

The BRIDGE



*4-H History:
Yesterday, Tomorrow, and Now.*

Vol. 11, No. 1

January, 2022

A New Year: A Look Back to Show the Way Forward: 2021 REFLECTIONS OF THE NATIONAL 4-H HISTORY PRESERVATION TEAM (N4-HHPT)

by Gwen El Sawi, Grandma and N4-HHPT Member

After the 2020 COVID-19 shut-down, 2021 was a year of “picking up” on several projects that were underway from previous years to document and preserve national 4-H history. New endeavors were added as well. Here are some highlights:

SAVING 4-H ARTWORK



Dave and Sue Benedetti in the New York Room, National 4-H Center, planning the transfer to the NAL, July 23, 2020.

2021 was the culminating year of a ten-plus-years effort to collect, restore, document, and digitize original and printed 4-H calendar and poster artwork. Many of the art pieces had been displayed on the walls of the National 4-H Center, some were donated and at least one was purchased on E-Bay by Jim Kahler. In August, 2021, the collection was transferred to the National Agricultural Library (NAL). The pictures will soon (we hope) be available for use throughout the nation to help appreciate

In Memorium

On December 29, 2021, the National 4-H History Preservation Team lost a founding member and trusted advisor. David Benedetti was more than a colleague, he was, for this team, and for each member of this team, a true friend. Words cannot express the sorrow each of us feels at this loss. Still, to have known Dave was such a great joy, our sorrow is so quickly overtaken by the joy he gave us each day he was with us. He gave us the confidence we needed to keep going. We are not lost without him, for in our hearts, he is still with us, leading us forward, still showing us the way. Tsamaya sentle (farewell in Setswana), dear friend.

We thank you.

4-H History. Many N4-HHPT members were involved, led by Sue and David Benedetti who started working on this project around 2008. Major assistance in this endeavor was provided by Eleanor Wilson, Larry Krug, Jim Kahler and Tom Tate. Tom provided major leadership in working with National 4-H Council and NAL to finalize the collection's transfer.

4-H RELATED BOOKS, MAGAZINES, ARTICLES AND MEMORABILIA

Through N4-HHPT's outreach to the Extension system over the years, a large number of items had been donated (even some rescued from a dumpster!) and were stored in various rooms throughout the National 4-H Center. N4-HHPT Members Kendra Wells, Jan Scholl-Kennedy, & Gwen El Sawi, led by Tom Tate, began reviewing the collection in February, 2021. In March, the Team was informed that all materials would need to be removed from the New York Room by August as the National 4-H Conference Center was put up for sale. The Team scrambled to complete as much work on the sorting and categorizing of the articles as possible. By August 15, approximately 20 boxes of books were sorted, documented and transferred to NAL with a remaining 50 or so transferred to a storage pod located at the University of Maryland 4-H Center. There the Team will continue to review, categorize and determine where the remaining items should go. The team is most grateful for the support from the Maryland 4-H Center in providing space to store and analyze the remaining articles and to National 4-H Council for expediting the move.

4-H NEWSLETTER - THE BRIDGE

Ron Drum led the re-initiation, after a two-year hiatus, of the Team's newsletter, renamed The BRIDGE. It is now produced on a quarterly basis and highlights projects and activities of the Team and 4-H historic activities from around the country.

THE 1980-2020 4-H HISTORY PROJECT (80-20 Project)

