



NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter for Retired Conservation Service Employees

Vol. 47, No. 2 March/April 2020

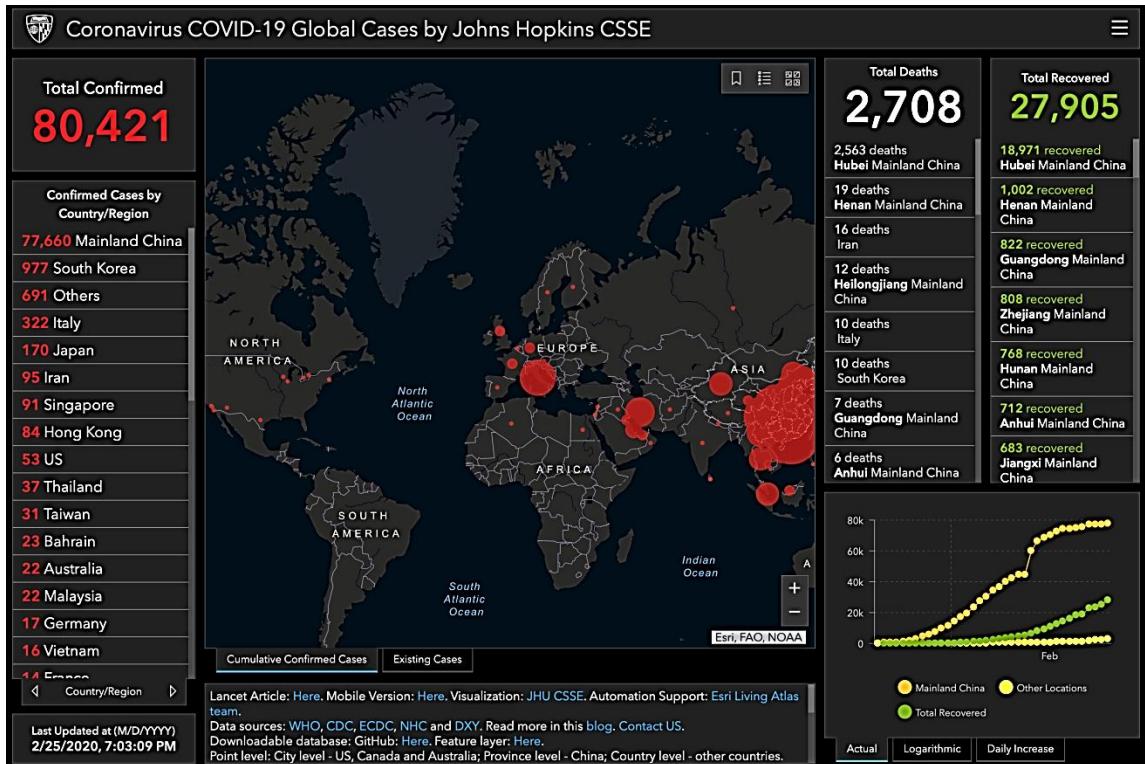
The *ARCSE Newsletter* is published bi-monthly by the Association of Retired Conservation Service Employees, P.O. Box 8965, Moscow, ID 83843

Website: www.arcse.org

NOTES FROM THE POTOMAC

Doug Lawrence and Patty Lawrence

Greetings from Capitol Hill. We hope everyone had a great holiday season. Probably one of the biggest stories around the world is the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) and its potential to become a health and economic disaster. On February 25th US health officials from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institutes of Health urged the public to prepare for the spread of the COVID-19 in the U.S. The primary reason scientists in the US have ramped up their concern is because COVID-19 has spread to a number of countries beyond China. For those of you interested in tracking COVID-19, Johns Hopkins University has created an informative [website](#) that provides the public with the latest data on the virus. We hope that COVID-19 is contained and that you and your family are not affected.



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Personal Finance—Largely due to fears of a coronavirus epidemic, the stock markets registered historic “point” losses on February 24th and 25th with the two-day decline in the Dow totaling 1,910 points, which translates into a loss in value of about \$1,700,000,000,000. The Dow is now down 8.4% from its record high on February 12th. While the fall in stock indices is dramatic, it is too soon to tell how the stock markets will fare in the short or intermediate-run. While writing this late on February 25th, the Dow was up in the futures market, and some stocks were up in after-hours trading.

The yield on the U.S. 10-year Treasury Note, reacting to fears that the COVID-19 virus could seriously disrupt an already sluggish global economy, sank to a record low on February 25th causing Warren Buffet to say that, “It makes no sense to lend money at [1.328%] to the U.S. government, when it is government policy to have 2% per year inflation. The government is telling you we’re going to give you 1.3% and tax you on it, and on the other hand we’re going to

presumably devalue that money at 2% per year. So, these are very unusual conditions." **The Secure Act**, which was signed into law in December 2019, made the most significant changes to the retirement systems in over a decade. The TSP administrators are waiting for additional information from the IRS before assessing the impact on TSP accounts. Here are some of the changes to retirement systems implemented by the Secure Act. Be certain to check the TSP policy on these changes when it is available or seek advice from a financial advisor.

The required minimum distribution (RMD) age has been raised from 70.5 to 72. Individuals born on or before June 30th, 1949 will need to start required minimum distributions at age 70 1/2, while retirees who are born on or after July 1st, 1949 will be required to take RMDs starting at age 72. It should be noted that in practice, the first RMD can be deferred until April 1st of the year following the year you turn age 70 1/2 or 72. Subsequent RMDs must be taken by 12/31 for every year thereafter, and if you choose to defer the first RMD until April, you will need to take another RMD by 12/31.

Also in the works are changes to the IRS's uniform lifetime table, which is expected to be released in 2020 and take effect in 2021. Investors must use this table to figure out the denominator for their RMD calculation each year.

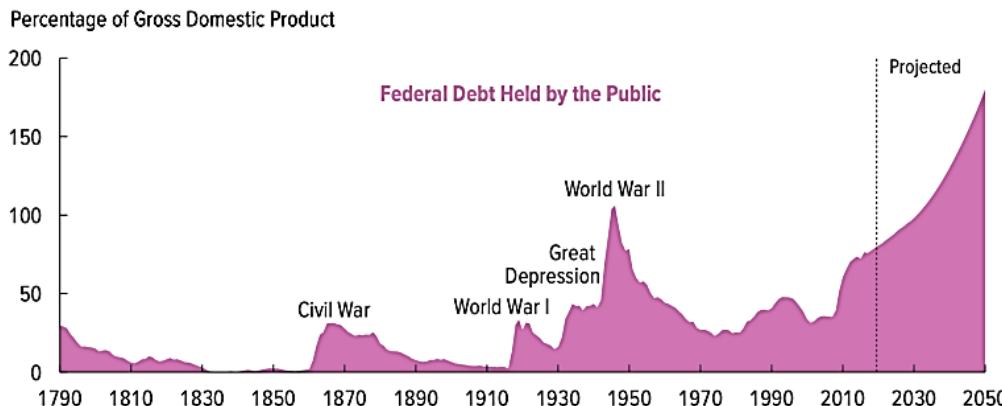
To help fund the other provisions of the Secure Act, the legislation no longer allows beneficiaries who inherit a retirement account from a non-spouse (e.g. parent or relative) to take distributions over their lifetime if the decedent passed away after 2019. Starting in 2020, these inheritances will now need to be depleted in 10 years. This may have tax implications for some beneficiaries, since the annual distributions could be higher.

Currently, individuals over age 70.5 cannot make contributions to a traditional IRA. Starting in 2020, individuals with earned income can make contributions up to the annual limit. This is consistent with active 401(k) participants and Roth IRAs.

New parents can now each withdraw up to \$5,000 from their 401(k), IRA, or other defined contribution plan within a year after they give birth or adopt a child, without incurring the 10% penalty. Taxes on investment gains would be due that year as the distribution would be included in your taxable income. Note that this is not a loan, and while the money can be repaid, it isn't required. However, such withdrawals could have a significant impact on retirement accounts.

National Debt—CBO estimates released in January 2020 indicate that the United States deficit will top \$1 trillion annually over the next 10 years, ultimately reaching \$1.7 trillion in 2030. The ballooning annual deficit is being fueled by increased borrowing by the federal government, which continues to spend more money than it takes in. By 2030, the CBO projected federal debt held by the public will surpass \$31 trillion—about 98 percent of the forecast size of the nation's economy.

Even when the national debt is viewed as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product, the US is projected to enter uncharted territory. If you include intragovernmental debt (i.e., money owned to other Federal entities like Social Security), the total national debt is already more than 100% of Gross Domestic Product.



Perhaps the most important question regarding the national debt is at what level does the debt begin to have adverse impacts on economic well-being?

The most immediate issue facing the Administration and Congress with respect to the national debt is how it will affect future budgets. Increases in mandatory expenditures associated categories like health care programs, as well increasing expenditures on national defense, and interest payments combined with the effects of the tax cuts enacted in 2017, will potentially result in greater pressure on the remaining Federal expenditures, such as conservation funding.

2021 Federal Budget—In early February the President submitted his budget proposal for 2021, and in that budget the Administration's priorities for managing the growing national debt are revealed. The Administration is proposing reductions in SNAP, Medicaid, and other safety net programs to reduce the 2021 budget deficit. As for USDA, the Administration would trim USDA's discretionary budget by more than 8% from current levels—from \$23.8 billion this year to \$21.8 billion in fiscal 2021. The Administration's proposed budget would also cut \$57.7 billion in mandatory agricultural spending by 2030, by lowering crop insurance subsidies, tightening eligibility for farm payments, and cutting conservation programs.

While the Administration's budget proposal holds the Private Lands Conservation Operations program spending steady at \$830 million, it eliminates funding for the Watershed Rehabilitation Program and the Watershed Flood Prevention Operations Program, which were funded at \$10 million and \$175 million, respectively, in 2020. The proposed budget reduction would reduce NRCS staffing from 8,743 staff years to 8,629.

In addition, the President's budget would reduce the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program by \$40 million per year; and it would eliminate the Conservation Stewardship Program, which would, on average, be a reduction of \$760 million per year.

The Fed—While it's too early to tell how the COVID-19 virus will impact the US economy, the probability of a Fed rate cut in March rose to 27.7% from 11.1% a week ago. The probabilities of a Fed rate change are estimated by the investment firm, CME Group, which uses a Fed rate futures market to forecast the probability of a rate change. Fed officials have been reluctant to cut rates further after cutting the Fed rate three times last year, bringing the baseline range to just 1.5% to 1.75%. With rates so close to an effective rate of 0%, economists fear that a minor reduction would do little to handle a global supply shortfall and cost the Fed crucial room to cut rates in the event of a crisis.

2018 Farm Bill –The lengthy rule process continues at NRCS! The good news is that two interim rules are nearing the finish line, and two more are just out of the gate for public comment. On finalization of the last two rule actions, which were the most complex, the process will be complete.

Program Rules Nearing the finish line—The comment period for the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) Interim Rule ended on January 17th, 2020. Over 100 comments were received, and proposed adjustments or responses were identified in a decision matrix that NRCS is reviewing with the NRCS Policy Review Team (PRT).

The comment period for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Interim Rule concluded on February 17th, 2020. Nearly 200 total comments were received prior to the closing date. NRCS is in the process of reviewing comments and preparing the decision matrix for the PRT.

New Program Rules—The interim rule for the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) originally published on January 6th, 2020, was updated on January 24th, 2020 to make minor preamble clarifications and include two additional questions. You can view the rule here: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/01/24/2020-01066/agricultural-conservation-easement-program>. Comments are due by March 20th, 2020 through [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) under Docket ID NRCS-2019-0006. <https://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=NRCS-2019-0006>.

The interim rule for the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) was published in the Federal Register on February 13th, 2020. The 2018 Farm Bill directed the establishment of the RCPP regulation, which previously had operated under an annual Announcement of Program Funding (APF) and the authorities of the covered programs. This new regulation guides the 2018 Farm Bill's significant changes to how the program is funded and operated (e.g., introduces RCPP contracts, changes the funding pool mechanism, streamlines the program, allows project renewals, expands activity eligibility). You can view the rule here: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/02/13/2020-01812/regional-conservation-partnership-program>. Comments are due by April 13th, 2020 through [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) under Docket ID NRCS-2019-0012-0001.

<https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=NRCS-2019-0012-0001>.

NRCS focuses on innovation—On November 26th, 2019, NRCS announced it was awarding more than \$24 million in 16 grants designed to help partners implement and evaluate innovative approaches that have demonstrated conservation benefits on farmland. The funding is provided through a new component of the Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) designated as On-Farm Conservation Innovation Trials (On-Farm Trials), authorized by the 2018 Farm Bill. You can see the list of awards here:

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/programs/financial/cig/?cid=nrcseprd1512816>.

