

## Raking in the Roubles - A poor person's guide to Fund Raising

The best way to get someone to cook at Cub Camp, run the banquet, or even be group treasurer, is to add the topic Fund Raising to the foot of the Group Committee agenda. It's guaranteed that everyone will join an unseemly rush to volunteer for something else.

It may even be that the reason Scout leaders turn out week after uncompromising week to tie knots with a group of ungrateful 13 year olds, or Beaver leaders spend endless hours forming River Banks in the church hall, is purely to avoid being stuck with the job of wresting roubles from a resentful neighbourhood. Perhaps we can come up with some ways to make the neighbourhood less resentful when we call for coins.

The 175th Toronto has had both good times and bad when it comes to raising money. But we've learned some things...

### Responsibility

"Aha!" exclaims the ecstatic leader, his mind already wandering back to the problem of how to persuade the Explorers to camp somewhere more woodsy than the local McDonald's car park. "It says here that fund raising is a group committee responsibility. That lets me out!"

"Would," one mutters, "that it were that simple!" In fact, the leader has the first selling job to do. He or she must persuade the group committee of the worthiness of his or her cause. The task involves considerable consideration: the planned program will cost so much money; it seems reasonable to expect most of the boys to contribute this much; one or two boys will need additional support; and the shortfall, which requires group committee support, is such and such.

It's possible to do this planning and costing in the summer, gain committee agreement on all costs, and make plans to raise the money in time.

Those who work with an ideal group that operates in an ideal manner may skip to the next section: Making Things Happen.

The rest of us operate in groups where, in December, the Rover Skipper suddenly finds that the crew's car is due for its 350,000 mile checkup; in January, the group committee realizes it is short of cash because it registered the leaders in September; and, in February, the banquet loses money because the first set of chicken turned a nasty greenish-yellow colour before it reached the tables.

Whether you budget for your emergency in advance, or simply let it creep up on you, it is often your job, Scouter, to sell the group committee on the need to raise money.

Usually the committee is a collection of parents who have been bullied into turning out once a month because, in some vague sort of way, it is supposed to help their sons in Scouting.

**Okay, we need money. So, Mr. or Ms. Fundraiser-what now?**

## Making Things Happen

**Need:** The number one priority all the way through your fund-raising enterprise, is to keep the NEED for the money in the forefront of everyone's mind.

"We're raising money for the Scouts" invokes sympathetic smiles and images of scrawny, knobby-kneed short pieces of humanity straggling along behind a tall fat one, but it doesn't necessarily raise much help or money.

Try replacing "money for the Scouts" with "\$300. to help send 10 boys to the Canadian Jamboree in Alberta ", or "\$200. so that the Beavers can spend a day visiting their big brothers at Cub Camp".

People need a cause with which they can identify.

**Workers:** One of the things that makes saints and martyrs so noticeable is that, generally speaking, there are so few of them around. They tend to stand out from the common herd. In fact, martyrdom appeals to a depressingly low number of people these days.

It pays to recruit a lot of people on the basis that everyone will do only a little bit of work. We've had great success when we've succeeded with mass recruiting. We've also experienced, sadly and all too often, a tinge of bitterness from people who've found they were among a select few working on the project.

I come back to the first priority. You have to sell the need, particularly to those whom you want to persuade to help you raise money. Very often when you find that "only the same old group of people shows up to help", it's because that same old group has forgotten the basic principles involved in sharing the load.

Of course, someone whose 5 year old has just joined the Beaver colony can hardly be expected to rally to the cry, "The Rover cabin needs a new roof!" As our family dog, Luke, would say, you have to scratch where people itch.

**Decision-Making:** It's good if the people who will work on the fund-raising projects can be persuaded to help make the decisions about how the money will be raised. At the same time, the desire for involvement must be tempered by the requirement for a strong lead. Endless meetings to decide what to do and how to do it are very destructive.

Brainstorming is a good method for approaching group decisions. Have people suggest ideas as the thoughts come and allow no comments, adverse or otherwise, until all ideas

have been recorded on a display board. It may be that a bad idea will give rise to a good one. Whatever happens, make sure that at some reasonably early stage, a decision is reached.

If the decision is to have several different fund-raising activities, coordinate them, but let people work in small groups, each with one person in charge.

A popular way to lose helpers is to have everyone sit in on everyone else's deliberations. Once you've delegated work, monitor it, by all means, but leave it delegated!

Advertising: Despite my promise, I forgot to pick up my daughter, Christine, from her piano lesson today. Jeremy was showing me the musical instrument he had made from saucepan lids; Marjorie was talking about a prospective "Bathroom Tile Person"; and the dog had just thrown up the remains of an extortionate dentist's bill, which he had eaten because the cat was out of reach.

