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# NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter for Retired Conservation Service Employees

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Website: [www.arcse.org](http://www.arcse.org)

## NOTES FROM THE POTOMAC

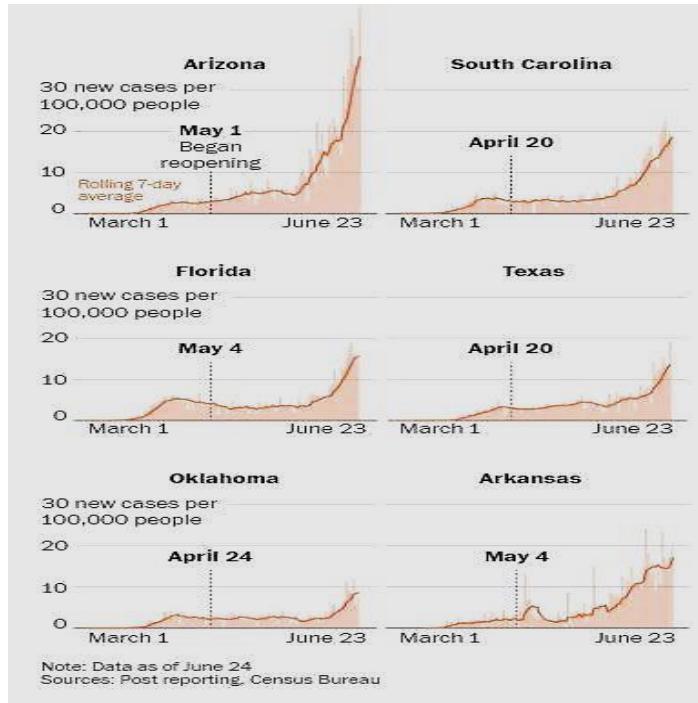
*Doug Lawrence and Patty Lawrence*

We can't think of any way to start this newsletter other than recognizing this moment in time and the opportunity we have as a nation to identify and root-out institutionalized racism, not only in the criminal justice system, but throughout society. Sadly, this moment has come at great cost to **George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor**, and the many others who are being remembered at protests across this country and around the world. While agriculture tends to stay "in its lane," it is heartening to see groups come forward following Floyd's death. The National Farmers Union was the first major farm group to call for racial justice following the killing of George Floyd by a white Minneapolis police officer on Memorial Day. (<https://nfu.org/2020/05/29/farmers-union-condemns-police-brutality-calls-for-national-effort-to-address-racism/>). A handful of groups said this week that they stand in solidarity with protests nationwide against racism and inequality that were sparked by Floyd's death ([https://thefern.org/ag\\_insider/few-farm-groups-speak-out-on-george-floyds-death-or-protests-that-followed/](https://thefern.org/ag_insider/few-farm-groups-speak-out-on-george-floyds-death-or-protests-that-followed/)). One NFU commenter posted, "Yes, racism is an agriculture issue, and we farmers everywhere need to stand beside our black brothers and sisters against police brutality." An American Farm Bureau Federation statement said AFBF will be reviewing its policies looking at ways to address racism. "We strongly oppose racial discrimination and believe just treatment by law enforcement is essential to maintain public trust and to uphold our Constitution. We also believe we have a responsibility across our society to honestly examine, identify and address racism." (<https://www.fb.org/newsroom/american-farm-bureau-statement-addressing-racism>).

**Federal Retirement Annuity COLA:** It's looking more and more like the 2021 Federal retiree annuity cost of living Adjustment (COLA) computation will be negative. Through May, the COLA is -0.3. If the COLA computation is less than zero, there will be no change in annuities in 2021.

**Interest Rates:** Interest rates are at historically low rates throughout the economy. For example, mortgage rates are at record lows, with rates on 30-year mortgages at 3.13% and 15-year rates at 2.59%.

### COVID-19 Update:



For those of us who have only had our routines disrupted by COVID-19, time has warped. Spring here in the mid-Atlantic area has come and gone with little notice. The days of the week have melted into a single repeating day that some call "Blursday." But confusion over what day of the week it is pales when compared to the rampaging COVID-19 virus. Confirmed COVID-19 related deaths in the U.S. have more than doubled since the last retirees' newsletter in late April, to nearly 130,000, and worldwide deaths are approaching 500,000. While the stock market has had a remarkable rebound due to Federal stimulus checks and actions by the Federal Reserve Board that now include quantitative easing through the purchase of corporate bonds as well as bonds issued by state and local government, the economy is still reeling from the effects of COVID-19. Since March 21<sup>st</sup> 47.3 million people have filed for unemployment benefits, and the unemployment rate is over 13%.

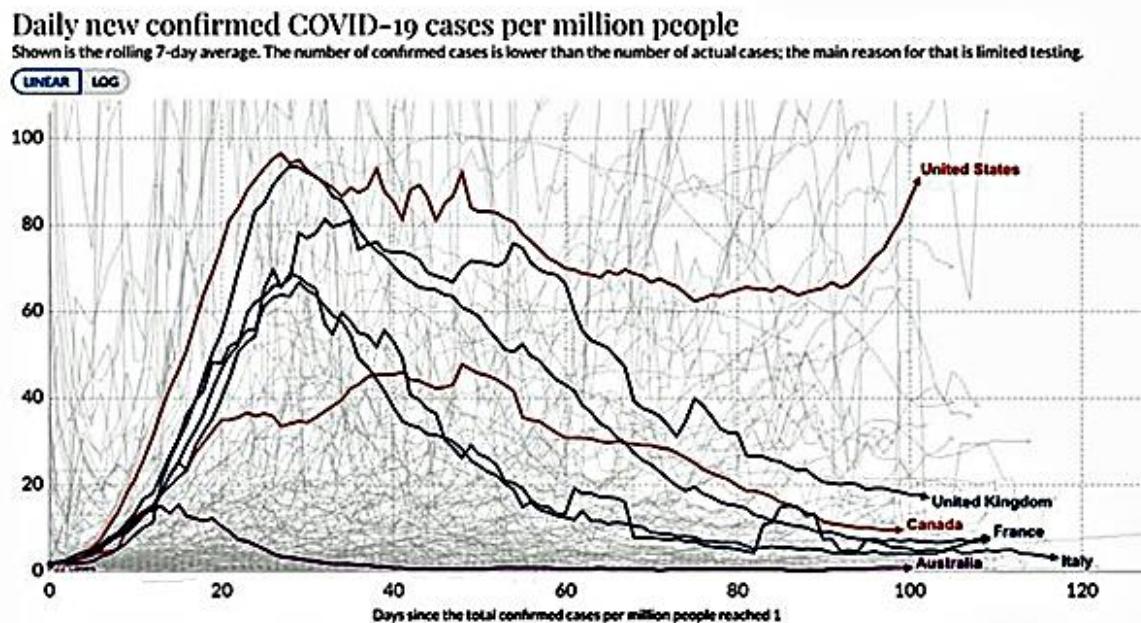
Unfortunately, the reopening of the economy has led to a spike in COVID-19 cases in several states, including Arizona, South Carolina, Florida, Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas. On June 25<sup>th</sup>, the increase in confirmed COVID-19 cases set a new daily record for the U.S. of 37,077. The prior record was set on April 24<sup>th</sup>.

The acceleration in the growth of US COVID-19 cases means that there is an increasing risk that states may have to return to lockdown protocols, which will further damage the economy and the livelihoods of millions of Americans.

There is some good news in that scientists in Britain announced a major breakthrough in the fight to keep critically ill COVID-19 patients alive. The steroid, **dexamethasone**, in combination with ventilators, appears to have reduced deaths by a third. Dexamethasone seems to reduce deaths because it is an immune suppressant, which paradoxically is what severely ill patients need because their immune system is in overdrive, and it is damaging organs. However, if dexamethasone is given to people who are not experiencing widespread organ failure, it will suppress the immune system so it can't fight the virus which could allow COVID-19 to get worse.

There are about 200 COVID-19 vaccines under development. Because of the COVID-19 crisis, the U.S. is employing a vaccine development strategy called "at-risk manufacturing." This means that manufacturing a vaccine begins after animal testing, but before human testing. The risk is that if the vaccine fails to provide humans with COVID-19 immunity, or if it has serious adverse effects on humans, they will have to destroy the vaccine that had been manufactured. The Federal government is paying for the at-risk manufacturing and to date, has provided funding in excess of \$600 million to just one of the companies that has vaccine manufacturing capacity for just one potential vaccine.

As you can see from the following graph of daily new Confirmed COVID-19 cases per million people, the rate of new daily cases in the US is moving in the wrong direction, especially when compared to similar countries like the United Kingdom and Canada.



**FY-2021 Appropriations:** COVID-19 has derailed the schedule for developing the FY-2021 appropriations bills, and there is little information about a Congressional timeline for passing the bills. Stay tuned.

**Things You Already Knew:** According to USDA's scientific findings published on May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020 in the Journal of Soil and Water Conservation, conservation practices are working to reduce runoff, improve soil quality, and mitigate contaminants in small watersheds across the country. NRCS and ARS collaborated with universities and other agencies and organizations to complete the water-quality studies featured in the journal through USDA's Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP). You can see the papers at <https://www.jswconline.org/content/75/3>

### Farm Bill Program Opportunities

**Cooperative Agreements for Community Compost and Food Waste Reduction:** USDA announced the availability of \$900,000 for FY 2020 cooperative agreements that will support pilot projects to develop and test strategies for planning and implementing municipal compost and food waste reduction plans. The Community Compost and Food Waste Reduction

(CCFWR) agreements are offered through the Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production. Projects are expected to span two years with a start date of October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 and completion date of September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022. The application deadline was June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020. You can view the funding announcement details at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=326961>.

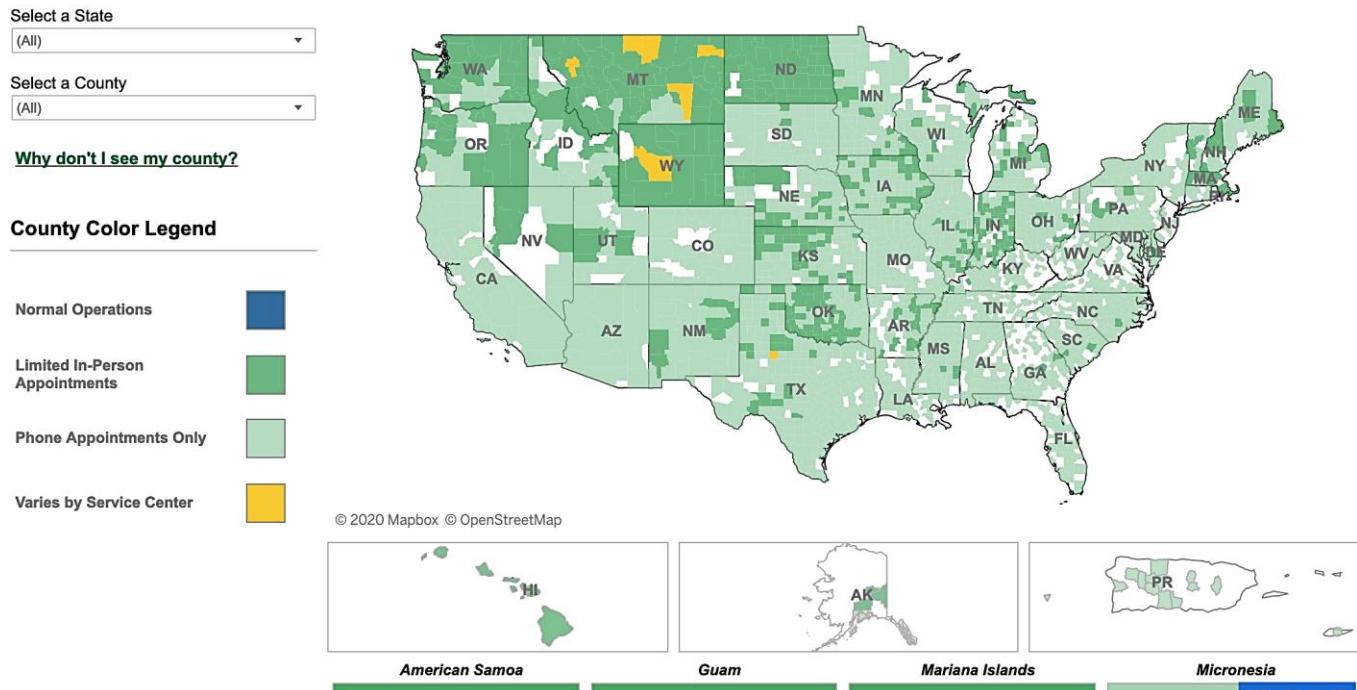
**Grants for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production:** USDA announced the availability of \$3 million for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production grants on May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020 through its new Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production, which was established through the 2018 Farm Bill. The office is led by NRCS and includes representatives from many USDA agencies, including Farm Service Agency and Agricultural Marketing Service. The competitive grants will support the development of urban agriculture and innovative production projects through \$1 million for Planning Projects and \$2 million for Implementation Projects. The application period closes on July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020. You can view the announcement and submit applications at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/search-grants.html?keywords=Grants%20for%20Urban%20Agriculture%20and%20Innovative%20Production>.

**Wetland Mitigation Banking Program Grants:** NRCS announced up to \$5 million for wetland mitigation banks on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Funding is through the Wetland Mitigation Banking Program and is available to help conservation partners develop or establish mitigation banks to help agricultural producers maintain eligibility for USDA programs. The program is intended to help states, local governments, and other qualified partners to develop wetland mitigation banks to restore, create, or enhance wetland ecosystems. The application period closes on July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020. You can view the notice of funding availability and submit applications at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=326796>.

