

# Special Scouts enjoy special weekend of events

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

NAPLES — When a Saturday in October yields sunny skies and temperatures in the 70s, any outdoor event automatically qualifies as special.

But even if rain or snow had descended upon the J. Warren Cutler Boy Scout Reservation, it wouldn't have drowned out the memories created during the first-ever Special Scouting Fall Camporee held Oct. 8-9.

Forty-two "Special Scouts" — those who are experiencing physical, mental or emotional difficulties — enjoyed the balmy weather by joining in festivities with 141 other Scouts and adult leaders representing Boy Scouts of America Otetiana Council 397.

The Special Scouts came from four Monroe County-based Boy Scout groups: Troop 26, sponsored by Fairport Lions Club; No. 40, Hillside Children's Center; No. 327, Gates-Chili Rotary; and No. 399, Monroe County BOCES I Alternative Junior-Senior High School. In addition, a group of Special Cub Scouts — Webster Plank Road North No. 52 — attended the inaugural event.

This Special Scouting overnighter was held in conjunction with a Camporee staged by the Otetiana Council's Arrowhead District. Many Scouts from Arrowhead, as well as Otetiana's Great Northern District, helped out as "buddies" for the Special Scouts over the weekend.

Saturday afternoon's wide range of group activities featured interesting events for all, such as a water balloon-launching competition and utensil-less cooking. Also included were informational sessions regarding flag etiquette and disability awareness. Following supper, the Scouts settled in for an evening around the camp fire before retiring to their tents.

Jerry Crowell, a leader in Troop 26, noted that the Special Scouts blended in very easily with other Scouts.



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

Tim Kraye (left) of the Arrowhead District's Troop 208 in Fairport leads his squadron through "blind course" competition during the first Special Scouting Camporee at J. Warren Cutler Reservation in Naples.

"These (Special Scouts) are so happy-go-lucky. They're not ashamed to smile or do things," remarked Crowell, who was a founding member of Otetiana Council's first Special Scouting troop 12 years ago.

"It helps out the (Special) Scouts to see people working together," noted Brian Quinn, a sophomore at Aquinas Institute and a "buddy" Scout from Troop 356 at St. Margaret Mary Church in Irondequoit.

"The best word is inclusion — bringing people who have disabilities together with those who don't, to focus on their abilities," added Jill Orbach, district executive for Special Scouting.

Michelle Austin, a leader for Troop 399, acknowledged that for her Alternative School Scouts, "within a school

setting their behavior is what gets them in trouble. But when you get them out here, they display leadership skills that you would never imagine."

One Troop 399 Scout, Jerry Neary, rated archery — "I got one bulls-eye" — and the camp fire — "it was awesome" — among his favorite activities.

For two other Special Scouts, Saturday's supper seemed to be the epitome



Scott Keller, a member of the Gates-Chili Rotary Troop 327, receives instruction on how to raise, lower and fold the American flag.

of enjoyment.

"More food!" exclaimed Frederick Parks, an Eagle Scout from Troop 327, who gleefully pumped his fists and patted his stomach upon the announcement that brownies were about to be served.

And fellow Troop 327 member Sam Burlingame's post-meal comment surprised no one who watched him polish off six plates of macaroni and a brownie.

"I was hungry," Sam explained.

## Annual diocesan retreat attracts 106 Scouts

OVID — A total of 106 Boy Scouts, Girls Scouts and Webelos Scouts attended the annual diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting Retreat, held Sept. 23-25 at Camp Babcock-Hovey.

The event was based on the theme "God's Church." Scouts participated in several outdoor activities which reflected that theme, and also attended an evening Mass. Father W. Mura, pastor

of the Holy Apostles/St. Anthony of Padua Parish Cluster in Rochester, celebrated the Sept. 24 Mass.

The Ovid retreat was hosted by the Finger Lakes Council Catholic Committee on Scouting. Next year's Catholic Scout Retreat is scheduled for Sept. 22-24 at Camp Gorton on Waneta Lake. It will be hosted by the Bath-based Five Rivers Council.

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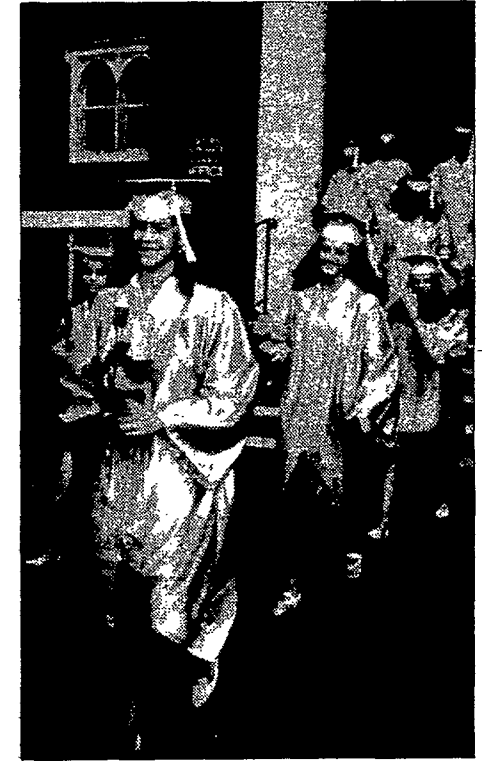
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