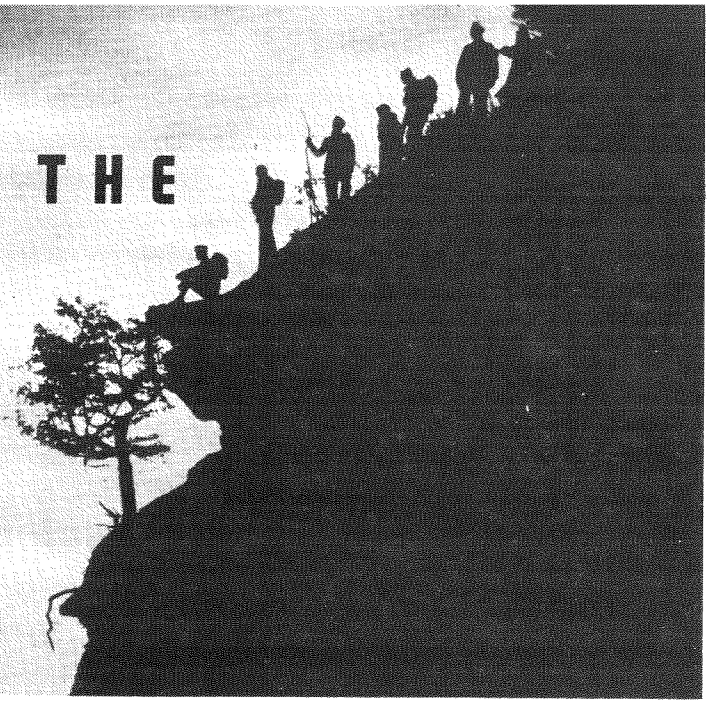
EXPLORERS HIT THE HIGH TRAILS



By **DAVE DUNBAR**
Asst. Dir. of Camping

WHILE YOU'RE READING THIS THERE ARE MORE than 1000 Explorers up and down the Appalachian and the Pacific Crest Trails getting ready for the big day.

They are getting lightweight packs in shape, buying featherweight dehydrated foods, and testing out light pack sleeping gear. Yes, sir, to travel light will be the order of the day, and knowing what to leave home will be just as important as the list of things to take.

For the first time in history, an organized group will cover the entire 2025 miles of the Appalachian Trail from Mt. Katahdin in Maine to Mt. Oglethorpe in Georgia and the 2267 miles of Pacific Crest Trail from Canada to Mexico during one summer season. No, the same gang won't be going all the way thru in one long marathon! That has been done for the Appalachian Trail but it took 128 days. Explorers don't have that much time, so they are doing the next best thing, they are traveling in relays and carrying four official Trail Log Books over their segment of the trails.

Here's how it works. On the Appalachian Trail, segment number one begins at Mt. Katahdin in Maine and ends at Sherburne Pass, Long Trail Lodge in Vermont. Segment number two begins at Harrisburg, Pa., and goes north to Sherburne Pass, Vt. This covers the northern half of the trail or about 1000 miles. Segment number three begins near Harrisburg, Pa., and goes south to the Virginia-Tennessee Line at Damascus, Va. The fourth segment starts at Mt. Oglethorpe in Georgia and goes north to Damascus, Va. Each segment will have its own special log book daily for entries.

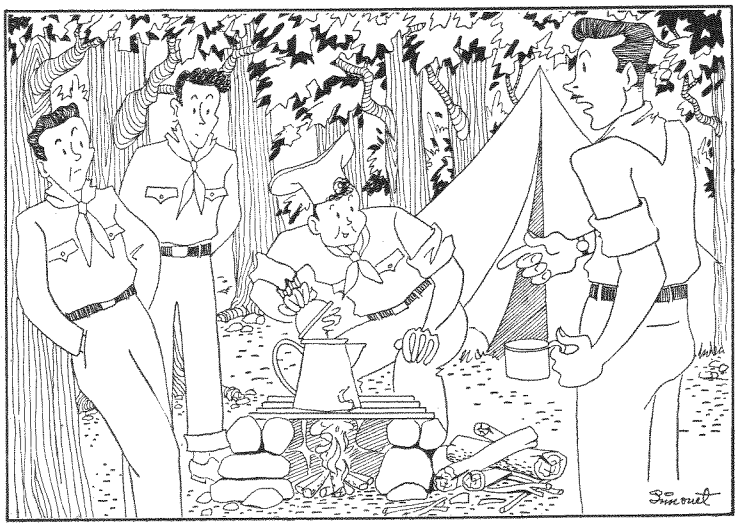
Similar segments are assigned on the Pacific Crest Trail with groups starting from Canada, Mexico and the Oregon-California Line.

