

**Troop 53 Parent Committee Meeting
McFarland Lutheran Church
November 12, 2007**

Present: Janis Lugo, Tom Hovel, Christine Weidner, Mark Birrenkott, Heather Oliva, Sheila Fay, Dan Burke, Kim Lambert, Tom Cerro

Meeting called to order at 6:35 p.m.

Previous Minutes of October 15, 2007: Tom approved; seconded by Christine.

Reports

Scoutmaster Report: The following is from Brock Chalmers:

Scoutmaster notes

November 12, 2007

Our last two camping outings have gone very well. Eight Scouts attended the Yahara District Camporee at Portage, Wisconsin, October 6 – 7. We hiked the Marquette Portage Trail in the morning. Toured the historic Indian Agency House, and the Scouts earned the Marquette Trail medal. Four Scouts also toured the Fort Winnebago Surgeons Quarters. Exhibitors closed early in the afternoon, which was a disappointment. The boys developed a good skit for the campfire program. I am grateful to Scott Jacobus and Kim Lambert for providing adult support on this outing.

The Camp Carlson outing last weekend was outstanding. We had the last nice weekend of the year weather-wise it appears. Steve Weinberger and Mark Birrenkott did a great job running the gun ranges and providing the equipment. Ten Scouts attending this outing, several used a rifle and shotgun for the first time. All the Scouts were able to blow clay pigeons out of the sky by the end of the afternoon. Many were able to do so with regularity. Exploding targets were disappointing as they did not explode. But the boys did destroy Evan's pith helmet, which would have been good for draining spaghetti noodles if it hadn't shattered after a half dozen shotgun blasts. Saturday morning temperatures were below freezing. Afternoon temperatures were in the mid 50's. I am also indebted to Scott Jacobus for serving as the 2nd adult on this outing, and Mrs. Fay for coming on short notice to help transport us all home.

The troop holds its bi-annual elections tonight for all Junior Leadership positions. Our current office holders have done a very good job leading the troop through meetings and on outings. Brant and Tony have also completed their NYLT requirements and should be receiving their bolo ties very soon. I will be holding the bi-annual Troop Jr. Leadership Training at the church this Friday, November 16 and 17th. It is a Lock-in, featuring team building, leadership information, Friday night movie, and ending in the November Patrol Leaders Council Meeting. All Scouts are invited to attend this event, but elected junior leaders are required to attend. Training in their new position is essential to the healthy functioning of a boy-lead troop. Newly elected officers will assume their positions of responsibility on November 19.

Upcoming events include our Pancake Breakfast, being led by Mr. Fay (thank you), a cabin campout at the Montello Scout Cabin December 14 – 16, and our end-of-year Christmas party on

December 17th. The two Webelos II dens may join us again this year for the Montello Campout. We will again travel to Roche A Cri State Park for a 5-mile hike around the park and to the top of the mound. The Roche A Cri mound is an amazing place with Indian petroglyphs and miles-around view from the top. Scouts will be able to satisfy their 5-mile hiking with map and compass requirement, or the 5-mile backpacking requirement for camping merit badge. This outing requires drivers all weekend, so if winter camping in the cold is not your thing, this is the campout to go on. The Montello fireplace is huge.

The recent unpleasantness has caused myself, and others, to look back and closely examine our time in Scouting spent with Mr. Frances. Having camped over a dozen weekends and two week-long summer camps with him, I can not think of anything that he said or did that would have led me to suspect that he ever engaged in the felonious activity that he is accused of.

I am very pleased that the majority of parents voted to continue with our program despite the bad news stories. I believe that that was the correct decision. The Troop's Halloween Party went off without a hitch and the boys had a great time. The Camp Carlson weekend was outstanding, and again, the boys had a great time. We volunteer our time for the boys so that they can learn new skills, grow into leadership, and become better citizens. We cannot help them do those things by shutting down the program. So I am very pleased with the support of parents and the committee in maintaining the Troop 53 program, and the success has continued.

When additional charges are brought – which seems likely – we should expect another round of negative press. It would be wise to adhere to the counsel of Steve Heck, Glacier's Edge Council Executive, and refer all press inquiries directly to him at the council office.

