

JUNE – PLANNING THE CUB SCOUTING YEAR

Music Full then Fade

PAT: Hello, everyone. We're glad you could join us. For this episode, well, I'll admit it's not the most glamorous of topics.

AARON: But it is important. In fact, I'll give it to you straight. It will make your Cub Scout leader experience a whole lot easier.

PAT: That's right. This CubCast for June 2015 is all about planning the Cub Scouting year.

AARON: And thanks to the Think & Grin section of *Boys' Life* magazine, I have the perfect joke. What is a calendar's favorite food?

PAT: A calendar's favorite food? I don't know.

AARON: A calendar's favorite food is... dates.

PAT: That's a good one. I'll go ahead and introduce our guest.

Music Fades

PAT: Our guest for this month is eight-year Cubmaster Linda Vaughn. She currently serves as a member of the National Camping Task Force with focus on Cub Scout National Camping School and for the past two years has been a part of the Cub Scout Adventure Team tasked with rewriting the Cub Scout handbooks and the den leader guides. You may recall that Linda shared some fantastic ideas for fun activities with your dens and packs on the November 2014 episode. Welcome back to CubCast, Linda.

LINDA: Thank you for having me.

PAT: So Linda, what exactly is program planning?

LINDA: It's more than just sitting around a table and asking, "What do you want to do next month?" with the pack. It's sitting down with your Cub Scout committee and putting into place the structure that's needed to deliver a quality program to your Cub Scouts. You need to take a look at what they're interested in. You need to look at what events they want to participate. Things from day camps and overnight camping. Where are you going to put your blue and gold banquet? Do they want them? Where are your derbies going to be placed this year? What district and council events are you going to want to participate in? Are you going to need to throw in some fundraising opportunities for your boys? Will they want to participate in Cub Scout popcorn? Is that something that your pack wants to participate in? What service projects are you going to have the boys do throughout the year? This requires planning and careful preparation.

Also, what's the purpose of the activity? Why are we doing it? Is it fun? Are family members going to want to come and participate with this? What are they interested in doing? And, are we really using the talents that we have available in our pack to the best that we could? Are we including people that have talent that might otherwise not participate? So it's taking all of those different ideas and sitting down and creating a calendar plan for what you're going to deliver over the next year.

AARON: Now, Linda, when it comes to planning for the next year, where does program planning fit into the priorities? What makes it one of the most important parts of planning your whole year?

LINDA: People want to be part of a successful program. Also, it gives you a well-rounded program. Sometimes it allows the boys to showcase some talent. Some of them have artistic talents or musical talents. Some love to be camping and hiking. Some of them are scientists and want to do some experiments. And some of them simply love just to be outdoors. And so if you make a plan, you can incorporate all of those different ideas and different talents that the boys have and their interests into the program. It ensures that the boys are accomplishing things. When you have this careful planning in place, the boys can earn awards. You can fit them into the program. And it requires the planning. It doesn't happen if you're not looking ahead and fitting things in. We often feel alone, that we don't have any help. But I think with careful planning, we can use the talents and the resources of parents and grandparents, but most people need to be able to put it on their busy schedules, and most of them are very willing to do that. We can't ask the night before. And so if we're looking ahead with these plans, we can take advantage of all the things that are out there and make a program worth showing up. So when we're planned, and we've presented that plan to other people, they come. They want to come, and then, everyone is successful, and all of our time is well spent doing that.

PAT: So Linda, it sounds like to have a variety of activities that boys enjoy, this is something that's better done with many people involved rather than just one. But who should be responsible for this process?

LINDA: You need somebody to start the ball rolling, and usually, it's your pack or your Cub committee chairman that gathers the folks together along with the Cubmaster. It's a joint role there because the Cubmaster is going to be taking the lead in so many of the pack meetings throughout the year. But the Cub committee chairman is someone that can coordinate a lot of the resources, can gather in talent surveys, talk to your den leaders and

get interests and so between the two, they ought to be able to start the ball rolling. But if those are the only two involved in the planning processes, then you've missed the opportunity for a wide variety of interaction. You've got to have your Cub committee members participate and contribute so that they have ownership in the plan that's coming about over the year.

AARON: All right, Linda, let's say we've got a group of parents, leaders; they're all excited. They're enthusiastic about the program. They're ready to go. Talk us through the actual steps in the program planning process. You've got the people. They've got ideas. What do you do? What are the steps you do to form the program?

LINDA: The first step is to gather together the calendars. You need to have a school calendar and church calendars. You need to have family calendars available, soccer schedules and some of those other things that the boys are participating in. You need to know when things are happening. Then you gather together for an annual pack programming calendar where you take a look at what's out there. When are they having the popcorn sales? When are they having district council events? And you need to set those down in the calendar so that you're not over-planning your pack. You can't be attending six different events in one month. So that's the first thing. Do the annual pack program planning as a group with all of this and don't come without that information because then it becomes a long process. But as people gather with that information, then you share it, and you create a skeleton structure. The next step takes the parents and the bigger group out of it, and you have most of your Cub committee. They ought to be meeting monthly in a pack leader's planning meeting where the Cubmaster takes a look at the previous pack meeting and how did that event work. They take a look at the next one that's coming up, the preparation that needs to take place,

the details, and then they take a look ahead at the next few events that are coming up with the pack. Take a look at the leadership that needs to be put into place and go from there. So that's where you start going into more of a detailed planning of what's going to be happening in your pack.

