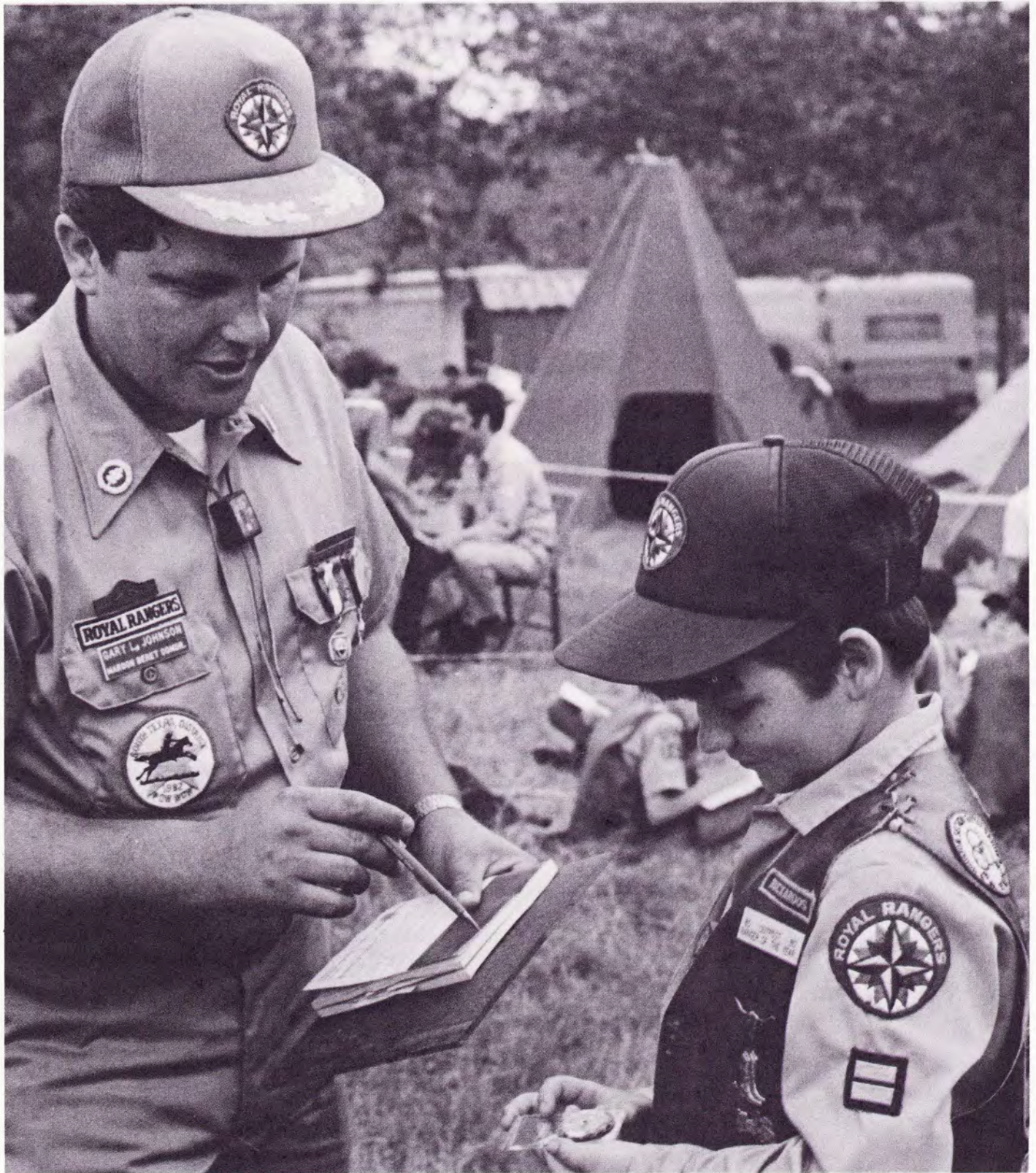


DISPATCH

A Royal Rangers Magazine for Men

FALL 1986



A TRUE-LIFE STORY ABOUT A CHRISTIAN ATHLETE'S STRUGGLE TO STAND UP FOR HIS CONVICTIONS

DISPATCH

FALL 1986

Vol. 23, No. 1

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“I got myself caught in the middle of one of those hotel fishing schools a few years back.”



THE AMATEUR

BY RODERICK WILKINSON

Did you know that you can learn how to fish at an angling school? They exist all over the country. I hear they're great fun and that some people will spend a whole week's vacation at one. They're usually run at a hotel located beside a good fishing river. Large groups often attend. Everyone joins in together, learning how to cast out their lines, getting the artificial flies correctly out onto the water. The jubilation begins when someone catches a fish.

This kind of thing is not exactly *my* cup of tea, but that's because I'm a bit of a loner. I don't like plural anything—especially plural fishing. I like just two creatures on a river—me and the fish. Fortunately, for fishing hotel owners and angling experts, everyone's not like me.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE ►



I got myself caught in the middle of one of those hotel fishing schools a few years back. It just so happened that they were fishing the same stretch of river that I was. There they were, half-a-dozen mad-keen amateurs and their supposed expert instructor.

When I first saw them begin whipping out their rods, I quickly got out of the way. Not wanting a hook through my ear, I ventured down the river to what I thought was a nice quiet spot,

Yes, it had stuck. And, yes, it was stuck on something that moved!

far away from the whizzing flies and plonking plugs of the amateurs.

I soon noticed that I wasn't alone. A stray from the school had wandered down my same river bank, and was now attempting to cast a big imitation Devon spinner into the foaming torrent below.

What could I do? This was the only remaining bit of river that I cared to fish. A cascade of white water fanned outward toward a magnificent salmon pool, with a smooth little sandy beach nearby, that cried out for someone with rod in hand to wade it.

And that someone was wading it—right where I wanted to be—standing a little way out from the bank, whipping that spinning rod all over the place, as if it was an umbrella with a rope on the end. Never in my born days had I seen casting like that! The lure was more like a bola used on the Argentine pampas than a salmon spinner.

Anyhow, down the river I went, toward the wader. To my surprise, the well-attired person in waders, waterproof jacket, and tweed hat turned out to be a female. I had to shout out over the noise of the water, "How're you doing?"

