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MADISON Sea Cadets disciplined and dutiful

By LARRY GRARD
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KENNEBEC JOURNAL *Morning Sentinel*

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MADISON -- At the age of 14, Lance Maginnis is into discipline.

The Anson resident has found a perfect match in the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps.

Maginnis, a sophomore at Carrabec High School, joined the corps early this year. He learned of the unit from a friend, and it didn't take much convincing for him to join.

"I like discipline," Maginnis said. "This keeps me out of trouble, and I know what to do and I know how to do it."

Maginnis' mother, Michelle, is an instructor at the drill site, American Legion Post 39 in Madison. He put in nine days of boot camp at Camp Edwards on Cape Cod in August. Competition in such activities as firefighting and barracks inspection kept him motivated.

"We marched a lot," he said. "We did a lot of physical training."

Congress chartered the U.S. Navy League to form the corps in 1962. According to a statement from the national office in Arlington, Va., it's all about developing America's youth into strong citizens in an "anti-drug and anti-gang environment."

Madison's co-ed Sea Cadet Corps is one of three in Maine. Others are in Brunswick and in South Portland.

Maginnis enjoys shop class and anything else that is "hands-on" at Carrabec. He plans on a military career, first in the Navy and then the Marines.

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Lt. Roger Sabourin of Madison stressed that, in addition to discipline, the Sea Cadet Corps is about service, good citizenship and patriotism. Sabourin has served a combined 24 years in the Navy and the Army.

To qualify, youngsters in two age groups must have passing grades. They go through the boot camp to learn such basic skills as seamanship, marching, rank structure, how to salute and corps values.

"You work hard, you get rewarded," said Sabourin. "Sound like life? This is not a giveaway program. You have to earn everything."

Sabourin's wife, Lt. Coleen Sabourin, and Peggy Spencer of Anson serve as instructors.

League cadets range in age from 11 to 13. Those 14 to 18 years old, or who have graduated from high school, are sea cadets. League cadets use a training manual.

Sea cadets are tested on each of 15 chapters on how to be a sailor as part of a basic military requirement.

"Some go military, some don't," Roger Sabourin said. "The goal is to teach these kids to be responsible citizens. We're not here to push them into the military."

Nine cadets from Madison-area towns comprise the corps, with four more about to sign up. They meet on the first and third Saturdays of the month at Tardif Belanger American Legion Post 39 in Madison.

During the last drill, cadets headed out into the woods with compasses and practiced land navigation skills. Earlier, they learned how aircraft are repaired at Whispering Pines Airport in North Anson.





"The kids just had a ball and they were asking questions," Sabourin said. "That's a good sign."

Cadets also have witnessed the commissioning of a ship at Bath Iron Works. They are invited to participate in the Portland Veterans Day parade on Nov. 12.

Those interested can visit the Web site at www.usnsccmadison.com.

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Joseph Laney of Clarksville, TN

Oct 29, 2007 9:16 AM

24 years in the military and still a Lt. ? Usually after 3 years you become a Capt.

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