

Farmington girl helps spread word

Pioneering kindles camper craze

By MARIA KOSANOVICH

With people always searching for new and inexpensive ways to spend their leisure hours, roughing it is quickly becoming an American pastime.

The Pack Sack, a camping backpacking and cross-country store at 2207 Senneca in Farmington Township, offers ways for wilderness lovers to enjoy the outdoors with the latest equipment.

Karen Gerhart, who started the Pack Sack in August of 1976, said that camping equipment ventures have mushroomed in recent years because vacationers want a "simple life."

Camping is an art, he explained. It takes the charm of the American frontier, which means living in the wilderness.

You have to limit yourself to what you can carry in camping, he said. It teaches you to live with less without a lot of fuss.

Gerhart, president of a textile and equipment manufacturing firm, calls the

camping store a "fun experiment." In a typical 12-hour day, he darts between the Pack Sack and his company office, situated behind the store complex.

Although the pioneer spirit may have created camping fever, the Pack Sack depends on modern merchandising techniques and an IBM computer for its sales success.

Store buying and inventory is handled by a computer. When stock comes through the door, it is tagged with a computerized price label.

The shopper never has to wait for special orders. The store or the warehouse needed behind the shop is low on equipment, the computer offers a warning that it's time to rest the shelves.

We've tried to do a lot of things with the computer, said Bill Merrifield, Pack Sack manager and a former sporting goods buyer for a chain store. "Small businesses can't afford computer time but we've found that adapting to computer service has made our job easier."

The computer also keeps track of the special interests of 4,000 store customers. Divided into cross-country skiing, bullfights, backpacking, mountain climbing and sailing, shoppers are mailed an advertisement every two weeks.

Merrifield and his youthful crew, Mary Barrett, 18, of Livonia and Sue Wolfe, 17, a group student from Farmington's Harrison High, tend the store and offer expert advice to campers.

A student of Oakland Board survival school at Hurdland Island, Maine, and an enthusiastic rock climber, Mary said that "this is the kind of job I've always wanted."

The Pack Sack uses colorful wall displays under redwood awnings for customer appeal.

"We've covered half of our usable wall space with merchandise racks," said Merrifield, a business administration student at Oakland Community College.

Although canvas tents, sleeping bags, snow shoes and camping clothes are best sellers, unusual camping items also sell well.

Eager customers can purchase a wood-burning stove or gasoline generator, which Gerhart predicts will see increasing use when fuel costs rise.

Another unusual item the store has is a giant iron cooking grate. Gerhart's own in Sweden. The grate is adjustable for the campfire or the fireplace at home. Gerhart has applied for a patent.

"There isn't anything on the market with a large enough cooking surface of sufficient strength to heat water," the inven-

tor explained. He pointed out that his design stoves steaks and hamburgers on one surface and makes breakfast foods on the flip side.

With the high cost of iron, they're not economically feasible to mass produce, he said, but they'll be offered at the store.

Campers can line the shelves with freeze-dried foods from the camping specialty store, which is the state wide distributor for the foods.

The cross-country food line originated from the old Army rations and have come a long way since. The cuisine features fresh Hawaiian pineapple, chop suey, chicken casserole, clam chowder which taste home cooked, Merrifield maintained.

The natural foods last indefinitely without preservatives, he added.

Camping stores used to have a limited seasonal business but with the growing popularity of winter camping and the cross-country sport, the Christmas season will attract buyers, many new to camping.

Although they've depended on word-of-mouth advertising and the storefront is obscured by neighboring commercial buildings, business has been better than anticipated.

If the Redford Pack Sack proves successful, another camping specialty store in a major shopping mall will follow.

We have hopes for future stores, Gerhart said. "People want our type of personalized and knowledgeable service."

NEW YEAR'S EVE CELEBRATION

Irish Entertainment by "The Celtic Sound"

Turkey & Ham Plate Served from 12:30 A.M.

\$2

No Cover Charge—Dancing



OLD VILLAGE INN
33338 GRAND RIVER
FARMINGTON • 474-5941

Super Specials This Week!!



6-1/2" thick
R-19 kraft faced insulation
\$4.95 Roll

Before you know it, your Johns-Manville R-19 kraft faced insulation will have paid for itself many times over!

Reg. 5.55

4"x15" Foil
R11

reg. \$5.90

\$5.20 Roll

Cash & Carry

FARMINGTON LUMBER

474-4015

32800 GRAND RIVER
FARMINGTON

Daily 8-6
Sat. 8-4

FL

Flip your own BAR for Christmas

One of the many unusual, distinctive bars you can find at the House of Maple & Pine. An heirloom of tomorrow.

