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# NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter for Retired SCS and NRCS Employees

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## NOTES FROM THE POTOMAC

**John Stierna**

**The Congress**—Before adjourning for this year, Congress passed an Omnibus Appropriation bill that provided funding for Federal departments and agencies through the rest of FY2016, a major tax bill, and a transportation bill.

Funding for NRCS included almost \$851 million for conservation operations, about a \$5 million increase from last year. Farm Bill “mandatory” funding for both the Conservation Stewardship Program and the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program were not capped by appropriators, but they placed a limit of \$1,329 million on the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, effectively a \$320 million cut from Farm Bill funding for EQIP financial and technical assistance. The Omnibus bill also provides \$12 million for the Watershed Rehabilitation Program and \$130 million for the Emergency Watershed Protection Program to address damage caused by flooding and other natural disasters. Having the funding situation completed for the year will better enable NRCS to administer conservation programs with greater certainty than in some previous years.

Congress also passed the tax extenders bill that covers many tax provisions, including the permanent extension of the enhanced tax incentive for donation of conservation easements. The provision is effective retroactively to the beginning of calendar 2015 when it had expired. This provision is a major benefit for helping achieve conservation easements on farmland, rangeland, and wetlands.

A five-year transportation bill was signed into law that included repealing the crop insurance funding cuts that had been in the bipartisan budget agreement enacted in November. House and Senate leadership had promised to reverse the crop insurance cuts earlier, and the transportation bill became the vehicle for doing that.

Despite efforts to include a policy rider blocking EPA’s Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule in the omnibus appropriation bill, that did not occur. However, the courts have put a hold on the rule until the merits of several lawsuits can be adjudicated.

**World Soils**—As the international year of soils comes to a close, a new report was issued on World Soils Day (December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015) by the United Nations’ FAO Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils (ITPS). The report calls for a number of actions to protect the ground beneath our feet from erosion and degradation. The report, called the first comprehensive assessment of global soil resources, is the collaborative effort of more than 200 scientists. It highlights serious concerns such as nutrient imbalance, erosion, and loss of soil organic carbon. The 22-page main report can be found at:

[https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=5&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwjf7I3FjvPJAhWlYyYKHC4HAcoQFgg3MAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fec.europa.eu%2Fjrc%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2F20151204-ies-launch\\_swsr.pdf&usg=AFQjCNEN1JWP1RU2Rx52jIK0qwqM0b02SA](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=5&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwjf7I3FjvPJAhWlYyYKHC4HAcoQFgg3MAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fec.europa.eu%2Fjrc%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2F20151204-ies-launch_swsr.pdf&usg=AFQjCNEN1JWP1RU2Rx52jIK0qwqM0b02SA)

It is an interesting report and well worth a read.

**New Soil Health Institute formed**—The Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation and the Farm Foundation are forming a Soil Health Institute to ensure that soil “continues to be a vital natural resource for generations to come.” The announcement celebrates the 2015 International Year of Soils. The organization will serve as the primary resource for soil health information, working to set soil health standards and measurement, build knowledge about the economics of soil health, offer educational programs, and coordinate research in all aspects of soil and soil health. This effort could be very helpful to NRCS and others seeking information on soil health.

**Butterflies**—NRCS is providing \$4 million in funding for conservation work to help agricultural producers provide food and habitat for monarch butterflies in the Midwest and southern Great Plains in a ten-state effort to combat the decline of the monarch species.

**Ogallala**—USDA announced assistance targeted at specific areas of the Ogallala Aquifer to help

farmers and ranchers conserve billions of gallons of water each year while also strengthening agricultural operations. This year the initiative covers parts of five states where there has been a decline in water resources associated with the aquifer. About \$8 million in additional funding is being provided to the initiative in FY 2016.

**Conservation Stewardship Program**—NRCS Chief **Jason Weller** has delayed the launch date for revisions to the CSP program until October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016. The revisions are intended to make it easier for customers to understand and use CSP, and also enhance the linkage with NRCS's conservation planning process and benefits available through the program. The delay provides added time to field test the new tools and ensure that field staff are prepared to better serve customers and work effectively with partners.

**CRP**—USDA celebrated the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Conservation Reserve Program in December. While CRP started off very modestly, it turned out to have had a significant impact on environmentally fragile lands. Some highlights from USDA include:

- ✓ Since it was established on Dec. 23, 1985, CRP has:
  - Prevented more than 9 billion tons of soil from eroding, enough soil to fill 600 million dump trucks;
  - Reduced nitrogen and phosphorous runoff relative to annually tilled cropland by 95 and 85 percent respectively;
  - Sequestered an annual average of 49 million tons of greenhouse gases, equal to taking 9 million cars off the road.
- ✓ Since 1996, CRP has created nearly 2.7 million acres of restored wetlands.

**USDA Program Survey**—The Farm Bureau is undertaking a survey of farmers and ranchers about their experiences with ten USDA programs administered by NRCS, FSA, and RD. The intent of the survey is to develop recommendations on how USDA can improve the programs and make them more useful to agricultural producers. The programs covered by the survey include

- Environmental Quality Incentives Program;
- Conservation Stewardship Program;
- Conservation Reserve Program;
- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program;
- Value-Added Agricultural Producer Grants;
- Rural Energy for America Program;
- Farmers' Marketing and Local Food Promotion Program;
- Direct Farm Ownership Loans;
- Direct Farm Operating Loans; and
- Guaranteed Farm Loans (farm operating and farm ownership).

The online survey is open to all farmers and ranchers, not just Farm Bureau members. The survey can be taken now through March 15<sup>th</sup> at <http://usdaprograms.questionpro.com/>.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

**Cecil Currin**

Christmas lights and displays have been up in Walmart and Home Depot since Halloween, and now the season is really here. Somewhere in between was Thanksgiving. For me, this is the season to be thankful for all the many blessings of life. We can all be thankful that we had a career in conservation. Except for my early years on the farm, most of my life has been dedicated to natural resources. It was a life-changing day in May of 1965 when Soil Conservation Service officials came to the NC State campus recruiting engineers. I was ready to begin a life in farm machinery design when I abruptly changed my mind and signed on with SCS. I have never regretted that decision.

A short prayer in the Episcopalian Book of Common Prayer goes like this, "Let us pray to the Lord for the good earth that God has given us and the wisdom and will to conserve it." Maybe H.H. Bennett helped write that one? As conservationists, we are in a great position to understand those words and the continuing need for stewardship of our natural resources. With global warming and climate change upon us, we can be part of the solution.

At this holiday season, I offer my wish for peace on earth and good will to everyone. Happy Holidays!

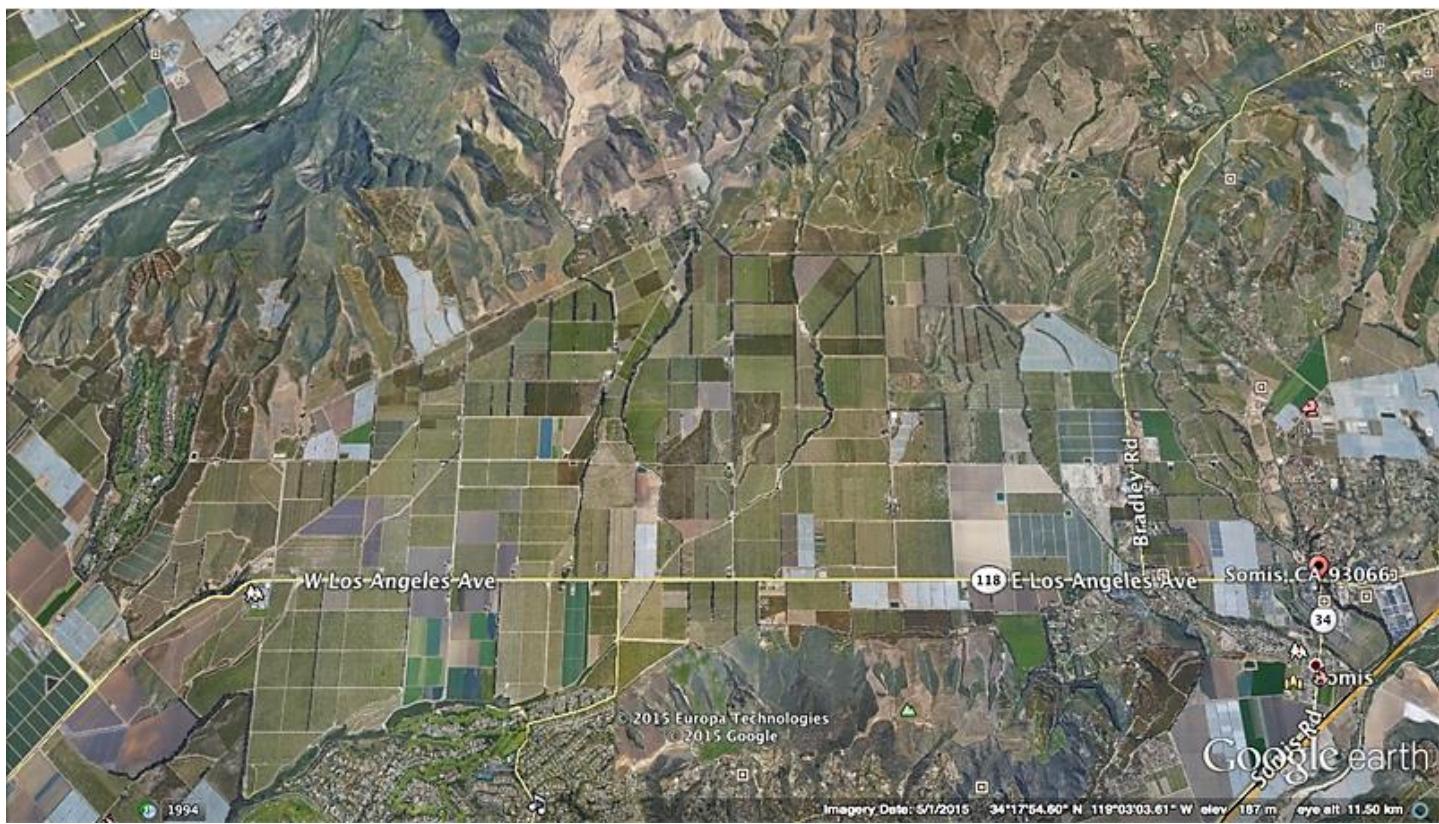
## A BIT OF HISTORY

**Douglas Helms, Historian**

Email: [douglas\\_helms@verizon.net](mailto:douglas_helms@verizon.net)

### **A Retrospective: The Las Posas Demonstration Project**

When **Hugh Hammond Bennett** became Director of the Soil Erosion Service (SES) in September 1933, he had at his disposal \$5,000,000 for "soil erosion prevention" work. At first, Bennett established watershed-based demonstration projects near the soil erosion experiment stations, where lessons learned in research could be used in working with farmers on soil and water conservation measures. As more funds became available, Bennett established additional projects. This past October, **Doug Toews** of Santa Barbara, CA, and I visited the project established February 24<sup>th</sup>, 1934, in Las Posas, Ventura County, CA. Toews retired as the National Water Management Engineer, but early in his career he worked in the valley as an Irrigation Engineer in the private sector, and with the SCS/NRCS as Field Office Engineer, Area Engineer, and Project Engineer on the Beardsley Watershed.



The watershed is defined by the Camarillo Hills and Las Posas Hills to the south, and the Santa Susana Mountains to the north. It is one of the larger tributary valleys of the Oxnard Plain. The watershed presented two problems: the steep land to the north had been severely overgrazed, and the land dropped sharply from 2,500 feet to the 300-foot plain to the south. When heavy rainfall arrived, the rushing water carved narrow, deep barrancas into the fertile orchard land on the alluvial plain. Some of the barrancas were 20 to 60 feet deep. Some had 200-foot wide floors. The SES had built large grade control structures that are still in place, though barely visible from the road. During the tour Toews commented, "Now I understand why we at the Somis Field Office (now the Oxnard Field Office) did not do much erosion control work here. The grade stabilization structures had done their job, and are still doing the job. This closes the circle of understanding for me."

Today Las Posas remains a valuable agricultural area, due at least in part to the work of the Soil Erosion Service eighty years ago.

## Request for Personal Stories about Hugh Hammond Bennett

by Jon Vrana

I am currently researching the person and the public and private life of **Dr. Hugh Hammond Bennett**, the Father of Soil Conservation. While much has been written about his public life, I am particularly interested in the more personal side of the man. To develop this comprehensive biography of Big Hugh's life, I am looking for stories, photographs, videos, memorabilia, artifacts, and other information. If you have personal stories that you would be willing to share with me, please let me know. Perhaps you worked with him, or he came out to visit your office. Perhaps you didn't meet Hugh in person, but you "experienced" life under Hugh, or you met Mrs. Bennett. I am interested in talking with you and collecting your stories and recollections, including oral histories.

Thank you. Jon Vrana

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## NEW MEMBERS

By Ron Marlow, Secretary Treasurer

Flentie, Larry	CO	Shelman, Meleia	IA
Snover, Scott	CO	Sears, Wilbur	MI
White, Lee	IA	Hawkins, Hubert	NC
Martin, Rodney	IA	Godley, Charlie	NC
Hammitt, Larry	IA		

## Dues and Contributions for 2016

By Ron Marlow, Secretary Treasurer

### FY 2016 Contributions (Beginning July 1, 2015)

The response has been excellent to the newsletter and suggestion in the dues notice for those receiving hard copies of the newsletter to make at least a \$12 donation, in addition to regular dues. We sent out 325 hard copies of the last newsletter. Those receiving hard copies have contributed \$1,572. This includes 53 who have made the \$12 donation and another 11 who have made an even higher donation, including six life members who have contributed \$100 or more. Another 20 have changed to e-news. That's a total of 84 positive responses from those who have been receiving a hard copy. The Board looks forward to others adding to this number.

Contributions from those receiving electronic copies of the newsletter have also been good, with 59 members contributing \$1,184.

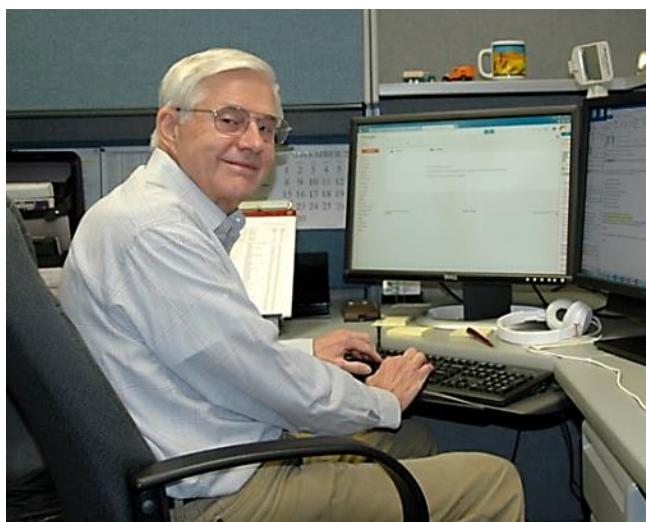
### 2016 Dues

216 members have not paid their 2016 dues, which were due January 1, 2016. Those who have not paid their 2016 dues by January 15 will receive an email reminder. After January 31, post card reminders will be sent to those who have not paid.

## Spotlight on Earth Team Volunteer

**Dorlene Butler, Regional Public Affairs Specialist**  
**Public Affairs Division, USDA-NRCS, Fort Worth, TX**  
[dorlene.butler@ftw.usda.gov](mailto:dorlene.butler@ftw.usda.gov)

Retiring after more than 50 years with NRCS and the Soil Conservation Service (SCS), **Doug Seibel** took less than a month off before he returned as an Earth Team volunteer.



**He's back! Retired NRCS engineer Doug Seibel returns as Earth Team volunteer**

Doug volunteers his assistance to the agency's Oversight & Evaluation (O&E) Team in Fort Worth, TX, the team he worked on from 1995 until he retired in 2014. When asked the difference between volunteering and working the same job, Doug replied: "Your time is more your own."

Doug reviews conservation contracts to ensure that they meet all technical and program requirements. He participates in the design and completion of O&E's reviews of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program's (EQIP) Allocation Formula, operations management and off-site EQIP Reviews.

His experience as an agricultural engineer proves invaluable to O&E. "His experience and input allows the team to make informed decisions based on lessons learned," said **Teresah Caire**, acting O&E Team Leader.

In 1966, Doug started work with SCS (the former NRCS) in Colby, KS, after graduating as an agricultural engineer from Kansas State University. Three months later, he was drafted into the Army. During his tour in Vietnam, Doug served in the engineering battalion of an operations office, conducted surveys and scheduled construction.

