

WARREN SYE

High Adventure

A ROYAL RANGERS MAGAZINE FOR BOYS

AUTUMN 1974

WILDERNESS ADVENTURE

THE TERMITES IN
GREGOR'S BRIDGE

ECHO AT EVERGREEN HOLLOW

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A CHAT WITH THE NATIONAL COMMANDER



Hi Fellows:

This issue of High Adventure marks the twelfth anniversary of the Royal Rangers program. It is almost unbelievable what has happened to the program in the past dozen years.

From a vision and a dream the program has grown to a worldwide program of over 130,000 Royal Rangers.

The program has not only reached into all of our fifty states, but has also touched 34 other countries of the world.

Thousands of boys have accepted Jesus Christ as their personal saviour through Royal Rangers. Last year alone, over 18,000 made a decision for Christ.

Thousands of boys grow spiritually, physically, socially, and mentally through the challenging features of the program.

Thousands have enjoyed exciting outdoor adventure such as only the Royal Rangers program could provide.

A good symbol of the progress of the program was the first National Royal Rangers Camporama just concluded at the US Air Force Academy in Colorado.

Our heart is full of gratitude as we think about all that has been accomplished, but I'm most grateful of all for individuals such as yourself who have become a part of this program. You have helped make Royal Rangers a great success.

The past twelve years have been great. However, I believe we have even greater things to look forward to in the coming years.

When you're on the Royal Rangers adventure trail, every day, every week, every month and every year is an exciting experience.

THE WILDERNESS



(Above)

Horseshoe Lake in the distance

(Right)

Wilderness Country



AD VEN TURE

BY KIETH ELDER

Excitement was high that Sunday afternoon. The food and patrol gear were individually stacked and last minute instructions given. Twenty Royal Rangers finished loading their packs and weighed in. Each pack averaged 40-50 pounds.

The Rangers were divided into two eight-man patrols with a four-man staff. Two vans were packed and good-byes were said. We were then on the road to Red River, New Mexico, where we had reservations at the "Sleepy Hollow Resort" for the night.

Monday morning came early after the long drive, but much still needed to be done. We all dressed in our uniforms, and felt proud to be a part of Royal Rangers.

After breakfast, which was our last "real" meal for the next five days, I left to get our wilderness permit at the Forest Ranger Station. The rest of the Rangers went to purchase 5-day fishing licenses to

assure at least one good meal of fresh trout.

The rest of our meals would come from freeze dried back packing food, except for one. Each Ranger would have to catch or find his own food—or go hungry.

We drove back into Ditch Cabin and made toggle lines. Then, we packed and moved out, walking sticks in hand, for the Carson National Forest Wilderness Area and our first campsite.

Our strides were long and fast at first, but within a short time we had set a good pace for all twenty Rangers. There was considerable talking and laughing, but soon the Rangers were quiet as they hiked upward. There was no time to talk as everyone was absorbed with the beauty and wonder of the wilderness country—as well as the tough climb ahead.

The trail seemed almost straight up and it took all we had to keep moving. However, the ridges enabled us to relax occasionally to view the countryside.

Wildlife was abundant. Many of the Rangers saw mule deer for the first time in the wild. Numerous other types of animals were also seen along the trail.

The first day was to be the longest, so the first glimpse of Lost Lake seemed like heaven to twenty exhausted Rangers. We had hiked five miles and climbed from 8,000 to 11,000 feet altitude. During the entire week only two Rangers were sick—they had altitude sickness.

Pressure was applied in getting things done. To build patrol spirit, each patrol had a name, flag, yell, and song. By Tuesday morning each patrol had become a good working unit with everyone doing his job.

With breakfast over, the daily routine was morning assembly and inspection followed by one or two short classes on "Wilderness Survival," "Lost and the Found," and "Wilderness First Aid" taught by the

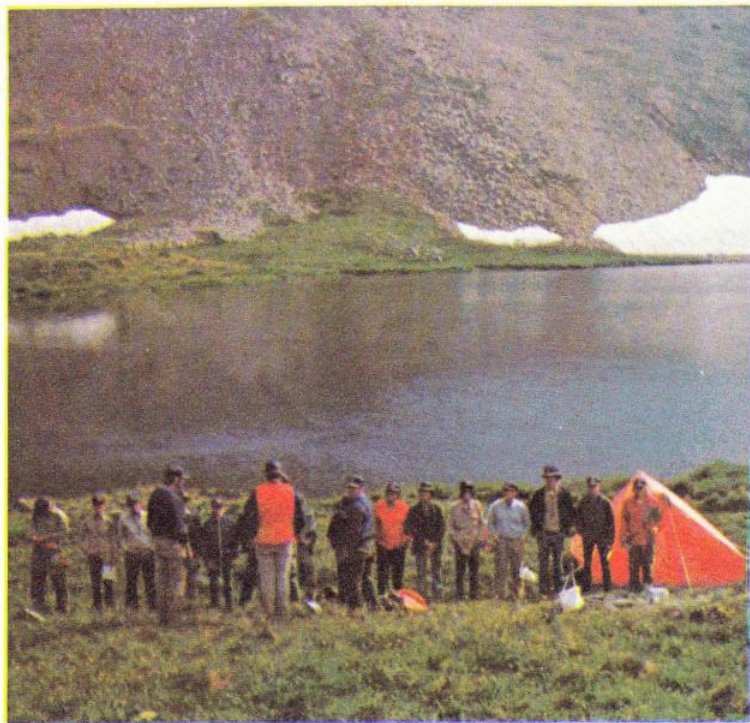
staff. One morning a wilderness ranger talked with us at Bear Lake.

