

High Adventure

A Native American man in traditional regalia, including a large feathered headdress and fringed garments, stands in a dark forest at night. He is gesturing with his right hand towards a large, tall bonfire that is the centerpiece of the scene. The bonfire is built on a pile of logs and is surrounded by flowers. In the background, a large group of men, some in military uniforms and others in civilian clothes, are standing and watching the ceremony. The scene is illuminated by the fire and a full moon in the dark sky.

FALL 1977

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TOTAL ECLIPSE
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MYSTERY IN THE OLD APPLE HOUSE

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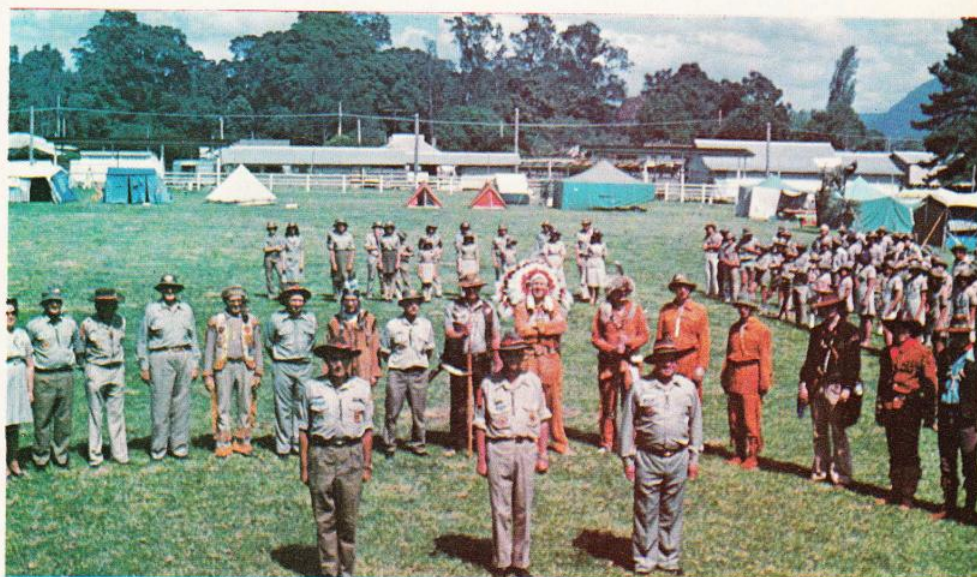
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National Commander

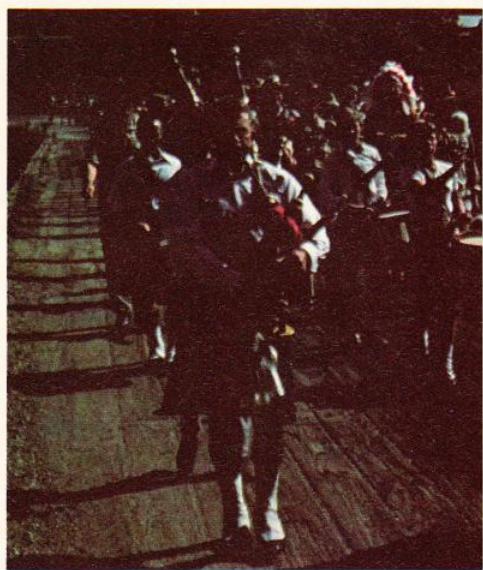
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National Training
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NATIONAL CAMPORAMA



AUSTRALIAN STYLE



by Johnnie Barnes

Camera's were rolling, flashbulb's were flashing, and a sea of smiling faces looked up at us as we stepped off the plane. I was in my Indian costume, and the other members of the American delegation were in FCF costume or uniforms. From the front row of the greeting spectators stepped Will Thorne, Australian Commonwealth Commander and Dennis Smith, Commonwealth FCF President.

With a rousing "Our ya going mate," and a hardy handshake, we were welcomed to Australia. This was one of the many experiences the 17 American delegates shared who journeyed to Australia for their first National Camporama, January 1977.

We had landed the night before in Sydney for a brief rest and the chance to get ready.

Because of a special request from the Banana Coast Tourist Association, we donned our FCF regalia for promotional shots upon our arrival at Coff's Harbour.

You can imagine the sensation we caused when we walked into the Sydney Airport, dressed in our costumes to board the plane to Coff's Harbour. The official's tried to keep their composure, but you could read the curiosity in their eyes.

When we boarded the plane, the captain requested that I come forward to the cockpit to explain who we were. He became so interested that he stepped off the plane with the group to get in on the excitement.

After hand-cramps from autographs, and photos, photos, photos, we boarded a special bus to drive to the Camporama site, 30 miles away, where another welcome from the Camporama participants awaited. The welcome we received from Royal Rangers from all over Australia would have warmed anyone's heart.

The Camporama site was located on the Bellington Fairgrounds in the beautiful Bellington Valley, which is considered to be one of the most beautiful spots in Australia.

How do you describe the fun, the excitement, the inspiration of an event such as a National Camporama.

On the first evening just as we prepared to begin our council fire, the sky became full of fruit bats. This is a large bat with a wing spread as much as 3 feet called "flying foxes." The MC of the council fire gave these words of assurance, "Don't let the vampire bats bother you, they only like American blood." We learned later that the bats made a nightly ritual of flying out from an island nearby to feed on the farmers fruit.

Highlights of the Camporama included a parade through town, complete with a Scottish bagpipe band, colorful morning assemblies, inspiring council fires, kangaroo court with Fred (Hawkeye) Deaver presiding, a 30-station skillarama area, an FCF area featuring aboriginal skills and artifacts, plus fun, recreation, and unusual events and special music.

There was also news conferences and radio and TV interviews. The Camporama made an impact on that section of Australia that will not be soon forgotten.

Both boys and girls, and both men and women are involved in Royal Rangers in Australia. This gave the Camporama an added dimension.

All the American delegation were pleased and grateful for the opportunity of participating in this outstanding event. We will all remember a number of things, jumping kangaroos, cuddly koala bears, bell birds (that sound like tinkling bells), whip birds (that sounds like a cracking whip) the kookaburra bird, "ugh!" (the noisiest bird of all), spectacular scenery, hot, hot weather, fun and humor, singing and worshipping Australian style. But most of all we will remember the expressions of love and friendship from the Australian Royal Rangers. ●



when

total eclipse:

by O. J. Robertson

A grand sight will appear in the sky over much of North America, October 12, 1977. A total eclipse of the sun will occur on that day.

What is an eclipse? When one heavenly body is hidden from view by another, it is eclipsed.

An eclipse of the sun, or solar eclipse, occurs when the moon passes directly between the earth and the sun. For it to be a total eclipse, the moon must be a *new moon*.

At a certain time, sun, new moon, and earth will be in a direct line. Light from the sun cannot reach the earth; it is blocked, or cut off, by the moon. A shadow cast by the moon falls upon earth.

A total solar eclipse is an awe-inspiring sight. The earth slowly darkens; the atmosphere seems supernatural. Long ago before modern astronomers explained what eclipses are, many people thought an eclipse a miraculous event and were frightened by them.

There is a legendary story that once while Columbus was exploring in the New World he was captured and his life threatened by unfriendly Indians. Knowing that a total eclipse of the sun would occur in the evening, Columbus told the Indians that if they harmed him, a great darkness would spread over the land.

