



TROOP 510



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January 2004

Scoutmasters Report



Tom Lenagh
Scoutmaster

Well, Scouts, did you make any New Year's resolutions? I hope some of you resolved to bring up your grades in school and be more helpful around the house. I'm sure your parents would be delighted with those resolutions.

In Scouting, we make a resolution almost every time we meet. Each time we repeat the Scout Oath or Law, we're resolving to do our best to do our duty and to make ourselves the best citizens we can be. I'm inclined to think that resolving to follow the Scout Oath and Law are the most important resolutions you can make - now and in the time to come. The Oath and Law cover almost everything that makes a good man and a good citizen.

Scouting a half century ago wasn't very different from now, at least not in the basics. The Scouts of the Twenties came into Scouting for the same reason you did - to enjoy the outdoors, learn some new skills and to have some fun.

There's something else that is not different: Our Scout Oath and Scout Law. Ever since 1910, more than 90 years ago, boy Scouts have been gathering at troop meetings and repeating the exact same Scout Oath and Law.

I think that's amazing. The world has changed in many ways over 90 years. When Scouting was new, a boy's life was very different. There was no television, no radio, movies were brand new, most people traveled by horse and carriage or train, adults worked long hours six days a week - and so did some kids. It was just a different world.

But the first Boy Scouts in 1910 pledged themselves to the same Scout Oath and Law. And they tried to live by it, just as I hope you do today.

So, as we start the New Year, we ought to repeat the Oath and Law and think about what we're saying.

The troop also has a few major events planned for this year:

30 January-1 February	Fort Rice @ Camp Phillips
20-22 February	Egloo @ Norseland S.R.
16 March	Spring Court of Honor
14-16 May	WEBELOS Woods
10-17 July	Tomahawk
13-15 August	Family Campout

How many of these activities are you planning on attending?

January is also the time for re-charting. If you are not getting Boy's Life magazine this is a good time to start. Boy's Life (BL) has many good articles and stories of things going on in BSA. Please contact Linda Offerdahl or myself if you would like BL.

OA Winter Banquet

Shawn Lenagh
OA Troop Representative

Hey, all you OA members. News on the OA winter banquet coming up in January. First for dinner you will have Chicken Rice Pilaf. For the main speaker of the night you will get to listen to Paul S. The winter banquet will be on January 10th at North Heights Lutheran Church Arden Hills. If you are a new member in the OA talk to some of the older OA members about winter banquet to see if you will like to go. If you want to know more about winter banquet talk to me or Mr. Schwarzbauer at a troop meeting.

Also, OA elections are coming up soon. Watch the calendar and attend the meeting so you or your fellow Scout can be elected.

The very end story

Mr. Hammer
Editor

Interested in going to the 2004 National Jamboree? Ask one of the older Scouts or some of the adults. We can tell you all about this event.

Now for the history lesson: "The BSA's 'forgotten' founding father" *By Robert Peterson*

Although he didn't carry the title of Chief Scout Executive, a veteran YMCA boys'-work executive named Edgar M. Robinson served as the head of the new Boy Scouts of America during the organization's struggling first year.

Ask veteran Scouters to name the founders of Scouting, and chances are they will name Robert S. S. Baden-Powell, the British war hero who launched the Boy Scout movement in England in 1908.

Maybe they'll mention Ernest Thompson Seton or Daniel Carter Beard, both naturalists, artists, and riveting speakers who led separate boys' organizations in the United States that joined the Boy Scouts of America when the BSA was born in 1910.

Scouters might also bring up the name of James E. West, who was Chief Scout Executive for 32 years. Possibly they will mention William D. Boyce, the Chicago publisher who incorporated the BSA on Feb 8, 1910, after learning about Scouting during his famous "foggy" visit to London.

But rarely, if ever, will they mention the name of Edgar M. Robinson. A forgotten member of Scouting's "founding fathers," Robinson was an executive with the Young Men's Christian Association who helped get the BSA through most of its first year without a stumble.

He was the balding, 43-year-old boys'-work secretary of the YMCA's International Committee which governed Ys in the United States and Canada.

When the BSA was founded in 1910, 400 local YMCA summer camps were serving 15,000 boys. E. M. Robinson, a native of Canada, was a veteran camp director with 20 years' experience in youth work.

In his portrait photo, the balding, 43-year-old Robinson looks stiff and starchy like the professor he was in his latter years at Springfield (Mass.) College, the YMCA's training center.

