

President
Cecil Currin
137 Mt. Warner
Hadley, MA 01035-9668
(413) 549-5677
louandcecil@currin.org

President-Elect
Dana York
Green Earth Connection
P.O. Box 324
Jonesborough, TN 37659
(410) 708-6794
dyork818@yahoo.com

Immediate Past President
Warren M. Lee
2300 Lakeview Pkwy
Locust Grove, VA 22508
(540) 972-6873
wandblee@comcast.net

Secretary/Treasurer
Ronald L. Marlow
ARCSE
P. O. Box 7454
Fairfax Station, VA 22039-7454
(703) 503-9219
arcse@cox.net

Regional Vice-Presidents
EAST
William J. Bowers
19 Natures Crossing
Enola, PA 17025-1043
(717) 877-4593
wbowers@comcast.net

WEST
Jerry Richard
2709 South Post
Spokane, WA 99203
(509) 747-5039
glr52pdr@aol.com

SOUTH
Arnold D. King
1900 Canaveral Ct.
Granbury, TX 76048-4370
(817) 578-8177
arnoldking@hotmail.com

MIDWEST
Norman R. Kempf
2312 North 80th
Lincoln, NE 68507-3339
(402) 464-6390
nkempf@neb.rr.com

Historian
Douglas Helms
398 N. Edison St.
Arlington, VA 22203
(703) 525-1468
douglas_helms@verizon.net

Editor
Jerry Bernard
15 Apple Blossom Ct.,
Stafford, VA 22554
(540) 720-5644
jbernard.nrcsret@gmail.com

Webmaster
vacant

Notes From the Potomac
John Stierna
19223 Stonegate Road
Hidden Valley Lake, CA 95467-
882, (571) 331-4452
jnrstierna@aol.com

Senior Conservationist
Chronicler
Marc Safley
11975 William and Mary Circle,
Woodbridge, VA 22192
(703) 494-8074
Jsafley1@verizon.net



NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter for Retired SCS and NRCS Employees

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The **ARCSE Newsletter** is published bi-monthly by the Association of Retired Conservation Service Employees, P.O. Box 7454, Fairfax Station, VA 22039-7454

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NOTES FROM THE POTOMAC

John Stierna

The Congress—The House Agriculture committee held a hearing to consider the impacts of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) actions on the rural economy. Members questioned **EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy** on the agency's regulations and policies, such as the "waters of the United States" rule, proposed changes to the ozone standard and pesticide uses, and many more.

President's Budget—The Administration released the President's Budget proposal for FY2017 on February 9th in which conservation program funding was treated very well. Following is a brief summary of the major elements in the budget proposal concerning conservation.

Discretionary: The NRCS conservation operations account, mainly for technical assistance, is proposed for \$860 million, an increase of \$29 million from last year's budget request and \$9 million from estimates for FY2016. However, no discretionary funding is proposed for the watershed rehabilitation program, the water bank program, and the emergency watershed protection program.

The FSA's Conservation Reserve Program is proposed at \$1,917 million, an increase of \$81 million over the FY2016 estimated amount. The proposed increase for CRP occurs even as the program acreage is shrinking somewhat over time. FSA's conservation loan guarantee program is proposed at the same \$150 million as in previous years.

Mandatory: For the first time in many years, none of the NRCS mandatory farm bill conservation programs are proposed for dollar caps as has been the case in the past. Below is the funding level for the listed programs as mandated in the Farm Bill and as carried forward in the President's budget, without caps (In Millions of dollars).

Program	2015 Enacted	2016 Estimated	2017 Budget
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)	1,347	1,329	1,650
Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)	394	419	500
Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) ^{a/}	1,164	1,225	1,561
Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)	93	93	100
All other programs ^{b/}	187	57	74

^{a/} The budget converts the authorized acreage to the dollar amount shown here.

^{b/} These include the old Conservation Security Program, the Agricultural Management Assistance Program, the Small Watershed Rehabilitation Program, and CRP Technical Assistance.

The treatment of conservation programs in the President's budget has to be considered very good, far better than previous years. The budget also proposes a cut of \$1.26 billion in FY2017 for crop insurance through a proposed legislative change, a proposal that has been soundly opposed by many on Capitol Hill.

At this point it is premature to say how conservation will be treated in the appropriations process, where caps have frequently been applied to EQIP and CSP. However, it is helpful that the President's Budget does not have caps on mandatory programs and provides some increase in the NRCS conservation operations account.

USDA—Awards under the Regional Conservation Partnership Program were announced by USDA on February 12th. These projects will direct up to \$720 million towards 84 conservation projects that will help communities improve water quality, combat drought, enhance soil health, support wildlife habitat, and protect agricultural viability. These projects are the second round of the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) created by the 2014 Farm Bill. The statement by **Secretary Vilsack** can be found at:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/newsroom/releases/?cid=NRCSEPRD624406>

Information on the specific projects can be found at:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/programs/farmbill/rcpp/?cid=nrcseprd598407>

ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED CONSERVATION SERVICE EMPLOYEES

Another Announcement of Program Funding (APF) will be released any day to request proposals for another round of RCPP projects. It will follow a similar pattern as in the past: briefer pre-proposals, followed by NRCS requesting full proposals from those selected from reviewing the pre-proposals.

A general signup for CRP will be closing on February 26th. Because of relatively low crop prices, CRP is an attractive option for producers with environmentally sensitive cropland. However, because of the lower acreage cap for CRP written into the 2014 Farm Bill, the volume of acres being offered in applications is significantly more than available space, making it a highly competitive signup. FSA will be able to select for enrollment those applications offering the greatest environmental benefits.

NRCS—In January, Agriculture **Secretary Tom Vilsack** announced the establishment of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Wetland Mitigation Banking Program, made possible by the 2014 Farm Bill. Through the program, NRCS will provide \$9 million to help states, local governments, or other qualified partners develop wetland mitigation banks. These would restore, create, or enhance wetland ecosystems, broadening the conservation options available to farmers and ranchers, so they can maintain eligibility for other USDA programs—conservation compliance. They must be for agricultural producers.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the renewal of the USDA Agricultural Air Quality Task Force and the selection of its members for the 2016-2018 term. The task force is composed of representatives from agriculture, industry, academia, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and other agricultural and environmental experts. The task force advises the Secretary of Agriculture on air quality and its relationship to agriculture based on sound scientific findings. The task force is chaired by NRCS **Chief Jason Weller**.

A sign-up for the Conservation Stewardship Program will run through March 31st

An APF for Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) is expected before the end of February. It will be focused on water quality, financial investment outreach, and outreach to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.

Conservation planning. Chief Jason Weller announced that about 45 million acres were covered by conservation plans during 2015 under the CTA program. NRCS continues to pilot enhanced conservation planning, called the Resource Stewardship Evaluation Plan. It has five objectives: soil health, water quality, water quantity, air quality, and habitat quality. They believe this evaluation tool will help producers make informed conservation decisions. The tool provides an easy-to-read graph on level of conservation attainment.

The final rules for EQIP, CSP, and ACEP are still going through the rule-making process. The rules for EQIP and CSP are slated for release sometime in March, and ACEP in April. However, clearance with OMB often requires more time than expected, so it would not be surprising if they were delayed again.

Other—February, 2016 has been labeled conservation month. So here are a couple more items. Here is an interesting chapter in **Secretary Vilsack's** reporting on USDA results. It includes both text and videos about conservation actions being taken by USDA-NRCS, USFS, and FSA.

<https://medium.com/usda-results/caring-for-our-land-air-and-water-preserving-precious-natural-resources-for-tomorrow-319ce7f275b2#.5i12ky23r>

NRCS released another video in the series labeled "The Science of Soil Health." The series is coming to conclusion, and here is the newly released introduction to the finale:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PJdh5Mcg5_E&list=PL4J8PxoprGa3wFYXSFu-BW_mMatlelt0&index=28

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Cecil Currin

ARCSE members do indeed read the newsletter and are concerned about our financial future. It is gratifying to see so many responses to the appeal for contributions. One of our elderly members (we are all elderly, I suppose) sent enough money to cover his hard copy newsletter for the rest of his life. Seventy-nine others sent in varying amounts. Thirty members switched to the eNewsletter. This is very encouraging. The next step is a special mailing to all members who receive the newsletter in hard copy. I hope to get a response to each of these, concerning how ARCSE can best meet their needs for the newsletter. The board will then develop a plan for the future of the newsletter. I am confident that we will work out a solution to meet the needs of all our members.

We do have another on-going problem. New NRCS retirees are not flocking to ARCSE. We know there are hundreds of retirees each year, yet we have only 19 new members since last August. Twelve of these are from NC and IA. California, Colorado, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Kansas and Oregon were the only other states with a new member. WOW! What about the retirees in my state and your state? We have a huge potential membership across the country each year, and each of us knows one or more new retirees. Please take it upon yourself to contact the retirees and invite them to join. Membership information is available on the website at www.ARCSE.org. Remind them that the first year is free. What a deal!

A BIT OF HISTORY

Douglas Helms, Historian

Email: douglas_helms@verizon.net

Hugh Bennett Notes Ascent of Denali (Mt. McKinley)

Last year the Department of the Interior official designated Mt. McKinley as Denali, the name used by the Koyukon Athabaskans. This reminded me of **Hugh Bennett** and **Thomas D. Rice's** reconnaissance soil survey of Alaska in 1914 to identify areas suitable for agriculture. The U. S. Government had decided to build a railroad in Alaska and wanted the information to aid in planning the route. The survey is available as a 246-page document at:

http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_MANUSCRIPTS/alaska/reconAK1915/reconAK1915.pdf

During part of the survey, they travelled up the Susitna River on the *Explorer*. Bennett noted that it had also transported **Hudson Stuck, Harry Karstens, Walter Harper, and Robert Tatum** on the way to their ascent of the South Peak on June 7, 1913. *Editor's note: They were the first to climb Mt. McKinley, now known as Denali.*

Request for Personal Stories about Hugh Hammond Bennett

by Jon Vrana

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

Thank you. Jon Vrana

5506 Greenshank Ct., Fairfax, VA 22032-3144, jon.vrana@wdc.usda.gov, jvrana@gmail.com, (202) 306-395 (work), (703) 919-2435 (cell), (703) 239-1842 (home)

"An Early Conservationist"

By Jon D. Vrana

jon.vrana@wdc.usda.gov, jvrana@gmail.com

It is a safe bet that everyone who reads this short writing knows **Dr. Hugh Hammond Bennett** as "The Father of Soil Conservation." He was the director of the Soil Erosion Service, which resided in the US Department of the Interior from 1933 to 1935. He was also the first Chief of the Soil Conservation Service, which resided in the US Department of Agriculture, as well as the founder of the Soil Conservation Society of America.

But did you know that he was a conservationist from an early age? Though credited with conserving soil, in the following instance, he was conservative of other resources, including his time and money.

At the time of the turn of the century, young Hugh Bennett was working at his brother's drug store in Wadesboro. The store provided a number of services, one of which was cutting glass for windows and other uses. This resulted in a great amount of glass scraps and broken glass pieces, which it was the responsibility of Hugh to collect in barrels and haul off periodically. One day, news spread that there was to be a great solar eclipse on May 28th, 1900, centered in Wadesboro, NC. Thousands of individuals and dozens of organizations from all over the country and the world, such as the Smithsonian Institute from Washington, DC, descended on the countryside of Anson County. Sheds were built, and telescopes and other apparatus were set up on the hillsides, with the hope of taking the best photographs and collecting the best scientific information about the total eclipse.

Not to be one to miss out on an opportunity such as this, 19-year-old Bennett took action. He had heard or read somewhere about the use of camphor gum to smoke the glass so that people could safely view the solar event. Hugh cut the glass to small squares and treated it with camphor and sold it to the visitors. It is said that he sold all of the glass, "making over \$100 net profit for the store—more, in fact, for he saved the time and effort of hauling the stuff away for disposal."¹

There are other stories of Hugh's efforts to conserve resources that will be told in future issues.

¹ Brink, W., 1951. Big Hugh, the Father of Soil Conservation Service. The Macmillan Company, New York. Page 47.

NEW MEMBERS

By Ron Marlow, Secretary Treasurer

Sykes, Walter	CA	Shaffer, Mary	KS
Hopp, Russ	IA	Garrett, Tim	NC
Krause, Keith	IA	McGrath, Chad	OR
McDowell, Doreen	KS		

Dues and Contributions for 2016

By Ron Marlow, Secretary Treasurer

2016 Dues

Please pay immediately. 112 post card reminders were mailed on February 18th to those who have not paid with 22 responses to date. Membership dues for 2016 were due January 1st. Your membership is important to all members.

FY 2016 (Beginning July 1, 2015) Contributions

The response has been excellent to the newsletter and suggestion in the dues notice for those receiving hard copies of the newsletter to make at least a \$12 donation, in addition to regular dues. We sent out 325 hard copies of the November newsletter. Those receiving hard copies have contributed \$2,086.04. This includes 62 who have made the \$12 donation and another 18 (choosing to "pay ahead") who have made an even higher donation, including seven life members who have contributed \$100 or more. Another 30 have changed to e-news. That's a total of 110 positive responses from those who have been receiving a hard copy. The Board looks forward to others adding to this number.

Contributions from those receiving electronic copies of the newsletter have also been very good, with 61 dues paying members contributing \$714 and 10 life members contributing \$835.

Spotlight on Earth Team Volunteer

Dorlene Butler, Regional Public Affairs Specialist
Public Affairs Division, USDA-NRCS, Fort Worth, TX
dorlene.butler@ftw.usda.gov

Earth Team Volunteer is Ambassador for Conservation

After retiring as an NRCS Resource Conservationist, **Edwin Harms** has become the unofficial ambassador and a voice for conservation as an Earth Team volunteer in Bridgeport, NE.

When friends of Bridgeport's **Dr. Bhanu Yadiki** visited from Eastern India, Ed was tapped to give them a tour and an overview of local agriculture. He showed the visitors NRCS conservation practices that included pest management, irrigation by canal water and ground water, livestock facilities, wildlife management, and general farming information.

When noxious weeds invaded the park area next to the Bridgeport Service Center, Ed brought his utility tractor with loader to dig up and destroy the vine to avoid a complete infestation. He then constructed a berm to control runoff and re-shape the park area.

Ed also recently volunteered at "Family Nature Night" at the Middle School in Bridgeport. He talked with students about careers available in NRCS. He gave brochures to the students and encouraged them to study science and other courses that would help steer them toward careers in conservation.

Ed remains an active member of the Soil and Water Conservation Society and submits articles to its newsletter. He also stays involved with conservation by visiting local producers. He sometimes requests NRCS brochures or other information to help answer their questions or concerns. He enjoys woodworking and building small items for sale at the local farmer's market and for his young grandson. Ed said he enjoys being a volunteer. It's his way of still being involved in conservation, which has always been his passion.



Edwin Harms and student at career fair in Bridgeport, NE.

ARIZONA

Ken Cookson, ARCSE Representative

Email: ckcookson@aol.com

We just received word that **Gary Nordstrom** suffered a massive heart attack on 02/23. Gary's wife **Jayne** has asked for everyone's prayers for Gary. Jayne is with Gary in the ICU at the Yavapai Regional Medical Center in Prescott, AZ.

Galen Bridge report: A few weeks ago a group of old friends met in Tucson for dinner. The group pictured had a great evening of old war stories and many memories of times past. **Bill Richards** stayed at my house for a few days and we sampled several great Bourbons.

