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NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter for Retired SCS and NRCS Employees

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NOTES FROM THE POTOMAC

Doug Lawrence and Patty Lawrence

Happy holidays to everyone. We trust that everyone had a fabulous Christmas with their families. Here's to a healthy and happy new year from all of us in the "Land of Pleasant Living."

FARM BILL—Despite low expectations of reaching a Farm Bill deal in a lame-duck session of Congress, as of December 20th, 2018 there is a 2018 Farm Bill—the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (PL 115-334)! Perhaps it was the specter of the 1949 law kicking in, or the anticipated impact of the upcoming House power shift, but no matter the driver, on December 11th, 2018 the Senate passed the Farm Bill, with a vote of 87-13; and the following day, the House approved the bill by a vote of 369-47. The President signed the bill into law on December 20th, 2018. The bill comes in at \$867 billion in outlays over 10 years, but results in no net change in deficit spending over the 10-year period, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

How were the issues resolved? The conferees had many differences to resolve over the course of negotiations; however, most observers identified three areas of controversy in the commodity, conservation, and nutrition titles:

Nutrition—The key controversy in the nutrition title was in the House Bill's changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), particularly the expanded work requirements. The Senate bill did not make major changes in the program, and the chamber clearly opposed expanding existing work requirements (68 Senators voted to defeat an amendment that would have added the House's SNAP provisions to the Senate bill ([Roll Call Vote 141](#))). While the White House supported the House bill, conferees reached agreement to retain current work requirements, while also making certain training and administrative improvements. That said, shortly before the President signed the bill, [USDA proposed](#) rule adjustments that align with the work requirement objectives in the House bill.

Commodity—Among the disputes tackled by the conferees was a House provision that ended ARC/PLC payments for acreage on which farmers hadn't grown program crops. The final bill retains the provision, while allowing growers to enroll those lands in the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) to offset the impact, while creating savings for other provisions. Other issues included a House provision that allowed yield updates only for growers who had drought problems during the calculation period. The final bill allows a one-time opportunity in 2020 for growers experiencing serious yield losses to update yield data with a formula that excludes the impact of increases in national trend yields. Overall, [Title 1 fared well](#) in the final bill.

Conservation—The issues in the Conservation Title are largely related to the fate of the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). The House Bill eliminated CSP and shifted CSP spending into the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), and the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP).

The final bill retains CSP as a stand-alone program, but shifts it from an acreage-based program to annual funding levels, starting at \$700 million in 2019 and gradually increasing to \$1 billion in 2023. By comparison, using [CBO estimates for 2018 through 2023](#), the average annual outlay for the acreage-based program (including the remaining Conservation Security Program contracts) is nearly \$1.7 billion. The impact on acreage enrollment is heightened by the need to accommodate growers losing ARC/PLC payments on unplanted base acres. The savings from the CSP program funding shift is used to boost ACEP funding to \$450 million a year and RCPP to \$300 million annually.

EQIP is funded at \$1,750 million in 2019 and increases to \$2,025 million by 2023. The 50 percent carve-out for livestock operations is also retained. Eligibility authority is included for certain entities, such as irrigation and drainage districts, ground water management districts, acequia (irrigation canals), land grant mercedes, or similar entities to compete for water conservation and irrigation efficiency funding under EQIP. A new conservation incentive contract provision is included to promote addressing priority resource concerns at the watershed and area-wide scale.

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acreage cap is increased from 24 million to 27 million acres by 2023. Acres reserved for grasslands increases from one million in 2019 to two million in 2021 through 2023. This increase is offset by capping payment rates to levels below the average county rental rates and by trimming some incentives to landowners.

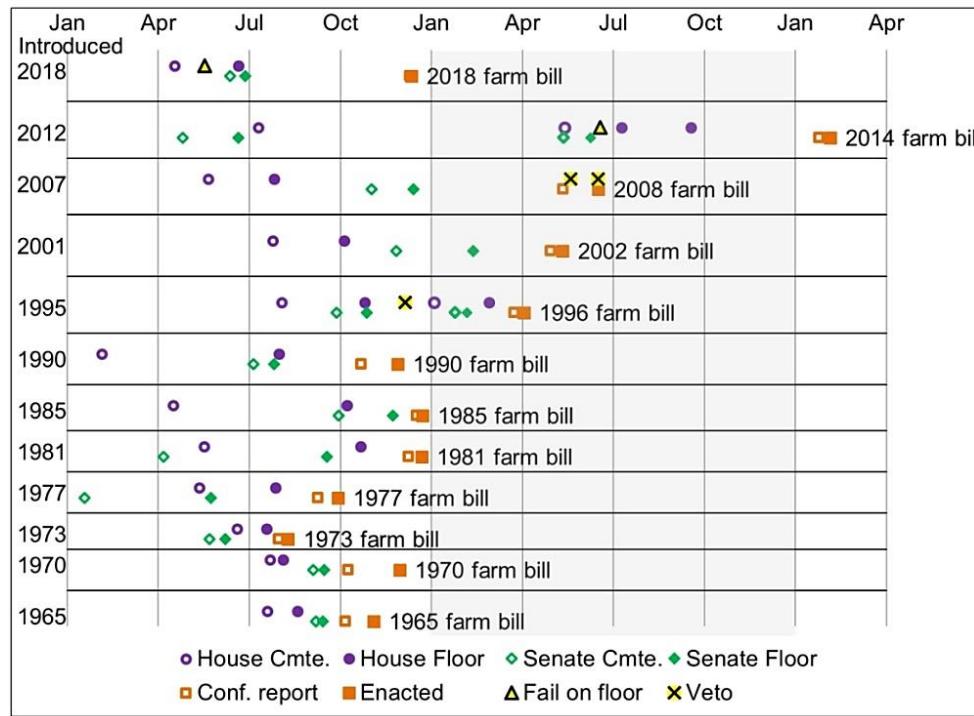
Summing up—Despite lengthy and sharp divides, Congress reached bi-partisan agreement to pass the Farm Bill by significant margins. The 2018 farm bill took eight months from introduction to passage, the first in nearly 30 years to be concluded in the same year it was first introduced. By comparison, the 2014 farm bill took more than 21 months from introduction to enactment, and spanned the 112th and 113th Congresses. The Congressional Research Service provides a nice [overview](#) of Farm Bill reauthorizations since 1965 (<https://fas.org/sgp/mis/R45210.pdf>).

Summary of Changes in Direct Spending for Major Conservation Programs (in Millions, 2019-2028)

Program	House	Senate	Final Bill
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)	(\$23)	\$0	\$0
Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)	(\$12,618)	(\$1,000)	
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)	\$7,692	(\$1,481)	
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)			\$8,451
Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)	\$2,221	\$1,607	\$1,779
Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)	\$1,308	\$874	\$1,742

Source: CBO, Direct Spending and Revenue Effects for the Conference Agreement on H.R. 2

Figure 1. Major Legislative Actions on Farm Bills, 2018-1965



Source: CRS, using <http://www.congress.gov>.

APPROPRIATIONS—Right now, FY-2019 appropriations are pending for the US Department of Agriculture, and large swaths of USDA are in furlough status. The FY-2019 budget has been a journey:

1. On September 21st, 2018, the President signed a “minibus” that included appropriations bills from three subcommittees: Energy and Water, Legislative Branch, and Military Construction.
2. A week later on September 28th, 2018, the President signed a second minibus comprised of funding from two more subcommittees: Defense and Labor-HHS-Education. In addition, this minibus included a continuing resolution that funded the rest of the government from October 1st to December 7th.
3. On December 7th, 2018, a second continuing resolution was signed that extended funding to December 21st for the seven remaining subcommittees, which included the subcommittees for (1) Agriculture; (2) Commerce-Justice-Science; (3) Financial Services-General Government; (4) Homeland Security; (5) Interior-Environment; State, (6) Foreign Operations; (7) Transportation-Housing and Urban Development.
4. And then the wheels started to come off the 2019 appropriations process. On December 19th the Senate passed a continuing resolution that funded the Federal government through February 8th, 2020. However, the House amended the Senate continuing resolution on December 20th and added more than \$5 billion for border wall construction. Because there were insufficient votes in the Senate to pass the House version of the continuing resolution, and the President was unwilling to sign a continuing resolution that did not include border wall funding, we now have a **partial government**

shutdown. The partial government shutdown affects Federal employees who work for agencies that are funded by the seven subcommittees that were included in the second continuing resolution. About 420,000 Federal employees are working without pay, and about 380,000 have been furloughed. Our understanding is that, in an effort to minimize the impact of the shutdown, the Administration is being generous in its interpretation of what constitutes essential services; and it appears that all of NRCS employees are currently working during the shutdown. However, employees at the Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC) Business Centers have been furloughed, except in cases where FPAC support is needed to implement conservation programs, and there is sufficient NRCS mandatory funding or carry-over funding available to pay those FPAC employees.

As this is being written, the impasse over border wall funding continues. In the past, Congress has enacted legislation that paid essential Federal employees who worked during the shutdown, as well as those who were furloughed.

NATIONAL CLIMATE ASSESSMENT—The fourth National Climate Assessment report, released on November 23rd, 2018, discusses, among other impacts, how higher temperatures and heavier and more frequent rains will result in yield losses for US agriculture. The report is a synthesis of research from 13 Federal agencies.

Rising temperatures, extreme heat, drought, wildfire on rangelands, and heavy downpours are expected to increasingly disrupt agricultural productivity in the United States. The changing climate will create challenges to livestock health, cause declines in crop yields and quality, and intensify extreme weather events in the United States and abroad. The overall effect of climate change will be to threaten rural livelihoods, sustainable food security, and price stability.

The report states that

“While some regions (such as the Northern Great Plains) may see conditions conducive to expanded or alternative crop productivity over the next few decades, overall, yields from major U.S. crops are expected to decline as a consequence of increases in temperatures and possibly changes in water availability, soil erosion, and disease and pest outbreaks. Increases in temperatures during the growing season in the Midwest are projected to be the largest contributing factor to declines in the productivity of U.S. agriculture. Projected increases in extreme heat are expected to lead to further heat stress for livestock.

Climate change is also expected to result in large-scale shifts in the availability and prices of many agricultural products across the world. Numerous adaptation strategies are available to cope with adverse impacts of climate variability and change on agricultural production. These include altering what is produced, modifying the inputs used for production, adopting new technologies, and adjusting management strategies. However, these strategies have limits under severe climate change impacts and would require sufficient long- and short-term investment in changing practices.”

AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY—Agri-Pulse reported that agricultural economist **Dan Basse** told participants at the American Seed Trade Association’s annual Seed Expo that growing world populations, accompanied by rising demand for food, should mean excellent long-term prospects for US farmers. However, farmers will have to make it through the current downturn in the farm economy, which has not been helped by the current trade wars. Basse predicted US net farm income would be depressed for most of the next decade. Basse is the head of AgResources, one of the world’s leading agricultural advisory and research firms.

Basse said he was not all that impressed by the “handshake deal” recently reached between **President Trump** and **Chinese President Xi Jinping**, which has temporarily eased tensions between the two countries. The details of the agreement, in which President Trump agreed to forgo a planned tariff increase from 10 to 25 percent on Chinese goods, and China agreed to buy an unspecified amount of US farm goods, “are very foggy as we see them today,” Basse said.

After the talk, he told Agri-Pulse that the trade war has not had the effect of destroying future prospects of ag trading with China, but recovering that market won’t be easy. “I’m not saying we lost our market in China forever, but it will take some work to get it back,” he said. “At the same time, our competitors in South America have been working to secure larger shares of it, so that will happen going forward.” The Chinese, for their part, are moving to “a leaner ration” containing more corn and wheat and less soybeans, he said.

The Lightning Round

WOTUS Rule—EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers announced their new “Waters of the US” proposed rule at an event on December 11th, 2018. The proposed rule will replace a rule that has been in place since 2015. A number of farmers and agricultural industry leaders, among others, attended the event. EPA Acting Administrator **Andrew Wheeler** said the proposed rule is designed to help landowners easily determine which areas of their property are covered by the Clean Water Act. The **proposal** would eliminate ephemeral streams from Federal jurisdiction and tighten guidelines for when other streams and wetlands would be considered for potential regulation. Environmental groups expressed concerns that the proposed rule will increase the number of streams and wetlands that would be vulnerable to development or farming without a permit.

Federal Employee Pay Raise—The current chaos in the 2019 appropriations process which is driven largely by border wall funding issues has apparently affected the anticipated raise for Federal Employees. Although the Senate version of the stalled continuing resolution included a provision that raised Federal pay by 1.9%, the most recent House version of the continuing resolution does not include a raise. Because the President’s fiscal year 2019 budget request did not include a pay raise, unless Congress takes action to override the President, there will be no raise in 2019.

Federal Retiree COLA—To be clear, the Federal retiree COLA of 2.8% is not affected by what’s going on with the anticipated Federal employee pay raise.

Personnel Changes—Acting NRCS Chief **Leonard Jordan** will retire at the end of the calendar year 2018 and is moving to Georgia. On December 17th there were a couple of very well attended events to honor and say goodbye to Leonard. Notably,

Leonard has served as Acting Chief longer than some appointed Chiefs and in perhaps more tumultuous times, prompting some to suggest that his picture should be placed on the wall of NRCS Chiefs.

On December 3rd, Secretary **Perdue** announced that **Matt Lohr** would be the new NRCS chief. Lohr is a Virginia farmer operating Valley Pike Farm in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. In addition to farming, Lohr has served four years in the Virginia legislature. He resigned his seat in the Virginia House in 2010 to serve as Virginia's Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services for three years. He has also worked for Farm Credit of the Virginias and has been farming fulltime since June 2017. Perdue praised Lohr's previous experience in agriculture and said it made him well-suited for leading NRCS.



New NRCS Chief Matt Lohr

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dana York

URGENT: ARSCE Needs YOUR HELP

As we see 2018 come to a close, I hope the year has been good for you. Your Membership to ARCSE has helped us bring you news of retirees through the efforts of your leadership team. However, now we face a hard decision. **Ron Marlow**, who has faithfully served as Secretary Treasurer and Membership Chair for over 10 years, is retiring. He has earned this break after helping keep many of us on track and keeping ARSCE moving forward.

We have been looking for someone to step into his roles for six months. To help decrease the workload, we have divided the job into two positions: **Secretary-Treasurer** and **Membership Chair**. We have about exhausted our contacts of individuals who might be willing to serve in these positions. Would you be willing to serve in one of these positions?

If we cannot find someone in the next few months we may have to close down the organization.

Please, take a moment to see if you are willing to serve. There are stipends for the positions, and we will provide support to help you get started. If you can help us by serving, please contact me at dyork818@yahoo.com or any of the officers found on the front page.

Thank you for thinking about this, and I hope we can find someone to fill these positions.

A BIT OF HISTORY

Diana Morse [New]

Email: morsediana@comcast.net

Life in the Field...Always Challenging

It would be intriguing to interview a soil surveyor in their early days.

