

Here Come

“Girls should be brought up to be comrades and helpers, not to be dolls.”

— Baden-Powell, 1910

In 1998, Scouts Canada made an announcement that created a stir across the country...girls would be accepted as youth members, in all sections, unconditionally. It was a controversial decision at the time, but since then, our female members have excelled in all areas of Scouting, achieving the highest honours and awards available to Canadian Scouts, sitting as youth representatives at all levels, and in many cases, moving on to become leaders themselves. Today we salute the tenth anniversary of a fully co-educational Scouts Canada, with a retrospective look at the contributions women have made to our Movement over the past one hundred years.

B.-P.'s Mom

Henrietta Grace Baden-Powell was the daughter of British Admiral William Henry Smyth, and the third wife of the Reverend Professor Baden-Powell, who died when B.-P. was three years old.

B.-P. remained very close to his mother all his life. While in the army, he wrote her frequently, and began to keep a detailed, illustrated diary of his adventures overseas. These diaries formed the basis of several of his early books, honed his writing and drawing skills, and laid the groundwork for what eventually would become *Scouting for Boys*. His mother was also his close confidant; she was an instrumental sounding-board for his early ideas during the formative years of Scouting and Guiding. After her death in 1914, B.-P. said of her, “It was her influence that guided me through life more than any precepts or discipline that I may have learned at school.”

The Crystal Palace Rally

Most Scouting members today remember Brownsea in 1907 and *Scouting for Boys* in 1908, but not so many are familiar with the next important milestone in our history — the Crystal Palace Rally in 1909. The Crystal Palace was an enormous exhibition facility and stadium in London, England and housed the first large gathering of Scouts, the forerunner to all later Jamborees, in September 1909. The Rally included displays, contests, a march-by of all the Scouts, and an inspection of the troops by the Chief Scout.

At the end of the march-by, the last Scout patrol in a group of 11,000, consisted of nine girls, wearing Stetsons and carrying staves. B.-P. approached the girls, and asked who they were. “We’re the Girl Scouts,” to which the Chief replied “You can’t be; there aren’t any Girl Scouts.” The swift retort came from sixteen year old Nesta Maude Ashworth: “Oh, yes there are, ‘cos we’re them!”

This was the Wolf Patrol, led by patrol leader Marguerite de Beaumont, and her younger sister Elizabeth. Marguerite went on to become close personal friends with the Baden-Powell family, a Scoutmaster and Girl Guide Commissioner, and author of one of the best known biographies of the Founder, *The Wolf That Never Sleeps*. Also at the Rally were a group of girls calling themselves Pinkney’s Green Scouts, and two representatives from the Girls’ Emergency Corps. These three small groups of girls at the Crystal Palace Rally are often cited as the origin of the Girl Guide Movement, but they are significant in the history of Scouting as well.

Early Girl Scouts

It may have only been a hundred years ago, but society was markedly different when B.-P. published the first edition of *Scouting for Boys*. Most women didn’t work. They weren’t allowed to vote. Married women couldn’t own property. Quite simply, there was no co-ed...anything. So it’s little wonder that Scouting started as an organization for boys only. But that’s not to say that B.-P. wasn’t thinking well ahead of his time.

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Creating a Better World
Créer un monde meilleur

the Girls

BY STEVE BOBROWICZ

After his meeting with the Wolf Patrol and the other girls at the Crystal Palace, Baden-Powell did some thinking, and some digging. All over Britain (and presumably in Canada as well, though it's poorly documented), girls were forming Scout patrols, wearing uniforms, camping, and obeying the Scout Law. At the end of 1909, over 6000 girls had registered as "Boy Scouts", most avoiding scrutiny by using their initial, rather than their first name. At least one had already earned the Medal of Merit, for saving her brother from drowning.

B.-P. realized the value of the Scout training for young women. During his army career in British colonies in South Africa and India, he had come to know many pioneer families living on the frontier. The women in these families were partners, sharing the burdens and dangers of frontier life, while still expected to keep the house and raise the children. In 1909, Britain was still in the business of sending colonists to populate its dominions overseas...including Canada. B.-P. knew that the Scoutcraft skills were as important to girls as they were to boys, particularly if they were going to become pioneers in the colonies.

We're all familiar with the short version of the story...after the Crystal Palace, B.-P., with help from his sister Agnes, set up

the Girl Guides as our sister Movement late in 1910. But that wasn't his original intention. Initially, B.-P. conceived of troops of Girl Scouts, led by "Scoutmistresses", and entirely within the existing Scouting program. He laid this idea out in *Yarns for*

Boy Scouts, the sequel to *Scouting for Boys*, early in 1910. And even once the Guide Movement was established, the conversion wasn't instantaneous.

