

# DISPATCH

A Royal Rangers Magazine for Men

WINTER 1985-86



**SPEAKING THE LANGUAGE OF ROYAL RANGERS**

---

---



# DISPATCH

Winter 1985-86

Vol. 22, No. 2

## FEATURES

### 3 Speaking the Language of Royal Rangers

by John Eller

It's a primary tool of communication.

### 5 Hypothermia

by Forgey & Meuninck

Beware! It's a cold-blooded killer.

### 7 John Honeyman

by Francis X. Sculley

No one but Washington knew of this man's dual role.

### 10 And the Winner Is . . .

by Susan Bell Farrell

It was a Pinewood Derby that no man or boy in this outpost would ever forget!

### 13 Love Apples

by Francine Herbst

In 1501 a group of explorers took a special fruit back to their Spanish king. It was an unusual and great discovery.



**STAFF** Editor: DAVID BARNES, Assoc. Editor: JOHN ELLER, Art: V. I. PRODUCTIONS, National Committee: SILAS GAITHER, KEN RIEMENSCHNEIDER, JOHNNIE BARNES, PAUL STANEK.

**DISPATCH** (ISSN 0190-4264) published quarterly by Royal Rangers, 1445 Boonville Avenue, Springfield, Mo. 65802. Second-class postage paid at Springfield, Missouri. Copyright 1985 General Council of the Assemblies of God, Inc., Gospel Publishing House. Printed in the U.S.A.

**POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to Dispatch, 1445 Boonville Avenue, Springfield, Mo. 65802.



## BRING 'EM IN

BY LARRY D. BOHALL

**G**rowth is the lifeblood of your patrols, and of the Outpost. If your patrols are growing, so will your outpost. If your patrols stop growing, so will your outpost. To get your patrols on the right path, encourage boys to invite some friends to visit one of their patrol corners and the outpost meeting. Plan ahead, and you'll have new Royal Rangers!

At your next patrol meetings, ask each patrol member what boys they may know that could be good Rangers. Make a list of their names and addresses. Make sure that they meet the age requirements listed in

### Encourage boys to invite their friends to visit!

your handbook. Now, set a date for the special "Invite 'Em!" patrol corner and outpost meeting, and start planning. This patrol corner and outpost meeting has to be good.

Between outpost meetings, appoint some of your members to invite your potential members. You may want to have their friends ask them, or have a couple of your patrol's "old-timers" invite them. Either way, make sure that someone contacts the boys. Make up some special invitations with your patrol name, emblem, address, and meeting time on them, and send or give them to your prospects.

Before the meeting, get the patrol corner in tip-top shape. Hang up special patrol photos, set out copies of *Adventures in Camping* and your Royal Rangers Handbook, display your patrol standard or flag and any trophies your gang has won.

During the meeting, make sure that there's plenty of action. Have a super spe-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15 ►

DISPATCH



# SPEAKING THE LANGUAGE OF ROYAL RANGERS

## for 22 years

BY JOHN ELLER

**T**he *Royal Rangers Leader's Manual* is the most significant book ever published concerning the Assemblies of God ministry to boys. It is a primary tool of communication.

Prepared by Johnnie Barnes in 1962, the *Leader's Manual* was enlarged and reprinted in 1983. It has stood the test of time. Most books published in America today go out of print in seven years or less.

The *Leader's Manual* contains ten dynamic chapters that show the leader of boys how to convey the challenge of Royal Rangers and obtain the best results. The *Leader's Manual* speaks the language.

*The Royal Rangers Ministry*. Chapter 1 shows how to organize, enlist, and promote Royal Rangers. The purpose, goals, methods, meetings, and uniforms are discussed. It is here we also learn about the emblem, code, pledge, and motto.

*The Patrol System*. Chapter 2 is focused on boys working together in an active patrol. The patrol spirit, standards, and other means of organization and identification are illustrated.

*Leading Boys*. Chapter 3 deals with understanding boys, their attitudes, needs, and problems. How to develop skills in



CONTINUED NEXT PG. ▶

### THE LEADER'S MANUAL



# THE MANUAL

counseling is spelled out in detail. *Leading Boys to Christ*. Chapter 4 contains the best guide to soul winning found anywhere. Preparation, the setting, and preservation are all given thorough treatment, along with some very practical tips in leading boys to Christ.

*Outpost Meetings*. Chapter 5 shows how to plan interesting and meaningful meetings, measure advancement, and plan special activities.

*The Advancement Trail*. Chapter 6 reveals how to encourage advancement and give proper recognition. Advancement pins and other awards are illustrated, along with specific information about Royal Rangers uniforms.

*The Camping Program*. Chapter 7 gets into our big "drawing card." Here is information on camping and the needs of boys, trip planning and outdoor cooking. This chapter introduces District Powwows, the Frontiersman Camping Fraternity, and leadership instruction such as National Training Camp, National Training Trails, National Canoe Expedition, and more.

