

SCOUTS-L

DEN CHIEFS

Date: Thu, 27 Jul 95 07:31:25 EST
From: "Stephen R. Bell" <sbell@kns.com>
Subject: Den Chief Training

Mike,

First let me thank you for the postings you send, I have great pleasure in reading many of your replies to questions, and through those and other postings I have expanded my scouting knowledge, so Thanks :-).

Let me also congratulate on the HOMEPAGE, great idea and I have tried some of those FTP sites which contain a wealth of information. What did we do 10-20 yrs ago?

YES I would be interested in the Den Chief Training that your Council puts on so please as time gets nearer register me or send me the registration materials. I reside near Philadelphia and as you guys are in Washington not too much of a drive.

Once again thanks for your help.

My Address is
257 Stefan Place
Chalfont
PA 18914
Tel 215 997 8888

Stephen Bell
A Bridge to the Future
Troop Committee 133, ACM 133, Unit Commissioner Trp/Pck36

Date: Thu, 13 Jul 1995 11:34:17 CST
From: Jim Sleezer <JHS8%OSUVM1.BITNET@cunyvm.cuny.edu>
Subject: Den Chiefs

We've had some discussion on this topic before and I hope I do not duplicate unnecessarily. However, we have a lot of new people who may not know how to look through the archives.

Anyway . . .

Den Chiefs are a vital part of both the pack and the troop operation. The office of den chief is particularly valuable for younger scouts who are not yet ready to take on the challenge of leading a patrol. As a youth, we had

a policy that a person could not become a den chief until he had achieved tenderfoot rank and had been ACTIVE in the troop for at least six months. (In those days, membership was an age issue, not grade related)

In my troop we had several den chiefs, some of whom worked with our institution related pack, and some with other packs. This was one of our strongest recruiting tools. Those cubs who went on to Boy Scouting generally joined their den chief's troop.

One of the things that I think made it work well for us was that all the den chiefs in our pack met monthly with an ACM who kept us briefed on upcoming themes and activities. He taught us a new game or two each month and we talked about problems we were having. We got ideas for handling problem situations although it was always stressed that it was not our role to discipline any cub--this was strictly a role for the den leader. We discussed what our jobs would be at the next pack meeting. Mostly, we worked with our dens but we usually had a little part in the meeting, especially if we had boys in our den who were getting their arrow of light (webelos) badge. Sometimes we escorted parents to the front of the room, sometimes we held props for the leaders. We led the grand howl for all those who received awards each meeting.

We had a troop committee member who met with us (and the ACM) about once every three months to see how things were going. He coordinated recognition in the troop--after all, we were troop officers. The den chief cord was always presented at a troop meeting. New den chiefs were introduced at pack meetings but their cord was never given there.

We were expected to participate in troop activities as any other scout would.

Den meetings were an extra but because we were treated special by the pack leaders, we never felt it was a burden.

At a typical meeting, I arrived a few minutes before the cubs. I quickly reviewed the meeting plan with the DL and ADL. Generally, I did the pre-opening activity--something the cubs could join as they arrived. That also gave the DL a chance to collect dues and check advancements.

The Denner lead the opening ceremony. The DL usually conducted the business portion of the meeting (i.e., planning outings, special activities, etc.). During this time, I often helped the ADL set up the meeting's activity and was ready to assist the cubs when the business was over (usually less than five minutes). Sometimes I helped with the business. After the activity I generally managed a game of some type (used ACM's suggestions). The Denner led the closing. After the meeting, I stayed a few minutes to help with cleanup and check plans for the following week.

I was a den chief for three years but for most of two of those years I had two dens (different packs, different meeting days). I enjoyed them both but always felt most important in the pack where the ACM worked with us. In the other pack, most of the den leaders did not have den chiefs--I heard one say they were more trouble than the cubs. Where the ACM worked with us, every den had at least one den chief and occasionally a den had two. I clearly believe that the success was directly tied to the training and support that the ACM provided. He believed that Den chiefs were important and made us feel that way.

Of course, I also came from a scouting family--my mother was a den mother (no den leaders in those days) for 15 years, retiring only after I had received my webelos and graduated into boy scouting. Our den always had at least one den chief and at one time had four--we had 24 boys in the den but operated a lot like three dens. All of our den chiefs were active in Scouting and of the five I can remember, four received eagle, three were on summer camp staff, all served as SPL at one time or another. I couldn't wait to join their

troop when I turned 11.