The only other schedule to meet was the council fire each evening. After all the stunts, stories, and just plain fun, a short devotion was given each night. God always seemed to be so real to us in those times.

One evening in particular, on top of a ridge, the stars seemed so close we could almost reach out and touch them. The boys entered into a beautiful spirit of worship and God changed many lives that night.

Rangers who had been sarcastic or unruly, came for special prayer. The quiet, shy Ranger also found a place to pray.

Commanders received a renewal in the Holy Spirit; and Rangers were saved and filled with the Holy Spirit. How good God was to us on that night of beauty and inspiration. We began to realize all the time, work, and effort invested in Grace Mountain Trail was paying off.



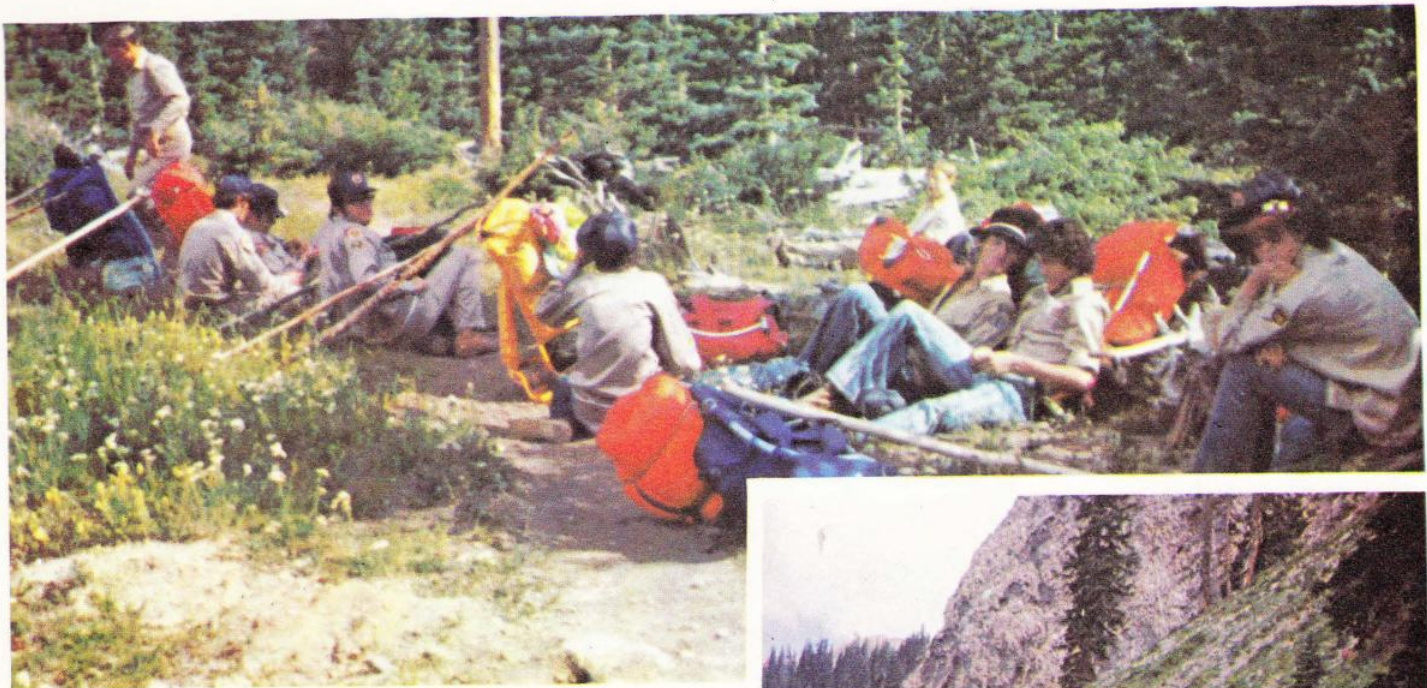
(Above)
What a setting for a devotion

(Right)
The staff takes a break

(Top page opposite)
Rest stop

(Middle page opposite)
On the Wheeler Peak Trail





Packing on the trail was fun, the songs and yells inspiring. We stopped at each mountain spring for a cool drink of that delicious Rocky Mountain spring water.

Horseshoe Lake, two miles higher than Lost Lake, was above the timberline, and therefore, much colder. The night we camped there the winds blew so hard that the only thing holding the tents down was the Rangers inside. All week the nights were cold and the days warm with a slight breeze moving puffs of white clouds across a high sky. At night Elk could be seen coming down to the lake.

Wheeler Peak, and Bear Lake which had the most beautiful setting of all the other campsites, was two miles up from Horseshoe Lake. We now headed in that direction.

