

# Blue Springs Scout camp hosts German Rovers

*Rovers impressed with Canada's wide-open spaces and Acton's drivers*

Although they had yet to see Niagara Falls or Algonquin Park, a group of German Scouts staying in Acton were most impressed with southern Ontario's wide open spaces. Camping at the Blue Springs Scout Reserve just west of Acton, the 21 Rovers (oldest Scouts) and leaders from Frankfurt, marvelled at the natural beauty of the area, and at how friendly Acton area drivers are.

"We've hitch-hiked a lot back and forth (to Acton), and as soon as (drivers) see our uniforms, they always stop to give us a hitch-hike," Scout leader Sebastian Polag said on Saturday as the group hosted a barbecue for visiting Toronto Scouts and prepared for a massive bon fire at the Scout camp serve on the Sixth

Line, south of Highway 7. "Frankfurt is a twinning city with Toronto and that's how our group came to visit Toronto and some Scouting areas near it," Polag said, adding they've enjoyed their week-long stay at the camp, week one of a three-week trip, paid for through fundraisers, including car washes, odd jobs and crepe sales. They were also very impressed with the CN Tower, and with the "many nice, friendly people we've met here," including a First Acton Scout official who waited for the visitors at the Acton GO Train station to give them a ride back to camp because it was raining.

While at Blue Springs, the Rovers enjoyed archery, an obstacle course, a two-day hike to Guelph and a visit to the Ac-



**DISCOVERING ACTON:** Acton Scouter George Henersson (left) welcomed visiting German Rover Scout leader Lukas Heun, and Rovers Meviam Huigen and Maria Vardopoulos to the Acton Farmers' Market last Thursday. — Ted Tyler photo

ton Farmers' Market for some fresh provisions, a "great experience" according to Lukas Heun, a Scout leader with most of the group since they were Cubs. "We met good people here — we had a hike in the area and stayed at the camp, which is fantastic," Heun said, adding the trip encourages the Rovers to

be "open to other nationalities." Saturday night's campfire had been organized, via Internet, between a German and Toronto Rover, and some of the Toronto Rovers camped overnight.

Heun said they all are impressed with Ontario's wide-open spaces. "Here, the nature is quite huge and free. In Germany,

there's, after five-kilometres, the next village — here (nature) goes forever."

Rover Fabian Modritz, 19, said he finds Canada totally different to Germany. "Here, you have much more space, and to be outdoors, I really love it — that's what I won't forget when I go home." Iain Tait, the Inter-

national Commissioner of Scouts Canada was a special guest at the barbecue. He heard that the German Rovers would be in Acton while at the Scout Jamboree last Month in Alberta, and said he wanted to welcome them to Canada. "Part of my role as Scouts Canada representative to other countries is to meet visiting Scouts and make some contacts," Tait said adding he was very impressed with the group of Rovers and their itinerary while in Ontario.

"There are 35-million Scouts world-wide, so there's that opportunity to go and visit with other Scouts, almost everywhere in the world."

Asked if there have been any issues or surprises so far on the trip, two Rovers, who came to Canada two weeks earlier than the main group, said they met a rattlesnake on the Bruce Trail, and lost three days of food to raccoons.

After visiting Niagara Falls this week, the Rovers go to Algonquin Park for a four-day canoe trip.

## Back to adventurous nature

The Blue Springs Scout Reserve west of Acton was home to two diverse groups of campers on the weekend — 21 Scout Rovers from Frankfurt, Germany had pitched their tents at Goat Hill, and a smaller group of Toronto kids, fulfilling requirements for the Duke of Edinburgh program, were bivouacked in another part of the camp.

The 250-acre property, south of Highway 7 on the Sixth Line, Nassagaweya, is owned by Scouts Canada, which acquired the original land in approximately 1937. The Blue Heron Scout Camp, on the west side of the Sixth Line, was deeded to Scouts Canada by the United Church of Canada.

Both sites are used as training and camping centres with facilities including lodges, cottages, walk-in camp sites and dining hall, are used by Scouts and Guides, and can be rented by other not-for-profit groups as a training/convention centre as well as for group camping.

Blue Springs Scout Reserve was the first SCENES — Scout Centres of Excellence for Nature and the Environment — certified site by the World Organization of the Scouting Movement.

In early September, the Reserve will be turned into a mini-city — complete with a mayor, fire department, hospital, garbage system and daily newspaper — for the Gilwell Reunion — Scouters from Canada and the USA who have advanced leadership training.

On September 24, Blue Springs hosts the first annual BSSR Frisbee golf tournament, which also features an archery contest, obstacle course, hikes and environmental projects. Spring 2014 boasts a world environmental camp allowing participants to work towards the World Scout Environmental Award. Every year, all men are banned from the Reserve for a week when a group of abused women from a Toronto shelter set up camp and enjoy nature.



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