

A photograph of a cougar walking through a rocky, brushy landscape. The cougar is the central focus, walking towards the viewer. The background consists of large rocks and dense, dry brush. The lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day.

High Adventure

A ROYAL RANGERS MAGAZINE FOR BOYS

SUMMER 1975

NIGHT OF THE PANTHER

DON'T MEDDLE WITH THE BEARS

WHALING IN THE ARCTIC

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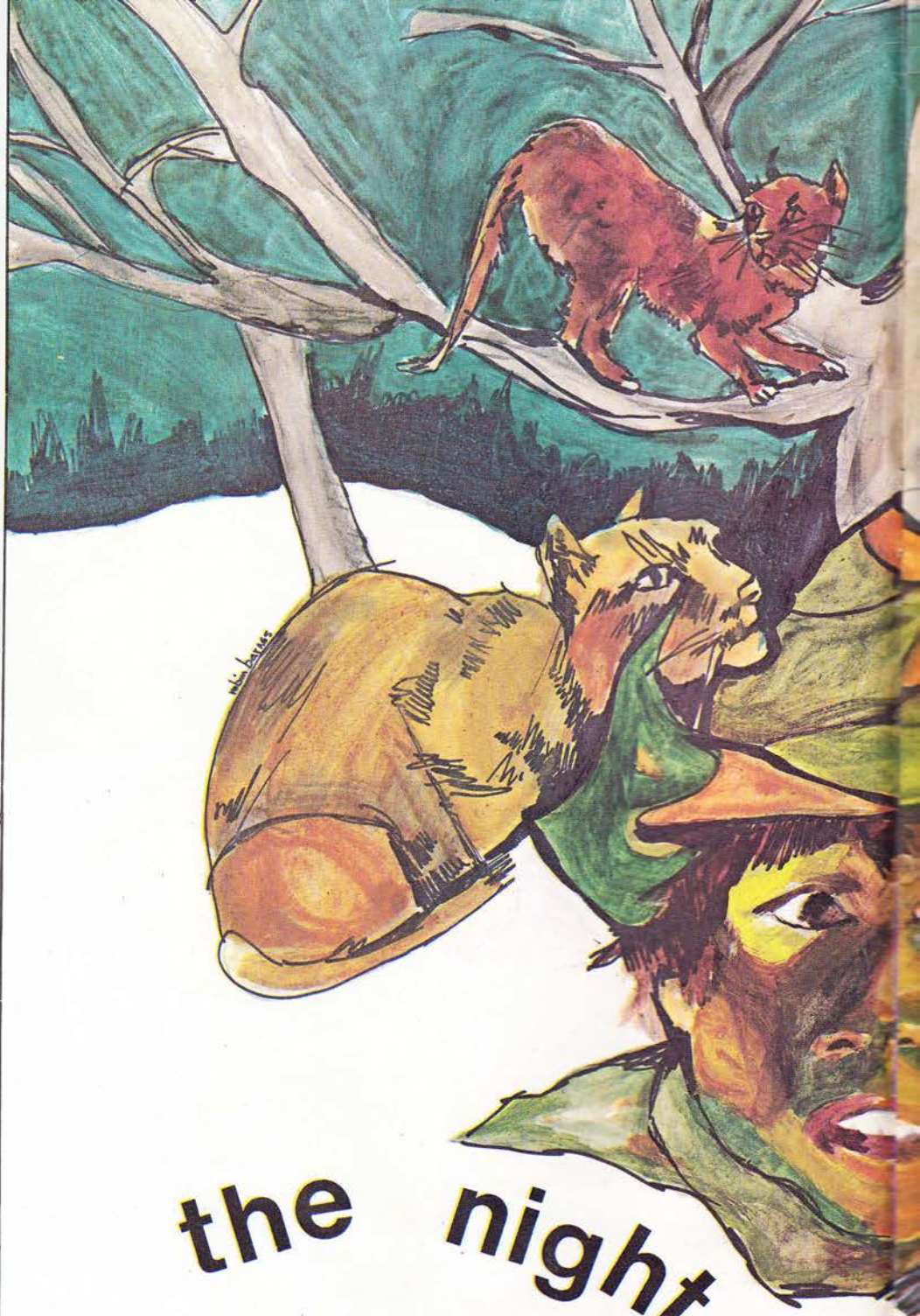
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the night of



the panther

by david summers

School was out; and the rolling Texas hills were awash with the color of bluebonnets and scarlet Indian paintbrushes. The air was fresh with the delicate scent of warm growing things. This warm idyllic spring day made me itch to do something real special. The spring rains had pretty well ended but Big Sandy Creek was still full of water. Dad said there were probably a lot of big yellow catfish hiding in some of the deep holes of the creek, but it would really take a fisherman to get them out.

"The best way to get those old whiskered granddaddys," he said, "is to set out some trotlines and fish all night." Mom was not too sure of the idea. "John, I'm not so sure he ought to be off down in those woods all night," she warned.

"Aw, Mom, R.C. and Wesley and Warren are going with me . . . and their mom doesn't care," I pleaded. R. C. Patterson and Wesley and Warren Cantrell were my friends. We had been secretly planning this trip for several weeks. Finally after much persuasion on my part and a little help from Dad, Mom agreed.

"Now, you boys stay together and don't be playing any tricks on each other," she admonished.

"We won't," I promised.

Around dusk R. C. and the Cantrell boys came by the house, "Hey, Johnnie, let's get going," they yelled. I was racing around the barn trying to finish my chores.

Dad saw how anxious I was to leave. "Go ahead, Johnnie. I'll finish up for you," he told me.