Early Women Scouters


In the earliest days of the Movement, before the First World War, there were only Scouts. No Cubs, no Rovers, and certainly no Venturers or Beavers. And the Movement itself was just that... a movement, not an organization. B.-P. and his colleagues were working hard to establish a headquarters framework to oversee Scouting across the Empire, but there was little in the way of guidebooks

for leaders, or policies and rules for operating, outside of what had been written in *Scouting for Boys*.

Right from the start there were women Scoutmasters, even though it wasn't officially in the rules. In Canada too, ladies like Louise Rush, of Cannifton, ON, were being recruited by groups of boys who wanted to become Scouts. They were usually successful, but they were the exception, not the rule. Then came World War I.

"It was her influence that guided me through life more than any precepts or discipline that I may have learned at school."

— Baden-Powell, 1910



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With most of the able-bodied men off to fight in Europe, most troops found themselves bereft of their Scoutmasters, right when they needed them most. Scouts were being called upon to take on immense duties to support the war effort. The women, who found themselves shouldering the burden of factory and farm work, naturally also became the temporary Scoutmasters. When Wolf Cubs were founded in 1914, women were further sought to become Cub leaders. And so the role of women in Scouting began to grow.

Co-ed Scouting in Canada

After the war, society began to readjust to a new sense of “normal”. Women had proven their mettle, and while the Scout Movement wasn’t ready to become a fully integrated organization right away, the slow evolution had begun.

From its beginnings as “officially” males-only in 1908, by the 1920s “lady Scouters” were unconditionally welcomed as leaders in the Wolf Cub section, and the Scout section under special circumstances. It was also very common for troops to have Ladies Auxiliaries: groups of mothers and other interested women who

organized fundraisers, social events, and often met for sewing bees to construct everything from neckerchiefs to bell tents. However, women were still not permitted as Rover leaders, nor as commissioners. Things stayed more or less the same until 1971.

Following major program reviews for the Cub and Scout Sections in the mid-sixties, the Rover program was reviewed and overhauled in 1971. Part of this initiative involved a three-year experiment to allow young women to join the Rover section. Each crew had the option of voting to become a co-ed crew for the duration of the experiment. At the end of the three years, a survey of all 2850 Rovers in Canada was conducted, and the co-ed option was overwhelmingly adopted in 1974. That same year also saw the birth of the Beaver section, which welcomed women as Scouters.

In 1984, the Venturer section followed suit with the Rovers, allowing each company to decide whether it would accept girls as members. Suddenly, the section of B.P.&P. which described the qualifications for leadership became very complicated: women were permitted to be Beaver and Cub leaders, but not Scout leaders. And they could be Venturer and Rover advisors, but only for a co-ed group. And then something unexpected happened.

On May 14, 1984, Jeanne Sauvé became the first female Governor General of Canada, and therefore the Chief Scout of Canada. Canada’s top Scout was a woman!

In the late 1980s, several surveys were conducted which indicated an interest in expanding Canadian Scouting as a co-ed organization. In 1992 the next step was taken. The co-ed option was opened up to all sections, with the individual group committees and their sponsors deciding on whether the younger sections (Beavers, Cubs and Scouts) would admit girls into their ranks. At first, this option was generally only adopted in small, rural communities which didn’t have enough children to support both Scouts and Guides, but the idea grew momentum, spurred on in part by the media bombshell that came when the British Scout Association opened up unrestricted membership in all sections to girls in 1993.

After several years of passionate debate, the Boy Scouts of Canada passed a motion to become a fully integrated, co-ed organization, at the Annual General Meeting in November 1998. It took us another nine years to shed the “Boy” from our name, becoming Scouts Canada in our 100th year, 2007, reflecting our co-ed nature. The intervening years have seen countless girls earn their Chief Scout and Queen’s Venturer Awards, women taking on roles as commissioners and trainers, and many even earning Medals of Merit and Silver Acorns.

Nesta Maude Ashworth would certainly be proud. ✂
— Steve Bobrowicz has written several historical articles for the Leader Magazine and the new Scouting Life Magazine. An amateur historian, he enjoys writing and is the deputy commissioner for Thunder Bay Area, ON.

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Women of Today

AS SCOUTS CANADA CELEBRATES OUR TENTH YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF BECOMING CO-ED, female members across Canada shared their thoughts and insights at what it means to be female in Scouting. And you know what? Their thoughts are no different than their male counterparts. They are accepted as equals (except maybe when wrestling with a stubborn pickle jar lid), and are learning and growing right beside the men.

