

# The Best Kept Secret in S

by Susan Muehlherr

**O**ne of the best kept secrets in Scouting is Program Tips. Started in 1999, Program Tips is an email service to which Scouters may subscribe. Twice a month, subscribers receive a section specific tip and

one for outdoors too. You may also send your crafts, games, outdoor ideas, activities and general knowledge to Program Tips to be shared with other Scouting members. What better way to spread great ideas for successful activities!

So spread the word – it's easy to join and fun to share! Interested Scouters can join by typing in the e-mail address box, [maiser@scouts.ca](mailto:maiser@scouts.ca). Leave the subject box empty.

In the message area, type: subscribe (whatever tip you wish to subscribe to, see below) your name (not your email name).

Beaver tips: bprg-l  
Cub tips: cprg-l  
Scout tips: sprg-l  
Venturer tips: vprg-l  
Rover tips: rprg-l  
Outdoors tips: oprg-l

For instance, if Jane wishes to register for Beaver Tips, she would type: Subscribe bprg-l Jane Brown

That's all there is to it! Now for some of the best of the Tips.

## Beaver Tips

### Ball Pass

Arrange two teams, each with an end zone. The object is for one team to get a ball into the other team's end zone by passing it from Beaver to Beaver. The player holding the ball may not move, which means his/her teammates have to scramble to set themselves up for the passes. Once the ball is passed, the player can run ahead for the next pass.

### Lions & Tigers (from India)

Use this as a gathering game. Beavers sit in a circle. Choose two youth who are sitting on opposite sides of the circle. Give each an object to hold – a stick and a stone for instance, which represent the lion and the tiger. Better still, use a small stuffed toy

lion and tiger. On signal, the Beavers pass the objects to the right around the circle as quickly as possible. The idea is to have one animal overtake the other as they are passed hand to hand. The excitement will build as they get closer together. You can make things more interesting by signalling a change in direction when one animal is getting too close to the other.

### Grandma's Quilt

*What you need:* matching pieces of material

*What to do:* Cut two small squares out of a variety of materials, never using the same material twice. Before the game, hide one square of each material throughout the area. Give each player one or two pieces of the other squares of material. Define the area

**You  
never  
know  
what  
ideas  
Program  
Tips will  
send  
you!**



**A few  
more lines  
and our  
masterpiece  
is done!**

Photo: Catherine Vlasht

# couting: Program Tips!

in which to look and set a time limit. Beavers must find their own squares of material. If they find one that doesn't match, they leave it there. When they find their own, they pick them up. First ones back with matching materials can help their friends, until all the material is found.

## Very Neat Butterfly Feet

*What you need:* construction paper, washable paints, markers, black pen, newspapers

*What to do:* Spread the newspapers to protect the floor. Have the Beavers take off their shoes and socks. Roll up their pant legs. To create a butterfly image using their feet, the Beavers will be placing their painted feet on the construction paper as follows. Paint the bottom of the right foot and have Beavers carefully step on the left side of the construction paper with their heel in the middle and their toes angling to the left side. Clean off their foot! Paint the bottom of their left foot, and carefully step on the right side of the paper, touching their heel to their previous footprint and angling their foot to the right side of the paper. This will make a butterfly shape. After the paint dries, decorate the butterfly with spots, face and antennae. Write this poem on the page: "Beautiful butterfly, Precious and Sweet. Strange how it looks, Just like (Beaver's name) feet!"

## Cub Tips

Cubs everywhere will soon start to design this year's Kub Kars. Try some of the following games.

### Kub Kar Curling

Use a variety of coloured tape to make different circles on the floor. Cubs push their Kar from a starting line to see who can come closest to the centre.

### Kub Kar Bowling

Set up a number of empty 500 ml pop bottles on the floor. Cubs push their Kar from a starting line to see how



Photo: Mary Margaret Boone

many pop bottles they can knock down.

### Kub Kar Obstacle Course

Place a number of pop bottles to weave around, and other obstacles to go over or under. Cubs guide their Kars by attaching a string with a tack or tape to the front of the Kar.

### Kub Kar Tunnels

Collect old shoe boxes; cut out a section at each end large enough for a Kar to pass through. See if the Cubs can shoot their Kars through the tunnels.

### Random Object Skits

Drama is an important part of Cubs. They like to act out ideas, and use their imaginations. Here is a great way to encourage both. Get a large bag, and fill it with a variety of objects. The objects can be anything from toy cars to carrots, 'though it's best to use things that are not too small or too sharp. Each six chooses, without looking, a number of items from the bag. Four to six items are sufficiently challenging. These randomly chosen items are to be worked into a skit on a chosen theme (Mother's Day, the end of school, Akela's wash day, spring camp...). The sixes have a few

minutes to plan and rehearse their skits, and then all the sixes perform for the pack, one at a time. The "best skit" can be the funniest one, the one that uses the objects in the most creative way, or the one that gets the loudest cheers at the end. With choosing, planning, rehearsing, and presentation time, give yourself at least 15-20 minutes for this one.

- from Bill Milner, Akela, Australia.

### Marshmallow Mountain

Bring bags of marshmallows to the meeting. How high can Cubs build a marshmallow tower without using anything else? Using toothpicks, see what other structures you can build (a castle, a truck, the Eiffel Tower). A good team-building activity, and fun to clean up after (as long as everyone washed their hands first)!

## Scout Tips

### Tell Time With Your Fingers

Forgot your watch at home and don't know how many hours are left until sunset? Let your fingers help you. It's best to try this trick first at home, so that you can determine the type of fingers you have. Face west and extend your arms before you. Bend your wrists so your palms are facing you, fingertips touching. Stack one hand

on top of the other between the horizon and the sun. Each finger represents approximately 15 minutes. So if you have four fingers between the horizon and the sun, there is an hour left before sunset. By practising at home with a watch, you can see if you have 10, 15, or 20 minute fingers.