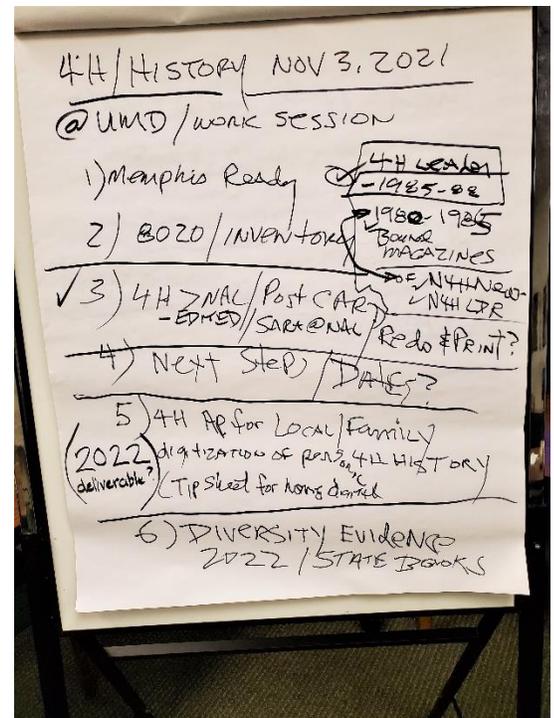
Activity has resumed on documenting 4-H History from 1980-2020, the period since the publication of the book, 4-H, An American Story by Wessel and Wessel. Considerable work has already been done on identifying key highlights of 4-H programs and activities in this time frame over the past two years. Nancy Valentine and Ron Drum are heading up the Team project in cooperation with National 4-H Council and the Extension Service.

4-H HISTORY TEAM MEMBERS ARE INDUCTED INTO THE NATIONAL 4-H HALL OF FAME N4-HHOF):

Class of 2020 (COVID delayed) N4-HHOF Inductees from the Team included:

- Sue and David Benedetti (4-H Council),
- Bill Svendsgaard (MN)
- Kendra Wells (MD).

Class of 2021: Jan Scholl-Kennedy (PA)



Where do we go from here?



National 4-H Conference Center Update

by: Bo Ryles, N4-HHPT Member

In March, 2021, the planned sale of the property at 7100 Connecticut Avenue in Chevy Chase, Maryland was announced. Through the year, we said goodbye to a special place and collectively contemplated the future. The N4-HHPT was very involved in the movement of historic 4-H items to the USDA National Agricultural Library.

The sale of the property was finalized in December, 2021. National 4-H Council President and CEO, Jennifer Sirangelo, chose the N4-HHPT as one of the first groups to hear the news. She made the announcement, discussed the transition, and answered the team's many questions on the same day the sale was finalized, December 17, 2021.



The following Monday, December 20, Sirangelo was interviewed on Brownfield Ag News by 4-H alumna Rhiannon Branch, providing details about the sale, the handling of historic 4-H items, and future plans. During the interview, Sirangelo said, "This endowment will enable us at National 4-H Council to continue our support of Cooperative Extension's 4-H program. Today, what we do, and what we want to continue doing with this endowment, is to convene the 4-H system, tell the 4-H story, and build public/private partnerships that grow 4-H."

The interview can be accessed with the following link:

<https://brownfieldagnews.com/news/national-4-h-center-sold-ceo-outlines-2022-plans/>



INTRODUCING

another opportunity for you, our reader, to help us collect, and make, 4-H History! As, we review the history of 4-H, it turns out that, more often than not, it wasn't the program that was implemented that made the greatest difference, it was the people involved who made the greatest impact! We want to know these people! Who in your life made that difference for you? Tell us about the person to whom you would like to say, "You Made My Best Better!"

Dot Emerson, You Made My Best Better

by Ron Drum, PA 4-H Member 1967-1977

Her words came in that clipped "New England" fashion, nothing fancy, always right to the point, "When you are asked to do something, always say, 'I'll be glad to!'. If you fail to do the small things, they may never ask you to do the BIG things, you know!"



Dorothy Emerson (July 30, 1893-January 24, 1990) is seen here celebrating her 90th birthday with National 4-H Council staff. One of her many sayings was “KISS: Keep it simple & sweet (or ...simple, stupid” depending on the mood of her audience). It teaches a similar message as another of her sayings, “Talk Less, Say More”. In the lower left we see the author applying KISS, but not quite in the manner the saying intended!