Authorized in 1896 in the USDA Appropriations Act, the soil survey consisted of digging and mapping by soil surveyors doing fieldwork. They encountered angry bulls, bears, rattlers, desperadoes, and moonshiners. Early transportation was on foot, horseback, horse-and-buggy, wagon, bicycle, and rowboat.

The sight of a stranger digging in a field aroused a range of reactions, wrote a former information director, **D. Harper Simms**. He described, for example, an Oregon soil surveyor who had just finished studying a soil profile. As he replaced his last

shovelful of earth, an armed posse arrived. The surveyor had to dig the hole again to prove that he was neither a grave robber nor a murderer trying to dispose of a body.

Summer heat was a fact of life in the South. In the National Archives in Washington, DC, are letters from **Hugh Hammond Bennett**, who in 1909 was supervising soil surveys in the southern United States. He wrote to Washington for thermos bottles to insure acceptable water was available for the surveyors...and was consistently turned down.

Fieldwork has dramatically changed over the years, but its lure, challenges, and benefits are legend. Would welcome hearing some of those stories!

ARCSE MEMBERSHIP DUES

Member	\$18 per year
Affiliate	\$18 per year
Life (One-time payment)	
Age 64 or younger	\$250
Age 65 thru 74	\$200
Age 75 or older	\$125

NOTE: Dues payment includes receipt of the bimonthly electronic newsletter only. All members (both life members and those who pay annual dues) who desire a hard copy of the newsletter must pay an additional fee of \$12.00 per year

Brief History of Duties of the ARCSE Secretary-Treasurer Position by Ron Marlow

Since its founding 44 years ago, ARCSE has been fortunate to have had the Secretary-Treasurer position covered by only five members. Three of those members have covered the last 34 years.

<u>Secretary-Treasurer</u>	<u>Number of Years Served</u>
Joe B. Rogers	4
J. Gordon Steele	6
Lincoln F. Gallacher	16
Neil Bogner	8
Ronald L. Marlow	10

When Neil became the Secretary-Treasurer around 2000, he was already the Membership Chair, so he then wore two hats until the end of 2008. Both those hats were passed on to Ron Marlow. Although the duties of both positions can be done most efficiently by one individual, the Board would like to distribute the workload among two or possibly even three individuals: either a Secretary-Treasurer and a Membership Chair; or a Secretary, a Treasurer, and a Membership Chair. A stipend covering all of these duties has been raised this FY from \$2,400 to \$3,200. The stipend will be divided appropriately, depending on the final distribution of duties. Here are the duties:

SECRETARY-TREASURER

The Secretary-Treasurer for ARCSE provides the day-to-day assistance and guidance for the Board and Members.

Administrative Duties (Secretary):

- Receiving and processing mail
- Assists Representatives and Vice Presidents in meeting their responsibilities
- Assists President and host Representative with arrangements for Annual Luncheon and Board Meeting
- Coordinates planning for Annual Meeting with SWCS
- Records minutes at Annual Meeting
- Maintains contact with NRCS, CCC Legacy, Watershed Coalition
- Arranges for audit when requested by Board
- Maintains Current Operating Procedures
- Sees that Position Manual and Sec-Trea Procedures are current
- Publishes annual membership and financial reports in newsletter
- Assists editor by completing final review of all newsletters.

Financial Duties (Treasurer):

- Pays bills and stipends to Support Staff
- Manages funds-Checking, Savings, and Investment Accounts
- Maintains records of all funds (Computer program)
- Prepares IRS reports
- Provides the Board with status reports as requested and for Annual Meeting
- Receives, posts to spreadsheets, and deposits dues, hard copy fees, and contributions.
- Transmits to the membership chair all dues notices, membership applications, dues spreadsheets and any other materials that would assist with maintaining the membership files.

Membership Chair

- Maintains Membership Records
- Maintains Retirees Register and Deceased Register
- Maintains Senior Conservationists Register
- Records deaths, prepares obituaries and notifies Editor and Web Page Manager
- Assists Chronicler by identifying potential Senior Conservationists
- Prepares reports for the directory published annually and the member locator published biannually.

- Provides report to editor for enews distribution.
- Provides report to printer for printed newsletter distribution.
- Provides Board with status reports

ARCSE REPRESENTATIVES

By Ron Marlow

The Board is happy to announce the appointment of six new state representatives.

Minnesota—**John Brach** has agreed to assume duties of the Representative, replacing **Marlene Mechelke** who had served in the position since the late 90s. John retired in 2013 as the State Conservation Engineer in Minnesota.

Michigan—**Bill Fude** has agreed to be the new ARCSE Representative. The position had been open since the passing in 2016 of **Roger Howell** who had served for many years. Bill retired in 2008 as the State Administrative Officer in Michigan.

Colorado—**Jack Carlson** is the new Representative, replacing **Ivan Wilkinson** who had served in the position since 2011. Jack retired in 2008 as the NRCS Chief Information Officer.

Arkansas—**Ralph Mashburn** has agreed to assume the duties of the Representative after having provided Arkansas input to the newsletter for several years. This position was vacated by **Whitey Spears** after having served since the mid to early 90s.

Florida—**Bill Kuenstler** is the new Representative. Bill retired in 2014 as the Conservation Agronomist at the South National Technology Support Center in Fort Worth.

Alabama—**Earl Norton** is the new Representative. Earl retired in 1995 as the State Resource Conservationist in Alabama. Earl fills this position after it being vacant for a number of years.

Marlene, Roger, Ivan, and Whitey provided good leadership for ARSCSE activities in their states, and their efforts are deeply appreciated by the Board. The Board welcomes John, Bill, Jack, Ralph, Bill and Earl.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Ron Marlow, Secretary Treasurer

New Members

Bruce Williams	OR
Wendell Hassell	CO
Ronnie Skala	KY

ARIZONA

Ken Cookson, ARCSE Representative

Email: ckcookson@aol.com

Karl Klingelhofer Report: Nothing very exciting during this period. Made a trip back to Maine in October to visit son and his wife. My other son from California and his wife joined us. Granddaughter from Florida was also there. So, this was very nice. Traveling with changes at airports is getting to be a challenge with my back problem. Not playing tennis now and may have to give up flying because of eye problems. What should I expect at 92?

ALABAMA

Earl Norton, ARCSE Representative

Email: earl.norton@charter.net

As far as the local group of retirees knows, this will be our first report in the ARCSE Newsletter. This report will provide some general background about our retirees. Since I had not been planning to write these articles and am anxious to get news from Alabama started, I am going to provide some information from memory and will strive to get accurate information from our retirees for future articles.

There were several meetings held during the late '90s that were marketed for attendance of retirees from over the state. **Charles Bush**, retired engineer with experience as area engineer, river basin program engineer, and engineer on the original National Aquaculture Team, did a terrific job planning these meetings. However, the meetings were never well attended, and attendance declined until it was no longer feasible to have a state-wide meeting.

Now we are loosely organized into a group that meets for breakfast on first Mondays in Auburn and a group that meets annually for lunch at Decatur. Since the State Office is located at Auburn, we have the highest concentration of retirees there, and they are the ones who usually attend our breakfast. The group that meets at Decatur are retirees who worked sometime in the old Area I that stretches across North Alabama. The luncheon is coordinated by **Mary Crowe**, the retired Area I secretary who now lives in Mobile and makes a long trip to be with the group that she worked with during her tenure of approximately 30 years at the Decatur Area Office. The group that meets in Auburn for breakfast is coordinated by **Charles Bush**. This group began meeting around 1997 and included several old timers from the original state office staff and included **Cyrus Newman**, State Soil Conservationist (job later became state resource conservationist) and **Miles Stephens**, State Soil Scientist. It was definitely a joy to get to spend time with the old timers during their declining years. The current group that meets in Auburn

includes some "regulars": **Charles Bush, Charles Love, George Martin, John Meetze, Ronnie Murphy, Mac Nelson, Earl Norton, Vic Payne, and Joe Spooner.** Others that attend occasionally include **Greg Brannon, Torbit Henry, Cliff Jones, Perry Oakes, Ken Rogers, Ernest Todd, Rick Zellmer, and Robert Berry** who drives down from North Alabama. **Morris Gillespie** was a "regular" until recently, but poor health has curtailed his attending the breakfast.

The Alabama State Office invites retirees to their annual Christmas luncheon. I plan to give more details about this event in the next newsletter

We have several persons who should be recognized as Senior Conservationists, and we hope to get these retirees recognized during 2019.

We lost several of the retirees from the Auburn area during the past two years and these are included in the In Memoriam section.

Mason Dollar, retired Water Resources Staff Leader on the Alabama state office staff, passed away on February 5th, 2016 at UAB Medical Center as a result of cancer.

Gladston, "G. H." Hall, retired hydrologist on the Alabama River Basin Staff, passed away at the age of 90. See the In Memoriam section for more details.

CALIFORNIA

Bill Ward, ARCSE Representative

Email: bluegrassbillward@gmail.com

Greetings from California! California wishes all our fellow retirees a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

A Christmas Light mishap and important advice from Bill Ward!

Shortly after Thanksgiving, putting up Christmas lights on our house, I had an accident that taught me I should have given this practice up many years ago. I was almost done, but a momentary lapse in my concentration caused me to fall off my 2nd story roof to my 1st story roof! It is about an 8 foot drop and I managed to land primarily on my feet first and then my buttock. My wife heard two rapid "thuds" from inside the house.

With great pain in my back and left ankle, my wife gingerly got me off the roof and we took off for the Emergency Room. I was most fearful I had done some serious damage to my back. X-rays on my left ankle and my back showed the left ankle was indeed broken; however, thank God there was no indication of any kind of serious damage to my back.

Jumping ahead a week later I had surgery with two screws put into my ankle to re-attach the broken tip of my tibia bone to the main bone, determined necessary for proper healing. I was very grateful to hear the surgery was a success. I then had a shiny new red "Christmas cast" put on that fits right in with the "Christmas décor" in our house. My recovery time for when I should be able to walk and put weight on my left ankle is estimated to be about six to eight weeks from now. I believe I am very fortunate. The consequences could have been much worse!

I am on crutches and can put no weight on that foot. I spend the majority of my time now in a recliner with my left leg elevated. After 40 years of putting up lights, it was a painful lesson to learn in more ways than one. All of you who still do this should take my advice to give it up now. Every year we do this we fool ourselves that yes we can still do it. However as each year passes we are not as strong, and the consequences of a mishap are far too great.



My final Christmas Lights Project.



Current view from my recliner

New California Retirees!

Congratulations **Alan Forkey**, CA ASTC- Programs! "After less than 1 year in a temporary position with the US Forest Service in Durango, CO, I started my career with the SCS as a range management specialist in February of 1980 in Greeley, CO. In April of 1984, I was selected as the District Conservationist in Westcliffe, CO, followed by the DC position in Colusa in May of 1989. I worked in Colusa for eight years and transferred to the State Wetland Biologist position in Davis in 1997. I stayed in that position for nine years and was selected to be the ASTC-Programs in March, 2006."

Congratulations **Dale Gropp**, Civil Engineering Technician, Templeton, CA. Dale started his Career in 1978 with SCS in Santa Barbara, employed by SCS/NRCS and also the local Resource Conservation District. Dale also spent time in both Klamath

Falls OR and Chandler, AZ. His time in Arizona was spent working on PL-566 where he worked with NRCS Engineers **John Harrington** and **Noller Herbert**.

Dale has some exciting things planned after retirement. After packing up his belongings and getting them into temporary storage, he is planning a six-week trip to Thailand, looking forward to warm weather for some snorkeling and diving. He is considering Oregon and Idaho as places to settle; however, he even mentioned Spain in the future.

Update on Santa Monica Debris Basin

One year following the Thomas Fire/Debris Flow disaster on the South Coast of California, the communities of Montecito and Carpinteria have prepared for the forthcoming winter rains. After moderate vegetative regrowth in the burned watersheds of the Santa Ynez Mountains, the Santa Barbara County Office of Emergency Management is prepared to issue evacuation orders to at-risk homes when storm intensities are forecast to exceed the rate of 0.8 inches in one hour. This year-two threshold is an increase from last winter, when a forecast rate of 0.5 inches in one hour resulted in evacuations on three occasions.

The Santa Barbara County Flood Control District has completed repairs and cleaned out a total of twelve debris basins below the burned watersheds. These include the Santa Monica Debris Basin, constructed by the Soil Conservation Service in 1978 as a component of the Carpinteria Valley Watershed Project. In sparing the City of Carpinteria from the tragedy that befell the Village of Carpinteria, the Santa Monica Debris Basin was severely damaged, but trapped almost 200,000 cubic yards of the debris flow of January 9th. The three-month, around-the-clock cleanout effort revealed significant damage to the principal and emergency spillways.

Emergency Watershed Protection funds to repair the Santa Monica Debris Basin were approved by the NRCS in September, and construction work commenced. The repairs are now complete, just in time for the heart of the Pacific rainfall season. The Flood Control District will now pursue Watershed Operations Rehabilitation funds from NRCS to improve the performance and maintainability of this vital PL-566 Watershed Project.



Alan Forkey.



Dale Gropp at Santa Monica Debris Basin



Rehabilitated Santa Monica Debris Basin

I will close out this Christmas and New Year update from California with one of my favorite traditional Christmas songs: <https://youtu.be/9Ck96cdUZKw>, Oh Holy Night, Bill Ward and Friends.

That's all for this time around folks. Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from California!

COLORADO

Jack Carlson, ARCSE Representative

Email: pspicata@gmail.com

As the new Colorado ARCSE representative following **Ivan Wilkinson** who ably reported from this spot for several years, a little background on myself. I retired from NRCS in 2008 after about a 3-year stint in NHQ, otherwise have resided in Fort Collins since 1992. Currently work part-time for an environmental modeling lab with Civil and Environmental Engineering at Colorado State University, and have since 2011, primarily focused on deploying resource assessment models and tools as web services, and more recently on metamodeling using neural networks.

Last September, seven retired/former NRCS plant materials specialists, including three from Colorado, completed our 11th Love of Grass trek, this time to the Corn Belt region, convening in Des Moines and then botanizing plant communities at the following locations:

- Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge, Jasper County, Iowa
- Hayden Prairie, Howard County, Iowa
- Avoca Prairie, Iowa County, Wisconsin
- Spring Green State Natural Area, Sauk County, Wisconsin
- Thompson Memorial Prairie, Dane County, Wisconsin
- Nachusa Grassland, Lee County, Illinois
- Manito Prairie, Tazewell County, Illinois
- Revis Hill Prairie, Mason County, Illinois
- Steyermark Sand Prairie, Clark County, Missouri

The process involves a reasonable attempt to identify all living plants growing in a defined area at a site before driving to the next location. Just for fun, notes and identifications are compiled into a report and posted to a blog site. The group also spent a day at the Elsberry PMC, interested in the cover crop studies there. Overwhelmingly the most frequently encountered species during the trek were *Zea mays* (corn) and *Glycine max* (soybean), thus discussion between stops tended to wander into soil health and other agronomic matters. However, we did encounter a nine-foot big bluestem at Nachusa, satisfying a primary objective of this trek.

