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MAKE YOUR OWN HOME VIDEOS

By John Hicks

The winter months are a great time to get together with friends and family and enjoy some time together indoors, playing games, watching movies, and spending time together. Around the holidays, families typically bring together relatives from far away to enjoy food and family fun. Inevitably, someone will break out the camera or video recorder to record all the historic festivities. But what do you do with all those photos or videos? Rather than tuck them away on CD somewhere, this season try making your own video or slide show out of them. With the right music, effects, and maybe some narration, you can turn those clips of Aunt Rose and the eggnog into something truly memorable.

If this little adventure is something you might be interested in, here are a few things you might want to keep in mind.

KEEP IT SIMPLE & KEEP IT CHEAP

Yes, there's a lot of fancy (and expensive) video editing software out there, and they can all do really cool things. But unless you're planning to start a career in cinematography (or are just looking to burn some time while Aunt Rose finishes off the eggnog), most of them will require quite a bit of learning before you can get anything done. So unless you're planning to return that PS4 from Uncle Bob, you might not have the cash to invest in them.

A lot of cheap or FREE software is available that is more than adequate to create some great home videos. Microsoft® Movie Maker is available as a free download on any Windows-based computer and provides a simple, easy-to-use way to edit your videos and add basic effects to create your own movie masterpiece.

If you're an Apple® device user, iMovie® is a low-cost option. For just a few dollars, you can create easy but somewhat impressive home videos, using your device's

camera or any other photo or video clip imported to your device through iTunes®. Once created, you can share them across devices via the iMovie® Theater feature. This app also includes a feature that enables you to create professional-looking movie trailers using your own pictures and videos.

PLAN IT OUT IN ADVANCE

If you know the general idea of what you want the final product to look like, you can make sure the photos and videos you capture will fit that project. Start by creating an outline or storyboard that describes your project. Then, use it as a guide as you create your content.

USE THE RIGHT HARDWARE, IF YOU'VE GOT IT

In some situations, in order to get good video you've got to use the right hardware. Simple add-ons, such as a tripod to stabilize the image, an external light for use in dimmer settings, or a microphone to catch audio without all the background noise, can make a major difference.

With all the tools so readily available today, creating good quality home videos is much easier than it used to be and can be a great way to memorialize your family fun together.

ENDNOTE: What do you think about this article? Do you have any tips to share about creating home videos? Give us your feedback at RangersNOW.com.



COMPLETING ADVANCEMENTS AT HOME

By John Hicks

The advancement system has been an important part of *Royal Rangers* since the beginning of the program. Advancement gives you the opportunity to learn new skills and do fun things with friends in your group. And the *Royal Rangers* advancement system is uniquely designed to help you grow mentally, physically, spiritually, and socially into the man you were created to be.

A typical weekly *Royal Rangers* meeting includes time where advancement progress is made, but depending on the time your outpost has during its meetings, or how often you're able to meet, you could find it difficult to keep your advancement progress on track with the recommended time schedule. If that happens, you might want to consider ways you can complete some of your advancement requirements at home. Here are some suggestions for making that work.

DEFINE THE PROCESS

Work with your Group Leader to identify those requirements that can be completed at home. Determine who will approve those requirements and how they will be reported back to the individual who keeps track of your advancement progress.



GATHER YOUR RESOURCES

All of the merit activity guides your outpost leader uses in your weekly meetings are available online through TRaCclub, the online resource delivery system for *Royal Rangers*. Anyone can purchase a membership to TRaCclub, and if you're planning to do a lot of work at home, you may want to talk to your parents about purchasing a membership for your family.

COORDINATE WITH YOUR GROUP

If you're completing entire merits at home, make sure to keep your Group Leader aware of the merits you're working on at home to ensure you're not working on a merit he is planning to do with the group soon.

PARTNER WITH OTHERS

If other members of your group would like to work on advancements at home too, look for ways to work together.

That will make the process more fun and you'll probably learn a lot more. Also, see if your parents or other family members can help you. Working on a merit with your dad, a grandpa, uncle, or other relative can be a great way to learn something new together or start a new hobby.

Completing advancement work at home can be a great way to keep your progress on track while doing fun things with those nearby. Details on the advancement trail can be found in your handbook or on the national *Royal Rangers* website at RoyalRangers.com. Information on TRaCclub can be found at TRaCclub.org.



AN EXPEDITION ALONG THE COLORADO TRAIL

By Anthony Hubbard



In June of 2012, the Royal Rangers from Outpost 240 in Van Buren, Arkansas, set out on our first "Adventure Expedition." Our goal was to hike a section of the Colorado Trail.

Training for the trip began months before the actual trip took place. We purchased gear, became comfortable with using stoves, operating water purification pumps, making our own meals, and packing gear, and then planned several backpacking trips close to home. By June, the group was ready for the trip to the mountains.

Our journey began in New Mexico. We visited Aztec Ruins, a National Park and World Heritage Site. We traipsed up the steps and ventured through the 900-year-old ruins that were built by the Pueblo Indians. There are places in the mud bricks where you can still see fingerprints from the time they were built!

