The 4-H Way

By Albert Hoefer

CORNELL 4-H CLUB BULLETIN 83
SEPTEMBER 1947
A Word of Appreciation

These essays, written by Albert Hoefer, State 4-H Club Leader, appeared originally as editorials in a publication devoted to the interest of 4-H progress in New York State.

Professor Hoefer is entering his thirty-first year in 4-H Club work. The New York State Extension Service is justly proud and New York 4-H Clubs fortunate, indeed, to have as State Leader a man with so keen an insight of rural life, so deep an understanding of rural youth, and so broad an appreciation of the art of living.

The philosophy set forth in these essays has contributed much to the success of 4-H Club work in New York State. The essays here have been gathered so that the principles they advocate may be preserved.

C. P. Sumner
Director of Extension
In Which We Serve

APRIL 1943

You are one of the necessary seventeen persons behind the lines required to keep one fighter on some battle front of the world. Most of you are also concerned with the production of that ton of food per year needed to keep that fighter in fighting trim.

All of us know that we must make the effort and the sacrifices necessary to assure speedy and complete Victory, whether it be in line with our present occupations or during those all too few “spare” moments away from the job.

We have not yet felt the full impact of this world-wide conflict, either in terms of personal sacrifice, or adjustments of plans and programs in our present official positions. But present-day happenings are casting their ominous shadows before them and portend, to some degree, the things to come.

Are we preparing ourselves to meet these impacts?

First of all, we should put our own house in order. We should make the unqualified determination that we shall render our best service in our position of leadership—the leadership we hold by virtue of our training and experience.

Second, we should keep our minds open in both our personal and professional life toward the quick and severe changes and adjustments necessary to victory.

Third, we are the champions of rural youth and as such must be aware that our guidance will be reflected in the adjustments and decisions that young folks must make.

Fourth, we shall do our part to help rural youth in this all-out effort—but

Fifth, hysteria shall not flavor the long-time fundamental 4-H Club plan of building better citizens. We must keep that thread of sound and thoughtful planning and procedure running through all our activities as a lifeline to which youth may cling in their return to normal living.
Where Are We Going in
4-H Club Work

MAY 1943

The nation has asked for a 100 per cent increase in 4-H Club membership in 1943. New York State has set no definite numerical goal but has asked that membership be materially increased. A 50 per cent increase over that of 1942 is already indicated. Since present world conditions are affecting every last one of us, both personally and professionally, it is the individual and the organization not making the adjustments to help win the war that are out of step with the times. It is questionable whether "normal times" as we have known them will ever return. We can reasonably expect that some of these changes will endure and that some of them will permanently affect 4-H Club work. The Extension Service has long prided itself on its ability to adapt its program quickly to meet a particular situation. Both the number of changes and the rapidity with which they are put into operation have now increased beyond normal tempo. This is in keeping rather than in conflict with established extension policy and procedure.

The more obvious present changes in 4-H Club work deal with increased membership and liberalized project and age requirements. We had become accustomed to things as they were. Who can say whether things as they were are really things as they should be from now on? A larger membership has long been an objective of 4-H Clubs for we have sought to bring the benefits of 4-H Club work to all eligible youth. The present emergency stimulates membership, and admitting those less than 10 years of age makes official what has already been going on.

A wide variation has always existed among 4-H Clubs projects as to the labor required, investment needed, and reports requested. Such discrepancies still exist, and will probably continue. The war demands an even wider range of project activities.

It is obvious then, when even casually analyzed, that these changes are not so severe as may appear on the surface. Yet the adjustment
to be made to serve greatly increased numbers and to find and train leaders is a challenge that requires our best judgment and thought. We must all make up our minds that changes must be made, programs must be pruned, work must be delegated, and organization must be maintained; that our success in holding membership, when finally the present emergency urges to join are over, will be in proportion to the satisfying experiences young folks get by their participation in 4-H Club work. But we cannot hold them all—we never did!

Concerning the Graduates

JUNE 1943

Another crop of college graduates is being harvested. Relatively speaking, this year’s crop is much like the June harvests of other years. Yet, in some respects it is, and is expected to be, much different.

It is one of the crops that war has forced to mature a little in advance of the usual time. Some of the members were already selected by the steely hands of war; undergraduate life was altered and the graduation exercises were given a distinct war flavor.

Despite these necessary changes, the black pall of war could not entirely black-out all of the customary festivities that attend actual graduation time. Graduates should not be deprived from experiencing some of the same emotions that this milestone has brought to countless thousands in the past. It should be marked, even during the war, with some festivity that delightfully stamps the occasion in the minds of the graduates.

These sad times have brought another significant change, a better change for the 1943 graduate. When the degrees had all been conferred and the last fond farewells to college pals and professors had all been said, when the Bachelors turned to face the world, the question of “What now?” had already been answered.

They had known for some time that the question of finding employment presented no problem; that in addition, there was some
choice, except for the older able-bodied males, in a wide variety of occupations with good pay. The feeling of "not being wanted," of insecurity and mental depression that has been the immediate aftermath of too many graduation-times in the past, was not in evidence.

Whether a wise choice of occupation has been made is overshadowed by the fact that necessary world work is to be done in a wide choice of occupations. This should relieve, to some extent, the chance of "round pegs in square holes" for the graduates of 1943. "4-Haps" salutes and congratulates these young graduates on the present incomparable opportunities that have awaited no other graduating class.

Rural Youth Respond

JULY 1943

A mighty national army of youthful "Soldiers of the Soil" has responded to the call for volunteer service on the food-production front this year, if New York State 4-H Club membership is an indication of what is happening in the Nation as a whole. Spurred by the challenge to "Serve, Save, and Sacrifice for Victory" through 4-H Club work, an army of 62,404 New York State rural boys and girls are helping to "Feed a Fighter in '43." This represents a 75 per cent increase over the state membership of 35,853 in 1942, an addition of 26,551 recruits.

The potentialities for service of this number of rural youth in a permanent organization are tremendous and should not be underestimated. Their activities include food production (meat, poultry, eggs, vegetables); food preservation and storage; farm and home labor; conservation of food and materials; participation in salvage; purchase and sale of war bonds and stamps; Red Cross; airplane spotting; and many others. Results are even now being realized. Probably a majority of the new recruits do not yet fully realize the fundamental values of 4-H Club organization. This is to be expected with such a sudden expansion in membership, but it must not be ignored by those in charge of the work.