Four star features:

- Lights in bar
- Storage compartments below
- Antique like finish
- Hand screened mural
- Glass shelf and glasses included
- When door is pulled down, top goes up to expose bar



\$369.00 reg. 485.00

HOUSE OF MAPLE & PINE



"OLYMPIA" FOR THOSE WHO WANT THE VERY BEST

- SKE Olympia Electric Portable, WORLD'S MOST DESIRABLE ELECTRIC PORTABLE TYPEWRITER! Some keyboard and feel as office models. No built-in obsolescence. **\$299.50**
- See "Built to last a lifetime" SM9 Manual Port. Typewriter **\$189.50**
- For the economy minded, Electric SEP Portable Typewriter **\$169.50**
- Olympette Manual portable 12" carriage **\$89.50**
- Olympia Office Model Printing Electronic Calculator **\$159.50**

The above are built by Olympia, "The World's largest manufacturer of typewriters" by German craftsmen since 1904.

YEAR END CLEARANCE! BARGAINS

- Current Office Model Olympia Model 98 Used One Year **\$99.50**
- Royals, Remingtons, Underwoods, Smiths Office Models from **\$79.50**
- For The Typewriter Who Likes To Take Things Apart, Battery Calculators With Working Motors **\$3.50**
- Office electric typewriters from **\$59.50**

LARGEST TYPEWRITER DISPLAY IN THE MIDWEST SALES • SERVICE • RENTALS • LEASE • FURNITURE

QUIST TYPEWRITER CO., INC.

1717 Stephenson
Troy Michigan 48064

The Quality House

2nd Bldg. N. of Maple Road
689-8000

Harrison students excel in math

Nine Harrison High School math students finished in the top five percent in the final round of the 28th Annual Michigan Mathematics Prize Competition and were among 1,100 Michigan students in the final examination Dec. 8.

The finalists are Steven Berkal, 12th grade, 2811 Thirteen Mile, John Humphrey, 12th grade, 2279 W. Newell Circle, Alfred Jean, 12th grade, 2070 Joliet, Greg Miska, 12th grade, 3076 Ridgeway, Andrea Meyers, 12th grade, 2524 Sky Dr., Kevin Perry, 11th grade, 2330 Glencrest, Robert Shattman, 11th grade, 2245 Arden Park, Randy Shaw, 12th grade, 2278 Old Franklin Dr., and Gordon White, 12th grade, 7030 Linda Lane, West Bloomfield.

The competition is sponsored by the Michigan section of the Mathematical Association of America and is designed to foster a wider interest in mathematics, to focus attention on the importance of mathematical training in most professions and trades and to identify and provide scholarships for capable mathematics students in the state.

The 100 winners of the competition will be honored at an award program to be held at Western Michigan University Feb. 19, with 40 of the winners receiving a total of approximately \$7,000 in college scholarships.

The scholarship fund includes contributions from the Burroughs Corp., the Kuhlman Corp., and the Michigan Council of Teachers of Mathematics.

New Portable RINSE VAC

Gets Carpets Professionally Clean

New RINSE VAC is the portable 100 lbs. 12 volt house vacuum cleaner. It cleans carpets, rugs, and upholstery out dirt, grime, and stains. It's portable, professional, and easy to use. RINSE VAC does the job only professional steam cleaners can do before. At a fraction of the cost. RINSE VAC cleans carpets, rugs, upholstery, and more. Clean longer!

Holiday Special \$8 per 5 hours

Lloyds True Value

HARDWARE
24215 GRAND RIVER RD.
AT 10 MI. RD. FARMINGTON
477-2676

Register For

Northville Plaza Mall's

7 Mile Road between Northville & Haggerty Roads

Holiday Shopping Spree
\$1,000.00 to be given away

Drawing to be held December 22

1st 500.00 2nd 200.00

3rd & 4th 100.00 5th & 6th 50.00

Have lunch with Santa in Northville Plaza Mall starting December 18-12:30 to 1:30!

Tickets available at Santa's Workshop in the Mall

Register & Win

Northville Plaza Mall

Holiday Dollar

Good For Merchandise or Service of any participating Northville Plaza Mall Merchant.

Many Special Christmas Gifts Now Being Offered By These Mail Merchants

Arnold's Music Co.
348-1010

George's Coiffures
349-9270

1-Hour Martinizing
349-0110

Own-A-Pet Pet Center
348-2960

The BookStop
349-8870

The Corral
348-2380

Michel's Jewelry
348-9380

Hair Affair
349-0190

Watermelon Seed
349-3940

Tri-State Unclaimed Furniture
348-9620

Laurel Hill Gift Place
349-2380

Bhatti's Corp.
349-3330

EXPRESSION IN BROWNSTOWN

Especially designed by Samsonite to compliment the Natural, earth tones color schemes that are today's favorites. Never before has folding furniture been available in such a rich collection of tasteful fabrics and detailing.

Expression in Brownstown—for people who know that timeless elegance is always in style!

SALE PRICE \$149.95

Other groups from \$124.95. See the entire line of Samsonite furniture at

Casual & Patio Furnishings, Pool & Leisure furn.

28001 Plymouth Road
3 miles east of Maclelland
next to Wal-Mart
425-7848

Open daily 10-8:00 Sun. 12-5
BankAmericard, MasterCard Honored



Samsonite
Fine Casual Furniture

- Padded 40" center wobbler table top
- Strong tubular steel frame work is coated in decorative finishes
- Thick cushioned chair seats and backs

the Terrace Shoppe - Club 'n Cue