Valley Highlands Area: Scouts Canada. April 05

"Notes'N'News"

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Last 2nd April | New 8th April | First 15th April | Full 22nd April | Last 29th April | New May 6th

Editorial…

We are rapidly coming to the traditional end of the Scout year. The Summer is a time when we can get out there and do things prohibited by winter so this month I am offering program ideas for the summer. I hope you find them useful.

Jim's Wisdom…

TRAINING, TRAINING, TRAINING! There are a lot of great courses out there for the Scout aged youth, First Aid, Baby Sitter, White Water 1, White Water 2, White Water 3 and many more. Have a look at the council web site, see what is out there for you. Leaders done be intimidated with Venture level courses, they will accept Venture age Scouts or Scouts about to move on to Ventures as part of their linking efforts. Take advantages of these courses, not only will the experience thrill you and give you new adventures but the qualification will also give you resume points for when you start looking for those summer jobs. They are all coming up soon so book now and have fun.

Stuck for a program idea…

Pop in the library and borrow a copy of "War and Peace" or "The Dead Sea Scrolls" or even the " Chronicle of the First Ten Centuries of Civil Government in China". Or if you think those might be beyond your kid's ken, then try Lewis Carrol's "*Through the looking glass*." Or try the *Jungle Book*, or the tales of the *Brother Grim*, maybe even *Æsop's fables*, and have a Pack read-in just for the heck of it.

"The time has come the Walrus said, to talk of many things: Of shoes-and ships-and sealing wax.
Of cabbages-and Kings, -and why the sea is boiling hot- And whether pigs have wings"

Children of all ages like to hear stories, some like to help read them, but not too many know how to choose the right book for individual *fun* reading. Such readings can help stimulate the child's imagination and spur them on to taking an interest in reading for themselves. You may just provide the missing link – helping your youth to a much better tomorrow, through reading to success.

Maybe you could re-schedule your meeting and have a visit to the library instead. Talk to the librarian first of course, and you will get lots of help to make your visit worthwhile.

Thank Heaven's…

Latitude as well as season affects the position of the constellations in the night sky. Lay down on your back facing north, (Head at south with toes at north) each night at the same time a star will be slightly to the west of its position the previous day. The 'Pole Star's,' height above the horizon is the same as your latitude (42.5°) degrees north. July 1st the season changes to summer – what differences do you see in the position of the stars now? As Leo sinks in the west, a number of new constellations move up from the east. The summer sky is not quite so brilliant as the spring sky so you are not likely to see more than 6 1st magnitude stars, however there are constellations a plenty and the Milky Way is most impressive in summer. On October 1st the season changes yet again and things begin to get a little confusing. The constellations start to overlap one another so are more difficult to discern. Remember you will always need ten – fifteen minutes out in the dark for your eyes to acclimatize.

Useless Trivia…

Did you know that William Shakespeare died on the day he was born ? 'Tis true, he was born on April 23rd 1564 and died on April 23rd 1616 - Fifty-two years to the day. He is buried in Poets Corner in Westminster Abbey, London.

A lot of Hot air…

It is 222 years since man first left the ground and traveled through the air in a vehicle of his own making. In 1783 the 'Montgolfier brothers built the 'Cloud-in-a-paper bag,' a balloon made of paper glued over a thin cane structure with a brazier slung underneath it. Below the brazier, a wicker basket carried a sheep, a duck, and a cockerel into the air. This was followed very quickly by the first manned flight. On November 21st, at La Murtte, just outside Paris Pilâtre de Rozier and the Marquis d'Arlandes became the first aeronauts in a Montgolfier Balloon. Not to be outdone, Jacques Alexandre and Marie-Noel Robert took off from the Tuileries Gardens in Paris, on December 2nd 1783 in a balloon filled with hydrogen gas. Much has happened since that time but there are still some balloon flights worthy of note here.

On the 16th of August 1960, Captain Joseph W. Kittinger ascended to altitude of 102,886 feet then jumped by parachute to begin his long decent. This was the longest parachute jump in the world and was to investigate the conditions to which Astronauts would be exposed while returning from space. Much more recently, Steve Fossett, an English/American, flew around the world in a record breaking solo flight in a hot air balloon in 2002.

You too can have fun with hot air balloons**. But beware of fire and burns hazards**.

First make certain your insurance is up to date.

You will need: A tall Kitchen bin liner, a piece of fine light wire, A roll of *Double Sided scotch tape,* an 8" square of tin foil, a wad of cotton wool, a small amount of naphtha fuel, a spool of light fishing line and a match.

