Introducing a New "POP" for Cub Scout Events

Portable Outdoor Programming
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OPTION TO CUB WORLD PERMANENT STRUCTURES
A Cub World is a special place for Cub Scouts to go and enjoy an outdoor adventure. Cub World features are usually permanent structures on council-owned property where a Scout can become immersed in a thematic program concept. Councils across the country that have invested in a Cub World structure have also had the distinct advantage of hosting Cub Scout outdoor activities with elevated participant excitement and success.

Success of a Cub World is measured by greater Cub Scout participation, membership, and retention. However, permanently constructed Cub Worlds are typically expensive and require extensive construction planning and maintenance. (See www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/430-023.pdf)

Staff members of Cub-World-aided events have noticed the greater enthusiasm of participating Cub Scouts but also have lamented that Cub World structures are costly, fixed to one location, and can’t be changed or moved. An option to the permanent element is to have an inexpensive portable theme-based structure that can be taken to other locations and set up on a temporary basis.

ADVANTAGE OF A MOBILE / PORTABLE CUB WORLD
The excitement and the power of imagination will rise to higher levels with any theme when a point of focus is taken to the event and the staff carries out the theme with creative costumes and embellishments. This focal point can be a portable theme-based structure that can be transported to the event, put up for the duration of the event, and then disassembled at the event’s end. With a portable structure the themed-program can come to any Scouting event whether it be in the inner-city, suburban or rural areas. In these settings, other non-member youth will also be exposed to the Cub Scouting program and become new members. A day camp is a good example; the event comes to the families in their own neighborhood and increases the number of participants, raises the youth’s desire to continue the fun and learning of Scouting.

PORTABLE OUTDOOR PROGRAMMING (POP)
Councils and districts are encouraged to plan Cub Scout outdoor and camping activities that best serve all the families in a geographic and/or demographic area of the council. Council-organized events in "centralized" areas may inadvertently weaken youth participation. Events planned only in inner-city facilities may discourage suburban and rural Cub Scout families from participating due to longer travel times and lack of adequate parking. Events planned in rural areas may discourage urban Cub Scout families due to longer travel times. Travel time should not exceed one (1) hour. Putting Cub Scout "POP" (Portable Outdoor Programming) into event planning is the key to increased youth participation. The POP concept makes outdoor events available to a greater number of Cub Scouts because this superb mobile program can be taken to different locations. This outdoor program brings events to the families rather than youth and parents travelling to inconvenient locations to attend the events!
EVENT ACCESSIBILITY
For Cub Scout events held council-wide, evaluate the number of youth attending and the average distance of required travel. Look at the youth not attending the events and determine why they chose to not participate. Perhaps these youth and their families comprise a group that might be better served if the council and districts either took the program closer to the youth at several different locations or, because of ease of set-up and take-down, devised a creative scheduling of the event—possibly twilight camps or events in the middle of the week. A major reason for incorporating the use of a portable outdoor theme centerpiece is that a great Cub Scout event can be brought easily to the youth. The goal is for every Cub Scouts to participate. Remember, the day camps is “the camp that comes to the Scout!”

In city venues, the event comes to the neighborhood where several packs are located within a reasonable distance, thereby making travel to the location easy. Also, an event location in the suburbs or rural venues encourages parents to participate when their preference is to not travel into the city.

At each location, give thought to the best placement of the Portable Outdoor Programming (POP) theme centerpiece that will maximize youth and parent/volunteer participation. This concept works nicely for day-time events such as day camps, shooting sports days, winter fun days, harvest festivals, etc. In city-central locations, consider churches, urban community centers, schools, museums, youth centers, sports fields and stadium arenas, police and firefighter training academies, etc. In rural areas, consider all the same areas as well as community parks and recreation areas, picnic grounds, shooting ranges, National Guard armories, and rodeo and fair grounds. Overnight events will require council-approval and secure sites.

USES OF PORTABLE THEME-BASED STRUCTURES
Easily transportable, temporary structures that can be utilized at a variety of venues.

• **General Scouting usage:** The obvious usage is for Cub Scout day camping/resident camping, and family camping. It can also be used for other Scouting activities such as council and district community events, Webelos-rees, camporees, pack overnighters, picnics, trainings, recruitment meetings, and reunions.

• **Non-Scouting usage:** Usage by non-Scouting groups on their own properties, such as schools, family reunions, weddings, receptions, youth programs, religious groups, and community organizations, has a potential to provide fees that are a bonus.

