

False Images Shattered

(NOTE: This is the last in a series of articles on the educational values of camping, written by Morton Tener, vice principal of Williamstown High School and head counselor at Camp Log-n'-Twig, Dingman's Ferry, Pa.)

The following is a summation and paraphrased excerpts from an address given at the 1961 Region II Convention of the American Camping Association by Dr. Charles H. Boehm, superintendent of public instruction of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

It is the assessment of many school personnel that camping is highly desirable on all levels of the socio-economic scale, but especially in the educational lag that exists in many underprivileged neighborhoods.

Camping dislodges a number of false images. False image number one is that the extension of the teaching of math, science and other academic disciplines beyond the average ten months of school, betters the education. This is not necessarily correct. Some school districts that lengthen the term merely continue routine schedules. Education is a broader exposure than just "book learning."

A second image to be scrutinized is the concept that the tougher the work, the better the learning, and that educational activities that students enjoy must be viewed with suspicion. Of course, this is absurd. Effective learning is always associated with interest and motivation.

The educational potential of camping is great because the child comes to camp to have fun and adventure. He approaches new experiences with enthusiasm.

Another false assumption is the exaggerated notion that a good program depends upon a variety of tight compartments or limited areas of learning, known as subjects. Here is where camping can be very effective as a

whole learning experience. The camp program is more inter-related where school is often too compartmentalized.

Camping has emphasized the physical development of youth without fanfare. Many youth may go to school 12 years or 16 years and still not have any proficiency in one carry-over physical activity or sport. Good camping programs never make that mistake.

To the unimaginative and uninformed, camping is but a chance for fresh air in an uncivilized setting. But to the imaginative and the informed, campers are creative artists living a full life. Camping exposure should be part of the experience of every youngster.

Need for School Camps

(NOTE: This is the second in a series of five articles on the educational values of camping. Author Morton Tener, vice-principal of Williamstown High School, also is head counselor at Camp Log-n'-Twig, Dingmans Ferry, Pa.)

A recent development of the school curriculum in some areas of our nation is the school camp, supported by public-school funds and operated as an integral part of the educational program.

An interesting statistic is that less than five percent of American boys and girls have any camp experience. A school camp characterizes many of the objectives of the regular academic curriculum, but it is distinguished by outdoor living and complete group living.

The full value of the school camp is when there is a transfer of learning and the application of knowledges and skills fostered, to the "indoor" school.

Camping education is designed to give boys and girls direct experience with different people, with interesting places, and with soil and other elements of nature. School-campers engage in group activities as they make things to use, learn to live safely out-of-doors, and study and apply health habits.

Camping is a series of purposeful, related experience under actual life circumstances and is therefore educational. Education can be promoted through a full interpretation of camping. In a two-week period of time, a child can spend as much time in camp as he would normally spend for one-fifth of an academic year in the classroom. The 336 continuous hours of camping (including sleeping time) provide a concentrated education with intensified learning.

The consideration is not only for time, but for content. One would be surprised with the concepts and values that can be embedded within this short period of concentrated time.

There is no set pattern for instituting school camps. Each should be planned and developed according to local con-

sideration. Some of the essential factors in the establishment of school camps involve staff leadership, location of campsite in relation to school, program, finances and student needs.

Impressive examples of camping-education enterprises can be found in California, Michigan, New York and Pennsylvania. Camp is a way of life wherein youngsters build and work together to solve the problems of daily living and community welfare for which they feel responsible.