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# NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter for Retired SCS and NRCS Employees

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## NOTES FROM THE POTOMAC

*Doug Lawrence and Patty Lawrence*

**Pocket Book**—The 2020 cost of living adjustment (COLA) for Federal retirees is currently looking like it will be less than last year's COLA given the lower levels of inflation so far this year. However, COLA increases are based only on 3rd quarter (July, August, and September) inflation rates compared to the prior year's 3rd quarter. Because oil and gas prices have a significant influence on the Consumer Price Index for Urban Workers (CPI-W) used to compute the COLA; and because the US has decided that it will not renew waivers that allowed countries to buy Iranian oil without facing US sanctions; there is a chance that the COLA could be higher than anticipated because of higher oil and gas prices.

In addition, it's worth mentioning that the tax reform package that was passed about 15 months ago applied "Chained CPI," an alternative method for measuring inflation, to the tax code. What retirees with indexed annuities need to know is that the chained CPI dampens inflation by as much as 0.2 to 0.3 percentage points. Consequently, many advocacy groups are concerned that in an effort to save money on retirement benefits, chained CPI may be used in the future to compute COLAs. We shall see.

**2018 Farm Bill**—The 2018 Farm Bill implementation continues apace and while NRCS doesn't have an updated farm bill page, you can find the "Latest News" on USDA's Farmers.gov website at <https://www.farmers.gov/farmbill>. (Under the departmental reorganization, legislative and communications functions were consolidated under the mission area and are handled through the business center for all three agencies.) However, you can still find program details and information on program signups and related initiatives through the NRCS website.

**Current Implementation Status:** The 2018 Farm Bill authorized temporary administration of conservation programs under existing regulations through September 30, 2019 and also allowed for the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) to operate under an announcement of program funding (APF) in 2019. But this interim authority also required the Agency to make adjustments to meet changes made by the Farm Bill. For example, while the 2018 Farm Bill reauthorized CSP, the current signup has to accommodate such changes as program enrollment being based on dollars rather than acres, higher payment rates for certain conservation activities (e.g., cover crops and resource conserving crop rotations), and specific support for organic and for transitioning to organic production activities. Other conservation programs also had to accommodate changes for the 2019 implementation, so it was not as straightforward as it might have appeared on the surface.

The good news is that even with the required adjustments, these conservation programs are ready to go. Financial assistance allocations have gone out to the States, and signups are being announced. For example, the Conservation Stewardship Program was just announced on April 5<sup>th</sup>. <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/newsroom/releases/?cid=NRCSEPRD1452817>.

**Farm Bill Regulatory Status:** Agency teams continue to work on the program regulations to ensure that they reflect the statutory intent. Some adjustments are more complex than others, but according to agency sources each rule has some interesting twists. Consider for example the new terminology in EQIP establishing "Incentive Contracts" and the switch in CSP from acre-based to funding-based implementation. The Buy-Protect-Sell provisions newly introduced in ACEP (and of great interest to the land trust community) appears to be particularly complex. While RCPP was simplified in the Farm Bill, it previously operated under an annual Announcement of Program Funding (APF) and now will have a rule (which in this author's opinion, reduces flexibility for the Agency to respond more rapidly to changing needs on the landscape).

Beyond making programmatic changes, the Farm Bill also reaffirmed Congress' interest in streamlining program rules and simplifying participation in conservation programs, which also are being considered in the rule-making process. As previously reported, NRCS was part of a Farm Bill listening session to gain stakeholder input on priorities and needed changes as input in the

**ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED CONSERVATION SERVICE EMPLOYEES**

rule-making process. The February 26<sup>th</sup> session generated more than 180 comments, quite a few of which relate to streamlining and program simplification:

<https://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=USDA-2019-0001>.

In addition to program rules, the supporting analyses (e.g., NEPA, regulatory impact analysis) are being developed as required in the rule making process. It is expected that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) will determine all of these rules to be “significant,” although that determination has not yet been received by the Agency. The impact of OMB’s determination affects the rigor and level of regulatory review, which if history is any indication will be detailed and lengthy.

**Changes to NRCS Conservation Programs:** Just as a refresher, here’s what the Department wants you to know about the changes to the major NRCS conservation programs, which will be addressed in the new program rules. You can see the full fact sheet at:

[https://www.farmers.gov/sites/default/files/documents/NRCS-FarmBill2018\\_WhatsNew-19.pdf](https://www.farmers.gov/sites/default/files/documents/NRCS-FarmBill2018_WhatsNew-19.pdf)

#### **Environmental Quality Incentives Program**

- Adds potential resource concerns related to beneficial cost-effective operation changes.
- Raises cap for organic producers to \$140,000 over six years.
- Adds a new enrollment option through incentive contracts to address priority resource concerns.
- Requires advance payment option be offered to historically underserved producers.
- Authorizes direct program assistance to irrigation districts, including acequias and other entities, for purposes of improving water use efficiencies.

#### **Conservation Stewardship Program**

- Increases payment rates for adoption of cover crop rotations and advanced grazing management activities.
- Authorizes contract extensions to facilitate renewal under new program authority.
- Transforms funding mechanism for program contracts, authorizing specified annual funding levels.
- Provides specific support for organic and transitioning to organic production activities.
- Includes special grassland conservation initiative for certain producers who have maintained cropland base acres.

#### **Agricultural Conservation Easement Program**

- Authorizes assistance to partners who pursue ‘Buy-Protect-Sell’ transactions.
- Requires a conservation plan for highly erodible land that will be protected by an agricultural land easement.
- Increases flexibility for partners to meet cost-share matching requirements.
- Identifies water quality as a program purpose for enrollment of wetland reserve easements.
- Expands wetland types eligible for restoration and management under wetland reserve easements.

#### **Regional Conservation Partnership Program**

- Simplifies funding authorities for program implementation.
- Authorizes Regional Conservation Partnership Program contracts rather than requiring enrollment through other program authorities.
- Expands flexibility for alternative funding arrangements with partners.
- Expands availability of watershed program authorities to projects outside critical conservation areas.

**Closing:** With only 5 months until the September 30<sup>th</sup> rulemaking deadline in the Farm Bill, there remains a lot to be done. Once final draft regulations are completed, they will need to be cleared internally through departmental offices (Office of the General Counsel, Office of the Chief Economist, Office of Budget and Program Analysis, etc.) before going to Office of Management and Budget for review and interagency coordination, which itself may take 90 days. This will leave the Farm Bill teams with little time for revision and finalization. That said, the Agency says they are on track to complete Interim Final Regulations for all the programs for a timely 2020 implementation!

**Roundup Verdict Appeal—**Monsanto, (recently acquired by Bayer, the German Chemical and pharmaceutical company) is appealing a California state court’s verdict awarding \$78.5 million to a California man who says exposure to Roundup caused his non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma. There is a lot at stake in this case which could, if not overturned, open the door for many similar cases across the country.

In related news from Agri-Pulse, a new Federal report on glyphosate’s toxicological effects likely will play a role in the ongoing debate over the safety of Roundup. The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, part of the Department of Health and Human Services, summarized—in a draft report released in April 2019—a number of studies on the herbicide’s effects and recommended areas for further research. The report concluded that “most studies found no association between exposure to glyphosate-based products and risk of cancer,” but “a possible association between exposure to glyphosate and risk of non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma could not be ruled out, based on conflicting results.”

**Changes in Conservation Easements?—**Representative Colin Peterson, Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, has said he is interested in finding a common-sense approach to improving the management of conservation easements. His concerns range from the use of public money to pay for easements that become private hunting reserves; to the lack of funds to manage the easements; to the impact of permanent easements on future farm management decisions. That said, there are a number of entities opposed to changes in conservation easements; there is currently no legislative vehicle for any proposed changes; and there is limited support in the Senate for changes in the Farm Bill easement programs.

**Midwest Flooding—**Estimates of the economic impact of the March flooding caused by several factors including an historic “bomb cyclone” that rolled over the Midwest have risen to as much as \$12.5 billion. To address the damages caused by the flooding, the Army Corps of Engineers, along with Senator Joni Ernst, held a field hearing in Glenwood, Iowa regarding the Corps plans for improving the management of flood water along the Missouri River. Because the frequency and intensity of

storms in the Midwest is predicted to increase as the planet warms, this is an issue that will demand greater and greater attention from policymakers.

**Waters of the United States: The Battle Continues**—The public comment period for comments on the proposed revision to the definition of "waters of the United States" (WOTUS) closed on April 15, 2019. The proposed revision seeks to clarify Federal authority under the Clean Water Act. There are nearly 5,400 public comments to address which could affect EPA's goal to publish a final WOTUS definition by the fall of 2019. After the final definition is published you would expect legal challenges to potentially slow implementation of the new definition.

**New Secretary of the Interior—David Bernhardt** was confirmed as Secretary of the Interior by the Senate in early April by a 56-41 vote. This was broadly seen as a victory for cattle producers, energy companies and others who support Bernhardt's views on public land management and endangered species regulation.

Bernhardt, a lawyer, was confirmed as deputy secretary of the department by the Senate, 56-39, in 2017. He also held a number of positions at the Interior Department during the **George W. Bush** administration, including as solicitor, deputy solicitor, and as then-Interior Secretary **Gale Norton's** deputy chief of staff. Before and after serving at Interior, Bernhardt was a lawyer at Brownstein, Hyatt, Farber and Schreck in Denver.

**Disaster Assistance**—The Senate is expanding the slow-moving disaster assistance bill to aid farmers and ranchers affected by the recent Midwest floods, but it's still not clear when Congress will pass the legislation due to a dispute between the White House and House Democrats over funding for Puerto Rico disaster relief.

A draft Senate bill authorizes \$3.05 billion to cover agricultural losses that occurred in 2019 as well as 2018. The House bill that passed in January, before the March floods, only included funding to assist with recovery from 2018 hurricanes Florence and Michael that caused damages in the Southeast. We still don't know if the Senate bill will cover damage to grain and soybeans stored on farms. There is no USDA program that currently covers such losses, although private insurance is available.

USDA officials said they need additional funding to replenish the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), which helps farmers remove debris and restore flooded land, and the Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP), which assists local communities in addressing damage such as removing debris from bridges and culverts, repairing levees and restoring stream banks. Both the Senate and the House are planning to authorize \$125 million in additional funding for the EWP but do not address funding for ECP.

**Ecosystem Services Markets for Agriculture**—Agri-Pulse reports that a new carbon market is set to begin operating in 2022. The new market will help farmers and companies that want to meet climate change goals. The proposed voluntary carbon market seeks to create a platform for farmers to participate in a market where they would be rewarded for adopting conservation practices such as no-till farming and planting cover crops.

The Noble Research Institute (NRI) carbon market project has been in the works for about two years. Companies involved in the project include ADM, Bunge, Cargill, General Mills, Indigo Agriculture, Mars, and McDonald's. Noble, the Soil Health Institute and The Nature Conservancy also are part of the effort. Noble says the market could help mitigate up to 89% of agricultural emissions by incentivizing farmers and ranchers to sequester carbon in the soil. A big incentive for companies to get involved is to meet emissions goals laid out in the Science Based Targets Initiative, a voluntary effort that includes 534 companies that have committed to achieving greenhouse gas reductions.

"The phone's been ringing off the hook," says **Bruce Knight** of Strategic Conservation Solutions. Knight, the former chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, is a consultant to the project.

**Economic Research Service Relocation**—On March 12th Secretary Perdue announced that the 136 proposals submitted to the Department associated with the plan to relocate USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS) and National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) had been winnowed down to 68. In October 2018, the Secretary indicated that USDA would make the decision on where ERS and NIFA will move by January 2019, but that date has been significantly extended. USDA has hired Ernst and Young to help evaluate the proposals.

However, there is significant opposition to the proposed relocation including members of Congress who included fiscal year 2019 Consolidated Appropriations Act Report language which stated,

*"The conferees are concerned about the unknown costs associated with the proposed move of the National Institutes of Food and Agriculture and the Economic Research Service to a new location outside of the National Capital Region. In submitting the fiscal year 2020 budget justification, the Department is directed to include all cost estimates for the proposed move of the two agencies, as well as a detailed analysis of any research benefits of their relocation. There is an expectation that this process will be followed in the future for any other potential proposed agency relocations by the Department."*

In addition, the managers' statement added,

*"The conferees support an indefinite delay in the proposed transfer of ERS to the Office of the Chief Economist. At this time, the conferees find it appropriate for ERS to remain under the Research, Education and Economics mission area. The conferees take this position as several questions remain about the merits of the proposed transfer as well as the proposed relocation of ERS outside of the National Capital Region. Insufficient information and justification relating to the reorganization and relocation make moving forward on these proposals premature at this time."*



In addition, Representatives **Chellie Pingree** (D., Maine), **Sanford Bishop** (D., Ga), and 12 other members of Congress introduced the *Agriculture Research Integrity Act of 2019* (ARIA), H.R.1221, with the aim of laying the legislative groundwork to oppose the relocation.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

**Dana York**

### Farmer Ingenuity

Three years ago when I decided to become a full time farmer on the family farm, I started to find pieces and parts of things around the farm that my grandfather stashed in the barns, woods, or fencerows since he would say, "I might just need that in the future." Being a product of the 1920s, he would never throw away anything that could be repurposed or made into something of use. He was known in the community for the innovative things he could make out of what he had on the barn. I find those "treasures" as I hunt through the barn for that piece of metal or just the right board to repair or to make something work. In the past three weeks I have been constructing a high tunnel, and hopefully in the morning if the wind will stay calm we will "pull the plastic" to finish the structure. But to build the tunnel some of my local farmer friends helped me with several innovations using some of those "barn treasures" so that we only needed three people to completely build the structure. One was an "arm" we created to hoist the tops of the high tunnel on the ground post. We dug through the barn and built an "L" that allowed two people to place the top of the high tunnel on the post (see picture) using my tractor. I was amazed how with a little ingenuity what we could do with what we had on hand. It made me think of all the valuable tools that my fellow workers shared with me in SCS/NRCS and how sometimes the best ideas came from the farmers who we worked with.



In this edition we have an article from the National Older Worker Career Center. I know that several of you participate in ACES, but with all the years of experience of our retirees and with all that valuable knowledge you might want to consider applying. I guess you can say it is never too late "to help someone learn something new--or old."

### National Older Worker Career Center (NOWCC)

NOWCC promotes an age-diverse workforce through expanding the employment opportunities in governmental agencies for individuals 55 and over. NOWCC is a nonprofit-based organization that recruits and manages experienced workers who bring dedication, motivation, reliability and diverse skills to a workforce. One of the programs NOWCC oversees is the "Agriculture Conservation Experienced Services Program" (ACES), which is a grants-based program administrated through an umbrella agreement and certified by the Department of Labor. The ACES program helps address the issue of "Brain-drain" as experienced workers retire and provides opportunities for newer, less experienced civil servants to learn from more experienced workers.



ACES enrollees are generally part-time and supply technical assistance to the NRCS in their conservation operations. Enrollees receive an hourly wage, and most are eligible for a benefits package that includes paid holidays, vacation and sick leave. There are multiple jobs in multiple states posted on our website at [www.nowcc.org](http://www.nowcc.org) that may appeal to you or to someone you know. Jobs change daily as they are filled, and new openings are available. Currently we have 450+ hires that are 55 and older working with the ACES program in the United States. If you have any questions about the ACES program, please feel free to contact Pam Lewis at 303-238-2547. To read more about NOWCC and the ACES program please go to our link at [www.nowcc.org](http://www.nowcc.org).



### Mark Your Calendars: ARSCE ANNUAL MEETING: July 29, 2018

The Association of Retired Conservation Service Employees will hold its annual luncheon in the Brigade Meeting Room at the Wyndham Grand Pittsburgh on Monday, July 29 from 12pm-1:30pm with the social hour beginning at 11am. Luncheon speakers will include representatives from ARCSE, SWCS, and NRCS at the state and national level. The 2019 luncheon reservation form will be available by May 1<sup>st</sup>.