The Indians, suspicious, but fearful that something might happen, delayed the execution. When the eclipse began and the earth did darken, the Indians panicked and let their prisoner go.

Modern astronomers accurately predict *when* and *where* eclipses will occur. The solar eclipse on October 12 will be total in some places, mainly over the Pacific Ocean. The path of totality will run from the northwest part of South America to a point southeast of Alaska. For about two and a half minutes, the sun will be completely hidden.

But the partial eclipse will last much longer, and it *will be* visible in all 50 of the United States and in western and southeastern Canada. Check your local newspapers for exact time in your area. Listen to your radio and TV station for information about this strange sky show.

Usually, a total eclipse is televised during the occurrence, or for delayed broadcast on news shows. It might be safer to watch the eclipse on TV screen. Sometimes the eyes can be damaged by looking at an eclipse.

An eclipse begins slowly and ends the same way. It may take an hour, more or less, for the sun to be completely hidden by the moon. Earth will slowly darken, and as the darkness increases you may see birds and chickens seek a roosting place. Livestock may leave their pasture and go into their barns. Automatic lights may suddenly come on. People may turn on their house lights during a total eclipse.

Chances are the eclipse will be only partial in your locality, but partial or total, it will be spectacular in most of North America during the afternoon of October 12.

Why not watch for it? You may never again have a chance to see such a grand scientific matinee!

a dragon eats the sun



viewing the eclipse safely:

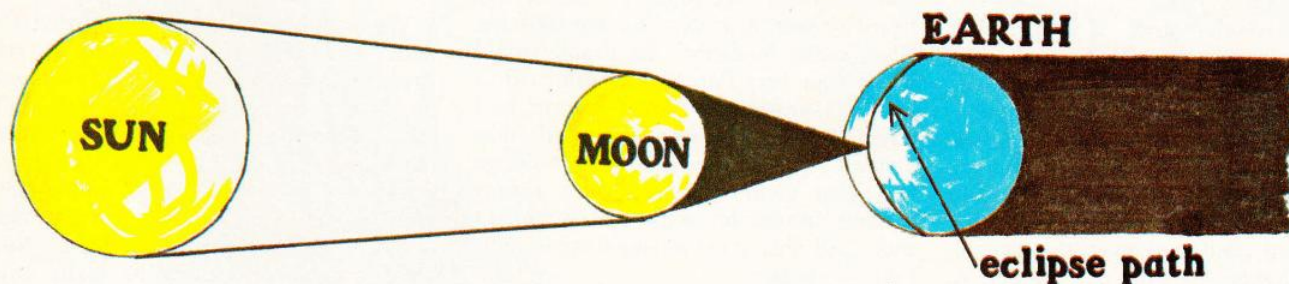
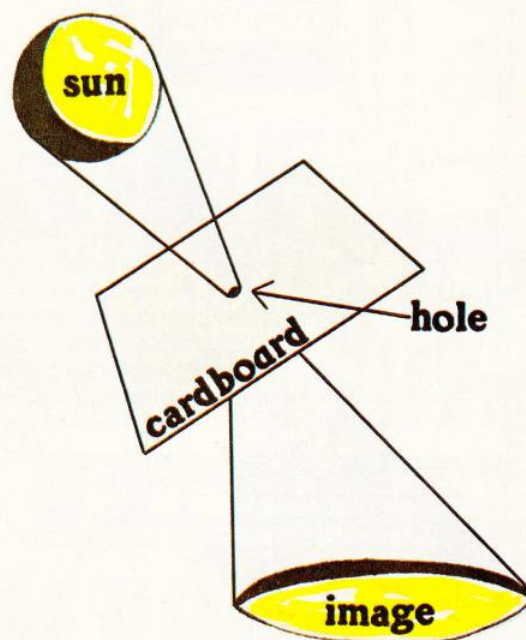
According to an old Chinese legend, a dragon would sometimes try to swallow the sun. People of the villages would then rush into the streets beating pots, shooting off fireworks and making noise to frighten the dragon away. Their noisemaking always worked; the dragon would cough up the sun leaving it as bright as it was before.

Although we know that an eclipse is not a dragon swallowing the sun, the sun can be a dragon that could eat your eyes. More damaging than the brightness of the sun are the ultraviolet rays it emits. Ultraviolet radiation is invisible but dangerous, it can seriously damage your eyes. It can even cause blindness. Care must be taken to avoid looking directly into the sun. Viewing the sun through sunglasses or smoked glass does not protect the eyes from the ultraviolet rays. Only professional photographers and astronomers with a proper set of lenses and filters should attempt to make direct observation of the sun.

The safest way to view the partial eclipse is by constructing a simple peep hole camera. Take a large piece of cardboard and put a small hole in the center. Raise over concrete or some other flat surface. On the concrete you will see a circular image. This image corresponds to the sun.

As an eclipse occurs you will notice the circle of light slowly being eaten away.

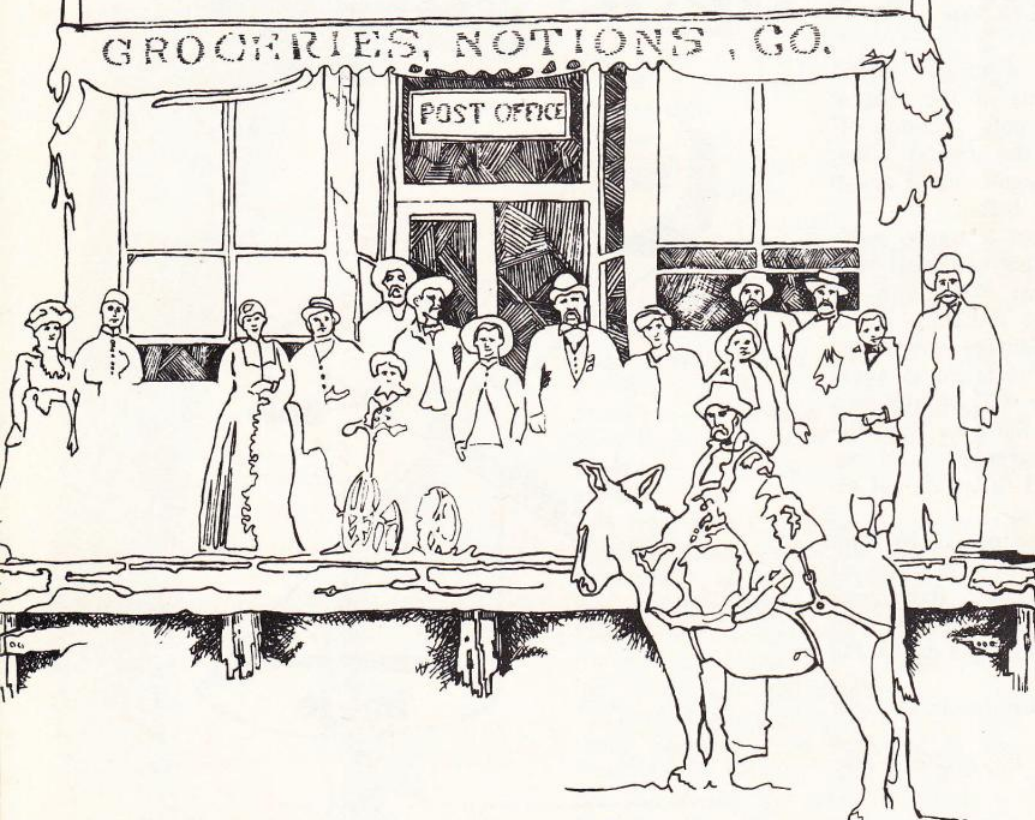
Remember, nothing is worth your sight. Be careful! Never look directly into the sun!



