

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

~ A JAMBOREE *FOOD TEAM* COMMUNIQUE ~

One year ago at this time many of us were packing up to spend a week, or two, or three at the Summit in support of the inaugural National Jamboree there. We arrived in waves, small at first with the advance team that set up the staff dining operation and then with the capacity to feed staff, more and more arrived to set up all aspects of the camp for the event. Then arrival day for the tens of thousands happened and the second largest city in West Virginia came alive. For many a youth, the friendships and memories made will last a lifetime.

You may wonder a bit whether the friendships made at a Jamboree really endure and let me just harken back to 1977. I formed a friendship that Jamboree with a man many of you know simply as Coachman, for while we channeled water away from our respective campsites in the legendary “More-Rain” State Park the commonality of Scouting made us connect. To this day our Scouting comradeship endures and together we have and will continue for years to serve in our respective roles to help the Jamboree Food Team achieve its mission of supporting the participants in their enjoyment of the event so that maybe, just maybe another pair of Scouts may so connect. Interestingly enough, 2017 will be the 40th anniversary of our Jamboree meeting and far more important of our friendship. I share that because I am sure many of you have tales to tell and as we look to 2017 and 2019 with the availability of Jamboree social media we will look for a forum to enable the stories the drive our passion to do what we do to find an outlet.

Now not everything that happens at a Jamboree is necessarily memorable, and in some cases if memorable not favorably so. That sounds like life at times, but let me recall a couple of things about the 2013 Jamboree and give you some sense of the action approach for 2017 and beyond from them. As I do this, let me share one perspective that I have had for years about Jamboree food distribution and meals. Jamboree folks (youth, leaders and even staff alike) all but never comment about the food unless they don’t like it. So my objective has always been to achieve this statement: *‘silence is golden’*. We seek to plan for an adequate amount of reasonably tasty product and let them eat and then get to doing what they really want to do (which is basically anything but standing in chow line for staff or cooking and cleaning up for participants). If we don’t hear an outcry of complaint, I felt as though we succeeded. Now in 2013 we had an outcry, a lot of golden silence and yet a couple of complimentary twists I’ll share in a minute. First though the expected, we had dissent over the lunch. It came interestingly more from the staff than from the participants in the field and we will react to that. It is always a challenge to achieve golden silence over a meal that has to be completely shelf stable, but we will endeavor to do better and I am sure we will. Now the first twist from 2013 came in the staff dining operation. The Food Team was given rave reviews and that was more than a bit unheard of previously. Admittedly the single location to feed all staff enabled us to engage a vision that offered three dinner line choices and the all-you-can-eat buffet style approach certainly satisfied everyone. So looking ahead to the 2017, I can no longer just count on silent acceptance as the



standard for Food Team has raised its own bar and will not only repeat the staff dining experience but even seek to enhance it along with all other aspects of what we do.

Now the second twist to planning for the future involves a much broader perspective. Many of you will know this, but let me share it for those who have not focused on it and the implications to Jamboree food provision: the World Jamboree will come to the Summit in 2019. What does that have to do with the 2017 Jamboree you may wonder? Well with three Jamborees in six years (2017, 2019 and 2021) we need to devise a plan that will satisfy all participants and staff and be capable of repeating without reinventing. Recalling the difficulty of pulling off a Jamboree in three years (the span between 2010 and 2013), we surely don't want to try to figure a new food routine in two (2017-2019).

Now the challenge is that feeding at the World Jamboree requires a lot more diversity. Of course it is what many of you are likely thinking now, but bear with me. So if we simply provide what we did in 2013, fare that generally pleased American pallets, but likely few others, there will be no golden silence and I am certain we will hear in many languages words of clearly voiced dissatisfaction. So instead we need to be prepared and avoid that. To do so we are working on a food distribution model for 2017 that will please more folks at our National Jamborees and, therefore by design, work for a World Jamboree with a few menu item additions.

