

High Adventure

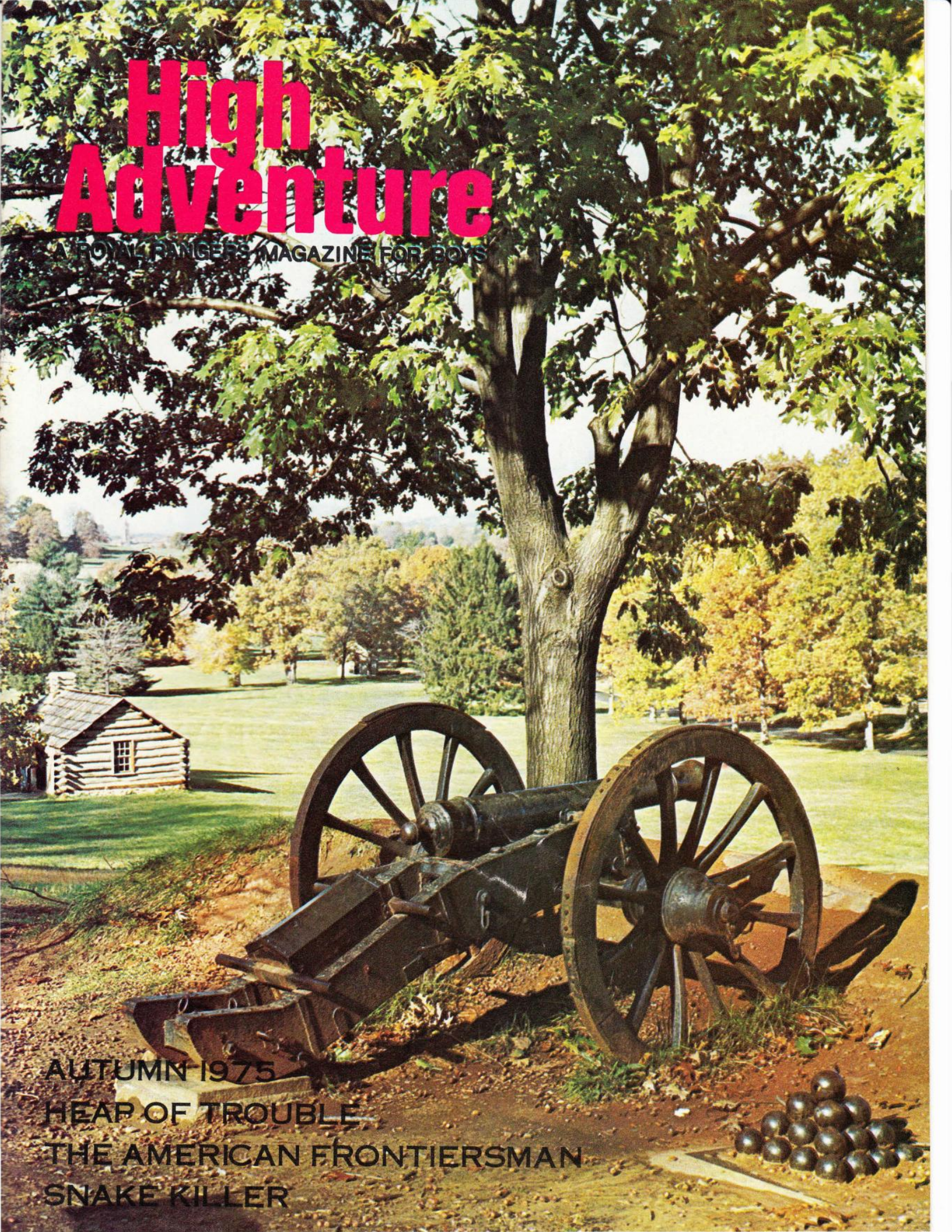
A ROYAL RANGERS MAGAZINE FOR BOYS

AUTUMN 1975

HEAP OF TROUBLE

THE AMERICAN FRONTIERSMAN

SNAKE KILLER



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by Fred Deaver

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High Adventure

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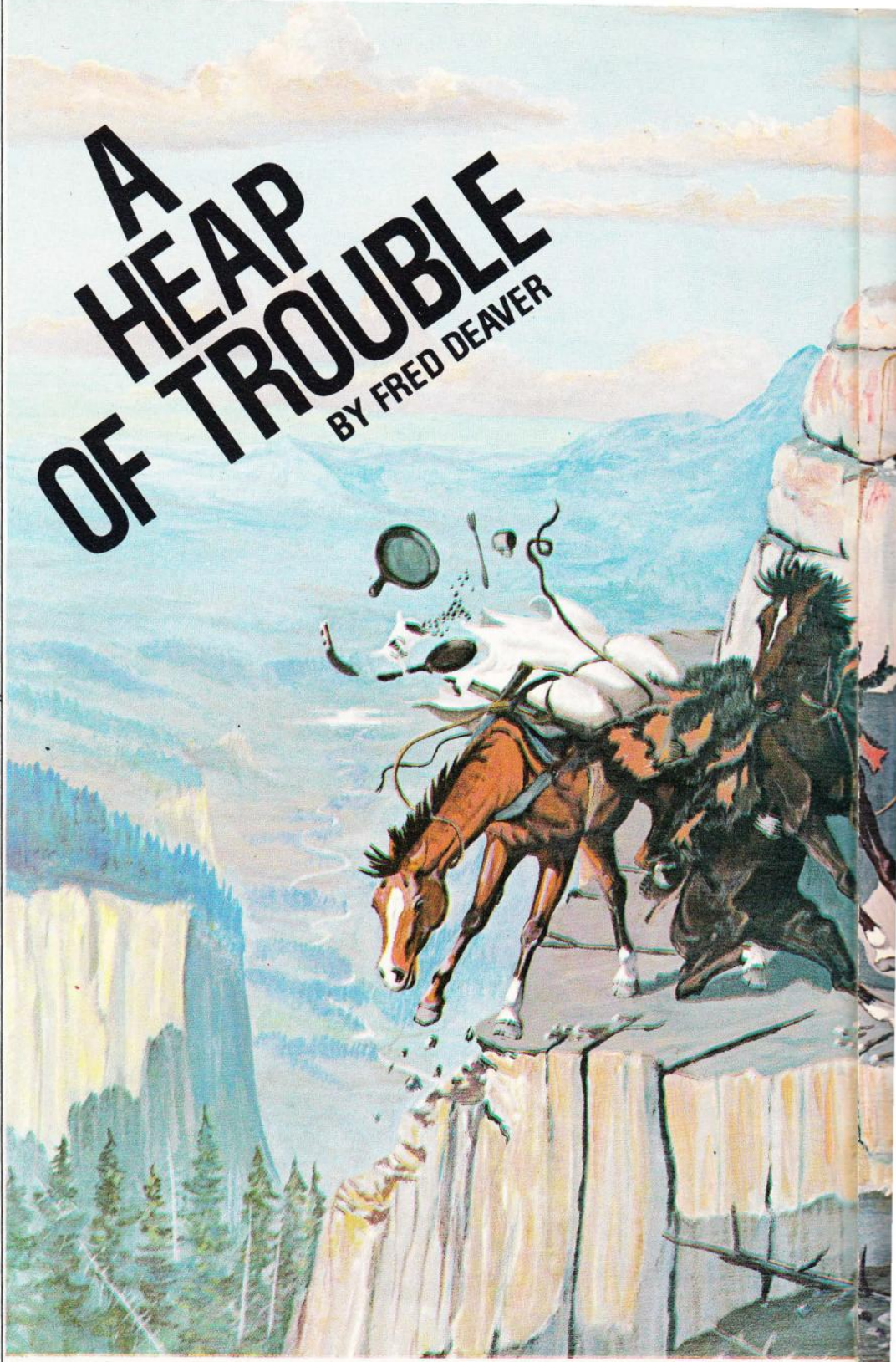
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A HEAP OF TROUBLE

