

CAMPFIRES

BOYS

Boys are the nicest things that ever happened to me - these arrogant, self-assured, cocky little men-children who assume that all the great big world revolves around them.

Who else can carry half a worm, one crushed daisy, a piece of scrap metal, a three day-old apple core, and 2 cents --- all in one pocket?

Who else can take a bath without getting their shoulders wet and wash for dinner without turning on the tap?

Who else can believe that right is right, and wrong is wrong and the believes the good guy always wins in the end?

Who else can be a fireman, swordfighter, cowboy, deep-sea diver, all in the space of one hour - and then solemnly hold a funeral, complete with cross and box, for a shell off a turtle lost a month ago?

Who else can be cuter without teeth, meaner without malice, kinder without embarrassment, sillier without foolishness and cleaner without neatness?

The world gains much in leaders and manpower when boys grow up - but loses something too - that magic feeling that comes with being young. The feel of dust between bare toes and the ability to lie quietly while time stands still to watch a minnow in a brook.

Me --- I like boys. They smile when I need a smile; they tease when I am somber; they keep me from taking myself too seriously. No, I don't wish I were young again. I just hope that somehow God will see to it that I always have young people in or near my home and heart.

Author unknown

CAMPFIRE PROGRAM

Types of Fire Lays

One of the most visible images of Scouting is the campfire. Just the mention of the word brings visions to the mind's eye of young people gathered around a roaring blaze performing their skits and stunts or huddles near a pile of dying embers listening intently to a story being spun by one of them. The role of the fire has been important to man since it was first discovered.

Fire can provide us with heat for cooking our meals and staying warm on cold, blustery night. It serves as a beacon calling us to gather, and discover fellowship within the confines of its flickering light. It serves as a warning to the other creatures of the forest that this place is marked.

Anyone who has been in Scouting for long has probably had the opportunity to experience the special chemistry of the council campfire. As the shadows fall, the fire is stoked, the Scouts return from their adventures of the day, and regale in the warmth of sharing a song, a skit, and stories of fantasy and fact.

But, as most of us know, scenes like this just don't happen. They are planned. Wood is gathered, a fire is laid, skits and songs are practiced, and a story is prepared. Often times, we must make these arrangements after we have arrived at camp, but we should only have to make minimal preparations after we arrive.

The first thing that should be decided is:

What Kind Of A Fire Is Needed?

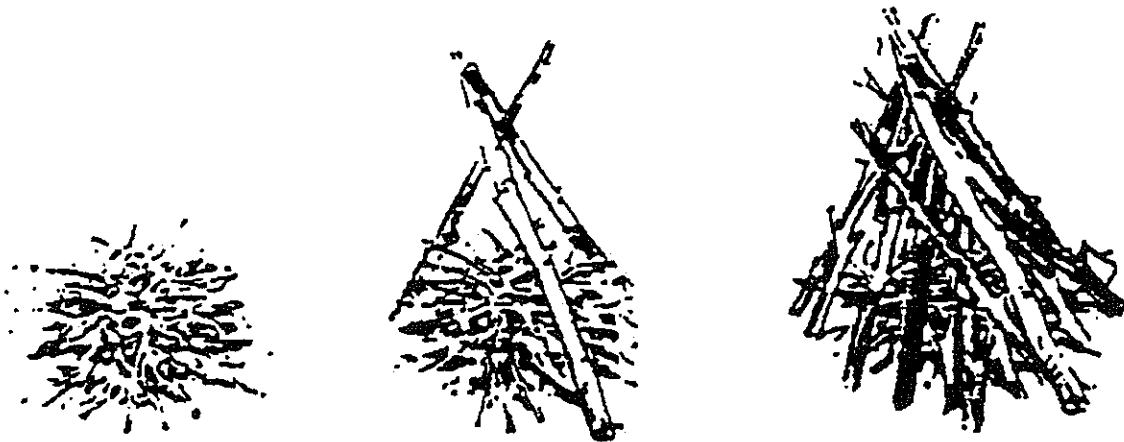
The length of your program will determine what type of fire lay should be put down and how much wood is needed. Short programs require small, fast fires; long programs need larger, slow burning fires. The time of day that your fire is planned will also dictate how much wood is needed.

While there is no one way to correctly build the council fire for a unit activity, a quick review of four basic fire lays will help you in planning your campfire. Considering the strengths and weaknesses of each will provide a starting point in determining the right one for your program and the amount of wood needed.