I have just returned from the Hawaiian Islands and am looking ahead to a trip to London, Scotland, and Ireland in late May with my friend **Erwina Peterson**.



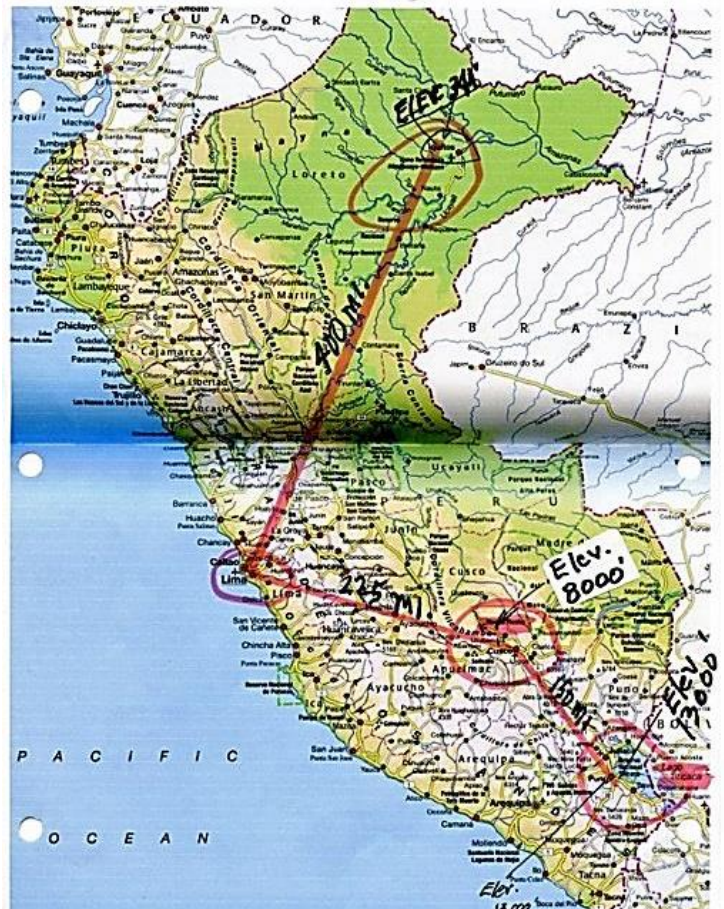
Gary Mast, Diane Mast, Galen Bridge, Erwina Peterson, Bill Richards, Judy Johnson, Neal Johnson

Karl Klingelhofer report: I left on Jan. 30th for a 16-day tour of Peru and met the 38-member group in Lima, Peru. All were seniors and a very nice group of people from all over. Lima is quite the city, right on the coast, and much is very modern, but traffic is terrible. With expressways, it takes four hours to drive across town. Population is about 10 million people. It has a large shantytown where 50,000 people came down out of the mountains and squatted.

See the crude map of Peru and my travel marked on it. From Lima we flew on Feb. 2nd to Iquitos, to the northeast.

This is the Upper Amazon Basin and Peru really contributes a significant amount of water to the Amazon. Iquitos is home to over 400,000 people and has access only by air or water, no roads to the city. It was originally established when they found rubber trees here, but that comes from elsewhere now. Its elevation is 341ft., and it is 2,000 miles from the mouth of the Amazon in Brazil. So, you can see it is not a fast moving river.

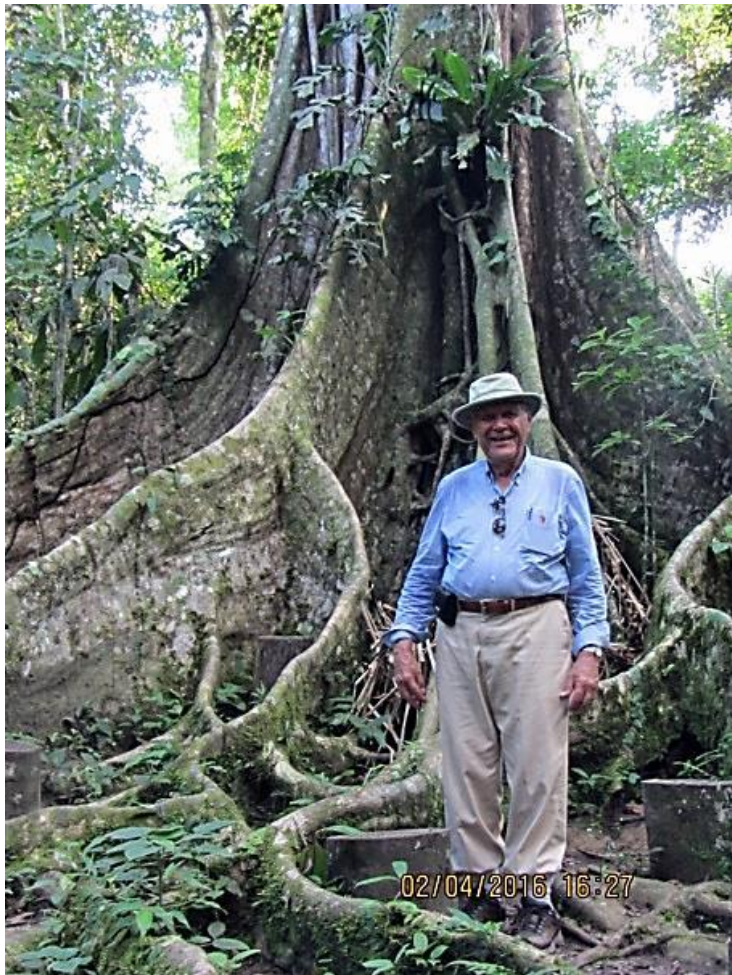
Our base for six days was a houseboat where we were treated royally, but no TV or Internet for six days. Each day we would go out in skiffs powered by two 60 HP outboards. This I really enjoyed. The jungle walk was not so enjoyable at 95 degrees and 95% humidity and with long sleeves and long pants to ward off the mosquitos. Also lots of stairs, mud, and it took almost 2 hrs.



Map of Peru, west coast of South America



Karl in Lima, Peru



Karl on Jungle Walk

With 10 more days to go and another 700 pictures, I can only tell you where we went and maybe include two or three pictures. Next we went to Cusco, which was once the capital of Peru but still a very important city and includes much of the Inca history and is 11,000 feet high. Spent two nights there and explored the Sacred Valley and of course Machu Picchu. This was strenuous and we spent two hours climbing steps and more steps. The last ½ hour it poured rain. Many other stops but next primary focal point was Lake Titicaca at 12,800 feet. This is the highest and largest navigable lake in the

world. No long hikes but even the hotel steps were a bit challenging. This is where they have the floating reed islands.



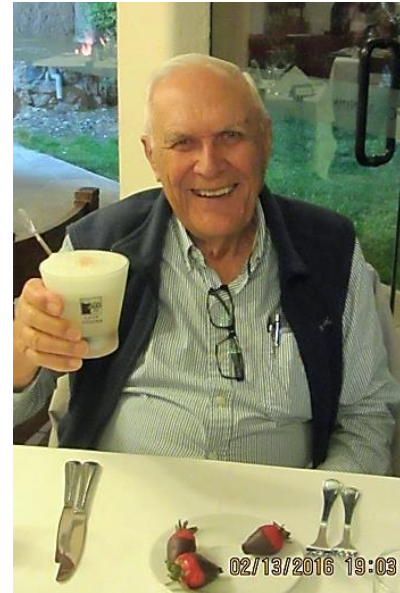
In skiff for exploratory trip



Out in the Main Channel (saw pink dolphins)



Monkey intrigued by goatee

**Machu Picchu****Lake Titicaca****Pisco Sour – Drink I like**

Ken Cookson report: My wife, Connie, and I were in Palm Springs right after New Years for five days. It rained two days and was unseasonably cold the other days. The last day was beautiful with snow covered mountains that were quite picturesque. We were in Joshua Tree National Park one day and enjoyed it very much. One of the rock formations was called Skull Rock and it was well named. There is a lot of construction going on in the down town area and the famous Marilyn Monroe statue had been removed.

**Skull Rock**

CALIFORNIA

Bill Ward, ARCSE Representative

Email: bluegrassbillward@gmail.com

Hello to all our fellow SCS/NRCS retirees across the country! We continue to meet monthly for both a breakfast and lunch get-together for all retirees who can make it. Those who made it to our February 3rd luncheon included **Shirley Leeper, Pat Grover, Walt Sykes, Virgil and Dolores Backlund, Helen Flach, Harold Honeyfield, and Bill Ward.**

Harold Honeyfield's 85th Birthday Celebration event. In our last report we let folks know that a special celebration of Harold's 85th Birthday was going to happen in December, and what a wonderful occasion it was. There were members of his family from New Mexico and Texas, many of his SCS and NRCS friends, both retirees and those still working, An Afghan family, husband, wife, and son he had made friends with while working on a detail in Afghanistan, neighborhood friends, and many other friends Harold has made along the journey of his 85 years. The Western Lights Trio, myself on Guitar, **Melvin Fong** on Fiddle, and **Mike Brooks** on Mandolin had a wonderful time providing background music for the group. Many thanks to my wife **Dana Ward** for being the photographer for the occasion. If any of Harold's friends would like to send a belated Happy Birthday wish or just start a conversation with an old friend he worked with and made along the way, he can be reached at the following email: hfield48@comcast.net. I am sure he would love to hear from any of his friends.



Harold Honeyfield at 85.

Following is a personal message from Harold to all those who were able to attend his birthday celebration, as well as all of his retiree friends he met, worked with, and became friends with along the way of his 30-year career.

"To my many colleagues in SCS and NRCS, my career was most rewarding, with regards to both achievements and the appreciation of others with whom I worked with over 30 years. As I look back, I was blessed for the opportunities to work with a very great group of people. I do extend my deepest thanks to those who attended my birthday event, planned by my wife **Valma**. Bill's band added very nice background music, and together with all of the evenings activities made for a lasting memory. To All, 'Thank you.' Harold."

Following is a YouTube link capturing some of the band's music: <https://youtu.be/xa6nqYKmPZU>



My Band, the Western Lights Trio



A small sample of Harold's 85 years of Memories



The event hall and folks in attendance



Harold and Valma and their Afghan family friends



Harold and Valma's family



SCS/NRCS retired and current working staff. Left to right, Dan Johnson, Jim Chapman, Danny Maxim, Bill Ward, Shirley Leeper, Brian Hallet, Darwyn Briggs, Marianne Hallet, Chuck Bell, John Rogers, Harold Honeyfield, Tom Smith, Dan Toan, Ed Schmidt, and Ron Hoppes.



Harold and Valma with neighborhood friends.



SCS/NRCS Staff: Jim Chapman, Tom Smith, Walt Sykes, Dan Toan, Danny Maxim

Bill and Dana Ward's 38th wedding anniversary. My wife **Dana** and I celebrated another wonderful year of marriage January 28th, and my how this time has flown! God has blessed us in too many ways to count, with three children, four grandchildren, and a love that only grows deeper as time moves along.



Bill and Dana Ward, Then and Now

Gary Bullard: In our last report we shared about the challenges Gary had experienced with a hip replacement procedure November 1st that was complicated by infections that developed, leading to two unsuccessful surgeries and a delay in being able to complete the procedure until the infections were gone. On 2/16/2016 I received an e-mail from Gary with the following update from him:

"Hi Bill, thanks for your e-mail. I will be on antibiotics for a little over a week. Test results indicate the infection is going away. Once I am off the antibiotics, they will do a set of cultures to determine if I am indeed free of the infection. After three clean cultures, they will schedule me for another hip replacement- Gary."

He indicated his days are filled with nurses, physical therapists, and occupational therapists, but he welcomes phone calls and can be reached at (916) 381-1502 or by e-mail at gbullard@comcast.net and definitely appreciates hearing from his SCS and NRCS friends.

Sadly we have to include in our report this time the passing of two California retirees: **Al Almquist**, former Design Engineer; and **David Rexroat**, former State Administrative Officer. See the In Memoriam section for more details.



Al Almquist



Dave Rexroat

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

COLORADO

Ivan Wilkinson, ARCSE Representative

Email: giwilk@estesvalley.net

This is a report of a tragic event that occurred in Colorado involving the son of one of our retirees. **Sandra Geer**, who served in the Grand Junction Area Office as the Area Administrative Coordinator for many years, has suffered this terrible tragedy. Her son, **Derek** was shot in Grand Junction on Monday, Feb. 8th.

While responding to a call regarding a suspicious male carrying a gun, **Deputy Derek Geer**, with the Mesa County Sheriff's Office, was shot numerous times and subsequently killed by the armed suspect. Deputy Geer was a beloved member of his agency, as well as a husband, son, Navy veteran, and father of two children. As the community is reeling from this horrific chain of events, the family seeks steady ground on which they can begin to process and heal from this unthinkable loss. Deputy Geer was a public servant to his core. He served in the United States Navy prior to his career in law enforcement and has served in many capacities for the Mesa County Sheriff's Office since 2001.

If you want to send cards, and if anyone would like to make a donation for Derek's family, you can send the information/donation directly to Sandra and David Geer at 2951 Paintbrush Way, Montrose, CO 81401. She will get the funds to the family.

GEORGIA

Edward Ealy, ARCSE Representative

Email: epdro22@gmail.com

Georgia ARCSE met for their quarterly lunch on January 28th, 2016, at Ryan's Steakhouse in Athens, GA. Although the day was cloudy and the temperature hovered around 50° F, there were 24 in attendance: **Earl Brantley, Fred Dilbeck, Linda DiPietro, Edward and Gail Ealy, Dot Harris, Jim and Judith Helm, James Huff, Steve Lawrence, Marge Lucas, Rick Main, Cecil and Gene Martin, Gerald and Evelyn Sadler, Donald and Evelyn Stewart, Bob Stovall, Beverly Walker, Bill and Norma White, Bob and Frances Wilkes**. Attending for the first time was Dot Harris, former NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Georgia (Operations) and Ohio (Programs). Dot Harris recently relocated to Georgia and says she is looking forward to hosting her grandkids this summer.



Dot Harris (left) and Beverly Walker, enjoying a chat after lunch.

Gene Martin reported that her sister, **Gy Neil Davis** passed in November 2015. She was 98 years old. Gene thanked those who had sent cards or called with messages of condolence. **Bob Wilkes** reported that former Georgia State Soil Scientist **Morris Schafer's wife, Louise**, is in the hospital. We all recalled that Morris passed in 2014. Also two of our regular attendees, **Jack and Lorraine Huff**, are now in Assisted Living in Athens.

Bob also reported that **Max Flanders**, Senior Conservationist, lives in Lyons, GA, is 90 years of age, and is still raising cows. Max was Area Conservationist in Georgia. **Fred Bracken**, retired Georgia State Information Officer, lives in Donaldsonville, GA, and is doing well.

ILLINOIS

Dale Benz, ARCSE Representative

Email: daleab@sbcglobal.net

Be sure to join us at the SCS/NRCS retiree gathering for lunch and visiting on April 7th at Ryans Steakhouse in Champaign. We will begin at 11:30am for lunch.

Several NRCS staff joined the club of retirees on January 2nd. **Roger Windhorn, Dan Withers, Dave Walling, and Jody Christensen** retired from their positions in the state office. Also, **Paul Youngstrum** retired as the Great Lakes Coordinator for NRCS. We wish these new retirees the best in their retirement and hope to see you at some of our retiree gatherings.

