

On My Honour...

MAKING INVESTITURES SPECIAL

It was a chilly November evening, around 3° C, the sun having set a few hours previously. The leaves crunched under my feet. Those in front of me were quiet for the most part, with just a couple of excited whispers back and forth. We walked across the grass and

As we neared, we could see that the candlelight came from within an animal's skull. Along with it, sitting on a table, were a Union Flag, unlit candles and various items of uniform accessories. We marched into position. I, at the end of the line, took my place just to the right of the table, now located at the open end of a horseshoe. As I stood, I was able to reflect on how I'd arrived at this point.

I Promise To Do My Best...

Having been a leader for many years there was no reason for me to be going through an investiture again. However, I had recently become associated with a new group, the 25th Christ Church Group in Edmonton. Wanting to formally be a part of their group, I accepted the invitation to be re-invested and renew my Promise.

The 25th is one of the oldest troops in Alberta; it will be celebrating its 80th anniversary in 2009. I was excited to be part of a group with such a rich and vibrant history. Many of the aspects of the 25th's investiture ceremony had been in place for decades.

around the corner. Ahead, in a small clearing mostly surrounded by evergreens, a candle, sitting on a table, flickered in the slight breeze. The group of people waiting for us watched silently, although there was some well deserved pride in a few eyes.

To Do My Duty to God and the Queen...

I stood in position observing as the ceremony unfolded. My job was to assist with the swearing in of the new patrol leaders by attaching their double striped epaulettes. Once sworn in, they would then help invest the new Scouts, assisting them to publicly recite the Promise for their first time.

As I looked around at everyone in the horseshoe I realized that I was so caught up in the event that I hadn't noticed the chill.

To Help Other People at All Times...

The Union Flag draped over the table had been donated to the group by a family who had lost their son (a former member of the 25th) during World War II. Since that time every member invested into the troop was given the opportunity to drip some wax onto the flag, leaving a permanent mark.

The skull had been found many years before at a camp previously owned by the 25th. Its purpose was to



Photo: Don Stephen

Photo: Don Stephen



Photo: Don Stephen



Photo: 25th Christ Church Group



Photo: Don Stephen



help remind everyone of the troop's history and that our time with the troop, as in life, is fleeting so we need to make the most of it.

To Carry Out the Spirit of the Scout Law

The Scouts had made their mark on the flag and were given their own candle to take back into the horseshoe with them; pausing to light it from the already burning candle of another Scout, symbolizing the sharing of the Scouting spirit with others.

Finally it was my turn. Two Scouts, the most junior and the most senior, called me into the centre where I made my mark on the flag, promised to do my best, and received my 25th Group neckerchief. Not only had a promise been renewed; so had my enthusiasm and commitment.

Three Important Steps

Three days later I had the opportunity to be a trainer at a Woodbadge I course. While discussing and practicing ceremonies I was able to share my experience. Not all of you will be in a troop as steeped with history as I am but that was only a small part of what made the event stand out. Over the years I've learned that there are three aspects to keep in mind as you plan and hold ceremonies.

1. Keep it brief: don't allow the ceremony to become the meeting. A short, to the point ceremony is much more powerful than one that drags on.
2. Make it meaningful: do build on and use past traditions but allow yourself the flexibility of introducing or creating new ones. Reserve some of these traditions for use only at certain ceremonies to keep them special. Whenever possible hold your ceremony outdoors to take advantage of the resources there. The chill, the breeze and the hike through the leaves added substantially to my investiture ceremony.

3. Involve your Scouts: Use your Court of Honour or Patrol in Council to plan and prepare for your ceremonies. It is much more effective to have your patrol leaders running the event. Some ceremonies are not held very often so they will need to be rehearsed but then allow the youth to take ownership.

– Garth Fitzner, Group Commissioner, 170th Sherwood Park, and Scout Counsellor, 25th Christ Church Troop, Edmonton, Alberta. The 25th will be celebrating its 80th anniversary in 2009. Plans for a reunion are in the works. If you've ever been associated with the 25th Christ Church Group in Edmonton, or know someone who has, please contact the writer at: gfitzner@chiefscout.info or use the link at www.chiefscout.info.

