

We were ready to leave for a Royal Rangers meeting when suddenly we realized there wasn't a Royal Ranger in the house!

For over 20 years a Royal Ranger has lit the fire in the fireplace using only one match, cooked biscuits on a stick when the electricity was off, and identified strange snakes, bugs, and plants.

How will we cope without such competent assistance? Who will tie up the dog using a square knot so it can't get loose? Who will chase the rabbits with a tomahawk?

Yet there will be a few compensations now that all our Royal Rangers have left home.

There will be no more, "Mom, is my uniform clean?" Then a frantic unpinning of 20 badges, washing and drying the uniform in record time, and repinning the awards.

My fingers will no longer be needlepricked from sewing on stripes and badges. There will be no more pre-dawn trips delivering boys for Royal Rangers outings; no more soggy sleeping bags, packs, tents, and clothing. (If there was ever a camp-out when it didn't rain our boys managed to get wet anyway.)

I will not hear, "But, Mom, I have to have something easy to cook on this camp-out." And a subsequent trip to the supermarket for \$2.98-a-pound ham.

We can do without the numerous trips to the doctor for a shot and \$20 worth of medicine for severe cases of poison ivy. How can such knowledgeable boys always gather poison-ivy-entwined wood for a campfire?

We have enough Royal Rangers handbooks for years of personalized study and leisure reading. There are enough award certificates to paper a small room.

We own a sufficient stockpile of unfinished crafts and craft supplies, such as rope, leather, rocks, and ice cream sticks, to keep us from getting bored in our old age.

I could make a quilt with the Royal Rangers patches, and dusting and