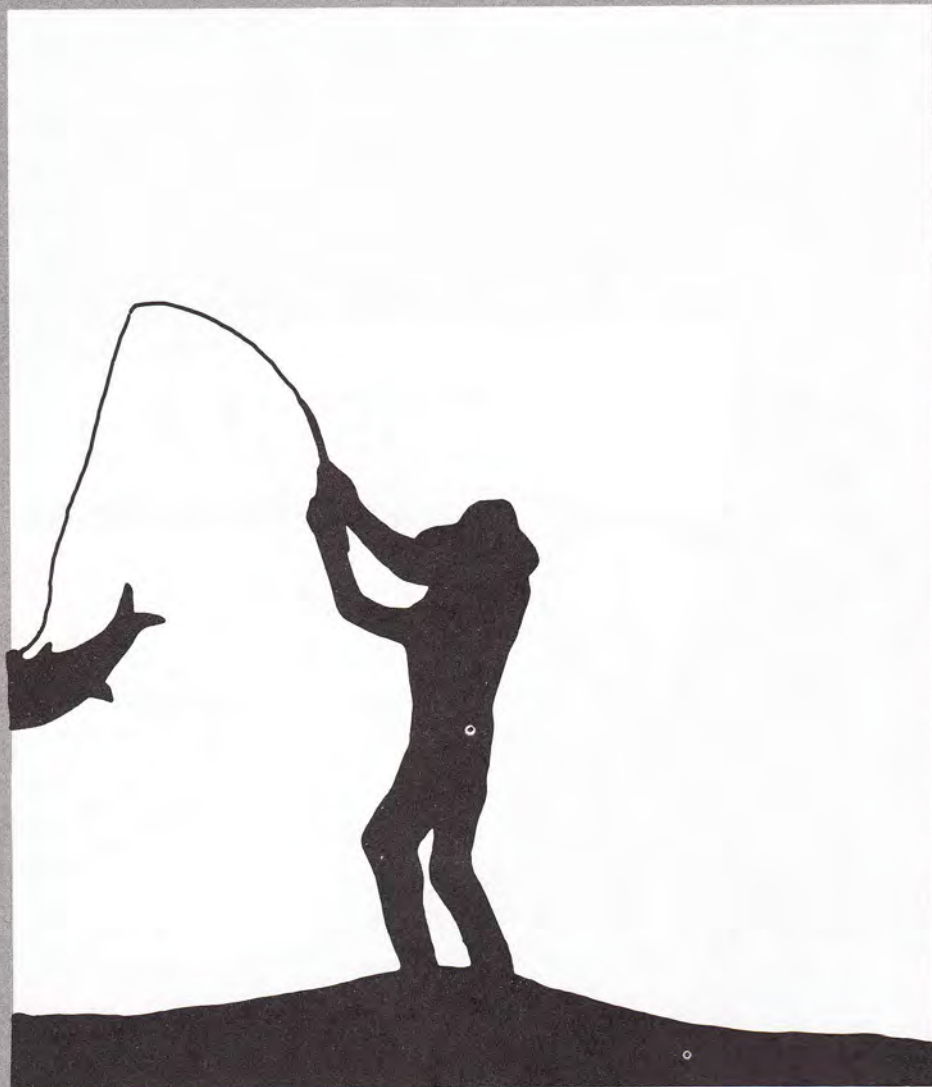
She turned around and smiled. "Not very well. Do you know much about this kind of thing?"

"What kind of thing?"

"Fishing. I think I'm doing it all wrong."

I thought that was the understatement of the year, but I remembered my manners. "Do you want me to show you how?"

"Oh, yes," she responded, as she



eagerly handed me the rod. "It's this spinner thing on the end of the line. The man at the hotel showed me how to fling it out into the water, but every-time I try it, it just seems to get caught on the bottom. Then I have to tug it and tug it to get it back."

I stared at her and swallowed. "Well—" Then I started at the beginning and showed her how to release the bail on the reel, how to hold the nylon line with her finger against the bail, and how to cast the spinner out onto the white water. Then I handed her the rod and said, "Now you try it, gently, take your time."

I stood well back out of the way, watching her swing that rod back like a golf club, and fling it forward like a caber-tosser. Then out toward the water that Devon spinner flew, sailing through the air like a cricket ball, until it plonked itself down, right in the middle of the foaming green.

"Now reel in," I said.

She clicked the handle and began winding, that is, until the line stuck,

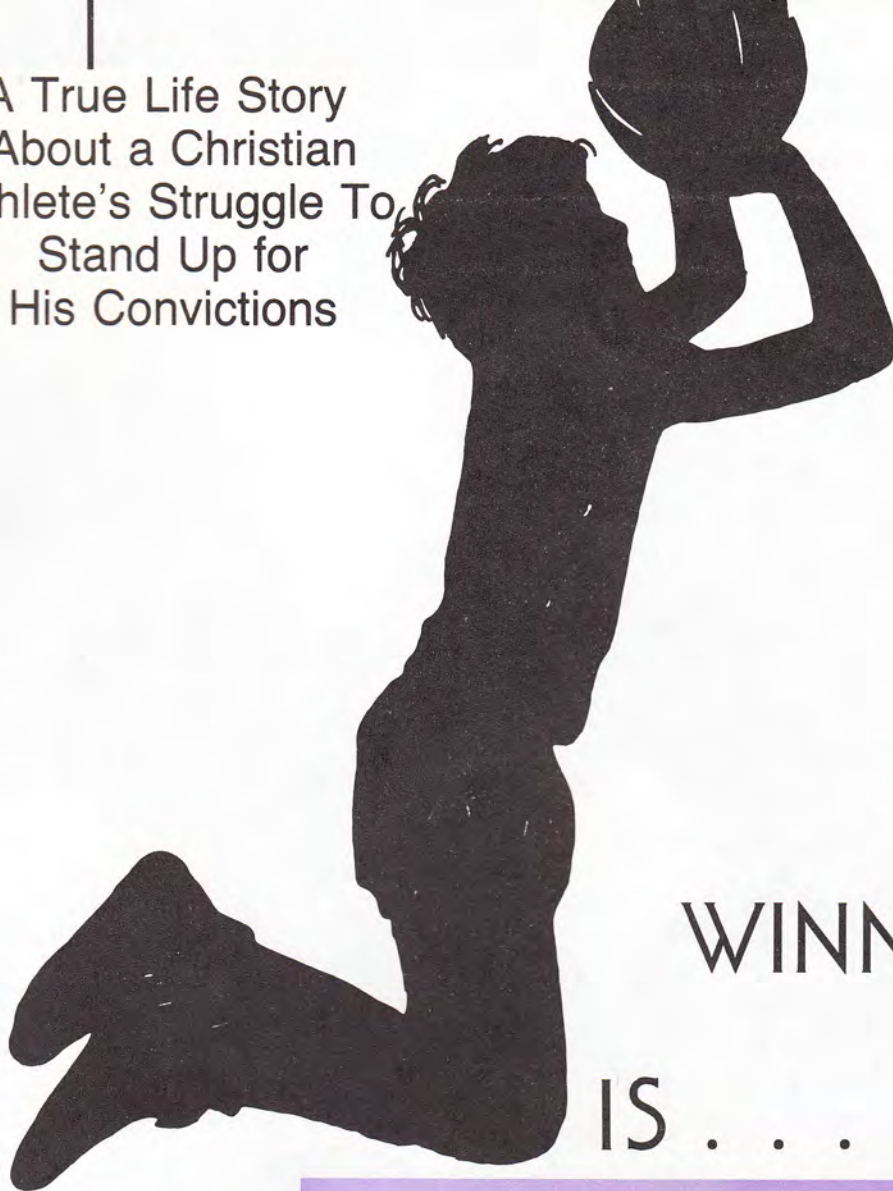
bending the rod like a question mark. "Oh, no," she said. "It's stuck again. I just *have to* make it budge," and immediately began jerking the rod.

