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# NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter for Retired SCS and NRCS Employees

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## NOTES FROM THE POTOMAC

*Editor's Note: Doug Lawrence and Patty Lawrence authored these "Notes."*

### Pocketbook Issues

**COLA** – The 2019 cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) to Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) annuitants and Social Security benefits will be 2.8%. The 2019 COLA for those covered in the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) will be 2%. This is the largest COLA increase for CSRS annuitants and Social Security recipients since 2012 which saw a whopping 3.6% increase.

**Interest Rates** – Federal Reserve board chairman **Jerome Powell** indicated in October that it still has a way to go before interest rates are high enough to have a neutral effect on the economy. The consensus at the Fed is that a neutral federal funds rate is 3% and current rates moved up to 2.25% in September, so we should see additional actions by the Fed to increase the federal funds rate in the future. The federal funds rate indirectly affects short term commercial interest rates for things like car loans, home mortgages, savings accounts, and credit cards. During the Great Recession the federal funds rate was at or near zero for nine years. In general, higher interest rates can benefit retirees who have savings accounts or certificates of deposit. However, if you own bonds or a bond fund, the rising interest rates on new bonds will depress the value of the bonds currently in your portfolio.

**CEO Salaries** – Have you ever wondered how much the CEOs of agriculture-related non-profit and trade organizations make? Thanks to Agri-Pulse's annual compensation report, there is information on CEO total compensation for 128 Washington-based organizations that play an incredibly important role in agricultural and food policy. We've ranked 128 organizations by CEO total compensation per year and then divided the 128 organizations into eight groups or "octiles."

- Smaller conservation, educational, and environmental groups are well represented in the lowest octile of compensation packages where the CEO salary averages about \$112,000 per year.
- The second octile of CEOs average \$221,000 per year, and we begin to see smaller scale commodity organizations such as mangos, watermelons, and sorghum.
- The third octile of CEOs average \$286,000 per year in total compensation. This group includes national commodity groups that represent the interests of cotton, mushrooms, blueberries, organic foods, biofuels, and wheat.
- The salaries in the fourth octile average \$349,000 per year, and organizations representing cotton, concerned scientists, snack foods, soybeans, eggs, and agricultural retailers, among others are included.
- CEOs in the fifth octile average \$433,000 in compensation. Included in this octile are sugar beets, rice, bakers, national animal welfare organizations, and broad-based national wildlife organizations.
- The CEOs in the sixth octile average \$536,000 in annual compensation. This octile includes groups advocating for banking, the 4-H, veterinarians, ducks, chicken, rural electricity, and fertilizer.
- CEOs in the seventh octile average \$670,000 per year in total compensation. Energy, dairy, Land-Grant universities, beef, and farmer cooperatives are among the organizations represented.
- CEOs in the highest compensated octile average \$2,016,000 per year. This is 18 times higher than the compensation in the lowest octile and three times as much as those CEOs in the seventh octile. This group includes organizations such as the Farm Bureau and a number of food processing and manufacturing organizations. The top three CEO compensation packages average \$4,755,000 per year and belong to the American Bankers Association, the National Restaurant Association, and the American Petroleum Institute.

**Farm Bill** – Despite rhetoric and good intentions, the 2014 Farm Bill lapsed at the end of September, given the continuing sharp divides in Conference. Today, those conference negotiations appear no closer to completion. With the House out of session, Congress will not be able to take up the Farm Bill until after the November elections. An extension of the 2014 Farm

Bill is likely, given the low odds of reaching a deal in a lame-duck session and the imperative of having something in place by December 31<sup>st</sup> to prevent the 1949 law from kicking in.