[6]
The "lag" in club organization is reflected in the slow increase of local 4-H Club leaders, from 3373 in 1942 to 3390 in 1943, and of 4-H Clubs, from 2416 to 2434. Some existing 4-H Clubs have no doubt increased their membership but they have not absorbed the entire increase in membership.

Since the food situation will remain critical after the termination of hostilities, and since rural youth will continue to make their contribution on the food-production front as long as is necessary, those in charge of 4-H Club work can expect that the present high membership level will be maintained. We owe it, then, to all who are and will be serving their country through the medium of 4-H Club work, to permit them the other advantages in the work that come with organization, ritual, community service, leadership, and cooperative effort.

4-H Club work will continue after the war is won. The experiences of newly affiliated members should be made pleasant and satisfying, not only because their help is needed for the duration, but because we hope to create a desire on the part of these rural young folks to continue in 4-H work in the years to follow.

"The Follow-Through"

AUGUST 1943

In my younger days I played at baseball and tennis. In my not-so-younger days I have tried my hand at bowling, horseshoe pitching, and golf.

Baseball diamonds frequently were too long and too narrow for my hits, if any; tennis nets were too high and too far away for my returns; bowling alleys too narrow; horseshoes too "springy" and they acted like cart wheels; fairways seemed to move out from under my golf strokes; all were results of poor timing, poor technique, and a lack of proper "follow-through."

Yet in all these sports I have had flashes of good execution; the fulfillment of expectations; an afterglow of satisfaction; the plaudits of fellow contestants; a keen anticipation for another good hit,
throw, pitch, or shot. In every instance, when desired results were obtained, there was a conscious sense of good timing, of good technique, and proper "follow-through."

In August we are at the peak of our throw, pitch, or swing, in the year's 4-H Club program. The ball is being hit, the horseshoe released. The strokes well started are but half completed. Whether or not the results are good, bad, or indifferent, from now on, will depend on our "follow-through."

Our diversified 4-H Club program calls for a "follow-through" in many strokes. We have started many in keeping with the war effort. Are we following-through on the assimilation of new 4-H Club members, 4-H Club organization, and leadership support? Will 4-H members "follow-through" on their goal to "Feed a Fighter in '43"? Is the hot summer sun affecting our strokes, well started, to help 4-H Club members to "Save, Serve, and Sacrifice for Victory"?

There is still need for "follow-through" on food production and preservation; still need for the salvage of fats, scrap metal, phonograph records, books; still need to purchase war bonds and stamps; still dire need to assist with farm labor and home labor.

Our beginnings on these many fronts have been well made. We have taken proper stance, been careful of our backswing and approach, kept our eyes on the ball, and are in full swing. How successful these many strokes will be from here out, no matter what the beginning, will depend mainly on one thing—a proper "follow-through"!

Concerning Fishing

SEPTEMBER 1943

I like to fish. I have always liked to fish. I've had tastes of many kinds of fishing: salt-water fishing for weakfish, when instead I caught pogies; mountain-stream fishing for rainbow trout, when I've caught nothing; fresh-water fishing, both still and troll, for sundry kind of bass and pike, when I've caught perch and sunfish; and a rather unsportsmanlike kind of fishing for suckers. To catch
those suckers, I had to dam a small stream after they had gone up and trap them on their return trip. To do this I had to go into the stream barefooted and throw the fish out by hand. I caught what I went after, suckers (poor fish at best), and still the biggest ones slipped through my fingers.

My luck has decreased as the expense and variety of my fishing tackle increased. I still lack a landing net. But no matter how well equipped, I have invariably depended on one kind of bait—earthworms. A real fisherman would instinctively recognize the fact that "bait" is more important than "tackle" and that bait must be wisely selected to get even a nibble from the kind of fish we start out to catch. It's a science.

We're all fishermen of one sort or another. Too often we depend on "luck" rather than science. We use good tackle but neglect the bait; some of us still own no landing net. The way we fish, the big ones are caught singly. Once the hook is set, the fun begins. The line is played in and out, but always kept taut and the catch worked ever nearer the fisherman—then the landing net comes into play.

In our fishing for local 4-H Club leaders, we cannot use the "trap and grab" method, reaching into a dark pool of community leadership and trusting to luck for results. If we are to catch the kind of person we desire, our tackle must be sound, our bait well selected and placed where it will be seen and taken. Once "hooked" we must keep our line of leader helps and inspiration taut, and must keep in mind that science and not luck lures the big ones and they are not landed until enfolded in the landing net. Do you own one?

**Highlights and Shadows**

**October 1943**

I learned to swim in the potholes of Watkins Glen before concrete and iron railings made it navigable to the public. Each of our gang had his special pothole, a private bath, ground round and deep and smooth, by the swirling action of pebbles and stones
in swift-running springtime freshets. When our private domain was invaded, these spots were given picturesque names. Our special shower became Rainbow Falls. The utilitarian use we made of the many spots, and the privacy we enjoyed, dimmed our eyes to the specific beauties that surrounded us on all sides.

Then one day an artist came with canvas and brush. As he transferred "our domain" to the canvas, we watched and checked with him new beauty spots—things we had not yet discovered. On the general background he highlighted that small portion of the Mountain House just discernible through the foliage, high on the cliff; a small bit of the narrow bridge that spanned the gorge, twisted trees clinging precariously to the precipitous sides; huge rocks and overhanging ledges; the rainbow in the falls. The deep greens of the trees and grays of the rocks formed shadows that gave depth and beauty to the entire scene. We understood and appreciated better the place where we were privileged to play as youngsters, even though the time had come to discover new playspots in the glen above the railroad bridge.

In the recent regional meetings of County 4-H Club Agents and County Executive Committee members, an attempt was made to refurbish the background of the Extension Service and to retouch the old and add the new things affecting 4-H Club work in their relationship to each other, to form a comprehensive picture of the whole.

The stream bed becomes the laws and regulations that founded and advanced the Service. The stream becomes the thousands of people who have abetted and benefitted in the Service. This stream is augmented by the many tributaries, blending and influencing ever increasing masses of people, the Farm Bureau, the Home Bureau, and 4-H Club members. The banks of the stream become the leaders, guiding the masses in the channel of better rural living—the Directors of County Farm and Home Bureau and 4-H Club Associations, County Executive Committee Members, Local Leaders, and Agents.

