



21 June 2020

Chart[er]ing A Course

BLUF: Pack 53 has to answer two questions:

- 1. What will Dell Rapids Cubscouts Pack 53 do for fundraising during the 2020-2021 scout year in order to raise a net amount of between \$8000-\$12,000 in order to “fund all Scouting related expenses and activities.”**
- 2. How will Dell Rapids Cubscouts Pack 53 organize itself during the 2020-2021 scout year in order to best fulfill the scout promise to its membership.**

These two issues are obverse sides of the same coin: Revenue and Expense.

Overview

To get the full story on the Trail’s End Popcorn Fundraiser go here:

https://www.wanderlost.today/uploads/7/9/1/0/79101950/the_whitecheddar_paper_pack_53_202002_05.pdf

The Pack leadership has met on a few occasions since January to discuss these two issues. Here is a, not-brief-enough, summary of those meetings and the discussion points:

https://www.wanderlost.today/uploads/7/9/1/0/79101950/pack_53_fundraising_and_charter_change_discussion_memo_20200320x2.pdf

Going forward, understand that *Den Leaders were not unanimous* in consideration of the issues and alternatives but I believe a consensus was reached.

First Things First

As a Group we need to discuss what we are going to do for the 2021 Fundraiser. Here are two things to frame the discussion:

1. If we continue with Trail’s End we will have to sell \$35,575 of popcorn in September – *just to pay for membership (no money will be retained by Pack 53)*. An increase of 23% or just under \$7000 in sales from 2019.
2. We will need a volunteer to handle the Trail’s End Sales. It is too busy a time of year for Amber and I to handle leadership and fundraising at the same time.

The Pack Leadership Consensus is:

1. We DO NOT get a good enough return on investment for the Trail’s End Sales.

2. Popcorn has strong Brand Power: In other words, people expect to see scouts selling popcorn and are prepared to support it.
3. We need ONE Fundraiser drive per year that does not directly compete with other DR activities.

To that end - for your consideration:

I reached out to [Gaylen's Popcorn of Wentworth](#). They have a fundraiser system in place and are prepared to partner with us.

The wholesale cost is very similar to Trail's End, however we would control 70% of the proceeds if we sell at the same per ounce price. They carry all the same products with the exception of Microwave popcorn.

At that rate of return, our break even point would be \$13,722 of sales in 2020-2021.

If we partner with Gaylen's, Pack 53 will have to carry the upfront cost of popcorn, a minimum of \$4116. We will have to handle branding/marketing in house.

We could choose to continue and fund the scholarship in house.

What other ideas/options for fundraising are there?

Second Things Next

A Brief History of Membership/Chartering Cost Increases

Pack 53 Membership and Charter Dues by Year:

| | | | |
|---------|----------|---------------------|------|
| 2018-19 | ~\$2600 | \$42.62 per person | |
| 2019-20 | ~\$7240* | \$84.19 per person | +98% |
| 2020-21 | ~\$9605 | \$110.40 per person | +31% |

[*Note: This is what they wanted, we paid about \$1200 in September for membership and I chartered only the Webelos II in February at a cost of \$840 for 8 scouts]

These numbers represent the money that goes to National BSA and do not include the cut that Council takes from Fundraising with Trail's End. They are just for membership and provide nothing tangible required to execute the scout promise such as books, uniforms, camps etc.

A very brief account of the changes

Late 2019 BSA announces planned increase to Chartering fees.

In January 2020 BSA releases [this memo](#) outlining the increase. An excerpt:

“Does this increase cover financial challenges the organization is facing?”

The increase was prompted because the **cost of liability insurance** the BSA must carry to cover all Scouting activities has increased dramatically over the past several months, and the organization is no longer able to offset the cost of insurance. The fee enables the BSA to continue essential services.”

In June 2020 BSA releases [this announcement](#) couched as a 10% fee increase.

An excerpt:

“Q: Why are the fees increasing?”

A: The national annual membership fee is increasing by \$6, about 50 cents per month, because the costs associated with Scouting, including the cost of liability insurance, continue to increase and the organization is not able to subsidize the increased costs as it had in the past.”