Join the Retirees in this summer and take advantage of a great meeting on rural and urban conservation! Below are links to a Photo Contest; and if you know of young people looking for experience, there is help to attend as a student moderator.

74<sup>th</sup> SWCS International Annual Conference, Wyndham Grand Pittsburgh Downtown, July 28-31, 2019, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Register at:

[https://www.swcs.org/static/media/cms/Registration\\_Form\\_58B077F9B0D75.pdf](https://www.swcs.org/static/media/cms/Registration_Form_58B077F9B0D75.pdf)

## Register Online

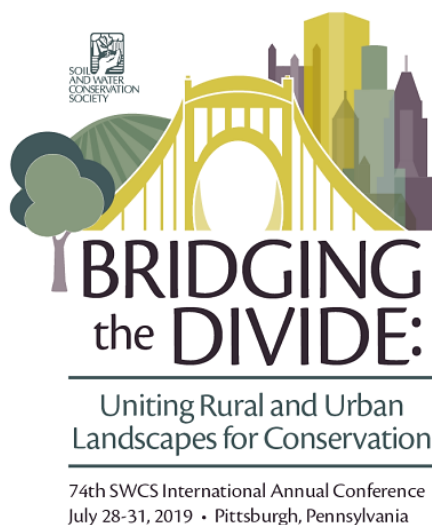
<http://www.cvent.com/events/2019-swcs-international-annual-conference/event-summary-f686e5ba19544bcb9d29074fa453db4e.aspx>

## Photo Contest information

<https://www.swcs.org/events/conferences/2019-annual-conference/photo-contest/>

## Student Moderator Program information

[https://swcs.formstack.com/forms/2019\\_swcs\\_international\\_annual\\_conference\\_student\\_moderator\\_program](https://swcs.formstack.com/forms/2019_swcs_international_annual_conference_student_moderator_program)



**SWCS Meeting – Pittsburgh, PA**

## ARCSE ELECTION BALLOT

Deadline: Ballots must be received by June 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **Candidate for ARCSE President-Elect: Arnold King**

**Arnold King** retired from NRCS in 2005 after 39 years of service. His career began in his home state of Texas, then on to Colorado where he served as Area Conservationist and State Agronomist. From there **Arnold** transferred to NHQ where he served as Staff Agronomist and Conservation Tillage Specialist. Then it was back to Texas at the National Technical Center where he served as the Agronomist and Head of Staff for Ecological Sciences and Planning. Since retirement, he has been active in ARCSE while serving as the Texas State Representative. An ARCSE Life Member, **Arnold** is currently completing his fourth two-year term as the Vice-President for the South Region.

### **Candidate for ARCSE East Region Vice-President: Melvin Womack**

**Melvin Womack** retired in 2014 with 42 years of service with the NRCS/SCS. **Melvin**, a native of Tennessee and graduate in Plant Science from Tennessee State University, worked in six states, accruing extensive experience and hands on knowledge of USDA farm bill policies, rulemaking processes, administration and implementation of financially assisted conservation programs, and providing assistance in underserved communities outreach to Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and low-income residents. He has years of experience in crop science, capital improvement projects, public policy, human resource management, budgeting, program delivery and developing and maintaining partnerships. **Melvin** has served in the capacity of a representative and liaison to professional affiliations, state, federal and private entities and organizations on a broad range of issues. He has also received advanced professional training and was selected to participate on several special assignments throughout USDA.

### **Candidate for ARCSE South Region Vice-President:** **(write in)**

### **Candidate for ARCSE Midwest Region Vice-President: Norman R. Kempf**

**Norman** retired in 2001 after a 40-year career with NRCS. His career started in SD in 1961 where he worked as a WAE, soil conservationist, district conservationist, and as an area conservationist in Pierre, SD. He served as Assistant State Conservationist for Programs in Bismarck, ND where his duties included leadership for the implementation of the Food Security Act. In 1989 he joined the Conservation Planning Division in NHQ as a Conservation Planning Specialist. He also served as national wetlands leader, national highly erodible lands leader, Deputy Director, and Acting Director of the Conservation Planning Division. In 1995 he was transferred to the Northern Plains Regional Office where he was a resource conservationist on the Oversight and Evaluation Team.

Since retirement in 2001 at Lincoln, NE, **Norman** has been active in the NE chapter of the ARCSE, has served as its vice-president and president, and has been state representative to ARCSE for 11 years. An ARCSE Life Member, **Norm** is completing his fifth two-year term as Midwest Region Vice-President.

**Norman and Sylvia** are the proud parents of four children, eight grandchildren, and four great grandchildren. They are active in the Lutheran church and other organizations. They also pursue many hobbies, including travel, which has led them to all 50 states, many foreign countries, and all seven continents

**Candidate for ARCSE West Region Vice-President: William A. (Bill) Ward**

**Bill Ward** retired at the end of 2010 after a 36-year career with SCS/NRCS. Starting as a student Trainee, he worked one summer before graduating from California State University at Humboldt with a Degree in Environmental Resources Engineering. **Bill** worked as a Field Office Engineer in two locations and Area Engineer in Santa Rosa, CA before transferring to the State office in Davis, CA where he went back to school and in 1984 obtained a master's degree in Civil Engineering from California State University, Sacramento. He then began work as a Design Engineer on the California Design staff. In 1989 he became the Design Staff leader (for a staff of four to six) for the California Design staff and worked in that position until he retired at the end of 2010. Design work included various Watershed Projects, Flood Control Dams and Channels, and a significant amount of Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) work. **Bill** is a registered Professional Engineer (Civil) in the State of California. He has served as the ARCSE State Representative for California since 2012. He is completing his first two-year term as West Region Vice-President.

#### ARCSE MEMBERSHIP DUES

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

*NOTE: Dues payment includes receipt of the bimonthly electronic newsletter only. All members (both life members and those who pay annual dues) who desire a hard copy of the newsletter must pay an additional fee of \$12.00 per year*

## ALABAMA

**Earl Norton, ARCSE Representative**

**Email: [earl.norton@charter.net](mailto:earl.norton@charter.net)**

The retiree group met in Auburn the first Monday during January, February and March at a local restaurant for breakfast and discussions on local and national topics and some discussions about their aches and pains. Two topics received much attention at the last two meetings, one sad and one happy.

An EF-4 tornado hit the Beauregard community just south of Auburn on March 3<sup>rd</sup> with winds estimated at 170 mph. The tornado killed 23 people and would have been an even worse disaster except that much of the path crossed through rather lightly populated areas. Hundreds of livestock were either killed or lost from broken fences, and thousands of acres of valuable timber were destroyed.

On a happy note, at least for Auburn University basketball fans, the Tigers made it to the Final Four and were just a second away from advancing to the final game before losing to the University of Virginia.

**Jimmy Chaffin**, retired State Administrative Officer for Alabama, surprised our group by attending our March meeting. He talked some about politics in the small town of Bowdon, GA, population slightly over 2,000. Jimmy moved to Bowdon following the death of his wife **Eleanor** several years ago, and he is now serving as the Mayor and has been encouraged to run for another term. Stay tuned for his decision. I should add, besides having a distinguished career with SCS/NRCS, Jimmy distinguished himself in his younger days as an outstanding bass fisherman and then later as a golfer. He still golfs regularly and is a factor in local tournaments.

Unseasonal spring-like days arrived in Alabama in February and were followed by a late frost in March, which is expected to reduce the Alabama peach crop some, so I have heard. However, the weather did not damage our annual spring burst of azaleas, camellias, and rhododendrons. Their colors have been brilliant this spring. And on this topic, our NRCS retired agronomist **Ken Rogers** gave a most interesting program on camellias to the local NARFE meeting in March. Ken and other members of our group who have quite a collection of Camellias are **Charles Bush** and **Mac Nelson**.

Ken had a distinguished 21-year career as State Agronomist. He led a very successful effort to assist our farmers to adopt conservation tillage with soybeans, corn, cotton, and to some extent, peanuts and helped the Alabama Cooperative Extension develop a grazing lands initiative that help many cattlemen improve their forage program. Since retirement, Ken has used his grafting knowledge as a contractor for several entities in Alabama and has also taught grafting. Many of us recognize that his work is helping to make the area more beautiful. Currently, Ken serves on the City of Auburn Beautification Council.

We lost two of our Alabama retirees recently. **Alan Randall "Randy" Hale**, 69, of Troy, Alabama died February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019 at his home following a massive heart attack. **Clark Charles Painter**, 73, of Opelika, Alabama passed away December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2018. See the In Memoriam section for more details.





*Retirees who met for breakfast in Auburn on February 4<sup>th</sup>, L-R: John Meetze, Earl Norton, Charles Bush, Charles Love, Perry Oakes, Ernest Todd, Randy Murphy, George Martin, Mac Nelson, Clifford Jones.*

## ARIZONA

**Ken Cookson, ARCSE Representative**

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

From **Christopher Williams**

**Karen's** sister, **Michelle**, flew in from Maryland to join us for a trailer trip to southern Arizona and New Mexico from March 9<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup>.



***Sand Hill Cranes at the Willcox Playa, Arizona.***

We camped in Willcox for a couple of nights on the way to New Mexico and one night on the way back. We chased the Sand Hill Cranes around the Willcox Playa and hiked in the Chiricahua National Monument. We were told that an estimated 36,000 Sand Hills had wintered in the area between Willcox and the Mexican Border. On our last night we located a small group of cranes and got within about 100 feet of them. We watched them for quite a while, and then they took off in small groups heading south to their night nesting area. For those who have not seen these birds, they call to each other continuously as they fly in their large, loose V-formations.

In New Mexico, we stayed in Las Cruces and visited the City of Rocks State Park between Deming and Silver City where we enjoyed hiking among this large cluster of rocks sitting by themselves in the middle of the rangeland in SW New Mexico. While we were enjoying this, a storm blew in and we were pelted with some snow and sleet.

Another day we went northeast from Cruces to the White Sands National Monument where **Karen** and **Michelle** purchased some plastic discs to go sliding on the dunes and had fun making sand angels in this white wonderland. We then had lunch in Alamogordo and then drove up to Cloudcroft, NM (8,600 feet). Halfway up the mountain, the skies opened up and the rain soon became sleet and then slushy snow, so that by the time we arrived in Cloudcroft there were 2+ inches of snow on the

hood of the pickup and an icepack under the windshield wipers. Needless to say, we decided not to “stick around” and returned to the valley and back to Cruces.



*Sand Hill Cranes at the Wilcox Playa, New Mexico.*



*City of Rocks State Park, New Mexico*



*White Sands National Monument*

We look forward again to a summer schedule of teaching at three or four Vacation Bible Schools and seeing my youngest son and his family in Olympia, WA. Hope to make some stops at Arches and Canyonlands in SE Utah on the way home!

## ARKANSAS

**Ralph Mashburn, ARCSE Representative**

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**Bob Price** is our Arkansas ARCSE president and Marilyn Marshall is secretary. They are busy planning for our annual meeting held in September each year.



*Fort Smith Area Retirees meet the first Wednesday of each month for lunch at the Western Sizzler in Fort Smith. Pictures L to R: Neal Sparks, Brent Keener, Stanley Mathis, Randy King, Mr. McGary, Bill Garner, Ronnie Keener, Marion Mathis, and John Chenoweth. Many stories are remembered. Some of them are true.*



**Ralph and Nancy Mashburn:** We enjoyed attending the Arkansas Gideon Convention in Ft. Smith, AR in April. We haven't missed one in the past 10 or so years.



*Ralph was honored in March for his 85<sup>th</sup> birthday with a family dinner at his favorite steak house in Little Rock.*



*Nancy and Ralph Mashburn*

**Beth Brickell**, Nancy's first cousin, visited us from Los Angeles in March while making a book signing tour of seven Arkansas cities. She has had two books published about the mysterious 1957 disappearance of **Maud Crawford** in Camden, AR.

She played the mother on the TV show, "Gentle Ben" a popular series that ran two years. She also has played numerous TV roles in such shows as "Gunsmoke" and "Bonanza." In addition, she has written a number of screen plays.



*Retiree Marion Mathis lined up with his restored 1955 Ford for the Veterans' Parade at Chaffee Crossing.*





**Mathis family wedding. Sara Mathis with her family at her outdoor wedding at the Mathis Home near Mansfield, AR. Pictured L to R: Marion and Treva, Cynthia, Sarah and husband Ethan Yandall, Stanley and Katie, and Joe. Sarah is the daughter of retiree Stanley and the grand-daughter of retiree Marion Mathis.**



**Stanley Mathis on sunny fishing trip with his Dad, Marion**



**Marion Mathis with a nice rainbow trout caught in the White River at Norfolk, AR.**

Some NRCS/SCS retirees made a motorcycle ride together from Lake Sylvia to Queen Wilhelmina Lodge, mainly via US Forest Service and County roads in Arkansas. The pictures were taken at an old historic gas station in Mena, Arkansas.

**The ESSO station located at the corner of Mena Street and Port Arthur in Mena Arkansas was restored by local businessman J.V. Brotherton founder of BroDix the manufacturer of aluminum racing heads and is used as a private museum. Many times it is opened to the public during special events such as car shows. In the 60's it was owned and operated by Oscar Pigg and later by the Preddy's. This building is a beautiful representation of times past.**







**L-R: Larry Ward, Bob Price, Mike Baily, Randy Busbea, and Ray Culvey**



**L-R: Ray Culvey, Larry Ward, and Charles Fultz**

The next Arkansas NRCS/SCS Retirees" meeting will be on September 26<sup>th</sup> in Little Rock, place to be announced.

## CALIFORNIA

**Bill Ward, ARCSE Representative**

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Greetings from California! We enjoyed one of our more memorable monthly lunch gatherings in March that was hosted by retirees **Brian and Marianne Hallet** at their home, instead of our usual IHop venue.

Their offer to host the lunch led to a great turnout, about 25 total, and some very special guests including **Bob Snieckus**, who came all the way across country from Washington DC! We were also blessed by the presence of **Vicki Davis** and **Gin Milani**, and many others who had not been to a recent retiree lunch.



**Those seated at the largest of 3 tables!**

Those in attendance included the following people:

**Brian and Marianne Hallet**, our hosts, **Hank and Christie Wyman**, **Arturo Carvajal**, **Sally Reed**, **Gin Milani**, **Pat Grover**, **Luana Kiger**, **Deana Rolewicz**, **Peggy Holbrook**, **Harold and Valma Honeyfield**, **Walt Sykes**, **Jack and Janet George**, **Chuck Bell**, **Ron Schultz**, **Jim Chapman**, **Bill and Dana Ward**, **Vicki Davis**, **Bob Snieckus**, **Ed and Bertha Schmidt**. Here are a few pictures.





**Brian and Marianne Hallet, our lunch hosts**



**Cheers to all in attendance!**



**A Group Photo before eating**



**Recent Photo of Tom Schott,  
Retired NRCS Forester**

I recently reconnected with an old Friend, **Tom Schott**, retired (2008) NRCS Forester, and wanted to share news from Tom with all our fellow retiree friends. Tom and I had the opportunity and pleasure to work together closely in 2007/8 on a unique EWP-funded "Tree Removal Project." The work included removing dead and dying trees in San Bernardino National Forest and some private lands, the result of an extended drought and "Bark Beetle" infestation that created an extreme fire hazard. This was a wonderful experience for both of us near the end of our careers, as we got to know each other well and to work with many wonderful partners and people to protect life and property from devastating wildfires. Tom shared with me that he has had a very difficult struggle with esophageal cancer that began in 2014. He has endured extensive surgery as well as multiple radiation and chemo treatments. He was cancer-free for a couple years but has had re-occurrences since then that have been difficult to shake.