After his tour of duty, Doug returned to Kansas SCS, serving in several positions and locations before moving to Illinois and then Missouri to become an assistant state engineer. He next served as the Iowa State Engineer before moving to the National Technology Center in Fort Worth. Doug and his wife **Jane**, who is also retired, live in Fort Worth.

## ARIZONA

**Karl Klingelhofer, ARCSE Representative**  
**Email: [krklingel@aol.com](mailto:krklingel@aol.com)**

Karl is retiring as ARCSE Representative. **Ken Cookson** will be the new AZ representative.

**Ken and Connie Cookson, Tucson**, were recently in Arthur, IL to celebrate an early Christmas with their family. They have been doing this for several years and always look forward to this special time. Their son and wife live in the area and a daughter and husband travel from Gaithersburg, MD. Ken's brother and sister-in-law are the gracious hosts for their time together. This year was a little different as the temperatures in Illinois were greater than in Arizona.

**Galen Bridge, Tucson.** Greetings from Bridge house. I hope you were all good and consequently had a great holiday season. Two thousand and fifteen has just run its course, and I begin my twenty second year of retirement. What a grand time much of that has been. This past summer I did a driving trip from Seattle to Washington, DC up to Maine and on to Quebec City. After the drive home and a few days of rest, we went on to Victoria and Vancouver, British Columbia. Canada is a fun safe place to travel with great cities and extensive natural beauty. Plans are to travel Europe during the next year.

Many of us lost a truly great friend with the death of **Gracie Richards** a few weeks ago. She was a special person, and she and Bill were a great team. I marvel at the positive impact that they had on SCS during a fairly brief span of time. I am honored to have known her. If our plans hold together, Bill will visit me in Arizona.

**Marion Strong, Mesa.** I don't have a trip to report on. I do, however, have some good neighbors and friends who assist me with tasks I can no longer perform. My neighbor across the street takes care of my yard (I talked with Marion by phone and his son from Seattle is visiting him for Christmas).

**Karl Klingelhofer, Tucson.** I am in CA for Christmas visiting son and family. My other son from Maine visited me two weeks ago, and it was colder in Tucson than Maine. My family is scattered across the country with no one closer than 400 miles. I went to Santa Fe for Thanksgiving, and that grandson has his own plane and flew to Tucson and took me back in 1.7 hours, a little faster than driving. I have said that this would be my last report and I am pleased to announce that Ken Cookson has agreed to take on the job. I am sure he will do a better job than I and he should be complemented on being willing to take on this job. It does take some time.

**Bill Fobair, Cottonwood.** He and his family send Holiday Greetings. Christmas Eve will be shared with Joyce and Bill's youngest son (Ralph) and daughter in law (Carol). They will enjoy dinner together and exchange gifts. Christmas Day they will attend a brunch with 22 family members.



*Holiday Greetings from the Fobair Family*

## CALIFORNIA

**Bill Ward, ARCSE Representative**

**Email:** [bluegrassbillward@gmail.com](mailto:bluegrassbillward@gmail.com)

Hello to all our fellow SCS/NRCS retirees across the country! We continue to meet monthly for both a breakfast and lunch get together for all retirees who can make it. Those who made it to our December 2<sup>nd</sup> lunch included **Shirley Leeper, Pat Grover, Walt Sykes, Ron and Carolyn Schultz, Helen Flach, Harold Honeyfield, and Bill Ward**.

**Harold Honeyfield** announced that his family has planned a special birthday celebration for him (his 85<sup>th</sup>!) on December 28<sup>th</sup> to be held in Woodland, CA. He will have family coming from New Mexico and Texas and, of course, many of our California retirees and some current NRCS staff are looking forward to being part of this. We look forward to sharing an update with pictures from that event in the next newsletter.

The Holidays are always a good excuse to touch bases and update all our friends on what is new. Here is just such a message we received from **Wil Fontenot**, now residing in Louisiana, that we are passing on to his retiree friends from other locations he worked in his career. *"Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! You all contributed to a very special time in my family, our 11 years in Davis, CA. Then Jo Lynn and I had the eight years after retirement when we split time between CA and LA. I am grateful for these memories and look forward to visiting in the future."*

**Gary Bullard** had a hip replacement procedure November 1<sup>st</sup> and has experienced serious complications related to infections, resulting in multiple operations. In early December he was allowed to go home but with only a "partial or incomplete" replacement and very limited physical ability with that leg.

He is expected to be in his current situation for four to six weeks until they are certain he is over any part of the infection he has experienced. Only then will they attempt to complete the final hip replacement operation. Both **Gary** and his wife **Linda** appreciate any prayers for improvement in his condition. They would also appreciate any e-mail communication, and messages can be sent to: [gibullard@comcast.net](mailto:gibullard@comcast.net).



*Fishing at Crane Prairie Res in Oregon*



*Bill and Dana Ward on the Washington North Coast*

My wife, **Dana** and I enjoyed a wonderful two-week vacation to the Pacific Northwest in October enjoying our travels through Oregon, exploring Olympic National Park and the surrounding area. I got some fishing in and we spent quality time with friends and family we have in both Oregon and Washington. The rainfall in rainforests in Olympic National Park is in the range of 140 inches per year, and the vegetative growth is spectacular. We enjoyed time on the rugged north coast beaches as well. We put together a slide show of our best pictures on Youtube to some of our band's music that can be viewed at the following internet link

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gjsJpsQh5m4>, Bill and Dana's Vacation, Bend OR, Olympic NP Oct 2015.

For the few who may not have access to the internet I have included a handful of those pictures with this report.



*Hoh Rain forest in Olympic National Park*



*Hoh Rain forest in Olympic NP*



*Sol Duc Forest in Olympic National Park*



*Sol Duc Falls in Olympic National Park*

That is all from the California retirees this time around. Best wishes and Happy New year to all our fellow retirees across the country!

## COLORADO

**Ivan Wilkinson, ARCSE Representative**

Email: [giwilk@estesvalley.net](mailto:giwilk@estesvalley.net)

In late November **Ginger** and I took a Peru Walking Tour sponsored by Vermont Biking Tours. One of the highlights was taking a train from Ollantaytambo Town in the Sacred Valley, following the Urubamba River, where we were dropped off to begin an eight-mile hike along the Inca Trail. This brought us to the "Sun Gate" which overlooks the ruins of Machu Picchu. Machu Picchu was never discovered by the Spaniards. For centuries it was buried in the jungle until **Hiram Bingham** found it in 1911. The Holy city of Machu Picchu was built in stone among the flanks of two hills belonging to the eastern mountain range of the Andes. It was an enjoyable and impressive vacation.



*Ivan and Ginger Wilkinson at Machu Picchu*



*From left to right: Wendall Oaks, Larry Holzworth, Wendall Hassell, Fred Gaffney, Curtis Sharp, Bob MacLauchlan, and Jack Carlson in front of Mt. St. Helens*

The following was sent by **Jack Carlson**.

The 8<sup>th</sup> annual Love of Grass botanizing trek convened June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015 at Spokane, Washington again involving the usual band of suspects: SCS/NRCS retirees **Curtis Sharp** (WV), **Bob MacLauchlan** (NE), **Wendell Hassell** (CO), **Fred Gaffney** (NY), **Larry Holzworth** (MT), **Jack Carlson** (CO), and **Wendall Oaks** (CO). The route took them to Steptoe Butte, Pullman Plant Materials Center, Wawawai Landing, Palouse Falls, Horse Heaven Hills, down the Columbia River, and with 109 degrees at The Dalles a detour into the Cascades to Mt. St. Helens and Mt. Rainier before back into the heat in the Columbia Basin--to Grand Coulee, Murphy Creek, and on to Spokane, completing the loop on the 30<sup>th</sup>. Although many grasses and wildflowers were a bit crispy, the somewhat desiccated botanizers were able to compile and develop a reasonably full report, posted to [www.conservationplantsblog.com](http://www.conservationplantsblog.com), where readers can check out the plants and other items of interest encountered during the trek. The 9<sup>th</sup> trek convenes at Salt Lake City a little earlier next time (spring 2016) to explore the shrub and grassland communities on and around the old Pleistocene Lake Bonneville in northern Utah, Nevada, and southern Idaho.

## IOWA

**Mark Jensen, ARCSE Representative**

Email: [amjens1@gmail.com](mailto:amjens1@gmail.com)

Our annual Christmas party was held on November 12<sup>th</sup> at the Machine Shed Restaurant in Urbandale. Forty-one retirees enjoyed a good meal of potatoes, vegetables, salad, pot roast, and stuffed pork chops. **Jack Sarasio and Margaret Dysart** were the "big" winners of door prizes consisting of \$25 gift certificates to the Machine Shed. Those in attendance included: **Rod Martin and Margaret Dysart** from Johnston; **Ronald and Jo Elyn Hersom** from Marshalltown; **Gerald and Marion Stevens and Russ and Donna Knutson** from Boone; **Lew and Connie Brent** from Knoxville; **Janet Schmidt** from Nevada; **David and Kay Breitbach, Chuck and Phyllis Fisher, and Eldon and Jeannie Weber** from Ames; **Volney Smith and Kathy Smith** from Waukee; **Jim Ayen and Duane and Mary Jo Miller** from Urbandale; **Brian Peterson** from Corning; **Lee and Alice White, Joe Ausan, Dennis Peterson and Herb Wilson** from Ankeny; **Jack and Maralee Sarasio** from Des Moines; **Ken and Marge Meyer** from Denison; **Lyle and Charlotte Asell** from Chariton; **Art and Mary Jane Bryant** from Indianola; **Don Redman** from Van Wert; **Don and Kay Peterson and Ann and Mark Jensen** from West Des Moines. It was a good time for re-connecting with old friends, telling stories, and socializing. **Herb Wilson** announced that our summer event this year is tentatively scheduled for June 23<sup>rd</sup> in Nevada, Iowa. Mark that on your calendars!



**Ken and Marge Meyer, Art and Mary Jane Bryant**



**Don Redman, Joe Ausan, Herb Wilson, Dennis Peterson**



**Duane Miller, Donna and Russ Knutson**



**Charlotte Asell, Alice and Lee White, Jim Ayen**



Kathy Smith, Volney Smith, Lyle Asell



Ann Jensen, Kay Peterson, Charlotte Asell



Phyllis Fisher, Margaret Dysart, Maralee and Jack Sarasio, Janet Schmidt



Don Peterson, Brian Peterson, Lyle Asell



Chuck and Phyllis Fisher, Margaret Dysart



Gerald and Marion Stevens, Kay Breitbach



Herb Wilson, Dennis Peterson, Rod Martin



Eldon and Jeannie Weber



Connie and Lew Brent



Kay and David Breitbach, Ken and Marge Meyer



Kathy Smith, Volney Smith, Lyle and Charlotte Asell, Alice and Lee White, Jim Ayen



Jo Elyn and Ronald Herson

The Ames retiree coffee group met at the west HyVee on Lincoln Way on November 4<sup>th</sup>. The group meets every other Wednesday. You may contact either **Sam Shreve** or **Robin Wisner** to get details if you would like to meet up with them some Wednesday.



The Ames Coffee Group, seated from left to right: ISU Agronomy Professor Tom Fenton, Robin Wisner, Herb Wilson, Sterling (Sam) Shreve, Eldon Weber, Dave Braitbach, and Roger Greenough

Thank you to **Dick Hall** for providing the following: "Marian and I celebrated our 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in July with a family gathering in Sioux City. All but one of 42 family members attended, including our children, grandkids and great grandkids. Marian and I are still in pretty good health. I continue to do safety inspections on earthfill dams for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and just completed 28 inspections and reports for the past year. We did get in a short vacation to Branson, MO last month with a side visit to our daughter and her family in Oklahoma City. I am still officiating track and cross country meets and was recognized as the Honorary Referee for the Sioux City Relays last spring. The Sioux City Relays is a good-sized meet of 30-35 colleges and 32-35 high schools in April every year. I was also honored just last week as the Regional track official of the year for Northwest Iowa. Now that I am past 80, I keep thinking that it is about time to slow down but am obligated for several track and cross country meets for next spring and fall. I'm trying to stay active so that I don't feel OLD. I got together with 11-12 retirees from Area 4 at Crescent on Wednesday, December 9<sup>th</sup>. As a former Area 4 type, they invite me down when they get together, which is a somewhat irregular 2-3 times a year at Henry's Diner in Crescent. **Norm Koester** normally sets the date and gets us together. Besides Norm and **Marion Plumb**, **Volney Smith** also attended this past week, plus several others. "

A couple of months ago **Ann** and I took a little trip to northern Minnesota and the Upper Peninsula (UP) in Michigan. We enjoy spending time in Duluth. One of the highlights included walking on the boardwalk and watching some of the shipping activities. Staff and volunteers from the Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory were conducting their annual count of migrating birds in the bluffs in Duluth. They welcomed people visiting their observation area. We stayed there for a while watching the activity. At the time we were there, a lot of sharp-shinned hawks passed through. From there we headed to another favorite area, the Porcupine

Mountains in the Upper Peninsula. We did some hiking, spent time along the lake, and enjoyed the scenery. We came home through Wisconsin, stopped at a few cheese factories, and stocked our coolers with more cheese than we needed!

During the past couple of months we have been saddened to learn of the passing of three of our retiree family. **Jerome Koster**, former District Conservationist in southwest Iowa, passed away on November 6<sup>th</sup>. **Mark Clause**, husband of **Judy (Rathel) Clause**, passed away on September 25<sup>th</sup>. Judy was the Area Clerk in Sioux City. **Richard Spangler**, husband of the late **Connie Spangler**, passed away on November 7<sup>th</sup>. Connie worked in the personnel section in the state office from the early 70s to the early 90s.

## KANSAS

**Deanne Lull, ARCSE Representative**

Email: [rlull2@cox.net](mailto:rlull2@cox.net)

Although the Christmas tree is trimmed, the decorations hung, and it is looking like Christmas, it sure doesn't feel like it. I did all my Christmas shopping in shirt sleeves or a light jacket. It appears that in our neck of the woods we will not be having a white Christmas.

Congratulations are sent to **Charles Foster** who turned 95 on November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015. **Charles** spent many years as the district conservationist in the field office at Washington, Kansas.

A number of our retirees remain active in the agriculture picture. **Kenneth Van Cleave** reported that 2014 was the best crop yield that the family farm ever raised. Corn produced 165 bushels per acre. **Baron Shively** still manages 400 acres of family rangeland in Ellsworth County. He is also serving on the McPherson County Conservation District board. **Ron Rader** has an Angus cow herd to care for and puts up hay. **Gary Kelley** spends a lot of time at the farm. A tenant does the serious farming while **Gary** looks after the Johnson grass and the armadillos. **Eldon Schwant** works with the ACES Program 20 hours a week. He helps check watershed dams and helps stake terraces. He enjoys going to his half section of land near Wheaton where there are native meadows, CRP and rangeland. **Jim Scott** seems to be married to the Scott family farm that has been in the family since 1872. Beef cattle and quarter horses are his major enterprises.

One retiree, **Leland C. "Lee" Whaley**, passed away on November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015. **Lee** worked most of his career as a soil conservation technician in the Brown, Miami, Douglas, and Franklin County field offices. He is survived by his wife, **Elizabeth "Ann"**.

**Ralph E. Churchman**, passed away on October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015. **Ralph** was the spouse of **Karen Churchman** who served a number of years in the Kansas State Office as the Secretary for the State Conservationist.

## KENTUCKY

**Vacant, ARCSE Representative**

**Billye Haslett** has resigned as the KY ARCSE Representative, so we are looking for a replacement. She sent this note:

The warm December weather we've experienced in KY has us all spoiled. We wonder what January and February weather will bring us. We always hear: "We're going to pay for this," meaning our good fortune so far. We certainly hope not! Wishing you and yours a wonderful new year. Let it snow somewhere else!

**Herbert (Herb) Davis**, Supervisory Natural Resources Manager (SNRM), 2150 Red Hill Rd., Dunnville, KY; email: [herbdavis3@windstream.net](mailto:herbdavis3@windstream.net), Phone 606-787-2069. Retired from the Lebanon Field Office, Marion Co., KY as of 01/03/16.

**Charles (Charlie) Farmer**, Supervisory Natural Resources Manager (SNRM), Lexington, KY effective 01/16. Charlie has 37 years of service and lives between Paris and Lexington, KY. He operates a daylily farm, with his wife Lisa. 2231 Houston Antioch Rd., Lexington, KY 40516; Phone 859-293-0350.

**Gary Lillard**, Natural Resources Planner, effective 12/31/15. 1270 South Pruitt Rd., Franklin, KY 42134, 270-776-1276.