Needs:

- Many of the Scouts have earned or completed merit badges in the last 2 months. Several have asked me when they will receive their awards. We need to move forward on immediate recognition.
- The current Church Council President is not inclined to provide his social security number for the Boy Scout Volunteer Application form. Therefore, we currently do not have a Charter Organization Representative (current church rule is that the council president automatically fills that roll). An annual rotation of the COR is really not in the best interest of the troop or church. I ask the committee to consider seeking a church member who would fill the roll for a number of years (3?) to offer continuity and actually sit on the Committee meetings and provide input from the church to our operations.
- Two early 2008 outings involve extra coordination and financing: February 8 – 10 is the EBSR Cabin campout with day trip to Cascade Mountain Ski Area. In March we go to Chicago to overnight in the Field Museum. The Scouts are interested in riding the train again into downtown Chicago. I have found that although I am capable of organizing campouts, juggling the payments, and arranging the schedules, running advancement, while leading the adult patrol, I am stretched very thin doing all these things at once. I would very much like another adult to take over the ski portion of the February outing – reserving with Cascade, taking the money, finding out who needs lessons, and who needs rentals. I would also like another adult to ramrod the Field Museum outing – scheduling

the train, getting the Field Museum materials and rules, collecting the money, and anything else necessary. I can then stay focused on the Scouts, advancement, adult menu, and the what-ever that always comes up.

Finally, the troop seems to have dropped at least a dozen Scouts from the roster since last May. Some of this has been natural attrition; aging out, and moving away. Others have differing interests, and our aggressive camping program is not everyone's cup of tea. My assumption was that high adventure activities would help retain Scouts, but I see that we still lose a few after each high adventure trek during the summer. Perhaps rather than 100% departure we only have 20% departure following high adventure. Troop 53 may not be as huge as it has been in recent years. That may not be such a bad thing. We can work well with the Scouts who want to be with us, learn the skills, and grow in leadership while we have exciting fun.

Brock Chalmers
Scoutmaster

Brock also wanted to thank the Committee and parents who attended the meeting last week, and the affirmation of support for where we are going for the Troop. People have been very positive and supportive and want to carry on. The last outstanding campout at Camp Carlson reinforces this. And, it is good that we kept to following the activities on the Troop calendar.

Joey Francis has completed his Eagle Project and will have his Scoutmaster Conference tomorrow.

Senior Patrol Leader: Brant reported that Camp Carlson went good. We have elections tonight. Don't know if we will have new patrols or keep current ones. Don't know where we are on High Adventure; Sea Base and Isle Royale.

Fundraising Chair: Heather Oliva reported for Michael Fay. Pancake Breakfast: prepared and distributed letters; placement ad letters done.

Roundtable: Christine reported that there were few updates. Between November 2007 and March 31, 2008 all Troops, Packs, and Crews need to have a Friends of Scouting presentation. Training on January 19, 2008 at Deerfield High School for all Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts and Venturers. Over 50 classes being held.

Other Volunteer Coordinator Reports: Tom indicated we still need volunteers to step up for Quartermaster and Advancement Chair.

Scott Chalmers requested that the Venture Crew take over the can recycling at the church. This would be our main fundraiser. Parent Committee approved this.

Tom stated that he will take over the instruction for Personal Management Merit Badge. Greg Francis was handling this.

Council may be looking at the Bernie Friedlund Fund.

Old Business

Scout Account Policy: Tom incorporated the minor adjustments that were discussed at the last Parent Committee meeting. Motion made to approve: Christine approved; Sheila seconded. Motion carried.

Presentation on High Adventure Activities

Christine presented. What is a High Adventure? It is the pinnacle of scouting; pushing yourself farther than you ever could. National High Adventures are Philmont in New Mexico, Double H in New Mexico, Northern Tier at Boundary Waters/Quetico, and Sea Base in Florida.

More parent volunteers and involvement is needed.

High Adventures are very strenuous trips. There are age and height/weight requirements. Age requirement is 14 years, or 13 years and completed the eighth grade.

Slide presentation was shown, and hand out information was provided.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Janis Caruso Lugo