

Acton Scouts celebrate 100 years

Beavers, so new their moms haven't had time to sew badges on their uniforms, and Scouts who learned to tie knots and be good citizens the late 1930s celebrated 100 years of Scouting in Acton recently at an open house and crest unveiling ceremony at the Scout Hall on School Lane.

In his welcome, veteran Scout leader George Hen-

derson recounted the rich history of Acton Scouting, sparked by a visit to the Toronto CNE by Scouting founder, Lord Baden-Powell, in the fall of 1910, and leading to the party at the Scout Hall, built in 1949.

Mayor Rick Bonnette, who called himself a "1962 model Cub," said Scouting has a long tradition of volunteerism, teaching young people not only how

to tie a bowline, but how to be good citizens, and develop strong self-esteem and skills to be a "better person."

With Acton's David Dills, who joined Scouting in 1938 and rose through the ranks to District Commissioner, Bonnette unveiled two new crests designed to mark the 100th anniversary – one crest to be worn on uniforms and one for a camp blanket or hat.

Among the guests was Sue Walton, who led one of the first experimental Beaver groups in the 1970s. She said she volunteered because her sons joined Beavers, and then stayed on when they moved up to Cubs and Scouts because "it was fun."

Henderson said the good turnout showed there are still people in Acton who care about Scouting, and what it can do for the community's youth.

"Fifty years ago there might have been 100 kids in Scouting, but it's the sign of the times that we have approximately 40 kids – there's lots of competition now with sports and other programs," Henderson said.

As Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Venturers shot off bottle rockets, raced a soapbox-racing car, set off a Scout-built cannon and played games, former Scouts reminisced about earlier days, including Hartley De-Forest, who was a Scout in 1948.

"It was something to do. It was better than standing on the streets like they do today," he said.

The 1st Acton Scouting groups began their weekly meetings last month, but registration is still open. For information call 519-853-2751.



THEN AND NOW: Current members of 1st Acton Scouting (left) and former Acton Scouts (below) attended a recent open house at the Scout Hall to mark the 100th anniversary of Scouting in Acton. – Frances Niblock photos



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