**What's the Impact of No Farm Bill?** The absence of farm legislation has had varying effects on farm programs. For some of the major programs whose authority runs with the crop year, there has been little impact. For example, Price Loss Coverage (PLC) and Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) payments are linked to the marketing year, which varies by commodity but runs as late as August 2019 for corn and soybeans. The effects on conservation programs are a mix. EQIP was extended through 2019 in the February budget agreement so is operating normally. ACEP had carryover funding so is able to continue with certain acquisition activities. However, enrollments in CSP and CRP are suspended, and the Agencies are only able to service existing contracts in these programs. At least 39 other farm programs are on hold as their funding is suspended, awaiting a new Farm Bill (<https://www.agri-pulse.com/articles/11497-farm-bill-expiration-impact-varies>).

At the other end of the spectrum is Crop Insurance, which is unaffected by the lapse because it has permanent authority.

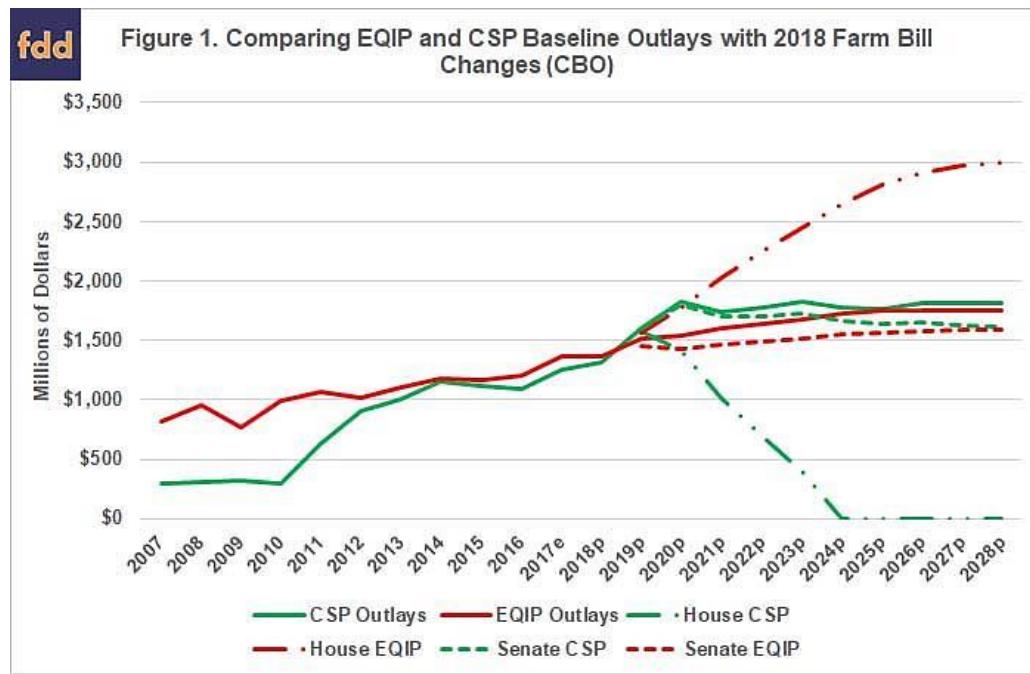
**What's the Holdup?** The issues that were sticky before remain just as sticky; the “big titles are still open” according to Senator Stabenow.

(<https://www.politico.com/story/2018/10/08/partisan-fight-farm-bill-876300>).

Key disagreements remain in commodity, conservation, and nutrition titles:

**Commodity Title** – Among the disputes to be settled is the House provision that would end ARC/PLC payments for acreage on which farmers haven't been growing program crops (<https://www.agri-pulse.com/articles/11468-commodity-dispute-remains-unresolved-as-farm-bill-stalls>). The change could affect millions of acres, and critics note its effect on discouraging planting of short-term conserving cover. Other issues include House provisions that would favor farmers in the Southern Plains, including more than \$500 million to cotton growers, a top constituency in **Conaway's** West Texas district. In order to offset the cost of that proposal, the House bill would shrink subsidies for row crop farmers across the country.