1. Make a ring out of the light wire, about eight inches (20cm) diameter. Reserving three pieces of wire, each about 5" long and one piece about 8" long.
2. Open the bag and fill with air, Seal any holes in the bag. Now carefully stick the open end of the bag around the wire ring, you may need to ruffle the bag to obtain an even distribution of the bag round the ring for good balance. Stick with the double-sided tape. Keeping tape to a minimum to keep weight down.
3. Attach the three reserved pieces of wire evenly around the wire ring.
4. To these wires attach a small cup using the tin foil.
5. Attach the 8" piece of wire to the ring on the bag and to this wire attach the spool of light fishing line. **The balloon must be tethered, by Law.**
6. In a separate cup, soak the cotton swab with fuel: Do not over-fill, excess fuel will make the balloon too heavy. Place the cotton wool wad into the foil cup making sure the foil cup is centered on the balloon ring. **Remove all surplus Naphtha from the area.**
7. Hold the balloon by its top so that the foil cup is off the ground.
8. Light the naphtha with the match and allow a couple of seconds for the air in the balloon to heat up.
9. Allow balloon to rise. Allowing the fishing line to unwind freely.
10. You may need to adjust the amount of fuel for best results.
11. Take care - too much wind will collapse the bin liner to melt and possibly burn, creating a fire risk.
12. Please clean up after yourselves. Please act responsibly. Do not leave litter or fishline for our innocent cousins to choke on. Enjoy.

Error free Hiking and Camping…

It's time now to get out and about, so that means its time for some tips on error free Hiking and Camping. You will of course need to practice these skills **before** you set off into the wilderness.

1. **Be Prepared.** Check out this list of items you should take on a hike. 1. Band-Aids. 2. A thermos and cup containing hot water. 3. A bag for your garbage. 4. Tissues or toilet paper. 5. Sunscreen 6. A hat. 7. A rain coat. 8. Note book and pencil. 9 A yogurt tub with holes in lid. 10. Pen knife. 11. Wetproof Matches. 12 Whistle. 13. A map of the area you are hiking in. 14. Coins for telephone and the number to call if you need help. (If you don't remember the number use 911) 15. INSECT REPELLENT.
2. **Waterproof matches**. Nothing worse than getting stuck out in the bush with wet matches. You can wetproof your matches in the following way… Get an empty tin can and clean the inside properly. Over a gentle heat, melt a candle in the can, Bundle about ten matches together with a piece of wire or a pipe cleaner, when the candle is melted and runny dip your matches into the warm wax, and hang up the bundle to cool. When cool remove the wire and put matches into a ziplock bag with a piece of sandpaper. Keep the bag closed at all times to keep the sandpaper dry. When you need a match break one off the bundle, clean off the wax with your fingernail and strike on the sandpaper.

3. **Wild berry leather rolls.** Make your hike really special. Ask adults to identify wild edible berries (Many berries are poisonous) collect a large bowlful of the berries, blackberry or raspberries are best. Mash the berries to pulp with a potato masher and spread the pulp over a foil tray to about half a centimeter thick. Cover and leave in a dry cool place for about a week to dry. When dry, sprinkle with sugar and roll up the leather like a jellyroll. Cut into easy bite size pieces and pack in a ziplock bag.
4. **HOle Potato. Before** you set your fire, think about the meal ahead. Wash your potato and spike it a few times, then dig a small hole where your fire is to be set. Place your potato in the hole and cover lightly with ashes from a previous fire. Or use the soil dug out of the hole but do not pack it down. Light your fire over the hole. Your potato will cook in a little over an hour. Scrape the fire to one side and retrieve the potato with a clean pointed stick. Cut it open and spread butter inside. Add salt and pepper to taste or even strawberry jam – umm-hmm.
5. **Find the best tinder.** Tinder needs to be very dry. Use the inner bark of dead branches, Twigs snapped off the tree and slit open, An abandoned bird or mouse nest, again break it open to expose the inner dry parts, Silk from milkweed or cattails, even the paper-like fiber of abandoned wasp nests. (Better make certain it is abandoned though) Brown dried up twigs on lower branches of spruce, balsam or cedar trees, and of course the fine curly wisps of Birchbark. Make sure you have a good supply of kindling nearby so that when you get a flame you can start feeding it right away.
6. **Breakfast bake.** Cut an orange in half and eat the orange, clean out the skin to form a perfect cup. Prop up the cup with a few small stones to keep it level, Crack your egg into the cup and put it in the hot coals, (no Flames) cook egg for five minutes. Eat egg right out of the orange cup.
7. **Dessert Sandwich.** Shave a piece of chocolate onto a slice of bread or Graham cracker, add some marshmallow and cover with second slice of bread or cracker, wrap in tin foil and place in hot embers for about three minutes. Take care opening the foil it will be very hot.
8. **Dandelion Eggs.** Fed up with plain old eggs? – Don't be. Whisk up your eggs in the usual way for scrambled or omelet's, Collect some fresh dandelion leaves and wash, then chop up small and add to egg mixture, cook as usual. (Dandelion leaves are non-toxic and contain high nutritive value).
9. **Hawaiian Toast.** As for French toast but add half a cup of pineapple juice to egg mixture. Cook bacon to desired crispness. Fry pineapple slices in bacon fat. Serve all together –Hot.