In November, **Vicki** and I spent 11 days in Kenya on safari to game parks and preserves at Amboseli, Ol Pejeta, Lake Nakuru, Lake Naivasha, and the Masai Mara. Needless to say, the wild animals were amazing, lodgings comfortable, and the drivers proficient and knowing the land. However, very easy to see the pressures continuing to build on this tremendous resource.



At the Thompson Memorial Prairie: Wendell Hassell (CO), Curtis Sharp (PA), Larry Holzworth (MT), Fred Gaffney (NY), Wendall Oaks (CO), Scott Lambert (ID), and Jack Carlson (CO).



At the equator: Vicki and Jack Carlson

One example, the loss of snow on Mount Kilimanjaro due to warming climate and logging, impacting the hydrology of Amboseli National Park, surrounding Masai villages, and farming areas relying on water from the mountain. The mountain is no longer a reservoir of water as before. On one hand, probably good reasons to be pessimistic, but on the other Kenya is an increasingly dynamic country with evidence of being up to the challenge by providing good resource management.

Several more stories and goings-on to report from Colorado and will do so in the coming newsletters.



Mt. Kilimanjaro from Amboseli National Park

FLORIDA

Bill Kuenstler, ARCSE Representative

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Rita and I have lived in Florida for about two and a half years, having moved in July of 2016 from Arlington, TX. Our home is in Santa Rosa Beach, which is between Destin and Panama City.

We were very fortunate this past October, when Hurricane Michael made landfall about 40 miles east of us, causing major damage in Panama City, and virtually destroying the small town of Mexico Beach, but not causing any damage in our immediate area.

Since our move, I have started to fill my time doing various volunteer activities. I volunteer one day a week at Sacred Heart Hospital. I work in Food Service, preparing and delivering lunch trays to patients. I have been doing this for almost two years.

In the fall of 2017, I enrolled in training to become a Master Gardener, completing the training in December 2017. In 2018, I volunteered 236 hours working at various projects in Walton County. One of my favorite activities is working at the E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center, a 5,000-acre environmental education center, helping maintain the grounds and doing other projects that support the Center's mission. The Center hosts around 6,000 students a year in 4th through 7th grade from a five-county area.

This spring I started the process of becoming a Master Naturalist, a certification offered by the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF-IFAS). The program consists of three classes: Upland Systems, Wetland Systems, and Coastal Systems. I completed the training in Upland Systems this year, and using that training, I started leading plant identification walks one day a month at Topsail Hill Preserve State Park, a park near our home.

Our big news this year was the marriage of our daughter, Jackie, to **Matthew Dingler** of Arlington, TX. They were married in Austin, TX, in June. They remain in Austin, living off the grid in a converted school bus.



Rita and Bill escorting Jackie to the ceremony



Jackie and me during the father-daughter dance



Sea turtle track from and return to the Gulf.



Sea turtle eggs. They are about the size of a golf ball.

Another volunteer activity I participate in is the South Walton Turtle Watch. During sea turtle nesting season, which is May 1st through Labor Day here in the Florida Panhandle, I walk a two-mile section of beach one day a week, looking for new sea turtle nests. We do our walk starting at dawn, so we can be mark the nests before beachgoers get to the beach. I have done this for two years now.

ILLINOIS

Dale Benz, ARCSE Representative

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Retirees and spouses met in Champaign on October 4th for lunch and visiting. Attending were **Wiley Scott, Elsie Campbell, Dave Dalzell, Jim and Bonnie McQuilken, Ben Mingo, Jim Evans, Ray Coombes, and Dale and Nancy Benz**.

Jim Evans told about his son, **Ben**, participating in the Special Olympic Games in Seattle this summer. Ben's activity was power lifting.

IOWA

Mark Jensen, ARCSE Representative

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On November 13th, Iowa's retirees held our annual Christmas Party at the Machine Shed Restaurant in Urbandale. We had 41 people attend. The names of those who attended (except for **Kay Peterson**, not sure how I missed getting her in a picture) are shown in the captions under the pictures. Everyone enjoyed visiting and reconnecting with old friends. **Betty Reel** was the winner of our door prize drawing for a Machine Shed gift certificate. No one went home hungry after a good meal of roasted pork loin, old fashion pot roast, and all the other good things the Machine Shed puts with it.



Christmas Party Attendees: Jim Reel, Lew Brent, Rod Martin, Dennis Peterson, Chris Knudsen, Doris Ayen, Jim Ayen, Alice White, and Lee White



Christmas Party Attendees: Betty Reel, Jim Reel, Connie Brent, Helen Kopitzke, Donna Knutson, Russ Knutson, Don Ummel, Donita Link, Roger Link, Charlotte Asell, and Lyle Asell



Christmas Party Attendees: Herb Wilson, Don Peterson, Dave Breitbach, Kay Breitbach, Jo Elyn Hersom, Ron Hersom, Ann Jensen, and Mark Jensen



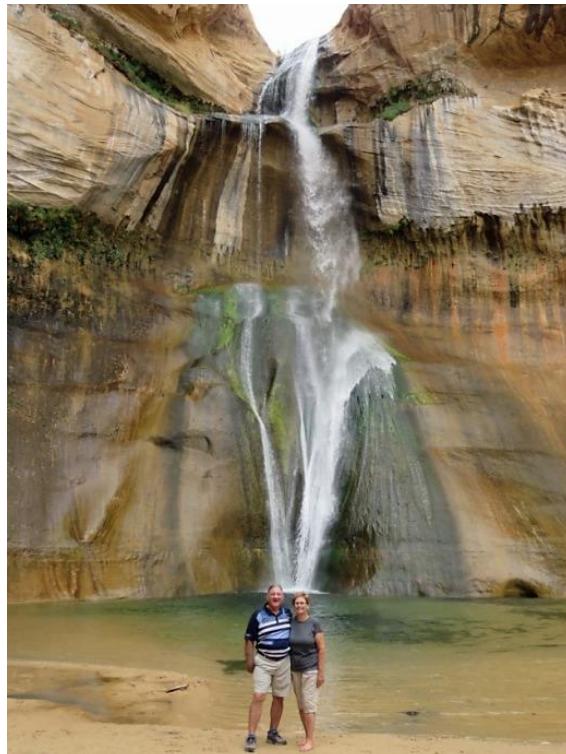
Christmas Party Attendees: Kathy Peterson, Brian Peterson, Dennis Miller, Charlie Kiepe, and Don Borts



Christmas Party Attendees: Jack Sarasio, Maralee Sarasio, and Duane Miller

**REMEMBER TO KEEP YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS UP-TO-DATE BY CONTACTING THE
SECRETARY/TREASURER**

Lee and Alice White recently enjoyed a trip to southern Utah and visited five National Parks and other sites in the region. Highlights included the Angels Landing trail in Zion NP; the hoodoos of Bryce Canyon NP; scenic Highway 12; Lower Calf Creek Falls; Capitol Reef NP; Canyonlands NP and finishing with Arches NP near Moab, UT. The red rocks and geological features of the region made for a totally enjoyable adventure.



Lee and Alice White at Lower Calf Creek Falls in the Escalante National Monument.

Dennis and Cheryl Pate enjoyed a trip on a Danube River Cruise from Budapest to Prague. They saw many interesting sites while riding the boat and walking around in Germany, the Czech Republic, Austria, and Hungary. Dennis said it was a great experience!

This month we are welcoming a couple of new retirees to our ranks: **Kathy Woida**, State Geologist, and **Paul Goldsmith**, EQIP Coordinator, both retired at the end of the year.

Recently we were saddened to learn of the passing of **Don Kauffman**. Don was a long time District Conservationist in Ida Grove. See the In Memoriam sections for more details.



Lee and Alice White at Delicate Arch within Arches NP



Dennis and Cheryl Pate on board a cruise boat on the Danube River.

KANSAS

Deanne Lull, ARCSE Representative

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It is beginning to look like Christmas; however, our weather forecaster predicts that we can only dream about a white Christmas.

Dale McClaskey turned 90 on November 4th, 2018. His children honored him with a special celebration at the Rolling Hills Wildlife Zoo located close to Salina where approximately 80 family members and friends gathered to wish him special greetings, take family pictures, reminisce, and enjoy the museum and the animals.

Not too long ago **Ron** and I had an unusual dining experience. Many small farming communities in Kansas are disappearing, as is the case with my husband's home town. A bustling town 60 years ago now consists of a main street with a post office, a farm implement and vehicle repair shop, a cafe, and a number of deteriorating building shells of past businesses. We decided to lunch at the local café, and as we ate we enjoyed watching the regulars come in for a meal. Most of them went directly to the back of the café, got their salad and drink from the coolers, placed their order with the cook, and sat down at big tables in the middle of the room to discuss the weather, crops, or local news. The menu included only one dinner plate special or fast food items such as burgers and fries. On that day the cook was also serving as the waiter. Since the table service was all

disposable, we even observed a couple carry in their own table service and give their plates to the cook to fill their order! After eating, their dirty dishes were carefully packed to take home to get ready for their next visit. Although it certainly was not elegant dining, the food portions were farmer-sized, and the meal was delicious. The café definitely plays a very important role in this small community.

Three retirees have had a change of address and are now residing at the Presbyterian Manor, an assisted living facility here in Salina. They are **Jerry Schuetz** (former District Conservationist in the Oberlin Field Office); **Dennis "Joe" Lemon** (former Financial Manager in the Salina State Office) and wife, **Illia**; and **Connie Brax** (former Office Automation Assistant in the Salina State Office).

Retiring on November 6th, 2018, was **Lori J. Graff**, Supervisory District Conservationist in the Leoti Field Office.

Three retirees have passed away. **William E. Roth** passed away on November 8, 2018. He worked 40 years as a soil scientist in Kansas, West Virginia, Nebraska, and Washington, D.C. He was known as the "best soil scientist in Kansas." His wife, **Deniece**, survives. **Robert Jack Benn** passed away on November 10th, 2018. **Robert** retired as a Soil Conservation Technician in the Smith Center Field Office. His wife, **Arlene**, survives. **Charles D. Cheek** passed away on November 22nd, 2018. **Charles** worked 35 years and retired as a Civil Engineer (Water Management Specialist) on the Technical Support Staff in the Salina State Office. His wife, **Joan**, preceded him in death. See the In Memoriam section for more details.

We were saddened to learn of the deaths of two spouses, **Peggy A. Rich** and **Verna F. Van Cleave**. **Peggy** passed away on October 17th, 2018. She was the spouse of **Billy J. Rich** who survives. **Billy** served as a Soil Conservation Technician in the Ashland Field Office. **Verna** passed away on November 1st, 2018. She was the wife of **Kenneth Van Cleave** who survives. **Kenneth** retired as the District Conservationist in the Eureka Field Office. See the In Memoriam section for more details.

MAINE

John Simon, ARCSE Representative

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2018 November: On the 13th we had eight retirees enjoying the company and catching up on news. Attending were: **Karen and Bruce Champeon, Judy and Charlie Boothby, Art Taylor, Roger Ashe, Chris Jones, and John**. The day was messy, but the group was glad to get out of the house for breakfast.

I heard from **Paul Hersey**. He and **Therese** went to Disneyland. See the following: "Hi John, Therese and I are in Orlando FL visiting all of the Disney site. We are here with our son **Ryan**, our daughter-in-law **Suzanne** and two grandkids. Temp is in the 80s yesterday and today. Back to cold Maine Saturday night with a flight into Portland. The last time I have been to Orlando was 1989. Paul."

Also heard from **Bill Moulton**: "Good morning John! A stormy, rainy day in the Pittston area today. Hope today's breakfast was fun. Oct 30th at 5:15pm while sitting in my smelt camp with shooting window slots in three sides, two deer rushed out of the woods and stopped 150 feet from my position. Two shots later a nice large doe and a button buck were ready for field dressing. I had only been in the camp two hours and had used two different deer calls, so now deer hunting is over for 2018. We have or had eight deer coming to my 10-acres of oats which are nice and green still and about 18 inches high. They love that green stuff. All for now. Bill."

Note: in one of Bill's previous e-mails he talked about getting a second deer permit by lottery or something. I guess that is the reason for two. As you can tell, I am not a hunter.



Chris Jones indicated that he traveled to the Grand Canyon, among other sites, and had a great trip and saw much beautiful country. **Noreen** has a niece who lives in Arizona and sends Noreen a yearly subscription to the monthly Arizona Highway publication. The magazine has spectacular photos of Arizona landscape! I have attached the photo Chris sent me along with his message.

"John, below find picture of me at Grand Canyon early in October. The colors of the Grand Canyon don't show up in my photos, but they are amazing in person. I also visited the Desert Botanical Garden in Phoenix, and I highly recommended it. In addition to the Grand. Chris."

Yesterday was veterans day and we all owe our veterans a big THANK YOU for their service. God bless you all!

On a personal note, my attempt to heat my whole house with just my new downstairs mini-split did not work out as planned, so I turned on the upstairs min-split, and all is just fine. The downstairs unit could not keep the upstairs at a comfortable temp without the oil coming on. (I have my two oil zones set at two degrees below the mini-splits, and those zones have not come on yet, maybe when it gets to below zero). With the evening lows in the teens and 20s for the last week, the oil circuit did come on in the bedrooms, (the oil temp is set at 65 in the bedrooms). We like it cool.

Since Thanksgiving is coming up I would like to give thanks to God for the many times and years I have spent with all of you in SCS/NRCS whom I have worked with on projects or farms. You all added so much to my life! I have lost track of most of the members on my FOES AG Waste Team; but if you are reading this, thank you for the memories and God bless. I especially remember all that **Fred Theurer** did for me and all of us on the FOES Teams. He is one Great Guy!!

2018 December: Attending yesterday's December 11th breakfast at Dysarts were: **Kay and Ray Voyer, Karen and Bruce Champeon, Roger Ashe, Art Taylor, Chris Jones, and John Simon.** December is following November by being a very cold month so far. Tuesday's low at my home in Hampden was 2.8 degrees, and winter hasn't even started yet. **Kay Voyer** is still doing substitute teaching in the Old Town school district and enjoys it. She favors the middle school age group the best she says. Roger has his sports car in the garage for the winter and using his truck now. Much better traction in the snow for sure.

Karen and Bruce Champeon will spend some time over the holiday season with her kids and grandkids in N.H. I urged them to be careful on Rt. 2, particularly in the winter, although they will be driving a Subaru which is an all-wheel drive car - great choice.

There was some discussion about health insurance, as this is the open season. Medicare of course is the primary insurer with any other insurance you may have picking up where Medicare stops. Most all of us have both part A and part B of Medicare. I have Mail Handers Value plan +1. I do end up with a small copay for office visits.

