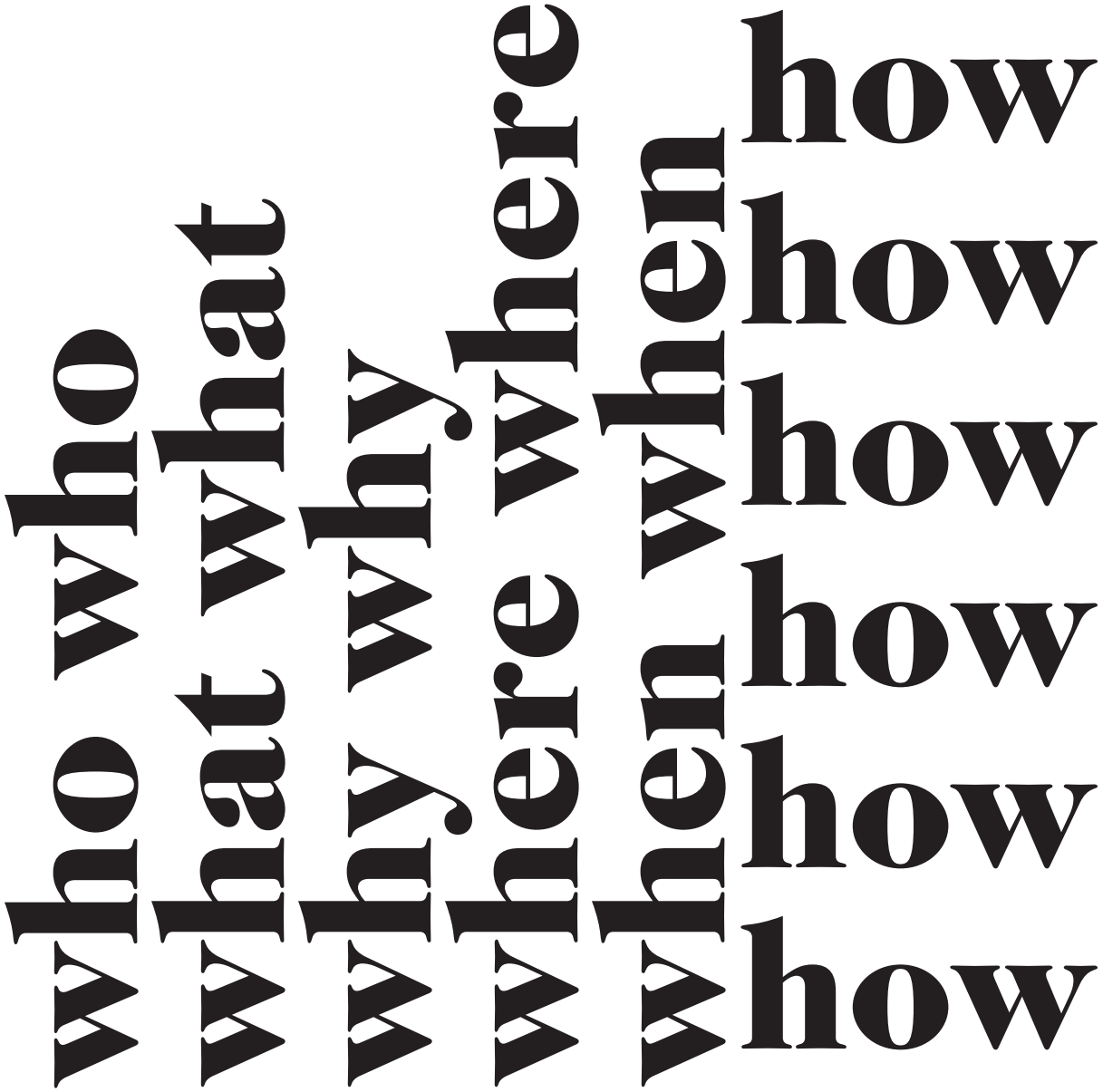
So you're news reporter of your group . . .



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
University Extension

4H 71F Reprinted January 2008

You, and all officers of 4-H groups, are representatives. You represent not only the local group, but the whole 4-H program throughout the state. Your skills and abilities, standards and ideals, grooming, speech, and even smiles represent the Iowa 4-H members. Representing others is one of your most important responsibilities because it exists at all times—not just while you are at the 4-H meetings. Those who are not acquainted with 4-H judge it by its officers.