The GREAT PANTHER HUNT

AN OZARK TALE

By F. S.
As told to W. S. Stephens



MY PAL EB never would have hatched such a freak idea if someone hadn't heard the yowl of a panther. Naturally, just as soon as it got around that Selzer Pitts had heard a big one, everyone and his cousin started hearing panthers, mountain lions, and the like. Some even saw one, and the animal got bigger and bigger with each sighting, until finally he was as big as a grizzly bear, and had eyes the size of the headlights on our old Model A Ford.

Eb and I, ornery as we were, just couldn't resist. We figured if Selzer had heard or seen it, it wasn't there for sure. The "snake medicine" he drank would make your ears flap like a mule with a horsefly, and your eyelids go up and down like window blinds. But, if folks *wanted* a panther, we'd be glad to oblige and give them one. We were always looking around for some new prank to pull, and this was too good an opportunity to miss.

It was a simple matter to get a five-

gallon oil can. Back in those days we all bought coal oil in five gallon cans from almost any grocery store. A can, a big bunch of horse hair from a fiddle bow, and a little resin from Grandpa's fiddle case, and we were ready, raring to go. The howls set up by that contraption were like nothing else on earth. It was a sawmill, a screech owl, and hog ringing, all in one.

One night we discovered two coon hunters were going out, fellows who, in spite of the reports, still had enough courage to hunt. We planned to make believers out of them. We carried our "panther" to Jake's timber, barely able to keep from snickering out loud all the way. We waited 'til we heard their voices close by, sounding low and scared-like, before we let loose with that hair-raising squall. Those boys got out of there as fast as greased lightning, and they didn't even slow down for the fences.

This was getting to be more and more fun. One hot evening in July a couple of fellows decided to go down to the swimming hole to cool off. We crept down there with our "panther" and cut loose with the awfulest yowling since Old Yo' treed the neighbor's tom cat, and he lit on Yo's back with all fours on his way down. Those two swimmers got out of there so fast they were dry before they ran five feet. They sprinted at top speed all the way back to town to warn the folks that the panther was a-coming!

We rolled and laughed 'til our sides ached, wondering when they would come back to get their clothes. They never did.

A few months later, we decided it was time for a little more fun, since some still weren't convinced there was a panther. *They* had neither seen it, nor heard it themselves, and they were Missourians through and through. But others were hearing the panther, especially on dark and stormy nights. Even a few old-timers declared, "It's a panther, there is no doubt about it, in the world." Eb and I just sat there with 'em by our old wood stove, whittling and swapping yarns.

We began to get a little worried finally, and decided it was time to rid Freemont of this terrible beast and end up heroes doing it. Women wouldn't step out on the porch at night to throw out the dishwater. Men kept their livestock tight around the barn, and calves in it. A man walking into town would carry a gun in broad daylight. Nobody walked into town at night any more.



So we figured the time was ripe to become the town heroes. I rounded up fifteen men who allowed they had enough courage to hunt the panther.

Eb, with his old hound, and the "panther," took a position out in a place we had picked out for our grand finale, where there was a high bluff and sheer drop into the creek.

When it was as dark as a black panther, I led the posse straight into

the timber, and right up on the creek bank. Nobody could see two feet ahead and when they were right where we wanted them, Eb commenced "screaming" the panther, making his hound howl like a scared banshee.

I yelled excitedly, "Here he comes!" and raced straight for that creek. When I got to the top of the bank I stopped, naturally, and stepped behind a tree. I knew that area like the back of my

hand. But the others ran at full speed, catapulted over the bank and down into the creek. Splashing and yelling, they climbed out.

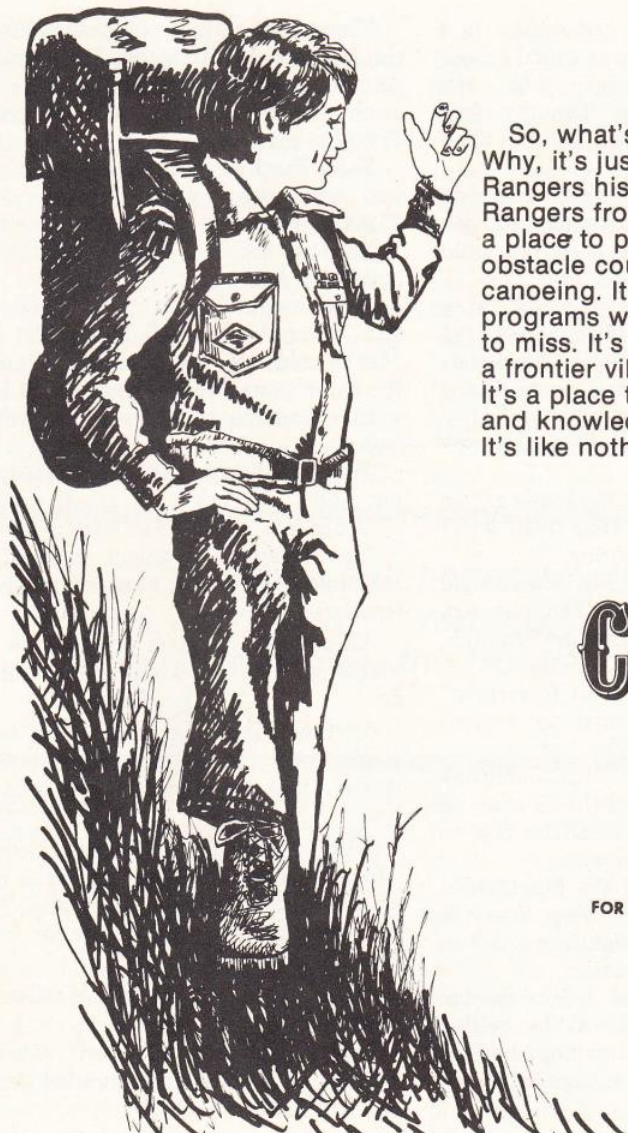
Eb and I, we laughed for a week.

The panther was never heard again. We threw away the hair, the resin, and the can with its tell-tale hole. We got to thinking that if the town folks ever found out that we were behind the whole thing, they might just form a posse of their own.

Eventually everything cooled down and Pitts didn't hear any more panthers. Fortunately for us, everyone forgot all about the Great Panther Hunt!

**The descendants of F.S. still live hereabouts. It seems the part of prudence, therefore, to conceal his identity, inasmuch as this account is essentially true. And, the panther scare seems to get revived every few years.*

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So, what's a National Camporama? Why, it's just the biggest event in Royal Rangers history. It's a place to meet Rangers from all across the nation. It's a place to participate in handicrafts, obstacle course, archery, swimming, and canoeing. It's inspirational evening programs with celebrities you won't want to miss. It's black powder demonstrations, a frontier village, tomahawk throwing. It's a place to test your physical fitness and knowledge of Ranger camping skills. It's like nothing you've ever experienced!