Yes, it *had* stuck. No, it *wasn't* stuck on the river bottom. Yes, it *was* stuck on something that moved. No, it wasn't a big log or a branch of a tree. Yes, it came out of the water like a silver torpedo. And yes, it was a *salmon*. And yes, it was hooked on *real good* and stayed *hooked*.

Sixteen pounds. I helped her net it and land it on the bank.

I'm not too sure what the moral of the story is. I do know that it doesn't have anything to do with fishing schools or amateurs or women anglers. It has something to teach us anglers with big heads, however, something we should never forget. Perhaps it's simply the idea that fish don't know who's at the other end of a fishing rod—whether it's a he or a she, an expert or an amateur. It took an amateur like that girl, to put a little sense into this "expert's" fishy noggin! ★

A True Life Story
About a Christian
Athlete's Struggle To
Stand Up for
His Convictions



AND
THE
WINNER
IS . . .

Larry Ashley slammed the door of his friend's Mustang. "Thanks for dropping me off, Bill." He turned toward the mall entrance.

"That's OK." Bill's white teeth flashed in a grin. "What time should I pick you up for Jim's victory bash?"

Here it comes. Larry swallowed hard and ran his hand through his dark hair. "I'm not going."

Bill opened his lazy blue eyes wide in protest. "What?" He sounded outraged. "You aren't going to the victory celebration when you're practically the guest of honor? You know we wouldn't have won the basketball championship if it hadn't been for you. Besides"—he tapped Larry on the chest—"you didn't show for one single after-game party this season. The team's beginning to wonder about you."

"So let them wonder." There was a sick feeling in the bottom of Larry's stomach.

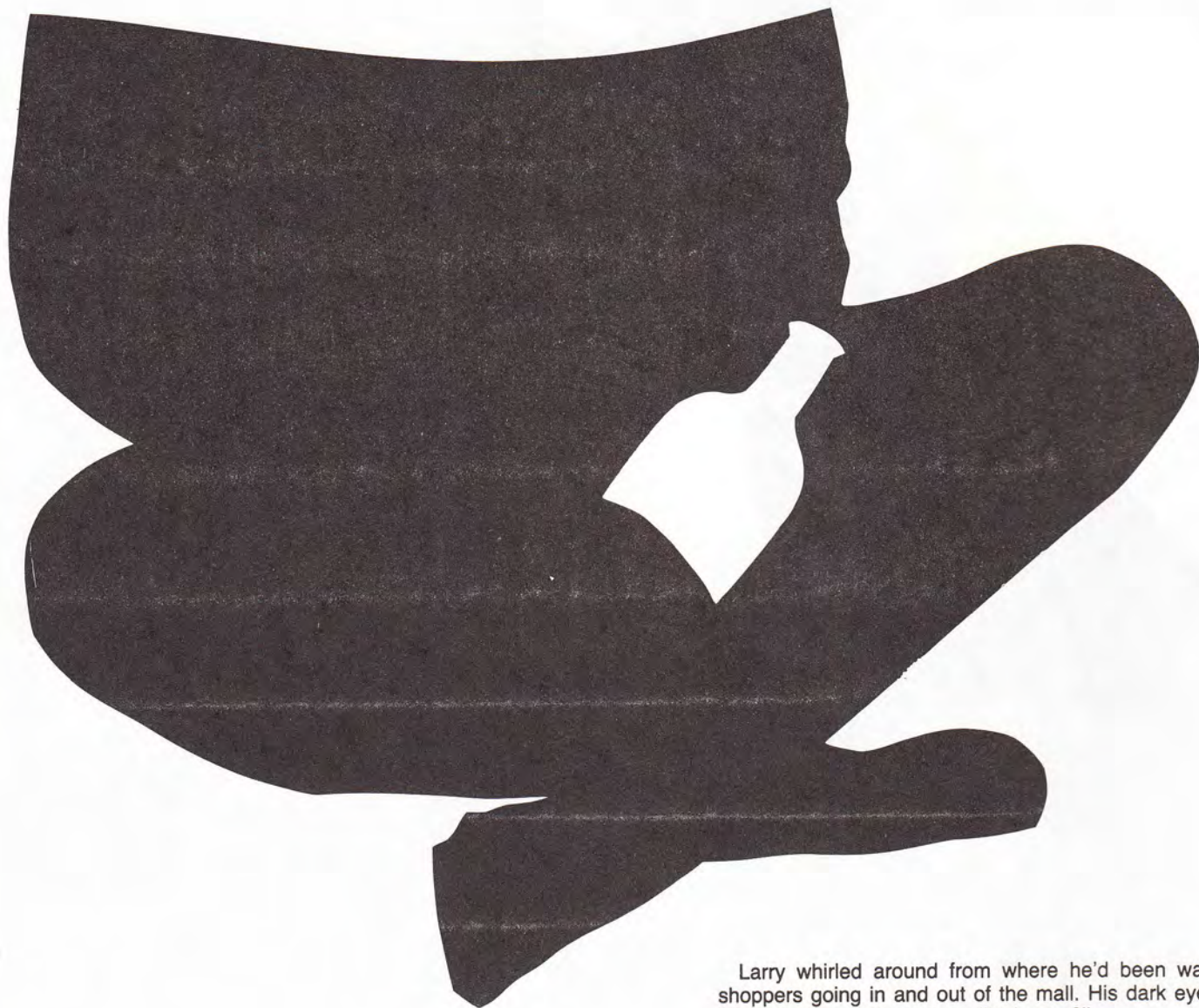
"If it is because Mike's been bragging about how much booze he got for tonight, forget it. The team knows you're a Christian. Sure, we give you a bad time, even me." Bill grinned again, but there was admiration in his eyes. "But we all respect you for standing up for what you believe in. Mike will have pop at the party too."

