

# Randy finds joy

By MRS. JOHN ELLER

WHIR-R-R! The lawn mower sputtered and died. Red-faced and angered, Randy watched two boys with bats and gloves move jauntily toward the sandlot across the street.

Halfheartedly he returned their carefree wave and jerked the cord again. At last! The motor finally roared, and he set off across the lawn briskly, his churning thoughts keeping time with the mower. Perhaps if he hurried, he could finish this lawn in time to play a short game before supper.

*If only Dad weren't sick!* he thought unhappily. Then the money earned from mowing lawns would be his own, instead of purchasing groceries for the family. He thought of the glove in Scotty's Sporting and Hunting Store downtown. Oh, well—maybe someday it would be his.

He did hurry—and did have time for a few moments' play with Jim and Dave and the others in the sandlot. His spirits rose when he slammed a home run!

After the group broke up, Dave invited Randy to attend their Royal Rangers Outpost meeting that evening.

SHY AND HESITANT, he trailed his friends into the meeting. What an atmosphere! Uniforms with bright patches, handbooks full of fascinating ideas, and a rustic-looking advancement chart showing each boy's work.

And—what a leader! Randy's attention was caught at once by the kind-faced Commander Carter. An exciting campout was announced for next Friday night. Commander Carter personally invited Randy to attend.

All week long he anticipated the campout. He arranged his schedule so he could be free Friday night. Never had he worked so eagerly and diligently on the lawns.

Finally, Friday arrived. There was the usual banter as the boys climbed into cars and waited impatiently for the commanders to pack the last of the camping gear.

With boys chattering ceaselessly, the caravan of cars left the well-traveled highway and headed into the rutted country road.

Each boy was assigned his duties when they arrived at the campsite, and soon the rough terrain began to take on the atmosphere of a thriving community.

As Randy and Jim returned from the spring with plastic jugs of fresh water, Dave and some of the other boys appeared with their arms full of wood for the fire.

Hammering the last tent peg into place, Randy was glad to hear the chow call. And man! such chow! One lieutenant commander was slapping melted butter on luscious big ears of corn; another was dipping hot steaming beans from a big black pot on the tripod; and



Commander Carter was removing barbequed pork steaks from the grill.

Almost too full to move, the cleanup crew went into action. As the shadows grew longer and the sun slipped lower, the garbage was properly disposed of and the camp cleared of debris.

THE STRUMMING OF GUITAR STRINGS caught Randy's attention. Sitting on a log Commander Carter hummed