

SINGING FOR ROSE

BY NERISSA DAWN CANNON

As a teenager, I didn't want to participate in the branch choir. I loved to sing, but singing with the branch never thrilled me. One day, though, I grudgingly decided to accompany my mom to choir practice. Believe it or not, I actually had fun that day. I couldn't exactly explain what it was, but for the first time I could remember, I wanted to be there. I continued to go.

At our last practice before we were to sing at branch conference, a recently returned missionary suggested that our choir go sing for Sister Rose. Sister Rose was a sweet 90-year-old lady whom I'd heard a lot about but never met. She was homebound, and the leaders were always telling us youth that she was lonely and that we should visit her. Not knowing her, I felt funny about just showing up on her doorstep. When this returned missionary suggested we sing, I jumped on the idea. Everyone else did too.

The next week, our choir sang at branch conference. Our stake president said that we were one of the best choirs in the stake. Even though we were a small branch, we had the best turnout as well.

Finally, we got to go sing for Sister Rose. I don't recall having met a sweeter lady. While we were singing, she caught my eye and smiled. I struggled hard to choke back the tears as I saw her singing the chorus of "Praise to the Man" with us. That day I knew why I had participated in the choir.

After we were done, Sister Rose said we were one of the best choirs in the stake. Members of our choir enthusias-

tically reported to her that the stake president had said the same thing.

The joy I saw on her face was worth dragging myself from my Sunday afternoon nap to choir practice. In fact, it was a small price to pay. I shudder to think that if I had been hardhearted and not gone to choir, I would have missed out on this amazing experience. It was wonderful to be a part of something that brought another person such happiness. **NE**



A FRIENDLY INVITATION

BY CHRIS LARSON

During my freshman year of high school, I met a girl who shared something with me that has changed my life permanently.

I knew she held her family and church very close to her. She always seemed to be talking about these things and never failed to invite me to a church activity. I always had an excuse for not being able to go, but in truth, I was simply afraid of the rumors I had heard about Mormons. After 18 months of invitations, I decided to go help her father with a Cub Scout activity at her local meetinghouse. The members were a lot of fun, and even though I didn't recognize it by name, I felt the Spirit very strongly. I went to more activities until eventually I found myself waking up at 4:30 a.m. to see what seminary was all about.

My friend invited me to read the Book of Mormon and meet with the missionaries. I agreed to meet with them in her home where I was able to feel the love and support from her family and also hear their conversion stories. The missionaries and this family encouraged me to read and to pray. Through their examples and support, I was able to gain a testimony of the Book of Mormon and the restored Church of Jesus Christ. I was baptized and later served in a branch presidency while on my mission in Lubbock, Texas. I loved to share this experience with those I taught and will be forever grateful for what a friend was willing to share with me. **NE**

THE MERITS OF SCOUTING

BY HIKIMAI JOHNSON

While earning the merit badges for Scouts, I noticed that most of the badges involve some sort of service.

Scouting is a great learning process. Earning merit badges has helped me explore different professional opportunities in many different careers. It gave me a lot of experiences that help me now and will continue to help me in the future. Scouting has taught me basic survival skills in case of emergencies and it taught me the values of service to others. It helped me with my communication and leadership skills and it taught me how to set goals and accomplish them. It also taught me how to have fun camping with my family and friends!

Now I use the skills that I learned while earning the merit badges and my Eagle rank in my schooling,



especially in the business area. I have listed Scouting and my Eagle rank when applying for academic honor societies, and I will be able to use it for other things. Scouting is a great tool to help me and other young men in schooling and in preparing for a mission, a career, and life in general. Through my experiences I have found that Scouting and the Duty to God program go hand in hand and both have helped me in the learning process of life.

As den chief for my mom I had the opportunity to help teach and work with other Scouts and Cub Scouts and I have also worked with my brother, who just received his Eagle, so I have had many opportunities to further the Scouting program. Scouting is awesome! **NE**

MY COMFORT

BY WHITNEY HOLYOAK LIFFERTH

I was 14 and had just moved to a new school with very few members. I had lived in a town made up mostly of LDS residents, so living in a place where I was the minority was a whole new experience. I didn't quite know how to take it in. I was really struggling to find where I belonged while still upholding my standards.

After one extremely trying day, I fell

to my knees in prayer, pleading for comfort and support. Then a calm feeling came over me. I felt arms embrace me as if someone were holding me gently. It was like my dad was giving me a big hug, only the warmth went all the way through. I knew without a doubt that the Lord felt my pain and was there to reassure me that my struggles were known. That's something I will always keep with me in times of pain. **NE**

Share your own experience with us at newera@ldschurch.org.