Talked on the phone to **Earland Morrison** who still lives in his home in Alfred, ME. Earland is 87 and still up and about and feeling pain-free in spite of a recent bout with cancer. Earland lost his wife a few years ago. We talked about old times and his numerous activities in local organizations. He was a selectman for the town of Alfred for years, and it is my understanding that they named the transfer station after Earland. After working on pig manure farms in York County (which he graciously got me involved in), the transfer station must have been a cake walk! He is active in the Shaker museum in Alfred and quite knowledgeable about Shaker history.

Also talked to **Cliff Roy** who still lives in Fort Kent. Cliff is 91 and, like Earland, he still drives and is active. He said he recently went snow-shoeing in the local park (he says he needs to keep in condition). Good for you Cliff. Cliff and his wife are feeling good. Cliff said they have at least a foot of snow on the ground up there. Cliff and his wife have a daughter who works as a nurse at the local Fort Kent hospital, so that is handy.

Cliff indicated the new furnace he installed several years ago is much more efficient, but it still uses a ton of oil. No wood stove or pellet stove for Cliff apparently. Maybe a candidate for a heat pump mini-split?

Bruce Champeon and his wife **Karen** went up to the Bangor Water District's large standpipe and took several excellent pictures that give a spectacular view of central Maine. Looking NE from Bangor you could see the tops of the five large wind turbines on Pisgah Mountain in Clifton. Looking NW you could see quite a few of the wind mills at Kingsbury Plantation in Bingham. The report I looked at listed 56 wind mills on the mountain ridge, but on Google I could only count about in the 30s. Maybe the project is not yet done. Coming up from Augusta on the China road you can also see the three wind mills on Beaver Ridge in Freedom. They are on the farm of **Ron Price**, with whom I went to College at Orono. Thank you Google maps, my favorite toy!

The update on my heating with mini-split heat pumps is interesting. To counter talk about any decrease in efficiency at cold temperatures I can say that my records show that the efficiency expressed as degree days vs. kWh (DD/kWh) used, I have found that the efficiency is fairly steady. I set the units on and leave them alone. The last 17 days of readings showed a value of about 1.47 DD/kWh for DD in the forties and fifties, with the efficiency dropping slightly to about 1.36 for DD in the thirties!

I have noticed that the frequency of the two units going into the defrost mode is shorter (every 40 minutes or so) when it is raining, snowing, or very humid cold air. For the very cold dry air the units defrost much less frequently (1 to 2 hours or more).

When the temperatures at night get into the teens or single digits, the oil zone on the far end of my house has been coming on. The two other zones have not yet kicked in. It must go below zero for them to kick in.

The noise is no longer an issue, with the vibration isolation bolts on both my units. The defrosting process does make a gurgling sound as the melted water drains off. I think it was **Norm Kalloch's** daughter who put in a unit recently and was concerned about the defrosting noise. You get used to it.

Paul Hersey said he met with **Mary Thompson** and **Geoff Coombs** recently. He also talked to **Bill Moulton**. Apparently they are all still certified for doing waste management plans. He did not say if they are doing plans, but he did say that he cannot keep up with the workload for all the small farms in the state.

I need to end by wishing you all a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays. May we all enjoy a productive year for 2019.

MINNESOTA

John Brach, ARCSE Representative

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Fred Kollman did a bicycle trip, starting October 21st, from St Augustine, FL to New Orleans. Three people were on this trip and they used a vehicle and trailer for sag support. Easy 45-mile days with lots of time to explore items of interest along the way. They passed about 60 miles north of Panama City and were surprised at the amount of damage left by Hurricane Michael. Fred commented: "Forest trees were chopped off 10 feet off the ground, not the usual sight one would expect from high winds. I was expecting trees to be blown down and root balls exposed; however, this was not the case."



Fred Kollman near Marianna Florida



Pete and Rina Cooper at White Pockets

The Coopers Move Back To Minnesota (submitted by Pete Cooper). After almost four years of living the dream (hiking, biking, not going to work) in Southern Utah, **Rina** and I have moved back to the Twin Cities. Three months after I retired in December, 2013, we packed up the cats and whatever else we could fit into our two vehicles and drove to our pre-arraigned

vacation rental in Kanab, UT. Kanab is a small town in SW Utah near the AZ/UT border. What originally was planned to be a four-month retirement celebration turned into one year, then two years, then ... well you get the idea. It didn't take Rina long to find a horse group to join (The Backcountry Horsemen) and volunteer opportunities at "Best Friends" animal shelter. Pete found a couple volunteer organizations to occupy his time: Arizona Trail Segment Steward and being an Archeological Site Steward in the Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument (GSENM). It was a dream come true: 40 minutes from Zion National Park, 90 minutes to North Rim Grand Canyon and Bryce National Parks, and The GSENM right out the back door. However, the Midwest still runs in our blood and felt it was time to move back closer to our good friends and relatives. We moved into a house very near the same neighborhood we had lived in before. Back to playing Sheepshead, hockey, and doing another old house renovation. It was fun, but it's good to be back home!



Back to Losing At Sheepshead, December 2018. (L to R NRCS retirees Vic Ruhland, Robin Martinek, Kim Steffen, Pete Cooper, Al Glencke, John Handler)

MISSOURI

Dave Rastorfer, ARCSE Representative

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Jack Schneider: The whole family is spending Christmas in Portland, OR at one of our son's homes. January will bring a trip to the Galapagos Islands to kick off another year which will probably include more travel. Hope 2018 has been good to all.

Dennis Shirk: Good morning SCS/NRCS folks. Lois and I are doing well. We were blessed with great fall pasture growth. I haven't had too much riding time, but life is good. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. See you down the trail.

Paula Price: The big news in my life is I retired last Friday. An 83-year-old friend invited me to be her travel companion, and I said a resounding "YES!" So 2019 should be interesting with some fun sprinkled on top. She's full of life and loves to travel. Our first trip is already planned and paid for. I'll get to enjoy our son and family at Christmas Eve church, overnight, and Christmas Day. Our four-year-old twin girls (**Holly and Rylee**) are full of mystery and magic this Christmas. **Jordin** (who is 10) is enjoying every aspect of Christmas. I'm expecting high energy and a whole lot of laughter. I'm ready to put 2018 and the prior 10 years into the history books. I am so honored that **Alan** chose me as his wife and life partner. Even though the stem cell transplant didn't do all we hoped, at least we made almost 10 years out of three months when the initial diagnosis was given us in 2008. He knew how it felt to love and be loved as a Grandpa, which was one of his greatest goals. We miss him horribly! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all of you.

Ed Smith: Not much to report from the Smiths. Our health has been pretty good this year. That's good! Have had to give up on the yard work for a couple years but am still able to maintain my twice-a-week golf game by riding a cart. I managed to shoot four rounds in low 80s, less than my age of 84. We will not be returning to FL this winter for the first time in 17 years. The trip just got too long (and dangerous) for me. Hope we have a mild winter so the transition won't get the best of us. Looking forward to our 5th great-grandson in March.

Hope all my SCS friends have a very Merry Christmas and a blessed new year in 2019. Where has the time gone? I know it keeps zipping by way too fast. My best wishes to everyone.

Al Taylor: The Taylor bunch will be here over Christmas and New Year with NAVY having first priority for some. Now the scene is set so I better head for the kitchen and get busy. So Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to All!

Jimbo Sturm has been busy spreading the Joy of Christmas. He started on Dec. 9th by visiting some friends at one of Princeton's nursing homes called "Pearl's Residential Care." Had quite a good time giving out poinsettias, Christmas cards, and candy. Then on Monday, Dec. 10th, he visited friends at the other Princeton nursing home called Pearl's II Eden for Elders. Poinsettias and Christmas cards were delivered along with talking about old times past. Next he delivered 25 poinsettias to the Wright Memorial Hospital Physicians Group Clinic and three other local businesses. He is looking forward to the 2019 New Year. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all retirees.

Pat Beneke: My high school friend, **Kathy**, and her husband **Steve**, invited **Bill** and me to visit them in New Braunfels, TX. None of us have seen much of central Texas, so we enthusiastically joined them. Bill and I were pleasantly surprised at the attractiveness of the Texas Hill country. During our short time there we were able to visit several interesting places in the general area. We drove to Waco and went to the Magnolia silos. They are part of the brand made famous through Fixer Upper, the remodeling TV show with **Chip and Joanna Gaines**. People were arriving by the tour-bus load! We were there on a Monday, and one of the greeters told us they averaged 40,000 guests a day. She considered that a light day, as the previous Saturday they had close to 100,000. Waco had a museum devoted to the Texas Rangers and their history, so we spent several hours there. We also discovered a museum devoted to the pop, Dr. Pepper, which was invented in Waco. We drove to **President Lyndon Johnson's** ranch, known as the western White House while he was in office. It was a beautiful ranch and had some cattle on pasture that are descendants from Johnson's original herd. The small jet he used was on the runway. The ranch runway couldn't handle Air Force One. We spent a day in the San Antonio area and visited the Alamo. We took a cruise down the river which runs through the heart of town (a peaceful change of pace). We drove to the German settled town of Fredericksburg. It was home to Fleet Admiral **Chester Nimitz**, commander of the pacific fleet in WWII. Most impressive was the huge National Museum of the Pacific Theater of WWII. The museum started with the contributing factors leading to Japan's decision to attack Pearl Harbor, and thoroughly covered all of the battles until its conclusion. There was a display on **President H.W. Bush** being shot down in the Pacific and subsequently rescued by a US submarine that we got to relive in the tributes during his funeral. It's very impressive for that museum to be located in a town with a population of a little over 1,700 people. Wishing everyone merry Christmas and a happy healthy New Year.

Jack Walker: Merry Christmas from the Walkers! As several of you know, Jack fell and broke his hip on New Years' eve, so many of our activities this year have changed because of that. His hip healed well; however, he now uses a walker to help with his balance, and slowly moves around, and is coping pretty well with that. Our travel has been mostly just around the KC area. Joyce is coping with macular degeneration. Treatments from a retina specialist are helping, so we are praying her vision will stay stable. We wish good health and blessings to all.

Bill Pauls: Merry Christmas/Happy Holidays to everyone. **Kris** and I are headed to Maui in January for marathon #105 (Oceanfront Maui) and the completion of all 50 states, twice. Should be fun, going with good friends from our Bethany days 40 years ago. Had a great Thanksgiving with both kids' families (and dogs) here at the lake, and it was a great time. We'll spend time at the kids' for Christmas. We're looking forward to 2019 and enjoy staying in touch with all our old SCS/NRCCS career friends and colleagues. We had some great times together and did some great work, didn't we! Our volunteer work, church activities, and family, reward us with the many blessings we enjoy now. We treasure our past, enjoy the present, and look forward to the future. May God Bless you all and all your families. Come see us at the lake ANYTIME!!! Bill (the ol' soil guy/manuscript man/Menfro man/marathon man) and Kris (long-suffering wife) Pauls.

Frank Miller: **Kay** and I have been busy getting involved with our new church. We left the Methodist and are now on our own as a non-denominational church. Frank has been temporarily sidelined by a complete shoulder replacement on October 11th. What a relief it is to be free of the pain. We use our free time to work around the home with yard work, gardening and Kay's Flowers.

The Columbia area retirees met for breakfast on November 14th. Those in attendance were **Gena Michalson, Gail Sallee, Jean Herman, Robert Hummel, Jerry Edwards, Odie Swanegan, Hugh Curry, Bob Ball and Dave Rastorfer**.

Gena reports that she continues to work on genealogy, **Jean** is spending lot of time babysitting, **Odie** is in the middle of hunting season, **Hugh** is busy riding his bike and **Bob B** is working on his farm in Ohio and doing some woodworking. The next Columbia area breakfast will be at the Denny's in Columbia on February 13th.

MONTANA

Dick Gooby, ARCSE Representative

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Montana Big Sky Report

Joyce Swartzendruber report: We had coffee with **Tom Watkins**, the new state conservationist on December 6th. **Jerry and Kay Schaeffer, Mark Johnson, Dave Kascht**, and I were treated to a synopsis of NRCS news.

Merry Christmas from the Gooby Ranch. We thought last year was tough, but this year was a lot tougher. I'm hoping next year will improve our situation. I'm thinking of getting **Mary Ann** a credit card scanner for her Christmas present. Then when we go to town, Mary Ann can sit on a street corner and seek donations while I go someplace and watch a ball game. I think that will really help.

For Mary Ann's birthday I took her to Costco for her birthday dinner. We went to all the food sample stations and got samples. Mary Ann decided which samples she liked the most and we went back for more. After she went back four times she didn't feel comfortable going back for more. Since it was my treat, I went back for more samples for Mary Ann. One food sample was so good I made 15 trips. Luckily it was Halloween, so I was able to try on different Halloween masks each time I was getting Mary Ann more food samples.

Our Granddaughter **Jamie's** wedding this fall was a big event for us farm kids. We wanted her to have the best wedding present possible. So we borrowed three dollars from her mother and with the two dollars we had saved we were able to buy a McDonald's gift card. They will be able to make at least two trips to McDonald's if they don't pig out on the first trip. When they got the wedding present, they were both really thrilled with us.

We have a water line that runs about 500 feet to a water trough where we water the cows. Last winter when I hooked up the water heater for some reason it didn't work, and the water froze up, so Mary Ann had to haul eight wheel-barrow-loads with four five-gallon buckets of water out to the cows twice a day all winter.

This spring when the frost went out of the ground, the waterer still didn't work. It was obvious the water line had a break in it somewhere. Our water lines are six feet in the ground to keep the lines from freezing in the winter when the temperature gets to 40 below. Mary Ann started digging up the pipeline at the waterer and worked towards the pump. Every day she dug her heart out, but no water line break. Finally, after digging for two weeks, she had dug up the whole water line and there was no leak. Then it dawned on me that when I was working on the water heater last fall I had shut the water valve off. I went out and turned it on and "WAHOO" the problem was solved. Mary Ann was really proud of me for remembering to turn the water back on so she wouldn't have to haul water any more.

We wish you a Merry Christmas and a fantastic New Year in 2019--Dick and Mary Ann.

Scott Hoag Report: Here's a photo of our small and dwindling group.



Jerry and Kay Schaeffer, Bob and Jan Remer, Scott Hoag.

Summer has been uneventful. **Scott and Nancy** have been on a couple of trips with the Senior Center, including a trip to Bighorn Lake with a boat ride downstream. Enjoyed the geology and wildlife, eagles and bighorn sheep. It's been hot here in Bozeman, pushing a hundred degrees a couple of times. Scott and Nancy have their condo for sale by owner in preparation for a move to Bainbridge Is. to be with family, two daughters and five grand kids, Nancy's sister and mother, as well as nieces and nephews. When the condo is sold, and they return from a buying trip, they'll sell their house in Bozeman. Nancy received an honorable mention in a national writer's competition. Scott is working on a PL-566 irrigation project in Southern Utah.