On December 17th, 2019, NRCS announced nearly \$12.5 million in awards to 19 Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) projects to support the development of innovative systems and technologies for private lands conservation. The 2019 funding pool focused on four priority areas: water quantity, urban agriculture, pollinator habitat, and accelerating the pace and scale of conservation adoption. You can see the full suite of projects at:

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/programs/financial/cig/?cid=nrcseprd1518814>.

Reaching out—On December 13th, 2019, NRCS announced investment of \$35 million in grants to enhance outreach to the nation's farmers and ranchers for the delivery and adoption of conservation measures. The announcement identified two categories of project proposals:

- Outreach to Assist Historically Underserved Groups. Projects that increase the delivery of conservation assistance to historically underserved farmers and ranchers through a combination of program outreach and technical assistance in managing natural resources. These projects can receive \$250,000 to \$1 million.
- Collaboration on Strategic Natural Resource Issues. Projects that provide technical assistance to farmers and ranchers for the transfer of technology and development of natural resource tools. These projects can receive \$500,000 to \$2 million.

Proposals were due February 7th, 2020, so the evaluation and selection process is only beginning. The funding source for these awards is Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA). You can view the full grant announcement here:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/search-grants.html?keywords=USDA-NRCS-NHQ-CCG-20-GEN0010619>.

NOTE: You will have to check the "closed" box under "Opportunity Status" in the left-hand column to have the announcement show up. The information will be archived on March 8th, 2020.

On February 26th, 2020, USDA announced that it will invest more than \$41 million this fiscal year through the Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership, a collaboration between the Forest Service (FS) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The agencies are working hand-in-hand with agricultural producers, forest landowners and National Forest System lands on 36 projects to protect communities from wildfires, restore forest ecosystems, and improve drinking water.

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/newsroom/releases/?cid=NRCSEPRD1550831>.

Reaching in – For those of you who can't get enough in the way of details!

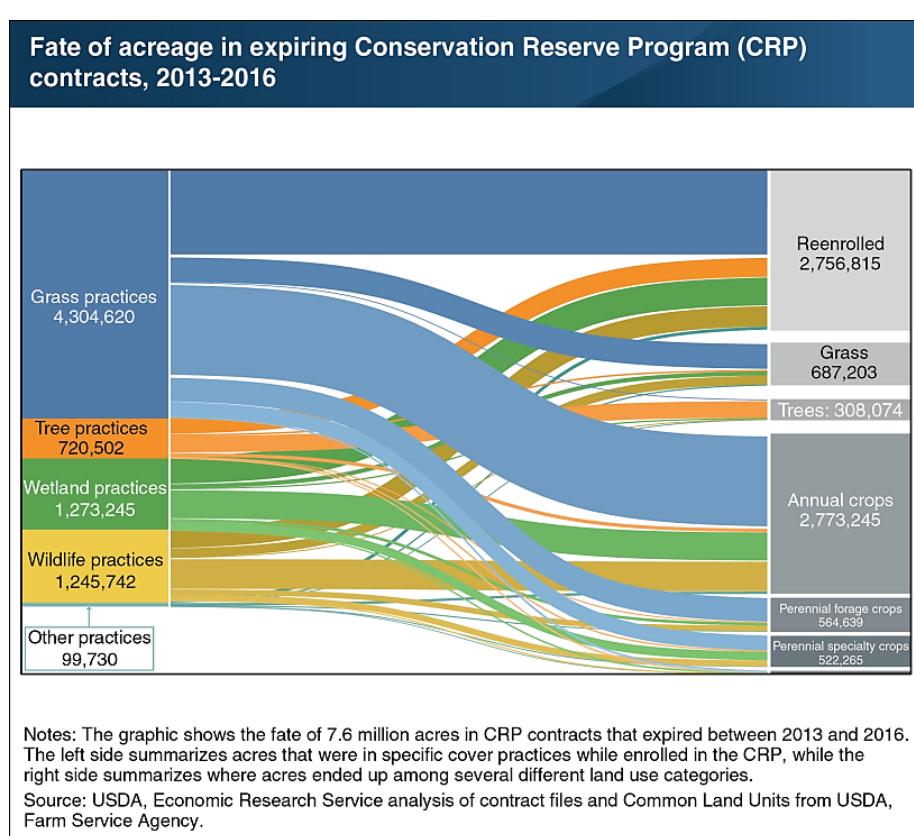
In February 2020, NRCS posted a few program manual updates:

- The Working Lands Conservation Programs Manual (M_440_530: Part 530), which is effective for new enrollments during fiscal year 2020 and forward, and for the administration of all AMA, CSP, and EQIP contracts as noted in the manual. You can check it out here: <https://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/ViewerFS.aspx?hid=44506>.
- The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) Manual (M_440_528: Part 528), which can be viewed here: <https://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/ViewerFS.aspx?hid=36843>.
- NRCS State offices have been asked to start holding Tribal Consultations now and into the spring to identify and discuss Farm Bill topics. It's never too early to get ready for the next farm bill!
- The Urban Ag responsibilities delegated to NRCS are underway. The priority is to set up the Office of Urban Agriculture and the Innovative Production and Advisory Committee.

Signups—The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) 2020 signup concluded on February 28th, 2020. This was the first general signup since 2016. CRP has 22 million acres enrolled, but the 2018 Farm Bill lifted that cap to 27 million acres. <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/news-room/news-releases/2020/usda-reminds-producers-of-feb-28-deadline-for-crp-general-signup>.

On February 24th, 2020, USDA announced the new Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Soil Health and Income Protection Program (SHIP) pilot that is available to producers in Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota. The new pilot program promotes planting of cover crops on agricultural land for three to five years. The signup starts March 30th and ends August 21st, 2020. <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/news-room/news-releases/2020/usda-launches-new-conservation-pilot-program-for-prairie-pothole-producers-to-plant-cover-crops>.

Chart of the Day—Ever wonder what happens to the land in expiring CRP contracts? ERS created the following chart that tells the story



About 7.6 million acres of land were in CRP contracts that expired between 2013 and 2016. Approximately 36 percent of land in expiring contracts (2.76 million acres) were re-enrolled in CRP. Of the 4.89 million acres that left the CRP program, nearly 80 percent was put into some type of crop production—with the remainder going into grass, tree, and other non-agricultural covers. CRP land associated with tree practices was the most likely to be re-enrolled in the program, at a rate of 47 percent, compared with 35 percent of land in grass practices and 29 percent of land in wildlife practices. Of land that was not re-enrolled, 77 percent of land with tree-related practices retained a tree cover, and only 13 percent went to annual crop production. In contrast, 65 percent of land with a wetland practice, and 59 percent of land in a grass practice went to annual crop production. It is worth noting that the period covered in the graphic was a time of very high commodity prices, which might have increased the percentage of CRP land converted to crop production.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Cheryl Simmons

The year 2020 marks the 75th Anniversary of the Soil and Water Conservation Society. ARCSE is excited to work with the SWCS to sponsor a student leader intern project and support student moderators for this summer's annual meeting in Iowa. The SWCS 75th one-time special event on July 27th, 2020 includes the ARCSE lunch, discussion with the SWCS Historian, and joint Student-ARCSE interaction.

Intern tasks include planning a student and early career professional development session to engage the next generation of environmental leaders at the annual conference, assisting ARCSE to connect groups for the 75th Anniversary experience, assisting SWCS staff with conference tasks, and creating a plan for an enhanced partnership between SWCS and ARCSE.

Join us this summer for a day of conservation remembrance and view to future conservation. SWCS@75
<https://vimeo.com/379803987>.

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

National Older Worker Career Center

Tim Forbert sent in a brief summary about the NOWCC and ACES, with much more information at <https://www.nowcc.org>. He is the ACES Recruiter/Program Specialist (email: tforbert@nowcc.org).

NOWCC began operations in 1997 as a national nonprofit organization to promote experienced workers as a valuable and critical component of the nation's workforce. The precursor of NOWCC was a unit inside AARP that had administered the EPA Senior Environmental Employment (SEE) Program for over 15 years. As the result of a strategic restructuring in 1996, AARP decided to conclude its connection with the SEE Program. Because of its commitment to the value of older workers, AARP facilitated the launch of a new non-profit, NOWCC, to continue administering its portion of the SEE Program and to continue to promote experienced worker programs.

Currently, NOWCC administers the Agriculture Conservation Experienced Services (ACES) Program for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) of the USDA and for the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), the Senior Environmental Employment (SEE) Program for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) in partnership with the AARP Foundation for the U.S. Department of Labor, and recently began working with Economic Research Service (ERS) to provide enrollees who are experienced workers 55 years and older to assist with providing the USDA, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and National Park Service (NPS).

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Paul Benedict, Membership Chair

New Members

Mark DeBrock – Reynoldsburg, Ohio
Martin “Marty” Adkins – Knoxville, IA
Thomas W. Christensen – Leesburg, VA

New Lifetime Members

Jane Hardisty – Greenfield, Indiana (was associate member)
Marvin D. Brown – Mt Pleasant, IA

Membership Dues

I would like to thank all the ARCSE members who have paid their 2020 dues and to those who have contributed additional funds to keep ARCSE operating. Paid members will get the 2020 ARCSE Member Directory with the next newsletter. Please make sure your contact information is up to date for the directory. You can email or call me if you have any questions or concerns.

As of February 23, there were 93 ARCSE members who had not renewed their dues for 2020. This will be the last newsletter those members receive if we do not receive their dues before the May/June newsletter is prepared. They will also not get the 2020 ARCSE Directory. A couple of members have emailed me to let me know that they will not be renewing their membership. The rest will soon be getting a post card reminder from me. There are also 26 members who subscribed to the hard copy of the newsletter in 2019 who have not sent in the \$12 fee for that service this year. Those members will not get the

hard copy of the May/June newsletter, even if you are a life member. Life members will still get the email version of the newsletter if we have an email address on file.

The 2020 Membership Dues Notice went out with the Nov/Dec ARCSE Newsletter. If you are receiving a hard copy and have not yet paid your 2020 dues or hard copy fee, here is some clarification on how to decipher the information on your label. **See payment example labels below.**

***** ALL FOR ADC 123
0000123-11223
JOHN Q. PUBLIC, 999, H19
11 GRANITE MOUNTAIN
ANYWHERE, USA 01010-1010

***** ALL FOR ADC 456
0000456-44556
JAMES P. PUBLIC, 19, H19
11 GRANITE MOUNTAIN
ANYWHERE, USA 00101-1010

1. If the first number to the right of your name on your mailing label is "19", "19C", "19S" or lower, your dues are due! Numbers like "20C", "20", or higher indicate that your dues are paid for 2020. Numbers "999" indicate life members, and your dues are paid. 2. If the second number to the right of your name on your mailing label is "H19", an additional payment of \$12 is required to continue receiving a printed copy of the newsletter. If it is "H20" or above, no additional payment is required to continue receiving a printed copy of the newsletter.

ARCSE Complimentary membership. When you have retiree social functions or any other time that you see new retirees from NRCS, be sure to remind them that they are eligible for a one-year complimentary membership in ARCSE, if they have not previously been a member. All that is required is that they submit a membership application. This one-year complimentary membership includes receiving the bimonthly electronic newsletter. Membership applications and the ARCSE brochure may be printed at: <http://www.arcse.org/nFORMS.htm>

ARIZONA

ARCSE Representative

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Rod Alt Report: Sally and I Flew to Luxembourg on June 24th to visit our daughter and son-in-law **Christine** and **Lance Altizer** who work and live in Betrange, Luxembourg. Sally, Christine, and I visited Berlin for three days and two nights. We used the hop-on hop-off bus to tour the city, visiting Check Point Charlie, the Wall, and many other places.

On Sunday, July 1st I had the opportunity to fly in a private airplane over Luxembourg, Germany, Belgium, and France. I was privileged to take the controls for a while on the venture.

On July 8th Sally and I flew to Oslo, Norway. We toured the city on the hop-on hop-off bus and visited the Viking Ship Museum, the National Opera House, the Vigeland Sculpture Park, the Royal Palace, and the Norwegian Parliament.

On July 10th we rode the train to Trondheim where we spent the night. We visited the Kristiansten festning, Gamle Bybro, Nidaros-domen, and Stits Garden. The next day, July 11th we boarded the Hurtigruten cruise ship for Bergen. The voyage commenced along the Trondheim Fjord and past Hitra Island and arrived in Bergen on July 12th.

We spent two nights in Bergen and again toured the city on the hop-on hop-off bus, visiting the St. Johns Church, the Magic Ice shop, and the Bergenshus Fortress. We also took the tram to the top of Floyen Mountain where we had an overlook of Bergen.