Investiture Tips

As you read through the next few pages of investiture ceremony ideas and tips, you will find an amazing variety of ways to hold this important ceremony. Every group has their own special way of celebrating the induction of a youth or adult into the Scouting community. Using this article as a starting point, prepare to make your next investiture even more special. Thanks to all the Scouters who took the time to send the *Leader Magazine* their ideas. If you'd like to share your special investiture stories, send them to: leader@scouts.ca.

Make them Unique

Scouter Sandy Scott is known for providing unique and special investitures. He believes in investing one or two youth at a time, doing his best to make the investiture location unique to the youth. He once held an investiture in a hospital – for a Scout who had been undergoing treatment on a regular basis. Nurses and caregivers assisted with the ceremony, as the Scout being invested sat proudly in his wheelchair.

Another time, a Scout was invested in a boardroom. What an impressive location to welcome a new Scout. The father, a businessman, proudly invited members of his work force to attend.

Sandy likes to involve family members as much as possible. "You're not just investing a Scout into the Scout troop, you're investing a whole family into the Movement." Parents are invited to come up with their child when it's time to repeat the Promise. If they had previously been involved in Scouting as a child or adult, they are welcome to repeat the Promise with their child. After all, "Once a Scout, always a Scout". Parents assist with their child's ceremony and then rush to get their cameras for that first salute.

At camp? Consider holding your ceremonies at dawn. Why not? The youth are up anyway! As the dawn rises on a new day, invest and welcome the new Scout into the Brotherhood of Scouting. Or do it at night by the campfire. Line a path with flares and invest them in front of the flickering flames of a campfire. These are the kinds of memories that will remain in the youth's mind forever.

One last reminder from Sandy, "Don't forget to use flags." Flags lend an element of ceremony, of importance to what is about to happen. Whether used as the 25th Christ Church Scout Group did, linking the group historically, or proudly flying in representation of the group, flags let the youth know that they are special and participating in an important ceremony.

– Scouter Sandy Scott is a Group Commissioner with the 52nd Toronto Group, Seton District, Greater Toronto Council, ON. With 50 years of service, he has presided over many investitures.

Cub Investitures

Pipe them In

With the investiture ceremonies I've done with Scouting and many more with the O.P.P., a necessary ingredient is making the participants feel important and that they've accomplished something significant. Give yourself enough lead time to create a successful program. Invite all relatives, sponsors and parents three weeks before the date so they can do their best to attend.

Involve already invested Cubs in the ceremony as much as possible. On the night of the big event, line up outside the meeting place with the parents waiting inside. The already invested Cubs walk in holding the section flags and the new youth follow behind. As a great touch, consider asking a bagpiper to pipe the youth in while parents stand. Seat youth waiting to be invested in the front and the older Cubs to the side. Welcome all and stand to sing the national anthem.

Older Cubs can hold the section flags, while others hand out neckers, woggles, certificates and uniform badges. As each child is called up to be invested, have his/her parents follow behind to be part of the ceremony. When all is done, invite everyone to clap for the newly invested Cubs, then stand aside as proud parents take pictures. Cake and refreshments can be served as everyone celebrates the investiture of a new Cub to Wolf Cubs.
– John Marcil, 1st North Bay Cubs, ON.

As Grains of Sand

For the last two years, Mysa Pack of 1st Oromocto Scouting Group has made it special for the youth. Parents and Cubs go to Lindsay Valley on Base Gagetown and follow one of the trails. Along the way, leaders discuss the history of Scouting, and speak of the meaning of the Cub Promise, Law and Motto. We also discuss why we shake with the left hand.

At the end of the trail we come to a bridge. The children stop short of the bridge. We begin our ceremony by having the parents light the candles placed along the sides of the bridge. We invest our Sixers and Seconds first, as they hold the flag for the new youth as they are invested. As the children are invested, they are invited to cross the bridge as new Cubs. Once all the Cubs have been invested, they are each given a candle holder with a candle and some sand in it. I then tell the Cubs that the candle represents the spirit of Scouting. Should they ever need a reminder of their Promise, simply light the candle, as the light will renew their spirit. They are then told that the sand represents all Cubs, Scouts and leaders that have come before them and that each granule of sand is their spirit.

– Jan Aubé of the 1st Oromocto Group, NB.



