Blue and Gold Banquet

Every February, Pack 1776 celebrates the anniversary of the Boy Scouts, and the bridging of our Webelos II. We invite the Pack and all family members to a sit-down dinner in the Coyote Creek MPR. We witness a formal graduation ceremony of our Webelos II, watch a video of the past pack activities, and hire a professional entertainer for the evening.

# Getting started

The Blue and Gold event is traditionally planned by the Webelos II parents. A successful banquet needs lots of planning; try to start at least two months in advance.

# Kick-Off Meeting

One person can do it all, but we don’t recommend it. There’s too much to juggle and you will be overwhelmed on the day of the event.

Start with a “kick-off” meeting and invite all the Webelos II parents. Divide up the tasks so each parent can work independently and check back with the leader, such as:

1. Be the chair of the Blue and Gold Committee and handle all the communications within the Pack and with the Troops
2. Handle the room layout and decorations
3. Make the videos
4. Order the food, drinks and cake
5. Hire the entertainer and book the high school volunteers
6. Manage the ceremony: Order of the Arrow, Friends of Scouting, the rehearsal, etc.

**Here’s a sample schedule**

* 4:30 Decorate the MPR
* 5:45 Welcome! Door Opens
* 6:00 Opening Flag Ceremony (Webelos II)
* 6:05 Greetings & Commence Dinner
* 6:20 Friends of Scouting
* 6:30 Recognition
* 6:40 Arrow of Light Bridging Ceremony (play your videos here)
* 7:00 Closing Flag Ceremony (Webelos I)
* 7:05 Entertainment by Astro Wizard
* 8:30 Clean Up

**Budget**

Check with the Pack Treasurer on budget. We traditionally spend around $3,500, most of which goes for food.

**Picking the Date**

We typically pick a Friday night in February, because it’s the end of the week and kids can stay up late. Weekends require an additional $300 fee to reserve the MPR. If choosing a Saturday, keep in mind that the District also has an annual awards dinner around the third Saturday in February, which means many of the Troops may have a conflict.

Confirm the MPR reservation with the Pack Committee chair. We typically reserve the MPR 6 months ahead but may get bumped due to school events. In past years, the school hosted a CCLF movie on the third Friday of every month, so try to avoid that day.

**Order of the Arrow**

You can ask the Order of the Arrow to come, dressed in their Indian costumes, and help lead the Arrow of Light and Bridging ceremony. However, there’s only one set of costumes in our District so if another Pack books them for the same day and time, we’re out of luck. BOOK EARLY! Check the District newsletter for the latest contacts; they change from year to year.

Order of the Arrow may ask for a tip to help support their program. Plan ahead and ask the Pack treasurer to provide you a check to give them at the end of B&G. We donated $50 last time.

After seeing the Order of Arrow performance, I recommend cutting out the bridging ceremony and asking the Cub Master to lead it. Otherwise, doing both the Arrow of Light and Bridging can get a bit long.

**Decorations**

Before you start, check the shed first. There are at least three boxes of Blue and Gold “stuff” such as blue and yellow lanterns for table decorations, a wooden bridge for the bridging, a fake camp fire, and various paper goods.

*The District does not allow balloons in the MPR.*

A fast and affordable way to decorate the MPR is to lay down blue and yellow plastic tablecloths (buy the rolls). Have a plate for every seating and place a blue or yellow napkin on them. Add the blue and yellow lanterns from the shed and some water bottles (the ones with blue labels from Costco). Now the room has color! To add more visual interest, you can clip messages to the lanterns to give the centerpieces some height.

**Videos**

Here’s a sample of what we did using the software Animoto. https://animoto.com/

<http://photos.pack1776.com/20142015-Scouting-Year/20150220-Blue-and-Gold-Videos/i-r5RxP2B/A>

<http://photos.pack1776.com/20142015-Scouting-Year/20150220-Blue-and-Gold-Videos/i-dbWqQ4N/A>

It’s helpful to ask the Pack Photographer to take some pictures of the boys dressed in their Class A best so each boy can be featured in the videos.

**Food, Drinks and Cake**

**Cake:** The Bollinger Safeway can custom-design your cake if the design is simple. Find images on the website that you like and show it to the decorator. You have to pick up the cake and bring it to the MPR. One full sheet cut small is enough to feed 175 guests; not everyone wants one and scouts eat very little.

**Drinks:** Costco is the cheapest way to go. Buy a few cases of apple cider or apple juice in clear bottles. It’s golden and matches the event color. Most parents don’t mind apple juice versus other sugary drinks. Remember to buy ice to chill the drinks. There are two ice chests in the shed.

**Food:** Try a few places. Ideally find restaurants that will deliver. It’s OK to deliver the food early versus stressing over the Friday traffic delays; there’s a professional warming oven in the MPR kitchen. Remember, scouts eat very little! When ordering, count two to three scouts per one adult serving size.

**Entertainers**

Kids love entertainment. It makes the B&G event even more unforgettable, like icing on the cake! It also helps you get a great turnout (younger scouts are more likely to attend). Ask around for ideas. We used Astro Wizard in 2014 and loved him.

**High School Volunteers**

You can ask Dougherty Valley High School students to help. In the past, we asked for 10 students to help with setup, food service, and cleanup. Out of courtesy, we always feed them first. Contact Jessica Tsuji at JTsuji1@DVHigh.net and provide her a description of what you need, when the kids need to arrive, and when they can leave.

**Contact the Troops**

When the scout chooses a Troop, he needs to inform them of our Blue and Gold date and time. It’s good practice to have our B&G Committee formally invite the troop representatives again and provide them all the details of time, location and agenda. Also invite the Troops to dinner!

**Friends of Scouting**

Friends of Scouting from the District may wish to make a presentation. Plan accordingly. It’s often best to make this the first presentation on the agenda while people are still getting food. There’s an envelope for Friends of Scouting. You can also ask the high school volunteers to sticker and distribute the envelopes.

**Prepping the Boys**

Before the B&G, gather your boys and plan out the flag ceremony. In the past, the Webelos II do the opening and the Webelos I do the closing flag ceremony.

Do a uniform inspection *with parents standing next to the scouts***.** That way if uniforms require fixing, it will be made! Remind the parents to iron the uniforms! Shirts tucked in with belts on the outside, shoes with socks. All patches should be on correctly.

Also, we made the Webelos II write a thank you speech and present it at the ceremony. You can have them write it by filling out this statement: “thank you for…..so we can…..”

**Ceremony on the Day of the Event**

Make sure the microphones work! It’s impossible to hear otherwise. Ask the school office in advance if you do not know how to operate the MPR equipment.

It’s helpful to have the boys eat first, or even before the door opens. That way when everyone else is eating, they’re ready for the ceremony.

When serving the food, tell the high school students give a small amount to the younger scouts and invite them to come back for seconds. Otherwise, a lot of food get wasted. It’s a good practice to tell everyone to reuse their plates.

Tell the Troops in advance the order they’ll be receiving their scouts. Only the Den leaders and Troops receiving their scouts should be by the bridge. Otherwise, it’s too congested and no one can see anything.

If you have a lot of scouts bridging, only shake hands when the Troops receive the boys. Tie the new neckerchief off stage so the ceremony moves quickly. Once all the boys bridge over, they can all gather on the stage again for a round of applause and pictures, wearing their new Troop neckerchiefs.

Start with the Troop that has the largest group of scouts bridging to them. That way they have more time to put the neckerchief on them.

Don’t forget to have fun and take pictures with your child!