

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 Ragers' Creed

LOYALTY

(Four Square Life)

THE SILVER RAG

Respect and appreciation for:

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

RESPECT & APPRECIATION

(Christian Decision)

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 RED RAG

Acceptance of the Red Rag is an acceptance of sacrifice of time, talent, and personal will.

When you became a Gold Ragger you challenged yourself to better understand and serve 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 Raggars.

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.

RED RAGGERS' CREED (To be memorized)

We believe the best and happiest life is the one spent not for self, but for others. With this for our goal, we pledge our hearty loyalty to our society and to its principles.

We will be earnest seekers after truth, we will be friends not only to each other, but to all, and we will do our utmost to advance in true Christian manhood (womanhood).

We will stand everywhere and always for purity and righteousness.

1. In what way do you feel you can give more fully of yourself to others?

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Then flew one of the seraphim to me having in his hand a burning coal which he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth, and said, "Behold this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin forgiven." And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here I am! Send me!" And He said, "Go!"

2. In what areas can you give leadership?

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 Red Ragger?

3. How can you better prepare yourself for this role?

How do I plan to do this?

EVERY BELIEVER IN THIS WORLD MUST BE A SPARK OF LIGHT

"DREAMER OF DREAMS" (CONTD)

There's no sadder sight this side the grave
Than the shroud o'er a fond dream spread,
And the heart should be stern and the eyes be brave
To gaze on a dream that is dead.

'Tis a cup of wormwood and gall
When the doom of a great dream is said,
And the best of a man(woman) is under the pall
When the best of his(her) dreams is dead.

He(she) may live on by compact and plan
When the fine blossom of living is shed,
But God pity the little that's left of a man(woman)
When the last of his(her) dreams is dead.

Let him(her) show a brave face if he(she) can,
Let him(her) woo fame and fortune instead,
Yet there's not much to do but bury a man(woman)
When the last of his(her) dreams is dead.

9. In order to make the world a better place and help our fellow man, we must be continual dreamers and visionaries. Dreams of this nature usually entail significant sacrifice of time, talent and personal will before they can become a reality, even if a dream is small. What does the above poem teach us about dreams/vision?

ST. MATTHEW 26:39

“And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, ‘O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt.’”

4. How can you recognize that you are accomplishing God's will?

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Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears has Thou opened:
burnt offering has Thou not required.

5. How can you keep your relationship to God vital and growing?

Choose a person whose spirit and attitude toward God and life you wish to follow (i.e., Jesus, Moses, Martin Luther King, Abraham, etc.)

6. What person did you choose?
7. Why did you choose this person (i.e., describe the qualities, life, etc. of the person selected which make him(her) someone you want to follow)?

At the end of the movie "The Wizard Of Oz," the wizard gives the tin man a "heart" (watch shaped like a heart). As the tin man receives his heart, the wizard gives the following advice with great reverence and affection, "And remember my sentimental friend that a heart is not judged by how much you love, but by how much you are loved by others."

8. Reflect on this and the previous poem:

- a. What does true sacrifice entail?
- b. What important lesson was the wizard giving the tin man? Explain.

"THE MEASURE OF A PERSON (UNKNOWN)"

Not --- "How did he(he) die?" But --- "How did he(he) live?"
Not --- "What did he(he) gain?" But --- "What did he(he) give?"
These are the units to measure the worth
Of a man(woman) as a man(woman), regardless of birth.
Not --- "What was his(her) station?" But --- "Had he(he) a heart?"
And --- "How did he(he) play his(her) God-given part?
Was he(he) ever ready with a word of good cheer,
To bring back a smile, to banish a tear?"

Not --- "What was his(her) church?" But --- "What was his(her) creed?"
But --- "Had he(he) befriended those really in need?"
Not --- "What did the sketch in the newspaper say?"
But --- "How many were sorry when he(he) passed away?"

"DREAMER OF DREAMS" (WILLIAM HERBERT CARRUTH)

We are all of us dreamers of dreams;
On visions our childhood is fed;
And the heart of the child is unhaunted, it seems,
By the ghosts of dreams that are dead.

From childhood to youth's but a span
And the years of our youth are soon sped;
Yet the youth is no longer a youth, but a man(woman),
When the first of his(her) dreams is dead.