

Boy Scouts reunite after 45-plus years

Neil Lupton traveled from his home in Boston in early February to attend the Immaculate Conception, Towson, Boy Scout 50th Anniversary Celebration. It was there that he met up with four of his fellow troop members, Robert Carter, David Duley, Ed Bollinger and Michael Topper, whom he hadn't seen for more than 45 years.

The last time the whole group had been together in one place was when they were 11- years-old. Mr. Lupton, 61, said the anniversary celebration was well attended, well put together and an all around great time. He said the men sat around and reminisced about their days in the Scouts and their hiking and camping adventures.

"We would do one or two overnight campouts almost every month," said Mr. Lupton. "You met people from other religions and backgrounds at camps."

Robert Cater, nominated as the rambunctious one of the group, said the scouts taught them how to work together as a team and build a sense of community. He said the Scouts established a sense of purpose and principles in their lives.

"These are things we believe in and at that age you don't dwell on them, but it formed your character," said the parishioner of the Catholic Community of St. Francis Xavier, Hunt Valley. "Life has different paths to follow but there are basic principles that if you believe in and follow, life will be a more positive experience."

Mr. Cater said the Boy Scouts reinforced the values that his parents instilled in him. He said some of the lessons he learned in the Scouts helped him later on in life. He said he loved the outdoors so much that he bought a piece of swamp on the Eastern

Shore where he and his children would go hunting and fishing.

Ed Bollinger, also a parishioner of the Catholic Community of St. Francis Xavier, said he never became an Eagle Scout, but he is very proud that his son earned that honor. He said he originally joined the Scouts because it seemed like a fun activity to do. His favorite part was when the troop would go to Broad Creek for camping trips and his father would come along. His dad was a hard-worker and he didn't get to spend much time with him, so having him along on this trip gave them lasting memories.

"The leadership that you get really is an asset to a young person," said Mr. Bollinger.

Mr. Lupton said today there aren't as many opportunities for young people to learn such valuable lessons. The Scouts taught him a degree of self-reliance, duty, loyalty and trustworthiness.

"It's been very rewarding for me as a kid and as an adult," said Mr. Lupton, who helps out on a national level.