



Scouts in ACTION

Australian Capital Territory Branch

September 2016

Scouts and Guides add a drop of chemistry to National Science Week

By Kate Lehane, Branch Activity Leader—Special Projects



Scouts Australia (ACT Branch) and the Research School of Chemistry at The Australian National University (ANU) co-hosted more than 1,000 Scouts and Guides for a day of fun chemistry on Saturday 13 August to help kick off National Science Week 2016.

The Scouts and Guides from across the ACT and surrounding region, as well as some extra special visitors all the way from 3rd Sunbury Scout Group in Melbourne, made liquid nitrogen ice cream and PVC slime, purified their own Lake Burley Griffin water, learnt about the chemistry of fire and played with cornflour slime.

The ANU Research School of Chemistry was excited to expand its outreach program to whole new audience. Projects like this share are all about inspiring a passion for science, giving young people the opportunity to experience both the practical and exciting sides of chemistry - learning about a science that we all interact with every day.

Chief Commissioner of Scouts Australia ACT Branch, Rick Goode, said the *SciScouts: Chemistry of Scouting* activity supports the Scouting philosophy of learning by doing and provides a great chance for our members to directly engage with science.

We all know our youth members are an actively engaged and inquisitive bunch. This experience might just be that one light bulb moment that inspires some of our youth members to pursue a career in science or technology. (continues on page 2)



From the Chief



August in Canberra is usually a time when we look for winter to end so we can return to the outdoors to do what Scouting excels in – we are after all an educational organization based on the outdoors. I know of a lot of camps, hikes and excursions that have waited patiently for the right time. Winter doesn't stop Scouting happening though, as the recent trips to Cabramurra and the Alpine course has proven. Even our Scuba team have ventured into the water – I am sure it is warmer than it looks!

A highlight of each year are the annual Adult Recognition Awards and this year proved to live up to expectations. I was pleased to present, along with Mark Holmes, the Deputy Chair of the Branch Executive Committee, Awards to over 50 well deserved Leaders and Adult Supporters of Scouting. My sincere thanks to all those who assisted both on the night and in the lead-up.

I was privileged to be invited to attend an Eagle Scout Award Ceremony at the residence of the US Ambassador earlier in the month. Chris Odell, a well-known campfire poet wrote a special ode which he shared on the night and has agreed that I may also share. It reflects the experience of Scouting in the ACT perfectly. (continues on page 2)

Scouts and Guides add a drop of chemistry to National Science Week

Continuation from page 1

We would not have been able to deliver the event without the support of the ANU Research School of Chemistry. We would like to thank our ANU co-organiser senior technical officer Vance Lawrence, for his enthusiasm, and all of our super-keen volunteer Scout and Guide leaders. Vance is also a committed Venturer Scout leader with Southwell Scout Group here in the ACT.

This project was funded by a National Science Week grant supported by the Australian Government's Inspiring Australia Initiative, and was also supported by the local ACT National Science Week Committee.

If you would like to find out more about the SciScouts project, please contact Kate Lehane, Branch Activity Leader - Special Projects, Scouts ACT via specialprojects@scoutsact.com.au

All images are credit to Corey Coppin Photography

From the Chief

(continuation from page 1)

An Eagle Scout in Australia
An Eagle Scout feels at home in Australia
He's in the bush all the time
He's hiked the peaks of Namadgi
And sailed down in Jindabyne

An Eagle Scout feels at home in Australia
He's kayaked the rivers down here
He's snowshoed up the slopes of Kosciusko
And skied down them without much fear

An Eagle Scout feels at home in Australia
The Scouts down in Oz bring him joy
Out at Cotter he's one of the many
He's happy they are not all boys

An Eagle Scout feels at home in Australia
He's grown since he arrived
He's abseiled the highest cliff sides
His teachers and friends think he's thrived

An Eagle Scout feels at home in Australia
Down beneath the southern lights
He's at home in the land of the ANZACS
He's camped there through many nights

An Eagle Scout feels at home in Australia
He's a leader amongst many
All who know him, recognize
He'll be a scoutmaster very soon
You can tell because of his size.