I do not remember a council or district training course for den chiefs but our ACM more than made up for any lack of formal training. I believe that a trained den chief is a real asset, an untrained one can be the problem I mentioned above--nothing but an overgrown cub!!

BTW, about every three months we had a den chief cookout as part of our meeting with the ACM. That month, the CM, committee chair, and a few other adults also attended to see what ideas we had for making things work better.

I would remind den chiefs who were not attending troop meetings that their position was a troop office, not a pack office, and that if they were not remaining active in the troop, then they could not hold the office. Be sure to get pack support for this.

>From time to time, I see packs recruiting den chiefs directly. I always remind them that they need to contact the SM. Unfortunately, some SMs don't fulfill their role.

I've rambled enough. Hope this helps.

jim Sleezer

Roundtable Commissioner, Pawnee Bill District, Will Rogers Council
Stillwater, Oklahoma

JHS8 at OSUVM1.BITNET JHS8 at VM1.UCC.OKSTATE.EDU (Internet)

Date: Sun, 16 Jul 1995 02:03:20 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@CapAccess.org>
To: SCOUTS-L Youth Groups Discussion List <SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>
Subject: Re: Managing Den Chiefs

Alan,

Sorry to be answering almost a week after your original posting. I think your ideas for helping the Den Chiefs sound great.

One of the toughest things for Scouts at this age is good time management. And being a Den Chief, doing a good job, is very time demanding. Scouts in this position are apt to burn-out quickly from time demands and it gets worse, if they are not recognized or teased by their peers for noting making the grade for a "real Troop Leader" job. Here are a couple of thoughts on the subject:

Try a leadership contract. Some units have found that a short job description listing expectations that is signed by the Scout, the Scoutmaster and the Den Leader is a great help. It can do the following things:

- * Make clear that the Scout's primary duties are with the Troop, attending activities and Troop meetings.**
- * Make clear what is expected of him in his conduct as a leader with the den.**
- * Help the Den Leader understand that the Den Chief is a limited resource and not a servant.**
- * Place limits on Den/Pack participation. Some have limited the Den Chief to 1 Pack Meeting/Activity and 3 Den Meetings/Activities per month to avoid burn-out.**
- * Limit the term of service to what is good for all concerned. In some cases it is necessary to limit the term of Office to part of a year and rotate another Scout into the position. One of the dangers is that a Scout can feel cast away with a one year sentence. That's pretty hard on a boy of this age. As a former Den Leader I understand the desire to have the same Scout help all year because of the rapport with the Cubs, but we have to remember that this is a leadership experience for this Scout as part of his growth and advancement. We need to tailor our expectations accordingly. My own Den Chief attended every other Den Meeting and no Pack Meetings. The Cubs looked forward to his visits, he didn't burn out and was always fresh.**

It is important that the SM or an ASM monitor the Den Chief's role. You have to be careful that he is being given leadership jobs and not merely treated as a go-fer helper. If he is not being given leadership duties - pull him out NOW! Nothing is worse than boredom and a feeling of being useless or unneeded. If you do pull out a Den Chief, use discretion to

create a new Troop Leadership post for him - you can be creative; e.g., Scribe responsible for newsletters, ASPL for advancement, etc.

Try to make sure that the Scout is treated like a part of the Leadership Corps of the Troop.

- * Is his name listed with the other Troop Leaders like the SPL or his name buried in a Patrol on the Troop Roster?**
- * At Courts of Honor when SPL, ASPLs, etc. are recognized for leadership with a warrant certificate, certificate of appreciation, etc., is the Den Leader treated the same? Same goes for ceremonies with leadership charges.**
- * Is he invited to PLCs?**
- * Has he been given Den Chief Leadership Training?**
- * Has he been given the chance to attend JLT like others?**

The latter comments are intend to be the start and not the end of an evaluation of how to set the stage for other Scouts to see the Den Chief as one of the Troop's valued leaders. This recognition will help in many cases.