On July 14th we rode the train from Bergen to Voss where we rode a bus to Gudvangen and got on a boat to Flam. We spent one night in Flam. We took a ride around Flam and saw the Flam Church that was built in 1667.

On July 15th we took the Flam Railway to Myrdal and then rode the Bergensbanen train to Oslo where we spent the night and then flew back to Luxembourg on July 16th.

On July 17th, Sally, Christine, Lance, and I flew to Dublin from Brussels. Arriving at the airport in Dublin, Sally was surprised that her grandson, **Lance Jr.** and girlfriend **Regina** were waiting for us. Then we all traveled to the Dingle Peninsula in a van where we spent two nights in Dingle. We drove the Ring of Kerry route and visited Kells Bay Gardens, Ring Forts, Ballycarbery Castle, Blasket Island Centre, and Bee Hive Huts. We spent one night in the Butler Arms Hotel in Waterville and also visited the Waterville Golf Club that was the home course for Payne Stewart in Ireland. We spent two nights in Killarney and took in the sights such as the Muckross House and Gardens, Torc Waterfall, Ross Castle, and Molls Gap.

We spent the day of July 22nd in Dublin before flying back to Luxembourg. On July 24th we headed home from Luxembourg through Amsterdam and ended up spending the night there before getting home the next day. Overall it was a wonderful trip.

ARKANSAS

Ralph Mashburn, ARCSE Representative

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Here's a picture from the NRCS and Lonoke Conservation District's Conservation Field Day. L to R: Kevin Cochran, NRCS DC in Lonoke, AR; Tom Fortner, retired DC in Lonoke; Ralph Mashburn, retired SCS and farm-owner doing irrigation conservation work on his farm; and Jim Swaim, Exec. Director Bayou Meto Irrigation District.

CALIFORNIA

Bill Ward, ARCSE Representative

Email: bluegrassbillward@gmail.com

Greetings from California!

A very memorable occasion happened for my good friend and fellow Engineer Retiree **Harold Honeyfield** and his wife **Valma**. On February 15th Harold and Valma celebrated their 50th "Golden" wedding anniversary with family and close friends. Guests included family from Harold's native state of New Mexico, retirees Harold worked with, Valma's friends from her quilting group, and neighborhood and other close friends near and dear to Harold and Valma. What a grand occasion it was for all of us!



Harold and Valma Honeyfield and their 50th Wedding Anniversary Cake!

My band, the Western Lights Trio, along with my good friend and fellow Engineer retiree **Doug Toews**, provided music to help celebrate the occasion for Harold, Valma and all attendees. Doug and his wife **Gwen Gilbert** made the trip up from Santa



L-R, Melvin Fong, Doug Toews, (Retired NRCS), Bill Ward, (Retired NRCS), and Mike Brooks

Barbara specifically to take part in this very special celebration. What a wonderful experience and honor it was for us to share our music to help celebrate such a special occasion! As Doug and I shared together later, opportunities to play music together do not get any better or meaningful than what we had just been able to do for a dear friend.



The Anniversary Celebration Party Going "Full Speed"



Harold and Family Members

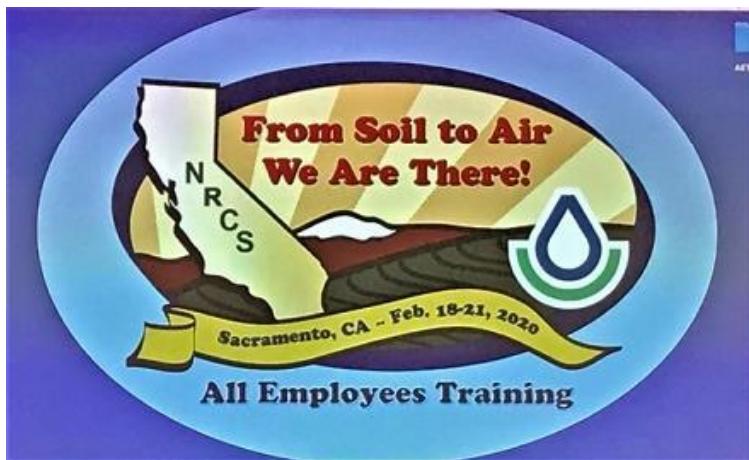


Harold with fellow engineer retiree, friend and Western Lights bass player Doug Toews

I called Harold the next day to see how he and Valma were doing after this grand celebration. He said he walked out of the building like he was walking on "Air," totally elated about all aspects of the event. I believe everybody there probably had a similar feeling.

California NRCS All Employee Training with Special Recognition of our Retirees!

California Retirees had the wonderful opportunity to join Current NRCS staff on the first day of a four-day all-employees' training session in Sacramento which started February 18th. Thirty of our retirees took advantage and had a wonderful time in doing so. Not only did many of us get to reconnect with each other, but many of us got to reconnect with current staff we worked with as well. All of us are grateful to **Carlos Suarez**, our current CA State Conservationist, for extending that invitation to us. Here are a few photos I snapped during my time at the session:



The "Can Do" approach that is the NRCS mantra.



Day 1, State Conservationist Carlos Suarez welcoming everybody!



Carlos Suarez with former CA STC's Ed Burton, Left and Chuck Bell, right



Retirees Peggy Holbrook, Mark Parson, Jim Kocsis, and Anita Brown

I caught up with two of my favorite “NRCS buddies” still working, **Bob Hewitt**, DC and **Bob Dunkle**, Engineering Technician. Both are still at the San Jacinto field office where I last worked with them almost 10 years ago now. We had fun and accomplished a lot working together on the Southern California EWP Tree Mortality Program. This effort reduced extreme wildfire threats by removing vast numbers of dead and dying trees, the result of a multiyear drought and Bark Beetle infestation.

Both these gentlemen were recognized the next day for their length of service to the agency: Bob Hewitt, 44 years; and Bob Dunkle, 42 years! Congratulations Guys!



Two of my favorite buddies, Bob Hewitt DC (left) and Bob Dunkle Engineering tech.



Bill Ward with NRCS Chief Matt Lohr

Day 2 of the all-employee training session was a treat with **Matt Lohr**, the 16th and current Chief of our agency starting the day off with a talk to all CA NRCS staff. Matt was raised on a Century family farm in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley, and he is a 5th generation farmer.

Matt gave a wonderful “inspiration” talk to all of us. This is the kind of man our agency needs as a Chief to lead us. As a bonus, I along with others was able to meet with Matt afterward, thank him for his inspirational talk, share about my career, and get my photo taken with him.

Best Wishes in the New Year from California!

COLORADO

Jack Carlson, ARCSE Representative

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Chuck Hart passed along the news that **Marguerite Ohland**, wife of lifetime member **Paul Ohland**, passed away in January. **Paul**, who retired in the 1990s, was one of the original members of the Field Office Support Staff formed in the mid-1980s, a project manager engaged with the development of the initial national Computer Assisted Management and Planning System (CAMPs) and subsequent Field Office Computing System (FOCS), precursors to the recently retired Customer Service Toolkit and current Conservation Desktop. **Paul** came from Iowa where he was a long-time district conservationist. Before and after retirement **Paul** and **Marguerite** were fixtures at CSU women's basketball games across the court from the team about 8 rows up.

Allen Green announced that he and his wife **Kathy** will host their annual golf scramble on July 24th at a course in Windsor. He noted with mild alarm that it would be the 10th edition (following retirement) of this annual event. **Steve Park's** 4th annual Golfing for a Cure (Pulmonary Aveolar Proteinosis) scramble is scheduled for June 27th in Littleton.

IOWA

Mark Jensen, ARCSE Representative

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Marty Adkins reports that things are good in Knoxville. His son **Drew** is scanning historical photographs at the Knoxville NRCS Field Office. There are some really cool pictures from over the past 70+ years. Marty and Drew are also continuing a project at the Chamber of Commerce and are baking for church shut-in visits. Marty is also teaching a middle school theatre arts camp right now. They have also just cast a production of a 1945-style radio show combined with the stage play "Harvey." It will be performed April 24-26 and should be a lot of fun. Marty, his wife **Carol**, and Drew sure seem to keep busy!

Thanks to **Charlie (Chuck) Kiepe** for the following: "We moved back to the farm in Missouri 10 years ago and also to be closer to the kids and grandkids. Life has been good other than a hitch in my walk and a catch in my back. We enjoy our time at the pond, in the timber, making hay, and serving at a local mission and at our church. Travels have included Hawaii, Israel, Cuba and somewhere in the US every year. I enjoy keeping up on my "old" SCS and NRCS friends. It brings me pleasure to travel the country and see our work on the land everywhere."

Thanks to **Doug Oelmann** for the following: "I retired for the 2nd time Dec 19 after completing my final contract with the NRCS/RC&D at the state office. I began work as a soil scientist in 1969 in Newton and soil mapped several other central Iowa counties before moving to the state office in 1980 as a soil specialist and assistant state soil scientist. I retired Sept 2012 and shortly after began contract work for the soils section. I also completed soil mapping in Wyoming near Fort Bridger and Pinedale for three summers while working at the state office. It has been a rewarding 50 years, and I still have a passion to work with soils. I am going to retire before they call me 'older than dirt.' I would like to thank the NRCS for a great and rewarding career."

The Wednesday morning breakfast group in Des Moines continues to meet at IHOP by the Merle Hay Mall. Folks attending the February 12th get-together included **Don Peterson, Rod Martin, Dale Faulkner, Richard Rogers, Tom Oswald, Roger Link, Dennis Miller, and Mark Jensen**. You're all invited to participate!

During the past few months we have welcomed several folks into our retiree community. Congratulations to the following on their retirement: **Richard Rogers**, Archeologist in the Des Moines State Office; **Darwin Henke**, SCT in Ida Grove; **Dale Schmeiser**, SCT in Mount Pleasant; **Rebecca Scott**, Office Assistant in the Fort Dodge Area Office; **Elmer Foxx**, Administrative Assistant in the Des Moines State Office; and **Peggy Wohlgemuth**, Budget Technician in the Des Moines State Office.

Unfortunately, we've also been saddened by the passing of **Jack Sarasio** and **Jean Sandstrom**. Jack was the husband of **Maralee Sarasio**. She worked in the State Office in personnel before her retirement. Jean was a Design Engineer on the State Office Engineering Staff and was scheduled to retire at the end of December.

KANSAS

Deanne Lull, ARCSE Representative

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It is celebration time in Kansas. After 50 years, the Kansas City Chiefs finally won the Super Bowl. I have been a devoted Chief fan for many, many years and I am certainly enjoying their victory.

Maurice "Mike" Ahern (former Personnel Officer) celebrated his 90th birthday on January 12th, 2020. In 1990, the year **Mike** retired, he was named Personnelist of the Year by the USDA for his outstanding work in personnel management in the State of Kansas.

Jim McDowell (former Soil Scientist) surprised the retired Kansas State Office ladies during their luncheon when he stopped by their table for a short chat. **Jim** received a new heart eight years ago and is looking good and is feeling great; however, he shared that his wife, **Vicki**, has been battling cancer for eight years.

There have been a number of new retirees since the last newsletter. Five retiring on December 31st, 2019, were **Kenneth L. Bowell**, Supervisory District Conservationist from the Abilene office in the Abilene Management Unit; **Gerald W. Gray**, Supervisory District Conservationist from the Iola office in the Iola Management Unit; **Gay L. Spencer**, District Conservationist from the Newton office in the Wichita Management Unit with 32 years of service; **Ronald L. Temaat**, Supervisory District Conservationist from the Dodge City office in the Dodge City Management Unit with 32 years of service; and **Gary L. Wolters**, Soil Conservation Technician from the Smith Center office in the Smith Center Management Unit with 31 years of service.

Five retiring on January 3rd, 2020, were **Steven P. Garber**, Resource Soil Scientist on the Hays Area Office Technical staff and was headquartered in Dodge City with 37 years of service; **Ron R. Klein**, Supervisory District Conservationist in the Great Bend office in the Great Bend Management Unit; **Larry A. Liggett**, Soil Conservation Technician from the Lincoln office in the Lincoln Management Unit; **Apolonio Miranda, Jr.**, District Conservationist from the Concordia office in the Belleville Management Unit with 40 years of service; and **Robert Scott Williams**, Supervisory District Conservationist from the Columbus office in the Columbus Management Unit.

One retiree, **Arthur LeRoy Boyd, Jr.**, passed away on February 14th, 2020. **Arthur** retired in September of 2009 as a Soil Conservation Technician in the Ellsworth Field Office. One spouse has also departed. **Ruth L. Gantz**, spouse of **Almus "Al" Richard Gantz**, passed away on February 6th, 2020. **Al** survives. He retired in 1982 as the District Conservationist in the Marion Field Office.

