

December 2021

In this Issue...

News of the Region	2
Upcoming Events	4
Meet the PAX	5
F's Spotlight	7
TAPS	10
Stats Snapshot	11

The mission of F3 Pittsburgh is to **plant, grow, and serve** small workout groups for men for the **invigoration of male community leadership.**

We leave no man behind, but leave no man where we found him.

Questions?

Contact Bieber

F3 Pittsburgh PAX Blast

December 2021 Edition

Welcome to the F3 Pittsburgh monthly newsletter: The PAX Blast. Here you'll find important updates about the Pittsburgh region, details of upcoming events for all F's, a peek into the past month's PAX statistics, a look into the lives of some of the PAX, and finally some Thoughts and Prayers (TAPS).



Check out other details of the region and get connected on our website: www.f3pittsburgh.com.

Contact Bieber with any issues, questions, or ideas for next month's issue.



The F3 Pittsburgh November Convergence



News of the Region

Passport Challenge Winner: FIAB

November Postmaster: FIAB, Kato, Abacus

From the Desk of the N'antan

Written by: Maxime



Shout out to all the PAX, Site Qs, FNGs and Brothers of F3, we have a lot to celebrate and be proud of in 2021. We saw growth in numbers, growth in leadership, and personal growth within individuals of F3 Pittsburgh. We've welcomed new PAX, handed off shovel flags to the future leaders of F3 Pittsburgh, and dedicated ourselves to several service projects that support our communities. It's everything that we as a region and F3 nation strive to do as our mission statement suggests. We are blessed to have the PAX we've gained in 2021, fortunate to have the PAX from previous years live and lead right (some leave right), and hopeful that the PAX we've not seen in a while will seek out F3 once again. We hold no judgement and leave no man behind, we would welcome you back with open arms and hope to see you in the gloom in 2022.

The successes of our region and F3 nation are worth celebrating as F3 has gone international and the growth of F3 continentally has grown exponentially. The mission of F3 at its simplest form is to plant, grow, and serve. How do we do that? The easiest answer would be EH and bring in new guys, and I don't disagree, that's #1 reason we will grow. But more important to me is how do we grow leadership, how do we as individual PAX (F3 HIM) grow in 2022. That's what I want to focus on.

No one knows us better than ourselves. We all have our fears, struggles, and insecurities as well as physical, mental, or emotional obstacles that prevent us from being our best versions of ourselves. No matter what the dilemma, I think one of the biggest barriers that prevent from us from making the first step towards improvement is the fear of two words, "Starting Over."

Starting over means that we have to admit to ourselves that our current behaviors or actions are not impactful, not beneficial, not the what's best for us. Starting over means that we need to stop what's easy or what's comfortable. Starting over means making tough decisions. Starting over means hard work and going back to square one. Introducing a whole new world of what ifs and uncertainty.

Starting over should mean that you have the courage and mental strength (and believe in your fellow HIM that post next to you and encourage you each and every freaking day when it's cold, hot, early, rainy, snowy, difficult) to improve yourself. It means that you will not let fear of judgement or failure prevent you from making a change in your life. It means that you care enough about someone besides yourself and recognize the influence and impact you impact on them. It means you believe in the G3L (Get right, Live Right, Lead Right, and Leave Right). No matter which phase you fall in to (spoiler, you never get to the finish line, the HIM always strives to get right and live right), you're never finished in your mission to improve, invigorate, motivate, and accelerate. At the end of the day, you must believe that F3 is truly you vs. YOU, and that F3 will leave no man behind, but leave no man where they found him.

No matter what your struggle may be: relationship, work environment, financial, mental health, family strife, self-doubt, apathy, aging, or if you're like me you have let your weight and/or health slip and are worried that its too late to do anything about it, start over. In this time of giving and love, give yourself a fresh start and love yourself enough to make a change in your life, or

help someone who's struggling make a change in theirs. Even if the reasons you're struggling are not directly your fault, if you refuse to acknowledge them and make the changes necessary, they become your fault because you refuse to do something about it. Utilize the amazing gift of fellowship and faith we share as men of F3 (faith in something bigger than yourself), reach out to your brother(s). Be honest, be vulnerable, be willing to ask for help and alternatively, be willing to listen.