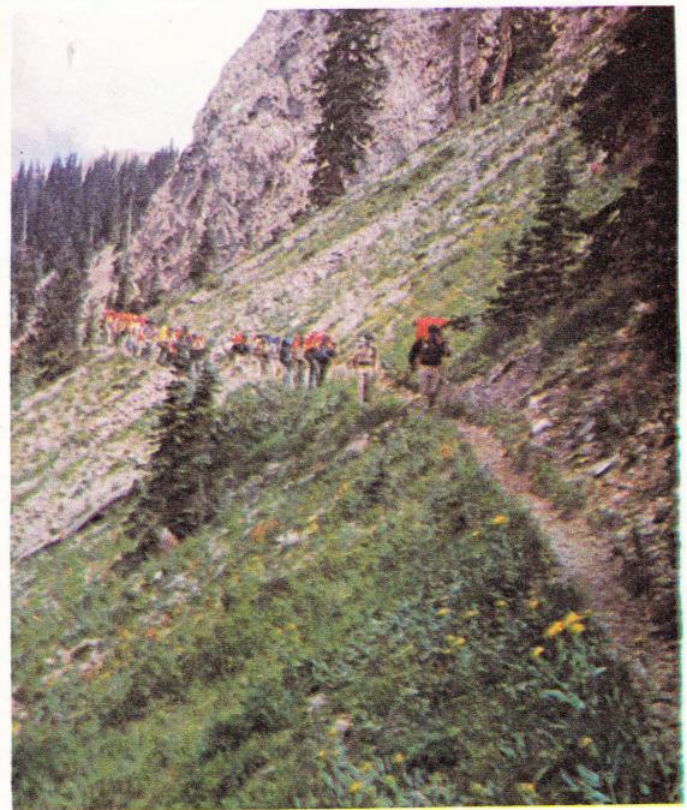
There never seemed to be a good time for bathing, although everyone except one Ranger voluntarily took one. But we managed to encourage him to take one by giving him the option of jumping in by himself or being thrown in head first. He jumped.

The fellowship was great. Everybody got to know each other better. There was one incident where a rather lazy Ranger was cast into the ice cold lake, clothes and all. This helped encourage him to carry his share of the chores for the rest of the trip.

As for fishing, we caught and ate over 150 fresh trout during the week. This made the dried food meals taste much, much better.

We carried with us a tortoise which was given daily to a worthy boy—for tardiness. The Ranger who broke certain rules carried an inflatable "Smokey the Bear." You can imagine the embarrassment of having to carry one of these all day.

With camp set up, we started on a hike to the top of Wheeler Peak, the highest point in New Mexico. From Wheeler Peak we could see in every direction, some of the most breathtaking scenery in America.



At the top we all signed the ledger giving the names and date we arrived at Wheeler Peak. We found snow that tasted so good we ate as much as we could hold, the rest we threw at each other.

With 5½ days of backpacking and twenty miles behind us, a tired but happy group of Rangers emerged from the wilderness Saturday morning and headed for Oklahoma.

One of the reasons the trail was successful was because every member of the staff was "prepared" through training received at National Training Camp.

The training I received at National Training Trails also helped me to plan, organize, and carry out the trip without incident.

This trip for our Trailblazers and Trail Rangers has created so much enthusiasm and interest that the fellows are already working hard and doing their own planning for another trip next year.

THE TURNER TWINS



PANT-PANT - (WHEW).. THAT'S IT, TAD, THE GRASS IS ALL CUT AND RAKED FOR THE WEEK! A HOT JOB, EH?



THAT **SUN** IS REALLY A SCORCHER! C'MON TOM, I'LL TREAT US TO A COUPLE OF ICE CREAM CONES!



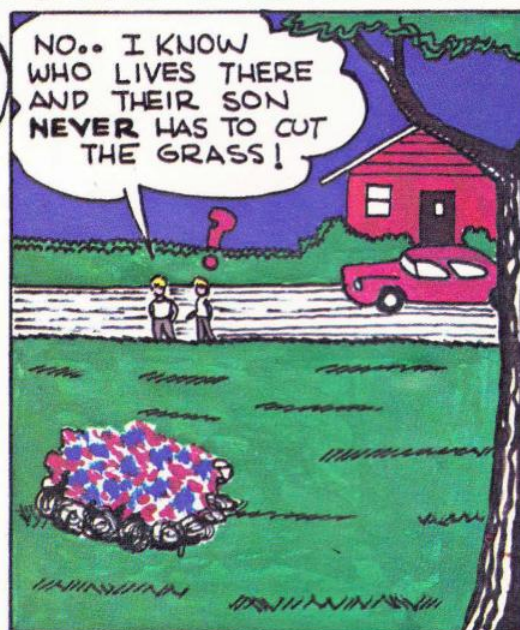
SEEMS LIKE ALL OF THE LAWNS IN OUR BLOCK ARE FRESHLY CUT!



WOW.. LOOK AT **THAT** BEAUTIFUL LAWN, TAD! I'LL BET THAT SURE KEEPS SOME KID BUSY!



NO.. I KNOW WHO LIVES THERE AND THEIR SON **NEVER** HAS TO CUT THE GRASS!

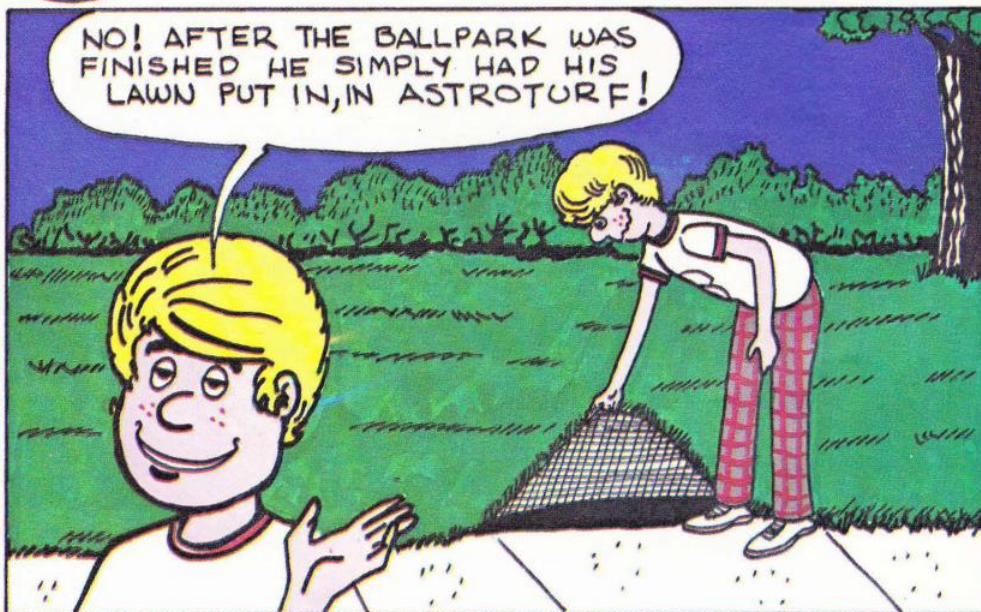


HIS FATHER OWNS THE NEW BALLPARK HERE IN TOWN!

