EXPLORING FOR

HAGERSTOWN, INDIANA, POPULATION 2,000—give or take a few—is a typical mid-American community. We have schools; churches; Rotary, Lions, and Optimist clubs; Jaycees; Business and Professional Women's Club; Farm Bureau; Masonic lodge; and scores of other organizations. Some of us try to join them all.

One that has proved most attractive to the high-school age boys of our town and the nearby farm areas is Explorer Post 3, sponsored by the Rotary Club. Leadership, however, is drawn from the entire community. Executives of the Perfect Circle Corporation (that has two plants in Hagerstown employing approximately 1,200 people) have been most helpful in recruiting many consultants for our post.

Old vs. new program

I have been associated with the Exploring program in Hagerstown since 1955—four years under the old program and two years under the new. In my opinion, the old program was really a continuation of Boy Scouting. We spent much time trying to get the boys to earn merit badges but with little success. There is too much change in most boys during the Explorer-age span (from fourteen to eighteen) for them to maintain an interest in Boy Scouting — unless they can be given leadership responsibilities.

In the fall of 1958, our Scout executive, Edward B. Liljeblad, presented the new Exploring program to us. We met with the chief of police, a doctor, the postmaster, and other people. Mr. Liljeblad showed us the helps available, including a new *Exploring* manual, new uniforms, new insignia, and the new Explorer Code. We saw a filmstrip and discussed a survey that had been taken to find out what high-school age boys really want. The men soon realized that we were not looking at a revised Boy Scout program but something entirely new.

This new program, we learned, had a president, a vice president, a secretary, and other offices that are familiar to young men. We saw a program similar in some ways to that of a service club—like Rotary, Lions, or Kiwanis—but designed especially for young men.

Today's Explorer post program is organized into activities, specialties, and superactivities, which include six experience areas: social, vocational, outdoor, personal fitness, service, and citizenship. Here are examples that have successfully covered the experience areas for us.

SOCIAL. Planning and conducting parties, with particular emphasis on our Christmas party.

VOCATIONAL. Touring nearby industrial plants and government agencies. Consultants furnished by them have explained employment procedures and advancement possibilities related to the jobs and positions. Through such discussions our boys have had a preview of many vocations.

OUTDOOR. Camping and camporees at our Whitewater Valley Council camp.

PERSONAL FITNESS. Swimming and basketball games have been a regular part of our program.

SERVICE. Assisting in the erection of a Christmas scene in Hagerstown; also clearing tin cans from the creek near the ball park.

CITIZENSHIP. Participating in Citizenship Day. We passed out "I have voted, have you?" tags for the Jaycees on election days. We sponsored the film *Operation Abolition*, showing communism in action, for the community and the high school.

Variety of interests

We have two regular post meetings and an officers' meeting each month. During the other week of the month we have a sport night or a swim.

Though many posts specialize in one subject or interest area, our boys decided against this. Instead, we have, from time to time, had special meetings when consultants would present subjects chosen by the boys. Some of the subjects have been photography, engineering, coon hunting, and trapping.

Superactivities have strengthened our program considerably. In 1957, eighteen post members went to Philmont; last year the associate Advisors and I accompanied twenty Explorers to the big ranch in New Mexico.

How do we carry out such a program, maintaining the interest of high-school age boys? Leadership helps. I have four associate Advisors. Two are assigned specific duties—one, the religious awards program and the other, sports. Our post committee is made up of a doctor, the chief of police, an attorney, and several businessmen.

BETTER CITIZENS

By ROBERT F. BEESON

An Explorer post Advisor with experience in both the old and the new Exploring programs prefers the new.

Joe Haisley, post president, is representative of the citizens that Post 3 is building to carry on the affairs of our town and nation.

Too, our larger-than-average membership—we now have forty-five members—enables us to do things we couldn't do if we were a small post. High-school age boys are busy people; they engage in many activities besides Exploring, so attendance at meetings varies. But in a post like ours, enough boys attend each meeting to ensure a worthwhile program.

Fortunately, we don't lose boys from year to year, except through graduation. Excellent parent cooperation helps, too. Before a boy becomes an Explorer in our post, we explain our program to him and his parents—often in the home. The parents sign the application form before we accept the boy.

Trained Explorer officers, of course, make the post operation run smoothly. We are considering taking our elected officers to a one-day training session each year.