*Games and Other Activities*. Chapter 8 gives the right concepts of play, and shows how play meets some very basic needs for boys. There are some helpful hints on the art of leading games, and the value of play in physical fitness. A list of possible games is offered to spark the imagination, followed by suggestions for collections, hobbies, and crafts, and even trips.

*Health and Safety*. Chapter 9 covers such subjects as activities, protection, and preparedness with relation to health and safety. The leader is shown how to plan, promote, and carry out these events. Projects, swimming safety, and elementary lifesaving are introduced and explained.

*Devotions*. Chapter 10 is filled with "tried-and-proven" devotional themes showing the purpose of the devotions, equipment needed, Scripture, illustration, discussion, prayer, or closing ceremony.

The truly amazing aspect of the Leader's Manual is that all this information and more is contained in just 192 pages of the current edition! At your fingertips, in an easy-to-read style, is a literal lexicon for speaking that old language of compassion to a new generation of boys. Let the *Royal Rangers Leader's Manual* be your guide to grammatical usage as we reach, teach, and keep boys for Christ! The *Royal Rangers Leader's Manual*, prepared by Johnnie Barnes, is published by Gospel Publishing House, Springfield, MO, No. 02-0685. ★





B r r r !

# HYPOTHERMIA

1 AVOID UNNECESSARY EXPOSURE

2 DRESS FOR WARMTH

3 HAVE ADEQUATE NUTRITION

4 CARRY EMERGENCY BIVOUAC GEAR

5 KNOW WHEN TO QUIT THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE ELEMENTS

6 USE ISOMETRIC CONTRACTIONS TO GENERATE HEAT

BY FORGEY AND MEUNINCK

**H**ypothermia occurs when the body temperature of a person is lowered by exposure to wind, cold, and dampness. Lower it enough, and death will result! Dampness and wind are the most devastating factors to be considered—even more than temperature. It is possible to die of hypothermia in temperatures far above freezing. Most hypothermia deaths occur

in the 30° to 50° range.

Proper insulation is the most important aspect of protection. By far the most valuable insulator when wet is wool. Wool loses only 40% to 60% of its insulating ability when wet. Protect the head and trunk with wool. Wool shirts have little bulk and can be invaluable additions to a day pack. Polarguard and Holofill II garments and sleep-

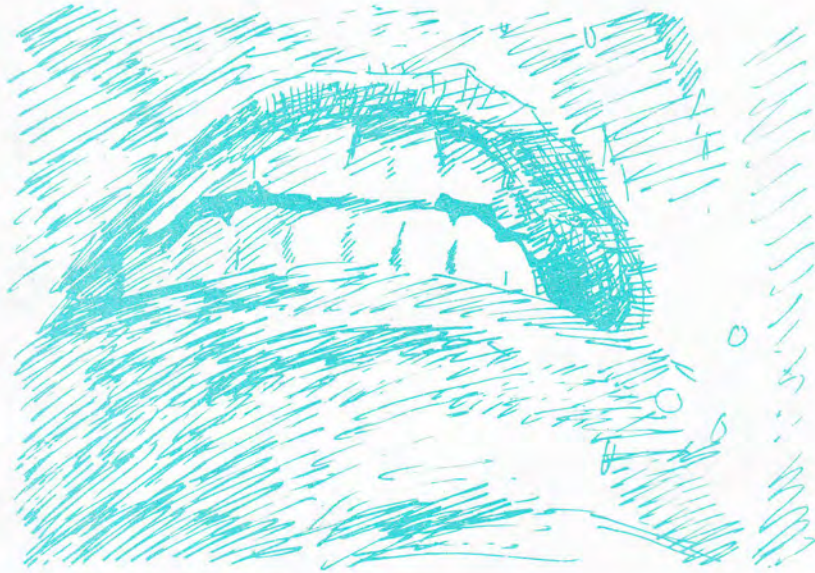
ing bags have also proven to be valuable additions to the wilderness armamentarium. Thinsulate and polypropylene liners appear very promising. Proper nutrition and avoidance of exhaustion are further factors in preventing hypothermia.

The first response that the body has to a hypothermia condition is vasoconstriction.

**CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE** ▶

C O L D • B L O O D E D K I L L E R





**INTENSE SHIVERING FOLLOWED  
BY SLUGGISH THINKING AND  
SPEECH DIFFICULTY PORTEND  
ADVANCING HYPOTHERMIA**

tion in the skin, thus decreasing the flow of blood to the surface—which, in effect, lowers surface temperature, but preserves the core temperature. If this heat loss continues, the core temperature will begin to fall below 99°. Intense shivering followed by sluggish thinking and speech difficulty portend advancing hypothermia.

Treatment is to prevent any further heat loss and carefully add heat to rewarm the victim. The ideal treatment would be to replace the core heat from the inside out, as subjecting the individual to an outside source of heat would cause the surface blood vessels to open and promote circulation to the surface. The initial effect this would have is to dump a load of very cold

blood into the already over-cool core. The temperature of blood in the hands and feet may drop 40 to 50 degrees below that of the body's inner core.