An Eagle Scout is at home in Australia
He's a citizen of the world, that's so true
He's made friends that will last him a lifetime
He's made memories that will never leave you

Planning for the future: Conference notes from attendees

By James Lehane, Assistant Region Commissioner Northern Region

There is that age old saying "Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance", and given the comments made during the Branch Conference in June, those who attended have a real knack for looking into the future.

The 202 ideas contributed by participants to the very short Planning session have been collated and allocated into one of the categories below:

Focal point	1 year	3 years	5 years
Attend major events	6%	6%	4%
Committee	1%	0%	0%
Finance	1%	0%	0%
Improve assets, facilities and databases	6%	9%	7%
Improved communication	3%	0%	0%
Improved program	17%	9%	18%
Leader recruitment	10%	0%	0%
Leadership roles	12%	10%	11%
Maximise Award scheme achievements	8%	10%	7%
Membership	21%	30%	35%
Patrol system improvement	4%	0%	0%
Training	6%	21%	9%
Water activities	4%	0%	0%
Succession planning	0%	4%	4%
Community engagement	0%	1%	5%

What does this show us? Membership is the largest issue that people want to see in planning our future. Specific comments around growing the Joey mob to 12, starting a second Cub pack or Scout Troop and recruiting more Leaders in to support the team all featured in the contributions.

As an organisation, our people are the most important asset. Without youth members, Scouting would no longer be serving its main role. Without trained and dedicated Leaders and supporters, it would be harder to ensure the youth members could undertake the wide range of activities that Scouting provides.

As part of sustaining the leadership and growing the membership numbers, a strong theme came out of the comments that Leaders required effective and time-efficient training to provide them with the requisite skills to deliver an every improving program. The ongoing improvement to the program is also supported by making better use of the Patrol system, providing youth members with more leadership roles across the organisation and making best use of the awards system to motivate and encourage members to do their best.

Well, without the people, there would be no need to plan. But since they are a critical component of Scouting, planning for the future can never hurt. Below is the overall planning considerations of interest to participants.



Assistant Branch Rover Adviser vacancy

By Leah Bach, Branch Rover Advisor

There is currently a vacancy for the position of Assistant Branch Rover Adviser. This appointment would suit those over the age of 28 years with knowledge and experience in mentoring. An understanding of the Rover Scout Section would also be of benefit.

Applications close on 11 September 2016. Please feel free to contact Leah on actbranchroveradviser@gmail.com if you have any questions about the role.

JOTA-JOTI 2016

By Elizabeth Hickey, Radio Team

Jamboree on the Air (JOTA) is an annual event in which around 500,000 Scouts and Guides from all over the world make contact with each other by means of amateur radio.

Jamboree on the Internet (JOTI) runs on the same weekend and connects Guides and Scouts on the internet through Scout-operated Internet chat rooms such as ScoutLink as well as MSN, email, webpages, blogs... you can even use voice communication!

The purpose of **JOTA-JOTI** is to enable and encourage Scouts and Guides from all around the world to communicate with one another by means of amateur radio and internet, providing a fun and educational experience and promoting their sense of belonging to a worldwide movement.

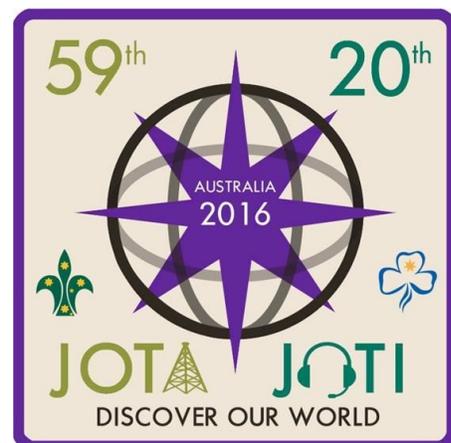
This year, JOTA and JOTI will be held on the third weekend in October, 14-16 October 2016.

