

Two reap benefits 4-H offers

BY SALLY BAIR
Staff Correspondent

Gretchen Doner and Hal Enders are pioneering new territory as they undertake activities as the first-ever Outstanding 4-H Girl and Boy in Lancaster County. Gretchen is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Claude Doner, New Providence, R 2, and Hal is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Hal Enders, Sr. 3203 Horizon Drive, Mountville.

The two 4-H'ers were selected to represent Lancaster County 4-H at the annual Achievement Day in August and are now beginning to make appearances to boost 4-H. The Outstanding Boy and Girl contest was initiated this year to replace the 4-H Junior and Senior Queen contest that had been a part of Achievement Day for many years.

Gretchen, 17, Hal, 17, share an enthusiasm for their new role and an ability to express themselves about 4-H's virtues.

Although she served for one year as the Junior 4-H Queen, Gretchen approved the move to a Boy and Girl contest. She states, "I thought it was a good idea to change. The

guys should have as much of a chance to be recognized. It is a title which can be used to promote 4-H."

Hal responds, "I liked the queens, and the guys did get involved as escorts. But this is more fair and equitable for both. I was pretty happy when I won. Although I was really tired that night from helping to set up for Achievement Day, I mostly felt rejuvenated when I won and was ready to go."

Both these teenagers make it clear that they consider 4-H a very valuable part of their total experience. Gretchen expresses her reasons for liking 4-H this way, "There are all kinds of ways to develop yourself and to gain confidence. And all the kids are just super."

"I learned so much I know I would not have my horse now if it were not for 4-H. It keeps me riding. But no matter what your interest, you gain so much. It gives you a good feeling."

Hal adds, "People is what makes 4-H. I have gained a lot and made a lot of friends. You see people from

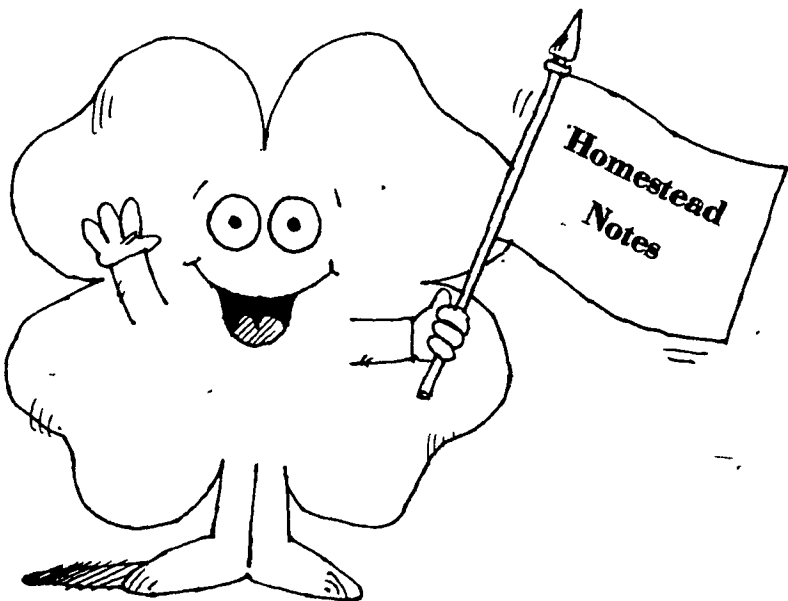
different events over and over again."

"I think 4-H is meeting a lot of needs. It gives you acceptance and is a way of getting a pat on the back when you do well. It offers friendship and allows you to be a part of something. You can achieve something not related to school, and you learn about other people."

On a personal basis Hal feels 4-H has enriched him tremendously. "I have learned to take responsibility and to channel it and challenge others to get a job done. I have gained self-confidence and learned how to conduct myself in front of a large audience. It has made me a better person and has made me a better influence on others."

As part of the contest, each participant had to present a radio commercial before the audience. Gretchen did a take off on the 4-H's, head, heart, hands and health, substituting her own words. She said to her, the 4-H's mean home, hard work, help and happiness, explaining, "No matter where you go you find lots of friends and 4-H is like one big family. Hard work pays off with a ribbon or the satisfaction of learning. Help comes from leaders willing to give a helping hand and you can return the favor by helping younger members. Happiness in 4-H comes from making friends, gaining knowledge and seeing 4-H'ers grow as individuals."