Four Types Of Fire Lays

Bonfire: The first fire lay that most of us are familiar with is the "bonfire". There is really no set way to build this fire. The random placement of wood allows for a very hot-burning, very quick fire. A large amount of wood is needed for even a very short program of less than thirty minutes. There is no control as to how the coals and burning embers will fall as the fire burns. Your participants can get overheated from being too near the fire as they perform their campfire program. Essentially, this type of fire is best for a rally or similar type of program.

Teepee: The "teepee" fire, our second fire lay, is a variation of the bonfire. The wood is stacked in such a way that as the fire takes form, it begins to take the shape of a teepee. Here the tender, kindling, and smaller pieces of wood are placed in the center, bottom of the fire lay. The larger pieces of wood are stacked outward. Again, the biggest problem with this fire lay is that it burns quickly when started. However, this fire does give large amounts of light.

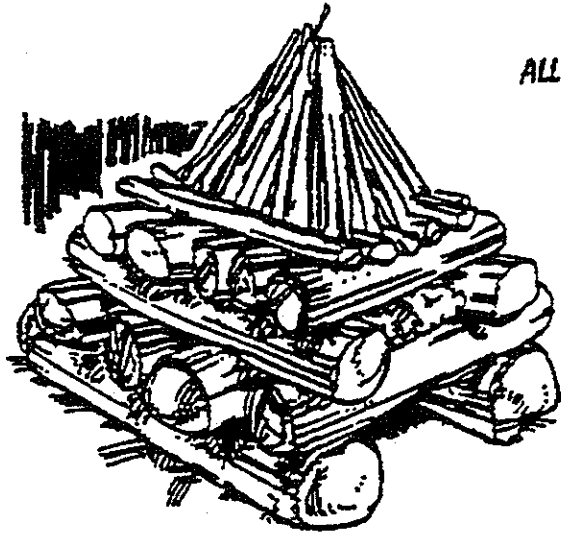


Lean-to: The third fire lay to consider is the “lean-to” or “camper’s” fire. Here, you select a large rock out-cropping, or dense tree stand, and place two logs on the ground. The logs should be of noticeably different diameters, and the larger diameter log is placed further from the rock background than the smaller log. Next, wood is stacked perpendicular to the background in several layers. A good supply of kindling and small wood is placed between each layer. Your tender, kindling, and small wood is placed at the top of the fire lay for lighting the fire. This fire burns slower than the two previously discussed fire lays and, because of the placement of wood, is the most controllable. Its light and heat will generally reflect away from the rock background and toward the audience. A fire lay of only three feet in height will last nearly an hour.



Log Cabin: Perhaps the best known and most commonly used council fire lay is the “log cabin” or “friendship” fire. It is a variation of the camper’s fire and is the most stable of the four basic fire lays discussed. Two logs are placed on the ground to serve as the base for the fire. Wood is then placed on these logs in such a matter that as the fire takes shape, it begins to resemble a log cabin. Tinder, kindling, and smaller wood is placed towards the top to start the fire. Even a small teepee fire could be placed on the

top to start the fire. As the wood burns, the coals and embers generally fall in upon themselves. Again, this is a fairly slow burning fire, and a fire of only three feet high will last nearly an hour.

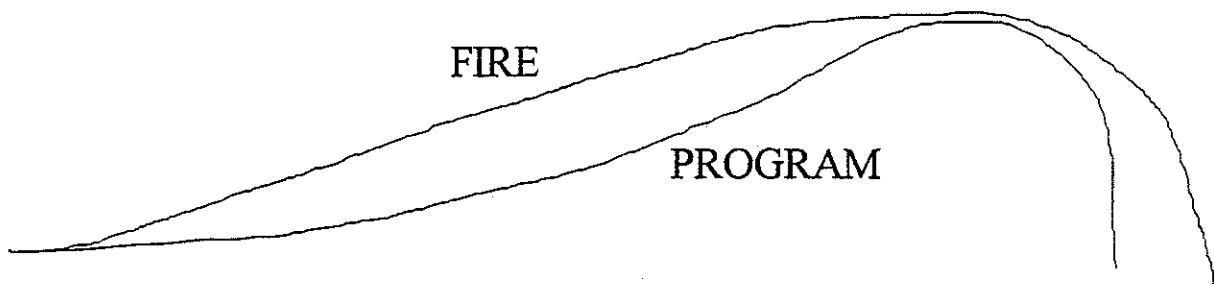


ALL FIRES SHOULD
BE TOP LIGHTED.

