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NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter for Retired SCS and NRCS Employees

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NOTES FROM THE POTOMAC

John Stierna

Cost of living adjustment—Cost of living adjustment will be 1.7 percent for both CSRS and FERS annuitants who have received benefits for one year. The increase is effective December 1st, 2014 and payable to annuitants on January 2nd, 2015. The same 1.7 percent increase in benefits will occur for Social Security recipients. Independently, based on an Executive Order, Federal employees will be receiving a one percent pay increase beginning in 2015.

The Congress—The 113th Congress has finished business for the year, and the new 114th Congress will convene in January with a Republican majority in both chambers. One of the last items of business for Congress before leaving town was passing an omnibus appropriation bill to keep the government running. Funding provided by the “Cromnibus” (for both a continuing resolution and an omnibus appropriation bill) includes \$846,428,000 for NRCS conservation operations in FY 2015, a step up from the \$813 million in FY 2014. However, the sequester will take away almost \$62 million, leaving about \$785 million for funding that is actually available for NRCS’s conservation operations account.

Of the **Farm Bill conservation programs** with “mandatory” funding through the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC), the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) was capped at \$1,347 million, a cut of \$253 million from the \$1.6 billion provided in the Farm Bill. The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) was also capped by limiting enrollment in FY 2015 to 7.7411 million acres, rather than the 10 million acres specified in the Farm Bill. However, the new Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) was not capped by appropriators, thus allowing \$425 million to be used for Wetland Reserve easements and Agricultural Land easements. Some of the funding for farm bill conservation programs, however, will be lost due to sequester. This will reduce available dollars by 7.3 percent.

The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) receives some direct funding as well as drawing funding from EQIP and ACEP, plus some acres from CSP. This new program has about \$342 million available over the two fiscal years of 2014 and 2015. Created by the 2014 Farm Bill, RCPP funds public-private partnerships to create regional conservation programs encompassing multiple farms and leverages Federal dollars with partner contributions. It allows the USDA and its partners to target funds to landscapes of important agricultural lands rather than working one farm at a time.

Appropriators provided \$12 million from discretionary funding and allowed up to another \$73 million from CCC mandatory funding for Watershed Rehabilitation work.

The conservation loan guarantee program administered by the Farm Services Agency was provided \$150 million in the Cromnibus appropriation bill.

The Congress also passed a large tax extender bill that included reauthorization of a tax deduction for farmers and ranchers who donate a conservation easement, thus protecting their land. Despite efforts to make this tax deduction permanent, it was limited to the 2014 tax year. While the deduction is limited to 50 percent of adjusted gross income for most landowners, a special case for farmers and ranchers allows a deduction up to 100 percent of their income, and it can be carried forward for up to 15 years.

Frank Lucas will be stepping down as Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee for the new Congress. Representative **Mike Conaway** from the 11th district in Texas will assume the chairmanship. This change is due to the Republican rules governing committee leadership. Representative **Collin Peterson** from Minnesota will remain the ranking member on the Democratic side.

ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED CONSERVATION SERVICE EMPLOYEES

In the Senate, **Pat Roberts** from Kansas will assume the Chairmanship of the Senate Agriculture Committee. Current Chair, Michigan **Senator Debbie Stabenow**, will become the ranking member for the Democratic side.

NRCS—Interim Rules for CSP and EQIP were published by NRCS on November 5th and December 12th, respectively, with requests for comment. Comments must be received by January 20th for CSP and by February 10th for EQIP. In both of these rules, changes to the programs are being made based on the 2014 Farm Bill, as well as program refinements identified internally and from prior public comments. For those interested in reviewing the rules or information on changes to the programs, links to the rule and summary information can be found at the following NRCS website:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/programs/farbill/?cid=stelprdb1237774>

The rule for the ACEP program is still at the Office of Management and Budget, and is expected to be published sometime in January.

RCP Projects—An announcement from USDA is likely in January on the projects selected for funding under the Regional Conservation Partnership Program. This much-anticipated announcement will jump-start this partnership program for addressing identified priority resource concerns.

International Year of Soils—2015 has been designated as the International Year of Soils by the United Nations. It will be a year-long soils celebration as a way to increase understanding of the importance of soil for food security and essential ecosystem functions. NRCS will showcase the importance of soil with monthly themes created by the Soil Science Society of America. More information can be found at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/soils/yos> The NRCS soils planner for 2015 (some call it a calendar) features the 12 monthly themes of International Year of Soils.



Waters of the United States (WOTUS)—The Omnibus appropriation bill included a provision instructing EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers to withdraw their interpretive rule concerning 56 NRCS conservation practices exempt from jurisdiction under the Clean Water Act. However, the proposed rule defining Waters of the United States was not limited by appropriators. Watch for more developments on the issue in the months ahead.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Warren M. Lee, wandblee@comcast.net

From your officers and staff, we wish you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



Your feedback is requested, please.

In our last newsletter, I asked your thoughts on including telephone numbers in the ARCSE Directory. We received very few comments. I personally would find it beneficial, but recognize there are differing opinions. We will be making a decision on this matter in the coming months, thus give us your feedback.

“Another issue we are debating is whether to include everyone’s **phone number** in our ARCSE Directory. With the advent of the computer, most of our home phone numbers are readily available using the “Whitepages” web site. Thus, since it’s readily available, we may not be compromising our member’s privacy by including their home numbers in the ARCSE Directory. In addition, many members are now using only cell phones, and those numbers are available. We would allow members to opt out. Personally, I would find it very handy to have individual members’ home and/or cell phone numbers printed in the directory, but this is the Board’s decision. **We recognize the pros and cons and would like feedback from our members.**”

ARCSE President’s Award for Outstanding Community Service

It is time once again to start thinking about potential nominees for the award. Nominations for the award and documentation (no more than 2 pages) of the qualifications of the nominee are to be made by the ARCSE Representative. Nominees' names and qualifications will be sent to the Regional Vice President **by May 15th**.

Purpose: To publicly recognize ARCSE Members who have distinguished themselves in sustained and outstanding contributions in local, state, and regional community service.

Qualifications:

- ☐—Nominee is an ARCSE Member.
- ☐—Nominee demonstrates strong character and high ethical and professional standards.
- ☐—Selection will not be based upon his/her achievements while employed by SCS/NRCS.

Criteria for Nomination: Nominees will be those individuals who have distinguished themselves by providing sustained high quality service, possibly using their SCS/NRCS area of expertise, to local, state, or regional entities. Recipients of their service may include volunteer work for hospitals, churches, schools, youth organizations such as Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, SWCDs, NRCS Earth Teams, environmental groups, or other units of government, or service organizations.

A BIT OF HISTORY

Douglas Helms, Historian

Email: douglas_helms@verizon.net Hugh Bennett and the Dust Storm Over the Capitol Story

Hugh Bennett's deft use of the dust storm over the Capitol during hearings to create the Soil Conservation Service is part of the folklore of the agency. While historian of the agency, I wanted to document as much of it as I could. But there remains one mystery.

On March 20th a dust storm swept over Kansas and crossed the Mississippi River in the early evening on its way to the East Coast. The Washington Post of October 21st reported on the storm, and Bennett testified that morning before a and the Mystery subcommittee of the House of Representatives' Committee on Public Lands. The transcript for March 21st makes no note of the arrival of the dust cloud, but arrive it did. The center of the storm passed north of Washington DC, but it was clearly visible in the Washington DC area on March 21st. The Washington Post reported "Throngs of curious persons, leaving Government offices, swarmed down the Mall and to Potomac Park, where the dust was visible." In recounting the event and talking with his biographer, Bennett said the event took place before the Senate Committee on Public Lands hearing. The Senate hearings actually were held by the Committee on Agriculture, while the House of Representatives' hearings were held

before the Committee on Public Lands hearing. The dust cloud of March 20th in the Midwest and its arrival over Washington DC on March 21st was well documented in newspapers. Weather observations for the East Coast and Washington newspapers did not report a dust cloud over Washington during the Senate hearings in April, 1935. I conclude that Bennett was correct in saying the event took place before a Committee on Public Lands hearing, but forgot that the hearing was before the House committee, not the Senate committee.

You can read about this and other matters in a collection of my writings published by Lulu.com press. Sam Stalcup edited **He Loved to Carry the Message: The Collected Writings of Douglas Helms, 1979-2010**, which is available from Lulu.com at:

<http://www.lulu.com/shop/douglas-helms/he-loved-to-carry-the-message-the-collected-writings-of-douglas-helms/hardcover/product-20262314.html>



Dust reaches Washington DC, Spring, 1935. Photo RG 114G-c-6001a from the National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

Editor's note: If you have seen the new movie, "Interstellar," note that the cameos with people describing the demise of the earth in the movie are actually from the Dust Bowl documentary by Ken Burns.

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

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

by Ron Marlow, Secretary Treasurer

Correction: Roman A. Statz was mistakenly listed as an Honorary Member in the last issue. Our records were off by 10-years. Roman is only 81.

New Members:

Hendrix, Larry	NC
Henderson, Wayne	SC
Weller, John	WV

ARCSE Representatives Report

by Ron Marlow, Secretary Treasurer

I want to welcome a new state representative on board. Upon retirement of ARCSE state representative **Maralee Sarasio**, the new state representative for Iowa is **Mark Jensen**. Mark retired as the State Conservation Engineer in Iowa in 2008. The ARCSE Board deeply appreciates Maralee's efforts in leading ARCSE activities in Iowa and is extremely pleased to see a relatively new ARCSE member like Mark stepping forth into a leadership role.

ARIZONA

Karl Klingelhofer, ARCSE Representative

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Steve and Licia Black of Phoenix spent Thanksgiving in San Diego visiting some of the local sites. Of special interest was a visit to the aircraft carrier USS Midway that is now a museum—very interesting site with lots of volunteers to talk about the activities that took place aboard that ship. They also visited some historic sites in Yuma, AZ on the way home. Steve was gone for several weeks in November/December to Illinois, Indiana, and Texas working on his part-time consulting job.

John Hedlund, Tucson—I'm back in Arizona enjoying sunshine and warm weather; but with due respect to ND, it has been a very nice and mild fall there. And while we may lament the Cardinals' loss to the Seahawks, The NDSU Bison are on their way to a fourth consecutive National Title. Go Bison!

Karl Klingelhofer, Tucson—I drove to Escondido, CA to be with family for Christmas, with a stopover in Palm Springs. Hadn't been there for some time and it is an interesting city. I did have dinner with **Galen Bridge** last week and we talked over old times. Have known each other for 40 years. He lives in my development when he isn't traveling.

On my way home from CA, I stopped over in Yuma and visited with **Marilyn Davis (Mrs. Mel)** and we had a good visit for about 1-1/2 hours. She looks great and is in good health. Her son, **Ron**, was with her and I got to meet him. He is a little taller than Mel was. They just got back the day before from visiting her daughter in San Diego. They live in a nice neighborhood about 15 miles East of Yuma. We had a good time talking about the old times and people we knew. She agreed that she had let her membership in the Association lapse and wanted to renew it so she gave me the fee and I will submit it for her.

CALIFORNIA

Bill Ward, ARCSE Representative

Email: bluegrassbillward@gmail.com

Hello and Happy New Year to all our fellow SCS and NRCS retirees across the nation. We continue to enjoy our Monthly gatherings, one for lunch and one for breakfast. In our November lunch we had **Mario Milan's wife Virginia** and their son **Paul** join us for the first time after Mario's passing. They are moving forward with their lives after 56 years of marriage for Mario and Gin. **Mario Milani** left quite a treasure of photos behind that his wife **Virginia** shared with me, going back to the early days of his career. With this update for the new year, I plan to begin sharing these in our future California reports. Here is a good one to start with from a training course on Contract Administration for Government Representatives in 1968. **Mario Milani, Harold Honeyfield and Stan Moorehead** are California retirees in this photo. We are fortunate Mario

recorded the names of attendees, otherwise identifying some of these folks from this 45+ year-old photo would likely be a challenge.



Attendees of Contract Administration training course for Government Representatives, Feb. 5–9, 1968.

First Row – Left to Right:

John I. Sherman, Chief, Procurement Mgmt. Branch, Washington, D. C. (Instructor)
 Floise A. Hasenkamp, Secretary, Western Training Center
 James T. Cuykendall, Albany Oregon
 Clarence M. Graham, Portland, Oregon
 Harold R. Honeyfield, Albuquerque, New Mexico
 Thomas F. Lagier, Hood River, Oregon
 Mario J. Milani, Stockton, California
 Stanley T. Moorhead, Santa Rosa, California
 Jerome T. Muth, Phoenix, Arizona
 Paul E. Nylander, Engineering Division, Washington, D. C. (Instructor)
 Linda Sidell, Clerk, Western Training Center

Second Row

Verl King, Ass't Head, Western Training Center (Instructor)
 Ralph C. Wright, Adm. Services Division, Washington, D. C. (Instructor)
 George A. Peck, Berkeley, California
 A. Joseph Petty, Elko, Nevada
 Leroy F. Scherer, Montpelier, Idaho
 Donald L. Stettler, Eugene, Oregon
 John L. Sullivan, Idaho Falls, Idaho
 Charles W. Ware, Apache Junction, Arizona
 Chester J. Wojahn, Kamuela, Hawaii
 William R. Stanley, Construction Engineer, Portland, Oregon, (Instructor)
 Boyd A. Murray, Head, Western Training Center



California Retirees' November luncheon: from lower left, Jack George, three guests of Bill Ward, Bill Ward's mother-in-law Betty, wife Dana and Granddaughter Anberlynn, Pat Grover, Stan Morehead, Walt Sykes, Helen Flach, Gary Bullard, Charles Davis, Virginia Milani and son Paul Milani, Darwyn Briggs and his wife Suzie. Bill Ward took the picture.

Helen Flach continues to do some extensive traveling, seeing the world and enjoying some very unique experiences. The picture was taken on a recent trip of hers to northern Thailand in November when she visited Tiger Kingdom, a tiger conservation center where you can go inside the cages and visit the tigers. She shared with me that when she stroked the back of the biggest one, he rolled over on his back like a kitten, and the employees told her "He wants you to scratch his tummy." So she did! Anybody else want to put this on your "Bucket List?" As part of this trip she also went briefly into Myanmar and Laos and said it was a great trip.



