

## Front Line Stuff

*Edited by Robert Peterson*

In our May-June issue, D.P. asked for innovative ideas for a Cub Scout pack's blue and gold banquet. Readers offered an assortment of ideas on location for the banquet, methods of serving, and ceremonies.



**D.P. should answer** the questions: What is a blue and gold banquet to you? What do you want it to be?

The committee should select a fun theme. The theme helps focus thinking and keeps each year's banquet fresh and creative. Plan the food and entertainment around the theme.

Should the meal be catered or potluck? Does the theme support one or the other? We have had our best luck with self-catering in which a small team of parents cooks or buys everything within a budget, and the team shares the profits for their efforts. Another pack in our area makes box lunches and swaps them.

What about location? I urge going outside the usual meeting place. It makes the occasion feel much more special.

For the program, you can usually fit in an awards ceremony or a Webelos graduation but generally not both. Select one and plan a separate and special time for the other. Put strict time limits on speeches and announcements and be selective in entertainment. Leave them wanting more!

*M.A.  
Omaha, Neb.*

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**In 10 years of Scouting** with my three sons, I have been to my share of blue and gold banquets.

As with all Cub Scouting events, remember it's for the Cubs, not the leaders. Decorations made by the Cub Scouts have meaning; those made by adults do not, no matter how good they look.

The evening's program should be kept short and sweet. Too often, even the best programs seem to drag on for what seems like forever.

The most memorable banquet I've attended was when we invited former Cub Scouts who had gone on to become Eagle Scouts. One Eagle Scout was asked to represent each decade since the 1950s, when our pack was chartered. The Eagles were asked to speak briefly about what Scouting has meant to them. Their responses were different, but, from the lawyer to the high school student, they all made us proud of the organization we were representing.

KISMIF: Keep It Simple, Make It Fun.

*P.S.  
Lexington, Mo.*

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**We spice up our blue and gold banquet** with a computerized slide show of the pack's activities. We borrow equipment to project the presentation onto a large movie screen in the school cafeteria where we hold the banquet.

The keys to our success are 1) we use good photos, with cropping that emphasizes the action, 2) we select music to complement the action, and 3) we try to make sure everyone in the pack is included and recognized.

We end the slide show on an upbeat note, then follow through with our Friends of Scouting (FOS) presentation. This year, we almost tripled our donation total and became the highest FOS donor unit in our district.

*M.D.D.  
Midwest City, Okla.*

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**Blue and gold banquets** are supposed to be one of the highlights of the year for Cub Scouts, but I cannot tell you how many times I have seen a boy's long face because he got to the buffet table too late to get his favorite food.

That is, until we started having an ice cream social instead of a full-course dinner for the blue and gold banquet. The pack provides the ice cream, and the dens are assigned to bring the toppings. Now there are miles of smiles for blue and gold banquets because each boy gets his favorite treat.

*B.T.  
Mount Pleasant, Iowa*

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**One of the most exciting** things at our blue and gold banquets has been the table decorations. Each year I collect empty cans—small juice cans for Tiger Cubs, soup cans for the Wolf and Bear Cub Scout dens, and larger spaghetti sauce cans for Webelos Scouts. I fill them with dirt, then top them off with an inch or two of plaster of paris, with a paper clip sticking up in the center.

Each den decorates its can as a table centerpiece and holder for blue and gold balloons. We have had everything from drums and tepees to Stanley Cups. Each den also makes an extra centerpiece for the guest table.

*Pack Committee Chairman D.P.  
Dearborn, Mich.*

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**An Arrow of Light ceremony** with Webelos Scouts graduating into Boy Scouting at the blue and gold banquet is indeed special for boys and parents. The *Cub Scout Leader How-To Book* describes several great ideas for Arrow of Light ceremonies.

We cut an Arrow of Light from a cardboard box and paint the box blue. We make a yellow paper background for the box, put a camping lantern inside it, and turn out the lights. There are always plenty of "Oooohs" and "Ahhhs."

Once, as a special treat, we asked the chemistry department at St. Cloud State University to give the boys a show they wouldn't forget. Highlights included hammering nails with bananas, exploding grapes, and neon blue and gold liquids flowing through tubes.

I recommend catering the banquet. We had pizza. Catering allows more people to come and just enjoy the festivities. Save the potluck for the end of the school year.

*Cubmaster S.H.  
St. Cloud, Minn.*

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**We updated our blue and gold** banquet this year, using simple table coverings and a few balloon bouquets for decorations. Each den made its own centerpiece with a "Scouting Into the Millennium" theme.

We had a father-son cake bake and auction, which raised \$200. The high bid was \$14.75 (by my son) for a cake with \$10 worth of candy baked in. All cakes were judged for originality, most frosting, best Scouting theme, etc. The boys who took part received patches.

Each den performed a skit, song, or cheer. The banquet was catered, and we charged about \$4.50 per person.

We always honor our leaders at the blue and gold banquet. Everyone had fun, and it was the best blue and gold we have ever had.

*Committee Chair D.D.  
Poplar, Wis.*

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**I was a Cubmaster for three years** and have attended a number of blue and gold banquets since then as a Boy Scout leader. The most memorable banquets were those that had a ceremony or special event performed by people in our local council.

I advise checking with the local council's Order of the Arrow lodge to see if they have a ceremonial dance team that might perform at the banquet. Also, older Scout leaders might be invited to share ceremonies and stories they have collected over the years.

If Webelos Scouts are ready to graduate, we always have the ceremony at the banquet. What better time for Webelos Scouts to show off their accomplishments?

I think the meal works best if the pack orders the main dish (fried chicken, ham, or roast beef) and each family brings a side dish.

*T.K.  
Menomonee Falls, Wis.*

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**Our blue and gold banquet** is held on a Saturday afternoon, after a small group of parents and leaders stay up until midnight Friday decorating for the big event. We make a keepsake table decoration for boys and leaders and place cards for family members.

The meal consists of baked chicken (catered), chicken strips, baked potatoes, corn, green beans, and rolls (prepared by the late-night crew), and each family brings its favorite dessert. We charge \$2 per adult and \$1 per Scout or other child. Our banquet is dedicated to our graduating Webelos Scouts and their families. We invite our brother Boy Scout troop, too.

The Webelos Scouts receive their Arrow of Light awards, graduation certificates, years-of-service pins, and any other awards they qualify for. They then cross over the bridge to join the Boy Scout troop.

We recognize our Webelos den leaders with a certificate and show our appreciation with a bouquet of silk flowers. Our blue and gold banquet is not the end of Cub Scouting but the beginning of the trail to Eagle.

*Cubmaster T.W.  
Redwater, Tex.*

**We go all out!** The blue and gold banquet is our ultimate annual celebration, and we try to make it as memorable as possible.

We have a theme-based banquet, with the Webelos Scouts crossing over into Boy Scouting. One year, for example, we decorated a cardboard pirate ship and had the Webelos Scouts "walk

the plank" into Boy Scouting.

With an outer space theme, we had Webelos Scouts cross over to Boy Scouts by putting them inside a "transporter" and "beaming them up" to their new troops. Last year, we had a medieval knights theme and inducted a new Cubmaster by having him pull his sword from a stone.

Our banquet is a full meal. Meat and paper goods are provided by the pack, and the dens bring the other goodies. Dens do their own table decorations. Because of various donations, we only spend about \$100.

*K.H.*  
*New Braunfels, Tex.*

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