BY FRED DEAVER



Yes Sirree, that's what I calls 'em. Black, brown, or ol grizzly, they be bear and that means trouble. Yep, ya cain't tell stories bout the frontier before some one will tell bout how they kill't a bear or how they almost got kill't by a bear.

Now ya see pilgrims, many years ago thar be bear everwhar ya would care to go in this great country of ours, and they was called many names. Now the Injun's sometimes called them Brother, the mountain man called him grizzly silvertip, or ol Ephraim, and many times pioneer and Injun alike, called him names we just won't mention here.



One thing fer sure, the good Lord made quite a critter when he made ol bear. Now the bear is a large fur-bearin animal, and he be related to the dog. When a bear walks, he steps down on the entire sole of his foot as a man does. The bear has large, strong claws, and ol bear can use them claws to rip a log open to git some honey, or he use'em to dig up ants, or to catch fish. They can break a moose's back with one swat of their powerful paws.

Now ya know ol bears got a short tail, and also got a short temper. Ol Grizz may look clumsy or slow, but pilgrim, bears have been known to run as

fast as thirty miles an hour. I guess it be a good thing that bear hibernate, that is; they eat a lot in the summer and fall, and sleep all winter.

Now most black bear usually weigh between two or three hundred pounds. Although they are called black, they may be brown, light brown, or cinnamon in color.

Now pilgrims, the grizzly bear be a shade from brown to blackish gray, and they got a big hump on their shoulders, and their hair be silvery gray. Now they may weigh as much as one thousand pounds and be ten feet tall.

I reckon the biggest bear be the brown bear, or better known as the Kodiak bear. He may weigh as much as fifteen hundred pounds and be eleven feet tall.

Well now pilgrim, I reckon ya see now why that ol bear can be a heap o trouble when he wants to.

Well sir, the Injuns and pioneers had a great respect for the bear. The Injuns used to count it a great honor to count "coupe," that is, to touch a live bear and not kill it—or get kill't doing it. They knowed twer bad medicine to mess around with ol bear. Now pilgrim, I'll tell ya a story that goes like this.

Bout 1828 or 1830, when they was good fur trade and beaver skin were same as gold in yar poke, ol Joe Meek, a mighty mountain man and free trapper, were at one of the big rendezvous—up in Yallarstone country it be. Now ol Joe thought himself to be a mighty brave man, and were a mind to say so.

Now it seems that Joe's bravery weren't as much as another trapper that were thar. So Joe and this here other trapper got into it over which one were the bravest. It looked like thar were gonna be a shoot out to settle the matter, when bout that time an ol grizzly bear came walkin into camp. Now pilgrim, ol Joe run right up to that ol grizz, and whipped out his shootin stick and slapped that grizz three times across his nose before he shot'em with his big bore (Hawken rifle). And that ended the fussin over who be the bravest.

Well sir, I know you've heard bout ol Daniel Boone and Davey Crockett, and how they'd brag bout how they could "grin" a bear to death. Well now, that be truer than ya might think pilgrim. Cause ya see, back in them days, what with the ol flint-lock shootin irons they had, ya only had one shot, and if'un ya just wounded or ya missed, they weren't nothin else left to do 'cept jest stand thar and grin!

Well now pilgrim, ya take ol Lewis and Clark. When they went up into the Yallarstone, they told bout how hard twer to put ol Ephraim to ground, with the wepuns they carried. Seems that ol grizz could carry more lead in his hide than a good mountain man could carry in his huntin pouch. So it was that they stayed clear of ol "heap-o-trouble" when they could.

Well now pilgrim, even today ol bear is still respected—an even feared. Many a modern-day sportsman consider the grizzly bear more dangerous than the African lion, and it might surprise ya to know that each year folks still get mauled and kill't in this country by bear.

Well now back in the early eighteen hundreds they were a famous mountain man name of Jedidiah Smith. Ol Jed were a leadin some trappers up the west side o' the Black Hills when all a suddenly ol Jed were face to face with ol grizz, and fore they

could drive the bear off ol Jed lay gashed and bleedin, with some ribs broke. Seems the bear had got ol Jed's head in his jaws and near scalped him. With one ear almost tore off, ol Jed told a feller the name of Clyman to get a needle and thread an get to sewin. Well sir, ol Clyman did a right nice job stitchin and in ten days ol Jed were up and leadin his trappers on into Crow Injun country.