The cliffs become the foundations for the respective branches of the service, the things that through the years have proved their worth.
In 4-H Club work they become democratic community organization and functioning; local leader guidance; progressive club programs; sound home projects; use of scientific subject matter; putting a premium on work; individual recognition.

On top of the cliff in the sun of public approbation stands the Mountain House of 4-H Club work.

That bridge in the sky is the link that ties 4-H Club work with the other branches of Extension; the path leading upgrade along the top of the cliff near the gorge to higher land above is the future path of 4-H Club progress. 4-H Club membership has already advanced far along that narrow path; some places are not yet provided with guard rails. That path must be improved and broadened. Guard rails of local club organization, leadership recruitment and training, increased personnel and adequate financing, must still be erected and made secure for the guidance of the thousands of children’s feet that will pass that way.

**Small Parts Are Important**

**NOVEMBER 1943**

Sara May runs a milling machine in an airplane factory. With her husband at war she got a job where she thought she could help most. She was put to work milling fittings that occupy a critical place in the wing structure of a light bomber. She didn’t understand just what the parts were for. No one thought it necessary to tell her.

One morning the piece she was milling broke off and hit her arm with enough force to break it. In a few days she was back in the shop with her arm in a sling. But until her arm mended, she couldn’t do her regular job at the milling machine.

They put her to chasing “hot” shop orders—locating urgently needed parts that were lagging behind schedule. Because this took her to all parts of the factory she found herself, one day, beside the final assembly line of the light bombers. She had never laid eyes on

---

1Based on article by Rex Miller in *This Week* Magazine, November 14, 1943.
one before. Her eyes traveled along the sleek fuselage from rounded nose to empennage. She gazed, enraptured, at the wing section that extended toward her. She stepped beneath it and, looking up, she saw her part, the part she had made on the milling machine. For the first time she realized the important place her part played in the whole bomber.

"It's mine!" she shouted.

Those long weeks of training, those hard days at the machine, took on new meaning. They had been worth while. She was helping to win the war, to bring Jack home sooner. Her broken arm became a lucky break for her; otherwise she might never have seen her part in place in the bomber.

Sara May reported her feelings to the plant officials. As a result of her experience and others like it, things began to happen in many factories. Every worker is now taken on a tour of the whole plant. The tour ends at the assembly line where the worker sees the part he or she helped to make. Each one knows now how important that small part is.

Once workers realize this, production increases, more parts pass inspection and absenteeism drops. Thanks to Sara May, thousands of workers now see how their small jobs combine to make a mighty whole.

4-H Club work is a combination of many small parts. The "mighty whole" is as good as the parts that go to make it up. Each one of us should make a visit to the assembly line, before we break an arm, in order to see our small part in relation to the entire war picture. Then with a sense of the real importance of our jobs, we can help speed the day of victory.
Christmas in Wartime

DECEMBER 1943

Christmas is one of the loveliest and most profound of symbols. Its observance is world-wide. It was ordained for the masses. It is for all the people of all races in all lands. The passage of more than two thousand years has not obscured its origin, altered its purpose, or dimmed its significance.

Such a universal symbol of spiritual hope for better times to come cannot be suppressed. It will be observed, if not customarily celebrated, even in the war-torn lands of the world. Some Germans will voice a guarded "Froeliche Weihnachts"; some Frenchmen a "Joyeux Noel"; some Italians a "Bono Natale." In Denmark it will be "Glaedelig Jul"; in Finland "Hauskaa Joulu"; in Spain "Felices Pascuas"; in Sweden "God Jul." The Brazilian will say "Boas Festas," and they all mean, as the Englishman and the American will so significantly say, "Merry Christmas!"

Our American Christmas celebration, like America herself, stems from many lands. "Christmas" came from the festival "Christesmesse" or "Christ's mass" celebrated in early England. From England came the idea of the written greeting. Santa Claus came by way of Holland as St. Nicholas, patron saint of children, who promptly grew a long white beard. From the Dutch custom of using the shoe came our idea of hanging up the more elastic stocking. The Scandinavian people gave us the Yule log. The poinsettia, the symbol of immortal, undying love, is legend in Aztec of Old Mexico. The Christmas tree, bells, candles, holly, mistletoe, singing of carols, exchanging of gifts—all coming from many lands including America—are now a part of all our own unique Christmas celebration.

America has reason to celebrate Christmas this year. Its significance takes on a more profound meaning. Thousands are praying for "Peace on earth good will among men." To celebrate the heart of Christmas is to forget ourselves in service to others and like the great personality who gave us Christmas, to "increase in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."
Proceeding According to Plan

JANUARY 1944

"Proceeding according to plan" has become a familiar expression. Used in connection with military matters, it is cast in an aura of necessary secrecy, to announce to a news-hungry world that all cannot be told, but that things are going as expected. The important concept of the expression is not alone the fact that things are "proceeding" but that there is a "plan," and procedure is in accord with it.

"Planning" denotes careful thought, sober consideration, the weighing of the pros and cons, strict attention to detail, anticipating probable quick shifts and changes to meet possible exigencies, final fitting together of the component parts to form a workable whole.

"Proceeding" denotes action, forward movement, execution, until desired results are achieved. Therefore, the "planning" becomes of utmost preliminary importance, the "proceeding" a logical sequence.

The official 4-H Club family has just completed a week of planning in behalf of the rural youth of New York State. Unlike military planning there is neither need nor desire for secrecy. Instead, the deliberations were cast in an aura of democratic procedure in which the agent, the specialist, the supervisor, all played a part.

The committee reports gave evidence that the deliberations were finally crystallized after careful thought, sober consideration, and attention to detail. With but one or two exceptions there were few rough corners to be smoothed before the component parts fitted into a workable whole.

It was evident that despite the increased burdens of the past two years, the 4-H Club family was in good spirits and in good health; that the conference was marked with the sobering effect of present-day seriousness; that the winning of the war flavored the decisions in keeping with the immediate needs of the country and what youth can do to help.

[14]
We now have, by mutual agreement, many words moulded into many ideas on paper. Those words and those ideas, and the thought and effort they reflect, are indeed empty unless they are translated into action during the season immediately ahead.

The planning part is over, except for slight modifications here and there, to fit particular situations. It remains for us now each to do his appointed task, so that the decisions made here may be translated into richer and fuller lives for more and ever more rural youth, so that each may take a full share and just satisfaction in the expression that things are indeed "proceeding according to plan."