We are sorry to report the passing of two retired SCS'ers. **Bob Lowe** passed away on December 22nd. Bob retired in 1993 as District Conservationist in Amboy. We extend our sympathy to his wife, Shirlene, and their family. **Don Long** passed away on February 13th. Don retired as District Conservationist in Hillsboro many years ago. We extend our sympathy to his wife, Martha, and their family. Please see the In Memoriam section for more details.

IOWA

Mark Jensen, ARCSE Representative

Email: amjens1@gmail.com

After **Meleia Shelman** retired on December 31st, 2015, as a Soil Conservation Technician in Poweshiek County, she didn't spend a lot of time kicking back and relaxing. On January 4th, she started her next career as the Watershed Coordinator for the Muchakinock Creek Watershed Project in Mahaska County. This is a State Water Quality Project, which was established to improve the water quality in Muchakinock Creek, which has been on the 303(d) state impaired water bodies list since 2002. The watershed has a drainage area of 51,000 acres, including some abandoned strip mines. Meleia is currently working with land owners to reclaim two of these sites. Meleia says that the work she is doing is similar to her work with NRCS. She works directly with land owners to plan and install conservation practices. She also provides educational opportunities for land owners as well as for school-age children.

Russell Kurth retired as the District Conservationist in the Logan Field Office in January, 2010. Since his retirement, he has served on the boards for several organizations in Harrison County. He also operates the family farm in Plymouth County. This apparently didn't keep him busy enough, so in 2014 he decided to go into the world of local politics. He ran for the Harrison County Board of Supervisors and was elected in November, 2014. He began serving in January, 2015. Russ said there has been "a lot of learning," and it has been "very interesting."

Continuing on the line of local politics, I had the pleasure of visiting by phone with **Russell Hopp**, retired Civil Engineering Technician in Area 1. Russ retired in 2014. In November of 2014, he was elected to the position of County Treasurer in Lyon County. He started his four-year term in January, 2015. After working an entire career serving land owners in conservation, he said it just seemed natural to continue his service to the public by serving the entire population of Lyon County. Even though he enjoys the work, he did note that he is "Probably not the most popular person in Lyon County—especially at tax time!"

Sue and Jerry Long have returned home from a Caribbean cruise. They enjoyed snorkeling in Roatan, Honduras; looking at the Mayan ruins in Belize; paddle boarding in Costa Maya, Mexico; and more snorkeling in Cozumel, Mexico. Sue said they had warm weather and missed a lot of the snow back here at home. A perfect vacation!

Lee and Alice White traveled to the Hawaiian Islands for a winter getaway recently, visiting the islands of Hawaii, Oahu, and Maui. Some of the many highlights included the beautiful waterfalls, rainforests, and helicopter ride over recent lava fields; a day at Pearl Harbor; the Dole Pineapple plantation; Polynesian Cultural Center; and the many beautiful beaches including Waikiki. They also enjoyed visiting the Hawaii Volcanoes and Haleakala National Parks, getting views of active and extinct volcanoes and the black lava. It was peak season for whale watching, one of their favorite activities of the trip. They survived Maui's famous 39-mile drive on the road to Hana—one of the world's most spectacular scenic drives with 54 bridges, 600 curves, and many waterfalls and beaches. Another highlight was eating the fresh seafood and fruit. They recommend a visit there to everyone. Another perfect vacation!



Lee and Alice White at Wailua Valley State Park, black sand beach, Maui.



Lee and Alice White enjoying scenery on the Hawaiian Islands

Forty-two years ago, **Norm Koester** took me (**Mark Jensen**) to my first Iowa Engineering Society meeting. I'm pretty sure neither one of us had any idea what he was getting me into! I joined the National Society of Professional Engineers and have been active on committees ever since. On February 16th, I helped administer the 33rd annual MathCounts competition for the Central Iowa Chapter of IES. MathCounts is a nationwide math competition for 7th and 8th graders that is sponsored by the National Society of Professional Engineers. This year, over 40,000 students will participate nationally. At the Chapter competition, we had 35 schools participate with 314 "mathletes" competing, plus 44 more alternates. It is fun to see the ability of all these students as they compete. On a related note, **Stacy Asell**, the daughter-in-law of **Lyle and Charlotte Asell**, was the coach of one of the participating teams.

During the past couple of months, we have been saddened by the loss of three of our retiree family. **Phyllis Fisher**, the wife of **Chuck Fisher**, retired soil scientist, passed away on January 21st. **Loren Elliot**, retired planning engineer on the Watershed and River Basins staff, passed away on January 22nd. **Ron Walker**, retired drill rig operator, passed away on January 29th. Please see the In Memoriam section for more details.

KANSAS

Deanne Lull, ARCSE Representative

Email: rlull2@cox.net

This can't be February. We are doing our errands in shirt sleeves, high temperatures are being set all over the state, the spring flowers are popping their heads in the flower beds, and the other night I even sent my husband out to grill a steak for our evening meal. It was delicious!

There have been three recent retirements in Kansas. **John M. Row**, Plant Materials Specialist, at the Plant Materials Center in Manhattan, Kansas, retired at the end of December. **Delores D. Eberle** retired January 31st, 2016, as a Soil Conservation Technician in the Cimarron Field Office. **Larry D. Meili** retired February 1st, 2016, as the District Conservationist in the Phillipsburg Field Office.

Linda Ourada (spouse of retiree **John Ourada**) served as a co-leader for a two-day Feed My Starving Children (FMSC) Mobile Pack event in Salina, KS, in January. FMSC is a non-profit Christian organization committed to feeding God's children, hungry in body and spirit. Over the two-day event 1,013 volunteers of all ages came together from all over the state to hand-pack meals specifically formulated for malnourished children. They packed 864 boxes (24 pallets), which totals 186,624 meals that will feed 511 children for a year. FMSC meals have reached nearly 70 countries around the world.

In addition to **Linda and John Ourada**, Salina retirees participating were **Kathy Razak** (seated) and to her right **Karen Churchman**, **Kayla Ascher**, **Debbie Kaiden**, and **Al Collins**. **Rosie Collins** also was there but is not shown in the picture.



Salina, Kansas, retirees packing FMSC meals.

Word was received from the **Habiger** and **Bell** families that **Jim** and **Elbert** had passed away. **James N. Habiger** passed away on December 24th, 2015, in Missouri. He served as the Kansas State Conservationist in Salina, KS, for approximately ten years, spanning from the mid-eighties to the mid-nineties. **Elbert LeRoy Bell** passed away on September 8th, 2015. He worked as a soil

scientist in a number of Kansas counties, authoring four books on soil types for the SCS before completing his career in Fort Scott.

A recent obituary indicated that **Lyle S. "Ike" Rightmeier** passed away on February 16th, 2016. Lyle served his entire career as a soil conservation technician in the Mankato Field Office, retiring in 1981. He is survived by his wife, **Virginia**. Please see the in Memoriam section for more details.

MAINE

John Simon, ARCSE Representative

Email: balnengr@tds.net

January: Hi everyone. Last Tuesday (January 12th) we had four attendees at our normal 9am breakfast at Dysarts. Attending were **Art Taylor, Bruce Champeon, Charlie Boothby, and John Simon**. All appeared in good health. The weather was threatening snow later in the day, but in spite of that both Charlie and John went to the Ag trade show in Augusta after the breakfast. Charlie went to the MOFGA annual meeting to catch up on goings-on in organic agriculture.

At the Ag. trade show I met **John Hemond**, long time supervisor of AVSWCD, from Androscoggin County. He is doing well. He said his dairy farm is doing well, his crops and animals have never been better, and he is shipping more milk than ever. Last year he had knee replacement on both knees and had some troubles, but is fine now. He indicated that rehab work is difficult but vital in getting back in shape after surgery. No pain now but any distance walking is a no-no. He has good help and also two teenage grandkids helping him, so that is great although the teenagers need supervision on machine operation. John had served on the AVSWCD board and was chairman for many years (John said 30 years) but he is done now. No more meetings!

I also saw **Bussy York** of Franklin County and his wife at the show but did not have a chance to talk, just said a hello. Bussy looked in fine shape. I also met retiree **Mary Thompson** and NRCS assistant **Chris Jones** at the show. Mary is doing winter preparation for blueberry growers for the coming season. I did not quite understand what she was doing, but she is very interested and fired up about her work. New stuff for her and she spends much time outside which is to her liking.

February: Well, in spite of the 4 to 5 inches of snow over Monday evening and into Tuesday morning (February 9th) the gang of four showed up for our scheduled breakfast. Wow! I got up early to snow-blow my large driveway clear. Anyone who knows me, knows that I am not a morning person! Just ask **Dick Ferland**. He always kidded me about my lack of early rising.

Anyway, **Art Taylor, Bruce Champeon, Charles Boothby, and John Simon** had a great breakfast together. Charlie informed us that he and **Judy** celebrated their 58th wedding anniversary on February 8th! Wow! Congratulations to them both and we wish them many, many more to come. Charlie indicated that he has not started anything growing in his greenhouse yet, but his fingers are getting itchy.

Art is working on getting the inside of his house painted so he can put on the woodwork and fixtures in baths and kitchen. Art informed me recently that on February 22nd he had his heat-pumps installed in his new house. Art has a separate electric-use meter installed just for his mini-splits heat pump system, so he can track electric use versus heating degree days. Things are finally coming together for Art's new house. Hope to see him move in sometime in 2016. His new place shows up quite nicely on Google.

I brought a printout of a google map of Quebec Province for the folks at breakfast to look at. The map showed Lac Manicouagan and the downstream dam of Manic 5, and also Lac Saint-Jean and its downstream dam called Shipshaw for the group to see.

Bruce told me to search the geology of each lake on Google. What I found is that Saint-Jean Lake is not a meteor impact site, but Manicouagan Lake is. While using Google, I searched for Hydro-Quebec. Wow! Hydro-Quebec has over 60 hydroelectric dams generating about 36,600 MW of electricity. Some of the dams generate over 2,000 MW. Excluding cars, about 99% of the power in the province is from electricity. They are ready to ship the electricity to Maine if we want some renewable and inexpensive power. Search Google for Manic-5 dam. It is truly a beautiful work of art for a dam.

Bill Moulton indicated to me that on February 11th he found 10 inches of ice on the Kennebec River and was putting his ice house out for a while to do some ice fishing. We wish him luck in filling his freezer for future consumption. Usually **Charlie Boothby** visits Bill every winter to catch up on things and to catch a few fish.

Bill indicated that he and **Pat** celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on February 5th! Congratulations to them and wishing them many more.

Heard from **Susan Watson** who is busy as ever. She indicated she heard from **Dave Popp** who is doing well. His farm is doing well and his freezer has a bunch of cranberries stored. His cranberry operation is still going strong in spite of the low prices!

Dave Popp was my first customer in 1995 when I retired from SCS and started my engineering company. The system of four individual cranberry bogs was well-designed by yours truly. It shows up quite nicely on Google. A downstream 5th pond recovers all spillage and filters it before discharge. Some of it was planned for reuse as needed. The four bogs allow Dave to have different varieties of cranberries and different harvesting methods as desired.

Other than the fact that we are having an unusually warm winter with little snow, there is not much more to share from Maine for now. Take care and God bless.

MINNESOTA

Marlene Mechelke

Email: mechgram@aol.com

Metro retirees gathered for lunch on Wednesday, January 13th, 2016: **Cathy McCormack, Gloria McCalip, John Handler, Pete Cooper, Vic Ruhland, Harvey Sundmacker, Ron and Sylvia Olson, Marlene Mechelke.**

Pete Cooper is back in Minnesota to take advantage of the "hockey weather." **Rina** likes that Utah weather, so they'll probably divide their time between states.

Vic Ruhland comments: "I'm finding out what life as a widower is all about. It still hurts, but as I'm told, 'enjoy the memories and plan ahead.' I did accept my daughter and son-in-law's recommendation to spend the Christmas season with them and their four children in Arizona where the 'other Grandma' has a winter home."

"There certainly are a lot of places to see and things to do in the Tucson and Phoenix areas. I was particularly intrigued by the Kartchner Cave outside of Benson, AZ. It's a wet cave discovered in 1974 and only opened to the public since 1999, whose entrances are on the side of a mountain. Such large chambers are connected by several narrow pathways only a half mile in length containing just an amazing amount of active stalactites and stalagmites of all sizes and shapes. Having worked in soil and water issues all of my career, I'm still trying to visualize how all this could have happened on the side of a mountain. How did the receding ancient seas and the uplifting of the landscape, along with the percolating waters through only some 200 feet of overburden and only about seven acres of surface area, result in such an array of strange and colorful formations. And the process is still ongoing! Amazing! I still have to decide whether to accept the other Grandma's invitation for next Christmas."

A few of us attended **Tom Faragher's** funeral on February 19th. Tom passed away at the age of 91 and was described by his granddaughter as we all remembered him: "funny, crazy, a real happy, loving character." We got to have a bit of a reunion with retired MN Soil Scientist, **Ray Diedrick** and his wife, **Jeanette**, who are now residing in Faribault, MN. Ray interviewed me when I came to the Soil Conservation Service, and he said he was having a hard time deciding which candidate to choose for the position, but the gal in Personnel said "take the older one." Best decision you ever made, Ray!

MISSOURI

Dave Rastorfer, ARCSE Representative

Email: daverastorfer@aol.com

Recent Missouri retirees: **Liz Cook**, Remote Sensing and GIS specialist, Columbia; and **George Taylor**, Soil Conservation Technician, Gallatin. Welcome to the "Club."

Bill Pauls: I'm sitting in Amarillo this evening waiting for "Amarillo by Morning" and then head home tomorrow. I ran marathon #91 in Phoenix yesterday, got kind of hot (mid 80's) so I was slow, but finished one more time. Off to Laurel, DE in April. First thing this AM Kris and I were "Standin' On The Corner in Winslow, AZ." (*Had that Peaceful, easy feeling...*). Prayers at the passing of **Glenn Frye** of the Eagles and **Justice Scalia**, an outstanding jurist!). Kris and I have also decided we are old enough to know better, but young enough to be able to take on one more big adventure. So after 30 years we are moving from Columbia and taking up residence on Thunder Mtn., Camdenton, MO, Lake of the Ozarks. We bought a house just up the mountain from our lake cabin. Hope everyone comes by to visit, hopefully not all at once. Just follow the Bridal Cave signs and turn left instead of right at the Der Essen Plaat restaurant: 149 Kingfisher. Hope everyone is doing well, and we will keep you all in our prayers.

Lane Thurman: No News from here, just trying to stay warm and dry. Fishing on Tablerock Lake has not really started up just yet, but some people have been catching them, just not me.

Dennis Shirk: Hello Folks. We have had a pretty mild winter so far. It was great seeing several of you at **Mel Marshall's** retirement party. **Lois** and I are well, but we are dealing with my parents' health issues. Dad will be 89, and Mom is 86. Beginning to think about Spring riding trips. Our wood pile is still good. Will have carry-over, unless something drastic happens. See you all down the trail.

Alton Taylor (in Texas): We have had a warm winter. 25 has been the low and not below 32 for more than a few hours (must be global warming). Now the Panhandle had their worst storm since 1956 and that is 300 miles west, so they are enjoying the current warm spell. We hope to have the triplets down for Missouri spring break. Later, we'll drive out to see our daughter and family in Arizona before the real heat sets in.