Well now pilgrim, let me tell ya one better'n that'en bout Jed.

Seems they were a Major Andrew Henry, leadin some thirteen trappers fer a man name of General Ashley, head of a big fur company. I reckon it were in the spring of 1823, when bout one hundred miles out of Fort Kiowa a man name ol Hugh Glass with Major Henry's party was out ahead of the rest of the trappers. When all a suddenly ol sow grizzly with two cubs charged ol Hugh Glass. Now ol Glass took aim an shot that ol grizz sow right in the chest. But twern't enough to kill that ol sow, and she caught Hugh after a short chase.

Now ol Hugh whipped out his butcher knife and did all he could to defend hisself, but the bear near kill't ol Hugh. It looked like Hugh were a gone beaver. Everone figgered he wouldn't last that night, but come sunup ol Hugh were still hangin on. So Major Henry asked fer a couple of men to stay till ol Hugh give up the ghost. Right off a young man whose name would become famous in due time volunteered to stay. His name were Jim Bridger. Now another man, who were somewhat reluctant to do it, said he'd stay. His name were John Fitzgerald. Major Henry reckoned he'd pay \$40 each fer riskin losin their scalps to stay with ol Hugh.

Now ol Hugh still were hangin on, and each day it looked like his last. Now this went on fer five days, and ol Fitzgerald said he'd stayed as long as he were gonna. If 'un Jim wanted to keep his hair he'd best come with him and leave Hugh. He was same as dead anyway. So it was that Jim Bridger, and John Fitzgerald left Hugh Glass to die—alone. Now they took Hugh's rifle, knife, and all his fix-uns.

Well now I tell ya pilgrims, ol Hugh's life didn't look worth a British musket ball. But ol Hugh didn't give up. He ate some berries and water out of a nearby spring. Now Hugh were in much pain and couldn't walk, but all Hugh could think bout were gettin even with Jim and John for leavin him to die. Now ol Hugh were able to kill a rattler fer meat, and each day Hugh got stronger.

One day he saw some wolves that had jest kill't a buffalo calf. Now Hugh crawled up close to that kill, and fer the first time since he had been mauled by the bear Hugh with all his strength stood on his feet and ran the wolves off with a club. And so the story went. Ol Hugh survived seven weeks after the bear attack, and crawled and walked a hundred and fifty miles through hostile territory back to Fort Kiowa.

Well now, when ol Hugh finally found Jim, you can imagine how Jim must of felt. But ol Hugh forgive Jim Bridger and John Fitzgerald after all, and so be it.

Well pilgrim, ya can see why Injun's and frontiersman wore their bear claw necklaces with pride, and a bear skin robe is mighty nice on a cold winter night. And bear meat ain't too bad if'un that's all ya got—after all meat's meat.

But I tell ya all, this ol child is gonna always give old silvertip, Ephraim, and grizz the right-of-way on any trail we happen to meet! Cause ya see ol Hawk-eye aims to keep his skin in one piece, and most of all stay out of a heap o trouble.

EDITORS NOTE:

Fred Deaver is National President of the Royal Rangers Frontiersmen Camping Fraternity.



THE AMERICAN FRONTIERSMAN



BY FRED DEAVER

Already we have begun celebrating the 200th birthday of our nation. History is being revived as we relive great moments which have made America what it is today. Names of famous patriots come to mind such as George Washington, Paul Revere, Davy Crockett, Daniel Boone and many others.

One special breed of men in the long list of our country's forefathers was the old frontiersman. He was among the most colorful characters in American history, and yet he played a vital role in widening the borders of our land. He tamed virgin territory, making it safer for those who followed.

This rugged pioneer, like the modern astronaut, depended on his life support equipment as he left the last settlement to explore the unknown. Let's look to those bygone days and see what equipment he used.

They were usually clad in buckskin clothing. This garb was ideal for wilderness living. It was readily available, and fairly easy to make. It was windproof, repelled the rain, was virtually snag proof, and took years to wear out.

They usually wore leather moccasins, which they replaced quite often.

Headgear was a coonskin cap, a wide-brimmed hat, a tri-corn hat, or whatever headgear that suited their fancy.

They all carried a good flintlock rifle. It had two functions. Number one, it was for protection, secondly, and most important, the rifle was used to supply food and clothing.

Along with the rifle, the frontiersman carried a rifle case made of buckskin.

In a hunting bag he carried a pouch containing rifle balls, extra flints, a small horn full of salt, a powder measure, a ball starter, and a roll of pillow ticking for patches.

He may have carried a few extra parts to repair his rifle, just in case it should break down. Probably a main spring, a screw or two. Also a tool kit, maybe a screw driver, or a pick to clean the flash hole.

On a strap of his hunting bag, he kept a small sharp knife, called a patch cutter.

He also carried two powder horns, a small one full of 4-F flash powder, a large one that would hold a pound or a pound and one-half of 2- or 3-F powder.

On his belt he carried a knife, more than likely a butcher knife. Also slipped in the back of the belt was a good tomahawk.

Tucked over the belt in the front was often another pouch. In it he carried flint and steel for fire starting, along with a container of tender to catch a spark to make a fire.

He may have had some jerky, pemmican or parched corn to snack on. Any other personal items he may have needed he carried in this personal pouch.

If he had a pack horse, he carried many extra things to make his life in the unknown wilderness much easier.



Many adventuresome men who left for the wilderness in the early days of this country never made it back. Only those who took care of their equipment and knew how to use it had any chance of survival. There is an old saying that still holds true today: "Take care of your equipment, and it will take care of you."

The more I learn about these great "American Frontiersmen," the more I learn to appreciate them.

ELTON BELL ELTON BELL ELTON BELL THE LEGACY



The National Office was saddened by the news of the death of Elton Bell. On Saturday, April 5, he was installing a CB radio antenna when his foot became entangled in a lead wire. As he fell, the antenna struck a powerline. He was pronounced dead on arrival at the hospital.

He served in many capacities in the Royal Rangers program, such as District Commander, Regional FCF Representative, and National FCF Vice President. At the time of his death, he was serving as a contributing editor of High Adventure,

National NTC Representative, and as a member of the National Executive Committee. Many of the Aides-de-Camp will remember the stirring message he brought as special speaker at our final banquet during the 1975 Council.