It is essential to remove the victim from wind and place him/her in the best shelter available. Replace wet clothing with dry clothing if possible. Insulate the victim and place him/her in a sleeping bag with a stripped rescuer. A hypothermia victim alone in a well insulated sleeping bag will simply stay cold. If conscious give the victim warm drinks and candy or sweetened foods, if available. If no sleeping bag or fire is available, have the party huddle together. Avoid the use of alcohol—this may act as a vasodilator, thus releasing cold

surface blood to the core.

In summary, prevention is the key to avoiding death from hypothermia. There are six steps to the prevention process: 1. Be aware of how insidious wet, wind, and cold can be—avoid unnecessary exposure. 2. Dress for warmth—prepare against wet and wind, remembering wool is your best friend. 3. Have adequate nutrition. 4. Carry emergency bivouac gear, such as a tube tent or trap. 5. Bivouac early before coordination and judgment are decreased—know when to quit the struggle against the elements and prepare camp. 6. Keep active using isometric contractions of various muscle groups to generate heat until desired warmth is produced. ★

**BEWARE!**



---

# John Honeyman

---

WASHINGTON'S SPY



BY FRANCIS X. SCULLEY

In December of 1776, George Washington wrote to his brother, John Augustine: "I think the game is pretty near up. No man, I believe, ever had a greater choice of difficulties, and less means to extricate himself from them."

On November 23, the notorious Tory John Honeyman had escaped an American patrol and stumbled into a Hessian unit, also on reconnaissance. The half frozen New Jerseyite, who had served under Wolfe before the walls of Quebec, was well known to his would-be rescuers and was taken before Colonel Rall, Hessian commander at Trenton.

As always, a loyal subject of King George was welcome with the regiment explained Rall. After feeding the hapless looking fugitive, who looked like he had the intelligence of the average American country bumpkin, Rall queried his guest. The German was assured that the rag-tag Conti-

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE ►





mental army was no problem. Desertions were multiplying faster than enlistments. No one believed the war would last beyond 1777. One more victory would do it.

Count Kurt von Donop at Perth Amboy, commander of all German troops in North America, had repeatedly urged Johan Rall to fortify the village, and to particularly make certain that both King and Queen street had breastworks. Lord Cornwallis, preparing to return back to England and his beloved bride of two years, had also sent a message to Rall urging compliance with these orders. But Rall, was contemptuous of Continental troops. He had seen how they reacted to the bayonet at Long Island, and his regiment was the best in the world in the use of that weapon.

So Honeyman served His Majesty's allies the best way that he could, procuring and butchering cattle. On December 22, he had a special assignment from Colonel Rall to bring in a couple beeves for the upcoming Christmas celebration. And so Honeyman headed into the hinterlands for a raid on a Patriot farmhouse, and their stock of cattle. It was an easy assignment, Honeyman mused.

As he made his way through the snow, rope in hand, toward an unsuspecting cow, two ragged Continental cavalymen bore

down on him. Turning quickly, the Tory saw that the game was up, but he fought furiously to escape, until one of his attackers felled him with a blow from the butt of his musket. Then, tied with the rope which was intended for the cow that witnessed the incident with bland indifference, the stumbling prisoner was headed toward the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware and Washington's camp.

Immediately taken before the Commander where Honeyman was roughly shoved into the room, the guards were startled when Washington dismissed them.

Then Honeyman, master American spy, revealed that Trenton was completely unguarded. There were no earthworks at either end of King or Queen streets. The foreigners were planning a Christmas celebration to transcend all others. Colonel Rall felt an attack was remote, even though he had been warned of such a possibility.

Washington called for the guards and ordered that his "prisoner" be locked up, and if he made an attempt to escape, he was to be "shot at once." Then the Commander called for a council of war, with his staff.

"Christmas day at night, one hour before day is the time fixed for our attempt on Trenton," was the terse order of the com-

## Once more the







# NATIONAL TRAINING CAMP



## APPLICATION

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ MAILING ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ OUTPOST NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_  
 OCCUPATION \_\_\_\_\_ HOME PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ AGE \_\_\_\_\_

### CAMP PREFERENCE

- |     |                |                   |                  |      |
|-----|----------------|-------------------|------------------|------|
| ( ) | FLORIDA        | Lake Wales, FL    | February 6-9,    | 1986 |
| ( ) | TEXAS          | Columbus, TX      | April 10-13,     | 1986 |
| ( ) | ARIZONA        | Payson, AZ        | May 8-11,        | 1986 |
| ( ) | MONTANA        | Hungry Horse, MT  | May 8-11,        | 1986 |
| ( ) | NEBRASKA       | Fremont, NE       | May 15-18,       | 1986 |
| ( ) | MARYLAND       | Whiteford, MD     | May 15-18,       | 1986 |
| ( ) | CALIFORNIA     | Sonora, CA        | May 15-18,       | 1986 |
| ( ) | OHIO           | Bellefontaine, OH | May 15-18,       | 1986 |
| ( ) | ALABAMA        | Clanton, AL       | May 22-25,       | 1986 |
| ( ) | CALIFORNIA     | Twin Peaks, CA    | August 7-10,     | 1986 |
| ( ) | NEW JERSEY     | Medford, NJ       | September 4-7,   | 1986 |
| ( ) | MISSOURI       | Eagle Rock, MO    | September 11-14, | 1986 |
| ( ) | NORTH CAROLINA | Rutherfordton, NC | October 9-12,    | 1986 |