**Tommy Pendley**, Civil Engineering Technician, (CET) retired 08/31/11 but was only recently added to the retiree list. 227 Jacklin Dr., Madisonville, KY 42431, 270-875-3671, Email [tpendley@bellsouth.net](mailto:tpendley@bellsouth.net).

**Gary Reckner**, ASTC/FO Madisonville Area Office, effective 01/02/16, 383 Collins Rd. Sebree, KY 42455, [RecknerFamily@gmail.com](mailto:RecknerFamily@gmail.com).

In Memory: **James (Jim) Fehr**, Retired Soil Scientist, age 84 passed away December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2014 in Winchester, KY.

On a sad note, **Gary Reckner** has advised us that **Jerry and Jackie Joiner's son James** passed away in Florida this past week. A memorial is scheduled for Sunday (Dec. 27<sup>th</sup>) at 2pm at Grace United Methodist Church in Gainesville, FL. Graveside service on Tuesday at 11am at Yeaman Church of Christ, Yeaman, KY. Jerry and Jackie will be bringing James from Gainesville, Florida to Kentucky on Monday.

## LOUISIANA

**Joseph Branco, ARCSE Representative**

Email: [jandmbranc@aol.com](mailto:jandmbranc@aol.com)

The 21<sup>st</sup> Louisiana SCS-NRCS retirees' luncheon was held at the Piccadilly Cafeteria in Alexandria. The gathering started at 10am. Everyone enjoyed drinking coffee and visiting with old work friends.

There were 43 retirees and guests in attendance: **Horace and Flora Austin, Joe and Marge Branco, Thomas Campbell, Jerry and Janie Dagile, Charles Guillory, Harry and Dee Hawthorne, Aaron Hinkston, Dozier and Winnie Harrell, Max Johnston, Sybil Ray, Marlin and Patricia Jordan, Benny and Delores Landreneau, Ron and Leslie Marcantel, Wayne Melancon, Donald Menard, Paul and Sandra Miletello, Kent and Sonie Milton, Billy Moore, Ken Mixon, Kevin Norton, Marilyn Rabalais, M.Dale and Sylvia Rockett, Arville and Annie Touchet, Ronnie Venson, Paul Wallace, and Jimmy Winston.**

Several members sent letters and phone calls expressing thanks for the invitation and expressing regrets they could not be with us. Letters and or calls were received from **Carl Thompson, Pat Cecil, Gene Simmons, Francis Artley, Robbie Loe, and Valine Collard.**

**Max Johnston** gave a report on current retirees' activities around the state. He reported that two retirees had passed away in the past year: **James Loe**, Area Conservationist in Monroe; and **Don Lawrense**, retired NRCS state forester from Jena.

**Kevin Norton**, STC for NRCS gave a report on programs around the state and said that personnel are very busy carrying out their responsibilities.

An open discussion was held on our health insurance open season, Nov. 10<sup>th</sup> to Dec. 8<sup>th</sup>. Many expressed concern that very little printed information is being mailed out. One individual stated that OPM is hard to get by phone. The best information is by computer, and several expressed concern about their computer knowledge to get the information.

## MAINE

**John Simon, ARCSE Representative**

Email: [balnengr@tds.net](mailto:balnengr@tds.net)

NOVEMBER: The Tuesday breakfast (the 10<sup>th</sup>) at Dysarts was attended by **Art Taylor, Bruce Champeon, and John Simon**, the "three musketeers" if you will. We were joined at the table by five other men with whom we bantered back and forth. Great fun. One guy remembered the Amish family style meals at restaurants in the Lancaster County, PA area. **Noreen, Peter**, and I would often go down on weekends to enjoy the Amish food and culture when we lived in the Harrisburg area (1969-1980).

We were all feeling OK considering our age! I started on acupuncture treatments recently. The treatments are painless but the effects are kind of subtle in their effect but defiantly obvious. So far it is going fine. If any of you have tried it, you understand.

I have a couple of great "Youtube" videos I would recommend to all those who still have a love for the soil.

#1 is by **Ray Archuleta** on "soil health principles." A wonderful treatment similar to the soils course I had in college from **Prof. Structemeyer** at U. of Maine. Only now I appreciate it much, much more. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9uMPuF5oCPA>

#2 is by **Gabe Brown** on "no-till." Just great stuff.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9yPjoh9YJMK>

I pray that you all had a great Veterans Day. We owe so much to those who served, especially those in combat. The physical and psychological damage was severe in many cases. God bless them all, and to all other veterans on this email list. Several, **John Malley** (Navy) and **John Ferwerda** (Army) come to mind.

Also I hope all of you had a wonderful Thanksgiving. I hope you enjoyed your families and friends. We have so much to be thankful for; but if you watch the news, we have a long way to go to achieve a peaceful world.

**Noreen** and I spent the Thanksgiving week in Montclair with our son and his family. We traveled down on bus from Bangor, ME to South Station in Boston and then down to Newark, NJ on Amtrak. The train is actually more comfortable than the bus. The Newark, NJ station is about 10 miles from Montclair. The grandkids are nine and seven and are fun to be around. We all went to a morning show that **Eliza**'s school class put on. It was a blast. That afternoon **Pete** and I went to a holiday demonstration by **Beckett**'s karate class. Beckett is a blue belt at the present time. We were pooped when we got back to Maine from our weeklong trip but the memories are priceless!

DECEMBER: The Tuesday's (the 8<sup>th</sup>) breakfast at Dysarts was attended by six retirees: **Art Taylor, Bruce Champeon, Charlie Boothby, Joe Bertolaccini, Ray Voyer, and John Simon**. Charlie reported that his apple tree harvest had apples that were brown inside and not usable. Obviously he will look into this over the winter. Charlie is interested in installing a heat pump into the supply side of his existing hot air heating system and could find no one who handled such a retrofit. However, **Ray Voyer** informed Charlie that he, in fact, has such a system and gave him the name of the outfit to call in the local area.

Just a note on my own ongoing use of a mini-split in my home. Last year at a cost of \$3.549/gal and electricity at \$0.17758/kWh the mini-split was 2.48 times as efficient as oil. This year with oil at \$2.129/gal and electricity still at \$0.17758/kWh the mini-split is 4.13 times as efficient as oil. I guess I will leave the unit on all winter, same as last year.

**Art Taylor** is finished with his primer coat on his new home. All his electric circuits are in, but most are not hooked up to his main entrance panel. Art has obtained quite a few quotes on mini-splits for heating and cooling his house, and there was quite a range in price; so if you are in the market it pays to shop around. I think Dave's, in Dover Foxcroft, was the cheaper of the bids.

I changed my health insurance from self and family to Self plus One. I saved only \$9 per month on my program, but looking at the chart in the NARFE magazine, some other plans are much cheaper. I did it over the internet. I found the site easy to use and fast. Tried calling first and was told I had a 35-minute wait so I went back to the web site. Hope all of you took advantage of the new Self+One option.

**Joe Bertolaccini** indicated that he will get an operation on his right wrist for carpal tunnel soon. Good luck Joe, hope everything turns out OK. **Bruce Champeon** is feeling well but he said that his wife **Pat**'s condition is pretty much the same.

**Tom Smith** sent the following message for those who know him. "Our middle son **Scott** and his wife **Sarah** have just informed us that they are expecting their first child. Our other three children and spouses have blessed us with five grandchildren to date. We're glad too that they all live in the Portland area.

I have taken on being treasurer of an 'Early Music' singing and instrumental group. They just wrapped up singing their Christmas concert at three churches in the area. I sang in three 'Magic of Christmas' performances with the Portland Symphony Orchestra last weekend. There were plans for me to sing six performances this weekend. That won't now happen.

Thursday morning heading to Saco to do some bookkeeping, I slipped on our ice-coated steps and ended up on my back on the walkway three steps down. **Connie** took me into emergency at Maine Med since I couldn't stand on my right leg. After a few hours in Emergency, they sent me home with a plaster of Paris cast on my foot and lower leg. I had broken my tibia bone just above the ankle. Bone still in place. I have very little discomfort at the break site. Over-the-counter meds are taking care of most pain. Monday I see the Orthopedist. Hope that all that is needed will be a walking cast. Moving two hundred thirty pounds on one leg and crutches keeps me from going very far. But I can sit at a computer and bang away." All of us co-workers of Tom's wish Tom a speedy and full recovery!

**Ray Voyer** filled us in on the trip he and his wife took to Turkey this fall to visit his son who is in the Air Force and stationed at an air base there. Ray and wife also visited Italy and found it quite interesting. The flights were long, but Ray said they treated them great on these intercontinental flights.

Wishing all of you a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays and pray that your families are all in good spirits.

## MASSACHUSETTS

**Jim Wesoloski, ARCSE Representative**

**Email:** [Jim.wesoloski@gmail.com](mailto:Jim.wesoloski@gmail.com)

'Tis the night before Christmas as I pen this report. Even though our newsletter editor gives me weeks of warning before the deadline, I still seem to function best under last minute pressure. We maxed out at 66 degrees today, so how was I to know that the Christmas deadline was tomorrow? And besides, my group of retirees hasn't been too efficient at providing me with newsworthy items the last few months so you can't blame me for missing the deadline on the last few issues. But I promise to try to do better in 2016. Most of my news items this month come from Christmas cards and letters so I'm hoping you don't mind some assorted snippets.

**Don and Jane Buckloh** recently returned from a month-stay in Paris. They arrived in France just before the terrorist attacks and were awakened with scads of anxious emails from friends enquiring about their welfare. It wasn't until they turned on the TV that they learned of the attacks which occurred quite some kilometers from their apartment. Don reports that Paris was quite devoid of tourists, so the **Bucklohs** and the Parisians had the city to themselves until 60,000 visitors descended for the climate change meeting. When not in Paris, Don keeps busy with a three-day-a-week stint at the American Farmland Trust in Northampton, MA where he is in his 18<sup>th</sup> year with the organization.

**Nancy and Fred Sheard** are taking an extended snow-birding trip to South Carolina and the Florida Keys. **Dot McDougal** tells us that **Luther** is still gathering and splitting wood to keep them warm in the cold New Mexico winter. She can't figure out how they got old; sometimes that bothers me too--I never planned to get old.

**Frank Resides** is still tending bees with his grandson. **Frank** just got a new Ford F-250 pickup. Have you seen the sticker price on one of those? But like **Frank** says: "Who cares? I only need one." **Carl Gustafson** is working on engineering for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regional office in Hadley. He's working on coastal restoration projects in the mid-Atlantic states. **Vicky Zabawa** tells me that she also is getting older but still manages to drive to see her kids and grandkids and brother. She stays busy because her son, daughter-in-law and two-year-old grandson share her home.

**Charlie Hotz**, retired Soil Scientist in Holden, died in June after a battle with bile-duct cancer. Charlie and I had the same eye disease, but he was about ten years ahead of me in vision loss so I could use him to see my future. He called himself a "stubborn Dutchman" and described how he would put out empty milk jugs so he could see that last strip he mowed. When my eye sight got that bad I had this woman who would come running out and frantically point at areas I had missed so I didn't need the milk jugs. Charlie lived alone the last few years and survived on TV dinners. He could only see light and dark and some shapes, so I asked how he could tell which dinner was what. He said it didn't really matter because they all tasted the same.

Happy, healthy 2016 to all.

## MINNESOTA

**Marlene Mechelke, ARCSE Representative**

**Howard Midje** writes that "We are little behind again this Christmas season, as usual. We have been remodeling the farm kitchen this summer. It has turned out to be a much bigger task than we expected. As our carpenter, one-man operation, said, "I thought it was going to be two hair-cut job, but it turned out to be a four hair-cut job!" We were through with the major remodeling by early fall, but then Louise and I were still busy restoring antique Norwegian furniture that we wanted in the kitchen. We were staining and varnishing until last week. The rest will wait until after the Holidays including hanging antique ceiling lamps. The latest news

with the family is Britta; Heather's oldest daughter is graduating from St. Olaf this spring and has been admitted to the U. of M. dental school this fall. She applied to three different colleges and was accepted by all three; so she had a choice. Ali, Heather's second daughter has completed her first semester at the Carlson School of business at the U. of M. The other six grandchildren are all younger and doing fine in school, music and sports. I have attached the article that came out in the Cannon Falls Beacon this morning about my wood carving. We thought you would enjoy seeing it. Louise and I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Thanks for all you do to keep the retirees informed. Sometimes I think we take it for granted, but I want you to know we appreciate your work!"

**Howard Midje** also sent an article written by **Betsy Frazier**, published in the Cannon Falls Beacon. The complete article is also available on-line at:

<http://www.cannonfalls.com/main.asp?Search=1&ArticleID=26731&SectionID=1&SubSectionID=1&S=1>. A portion is shown here.

*The Midje family has lived and farmed in the area known as High Prairie west of Sogn for over 100 years. The current residents of the century farm are Howard and Louise Midje. Howard's grandparents, Hans and Anna Midje moved from Ellendale, MN to Warsaw Township, west of Sogn in 1914. Their son and Howard's father, Cyrus, one of nine children, was born on the farm in 1914. Cyrus married Helen Egge in 1937 at Vang Church, where her father was pastor.*

*Cyrus and Helen's son, Howard, grew up on the High Prairie farm, became a Design Engineer with the Soil Conservation Service and designed hundreds of farm ponds and dams that included the Belle Creek Watershed, before he retired a few years ago.*

*He also became an expert wood carver. He has created an entire church congregation, a bevy of farm workers, repairmen, wood splitters, fjord horses, dogs, ladies rolling out lefse, men wearing suits seated in the traditional Norwegian chair - a kubbestol, and all manner of Norwegian artifacts that decorate the farm house occupied by Howard and Louise.*



*The kubbestol, one of two, all hand-carved from a single basswood log by Howard Midje, sits in the kitchen bumpout addition. It's the Midje's favorite spot for morning coffee. Some of Howard's carving tools are on the table, along with two carved fjord horses, and a Norwegian couple. She rides in the sled, he perches on the runners.*

## MISSOURI

**Dave Rastorfer, ARCSE Representative**

**Email:** [daverastorfer@aol.com](mailto:daverastorfer@aol.com)

The Columbia Area retirees met for their quarterly breakfast on November 11<sup>th</sup> at the Country Kitchen in Columbia. Those in attendance were: **Richard and Marjorie Koenig, Jack and Joyce Walker, Frank and Kay Miller, Neil and Louise Randall, Jerry Edwards, Hugh Curry, Mike Wells, John Turner, Dave Rastorfer**. The next breakfast will be on the second Wednesday of February at the Country Kitchen.

Recent retirees: **Melodie Marshall**, after 34 years if service retiring as the DC at Rolla; **David Williams**, ex Missouri State Construction Engineer until 2011 when he transferred to Ft. Worth.

**Bill Pauls:** Just back from an almost week long babysitting (although our eight- and six-year-old grand-girls would strongly object to it being called that) in Wildwood, MO. Lots of fun there and a tired G'Ma and Pa back home for some rest and recoup before Christmas travels. Also just back from marathon #90 on the "Strip at Night." Guess where? I'll give you a clue: there were pictures with "showgirls," errr, I mean "models?" No, **Kris** didn't go on this trip, just two running buddies and me! Just us and 45K of our closest running pals. Just now scheduling the "16" marathon season. First one up is on Valentine's Day in Phoenix, the rest TBA. 2<sup>nd</sup> one may be in Alaska if we can get a cruise scheduled in conjunction. Also busy with Pro-LIFE work, church activities, K of C, and city commissions and boards (although will be giving those up this upcoming year ("been-there-dun-that" long enuf on city commissions and boards). After my unsuccessful (bucket list) political career fizzled in its infancy, I am a much happier person-best thing that "never" happened to me. Kris retired fully a couple months ago, so now we are truly footloose and fancy free. She is now doing computerized embroidery from home for family rather than professionally. Travel back to Central IA every now and then to help my 100-year-old Aunt **Engeline** (my mom's older sister) celebrate and with some issues associated with being a "very" senior citizen. She is quite an inspiration, a very strong Iowa farm girl. Traded down-size for a new-to-us "wolf pup" RV trailer and will use that on marathon adventures to our last 10 states (except maybe Hawaii), the 2<sup>nd</sup> time around the states, and hopefully on my way to a goal of running 100 marathons. Getting slower every day but still finishing fairly strong--after all, it's only 26.2 miles a shot. God bless good leg genetics (at least good for soil science treks for 20 years and overlapping into 20 years of running). Very disappointed in Mizzou for multiple reasons. We are considering a move to the lake area, down around Thunder Mtn/Bridal Cave, TB determined later. Merry Christmas all you ol' SCSers! Call us anytime, we'll go out to eat and swap tall tales. PS: So sorry to hear about **Dave Wolf's** son-in-law and **Marge Lynn-Tapley's** **Ron**. Our sympathy. Bill and Kris Pauls, still at 306 Whitetail Drive, Columbia, MO.