ALL FIRES SHOULD BE TOP LIGHTED.

Choose the right fire lay to go with your program will minimize your anxiety as you prepare for your ceremony. Properly laying the fire, and then protecting it, will ensure that it lights when you are ready.

In bringing off a successful campfire program, much care should be given to planning. Songs, skits, and yells should be dispersed throughout the program. The campfire program should proceed and mimic the burning of the fire, as the diagram below shows.



Program Campfire

Your fire will start slow and soon burn brightly. As it uses up the fuel, it will quickly fade and go out. Your program should start slow and be climaxing at the same time your fire is burning brightest.

Generally, a campfire program should last no more than an hour from start to finish. You will find that unless you dismiss your Scouts back to their camps, they will linger around the council fire and begin telling stories on their own. You should have a supply of wood nearby that is approximately half the size of your original fire lay in case additional fuel is needed.

Campfire Storytelling

A storyteller is one whose spirit is indispensable to a campfire. He/she is a magician, artist and creator.

Stories are made of words and of such implications as the storyteller places upon words. Words are the primary tools of the storyteller. It is to his/her purpose to use words well.



It is important to know a story well before telling it. Read a story many times before attempting to tell it to someone else. Most stories in Indian literature are meant to be told out loud. They become more alive when they are spoken. As you tell the stories, pause every now and then and say the word "Ho!?" Tell your listeners to respond with "Hey!" each time they hear you say "Ho?" By involving your listeners in the story, you enable them to feel more a part of the story. Remember when you tell stories to speak slowly and clearly; don't rush your stories. You should feel relaxed. Either stand close to the campfire, turning slowly and easily to face all points of the circle of listeners as you unwind your story, or stand at a central point in the circle where you can be seen at close range by most of the audience.



Campfire Program

A good campfire program has several components. Start with an opening ceremony, colorful and related to the lighting of the fire. Have some songs and icebreakers to provide fun, action, and variety. If possible add games and/or contests to your campfire. Skits or stunts performed by the boys are always a hit and fun for all present. Storytelling is another component that is wonderful at a campfire. There are lots of resources for stories: this book, Scouting Magazine, Boys Life Magazine, and Indian lore books located at the library. A campfire is a great location for recognition ceremonies: boys and adults alike. It provides an atmosphere for memorable ceremonies. Always, I repeat, always keep announcements brief. And always end your campfire with a closing ceremony - Cubmaster's Minute, a quiet song or a benediction.

A good rule of thumb for campfire programs is to follow the fire. Start loud and lively, then slow down, get quiet and inspirational as the fire dies down.

A good campfire program should have in it good fun, good manners, and the Scout ideals translated into action. "Remember, the sparks from your campfire may live in the eyes and heart of a boy for the rest of his life."

Location

When planning your campfire consider location. Where will the participants be seating? Will the smoke be going their way? Will the sun be in their eyes? Is there a highway close by where the noise will be bothersome? Will you need to provide your own firewood or water buckets? Look over the location before you start your campfire so that you will be prepared for any emergency.



From "By Cheyenne Campfires" by George Bird Grinnell

The creation story of the Cheyenne's tell of being who was floating on the surfaces of the water. Water birds, swans, geese, ducks, and other birds that swim already existed, and these were all about him. The person called to these birds and asked them to bring him some earth. They were glad to do so, and agreed one after another to dive through the water and see if they could find earth at the bottom. The larger birds dived in vain. They came up without anything, for they could not reach the bottom; but at last one small duck came to the surface with a little mud in its bill. The bird swam to the being and put the mud in his hand, and he took it and worked it with his fingers until dry, when he placed it in little piles on the surface of the water, and each little pile became land, and grew and spread, until, as far as one could see, solid land was everywhere. Thus was created the earth we walk on.

After there was firm ground the creator took from his right side a rib and from it made man. From the man's left side he took a rib and from that made a woman. These two persons were made at the same place, but after they had been made they were separated, and the woman was put far in the north, and the man in the south.

After the creator had made the two people, whom he placed far apart in the north and in the south, he stood between them with his back toward the rising sun. He said to them, "In that direction," pointing to the south, "You will find many sorts of animals and birds different from those which you will find in that direction," pointing to the north where the woman stood. "The birds that live in the south will go to the north in the summer. Where the woman is it will be cold and the grass and trees will not grow well. There will be hardly any of them, but where the man is everything will grow: trees, bushes, grass."

