

# Cubmaster Advancement Newsletter

Issue 8, February 2005

It is February and the season of Blue & Gold celebrations. This is the time of year for packs to put on their best and biggest ceremonies and when many packs are in the final stages of graduating the 5<sup>th</sup> grade Webelos to Boy Scouts.

With that said, let us tackle two topics this month.

## Ceremonies: When? Who? and What? & Dens, Patrols and Cub Scout Packs

### Ceremonies

Advancement is one of seven methods of Cub Scouting. Badges, in conjunction with award ceremonies, are the primary tools to recognize a boy's accomplishments in completing the advancement goals. Having exciting ceremonies builds on the fun of the pack. Fun ceremonies are good!

A problem develops in a pack when the ceremonies start to drive advancement. When boys are pushed to complete work in order to meet a pack's ceremony schedule, the pack is undermining some key elements of BSA Advancement.

Advancement is a boy-family experience where each boy progresses at his own "do your best" effort. It is not a competition among boys. And, **it is not done on a schedule that is set by the pack.** BSA has defined the advancement year as beginning June 1<sup>st</sup> and continuing through the next school year until June 1<sup>st</sup>. It goes further to encourage that a boy who is struggling to complete his rank advancement can be given a couple extra months to complete his work over the summer.

Ceremonies need to meet the needs and schedule of the boys. The Cub Scout Leader Book clearly states that immediate recognition of advancement is a key element of each program level. This framework for advancement offers some challenges for pack ceremonies. A Cubmaster needs to develop a collection of ceremonies that can be put on at based upon the schedule of the boys. A Bear advancement ceremony may need to be put on 3 or 4 times in a given program year.

Many packs have made their Blue and Gold celebration one of their Big WOW pack meetings. Extra effort is put into big recognition ceremonies. However, a boy that earns his rank advancement by May deserves no less recognition than a boy that completes his advancement by Blue & Gold. If your choice of advancement ceremonies creates an environment where the boy that completes his advancement in May feels less recognized, you have undermined the boy-family aspect of the program as defined by BSA and introduced an element of competition.

If this doesn't agree with how your Pack manages its advancement program, I would strongly encourage you to refer to section 18 of the Leader Book.

### Dens, Patrols and Cub Scout Packs

In preparation for Boy Scouts we move our Webelos from their blue Cub Scout uniforms up to the tan uniform. At this point the den has the option of switching from a den number to a den emblem. These are the same emblems that the Boy Scouts use for their patrols, often referred to as patrol emblems. At this time, some packs have been incorrectly starting to refer to the Webelos dens as Webelos patrols and the use of the term Patrol as been seeping its way into the Webelos program. This is not correct.

A Patrol is the smallest operating unit in Boy Scouts. The Patrol Method is the approach to Boy Leadership that is specific to Boy Scouts.

Why is this important? It is important to have clear language when we educate our boys and parents on the differences between Cub and Boy Scouts. If we muddle the language, we will have an even harder time explaining to our leaders and parents of our Webelos about the upcoming program differences that the Cubs should be prepared for and looking forwards to. If our Webelos parents are thinking "but, my boy is already

part of a patrol...", they will be slower to catch on to the distinctions that differentiate the two different Scouting programs.

In a read through section 21 of the Cub Scout Leader Book on Webelos, you will find only references to dens, Webelos Den Leaders, and Denners. There is nowhere within the program that allows for or supports patrols in Cub Scouting.

Bottom line. A Cub Scout pack is made up of multiple dens. Patrols are strictly for Boy Scout Troops.

**Newsletters**

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Till next month, yours in Scouting,  
- Chad Cooper  
chadc@charter.net

