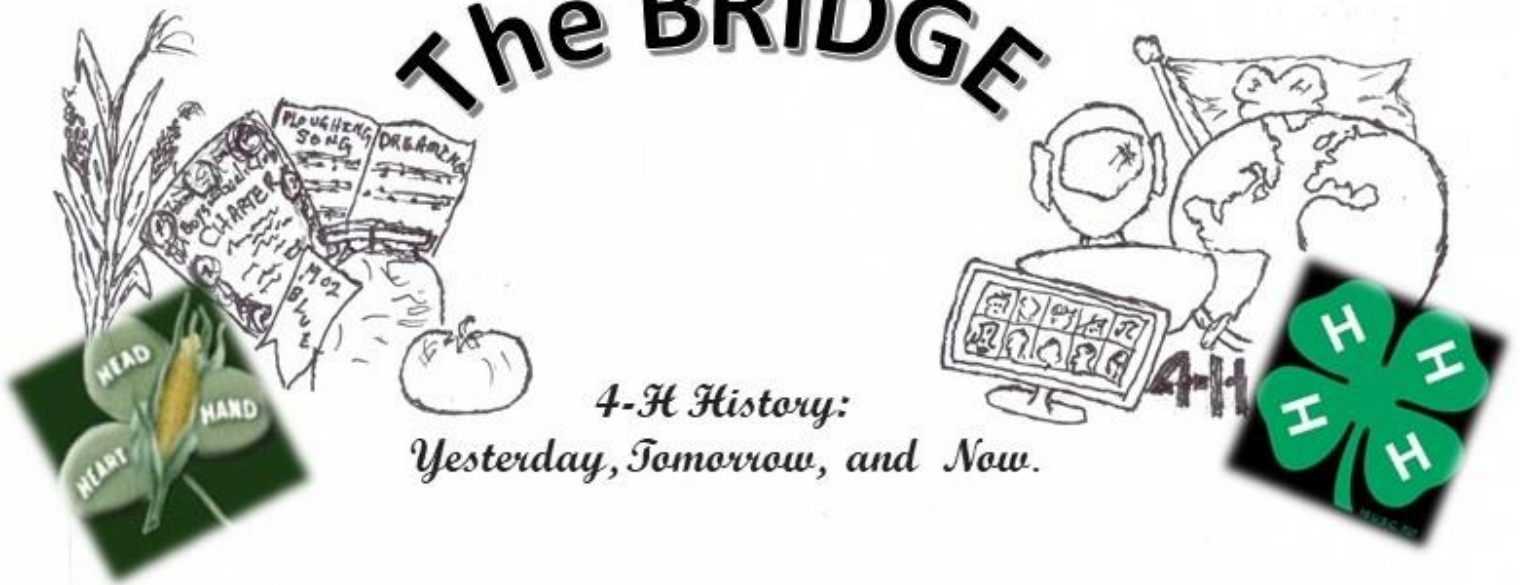


The BRIDGE



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

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Flags for Peace – 4-H and UN

By Larry Krug and Ron Drum, National 4-H History Preservation Team Members

Editor's Note: This article is based largely on an article on the National 4-H History Preservation Team's website written by Larry Krug and entitled United Nations Flag and 4-H. For more information go to:

https://4-hhistorypreservation.com/History/UN_Flag/.

It is uncertain when or why the first 4-H Flag was created. Perhaps it was created for a 4-H Camp flag-raising ceremony, or some 4-H Member needed a "banner" for a parade, or maybe a 4-H club just wanted something to say their 4-H Pledge to! Whatever the reason may have been for placing a 4-H Clover in the center of a white, rectangular background and using it as a flag, the concept quickly caught on. Produced in quantity and sold nationally by the National 4-H Supply Service since [it started in 1925](#), a 4-H Flag became a standard element of almost every 4-H Club meeting and event across the country right up to the present. In fact, it just may be that it was the National 4-H Supply Service that created the first 4-H Flag.



