

LI Scouts Have to Be Ingenious, Too

By Tom Demoretsky

Hard financial times appear to be giving the adult leaders of Long Island's Boy Scout programs the same stern lesson about thrift that the Boy Scouts have been teaching young boys for years.

In Nassau, where the chronically troubled local council has amassed debts of more than \$1 million, volunteer and paid officials are scrutinizing titles to real estate holdings to prepare for a land sale that they feel will rid them of heavy interest charges.

In Suffolk, a low-key campaign is being readied to wipe out a deficit of about \$150,000 in operating expenses which was run up in the past two years. Nassau, which has gained national reputation in the Boy Scout organization for its bad finances, had its operating expenses in the black last year for the first time since 1965. Suffolk hopes to balance its budget next year.

Richard Chandler, director of local council finance at the national headquarters of the Boy Scouts of America in North Brunswick, N.J., recently had a very simple explanation for all the concern. "After all, if anybody ought to pay their bills it ought to be the Boy Scouts," he said, adding that Nassau's long-standing debt was particularly unusual. "In the past five years a number of councils have run into debt, but it is still not normal. Until about five years ago it was very unusual."

Charles Greenman, 48, the Nassau scout executive, or chief paid official, said recently he had heard about the county scout council's fiscal problems while still stationed in Dallas. He left the Texas job in late 1973, accepting the assignment at the Roslyn headquarters, he said, "because the time to buy stock is when it's down."

When Greenman came in December, 1973, the "stock" was definitely down: The council was \$1 million in debt, and a plan to sell Camp Wauwepex, a 550-acre property in Wading River, had drawn heavy criticism from leaders at

the unit level. The units in scouting, Boy Scout troops, Cub Scout packs and Explorer posts, are basically autonomous within the organization, except that they hold franchises from the Boy Scouts of America. The units eventually stopped the Wauwepex plan, arguing that the campsite in Suffolk was the council's only suitable weekend camping area for Nassau County's approximately 25,000 scouts and leaders.

The council's substitute for Wauwepex on the market block, according to Greenman, is 25 acres of the 30-acre headquarters in Roslyn. Five acres at Shelter Rock and I. U. Willets Roads will be retained for the headquarters, a "trading post" for scout badges and equipment, and for some training pur-

poses. Sale of the choice residential property, Greenman said, should pay off the debts, which total \$1,052,000, with funds left over to be put in trust.

In the meantime, the council has balanced its budget, which meant reducing the number of paid executives from 27 to 11 and stepping up efforts to raise money through a "sustaining membership" drive and other contributions.

The Suffolk council went through its own land-sale crisis in 1973, according to its scout executive, Albert L. Smith. Smith said that the 1973 sale of 180 acres in Yaphank to Suffolk County for parkland paid off \$500,000 in debts from operating expenses, and the remainder of the revenue from the sale went for the purchase of 2,000 acres in

the Adirondacks and to beef up a trust fund.

But Suffolk is still operating in the red and spent \$150,000 more in the past two years than it took in. And this time there is no convenient parcel of property to put on the market. Smith said the problem can be solved with a campaign among those financially able to make large contributions. All scout fund-raising must be somewhat low-key by agreement with the United Way, a fund-raising group that contributes about 20 per cent of the budgets of both Long Island Boy Scout councils. Smith has also reduced staff and hopes to balance the budget during the coming year. "We hope to eat away about \$30,000 of that debt this year. If we can, we'll be in business," Smith said.

A Scout Is Always Helpful...



Scout helping old lady across street



Scout protecting child from mad dog

... according to the earliest "Handbook for Boys" published by the Boy Scouts of America. These illustrations are from a reprint of the original 1911 handbook.