Pat Beneke: We may be retired, but still able to keep up with the youngsters (sort of). The whole family hit the slopes for some downhill skiing at Monarch Mountain outside of Salida, CO during the school break. **Robbie**, the youngest at three, decided snow wasn't his cup of tea but did a little sledding. Granddaughter **Sarah** learned how to snowboard this trip. Granddaughter **Jessie** skied all over the mountain and was so proud of skiing down a black diamond (difficult) run. The rest of us just enjoyed some casual runs down the mountain. However, it is so nice to come home to a much milder winter this year and hope you are enjoying the weather here as much as we are.

Jess Eppe (near Muskogee, OK): **Phyllis** and I are excited about the Civil War Battle of Honey Springs new visitors center being constructed just East of Rentiesville, OK. My Father wrote the book about this Indian Territory battle in 1964 (I republished it in 2002). Dad grew up just a few miles east of the battlefield and began his discovery/research work 90 years ago on this, the largest battle fought in I. T. Present plans are to open the center July of this year. If you plan a trip through the area, consider visiting the battlefield site. We haven't had much winter weather on the ranch, yet! As a result, our livestock and wildlife are doing

well. Phyllis and I are seeing more eagles, wild turkey, and deer on the ranch. Calving season will begin soon, and we are trying to get prepared. Our great grand-children are doing fine and will be expanding (by two) in April. Wishing each of you happiness and good health.

Gary Moreau: Just returned from a two-week mission trip with 1040i to the interior of Cote d'Ivoire, West Africa. He gave away 83 PET mobility carts to the disabled of Africa. Check out the updates on www.1040i.org and YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter.

Mike Blaine: Not much to report this time. **Pam** and I spent Christmas in the eastern parts of the country visiting two daughters and their families. Had a really good time there. Since coming home about the first of the year, we have stayed close to the wood stove and stayed busy at church. Pam and I wrote the Easter program for our church, and we are rehearsing it now with the choir and narrators. We have had some pretty cool weather and some snow but nothing like a couple of years ago when it took me two days to clear our drive and the neighbor's drive with my tractor! We are thankful for the easy winter here. Best wishes to all and have a blessed Resurrection Sunday.

We are sad to learn of the following recent deaths: **Forrest Tindall**, retired Area Engineer at Springfield; **Bobby Sipes**, retired Soil Conservation Technician at Mound City; **Dave Owen**, retired District Conservationist in Richmond; **Mark Jungk**, husband of **Mary Beth Jungk**, Resource Conservationist in St. Joseph. Please see the In Memoriam section for more details.

The Columbia area retirees met for breakfast at the Country Kitchen in Columbia on February 10th. Those attending were: **Don Williams**, **Hugh Curry**, **John Turner**, **Odie Swanegan**, **Jerry Edwards**, **Jack Cronhardt**, **Frank Miller**, **Bill Pauls**, **Mike Wells**, **Bob Ball**, **Bob and Rosie Herschbach**, **Richard and Marjorie Koenig** and **Dave Rastorfer**.

MONTANA

Dick Gooby, ARCSE Representative

Email: inca@3rivers.net

Harold (Boge) Kraut report from Batchtown, IL: Here is the letter we got from Harold, he is a retired Conservation Technician and celebrated his 102nd birthday this past summer. He must be the oldest living SCS/NRCSer. It sounds to me like he would like to hear from SCS/NRCSers.

Harold Kraut, RR1 Box 157, Batchtown, IL 62006-0206, (618) 576-2603

"Dear Friends **Mary Ann and Dick**. I would like to work with you. I spent half of my time in SCS in Calhoun County by myself. The other half breaking in a new D.C.

After coming back from WW II I bought my farm of 144 acres. I circulated a petition to get a Soil Conservation District in Calhoun County. I was the third person to have a Conservation Plan. I then became a SCD Director. I have a country school house on my farm and we held Conservation District meetings at it to get conservation cooperators. Later on our D.C. was killed in an automobile accident. I worked two months using my car and gas and finally decided if I was going to work for SCS, I just might as well get paid for it. I didn't know which end of a transit to look through. Later on I went to Construction Conservation School. Later on I came out 2nd in Illinois for conservation on my farm. It is now in hay and conservation CRP.

When I bought my farm, I didn't have any money. I just paid \$125.00 down on it and did a bond for deed for five years. Three years later I had it paid for.

Mary Ann, if Dick gets so ornery you can't live with him, please feel free to come and live with us. I have three ladies that stay with me for three eight hour shifts. I promise you, you won't have to do anything but hoe the garden, dig potatoes, and carry in the wood.

Harold Kraut report: Thanks very much for the telephone call. Never in my wildest dreams would I have thought that would happen. If you ever get back this way be sure to stop in. Enclosed are some views of my farms except the 90 acres where we have a private campground. Mostly just relatives use it. I have seven kids, 16 grand kids, 35 great grand kids and three great-great grand kids. We built a pond ourselves. My wife and seven kids worked every day all summer using wheel barrows and shovels to build the pond, while I was helping the farmers care for the land. The open land within the farm is all planted in pine trees. We planted 20 thousand trees, and most of them were sold for Christmas trees until they got too big. I sold the Christmas trees for a \$1.50 each and sent one truck load to a person in New Mexico. I left the rest of the stand, and now they are 50 feet high and 15 inches in diameter.

Back in the early 30s I cut and hewed out railroad ties 7" x 9" and 8" by 10". I still have my broad-ax just in case I need to go back to hewing ties. After I bought my farm, my oldest girl (11 years old) sawed down white oak and made stave bolts and headings to help pay for this farm. I have since sold the timber for \$10,000 and \$22,000 for the timber upon the other place.

Tell Mary Ann to watch out when she goes to town that the twin bridges are safe to cross."

Joyce Swartzendruber report: I don't have anything, Dick, but you should mention **Tom Pick's** untimely death. I did speak at the memorial service on behalf of all the NRCS employees who thought so highly of him.

Scott Hoag Jr. report: Haven't looked at email in a day or two, sorry. Thanks for your thoughts and prayers. Here's our report:

By the time everyone reads this, Scott will have finished 44 radiation treatments, completed Feb. 15th. All is well. Scott still skis once in a while, volunteers with Habitat for Humanity, and continues with the economic analysis of three dams in Kansas that are in the PL-566 Watershed Rehabilitation Program. **Nancy** is writing daily and has a book, When Mountains Tumble, with an editor and more than a dozen articles being considered by several Christian publications, including Chicken Soup for the Soul. February

4th, gophers were out on top of the snow--good targets, but can't shoot in the city limits. Turns out Punxsutawney Phil has nothing on Montana gophers. Phil predicted an early spring; the gophers saw their shadows.

Gooby Ranch report: When our hay is baled, it is stacked in a field corner that isn't irrigated. The hay yard is fenced to keep the cows out. After the alfalfa freezes, **Mary Ann** turns the cows out onto the hay fields. That saves a lot of hay and helps to improve the soil health in the field. Normally we don't get enough snow to where the cows can't eat in the fields all winter.

Last week it snowed every day and drifted the roads closed. We couldn't get a single vehicle out of our yard. It's sure a good thing Santa delivers gifts with a sleigh because no one else could have gotten here with our presents. I did really well this Christmas: I got one lump of coal from my mother, one from Mary Ann, and three from the kids.

While Mary Ann was shoveling the driveway, I was busy keeping the fire going in the house. Since we live over a mile off the county road, that is a lot of shoveling. In order to save Mary Ann time, every couple of hours I would drive the tractor down the road that she had cleared to take her a cup of coffee and slice of toast. Man, that cab and heater are great. Being a nice guy like I am, while Mary Ann was spending three minutes drinking her coffee, I would shovel a few feet. Mary Ann really appreciated me for helping her shovel out the road. It would have saved Mary Ann a lot of work if we could have plowed the road with the tractor but we don't have a snow plow.

The snow got so deep the cows were having a hard time grazing the hay fields, so they started looking at the hay stacks to see how they could access them.

While I was keeping the fire going in the house, I could use the spotting scope to keep my eye on how the cows were doing. I could also see how much progress Mary Ann was making on the road. The snow shoveling must have made me tired because the next thing I knew I woke up and had slept for over an hour. I looked through the scope to see what was going on, and the darn cows were in the hay stack.

I got the fencing equipment, a sled, and drove down to where Mary Ann was to tell her about the cows. We loaded the fencing stuff on the sled and headed to the haystack to get the cows out. It was nice of Mary Ann to break trail and pull the sled.

We finally got the cows out of the hay yard and looked to see what was wrong with the fence. Somehow when the cows charged through the fence, they broke off the corner post. Great! How are we supposed to replace a corner post when the ground is frozen? In the meantime, the cows are trying to get back into the haystack. What a mess. There was no way we could fix the fence, and we couldn't leave without the cows getting back into the hay stack. Usually I have some time to figure out how to solve the problem, maybe get the easel out and write down all the plusses and minuses, but not this time. Finally I came up with the idea of dragging some bales of hay over by the broken-down fence and build a hay house igloo to sit in while we were keeping the cows out of the hay yard.

We sat in the hay igloo and held a meeting to see what the best thing was to do. We decided that Mary Ann would head back to the house and get a TV, antenna, solar panels, camping gear, warm clothes, and the bull horn, and I would watch the fence during the day while Mary Ann finished shoveling the road and did the chores. Then when it got dark Mary Ann would come down and watch the fence during the night. It worked pretty well, except the food would get cold by the time Mary Ann got from the house to the igloo. Also, the TV reception isn't as good in the igloo. Mary Ann got her cross-country skis and brought out a sled load of fire wood, along with my five pieces of coal. We built a fire over the spot where the corner post broke off and it not only keeps me warm, but it is melting the frozen ground where Mary Ann needs to dig the post hole. Hopefully by tomorrow the ground will be thawed enough so Mary Ann can replace the post.

NEBRASKA

Norman Kempf, ARCSE Representative

Email: nkempf@neb.rr.com

SCS/NRCS Nebraska Retirees' Breakfast: Vice President **Bob Engel** called the meetings to order with 12 members present in January and 14 members present in February.

Harriet Louise Kerl, Wife of **Donald Kerl**, died on January 29th, 2016. Don worked in Valley City, ND and numerous places in NE, and retired in Auburn, NE. **Maurice (Mike) Stout Jr.** died on February 18th, 2016. His career started in Ohio. He also served as Asst. State Soil Scientist in KS and TX, State Soil Scientist in SD, and Soil Correlator and Director in the Midwest National Technical Center, Lincoln, NE. Mike retired in 1986. His wife, **Maxine** and he were married for 71 years.

Dave Camper went on two ski trips, one to Telluride and one to Steamboat, and enjoyed great skiing.

Gary Muckel fell on the ice on January 25th, resulting in a concussion and brain bleed. The bleed has stabilized and he is doing much better, but still not 100%.

Sylvia Kempf spent time at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN in January to test an electrical stimulator implant in her back for pain reduction. It was not successful. She will return on February 22nd for a pain pump implant. It is hoped that this will be more successful.

Jim Culver, Lou Buller, and Norman Kempf report that the ice fishing has been very good. A group of seven reported landing 100 bluegills and crappies.

NEW YORK

Nancy Lee, ARCSE Representative

Email: mlee0006@rochester.rr.com

Ellen Luchsinger writes: Since retiring, I have kept busy with some house restoration projects. Last summer I had the brickwork repointed on my house. The contractor started work satisfactorily, and since I had plans for camping near the end of the project, I left him on his own for a few days. Before I left, I told him that as a former construction inspector that I would grant him my wish which was "to send the landowner away on vacation during construction!" He enjoyed the comment, and I think that they also enjoyed having lunch on my shady bank of the Hudson River. This next summer I have several kayaking and camping trips planned with my "new to me" Aliner pop-up camper. A safari trip to Tanzania and the Serengeti to "shoot big game" with my camera is on the calendar, too.

Jim Calhoun writes: As with many other retirees, we are "snowbirding" in Florida again this winter. We left the end of December for St. Augustine, FL and arrived after a stressful drive down, vowing this was the last time we would drive. The weather has been cool, a lot of mornings in the 30s. I came back to NY February 9th, as I missed winter. Saw the first snowfall when I arrived and was in time to experience -15 degrees this morning! Beth and I are in good health and keeping busy.

Gene Hanchett writes: No real news here. I am getting along OK. No real medical problems.

Julian Drelich writes: We now have two grandkids, **Molly** age 4 and **Tyler** 9 months. We are traveling to Tucson Arizona for Major league Soccer spring training 2/14 through 2/21. I am still working in Walton. **Sylvia** is still at Oxford Academy and Central School. Otherwise same ole, same ole.

Fred Gilbert writes: **Mary** and I recently returned from another auto trip west. We spent about two months with our daughter, son-in-law, and son in Anthem, AZ where it was about as cool (temperature) as it was in Manlius at the same time. We drove over to Valencia, CA to visit Mary's sister-in-law and some of her family in January. We spent several days both going and coming in Columbia, MO, resting mostly.

Ralph Work, who was more commonly known to close friends and family as "Mike" died January 25th, 2016, in Troy. Mike worked as a Soil Scientist for over 40 years until his retirement in the early 1990s. **James "Jim" Baker** passed on January 29th, 2016. Jim was a District Conservationist and RC&D Coordinator. Please see the In Memoriam section for more details.

NORTH CAROLINA

Jim Canterbury, ARCSE Representative

Email: jhcanter@bellsouth.net

Fifteen retirees from the Raleigh area met at Bob Evans Restaurant for breakfast on January 6th. This event takes place several times each year. Attending the breakfast were **Jim Canterbury, Tommy Cutts, Dick Gallo, Coy Garrett, John Garrett, Harry Gibson, Charles Godley, Hubert Hawkins, Ed Helme, Roger Montague, Dora Richardson, Cecil Settle, Horace Smith, Larry Stephenson and Rex Tracy**. **John Garrett** made the arrangements for the breakfast.



North Carolina retirees' breakfast

NORTH DAKOTA

Robert "Bob" Bird, ARCSE Representative

Email: Rajmbird@aol.com

There were four of us at our Thursday morning breakfast: **Larry Bushey, Jim Johnson, Myron Senechal, and myself (Bob Bird)**. After we had solved all the local and national issues, Myron showed up with the latest diamond willow stick he had salvaged from a pile of firewood. He said many of them looked pretty bad until he peeled the bark off of them. Each Thursday he shows up with his latest creation of a diamond willow walking stick, somewhere in the process of being restored. **Neal McClure** calls me quite frequently and noted that he was in the hospital recently for a few days because he got lost or disoriented in his assisted living facility, and he doesn't see very well. His boys thought maybe he had a health issue that caused it, but they haven't found a cause. He reminds me that he is 99 years old now, and I keep asking if he is going to make it to triple digits, and he probably will. My wife, **Jeannie**, had a hip replacement in September and recovered well from that. Some of the testing during that time found a spot on her kidney that the doctors recognized as usually cancerous and recommended that her right kidney be removed. In January, she had her kidney removed at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN. The surgery went well and it was cancerous, but they feel confident that it was confined to that kidney. The recovery has been a little tougher than the hip surgery. We were hoping to be snowbirds in TX for a couple months and may still get away for a month or so.

You will see in the Memoriam section that **Arnie Schoepp** passed away. He had been active with the Bismarck VFW as a trustee for a while and liked to come to the dances and tell stories and remind people that he achieved the rank of Sergeant Major in the North Dakota National Guard.

Happy Easter to everyone and hope all the snowbirds have a good trip back north.