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE ►

BY C. L. REECE



LARRY, "YOU DIDN'T SHOW FOR ONE SINGLE AFTER-GAME PARTY THIS SEASON. THE TEAM'S BEGINNING TO WONDER ABOUT YOU."



"Imagine the faces of the team if he gave them what he really owed them!"

Larry whirled around from where he'd been watching the shoppers going in and out of the mall. His dark eyes flashed. "Can you honestly say you *like* booze?"

"Naw. It's rotten-tasting to me."

"Then how come you guzzle the stuff?" Larry shot back.

Bill's face turned red. "Hey, that's hitting low. Everyone else—except you—goes along with the crowd. Why should I be different?" He sounded defensive. "It's not like it's going to hurt me or anything. I'll never get hooked."

"I've read that one out of every four teenagers who start drinking *does* get hooked."

"Look, what's the big deal? I'll have a few beers and call it quits." Bill's grin had disappeared.

"Two months ago it was 'one beer,'" Larry pointed out.

He sprinted toward the mall. His face flushed, and he ignored Bill's call to come back. He slowed to a walk, aware of crowds around him laughing and pushing.

Practically the guest of honor. Bill's words rang in Larry's ears. Did he owe it to the team to show up?

Like a thunderbolt an idea hit him. He owed the guys something, all right, but did he have the courage to do what it would take? He rubbed his suddenly sweaty palms together, imagining the



faces of the team if he gave them what he really owed them.

His jaw muscles tightened. He waited fifteen minutes and then dialed a number. "Bill? Could you please pick me up at the mall at eight? Yes, at the mall." He cradled the phone, breathing fast. A quick prayer went heavenward from his heart. "God, give me courage to stand up for what I know is right. Amen."

The time until eight o'clock raced. Larry desperately wished he could hold back the clock's hands. He had gone home, fixed a sandwich, and told his folks about the party. They encouraged him when they heard about his plans. Then Larry waited for Bill. Was Larry nuts for even considering what he meant to do? His family was moving soon. This might be his only chance.

"Glad you changed your mind," Bill sang out as Larry crawled into the Mustang. "How come?"

"I owe it to the team, especially you." But deep inside, Larry felt rising panic. Could he go through with it?

The bash was all Mike had promised. He'd smuggled a river of booze in after his parents locked the house, thinking their son was at his grandmother's. Larry choked in the blue haze of smoke and was glad when someone opened a window and let some of it blow away in the damp night air.

He refused drinks a dozen times. At the moment he didn't even want any soda pop. All he wanted was to finish what he had to do and leave.

Finally Mike hollered, "How about some speeches from the team?"

His suggestion brought enthusiastic yells. After the captain said a few words, Mike said, "Your turn, Larry." He waved a beer can at the crowd. "Larry's a superstar in spite of being a Christian."

Even as the crowd roared, Larry's panic dwindled. He'd entered the room tonight feeling what Daniel must have felt when he walked into the lions' den. But God hadn't let Daniel down—or Larry. He'd just been given the perfect opening.

"You're wrong, Mike. I'm not a good ball player in spite of being a Christian." Startled faces turned toward him. A laugh broke off in the middle. "It's *because* I'm a Christian."

Mike waved his beer can again. "In spite of, because of, who cares? You shot the winning basket, didn't you? That makes you a winner." His flushed face beamed. "Let's hear it for Ashley!"

Larry waited until it got quiet again. "Thanks." He smiled at

the group, noticing the red faces, the silly giggling, and the tipsy behavior. "I owe you guys a lot. We worked as a team. That's why I have to tell you something. We've had a good season together and now my family's moving, so . . ."

"Moving!" Bill shoved his way to the front. "But we need you for next year and the next! Are you trying to fool us?"

"No," Larry shook his head. "But you're all fooling yourselves."

Everyone grew deathly quiet. Larry could feel his heart pound. "I know you think I'm out of it for not drinking, but have you ever wondered why I don't?"

Larry asked Bill,
" 'Can you honestly say
you like booze?'

Bill responded,
'Naw. It's rotten-tasting
to me.'

'Then how come you guzzle
the stuff?' Larry shot back."

"Probably because you're a Christian," Bill answered.

"That's one reason. But I didn't drink even before I became a Christian," Larry said. "Both my parents used to be alcoholics." It sounded loud in the room.

"You mean AA and all that stuff?" Mike wanted to know. He had put down his beer can.

Larry let his gaze travel over the crowd, who were all listening now. He looked at Bill last. Even if no one else understood, Bill had to. He had been a real friend. "No Alcoholics Anonymous, Mike." His eyes never left Bill. "Bitter family quarrels. Huddling under the covers with a pillow over my head to shut out the sound of Mom and Dad fighting. Never bringing friends home. Then two years ago they became Christians. We all go to church regularly now and our family life is a thousand times better.

"But even before they were Christians I loved them very much. They loved me too. When they were sober they would cry and tell me how sorry they were. Then they drank again. Alcoholism is a sickness. I finally learned that by going to Alateen, the group for teenagers with alcoholic parents. Then when we became Christians we found something worth living for."

Larry paused for a moment and then continued. "Mom and Dad started drinking when they were in high school. *They* didn't plan on becoming alcoholics either." His shoulders slumped. "So I had to tell you before I move—when you break training and drink and smoke, when you think it won't hurt to hoist a few, just remember, it's a long way back." He looked around the crowd. "It's not easy getting called 'chicken' or 'turkey' for saying no. It wasn't easy for me to tell you this tonight. But if even one of you does some serious thinking about how destructive alcohol is, about how it's the number one killer of teenagers in America today because of car accidents, then I'll be a real winner because I finally had the courage to try saving your lives."

There was stunned silence. Larry shouldered his way through the crowd and headed for the door. He had to get some fresh air. He heard steps behind him. His heart leaped.