Helen Flach with a Bengal Tiger in Tiger Kingdom, Thailand, November 2014



Western Lights Trio

I am continuing to enjoy playing music with my band and I also enjoy playing with a smaller group of three of us as a trio. One of the venues we are finding a big demand for our music is playing social events for Senior Living communities. Here is a sample of our music we captured at one of these recent senior living community social events: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wp2XxWUOWDI>.

Western Lights Trio, Tennessee Waltz, Freight Trains, Tumbleweeds, Moving and another Waltz.

That's all for this update, wishing you all the best for the new year from all the California retirees!

COLORADO

Ivan Wilkinson, ARCSE Representative

Email: giwilk@estesvalley.net

Just a brief note from Ivan: "Last August 4th I had a bike wreck which seemed inconsequential at the time. Five weeks later I was airlifted to Loveland, CO due to a subdural hematoma."

IOWA

Mark Jensen, ARCSE Representative [NEW]

Email: amjens1@gmail.com

As I begin my new duties as the Iowa ARCSE representative, I want to shout out a big "thank you" to **Maralee Sarasio** for the hard work she has done over the past several years in this position. Maralee, it has been appreciated!

Iowa retirees held our annual Christmas party at the Machine Shed Restaurant by the Living History Farms in Urbandale on November 13th. A great meal of potatoes, vegetables, salad, pot roast, and stuffed pork chops resulted in 51 stuffed retirees. Those in attendance included: **Rod Martin and Margaret Dysart** from Johnston; **Roger and Donita Link** from Maxwell; **Ronald and Jo Elyn Hersom** from Marshalltown; **Gerald and Marion Stevens, Russ and Donna Knutson, Raymond Currier and Connie Rudy** from Boone; **Lew and Connie Brent** from Knoxville; **Janet Schmidt** from Nevada; **Volney Smith and Kathy Smith** from Waukee; **Don and Dortha Borts** from Sigourney; **Jim Ayen and Duane and Mary Jo Miller** from Urbandale; **Brian Peterson** from Corning; **Joe Ausan, Dennis Peterson, Herb Wilson, and Ron Walker** from Ankeny; **Don and Doris Ummel, Jack and Maralee Sarasio, Dean Glen and Margaret Hemphill, and Dewey Bondurant** from Des Moines; **Jim and Betty Reel** from Mount Sterling; **Lyle and Charlotte Asell** from Chariton; **Art and Mary Jane Bryant** from Indianola; **Don and Donna Redman** from Van Wert; **Doug Oelmann and Dave and Paige Rohlf** from Altoona; **Debbie Cavett** from Norwalk; **Louis Boeckman** from Creston; **Charles and Trudy Shirley** from Mingo; and **Ann and Mark Jensen** from West Des Moines. It was a good time for re-connecting with old friends, telling stories, and socializing.

In other news, **Jack Sarasio**, husband of retiree Maralee, and **Don Ummel** were among the 385 Korean War veterans on the September 30th Central Iowa Honor Flight to visit the Korean War Memorial and other memorials in Washington, DC. The group attended a send-off dinner on Monday evening at Prairie Meadows, where they arrived in a processional of 17 chartered buses led by police cars. A very early morning flight on a chartered Boeing 747 took them on a once-in-a-lifetime trip with a return at almost midnight.

The trip had a special sidelight for Don as his daughter **Debbie** and husband **Mark** were able to join the group as they visited the memorials. Mark is with the U.S. Air Force stationed in Washington. Our thanks to Don, Jack, and all the other veterans who have valiantly served our country.

Volney Smith made an extensive driving trip to the West last July. He visited friends and family in Colorado, Oregon, California and New Mexico. One interesting item he observed was that in several places in the Central Valley of California there were signs reading "No water, no jobs." He didn't know if the signs referred to a pending vote in the legislature or the continuing drought in California. By the time he returned home he had driven 5,800 miles through 11 states.

During the past few months, we have lost four of our retiree family. **Ron Snyder**, the long-time District Conservationist from Leon and RC&D Coordinator from Burlington, passed away on December 6th. **Lorenz Meier**, a Soil Conservation Technician in Page County, passed away on December 11th. **Bryan Schmitt**, husband of **Linda Schmitt**, former Area Administrative Assistant in West Union, passed away on October 22th. **Erma Duree**, wife of the late **Leo Duree**, a former Civil Engineering Technician, passed away on September 25th. See In Memoriam for more details.

KANSAS

Deanne Lull, ARCSE Representative

Email: rlull2@cox.net

Although I am dreaming of a white Christmas, it appears that will be unlikely in the Salina area. We did wake up to a winter wonderland with a three-inch snowfall the week before Christmas; however, with temperatures climbing to the upper 40s, it quickly melted.

Congratulations go to **Dale McClaskey** who celebrated his 86th birthday in November.

Two long-time office assistants recently retired from the Kansas State Office. **Doreen McDowell** retired on November 1st, 2014, with 42 years of service. Doreen began her federal career in 1972 filling the positions of receptionist, file clerk, and office assistant for the State Conservation Engineer. **Rosie Collins** retired on December 3rd, 2014, after completing 41 years of federal service. **Rosie** began her federal career in 1973 with the Department of the Army at Fort Riley in Junction

City, Kansas. She transferred to the financial department of the SCS in 1975 and in 1978 was reassigned to the Programs Staff where she served as secretary and office assistant for the remainder of her career.

I am extremely sorry to report of death of retiree and close friend **Linda L. Komarek** on December 17th, 2014. I worked many years with **Linda** and visited with her at lots and lots of coffee breaks. She is survived by her husband, **Francis**, who is also an SCS retiree.

Our condolences also go to the **Payne** and **Hoffman** families. **Mary Ruth Payne** passed away on November 20th, 2014. She was the spouse of **Jay** who preceded her in death in 1989. **Jay** was the District Conservationist in the Salina Field Office for many years. **Thelma Irene Hoffman** passed away on November 26th, 2014. She was the spouse of **Mac L. Hoffman** who preceded her in death in 2009. **Mac** was a Soil Conservation Technician in the Effingham Field Office. See In Memoriam for more details

KENTUCKY

Billye M. Haslett, ARCSE Representative

Email: bchaslett@aol.com



Photo by Billye Haslett. Left to Right: Connie McKinney, Linda Derrossitt, Shriley Hill and Sylvia Lyons having lunch on December 10, 2014 at Coba Cuccina's in Idle Hour Shopping Center, Lexington, KY.

Coba's is a Las Vegas style restaurant that serves Latin American cuisine, as a specialty. However, there is something on the menu for everyone. The restaurant has the largest jelly fish tank in America. It also has a bakery and Italian style gelato (ice cream) parlor that is a "must visit." If you're in Lexington, plan on visiting Coba Cuccina's.

Upcoming Kentucky Retirements:

Joe Carpenter, SCT from Springfield, KY is retiring January 2, 2015. Joe Carpenter, 330 Lakeview Dr., Springfield, KY 40069, carpenter12@bellsouth.net.

Steve Crabtree, State Office GIS Specialist will be hanging up his mouse on January 2, 2015 to start enjoying retirement, after 37 years of service with SCS and NRCS. Steve's home address is 1008 Par Drive, Lawrenceburg, KY 40342, 859-492-1373 or email stevedcrabtree@att.net.

Gary McFarland, District Conservationist in Bourbon and Fleming Counties will be retiring January 2, 2015. Gary's home address is: 6128 Ware RD, Paris, KY 40361, 859-707-7070 or email garym@kih.net.

Billye Haslett, Retired State Administrative Officer: I've taken up the hobby of painting. I'm using acrylics and while I doubt anyone would buy them, I've found the creative outlet to be a lot of fun.

I'm giving my painting to unsuspecting family members at Christmas. This year I've made a real effort to enjoy the Christmas season and to not get stressed by anything. I invited my five-year-old great niece to my house to make sugar cookies. You wouldn't think sugar cookies could turn into a disaster—but they did. We still had fun decorating the blobs that they turned into. I still can't figure out what happened. Next year I'll buy the cookie dough.

My effort to have all Christmas presents purchased by Thanksgiving didn't work exactly as planned. Some of the online websites I used indicated a 12- to 25-day delivery. I assumed that meant from the time I placed the order. Actually it meant from the time shipped.

So, some items aren't going to make it on time—if ever. I've learned one thing. When you ask your young nieces/nephews for a wish list, specify local vendors or at least a U.S. company.

Don Henry, Retired Plant Material Specialist: My wife Marge and I took a Bluegrass Tour Bus to Ashville, NC to visit the Biltmore Estate Dec. 6th weekend. The large house was all spruced up for Christmas. I first visited the Estate in 1958, with The SCSA group when the large dairy was present. Today the dairy has been replaced by a fairly large winery. Of course we sampled a few brands. Marge and I both have been to the Estate before this recent visit. We wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Earl Johnson, retired District Conservationist: Earl has been employed as a full-time Adult Education Instructor with the Morehead State University (MSU) Montgomery County adult learning center in Mt. Sterling, KY since October, 2013. Earl's oldest daughter graduated from Bellarmine University in Louisville, KY on December 17th, 2014. His younger daughter is a sophomore at Bellarmine University. Earl's wife Kim retired June 1st, 2014 after 33 years teaching in the Powell County school system. Kim is enjoying substitute teaching part-time while catching up around the house.

Sylvia Lyons and her husband Earl spent two weeks on Sanibel Island, FL this year, and enjoyed it very much.

Connie McKinney, retired Contracting Officer. Connie reports that her grandson who was adopted from China earlier in 2014 enjoys going to the local Chinese restaurant. His eyes light up when he hears workers in the kitchen speaking Chinese. The staff always comes out to speak to **Gabe**, and he chatters back in Chinese. Connie is very proud of both her grandsons. **Benjamin** is bi-lingual speaking Spanish and English, while Gabe speaks Chinese and English.

Ed Scott, retired CET, reports that he is doing well, back to normal for him, after his recent surgery. Ed and his wife **Bonnie** are walking every day. Ed's up to 1 mile and Bonnie goes further. Ed will not be doing chemo. Ed said he can't see the point of doing something to make him feel worse in hopes it may prevent something in the future that may not even happen. The doctor indicated after his surgery that he felt like they had gotten all the cancer. Ed and his wife Bonnie have wrapped a lot of Christmas presents for needy children in the Northern Kentucky area. His church is giving Christmas gifts to 600 children. Lifeline ministries signed up 400 children and another charity signed up 200 children.

DEADLINE FOR MARCH/APRIL 2015 NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS IS FEBRUARY 25, 2015

LOUISIANA

Joe Blanco, ARCSE Representative

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Louisiana SCS-NRCS Retirees' Luncheon, Nov. 13th, 2014

The 20th Louisiana SCS-NRCS retirees' luncheon was held at the Piccadilly Cafeteria in Alexandria. The retirees started arriving at 10am to drink coffee and visit with co-workers.

There were 35 retirees and guests in attendance. Those present were: **Max Johnston, Sybil Ray, Paul Miletello, Sandra Miletello, Dale Rockett, Sylvia Rockett, Joe Branco, Marge Branco, Huey Mixon, Dozier Harrell, Winnie Harrell, Marty Floyd, James Loe, Robbie Loe, Arville Touchet, Valine Collard, Charles Guillory, Ruby Guillory, Billy Moore, Thomas Campbell, Marlin Jordan, Juanita Hoffpauir, Jerry Daigle, Janie Daigle, James Winston, Kent Milton, Sonie Milton, Paul Wallace, Aaron Hinkston, Betty Jones, Wayne Melancon, George Guillory, Catherine Sloan, and Ronnie Vincent.**

Joe Branco, as MC, welcomed the group and asked **Dozier Harrell** to give the invocation. In recognition of Veterans Day and appreciation for all our veterans, the Pledge of Allegiance to our flag was recited.

After lunch, Joe welcomed **Kevin Norton**, State Conservationist, NRCS. Joe reported that he had received several calls and/or letters from retirees who could not attend. **Carl Thompson, Hugh Tidwell and Frances Artley** had previous commitments. **Pat Cecil** has recently moved to Florida. **Gene Simmons** living in Texas could not make it. **Max Johnston** gave a brief report on current retiree activities around the state.

Joe asked **Kevin Norton** to give us an update on current NRCS activities. Kevin reported that he has spent a large part of this year detailed to Washington, DC working on the farm bill that is still not passed. He said it was interesting work, but he was glad to be back home. He reported that the NRCS has about 210 employees in the state. They are very busy carrying out NRCS conservation program responsibilities. He also said that there would be few employees joining our ranks as retirees because the number retiring is low.

The group was reminded of the Health Insurance open season Nov. 10th to Dec. 8th and asked for any questions or discussion. The cost of living pay increase was also discussed.

The planning committee, **Dale Rockett**, **Paul Miletello**, **Marilyn Rabalais**, **Max Johnston** and **Joe Branco** were recognized and thanked for their effort.

MASSACHUSETTS

Jim Wesoloski, ARCSE Representative

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Well, it's been another quiet two months here on the edge of the frozen tundra. It's Christmas Eve as I write this, so it means we're already two days past the winter solstice, and Spring is less than three months away. Weather forecast for Christmas Day is for temperatures almost to 60 degrees. I think I'm getting to like this global warming thing.

Betty and I received a Christmas letter from Texas that we'd like to share. It starts: "Merry Christmas from **Gene Grice** (retired Mass. State Soil Scientist). Gene would want all his long-time friends to enjoy the blessings of good health and good family times. He is being cared for and is content. He observed his 84th birthday in October. He still has his unique smile and sense of humor. Alzheimers is a horrible disease, but he would appreciate any mail. His address is: Darrell G. Grice, Silverado Cypresswood Living, 10225 Cypresswood Drive, Houston, TX 77070". So, if you remember Gene from his time in Mass., you might want to drop him a note.

Steve Plotkin, Water Quality Specialist on Joe Bagdon's National Agricultural Pesticide Risk Analysis (NAPRA) Team, decided to join the ranks of the retired in October. Although Steve was a Cooperative Extension employee, he was stationed in the NRCS state office and was one of the NRCS family. He's back working two days a week on the NAPRA staff until he reaches his earning limit under the state retirement system. And he's enjoying playing a lot more tennis.

I had a nice phone call with **Kathy Price**, retired cartographer. Kathy has relocated from Holden, MA to a newly-constructed home in Wiscasset, ME. Or should I say to an almost completed home that was promised in September but somehow may be completed by the New Year. She's been dealing with contractors who don't return her calls and a whole-house generator that wasn't connected when her area lost power for a day. But Kathy remembers her long-ago Peace Corps service in West Africa where a daily task was trimming the wicks on kerosene lamps, so she was able to take Maine in stride.

