

## Training Patrol Leaders

Probably few leaders can boast that all, if any, of their Patrol Leaders are up to the standard they would like. What can be done about it? More specialised training? At Troop meetings? Well, Troop meetings are not the time and place for formal Patrol Leader training, for the PU time should be occupied at the Troop in, games and other activities. Any training that is going to be productive has to be done away from the Troop meeting on, maybe, a different night or weekend assuming the Scout Leader has the time and ability. Here are some ideas that may be of some assistance:

- Have a Leader and PLs' weekend camp to put over ideas. PLs have a habit of 'coming clean' on things they would like to try in this atmosphere.
- Encourage the PLs to organise a camp or hike for themselves. Help them to prepare objectives but executing the objectives is their problem.
- Ask your DC or DSL to run a PLs' training course with an emphasis on Patrol activities. Consider inviting selected Scouts with PL potential.
- Consider having a Leader and PL training course at District level where you become the PL of your Patrol of PLs'. It may give you the opportunity of getting down to youth level and comparing your Patrol organisation and efforts with that of others and developing better ways of doing things.
- How many of your Patrol Leaders have you presented a copy of the *Australian Patrol Leaders Handbook*? If you haven't given the idea any thought, you should question how serious or genuine you are about the Patrol System.

### Crazy Patrol projects

It has been demonstrated that boys and girls of Scout age do respond to challenges and, sometimes, the more crazier and zany the idea, the better the response as a team.

Here are a few ideas you can try for operators.

### The longest Patrol in the Troop

Establish Patrol records like all members of the Patrol joining hands and stretching out in a line to see which Patrol has the 'longest line'.

Alternatively the Patrols can be on the floor in line (head to foot) and see if another record can be set. If Patrols are short of member's - too bad they better start recruiting.

### The Patrol family meal

The Patrol draws up a meal, which has to be cooked by the parents of its members. Each home has a component of the meal to cook and the Patrol must leave the hall and go from home to home to eat the meal, bit by bit.

It's one way for members to actually find out where the others live, meet their parents (and vice versa) and have fun.

### The Flip-the-Coin-Hike

Patrols are lined up and each PL given a 10-cent piece. They are told to assemble in front of the hall and move off along the street, the direction depending on the flip of the coin (heads to the right, tails to the left).

Each Patrol must have a watch and travel for exactly 20 minutes. Each decision to move into a direction must be made by the flip of the coin. They note their position at 20 minutes and return to the hall where they show their 20-minute position on a map. It's interesting to see the disposition of the Patrols particularly if you asked them beforehand where they thought they would be after 20 minutes' fast walk from the hall.

### Save the Patrol Leader

Each Patrol Leader is stricken with a dreadful malady called 'Mumbleitis.' They are incapable of helping their Patrol in any way, short of walking and saying 'mumble mumble' to all questions.

Over a given course (maybe around a block or two), you select six items they must locate (telephone box number, item in shop window, signature of co-operative householder etc.). These must all be returned to the Scout Leader who checks all the components for correctness and proceeds to "make a special elixir" that will cure each PL of "Mumbleitis".

Where the Patrol has all items correct, the PL, must chew a Sac, - or very big dry biscuit while repeating the phrase "my Patrol is the greatest".

For every incorrect item, he has to eat an additional biscuit while repeating the phrase. Naturally no one knows of this 'caper' until the SL explains the cure after checking each Patrol's returns. (I hope all Patrols like their PLs)