In spite of all this Tom has managed to stay active in the forestry profession he loves dearly. He began this effort immediately upon retirement going to work with NRCS as a Resource Conservationist and Forester through their ACES program until 2015.

After that, Tom started working as a part-time forester for the Mendocino County Resource Conservation District working under an NRCS Agreement that supports fire recovery, fuel reduction, and other forest management activities throughout Mendocino County. In Tom's own words, "I enjoy my colleagues, clients and the opportunity to make a positive impact on the forests I love."

Tom and I reminisced about our wonderful opportunity to work together on the unique Southern CA Fuel Removal work done under EWP. We now enjoy staying connected and are in communication with each other. I am keeping Tom and his wife **Shirley** in my prayers for a complete victory and total elimination of Tom's cancer!

Being retired, many of us enjoy a number of passions. Time with our grandchildren is probably very high on the list for many of us. I know many of us enjoy sharing our passions with friends and family, One of my many Passions is playing music with my band, and one of my wife **Dana's** is photography. I wanted to take this opportunity to share a unique and beautiful photo of Dana's that was recently on display at Viewpoint Art Gallery in Sacramento, "Fire Falls," also known as "Horse Tail Falls."



**Fire Falls, also known as "Horsetail Falls," Yosemite NP, Photo by Dana L Ward.**



**Dana in front of her Photo at the "Yosemite" Artist Reception**

Dana and I enjoyed a special evening Friday at the "Artists Reception" at View Point Art Gallery in Sacramento for the "Yosemite Grand Gesture of the Range of Light" exhibit. Dana was one of numerous artists with photos focused on the "wide range of light at Yosemite."



Many photographers familiar with this unique Yosemite feature know that it is a great accomplishment to get a high quality photo of "Fire Falls." The Fire Falls image is only available at sunset in mid- to late-February. There is normally only about a 10-day window, and then only at sunset when conditions are optimum for a great photo. During that time, the setting sun hits Yosemite Valley at just the right angle to illuminate the upper reaches of Horsetail Falls. So for your viewing pleasure here are two photos celebrating Dana's accomplishment.

That's all for this time around folks. Best Wishes from California!

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## COLORADO

**Jack Carlson, ARCSE Representative**

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Welcome to new Colorado ARCSE member **Allen Green**, Colorado State Conservationist who retired a few years back. He and wife **Kathy** host a golf scramble in the Windsor area each summer, well attended by current and retired NRCS and USDA employees, providing a great time for everyone to catch up.

Those in our ARCSE community who farm and others who may be interested, the Fieldprint Calculator from Field-to-Market (FtM)—The Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture, provides for computing sustainability metrics for several commodity crops: corn, soybeans, wheat, alfalfa, cotton, sugar beets, barley, rice, potato, sorghum, and peanuts. The publicly accessible web-based calculator accesses the same models, tools, and data used by NRCS for conservation planning, to compute sustainability metrics for soil erosion, water quality, soil carbon, and greenhouse gas emissions. Current FtM projects across the country impact about one million acres annually. Five industry partners also have linked their systems through FtM to access the models, tools, and data. You may want to check this out at <https://fieldtomarket.org>.

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## ILLINOIS

**Dale Benz, ARCSE Representative**

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SCS/NRCS retirees and spouses gathered at Perkins Restaurant in Urbana on April 4<sup>th</sup> for lunch and visiting. Attending were **Dick Dickerson, Earl and Barb Voss, Ray Coombes, Ben Mingo, Jim Evans, Nancy Phalen, Gene Davis, Lee Bridgman, and Dale and Nancy Benz**.

**Earl and Barb Voss** spent another winter in Champaign rather than traveling to Florida. They have enjoyed having visits with their kids from Texas and New York for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter in Champaign rather than traveling to those states. Earl's good news is that he had no surgeries in 2019, so far. Keep up the good record, Earl.

**Ray Coombes** keeps busy going to grandkids' sporting events, which include baseball, basketball, softball, and track.

**Jim Evans** apparently does a lot of sleeping. He told about buying 12 mattresses from a local mattress manufacture over the years that they have lived in Champaign and the 13<sup>th</sup> one was supposed to be free. When he went to get his free mattress he was told that they destroyed the records of his 12 purchases so he could not get a free one! Sorry, Jim, you will have to sleep on the old one.

**Nancy and Bill Phalen** recently took a trip to Oklahoma and Arizona. They visited a ranch in Oklahoma that had 170 wild mustangs. They also attended a Cubs baseball spring training game in Mesa, AZ. I always thought Nancy was a St. Louis Cardinal fan!

**Gene Davis** continues to do taxidermy work. Over the years he has done over 4,000 "stuffings" of animals and birds. He showed some pictures of his work, and you couldn't tell any difference between his work and a live animal. He has five grandkids and enjoys hunting with his 16- and 27-year old grandsons.

**Lee and Nancy Bridgman** also spent the winter in Illinois. We assume Nancy had to do the snow shoveling last winter as she is having a lot of pain in her legs, especially when walking. Lee said he now knows how to cook, clean, make beds, etc. About time, right Nancy! Lee and Nancy celebrated their 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in August 2018. Congratulations Lee and Nancy.

**Dick and Jan Dickerson** moved into their condo two years ago. His buzz words now are "no snow, no mow." Life is good. Their oldest granddaughter was married in Seattle in 2018. Dick and Jan were in Florida for February.

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## INDIANA

**Harold Thompson, ARCSE Representative**

*Harold Lee Thompson (70) passed away on April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019. See the In Memoriam section for more details.*

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## IOWA

**Mark Jensen, ARCSE Representative**

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

When **Jeff Godwin** retired in 2017, he went to work for Snyder and Associates in Atlantic. He has worked on several interesting projects, most of which have been small-town water and waste water facilities. Some of his current projects include: a sewer treatment facility upgrade in Lenox; lining the sewer in Pisgah; water main projects for Brayton, Lenox, and Bedford;



and starting planning for water towers for Stuart and Arcadia. Jeff says that in many ways, working for a consultant isn't that much different than working for NRCS. The "pure engineering and project management is essentially the same as NRCS." He said that he has to be the moderator between the client and the contractor, just like when he was the Area Engineer and a Project Engineer. Jeff said that one thing that he always knew has been reinforced while working in private industry, that NRCS has a lot of hard-working employees, just like the employees in their firm.

**Russ Hopp** is beginning his 2<sup>nd</sup> term as the Lyon County Treasurer since retiring from NRCS in 2014. Russ and his wife, **Anita**, still reside in George, IA. Their only grandson is turning two in May, and they love spending time with him, but never get enough grandparent time!

When **Norm Koester** retired from the NRCS in 1997, he decided to start up his own engineering consulting firm. He hung out a shingle with the cleverly named "Koester Engineering" name on it. Over the years, he developed the firm into a thriving small business with several part-time employees. Two of those employees were **Marion Plumb** and **Gayland Hall**.

He performed a variety of engineering services, but a significant part of his work was the design and construction oversight of about 75 projects, most of which were small flood control dams or irrigation storage dams throughout the Omaha area and eight Natural Resource Districts. Approximately 60 of the dams required state construction permits: three were TR60 size, and two were high hazard. His expertise gained while working in western Iowa as an area engineer and project engineer on many PL566 watershed projects served him well in the consulting business. His work included another 120 projects such as O&M inspections and repairs, prairie restoration, livestock lagoon restoration, backyard erosion control, and serving as an expert witness. His last job was serving as an expert witness for the Audubon County Soil and Water Conservation District. The District had been sued by a land owner concerning the maintenance of a waterway in David's Creek Watershed. The District won the case with the help of Norm's testimony. Norm said he felt a real sense of satisfaction on that one. As with many things in life, most good things have to end at some point. Last fall Norm decided to close out his consulting business. He took down the shingle and is enjoying retirement. Congratulations, Norm on retiring from a second productive "career!"

In 2010, the Lake Delhi Dam in Delaware County in northeast Iowa failed. This was a private dam that did not have any NRCS technical assistance. After years of investigations, planning, design, and finally construction, the reconstructed dam is back in operation. **Lee White** and **Mark Jensen** attended an Iowa Engineering Society meeting where the Senior Project Manager and Principal Geotechnical Engineer with Stanley Consultants made a presentation on the dam failure and the subsequent design and reconstruction of the dam. A key feature of the dam was a large labyrinth spillway. It made for a very interesting program.

During the past few months, we have welcomed several employees to the ranks of the retired. These include: **Dennis Schrodtt**, District Conservationist in Osceola; **Jeff Collins**, District Conservationist in Guthrie Center; **Steve Langholdt**, Civil Engineering Technician in Denison; **Matthew Foubert**, Program Assistant in the West Union Area Office; **Jamie Johnson**, Drill Rig Operator stationed in Ottumwa; **Stephanie Hill**, Soil Conservationist in Fort Dodge; **Dale DuVal**, District Conservationist in Council Bluffs; and **Rick Bednarek**, State Soil Scientist in Des Moines.

Recently we have been saddened by the loss of two retired engineers. **Lowell Kleckner** passed away on March 20<sup>th</sup>. He was a long time engineer in the Denison Engineering Office. A lot of engineering trainees, including me, went through the Denison Engineering Office working and training under Lowell. He was an excellent trainer with his calm, quiet personality, technical expertise, and outstanding character. **Tom Brown** passed away on April 1<sup>st</sup>. He was a long time engineer in southeast Iowa.

## KANSAS

**Deanne Lull, ARCSE Representative**

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I think Mother Nature pulled an April Fool's joke on us. I was assuming that Winter was gone as I was seeing spring flowers and trees blooming. Then came the forecast of several days of wind and freezing temperatures, and out came the winter coats again.

**John** and **Linda Ourada** received a 10-year award this year for their volunteer service at the Snow Mountain Ranch, YMCA of the Rockies, in Colorado.

Two retirees in the Salina area passed away recently. **Guy Dale McClaskey**, a special friend, passed away April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019. **Guy** retired from the Kansas State Office in Salina in 1987 as the Assistant State Conservationist (Programs). His wife, **Lois**, preceded him in death. I worked a number of years with him and had enjoyed his attendance in the Crusaders Sunday School Class for over 30 years. He was known for his peanut brittle during the Christmas holidays and made many batches for family and friends each year.

**Donald J. Serrien** passed away April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019. I also worked with **Donald** in the Kansas State Office in the early 1960s before he moved to a field position. He retired as a construction inspector for several watershed projects in 1985. **Celeta**, his wife, passed away in 2014.

Our sympathies are also extended to the **Leuthold** and **Rathbun** families. **Erma Jean Leuthold** passed away February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019. **Erma** retired as an Office Automation Clerk at the Plant Materials Center in Manhattan, KS, with almost 40 years of service. Her husband, **Larry**, survives. **Barbara Ellen Rathbun** passed away February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019. She is survived by her spouse, **Alfred**. Alfred served as a Civil Engineering Technician in the Fall River Watershed Project Office in Eureka, KS.

The Kansas 2019 Annual Meeting is scheduled for Friday, June 28<sup>th</sup>, at the Hilton Garden Inn, 3320 S. Ninth St., Salina, KS. We will gather at 5:30pm to visit, followed by a dinner and program at 6pm.

## MASSACHUSETTS

**Jim Weoloski, ARCSE Representative**

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It's been a quiet few months for the Massachusetts retirees. The winter has finally given up the ghost, and the daffodils are all blooming. My lawn guy appeared this week to apply the crabgrass stuff, so spring is here.

I've been asleep since I retired from the ACES program at NRCS, and I've been out of the loop about new retirees; but I have news that **Ted Nicholson** has retired from his position as the Assistant State Conservationist for Management and Strategy. For you old-timers, that used to be the "State Administrative Obstacle." Ted came to Mass. NRCS from the National Park Service Cape Cod National Seashore. I heard a rumor that Ted was filling his spare time rebuilding an old motorcycle.

**Darlene Monds**, Natural Resources Specialist is experimenting with easing into retirement while mentoring some current employees to take over some of her duties. Darlene formerly was the Berkshire-Pioneer RC&D Coordinator.

**Carl Gustafson** again organized the annual Pi Day breakfast on March 14<sup>th</sup> this year with nine attendees. **Frank** and **Joanne Wilda** are excited about an upcoming trip to Poland. **Paul Benjamin** is busy with some parent-in-law assistance. **Ed Drake** is coming off a battle with cancer and is volunteering with the Red Cross. Ed has completed his disaster training and is now eligible for deployment to a disaster recovery area. **Rudy Chlanda** completed a battle with cancer and says his doctor calls him the poster child for the protocol. Carl Gustafson has returned from Disney World with family and grand kids. Carl is also keeping busy with some wetland restoration, storm rehab., and some dam rehab. work. **Cecil Currin** drove me to breakfast in his new 15-year-old Land Rover.

Around April 15<sup>th</sup> I got a call from a retiree asking me if federal pensions were exempt from Mass. Income tax. I assured the caller that they are exempt. Seems that she had been taking her taxes to a CPA for years and for years her CPA had been including her federal pension as taxable income for Mass. So it might be wise to make sure your federal pension isn't being taxed.

## MINNESOTA

**John Brach, ARCSE Representative**

**Email: [jcb1153@yahoo.com](mailto:jcb1153@yahoo.com)**

Some of the Twin Cities area retirees got together May 24<sup>th</sup> for an informal lunch.



**Pictured from left: Marlene Mechelke, Micki Gangl (Margy's sister), Margy Gangl, Barb Nesbitt, Susan Ploetz, Cathy McCormack, and Vic Ruhland. Not pictured: John Brach (photographer), Doug and Merrilee Christianson who left before we thought about a picture.**



**Kermit Bjorlie served with the Soil Conservation Service in Forest City, Iowa and Zumbrota, Minnesota.**

**George Poch** passed on a news article from Rochester about the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of **Kermit Bjorlie**. We knew Kermit as a fine Soil Conservationist, but there was a lot more to his life. In World War II he served as a fighter pilot in the US Army Air Corps.



## MISSOURI

**Dave Rastorfer, ARCSE Representative**

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**Jim Rickman:** We just got back from Africa. Our kids and their spouses went on 19 game drives in three countries and saw a lot of wild animals. I am attaching my favorite picture of a leopard. It had a fresh kill in the tree behind me.



We generally travel with a company that caters to seniors, and they always seem to be a good value. If anyone is interested in divesting themselves from some of their kid's inheritance let me know and I'll send you the info.

**Gena Michalson:** We have one new horse baby, a thoroughbred filly, and we're expecting a warmblood foal any day now, so we are checking the mare throughout the night. We got a new dog: a female blue merle Australian shepherd about two years old. We need to get some new barn cats to protect the grain. We are eagerly anticipating a visit from our son and his family from Texas in May. Haven't seen the two grandsons for a while. Trying to figure out sleeping arrangements. I'm still doing genealogy and working at finding proofs to join various lineage societies, especially one going back to Jamestown. Also, as Registrar for the D.A.R., I'm doing genealogy for others as well. This spring, **Norm** has come out fishing and so has **Odie**. Mowing season has started.

**Bob Ball:** **Lenore** and I are heading to the farm in Ohio on Tuesday. I'm swamped with work here and just don't have time to write anything up. Just don't have much free time.

**Dennis Shirk:** Hello and Happy Easter. We are doing well. We had quite a bit of tree work done around our place, and we're losing shade trees. They were all hollow and too close to the house. We will be going camping and trail riding the first week in May at Lesterville in the Riversedge campground along the banks of the Black River. See ya down the trail.

**Nancy Caldwell Ayres:** **Van** and I finally moved to his family farm (been in his family for over 215 years) in southern middle Tennessee. We built a new farmhouse rustic style house, on the highest point on the farm overlooking Thompson Creek and Duck River. The screened back porch (12' x 65') overlooks the beautiful hills in Bedford County. When folks ask where we live, my reply is: "Between Jack Daniels and George Dickel." A great location to retire! They are setting up a new distillery just north of Shelbyville. It is named after the black man, Nathan "Nearest" Green, who taught Jack Daniels how to make whiskey. There is a book coming out soon about "Uncle Nearest."