**Paula Price:** 2015 found us Prices home with only a few brushes with hospital stays. **Alan** is starting his 8<sup>th</sup> year of cancer-free status! The stem cell transplant is solid, and the Graft vs. Host Disease is finally in remission. We praise God and thank everyone who helped us and prayed along the way. This week Alan begins water therapy for strength and balance, with the goal of walking with a cane and getting out from behind the walker. Our grandchildren are growing and doing great: **Jordin** is seven and a 2<sup>nd</sup> grader, and **Holly** and **Rylee** are 16 months. We just saw Jordin as a child actress in "The King and I" cast of her school's Performing Arts Dept. The twins are crawling and learning to walk, exploring, and learning, learning, learning! **Cindy** and **Andrew** both enjoy teaching in their respective schools and subjects. I continue to enjoy being the office manager for Realty Executives of NW Missouri in Savannah/St Joseph. As always, if you are ever in our area please look us up! Happy New Year!

**Ed Smith:** Hello all you SCS Retirees. Not much to report from the Smiths. We've had a good fall including a trip to Estes Park, CO and Branson, MO for three shows. Have been kept busy mulching Pin Oak leaves and with nice weather, playing lots of golf even up to today. We were blessed by the birth of our 2<sup>nd</sup> great-grandson to our youngest granddaughter in Nov. Will be getting ready for our three months in FL starting in Jan. but right now are in the middle of another Blessed Christmas season with lots of parties and open houses. That's all for now. See you in April.

**Lane Thurman:** Just to catch everyone up on the Springfield group of SCS and NRCS retirees. We had a luncheon meeting on Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup> and only five retirees showed. Since there seems to be no interest in having luncheon meetings anymore, other than those five who were there, we are going to stop having these meetings. No one seems to want to get out and socialize anymore. Maybe it is that we are all getting older and just don't want to get out. Those attending were **Lane and Nancy Thurman, Forest Tindall, Jim Andrews, John Feistner, and Clarice Wildermuth**. **Jim Andrews and I** were on Stockton Lake today fishing, and fighting the wind, with little result. I caught one bass that was short, and that was it, so it is time to put the boat up for the winter. I am headed down to Louisiana for a short deer hunt on the 17<sup>th</sup> of this month. Two of my sons will be along to help haul out the deer we will shoot. Otherwise, **Nancy** and I hope everyone has a very Merry Christmas and a great new year!

**Dennis Shirk:** Hi, folks. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. We had a great fall of camping and riding. Just got back from **Mei Marshall's** retirement party. Made a trip to SW Missouri to see Mom and Dad. Both are doing well for their age. Hope your family gatherings are all that you wish for, enjoying old and making new memories. See you all down the trail!

**Phyllis and Jess Epple**, in Oklahoma. We continue "bucket list" trips. We returned from New Mexico/Arizona travels some weeks ago. Jess worked as an SCS soil scientist in Hidalgo Co., Lordsburg; Quay Co., Tucumcari; Harding Co., Roy/Mosquero and San Miguel Co., Las Vegas, NM. We visited these work-related areas plus much more including Eagle Nest, Angel Fire, Red River and Taos. Went to Tombstone, AZ and saw the OK Corral gun fight, World's largest Rose Tree, then to Silver City, to Gila Cliff Dwellings Nat. Monument, and White Sands Nat. Monument near Las Cruces. When we came home, Muskogee Airport was hosting a vintage WW-II aircraft show, and Jess flew on the B-29 Super-Fortress. His father was an aeronautical engineer and was involved with these planes during the war. We plan to spend Holidays in K.C., MO, weather permitting. We enjoy being with family and seeing the "Plaza" during Christmas time. All cow-hands here said, "Have a wonderful, high energy, event filled Christmas and Happy New Year."

**Fred Young:** I terminated my ACES contract on September 30<sup>th</sup>, thereby retiring "for real." On Thursday October 1<sup>st</sup>, **Julie** and I flew to Barcelona, Spain. A couple of days later, we took an overnight train across the country to Vigo, on the Atlantic coast, then proceeded to bicycle south, through much of Portugal, ending in Lisbon. We highly recommend Portugal, and no, you don't have to be a cyclist to enjoy it. Feel free to contact me if you are considering a trip there and would like some recommendations.

**Bill and Ruby Riggs** enjoyed a seven-day bus tour of Western Iowa in late October. Even though Ruby grew up in this area, they saw many new sites. They saw the Surf Ballroom in Clear Lake where Buddy Holly gave his last concert, Winnebago motor home manufacturing facility in Forest City, the site of one of the German prisoner of War camps in Algona, the Grotto of the Redemption at West Bend, The Blue Bunny Ice Cream Company in Le Mars, the Danish windmill at Elk Horn, and the Underground Railroad at Lewis. They saw several collections of John Deere, Allis Chalmers and IH tractors. They enjoyed touring a lavender farm and aronia berry farm. Loess Hills and wind farms. One of their favorites was seeing the Bridges of Madison County and John Wayne's boyhood home in Winterset. In November, **Bill** fell in the garage because of his Parkinson's and cracked his hip. After a hospital stay, he went to a skilled nursing facility for therapy and rehab. He is now home and recovering nicely.

Ending on a sad note we were saddened to learn of the deaths of several of our retiree friends: **Dave Owen**, long time DC in several locations throughout Missouri; **Jeanette Hardiman** who worked in the Carto unit at the state office; **Tom Keep** former Assistant State Engineer during the 1980's; **Dave Wolf's** son-in- law Steven McFadden; **Becky Gorman**, former secretary in the NRCS state office.

If you are aware of any retiree who has reached their 83<sup>rd</sup> birthday, they are eligible for recognition as senior conservationists of Association of Retired Conservation Service Employees. Please let me know who they are.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a wonderful 2016!

## MONTANA

**Dick Gooby, ARCSE Representative**

**Email: [inca@3rivers.net](mailto:inca@3rivers.net)**

**Hal Hunter report.** I just finished completing a transcript of the program. I thought you and other NRCSers would be interested. Send me your address and I will send you a flash drive summarizing a portion of the work I have completed to bring to the Nation's attention the sorry state of the Northern Range resource in Yellowstone National Park (YNP). The range and related resources in YNP are continuing to deteriorate, and YNP management refuses to acknowledge that. YNP needs to return to the

"Agricultural Management Period" in YNP and abandoned the Natural Regulation Period. **NRCS retirees should be mad as hell** regarding what is happening to the basic resources of YNP.

I initiated this effort in response to a telephone call from a rancher whose family has ranned and outfitted near YNP since the 1890s. We have been on quite a journey. I have volunteered about one day a week for the last two years working on this issue. I have had support from my technical support team of NRCS retirees. SRM has been funded to work on the issue. **Senator Borass** and **Governor Mead** of Wyoming have been supportive. I have been working with STRATA an environmental policy research organization on the issue. Strata leadership and five policy analysts participated in a tour I hosted for them.

I finished up my field work about a month ago. Now, I am folding that information into a document so compelling (hopefully) that PBS, 60 Minutes, BBS, or some similar organization will pick up the issue and run with it. The Nation's citizens have been misled and misinformed as to how the ecological management of YNP is resulting in a healthy resource base.

**Bob Ross**, Retired NRCS State Range Conservationist, Montana was honored by a Gentleman from France on September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015, for his courageous work in France during the second World War.

*Bob Ross, Cérémonie de Remise de la Légion d'Honneur, Vétérans de la Seconde Guerre Mondiale*

Dear Mr. Ross, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, allow me to say how pleased and honored I am to be with you today, here in Bozeman. Today is a special day. Today, we are celebrating a hero whose courage, faith, and dedication contributed—more than 70 years ago—to defend and preserve the independence of France and to save our common values: freedom, tolerance, democracy.

I would like to extend the tribute today to all your fellow soldiers during WW2, especially to all of those who did not make it back to their country and families. First, I invite you to listen to a poem that Mr. Ross wrote. It will be read by his son, Mr. Tim Ross.

From "Muddled Meanderings of Yesteryear, the poem:

#### WAR IS HELL.

War is hell someone has said  
But hold on there, let's ask the dead.  
Perhaps they didn't die in vain  
With naught but fear and twisted pain  
They gave their lives so we could live  
And that is the most one can give.  
God's children all - they led the way  
For a better life at a later day.

War is rough no matter what  
But it's not all stench and rot.  
Stop and think if you would  
Of war times happenings that are good.  
First of all—to clear the weather  
When the chips are down we pull together.  
Oft times a crisis brings out the good  
And reaffirms our brotherhood.

Unselfish deeds in time of war  
Can be related by the score.  
Many a soldier's volunteered his life  
To save a buddy with kids and wife.  
Patriotism's at its best  
When our nation is in a battle test.  
Folks put their shoulder to the wheel  
In bonded team work with amazing zeal.

Often improved technology world wide  
Stems from war-time efforts that are plied.  
Medical advances and disease control  
Have eased the suffering of millions of souls.  
There's increased production from the soil,  
More time for leisure and less for toil.  
Advanced world – wide communications  
Brings understanding between the nations.

War is tragic without a doubt -  
It takes but one to find it out.  
The tragic deaths and utter waste  
Leaves a very bitter taste.  
As long as there is human life  
There'll always be some strain and strife.  
But along with the sorrow is a pleasant "ring"  
Because there's something good in everything.

I've seen the blood and heard the cry  
I've seen my fellow soldiers die.  
I've felt the shrapnel's jagged steel  
And know the pain the wounded feel.  
I do not sanction death and gore  
Nor am I advocating war.  
I merely say – and do repeat  
Without the bitter we don't taste the sweet.

Mr. Ross, assigned to the 254<sup>th</sup> infantry Regiment, in the 63<sup>rd</sup> infantry division, was sent to the Colmar Pocket, in the eastern part of France, a major stronghold for the Nazis. The Germans were very organized as far as supplies, material, and armor. It was just around Christmas of 1944. The weather was bitter cold. The days were spent in fox holes, the nights to fight the war and infiltrate the German lines. From twilight to dawn, the division constantly faced danger, destruction, and death. In the heart of Les Vosges Mountains is the town of Jebsheim, with a population of roughly 1,000 people. Jebsheim was one of the German headquarters, the key to the entire Colmar Pocket. Heavy concrete bunkers and fortifications had been built as part of the Maginot Line. Tired and suffering from the cold, subzero temperatures, and the wind-chill factor, the 254<sup>th</sup> infantry Regiment headed towards Jebsheim under machine gun, rifle, and burn-gun fire.

From January 25 to January 29, 1944, the fighting went on... for five days and five nights... until Jebsheim was finally taken and liberated. The toll: 600 prisoners and 500 dead. "For the heroic deeds in liberating Jebsheim and the surrounding Colmar Pocket, the 254<sup>th</sup> infantry Regiment was awarded the coveted French Croix de Guerre and a Presidential Unit Citation."

(Summary from WWII Memories of Mr. Ross, "WE FOUGHT FOR PEACE.") On January 29, last day of the battle, Sergeant Ross had just lined up 40 German prisoners in four columns and started running down the street to cover when an 88 mm shell landed in the middle of his group of men. Sergeant Ross was knocked to his knees and dropped his rifle in the snow. He could not get up and was not able to recover his rifle for a couple of minutes. When he regained his feet and rifle, he contacted the aid station to get help for the several wounded around him. When the medic saw him, he said, "I'd better take care of you first. That hole in your neck is bleeding kind of bad".... Sergeant Ross had not realized he had been wounded. He thought it was the shock from the concussion of the shell explosion... When he woke up from the surgery he could feel a chunk of shrapnel lodged in his throat, and his left arm would not function. He was taken by ambulance to the closest MASH unit. He vaguely remembers the next two or three days... Blood transfusion... Serious infection... High fever... He almost did not make it. From there, Sergeant Ross was transferred by ambulance to Paris, then to Cherbourg, then to England, then, a month later, transferred back to the United States by

hospital ship. I will quote Mr. Ross one more time: "As we entered the New York Harbor the Statue of Liberty was beautiful to behold. There she stood a symbol of liberty shedding light upon the world. This was what we had been fighting for!"

Robert Ross enlisted on August 17, 1942 in Bozeman, Montana. His decorations and citations are: Silver Star, Bronze Star (2), Presidential Distinguished Unit Citation (2), Combat Infantryman Badge, French Croix de Guerre with Palm, Purple Heart, European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, American Campaign Medal, WW II Victory Medal, and Good Conduct Medal

Ladies and Gentlemen, this WW2 hero did this far away from his home, from his beloved family, from his friends. It is almost impossible for us to imagine how much courage and bravery it must have required to cross the ocean and to fight in Europe as he did. Courage and bravery are precisely the qualities that Napoleon wanted to reward when creating the Legion of Honor in 1802. YOUR courage and YOUR bravery, Mr. Ross, are the reasons why the President of the French Republic has decided to award you the highest French recognition.

**Jim Johnson report:** We were out of town and did not make the December breakfast. Now we're enjoying our winter in Bozeman. There is nothing else to report.

**Scott Hoag report:** Scott and Nancy are in their new home and are still "kicking the feathers" around. Family--son, daughter and granddaughters--will be here for Christmas. They're excited about Mom-Mom's cooking, eating junk, playing board games and skiing with Papa, although it will be more like Papa being able to ski with them. Plenty of snow. **Scott** goes to the hospital five days a week for radiation, so we won't need a Christmas tree: Scott glows in the dark. Seriously, we feel blessed and daily strengthened, and we are praying the same for each of you as we look forward to 2016.

**Montana Big Sky Report:** Merry Christmas from the Gooby Ranch. Man what a year. The rain gods were definitely mad at us. **Mary Ann** did rain dances every day, but no rain came. One day in July while Mary Ann was doing her rain dance, a big black cloud came over and it looked like her work was going to pay off; but it just kept going and when it hit the mountain it started lightning like crazy. The next day the mountain was lit up with four big fires. Mary Ann hung up her rain dance gear and headed to the river to fill the water barrels so she could water the garden.

We had a field of grain not too far from the house, and after the grain was harvested there must have been 2,000 Sandhill Cranes that moved in to eat the grain that was left in the field. I guess we need to get the combine adjusted because it looks like more grain was on the ground than was in the grain bin. Mary Ann has really had her work cut out for her. She is working from daylight to dark picking up the grain kernels that fell on the ground. While she is in the field she has to run and scare the Sandhill Cranes so they don't eat the grain before she can glean it.

In the meantime, I harvested enough Sandhill Cranes to fill the freezer. After dark, Mary Ann would clean the Sandhill Cranes and put them in the freezer. I would have helped her, but this time of year there are so many football games on I don't have any spare time.

When the grand kids were younger they used to come stay with us all summer and helped Mary Ann with the work. They didn't cost us anything, and with two more mouths to feed I got to catch a lot more fish so they would have something to eat. Of course we couldn't take them to town since they always wanted to go to MacDonald's, and that cost me a dollar each. I much preferred to take them to Bozeman when we had to go to town. That way we could shop at Costco and they could fill up making the rounds to the food sample booths, and I could go home with the two dollars still in my pocket. Plus Mary Ann likes eating there also.

It is obvious Mary Ann needs a lot more help in operating the ranch. Between hunting, fishing, keeping up with my TV programs and all the sports, I don't have much time to help. We thought about hiring someone, but we wouldn't be able to pay them enough to where anyone would work for us. Although with all the Management trainings I've been to over the years and my years of experience making Mary Ann's work list, I would be able to make them a good work list to attack. That should tweak their interest in working for us.

In trying to figure out the best way to survive when we get old and Mary Ann can't do all the work around here (which I don't see as a problem for at least for the next 25 years or so), I got out the Management documents and read up on long-range planning, and I read the horse trainer **Pat Parrelli**'s quote "Prior proper planning prevents poor performance." So Mary Ann and I had three long-range planning work sessions, and after two easels were filled up, we finally decided on our best long-range plan.

We like it here. The sun shines a lot and we live in a spot where you can see forever. That way we don't have to worry about the bill collectors sneaking up on us. Its great country to ride our horses in, and we can raise healthy beef which helps Mary Ann in two ways. One is that all the work keeps her in shape, and two, eating our beef keeps her healthy on the inside. Oh yah, and I can even catch a fish once in a while.

We decided that the only way we could afford to stay here in the long run would be to sweet talk one of our kids to move here when they retired and they could help Mary Ann do all the work. I'm pretty sure the two of them can do the work Mary Ann is doing. At least enough so Mary Ann has time to make me fancy meals.