OREGON

Don Stettler, ARCSE Representative

Email: don.stettler@comcast.net

The Oregon winter quarter lunch was held on January 27th, 2016, a spring-like day between storms of our very wet El Niño weather pattern. Thirty-five found their way to the new venue for the westside lunches at Peppermill Restaurant in Aloha. Aloha (pronounced Ah low ah) is an unincorporated area west of Portland with a population of over 50,000 wedged between the cities of Beaverton and Hillsboro. Attending were **Stef Aschmann, Sue Brandt, Keith Cromwell, Clifton and Marva Deal, Gary Formanek, Roy Fox, Tom Fujii, Dave and Joan Johnson, Jack Kanalz, Lowell and Marian Kenedy, Dick Kover, Jon Lea, Bunny Leuthold, Rose Loehr, Jim Marron, Chad McGrath, Bruce Newton, Lamont and Karen Robbins, Leland Saele, Joe Sahlfeld, Pat Smith, Gene Sturtevant, Dick and Kathy Sylvester, Jean and EmTrainor, Eldena Vanderzanden, Ralph Wadleigh, René Walls, Beth Zetter, and yours truly, Don Stettler**.



Marian Kenedy, Chad McGrath, and Jon Lea



Leland Saele, Lamont and Karen Robbins, and Lowell Kenedy



Foreground: Keith Cromwell, Dick Kover, Em Trainor and Jean Trainor



Dave and Joan Johnson, and Marva Deal



Tom Fujii, Gene Sturtevant, and Jack Kanalz



Kathy and Dick Sylvester, and Jim Marron



Stef Aschmann, Gary Formanek, Terry Mitchell and Pat Smith



Sue Brandt, Rose Lohr, and Roy Fox

Bruce Newton continues to serve on the board for a local watershed council. He was also recently elected Vice Commodore of his sailing club. He and Wendy visited Australia and New Zealand last year and are planning trips to Scandinavia and the Southwest National Parks this year.

DD and Howard Kido are still on the move. After they return from their trip to Hawaii to visit DD's mother, they will take a month-long trip to Antarctica. Remaining on their Bucket List is Southern Africa and the Taj Mahal.

Stefanie Aschmann's Dragon Boat team has entered an international competition in Adelaide, Australia. The team will leave at the end of March. In the meantime, Stefanie says the team is practicing very hard so they won't embarrass themselves.



Dragon Boat



Dragon Boat Team

Cliff and Sandy Hillebrandt recently moved to a retirement home. An observant retiree recently spotted them pictured in an advertisement for the home.



Cliff and Sandy Hillebrandt in ad for retirement home

PENNSYLVANIA

Bill Bowers, ARCSE Representative

Email: wbowers@comcast.net

Tim Murphy, PA Bugle Editor

Email: vindemurph@verizon.net

The following comes from Tim Murphy, editor of the PA Bugle.

Happy 2016 to each of you! Hope 2016 is a happy, healthy and prosperous (ignore the stock market for now) for all! Congratulations to **Ed Patchcoski and Ron McCorkle** on their recent retirements. Ed, otherwise known as "Patch" has been the key conservationist in Wyoming County for many years. Ron was the technician in the Crawford County office. Wishing you both the best in retirement!

What a winter so far, at least in south central PA. We barely had any snow before January 22-23, when we made up for it with a record 30.2 inches storm in Harrisburg. So now we have exceeded our average annual snow total!

It's time to begin thinking about our September 19th, 2016 annual get-together. Please share your ideas of locations and suggestions for what to visit and what to talk about. We are thinking it's time to be in the central PA area, since we have been to the northwest and the northeast the past two years. Those were great meetings at great locations, and thanks to those who suggested and planned them! A couple of ideas we are kicking around are the Army Heritage Center at the Carlisle War College, and Adams County apple orchards. If you have other ideas or would like to weigh in on one of these, please send your suggestions to either Tim or me (**Bill Bowers**) by February 15th.

Frank Resides provided the following report:

The Southeast PA Retirees met for lunch at Roger's on December 19th, 2015. Those present were: **Len and Mary Beck, Gail Brant, Pat Burkett, Jim and Maria Cropper, Carolyn Gehlen, Tom and Joyce Iivari, Jean Kirkaldie, Joe and Janis McDonough, Shirley Thomas, and Frank and Jane Resides**. It was a beautiful Autumn day and about 40 degrees in the PM.

It was especially nice to see Gail who had not been with us for a while. The Becks had to leave a bit early to attend the 60th wedding anniversary observance for **Charlie and Barbara Ford**.

Speaking of **Charlie**, who was the resident photographer at the NTC, reminds me of a time in the 1970s when he came to Massachusetts to take aerial photos of some of our PL83-566 water resource projects. We flew around the Commonwealth in a Piper Cherokee, door removed, with Charlie leaning out the doorway using his camera, while I navigated with a state map and a handful of Quad sheets. We got many nice pictures and had a good time doing it. We congratulate Charlie and Barbara on their first 60 years together.

Art Holland was up from SC for the holidays. **Tom and Joyce and Jane** and I had lunch with him at Roger's on December 31st. Art is doing well and said "Hello" to everyone. It was good to see him.

Barbara Osgood couldn't make the meeting but sent this in. "I volunteer with Lab Rescue of the Potomac, and have been adopting senior Labs, 19 so far, for the past 20 years. The dogs in the picture are my current old Labs. From left to right: K.D., 13, was a breeder dog in a registered kennel that went out of business; Daffy, 9, was a breeder dog in an Amish puppy mill in Lancaster County, PA; and Raleigh, 12, was a stray to a shelter in southwest VA.



Barbara Osgood with some of her rescued Labrador Retrievers.

Our next meeting at Roger's is planned for July or August of this year.

John Akers wrote that he and **Ann** took a bus trip to Ocean City, MD in September to take in the Sun Fest. They have large tents where they sell crafts and other items. The weather was nice, but it was pretty windy each day. The winds were bringing in the large storm that happened that weekend at Ocean City and piled sand up on the boardwalk.

"On November 7th, a day before my 80th birthday, Ann had a surprise birthday party for me at Homewood, a retirement home complex near Everett with a nice dining room. All six of my children were there, and some of the grandchildren and great grandchildren were also there. Other relatives, neighbors, and members of my Sunday School class came and made about 100 people. Needless to say, I was very surprised and temporarily overwhelmed.

"In November and December I helped verify land use and conservation practices on selected farms in Bedford and Fulton Counties. There were 24 farms in Bedford and 29 farms in Fulton County to visit. This was for the Potomac River Basin as part of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. It was interesting to get into parts of the counties that I normally do not go through."

Don Lindsey reports that he and **Shirley** spent Thanksgiving at Isle of Palms, SC with son **Bruce** and family and Don's sister and family. They had a fun time at the beach (~75 degrees), and what a joy to be with loved ones.

Don also proudly announces that on Dec. 31st, **Camden Jace Lindsey** arrived in Anchorage. Don and Shirley's grandson, **Caleb** is Dad and **Yoshimi** is Mom. And yes, he is the cutest baby ever!

Alan and **Judy Wood** are spending late January and early February in Tahiti with the Penn State Alumni. Anything to get away from winter. Retirement is tough!!

As soon as they get back, Judy is off to Ethiopia for her 6th trip with Lifewater International to teach sanitation. Alan has to stay back in Lebanon updating conservation standards and specs for the State Conservation Engineer!

Rose Marie Updegraff writes that she and **Dale** enjoyed a family vacation over the Christmas holidays on a Mediterranean cruise. The Viking ship was exquisite, newly christened, with great food and onboard entertainment. It was a perfect three-generation trip with their daughter **Tracy**, son-in-law **Rick**, and grandchildren **Juliet** and **Danny**. Starting in Barcelona, Spain, they enjoyed an evening of Flamenco dancing and dinner. The surreal architecture of Antoni Gaudi is everywhere, and Sagrada Familia Cathedral is the centerpiece. Construction began in 1882 and should be completed in 2026. The church, along with Park Guell, is amazing. Monaco was one of the most beautiful places we've ever seen. We visited the Oceanographic Museum and Aquarium, designed by Jacques Cousteau, which sits on a cliff above the sea. St. Nicholas Cathedral is beautiful and is the burial site of Princess Grace and the Grimaldi royal family. Florence was another port and is a beautiful city with art everywhere. We all enjoyed Rome and the many sights. The cruise ended in Rome, but **Rose Marie** and **Dale** stayed on at a hotel. A highlight for **Rose Marie** was a tour of the Colosseum. Even though it has such a bloody, violent history with hundreds of thousands of animals killed, along with slaves and gladiators, it is a fascinating place and an engineering marvel. We also visited Vatican Square with the beautiful St. Peter's Basilica. We enjoyed an operatic concert on New Year's Eve, then watched fireworks from our hotel's roof top. What a way to start the New Year!

Bill and Mary Ann Bowers enjoyed many days on the golf course last fall. No, Mary Ann has not taken up the sport, (Bill plays – not well) but watching grandson, **Ben**, play for his high school team and his run through districts and regional to the PA state tournament. Bill has learned more about ballet than he ever expected watching granddaughter, **Emily**. She also was on the girls' high school golf team.

We have plans to experience baseball spring training in FL again this year in March and have enjoyed attending several Penn State men's ice hockey matches this winter. Bill continues his battle with melanoma. His latest treatment is an immunotherapy, Keytruda (same as has helped Jimmy Carter). Bill has had few side effects and continues normal activities, for which he is most thankful. Your support is most appreciated.

Tim Murphy has been busy since December teaching income tax return preparation for the AARP Tax-Aide program. We have 13 new volunteers in Harrisburg this year, and will be opening new Tax-Aide centers at two branches of the Dauphin County Library, in addition to the two centers that have operated for several years.

Fred Bubbb got a note from **Charlie Ford**, former NNTC photographer, and a couple of embarrassing memories came back. One sunny fall day, Charlie and I were in Tioga County (why do these stories start in Tioga County, but **Don Lindsey** wasn't involved in this one). We crossed a stream orange with mine acid. Charlie needed to stop because of the photo potential of the brightly colored fall leaves and the orange stream. The day after we returned, I got a call from Charlie: "I didn't have any film in the camera--no pictures!" After consoling Charlie, I wondered how a pro like Charlie could slip up like that.

A few weeks later, I needed a photo of **Penny Hallowell**, PA Secretary of Agriculture, for a publication. Penny graciously agreed. I grabbed a camera body and lens and went up Third Street to the Capitol and Penny's office. He graciously agreed to taking off his jacket, rolling up his sleeves and be looking hard at work as I snapped photo after photo. Very happy with myself, I headed back to the 8th floor of the Federal Building. You guessed it, no film. We had two camera bodies. One was loaded, the other had just come back from the repair shop and was empty. My solution: I called the Ag press office and told them I was not satisfied with the photos I took. "Could I come up and get the Secretary's official photo?"

Ed Brzostek recalls: Back in 1974, I worked in the Allentown field office as a new GS-5 trainee. We had a GS-9 Soil Conservationist who was very meek and humble. But we also had a District Manager that was quite the jokester. He slipped a fake Mafia agreement, where our GS-9 conservationist kept his conservation district cooperator agreements in his brief case, when he wasn't looking. When our GS-9 conservationist handed his next conservation cooperator his agreement, the farmer kind

of got upset and questioned why he had to belong to the Mafia just to do conservation work on his farm. Of course, our GS-9 conservationist was quite embarrassed and had to do a lot of explaining. He never left his brief case unattended again.

TEXAS

Arnold King, ARCSE Representative

Email: arnolddking@hotmail.com

Twenty-six members attended the December 18th meeting. Those attending were: **Earl Blakley, Dennis and Kathy Gaster, Dave Stockbridge, Bernelle Baxley, Betty Sisson, Del Rockenbaugh, Anita Plummer, Bernie and Maxine Owen, Helen Shanklin, Doug Seibel, Dave Drennan, Elaine and Billy Don Davis, Mary Mattinson, Berniece and Don Newman, Bill Kuenstler, Jim and Jere Rickman, Marie Garsjo, Joyce Petty, Dennis Erinakes, Willeene King and Arnold King.**

Vice-President **Doug Seibel** called the meeting to order. At this meeting, the new officers took office.

We also received a note from **Joan Trew**:

Just a note about the "Trew News." It was three years ago on 12/20 that **Phil** went to heaven. He did so love all his SCS friends and relished getting the newsletters. A "Thank You" to **Don Newman** who keeps me informed about our really good GEHA health care. I am so grateful that Phil kept that up for us. I am most healthy (and blessed!) for my 83 years.

Still maintain an office for our real estate company (and have continued to be out and about showing, etc.). Am on lots of wonderful boards and enjoy life with the eight grandchildren and now five great-grand ones! So I like staying in touch, as you can imagine. All good wishes to each of you for a healthy 2016!

We received a very nice "Thank you" letter from **Toby Owen**, Chief Executive Officer of the Presbyterian Night Shelter, for our donation to their Holiday Meals Campaign.



Berniece Newman and Billy Don Davis get ready to enjoy lunch.



Del Rockenbaugh and Willeene King discuss their holiday plans.



Jere Rickman said they had received a note from **Harland and Anita Dietz**. They are making friends in Kansas, but really miss their friends in the Fort Worth area. **Billy Don and Elaine Davis** wished everyone a Merry Christmas!

Mary Mattinson reported that she has sold her motor home and her old pick-up truck (270,000+ miles), and bought a car. **Dennis Gaster** must really love his old pick-up truck. This year he bought it a new radiator for Christmas. The old one gave out after 236,000 miles.

Bill and Rita Kuenstler were in Florida in early December, doing work on their house in Santa Rosa Beach. They painted two bedrooms upstairs, the upstairs and downstairs hallways, and the laundry room. If everything goes as planned, they will (finally!) move there in 2016. **Betty Sisson** said that she had just celebrated another birthday by going to the Capitol Grill for dinner, then to see "The Book of Mormon." On the down side, her living room was flooded from a leak in her neighbor's pipes.

Helen Shanklin said that she had been trying to get her home ready for Christmas, but preparations have been slowed because she is dog-sitting a 6-month old black Labrador retriever. Helen, how high do you have to hang decorations to keep them away from the dog?

Dennis Erinakes had been to Fort Leonard Wood, MO, for the graduation of his grandson, **Ethan**, from the US Corp of Engineers School of Engineers. He and his grandson then went pheasant, duck, and goose hunting in Nebraska.

Doug and Jane Seibel went to northwest Kansas for Thanksgiving with his mother.

Seventeen members attended the January 15th meeting. Those attending were: **Earl Blakley, Dennis Gaster, Betty Sisson, Anita Plummer, Bernelle Baxley, Clyde Goodman, Joyce Petty, Barbara Gillum, Don Kapalka, Bill Kuenstler, Rita Kuenstler, Don Newman, Doug Seibel, Bernie Owen, Dennis Erinakes, Billy Don Davis, and Elaine Davis.**

President **Clyde Goodman** called the meeting to order.

Two of our members reported that they have been targets of an attempted "IRS" scam. They received telephone calls telling them they owed money to the IRS, and threatening legal action against them if they didn't give the caller a credit card number and/or bank account number so the debt could be settled immediately. Know that the IRS will never contact you in this way, but will always send you a letter. And, they will never demand personally identifiable information over the phone.

Two Central National Technology Support Center employees retired on Jan. 2nd, 2016: **Cheryl Simmons**, Resource Conservationist/National Technology Specialist; and **Matthew Judy**, Environmental Specialist. **Michelle Lewis**, Human Resources Specialist on the National Centers Servicing Unit staff, also retired on Jan. 15th.

