

## Sign Up Night

Council Commissioner Meeting  
16 Sept 2008

Membership has always been an important issue in Scouting. Currently we're conducting our council-wide Fall Membership Roundup Program. An important element of that, is the, unit conducted, Scouting Sign-up Night. That's what we're going to look at for the next few minutes.

What I'd like you to do is, take a trip with me. We're going to follow a dad, and his son, as they experience an Ideal Pack Sign Up Night. I am the Dad taking my Charlie Buckets to become a Cub Scout. What I'm going to ask you to do, at various points in the story, is describe what you think I'm seeing and how I'm responding to it all, based upon your knowledge of Scout Sign-up Night program.

You will be asked to make educated guesses, and make suppositions and draw conclusions.

Let's Begin

My son came home from school the other day, with a flyer in his hand, and announced that he was going to be a Cub Scout. Handing the flyer to me, he said "and Dad, this is where you can take me to sign up."

So, here I am walking across a parking lot to attend a Cub Scout Sign-up night program.

**What am I thinking about?**  
**What are my concerns?**  
**What do I expect to happen at the meeting?**  
**What am I looking for . . . . for my son?**

**<<Answers>>**

*(As I walk across that parking lot, I have my "shields up", to maximum. I expect this is probably going to take a lot of my time. Time I don't have. And, not only that, they probably won't have enough help and will try to recruit me to be a leader, which will take even more of my time. The pressure is really going to be on.*

*However, I know what they are going to do and I'm ready for them.*

*But, then when you think about it, Scouting is known as a great organization for kids. Charlie would probably experience new things and gain new friends in a positive environment. And, I know that he wants it . . . . But my time.)*

Now we're at the door to the sign up room.

Try to see these things in your mind's eye.

**What Happens Here?**

**<<Answers>>**

*(Here I'm greeted by 3 or 4 adults, in uniform, who are dripping with real, honest to God enthusiasm. I can sense, clear to my bones, that there is absolutely no where else in the world they would rather be, right now, than right here, doing this.)*

After the welcome and handshakes, I'm handed a folder and enter the room.

Now, remember, in your mind's eye . . .

**Describe the room.**

**<<Answers>>**

*(Scouting pictures and posters are all over the walls. There are various tables, draped in Blue & Gold, covered with photographs of Pack events, advancement displays, crafts and recognition awards. The American Flag and the Cub Scout Pack Flag are standing proud behind the tables. On the left hand wall is a large Pack 261 Banner near groups of chairs. There are Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts in full uniform greeting people, helping the adults and answering questions. there is a table with cookies, pastries, Coffee and kool-aid. Everyone is smiling and being so helpful. This not just a room, it's an entire Scouting experience. I can just feel the room envelope me in Scouting. WOW!)*

**Did I expect this?**

**What am I thinking?**

**<<Answers>>**

*(Just look at this, plenty of leaders, with Scouts helping, all in uniform. And, the logistics. The amount of work, time and care it took to do all of this had to involve a lot of people. And that doesn't even speak to the quality of the work done. But, ya know, I'll bet those people in the hall did a lot of this.)*

*We walk around the room looking at the walls and table displays while Scouts, and adults, explain some of the trips and activities from the photographs. The photographs show boys having fun on many different events and activities, with parents and leaders ever present.*

*And then I notice Charlie. His eyes are bugging out. He's looking at the crafts, the pictures and the Pinewood Derby cars on one of the tables. He's talking to the Cub Scouts about the race and building the cars. The boys seem very friendly and Charlie is really excited.)*

## **Am I impressed with all of this, so far?**

*(Yea, I am. And, I'm pretty surprised about it, too.)*

One of the leaders directs us to a section of chairs, near the big banner, marked "Wolf Den". Parents, with their boys, are already sitting and writing. One of the adult leaders is talking to them and answering questions. We sit down.

So, this is it. This is where they are going to try and get me to sign up.

The leader walks over, and I'm ready, but she just asks me to open the folder.

## What's in it?

*Agenda for the Meeting*  
*Annual Pack Program Calendar*  
*Adult Leader and Parents Roster*  
*Pack "This is Who We Are" Flyer*  
*Pack Meeting Flyer with Dates, Times and Place*  
*Flyer from the Council Scout Shop*  
*Blank Adult Resource Sheet*  
*Cost Breakdown for Registration*  
*Youth Application*  
*Adult Application*

Then she asked if I would mind filling out the Resource Sheet, and then Charlie's Registration form, while we are waiting.