"Wait up, Larry." Bill was struggling into his jacket. "You ready to leave now?"

"Yeah." Larry hesitated, hating to say it, but forced to. "If you want to stay I can jog home."

Bill wavered, glancing back at the crowd. Some were still speechless; others were picking up where they'd left off.

Larry's eyes stung. So much for his little temperance talk. He stepped out into the fresh air, waiting for Bill to choose. "Going my direction?"

Bill followed. His voice was husky. "Just maybe I am." His lips curved into a smile. "I always did like being on the winner's side." He held out his hand to shake Larry's. That said it all. ★

**THE NEXT TIME
YOU ARE CAUGHT
WITH AN EMPTY CANTEEN**

REMEMBER:

***PLOP, PLOP, FILTER, FILTER!
SAFE DRINKING WATER—
OH, WHAT A RELIEF IT IS.***



HOW CAN WATER BE PURIFIED?

BY JIM MEUNINCK

Water can be purified by physical, chemical and mechanical means.

To begin with always seek the clearest possible water. Try to avoid water contaminated with organic matter, dirt, and clay. These suspensions provide a greater surface area to encourage and support bacterial growth. The exception to this policy is in desert or mining areas. Here, look for life in the water—fish, bugs, or plants—to avoid drinking water with arsenic, cyanide, or mineral contamination.

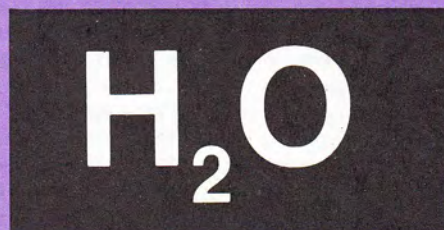
Remember in preparing potable drinking water we want to lower the germ count to the point where the body can defend itself against the remaining quantity. We are not trying to produce sterile water; that would be impractical.

Purification by Physical Means

Perhaps the oldest, and still very effective way to make water drinkable is to boil it. You may have read it is necessary to boil water 5, 10, even 20 min-

utes before it is safe. Actually, bringing water to a boil will effectively kill pathogens and make water safe to drink.

Because water and the fuel necessary to boil may be in short supply (say on a boat stranded far from shore), it is impractical to boil the water for more than five minutes; and just bringing it to a boil in the shortest time possible will suffice for safe drinking water. This water will not be sterile, but it will be okay to drink.



Chemical Ways to Make Water Drinkable

The use of chlorine based systems has been effectively used by municipal water supply systems for years. There

are two forms of chlorine readily available to the boater and outdoor traveler. One is liquid chlorine laundry bleach and the other is Halazone tablets. Laundry bleach that is 4% to 6% in concentration can make clear water safe to drink if 2 drops of bleach are added to 1 quart of water. The water must be mixed thoroughly and let stand for 30 minutes before drinking. This water should have a slight chlorine odor. If not, the original laundry bleach may have lost some of its strength, and you should repeat the dose to the same water and let stand an additional 15 minutes prior to drinking.

Halazone tablets from Abbott Laboratories are also effective. They are actually quite stable, with a shelf life of 5 years, even when occasionally exposed to temperatures in excess of 100 degrees F. Abbott labs has recently refuted an article in Backpacker Magazine that Halazone has a short shelf life. Tests and government (FDA) approval sufficiently support the 5 year

shelf life claim of the manufacturer. Anyway, if the tablets have lost their stability they turn yellow and have an objectionable odor as they decompose. Five tablets should be added to a quart of clear water for adequate chlorination.

These chlorine based systems just discussed are very effective against virus and bacteria. They work best in neutral or slightly acid waters. But remember to increase the amount of chlorine bleach or Halazone in alkaline water, or water with a high degree of visible organic debris. Your local aquarium supply store has paper strips to test the pH of water—add these strips to your medicine kit if you use chlorine based systems to purify water.

Iodine is very effective against protozoan contaminations such as *Giardia lamblia* and *Entamoeba histolytica*, WHICH TEND TO BE RESISTANT TO CHLORINE, BUT ARE KILLED BY BOILING. Further, iodine is more effective in water clouded with organic debris. Tincture of iodine from your medicine chest may be used. Use the commonly available 2% solution, add 5 drops to clear water, or 10 drops to cloudy water. Let the mixture stand for 30 minutes prior to drinking.

An elemental concentration of 3 to 5 parts per million (ppm) is necessary to kill amoebae and their cysts, algae, bacteria and their spores, and enterovirus. Several commercial sources of iodine tablets meet this criteria. They are: Globaline, Potable Aqua, and Army surplus water purification tablets. Use as directed on the bottle. For example one tablet of Potable Aqua provides 8 ppm iodine concentration for one quart of water. If the water is clear a 10 minute wait is required, if the water is cloudy wait 20 minutes before consuming. At near freezing temperatures a longer wait is required, at least 30 minutes.

Drinkable Water by Mechanical Filtration

Mechanical filtration methods are also useful in preparing drinking water. They normally consist of a series of screens down to 6 microns in size which are useful in removing tapeworm eggs (25 microns) or *Giardia lamblia* (7 to 15 microns). These screens enclose an activated charcoal filter element which removes many disagreeable tastes.

As most bacteria have a diameter smaller than 1 micron, and viral contaminants are even smaller, they may not be removed by filtration using these

units. So for water to be safe after using one of these devices it must be pretreated with chlorine or iodine. Pretreating the water also keeps the charcoal filter from becoming contaminated with live bacteria. Also, by using both chemical purification followed by mechanical purification improves the taste of the water (iodine and chlorine treated water may have a disagreeable taste).

One of the oldest methods of cleaning water is filtering it through unglazed ceramic material. This is still done in a few tropical countries. A large pot of unpotable water is hung above a collecting basin. After the water passes through the clay it is safe to drink. A modern version of this old system is the development of pressurized pumps. One product, made in Switzerland, called the Katadyn Pocket Filter has a ceramic core enclosed in a tough plastic housing, fitted with an aluminum pump. The built-in pump forces water through the ceramic filter at a rate of approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ quart per minute. Turbid water may clog the filter, but a brush is provided to easily restore full flow rates. This filter is a .2 micron size, which eliminates all bacteria and larger problems. Pretreating of the water is not required. The cost of a 23 ounce Katadyn Pocket filter is a salty \$170.00.

