Christmas

By LOODY CHRISTOFERO,
S.E., Birmingham, Wash.

The isolated villages on the San Juan Islands don't have many visitors. So the arrival of S.E.S. "Discovery," with Santa Claus aboard, was most welcome.

SANTA CLAUS IS AN IMAGINATIVE FELLOW when it comes to the distribution of Christmas spirit. Up in the northwest corner of Washington State he had to call on the assistance of Sea Explorer Ship "Discovery" of Bellingham to help him out. Offshore from the city of Bellingham lies a group of beautiful islands called the San Juans. Many of the islands are inhabited, and transportation to and from the mainland is difficult. That is the reason Santa called on Skipper Don Wight and the "Discovery".

So at 10:30 Sunday morning before Christmas, Santa was piped aboard the Christmas ship. The Mate gave the "cast off" order and the Skipper ordered half speed ahead. A 30-foot brightly lighted Christmas tree was secured at the mast, and Christmas carols from a specially rigged sound system were heard across the water. The SES "Discovery," a 75-foot ex-Navy Patrol Craft was on its annual Christmas cruise which was to travel 100 miles and visit six different "ports". The ship, which is sponsored by the Bellingham Elks Lodge, cooperates with the Bellingham Junior Chamber of Commerce in making the cruise possible. Normally, the only connecting link of traffic to many of the islands is the mail boat.

Long before the boat docked at Lummi Island, the first stop, the residents were gathered on the pier. Still more people were waiting in cars since there was a cold wind blowing off the Georgia Straits. Santa disembarked and was immediately surrounded by children of all ages. He distributed bags of candies and nuts to everyone and after hearty exchanges of seasons greetings, the ship sailed for the next port of call.

Point Roberts was next. The trip is across open water. The year previous it had been canceled because of rough weather, and even this time, there was a strong swell running. Some of Santa's helpers had to stick pretty close to the rail during this leg of the journey. They had the sympathy of the "Old Salts". Point Roberts is actually part of the mainland of Canada, but since it reaches down south of the border into the United States, it is a part of Washington State. If you were to travel by land to Point Roberts you would first have to cross the Canadian border at Blaine, Washington, and travel around the bay to the settlement. That's the way the Scout Unit there is serviced by the Mount Baker Area Council office.

The Point Roberts folk sighted the "Discovery" while she was still a considerable distance out and they headed for the dock by car, bicycle and on foot. This stop was rather short. The south wind was blowing with increasing strength, and it made docking extremely difficult. With some expert handling, however, the landing was made, and Santa again established a beachead to the delight of the waiting people.

The next call was Waldron Island. On this leg, some passing ships were serenaded with Christmas carols. Ship crews were happy to exchange greetings with Santa and the Sea Explorers. The entire population of Waldron Island was on hand—the "entire population" includes the 12 children and their parents. After leaving Waldron, darkness fell, but the weather improved.

Tree Ship

Clear skies and a moon helped the Quartermaster follow his course around the many small uninhabited islands to Friday Harbor on San Juan Island. This stop, and the stop at Orcas Island are the two most heavily populated, and over a hundred people were on hand at each place. Shaw Island was the final stop. Something had gone wrong there, however. Someone had failed to notify the Shaw Islanders. Fortunately, one of the island folk happened to be "monitoring" the party line and heard about the cruise. Immediately, the news was "broadcast" over the telephone, and people were still gathering when the ship docked. At 7:30, Christmas greetings were called across the widening stretch of water as the ship headed for the home port of Bellingham. There was time, then, for everyone to retire to the galley for some welcome hot chocolate and sandwiches.

Going into Bellingham Bay, the Christmas tree lights were again turned on and homes along the shore heard the carols. House lights blinked on and off in acknowledgment. After the "Discovery" was safely berthed, the Christmas spirit, the spirit of friendship, of giving, and of service to others was strong in everyone.

