

# Kids' KOrner

## Riding A Wagon Train Helps Chris Understand Pioneer Life

Gay N. Brownlee  
Somerset Co. Correspondent  
ADDISON (Somerset Co.) — Chris Fortunato, age 14, was at the tail-end of the wagon train that rolled into town to hold camp for the night. Chris was riding her horse, Lady Jane, as one of three scouts at the back of the train.

It was the weekend of the National Pike Festival, held every year in May to celebrate the very first highway that went across the United States of America. This festival is held in counties along 200 miles of the National Pike — in Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Ohio. Wagon trains and pioneer memories are part of the celebration.

Today the road is Route 40, but over the years it was called by other names because General George Washington and General Braddock, as well as Indians and many stage-coaches traveled over it from east to west and back again.

The Fortunato family really enjoys the wagon train. This year Chris's mother, Carol, drove a

snappy-looking, black doctor's buggy that was pulled by her horse, Diamond.

Chris said her family belongs to the Appalachian Wagon Train that takes a 10-day journey each year. She said that is their main vacation because the train goes to a different place each year. It's different from the Pike Festival.

Wagon trains have horseback riders and wagons. The Conestogas are built very differently from covered wagons the wagonmaster said. There are also buggys and other old wagons that the owners take good care of because they respect the history of the old days. And they want their children to appreciate and understand the lives of the early pioneers who had never heard of a car.

When she was eight years old, Chris got her first pony. She had it for five years. Lady Jane came last year.

"I bought Lady Jane in June 1992," she said. The horse was seven years old and Chris paid for her with her own money.

"When I got her, she was like



Here there are 19 wagons, buggies and riders coming down the road to reach Route 40 near Grantsville, Md. They are going west to Addison, Pa. for the National Pike Festival. Many other entries joined the wagon train.

my savior because I was really depressed," said Chris. That's because Chris had lost her other horse.

"Don't walk near a horse that has its ears back," Chris warns, "or one that has a red bow on its butt, because that means that they kick." That's good advice to remember.

Chris is also a Girl Scout. So when the wagon train arrived at the campsite for the National Pike Festival in Addison, her Scout troop prepared supper over a big campfire for 150 people. The Girl Scout leaders helped them.

During a program when lots of friends came to visit the wagon train, the Girl Scouts in costumes, performed Indian dances for the audience who sat on hay bales and on the grass.

"I was at a Pow Wow," said Chris, "and an Indian taught me (to dance)." She said her mother likes to read about the customs of Indians.

Chris is currently in the eighth



Chris Fortunato and two other Scouts are at the rear of the National Pike Festival wagon train as it enters Route 40 of The National Pike, while other traffic stops.

grade at the McMullen Junior High School in Fayette County. She lives in Markleysburg. "School is okay," she says, grinning. "I get to be with my friends."

Her favorite things include Indian beading, basketball, and photography.

Her dad's name is Jim Fortunato and her brothers are Rich Gmys and Ron Gmys.



Chris Fortunato and her horse, Lady Jane are at the Addison, Pa. campsite for the National Pike Festival's Pennsylvania wagon train on May 13.



Chris Fortunato and her Girl Scout troop helped with the opening of a program for the National Pike Festival at Addison. Dressed in Indian costumes, the girls later did some Indian dancing for the audience.

## 4-H Artists Have Opportunity To Shine

GETTYSBURG (Adams Co.) — Do you know of any 4-H members who excel in the arts? Is one of his hobbies drawing pictures of his favorite things? Does she like to take photographs of her family, friends, pets, or interesting places around her home? Do you enjoy listening to he or she tell stories about his or her experiences while raising 4-H projects?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, then you should encourage the child to participate in either the "Poster Art Contest," the "Photography Exhibit Contest," or the "Small Animals Essay Contest." These three contests are held in conjunction

with Penn State 4-H Achievement Days held at Penn State University on July 27, 28, and 29. All 4-H members from 8 to 19 years of age are eligible and are divided into three categories: ages 8 to 10, 11 to 13, and 14 to 18. The winners in each contest are recognized at the awards assembly during State Days on July 29.

If you think someone has a knack for the arts and/or would like to participate in one of these activities, please call Jayne Hess, 4-H summer program assistant, at the Extension Office (717) 334-6271 or 624-4525) for more contest guidelines and details.