**New CRP Pilot Program (Clean Lakes, Estuaries and Rivers (CLEAR) 30) Offers 30 Year Contracts:** The Farm Service Agency (FSA) will open signup for a new pilot program in the Great Lakes and Chesapeake Bay regions—LEAR 30—from July 6<sup>th</sup> to Aug. 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020. Eligible producers must have expiring Clean Lakes, Estuaries and Rivers (CLEAR) initiative contracts, including continuous CRP Cropland contracts with water-quality practices or marginal pasturelands CRP contracts devoted to riparian buffers, wildlife habitat buffers, or wetland buffers. Annual rental payment for landowners who enroll in CLEAR30 will be equal to the current Continuous CRP annual payment rate plus an inflationary adjustment of 27.5 percent. In addition, FSA will help producers maintain CLEAR30 contract acreage. FSA announced the future signup on April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020 to give potential participants more time to consider their options.

**Farm Program deadlines Approach:** A number of farm income support, insurance, and disaster assistance and marketing programs are open for signup with upcoming deadlines. You can see more at <https://www.farmers.gov/program-deadlines>.

**USDA Service Center Status:** Farmers and ranchers can now make in-person appointments at a number of USDA Service Centers across the country as part of the phased reopening process. Field work, including conservation planning assistance, continues with appropriate social distancing. You can view the status of your local Service Center at <https://www.farmers.gov/coronavirus/service-center-status>.



USDA continues to use Microsoft Teams to enable producers to meet with USDA Service Center staff virtually. Customers with eAuthentication also have access through the NRCS Conservation Client Gateway to track NRCS payments, report completed practices, request conservation assistance, and electronically sign documents. For customers without eAuth, USDA is using other applications to allow producers to access, sign, and share documents online. More information on virtual products is available at <https://www.farmers.gov/mydocs>.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

### Cheryl Simmons

Fellow Retirees, the Association of Retired Conservation Service Employees (ARCSE) will hold a special virtual Annual Meeting this year. Attending the virtual ARCSE meeting is **FREE** and does not require a SWCS Registration. The ZOOM event will include a presentation by the SWCS historian, viewing never-before-seen **Hugh Hammond Bennett** artifacts, networking activity, and state and national updates from ARCSE, NRCS, and SWCS representatives. All you will need to join the meeting is a device that can connect to the internet, like a laptop, desktop computer, or phone. Look for more information on the [ARCSE.ORG](http://ARCSE.ORG) website and SWCS Partner Events. (Check the SWCS and ARCSE website for directions to join the meeting.)

**Join us Monday, July 27 for a visit!**

#### Segment 1-ARCSE Updates and Awards (9:00-10:10 am)

Our awardees for this year are:

Meritorious Service—Dana York  
Distinguished Service—Norm Kempf  
Community Service—Earl Norton



#### Segment 2-The ARCSE/SWCS Partnership and History Tour (10:10-11:30 am)

#### Segment 3-ARCSE Board Meeting (11:45 am – 12:30 pm)

Email [arcse.treas@gmail.com](mailto:arcse.treas@gmail.com) if you have any questions about the meeting.

### 2020 ARCSE AWARDEES

#### Meritorious Award – Dana York

Dana retired from NRCS after 34 years of service in January 2011. She started her career as a student trainee and became a full-time soil conservationist in 1977, in Tennessee, advancing in the agency working in Georgia, Ohio, and in several leadership positions in Washington DC, including NRCS Associate Chief. Following retirement, she continues to influence conservation through her consulting company, Green Earth Connection, where she continues to help various environmental groups reach their conservation goals and objectives. On top of all that, she runs her 120-acre family farm that her family has occupied since 1778. There are many other worthy accomplishments, not to mention serving as a mentor to young farmers in her area. Soon after retirement, Dana became an active member of ARCSE, serving on the board of directors for several years. She served as president during 2017 and 2018. During her tenure as president, she used her academic training in organizational design to successfully improve the organizational structure of the association, which was badly in need of change and modernization. By updating and modernizing several key positions on the board of directors and support staff, she led the group through the process of implementing changes in the function and processes involved in managing the society. These changes, implemented with Dana's leadership, resulted in improved efficiency and effectiveness of board of directors and helped the organization move forward.

Dana also stepped up to the plate by working closely with the Tennessee chapter and helping organize local meetings and providing information to the national newsletter editor for publication. By her extra efforts with the Tennessee group, regular information articles are being published in the national newsletter to inform fellow retirees about current events, deaths of former colleagues, special awards and accomplishments.

Dana is very deserving of the ARCSE Meritorious Award to recognize her contributions to the association.

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Based on the above accomplishments and actions, I think Dana is very deserving of a meritorious award to recognize her contributions to the society.



Dana York

### Distinguished Service Award – Norman Kempf

Since retirement in 2001 Norman Kempf has been very active in the Nebraska chapter of the ARCSE. He served as chapter vice-president and president, followed by many years up to now as the Nebraska State ARCSE Representative as well as Midwest Region ARCSE Vice-president. As Midwest VP since 2004, Norm has communicated with State leads regularly by mail, e-mail, or phone to remind and encourage them on such things as news article write-ups, securing new retiree's information, and new ARCSE members, nominating Senior Conservationists, reporting deaths and participation. Norman retired in 2001 after a 40-year career with NRCS. His career started in SD in 1961 where he worked as a WAE, Soil Conservationist, District Conservationist, and as an Area Conservationist in Pierre, SD. He served as Assistant Conservationist for Programs in Bismarck, ND where his duties included leadership for the implementation of the Food Security Act. In 1989 he joined the Conservation Planning Division in Washington DC as a Conservation Planning Specialist. He also served as national wetlands leader, national highly erodible lands leader, Deputy Director and Acting Director of the Conservation Planning Division. He also helped to develop and train in conservation planning on a national basis. In 1995 he was transferred to the Northern Plains Regional Office in Lincoln, NE where he rounded out his career as a resource conservationist on the over-sight and evaluation team.



**Norm Kempf**

Norman has been married to **Sylvia** nearly 57 years, and they are the proud parents of four children, eight grandchildren and five great grandchildren. They are active in the Lutheran church where he has served on the church council and as chairman of the property committee for many years. They are also active in many other organizations. They also pursue many hobbies including travel, which has led them to all 50 states, many foreign countries, and all seven continents.

### Outstanding Community Service Award – Earl Norton

Since retiring from SCS/NRCS in 1994 Earl Norton has remained committed to conservation through engagement with organizations and activities almost too numerous to mention. He taught a conservation course at Auburn University from 1995-2001. He remained very active in SWCS and the International Erosion Control Association. He engaged early on with professional certification efforts as they got off the ground and remains an active Certified Professional in Erosion and Sediment Control, Certified Professional Agronomist, and Certified Crop Advisor. He continues to serve as Erosion and Sediment Control Program Coordinator for the Alabama Soil and Water Conservation Committee, among other things responsible for maintaining the Handbook for Erosion and Sediment Control and Stormwater Management on Construction Sites and Urban Areas. He has coordinated several sediment and erosion control seminars and field days each year, reaching and training thousands of private and agency engineering and environmental management personnel over the years and continuing to this day. Earl's numerous awards include the Alabama Water Conservationist of the Year (2005), SWCS Fellow (2005), and Alabama Wildlife Federation Soil Conservationist of the Year (2014), and Envirocert International Distinguished Service Award (2017).



**Earl Norton**

Earl also has practiced his preaching, transforming a clearcut and roadside garbage dump over 20 years into a well-managed forest certified by the Alabama TREASURE Forest Association in 2019, involving his grandchildren with soil conservation activities.

Earl graduated from Auburn University with a B.S. degree in Agricultural Science (1960) and M.S. degree in Agronomy and Soils (1964) served a stint in the Navy. Since moving to Auburn in June 1976, he has been a member of Auburn United Methodist Church and Chancel Choir. Earl frequently participates in ARCSE annual meetings and emceed last year's event in Pittsburgh.

Earl has been married to wife **Julia** for 53 years and has two sons and four grandchildren.

### ARCSE Annual Meeting Update

**Jack Carlson, ARCSE Secretary**

As you may have noticed in the May SWCS Conservogram, ARCSE has sponsored **Joe Derry**'s internship at SWCS headquarters May-August this year. Joe's responsibilities, among other tasks, include working with us on a plan for an enhanced partnership between ARCSE and SWCS, as well as steps to increase interest in ARCSE as an organization. Joe, from Johnston, Iowa, is a student at the University of Iowa involved in nonprofit and philanthropy studies as a major in Journalism and Mass Communication with a Certificate in Creative Writing. We've iterated on ideas since he started work in early May, which has led to Joe presenting a draft plan at our upcoming July 10<sup>th</sup> ARCSE board meeting. We'll circulate the draft to membership for review and hope to have a working plan reasonably settled in early August before Joe heads back to school. Since the last newsletter, the ARCSE Board conferred May 8<sup>th</sup>, May 15<sup>th</sup>, and June 12<sup>th</sup>, primarily to adjust preparations for conducting our annual meeting virtually. The Board used Zoom for the first time to conduct their meeting on June 12<sup>th</sup> and will do so for future meetings. Cheryl and I also conferred with Joe Derry and **Courtney Allen** on May 13<sup>th</sup> to initiate progress on the partnership plan and then participated in SWCS conference sponsor and moderator training on June 18<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. We'll have a virtual sponsor booth and advertisement in the conference program, hopefully increasing visibility of the organization to prospective future members participating in the full SWCS conference.



**Joe Derry, ARCSE-sponsored SWCS Intern**

As noted above in Cheryl's message From the President, Segment 2 of the upcoming virtual ARCSE annual meeting, in addition to the History Tour, will discuss the ARCSE/SWCS partnership, which is part of a larger conversation of what do we want to accomplish as an organization in the coming years. We've gone from a peak of 1,768 members in 1998 to about 800 today.

Obviously, recruitment needs attention. What percentage of new retirees know about ARCSE when they retire? How soon before they retire? Should membership eligibility be broadened to include retirees of other organizations in the conservation partnership? Should ARCSE do something new or different to strengthen its purpose, in keeping with our new "Stay Connected to Conservation" ad we're placing in the SWCS program. Segment 2 of the Annual Meeting will provide an opportunity to respond to these and other questions, and even if you are not able to join us, we would really like to hear from you, whether directly or through your state or regional ARCSE representative. Thanks in advance for your responses!



**ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED CONSERVATION SERVICE EMPLOYEES**

# STAY CONNECTED TO CONSERVATION!

[WWW.ARCSE.ORG](http://WWW.ARCSE.ORG)

We help members keep in touch with each other and Conservation Organizations (NRCS and others) to view conservation problems and programs from a non-governmental point of view so that members may better help the conservation effort.



[Bimonthly Newsletters](#)

[First year membership \*\*FREE\*\*](#)

**Join retired Conservationists and visit!**  
(And share conservation and retirement activities and stories.)

## For ARCSE Newsletter Recipients Registering for the Full Virtual 75<sup>th</sup> SWCS International Annual Conference!

ARCSE is pleased to be the student leader development sponsor for the virtual 75<sup>th</sup> Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) International Annual Conference, July 27-29, 2020. We encourage SWCS conference registrants to "stop by" the ARCSE virtual exhibit booth, which you will be able to see on-line during the conference.

SWCS conference attendees should also consider participating in the ARCSE annual meeting. Note: participation in the ARCSE annual meeting is free to its members and does not require SWCS conference registration, but all registered for the conference are welcome and encouraged to join us.

For those intending to register, a reminder SWCS conference registration closes July 15, 2020. For complete conference details and to register, visit [www.swcs.org/20AC](http://www.swcs.org/20AC).

For more information on the ARCSE Sponsorship, please contact Cheryl Simmons, ARCSE President, [arcse.treas@gmail.com](mailto:arcse.treas@gmail.com).

### About ARCSE

Since 1974, the Association of Retired Conservation Service Employees (ARCSE) helps members to keep in touch with each other and facilitates their continued commitment to conservation. Members represent a reservoir of institutional knowledge and expertise. The organization supports passing this resource on to future generation conservationists and identifies opportunities for members to continue taking part in activities facilitating technical sound soil and water conservation for all land uses. Its membership is organized by state chapter, coordinated by an elected organization-wide board.

### About the Soil and Water Conservation Society

For seventy-five years, the Soil and Water Conservation Society has been the premier international organization for professionals who practice and advance the science and art of natural resource conservation. We believe sustainable land and water management is essential to the continued security of the earth and its people. Our goal is to cultivate an organization of informed, dynamic individuals whose contributions create a bright future for agriculture, the environment, and society. The Soil and Water Conservation Society is headquartered in Ankeny, Iowa with chapters across the United States and Canada.

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

*Paul Benedict, Membership Chair*

### New Members

Terri Hodgin – Henning, Minnesota  
Jean C. Herman – Columbia, Missouri

Albert Cerna Jr. – Salinas, California  
 Marshall “Mac” Nelson – Auburn, Alabama

**New Life Member**

Rebecca Fletcher–Danville, Indiana

Thank you all for sending in information on retirees for obituaries. I depend on you for that information. In the 2020 ARCSE Directory you received two months ago, I believe we have several life members and/or senior conservationists that have likely passed away, but we have not received notification yet. If you have the opportunity, please look through the directory and see if you know of anyone. If you do, please let me know and we will recognize them in the newsletter and on the website.

We are looking for state/area representatives in several states and the National Capital Area to help keep members informed and the association operating smoothly. This includes Connecticut/Rhode Island, Hawaii, Maryland/Delaware, Mississippi, the Washington National Capital Area, and Wyoming. If you are interested, please contact your regional vice president: <http://www.arcse.org/nofficer.htm>. State representatives coordinate news items for the newsletter from their state, advise the Regional Vice Presidents on activities and events in their states, and work with me to keep track of members, retirees and obituaries.

