

OCTOBER – I LOVE A PARADE

Music Full then Under

AMY: Oh, I hear the music, so it must be time for the October CubCast. I'm International Program Specialist and Webelos Den Leader, Amy Hutcherson, along with Senior Writer for *Boys Life* magazine, Aaron Derr.

AARON: Now, in previous CubCasts we've discussed the many ways to get your dens and packs noticed in the community, but this month we're going to focus on something very specific and a whole lot of fun – parades.

AMY: Ooh. We're going to help you get your units out of that church basement or school or living room and into a parade!

Music Fade

AMY: Carrie Wetzels is the Committee Chair for Pack 45 in Chelmsford, Massachusetts. She and her family have been involved with Scouting for six years and have helped their boys participate with the Cub Scouts in five Fourth of July parades and several Memorial Day parades in their hometown. Welcome to CubCast, Carrie.

CARRIE: Hi, thank you,

AARON: My son's Cub Scout pack is going to participate in a parade here in a couple of months. I am very eager to get some good advice.

AMY: Awesome. Okay, Carrie, let's get started. Now, my son's pack, they participate in a Christmas parade every year but what other type of parades might be coming up for units to participate in?

CARRIE: Wow, Christmas! I haven't heard of that one. Many communities have parades around national holidays. So, in our town they hold two a year,

Memorial Day parade and a Fourth of July parade every year. Other towns near us also hold parades to celebrate local holidays that are important to their community or state. For instance, I know there's some in our state that celebrate Patriot's Day other towns I know of have parades that commemorate the founding of their towns, so it could be any time of the year.

AARON: And what does that participation look like? What is the role that a Scout unit can play in a parade?

CARRIE: The two parades in our town are very different and so our participation looks different as well. The Memorial Day Parade is a solemn event in our town to commemorate the sacrifice of fallen soldiers. The Scouting units in our town participate in this parade by marching the parade route in their Class A uniform holding a small American flag with car Pack 45 banner out front. At the end of the parade, folks gather on the common for a ceremony to remember and honor those who died in service to our nation. The Fourth of July Parade is quite different. it's much more of a celebration of our nation, and our town and our pack. For this one we build a float on a trailer which is a lot more involved than just walking. Each year we have a parade master for the float concept and design, which helps to promote summer camp. All the boys look forward to the parade because it is a highlight of our Scouting year and it energizes the adults and the leaders, and it's just a lot of fun.

We have paint nights and build days when Scouts and their families paint and build elements of the float. On the Fourth of July the Cub Scouts ride on the float \which is built on a borrowed trailer and the parents hand out candy and flyers about our pack and how to join the fun.

AMY: That is really a great idea, using a parade to help promote your day camp. I never really thought of that. What are some other benefits to a Cub Scout pack for participating in a parade?

CARRIE: Parades are wonderful experiences for the Cub Scouts, the adult leaders, and the pack families. Our pack benefits greatly from our participation in the Fourth of July Parade especially because when we hand out cards along the parade route we take the opportunity to tell Scout-aged boys and their families that we can get them on the float next year, which encourages them to join and it also associates Scouting in general with fun and as a result, we've had a great deal of interest in our pack after the parade. Last year, one family joined in the spring. It was an incoming Tiger for the fall just so that they could participate in the parade. Another new family joined our parade as a direct result of receiving one of our cards on the parade route, and that Scout is now a Wolf Cub and his mother is a committee member. This year we promoted the start of the Kindergarten Lion Den, which is new for our district this fall, and we hope to see much interest from the parade for that as well. Retention rates in general for Pack 45 have been close to 100% for several years.

AARON: That's great. So, we've established there are many, many benefits to a Cub Scout unit for participating in a parade. What about the benefits to the community when a Cub Scout unit participates in a parade?

CARRIE: The pack relies on our community for support throughout the year and we acknowledge in our written float description the gratitude that we have for our community for supporting us and also the specific sponsors who help us with funds to build our float or donated their trailer for the day for us to carry the float on and this description is read at the reviewing stand which is also on the local community TV broadcast. The Fourth of July Parade is the largest event of the year in our town, Chelmsford, and it's a pleasure to give them a great show at the parade. Each year the leaders walk in the parade route with pride not only for the creation that our Cubs and the

families have built but also much pride in the Scouting program that we produced in the previous year.

AMY: Nice. Now, to help our listeners understand who is responsible for getting the unit into the parade and who do they contact or the process that they would go about for the parade.

CARRIE: For the Fourth of July parade there is a formal application process a form that we have to fill out. So, we have a parade master and he's done it for a couple of years so he knows the process, so he'll complete the form, which includes the write-up about the theme of the parade float as well as the thank you to the sponsors and to the community for their support for the year. That form is submitted to the town parade committee which organizes the whole event. Information on when and where to assemble on parade day is shared back to the parade master who coordinates everything for the pack on that day.

Memorial Day Parade is not so formal. There's no application process. It is organized by the Veterans Service Officer who works in our town, and as a committee chair I contact her to just find out where it is that year and just let her know that we're coming, and it's much less formal.

AARON: What kind of preparation does a Cub Scout unit need to do in advance to prepare for a parade, and how far in advance does that begin?