**Smoke Stacks**

**FEBRUARY 1944**

My office window affords a picturesque view of patchwork fields, rambling valleys, and wooded hills that characterize the Finger Lakes region of central New York.

By settling back in my office chair I can screen out most of the man-made structures that fringe the southern boundary of the Cornell Campus. The scene then becomes entirely pastoral were it not for two things, two huge smokestacks that pierce the sky high above the horizon to mark the site of the University heating plant. Those stacks, centered as they are in such a setting, dominate the entire scene. Their behavior is peculiar. Rarely do they emit the slightest trace of smoke. Only at their bases are they ever partially enveloped by the smoke and steam of two lesser stacks that on occasion move about them, one on the locomotive that hauls in the fuel and the other on a diminutive steam-powered crane that feeds the hoppers of the plant.

The shrill cry and clanking rods of the locomotive reverberate among the hills long before it can be seen. Then its own rhythmic belches of smoke and hissing steam nearly envelop its sooty self as it groans to a stop and begins its tired panting beneath the towering stacks.

The smaller engine then starts to outdo the locomotive. Its stack begins to smoke, out of all proportion to its diminutive self; it
begins to move amid the staccato puffs of its pent-up steam; it bustles back and forth with its own noisy importance almost continually lost from view in the fog and smoke of its own making. The big stacks look silently down on all this bustle and confusion but refuse to be disturbed. The locomotive backs more silently down the track from whence it came. The crane comes to rest and finally cools off... the big stacks refuse to smoke.

Folks are like smokestacks. Little folks are prone to fume and bluster back and forth in their single limited track, often lost in the fog of their own making. Their spurts are short lived and soon come to rest. Some come hissing and clanking down the track with puffs and belches and cries and groans. They stop to snort a while and finally back down the track.

The big folks whose heads are never lost in the haze of their own making or confused by the commotion and smoke-screen at their feet, stand as sentinels of potential and efficient power, to be used only on occasion; to emit only that which seems necessary for proper balance and controlled functioning.

How is your fuel burning? Is most of it going up the stack?

**Green Thumbs**

MARCH 1944

**Mother** has a green thumb. She also has a garden. That's a good combination,—a green thumb and a garden. At eighty years, she gardens the year around.

In the winter time her garden is a sill-high bench in front of a south window. It holds not more than half a dozen plants—begonia, azelia, gloxinia, cactus. They all do well. Mid-winter found the azelia beautiful with bloom. Both the gloxinia and begonia were in bud. The cactus had what cactuses are supposed to have. The azelia was a hold-over. The begonia and gloxinia were slipped. Slips for next winter's plants were in a glasss tumbler on the kitchen window sill. A gloxinia leaf had been broken off and stuck in the soil beside the parent plant. Next year they will bloom, mostly because of mother's green thumb.
She says she will spade only a "little of the garden" this year. She said the same thing last year. She spaded it all, mostly in early morning before the sun got too hot because she "couldn't stand seeing the weeds in the unspaded portion." There will be weeds this year, and no doubt the whole garden will again be spaded. There is much akin to "green thumbs" in working with boys and girls. I can't explain a green thumb any more than I can explain what it takes to work successfully with young folks. You either have it or you don't.

It's a knack to influence the younger generation to take deeper root, too often under adverse conditions; to nurture them to full bloom; to move them for proper growth to a larger sphere of experience, and to "spade the whole garden" to get rid of those things that sap life and strength.

We need more green thumbs to nurture the human plants that are to bloom soon and bear fruit in a war-torn world.

Anniversaries

April 1944

My poorest grades in school were in history. That's not because I couldn't read or remember the event. I couldn't remember the date. My grades fluctuated in inverse proportion to the number of dates I was obliged to guess.

Fixing the time of an event still bothers me. Anything that occurred day before yesterday, so far as recalling the date is concerned, is history to me.

I marvel, although somewhat vexed, at the person who so glibly recounts, "Well, that happened on such and such a date."

Yet, the inability to recall dates is no excuse for not recalling some. Those on a yearly basis—New Years, Fourth of July, Christmas, or your mother's or next-of-kin's birthdays. These are close to the heart and close to home.

But of the others, those less personal, those that are identified
with your work, the little known ones—do you recall those annually, by decades, semi-centennial, or centennial?

For example, thirty years ago, now close to a nearby date, federal legislation began a new experiment in government, in which federal, state, and county government and local people all cooperate in financing, planning, and carrying out a great constructive movement in rural education and progress.

It's a 30th anniversary.
What did this legislation establish?
Who were its sponsors?
What was the exact date?

*You'll have to find the answer somewhere inside this issue of 4-Haps if your school grades were poor in history.

**Morale on File**

MAY 1944

I have a morale file. It's not labeled with that name. In fact, it has no identification mark. It's just a place where I stick things, letters and newspaper clippings mostly, about me. It contains only nice things. Nice things that people write when something unusual happens. I keep it handy by. I've used it quite a bit lately.

When things get thick and then thicker; when plans somehow go awry; when the desired response is not forthcoming; when obstacles seem insurmountable; when enthusiasm and initiative begin to lag, I reach for and thumb through my morale file.

I read again some of those things that other people were kind enough to write to me: "Wish you the best of success"; "it will be a great pleasure to work with you"; "will have my loyal support"; "assure you of our hearty cooperation"; "very much gratified"; "confidence in your ability."

It doesn't matter if people have changed their minds so long as I don't know about it.

*Passage of the Smith-Lever Law establishing the Extension Service passed by Congress May 8, 1914.*
Each phrase is a hypodermic injection of egoistic serum, to be taken, of course, in small doses as needed. Like most serums an overdose may prove fatal—swelling will begin in the head.
But, to me, morale is largely ego with a balance wheel. Inherent in morale are the mental factors of zeal, spirit, hope, confidence—with no priority needed. It’s not confined to the armed forces.
It does make a difference what the other fellow thinks about you. You tend to live up to those thoughts.
When all else fails, and you need a lift, take a shot from your morale file. Surely you must have one! And while you’re building your own, keep in mind that the other fellow wants to build one too.