**Conservation Title** – The issues in conservation largely relate to how the two bills treat EQIP and CSP (<https://farmdocdaily.illinois.edu/2018/10/farm-bill-stalemate-part-3-conservation-concerns.html>). The House Bill eliminates CSP and shifts some of that spending into EQIP, ACEP, and RCPP. The Senate Bill retains CSP (but reduces annual enrollment) and reduces EQIP funding to slightly increase ACEP and RCPP funding. The following graphic summarizes in a nutshell the conference debate by depicting the very different views held by the House and Senate for the future of EQIP and CSP.



Source: *farmdoc daily* (8):192; Oct. 17, 2018; <https://farmdocdaily.illinois.edu/2018/10/farm-bill-stalemate-part-3-conservation-concerns.html>

Both bills increase the CRP acreage cap (House, 29 million; and Senate, 25 million), but differ in how they address rental rates. The House caps first-time enrollments at 80 percent of the average estimated county rental rate and scales this back for subsequent re-enrollments. The Senate bill caps the rate at 88.5 percent of the average estimated county rental rate.

Both bills include authority for certain entities, such as irrigation and drainage districts, to compete for funding under EQIP. While the provisions are intended to streamline addressing conservation issues affecting multiple farm ownerships, some have raised concern about the potential impact on funding availability for individual producers. However, since both bills have similar language, it may not rise to a significant conference issue.

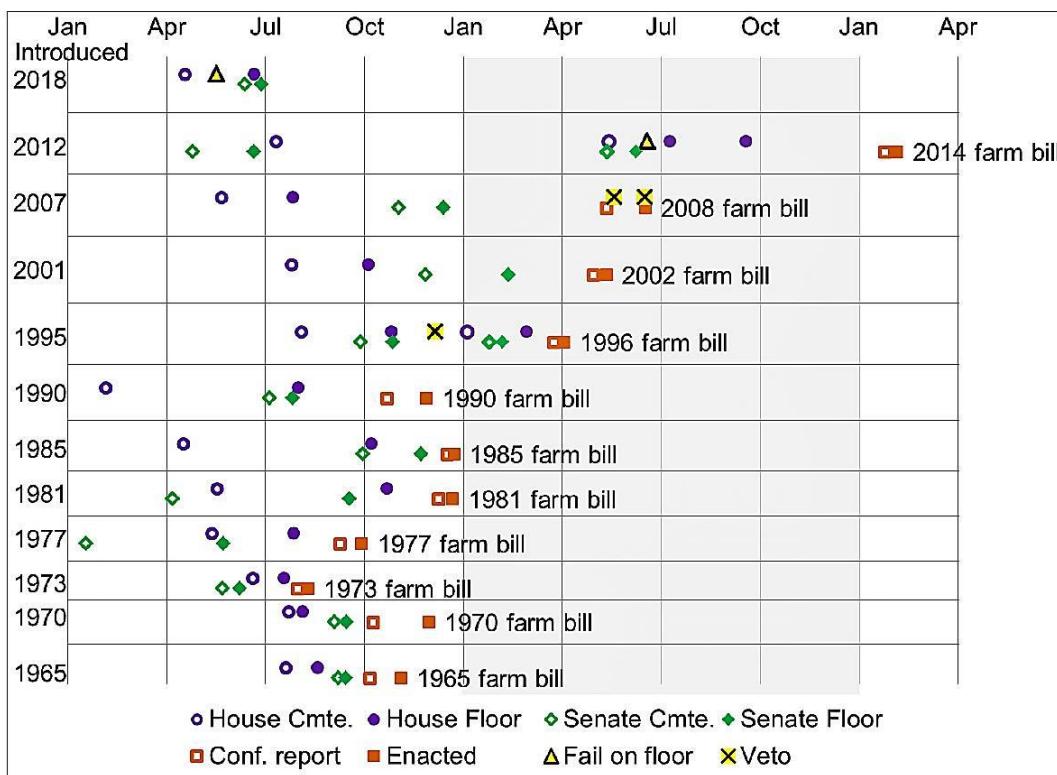
**Nutrition Title** – The key controversy in the nutrition title remains the House Bill's work training requirements in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The provisions are DOA in the Senate according to some sources (68