**ARCSE MEMBERSHIP DUES**

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

*NOTE: Dues payment includes receipt of the bimonthly electronic newsletter only. All members (both life members and those who pay annual dues) who desire a hard copy of the newsletter must pay an additional fee of \$12.00 per year.*  
*Please submit Dues to ARCSE at P.O. Box 8965 Moscow, ID 83843*

**ARIZONA**

**ARCSE Representative**

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

**Steve Black Report:** One thing I have been doing during my time at home over the last two months is to add additional names to my Family Tree Maker database. I have been looking at ancestors on Ancestry.com and found about 200 additional names to add, including six or eight 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> cousins who I have never met. I now have over 2,000 ancestors in my database. In 2023 the house on my farm in Illinois will be 200 years old, and it was built by my great, great grandmother. I hope to have an open house and family reunion there in 2023 and am trying to find her descendants so that I can invite them to the event. She had 29 grandchildren, so there are literally hundreds of their descendants scattered throughout the country, and I have no idea of their names or locations today.

The land was purchased from the US Government Land Office in 1821 at a price of \$1.25 an acre, and my great, great Grandmother bought 480 acres. The farm will be an Illinois Bicentennial Farm in 2021. In 2005 the farm and house were listed on the National Register of Historic Places due to their architectural, agricultural, and early settlement significance. We think the home is the oldest house in Illinois north of St. Louis, MO.



**Black Homestead Farm. The flag has 24 stars. That was the number of states in the US in 1823 when the house was built.**

**Ruth Wilimek Report:** I have been cleaning out closets and watching too much television. My youngest son, who is 54 years old, has been fighting the virus since he was diagnosed in April. He is still doing a lot of coughing. Hope everyone stays well and safe.

**Karl Klingelhofer Report:** The best news I have is that I am still alive and will be 94 in August. Vital signs are quite good, but I fell and broke a hip April 10<sup>th</sup>. I then proceeded to further injure that hip and now have a partial replacement. I'm now in a wheel chair and using a walker for mobility. I don't think the future holds any more tennis that I played until I was 90, and no flying since I sold my airplane. However, I plan to get back to just using a cane. And, after being in this house for 29 years, I am planning to move to a two-bedroom apartment with extensive facilities in August. Wish me luck. And my advice to all, young and old, is **do not fall!**

## CALIFORNIA

**Bill Ward, ARCSE Representative**

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

**Greetings from California.** Like many parts of the country, some things are beginning to open back up, and there is a slow move to beginning to do things again. My wife and I have eaten out on the patios of restaurants and have become more comfortable spending family time with our kids and grandkids. We are still being careful, staying home a lot, avoiding crowds, social distancing, and wearing masks when shopping.

Our retirees are pretty much doing the same thing, staying close to home and following similar practices necessary to stay safe. Our normal group of retirees who meet for lunch once a month in Davis have not done that for the last few months, and we have really missed that.

### California Retiree's First "Zoom Virtual Gathering!"

It seems with the shutdown a good number of us have been exposed to Zoom video conferencing technology through our hobbies, church, and other social groups. I have recently been a participant in multiple Zoom teleconference group meetings. I began to think about trying to host one for our retiree group and decided to go for it.



**All eight participants admitted**

That started a little education period which consisted primarily of watching a number of "How to Video's" on YouTube and talking to friends who had experience in hosting. It was a little confusing at first, and I am still learning. But I found with this first teleconference that it is not that difficult to host a simple teleconference with friends sharing conversations and just happy to be able to see each other. Here are a few pictures to document the event.

What a great time we all had! The feedback I got from everybody was very positive. To see old friends and familiar faces we had worked with and had not seen in a long time was wonderful.

The way we spent our time was to take turns having each person share how they were doing, what was new and anything they wished to share. It was good to hear that everybody was essentially doing well—if not just bored—and more than ready to be able to get out and do things again. Here are a few snippets of things that were shared.

**Tom Wehri** shared that he is still active working with NACD, and they are doing everything with Zoom. He has been playing some golf and had spent time recently out of the heat at his cabin near La Porte.



*The final gang of 8 participants!*

Our “maiden voyage” group included Top Row, left to right, Tom Wehri, Bill Ward, Paul Benedict. Middle Row, Darwyn and Susie Briggs, Madelene Ransom, Ron and Marilyn Hoppes. Bottom Row, Hank Wyman, and Al Cerna

**Paul Benedict** shared that he and his wife had just recently had their first meal out in a restaurant and very much enjoyed being able to let someone else do the work for a change. His wife is still working, able to work at home and they generally doing well. Paul retired working at the National office, staying back East but enjoyed two different stints working in California where he started.

**Darwyn and Susie Briggs:** Susie shared that her “hula and ukulele groups” have been meeting through Zoom, and have really enjoyed keeping in touch, and having a chance to dance and play even if remotely. She has been working on a photo book capturing memories of over 50 years of marriage they have been blessed with. Darwyn shared with us his work on publishing his Memoirs to share with his family. “Following 8 years of a Memoirs writing class at the Davis Senior Center, I decided to have my over 300 memoirs published, and give copies of my book to family members. My memoirs are divided into 11 categories, including one titled “My Soil Conservation Service Career.”

**Madelene Ransom** is living by herself and just misses people! She says she spends a lot of time on the phone visiting with friends who she has met from all over, including Kansas, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina. She also shared that she has a friend who is helping her with piano lessons on Zoom!

**Ron and Marilyn Hoppes** indicated they are tired of being cooped up and miss playing pinochle with Darwyn and Susie, Rome Rivera and others. They are missing seeing their grandkids. Ron shared that it was just really good to see faces here as part of our gathering.

**Hank Wyman:** Hank and his wife **Christie** made a trip up to their tree farm in Oregon recently, and it was nice to get out of the house. Hank still works with Friends of the Library in Davis, and they just recently re-opened the Logos Book Store downtown, and business was actually very good. They are involved in their both their sons’ lives and shared that their son **Mike** has developed a business, “Mike’s Meals” as a result of cooking meals for others during this shutdown.

**Al Cerna** and his wife **Alexa** are living in Prunedale, CA, having returned to California after retiring from the National office where Al was the National Program Manager for WHIP. They love the climate in the Monterey area, a little fog in the morning and then about 72° the rest of the day. They are spending much of their time right now up North, taking care of their respective parents. Alexa’s mom lives in Yuba City and Al’s mom is in Dixon.

**Bill Ward:** My wife **Dana** and I are doing well as are all our three kids and four grandkids. We just recently are now able to see all four of our grandkids. All three of our kids are able to work at home. I spend a lot of time working on music things, expanding my horizons, and looking forward to our band being able to get back together. Dana has no problem keeping more than busy with sewing, quilting, knitting, and other projects. She is currently teaching one of our granddaughters how to sew. We have both been watching our Church’s online services.

After I finished sharing my news with our group, we were near the limit of 40 minutes allowed by Zoom for “free accounts.” I had heard that if you ended your session with everybody signing out, that you could actually come back and restart your session as if it were brand new. I wanted to try that, so we agreed to take a 15-minute break to see if this worked. I was very happy to see a number of our participants joining again to confirm this did, in fact, work. Now we know for future Zoom gatherings that we have this option for more time if needed.

I would encourage State reps to consider setting up a Zoom account for your state as well. If you are interested, just drop me an email, and I would be happy to share more detail about my experience and advice in getting set up.

Until Next time, wishing all Retirees the best and to be safe!

—Bill Ward, [bluegrassbillward@gmail.com](mailto:bluegrassbillward@gmail.com), California ARCSE Representative, PE, Former Design Staff Leader, Davis, CA

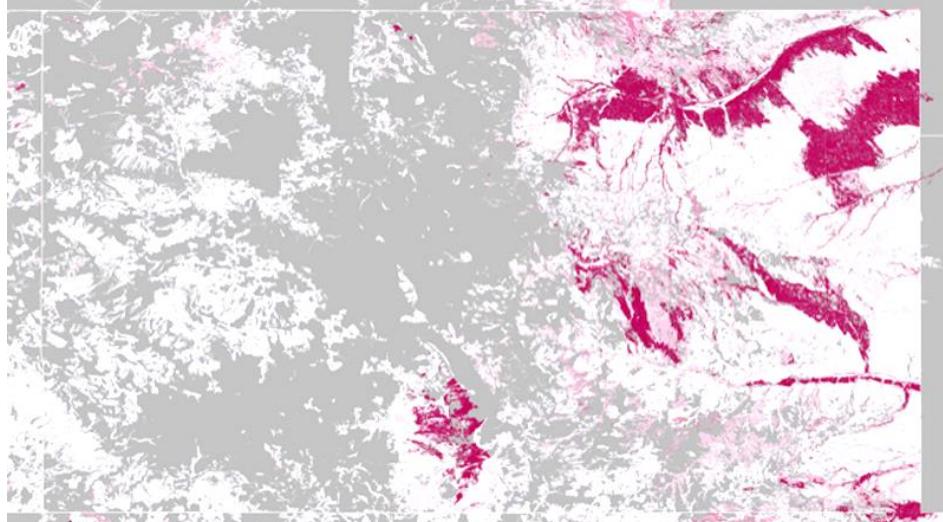
## COLORADO

**Jack Carlson, ARCSE Representative**

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**Allen Green** reports that the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Allen and Kathy Golf Outing will proceed July 24<sup>th</sup>, with adjustments for social distancing as we all continue adapting to the current times.

Also, perhaps of interest, here's a wind erosion map for Colorado, created using Wind Erosion Prediction System (WEPS) model simulations for tilled-fallow management on each soil map unit polygon intersecting a cultivated land polygon from the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). The movement of soil over the millennia is evident east of the Rocky Mountains.



**Wind erosion map, Colorado; dark red areas denote (mostly sandier) soils vulnerable to wind erosion**

In other good news, a new Colorado State University report is expected to come out this summer on The Impact of EQIP-Funded Agricultural Conservation Practices on Water Quality in Colorado, focused on irrigated crops in the Republican, South Platte, Arkansas, and Rio Grande Watersheds. Analysis from the study evaluating EQIP-supported conservation practices from 2008 through 2018 shows switching from flood and furrow irrigation to sprinkler and drip systems, combined with reduced tillage and field borders, significantly reduce nitrogen and phosphorus losses from farmed fields.

## IOWA

**Mark Jensen, ARCSE Representative**

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Memorial Day parades this year were certainly different than what we've enjoyed in the past. **Eldon Weber**, an army veteran, described how the city of Ames honored their veterans. "To honor veterans on Memorial Day, we were to set in our driveways as a parade of motorcycles, cars, and walkers proceeded through our neighborhood." The picture shows Eldon standing by his chair as the parade passes by.

**Dave Breitbach:** "Kay and I along with our son, **Gary**, and daughter, **Donna**, spent part of three weeks in May at our farm in Chickasaw County, picking up rock and woody debris from a construction project completed in the fall 2019. We found that about two hours per work session and at best two sessions per day were about all our bodies could handle. It was even better if the work sessions were every other day. We spent a total of about eight days working during the three weeks. Social distancing while at the farm was not a concern. Our methodology was to throw the rocks in the loader bucket mounted on a 1962 Model 730 Case tractor and load the woody material on a trailer pulled by an ATV. After the first afternoon work session, **Dave** found climbing on and off the tractor and ATV was pretty tough on the old body. After some careful deliberation, Dave decided to implement the **Gooby** style of completing farm projects as has been described in this newsletter. So Dave just drove the tractor and let his three laborers pick up the rocks. Dave soon found his Dad's philosophy true. After about an hour of work the "rock pickers become stone blind." He soon learned that the tractor driver needs to use



**Eldon Weber watching the Memorial Day parade in Ames**

"tactical discretion" when pointing out a rock missed by pickers on the ground. We did finish the project without anyone being "stoned" or divorce papers being filed!" Dave and Kay celebrated their 56<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on June 6<sup>th</sup>. Congratulations!

Last September **Ed Marshall** went on a 15-day elephant hunting trip to Namibia, West Africa. He hunted in a part of the country called the Caprivi Strip. With the assistance of a local hunting guide, he was able to get one. Ed said the local villagers were very friendly and happy to have hunters come to their area. They have very few possessions.



**Ed Marshall with an elephant he got on a hunting trip to Namibia, Africa**

The villagers are appreciative of hunters because the game that is harvested is the primary source of meat for them. They also utilize all other parts of the animal. For example, they keep all the bones and carve trinkets that are then sold to provide them some income. The money paid to the guide helps the local economy. License fees are split between the local villagers and conservation officials who use the funds to maintain and improve wildlife habitat. Ed is planning to go to Angola this fall for his next big game hunting adventure. Stay tuned for an update.

Several of our retirees and/or spouses have made face masks. **Lyle Asell** told me that **Charlotte** has made around 75 masks so far, and possibly quite a few more by now. Good job, Charlotte!

Recently we welcomed one person to our retiree family. **Gary Fedler**, SCT from Mt. Pleasant, retired at the end of April.

## KANSAS

**Deanne Lull, ARCSE Representative**

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Wow! What a time in history this year will become. It is a milestone year for me. I turn 80 in July, and **Ron and I** will have our 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in October. How does one plan any celebrations during a pandemic? I am wondering what the future holds for normalcy. It appears it will be much different from what we once knew.

Although Kansas is opening up by phases, **Ron and I** are observing the lockdown phases. We do not attend any public functions, including church, and it is masks, gloves, and social distancing the few places we go. We have dined-in at restaurants several times but continue to treat ourselves by going through the drive-ins.

At the time of this writing the Kansas Annual Meeting is still scheduled for June 26<sup>th</sup> at the Hilton Garden Inn in Salina. From the number of reservations received so far, it appears attendance will be light. **Dennis Brinkman**, former Agronomist and District Conservationist, will be the speaker.