Stride Ability

JULY 1944

I have long legs. I use them. They were drafted into active war transportation service with the advent of “A” car stickers. Like yours, they are just long enough to reach from the body to the ground, but their stride ability may be quite different.
You fall into step beside me. We both may “jig” a little to get our lefts and rights functioning together. Why? I don’t know. Did you change your stride or did I conform to yours? Lately, mostly because I cannot jig gracefully, I keep my stride and the other fellow can conform if he wishes. He usually does anyway. It may be psychology.
As we enter the campus, we hit a natural tempo beaten out for us with the “Hup-2-3-4” of the service men going hither and yon. We both conform almost unconsciously. The boys in the ranks have no alternative, not even the short-legged ones.
In our dealings with human relationships, progress, keeping abreast of things, staying one step ahead, stride ability plays an important part. We have gathered about us people with different length mental legs. The youngsters with whom we work, by and large, have shorter strides.

[19]
We can either fall in beside the short-strider with the mincing steps and accept his pace or set a better one to which he will probably conform.

In the meantime, we want to keep an eye on the fellow who is rapidly approaching, the long-strided one who is going places, and hit it off with him as he tries to pass by, even though it takes quite a "jig" to get in step beside him.

We should all try to grow longer mental legs that will carry us through the war and a long way into peace. If we set a good pace and keep it, most others will unconsciously conform. Even the very short-legged ones.

Mid-Season Ailments

AUGUST 1944

At mid-season our Victory Garden harbors a few insect pests and plant diseases. I presume yours does to in spite of all the precautions you took.

While the garden was young there were few evidences of destruction. They were superficial and easily detected. Adult Mexican bean beetles and cabbage worms were hand-picked and dust applied to finish off the progeny of those overlooked. The unhealthy plants were replaced. Precautions were also taken against ailments that we knew might come later. They came. And some took hold in spite of treatment.

But these mid-season ailments seem deeper seated and more destructive. You discover them all at once. Squash vine borers and corn borers certainly go to the center of things with devastating results. Cucumber wilt seems hopeless. We keep on fighting.

The garden needs constant checking. We start with good seed and healthy plants; we fertilize for quick and healthy growth; we cover all with a cloud of dust or spray; we cultivate and weed, and in spite of our efforts, mid-season ailments creep in and attack. We heed the first symptoms to save the crop. We keep on fighting.

Humans are like the garden. Some of us are near mid-season in age.
we've come through our younger years in good shape, taken every precaution and yet, something hits us all at once. Something has slipped through our defences. These ailments seem more deeply seated. But unlike our treatment of the garden plants, we tend to ignore the little warning aches and pains. We ignored them before and nothing happened, so we'll ignore them again.

Like the garden, humans need constant mid-season checking and necessary immediate remedy. Things have crept up on us and attacked us. Heeding them means better health, better work, and happier living.

Mother nature will heal the deep wound necessary to remove a squash borer from the center of its vine. If given the chance in time, she'll do the same for you.

V-E-Day

SEPTEMBER 1944

V-E-Day is just around the corner. We don't know just how far we are from that corner. We do know that we are approaching it, swiftly, surely.

V-E-Day, of course, should be celebrated. A large number of people expect to celebrate it. They are poised and ready to burst forth at the first word of Germany's capitulation. The safety-valve of pent up emotions has reached a pressure point where the least provocation will blow it wide open. Business and industry are taking precautions to safeguard property.

Lack of proper planning and control is assurance that mob psychology, often resulting in property damage and personal injury, will prevail. Perhaps America should celebrate in this manner. With proper planning, however, some of the baser elements of celebrating might be brought under control. A more sober and fitting means of celebrating might be devised.

At best, we can only hope to celebrate V-E-Day, or half a V-Day. Whichever it is, there must be a V-J-Day, the other half of a V-Day, or the first celebration becomes premature and meaningless.

In our rural areas and smaller communities, who would plan for a
more sober celebration better than the young people of the community with the initiative taken by the local 4-H Club? Unless such planning is done, many rural folks will be unable to participate in an event that all have hoped, dreamed, and prayed for. G-hour plus 1 (the time of the receipt of the first news) might be set, rallying places designated, flags and other paraphernalia incident to organized celebration assembled, musical instruments, drums, toy instruments that anyone can play and noisemakers provided. You might have a general community parade with stops for sober reflection and thanks at the homes where service flags are displayed. A short service of thanksgiving would be a fitting close.

Folks should be given the opportunity to vent their long-confined emotions through some sort of physical activity. It should be directed. It can be orderly. Proper planning will help. Sober reflection should follow.

Beaten Paths

OCTOBER 1944

ON OCCASION, my job requires that I visit persons in other buildings on the campus. Sidewalks join all buildings. They are laid out in simple geometric design. They often nullify the principle of the shortest distance between two points. Having lived through the "Keep off the Grass" era, I still incline to conform to all sidewalk routes. There's no question about it in foul weather. But in fair weather, and with still a little hesitancy, I travel the shortest distance often directly across the greensward, perhaps the first to chart a new course. Other folks do it too.

Some of these shortcuts become beaten paths. I then use them without qualm. To me they reflect elements of daring, pioneering, individualism, and efficiency.

Sidewalks sometimes replace these beaten paths. They then become fully recognized courses between certain points. Others are of a temporary nature, soon abandoned and swallowed up with grass. They served their purpose. All semblance of the path is soon obliterated.
The pioneers of 4-H Club work dared to strike out directly across the greensward to create a newer type of education for rural youth. Of the many beaten paths first trod by pioneering feet, some are now obliterated for lack of constant use. They either were unsound or served their temporary purpose. Some persisted and those who followed helped to beat them into sidewalks of sound principles and procedures. On some others that seemed established, the grass is beginning to return.

The experiences of the past few years under the pressure of war conditions has forced us out along some new and uncharted paths. Some of these beaten paths will be abandoned. They will have served their purpose. Some others that appear established will take new direction, and be changed. Others will persist as they are now. In the past we have based our work on the inheritance of certain ideas and procedures from others. Some we shall discard. In turn we should be daring enough so to enrich the inheritance we received, with what we can add, that our time may create new paths and broaden the old ones so that they become the better 4-H Club sidewalks of tomorrow. Else we stand still.

**Reflections**

**FEBRUARY 1945**

I'm spending this week-end in Chicago. It's Saturday. National Club Congress is over. The next meeting does not begin until Monday. This in-between pause has permitted time for some reflections—on the past week and on the past year.

I'm sitting at a small desk at one side of a very long corridor. I'm facing a large double doorway that leads into the largest ballroom in the largest hotel in the world. Unlike most doors used in such doorways, mirrors replace the ordinary clear glass panes.

