



The Acton Free Press,
April 19, 1978 B3

JOHN SHARPLES demonstrates a fully loaded backpack at the Scout equipment seminar last Thursday evening. John is the Scoutmaster of the troop and instructed the seminar for parents.

Guide to backpacking, survival given by Scoutmaster John Sharples

With the comfort of both parents and boys in mind, the first Acton Scout troop held a backpacking equipment seminar at the Scout hall Thursday evening.

Scoutmaster John Sharples included in his discussion to parents and boys many of the important things to look for when shopping for equipment. Many of the topics discussed apply not only to Scouts but to hikers in general.

Before discussing equipment John went through a list of personal gear necessary to a hiker.

Boots must be leather with good ankle support and a thick sole. John explained that inadequate footwear can lead to future health problems for the boys.

Parents were warned against buying denim pants for hiking because they are not flexible enough, too hot and absorb too much moisture. Recommended fabrics included corduroy, wool or whipcord.

The quality of equipment usually improves while the price increases. John instructed parents on points to look for when shopping for equipment.

Packs range in price from \$15 to \$200. For backpacking trips an adjustable, well fitting frame pack is necessary. Padded shoulder straps and a waist band are designed for more comfort and ease distributing the weight of the pack more evenly. Waist bands can be purchased separately and attached to a pack. Other important qualities are that the pack is lightweight and reinforced at the stress points. Some other features which were recommended but not essential are a two compartment sack, pockets in the sack, a support frame at the top of sack, self-healing zippers and strap holders. Zipped compartments and pockets are suggested rather than buckled or laced pockets.

A good, well designed pack or a poor uncomfortable one can make or break a hiking career.

After a long backpacking trip a good night's sleep depends on the sleeping equipment available. Sleeping bags are necessary for both the coldest nights of the winter, and the warmest days of the summer. Bags should be light, approximately eight pounds or less, warm, even in the summer, and compact. When buying a

bag be sure to check the temperature range on the bag. This range is applicable only when used in a tent and with a foam pad underneath. If a bag is zippered there should be storm flaps inside the zipper.

Other suggested features are down, feather or down-feather combination fill for bags. Polyester is not as good but it is more reasonably priced, suitable for summer camping and also recommended for people with allergies. Other fills are Dacron fiberfill, feather-down and polyester. Mummy shaped bags are warmer and lighter than rectangular bags. All bags should have a washable flanelle inner liner to absorb moisture. The average person will perspire heavily after six hours in a sleeping bag. This dampness causes the camper to become cold, however flanelle absorbs moisture and can easily be washed. A drawstring to tighten the bag around the head or shoulders is very useful for keeping in heat.

Stoves fall in three categories, solid fuel, liquid fuel and gas fuel. They should all be light, efficient and compact. Solid fuel stoves are heated with sterno or paraffin and are suitable only for day hikes. Liquid gas is recommended by the pros but it is slightly harder to light. White gas or naphtha is used for fuel. All liquid fuel must be carried in a proper aluminum fuel bottle not in plastic. Gas fuel stoves heated with butane give efficient heat only in the summer. The heat is lost as fuel is consumed in the cartridge.

Mess kits should include one pot for water, one fry pan, one metal plate, one cup and a knife, fork and spoon. A jack-knife with two blades and a can opener is best.

Optional extras include a closed cell construction foam pad. The pad should be no longer than the length of the camper from head to mid-thigh and approximately two feet wide. These pads provide excellent insulating and prevent moisture penetration. Bubble pads are not suggested because they are so bulky to carry and do not insulate as well as foam. Often the bubbles start to burst cutting down on the insulation it does provide. A few garbage bags for emergency waterproofing and small plastic garbage bags for taking out garbage are useful. Another helpful

object is a collapsible bucket for campsite duties.

A fully-equipped first aid kit is a must for campers. For those planning on hiking, salt tablets are good for replacing the salt lost from the body.

When purchasing and packing food for the backpacking trip it is important to keep some basic rules in mind. The food should be light in carrying weight, low in bulk, nutritious, fast cooking, simple to prepare, and have a low chance of spoiling. The water content must be kept to a minimum and heavy packaging materials eliminated. Most food should be repackaged in polyethylene bags with complete meals in one package with a label. Low density items such as corn flakes or soda crackers should be avoided. Premix ingredients whenever possible. Always avoid tins as they add 15 to 25 percent to the weight of the contents and have to be carried out of the campsite as garbage. Cardboard packages add five to ten percent more weight. Pack rye or pumpernickel bread instead of regular white or brown because it is less crushable and usually more nutritious. Freeze-dried foods are strongly recommended even though they are fairly expensive. Nutritious snack foods for eating along the trail such as dried fruit, sunflower seeds, nuts and Granola should be included in the food plan.

