

It was many years ago when a young disabled boy sat on the sidelines at a YMCA camp. He cheered his friends on, always wearing a smile and shared all he had to give -- his Christian (God-like) ideals and happy way of looking at everything -- with everyone.

On the last night of camp, a bandanna was tied around his neck as a humble symbol from the campers to recognize his Christ (God)-like way of living. From this small beginning comes the tradition of a little "rag" of cloth, today called the Rag. The Rag represents the desire of its wearer to follow the examples Christ (God) set for us all.

What does the Rag signify? The Rag is an outward symbol of an inner challenge you wish to accept. It is a piece of cloth to remind us of the challenge we accept at camp and continue to carry out while we are away from camp. The Rag is a personal and voluntary way of challenging yourself to improve your way of life. Your promise of improvement is between you and God. The responsibility to live up to this challenge is yours. God will see your success in fulfilling this desire to live a better life; your family, friends, and anyone you meet should see it too.

Now yours to share is the experience of coming close to God through the dedication to become more God-like in your thinking and acting.

Read this book further to decide whether YOU want to become a Ragger and live such a life.

THE RAG

As stated previously, the Rag is an outward symbol of the acceptance of an inner challenge for growth. Its symbolism is God-centered, sacred, and personal. The decision to become a Ragger must rest with you.

Each color has a specific meaning. Linked to the meaning of a particular rag is your personal challenge for growth.

THE BLUE RAG

1. Loyalty to God
2. Loyalty to country
3. Loyalty to one's best self
4. Loyalty to the Raggers' Creed

LOYALTY

(Four Square Life)

THE SILVER RAG

Respect and appreciation for:

RESPECT & APPRECIATION

(Christian Decision)

1. The principles that Christ gave to the world
2. My country
3. My fellow man
4. Myself

THE BROWN RAG

1. Serve God
2. Humility
3. Become more aware of the needs of others

SERVICE

(Service to Others)

THE GOLD RAG

1. Understanding of others
2. Concern for others

BENEVOLENCE

(Understanding Others)

THE RED RAG

1. Sacrifice of time
2. Sacrifice of talent
3. Sacrifice of personal will

SACRIFICE

(Leadership and Humility)

THE PURPLE RAG

HIGH AND NOBLE LIVING

(Noble Life)

THE WHITE RAG

DEDICATION TO A LIFE OF

CHRISTIAN SERVICE

(Life Service)

RAG TIER's WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT:

RAG ACCEPTED BY:

MY RAG WAS TIED BY:

ADDRESS: _____

HOME PHONE: _____

DATE: _____

MY GUIDE (IF DIFFERENT FROM TIER):

ADDRESS: _____

HOME PHONE: _____

DATE: _____

THE MEANING OF THE RAG

We refer to our rags as rags because that is exactly what they are --- worthless pieces of cloth. You couldn't sell your rag; it isn't worth much money. Your rag has only the meaning YOU give it. The Rag program is open to people of all religious faiths.

THE RAG IS NOT

1. A decoration
2. An award for achievement
3. A reward
4. A "pat " on the back
5. Measuring myself by others
6. "I AM FIRST"
7. Self-centered
8. I am good, or being good
9. Knowing about God, talking about God
10. Sight (seeing things as they are)
11. A status symbol

THE RAG IS

1. A symbol
2. A challenge for growth
3. A responsibility
4. A "push" forward
5. Measuring myself by God
6. "I AM THIRD"
7. God-centered
8. I want to be better
9. Knowing God, talking to God
10. Vision (seeing things as they ought to be)
11. A personal calling to humility

THE GOLD RAG

Acceptance of the Gold Rag is an acceptance of concern for others and a desire for understanding of others.

When you became a Brown Ragger you challenged yourself to be of service to others. Do you feel you measured up to your challenge? In what way(s) was it most difficult?

The Purple Rag was conceived as a new step for 18-year olds and over. It was an advancement and challenge to the good life for those men who were not going into full time Christian service.

The Rag has had a long and eventful life of 35 years. It has changed in many ways, but it is still an instrument to aid in the building of Christian character at YMCA summer camps. The real test of the Rag is in how its members conduct themselves in the year round program of the YMCA, and in their home, school, church and community.

Homer Gould of the Los Angeles YMCA tried changes involving campers in the selection of Ragers.

Sheldon Swenson, Conley Davis and others proposed that the rag should be a challenge available to every camper who sincerely accepted it. Acceptance required sharing with a counselor the meaning associated with a specific color rag and how it tied into the candidate's personal needs.

Over a period of fifty years the Rag has been and continues to be a challenging symbol of strength and Christian character, leadership and service. It is the key to the spirit of Christian fellowship at Camp Arbolado.

THE RAGGERS' CREED

I would be true, for there are those who trust me,
I would be pure, for there are those who care,
I would be strong, for there is much to suffer,
I would be brave, for there is much to dare.
I would be friend to all, the foe, the friendless,
I would be giving and forget the gift,
I would be humble, for I know my weakness,
I would look up and laugh, and love and lift.

THE HISTORY OF THE RAG

In the summer of 1914, Tom Caldwell, Boy's Secretary of the Oakland YMCA, presented the first Blue Rags to boys living up to certain standards in camp. He conceived the idea of giving a blue bandanna as an award for character attributes such as good health habits, morals, helpfulness, cheerfulness, promptness and dependability. This idea contrasted with the San Francisco 'Y' policy of presenting an athletic award for achievement in certain specified athletic activities. All campers could be recognized socially for constructive attitudes and cooperation.

