



# 1<sup>st</sup> BLACKBURN SCOUTS NEWS



Hello to Parents and Scouts !

I think it is fair to suggest that things have not run as smoothly as had been planned for at the outset of the Scouting year. Because of this; I would like to open with an apology to everyone for any inconveniences or stressing "moments of doubts" that transpired **before** I was able to sit down and fire off this message to you on behalf of the Leader Team.

Early into the year, two of the lead Scouters simultaneously experienced a "shift" in their working life. This meant that their volunteer service time to scouting was placed directly in conflict with that of their daily jobs. At that point, Mike Turtle and Bill Smallman were both forced to greatly reduce their involvement with the Scout Troop. Blackburn Scouting Group Committee immediately stepped in and started trying to figure out a leadership solution. After some consideration and speaking with several of the leaders involved, I decided to personally step forward and try to directly assist the Scout troop by taking on a co-ordinator role. My name is Rick Davidson. I am a 6 year Leader in Blackburn with the Beavers program. I was also a Cub and a Scout in my youth. I have a son, Jordan, who is in his second year of Scouting and I travelled on all of the Scouting camps and trips last year. I am now set to finish out the current year as a Lead Scouter to help the Troop in any way that I can.

Therefore---as a function of this role, I thought that the time might be right to send out this small "overview" for your consideration to help "fill in any blanks" about matters past, present or future for your Scout.

Over the past two meetings, the Scouts have identified two of the Voyageur Badges that they would like to work on as a Troop. Each of these badges has several components that must be accomplished in order to earn the right to wear them. The leader team will now use these elements to form the backbone of the Scouting Program for the rest of the 2004-2005 year. Individual Challenge badges have been "re-introduced" and we have already had our first evening of badge testing and awards! This is personal work/development that each Scout chooses for himself. We invite them (and you) to use these badges as a chance to work together to gain new skills while also having some fun. Badge testing nights will be notated on the Program Calendar (soon to be released) so be prepared for your Scout to need some extra help carrying some "projects" into a Tuesday night meeting. Remember, the requirements for every challenge badge are clearly defined and listed in the Scout Handbook. Please feel free to make notes in the Handbook with your Scout about when/how certain requirements have been met. No badge will be rewarded without a Leader reviewing and discussing the facts with each Scout. And, sometimes the lesson learned from this test is that a Scout was NOT as "prepared" as they thought they were. However, learning from this and re-focusing to try again is all part of the process.

You may have also noted that the emphasis in the Scout program has turned to the Scouts fending for themselves and becoming able to take charge of many things that they do.

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We just returned from our FIRST weekend camp held at Camp Opemikon outside of Perth ( [www.opemikon.org](http://www.opemikon.org) ). We specifically used this time for the Scouts to:

- a) consider, prepare and use a personal pack list for a camp and
- b) be trained in the use of Gas/Propane stoves and lanterns---leading to an individual test to see if they qualified to hold a SCOUTING PERMIT for the right to operate and make use of these items during their camping programs.

And, although Mother Nature threw a wide variety of temperatures and conditions at us---I am proud to report that the six Scouts that went "weathered" the conditions very well and ALL of them earned their Scouting Stove/Lantern Permit ! I am also pleased to share with you that on several occasions during the weekend the Scouts showed great maturity and responsibility. They requested and were granted personal, free time to explore the camp with a "buddy". They not only did this constructively but also worked to assist camp staff and they always arrived on time for our many scheduled events throughout the weekend (without prompting or disciplinary actions). You may have already heard all of these details first-hand from your Scout. I sincerely hope that a smile and a sense of pride/accomplishment accompanied the telling.

THIS is what Scouting is. The leader team feels that the troop has an opportunity to explore and learn many new areas of Scouting. Therefore, the leaders will be meeting this week to plan the meetings and camps (all of the Scouting activities) for the full 2004-2005 year. However, what we will be specifically creating is a calendar that is often populated with somewhat vague notations like: Winter Camp ---details to be confirmed (TBC). This is because we will want the Scouts themselves to decide as a Troop the intimate details like:

- Where will we go?
- How will we go?
- How long will we stay?
- What will we do?
- What will we take?
- What will we eat/cook?
- What will we have acquired when we are done?

When the Program Calendar is done (hopefully in time for NEXT MEETING---Tuesday, November 30) we will put a copy into every Scout's hands. We want them to post it somewhere for easy and constant reference. Hopefully, they will want to bring it to EVERY MEETING so they can fill in details on it as THEY decide what those details exactly are.

As for forthcoming information---we will also try and make sure that Parent Consent Forms and sufficient support materials are sent home in a timely and regular fashion well PRIOR to the scheduled dates. We welcome the attendance of parents at meetings, outings, events or (if desired) camps/tours. Please feel free to speak with any member of the Leader Team about the Program Calendar, upcoming events, items of interest (for YOU or your Scout) or to discuss any badge or other "Scout work" that you may wish to help support your Scout in.

Here's hoping that the 2004-2005 Scout year provides an adventure that all of us (Leaders, Parents AND Scouts) can learn from and grow with.

#### Your Scouting Leader Team

Rick Davidson (762-6367)  
Jim Shepherd  
Rick Mitchell  
Derek Purcell

Mike Turtle  
Bill Smallman

Rick Aubrey (Sea Scout Activities Coordinator)