Here are a few highlights from several retirees taken from our Kansas annual newsletter.

**Ron Tematt** is serving as mayor of the city of Spearville and as chairman of a board of directors with a goal to build and operate a 26-bed assisted-living and skilled care senior living facility. Others have been travelling. **Jeff Gross** took a Royal Caribbean cruise to Bermuda and had the excitement of running into Hurricane Jerry. **Ken Hoffman** also shared he has been doing a bit of traveling since retiring, going on cruises to the eastern Caribbean, the western Caribbean, Hawaii, and Alaska. This past year **Mary Shaffer** travelled extensively within the United States, visiting sites and family in California, Arizona, Washington, Oregon, Wisconsin, Florida, and Texas. She also travelled out of the country to Mexico and China.

There is only one retirement to report: **Rita J. Schartz**, District Conservationist, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020, from the St. John office in the Pratt Management Unit.

Two retirees have passed away: **Frankie E. Gray** died on May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020. He retired as a Soil Conservation Technician in the Abilene Field Office in 1994. His spouse, **Sherry**, survives.

**Alan Dale Gentry** departed on June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020. **Alan** retired in 2017 as a Civil Engineering Technician from the Ottawa office in the Paola Management Unit with 30 years of service. His wife, **Lori** survives.

**MISSOURI****Dave Rastorfer, ARCSE Representative**Email: [daverastorfer@aol.com](mailto:daverastorfer@aol.com), [moarscse@aol.com](mailto:moarscse@aol.com)

**Dennis Shirk:** Good morning, all. Other than a few trail rides and trips to our doctors, we have been mostly staying at home. Our church is back open, otherwise only necessary trips. See ya down the trail!

**Mike Blaine:** Yes, it has been an interesting and sometimes disturbing time since March 15<sup>th</sup> when we went into shut-down mode in NEMO. Actually, Scotland and Knox Counties have fared pretty well through it all. **Pam** and I spend about three days per week in Scotland County working at church to provide ministry to our church people and any others who we can. We live in Knox County but have little contact with many Knox County folks. Other than seeing other people at church, about the only place we go is to the grocery store when we run out of food! Our staff here at church have spent time doing online devotions, Bible studies, sermons, and music to try to keep our people connected and informed.

Pam and I have been doing a worship song every week that is made available to the public on our church page on Facebook. Also, I do an interactive Sunday School lesson by video that is viewed every Sunday evening. Our senior pastor and youth pastor both do online devotions every week, and the senior pastor has recorded a sermon every week. Two weeks ago (June 7<sup>th</sup>) the health department allowed us to begin having inside services for worship. On June 28<sup>th</sup> we will restart inside Sunday School and be at least somewhat back to what it used to be. I hesitate to say "back to normal" because I'm not sure we will ever be back to what we did for church back at the first of the year. But that is not necessarily bad. We have learned that we can do things differently and still minister to our people.

And, while all of the COVID-19 stuff was going on, I had to deal with a kidney stone the first two weeks of June. That was NOT fun! We are looking forward to a little more relaxed rest of the summer. We hope to get out with the camper and get away for a while, maybe in July or August. Hope you all are well and have not had to deal with the COVID-19 virus personally. Take care, my friends.

**Jim Rickman:** We have made few trips, but are mostly eating at home. Been picking tomatoes and cucumbers from our garden. We got a big rain, almost four inches, and the tomatoes are growing so fast they are cracking open. I think they are cracking much worse than concrete, and you can't put any steel in them to control it. Thus far nobody we know has gotten the virus. Only about half the shoppers are wearing masks now, and the restaurants are at full capacity. Sure hope we don't see a spike and that all of us old timers are spared.

**Alton Taylor:** I have not expanded my circle lately. It has sure increased the phone use to keep up with friends. Have my youngest granddaughter with me for a couple weeks. Another MOHS scheduled for the 1<sup>st</sup>. It is just SOP stuff. Last week saw the well head of the first Helium well in Dexter, Kansas. Also saw arch rock bridges built in the first ten years of 1900. They were harvesting wheat and planting cotton.

**Rita Thomas Mueller Williams, Fair Grove, Missouri:** I've been retired for one and half months, and my husband **Kevin** and I are loving it. Spent the first month working on the yard's landscaping. We wore ourselves out, but we're enjoying the results. Now working on the garage, out of the sun. Thank you to all of you who sent me retirement cards and notes. I really appreciated every word. Hope to see you at upcoming retiree breakfasts or luncheons.

**Pat Hufford:** We have been adhering strictly to the COVID-19 methods to reduce risk of spread. That said, on a farm not too much changes (read the captions sequentially under the following pictures):



*Calves are born and grow, and bring us joy,*



*Spring storms bring rain and dramatic night skies,*



*Smooth brome and clover grow in the hay fields,*



*And gardens provide us with healthy food and enjoyment.*



*Rainbows do still appear in the sky.*

**Gena Michalson:** We have had a great lockdown. We got a new mini-Aussie puppy that is 10 mo. old now. She is joyful and mischievous and loves to get in water, jump horse jumps, and catch just about anything you throw. She keeps us on our toes. We had a fabulous thoroughbred foal this spring and bred two mares for next year. Our daughter has been busy training our young horses. She took a four-yr-old and a five-yr-old to their first A jumper show in Chicago last week, and they both did quite well. We also sold a yearling colt to a neighbor. My husband has been doing some woodworking and made two wine racks and is working on a bookcase. I'm still working with genealogy, mine and others'. Unfortunately, we've had to put off traveling to Texas to see the grandkids. But we are excitedly anticipating the birth of a granddaughter in August. So hopefully we can go visit then.

**Craig King:** I am sure everyone can say it has been interesting times to say the least. Since we were pretty much confined to the home 20, we caught up on odd jobs. The kids helped me with the shop addition. It worked out for Candra as she had a pre-AG class in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Since they weren't in class, they were supposed to do, or help with a project. **Weston** helped also and worked part time at O'Reilly's Auto Parts. **Andrea** kept working diligently from home. We got out every fishing pole and bought a couple new ones. Replenished our tackle box and hit about every crick, river, and pond around. I still hauled ethanol and fuel during this time. Made quite a few trips to Grand Junction and Shenandoah, Iowa hauling ethanol back for Ayers Oil Co. in Canton. It was getting hard to find since much of it was going for sanitizer. It filled the gap since the other fuel usage had declined.

We all did pretty good mentally until Memorial Day, then we all had enough. Both kids were missing their sporting activities and seeing friends. Weston built his own squat rack, and kids were coming by to lift since they couldn't get in the schools. We were mentally tired. Also, the loss of **Karen Brinkman** left us somewhat stunned to say the least. Andrea and she spoke quite often, but you are never prepared. Prayers for **Darren, Caleb, and Claire**. So, we left June 9<sup>th</sup> and spent a week in Pensacola, FL. One of the best trips we have taken. Summer workouts for both kids have started, so getting back in the swing of things. Maybe we will all be more health conscious after this. God Bless!

## MONTANA

**Dick Gooby, ARCSE Representative**

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### Montana Big Sky Report

**Wendy Williams Report:** Well, I have been working in my greenhouse and my garden. I got 11 out of 30 Dahlia tubers to over-winter, so I planted them as well as 50+ Glads that I over-wintered.

We are building a long-term rental cottage on our back five acres. I have been reseeding and watering the new septic system drain field, water line, and electric line. Because of COVID-19, we decided not to rent our cabin to vacationers this summer. Sanitizing the cabin after each guest did not sound like fun, plus I didn't want to risk bringing the virus to our property. We just kept our winter renter in the cabin.

My sister in law died suddenly of a heart attack on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, so that was hard even with all of my family home. We celebrated our youngest daughter's, Mara's, birthday that week too. She turned 30. Mara came to the state office with me when she was eight weeks old as the first "baby in the workplace" for Montana SCS. I'm sure that there were more, but she was the only official one that I know of. She was able to stay for six months, thanks to **Dick Gooby**. Trying to be a good Mom and a good employee is not an easy thing to do, but I will always be grateful for the extra time that I got to spend with her.

**Gooby Ranch Report:** Things are pretty quiet around here. We are staying hid out. **Mary Ann** makes sure she stays at least six feet away from me. Since our table we eat at is too small to allow us to stay six feet away, we had to put up the card table for Mary Ann to eat at. If she wants any salt or pepper, she has to get it before I sit down. After that, she is out of luck.

Mary Ann has to sleep in the guest room so we don't get too close. She said my snoring hasn't woke her up in over a month.

When we go out to feed, Mary Ann sits in the back of the pickup; or if we have the tractor, she rides in the bucket. I back the pickup up to the hay stack, and Mary Ann loads the bales in the pickup. I can't help her, or I will get too close. Since Mary Ann can lift more than me, it makes sense that she loads the hay and doles it out to the cows and horses while I drive, sip my coffee, and listen to tunes.

We haven't figured out yet how we can go to town to get groceries. In order to keep our distancing, Mary Ann would have to ride in the back of the pickup. We have to go 50 miles each way if we go to Butte, or 100 miles if we go to Bozeman. I wouldn't be able to drive very fast, or she would probably get blown out the back of the pickup. To avoid going to town, Mary Ann is cooking lots of ground squirrels. I hope we don't run out of salt and pepper, or we'll have to use the cows' salt.

Mary Ann is partially milking two cows every day to get us enough milk to drink. But she needs to leave enough for their calves. The birds are nesting and providing us eggs. Mary Ann goes out to the grain bin and gets some oats every day, grinds it, and makes oatmeal for breakfast. She is also making oat bread since we don't have any wheat.

Since Mary Ann is stuck on the ranch, she has more time. So I have been able to add more items to her to-do list. However, since I have to stay over six feet away, I haven't been able to do any time-in-motion studies to see if we can come up with ways to increase Mary Ann's work efficiencies. Actually, I think Mary Ann likes that.

We were getting so low on food we had no choice but to go to town. I put a garbage can in the back of the pickup for Mary Ann to crawl into so she could get out of the wind and rain. I put the lid on it and tied the garbage can down to the floor of the pickup, and off to town we went. Along the way I saw a bunch of deer, two moose, three bunches of antelope, and a herd of elk. Of course, Mary Ann wasn't able to see them. When we got to town, I told Mary Ann what I saw along the way. That was a big mistake. After we got the groceries and were ready to head home, I could hardly fit in the garbage can.

## NEBRASKA

**Norm Kempf, Jim Culver, ARCSE Representatives**

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Our Lincoln SCS/NRCS Retirees Club monthly 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month meetings have been canceled for the past three months due to the COVID-19 concerns. Restaurants and meeting places in Lincoln, Nebraska are beginning to open up with limited seating capacity and other safety restrictions. We meet at Stauffer's Cafe & Pie Shoppe. They are now open, but our normal meeting room has been restricted to two tables with a seating capacity of only six people per table—not enough seating capacity for our group. At this point in time, even if there were adequate seating capacity, our membership would vote to cancel our monthly meeting, which is what was done for June. We have had a calling committee for many years that calls each member of our club each month to invite and remind them of the upcoming Wednesday morning breakfast and meeting. This has been an excellent way to easily contact all members for a coordination of various activities.

The impact of COVID-19 in Nebraska has been significant, but low compared to many parts of the county. Currently in Nebraska as of about June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020 there have been about 17,957 cases, with 252 deaths reported. Here in Lancaster County there have been 1540 cases reported, and 11 people have lost their life due to this virus.

Thus far, to the best of our knowledge there has not been any report of our NRCS retirees having tested positive for the virus—great news! Retires must be using their mask and doing the right protective things during the required day-to-day activities.

**Norman** noted several different family experiences with respect to the virus. The engineering firm where Norm's son works in Minneapolis had one employee to test positive back in February. His company went to offsite working arrangements, with most employees working from home. Thus far, no other employees from the engineering firm have tested positive. Also Norm's granddaughter in Boulder, Colorado was with a friend who tested positive—granddaughter was not positive. So granddaughter is currently under the two-week quarantine. Norm's oldest daughter in Faulkton, South Dakota was sick this past Wednesday and has taken the test for the virus, but as yet the results have not been completed.

On the lighter side, Norm is in South Dakota today and will play in the annual South Dakota golf tournament on Saturday. He was requested to attend because he was the winner last year and now has the traveling trophy. So hopefully Norm will have another excellent golfing day tomorrow, Saturday, and the South Dakota traveling trophy will again return to Lincoln, NE.

**George Holmgren** (92) of Palo Alto, California passed away on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019. He worked as a researcher with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service, Soil Survey Lab in Lincoln, Nebraska for 30 years. See the In Memoriam section for more details.

## NEVADA

**Liz Warner, ARCSE Representative**

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For those of you who knew **Rod Dahl** during his tenure as soil scientist and DC in Fallon, then Programs Specialist in the State Office, he is joining the ranks of "RETIRED!" Rod transferred from Nevada to North Dakota where he worked on the Ecological Sciences Staff. I'm sure he'll enjoy it as much as we all do!

Also, **Jim Doughty**, former SRC, and his wife **Gloria** are celebrating their 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on August 1<sup>st</sup>, in Buffalo, WY. If you can join in the celebration, please RSVP to Jim by July 15<sup>th</sup> at 307-259-7674. Congratulations, Jim and Gloria!

## NORTH DAKOTA

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

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Clinton Edgar Neff, 92, passed away on his 65<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, June 18, 2020. See the In Memoriam section for more details.

## OREGON

**Don Stettler, ARCSE Representative**

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**Bob Graham** reported that his dad, **Cal Graham**, turned 100 in April. Bob told me that his dad has fond memories of his SCS career. I had the pleasure of being stationed with Cal at the Eugene Field Office early in my career. Besides training me, Cal would tell me of his experience of capture, death march, and incarceration by the Japanese during World War 2. He also encouraged me to purchase a home, which was one of the better life decisions I have made. Bob and IAnn continue to volunteer with the Oregon Equestrian Trails. However, the usual trail clearing and horse camp maintenance is now on hold because of the pandemic.