MAINE

John Simon, ARCSE Representative

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January 2020. On January 14th we had our regular 2nd Tuesday breakfast at Dysarts at 9am. Ten retirees attended: **Art Taylor, Chris Jones, Kyle Bolduc, Karen Champeon, Bruce Champeon, John Simon, Judy Boothby, Charlie Boothby, Roger Ashe, and Brian Stuart.**

It was the first breakfast for both **Brian Stuart** and **Kyle Bolduc** who both retired at the end of 2019. A hearty welcome to you both. Brian is following in the footsteps of **Paul Hersey** by signing up for part-time work with the NRCS state office. Kyle has a long history with the Air National Guard at Bangor. He apparently did some full-time duty with the Air Force during the 911 period.

Chris Jones showed some of us a photo of him dressed up as Santa and holding his adorable granddaughter in his arms. Chris was a decent looking Santa! Chris and **Janet** spent the Christmas season on the West Coast with his family. He said the flights to and from the west coast went well.

John and Art went to the Ag Trade fair in Augusta after the breakfast. At the Augusta trade show we saw **Gary Hedstrom and Mary Thompson**. Mary had her four-year-old granddaughter with her. She took an immediate liking for the big tractors on display, especially the blue ones.

Gary Hedstrom told **Art** and me that **Paul and Terese Hersey** got in a bad car accident which totaled their car. Thankfully, both escaped serious injury. Gary said that Paul was with him at the trade fair, attending sessions for pesticide re-certification. Our thoughts are with both Paul and Terese for a full recovery. It is easy to get another car, not so easy to get another body!

Just got through talking to **Michael Erinakes** the younger son of **Dennis Erinakes**, and he gave me an update on his dad's condition. Dennis had a second stroke several months ago and has been staying with his son **David**. Michael Erinakes said it would be OK for those who know Dennis to send get well cards over at David's house. Dennis probably could not converse on the phone so cards are the way to go. Dennis's cell phone is now inactive.

For those who know Dennis you can send him cards at: **David Erinakes**, 225 Creek Side Drive, Murphy TX 75094. I will keep you all informed as I get more on Dennis's condition.

I am reminded of the stories that **Richard Ferland** used to tell about Dennis Erinakes detonating the left-over dynamite after each week's work! Dick used to love it! Remember those times Richard?

February 2020. In spite of, or because of, the gloomy weather, we had nine pleasant retirees at our breakfast this morning (cabin fever). In attendance were: **Kay and Ray Voyer, Karen and Bruce Champeon, Roger Ashe, Kyle Bolduc, Brian Stuart, John Simon, and Art Taylor.**

Judy and Charlie Boothby were unable to attend, but Charlie wanted to say hello to all and that he and Judy celebrated their 62nd wedding anniversary on Saturday, February 8th. Wow! Congratulations to you both. Charlie said that so far the relationship has worked out well!

In Bangor, ME we are at 4,535 heating degree days out of a total of 7,000 for the winter. Normal for this date is 4,882 HDD's, so we are at 92.9% of the long-term average. (climate change). All of us using heat pumps are keeping comfortable. I believe I heard that the state of Maine rebate on heat pump installation has now been increased up to \$1,000 for the first one and \$500 for the second. What a deal!

On discussing the unknown reliability of heat pumps, **Art Taylor** indicated that one of his heat pumps sprung a leak in the radiator portion of the outside unit and needed replacement. **Roger** has had a heat pump system for quite a while as has **Ray Voyer**. I have had no trouble with my two units, other than the gurgling of the outside unit when it defrosts. I find the defrosting

occurs much more often during humid rain or snow events that occur with the temperature between 25 and 35 degrees. The defrosting occurs much less in very cold dry air.

Brian indicated that NRCS is having difficulty holding onto employees. **Chuck Penny**, the D.C. for Penobscot County, said the same thing at our last Penobscot County S&W Conservation district meeting. Chuck indicated that the paperwork for a cooperators file is now so extensive that new employees spend most of their time filling out forms! Something that they did not expect to do as professionals, so they move on to new jobs.

Roger, Kyle, and I discussed the pros and cons of buying cars rather than leasing them. Roger indicated that if you do lease, put as little down as you can as a down payment. Kyle and I were basically of the "buy them and keep them forever" type. Both my car and truck are 18 years old and are in good shape and will probably outlast me. I have had both cars undercoated every year for quite a few years now and consider it money well spent. The salt they use up here is hard on car bodies and parts!

Lots of other conversations were going on around the table, too numerous to mention, but it was obvious all were interested and enjoying themselves.

Up here we Mainers will enjoy the upcoming high school and college basketball tournaments in February. High School basketball up here in Maine is a lot like High School football in Texas. The high school tournaments are more fun to watch than the college, for me anyway. It is a nice winter activity for families all over the small towns of Maine to come to the big cities and enjoy the games and travel.

God bless and keep warm, John Simon for Maine

MISSOURI

Dave Rastorfer, ARCSE Representative

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The Colombia area retirees met for the quarterly breakfast on Wednesday, February 12th. Those in attendance were: **John and Carol McCarthy, Gail Sallee, John Turner, Bob and Rosemary Herschbach, Odie Swanegan, Frank Miller, Jerry Edwards, Dennis Hoffman, Jean Herman, and Richard and Marjorie Koenig**. The next quarterly breakfast is planned for Wednesday May 13th. It is open to any SCS/NRCS retiree.

Paula Price: Super Bowl 54! My son, Andrew and I were there in Miami for all of the festivities and game. It was quite a nice Mom and Son weekend. Of course, we were there to support the Kansas City Chiefs from the great State of Missouri. Memories made that will never be duplicated.

Dennis Shirk: Hello folks. The spring bulb flowers are beginning to show themselves. Our health is doing pretty well, still blessed to have my parents. Mom is 90 and Dad is 93 (with Alzheimer's). We lost a very special friend from Mexico recently. I only have my horse as a grazing animal. Looking forward to spring and riding season. See ya down the trail.

We have received word that **Hugh Curry** has suffered a stroke while wintering in Phoenix. He is somewhat limited on his left side but is in rehab. He and **Sharon** intend to return to Kansas City in the next few weeks for continued recovery before returning home to Columbia. We all wish Hugh a speedy recovery.



Jim Rickman in Morocco.

Jim Rickman: Still traveling a lot. Just back from Morocco the last week of January. We spent a lot of time in the Sahara Desert, but this pic is with the Atlas Mountains in the background and out of the desert. Hoping to visit 100 countries by October. Think about all the great folks in Missouri a lot, with fond memories. Hope everyone is doing fine.

Bill Pauls: Hello fellow retirees. It's hard to believe--12 years since my retirement. I remember mid-career, 1986 we moved to Columbia, and retirement seemed a long way off. Time really flies by. **Kris** and I are going on 49 years married this year. 1971 was a big year: graduated college, got married, got a job with SCS. Great career, different times! Raised two great kids, now have four of the greatest grandkids ever (also a couple of great in-law kids. Life is good, we're blessed, we know it and look forward to more fun and interesting times, God willin'. Well, all of that to say, we're staying busy here at the Lake of the Ozarks. Been here over three years since moving from Columbia. Love all the lake "stuff," something happening all the time. We're busy volunteering on multiple things. Still runnin'. I have my first trail ultra-marathon this weekend (Feb. 23rd in Tulsa area). A couple more scheduled for KC and Denver. Also love going over to STL to visit the kids and watch the Grandkids and their activities. Loved the Super Bowl this year, big party, GO CHIEFS! As always if you're in the "hood" of the "LAKE," stop in and see us. We get up to Columbia every once in a while, may stop in and surprise some of the ol' gang up that way. May head up to North MO and visit the old stomping grounds around Kirksville and Bethany. Everyone, enjoy the rest of the little bit (we hope) of winter left and looking forward to spring 2020.

Al Wolfe: The news I have is that **Cheryl** and I, who are both native Nebraskans, are in the process of moving to Omaha, Nebraska. Our daughter and grandson live there, plus I have other family nearby in Lincoln. I would say that we are going "home" but not sure that is totally correct since we have been here in Columbia 30 years. Also, we grew up in a very rural area of Nebraska, totally unlike Omaha, A part of the state where cattle far outnumber people, country schools were common--I am a proud 8th grade graduate of District 17--and some classmates "commuted" to school on horses. Graduated from a high school class of 23. (I've always bragged to the unsuspecting that I finished in the top 20 students) A part of the state where those my age remember when the town got its first traffic light! We were big time then! We are downsizing and getting a town home where I no longer need to mow, shovel snow, paint and more. Life is going to be easy. I truly will miss Columbia and NRCS. In some ways a move is good, but moving away from friends is a really tough part of that. I wish everyone the best. If you come to Omaha, come see us!

Al Taylor: I am fine and getting ready for my Arizona spring trip when the desert blooms. This year my triplet grandchildren will be with me. They are 14 now. We plan to take three days from Texas to give about half our time site-seeing. When we get to Avondale, **Gail** (daughter) will give us some tours. A lot of West Texas cotton crop was a disaster. It went through a hot, dry summer and ended with an early freeze. The quality was so bad and low yields made it wise to take the insurance and not harvest.

Mike Blaine: I trust everyone made it through the holidays and the nasty weather following! We have had the coldest winter in Baring in a long time. I think I mentioned the old adage about the date of the first snow in October being the number of snows during the winter. The first snow here was October 29. So far, counting flurries and traces, we have had 19 snows here. Not too much exciting happening on Blaine Hill. I had some more surgery in January and am having a slow bounce back. But I am on the upswing now. Every day is a little better. Winter better stop pretty soon. My wood pile is getting pretty small. I hope it makes it at least through March. I have nothing to complain about though. God is, and has been, very good to the Blaines. Have a great Spring!

Recent Retiree: **J.R. Flores**, State Conservationist.

MONTANA

Dick Gooby, ARCSE Representative

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Montana Big Sky Report



Bob O'Driscoll, Gordon Decker, and Gordon Watson

Gordon Decker report: February 15, 2020 was my 80th Birthday and was celebrated with family, neighbors, SCS/NRCS retirees, Montana State University retirees, and friends. There was a good mix of people. **Kathy** and I were the only ones that knew everyone, so there were lots of interactions. Got a good picture of three NRCS employees who retired the same day in December of 1994. They took advantage of the 1994 agency buy-out. I am standing but hanging on to my walker along with Bob and Gordon.

Other activities include time with family: celebrating our first Great Granddaughter in Las Vegas over Thanksgiving, going to sports events with grandkids, grandkid weddings, and watching the growth of a Great Grandson whose parents live with us while our Grandson is finishing college at Montana State University.

The next event is spending a week with family in Scottsdale, AZ in March watching the San Francisco Giants in spring training.

Gooby Ranch Report: A while back I drove **Mary Ann** up in the hills so she could saw up a load of firewood. On the way up, not too far off the road, we saw two grizzly bears eating a fresh killed cow. I had Mary Ann chase the bears off while I looked at the cow, so I could see its brand, and then I could let the rancher know the bears got his cow. The cow was only a couple of years old. Mary Ann had her hands full keeping the bears away while I was looking at the cow. She had to be larger than the grizzlies, so she was doing back flips, cart wheels, and dunking basketballs.

After I found the brand, I saw that they hadn't eaten the loins yet. I borrowed Mary Ann's knife and cut them out. Thanks to the grizzlies, we've been eating steaks and roasts for over two months. Also, thanks to Mary Ann for her good work keeping the bears occupied and away from the cow and me.

Mary Ann said one of the bears had a collar on it. This summer when we go riding in the mountains looking for feral cows, I will call fish and game to get the location of the collared bear and we will look for cows in that area. Maybe they will get us some more beef to eat. Mary Ann would really like that, since beef is easier to cook than ground squirrels--and tastes better.

We live a mile off the county road, so Mary Ann has to walk down each day to get the mail. Since we do not live on a paper route, the paper comes with the mail. I always read the paper at 4 o'clock, so I am ready for supper. Also, I like to have the paper read so I can discuss the comic strips and other key news items during supper. Then after supper I can get to watching the exciting Hallmark movies.

A few weeks ago, it was snowing and blowing like crazy, and we were totally drifted in; but Mary Ann knew how bad I needed the paper by 4, so she decided to walk down to get the mail. She took off at 1 o'clock, but at 3 she wasn't back. It usually takes her about 20 minutes to walk down to get the mail. At 4 o'clock she still wasn't back. Something had to be wrong. As cold and blowing as it was, she could freeze to death. I decided I better take the tractor and go look for her. I drove all the way to the mail box, but Mary Ann was nowhere to be found. Since I didn't know if Mary Ann had gotten the mail, I got out to check the mailbox. When I opened the mail box I was totally shocked. There was Mary Ann. She had crawled into the mail box to get out of the wind.