In order to acclimate to the high altitude, we spent a day in the city of Silverton, Colorado, which is just over 9,000 feet in elevation. On the third day, we started along the Colorado Trail. Even though it was June, there was still quite a bit of snow on the mountain peaks. The first part of the trail was easy walking and led to the switchbacks that descended to Elk Park. How exciting it was to stand

on the edge of a 1,000 foot mountain and look out over the valley!

The last part of our journey was a leg of the trail that took us to within just a mile of the Continental Divide. We camped near a beaver pond where a female moose and her calf had taken up residence. You don't realize how big a moose is until you see it in nature, without a fence between you and the moose! Our six-day expedition built stronger friendships and gave us new appreciation for the beautiful world God created.

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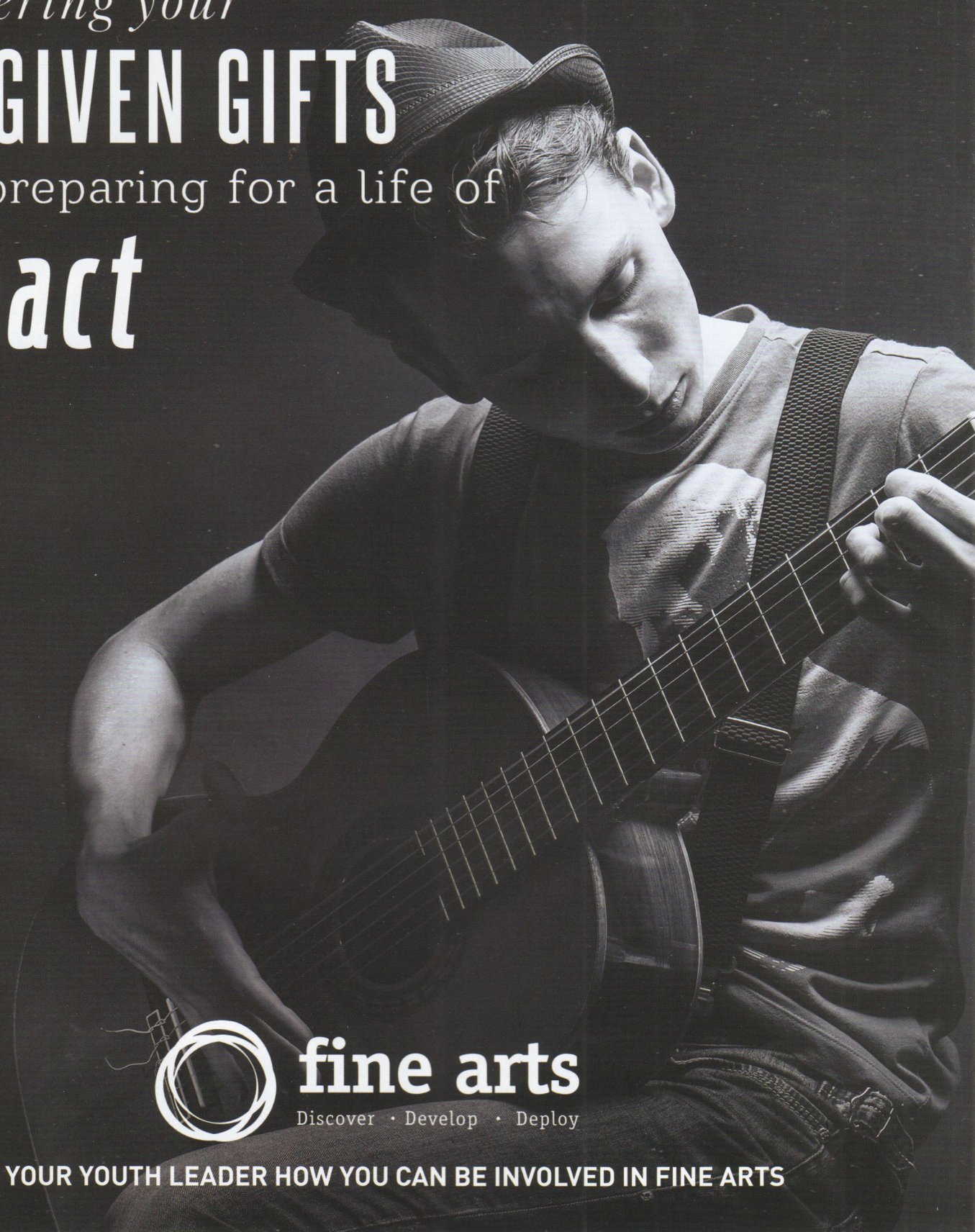
An expedition typically refers to a journey taken for a specific purpose. Your personal expedition, or journey through life, is one of great purpose and adventure. Did you know that God has a very clear purpose for your life? He has a plan specifically for you. Ephesians 2:10 says, "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (NIV). As you build a relationship with God through reading the Scriptures and praying, He will reveal His specific plan for your life and give you direction for your future. You are His handiwork and He has great things in store for you!

Discovering your

GOD-GIVEN GIFTS

while preparing for a life of

impact



fine arts

Discover • Develop • Deploy

ASK YOUR YOUTH LEADER HOW YOU CAN BE INVOLVED IN FINE ARTS



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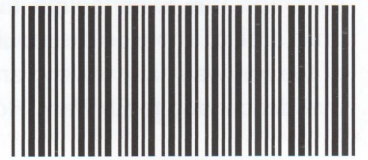


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