If I can justify forgetting my daughter, are you surprised I forgot to phone Mrs. Bridge to tell her how many Boy Scout calendars I want? Well, are you? The school is having a balloon race; Christine's hockey team is holding a banquet; Jeremy has an application for music camp; the bathroom wall just fell down... and NOW I have to find the sponsor sheets for Trees for Canada? Right now, amidst the encircling dust? I KNOW it was marked on the calendar!

Get the point? When you advertise, do it strongly. Sell the need, sell the product and, for goodness sake, REMIND people. Rather than blaming people for not supporting us, we should blame ourselves for not gathering their support. Napoleon wouldn't have looked half so silly at Waterloo if Wellington hadn't been able to persuade his troops to show up that day.

Avoid your own disasters by follow-up advertising. One poorly mimeographed piece of paper which landed in the washing machine along with Charlie's Cub shorts won't do it. Follow up by phone. Start a telephone blitz.

Target Group: Finally, who will be the targets? Who will do the work and who will pay the cash? It's best if your different plans can hit different groups. Sometimes, depending on local policy, it is desirable to organize the boys to do the work. Sometimes you have to organize the parents.

I've always been saddened by professed self-made people who believe that Scouts who can't afford to go on outings should be able to earn their own money. I've always reckoned that, if the boy is that smart, he doesn't need to be a Scout.

If the boys are to earn the money, give them the support and control they need. Come to think of it, the same goes for adults as well.

Often, the people who provide the money are the boys' own relatives. If you make a point of going into the wider community, you're more likely to give value for money, to be on firmer moral grounds, and to gain support the next time around.

## Some Ideas

There's a lot of available information about the tried and true methods of raising money: Trees for Canada; calendar sales; and Apple Day. If these ideas aren't enough, try the brainstorming technique. Certainly, the more people you involve, the more ideas and enthusiasm you'll generate.

These ideas worked for us, and may also work for you.

### **The Money Tree/Road Race**

Quite simply, donors stack up nickels, dimes, or whatever, to make the highest possible pile. Another variation is to have them make a long chain of money along the ground.

You can spice up this one by turning it into a competition at a banquet or cookout. Create two opposing factions (e.g. Scout Parents versus The Rest) and challenge each to build the longer line of cash. To increase the value for money, set it up so that each team has a captain. Every time a team reaches a given landmark, the captain of that team gets to dump something on the captain of the opposition.

If the sight of the Group Committee Chairman gleefully tipping left-over vegies over the Lady Cubmaster's head won't bring in the megabucks needed for the Beaver Spring Fling, nothing will! Of course, agreement by the two main participants, who then can wear appropriate apparel for the exercise, is a helpful approach.

### **The Great Dinner Auction**

The idea for this one grew from the belief that, since much of the money raised within the group came from the families themselves, they might as well enjoy the process. Furthermore, someone pointed out, most people go out for dinner occasionally and would be just as happy to meet other people connected with the group over an often times better and cheaper meal than the local food dispensaries would ladle out.

Thus, different families offered their choice of activity or meal to be sold by auction: a hamburger cookout for the whole family; a gourmet meal by candlelight for two other couples, with all the courses and accompanying wines spelled out in tantalizing detail; a Mediterranean Evening, with swimming in the local pool and Italian food at home; Eggs Benedict served in one's own home at 7 a.m. on the Saturday morning of one's choice!

My being of a generous nature and my wife being a cook of no mean repute, we offered an all-expenses paid (there were none) afternoon of cross-country skiing on the local golf course, followed by a hot pot of stew at our house.

Those who didn't want to offer meals diversified, and so our auction items also included a lunch-time Hallowe'en party, and archery lessons given by an olympic athlete.

## **The Great Everything Else Auction**

We began to talk about a large garage sale and were carried away, to a very successful conclusion. We raised over \$1000.

Auctions can be quite successful if they are well-advertised and offer good sales items. I've seen them succeed when people contributed new or nearly new items (It's surprising the number of goods in excellent condition that people are aching to unload) and, in one instance, when a group of local merchants supported the local Scouts by donating both goods and advertising to the auction.

The principle of the thing is that members of the general public, as well as of the group, can get good value for their money because they acquire an item, literally, for what they are willing to pay. Even children become involved if you put some inexpensive items on the list. Some of the hardest bidding I ever saw was made over two chocolate donuts.

## **The Plant Sale**

We made arrangements with a local dealer to supply us small flowers and garden plants which we would sell in the spring. We gave people in the neighbourhood order forms and, on the appropriate day, had them pick up their plants in the schoolyard.

Of course, this took some organizing, but it raised several hundred dollars and should be a good event every year. The plants were of a high quality and, when they saw them, most people (including ourselves) wished they'd ordered more. It's not so difficult to give money to Scouting if you get something you need in return.

Well, I never said it would be easy. We've had to be creative and, at the same time, to keep within municipal, school board and Scouting rules. We've sometimes put in a lot of work for a little return. But, generally speaking, when there's a Kopeck to be collected, someone will find a way, at the 175th.