As I read their testimonials, I was reminded of how similar they are to our column — *Scouting Works*; stories of invaluable opportunities to learn life skills, including leadership, organiza-

tion, and preparation for whatever life throws at you. Scouting has provided them with opportunities to learn new skills which are relevant to their recreational, professional and family lives. These include outdoor skills, leadership and business skills, public speaking, self confidence and much more.

The ability to be together in Scouting as a family was another common theme. Mothers spoke of their joy watching their children grow in the Scouting family. As Erinn Robertson said, “I have been adopted into the Scouting family where I feel loved, supported and I can accomplish any goal I set out to do. Scouting to me is laughter, friendship, a warm hug on a cold day, life lessons, equality, but mostly a family... my family that is always willing to accept even the strangest of folks and share the love.”

These women and youth have shared their love of Scouting on the following pages. As a co-ed Movement, Scouting is leading the way to creating a better world.

Voices

Jessica Page

— Chair, National Youth Committee

People ask me all the time how I balance all of my volunteer commitments with my academic workload. They seem to think it’s some kind of arduous chore and that I’m incredibly selfless to “give up” so much of my time. But, the secret is that I choose my volunteer causes because I feel strongly about them, and I really enjoy working on them. I have met people from all over the world, traveled across Canada and internationally, and gained a host of skills and self-confidence I never would have through school alone.



Ashlyn Field

— Council Youth Commissioner, Northern Ontario Council, ON

In my third year in Cubs I obtained all the badges, awards, and stars. My last badge was presented by my grandfather, who started me in Scouting. Not only was I the first female Cub to do this in Thunder Bay, but I was the first Cub (of any gender) in my area to complete all the badges in the new program. At that moment I felt like I could do anything.



I take great pride in being a female leader and feel confident that I am, and can continue to be, a strong role model.

Linda Mei

— Council Youth Commissioner, Pacific Coast Council, BC

One of the most difficult quests in life is discovering and integrating one’s own interests with one’s vocation. Scouting provided me with direction during my academic studies when so many of my peers were still seeking a focus in life.



Creighton Avery

— Rover, Cub leader, and member of an international development contingent (MAD Project), Tri-Shores Council, ON

My most rewarding experience was in 2006, when I traveled to Belize to build a hurricane shelter with 20 other youth as part of Project Belize.



Kristen Maki

— Rover and Scout leader, Chinook Council, AB

I am proud to be a role model for the youth in Scouting (both male and female). I like to think I set an example in showing that you can accomplish a lot in Scouting (and life) when you try.



Rachel Northey

— Rover Crew Member, White Pine Council, ON

I have been exposed to so many things (such as wilderness camps and adventures far from home) that I wouldn’t have experienced without Scouting. I have met amazing people, and have become much more comfortable in my own skin.



Elizabeth Eremondi

— Rover, Cub leader and member of the Saskatchewan Service Corps, Saskatchewan Council, SK

I love being able to share my knowledge with the youth I teach and watch them increase their skills while having fun. I enjoy watching them develop into confident, mature and knowledgeable leaders.



Ruth Millard

—Deputy Council Commissioner for Volunteer Development and Training, Central Escarpment Council, ON

Scouting provides the opportunity and privilege of spending more time with my family. All of us were involved in Scouting together for several years, as my boys progressed through the sections.



Emily Nickerson

—Fourth year Scout and member of the youth committee, NB

Being a female Scout is a great experience. If more girls gave Scouts a try, they would probably enjoy it.



Erinn Robertson

—Rover and Deputy Area Commissioner for Youth in Kawartha Waterways Area, White Pine Council, ON

Scouting runs through my veins and flows to the very heart of my soul. My true self is who I want to be every day. I wake up knowing that I can be me because of all the lessons my favorite Scouter taught me in Scouts.



Marlene Harris

—Sunnybrook Area Youth Commissioner, Greater Toronto Council, ON

People from the community come up to me and say, "You can't be in Scouting — you're a girl!". They are shocked to hear that it is co-ed. It's nice to be able to educate them.



Bonnie Lucas

—Management Team and Popcorn Committee, Northern Lights Council, AB

A favourite memory was presenting a Chief Scout Award to a young lady that could not attend our Youth Award Ceremony. Her family crowded into the hospital room and Janna sat up as best she could on the bed, wearing her uniform. We felt fortunate to have met this young lady, so proud to be a Scout. Janna passed away not long after our visit.



Heather Chilvers

—DCC Adult Development and Training, Voyageur Council, ON

I married a Scouter 44 years ago; it was join Scouting or get left behind. Watching my Cubs grow and mature within the Scouting program, I marvel at the depth of understanding and commitment to each other these Cubs demonstrate.