You must be in good health in order to participate in the strenuous activities of the training camp. Therefore, it is required that you have a physical examination. After the examination, please sign the following statement. "After consultation with my physician, I know of no physical reason that would restrict me from participating in the camp activities."

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY PLEASE NOTIFY:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Any medical facts we should know: \_\_\_\_\_

Because of the limited size and the advanced cost of setting up these camps, a \$30 registration fee must accompany this application. This will be applied toward the total camp fee which will be approximately \$80. If for any reason you are unable to attend a camp, you must notify our office THREE WEEKS prior to the camp to receive a refund! A \$10 discount will be given at the camp for those who preregister FOUR WEEKS prior to the camp date.

Mail this form to: Royal Rangers, 1445 Boonville Avenue, Springfield, MO 65802

Credit to account 001-01-031-4001-000



## NATIONAL TRAINING CAMP

# PERSONAL EQUIPMENT CHECK LIST

### CLOTHING

- 1 complete Class B Royal Rangers uniform (long sleeve khaki shirt, khaki trousers, khaki Royal Rangers belt--no dress coats or ties are worn)
- Please note: No cap or hat is needed. A special beret will be issued. (Every item except emblem, nametab and district strip should be removed from uniform)
- 1 Royal Rangers jacket
- 1 Royal Rangers sweatshirt (for colder areas only)
- 1 pair Army fatigue trousers or other work-type trousers for casual wear
- 2 Royal Rangers T-shirts
- Extra uniforms or fatigues for fresh change, as desired
- 1 pair heavy shoes or boots for camp activities and hiking
- 2 pairs heavy socks (navy or black)
- 1 poncho or raincoat with hood
- Underclothing and handkerchiefs
- Pajamas

### PERSONAL ITEMS

- Sleeping bag
- Folding camp cot
- Toilet kit and mirror (no outlet for electric razor)
- Towels and washcloths
- Mess kit (plate, bowl, and cup)
- Silverware kit (knife, fork and spoon)
- Canteen
- Pack and lightweight pack frame (for overnight hike)
- Small lightweight tent (for overnight hike)
- Ground cloth (waterproof)
- Air mattress or foam pad
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Personal first aid kit
- Pocket knife and whetstone
- Hand axe
- 8 inch mill file
- Compass (Silva style preferred)
- Waterproof match container with matches
- "Adventures in Camping" handbook
- "Leader's Manual"
- Small Bible
- Pen and pencil

### OPTIONAL ITEMS

- |                                      |                                 |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Sunburn lotion                       | Camera                          |
| Sunglasses                           | Compact sewing kit              |
| Insect repellent                     | Survival kit                    |
| Folding plastic cup                  | Small package of facial tissues |
| Thermal underwear (for colder areas) | Ditty bag to carry small items  |
| Nail clippers with fingernail file   | Pillow                          |



# OUTPOST COMMANDER'S AWARD

The Outpost Commander's Award is a special achievement award for Outpost Commanders who have demonstrated outstanding service. All points must be earned for service rendered during the current calendar year. NATIONAL TRAINING EVENTS MAY BE COUNTED EACH YEAR. \*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_  
 State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ District \_\_\_\_\_ Outpost Number \_\_\_\_\_

FILL IN THE BLANKS WITH THE NUMBER OF POINTS EARNED:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. <u>AN UP-TO-DATE CHARTERED GROUP:</u><br>20 points _____   | 12. <u>WEARING PROPER UNIFORM:</u> 5 points _____  |
| 2. <u>COMPLETED LEADERSHIP TRAINING COURSE I-V:</u> 20 points _____   | 13. <u>OUTPOST MEETINGS:</u> 1 point each meeting conducted. _____   |
| 3. <u>ADVANCEMENT PARTICIPATION:</u><br>25 points if at least 50% of boys in your outpost received an advancement, and at least 4 Councils of Achievement were conducted. _____ | 14. <u>OUTPOST USING THE PATROL METHOD PROGRAM:</u> 5 points _____   |
| 4. <u>OUTPOST CAMPOUTS:</u> 2 points each. _____  | 15. <u>GOLD BAR MEETINGS:</u> 1 point each meeting of boy/adult leadership planning the outpost meetings and activities. _____ |
| 5. <u>OUTPOST OUTINGS:</u> 2 points each except for campouts. _____   | 16. <u>CURRENT RED CROSS CARD:</u><br>2 points for each card. _____  |
| * 6. <u>ATTENDING A NATIONAL TRAINING CAMP:</u> 5 points _____  | 17. <u>OUTPOST SERVICE PROJECT:</u><br>2 points for each project. _____  |
| * 7. <u>ATTENDING OTHER NATIONAL TRAINING EVENTS:</u> 5 points for each event. _____  | 18. <u>ACTIVE FCF MEMBER:</u> 2 points _____   |
| 8. <u>OUTPOST PARTICIPATION IN A DISTRICT POW WOW:</u> 5 points _____   | 19. <u>LEADERSHIP MEETINGS:</u> 2 points each for attending Area, Sectional or District wide meetings. _____                   |
| 9. <u>BOYS WON TO CHRIST:</u> 5 points each _____   | 20. <u>OUTPOST VISITATION PROGRAM:</u><br>2 points for each home visited. _____  |
| 10. <u>NEW MEMBERS:</u> 2 points each _____   |  |
| 11. <u>RANGER OF THE YEAR PROGRAM:</u><br>5 points _____  | TOTAL POINTS _____   |