We became grandparents for the first time last year. My daughter, **Vanessa** and her husband had a baby girl. Didn't realize that being a grandma is a lot easier than a mother. Vanessa graduated with a degree in Agricultural Technology from Murray State University in 2013. She married a Mississippi County farmer and resides in Charleston, MO. **Harrison** got offered two football scholarships and one academic scholarship. He broke the "Caldwell tradition" and took the academic scholarship. He tore his right shoulder's labrum 360 degrees in the high school state championship game. He was playing middle linebacker and tackled a 240# running back (that received a full scholarship from Mizzou) behind the line. I think that is why Harrison turned down the football scholarships (which I wasn't a bit upset). They don't tackle in football anymore; they hit. Harrison is now in the Air Force ROTC at SEMO and just took his officer test at Scott Air Force Base. We are now waiting on his officer rank. He is following in his mommy's footsteps, majoring in plant and soil science!



Van and I have been doing a lot of traveling, since he retired from the University of Missouri. We went out to the hill country in Texas and visited one of my history and Spanish instructors. He retired from Texas State University in San Marcos and now plays in a band called "Dr. G and the Mudcats." Google them, great music! Then we spent two weeks in Calgary and the Rocky Mountains in Canada. Then traveled to North Carolina and the Blue Ridge parkway. I've spent a lot of time in San Diego and Miami taking care of my **Uncle Donnie** and **Aunt Marie**, respectfully. They appointed me their POA a few years ago. We got out of the cattle business after all these years. We sold our entire herd of red shorthorns. The timing on getting out of the cattle business was perfect--cattle prices have fallen this year. Therefore, we can do more traveling now. We have an Alaska Cruise planned this August and September. Plan to go to Hawaii with our best friends from Cape Girardeau in late October through first week of November of this year. An Eastern Caribbean Cruise and traveling to Nova Scotia and New Zealand trips are in the schedule for 2020! Hope this newsletter finds everyone happy and in good health.

**Alton Taylor:** Well, it is about peanut planting in the High Plains of Texas, and the moisture level is the best in years. Cotton planting will follow in a couple weeks. Wheat is heading out. I was in AZ for three weeks and have been home long enough to get mail caught up with exception of magazines. Had good time, spent one day at the Arboretum and an afternoon watching Cirque de Soleil (did not know the human body could bend that much). When I got to the bottom of my 1040 this year I was ready to reinstate the old system. The spring flowers are great this year. Rain sure helps.

**Bill Pauls:** We had both kids' families here (and the two dogs...big dogs). We had a really good family time together and a wonderful/spiritual Holy Week. We are starting to burn on all cylinders here at the Lake, setting up all the summer season plans. Fun time. The Dogwoods (popcorn trees) are fully out, and the Red buds are still in full bloom. Very beautiful. Lake water still pretty cold, but it didn't stop several of the G'kids or the dogs from getting in. Had a great Easter egg hunt at the cabin and the annual Easter egg-coloring contest (40+ year tradition, has gotten way out of hand). I finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in the MAPSS NCAA bracket this year. Heading to Brookings, SD for marathon #107 next month; still getting slower, but still finishing. **Kris** and I enjoy the travel. We got a little bigger RV with Kelly and Jeremy and their G'kids, a "Coleman Lantern" model (mid-size, no pop-outs). Their kids are growing up and need more room than we had in the Wolf Pup. Still volunteering a lot and active at church. Hope everyone had great Holy Week. God Bless You All!

**Jess Epple:** The Epples have enjoyed a mild winter here in "Green Country" and so far haven't had any twisters this spring! It looks like we are going to have a good grass year. Most of our round hay bales went to Texas cattlemen. They have been in a serious drought situation. It is about time for us to begin fertilizing and weed spraying our meadows. We now have another great grandchild, **Hattie Grace**. She is our 9<sup>th</sup>. We haven't seen her yet, but we have been assured that she is a keeper! Her father, **James Hughes**, changed jobs a few weeks ago. However, they will continue to live in Columbia because that's where his new job is, at a bank! James has already advised me: **no** Grandpa loans to buy more cattle! To all of you SCS/NRCS retirees, have a healthy, busy, and safe summer.

## MONTANA

**Dick Gooby, ARCSE Representative**

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### Montana Big Sky Report

**Wendy Williams Report:** Well, we bought a 5<sup>th</sup> wheel RV last August, and this past January we took it south to the state parks in southern CA and AZ. We got home just in time for the record snowfalls and low temps. Next year we are going for six weeks. I bought a mid-week ski pass for Big Sky, so I have been downhill skiing once a week. Hiking the trails around Bozeman 2-3 times a week. I'm still selling Norwex and managing our vacation rental. Trying to get motivated to work in my greenhouse.

**Joyce Swartzendruber Report:** I am headed to Amsterdam. Will have a report next month.

**Phyllis Phillips Report:** Phyllis has been a very busy girl since retiring in 2014 as Colorado State Conservationist. Two brain surgeries, two radiation Thereasphere operations on liver tumors, which were strong enough to trigger a border patrol event in 2015 (yes they had to use a fancy Geiger counter to make sure she wasn't a terrorist), and several different kinds of chemotherapy, and she is still kicking. What does that tell you? She now has four grandchildren, and although her daughter lives in Delaware still she gets to travel a lot to see her. Her son is still in Conrad. She is glad she has at least two grandkids nearby. Still producing original play productions, her most recent celebrated 100 years of the Orpheum Theatre in Conrad. She wrote grants and was general construction manager to ensure that the 900-square-foot ADA-accessible addition was completed in time for the theater's centennial celebration last fall. Construction on the Conrad Path Project will get underway at the end of May. She is working with the Pondera HealthCare Foundation to write grants and oversee the construction of the project which will also include a demonstration area from the Pondera County Conservation District. Phyllis is now looking forward to spring and summer! Aren't we all!

**Gordon Decker report:** Haven't submitted news for a while so here goes. I just found out that **Robert "Bobby" Richardson's** wife **Gwen** passed away on April 6<sup>th</sup> in Hudson, WI. Her obituary is in the Hudson Star Observer. Bobby mapped soils, served as a soil survey project leader and soil correlator in the state of Montana, and retired in 1994.

The month of March took us to Scottsdale, AZ where we joined a group of seniors attending SF Giants baseball spring training. We were joined by **Kathy's** sister and husband, and step son **Ray** and wife.



**Ray, Rebecca (step son and wife), Gordon, Kathy, Peg and Ron (Sister In-Law and Husband).**



**Kathy and Gordon (foreground) and crew at the Sugar Bowl in Old Town Scottsdale.**

Weather was perfect, in the 70's compared to below zero and lots of snow in Montana. We couldn't totally escape the snowy weather, left home with over a foot on the level, snowed on us in Flagstaff, and more snow on passes on the way home. We spent several days in Scottsdale, then to Henderson, NV to visit a grandson, a niece and grandniece, then to Fruita, CO to visit my sister and husband, and more nieces and nephews.

I've had a few health issues: diagnosed with peripheral neuropathy in both legs which resulted in back surgery in November of 2017, to reduce the neuropathy progression, but current muscle damage is irreversible, then on to partial knee surgery in June 2018. So, there's been lots of physical therapy, but the legs continue to stay weak and get tired very easily. I also have some circulation issues below the right knee which helps keep the right foot floppy and cold. I wear a foot and ankle brace to keep the right foot from dragging. I'm very thankful that my wife, **Kathy**, is staying very healthy and fit, does all the work, driving and keeps me on the straight and narrow.

Much time is spent with family and grandkids. One grandson and fiancée are living with us and going to school here at Montana State University. They are getting married in July and we will miss them after he graduates in about a year. Another grandson is in college at Dickinson State, so football games are on the schedule. The remaining grandkids are scattered: South Dakota, Wyoming, Nevada, and Montana. They keep us on the move.

**Gooby Ranch Report:** You can't believe how the weather was last month. The temperature was minus 15, snowing, and the wind was blowing 30 miles an hour. **Mary Ann** went out to feed the cows. She uses her wheel barrow to haul the hay, but she had to push the wheel barrow through drifts several feet deep, and she just couldn't do it.

Mary Ann came back to the house and asked me if I could start the tractor and take hay to the cows since there was no way she could push the wheel barrow. Being the nice guy that I am I said yes, if she would make me some coffee that I could take with me.

I went out and got the tractor going and headed down to get some hay. I had to drive through snow drifts up to six feet deep. When I hit the third one, the tractor spun out and no matter what I did the wheels just spun but we didn't move an inch. Mary Ann got the shovel and spent over an hour shoveling the snow out from under the tractor so we could get unstuck. I was glad Mary Ann had made me coffee to take with me while I waited for the tractor to get shoveled out. Finally I got the tractor moving, but the tractor would not go through the drift. I could only back up.

Mary Ann had to go get her sled to haul the hay to the cows. It took her so long wading through the snow that she was over an hour late getting my supper ready.

A couple weeks ago Mary Ann finally got the road from our house to the county road dug out so we could get to town to buy the needed groceries. A lot of the drifts were over six feet high. It started getting above freezing every day and getting into the low teens at night. We can drive the pickup out the road in the morning while the ground was froze, but in the afternoon it is thawed enough that we will get stuck.

While we were contemplating what to do to overcome the muddy road problem, Mary Ann came up with the idea that we go to town early in the morning while the road is frozen, stay overnight in town and come home early the next morning while the road is still froze. That was a great idea. Mary Ann never stops amazing me with her ideas. The only problem is that we can't afford to stay in a motel. Mary Ann called the homeless shelters, but they are full.

We have to take the pickup to town to get what we need. Since it only has one seat, just one of us could sleep in it. After thinking about the problem for a while I came up with the idea that we take the tent and set it up in the Walmart parking lot to spend the night and head home by 4am in the morning so we can get home before the road thaws.

The next morning we headed to town to get all the items we needed and set up the tent. Though that wasn't easy. It's a lot of work to drive the tent pegs through the asphalt. Then we laid down a tarp and put our sleeping bags on so they would stay clean. Asphalt is not a good mattress. It was impossible to get any sleep since the cars were coming and going all night, and it



seemed that every driver had to shine their head lights into the tent, and a lot of them thought it was their duty to honk their horn. We were fully ready to head out at 4am. When we were headed home, Mary Ann said taking the tent was the best suggestion I ever had. I wonder exactly what she meant by that. I'm sure she meant she was really proud of me.

## NEBRASKA

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

**Emails: [mnkempf@neb.rr.com](mailto:mnkempf@neb.rr.com), [j4culver@aol.com](mailto:j4culver@aol.com)**

March 20, 2019 SCS/NRCS Retirees Breakfast



**Joan Thiele, our Vice-Chairperson, standing, getting our monthly Nebraska retirees breakfast meeting off to a good start. Left, Donna Dornbusch; Right, Chris Chapman and Arlis Plummer.**



**Craig Derickson, Nebraska State Conservationist, (standing) sharing current NRCS activities with our retirees group. Left, Bill Hance, Bob Engel, Dana Snyder, Gus Dornbusch; and Right, Paul Bartlett, Jim Carr, Joe Calder and Dave Camper.**

**Craig Derickson** stopped by before the breakfast to make several announcements about the NRCS. He talked about the flooding situation in Nebraska and possible actions that NRCS and various other government agencies may take.



**Norman Kempf, standing, reporting on current national concerns for the Association of Retired Conservation Service Employees. From left: Bob Engel, Dana Snyder, Steve Scheinost and Gus Dornbusch.**

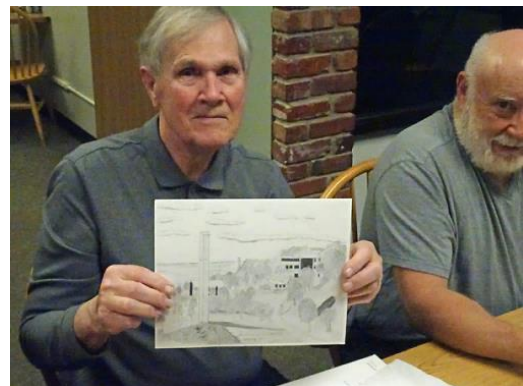


**Norm Helzer, Chairperson and Norman Kempf, Midwest Regional Vice President discussing current Nebraska SWCS events.**

April 17, 2019 SCS/NRCS Retirees Breakfast



**Getting ready to begin our monthly Wednesday meeting. Left: Norm Helzer, Norman Kempf, Russ Schultz. Right: Chris**



**Russ Schultz showing an excellent recent pencil drawing he did. A renewed interest and skills of an old hobby. All of his**



**Chapman, Lou Buller, Paul Bartlett, Jim Carr, Tom Reinsch and Joe Calder.**

*children have requested that Dad do a special sketch for each of them. Great job Russ!*

The **March 20<sup>th</sup>** meeting was called to order by Vice-President **JoAnne Thiele**. There were 18 present: **Louie Buller, Jim Culver, Paul Bartlett, Jim Carr, Joe Calder, Gus Dornbusch, Steve Scheinost, Dana Snyder, Bob Engel, Bill Hance, Harold Klaege, Arlis Plummer, Donna Dornbusch, Chris Chapman, Dave Camper, Gary Muckel, Norman Kempt, and JoAnne Thiele.**

The **April 17<sup>th</sup>** meeting was called to order by President **Norm Helzer**. There were 18 members present: **Chris Chapman, Jim Culver, Norman Kempf, Louie Buller, Paul Bartlett, Jim Carr, Tom Reinsch, Joe Calder, Dave Camper, Steve Scheinost, Dana Snyder, Gus Dornbusch, Bob Engel, Russ Shultz, Norm Helzer, Val Bohaty, JoAnne Thiele, and Donna Dornbusch**

**Bob Kluth** died on April 5<sup>th</sup>. He was worked for 34 years as a hydrologist for the USDA Soil Conservation Service. **Don Thober** died on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2019. He retired on 2007 with 34 years of service in NE. **Craig Smith** died on March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019. He worked as a civil engineer and state design engineer. He retired in 2001. **Nancy Harner** was the wife of **Rod Harner** who was a soil scientist in the Soil Survey Center in Lincoln, NE.

**Richard Patronsky** was a long time engineer with USDA Soil Conservation Service and served in OH, WI, IN, and NE.

**Norm Kempf** stated that his wife **Sylvia** had successful surgery to repair a hiatal hernia on March 22<sup>nd</sup>. Sylvia also took a fall on April 11<sup>th</sup> and had a broken nose. She is now doing better. **Bill Hance** reported on his successful cataract surgery. His wife **Colleen** had a pacemaker put in and has had some serious problems with it.

**Steve Scheinost** and his wife just got back from a west Caribbean tour where they enjoyed the warm weather and sunshine. **Norm Helzer** and his wife **Linda** traveled to western Nebraska for the Sand Hills safari. **Russ Shultz** and his wife are going to start taking short trips in Nebraska for sight-seeing. They will be celebrating their 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary and will probably do so in Santa Fe, NM.

**Tom Reinsch** is traveling around Nebraska to learn more about its counties. We learned that the Burlington Railroad named the towns on its line in alphabetical order. He and his family were to gather for his mother's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, but she died two weeks before. The family still got together.

There was a piece on **Jan Joseph** on Pure Nebraska (Channel 10/11) in Aurora. He is a retired NRCS Employee.

Those who had attended one-room schools reminisced about their experiences. It was interesting to note how many of the group had attended one-room country schools.

**Gus Dornbusch** stated that his sister had died. His brother-in-law, husband of another sister, was going to have a 90<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration, but died a few days before that occasion, so they had a funeral instead.

## OREGON

**Don Stettler, ARCSE Representative**

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

Twenty came to the Oregon retiree lunch on a beautiful April 24<sup>th</sup> spring day to help The Old Spaghetti Factory (OSF) celebrate its fiftieth year. The OSF had its beginnings in Portland and now has restaurants in twelve states. The Oregon retirees have been enjoying lunches at the Clackamas OSF in April and October for more than twenty years.