Equipment that is taken care of will last a lot longer than equipment which is abused. All equipment should be kept in a dry place with a fairly consistent temperature, to prevent mildew and other damage.

Even the best packs can be damaged by careless packing and other abuses. Mud should be brushed off the pack when dry with a bristle brush not a wire brush. After and before each hike check straps, buckles and other stress points and repair any damage. Keep all food, fuels and liquids in leakproof containers so that they will not damage the pack.

Sleeping bags contain

After shopping around in different sports and camping stores John was able to price equipment and see all that is available. His own practical camping experience has taught many of the secrets he has learned for successful hiking.

and clean. Stoves should be kept clean with the burners checked regularly for clogging. Nozzles and valves should be replaced when damaged as inefficient parts can be very dangerous. Be sure to pack fuel containers carefully to prevent puncturing or damage.

After shopping around in different sports and camping stores John was able to price equipment and see all that is available. His own practical camping experience has taught many of the secrets he has learned for successful hiking.



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Insulation hot topic during energy seminar

Checking the depth of snow on the roof is a useful gauge of heat loss an audience at the first Halton Hills Conservation Centre seminar learned last week.

If snow remains on the roof, there is little heat loss; but if patches of the roof are bare, the owner is paying to melt snow. That was one tip from the film: The Insulation Story. About 40 people watched it, plus another film then took part in a question period with Eric Scheuneman, a guest speaker from Ottawa.

One of Scheuneman's suggestions to stop heat from escaping the home was to plug the windows at night with a non-flammable material or treated polyethylene. In daylight the plug would be removed so that the room could gain the sun's heat, Scheuneman said. Approximately 40 people

attended the three hour meeting in Guelphview Square, in Georgetown.

Many in the audience picked up copies of a 108-page booklet entitled "Keeping the heat in" which one man described as a gold-mine of information. The booklet's subtitle is "How to re-insulate your home to save energy and money (and be more comfortable too)".

At least two couples started, right there in the meeting, to fill out a questionnaire regarding a federal energy, mines and resources department program. The program, entitled Enersave, is to inform people of the cost of improvements and how much the homeowner can expect to save.

Scheuneman, a federal government technical advisor on re-insulation, dispelled one myth for his

listeners. It has been scientifically proven that it costs no more to leave a furnace on all night than to turn off the furnace and restart it in the morning.

Insulation can be a good investment, according to Scheuneman. In four years or less insulation pays for itself and it's oil in Canada's tanks that's not being used, he said.

The seminar also learned that a clean furnace is yet another step towards saving fuel. There is free, trained labor available to insulate homes—for certain people, Scheuneman said. Such people would be senior citizens, single parents, the handicapped and low income earners, he said.

The conservation centre's Stan Collett said they are trying to establish a permanent energy institution so that when the centre closes this fall the information will remain available to the public.

From another film—The Hottest Show on Earth—the audience learned North Americans compose six per cent of the earth's population and they use 40 per cent of the world's energy.

"We waste half of it", according to film narrator David Suzuki.

Coaching courses are run by Rec. department

Response was good to three of four coaching courses held by the Recreation department.

Coach Level One Theory, a general course designed for

Wintario response good

Public response to Acton library's call for old Wintario tickets has been good according to Esther Taylor, librarian in Acton. The tickets are used, under a government program ending today, to receive discounts on Canadian books and magazine subscriptions.

"People have been bringing them in regularly" said Miss Taylor. "We have already ordered some magazines and books under the system."

Wintario grant received

The Halton Hills Jills Gymnastic team have received a Wintario grant for \$2,010, it was revealed yesterday (Tuesday).

Recreation Co-ordinator Karen King told this newspaper she received a letter from Robert Welsh, Minister of Culture and Recreation on Tuesday, announcing the grant, to go towards gym equipment. The girls have had to match the money, and did so through fund-raising drives.

Approximately 33 girls from Acton, Georgetown, and the rural areas are involved in the Jills, and meet three times a week at the Georgetown Memorial arena.

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