Where am I… ?

So many people know how to use a compass and read a map, but not too many know how to find their physical position on the map. Here's how – guaranteed…

1. Locate two landmarks on the ground *and identify them* on the map as landmarks A + B.
2. Using your 'Sylva type' compass, take magnetic bearings of each landmark. Make a note of each bearing.
3. **Deduct** the magnetic variation to make them into **Grid** bearings. Make a note of the new grid bearings.
4. **Forget the magnetic bearings**
5. Set the map.
6. Set the 1st **Grid** bearing on the compass and place the compass on the map adjacent to landmark A. Turn the entire compass until the orienteering lines, line up with the North/South grid lines on the map. (The North end (red) of the compass needle and the orientation arrow on the floor of the compass bezel **and** the top of the map should now all be in line.)
7. Draw an extended line through landmark A. along the side of the compass base plate.
8. Repeat item 5 for second grid bearing, and again draw an extended line through landmark B. **Where lines cross is where you are.**
9. ***This known as "Re-section"***
10. Now take the troop out to an undisclosed location and get them to practice the above.

There will be a test on this !

Compass Bearings v Grid Bearings…

Yes… There is a difference. Compass bearings are **magnetic** bearings adjusted to the magnetic variation for the place you are at. Grid bearings are compass bearings taken from a map in relation to the map **gridlines**. Here's how to sort it out. To apply a compass bearing to a map Remember **MUGS** this means Magnetic Unto Grid = Subtract. This means you have to subtract the value of the Magnetic Variation from your compass bearing before applying it to the map. To convert a Grid bearing to a magnetic

bearing remember **GUMA**, this means Grid Unto Magnetic = Add, Here you have to add the magnetic Variation to make magnetic bearing you can walk on.
Lets say your destination lies along a magnetic bearing of 274° and the magnetic variation is 14° to convert this to a Grid bearing subtract the MV 14. Degrees now plot this new bearing on the map. To give a magnetic bearing from a destination on the map, find the grid bearing and then add the MV 14 degrees. So a Grid (map) bearing of 83° PLUS the MV 14°= 97 degrees. Walk on this bearing.

Obstacle crossing…

Moving across country you are almost bound to come to an obstacle that you cannot cross.
The problem is how to do this without losing direction.
If you can see across the obstruction, this is not too much of a problem. Take a bearing of some prominent feature, go around the obstruction until you exactly pick up your bearing again. If you cannot see over or through the obstruction, you now need to be more careful. Take a bearing of your heading and make a note of it. Now set your compass an angle of 90° either left or right of your heading (depends which way you decide is the shorter route to go around the obstruction, check your map !) now walk in the direction of the new bearing, **carefully counting the paces** until you are clear of the obstruction. Now reset your bearing for your original heading. Proceed on this bearing until you are again clear of the obstruction. Now reset your first 90° bearing and add 180°. Now walk on this latest bearing **for the number of paces previously counted**. Now reset your original bearing again. By this time you should be back on your original course with the obstacle behind you.
The following diagram makes this quite clear. Again click on image. Pick up bottom corner and pull down to enlarge image.
Always get your partner to do his or her own calculations and then compare… Two heads **are** better than one.
Be sure to practice '**Pacing**' to be sure you know the number **of your paces** that it takes to cover a hundred meters etc. then make allowances for rough terrain e.g. Add a percentage of paces on rough, boggy, sand, uneven or uphill ground. Better still practice in as many different types of terrain as possible. Keep a note of these in your notebook; you never know when you might need to refer to them.

Before setting out…. Make a route card. Leave a copy with someone responsible **other than a family member. Remember to notify them when you return, or they will send out a search party in vain.**
A route card gives details of each leg of your hike; the map references and route bearings, distance traveled, and estimated time for each leg.
Always make your route card from home back to home or camp back to camp.
Again there will be a test !

Bicycle Hike….

