

# Yuma 4-H and Their Wayward Bus



If the best automotive mechanics in Arizona come from the Yuma area, there's a reason.

For the past 10 years the care and nursing of a wayward bus has been a sort of extra-curricular project for the 4-H boys and girls of Yuma County, who have their own 4-H bus — or, rather, a succession of busses.

According to L. A. "Bud" Lemke, spokesman for the Yuma County 4-H Leaders Association, that association purchased its first bus, a Reo, from the armed services in 1957. The price was nominal, but the 42-passenger bus was itself a veteran of hard service, and in 1959 it was traded in toward a 37-passenger second hand Chevrolet bus, a \$1,000 purchase with trade-in.

The second bus trundled the boys and girls of the green clover leaf to summer camp above the Mogollon Rim and to 4-H Roundup at Tucson each summer. It, too, grew old and tired, and in 1963 the 4-H Leaders Assn. purchased a 45-passenger Ford bus, which this year made the summer treks to Prescott for camp and to Tucson for roundup.

The 4-H Leaders Assn., numbering 180 adult leaders who supervise the programs of over 900 Yuma County 4-H members, finances its activities

with two events, a pie auction and a barbecue.

"The reason we bought the first bus," says Lemke, "was an attorney general's ruling at that time that public school busses could not be rented or loaned to non-school groups. Before that we had rented a school bus for these 4-H jaunts and paid the school district. With that ruling we had to turn to another source for transportation, and buying a bus seemed the way out.

"Now I understand that this ruling has been reversed — in fact, we have so many kids going to camp and to roundup that we used our own bus and also rented a school bus for the trip to camp last June and the trip to 4-H Roundup on the University of Arizona campus at Tucson in July." (See photo at top of page).

Actually, the two trips don't total enough mileage each year to make ownership of the bus economical. One answer to that has been an arrangement with the Yuma schools whereby the 4-H bus is housed and serviced with the school busses, and used by the school system as a spare when extra bus capacity is needed.

Precise records are kept, and the 4-H Leader Assn. pays for all gasoline, oil, repairs and other out-of-pocket garage costs.

Besides the two big trips, to sum-

mer camp and roundup, plus occasional "borrowing use" by the school system, the 4-H bus makes frequent short trips when 4-H groups go on tours, project trips and picnics.

"Transportation is a big item these days in a 4-H program," says Bud Lemke. On our trip to Prescott last June there were 125 4-H members and around 20 adult leaders, helpers, drivers and others. Besides the busses there was a train of automobiles and pickups carrying the clothing, blankets, food supplies, recreation equipment and other gear."

"Woody" Winans, the Yuma County 4-H Leader in the county Extension office, points out that, economically justifiable or not, "There is great value in having that big yellow bus with the green sign, YUMA COUNTY 4-H CLUBS, and the cloverleaf design, on its side.

"It means a lot to the young people and to the adult sponsors of their work. It is something big and tangible and psychologically important to all of us. With the splendid cooperation of our school people, balanced against the rising cost of renting a bus with a driver from a commercial bus line, it may not be so uneconomical after all to own our own.

"Besides, the state cooperates by charging us for only a \$9 annual license, the same as publicly-owned vehicles."