Since the road was so bad, the mailman hadn't come; but if he had he would have left her in the mail box anyway since she didn't have a stamp.

NEBRASKA

Norm Kempf, Jim Culver, ARCSE Representatives

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The January meeting was called to order by Chairperson **Jim Culver**. There were 17 members present (and one guest, **Susan Reinsch**): **Jim Culver, Paul Bartlett, Gary Muckel, Joe Calder, Jim Carr, Dave Camper, Gus Dornbusch, Harold Klaege, Bob Engel, Louie Buller, Steve Scheinost, Norm Helzer, Thomas Reinsch, Norm Kempf, Chris Chapman, JoAnne Thiele, and Donna Dornbusch**.

The February meeting was called to order by Chairperson Jim Culver. There were 17 members present and one guest (**Craig Derickson**): **Norm Helzer, Louie Buller, Steve Scheinost, David Camper, Joe Calder, Gus Dornbusch, Clinton Johnson, Norman Kempf, Paul Bartlett, Jim Culver, Chris Chapman, JoAnne Thiele, Gary Muckel, Harold Klaege, Thomas Reinsch, and Donna Dornbusch**.

Norm Kempf announced the 75th anniversary of the SWCS which will be celebrated at the national meeting in July in Des Moines, IA. ARCSE will be a sponsor of special youth activities that will be a part of the 75th anniversary celebration. This will include activities scheduled at the SWCS headquarters in Ankeny, IA.

Jim Culver attended the NARFE meeting on February 15th. **Harold Klaege** is the current president and gave a brief presentation on the local chapter. The next meeting is March 21st at 10am, with a program on fire safety at home given by the Lincoln fire department. Harold also gave a short presentation on NARFE at the local and national level.

Gary Muckel will be traveling to Nevada to attend his brother-in-law's funeral. He will also see his brother and daughter while there. **Lori Dreezen** retired in December after having worked for over 30 years for NRCS.

Harold Klaege has been diagnosed with low hemoglobin and is currently taking medication for it. **Joe Calder** announced that **Jim Carr** is scheduled for open heart surgery.

Dave Camper went skiing in Colorado with the Cornhusker Ski Club. He also went to Wisconsin for a short visit and a funeral. **Norm Helzer** and wife will be going to Disney with his daughter and family. They will also be going to see the Sandhill cranes in March. **Norman Kempf** is also planning a trip to see the cranes in March. Norm recently traveled to Elmwood, NE and saw 28 deer and 7 coyotes in a couple of hours.



Left side: Craig Derickson, Nebraska State Conservationist, Lou Boller, Steve Schienost. Right side: Chris Chapman, Jim Culver, Paul Bartlett and Norm Kempf, standing and reviewing current activities of the Association of Retired Conservation Service Employees.



At end standing, Harold Klaege, President of the Capitol City Chapter 199 of the National Association of Retired Federal Employee (NARFE) discussing current chapter activities and an upcoming State Meeting on May 14-15, 2020.

Jim Culver has reviewed the records of our group. In going through them, he saw that our retiree group will be celebrating its 50th anniversary on April 1st, 2021. He then asked if anyone was interested in serving as a historian and going over the records. This will be discussed at our next meeting.

Louie Boller provided a handout to everyone on OPM information about a family handling death benefits of a Federal retiree. The annual chili cook-off for the employees association will be held at the Federal Building on February 27th.

The next meeting will be March 18. The minutes were recorded by **Donna Dornbusch**, Sec.

Harold Klaege currently is president of the Nebraska chapter of AARP which meets every third Thursday of the month at First Lutheran Church at 1550 S. 70th Street. AARP has given over \$1 million dollars to the Alzheimer's association for research. Through this organization, Harold volunteers in preparing taxes for free to those who need the help. That work is done at the city public libraries and other locations. Harold also gave an update on tax issues that probably will affect those retiring under FERS.



Right side of photo – Craig Derickson, Nebraska State Conservationist visiting with Gus Dornbusch about some of the new NRCS agency programs



Craig Derickson, Nebraska State Conservationist bring us up to date on current NRCS activities and programs.

Craig Derickson, State Conservationist, gave an update on some of the changes within the agency. The new Chief of NRCS is **Matt Lohr**, and the Associate Chief is **Kevin Norton**, a long-time employee of the agency. All administrative functions for each state are now administered by centralized business centers within the Department. Software for planning within the agency is being updated and employee training has begun. And the agency has begun implementing some of the 2018 farm bill provisions. A question-and-answer session followed.

Jim Culver spoke with **Craig Derickson**, State Conservationist for Nebraska. Craig has said he would join us from time to time to keep us up to date on current events and activities in NRCS. **Norm Kempf** provided some information on the ARCSE, Association of Retired Conservation Service Employees, newsletter which comes out bimonthly. **Gus Dornbusch** thanked him and Jim Culver for providing the information and pictures to be published and thought it enhanced our Nebraska activities.

NORTH CAROLINA

Jim Canterbury, ARCSE Representative

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Twelve retirees and spouses from the Raleigh area met at the Raleigh Farmers Market Restaurant for breakfast on January 15th. Attending the breakfast were **Jim Canterbury, Tommy Cutts, Albert Coffee, Frank Evans, Dick Gallo, Coy Garrett, John Garrett, Mildred Garrett, Hubert Hawkins, Ed Helmey, John Kelly, and Cecil Settle**. Photo by **Hubert Hawkins**.



North Carolina Retirees' Breakfast

Editor's Note: The following was reported incorrectly in the previous edition under the Oklahoma section. "On Wednesday, **Billy Jones**, retired Area Engineer in Goldsboro, had his other leg amputated due to an infection in his foot. According to Val, his wife, **Billy will be going to rehab, once the doctors take care of some other complications. I'm sure Billy would appreciate your prayers and a note of encouragement. Billy's address is 198 Hoyle Jones Road, Hertford, NC 27944-8062. His email address is [bjjones57@gmail.com](mailto:bvjones57@gmail.com).**"

OKLAHOMA

Randy Freeland, ARCSE Representative

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Today's special, "Armadillo on a stick."

Editor's Note: the following was reported for the Jan/Feb edition. Plenty cold in Oklahoma this time of year. Our next meeting is scheduled for **Friday, April 24th, 2020**, at the Golden Corral Restaurant on MacArthur Boulevard in Oklahoma City. The Golden Corral opens at 10am, so there is extra time for visiting before the meeting starts at 11:30am.

Our What-A-Burger group that meets every Friday had a big laugh in December. Retiree **Darrel Dominick** presented the group his latest find at the local thrift stores. Many a story has been told by the group about our armadillo hunting exploits. **Darrel** said he didn't care if was \$2, he was buying it anyway. As our mentor, **Roland Willis**, says, "We aren't cheap, we are just frugal."

OREGON

Don Stettler, ARCSE Representative

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January 2020 in the Portland area had only one day without rain. Despite that, or because of it, 22 came to the winter quarter Oregon retiree lunch at the Peppermill in Aloha. By the noise level, it could be assumed we had a good time. Attending were **Don Wallin**, **Eldena VanderZanden**, **Lowell** and **Marian Kenedy**, **Dick** and **Kathy Sylvester**, **Gary Formanek**, **Beth Zetter**, **Lamont** and **Karen Robbins**, **Ralph Wadleigh**, **Bobbie Hart**, **Gail Voge**, **Jeff Repp**, **Joe Sahlfeld**, **Sue Brandt**, **Kay Denfeld**, **Terry Mitchell**, **René Walls**, **Tom Fujii**, **Stefanie Aschmann**, and yours truly, **Don Stettler**.

Tom George sent me his regret telling me that he and **Jeanne** would be in Hawaii. I hope they found some strawberry papayas.

Eldena VanderZanden told us she had been her usual busy self. Her family celebrated her son's birthday with several days at Astoria on the Oregon Coast. She is making plans to take the Flower Power Cruise in March and to attend the Kentucky Derby in early May. **Joe Sahlfeld** took in Three Dog Night at the Chinook Winds in Lincoln City. He also has plans to visit Bora Bora. **Don Wallin** went elk hunting. The hunting was good, but the finding wasn't. However, he did find an elk burger at a McMenamins Pub & Brewery.

Lamont and Karen Robbins are getting closer to being moved into their new home. The current effort is to make it possible to park their car in the garage. **Karen**, along with her thirteen-year-old granddaughter, made a trip to Kenya in August. To preserve the memory, Karen is putting together a photo album. **Lowell Kenedy** recovered from his fall off a root but tripped and injured his middle finger while volunteering at the Clark County Genealogy Center. **Marian** and **Lowell** enjoyed Christmas with their daughter.



L to R: Tom Fujii, Don Wallin, Lamont and Karen Robbins, Marian and Lowell Kenedy, Jeff Repp (mostly hidden), Stefanie Aschmann, and René Walls.



L to R: Dick and Kathy Sylvester, Terry Mitchell, Gail Voge, Kay Denfeld, Bobbie Hart, and Ralph Wadleigh.

Stefanie Aschmann took a trip to Hawaii for a reunion with her soccer team. Lately she has taken up walking soccer. **René Walls** took a trip to White Fish, MT to attend a family wedding. Other than that, he is staying close to home. **Jeff Repp** has been mainly staying close to home. He did, however, have a job in Nevada, and he and **Maureen** took a trip to Florida. **Beth and Butch Zetter** are keeping busy on their acreage. **Dick and Kathy Sylvester** recently celebrated Kathy's birthday with a trip to the beach.

Terry Mitchell took a trip to Georgia to see her brother and has been involved with an exercise group. **Gail Voge** recently took a trip to Las Vegas for a family get-together. While there, she took in a David Copperfield magic show. **Kay Denfeld** attended her high school reunion in August. **Bobbie Hart** enjoyed a family Christmas and her frequent trips to the beach. **Ralph Wadleigh** enjoyed Christmas and his birthday with his family. **Gary Formanek** has been bowling.

The spring quarter lunch will be on April 22nd at The Clackamas Old Spaghetti Factory.

PENNSYLVANIA

Bill Bowers, Tim Murhpy; ARCSE Representatives

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A big welcome to recent NRCS retirees: **Tim Elder**, 17 years, Agronomist/Grazing specialist NW; **Mary Smith**, 20 years, DC Mifflin County; **Tom Lemont**, 31 years, Soil Conservationist, Erie County; **Noel Soto**, 31 years, Resource Conservationist, State Office; **Mark Ely**, 36 years, Soil Conservationist, Franklin/Fulton Counties; **Mark Groshek**, 36 years, Civil Engineering Technician, Bloomsburg TO; **Dave Coulter**, 39 years, DC Indiana County; **Don Murray**, 40 years, Engineer, SO/Bloomsburg TO. Your 250 years of service to the conservation movement in Pennsylvania is remarkable and much appreciated! Thank you and CONGRATULATIONS! I hope to see you at our annual meeting this year!

Speaking of our annual PA retirees' event, we will gather September 20th and 21st, 2020 in State College, PA. That is the location of our land grant institution, Penn State University. Details will follow, but here are a few things to get you excited. Sunday evening we will meet at the Tailgate Sports Bar (formerly Damon's). They have great food and lots of PSU sports items. Monday morning (21st) we will meet at Hoss's on North Atherton for bagels, coffee, tea, and conversation, be inspired by a dynamic speaker, hold our annual business meeting including the SCS Belt buckle raffle, and hear the NRCS report. In the afternoon we will tour the Penn State Department of Meteorology and Atmospheric Science, including the Weather World studio, the weather observatory, led by **Bill Syrett**, teaching professor and Manager of the Joel N. Myers Weather Center. The theme of the tour is "The ingredients of a weather forecast."

<http://www.met.psu.edu/facilities/teaching-facilities/joel-myers-weather-center-1>.

Of course, no visit to Penn State would be complete without a stop at the Berkey Creamery for a dish, cone, or milkshake of your favorite creamery ice-cream.

<https://creamery.psu.edu/our-story>.

Put **September 20th and 21st** on your calendar as SCS/NRCS PA Retiree's days and plan to be in State College to renew friendships and share your retirement activities.

Be sure to read the **Senior Conservationist Chronicle** article later in this newsletter. Our own **Fred Bubb** was honored to have his story told in the ARCSE national newsletter, Jan-Feb 2020 edition. Congratulations, **Fred**, for the honor and for your SCS/NRCS career and your mission serving activities beyond your government career. We are proud of you!

Tim Cral reports: "I haven't really added much to the Bugle, because I haven't really retired. I sort of changed jobs. Now I am consulting with landscape architects for designing planting soils for urban parks under Cral Land Scientists. A lot of my work is in NYC and Philadelphia. I get to work on some really cool projects like Dilworth Plaza in front of Philly City Hall, new landscapes at UPenn, Princeton, NYU, University of Chicago and a few others. I also get to drive into Brooklyn, which is fine going in, but terrible coming back out. So I am still trying to bring soils to the masses, just in an urban setting. Stop on by Cral Land Scientists Facebook page and give it a like."