There are three major areas of Food Team and all are implicated in this. Again for those who may not have served on our staff before, or may not have really seen the big picture of what Jamboree Food was all about, let me share the areas of our realm. Jamboree Food Team has major areas for Food Distribution, Staff Food and Retail Food. I will take them one at time so you can hear what each will do and how we plan to serve our scouts in 2017 and the entire world in 2019.

Food Distribution is the biggest component of the Jamboree Food Team. The role of its members is to provide the food to the Units – the Scout Troops and Venture Crews – and basically is the area of our team that feeds the participants. In the past we have just handed out boxes or totes of food from various distribution points in Subcamps or Base Camps along with a menu book and basically suggested to the Units that this is your food, fend with it. There was always a literal ton of food left over, principally because different units had different preferences and often didn't consume or even prepare all the food given to them. So instead for 2017 and 2019 we are moving to what is commonly called the 'grocery store' approach. Picture please a big tent with pallets of big products like one finds a wholesale store and racks of the many other miscellaneous smaller items. For planning, the Units will have access to an online listing of all the items we will carry in the stores along with menu suggestions of meals that can be prepared from those items. The representative participants from each Unit will come to the store and shop as they would at home for a weekend campout. There will be a checkout system to track and monitor things and the role of the Food Distribution area members will be to run the stores – both the stocking and the checkout aspects. There is a lot more on this topic but for now we hope you can see how we can fashion the items in the stores



to work for 2017 by picking more common items to our country's collective pallet and then broadening the selection in 2019 for the system will easily allow that.

Staff Dining is the next area I'd like to discuss with our plans to expand toward 2019. The successes of 2013 gave us a real sense that people like choices and the buffet style, so we will look to repeat that in 2017. Beyond just doing the same thing, we will start an expansion of selections in the areas we know have been somewhat troublesome in past Jamborees. We are envisioning serving lines to accommodate what previously had been termed specialty food items, though that really wasn't adequately descriptive so let me try to lay out what we are going to do. Looking around the world (for 2019) and even regularly at home (for 2017) we find there are a variety of people who have what I'll simply term dietary restrictions. These are imposed by various factors such as by religious reasons, by allergies, by health concerns or just by personal constitution. Previously we have supported food for religious observation but not beyond that. We seek change and are really going to try to move the options in the staff dining to address growing realization in our country and around the world for food that is not just religiously compliant, which we will support again, but also allergy and health related so gluten free, nut free, vegetarian and vegan items are contemplated for the next two Jamborees at Staff Dining. Needless to say the diversity of the other choices of serving line items will have to increase in 2019 to try to please a wider array of tastes from the countries and regions that will be present.

Retail Food is our final area and that too will be evolving. Staying with known success, we will repeat having fixed snack bars throughout the Jamboree site. We will also have the pop-up retail food tents that are mobile snack bars which can accommodate different menus based on location. What will change and evolve just as with the other areas discussed is what we choose to sell at each. Naturally the items for 2017 will be more tailored to our country's traditional snack bar items and differ from 2019 when we will need to accommodate a far more varied audience. Now that will be the fun, and admittedly a bit of a challenge, but in the process we hope to be able to work with our equivalent food team members from other countries to enable what is commonplace at a World Jamboree of having a few different food tent venues by country. Another change from 2013 will be the number and specific locations of the retail food outlets based on changes to the program to be offered in 2017.

So there is a rather long explanation of where we see the Jamboree Food Team generally going in the next five years. I violated of necessity the rule I have really tried to follow of keeping the *Food For Thought* issues to two pages, but hope you understand and forgive.

In closing let me express the hope that each of you will enjoy the 4th of July this year. I recall well that last year, on Independence Day itself, I spent the better portion of the holiday driving to the Jamboree. I was thankful then for the chance to help lead the Jamboree Food Team and yet this year I will simply be thankful for the day with loved ones and the freedom our country affords for us to choose how we live and how we give of our time to causes, such as Scouting, in which we believe. God Bless America.