NEBRASKA

Norm Kempf, Jim Culver, ARCSE Representatives

Emails: nkempf@neb.rr.com, j4culver@aol.com

The December 19th meeting was called to order by President **Norm Helzer**. There were 19 members present: **Val Bohaty, Norm Helzer, Steve Scheinost, Gus Dornbusch, Harold Klaege, Dana Snyder, Joe Calder, Dave Camper, Keith Sheets, Paul Bartlett, Louis Buller, Jim Culver, Clint Johnson, Donna Dornbusch, Jim Harder, Chris Chapman, Norm Kempf, Sylvia Kempf, and Tom Reinsch.**



Right to Left: Norm Helzer, President, Donna Dornbusch, Secretary and Chris Chapman reviewing local chapter business.

Jim Culver and Norm Kempf, ARCSE representatives, encouraged all our members to join the organization. Norm said that he would assist anyone 83 and older to complete an application to become a senior conservationist.



Norm Kempf, Regional Vice-President for the Midwest discussing the advantages of being a member of the Association of Retired Conservation Service Employees (ARCSE).

Verne Dvorak, a member of our retirees group, passed away December 16th. See the In Memoriam for additional information.

Harold Klaege and **Becky** went to Chicago on a bus trip. While there, they saw the play "Hamilton." With the money he collected from our members in November, he purchased nine pies from Stauffers and took them to the City Mission.

Jim Culver traveled to Myrtle Beach, SC, to attend his granddaughter's graduation from Coastal Carolina University. **Tom Reinsch** traveled through the Bohemian Alps (Nebraska) by bicycle. **Dave Camper** reported on his trip to Colorado to ski and plans to go again this winter. **Norm Helzer** will travel to Texas in February.

Louie Buller celebrated his 90th birthday. His wife celebrated her 90th in November. **Frances King** will celebrate her 98th birthday on Monday, December 31st, with an open house at 4800 Holdrege Street, Apt. 517, from 3 to 7 p.m.

Keith Sheets and wife will be spending the next few months in Texas. He is recommending that we all read the book Poems and Stories About Life that he and others wrote. Chris Chapman recommended a book, My Life - My Fight - Steven Adams, written by her granddaughter **Madeleine Chapman**. **Steven Adams** plays professional basketball with the Oklahoma City Thunder. Both Steven Adams and her granddaughter were born and raised in New Zealand. **Harold Klaege** is encouraging members to join the NARFE organization. He will bring material on the organization and membership applications to our next meeting.

The November 21st retirees' breakfast meeting was called to order by President **Norm Helzer**. There were 17 members present: Val Bohaty, Jim Culver, Paul Bartlett, Gary Muckel, Harold Klaege, Norm Helzer, Jim Carr, Louie Buller, Chris Chapman, Dana Snyder, Gus Dornbusch, Norm Kempf, Keith Sheets, JoAnne Thiele, Steve Scheinost, Bob Engel, Donna Dornbusch, Guest – Craig Derickson

Craig Derickson, NE State Conservationist was a special guest. Craig Derickson gave an update on the current situation for the Natural Resources Conservation Service: no permanent chief as of yet; work on the NRCS budget has not been finished; the 2014 farm bill has expired and a new one has not been passed; NRCS, FSA, and the Risk Management Agency will share administrative services; etc. Moving the NRCS from the Federal Building to the University of Nebraska Innovation Campus is still ongoing but moving slowly.

Wally Valasek has been diagnosed with brain cancer. **Don Manley** died on November 4th. A December 1 funeral is planned at 11am at St. Mark's United Methodist Church. **Bill Roth** passed away on November 7th and the funeral was November 12 in Salina, Kansas

Norm Kempf and his wife **Sylvia** traveled to Mayo's for her treatment and to visit family and friends. Norm also traveled to the Black Hills for deer hunting with friends.

Arlis Plummer is retiring and a retirement gathering is planned for December 18 from 1:30 to 3:30pm at the Denney Federal Building.

Norm Helzer reported on the Kiwanis farm breakfast yesterday which featured **Doug Garrison** who spoke about his grass-fed cattle operation called "DS Family Farm." Doug is a current employee of NRCS and works in the State Office.



Craig Derickson, Nebraska State Conservationist, NRCS, giving a briefing on current Nebraska conservation and management activities. Keith Sheets, center; and Jim Carr, right

Harold Klaege donated \$10 and challenged everyone to contribute money to purchase pies today from Stauffers to give to the City Mission. The "hat" was passed, and \$106 was collected. The December, January, and February meetings will begin at 8am instead of 7:30am.



Left to right: Steve Scheinost, Bob Engel, Norm Kempf Dana Snyder, Norm Helzer, Gus Dornbusch, and Donna Dornbusch.

A get-well card for **Jim Carr** was circulated for signatures. Jim had surgery recently.

The October 17th meeting had 18 members present as well as a number of spouses at the fall breakfast at the Egg and I. **Thomas Reinsch** and his wife attended as guests. The September 19th meeting had 15 members present.

Harold Klaege and his wife, **Becky**, recently traveled to Ohio to celebrate her 50th class reunion. The **Dave Camper's** went to Jonesboro, AR to visit a 95-year-old Aunt, a very active lady who swims laps three times a week, does her own cooking (even for company), etc. **Paul Bartlett** made his first trip to the Ashfall Fossil Beds in northern Nebraska.



Clint Johnson, Left, Tom Reinsch, center and Joe Calder, right. Tom is one of our new members. Prior to retirement Tom was NRCS-USDA Research Soil Scientist at Beltsville, Maryland, Washington DC National Soils Staff and National Soil Survey Center, Lincoln, NE.



Right to Left: Donna Dornbusch, Chris Chapman, Lou Buller, Paul Bartlett, Keith Sheets, Dave Camper, Joe Calder, and Jim Harder.

Steve and Jan Stover spent time in Cincinnati with grandchildren, including a track meet under horrible wet conditions. They also visited Herman, MO, a great old historic town. **Steve and Sandy Scheinost** went to Idaho, going through bad smoke and haze from recent forest fires.

Lyle Westerman, retired Soil Conservation Technician in the Lincoln Field Office, died at age 93. **Valda Jaunzemis**, a clerk-typist in SSIV and NSSC, died at age 73. See the In Memoriam section for more details.

Next meeting is January 16th at 8am.

NORTH CAROLINA

Jim Canterbury, ARCSE Representative

Email: jhcanter@bellsouth.net

Fourteen retirees and guests from the Raleigh area met at the Raleigh Farmers Market Restaurant for breakfast on November 14th. This event takes place a couple times each year. Attending the breakfast were **Jim Canterbury, Dr. Maurice Cook, Tommy Cutts, Frank Evans, Dick Fowler, Coy Garrett, John Garrett, Mildred Garrett, Hubert Hawkins, Ed Helmey, John Kelly, Harold Lile, Cecil Settle, and Horace Smith**. Photo by **Hubert Hawkins**.



North Carolina retirees meet in Raleigh for breakfast

OKLAHOMA

Randy Freeland, ARCSE Representative

Email: randy.freeland@suddenlink.net

The Oklahoma SCS/NRCS Retirees met at the Golden Corral Buffet Restaurant in Oklahoma City, OK on October 26th, 2018. Thirty two people were in attendance: **Ed Abernathy, Don Bartolina, Steve Chessmore, Mark Conkling, Brad Elder, Fred and Gayle Fortney, Wayne Fjeseth, Randy Freeland, Harry Fritzler, Ron Goedecke, Gayle Goforth, Mike Goforth, Sandra and Terry Hough, Otho Lamar and Bobbie Steenbergen, Nick Lambeth, Jim McCampbell, Herb Moody, John and Joni Mustain, Phil and Lana Perryman, Dan Runnels, Chris Shepherd, Jim Smith, Ed Stinchcomb, Keith and Phyllis Vaughan, and Carolyn and Bob Webb**.

President **Chris Shepherd** called the meeting to order. **Chris** asked if anyone knew of a retiree needing prayers. **Everett Cole** and **Bill Petermann** and his wife were mentioned. All of them have health concerns which keep them from attending the meeting. **Chris** provided the blessing for the meal and everyone enjoyed the buffet meal.



Ed Abernathy

First time attendees introduced themselves: **Phil Perryman** retired as District Conservationist in Anadarko 10 years ago. He was accompanied by his wife **Lana**. **Ron Goedecke** retired as District Conservationist at Okmulgee three years ago. **Mike Goforth** is currently the Civil Engineering Technician at Perry. He previously had worked in watersheds. He brought his dad, **Gayle Goforth**, who has been retired from watersheds more years than he worked. Everyone in attendance introduced themselves and their spouse or guest in attendance.



Herb Moody



Keith Vaughan and Ron Goedecke

Fred Fortney read a list of recent retirees: **John Mueller**, State Conservation Engineer, Texas, 7/31/18, 35 yrs service, engineer in Oklahoma previously, served 4 months in 2013 as the Acting Oklahoma State Conservationist; **Mike Sheik**, DC, Enid, 7/31/18; and **Becky Hickman**, Ecological Sciences, State Office, 8/31/18.



Mike Goforth, Ed Stinchcomb, and Gayle Goforth

Fred Fortney also read a list of retiree deaths since April 2018. They were: **John Wilkinson**, 83, retired contracting officer, State Office, 6/1/18, 36 yrs service, retired 7/02; **Bill Ellis**, 76, retired SCT, Seminole, 7/28/18, retired 12/02; **Don Jackson**, 88, retired DC, Stillwater, 7/12/18; **Pansy Schneider**, 83, wife of **Joe Schneider**, Grove, 7/29/18; **Wendell Morton**, 83, retired CET State Office design section, 8/14/18, retired in 1990, 31 yrs service; **Glen Mullen**, 93, retired AC, Perry, 9/16/18, retired in 1980. **Glen and his wife Eunice** had attended 19 of 21 meetings from April 2008 through April 2018. **Fred** asked for a moment of silence in their memory and provided a prayer.



Phil and Lana Perryman

At the April 2018 meeting, **Larry Caldwell** reported that the Oklahoma State University Oral History Program had completed 11 interviews with conservation leaders that will be preserved in their permanent oral history collection website (<https://library.okstate.edu/oralhistory/digital/>). **Wayne Fjeseth**, who serves as the Vice-President for the Oklahoma Conservation Historical Society, reported that interviews with former Oklahoma State Conservationists are being conducted. **Roland Willis** and **Bud Fountain** are among those completed. Memberships with the Oklahoma Conservation Historical Society are being accepted. Membership categories are: Individual (\$25), Family (\$40), Organization (\$50), and Founding (\$100).



Steve Chessmore and Wayne Fjeseth

Chris Shepherd asked those in attendance who would like to share with the group a brief reflection of someone who had made an impression on their career with SCS/NRCCS. Those volunteering to share included: **Chris Shepherd, Phil Perryman, Randy Freeland, Fred Fortney, Jim McCampbell, Otho Lamar and Carolyn Webb**. Their stories were very interesting. Come prepared to share next meeting.

Carolyn Webb and **Keith Vaughan** birthdays were celebrated by singing "Happy Birthday." Several retirees are experiencing health issues and cannot attend the meetings but have expressed their appreciation for the website (www.joepad.com) which is updated after each meeting to include lists and pictures of attendees, minutes of the meeting, etc. **Randy Freeland** coordinates this information with his brother **Joe Freeland** who does the updates.

Attendees were asked to fill out a slip of paper telling about their retirement years. Following are those submitted.

Keith and Phyllis Vaughan say they follow grandkids mostly and returned from a trip to Israel last June that they highly recommend. **Jim McCampbell** continues his work in Cleveland County buying urban development rights for open space. Retired for 22 years and active in his local NARFE Chapter, **Nick Lambeth**, continues to serve as the Financial Officer for his local American Legion Post.

Family farm and taking his grandson on his first deer hunt this fall have occupied **Steve Chessmore**'s time. He has also spent time camping in Colorado this past year. **Mark Conkling** is still farming Hill Top Farm, in Thomas, OK. He plants diverse crops for soil health and cover crops for cash and grazing with his black/black baldy cows, heifers, and steers. **Otho Lamar** still lives on the farm east of Marlow, OK and raises Angus cattle on Bermudagrass and Plains Bluestem.



Mark Conkling and Nick Lambeth

Harry Fritzler works on his farm raising cattle and two horses that eat "a lot." He travels as much as he can talk his wife into from her veterinarian business and plays with his 1st grandson. **Harry** donates blood regularly at the Oklahoma Blood Institute. He is also a board member of the Norman Area Land Conservancy Board. **Carolyn Webb** continues to volunteer at school, church, and serves as the Director for the City Library. She and **Bob** are just back from Ireland. She takes yoga classes and does 5 Ks. Also likes to work in her garden and be involved with the local garden club.



Harry Fritzler and Jim McCampbell



Carolyn and Bob Webb

Terry and Sandra Hough celebrated 50 years of marriage in August 2018. Congratulations! They travel to see children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. They often help out one of their children's family at a private campground in Southeast Missouri. It is lots of work. **Jim Smith and his wife Terry**, just returned from a fishing trip to Alaska where they caught lots of salmon and halibut. **Terry** just retired from the pharmaceutical industry, and they hope to now do a lot of things not possible during their employed lifetime.

John and Joni Mustain are two very busy people in retirement. They travel "a lot" on a Honda Goldwing or a Toyota Prius that gets 58 miles per gallon. Here are just a "few" of their many activities: vegetable gardening, canning, wood working, home remodeling, wine making, beer making, bee keeping, chicken raising, painting, and enjoying children, their spouses, and five grandsons. **John** is also developing burn plans and conducting burns for the Oklahoma Prescribed Burn Association. And **Joni** works at her church's thrift store and as an office assistant.

Open Season (November 12 - December 10) is now open for Health Benefit changes. **Randy Freeland** works closely with the Insurance Carriers through NARFE and asks you to remember a few things. "Self plus one" is a cheaper premium and gives you the same coverage. If you have Blue Cross and Blue Shield "Basic Option," be sure to look at the \$600 rebate they offer if you have Medicare parts A and B. Other companies have similar "perks." Check them out.

In closing, **Chris Shepherd** encouraged those not currently NARFE Members to join. Just \$40 a year for a great magazine and lots of good information about your retirement benefits, including health benefits. Contact him or any other NARFE Member for more information.

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, April 26th, 2019, at the Golden Corral on MacArthur Boulevard in Oklahoma City. The Golden Corral opens at 10am, so there is extra time for visiting before the meeting starts at 11:30am. Put it on your calendar now! Everyone is welcome and no reservations are required.

OHIO

Jon Gerken, ARCSE Representative

Email: jgerken47@gmail.com

Norbert Kay Lerch, age 90 of Hamilton, OH peacefully passed away Saturday, December 22nd, 2018. See the In Memoriam section for more details.