Because she has been cooped up and staying close to home, **Terry Mitchel** has her garden and yard in good shape. She suspects others are doing the same thing.

**Jon Lea** tells me that he is his usual busy self, despite events he enjoys such as the Western Snow Conference and dog shows being canceled because of the virus. **Jolyne** has been working from home since mid-February and has been able to issue water supply forecasts to the States. She has found that a drawback from working at home is the feeling that she is always on duty. This year's forecasting has been challenging since it has been another hydrologically odd year. He and Jolyne's daughter, **Rowyn** is married and living in Redwood City, CA.

**Tom and Jeanne George** just celebrated their 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary and are looking forward to making it 70. They spent three weeks in Arizona visiting **Galen Bridge**, barely getting home ahead of travel restrictions.

**Don Carr** is still involved but easing out of his family tree farm business of growing big trees in Benton, Lincoln, and Marion County. He is thinking is time to turn the business over to younger family members.

**Gary Formanek** and I were both relieved that we managed to get haircuts. For me it was over four months since my previous one, a far cry from every two weeks, whether I needed one or not when I was in my twenties. Gary is convinced getting a haircut prevented him from being attacked by a buffalo or a buffalo hunter. Other than that, Gary said he, **Jane**, and her daughter and her family are all in good health.

**Pat Straka** is reveling in having a new grand-dog. **Blue** is an exuberant Boxer pup with reverse brindle markings, weighing 52 pounds on his way to 75 when mature.



**Blue with Pat Straka's 16-year-old grandson, Kyle**

**Garry and Janie Schaefer** sold their house last December and bought a fifth-wheel trailer with the plan of traveling around the country. The virus put a damper on that, and they are now camping out at the Milwaukee Elks until they can hit the road. Then it is off to Pendleton and Delintment Lake in Harney County. Another change of plans due to COVID-19 was to call off a vacation with Janie's newlywed son and his wife in Loreto-Baja, Mexico.

In February **Stefanie Aschmann** took a trip to Columbia where she had a variety of adventures. Upon her return, she has been home bound. She enjoys her daily walk, a virtual Zumba class, a virtual choir practice, and on occasion, a Zoom book club meeting.

With help from their daughters, **Marsel and Joylene Tingey** are still living in their home. Marsel has given up on mowing his lawn but still manages to plant and care for a small garden.

**Beth Zetter** has been staying pretty close to home. His son **Matt** and grandson **Matthew** have been coming on weekends to help out on **Butch**'s projects. Beth has also used her home time to get her office sorted and cleaned up.

It is hoped that in the not too distant future we can once again meet for the quarterly lunches. Together we can get through this.

## PENNSYLVANIA

**Bill Bowers, Tim Murphy; ARCSE Representatives**

**Emails:** [wbowers@comcast.net](mailto:wbowers@comcast.net), [vindemurph@verizon.net](mailto:vindemurph@verizon.net)

The Coronavirus was discovered here in PA in early March, and within a few weeks we were under a "stay at home" advisory or wear a mask if you go out, among others, and keep social distancing (stay six feet apart). Around the first of April it was decided to close all public and private schools from the remainder of the school year; and all non-essential businesses had to close. Gas stations, grocery stores, medical facilities, drug stores, auto service centers, Lowe's, Home Depot, and brewery outlets could remain open. Liquor stores were closed. Restaurants with drive-through or take-out service could remain open, but no patrons could go inside. The stock market is down about 20% so far.

So, all this created a different way of life for everyone. **Jane** and I are thankful for many things: We don't have to go to work, haven't lost a job, have no children to entertain, and we have all of life's necessities that we need and more. Our daughter, **Leigh**, or our grandson, **Matthew**, do most of our grocery shopping; and since Matthew is home from Bloomsburg U, doing his work on line, he is available and willing to help us if we need him—another thing we are thankful for. Most big stores have one-way aisles to keep people apart. Some items are in short supply. Toilet paper, hand-sanitizer, and disinfectant wipes were the first to go, and we hear that meat is very scarce in northern Delaware and in the Clearfield area. Fortunately, the meat problem has not reached central Chester County so far.

I still get out to burn some gasoline with my F-250 a couple days a week. I pick up day-old bakery products from Giant on Sundays and Tuesdays and deliver to shelters or rehab. Places. Jane sometimes goes with me. As we say at Covenant Presbyterian, "we are Blessed to be a Blessing." We occasionally go for a ride to pick up excess pallets which I cut up for firewood. We skip out a day or two a week to get breakfast or lunch at Burger King or a similar high-priced facility that is serving through a window. The Senior Centers are closed, so many are getting a chance to do some cooking at home. I got my 14-yr-old riding mower going and picked up the leaves and winter debris off the lawn and plan to start mowing next week.

Sadly, with so many people in food lines, farmers are plowing under ready-to-harvest crops, dumping milk; and breweries are dumping beer, with no market, so many places being closed. My church, mentioned above, sends a daily message and had beautiful online services for Palm Sunday and Easter, as did Jane's church. We enjoyed these and are thankful for them.

What might the future bring and when? Will there be college football this year? How soon will we want 100,000 people in one place yelling, screaming, and hugging each other? And will there be a secondary wave of infections after we think it's over?

This is a good time to read a few good books, watch some TV and make a few phone calls to family and friends we haven't heard from in a while. Jane and I have enjoyed some of these.

Now in mid-May I am riding my new lawnmower and enjoying the Spring blooms.



**Frank Resides on his new mower.**

The word on the street here is: "We will get through this together." How many of us, and which ones? Time will tell.

OK, I guess all we can do is to keep on "Keeping On," take life a day at a time and hope and pray that we will stay healthy and that this situation will improve soon. —Frank

Since we are not having semi-annual luncheons, I thought we would try a newsletter. Found out newsletters aren't within my field of expertise, but I've tried to combine the messages I've gotten, so here they are! Was glad to hear that **Jim** and **Carl B.** are holding their own with some serious health issues.

**Pat Burkett** and **Carolyn Gehlen** are staying home and having what they need delivered by family or friends. Carolyn did say she has discovered some TV channels that she didn't know she had.

**Barbara Osgood:** Today is the 82<sup>nd</sup> day that I have been isolated at home. I only go out a couple of times a day to walk the dogs, and, thank goodness, I can work in the garden. To some that might seem like overkill, but at 85, everything I read says if I get this virus, I most likely will die. And I'm not ready to go yet—at least not with a push from Covid.

I'm lucky that, with the help of friends, Amazon and Whole Foods, I have everything I need, so I can't complain.

As I told Frank, I'm spending a lot of my "enforced free time" writing another book. This time it's a diary of my days in isolation—a memoir of sorts, tentative title Corona Diary. It has a hint of SCS in it! I've included a chapter here.

Here is a photo of the two old guys I live with—**Molly** (chocolate) and **Benji** (yellow). They make my isolation tolerable.



*Molly and Benji*

## A PARABLE

*Our generation had no Great War, no Great Depression.*

*Our war is spiritual. Our depression is our lives.*

—Chuck Palahniuk

The man was huddled in the doorway when my father arrived for work that frigid January morning. He clutched a threadbare overcoat tightly around his body, as if the effort might improve its warmth. His head and hands were bare. The gaping soles on his shoes were tied together with rags.

Inside the warm office, with a cup of steaming coffee restoring the circulation in his hands, the man told his story. His name was Gabriel—Gabe, his family called him. He was an Italian stonemason. He had a wife and a new baby. He had walked 50 miles from Staten Island to Nyack, looking for work, stopping at soup kitchens along the way. He was desperate. He had no money. Did my father need a stonemason?

My father hired Gabe. I never knew why. Perhaps he really did need a stonemason. Perhaps it was because Gabe's newborn son was the same age as his own infant daughter. Maybe, as a devout Methodist, he just couldn't turn him away—this threadbare man who had walked 50 miles to find a job. Regardless of the reason, Gabe went to work for my father.

It was January, 1935. The midst of The Great Depression.

The Depression wasn't a good time to be a monument dealer, or any other small business owner. While Gabe cut stones in the workshop, my father travelled miles beyond his usual sales area to find clients, hoping his battered Plymouth was up to the task. He made calls from early morning into the night, often going days without a sale. "I just had to keep going," he explained, many years later. He never spoke about the disappointment and fear that must have followed him in his quest for just one more sale. Like Gabe, he, too, was in need. He had to save his business.

There were customers who had no money. Their bank accounts were empty. Their investments were worthless. They offered artwork, family heirlooms, and treasured possessions to pay their bill. I still have the remnants of those transactions—a hand blown glass wine set, an antique brass cigarette box, marble bookends. My father kept them, I think, as reminders of a time that shaped his life forever. A time when people who had never been poor found themselves on food lines. When middle class families were unable to make their mortgage payments and lost their homes.

There were other customers who never paid their bills. Millionaires who managed to avoid the devastation of the Depression and retreated to their mansions in an enclave aptly named “Tuxedo Park”. They knew my father had no power to pursue them when they left their bills unpaid. But he never forgot them. Many years later I could still sense the anger and pain in his voice when he told me their story.

World War II ended the Depression, and although it brought its own share of problems, the business survived. My father bought a baby grand piano for my mother. He built a house for us in the country, where we had a flock of chickens and fruit trees and a large vegetable garden. He could not have known then that it would be our sanctuary during the War.

Gabe bought a house in the suburbs for his family. In time, he sent his only son to college.

\*\*\*

I think of Gabe and my father when I read the headlines in my morning paper. The news is tragically familiar. Struggling small businesses. Food lines. Rising unemployment numbers. They have been compared to the food lines and unemployment of the Great Depression. We have been here before. But will it be the same? Our current leaders have a high standard to meet.

The leaders of the country during the Great Depression responded to the crisis with innovative, sweeping new programs, some of which are still in existence. Thousands of able young men joined the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) to live in barracks and transform the countryside with conservation projects. They built structures and trails in national parks that are still in use today using only basic tools—picks, shovels and wheelbarrows.

The Work Progress Administration (WPA) hired authors, artists, musicians and journalists to fill public buildings with works of art, chronicle the history of the Depression, and tour the country giving concerts and theater performances. Their art still enhances public buildings around the country. Their photography is a bleak portrayal of the human misery of the era.

Millions of jobless construction workers were hired by the WPA to create iconic skyscrapers like the Chrysler Building and Rockefeller Center in New York City. They built the Golden Gate Bridge, Hoover Dam, LaGuardia Airport and many other projects. They even built entire towns, like Greenbelt, Maryland.

And 1935 marked the advent of the Social Security Program. Decades later, it still provides benefits to the disabled and the elderly.

The fate of the Coronavirus Pandemic of 2020 remains unknown for now. Will history record that the leadership of our country responded today as it did during the Great Depression? That it addressed the plight of people who are suddenly unemployed and unable to pay their bills through no fault of their own? That it felt the pain of those who are homeless and hungry?

Will history record that our current leaders tamed a nation's dangerous pandemic, and protected its citizens from harm?

Will today's leaders be remembered for innovative legislation and sweeping programs that not only rescued society, but changed it for the better?

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I like to think of the story of my father and Gabe as a parable of hope. They endured disaster and they survived, supported by a government that cared about their future.

The nation's leaders found the strength to overcome a crisis in 1933.

Will they find it again in 2020?

From **Carl DuPolt**: The Darby Creek Valley Association is a nonprofit association encompassing 77.2 square miles of drainage areas within 32 municipalities and four counties in southeast Pennsylvania. It discharges into the Delaware River near the John Heinz Wildlife Preserve. The watershed contains 123 miles of streams.



Carl DuPoldt keeps busy with all sorts of podcasts, webinars and virtual meetings from USDA and Penn State Extension on conservation and environmental issues. We wish Carl and Rosalie well.

**Tom and Joyce livari:** We've been doing almost nothing. Joyce and I both have health issues, so we mostly stay at home. We get some of our groceries delivered and might make a short trip to the market every 10-14 days to pick up a few items. We get our prescriptions delivered/mailed or go to drive-thru CVS. We've had a few curbside pickup meals, but they were pretty mediocre. We picked up a few pizzas and antipastos from Mike's, our local pizza joint, and they were great. We do some Face Time with our young grandchildren in Virginia Beach. Joyce really misses them and looks forward to these virtual visits. We can't wait to see them in person. I'm still active in Boy Scouts and have had several virtual meetings and conferences. Very soon I will conduct several Eagle Scout Boards of Review in/at some outdoor settings and keep our social distancing. We are waiting for some warm dry weather so I can do some yard work. Best part of this stay-at-home epidemic is I get to wear pajamas and warmups almost all the time. No pants, no shirts, and don't shave all that much. Hope everybody is doing well.

**Jean Francis:** Well folks, this is definitely the most boring time of my life. However, for a while there weren't any robo calls, and it was really boring as I like to "play" with them. That keeps them from calling gullible people who fall for their "deals." However, they are coming back.

I have five cats, so Swiffering the fur from my floors keeps me busy. Then there is pulling weeds. I started reading a book I bought 15 years ago. Also, I am making phone calls to those I don't see often to catch up and see that they are well. Our Church also calls parishioners to see how they are doing and see that they are well.

I've been busy with our Homeowners Association as we are transitioning to a Management Company. Hurray, no more letter-writing to those who don't like to follow the Rules and Restrictions.

I guess I could also clean out cabinets and other storage areas to get rid of those things I don't need any more. So, when the day comes for garage sales, I will be ready. I hope this finds all of you well and are staying safe.