NRCS in Amherst has fallen victim to our crazy times, and the office doors are now locked during the work day and people need a key or have to ring the doorbell and wait to be admitted. And we need to complete an on-line lesson on what to do if we're in an "active shooter" situation. The olden days seem so innocent now.

MISSOURI

Dave Rastorfer, ARCSE Representative

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Bob Ball: Our family farm, Spring Hill Woodlands, LLC, was selected as the 2014 "Cooperator of the Year" by the Noble Soil and Water Conservation District in Southeast Ohio. Lenore and I attended the district's annual meeting in October where we received a very nice walnut plaque and a cooperator sign (see the photo).

We were fortunate to have two close friends and fellow NRCS retirees, **Jim Piper**, retired ASTC-Programs in West Virginia, and **Don Butz**, retired NRCS-NHQ national CRP program manager, and their wives attend this banquet with us. These guests retreat (see photo) were visiting us at our Ohio woodlands.



Lenore and Bob Ball, Noble Soil and Water Conservation District's 2014 Cooperator of the Year.



Jim and Gail Piper, Don and Penny Butz, Lenore and Bob Ball

This gave us the opportunity to visit local historic sites around my hometown of Caldwell, OH. One additional visit included a day touring "The Wilds" located on 10,000 acres of strip-mined land that is the home for dozens of wild and endangered species. This operation is an extension of the Columbus Zoo but at another location.

Touring by open vehicle may be as close to an African safari as most of us will experience. Their website is: <https://thewilds.columbuszoo.org/>. If you are considering a drive through Ohio, I strongly encourage finding time to visit "The Wilds."

Bill Pauls: Happy New Year 2015! Time flies when you're having fun, so I hope you all are. We are here. Our family is **Kris** and I, two kids, spouses, and four of the greatest Grandkids any Grandparents could have. Two are seven and two are five, three girls and a boy. Kris is still working mornings at "Embroider It." I'm now up to my ears in not only the Columbia Parks Commission, but Columbia Neighborhood Watch. I'm still running and traveling, into our 20th year of marathon-ing. We are headed to Celebration, FL to celebrate by running that marathon this month, then five more scheduled later this year. Still have knees of a 20-year-old (God bless good genes). Life at the Lake of the Ozarks cabin is always fun. We're also very involved in our Christian Pro-Life running group, LIFERunners, as well as the VITAE Foundation (national pro-life communications).

Dan Switzer: I was blessed to be able to go on a mission's trip to Cairo, Egypt; Istanbul, Turkey; and Northern Iraq (Kurdistan). Aside from visiting missionaries our church supports, our team of four was also able to conduct medical missions for villages around Dahok, Iraq. There are 840,000 refugees in 11 tent cities around Dahok as a result of ISIS atrocities. When we crossed the Tigris River going from Erbil airport to Dahok, we were only 15 miles from Mosul, the ISIS stronghold. It was a challenging but great trip. On another note, the construction of our house is underway—Yay! We can't wait to move to the farmette sometime late spring.

Paula Price: Our daughter-in-law delivered twin girls at 26 weeks on July 2nd. Our son started his first year as a teacher in August after having graduated last December. We hope **Holly** gets to move home from St. Luke's Hospital in KC this next week. **Rylee**, at Children's Mercy Hospital, isn't quite ready for the transition yet. So, I've been caring for **Alan** who still has a lot of residuals from the stem cell transplant of 2009, and making weekly trips to the KC hospitals to get to know our grandchildren. Once back home, Alan will be able to meet them, too and that will be a grand and happy day. The girls now weigh 9+lbs. and 8lbs. This, and I'm working full-time in a realty office as office manager just four blocks from our home in Savannah. The job fell into my lap and I snagged it. Really like the industry, and the people with whom I work are very congenial and great people.

Carleen Nolte (spouse of former State Agronomist, **Forrest Nolte**) passed way Monday, December 1st. Many of us knew Carleen and enjoyed speaking with her long after her husband, Forrest, retired. She always had a smile on her face. It is with sadness that we learn that **Darlene Johnson's** mother has passed away. **Darlene** just recently retired and we welcome her to our ranks as retirees.

Another recent retiree is **Jim Sowash** from Pettis county NRCS. Welcome to "the club," **Jim**.

Lane Thurman: The Thurman family enjoyed a wonderful Thanksgiving at oldest son Steve's home with his wife, **Anna** and our granddaughter, **Delaney**! The youngest son, **Robert**, was also there enjoying the festivities and all the food. Other than that, nothing great is happening down our way. We all hope you and yours have a "Merry Christmas" and a "Happy New Year."

Jack Schneider: After a busy 2014 travel year, we have one more trip to go. We are spending Christmas in Portland, OR at **Matt's** house and our second grandson, **Vincent** who was born last October. It will be interesting to see his growth and changes since our trip there for the birth. Our other son, **Keith** was married earlier this year and they bought a house about

half way between Toronto and the Georgian Bay in Canada. Best wishes to all with family and friends for Christmas and the start of a new year.

Ed Smith: Not much to report from the Smiths. We had a good summer and fall; leaves all taken care of 'till spring; flower beds cleared; golf clubs cleaned (80 rounds of golf this season) and ready for their FL vacation (Jan through Mar). Had all our family around during Thanksgiving week and are now in the process of looking for, guessing at, and buying Christmas gifts. It gets tougher as you age, and at the same time the family continues to grow in numbers. Still we're looking forward to again having all the family around for Christmas season. Then we're off to find some sunshine and sand. Wishing for everyone a very Merry Christmas and a safe and healthy winter. See you in the spring!

Dennis Shirk: Hi folks. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! It was really good to see a picture of **Jim Andrews** in the last newsletter. I worked with Jim in the summer of '64 and '65. He was a wonderful mentor. We went to Dade County the first weekend in Dec. and celebrated Thanksgiving, Christmas, and birthdays in one fell swoop. It was a very enjoyable weekend visiting with family. We will celebrate with our kids and grandkids on the 13th of Dec. The mad rush will then be over. The dog and I can enjoy the recliner and the wood stove. Life is Good. We had several nice riding days the fall. Remember the reason for the season. See y'all down the trail.

Note from **Linda Struewe**, Jackson Co. District Manager: I met **William Baugh** a few years ago here in our Blue Springs Field Office. He and his wife **Marion** live here in Blue Springs. **William** informed me he had retired from NRCS and loves to reminisce. William spent many years with NRCS in Wisconsin, retiring from NRCS in 2000 in Springfield, MO. William has Parkinson's and stage four cancer. It would mean a lot to him to hear from some NRCS folks who remember him. You can contact him at: 816-228-4758. William Baugh, 1135 SE Eastridge Dr., Blue Springs, MO 64014.

The **Blaines (Mike and Pam)** have enjoyed a very nice fall. All our kids and grandkids come for Thanksgiving every year. We do a big family Christmas at that time since we all live so far apart and visits to in-laws are made at Christmas. We call it "ThanksChristmas!" We had a really good time this year. There are so many of us that we cannot all sleep in the house, so Pam and I, and at least some of the grandkids, sleep in the camper.

While everyone was here, we scheduled our next family trip to Hilton Head. We are doing that every other year. Gives us another time to all be together and have some fun. We rent a BIG house and all stay together. We bike, swim in the ocean, and just enjoy! Deer season was better this year than last. My sister, my son, and I all got our deer the first weekend. It was cold opening morning, 13 degrees; but fortunately there was no wind, so it was bearable. And the best part, I didn't kill an \$8,000 deer with my truck this year! It will be past Christmas when this comes out, so I hope you all had a great season of family fun; and most of all, remembering why there is a Christmas time. God made the greatest gift of all by giving His Son to be our Savior. Have a great spring!

Peggy Fricke informed us in November of the death of **George T. Simmons**. **George** was a soil scientist for the Soil Conservation Service for many years at the Warrensburg Area Office. Also from **Peggy**: received this info on retired DC **Gary Luttrull** (Henry/Benton Counties). There may be other retirees who know **Gary** and would want to let him know they are thinking of him and wish him well. Since retiring in June 2012 **Gary Luttrull** and wife **Bonnie** designed, built, and recently moved into their "retirement home" located on Bonnie's family land north of Branson. Recently he was diagnosed with prostate cancer and while running tests preparing for surgery, blockage was indicated at his heart. October 9th he had heart surgery, and it went well. **Gary** has the attitude that he will be okay and once he heals from heart surgery, they will switch focus to prostate surgery. **Gary** received great news earlier this week from his oncologist. The prostate cancer was self-contained and once again (as with his kidney cancer) he will not need treatments. I believe their Christmas just got a whole lot better. Following is his address if you would like to send him a note: Gary Luttrull; 250 Cambridge Road; Walnut Shade, MO 65771

From the **Epple's** near Muskogee, OK: **Phyllis and Jess** are busy with fall calving. Yes, I know—it should be finished by now, but I must have "goofed" on record-keeping! Thanks to mild weather we have not lost a calf so far. We are still working to get the Civil War Battle of Honey Springs, near Checotah, OK, recognized/accepted by the National Park Service. I believe it will happen soon. We continue to be active with the Connors State College Alumni board. We have a new President who is ambitious and is making large progress.

We lost two dear friends retired from SCS this year: **George Simmons**, Soil Scientist Missouri and **Douglas S. Pease**, former Arizona St. Soil Scientist. **George** finished Hickory Co. survey, and it was published about 1990. Before transferring to Charleston, MO I spent over five yrs. in four New Mexico counties—worked with **Douglas Pease** in two of these counties before he was promoted to Arizona. Both were friends and fellow workers, from miles and worlds apart. They were exceptional people, typical of many NRCS/SCS employees who I have met in several States. Angus Beef Ribs or Roast sure would go well with one's Holiday meals—don't you think? We wish all of you a blessed 2014 Holiday Season.

It is with great sadness that we learned that **Jeff Lamb's** daughter, **Keely**, passed away in early December after losing her 20-year battle to Crones disease. **Jeff** worked for NRCS and retired as Coordinator at Big Springs RC&D. Keely leaves behind a husband, young daughter, mom and dad, sister, and other extended family.

Jimbo Sturm informs us of the death of **Carroll L. Parks** at the age 90 at Cameron Regional Medical Center. **Carroll** was born July 26th, 1924, in Albany, MO. He graduated from Albany High School in 1942 and enlisted in the United States Army. He was a veteran of World War I, serving in Europe and fighting in the Battle of the Bulge. He then went on to attend the University of Missouri, graduating in 1951 with a degree in Agriculture. **Carroll** worked for the USDA Soil Conservation Service in Albany before relocating to Gallatin in 1956. **Carroll** retired in 1986, after 35 years of service. Following retirement, he worked part-time for the Daviess County. *(Jimbo recalls during his NRCS/SCS tour of duty of 31.5 years, he worked in the Daviess County SCS office from 1981 to 1983 with Carroll, as a Soil Conservationist trainee. Jimbo enjoyed learning about all of Carroll's soil conservation teachings. Carroll had done a fine job in Jimbo's eyes, as Jimbo started his career.)*

Les Volmert, who was critically ill and in a coma since Dec. 20th, passed away on December 27th. See the In Memoriam section for more details. **Merrill Dean Ray** of Quincy, Illinois, formerly of Fulton and Columbia, also passed away December 25th. See In Memoriam for more details.

That's the news for now. Here's hoping you all have a wonderful Christmas Season and a Happy New Year.

MONTANA

Dick Gooby, ARCSE Representative

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Montana Big Sky Report

Jim Johnson report: We didn't attend the last breakfast, so there is nothing for me to report from there. We're leaving Bozeman next Tuesday to spend the holidays with our family in California. Enjoy the holidays and look forward to a great 2015.

Scott Hoag Jr. report: We spent 2 weeks in October in Las Cruces, NM building with Habitat for Humanity—got one home trussed, sheathed, roofed and the interior walls in and second slab marked off for framing. Then on to Hobbs, NM where we spent five weeks. The volunteers nearly finished one house. The next groups completed it, and the homeowner and family will be in before Christmas. Got a good start on a second house—framed, sheathed, trussed and wrapped. We're now in Yuma through the end of March. They call this place “the lettuce capital of the world”—fun to see rows of those colored lettuces as well as iceberg, along with broccoli, cabbage and other vegetables. Then there's the citrus and the date palms—date shakes, yum. We get to Algodones, Mexico once or twice a month—what a place. Seniors (aka 'Q-tips') go there for cheap meds, dental work and glasses. And, in addition to all of that, Yuma is home to the US Marine Corps Air Station—Yuma. Fighter and attack aircraft fly daily as well as helicopters and the occasional C-5. A lot of noise and some folks complain. The standard response is: “That's the sound of freedom.” We go to Bainbridge Is, WA on 12/22 for Christmas with family (daughters, son, grand kids, mother, sister, nieces, nephews, and other assorted in-laws and outlaws) and return on 12/29. Then, who knows what.

Gooby Ranch report: Man what a year! **Mary Ann** went to Twin Bridges behind the grocery store to pick up all the date-expired canned goods thrown out so we could store some food for winter. But she couldn't find a single can. That meant we are going to have to drive up the impossible road to hunt elk. The road is washed out so bad that we can only drive the pickup half way to where we need to head up the mountain to our secret ridge.

On the big hunt our son **Dale** carried my gun for me and Mary Ann stayed back at the pickup to cut a load of fire wood. After walking up the road for four miles, Dale and I headed up the mountain. It was steeper than a cow's face, but we kept going. It was two steps up and slide one step back. Finally we made it to the top. We were so pooped that we found a spot where we could see out a little bit and sat down to rest. After we rested up we got ready to head down the secret ridge.

All of a sudden here came a herd of elk. There must have been 40 of them. We picked out the best looking one that was dry, and I harvested her. After Dale eviscerated it, he started dragging it down the mountain. Since there was no snow, it was just about impossible to drag. I couldn't help him since I was busy carrying the rifle. Luckily, the mountain was real steep, and once in a while the elk would roll down the mountain with Dale doing everything he could to keep from getting run over by it. Finally about dark we got down to the creek, but the road was way up the other side. My mother always told me to hunt uphill but she forgot to tell me what to do when there is a canyon in between the road and the secret ridge.