THE 1978 NATIONAL CAMPORAMA farragut, idaho july 25-29

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
CONTACT YOUR DISTRICT COMMANDER

*A life-long dream
will come true.
If only he can catch . . .*

THE LAST STAGE

By E. B. Witter

"I have exciting news!" called Timothy MacDonald, as he flung open the cabin door. The door creaked loudly, for it was new and stiff. The cabin itself had just been built on a beautiful hill-side on the Pennsylvania frontier.

"And what is the news?" inquired Mistress MacDonald. She stopped stirring the mush which was boiling in the big black kettle on the hearth. She turned and smiled affectionately at her tall son with his serious blue eyes and coarse, homespun clothing.

"Tell us, Timothy!" demanded Timothy's sister Faith. She jumped up from her place at the spinning wheel and ran over to him.

"You have spoken to the captain," guessed Mr. MacDonald with his usual wisdom.

"Yes!" replied Timothy, and he felt a warm glow at the thought. "I have spoken with Captain Edens, and he said he will take me to Boston on the very last stage."

Timothy watched the pleased expressions on the faces of his parents and his sister. They were happy about Captain Edens' promise because they knew that Timothy wanted to go to Boston where there were many boats.

Ever since the MacDonald family had crossed the ocean to America, Timothy had dreamed of spending the rest of his life on a sailing vessel. On that voyage he had learned to love the feel of a ship under full sail and the clean smell of salt air.

But the MacDonald's had settled on a farm inland. The place was called Canoe Creek because of the stream which ran through the hills near by. Timothy liked to live at Canoe Creek, but he liked ships more.

Now Captain Edens had come to Canoe Creek on a government mission and had told Timothy that he could return with him.

"Captain Edens said I could be a cabin boy on his ship," Timothy went on.

Suddenly his mother raised her hands in surprise. "The last stage leaves Canoe Creek tomorrow!"

"That's right," Faith said, a sad look coming into her eyes.

"The settlers say that the roads get so bad after the fall rains that there won't be another stage until spring."

"You'll make it, boy," Mr. MacDonald said. "The ride will be a fast one too. The last stage has got to get through, for it carries the mail."

"Twill be a long wait 'til tomorrow," said Timothy, as he joined the excited family at the supper table.

It was a happy meal with much talk and laughter about Timothy's career in the navy. They talked until the fire on the hearth burned to embers.

After family prayers, Mr. MacDonald said, "Tis best we go to sleep. Save the candle and get a good night's rest. Timothy has a long day ahead."

Timothy climbed the ladder to the loft and smiled broadly as he settled himself on his sweet-smelling bed of straw. "Tomorrow!" he whispered as he dozed off.



There was a flurry of preparation in the MacDonald cabin the next morning. As soon as daylight peeked over the hill, each member did his share in getting Timothy ready.

Faith fixed a neat package of cookies and sweetmeats while Mistress MacDonald gathered up all of Timothy's belongings and tied them carefully in a square of homespun.

"The stage horses are being fed and watered already," announced Mr. MacDonald, as he squinted through the cabin's one window so he could keep a check on the activities in the village below.

Then suddenly Timothy sniffed the air. "Oh!" he cried. "I smell smoke!"

"I do, too!" cried Faith with a scream.

The village bell began to clang its warning, the warning most feared on the frontier—fire!

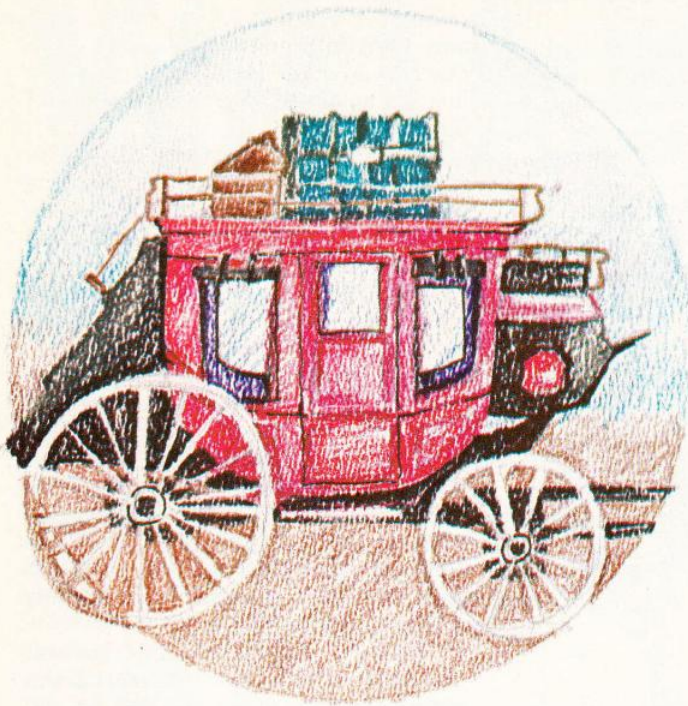
There was no time for talk in the MacDonald cabin. There was a job to do.

Mistress MacDonald grabbed a water bucket and ran to the cistern. Faith quickly took up a bucket and followed her.

"We could make a backfire, Father," Timothy said quickly, his nerves as tight as the reins of a runaway horse. "The fire seems to have started near the creek, and it's coming this way!"

"Right, boy!" replied Mr. MacDonald. "Spades—hurry!"

"Here they are, Father," Timothy called, and his voice sounded hoarse and frightened.



"We'll have to dig a ditch across the Middle of the hill," Mr. MacDonald shouted, as he began digging with furious haste.

"And burn a strip of ground along the ditch so that when the fire gets this far it won't have any more fuel to burn on and will have to go out," Timothy added quickly. He was thinking of the cabin, the new barn, the nice shed, and the church nearby. The fire must not take away all they had worked so hard to build. Timothy also remembered the crops. They would be safe if the fire got no farther than MacDonald's hill. The settlers would starve through the winter if the fire spread beyond the hill.

All the settlers were soon at MacDonald's hill. The women and the girls formed a long line. Mistress MacDonald dipped the pails into the cistern, passed them to the next woman in line who passed them on until the girls at the end of the line ran with the water and threw it on the flames.

Though his mother worked on steadily, Timothy knew by the wide-eyed expression on her face she was more frightened than he had ever seen her in his life. The sight of her courage in the face of fear gave him strength to work harder and faster.

Rabbits ran from their nests. Timothy could hear a coyote bark in the

as she gasped, "Timothy! The stage!"

Timothy clenched his teeth, rolled his sleeves up higher, and went on digging. The people of Canoe Creek needed every digger to save them from starvation and ruin. Had his father not said those very words?

"Go, Timothy!" pleaded Faith. "This is the last stage, and it will not wait. It carries the mail. It will not wait."

"Go back to Mother," Timothy ordered more gruffly than he had intended.

Faith began to sob. "Oh, Timothy, you may never have a chance again!" Tears streamed down her face as she made her way back to the bucket line.

"Dear little Faith," Timothy sighed. "Even she does not know how much I want to be on the last stage."

But Timothy could not lament long. The crack of burning bush was getting as loud as a horseman's whip. Timothy dodged a burning branch that came hurtling through the air. The job was far from done. He must dig and try to help finish the ditch that would choke the all-consuming fire.