The Scouts ACT Radio Activity Team and the SE Region Girl Guides have again partnered up to provide a great assortment of activities for Guides and Scouts of all ages to participate in. Units are encouraged to book a timeslot (usually 1-2 hours depending on numbers and age of the group) which will include:

- ½ hour radio booking
- Craft activities
- 'fox' hunting
- Geocaching
- Radio games
- Radio communications
- Possible JOTI activities

Details:

WHEN: Saturday 15th – Sunday 16th October 2016
 WHERE: Camp Cottermouth, Cotter Road
 COST: \$5.00 per participant, includes all activities plus badge



To book a timeslot and camping spot for your group, please contact Elizabeth Hickey at lhickey@netspeed.com.au with the following details, Scout Group and Section name, contact person and their details, expected number of participants and preferred day and time (morning or afternoon) and camping details if you have any questions please phone 6258 5719.

Indonesian Independence Day ceremony

By William Strutt and James Boulter, Lake Ginninderra Venturer Unit

As a part of the Venturers cultural preparation for their trip to Lombok, two of the Venturers (James and Will), along with Leader Andrea and parent helper Sally, went to the Indonesian Embassy for their Independence Day celebrations.

To start the day off they had a militaristic ceremony for the raising of the Indonesian flag, which was then followed by a couple speeches from dignitaries, including the Indonesian Ambassador for Australia. This went on for around an hour and a half. After the speeches we then listened to some songs sung by some of the diplomats. Once the songs were sung we were spoken to by an Australian student who had won a national Indonesian speaking contest. By that point we were all very eager to rest our legs and eat some food.

We moved from the square in the front of the Embassy to a small hall and sat down, much to James' and Will's delight, they got to hear some traditional music played on instruments made out of bamboo. Some awards were then given out to winners of a competition that was held earlier in the week. All this while James, Will and Andrea were struggling to try and understand the Indonesian language, whereas Sally was having a blast speaking Indonesian to whoever was happy to have a conversation!

Finally we had lunch, which was delicious. It was an assortment of rice, chicken, prawns, beef, egg and everyone's favourite, prawn crackers. All this was traditional and was divine, James and Will happily went up for seconds!

Once we finished lunch and had talked to some diplomats and guests, we unfortunately had to leave. We came away from the whole experience feeling that we had learnt quite a bit about the culture and language of Indonesia. Some of this would be how polite the people are, that they are extremely proud of their country, and that their language, though it may seem difficult, is quite simple and that their food is very nice.

Thanks to Andrea for giving up her precious time, to Sally for teaching us Bahasa Indonesia throughout the past couple of months and for translating on the day. It was an eye opening experience.



William, James and Andrea with the Indonesian Ambassador and his wife



Indonesian children from the Canberra community sing songs and wave flags



Listening to the Angklong Orchestra

Snowy Blizzards and Harmony

By Graham Downie

Our skis, carried easily in one hand, were suddenly whipped around almost 180 degrees and it seemed we would be taken off our feet by a gust of westerly wind.

Matthew, a Scout, and I were the last to leave the communications tower which looks over the small Snowy Mountains town of Cabramurra. Though only about 50m behind the rest of the party which had eschewed the comfort of our accommodation in the town to ski a few more kilometres, there was little trace of their footprints in the steadily falling snow. Indeed, there was little trace of the 12 or more people at all as visibility reduced sharply from about 150m to only a few metres in front of us. Perhaps of greater concern were the razor-like crystals driven into our faces by the driving wind which we learned later reached more than 85km/h.

This rather stern test at the end of our first day's skiing failed to reduce enthusiasm for challenging the elements over the next three days. In fact, it showed to many that, when well prepared with suitable protective clothing, those elements can be at least managed with a reasonable degree of comfort and safety.

It was the second week of the 2016 July school holidays when, for close to the 35th time, the 13th Canberra Troop with a few other Scouting friends, spent five days at Cabramurra.

Signs were grim as we departed on the Monday morning with steady rain threatening to wash away what little snow remained. There were only patches of snow in the town when we arrived so we walked to the tower to check out whether any skiing was possible. Though not terrific, there was enough snow for the entire party to return the next morning, armed with skis, daypacks and lunch. For some it was their first time on skis, or even in snow. They were helped by others to begin learning some cross-country skiing techniques and to ski to the day shelter.