OREGON

Don Stettler, ARCSE Representative

Email: don.stettler@comcast.net

The Oregon winter quarter retiree lunch will be held on Wednesday, January 24th at the Peppermill Restaurant in Aloha.



Geese fertilizing an athletic field at Aloha High School. For Jim Marron who coaches Aloha High School's girls' softball team, geese are his nemesis. In his attempt to keep them off the softball field, he fences the infield and places silhouettes of German Shepherd dogs that pivot in the wind.

SOUTHEAST PENNSYLVANIA

Frank Resides, ARSCE Representative

Email: frank.resides@comcast.net



L to R: Tom Iivari, Carolyn Gehlen, Janice McDonough, Joe McDonough, Pat Burkett, Len Beck, Mary Beck, Jean Kirkaldie, Jane Schuetz, Fred Schuetz, Joyce Iivari, Rosalie DuPoldt, Carl DuPoldt, Jane Resides, and Frank Resides.

SEPA Retirees Meet for Lunch

Fifteen lucky and dedicated members of our group met for lunch at the Chicago Pizza Grille in Newtown Square on December 15th. Eating, drinking, and stories from the "Good Ole Days" went on until about 3pm. Thanks to **Carl DuPoldt** for recommending this place over a year ago. Present: **Len and Mary Beck, Pat Burkett, Carl and Rosalie DuPoldt, Carolyn Gehlen, Tom and Joyce Iivari, Jean Kirkaldie, Joe and Janice McDonough, Frank and Jane Resides and Fred and Jane Schuetz.**

Ann Magee has serious medical issues and was in Lankenau Hospital. We need to pray for Ann and her family.

The Northeast NTC closed about 22 years ago, and we have had two lunch or dinner meetings a year ever since. The lunch committee has begun to wonder: "How long can we keep this tradition alive?" We will plan a lunch event for July or August of 2019, but our winter meeting next year may be suspended. It's been a real Blessing to have worked together and stayed in touch like a family all this time.

TENNESSEE

Submitted by Dana York

SCS/NRCS Retirees' Meeting, December 13, 2018

The SCS/NRCS retirees met at Shoney's in Lebanon, Tennessee, with the following members present: **Debbie Brasfield, Kevin Brown, Chester and Janet Bush, Jack and Anna Chidester, Allen Crowe, Ray Curl, Donald Dotson, Jeanne Eastham, Gary Handley, Mike Hart, Ardelle Langdon, Jim Lansford, Bobby and Brenda Moore, Will Nesby, Lou Richards, Vic Simpson and James Sims.**



Left to Right: James Sims, Jim Lansford, Kevin Brown, Jeanne Eastham, Mike Hart, Ray Curl, Donald Dotson, Ardelle Langdon, Debbie Brasfield, Janet Bush, Lou Richards, Chester Bush, Brenda Moore, Jack Chidester, Anna Chidester, Bobby Moore, Allen Crowe, Will Nesby, Not pictured (Vic Simpson and Gary Handley).

Debbie Brasfield continues to work with the NRCS through the ACES program and volunteered at the Envirothon. She is expecting another granddaughter next year. She recently met **John Jenkins and Tim Powers** (former NRCS employee).

Kevin Brown worked with the Bredesen-for-Senate campaign but has some time available now. He is enjoying retirement and looking forward to the holidays. With his many NRCS moves, the family is scattered but hopes to have them together during Christmas.

Chester and Janet Bush were in Tennessee visiting family and decided to come to the meeting. They currently reside in California. He has a daughter in Crossville and a son in Murfreesboro. He and Janet have visited Yosemite and Hawaii this year as well as several places closer to home. There were California large fires both north and south of them but not in their area. **Jack and Anna Chidester** have about settled in their new home and have done some traveling and plan to do more in the future. They also are getting a new dog in a month. They lost their dearly loved pet recently.

Allen Crowe has a grandson at UT studying Civil Engineering and has developed an interest in UT sports, especially UT Men and Women's Basketball. **Ray Curl** continues to have some back problems but is able to do some woodturning. He plans to spend Christmas with his daughter in Indianapolis, IN. He mentioned that if you are on Medicare and BCBS Basic, that you may be able to get \$600 rebate from BCBS.

Donald Dotson says they go to the doctor for something all the time. Donna now has some knee problems, but both of his knee replacements are now doing great. He and Donna went to a UT football game with **Larry and Beth Goff** and **John and Betty Harris** this fall. He reported that Larry Goff had back surgery recently and is still recuperating from the surgery. **Don and Donald** have a granddaughter at Centennial HS and one at Belmont studying to be a Nurse Practitioner or Doctors Assistant. Donald also visited with **Jeff Bowie**, DC for Maury County, who is taking rehab after his stroke.

Jeanne Eastham stays busy with her family but plans to assist with the TACD Meeting in Gatlinburg this winter. **Gary Handley** continues to work part time and is currently driving a school bus. He plans to retire soon from the State. He stays busy around home with some renovations and normal maintenance.

Mike Hart is enjoying retirement and does not know how he ever had time to work. He is currently assisting the NRCS as an ACES worker. He has two sons and is currently getting them resettled. Mike is a new member and this is his first meeting. **Ardelle Langdon** related her recent trip to Minnesota and some of the many problems she had both during her trip and after she returned home. She is currently planning a trip to Minnesota during the Christmas Holidays and hopes she does not experience anything like her trip this summer. She is currently going through some things she had stored and disposing of the items she no longer needs.

Jim Lansford was dealing with excess leaves in his yard and getting the outside ready for winter. He also regularly visits Tom Pointer in Assisted Living. Tom is holding his own but getting weak. **Bobby and Brenda Moore** are glad to be up and going. Bobby continues to work part time for a firm in Smyrna and through this job ran into John Gibby, who performs the soil scientist work on some of his job locations.

Will Nesby related that he had been inducted into Tennessee State University Hall of Fame for his work with students in agriculture and USDA programs. He was in the Parade for Homecoming and had a great time. He plans to attend his High School Reunion in Memphis where he will be visiting with his brother and sister and looking forward to the Holidays and seeing family. **Lou Richards** thanked **Jim Lansford** for his thoughtfulness and bringing her to the meetings. She had lost her dog earlier in the year and had about decided not to get another. But that changed when a friend called from the shelter and told her "your dog is here." Now she has a new cocker-poodle and is thrilled.

Vic Simpson had talked to **Bill and Gail Headden** and they were "holding their own." Billy stated they had just celebrated their 4th great grandchild. Billy wanted to come to the meeting but had doctor's appointments. Vic also related **John Harris** had sent a note that his daughter just took a job as Director of Alumni Affairs at Maryville College. **Steve Dobbs** called and said to wish all Merry Christmas. Steve just purchased his 4th vehicle, but is trying to sell one. **Ron Graner** said to say Merry Christmas. **Larry and Connie Hasty** are sick with colds and could not come to this meeting. **James Sims** continues working with NRCS through ACES and is currently working with **Carol Chandler** and NRCS staff. Looking forward to Christmas and family. He has reservations for his bass fishing trip to Florida in early February.

Deaths that are known since our last meeting are: **Troy Taylor** (Memphis), **Clarence Conner** (Knoxville), and **William "Bill" Medley** (Algood).

Vic is currently considering a location south of Nashville for our March 21st meeting (maybe Manchester), and will get that out as soon as confirmed.

Mark your calendar for 2019 now: March 21st, 2019 (Possibly Manchester); June 20th, 2019 (Waverly); September 19th, 2019 (Cookeville); December 12th, 2019 (Lebanon)

TEXAS (NORTH)

Arnold King, ARCSE Representative
Email: arnolddking@hotmail.com

The North Texas group had their annual Christmas party on December 21st. Attendance continues to dwindle, but everyone enjoys getting together and having a white elephant gift exchange. **Jere Rickman** has been in charge of that event for several years and provides gifts she gathers up while on their many annual worldwide trips.

During the business meeting, the slate of officers for 2019 was presented. **Doug Seibel** was elected President for 2019 and **Dennis Gaster** will continue as the Secretary-Treasurer and newsletter editor.

Doug Seibel and his wife spent Thanksgiving in Kansas visiting family and enjoying that portion of the holidays. **Clyde Goodman** provided a farm report on their family place in Kansas. Western Kansas has snow on the ground and more crops to harvest. They also had more rain than they needed this fall causing harvesting problems. Clyde and his family have a cruise planned during Christmas and following that he is scheduled for knee surgery during February.

Dennis Gaster recently went with his Boy Scout Troop to the Highland Games and Camp Tahuaya near Belton, TX. It is an unusual experience for the boys because they combine traditional Celtic sporting events that originated centuries ago in the Scottish Highlands with a few scouting events. Events include turning the Caber, Sheaf toss, Weight Throws, Weight Toss, Clachneart, Braemar Stone, Hammer Throw, Farmer's walk and Pumpkin Slaying. The scouts from Dennis's troop won their share of the ribbons and had a great time. Dennis has spent a lot of time this fall redoing the landscape around his home. The rains have caused him some problems.



North Texas retirees' Christmas party

VIRGINIA

Kenneth Carter, ARCSE Representative

Email: duckheadone@gmail.com

The retirees in Virginia would like to "welcome home" former State Conservationist **George Norris**. George and his wife, **Ellen**, have relocated back to Richmond to be closer to their daughters and grandchildren. George's new address is 12401 Gayton Rd., Apt 139, Richmond VA 23238. Phone: (770) 468-2957

Virginia ARCSE representative **Ken Carter** is temporarily home bound recovering from open heart surgery to have a valve repaired. He is more concerned that he will miss all of duck season and fall striper fishing.

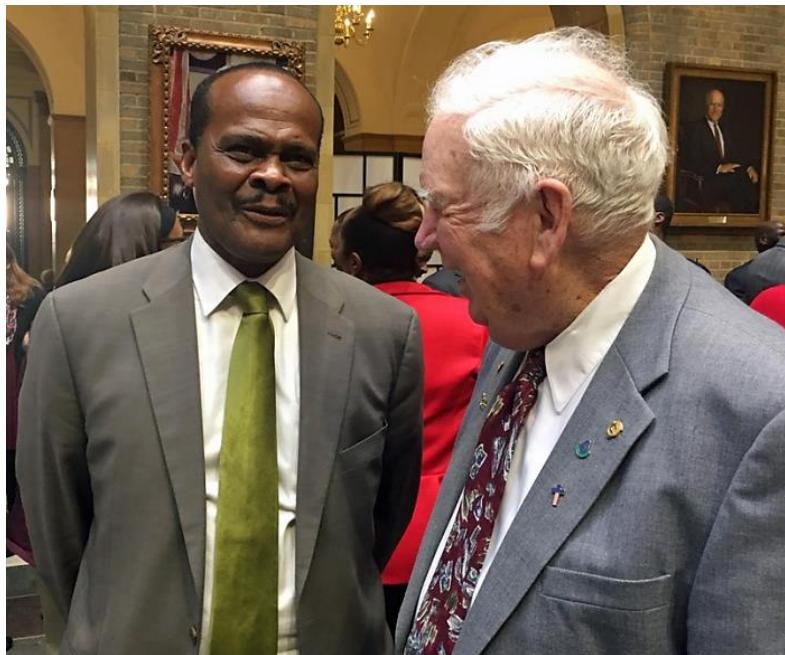
WASHINGTON, DC, NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA

John Peterson, ARCSE Representative

Email: jwpeterson@cox.net

Gary Gross reports that he is doing well, keeping very busy volunteering locally and around the world with missions. He has been on about 30 church mission trips since retiring and for about half of them served as the team leader. In addition to many areas in the US, he has been to Peru, Mexico, and Costa Rica several times each on construction mission trips (mostly) and medical trips. He also got to Guatemala last summer helping to build a school kitchen and in-home stoves in the Highlands. He is currently booked back to Costa Rica next June and will be leading a trip back to Mexico in January 2020. **Linda and Gary** have chaired their Missions Committee at church (not chairing currently) for 15 years. They also do a lot of traveling. They were recently in Ireland and in December will be going to jungles in Ecuador for a few days, and then to the Galapagos Islands for about 10 days. Life is good. Oh, and by the way, they are fostering a Border Collie that they might adopt. They've had her for a week now. They lost their Border Collie, Dakota, a year ago and this new girl at their house is fitting in very well.

After 12 years as serving as the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (VASWCD) representative to the NACD Board of Directors, **John Peterson** stepped down on December 4th. **John** remains as the Chairman of the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District (Fairfax County). He also stepped down from being SWCS's Washington, DC Representative. SCS Retirees **John and Norm Berg** have been the only two SWCS people to play that role to date. SWCS will very likely be looking for John's replacement, probably someone in the DC area. He has also been ARCSE's Washington, DC National Capital Area Representative for the last 25 years and will be leaving that role after the spring luncheon on May 2nd. Sounds as if someone is slowing down. The National Capital Area Retirees will need to find a replacement.



John Peterson attended the retirement ceremony for Acting NRCS Chief **Leonard Jordan** which was held at the USDA Patio in the Whiten Building on December 17th, 2018. **Leonard** is retiring on January 3rd after 42+ years of federal service. He is moving to Douglasville, GA, and says he is going to do a lot of fishing before he takes on more work.

USDA **Secretary Purdue**, **Under Secretary Northey**, **FSA Administrator Fordyce**, **RMA Administrator Barbre**, and **former Chief Dave White** all spoke and wished **Leonard** well. NRCS'ers **Tom Christensen**, **Diane Gelburd** and **Kevin Wickey** also spoke.

Then on Wednesday the 19th, **John** attended a welcome session for the new NRCS Chief **Matt Lohr**. **Lohr** is a farmer from VA's Shenandoah Valley, has been VA's Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services, cooperates with his conservation district, and his farm has earned VA's Clean Water Farm Award. He comes to NRCS with an excellent background. **John and Blanche** had another great surprise during the holidays. They received a very nice phone call from old SCS friends **Gary and Jayne Nordstrom** from Prescott, AZ. They talked about old times, mutual friends and some who have passed on, each other's health, and their military sons. It had been a number of years since they had talked in person. What a nice Christmas present. The SCS/NRCS family is a strong one.





WASHINGTON

Ken Kaul, ARCSE Representative

Email: kenkaul@msn.com

Those attending our monthly meetings were **Joe Carmack, Larry and Jean Edmonds, Stefan Fechter, Chet Jahns, Ken Kaul, Tim King, Harry Riehle, and Carl Vennes**. This has been a time for travel. **Stefan Fechter** is in Arizona and repairing his deck and enjoying lawn bowling. **Kelli Mollison**, HR Specialist, also has a park model in the same subdivision. **Carl Vennes** was on a cruise to Italy, Spain and the Caribbean. **Chet Jahns** was on a cruise to the Bahamas. **Ken and Tina** were in Texas to see their grandson in a Christmas concert and for Ken to go fishing with past Bass Master champion **Alton Jones**.