He was so occupied with these thoughts that he had not heard Captain Edens' approach and was startled when he heard the captain's voice at his side. Captain Edens was saying, "Timothy, the coach is ready."

Timothy managed to hold back the tears that flooded his eyes. He kept his voice calm as he said, "I cannot go. Everyone is needed. But I thank you sir, for trying to get me a place in the navy. Goodby, sir."

"The village bell began to clang its warning; the warning most feared on the frontier—fire!"

Timothy saw the flames coming closer and closer. The air was now blue with smoke. Not far away Timothy could see the angry yellow flames lick and crack around the tall pines. "Dear God," Timothy prayed, "please help us!"

As he lunged into digging with his spade he heard his father say, "The fire's got a good start. It's a demon, and we're too shorthanded to fight. We're needing every man, woman, and child in Canoe Creek to fight this one!"

distance. Even the timid deer ran close by him in its wild frenzy to reach the creek and safety.

Men with spades were digging with all their might. Timothy kept praying and digging. When he raised up to stretch his aching limbs for a moment, he looked down toward the village. The horses were being hitched to the last stage!

At that moment Faith left the water line, running and stumbling toward him

"I would very much like to stay and help," Captain Edens said. "It is hard for me not to. But my duty is to make the last stage. Goodby, my lad."

Timothy felt as if he were saying goodby to the sea forever when Captain Edens turned and walked down the hill to the waiting coach. His heart ached at the realization that his dream of the open sea, a life on a fine sailing vessel, would never come true. "This is the saddest day I have ever had," he thought.

The fire had come to the ditch now. The men were fighting more desperately than ever. The fire fought back with hot vigor. Between spadefuls of dirt, Timothy's eyes followed the coach as it wound its way along Canoe Creek road to Boston.

"Good-by, Captain Edens. Good-by, my beautiful ship!" he cried against the wind.

Hours later the fire was vanquished. Great trees lay in heaps of ashes. The grass and brush were gone. Everything beyond the ditch looked sad and defeated as did Timothy himself. But the farm buildings were unharmed. The crops were saved, and the settlement below the hill lay in safety in the noon sun. "Thank you, Lord," Timothy said, "even though I cannot understand."

He spent the rest of the autumn picking corn and digging potatoes. In the winter he sorted seeds and sharpened plows. In the spring he hitched the horses to the plow and turned over the rich, black dirt. In the summer he weeded the crops. As harvesttime drew near, he was glad that he had sacrificed his own desires for the good of others.

But very often his thoughts turned from his farm work to the sea, to Captain Edens and his fine ship. Timothy's longing for the sea was greater than ever.

Then one day, when the last stage came once again to Canoe Creek, Timothy went out to meet it. Halfway down MacDonald's hill he caught sight of a familiar, uniformed figure getting out of the coach.

He caught his breath at the sight. "Captain Edens!" he called. Running with the sureness and strength that life on the Pennsylvania frontier had given him, he made his way to the coach.

"Timothy!" Captain Edens greeted him with a broad smile and handclasp. "Will you be here long, Captain?" Timothy smiled back at the man whom he admired above all others except perhaps, his father.

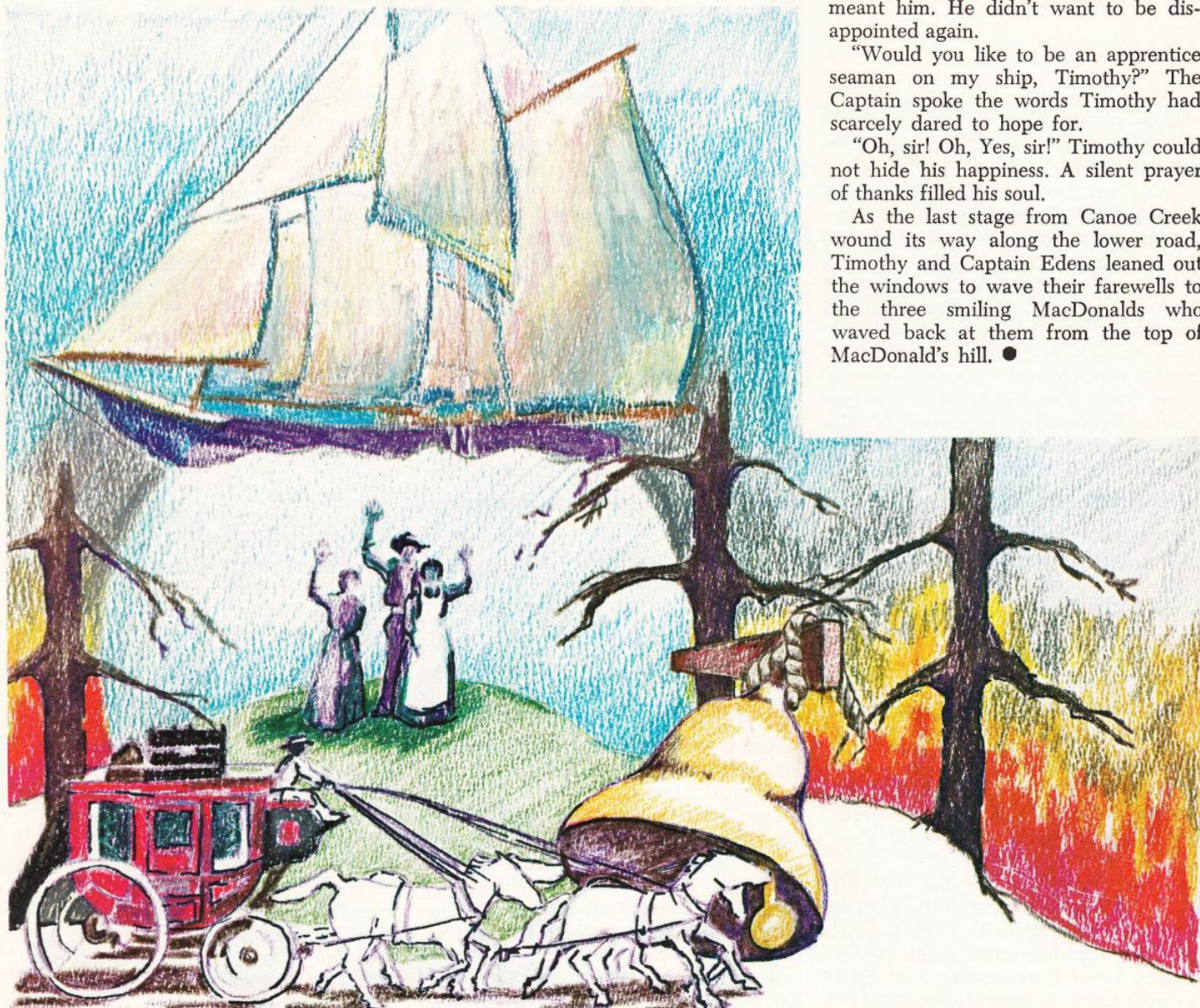
"Until the last stage leaves," answered Captain Edens. "I hope to take back some valuable information for the government and also an apprentice seaman for my ship. I have need of a dependable lad whom I can trust to do his duty under all circumstances."

"Yes, sir!" gulped Timothy. He was afraid to believe that Captain Edens meant him. He didn't want to be disappointed again.