The woman in the north, though she was gray-haired, was not old. She never seemed to grow any older. The man in the south was young. He did not grow older.

In the north lives Ho older' a ha, the Winter Man, the power that brings cold and snow, and also brings sickness and death. He obeys the woman in the north. He is often spoken of in the stories and is said to have declared at a meeting of the supernatural beings that he would "take pity on no one." When at this meeting he spoke in this way, the Thunder, who represents the power of the south, declared that it would not do to let Ho older' a ha have everything to say; so, with the help of the buffalo, the Thunder made fire, and taught one of the people how to do the same thing. Thus, by the help of the Thunder, and people were given something to use against the cold, something that would warm them.

The man and woman in the south and in the north appear to typify summer and winter; the man represents the sun or the Thunder, while the woman represents the power that wars against the sun.

Twice a year there is a conflict between the Thunder and the Winter Man. At the end of summer when the streams get low and the grass becomes yellow and dry, Ho older' a ha comes down from the north and says to the Thunder: "Move back, move back to the place from which you came. I want to spread all over the earth and freeze things and cover everything with snow." Then the Thunder moves back. Toward spring, when the days begin to grow longer, the Thunder comes back from the south and says to Ho older' a ha, "Go back, go back to the place from which you came; I wish to warm the earth and to make the grass grow, and all things to turn green."

Then the Winter Man moves back and the Thunder comes, bringing the rain; the grass grows and all the earth is green. So there is a struggle between these two powers. They follow each other back and forth.

The two first people, the man in the south and the woman in the north, never came together, but later other people were created and from them the earth was populated.

From "When the Tree Flowered" by John G. Neihardt

There is a great hoop; and so big it is that everything is in it for it is the hoop of the universe, and all that live in it are relatives. When you stand on a high hill and look all around, you can see its shape and know that it is so. This hoop has quarters, and each is sacred, for each has a mysterious power of its own, and it is by those powers that we live. Also, each quarter has its sacred objects and a color, and these stand for its power.

First is the place where the sun goes down. Its color is blue like the thunder clouds, and it has the power to make live and to destroy. The bow is for the lightening that destroys, and the wooden cup is for the rain that makes live.

Next is the place where the great white giant lives, and its color is white like the snows. It has the power of healing, for thence come the cleansing winds of the winter. The white wing of the goose stands for that wind of cleansing and a sacred white herb for healing.

Next is the place whence comes the light, where all the days of men are born; and its color is red like the sunrise. It has the power of wisdom and the power of peace. The morning star stands for wisdom, for it brings the light that we may see and understand; and the pipe is for the peace that understanding gives.

Next is the place of summer, and the color of it is yellow like the sun. Thence comes the power to grow and flourish. The sacred staff of six branches is for the power to grow, and the little hoop is for the life of the people who flourish as one.

Then at the place whence comes the power to grow, a road begins, the good red road of spirit that all men should know; and it runs straight across the hoop of the world to the place whence comes the power of cleansing and healing, to the place of white hairs and the cold and the cleansing of old age.

And then there is a second road, the hard black road of difficulties that all men must travel. It begins at the place whence come the days of men, and it runs straight across the hoop of this world to the place where the sun goes down and all the days of men have gone and all their days shall go; far beyond is the other world, the world of spirit. It is a hard road to travel, a road of trouble and need. But where this black road of difficulties crosses the good red road of spirit at the center of the hoop of the world, that place is very holy, and there springs the Tree of Life.

For those who look upon the Tree, it shall fill with leaves and blooms and singing birds; and it shall shield them as a prairie hen shields her chickens.

(This is as the story was written. In telling it, you might wish to adapt it to your own setting, location, vocabulary and way of saying things. In other words, make it your own!)

"The Bear That Came For Supper" by Robert Franklin Leslie

I met Bosco in the remote wilderness near Mount Robson I Western Canada. At the end of a long day of backpacking I had made a lean-to in a clearing beside a stream and was preparing to catch supper. Then I looked up - and there he was; an enormous boar black bear, slowly circling the clearing within thirty yards. He wasn't Bosco to me yet, and I viewed his presence with trepidation. My provisions were vulnerable if he was in a piratical mood, since I was unarmed. However, I decided to go about my fishing. The bear came along.