We finally talked one of the kids and her husband into moving here when they retire next year. And they agreed to do my work and most of Mary Ann's; however, they refused to move into our house. They were adamant about having indoor plumbing. The only way they would move here is if they had a house of their own. So we agreed to build a house, but Mary Ann and I have the final say on the size, etc. We also agreed it wouldn't be a trailer house, although we have an old stock trailer I thought we could fix up for them.

The neighbors had an old barn that is falling down, and I talked them into giving it to us if we would haul it away. They said fine, so we have most of the building materials we need. We know a really good carpenter, and he said he would help us if we provided him with at least half our garden produce and provided him with a freezer full of Sandhill Cranes. Also the carpenter said he

needed someone to help him this summer, so we had to talk Gary, who is a teacher, into coming up here to help build the house. The house is up but we're not sure if it should house people or horses. It looks just like it did when it was the neighbor's barn, but the roof isn't falling in like it was. We're thinking of putting straw bales on the inside for insulation and hanging blue tarps over the straw for the inside walls. Everyone wants their house to be unique. This one sure will be.

Elk hunting was a bust this year. I spent days hiking in the mountains, but no elk would show up. I saw very few elk tracks. But I did see a lot of rabbit tracks. I think next year I will put in for a rabbit permit instead of an elk permit. That will really increase my odds of getting some meat for winter. Even though a rabbit isn't as big as an elk, they have more meat than no elk.

We wish you a Merry Christmas and a fantastic New Year in 2016--Dick and Mary Ann Gooby

## NEBRASKA

**Norman Kempf, ARCSE Representative**

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President **Steve Scheinost** Called meeting to order with 19 members present in November breakfast, 19 members present at the November breakfast, and 22 members present in December.

It was announced that **Steve Stover** will be the 2016 president with **Bob Engel** as Vice President. Since Steve will be gone during the early part of the year, Bob will be presiding. The monthly breakfasts will change to an 8:00 starting time for January and February.

**Pete and Doris Jensen** are also celebrating their 69<sup>th</sup> anniversary. **Bob and Doris Pollock** also celebrated their anniversary.

**Tom Keep** died on November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015. Tom worked on the oversite and evaluation team on the regional staff in Lincoln prior to retirement. **Gerald Post** died on November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015. Gerald Post was a soil scientist in Lincoln prior to retirement. **Dick Johnson** died on November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015. Dick was a soil scientist at the National Soil Survey Lab in Lincoln prior to retirement. **Dr. Willie Nettleton** died on November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2015.

**Dave Camper** spent Thanksgiving in Connecticut visiting family and enjoyed beautiful weather, while we suffered through ice and snow.

**Sylvia Kempf** has been approved for an electrical stimulator implant in her back. She will have surgery at Mayo's in January.

A reservation has been made at the Egg & I for October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016, a change from our past fall breakfast at Hy-Vee. The new roster of retirees will be available in January.

## NEVADA

Nevada Report

**Liz Warner**, [ewarner130@aol.com](mailto:ewarner130@aol.com)

A small group of Nevada retirees met on Sept. 17<sup>th</sup> for lunch at John Ascuaga's Nugget in Sparks. Attending were **Larry Goodson, Mark Twyeffort, Gary Monroe, Joe Chiaretti, Deb Prevost and Liz Warner**. **Larry** moved to California about three years ago and is working as a handyman, after working as a bus driver, truck driver and other odd jobs since his retirement. **Gary** is still working in Soils as a rehired annuitant and is happy to report he's getting a raise in January. **Mark** is living in a "man cave" with his youngest son and oldest grandson. **Joe and Deb** visited **Connie Ihringer** in Washington State over the summer. **Liz Warner** took her grandsons on a Disney cruise and to Disney World in July.

Several retirees couldn't make it but want to keep in touch, including **Bill Dollarhide, Rick Orr, Linda Peri, and Ed Blake**. **Chuck Houston** was busy volunteering at the National Air Races, **Bill Pellersels** was travelling, and **Gerry Miller** was out in the field monitoring sage grouse habitat. **Vada Hubbard** was celebrating her 43<sup>rd</sup> wedding anniversary with her husband **Steve** at Lake Tahoe. Congratulations, Vada and Steve.

We were saddened to learn of the unexpected passing of **Marilyn Loring**'s daughter, **Christine Loring Comstock**, age 40, on Sept. 6<sup>th</sup>. Our deepest sympathies to their family.

On Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>, a few retirees joined the NRCS/FSA State Office staff for their Christmas luncheon: **Chuck Houston, Steve Slusser, Gary Monroe, Consuelo Navar, Joe Chiaretti, Deb Prevost and Liz Warner**. State Conservationist **Ray Dotson** welcomed everyone and expressed his appreciation for these events "that bring people together." Ray's fiancée, **Stephanie**, joined the festivities, as well.

And, **Larry Goodson** provided this nice write up on Sylvia Cyr who passed away earlier this year. I prepared this because I was unaware there had not been anything written for her after her passing. I hope this will make up for that.

**Sylvia Cyr**, former Information Specialist, Nevada NRCS (formerly SCS, Soil Conservation Service), Reno Nevada, passed away recently. **Syl**, as we called her, was an exceptional employee and my very dear friend. She was loved by all employees. Syl took me under her wing so to speak, when I transferred to the Reno State Office from New Mexico, in 1976. I was alone in Reno several months before my wife moved and was always being guided by her knowledge and friendship and caring attitude. We worked together many years before her retirement. She had a big job to do to overcome some animosity, but performed with dignity and grace, always with a friendly attitude to all she worked with and for. She basically created the information program in Nevada and represented SCS very well in outside contacts, both public and private. With her help, I learned all about the state and our great employees. She taught me to respect all our employees and I never forgot that over the 20 years in Nevada.

*She added to her community and raised a son who respected her and was a great help to her in her last years. Syl will be missed by many who knew her.*



*Nevada Christmas luncheon*



*Ray Dotson, State Conservationist, and his fiancé, Stephanie.*

## NEW YORK

**Nancy Lee, ARCSE Representative**

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**Nancy and Mel Lee** received a great gift on Thanksgiving - a new grandson, **Nolan James**. Nolan joins his brother, **Carter**, in the Lee family.

## NORTH DAKOTA

**Robert "Bob" Bird, ARCSE Representative**

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**Loucks, Curtis L.**, 94, died November 13, 2015 at his workshop in Rugby, ND. **Pope, Muriel E.**, 87, died November 26, 2015 at St. Catherine's Living Center, Wahpeton, ND. She was the wife of the late Eugene Pope, an engineer, who worked for SCS in ND. **Schiermeister, Ervin**, 79, died December 10, 2015 at a Bismarck, ND hospital. He worked for 32 years in SCS offices in ND.

Please see the In Memoriam section for more details on these passings.

## OHIO

**Larry Tornes, ARCSE Representative**

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**Thomas Alan Keep** (68) of Lincoln, Nebraska passed away November 20, 2015 after a long battle with cancer. He worked as an engineer for the USDA from 1971 until he retired in 2004 as the Agricultural Engineer for NRCS on the Regional Staff. See the In Memoriam section for more details.

## OKLAHOMA

**Randy Freeland, ARCSE Representative**

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The Oklahoma SCS/NRCS Retirees met at the Golden Corral Buffet Restaurant in Oklahoma City, OK on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015. Thirty seven people were in attendance. They were: **Don Bartolina, Lester Brockmann, Bob Bumgarner, Steve Chessmore, Everett and Helen Cole, Les and Barbara Conner, Duane Crider, Wayne Fjeseth, Fred Fortney, Randy and Bonnie Freeland, Harry Fritzler, Sandra and Terry Hough, Lloyd Garrison, Gayle and Mary Goforth, Nick Lambeth, Tom Lucas, Jim McCampbell, Gordon and Minnie Moebius, Nelson and Mary Mueller, Glen and Eunice Mullen, Dan Runnels, Rod and Sheila Shaw, Jim Smith, Bettie Todd, Andy Tucker, Carolyn and Bob Webb, and Jamey Wood.**

Following a delicious meal, President **Gordon Moebius** called the meeting to order and asked first time attendees to introduce themselves. **Tom Lucas** retired in January 2015 as the Public Affairs Specialist in the State Office. Prior to that position he was the RC&D Coordinator at Beaver. **Rod Shaw** retired in January, 2015 from the District Conservationist position in Oklahoma City. Prior to that position he was the District Conservationist at Watonga. He introduced his wife **Sheila**. He said he was counting retirement in months, not years, as the majority of those in attendance.

It was reported that a Health Fair was being held at the State Office in Stillwater, Monday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015, from 9am to 11:30am. Representatives of the various health plans will be on hand to answer questions. The 2015 Open Season enrollment period for health benefits begins November 9<sup>th</sup> and ends December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2015. One of the changes which could affect most retirees is the addition of an enrollment type: Self Plus One. This choice is for individuals with you and one other eligible person such as your spouse or eligible child. Premiums are lower than the Self and Family option which covers you and only one additional eligible person. You must request the change to Self Plus One from the Self and Family option. Open season mailers are being mailed the week of October 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Nick Lambeth** reported he had attended the June 16<sup>th</sup> reunion of Area 9 former employees at the Western Sizzlin Steak House in McAlester. This was put together by **John Beard**, retired Area Conservationist from Hugo. There were about 30 former employees in attendance and everyone had a good time.



Andy Tucker and Larry Caldwell



Rod and Sheila Shaw

**Carolyn Webb** reported that she does lots of volunteering. I'm in love again, with two second grade boys I'm tutoring. Also work at the hospital and involved in Church work sending cards to those ill and absentees. Happiest I've ever been in my life.

**Rod Shaw** is one of our newest retirees and reported he and **Sheila** had already taken a trip to Saint Martin in April, then to Vancouver, BC and Fairbanks, AK during the summer of 2015. They are spending more time with kids and grandkids and plan to do more fishing, hunting, and hiking in the years to come.

**Les Brockmann** retired in December, 1995 from the National Soil Survey Center in Lincoln, NE. We moved back to my old home farm near Ponca City, and since that time I have become somewhat a "hobby farmer." Best thing I can say is "every day's a Saturday." Best wishes from Kay County.

**Joni** and **John Mustain** wrote: We planned on attending the meeting; however, I was at the doctor Friday morning with strep throat. We will hopefully be able to come to the next one! Since **John** retired September 3<sup>rd</sup>, we have been traveling. We went 4,500 miles to Colorado and Georgia on our motorcycle, and then flew to Cancun, Mexico, for eight nights. We've made a trip to visit John's family near Afton, OK, since being home, and are making a trip to Wichita this week to help our son move. And grandson #4 will be here today, so we will be going to Woodward to see the little guy on Friday! I think retirement life may be very busy for us!

Gardening and grandkids keep **Les** and **Barbara Conner** busy these days. **Les** works with a group of Ambassadors at The Botanic Garden for Oklahoma State University and volunteers at the Public Library. **Barbara** loves to quilt and can spot a quilt store a mile away!

**Terry** and **Sandra Hough** recently returned home after spending five weeks at Beaver Springs Campground in Piedmont, MO. Campground is owned by daughter **Emily** and husband **Gregg** and grandson **Ty**. **Terry** and **Sandra** welcomed a new great granddaughter, Hayden, in August, daughter of grandson **Garrett** and **Maddie**. Great grandson, **Wyatt**, son of granddaughter **Jenna** and **Sean**, turned two years old in July.

Secretary/Treasurer **Sandra Hough** read a list of recent retirees: **Kim Ehlers**, SC, Stillwater FO, 1/1/15; **Dennis Stipe**, CET, Woodward TSO, 1/1/15; **Ronald Smith**, CI, Pauls Valley WO, 1/1/15; **Rod Shaw**, DC, Oklahoma City, 1/1/15; **Ron Goedecke**, DC, Okmulgee, 5/31/15, 32+ yrs; **Jontie Aldrich** (USFWS), 6/30/15, 25 yrs federal and 10 yrs state; **John Mustain**, State Forester/Agronomist, Stillwater SO, 9/3/15, 32+ yrs; **Tom Neumeyer**, DC, Stigler, 10/1/15; and **Mark Conkling**, Agronomist, Clinton TSO, 10/1/15.



Nick Lambeth and Dan Runnels



Gordon and Minnie Carol Moebius



Bob and Carolyn Webb

Sandra Hough also read a list of retiree deaths: **Lillian Shirley Nordean**, 94, Konawa, 4/28/15; **Kevin Cook**, 46, Civil Engineer, Stillwater SO, 6/11/15; **Clay Wilson**, 64, Soil Scientist, Perry TSO living in Seneca, MO, 7/26/15, retired in 2000; **Harold Irwin**, 93, SCT, Hammon, 8/20/15; **Bob G. Day**, 87, Engineer, Clinton TSO, 10/3/15, retired in 1985 with 33+ yrs; and **Kenneth Miller**, 91, Design Engineer, Stillwater SO, 10/5/15, 38 yrs. A moment of silence was observed and **Fred Fortney** offered a prayer.

**Jamey Wood**, Assistant State Conservationist for Strategy and Management, presented a Power-Point presentation on the reorganization plans which will be forthcoming next summer. Parts of the reorganization plan are already in the works. Back in 1965 there were 805 employees, and today there are 250. There are also currently 95 supervisors for the 250 employees. The biggest problem which has been facing employees and especially district conservationist is the lack of time available to be able to meet with producers on their land. Too much of their time is being spent in the office on the computer, etc. This reorganization plan will alleviate some of these problems which have been identified.

**Tom Lucas** is working to establish an Oklahoma Conservation Museum. Oklahoma is in the "Heart of the Dust Bowl" and probably one of the most recognized states for our conservation work and the focus of much of the publicity surrounding the Dust Bowl. With our great heritage of conservation practices and watershed construction projects, it seems only fitting we should preserve items for future generations to learn about the happenings in history. He has met with the Oklahoma Conservation Commission, Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts and NRCS to present this concept and has received many offers of correspondence, implements, etc. He is asking that our retiree group select four individuals who would like to be a part of the founding board of directors. If there are more than four, they could be a part of an advisory committee. Several names were mentioned and will be contacted by Mr. Lucas. He also asked that everyone keep their eyes and ears open for possible items which could be secured or donated for the museum.

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016, at the Golden Corral on MacArthur Boulevard in Oklahoma City. Everyone is welcome and no reservations are required.



Les and Barbara Conner



Tom Lucas and Jamey Wood

## OREGON

**Don Stettler, ARCSE Representative**

**Email:** [don.stettler@comcast.net](mailto:don.stettler@comcast.net)

The Oregon retiree El Niño winter quarter lunch will be held on January 27<sup>th</sup>. Breaking from tradition, we will be meeting at the Peppermill restaurant in Aloha. Watch your email for details for the lunch.

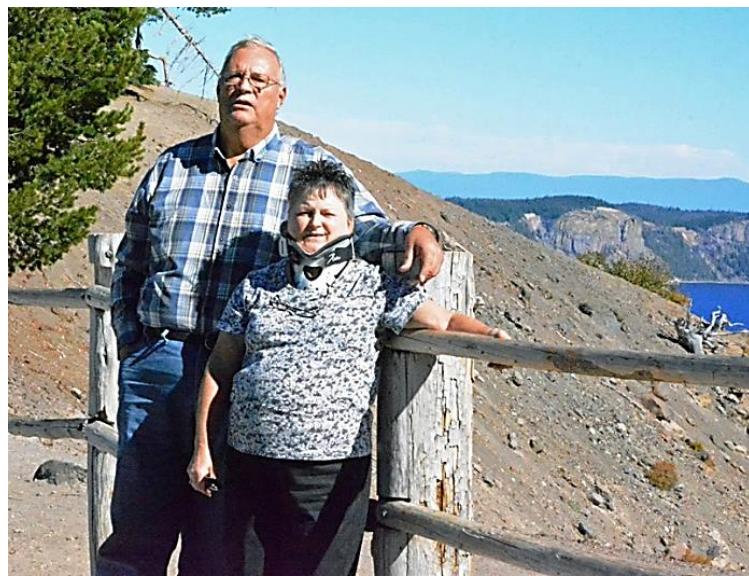
**Lamont Robbins** reports that in September he became one of the statistics for men with breast cancer. He had a mastectomy the first week in October, and then last month his oncologist had him start a cancer medication which he will take for five years. His prognosis is very good, for which **Karen** and he are very thankful.

