

UNIFORM ISSUES:

Youth Members Set the Direction

by Bonita Brick

Bring on the Adventure!

That's what people should think about when they see Scouts, Venturers or Rovers being active within their communities. To help us "Bring on the Adventure" to more young people – as well as promote the active, outdoor programs that we offer – youth members of Scouts Canada have set the future direction of uniform usage within the older age sections (Scouts, Venturers and Rovers).

After a number of years of study and research, in May 2002 the National Youth Committee recommended that Scouts Canada add options to the current uniform for the three older sections. Almost immediately the proposal gained the full support of both the National Commissioner and the National Management Committee.

The uniform direction includes three key points (listed below) that pertain to the Scout, Venturer and Rover sections.

1. *Recognition that Scouting needs several official uniform options for both "program activities" and "formal activities".* Youth have continued to tell us that they want a choice when it comes to uniform. Some people find that the tan shirt is acceptable

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for all occasions; others find it okay for Scouting functions only. But, a growing number of youth members do not like the uniform at all. Research shows that the present uniform is a barrier to membership. In other words, the uniform *stops* some people from joining Scouting.

2. *Empower youths to choose which uniform option best suits their needs.* After the most recent uniform discussions, it became evident that adult leaders were deciding how and when

youth members would wear the uniform within the sections. However, often the youths found these directions both impractical and inflexible. The result: they started leaving the organization in ever-growing numbers. What's more, program structures designed to allow for youth decision-making were not being implemented or employed as they should.

3. *A need to continue to wear a necker, when appropriate.* A necker is the one standard uniform item recognized by most Scouting organizations around the world. It also serves to identify individual groups on occasions where more than one group is present. In addition, the necker can be used during emergency situations.

Options, Options, Options

Choice: that's what the new direction for uniform wear (*in older sections only*) revolves around. Who will make this choice? Individual youths and their parents will make the choice of uniform wear on all occasions. Adult Scouters will *not* make this decision.

Program Activities

Program activities may include, but are not limited to, weekly meetings/outings, camps and travel. Members may choose to wear either the tan shirt and accessories that we have today, OR one of the optional uniform shirts and fleece. Only Scout, Venturer youth members (and their parents) or Rovers, will decide which of these uniform options will be worn, not adult Scouters.

Program Activity

Tan Shirt, Necker and Blue Pants

OR

New Shirt(s), Necker*,
Blue/Beige Pants and Fleece

* if appropriate.

Formal Activity

Tan Shirt, Necker,
Blue Pants and Sash

OR

White Shirt, Tie**,
Blue/Beige Pants
or Skirt/Dress

** or appropriate attire for females.

Formal Activities

What are formal activities? They may include (but are not limited to):

- g Major award ceremonies (e.g. Chief Scout's/Queens Venturer)
- g Remembrance Day
- g Civic meetings
- g Major business fund-raising events.

Direction Endorsed at National Meetings

During the most recent national meetings, in November 2002, the Youth Committee presented this new direction creatively in the form of a fashion show. Not only did Provincial

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Commissioners and others react positively to the new direction, but they acknowledged and expressed great appreciation for the time and effort that Youth Committee members spent consulting Scouting youths on the matter.

What's Next?

The National Youth Committee will work very closely with the folks from Scouts Canada's National Retail Services to design a new line of uniform options. We anticipate that by September 2003, or earlier, youth members in the Scout, Venturer and Rover sections will be able to choose a uniform that will not only promote the active, outdoor programs that we run, but also that they feel happy wearing.

As soon as the designs and colours are chosen, National Retail Services and the National Youth Committee will publicize the uniform choices widely.

A Voice from the Past

Thank you to all those who have supported the work of the National Youth Committee on this issue over the past years. By listening, and acting on the changes identified by youth members, we will ensure Scouting's ability to "Bring on the Adventure" well into the future.

In closing, let's consider some words spoken by the past Chair of the National Youth Committee, Tyler Arrell – now International Commissioner for Scouts Canada:

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q: Why is an alternate uniform necessary?

A: For many years, Scouts Canada has been reviewing the issue of membership. Throughout the many discussions and gatherings, it has become evident that the present uniform is a barrier to some youths who wish to join older Scouting sections. A growing number of members have repeatedly said that the uniform is impractical and militaristic – not cool and fun.

Q: Does the alternate uniform apply to all Scouting sections?

A: No. The alternate options only apply to Scouts, Venturers and Rovers. Beavers and Cubs will continue wearing their present uniforms as in past years.

Q: What are the benefits of the alternate uniform?

A: The benefits are many. The alternate uniform will be:

- g Everyday wear
- g Easy to take care of
- g Practical and comfortable for activities
- g Attractive and stylish (i.e. cool and fun).

Q: How will this uniform choice affect ceremonies?

A: It won't. Ceremonies themselves exist in Scouting to celebrate achievements and special occasions. There is no reason to change any ceremonies with-

in the sections because of what we wear. All ceremonies presented in the past will remain.

Q: How will we salute when wearing the alternate uniform?

A: The Scout salute is a sign of respect within the Scouting Movement. Our salute is *not* a military one, and so it is not governed by military protocol. Scouts should continue to salute in appropriate circumstances (i.e. flag raising, national anthems, etc.).