Checklist for Reporters

___ I will tell the 4-H news in an accurate and interesting way.

___ I will write an article before the meeting to invite people to the meeting.

___ I will consult the club secretary if I need meeting information.

___ I will take accurate notes at each club meeting.

___ I will write a news story promptly after each meeting.

___ I will take or send the news article to the newspapers and radio stations.

___ I will include pictures with some articles for the newspapers.

___ I will read other 4-H and general news articles in order to improve mine.

___ I will check with publishers on the preferred form of submitting articles.

Guidelines for Reporters

1. The first paragraph of the article is the most important. It sums up the rest of the article in one sentence.
2. The first paragraph tells **who, what, when, where, why,** and sometimes **how.** Decide which point (who, what, when, where, why or how) is most important, and start the sentence with that point.
3. After the first sentence, tell more about each of the points in the first sentence—the who, the what, the when, where, why, and perhaps how.
4. Use simple language in brief sentences. Include only those details that are necessary to the article.
5. Use first and last names and the town in the person's address, such as Susan Bates, Colo; Tom McCall, Colo. Be absolutely certain all names are spelled correctly.
6. Report only on recent news. Old items are not new, so they aren't news.
7. Be accurate.
8. Recopy or type the news article.
9. At the top of the article, in the upper left corner, write the name of the group, then below that, your name, the 4-H office you hold (reporter), your mailing address, e-mail address (if you wish), and telephone number, and "For Immediate Release."

_____4-H Group
(name of your 4-H Group)

_____, reporter
(your name)

_____
(your address)

_____
(your phone number)
(Skip a line)
For Immediate Release

(Skip four lines)

Start the article. If you type the article, double space it. If you write it by hand, write on every other line of lined paper.

10. After the article is typed or recopied, immediately take it, mail it, or e-mail it to the newspapers and/or radio stations. At the newspaper, give or send it to the news editor. At the radio station, give or send it to the news director.
11. Keep a list of the places to send the news articles.

Name of the news editor _____

Name of the newspaper _____

Address of the newspaper _____

(street)

_____

(town) (state) (zip)

Deadline of the newspaper _____

Phone number _____

Name of radio station news director _____

Name of radio station _____

Address of radio station _____

(street)

_____

(town) (state) (zip)

Phone number _____

12. If you are mailing your articles, address and stamp several envelopes at the beginning of the year so that when the article is recopied, it can be mailed immediately.

How this Sample News Article was Developed

An example of a good 4-H news article follows. This is the way it should look when it is sent or taken to the newspaper and radio stations. (Instead of being typed, it could be written by hand on every other line of lined paper.)

Lincoln True Blue 4-H Group
Marcus Montgomery, reporter
3630 Daley Drive
Ames, Iowa 50011
(515) 294-9640

For Immediate Release

The Lincoln True Blue 4-H'ers painted picnic tables at the Lincoln Town Park as a community service project on May 17 and 24. They bought paint and supplies with money they earned during the year.

Organizers of the community service project were Raphael Ramires and Carol Walker. 4-H'ers who helped were Chris Brown, Chiffon Jefferson, Bill Ross, Anne Clay, Steve Olson, Andrew Wallenstein, Patrick Zenowski, Li Yu, Rita Ramires, Jin Zhang and Marcus Montgomery. Volunteer 4-H leaders are Gene Smith and Consuelo Gonzalez.

The 4-H'ers compiled 35 volunteer hours toward their yearly goal of 1,000 hours of community service as they cleaned, scraped, scrubbed and rinsed the tables before painting all seven a dark green.

To organize the project, Ramires and Walker talked to Lincoln Mayor Keith Reynolds in March to find out what needed to be done in Lincoln that 4-H'ers could do. At the April 4-H meeting, the 4-H group voted to paint the tables and continued to make plans.

Paint and supplies were purchased with money from a chili supper the group sponsored in February. Other supplies were donated by the Lincoln Hardware Store.

The next club meeting will be June 2, a 7:30 a.m. breakfast, in the Lincoln Town Park. The mayor and city council will be invited guests to hear 4-H'ers report on the picnic table project.

For more 4-H information, contact the Story County office of Iowa State University Extension at H. St. and Second Ave. in Nevada or call (515) 987-6543. 4-H programs are available to all without regard to race, color, sex or national origin.