As Dark Helmet would say that's why F3 is for men only. The love we share between each other would be inappropriate between a man and another woman not his spouse. You should be able to hug another man who's struggling and say I love you man, we got you. Share your thoughts without fear of judgement. Embrace and seek out trust in your brothers. Form a shield lock and whetstone. Only by becoming our best selves and getting, living, leading, and leaving right can we go out into our communities and EH other men and make an impact. If we are rotten seeds we can't expect to grow. We need to be the best PAX we can be and if that's true, others will follow. Our atmosphere and brotherhood is contagious, but only if we truly practice what we preach. If we don't embrace the mission and principles of F3, we can't bring others in and expect them to believe what we say. Do as I say not as I do only works as a parent (for a little while anyway). We must get right, to live right, live right to lead right, and that is how we will grow in 2022. It starts with each and every one of us making the commitment to one another to get 1% better, and that might be a big 1% but trust that you have the strength of a nation supporting you. The calendar resets on January 1st, will you take this opportunity to start over?

I wish the PAX of F3 Pittsburgh and the brothers from other regions who are part of our family a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays.



Upcoming Events

- **December 19: F3 Dads**

What: Last F3 Dads event of the year, all PAX and kids welcome!

Where: Juniata Pavilion, North Park

- **December 23: Canada Festivus**

What: Christmas-themed Beatdown followed by a white elephant gift exchange. Gift exchange open to families!

Where: Canada AO, then Sir Pizza for the festivities

- **January 1: Q Year's Day**

What: PAX led beatdown at Pierogi Hill. All PAX bring your favorite exercise!

Where: Pierogi Hill AO

- **January 4: The Pit Mini Convergence**

What: Monthly mini convergence, this time at The Pit! Apparently monster truck themed?

Where: The Pit AO

- **January 8: Site Q Meeting**

What: Meeting for all current Site-Q's to discuss F3 Pittsburgh

Where: McKnight Bob Evans, 0900

Upcoming Emotional/Spiritual Health Study:

Men of F3 Pittsburgh, we have found a treasure in Gutterball -- beyond being a professional therapist focused on men and addiction, he cares deeply about men's mental health and in recent conversations he has shared with me his desire to (1) address some of the underlying causes to male suicide that continues to show up in the F3 Nation community and (2) start to build and teach within F3 Pittsburgh towards better emotional health and spiritual connection.

In support of the above we are planning to launch and co-Q a new 3rd F initiative and study spiritual formation, emotional health, spiritual health, and how these things are essential to masculinity and leadership. If F3 is leadership training disguised as a workout, then this study will be inner life and spiritual formation disguised as leadership training.

So – If you have gone through rough times, are going through rough times, or will be going through hard times; if you have struggled with depression and addiction; if you lack in your inner life – please come join us!!

What: A 6 week guided study co-Qed by Gutterball and Runner-Up

When: TBD – Please vote in the upcoming Slack poll to give your input. We plan to start late January.

Where: It will be a combination in-person and virtual to make it available to as many people as possible. In-person clearly has a stronger impact.

Why: To strengthen our spiritual and emotional fortitude. “Leave no man behind” includes our emotional vulnerability and spiritual life.

Who: All men of F3 and any FNGs



Meet the PAX

Due to Bieber's move, we were unable to get together with some new PAX to introduce yinz to. Perhaps you can handle "Meet the PAX" yourself this month and say "hey" to a PAX you haven't gotten to know yet.



Meet the PAX

FNG Corner

Welcome to these newest members of F3 Pittsburgh! We're glad to have you with us and look forward to seeing you at the next beatdown.

Scrunchy

First Post: 11/13/21

AO: Moon

Sleeper

First Post: 11/13/21

AO: Moon

Newman

First Post: 11/13/21

AO: Moon

Floppy Disk

First Post: 11/13/21

AO: Moon



Manniversaries and Birthdays

Manniversaries:

Birthdays:

Have an upcoming Manniversary or birthday?

Let Bieber know to be included in the next issue.

Seriously. Let Bieber know.

*Please.
Don't make me beg.*

2nd F Spotlight: Cabin CSAUP

15 Yinzers and one Grover PAX took to the hills of Deep Creek Maryland from November 5th to November 7th. Friday night there was about an hour-long beat-down in the driveway of one of the cabins where we welcomed the one FNG of the group, Rough Cut, into F3 Pittsburgh.