Attending the lunch were **Lowell and Marian Kenedy, Leland Saele, Tom and Jeanne George, Kay Denfeld, Jo Huelshoff, Beth Zetter, Gail Voge, Eldena VanderZanden, Terry Mitchell, Lamont and Karen Robbins, Jon Lea, Joe Sahlfeld, Laurel Grimsted, Chad McGrath, Dick and Kathy Sylvester,** and yours truly, **Don Stettler.**

**Tom and Jeanne George** are enjoying being back in Oregon despite the stress of the move after twenty years in Arizona. They were drawn back by the sunshine to spend a few weeks in Arizona. While there, they visited **Galen Bridge** who they said was a great host. **Joe and Beckie** enjoyed a trip as far away as Florida. **Kay Denfeld** is still strumming away on her ukulele.

Her group will perform at the Columbia County Fair in July. **Gale Voge** recently lost her father. He was a war long prisoner of war in Burma. Gale received a document that outlined all the prison camps he had been held in.

**Dick and Kathy Sylvester** have been busy staying home. They did finish their project of converting their garage. The group welcomed **Jo Huelshoff** to her first retiree lunch since retiring. So far, she is enjoying retirement. **Laurel Grimsted** told us she is the proud grandmother of five grandchildren. **Elena VanderZanden** recently took a trip to Indiana to visit relatives. She was very pleased to see a video from an 8mm movie of relatives when they were young. **Beth Zetter** told us that she and **Butch** are still at odds with the beaver that has taken residence in their backyard. **Marian Kenedy** gave the group advice based on her experience with a bruised knee. **Lowell Kenedy** has a lawnmower that provides an interval of time for a rest from the vigor of mowing. After several bag-emptying the mower won't restart. It will start up again after giving Lowell a rest.

**Jon Lea** reported that he attended the 87<sup>th</sup> Annual Western Snow Conference April 15-18, 2019 in Reno, NV. He and **Jolyne's** daughter now has a degree in civil engineering from the University of Washington. **Chad McGrath's** son is graduating from Harvard. The school only gives two tickets to attend the graduation ceremony per graduate. **Lamont Robbins** told us that he and **Karen** are enjoying their new single-story house. The selling of their old house along with an intermediate move into a rental prior to moving in to their new home was stressful. **Karen Robbins** recently took a trip to Macedonia and Serbia to speak about helping children with autism.



*Laurel Grimsted, Tom George, Joe Sahlfeld, and Jeanne George*



*Terry Mitchell, Kathy and Dick Sylvester*

**Leland Saele** told us that he and **Margo's** daughter's health problems continue to keep them on pins and needles.

Even so, she is doing quite well. Leland highly recommends the book, The Worst Hard Time: The Untold Story of Those Who Survived the Great American Dust Bowl by Timothy Egan. I second that. The next lunch will be on July 24<sup>th</sup> at the Peppermill Restaurant in Aloha.



*In the foreground left to right, Beth Zetter, Eldena VanderZanden, and Jo Huelshoff. In the background facing the camera left to right – Leland Saele*



*Lowell and Marian Kenedy*

## SOUTH CAROLINA

**Grady Adkins, ARCSE Representative**

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

Front Row: Niles Glasgow, Marcia Adkins, Carolyn Glasgow, Linda McNeill, James Williams, Jimmy Sanders, Bill Melven, Ethel Comer, George Comer, Ellis Morrow. Back Row: Burt Wells, Grady Adkins, Fred Plyler, Jr., Al McNeill, Hugh Caldwell, Dan Guy, Walt Douglas.





The South Carolina NRCS Retirees met April 18<sup>th</sup> in Lexington, SC. Following many updates and stories (the older we get, the better we were), and a Dutch treat lunch, a representative from Meals on Wheels explained the local county program.

## TEXAS (NORTH)

**Arnold King, ARCSE Representative**

Email: [arnolddking@hotmail.com](mailto:arnolddking@hotmail.com)

The Texas retirees held their 26<sup>th</sup> annual reunion, once again at New Braunfels, TX. **Willeene** and I attended and enjoyed the special meals and social events that have become a tradition over the years. Attendance was slightly down, as expected, as the older members have problems preventing their attendance. Add to that, recent retirees do not seem interested in joining and participating in the event. The silent auction was successful once again, and approximately \$1,100 was collected for the scholarship fund. It was decided a few years ago to devote the scholarship money to sending young people to an organization, Texas Brigade, devoted to training teenage students in conservation of natural resources. The training is provided at week-long conservation camps in various locations within Texas. \$500 scholarships are made available to applicants who need financial assistance to attend. We have received several letters from graduates who state the training has changed their lives by giving direction and improving skills in technology and public speaking.

**Clyde Goodman** had a knee replacement. He has finished his home therapy, and other therapy is scheduled. He appreciated the card from the Club. **Dave Stockbridge** had another heart ablation to correct heart rhythm problems (arrhythmias). He is feeling OK now. He and **Billy Teels** have been fishing for sand bass. Billy is having some back problems.

**Bernie Owen** reported that **Maxine** recently had vein surgery. He also reported that **Dennis Gaster** was in the hospital. **Dennis Erinakes** took a look at a dam failure in Joshua, TX. The dam is OK now and holding the water safely. Groundwater rules and regulations have been published. Dennis said his arm is feeling better now. He helped trap and remove twenty pigs from his farm.

**Doug Seibel** retiled a shower and did a good job. Doug has two brothers in California, and one of them is moving to the San Antonio area. Doug has been finishing up his mother's estate. His wife is continuing her exercising at a fitness center. **Dave Drennan** is looking forward to watching his grandsons play baseball. Dave's son took his family to Arizona for golf and Rangers spring training. They also went to Disney World. **Tom Hodges** reported that he had his kitchen cabinet doors repaired by **Scott Kirkland**.

**Bill Kuenstler** sent some news to the club. He and **Rita** are both doing well. Bill is staying busy with Master Gardner activities as well as volunteering at the local hospital. Beginning May 1<sup>st</sup> he will resume his sea turtle watch activities where he will work a section of beach one day a week looking for sea turtle nests. Bill says hi to everyone. Bill has also assumed responsibilities as the Florida state representative.



## WASHINGTON

**Ken Kaul, ARCSE Representative**

Email: [kenkaul@msn.com](mailto:kenkaul@msn.com)

Those attending our first Monday monthly noon lunch at the Timber Creek Grill and Buffet in Spokane Valley were: **Larry Edmonds, Ken Kaul, Harry Riehle, Ralph Schmidt and Carl Vennes**. The Snow Birds should be back in May. On April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2019 **Hans Krauss** celebrated his 89<sup>th</sup> birthday with a trip to the Outback. He is looking forward to returning to our lunches. **Lennie Husa** is doing much better and is also looking forward to joining us for lunch. **Joe Carmack** reported that he and several family members road bicycles through the new tunnel in downtown Seattle. **Carl Vennes** reported that he did very well at the Cribbage tournament in Las Vegas. We were saddened by the death in March of **Margaret "Beecie" Fechter**, sister of **Stefan Fechter**.

## WASHINGTON, DC, NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA

**John Peterson, ARCSE Representative**

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

From **Carl Bouchard**. "Once again, I volunteered to do the photography for the National Conference of State Societies Princess Program of the Cherry Blossom Festival. Eight days of following 55 young ladies around Washington from 7 in the morning till 10 at night is enough to tire anyone out, which will take me two weeks to recover. I took over 8,000 pictures this year, and they can all be found at <https://2019cbpp.shutterfly.com/>. Some of the highlights from this year are the Lantern Lighting, a tour of the White House, and visits to the Lithuanian and Russian Embassies. You can see all the events on the website. I have been doing this for about 20 years, and it is time for me to hang it up. I mean it this year.

Also as president of Coastal Sussex NARFE Chapter 1690, we are hosting the Delaware Federation Biennial Conference on June 5<sup>th</sup> at the Maple Dale Country Club in Dover starting at 9am. I encourage all former NRCS and SCS employees who are NARFE members and those who aspire to be members and live on the Eastern Shore to attend. This has consumed much of my time for the past few months, and we have a great program lined up. One of the many door prizes will be one of my pictures taken from the South Portico of the White House last year while touring the White House with the Cherry Blossom Princesses." **Carl** has contributed greatly in many positions as a volunteer since his retirement. Thanks, **Carl**.

**John and Blanche Peterson** attended the South STC and Friends 2019 reunion in Franklin, TN from 5-8 MAY, 2019. It is always great fun, and this year there were about 40 attendees. There was a golf scramble on Monday the 6<sup>th</sup>, a banquet on Tuesday evening, and much sightseeing and reminiscing with old friends. This reunion was hosted by **Kevin Brown and Dana York**. More next newsletter.



**Reunion at Hilton Head Island: Art Holland, Blanche and John Peterson, Jo and Don Gohmert, Carolyn and Niles Glasgow**

This is from your ARCSE National Capital Area Representative. I wasn't going to include it, but some folks reminded me it just might help someone else. For all our friends who knew of my recent stroke scare, this is an update. Tuesday morning (16



APR) as I was drinking my coffee, my face started feeling numb for no reason. It was as though a dentist had given me a shot of Novocain. Then when I stood up, I was very dizzy. Somehow, I sensed a stroke, checked the F.A.S.T. warning signs, and we immediately departed for the Inova Fairfax Emergency Room.

I certainly met the criteria for being cautious. I am a male, over 55 years old, take cholesterol medicine, and my father had a stroke late in his life. When I was checked in to the ER and started undergoing tests, I could tell all the doctors and nurses did not think I was suffering a stroke, but my symptoms confused them, and they were bound and determined to get to the bottom of it. They were concerned about a heart attack and something called a Transient Ischemic Attack (TIA). A TIA is a warning that you are at risk of soon having a stroke. I moved to a private room late Tuesday. For three days, night and day, I was poked, prodded, had EKGs, MRIs, ultra sounds, 10 other scans particularly focusing on blood flow to the brain, and X-rays. I would say I probably had the most thorough physical exam I will ever have, but got very little sleep.

They discovered that two of my four carotid arteries in my neck allowing blood flow to the brain were not functioning as they should. One apparently completely closed while I was in the hospital. Another was about 50% blocked. So I did have a TIA. They suggested not worrying about the blocked one. Trying to clean it out could cause more damage. And for six months we will monitor the other one. I will start taking baby aspirin every day, and regularly check its flow. At some point we may need to have that artery cleaned out. This was all a complete surprise and a shock to me. Never in my life had I experienced these symptoms before. That was a surprise to the many doctors. While I was shocked and surprised at what they found, I have to be pleased they did. I was sent home late Thursday.

I was supposed to be at the Potomac Watershed Roundtable tomorrow, but am not up for it. This is probably more than you wanted to know, but so many people have asked what happened. I thank you all for your prayers, thoughts, kind words and flowers, and calls. **Blanche** and I really appreciate your concern. When I expressed surprise at what they found, the doctors reminded me they usually treat people with TIA in their 60s. Since I will be 83 in July, one smart-alec Dr. said I was past due and reminded me I will die from something. I am very grateful for the good care. **John Peterson**.

The National Capital Area Retirees held their Spring Luncheon at the Ft. Myer Officers Club on Thursday, 2 MAY. **Barbara Osgood** makes the reservations and **Diana Morse** handles the finances. It is always much fun with excellent food. I will list the attendees in the next newsletter.

## WISCONSIN

**James Enlow, ARCSE Representative**

**Email:** [ljenlow@att.net](mailto:ljenlow@att.net)

The Wisconsin retirees met for lunch on April 25<sup>th</sup> at Grizzlies Bar and Grill, Eau Claire, WI. **Vic Price** was the host. The regularly scheduled luncheon was canceled due to severe weather conditions. Those in attendance included **Vic and Mary Price, Louie and Cathy Barber, Olin Femreite and wife, Steve Price, Mark Biel, Dale Gagner, Steve Rake, Bob Uhrig, Ted Manning, Roger Dahl, Bob Henrich, Ron Kugel, and Rick Zirk**. The weather was great, and everyone enjoyed the food, drink, and fellowship. The next luncheon is scheduled for June 13<sup>th</sup> in Green Lake, WI.

## WYOMING

**Veronica Schadegg, ARCSE Representative**

**Email:** [schadegg2@bresnan.net](mailto:schadegg2@bresnan.net)

May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019 is the date for the Wyoming SCS/NRCS retiree get-together in Buffalo. Campers can access Tie Hack Campground on the Big Horns not too far from town, easy pull for a camper. For more information contact **Phil Gonzales**, 333 Klondike Drive, Buffalo, Wyoming 82834, 307-684-5920, Cell 307-217-1224.

## 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.*

Rodney M. Alt  
Frederick E. Bubb  
Robert B. Crawford  
Robert Halstead  
Barbara T. Osgood  
John W. Reh  
Frank E. Resides

Surprise, AZ  
New Cumberland, PA  
Newton, KS  
Homosassa, FL  
Fairfax, VA  
Salina, KS  
West Chester, PA

## SENIOR CONSERVATIONIST CHRONICLE

by Marc Safley, Chronicler, Senior Conservationist

### Senior Conservationist Barbara Travis Osgood, Ph.D.

Senior Conservationist **Barbara Osgood** was born in Nyack, Rockland County, New York. Nyack is a town on the west bank of the Hudson River about 19 miles north of Manhattan. Her roots are deep in the area. In 1899 her grandfather founded a cemetery memorial business in Nyack named Travis Monuments; he also served as mayor of Nyack for a time. Barbara attended local schools, graduating from Nyack High School. After graduation, she attended Cornell University, where she graduated with a B.S. degree in Home Economics. Later she returned to academia at the City University of New York (CUNY). From 1972 to 1976 she was lecturer/instructor at Lehman College of CUNY while pursuing an M.S. degree in Family and Consumer Studies. From 1976 to 1980 she was a Research Associate and Visiting Assistant Professor at Cornell while working toward a doctorate degree. In 1980 she received a Ph.D. in Human Ecology from Cornell; her doctoral work focused on the sociology of built and natural environments, city and regional planning, and social gerontology.

Barbara's early involvement with SCS was in the late 1970s during the first Resources Conservation Act analyses being carried out nationwide. She was an analyst under contract with the agency at that time. In 1980 she was hired as the agency's first National Sociologist. During this period she worked with field office staffs on strategies for working with minority and low-income farmers, understanding different ethnic groups, and marketing conservation practices to farmers, ranchers and other land users. Since then she has held positions as Staff Head in the Northeast National Technical Center, State Conservationist for New Jersey (in fact, Barbara was SCS/NRCS's first woman to be a State Conservationist), USDA Liaison to EPA, Associate Director for Strategic Planning and Policy Analysis, Assistant Chief for the Northeast, and Special Assistant to the Chief. Barbara was a member of the Senior Executive Service. She is included in Who's Who of American Women and Who's Who in the United States.

Barbara retired in 2002 and resides in Northern Virginia. She has continued to be involved in the sociological dimensions of conservation and environmental policy and analysis. As a consultant in environmental sociology, she has developed the Social Impact Assessment sections of environmental impact statements of off-shore drilling, off-shore wind farms, and other energy-related projects. Barbara has also created training materials for conservation professionals. Her activities have included President of the Villages of Fair Lakes Board of Trustees, member and President of the Greens of Fair Lakes Homeowners Board, and former Governing Board member of the United Campus Ministries of Northern Virginia.

She has a son, a daughter, and one grandchild. Her hobbies include horticulture, needlepoint, and her rescued, old Labrador retrievers. Her Labrador retriever activities are as a volunteer in the Lab Rescue group within the Labrador Retriever Club of the Potomac (Lab Rescue of L.R.C.P.). She currently is living with her 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> old Labs. She is also very active in ARCSE's D.C. Chapter. Barbara has written a book which will be unveiled in early June; it is entitled 84 Paws: Life Lessons from Old Labs. She has noted that "My 21 years with NRCS were the best of my professional career. It was a great organization to work for."