He spoke at many Pow-Wow's, and conventions, but was best known for his role as Senior Guide at many of our National Training Camps. He was affectionately known to many as "Senior Guide Bell." His ability to make men look inside themselves, then go on to improve their leadership qualities, was unexcelled.

Elton was a giant in the Royal Rangers program, and left a legacy of knowledge and challenge to men and boys that will never be forgotten. He left a big gap in the Royal Rangers program, and on the front lines of God's army.

Commander Bell was a man who practiced what he preached. The impact he made on the lives he touched made him a man that will never be forgotten. Everytime a hunter's horn is blown at an NTC, everytime a crackling Council Fire is lit at a Pow-Wow, everytime a flintlock rifle is fired at an FCF Rendezvous, and everytime energetic boys participate in a exciting game or activity; someone will remember Elton Bell.

He was an unusual man who played a very vital and far-reaching role in the Royal Rangers program; *and we will miss him!*

We are planning a national essay contest for boys and the top award will be the "Bell Award," in honor of Elton Bell, and the contribution he made in the field of journalism.

INDIAN CAMPING

One of the most exciting camping experiences is Indian camping. This however, should be done only by experienced campers.

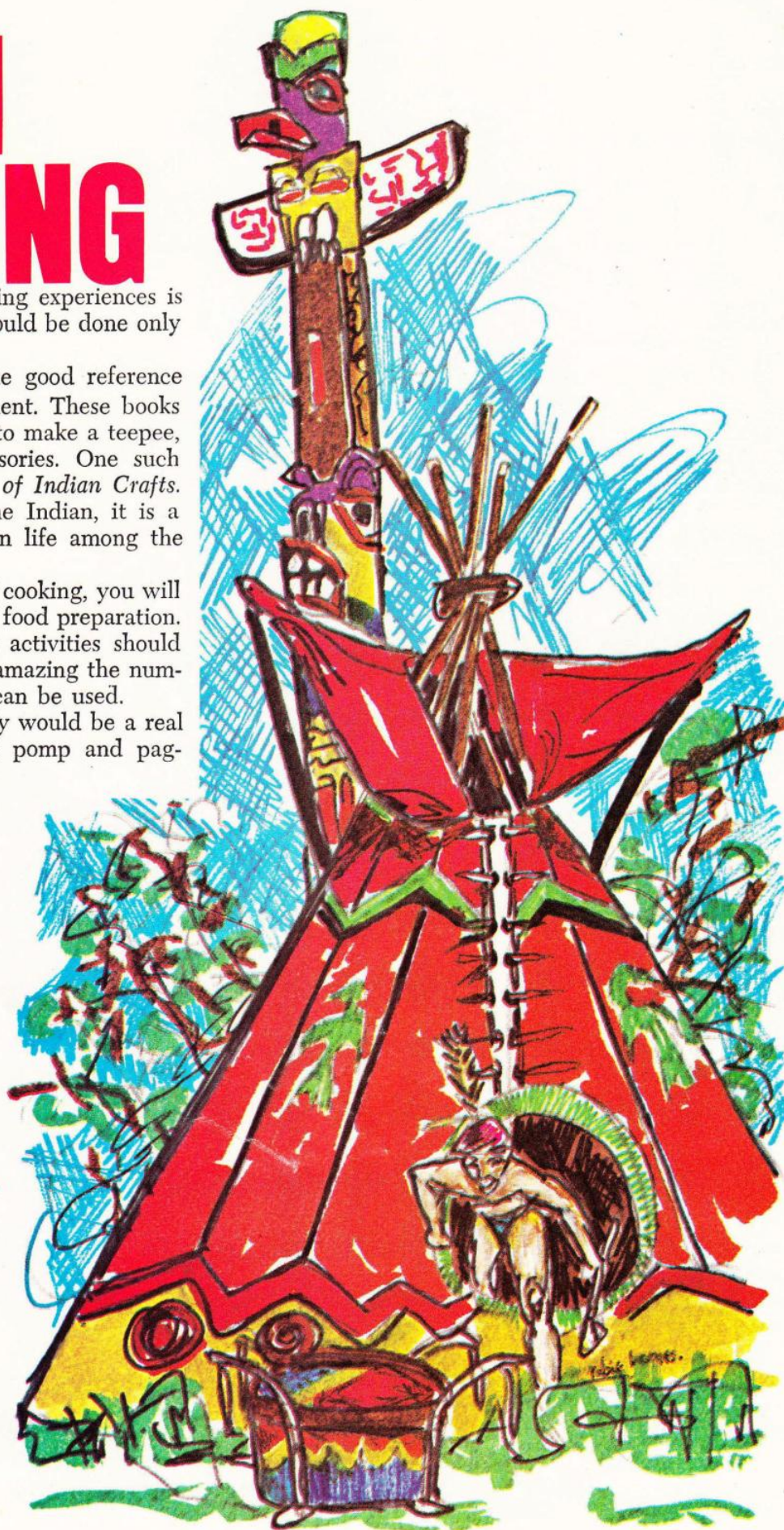
The first step is to secure some good reference books on Indian gear and equipment. These books will give you instructions on how to make a teepee, Indian clothing, and other accessories. One such book is *Ben Hunt's Golden Book of Indian Crafts*.

Since you will be living like the Indian, it is a good idea to do some research on life among the Indians.

If you follow the Indian style of cooking, you will of course use the primitive type of food preparation.

Your in-camp games and other activities should also follow the Indian theme. It's amazing the number of Indian related games that can be used.

The climax of each day naturally would be a real Indian Council Fire, with all its pomp and pageantry.





THE SNAKE KILLER

BY JOHN ELLER

Fairson Eller was a slim, wiry lad of sixteen, already a rawboned six feet and still growing. All his life had been spent on the slopes of Black Mountain in Rabun County, Georgia. The "big hill" was second nature to this young man of German-Irish extraction.

Between saw milling and farm chores, young Fairson found time to run a set of small game traps near stream beds and in the draws. In spite of opossum and occasional cottontails, his successful capture of raccoon and red fox proved to be both interesting and profitable.