We will have a program for the February 19th meeting. **Bill Adams**, who retired from the National Cartographic and Geospatial Center a few years ago, will give a program on ham radio operation.

Bill and Rita Kuenstler went to Illinois the week before Christmas to visit relatives. Their daughter, **Jackie**, and boyfriend **Matt Dingler** went with them. Everyone had a great visit. She and they made it out of Illinois and back through Missouri before the flood waters came.



Dennis Gaster and Bernie Owen discuss the sad state of the Dallas Cowboys.



Barbara Gillum and Bernelle Baxley chat over coffee prior to the meeting.

Betty Sisson is still excited about TCU's triple-overtime win over Oregon in the Alamo Bowl. But she is disappointed that neither the Kansas State nor Texas A&M fans want to talk about how their teams did in their respective bowl games.

Barbara Gillum announced that she is celebrating the third day of the second year of her new life, which started when she had heart surgery. She never imagined that she would recover so quickly and feel as good as she does now.

On one of her recent walks, **Bernelle Baxley** had a close encounter of the deer kind. A deer jumped across the road and slid on the sidewalk just in front of her. Bernelle, a couple of months ago it was rattlesnakes, now deer are after you. You'd better hire a body guard!

Elaine and Billy Don Davis will again be helping grade test papers for the Range Plant Identification Contest at the Fort Worth Stock Show. This is the 20th year they have done this.

Don Kapalka has been keeping his cell phone handy, awaiting some big news. His daughter-in-law is four days past her due date for her baby. **Dennis Erinakes** said that his grandson, **Ethan**, will start graduate school this semester at Texas A&M-Commerce, pursuing an engineering degree. Dennis' dog, Shelby, has been doing well during his daily exercise/walks, despite having been diagnosed with cancer last fall.

Bernie Owen reported that **Maxine** celebrated her ?? (don't worry, Maxine, I won't give your secret away!) birthday Jan. 10th. Maxine has been undergoing some medical tests, trying to determine the cause of her anemia. The most recent was an upper and lower GI to ensure that nothing was interfering with food absorption.

Bernie said that for 2016 taxes, most forms are available on-line, but the instructions for many were not yet available. His IRS contacts tell him that everything should be available by the last week of January, if you're especially anxious to start working on your 2015 tax return.

Dennis and Kathy Gaster's Christmas was especially enjoyable this year because their 17-month-old granddaughter celebrated Christmas with them. Dennis said she is an expert at unwrapping gifts! Dennis announced that he is starting his 31st year of association with Boy Scout Troop #68 in Arlington. They have a campout scheduled this weekend.

Clyde and Marla Goodman went on a Disney cruise last month. They were somewhat apprehensive about going, since Marla was still in a wheelchair as she recovers from Achilles tendon surgery. But their fears were unrealized, because the Disney crew made sure that everything was taken care of for them. Marla is now able to go out without her wheelchair, but still uses a walker. She continues to improve and gain strength, and should eventually be able to walk without the assistance of a walker.

Fred Chastain, husband of **Diann Wilmart**, a retired SCS employee at the South National Technical Center, died Jan. 23rd, 2016. Please see the In Memoriam section for more details.

WASHINGTON, DC, NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA

John Peterson, ARCSE Representative

Email: jwpeterson@cox.net

John Peterson attended both the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD's) 70th Annual Meeting in Reno, NV and the International Erosion Control Association's (IECA's) annual North American Environmental Conference in February. **John** represents VA on the NACD Board. As at many of these meetings, he gets a chance to reminisce with many other SCS/NRCS retirees. At NACD he saw **Tom Wehri** who represents CA on the NACD Board. **Larry Butler** was also there. **Larry** now hosts his own TV show called *Out On The Land*, which airs on RFD TV. It reaches 46 million households and features conservation work done by SWCDs. **Rich Duesterhaus** still assists NACD as a senior advisor. While at NACD, **John** was recognized by the National Conservation District Employees Association District as the National District Supervisor of 2015. He had previously received that award from the employees in the SE states, and his nomination was then entered into the national competition with those from six other NACD regions. **John** is the Chairman of the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Directors. At the IECA conference, **John** was elected as the Chairman of the International Council, which aids and oversees the work done by IECA's two regional organizations. One region headquartered in Denver, CO, oversees chapters in the America's and Europe. Another region headquartered in Sydney, Australia, oversees chapters in Australia, New Zealand, Africa and Asia. **John's** council has members from Costa Rica, California, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand. Guess he will stay busy.

Bob Kohnke will celebrate his 90th birthday on Saturday, March 5th, 2016. Bob has stayed very active since retirement assisting the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District (NVSWCD) as their first conservation engineer for many years, and then since retirement from that position, as an Associate Director. He still participates in the annual site inspections of the Pohick Watershed Dams and represents the NVSWCD on county committees. Well done Bob. Happy Birthday.

Here is a picture of Bob as he graduated from college in 1948, and took a trip to Paris, France. The lady behind Bob doesn't look like she trusts him at all.



Bob Kohnke, Paris, France, 1948.

WASHINGTON

Gerald Richard, ARCSE Representative

Email: glr52pdr@aol.com

Present at our January and/or February luncheons at the Timber Creek Grill and Buffet were: **Jud Melton, Lennie Husa, Joe Carmack, Harry Riehle, Ralph Schmidt, Larry Edmonds, Hans and Kathryn Krauss, Jerry Richard, Carl Vennes, Ken Kaul, Chet Jahn, Paul Dorning, and Larry Zehm.** **Lennie and Florence Husa** travelled to Bainbridge Island on the west side to spend Christmas with their families. **Ralph Schmidt** is well into the tax season as a volunteer in preparing tax returns for seniors. He experiences some interesting people and several that return year after year and request Ralph for their tax preparer. **Carl Vennes** will be attending and participating in a cribbage tournament in Arizona. **Russ Pringle** sends word from the west side that on October 29th, 2015 he was proud to announce the arrival of his first great granddaughter, **Elaina Roberta Pringle**, weighing in at 8lbs. and 3oz. Russ is enjoying retirement, and one of his major hobbies is genealogy. In fact, Russ says he is eyeball deep in tracing his family history. So, we're guessing that Russ has gone way, way back in researching his family roots. **Chuck Houston** and his wife (Reno, NV) stopped in Spokane and visited with **Ralph and Lynn Schmidt**. They were on their way to Canada to search out some powder snow. **Joe Carmack** is another avid winter skier, doing most of his skiing at Silver Mt.; and it's been a banner ski year with plenty of snow in the northwest. The snowpack is looking good.

WEST VIRGINIA

Peg Reese, ARCSE Representative

Email: pegreesevw@gmail.com

Jim Cooper says "be aware of spider bites," as he needed 50 hours of antibiotics in the hospital because of a suspected one. "Not sure what caused the infection, but when the swelling started to go down, it looked like a Brown Recluse bite, as shown online. Anyway, it could have been very serious, as red spots were all the way up my arm. They used some very potent drugs to stop it; just glad I got to the emergency room in time. Also, it was on my left hand, and I'm a lefty."

Jim Clevenger had a small stroke and is doing rehab in Texas. He is doing well and will be flown to Virginia Beach to be near his son on February 28th.

Luke Hunter, Soil Conservationist, in Ripley retired on December 31st, 2015.

WISCONSIN

James Enlow, ARCSE Representative

Email: ljenlow@att.net

The Wisconsin retirees met for lunch and fellowship on February 11th, 2016 at Grandma Mary's Cafe in Arena, WI. **Gene Hausner** was the gracious host. Those in attendance included **Gene and Georgene Hausner, Bill and Virginia Conner, Stan and Marlene Dingle, Jim and Lynnette Enlow, Howard Gundlach, Gene and Annmarie Nimmer, Robert Plawski, Steve Rake, Robert Uhrig, Michele Wilkinson, Ted manning, Norb Wozniak, Keith Behling, Dan Cotter, Roman and Bea Statz, and Peggy James.**

Dan Cotter told the group about a 30-day trip he made recently to Peru, Argentina, and Chile with a group on motorcycles. Very interesting topography and places to see.

After a wonderful lunch and fellowship, the group drove to Spring Green, WI and toured the Spring Green Timbers Growers Manufacturing facility and retail outlet. They made wonderful wood products for the home from locally grown trees. It was a great tour enjoyed by all.

The next luncheon is scheduled for April 14th in Eau Claire, WI.

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

Jimmy R. Bell, Worland, WY
Otto D. Fischgrabe, Moody, TX

Marc Safley, Chronicler, Senior Conservationist

SENIOR CONSERVATIONIST CHRONICLE**Marc Safley, Chronicler, Senior Conservationist****Senior Conservationist
Jimmy R. Bell****Senior Conservationist, Jimmy R. Bell**

Senior Conservationist **Jimmy R. Bell** was born October 18, 1932, on his grandparents' ranch in Mitchell County, Texas. He was the first of five children. His father was employed by Mobil Oil Co. for many years. Jim graduated from Colorado City, Texas High School in 1951. After high school, he enrolled at Texas A&M University, where he received a BS degree in Range and Forestry in 1955.

After graduation he reported to duty for the Soil Conservation Service in Big Springs, Texas. After attending the SCS training in Big Springs, in July of 1955 he entered the US Army to fulfil his two years required military service. He was honorably discharged in May, 1957, after serving with the 3RD Armored Division in Germany. **Jim and Iris** were married August 8, 1953.

Upon completion of his military service, Jim returned to work for the SCS in May, 1957, in Brady, Texas, as a Range Management Assistant. He transferred to Brownwood, Texas in November, 1958, as a Range Conservationist. In April, 1962, Jim was transferred to Worland, Wyoming as an Area Range Conservationist. In 1974, he was transferred to Sheridan, Wyoming, as Area Range Conservationist. He served as Range Conservationist for three areas (northern half of Wyoming). In 1975 he was selected to be the RC&D coordinator for the Big Horn Basin in Wyoming. Again he was relocated in Worland.

In August, 1977, Jim was asked to assist the US Dept. of Interior, BLM with the development and implementation of a new natural resources inventory system. This detail ended in October 1979. In 1977 Jim received the Wyoming Society of Range Management "Man of the Year" Award. In April 1980, Jim was selected for a special assignment at NASA, Johnson Space Center Houston, Texas. This assignment was as senior scientist to work in a new program named the Agricultural and Resources Surveys Through Aerospace Remote Sensing (AgRiSTARS). Jim served as the research and development leader for the Renewable Resources Inventory Project (RRI), which was a part of the US Forest's Nation Wide Forestry Applications Program (NFAP). Jim retired July 13, 1985, at the end of this five year program.

While working with the RRI, he was asked to design and construct several special field use light tables to accommodate the use of large reels of film from U2 flights to monitor the gypsy moth damage to trees in the north eastern states. The light tables were about four inches in depth but large enough to handle two rolls of 9-inch-wide film lying side by side. It was easy to transport a large number of light tables in a van. Jim received a Certificate Appreciation from Max Peterson, Chief Forest Service.

After retirement, Jim and his wife stayed in Houston until 1994 when Iris retired from Smith Barney Shearson as Assistant Vice President. After her retirement, Jim and Iris returned to Worland, Wyoming. They built a log cabin on Canyon Creek in the Big Horn Mountains, on 840 acres of private land that adjoins the Big Horn National Forest to the north. There are moose, elk, deer, antelope and an occasional bear on the property. He still owns a small irrigated farm near Worland, where he raised quarter horses until he got too old to break and train the new ones. Jim's health is still good. He continues to hike and fish the streams along the divide of the Big Horn Mountains.

The Bells have raised four children, have seven grandchildren and 18 great grandchildren. They love to celebrate the many birthdays that come along. They are also very active in their church activities. Jim has served as a deacon in most of the churches he has attended.

He has been an avid hunter and fisherman, and he has guided big game hunters for years. In 2014 Jim wrote a 380 page book, [We Rode the High Country](#), about his life, career and recreation. He has presented many papers and contributed to many publications relating to remote sensing, as well as cover photos for Society of Range Management, and Soil Conservation Magazine (February 1967).

Jim has thoroughly enjoyed the 30 years he spent with the SCS in Natural Resources Management.

OBITUARY INFORMATION

Ron Marlow, Secretary-Treasurer

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

Surname

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

- Almquist** **Alton Wilhelm Almquist** (100) passed away peacefully on February 4, 2016 in Vacaville, California. He was born at St. Hilaire, MN, the fourth child of eight. He was baptized in Augustana (Swedish) Lutheran Church, St. Hilaire and confirmed in St. Hilaire Lutheran Church. In April 1942, he enlisted in the United States Navy, May 23, 1942. His boot training was at Great Lakes Training Station. He was with the initial invasion fleet at Gela Beach, Sicily and Salerno, Italy, Normandy, France, North African campaign, England and also worked at the Naval Ordinance Plant in Pocatello, ID. Due to a severe hearing loss he was discharged from the Philadelphia Naval Hospital in 1945. After his discharge from the service, **Alton** enrolled at the University of Minnesota and graduated with a bachelor's degree in Agricultural Engineering. He then returned to the family farm and enrolled in graduate school at U of M. He worked for the Bureau of Indian Affairs in South Dakota and Arizona. On October 14, 1950, Alton was united in marriage to **Constance Esther Conrad**, whom he had met while serving in the navy. They were married at Foundry Methodist Church in Washington, DC. In July, 1958, **Alton** started working for Soil Conservation Service in Concord, CA. He designed numerous flood control projects throughout the state. In August, 1963 the couple moved to El Cerrito, CA. He became a registered civil engineer in 1966. In November, 1973, the couple moved to Davis, CA and on March 31, 1984, he retired from the Soil Conservation Service. **Alton** was a long-time member of the American Society of Agricultural Engineers. He was a life member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Disabled American Veterans. **Alton** is survived by a brother, two sisters, and several nieces and nephews. He is preceded in death by wife in 1989. Cards can be sent to his "oldest living relative", his sister Mrs. Olive Dunman, 6940 33rd Avenue, Wheatridge, CO 80333.
- Baker** **James (Jim) Edward Baker** (75) of Johnstown, New York passed away on January 29, 2016. He graduated from Paul Smith's College with a degree in Forestry, then on to Cornell University with a Bachelor's Degree in Horticultural. **Jim** began his employment with the USDA Soil Conservation Service in 1965 and worked until 1996 holding positions in Ellicottville, Johnstown, Chestertown & Warrensburg, NY, ending his federal career as the Resource Conservation and Development Coordinator. He served for many years as an officer and member of the F, J & G Square Dance Club and Cross Trails of Canajoharie. He is survived by his loving wife of 54 years, **Dorothy Pelzer Baker** of Johnstown; two daughters, **Amy E. Baker (John Smith)** of Voorheesville; **Betsy L. Martineau (Lance) of Delanson**; three grandchildren, and four great-grandsons. Donations can be made to Johnstown Reformed Church, 351 North Perry Street, Johnstown, NY 12095.
- Barefoot** Honorary Member and Senior Conservationist **Everette Glenn Barefoot** (91) of Four Oaks, North Carolina passed away on February 14, 2016. **Everette** retired in 1980 with 32 years of service as Soil Conservation Technician in the Smithfield Field Office. He spent his entire career in Johnston County. After retirement he established a strawberry farm and later founded "Barefoot Hams", one of the most respected ham-curing operations in the southeast. **Everette** was a WWII veteran. He enlisted in the US Army Air Corps in December 1943. He served as a nose-gunner on a B-24 with the 8th Air Force stationed in England. He participated in over 20 bombing missions in Western Europe. **Everette** was awarded the Air Medal and two Oak Leaf Clusters for meritorious service with the Army Air Force. His B-24 crew of 10 maintained contact after the war and beginning in 1954 they began having annual reunions. He was the last surviving member of the crew. He was discharged as Staff Sergeant on November 19, 1945. When he returned home, he married his high school sweetheart and loving wife of 67 years, **Jean Cooper Barefoot**, who passed away October, 2012. **Everette** was an active member of the Four Oaks America Post and was a loyal and supportive member of Four Oaks United Methodist Church. **Everette** is survived by his two sons, **Stephen Glenn Barefoot** of Durham and **Michael Cooper Barefoot** of Chapel Hill, grandson, **John Mallary Barefoot Klein** of Portland, Oregon, and niece, **Pamela Barefoot** whom he referred to as the daughter he never had.
- Bell** Senior Conservationist **Elbert LeRoy Bell** (93) of Sedan, Kansas passed away at the Masonic Home in Wichita, Kansas, on September 8, 2015. **Elbert** was born on a farm in Washington County, Kansas. He attended Kansas State University and graduated in 1949 with a Bachelor's Degree in Agronomy, majoring in soils with a minor in economics. He took graduate studies at Cornell University and the United States Department of Agriculture. After graduation he moved to Ottawa, KS, where he had his first job with the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) and later holding posts in Osage City, Atwood, and Colby before moving to Sedan in 1962. During this time **Elbert** served for nine years as a Methodist Youth sponsor. He also provided sermons every 4th Sunday for the Niotaze Methodist Church. He authored four books for the SCS on soil types with one focused on Chautauqua County. In 1971, he was transferred to Fort Scott, KS, where he retired in 1979 as a soil survey party leader. In 1983, he and **Eleanor** moved back to Sedan, KS where they lived until 2015 as active members of the local community. In his young adulthood, **Elbert** was assigned to the CANOL project in the southeastern part of Alaska, Yukon, and Northwest Territories of Canada for 15 months. He worked as a carpenter on construction work under extreme working conditions in arctic weather. He also was a heavy diesel equipment operator for 18 months on the island of Shemya, on outer end of the Aleutian chain. **Elbert** was very proud that he was a 32nd degree Mason and Shriner.