"Would you like to be an apprentice seaman on my ship, Timothy?" The Captain spoke the words Timothy had scarcely dared to hope for.

"Oh, sir! Oh, Yes, sir!" Timothy could not hide his happiness. A silent prayer of thanks filled his soul.

As the last stage from Canoe Creek wound its way along the lower road, Timothy and Captain Edens leaned out the windows to wave their farewells to the three smiling MacDonalds who waved back at them from the top of MacDonald's hill. ●



WATER

OUR RECYCLED RESOURCE

By Grover Brinkman

In today's highly technical world, man is learning a hard lesson that he has been shoving into a corner for much too long.

If he cares to stay alive for another century or more, he must recycle many of the things that he is now discarding. Suddenly the environment is a problem, and man hasn't solved it.

If one doubts the wisdom of recycling, turn on the tap for a drink of water. That crystal liquid is millions of years old. It has been recycled thousands of times, and still is the same pure water.

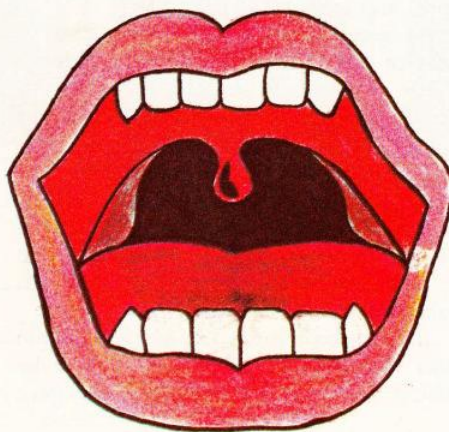
With today's vast store of scientific knowledge at our fingertips, this is hard to believe. Nonetheless it is truth. If water had not been constantly recycled down through the ages, the oceans would be no more. The earth itself would be a cinder. Life as we know it would be nil.

So at long last we accept the fact that water cannot be destroyed. At first man believed it could. The magic word is recycling.

Water is boiled into vapor but condenses back to its original form; man pollutes it but nature cleans it up, even though the restoration cycle might be extremely slow. Early man had various theories about water, but most of them later proved wrong. He feared, for instance, that through man's waste, some day the earth would go bone dry. But such, apparently, will never be true. In early scientific evaluation, man's knowledge had not progressed to the state that he could pin down a scientific truth—that water is recycled hydrologically. Today he realizes this is fact.

Each moment, heat of the sun evaporates a tremendous amount of surface water on the earth. If this were not constantly replaced, the level of all streams and bodies of water would drop until the oceans turned into an abyss of yawning canyons.

But water is constantly being returned to the rivers and seas in the form of surface runoff. Water from glaciers and mountain heights is constant. Rains and snows are part of the hydrological pattern of replacement.



Today, much as man hates to admit it, he has polluted much of the water on the land's surface. Some of our rivers are virtual cesspools. Smaller streams are so polluted that fish kill is a daily occurrence. Even fish caught far off-shore in the oceans today often show traces of deadly chemicals in their bodies, making them unpalatable.

Man has turned loose his mine wastes, his industrial sewers, into the rivers. Once where the Indian drank, the water is so highly polluted it would kill.

And don't forget the millions of tons of water suspended in the atmosphere in the form of fog, mist and vapor.

How much water does our globe contain? A rule of thumb might be as much as 300 million cubic miles. So there is really no shortage of water on a unit basis. The trick is to keep it distributed beneficially for all humanity.

Remember, it is our most common substance. And for that reason, if for no other, we take it for granted. Pure water is odorless, colorless, tasteless. If you detect a taste to it when you run a glass from the kitchen tap, it's because of some purifying agent added to it to make it bacterially safe.

How much water do you need each day? The average healthy adult requires a minimum of about 2½ pints every 24 hours.

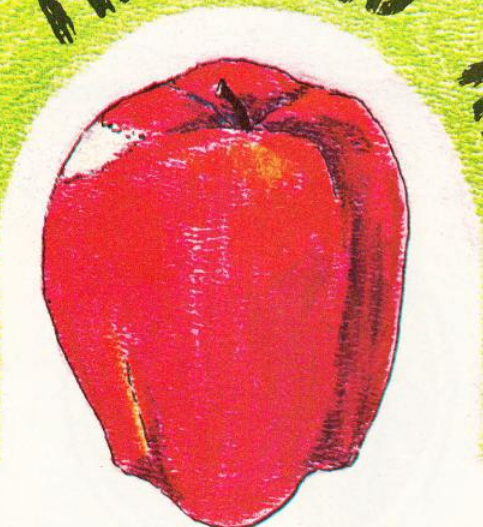
Some of this volume comes from the foods consumed in one's daily diet, most of which are quite high in water content. A ripe watermelon, for instance, is about 97 percent water; chicken is 74 percent water. Generally, an individual 'eats' more water than he drinks in the course of a day.

Important words are on the tongues of men today, more and more: Environment, ecology, recycling, preservation. Perhaps at long last man will become a friend of mother earth instead of an enemy.

So pause a moment before you drink that glass of water. It is life's most precious fluid. It has been abused down through the ages as if it was a heinous criminal. But it's still here to keep us alive, because nature is the greatest recycler of all.

Wise man will fall into step. ●

THE OLD APPLE HOUSE IN A MYSTERY



By Evelyn Witter

Jim Robertson's fingers gripped tighter around the steering wheel as he stepped on the gas, and tried to guide his dad's high-powered sedan through the deep ruts in the winding road. He cast a quick glance at Susie to see if she too had noticed the black storm cloud ahead of them.

"Jim," Susie said in her small, soft voice, raising her great brown eyes to his, "a storm's coming. The road is mud to the axle even in a shower. We shouldn't have taken the shortcut."

"Maybe we can beat it," Jim hoped aloud.

"If we don't. . . ."

Just then the thunder sounded like a sixgun salute and the sky was shot through with dashes of jig-jag silver.

"We'll be stranded on this cowpath of a road and it's getting dark!" Susie moaned.

"There's the old apple-house up the road," Jim tried to console her. He pressed harder on the foot feed.

"Apple-house!" Susie moaned again. "I'll take the storm!"

Jim said nothing. He was ashamed of the fact that he didn't look forward to the apple-house any more than Susie did. He remembered hearing Susie's dad, who was the town's real estate agent, besides farming the places next to the Robertson's, tell about the abandoned place. He had said that everyone thought it was haunted because lights went on and off in the place night and day and weird creaking noises came up from the cellar. Susie's dad said it was a good substantial building though, and a good buy for someone who wouldn't mind the supernatural. His commission would be big enough to help Susie through college after she graduated from Shelton next year. And Susie did want to go to college.

The sky let down with water of fire-hose pressure. Jim felt the wheels spin. He knew they were stuck but good.

"We've got to hoof it, Susie, before the clay gets like quicksand. If we stay in the car we may be stranded for hours. There's a good gravel road about a mile east of the old apple-house and when the rain lets up we could walk home.

"Leave the car?" Susie had a quiver in her voice.

"Oh, I can pull it out with the tractor tomorrow."

"But I was thinking of leaving the nice safe car for that scary old house. . . ." Susie was twisting her handkerchief into a tattered rope.

"Come on," Jim ordered. This, Jim said to himself, will be something wild to look back on.