"Thanks, Dad!"

"And Johnnie," he grabbed my arm as I started to run for the house, "I want you to promise me two things."

"Yes, sir?"

"Stay out of that water at night, and keep a good campfire going," he said.

"Okay, Dad, I promise."

"And be careful," he yelled as I ran for the house.

(Continued next page)

The sun set and it was already quite dark when we left. The Cantrells brought their dog, Blue. R. C. brought his big hound, Sam, so I decided to take my dog. Bigfoot was part hound and a part Irish terrier. He was a big dog, weighed about 80 pounds. I had found him when he was just a little pup a couple of months old. Someone had dumped him at the edge of town. Bigfoot was a pretty good dog, except for a habit he had of running off from home every now and then. Although he tolerated the rest of the family, he was more or less a one man dog. The only other person he really answered to was Dad.

Bigfoot and Blue sniffed each other and took off ahead of us. R. C. had his single-shot .22 rifle with him, so we felt pretty comfortable as we got to the big woods. We had three miles to walk to where we planned to set our fishing lines and camp for the night. I carried a small hand ax in my belt to be used to cut firewood. Wesley and Warren had brought the fishing lines. We didn't carry much other gear, because we planned to sit up all night with our fishing lines.

It was pitch dark when we got to "deep hole bend." The only light we had walking through the woods was the little two-cell flashlight I carried. It hardly gave enough light to see ten feet ahead. But it didn't make much difference. The woods were so thick you could only see the branches and brush right in front of you. After about an hour we finally came to the clearing on the banks of the creek. We were all quite relieved to get out of the woods.

After setting our fish lines for the night, we soon had a good fire going on a large sandbar. We made ourselves comfortable, some of us sitting and some lying beside the fire. We could hear the dogs barking and carrying on back in the woods. "Must of treed a possum," said R. C.

"Old Blue'd never tree no possums," said Warren, Wesley's younger brother. "He's a coon dog!"

"That's right," said Wesley, "our dad trained him never to hunt anything but coons."

"Yeah," I said, "and if it is a coon, there's no telling how long they'll run him." The sound of dog barks were becoming more distant. "They'll be back when they get tired running whatever it is," I said.

I settled back into the soft sand and gazed into the dark water. The glow of fire sent shimmering golden contrast to the light ripples around the sandbar and the black water beyond. The air was heavy and still with the smell of damp earth and rotting leaves. We talked idly between long pauses in conversation.

"Warren, why don't you go check the lines?" Wesley finally asked.

"Naw, I don't want to," he replied, trying to conceal any fear he had.

The lines were set at intervals of 40 to 50 feet up the creek bank for about 100 yards. We could see the first two lines from where we sat on the

sandbar, but because of the bend in the creek, the other lines were out of sight.

"Nothin's going to get you," his brother coaxed, "don't be scared." This was the first time Warren had ever spent the night away from home.

"Nothing but a big ole panther," R. C. joked loudly.

"I ain't goin'," Warren said. "I hurt my foot back up the trail."

"Aw, go on, Warren, nothin's going to get you," urged Wesley.

"What about them panthers?"

"There ain't been panthers around here in years," I ventured.

"I heard some hunters found some tracks back on the Johnson Ranch just last week," R. C. replied soberly.

R. C. was about six months older than I. We had been close friends since the first grade in school. I believed what R. C. said. He usually told the truth. The cougar, commonly called a panther in our part of Texas, was periodically reported in some of the remote parts of our country. But it was rarely seen. Usually news of a panther in the vicinity came as a result of people confusing the tracks of the large bobtailed wildcat (which was very common) with a cougar.

"Aw, R. C., why do you want to say that," said Wesley. "You're just scaring Warren."

"I'll go check the lines myself," I volunteered.

I had checked the first three lines and nothing had bothered them. I was at the fourth line and both out of sight and hearing of the others when suddenly from up the creek I heard a sound piercing the eerie stillness of the night. It gave me goose pimples. I dropped the line. I froze. The hair raised on the back of my head.

"There ain't no panthers around here," I whispered to myself. Then I heard it again. It was a long, high pitched wail . . . almost like the cry of a small child. It was terrifying!

I shined my flashlight in the direction of the sound, but all I could see was the shadowy outlines of the trees. With all the courage I could muster, I slowly turned and began to walk back toward the campfire. It took all of my willpower to keep from breaking into a wild run. When I got to the campfire, R. C. was on his knee with his .22 rifle in his hand, and Wesley menacingly held my ax. Warren was crouched between the two, his eyes wide with terror.

We looked at each other in stunned silence.

"Did you hear that?" R. C. asked.

I nodded. The animal screamed again. This time it sounded much closer. Warren whimpered, the rest of us were too frightened to make a sound. The seconds ticked away like eternity.

"I wish the dogs were here," said Wesley softly.

The big cat cried again. This time he was down the creek below us. He had silently passed us on the opposite side of the creek. We looked at each other, but no one spoke.



Finally, I broke the silence. "He's going away," I said.

Warren was pale. "I wanna go home," he said. "It's gone, Warren. It ain't gonna bother us," Wesley said.

"I wanna go home now," Warren insisted.

"Nothing will bother you around a campfire," R. C. said. "All wild animals are afraid of fire."

"I want to go home," he wailed. "I'm scared!"

"Shut up, Warren," Wesley commanded.

"Take me home, Wesley, please. I'll give you my big stealie and my two tiger eyes if you will."