Saturday the PAX woke up at 3:30 am and converged at the second Cabin where they gathered four sandbags and three shovel flags and set off to the top of the mountain with their rucks and sand bags by 4:30. At the top the temperatures were frigid and the wind was blowing the shovel flags over every 5 minutes. Puppy Chow led a beatdown at the top of the hill in the dark while we waited for the sun to come up and take in the beautiful sunrise. Puppy Chow decided that the best way to keep the PAX warm was do variations of planks and core on the cold ground, I'm still mad about that, but his beatdown had exercises that spelled out thankful and we were thankful for his leadership.

We mosied around the top of the mountain to stay warm as the sun broke the crest of the mountain across the valley.

The Rev. Valentine gathered the PAX in a semi-circle to listen to him speak on gratitude and appreciation. Maxime led the PAX in a quick sunrise yoga routine before they quickly gathered the gear and headed back down the mountain to the cabin. All in all, we completed about 5-6 miles in total.

After a very delicious breakfast, most of the PAX returned to the first cabin where plans were formulated for a mid-day hike. Some of the PAX stayed behind to recover and prepare lunch while the rest of the PAX put in another 4-5 miles. Some carried rucks, some just went for the fellowship. After completing the mid-day hike, the PAX got together back at the cabin and recovered in the hot tub, napping, or just stuffing their face full of food. Some did all three.

The last hike of the evening was this Maxime's favorite. The falls were absolutely beautiful and the rocky hike along the river's edge very challenging after putting in 11+ miles. We contemplated taking sandbags with us, but the rucks proved to be enough of a challenge as the 7 miles we completed pushed the PAX to their limits.

Back at the second cabin some very tired and hungry PAX proceeded to demolish 8 pizzas in record time. The laughs continued and Santa Gemini handed out "gifts" and awards to the PAX for completing the CSAUP weekend. Most of the PAX went back to the first cabin where adult beverages were consumed, and we sat at the dinner table laughing and talking about things we dare not repeat to the rest of the PAX. I encourage all PAX to sign up for the weekend in 2022, which will be moved to late October to better accommodate PAX schedules. Make the plan now to sign up. The rucking and the 1st F is the least important part of the weekend. The fellowship and the friendships formed during the weekend are by far the most memorable and valuable part. Thanks to Valentine and Gemini for continuing to accelerate F3 Pittsburgh through Fitness, Fellowship, and Faith.



3rd F (Faith) Spotlight: Advent Devotional

Advent Devotional

(in the ancient method of *Lectio Divina*)

by: Gutterball

Lectio (Read)

Tis the season! While most of the world is caught-up in the hustle and bustle of Christmas, the Christian liturgical calendar points to the period of time called *Advent*. This season is understood as the anticipated arrival of Christ with the invitation for us to examine our hearts in the four weeks leading to Christmas Day. For those who celebrate with an advent wreath, we mark each of the four weeks by lighting a candle that represents *HOPE, LOVE, JOY, and PEACE*. A fifth candle in the center of the wreath is lit on Christmas Day representing *CHRIST*—the *Light* of the world. Advent is full of rich symbolism, ritual, meaning, and liturgy. It is a season that invites us to consider what it really means that Christ entered our world.

It is quite amazing and, at the same time, beyond full comprehension of the depth and scope of the incarnation. Jesus' birth required that the Triune God allowed part of Himself to step outside of the Trinitarian union to take human form, which was an act of humiliation. Scripture further describes the details surrounding the indignity of Christ's birth being born in a manger, certainly not highly esteemed according to cultural or worldly standards. AND, this was God's intent! As humiliating His birth was, there would also be another humiliating event that would occur some three decades later: The Crucifixion. The cross was not an afterthought of the birth of Christ, but was God's plan from the beginning. It has always been in God's character and passionate desire to sacrifice Himself for us. This is a reality to consider as we light the *LOVE* candle.

God incarnates Himself as Jesus in humiliation because of the extent of His love for us. No matter what we call it (sin, depravity, or the human condition), there had been a relational rupture between God and humankind. Christ's birth, death, and resurrection mended this rupture and as a result we have *HOPE*. As we light the *HOPE* candle, I would invite us to consider more deeply the meaning of *HOPE*. As believers, we all strive to live in the *HOPE* that Christ offers. But, what does that actually mean? Many of us may be surprised to learn that the path to *HOPE* is actually through suffering. We just considered Christ's birth and crucifixion. Both of these events involved suffering. Not suffering for suffering's sake, but a way of suffering that produces the ability for us to experience God's presence in the midst of our suffering.