Senators voted to defeat an amendment that would have added the House's SNAP provisions ([https://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll\\_call\\_lists/roll\\_call\\_vote.cfm?congress=115&session=2&vote=00141](https://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote.cfm?congress=115&session=2&vote=00141)). With the White House supporting the House version, conferees on that side of the aisle may see little wiggle room. You can read a great discussion of the SNAP dispute, including history at <https://farmdocdaily.illinois.edu/2018/10/the-farm-bill-stalemate-part-2-the-snap-question.html>.

**Lastly** – With sharp divides in so many titles, we predict the next update to be about the 2019 Farm Bill. This looks like the “new normal,” as reauthorization timelines appear to be directly proportional to the increasing political sensitivity and complexity of the farm bill. The Congressional Research Service provides a nice overview of Farm Bill reauthorizations since 1965 at

<https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R45210.pdf>.

**Figure 1. Major Legislative Action on Farm Bills, 2018-1965**



Source: CRS, using <http://www.congress.gov>.

**Appropriations** – In late September, **President Trump** signed what is called a “minibus” because it provided full fiscal-year 2019 funding for some departments, but only provided a continuing resolution for other departments. The Department of Agriculture was funded as part of the continuing resolution that expires on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

This past week, President Trump directed Department heads to reduce spending by 5%, but it was not clear if this was just for formulation of the 2020 budget that will be transmitted to Congress in February or if he also wanted 2019 spending cut by 5%. The 2018 budget deficit rose to \$779 billion which is a 17% increase over the 2017 budget deficit.

### The Lightening Round

**E15** – EPA is proposing to allow gasoline with 15% ethanol to be sold year-round. This would increase the demand for corn in biofuels production by 50%, and the administration is hopeful that this will help with corn prices. However, the refining industry has announced that they will litigate the proposed increase. The litigation combined with new storage and pumping equipment or pumps that blend the desired ethanol level means that it could take years to implement the E15 proposal.

**Roundup** – A California judge materially cut the jury award to **Dewayne Johnson** who is suffering from non-Hodgkin lymphoma from \$250 million to \$39.25 million, and declined to grant Bayer-Monsanto's motion for a new trial. This could impact suits pending against Bayer. For example, an attorney in Nebraska is representing three farmers and an agronomist, all with non-Hodgkin lymphoma they believe was caused by exposure to Roundup.

**WOTUS Rule** – The Environmental Protection Agency says it is on track to promulgate a final rule on the Waters of the United States (WOTUS) by September 2019. The new rule would replace the current 2015 rule which is in effect in 22 states, but blocked by federal justices in 28 states. The rules are associated with defining the “waters” that would fall under the protection of the Clean Water Act. If you’re a gambling person I would recommend taking the “over” on September 2019.

**Gulf Dead Zone** – A recently released ERS study finds that the most cost-effective strategy to reduce the amount of nitrogen and phosphorus flowing into the Gulf of Mexico would be to focus on improving practices in the Lower Mississippi sub-basin. The authors stated: “The Lower Mississippi sub-basin’s proximity to the Gulf means that a higher percentage of nutrient losses

from fields would reach the Gulf from the Lower Mississippi than from cropland further upstream. The cost of reducing nutrients delivered to the Gulf would therefore be lower in the Lower Mississippi sub-basin than on a comparable field located further upstream."

**Personnel Changes.** In early October, Vicki Christiansen was sworn in as the 19<sup>th</sup> chief of the United States Forest Service. Christiansen is a former wildland firefighter and fire manager and has been with the Forest Service since 2010.

**Bill Buckner** is retiring as president and CEO of the Noble Research Institute at the end of the year. Buckner, who's led the Noble for the past seven years, says he wants to return home to North Carolina; however, he plans to continue to serve on the Noble board of directors.