There we found a family had established a welcome fire in the pot belly stove. It was good to be out of the increasing wind and the wet, falling snow.

Lunch over, some people began the 2km walk back to the Scout Hall. But a sizeable number decided not to waste the available snow and to ski the return trip to the tower. Though much of this journey was into the increasingly stronger wind, it was decided to push on past the tower for a few kilometres. Skiing up hill, wind assisted, was one of the highlights. Returning into the wind was more challenging.

However, we gained the tower and began the walk down the road as the wind strengthened and brought with it those razor-like crystals which assaulted any exposed skin. This attack by nature strengthened comradery which by the end of the week was one of the really notable aspects of our annual cross-country ski trip.



Photograph by Peter Stevenson

That night, in the old Scout Hall, once a dwelling for construction workers, it seemed a train was roaring past as the wind of more than 110km/h drove at the building. But it remained secure and most people had a reasonable sleep.

Wednesday dawned with the town's oval covered in snow. We used that opportunity to avoid the stronger wind higher up the hill to practise different skiing techniques on the dry, powder snow. But it was cold – very cold and lunch was enjoyed in the warmth of our accommodation.

Yet despite the wind and cold, the appeal of fresh snow on the higher plateau lured more than half the party out and up. The temptation was to over dress and a few layers were shed on reaching the tower. From there we followed a marked trail through quite deep powder snow which sounded and felt like silk under our skis. At the front, making tracks, required considerable energy and even my hands were warm. Yet when we stopped for a rest and a drink I noticed something never previously experienced when skiing at Cabramurra – there was ice in my drink bottle. By the time we reached the day shelter there were quite large lumps of ice in my drink bottle. The explanation was simple enough – the maximum temperature that day was minus 3.7 degrees.

Some of the Scouts in this group were only 11 or 12 years old and for some it was their first experience cross-country skiing. There was not a complaint. Instead, a wonderful feeling of having achieved something worthwhile in very challenging weather. That is not to say we did not welcome our return to the hall – to hot showers, hot drinks and a hot meal.

By the Thursday the wind had decreased to a stiff breeze of about 40km/h. Snow had again fallen overnight and as the road had not been cleared the first group was able to ski from the front steps of the Scout Hall, all the way to Kings Cross about 8km away. For the first time on this trip we were able to eat lunch in the open. There was even, as Banjo Paterson might have said, 'a stingy ray of sunlight'.

Kings Cross is the highest point on the back road between Cabramurra and Mount Selwyn. It was hoped we could complete the journey to Selwyn but weather and snow conditions were not suitable for a large group with several quite young people. The failure of a ski binding almost at the bottom of the hill returning from Kings Cross made that decision seem a pretty good one.

Meanwhile, two other parties skied on the trails on the plateau with all, including the less experienced Scouts, demonstrating remarkable progress.

Friday, our last day at Cabramurra, wouldn't you know it, dawned bright and sunny. But there was not enough time for a long journey so my friend, John Sim, gave skiing lessons on the hills behind the Scout Hall. John had intended to join us on the Wednesday but his car was snowed in near Perisher Valley. So he did not arrive until the Thursday morning.

It was John who taught me to ski many years ago. Though I have never achieved his competence, I arranged our troop's first trip to Cabramurra in 1977. There have been many since and this one was one of the best.

Certainly there have been years with better snow and far kinder weather. But there have been few with such a harmonious group of people, willing to challenge themselves and to care for others. And that, after all, is what we aim for in Scouting.

Scouts in ACTION and the Australian Scout Magazine deadlines

Would you like your Scout Group or event to be in the next issue of Scouts in ACTION or the Australian Scout Magazine? If so, please send your write up to development.officer@act.scouts.asn.au by the 15th of each month for the Australian Scout Magazine (minimum 1 page and high quality photos) and the 25th of each month for Scouts in ACTION (maximum 1 page with photos).