Susie stumbled along the grassy side of the road. The rain shot pellets of water at them and the wind pounded the water into their clothing. It was the longest mile Jim had ever walked in his life.

"Here we are!" Jim shouted against the wind even though Susie was just a few feet behind him. He held out his hand and she took it eagerly.

He was making for the door when a gust of wind pushed it open. Suddenly lights went on in the big room before them. Dust was everywhere. Barrels and boxes, stacked in neat rows were the only furnishings. Cobwebs swung like filmy curtains from the exposed rafters.

Susie grasped Jim's arm. "Oh! I'm afraid, Jim! Please lets not go in there . . . please. . . ." Tears mingled with raindrops on Susie's pale face.

Jim braced himself. Susie's fears made him feel braver and stronger than he would have thought possible. He gave

Susie what he hoped looked like an angry look. "Come on. We can't stay out in the rain. We won't have to stay here long. Maybe our folks will figure out where we are when we don't come home on time from the 4-H rally and will set out to look for us."

This possibility seemed to console Susie. Her grip on his arm slackened and she took several steps forward. No sooner had they entered the room when a gust of wind pushed hard against their backs like unseen hands forcing them further into the room.

Bang! went the door. The lights went off. Susie screamed. And with her screams came heavy groaning from the cellar. Susie groped for Jim, her arms going around his waist. Jim stood like a statue. It seemed that his heart was the only organ in his body that was working, and it was working overtime—pounding against his ribs as if it would knock a hole through his side.

"Oh, Jim," Susie cried. "I'm so scared!" He felt her shaking. A riveter couldn't have shaken more putting a bolt through two or three metal plates.

"We're going to be okay, Sue," Jim smoothed her wet hair. "We are going to start a fire and get dry first."

"Don't leave me! Don't leave me for an instant!" Susie sobbed.

Suddenly the lights flickered, then came on all over the room. The groaning sounded louder in the cellar.

"It's . . . horrible!" Susie gasped. Jim wanted to agree with her but he knew he didn't dare. He had to at least look brave or Sue would take off into the driving rain.

"Come on, Sue," he said evenly. "While the lights are on let's see if we can find some matches. I know there's supposed to be a kitchen in the back."

Sue's fingernails dug hard into his hand as she walked with him across the sturdy floor. Then they stopped. The creaking and groaning had become faster and louder. Now Jim could distinguish a metallic sound. There was no visible change of expression on Susie's face . . . just blood-draining fear.

"It's worse," she whispered.

Jim flexed his muscles and forced himself to continue to the kitchen. It was a bare room with a cistern pump by a wooden sink and an over-sized black iron cook stove.

"See," he said, his voice sounding as if it had loomed up from a great distance. "We can build a fire in this old stove with that packing crate stuff and get warm and dry in no time. Let's look in that cupboard over there. Maybe there's matches."

Jim opened the cupboard door, trying to ignore the groaning in the cellar. The hinges added more sound; a rusty, squeaky sound like a flock of disturbed guinea hens. Susie stood right at his elbow.

"The cupboard is empty," she said hoarsely. "Now what?"

Before Jim could think of an answer, the lights went out and the groaning stopped. Susie's scream tore through his eardrum.

"Susie! Stop it!" Jim commanded. But his knees had lost their bending ability and his back felt like it had substituted an iron rod for a backbone.

Huddled together there in the dark, clinging to each other for life itself . . . cold, wet, hungry, and frightened beyond all sensibility, Jim wondered if it wouldn't have been wiser to have stayed

in the car and taken their chances.

Then he thought of how Coach Fanning has said: "If you've got a problem, running from it won't solve it. The first step in solving a problem is to face up to it." That bit of advice applied to life as well as to football. The problem at hand was to find out what or who was haunting the old apple-house.

"Susie," Jim said as calmly as he could. "The groaning comes from the cellar, right? Then let's go down there and find out what's making the groans."

"Not me!" Susie's response was sure and positive.

"Would you rather stay here?"

"No, No, Jim. Please don't leave me alone here in the dark."

"Come on then."

"I'll faint, I'll die!"

"Come on!" Jim insisted and grabbed her hand. Half pulling, half stumbling, to the cellar door which he had seen at the north corner of the kitchen, Jim made his way with Susie in tow, across the barn-like kitchen.

As soon as his hand touched the knob the groans from the cellar started and the lights of the apple-house became alive again.

Susie gasped and Jim heard her draw in air between her teeth. "I'm leaving!" she cried out in complete, unleashed terror.

"Susie!" Jim grabbed his friend's arm and held fast. "Be sensible. You can't go out in that storm!"

As if to prove him right, a gust of wind howled and a volley of rain smashed itself against the window pane.

Half-dazed, Susie let Jim guide her down the cellar stairs. They were wide steps, strong and thick. Jim thought: It's like Susie said. This is a good building. Too bad haunted house stories had driven off buyers. Still, who would want to live in a place where lights turned on and off and groans came up from below?

The groans were louder . . . louder . . . louder. Susie slumped on the stair where the turn was that led directly to the cellar. The groans took on a metallic sound again.

"What's the matter?" Jim asked in a whisper.

Susie's whisper came out hoarse and anguished. "Someone is being tortured down here. . . . I know it, I know it."

"Sit there then," Jim tried to free his hand from her vise-like grip. "I'll go on alone."

"No! Don't leave me!"

"Okay then. Come on."

There was one dim light on in the cellar. Bushel baskets were piled against the stone walls and there was a huge cider press at the east end.

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"Only the mice, ONLY THE MICE!"

Jim squinted into the gloom of the cellar when Susie's scream filled the place like the eruption of a volcano. The icy fingers of fear gripped his throat in a stranglehold, pinching his voice into helplessness. He wanted to ask Susie what she had seen to make her scream like that, but he was powerless to make a single sound.

She answered his unasked question between gasps. "There's millions of mice down there. They're running up the walls!"

"Oh," Jim was almost relieved.

The groaning came to a gradual halt and the dim cellar light flickered and went out.

In the darkness, as they huddled together once more, they heard the mice scampering to and fro, to and fro. Susie's knees were buckling. Jim wondered if she would faint. As he held her up wondering what he would do if she blacked out, the light flickered on again and the groans began.

"Susie!" Jim cried, the exhilaration of discovery revitalizing his whole body. "Here's the reason for the groaning."

"The cider press?" Susie asked in astonishment. Then she laughed. She threw back her head and laughed while happy tears streamed down her face. "I'm so glad . . . I'm so relieved. . . ."

"B-but what turns it on?"

"I don't know yet," Jim admitted.

"And w-what about the lights?" Susie's voice pleaded into his ear. "I'm afraid a mouse might run up our legs . . . please, Jim, let's go. . . ."

"If we just knew how the cider press and the lights get turned on. . . ." Jim spoke his thoughts aloud.

"Jim—please. . . ."

The press and the lights turned on again before Jim could tell Susie he meant to stay and find the answer.

"Now, we don't believe in ghosts," he reasoned. "No one is here to turn on the lights and the press—no one."

"Only the mice!" Susie reminded him with a quaver in her voice.

"Only the mice," nodded Jim. "ONLY THE MICE! Susie, that must be it!"

Jim quickly scanned the cellar for the light switch. There it was on the oak beam that supported the center of the building. As he left Susie, she swayed. Poor Susie!