Rosie and Father Brommer at St. Peter's Basilica

Rosie Updegraff writes: "In October, I went on a pilgrimage to Italy with our parish priest who led a group of 38. We started in Assisi visiting the Basilicas of St. Francis and St. Clare. Traveling through the countryside in Tuscany was beautiful. We visited Siena and Florence where we saw Michelangelo's famous statue of David. We traveled to Orvieto and fell in love with the town after taking a funicular up to the top. The art and buildings in Florence and Rome are beyond description and pictures don't do it justice. **Dale** and I visited Florence and Rome twice, but I had never been to the other places. In Rome, we were blessed by Pope Francis. We toured the Colosseum and the San Calisto Catacombs which was fascinating. We got our exercise walking for many hours every day. All the churches were magnificent, and **Father Brommer** said Mass in every place we visited. It was a wonderful experience that I will never forget.

Closer to home, my daughter **Tracy** and I enjoyed New York City at Christmas. The highlight was seeing **Andrea Bocelli** in concert at Madison Square Garden. He is sensational and always sells out the Garden."

Barry Kintzer shared, shortly after the last PA Bugle: "I count my blessings every day that I have so far not been subject to any serious health issues—lots of old age aches and pains though. I had two reminders of our mortality last week—**Bill Hughey** on the 13th and a high school classmate on the 18th, both almost exactly my age—sobering for sure. Earlier in the week, I visited with another high school classmate on our way back to Virginia from Connecticut where my wife and I had been to visit one of our daughters and her family. The phrase, 'The last time I saw ___' (fill in the blank) came up in our conversation a number of times."

Along those lines, **Tim Murphy** was pleasantly surprised by a recent phone call from **John Heyler**, who was an Engineer who left SCS back in the 1980s. John still operates the family dairy farm and maple syrup operation in Tioga County. John and family are doing well and wish everyone well!

Last month I attended the retirement celebration for **Don Murray and Mark Groshek**. The event was well attended, with an impressive number of fellow retirees, many of whom I had not seen for several years. It is a pleasure to connect with people from our past. Hopefully the PA Bugle is an instrument to help make that happen!

Fred Bubb writes: "One of the signs of old age is walking with a cane. Here is how I earned mine. I was evaluated and as we say, very "doplick." I was sent for physical therapy. Shortly after starting, on my way home from therapy, I fell and broke a rib—first fall in years. Oh, yes, I am still in therapy, and the rib healed quickly."

John Akers says: "Ann and I made two bus trips in December. The first was to the Dutch Apple Dinner Theater near Lancaster. It was a great meal and a play about an inn called the Holiday Inn. The second trip was to New York City to see the Rockettes' Christmas Program at Radio City Music Hall. It was a beautiful music program and even had the birth of Christ scene in the production. We also got to visit with our son **Mike**, who lives in New York City and designs women's clothing."



Wayne Bogovich sent a note: "So I'm sitting in my Delaware vacation home getting ready to put up the Christmas tree and watching the local news when I hear a familiar voice on the TV talking about his concerns with a developer's plans for storm water management, or lack thereof, at his proposed apartment complex. It was **Ed Brzostek**! He's still looking out for people who are not following the rules when it comes to doing E&S properly. Looks like Ed is still quite engaged in things."

Less than three hours later, I got a message from **Ed Brzostek**: "I contested the feasibility of a planned underground storm water management facility in an area that has a seasonal high water table within six inches of the ground surface. Offsite drainage was also poor. I was able to access the soil survey and soils limitations on line thanks to modern technology now in place at NRCS. Many other residents contested other features. The development plan was soundly defeated, and the project is now being redesigned to properly address the soils and site limitations."



Bill and MaryAnn Bowers with Their Family

Bill and Mary Ann Bowers celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in November. The whole family gathered with friends at the social hall of our church to tell stories, look at pictures and fellowship together.

Bill has his vegetable seed order in and awaiting spring weather. The vegetable garden is totally “no till” (**Joel Myers and Rich Shockey**, did you hear that?). He had cover crops this year of tillage radishes and hemp. No harvesting, just cover crops! Bill continues to be active in Master Gardener events and church activities.

Gary Smith reported that the PA retiree group has provided college scholarship funds for several years. Prior to 2014, we donated our funds to the Keystone Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society scholarship fund. The Keystone Chapter advertises and selects one or two \$500 scholarship recipients who are PA college students studying engineering, agronomy or environmental science.

In 2014, our annual meeting was held at the McKeever Environmental Education Center in Mercer County, run by Slippery Rock University and named for our former State Conservationist. That year we donated \$600 toward their environmental education programs.

In 2015 we visited the beautiful Grey Towers National Historic Site, which was the summer home of **Gifford Pinchot** and former Yale School of Forestry's summer school, located in Milford, PA. We contributed \$400 to that organization, which offers an annual scholarship to a PA forestry student.

Since then, we have made annual contributions of between \$400 and \$500 to the SWCS Keystone Chapter scholarship fund. The 2020 scholarship will also be handled by the Keystone Chapter and money donated for this purpose has been set aside in our treasury. The SWCS Keystone Chapter scholarship committee has for many years been chaired by our own **Mary Smith**, who has recently retired from her Mifflin County DC position.

Where do we get our scholarship dollars? Five dollars from each summer meeting registration goes to the scholarship fund, and many of the attendees contribute additional dollars with their registration. **We appreciate that some folks contribute extra funds with their registration.**

In recent years, we have been raffling an SCS belt buckle anonymously donated to our organization. The winner keeps the belt buckle for one year, then returns it the following annual meeting to be raffled once again. All raffle proceeds go to the scholarship fund.

Our scholarships to PA college students from 2014 through 2020 have amounted to an impressive \$2,550 generously donated by many of you.

Shortly after the last issue of The PA Bugle, I received an email from the daughter of **Larry Staley**, letting me know that Larry was recently deceased. I did not have the pleasure of knowing Larry, but **Fred Bubb** was able to help me out: “I trained Larry as a soil scientist in Centre County. Larry loved doing soil surveys. This was back in 1957-58, at a time when I had a dislike for soil survey, finding it ‘boring.’ I could not believe this guy who thoroughly loved mapping soils. I left Centre County to become Work Unit Conservationist in Union County. Larry continued in Centre County. We kept in touch for many years. I know he worked in other states, but I am not sure of his exact career path.”

Frederick (Fred) E. Bubb was featured as a Senior Conservationist in the Jan-Feb 2020 issue of the newsletter. Sadly, Fred's wife of 62 years, **Carol Eakin Bubb**, passed away November 18th, 2018. Fred and Carol have three children, three grandchildren and one great-grandchild. Both Fred and Carol were and continue to be involved in the life and witness of their church.

Carl DuPolt sent in links to "High Bionutrient Crop Production" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=im42xjLEk3A>).

TENNESSEE

Allen Crowe, ARCSE Representative

Email: atctn60@hotmail.com

This report is from Dana York (dyork818@yahoo.com). The retirees met at Shoney's in Lebanon, TN with 21 members present: **Debbie Brasfield, Kevin Brown, Jack and Anna Chidester, Allen Crowe, Ray Curl, Kathy Daughtery, Jeanne Eastham, Terry Gupton, Gary Handley, Larry and Connie Hasty, Traci Horne, Patty Lane, Jim Lansford, Bobby Moore, Will Nesby, Vic Simpson, Ray and Sue Sims and James Sims.**



Tennessee retirees' gathering

Those not present but reported on were as follow. **Billy Headden** had planned to attend but cancelled because of the flu. **Shelia Caridine** was not able to come due to recently having a partial hip replacement. **Faye Floyd** was working with ACES and getting out program payments due before the end of the year. **Ardelle Langdon** was getting ready to travel to Minnesota to spend the Christmas Holidays. **Richard Bryan** was busy around his farm and said he hoped to see everyone at the June meeting. **Donald Dotson** could not make it, and he related that he lost his brother recently. It was noted that **Charles Roberts** also lost his brother recently. **Jeff Bowie**, DC at Columbia, is working one day a week now.



Tennessee retirees' gathering

Debbie Brasfield continues to work with ACES and spends as much time as she can with her two granddaughters. **Kevin Brown** is a grandfather again and just got the first boy. He continues volunteering with several organizations and did some traveling to visit his children. **Anna and Jack Chidester** are enjoying improved health and were traveling east after the meeting today. **Allen Crowe** has a grandson who is a civil engineering student at Tennessee Tech and is making better grades than Allen did. His grandson plays rugby, and his team placed 3rd in the SEC conference teams. **Ray Curl** visited his daughter for Thanksgiving and expected to visit again over the coming holidays.

Kathy Daughtery has her mother living with her, and her daughter recently was married. **Terry** performed the ceremony. Kathy began collecting wedding dresses to make "Angel Gowns" for infants. When this became known, she got more dresses than needed. In addition, she now has other wedding accessories. She has over 50 dresses and many other items which may be borrowed, used, cleaned and returned for no cost. She wants everyone to know that they can call her for an appointment at 423-605-7241 or contact her through www.facebook.com/twiceblessed4u.

Jeanne Eastham is helping with TACD and recently ran into **Tim Powers**, former NRCS employee. She spends a lot of time with her family, children, and grandchildren. **Terry Gupton** reported that everything is the same with him raising cattle and enjoying good health. **Gary Handley** is still driving a school bus and now has two old cars that he is rebuilding.

Larry and Connie Hasty recently visited the Home of **Earl Hammer** (The Waltons) in Virginia. Larry is heavily involved with TACD, Area 5 Director, and with the Farm Bureau. He noted that Bedford County is the No. 1 agricultural county in TN primarily due to the walking horse industry. They have three great-grandchildren.

Traci Horne retired August 15th last year and spent a week at the beach with **Terry** and then two weeks with her parents in Tampa, FL. This was Traci's first retirees' meeting. **Patty Lane** is still volunteering at school, and her sister recently had heart surgery.

Jim Lansford is still living in Cookeville independently but is still unable to drive due to his vision. He thanked everyone for all the kindnesses shown over the past year, with a special thanks to **Kathy Daughtry**.

Bobby Moore reported that **Brenda** had a hip replacement and is up and going. He is still working part time at H&H surveying in Smyrna where his grandson is also working. He is a member "in good standing" of his local McDonalds liars club.

Will Nesby, retired in 2006, was out for a while and then went back to work at TSU, and finally retired again in 2014. His granddaughter is currently living with him, and he tries to stay busy. **Vic Simpson** reported that **Harriett** is getting stronger, driving and shopping, and that everything else is about the same.

Ray and Sue Sims have no travel plans, are looking forward to a garden next year and his daily "coffee club." He related their experience trying to get their driver's license renewed and cautioned everyone to do some checking about what proof you will need to carry before you go.

James Sims is still working with ACES and had an opportunity to visit several of the Mary's Creek sites in Shelby County, as well as both of the Pine Creek sites at Oneida. He plans to work early voting and election day for the Davidson County Election Commission for three elections in 2020.

Mark Your Calendars: March 19th, 2020 "The Oak," Manchester, TN; June 18th, 2020 Loretta Lynn's Kitchen, Waverly, TN; Sept. 18th, 2020 Cookeville, TN (probably Golden Coral); Dec. 10th, 2020 TBD "Nashville area."

TEXAS

Arnold King, ARCSE Representative

Email: arnolddking@hotmail.com



Charles Melton presides over the planning meeting for the annual meeting of the Texas Retirees Association. From left to right is Charles Melton, Bailey Mayo, and Beade Northcutt.

Arnold King Report: The Texas Retirees Association (representing the North and South ARCSE chapters) are finalizing plans for the 2020 annual meeting at New Braunfels, TX. The planning group met at the Cold Water Ranch near Glen Rose where **Rhett Johnson** is the ranch manager. The annual meeting will be held at the Scheleiderbaum Water Park in New Braunfels on April 16-17. The President this year is **Charles Melton**, retired engineer. We plan to have the silent auction again this year and give the proceeds to scholarship recipients who plan to attend one of several conservation workshops scheduled in Texas. Generally, the auction brings in around \$2,500.

Dennis Gaster received a card from **Lu Logan**, and she reported that there is something about having your 85th birthday: no more dues! She plans to retire from her no-pay job, but still stays busy. **Clyde Goodman** reported that all churches are looking at their security. Genesis UMC is keeping its doors locked. We need to push the white doorbell button on the backdoor where we enter the church. Clyde's cousin has opened a golf course near Dighton, KS. Clyde's daughter bought a house in Midland,

TX. She and Clyde have a cruise planned for March, where they will leave out of New Orleans, proceed through the Panama Canal to South America and return to San Diego. Clyde sees **Bob Rymell** on occasion.