For Hal's commercial he spoke as Chris Clover, a character he often assumed when he wore the plywood frame of Chris at many area parades and events over the summer. As Chris Clover, he offered his listening audience and "irresistible offer," saying, "For a small part of your time, your enthusiasm, and your fun and learning spirit you can belong to 4-H". He told young people, ages 8-18, to join 4-H as a member, and encouraged those over 18 to become involved as a leader of one



Shades of Dixie gets some playful attention from Gretchen Doner, Lancaster County's Outstanding 4-H Girl. Gretchen joined 4-H to

learn more about the care of her horse, and had a whole new world of activities opened to her.



Hal Enders, Lancaster County's Outstanding 4-H Boy, models the latest in backpacking equipment, necessary for a hike through the wilds. Backpacking has become one of Hal's favorite 4-H projects.

of the 100 projects available to 4-H members.

Gretchen has been a member of the 4-H Rough Riders for five years and has served as vice-president, president and secretary. She participated in Capitol Days in Harrisburg and in Leadership Congress at Penn State as well as serving as recreation leader for county 4-H day camp.

She has been a member of the 4-H horse judging team for two years, an experience which she considers very valuable in helping her learn to speak well and in improving her memory. "You have to be able to defend what you said. That's quite a task and I've really learned about horses."

Gretchen feels that being in 4-H has helped her improve her riding, something she tries to do daily. About horse shows she says, "Winning is not everything. I just like to place well. I'm very happy with the horse I've got."

A member of the Mountville Community Club for eight years, Hal has had a variety of projects including dogs, gardening, pet care, bicycle, electric and gasoline engines, woodworking, leathercraft, wildlife, chef's league and backpacking.

He has also served as teen leader in dogs, gasoline engines, wildlife and pet care.

He has been vice-president, president and co-game leader in his club. He has participated in county and regional demonstrations, county day camp, regional teen leader retreat, served as senior counselor at 4-H camp at Camp Nawakwa, and attended a regional dog leader training workshop. He has also attended 4-H Capitol Days, Leadership Congress at Penn State and the Citizenship Washington Focus in our nation's capital. In addition, he has spoken on local television twice and represented 4-H at the local bankers' banquet.

Hal is enthusiastic about most of the projects he has had, saying, "4-H is full of surprises." Backpacking is one of his current favorites. He says, "It is a totally different dimension, and you see people in a new light when you go backpacking together."

Gretchen can remember that she joined 4-H specifically to gain information about the horse she

owned. She is an eager teen leader, saying that she enjoys watching the young members learn and grow.

Hal talks about why he enrolled in 4-H. "I was lucky. My mom was organizational leader and she wanted more guys in the club and wanted to get projects which were interesting to guys. At first I was just going along and doing projects, but in the last few years I've had my own reasons for belonging. I feel teen leadership is very rewarding. I know how it feels to learn how to do something, and now I find kids who can finish a project in one week instead of being able to do nothing."

Both Gretchen and Hal have found time in their busy schedules to work with the 4-H therapeutic riding program. Gretchen says, "It was a neat experience to work with those kids. It gives you a tremendous feeling to watch their progress."

Hal also likes working with the handicapped riders and adds, "I'd like to see everybody be more responsible to people who are not so healthy."

While these outstanding 4-H'ers feel that 4-H is a terrific program, they can also see some room for improvement. Hal says, "I think one shortcoming of 4-H is that we don't keep the older youth, and it is then that they can see the value of it. Once they are out, they lose contact."

He also wants to see more community involvement in 4-H. "They know about 4-H, but we don't make them appreciate us very much. We could be more involved in community pride and help with community spirit. Spirit is something we've got lots of."

While in Washington, Hal became interested in conservation and said he would like to see 4-H more involved in picking up trash and recycling, perhaps as a fund raiser.

Gretchen agrees that there is a need to keep the interest of young people through high school, and agrees that it takes a lot of motivation and support from home to maintain that interest. She said she frequently comes home from hockey practice, shoves down her supper and goes off to a meeting.

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