Elbert is survived by his wife of 68 years, **Eleanor**; his son, **James** and wife Wilma **Bell** of Belknap; daughter, **Sandra Bell** of Scottsdale, Arizona; and daughter, Deborah and husband **Jerry Sturm** of Englewood, Colorado. He also leaves six grandchildren and nine great grandchildren.

- Benson** **Billy Keith Benson** (85) of Union, Kentucky passed away on February 12, 2016 at his residence. Billy retired from the USDA Soil Conservation Service in 1994 as Deputy State Conservationist of Tennessee. He had 40 years of service in Kentucky and Tennessee. He graduated from the University of Kentucky in 1952. **Billy** is preceded in death by a daughter, **Susan Annette Benson**. He is survived by his loving wife of 62 years, **Edith Reynolds Benson** and a daughter, **Brenda Benson Schulz (Stephen)**. Memorial donations are requested to the American Cancer Society, 701 W. Mohammed Ali Blvd., Louisville, KY 40203
- Berndt** **Gertrude (Trudy) Berndt** (77) of Bridgman, Michigan passed away February 21, 2016 following complications from surgery. She was the wife of ARCSE member **Loren Berndt** who survives. **Loren** retired from SCS in 1993 as Assistant State Soil Scientist in East Lansing, Michigan. **Trudy** was born Marquette. She met her husband, **Loren**, on a blind date in early 1973. They enjoyed 43 years together, traveling to all the lower 48 states and several Canadian Provinces.
- Campbell** **Charles "Charlie" Campbell** (80) of King George, Virginia passed away in the company of his loving family on February 8, 2016. He is survived by his beloved wife of 41 years, **Carol Campbell**. **Carol**, an ARCSE member, retired from the Soil Conservation Service in 1992 as a procurement analyst in the Administrative Services Division. He is also survived by seven children, Charlie's three, **Daniel Campbell**, **Deanna Olson**, and **Douglas Campbell**, and Carol's four, **Michael Moseng**, **Pamela Odle (Scott)**, **Timothy Moseng (Joan)** and **Laurie Strickland (Travis)**. Survivors also include 14 grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren and many other family members and friends. **Charlie** retired from the Government Printing Office after 31 years of service before enjoying 24 years of retirement. He enjoyed dancing, golf, boating, and traveling, but his greatest enjoyment was spending time with his large family and many friends. In lieu of flowers; memorial contributions may be made to The Alzheimer's Foundation of America, www.alzfdn.org or the St Anthony of Padua, "Building Our Future," campaign, 11 S. Irving Ave., Colonial Beach, VA 22443. Please sign the online guestbook at nashandslawfh.com
- Cavanaugh** Member and Senior Conservationist **John Patrick Cavanaugh** (89) of Chino Valley, Arizona passed away on July 23, 2015. **Pat** was born in Van Hook, North Dakota. He was called Pat since his birth because of five other Johns in the family. He was a 4th degree Knight of Columbus. He was the oldest of six children. **Pat** served in the Navy in WWII. After his honorable discharge, he married his first wife, **Julia V. (Kina) Edmunds**. He attended Montana State College in Bozeman, Montana using the G.I. Bill. He went to work with the USDA Soil Conservation Service. He retired in 1989 as a Planning Engineer at the SCS National Technical Center. After retiring, he worked as a consultant for FEMA. His career took him throughout the U.S. and to several foreign countries. Following Kina's passing, after 56 years of marriage, Pat found love again and married his second wife, **Joyce E. Gray**. They shared 11 years together. He is survived by his second wife, **Joyce**; seven children - **Michael (Rose)**, **Arllys (Richard)**, **Kathleen (Ronald)**, **David**, **John Jr. (Tammy)**, **Susan (Kim)**, and **Christopher (Jochebed)**; three stepchildren - **Edward (Patricia)**, **Michael (Karen)** and **Patricia (Ronald)**; 24 grandchildren; 12 step grandchildren; 31 great grandchildren; 31 step great-grandchildren; and one great-great grandchild.
- Chastain** **Fred Chastain** (91) of Cleburne, Texas passed away January 23, 2016. He was born in Wills Point, Texas. He served his country in the United States Army. **Fred** was a member of the Cleburne Seventh-day Adventist Church. He was preceded in death by two wives, Juanita and **Lois**; daughter, **Karen Sue Morgan**. Fred is survived by his wife of eight years, **Diann Wilmart** of Keene; a son, and three grandsons. **Diann** worked for the Soil Conservation Service at the South National Technical Center.
- Elliott** Senior Conservationist **Loren Spencer Elliott** (92) was born on his parent's farm in Rice Township, Ringgold County, Iowa. He attended Iowa State College on a Sears and Roebuck scholarship and monthly \$20 loans from twin sister, **Lois**, along with her fine 1941 Christmas gift of a new Underwood Portable Typewriter. **Loren** entered the US Navy on May 26, 1943 and was honorably discharged February 17, 1946 at Ft Snelling, St. Paul, MN. He served on numerous bases and one year aboard the U.S.S. Makassar Strait CVE-91. **Loren** returned to Iowa State College and graduated in 1949 with a B.S. degree in Agricultural Engineering. He retired December 31, 1982 from the Soil Conservation Service, USDA, having served as assistant area engineer in Ft Dodge, planning engineer in the Little Sioux Watershed at Sioux City; area engineer in Topeka, KS; and Watershed and River Basin Engineer for the State of Iowa located in Des Moines. He lived in the Des Moines area from 1963 until he moved to Mesa, AZ in 1993. **Loren** returned to Mount Ayr as a resident of Clearview Home and he passed away there on January 22, 2016. He was preceded in death by his middle son **Bob** and all of his siblings. Survivors include his wife of 68 years **Alma** of Clearview Home in Mount Ayr, IA; sons **Mark (Susan) Elliott** of Gallup, New Mexico and **Jim Elliott of Houston**, TX; daughter-in-law **Margaret Elliott** of Des Moines, IA; and three grandchildren.
- Elmore** Life Member **Joseph L. (Joe) Elmore** (82) passed away on November 17, 2015, at his home in Baxter, Tennessee, on the farm where he was born. He began his career with Soil Conservation Service in 1957 as a Soil Conservationist Student Trainee in Gainesboro, TN. He was a Soil Conservationist in Gainesboro, an Administrative Assistant in Albuquerque, NM, and a Classification Specialist in Washington, DC. He worked as State Administrative Officer in Albuquerque, NM, Columbia, MO, and Columbia, SC. He also was Assistant State Administrative Officer in Nashville, TN, and RC&D Coordinator in Chattanooga, TN. He retired in 1986 as a Management Analyst in the Productivity Enhancement Division of SCS in Washington, DC. He was a Korean War veteran. **Joe** is survived by his wife of 35 years **Dianne Elmore** and son **Lynell (Christie) Elmore**, of Baxter, TN, and daughter **JoAnn (Michael)** of Cookeville, TN. Survivors also include six grandchildren and one great-

grandson.

- Faragher** **Tom Faragher** (91) of Roseville, MN passed away on February 13, 2016. Tom worked as a geologist for the Soil Conservation Service, retiring in 1984. Tom was married to his wife, **Irene**, for 62 happy years and is survived by her. He is also survived by two sons, four grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren. Condolences can be sent to **Irene** at 2821 Galtier St., Roseville, MN 55113
- Fisher** **Phyllis Marie Fisher** (86) passed away quietly on January 21, 2016 following complications of heart surgery. She was the wife of ARCSE member **Charles Fisher**, retired State Soil Scientist with SCS. Phyllis was born in Dysart, Iowa. The youngest of three sisters, **Phyllis** was raised on a typical Iowa farmstead. After high school, she attended Iowa State Teachers College, now University of Northern Iowa, graduating in 1951. She taught home economics and science at a series of small Iowa high schools. **Phyllis** is survived by her husband of 60 years; sons **David (Kristine)** of San Jose, CA, **Dennis (Peggy)** of Decatur, IL; and two granddaughters. She was a member of the First United Methodist Church in Ames.
- Habiger** Member **James N. Habiger** (78) of Shell Knob, Missouri, passed away December 24, 2015 in Springfield, Missouri, from kidney and heart failure. He grew up in Republic, Kansas. He is survived by his wife, **Jeanette**, of 57 years; daughter, **Jana (Mark) McKinney** of McPherson, Kansas; son, **Mark (Janet) Habiger** of Salado, TX; and two granddaughters and two grandsons. **Jim** started his career with the USDA Soil Conservation Service after graduating from Fort Hays Kansas State College 1959. His long career started in Mission, South Dakota, and took him to Scott City, Kansas, Minneapolis, Kansas, Boise, Idaho, and finally as the State Conservationist of Kansas for the NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service) in Salina, Kansas for 10 years. In 1997 **Jim** retired and he and **Jeanette** moved to their dream home on Table Rock Lake near Shell Knob, Missouri.
- Hail** **Catherine Calvert Hail** (90) of Shelbyville, Kentucky passed away on February. 20, 2016 in Louisville. She was a native of Lexington. She was a member of Shelbyville First Christian Church and a retired teacher. She was preceded in death by her husband, **Carl W. Hail Sr.** **Carl** was soil scientist with the Soil Conservation Service, retiring in 1986. She is survived by her daughter, **Rebecca Hail Harding**, Sarasota, FL; sons, **Carl W. Hail, Jr.**, Louisville and **Dr. Mark E. Hail (Amy)**, Yardley, PA.
- Jones** **Mavis Maray Jones** (88) passed away January 13, 2016 in Stillwater, Oklahoma with his family by his side. He grew up near Granite, Oklahoma. **Mavis** honorably served in the United States Navy during World War II and received the US Navy World War II Victory Medal. **Mavis** attended Oklahoma State University, graduating with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Civil Engineering in 1960. He worked for the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) for 38 years, retiring in 1986 as the State of Oklahoma's Watershed Construction Engineer. **Mavis** worked in construction offices in Cheyenne, Wewoka, and Shawnee. During his career, more than 1,650 of Oklahoma's 2,107 watershed dams were constructed. During his SCS tenure he was named the Oklahoma Soil Conservation Engineer of the Year in 1985. After retirement, he worked as a private consulting engineer for the Oklahoma Conservation Commission where he focused on the development of wetland habitat in Oklahoma. He was recognized with the Wetlands Pioneer Award in 1994 by the Oklahoma Chapter of the Wildlife Society. He is survived by his wife of 66 years **Willene** of the home, his sons **Gary Jones (Christine Miller)** of Stillwater, **David (Diana) Jones** of Edmond, OK, daughter **Lori (Greg) Boyer** of Stillwater, and five grandchildren. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Mavis Jones Engineering Scholarship care of the OSU Foundation, POB 1749, Stillwater OK 74076-1749 or call the OSU Foundation at 405-385-5100. Condolences can be sent to his family: Willene Jones, 2904 North Crescent Drive, Stillwater, OK 74075
- Jungk** **Mark L. Jungk** (54) of St. Joseph, Missouri passed away on November 7, 2015. He was born in Des Moines, Iowa. Mark graduated from Benedictine College with a piano performance degree, and later obtained a physical therapy degree at MU. He worked at Saint Luke's Health System. Mark is survived by: his wife of 26 years, **Mary Beth**; and son, **Brian**; and his mother, Louise. **Mary Beth Jungk** is a Resource Conservationist with NRCS in St. Joseph.
- Kerl** **Harriet Louise Kerl** (88) of Auburn, Nebraska passed away on January 29, 2016. She was the wife of **Donald Kerl** who worked for SCS in Valley City, ND and numerous places in NE, and retired in Auburn, NE. **Harriet** graduated in 1949 from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. She met Donald Kerl, the love of her life, in a freshman college Botany class. Survivors include two daughters and two sons, seven grandchildren and six great grandchildren. Memorials are suggested to First United Methodist Church or Auburn Memorial Library.
- Lawrence** **Donald Lawrence** (77) of Jonesville, Louisiana passed away on May 11, 2015. **Donald** was proud to serve his Country in the United States Army. He was a forester for many years working for Fisher Lumber Company and USDA/NRCS. He is survived by his wife of 54 years **Geraldine (McMillin) Lawrence** and son, **Greg Lawrence** of Ruston, Louisiana.
- Loe** **James Loe** (84) of Monroe, Louisiana passed away on June 5, 2015. He is survived by his wife of 61 years, **Robbie Barnett Loe**, two daughters, five grandchildren, and two great grandchildren. He attended LSU and graduated from LA Tech University. He was a member of the United States Air Force. He was employed for 33 years by the USDA Soil Conservation Service retiring in 1990.
- Long** Senior Conservationist and member **Donald R. Long** (88) of Springfield, Illinois formerly of Hillsboro, IL, passed away on February 13, 2016, at Memorial Medical Center in Springfield, IL. **Don** was born in White County, IL. He is received his Bachelor's Degree, in Ag Education, from University of Illinois in 1949. He married Martha White on June 4, 1950 in Salem, IL. She survives in Springfield, IL. He worked as an Ag Teacher at Shawneetown, IL then worked for USDA in Soil Conservation Service in Menard County, Logan County and Montgomery County. **Don** served as a Navy Coreman in the United States Navy during World War II. He was a member of the United

Methodist Church in Hillsboro, IL, where he sang in the choir; Kiwanis Club; Coached Little League baseball; and was very active with many other community activities. Along with his wife, **Don** is survived by three children, **Cindy Long Adams (Joe)** of Chandler, AZ & East Hartford, CT; **Mike (Glenda) Long** of Rochester, IL & **Stan (Darcy) Long** of Bastrop, TX; six grandchildren, and eight great grandchildren. Memorials are suggested to the Hillsboro United Methodist Church Heat & Air Conditioning Fund.

