

Deafness Proves No Barrier To Boys' Enjoying Scouting

By PAT PETRASKE

At first Robert Fluman, who has been deaf since he was five months old, was afraid to be a leader, afraid that the Cub Scouts wouldn't understand him. So he took his nine-year-old son, Robin, to help him interpret.

But after a few weeks Fluman had taught the boys in his troop the basics of finger spelling and the troop continued with its new leader immersed in the activities of earning merit badges.

The scout motto, "Be Prepared" has taken on a new meaning for three troops that are involved in one way or another with the silent world of the deaf.

Fluman's work with scouting began with his role as a "den mother." The next challenge was to become a Cub Scout leader, replacing another father who wanted to follow his boys up through scouting. "If things get too complicated, he uses Robin," explained his wife, Rosemary, who works as an interpreter for the National Technical Institute for the Deaf at Rochester Institute of Technology.

Troop 260 sponsored by St. Joseph's Church in Penfield, has no communications problem. Fluman's co-leader and co-worker, John "Bud" Stewart, learned finger spelling while working with Fluman at Itek. The 14 boys either listen to Stewart or watch Fluman's explanation of what happens next.

A typical meeting showed Stewart quizzing a Cub Scout on the requirements for a citizenship badge while Fluman counted the 30 sit-ups being grunted out by two other cubs. Order was maintained by flashing a V-sign, the Cub Scout salute and the universal sign for peace.

State Officers To Attend K of C Dinner

Dignitaries aplenty will be present at the gala dinner and dance that will close the area Knights of Columbus Brotherhood Week, March 30, at the Towne House.

Included on the list are the following state officers and their wives:

Anthony B. Caramelo, New York State deputy; James E. Foley, state supreme director; William J. Van Tassel, state treasurer; Christopher J. Cleary Jr., state advocate; Carmine A. Caifano, secretary to state deputy; Philip J. Spiro, warder to state deputy; William J. Sansone, state director of council activities.

The evening will begin with a social hour at 6:30 p.m., followed by dinner at 7 and dancing at 9.

Reservations for tickets, \$15 per couple, must be made in advance with ticket chairman Timothy Halpin, 73 Kings Lane, 266-5684; or auxiliary state chairman of council activities, Thomas Grosodonia, 241 Oak Ridge Dr., 342-2541.

LEGION ACIES IN MT. MORRIS

MT. MORRIS — The third annual Acies ceremony of the Genesee Curia, Legion of Mary, will be held at St. Patrick's Church March 24, at 3 p.m. The speaker will be Father Robert Kanka, pastor of St. Patrick's and spiritual director of Queen of Peace Presidium. There will be a coffee hour afterward in the school.

The Acies is a ceremony of rededication. All members and former members invited.

Boy Scouting is a "preparation for life," believes Stewart. This "learning of the things that kids have to know" includes an exposure to different types of people and in this case it means an exposure to deaf people.

"The kids are really great. They're pretty knowledgeable and they've accepted the fact that Bob is deaf," Stewart reflected. Evidence of this acceptance was shown at a Blue and Gold Dinner held for all Cub Scouts in the area. The boys, excited about the celebration, went over to their leader and with manual alphabet cards in hand, "talked" with Fluman.

Discipline is no problem because "his whole face gets mad" when her husband gets upset, Mrs. Fluman said.

The Fluman's courtship began with conversation written on the condensation of a bottle. They had to write out their conversations until Mrs. Fluman learned to finger spell. "I used to dream and finger spell in my sleep," she recalled. They are now teaching their three children the Rochester method, which includes speech reading and finger spelling.

Good-natured bantering flies between the couple. Fluman likes to insist that he can hear his little daughter, Ann, when she plays the piano and that he can hear the music from the band when they go dancing. "He feels the music vibrate off the walls," Mrs. Fluman countered.

Fluman, who became deaf after a battle with spinal meningitis, used to wear a hearing aid, but it made him nervous. He is now totally deaf.

People tend to be nervous when they first encounter a deaf person. Fluman "signed" to his wife who sometimes interprets for him. "Most people think sign language is beautiful and wished that they knew how," he said. Fluman, who was the first deaf person hired at Itek, observed that the better educated a person is, the better is his acceptance.

Hunting is one of Fluman's favorite pastimes and he has shared his love and knowledge of the outdoors with his Cub Scouts. While camping at Webster Park, havoc broke out when the 14 boys tried to capture a mouse in their cabin. Such noise and hullabaloo don't bother him, Fluman grinned.

Robert Fuller, scout master of Troop 29 also takes communion in stride. Fuller, an employee at Kodak, is also deaf and heads the troop at the Rochester School for the Deaf. "They get into as much trouble as hearing boys," Fuller signed as one scout excitedly signed to him that there was a flood of water in the bathroom.

The troop was begun in 1922 one of the first established in the Rochester area. Lack of parental help is the major problem facing the troop because most of the students who attend the residential school live between 30 to 50 miles away. But enough adult supervision was obtained for the Fall Camporee in Camp Cutler, near Naples where the troop won first place for best appearance.

Camping is one area that the deaf scouts excelled in over the hearing scouts. Greg Pagan, 18, a member of the troop sponsored by the Recreation Club of the Deaf, was taught to swim by the boys he camped with from the

School for the Deaf. "I couldn't even roll a sleeping bag," Greg said.

The story of his troop, 132, is a little unusual. The scouts have hearing, the sponsors are deaf, and its eight members are all related. Greg and his brother, Tony, 17, are cousins of the six Ocasios; Herman, 11; Felix, 13; Juan, 14; Jose, 15; Ben, 16 and Orlando, 18.