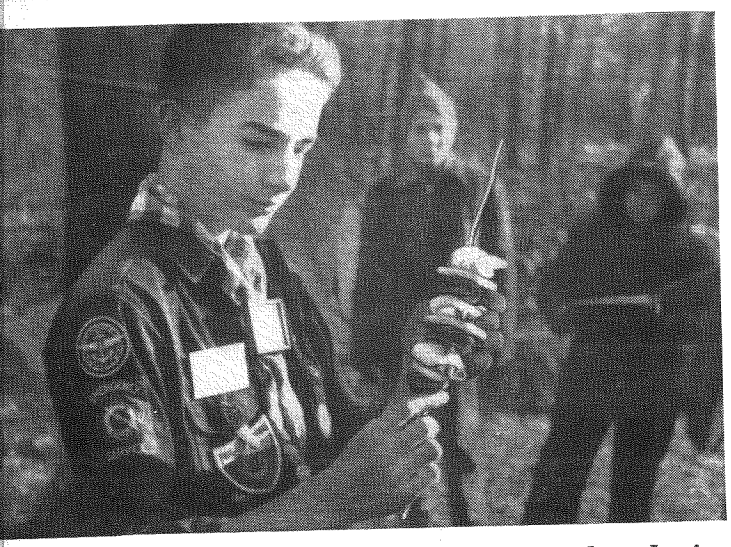
This Christmas trip is a yearly event which is eagerly looked forward to by the island residents. It is in its fourth year. The Bellingham Junior Chamber of Commerce and the Sea Explorer Ship "Discovery" work closely together in making the trip a reality. The trip is generally a difficult one for the Crew. Weather conditions at this time of the year are often bad, and expert boat handling is required.

But this makes the project the more appealing to the Crew of the "Discovery." It becomes a demonstration, not only of their Christmas spirit, but of their seamanship.

It would be hard to say who gets the biggest thrill out of the enterprise. It is a big event for the lonely islanders, whose contacts with the outside world are so meager. And the lucky Sea Explorers who get to make the trip find it a richly satisfying experience to bring a bit of Christmas to these isolated communities.

Actually most of the Crew does not get to go, for the Ship's annual Christmas tree selling project, which finances most of their activities, is in full swing at that time. But again the spirit of service shows itself, and most of the fellows "turn to" on the selling job. All of them do get a taste of the Christmas tree ship project, however, for the "Discovery" spends several evenings before Christmas cruising up and down the Bellingham waterfront in a Christmas carol serenade.

Skipper Don Wight and his gang have been happy to find this opportunity to do a worth-while good turn. It occurs to them that there must be many isolated communities over the nation—mining camps or lumber camps, for example—where a similar need exists. Has some Explorer Post mounted a lighted Christmas tree and an amplifying system on a big truck to carry toys and candy and Christmas music to a "forgotten" community? Or has some gang devised some better plan? If so, S.E.S. "Discovery" would like to hear about it. If not, they would be doubly happy if their project stirred the imaginations of other Explorers. *END*



TOP. Everybody benefits when key Junior Leaders carry the ball in training fellow Junior Leaders — the trainers, the trainees, and the boys they lead.

ABOVE. Learning by doing is the ideal method. When the training involves the preparation of honest-to-goodness food, participation is unanimous plus.

"SIXTY-FOUR! SEVENTEEN! EIGHTY-TWO! HIKE! One! two! three! four!" barks the quarterback, and as the ball is snapped he spins, fakes to the fullback and passes off on a neat reverse to the left half who slices off tackle for five yards. It's a familiar sight on a crisp autumn Saturday afternoon.

But we all realize that back of that nice gain was (1) a lot of practice (2) of a series of carefully planned plays (3) with each man prepared to carry out a specific assignment. It wouldn't help much just to have the team spend a few hours learning how to kick and pass, tackle and block, and run with the ball, and let it go at that. Even if the players became good at all these skills they still wouldn't win any games. Star performers, by themselves, never made a winning team.

A Poor System

That system won't work with junior leader training either. We tried it in 1951. Over a dozen of our Explorers (unselected) went to a bang-up junior leader training course—it happened to be at the nearby Schiff Scout Reservation. These fellows had a wonderful time. They learned the job of the junior leader from A to Z, forward and backward and upside down. Then they went back home, and what happened? Nothing! No plan had been made, no plays outlined, no positions assigned, no signals arranged. No team at all, just some trained individuals.

We tried it again in 1952. Eight unselected Explorers took this exceptionally fine course. They completed their work, and returned to their Council, and what happened this time? You guessed it. Nothing! Still no plan that would *make* anything happen. No agreement as to who was to carry the ball, or when, or where or how.

Then We Woke Up

Until—the District Executive related to Council training and the Camp Ranger of the Council Training Center sat down with the 1952 Schiff-trained Explorers and worked out a full week-end course for Patrol Leaders and Senior Patrol Leaders, to be given at monthly intervals to limited numbers of junior leaders. Three Schiff-trained Explorers agreed to "carry the ball".

Five such week-end courses were conducted—each one a sellout. Net result—129 juniors trained. Not a bad ratio, when one fellow trains 43 others.

That gave us our cue. We were through with letting just anybody play around with the ball. We saw the need for picking a strong team and training them for team work. So we set up a plan for a junior leader training program that would really click in 1953-54.