In the same year, two outstanding boys received Red Rags as advanced recognition. Most of the other boys received Blue Rags. They were called out at campfire and bandannas tied around their necks.

In 1915, the story of King Arthur and his Knights suggested a ceremony of "Knighting" the boys with Rags, and Tom Caldwell was called the "King" of Ragers. Ray Ogden, Associate Boys, Secretary of the Oakland YMCA, suggested "I would be true" as the Ragers' Creed and it was adopted. The ceremony was given on a mountain peak near camp. D.F. Ewings and C.F. Martin wrote a Red Rag ceremony in 1916.

In 1918, Ralph Cole, State Secretary, visited the Oakland the 'Y' camp, recognized the values in the system and suggested the plan to other camps. There were five young men planning to go into YMCA work including Louis Meillette, Bob Hutchison, and Roland Ure. Tom Caldwell wrote a White Rag ceremony for them. Its use was generally restricted to those going into Christian work. Later at a special ceremony in Los Angeles, Louis Meillette presented Tom Caldwell with a White Rag as "King of Ragers" in November 1924.

In 1932, the Los Angeles YMCA under Homer Gould, suggested a new method of telling the boy his selection for membership. Up to that time, boys were called out at campfire and given a list of requirements to learn for a ceremony the following day or so. The new idea was to have all the Ragers called together by the Director and the list read to them. Volunteers were to look up the individuals chosen and bring them to the ceremonial spot without having to learn any material.

The Gold Rag was conceived as a step for 15-year olds and over. The idea was to encourage study of a concern for the economic and social order, to emphasize the inclusive gospel of all races and creeds, and economic groups. The World Service Program of the YMCA was tied in with this ceremony.

"LISTEN"

Listen to the voice of God!
Around you! Listen!
He calls you to grow!
To stretch your mind with new knowledge,
To stretch your muscles with clean play and hard work.
To stretch your heart to include new friends,
To stretch your soul and fill it with beauty and hope and great purposes!
Listen to the voice of God!

1. How do you think you can grow by listening to God?

"THANK YOU, GOD"

Thank you, God for this new day in which to grow,
For wondrous things, which, when this day is done I shall know.
For each new face that I shall meet throughout this day,
And for the lessons I shall learn from all who come my way.
And thank you, too, for strange ideas I shall meet.
That call for my best efforts, least I know defeat.
And if, sometime today, I seem to fail, help me to know,
Tomorrow's still another day in which to grow!

2. How can you learn to understand others?

A RAG IS THE OUTWARD SYMBOL OF AN INNER CHALLENGE YOU WANT TO ACCEPT. YOUR RAG CHALLENGE SHOULD AFFECT YOUR LIFE TO SUCH A DEGREE THAT YOU CAN FEEL A SIGNIFICANT CHANGE WITHIN YOURSELF AND OTHERS CAN EXPERIENCE THIS CHANGE.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

What personal goal do I want to strive for as a Gold Ragger?

3. How would understanding yourself first help you to better understand others?

How do I plan to do this?

THE SIGN OF GOD IS THAT WE WILL BE LED WHERE WE DID NOT PLAN TO GO

b. How can you correct these shortcomings?

"O, GOD!"

O, God, give me clean hands, clean words, and clean thoughts. Help me stand for the hard right against the easy wrong. Save me from habits that harm. Teach me to work as hard and play as fair in Thy sight alone as if the whole world saw. Forgive me when I am unkind, and help me to forgive those who are unkind to me. Keep me ready to help others at some cost to myself and send me chances to do some good every day. Amen.

4. Why is honor and integrity important?

"FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS" (JOHN DONNE)

No person is an island, entire of itself; every person is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were; any person's death diminishes me, because I am involved with mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.

9. To be whole, a person must give of him(her)self to others. Why?
How has your life affected the lives of others around you?

"THIS IS MY COMMANDMENT"

Jesus said, "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no person than this, that a person lay down his(her) life for his(her) friend. You are my friends if you do what I have commanded you."

5. What kind of new friends could you add to widen your circle of friendship and increase your understanding of others?

"INSTRUMENT OF PEACE"

Lord, make me and instrument of Thy peace!
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury --- pardon
Where there is doubt --- faith
Where there is despair --- hope
Where there is darkness --- light
Where there is sadness --- joy
O, Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as
to console;
To be understood as to understand;
To be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
It is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

6. How are these ideas or thoughts important to you?

"IN MEN WHOM MEN CONDEMN AS ILL" (FROM BYRON)

In men whom men condemn as ill
I find so much of goodness still,
In men(women) whom men(women) pronounce divine
I find so much of sin and blot,
I do not dare to draw a line
Between the two, where God has not.

7. What does this poem teach us about:

- a. Judging others?
- b. Condemning/ridiculing others?

"IF I CAN STOP ONE HEART FROM BREAKING" (EMILY DICKINSON)

If I can stop one heart from breaking,
I shall not live in vain;
If I can ease one life the aching,
Or cool one pain,
Or help one fainting robin
Unto his nest again,
I shall not live in vain.

8. True benevolence requires concern for and understanding of others and all things in nature (plant, animal, and non-living). Reflect on your personal life.

- a. Where are your shortcomings?