Rumor has it that acting NRCS Chief **Leonard Jordan** plans on retiring at the end of the calendar year. Leonard has done an outstanding job as Chief and deserves to have the "acting" removed from his title and be recognized as the 16<sup>th</sup> Chief of NRCS.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Dana York*

**Don't you Love Fall?** We just had our first frost which signals that all but the hardy veggies on the farm are through! We spent yesterday getting cover crop sown just in time for rain so we are putting everything to bed for the season.

So what did I learn from my first year of full-time farming after retirement? First, I love growing things- I had forgotten how much enjoyment there is in planting seeds, seeing plants grow, flourish and then harvesting the fruits of your labor. Even on our organic farm, watching the bugs (good and bad) makes you see how nature is so amazing! (See pictures below) Second- it takes A LOT of hard work to farm- but somehow you feel so much better. Starting at 7AM and ending at 7PM makes for a very long day, but you sure don't need anything to help you go to sleep. Walking about 15,000 steps a day and losing 10 pounds and 2 pant sizes was a great side benefit! However, somehow I need to learn how to have more time to cook some of that great food I am growing.

Finally- customers and chiefs DO appreciate your hard work. Selling at our local markets and restaurants, when they keep coming back and telling you how much they love our produce, makes all the work worth it. Even so, the first frost was a welcome sight this week, but now the planning starts for next year! I'm getting out all those seed catalogs and trying not to go crazy! Have to remember number 2 above! Hope your year has been great. Enjoy the fall!



**Nature's Pesticide: Tomato hornworm with Parasitic Wasp Eggs (left) that, when hatched, eat the hornworm (right).**

From President-Elect Cheryl Simmons:



Calling for volunteer(s) to help develop and manage a Retirees ARCSE Facebook page.

Right now we are thinking of a private organization page that has a public main picture. This would not be a substitute for the newsletter; however, we could post parts of the newsletter.

Let Cheryl Simmons know what you think by emailing [cksoil@aol.com](mailto:cksoil@aol.com). Thank you for your consideration.

## A BIT OF HISTORY

### Douglas Helms, Historian

For this newsletter's A Bit of History we are using the obituary for Doug Helms. As an ARCSE Life Member and the ARCSE Historian since his retirement in 2012, Doug has shared numerous tidbits of history for our enjoyment. His obituary continues that sharing. It seems only fitting that Doug was laid to rest only a few miles from the birthplace of Hugh Hammond Bennett.

**John Douglas Helms** (73) passed away on September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018, at the Virginia Hospital Center in Arlington, VA.

Doug was born June 29<sup>th</sup>, 1945, in Union County, NC, a son of the late **John Reece Helms** and the late **Mildred Cornelia Ross Helms**. In addition to his parents, his brother **Michael R. Helms** and his brother-in-law, **Sherrill Griffin** preceded him in death.

He was a 1963 graduate of Forest Hills High School in Marshville; a 1967 graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a Bachelor of Arts in History. He continued his education at Florida State University, earning a Master of Arts Degree in 1970 as well as a Doctorate in American history in 1977.

During his college studies, he first researched the impact of the boll weevil on cotton crops and continued this research in his Master's and Doctoral studies.

Following his education, Doug moved to the areas of Arlington, VA, and Washington, DC, where he worked at the Smithsonian Institute and at the National Archives. He later became employed with the United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service as Historian. At the time of his retirement, he had worked for more than 30 years with the department. He was the first Historian for NRCS.

In 2008, the NRCS published his history of snow surveys, "The History of Snow Survey and Water Supply Forecasting" (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2008). In addition to chronicling the history of snow surveying, the bulletin also contained interviews with many of the pioneers who had participated in the beginnings of snow surveying. Although **George Dewey Clyde** figures prominently as a character in Helms's narrative history, he died in 1972, and his recollections were never recorded.

To say he was a "history buff" as well as a history professional is an understatement. He was very instrumental in the recognition of the Hugh Hammond Bennett Conservation Site in Anson County and was featured as a speaker at the site's dedication ceremony. Douglas published a book entitled, He Loved to Carry the Message about Bennett's writings about soil conservation. This volume included early writings by Helms himself. At the time of his death, he was preparing a biography of Hugh Hammond Bennett.