PAT: Where do I find information about how to do this?

LINDA: Probably the most unused resource that we have is called the *Cub Scout Leader Book*, and it has all kinds of wonderful, practical, information. Under the section called "administration," there's information about program planning. It includes some of these steps that talks about the preparation you should make for your annual planning conference. It talks about agendas for your monthly planning meeting, and it goes on to talk about how you can conduct a great pack meeting. So it gives you some good ideas of what elements you could include that fit your pack.

AARON: So you mentioned the *Cub Scout Leader Book*. Are there any other sources for help where people can go if they need a little guidance?

LINDA: There's nothing like personal contact. A roundtable is a fabulous place to go because you have seasoned leaders there that have experienced this planning process and can give some guidance as to activities that went really well - what they did to prepare for it; how they managed large crowds; and how they funded it. Those sorts of things. So your roundtable is a great resource.

On www.my.ScoutingTool there are training modules specific to pack planning. I would encourage not only you to go there, but take your Cub committee there, so that they can see what information and the processes that they ought to be participating in.

My new favorite resource is going to the program updates page that BSA has. They just put up pack meeting plans for the next two years, and so it

gives you an opportunity to look ahead to see some of the themes that might be available; some of the activities that could be put into a Cub Scout pack meeting. But not only that, it gives some guidance. There's information about the new Cub Scout adventures, and some of those that need pack meeting support for the boy to do displays or games or activities, and it would be very valuable for a pack committee to have access to the themes that are coming up. They need to know these adventures and which ones over the next year need to be coordinated so that the pack meeting and the den leaders can work together to create the adventure that's outlined.

AARON: Linda, you mentioned earlier the annual program conference. What time frame are we talking about for that? What time of the year do you recommend that folks do that annual program conference?

LINDA: If you haven't done it through your pack yet, right now is the time to start thinking about it. Most packs like to get together midsummer, July, August, as the school year is beginning. With this new Cub Scout adventure program, right now is a good time to get together, take a look at the adventures that have been laid out for your pack, and how that can support what the den leaders are going to be providing for them. So get that planning taken care of.

PAT: Linda, anything else about planning the Cub Scout year that you think ought to be shared with our listeners?

LINDA: Put it on paper. Write it down. Put it online. Put the calendar out to your pack people. If you plan all these wonderful events, and then you never let them know what's going to happen, nobody's going to know about it. And waiting a week before the family camp out or the day camps to let the Cub Scouts and their families know that the event's taking place is just too

late. They need to have the annual plan as soon as possible so that they could put it on their calendars.

Once we have that plan in place, I would do everything as a Cub committee chairman, as a den leader, as a Cubmaster to make sure that that event takes place. The Cubs look forward to it. They want something to happen, and they look forward to coming to the events. If a pattern is set of not providing the promise of what we were going to do, it can be very devastating and destructive to a pack program. So once you've set the plan in place, then make sure that it actually happens. That's the key to success.

PAT: This all kind of reminds me of that Ben Franklin quote that goes: "By failing to prepare, you're preparing to fail." Thanks for being on CubCast, Linda, and making it all sound so easy.

LINDA: Thank you.

AARON: Let's plan to listen to a sneak preview of our big brother ScoutCast right now; then, we'll be right back with Reminders and Tips.

(June ScoutCast snippet: How to Promote Your Unit in Your Community)

AARON: Mmm, that sounds like a good one for CubCast listeners, too. But now, here we go with this month's Reminders and Tips. Take it away, Pat.

PAT: Now is a time that you and your pack should be camping. Day camp, resident camp, overnights, it doesn't matter. Just go camping. After all, it's what Boy Scouts of America is all about, right? Tune into the

April 2013 CubCast for all the details of a successful camping trip.

AARON: This is also the time to get your Fall Roundup plan in order. You'll need to get your location, your date, and your time established. The unit membership chair works to decide the date, and the committee chair or Cubmaster will follow up with the district executive and the unit commissioner to ensure that they have the information to help promote the Fall Roundup throughout your community. Check out the May 2015 CubCast for the new Build an Adventure resources that will be available for recruiting.

PAT: You should also finalize your plans for earning the Summertime Pack Award. All of your activity leaders should have their June, July and August activities ready to go.

AARON: Plus, you should be recruiting your popcorn kernel or other coordinators of council product sales right about now. Your committee chair is the person responsible for appointing someone. But if you know someone who could make a good candidate, mention it to your den leader who then could pass the suggestion along to the committee chairman.

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AARON: That brings us to the close of CubCast. Thanks to our guest, Linda Vaughn, for being on the show.

PAT: And thanks to you for listening. Let us know what you think of the new Cub Scout program by sending an e-mail to CubCast@scouting.org.

AARON: Or Tweet to @CubCast. Join us next month for a rousing discussion on the new STEM requirements for your Cub Scouts interested in the Nova Awards.

PAT: I'm putting it on my calendar. Until then, I'm Pat Wellen.

AARON: And I'm Aaron Derr. Now, go put those important "dates" in your Cub Scout calendar.

Music Full to Finish