## OBITUARY INFORMATION

**Paul Benedict, Membership Chair**

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

### Surname *In Memoriam* (Note: These are recent notices. For a complete list, please see [www.arcse.org](http://www.arcse.org))

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| <b>Allen</b> | <b>Keith Jordan Allen</b> (93) of Salem, Oregon died peacefully at the Sweet Bye and Bye Assisted Living Facility on Tuesday March 19, 2019. Keith served our country by enlisting in the US Army Air Force and received an honorable discharge. Keith graduated from Oregon State University with a degree in Civil Engineering and made his career in the USDA Soil Conservation Service in Oregon. He married <b>Ardys Struckmeier</b> in 1950, and they had two sons, <b>Jerry</b> and <b>Gail</b> . Ardys passed away in 1985, but he found love again when he married his 2nd wife, <b>Ruth</b> in 1987. He attended the 1st Christian Church in Salem for many years. He loved taking vacations with Ruth in their 5th Wheel and enjoyed volunteering at their church and for Meals on Wheels. Ruth passed away in March 2018. He is survived by his two sons and two grandchildren.  |
| <b>Brown</b> | <b>Thomas "Tom" James Brown</b> (100) of Fairfield, Iowa passed away Monday, April 1, 2019, at his home in Sunnybrook Assisted Living at Fairfield. Tom was born August 5, 1918, in Garden Grove, Iowa to <b>Murice</b> and <b>Harriett (Schooler) Brown</b> . Tom graduated from Iowa State with a BS degree and continued being an avid Iowa State sports fan. After college he served in the Army Corp of Engineers during WWII for 4 years in the South Pacific and retired as a Captain. He married <b>Violet Leah Greene</b> on October 8, 1950, in Humeston, Iowa. This year they would have been married 69 years. He worked 31 years for the Soil Conservation Service as an Agricultural Engineer in the Fairfield Area Office before he retired in 1984. A Masonic Service was held April 4, 2019, at Behner Funeral Home, followed by a funeral service April 5, 2019 at First Presbyterian Church, Fairfield. Burial with Military Honors was at Humeston Cemetery, Humeston, Iowa. Memorials may be made to the Presbyterian Church or Lord Cupboard. Cards and memorials may be mailed to Violet Brown, 3000 W. Madison Ave., Apt 409, Fairfield, Iowa 52556. Survivors include his wife, <b>Violet</b> ; and nephews, <b>Terry Legvold</b> of North Carolina and |



**James Legvold** of Fort Worth/Dallas, Texas.

- Bruns** **Edward L. Bruns** (85) of Hugo, Minnesota, passed away peacefully surrounded by family on April 17, 2019 at his Keystone Place residence. Before retiring, Edward was a soil scientist for the USDA Soil Conservation Service. His positions included being an Assistant State Soil Scientist in Minnesota during the 1980s. He was recognized for personally mapping soils on over 1 million acres in several Midwestern states. He was preceded in death by parents **William** and **Bernice Bruns**; brother **Richard**; sisters **Dorothy Sdeaton** and **Betty Wubbena**; and son **Ronald**. Survivors include Edward's wife of 64 years **Rosabel (Randi)**; children **Steven Bruns (Shari)**, **Kathleen Bosse (Jim)**, **Clifford Bruns (Heather)**, **Elizabeth Okerstrom (Brian)**; 8 grandchildren; 2 great grand-children; and sisters **Minetta Jones** and **Marge Freeese (Darwin)**. In lieu of flowers the family request that you give to your favorite charity, and they offer special thanks to the caring Staff at Keystone and Allina Hospice.
- Cashman** **Stephen L. Cashman** (66) died February 27, 2019 at Caribou, Maine following a brief valiant fight with cancer. He was born in Danvers, MA, February 8, 1953, the son of the late **William** and **Doris (Bouchard) Cashman**. He served with the U.S. Army and married **Jean Hibbard Cashman** on May 14, 1983. He was a graduate of Essex Aggie (Danvers, Massachusetts) with an Associate's Degree and the University of Connecticut with a B.S. Degree in Natural Resources. Stephen was employed by the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Services in the Fort Kent office for over 34 years. He was a member of the Gray Memorial United Methodist Church. In addition to his wife **Jean**, he is survived by three sons, **Joshua** of North Dakota, **Andrew** of Brewer, and **Christopher** of Woodland, Maine; and his grandson **Trey**.
- Clendenon** **Douglas Fred Clendenon** (46) of Fayetteville, Tennessee, passed away February 3, 2008. He was a native of Akron, OH. He was the son of **Fred W. Clendenon** of McMinnville and the late **Mildred Dillmore Clendenon**. He was married to **Judy Darlene Turnbo Clendenon**. Douglas worked as a soil scientist with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. He was a member of the Fayetteville First Baptist Church. In addition to his wife and father, he is survived by one son, **Kyle Clendenon** and one daughter, **Callie Clendenon**; and a brother.
- Darby** Honorary Lifetime Member and Senior Conservationist **Gerald "Gerry" Marlin Darby** (93) of Blacksburg, Virginia passed away April 20, 2019. Born February 7, 1926 in Ponta, Texas. Mr. Darby retired from the Soil Conservation Service, (now the Natural Resources Conservation Service), in 1986 as National Agronomist. At the time, his headquarters was in Washington, DC. He was a member of the American Society of Agronomy and the Soil Conservation Society of America. He was a veteran of the U. S. Navy Hospital Corps and the U.S. Army Field Artillery, during World War II and the Korean War, respectively. After naval service he returned to Texas A & M University and graduated in 1949 with a Bachelor of Science degree in agronomy and received his commission in the U. S Army Reserve. He returned to Texas A & M in the early seventies and received a Master of Agriculture degree. During Mr. Darby's career in the Soil Conservation Service he served in Texas; two years in Nicaragua; short periods in Kenya, Zambia, Malawi, and Iran; and several years in Washington, DC. Mr. Darby was a member of St. Paul United Methodist Church in Christiansburg, Virginia. Survivors include his wife **Jean Cummins Darby**, whom he married in 1951; two sons, **Dan** and **Bruce**; daughters-in-law, **Martha** and **Vicki**; two daughters, **Diana Carlson** and **Betsy (Gail) Stuart**; son-in-law, **Wayne Weade**; seven grandchildren; five great grandchildren; brother, Mr. **B. R. Darby, Jr.** of Jacksonville, TX. Funeral services were conducted April 25, 2019 at the McCoy Funeral Home Chapel, Blacksburg, VA.
- Fechter** **Margaret "Beecie" Felice Fechter** (75) of Helena, Montana, passed away March 23, 2019. Margaret was the sister of ARCSE member **Stefan Fechter**. She served in the U.S. Army as a medical records librarian. After discharge, she worked for St. Peter's Hospital in Helena.
- Fox** Honorary Lifetime Member and Senior Conservationist **Roy Linwood Fox** (97) of Salem, Oregon lost his battle with old age on March 8, 2019, eleven days before his 98th birthday. He was born in Winner, South Dakota, the third son of **Luther Leroy** and **Lorena (Wilmoth) Fox**. As a child, he barely survived a fire that burned down the family home. He was subsequently raised in the back room of the family plumbing business, and he graduated from Winner High School in 1939. Roy was smitten with a local girl, **Avis Marlene DeBuhr**, who made it clear his romantic overtures were unwelcome unless he earned a college degree. Accordingly, he enrolled in the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, in Rapid City, and worked his way through school with a variety of interesting jobs such as cleaning the restrooms in a filling station in exchange for a room in the basement. After the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, Roy volunteered to enlist in the Navy, hoping his experience in the family business would allow him to enter the service above the lowest rank. He was surprised when the Navy enrolled him in an officer training program and told him to finish his civil engineering degree. He graduated in 1943 and shipped out for Guam after completing Midshipmen's School. Roy served as an engineer and officer in the 49th and 134th Naval Construction Battalions (Seabees) and spent most of the war building large aircraft hangers for the bombers flying missions to the Japanese mainland. He was discharged in 1946 and promptly married Avis in Madison, Wisconsin. He worked the following three decades in various engineering and management positions with the USDA Soil Conservation Service in Terry, Montana; Rock Springs, Wyoming; and Albany, Salem and Portland, Oregon. He retired in 1977 as the State Conservation Engineer, having designed and overseen the construction of dams and irrigation projects throughout Oregon. He also served as an officer in the US Naval Reserve until 1964, retiring as a Lieutenant. In 2018, Roy was honored to travel to Washington D.C. on a Journey of Heroes (for World War II veterans), sponsored by Wish of a Lifetime and the Vital Life Foundation. In addition to his professional accomplishments, Roy was a dedicated family man, faithfully married to Avis for 57 years. Roy and Avis were blessed with four children: **Lana**, **Pamela**, **John**, and **Amy**, along with nine grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. Roy was active in many organizations including the Episcopal Church, Toastmasters International, Association of NW Steelheaders, Federation of Fly Fishers, American Society of Civil Engineers, Masons, and Elks. In 1994 Roy and Avis relocated from Portland to South Salem to be closer to family. They spent many happy days together with their children and grandchildren. Following Avis' death in 2003 at age 80, Roy began volunteering in the computer room at the South Salem Senior Center. In 2017, due to declining health, Roy moved to the Oregon Veterans' Home in Lebanon where he made many new friends among the residents and staff. The family is grateful for the excellent care he received there. Roy was laid to rest with his beloved Avis in a private interment at Willamette National Cemetery on March 15, 2019. Memorial contributions may be made to the Association of NW Steelheaders [nwsteelheaders.org/donate/](http://nwsteelheaders.org/donate/).
- Gembala** Senior Conservationist **Henry Gembala** (90) of Fair Oaks, California, passed away April 15, 2001. Henry was born August

23, 1910, in Tarnov, Nebraska to **Joseph and Veronica (Silver) Gembala**. He studied civil engineering at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln from 1928 to 1933 and was a cadet officer in the Army ROTC program. After college, he joined the U.S. Civil Conservation Corps as a civil engineering leader and transferred into the Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service (SCS), living and working in many South Central Nebraska towns. He held several engineering and management positions with SCS including serving in North Africa during the mid- and late- 1960s, assigned to the U.S. Agency for International Development. He retired from the USDA in 1973 at the Lincoln Nebraska Regional office and moved to Rialto, California. He then consulted for White Engineering Corp. as a civil engineer and performed soil and water engineering studies and did hydrology engineering consulting for the governments of Haiti, Jamaica, Indonesia, Burma, Mauritania, and Afghanistan during 1974 to 1980. He fully retired in 1981 and moved to Fair Oaks in 1994 to be near his family. Survivors at the time of his death included his wife of 66 years, **Ruth G. (Brown) Gembala** Fair Oaks, California; one son, **Roger**, also of Fair Oaks; one daughter, **Barbara Ann (Mrs. Terry) Miller** of Colorado Springs, Colorado; six grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren; two brothers and two sisters. He was preceded in death by one son, **Eugene R. Gembala** in 1993; and two brothers and two sisters.

**Geter** Member **John A. Geter** (90) of Fort Collins, Colorado passed away on February 2, 2019 in Fort Collins. John was born in Mississippi and served in the US Navy at the end of WWII. He graduated from Louisiana State University with a degree in Agricultural Engineering and began working for the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) in 1952, employed in Oklahoma to work on watershed dams. He spent most of his SCS career as a Conservation Engineer. In 1954 he married **Bonnie Foust**. His SCS career then took him to Phoenix and Indianapolis. In 1975, he packed his family up for Lashkargah, Afghanistan where he worked as a team leader on a project to reduce salinity on irrigated farm lands. The project lasted four years, until they were evacuated following political turmoil in the area. John then settled his family in the Washington, DC area before taking positions in Puerto Rico, Haiti, and Mexico City. After John retired from SCS, he took on international contracting jobs in St. Kitts, Indonesia, and Egypt, working on various conservation projects. John was preceded in death by his parents **Leo and Emily Geter**, his daughter **Deborah Green**, and his son **John A. Geter, Jr.** He is survived by his wife of 64 years, **Bonnie Geter**; his sons **Frank Geter, Leo Geter, and Kenneth Geter**; his grandchildren **Laura Green, Stephanie Young, James Green, Dana Bauer, Michelle Geter, and Christina Wetherington**; and his great grandchildren **Milton Young and Seamus Young**.

**Harner** **Nancy Jean Harner** (90) formerly of Lincoln, Nebraska passed away March 23, 2019, in North Platte, Nebraska. Nancy was the wife of Senior Conservationist **Rodney "Rod" F. Harner**. Nancy was born October 30, 1928 in Great Bend, Kansas. She obtained her Bachelor in Education degree from Washburn University in 1950. Following graduation, she taught in Topeka and in Garden City, Kansas where she met Rod. They were married in Topeka, Kansas June 12, 1954. Nancy and Rod returned to Garden City as Rod began his career in the Soil Conservation Service, and Nancy resumed teaching. Nancy was a caregiver her entire life, beginning with her baby and younger sister when their father passed away. Nancy then raised her children in Kansas, Michigan, and Nebraska as Rod's career advanced over the years. Her caregiving continued with her seven grandchildren. Nancy transmitted her love of music, reading, cooking, games, crafts, and family to all she touched. Nancy is survived by her spouse, **Rod**; children, **Kent**, of Omaha, Nebraska, **Brian**, of Arlington, Virginia, and **Ann (Steve) Wade** of North Platte, Nebraska; grandchildren, **Jay (Jerri) Harner, Ryan (Beth) Harner, Andrew (Meaghan) Wade, Nathan (Jamie) Wade, Sarah (Sam) Sweley, Isabel Harner and Genevieve Harner**; great grandchildren, **Malayka, Kyler, Bode, Austin, Alex, Chloe, Jacob, and Kolton**. She is also survived her beloved sisters, **Carolyn Huffman and Kathy Maag**, both of Topeka, Kansas. A celebration of Nancy's life was held March 27, 2019, 10am at Lincoln Memorial Funeral Home, 6800 South 14th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to St. Mark's United Methodist Church, Lincoln, Nebraska.

**Hart** **Gerald Norman Hart** (85) passed on March 28, 2019, at Baptist Health Lexington, Kentucky following a brief illness. Gerald served in the U.S. Armed Forces during the Korean War. He was a graduate of the University of Kentucky and a member of Greenland Baptist Church. He retired from the USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in 1994 after service in various capacities in eastern and central Kentucky including area conservationist. Following retirement Gerald became a full-time farmer. He was preceded in death by his wife, **Marjorie Eaton Hart**; son, **Gerald Allen Hart**; and son-in-law, **Martin J. Cunningham III**. Gerald is survived by his daughter, **Sheree Hart Cunningham**; two grandchildren and one great grandchild. The family requests memorial donations to The Gerald Hart Scholarship Fund/Whitley County Farm Bureau, PO Box 209, Williamsburg, KY 40769 or a charity of your choice.

**Hudson** **Jeanette Hudson** (92) of Corbin, Kentucky passed away Jan. 25, 2018, at Baptist Health Corbin. During World War II Jeanette worked at Oak Ridge National Laboratory and later for the Selective Service. Jeanette retired as a Resource Conservation and Development Program Clerk in 1994. She continued as an Administrative Secretary for Whitley County Conservation District. She was a member of Parkway Church of God. She was preceded in death by her husband, **Kenneth Hudson, Sr.**, and by several siblings. She leaves behind her daughter, **Hazelle Ann Smith (Ron)**; her son **Kenny Hudson (Beverly)**; six grandchildren; seven great grandchildren; four great-great grandchildren; two sisters; and three brothers.