STEPS IN PLANNING AND PRODUCTION OF A PORTABLE OUTDOOR PROGRAMMING THEME CENTERPIECE
It is highly recommended that all Cub Scout outdoor activities be planned around a theme. Themes appeal to all family members and can also be an educational tool. Support literature for many theme categories and specific theme titles is readily available. See Appendix A, page 32 at [http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/430-023.pdf](http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/430-023.pdf) for theme suggestions. It cannot be overemphasized how powerful a tool is at the hands of Cub Scout leaders when the imagination of a young Scout is sparked by a theme.
A theme will come to life in any suitable location when there is a program focus point. Even a temporary and portable structure of some kind that captures, reinforces, and invigorates the magic of that mental image becomes very useful in carrying the theme throughout the entire event. An economical, easily portable, and versatile structure converting the thematic idea into a three-dimensional focus point can be made from an expandable shade canopy. This is the very same canopy you often see at craft fairs and community festivals. Here’s how to create one:

1. Select the theme category to be used for events. During discussions, make design sketches and concept drafts of the best ideas. Theme categories are not specific theme titles but are a class of activities related by subject, locale, historic occurrence, etc. For example:

   - Travel
   - Future
   - Western
   - Fitness
   - Nature
   - Space
   - Adventure
   - Medieval
   - Circus

Using “Medieval” as a category, possible theme titles might include:

   “From Squire to Knight”  “Castle Secrets”  “Alchemist’s Gold”
   “Merry Men of the Forest”  “Loyal Men of the Roundtable”  “Days of Chivalry”
   “King Arthur’s Court”  “King’s Pageantry”  “Mystical Merlin”
   “Camelot’s Castle”  “Castle Spies and Clues”  Etc.

Program location and activity area names are then chosen to carry theme development throughout the event. For example, in the category of “Medieval”, “From Squire to Knight” theme, the activity area names might be:

- Parking: Stables or Mechanical sward
- Registration: Squires’ Enrollment
- Assembly area: Muster Meadows
- Games: Competition of Champions or Contests and Tournaments or Tournament of Champions
- Crafts: Craftsmith’s Workshop
- Shooting Sports: Sherwood Glen or Bows and Blunderbusses or Locksley Meadows
- Nature: Green-Green, King’s Forest
- Luncheon area: Knights’ Banquet
- Pool/Aquatics: The Moat
- Etc.

Use of the on-site portable outdoor program theme center piece(s) could include:
- Headquarters and administration center or the trading post
- Special activity area pavilion i.e. quiet time presentations or the medic / first aid clinic

The portable centerpiece can also be a focal point for:
- Equipment staging and distribution
- Music /entertainment and /or a family BBQ /picnic
Whatever creative theme-enrichment devices staff can envision, including costumes and props, they should endeavor to carry out a spectacular thematic program that will remain in participants’ memories for a long time.

2. Councils are encouraged to develop and prepare a variety of themed portable centers so that a Cub Scout can experience a different theme each year. There are five suggested theme stage ideas on page 14. One of the ideas, the medieval castle, has been completed and prototyped.

3. Determine what size the event’s theme centerpiece (shade canopy) will be. The canopy should have straight walls – not slant walls, and the frame and legs must be made from steel—not aluminum. Although many sizes are available, recommended sizes are 8 x 8 or 10 x 10. (Measurements given here are for a Coleman® straight wall instant shade canopy of 10 x 10, Coleman® model # 2000012503.) (See photo on pages 4 and 8; however, other manufacturer’s products also will work as well.) If you want a large centerpiece, connect two or more canopies together, i.e. 10 x 20.

4. Determine what materials will be used for the canopy walls. Suitable items will be determined by ease of applying the artwork. Methods may be, but are not limited to, paint brush, air brush or large format printing from computer images. Also, consider weight, thickness, portability, and secure clean storage, including protection from extreme heat and cold.

Applicable materials will predominantly fall into two categories: FLEXIBLE and RIGID.

FLEXIBLE

A. Textiles:
   • Natural fiber white cotton, pre-shrunk fabrics such as poplin, broadcloth, canvas duck, denim, or muslin of not less than 140 threads per inch.
   • Synthetic fiber white nylon, rayon, and acetate. Shade wall accessories are available for canopies (after purchase of the initial canopy) made from synthetic fiber must be flame retardant in compliance to Canvas Products Association International (CPAI) - Specification 84 (CPAI -84) promulgated by the Industrial Fabrics Association International (IFAI).

B. Thin films:
   • Opaque plastics, white, fiber re-enforced: polyvinyl chloride (PVC, vinyl), high-density polyethylene (HDPE).

RIGID

A. Cellulose fiber hardboards in panels 2 x 8, 4 x 8, with ⅛ to ¼ inch thickness, one rough and one smooth side, plywood.

