

# Colony Building Blocks

BY JULIAN CELMS

**I**t's here already! Another soon to be unforgettable year of Beavers. Hurray!

Allow me to be Malak, the wise old owl for a moment. There are a few great, open, "secrets" to running a great colony. I'm going to touch on three building blocks for your colony: planning, training

and resources. These ward off the evil foundation busting trio of frustration, feeling out of control, and scrambling for resources. So, flex your muscles and let's get busy building — if you invest time in this now, your colony and its leadership team will reap the benefits! Stay tuned for some more open "secrets" later in the year.

## Building Block One — Planning

Let's do a quick mental checklist: Do make the time to think about the upcoming year and plug in the events and activities you know will happen and what sorts of activities your colony enjoys. To do this, you need:

1. An open mind for new ideas. Don't just repeat last year's great year — search for new themes and activities for your colony, and bring back just a few of the favourites.

2. What would a Beaver do? Creatively talk in broad terms about some of the fun things your Beavers would like to do and get some ideas. Ask parents about some of their kid's favourite interests.
3. The essentials. Think about the obvious items that come around: popcorn, Thanksgiving, B.-P. Week, Scoutrees, winter, day outings, etc. Are there other areas of interest that could lead to some themes?

Do some long term planning. Block out weeks of themes on a calendar. Then you can come back and do the short term details. Make a point of checking with Beavers and their parents for more ideas before you do the next round of planning.

## Building Block Two — Training

Does everyone on your leadership team have their Wood Badge I training? If they haven't already done so, let me give you a few good reasons why they should.

1. Ideas. If you've been part of a leadership team for a year, you've probably got a pretty good handle on running colony meetings. But there is always more to learn, and great ideas to share. More ideas mean it's easier to put together an exciting program.

2. During training sessions, you have a chance to ask the trainers some of those questions you've always wondered about.
3. Training for new leaders is essential and required (see B.P.&P., section 6000, #6002.6 — Timelines). After completing basic training, they will be well informed and ready to jump in with both hands. This will make it a lot easier to run your meetings smoothly.

## Building Block Three — Resources

Do you own the *Beaver Song Book*, *Fun at the Pond*, *Games from A to Z*, or the *Climate Change Resource Book*? Have you tried the JUMPSTART programs? Did you know there are 13 themed JUMPSTART programs, and each program has four weeks of ideas? They make great back up programs as well as provide a way to take the pressure off for a few weeks of program planning. Look for these books and resources at the Scout Shop.

Just like building a dam, once you have these three building blocks in place, your program will be water-tight. <sup>^</sup>  
— Julian Celms is the Program Director for Beavers, Cubs and the Outdoors.



## Let's Get Crafty

**P**ut your hand up if you do crafts at Beaver meetings. Of course you do! This month's Pack Sack column (page 33) is full of great ideas on how to run crafts. With some minor changes, you can use them for your colony too!

## Craft Web sites

Some great web sites for games, crafts and activities:

**Familyfun.com**  
**funburst.com**  
**mycraftbook.com**