Early in the foggy dawn one September morning in 1888, Fairson was to run across one of the great hair-raising experiences of a lifetime. It was the kind of situation one always feared in those north Georgia hills, but the sheer reality of it would excite and entertain his family for generations to come.

Crossing a large fallen tree for a routine trap check toward the bottom of a draw, he felt his foot give. Fairson drew back instinctively, and just in time to hear the air pierced by the death-like warning of a timber rattlesnake.

Fairson crept cautiously in a big circle until at last, he came into full view of the coiled rattler, partly sheltered by the log. His racing pulse missed a beat as he observed the gigantic proportions of the dangerous viper his boot had mashed moments before. The snake was larger than a man's forearm!

Stepping backwards with eyes wide in wonder and appreciation, Fairson caught sight of blood oozing from the serpent's body just as the angered monster struck at the air. Capable of reaching a maximum distance three times his length, the King-sized rattler, with lightning speed, stretched out his enormous hulk a few unsafe yards away.

Fairson caught his breath in astonishment. The snake's body was as large as the calf of his leg—perhaps larger! He could not afford to quibble about the difference just then. Reason fought with fear as he considered a means of escape.

Jungle-like underbrush snarled and dominated the draw on all sides. But the terrain receded quickly from the place he was standing into a wash, and with a little luck, he could dive through and claw his way to safety. While the snake recoiled, he would be long gone through the briars and thorn bushes.

Again Fairson backed away, careful not to startle the viper and hopeful of putting more distance between them before lunging into the brambles and thickets. Losing his balance momentarily, his hand caught hold of a hickory sapling which broke at the root. He fell on one knee, but managed to keep an eye on his newly found enemy.

The commotion alerted the snake for action. A rustle of leaves joined the clatter of rattles as the deadly reptile made a spiral in the air. Like most pit vipers, this irate ophidian had begun to permeate the atmosphere with an offensive, almost repulsive odor. The senses of sound and smell only added to the increasing anxiety nurtured by the sight of such beguiling peril.

Just then a sickening snap shattered the morning air as a rusty animal trap sprung shut. Fairson yelled—in fright more than pain—as the stubborn jaws fastened just above his right ankle. Slipping again, he fell on all fours, eyes glued upon the cylindrical death dealer, but with a hand catching the small broken tree.

Scrambling to his feet, Fairson suddenly remembered the small skinning knife secured in his left boot. Frantically he trimmed the sapling's branches, ever watchful for any movement. An attempt to free himself from the trap would be too risky. The time consuming exercise would render him defenseless and could prove fatal. With these odds, his only choice would be to withstand the viper in combat—win or lose.

The timber rattler, possessing the inherent heel-bruising capabilities of his original ancestor, seemed to sense his new advantage and slowly bellied toward his victim in the semidarkness. Fairson had heard the old-timers say that snakes would usually run from humans. But a rough hobnail boot had injured the viper, calling upon its survival instincts.

Uncoiled and confident, the huge creature slithered charmingly toward his prey as if in search of certain revenge. Fairson braced himself for a fight to death, his eyesight now strained against the mist, his every muscle taut for this all-important moment of truth.

Suddenly, the snake reared into the air, standing on the very end of its tail. Fairson shoved the sapling forward to ward off the attacker. The forked tongue ran in and out as the viper struck out at the stick. Twice he almost knocked the pole free. Limited in movement and unable to either free himself or dislocate the trap stake, right-handed Fairson dug in for dear life.

Cold sweat broke out in massive beads across his forehead. His limbs ached. His body shook with fear against this unreal, dreamlike savage of the mountains. A single bite from a snake so large could mean instant death, owing to the agility of the serpent and the vulnerability of its target. Chance survival of such poison would leave lingering infection, loss of limb, and probable death.

A chilling shiver went through his body as he sought to see some advantage in the circumstances. If only the trap were not secured so snugly! If only the chain were a few inches longer! If only his left foot had not been snared!



**Weary and fatigued,
the heroic headbruiser
set out for home.**

Fairson's entire life flashed before him as he yearned for the safety of home. Picturesque moments spent at the cabin some three miles away flooded his mind. Scenes of his boyhood stood out in rapid sequence as he forced his tired body to resist a killer who refused to recant, reason, or compromise.

A horrible fear possessed his being once more as the snake of inconceivable dimensions made an all-out effort to sink his venomous fangs. Timing his final swing to the precise moment, Fairson gripped the slippery sapling with a pair of sweaty, blistered hands, dropped his defenses, and went for broke. The pole sang through the air, caught the wide-mouthed viper at a most susceptible spot, and popped off his head.

For a long moment, the unarmed Fairson stood frozen, not realizing what had happened. The snake jumped, bucked, and dug at the red clay in its futile attempt to defy death. A deep sigh of relief escaped Fairson's lips as he recognized the bleeding viper was now headless.

Fairson slumped to the ground, exhausted. During the struggle which had lasted more than half an hour, the sun had broken through the haze to illuminate the bloodstained battlefield. Painstakingly releasing his entrapped foot, he removed his boot and began rubbing to encourage circulation. His knife, dropped and stomped during the melee, was dug from the earth and sheathed.

Weary and fatigued, the heroic headbruiser set out for home, slightly limping, but dragging his still active trophy behind. He could see smoke curling from the fireplace in the distance. Breakfast of fried apples, hominy grits, and fat back would never taste better, between huge quaffs of piping hot Luzianne coffee and chicory.

He had done a day's work before most of the family was even up. Their eyes would grow big with amazement when he told his story and displayed the prize. Dressed out, the skin would hold an unbelievable peck and a half of grain!

Folks from miles around would come to old man Pid Eller's place to talk with Fairson, examine the six foot skin, and count the seventeen rattlers. Generations yet unborn would hear the legendlike tale—fantastic but true—and be proud that their ancestor beat a timber rattler at his own game. The hide would be assigned to the state archives in Atlanta, and even his hunting knife would become a family heirloom.

Fairson survived the snake attack, weathered the publicity which followed, and outlived scattered disbelief which labeled his story the fabrication of a wild imagination. He grew up to become well-known in those parts, married a beautiful Cherokee maiden, and lived a long and fruitful life.