One of the doors is closed. In it I can see reflected all that is going on behind me. It was some little time before I realized the illusion of people coming from both directions, to disappear entirely as they passed through. As people pass me I can observe them from two sides at once.
The other door is ajar. Through it I can see into the huge ballroom beyond. Its wide expanse, its ornateness, its crystal brilliance, is in sharp contrast to that of the corridor. It seems to draw people toward it as though stepping into a different world.

Reflecting on the past week, I can still visualize the 1000 4-H Club delegates, representing the nearly one and three-fourths million 4-H Club members of the Nation, approaching the same doorway. They were here because of their 4-H Club achievements. They personify achievement. They passed through as though to the new experiences, into a larger area of activity and brightness that lay beyond.

This is the time of year for reflection. We should all sit for awhile at one side of that long 4-H Club corridor of 1944 down which we have just come. We should gaze intently and critically into the closed half of that mirrored doorway that marks the end of the 4-H Club year. As we review each accomplishment, as we appraise each program, looking at it from all sides, we should not be misled by what seemingly is going counter to the 4-H Club current. Gradually we should shift our gaze to that open half. Move toward it. Meet counter currents face to face and erase them by stepping through that open half into the wider area of service, the embellished and expanded program and the brighter future that is 1945.

Play Ball

MAY 1945

The nation's ball parks once again resound to the command, "Play Ball!" Baseball is an institution of the United States of America. It was born in New York State. It has wide-spread appeal to both participant and rooter.

I like baseball. I like to watch it. I used to like to play it. When I played it, I played first base.

To play any position well, requires special training and diligent practice—a keen sense of timing, judgment, and quick decisions. Above all, a keen appreciation that individual play must always contribute to the play of the team.
One advantage I had as a first baseman was that I am tall and consequently have a good reach. The throws from other players to first are not always easily caught. The haste necessary to field the ball and get it to first before the batter often precludes careful aim. So a first baseman must learn to shift quickly, stretch and reach full length in any direction, and, if possible, to keep one foot on the "bag." In that way a six-footer should handle all throws that come within a radius of about 8 feet and still be able to keep one foot on the "bag." Those of less stature must make up in agility what they lack in reach.

Many times it may be better strategy to let wilder throws go through to the fellow who is backing up the play. It may also be better strategy, when fielding choice of a batted ball lies between players, to let the other fellow handle it without interference.

In a sense, all county 4-H Club agents are first basemen. How well they have learned to play the position depends on their training and willingness to learn on the job. Through practice, they have learned to stretch out and handle an increasingly larger number of jobs that are thrown their way, sometimes without too careful aim. They have learned, too, the need to keep one foot on the "bag" of sound 4-H Club procedure and philosophy, and that their individual efforts must contribute to the play of other members of the 4-H Club "team."

Experience has given them the judgment to let some things "go through" for those backing up the play to handle but to be on the alert to assist.

Experience should also teach the strategy of letting other players handle some matters without interference—sometimes by not being directly involved in the play; sometimes by coaching from the side-lines; and, more often, to sit in the grandstand, to lend moral support, and to "root" for the other teams that happen to be playing at the time.
Wave Illusion
AUGUST 1945

The other day I spent a few hours fishing. Between bites there was nothing else much to do but watch the waves. They came from one direction and rushed off in the opposite direction. Occasionally a wave would be caught off balance. The wind would whip the crest into a frothy whitecap. It attracted immediate attention. All around was choppy confusion. Along the shore there was more confusion with added noise as they toppled on the beach.

Wind and waves gave the impression that both were rushing off to keep some important engagement in another part of the lake. But the science of physics discovered long ago that wave action is largely up and down—that there is little forward motion—and that because of this a wave that sticks its head up too high gets it blown into frothy spume. Along the shore, at least three forces join hands to create the noise and confusion: the wind pushing from behind, the up-and-down action catching its “toes” on the lake bottom, and the backwash from the preceding wave.

The wind created a wave-illusion. With all their commotion and frothy show the waves were merely dancing up and down pretty nearly in place. But they did command attention.

Among the characteristics that drive the Extension Service to better and larger achievements are the sound educational basis and quick adaptability of its program and the generous efforts of volunteer leaders with their firsthand knowledge of the groups they represent. These strengths are a challenge to the employed personnel.

We must work with the people whom we would serve, listen and pay heed to what they are saying, share with them the development of ideals and objectives that shall guide us all. Otherwise, like the waves, we may be whipped about by shifting influences that make us dance up and down in place. We must not be content to create a frothy illusion of moving forward, lest we spend our energies needlessly, wreck our ideals and objectives in too shallow water upon the beach and lose them in a flotsam of confusion and noise.
Yearly Records

NOVEMBER 1945

My office window frames a rather large elm tree. In summer, its bulky, green, fan-shaped dome commands a considerable portion of the outside view. In its full summer regalia it is constantly at work making itself into a larger and better tree.

A short time ago its summer garb was lost following a short-lived burst of yellow, marking an end of another season's work. Its annual cycle, repeated for many years, is again complete.

Today, its hidden structure stands vividly revealed. Its limbs form long, gracefully tapering, black lines, accented against a contrasting background of newly fallen snow, to their very lacelike tips. All summer long those limbs formed the support that held the green canopy against the sun's rays. They conveyed the raw materials to the leafy manufacturing plants; transported the finished product to its every woody part; and recorded the season's work in the form of another annular ring that covers its entire surface. It provided also its plans for next season's work and concealed them in the thousands of tiny buds that form part of its winter garb.

At this time annually, 4-H Clubs drop much of the summer garb that has contributed to the year's growth. Now is the time to take a clear-cut view of the many limbs that form the solid structure that lies beneath,—unobscured by the mass of summer foliage; to record the results of another year's work covering all its branches and its growth from year to year; to determine whether the growth is thick or thin, healthy or weak. And then to include many "buds" that assure continued growth for the coming year.

Making an annual report may be a bore and a chore. It should be a critical appraisal of the year's work; a determination of weakness as well as strength. It should reveal the places to prune and the spots that need growth stimulation; perhaps some reinforcement and surgery. It should form the basis for future planning.