Marion Zaichkowski

—Assistant Deputy Council Commissioner International Relations and member of the National International Relations Committee, New Brunswick Council, NB

I've held many roles over the last 56 years. As the first advisor for the New Brunswick Youth Forum; it was amazing working with teen age youth; their intelligence, energy and enthusiasm is what we are all about. Knowing the effect we have on the lives of others in less fortunate countries makes me very proud to be a member of Scouts Canada and part of the national international team.



Mary-Alice Harvey

—Registrar for 7th Whitby Group, White Pine Council, ON

While at CJ'07 at Camp Taramacouta, to see the Scouts from Kenya and others around the world unite as one voice was a moving and spiritual moment. It truly restored my faith as to why Scouting is such a worthwhile activity for young and old.



Linda Maki

—Group Commissioner for First Calgary International Scout Group, Chinook Council, AB

I am fortunate that my husband and four children have also been actively involved in Scouting. As a family, we have shared many exciting outdoor adventures together for many years.



Shirley Larson

—Area Commissioner for Prairie Heartland Area and DCC – Recognition, Saskatchewan Council, SK

I coordinated a petition to the group committee in 1996 to change the by-laws of the group to accept female youth registrations. The 1997 fall registration was the first that female youth were registered with the group and my daughter was the first female Cub. She remained in Scouting throughout all the sections and is now a Cub leader.



Olean Jones

—DCC for Adult Development Northern Ontario Council, ON

Several years ago I was portaging with a group of Venturers, carrying a backpack and following the canoe that was being carried by the president and another lad over the rocky terrain. Upon reaching the shoreline, the canoe was practically thrown into the water by the new Venturer who turned sharply to me and demanded to know why I wasn't carrying the canoe. The president very calmly answered before I could recover by stating, "She's the advisor, she advises. You carry." End of conversation.



Jill Gustafson

— ACC Volunteer Development, Northern Lights Council, AB

Females have a lot to offer to Scouting, with ideas on activities, outings and challenges. Scouting helps everyone grow to their full potential and more.



Gen Stalker

— Youth Representative for Valley Highlands Area, Voyageur Council, ON

I've made some great friends in Scouting — almost all guys, along with a couple of girls, and I've earned a lot of respect. It's like having a bunch of big and little brothers.



Angele Issler

— DCC Programming, Northern Lights Council, AB

By being a leader I am able to share my talents and abilities with the future generation. I am also able to be a positive influence on all that I meet.



Anita Simmons

— Assistant Council Commissioner - Colony, White Pine Council, ON

I find that our greatest successes happen when we focus on creating a strong program for the children. These successes may be as personal as getting shy or awkward children to become a player in the group, to having ones with disabilities forget their constraints and JUST HAVE FUN with one another!



Diane Burns

— DCC for Training, Area Commissioner and member of the Nova Scotia Council Support Team, NS

Being part of the fabric that provides our youth with the skills and knowledge to move forward in life in a meaningful way; this is a precious gift.



Lynne Olson

— DCC – Program, Tri-Shores Council, ON

The chance to watch, and in a small way help others grow, is the greatest experience of all. Scouting will let you try new experiences and learn from those experiences in a safe environment. In Scouting, I have been given the opportunity on many occasions to soar with the eagles.



Lenore Allen

— VRAD representative for Kawartha Waterways Area and trainer, White Pine Council, ON

I've enjoyed all my 55 years of Scouting. My favourite personal experience was attending the Quinte Conference, and being introduced to Arnold, a DC from a neighbouring district. We became friends and celebrated our 41st wedding anniversary last October.



Kendra Bray

— Youth Commissioner and Vice-President of the Saskatchewan Service Corps, Saskatchewan Council, SK

Sometimes, with just a little gesture, youth will remember it forever. I recently lent a young boy my backpack at the camp where I work. He could not believe that I would lend him my own personal pack without even knowing him. He was there for a week after the hike and every day he thanked me. It's just a great feeling knowing that through Scouting you are helping to make a difference in people's lives.



Jannette Wallace

— South Okanagan Area Commissioner, Cascadia Council, BC

I feel that I have made a difference in the lives of the youth. It really hits home when I am out in public and a young man or woman for whom I was a leader talks to me, tells me what he/she is doing, and how he/she is still giving back to the community. Those are special moments.



Anything is Possible

In the words of Ashlyn Field, "I just hope that celebrating the tenth year anniversary will help more young people, girls in particular, realize that it really is possible to do anything if you put your mind to it." ^

Our thanks to the following photographers:

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