Q: Where will youth display their badges with the alternate uniform?

A: For the immediate future, the sash will remain the appropriate method for youth to display their badges.

Q: Who decides what uniform will be worn?

A: Youth members and their parents will decide what uniform will be worn on all occasions. Adult leaders will *not* make this decision.

Now that the uniform direction has been set, make sure every youth member in older sections finds out about the new direction. Do you have a comment? Send it to the National Youth Committee at 1345 Baseline Road, Ottawa, ON, K2C 0A7, or e-mail: nyc@scouts.ca.

"Our uniform doesn't define us as Scouts Canada members. We define ourselves through our actions and values. We don't need a tan shirt on our backs to know that we are part of the largest and best youth development organization in the world. It's time to stop bickering about the clothes we wear while participating in Scouting activities, accept the reality of change,

and get the focus back on providing adventurous, educational programs to more youths across Canada."

Happy Scouting! X

— Bonita Brick is chair of the National Youth Committee, and the Assistant National Commissioner — Youth.

Wear appropriate clothing for outdoor activities.

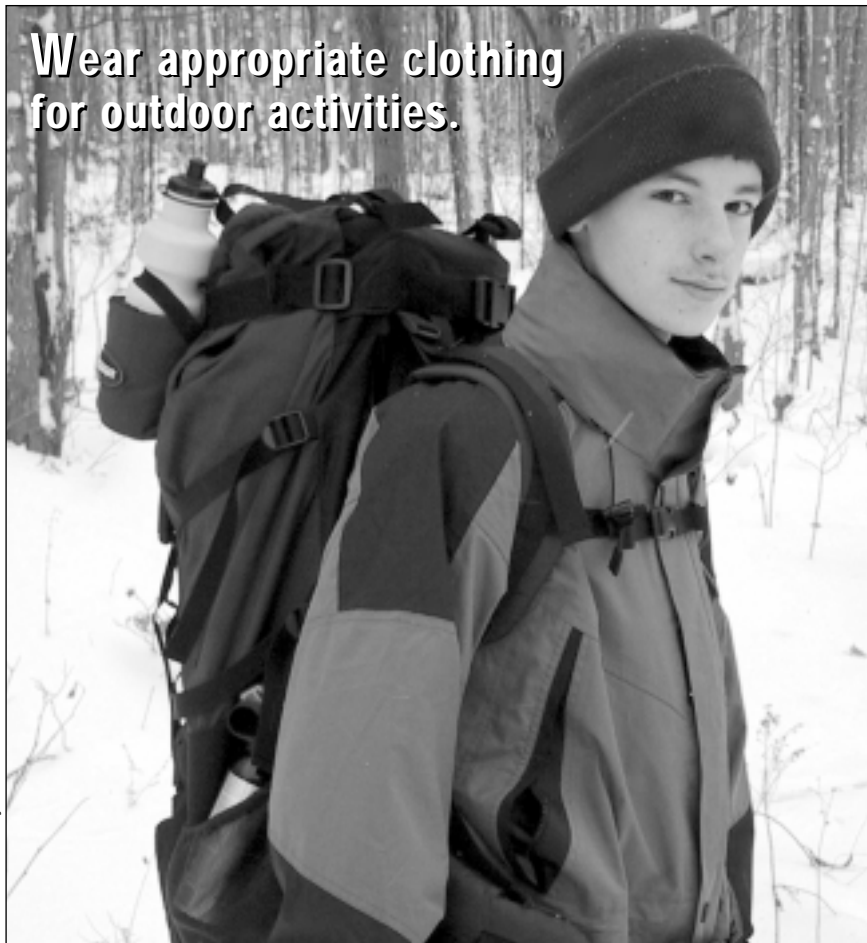


Photo: Allen Macartney

LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

by Mike Scott

Making decisions is a large part of what leadership is all about. To make good decisions, a leader must have good information and be able to communicate it to enlist support for the decision based on it.

I witnessed such leadership from our National Youth Committee at our most recent national meetings. These young people have set a direction for this organization based on sound research and input. They have enlisted support for a uniform direction

that allows for choice; not only for choice of what can be worn, but possibly more important, who actually gets to choose.

I ask every leader to support this new direction.

Youths have spoken about this issue for many years. Youths have set a direction for change. Youths have provided the opportunity for all to participate in Scouting in the future.

Scouting builds leaders. Your National Youth Committee has proven it.

— Mike Scott is Scouts Canada's new National Commissioner.

PROGRAM ACTIVITY FOR UNIFORM DISCUSSIONS

Here's a fun activity that will lead a patrol, troop or company into a discussion about the new uniform direction.

Decode this Cipher

Ask youth members to decode the message below, then read the article and discuss its meaning in your group.

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CCASI ONSWI LLBEM ADEBY THEIR
DIVID UALYO UTHME MBERS ANDTH
EIRPA RENTS ITWIL LNOTB EASCO
UTERD ECISI ONXXX.

(Answer: The choice of uniform for all occasions will be made by the individual youth members and their parents. It will not be a Scouter decision.)

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