## **While I'm sitting there, filling out the resource sheet, what do you think is going through my mind?**

*(They really seem to have their act together. They appear to be well organized, courteous, friendly & helpful. There seems to be plenty of help from both the parents and the leaders. And that program they have planned for the year. WOW! And just look at Charlie, and the other kids sitting over there talking up a storm.)*

After completing the resource sheet I hand it to the leader, then begin Charlie's registration.

The Cubmaster comes to the front of the room and welcomes us to the Pack 261 Sign-up Night. He then introduces each leader and committee person. Finally, he calls up 2 Boy Scouts, who are Den Chiefs, and asks them to take the new boys to the other side of the room for a few games. They take the boys. This leaves the parents and the leaders alone to talk.

So, this is where I get the speech about not enough leaders. But wait a minute they seem to have plenty of help. They are well organized and the program seems well planned. Maybe I'm not going to get the "we need your help" speech.

### **Why does the Cubmaster want to get us alone and have the boys do games?**

*(For the Boys: Their attention span was already passed. They should have many short term activities rather than one long program.*

*For us, the adults, there is a dual purpose.*

*First, there is work to be done.*

*There is information the parents need to have. This is what the Pack is . . This is who the leaders are and what they do . . . This is what Scouting is and what it stands for . . . this is where and when we meet . . . this is the location of the Council Scout Shop and the Council Office . . .etc*

*Administrative tasks which need to be done. Youth registration forms, and fees, must be collected and checked for correctness*

*Then a Q & A session to answer questions and address concerns should happen.*

*All of which would have the boys, bored to tears.*

*The other purpose is to see the boys having fun with the games.)*

The Cubmaster proceeds to explain about Scouting and how the Pack works & that Cub Scouting is a family program. He talks about the activities that are planned for the Pack Meetings and the regular monthly outings. He explains advancement and recognition. Then he answers questions.

## **Now what is going through my mind?**

*(Charlie is having fun with the other kids. There seems to be plenty of help and everyone seems to get along so well. And, they're probably not going to ask me to be a leader. This will probably be good for Charlie.)*

The Cubmaster then looks right at me and says "I understand that you enjoy barbecuing for your family and friends. On October the 6th we're conducting a hike through Frick Park followed by a barbecue at the shelter. It would really be great if you could help us with that. We may not be very good with the barbecue, but we sure can help and support you, and, maybe learn a little bit along the way. We'll get all of the meat and chicken. Let us know what seasonings you would like, and then all you'll need to do is cook it."

Man!!!

I'm thinking, I do enjoy working on the barbecue. I wrote that on the resource sheet. These guys really are organized. There are plenty of adults, and Charlie is having a great time. I'll be on the hike with him anyway. It shouldn't take that much time and I will have help. Why not! I told him I'd be glad to do it.

The Cubmaster then asked a few other people, similar questions about areas of interest.

As he turned to leave, the Cubmaster stopped, and as kind of an afterthought, asked us if we would like to register with the Pack. It will cover each of us with insurance at all approved Pack functions. Not only that we could have a say in pack programing, activities and scheduling decisions.

Everyone kind of looked at each other for a minute smiling, and said why not.

Interesting story, do you think?

**Let's Reflect a Little.**

**What had the biggest impact upon me? Why?**

The most important thing you can do is establish the ambiance of the room, and everything else will support that.

**At any point did the leaders say:**

We are a good pack

We care about our boys

We are well organized

We have a great active program

We have plenty of enthusiastic leaders

We have good parent involvement  
Your son will have fun

**If they didn't say it, how was it communicated?**

**At what point did they say we don't have enough leaders and we need you to register?**

**Would it have been effective or productive to have asked me to register when I walked in the door?**

**When they did bring it up, was I receptive? Why?**

Think about how the process built from beginning to end. The sequence of events. In sequence. Just like baking a cake. Same ingredients, different sequence, no cake.

**Why was it at the end?**

Think about how he did it. It's similar to an old negotiating gambit. You've negotiated the price of the car and you have the papers in front of you and just before you sign you look up and say something like, "That does include a full tank of gas, doesn't it?"

The salesman has already decided how to spend the commission, and you drop this in his lap. He could say something like "Come on now, we've negotiated a very fair deal. You're not going to do that to it are you?" Most probably, however he'll just say "Of Course it Does."

**Recruiting is similar to counseling and persuading.**

**What is the primary mission of a counselor?**

Help a person make their own decisions

**What does a salesman use to persuade a person to buy their product?**

Information

**How was I persuaded to sign the registration form?**

They anticipated my concerns (Asked to Volunteer)

They addressed my needs (Son) and wants (Barbecuing)

They gave me information, in a sequence, that addressed my concerns, met my needs and satisfied my wants.

They helped me, sell me. Isn't that the objective

Questions - Comments - Observations