

Backpackers learn through 4-H

LANCASTER — With attention focused on 4-H during the week of October 5-

11 and its theme "Expanding Horizons", it's a natural to highlight one of its newest

projects, backpacking.

Backpacking is enjoying popularity among outdoorsmen, and for the first time a project was offered within the 4-H program through the Mountville Community 4-H Club, long an innovator in meeting members' interests.

Rob James, Quarryville R4, and Gus Gianopoulos, Lancaster, led the project which drew 20 members.

Reflecting on the program, Gianopoulos said, "It was a lot of fun. We pointed out that backpacking is different from the usual family camping." He said they designed the project to help young people learn to enjoy the wilderness and help them to be more self-sufficient."

James added, "You carry everything you can possibly need on your back. And you learn you don't need some things."

Actual instruction took place on several well-planned excursions which were preceded with educational meetings to prepare members.

Since there had been no previous backpacking project, there was no project book or guidelines to follow. That did not put off the leaders. Working with Nancy Meyers, at Penn

State's Cooperative Extension office, they created a book which includes information on recommended equipment, safety considerations, and food needs in the outdoors. The only reference they had was a hiking manual used in Colorado's 4-H clubs.

The members began slowly with a one-day hike in Susquehannock State Park, carrying just their sleeping bags and pack. The next hike was on a section of the Appalachian Trail where the group of 13 stayed over one night. On the second hike, members camped for two nights and hiked in Stony Valley in Lebanon County. James said they chose fairly flat areas in which to hike.

On the longer hike they encountered a huge rain and hail storm which effectively soaked all their belongings. On the second day the leaders chose to hike without packs because everything was so wet.

James said, "Some thought they wouldn't make it on the first trip. It was really hot and they were very tired. They were not in great spirits on the second day." Nonetheless, they all made it which gave everyone a sense of accomplishment.

Gianopoulos added, "The



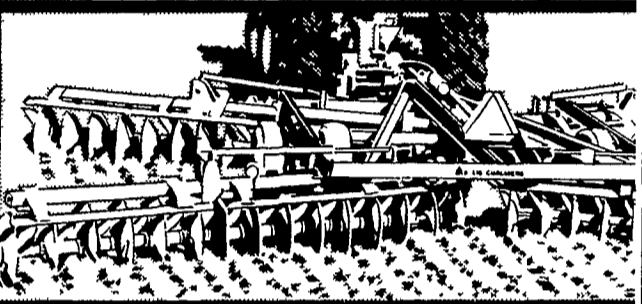
Robert James, left, adjusts the straps of Gus Gianopoulos' backpack as they demonstrate the proper way to carry a pack and explain how to load it correctly. Both served as leaders for a 4-H backpacking project.

experience showed a couple of them that they are not as sure of themselves as they thought they were."

The leaders praised the cooperation of the 4-H members. Gianopoulos (Turn to Page C30)



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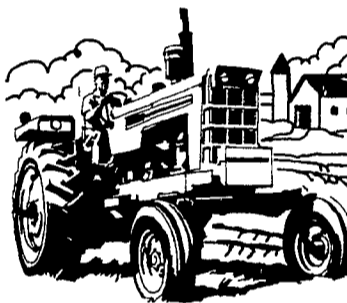
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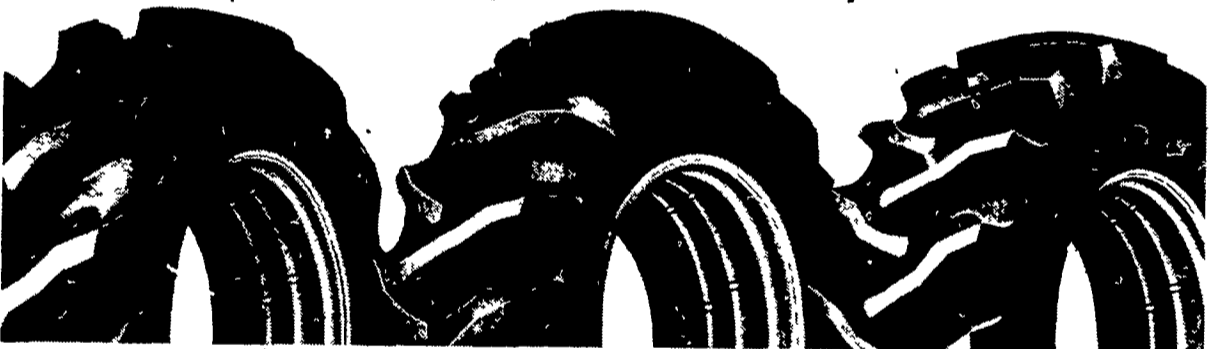
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