We had to leave the elk and head for home and get the tools to come back the next day to bone the elk out and pack it across the creek and up the hill to the road which was about a quarter of a mile. Then we had to walk two miles to get back to the pickup. When we got there, Mary Ann had the wood loaded and another load cut. What a lucky day. That meant the next day Mary Ann could take her back-pack, and she and Dale could pack the elk out while I figured out a plan to haul the load of wood and the elk home in one load. As soon as they got the wood loaded, they headed up to get the elk. The elk turned out to be so big they had to make two trips to pack it out. That gave me a lot more time to figure out how to load the elk on top of the wood.

This year Mary Ann sold several of her well-trained horses. She bought a Rocky Mountain gaited horse from the person who trains horses. The trainer had given up on the horse and gave Mary Ann a real good deal. After a few months of

intensive training, Mary Ann was ready to take it to the hills for a ride. I rode my regular horse, but while Mary Ann gaited, my horse had to trot all day to keep up. My hinder was sore for a month. I decided I had to have a Rocky Mountain gaited horse too. Mary Ann found a place that raises them and was reducing the herd. We went over and picked out the one we liked best, and I offered the person 50 dollars less than Mary Ann had paid for hers. After a lot of crying and me telling the owner everything we thought was wrong with the horse and that the price of hay was \$200 dollar a ton, they finally sold us the horse. It had never been rode, so Mary Ann had her work cut out for her.

Mary Ann spent a lot of time breaking the horse since it has to be well trained before I can ride it. After a couple months we headed for the hills with both of the gaited horses. It was a nice ride and I only fell off twice.

Mary Ann did a good job with the cows this year. She managed to graze them on the neighbor's place for two months before they found out about it. They are out-of-state owners. That saved a lot of our pasture. Since that worked so well, I've been busy trying to find out who all the non-local owners are.

We were through calving by the middle of May. On October 15th Mary Ann was out checking the cows, and she saw a cow way down to the other end of the field all by herself. She went down to see what was wrong, and there lay a new-born calf. That was impossible since the bulls were pulled a long time before the cow could have mated. I guess some hanky-panky was going on that we didn't know about. I'll bet one of the bulls was jumping the fence at night while we were sleeping. At least it improved our calving percentage.

Mary Ann was able to sell all the **Gooby Ranch Healthy Antibiotic Hormone Free Grass Fat Beef with the natural tender gene** to customers who buy halves and quarters. I was so proud of Mary Ann that I took her to MacDonald's along with the kids who were visiting for Mary Ann's birthday. While we were at MacDonald's, I gave Mary Ann her birthday present. It was a brand new shovel. Now she will be able to spade the garden a lot faster.

A lot of our cats got old and passed this last year. Mary Ann decided she needed to get more cats since the mice are taking over the place. It got so bad the mice were eating more than the horses, dogs and we were. Everywhere you looked there was a mouse and they weren't shy. Mary Ann wanted to go to the dog pound to get some cats. I tried to explain to her that she would need to go to the cat pound if she wanted cats, but I guess I was wrong. I wonder why they don't call it the Cat and Dog pound. Mary Ann went to the dog pound and they had several cats, so she asked if she bought two would they throw in a third one. They finally agreed, so Mary Ann came home with three new little cats. One is almost black, but it has three white hairs so we are okay. One is a Siamese and one is a Norwegian Forest Cat. Even though the one cat speaks Norwegian they seem to get along okay. All they do all day is play with mice and eat cat food.

One day the cows were throwing such a fit Mary Ann ran out to see what they were so mad about. Four goats had wandered into the cow pasture, and the cows didn't want them there. The cows finally chased the goats through the fence into the yard. The goats looked happy with the yard. I'm thinking it was because of all the weeds. Two of them looked like milk goats, so Mary Ann milked them and we have been drinking goat milk and eating goat cheese for a month now. We planned to put the other two in the freezer, but one day a neighbor came down and said the goats were his. So we only have elk meat in the freezer for this winter.

We wish you a Merry Christmas and a fantastic New Year in 2015. Dick and Mary Ann Gooby.

NEBRASKA

Norman Kempf, ARCSE Representative

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SCS/NRCS breakfast meetings were held on Nov. 19th and Dec. 17th. President **Gus Dornbusch** opened the meetings. Twenty people ventured out on a cold November morning, and 24 people were present for a cool December meeting.

We have received word of the deaths of **Rudolph (Rudy) and Maxine Hraban**. Rudy died on June 24th and Maxine the second of November, 2014. **Jerry Winkler's wife, Jane**, died in October of 2014. The Winkler's had been living in Bonita Springs, FL.

Bob Engle, Bob Koerner and Lou Buller are all celebrating birthdays in December.

Gus and Donna Dornbusch spent two weeks in Paris in November. Yes, it was Paris, France, not Paris, Kansas, Texas, or any of the other Paris-es in the USA. Since it was the end of the season, crowds were minimal and they were able to enjoy sights, museums, etc. with fewer problems. They reported that it was quite easy to use the metro and light rail to get around.

Pete and Doris Jensen were in Estes Park in October. Pete said it was nice, but a little too quiet without the summer visitors. **Jim and Susie Harder** will be traveling to Oswego, Illinois for a family Thanksgiving celebration.

Bill and Colleen Hance will be visiting Bill's daughter in Ann Arbor, MI. She is the Director of a simulation center at a hospital there and will be receiving an award. Bill has been told it is a formal affair and a tux is required.

The **Paul Bartletts** were in Seattle for Thanksgiving. **Jim Culver** brought National Soil Survey calendars for distribution. We learned that several of our retired soil scientists have put together a great display at the Spring Creek Prairie visitor center.

NEW YORK

Nancy Lee, ARCSE Representative

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Bob Hartrick writes: We are doing fine in Dale except for all the snow we had a week ago. Got over 5 ft. over two days and really got tired of plowing and shoveling. Plan to visit our grandsons at Christmas time in Norton, MA. Had a great Thanksgiving with lots of food. Sue and I are attending a traditional Polish Wagillia or Polish Christmas special in Buffalo on Saturday. Lots of traditional Polish foods and the singing of Polish Christmas Carols by the Buffalo Chopin singers. Deer season has been tough with the weather but did manage to get a nice 9-point. Traveled to Newfoundland this fall for moose but were unsuccessful. The scenery was beautiful, but a Northeast storm hit with gale force winds of 70mph and heavy rains. We were not able to fly out for three days to camp, and when we were able actually flew in on a helicopter. After that the weather did not improve much and saw no moose, but did see a couple of nice caribou, but unfortunately we did not have caribou tags. All for now from sunny Dale, NY. Regards of everyone.

Allan Connell writes: Terry and I went on an amazing trip in September. We went on a bike and barge tour on the River Mein in Southeast Germany. We flew into Frankfurt and traveled by train to a small city called Mainz on the Rhine River. We boarded our cruise boat there, which was a working barge converted into a luxury liner with beautiful accommodations. The boat could only accommodate 20 people, so it was a small intimate group from all over the world. Our journey down the Rhine was short-lived as we branched off onto the River Mein the first day of our trip. We went through over 40 locks during our journey as we traveled up stream toward Bamberg. Each day we would bike 30 to 40 miles through small charming villages and some of the most amazing scenery along the river. The agriculture was diverse, and there were many vineyards on slopes that you would have trouble walking on, they were so steep. Some did not even have permanent cover between the rows. I was intrigued at why these vineyards were not experiencing high rates of erosion. No one else was interested in that! Of course no one could answer that question. We would board the boat at a different port each day and travel at night to our next biking destination. We ended the trip in the city of Bamberg, which is a UNESCO World Heritage city which strives to protect the historical value of this amazing city. It was bombed heavily during World War II, and it is now restored to much of its prewar condition.

In October I spent time out in Montauk camping and fishing. The fall run of striped bass was nothing to get excited about. I guess that is why they call it fishing and not catching.

The scallop season was amazing and is still ongoing. It is the first year Peconic Bay has produced any abundance of scallops in about eight years. I went scalloping as often as I could and filled our freezer. You are allowed to take a half bushel per day as a recreational permit holder, and that was very easy to do, there were so many!

Nancy Lee writes: I attended the State Office "Cookie Day" and got caught up on the latest changes to NRCS since I retired eight years ago. Most of the changes involve the Administrative staffs, and it is still being worked out. The administrative responsibilities are handled by "teams" to serve several states, and the question remains who is going to be filling New York's day-to-day needs.

Don Pettit was the only other retiree in attendance. I had been hoping to see other retirees there!

NORTH CAROLINA

Jim Canterbury, ARCSE Representative

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Thirteen retirees and guests from the Raleigh area met at Bob Evans Restaurant for breakfast on October 30th. This event takes place several times each year. **John Garrett** made the arrangements for the breakfast. See the group picture next page.

Herbert C. Fox, Jr., 78, Cary, NC, died November 18th, 2014. Herb retired in 1993 as hydrologist on the Watershed/River Basin Planning Staff. See the In Memoriam section for more details.



NC Retiree Breakfast, October 30, 2014. Left to right: Horace Smith, Coy Garrett, Harold Lile, Tommy Cutts, Jim Canterberry, Dr. Maurice Cook, Hubert Hawkins, Charles Godley, Dick Gallo, Frank Evans, Cecil Settle, John Garrett, and Ed Helmey.

NORTH DAKOTA

Robert "Bob" Bird, ARCSE Representative

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Hope everyone had a great Christmas with family or friends. We had the whole family together for the first time in a long time. We ate too much and probably drank too much. We had just returned from Big Sky, MT, where our last grandson got married on the resort outdoor balcony. Everybody had to contend with snow-covered roads, slushy, rainy, freezing rain and icy roads, but everybody got back safely to Bismarck, ND.

We recently lost one of our Senior Conservationists, **John Knecht**, who died at 91 on Dec. 6th. See details in the in Memoriam section. He regularly attended our annual get-togethers until the last couple years. I first met John in 1972 when I worked in the Grand Forks Area Office, and John was in the process of moving from Langdon to my hometown of Hillsboro, ND. I learned from his obituary that John was drafted into the US Navy in 1943 and eventually served aboard the battleship USS California in the Pacific. His ship was involved in the retaking of Guam and the Marianas, the invasion of the Philippines and the taking of Okinawa. They also fought a sea battle in the Surigao Strait defending the landings on Leyte. We continue to lose our World War II veterans or as Tom Brokaw called them "The Greatest Generation." We lost a number of our ND retirees this past year and we gained some new retirees. We remember and pray for the families who have lost loved ones and look to the future of working with our new retirees. We wish everyone best wishes for the new year and hope that everyone stays healthy, wealthy and wise.

OKLAHOMA

Randy Freeland, ARCSE Representative

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On October 24th, the Oklahoma SCS/NRCS Retirees met at the Golden Corral Buffet Restaurant in Oklahoma City, OK. Forty-five people were in attendance. They were: **Don and Darlene Bartolina, Kenneth and Rebecca Blan and guest Linda Byford, Bob Bumgarner, Steve Chessmore, Everett and Helen Cole, Duane Crider, Bob and Betty Day, Wayne Fjeseth, Fred and Gayle Fortney, Randy and Bonnie Freeland, Lloyd Garrison, Sandra Hough and guest Linda Martin, Otho Lamar, Nick Lambeth, Jim McCampbell, Lowell and Minnie McMasters, Gordon and Minnie Carol Moebius, George Moreland and guest Betty Gilbert, Nelson and Mary Mueller, Glen and Eunice Mullen, John and**

Joy Pewthers, Stan and Fredia Rice, Dan Runnels, Chris Shepherd, Jim and Terry Smith, Bob Smith, Betty Todd, Marcella Wagner, and Loran Zweacker.

Oklahoma SCS/NRCS Retirees' President **Dan Runnels** called the meeting to order. He asked that everyone keep **Eddie Day** (brother of **Bob Day**) in their prayers. He is battling bone cancer. Also **Bill Porter** in the State Office has been diagnosed with cancer. **Stan Rice** provided the blessing for the meal.



Bob and Betty Day

It is difficult to keep up with address changes, but the Oklahoma SCS/NRCS retiree website (www.cyber-shack.net/nrcs/) has been helpful in our effort to keep retirees informed. This website also has a posting of the attendees, minutes and pictures from each of the meetings. Special thanks to **Bill Porter** for his work in keeping the website up to date.

It was announced that **Mike Thralls**, Executive Director of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission for 17 years, retired 9/1/14, due to medical conditions. **Trey Lam**, Garvin County Conservation District board member and former President of the Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts, has been selected to serve as the Oklahoma Conservation Commission Executive Director replacing **Mike Thralls**, effective November 17th, 2014.

Don Coffman, Cherokee, OK advised he was five weeks behind in alfalfa and wheat farming, had a heart operation six weeks ago and is doing great now. He had hoped to make the meeting and see everyone. **Wes Oneth**, McAlester, OK wanted to give the crowd a big hello since he could not attend. His "senior" grandson from Denver, CO is taking a tour of OSU, and granddad has to be there to show him around the campus.

Randy Freeland presented a Power-Point "Do You Remember." Those in attendance were asked to name the person being presented an award. The presentation was from pictures taken at the 1979 State-Wide Awards Program held in Stillwater.

Chris Shepherd introduced himself as a first time attendee. He has a cow/calf operation and now resides in Lookeba, OK. He was raised in Clinton and served as District Conservationist at Fort Cobb, Watonga, and El Reno. He retired as the District Conservationist at El Reno.

Bobby Smith continues to pastor the First Baptist Church in Wakita, OK. Along with an SCS career, Bobby has recently completed his 45th year in the ministry.

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, **April 24, 2015**, at the Golden Corral on MacArthur Boulevard in Oklahoma City. Everyone is welcome, and no reservations are required. We even let active employees join us.



Chris Shepherd and Sandra Hough



Otho Lamar and Bobby Smith

OREGON

Don Stettler, ARCSE Representative

Email: don.stettler@comcast.net

A small group of both former staff members of the National Water and Climate Center's Water Quality and Quantity Staff, and others met at the Rock Bottom Restaurant and Brewery in early December for the annual "staff meeting." Attending this year were **Pat Willey**, **Ken Pfeiffer**, **Gary Formanek**, **Harbans Lal**, **Roy Mann**, **Dan Moore**, and yours truly, **Don Stettler**.

As may be suspected, some high-level decisions were made. **Don Huffman** joined me for the ride on the Max to downtown Portland. Since Don is a retiree from the Center, I assumed he was attending the staff meeting. As it turned out, he was going to another holiday get-together involving the IT staff.

Thor Thorson, a soil scientist at the Oregon State Office for many years, has announced his retirement. At his retirement, Thor was serving as a soil scientist in the Major Lands Resources Area Office. A roast is planned for March 7th.



