

## Winter Carnaval at Big Rock Eco Retreat ?très magnifique?



**By Michael Riley**

Big Rock Eco Retreat and Campgrounds on the south shore of Weslemkoon Lake in Denbigh hosted a Winter Carnaval with the 1st Bancroft Scouts Group on March 22. Featuring a day of action-packed family-friendly fun, treats, demonstrations and outdoor adventures, the event went over well with participants and all those who attended. A non-perishable food item was requested from all attendees to go towards helping the local community.

The Winter Carnaval hosted by Big Rock Eco Retreat and the 1st Bancroft Scouts Group on March 22 featured free hot chocolate, an outdoor barbecue, slushies, cotton candy and popcorn, maple taffy, snow snake races, snow sculpture competitions, and free skating. Also on hand was a Jungle Nights show, which brought the story of the Jungle Book to life courtesy of the Scouts. There were also scouting demonstrations and a myriad of winter activities for kids of all ages to enjoy.

Big Rock Eco Retreat, on 32 acres on the southern shores of Weslemkoon Lake in Denbigh, is an all-season eco-friendly glamping retreat, featuring walking, ATV and sled trails, swimming, kayaking or canoeing on Weslemkoon Lake, hot tubs and the chance to enjoy time with family and friends over the roar of a campfire. For more information, go to [www.bigrockecoretreat.com](http://www.bigrockecoretreat.com).

Made up of 24 youth ranging from five years to 15 years of age, the 1st Bancroft Scouting group, which is a coed group, consists of Beaver Scouts, Cub Scouts, Scouts and Venture Scouts, engage in outdoor activities to develop life skills like leadership, teamwork and communication.

Susie Mitchell, marketing director and business support specialist with Big Rock Eco Retreat told Bancroft This Week that they'd been developing and continue to develop Big Rock Eco Retreat over the last three years and wanted to share their facilities with a local youth-oriented organization for the purposes of community service and outreach.

?We were pleased to connect with Loretta and start brainstorming potential activities that we could jointly host for the community,? she says.

Mitchell says the Carnaval has taken three to four months to plan for March 22, and that they're expecting 150 to 200 people. In addition to the 1st Bancroft Scouts, they reached out to the Jungle Night Roadshow crew, a group of scouters from various groups ranging from Pickering/Whitby to Bowmanville that brings together the Jungle Book and Scouting. She says that one member reached out to a scouter in Peterborough, who'll be hosting an activity on March 22.

?The Scouts from 1st Bancroft have been planning and organizing various activities for the community to participate and will be

facilitating many of the activities. The Bancroft Lions' Club is graciously hosting the barbecue,? she says.

Mitchell says it's been really nice to see the local community offer up assistance in making the event special for the scouts and community. In addition to the Scouts and Big Rock Eco Retreat, (who provided the location, accommodations for organizers, organizing some activities and logistics and providing some treats) she mentions a few others;

?The Social Core, Business Support Services donated their time designing our print, social media and digital/web advertising, the welcome site map and aiding with the preliminary organization of the event, Smith Contracting donated a huge fire bowl for the campfire, Cobb Construction donated their time to install an additional portable washroom, Bancroft OPP, Madoc OPP, Limerick fire department have mentioned they will try to be in attendance, Allen Beaudrie of RAP Logging & small engine repair donated two man saws for a wood saw demonstration and education purposes, and some local and out of town student volunteers are helping with some of the activities,? she says.

Mitchell said that the local community was excited to hear about the Carnaval and were looking forward to attending, as well as Scouting groups and families from the Bancroft, Tweed, Madoc, Kawarthas and other surrounding areas.

?The Scout groups are looking forward to demonstrating their skills and hosting the various activities for the local community as well as collecting non-perishable food items for those in need,? she says.

Loretta Kaperski with the 1st Bancroft Scouts says that the Carnaval is part of the Scouts Canada Winter Challenge.

?This year the theme is French Carnaval. Giving youth opportunities to gain perspective of how big our organization is with a chance to learn about our French Canadian history. Each week Scouts Canada releases a video challenge for us to complete the challenge. We then submit our activity to be voted upon. Prizes can be won.

The Carnaval is the last submission, the challenge states we can hold a parade, play games and activities as they would do at the Carnaval de Quebec (one of the largest winter carnivals). Our youth wanted to share this with the community and showcase to them what we have been doing the past few weeks,? she says.

Kasperski told Bancroft This Week that their youth had a good time, although the weather was not on their side and turnout was lower than expected.

?But that did not stop our youth from enjoying Big Rock Eco-Retreat and the activities that was setup. A few families did eventually come by to check out our event and donations were made to our non-perishable collection, which will be delivered to North Hastings Community Cupboard here in Bancroft. All in all it was a good day of fun activities and shows. We hope to do this event again but earlier in March or late February. I think the highlight for the youth was playing old arcade games and having some yummy treats. Some really enjoyed the show put on by the Jungle Night Roadshow crew. I think I enjoyed the smiles!? she says.

Mitchell told Bancroft This Week on March 24 that the day went well despite the crazy weather.

?We had everything from rain, snow and a quick snowy microburst, but it didn't dampen the spirits of the Scouts. The youth that attended had a wonderful time participating in The Jungle Nights Roadshow, making maple taffy, eating hot dogs, popcorn and cotton candy and socializing with friends. There was a diorama setup with displays including information about local animals and birds that the youth could learn about. And they participated in canoe races, paracord bracelet making, and snow snake races. The youth had a great day! The highlight of the day was how much the youth were engaged in the outdoor activities and learning about the natural environment,? she says. ?It gave the youth an opportunity to experience outdoor fun physical activities, enjoy theatrical performances and participate in craft making. And they loved making maple taffy!?