Ken Kaul with past Bass Master Alton Jones.



Ken and Tina Kaul with grandson at Christmas concert.

WEST VIRGINIA

Peg Reese, ARCSE Representative

Email: pegreesewv@gmail.com

Retired Area Clerk **Judy Stewart**, Beckley, WV passed away on October 16th , 2018. Retired Contracting Specialist **Bill "Larry" Doerr**, 60, of Fairmont, died on Tuesday, December 11th, 2018. You can read more about Judy and Bill in the In Memoriam section.

Dee Weston "visited Surfside Beach, SC, in early November and was blessed to spend a few hours with **Jim Dove**. He's still doing remarkably well and keeping busy. We shared many fond memories and I took him a bag of Preston County buckwheat flour to enjoy."

Judy Fairbanks says "Retiring to my old 'home town' of Parsons, WV has been an enjoyable experience, especially during this magical time of the year. A few highlights have been approximately 700 folks sharing a free Festive Thanksgiving Dinner, listening to our Tucker County Community Choir, and touring five decorated homes. The effort decorating these old and new homes is so interesting! This year the old 'train depot' was added to the tour where citizens could display their prized antique dolls and toy train sets. It's all just breathtaking! God Bless and Merry Christmas!"

WYOMING

Veronica Schadegg, ARCSE Representative

Email: schadegg2@bresnan.net

Retiring at the end of the year are: **Jim Mischke** Thermopolis, Wyoming; and **Jim Pike**, Cheyenne, WY.

NEW SENIOR CONSERVATIONISTS: *They have reached the minimum age of 83 years and have completed the Senior Conservationist Questionnaire. See IN MEMORIAM for the Senior Conservationists who have left us since the last Newsletter. Please help us identify retirees who should be named Senior Conservationists. Please provide their contact information to your ARCSE Representative or Regional Vice-President. Three to report this newsletter.*

Roger Lee Haberman	Larned, KS
William (Bill) Melven	Columbia, SC
J. Michael (Mike) Nethery	Smithfield, UT

SENIOR CONSERVATIONIST CHRONICLE

by Marc Safley, Chronicler, Senior Conservationist

Senior Conservationist
William Curtis Sharp

Senior Conservationist Curtis Sharp was born October 31, 1929, in Frost, West Virginia. Frost is a community in eastern Pocahontas County about 55 miles northeast of White Sulphur Springs. Curtis' family moved to Greenbrier County in the early 1930s and settled near Renick, WV. He attended schools there and graduated from Renick High School in 1948. He attended Potomac State College from 1949 to 1951 then transferred to West Virginia University WVU) in Morgantown where he graduated in 1953 with a B.S. in Agronomy. During summers from 1948 to 1952 Curtis worked as a Student Trainee in Greenbrier and Pocahontas Counties.

Following graduation from WVU he worked as a Soil Conservationist at Canton, NY, during the summer of 1953. In the fall of 1953 he began graduate studies at The Pennsylvania State University. He earned a M.S. degree in Agronomy in 1955. Curtis served in the U.S. Army from 1955 to 1957. He was stationed in Germany. Upon his discharge in early 1957, he was hired by SCS and assigned to the East Aurora (NY) field office. In May 1957 he met Peggy Bell who became his wife in the fall of that year.

From 1957 until 1960 Curtis worked for SCS as a staff person at the Big Flats Plant Material Center. At that time the Center was managed by the State University of New York under a cooperative agreement with SCS. Curtis' job title was Assistant Professor. In 1960 he was named Center Manager there and served in that capacity until 1965 when he was selected to be Plant Materials Specialist for New York. Soon thereafter he was named Plant Materials Specialist for New Jersey at Cape May Courthouse. He held that position until 1970 when he was laterally assigned to California as the state specialist there. He was first located at Pleasanton then later at Lockeford. Curtis worked in California until 1974 when he was promoted to Regional Plant Materials Specialist for the Northeast at Upper Darby, PA. He served that region until 1985 when he was named National Specialist at the SCS Headquarters in Washington, D.C. Curtis retired from that position in 1993. During his federal career he received several Certificates of Merit and two USDA Superior Service Awards (1984 and 1993).

After retirement Curtis continued to work in support of natural resource conservation programs; he collected plant data under contract to support field office conservation planning software. He and Peggy traveled extensively both domestically and internationally. Together and separately they wrote eight books (five of which are family histories). He also indicated that he "built tons of furniture for children that they don't know what to do with now". Sadly, Peggy passed away earlier this year after 61 years of marriage. Curtis and Peggy have four children, 11 grandchildren, and 4 great-grandchildren.

Curtis writes that his "SCS career was narrowly focused, enjoyable, and I hope productive. I have [been] and continue to be blessed by maintaining reasonably close contact with many Plant Materials people and the program. Even 24 years after retirement, I and several former colleagues spend a week together deeply immersed in what we call 'For the Love of Grass'. (These field exercises in plant identification and site description are evidence of the true dedication of Plant Materials specialists to each other and to the science and art of their profession.)

OBITUARY INFORMATION

Ron Marlow, Secretary-Treasurer

When you receive word of someone passing, with little other information provided to you, obituaries can often be found by doing an advanced search using Google, using the full name of the deceased. If you do not have access to the web, Ron Marlow will be glad to do the search. Please send death notices and obituary information directly to Ron at arcse@cox.net. Always include the position or the spouse's position with SCS/NRCS.

Surname

In Memoriam

(Note: These are recent notices. For a complete list, please see www.arcse.org)

Bailey	Manley "Joe" Hibbert Bailey Jr. (90) passed away at home on November 7, 2018 at his home in Lincolnville, Maine. He was born in Oakland, ME. He was a graduate the University of Maine where he received a Bachelor's degree in Agriculture. Joe served in the U.S. Air Force for four years. He completed soil surveys for Scott Paper Company before working 26 years as a soil conservationist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Joe enjoyed collecting antique tractors and building model airplanes in his spare time. Joe was a member of the Chestnut Street Baptist Church in Camden, the Masonic Lodge in Sidney, and Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity. He was predeceased by his first wife, Roberta Ackley Bailey and their infant son; his second wife, Lucille Bailey ; stepson, Stephen Lidstone ; three brothers; and two sisters. Surviving is his dear friend and companion, Edith Brown of Camden; a daughter and three sons, one grandson, and one great-grandchild. Memorial gifts may be made to the Chestnut Street Baptist Church. Interment will be held later in Riverside Cemetery in Farmington. Condolences may be shared with the family at www.longfuneralhomecamden.com .
Benn	Robert Jack Benn (82) of Smith Center, Kansas passed away peacefully November 10, 2018 at Smith County Memorial Hospital. He was born in Troy, KS. He attended Highland Community College where he played football and then attended the University of Kansas. He was employed by the Soil Conservation Service in Doniphan Co. and was transferred to Smith Center in 1958. He had a 30-year career and retired in 1986. Jack and Arlene loved to travel and spent their winters in Rockport, Texas and many summers in Canada. He loved to cook and entertain his friends and family. Jack was a member of Ducks Unlimited, the Soil Conservation Society of America, and served on the Library Board. Jack is survived by his wife Arlene of 58 years, and one son Dirk (Sarah) of Adel, IA, and two grandchildren. He is also survived by 13 nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents and his two sisters.
Berger	Thomas "Tom" D. Berger (69) of Westerville, Ohio, passed peacefully, at home, on November 8, 2018, after battling Lewy

Body Dementia. He is survived by beloved wife of 45 years, **Patricia**, his three children, and four grandchildren. Tom served his country in the Marine Corp Reserves. He was retired from Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry. **He also worked with NRCS for a time in the state office, following his retirement with ODNR.** In lieu of flowers, please consider planting a tree to honor Tom's love of forestry. Condolences may be left at www.morelandfuneralhome.com.

Cheek	Honorary Member Charles D. Cheek (91) formerly of Tonkawa and Ponca City, resident of Kansas City, Missouri passed away November 22, 2018. Charles was born in Sterling, Colorado. He attended Tonkawa (Oklahoma) grade school and graduated from Tonkawa High School in 1945. He attended Northern Oklahoma College in 1946, then Oklahoma State University where he graduated with his Bachelor's degree in civil engineering in 1951. Charles served in Korea as a combat engineer from October 1, 1952 to May 29, 1954. Charles married Joan Schug in Tonkawa, Oklahoma on August 25, 1948 and was married to her until her death August 2, 2002. They had one son Randy who was born in 1955. Charles worked as an engineer for the US Soil Conservation Service from the summer of 1951 until his retirement in May of 1986, with a break for military service 1951-1954. Survivors include his son Randy Cheek and wife Kathryn of Kansas City, MO, a granddaughter and two great grandchildren. Charles was preceded in death by his parents, his wife, a sister, and a brother.
Cleave	Verna F. Van Cleave (88) of Eureka, Kansas, and a longtime former resident of Galesburg, Kansas, passed away on November 1, 2018 at Greenwood County Hospital in Eureka, Kansas. She was born in rural Chase County. She worked in the Kansas State University agricultural office. Following his graduation from college while living in Eureka, Verna worked for the Greenwood County Health Department as a secretary until retiring. She was a member of the Galesburg United Methodist Church. Verna loved to quilt. Through the years, she had made 157 quilts, many of which were gifted to her family and friends. Survivors include her loving husband of 69 years, Kenneth Van Cleave , of the home. Kenneth retired from SCS in 1983. Also surviving are two sons, a daughter, six granddaughters, five great grandchildren, a brother, and two sisters. Online condolences may be left at www.forbeshoffman.com .
Davis	" Dottie" Davis (95), formerly of Silver Spring, Maryland passed away peacefully at Luther Crest Diakon Senior Living Center on October 26th in Allentown, PA. She was born in Superior, Wisconsin. She married Howie Davis in 1945, taught school and raised their two daughters. Howie died in 1985. She was married to Wesley Hofstad (the best man at her first marriage) from 2003 until his death in 2015. Wesley retired from SCS in 1982 as an Economist at the NENTC. He and Dottie were regular attendees to the retiree luncheons. Dottie enjoyed his children and their families: David, Joy, Alan and Mark. Dottie is survived by her two daughters: Jane (married to Ted Zimmerman living in Allentown) and Mary Lou (married to Bob Rosen living in Savannah, Georgia), four grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to: Luther Crest Care Fund, 800 Hausman Rd., Allentown PA 18104 or St. Luke's Lutheran Church, 417 N. 7th St, Allentown PA 18102.
Dawson	Albert Ray Dawson (78) of the Claymour Community, passed away on December 27, 2018 at St. Thomas West Hospital in Nashville, TN of natural causes. Albert was born in Todd County, KY. He was a farmer and retired in 2004 from Natural Resources Conservation Service as an Engineering Technician. He was ordained as a Deacon and was a member of Green Ridge Baptist Church. Albert was survived by his wife of 58 Years, Bettie Boley Dawson ; his son, Rev. Gary (Debi) Dawson of Trenton, KY; a brother, a sister, two grandchildren, and a great grandson. The family asks that donations be given to the Sunrise Children's Home, P.O. Box 1429, Mt. Washington, KY 40047.
Dean	L. Robert "Bob" Dean (73) of Rio, Illinois passed away on October 28, 2018, at home. He was born in Port Huron, Michigan. Bob married Faith M. Kenyon on July 2, 1988, in Halfmoon Township, New York. She preceded him in death on July 21, 2018 after 30 years of marriage. He is survived by children, Justin (Brittany) Dean of Dahinda, Zack (Melanie) Dean of Latham, New York, Dr. Victoria "Vicki" Callagan of Troy, New York, Amy (Dan) Mahoney of Voorheesville, New York, and Josh (Lis) Cinelli of Fort Worth, Texas; six grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; a brother and a sister. Bob worked for the United States Department of Agriculture for many years. After moving from California to Rio in 1996, he was assistant state conservationist at Galesburg until his retiring in 2012. He earned his bachelor's degree from Michigan State University. Bob was a member of the Rio Masonic Lodge 685 and Oneida American Legion Post 727. Bob was of Christian faith. He served in the United States Army during the Vietnam War. He was the recipient of the National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Vietnam Service Medal with Two Campaign Stars, and the Purple Heart. Memorial contributions may be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital . Online condolences may be made at www.h-p-w.com .
Densmore	Mabel Elizabeth "Betty" Densmore (102) a long time resident of Madison, Wisconsin passed away on November 23, 2018. Betty was born in West Salem, WI. Following graduation from West Salem High School in 1934, Betty attended Miss Woods Kindergarten and Primary Teacher Training School in Minneapolis, MN. Subsequently, Betty taught kindergarten from 1936-1941 in Viola and Viroqua, WI. Betty met Jack Densmore at a community dance in 1940 and they were married in 1941 in Bangor, WI. Jack was the first State Resource Conservationist in Wisconsin with the Soil conservation Service and former Regional Forester in the Lincoln, Nebraska technical center. They enjoyed 71 years of marriage and had three children and one granddaughter. Betty was preceded in death by husband Jack in 2012, her parents, and brother. Betty is survived by her two daughters, a son, granddaughter, a sister-in-law, and many nieces and nephews. Memorial donations may be made to Covenant Presbyterian Church, Oakwood Foundation or a charity of your choice.
Doerr	Bill "Larry" Doerr (60) of Fairmont, West Virginia passed away on December 11, 2018 with his wife at his side. He was born in Detroit, Michigan. Bill graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration at Montana University. He was a retired Contracting Specialist with USDA/NRCS. Bill is survived by his loving wife, Cheryl Diana (Dunlap) Doerr ; daughters, Jessica (Jeff) Powers of Valley Grove, and Paula Dunlap , of Fairmont, two sisters, and four grandchildren as well as several loving nieces and nephews.
Dollar	Mason Dollar (73) of Auburn, Alabama passed away on February 5, 2016 at UAB Medical Center as a result of cancer. He retired as the Water Resources Staff Leader on the Alabama state office staff. Mason retired with approximately 35 years of Federal service and later had a very successful career as a real estate salesman, specializing in forest and recreation/wildlife land. Mason was an attorney and member of the Alabama bar.
Dvorak	Verne Irvin Dvorak (93) of Lincoln, Nebraska passed away on December 16, 2018 after recurrent battles with pneumonia. Verne was born at home near Barneston, Nebraska. Verne graduated from Barneston High School in 1943 and served in the U.S. Navy on USS LST 952 (an invasion hospital evacuation ship), seeing action in the battle of Okinawa. After farming with his father for the next few years, Verne enrolled at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. In 1954, he met the love of his

life, **Helen**, at a Sunday evening Methodist church supper in Scottsbluff, while assisting with research at the Panhandle Research & Extension Center. They were married at Centenary UMC in Beatrice on Feb. 5, 1956. He earned a B.S. and M.S. in Agricultural Engineering from UNL. Verne first worked as a hydrologist and later as a computer programmer for the Soil Conservation Service between 1950 and 1991. After retirement, he enjoyed gardening, woodworking, helping his children with home renovation projects, and spending time with his grandchildren, avidly following their activities. Verne was preceded in death by: wife, **Helen**; parents, and a brother. He is survived by: his sister, **Audre (Dvorak) Ferrier** (Ankeny, IA); children, **Carla (Ed) Lash** (Gallup, NM), **Dennis (Leah) Dvorak** (Manhattan, IL), and **Bruce (Karrie) Dvorak** (Lincoln); seven grandchildren, and a great-granddaughter. Memorial contributions may be made to Christ UMC Bus Fund or Tabitha Meals on Wheels.