Thor Thorson, soil scientist, is retiring. He knows the difference between good soil and bad soil.

In a video shown on the December 26th "Today" show, NBC News special correspondent **Tom Brokaw** spoke with World War II veteran **Clarence (Cal) Graham** about the three-and-a-half years he spent in a brutal Japanese POW camp, and his life back in America.



Cal Graham

The interview mentioned that Cal had been employed by USDA. In fact, Cal worked in Oregon as a soil conservation technician at Eugene and then as a procurement specialist in the Oregon State Office and the Northeast National Technical Center. Cal now lives in Central Oregon, as does his son **Bob Graham**, who at his retirement was Oregon's State Conservationist.

The winter quarter retiree lunch will be held on January 28th at the Tanasbourne The Old Spaghetti Factory. Details for the lunch will be sent out by email in early January.

PENNSYLVANIA

Timothy Murphy, ARCSE Representative (NEW)

Email: vindemurph@verizon.net

From **Bill Bowers**: Please help me welcome recent retirees, **Tom Matticks and Gary Swope**. Congratulations to both of you! The West (old Area 1) will never be the same without you.

In the report in the ARCSE newsletter of our meeting this past September at the McKeever Center, two locations were suggested for our 2015 meeting: The Nature Inn at Bald Eagle State Park in Centre County and Gifford Pinchot's Grey Towers National Historic Site in Pike County. Please let us know your preference or suggest another location. Any volunteers?

I just want to add a word of thanks and gratitude to **Fred Bubb** for his years of service as Editor of the PA BUGLE! Fred also was the key communication link passing news (mostly good but some sad) to all the PA SCS/NRCS retirees. Fred was honored at the McKeever Center for his service. On the new side, a big welcome to **Tim Murphy** as the new Editor of the PA BUGLE and key communicator of news to all of you! Welcome aboard, Tim! Please send Tim a paragraph of your recent activities and some of the "good old times" stories of your antics at SCS/NRCS! I know there were antics that some of you would love to share!

Wishing all of you and your families a happy, healthy 2015!

Frank Resides reports that on November 22nd, twelve of the Southeastern PA Retirees Group met for our semi-annual lunch at Roger's Bistro in West Chester. Present were: **Len and Mary Beck, Pat Burkett, Helen Brossman, Jim and Maria Cropper, Carolyn Gehlen, Jean Kirkaldie, Tom and Joyce livari and Frank and Jane Resides**.

As usual, we had a great time remembering the people, places, and events from our working days at the Northeast NTC. Len noted that he had started there in 1957 (57 years ago) when it was in the Central Building in Upper Darby. Mary came on June 15 of 1959, just a week after I started my career as a Student Trainee in the Somerset Field Office.

We were looking at some vintage pictures taken at workshops and meetings in the mid-1970s. It was fun to see how we looked 35-40 years ago, but it was also a bit sobering to realize how many of those people and others that we worked with are no longer with us. It's a Blessing to be alive and have friends who we've known for so many years. Be thankful that the next funeral you go to isn't your own. It was a good afternoon with food, drink and fellowship.

From **Ed Brzostek** in Ocean View, DE: This was a very busy and exciting year for the Brzosteks. In April our daughter gave us a new granddaughter on my birth date. In June we took a Princess Cruise from Vancouver, Canada to Alaska, along with an 8-day land excursion to Denali.

We got back just in time to help our son pack up to move from Bloomington, IN to Washington, DC. I drove the 26-foot moving truck the whole way, ending up going down Connecticut Avenue in DC during rush hour. It's three very narrow lanes, and Rita said most of the time there were only two to three inches on either side of my truck and the cars on each side. After all that driving stress, I needed a nice relaxing day fishing. The next day Rita and I launched our boat at the Indian River Marina. I started the engine and backed out and went to turn the boat and the steering wheel wouldn't budge. So much for relaxing day of fishing. Speaking of not finding time to do things, I just contracted with NRCS for another year of ACES work with National Headquarters for four hours a day. However I do enjoy my ACES work, so it actually is relaxing for me.

Pat Cecil writes that she has been on the move again: "I sold my home in Lufkin, TX last March, and moved to Anacoco, LA. My oldest son had just refurbished his rental house, and he said I could stay there until I decided where I wanted to live. Had several options—my sister in Katy, TX, my sons in Louisiana, or my son in Florida. Visited all three places and decided on Florida. My son Henry had retired from the Air Force, and he and his wife were also building a new home, so he helped me find the location and home to build. It took six months, and I moved from Anacoco, LA to Auburndale, FL on September 30th. So far, all is going well. I am surrounded by orange groves, and it is very peaceful here—and the best part is that my son only lives five miles away!

My sister and I made a couple of trips while the building was going on, and she helped me move in. We missed our usual trip to Destin this year and went to Cocoa Beach instead. But we have vowed we will be back in Destin come November, 2015.

And in August, before I moved, one of my high school friends and I went on a cruise to Alaska—it was a beautiful trip, and we met a lot of nice people. It was very cold because we went in September, but it was well worth the trip to see our 50th state. It is beautiful and all the pictures you see don't really do Alaska justice.

I stay busy with learning my way around. I walk just about every morning, and the first three weeks, I got lost four times in my neighborhood! But I found my way home and now I have a certain route so that I don't get lost again. This has been quite a change—not cold weather which I love but rather cool weather.

Alan Wood went with a team from Engineering Ministries International to Tanzania in August/September to survey and prepare the master plan for an orphanage, which after the third phase in 10 years will house 700 orphans. The unique aspect of this plan is that the children will learn about agriculture and work on the orphanage farm to raise their own food—just like the original Milton Hershey School.

Byron and Joyce Roth went to Niagara Falls on their honeymoon 65 years ago, and returned in 2014 for their anniversary. Byron says the falls were the same, but the surroundings had changed. This time, he and Joyce got to change the colors of the lights that shine on the falls from the Canadian side. Byron has been busy catching and disposing of skunks at home, with the count up to 23 in the past two years. He hopes to see everyone when the PA retirees gather next September.

Rose Marie Updegraff writes that she and her daughter **Tracy** helped Rosie's grandson, **Danny** to move into his dorm at the University of Colorado at Boulder where he started as a freshman. Rosie said it's a gorgeous campus with the Rocky Mountains in the background. After they got him settled, they stayed with Rosie's friends **Laura and John Vescio**. Laura is retired from NRCS in Colorado. They are great hosts. They all did some sightseeing and visited the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, the Garden of the Gods, Red Rocks, Buffalo Bill's grave and museum, and the Old West town of Golden, along with checking out the city of Denver. It was a great time in beautiful Colorado with good friends.

Rosie and Tracy spent Halloween week-end in New York City attending the Halloween Parade in Greenwich Village, enjoying good restaurants and doing some sightseeing and shopping. Rosie said the parade is quite a show!

Rosie and Dale traveled to Hilton Head, SC in November. They had planned to visit with **Benny Martin** on the way down. Benny was State Conservationist in Pennsylvania years ago. After talking with him, Rosie found out that he is recovering from a broken back so they weren't able to see him. He also celebrated his 90th birthday!

Shirley Lindsey writes that she and **Don** enjoyed the lovely fall weather. They attended the Memorial Service for **Bill Branigan** in New Market, VA. It was a heartwarming service and a beautiful weekend in the Shenandoah Valley. Their big family news is the birth of their first great grandchild, **Gavin Lindsey**. They can't wait to meet him! **Don** has his 1955 Studebaker painted and on the road. Yellow and cream—Sharp!

Bob and Nancy Escherman have relocated to North Carolina where they are having a home built on the "Inner Banks" on Albemarle Sound. As of September, they were walking, biking, swimming or kayaking almost every day. Bob has plans to play more golf.

Bill Bowers reports that it was a good fall around the Bowers household. A very long growing season (first killing frost/freeze was November 10th). Garden is cleaned up and the garlic planted. The grass continues to grow and some leaves need to be mulched. **Mary Ann** and I have enjoyed most of the Penn State football games. We have seen two wins and two losses, but the team has a bright future. The last two games were "bundle up" weather, but the packed stands helped to keep everyone warm. Grandson, **Ben**, completed his freshman year on the high school golf team (2nd place in their league), and he qualified for the East PA regional tournament. Granddaughter, **Emily**, was in the Nutcracker this December, so we attended the ballet. Thanksgiving brought all the family to our house. Lots of food, games and talk.

Rollin and Helen Swank report that their son, **Joe**, is in charge of field operations for construction of the African American Museum on the Mall in Washington, DC. Joe worked as an engineer with NRCS in Iowa and Pennsylvania.

John Akers writes that "it has been a busy fall cutting firewood from a neighbor's small woodlot that had a number of trees that had fallen down or were dead and needed cut down. I use the firewood for camp fires at the Crystal Spring Camp Ground for next summer. Ann and I went to Richmond, VA to watch our daughter, **Janice**, run in the Richmond Marathon on November 15th. She did the 26 miles in about 4 ½ hours, which was pretty good time. She was very sore and tired for a few days after that. We wish everyone a Happy New Year!"

Ed White says he had a pretty exciting summer on the golf course. "Not only did I win my first club championship, the Senior Club Championship at The Clubs at Colonial Ridge, I had my first hole-in-one after 50 years of playing golf on the second hole at Blue Ridge, only 105 yards but beggars can't be choosers. I guess perseverance and some luck pay off?

In the spring, I helped with the National Collegiate Soil Judging Contest at Delaware Valley College, and then helped them again in the fall when DVC hosted the Northeast Regional Soil Judging Contest. I also provided testimony to the PA House of Representatives Professional Licensure Committee on a Bill to License Soil Scientists in Pennsylvania (HB 997, SB1173).

In July, **Sherrie** and I took our grandson to the beach in Sea Isle City, NJ. In August, We went to see the Labor Day-Weekend Show Jimmy Buffett and the Coral Reefers concert at Hershey Stadium. In October, Sherrie and I took a trip to

North Carolina to visit our sisters and their husbands, and had a great time touring the Biltmore Estate and hiking to the waterfalls in DuPont State Forest, and playing some golf with the Brothers-in-Law.

Over the summer, I did some volunteer work with the Pennsylvania Golf Association, and got to play Lancaster Country Club, Conestoga Country Club, Silver Creek Country Club, and Lehigh Country Club."

John Mickley reports that he received a nice Thank You from **Barbara Ender**, VP for University Advancement for the donation we made to the McKeever Center: "On behalf of the entire Slippery Rock University community, thank you for ARCSE's generous gift of \$600.00 to the McKeever Environmental Learning Center. Gifts from alumni and friends continue to provide the margin of excellence for which Slippery Rock University is known." Meanwhile, the Mickley's remain on baby watch for their grandchild.



Ed White on the golf course.

Tim and Gina Murphy spent a month in Europe last summer. "The first week was with our son, **Evan**, walking 110 km on the Camino de Santiago (Way of St. James), a pilgrimage route in Spain that dates from the Middle Ages. Next was a tour of Brittany, France followed by a river cruise from Normandy to Paris.

The World War II beaches and American Cemetery were especially moving stops. We also enjoyed the French history and Impressionist art aspects of the trip along the coast and the Seine River. The cruise ended with time to see the highlights of Paris before leaving for a five-day visit with relatives in Bordeaux, including the beaches and wineries in the area."

As a follow up to the Camino experience, Tim and Gina decided to walk a marathon, which they successfully did in November, completing the 26.2 miles a few minutes faster than planned.

There was a very busy local grape harvest in 2014. The Perry County vineyard Tim buys grapes from had its largest yield in 21 years of growing, so there is now a lot of fermenting going on in the Murphys' basement.



Tim and Gina at Normandy, France.

Don McCandless shares a story from his first field job as a student trainee in 1953 in Butler County, PA. "The conservationists covering Butler County were **Jim Hixson** and **Norris Judy**. At that time there was not a Soil Conservation District in Butler County. It was called a "white" county, whereas counties that had districts were called "green" counties. I was newly married (three days before starting as a trainee) and living with my in-laws. Conservationist Jim Hixson assigned me to observe a farm pond under construction. So all day long I sat under an apple tree and watched the contractor, **Homer Tack**, build a pond with a dozer. Upon returning to my in-laws' house, my father-in-law asked me what I did all day. So I told him about sitting under the apple tree and watching Homer Tack build a pond. He said 'how do you get a soft job like that?'

So for the next 35 years I had a very soft and enjoyable career working for SCS. And I am also still with that 17-year-old girl, **Shirley**, married June 6, 1953.

A bit of 'irony' about this story was that contractor **Homer Tack** had trouble getting paid for his work. I know his son, **David**, and he said his father accepted a horse as partial payment. David's older sister fell off that horse and broke her arm."

PA Bugle Editor's Note, from **Tim Murphy**: I want to express my appreciation for Fred Bubb's help in getting me up to speed in this new role as your editor. The transition from his computer and email service to mine was not without glitches, and Fred was persistent in helping me get off to a good start. Have a great 2015, and keep the news coming!

Some items of interest sent from Carl DuPolt:

Healthy Aging Summit, July 27-28, 2015, Washington, DC
<http://www.2015healthyagingsummit.org/>

Top Reasons to Visit the Awesome New Schuylkill Banks Boardwalk in Philadelphia, PA. See Photos on the web link.
<http://www.visitphilly.com/articles/philadelphia/top-reasons-to-visit-the-awesome-new-schuylkill-banks-boardwalk/>

Spotted Lantern Fly a new invasive pest in PA.
<http://ucanr.edu/blogs/blogcore/postdetail.cfm?postnum=15861>

Chad Passage in the Susquehanna River (PA Fish and Boat Commission). http://fishandboat.com/shad_susq.htm

SOUTH CAROLINA

Byron Thompson, ARCSE Representative

Email: landmgtinc@wctel.net

Henry Nicholson reports that he continues enjoying retirement and he and his wife having time to enjoy their granddaughter, **Breanna Carroll**, while the parents work. He also was able to attend the Palmetto Bowl where Clemson won the game.

Hugh Caldwell reports that his wife **Patsy** is back as substitute teacher after having completed a knee replacement. They spent Thanksgiving with their family in Myrtle Beach and plans are to spend time in the Great Smoky Mountains in December.

Bill Melven remains active in retirement by volunteering to work with the South Carolina Association of Districts in coordinating events for the Chaplains during their annual meeting in 2015. Keep up the good work Bill.

Byron and Mary Thompson continue to be very active in church, retirement community, and county activities such as, senior center, serving on County Council, Forestry Association, and the Extension Advisory committee. We also find time to enjoy family trips to Florida, North Carolina, and back to Ohio and Kentucky.