If my grandpa were still here, he'd probably brag about the snake, and his "spittin' image" grandson who became a writer.

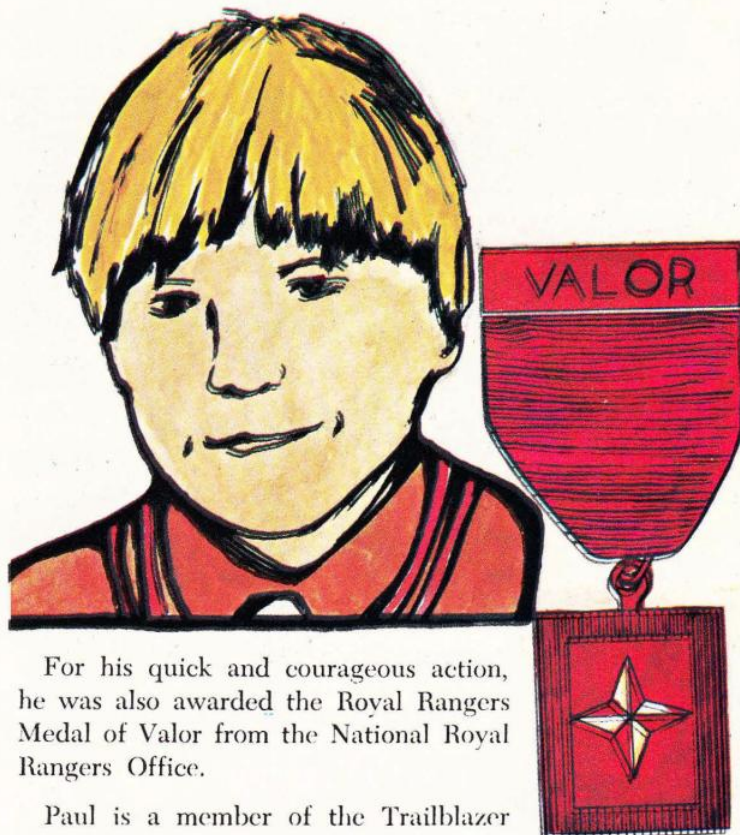
Rangers in *Actionnnn*

One afternoon, Paul Knight, a 13 year old Royal Ranger from Cressy, Victoria, Australia, was sitting on the veranda of his home, when he heard the screech of auto tires. Looking up, he saw a station wagon crash through the iron railing and plunge 30 feet off the bridge into the Woody Yallock River. The automobile driven by Eric Nightingale, landed nose down in twelve feet of water.

Paul quickly waded into the water, opened the rear door of the station wagon, and pulled Nightingale from the sinking auto. Struggling through the deep water, he was able to pull the semiconscious man to the bank of the river. By that time others had arrived to assist him.

Senior Constable T. Day, of Cressy, in reporting on the accident, stated, "Paul Knight should be commended for the risk he took, knowing that the car could pull him into deeper water at anytime. He continued to take great risk in getting the man into shallow water.

The Royal Humane Society of Australia, awarded Paul Knight their Certificate of Merit for this act of bravery.



For his quick and courageous action, he was also awarded the Royal Rangers Medal of Valor from the National Royal Rangers Office.

Paul is a member of the Trailblazer outpost in Ballarat, Australia.

HERE
THEY COME
THUNDERING OUT
OF THE TERRITORIES
TO THE

NATIONAL

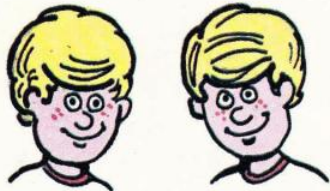
fcf rendezvous

DOGWOOD VALLEY, MO.
JULY 27-31, 1976



MOUNTAIN MUSIC
BLACK POWDER SHOOTIN'
TOMAHAWK THROWIN'
FRONTIER REGALIA
SPIRIT OF '76 PAGEANT
COUNCIL FIRES
BRUSH ARBOR REVIVAL
HEAPS OF FUN

THE TURNER TWINS



"TAD" & "TOM"



SIR TAD, THE KING WILL SEE YOU NOW!

THANK YOU!

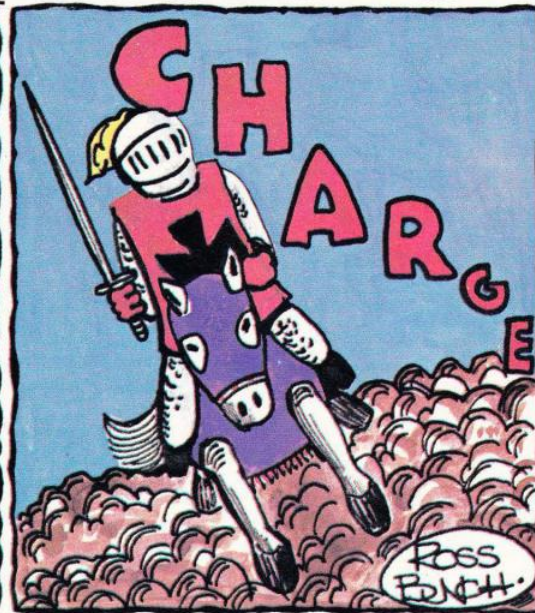


AND SO, SIR TAD, YOUR MISSION IS TO DESTROY "POLLUTER", THE DRAGON AND RID US OF THIS SMOKE!

I'M ON MY WAY!



COUGH COUGH THE SMOKE IS TERRIBLE! AHH, AND THERE IS OL' POLLUTER!



CHARGE

ROSS BOND

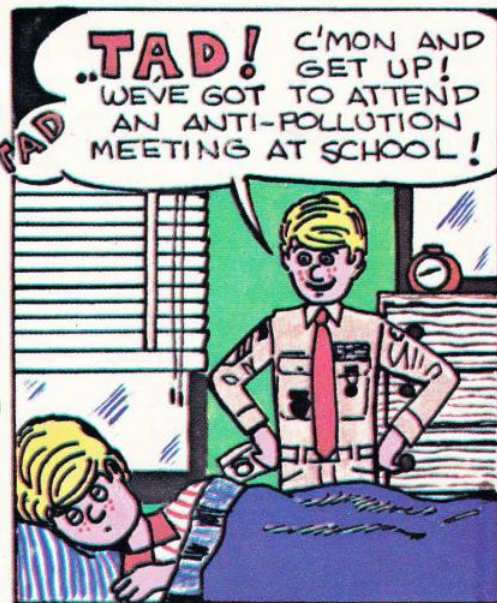


FOR YEARS, OL' POLLUTER, YOU HAVE BEEN FOULING UP THE NICE CLEAN AIR OF OUR LAND... BUT NO LONGER..

