

# Ballantrae scouts celebrating 50th with new addition

BY HANNELORE VOLPE  
Staff Writer

After five decades, the First Ballantrae Scouts have something new to celebrate.

After almost eight years' absence, a scout troop has been started up for 11- to 14-year-old boys — and the Beavers and Cubs are thriving.

At the Ballantrae scouts 50th anniversary banquet May 16, present and past members and leaders will get together to receive awards, be recognized for their achievements and reminisce about scouting through the years.

This year, there are 12 beavers (ages 5 to 7) and three leaders; nine cubs, who are 8 to 10 years old, and two leaders. There are seven scouts with two leaders.

The scouts are led by David Martineau and Doug McDougall; Beavers leaders are Ian Rock and Mike Catalano and recent arrival Rick Faber. The cubs are led by Suzanne McDougall and Tim Neuman.

Mr. Martineau is in his 12th year of scouting. He chose the Scouts as an activity for his son a few years ago, and stayed on to "make sure the Beaver program stays alive," he said.

After finishing university, he wanted to volunteer in his community and being a Scout leader "was a natural thing to do," he said. His 10-

year-old son Brandon will move up to the scouts next year. Mr. Martineau is aiming to increase the boys' self-reliance by giving them tasks such as setting menus and shopping for camping trips. When he first runs the idea past them, they stare at him in disbelief and ask, "You want us to do what?"

The scout troop is trying to raise enough funds to attend the Canadian Jamboree next summer. On the Victoria Day weekend, they'll be camping in Algonquin Park.

Quartermaster Brian Horton, who received his 10-year recognition award from Scouts Canada, makes it possible for the packs to go camping and canoeing by storing tents, canoes and other items until they're needed.

Many of the scout leaders found the scouting program after looking for alternatives to sports for their sons. As well as going on trips, doing crafts and camping, beavers, cubs and scouts give back to their community at an early age. The children participate in community cleanups and raise funds for worthy causes, such as the OSPCA and CBMI's Sight for Kids programs.

The appeal of a new pumped-up program drew in several boys from both Ballantrae and Whitchurch Highlands public schools and even St. Mark's Catholic School in Stouffville this year. Even with some boys advancing to the next level at the beginning of the season, the pack has doubled its membership, Beaver leader Ian Rock noted.

One bonus of being a beaver, cub or scout is that you learn life skills such as how to be safe in your home, how to do simple home repairs or jobs such as changing the furnace filter, and learn basic first aid. Camping and survival skills are emphasized. The boys also learn about the world around them and discuss world issues at their level.

"I can't think of anything else kids can be involved in for nine months of the year that costs so little and where they do so much," Mrs. McDougall said.

Long-time scout leader Robert Gamble's father Kenneth was a Cub leader in Ballantrae in the early 1960s. Then the Cub pack, which had close to 20 members, met at Ballantrae Public School. The scouting movement was larger then, Robert Gamble noted, because there wasn't the abundance of other sports such as soccer, baseball and hockey.

Joining the scouts "was something for the local youth to do," he said.

The area around Musselman's Lake at that time was "basically a poor area," he explained. Instead of hopping on a bus for a far-distance



STAFF PHOTO/MIKE BARRETT

Tyler Hartwick (right) models a vintage 1970s uniform while fellow Ballantrae cub Robbie Allensports shows off the modern look. The Ballantrae scouts are celebrating their 50th anniversary this month.

camp, the cubs camped in Mr. Gamble's back yard.

The volunteer work that the troop does, such as tree planting in their community, is just "pay back," Mr. Gamble said.

The 50th anniversary banquet begins at 7 p.m. at the Ballantrae Community Centre on Aurora Road. Councillor Phil Bannon, scout-area

commissioners Bob Cole and Donna Hazlett, and members of the Ballantrae and District Lions Club, who sponsor the scouts, will be in attendance.

To find out more about Scouting in the Ballantrae area, call 905-642-3240. To reach reporter Hannelore Volpe, e-mail hvolve@img.com

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