

Our First Moot! Zoo Moot!

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Our Advisors learned about moots as they took their Parts I and II Woodbadge, but they really could not tell us what one was. It seems you really can't describe one until you have been there. I had looked up Moot, and found that it can mean any of the following: debatable; open to discussion; raise a topic for discussion; suggest an idea; be an assembly held for debate; a mock trial in a hypothetical case. Hmmm. We were not sure about any of this. We just wanted to camp and have fun. Much reluctance was expressed. However we would never know if we didn't go.

We arrived Friday night Camp Samac in Oshawa to cold weather and the threat of rain or freezing rain on Saturday. With only 2 of us in our Venturer group, and both of us being first year, our advisors had arranged for us to camp with 1st Whitby. I contacted them by e-mail, and we got organized. They treated us really well. We didn't have to bring anything but our tent and personal gear, which was really good as our meeting storage facility (Aurora United Church) had burned down last spring with all of our equipment, and the gear had yet been replaced, or donations inventoried or sorted.

Although we had pre-registered online with a deposit, we learned that it was a really good idea to bring a copy of your receipt to hand over at registration. After some confusion over what we owed, the receipt was found with our Advisor and we were on our way down a short trail to find our camp mates. Groups could camp wherever they liked, but 1st Whitby was easy to find in this section of Lakeland.

We helped get the fire started, and set up a tarp and the kitchen area. It was interesting to meet different Venturers and Rovers coming and visiting the site. Opening was at midnight, and I would like to tell you it was very good, but that is only what I was told. With a theme of W.O.L.V.E.R.I.N.E. (Whitby's Omnipotent Leviathan Venturers Extra-dimensionally: Rampaging Into the Night) the robed Rovers wandering around made a very nice touch. After playing football all day for my school, I was happy to sit around the fire yacking, until I zonked out at 10 p.m.

Rain in the morning. We went and retrieved our Advisors dining shelter and set it up, and were glad we did. It was very cold, wet and windy all day, but with the right rain gear layers, and a few umbrellas, we just made it to opening as it was finishing. We were able to head right off to the activities over at the main hall. The Rovers had set up 5 stations upstairs plus Archery "with a twist" in the range downstairs. The Fire Vents also had cheese, crackers, hot chocolate in their Den downstairs by the range for people to enjoy. We did some activities upstairs that including dressing a monster, then headed down to the range. While we were waiting our turn, we got playing pool, learned to play Euchre, and had a very good time laughing with the new people we were meeting at every turn. Another group beat us to the range, and we were too late to go back upstairs for the activities, so we headed back to the site for lunch, where we tried to work out the clues for the scavenger hunt.

After lunch we got our turn at the range and had a huge amount of fun with the twist that had been put on it. We did not realize that the activities upstairs had changed from what was offered in the morning, so by the time we got upstairs we only had a bit of time to try the Oblique Goop activity and the map guessing game (we enjoyed this and were there for a long time). Of course no one could miss the blindfolded pie sniffing contest. Somewhere along the way we picked up a Vent from another group, and the 6 of us enjoyed having her along with her talented nose! We missed the raw shelled egg and spoon race, the ruin challenge and a few more activities, but I did not miss the How Purple Are you contest! I don't want to say too much, but I did wish I had a towel and soap for the shower down stairs after it was over (I would have stayed purple, but I never would have got it out of my sleeping bag, and my mom is funny that way.)

What we liked best was that the activities were not scheduled, and we could do as we liked. We noticed that some people went back to their sites for naps, to socialize, or to do other things. This is very different from the highly scheduled Scout Camps we had been used to from Beavers on up.



Back at our site we got ready for the pot luck dinner at 6 p.m. We had learned about this last minute, and had stopped and picked up a Caesar salad and fixings for 20 on the way to camp. We did remember to bring out mess kits, but forgot paper towel for spills. We did not know you needed to bring your own beverages to dinner, or a plastic bag to put the dirty dishes in to take back to our campsite to wash. The potluck was wonderful, with lots pasta, Sheppard's pie, and the organizers had supplied wonderful lamb that had been marinated all day. Our salad was very popular (almost the only green thing there), and it was gone with the first round of tables up. There was lots of other food for seconds (including the lamb!) and even 3rds, before the pies from the contest were brought out for dessert, along with some cupcakes and Halloween candy.

Totally full, we wished we had brought a deck of cards to play games with, rather than going back to the site while the dance was set up. To tell you the truth neither Timothy nor I really wanted to go to the dance. Neither of us had ever been to a dance, and we were not liking the idea of going. Back at the site Scouter Tim told us the same thing that our Scouters had told us – you don't know if you don't go. Without much option, and the 1st Whitby Vents going, we trudged over in the rain too.

What a surprise! The hall had been done up with lights, and a DJ was playing music that had a good beat. Timothy did not know a lot of the tunes, but I recognized most of it as what was played around our house. People stood around and watched what was going on with the people that had obviously been to dances before, and we all gradually joined in. The music was not too loud (which was great, as your neighbour could still hear you, and the Scouters socializing in the next room could talk easily). I learned how to do line dancing and there were songs where we formed long chains and streamed in and out doors and around the room. Sometimes everyone was just singing along and dancing all over the place or in circles of 5-10 people, and other times everyone formed a large circle and clapped in the patterns with the song, while others showed their stuff in the middle. This was not a boy-girl type dance, although there seemed to be equal amounts of each. Even with the doors open to the balcony, everyone got pretty sweaty. Thank goodness for the cooler room next door, and the big jug of water. I can't believe that we did not get back to the campsite until 2 a.m.!

Everyone slept in the next morning, some later than others. We got up and got packed pretty quickly. After a late breakfast we went to closing, where there were fun prizes of *unbelievable value* for each of the events. The groups that had come from Northern Ontario (including Sault St. Marie, Sudbury and North Bay) were very excited by the Christmas tree they had won.

We were not sure that we would enjoy going to a Moot. We hear that each one is different, yet somewhat the same. From talking to others, and at closing we learned there was an upcoming Lego Moot, Holiday Moot (Redneck Moot) with a focus on fun and food, Snow Moot (Viking Theme), Llama Moot, Music Moot, Nameless Moot (a Murder Mystery), Quidditch Moot, Million Dollar Mania and many more in the next 8 months which can be found on **Rovering.org**.

It may be a moot point after this long tale, but as you can see "Mooting" is fun after all.