Reporter's Guide

Congratulations on being selected Reporter of your 4-H Club. Reporting news can be an exciting adventure for everyone. The Reporter's job is to tell the community about the club, its activities, successes, and how much fun it is to be involved in 4-H. Invite and involve a number of 4-H members to create a news committee. A committee allows the coverage of more events and activities with multiple people capturing photos. Make a plan to cover your club's events and activities.

One of the main things for a reporter to remember is **the difference between publicity and news**.

- **Publicity** is promoting an event by using posters, paid advertising, etc. Publicity is the information gathered to promote a club fish fry.

- **News** is something which answers the questions "who, what, when, where, why, and how." News is timely and of interest to a number of people. An example of news is a member who has won an award.

A news or social media story should be:reported promptly, important, honest, grab the reader's interest. Include facts, contect, impact, and emotion.

Preparing to Write

- Make it your mission to **learn as many names as possible**. When taking photos and writing stories, you will need to document who is in each picture and or story and it's easier if you know the people in your club!

- Get acquainted with the newspaper editor or other person who handles local news. Find out how he/she wants the story written and turned in.

- Study some local news stories in the paper or on social media. This helps in writing better stories and determining the kind of stories that the newspaper wants.

Writing News Stories

- Newspaper material is called "copy."

- Provide the writer's name (you are probably the writer),email and telephone number so that the editor can call if there is a question.

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- The first paragraph features interesting or important facts to hook the reader and always tells who, what, when, where, and why.
- In the second paragraphs give the details in the order of importance. You could include quotes from people you interview. Taper off the story with the least important details at the end. This is known as the pyramid style of writing. The end is where the editor starts cutting if there isn't room for the whole story.

Tips for News Stories

- Write no more than 40 to 50 words in any paragraph.
- Write in the third person. Say: "The members decided," not "We decided."
- Make sentences short.
- Leave out personal opinions. Don't say, "Everyone had a good time." Let the reader judge.
- Check and double check that all names are spelled correctly.
- Be timely, if a story is not turned into the newspaper office within 12 hours after an event, it usually is too late for use.
- **Do not feel badly if the story you write is cut down, changed, or does not appear.** Every editor has only so much space. In order to get news and feature stories into that space, the piece will be altered to fit.

Photos

A good news photo records events while they are happening, people in action, rather than pictures of people who have gathered to have their picture taken.

Photography Tips

- Strive for action.
- Go for a natural look.
- Move up close.
- Avoid distracting objects in the background.
- If you use a flash, don't pose your subjects in front of a window or a mirror. The flash will be reflected in the glass, causing a distracting "hot spot" in the picture.

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- Avoid photos of large groups. Two or three people in a news picture is an acceptable group.
- Each picture should have a caption or cutline. A caption is a brief description of what is happening in the picture. Double check to make sure EVERYONE in the photograph has given media consent before submitting or posting any news report.
- Submit photographs to media outlets in the required format (usually .jpg files) along with your report. At the bottom of the report, indicate the filename of the photograph(s) you are submitting.

Media Consent

Ask your club leader if any of your members or leaders have NOT agreed to a photo release on 4HOnline. If anyone has not agreed to a photo release, their photo cannot be shared publicly.

Social Media Content Standards

All content must be appropriate for followers. Carefully choose content for 4-H social communities based on these criteria:

- Appeals to a majority of our followers
- Community service based
- Success stories of relatable 4-H programs

Social Media Tips:

- Always have your club leader review the news report before it is published on any website. Once a report is posted it will always be a part of the cyber-world, even if you delete the report after you have posted it.
- Do not post a report using your personal profile. Submit the report to your club's profile or work with your club leader to create a page for your club (or profile) depending on the type of social media being used.
- Do not tag anyone in your social media photos or stories.

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Questions for Thought

1. What is the job of the news reporter?
2. What ways can the club benefit from news?
3. Which club activities are newsworthy?
4. How can the reader's curiosity and interest be captured?
5. What are some ideas for feature stories on members' projects?
6. How can the entire club be involved in writing new stories?
7. How can news stories help your club in the community?
8. How can you determine if you are doing a "good job" as the club reporter?

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