Offshore boaters and fishermen can

stow away a little confidence by making a solar still. Paint a five gallon plastic bucket black, pour in one or two gallons of seawater, then place a weighted tennis ball can or other container in the middle of the bucket. Cover the bucket with clear plastic film. Place a stone, large bolt, or nut in the middle of the plastic wrap so it forms an inverted cone that drops into the tennis ball can. Captured solar heat will cause the salt water to evaporate, then condense on the plastic cover. The condensation will roll down the clear film and drip into the tennis ball can. The water in the can is drinkable. Larger solar stills, of course, are more efficient. Commercially produced solar stills may be purchased from your local marina.

So, the next time you are caught with an empty canteen remember: plop, plop, filter, filter! Safe drinking water—oh, what a relief it is. ★

The oldest way
to make water
drinkable is
to boil it!



ANOTHER CONTINUING STORY
OF THAT NEARLY FAMOUS ROYAL RANGER:

LITTLE JOHNNIE and the White Flower



Enlarge the illustrations
or use an overhead projector
to accompany the story
of Little Johnnie.
You'll help to reach, teach,
and keep boys for Christ!

BY CONNIE LANIER

See for yourself!



1



2



3



Little Johnnie was nine years old and lived in Lakeland, Florida. He was a Royal Ranger, a member of Outpost #5. He could hardly wait for Wednesday nights when he had his club meetings, for he learned many interesting facts as well as a good Bible foundation.

Little Johnnie's dad was also involved in Royal Rangers. He was a commander. So on some projects Little Johnnie got to work right along beside his dad.

1

One holiday when they were at home, Little Johnnie's mother said, "Oh, I wish we had some pretty plants on either side of the front door. We need some flowers with lots of colors."

"Dad and I could plant some, Mom," chirped Little Johnnie, "couldn't we, Dad?" As Little Johnnie spoke he flashed a great big grin at his dad for in just a few weeks was his mom's birthday and they had been talking about a special present for her.

"Oh . . . uh . . . yes . . . I . . . think that's just the thing our yard needs. Little Johnnie and I can go to the nursery and scout around and we should be back in a couple of hours. Come on, Son," replied Father.

Mother was practically speechless as she stood waving good-bye through the screen door. "I never dreamed they would jump right up and start on that project just as soon as I mentioned it," she thought. "I should have said something long ago."

2

"Ha Hoo!" squealed Little Johnnie. "This is the best birthday present Mom could have!"

When Little Johnnie and his father got to the Green Thumb Nursery, they were excited. It was breath-takingly beautiful. They saw all kinds of plants and flowers, bushes and trees. It took a while, looking and deciding what they wanted, but finally Little Johnnie said, "Dad, I think Mom would love the petunias. There are lots of colors and the attendant said they were easy to grow and to care for."

"I agree. Let's pick them out and head for home. We've got work to do," beamed Dad.

3

Once at home, Little Johnnie ran to the utility shed and brought out the rake, hoe, and water hose. He helped his



4



6



5



7

dad unload the truck of peat and petunias. His dad noticed how eager Little Johnnie was to start the weeding. He was proud of his son's enthusiasm. He was a hard worker.

4

The sun shone hot for this was the typical Florida weather. But Mom kept Little Johnnie and his dad refreshed with lots of ice-cold lemonade made with fresh lemons from the tree in their backyard.

5

In about three hours Little Johnnie and Dad finished packing the soil around the last petunia. Oh, how their backs ached! But it was a good kind of ache for this was for Mom's birthday. They had taken special care in selecting the plants from each color group so when the flowers bloomed there would be alternate white and lavender blooms. These were his mom's favorite colors.



8



6

When Little Johnnie stood up, he fell over the bucket and landed in the loose peat, smearing dirt all over his nose. His dad laughed and Little Johnnie picked up the water hose and squirted his dad. Before you knew it Little Johnnie was screaming with laughter and Dad was chasing him all over the yard with the water bucket. Mom came out the screen door to see what was causing the commotion and laughed at her two men until her sides hurt. They were truly a happy family.

Every day after school Little Johnnie would run to the edge of the house where the petunias were planted. They were so strong and healthy looking. He could see the growth from one day to the next.

In a couple of weeks when Little Johnnie jumped from the school bus, he saw color from the sidewalk. He threw his books down and ran to the door. "Mom!" he yelled. "Come quick. One of the flowers is on the bush. It's white! It's our first flower. Dad! Our work has paid off." The three of them stood there feeling so proud and grateful for the lovely flower. It wouldn't be long now and the whole front would be lavender and white. Little Johnnie's anticipation grew.

7

The following Saturday Little Johnnie was mowing the yard, when he suddenly stopped in his tracks. A second plant was blooming, but it was not what he expected. "It's another white flower. It's supposed to be lavender. It's not like we planned it. It's white!" said Little Johnnie disgustedly.

Dad walked up. "What is it, Son?" "It's a white flower. It's supposed to be lavender. That's going to mess up everything. The man at the nursery told us it was lavender. We were going to have lavender, white, lavender, white for Mom. What are we going to do, Dad? Take it back?"

"Wait a minute, Son. Let me think."

8

Little Johnnie kicked the dirt with his shoe. He was disappointed. Then Dad said, "Let's look at it this way, Little Johnnie. We could get angry, because the man at the nursery gave us the wrong plant. We could take it out and change it. However, it would be smaller than the others. We could be very upset with our plans spoiled to do this for

your mom. Or we could look at this situation in a different light."

9

As Dad spoke he put his arm around Little Johnnie's shoulders and motioned for him to sit in the grass. "Little Johnnie, I've never had what you call a green thumb. Your mom can grow practically anything. I can fix things and build things, but I've never been too successful in growing things. These plants are healthy. They are really growing terrific. I think we should just accept it and be glad it's alive and strong. White petunias are, after all, beautiful, too. It's true; it's not what we planned. But sometimes things aren't what we plan and we need to look at the positive side. OK?"

"OK, Dad. I think you're right. We can either get mad about it or be glad about it. Huh, Dad?"

"Right, Little Johnnie. I appreciate your good attitude."

10

Early in the morning two days later Mom called. "Little Johnnie, outside in the flower bed there's something you need to see. Hurry."

11

"What is it, Mom?" asked Little Johnnie.

"You go see for yourself," Mom said. Dad followed as Little Johnnie dashed out and stooped down to get a closer look at the petunias. His hand covered his mouth as he gasped. "Mom, Dad . . . there's . . . there's another flower on the second plant . . . a . . . lavender flower with the white flower. How? What? I don't understand!"