## REQUIREMENTS FOR AWARD

1. The outpost must have an up-to-date charter.
2. The Commander must have completed the Leadership Training Course.
3. A minimum of 175 points are needed to qualify.

All Outpost Commanders who meet the above qualifications will be eligible to receive and wear the Outpost Commander's Award. Time period - JANUARY 1 of the current year through DECEMBER 31

NOTE: Please complete your copy of the Outpost Commander's Award Evaluation Sheet and mail it to your District Commander, not the National Office. Your District Commander will supervise the awarding of the Outpost Commander's Award. Seven dollars should be attached to cover the cost of the medal. (Subject to change by GPH without notice.)

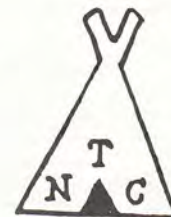
If all Outpost Commanders of one church earn this medal, the Senior Commander may wear an Outpost Commander's Award also.



# TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ROYAL RANGERS LEADERS

Royal Rangers National Training Events are designed to give you the very best of training for all phases of the Royal Rangers ministry, with major emphasis on camping!

NATIONAL TRAINING CAMP is designed to give leaders professional training in camping and leadership, plus the opportunity of outstanding fellowship and adventure in the out-of-doors. See attached application for locations and dates.



BUCKAROO/STRAIGHT ARROW TRAINING CONFERENCE is designed to give leaders training in various techniques and methods of leadership. Trainees will also receive training in various aspects of the Buckaroo and Straight Arrow ministries. Locations and dates are: Columbus, Texas, February 13-16; Lake Wales, Florida, March 6-8; Falling Waters, West Virginia, April 24-27; Springfield, Missouri, May 8-11; and Northern California, October 9-12.

NATIONAL TRAINING TRAILS. On the National Training Trail leaders participate in outstanding rugged outdoor activities surrounded by some of America's most beautiful scenery. Leaders will be on the trail for three exciting days, carrying all their gear and food in backpacks. Locations and dates are: St. George, Utah, August 14-17; and Eagle Rock, Missouri, October 16-19.



NATIONAL CANOE EXPEDITION is designed to give leaders specialized training on how to conduct canoe trips, and to provide outstanding adventure in some of the most beautiful canoe country in America. Locations and dates are: West Jefferson, North Carolina, May 29 - June 1; and Columbus, Texas, October 2-5.

ADVANCED NATIONAL TRAINING CAMP is designed to provide Royal Rangers leaders with additional training beyond that offered at NTC. It will also help to inspire leaders to greater involvement in the Royal Rangers ministry. A leader must have attended NTC before enrolling for ANTC. Locations and dates are: Sonora, California, August 20-24; Eagle Rock, Missouri, September 24-28; and Whiteford, Maryland, October 8-12.



STAFF SCHOOL is designed to give leaders opportunity for: training in camp skills, leadership development, ideas for teaching and administration, analyzing personal strengths and weaknesses--plus self-improvement tips, and seeing the program from a boy's viewpoint. Locations and dates are: Hungry Horse, Montana, May 5-7; Lake Wales, Florida, September 12-13; and Falling Waters, West Virginia, October 13-14.



For further information and applications, please contact the national office, your District Commander, or your District Training Coordinator.



## notorious Tory had escaped!



mander.

In the meantime, a fire broke out mysteriously in a haymow, and the guard left the little guardhouse in which Honeyman was confined. Equally mysterious was the fact that the door was also left open. Once more the notorious Tory had made good his escape, and once more he made it across the Delaware where a Hessian patrol found him, half frozen, and almost in a state of shock. The story he had told Rall must have been a convincing one, as the gullible German believed all he heard which was plenty. Washington's army was starving, and most of the troops were barefooted. Enlistments would expire within a week, and most of the army would not reenlist. Others were on the verge of mutiny.