Romans 5:2b-5 provides a glimpse into this understanding of *HOPE*. *HOPE* is the outcome of developing character through the endurance of suffering. Our humanness balks at this notion. We question, how can suffering and *HOPE* be intertwined? Often, we avoid suffering at all costs; consequently, this circumvents the essential element in producing *HOPE*. The Apostle Paul exuded *HOPE*, yet, he also knew great suffering. Paul made repeated requests to God for the removal of his "thorn" (we know he attempted at least three times). What Paul wanted and pleaded to God for was relief from his suffering, but what God desired was Paul's heart. God allowed Paul to endure this process in order for Paul to discover that God's grace is truly sufficient in the midst of his circumstances. Maybe this is why Paul instructs us to rejoice in our own suffering (vs 2) because he is sharing with us how God pours His love into our hearts (vs 5). Maybe this is why Scripture never instructs us to explain away pain, but to endure it in order to find Christ's presence in the midst of it. Consider, along with Christ's Spirit, that this is the process that produces *PEACE* and *JOY*—God's presence in the midst of suffering.

As humans living on this side of heaven outside the garden, we all have to contend with our fallen nature. Everything is tainted by sin. None of us are unscathed by depravity. Therefore, we are all united in our experiences of suffering, pain, and woundedness. Consequently, despite this universal experience, we all have a tendency to avoid our woundedness; we pretend that we don't struggle or we deny the existence of our pain. As a result, we often engage in certain behaviors or particular ways of living to escape the reality of our woundedness. This is because when painful aspects of self are exposed, we experience shame. Shame leads us to hide. It's not easy admitting or allowing others to see our failures, our struggles, our emotional needs, our mental health challenges, our hurts, our traumas, our relational problems, our addictions, our repeated sins, our compulsions, how we hurt others, or how we hide the parts of self that we resent.

Theologian, Martin Laird, explains that we all have a deeply ingrained tendency “. . . to recoil from our own brokenness, to judge it as others have judged it, to loathe it as we have been taught over a lifetime to loathe it” (*Into the Silent Land* 120). However, when we hide or ignore these parts of ourselves, “. . . we ignore what God in Christ draws close to and what he embraces” (120). Have you ever considered God embracing your brokenness? Or, drawing close to it? As Laird so profoundly expresses, “God meets the human condition where it stands most in need, in its poverty and brokenness” (120). Christ does not identify himself with what we vainly idolize in ourselves; He identifies with what we resent in ourselves. We serve a God that can resonate with us. Christ knows what it is like to be humiliated. Christ knows what it is like to endure pain and suffering. Therefore, “because of the death and resurrection of Jesus, wounds, failures, disgrace, death itself all have a hidden potential for revealing our deepest ground in God. Our wounds bear the perfumed trace of divine presence” (120). Considering the meaning of *Advent* and Christ’s incarnation is meeting God’s presence in the midst of our woundedness and suffering that cultivates *HOPE*, extends *LOVE*, provides *PEACE*, and produces *JOY*.

Meditatio (Reflect/Meditate)

As you light the four candles of *HOPE*, *LOVE*, *PEACE*, and *JOY*, take some time to meditate on the following:

- Pause and consider the incarnation. What are you aware of when you reflect on God entering into the world clothed in humanity as Jesus? What does this mean for you? When considering Christ’s birth, do you also consider His death? Do you get a sense of the level of humiliation that God took on? What does it mean that He took on humiliation especially for you?
- What are you aware of when you consider how hope and suffering are intertwined? How do you engage with you own pain and suffering? Welcome it? Avoid it? Do you find God’s presence in the midst of your pain and suffering? Do you experience *HOPE* in your suffering? How about *JOY* and *PEACE*?
- How do you sit with your own depravity or woundedness? Do you embrace it? Avoid it? Do you meet God’s presence there? How do you response to Martin Laird’s statement, “Our wounds bear the perfumed trace of divine presence?”
- Do you expect to find God’s presence in your own brokenness or the parts of yourself that you resent? What does this now mean for you as you learn that our brokenness is the place where God is present and meets us? Take a few moments to allow yourself to experience meeting God in the midst of your brokenness. Invite God to provide you a sense of HIS love, grace, peace, forgiveness, and full unconditional acceptance.
- Do you experience God’s full, unconditional acceptance of you? If not, consider what prevents you? Ask God to help you navigate beyond what blocks you from experiencing this reality and truth.
- Have you considered and accepted the invitation of Christ to be a conduit of His peace and presence in the midst of others’ suffering by extending the redemptive compassion of Jesus? Isn’t this the essence of *Advent*—the coming of *CHRIST*?