A 4-H Flag on display in the University of Maine's Page Farm & Home Museum. Purchased probably from the National 4-H Supply Service in the late 1930s or early 1940s, it was used for at least 50 years during many 4-H club and 4-H county ceremonial events by the members of the West Rockport 4-H Club of Maine.

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In 1945, the world welcomed a new organization - The United Nations. Well, “welcomed” might be the wrong word. Not everyone thought the UN was a workable idea. But that changed on June 25, 1950, when North Korea attacked South Korea. The UN responded and by doing so, aroused the interest and support of many Americans. Suddenly, communities wanted to fly the United Nations flag in observance of the fifth Annual UN Day.

The National Citizen's Committee for United Nations Day, chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt, was overwhelmed with requests for flags. Short on supply, the committee turned to Extension for help who turned to the National Committee on Boys and Girls Club Work and their 4-H Supply Service. Yes, they could make materials and patterns available for making a UN flag and yes, they would make such kits available for sale.

The flag kits were available by September 1 and by October 12, 35,000 orders had been received. The UN flag kits were priced at 50 cents each and contained two hot-iron transfer patterns of complete design which the purchaser could apply, following the included instructions, to the center of the supplied blue 3 foot by 5 foot cloth.

In its report on UN Day 1950, the National UN Citizens' Committee commented on... "the extraordinary job of organization performed by the National Committee on Boys and Girls Club Work ... which produced and distributed the flag-making kit. All other work of the Committee had been postponed for a period of six weeks to fill the orders that poured in at a peak rate of over 1,000 orders per day."



On September 7, 1950, two 4-H Club members; Mary Ann Long, 19, of Shelby, Virginia and Charlotte Ingram, 15, of Ellendale, Delaware; attended a ceremony in the Rose Garden where they presented one of the first United Nations flag that they had made to President Harry Truman as Eleanor Roosevelt looked on. Mr. Truman commented, “it is ... a very great pleasure to me to have received that first flag presented by these lovely 4-H girls.”



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Discover the New National 4-H Hall of Fame Website [<https://4-h-hof.com/>]!

By Tina Veal, Illinois

The National 4-H History Preservation Committee kicked off 2025 with exciting news—there’s a brand-new National 4-H Hall of Fame website! Announced by National 4-H Hall of Fame Chair Debbie Nistler and NAE4-HYDP Archivist, Betty Gottler, this new site offers a fresh, user-friendly experience to explore the inspiring legacies of 4-H leaders, volunteers, and supporters.

Since its establishment in 2002 as part of the 4-H Centennial Project, the National 4-H Hall of Fame has honored those who have made a lasting impact on 4-H at local, state, and national levels. The website, <https://4-h-hof.com/>, now features profiles of more than 500 inductees, highlighting their contributions and dedication to positive youth development.

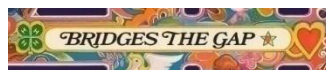
Know someone who deserves this prestigious recognition? The National 4-H Hall of Fame is now accepting nominations for the Class of 2025 through state 4-H offices and partner organizations. Nominations are due by **February 28, 2025**. Visit the website today to explore honorees and learn how you can be part of celebrating 4-H excellence!



National 4-H Hall of Fame INDUCTEES ABOUT US NOMINATIONS CONTACT US HOME

WELCOME TO THE NATIONAL 4-H HALL OF FAME!
A 4-H Centennial project of the National Association of Extension 4-H Agents.

2025 Nominations are Open!
Nominations may be made through state 4-H offices and our partner organizations. If you have a nominee in mind, please reach out to one of these organizations!



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Did the 4-H Pledge Change in 1986?

by Ron Drum, Co-Author of the 1980-2025 4-H History Book

I pledge my head to clearer thinking,
my heart to greater loyalty,
my hands to larger service, and
my health to better living,
for my club, my community, my country and my world.