The Appalachian Trail Conference, with headquarters at 1916 Sunderland Place, N.W., Washington, D. C., and the Pacific Crest Trail System Conference, Hotel Green, Pasadena, Calif., are cooperating to make this trek a big success, and trail groups, all up and down the Trailways, are assisting their local Explorer groups. Each segment of the trail is divided into expeditions of from four to eight days. Two Explorer groups will travel over each section, making up a party or expedition. The movement of these parties is timed from day to day, and exact meeting and camping places are arranged so that the official Log Book can be transferred from one group to the next right on schedule.

Plans have been made for Explorers to take some time here and there to carry on the nationwide Conservation Good Turn while on the trail. They will be instructed as to the removal of trail obstacles, filling in an erosion ditch, where possible, replacing trail signs torn down, rebuilding cairns, cleaning up springs and campsites, and being generally helpful in the maintenance and improvement of the trail wherever time permits. Explorer groups will not, however, blaze or mark the trail or any side trail at any point.

Arrangements are being made for all Explorer groups to have Official Tour Permits, and Conservation Good Turn Certificates. Each Explorer who proves himself capable and who has carried through on the Conservation Plan, will receive through his Council, after the trip, a National Council Trail Log Expedition Award. These are only two of many expeditions that will be made this summer by groups of Explorers. These are demonstrations of what can be done. Many opportunities for adventure treks nearer home base beckon thousands of other Explorers.

The inspiration of a mighty mountain, the laughter of a rushing brook, the fellowship of a small campfire at nightfall, the call of the hermit thrush will be part of the daily living along the trail for Explorers, on the 1954 Trail Log Expeditions. *END.*



The next morning was even worse. We were still waiting for coffee water to boil to wash out of our mouths the peculiar taste of what the Explorers insisted was oatmeal.

By WILLIAM COOPER
Ass't Advisor Post 175
Manhattan Council, N. Y. C.

An amazed leader does his best to keep up with his amazing Explorers.

GOLD BRICKS or DIAMONDS?

WE ALL MAKE MISTAKES. But when I pull one, it's a real, king-size blooper, in spades. Think I'm kidding? Well, just look at the way I misjudged my Explorers.

It was at our last spring camporee that I decided I was assistant advisor to the laziest, feudingest bunch of goldbricks this side of Timbuctoo. They wasted their entire final meeting before the camporee wrangling over whether they would take two Boy Scouts, ages 12 and 13, along with them. The Explorers didn't want to be bothered playing nursemaid—but finally, after much persuasion, they agreed the younger brethren could come along if they promised not to tag after the high and mighty Explorers.

The Boy Scouts were as good as their word. By 8 o'clock the first night of the camporee, they'd finished their dinner of steak, vegetables and dessert, put up their tent as briskly as you could wish, and had a cheery fire burning. The Explorers—and the Post Advisor and I, who were eating with them—were still trying to salvage a mouthful of unappetizing food in total darkness.

The next morning was even worse. We were still waiting for coffee water to boil, to wash out of our mouths the peculiar taste of what the Explorers insisted was oatmeal, while those two young Boy Scouts had finished a well-rounded breakfast, washed their pots and pans, and were enjoying nature the right way—lounging on their backs, squinting lazily at the cloud-flecked sky.

When we got back to town, I gently but firmly read the riot act. I was positive our bunch of Explorers was made up of gum-beating braggarts—and I told them so. They listened and went right on acting as if they had written the Scouting manual and still had some tricks up their sleeve.

That's how they caught me off-base.

Our Post Advisor is a splendid gentleman, but how he ever let himself get talked into accepting the chore of feeding the working personnel at our next winter camporee, I'll never know. But he did—which meant our five Explorers were slated to handle the grub for themselves plus 18 hungry men, with appetites which consider third helpings just an appetizer.

And these were the Joes who needed a palaver to boil water! I shuddered and waited.

The big day finally came. I was sure we were in for a real fiasco. My forebodings weren't helped any when the boys arrived in camp and immediately unfurled three huge sheets of paper on which they had carefully printed the menus for the upcoming meals: Saturday night dinner, Sunday breakfast and Sunday lunch. If they let this ravenous crew down, we'd be the laughing stock of Scouting!

Came the first meal. Hungarian stew, said the menu, with coffee, cookies and dessert. To my amazement, the boys produced—and smack on the button, at the scheduled 6 P.M., too. And they served seconds and thirds.

Not only that, but when a Scout Unit accidentally overturned its entire dinner, guess who fed them? My erstwhile goldbricks.