Again, the true increase is much higher due to the way in which BSA assesses the various fees, which we have no control over during the online chartering process.

A few notes here:

Once I completed the online chartering process for the Webelo’s the pack was assessed a \$60 Insurance Fee on top of everything else. So despite what the releases say the Insurance cost is being handled separate. Incidentally, the per person insurance assessment is \$4 – the same cost I was quoted by an independent underwriter.

Following the most recent announcement I sent a rather strongly worded letter to Council, part of it here:

“My concerns are still the same; to sum up: *“Where does the money go?”*”

This concern has only deepened with the published new fees. What I see is more opacity and subterfuge. The increase is couched as 10% (\$60-\$66) but just like before the additional fees make it much more. Several concerns there:

1. Increase the Adult volunteer fee again. BSA has to understand that many , if not all, units pay their leaders way - as it should be. This is, in effect, another way to take money from the packs.
2. The \$75 unit charter fee. The press release RE fee increases of earlier this year expressly states admin and insurance fees have gone up and those are the primary reasons for increasing membership dues. This unit charter fee is part of the same lie, just like hiding a pack insurance fee at the end of the online chartering process.
3. Probably most important. New member fee: This attacks recruitment. If my math is right the total fee schedule for a new Lion or Tiger is going to hit \$158.00 when you add everything together.

It is almost like Pack 53 is being charged a franchise fee just to volunteer.

My napkin math shows the potential fee schedule for Pack 53 in 2020-21 to be \$9605 or more. That includes nothing we need to actually get the job done.”

I concluded that email with a request to see an annual report and budget so I could ascertain for myself where the money was actually being spent. *Cricket's....*

Additional Costs

As you all know the start-up cost is not cheap with Scouts:

| | | |
|------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Uniform: | \$95 all in | \$19/per year |
| Advancement*: | Loops, Rank, Neckerchief | \$36 |
| Book*: | | \$17 |
| 1 Council Event: | | \$40 |
| Total: | | \$112/per year/per scout |

[*Covered with Membership and Fundraising]

Pack expenditures [covered by fundraising]:

| | | |
|----------------|----------|--------|
| Pack Meetings: | \$35x7 = | \$245 |
| Halloween: | | \$250 |
| Derby: | | \$250 |
| Blue & Gold: | | \$1000 |
| Admin: | | \$400 |
| Subtotal: | | \$2145 |

This is a short version of the budget but shows, in brief, the additional expenditures we would need to cover, individually or together. I would like to see an Fundraising scheme that covers everything but the new member fees and uniform.

Again before moving on, none of this includes the Gross Trail's End revenue to Council, estimated at \$14,230 for 2020-2021.

What choice do we Have?

The leaders and I discussed four options which ranged from "as-is" to "go rogue."

We decided the best alternative for your consideration is:

Consider leaving BSA and joining the [Baden Powel Service Association](#). The BPSA, Baden-Powel Service Association is a traditional scouting organization named after the Scout founder, which focuses on outdoor craft and is a member of the World Federation of Independent Scouts. It is very similarly organized to BSA but with fewer US members and far less oversight. They have sufficient online training resources for leaders and for things like Youth Protection but is much more of a bottom up organization.

I reached out to the Regional Leader, Jeff Kopp. [His letter is here](#) with great info that will answer most questions about the organization. I have since joined as a Rover to explore the organization.

The cost to charter the entire Pack with BPSA would be \$2105. We would have to insure ourselves at between \$350-500/year.

Three cool things about BPSA:

1. Completely focused on community service and outdoorsmanship using the original Scout material designed by Baden-Powel. [Just some examples.](#)
2. No age limits: Parents can join as Rovers and go through the process with their kids.
3. No activity restrictions: If we want to do marksmanship, archery or canoeing we can.

If we join BPSA we will no longer be associated with BSA or Sioux Council, unless they choose to partner with us for events.

Damn the Torpedoes or Second Star to the Right?

To Recap:

What are we going to do for fundraising?

What are we going to do for Organization?

Those are two very big questions.

We would like 7 volunteers (at least one from each Den) to form a committee and explore what we've put forward and provide two recommendations for the Pack to vote on, no later than August 2020.

Thanks for your time and consideration,

Jason and Amber