2004

WEBELOS TO SCOUT TRANSITION

(A Guide for Boy Scout Troops)

NORTHERN NEW JERSEY COUNCIL
BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA
25 Ramapo Valley Road
Oakland, NJ 07436
Telephone: (201) 677-1000
Fax: (201) 677-1020
E-mail: info@nnjbsa.org
Web-site: http://www.nnjbsa.org

Northern New Jersey Council
Boy Scouts of America
25 Ramapo Valley Road
Post Office Box 670
Oakland, New Jersey 07436
Phone (201) 677-1000 ~ Fax (201) 677-1020

Dear Troop Leadership,

We believe YOU are the most important people in insuring that the majority of our Webelos transition and become Boy Scouts. Unfortunately, too often the Cub pack considers their job completed when a Webelos earns his Arrow of Light. While that is not true (their job is done when a boy joins a troop), it is too often the pack leadership's perception. Therefore, every troop must make attracting Webelos to join Boy Scouting a priority. EFFECTIVE TRANSITION DOESN'T JUST HAPPEN. It must be planned and carefully executed.

This booklet gives a very specific and detailed plan that, if followed, will help you recruit more Webelos into your troop. Remember – any troop that does not recruit a minimum of one new patrol a year (8 boys) is going in the direction of extinction!

It is important that every troop appoints a membership chairman. If a troop is to follow this plan, there must be one person whose primary job is to make this plan happen.

About seventy-five percent of our troops have a pack chartered to the same community organization, while twenty-five percent do not. In some cases this plan may need to be altered since two troops are recruiting from the same pack. To be fair, where there are two or more troops involved they should both share in the process described in this booklet. Plus, the troop membership chairmen should be in contact with each other.

Thanks for making sure your troop *aggressively* reaches out to every fifth grade Webelos to transition to Boy Scouting.

Yours in Scouting,

A. Bruce Janes
Council Vice President, Membership

ABJ/dm

AN ANNUAL PLAN
GUARANTEED TO RESULT IN SUCCESSFUL
WEBELOS TO SCOUT TRANSITION

AUGUST

1. The troop Membership Chairman contacts the local Cub Scout pack(s) to get the name, address, and phone number of each boy who will be a fifth grade Webelos (normally all the upcoming 5th graders). If the troop leadership does not know the leaders of the local pack, call the council service center at (201) 677-1000 to get this information.

2. The Scoutmaster selects Scouts as Den Chiefs for each Webelos and Cub Den in the local pack(s). The Scoutmaster works closely with the Cubmaster to make sure every den has a Den Chief.

3. The Scoutmaster contacts the fifth grade Webelos leader and arranges for the Webelos to go camping with the troop in October or another fall month.

4. The Scoutmaster contacts the Cubmaster and arranges for the troop to conduct the Bobcat Ceremony at the October pack meeting.

SEPTEMBER

1. The Troop Membership Chairman and Scoutmaster mail a letter to every fifth grade Webelos, telling the boy how much they look forward to him joining the troop in February. Enclose a copy of the September troop newsletter. In the letter, let each fifth grade Webelos know they will begin automatically receiving the troop newsletter in the mail each month. Make sure the Cubmaster and Webelos leader also receive the *newsletter*.

2. The Scoutmaster and Webelos leader set a November date for the Scoutmaster and the Senior Patrol Leader, or other key boy leader, to visit a fifth grade Webelos den meeting.

Webelos to Scout Transition

OCTOBER

1. The troop attends the pack meeting and conducts the Bobcat Ceremony for the pack. Make sure the entire troop attends in proper uniform. This gives all the parents and boys a chance to see the older Scouts. Plan an impressive Bobcat induction ceremony. At the end of the ceremony invite the entire fifth grade Webelos to join the troop at the front of the meeting. Say something like "Since we know all the fifth grade Webelos will be joining our troop in February, we want them to stand with us while we all give a "BULLY" to our newest Bobcats."

2. The Webelos attend the troop's October campout (with a parent). Plan a good but fairly easy campout for October.

3. Make sure the troop's October newsletter is mailed to every fifth grade Webelos.

NOVEMBER

1. The Scoutmaster and Senior Patrol Leader attend a meeting of the fifth grade Webelos Dens. Talk about the troop's program. Show slides, photographs, or a video of a recent troop outing.

2. Mail the troop's November newsletter to every fifth grade Webelos.

3. Register all Den Chiefs for next month's Den Chief Training Conference. Trained Den Chiefs do a better job for the Cubs and are a better influence to help Cubs want to be Scouts.

DECEMBER

1. Mail the troop's December newsletter to every fifth grade Webelos.

2. The Webelos Den Leader and Scoutmaster or Membership Chairman set a date for the fifth grade Webelos and their parents to visit a group meeting – an open house for Webelos.

3. The troop should buy a small holiday gift for each fifth grade Webelos. The Scout Shops have lots of fairly inexpensive Boy Scout items from which to choose. Send a personal note to each boy with his gift, telling him how much you look forward to him joining the troop in February. Mention the date of the Open House. This is the responsibility of the Memberhship Chairman.

