

SCOUTS-L

PACK MEETINGS

Date: Wed, 7 May 1997 09:38:14 CST
From: Barry C Runnels <Barry_C_Runnels@MMACMAIL.JCCBI.GOV>
Subject: Pack Meetings

Hi Peter

There is several ways you can do to shorten the meeting without taking the FUN out or degrading the ceremonies.

We only gave the more special awards during the ceremonies like the Bobcat, Wolf, Bear and so on. We asked the Den leaders to give the belt loop type awards during the Den Meetings.

Generally Scouts only talk when they think they won't miss anything Fun or important. So keep them involved as much as possible.

Get everyone involved during ceremonies. One night we asked everyone to get in a Big circle, when we called the recipients name, everyone would stamp their feet then yell something like, Roar of Bear or Cry of the Wolf. Then as I present the award, they would yell the Scouts name and award. Another night we had one of our Native American (he prefers American Indian) parents lead everyone in a dance after the awards were presented.

Spice up boring parts of the meeting. During announcements, we do the announcements song. I can find it on the Web if you want. I had someone else do the announcements so I could put on a wig or silly hat to represent part of the announcements. During our roller Skating Party announcement, I came out with roller blades and hammed it up.

We gave the Den leaders a copy of the agenda so they would have their Scouts ready to do their song or skit at the right time. This reduces the dead time. I also have some jokes ready just in case there was some dead time.

Another great trick is tell the Scouts if you hold your arms a certain way, they have to stand up and yell at the top of their lungs. But if you hold

hands a different way, they should only clap. Change the signals at each meeting. This works great during dead times like announcements. During a Uniform Inspection by a local Troop, the natives were getting restless. So I threw out a few hand signals to cheer the Scouts on and all went well after that.

I saw Dave's idea to spread out the awards during the meeting, we also did this and it works very well.

There are two things to keep in mind for each meeting: it is normal for Scouts to get rowdy when they are bored. It's not their fault, it's yours. The other is the meeting has to be FUN. Scouts love to yell and jump up and down, so plan it in the meeting under your control.

Review each meeting and change the areas the Scouts didn't enjoy. All parts of the meeting can and should be fun, even ceremonies and announcements.

When we started reviewing each meeting and changing the parts that weren't fun, we shorten the meetings by 40 minutes without taking out any content.

The changes won't happen over night, but they will make a difference. Good Luck.

Barry Runnels
"Mighty" Pack 339
Troop 386

Date: Wed, 7 May 1997 10:20:37 -0400
From: Randy Moyers 1355 6051 <moyersrl@PLHP002.COMM.MOT.COM>
Subject: Re: Pack Meetings

Peter:

I can sympathize with you. Last year our pack had 220 boys registered with about 190 active. We had been rejecting the idea of splitting, but finally gave in over the summer. It was the best thing we ever did. We now have 120

registered and about 100 active boys. It makes things a lot easier to handle, and our DE loves us because we -handed- him a strong, viable, additional unit of about 70 boys. 8^)

Last year we were forced to make the pack meetings advancement factories and I feel the boys got short-changed. The meetings still ran over 2 hours.

What we have done is:

1. Move the game to pre-opening. It saves time and gets the scouts there so you can start on time. Also use this time for display of den crafts and projects.
2. Start on time. (See #1) Once people realize that 7:00 means 7:00 they will get there. It is also unfair to penalize those who do make it on time.
3. Keep the announcements short and sweet. Just the highlights. A lot of information can get passed through your leaders meetings to the den meetings. Have a -complete- and -correct- handout/newsletter that the parents can read. You shouldn't have to read it to them. You will get quizzed afterward. There is no way to avoid this. Someone will always ask, *When you said the red scarf, which color did you mean?* Some people will want clarification no matter how in detail the announcements are. Deal with them on an individual basis (you'll have to anyway). Don't delay the whole meeting trying to lay it all out for those few.
4. Keep the advancements moving. Put all the advancements for a boy in a plastic baggie and all the baggies for a den in an envelope. The den leaders for den 1 are called forward. We have the advancements chair read the boys name. The boy comes forward. As he is coming to the front I get the baggie and hand it to the Cubmaster. When the boy reaches the front the CM hands the

baggie to the boy, shakes his hand and congratulates him. He moves in front of the den leaders. When den 1 is complete we applaud them as a den and dismiss them. Move to den 2..... For rank advancements we spend a -little-more time on the individual boy. For Bobcat, we turn the boy upside down and have the parent pin the badge on right side up. Keep it moving.