Oratio (Pray/Respond)

Dear Holy Trinity: Father God, Jesus, Holy Spirit,

We are grateful that in the midst of our suffering and pain, you offer presence, Your Presence. May we ever grow in the depth of knowing your presence. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for this “means of grace” and *HOPE* to expand our capacity to experience the depth of your love for us and, in turn, to love others. During this *Advent* season, teach us to welcome our own pain and suffering in order that we may experience more of your grace, healing, and redemption. Prepare and teach our hearts to be a safe place to offer your presence to those who are hurting and suffering. Quiet the part of us that wants to fix, provide advice, or offer simple answers. Allow us to know your spirit so intimately that we can effectively discern your movement in our lives and in those that you allow to cross our paths. Show us how to compassionately demonstrate Your redemptive love to others that cultivates *HOPE*, extends *LOVE*, provides *PEACE*, and produces *JOY*. Show us how to allow *CHRIST*—the light of the world— to shine through us.

We pray this in the Holy name of *CHRIST*—Amen!

Contemplatio (Contemplation/Rest)

Now you are invited into a time of silent, contemplative prayer. Allow yourself to take a period of time to rest in God's presence. This is not a time of praying to God with verbal requests or words, but a time to sit quietly and notice God's presence. How does God show-up for you? In the form of Jesus? An image? A felt presence? A sense of the Holy Spirit? Take a moment to notice. Next, notice how He is responding to you? You are invited to be still, to just be, and to spend time in the beauty of *Advent*. Rest in the meaning of *CHRIST* incarnate and the truth of God's presence within you.



Below is a current list of thoughts and prayers for the PAX of F3 Pittsburgh and beyond:

Kato's Father in Law	Puppy Chow's Father in Law	Quip's Mom
Valentine & Family	Safari	Bam's Family
Flash Dance's Grandfather	Max's Daughter	Bieber and his M
FIAB's Niece	Wesley Priore	Praise: Sherman's brother's recovery
Roadie's granddaughter	Roadie's niece's FiL	Gemini & Family
FIAB's BiL	Mr Sneed	Chief's Aunt Sara
Chief's Son (Scout) – fractured foot	Austin Family & Vowel's MIL	Soft Hand's Parents
PC's Brother	ShamWow's granddaughter – college	Uncle Rico's Sister
Vowels' FiL		

Have a Thought or Prayer that isn't on the above list? See a TAP on the list that's outdated or needs removed? Let Bieber know so we can get it updated!

Stats Snapshot

Here you will find the most relevant stats accumulated throughout November. REMINDER: Please be diligent with your back blasts. We would like them entered into Slack within 24 hours but if you need time to make sure you have the right data entered (PAX, FNGs, etc.) please take more time.

AO Post Summary

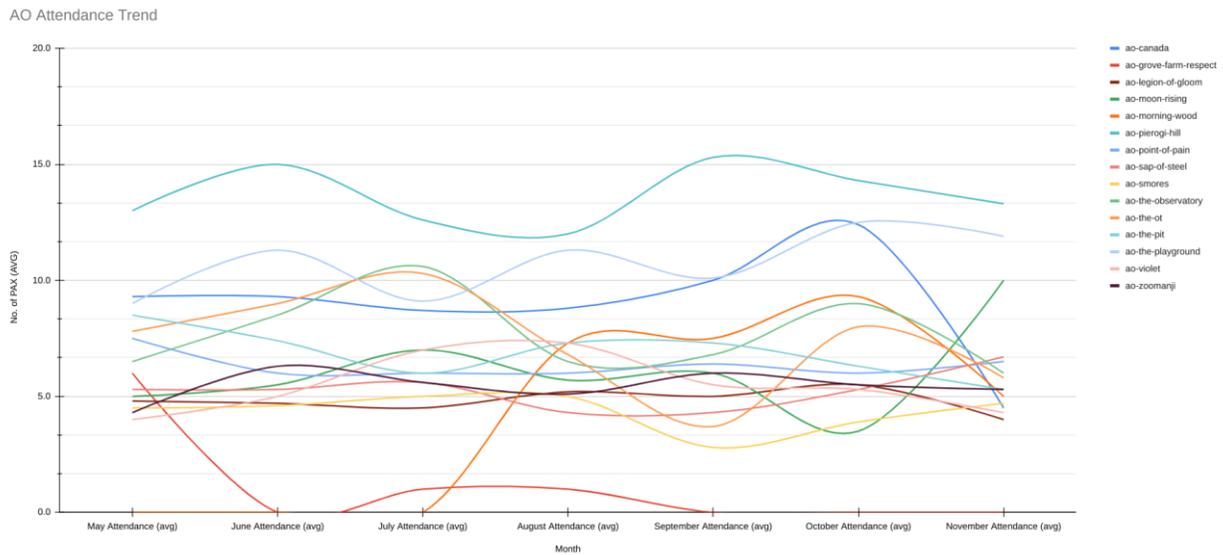
This table shows what the attendance looked like in November for each AO. Pierogi Hill is in the lead with 13.3 PAX in average attendance! but The Playground is nipping at its heels!