- Lowe** Member **Robert L. Lowe** (84) of Amboy, Illinois passed away peacefully on December 22, 2015, at Serenity Hospice and Home in Oregon. He was born in Pana, Illinois, and graduated from the University of Illinois College of Agriculture in 1953. He was employed as District Conservationist for 41 years, first serving as a trainee in Hancock and Macon Counties, then D.C. for 12 years in Cumberland County, and then assisted Whiteside County while also serving as D.C. in Lee County, prior to his retirement in 1993. **Robert** was a Veteran of the US Army. He was an active member of Zion United Methodist Church in Mendota, and had been actively involved in DeKalb Dist. United Methodist Church, serving as Lay Leader for 8 years as well as Annual Member to conference for many years. He was also active in the Northern Illinois Conference of the United Methodist Church. **Robert** was a Freemason belonging to the Illinois Central Lodge #178, a member of the Amboy American Legion, and the Amboy Lions Club. He leaves to mourn his wife of 63 years, **Shirlene**; daughter **Susan (Stephen) Florschuetz** of Sublette; daughter-in-law **Barbara (Gary Lohse) Lowe** of Blue Grass, IA; 5 grandchildren, and 7 great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his son **Jeffrey Lowe**, and great-granddaughter **Rosa Florschuetz**. Memorials have been established to Serenity Hospice, Zion United Methodist Church, and Midwest Mission Distribution Center.
- Martin** Honorary Member and Senior Conservationist **Benny Martin** (91) of Camden, South Carolina passed away on February 13, 2016. He was born in Buhl, Idaho. Upon graduating from high school, he enlisted in the U. S. Navy and served for three years in World War II, assigned to the Naval Amphibian Forces in the Pacific. After the war, **Benny** attended the University of Idaho and received a BS degree in 1951. Upon graduation he went to work for the USDA Soil Conservation Service. He lived and worked in five states. In 1981 he led a USDA technical team to mainland China for a year. His final career years were spent in Washington, DC as Assistant Chief for the Midwest states. He then spent a year in the Philippines as a conservation consultant. He enjoyed travel in the United States as well as in Europe. **Benny** was a member of the VFW Post 5928 and the American Legion, and was a life member of the Masonic Lodge #48 in Arco, Idaho. Besides his wife of 55 years, **Margaret "Marty" Foley Martin**, he was predeceased by a daughter, Pamela **Marie M. Fisher**. He is survived by three daughters, **Peggy M. McBride (Kevin Leedy)**, **Toni Tuders**, and **Leeann Martin**, five grandchildren, six great grandchildren, and his special friend **Carol Meckstroth**. Memorials may be made to Lyttleton Street United Methodist Church, 1206 Lyttleton Street, Camden, SC 29020, or a charity of one's choice.
- Perkins** **Lewis Harold Perkins** (85) of Hodgenville, Kentucky passed away on October 30, 2015, at the Hardin Memorial Hospital in Elizabethtown. He was a retired LaRue County District Conservationist and school bus driver for LaRue County Schools, a member of the Hodgenville First Baptist Church and a 54 year member of the B. R. Young Lodge #132 F&AM. Lewis also served as a Conservation District Board member. Lewis is survived by his wife of 61 1/2 years, **Jean Becker Perkins**, three sons, six grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.
- Pick** **Thomas L. Pick** (66) passed suddenly on January 16th, while skiing south of Cooke City, Montana. He was a hunter, fisherman, gardener, chef, woodworker, writer, artist, swing dancer, adventurer, and lover of literature. **Tom** served his country in the Vietnam era, as an Agricultural Advisor on a Reconstruction Team in Iraq in 2009-11, and with the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service over a 35-year with a distinguished career in several western states. **Tom** is survived by his wife **Kathleen Williams**, his two sons, **Calen** and **Sander Pick** and their mother **Jessie Close**, his mother **Emma Lou Petitgirard**, siblings **Cindy**, **Jeff**, and **Mike**. In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to the Tom Pick Fund at Gallatin Valley Pheasants Forever, P.O. Box 4220, Bozeman, MT 59772. Share your photos and stories about **Tom** at www.inmemoryofthomaspick.com.
- Renard** **Kenneth George Renard** (81) passed on February 8, 2016. Ken earned his BS and MS in Civil Engineering from the University of Wisconsin, and his Doctorate in Civil Engineering from the University of Arizona. He is survived by his wife if of 64 years, **Virginia** and two daughters, a son, and four grandchildren, and one great granddaughter. **Ken** started working for ARS in 1957 and was a leader in the development of USLE and RUSLE. **Ken** retired from ARS as Director of the USDA Southwest Watershed Research Center in 1994.
- Rexroat** **David Bernard Rexroat** (75) passed away peacefully on the morning of Feb. 11, 2016, after a long battle against multiple infections, while being attended to by his wife and oldest daughter at home in Natomas, California. **David** retired as the State Administrative Officer for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. He was a Mason with the Woodland Lodge 81, a Shriner with the Ben Ali Shriners. He was preceded in death by his first wife, **Shirley Anne Rexroat**. He is survived by wife, **Shirley Kay Rexroat**; three daughters, **Valerie Rennie**, **Michelle Huffine** and **Stacy Dusseau**; four stepchildren; 15 grandchildren; and 15 great-grandchildren.
- Rightmeier** **Lyle S. Rightmeier** (92) of Mankato, Kansas, was born on a farm four miles south of Montrose, Kansas. He passed away on February 16, 2016, at the Jewell County Immediate Swing Bed, Mankato, Kansas. **Lyle**, known as "**Ike**," was one of seven children. **Ike** graduated from Montrose High School. He joined the United States Army in April 17, 1943 at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and was discharged January 12, 1946, with the rank of Corporal serving in the 124th Horse Cavalry regiment. **Ike** lived his earlier years in Montrose, moving to Mankato in 1951. He worked for the Soil Conservation Service as a surveyor and soil conservation technician, serving his entire career in the Mankato Field Office. He retired in 1981. He was a member of the Harmony United Methodist Church, Mankato, Kansas. He is survived by his wife of 66 years **Virginia** of Mankato; daughter – **Paula (Terry) Cherney**, of Agenda, Kansas; son – **Roger Lyle Rightmeier** of Mankato, Kansas; three grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. He enjoyed singing in barbershop quartets and gaining his private pilot license after his retirement. **Lyle** requested

immediate cremation, and service will be held at a later date to honor his life. Online condolences can be left at www.melbymortuary.com.

- Schoepp** **Arnold V. Schoepp** (86) passed away on January 24, 2016 at Sanford off Sunset in Mandan, North Dakota. He was in the U.S. Army, 1951-1953, and served in Japan and Korea. **Arnold** served in the Montana National Guard and the North Dakota National Guard, achieving the rank of Sergeant Major of the 164 Group Command at Bismarck, ND. He began working for the SCS in Hazen, ND in Feb. 1958 and also worked in Fairview, MT, and the Bismarck field office retiring in December 31, 1988. He is survived by his son **Gary (Karen) Schoepp**, Sidney, MT; daughter **Ava Schoepp**, Bismarck, ND; son **Kirk (Patty) Schoepp**, Williston, ND; daughter **Lucia (Jose) Villarreal**, Medicine Bow, WY; 10 grandchildren, 17 great-grandchildren, and three sisters. He was preceded in death by his parents, his wife **Vernice**, two brothers, and a grandson.
- Sipes** **Bobby L. Sipes** (77) of Mound City, Missouri passed away on January 1, 2016. He was born in Bolckow, Missouri. The family moved to Holt County in 1943. He received his high school diploma on July 30, 1959 while serving in the Army. He served three years. The family lived in Bigelow, MO. where **Bob** worked for the Missouri Department of Transportation. In 1978 he started working for the USDA Soil Conservation Service as a Soil Conservation Technician at Mound City and remained there until his retirement in 2000. He joined the Big Lake Baptist Church in 1968, where he served as Sunday School Director for 35 years. He was also a member of the Masonic Lodge in Mound City and a member of the Scottish Rite. He was an avid carver of birds of North America, and carved over 600 pieces in his lifetime. Survivors include his wife of 54 years, **Linda**, of the home; daughter, **Susan (Terry) Ecker** of Elmo, Missouri; son, **Robbie (Tracy) Sipes** of Big Lake, Missouri; and five grandchildren. Memorials: Big Lake Baptist Church.
- Skinner** **David Michael Skinner ("Dave")** (68) passed away on January 28, 2016 at his Moscow, Idaho home. He graduated from Washington State University in 1970 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture, specializing in Soils. He joined the Peace Corps and served in Iran from 1970-1972. **Dave** traveled throughout Europe and North Africa during this time where he climbed Mt. Kenya before returning home in 1973. He was a first class Botanist specializing in Native Plants of the Palouse. **Dave** spent 30 years working for the NRCS Plant Materials Center in Pullman, WA. He cared deeply about gardening, the Palouse, nature, environmental issues, National Parks, Baseball, square dancing, cribbage, and photography. He was a founding member of the Palouse Preservation Foundation and Koppel Farm. He is survived by his wife **Jo** at their Moscow home; his son **Sam (Melissa)** of Boise, ID; his daughter **Maggie** of Twin Falls, ID; his mother **Dorothy** of Spokane, WA and brother **Greg (Monica)** also of Spokane. He was preceded in death by his father **Don** and sister **Cathy**.
- Stout** Honorary Member and Senior Conservationist **Maurice "Mike" Stout Jr.** (92) of Lincoln, Nebraska passed away on February 18, 2016. He was born in Winchester, Ohio. He was a U.S. Marine veteran, WWII, Pacific Theatre. Mike was a soil scientist for Soil Conservation Service and retired in 1987 as Director of the Midwest National Technical Center. Survivors: wife of 71 years, **Maxine (Young)**. Sons: **Mike (Dianne)**, **Dr. Steve (Peggy)**, **Dr. J. Patrick (Karen)** and **Jeff (Sandy) Stout**; daughter, **Jane (Wayne) Munsterman**; daughter-in-law, **Paula (David) Schuelke**; and ten grandchildren; and nine great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by a grandson, **B.J. Stout**. Memorials, in lieu of flowers, to Eastridge Presbyterian Church. Condolences can be left at lincolnfh.com.
- Tindal** **James Forrest Tindal** (83) of Springfield, Missouri passed away on January 4, 2016. He was born in Anaconda, MT. **Forrest** was an area engineer with the Soil Conservation Service. He is survived by a son **Bruce Tindall**, a daughter **Monica Tindall**, and a brother **Doug Tindall**.
- Turner** **Stephen L. Turner** (99) of New Philadelphia, Ohio passed away on January 16, 2016 after a brief illness. He was born in McKees Rocks, PA. After graduating in 1935 from Stonecreek High School, Stephen left the family farm in Stonecreek to work in the steel mills in Gary, Ind. In 1941, Stephen enlisted in the U.S. Army as a member of the 27th Infantry Division as a Technology Sgt. He was deployed to the Gilbert, Mariana Islands, as well as Saipan, and as a Platoon Sgt. was in charge of 43 personnel which were involved in some of the worst battles of the war. Injured in the battle, Stephen was a recipient of the Purple Heart Medal. Upon his discharge from the Army, Stephen attended THE Ohio State University, graduating in 1951 with a Bachelor's Degree in Agriculture. One of his fondest memories at OSU was attending the "Snow Bowl" of the 1950s. While in Columbus, Stephen met the love of his life, **Wilma Hazel Caldwell** who precedes him in passing. Stephen and Wilma were married June 13, 1953. After graduating from OSU, **Stephen** was employed by the United States Department of Agriculture and became the District Conservationist in Tuscarawas, Holmes and Noble County, a career that would last 30 years. He was a member of the Quaker Club, New Philadelphia Elks and Emmanuel Lutheran Church for many years. He is survived by his son, **Gregory (Georgianne) Turner** of New Philadelphia and many nieces and nephews. In addition to his wife and parents, **Stephen** is preceded in death by four sisters and four brothers. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made in Stephen's memory to Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 202 E. High Ave., New Philadelphia, OH 44663.
- Walker** Life Member **Ronald "Ron" Dean Walker** (82) of Ankeny, Iowa passed away January 29, 2016, surrounded by loved ones. **Ron** was born in Ida Grove, Iowa. He was married to **Janice Kasner** on August 31, 1957 and they lived in Merville, Iowa until moving to Ankeny, Iowa in 1969. He worked 43 years as a drill rig operator for the USDA Soil Conservation Service. He served in the United States Navy during the Korean War. **Ron** loved watching Iowa State Cyclone football, where he regularly cheered and enjoyed tailgate parties for over 35 years. He was an avid collector of John Deere tractors and other toys. He is survived by his wife of 58 years **Janice** of Ankeny, Iowa; children **Debra (Joel) Twardokus** of Princeton, WI; **Darcy (Tim) Fitzgerald** of Chariton, Iowa; and **Rusty Walker** of Ankeny, Iowa; 8 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren and many nieces and nephews. He is preceded in

death by his son, **Randy "Walk."**

Welsh Member and Senior Conservationist **Gerald B. Welsh** (86) of Little River, South Carolina passed away. He is survived by his wife **Alice**. **Gerald** retired from the Soil Conservation Service in 1990 as the National Research Coordinator.

Work **Ralph Work "Mike"** (95) passed away January 25, 2016, in Troy, New York. **Mike** was born in Ithaca, and was one of four children born to the late Professor Paul Work and Grace Nicholas Work. **Mike** attended Cornell University where he received both his undergraduate and graduate degrees. In 1943, he enlisted and served as an Aviation Cadet Trainee in the Armed Forces and served his country until he was Honorably Discharged in 1946. **Mike** continued his public service with the USDA Soil Conservation Service as a Soil Scientist for over 40 years until his retirement in 1987. He was predeceased by his loving wife of 52 years, **Eleanor Smith** of Rutland, Vt. They had a son, **Aaron William Work**, who was born in 1956 and died shortly after birth. **Mike** was an avid collector of bottles, stamps, railroad memorabilia, coins and fishing stories. He was a lifelong supporter of Trout Unlimited and donated many days improving habitat along the Battenkill and Hoosick Rivers. In addition, he was a lifelong member of the Boy Scouts. Over the years, he and his wife **Eleanor** assembled one of the finest collections of Saratoga type carbonated water bottles. **Mike** donated the majority of his collection to the National Bottle Museum, of which he was a founding member. **Mike** is survived by many nieces and nephews. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to The National Bottle Museum, 76 Milton Ave. Ballston Spa, NY, 12020. To leave a message for the family, please visit LGFuneralHome.com.

DEADLINE FOR MAY/JUNE 2016 NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS IS APRIL 25, 2016



Reflection Pond, Denali National Park, Alaska.



The Stars and Stripes raised on Mt. Suribachi, Iwo Jima, 1945. On display at the Museum of the US Marine Corps, Quantico, VA.



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