1—Our first step was to pick top-notch Explorers to head up our training faculty. We selected outstanding Explorers from each of the five courses we ran in 1952-53, fellows who had demonstrated (a) through mastery of the skills and techniques involved (b) ability to lead and teach others (c) willingness to put in the time to do a thorough job.

2—Six of these top leaders were given the finest training available anywhere. Five of them attended the course at Schiff last summer. One took a thirty-day course at Philmont. Each knew the assignment he had back home this winter and was on his toes to be prepared to do his job. The cost of this training was shared by the Council, the Units from which the Explorers came, and the Explorers themselves.

3—This past fall and winter these six young men, (they average 15 years of age) have been sparking a high quality series of junior leader training courses in the Council. They are passing on their know-how to over 160 junior leaders, and Scoutmasters are delighted with the results. It's paying off in stronger Patrols and

THEY SPARKED OUR TRAINING PROGRAM

Crews, better program, longer tenure, faster advancement. Here are scores of young men really stepping out for the first time and doing their jobs with enthusiasm and efficiency, because they know how. And who is responsible for that? Some folks at the top had the vision to select some key junior leaders, provide for their training and call the signals for them to carry the ball in passing that training on to their buddies.

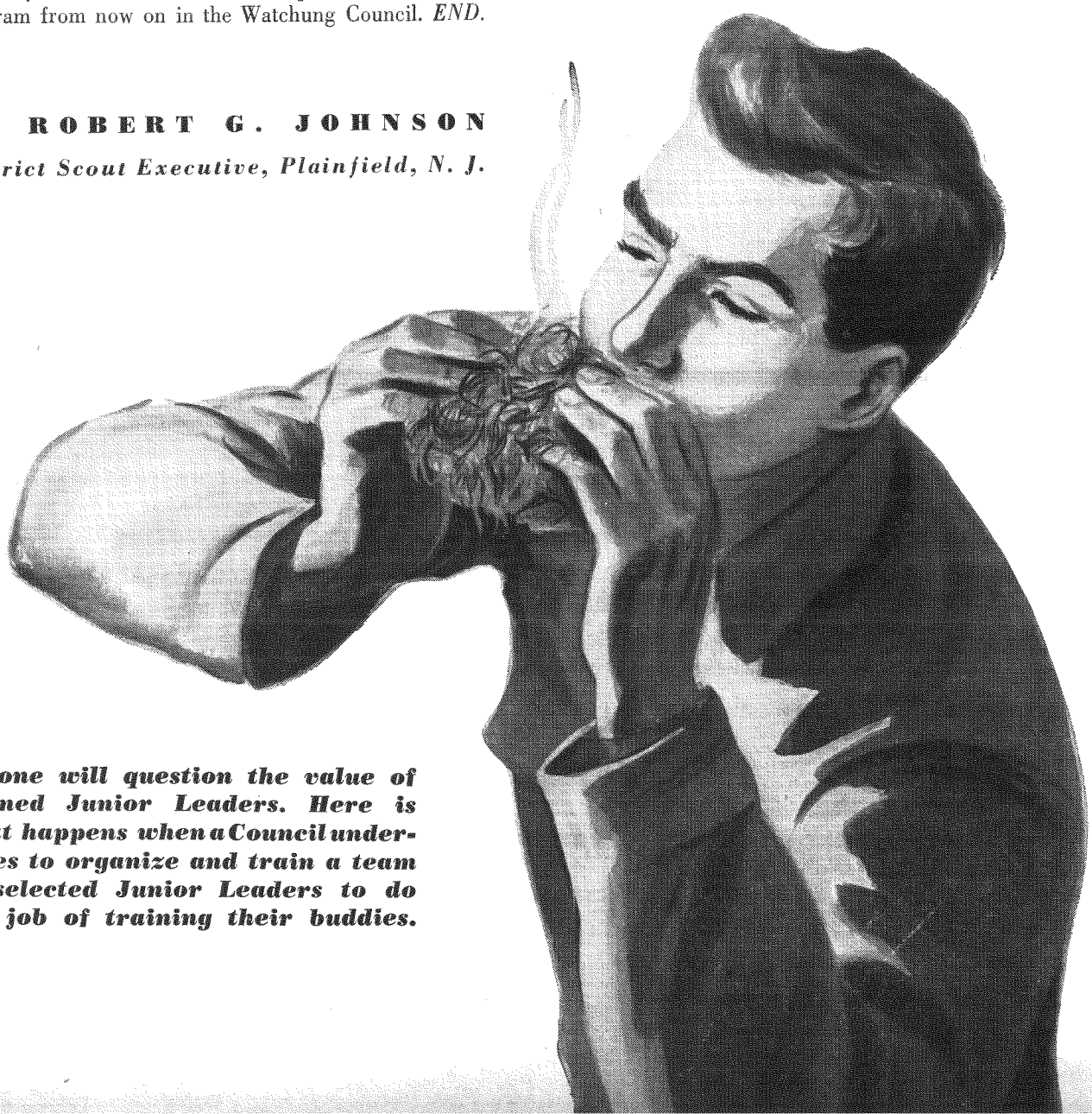
Any Council Could

No magic to it. Any Council in the country could do the same thing. Might even work in some Districts. We were lucky in being able to send our "trainers" to Schiff Scout Reservation, plus one boy to the Philmont Scout Ranch. Many Councils could do the same, for hundreds of Councils are within reach of these two nationally-operated training centers. But other Councils merely develop their own program to train a few key leaders. From there the procedure is the same. A team of trained key junior leaders carries the ball in training other junior leaders in the Council.

At any rate we're sold on it. It's a part of our training program from now on in the Watchung Council. *END.*

By ROBERT G. JOHNSON

District Scout Executive, Plainfield, N. J.



No one will question the value of trained Junior Leaders. Here is what happens when a Council undertakes to organize and train a team of selected Junior Leaders to do the job of training their buddies.

Scout Shorts

GOD AND MY COUNTRY — This little book, by MacKinley Kantor, should be required reading for every Scouter. The simply-told, intimate story of Lem Siddons, Scoutmaster for forty years in a quiet little Iowa town, is a clear and touching revelation of the impact of such a life on a community. Its sympathetic unfolding of the humble day-to-day dealings of this unpretentious citizen with the hundreds of boys who passed through his Troop carries a message no sermon could match. Lem was no genius. He made no pretense to position or authority or wisdom. The only thing which set him apart as an outstanding leader was a deep sense of responsibility for boys. Of the many stories this gifted author has published none is more charmingly told, or more rewarding to the reader than *God and My Country*.