Wesley looked at me. It was obvious that Warren was terrified. He was eight years old, but as far as he was concerned this was no place for him to be. "Well, the fish ain't biting anyway," said Wesley. "It's just a mile over the hill to our place. I guess I could take Warren home, then come back."

"I want Mama!" bawled Warren.

"Would you let me borrow your rifle!" asked Wesley.

R. C. paused. "Well, I dunno." It was apparent that he didn't want to be left out here without his rifle. All of us were ready to get out of here, but none of us except Warren was willing to admit that he might be afraid.

"Well, since it doesn't look like the fish are biting, why don't we just go home and come back in the morning to run the lines?" I suggested casually. Everyone agreed.

We put out the fire and headed straight over the hill to the Cantrell place. It was much farther for me to walk home this way, but I was in no mood to head out alone through the creek bottom woods. When we reached the road that led to Wesley and Warren's house, we all breathed a sigh of relief. R. C. lived right up the road from the Cantrells, so I had to walk three miles back home alone. With a simple "See you later, Johnnie," the others turned and left.

I was alone. The flashlight that I had been carrying was already dim from use. However, the starlight was bright enough for me to easily see the road, so I hurried my pace. "I wish ole Bigfoot had stayed around," I muttered. "What if the panther comes back this way?" (Continued next page)

NIGHT OF THE PANTHER Cont.

I had an irresistible urge to look back over my shoulder. I had walked about a mile and was in a particularly woody stretch of road. The tree branches had grown over the road, blocking out the starlight.

Suddenly I heard a rattle in the bushes. I quickly switched on my flashlight and shined it toward the noise. An icy knot lodged in the pit of my stomach. In the dim light of the bushes was the unmistakable outline of an animal. "Oh, God!" I gasped, and plunged headlong down the road as fast as I could run. Each time I looked back over my shoulder the animal was still effortlessly pacing me. Finally I reached the limit of my endurance. Backing up against a large oak tree beside the road, I gripped my ax in my sweating hand. "Come on, you dirty devil. If you want to kill me, you'll have to fight!" I gasped. As the animal approached, I heard a pleading whine. Then in the dim light I recognized him. "Bigfoot!" I exclaimed with a mixture of relief and anger. "I thought you were off chasing coons. You almost scared me to death!"

The next day R. C. came by with a five-pound catfish. He and Wesley had run the trotlines and had caught two catfish and a big carp. "There sure were some big cat tracks on the other side of the creek," he said. "It looked like he was heading down toward your place. You didn't happen to run into him on your way home, did you?"

"Naw," I replied, "I made it home okay." ●

The preceding was an excerpt from the new book, "Johnnie" the Barefoot Dreamer." By David Summers The boyhood story of Johnnie Barnes, the founder of Royal Rangers. Read the complete book! The book is available from the Gospel Publishing House. Order #2-535, price \$1.50.



"He's talking about Daddy!"

Rangers in Action

In the Fall of 1972, Max Dodson, Dan Danel, Doug Bell, and Harland Stoner of Joplin, Missouri, were enjoying an outing at Table Rock Lake in Southwest Missouri. While swimming in the lake, Harland Stoner, who was some distance from the others, suddenly developed muscle cramps. These cramps so incapacitated him that he was in danger of drowning. Hearing Harland's plea for help, Don and Doug swam to his rescue. However, because of the great distance, only 16-year-old Doug Bell was able to reach him.

Doug kept the distressed Harland afloat until the others were able to secure a boat and come to their rescue.

For his quick and courageous action, Doug Bell was awarded the Royal Rangers Certificate of Valor by the National Royal Rangers Committee.

Doug was a member of outpost 73, Joplin, Missouri.



THE TURNER TWINS



WHAT OUR OUTPOST NEEDS IS A GOOD FIELD TO PLAY BALL GAMES ON!

SAY, WHAT ABOUT THAT JUNKY LOT ON ELM STREET?

NAH, THAT BELONGS TO OL' MR. GRIMP. HE'S SO CRABBY HE'D NEVER LET US USE IT!

GUYS, I'VE GOT A PLAN AND IT JUST MIGHT WORK!

I HOPE YOU KNOW WHAT YOUR DOING, TOM, HAVING OUR ENTIRE OUTPOST CLEAN UP OL' MR. GRIMP'S VACANT LOT FOR HIM!

PANT PUFF PUFF

I DO... PUFF PUFF

ROSS BUCHT.

WHAT? YOU BOYS BEEN MESSING WITH MY LOT? C'MON WITH ME AND, WE'LL SEE WHAT YOU'VE DONE TO IT! HARRRMPH!

GULP... THIS..THIS.. IS MY OLD LOT? AND YOU BOYS.. YOU ROYAL RANGERS CLEANED IT ALL UP LIKE THIS?

WELL, TOM, YOU SURE KNEW HOW TO GET US A PLACE TO PLAY BALL! GOLLY, MR. GRIMP EVEN PUT US UP A SIGN!

YEP! NICE OF HIM, EH?

ROYAL RANGERS PARK

YES, BUT, **HOW**, DID YOU EVER FIGURE OUT THAT MR. GRIMP WOULD DO THIS!

TAD, I JUST DECIDED THAT THE FIRST THING WE SHOULD DO WITH MR. GRIMP WAS TO "PLAY BALL" WITH HIM FIRST!

"DON'T MEDDLE with bears." Dad had said again and again. "Bears are bad medicine for boys. You can never predict what they will do."

"Sure, Dad, who wants to fool around with a bear?" I assured him. "If they'll leave *me* alone, I'm not going to bother *them*."

Moving from a small town in California to a wilderness cattle ranch in Canada was a tremendously exciting experience for my brother and me. In Canada, so many things were different. It was a completely new life with adventures beckoning at every turn.