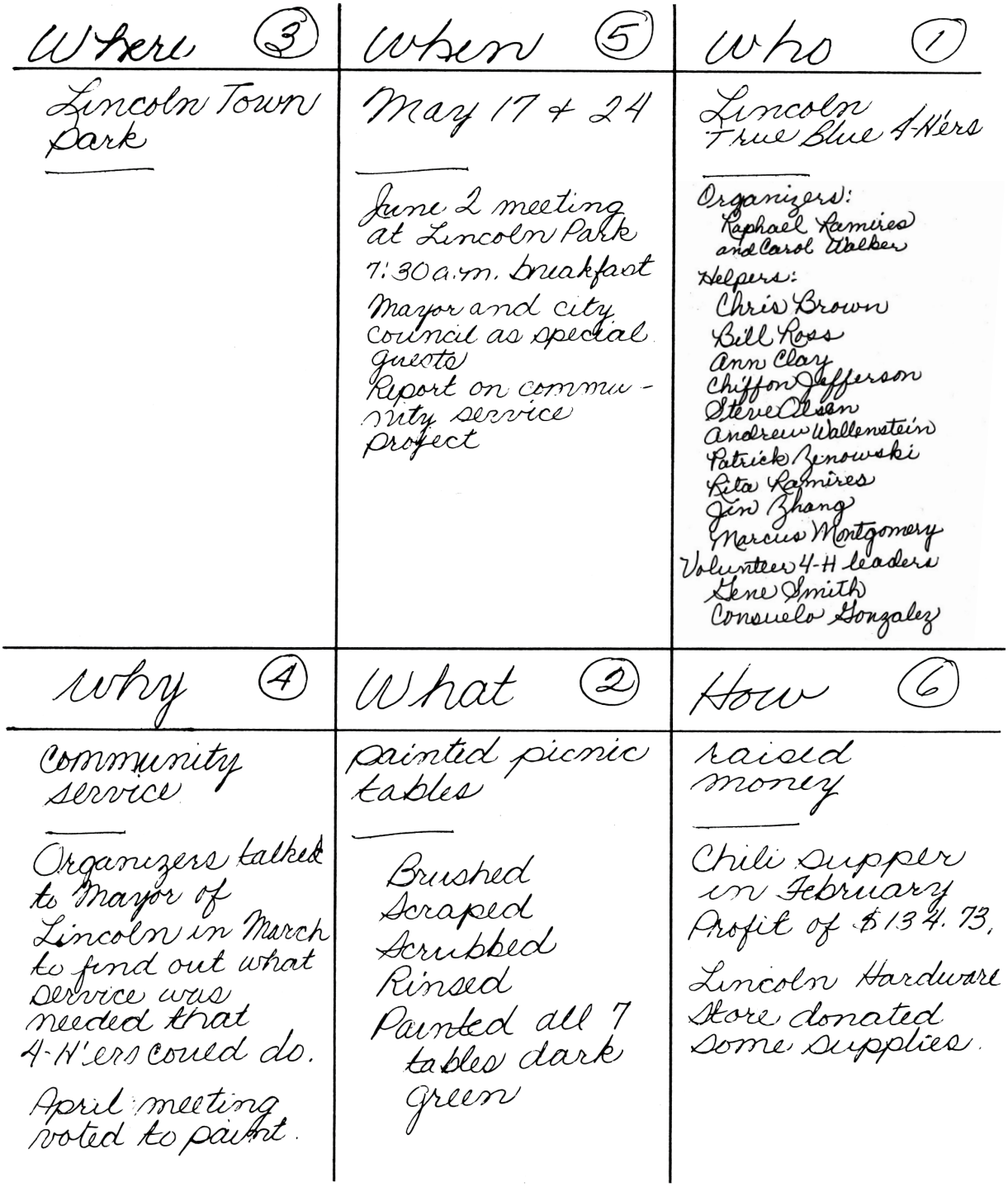
Notes on Lincoln True Blue 4-H'ers

This sample article was written from the following notes:

Painted picnic tables May 17 and 24 in Lincoln Town Park.
Used chili supper profit ($134.73). Held in February.
Picnic table project decided on after talking to Mayor Keith Reynolds in March to find out what services Lincoln needed. Find out what 4-H'ers could do. Took vote in April to paint. Work toward our goal of 1,000 volunteer community service hours.
Dark green paint.
Hardware store donated some supplies.
All 7 picnic tables.
Brushed, scraped, scrubbed, rinsed tables.
Organized by Raphael Ramires and Carol Walker.
Painters—Chris Brown, Chiffon Jefferson, Bill Ross, Anne Clay, Steve Olson, Andrew Wallenstein, Patrick Zenowski, Li Yu, Rita Ramires, Jin Zhang and Marcus Montgomery
4-H Leaders—Gene Smith and Consuelo Gonzalez
Next meeting June 2, 7:30 a.m. Lincoln Town Park. Breakfast. Program—report on community service project. Mayor and city council special guests.