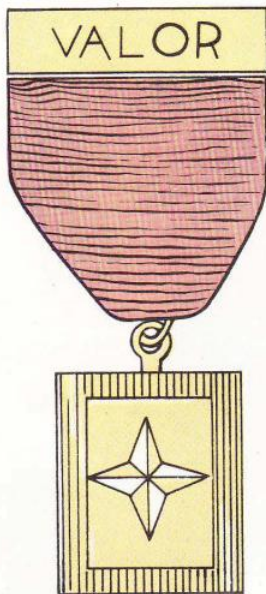
OH, SO HE HAS THE GROUNDKEEPER TAKE CARE OF HIS LAWN TOO?



NO! AFTER THE BALLPARK WAS FINISHED HE SIMPLY HAD HIS LAWN PUT IN, IN ASTROTURF!



Rangers in Action



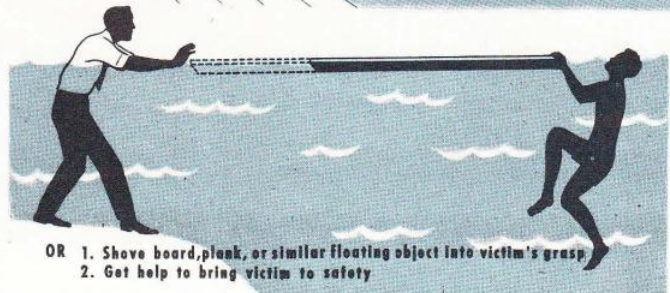
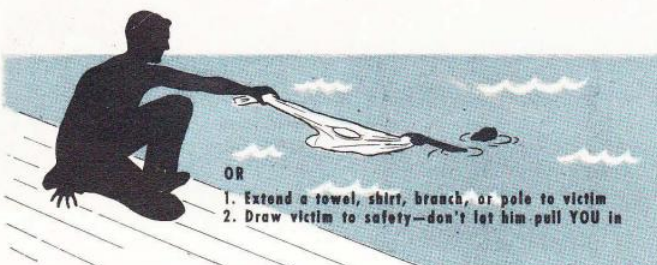
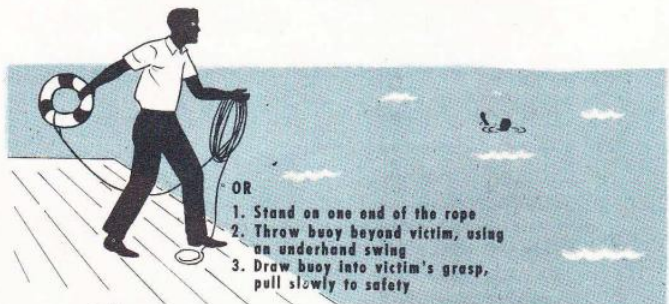
David Phillips, age 15, was fishing on the Sacramento River near Cottonwood, California. A small girl standing on the bank several yards up stream suddenly fell into the swift, dangerous water.

Another young man nearby tried to rescue the child but could not reach her because of the swift current and was swept one-half mile down stream.

David, seeing the girl's plight, dived into the churning river and swam toward her. After a strenuous struggle against the strong current, he reached the child. Then keeping the frightened girl afloat, he brought her to shore about one-half mile down stream.

For his quick and courageous action which saved a life at the risk of his own, David Phillips was awarded the Medal of Valor by the National Royal Rangers Committee.

David is a member of Royal Rangers outpost 46 in Cottonwood, California.



THE EXCITING WORLD OF NATURE

JUNGLE



By John Eller

Reach for your machete and sun helmet as the exciting world of nature takes us now to life in the *jungle*. Plant and animal communities found there survive in a most intriguing ecosystem.

The river is your highway into the jungle, and with each stroke of the paddle you draw nearer to your destination. The water is dark coffee-colored and the banks are lined by a wall of dense vegetation, up to one hundred feet high.

Jungles are tropical rain forests, widespread in tropical regions, but flourish only under certain conditions. Although rain forests extend beyond the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn in a few places, they grow best in the nonseasonal climate of equatorial lowlands, where temperature and humidity remain high and relatively consistent. The rainfall is frequent and well distributed throughout the year.

The Old World rain forests are not as extensive as those in South America, but in many ways they are very much alike. Very few kinds of plants and animals are found in both Old and New World jungles. Yet, in both areas many plants and animals of unrelated families have developed similar adaptations for survival in the jungle habitat.

Among birds, both the hornbills of Africa and Asia and the exclusively American toucans have grotesque bills especially suited for eating fruit and crushing nuts.

Similarly, hummingbirds are found only in New World counterparts, the sunbirds of tropical Asia and Africa, also have iridescent plumage, the ability to hover before flowers, and long slender bills adapted for probing for nectar and tiny insects hidden at the bases of long, tubular blossoms.

The architecture of the jungle begins with a canopy some two hundred feet high or even taller. This solid roof of foliage encompasses far more living space than the jungle floor! Exploration of this area usually begins with a low-flying airplane.