It then becomes of more value to the maker than merely to fulfill a requirement. It forms another "annular ring", making more sturdy the structure that ever builds for the future.
Finding Gems

MAY 1946

One of the most menial tasks that GI’s were called upon to do was to clean up the sordid, jumbled messes of both men and material left in the wakes of battles. Often prolonged engagements added to the sordidness and the repulsiveness that awaited the clean-up squads. Since many of the Pacific battles involved island-hopping, fighting was particularly heavy on the shores and beaches, so into the immediate areas of devastation was spewed the wave-borne flotsam of sea battle.

On one occasion a GI was assigned to help clean up a particularly nasty bit of shore line. His thoughts probably matched his squalid surroundings and embraced all of the brass hats in the U. S. Army. He no doubt had to exert all effort, both mental and physical, to do the task at hand. There was no alternative.

In picking up a shattered bit of debris, he chanced to disturb in the shallow water what appeared to be a small but very pretty spherical stone. He slipped it into his pocket. Later he recalled a man whom he heard address National 4-H Club Congress when he was a delegate to that event, offer to mount in a ring or other ornament any pretty stones that 4-H Club members might find and send to him. The stone was sent to be made into a ring for the GI’s mother. The man never mounted it but sent it to the mother to keep until the son’s return.

From among the wrecked pieces of that deplorable war-made mess, the GI had picked up what proved to be a perfect pearl. He had found a rare gem in the very place where he least suspected. Perhaps it needed a little polishing to bring out its real luster. No doubt a proper setting would still further enhance its beauty. How easily it could have been overlooked! How justifiably blind he could have been not to have seen it!

In our work with young folks and leaders we are never called upon to face the task nor work in surroundings that confronted this GI. But we are faced at times with doing tasks not entirely to our liking in situations as we find them.
It requires a will to do and a discerning eye to spot the gems that will eventually add to our joys of living and working. We should be alert to catch the first glint in that ordinary boy, that ordinary girl, living in that ordinary community, who may well be the outstanding 4-H Club member tomorrow; to seek out that ordinary person who will consent to act as local leader of an ordinary club. With a little polishing and placed in a proper setting such gems will provide the gleam and the sparkle that will add to the value and the pride of our daily tasks.

To find them, look in the least suspected places.

**Snap-Back**

JUNE 1946

An automobile tire dealer explained it to me sometime ago. It may have no scientific basis, so far as I know, but it sounded logical.

The argument at the time, among dealers, was whether tires should have a continuous unbroken tread or a broken one that alternated rubber with air space. The virtues of the continuous tread were more rubber touching the road and a larger sustaining surface, hence reduced wear and a longer life. The virtues of the intermittent tread were cooler tires because of air space, better grip, less side slip, and snap-back. He stressed snap-back.

He explained that no matter what the inside pressure of a tire was when on a car, the tread touching the ground is always somewhat depressed; that a continuous-tread tire, when rolling over the road, is continually pushing against a little mound of undepressed rubber at the forward edge of the depressed area. The continual kneading action in the rubber because of this little “hill” that is being pushed along against the road, sets up friction, produces heat, eventually reduces resiliency and elasticity and causes more rapid wear.

With an intermittent-tread there is a minimum of internal friction. There is no continuous forward pushing against a mound of kneading rubber. Each separate part of the tread, because of the spaces
between them, has a chance to recover its original form as pressure is reduced on breaking contact with the ground. Tires remain cooler. Resiliency and elasticity are retained longer. This recovery he called snap-back.

All of us have been running on continuous tread-tires these past few years. Added load has built up pressures. Ever pushing against a mound of dead-lines, extra duties, and demanding activities has engendered some friction. We cannot continue to push such heavy loads lest we be forced to stop entirely for a cooling-off period or suffer the inevitable blow-out. We might better shift now to the treads that cause less friction, less side slip, less heat; that retain their elasticity, resiliency, and grip; to give due concern to spaces between the separate parts of our busy life and insure longer wear through well-spaced, well-earned periods for snap-back.

One-Man Band

September 1946

I was one of a circle of admiring youngsters when I saw him,—an oscillating human Christmas tree hung with musical instruments,—a one-man band.

A bass drum was strapped to his back; a metal frame held a mouth organ to his lips; to one elbow was fastened a cymbal; a bell adorned his left ankle, another his head; in his hands was a guitar. A drumstick was clamped to the drum edge and a piece of rope ran from a lever on the stick to an eyelet in the heel of his right shoe. Whenever he kicked his right leg, he beat the drum; a flip of his right elbow made the cymbal clang against another one on the drum; he rang a bell when he shook his left leg and a different knell sounded when he shook his head. His lips cupping the mouth organ’s edge gave direction to cheek-bellowed breath. Both hands were busy with fret finding and strumming. He could not possibly have played another instrument.

As he played he was obliged to remain pretty much in one busy spot. He could not march off to his own music lest there be a misplaced drum-beat or an unharmonious bell clang. He attracted a lot
of attention. He gave more an exhibition of physical dexterity than a rendition of pleasing music. I could only imagine the lonely practice and rehearsing required to master the performance. The effort and energy required to do the act was comically evident. I have often contrasted the one-man band with a regular one. A good band is a wonderful organization, a fine example of integration and harmonious cooperation. The bandmaster must assign the parts and is himself one of the players. Each player must know his part in advance. His instrument must be in tune and his individual performance in harmony with all others. Each must contribute his full share to the finished product.

Each player in a good marching band must be on the alert to step off to a lilting tune with each other player. It takes time to prepare such a band for public appearance—recruiting, training, and rehearsing. A regular band can go places to tunes of their own making. What’s more, all those listening have a desire to go along too—to keep in step with the band.

The time for planning new programs is at hand. It is time to select the pieces to be played, the players to take part, and the tools and instruments to be used.

It is time for each County Executive Committee to decide whether their agent acts as a bandmaster, to help him so organize the parts of the program to the end that all the players assume and contribute their full share in an harmonious, integrated, forward-moving and popular program for rural youth. Or does the committee limit the parts to be played in any county by forcing him to be a one-man band?

Stony Ground

NOVEMBER 1946

My first farm job was the toughest. It combined a number of elements most distasteful to younger 'teen age boys. It had to do with weeds, growing crops of sweet corn, tomatoes, and melons, hot sun, and a most overpowering hoe. The one pleasant feature was a ten-minute rest for every 50 minutes worked. The hoe was not an ordinary hoe. It appeared to us as an instru-
ment especially contrived to punish and remind. Its long, unwieldy handle terminated in a somewhat rounded triangular-shaped blade, patterned, to all intent and purpose, after the tip of satan's tail. The field was not an ordinary field. Each spring a nearby creek claimed it as part of its bed, adding or subtracting soil and rock according to the degree of its annual rampage. It was one of the stoniest pieces of land ever called upon by man and prayerfully expected to produce a crop.