Ever considered a Bike Hike. This can be a lot of fun. 4 or 5 miles on a Saturday afternoon with a bottle of drink some trail mix and a few simple tools to mend a puncture will make good practice runs to pace and time yourselves. Once you have mastered that much gradually extend your trips to help build up your stamina and experience. In the meantime try to get an adult to help you make Pannier Bags for your bike. It is not a good idea to carry too much weight on your back, it can make you wobble out of control and run into the path of a huge transport that will turn you into roadkill. It will also tire you out very quickly indeed. Soon enough you will be ready to take off in three's or better yet as a patrol for an overnight trip. If you are lucky you can camp without tents, which will substantially cut down the load you have to carry.
Sound boring, - well I once (1957) took my patrol on a four-week trip from London to Wales and back. We trained for several months starting with very short trips, both in daylight and after dark, in fine weather and foul. On E-day (Expedition day) we rode our bicycles from Croydon to London (17 miles) and then took the train to Llandudno in North Wales. From here we cycled to a little village that has the longest name in the world. Ok… wait for it…

"Lanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwllllandysiliogogogoch"

Sure it is written in welsh but that's all part of the fun. Especially since the signposts along the roads only say "Llanfair PG" Maybe you can look it up on the Internet and find out what it means in English.

From here we made our way south visiting a working coal mine, a replica copper mine, lots of castles and linked up with many scout groups along our route. These troops were a terrific help to us. One troop came with us on a trip to the top of Cadre Idris a 2,927-ft mountain, on foot of course. Another Seascout Troop provided us with rowing boats for a river trip, and transported our bikes for us so that we did not have to waste time returning the boats. Another troop put us up in their HQ after a day of torrential rain, which allowed us to dry out overnight.

At the end of the second week we had a four-day rest during which we camped over a stable at a castle in return for doing chores about the home farm. A few days later we stayed at the Capel Curig National Mountaineering Center for some serious rock climbing. Further on we had a trip to some serious caves where we were taken by yet another troop for a two-day canoe trip through the caves at almost half-a-mile under the Brecon Beacons. We ended our trip in Swansea, camping out overnight by the seashore before catching the train back to London.

Here we stayed the night at Baden-Powel house before riding our bicycles back to Croydon. During the four weeks we mended 187 punctures, bought 7 new tires, and replaced one wheel over a distance of 347 miles (Not counting the rail journeys.). And I should tell you that we all had old upright bikes. (Ask your Grandfather about these) No sports bikes or Mountain bikes in those days. A couple of years later someone invented the motor car. I should also tell you, my muscles still ache whenever I think about that wonderful trip with the Tiger Patrol from the 4th Wallington Troop.

So… Summer's Coming… Ok, we have for the most part spent the last six months or so cooped up in the meeting hall, quite possibly just playing games. What now? Are we going to let the summer pass by without Scouting. If your answer is yes – Then you should ask yourself -Why? Our Youth – Your Youth signed up for a year of Scouting so why are you planning to short change them. Most Scout Training is OUTDOOR stuff. You cannot do outdoor stuff in the Canadian Winter so why quit now that the best weather is arriving? Where is the mandate that say's Scouting is only a six-month thing? Yes we've heard the arguments that the youth play hockey or softball or go to riding school etc – but I guarantee they are not otherwise occupied every day of every week and every weekend for the entire summer. So why are you stopping Scouting? You do not need to meet in a hall for the summer; in fact you most certainly should not. Scouting was designed for the Outdoors. Some of your youth may be occupied on your usual night, I agree that's possible so why not simply change your meeting night - Or meet on the weekend? Meet once a fortnight for a long weekend starting Friday night through 'til Sunday lunchtime. **And do remember that your Group committee people are there to relieve you** if you are going away on holiday. One of the reasons Scouting is struggling is because our programs are not giving the youth what they want – *Fun – Action – Fun and more fun*. And did I mention – **Action**. They want to get out there, to get down and dirty and put into practice all the things you have taught them throughout the winter months. – Assuming you did teach them something and not just play games. If you did only play games – NOW is the time to put the matter straight and get out there with your youth and get to grips with some real Scouting. They will enjoy it and so will you. And your troop will be better for it next season. – I Promise.
Now is the time to set up your Patrol Leader's Council and Plan the program for your summer activities.
By the time you read this I will be back in Canada (15th April) so if you need help to set up a program for the summer please call me. My telephone number will be (613) 722 5040 Until May 1st then it will revert to (613) 283 1525 when I will be back at the cottage on Bass lake. Or you can call Ken Richardson, Roger Nuttall, Alyssa Comstock or Jim Britton, we are all here to help you. That's our job. Please Use us. We want your group to succeed.