Crowns of the tallest trees are known as A-story. Life in the attic is filled with superabundant insect life and birds that capture insects on the wing. This activity is most evident at dusk.

Next is the B-story, extending from 110 feet high to 30 feet above the ground. Many species of trees grow in masses at this level. While A-story trees resemble umbrellas, those of the B-story look more like mops.

The C-story consists of a layer about twenty to thirty feet above the ground. This distinct level of jungle life is filled with very thin, often pole-like stems.

The C-story is by far the densest mass of foliage and cuts off a large percentage of the light filtering down from above. It also hinders animal movement from the upper stories.

Beneath the C-story is the D-story, generally rather sparse. Close to the ground level is the E-story of small herbaceous plants and ferns. Some undergrowth consists of small palms and "treelets."

Because of the complicated architecture of the jungle, environmental conditions differ at every level, from ground to canopy. Each layer has its own *microclimate*, or climate in a small space, within the larger climate of the jungle as a whole.

Jungle animals are as stratified as its plants. Boundaries between animal zones are not as pronounced. However, each layer tends to have its characteristic animal inhabitants with place for everything.

The canopy of the Malayan jungle for example, will support flying squirrels, pen-tailed shrews, gibbons, leaf monkeys, and Asiatic climbing rats. Middle levels will have banded linsangs, clouded leopards, palm civets, pig-tailed macaques, yellow-throated martens, and tree shrews. The forest floor will have bamboo rats, Malayan sun bears, moon rats, tigers, Asiatic elephants, pangolins, and guars.

Unusual plants thrive throughout the jungle community. Among these are plants that climb, plants that strangle (some with aerial roots growing down from branches), and plants that grow on other plants. This latter group is known as *epiphytes* and grow at all levels. Perhaps the best known epiphytes are the many species of orchids.

The jungle is not an easy place for man to live. Until well into the twentieth century, the humid tropics remained one of the world's most thinly populated regions.

Now all this is changing. Because of *shifting cultivation*, a system which moves crops to different locations within the jungle each year, more and more of the virgin rain forest is being nibbled away. Unless the trend is reversed, the mysterious beauty of the jungle is doomed to disappear.





THE TERMITES

IN

By Phil Wayman

When Gregor moved out west to a homestead in 1903, his means of conveyance was a well-worn buggy and a broken down nag called Hopper. Since Gregor's homestead was across the river from the nearest settlement, it was necessary for him to build a bridge across the river to enable passage to the country store.

Shortly after the timbers were laid in place, Terry the Termite opened *his* homestead in the end of the timbers and began the long tedious process of clearing tunnels throughout the bridge for his home. At first the terrible sound of clomping feet and whirling of rolling wheels scared the little termite tremendously as Hopper came across the bridge pulling the buggy with Gregor in the driver's seat. Eventually Terry became so accustomed to the daily ritual that his curiosity prompted him to investigate.

He burrowed his way to a site where he could observe the monstrosity that dared cross his bridge. He noticed a huge animal with four legs and a vehicle with four wheels and a creature sitting in the vehicle clucking to the animal. So fascinated was Terry with his discovery of the vast world outside that he made it a daily practice to be near the observatory where Gregor made his regular visits to the settlement.

Through the years Terry was joined by other termites who enlarged the observatory to learn more about the strange world above them. Can you imagine the pandemonium that ensued when one day the rendezvous at the observatory was interrupted by a fearful demon spewing smoke, sputtering, and belching loudly as it crossed the bridge for the first time. The termites fled in terror thinking the world had come to an end. They neither ate nor slept for days as the threatening device crossed their home again and again.

Finally Terry, the aged termite, risked his life to observe the latest phenomenon. "Why, look at that!" he said in surprise to himself. "It has four wheels just like the other had and the man in the seat is the same, but what has happened to Hopper the Horse?" The best brains of the termite world began to put books together to explain the transition from one vehicle to the other.

For years in the little termite school where all the younger ones were educated in the wisdom of the world, the following explanation was given. "Hopper the Horse was a brilliant creature who had been held captive by a bunch of wheels by a man who made him run and do all the work. Finally, Hopper was getting too old for such work so he used his head and changed himself from a clomping creature to a roaring monster. This placed the man in such fear of the "new" hopper that the man became his slave. The horse forced the man to go with him everywhere he went and made the slave drive and pay all the expenses while the horse had a free ride."

Hopper's brilliant maneuver so awed the termites that he became a god to them. They worshiped when Hopper came roaring across the bridge with his display of power; they delighted in the rigidity of discipline that kept the clucker dumb at the wheel, meekly obeying the god of the termites.

Little termites were instructed in positive thinking. "If they would use their brains and eat lots of good nourishing wood, they should be able to evolve into a higher order themselves just like Hopper did." Every termite dreamed of the day when it would travel all over the world and have a man-servant to pay all the expenses like Hopper.

They grew in the wisdom of their teachers and multiplied in number hoping for the great transition to occur. They grew prosperous and fat on the decaying bridge wood not knowing they were eating themselves out of house and home.

One day as the termite's god came sputtering across the ancient bridge made "holy" by years of termite worship, the timbers gave way and the termite's god, Hopper, and Hopper's man-servant, and all Hopper's subject termites crashed into the river below and perished.

How wrong the termites were, but they found out too late. They couldn't understand the strange thing crossing their bridge, so they began to fabricate in their minds an explanation that was miles from the truth—and destroyed themselves in the process.