5. In order to keep the boys quiet we bound and gag them as they come in!
8^)

No, not really. Seriously, I am not sure that there is a way to keep 100+ boys quiet for 1 1/2 to 2 hrs. I am looking forward to seeing how others on the list address this issue. Keep the program moving. Use a PA to talk over background noise. Don't expect silence. Just a reasonable degree of quiet. We have as much problem with the parents in this area as we do with the boys.

I think its great that you are not turning boys away. These days, kids need our program more than they ever have. Do your best. Tap into the wisdom of the list. Seek advice and help from other scouters in your area and you'll have a great program. Good Luck!

On May 6, 9:14am, Peter Hickey wrote:

> Subject: Pack Meetings

snip

> Our pack is what I would consider to be extremely large. There are about
> 120-130 boys in 12 dens. The pack meetings include an opening,

> announcements, awards ceremony, skit, song, game and closing. To give
out

> awards to all the boys who have earned them makes the meeting
extremely

> long. (two hours or more).

snip

- > To split the pack up has been suggested and rejected by the pack leadership.
- > To stop accepting boys into the pack after we reach a certain critical mass
- > (which I feel we are way beyond) has also been rejected.
- >
- > So it appears that we are somewhat stuck with dealing with a large group of
- > scouts and trying to run an effective pack meeting. Does anyone have
- > experience with a large pack and/or suggestions on ways to make the pack
- > meeting run better.
- >
- > I am looking for constructive suggestions. I hope that my inquiry will not
- > result in lectures on what we are doing wrong.
- >
- > Thanks for any help you can provide.
- >-- End of excerpt from Peter Hickey

--

YIS,
Randy KE4NNI
CC, WEBELOS Leader, Outdoor Activity Chair Pack 281, ASM Troop 397
Unit Commissioner, District/Council Training Staff, Roundtable Staff
South Florida Council
To Reply directly to me: <mailto:moyersrl@plhp002.comm.mot.com>
To Reply to the SCOUTS-L List: <mailto:SCOUTS-L@tcu.edu>

Date: Wed, 7 May 1997 10:16:25 -0500
From: George Hutcheson <pack44@WWW.CEDARNET.ORG>
Subject: Re: Pack Meetings

Peter,

A pack of 120 to 130 Cubs; what a wonderful problem to have!!
And I salute your pack's leadership for not limiting the size.
Our pack is not quite as large (70 boys average) but we've had
some of the same problems. Here's some ideas based on our
experience.

1. Set up ahead of time. If there is something that will be used during the meeting get it ready before the meeting starts. For example, instead of wasted time fumbling for awards, pins, and cards during the meeting they were all laid out, in order, on the head table. Two additional benefits, it makes it easy for someone to help and the display sure gets the other Cubs motivated when they see what others have earned.

2. Start on time. You can easily waste 15 minutes waiting for people. About 5 minutes before the scheduled start announce that people need to take a seat. Start on time and don't pussyfoot around. Kick the meeting off energetically and don't look back. If the CM is late expect the ACM to step right in.

3. Look at your meeting order. What are the very important items and who is the meeting for? (Hint: awards/skits/songs and the boys) Make these a priority and limit the other activities. Do try to mix activities with sitting to help control excess energy. Adults will also appreciate a chance to stretch. <grin> A good rousing cheer can be well worth the time. I notice you mention a game as part of the pack meeting. You might consider using the game as a "gathering" activity. Benefits? It frees up meeting time, helps get people there early because the boys are pushing not to be late, and it gives the parents some social-time outside of the meeting. Just don't get too involved and forget suggestion #2.

4. Seating arrangements. We have parents sit with their son's den rather than having all the Cubs sit together. It helps maintain control. We also tell parents that they are responsible for helping maintain control - especially of siblings.

5. Announcements, Announcements, Announcements (what a horrible way to die, etc)

Notice that "announcements" isn't on the hot list. If you publish a newsletter (and you should!) announcements are often a duplication. Move 'em to the end of the meeting and keep them under tight control. Too often announcements are a big time waster where unprepared people stand up, fumble for words, and just repeat common knowledge. It is better to have one person read highlights from a card. If people need to know who is running a project just have them stand, briefly. There are other good reasons for having announcements last. You'll get better retention of information and if you run long you can cut announcements short by just mentioning that there is important info in the newsletter.

6. Stay on schedule and don't let things drag out. Be aware of the clock.

7. Finally, a good meeting doesn't just happen, it requires planning, communication, and a committment to staying within a time limit.

Good luck and I hope this helps.

YiS,

George Hutcheson,

Eagle '67, W. Little Grey Powder

Advancement Chairman - Troop 42, Cedar Falls, Iowa

Wabuha District Cub Roundtable staff

...a ticket-working C-25-96 Eagle