This region is ON FIRE!

AO	TotalPosts	TotalUniquePax	BDs	AvgAttendance	TotalFNGs	Month	Year
0 ao-pierogi-hill	53	26	4	13.3	0	November	2021
1 ao-the-playground	107	21	9	11.9	0	November	2021
2 ao-moon-rising	40	17	4	10.0	0	November	2021
3 ao-sap-of-steel	20	15	3	6.7	0	November	2021
4 ao-point-of-pain	13	9	2	6.5	0	November	2021
5 ao-the-observatory	24	13	4	6.0	0	November	2021
6 ao-the-ot	29	11	5	5.8	0	November	2021
7 ao-the-pit	16	7	3	5.3	0	November	2021
8 ao-zoomanji	42	13	8	5.3	0	November	2021
9 ao-morning-wood	10	5	2	5.0	0	November	2021
10 ao-smores	42	11	9	4.7	0	November	2021
11 ao-canada	9	7	2	4.5	0	November	2021
12 ao-violet	17	11	4	4.3	0	November	2021
13 ao-legion-of-gloom	12	9	3	4.0	0	November	2021

AO Attendance Trends (May – October)

This chart will be interesting to look at at the end of the year to see what the attendance trends look like. Hopefully there is a pattern we can see where we can try to do different things to get to a flatter but with a gradual slope upward for each AO.



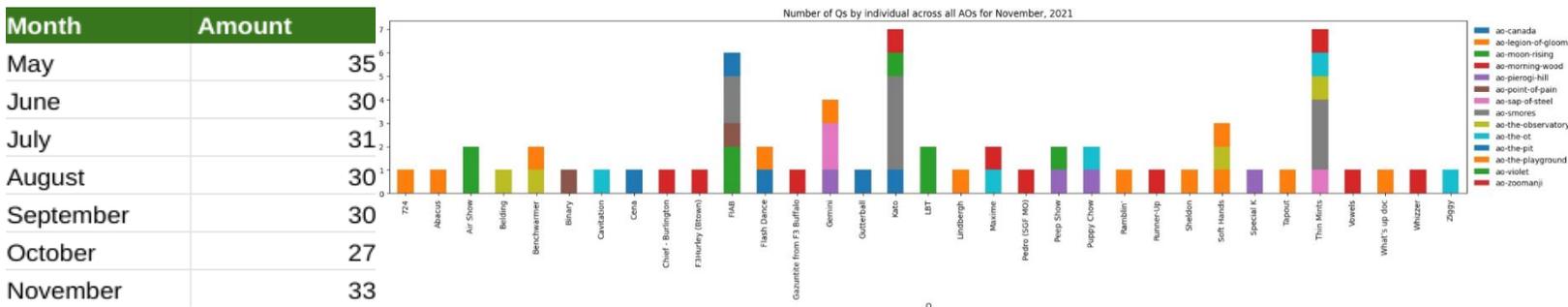
AO	May Attendance (avg)	June Attendance (avg)	July Attendance (avg)	August Attendance (avg)	September Attendance (avg)	October Attendance (avg)	November Attendance (avg)
ao-canada	9.3	9.3	8.7	8.8	10.0	12.4	4.5
ao-grove-farm-respect	6.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
ao-legion-of-gloom	4.8	4.7	4.5	5.2	5.0	5.5	4.0
ao-moon-rising	5.0	5.5	7.0	5.7	6.0	3.5	10.0
ao-morning-wood	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.3	7.5	9.3	5.0
ao-pierogi-hill	13.0	15.0	12.6	12.0	15.3	14.3	13.3
ao-point-of-pain	7.5	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.5
ao-sap-of-steel	5.3	5.3	5.6	4.3	4.3	5.3	6.7
ao-smores	4.5	4.6	5.0	5.0	2.8	3.9	4.7
ao-the-observatory	6.5	8.5	10.6	6.5	6.8	9.0	6.0
ao-the-ot	7.8	9.0	10.3	6.8	3.7	8.0	5.8
ao-the-pit	8.5	7.4	6.0	7.3	7.3	6.3	5.3
ao-the-playground	9.0	11.3	9.1	11.3	10.1	12.5	11.9
ao-violet	4.0	5.0	7.0	7.3	5.5	5.3	4.3
ao-zoomanji	4.3	6.3	5.6	5.1	6.0	5.5	5.3