As piper Candy Stott plays the bagpipes, the soon to be Beavers line up for their big moment.

Photo: 1st North Bay Cubs



Photo: 1st North Bay Cubs

▲ Involving parents in the ceremony, brings the whole family into Scouting.

Finally, we're Scouts. Happy faces reflect their enthusiasm for Scouting. ▶



Photo: 1st Oromocto Group

▲ A special cake welcomes new Cubs into the Pack.



Photo: 1st Ketepec Group

Scout Investitures

Special Memories

Our troop investitures were pretty cool. I remember my son's first... A winter camp, with snow falling and the troop standing around the campfire holding tea lights they had lit from the fire.

Or, the time we crawled through the Lusk Caves in Gatineau Park, QC, to the main cavern where my daughter was invested while the troop held flashlights.

I was invested on a beautiful lookout overlooking a lake at Gracefield, having snowshoed up with the troop on a sunny January morning. These are what make investitures special memories.

— Don Stephen is now with the 1st Kanata Venturer Company, ON.

Ten Candles

The 3rd and 7th Fredericton Scout Troop has used the following investiture ceremony for over ten years. It's now become a troop tradition. The ceremony is usually held inside and parents are invited. It starts with the hall darkened. During the ceremony, ten candles are lit — one for each of the seven parts of the Scout Law and three for the main parts of the Scout Promise. After a leader welcomes the guests, the leaders are introduced and thanks are given to the group committee for the assistance they give the troop. Then it's time to start the ceremony. A leader lights the first candle and calls for lights out.

Leader: "I would now like to call on the Patrol leaders to bring in the Scouts for the service."

Leader: "Having fulfilled the requirements, you are now ready to be invested into this troop and into the worldwide brotherhood of Scouting. Before you is a single lighted candle. It represents the spirit of Scouting, and as a Scout you will learn more of the spirit day by day. In preparation for this moment, you had to learn and understand the meaning of the Scout Law and Promise. Listen now to the Law and remember that the Law is the law of the troop.

(An assistant lights the seven candles, as the leader recites the Scout Laws.)

A Scout is helpful, A Scout is trustworthy, A Scout is kind, A Scout is cheerful, A Scout is considerate, A Scout is clean, A Scout is wise in the use of all resources.

Leader: "You have heard the Scout Law. Do you accept this law as your code of conduct in your daily life?"

Scouts: "I do."

Leader: "As a Scout you are asked to love and serve your God and your Queen, to help other people, and to live by the Scout Law. Are you ready now to make this Promise in front of your fellow Scouts, your parents and those gathered here as a sign of your sincerity?"

Scouts: "I am."

Leader: "I will now ask you to repeat this Promise, and as you do, a candle will be lit representing each part of your Promise."

(All make the Scout Sign.)

Leader: "Repeat after me: On my honour, I promise that I will do my best

To do my duty to God and the Queen *(Light first candle.)*

To help other people at all times *(Light second candle.)*

And to carry out the spirit of the Scout Law." *(Light third candle.)*

Leader: "We began this ceremony in darkness, and now with the light of these candles, we can see each other more clearly. As it lights our path through life, may we always think of and remember our Promise and Law."

Leader: "I will now present these Scouts with their

badges. The Scout Badge, in the shape of the fleur-de-lis, is really the north point of the mariner's compass. The message is that Scouting always points you in the right direction. The badge is made up of three parts:

The three points of the fleur-de-lis stands for the three main points in the Promise,

The band represents the bond of brotherhood among Scouts, and The scroll reminds you of the Motto, Be Prepared."

Leader: Our new Scouts also receive the Riverton Area badge and the New Brunswick Provincial badge. Those who were in Cubs last year will receive a link badge.

(Hand out badges and shake with the left hand.)

Leader: "We now present the Scouts with their troop neckerchiefs."

Leader, to the audience: "It gives me great pleasure to welcome (name Scouts) as new Scouts to the 3rd and 7th Fredericton Scout Troop and as

members to the worldwide brotherhood of Scouting. May they benefit from their experiences and may the community benefit from them."

Leader: "Would the Patrol leaders please welcome these new members to the rest of their patrol?"

(Patrol leaders come forward, shake hands and escort the new Scouts to their patrol.)