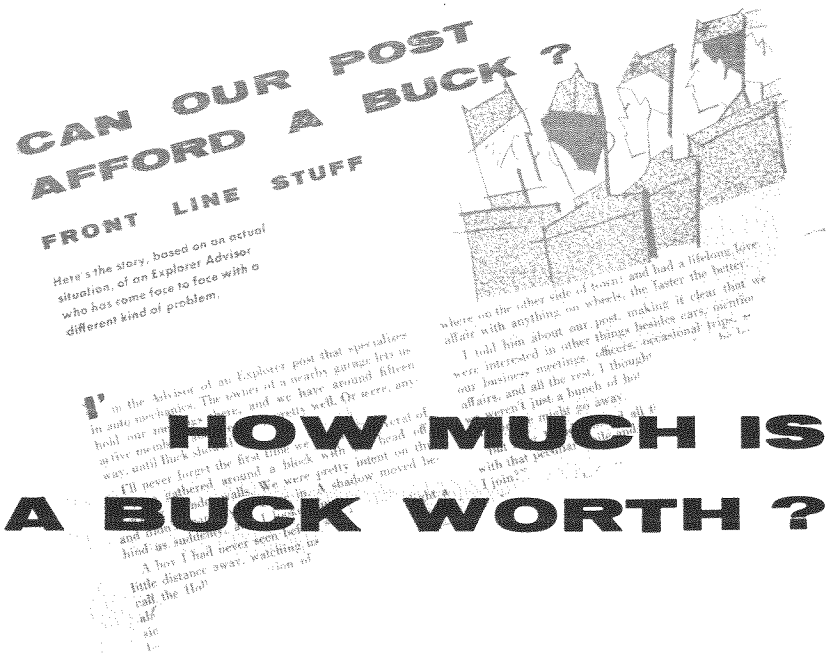
It is important, too, that the Advisor and his associates be thoroughly trained. In my opinion, the success of the post is in direct proportion to what they put into it. Getting training is not as difficult as you may suppose as many good training materials are available to assist in training the Advisors.

Having the school administration on your side is important. We keep school officials informed of what our boys are doing. This is particularly important if we have programs that necessitate asking that the boys be excused from school. Of course, we keep such requests to a minimum.

We find it best to follow the national program as we learn it through the quarterly roundtables and the district cabinet. This new program is based on thorough testing and practical experience throughout the nation. Following it steers us clear of trouble.

However, we have been known to look for trouble. For instance, we have deliberately sought out for membership in our post some boys who, we thought, were especially in need of the kind of program we run. We have a few known as troublemakers, which makes our job even tougher. Helping them, though, through the Exploring program, is highly rewarding.

We believe that with an interested Advisor, a dedicated committee, and loyal associate Advisors working with the council, a good Exploring program can be developed in any community, however small. We believe that we are helping young men in our town be better citizens simply because they are members of Post 3.



HOW MUCH IS A BUCK WORTH ?

Post Advisor "Judd" wrote in March Front Line Stuff of the post's new member, Buck, who wore a black leather jacket, used rough language, raced his motorcycle in defiance of police, but put his mechanical genius to invaluable use in the post's auto mechanics specialty. Now some post members were talking of quitting; some were copying Buck and his dubious companions who were coming around with him.

Some readers advised Judd to throw Buck out; some said he couldn't. We couldn't find a conclusion to recommend to Judd. We think a fellow out in Illinois put it best as you will see in the last letter we've reprinted.

So we sent his letter and more than sixty others, some of them four pages long, to Judd. The post's situation is still about as it was in March. It is up to you, Judd—you and your post officers and members.

Excerpts from your letters follow.

From R. S., Bronx, New York: *Throw Buck out. You had a good functioning post before he joined and now the entire post is following his bad habits.*

From C.M.C., Norristown, Pennsylvania: A young man joined our post but he was not quite as far out as Buck. He had several minor scrapes with the law, dropped out of the post, and quit school. Where he will go from here no one knows. I have always regretted that we were not able to help the one boy that needed our help most.

From J.W.G., Menlo Park, California: *By allowing this hoodlum to impose upon the post, you are breaking faith with parents who have a right to suppose that Scouting provides wholesome association and examples for their sons. If you think Buck has the making of an Explorer, require him to dress, speak, and act the part, beginning immediately—not at such unlikely time as he may happen to be so inclined.*