Dad said, "Looks like there's two plants instead of one. I believe God blessed us for having the right attitude in our hearts. He gave us two plants. He doubly blessed us. When things don't happen just like we think they should, but we still try to see the good side, God will always bless us far beyond what we can imagine. The Bible says: 'Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.' Also it says: 'All things work together for the good of those that love the Lord and are called according to His purpose.'"

12

Then Little Johnnie remembered this was his mom's birthday. He put his arms around her and said, "Happy Birthday, Mom. Here are your flowers—lavender and white, lavender and white."

Tears came to her eyes, but Little Johnnie knew it was because she was happy. He felt warm inside. Things had turned out perfect after all. ★

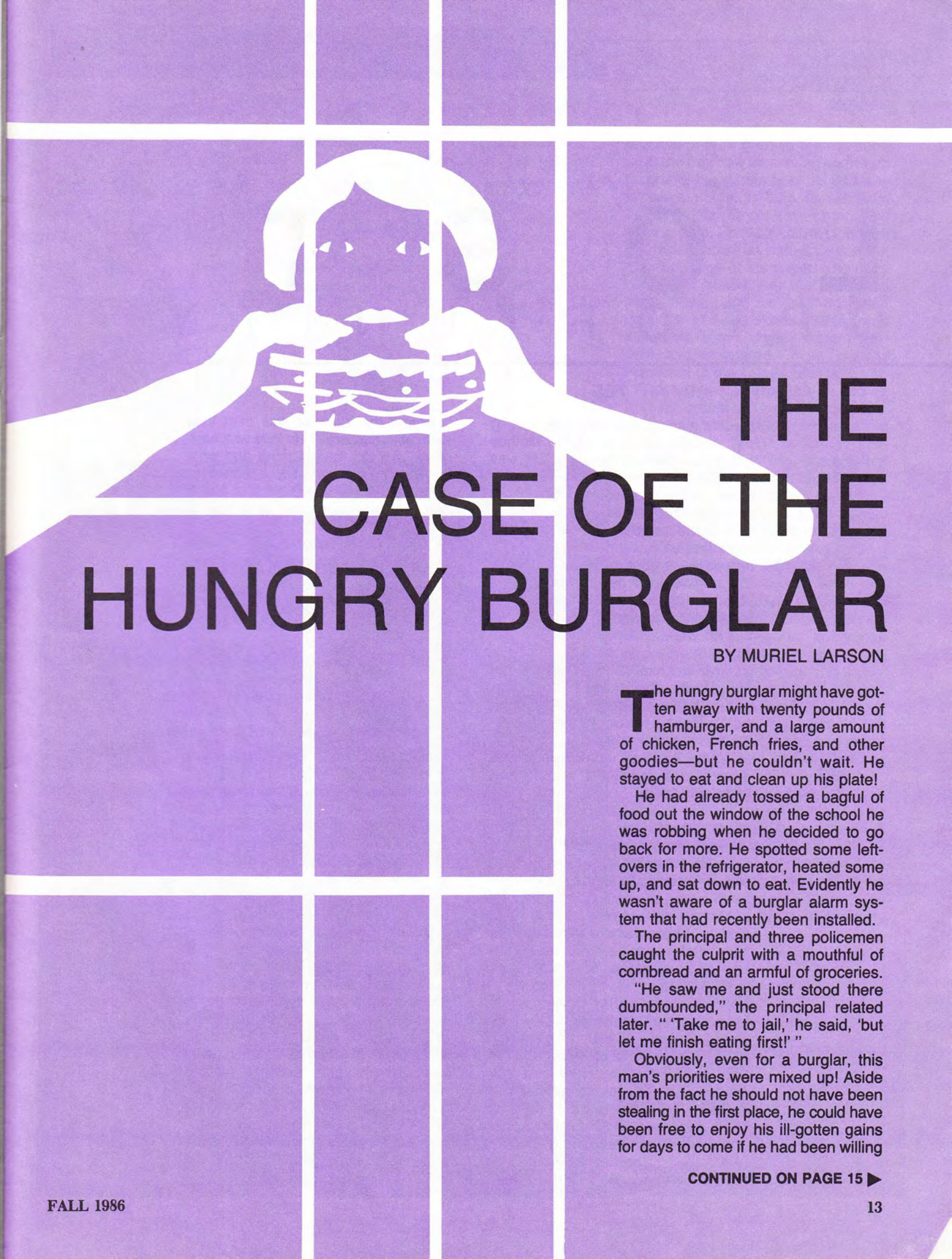
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9



10



THE CASE OF THE HUNGRY BURGLAR

BY MURIEL LARSON

The hungry burglar might have gotten away with twenty pounds of hamburger, and a large amount of chicken, French fries, and other goodies—but he couldn't wait. He stayed to eat and clean up his plate!

He had already tossed a bagful of food out the window of the school he was robbing when he decided to go back for more. He spotted some leftovers in the refrigerator, heated some up, and sat down to eat. Evidently he wasn't aware of a burglar alarm system that had recently been installed.

The principal and three policemen caught the culprit with a mouthful of cornbread and an armful of groceries.

"He saw me and just stood there dumbfounded," the principal related later. " 'Take me to jail,' he said, 'but let me finish eating first!'"

Obviously, even for a burglar, this man's priorities were mixed up! Aside from the fact he should not have been stealing in the first place, he could have been free to enjoy his ill-gotten gains for days to come if he had been willing

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L O S T O P P O R T U N I T Y

BY ART FEE

The teenage boy had walked long and far, carrying his few clothes in a bundle on his back. He was searching for summer work. Near the close of the day a large farmhouse came into view. Near it was a huge barn and a number of sheds. Several cows grazed in the pasture. To Jim it looked like a good place to find work. The dogs started barking as he drew near. He knocked on the front door. A beautiful young woman about his own age answered. "Is your father in?" Jim asked.

"I will call him," she smiled. Her father, Worthy Taylor, was a big man, well-off and a leader in the community.

"I'm looking for work," Jim stated.

"Can you milk cows?"

"Yes, I can milk cows, clip sheep, drive horses, cut wood, and do anything on a farm."

"I think I can use you," Taylor replied. "What's your name?"

"Jim," the lad answered.

Taylor took Jim down to the barn. Above the cows in the haymow was a small space by the hay, room for his bunk and a few nails to hang his clothes. That is where Jim slept that summer. He didn't eat with the family. He was the hired man and he ate alone in the kitchen.