**Speaking only for myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F. Bowman
DDC-Training, GW Dist. Nat Capital Area Council
mfbowman@CAPACCESS.ORG**

**Date: Fri, 28 Jul 1995 02:06:54 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@CapAccess.org>
To: hendra@macscouter.com
Subject: Den Chief Training (fwd)**

Gary,

Thought you would enjoy seeing the forwarded message as it indicates another happy MacScouter browser.

Speaking only for myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F. Bowman

**DDC-Training, GW Dist. Nat Capital Area Council
mfbowman@CAPACCESS.ORG**

----- Forwarded message -----

**Date: Thu, 27 Jul 95 07:49:39 EST
From: Stephen R. Bell <sbell@kns.com>
To: mfbowman@capaccess.org
Subject: Den Chief Training**

Mike,

I tried to send a message to you and the return said the address was wrong.If you get this then OK.The difference is how I have written the address. On your message it is written mfbowman@CapAcces.org I have changed it to mfbowman@capaccess.org. so if this gets through I am ok. Anyway if the first one gets through i apologize foe repeating everything.

First let me thank you for your prompt response, and YES I would like take up your offer of your councils training course in November. Please send me (address at the bottom) and/or register me as the time nears.thanks.

Let me congratulate on the WWW Homepage for the Internet, my knowledge;edge of the system has greatly improved. Interesting enough I have a connection through Compuserve all windows based, but when i started to use the E-mail itself for access I learnt/understood much more, so thanks to you for setting that up.

Regards Steve

**A Bridge To The Future
Troop Committee 133,ACM 133,Unit CommissionerTrp/Pck36
Chalfont,Pa.**

**Date: Fri, 28 Jul 95 12:56:09 EST
From: "Stephen R. Bell" <sbell@kns.com>
Subject: Den Chief Training**

Mike,

Thanks for your reply, knowing that I got through is a relief, however, I think I sent you now three messages. Anyway, just a little about myself. I am from the Bucks

Council just outside Philadelphia, and I am from England(Been in the US for 5yrs), I am a Queen Scout (Eagle US) which I received in 1967.I moved here in 1990 and got involved through guess what my son, and became ACM. My son moved up to scouts last year and of course I followed. The troop 133 is 36 years old and the scoutmaster (Jack Morris) is the original guy who set up the troop.the troop program is a tried and tested program over those years and is probably the best all round troop in the county(biased) :-)
At the present I am working with troop /Pack 36 which is 66 years old, (I believe is one of the oldest in the county) as Unit Commissioner, which I have found very enjoyable as the troop had been run down by the previous SM(wanted to do everything himself) and we (myself and new SM) are rebuilding the troop (great to see the fruits developing).

I decided that if I wanted to become good at this (scouting) I needed to attend Woodbadge, and I was able to persuade the scoutmaster of trp36 to go as well. (I wonder if thats a first-probably not) and we begin NE-IV-72 August 19th. My SM suggested that as I like training that Den Chief Training for the troop would be a good idea for one of my tickets (and as it was a need why not).

Actually this brings me to another point. What we (troop) want to set up is an E-Mail for the troop/parents etc.. Well thats sort of easy, but one of the questions was "well what to we need" Simple really, but they have different systems,PC,Mac, Apple etc.Question: How do we found out and tell them what to do,example Pc buy a modem/provider/co. communication software/telephone line and away you a go, but what about Apple systems.,which systems a available.
Any ideas

Anyway, thanks once again for help and your efforts.

Stephen Bell
A Bridge to the Future
Troop Committee 133,Unit Commissioner Trp/Pck36 ACM 133
Chalfont PA Lenape District, Bucks Council

Date: Mon, 31 Jul 95 19:21:55 CST
From: "rcovingt" <rcovingt@smtplink.dsccc.com>

To: mfbowman@CAPACCESS.ORG, chuckb@aztec.asu.edu
Subject: Den Chiefs

Michael Bowman,

You recently wrote about the importance of the den chief. I agree.

The Den Chief, what an important job both for the Troop, the Pack, the Den and for the Boy Scout himself.

In our Troop, we view the position of Den Chief as one of the most difficult way to earn leadership credit. We rank this position as important as the Troop Guide is to the PLC.

A Scout must be of First Class rank and make a commitment to the Troop

and Pack that they will complete the school year with a Cub Scout den. In early August each year our District provide an excellent Den Chief Training for the potential Den Chiefs. Each is given a fine handbook full of leadership tips and songs and cheers, and many other aides for his position.