B. Corrugated white plastic panels 4 x 8 (well-known substrate for advertising and political signage), PVC, HDPE, acetates.
There are many reasons to select a single material over others, and a discussion among everyone involved with the project about the pros and cons will aid in planning. Here, for the “castle” prototype, opaque, fiber re-enforced PVC film was chosen for its ease of handling and portability. It rolls and stores easily and can be printed from computer image files on large-format printers. Also, all components pack nicely into a small grouping (see photo at bottom of page 9).

5. Create the artwork that will illustrate each of the four (4) walls. (See page 14.) Make sketches or use concept diagrams of the theme category the group selected. Accomplished artists aren’t required. Utilize the community’s resources. Enlist the assistance of community college art and/or theater arts classes – stage set designers or scenic designers. Perhaps high school art teachers and students and/or an artists’ co-op could lend a hand.

Look into the community for businesses that manufacture signs and banners for all occasions. Ask if they can produce large-format works. A distinct advantage for selecting a sign and banner production studio is that they will all have ‘in-house’ art departments and/or access to art production resources. They will be glad to work with you on any concerns that may arise and develop the wall-art work. Wall art is most versatile when produced from a higher resolution computer image such as a .TIFF file with a resolution of 600 dots per inch (dpi). Always coordinate with the banner shop staff on their requirements.

Page 10 shows a measurement-specification plan for all four walls of the 10 x 10 canopy. Wall art will change, but grommet and Velcro® tape locations remain the same for all the wall panels. The banner shop will install all the grommets. Wall designs for the 10 x 10 will have a width-to-height ratio of 1:1.4.

6. There are two important reasons, (a) and (b), to cut access through the doors and windows of the wall art work. This is recommended for entry access, proper ventilation, and wind damage prevention. Allow approximately 1” of material around the opening that can be folded over to the back as a reinforcement hem and taped securely with double-faced tape. (Double-faced tape for vinyl material is available from the sign and banner production studios.) The banner shop personnel will place a similar sewn hem on all four edges of the vinyl panel where grommets will be installed. If initially specified, they may also cut, fold, and tape strengthening hems behind the door and window openings.

(a) Entry to the interior of the canopy allows inside decoration and embellishments to enhance the theme (See page 12). Cut the door access wide enough to accommodate a wheel chair. (American Disabilities Act, Sec. 4.13: min 32”) DO NOT cut and remove the hem at the bottom of the door opening. This hem strip keeps the bottom corners of the door aligned.

(b) Winds will pass through the openings (and open roof peak vent) and exert less pressure on the walls. (Tie downs can be used; see step 3 in SET-UP, page 11.)
INITIAL ASSEMBLY OF POP CENTERPIECE COMPONENTS
Location Detail and Attachment Measurements for Wall Panels

After delivery of the completed wall panels, placement and attachment of the panels to the canopy frame is done as a ‘first proof of location and positioning’, allowing future set up to be done quickly and easily:

1. Loosely set up the canopy frame and attach each corner of the fabric roof top to the Velcro tabs at the frame corners. Pull the frame to its full width extension so the position buttons click into place - do not fully raise the legs. Using ¾ inch-wide adhesive Velcro® tape (“loop” side), attach the tape strip all along the shoulder of the roof fabric on each of the four sides. (The “hook” side of the tape is attached to the back side of the wall panel with the center of the tape at 1½ inches from the top of the panel – see pages 7 and 10 for the tape placement.) The Velcro® tape is the major support for the panel on the frame. This “hook and loop” tape in rolls of several lengths is available at home improvement warehouse outlets as well as internet websites and sewing notion shops.

2. Mark the center of each of the four wall panels with a visible permanent marker dot (red or black) and the center of the canopy roof fabric on the shoulder of each of the four sides. (The center mark of the wall panel and center mark of the canopy roof shoulder will be married together during set-up, which centers the wall panel between the frame legs.) NOTE: The sequence of wall panels is from the position of the observer looking at the front wall and the door, front wall #1. Then to the observer’s right, wall #2, then to the rear wall, #3 and finally to the observer’s left, wall #4.)