## SOUTH CAROLINA

**Byron Thompson, ARCSE Representative**

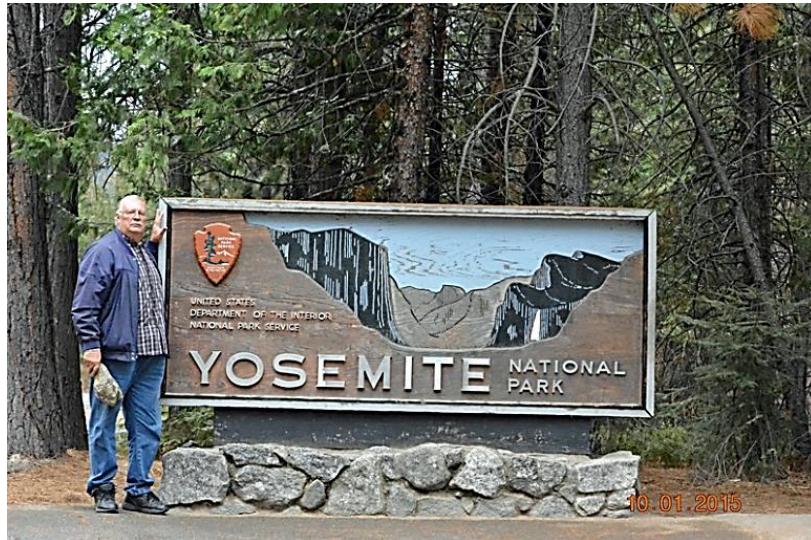
**Email:** [landmgtinc@wctel.net](mailto:landmgtinc@wctel.net)

A member of our South Carolina Chapter, **Al McNill** attended the ASABE national meeting in New Orleans this summer. Al continues to volunteer as an engineer for the NRCS at the state office. Also, **Luke Nance**, an engineer volunteer at the same office has had some health issues and hopes to return soon to continue his volunteer service to NRCS.



Bobby and Debbie McGee at Crater Lake

**Bobby and Debbie McGee** toured the western US for the months of Sept. and Oct. Enjoyed the National Parks in the Dakotas, MT, WA, OR, CA, CO, NM, TX, plus visits to San Francisco, New Orleans and to El Paso to visit our son and a visit with **Doyle Allen** and family in San Antonio.



*Bobby McGee at Yosemite*

One of our members, **Bob Wells**, passed away since our last meeting. Bob graduated from Texas A&M College in 1941 and went to work for USDA-SCS in Fort Lauderdale FL. as Soil Scientist until retirement in 1975.

On a positive note, none of our PL-566 dams in South Carolina were damaged during our historical rainstorms in October.

**Louis Jackson** is enjoying retirement doing wetland's consulting and playing with the grand-kids. We hope to see Louis at our next meeting in the spring.

**Byron and Mary Thompson** enjoyed several trips to different parts of the US and just returned from a visit to Ohio to see our great grandson. Our chapter has started planning for their spring meeting of all our members.

## TEXAS

**Arnold King, ARCSE Representative**

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Sixteen members attended the October 16<sup>th</sup> meeting: **Earl Blakley, Dennis Gaster, Bernie Owen, Elaine and Billy Don Davis, Joyce Petty, Bernelle Baxley, Betty Sisson, Anita Plummer, Don Newman, Doug Seibel, Mary Mattinson, Bonnie McKee, Dennis Erinakes, Clyde Goodman, and Dave Drennan**. The meeting was called to order and presided over by Vice-President **Dave Drennan**.



*Dave Drennan presides over the October meeting.*



*Bernie Owen and Betty Sisson discuss the Kansas State - TCU game.*

**Del Rockenbaugh** reported that **Rocky** is getting good care at Colonial Gardens Memory Facility. The chaplain visited Rocky, and played several of his favorite songs. Del had a great time singing along with the music. **Betty Kirkland** remains in the rehab facility, while **Paul Kirkland** is at home. Paul visits here nearly every day.

**Joyce Petty** is still active with CASA, a child advocacy group. She said that child slavery is a growing problem, and, in Texas, seems to be more common in the Houston and Waco areas. **Billy Don Davis** is enjoying life and plays dominos regularly. **Elaine Davis** recently attended a family reunion, which was attended by 51 people. She also said that their oldest granddaughter will be getting married soon.

**Betty Sisson** was very happy with the outcome of the recent TCU-Kansas State University football game (which TCU won handily)--Bernie Owen, not so much. We'll let you guess which team each of them roots for. Betty said she is growing tomatoes in her garden this fall. **Bernie and Maxine Owen** attended the wedding of Maxine's great-nephew on October 24<sup>th</sup> in Kansas.

**Dennis Erinakes' grandson**, who is in the Army Reserve, is now stationed in Minnesota. Dennis is going to Nebraska next week to give his dogs some exercise hunting pheasants. He invited everyone to Pioneer Days in Cleburne, which will be the weekend of November 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Bernelle Baxley** has a new hobby--rattlesnake hunting! She said that they killed four rattlesnakes close to her home last week. Bernelle, I hear the rattlesnake round-up in Sweetwater is looking for help! **Anita Plummer** went to Kansas in August for her husband's family reunion. In September, Anita visited her family and friends in Tennessee.

**Mary Mattinson** is staying busy with the activities of her five grandchildren. No more road trips for Mary, as she reported that she has sold her travel trailer. She recently had blood work done, and the results looked good. I guess that means her blood is still red and circulating well! The youngest grandson of **Bonnie McKee** got married recently. Bonnie also went on a cruise to Alaska with her daughter recently, and had a great time.

Congratulations to **Dennis Gaster**, who successfully completed a pre-diabetes counseling/training course recently. By following the diet and exercise guidelines, he has lost about 15 pounds. Congratulations, Dennis! Dennis has a bad news/good news situation. He recently sold his 2003 Mustang Cobra, which he was sad to part with. But with the extra money, he was able to pay off his house. It's probably all for the best, Dennis. It gets pretty cramped living in a Mustang Cobra!

**Dave Drennan** has had relatives visiting from Alaska. They are probably storing up some warmth for the long winter ahead. Dave has been spending some of those hard-earned CSRS dollars, doing some home improvements and repairs.

**Bernie Owen** reports that the AARP Driver Safety Courses are being held in the area and also online. The cost is \$15 for AARP members and \$20 for non-members for the 4-hour course. Most car insurance companies will give you a discount if you have had the course in the last three years. Contact information for the classroom course is [www.aarp.org/findacourse42](http://www.aarp.org/findacourse42) or phone 877-805-0674. Contact information for the course online is [www.aarp.org/drivesafe29](http://www.aarp.org/drivesafe29).

Sixteen members attended the November 20<sup>th</sup> meeting. Those attending were: **Earl Blakley, Dennis Gaster, Clyde Goodman, Doug Seibel, Elaine and Billy Don Davis, Bernelle Baxley, Barb and Dave Stockbridge, Joyce Petty, Bill and Rita Kuenstler, Tom Hodges, Don Newman, Mark Boysen, Bernie and Maxine Owen, Dennis Erinakes, and Anita Plummer**. The meeting was called to order and presided over by **Dennis Gaster**, since neither the President nor Vice-President was present.

We received a note from **Lu Logan** when she sent in her dues for 2016. She says: "Hi Dennis - All is fine in Granbury! Just returned from a trip to Branson - lots of good Christmas shows. Still busy with all my volunteer jobs." — Lu

We discussed our annual donations to charitable organizations. **Clyde Goodman** moved that we donate \$200.00 to the Fort Worth Presbyterian Night Shelter, and \$100.00 to Harvest House, a group sponsored by the Burleson Ministerial Alliance that provides food and clothing to those in need. The motion was approved. **Bernie Owen** reminded everyone that the FEHB open season dates are Nov. 9--Dec. 14. Bernie said that he had heard reports that some people were having trouble making changes to their FEHB plans on-line.

**Clyde Goodman** said that **Marla** is recovering well from her Achilles tendon surgery. She walks with the use of a walker, and can walk 500-600 feet without stopping to rest. Clyde and Marla are planning to go with their family on a seven-day cruise out of Galveston in December, so she has an incentive to get her strength back.

**Dave Stockbridge** reported that he recently went duck hunting on Lake Granbury. (Notice the use of the word "hunting". The ducks hadn't put that date on their calendar, so they never showed up!). **Bill Kuenstler** announced that the people renting their house in Florida had moved out October 25<sup>th</sup>. He and **Rita** had gone down there to check things out and assess what needed to be done. While there, they were able to get someone in to paint the stairwell to the second floor, and get measurements taken for new carpet. Over the past couple of months, **Barb and Dave Stockbridge** have taken two cruises, and attended one funeral. Dave had just returned from New York, where he attended his brother's funeral.

**Maxine and Bernie Owen** have been having computer problems. According to the helpful tech support from Office Depot, hackers posing as Microsoft employees had messed up the hard drive on Maxine's laptop. She never let them have access to her computer or encouraged them, but they called often and somehow gained access. The tech support at Office Depot installed a new hard drive and were finally able to get things working again. Everything seems to be OK. Maxine and Bernie plan to have their son **Steve**, his wife **Carol**, and their daughters **Nicki** and **Michelle** and Carol's mother at their home for Thanksgiving.

**Anita Plummer** will be going to North Carolina for Thanksgiving with her daughter and her family.



**Earl Blakely practices his grand-parenting skills with Joyce Petty's granddaughter.**



**Dave Stockbridge and Dennis Erinakes discuss the political situation in the Middle East.**

**Mark Boysen** and his wife, **Sue**, spent most of September traveling. They spent five days in Germany with their German daughter, visited Turkey and Ephesus, and also went to Gallipoli. And they have plans to go to Israel in January. Also, Mark announced that he is playing the Grandfather in a production of "The Nutcracker."

**Dennis Erinakes'** son has purchased an equestrian center southwest of Fort Worth. It is just east of the new Chisholm Trail Parkway. **Dennis'** grandson will soon graduate from Officer Training School at Fort Leonard Wood, MO. With great sadness, Dennis announced that his dog, Shelby, has cancer.

**Tom Hodges** has had another knee replacement--this time the left knee. With both knees working so well, we wouldn't be surprised to hear that Tom is training for a marathon! **Don Newman** wishes everyone a happy, healthy Thanksgiving. He and **Bernice** are headed to Amarillo for the holiday. **Doug and Jane Seibel** plan to go to northwest Kansas for Thanksgiving.

**Dennis Gaster** still misses his Mustang Cobra. All of us who have had to part with a car we loved feel your pain. I still get a little misty-eyed when I think of a light green (**Rita** says it was blue) 1965 VW Beetle we owned many years ago.

I'm sad to report the death of two retired SCS employees, one who was a member of our group. **Edward Leon Alexander** died December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015, in Fort Worth. He was 93. Here is an excerpt from his obituary highlighting his career with SCS:

He began work for the Soil Conservation Service June 20<sup>th</sup>, 1949, moving his young family that now included son Jerry, to Harlingen, TX, which seemed like the end of the world to two kids from Memphis. He and **Faye** were embraced by his fellow engineers and their families who promptly nicknamed him "Alex" and with whom they maintained lifelong friendships in the state they came to call home. During his career he was responsible for countless projects aiding farmers and ranchers throughout 13 states. He turned down numerous promotions that would have required disrupting his family with other moves.

**Howard Tankersley** also died, November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015, in Fort Collins, CO. His last position with the agency was at the Information Technology Center in Fort Collins. When he retired from SCS in 1992, he made his home there. See the In Memoriam section for more details.

## **WASHINGTON, DC, NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA**

**John Peterson, ARCSE Representative**

Email: [jwpeterson@cox.net](mailto:jwpeterson@cox.net)

**Warren and Barb Lee and Gordon and Betsy Klofstad** report that they had a great trip to Australia and New Zealand. The only hiccup was when **Gordy** fell and broke a bone in his hand. It didn't slow them down, and his hand is healing well.

From **Carl Bouchard**, "Again this year we participated in the Wreaths Across America event at Arlington National Cemetery. Over 70,000 volunteers showed up at Arlington, and every grave and the Columbarium were covered (240,408 wreaths and 75 tractor trailers). Wreaths were placed at 1,000 locations world-wide on veterans' graves. My grandsons and my son also helped us. This will probably be the last year for the twins to help since they will be away at college next year. It will also be a big year as it will be the 25<sup>th</sup> year since we placed that first truckload of 5,000 wreaths from Maine in 1992. Thank God we have some young blood taking over. We welcomed the volunteers from the ANC steps and answered questions from the time the gates opened until the trucks were unloaded at about 11:30. As always, it was a moving and touching experience. Clean-up takes place on Saturday January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2016. I urge everyone to volunteer at a Veterans Cemetery near you." Thank you **Carl**. Well done again.

**John and Blanche Peterson** attended the Sixth National Conference on Grazing Lands hosted by the National Grazing Lands Coalition Dec. 13-16 in Dallas-Fort Worth, TX. **John** has managed all the six grazing conferences, and this will be his last; he is "retiring." Many former and current SCS/NRCS employees also attended. The **Petersons** enjoyed reminiscing with **Don Gohmert**, former AZ, LA and TX STC. Retirees **Rod Baumberger (SD)**, **Dennis Thompson (NHQ)** and **Dan Caudell (TX)** were also there,

as were many other retirees. Over 600 people attended. The Keynote address was provided by House Ag Committee Chairman K. Michael Conaway (R-TX, 11<sup>th</sup>).

**Kendall Elaine Tyree**, VASWCD Executive Director wrote:

*"At the direction of the VACDE, we nominated **John Peterson** for the Southeast Employees Association for the Outstanding District Board Member award. We learned today that John was chosen as this year's recipient for his outstanding support of employees and association staff in Virginia and throughout the Southeast region.*

*While John can't make it to the Southeast Employees meeting in November to formally accept the award, I chatted with Southeast Employee Association board members today to discuss how we can recognize John at our December annual meeting and share with them the pictures and press. Join me in congratulating John for this recognition.*

*It is my understanding John's nomination will now be moved to the national association of conservation district employees for consideration and review at that level."*

## WASHINGTON

**Gerald Richard, ARCSE Representative**

**Email:** [gir52pdr@aol.com](mailto:gir52pdr@aol.com)

Present at our November and December luncheons at the Timber Creek Grill and Buffet were: **Jud Melton, Lennie Husa, Harry Riehle, Ralph Schmidt, Larry and Jean Edmonds, Hans and Kathryn Krauss, Jerry Richard, Carl Vennes, Ken Kaul, Chet Jahn, Phil Schauble, Dennis Robinson, and Gary Kuhn.** **Lennie Husa** shared some of his experiences of "The Battle of the Bulge" during WWII. After retirement, **Lennie and Florence**, together with some family members, returned to some of the small villages and were warmly welcomed and hosted by the local people. **Ralph Schmidt** was a volunteer for 10 days at the Christmas Bureau. The charity distributes books, toys and food vouchers to over 30,000 needy families as a 70-year Spokane tradition. Thanks to this program, these families can have a merrier Christmas. Thanks Ralph!

**Larry and Jean Edmonds** attended several family reunions, one at Manzanita on the Oregon coast, another at Newberg, OR, and Jean's 50<sup>th</sup> High School reunion in Portland, OR. Jean says it was wonderful to see friends not seen for 50 years!

**Jerry and Phyllis Richard** enjoyed a week in Wrangell, AK this past summer. They visited the Anan Wildlife Observatory to watch the bears fish for salmon. Also saw the LaConte glacier, along with icebergs and seals, Orca whales and Bald Eagles. And of course, a little fishing for Halibut.

We were saddened by the recent passing of **Bob Olson** and **Gary Johnson**. Both Bob and Gary were faithful members of our retiree luncheons leading us into lively discussion of both current events and stories of their days and projects working with farmers and foresters on various conservation projects. In November, Spokane experienced the worst windstorm in its history. It was a disaster! Gusts to 71 mph and over 180,000 homes without power, many without power for eight and nine days. 130 crews, numbering over 700 linemen and assistants, many from other states and Canada, worked day and night to restore power. Tall Ponderosa Pine and spruce trees were blown down, many uprooted and falling on homes and cars. Streets and avenues were blocked all over Spokane.



**Grandson Matt, Great Grandson Isaac, and Jerry Richard at Tlingit totem poles, Wrangell, AK**

## WEST VIRGINIA

Peg Reese, ARCSE Representative

Email: [pegreesewv@gmail.com](mailto:pegreesewv@gmail.com)



*West Virginia retirees' annual luncheon, Morgantown*

West Virginia held its annual retiree luncheon in Morgantown on November 19<sup>th</sup> in Morgantown. Attending were **Patrick Bowen, Dave Burns, Jim and Mary Clevenger, Jim Cooper, Andy and Kathy Feher, Lynn and Karen Shutts, Peg Reese, Helen and Rollin Swank, and Don and Carrie Westach**. **Karen Shutts** won the grand prize which was a birdhouse made by **Jim Cooper**. Many thanks go to **Jim Clevenger** for organizing the event.

**H. Arless Kesecker**, former technician serving in Morgan, Berkeley and Jefferson Counties, passed away on February 20, 2015. More information can be read in the In Memoriam section.