**Johnson** Honorary Lifetime Member and Senior Conservationist **Ralph C. Johnson** (98) of Sparta, Kentucky passed away on February 24, 2019. He was born in Akron Ohio on July 13, 1920 the son of the late **Ray and Katie Johnson**. Ralph spent three years and three months overseas during World War II. He attended college on the G.I. Bill, receiving a Bachelor of Science degree in agriculture from Western Kentucky University in 1948. Ralph was employed by the US Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service in 1948 and retired as district conservationist in 1977. Ralph enjoyed flying his small plane that he called "Blue Goose." He loved to travel and see historical places in the USA, Mexico and Canada. His travels took him to all 50 states and some of the Caribbean islands. Ralph married **Mildred Hendren** on December 10, 1971. After he retired, their home was on the Hendren Farm in Gallatin County, Kentucky. Ralph was preceded in death by two brothers **Garland and Vanley Johnson**; and three sisters **Loretta Taylor, Mary Lee Gooden and Edith Mae Henderson**. Ralph is survived by his wife Mildred; four brothers, **Ray Jr, Jesse, Alan and Kenny**; and one sister **Vonda Tabb**. Ralph was a member of the Oakland Baptist Church, and the family asks that memorial donations be made to the Oakland Baptist Church, 410 Church Street, Oakland, KY 42159.

**Johnston** **Edward A. Johnston** (55) of Durand, Illinois passed away suddenly on April 26, 2011. Edward graduated from Western Illinois University in 1980. He married the former **Colleen L. Gaffney** on March 31, 1989. He was employed as a district



conservationist for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service in Winnebago County, Illinois. Edward worked for the USDA for 35 years. He was a member of St. Mary Catholic Church, Durand. He served on the Durand CUSD 322 School Board for 17 years. He was president of the school board when he passed away. Survivors include wife, **Colleen**; daughter **Morgan**; son, **Eddie**; mother, **Jo Ann**; sister, **Theresa**; brothers, **Pete, Pat and Joe**; sisters, **Sue and Julie**; and many nieces and nephews.

- Kleckner** Member **Lowell Henry Kleckner** (86) of Dennison, Iowa, passed away March 20, 2019 at the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha, Nebraska. He was an engineer in the Denison Engineering Office for most of his Soil Conservation Service/Natural Resources Conservation service career. He was the son of **Henry Clarence Kleckner** and **Opal Merle (Torney) Kleckner**, born February 9, 1933, near Riceville in Northeast Iowa. Lowell attended a rural one-room school (Jamestown No. 8) through the 8th grade and then graduated from Riceville High School in 1951. After being drafted, he served in the United States Army from 1953 to 1955. He attended Iowa State University from 1956 to 1960 and received a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Engineering in 1960. His position as a civil engineer with the Soil Conservation Service brought him to Denison in 1961. His work involved designing many dams and ponds in Crawford, Harrison, and Shelby counties. He was also involved in the design of the dams at Yellow Smoke and Nelson Parks. On December 28, 1968, Lowell was united in marriage with **Sharen Claussen** at Zion Lutheran Church in Denison, Iowa, and they were blessed with four children: **Kelly, Shawn, Heidi and Lance**. After Lowell retired from the Soil Conservation Service in December of 1988, they became involved in farming and had a beef cow-calf operation and a dairy goat enterprise near Dennison. Lowell was a member of Zion Lutheran Church in Denison where he served as treasurer for more than thirty years. He was also a member of the American Legion and the local genealogy society. Lowell enjoyed the peacefulness of rural living and playing his guitar. He was preceded in death by his parents; one grandson, **Diego Ceballos-Kleckner**; and one brother, **Richard Kleckner**. Survivors include his wife of fifty years, **Sharen Kleckner** of Denison, Iowa; two daughters, **Kelly Kleckner** of Council Bluffs, Iowa, and **Heidi Standridge (Daniel)**; two sons, **Shawn Kleckner (Phenister)** of Boone, Iowa, and **Lance Kleckner (Sandy)** of Denison, Iowa; eleven grandchildren; two brothers, **Gordon Kleckner (LaRae)** and **Wilbur Kleckner (Laura)** all of Riceville, Iowa; and other relatives and friends.
- Kluth** **Robert Kluth** (79) of Lincoln, Nebraska passed away on April 5, 2019 at his home. Bob was born on May 13, 1939 in LaGrange, Illinois to **Raymond and Libuse (Stulik) Kluth**. He graduated from Iowa State University in 1961 with a degree in Agricultural Engineering. In 1967 Bob married **Charlotte Jane Wilbur**. They had two daughters, **Karen and Kim**. He worked for 34 years as a hydrologist for the USDA Soil Conservation Service. Bob enjoyed gardening, playing golf, and rooting for his Cubbies! Bob was preceded in death by his parents and daughter **Karen**. Survivors include his wife **Charlotte Jane**; daughter **Kim Harris (Mike)** of Bellevue, Nebraska; son-in-law **Steve Gaul** of LeRoy, Illinois; and five grandchildren.
- Laborie** **Robert "Bob" Ellsworth Laborie** (87) of Elyria, Ohio, passed away on March 13, 2019 at Life Care Center of Elyria under the care of Crossroads Hospice. Bob was born in Ashland, Ohio on April 8, 1931. He was employed for 45 years as a Conservation Engineering Technician for the USDA Soil Conservation Service. He served as a multi-county technician in Medina, Ohio for about 15 years. He was a member of the United Methodist Church and he enjoyed gardening, all Cleveland sports, and he coached at Little League West. Everyone Bob met became his friend. Surviving are his wife of 64 years, **Mary Ann (nee Zgoda) Laborie**; children, **Michele (John) Hunt, Jayne (Steve) Poff and Greg (Sheree) Laborie**; a granddaughter, a great-granddaughter, and a brother. Memorial contributions may be made to the Second Harvest Food Bank of North Central Ohio, 5510 Baumhart Rd., Lorain, OH 44053.
- Leidner** **Mary Currier Brown Leidner** (62) passed away September 8, 2015, at her home near Tifton, Georgia. Her three children and husband were with her when she passed from this life to the next. Mary was born on Sept. 19, 1952 in Concord, New Hampshire, but grew up in the Chicago, Illinois area. Mary attended Texas A&M University and graduated in 1974 with a degree in plant and soil science. She spent her professional career with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service (SCS), later named the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). She worked as the agency's first female agronomist and spent most of her career as the district conservationist for Tift and surrounding counties in Georgia. She was an expert on the identification of wetlands and served on numerous national committees for SCS and NRCS. She is survived by her husband and children.
- Leuthold** **Erma Jean Leuthold** (80) of Manhattan, Kansas, passed away February 21, 2019 at her home. Erma was born on January 21, 1939 in Manhattan, Kansas to Donald and **Marjorie (Visser) Hartner** of Riley, Kansas. She attended Washburn University. On July 31, 1960 she married **Larry D. Leuthold** in Riley, Kansas. She worked for the USDA Soil Conservation Service/Natural Resource Conservation Science, Plant Materials Center, for almost 40 years, retiring at the age of 73. Survivors include her two children: a son **Mark Steven Leuthold (Ginger)**, of Manhattan, Kansas; and a daughter, **Lisa Rae Casey (Michael)**, of Springfield, Missouri; and two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.
- Lowe** Member **Douglas Richard "Doug" Lowe** (89) passed away on February 13, 2019 at McLean, Texas. He was a US Navy veteran serving during the Korean War. Doug started his Soil Conservation Service career as a soil scientist at Muleshoe, Texas and then converted to a soil conservationist. He became the District Conservationist in Jayton, Texas and then the Agronomist in Big Spring, Texas. He later transferred to Columbia, Missouri as the state agronomist and later became state resource conservationist. His last duty station was at the South Technical Center in Ft. Worth, Texas. He retired in 1985 to Clarendon, Texas where he was the Veteran's Service Officer for Donley county and served several years on the Board of Regents for Clarendon College. Doug was a member of the First United Methodist Church in Clarendon, VFW, American Legion, and Clarendon Masonic Lodge. He was buried at Hedley, Texas where both he and **Martha Jo Spalding**, his wife of 53 years, grew up. Martha passed away in 2008. He was also preceded in death by his brother, **Wayne Lowe** and a great grandson, **Jett Dyer Lowe**. Survivors include two sons, **David Lowe** of Decatur, Texas, and **Charles Lowe** of Plano, Texas; a sister, **Jane Tice** of Nacogdoches, Texas; his grandchildren, **Brandon, Justin, and Cody Lowe**; and three great grandchildren **Chasady, Cayden, and Jamison Lowe**.
- McClaskey** Lifetime Member and Senior Conservationist **Guy Dale McClaskey** (90) of Salina, Kansas passed away on April 3, 2019. Dale attended Kansas State University, graduating in 1949. He married **Lois Jean Covey** on September 3, 1950 in Wichita, Kansas. His career, after serving two years in the U.S. Army during the Korean War, was with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service. He worked at several locations in Kansas (Wellington, Marysville, Topeka, Hays, Salina) and in Washington, D.C., where he oversaw the Great Plains Conservation Program. He also spent three years with

the inspector general office of the USDA. Dale returned to Salina where he retired in 1987. Dale loved the outdoors and felt honored to have a hand in conserving God's creation of our natural resources. He liked to hunt and fish. His family life was also outdoors, enjoying family camping in his numerous RVs. Dale held life memberships in several organizations: National Rifle Association, American Legion, National Association of Retired Federal Employees, Association of Retired Conservation Service Employees, and the National Association of Family Campers and RVs. Dale was a member of First United Methodist Church in Salina. He was preceded in death by his parents, **Clement** and **Ruth (Cunningham) McClaskey**, of Girard, Kansas; his wife of 55 years, **Lois**, who passed away in 2006; and brothers, **George** and **Jack**. He leaves to mourn his passing: three children, **Vicki Kolarik (David)**, of Bellvue, Neb., **Linda McClaskey**, of Salina, Kansas, and **Gerald McClaskey**, of Lawrence, Kansas; 13 grandchildren, **Nathan, Jared, Ryan, Erin, Megan, Christopher, Amanda, Kathleen, Tyler, Danielle, Sean, Connor** and **Kerry**; and 13 great-grandchildren. Also surviving is **Joyce Rich**, his companion of 12 years. A celebration of Dale's life was held April 9, 2019 at First United Methodist Church, 122 N. Eighth, Salina. Memorials are suggested to Salina Rescue Mission, in care of Ryan Mortuary <http://www.ryanmortuary.com>.

- Miller** **Gerald Thomas Miller** (60) of Box Elder, South Dakota passed away February 23, 2018, after a courageous battle with pancreatic cancer. Gerald was born May 19, 1957, in Spearfish, South Dakota to **Ralph** and **Elsie (Wilson) Miller**, the seventh of 10 children. He grew up in Buffalo, South Dakota. He graduated from North Dakota College of Science in Wahpeton, North Dakota in 1978, with an associate degree in civil engineering. Gerald dedicated more than 40 years to the work of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, starting in the Buffalo, South Dakota field office right out of high school as a soil conservation aide, moving on to offices in Sturgis, Belle Fourche, and finally the Rapid City Field Support Office, where he was a civil engineering technician. While working in Belle Fourche, he met the love of his life, **Cheryl Emery**, and the couple married June 25, 1988, in Belle Fourche. He and Cheryl opened their home to several foster children before adopting three children of their own, **Kayla, Tyann**, and **Justin**. Survivors include his wife, adopted children; four grandchildren; six brothers; and two sisters.
- Munkittrick** **Mary Reine Munkittrick** (91) of Dillsburg, Pennsylvania passed away March 6, 2019 at Holy Spirit Hospital in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania. Mary was married to **Graham (Munk) Telfair Munkittrick**, former USDA Natural Resources Conservation Assistant Chief (Northeastern States) and former Pennsylvania State Conservationist. She was born in Chicago, IL. She received nursing training through the U.S. Navy at St. Barnabas School of Nursing and worked at numerous hospitals throughout the country. Surviving is her loving husband of 68 years, **Graham**; her sons, **Richard Graham Munkittrick, Dr. Thomas Wright Munkittrick (Ruth)** and **Kevin William Munkittrick (Tina)**; her daughter, **Elizabeth MaReine Terrel (Richard)**; ten grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.
- Murray** **Boyd Ashby Murray** (85) of Mapleton, Utah passed away January 1, 2003. He graduated from Utah State Agricultural College in Logan, Utah, where he met his eternal companion, **Ardis H. Webb** of Hinckley, Utah. They were married in the Salt Lake Temple October 3, 1940. His career with the USDA Soil Conservation Service took him many places including Salinas, California; Kanab and Delta, Utah; Mesa, Arizona; San Luis Obispo, California; Portland, Oregon; Springfield, Virginia; and Ankara, Turkey. He retired as Chief of Employee Development and Safety in Washington, D.C. and returned to Sandy, Utah. Boyd served devotedly in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in many callings from Deacon to Patriarch. At the time of his death he was survived by his wife **Ardis** and their children **Norman Boyd Murray** of Bountiful, Utah, **Jane Ardis Jefferies** of Draper, Utah; **Kathryn Lobo** of Portland, Oregon; **Evan Leslie Murray** of Casper, Wyoming; **Margaret Ann Sharp** of Baton Rouge, Louisiana; **Elaine Sanders Cochran** of Orem, Utah; **Robert James Murray** of Portland, Oregon; and **Golden Eugene Murray** of Mapleton, Utah; and 41 grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren.
- Newton** **John Hagan "Jack" Newton** (95), widower of **Mary Wood Vaughn Newton**, passed away March 18, 2019, at the Charleston Health Care Center in Danville, Kentucky. He was born in Cincinnati, OH. Jack was a soil scientist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service and retired as the State Soil Correlator in 1980. He was a member of the United Presbyterian Church, Harrodsburg, Kentucky. Survivors include: two daughters, **Betsy (Bruce) Newton Gillespie** of Danville, Kentucky and **Mary Anne (Curry) Newton Woods** of Bel Air, Maryland; four grandchildren, and four great grandchildren.
- Nutt** **Ellen Gee "Mimi" Nutt** (94) passed away December 5, 2018 in Meridian, Idaho. Ellen was married to the late **Gary Nutt** for 36 years. Gary served as state conservationist in both Idaho and Oregon and passed away in 1988. She is survived by her children **Ann (Montie), Bill (Jan)**; eight grandchildren and eleven great grandchildren.
- Ott** **Kim Leo Ott** (62) of Troy, Ohio, passed away April 21, 2019. Kim was the husband of **Jenelle Ott**, Natural Resources Conservation Service District Conservationist in the Wapakoneta, Ohio Service Center. He was a former instructor at Hobart School of Welding and a former robotic engineering tech at Motoman. Kim is survived by his wife **Jenelle Ott**; mother **Irene Ott** of North Manchester, Indiana; children **Adam, Ethan**, and **Lindsey**; brothers **Keith Ott (Donna)** of Wolf Lake, Indiana and **Jim Ott** of Churubusco, IN; sister **Elaine Franklin (Mike)** of Brentwood, Tennessee; and sister-in-law **Anne Ott** of Ft. Wayne, Indiana. He was preceded in death by his father **Ronald Ott** and brother **John Ott**. Kim was a member of Troy Church of the Brethren. A memorial service will be held 11am Saturday, May 4, 2019 at Troy Church of the Brethren with **Pastor Jon Keller** officiating. Visitation will be from 10am-11am at the church. Memorial contributions may be given to Ohio's Hospice of Miami County or Troy Church of the Brethren.
- Painter** **Clark Charles Painter** (73) of Opelika, Alabama passed away December 3, 2018 at Piedmont Columbus Regional Hospital. Clark was born September 22, 1945 in Lewiston, Idaho. He grew up near the confluence of Sweetwater Creek and Webb Creek on the Nez Perce Indian Reservation in Idaho. He loved playing on the creek with his siblings in the humble valley where he grew up. He graduated from Lapwai High School in 1963 and attended Spokane Community College and later graduated from Boise State University. Clark worked his entire career with the Soil Conservation Service/Natural Resources Conservation Service, from which he retired as a Regional Budget Director. His career took him from Boise, Idaho to Lincoln, Nebraska, then to Little Rock, Arkansas and on to Gainesville, Florida and finally to the Auburn/Opelika area. He was preceded in death by his wife, **Carol**, in 2015; and his daughter, **Angie Painter**. He is survived by his daughter, **Jodi (Ian) Crane**; grandchildren: **Dawson** and **Daniel** of Lewiston, Idaho; sister, **Gayle Painter** of Lewiston, Idaho; and his brothers: **Lloyd (Pat)** of Idaho Falls, Idaho and **Ray (Donna) Painter** of Walla Walla, Washington.
- Parker** **Wilson "Bill" J. Parker** (85) of Spotsylvania, Virginia, passed away on October 17, 2018. He was born in Charlotte,



Michigan in 1933 to **Floyd and Helen Parker**. In 1955, he joined the Air Force and married **Joan**. After being discharged in 1957, he started his career in the Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service. He served as state conservationist in both New Jersey and Nebraska. He finished his career in Washington DC where he worked on the Resource Planning Branch and was Director of NRCS's Rural Development program. He received a USDA Superior Service Award for helping develop the Soil and Water Resource Conservation Act of 1977. In July of 1984, he received a Distinguished Service Award/Public Liaison Award for developing USDA programs to improve program delivery in all states. After retirement in 1987, he settled in Spotsylvania, Virginia, where he enjoyed working on his garden, building miniature dollhouses, woodworking, photography, genealogy, and his children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. He was a member of St. Mary's Catholic Church. Bill is survived by his wife of 63 years, **Joan Parker**; their children, **Sue Plachy, Bruce Parker (Alice), Karen Nash, David Parker (Elizabeth), and Debbie Parker**; eight grandchildren, and three great grandchildren. Memorial donations may be made to the American Heart Association, American Association of Cancer Research, or the Arthritis Foundation.