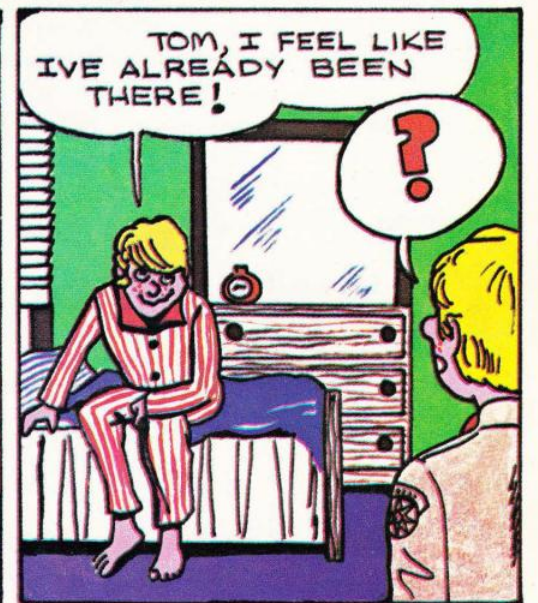


THERE, THE JOB IS DONE AND ONCE AGAIN OUR AIR IS SWEET AND PURE! HARK! WHO CALLETH??

TAD, TAD TAD

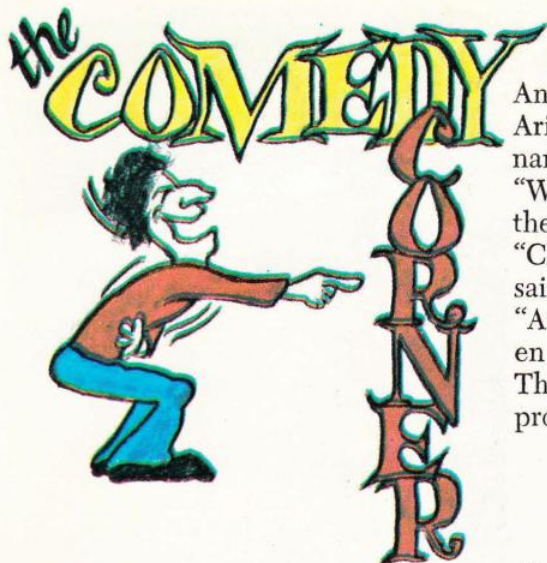


TAD! C'MON AND GET UP! WE'VE GOT TO ATTEND AN ANTI-POLLUTION MEETING AT SCHOOL!



TOM, I FEEL LIKE I'VE ALREADY BEEN THERE!

?



JOE: How far does light travel?
 BILL: I don't know, but it gets here too early in the morning.
 Lennie A. New
 Norwalk, CA

QUESTION: Why did the astronaut put a clock in his rocket.
 ANSWER: Because he wanted to see time fly.
 Lennie A. New
 Norwalk, CA

COMMANDER: Why do you think clouds are like people riding horses?
 TRAILBLAZER: Because they hold the rains.
 Lennie A. New
 Norwalk, CA

A Texas lad rushed home from kindergarten and insisted his mother buy him a set of pistols, holsters, and a gun belt.
 "Why, whatever for, dear?" His mother asked. "You're not going to tell me you need them for school?"
 "Yes, I do," he asserted. "Teacher said tomorrow she's going to teach us how to draw."
 Samuel Contreras
 Whittier, CA

An Indian asked a judge of an Arizona court to give him a shorter name.
 "What is your name now?" asked the judge.
 "Chief Screeching Train Whistle," said the Indian.
 "And to what do you wish to shorten it?" asked the judge.
 The Indian folded his arms proudly and grunted, "Toots."
 Warren Bebout
 Morro Bay, CA

JOE: I can see into the future!
 JOHNNY: That's impossible.
 JIM: Nope! I can tell you what the score for Saturday's game will be before it starts.
 JOHNNY: What is it?
 JIM: Nothing to nothing.
 Warren Bebout
 Morro Bay, CA

QUESTION: What colors would you paint the sun and the wind?
 ANSWER: The sun rose, and the wind blue.
 Lennie A. New
 Norwalk, CA

BILL: I saw the first act of the school play but not the second.
 BOB: How come?
 BILL: I couldn't wait that long.
 The program said the second act took place two years later.
 Warren Bebout
 Morro Bay, CA

HARRY: My big brother shaves every day.
 HENRY: My brother shaves fifty times a day.
 HARRY: He's crazy.
 HENRY: No, he's a barber.
 Bradley Monn
 Mont Alto, PA

QUESTION: What does an astronaut put in a sandwich?
 ANSWER: Launchin' meat
 Lennie A. New
 Norwalk, CA

JOE: My brother's been going around all week with half a shirt on his back.
 JIM: Where's the other half?
 JOE: On his chest, where else?
 Warren Bebout
 Morro Bay, CA

JOE: Dad, mother was backing out of the garage and ran over my bike.
 FATHER: How often have I told you not to leave your bike on the porch?
 Warren Bebout
 Morro Bay, CA

COMMANDER: You boys want to hear a couple of dillies?
 PIONEER'S: Sure.
 COMMANDER: Dilly, dilly.
 Lennie A. New
 Norwalk, CA