**Gail Brant:** Well, remembering my gazillion presentations on the adoption-diffusion model, about 2% of a group are innovators. As for me, I do not meet the criteria for an innovator. As for fun, coordinating masks with "stay in place" wardrobes is "fun or funny."

**Howard Hall:** Writing from Quarryville in Lancaster county, PA. I have a one-bedroom apartment in Quarryville Presbyterian Retirement Community. I say this is a good place for an Iowa farm boy to retire. I have cornfields, meadows, and a pond across the street. We are sheltering in place here. We are not to leave the campus except for necessary trips such as doctor visits and groceries. The dining hall is closed, but we get dinner delivered to our apartment. I will be fine if it does not last too many years. This strict policy has spared the residents from any virus infections. Two employees have been infected.

My family has been able to work from home to stay employed. My daughter and husband live in Durham, England and teach at Durham University. Their restrictions are similar to those in the US. They finished the spring term teaching from home. They can go out for a walk once a day and have groceries delivered to their home.

I was the soil mechanics Engineer in the Chester office. I started with the SCS in the Shenandoah Iowa Area office in July, 1952. I became the area engineer and project engineer in that office. It was a joint position. In 1968 I transferred to the Technical Center in Lincoln, NE where I worked as a design engineer for about three years, then worked as a soils engineer until I moved to Pennsylvania in 1977, where I worked until retirement in 1991.

**Frank's note:** *Howard was the "go to guy" at the NTC when there was a soil-related problem out on the construction site, and a great person to work with.*

**Mercedes Seman:** Nice job, Frank! Great idea - you are invaluable. Because of your initiative and ongoing investment of time and effort, you have kept everyone from the NNTC together over the years. I really appreciate that. The office was disbanded and employees dispersed, and the agency and its mission greatly amended since the reorganization of the mid 1990s, forces beyond our influence. There was (and is) heart in what we were doing and scientific/technical value to society and the land. It was more than a job for most of us.

Fortunately, my main clients are essential businesses and remain open. I am able to do most of their bookkeeping from home via connections to their computer systems. Although I thought initially that I would have some personal time to be able to do things around my house, it turns out I have a lot of bookkeeping work.

Applying for the federal PPP loans was an unscheduled task for some of my clients. That turned out to be interesting. It didn't matter at all if one had a long-standing business relationship with a bank. One client has banked with Wells Fargo for 15 years or more. They are a reliable account for the bank. Wells Fargo delayed accepting applications and the first allocation of funds ran out before my client ever heard back from Wells Fargo. Evidently, Wells Fargo opted to service their largest customers first, for which they receive a larger loan servicing fee. The client's CPA advised the client to apply through Kabbage or PayPal. Kabbage processed their application and delivered a loan within three days, from the second allocation of funds.

I live in Prince George's county in Maryland. We have, as of this writing, 10,000 identified cases, approximately a third of Maryland's state-wide cases. Only 37% or so of those 10,000 cases are attributable to nursing homes. My county has a large number of residents who are "essential" workers. Essential workers are absolutely at greater risk for exposure to the virus, and it's a contagious virus. My neighbor two doors down works in a nursing home as a housekeeper and is afraid but goes to work every day. Her husband is a contractor. He also goes to work every day.

The fact is, I am a very privileged person, getting to spend most of my working time from home. One of my clients hauls mail. He and his employees, drivers, and mechanics do not have that luxury, and I do go into their office more frequently than my other clients.

I also have a hairdresser and an old-time dentist client. They are smaller accounts. Both businesses have been closed now, going on two months, with no income at all. They are sole proprietors, accustomed in their lifetimes to earning enough to support themselves without a safety net like a salary from a larger entity, a slate of benefits and a retirement plan. They support themselves by working in their fields, but it is not safe to work, for themselves or for their clients.

Now it is time to anticipate the impact on the economy and take steps as best as one can. Another client is an insurance brokerage. They sell health insurance and ancillary coverage (group disability, group life insurance) and 401K platforms. It would seem that they would fare better than most, except these are coverages small businesses buy. The small business clients are struggling. Gauging how many may close, scale back, or drop coverage is something the insurance broker is trying to assess. Depending on how much business is lost will determine steps the brokerage will need to take regarding their employees.

There is so much uncertainty. My experiences with these small businesses are nothing like my experiences as a federal government employee. Two completely different worlds. I am truly a very fortunate person.

I have done better at keeping my little garden weeded out front. I had planned on starting seeds and selling plants at the Beltsville Garden Club's spring sales this year, but those were cancelled. I'm not that accomplished as a small business! The Beltsville Garden Club is great. It's mostly USDA employees and retirees, a very science-based club with a speaker at every meeting, a real find when I first moved here.

I do hope you all are well and able to make the adjustments that are necessary as we live through another event that will be permanently recorded in the history books!

I recommend the software, Splashtop, for remote access to another's computer. It is inexpensive, easy to use, reliable and has security, in case you need to connect to someone's computer in a different location. The insurance broker's IT support contractor installed it at that office, and then I needed my own license to connect to the mail hauling client. You can pull files back to your system, or you can print to your printer, if needed. This has been a boon for me.

**Karen Gustler:** I'm still working my IT job, security job, and watching my granddaughter, **Sawyer** every chance I get. I started crocheting my 19<sup>th</sup> afghan since Feb. of 2019. I just purchased flowers and veggie plants, which I hope to get in the ground soon. When I'm out, I wear my mask and gloves. Stay safe everyone!

**Carl Bouchard:** I'm holding video conferences with doctors in lieu of office visits. Sometimes that works and sometimes not. Grocery shopping is about our only outside adventures since the beaches are closed. Walking every day in the neighborhood helps me regain strength. I even splurged on a 75-inch TV. So we are watching movies, old and new.

**Jim Stiegel:** Better get cracking here, as the May 14<sup>th</sup> deadline has passed. But then I live in loooower, sloooower Delaware. We are both doing good, except for some medical issues that, so far, we have been able to overcome or live with.

My most recent issue along those lines has pretty nicely coincided with the Pandemic. In January I made an annual visit to my cardiologist. When he was finished listening to my heart, he said "Mmmm, I don't like what I hear." So after a battery of tests, I was on my way to Christiana Hospital for a mitral valve and double bypass operation. Nobody was more surprised than me at this turn of events, as I had had no noticeable symptoms.

The operation occurred on March 10<sup>th</sup>, just days before the shut-down. Bad timing? It certainly put me in the high-risk population. But I stayed low key and had an excellent home care worker, as she has been for nearly 58 years. **Judy** has been making weekly visits to the grocery and periodically to the drug stores. Other than that, we have kept our head down and have corresponded with family by email, text, FaceTime, and that old standby, telephone. No-one in our family has contacted the virus.

I have progressed nicely and I'm now back to walking 30 minutes per day at my former pace. For someone who was only taking one prescription drug per day, the need to take about 10 per day was quite a change. I'm down to five now. I made one return visit to Christiana five days after surgery for a post-op check-up. I've since been seeing the local cardiologist and PAs via teleconferencing. I will have cardiac physical therapy as soon as permitted by the pandemic shut down. So a word to the wise: at this age, whether you have symptoms or not, it's a good idea to see a cardiologist annually.

Hope this finds you and your family and all other NTC retirees and families well and coping with the present situation.

## SOUTH CAROLINA

**Grady Adkins, ARCSE Representative**

Email: [grady.adkins2@gmail.com](mailto:grady.adkins2@gmail.com)

**Dennis Bauknight**, who was seriously ill with rheumatoid arthritis last summer, is now in complete remission and is going full speed with his Certified Tree Farm. The Bauknight Tree Farm was recently recognized for being a member of the American Tree Farm system for over 50 years.

Dennis was also recently appointed by Pickens County Council to serve on the Pickens County Emergency Board, which oversees fire departments, EMS, and 911.

His wife, **Amanda**, was just appointed by the SC Governor to serve a four-year term on the Pickens County Board of Voter Registration and Elections. She has been working to prepare for the June Statewide Primary and the General Election in November.

They expressed thanks to God for the health to continue serving their county.



*L-R: Dennis and Amanda Bauknight, Russell Hubright, SC Forestry Commission.*

## TEXAS (NORTH)

**Arnold King, ARCSE Representative**  
**Email:** [arnolddking@hotmail.com](mailto:arnolddking@hotmail.com)

Texas is still partially shutdown, but activities are on the increase. Like everywhere else, problems still exist in the cities, but things are almost back to normal in the small towns. The fear now is the fall rebound, which seems to already be happening. The younger set is going about their business in a fairly normal way, but the 60+ crowd is being very cautious and observing the social distancing guidance. Our local chapter hasn't met since February, and the meetings are still on hold. So there's not much to report. We recently got a sad report from Morris Loubrecht's wife that Morris is suffering from Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease. He is currently under hospice care, but living at home. Morris was on the engineering staff at Ft. Worth for many years and worked as a volunteer for several years.

If things keep improving, the North Texas chapter will begin meeting again in a month or so. At least that's what we are hoping for.

## VIRGINIA

**Ken Carter, ARCSE Representative**  
**Email:** [duckheadone@gmail.com](mailto:duckheadone@gmail.com)

**Wade Biddix**, former Asst. State Conservationist for Programs, reports he will be moving to Arizona in a few weeks. His new address will be 3722 N. 162 Avenue, Goodyear, AZ 855395. Cell # will be (804) 477-2675. Arizona golfers beware!

**George Norris**, former State Conservationist, is home recovering from a recent serious bout with diverticulitis. After release from the hospital, he had to go back into a 14-day self-quarantine period at the housing facility where he and his wife **Ellen** reside.

George also reports on a request I sent out for various ways to beat the boredom associated with the stay-at-home policy due to the virus. He and Ellen play a lot of Scrabble and commented that two players can be somewhat boring. They have "upped their game," so to speak, by each playing two sides and deciding who their partner will be. In addition to family members, they "invite" friends, former associates, celebrities, former presidents and first ladies—and even Queen Elizabeth and Prince Phillip have had name cards placed at the table indicating their presence!

On a personal note, my recovery from a heart transplant in September is going well. The amounts of meds I have to take is decreasing, and my activity level is increasing. I am finally fishing again and have started back boating on the Chesapeake Bay. Life is good!

## WASHINGTON

**Ken Kaul, ARCSE Representative**  
**Email:** [kenkaul@msn.com](mailto:kenkaul@msn.com)

Receive word that **Chester, (Chet) Jahns** (age 74) passed away on June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020. No obituary available as of this date. The only change from our last report is that we are now in fire season as of last week with the first wild fire. We are not sure when things will open up enough so we can get together. Everyone is doing their best to stay healthy and looking forward to returning back to some kind of normal.

## WASHINGTON NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA

**We are still looking for a replacement for John Peterson as the ARCSE Representative.**

John Peterson “retired” from serving as The Land Improvement Contractor’s Director of Government Relations for the last 12 years. LICA had been part of his life far longer.

In about 1966 when he was the SCS Area Engineer in Rochester, MN he was asked to write an article on push-up, tile-outlet terraces for a MN-IA LICA newsletter. Even before that, going back to the late 1950s, he knew many drainage contractors who belonged to LICA.

As he made his way through the SCS/NRCS system from MN to OH, IN, AZ and finally to DC, LICA and LICA Contractors were always there. One of his many SCS assignments was to direct the PL 78-534 and PL 83-566 Watershed Programs, the Emergency Watershed Program (EWP), and the Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) program nationally. SCS/NRCS assisted local project sponsors build nearly 12,000 flood damage reduction (flood control) dams throughout the U.S. using those programs. Those dams are on the National Dam Inventory. LICA Contractors built many of them.

And later when John was the SCS Assistant Chief overseeing the 12 midwestern states (ND, SD, IA, NE, KS, MN, IL, MO, WI, MI, OH, IN), those states were and are still strong LICA states. After he retired from SCS in 1994 and became the Executive Director of the National Watershed Coalition (NWC), LICA was on its Board of Directors.

In 1996 John wrote the first draft of the Small Watershed Rehabilitation Act, PL 106-472, that was finally passed into law in 2000. LICA assisted in its passage. And then in 2008 things came full circle when he was asked to be the LICA “Liaison” in Washington, DC. It quickly became apparent that a “liaison” was not what LICA needed. They needed a real government relations function where governments at every level knew of LICA. LICA supported that and that is what they created together.

Many well-known federal agencies and national organizations know of LICA. They have active MOUs with NRCS and NACD. LICA has been part of John’s life for over 60 years. He still serves as Chairman of the Northern Virginia Soil & Water Conservation District, is on the Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation District’s Board and the NACD Board, so will remain in the conservation family. In previous years he has assisted the Soil & Water Conservation Society, the National Watershed Coalition, the National Grazing Lands Coalition, the International Erosion Control Association, and EnviroCert International. He was the ARCSE National Capital Area Representative for 25 years, from 1994-2019.

## WEST VIRGINIA

**Peg Reese, ARCSE Representative**

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

Lee Godbey, soil conservationist for the Union Service Center, retired on May 8<sup>th</sup>.

I am saddened to report that retired conservation technician **Teddy Hanson** from Lewisburg passed away on May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020. You can read more about his life in the “In Memoriam” section of this newsletter.

Two members of the NRCS family won their contests in the primary election. **J.R. Wolfe** of Preston County is now a democratic candidate for the WV House of Delegates to represent district 52. **Paul Dunn**’s daughter, **Cindy Scott**, will remain on the 17<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court in Morgantown.

