

Parents,

There is no easy way to say this. Last Thursday I was notified by the Senior Pastor that he and the Local Board of Administration of the Wesleyan Church of Orchard Park have decided to close our Stockade and Battalion groups. This is effective at the end of this program year. Since this group is a part of the Wesleyan Church of Orchard Park it is within their role to do this.

I was not asked to provide input or be involved, in any way, in this discussion or decision. I've been told the decision is not reversible. During this meeting, in an effort to keep the group operating, I stated that if the issue was with me, I would willingly resign or accept being fired. To me, the primary importance is the boys in this group, not me. I was told the decision stands, and it would not make a difference.

In my opinion, this is a bad decision.

I've been involved in this group since I was 10 years of age, and have been its leader for going on 47 years. There are many other Stockade and Battalion groups, but I can tell you from knowing hundreds of leaders across North America, that there is no group equal to ours. Our entire leadership team is heartbroken, not only for us, but for the boys that we have come to know and love who will no longer be a part of something they value so much.

We **DID NOT** tell the boys this news tonight. The Stockade leadership team decided this news should come from the parents, as you know much better than us how your boy will react. Some boys will be nonplussed, and others will be devastated.

Since I've spent the entire weekend starting to pack up, and in meetings with leaders, I've not had much time to process or think through options. I may have more to share in the coming weeks and over the summer.

If anyone would like to discuss this, share thoughts, ideas, comments, etc. I am available anytime at 716-536-4077, [jim@2047.org](mailto:jim@2047.org).

Also, I have set aside time next Wednesday, May 8th, during Stockade from 7:10-7:40 for any parents who would like to meet as a group and discuss options, ideas, future and alternate possibilities, etc.

**Stockade is participating in the Stockarama Weekend on May 17-19. Please sign up asap as we need to plan, shop and pack and because of the above we are behind.**

**Stockade will finish the year as per our schedule on June 5th.**

Lastly, the Pastor of the church, Rob Engler, has said that if anyone would like to speak with him, you are welcome to contact him at 716-662-9842, [rob@opwc.org](mailto:rob@opwc.org)

It has truly been a privilege to be a part of the leadership team of this group. Thank you for allowing us to be a small part in the lives of your boys.

Best,

Jim Szczodrowski  
716-536-4077  
[jim@2047.org](mailto:jim@2047.org)

PS: The church will have some sort of program next fall, that I assume you will receive information on. It will not be Stockade, and it will not be with the current leadership, goals, or structure. If it interests you and your son, please don't let the absence of our leadership team dissuade your son's participation. This is not about us, but what's best for the boys.