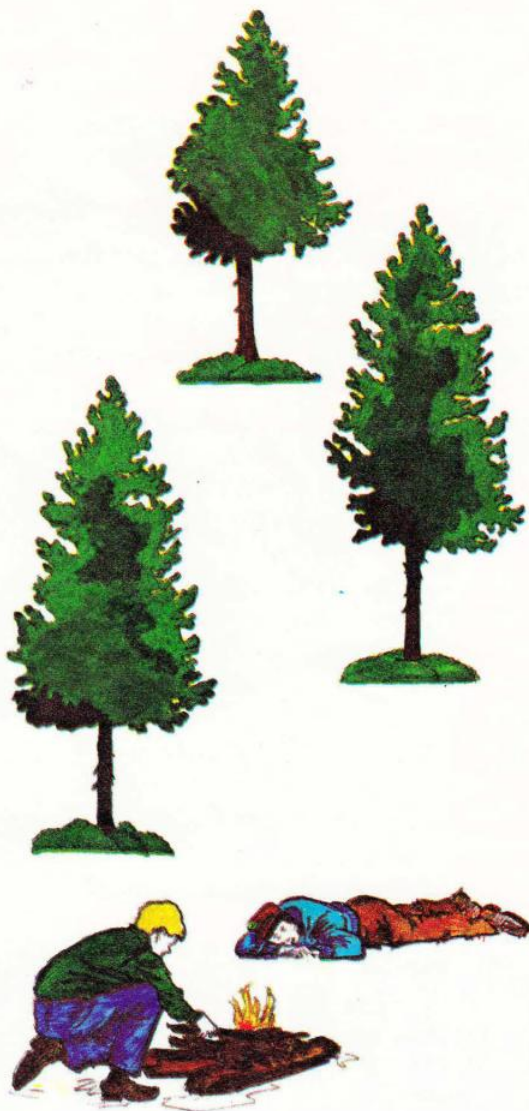
Many men in history have done this. They could not understand many things about God and His creation, so they worshiped the creation rather than the Creator, and became products of their own self-destruction.

It's far better to accept by faith what God's Word teaches than to believe the carnally devised fables of man's imagination.

GREGOR'S BRIDGE

ECHO AT EVERGREEN HOLLOW

BY LILLIAN MAC KILLOP



Ray, enjoying the warmth of the spring sunshine through his plaid shirt, sauntered along the old wood's road with his new friend, Joe.

Joe Ferguson and his family had recently moved into the trailer court across from Ray's house. They had become good friends so Ray invited him to go along with him on a Saturday trip in the woods.

Joe, a talkative, friendly type, kicked at a stick. "What did you say you were coming into the woods for?"

Ray, laughing a little, took a deep breath. "See, my mother has this strange fever every spring—well, maybe not a fever—but she insists on getting me to go dig up a basket or two of ferns. I've told her wood fern won't grow around our place, but she isn't convinced. Last year as soon as the days got really hot, every fern dried up and died."

"Don't you have a shady spot somewhere? And if they were watered everyday. . . ."

Ray turned off the road and stepped around a huge pine tree. "Now you suggest that to my mother and guess who'll be spending all summer with the water hose in his hand!"

The trees and brush were quite dense. Darting here and there to avoid boggy spots under foot kept the boys busy, but the smell of the pine and fir excited them. Finally they came upon an area of small fern. Instead of digging ferns they set the basket down, leaned the small shovel against a tree, and took off for a hike. No sun could get through the thick treetops so the farther they walked the darker the woods became.

Once, a squirrel ran down a tree, chattered at them loudly, then scurried back up. Ray enjoyed pointing out the different types of trees to Joe. Joe had lived in St. Louis and had never been in the deep woods

before. He wanted to hike further even though his socks were soaked with cold water.

"Let's do this again next Saturday," he suggested.

"Okay," Ray said, nodding slowly. "The ground will be a bit drier by then. We'll bring a lunch and make a day of it."

"Hey, it's getting late, we'd better start back," Ray murmured. "Where did we leave the basket?"

Ray had been in the woods often, but he felt just a twinge of fear dart through his heart. They couldn't be far from the road—they could hear if a car drove past. No chance of getting lost.

But he *was* lost—and knew it. He had no idea where the basket was, even though he thought he knew how to get to the road. But his biggest problem was keeping Joe from knowing the truth. Joe probably had never been lost before, so he could easily panic and start running in the wrong direction. *But where was the wrong direction?*

"I think the basket is over this way," Joe signalled for Ray. But Ray paid little attention. He was silently praying that God would show him where to find it.

Ray, gawking around for a clue to where they were, tripped over a log and fell flat. He wasn't hurt but his sleeve was dripping with cold water. As Ray got to his feet, Joe walked his way around a low mossy place.

"Hey, Ray! I don't remember coming all this distance!"

Ray sighed. Did he dare to tell Joe the truth? Would Joe think him stupid—not knowing the way back? "God, why won't you help me?" he almost sobbed inwardly. If he ever needed God's help, he sure needed Him now.

"Are you sure you know where that basket is?"

"Well—it's right near here somewhere. We'll find it."

But they didn't find it. Ray would certainly have gone home without it, but where was home from here? They hadn't heard a single motor even though Ray had been straining his ears in every direction. And he was praying.

Praying! In the back of Ray's mind he kept planning to tell Joe about the Lord and how to receive the gift of salvation. He intended to invite Joe to his teen class with him on Sunday and had put off asking him.

But now? Ray shrugged his shoulders and sighed. It sure didn't look like either one of them would be going to the teen class tomorrow. "Oh, God, I have prayed that I might help Joe find salvation—and now this! Why aren't you showing us the way home?"