**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.*

**Roland R. Willis, Stillwater, OK**  
**Jimmy R. Bell, Worland, WY**

**Marc Safley, Chronicler, Senior Conservationist**

**SENIOR CONSERVATIONIST CHRONICLE****Marc Safley, Chronicler, Senior Conservationist****Senior Conservationist  
Edwin (Ed) L. Minnick**

Senior Conservationist **Ed Minnick** was born in Folsom, Pennsylvania. Folsom is in Delaware County, about 15 miles south of Philadelphia. He attended elementary school in Ridley Park, PA, and graduated in 1949 from Saint James Catholic High School for Boys in Chester, PA. Following high school he began attending La Salle University in Philadelphia; however, the Korean War draft was imminent, so Ed enlisted in the U.S. Army. He served in the field artillery and arrived in Korea about six months prior to the armistice (signed at Panmunjom on July 27<sup>th</sup>, 1953). Ed was honorably discharged in 1954.

He started working for SCS in 1956 as a WAE at the Georgetown, DE, field office. He was hired full time in June of 1957 as a Civil Engineering Technician serving field and project offices in Maryland and Delaware. He met his wife, **Berta**, in the cafeteria at the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center. They married February 14<sup>th</sup>, 1959. Ed served as Civil Engineering Technician until March 1968 when he accepted the job of Design Engineer for offices and projects in Maryland and Delaware with office in College Park. In June 1970 he graduated from the University of Maryland with a Bachelor of Science degree in engineering. In November of that year he was promoted to Civil Engineer at Storrs, CT, with responsibility for field and project offices in both CT and RI. In December 1979 he was made Assistant State Conservation Engineer for Ohio and moved to Columbus. He held that position until August 1982 when he accepted the job of Assistant State Conservation Engineer and Construction Engineer at Durham, NH. Ed was promoted to State Conservation Engineer for Michigan in May 1985 and served in that capacity until his retirement in December 1988. Throughout his career he designed conservation structures, developed tools to improve the effectiveness of conservation measures, and instructed and mentored other conservationists in analysis and development of appropriately designed conservation measures and systems. Ed passed the Licensed Professional Engineer exam while in Connecticut and is currently licensed in five states (Connecticut, Ohio, New Hampshire, Michigan, and Maine).

After retirement Ed worked as Project Engineer for Civil Consultants, South Berwick, ME, from January 1989 to March 1990. From May 1990 until May 1992 he was Project Engineer for Greiner Engineering Co. of Timonium (MD) and Rocky Hill (CT). In May 1992 he established Minnick Engineering located in Berwick, ME. Its primary client was Rockingham County Conservation District in Brentwood, NH. He remained active as a consulting Professional Engineer until he and Berta moved to California in 2014.

Ed and Berta have two children and five grandchildren. He enjoys photography and has instructed classes in use of HydroCAD stormwater modeling software. He was a volunteer with his local community food pantries in Maine and New Hampshire. Since moving to California he has taken up lawn bowling. He says that Berta has also become a library volunteer and a pickle ball player. Ed says that he has thoroughly enjoyed his chosen career and the tremendous variety of opportunities it afforded him.

## 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, I will be glad to do the search. Please send death notices and obituary information directly to Ron Marlow at [arcse@cox.net](mailto: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](http://www.arcse.org))

Alexander	Honorary Member and Senior Conservationist <b>Edward Leon Alexander</b> (93) passed away on December 3, 2015, in Fort Worth, TX. He was born in a farmhouse in Obion County, Tennessee. WWII veteran and proud member of the Greatest Generation, <b>Leon</b> served with The 316 <sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron in the 324 <sup>th</sup> Fighter Group as a mechanic Crew Chief for P-40 and P-47 fighter planes, among others. WWII took him to India, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Italy, France and Germany until the war was over in 1945, when he was honorably discharged. He obtained the rank of Sergeant and was awarded the Bronze Star. The GI Bill allowed <b>Leon</b> to attend Memphis State College and graduate from The University of Tennessee at Knoxville on June 6, 1948 with a degree in Agricultural Engineering. His work with the Soil Conservation Service as an irrigation engineer in Texas took him to Harlingen, Uvalde and then Temple in 1959. The final transfer was to Ft. Worth in 1971 where he retired in 1980. <b>Leon</b> was preceded in death by his wife of 67 years in 2014, <b>Faye Herriman</b> , his son <b>Jerry Lee Alexander</b> , and son-in-law, <b>Charles Edgar Nash III</b> . He is survived by daughter <b>Deborah Alexander Nash</b> ; son <b>David V. Alexander</b> and wife <b>Cheryl</b> , their children <b>Brandon</b> and <b>Madeline</b> .
Bivens	<b>Donald Clarence Bivens</b> (84) of Brentwood, Tennessee passed away at his home on December 23, 2015. <b>Don</b> was born in Athens, Tennessee. He met his wife <b>Judy</b> at the Soil Conservation Service office in Cookeville where they both worked while attending Tennessee Technological University. After graduating with a BS in Agricultural Science and his marriage to <b>Judy</b> in 1951, he spent several years as a Captain in the US Army and almost 20 years in the Army Reserve. He earned a Master's Degree in Public Administration from the University of Oklahoma in 1972. <b>Don</b> enjoyed a 36-year career with the USDA Soil Conservation Service that took him and his family across Tennessee from Jonesboro to Gainesboro, then to Indiana, Missouri, Colorado, and Oregon, and back to Tennessee in 1975 when he became the State Conservationist. He retired in 1987 and immediately started a new career as a realtor and especially enjoyed involvement with farm land and rural properties. <b>Don</b> was a pilot, farmer, and gardener. He is survived by his wife of 64 years, <b>Judith Ann Hill Bivens</b> ; his four daughters <b>Sandy Bivens (Bob Parrish)</b> , <b>Susan Bush (Gary)</b> , <b>Donita Powell (Bill)</b> , and <b>Sara Beth Schwab (Al)</b> ; his seven grandchildren and eight great grandchildren. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Friends of Warner Parks or a charity of your choice.
Churchman	<b>Ralph Eugene Churchman</b> (72) of Salina, Kansas, passed away on October 24, 2015. <b>Ralph</b> was born in Decatur, Illinois. He worked for <b>Leon Dinkel</b> for over 30 years and then started Excel Security Systems in 2000. Survivors include his wife, <b>Karen</b> of the home, two daughters of Salina, Kansas, and four grandchildren. <b>Ralph</b> was the spouse of <b>Karen Churchman</b> , who served a number of years in the NRCS Kansas State Office as the Secretary for the State Conservationist. Memorial contributions may be made to Salina Breakfast Ambucs in care of Carlson-Geisendorf Funeral Home, 500 S. Ohio, Salina, Kansas 67401.
Clause	<b>Mark Clause</b> (78) Sioux City, Iowa passed away on September 25, 2015. He was the husband of <b>Judy (Rathel) Clause</b> . She was an Area Clerk in Sioux City.
Fagan	<b>William C. (Bill) Fagan</b> (84) passed from this life on November 14, 2015 in Mena, Arkansas. He was born in Okmulgee, Oklahoma. He is a 1959 graduate of OSU. <b>Bill</b> was a veteran of the Korean War, serving in the US Navy. While raising his nine children, he was active on the Garber school board and served as mayor of Fairmont. During the years his children were in school, he manned the game clock at every home football game. <b>Bill</b> spent his career as a Project Engineer with the Soil Conservation Service in Enid and Perry, OK, and designed and built many of the watershed dams across northern Oklahoma. He retired in 1990 after 37 years of service. In 1991, he and his wife <b>Patsy</b> moved to Big Fork, Arkansas to help his oldest son start a marble and granite fabrication company. He resided in Big Fork since that time. He is preceded in death by two sons, <b>Charles Edward Fagan</b> and <b>John Anthony Fagan</b> . <b>Bill</b> is survived by seven children, <b>Steve Fagan (Brenda)</b> of Poteau, OK; <b>Jim Fagan (Carlene)</b> of Mena, AR; <b>Cathy Lantz</b> of Fairmont, OK; <b>Tim Fagan (Tammy)</b> of Garber, OK; <b>Patty Sanders</b> of Morrison, OK; <b>Mary Malloy (Jerry)</b> of Temecula, CA; and <b>Susie Masters (Joe)</b> of Morrison, OK. He is also survived by 17 grandchildren and 21 great-grandchildren. Online Guestbook: <a href="http://www.bowserrfh.com">www.bowserrfh.com</a> .
Fehr	<b>James (Jim) Fehr</b> (84) of Winchester, Kentucky passed away Dec. 10, 2015. He served as a soil scientist for the Soil Conservation Service, retiring in 1986.
Feusner	<b>Mary Margaret Feusner</b> (89) of Upper Arlington, Ohio passed away December 5, 2015. She graduated <i>magna cum laude</i> from Westmar College in LeMars, Iowa. She worked as a teacher throughout her career and retired from Worthington High School. She was preceded in death by her beloved husband, <b>LaVern M. Feusner</b> , former SCS State Agronomist in Ohio. <b>Mary</b> is survived by three sons, eight grandchildren, and 12 great grandchildren. To share memories or condolences, please visit <a href="http://www.schoedinger.com">www.schoedinger.com</a> .
Gorman	<b>Becky Gorman</b> (60) of Jamestown, Missouri passed away on December 18, 2015, at her residence. She was born in Hutchison, KS. She was married on April 20, 1973, to <b>Bruce Gorman</b> in Jamestown, MO, who survives

of the home. She graduated from California High School in 1973. She worked for the Federal Government as an Administrative Assistant for the USDA-NRCS. **Becky** is survived by one son, **Joel Gorman (Alison)** of Jamestown and two precious grandsons. Memorials are suggested to the Family of Becky Gorman, c/o the funeral home. Arrangements are under the direction of Bowlin-Cantriel Funeral Service, 100 S. Oak St. California, MO.

## Herndon

**Velma "Jean" (Wynn) Herndon** (96) of Stillwater, Oklahoma passed away on November 4, 2015. **Jean** was born at home in the remote western Oklahoma community of Carpenter. She graduated from Elk City High School in 1936 and from Hills Business College in Oklahoma City before starting her career with the Federal Government (USDA-SCS State Office), where she retired in 1980 after 30 years of service. **Jean** was married to **John "Roy" Herndon** for over fifty years, until his passing in 1999. She is survived by son **Royce Gene Herndon** of Stillwater and daughter **Regina Herndon Phillips**, one granddaughter, and three great grandchildren. **Jean** was very talented, enjoying many activities and organizations in Stillwater throughout the years: NARFE as a past president, won ABWA Woman of the Year, had a great time singing with the Silver Bells and was proud to be a charter member of Total Health where she exercised until she was 95 years old. She had a great faith in God, attending the Stillwater Church of Christ for more than 60 years. Condolences may be emailed to the family, and an online obituary may be viewed by visiting [www.strodefh.com](http://www.strodefh.com)

## Hotz

**Charles F. Hotz** (82) of Spencer, Massachusetts passed away on June 17, 2015. **Charlie** was predeceased by his wife of 50 years, **Phyllis "Jane" Hotz** in 2013 for whom he lovingly cared during her extended illness. Born in Jersey City, NJ, **Charlie** earned a B.S. in dairy science from Rutgers in 1951. Despite being profoundly hard of hearing and gradually losing his sight, he worked for SCS/NRCS as a Soil Scientist for 37 years before retiring in 1997. In his early years with SCS, **Charlie** conducted soil surveys throughout the U.S. including West Virginia and Alaska. After some loss of vision, **Charlie** drafted soil maps for publication. **Charlie** and his wife hosted children for the Fresh Air Fund for urban children and participants in the 4-H International Exchange Program.

## Irwin

**Harold A Irwin** (93) of Hammon, Oklahoma passed away on August 29, 2015, at Mercy Hospital in Oklahoma City, surrounded by his loving family. He graduated from Hammon High School in 1941. Harold married his best friend and sweetheart, **Lizzie Ruth Collins** on November 22, 1941. **Harold** was an active member of Hammon First Baptist Church, where he served as Treasurer, as well as serving on many committees. He was a member of the American Legion, a 32<sup>nd</sup> degree member of the Masonic Lodge, and charter member and treasurer of the Hammon Lions Club. **Harold** proudly enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in 1943. After basic training in San Diego, California, he served in the South Pacific for approximately two years, where he fought in the battle of Iwo Jima and occupation of Japan. After returning from active duty, he and **Ruth** purchased the farm east of Hammon, where they continued to live. He was employed with the Soil Conservation Service for thirty years as an inspector and surveyor. **Harold** assisted in the US Stream Flood Project on the Upper Washita River near Cheyenne, Oklahoma. He retired from the SCS in 1973, but continued his work surveying for the city, county and friends. He is survived by his loving and devoted wife, **Ruth** of 74 years. Other survivors include his daughter, **Bama** and her husband, **Don Blount** of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; son, **Robert Irwin** of Hammon, Oklahoma; three grandchildren, and two great granddaughters. Preceding him in death was one grandson, **James W. Wheeler**. Memorial Contributions may be made to Make Promises Happen in care of Martin-Dugger Funeral Home, 600 West Country Club Blvd., Elk City, OK 73644.

## Johnson

**Paul Richard (Dick) Johnson** (86) of Lincoln, Nebraska passed away on Nov. 24, 2015. **Dick** was born in Denison, Iowa. He graduated from Denison High School, Iowa State, and the University of Illinois in Champaign, earning a PhD in Agronomy. **Dick** interrupted his studies to serve in the US Air Force during the Korean War as a Staff Sergeant from 1951-1953. **Dick** and **Helen** met in Champaign and were married on January 26, 1958. **Dick** had a passion for the land and for helping farmers make the best use of their soil. He joined the USDA Soil Conservation Service in Lincoln, transferring to Sturgis and then Huron, SD, and back to Lincoln in 1972 where he retired as a Soils Correlator. **Dick** was preceded in death by his wife **Helen**. Survivors include his three children and nine grandchildren. Memorials to Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital Long Term Care or Teammates.

## Johnson

**Gary L. Johnson** (80) passed away November 21, 2015 in Spokane Valley, Washington. **Gary** was born in Fargo, North Dakota, attended North Dakota State University where he earned a bachelor's degree. He worked for the USDA Soil Conservation Service in Eastern Washington for 36 years, retiring in 1955 from the State Office in Spokane on the River Basin Staff. In retirement **Gary** served on the Board of the Spokane NARFE Chapter. He is survived by his wife, **Elinor**, and son, **Mitchell**, both in Spokane Valley, WA. He was preceded in death by his son, **Shannon William Johnson**.

## Keep

**Thomas Alan Keep** (68) of Lincoln, Nebraska passed away November 20, 2015 after a long battle with cancer. He worked as an engineer for the USDA from 1971 until he retired in 2004 as the Agricultural Engineer for NRCS on the Regional Staff. He graduated from Purdue University. **Tom** was a member of St. Mary's Catholic Church in Davey; Knights of Columbus; Soil & Water Conservation Society; certified professional engineer; American Society of Agricultural Engineers; and an avid golfer, Lincoln Seniors Golf League. He is survived by his wife, **Rebecca** of Davey; son, **Andrew Keep**, a District Conservationist in Imperial, NE; and mother, **JoAnne Keep** of Ashland, Ohio. He was preceded in death by his father, **Richard Keep** who worked for SCS as a District Conservationist in Ohio. Memorials, in lieu of flowers, to St. Mary's Catholic Church in Davey or Lincoln Parks & Rec. Foundation Golf Legacy Tribute. Condolences online at [Roperandsons.com](http://Roperandsons.com)

## Kesecker

**H. Arless Kesecker** (92) of Berkeley Springs, West Virginia passed away on February 20, 2015, at his home. He was born on his parents' home farm at the mouth of Sleepy Creek on the Potomac River. **Arless** graduated from Berkeley Springs High School in 1942, and shortly thereafter enlisted in the United States Navy, serving in the

Pacific Theatre until the end of World War II. He attended West Virginia University and enjoyed a 30-year career with the USDA Soil Conservation Service, serving farmers in Morgan, Berkeley and Jefferson counties. During his career, he served on the Morgan County Planning Commission, the Administrative Council of James Rumsey Vo-Tech School, the Morgan County Fire Board, the Morgan County Environmental Council, and the Mountaineers for Rural Progress. **Arless** also served as district supervisor for the Eastern Panhandle Soil Conservation District. Upon retirement in 1977, he continued doing earth-moving construction work for several years. He was preceded in death by his wife of 56 years, **Nora "Pearl" Nicholson Kesecker** and two sons, **David Allen** and **James Andrew Kesecker**. He is survived by three daughters, three sons, seven grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Sleepy Creek Watershed Association, P.O. Box 991, Berkeley Springs, WV.

