

The People's Forum

The Evening Gazette Worcester, Sat., Jan. 21, 1978

Scouting Teaches What Schools Don't

To the Editor:

To mothers and fathers: Ask yourself these questions:

Can my boy stay warm and dry outside in wet weather? Does he know the difference between waterproof and water-repellent equipment? Can he build a fire with one or two matches when it is raining? Or has he been conditioned never to build a fire, even when it could save his life?

Does he know how to identify oak, hickory, maple, birch, pine and their burning qualities? Does he know what a sharp ax or saw looks like? Could he sharpen these tools?

What about drinkable water? Is it safe just because it looks clean? How can you purify it?

What do poison ivy and nettle look like?

Did he ever walk eight or 10 miles with a small amount of equipment? Can he maintain and keep a bicycle working, even a one-speed?

Would he run away or faint at the sight of blood? Does he know basic first aid? Can he swim? Does he know what a well-equipped boat looks like?

What about shooting a rifle and hitting a target? Has he been conditioned that rifles and pistols are evil because thieves have them?

Through the years in my work with children, I have never seen such a lack of resourcefulness on the part of youth as now. Truly I am worried. There are more challenges in this life than are dealt with in the schools.

This nation was built by men who walked to and from church and school. They played ball once or twice a year at town and church outings. It was a game of fun, not a trade or a way of life. They built their homes themselves. They knew good lumber from bad because they worked in saw mills and swung an ax. They mixed their own cement, lugged their own fieldstones and built walls, cellars and all manner of essential things.

They got dirty, worked long hours for small pay and, when they finished, they took pride in their work. God help anyone who littered up the village green or wrote foul oaths on walls of churches or schools.

I am a firm believer that a good

sense of pride in one's home, city, town, church and nation must be learned at a young age. This is done only with good leadership and a good amount of elbow grease.

If some of these things I have stated make sense, and the shoe fits, put it on now! You and your boy should go to your local Boy Scout troop meeting hall. This is the only way this nation will get back the sense of pride it once had.

RICHARD A. SEARS

Assistant Scoutmaster, Troop 54,
16 Waycross St.,
Worcester

We welcome letters on topics of general public interest. Mail should be addressed to The Editor, The Evening Gazette, 20 Franklin St., Worcester, Mass., 01612. Each writer is limited to one letter in four weeks. Names and addresses will be published. Letters may be shortened.