That summer Jim milked cows, clipped sheep, cultivated corn, cut wood, and made himself generally useful. But Worthy's daughter who met Jim at the door watched him very closely. She soon saw something wonderful in him. They got to know each other and alone under the stars, they unburdened their hearts to each other and revealed hidden secrets; their dreams, longings, and aspirations.

Before the summer was over they were both desperately in love with each other. Jim did the big thing and went to Worthy Taylor. He told him he was in love with his daughter and asked permission to marry her sometime in the future.

Taylor never stopped to ask Jim about his family, finances, or his plans.



Instead he flew into a rage. In a tirade of vicious words he told Jim he would never marry his daughter under any circumstances. He had no money, no name, no family, no connections, and in general he was a poor prospect, and he would never allow the likes of him to marry his daughter.

Jim was bowled over by the wicked barrage of negative, defaming words that were hurled at him with cannon force and machine gun rapidity by the girl's enraged father. Jim felt he was cut to pieces and bleeding inside. He had worked hard all summer to prove himself worthy. Now all his plans, dreams and aspirations had withered away under this verbal blast. He went back to the haymow in a daze, packed his few belongings and headed down the road away from the Taylor farm and the girl he had hoped to marry.

It was 25 years later. Worthy Taylor decided to build a bigger barn. In the

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THE CASE OF THE HUNGRY BURGLAR

CONTINUED

to wait. But, unfortunately for him, he wanted immediate satisfaction.

Most humans seem to have this same problem, especially in the spiritual realm. No matter what the devil holds out to us, some people are taken in and run after it, falling right into his trap! Just like the burglar, we demand immediate gratification of every want and whim so the devil makes a lot of "not so good" things attractive to us. Then we grab for them rather than wait for the long-term benefits God offers us.

What long-term benefits? you ask. Well, benefit number one is that through faith in Christ, we become children of God. The devil really fights this one by making you think, "Oh, I can get saved later. I'm having too much fun right now!"

Then, benefit number two, God promises us His presence, peace, joy, strength, and help on a daily basis if we will walk with Him. This means you do your God-helped best to obey His Word and live for Him.

Benefits three and four are in Psalm 84:11 and Matthew 6:33. Try Malachi 3:10 for benefit number five. The list could go on and on.

Not everyone realizes that these benefits are available, though. The Bible says, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God

hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit" (1 Corinthians 2:9,10). Until a person accepts Christ and really starts living for the Lord and obeying Him, he can't begin to understand all the blessings of God!

Complete surrender to Christ gives you a taste of heaven while still on earth. Momentary pleasures, contrary to God's will, can't hold a candle to these benefits. But there's more! First Corinthians 3:12-15 promises us eternal rewards in heaven if we live godly lives and serve Christ faithfully here on earth—which of course, is a delayed gratification not many can see. And, of course, there is a mansion prepared in heaven for each Christian, surrounded by all the unimaginable joys and beauties of God's home.

When that burglar was caught, he had just finished a huge plateful of food and got caught with cornbread in his mouth. The food was a fleeting, passing gratification—but he had to have it *right now*. Isn't it sad that he settled just for that? He didn't think he'd get caught, but he did. And no matter what we think we're getting away with now, a day of reckoning will come. God warns, "Be sure your sin will find you out" (Numbers 32:23). But He also promises to recognize and reward your faithfulness to Him (Revelation 2:10; Hebrews 11:6). ★

LOST OPPORTUNITY

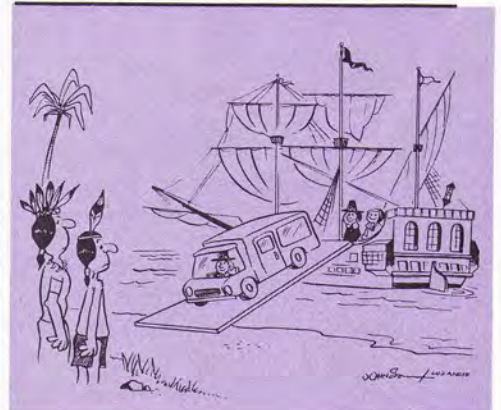
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process of pulling down the old barn, up in the haymow where Jim had slept, on one of the rafters near his bed was a man's name in bold handwriting. When Worthy Taylor saw it he turned deathly pale. He recalled the picture of a familiar face that had appeared on the front page of the paper. The story beneath it stated that that man had been inaugurated as the 20th President of the United States. Worthy read the name again, *James Abram Garfield*, and whispered, "Now he's the President of the United States."

Twenty-five years before James Abram Garfield had asked for the hand of his daughter. He didn't see anything in the boy—or hadn't he looked? His daughter saw something. She saw that he worked long and hard and did more than he was asked. In him she saw a real gentleman in the way he treated her mother and the other members of the family. She knew he was kind by the way he treated animals. Yes, she knew he belonged to a good family and was the youngest of five children. She knew he was working his way through Williams College, majoring in German and education. She knew he had dreams of entering politics and someday becoming President of the United States and she dreamed of someday being the First Lady. She watched him walk down that lonely road and out of her life. She knew he was the best and biggest man she would ever meet.

How different things would have been for the Taylor family if Worthy had sat down with Jim and his teenage daughter and had a quiet talk.

Beware of "judging" too quickly. Let's pray that God will give us wisdom as we evaluate young people. Sometimes only He knows the great potential they represent. ★



Stay With Me ... Boys



BY BOB FOX

Stay with me and you will become a man—the kind of man God wants you to be; the kind of man business is looking for and government needs.

I will make things happen that you want to happen. I will make you proud of yourself and others will admire you.

You will learn skills that few boys your age have an opportunity to learn. Skills in camping, swimming, rifle shooting, boating, first aid, and personal grooming. I will help you be more attractive to the girls.

I will teach you, individually, according to the shape and size of your body, how to style your hair, how to improve your face and body, what clothing to wear that will “sell” you, to yourself and others; and manners that will make others want to be with you.

We will go places and do things that

some of you would not get to go or do outside of Royal Rangers . . . *we will have a lot of fun.*

If you stay with me, I will do these things for you because Jesus Christ loves you so much that He personally directed my life to make me want to help you become what down deep in your heart you want to become. God loved you so much He gave Royal Rangers to Assemblies of God churches. In fact, He loved you so much that He gave the only Son He had, to die on calvary in your place, that you might not perish but have everlasting life.

If you stay with me boys, we will go to heaven together. We will live forever and ever in a place of eternal happiness and joy . . . stay with me boys. I don't want to lose a one of you.” ★