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## Cub Scout pack still going strong at 40

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YORKTOWN — When Don Roberts was a committee member for Cub Scout Pack 238 in the early '80s, he got the idea — unpopular with some of the moms — of a hiking trip to Anthony's Nose.

The Hudson River peak overlooking the Bear Mountain Bridge seemed a perfect outing to him but a risky proposition to those moms. He won a few of them over with a stop at Camp Smith, where he convinced the medical unit to practice their bandaging technique on the boys.

"As we drove back to Seton, all the mothers were there to pick up their kids," Roberts recalled. "We told the kids, 'As you get out of the car, limp a little bit.' "

Despite that bit of fun, the hike initiated by Roberts, father to four former pack members and grandfather to three more, became an annual event. It is just one reason Pack 238 at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School in Shrub Oak will celebrate its 40th anniversary Feb. 7.

"It's not just a time filler," current Cubmaster Phil Donnelly said of Scouting. "It's literally where you are learning different things for life."

That includes the basic values of the Cub Scout Promise and its motto, "Do Your Best," said Donnelly, but also the chance to learn social skills in a positive setting.

Preparing for the anniversary has put him in touch with former Scouts, and he takes pride in those who've passed through the ranks.

"It's only now that I'm finishing up my last year as cubmaster that I'm getting a chance to reflect on it," he said.

Donnelly, whose son Benjamin is a Webelo Scout, took over the job four years ago. His brother Kevin held it too in the late '90s. Before that, Ken Gulmi of Mahopac was cubmaster for 11 years.

The adults who plan the Pinewood Derbies, Raingutter Regattas, Cub Scout Olympics and numerous other pack events — including 80 camping trips — usually got involved because their sons joined.

Gulmi's own wife recruited him when the oldest of their four boys joined the pack.

"She said, 'You have all these children, you should be active in the community and we should do our share,' " said Gulmi, who stayed on as each of the boys passed through.

His goal, and a reason the pack reached its peak membership of nearly 100, was to make it fun. That meant trips to Washington, D.C., and to Sharp Reservation in Dutchess County and a carnival organized by the Scouts, with a pizza party at stake for the most creative games.

"We never lost sight of the Scouting aspect, and we never gave a kid an award he didn't deserve,"

Gulmi said, noting that Scouting goes through ebbs and tides of popularity. "To weather all of that, you have to have kids having fun."

Roughly 2,000 Scouts have passed through Pack 238's ranks since it was chartered at then-Blessed Elizabeth Ann Seton in 1970. About nine out of 10 went on to become Boy Scouts. The Boy Scouts of America celebrates its 100th anniversary Feb. 8.

Donnelly steps down this year as cubmaster, confident in the pack's future because of what it offers the Scouts who keep joining.

"The boys don't even realize that they're learning something," he said, "because they're having fun."

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