CARRIE: Each year our parade committee starts up three, four months before the Fourth of July Parade, and is led by the parade master and several parent volunteers. Some elements of the float are assigned to families to start working on with their children ahead of time, and a couple of more talented adults who have carpentry skills might take on larger elements of the parade. Then about a month before the parade a large element of the float and lots and lots of cardboard are brought to the paint night where

the Cubs come to paint. Any Cub Scout who wishes to ride on the float is required to help out at paint night. A few days before the parade itself, the adults will gather to put the float on the trailer. Those are called the build days, and everyone in the pack can volunteer for that part whether building or painting or making flyers to hand out or purchasing the water to bring and have available for the children and the adults who are on the float for the day.

AMY: This is great for me to hear that other packs go to these great lengths to build these floats as well, because for our Christmas Parade, I'm telling you, weeks and weeks of preparation is involved and then lots of parent involvement is required for what you called the build nights. and so, yeah. The kids love it but a lot of people don't realize all of the preparation that's involved, so it's great to get the parents' help. What other ways can parents get involved in this whole process?

CARRIE: We make several announcements to the parents when it's getting time to prepare for the parade committee meeting or for the pack painting nights. But, throughout the year we get to know our parents pretty well within the den or within the pack meeting. So, we talk to them about, what may be coming up for the parade and we find out what they have a particular interest in. We have some great families and they're very forthcoming with their talents, and even if they don't have a particular talents they're just willing to lend a hand, if it's just holding something in place while someone else hammers it. So, parents have been extremely supportive.

AMY: How about during the parade? I know that one thing that I always am a little worried about as a mother; during the parade if they're riding on the float and there isn't any sort of like fence, I want to place a parent next every single child because it worries me. Do you get the parents involved in that way?

CARRIE: Yeah. So, our float, we build a railing on the trailer - it's a wooden structure so it's not something that's going to fall over, and the float goes very slow. So, as long as they're in a trailer area they have something to lean on if they have to, but they're pretty safe and secure in there. But we do still ask several parents to join us, as many as they want to, they can walk behind the parade, they can walk alongside. We position people in the four corners to make sure that they are keeping an eye on where the kids are at any particular moment to make sure that the Scouts and other family members who might be on the trailer are safe.

AMY: Perfect.

AARON: Carrie, are there any resources out there that you could recommend to our listeners where they can get some information about getting involved in a parade, getting ready for a parade, things like that?

CARRIE: I would say just looking in your community, social media to learn about what parades might be happening in your area is step number one, to find out when and where you could participate. We rely heavily on our family talents and connections. If you're building a float, you're gonna need wood and cardboard, and so we look for donations of wood and building materials usually through a local store and there's going to be some family connections that can help with that. Large cardboard pieces, because we use the cardboard to paint it and then they put it on the wooden structure to kind of complete the design, any paint donations, And you will need a space to build, so having a family with some garage space or some driveway or backyard space is also helpful. if you don't have someone in

the pack with that space, another pack in our town has connections with the town's DPW and they've asked and received, they've borrowed their DPW vehicles for the float and they use their garage for their builds. So, there's lots of different ways you can kind of capitalize on family resources.

AMY: And getting your chartered organizations involved as well because that might be something where they have resources or people that can help out too with different things that you may need.

CARRIE: Absolutely.

AMY: Okay. This is awesome information, Carrie. Thank you so much. Is there anything else that we haven't covered that you think may be shared with our listeners?

CARRIE: Well, sure. There's one fun, wonderful thing about the Chelmsford Fourth of July Parade, which other parades may have as well, is that it is actually a competition with cash prizes. We have won at least the last three years in a row, um, and that money, the cash prize, has paid for our float and then some.

AMY: Nice!

CARRIE: That's always nice.

AMY: Yes, a little cash incentive never hurts anyone. That is really great. You know, I don't believe I've ever seen a parade that didn't have a group of Scouts in it, and now our listeners can get their units out there and part of

the parade and not just spectators. Carrie, thank so much for joining us on CubCast.

CARRIE: You're quite welcome. Thank you for asking me.

AARON: After this Safety Moment we'll be back with Reminders and Tips.

Safety Moment – First Aid Kits

AARON: Now it's time for our Magnificent Monthly Reminders. Let's start with Council Roundtables. To locate Roundtable sites and times, check with your Unit Commissioner or your local Scouting Professional, the Council Service Center or website, or the Cub Scout calendar.

AMY: There's really no better way to help deliver a quality program than to experience the idea sharing that goes on at those meetings. Need more convincing? You can listen to the September 2016 CubCast to hear an in-depth discussion of the benefits of Roundtables.

AARON: Now, here is a question you should be asking yourself. Are all of your committee positions filled? Just to review, you should have a Committee Chair, Pack Trainer, Secretary or Treasurer, Advancement Chair, Outdoor Chair, Membership Chair, and a Finance Fundraising Chair. The responsibilities for each role are outlined on Scouting.org.

AMY: The Committee Chair is responsible for filling all the slots, but leaders can help out by remaining on the lookout for good candidates in their work, church, or neighborhood. You can listen to the July ScoutCast for more ideas on where you can find folks to fill these committee positions.

Begin Music Under

AMY: So that's it for the October CubCast. Thanks to Carrie Wetzel for joining us.

AARON: And thank you for listening. Hope you're back next month as we figure out how to get all parents in the unit involved and engaged. Are other topics we should be discussing? Send that email to CubCast@Scouting.org or tweet [@CubCast](https://twitter.com/CubCast). With that, I am Aaron Derr.

AMY: And I am Amy Hutcherson. Don't let the parade pass you by.

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