Leader: "This ends the formal portion of the ceremony. Those wishing to take photographs may do so now."

— Karoline Barr is a leader with the 3rd and 7th Fredericton Scout Troop, NB.



Candles provide an element of mystery.

Photo: Keith Barr

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Welcome to Scouts

When a local Girl Guide unit closed, thirteen girls joined the 1st Ketepec Scout Troop in Saint John, New Brunswick. With 13 girls and one boy, our investiture ceremony was held last November at the KBM Outing Association. During the afternoon, we went to the KBM to set up the hall, do some final planning and invest one new leader. When the Scouts arrived with their parents, they found the hall lit with white lights running up both sides and at the front where we had set up tables for the neckers and badges. The Scouts' first reaction was, "Do we get all these badges?"

In order to allow the youth as much involvement as possible, it had been decided that the leaders would present the three new Patrol leaders (PLs) together first; investing them and giving them their PL stripes. The Patrol leaders then presented their assistant Patrol leaders (APLs) to be invested and receive their Second stripes. Then the PL and APL brought the rest of their patrol forward and the PL introduced them to the leaders. Every time we had the new Scouts turn to salute the troop, cameras were flashing and they had to hold the salute until the parents were done. Looking at the faces as they repeat the Promise and into the eyes of the newly invested Scouts is a moment a Scouter will always remember. After the ceremony, one of the Scouts played a DVD with music she had made of all the events we had gone to since September. The parents enjoyed the ceremony and seeing their child on the screen doing the activities. After snacks, everyone helped cleaned up and went home feeling good about this special night.

— Scouters Brenda Graham, Laurie Boakes and Paul Criley are with 1st Ketepec Scout Troop, Saint John, NB.

Investitures For Everyone

Make it Interesting

To keep the youth coming (and coming back), you have to keep the program fun and exciting... and that includes ceremonies. But it depends on what you call "interesting".

For convenience, most investitures are held in the regular meeting place. Why? Because its easier... convenient

for leaders (easier to plan), convenient for the youth (they are familiar with the facility and comfortable with the surroundings) and convenient for the parents (know where to park, a good idea of when to arrive, how long they have to wait, etc.).

In an effort to make our ceremonies more memorable, our group has tended to move our investitures outside and add some "meaning".

With the younger sections, investitures can be "jazzed up" without too much difficulty — this provides a memorable and entertaining event for both youth and adults. Beavers are invested by actually wading into a shallow creek for the ceremony. Beaver "tails" come from Big Brown Beaver in the creek.

Cubs are invested by walking the new Cubs down a laneway lit by candles in "juice cans" (a *Leader Magazine* craft idea) to the pack, waiting (maybe not so patiently) in a circle, in a small clearing in the woods. A real "wolf" and "jungle" theme is easy there.

With the older sections, investitures require a little more thought and preparation. We have brought the Scouts to the three totem poles in front of Camp Samac and done investitures there. Sometimes we've asked the youth to write out their Law, Promise and Motto on a piece of paper and sign it. They "consecrate" their Promise by placing the paper in a juice can with burning candles in it (turning the paper to ash is the point). Adding the ashes to the campfire at the end of the ceremony, the ceremony of the ashes is also explained and older Scouts and leaders add their ashes. The leadership team then collects the campfire ashes and presents each new Scout with a film canister of ashes containing their Law, Promise and Motto, as well as the Law, Promise and Motto of those who have gone before. (See sidebar for the Ceremony of the Ashes.)

Venturer investitures tend to be quiet simple affairs (in most cases). Sometimes a company plans a "fun" investiture, a banquet, or a deep, dark, mysterious one. As the first section that "really" does design their own program, they tend to take the freedom seriously and want to "do their own thing".

Rover investitures are private and cloaked in mystery (for the most part).

— Karl Holliday, 21st Oshawa Group, ON.

Ceremony of the Ashes

Legend has it that Lord Baden-Powell took a small amount of ashes from the campfire at Brownsea Island to spread into the next campfire, (encouraging his "Scouts" to do the same).