How often have you said THOSE words? Originally written in 1918 sans “and my world”, they were adopted as the “National 4-H Pledge” during the first National 4-H Conference (Camp, back then) in 1927. It has stood the test of time, only being altered once. That was in 1973 when delegates to the National 4-H Conference felt 4-H’ers care about more than just their country and added the words “and my world”.

It came close to being altered a second time on its 59th birthday in 1986. Here is what happened.

During the 1985 National 4-H Conference, one of the Consulting Groups recommended that the phrase “my family” be added so that the pledge would read “...for my family, my club, my community, my country, and my world.”¹

Nationally, 4-H is governed by a body called the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP). Usually, ECOP assigns a sub-committee to handle 4-H business which was the case in the 1980s. So, the recommendation was sent to the ECOP 4-H Subcommittee and was taken up for discussion during their June 10-13, 1985 meeting held in Logan, Utah. Immediately concern was raised over the idea that making changes to the pledge would become a pattern. After all, it was just changed in 1973! So, committee member Lloyd Westbrook moved that the matter be postponed. In his motion Westbrook suggested that the USDA 4-H Staff, led by Don Stormer, survey State 4-H Leaders and Advisory Boards about making such a change. He further asked that a report on the survey results be presented at the next Subcommittee meeting, January 7-10, 1986 in Orlando, Florida. The motion passed.²

During the Utah meeting, a few other questions were also added to the survey, making the Orlando report a little bigger. The Orlando meeting minutes reported that the committee now had three points to decide.

At the request of the Subcommittee at its June 1985 meeting, Don Stormer conducted a survey of State 4-H Leaders and Citizen Advisors on the issues of (1) change the 4-H pledge to add the words “my family”, (2) change in age for participation in national events, and (3) change from age to grade in school for as the basis for participation in 4-H.

Based on the results received, the Subcommittee acted on each category separately. The findings resulted in a motion being made by Tom Hill: (1) to approve the proposed change in the pledge to add “my family” to the pledge making it read, “...my family, my club, my community, my country, and my world.” to become nationally effective January 1, 1988; and (2) not to approve either the change in age (reduce the age from 14 to 13) for participation in national events or the change from age to grade in school to determine eligibility for membership. Motion seconded and passed.³

This change didn’t sit well with the delegates of the 1986 National 4-H Conference. Since the pledge did not change on January 1, 1988, we can only assume that the 1986 Conference delegates wanted the pledge to stay just as it was. At least, given the outcome, that must be what the following minutes mean.

MINUTES OF THE ECOP 4-H SUBCOMMITTEE, June 3-5, 1986, Ocean City, Maryland, pp 2-3, under the topic heading: “4-H Pledge Change”: “Donald Stormer presented a petition signed by all the National Conference delegates (except for two) indicating their desire to keep ‘my club’ in the 4-H pledge.”

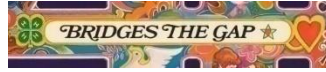
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The subcommittee approved a motion to keep “my club” in the pledge and we continue to say the 1973 version to this day.

¹ ECOP 4-H Subcommittee Meeting Minutes, June 10-13.1985. p 3

² Ibid

³ ECOP 4-H Subcommittee Meeting Minutes, January 7-10, 1986. pp 1-2



4-H Fun FACT

Is it “National 4-H Council” or “THE National 4-H Council”?

“Adele Whitford gets the credit for this answer. She was Grant’s (Shrum, National 4-H Council CEO, 1979-1989) long-time executive assistant, and then she was mine, and she was a grammar queen. She said that it's National 4-H Council.”

Donald Floyd, President and CEO, National 4-H Council, 2000 - 2013, Interview by Jo Turner and Ron Drum, June 6, 2023

Tell Us Your 4-H History Story

Share your photos and stories of the history YOU made in 4-H!

We know you’ve made 4-H History. So, tell us about it! The world wants to know YOUR 4-H history!
Send your articles to: Editor@4-HHistory.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.

Thanks for reading The BRIDGE. Look for our next issue May 15, 2025!



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