Meetings were first held at St. Bridget's, but since the area, according to their leader, "is one of those trick or treat places that is mostly trick," they received permission to hold their weekly meetings at the Rochester Recreation Club for the Deaf on St. Paul Street.

The club took over the sponsorship of the troop and serves the Board of Review which tests the boys who are trying for merit badges.

"At first it was kind of strange," Greg commented on his initial exposure to people who are deaf. "But if you want to talk to the members of the club, you just go up to them. Most of them can understand you by reading your lips. And if you have a piece of paper and pencil, that's great," he said.

Besides working and partying with their sponsors, the scouts offered to babysit for club members who were attending a convention for deaf parents at Rochester Institute of Technology. Recalling the afternoon with 30 both hearing and deaf children, Greg exclaimed, "It was hard to know who was deaf and who wasn't, they all made the same amount of noise."

The troop has also learned finger spelling, which helps them communicate with their assistant scout leader, Richard Smiley, who was born deaf. Kathy, his wife of nine months, became deaf after she was stricken with palsy.

Their scout master Richard Dixon became a leader by accident. He offered to assist their former scout leader on a camping trip and "the guy put his gear into a corner and said 'I'll see you.' I didn't see him 'til two days later." Dixon was left to manage 20 boys that he hardly knew.

Dixon and Smiley joined forces after meeting at the annual Thanksgiving dinner for the deaf at Holy Ghost Church. Smiley became interested in Cub Scouting at St. Mary's School for the Deaf in Buffalo.

Dixon believes there is a quality of difference between Boy Scouts and other boys. "If there were two boys in heaven, I could tell which one was the Boy Scout." Part of this "quality" is obtained by retreats such as the one at Mt. Saviour Monastery near Elmira. Members of Troop 132 were the only boys in that age group ever let into the monastery, Dixon said.

COMMUNION BREAKFAST

Hornell — Father Herbert Sturmer, St. Ann's traveling priest, was the guest speaker at the Communion Breakfast held Mar. 3 at the Knights of Columbus Hall. The event was sponsored by the Retreat League and the Knights.

Gerould's Pharmacies

S. Main St. and Church & Hoffman
Elmira
Delivery Service
733-6696

WARNER'S
LIQUOR STORE
HINCHEY ROAD
AT CHILL AVE.

THE OPEN WINDOW

Q. Why do priests never mention devotion to the Blessed Mother, the Rosary, Lourdes, Fatima, praying to specific saints and the significance of the stigmatics?

A. No doubt you exaggerate a little bit when you say these things are NEVER mentioned by priests on Sunday. I am sure some of them are, but I would say they aren't mentioned very much because outside of the Rosary, which is probably a man-made devotion, the rest are private revelations. A private revelation is distinguished from PUBLIC revelation which contains the deposit of faith and is meant for all. Public revelation alone is infallibly the Word of God and as such calls for faith on the part of all men. Private revelations go on their own merits and do not demand faith on the part of all. Besides, I do not know any truths revealed in private revelation (outside of devotional practices) which are not already contained in the Public revelation.

Priests have only ten or fifteen minutes a Sunday to get across the message of the Gospels. We are in a sense pressed for time. We could preach the Gospel

message hours a day and never exhaust the content. Personally, I am not averse to using private revelations as a backup to Gospel teaching, and I like to urge the Rosary as a very fruitful and powerful devotion. I would think that most priests include Blessed Mother substantially in their Sunday preaching. She holds an important place in the Gospel message.

Q. Our religion is supposed to be one of joy yet the Bible is filled with violence, frustration, adultery, famine, lust, sin, disobedience, sorrow, martyrs, uncleanness, rituals, fire and brimstone. Why?

A. Your list of nouns is not a bad description of the unredeemed human condition, is it? One of the important functions of the Bible is to show us the human condition as it is when the hand of God is not present and what that human condition can be when God redeems it. The Old Testament in particular is the record of a people whom God chose to lift from man's original sinful condition. It shows us dramatically how individuals and nations rise to great heights when they live by the will of God and in His friendship, but it also shows us to what degradation they sink when they abandon God. The Bible is not primarily a HAPPINESS IS OR JOY IS OR LOVE IS type book but rather the history of man's salvation, showing man the way through the desert of life led by the hand of God.

SEMINARY SCHEDULES SHORT COURSE ON PSALMS

A course entitled Praying the Psalms will be given at St. Bernard's Seminary April 5-6 by the rector, Father Joseph Brennan, under the continuing education program. The first class is scheduled for 7:30-9:30 Friday, April 5. On Saturday, classes will meet from 10 until noon and 1-4 p.m., with lunch between.

Sister Anne Mary Dooley, coordinator of continuing education, will take registrations through April 1 by telephone, 716/254-1020. Prospective students may write to her at St. Bernard's, 2260 Lake Ave., Rochester 14612. The fee for the course is \$25.

CHURCH & MASS INFO.
DIAL DIRECT FREE
THE **Castaways**
Resort Motel
Ocean at 163rd St.
MIAMI BEACH, FLA.
1-800-327-5272

March Special!
HEARING AIDS 30% OFF
When You Present This Ad



WHITE
Hearing
Aid Center

AUTHORIZED NORKCO DEALER
340 Sibley Tower Bldg.
CALL 454-3270

Suede-life
for
SUEDE & LEATHER
CLEANING
SEE US FOR:

- DYEING
- REWEAVING
- BAT & GLOVE CLEANING
- FUR CLEANING & STORAGE
- VINYL & PLASTIC CLEANING

Open Mon.-Fri. 10-6
Sat. 10-5
Sun. 12-5

Bring your precious
Suede & Leather Garments
to the Experts!!

seneca
dyers

1227 Maple St.

687-7766

WE DO GARMENT DYEING