It is believed the purpose of spreading these ashes was to continue the fellowship founded at that original camp and share it with others. At the first Woodbadge training held in Gilwell Park in September 1919, Lord Baden-Powell is reputed to have set into motion the tradition of the "Ceremony of the Ashes". At the beginning of a formal campfire, all participants are invited to add their ashes saved from past campfires to the present fire. The intent is to extend and increase the camaraderie and fellowship of Scouting and bring to all youth and Scouters the international aspect of the World Brotherhood of Scouting.

Some carry their ashes from campfire to campfire, keeping only the memories. Others record the occasions their ashes were added to campfires and the ashes develop a history or pedigree. Some Scouting members will go to great lengths to record the long history of their ashes, extending out from their own experiences to include campfires and events that were attended by others and shared at a common campfire.

At the start of a campfire, the leader will usually announce the history of his/her ashes, and add them to the fire, saying, "I would like to add these ashes to our campfire as a symbol of our continuing fellowship and union with the Worldwide Brotherhood of Scouting. I invite any of you who have ashes to add to the spirit, to come forward now. You are welcomed and encouraged to take some ashes home with you tomorrow as a remembrance of these links."

— Original training session prepared by Scouter Robert Rick, Ajax, ON.
Updated by Scouter Karl Holliday, Hampton, ON, November 2007.

Rover Investitures Revealed

While Rover investitures are normally shrouded in mystery, there are some aspects, which can be safely divulged. First, the ceremony is representative of the crew. No two ceremonies are really ever the same because of that. Whether the crew maintains a knighthood theme or has one completely of their own, there still exists a certain solidarity between them.

Mythology is very important to the crew. The legend of past Rovers is a common thread throughout the investiture ceremony, linking new members to the members who have come and gone. Also, it is often found that there is a Charge of Service given to the new Rover. This describes what makes the Rover section unique. It can be found in different forms ranging from questions requiring answers of "I do" and "I am", to another crew conducting the Charge entirely in Latin.

Another important aspect of the ceremony is who is in attendance. Many crews limit the people who can attend an investiture to those who have already gone through it. Others maintain a very public ceremony to show the commitment and accomplishments of the Rover. This all depends on the theme of the crew. Vocational Rover crews are becoming ever more prevalent in Canada. Their ceremonies often focus almost entirely on the vocational services to be provided by the crew; so it follows that it should be quite public, including sponsors, family, friends and Scouting officials.

Where the investiture is conducted can make the difference in its effectiveness. Again, dependent on the theme, it may be appropriate for an investiture to take place at a site of importance, such as City Hall. However, ceremonies can be done just about anywhere, from a secluded beach to the top of a hill. Small monuments often make a good backdrop for an investiture. Other crews have them indoors, either at their meeting place or a similar location where they can easily control everything that happens (this is usually done when a very complex investiture will take place).

In any case, the most important focus of the Rover investiture is the new member. The purpose of the investiture is never to embarrass or degrade, but rather to empower the Rover to serve and become a useful part of their community and Scouting. ✕

– Iain Tait, Rover and Tri-Shores Council Youth Representative, ON.



*The brotherhood of Scouting awaits.
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Photo: 1st Oromocto Group

A Heartfelt Speech

Our group always invites family members and some honourable guests to the investiture ceremony. Mr. Bas Balkissoon, the MPP of Scarborough-Rouge River, enjoys coming to the many Scouting ceremonies and meetings. At our last investiture, he gave the following speech, which I believe could be used by other leaders at this ceremony.

"Let me start by saying that tonight's ceremony is an important one. Since Scouting was first introduced to Canada, Scouting programs have remained an integral part of our young people's lives.

Scouts Canada helps young people identify with themselves and society, preparing them with essential life skills; this is why values taught each week, and friendships created each year, last a lifetime. Today, more than 25 million youth and adults, boys and girls, take part in Scouting programs worldwide. The same Promises, Laws and Mottos we will hear tonight from our new Scouts, are shared and repeated by all Scouts from around the world.

I have heard how hard these young people have been working to learn their new duties and preparing themselves for this special evening. This is why I am honoured to witness their official welcome into the worldwide brotherhood of Scouting.

I am certain that tonight's newest additions are more than ready to be good Scouts in Promise, Law and Motto. Let me once again congratulate all of you at this investiture ceremony and wish you the best in your Scouting career!"

– speech sent in by Julie Chow, 338th Toronto Scout Group, ON.

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