## NEW SENIOR CONSERVATIONISTS

**Prepared by Marc Safley, Senior Conservationist Chronicler**

*They have reached the minimum age of 83 years and have completed the Senior Conservationist Questionnaire. See IN-MEMORIAM for the Senior Conservationists who have left us since the last Newsletter. Please help us identify retirees who should be named Senior Conservationists. Please provide their contact information to your ARCSE Representative or Regional Vice-President. No new Senior Conservationists have been named as of this issue.*

### SENIOR CONSERVATIONIST CHRONICLE

Senior Conservationist

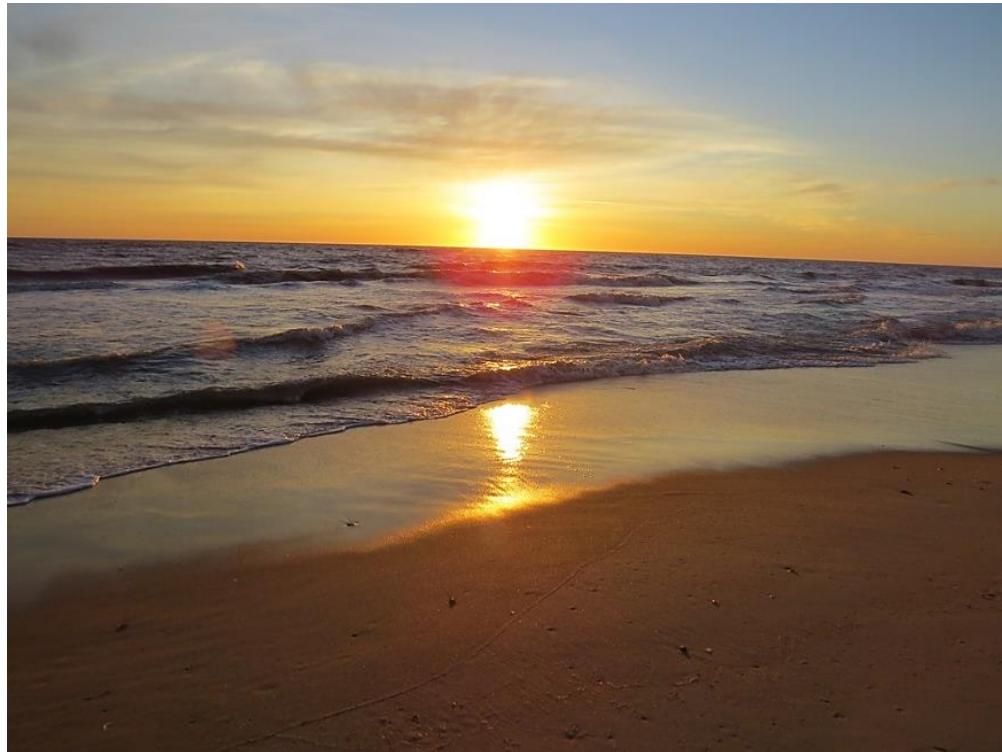
**Talmadge Jay Wiggins**

Senior Conservationist Talmadge Wiggins was born in Bryson City, NC. Bryson City is the county seat of Swain County in southwestern NC. It is about 65 miles west of Asheville. Talmadge grew up in Bryson City until his 8<sup>th</sup> year when his family moved to the farm outside of town, where he spent the rest of his formative years. The farm grew feed for livestock and some corn for market. He reports that he worked at his uncle’s ice plant for two summers “pulling ice” and serving customers.

Talmadge attended North Carolina State College of Agriculture and Engineering where he graduated in June 1957 with a B.S. degree in Animal Science. During his college years he held several jobs at the school. He assisted in the forage crops research, worked as office assistant in the office of the Head of the Agronomy Department, and cared for bulls in the humidity and heat research chambers at the dairy farm. During his sophomore year he became an SCS Student Trainee and worked in that program in Swain County during the summers of 1955 and 1956.

Upon graduation, Talmadge was hired by SCS as a Soil Conservationist in the Raleigh (NC) Field Office. He was in that job until 1960 when he was selected to be Work Unit Conservationist at Lenoir City, NC. He was there for two years and then moved back to Raleigh as Work Unit Conservationist in 1962. Talmadge held that position until 1969. During his time at the Raleigh Field Office, he spent nine months in graduate study at NC State's Agricultural Policy Institute. From Raleigh he was made RC&D Coordinator located at Andrews, NC, where he worked until 1975. In 1975 he was selected to be Area Conservationist located at Wilkesboro, NC. He retired from Federal service there in 1990. After retirement, Talmadge worked as Watershed Coordinator at Stokes County, NC.

Talmadge married **Marjorie Jackson** in December, 1956 and have a son, a daughter, and one grandchild. Guests at their 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary party included some who were present at their wedding. He has listed his hobbies as travel (they have visited all 50 states), landscape maintenance, and trout fishing (now a pastime of the past). He has been a volunteer with Habitat for Humanity and notes with special appreciation his years as a Habitat volunteer. He is also engaged in lay work at their church. He says that he has seen the difference that home ownership makes in the lives of people, and that he has "lived long enough to see some of the children we helped to have a stable home environment grow to adult life."



DEADLINE FOR  
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2020  
NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS IS  
AUGUST 25<sup>TH</sup>, 2020



## OBITUARY INFORMATION

**Paul Benedict, Membership Chair**

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

| Surname   | Year | <i>In-Memoriam</i> (Note: These are recent notices. For a complete list, please see <a href="http://www.arcse.org">www.arcse.org</a> )   |
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| Allen     | 2020 | Senior Conservationist and Honorary Member <b>Malvern "Mook" Walter Allen</b> (93) of Bunker Hill, Illinois passed away at his home on June 5, 2020. He was born on April 7, 1927, in Wood River, Illinois to <b>Ernest L. Allen Sr.</b> and <b>Ellen R. (Reed) Allen</b> . He married <b>Helen Marie (Burns) Allen</b> on September 12, 1953 in Shipman, Illinois. Mook started his career working for McDonald Aircraft before coming to work for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service as an engineer. During his career he served as Area Engineer in the Edwardsville Area Office and then went to work for the Northeast Technical Center as an Environmental Engineer. Mook was a member of the American Legion of Bunker Hill. He was active in Boy Scouts and youth organizations in Bunker Hill, Illinois. He was also active in the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association serving for a while as a Director of that organization. He is survived by his wife, <b>Helen Marie Allen</b> of Bunker Hill; children, <b>Michael (Joan) Allen</b> , <b>Kathleen (Mark) Knetzer</b> , <b>Theresa (David) Bryan</b> , <b>Denise (James) Davis</b> , <b>John (Bonnie) Allen</b> , <b>Joan (Jerry) Flarity</b> , and <b>Richard (Leann) Allen</b> ; 17 grandchildren; numerous great-grandchildren; and numerous great-great-grandchildren.   |
| Brister   | 2019 | Honorary Member and Senior Conservationist <b>Rayford J. Brister</b> (92) of San Saba, Texas (formerly of San Antonio, Texas) passed away August 11, 2019. Rayford was born in Mertzon, Texas on April 27, 1927. He worked for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service, including service as a range conservationist, soil conservationist, and a District Conservationist. He retired in 1982. Many of Rayford's colleagues have passed away, making it difficult to learn much about his career, but numerous archived newspaper articles either written by Rayford or about Rayford in the 1960s and 1970s can be found online. He evidently had an active public information program promoting conservation in Texas. He was preceded in death by his daughter <b>Janice Brister</b> . He is survived by wife <b>Helen Brister</b> , and his children, <b>Sherry Brister Smay</b> and <b>Stephen Brister</b> . He is also survived by numerous nieces, nephews, and a host of extended family.  |
| Eckenrode | 2020 | <b>Joseph Jay "Jake" Eckenrode</b> (75) of Bellefonte, Pennsylvania passed away May 23, 2020 at Mt. Nittany Medical Center in State College, Pennsylvania. Jake began his soil scientist career in 1966 after earning a degree in Soil Science and Agronomy from Pennsylvania State University. He mapped soils in Crawford, Wyoming, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Northumberland, Snyder, Union, Clinton, and Potter Counties. He also did soil survey details in Florida and Alaska. He was one of the featured soil scientists in the Smithsonian Institute's 2008 to 2010 Dig It! The Secrets of Soil Exhibit. He mentored many soil scientists who have gone on to successful soil science careers. He retired from NRCS in 2005 and continued working as a consulting soil scientist. Jake wrote many materials that are still being used today – Introduction to Soils of Pennsylvania, the FFA Soils Land Judging manual, Pennsylvania Soil Survey Biographies, and various Agronomy Series on the History of Soil Survey in Pennsylvania, to name a few. He was one of the early contributors to the Pennsylvania Envirothon program and was an honorary member of the Pennsylvania Association of Professional Soil Scientists. He is survived by his wife <b>Sharon M. (Struble) Eckenrode</b> ; two sons <b>Jay Glenn Eckenrode (Karen Nagle)</b> and <b>Joseph Andrew Eckenrode (Tara Davidson)</b> ; two stepsons <b>Jeffery Horner (Robin)</b> , <b>Scott Horner (Jennifer)</b> ; six grandchildren and one great-grandchild. |
| Farr      | 2019 | Honorary Member and Senior Conservationist <b>Jay Edmundson Farr</b> (92), formerly of Petersburg, Illinois passed away February 20, 2019 at the Bell Trace Senior Living Center in Bloomington, Indiana where he and his wife <b>Betty</b> had lived for five years. Jay was born May 3, 1926 in Oak Park, Illinois to <b>Jay, Sr.</b> and <b>Elizabeth Farr</b> . Immediately after graduating from high school, Jay enlisted in the US Army Air Force. He graduated from the University of Illinois and began a lifelong career in conservation, first with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service until he retired as a district conservationist in 1972, and then 20 more years with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Jay was a charter member of the Petersburg Tree Committee, active in veterans' organizations and the United Methodist Church. One of the highlights of his later years was going on the Honor Flight to Washington, DC to honor World War II veterans. He is survived by his wife of 70 years, <b>Betty</b> , and grandchildren <b>Sara Humbert</b> , <b>Becky Belancin</b> , <b>Jeffrey Bartons</b> , <b>Angie Hudak</b> , <b>Scott Lindroth</b> , <b>Catherine Lindroth</b> and one great-grandchild, <b>Madison Belancin</b> .  |
| Galt      | 2020 | <b>Henry Deloss "Dee" Galt</b> (90) of Las Cruces, New Mexico passed away peacefully on May 19, 2020 in Las Cruces. Dee was born on September 14, 1929 in Forson, Texas, the only child of <b>Junius and Helen (Marshall) Galt</b> . Dee was a veteran of the Korean War, where he served as an Airman First Class in the Army Air Corps. He was an alumnus of both Texas A&M University and the University of Arizona, where he obtained a B.S. degree in Range Management, an M.S. in Range Forestry, and a Ph.D. in Range Management, also minoring in Animal Nutrition. He married <b>Margaret Lucille "Lucy" Tucker</b> on July 9, 1960. Together they raised a family while they lived in New Mexico, North Dakota, Tunisia, and Washington due to Dee's work as a Range Conservationist with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service, where he worked for 30 years. Dee and Lucy moved to Las Cruces when Dee retired in 1990. After retirement, along with <b>Jerry Holechek</b> , Dee formed an independent range consultant service, where they worked on several projects throughout New Mexico and Arizona. Dee was preceded in death by his wife, Lucy in 2014. He is survived by five children: <b>Patrick (Carole)</b> of Saint Paul, Minnesota; <b>Mark</b> of Las Cruces; <b>Keri Galt-Belhon (Patrick)</b> of San Diego, California; <b>Janis Phillips (Mike)</b> of Griffin, Georgia; and <b>Lee</b> of Las Cruces; six grandchildren and one great-grandchild.  |
| Gentry    | 2020 | <b>Alan Dale Gentry</b> (63) of Ottawa, Kansas passed away June 14, 2020, at Menorah Medical Center in Overland Park, Kansas. Alan was born March 19, 1957 in Wichita, Kansas and was adopted May 23, 1957 by <b>Kenneth Neil</b> and <b>Alberta Elizabeth Briles-Gentry</b> . He was welcomed home by big brother <b>Mike</b> who was also adopted. On August 31, 1961 they all welcomed baby sister <b>Elisa Ann</b> to the family. Alan was united in marriage to <b>Lori Fritts</b> March 25, 1995 in Ottawa where they were fortunate to share 25 years of marriage. He worked for USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service for 30 years, retiring on June 30, 2018. He loved his job and working with the farmers. Alan and Lori traveled extensively.  |

They cruised to Alaska twice, took yearly trips to Branson, Orlando, Wyoming, Ohio, Texas, Iowa, Nebraska, and North Carolina. Alan's favorite vacation spot was Rocky Mountain National Park in Estes Park, Colorado. They had hoped to travel back there, but God had other plans. Alan is survived by his wife Lori and son **Benjamin "Ben"** of Castle Rock, Colorado. The family suggests memorial contributions to the Kansas City Research Institute c/o Dengel & Son Mortuary, 235 S. Hickory, Ottawa, Kansas 66067 as Alan participated in their liver research program.