Viewed from the top, the weeds were just weeds. But the roots went deep in their search for soil and moisture. They were hard-braced on all sides. On such land no hoe-shaving was possible. Roots were either mined or raggedly cloven.

The sun was the sun of today, but with a two way-effect. The heat was absorbed alike by plant, boy, and stone. The stone-stored heat nurtured the plant by night and gingered the boy, through bare feet, by day. The boys swung, sweated, and sweltered with the luxurious thought always in mind of that ten-minute respite flat on the back in the cool shade of a nearby tree, and the jug of water.

Strange as it may seem, the boys endured and the land produced. The produce was again to supply, as they had for years, the elite trade of a reputable grocery store in a nearby city. There just had to be a superior crop. The grocery man expected it. There was also a reputation to maintain—the boys knew it, labored for it, and maintained it.

There were many times when some boys said, “What's the use?” Some quit. Most of them saw it through.

Many of us today are forced to labor in what appears to be barren ground. There are too many stones and tough weeds in our way. Chances for success seem doubtful. Our tools do not seem adapted to the job. They are unwieldy in our hands.

When the sun is hot and the stones burn, shall we say “What's the use?” Or do we have the audacity to sow some of our certified seed of help and service in those places where it appears that blind faith alone is needed, and through hard work and sweat to extend our services to the boys and girls who just happen to be located on the stony ground?

[32]
Bridge Grafting

JANUARY 1947

The farm where I once worked, like many farms in those days, had a few fruit trees. New ones were set out from time to time. We planted them carefully, spreading the roots and firming the soil about them. We shaped their tops by pruning. From time to time in the spring after the snow had gone, we would find one or two of them girdled. Mice had eaten a ring of bark sometimes extending completely around the slender tree trunks.

Later we were advised that a wire-screen collar placed around the trees in the fall would protect them. That advice came too late, the damage had been done.

We had learned that trees fed and grew in the bark, in the region where it made contact with the solid wood. We knew that somehow the gaps made by the mice had to be filled if the trees were to live and grow. Somehow the food channels had to be reestablished between the roots and the tops of the trees. We had not learned how to bridge-graft.

Our first efforts failed. We tried to bridge the gaps with strips of bark held in place with raffia and generous gobs of grafting wax. Too late we learned that entire twigs, cut to fit and make contact with the live bark on either end of the gap, should have been used. We used them and witnessed the success of our learning and work by watching those twigs slowly take hold, weld themselves together, and eventually cover the entire gap.

We have long been aware of a gap in the Extension Service. We have watched hundreds of 4-H Club members leave the service in their late 'teens and on reaching the maximum age limit of 21 years. We have not seen many of these young people affiliate with adult Extension work until later years. There seems to be a long gap to bridge.

If we had paid proper attention to this age group earlier, perhaps this gap would not have occurred. At any rate there is one. It needs bridging. We might use some incorrect methods at first but that should not prevent us from seeking out better ones. If the life
blood is to flow uninterruptedly from the roots of our Extension trees, which we have given major attention, to the top, which we have so painstakingly shaped and nurtured, a major effort in bridge-grafting, using all the science at our command, seems desirable and necessary.

These two living ends must be brought together. The solid core that holds the tree erect still remains. It is ours to bridge. Perseverance will eventually uncover the correct methods and proper activities, many of them, that carefully selected and fitted, will bridge the gap that now retards the fullest growth and continuous fruitful harvest of which the Extension Service is capable.

The County 4-H Club Agent

April 1947

I am the County 4-H Club Agent. Generally, I am farm-reared. My roots are firmly anchored in the land and the traditions of American rural life. As likely as not, I have been a 4-H Club member. I have had firsthand knowledge and experience in the application of science to farm life through learning by doing. My Club experience revealed the principles of group action and cooperative effort to me. I knew about some of the duties of a County 4-H Club Agent and they appealed to me.

I am a college graduate. My college training added further scientific knowledge and understanding to my earlier experiences. My college degree provided a basic qualification for my position as a County 4-H Club Agent.

I have other qualifications; some inherent, others acquired. They are of equal, if not of more, importance than my college training. I love people. I like to work with people. While I have a genuine interest in and am primarily concerned with young people, I also work with adults in groups and as individuals. Because I work with all ages, I must understand them. To understand them, I must be psychologist, sociologist, teacher, and confidant. I inspire young folks. I help them to help themselves by making the ordi-
nary tasks of farm and home more appealing. I put a premium on work and the results of conscientious labor by turning heads, hands, and hearts to many things for a more satisfying rural life. I broaden horizons of others through contests, trips, tours, and visits in search of new ideas and new methods. I add a generous portion of fun to all activities.

My teaching is made more effective by tying it closely to the farm, home, and community through the training of local leaders and through club functions.

In addition to my technical knowledge, my varied experiences, reading, and study add to my broad knowledge of persons as well as places and things. I am equally at ease in the home, the barn, and the meeting places.

I have a commanding and pleasing presence. I express myself well. I have ability to plan, vision to see ahead, enthusiasm for my work, courage to carry it forward, and faith in myself and those with whom I work.

I am honest with myself and with others, exercise good judgment and tact in dealing with people, and render fair and unbiased decisions. Friendliness, tolerance, patience, unselfishness, sympathy, and cooperation are my stock in trade.

Mine is a full life, a life calling for tireless energy. I have good health and must maintain it. I work early and late. I have no set hours of daily work. Morning finds me early at my desk caring for the ramified duties incident to running an efficient office and serviceable program. Afternoon finds me in the homes, on the farms, or at sundry club and other meetings. Evening may find me many miles from home explaining the program at a community meeting or organizing a 4-H Club.

I am the personification and the representative of the Extension Service—County, State, and National. I am the champion of rural youth. My richest reward comes in watching young folks develop in knowledge, in skill, and in their dealings with other people. I am the County 4-H Club Agent.
Published by the New York State College of Agriculture at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York. L. R. Simons, Director of Extension. This bulletin is published and distributed in furtherance of the purposes provided for in the Acts of Congress of May 8, and June 30, 1914.