I have lived with wild creatures for thirty years, respecting their first fear - fast movement - and now I let him see the reason and the beginning in every slow, deliberate move I made. Soon he was setting on his haunches less than five feet away, intensely interested in my activity. When I landed a fourteen-inch Loch Levin, I tossed it to him. He gulped it without bothering to chew. And when I flipped out the fly again he moved closer, planted his well-upholstered fanny on the turf beside my boot, and leaned half his five hundred pounds against my right leg!

I plied the gray hackle along the ripples and got another strike. Before reeling in, I eased over a yard, convinced the bear would grab the fish, line rod - and maybe me. But he didn't. His patience and dignity were regal as he sat rocking back and forth, watching carefully. When I released the trout from the hook, he bawled a long-drawn-out "Maw!" I held the wriggling fish high by the lower lip, stepped over to my "guest" and shakily dropped the prize into his cavernous red mouth. When drizzly darkness set in, I was still fishing for that bear, fascinated as much by his gentle manners as by his insatiable capacity. I began to think of him in a friendly way as Big Bosco, and I didn't mind when he followed me back to camp.

After supper I built up the fire, sat on the sleeping bag under the lean-to and lighted my pipe. All this time Bosco has sat just outside the heat perimeter of the fire, but the moment I was comfortably settled he walked over and sat down beside me. Overlooking the stench of wet fur, I rather enjoyed his warmth as we sat on the sleeping bag under the shelter. I listened to the rain thumping on the tarp in time with the steady powerful cur-rump, cur-rump of the heartbeat beneath his thick coat. When the smoke blew our way, he snorted and sneezed, and I imitated most of his body movements, even the sneezing and snorting, swaying my head in every direction, sniffing the air as he did.

Then Bosco began licking my hands. Guessing what he wanted, I got him a handful of salt. Bosco enthusiastically mauled my hands to the ground with eight four-inch claws, claws capable of peeling the bark from a full-grown cedar, claws that could carry his five-hundred-odd pounds at full gallop to the top of the tallest tree in the forest, claws that could rip a man's body like a band saw. Finally the last grain of salt was gone and again we sat together. I wondered if this could be for real. I recalled Sam Ottley, trail foreman on the King's River in the Sierra Nevada, whom I had seen sharing tent and rations with a bear; but Sam's creature was old and toothless, no longer able to live off the country. This monster was the finest prime specimen I had ever seen.

Bosco stood up on all fours, burped a long, fishy belch, and stepped out into the rainy blackness. But he soon was back - with a message. He sat down near the sleeping bag and attempted to scratch that area of his rump just above his tail; he couldn't reach it. Again and again he nudged me and growled savagely at the itch. Finally I got the message and laid a light hand on his back. He flattened out to occupy the total seven feet of the lean-to as I began to scratch through the dense, oily hair. The full significance of his visit hit me. Just above his stubby tail several gorged ticks were dangerously embedded in swollen flesh. Little by little I proved that the flashlight would not burn, so he allowed me to focus it on his body. When I

twisted out the first parasite, I thought I was in for a mauling. His roar shook the forest. But I determined to finish the job. Each time I removed a tick I showed it to him for a sniff before dropping it on the fire, and by the last one he affably licking my hand.

A cold, sniffing nose awakened me several times during the night as the bear came and went. He left the sleeping bag wetter and muddier each time he crawled around over me, but he never put his full weight down when he touched any part of my body. The next day I set off again, over a ridge, down through a chilly river, up the next crest, through thickets of birch and alder and down a wide, north-running river canyon. To my surprise Bosco followed like a faithful dog, digging grubs or bulbs when I stopped to rest. That evening I fished for Bosco's supper.

As days passed and I hiked north, I used a system of trout, salt and scratch rewards to teach the bear to respond to the call, "Bosco!" Despite his perpetual devotion to food, he never lagged far behind. One evening he walked over to the log where I was enjoying my pipe, and began to dig at my boots. When I stood up he led me straight to a dead, hollow bee tree at which he clawed vigorously but unsuccessfully. Returning to camp, I covered my head with mosquito netting, tied shirt, pants and glove openings and got the hatchet. I built a smoke fire near the base of the tree and hacked away until the hollow shell crashed to earth, split wide open and exposed the hive's total summer production. For my understanding and efforts I received three stinging welts. Bosco ate twenty pounds of honeycomb, beebread and hundreds of bees. He snored most of that night at the foot of the sleeping bag.