TEXAS

Arnold King, ARCSE Representative

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The November 2014 meeting of the SCS/NRCS Alumni Club will be at 10am on Friday, November 21st, 2014, at St Ann's Catholic Church, 100 SW Alsbury Blvd, Burleson, TX. Refreshments will be furnished by **Elaine Davis and Dennis Gaster**.

Sixteen persons were present for the October 17th meeting: **Earl Blakley, Dennis Gaster, Barbara and Rex Gillum, Joyce Petty, Bernie and Maxine Owen, Doug Seibel, Tom Hodges, Mary Mattinson, Jim and Jere Rickman, Dennis Erinakes, Elaine and Billy Don Davis, and Joe Nichols**. **Dennis Gaster** presided over the October business meeting.

Maxine Owen reported that **Anita Plummer** sent out nine cards since the last meeting. Anita takes care of some older relatives in Vernon, Texas. She also spent nine or 10 days in Fredrickstown, MO caring for her cousin following surgery. Her cousin had a follow-up appointment and got an A+ in recovery! Anita welcomed the opportunity to visit Gerald's grave in Springfield, MO, as she had not been able to make that trip the past two years. Her mother and Gerald's parents are also buried there.

Marcia Delucchi sent a note to Maxine: "It's been three months tomorrow since I moved (to Seattle), and it is beginning to feel like home. Aljoya, the complex, is delightful. There is more going on than anyone can possibly take part in. It is nice being close to **Katy** and family and **Chris** has already come to visit. So far the weather has been wonderful, but I'm waiting for the grey skies to take over. Everything is going well and it was the right move for me."

Helen Shanklin was very appreciative of all the people who attended Don's memorial service.

Dennis brought up our annual donation to the Presbyterian Night Shelter and **Elaine Davis** said that we traditionally send a \$200.00 contribution after the November meeting. If members wish, they can add to that amount with personal checks. A lively discussion ensued about charities and the percentages that go towards administrative costs versus the mission.

As a reminder, members are invited to attend the Arlington NARFE Chapter 1201 meeting on November 17th. Representatives from Blue Cross/Blue Shield and GEHA are scheduled to review their insurance plans for the coming year. The meeting will be held at the Senior Center, 1000 Eunice Street, Arlington, TX. The business meeting begins at 10am with BCBS and GEHA presentations to follow around 11am.

Maxine Owen was getting ready for a visit from her sister and her husband, as well as her brother, **John Reh**. Her brother was a former SCS Assistant State Conservationist for Water Resources in Kansas. Maxine was shopping at Sprouts, getting ready for the visit and spotted an interesting item—kangaroo meat! Someone wondered if it tasted like chicken—or had a kick to it.

Billy Don Davis said speaking of meat, his friend recently took some cows to the sale barn and prices were twice what they were last year. He wished he had more to sell. **Elaine Davis** said 39 people attended the family reunion at her house this year, and she wonders why she bothered to clean the house before the event.

Mary Mattinson has been keeping busy shelling pecans. Her 16-year-old granddaughter is driving a 1962 Chevrolet pickup which the boys think is pretty cool.

Barbara Gillum has an interesting ring tone on her cell phone—ducks quacking. When it rang during the meeting, several members reacted like pulling up shotguns. Barbara's daughter is hospitalized with MS, and the Gillum's take care of their grandson.

Joyce Petty keeps busy chasing great grandkids. There are some issues with the Rio Vista city council that have gotten her attention.

Doug Seibel came to the meeting to rest after two hours of cardiac rehabilitation.

Jim and Jere Rickman will be heading to the African nation of Tanzania and its semi-autonomous part called Zanzibar.

Dennis Erinakes reported that his son Michael shot a rogue elephant in Africa. Dennis attended a symposium on injection wells and earthquakes. Dennis also had a near miss from an accident between two vehicles, and we are thankful that he was not hurt. He is also having fun stringing along someone representing Publishers Clearing House.

Joe Dean Nichols, 81, passed away Tuesday, Oct. 21, 2014, in Fort Worth. See the In Memoriam section for more details.

The December 2014 meeting of the SCS/NRCS Alumni Club will be at 10am on Friday, December 19th, 2014, at St Ann's Catholic Church, 100 SW Alsbury Blvd, Burleson, TX. This is the meeting where everyone brings something to eat.

Eighteen persons were present for the November 21st meeting: **Earl Blakley, Dennis Gaster, Barbara Gillum, Bernie and Maxine Owen, Dennis Erinakes, Elaine and Billy Don Davis, Dave and Barb Stockbridge, Don Kapalka, Don Newman, Bill and Rita Kuenstler, Arnold King, Betty Sisson, Anita Plummer, and Marie Garsjo**. Marie Garsjo presided over the November business meeting.

Maxine Owen, Chairperson of the Nominating Committee presented a slate of officers to serve in 2015. President: **Marie Garsjo**; First Vice President **Dave Drennan**; Second Vice President **Don Kapalka**; Secretary-Treasurer **Dennis Gaster**; Assistant Secretary-Treasurer **Barbara Gillum**; Member Relations Leader (Caller Groups): **Clyde Goodman**; Member Relations Leader (Cards and Memorials): **Anita Plummer**; Newsletter Editor: **Bill Kuenstler**. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to accept the slate of officers as presented.

Clyde Goodman reported that he was taking his wife for emergency surgery the morning of our meeting. It has been a long siege for **Marla**, but she wrote in Facebook on December 6th: "I escaped, I escaped I escaped! It is so good to be home, even though 'to be' is all I can do. I have had many surgeries, but when I left for the hospital, things were left with organization."

Don Kapalka reported that his son's wedding on October 18th went off without a hitch and was truly a great day. **Zach and Anna's** wedding was held at Lake Arlington, and the weather was ideal.

Marie Garsjo gave a very interesting program on the restoration of the Elwha River Watershed in Washington State. This project involved construction, reconstruction, and the decommissioning of the Elwha and Glines Canyon Dams. Great photography was displayed, and she did a nice job explaining the project.

Milady Henrietta Blaha Hejl, 101, a retired registered nurse, died Saturday, Nov. 22th, 2014, in Keene.

WASHINGTON, DC, NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA

John Peterson, ARCSE Representative

Email: jwpeterson@cox.net



John Peterson, our man in Washington, DC.

Joan Albertella sends, "My biggest news is a phone call I received from my granddaughter, **Lieutenant Erin Griffen**, who is stationed in Bagdad. (The unit received permission to make these calls for the holiday.) Certainly not anything like the Vietnam era communications! Family was at my house for Thanksgiving dinner so they got to talk to her. It was wonderful."

John Peterson attended the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (VASWCD) Annual Meeting in Roanoke, VA in early December. He was again elected to be Virginia's representative on the NACD Board of Directors. His term is two years, and this is his 5th election to that position. **John** is also the Chairman of the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District. **John and Blanche** also managed to spend two weeks at Hilton Head Island (HHI) this fall. They have enjoyed HHI and the ocean for many years.

Carl Bouchard sends "This is the 150th anniversary of Arlington National Cemetery (ANC). It is also the 23rd year of placing wreaths at Arlington National Cemetery, started by a wreath-maker in Maine, Morrill Worcester, who donated 5,000 excess wreaths in 1992 to be placed at ANC by the Maine State Society of Washington, DC. From that beginning, the effort took off when a photograph was taken in 2005 that showed the green wreaths with a red bow on a snow background. With people wanting to make donations in an effort to cover the whole cemetery, Wreaths Across America was born, and this year for the first time, over 223,000 wreaths were placed on all markers in ANC (<http://www.wreathsaacrossamerica.org/>).

In addition, over 700,000 wreaths were sent out to Veterans Cemeteries around the country and overseas. Again this year on December 13th **Janet and I** and our twin teenage Grandsons were at ANC to welcome 35,000 to 45,000 volunteers (based on ANC estimates) from all over the country who showed up to place wreaths. Wreath-laying started at 9am, and the majority of the 69 trucks were emptied by noon.



Wreathes laid by the Maine State Society of Washington, DC, on the 150th anniversary of Arlington National Cemetery.

The next day, the Maine State Society and its President Janet presented the Big M award to Maine's First Lady, **Ann LePage**, for her work in supporting veterans and their organizations. This past summer she jumped out of a plane with quadruple amputee veteran **Travis Mills** to raise funds for a Northern Maine Veterans Center in Fort Kent, ME, my home town. And the jumping point was at the Fort Kent Airport on land originally settled by my Great-Great Grandfather. For any of you who live in the DC area, Saturday, January 24th is the magical day when the wreaths will be picked up starting at

0830. Hope to see some of you there. Pictures are of my Grandsons with GW and of ANC.” Thanks **Carl**. I really enjoy going to Arlington this time of year and seeing the wreaths.

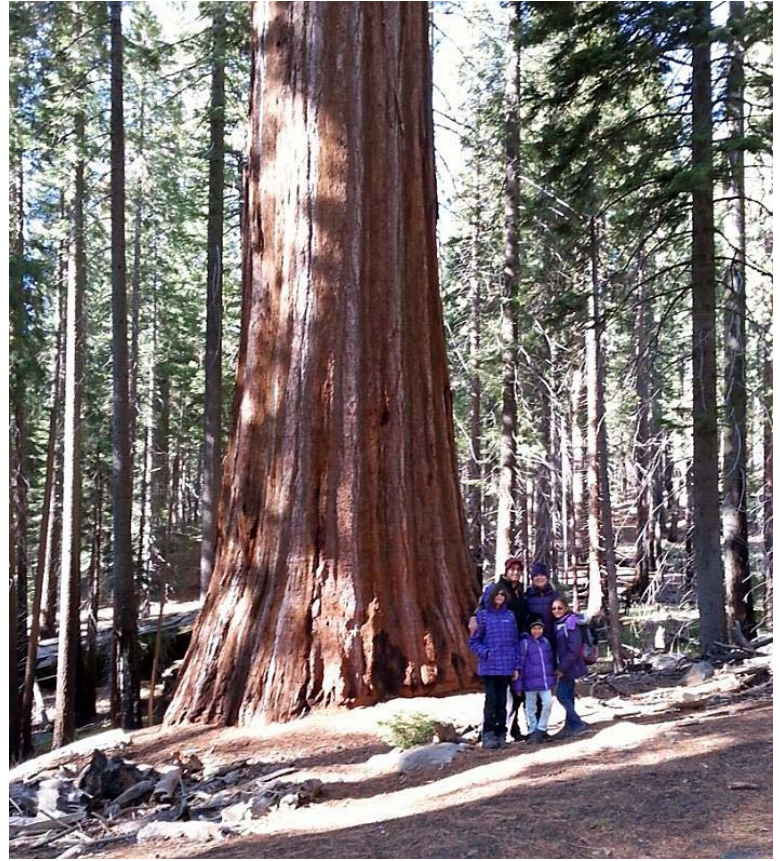


Carl Bouchard's grandsons with George Washington at Arlington National Cemetery.

This is from **Wes and Dottie Hofstad**. “Sorry that we missed your fall meeting. I had a bleeding ulcer which put me in the hospital for several days. I am now fully recovered, and getting ready to celebrate the holidays with my son-in-law and his wife. He has just retired from 40 years as a missionary in Hong Kong. He is buying a house in Emmaus, PA. From there he has a two-hour drive to visit his son in Brooklyn, and three hours to visit us. We are looking forward to attending my granddaughter's wedding on Valentine's Day in New York City. Hopefully, we will see you all at your spring meeting. Greetings to you all.”

Ruth and John Stierna traveled to San Francisco to spend time with their daughter and her family in November. They also drove out to Yosemite and spent several days enjoying the beauty and uniqueness of the park. El Capitan, Half Dome, the waterfalls (although very little water), a dry Mirror Lake, Mariposa Grove and Giant Sequoias, wildlife, were all fascinating. Of all their travels over the years, this has been the first time they have been able to visit Yosemite. They timed it just right—it did not rain until they returned to San Francisco—and that was a light rain. The heavy rain came after they returned to Virginia. Still the drought in California continues to be serious. It will take a lot more rain and snowpack to restore the water levels in lakes and reservoirs. Attached are a few photos of their time in Yosemite with their daughter and her family.





WASHINGTON

Gerald Richard, ARCSE Representative

Email: glr52pdr@aol.com

Present at our November and December luncheons at the Timber Creek Grill and Buffet were: **Jud Melton, Lennie and Florence Husa, Harry Riehle, Ralph Schmidt, Larry and Jean Edmonds, Gary Johnson, Hans and Kathryn Krauss, Jerry and Phyllis Richard, Carl Vennes, Ken Kaul, Chet Jahn, and Phil Schauble. Stefan Fechter and spouse plan to snow bird to Phoenix, AZ for the winter months.**



Grandson Matt, Jerry Richard, and Son Dale. The salmon run on the Columbia River = great fishing!

We have been in contact recently with **Bob Olson**. Although Bob can dish up some gourmet meals, he found out that cooking for one (with bad hips and knees) wasn't working out. So, with the kids' help Bob has moved to the Fairwinds Retirement Community (N. Spokane). He says it's a good place and the food is great.

Ken and Rita Kaul travelled to Poland and were able to visit with some of Rita's relatives. It was a great trip and their visit to Krakow showed that it is indeed an amazing city.

Here is some WSU history. **Ralph Schmidt's Great Uncle William Delbert Barkhuff** was the first student of the first class to register on the opening day of Washington State University in 1892. He was the first editor of the college paper. He graduated as an engineer and worked for the Northern Pacific RR, city engineer for Everett, District Engineer in Seattle, and finally City Engineer for Seattle under three mayors.

WEST VIRGINIA

Peg Reese, ARCSE Representative

Email: pegreesevw@gmail.com

Patricia Burns, wife of **Dave Burns**, passed away on November 13th, 2014 after a long struggle with cancer. See the In Memoriam section for more details.

John Weller, Resource Conservation Engineer, plans to retire on January 2nd, 2015.

Dee Weston recently returned from spending a month at Myrtle Beach, SC. The weather was wonderful and I got to spend some time with **Jim Dove**. Jim is doing great and is still keeping busy with church activities, and his yard work. I attended his church several times that month and one of the highlights was the birthday celebration of Billy Graham's birthday. The program was very nice, and the music was wonderful as a harpist played several of Billy Graham's favorite hymns, and of course we had birthday cake!

Merry Christmas and a Healthy New Year to everyone!