DON'T FORGET US. Keep us supplied with good items for our WORTH RETELLING pages, and our SCOUT SHORTS. Jot that good item down right now and mail it in.

EXPLORER OPPORTUNITY. A most unusual experience awaits a limited number of Explorers at Philmont this summer—the first national training courses for Senior Crew Leaders. These Explorers will be chosen by their Local Councils as qualified not only for the training but for passing on what they learn to other Explorers. The course is open to present and prospective Senior Crew Leaders of Posts, Ships, Squadrons, and Troop Crews.

1st course — August 9-30. 2nd course—August 10-31. 3rd course—Aug. 11-Sept. 1. The fee is $68.00. See your Scout Executive for further information.

NO CAUSE MORE WORTHY. It is scarcely necessary to say that we all will be more than ready to do our part in the 1954 American Red Cross Campaign. No organization in our nation deserves more completely the confidence and support of every good citizen. It serves unceasingly wherever there is human need, knowing no boundaries of race, creed, color or nationality. In time of peace as well as in time of war it cares for the needs of servicemen and their families. It takes over in time of floods, tornadoes and other disasters. We protect ourselves when we support the Red Cross for we never know when this organization may need to step in to serve the community in which we live.

MIGRANT CAMPS—The Upper Mohawk Council, Utica, New York, Dale M. Reed, Scout Executive, has for three years done a fine job of bringing Scouting to boys in the camps of migrant laborers employed during the summer months. There are seven such camps within the the Council area, and two Scout Troops are operated for about three months, serving an average of 65 boys.

A group of local community leaders serve as Troop Committees. A local bank presents each Scout with a new *Handbook for Boys*, and a local Scout Troop puts on the investiture ceremony.

The project has helped to create a new community spirit in these camps. A survey at the end of the first year revealed that 93% of these boys joined Troops when they returned to their homes in the South.

NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING—The 44th Annual Meeting of the National Council is set for May 28-29 (cherry blossom time) in Washington, D. C. Make plans now for full attendance from your Council.

OPERATION PINE CONE — The Oakland Area Council is losing no time getting started on the Conservation Good Turn for 1954. Last December a survey was made of one of their Scout camps, Rancho Los Mochos, by representatives of the State Forestry Service and the Soil Conservation Service, and the Scout Executive, Homer J. Bemiss.

C-day was set for January 9, rain or shine, with a plan to plant 6000 trees: pines, cypresses and redwoods. They had 375 Explorers and 75 Advisors on the job, and the project was completed in six hours.

Earl L. Hinden,
Assistant Scout Executive.