

Lady Liberty and the Ideal Boy Scout

by Lynne Belluscio

Thomas Podnar called from Ohio last week. LeRoy's Lady Liberty is ready to come back home. (In fact, by the time you read this, she may already be back in LeRoy.) Her face has been restored, and the gaping seams near her feet are repaired. The wood inside the base was in such good shape, they didn't have to replace it. We decided that the seams would not be so obvious if a finish was applied.

Originally she was made of forty sheets of copper that were soldered together. Then in 1984, when she was repaired, she was soldered again, but not with the original type of solder, so she really looked like a pieced quilt. Thomas suggested a special finish, which would minimize the solder lines. They still show, but aren't as prominent. In order to restore the face, Thomas had to remove the top of her head and press the copper out from the inside. He also straightened the seven rays on the top of her crown. (The seven rays symbolize the seven continents and the seven seas of the world.)

During our conversation, we talked about the Boy Scout connection to the statues that are across the nation, and I asked Tom if he had ever repaired one of these before. No he hadn't, but he did work on the "Ideal Scout" statue in Cleveland. I hadn't heard about this statue, so I did a little research and found it quite interesting.

In 1914, the President of the Philadelphia Council of Boy Scouts asked Dr. R. Tait McKenzie to create a statuette of the

"Ideal Boy Scout." McKenzie was a Canadian physician, writer, artist and sculptor, who had moved to Philadelphia to teach at the University of Pennsylvania. He was a pioneer in the field of physical education and served on the Board of the Philadelphia Boy Scout Council. He produced an 18 inch bronze statuette and only ten were cast.

In 1930, the Philadelphia Boy Scout Council asked Dr. McKenzie to create a life size statue to stand before their new headquarters. Instead of reproducing the small statuette in a life-sized version, Dr. McKenzie incorporated new changes in the scout uniform and insignia. The statue in Philadelphia was unveiled in 1937. (It has been recently moved to a new location.)

Boy Scout Councils around the country have had copies of the "Ideal Scout" cast and installed. On October 10, 1962, the Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Explorer Scouts of Cleveland dedicated a life-sized version of "The Ideal Scout" to the Boy Scout Council of Greater Cleveland. This is the statue that Tom Podnar restored.

As the Historical Society gets ready for our summer exhibit, "Strengthen the Arm of Liberty" I am interested in finding some - - -and I stress - - some Boy Scout things, preferably connected with LeRoy Boy Scouts.

In particular, I am interested in things from 1950, when the Statue was dedicated. A few years ago, we received a wooden pack frame. But as far as I can tell, we have nothing else. The objects or uniforms

do not have to be donated, they can be on loan for the exhibit.

In the meantime, I have purchased a few things on ebay. First I have a 1950 handbook for patrol leaders. And a neckerchief from the 1950 Jamboree at Valley Forge with the Strengthen the Arm of Liberty slide. I also found a great 1950 scout diary to celebrate the 40th anniversary. On page 3 it mentions: "Most important of all, it is a place where

you may keep a personal record of your Daily Good Turns. Good Turns are not something to brag about. But you should be conscious of having done them." It also mentions that the knot in the scout tie is to remind each scout to "Do a Good Turn Daily."

I have also bought several pins that were created to commemorate "Strengthen the Arm of Liberty"

and a stamp that was commissioned for the post office. I also found some first day covers that were mailed from the 1950 Jamboree in Valley Forge. A more curious object that I purchased - - and it wasn't cheap - - is a small plaster Sebastian figure. (The Sebastian Company made hundreds of these little figures for organizations and companies. The company began in 1938 and continues today. They made a series for Jell-O in the 1960s). There were 2,500 "Strengthen the Arm of Liberty" figures made for the Boy Scouts. The Boy Scouts, headquartered in East Brunswick, New Jersey, asked Prescott Baston to design the pa-