Doug was well-respected among his colleagues and in his area of knowledge. He was often booked as key note speaker for conferences abroad. He was a member of The North Caroliniana Society, an honor society which promotes literature, history and culture.

He also contributed writings for a book published by the Anson County Historical Society. He cherished deep family roots and history in both Anson and Union Counties. He loved the Fountain Hill Community, which felt like home to him, and Fountain Hill Church and Cemetery, which has been a part of his family for generations and where he will be laid to rest.

Family was very important to Doug, and he held very dear his relationships with his maternal aunt and uncle, **Avis Ross Lee and Blonnie Ross**, and his paternal aunts and uncles, **Lois Helms Huggins, Kate Helms Huggins, Roy, Bill, J.C., Marvin and Parvin Helms**, all of whom preceded him in death. Douglas had a very special relationship with his uncles, **Roy, Marvin and Parvin** who all lived on the Helms family farm in the Olive Branch Community.

He enjoyed traveling, especially on a family trip to New Zealand with his sisters and brothers-in-law and traveling the world as a Formula 1 race fan. He was a collector. Among his collections were books, family history, soil service information, coins and stamps. He really enjoyed baseball and had a passionate ear for Blue Grass music.

Surviving Doug are his sisters and brother-in-law, **Flora Faye Helms Griffin** of Simpsonville, SC, and **Martha Helms Cooley and James** of Oak Ridge, NC; his sister-in-law, **Judy Helms** of Stallings, NC; his nieces and nephews, **Marcia G. Murff** of Greenville, SC, **Alan Griffin (Tracy)** of Simpsonville, SC, **Jason Cooley (Caroline Evarts)** of Los Alamos, NM and **Susannah McKinney (Patrick)** of New Orleans, LA, and their families; his cousins who were very dear to him; and his friends in Arlington, VA, who were indeed a second family to him.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Fountain Hill Church Cemetery Fund, c/o, Judy Horne, 2152 Cappadocia Church Road, Peachland, NC, 28133, or Anson County Historical Society, 206 E Wade St., Wadesboro, NC 28170, or Union County Historical Society, P.O. Box 397, Monroe, NC, 28111.



**John Douglas Helms**

### 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

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

*Ron Marlow, Secretary Treasurer*

### New Members

|                  |        |
|------------------|--------|
| Holy, Doug       | MD/NHQ |
| Snieckus, Robert | MD/NHQ |
| McElhiney, G.K.  | MO     |
| Henry, Jimmy     | MO     |
| Thackeray, Dave  | VA/NHQ |
| Kenedy, Lowell   | WA     |

### New Honorary Members

The following 14 members of ARCSE have celebrated or will be celebrating their 91<sup>st</sup> birthdays by the end of 2018. With this milestone, each of these members becomes an Honorary Member. As an Honorary Member, no dues are required for calendar year 2019 and thereafter. However, those honorary members who wish to receive a printed copy of the newsletter are required to pay a \$12 fee (see enclosed dues notice). The ARCSE currently has 75 Honorary Members.

| First Name    | Last Name   | State |
|---------------|-------------|-------|
| Malvern       | Allen       | IL    |
| Robert V.     | Bollman     | IN    |
| Rayford J     | Brister     | TX    |
| Charles D     | Cheek       | MO    |
| Leroy J       | Drechsel    | IL    |
| Dominic       | Fetterer    | NC    |
| Howard W      | Hall        | PA    |
| David O       | Kile        | IN    |
| Gilbert R     | Landtiser   | WA    |
| Robert S      | MacLauchlan | NE    |
| Harry E       | Potter      | NY    |
| Donald R      | Robertson   | OR    |
| Earl E        | Voss        | IL    |
| John J (Jack) | Walker      | MO    |

## MEMBERSHIP DUES AND ADDITIONAL FEES FOR PRINTED NEWSLETTER IN 2019

*Ron Marlow, Secretary Treasurer*

**2019 Dues Notice to Members receiving the newsletter by printed copy:** A dues notice is included with the hard copy newsletter (**green page insert**). Please follow the instructions on the notice concerning the address label information to determine if your dues are due.