### Pathfinders

*What you need:* list of items to be found (answers to questions)

*What to do:* Teams are given lists of questions. They are told when they have to be back. Grade questions according to their difficulty and assign corresponding point values. Try to have more questions than they can get answers for in the time allotted. Questions should relate to the neighbourhood, such as: dates on a specific building's cornerstone, number of largest house on a specific street, the height of a tower (within 10%), bus route numbers at a specific stop, type of tree growing in a specific yard, number of stores at a shopping centre, etc.

### Game Board

Looking for a way to pass those rainy days or early evenings when camping? Why not turn your sleeping mat into a game board. Ensure you receive permission before starting this activity. Use a straight edge and an indelible marker to draw one or more of the following board games on your mat – chess, backgammon, checkers, or scrabble. Checkers – use pebbles for one player, twigs for the other. Use bigger rocks and sticks for the Kings.

Chess – use natural objects for the players, or bring along pieces from a miniature chess set. Backgammon – pack dice and either use natural objects for the pieces, or plastic poker chips. Scrabble – make the letters out of small pieces of paper (don't forget the points).

### Craft Sticks

**(Popsicle or coffee stir sticks)**

#### Races

Skiing - put one under each foot; each youth has to race to the end of the hall and back, ensuring that the skis are always underfoot (watch out, this one might scratch some floor surfaces).

Baton - use the stick as a baton and pass from runner to runner.

Javelin - how far can you throw it? How many throws to the other end of the hall and back?

Hobby horse - between the knees and gallop to the end and back.

Tie the team together - everyone on the team (four is a good number, six is tough) must stay in contact with the stick, moving to the end of the hall and back.

Pass it on - everyone take off shoes and socks, and pass the stick using only toes.

- Thanks to Bill Milner, Akela in Australia for sharing his stick-y ideas.

### Venturer/Rover Tips

#### Make your own fruit leather

Take some time over the winter months to make your own fruit leather for upcoming camping trips. To make spaghetti sauce fruit leather,

start with a jar of ready-made sauce. Spray cooking oil on a baking pan. Spread the sauce onto the baking pan so that it is no more than 1/2" thick. Place in oven at 120-40°F, and leave the door propped open.

Start checking it after five hours. It's done when it peels off the pan and doesn't look wet. If it tastes burnt, it cooked too long. Break it into pieces and put in a sealable plastic bag. Store in a dry place. To use when camping, add one cup of hot water and massage gently until the sauce is reconstituted. This technique can be used to make any kind of fruit leather. Get creative. Try pureed strawberries and apple-sauce, pureed apricots, or any mixture of pureed fruits.

### Cross the Chasm

Give your company/crew a course in teamwork with this challenge. Divide them into two groups with an equal distribution of strength and age. Give each group the equipment, and set them up so they can't see what the other group is doing. Advisors can offer suggestions, but only if asked. When finished, hold a debrief with the suggested questions.

*What you need:* (for each group) one 15 foot log or wide plank, one tarp 9 x 12 feet (representing the chasm)

*Goal:* To get each member of the group across a chasm of about 12 feet in diameter, filled with vicious, blood-sucking frogs. Frogs can jump 15 inches high. (Make up your own evil creatures if you don't like frogs!)

*What to do:* Start with all members of the group on one side of the chasm.

**Some of  
our best  
tips come  
from  
Scouters  
just like  
you!**



Photo: Sharon Fikkeart

Lift the log up and place one end on the ground on the other side of the chasm. While several youth hold the closest end of the log up high enough that the frogs can't reach it, the rest crawl over the log to the other side. (Watch out that the frogs don't jump up and bite you!) After several have crossed over, the youth holding the log put their end down. The youth who have previously crawled over the log now pick up their end and let the remaining youth crawl up the log to join them.

*Debrief:* Ask the following questions of the youth after they have completed this exercise.

### Leadership

How was the leader chosen?

- by force of one individual
- by voting
- by general consensus
- none was chosen
- other (explain).

### Planning

How was the plan chosen?

- by discussion and vote
- by dictation
- by trying many suggestions
- none in particular was chosen
- in detail
- in outline only.

### Performance

How was the plan carried out?

- everyone doing their part

- followed through to the end
- led by leader
- Was the goal accomplished?
- Were the restrictions observed completely?
- Could the goal have been achieved more efficiently and effectively?

### What good is a garbage bag?

Here are eight useful tips on ways to use a garbage bag while backpacking.

1. Use as an emergency rain poncho by punching a neck hole in the bottom and two arm holes on the sides.
2. As a backpack cover if you don't own one.
3. As a shower. Collect water in the bag and leave in the sunshine for several hours. Hang from a branch, poke small holes in it, and shower.
4. As a bandage. Cut it into strips and use to secure a dressing.
5. Tent ground cloth. Open up the seams and lay it down flat.
6. Ash bucket. Shovel your cold ashes into it, and distribute evenly throughout the forest.
7. Dish drain. Put dry leaves, small sticks, etc. in the bottom of the bag and poke several holes in it. Pour your dirty dishwater into it and collect all the bits of food in the bag, leaving only water to fall on the ground.
8. As a garbage bag! Pick up all the litter you see as you hike out on your last day.

Join the many Scouters who have already signed up for this really useful resource. X

- Susan Muehlherr is a source of great ideas as coordinator of Program Tips and the Program Help Line.

**Wait a minute!  
Here's a really  
COOL tip!**





**Why didn't we think of that?!  
We should have subscribed  
to Program Tips earlier.**

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