**Patronsky**

Honorary Lifetime Member and Senior Conservationist **Richard J. Patronsky** (97) passed away on March 7, 2019 in Madison, Wisconsin. **Rick**, as he was known, was born October 21, 1921, in Cleveland, Ohio, and grew up on a farm near Aurora, Ohio. Rick received an engineering degree from The Ohio State University. His college education was interrupted by four years of service in the United States Coast Guard during World War II. He was a gunner's mate, seeing action in the Pacific Theater. Rick worked for the USDA Soil Conservation Service following his graduation from college until his retirement in 1984. His assignments took him to Ohio, Wisconsin, Indiana and Nebraska. He was a registered engineer in the latter two states. Rick married **Barbara Anne Buckingham** in 1946. Barbara was a school teacher, and when she passed away, he established a fund for the enrichment of teachers in Lincoln, Nebraska, where they were living at the time. Rick was an accomplished fisherman and passed his love of fishing to his family and to many others whom he met over the years. He also enjoyed hiking and bicycling. When he was 62 he cycled solo across the state of Nebraska, mapping out his own route as there were no established trails at the time. He also served as a scoutmaster for 15 years for troops in Ohio and Wisconsin. Rick married **Barbara Jean Forester** in 1977; they were divorced in 2013. He is preceded in death by his brother, **Steve**; his father, **John**; and mother, **Suzan Bence**. Rick is survived by his three children, **Mark, Ross and Neal**; nephews, **John and Steve**; and by two grandchildren, **Daniel Patronsky and Ariana Stempel**.

**Phelps**

**Richard A. Phelps** (89) of Madison, South Dakota passed away December 13, 2017, at his residence. He was born in Wentworth, South Dakota to **Donald and Hazel (Anderson) Phelps**. After he turned 10 years old, Richard was raised by **Otto (Sophie) Aukschun** near Rutland, South Dakota. After high school, Richard served in the U.S. Army Co. 1 196th Regimental Team at Camp Carson, CO, and Fort Richardson, AK. He married **Janice French** on April 3, 1954 in Worthington, Minnesota. He farmed near Rutland before working for the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Lake County Soil Conservation Service in Madison. Survivors include his wife Janice; two brothers, **Darrell Phelps**, and **Thomas Phelps** of Sioux Falls; and two sisters, **JoAnn McNeil** and **Nancy Chase**.

**Rathburn**

**Barbara Ellen (Loflin) Rathbun** (85) of Leon, Kansas passed away February 10, 2019. She married **Alfred "Al" A. Rathbun** on June 17, 1951, in Ellis, Kansas. Her husband Al retired from the Soil Conservation Service on October 31, 1983. They both enjoyed traveling on their motorcycles across the U.S. and made several trips to Mexico with a group of other motorcyclists. Survivors include her husband and two sons, **Doug (Diana)**, and **Dave (Mary)** all of Winfield, Kansas; and four grandchildren.

**Richardson**

**Gwen Richardson** (85) passed away peacefully on April 6, 2019 at her home in WinterGreen in Hudson, WI. Gwen was married on September 24, 1955 in Eau Galle, Wisconsin to **Robert "Bob" (or Bobby** as his colleagues knew him) **Richardson**. Bob was a soil scientist with the Soil Conservation Service and served in several roles including project leader and soil correlator. In the early years of their marriage, Gwen and Bob moved from Wisconsin to Montana in July of 1960, living in Plentywood, Chinook, Bozeman, and eventually settling in Belgrade, where they raised their four children. Gwen will be remembered with love by her husband **Bob**; children **Elaine (Bill) McClure, Brent (Jill) Richardson, Camille (Peter) Vogt** and **Shauna Richardson**; and ten grandchildren.

**Schwendiman**

**John Leo Schwendiman** (82) passed away from a heart attack on June 7, 1992 in Pullman, Washington. He retired in 1976 after 41 years with the Soil Conservation Service. He was a nationally-renowned plant materials specialist, helping develop 14 different grass varieties for use in soil and water conservation. From 1929 to 1932, he served in the Swiss-German Mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He married **Naomi Garner** Sept. 5, 1934. In 1935, he graduated from the University of Idaho College of Agriculture and taught agriculture at Rexburg (Idaho) High School before being appointed junior agronomist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service at Pullman. In 1945, he was appointed manager of the Soil Conservation Nursery and to the Washington State University Experimental Station staff. He was very active in many professional **organizations** including the Soil and Water Conservation Society and American Society of Range Management and received many awards for his work. At the time of his death he was survived by his wife **Naomi** and four sons, **Carl J. Schwendiman** of Arlington, Texas, **Gary Schwendiman** of Lincoln, Nebraska, **Robert Dee Schwendiman** of Pullman, Washington, **Gene Scott Schwendiman** of Vancouver, Washington, a daughter, **Karen Davis**, of Springfield Missouri; his stepmother, **Francis Schwendiman** of Idaho Falls, Idaho; two brothers, a sister, and 20 grandchildren.

**Serrien**

**Donald J. Serrien** (90) of Minneapolis, Minnesota, passed away April 20, 2019. He was born April 24, 1928 in Lincoln County in Western Minnesota to **Louis and Minnie (Panzer) Serrien**. Donald was a United States Army veteran. He worked for the USDA Soil Conservation Service as a soil conservation technician for many years. He retired as a construction inspector in 1985. He and **Celeta Matson** were united in marriage on October 3, 1954. He was preceded in death by his parents; wife, **Celeta**, on April 12, 2014; and his sister, **Delouise Harbaugh**. Survivors include his sons, **Kyle and Karl (Paula) Serrien**; two grandchildren; three step-grandchildren; and seven step-great-grandchildren. Funeral services were held April 23 at Wilson Family Funeral Home, Minneapolis followed by burial in Highland Cemetery, Minneapolis. Memorials may be made to the Bennington Community Library or the V.F.W. Auxiliary #3201 Fair Stand.

**Smith**

**P. Craig Smith** (78) passed away peacefully in Lincoln, Nebraska on March 24, 2019. Craig was born on August 22, 1940 to **Clifford P. and Leora A. (Minnis) Smith** in Stafford, Kansas. He worked as a Civil Engineer, P. E. Emeritus and as a State Design Engineer for the Natural Resources Conservation Service, retiring in 2001. He was a member of the

Professional Engineers of Nebraska and the Lincoln Engineers Club. His greatest passion was his family. Craig is survived by his children, **Lori (Renee) Rocheleau** of Maryland, **Craig A. (Jennifer) Smith** of Pennsylvania; sister, **Linda Reed**; brother, **Conrad (Carol) Smith**; and five grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife, **Katherine E. (Ochs) Smith**. His family wishes to express sincere appreciation to the caring, dedicated professionals at the Woodlands at Hillcrest and CHI Hospice.

- Steen** **Bert Steen** (67) of Bainbridge, Georgia passed away Wednesday, September 17, 2014 at his residence. Mr. Steen was born September 1, 1947 in Moseley Hall, FL, the son of **Morris Grissom Steen** and **Sarah Helen Hendry Steen**. He was a graduate of Berry College in Mount Berry, Georgia. Bert was a veteran of the United States Navy. He retired as the District Conservationist with Natural Resources Conservation Service. Bert loved life and the outdoors and didn't take problems too seriously. He was a real steward of the land. Survivors include his wife, **Susan Barnett Steen**; sons, **Crosby** and **Jesse** both of Bainbridge; two brothers and a sister. He was preceded in death by his daughter, **Ragan** and a sister.
- Taylor** **Troy Lee Taylor** (65) passed away on October 28, 2018 at his home in Memphis, Tennessee. He was a graduate of Tennessee State University and a retired employee of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. He was a member and usher at World Overcomers Outreach Ministries Church. He leaves to cherish his memory, his loving wife, **Phyllis Taylor**; four daughters; five grandchildren; and four sisters.
- Thober** **Don Gilbert Thober** (68) of Lincoln, Nebraska, passed away on March 2, 2019 after a courageous battle with cancer. Don was born on July 8, 1950 in Beatrice, Nebraska, the third of seven children of **Kenneth** and **Ruth Thober**. He attended the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, graduating with a Bachelor of Science in animal science and agricultural economics in 1972. While in college, he met **Ann Hagan**. They married on July 28, 1973 in Eddyville, Nebraska. He joined and served in the Army Reserves following graduation. Don briefly worked for a medical supply company in Lincoln before beginning his career in 1974 for the US Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, where he worked until his retirement in 2007. He retired as Assistant State Conservationist for Programs in the state office in Lincoln, Nebraska. Don is survived by his wife, **Ann**, of Lincoln; daughter **Jody Hanson (Craig)**, of Chaska, Minnesota; daughter **Sarah Bjornson (Erik)**, of Jordan, Minnesota; son **Ben Thober (Carrie)**, of Omaha, Nebraska; ten grandchildren; and three sisters and a brother. Memorial contributions may be directed towards St. Mark's United Methodist Church, 8550 Pioneers Blvd, Lincoln, NE 68520; or to the Heartland Cancer Foundation, [www.heartlandcancerfoundation.org](http://www.heartlandcancerfoundation.org).
- Thompson** Lifetime Member **Harold Lee Thompson** (70) passed away on April 20, 2019 at his home in Danville, Indiana. He was born on April 8, 1949 to **James Leslie** and **Imogene Isabelle (Rutan) Thompson** in Libertyville, Illinois. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Education from Purdue University in 1971, and subsequently earned 30 hours of graduate credit in agricultural education, also from Purdue. Harold worked for USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service (formerly the Soil Conservation Service) for over 40 years. He began his career as a student trainee, and he spent the first 18 years providing technical service to farmers mostly in southwest Indiana. For 19 years, until his retirement in 2008, Harold served on the Indiana NRCS management team as an area conservationist and assistant state conservationist. He was a dedicated public servant who had a passion for Indiana agriculture, and he spent a lifetime helping farmers make their land more productive, sustainable and profitable. After he retired, Harold continued to work as an agricultural liaison with several Soil and Water Conservation Districts and watershed groups. In his community, he was a member of the Hazelwood Christian Church, an Earth Team Volunteer for over 25 years, a 30-year volunteer certified Emergency Medical Technician, a 25-year 4-H Leader, and a long-time member of the Paoli Optimist Club. He served on the Wayne Township (Marion County) 4-H Advisory Board for 12 years (president for 3 terms) and as a director of the Marion County Fair Board for two terms. He was a member of Paoli's Masonic Lodge 119 and a 51-year member of the Hoosier Chapter Soil and Water Conservation Society where he served as a director for 12 years (president 1998, 2018). Among Harold's many awards are Purdue's Agricultural Alumni Certificate of Distinction; the Governor's Distinguished Hoosier Award; the Soil and Water Conservation Society's Distinguished Fellow Award; Wayne Township Community Service Award; and Marion County Soil and Water District's Lifetime Conservation Achievement Award. Harold loved to fish, hunt, and read, but most of all he loved helping others and spending time with his family and friends. He was known for his quick wit, his infectious smile, and his kind and compassionate spirit. On October 18, 1997, Harold married **Rebecca (Becky) Hill Fletcher**, and they have two children, **Craig (Angie) Kinzer** and **Chantel (Joshua) Muntain**. In addition to his wife Becky and their children, Harold is survived by five grandchildren, **Caleb, Madison, Zachary, Tirzah and Naomi**; his sister, **Linda (Robert) Daming** of Greenwood, Indiana; and numerous nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents, brother **Richard** and sister **Charlotte**. A Celebration of Life was held April 26 at Hazelwood Christian Church in Hazelwood, Indiana, followed by burial in Roachdale Cemetery in Roachdale, Indiana. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in honor of Harold to the Indiana 4-H Foundation <https://www.in4h.org/donation-form/> or the Hoosier Chapter Soil and Water Conservation Society's Education Endowment, PO Box 77, Kingman, IN 47952 <http://www.hoosierchapterswcs.org/>.
- Wiederhold** **Henry "Hank" Thomas Wiederhold**, P.E. (60) of Nacogdoches, Texas, passed away on May 9, 2014. Hank was born a Texan in 1953 and grew up on the family farm in Dime Box, Texas. He attended Blinn Junior College and graduated from Texas A&M University in 1976 with a B.S. in Agricultural Engineering. His work with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service/Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) started in 1977. In 2006, Hank was the agency's lead engineer in response to Hurricane Rita. For his outstanding performance and lifetime achievement as an agricultural engineer, the Texas Section of the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers presented Hank with its highest achievement award, naming him "2006 Engineer of the Year." In 2009, Hank became the first State Wetland Engineer for Texas NRCS. Hank retired from the United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service in December 2013. Hank is survived by his wife of 25 years, **Angela (Morgan) Wiederhold**; sons **Dustin Judson**, **Henry Wiederhold II**, **Hunter Castle Girard** and **Evan Chatman** of Nacogdoches; and several brothers and sisters.
- Williams** Senior Conservationist **Ormand Carvel Williams, Sr.** (95) of Weaverville, North Carolina passed away December 7, 2018. He died just five days shy of his 96th birthday. Ormand was a WWII Army veteran and a Purple Heart recipient due to shrapnel wounds received near Naples, Italy. He graduated from Berea College where he met his wife of 71 years, **Daphne Millen Williams**. He taught vocational agriculture from 1946-1955, prior to beginning his career with NRCS from 1955 until his retirement in 1978. Ormand retired as District Conservationist for the Asheville Field Office. After his retirement, he and Daphne traveled several times to the Holy Lands and went on mission trips to Russia and Ecuador. He is survived by his



beloved wife **Daphne**; two daughters, **Millaine Milhaupt** of Weaverville and **Annette Potts** and husband **Joe** of Mills River, North Carolina; a son, **Carvel Williams** of Weaverville; seven grandchildren and 16 great grandchildren.



DEADLINE FOR  
JULY/AUGUST 2019  
NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS IS  
JUNE 25<sup>TH</sup>, 2019

