

President's Corner - August 2011

As I sit staring at the blank screen trying to come up with something witty or deeply relevant to write, I notice it is dark outside my window. It's only 8:00 pm. Suddenly I realize another summer is almost gone. The Scouts will soon be back in school. Most of us will be bracing for the coming of another winter.

I hope you and your Scouts had an active and fun summer. Perhaps the best I can do this evening is give you a preview of what we are looking forward to completing in the next few months.

First, by the time you receive this August 20th will have come and gone. I hope your pop corn 'kernels' and others took advantage of the kick off outing and training day held at North Bend State Park. Dick Ledford and Iris McCrady have done a great job not only planning and putting on the kick off campaign, but in bringing a business model and approach to our two major product sales events. I encourage every unit to participate. It is a tremendous opportunity for your Scouts to apply learned sales and business skills as well as be seen in the community. Plus, they contribute to their Council's Scouting program and, perhaps earn something for themselves in the process.

Second, September 10th we are having a training conclave. It is three hours of jammed packed program and brainstorming of ideas. I am asking John Burns of our Scout Service Center to post the program outline on the Council web site. I recently shared the outline with the Area IV director. He wants to come and be a part of it.

Third, the new building at Camp Kootaga was not completed by the opening of Camp. That was a "bummer." The good news is that Don Gerhardt has graciously volunteered to oversee the completion of the building in the next 6 or so weeks. It is a project that has been long in process but the end is near. It will be a beautiful and functional addition to the camp. It would not have ever been realized without the countless volunteers who believed enough to make it happen. We could not have afforded a project of this quality without the many who donated labor and materials.

Fourth, for the first time in my association with the Council, Camp Mahonegon operated in the black. This is thanks to the many volunteers working under the capable and dedicated leadership of Tom Staud and the Mahonegon maintenance committee.

Fifth, for two years I have said we would have a Camping and Activities Guide for the unit leaders in our Council to use in finding fun and adventure within short drives of their particular unit. We have come one step closer to that becoming a reality in the past month. Steve Parks, a board member and volunteer stepped up to the plate and accepted the challenge of putting together a committee to get this valuable project done. If you have information about fun places to go for any activity, learning experiences, hiking, biking, canoeing, fishing, camping, back packing - well you get the idea—give Steve a shout.

Sixth, by the next President's letter we will be announcing the Council level leader of our Venturing and Learning for Life programs. Our Council has been sorely lacking in this area for two years. This month, a well qualified person has come forward and accepted this challenge. This volunteer is not only involved with the program at the local level but has recently been tagged to work on the program at the Area level.

Seventh, we have interviewed volunteers for a maintenance committee for Camp Kootaga which will operate on the same order as the one at Camp Mahonegon; for Vice President of Finance to fill the vacancy created when Joe Bell took a job assignment in Atlanta; for Treasurer to fill the vacancy created by Doug Life's resignation; and for legal advisor to the Council. While we have been working on filling vacancies at the Council board level, the districts have been organizing and filling their own positions. We are making progress. I want to thank the districts for their efforts in this regard. One thing I have learned and I suspect you already knew: there will always be vacancies to fill and sometimes you don't get the right person in the right position. That's ok. It gets worked out. Someone usually steps up to the plate. I have also learned, you will never know if a person will step up unless you, as the leader, ask.

If we can get these things completed and have a good fall recruitment season, we should have another great year in our Council. Heck, it has already been a great year because of all of you. It can

only be even greater as we finish it up.

Saturday I participated in the third annual Elkins Night Golf fund raiser. I can't play golf worth a lick. But I had fun until I left at 1:00 am to drive an hour and a half home. As I told my wife the next morning – Im too old for this—Next year—DONATION! This event is largely put together with one Scouting family from the Elkins area. Their young adult son, a fine golfer in his own right, has planned and put on the fund raiser for the past two years. This year the event made more money for the Council than it did last year. Our council owes a heap of gratitude to this family for their contributions of materials and equipment to both of our camps and their leadership in fund raising events in Highland District.

The danger in writing a missive like this is that I will not mention someone who has done a lot for the Council and they or someone on their behalf will be offended. For doing that, I apologize in advance. These are but a few examples of our many volunteers at work.

Sunday I participated in yet another of our new Eagle Scout's Court of Honor. The parents had taken pictures of their Eagle Scout son from the time he first entered Scouting as a Cub in another state through his Eagle Service Project. The Scout leader put it to music in a slide show presentation and played it for the crowd. You could see the development of this young man. As I rose to present the Eagle Challenge, I commented on the film. I mentioned seeing him standing alone at the top of his completed project. Then I mentioned that while he was standing alone in the end, it was the team working two by two and in small groups that got the job done under his leadership. He was standing on the shoulders of many who supported him. I pointed out there was no "I" in the word "team." He is another of our many fine Scouts who is ready to take his place and give back to his community, state, nation and world.

Yesterday, I read a story in the newspaper of a young Scout who became separated from his group in the wilderness. He was forced to spend the night, alone, without food or shelter and in cold temperatures. He was scared but did not panic. Instead, he drew on the Scout Camp training of the year before and created a ground nest of pine boughs and dirt to stay warm and protected. The next day he was rescued.

I have said it before, "This is why you, the volunteers of Allohak Council, do what you do. You give of your time, your vacations, your money and resources, your talents to help boys and girls who are Scouts, Explorers, and Venture Crew to be better citizens and leaders." I challenge every Eagle Scout to return the favor so that when they lay their head down for the last time, they can be assured that the world has been a little better for their having lived in it.

Thank each and every one of you for all that you do. Keep doing the job well done. It is recognized and appreciated.

May God bless you and keep you safe.

Yours In Scouting,

John S. Kaull