NEW SENIOR CONSERVATIONISTS: We welcome two new Senior Conservationists since the last Newsletter. They have reached the minimum age of 83 years and have completed the Senior Conservationist Questionnaire. Congratulations!

Roy G. Freeman **Kenedy, Texas** (*this is the correct spelling of the town*)
Edwin L. Minnick **Walnut Creek, CA**

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.

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 of 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 to Ron Marlow at arcse@cox.net.**

Surname

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

Please email Ron Marlow at arcse@cox.net to report recent notices for In Memoriam.

Boyd	O. B. Boyd (64) passed away November 18, 2014 in Holdenville, Oklahoma. He was a member of the Texas Banner Church of God. O. B. worked as an Engineering Aide for the Hughes County Conservation District from 1986 to 1998, before starting with the Holdenville Field Office of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) where he has been employed for the last 15 years as the Soil Conservation Technician. Surviving are his wife 20 years, Sandee of the home, four children, 14 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.
Burns	Patricia Burns (73) of Fairmont, West Virginia passed away on November 13, 2014 after a long struggle with cancer. She is survived by her husband, Life Member Dave Burns who retired in 2003 as the IRM manager in West Virginia, and her daughter Stephanie Burns , of Morgantown. Patricia was a graduate of Morgantown High School. She was a member of the Pleasant Valley United Methodist Church where she was active in the United Methodist Women. She retired as an office manager at Jones Fur Service with many years of service. She was a member of the TOPS Club 0070. Patricia enjoyed volunteer work after her retirement. She was involved with the Fairmont-Marion County food pantry. She volunteered for the American Cancer Society where she proudly walked the survivors' lap at the Monongalia County Relay for Life for the past seven years. She was a loyal Mountaineer Fan and enjoyed going to home football and basketball games. Online condolences may be made to www.fordfuneralhomes.com .



Reflection Pond, Denali National Park, Alaska.

Surname

In Memoriam (Cont'd)

- Carlton** Honorary Life Member and Senior Conservationist **Earl Parker Carlton** (97) of Carrollton, Ohio passed away on December 2, 2014 in his home with his family at his side. He was husband of the late **Marie Carlton**, his wife of 60 years. He graduated from The Ohio State University in 1941 and remained a loyal Buckeye throughout his life. **Earl** served as a Naval Officer in the Pacific during WW II. Returning home, he began a 27 year career with the U.S. Soil Conservation Service in Summit County. In 1952, he began yearly plantings of Christmas trees on Mrs. Carlton's grandparents' farm in Carroll County. The trees were harvested and sold by his family in the Cuyahoga Falls area. Eventually his three sons joined him in partnership. The farm and business grew and Carlton Tree Farms Inc., a tree farm nursery, developed. **Earl** served on the Ohio Reclamation Board of Review for 25 years. He received numerous awards including being named to the Conservation Hall of Fame and the Christmas Tree Growers Hall of Fame. He belonged to and held leadership positions in many organizations including Carroll County Chamber of Commerce. He was a member of Carrollton First United Methodist Church and was a 70 year Mason. He was an avid bridge player. He is survived by three sons **Rick (Cathy)**, **Ron (Judy)**, **Bruce (Catherine)**, all of Carrollton and one daughter, **Linda Haskett (Jim)** of Stow; nine grandchildren and 13 great grandchildren. Memorial donations may be made to Community Hospice, 789 N Lisbon, Carrollton, OH 44615.
- Davis** **Darrel Dale Davis** (69) of Sugar Land, Oklahoma passed away on November 30, 2014. He attended Oklahoma State University and received a Bachelor's and Master's Degree in Agricultural Economics. **Dale** was employed by the Soil Conservation Service as an Ag. Economist and eventually served in numerous roles with Halliburton from 1982 to 2011. Dale is survived by his wife of 48 years, **Karen Davis**, a son, a daughter, and three grandchildren.

- Drullinger** **Florence (Carter) Drullinger** (98) of Holt, Michigan passed away on March 18, 2014. She graduated from MSU in 1939 with a degree in music and later worked for the Crop and Soil Science Department. She married her college sweetheart, **Richard H. Drullinger**. **Richard** retired in 1975 as the State Resource Conservationist for SCS. Surviving is one daughter, three sons, eleven grandchildren and fourteen great grandchildren. On line condolences may be made at www.greastlansing.com
- Duree** **Erma Duree** (86) of Chariton, Iowa passed away September 25, 2014. She was the wife of the late **Leo Duree** who was a retired engineering technician. Surviving are her three daughters, seven grandchildren, and 18 great grandchildren.
- Ensminger** **Billy John Ensminger** (85) of Duncan, Oklahoma passed away Saturday, November 22, 2014, at home surrounded by his family. He graduated from Wewoka High School in 1947 where he was a standout football player. He served his country honorably in the United States Army. He worked in the oil field for Mobil and Deep Rock in Oklahoma and Kansas in his earlier years and went to work for the US Soil Conservation Service in 1961, retiring from there in 1993 as a Supervisory Surveyor. He loved hunting, enjoyed working in his yard and spending time with family. **Billy** is survived by his wife of 64 years, **Ellen Ensminger**, of the home; two children, two grandchildren, three great-grandchildren. Online condolences can be sent to the family at: www.granthamfuneralhomes.com
- Ferguson** Honorary Life Member and Senior Conservationist **Donald T. Ferguson** (98) of Muncie, Indiana passed away on January 27, 2014. **Donald** retired in 1984 from the Soil Conservation Service as a District Conservation. He also served in the Civilian Conservation Corp.
- Fox** **Herbert C. Fox, Jr.** (78) of Cary, North Carolina passed away on November 18, 2014. He retired in 1993 as hydrologist on the Watershed/River Basin Planning Staff. Herb was a native of Virginia but spent his SCS/NRCS career in North Carolina. He was a design engineer on the State Conservation Engineer's staff before assuming the hydrologist position. Herb is survived by his ex-wife and friend, **Nancy Fox**; sons, **Bert (Lisa) Fox** of Cary, **Hugh (Teresa) Fox** of Kittrell; daughter, **Dawn (David) Satterwhite** of Wake Forest; and six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.
- Frank** **Ernest F. Frank** (76) of Dover, Ohio, passed away on December 11, 2014 after suffering a stroke while deer hunting with friends. He is survived by his wife of 51 years, **Alice Ann (Strasser) Frank**, originally of West Lafayette; a son, a daughter, and two grandchildren. Upon graduating from Fresno High School in 1956, he enlisted in the U.S. Army and served two years in Germany. **Ernie** retired from the USDA Soil Conservation Service. He was an outstanding technician to the many cooperators he served and a great trainer. **Ernie** was a co-founder and developer of Zoar Village Golf Course. He was also the owner of Franks' Tree Farm. Contributions in honor of **Ernie** may be made to Community Hospice of New Philadelphia --address is 716 Commercial Ave. SW, New Philadelphia.
- George** **John C. George** (66) of Rome, Pennsylvania passed away December 12, 2014. **John** was a graduate of Delaware Valley College in 1970, where he received his degree in Agronomy. During his college years, **John** served as a student trainee with the Soil Conservation Service. His career with SCS/NRCS spanned 41 years, during which he served as a Soil Conservationist, District Conservationist, RC&D Coordinator and then as Supervisory District Conservationist for Field Team 1 in Northeast PA. In his six years of retirement, **John** and **Donna** traveled extensively to foreign countries. He is survived by his wife of 44 years, **Donna**, two sons, a brother, as well as several nieces, nephews and cousins. Memories and condolences may be expressed by visiting www.bowenfuneralhomes.com.
- Hicks, 2013** Life Member and Senior Conservationist **Jesse L. Hicks** (90) of Knoxville, Tennessee passed away on February 23, 2013. He retired from the Soil Conservation Service in 1981 as the State Conservationist in North Carolina. Jesse also served as a State Conservation Engineer. He was an Assistant State Conservationist in Ohio and was a past President of the Soil Conservation Society of America.
- Hoffman** **Thelma Irene Hoffman** (93) formerly of Effingham, Kansas passed away on November 26, 2014. She was the spouse of **Mac L. Hoffman** who preceded her in death in 2009, having been married for 63 years. **Mac** was a Soil Conservation Technician in the Effingham Field Office. **Thelma** received her Normal Teachers training from Kansas State Teachers College in Emporia. She was an elementary school teacher for many years in rural Atchison County and Jefferson County grade schools. She had also served as principal for the Effingham Grade School. The Hoffman's raised their family on a dairy farm near Effingham. Survivors include three sons, a daughter, 13 grandchildren, 24 great-grandchildren and two great-great-grandchildren.
- Hough, 2013** Life Member **Glenn Harold Hough** (85) of Olympia, Washington passed away on October 23, 2013. **Glenn** was a proud professional civil engineer; he retired as an area engineer for the USDA Soil Conservation Service. He also worked for the city of Olympia and several local consulting firms throughout his career. Born in Hebron, Indiana, **Glenn** grew up on a farm, was an active 4H member and deeply involved in church activities. He went to Purdue University, graduating with a Bachelor's of Science degree. He immediately joined the United States Army and served during the Korean War in the Seventh Cavalry and 45th Infantry Regiment Heavy Tank Company. He rapidly moved up in rank and became a Sergeant and Communications Chief. After working in several locations in Illinois and Washington, a transfer in 1974 took **Glenn** and his family to the Lacey and Olympia, WA area, where he stayed for the remainder of his life. He and wife **Jean** were strong supporters of the foster care program and supported seventeen or more foster kids over their life. He was a musician, using his

vocal abilities in Barbershop Quartets and in Church Choir most recently at the First United Methodist Church of Olympia. He was a drummer at Purdue early in his life and carried his interest and skills to the Olympia New Horizon's Band. **Glenn** was a strong advocate and leader of the Boy Scouts of America. He is survived by son **Thomas** and his wife **Hope**, son **Dale** and partner **Jill Sjolín**, son **Stuart Hough**, and daughter **Beth Downs (Hodges)** and her husband **Wayne**. Also surviving are fourteen grandchildren, plus nine great grandchildren. **Glenn** was preceded in death by his wife **Jean**.

- Hraban** **Rudolph Raymond Hraban** (89) of Billings, Montana formerly of Gering, NE passed away on June 24, 2014. He served in the Navy aboard the most decorated ship of World War II, the USS Enterprise Aircraft Carrier. He received the Good Conduct Medal, Victory Medal, American Theatre Medal, Purple Heart Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal—eleven stars, Philippine Liberation Medal—two stars and a Commendation by the Commanding Officer. **Rudy** was proud of his service to his country. He graduated with a degree in Agriculture from the University of Nebraska. He was employed by the USDA, Soil Conservation Service for 38 years, retiring in 1987 as an Area Conservationist. **Rudy** married **Maxine Tharnish** on June 16, 1952 in Lincoln, NE and just recently celebrated their 62nd anniversary. Together they raised seven children who survived along with 22 grandchildren and 9 great grandchildren. **Rudy** was an active member of Christ the King Catholic Church where he served in a variety of ways including the church council for over 20 years. Memorials can be made in Rudy's name to Christ the King Catholic Church.
- Hraban** **Maxine F. Hraban** (84) of Billings, MT formerly of Gering, NE, passed away on November 2, 2014. She was the wife of **Rudolph Raymond Hraban** (memoriam follows). Memorials can be made in Maxine's name to Christ the King Catholic Church and the Ronald McDonald House in Denver, CO. Condolences may be offered to the family at www.geringchapel.com.
- Knecht** Senior Conservationist **John P. Knecht** (91) of Hillsboro, North Dakota passed away on December 6, 2014. He worked for the Soil Conservation Service in North Dakota offices in Napoleon, Langdon, and Hillsboro retiring in May 1983. He is survived by his wife of 68 years, **Lorraine**, daughter **Susan Cheatley**, son **Jim (Deb)** all of Hillsboro, son **Jeff (Suzette Munnik)** of Pasadena, CA, and daughter **Janice (Brian) Glaeske** of Fargo, ND, two sisters, nine grandchildren, six great grandchildren and many nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents, a sister, two brothers, a son and daughter-in-law, five brothers-in-law, three sisters-in-law, a niece and nephew.
- Komarek** **Linda L. (Hamilton) Komarek**, (66) of Salina, Kansas passed away on December 17, 2014. She attended Albany school and graduated from Sabetha High School in 1966. She retired from SCS/NRCS in 2005, after 36 years of service. **Linda** was a devoted farm wife and a member of St. Mary's Catholic Church. She was a natural caregiver, always sharing her kindness and love for others. She is survived by her husband of 31 years, **Francis J. Komarek**, of the home and son, **James F. (Emily) Komarek** of Salina. Memorials are suggested to the Salina Animal Shelter, St. Mary's Catholic Church or Bavaria Cemetery, in care of Ryan Mortuary.
- McNeil** **Freddie B. McNeil** (65) of Grand Blanc, Michigan passed away on September 7, 2014. He graduated from Tennessee State University majoring in Plant Science. After completing an internship Miles City, Montana, **Freddie** was a dedicated worker for the Natural Resources Conservation Service for 41 years. He was also an active officer in National Association of Professional Black Employees and was the former chairman of the Michigan Association of Professional Black Employees. **Freddie** is survived by his wife of 41 years, **LaDon**; two children, **Mia D. McNeil**, Lansing, MI; **Frederick L. McNeil**, Grand Blanc, MI; five brothers, and four sisters.
- Meier** **Lorenz Meier** (88) of Shenandoah, Iowa passed away on December 11, 2014. **Lorenz** was proud to say that he was a lifelong member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church. On February 20, 1946, he married the love of his life **Annabelle Couch**. Along with farming, **Lorenz** began working for Soil Conservation in 1964 where his job was staking terraces and tile lines, helping the farmers to make their farming easier. He retired from the Soil Conservation Service in 1996 after 32 years of faithful service. Preceding **Lorenz** in death was his wife, **Annabelle** in 1994. He leaves behind one son, two daughters, grandchildren, great grandchildren, and great-great grandchildren
- Meister** **Delbert G. "Del" Meister** (87) of Harvey, Michigan passed away on April 2, 2014. He retired in 1981 as an Area Conservationist with the Soil Conservation Service. **Del** began his career as a soil scientist. He is survived by his daughter and four sons, nine grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren. **Del** was preceded in death by his wife, **Virginia**, on June 10, 2012.
- Mills** Honorary Life Member and Senior Conservationist **Van Clee Mills** (91) of San Angelo, Texas passed away on July 20, 2014. He attended Millrun school through the 7th grade. This was a two room country school. Following graduation from Athens High School in 1941, he volunteered to serve in the U.S. Navy for the duration of the national emergency. **Van** finished boot training at San Diego on December 5, 1941 two days before Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. Following graduation from the radio and communication school in Los Angeles in May of 1942, he was assigned to the U.S. Navy Armed Guard. Armed Guard personnel served aboard Merchant Marine ships. He served in this capacity in the North and South Atlantic, Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, Mediterranean Sea and the South Pacific. **Van** was honorably discharged from the Navy in November 1945. Following graduation from Texas A & M University in January 1950 with a BS in Range Management and Forestry, he began a long career with the (USDA) Soil Conservation Service. He worked for the SCS at Clarendon, Claude, Potter County, Follett, Pampa, Snyder, Andrews and Colorado City. He retired from the SCS as a District Conservationist on

December 4, 1984. He received numerous awards for his dedicated service to the cause of soil and water conservation. **Van**, with his wife **Vera**, moved to San Angelo in July 1985. In various towns **Van** served as a deacon and Sunday school teacher in the Baptist Church. He served as president of the Lions Clubs at Claude and Colorado City. He also served as president of the Colorado City Chamber of Commerce. **Van's** hobbies included hunting, fishing, hunting for arrowheads, trapping mink, washer pitching and 42. He was preceded in death by his infant daughter Ellen Elise. Survivors are his wife of 60 years **Vera Schmidt Mills**; daughters **Sherry Lynne (Kenneth) Corbin** of San Antonio, and **Donna Louise (Mike) Gillespie** of Crandall; five grandchildren and two step-grandchildren. He is also survived by four great grandchildren. In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be sent to San Angelo A&M Club Scholarship Fund, PO Box 1122, or the charity of your choice.