3. Seven (7) grommets are at both edges of each wall panel. The upper six (6) are attachment positions for the wall panels using mini bungees. The topmost grommet at each corner will cover the roof fabric; therefore, make a small slit or cut about ¼ of an inch through the fabric behind the grommet to allow a mini-bungee cord to pass through and be attached to the frame leg inside. A “button-hole” stitch around this slit will add strength and stability against tearing and fraying. (See photo at right and on page 10.) Five (5) more grommets down are each for mini-bungee cords on the frame legs and the last one at the bottom corner, 1½ inches from the hemmed edge, is for a ground stake as needed. Also, ground stake grommets are at bottom corners of the door and two (2) at the left of the door at twenty (20) inch intervals. (See page 10)
Note that there are three (3) additional grommets on the top edge of the panel in line with the center position mark. These are auxiliary grommets for use with ropes, wires or cables to hang the wall panels (without the shade frame) flat on room walls, drapery frames or other attachments as decorations for other events i.e. Cub Scout Pow Wows, Universities of Scouting, etc.

4(a). Raise the legs about halfway (center pin position) and duck under the fabric. Note that there are twelve (12) Velcro® tabs to hold the roof fabric to the scissor-side frame. It is advisable to attach these tabs to the frame for additional stability, especially if the weather may be breezy. At the inside shoulder of the roof fabric there are two (2) tabs on each side: wrap the tabs around the high points of the scissor frame and pull the tabs securely down to affix the Velcro®. Do this for the other three (3) sides as well. Also, there are two (2) tabs on each roof frame diagonal. Wrap the Velcro® around the diagonals, drawing it tight and close the ends.

4(b) Raise and extend the legs (two (2) together on the same side at a time) to full height with leg-locking pegs clicking into place. Measure the distance between the legs on the same side of the frame at the top under the fabric and duplicate this measurement at the bottom of the legs. Do this for each side and the diagonals, and this will square up the frame. It may be advisable to drive a round steel canopy stake into the ground through the hole in the foot to secure the legs from moving. (Of course, this will not be possible at an inside set-up and it is also a recommendation to use furniture leg caster cups under the frame leg feet to protect the floor surface.)

5. Raise and attach each wall panel in this similar fashion. Three (3) people with step stools will be helpful to reach up at this point, one person at the center mark of the wall panel and one at each edge:

- Lift the panel and match the center roof mark with the center canopy mark. Be sure that the Velcro® attachment is aligned and firmly secured in place.

- Assistants lift each edge and left and right corners making sure there are no wrinkles, bottom of panel is even with the ground and then firmly secure the Velcro®tape attachments. Finally, inspect the panel for wrinkles that may appear because of uneven hanging of the panel at the top. Make any necessary adjustments before placing the mini-bungees next.

6. Bungees are folded in half with the center pushed through the grommet from the front, with the metal hook ends passing around the canopy leg and hooking the cord center from behind by one of the assistants. See detail photos at right. Allowances in length can be made as needed by shortening with a knot or lengthening by connecting two cords.
7(a). Blue and yellow triangular flag banners (see page 15) are cut from suitable fabric and a hem is sewn into the straight edge that just fits over a one (1) inch Schedule 40 PVC pipe. It is recommended that two - five (5) foot segments be used with a coupling, creating a ten (10) foot flag banner pole. Slide the flag on an end of the one-inch pipe and push the flag and pipe from the interior of the castle between the wall panel and the roof fabric through the halves of the Velcro® tape as close to the corner as possible. Attach the bottom section of pipe with the coupling and continue lifting until the end of the pole is on the ground. Do this for the other three (3) corners and, if needed for greater stability, drive a steel tent stake without the plastic top halfway into the ground and slip the open end of the pipe over the stake.

7(b). A better and more permanent option for placement of flag banner poles is to install clamshell curtain grommets at the corners of the roof fabric. Dritz® home curtain grommets of 1\(\frac{1}{16}\) inch (available at sewing and fabric centers or on the internet) are recommended for ease of installation. The grommet kit includes instructions for placement and a template to locate the grommet center point. See the three photos above. The left photo shows the measurements A - A and B - B for the center point. A-to-A is 3\(\frac{3}{4}\) inches from the first sewn seam at the shoulder of the roof fabric and B-to-B is 1\(\frac{1}{2}\) inches from the same seam. These measurements are required to allow adequate clearance of the frame hardware inside the canopy. See the other two (2) photos. Install grommets at corners on one side of the roof and then corners on the opposite side of the roof.

8. Determine the placement of the heraldic shields, other wall banners, etc. These items are attached to wall panels simply with small sections (dots) of Velcro® tape, hook ends on wall and loops on banners.

9. When all the components have been satisfactorily assembled, take photographs as a record of the placements. This photographic library will be valuable in future set-ups. (See page 15 for some examples.)

10. After set-up to check wall panel placement and fit, the wall panels are removed, rolled, and the frame collapsed. Assembly on-site can now be easily accomplished in about thirty minutes with a “crew” of three people. All components are packed for easy transport in any mini-van or SUV type vehicle (see photo at right).