Eating a great meal during lunch break. L-R: Beade Northcutt, Henry Bogusch, Tim Holland, Mike Bogart, Arnold King, Debbie Melton.

Maxine Owen asked about **Barbara Gillum**, and **Earl Blakley** responded that she was doing OK. Maxine mentioned that her family had many illnesses over the holidays. She and **Bernie** will be going to Kansas for Memorial Day. It was also reported that **Del Rockbaugh** and **Berniece Newman** are doing OK.

Anita Plummer reported that **Betty Sisson** continues her stay with her niece. Anita sent a card to **Dave Moffitt's** family. **Dave Stockbridge** reported that **Don Deal**, who lives in Petaluma, CA, is working on the 2020 Census. His wife, **Sue**, is tutoring. **Earl Blakley** went to visit family in Oklahoma over the holidays. Deer hunting was good. **Dave Drennan** has been to Hawaii. He is going to see his son at the air base near Raleigh, NC. A family get-together is planned for June. He now has nine grandchildren. Dave recently had cataract surgery. **Bill Kuenstler** and **Jerry Lemunyon** have made several trips to Mexico.

Arnold King retired last fall from his work at Texas A&M. Arnold is the new president-elect of ARCSE and will replace **Cheryl Simmons** when her term expires in July 2021. **Dave Stockbridge** is continuing tests on his heart to find out what is happening. **Barb** is doing well. They are going to New York in June to visit sisters and son **Greg** in the Poconos. **Doug Seibel** spent Christmas with relatives in the hill country

VIRGINIA

Ken Carter, ARCSE Representative

Email: duckheadone@gmail.com

Retired State Conservationist **George Norris** is home recovering from emergency surgery to place several stents in his heart arteries.

Retired SRC and ASTC (Water Resources) **Wade Biddix** and wife **Joanne** spent January and February in Arizona. Wade commented it was better to play golf on green grass than the brown turf we have in Virginia this time of year. They were able to visit with **Steve Black** and his wife while in Phoenix. Steve had served as Deputy STC for Virginia in the 1990s.

Wade Biddix will replace Ken as the VA ARCSE Representative upon returning from Arizona.

WASHINGTON

Ken Kaul, ARCSE Representative

Email: kenkaul@msn.com

Those attending our first Monday lunch were: **Joe Carmack, Larry Edmonds, Chet Jahns, Ken Kaul, Harry Riehle, Ralph Schmidt and Carl Vennes**. **Stefan Fechter** sent an e-mail telling us how much he is enjoying the sun in Arizona.

Everyone is doing well and enjoying the mild winter.

WASHINGTON NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA

Editor's Note: The Washington National Capital Area needs a Representative. John Peterson served this role for many years and has retired. Please contact Melvin Womack, East Regional Vice President if you are interested in carrying the torch (804) 803-8940, mwpocket2@comcast.net

Submitted by **John Peterson**: To my SCS/NRCS colleagues all over the US. Many of you know **Tom Christensen**, who most recently was the Deputy Chief Operating Officer for the USDA Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC) Mission Area (Under Secretary **Bill Northey**), and who had also been in a number of my old roles at SCS/NRCS before FPAC was created. He had also been IL STC. Tom just retired in January 2020. Before Tom retired, he worked on a chronology of developments documenting USDA's role in America's Private Lands Conservation Movement. His chronology goes from 1933, when the Soil

Erosion Service started in DOI, to 2019. He presented it to the NACD Board of Directors, which I am still on, on Tuesday, February 12th, 2020.

This is an excellent reference. While USDA goes back to 1862, the years Tom chose to document, 1933 to when he retired after 2019, were the major federal conservation years in my opinion. I know I am biased, but all of you, Tom and I lived them. I believe you will find this a useful reference.

He also wrote two other pamphlets: "The US Department of Agriculture's Role in Voluntary Conservation on Private Lands" and "Voluntary Conservation on Private Lands." In addition, he had copies of an article written by Hugh Hammond Bennett (HHB) on "Soil Conservation Districts: Perspectives on Their Success." The Christensen and Bennett documents are at <http://www.arcse.org/nhistory.htm>.

Hope you are all well on this Valentine's Day. Blanche and I wish you the best. Also, please note my new email address: jwpeterson083@gmail.com.

--John Peterson



Four NACD/SCS Amigos: Tom Wehri, Tom Christensen, Rich Duesterhaus, and John Peterson at the NACD 74th Annual Meeting in Las Vegas.

Warren Lee reported: "I, **Larry Lenz**, a retired RC&D coordinator from Yakima, WA and our spouses, met up with **Galen Bridge** and his friend **Kathy** for lunch in Casa Grande, AZ. Lots of discussion on future travel plans."

WEST VIRGINIA

Peg Reese, ARCSE Representative

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Jim Clevenger lost his wife **Mary** on January 20th. Following her death, Jim moved to a nursing facility at Virginia Beach to be near his sons. **Roseanne Kennedy**, former secretary to many WV State Conservationists, died on January 29th. For most of her 46-year career, Roseanne's smile was the first thing that most visitors to the state office saw. You can read more about the lives of Mary and Roseanne in the "In Memoriam" section of this newsletter.

On a happier note, **Barbara Davis**, Program Assistant at Mt. Clare, and **Larry Greynolds**, Soil Conservationist at Summersville, retired on January 31st.

State Conservationist **Louis Aspey** is leaving WV for NHQ.

Sam Sheets shared the following: "In late Dec. 2019 you sent me an email asking if I knew what position **Phyllis Ellifritz** held with SCS. I was recently asked to give a talk on history of soil conservation and to help me prepare I obtained a copy of **Jean Oliverio's** book Footprints In the Soil and Reflections On the Water from the LKCD office. In this book on page 68 it listed Phyllis as a district clerk in Keyser. This book contains information on Conservation Districts and SCS information through 1969 and states that clerks sometimes worked part time for SCS and part time for the district.

I worked at Keyser while I was a student at Potomac State in 1965 and 1966. I do not remember any female clerks in the office at that time. The DC was **Dixie Shreve**, the soil conservationist was **Porter Hannah**, and the technicians were **Charlie Alt** and **Raymond Wilson**. **Earl Junkins** worked as a dam inspector in the summer and as a technician in the winter. **Leonard Beverage** was also a dam inspector who worked out of this office. At times there was also a district crew that worked out of the

office. It was a very busy office since the Patterson Creek and New Creek watershed projects were both in construction. After the summer of 1966 I did not work in the Potomac Valley District again until Dec. of 1969 when I was hired fulltime and went to work at Moorefield. I worked in Moorefield until Nov of 1970 when the US army decided I was just too valuable to pass up. I never worked in the Potomac Valley again until the late 1990s when I worked some flood work in Pendleton county.

The obituary for Phyllis says she graduated from Hampshire County in 1957. Since I don't remember her being there in 1965 or 1966 and since the book lists her as a clerk by 1969, I would guess that she started between 1966 and 1969. The obituary says she lived in Keyser when she died in 2018, but she could have worked at Romney, or she could have been at Keyser for her whole career.

I do not remember who was at Keyser after Dixie. Maybe **Ron Gilkeson** or **Herb Paugh**. **Harold Kessel** was the RC&D coordinator at Romney before he was AC at Parkersburg. **John Vandevender** worked at Romney for a short period in the 1990s and **Joe Hatton** was DC at Keyser before going to the state office but I figure Phyllis would have retired before Joe got there. **Orlan Parks** may know about Phyllis since he was the DC at Petersburg before becoming state agronomist.

I have really enjoyed reading Footprints In the Soil and Reflections On the Water, even though I only knew around 5% of the people mentioned. One thing that was interesting is that by 1969 SCS had already started the construction of the 100th dam under the small watershed program.

It would be interesting to read a document which covered from 1970 to 2020 with all the new programs such as RC&D, Rural Abandon Mine Program, 319 programs, consolidation of offices, additional watershed projects, all the different cost share programs, etc.etc.

Pat and Elaine Bowen welcomed their newest grandson, **Jhett Patrick Koch**, on February 2nd.

WISCONSIN

James Enlow, ARCSE Representative

Email: jjenlow@att.net



The Wisconsin retirees met for lunch on February 13th, 2020 at Grandma Mary's Cafe in Arena, WI. **Gene Hausner** was the gracious host. Just a few retirees braved the sub-zero weather and previous night's snow. Those in attendance included **Eugene and Georgene Hausner**, **Jim and Lynnette Enlow**, **Keith and Dottie Behling**, and **Ted Manning**. Everyone enjoyed the fellowship and wonderful food. The next luncheon is scheduled for April 16th, 2020 at Grizzly's Wood Fired Bar in Eau Claire, WI.

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.

August Dornbusch
A. Howard Garner
Frederick L. Gilbert
Talmadge Jay Wiggins

Lincoln, NE
Newport, NC
Manlius, NY
Wilkesboro, NC

SENIOR CONSERVATIONIST CHRONICLE

Senior Conservationist

Coy A. Garrett

Senior Conservationist **Coy A. Garrett** was born January 13, 1936, in San Angelo, Texas. San Angelo is located about 225 miles southwest of Fort Worth. At that time that part of Texas was sheep and goat country. Coy graduated from San Angelo High School in 1954. He enrolled in Texas A&M University for one semester and then transferred to Texas Tech University. At Texas Tech he met **Barbara Stegall** from Lubbock, Texas, and they married August 16, 1957.

Also in 1957 Coy began his career with SCS as a Student Trainee in Plainview, Texas. After graduating from Texas Tech in 1958 with a degree in Agricultural Education, Coy served as Soil Conservationist in Lubbock, Texas, until he entered the US Army in February 1959. He completed basic training at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, and then was sent to Fort Knox, Kentucky, for advanced training. Upon completion of his training, Coy was transferred to Fort Lee, Virginia, where he worked for the Commanding General, **Alfred Denniston**. Prior to his discharge, he received a direct commission as Second Lieutenant and served in the Texas National Guard for several years.

After his discharge from the army in February 1961, Coy went to Muleshoe, Texas, as Soil Conservationist. In 1962 he was transferred to Cuba, New Mexico, as a GS-9 District Conservationist. While in Cuba their first son, **Jim**, was born in 1963. Coy was transferred to Santa Fe, New Mexico, as a GS-11 District Conservationist in 1964 where their second son, **Jay**, was born in 1965. From 1967-1970 Coy was assigned to the Office of the Inspector General in the Kansas City Midwest Region. In 1970 Coy was selected Assistant Area Conservationist in Manhattan, Kansas. From there in 1972 he went to Dodge City, Kansas, as Area Conservationist. Then, in 1975, he accepted the position in SCS National Headquarters of Management Analyst in the Management Division. In 1979 Coy was selected to be the State Conservationist for Vermont and worked there two years. From 1981-1985 Coy served as State Conservationist for North Carolina. This was the first of two stops in North Carolina as State Conservationist.

In 1985 Coy was selected as the State conservationist for Texas. His sons liked North Carolina so well that they did not move to Texas. Two years later he moved to NHQ as the Assistant Chief for the South. Tragically, Coy and Barbara's son, **Jim**, was killed in an automobile accident in Raleigh in 1991.

In 1992 he returned to North Carolina as State Conservationist until his retirement April 1, 1994. After working in four states (two of them twice), serving in the National Headquarters two different times, and after 15 moves, Coy (maybe Barbara) decided it was time to retire. Raleigh is home, but he and Barbara enjoy spending time at their beach cottage in Nags Head. Coy enjoys fishing, gardening, and spending time with his son Jay and his wife **Julie**.

--Prepared by Marc Safley, Senior Conservationist Chronicler



EXPANDING HORIZONS

WHERE CONSERVATION MEETS INNOVATION



SWCS 75TH INTERNATIONAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE
JULY 26-29, 2020 | DES MOINES, IOWA

ARCSE 75th Anniversary Conference Experience,
Monday July 27th

Current plans are to depart the SWCS Conference venue in downtown Des Moines at 11 am via bus for the 15-minute ride to SWCS Headquarters. There the SWCS historian will provide a building tour with never before seen Hugh Hammond Bennett artifacts. Then we will enjoy lunch and interaction with students attending the event. A few more activities following are in the works. Return to the SWCS Conference venue will be well in time to refresh and as registered attend the Exhibitor and Poster Reception starting at 5 pm.

We expect a good turnout for the event. Mark your calendars and look for additional information in the upcoming ARCSE newsletters and communications as the date approaches.

ARCSE Sponsored Student Intern

ARCSE is sponsoring a student leader project internship at SWCS for 2020 with a start date in April/May continuing into August. Details can be found [here](#):

ARCSE Sponsored Student Moderator Program:

ARCSE is helping to sponsor 10 full-time student members of SWCS with a major in conservation or related fields as student moderators during the upcoming Conference. Details can be found [here](#).

