# **CUBMASTER THOUGHTS**



**YOUR FIRST PACK MEETING**

**OF THE FALL**

*Mark Diienno, Cubmaster Emeritus, Garden State Council, and a wise old OWL
who has earned the Unit Leader Award of Merit*

**The first Pack Meeting.** How can this be? It seemed like yesterday we had our June Pack Meeting, and September seemed like an eternity away. Well, that eternity has passed, the days are getting alarmingly shorter, and the Program year is upon us.

The first Pack Meeting is crucial in setting the tone for your unit. It will be the information exchange meeting between your pack leaders, and the families who make up your unit.

This is the golden opportunity to let families know what is expected of them. Dues, uniforming (and hopefully assistance in uniforming to those families who may be in need in your unit), medical forms, and recruiting of scout parents to assist in various activities, are among the various topics that should be discussed with the Pack as whole.

Here you have a captive audience. Here you have a chance to motivate the families to step up as it were, and assist in making your unit the best it can be.

So, how do you accomplish this task and keep your Cub Scouts engaged in a quality scouting experience?

**As with all Pack Meetings, the seven parts of Pack Meeting should be utilized.**

There should be pre planning to insure that the meeting will run smoothly and stick to time constraints. (Yes, especially the first one should be between 60 – 75 minutes(an hour to an hour and a quarter, even though the author is hard pressed to get any of them done in an hour and a half.)

**There should be an opening.**Now this is the first meeting. It should be spectacular. I do something in my unit that I find very moving and motivating especially to the boys.

We line them up outside.

While they are lining up, I ask the families, “watch any sports lately?? Have you found yourself cheering loudly for men to succeed? Men you don’t even know? Well outside are a bunch of young men, about to embark on a challenging year learning skill to allow them to be better.

If we can cheer for men we don’t know on our television, how much more can we cheer for the boys who will ultimately be our futures. Cheer like they just won the World Series, or The Super Bowl…or better yet cheer them because they are **Our Sons**. Clap until the last boy comes enters. The look on the boys’ faces will tell you how wise a Cubmaster you are.

Once the Pledge of Allegiance, Law and Oath are said, (and after a quick great song by that same Cubmaster ), You should not overlook this golden opportunity to recognize the boys for what they accomplished over the summer.

Some went to Day Camp, Some went to Cub or Webelos Weekend or Cub or Webelos Resident Camp.

Perhaps you have dens who have earned the summertime Den Award, or if you fortunate you have 75% of your dens earning this award and there your unit is recognized as well.

All of these awards must be obtained prior to the meeting of course.

At this point we split the Pack Meeting.

The boys on one side of the meeting place, and the parents on the other.

The boys will be experience any number of scout activities, such as:

* A wildlife reserve presenting the importance of wildlife conservation, (hopefully with animals on display).
* The local Police or Fire Department coming and explaining their various duties in keeping our communities safe.
* A local troop could presenting various scouting experiences such as knot tying, first aid, camp set up or all of the above.

The sky is the limit.

**While the boys are engaged it is the perfect time to discuss with the parents, the program year and what is expected of them.**

Different Chartered Orgs have different obligations that Cub Scout Packs must meet just to be able to meet there.

For instance, our unit is chartered to a Catholic Parish. Therefore, our Pack must have all parents and leaders fingerprinted and background checked if they wish to spend an overnight with the unit.

This is the perfect time to inform the scout parent of these obligations.

Discussing the program year and potential needs in parent involvement are also important topics.

As Cubmaster, it is crucial to motivate your unit families to contribute their time, talent, and treasures, to insure a successful year.

Perhaps have all leaders and committee introduce themselves to show the diversity within your unit and insure others to follow the footsteps of volunteerism. Encourage dialogue by asking questions and inviting comments and opinions.

Separating the unit in this manner is a very effective tool in getting your program year off the ground.

A well-informed unit is in a better position to succeed, and a quality program is attainable.

Timing is essential, do be careful not to run to far over the time allotted. Even parents lose their focus if this runs on and on.

**Bring everyone back together for the closing.**

This will be your first Cubmaster MInute of the year. Use it to motivate the boys to get the most out of the program and empower the Scout parents to contribute to this unique opportunity to help shape tomorrow’s leaders.

If the first meeting is done well, the entire unit will leave with a feeling of hope. They will be excited at the possibilities that lie before them.

And your leadership will enjoy the assistance and support of the Scout Families that together will make your Cub Pack experience the best it can be.

Retire the colors and leave knowing your first quality pack meeting was realized, and get ready for a great scouting program year.