A grin crept over Rall's face. It was just as he thought. So he made arrangements for the biggest Christmas celebration Trenton had ever seen. The breastworks could wait until after the holidays.

The rest is history. The blistering, well coordinated attack which the ragged army made on Trenton on the morning of December 26, 1776, was a complete success. Over 900 Hessian soldiers were taken prisoner, the Germans suffering another 100 casualties killed or wounded. Thousands of sorely needed bullets, as well as guns, fell into the hands of the jubilant American

army. It was an astounding victory, at a time when American hopes were at their lowest ebb.

When the Landgrave of Hesse heard of the stunning defeat, he ordered that the Rall regiment would never again be allowed to bear colors, unless they were able to recapture the ones they had lost.

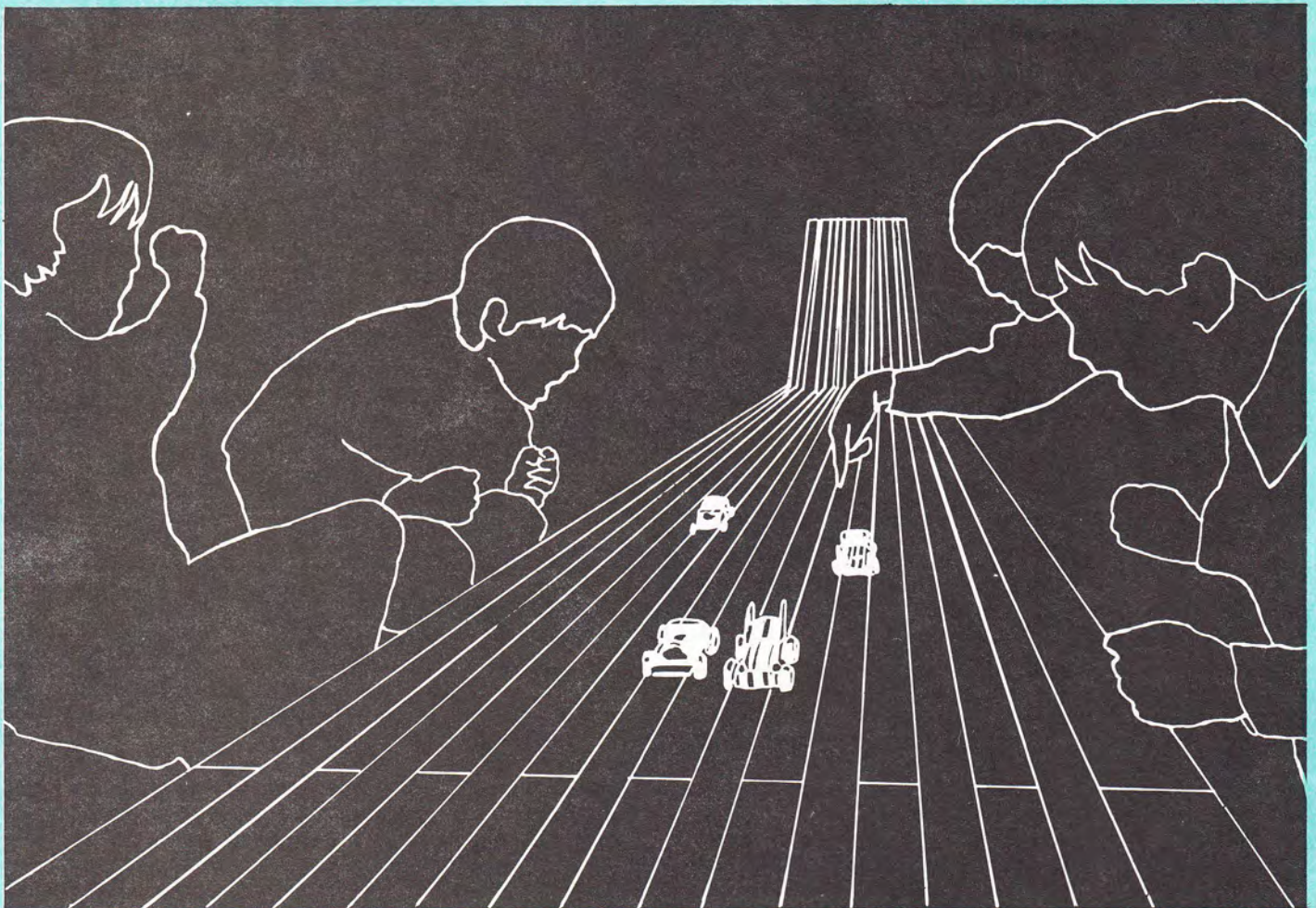
No one in America, save Washington, knew of the dual role that Honeyman was playing, and three times within the next few years, he was captured and sentenced to hang, but always he was mysteriously released or escaped. Other than the great effort at Trenton, his record throughout the remainder of the war, was one of obscurity.

In 1783, Washington and his staff visited John Honeyman at his home, shaking hands with his greatest spy in full view of the villagers who had scorned and hated the quiet man throughout the lengthy war.