The forest stretched almost without boundaries eastward beyond our ranch. At first, it was a terrifying mystery to us. What might be lurking beneath those shadowy boughs? We scarcely dared go out of sight of the ranch buildings.

As time went by, however, we became bolder. We came to know what animals were in the woods and gradually discovered that they were more frightened of us than we were of them. The time came when we roamed the range without fear.

There were bears in the forest. Occasionally we surprised them in blueberry patches, where warm summer days provided them with a feast of fruit. Once, one stood up on its hind legs, manlike, to peer at us from round beady eyes before it lumbered away. We laughed at their awkward rolling gait and sometimes gave chase when we were on horses. Fortunately the bears could run through the bush faster than we could, and we never caught up to them.

We remembered Dad's warning about bears, but we couldn't see how these timid animals could be a danger to us. I guess that is why I became involved in the most frightening adventure of my life.

The camera I received one Christmas was partly to blame. I was determined to get close-up pictures of as many of our animal friends as possible. Already I had a snapshot of the biggest citizen of the forest—a moose. Intent on cropping the tender buds from a willow, he did not see me approach until I was only yards away. When he turned to face me, I snapped the picture and fled back the way I had come, while he went the other way just as rapidly.

Could I get a picture of a bear? That was a real challenge. My brother laughed when I suggested that I would do it and Dad repeated his warning about meddling with bears. Well, I vowed that I would show them. One way or another, I was determined to fill the page in my album I had reserved for a photo of a bear.

One afternoon I had ridden my pony several miles away to try to get a picture of a hawk's nest that Dad had discovered. I didn't find the nest, but on the way home, I rode into a small meadow and spotted a mother bear and two cubs tearing open an anthill. Could I get a picture? My heart thumping with excitement. I studied the situation. The bears were too far away to show up in a snapshot. It was then that a possible solution flashed into my mind. Perhaps I could get them to climb a tree.

I knew better. I knew that I should turn my horse and head in the other direction. That is what Dad would have advised me to do. "*Especially stay clear of a bear with cubs!*" he had warned.

I guess my dog made up my mind. Duke spotted the bear family and started after them, barking furiously. Mother Bear took one startled look and fled, with her cubs right behind her and Duke gaining fast. I hesitated only for a moment, then gave in to the call of adventure. Whooping at the top of my lungs, I gave Nancy rein and went pounding in pursuit.



Could Nancy run faster than the bears? Would the bears climb? I had no idea, but I was going to find out. Leaning low in the saddle, I urged Nancy forward as fast as she could go and whooped the louder when I realized I was gaining.

The chase ended so suddenly, even I was surprised. As the fleeing trio reached the shelter of the woods, one frightened cub dashed to a large fir tree and shot up the trunk, its claws tearing chunks from rough bark. The other cub followed, and both climbed to the first limb. Mother Bear whirled and bristled at Duke, her mouth open and her teeth bared. Duke had no desire to be a dead hero; he skidded to a stop, then danced about at a safe distance yipping shrilly until I came thundering up on Nancy.



"Hi, Hi, Hi!" I shouted.

Duke barked. The bear snarled. She rushed at Duke, who turned tail and scuttled out of her way. Safe above the uproar, the two cubs crouched on their limb and waited to see what would be the outcome of it all. (Continued on page 12)

WHALING IN THE ARCTIC



By Mickey Hotrum

Our Umiak (Eskimo skin boat) moved silently through the Arctic waters as we swiftly approached our quarry, a 50-foot bowhead whale. Sproosh, sproosh, the spouting of the whale became louder and louder as we closed the distance. The crew moved the Umiak into position for the kill, inches from the whale's head as the gunner took careful aim with the ancient brass bomb gun. A misplaced shot could bring a mountain of enraged black muscle thrashing down upon the crew.

The gunner signaled that he was ready so the crew carefully edged the Umiak forward upon the neck of the submerged whale. BOOM! The ancient gun fired driving the projectile deep into the neck. Our Umiak was lifted high out of the water upon the flailing fins, as the whale dove. Suddenly everything was calm as the whale disappeared into the depths of the ocean.

Anxious looks were exchanged among the crew. Is the whale dead? Is he trapped beneath the ice? Will he surface? These questions and many more ran through our minds as we silently prayed that the shot was well placed and that the whale would die before it became entrapped beneath the ice pack.

To lose a 50-ton whale would be a severe loss to the village of Point Barrow. They depend upon the muktuk and whale meat to fill their ice cellars for the coming year.

The water was cloudy with blood and a thick oily film which made it difficult to see the slowly

emerging shape of the dying giant. Cheers of victory filled arctic air as the motionless mammal floated to the surface. God had provided our needs again.

Quickly we harpooned the whale, attaching floats to keep it from sinking until we could pull him up onto the ice. One of the crew proudly placed a flag high upon a ice ridge as a signal to other crews: *Come quickly! We need help!*

Whaling in the Arctic is an ancient and dangerous art. To the Eskimos who live along the Arctic coast of Alaska, whaling is not a sport but a serious business. To their ancestors, not catching a whale could mean starvation. But this is no longer true today. Many of the villagers are employed by oil companies or have other well-paying jobs. They live in modern frame houses—many with indoor plumbing—and have color TV's.

Point Barrow, a village of about 2,500 people located at the top of the world, is the largest of the Eskimo villages. It is the farthest north point on the North American Continent. It boasts a new 1½-million-dollar hotel, a restaurant, three taxicab services, a large store, and an airport with jet service. However, the old ways of their ancestors still persist, whaling in particular.

