



The Baden-Powell Guild: *Active and Working For Scouts Canada*

by Bill Fettes

In Canada, there is an adult association of almost a thousand retired and still-active Scouters and their friends, who meet to socialize and lend support to Scouting. This is the Canadian Fellowship of Baden-Powell Guilds.

While the B.-P. Guild works closely with Scouts Canada, it is a separate association. One must still be a member of Scouts Canada to participate in Scouts Canada activities and work with youth.

Ever since the very first generation of Scouts came of age, there have been Old Scouts groups worldwide. The first international association, the International Fellowship of Former Scouts and Guides (IFOFSAG) was formed in 1952. This unwieldy title has been changed to its current one, the International Scout and Guide Fellowship (ISGF). Its headquarters are in Brussels, with eighteen national associations under its umbrella.

In Canada, the Canadian Fellowship of B.-P. Guilds began with one group in Vancouver. It now has active groups in every province.

Members of the B.-P. Guilds take the Scout Law and Promise, and are invested into their local Guild. If there is no Guild nearby, people may join the Central Guild; entitling them to receive the newsletter and participate in provincial gatherings. Groups of five or more may make application to form their own Guild.

There is no required uniform. Many Guilds have adopted their own unique activity wear, but at formal gatherings, most wear a crested navy blazer with grey skirt or slacks.

There is no structured program in the B.-P. Guild. Guilds are self-directing; each choosing its own activities and meeting schedule based on the wishes and abilities of its members. Each Guild adopts its own constitution, but all Guilds must operate under the general Aims and Objectives of the Canadian Fellowship.



Audrey Ridge adds those extra touches to a staff luncheon

Activities chosen by Guilds vary from simple gatherings of long-time Scouting friends at barbecues or dinner-theatre evenings – to fund-raising events for local and regional Scouting. They may participate in active leadership and group sponsorship. Individuals participate only as they are willing and able.

Many Guild members serve on Jamboree staff, working behind the scenes to maintain and repair local campsites. Cooking for camps and providing refreshments for district events is very popular, as is operating Kub Kar rallies and staffing Scout-Guide Week displays.

Some groups, in the name of Scouting, choose to serve their local communities. A Calgary group served refreshments at the swearing-in of new Canadians at Citizenship Court for many years. A Surrey-Delta group made hundreds of wooden toys for a local community association's Christmas charity. Some Guilds, like the 17th Vancouver, were formed to meet specific needs such as providing medical, dental and security services for Scouting events.

The ISGF holds world meetings in different countries every three years. The 2005 World Conference will take place in Norway. All Guild members are welcome to attend these week-long conferences as delegates or observers. Some members plan their travelling around the World Conferences and are billeted by Guild members of the host country.

Through the ongoing sale of used stamps collected by its members, the ISGF is able to fund leader training in underdeveloped countries. Other special projects are funded as needed.

Just like Scouts Canada and Girl Guides of Canada, the B.-P. Guild has a sister association: the Trefoil Guild. There are many Trefoil Guilds across Canada, and their members attend the World Conferences as well.

Potential members of B.-P. Guilds can be male or female, current or former members of Scouting, spouses of Scouters and even those who are just friends of Scouting. All members are adult and any work with youth is done through a fully screened membership in Scouts Canada.

The B.-P. Guild does not take leaders away from Scouting; one may be a member while retaining active membership in Scouts Canada. The Guild really shines as an association for those who would like to step back from active weekly Scouting but still want to be involved on a lesser basis. Without the Guild, these valuable individuals would be lost to Scouting entirely.

The Canadian Fellowship of B.-P. Guilds has its own web site at <http://members.shaw.ca/bpguild/>. A newsletter called Mamook Papah is published three times a year and is sent to every member. Guild pins and badges are available to all members.

To enquire about joining the Canadian Fellowship of B.-P. Guilds, contact the National President, Linda Bates at Box 63, Glenburnie, Ontario, K0H 1S0. E-mail: goodwolf@canada.com.

– Bill Fettes enjoys being an active member of the B.-P. Guild.

Gone Home

Orville O'Brien, mainstay of the Ottawa B.-P. Guild, and former President, passed away after a lengthy illness in late



September, 2003. Orville's way with a joke, his ever-present cheerfulness and his dedication will be sadly missed.