Nesbitt, 2013 Honorary Life Member and Senior Conservationist **Gordon R. Nesbitt** (91) of Groton, New York passed away on January 26, 2013. With 30 years of service, **Gordon** retired from the Soil Conservation Service in 1979 as a District Conservationist. He proudly served the Army Air Corps during World War II servicing B29s as an avionics technician. After his military service, he attended and graduated from Cornell University with a degree in agronomy. **Gordon** was a part-time farmer from 1952 until 2012, and loved his farm in Groton. He was an active member of the Lansing Methodist Church for many years. **Margaret** and **Gordon** enjoyed spending winters in Roswell, N.M., for many years. He is survived by his wife of 64 years **Margaret**; five children, **Melanie Mackey (Walter)**, Cocoa Beach, Fla., **Mary Sloan (Daniel)**, Gilbertsville, **Celeste Ryan (Tecumsah)**, Cooperstown, **David Nesbitt**, Tampa, Fla., and **Nancy Nesbitt**, Anaheim, Calif.; daughters-in-law, **Molly** and **Susan**; 14 grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren. He was predeceased by two sons, **Gordon Jr.** and **Leslie Nesbitt**; and one grandson, **Eric Nesbitt**.

Nolte **Carleen (Hendrickson) Nolte** (89) of Cedar Hill, Texas, formerly of Columbia, Missouri passed away on December 1, 2014. She was the wife **Forrest Nolte** who retired as the State Agronomist with SCS in Missouri. Survivors include a son, **Carl W. (Linda) Nolte** of Redmond, Oregon; and a daughter **Carolyn E. (Chuck) Skeels** of Cedar Hill, Texas. In lieu of flowers, contributions to Carleen H. Nolte Memorial Fund at New Life in Christ Luther Church, Duncanville, Texas.

Nuttle **Charles E. "Chuck" Nuttle** (77) of Perry, Oklahoma passed away on December 6, 2014. In April, 1959, he joined the Soil Conservation Service, working primarily in Bristow, Ada, Perry and later Claremore. After providing technical assistance on 550 flood control dams and 11 abandoned mine sites in 42 counties across the state, he retired in 1993. **Chuck** also served over 40 years in the Oklahoma Army National Guard. He rose to the rank of infantry battalion command sergeant major with responsibility for 750 soldiers. He was one of few marksmen in the state to be named to the Governor's 20 in both pistol and rifle shooting. He served as a deacon and elder in the Christian church. He is survived by his wife of 53 years **Nila Nuttle** of Perry, two daughters, seven grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

Parks **Carroll L. Parks** (90) of Gallatin, Missouri passed away on November 18, 2014, at Cameron Regional Medical Center. He graduated from Albany High School in 1942 and enlisted in the United States Army. He was a veteran of World War II, serving in Europe and fighting in the Battle of the Bulge. He then went on to attend the University of Missouri, graduating in 1951 with a degree in Agriculture. **Carroll** worked for the USDA Soil Conservation Service in Albany before relocating to Gallatin in 1956. **Carroll** retired in 1986, after 35 years of service. Following retirement, he worked part-time for the Daviess County.

Payne **Mary Ruth Payne** (98) of Salina, Kansas passed away on November 20, 2014, at Salina Presbyterian Manor. She was the spouse of **Jay** who preceded her in death in 1989. **Jay** was the District Conservationist in the Salina Field Office for many years. She graduated from Hartford High School and received a violin scholarship and attended Emporia Teachers College. She transferred to Kansas University her sophomore year. **Mary** was initiated into Mu Phi Epsilon, honorary music sorority, and graduated from Kansas University School of Fine Arts with a bachelor of music education in 1937. Survivors include a son, two daughters, two grandchildren, and a great-grandchild. The family suggests memorials in lieu of flowers, to Salina Presbyterian Manor, 2601 E. Crawford St, Salina, 67401.

Pitts, 2013 **William Edward Pitts** (98) of Cadillac, Michigan passed away on October 8, 2013 at his home. **William** graduated, with high honors, from Michigan State College (now University) in 1938. After graduation, he joined the Michigan Department of Forestry. **William** answered his country's call in 1942, volunteering for the Army Air Corps. He was deployed overseas in 1943, serving as a part of the 13th Air Force in China, Burma, India theatre. He served as communications officer for the 528th fighter squadron, a part of the famed Flying Tigers. In the course of his wartime service he "flew the hump" from Northern Burma, up over the Himalayan Mountains into Southern China. His decorations included the Asiatic Pacific Ribbon with three bronze stars. After his return, **William** continued his service in the U.S. Air Force reserve, retiring in 1975 as a Lt. Colonel. He joined the Soil Conservation Service in 1948. He moved, with his family, back to Cadillac in 1950. **William** served as Soil Conservationist for Wexford and Missaukee counties until his retirement in 1975. He is survived by **Ruth**, his wife of 72 years; two sons, **William** and **Eric**; daughter in laws, **Dana** and **Mary**; eight grandchildren and eight great grandchildren.

Porter **Betty L. Porter** (84) of Longmont, Colorado passed away on November 25, 2014 during heart valve surgery at a hospital in Boulder, Colorado. She is survived by her husband of 64 years, Life Member **Richard L. Porter** who

retired as the state conservationist of New Hampshire. Other survivors include daughters **Jana Stolz (Robert)** of Loveland, CO and **Lori Bradford (Bill)** of Estes Park, CO; grandson **Josh Stolz (Kandace)** of Fort Collins, CO; granddaughter **Amanda Stolz** of Lakewood, CO; brother **Gene Downen** of Berthoud, CO; two great-grandsons, **Aidan** and **Layton Stolz** and four step-grandchildren and their families. An online obituary may be viewed by visiting www.carroll-lewellen.com.

- Quisenberry** **Ina Jean Quisenberry** (89) of Okemos, Michigan passed away on January 15, 2014. She graduated from Anderson University in Indiana. She worked as a clerk-typist for the USDA Soil Conservation Service. Surviving are two daughters and seven grandchildren. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Pennway Church of God in memory of Ina Jean.
- Ray** Member and Senior Conservationist **Merrill Dean Ray** (86) of Quincy, Illinois, formerly of Fulton and Columbia, passed away December 25, 2014. On April 11, 1953, he was united in marriage to **Florence Mary Margaret Mulka Ray** in Posen, Mich. **Florence** preceded him in death on March 22, 2007. On July 17, 2007, he married **Jewell Ladean Hahn**, who survives him at home in Quincy. **Merrill** joined the National Guard when he was 18, participated in ROTC in college and served faithfully in the Korean War. He graduated from Kansas State University in May 1950 and retired as the State Resource Conservationist from a lifetime of service with the Soil Conservation Service in 1984. He is lovingly remembered by his wife **Jewell**; and by his 12 children, **JoAnn (Patrick) Stone**, **Mike (Nancy) Ray**, **Kathy (Carl) Soelle**, **Sharon (Mark) Patrick**, **Neal (Suzie) Ray**, **Janet (Corey) Okonek**, **Jim (Lisa) Ray**, **Tom (Rosemary) Ray**, **Mary (Tony) Arthur**, **Margaret (Erich) Schneider**, **Robert (Maria) Ray**, and **Julie (Bryan) Ebersole**; 29 grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren. He also is survived by Jewell's family. He was preceded in death by three brothers and four grandchildren. Contributions can be made to the Ava Maria University, Florida, c/o Maupin Funeral Home, 301 Douglas Blvd., Fulton, Mo., 65251. Condolences can be left for the family at www.maupinfuneral.com.
- Schmitt** **Bryan "Tiny" Schmitt** (67) of Wadena, Iowa, peacefully passed away surrounded by his family after a brief battle with cancer on October 22, 2014. **Bryan** is survived by his loving wife of 44 years **Linda Schmitt** of Wadena who retired from SCS; 4 sons, 9 grandchildren and a great grandson. **Bryan** graduated from Valley of Elgin High School in the Class of 1966. He joined the U.S. Army and served during the Vietnam War from 1966 to 1969 in Germany.
- Simmons** Member **George Thomas "Tom" Simmons** (87) of Higginsville, Missouri passed away on December 11, 2014, at Western Missouri Medical Center. His wife **Bettie Lou Oliver** in Kansas City preceded him in death on April 29, 2008, after 53 years of wedded bliss. **Tom** was raised on a farm just north of Osceola. He was educated in a one-room school and graduated from Osceola High School, Class of 1944. **Tom** was a Marine Corps veteran. After his military duty, he attended and graduated from the University of Missouri with a degree in agronomy. He then worked for the USDA Soil Conservation Service as a soil scientist until his retirement in 1987. **Tom** is survived by his son, **Mark (Annette) Simmons** of Higginsville; and four grandchildren.
- Slawter** **Harry D. Slawter** (63) of Grafton, Wisconsin passed away on November 16, 2014. **Harry** received a BS degree in Agronomy from The Ohio State University in 1971. He worked for the Natural Resource Conservation Service his entire career. He worked and lived in Ohio, Maine, Illinois, Wisconsin, Utah, and Washington DC. Among his many accomplishments, he received the prestigious Norman A. Berg Conservation Legacy Award in 2010. He is survived by his loving wife of 43 years, **Rhea**; daughters: **Amy (Gene) Kenny** and **Lisa (Jeremy) Volkening**; and five grandchildren. In lieu of flowers, the family is requesting donations to The ALS Association, Wisconsin Chapter, 3333 N. Mayfair Rd, Suite 213, Wauwatosa, WI 53222
- Snyder** Member **Ronald (Ron) Dean Snyder** (70) of Burlington, Iowa passed away on December 6, 2014 at Great River Hospice House in West Burlington. **Ron** worked 32 years for USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Services. In retirement he was a District Commissioner for the Conservation Service, served as a substitute teacher, and volunteered for the Iowa Organ Donor Network from which he received a liver transplant in 2001. **Ron** also was a member of many community and service organizations including C.R.I.S.P. and N.A.R.F.E. Survivors include wife of 45 years, **Marsha (Stagers) Snyder** of Burlington; children, **Tammera (Mark) Kappes** of Cedar Rapids, **Rachelle (Brad) Fidely** of Hutchinson, Kansas, **Dustin (Megan) Snyder** of Burlington; and seven grandchildren. Memorials will be established for the Iowa Organ Donor Network and First Christian Church in Burlington, Iowa.
- Volmert** **Leslie F. Volmert** (88) passed away on December 27, 2014, peacefully at his ranch in Vienna, Missouri, surrounded by his loving nephews. He was preceded in death by one sister and one brother. **Les** was a 1950 graduate and proud alumnus of the University of Missouri Columbia. He spent his career with the Soil Conservation Service in New Madrid and St. Charles, Missouri, retiring in 1982 as a district Conservationist. A WWII veteran, **Les** proudly served in the US Navy aboard the USS Stickell. He also served in the US Army reserve attaining the rank of 1st Lieutenant. A devote catholic, he was a member of Visitation Parish in Vienna, Mo. **Les** was active in many community organizations. A lifelong farmer, he was the proud proprietor of his Century Farm. He raised registered polled Hereford cattle and was a member of the Missouri Polled Hereford Association, serving as a past president. **Les** was on the board of the MO Cattleman's Association and was awarded the 1965 Soil Conservation Award by the Conservation Federation of Missouri in cooperation with The National Wildlife Federation and the Sears-Roebuck Foundation. He is survived by his loving sister-in-law **Agnes A. Volmert** and many beloved nieces and nephews as well as great-nieces and great-nephews. Memorial

contributions to the World War II Honor Flight or the **Leslie F. Volmert Scholarship Fund**, with envelopes available at the Vienna Office of the Birmingham-Martin Funeral Homes.

Winkler

Jane Dorine (Meter) Winkler (77) of Bonita Springs, FL, passed away on October 24, 2014 after a long bout with cancer. **Jane** is survived by her husband, **Jerry Winkler**, who retired as the District Conservationist for NRCS in Alliance, NE. She received her education from Melbeta High School, graduating in 1956 and was an outstanding athlete. She also attended Center Business College in Denver, CO. She was employed at the Star-Herald as the Society Editor. She owned and operated JW's Clothing Store in Alliance until retirement. She moved to Florida with her husband, **Jerry**, in 2001. **Jane** is survived by her husband of 49 years, **Jerry** and son **Tyler (Lorrain)** of Bonita Springs; a granddaughter **Mana** of Chicago, Ill. A memorial will be established to a cancer fund. Tributes of sympathy may be sent to 13060 Amberley Ct. #811, Bonita Springs, Fla., 34135.

Note: These are recent notices. For a complete list, please see www.arcse.org. Please email Ron Marlow at arcse@cox.net to report recent notices for In Memoriam.



Blue Ridge Mountains, Virginia



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