Spring whaling in Barrow begins each year around the last week in April. Temperatures have risen enough, -10° to $+10^{\circ}$, to cause the Arctic ice pack to begin to move, opening leads of water for the whales to pass through.



The Umiak is a wood-framed boat, usually about 16' long and covered with handswen ugruk—breaded seal skins. The Umiak makes no noise when it is pushed from the ice and if it strikes a jagged piece of ice while in pursuit of a whale or while trying to escape the attack of an enraged 2,000 pound walrus, the tough skin will bounce off the ice. An aluminum or fiberglass boat is too noisy and would sink if it struck a sharp piece of ice. This is important for you can survive for only a few minutes in the frigid waters of the Arctic.

When a whale is sighted swimming down the lead, the crew quickly launches the Umiak and begins pursuit. They delicately man the wooden paddles as the gunner or harpooner of the crew, for a misplaced shot could mean a lost whale or worse yet drowning to the crew.

The ancient whale gun is made of solid brass, and weighs about 30 pounds. Dating back to the 1800s, it is not very efficient, but it is the best equipment available as no one but a handful of Eskimos still hunt whales. Quite often the gun misfires and the whale has to be harpooned by hand.

The crew approaches the whale from the side, behind the eye so they will not be detected. They paddle the Umiak upon the whale's neck and the gunner fires into the neckjoint. If placed properly, the shot breaks the neck and the whale is unable to dive. Sometimes the whale gets caught under the ice and is lost. When the whale surfaces, harpoons with floats attached are embedded into the whale to keep it afloat or to slow its flight if only wounded.

Word of the catch is sent back to the village and everyone available turns out to help. A whale weighs one ton per foot in length so it takes a lot of help to pull a 50-ton giant from the water. Sometimes the ice has to be blasted out with dynamite to create a channel so the whale can be pulled to ice solid enough to support the tremendous weight.

Anchor rods are driven into the ice. One end of a block and tackle is attached to the rods and the other end to the whale by a large band. It may take 100 people two or three days to pull a large whale far enough onto the ice so cutting can begin.

(Continued on page 13)

A lead is a wide channel of water that has opened in the ice because of the pressure of the ice pack and the Arctic winds.

The men load their wooden freight sleds, pulling them across the ice with their sno-gos in search of a good lead. There they make camp and wait for a whale. The Umiak is placed at the edge of the ice, ready to be launched rapidly.



(Don't Meddle With the Bears from page 9)

After making one final dash at Duke, the mother bear decided to join her family. With surprising ease, she pulled herself up the trunk while Duke barked triumphantly below. Soon all three bears were clustered in branches fifteen or twenty feet from the ground.

"Couldn't be better!" I congratulated myself. Now that the ground was free of bears, I felt safe in leaving the saddle. Nancy pranced nervously and snorted her distant fear for bears, but she allowed herself to be tied to a nearby sapling. Now I was free to get on with the job of wildlife photography. Already I was thinking of how surprised everyone would be when they saw the bears' family portrait.

Busy getting my camera ready, I hadn't noticed what was happening in the tree. When I finally glanced up, I was dismayed to see that all three bears were climbing again and had all but disappeared in higher branches.

"Hey!" I exclaimed, "you can't do that. Hold on a minute!" But the bears continued to climb until all three were clustered in a crotch a good eighty feet from the ground. Duke looked at me questioningly, then barked excitedly and launched himself at the trunk of the tree tearing off bits of bark with his teeth.

"What do you want me to do?" I growled, "climb up after them?" Duke looked as though he expected me to do just that.

Well, I wasn't about to do anything so foolish. Not with Mother Bear up there, as angry as a wet hen.

The idea of climbing had merit, though. Near the bears' tree was another large fir that towered even higher. Why couldn't I climb it until I was level with the bears? That would make an even better picture.

Climbing trees was something I had been doing ever since I learned to walk. I slung the camera over my shoulder; then attacked the tree, making use of notches in the rough bark for hand and footholds. When I reached the branches, the climbing was easier. Finally I sat on a large limb almost directly across from the bear family.

What luck! Trembling with excitement, I gripped the limb firmly with my legs and prepared to snap a picture. But now the shutter was stuck! A sliver of bark had jammed under the trip lever.

Bears, like time, wait for no man. I suppose the mother bear was nervous because of my closeness and suspicious of my intentions. Before I had freed the lever, I heard a clawing and scraping and looked across to see her furry black coat disappearing down the trunk of the tree! The cubs didn't follow her, but they squirmed around until the tree all but hid them from sight.

What now! While I fumed with impatience and indecision, Duke's wild barking told me that the mother bear had reached the ground. I hoped desperately that Duke could run her up the tree again.

"Sic'em, Duke!" I shouted down. "Go get her, boy!" The growls of the bear and yips of the dog mounted to a crescendo, but I couldn't make out whether Duke was chasing the bear or the bear was chasing Duke.

Then a horrible thought dawned on me: What if Duke should chase the bear up my tree?"

For a moment, I was almost dizzy with terror. I couldn't go down the tree; the bear was there. I couldn't go up; the mother bear could climb as high as I. Across the twenty feet of space, I saw the cubs peeking around the tree trunk—they were trembling and whimpering and looking anxiously from me to the confusion going on below.

In that moment, I felt ashamed of what I had done—terrorizing the bear family just for a picture and forgetting all about Dad's warning. How foolish I had been! I gripped the branch hard and waited while waves of fear swept over me. "Oh, Lord," I whispered, "forgive me for not obeying Dad—I didn't mean to be so foolish. And please don't let that bear climb my tree.