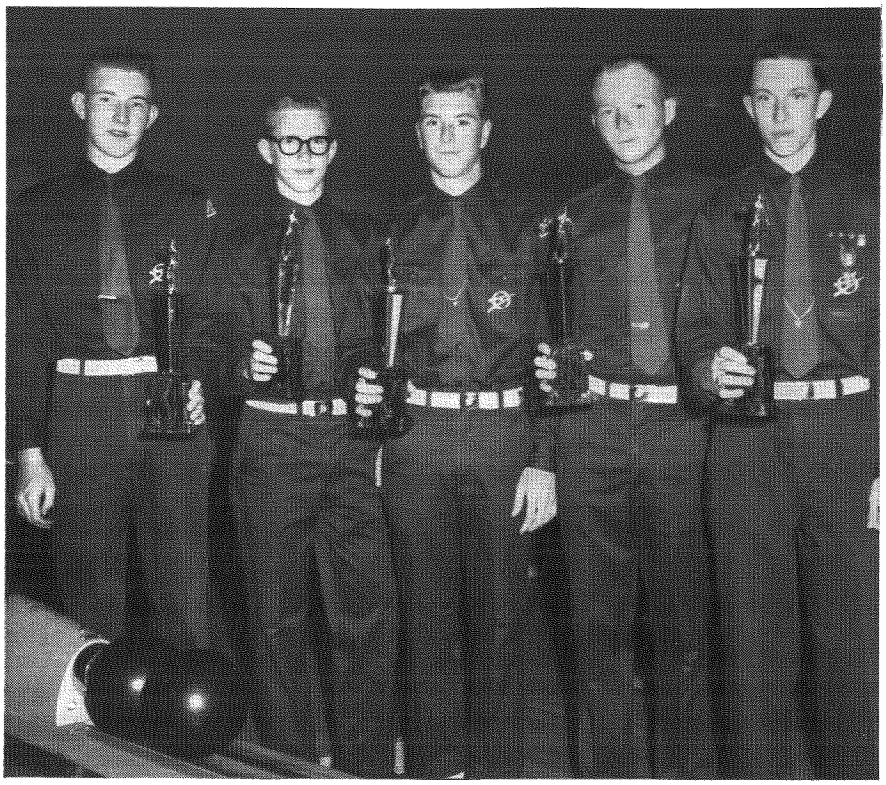
From A.E.J. (address omitted by request): Your post can't afford to be without a "Buck." He is a mechanical genius but evidently he has a mechanical problem like distributor trouble. His likes and dislikes are firing the wrong plugs. It should be much more important to help him than getting zoom from a carburetor on a hot rod. Talk it over with the boy leaders to get suggestions from them for a plan to get under Buck's hood.

From S.J.P., Perkiomenville, Pennsylvania: *Somebody must level with this boy. He needs an honest opinion of a sympathetic but firm adult. Tell him, face to face, that his manners and attitude are not acceptable. Give him your ideas of how a young fellow should be. Don't flinch, even when you know that he may think what you are saying is sissy or kid stuff. Maybe this boy won't stay. It will help him, though, because for once in his life somebody will have given him good advice straight from the shoulder.*

From V.T., Tulsa, Oklahoma: Have a man-to-man talk with Buck. Explain to him his value to the post as an engine know-how man; point out his need to subscribe to the ideals of the Explorer Code. Make suggestions on what to do to improve. Tell him you hope he will want to stay, but he must make the decision. Remember that the dismantled engine is just the bait; it will attract boys, but does not of itself offer the stuff to build moral fiber, understand democracy at work, or evaluate the responsibility of freedom.

From C.N., Towanda, Kansas: *You never did want Buck to join in the first place, and you just used him as a mechanic so you could learn things from him. I think that all the trouble is your fault. If he is taking the leadership away from you, you weren't a good leader in the first place.*

From Elly S., Levittown, New York: I'm a teen-age girl from a Scouting family. Yes, of course, your post can afford a Buck. Boys like Buck should be helped. What could be better help to a fellow interested in auto mechanics than the fabulous influence of a whole post of interested Explorers? It's up to the boys as Explorers not to



FIRST NATIONAL EXPLORER BOWLING CHAMPIONS. *Holding their trophies for winning the first National Explorer Bowling Tournament is the team representing Post 250, sponsored by the Alhambra (California) Kiwanis Club in the San Gabriel Valley Council. Bowlers, left to right, and their scores are Roy Runzel, 464; Allan Boren, 386; George Pendleton, 546; David McAnnally, 498; Bob Westmoreland, captain, 477. Plus a handicap of 660, their total score was 3,031. This topped 219 other teams competing in the Explorer Division of the American Junior Bowling Congress Mail - O - Graphic Tournament on March 25. The AJBC and the Boy Scouts of America will sponsor the second tournament in 1962. Entry blanks will be available from your council office by November 1.*

"I don't remember picking out this place!"

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