<b>Koster</b>	<b>Jerome Koster</b> (82) of Breda, Iowa passed away November 6, 2015 at the St. Anthony Nursing Home in Carroll. Born at Breda, Iowa, Jerome served in the United States Army and upon his honorable discharge returned to Iowa. He attended Iowa State College where he met his future wife <b>Jean</b> . Following their marriage <b>Jerome</b> and <b>Jean</b> lived in California and in 1965 moved back to the Midwest where <b>Jerome</b> was a Soil Scientist and later became District Conservationist, working for the Soil Conservation Service until his retirement in 1986. They later moved back to the Breda community. <b>Jerome</b> was a member of St. Bernard's Parish and the Breda American Legion. Survivors include his two children, <b>Jeffery (Denise) Koster</b> of Rochester, MN; and <b>Jennifer Koster</b> of Breda; and three grandchildren. <b>Jerome</b> was preceded in death by his wife, <b>Wilda Jean Koster</b> . Funeral arrangements are under the direction of the Sharp Funeral Home in Breda, and online condolences may be left for Jerome's family at <a href="http://www.sharpfuneral.com">www.sharpfuneral.com</a> .
<b>Loucks</b>	<b>Curtis L. Loucks</b> (94) passed away on November 13, 2015 at his workshop in Rugby, North Dakota. He began his SCS career at Langdon, ND in 1948 and transferred to Rugby, ND in 1957 as the District Conservationist for Pierce County. He retired in 1979. He is survived by his wife of 67 years, <b>Joyce of Rugby</b> ; one son, <b>Brian</b> of Minot; three daughters, <b>LaNeta (Gordon) Pieterick</b> of Rugby, <b>Wendy (Paul Hendrickson) Loucks</b> of Fargo, and <b>Laurie Loucks</b> of Dunseith; four grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents, three brothers and three sisters.
<b>Marietta</b>	Senior Conservationist <b>Merle H. Marietta</b> (91) of Mount Vernon, Ohio passed away on October 29, 2015 at his home. He was born in Canton, Ohio. <b>Merle</b> was a member of the First Christian Church and a WWII Army Air Corps Veteran. He was a graduate from The Ohio State University in 1955 on the GI Bill. He worked at the Knox County Soil and Water Conservation District for a number of years, retiring 1983. <b>Merle</b> was a BMW motorcycle enthusiast and life member of the AMA and Buckeye Trail Association. He was also a member of the Sharon Masonic Lodge #0136 and a former Boy Scout Leader. <b>Merle</b> is survived by his wife of 67 years, <b>Wanda (Roach) Marietta</b> ; one daughter, <b>Connie (Richard) Uveges</b> of Middleton, NY; two sons, <b>Rodney Marietta</b> of Hanover, and <b>David (Margo de Camp) Marietta</b> of Gambier; four grandchildren; two step grandchildren; and two great grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his son, <b>William H. "Bill" Marietta</b> who passed just a few short hours prior to <b>Merle</b> , and an infant daughter <b>Susan</b> . Memorial Contributions may be made to Hospice of Knox County, 17700 Coshocton Road, Mount Vernon. To share a memory or send a condolence to the family of <b>Merle H. Marietta</b> , please visit the funeral home website <a href="http://www.lasaterfuneralhomes.com">www.lasaterfuneralhomes.com</a> .
<b>Miller</b>	<b>Kenneth Arno Miller</b> (91) of Stillwater, Oklahoma passed away on October 5, 2015. He was born in Jay, Oklahoma. An Oklahoma A&M grad., he joined the A&M faculty for two years before working for 38 years as a Soil Conservation and Flood Control Design Engineer for the USDA in Oklahoma. <b>Kenneth</b> was a devoted family man and faithful Christian actively serving for over 50 years as a deacon and Sunday School teacher at Stillwater First Baptist Church. As a young man of 19, he served as a Light Mortar Crewman in the 99 <sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, 395 <sup>th</sup> Regiment of the US Army. The 99 <sup>th</sup> Infantry Division distinguished itself defending the North shoulder of the Ardennes in the Battle of the Bulge. It was the first full infantry division to cross the Rhine River at Remagan. It collapsed the Ruhr pocket and conquered more than 1,000 square miles of territory before reaching the Austrian border on V-day. He is survived by his wife of 64 years, <b>Juanita Jo</b> ; a son, <b>Mark</b> and partner <b>Wade Burkholder</b> ; daughters, <b>Kerry Staley</b> , <b>Nancy Miller</b> and husband <b>Rick Froelich</b> ; six grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren. Condolences may be emailed to the family and an online obituary may be viewed by visiting <a href="http://www.strodefh.com">www.strodefh.com</a> .
<b>Nettleton</b>	<b>Dr. Wiley Dennis Nettleton</b> (83) of Lincoln, Nebraska passed away on Nov. 21, 2015 at his home surrounded by family. He was a long-time research soil scientist with the USDA National Soil Survey Laboratory. He was united in marriage to <b>Norene Lutz</b> on June 9, 1956. To this union were born four children, 11 grandchildren, and 12 great-grandchildren. He was predeceased by grandson <b>J. Foster McCracken</b> , and great-grandson <b>Asher Damrow</b> . In lieu of flowers, please place your memorials towards the Prayer Chapel of Southview Baptist Church.
<b>Nordean</b>	<b>Lilian Shirley Nordean</b> (94) formerly of Konawa and Ada, Oklahoma passed away on April 28, 2015. She was born at Summitt, Arkansas. She graduated from Yellville-Summit High School. She also graduated from East Central University in 1975 (after 17 years of night school), where she received a Bachelor of Arts degree in History and Sociology. She completed an additional 15 hours towards a Masters in Psychology. <b>Lilian</b> was employed with the Soil Conservation Service for 32 years. Survivors include three sons, nine grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband of 56 years, <b>Charles Leslie Nordean</b> , a son, <b>C. Russell Nordean</b> , and a grandson, <b>Ross Alan Nordean</b> . Online condolences sent to <a href="http://crsliwellfh.com">crsliwellfh.com</a> .
<b>Olson</b>	Honorary Life Member and Senior Conservationist <b>Robert J. Olson</b> (93) of Spokane, Washington passed away on October 2, 2015. He joins his wife of 62 years, <b>Lillie Mae</b> ; son, <b>Mark</b> ; granddaughter, <b>Kristy</b> ; and brother

**Don**. His father was in charge of the replanting of the Bitter Root range after the "Big Burn" of 1910, and Savanac nursery, Montana, became Bob's much loved playground. He began his University studies in Lincoln, Nebraska but was called into duty for World War II. He fought in the Battle of the Bulge under General Patton. He attended Stanford and then graduated from Washington State University. He followed his father's path into forestry and soil conservation and was the State Forester for the Soil Conservation Service in Spokane, Washington when he retired in 1979. **Bob** is survived by his children, **Susan DeLine (William)**, **Ken Olson (Margo)**, **Catherine Olson (Ron)**; and daughter-in-law **Eleanor Olson**. He had eight grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Pope	<b>Muriel E. Pope</b> (87) passed away on November 26, 2015 at St. Catherine's Living Center, Wahpeton, North Dakota. She was the wife of the late <b>Eugene Pope</b> , an engineer, who worked for SCS in ND, the National Technical Center in Lincoln, NE and a four-year tour of duty in India. She is survived by her children, <b>Randall (Joan) Pope</b> of Wahpeton, ND; <b>Deborah (David) Starbuck</b> of Kaneohe, HI; <b>Doug (Lynn) Pope</b> of Greenfield, WI; <b>Steve (Janet) Pope</b> of N. Potomac, MD; <b>Gene Pope Jr. (Polly)</b> of Overland Park, KS; <b>Dan Pope</b> of Duluth, MN; two sisters; 10 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her parents, her husband, two sisters, and three brothers.
Post	<b>Gerald John Post</b> (85) of Lincoln, Nebraska passed away on November 19, 2015. He was born in Burkettsville, Ohio. <b>Gerald</b> is a member of Saint Peter's Catholic Church, Army Veteran, member of American Legion Post #3, American Society of Agronomy, and the Soil Science Society of America. He retired from the Soil Conservation Service in 1989 as a Supervisory Soil Scientist. Survivors include wife, <b>Dorothy Post</b> , sons and daughters-in-law <b>Paul (Patricia) Post</b> of Thornton, CO; <b>Michael (Sharon) Post</b> of Hilliard, OH; <b>Thomas (Karen) Post</b> of Lincoln; <b>Larry (Kristie) Post</b> of Lincoln; daughter and son-in-law <b>Theresa (Gary) Gremling</b> of Columbus, OH; and ten grandchildren and two great grandchildren. Preceded-in-death a grandson <b>Steven Gremling</b> . Online Condolences can be left at <a href="http://www.bmlfh.com">www.bmlfh.com</a> .
Richards	<b>Grace Richards</b> (83) of Circleville, Ohio passed away on December 4, 2015 at Grant Hospital due to a brain aneurysm. Grace is the wife of ARCSE member <b>Bill Richards</b> , former Chief of the Soil Conservation Service. A graduate of The Ohio State University, Grace was a full partner and corporate officer in the Richards' Family Farm operations. She was a member of the Presbyterian Church where she served on many committees. Grace was a member and past president of the Child Conservation League. While living in Washington D.C., she was active in the Philanthropic Educational Organization (P.E.O.). Grace is survived by her husband of 63 years, Bill Richards; sons, <b>Bruce S. (Betsy) Richards and Elmon (Connie) Richards</b> of Circleville; daughter-in-law, <b>Loribeth Kowalski</b> , Circleville; and seven grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her son, <b>Steve Richards</b> . In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to The Grace Richards Memorial Fund in care of the Presbyterian Church 134 E. Mound St., Circleville, OH 43113.
Rush	<b>Annette Rush</b> (77) of Grove City, Ohio went peacefully home to be with her Lord on December 27, 2015. She was a graduate of Claredon High School. She is survived by <b>Richard W. Rush</b> , her husband for 54 years. An ARCSE member, <b>Richard</b> retired in 1994 as the CAMPS Specialist for SCS in Ohio. They traveled around the world together after retirement. Also survived by her daughter, <b>Laura Rush</b> , of Grove City. She was a faithful and active member of St John's Lutheran Church, serving in the Saturday Night Choir, Prayer Warriors, Sunday School, Bible Study Groups, Women's Circle, and served for more than 20 years as a Grove City LifeCare Alliance Meals On Wheels Volunteer Coordinator. She also was active in Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS), Vaughn E Hairston YMCA Urbancrest, and with her husband was awarded the Volunteer of the Year Award from the Dept. of Aging. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church Organ Fund. Visit <a href="http://www.schoedinger.com">www.schoedinger.com</a> to share a favorite memory or extend condolences.
Schiermeister	<b>Ervin Schiermeister</b> (79) passed away on December 10, 2015 at a Bismarck, North Dakota hospital. He worked for 32 years in SCS offices in Linton, Mott, and Bismarck, ND. His wife, <b>Joan</b> , died recently on September 2, 2015. <b>Ervin</b> is survived by his daughters, <b>Gail (Terry) Mees</b> and <b>Sandy (Donny) Gleich</b> ; five grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren; and seven sisters. He was preceded in death by his parents, his wife, three sisters, four brothers, and two brothers-in-law.
Spangler	<b>Richard Spangler</b> (88) of Indianola, Iowa passed away on November 7, 2015. He was the husband of the late <b>Connie Spangler</b> . <b>Connie</b> worked in the SCS state office in personnel from the early 70s to the early 90s.
Tankersley	<b>Howard Charles Tankersley</b> (81) of Ft. Collins, Colorado passed away on November 29, 2015. He was born in Gooding, ID. <b>Howard</b> graduated from the U of Idaho with a BS in Ag. Ed. (1956), and from the U. of Oregon with an MS in Public Admin. (1969). After teaching for two years, interrupted by a one-year stint in the Army, he began a long career as a civil servant in the USDA, where he achieved upward mobility through county, state, and national service. <b>Howard</b> was the last Senior Information Resources Management Officer (SIRMO) with SCS/NRCS, precursor to what now is the Chief Information Officer (CIO). He retired in 1992. He leaves behind his wife of 60 years, <b>Cherrie</b> , daughters <b>Leslie Black (Don)</b> , <b>Laurie Seiler</b> , and son <b>David Tankersley (Patti)</b> , seven granddaughters, and three great-grandsons. The family requests that donations to the following charities be considered in lieu of flowers: Larimer County Food Bank or Habitat for Humanity, in care of Allnutt Funeral Service, 650 W. Drake Road, Fort Collins, CO 80526.
Wells	Honorary Member and Senior Conservationist Colonel <b>Robert Dial Wells</b> (95) of Columbia, South Carolina passed away peacefully in his sleep November 2, 2015. He was born in Young County, Texas, one of nine children. <b>Bob</b> graduated from Texas A&M College in 1941 and went to work for the USDA Soil Conservation Service in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. He was the SCS State Soil Scientist upon his retirement in 1975. <b>Bob</b> was also a lifelong proud member of the United States Marine Corps. After the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, he

signed up as an aviation cadet in the Navy. In the Navy he trained to be a fighter pilot, later transferring to the Marines where he was affectionately known as "Oily." His favorite plane to fly was the Corsair and he liked to say it was the best ever plane to fly as long as you weren't being shot at. **Bob** was deployed in Operation Downfall in 1945 and continued to patrol the Pacific after the Japanese surrender. He again deployed with Ground Forces to Korea in 1951 to coordinate ground forces with air-based troops and supplies. He counted his service with the Marines as some of his strongest bonds. *Semper Fi* was his lifelong motto that he lived out each day. He was often heard to declare, "Once a Marine, always a Marine." He was a faithful member of North Trenholm Baptist Church for 48 years. He served as a deacon and Sunday school teacher for most of those years. **Bob** was an avid reader, coming home weekly from the library with 10 or more books on a variety of topics. He was a proud member of Toastmasters for 30 years and was an enthusiastic speaker. He enjoyed excellent health throughout his life, walking three miles a day well into his 90s. He encouraged others to be healthy, too, with his well-known plan for longevity: "genes, beans, miles and smiles." All who knew **Bob** loved him and will not soon forget him as one of the kindest and best Americans of the Greatest Generation. He was predeceased by his wife of 56 years, **Myrtle**; his daughter, **Nancy**; and his son, **Ben**. He is survived by his children, **Margie Welch**, **Sally Koon (Wayne)**, **Evelyn Fletcher (John)**, **Ken Wells (Lisa)**; his 11 grandchildren and his five great-grandchildren. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to North Trenholm Baptist Church, 6515 North Trenholm Road, Columbia, SC 29206.

**Whaley** CMSGT Leland C. "Lee" Whaley USAF (R) (85) of Baldwin City, Kansas, passed away on November 27, 2015. **Lee** worked most of his career as a technician for the Soil Conservation Service in Brown, Miami, Douglas and Franklin counties. He also served 37 years between the active and reserve U.S. Air Force, retiring as Chief Master Sergeant, and spent considerable extra duty with the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, earning two Joint Services Commendations. He was born in Brown County. He served two terms on the Baldwin City council and multiple terms on the Douglas County Conservation District Board of Supervisors. **Lee** is also survived by his wife of 67 years, **Elizabeth "Ann" Field**, a daughter **Karla R. Grosdidier (David)** of Eudora Kansas; two sons, **Darren Whaley (Paulette)** of Avondale, PA, and **Mark Whaley** of Baldwin City, KS; six grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions suggested to the Brown County Veterans Honor Guard, sent in care of Chapel Oaks Funeral Home, 124 S 7th St., Hiawatha, KS 66434.

**Whitehurst** Bryan Kelly Whitehurst (89) of Williamson, Georgia passed away on December 23, 2015 at his residence. **Bryan** was born in Adel, Georgia. He is preceded in death wife of 61 years, **Carolyn Howard Whitehurst**. **Bryan** served in France and Germany during World War II, and after Germany's surrender, he returned home to complete his education. He graduated from The University of Georgia in 1948. Bryan was a farmer and the USDA-SCS District Conservationist. At various times he served Pike, Spalding, Lamar, Upson and Monroe Counties. He was the mayor of Williamson and a beloved member and co-founder of The Church of Joy. For many years he served as a devoted Elder and leader. Survivors include his daughters and sons-in-law, **Lil** and **John Lassiter** of Crawfordville, FL; **Kella** and **Thomas Barnett** of Williamson; and six grandchildren. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to The Church of Joy, P.O. Box 41, Williamson, GA 30292 in memory of Mr. Whitehurst.

**DEADLINE FOR MARCH/APRIL 2016 NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS IS FEBRUARY 25, 2016**



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