I guess God must keep special watch over boys, knowing how impetuous and scatterbrained they can be. A few moments later, I saw the bear dashing off through the woods with Duke in close pursuit. No doubt she was leading him away from her cubs, hoping I would follow. Well, if that was what she wanted, I was glad to oblige. I fairly flung myself down the tree, sliding down the lower trunk with a rush and landing in a heap.

Nancy was gone! Probably when the mother bear and Duke were squabbling, Nancy had decided that enough was enough and had snapped the rein that held her to the sapling. She would be waiting for me at the pasture gate at home.

"So long, fellows—sorry!" I shouted up at the cubs. Then I took off on foot in the opposite direction from the way the bear had gone.

There would be many more adventures in this northern wilderness, but never again would Dad have to warn me not to meddle with bears. ●



Large knives on long poles called "flensing knives" are used to peel the *muktuk* from the carcass. The *muktuk* is thick whale skin and blubber about 1½ feet thick. It is quite tasty, resembling the flavor of sardines. Under the *muktuk* is the rich red meat of the whale.

The *baleen* or whale's gums which filter the microscopic organisms from the water for food, is used for Eskimo art. It is polished to a high black sheen suitable for etching or torn into strips and woven into baskets.

The inner ear of the whale, which is a bone about 10 inches in diameter, is the most prized possession and is always given to the captain of the crew.

The whale meat and blubber are cut into strips and hauled by sled into the village where it is stored in underground ice cellars. These ice cellars have been dug into the perma frost and keep the meat frozen year around. After whaling season, the Eskimos hold a festival with everyone participating in playing games and eating *muktuk*.

Throughout the centuries, many taboos and superstitions have been rigidly followed in whale hunting. Women were never allowed near the ice. Sacrifices were offered to the spirits. The *shammon*, or witch doctor, was a very powerful and feared man who openly consulted Satan on how to catch a whale.

Most of these superstitions have passed, largely due to the influence of missionaries and Christian men like Simeon Patkotak, a member of the Assembly of God church in Barrow, Alaska. Simeon is the captain of a whaling crew and has caught a whale each year since 1968, a remarkable record. Each time he and the crew catch a whale, they praise God for answered prayer.

Every Thanksgiving a feast is held at the church. Those that caught a whale share with everyone that did not. A generous, equal portion of *muktuk* and whale meat is passed out to the children and adults alike. A true Thanksgiving feast in the real meaning and tradition of Thanksgiving.

Why do the men work so hard and risk so much for a whale? Is it because of their ancestors? Tradition? Economics? I don't know if anyone really knows for sure. One man who left a high-paying job on the north slope to come home for whaling explained, "I like fresh whale meat."

Up here at the top of the world we all do, which I suppose is a good part of what whaling is all about. Editors note:

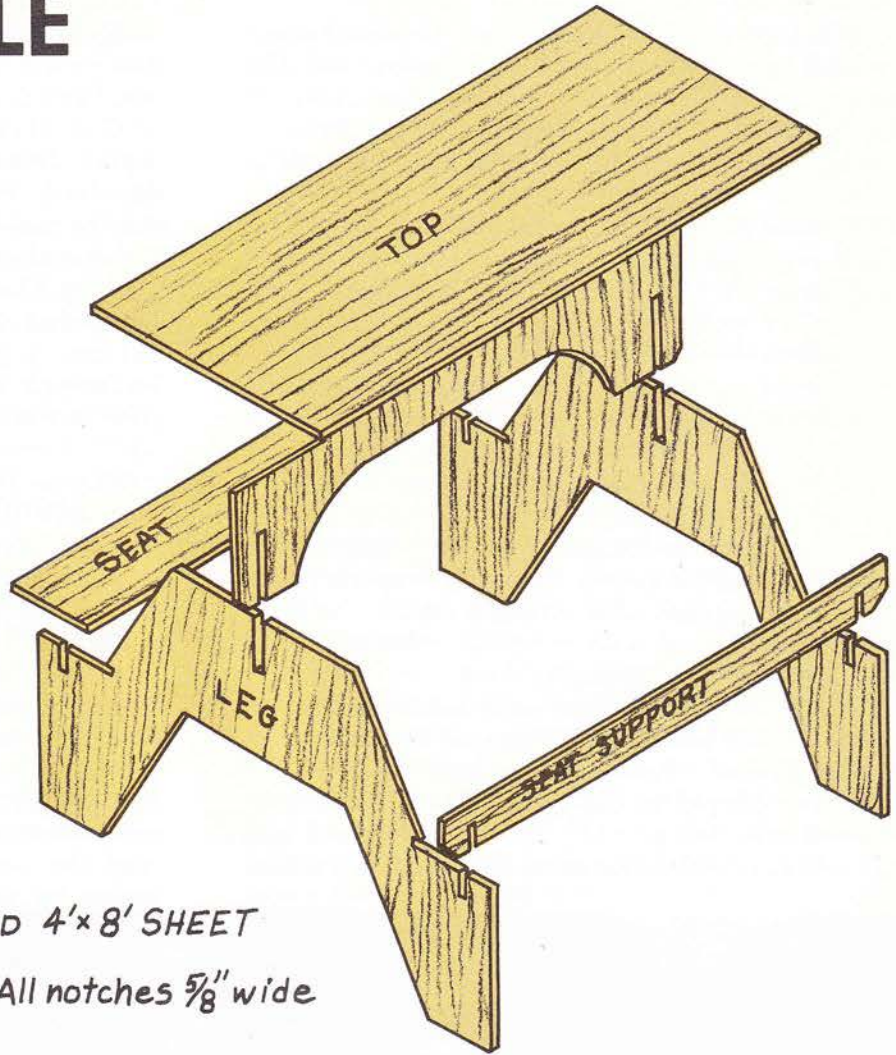
George Hotrum is the Royal Rangers District Aide-de-Camp for the Alaska District. He is one of a few white men who have had the privilege of whaling with the Eskimos. ●