Green = "Trending Up" Yellow = "Steady" Red = "Trending Down"

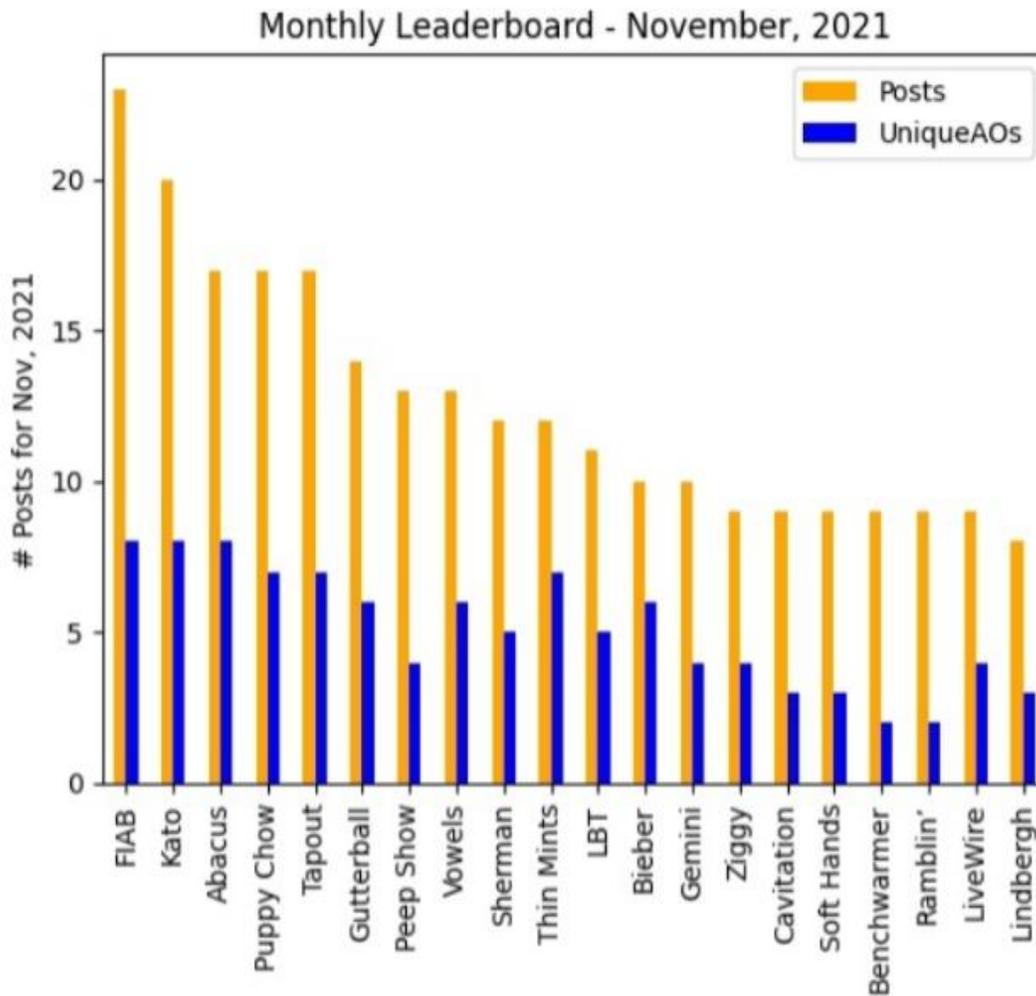
This stat gives us an indication as to how our AOs are being attended. In November, we saw attendance down at most AOs but four of them.

