



# Getting Ready To Camp

by Bryan Mierau



**C**amping is one of the best parts of being a Scout and usually is the main reason for the initial interest in the Movement from youth and adults alike.

I love to camp and for the past several years my troop has averaged one to three camps

There are many different types of camps: winter camping in snow shelters, fall camping in tents, canoe trips, lightweight hiking, cycling trips, etc. Depending on the camp or event, it takes our troop one to three weekly meetings to get ready for the adventure.

There are many pre-camp preparations that I expect of my Scouts for every camp. They are to help gather all troop equipment, plan menus, purchase food and supplies, plan program activities for camp if required, pack their own personal equipment and more.

I also expect the youth to complete their Parent/Guardian Consent Form, obtain their parent/guardian signature and return the form back to me before camp. This is not the most glamorous part of pre-camp but is a necessary step for them to inform their parents of the adventure they are participating in at the next camp.

per month. To go camping this frequently, I believe the Scout youth have to be partially responsible for the planning and preparation of the camp. The more work you can get the youth to accomplish themselves, the less work as a leader you are required to do.

Troop equipment such as stoves, lanterns, tents, pots and pans need to be gathered and checked. During the first meetings of the year, we will spend an entire meeting just cleaning stoves, cleaning lanterns, and having each member of the troop familiarize themselves on how to use this equipment. It is always fun to strike the match and light a stove and have each Scout demonstrate to a leader they can accomplish this. We continue to add this skill to future meetings until everyone is completely familiar with the task.

During another one of the first meetings of the year, the Scouts open all the tents, check for cracked poles, replace missing tent pegs (amazing how they disappear after every camp), look for tears, and sometimes apply new waterproofing to the seams and bottoms. The Scouts set the tents up and down a few times just to familiarize them-

**Scouting and food just seem to go hand in hand.**



Photographer: Dennis Power

# Safety Tips for Stoves and Lanterns



**R**ead the directions carefully before operating any stove or lantern and perhaps have the salesperson demonstrate how to use it properly. Before lighting a stove/lantern, check that all attachments are secure, that the cap on the fuel tank is tightly fastened, and that everything is turned off.

- To keep your stove/lantern safe from accidental tipping, set it up on a flat, level surface away from high traffic areas.
  - Never refuel or use your stove or lantern inside your tent.
  - Refuel a safe distance from other burning stoves, lanterns and open flames.
  - Before travelling, release pressure in fuel tanks. Doing so may prevent an explosion or fuel leak.
  - Airlines require tanks to be empty and washed thoroughly before allowing them on board. Check with your carrier before bringing a stove/lantern, even in your luggage.
  - Keep your stove and lantern clean and well maintained at all times.
  - When lighting a stove (or lantern), keep your face and body well back from the burner (or globe) to prevent burns in the event of a "flare up".
  - Select fuel bottles designed specifically for carrying liquid fuels. These will be made from aluminum and have a tight, leak-proof seal to prevent accidental leaks. Look for fuel bottles that have the ability to add a pour spout; these make pouring fuel much safer and easier. Fuel bottles/canisters come in a variety of different sizes. Select the appropriate size for the length of your trip.
- taken from the Fieldbook for Canadian Scouting

selves how all the poles and pegs attach to the tent. I always ask them, "Are you ready to set up a tent in the dark and in the rain?"

Other gear (tarps, pots and pans, axes, saws, etc.) must all be gathered and checked too. Our group has Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Venturers and equipment is shared, so checking everything before heading off to camp is a must.

Personal equipment is left to each individual Scout to gather, but making sure that they bring the proper items to camp is my responsibility. The Scouts are asked to pack all their gear and bring it to a meeting where they show the leaders that they have acceptable rain gear, rubber boots, mitts, toques, etc. for the selected camp. Our troop enjoys hiking (I mean I enjoy hiking, and the more the Scouts hike the better they get to like it as well). Therefore I practice packing for hiking camp with the Scouts. They will spend time during one or two meetings hiking with their gear one to six kilometres around the meeting place.

Camping and food tend to go hand in hand in our troop. I inform the Scouts how much they can spend, and anything and everything can be on the menu as long as it doesn't go over budget. The menu is either planned as a troop, patrol, or pair and this portion of the meeting tends to be longer than the games portion. Scouts are required to gather the specialized equipment when menu items such as bush pies, cakes, turkeys, etc. are on their menu. A grocery list is made and off we depart to the local grocery store. The shopping carts are all parked in the middle of the store and I ask the youth to disperse in pairs to find everything on their list. After a trip to the grocery store everyone in town knows that the Scouts are camping this weekend!

This routine is utilized before our first camp, but the amount of time it takes after the initial camp becomes dramatically less. I explain to the Scouts that properly cleaning and packing troop equipment at the end of the camp will save them time for other fun activities during meetings.

In fact, the Scouts started a practice of marking all the checked equipment with green painter's tape, labeled with the date and the name of the Scout who checked it. When we are to use the tent, stove, lantern, etc. again, and it has

been checked by a Scout, they give it a quick look-over and we then continue with the rest of our meeting.

By implementing these ideas, you will find your Scouts proud of their independence and ready for their next adventure in record-setting time. X

– Bryan Mierau is now an Advisor with Zion 8<sup>th</sup> Yorkton Venturers. By August, they already had nine camps planned.

Linking to Strategic Directions #1 and #4.



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