CAMP TABLE

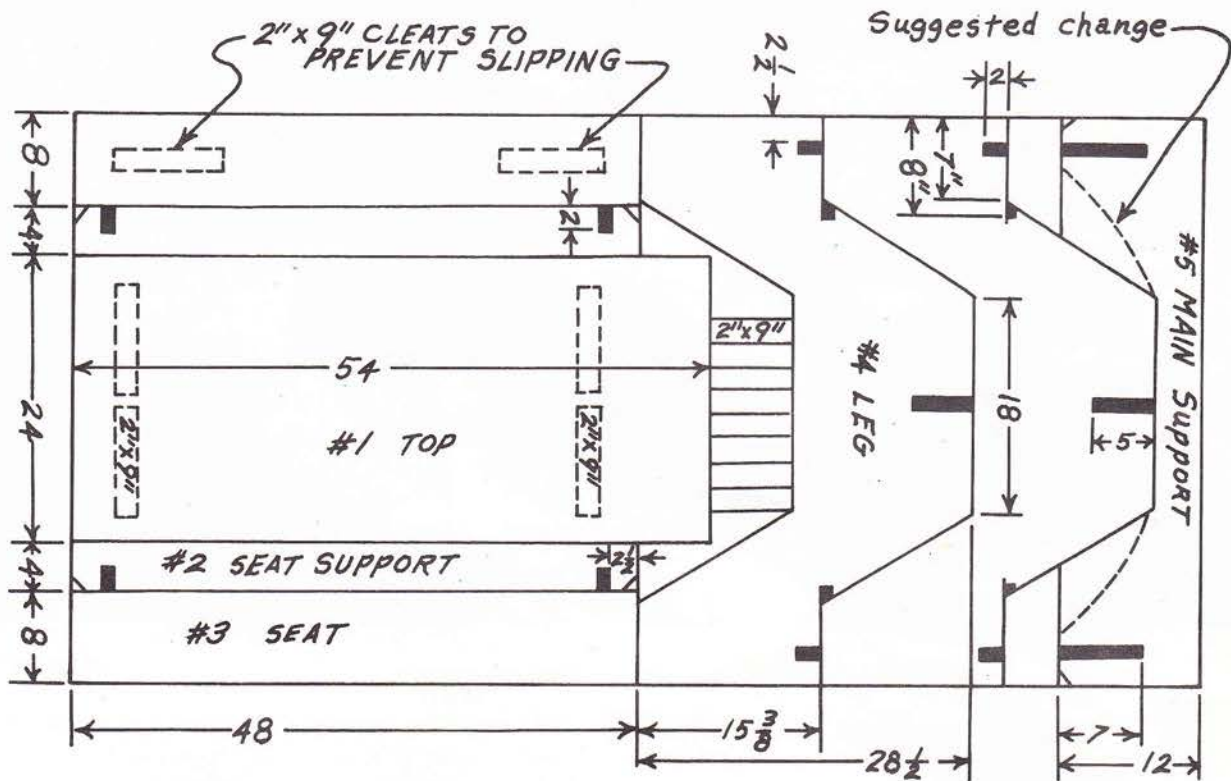
by Elton Bell

Here's a great idea for a portable camp table. Just follow instructions.



MATERIAL : $\frac{5}{8}$ PLYWOOD 4'x8' SHEET

Note: All notches $\frac{5}{8}$ " wide





the
**Comedy
Corner**

In honor of Servicemen's Day, July 6, 1975, the following rib ticklers were provided by Servicemen's Ministries of the Assemblies of God Chaplain's Department. We hope you like them, too.

—

An Air Force major was piloting supply hops to Vietnam. While approaching one of the bases, he ran into heavy anti-aircraft fire. Flak exploded all around the plane. The control tower temporarily lost track of his plane and radioed for his position. His reply: "Kneeling!"

—

A captain sternly lectured the soldier for losing his rifle and told him he would have to pay for it. "Sir," gulped the soldier, "what if I lost a tank? Surely I wouldn't have to pay for it."

"Yes, you would if it took you the rest of your Army life."

"Wow," said the soldier, "Now I know why a captain goes down with his ship."

—

A veteran was telling the Royal Rangers about his combat duty.

"One morning," he said, "was especially bad. Bullets were whistling by and shells were falling all over the place."

"Why didn't you hide behind a tree?" one ranger asked.

"A tree? Why, son, there weren't even enough trees for all the officers!"

—

Seeing a large submarine, a little sardine began trembling. "Don't be afraid," said its mother. "It's only a can of people."

Willie Jones had been in the Air Force over two years without being promoted. Finally, he hit on an idea to get his feelings known to the commanding officer.

One Saturday morning the C. O. was making his usual inspection of the barracks. When he started through Willie's belongings, he found a pair of pajamas with master-sergeant stripes sewn on the sleeves. "What's the meaning of this, Jones?" he demanded.

"I can dream, can't I, sir?" replied Willie.

—

A young Israeli applied for enlistment into his country's navy. After he was accepted he asked about his uniform.

"Sorry," said the navy recruiter, "our budget doesn't provide for uniforms. Just wear your regular shirt and we'll give you a navy insignia to sew on it."