**2019 Additional Fee for Printed Copy:** All members (life members, honorary members and those who pay annual dues) who desire a printed copy of the newsletter must pay an additional fee of \$12.00 per year. Since many of you have already paid, please follow the instructions on the dues notice concerning the address label information to determine if you must pay the additional fee. This \$12.00 will help offset ARCSE annual costs of over \$20.00 per member to print and distribute the printed newsletter.

**2019 Dues Notice to Members receiving the electronic newsletter:** A dues notice is not included with the electronic newsletter. Members receiving the electronic newsletter whose dues are due will receive a separate email from ARCSE with a dues notice attached (**WATCH FOR IT**).

Life Members, honorary members, and members who have already paid their 2019 dues will receive an email assuring you that your membership dues are paid.

## ARCSE Complimentary membership

*Ron Marlow*

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

## ARIZONA

*Ken Cookson, ARCSE Representative*

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

**Rod Alt Report:** On September 3<sup>rd</sup>, **Sally** and I traveled to Colorado to visit friends in Denver and to attend our granddaughter's (**Meagan Sullivan**) wedding in Burlington. Then we traveled to Lubbock, TX to visit my son **Rod** and his wife **Mary** and to see their new house."

"On September 21<sup>st</sup> we traveled to Palm Springs, CA to use our time share for a week. We played golf at the Silver Rock golf course where we saw about 30 Bighorn sheep on the course. We also played golf at Indian Canyon. The rest of the time we just sat around the pool and had a wonderful time."

**Steve Black Report:** "I spent two weeks at my farm in Illinois helping with corn and soybean harvest. Good yields this year, but prices are down. Built some split rail fence around my old farm house that will be 200 years old in 2023."

**REMEMBER TO KEEP YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS UP-TO-DATE BY CONTACTING THE  
SECRETARY/TREASURER**

## ARKANSAS

*From Ralph Mashburn*

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

**Marilyn Marshall** is the Arkansas SCS/NRCS Retired Employees Association Secretary. A new retired employees directory is being prepared by Marilyn. She also maintains her high school class directory of 742 classmates. She plays bridge at the AARP clubhouse with friends. She has played bridge with them for over 40 years. She has made scrapbooks for her two great nephews from the day they were born and are now 16 and 19 years old. She attends Bible Study Fellowship every Monday night. She also is in a library book club and likes to read.



*Annual Luncheon Meeting of the Arkansas Retirees*

*Left to Right: Front Rows: Mike Sullivan (State Conservationist), Tony Stevenson, Robert Cantrell, Linda Drewry Ward, Larry Ward, Bill Garner, Marilyn Marshall, Ronnie Keener, Dru Cantrell, Marion Mathis, Sid Lowrance, Raymond Ingram, Bill Townsend, and Robert Young. Top Row: David Tencleve, Ralph Mashburn, Tom Fortner, Randy Busbea, and Bob Price.*

Retired NRCS employees from Arkansas enjoyed a recent early fall motorcycle ride. They were riding in the beautiful Ozark Mountains of Arkansas. The group rides adventure motorcycles that are made for traveling dirt and gravel roads. They enjoy riding the back roads of the Ozark and Ouachita National Forests.

**Charles** and **Tony** have completed the Trans American Trail on their motorcycles. This is a 5,000-mile, cross country route from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans. The route is predominantly dirt roads. Very few motorcyclists have the riding skills, off road experience, proper motorcycles or time to complete the entire route.