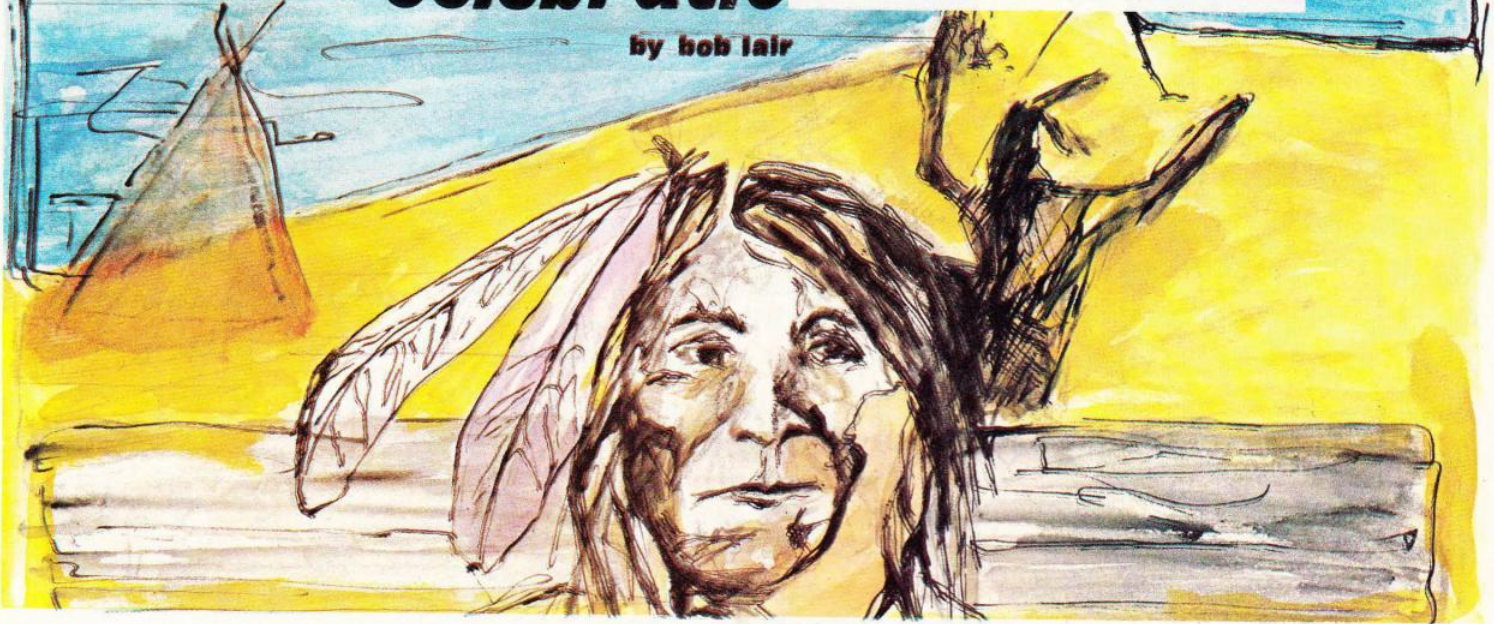
CUSTOMER: Waiter, come here this minute.
 WAITER: May I help you, sir?
 CUSTOMER: What is that fly doing in my soup?
 WAITER: I think he's doing the back stroke, sir.
 Warren Bebout
 Morro Bay, CA

TEACHER: Harry, how can you prove the earth is round?
 HARRY: I don't have to prove it, I never said it was.
 Lennie A. New
 Norwalk, CA

forgiveness celebratio

by bob lair

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THE CREEK INDIANS, former inhabitants of Georgia and Alabama, set aside four days every year in July or August for their Green Corn Dance, a new year rite in which all things were begun again.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of the festival was that all criminal acts, with the exception of murder, were forgiven. Thieves and slanderers, men of violence and fraud and passion, could hide themselves in the forest, barely surviving, until the announcement was made setting the day of the festival's beginning.

The time of the celebration varied slightly from year to year, for it was scheduled for the time when the corn would be ready for harvest. The ceremony was also called "busk," a primitive word meaning to fast. No pious man would eat even one ear of corn until the gods had been thanked properly in the Green Corn Dance.

The festivities lasted four days. On the first day, the central meeting place of the Indian community was cleared for the celebration. On the second day, there was feasting upon the newly ripened corn. On the third day, the Indians fasted and drank the strange Black Drink prepared by the tribal leaders. On the fourth day, feasting began again, accompanied by games of every sort and the ceremonial dances.

At the end of the busk, all of nature was renewed ritually; the vegetative cycle was ready to begin again and, hopefully—to end a year later in another great harvest.

The Creek Indians worshiped the god of the sun, whose manifestation on earth was in fire, the mediating spirit between their god and men. Whenever there was an eclipse of the sun or a great storm which appeared to blacken it, the Creeks feared some great evil force was about to swallow up their god.

As a new year rite, the busk was believed to start all things over. The Indians destroyed their old clothing, their weapons and their tools and made new ones. Most important, they put out all fires in their hearths, extinguished every blaze in their tribal community so that, in the ceremony of

the busk, they could start a new fire from which all in the village could relight their hearths.

But the most intriguing part of the celebration was the forgiveness of all sorts of crimes and the reinstatement of criminals as full members of the community.

In that pagan Indian ceremony we can see expressed man's basic longing for forgiveness, his fundamental need of restoration.

Such a need can be answered only in Jesus Christ. Human forgiveness is a marvelous thing, but it cannot answer to man's offense against God. The reinstatement of a man in his society must bring great joy, but it cannot remove the guilt of the soul before God.

Jesus Christ alone can cleanse the conscience of guilt. All the sacrifices of the Old Testament priests only looked forward to the Cross. When the Son of God came, He brought with Him God's promise: "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." And the apostle Paul said, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered."

Murderers have come to Christ and found His forgiveness. David and Paul were justified through faith, the blood upon their hands cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ.

Peter had denied his Lord, but he "fed the flock of God," forgiven by the Saviour whom he had denied.

The woman taken in adultery was told to go and to sin no more, but He did not condemn her; He forgave. The Samaritan at the well came in faith, finding the Christ and forgiveness.

If we confess that we are sinners, He is faithful and just to forgive and to cleanse from all unrighteousness. The marvelous grace of God cleanses from all sin, frees the conscience of all guilt.

The forgiving ceremonies of the Creek Indians are a feeble illustration of that act of justification made possible in the death of Jesus Christ. "He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

—The War Cry