Testing the light switch, Jim realized immediately that it was loose. Jostling it a little the lights went out and the press stopped. He jiggled it again. The lights went on and the cider press started.

"It's just this faulty switch, Susie! It's just this switch!"

"Oh, Jim, I can't believe it!"

Jim toyed with the switch to reassure himself and Susie once again that here lay the key of the mystery of the flickering lights and the groaning sounds.

"But—but—" Susie's small, soft voice was returning to normal. "How did you know it was the switch and who or what it was tampering with it?"

"The mice, Susie," Jim grinned. "Don't you remember saying no one is here except the mice?"

"Yes."

"Well, when they run up and down this beam they touch the switch and turn the lights and press on and off."

A man's voice suddenly boomed down at them from the kitchen door, "Who's down there?"

"It's Dad!" Susie exclaimed, running up the stairs with her natural sureness and strength.

"Mr. Robertson is here, too," her father called.

Jim stood right behind Susie when they re-entered the kitchen. There stood their dads in raincoats looking drenched and drawn with worry.

First Susie began sputtering out the story of the mystery of the old apple-house, and then Jim cut in, and then Susie, until the whole story was told. The two men looked as astonished as if they had heard of the split atom for the first time.

"But," said Jim's dad when the story was completed. "How come the lights weren't shut off when the apple-house was abandoned?"

"I can explain that," said Susie's dad. "The heirs pay the light bill each month so there'll be lights for my convenience when I show the place. Of course I haven't had a chance to show it much with all the tales of weird goings-on that have been told about this place."

"Will you be able to sell it now?" Jim asked.

"After that switch is fixed!" laughed Susie's dad.

"Now you can be sure of going to college," Jim turned to look down at the smiling Susie.

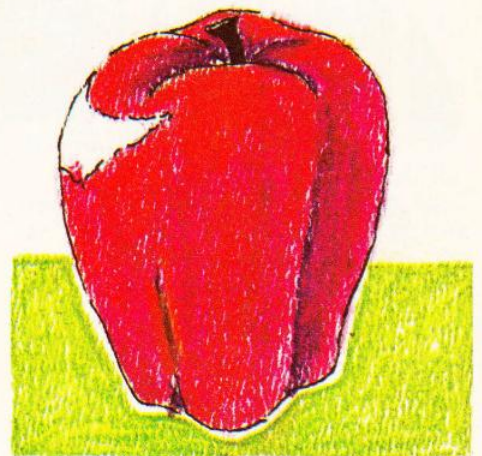
"This is earning a college education the hard way!" Susie giggled. "But it was worth it."

"Come on kids," Mr. Robertson said, stamping toward the front door. "We've got to get you home and into some dry clothes."

"And mother's got hot chocolate and sandwiches waiting," Susie's dad added cheerfully.

Just then the lights dimmed and the groaning stopped.

There were four amused laughs in the darkness of the old apple-house. ●





Two small boys were trying to wake up their father. Finally one of the boys lifted up one eyelid. "I don't see why he doesn't answer," the boy said, "He's still in there."

Stan Stewart
Oklahoma City, OK



Question: What goes "Zzub! Zzub?"

Answer: A bee flying backwards.
Arthur Jones Jr.
Portsmouth, NH

Walking down a country road, a city man saw a farmer holding a pig up to a tree to gobble apples from its branches. The farmer repeated this with several pigs.

"Excuse me," said the city man, "but isn't that an awful waste of time to feed pigs that way?" The farmer caught his breath and replied, "What's time to a pig?"

Warren Bebout
Morro Bay, CA

A hopeful young lady listed her requirements with a computer dating service. She wanted someone who liked people, wasn't too tall, preferred formal attire, and enjoyed water sports. The computer followed her wishes exactly: it sent her a penguin.

Warren Bebout
Morro Bay, CA

Teacher: There will be an eclipse of the moon tonight; perhaps your parents will let you stay up to watch it.

Student: What channel is it on?
Bradley Monn
Mont Alto, PA



A cowboy ran out the door of a building, jumped high in the air and landed hard on the ground. "Hurt yourself?" asked a bystander.

"No, but I'd like to get my hands on the man who moved my horse."
Stan Stewart
Oklahoma City, OK

City Girl: What do you use that long rope for?

Cowboy: That's for catching cows.
City Girl: Hey, that's interesting. What do you use for bait?

Arthur Jones Jr.
Portsmouth, NH

Flim: My electric toaster broke down, so I repaired it with parts from an old airplane.

Flam: How does it work?

Flim: Not badly, except that now when the toast pops up, it circles the table twice before coming in for a landing.

Bradley Monn
Mont Alto, PA



Question: What did the Martian see in his frying pan?

Answer: An unidentified frying object.

Lennie New
Norwalk, CA



Clerk: "Did you kill any moths with the mothballs I sold you yesterday?"

Customer: "Nope, I couldn't hit a single one."

Stan Stewart
Oklahoma City, OK



Question: Name the quietest sport known to man.

Answer: Bowling, you can hear a pin drop.

Mary Jane Miller
Lombard, IL



Teacher: Your composition, "My Dog," is word for word the same as your brother's.

Bruce: That's right. It's the same dog.

Arthur Jones Jr.
Portsmouth, NH

Do You Pass the sportsmanship test? ☐ yes ☐ no ☒ maybe

by O. J. Robertson

"Come on! Be a good sport." Those words easy to say, but for some teens they are difficult to live by. No one wants to lose, but there is only one winner in most competitions. Someone must accept defeat, or at least try to. Someone must also accept the winner's "crown." Surprisingly, some people are poor sports even in success. The bragging, gloating winner is on the same plane as the complaining, angry loser.

It is easy to be a good sport when everything is going well, when things are breaking right. The real test comes in a crisis. At such a time one's sportsmanship is tested to the limit. Many persons who behave perfectly when nothing much is at stake, lose their composure when the "heat is on."

Take Don, for instance, a young fellow with tennis in his blood. All his friends considered him to be a real Christian gentleman and a good sport. But the final rounds of a tennis match proved to be quite otherwise.

Don was trailing four games to five, with a 30-40 score against him in the deciding set. He and his opponent were driving the ball back and forth in what is known as the set point. If Don's opponent won this point, the match would be his. In a spurt of brilliant play, Don's opponent made a drive that Don could not return.

The contest was over. The tired winner advanced to the net, smiling, to shake Don's hand. But Don, redfaced and embarrassed, ignored the friendly gesture. He stomped off the court to the dressing room. He was angry through and through. The spectators were stunned. He had classified himself as a poor sport when he could have been a good one.

Great players or competitors in any contest are almost invariably good losers and modest winners. They accept defeat gracefully and smilingly, even though their hearts may be breaking.

Don will go on playing tennis, but he'll have fewer fans to cheer him on. When he refused to shake hands with the winner, Don advertised to the spectators and the press that he could play tennis but didn't have the tact and courage to accept defeat graciously. Maybe he'll win his next match. Will Don then extend a hand to the loser? Sometimes it's the loser who deserves to be congratulated because he made you play your best.

There may be games or competitions which you will enter. You may progress from local, to state, to national competition. You may win or lose.

If you lose, be a good sport. Congratulate the winner. Show that you loved the competition.

If you win, don't forget that your sportsmanship reveals a great deal about the kind of person you are. Feel proud of your accomplishments and smile—but not too broadly. ●