He wasn't like that at all, according to Laura Jo Wechwerch Judd, who remembers Robinson from her girlhood as a professor's daughter.

"He was tall, very dignified, and he loved the outdoors," said Ms. Judd, now a retired faculty member herself. "He had a wonderful, sunny disposition. He was very formal, but outdoors he was a whole different person."

But E. M. Robinson was well aware of the fact that he was not a charismatic figure like Ernest Thompson Seton or Dan Beard. It was said that he despaired on his first visit to a YMCA camp when he saw leaders enthraling boys by being fatherly, leading them in song, or convulsing them with laughter.

Robinson thought to himself, *There is no hope for me to be a leader of boys for I am not musical, witty, or fatherly.* But then, the story goes, a still, small voice said to him, "Perhaps God can use all varieties of men, perhaps even me."

With that happy thought, E. M. Robinson immersed himself in work with boys. In 1900 he became the first boys'-work secretary of the Y's International Committee, with headquarters in New York City.

Naturally, Robinson was interested when he began hearing reports in 1908 and '09 about the new Boy Scout movement in England. A few YMCAs set up troops, and some Y camps were using elements of the Scoutcraft skills being taught in Britain.

So when Robinson heard in early May 1910 that William D. Boyce had incorporated the Boy Scouts of America months earlier, he was alarmed. The news meant that Boyce controlled the Boy Scouts and the future of the movement in America.

With two other YMCA men, he hastened to Chicago to visit with the publisher. There they learned that while Boyce had title to the BSA name, he had no boys and no organization.

E. M. Robinson turned on the charm. He urged Boyce to throw in his lot with the YMCA, which could serve as the point organization for setting up Scouting--and could also provide a source of Scoutmasters.

Boyce was sold. He even agreed to give \$1,000 a month to get the BSA on its financial feet.

Robinson hustled back to New York. In short order, he set in motion the process that would lead to transfer of title from Boyce to an as-yet-unformed national committee.

On June 1 Robinson opened a one-room national office for the Boy Scouts of America right next to his own office in the YMCA building on East 28th Street. He persuaded John M. Alexander, a YMCA boys'-work secretary in Philadelphia, to run the office, with a stenographer as the lone staff member.

Through his camping experiences, Robinson was a friend of Ernest Thompson Seton, and he invited Seton to merge his Woodcraft Indians into the BSA. Seton and Robinson then approached men who had announced plans for their own Scouting organizations and got all but one of them--the publisher William Randolph Hearst--to come into the BSA.

Correspondence was soon pouring into the tiny office from men and boys who wanted to start troops. Years later Robinson remembered, "Unopened letters were at times stacked like cordwood on the floor."

Something had to be done. Robinson's response was to call a meeting for June 15 of prominent men who were involved in working with boys. That was followed six days later by another meeting, at which a committee was appointed to organize the BSA's National Committee. Seton was named chairman.

While the committee deliberated, a historic two-week Scout camp was held at Silver Bay on Lake George in upstate New York.

As organized a year earlier, the camp wasn't intended to be a Scouting experience. Robinson had originally arranged for Ernest Thompson Seton to demonstrate Woodcraft Indians campcraft at a special late August session for YMCA boys.

As it turned out, Seton and all the other camp leaders were involved with the infant Boy Scouts of America. They taught the campers about Scouting as well as the Woodcraft Indians. Even though all participants were YMCA boys and leaders, they became part of what is recognized as the first Scout camp in America.

By the time the camp ended Sept. 1, "troops of Scouts were springing up like mushrooms in every section of the country," Robinson wrote. That fall, he recruited a financial secretary to solicit funds for the BSA and began looking for his own successor as executive secretary.

E. M. Robinson declined overtures to become the BSA's permanent executive secretary because, he said, "my attachment to the YMCA was too strong to allow me to consider it."

His attention was called to an enterprising young lawyer in Washington, D.C., named James E. West. West had been active in the Y, the playground movement, and the Child Rescue League, and Robinson tried to recruit him for the BSA.

At first West resisted Robinson's entreaties to take the helm of the financially shaky movement. But he finally accepted the challenge and started work as the BSA's new chief on Jan. 1, 1911. He was a firm hand on the tiller until 1943.

E. M. Robinson remained the preeminent figure in YMCA boys' work until his retirement in 1927. He died in 1951; by then, his brief, but vital, role in putting the BSA on a firm foundation had been all but forgotten.