Q Counts and AO per PAX

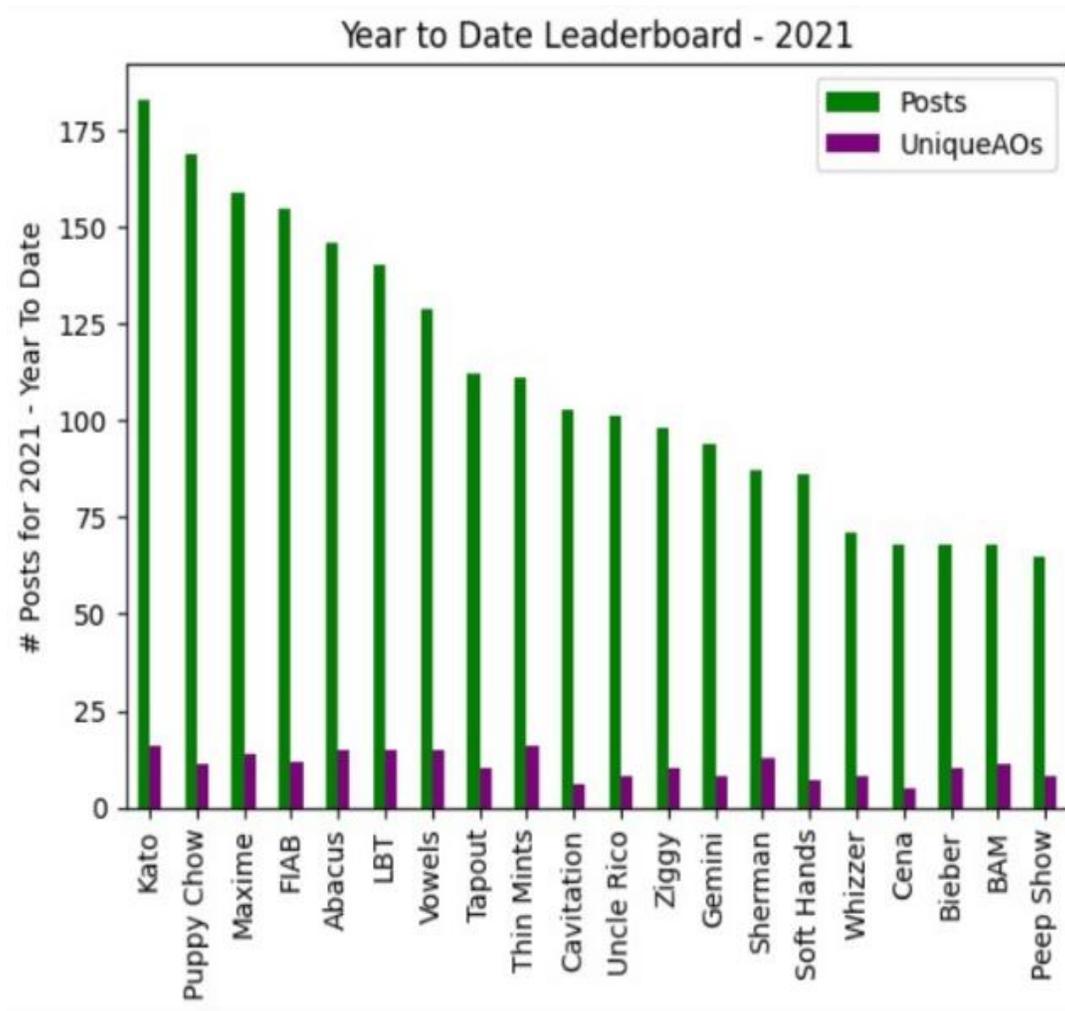
Here is a chart of who Q'd and where for the month of November. We see some spikes in here which is telling us that we have certain individuals who Q more than others. In November, we had 33 unique Q's, which is a 6 PAX increase from October.



Postmaster and Passport Graph



YTD Leaderboard Graph



Summary

In the growth department, attendance at our AOs is down at most AOs but there was a step up change in the unique Qs department. The attendance could be a factor that certain PAX took some time off who attended multiple AOs. One other stat that I am going to look into is how many PAX show up to at least one AO per month. This will show us our current active PAX count. This plus the AO attendance numbers will show if we are growing or shrinking. Great job there men! Let's see if we can push this a little further this winter and experience some growth and remember to be the buffalo!

For you site Q's, I will send out a summary of what the AO looked like over the months (May through December) in December. Going into next year, we can analyze and discuss the data and what it means for the AO.