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. 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 www.arcse.org)
Beard	2020	John Charles Beard (94) passed away February 2, 2020, at his home in Paris, Texas. He was born to Hubert Elbert Beard and Elsie Groves Beard November 8, 1925, in Canton, Texas. Being too young to enlist in military service on his own during World War II, he persuaded his mother to sign papers that allowed him to join the navy and serve in the Pacific Theater from 1943 to 1946. He attended East Texas State University, earning his bachelor's and master's degrees. John held multiple titles as a competitive swimmer and diver. He was an avid naturalist and expressed his love of living creatures as a gifted woodcarver. He was a singer, musician, and showman. He shared his love of music by directing several church choirs. John worked for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service and retired as an Area Conservationist in Southeast Oklahoma. John was preceded in death by his first wife, Billie Cox Beard . Survivors include his wife, Mary Anne Beard , two daughters, Susan Holmes and husband Rhett Gideon of South Padre Island, Texas; and Laura Hutchings of Paris, Texas; four grandchildren, and eight great grandchildren. Burial, with military honors, was held at Memories Memorial Park in Canton, Texas.
Boyd	2020	Arthur Leroy Boyd Jr. (70) of Marquette, Kansas passed away February 14, 2020 at the Salina Regional Health Center, Salina, Kansas. Arthur retired in September of 2009 as a Soil Conservation Technician for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service in the Ellsworth Field Office.
Brinlee	2020	R. C. Brinlee (88) of Wilburton, Oklahoma passed away on February 7, 2020 in McAlester, Oklahoma. R.C. was born on January 29, 1932 in Konawa, Oklahoma to William Juddy Brinlee and Nora (Davis) Brinlee . He served in the U.S. Army, and received an honorable discharge in 1953. R.C. then attended Eastern A&M where he played baseball. He transferred to Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma where he received a Bachelor of Science degree in Geology in 1959. As part of his employment with the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), he authored soil survey manuscripts for several counties in Oklahoma. He retired from the NRSC in 1988. Following his retirement, he continued working for the NRCS as a contract soil scientist. R.C. is survived by his children: Robert Brinlee (Valerie) of Clayton, Oklahoma, David Brinlee (Melinda) , Judy Brinlee and Linda Callaway (Sean) all of Wilburton, Oklahoma; 9 grandchildren; and 4 great-grandchildren. A funeral service was held February 11, 2020 at Salt of the Earth Church in Wilburton with Pastor Cindy Shero officiating.
Clevenger	2020	Mary Cunningham Clevenger (84) of Morgantown, West Virginia passed away peacefully at JW Ruby Memorial Hospital on Wednesday, January 1, 2020. She was the wife of retired USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Services engineer and Planning Staff Leader James P. Clevenger . She taught elementary school after raising their children. In addition to her husband of 61 years, James, she is survived by sons Joe (Beth) , Jimmy (Ruthie) , son-in-law JJ Hynes ; 7 grandchildren and one great-grandchild. She was preceded in death by daughter Kim Hynes .
Dull	2019	Harold B. Dull (97) of Soldiers Grove, Wisconsin passed away peacefully at home on December 27, 2019. Harold was born July 3, 1922, in Soldiers Grove to Earl Edward Dull and Anna Bell (Bailey) Dull . On Oct. 8, 1942, he was drafted into the U.S. Army and served during World War II as a medical technician and later as a clerk/secretary. He was chosen for Army specialized training and attended Kalamazoo College in Kalamazoo, Michigan where he took general college courses in engineering. In 1945, he was sent overseas to Calcutta, India. He was a member of a convoy unit hauling supplies, ammo and goods across the Ledo Trail, through Burma into Kunming, China. At this time, he and other members of the convoy were caught between Nationalist China and Communist China. They were cut off from other Allied troops for approximately six months. Finally, they were rescued and flown back to India. On April 25, 1946, he was honorably discharged from the U.S. Army at Fort McCoy. Harold was very proud of his military service. Harold was also proud of being a farmer; and when he returned home, he began farming with his father. While farming he also worked for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service in Vernon County, Wisconsin as a soil conservation technician for 30 years. Harold is survived by four daughters, Sue (Lee) Knoche of Wetmore, Michigan, Claudia Dull of Readstown, Wisconsin, Kit Hartman of Aurora, Illinois, and Beth (Tom) Eder of Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin; three sons, Craig Dull , Wade (Colleen) Dull and Peter Dull , all of Soldiers Grove; one daughter-in-law, Elaine (Clay) Dull of Maquoketa, Iowa; 15 grandchildren; and 11 great-grandchildren. Harold is preceded in death by his wife, Lola , and son, Clay .
Gantz	2020	Ruth Louise Gantz (94) of Marion, Kansas passed away February 6 th , 2020. She was the spouse of Almus "Al" Richard Gantz . Al survives. He retired from the USDA-Soil Conservation Service in 1982 as the District Conservationist in the Marion Field Office in Kansas.
Kennedy	2020	Roseanne Kennedy (72) of Morgantown, West Virginia passed away peacefully at home on January 29, 2020 following a long, hard-fought battle with dementia. Roseanne was born May 18, 1947, in Morgantown and was the oldest daughter of Lawrence Dale and Ella Claudine Stone . She graduated from Morgantown High School in 1965 and soon after began working as the secretary to the West Virginia State Conservationist for the Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS). Roseanne's smile was the first thing that most visitors to the state office saw. She was consistently acknowledged and honored for her high-level job performance and invaluable devotion to the organization's mission. After 47 years of service, she retired from the NRCS in May 2012. She is survived by her loving husband of 51 years, Dwight Kennedy . She is also survived by her only daughter, Shelly Cardi and her partner, Greg Golden , and two granddaughters. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to: Amedysis Hospice Care at 5006 Mid Atlantic Drive, Morgantown, West Virginia 26508.
Ohland	2020	Marguerite E. Ohland (86) of Fort Collins, Colorado passed away January 24, 2020. Marguerite was the spouse of ARCSE life member Paul Ohland , who survives. Paul retired in the mid-1990s as a project manager at the USDA-N Information Technology Center in Fort Collins, Colorado. Marguerite, known for her cooking during holidays and over

campfires, and Paul could be seen second row center during the theatre season in town.

Rallison	2019 Robert E. Rallison (94) passed away peacefully at home in Beaverton, Oregon, surrounded by family on December 26, 2019. He was known as Robert, Bob and by some as Gene. He was a decorated WWII combat veteran who was awarded the Bronze Star. He also served our country during the Korean Conflict. He had a successful career as a civil engineer, specializing in hydrology for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service, including serving as National Hydrologist. He represented the U.S. government on numerous scientific exchanges around the world. Robert felt his greatest success was marrying Lorraine Hansen , who passed in October 2003. In retirement he loved spending more time in the garden, tending the apple trees and sharing the bounty of his harvest with anyone who came to his home. He is survived by his seven children, Steve (Sharon) Rallison , Patricia (John) Aanderud-Clifford , LuAnn (John) Falk , Jolene (Manuel) Hemeon-Garcia , Barbara Friedman , Jill (Randy) Ribeira , and Guy (Janette) Rallison ; 40 grandchildren; and 73 and counting great-grandchildren. He was an active member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. He served in many capacities over the years in his congregation and Stake, and again through his example showed his family what it meant to "Love the Lord and to Love your Neighbor." Remembrances may be made to the Nature Conservancy (www.support.nature.org) or the American Red Cross (www.redcross.org).
Ralson	2020 Senior Conservationist and member David Cornell Ralston (89) of Fairfax, Virginia passed away January 15, 2020 at his home. David was born May 6, 1930 in Beloit, Wisconsin, and grew up in Roscoe, Illinois. He and his brother Harold Ralston (Racine, Wisconsin) graduated from the University of Illinois, Urbana, IL in 1952 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Engineering, specializing in soil and water conservation and mechanical engineering, respectively. David received a master's degree from the University of Illinois in Civil Engineering. David entered the military service soon afterwards with overseas service in South Korea. His professional career was spent working for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service for 38 years, ending as the chief design engineer for the agency. His service to the federal agency included designing and providing oversight of flood control projects and providing dam safety evaluations for the Great Plains, Mid-Atlantic, and Western regions of the country. He was also involved in developing training programs for engineers within the agency. Outside of his professional career, David was an avid gardener at both his home and at his church, Fairfax Presbyterian Church. He leaves behind his wife of 63 years, Margaret S. Ralston , four children Roger (Lisa) , Peter , Barbara (Paul) and Andrew (Shannon) , one granddaughter Grace , three brothers (Larry , Harold and Duane and their spouses), one sister (Mary Jane Alexander) and many nieces and nephews. Donations in his name may be made to the Parkinson's Foundation (Parkinson.org) or to Fairfax Presbyterian Church.
Sandstrom	2019 Natural Resources Conservation Service employee Jean Lois Sandstrom (64) of Des Moines, Iowa passed away December 26, at MercyOne Hospice in Johnston, Iowa. Jean was a Design Engineer on the State Office Engineering Staff, scheduled to retire at the end of December. She was born to Albert and Irene Sandstrom in Owatonna, Minnesota. Jean attended Drake University and earned a bachelor of fine arts degree in printmaking in 1977. After college she was employed as an illustrator for National Handcraft in Des Moines. In 1980 she married Darwin Norris , and though they divorced in 1985, they remained friends. She returned to school to study engineering at Iowa State University, where she met Andy Shaffer . Jean received her degree in civil engineering and married Andy in May of 1987. She was employed by Bishop Engineering, and in 1990 she accepted a position with the federal government's Natural Resources Conservation Service where she worked for 27 years (with a two-year break for parental leave). In March of 1995, Jean and Andy welcomed Neal Park Sandstrom Shaffer into their family upon his arrival from South Korea at the age of six months. Jean was a devoted and loving mother. Beyond her family, Jean touched many people throughout her life, making friends wherever she went. She was an advocate for peace, human rights, social justice and preservation of the environment. For several years she was active in the Korean Cultural Center and was a member of the Des Moines Community Orchestra. She played violin and viola in a variety of settings throughout her life. For more than 20 years she was an active member of the Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting (Quaker), where she served in many capacities. Jean is survived by her husband, Andrew Shaffer; and son, Neal Shaffer of Des Moines (fiancée Noémie Sollier of Sorèze, France). A Quaker memorial service was held January 4, 2020.
Sarasio	2020 Jack Sarasio (89) of Plainfield, Iowa passed away February 2, 2020 at Mercy Hospice in Johnston, Iowa. Jack was the husband of ARCSE member Maralee Sarasio . Jack was born on May 9, 1930. He served in the Army in Germany from 1951 to 1953. After his honorable discharge, he worked at Meredith Publishing Co. as a bookbinder for more than 40 years. In addition to his wife of 61 years, Maralee, Jack is survived by two daughters, Kathleen (Marty) Hobson and Carolyn (Chris) Monahan .
Spurlock	2020 Dorsey Eugene "Gene" Spurlock (88) of Chelsea, Oklahoma passed away on February 21, 2020. Gene retired from the USDA-Soil Conservation Service as a Technician and then went to work for the Oklahoma Conservation Commission as an inspector in the Abandoned Mined Lands Program for several years.
Stelling	2019 Donnel "Don" Lee Stelling (90) of Deshler, Nebraska passed away on October 22, 2019 in Hebron, Nebraska. Don was born on March 10, 1929 near Deshler to Lawrence John Stelling and Irma Bertha (Ehlers) Stelling . He enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in 1948, serving in England and Japan during the Korean Conflict as an aerial camera repair technician. He was a member of the Strategic Air Command and was honorably discharged in 1952. On May 3, 1952, Don was united in marriage to Mary Ann Brettmann . Don and Mary were married 66 years at the time of Mary's passing on July 17, 2018. Don worked on a variety of foreign and domestic aerial mapping projects for nearly 40 years. He was employed nine years with commercial mapping firms, and the remainder of his career was with USDA-Soil Conservation Service as a supervisory cartographer. He worked at the Technical Service Centers located in Lincoln, Nebraska; Hyattsville, Maryland; Portland, Oregon; and Ft. Worth, Texas. Much of his career involved soil map publication for the National Cooperative Soil Survey. He retired in 1989 while living in Ft. Worth, Texas and subsequently returned to Deshler. He then went to work for Kroll Funeral Home. He is survived by his daughters, Donita (David) Johnson of Bowie, Maryland and Denise (Patrick) of Severn, Maryland; 7 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren



Reflections of the Grand Tetons

**DEADLINE FOR MAY/JUNE 2020
NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS IS
APRIL 25TH, 2020**