At campsites, Bosco never tolerated long periods of relaxation and reflection; and true to my form where animals are concerned, I babied his every whim. When he wanted his back scratched, I scratched; when he wanted a fish dinner, I fished; when he wanted to romp and roll with me in the meadow, I romped and rolled - and still wear scars to prove that he played games consummately out of my league. During one particularly rough session, I tackled his right front leg, bowling him over on his back. As I sat there on his belly regaining wind, he retaliated with a left hook that not only opened a two-inch gash down the front of my chin but spun me across the meadow. When I woke up, Bosco was licking my wound. His shame and remorse were inconsolable. He sat with his ears back and bawled like a whipped pup when I was able to put my arm around his neck and repeat all the soft, ursine vocabulary that he had taught me.

After that experience I let Bosco roll me around when he had to play, but I never raised another finger toward originality. If he got too rough, I played dead. Invariably he would turn me over, lick my face and gently whine.

There were times when he spent his excess energy racing around in hundred-yard circles, building up speed to gallop to the top of the tallest fir. When he returned to camp immediately afterward, I could detect absolutely no increase above normal breathing rate. He panted only when we walked for long periods in full sun and he got thirsty.

It is not my intention either to attribute character traits to the bear which he could not possess or to exaggerate those he had. I simply studied him for what he was and saw him manifest only the normal qualities of his species, which were formidable enough without exaggeration. Other than calling him Bosco, I never attempted human training with him; conversely, I did everything possible to train myself to become a brother bear. Like all sensitive mammals, Bosco had his full compliment of moods. When serious, he was dead earnest; when exuberant, a volcano. Being a bear, he was by nature uninhibited; so I never expressed even a shade of the word, "no". The feeling we developed for each other was spontaneous, genuine, brotherly bear affection. When it occurred to him to waddle over my way on his hide legs, grab me up in a smothering bear hug and express an overflowing emotion with a face licking, I went along with

it for two reasons: first, I was crazy about the varmint; second, I nourished a healthy respect for what one swat from the ambidextrous giant could accomplish.

Although he was undisputed monarch of all his domain, I think Bosco considered me his mental equal in most respects. It was not long before he taught me to expand communication through a language of the eyes. How a bear can look you in the eye! Terrifying at first, it grows into the most satisfactory medium of all. Bosco and I would sit by the campfire, honestly and intimately studying each other's thoughts. Once in a while he would reach some sort of conclusion and hang a heavy paw on my shoulder. And I would do the same. It must have made an odd picture, but many times as I looked into those big, yellowish-brown eyes, I felt an awed humility as if the Deity Himself were about to effect a revelation through this, another of His children.

Although his size and strength made Bosco almost invulnerable to attack by other animals, he had his own collection of phobias. Thunder and lighting made him cringe and whine. When whisky jacks flew into camp looking for food, he fled in terror, the cacophony birds power-diving and pecking him out of sight.

Bosco's phenomenal sense of smell amazed me. Trudging along behind me, he would suddenly stop, sniff the air and make a beeline for a big succulent mushroom two hundred yards away; to a flat rock across the river under which chipmunks had warehoused their winter seed supply; to a berry patch two ridges over.

One afternoon when we were crossing, a hearth where dwarf willows grew in scattered hedge like clumps, Bosco suddenly reared up and let out a "Maw!" I could detect no reason for alarm, but Bosco stood erect and forbade me to move. He advanced, began to snarl - and pandemonium broke out. From every clump of willows spouted an upright bear! Black bear, brown bear, cinnamon bear and one champagne (all subdivisions of the same species). But these were young bears, two-year-olds, and no match for Bosco. He charged his closest contestant with the fury of a sherman tank, and before the two-year-old could pick himself up he dispatched a second bear and tore into a thicket to dislodge a third. At the end of the circuit my gladiator friend remembered me and scoured back, unscathed and still champion.

That night we sat longer than usual by the campfire. Bosco nudged, pawed, talked at great length and looked long in the eye before allowing me to retire. In my ignorance I assumed it was a rehash of this afternoon's battle. He was gone for most of the night.

Along toward next mid-afternoon I sensed something wrong. Bosco did not forage, but clung to my heels. I was looking over a stream side campsite when the big bear about-faced and broke into a headlong, swinging lope up the hill we had just descended. I did not call to him as he went over the crest full steam without once looking back. That evening I cooked supper with one eye on the hillside, then lay awake for hours waiting for the familiar nudge. By morning I was desolated; I knew I should never again see big brother Bosco. He left behind a relationship I shall treasure.