"How about a hat?" asked the new recruit. "No hats," was the reply. "We'll give you a patch for your own hat. Incidentally, can you swim?"

"What!" exclaimed the recruit, "you don't have ships either?"

—

Deep in Vietcong country the chaplain was holding services for men of an artillery battery. Near the end of his sermon, two rifle shots whizzed close overhead. Hoping to set his men at ease, the chaplain looked toward the jungle and said to the unseen Vietcong rifleman, "All right, Charlie, the sermon wasn't that bad."

The whole group erupted into laughter as a soldier responded, "Chaplain, what makes you think those were enemy rounds?"

—

First Soldier, "Hey! Did you borrow my toothpaste?"

Second Soldier, "No! I don't need no toothpaste. My teeth ain't loose."

—

Allen Dulles, head of the Central Intelligence Agency, liked to tell this story. Jozef Rapacki, a minor official in the Polish ministry of trade, frequently went on missions to Russia and other satellite nations. Each time he sent a postcard to Stephan, a pal in his Warsaw office, the cards would say:

"Greetings from free Moscow."

"Having a wonderful time in free Prague."

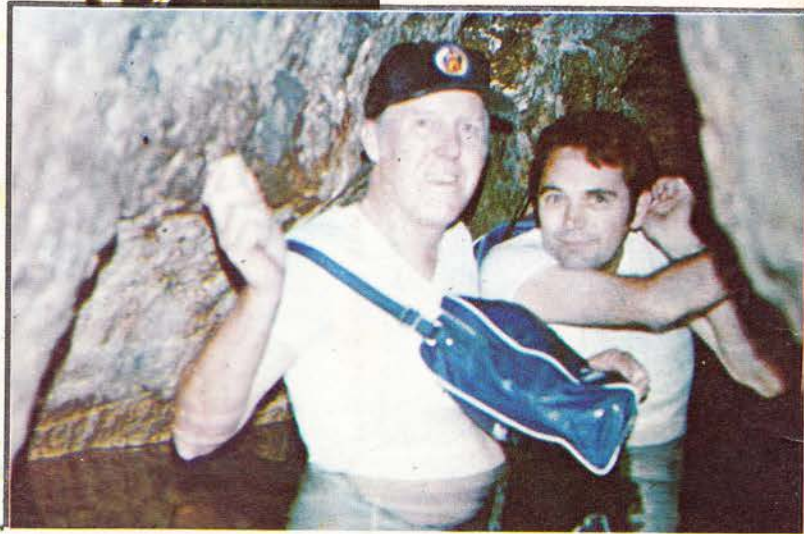
"Best wishes from free Budapest."

One day Rapacki left unexpectedly. He did not tell Stephan of his departure. Days passed and Stephan began to worry, fearing his friend had been arrested and sent to a slave labor camp.

Finally, he got a card from New York which read, "Greetings from free Jozef."

THE HEROES OF HEZEKIAH'S TUNNEL

by Ralph W. Harris



"J—, J—! WA—!" I was trying to say, "Johnnie! Wait!" but the words wouldn't come out. And Johnnie Barnes and Wally Welke were moving away from me with the only flashlight, leaving me in the darkness and the cold, cold water. I'll never forget that experience in Hezekiah's Tunnel in old Jerusalem.

When King Hezekiah's men dug that tunnel about 700 years before Jesus was born, they never dreamed someone would have an experience like this almost 2,700 years later.

The workmen were obeying the king's orders to help defend the city against an army from Assyria. You see, the Pool of Gihon, the city's major water supply, was outside the walls. All the attackers had to do was seize the Pool and wait for the defenders to surrender because of thirst. Water's so important, no wonder the Bible likens salvation to it.

But Hezekiah outwitted the enemy. Two groups of workmen began digging a tunnel, one team from Gihon, the other from the Pool of Siloam (which has no water supply of its own). Following an "S" course, they finally met. A remarkable achievement.

Water could now flow from the Gihon Pool to the Pool of Siloam. All the workmen had to do was cover up the Pool of Gihon to hide it from Assyrian eyes.

Many people have walked through the Tunnel, about 1,850 feet long, so I thought four Royal Rangers leaders and I could do the same. Friends of mine had told me the water wasn't high, only a foot or so. So stripping to my shorts; putting my clothes in a

flight bag to protect them; and holding my costly camera high, I followed Johnnie Barnes and Wally Welke into the Pool of Gihon. Marv Oliver and Clarence Rubart were behind me.

I wasn't prepared for what happened!

Immediately I was in water almost to my shoulders, the coldest I'd ever felt. I couldn't breathe! My heart seemed to stop beating! As I tried to call for help, I was sure glad to see the rays from the flashlight moving back toward me.

That wasn't the end of the excitement!

Sometimes the water got even higher. That didn't bother Johnnie, for he's about 7 inches taller than I am, but if it got any higher—! I'll confess I was tiptoeing through the tunnel.

Things got worse!

The ceiling of the tunnel got lower (Hezekiah's men must have got tired). A couple of times the water got so high and the ceiling so low, we had to turn our heads sideways to breathe. It was a relief to reach the Pool of Siloam.

For me, the adventure was not ended. My flight bag, filled with water-soaked clothes, threw me off-balance as I stepped up a couple of feet to the edge of the Pool. I fell in, camera and all.

The six slides I took in Hezekiah's Tunnel are among the most expensive in history, for it cost me \$91.67 to get my camera repaired.

But do you know of anyone else who got baptized in the Pool of Siloam—and his camera too? ●