What a joy it was to have Dorothy Emerson as my friend. It still is! We always called her “Dot”, but one day in the 1980’s I received a note in which she said the new National 4-H Council Program Assistants, “...are older now. They call me Dorothy.” I met her for the first time one evening in 1967. Perhaps “met” isn’t quite the right word. She had come to Luzerne County, PA to present her public speaking program during a county 4-H event. I think at that time she called it “Who!? ME!?”

During the program she asked for audience volunteers who’d each be given a task; portray Mr. Lincoln, describe their pet. That wasn’t for 10-year-old me, no sir! I sat in the back and hid behind the kid in front of me. Twelve years later, now a National 4-H Council Program Assistant, I couldn’t wait to get on stage with her, this time to help her implement her program, now called “You’ll be Surprised”. How she laughed when I told her that story years later.

Although I saw her laugh many times, she would always tell me she didn’t know how to laugh. “Teach me how to laugh,” she would plead as we took walks together through Chevy Chase behind the 4-H Center. One note she sent in 1985 said she had begun studying a philosophy called “A Course in Miracles”. “This will be my last – the search of 91 years is over... I haven’t learned to ‘laugh’ but am learning bit by bit not to hold grievances but to let go and forgive.”

Dorothy loved stories, both to tell and to hear. One of her favorites was “The Angelus” by Eleanor H. Porter, but no matter what the story was, she always told it to teach the lesson: “Imagination and creativity is of utmost importance...!”

She loved story “hearing” as well! I often witnessed her approach a surprised 14-year-old in the 4-H Center cafeteria and ask, “Do you have a Love Story?” Then her face would grow calm, her eyes would fill with interest, and she’d continue, “Tell me your Love Story”.

Shortly after Phyllis and I were married, Dorothy asked us, “tell me your love story.” Later, her thank-you note told us she enjoyed it “...as a collector of Love Stories in this age where there seem to be very few really true ones.” Then she added, “I have had a very difficult life – alone but practically never lonely.” “I am never alone!” she would tell her audiences. “I never had children of my own, but I have you. All of you are my children!”

I doubt anyone knows how many people ever heard Dorothy speak. I do know, however, that everyone who did, walked away as a better person. Certainly, that is true for me.



National Association of Extension 4-H Youth Development Professionals Conference Memories

By Betty Gottler, NAE4-HYDP Archivist

The National Association of Extension 4-H Youth Development Professionals (NAE4-HYDP) has been holding educational conferences since that first luncheon in Chicago back in 1946! We certainly have grown in the 75 years since.

In an informal poll, members shared memories. From large in-person meetings to the Boise ID, 2020 totally virtual meeting, we all learned and shared. Perhaps you remember:

Secretary of Agriculture, **Thomas J. Vilsack**, transforming the 2013 Galaxy IV in Pittsburgh, PA, into a discussion on ways that Extension could promote economic recovery and development; Steven Covey, an American Educator; Karen Pittman, an American actress; and Sharon McCain, MO 4-H Alumnae and former Dallas Cowboy cheerleader, inspiring the audience.

We all remember the 4-Hers who enriched conferences with their talent and their words.

Who remembers Jim Davis doing pencil sketches of Garfield and Ode in 2004 in Oklahoma City? The focus of the talk was making changes to make a difference. The sketches were auctioned to support the 4-H program.

4-H Stories from the Heart was published in 2011, edited by Dan Tabler. Book proceeds supported the National 4-H Hall of Fame. The Marketing and Outreach Committee continued collecting stories and in November, 2021, NAE4-HYDP published *Stories II*, edited by Public Relations Chair, Pam Bloch. [*More 4-H Stories from the Heart*](#) is now available, with proceeds continuing to fund the N4-HHOF.