Farris	Larry Dale Farris (66) of Okemah, Oklahoma passed away on November 25, 2018. He was born in Okemah. Larry received a bachelor's degree in Agronomy from Oklahoma State University. He retired from the USDA NRCS (formerly the Soil Conservation Service) after more than 20 years of employment. He enjoyed his work and also liked gardening, hunting, fishing and reading. Larry attended the Skyview Baptist Church of Okemah. He is survived by his wife of 39 years, Robin Farris of the home in Okemah; one son, David (Melissa) Farris of Okemah; one daughter, Michelle Oxley of Okemah; four brothers, one sister, and five grandchildren.
Garner	Howard Garner (83) of Newport, North Carolina, passed away on November 23, 2018. He was born to Fernie and Mildred Garner at their home next to the Hill Hardware Store. He lived at his current home on Nine Foot Road since 1963. Howard had a long career as a Soil Conservation Technician serving Carteret, Craven, Pamlico and Onslow Counties. Some of the achievements during his life he was most proud of are: President of Newport Woodmen of the World, Charter President of Newport Jaycees, Governor of Newport Moose Lodge, Vice President of NC Jaycees, Board of Directors of US Jaycees, Honorary Jr Chamber International, Pilgrim Degree with Moose and served as Administrator of Newport Moose Lodge for 18 years during which time the lodge was named #1 out of 2200 lodges by Moose International. He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Peggy Garner ; daughter, Beth Tufts and her husband; son, Ward Garner ; five grandchildren, and a special great granddaughter, and a sister, Brenda Smith. He was preceded in death by his parents, two brothers, and a sister.
Gelnar	Edward Robert Gelnar (82) of Mangum, Oklahoma passed away on November 22, 2018 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. He was born in Brinkman, Oklahoma. He graduated from Mangum High School in 1956. He served his country in the Air Force. He spent his life as a rancher and retired from the Soil Conservation Service. He was a member of the Knights of Columbus. He was a member of the Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Mangum. He enjoyed camping, working with his cattle and especially spending time with his grandchildren. Edward is preceded in death by his parents, a brother, a sister, and a great grandson. He is survived by his wife Darlene of the home; a son, Junior (Susan) Gelnar of Mangum; a daughter, Stephanie (Calvin) Yocham of Mangum; seven grandchildren, and 14 great grandchildren.
Gregory	Gerald Lee Gregory (80) of Baker City, Oregon, passed away from a heart attack on November 7, 2018. Gerald was elk hunting with his son-in-law, when he experienced some chest discomfort. After a triple bypass surgery at Saint Alphonsus Regional Medical Center in Boise, Idaho, Gerald had two more heart attacks, the second one was fatal. Gerald grew up in Sweet Home. Gerald was an Army Veteran, a woodworker, a gardener, a hunter, an artist, and a cowboy action shooter. Before retiring, Gerald worked as a Civil Engineering Technician for the Natural Resources Conservation Service. He is survived by his wife of 58 years Dorothy ; son Brian ; daughter Becky and son-in-law Bill Manix ; and two brothers. Online condolences may be shared at www.tamispinevalleyfuneralhome.com .
Hall	Gladston "G. H." Hall (90) of Auburn, Alabama passed away on July 28, 2018. G. H. was a retired hydrologist on the Alabama River Basin Staff. He retired with 33 years of Federal service with SCS. Other work experience included area engineer in Alabama Area 1 and Assistant State Engineer in New York. G. H. was a professional civil engineer and continued work as a pond designer after retirement from SCS. He received the Purple Heart and Silver Star for injuries received in the Korean War. G. H. was an ordained deacon in the Baptist Church and a member of the Gideon's.
Helms	John Douglas Helms (73) of Arlington, Virginia passed away on September 5, 2018, at the Virginia Hospital Center in Arlington, VA. Doug was born in Union County, NC. He was a 1967 graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a Bachelor of Arts in History. He continued his education at Florida State University, earning a Master of Arts Degree in 1970 as well as a Doctorate in American history in 1977. Following his education, Doug moved to the areas of Arlington, VA, and Washington, DC, where he worked at the Smithsonian Institute and at the National Archives. He later became employed with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service as Historian. At the time of his retirement, he had worked for more than 30 years with the department. He was the first Historian for NRCS. To see Doug's full obituary, see a "Bit of History" on page 5 in the ARCSE November/December 2018 newsletter.
Jaunzemis	Valda Jaunzemis (73) of Lincoln, Nebraska passed away on September 9, 2018. Born April 8, 1945 in Ravensburg, Germany, she came to the United States in 1950, with her mother and brother Janis . She graduated from Lincoln High School and took a job with the Mills Insurance Agency. For many years she was employed by the USDA Soil Conservation Service as a Cartographer at the Midwest Regional Cartographic Unit in Lincoln and later as an administrative assistance at the National Soil Survey Center, Lincoln. Valda was a member of the United Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church of Lincoln and life member of Daugavas Vangis Inc.
Johnson	Esther L. Johnson (68) of Decatur, Illinois departed this life on October 20, 2018 at Decatur Memorial Hospital. Esther was born in Fayette County, Tennessee. She united in holy matrimony to James B. Johnson, Jr. in 1971. James was a retired Soil Scientist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Esther received a Bachelor's Degree in Nursing from Millikin University, Decatur. She also completed a post master's program Family Nurse Practitioner at Mennonite College of Nursing Bloomington, 1997. She retired in 2012. Esther leaves to cherish her loving memories: her husband James B. Johnson of 47 years; a son and a daughter; two grandchildren, two sisters, and three brothers. Professional Services Entrusted to Walker Funeral Service. www.walkerfs.com .
Kauffman	Donald Glen Kauffman (86) of Ida Grove, Iowa passed away on October 22, 2018, at his residence in Ida Grove. Condolences may be sent online at www.christensenvanhouten.com . Don was born in Parnell, IA (Iowa County. He graduated from Wellman High School in 1950. Don went on to further his education at Iowa State College graduating in 1956. His college experience was interrupted by a two-year period in the U.S. Army, including serving overseas in Korea. Upon graduation Don taught Vocational Agriculture in Dunlap and Grundy Center, IA. While in Dunlap he met his future life

mate **Wanda Andersen**. After leaving teaching, Don joined the Soil Conservation Service in Rocky Ford, CO. He also worked in Holly, CO and Council Bluffs, IA, before being promoted to District Conservationist in Ida County in 1968, where he worked until his retirement in January of 1994. While employed, he started planting Christmas trees on their acreage and upon retirement started Grandpa's Christmas Tree Farm. Don and Wanda loved meeting and helping families celebrate a traditional Christmas for 14 years. Don loved trees and nature and was active in Trees Forever and was a Master Gardener. He was a charter member of the Ida Grove Ambulance squad for 18 years and an American Legion member. He was also a member of the First United Methodist Church. Don is survived by his wife of 62 years **Wanda Kauffman** of Ida Grove, IA; sons **Jeffrey Kauffman** of Cambridge, WI and **Craig Kauffman** of Shawnee, KS; seven treasured grandchildren, three sisters-in-law; four brothers-in-law; numerous nieces, nephews, extended family and friends.

Koerner	Senior Conservationist Robert Owen Charles Koerner ("Rock") (91) of Lincoln, Nebraska passed away on October 26, 2018. He passed peacefully at home surrounded by his family. Robert spent his career as a biologist with the Soil Conservation Service, retiring in 1988. His greatest joys in life were spending time with family, his faith community, photography and time outdoors. Robert was preceded in death by his wife Mary Ann and eight siblings. Robert is survived by his seven children, Paul (Jan) , Dan (Janet) , Colette (Bill Bohl) , Roberta (Ty Westover) , Patty (Dan Drozda) , Kathy (Dan Steinmeyer) , Tom (Shelley) , 21 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren. Memorials to the family for later designation.
Kover	Member Richard "Dick" William Kover (82) a resident of the Forest Grove, Oregon passed away on November 13, 2018 at the Tuality Community Hospital in Hillsboro. Dick was born in Inglewood, CA. Dick attended Cal Poly and received a Bachelor's Degree in Soil Science in 1958. He met his future wife, Delphine Kitch , while on summer break from college, Delphine and her family moved next door and they soon began dating. After living in several location in CA, Dick and family moved to Oregon settling in Beaverton in 1977. Upon his retirement in 1993 Dick and his wife moved to Forest Grove. Dick had worked all his life for USDA Soil Conservation Service. Having been a Soil Scientist he used his skills in California and Oregon. In his later years Dick was an Administrator in charge of fourteen western states and had to travel to each one. He retired in 1987. He enjoyed working puzzles and BBQ's. When he was in high school Dick belonged to the FFA and showed beef cattle. He is preceded in death by his parents and two siblings. He is survived by his loving wife of 66 years, Delphine , a daughter; Pamela "Pam" Kover of Aloha, three grandchildren, and two great grandchildren, and many nieces and nephews.
Lerch	Norbert Kay Lerch (90) of Hamilton, Ohio peacefully passed away on December 22, 2018 at UC West Chester Hospital in Liberty Township. He was born in Norwalk, Ohio. Norbert received a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture from the Ohio State University in 1950. He retired from USDA Soil Conservation Service after working for 35 years. He was a member of the National Association of Retired Federal Employees and a Member of The Nature Conservancy. He was a member of First Baptist Church of Hamilton and at one time served as a Deacon. He is survived by two nieces and a nephew. Norbert is preceded in death his wife of 52 years, Luella Lerch , two brothers, and a sister. Memorials may be made to the First Baptist Church of Hamilton or to the charity of one's choice. Condolences may be offered to the family by visiting www.avancefuneralhome.com .
Peteefish	David Michael Peteefish (67) of Plano, Texas passed away on December 8, 2018 of a sudden heart attack. He was born in Dallas, Texas. David graduated from McKinney High School and continued his education at SMU where he obtained his Master's Degree in Geology. He was the State Geologist in Texas with the Natural Resources Conservation Service. He enjoyed rock collecting, camping and had a love of history. David is survived by his loving wife of 37 years, Rose Marie Nagel Peteefish of Plano, Texas; son, William Peteefish of McKinney, Texas; a sister, two nieces, a nephew, and numerous other loving family and friends. Memorial donations may be made to the SPCA of North Texas or the Abandoned Pet Project .
Rich	Peggy Rich (80) of Protection, Kansas passed away on Wednesday, October 17, 2018. She is survived by her husband of 56 years, Billy J. Rich who retired from SCS in 2005 as a Soil Conservation Technician. Also surviving are four children, five grandchildren, and two sisters. Peggy received a bachelor's degree in home economics from Kansas State University in 1960. In lieu of flowers, memorials are suggested to Pat Rich Children in Need Fund (Protection First Baptist Church) in care of Hatfield-Prusa Funeral Home, P.O. Box 417, Coldwater, KS 67029.
Ross	Life Member Irvin F. Ross (90) of Pinellas Park, Florida passed away on October 2, 2018. A true gentleman, he is survived by his wife of 68 years, Betty Jo , and his loving family. Irvin retired in 1989 as a Management Analyst for the Soil Conservation Service, having previously served as a State Administrative Officer.
Roth	Life Member William "Bill" Edward Roth (84) of Salina, Kansas passed away November 8, 2018. Bill was born in Holyrood, Kan. He worked as a soil scientist for the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service for 40 years. Throughout that time he provided service in Dodge City, Kinsley, Larned, and Salina. His work even took him to Parkersburg, W.Va.; Lincoln, Neb.; and Washington D.C. In 2011, Bill received the ARCSE President's Award for Outstanding Community Service. He is survived by his wife of 62 years Deniece (Kohls) Roth , two daughters, Amy Swann (Larry) , of Charleston, W. Va.; Sara Rowe (Merle) , of Abilene; a son, Thomas Roth (Terri) of Clay Center; three sisters, a brother, six grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren. He is preceded in death by his sister, Donna Roth . Memorials may be made to Kindred Hospice or Lutheran Hour Ministries, sent in care of Carlson-Geisendorf Funeral Home, 500 S. Ohio Street, Salina, KS.
Stewart	Judy C. Stewart (63) of Beckley, West Virginia passed away on October 16, 2009 at the Roanoke Memorial Hospital in Roanoke, Virginia. She retired from the Natural Resources Conservation Service as the Area Clerk in the Beckley office. She was born in Jesse. She was a member of the Jordan Christian Fellowship in Sophia. She was preceded in death by one daughter Andrea Lynn Stewart . Survivors in addition to her parents include her husband Bob Stewart , two sons and four precious grandchildren, and several nieces and nephews.
Westerman	Lyle F. Westerman (93) of Lincoln, Nebraska passed away on September 10, 2018. He was born in DuBois, Nebraska. He retired as a Soil Conservation Technician with the Soil Conservation Service in April, 1984. He as a World War II Army veteran serving in Italy. Lyle was a member of Southern Heights Presbyterian Church, charter member VFW Post 4626, Lincoln, and member of American Legion Post 371, Valparaiso. Survivors: Wife Kathryn (Kay) Westerman , daughter Susan (Ken) Mayberry , York, NE., son David (Terri Tobias) Westerman Cooper Landing, Alaska, daughter Joan

Kennedy, Cypress, TX, son **Jim Westerman**, Rapid City, SD, seven grandchildren, three great grandchildren, a sister and a brother, nieces and nephews. Memorials in lieu of flowers to Southern Heights Presbyterian Church or Multiple Sclerosis Society. Condolences www.lincolnfh.com

Wilson

Russell Wilson (86) of Coalgate, Oklahoma passed away on December 19, 2018. He attended and graduated from Atoka Schools, and then attended Murray State. Russell worked for the USDA Soil Conservation Service, retiring after 30 years as a Soil Conservation Technician. He was born at Wardville, OK. Russell proudly served his country in the United States Navy, serving in the Korean War. Russell was a member of the Coalgate VFW, Penn & A Church of Christ. He loved to read & watch rodeos. He is survived by his wife of 54 years **Mary Judith Wilson** of the home, two sons, and two granddaughters. Russell was preceded in death by his parents, a sister, and two brothers. A link to the funeral home website: <http://www.brownfuneralserviceatokaok.com/obituary/russell-wilson>



**DEADLINE FOR
MARCH/APRIL 2019
NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS IS
FEBRUARY 25TH, 2019**