I was sure we'd spend the night rushing the first aid kits for indigestion remedies, but nothing of the kind happened. I slept like a well-fed kitten.

When I opened my eyes Sunday morning, I doubted what I saw. Out front, two fires were blazing merrily. Over them, coffee was perking, ham steaks were giving off that tantalizing aroma, freshly cut half grapefruit were lined up, ready for serving—and the Explorers were sweetly asking each man, "How would you like *your* eggs, sir?"

It was a meal fit for the well-known king. Even so, my doubts lingered. I looked again at the luncheon menu —fresh split green pea soup, franks, fruit salad, coffee and cookies. Then I felt that sinking feeling.

How were they going to produce fresh vegetables for the soup?

I'd underestimated the Explorers again. Out of their duffel bags, they magically produced crisp fresh celery, carrots and potatoes, along with packages of dried split peas. Into the soup they cut up what was left of the ham steaks—and the rush for chow was on.

When it was over and my head stopped reeling, I wondered what had happened. What changed these boys from lazy goldbricks to human windmills of Scouting energy? Was it the pep talk I gave them? Or was it something inside them?

I'll never know. Whenever I ask, they give me a knowing wink and tell me, "You just had us pegged wrong."

I did, too, and I'm the first to admit it.

I'm proud of my Explorers. *END.*

What changed these boys from lazy goldbricks to human windmills of Scouting energy? Whenever I ask, they just give me a knowing wink.

PHILMONT TRAINING CONFERENCES

RESERVATIONS ARE NOW BEING ACCEPTED for Conferences at the Volunteer Training Center, Philmont Scout Ranch, for the summer of 1954.

Indications are that more people than ever before will take advantage of the training-family-vacation opportunity offered at Philmont.

Mom, Pop and the kids will all have a grand time. Special recreational facilities, under adult supervision, are available for all age and groups while dad participates in the Conference.

The housing is comfortable, food wonderful and the weather is perfect for being outdoors.

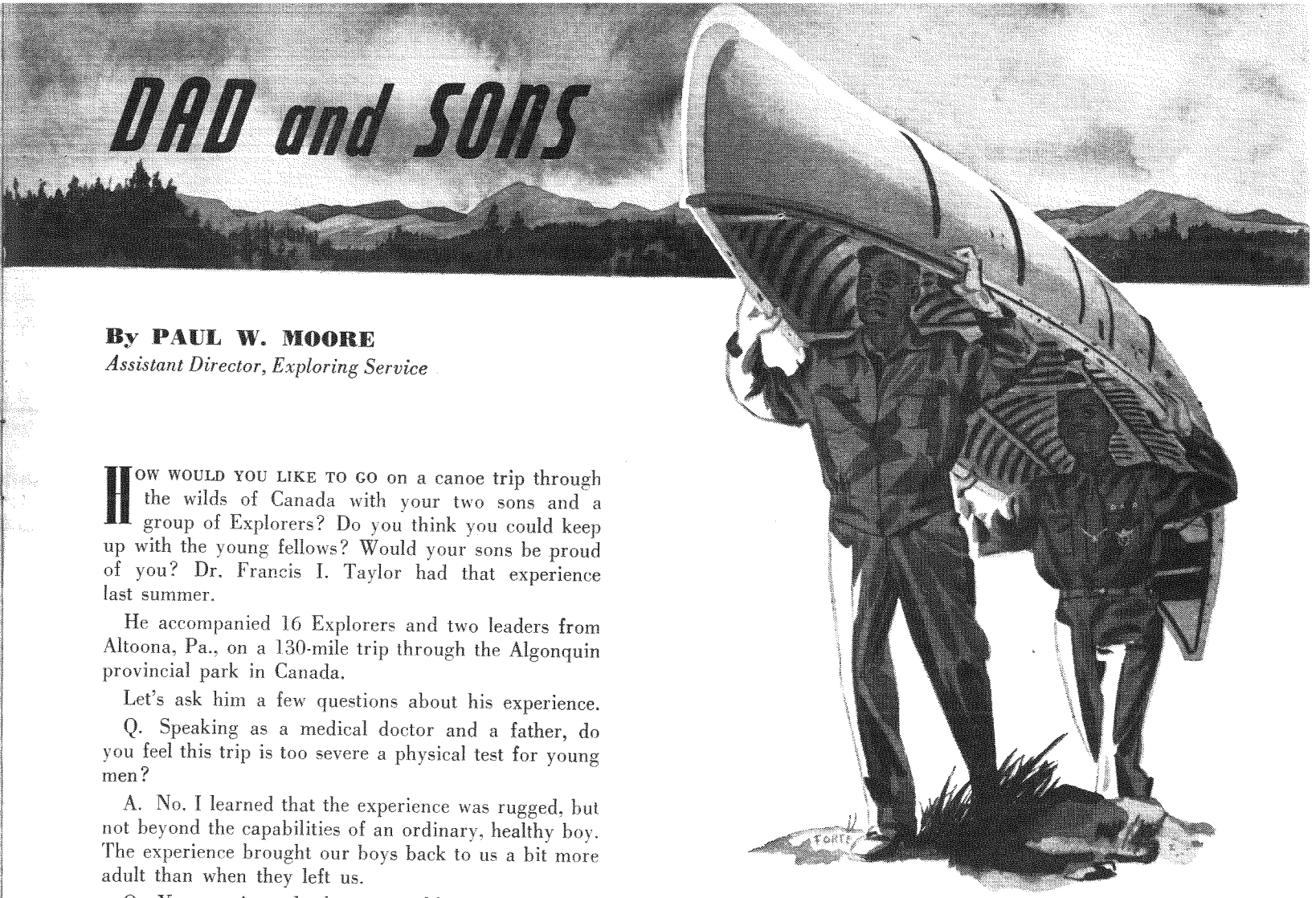
The Conference schedule is as follows:

Commissioner Conference	June 16	June 22
District Operation Conference	June 23	June 29
Finance Conference	June 30	July 6
Cub Scouting Conference	July 7	July 13
Cub Scouting Conference	July 14	July 20
Boy Scouting Conference	July 21	July 27
Boy Scouting Conference	July 28	Aug. 3
Exploring Conference	August 4	Aug. 10
Exploring Conference	August 11	Aug. 17
Commissioner Conference	August 18	Aug. 24
District Operation Conference	August 25	Sept. 1

Reservations are accepted on a first come, first served basis.

See the December 1953 issue of SCOUTING Magazine for further details. Your Scout Executive has reservation blanks and brochures. Ask him for details, or write Volunteer Training Service, Boy Scouts of America, 2 Park Avenue, New York 16, New York. *END.*

DAD and SONS



By PAUL W. MOORE
Assistant Director, Exploring Service

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO on a canoe trip through the wilds of Canada with your two sons and a group of Explorers? Do you think you could keep up with the young fellows? Would your sons be proud of you? Dr. Francis I. Taylor had that experience last summer.

He accompanied 16 Explorers and two leaders from Altoona, Pa., on a 130-mile trip through the Algonquin provincial park in Canada.

Let's ask him a few questions about his experience.

Q. Speaking as a medical doctor and a father, do you feel this trip is too severe a physical test for young men?

A. No. I learned that the experience was rugged, but not beyond the capabilities of an ordinary, healthy boy. The experience brought our boys back to us a bit more adult than when they left us.

Q. You say it made them more like men. Is it possible to have this effect in such a short time?

A. As a participant and an observer, I was able to see raw and inexperienced boys develop stronger traits of self-reliance and responsibility. There was no coddling of the whims of those who temporarily might wish to lean upon someone who might assume their individual burdens; each had to be his own master and care for his own responsibilities.

Q. You speak of responsibility. How can we develop a sense of responsibility in these young men?

A. It has always been my belief that the only way for a boy to learn to assume responsibility is for that boy to be given responsibility; and this canoe trip has been the perfect school. Each must "paddle his own canoe" actually and figuratively; must make his own bed; must cook and eat his own meals; and must play his own part in maintaining the good spirit, morale and fellowship of the entire party.

Q. But what about those who wouldn't do their share?

A. Those who, on the first day or two of the trip, might have a tendency to slight these important functions are soon brought into line by their own desire to show that they are capable of carrying their full share on the trip; their trip buddies have a vigorous way of bringing all into line. While the first few days may be discouraging, the time soon comes when all have become so absorbed in the enterprise that none would wish to impair the success and pleasure of the party.

Q. Who should be credited with the success of the trip?

A. To make these statements without mention of the direction and supervision of the trip would leave the story only half told. Each detail of transportation, feeding, training, canoe travel, worship for all creeds, financing, entertainment and education was planned in a manner which was amazingly complete. For this we can thank Herbert Ey, Field Scout Executive of the Blair-Bedford Council.

Q. What impressed you most about the effect of Scouting on these young men?

A. The bond which exists among Scouts from all over the world was a discovery for me. Whether it was in the "bush," at the Toronto exposition, or in the several cities or villages through which we passed, when another Scout would see one of us there was always the greeting, the handclasp, the fellowship, and the offer of help in the spirit of true "Scouting." It was something revealing to me, and something which I personally regard as a necessity in the ever-shrinking world of our day. *END.*