Both boys were exhausted. Joe grabbed Ray by the shoulder. "This is going too far! I've had it! We're lost aren't we?"

Ray could do nothing but nod. "I . . . I'm sorry . . . I honestly don't know which way to go."

Both stood, silently gazing at each other. Then Joe spoke. "Okay, what do we do now?"

Ray had no answer. He felt spent. Exhausted. He slumped down on the nearest log. Joe joined him.

They sat quietly while a million thoughts raced through their minds. Two birds flew up from a thicket close by. Ray had no idea how many hours they'd been walking, but it was beginning to get dark.

"Joe, we'd better make a little shelter here and get a little rest. It gets dark fast in the woods. We'll be able to find our way out in the morning, I'm sure."

"What about my wet feet?" Joe asked.

"We'll need a fire," Ray murmured, getting to his feet and searching through his pockets.

"Here's some matches," Joe offered him the small packet.

Together they gathered twigs and birch bark and lit the fire. They stacked up dried and rotted limbs and small logs. Ray found cutting fir, spruce, and pine branches with his penknife was a tough job, but they soon had enough for a bed. They lay down, taking turns getting up to put more wood on the fire. Joe wrapped his sweater around his feet to keep them warm while his socks and boots were drying by the fire. Ray held his wet sleeve near the fire.

Neither were sleepy. There in the stillness of the night, they could do nothing but talk. Ray learned many things about Joe. He had been an orphan before being adopted by his present family. He had found out he was adopted by looking through an old photo album in the attic one rainy afternoon.

"On the back of a picture of a blond boy," Joe explained, "were the words, 'This is Joe, the two-year-old we adopted from the agency.'"

From that subject it seemed the most natural thing in the world for Ray to tell Joe that he, too, had been adopted into God's family. And before the long dark night was over, Joe had prayed and asked God to take him into his family too.

The fire was dying down. Ray got up to poke it with a stick. "Know something, Joe? I'd been praying God would show us how to get home before night, but now I know He was answering my prayer in His own way."

"I'm glad for His way. So glad for His way!" Joe sang out.

" . . . His way . . . His way."

"What's that! Sounded like a call."

"Your echo, I think," Ray said. "Call out again."

"I'm glad for His way! So glad for His way!"

Clearly a voice came back. "This way! This way!"

Joe jumped to his feet. "Take it easy, Joe. It's only an echo," Ray explained.

"I can see their fire!" the echo said. And with it came the flashlights and shouts of the fathers of two very happy boys.

A TRACKING PIT

by Elton Bell

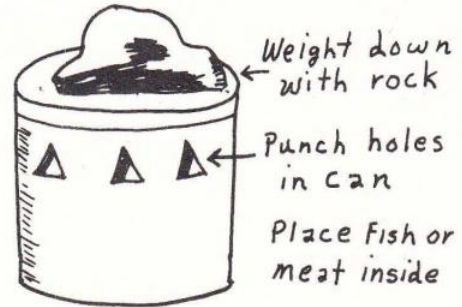
An interesting way to study animal tracks and to discover what kind of critters live in the area where you are camping is to make a tracking pit.

First clear an area four feet square and loosen the soil in the area so the tracks will show up clearly.

Next punch holes around the top of a coffee can. Put a piece of fish or meat inside the can and cover it with a plastic lid.

Place the can in the center of the pit and weigh it down with a rock.

Leave it out overnight and you will usually find an abundance of tracks the next morning.





the Comedy Corner

A passenger who had never flown before glanced out of the plane window. To the passing stewardess she said, "Isn't flying amazing? From this height, people down there look just like ants."

"As a matter of fact," replied the stewardess, "they are ants. We haven't taken off yet."

Ray Lambert
Middleburg Heights, OH

Man: I just saw something running across the floor with no legs!

Wife: Goodness! What was it?

Man: A glass of spilled milk.

Warren Bebout
Morro Bay, CA

A commander instructing his boys in cooking told them to cook wieners just like fish. Upon inspection during the cookout the Commander noticed that one boy had only dried out wiener peelings in his skillet. Asked what was wrong, the Ranger replied, "I started to cook them just like we do fish but after cleaning them, I didn't have much left."

Ray Lambert
Middleburg Heights, OH

Farmer: "And how did you come to fall in the lake?"

Buckaroo: "I didn't come to fall in the lake, I came to fish."

Warren Bebout
Morro Bay, CA

Sunday School Teacher: "What lesson do we learn from the story of Jonah and the whale?"

Boy: "People make whales sick."

Warren Bebout
Morro Bay, CA

When the motorist asked the farmer how far it was to the next town, the farmer told him it was "two miles as the crow flies."

"Well," said the motorist, "how far is it if the crow has to walk and roll a flat tire?"

Ray Lambert
Middleburg Heights, OH

Then there was the elephant hunter who had to quit. The decoys were getting too heavy.

Warren Bebout
Morro Bay, CA

Little sister was entertaining the visitors until her mother was ready. One of the ladies remarked to the other with a significant look, "Not very p-r-e-t-t-y."

"No," answered the child, "but awfully s-m-a-r-t."

Warren Bebout
Morro Bay, CA

First grade teacher on opening day of school: "Anyone who wants to go to the washroom should hold up two fingers."

New Pupil: "Teacher, how is that going to help?"

Billy: Mom, mom, guess what happened to Tommy today?

Mom: What?

Billy: He fell into the mud up to his ankles.

Mom: What's so bad about that?

Billy: He fell in headfirst.

