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## Oath Keepers CPT Journal – Eureka, Montana, January 30, 2015

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by Brandon Smith , January 30, 2015

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I recently received an email from a new CPT coordinator in South Dakota asking for some of my input on organizing a team. I responded with as much help as I could muster considering CPT is still very much a young and adapting concept that we are continuously attempting to improve with the experience we gain. After all, Americans have not been organizing their communities in this fashion for a couple of centuries, and the art form of building a self reliant citizenry is nearly a lost one.

In my response, I felt motivated to perhaps share some insights with the rest of the Oath Keeper CPT hard chargers, including methods that I believe do work, as well as methods that don't appear to work so well. Starting an organized group of any kind is a complex thing. Here are some ideas to help you avoid feeling like you are herding cats...

Ultimately, the most important task of those coordinating Community Preparedness Teams is not to structure strict training regiments, but to keep people engaged, interested, excited, and on mission. Unlike the military, CPT functions less on top down orders and more on bottom up individual inspiration. Thus, people must be inspired. Structure is important as long as it complements and inspires individual initiative rather than interfering or stifling it.

The core of CPT first requires regular participation. In Eureka, MT, we have found that training **MUST** take place at least once a week; any less and you will see some members feeling less in tune with the training, more isolated, and in the end, they will take the whole thing less seriously. Also, regular weekly training ensures that your team will have more time to build the kind of close knit atmosphere required for people to work together effectively. Your CPT group must not become a gaggle of strangers that meet for sterile training once a month and who rarely associate with each other in any other capacity. I don't want to sound too sappy, but as a team, you must be friends. At the very least, there must be a sense of mutual respect, otherwise, you will fail.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, on occasion, there will be people who simply cannot work with others and who make life miserable for the coordinator and everyone else. Hot heads, blowhards, egomaniacs, and guys who just like to hear themselves talk for hours on end. Now, some people who have vast knowledge in important areas can tend to develop a certain hubris. If they can manage to keep that hubris and temper in check, then you might have to develop a level of tolerance for their A-type personality.

On the other hand, catering to disruptive egos can hurt the team far more than any other threat. In fact, self absorbed characters and aggressive spotlight hunters are more destructive to the Liberty Movement than any hostile entity (like the Southern Poverty Law Center) could ever hope to be. Do not be seduced by the accolades of any particular member and treat each one as a test case. I don't care who they are – Special Ops, top tier Doctor, Engineering genius, it doesn't matter. Character is more important than training any day. Personally, I am not impressed by boastings of prior achievements. I am not impressed by former military status or professional status. I am impressed when I can see a person in real time present a wise and level headed attitude rather than become a poison pill that disrupts any progress.

My personal advice? In the most diplomatic way possible, ask the poison pills to leave, and to make sure the door doesn't hit them in the ass on the way out. If you don't they will drive all the other solid members away.

In terms of team coherence, it is vital that people are given tasks that allow them to exert their talents and live up to their potential. In the end, each member of the CPT should be creating their own presentations, classes, and contributions. The coordinator, especially in the beginning, may have to help everyone along, but they should also step back at times and refrain from over-managing. The coordinator is there to help everyone become their own leader in their own way; he/she is NOT there to become the next Patton, or be the center of attention. True leaders are good teachers and good teachers retain a healthy respect for humility. They know when to step back and allow other capable people space to contribute.

There will come a point when your team members will need to choose a category of expertise. Be it security, medical, communications, etc. There will of course be cross-training. Some people might fit into several categories and can and should contribute where they want, but they need to choose a single primary focus, making other categories secondary. That is to say, there is only so much time and energy a person can spend in any given category. They should be sure to spend that time and energy in an area where they are most interested, most proficient, and most efficient. Spreading themselves thin will ruin their potential in every category.

I highly recommend coordinators find their category team leaders as quickly as possible and give them license to recruit within the team. The medical team leader, for instance, should be seeking out the best candidates for emergency medical training and bringing them on board. Again, the overall team coordinators should trust their category leaders to get the job done rather than attempting to manage every facet of the process.

During training sessions, make sure you have respect for other people's time. They could be at home with their families, drinking a beer and relaxing after a long day at the job. Instead, they have chosen to deny that ever powerful temptation and spend their hours training with you, working hard with you, taking initiative to achieve something greater. Never adopt the attitude that these people owe you that time. They don't. By joining CPT, every member is making the statement that they are willing to take certain risks for their community, and for liberty. **DO NOT WASTE THEIR TIME.**

My personal observation is that meetings longer than three to four hours can be daunting for participants. The importance of the subject matter taught during the session is truly irrelevant. Every person's brain can only handle so much information on any given day. Do not burn out your members with overly long meetings, or they will stop showing up, guaranteed.

If you do make any hard fast rules, I would set the meeting time in stone, and never go longer than the time period you have already promised to your membership if you can help it. If members expect to go

home at 5pm, then they should be able to leave at 5pm without feeling like they are abandoning the meeting. Inability to cover the material within the allotted time is the fault of the coordinators, and shows lack of planning.

Category team leaders giving presentations should be sure to keep those presentations short and on point. I recommend around an hour or less allotted time for each presentation. Any longer and people's eyes begin to glaze over. Outdoor training days will, on the other hand, probably take up the entire training schedule. Coordinators should not worry about using the full schedule for tactical shooting and team movement, for example. Indoor classes should be kept compact, informative, and fast.

The CPT concept revolves around the method of "replication". Never forget that your job as a CPT is to eventually go out into the community and share your knowledge and training with as many people as possible that will listen. Make sure you are properly prepared first, but avoid the inclination to treat your CPT as some kind of separate secret squirrel entity, isolated from the general public. We are a community service organization. The goal is for EVERY American to one day be self reliant enough to weather any disaster. When training each other, keep in mind that the way you structure your training today will be the way you structure it for the public tomorrow. If your methods are inadequate for your own CPT, then they will certainly not work for Joe the Plumber straight off the street. Do not cling to bad ideas or ineffective philosophies. As long as you understand that your CPT is a kind of laboratory, a place where you develop the best training methods possible and do away with that which clearly does not work, then you will succeed.

This is Brandon Smith, Oath Keepers Associate Editor and member of the Eureka CPT, signing out.

***If you are interested in joining or starting a Community Preparedness Team in your region, or if you are a coordinator that wishes to submit your own CPT Journal, please contact Oath Keepers here:***

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