We have three Cub Scout Packs that generally provide cub scouts to our Troop. We try to maintain a good relationship with them throughout the year. The physical presence of the den chiefs at the Pack meetings is an advertisment for Boy Scouting and our Troop.

On School Night For Scouting (late August) our Troop will bring in our recently trained Den Chiefs to the SNFS meeting. After the dens have been formed and Den Leaders chosen, the new den leaders will interview

our boys so they may decide (if possible) that night which one can meet their meeting nights and chemistry.

As the Den Chief advisor, I indicate to each Den Leader that they are to use these Scouts as teachers, as leaders in their den, not just another cub scout. Use them or lose them, offer challenges and assignments for them to do. These boys are a few years older than the cubs they lead.

Mr. Bowman indicated that time management is one of the toughest things for these Den Chiefs to achieve. Our boys are active in Jr. and Senior High marching bands, and various other honor societies and

school and church activities, many complete one meeting to just meet another obligation. All are honor students.

We ask all of our leadership position candidates in the Troop, Den Chief included, are you going to make the commitment to do your best in fulfilling the responsibilities of this position. We expect a near 100 percent attendance in both troop meetings and troop outings for the duration of the position. In addition, the Den Chief meets weekly with the den, and monthly with the Pack. Our Troop elects or appoints position for 4 months (except the Den Chief, that is for the school year.)

Since the position of Den Chief is a leadership position working within the Pack and Den, any conflicts of schedules between the Pack and Troop, the Pack/Den has priority over the Troop! We have little complaints on this point. Their first obligation is to their den.

We do not place limits on the length of service any boy can serve as den chief. For many hold dual positions as they serve as den chief. It is not uncommon for all of the den chiefs to hold positions as PL, ASPL, SPL, etc.....while meeting the demands of the den.

After a den chief has completed his second year of service the Pack awards the den chief with the Den Chief Award (the red/white/blue shoulder cord). We have 4 den chiefs that just completed their third year with the same den. Two den crossed over to the troop to a new Boy Scout, the Troop Guide.

I had the good fortune a couple of weeks ago to take a First Year Webelos den (fourth graders) to their first summer camp experience at Camp Cherokee in East Texas. It was a little warm. Our group consisted of two adult leaders, a female Den Leader, a fine lady, a great Scouter, an good leader, myself as ADL and the Den Chief a thirteen year old Star Scout. I was able to talk the Den Leader into allowing the Den Chief to run the show similar to that of the SPL in the Troop. She agreed and indicated her confidence that he could do the job. He did an outstanding job with the boys, he was very patient, helpful, and taught them many basic scout skills necessary during their four day stay at Webelos Summer Camp.

The assignment of this den leadership to the den chief, and he taking the challenge made him a better Scout and better prepared him to hold the position of SPL for the Troop. I was very proud of him.

I have gone long enough about our ideals about den chiefs and what a real opportunity there is for the boys in this position. Give them a chance, they may far exceed your expectations.

**Rick Covington, ASM, ADL
T713 / P874
Circle Ten Council
Dallas, Texas**

**From mfbowman@CapAccess.org Mon Sep 4 23:08:29 1995
To: SCOUTS-L Youth Groups Discussion List <SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>
Subject: Re: Den Chief Requirements**

The position of Den Chief is an appointed Troop office. The Scoutmaster Handbook, the Den Chief Handbook and the Junior Leader Handbook leave the appointment up to the Scoutmaster and the Senior Patrol Leader (note the "and"). There are no specific pre-qualification criteria for this position. That said, a Scoutmaster would be doing a disservice to both the Scout and the Cubs, if the boy were not mature enough to give leadership to a Den. There is a beauty in this loosely defined process and that is that the SM and SPL can place a Scout in the position based on ability rather on rank or age, which are not necessarily any guarantee of success. I've seen some great young Den Chiefs and some not so great. And the same can be said of older ones too. The key is to take this leadership position seriously and promote it instead of having seen as a consolation prize.

**Speaking only for myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F. Bowman
DDC-Training, GW Dist. Nat Capital Area Council
mfbowman@CAPACCESS.ORG**