Warren Bebout
Morro Bay, CA

A young fellow wanted the latest hit records in his home. One day he heard over his radio a number called "Ten Little Fingers and Ten Little Toes Waiting for Me Down in Tennessee." He rushed to the telephone to call the corner record shop. In his haste his finger hit one of the wrong digits on the dial and he rang the plumber. "Have you got 'Ten Little Fingers and Ten Little Toes Waiting for Me Down in Tennessee?'" The plumber replied, "No, but I've got a little wife and ten little kids waiting for me down in Texas." "Is that a record" the young fellow asked. "No, I don't think so," said the plumber, "but that's pretty big even in Texas."

Phil Wayman
Kirkland, WA

History Teacher: What happened in 1800?

Johnny: Lincoln was born.

Teacher: Now, what happened in 1812?

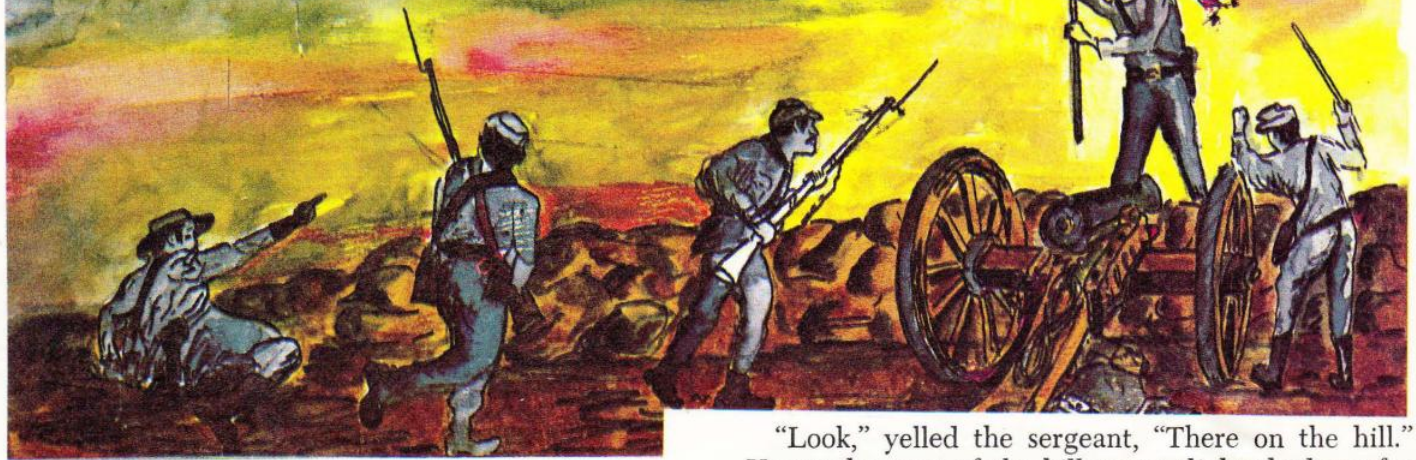
Johnny: Lincoln had his twelfth birthday.



"Noah, you've got to separate the elephants."

WAVE THE COLORS

BY PAUL STANECK



The moon was still, while cannons ceased their booming. The wage of battle retreated to the lines in the moonlit night. The battle was heavy that day in 1863.

The Blues and Greys fought with valor and sacrifice. The night had come to bring temporary rest for the weary soldiers. Tomorrow would soon come again.

The trenches were bustling with preparation of the forthcoming attack at the rising of the sun. The soldiers knew that the hill must be taken from the enemy. Men and equipment waited patiently for the first glimpse of light from the eastern skies. Everyone was tense. An eerie hush hovered over the tools of war.

Alas, the bugle sounded out, humanity poured out of the dens and crevices. The booming of roaring cannons, crackling of rifle fire, the cry of the attacking force vibrated through every hillside. Fear struck the heartstrings of every man and boy. The battle was on!

Rockets bursting in air, the onrushing attackers were confronted with a wall of steel and shot. Soldiers by the score fell. Fear gripped the invaders. The bugle sounded, "retreat, retreat, retreat." The staggered army turned and swiftly found refuge behind its lines.

Defeated and beaten, the survivors began to take inventory of the missing in action. "The flag-bearer is gone. Where are our colors?" echoed the line. Every eye strained over the smoke-scarred battlefield in search of their banner and the blond-haired lad who bore it. Everything looked helpless. The slender lad could not be seen among the debris. All was lost.

"Look," yelled the sergeant, "There on the hill." Up on the crest of the hill was a slight shadow of a boy waving the colors to his comrades in arms. The young soldier was motioning to advance.

The commanding officer in his foxhole cried out, "Bring the colors back to the men."

"No sir, bring the men back to the colors."

Courage filled the ranks. The men responded with unconquerable zeal! The bugle sounded. The men pressed on and joined their colors. The battle was won, the hill had been taken.

What of the young flag-bearer? He has disappeared in the pages of time. His bravery and action has outlived his name.

There are other battles to be fought within our own lives. The enemy of our hearts is rampaging against us in our daily Christian living. It takes a special kind of courage to face criticism or threats. Battles are not always won in the security of the "in group." Victories are won on the battlefield.

Christ has carried His banner to the top of Mount Calvary. There He paid the price. Now, the Master has called us into the battle. There is no room for deserters or spiritual cowards. There are only front-line soldiers.

Everyday, people are watching us as open books, to see how we fare in our Christian living and spiritual battle. We are bearers of the stained banner of Christ. How we bear it, will determine the outcome of the lives of those about us.

Let us not retreat in our spiritual life. Let us press on to victory! If Christ be before us, who can be against us? Let us wave the colors and be counted. Let us rally men and boys to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. The battle is on. March on, march on.