Celebrations bring good memories. Champagne toasts and association highlights for the 1971’s 25th Anniversary in Atlantic City, NJ. Belt buckles and chocolate for the 40th Anniversary in Hershey PA in 1986. Gold, glitter, and **The County Agent** cutouts for the 50th Anniversary in Grand Rapids, MI in 1996. Indoor fireworks and wine toasts for the 4-H Centennial Celebration in Norfolk VA in 2002. Celebrating 75 years of professional development in Memphis TN in 2021 with quilts showcasing association presidents, conferences, and state associations. And The Peabody Ducks marching.



Can you remember these moments?

- ✿ Learning to make fajitas in Fort Worth TX in 1985.
- ✿ Dinner and dancing on the deck of the U.S.S. Alabama in Mobile in 1989.
- ✿ The American Plan at Grossinger's Resort NY in 1976.
- ✿ The elegance of The Greenbrier WV 1990 and 2019.
- ✿ Galaxy Conferences: 1997 in Cincinnati OH; 2003 in Salt Lake City UT; 2008 in Indianapolis IN; 2013 in Pittsburg PA.
- ✿ Sharing with Extension colleagues.
- ✿ Touring Churchill Downs in Louisville KY in 1998 with the winner of the horse race being presented the roses by Tammera Beckham, NAE4-HA* President.
- ✿ A train trip to the top of the mountains in Denver CO in 2000 interrupted with the railroad working on the track. Extra time to visit everyone on the train.
- ✿ ***Clovers and Company*** 4-H talent showcased in Atlanta, GA in 1978 and 2007. Jennifer Nettles, a ***Company*** member in 1978, was showcased in 2007.
- ✿ The "***Indy Car***" in the lobby in Indianapolis, IN in 2008.
- ✿ Louisiana/Texas hosting hospitality on ***The Saints*** football field in New Orleans, 2016.
- ✿ The after-dinner dances until midnight in the 1970s and 1980s.
- ✿ Bus tours to the coast from Portland, OR in 1983 or in the fog from Rochester, NY 1994.

Each of us have hundreds of memories from throughout the 75 years of NAE4-HYDP Conferences. What are your memories?

*NAE4-HYDP was previously known as National Association of Extension 4-H Agents.



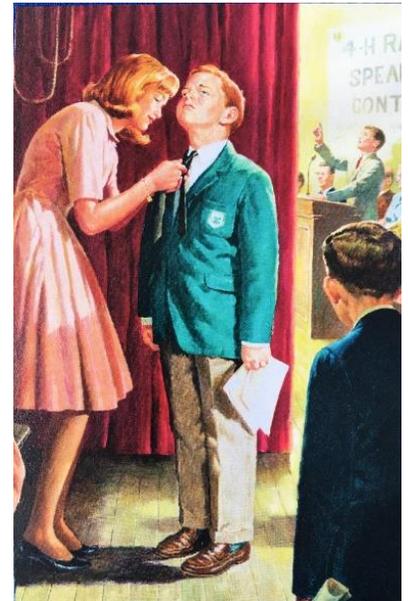
The official Newsletter of the National 4-H History Preservation Team

Caption Please!

In our previous newsletter we introduced this new, FUN feature. We asked our readers to provide a caption for this painting that was chosen from our historic 4-H Calendar Art collection. Watch for more captioning opportunities in future issues of The BRIDGE.

The winning caption is:

Come on, I know you are going to do a GREAT job this time. I mean, really, NOBODY could do as badly as you did that last time!

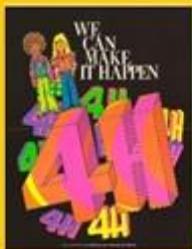


Tell Us Your 4-H History Story

We know you've made 4-H History! So, tell us about it! The world wants to know YOUR 4-H history preservation stories and ideas.

Send your articles to: Editor@4-HHistoryPreservation.com.

Submissions longer than 500 words must include a 500-words or less summary. The in-depth articles will be posted to our web-site and linked to the summary that will appear in the newsletter.



The BRIDGE Editorial Board:

*Sue Benedetti Dave Benedetti Gwen El Sawi Tom Tate Rick Moses Jane Jopling
Bonita Williams Ron Drum*