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| Gray         | 2020 | Frankie Eugene Gray (80) of Abilene, Kansas passed away May 21, 2020 at home surrounded by family. He was born January 7, 1940 near Miltonvale, Kansas, the son of <b>George W.</b> and <b>Georgia A. (Catlin) Gray</b> . On July 4, 1957 he married <b>Sherryl Shroyer</b> in Miltonvale. Most of their married life was spent in Abilene. Frankie was employed by the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service as a Soil Conservation Technician. Frankie enjoyed spending time with family and friends, hunting, fishing, traveling, and country music. He was a member of the Abilene First United Methodist Church. Frankie was preceded in death by his son, <b>Leland Gray</b> . Frankie is survived by his wife, Sherryl Gray of Abilene; son, <b>Gerald (Jeanine) Gray</b> of Iola, Kansas; daughter, <b>Sherri (Jim) Hohensee</b> of Abilene; four grandchildren, <b>Kelby Garten, Cassie Gragg, Leland Gray, Layton Gray</b> ; and five great-grandchildren. The family suggests memorial contributions in his name be made to St. Jude's Children's Hospital or Dickinson County Hospice.   |
| Hanson       | 2020 | Theodore Dale "Teddy" Hanson (78) of Lewisburg, West Virginia passed away May 31, 2020 at his home. He was born March 11, 1942 at Clintonville, West Virginia the son of the late <b>Slater Wilson</b> and <b>Winona Maye Kelley Hanson</b> . Teddy was in the National Guard for eight years. He was retired from the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service as a Soil Conservation Technician. He was a member of the Lewisburg Baptist Church and the Maxwelton Ruritan Club. He enjoyed gardening and hunting. Teddy loved coaching his grandsons in basketball and baseball. Survivors include his loving devoted wife of fifty-three years, <b>Mary Ruth Keene Hanson</b> ; daughter, <b>Darla Beane (Jeff)</b> of Lewisburg; and grandchildren, <b>Isaac, Austin</b> and <b>Lauren Beane</b> . Graveside service will be 11:00 AM, Tuesday, June 2, 2020 at the Rosewood Cemetery, Lewisburg, West Virginia. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations of sympathy be made to the Lewisburg Baptist Academy Athletic Fund, 246 Grand Avenue, Lewisburg, WV 24901.  |
| Harjo-Moffer | 2020 | David Brent Harjo-Moffer (77) of Wetumka, Oklahoma passed away February 19, 2020 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. David was born September 25, 1942 in Wetumka, Oklahoma to <b>Eddie Moffer</b> and <b>Hazel (Absher) Moffer</b> . He proudly served his country with the United States Navy during the Vietnam War. On September 25, 2007, in Holdenville, Oklahoma, he married <b>Melissa Ann Harjo</b> . David was a construction inspector for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). After retiring from NRCS he worked in real estate for the Sac and Fox Nation and Bureau of Indian Affairs. David also enjoyed searching for and collecting arrowheads and fossils. Survivors include his wife, Melissa Ann Harjo-Moffer of Wetumka; one son, <b>Brent Tulwy Moffer (Dana)</b> of Norman, Oklahoma; three daughters, <b>Debbie Devine</b> of Nashville, Tennessee, <b>Raquel Moffer</b> of Ft. Thompson, South Dakota and <b>Kim Moffer</b> of North Carolina, and several grandchildren. Committal was at the Moffer Family Cemetery near Wetumka, Oklahoma with military honors.  |
| Higgin       | 2020 | Danny Higgins (78) of Elkton, Kentucky passed away May 17, 2020 at his home of natural causes. He was born July 1, 1941 in Todd County, Kentucky, the son of the late <b>Ernest E.</b> and <b>Imogene Dunn Higgins</b> . He was a member of the Westside Church of Christ. He was retired from the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service where he worked as a civil engineering technician. He was also a retired farmer. He loved his family, cattle trading, gardening, and tractors. Danny is survived by his wife of 58 years <b>Dianne Higgins</b> of Elkton; three daughters <b>Kimberly Sears (David)</b> of Allegre, Kentucky, <b>Cherie Morris (Mitch)</b> and <b>Brandi Higgins (Coty)</b> both of Elkton; three grandchildren; two step grandchildren; and two great grandchildren.   |
| Hodges       | 2020 | Jacqueline Theresa Hodges (nee McDermott) (82) of Folsom, Pennsylvania passed away May 21, 2020 due to complications of Alzheimer's Disease. Jacqueline was born on August 3, 1937 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She was predeceased by her loving husband <b>Charles</b> , and her son <b>Charles, Jr.</b> She graduated from John W. Hallahan High School in 1955 and worked for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service until her retirement in 2005. She worked on the Soils Staff at the Northeast National Technology Center and later as a computer specialist. Jackie also worked for several years at National Headquarters. Her favorite hobbies were spending time with her family, being at the family shore house in North Wildwood, traveling with her friends, and gardening. Survivors include daughter <b>Cathleen</b> , daughter <b>Patricia (Fran)</b> , son <b>Bill (Kathleen)</b> , and grandchildren <b>Kristina (Michael), Charles (Lindsay), Francis, Jr. (Amanda), Andrew, Sean, Joshua, Patrick, Victoria, and Ryan</b> , as well as three great grandchildren. Memorial contributions can be made to the Alzheimer's Association. |
| Holmgren     | 2019 | George Holmgren (92) of Palo Alto, California passed away peacefully at home on November 22, 2019, surrounded by family after a short illness. Born in Arlington, Massachusetts, he later moved with his family to Berkeley, California where he attended Berkeley High School. Following graduation, he immediately volunteered for the Navy, serving at the close of WWII. Upon returning home, he attended the University of California, Berkeley and went on to earn a PhD in Soil Chemistry at Washington State University. He worked as a researcher with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service, Soil Survey Lab in Lincoln, Nebraska for 30 years. Las Vegas was his home in retirement for three decades, and in 2015 he moved to Palo Alto, California to be near his children. He was married for 62 years to his surviving wife <b>Joyce Holmgren</b> . He is also survived by son <b>Eric</b> , daughter <b>Laura (Frank)</b> , and five grandchildren.   |
| Hurst        | 2020 | Donald Alan Hurst (64) of Richmond, Kentucky (formerly of Springfield, Kentucky and Stanton, Kentucky) passed away May 9, 2020 at his home. He was born in Harrodsburg, Kentucky on June 19, 1955. Donald was a 1977 graduate of the University of Kentucky. He spent his career working for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service as a soil conservationist. He was the district conservationist in Stanton, Kentucky when he retired in 2010. He was of the Baptist faith. Survivors include his wife, <b>Elaine Goode Hurst</b> ; a daughter, <b>Rebecca Petrey (Lynn)</b> of Richmond; a son, <b>Alan Hurst (Katie)</b> of Lexington, Kentucky; five grandchildren, <b>Madelynn, Tate and Millie Petrey</b> and <b>Iris and Ivy Hurst</b> ; and his mother, <b>Mary Agnes Hurst</b> .   |
| Jackson      | 2020 | Member John Wallace Jackson (88) of Fort Worth, Texas passed away February 16, 2020. John and his twin brother and fellow ARCSE member <b>Calvin Jackson</b> , were born on May 2, 1931, at Maypearl in Ellis County, Texas to <b>Margaret</b> and <b>W. H. Jackson</b> . They grew up on the family's farm near Maypearl. After graduating from Waxahachie High School  |

in 1948, John farmed and attended Texas Christian University before transferring to Texas A&M in 1951. John was a member of the Corp of Cadets and graduated with his brother Calvin from Texas A&M in 1954 with a Bachelor of Science degree in agricultural engineering. He received a commission as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army upon graduating from A&M and served most of his active duty at Fort Hood, Texas. Upon his discharge from active army duty in 1957, John went to work for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service (SCS), where he worked as a construction engineer. He began his career in Crosbyton, Texas, where he worked for two years before being transferred to Spur, Texas. John moved to the Pampa, Texas SCS office in 1964, where he worked for nine years, and he finished his career in Stephenville, Texas where he worked for fourteen years, before retiring in 1987 after thirty years of service. He moved to Fort Worth in 2002 and was a member of First Baptist Church Benbrook. Survivors include his twin brother and ARCSE member **Calvin M. Jackson (Carolyn)** of Fort Worth; niece **Carol Silver (Ken)** of Edmond, Oklahoma; nephew **Cal Jackson (Cheryl)**; and several great nephews.

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| <b>Jahns</b>  | <b>2020 Chester "Chet" Arno Jahns, Jr.</b> (74) of Rockford, Washington passed away on June 20, 2020. Chet worked for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service as an engineer.   |
| <b>Kugel</b>  | <b>2020 Grace "Marie" Kugel</b> (71) of rural Strum, Wisconsin, passed away May 1, 2020 at her home. She was the spouse of retired conservation engineering technician <b>Ron Kugel</b> who worked for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service. They were high school sweethearts and married June 10, 1966 in Tucson, Arizona. Marie is survived by her husband, Ron; two sons, <b>Wayne (Christine) Kugel</b> and <b>Scott Kugel</b> ; and four grandchildren.  |
| <b>Mowrey</b> | <b>2013 Senior Conservationist Noel Richard "Dick" Mowrey</b> (89) of Logan, Ohio passed away peacefully February 4, 2013 at home. He had lived with Parkinson's disease for more than 25 years. Dick was born April 20, 1923 in Hocking County Ohio to <b>William</b> and <b>Birdie Mowrey</b> . He served with the U.S. Army in Guadalcanal during World War II. He worked 32 years with the Soil Conservation Service (SCS), and designed many of the county's ponds and spring developments; he assisted farmers in implementing erosion control practices and in managing their forests; he planted thousands of evergreen trees in the area. He also farmed with his brother <b>Everett</b> for more than 50 years. After retiring from SCS, he enjoyed restoring Ford and Allis-Chalmers Tractors with his friend <b>Frank Holcomb</b> ; was active with the St. Matthew Lutheran Church, the Hocking Valley Community Hospital Board, the Hocking County Historical Society, the Hocking County Fair Board, and served as Honorary Supervisor on the Soil and Water Conservation Board. At the time of his death he was survived by his wife of 63 years, <b>Helen I. Mowrey</b> ; daughter, <b>Melissa Howell</b> ; granddaughter, <b>Crystal (Justin) Kerns</b> ; and two great-grandchildren <b>Abigail</b> and <b>Olivia Kerns</b> .  |
| <b>Mowrey</b> | <b>2020 Helen I. Mowrey</b> (92) of Logan, Ohio, passed away June 24, 2020 at her granddaughters' residence in Logan, Ohio following an extended illness and hospice care. Helen was preceded in death in 2013 by her husband Senior Conservationist <b>Noel Richard "Dick" Mowrey</b> who worked for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service as a Soil Conservation Technician. Helen was a member of St. Matthew Lutheran Church and Hocking County Historical Society; volunteered at the Hocking Valley Community Hospital; and retired from the Logan Clay after 40 years. Surviving are her daughter <b>Melissa Howell</b> ; granddaughter <b>Crystal (Justin) Kerns</b> ; great-grandchildren, <b>Abigail</b> and <b>Olivia Kerns</b> . Graveside services will be held at 1:00 P.M., Monday, June 29, 2020 at the Oak Grove Cemetery, Logan, Ohio with <b>Pastor Scott Smith</b> officiating.  |
| <b>Neff</b>   | <b>2020 Clinton Edgar Neff</b> (92) of McClusky, North Dakota, passed away on his 65th wedding anniversary, June 18, 2020, at Augusta Place in Bismarck, North Dakota. Clinton lived in McClusky, North Dakota his entire life, except for the years he served in the military from 1944 to 1954. After this service he began working for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service in McClusky as a soil conservation technician for thirty years until he retired in 1988. He volunteered at his church and on several boards in the community, as well as serving throughout his life on the McClusky fire department, including a period as fire chief. Clinton is survived by his wife <b>Mary</b> of 65 years; and their sons, <b>Michael (Cindy)</b> , Bismarck, and their children, <b>David, Daniel (Jenny) and Rachel; Steven (Nancy)</b> , Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and their children, <b>Blake, Abby (Tyler) VanLiere, Mandy (Joel) Haas and Ryan</b> ; and <b>Paul (Luisa)</b> , Cleveland, Ohio, and their children, <b>Cory</b> and <b>Olivia</b> .  |
| <b>Renfro</b> | <b>2020 Marvin "Bo" Renfro</b> (65) of Paint Lick, Kentucky passed away June 9, 2020 at his home after a long battle with cancer. Bo was born in Danville, Kentucky to the late <b>Dallas</b> and <b>Virginia Palmer Renfro</b> . He received his college education at Berea College in Berea, Kentucky. Bo retired from the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service after almost 40 years of service. He was the district conservationist for Lincoln County Kentucky when he retired. He was a member of Wallacetown Baptist Church and a member of Gideon's International, Berea Camp. He is survived by his loving wife <b>Joy Renfro</b> ; two children, <b>Kara Taylor (Sam)</b> and <b>Rodney Renfro (Kacie)</b> ; and three grandchildren, <b>Tahirih Joy Renfro, Tristan Renfro</b> , and <b>Lucille Taylor</b> .  |
| <b>Weber</b>  | <b>2020 Mary Louise Wills Weber</b> (88) of Keizer, Oregon passed away February 29, 2020. Mary was the wife of Life Member and Senior Conservationist <b>Edward Weber</b> , who retired from the USDA-Soil Conservation Service in 1988. Mary was born on March 12, 1931, in Green River, Wyoming to <b>Earl Wills</b> and <b>Zelma Wills</b> . She and Edward wed on December 25, 1949, and they celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary on Christmas Day, 2019. During her working years, Mary worked mainly in retail. She started at Western Auto in Hermiston, Oregon. She held several positions with Fred Meyer in Corvallis and Roseburg, Oregon, and retired from the Fred Meyer in Salem, Oregon. Mary also worked for Harry and David in Ashland, Oregon. In addition to her regular job, Mary was an Avon Sales Representative. Mary was active in Campfire/Blue Birds, Hermiston PTA, Teton County Montana Home Demonstration Club, Square Dance Clubs, and The Daughters of the American Revolution. She was an avid reader, loved knitting and crocheting, and making dresses. Mary is survived by her husband of 70 years, Edward Weber; daughter <b>Edith Cano (Bob)</b> of Vancouver, Washington; son <b>Leslie Weber (Deena)</b> of Meridian, Idaho; grandchildren <b>Shelly Cano Kurtz (Nate), Nathan Cano, Matthew Weber</b> , and <b>Shyla Paradis (John)</b> ; and 10 greatgrandchildren. She was preceded in death by daughter <b>Myrna Weber</b> . |