While Honeyman was to remain in obscurity throughout history, The Patriotic Sons, Order of America erected a memorial fountain to the memory of John Honeyman on the New Jersey side of Washington Crossing Park which says: "Dedicated in memory of John Honeyman, who served Washington and the Continental Army as a spy."

Drink of the fount of liberty, let posterity inherit freedom. ★





## AND THE WINNER IS . . .

BY SUSAN BELL FARRELL

It is going to be a big race this year. Ninety cars are registered. Racers have brought their cars from miles around and are now engaged in last minute preparations. They are still busy tightening or loosening screws, spinning wheels, putting graphite on axles, scheming to make their cars run faster. The weight regulation is strict, and some racers are taking off extra trim.

As the crowd of spectators grows, some of the racers admire the other cars: "Look at the paint job on that black one!" "Do you think that thing runs as good as it looks?" "How did they do THAT?" They compare styles and marvel at some of the most elaborate modifications.

When they are finally ready for inspection, the racers line up, get their official numbers, weigh in their cars, and are signed into the log. Each racer looks anxious as the judges examine his car. All eye the scale critically. So important is the weight requirement, some owners even drill holes in their cars to remove a little more excess bulk.

The excited noise of the crowd grows with anticipation. Eager spectators strain

to see around each other, admiring the more flashy cars and reading slogans painted on the sides. They climb onto seats or hoist children to their shoulders. They peer through binoculars vying for the best view. They call encouragement to their favorite racers and grin back at the smiles and thumbs-up signs. The feeling of competition swells to a cheer at the announcement: "We're ready to race!"

Ninety sleek cars stand ready behind the starting line. A total of 28 pounds of rubber and wood. Not 28 tons? Not rubber and steel? No, each of these beauties weighs no more than five ounces and was made by its owner from a six-inch by 1½-inch by 1½-inch block of pine. But the diminished size of the cars doesn't diminish the excitement.

This is the annual Royal Rangers Pine-wood Derby, sponsored by Evangel Assembly of God, Claremore, Oklahoma. The idea was to get dads and sons working together on a project," says Royal Rangers leader, Ralph Carlson. "But then the men wanted their own cars! We had to have a category for them this year." He explains,



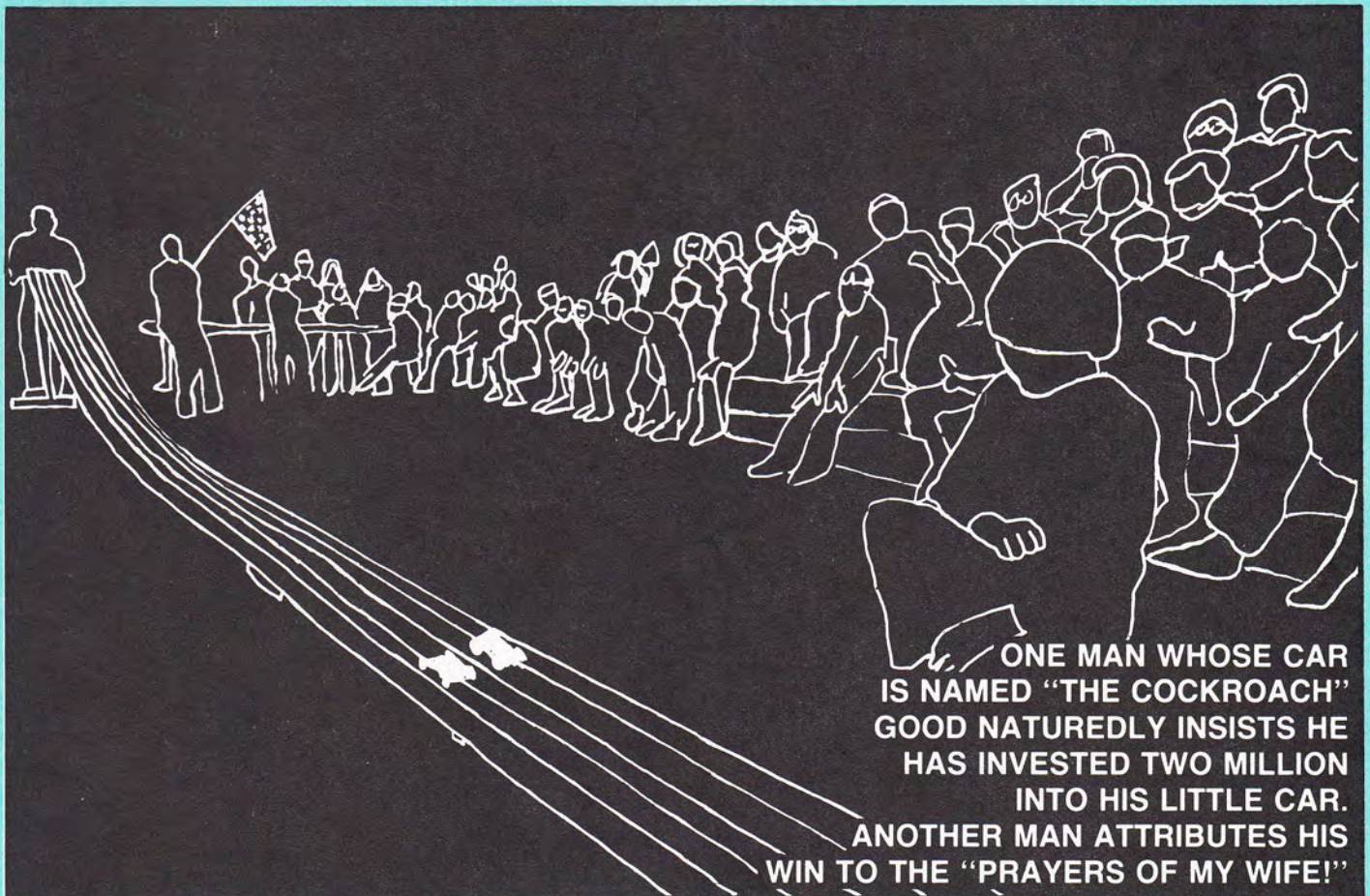
"There are fourteen age categories, one for each year from five to seventeen. And then the men, of course. The cars for each age group are raced three at a time—except for one category. We only had one fifteen-year-old entry, so he will win that category IF he makes it to the end of the track!"