Webelos to Scout Transition

JANUARY

1. Mail the troop's January newsletter to every fifth grade Webelos.

2. One troop meeting should be an Open House for Webelos to visit with their parents. Plan an exciting meeting with a lot of action. Make sure the Webelos are full participants – not spectators. Allow the Webelos parents to witness at least half the troop meetings. During part of the meeting, have the Committee Chairman and Membership Chairman meet with the parents in another room to make a short presentation about the troop and answer any questions they may have. Give each Webelos an application. Give each parent an adult application and ask them to consider either being an Assistant Scoutmaster or a member of the committee. Also give each family a copy of the troop's annual schedule. Encourage them to begin planning family activities around the troop's schedule whenever possible to avoid conflicts.

3. The Scoutmaster and Cubmaster should plan out an impressive "Crossing the Bridge" ceremony for the February Blue and Gold Banquet.

FEBRUARY

1. Mail the troop's February newsletter to every fifth grade Webelos.

2. The troop attends the Blue & Gold Banquet to conduct the bridge crossing ceremony. It could be the Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmaster, Senior Patrol Leader, and maybe another key boy leader or two – OR – the entire troop could attend. If only a few attend and <u>if</u> the pack invites them for dinner, it is appropriate to attend the entire Blue and Gold. If the troop brings a better contingent, plan to arrive after dinner – for the program only.

   Conduct an impressive, meaningful bridge crossing ceremony. Most troops give the new Scouts a gift or two – handbook, troop neckerchief or bolo tie, troop tee shirt, etc. At the end of the ceremony, ask the entire fourth grade Webelos Den to stand. Say something like "We want you guys to stand and be recognized because next year you will be standing here joining our troop." THE PROCESS HAS STARTED OVER.

3. Have the new Scouts start attending troop meetings immediately. Organize them into a New-Scout Patrol. Assign an older Scout to be the Troop Guide and assign an Assistant Scoutmaster to work with the patrol.

4. The Committee Chairman actively recruits new parents to serve on the troop committee. The Scoutmaster recruits at least one new Assistant Scoutmaster from the new Scout parents. New parents should receive all written information the troop has about the troop, such as a troop guidebook.

5. During late February or early March, hold an Open House for non-Webelos fifth graders. The council will work with you to put flyers in all fifth grades. Have your brand new Scouts make lists of their non-Scout friends from school. Mail an invitation to these boys. Encourage the new Scouts to invite their friends.

   OUR RESEARCH HAS CLEARLY SHOWN WE RECRUIT A MUCH HIGHER PERCENTAGE OF FIFTH GRADE BOYS IN FEBRUARY OR MARCH THAN IF WE WAIT UNTIL LATER. Many troops pick up an additional three to six boys by reaching out to non-Webelos 5th graders at this time.

MARCH

1. The March campout should be planned remembering you will have brand new Scouts. Make it a fun trip – one that will not be too difficult. The weather can still get very nasty in March, so plan accordingly. You want the new Scouts first trip to be a success.

2. Make sure every new Scout knows all the details about summer camp. Give families the opportunity to start saving for camp. Strongly encourage every new Scout to plan to attend a week of camp with the troop.

APRIL

1. The Scoutmaster should arrange to attend a meeting with all the Bear Cub Scouts in the pack. Conduct an orientation to explain the changing role as boys become Webelos Scouts. Take along your Senior Patrol Leader, or other key boy leader, to talk to them from an older boy's perspective.

   There are two reasons this meeting is important. First, too many boys drop out of Cub Scouting after their Bear year. It is important that they understand Webelos will be a new challenge. Second, it is important to develop a rapport between the troop and the Cubs this early so they want to eventually move into Boy Scouting.

MAY, JUNE, JULY

1. The Membership Chairman and Assistant Scoutmaster for the new Boy Patrol should work closely to insure each new Scout is having a successful experience. Call the parents several times during this time frame to see if they have any questions or concerns.

2. Make sure each new Scout feels welcomed and a part of the troop. Work with each boy to help him achieve Tenderfoot and get started on Second Class.

IN CLOSING

This plan will work. Follow it carefully and your troop will grow by recruiting and keeping Webelos Scouts, as well as non-Webelos fifth graders. Thanks for your interest in helping EVERY boy have a great Scouting experience.

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WEBELOS TO SCOUT TRANSITION

TROOP PARTICIPATION REPORT

TROOP NO: _____ DISTRICT: _____ DATE: _____

SCOUTMASTER: _____ TEL: _____

YES, OUR TROOP WILL USE THE WEBELOS TO SCOUT TRANSITION PLAN. OUR MEMBERSHIP CHAIR WILL BE:

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TEL: _____

E-MAIL: _____

WE ARE AFFILIATED WITH PACK(S): _____

OUR GOAL IS TO RECRUIT _____ NEW BOY SCOUTS IN 2004

PLEASE RETURN TO: Northern New Jersey Council, BSA
25 Ramapo Valley Road
P.O. Box 670
Oakland, NJ 07436