To write the article, notice that the following sheet of paper first was divided into six boxes. Each part was labeled with one of the five Ws and the H that are important for news articles. The five Ws and the H are who, what, when, where, why, and how.

The main information was taken from the notes and written in each of the six boxes. Then the reporter decided which of the six parts was most important. That box was given the number one. The reporter decided which part was next most important and numbered it two, and so on, for all six boxes. Then the first sentence was written by putting the information in number order.



How to Decide What to Write

You report 4-H news so others will know about 4-H and 4-H'ers. People like to know about other people. So make people the subject of your first sentence. Then use the people's action for the verb.

Here's an example of another first sentence using the same information from the six boxes on page five, but arranged in a different order than in the sample article on page four. "Picnic tables were painted May 17 and 24 at the Lincoln Town Park as a service project of the Lincoln True Blue 4-H'ers."

The sentence in the sample article on page four is better because it uses people as the subject of the sentence instead of picnic tables.

To decide what is most important, and therefore what should be reported early in the first sentence, also think about this: what would be most interesting for people to know if they had not attended the 4-H event that you are writing about? (The fact that your 4-H group met would seldom be the most interesting thing for someone to know.) Instead, write about an action that the 4-H'ers took at the meeting: 4-H'ers decide, 4-H'ers learn, 4-H'ers elect, 4-H'ers do things for other people. Choose this type of information to use early in the first sentence.

After writing the first sentence for the sample article on page four, the reporter went back to the six boxes and wrote a few more notes about each of the five Ws and the H. The paragraphs were written about each of those and added to the article. The paragraphs were added in the same order as the topics were mentioned in the first sentence. For example, in the sample article, the second paragraph told more about the "who" part of the first sentence; it told names of the 4-H'ers and leaders. The third paragraph told more about "what" 4-H'ers did; the "what" was the second part of the first sentence; etc.

Then the last paragraph was added. It should be included on all articles.

Practice for News Reporters

Steps to Your Finished 4-H News Article

1. Take notes; get other information from secretary.
2. Divide paper into six boxes for five Ws and the H.
3. Add brief information from notes to boxes.
4. Number boxes in order of importance.
5. Write first sentence.
6. Add details from notes to boxes.
7. Write paragraphs from information in boxes.
8. Add last paragraph.
9. Recopy article.
10. Send or take article.

Notes:

Here are some notes taken at a Clover Clan 4-H meeting. Use them to write a news article following the procedure shown on page five and completing the steps listed above.

Clover Clan 4-H Group met at Jane Richard's home in Colo on May 6.
The president, Tom McCall, was at camp so Bill Thompson, vice president, led the meeting.
Fourteen of the 18 members were present.
Susan Steed's two little sisters, Amy and Sara, visited the meeting.
The bake sale committee asked to buy poster board and markers.
The bake sale will be May 27 at Fareway Grocery in Ames from 9 a.m. to noon.
Bill Lu gave a presentation on how to use chopsticks.
Anne Mai showed how to make fortune cookies. Then each member made a dozen cookies.
Members visited people at Maxwell Retirement Home on April 23.
Recreation was led by Mike Sopocy. A relay game was played.
Next meeting will be at Charlie Chavez' home in Maxwell on June 7 at 2 p.m.
Leaders are Jolene Petersen and Marvin Kral.

Where ◯	When ◯	Who ◯
Why ◯	**What ◯**	**How ◯**

4-H News Article

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

For more 4-H information, contact the _____ County Office of Iowa State University Extension at _____ in _____ or call _____.
(street address) (town) (number)

Now what should you do with the news article? _____

When should you send or take the recopied news article? _____

Article to write to announce the meeting

_____ 4-H Group
(name of your 4-H group)

_____, reporter
(your name)

_____
(your address)

_____
(your phone number)

For Immediate Release

4-H'ers to Meet

_____ 4-H Group will meet at_____
(name of your 4-H group) (location—home or building) (address)

on _____ at _____ p.m./a.m.
(date) (time)

Volunteer 4-H leaders for _____ 4-H Group are
(name of your 4-H group)

_____, _____, and_____, _____.
(name) (hometown) (name) (hometown)

For more about 4-H, call the _____ County Office of Iowa State University Extension at _____.
(phone number)

. . . **and justice for all**
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