The hopeful owners wait at the bottom of the handmade track and retrieve their cars after each heat ends with the cars crash-landing into a pillow. When #10 wins its category, the owner, eleven-year-old Mark, agrees to reveal his secrets. "The car is full five ounces. We put a weight in the center and sanded the wheels and axles to make them smooth. If the wheels hit the guide strip on the track, it slows them down, so the wheels need to be straight. We ran it down boards to test it." He adds, "There was a lot of engineering by my dad." Mark's advice is good. Of the five cars entered by Mark, his dad, and his brothers, all but one win their age categories, and one car is even runner-up to the Grand Champion.

There are other strategies evident. Nearly all the cars have been carved and sanded into sleek shapes. David, age ten, says he studied aerodynamics. One man whose car is named "The Cockroach" good-naturedly insists he has invested two million dollars into his little car. Another man attributes his win to the "prayers of my wife!"

As the announcer calls the names and numbers of the winners, the scorekeepers

**CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE ►**



ONE MAN WHOSE CAR IS NAMED "THE COCKROACH" GOOD NATUREDLY INSISTS HE HAS INVESTED TWO MILLION INTO HIS LITTLE CAR. ANOTHER MAN ATTRIBUTES HIS WIN TO THE "PRAYERS OF MY WIFE!"





**Shawn, the Grand  
Champion, admitted,  
“I knew I was going  
to win.”**

chart the results on a chalkboard. The winners of each heat race each other until every age category has first, second, and third place winners. Tied races are run again. And again and again and again in one heart-breaking close race. There are wrecks on the track which disqualify the wayward cars. Racers relieve some of their tension by teasing: “I want #46 dismantled!” “The pastor is cheating!” The Cockroach’s owner declares he can’t take the pressure and hides his eyes.

The race for Grand Champion is among all the first place winners. One car begins to appear in every race. It wins the five-year versus six-year race. It wins the next race and the next. Its owner is five-year-old Ben. The crowd has found a favorite. The car finally beats everything but Shawn’s car. Shawn is twelve, and he has just beat his own dad to be the semi-finalist. His competitor for Grand Champ is the seemingly unbeatable Ben.

The crowd is chanting, “Ben! Ben! Ben!” Ben is ceremoniously lifted to the announcer’s table so he can see the big race. He is calmly sucking his thumb. Shawn is wringing his hands. He has his own cheering section. The crowd roars, “Ben! Ben!” “Shawn! Shawn!” “BEN! BEN!” “SHAWN!”

Everyone is on his feet, crowding the track. The two cars are poised six feet in the air at the top of the 32-foot track, ready for the last race.

Handwringing works better than thumb-sucking, and Shawn’s car manages to beat Ben’s to the pillow. Shawn is the Grand Champion! He tearfully accepts a huge trophy and crows, “I *knew* I was going to win!” He’s keeping his secrets, though. He wants to win next year, too!

The trophy for Most Original Car goes to #66, surprising the fans of “Chitty Chitty Bang Bang”; it’s an elaborate reproduction of the movie car. There are two other memorable cars: one with working headlights and one with “Holy Roller” painted on the side.

All the winners line up for ribbons, trophies, pictures, and congratulations. The cars are claimed by their owners; winners or not, they are a source of pride and pleasure. They’re no longer just five ounces of wood. As the owner of the Cockroach says, “Don’t play with it, son, it’s not a toy!”

As the crowd breaks up, many of the racers have their heads together, studying the lines and details of each other’s cars, trading ideas. And planning already for next year. ★