**Charles, Tony, and Randy** plan on many more years of fun and fellowship together on their motorcycles.



**Retired NRCS motorcycle riders. From left to right: Tony Stevenson, retired State Conservation Engineer, Charles Fultz, retired State Soil Scientist, and Randy Busbea, retired State Construction Engineer.**



**Mike Sullivan, Arkansas NRCS State Conservationist, is welcomed to our meeting by Bob Price, President of Retired Arkansas SCS/NRCS Employees.**



**Mike is also greeted by Ralph Mashburn, a long-time friend of both Mike and his late father Gene Sullivan, who was also a State Conservationist in Arkansas. Mike was our speaker and gave an interesting report of the NRCS program activities in the state.**



**Dru and Robert Cantrell**, when asked about their recent activities, reported that they were feeling good, just enjoying retirement and not doing much but keeping doctors' appointments. They both worked many years in the state office, where Robert was a very popular and effective Assistant State Conservationist for Water Resources and RC&D.



**Tony Stevenson and Randy Busbea** were visiting with everyone and in a happy mood telling about their plans to take off soon with **Charles Fultz** on an Ozark Mountains motorcycle trip. No one was eager to accept their invitation to join them on the trip.



*Sid Lowrance, always smiling, told about how he was very busy in retirement just doing things he liked.*

**Tom Fortner**, NRCS retiree, is acting Executive Director for the Bayou Meto Water Management District. The Bayou Meto Basin Projects will bring excess Arkansas River Water to 267,000 acres of irrigated cropland in four Arkansas counties. The project will have a large pump station, over 100 miles of earthen canals, and more than 400 miles of underground irrigation pipelines.



**Tom Fortner shows NRCS State Conservationist Mike Sullivan and other NRCS employees a 168,000-gpm pump.**



**Tom Fortner Shows an NRCS employee how Bayou Meto Basin Project gates work at a 787,500-gpm pump station.**



**Ralph and Nancy Mashburn** took an August trip to Portland, Oregon where he enjoyed a luncheon visit with retired West National Technical Center co-workers. They are John Hedlund, Eldena VanderZanden, Danny Moore and Dave Johnson. Ralph and Nancy took an Amtrak train from Portland to the Seattle area for a two-week visit with their son, David, and his family.



**Lorie and Dick Babeu** in Hawaii

**Dick and Lori Babeu** celebrated his 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday on October 20<sup>th</sup> while on a three-week October trip to the big island of Hawaii. In addition to touring the island, they planned plenty of activities including hiking, snorkeling, zip lining, stand up paddle boarding and maybe even para sailing.



**Dick and Lorie Babeu** at the original King Kamehameha statue in Kapa'au.

## CALIFORNIA

**Bill Ward, ARCSE Representative**

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

Greetings from California! California continues to enjoy a monthly luncheon and breakfast for all who can make these gatherings.

**An Update on California's Santa Monica Debris Basin.** Progress continues to be made on our agency's Santa Monica Debris Basin to get it ready for this winter's storms and beyond. In my last report I described three phases of planned work in various stages of implementation. Here is an update on that work.

**Phase I Work.** This contract was administered by Santa Barbara County to finally restore the basin capacity to its original capacity and was completed in September. This work consisted of blasting and removing large boulders, some basin repairs, and rebuilding access ramps and roads. The County will make a formal request to FEMA and the State of California for reimbursement of this work.

**Phase II Work.** A local contract for this work was administered by Santa Barbara County and funded by NRCS under EWP. Work started in mid-October. This includes basin repairs and modifications for the three intake towers, asphalt roads, concrete v-ditch and road resurfacing of the long access road from Foothill Drive. The goal is to complete this work by the end of the calendar year in time for the upcoming winter's storms.

**Phase III Work.** This work includes eight specific remedial measures identified in an Engineering Report prepared by Santa Barbara County at the request of NRCS. This remedial work will be evaluated and funding considered through our agency's PL-566 authority. The construction cost estimate for this work is \$3.2 million.

The proposed remedial measures in the report, taken together, are considered to be a "best effort" plan to avoid a repeat of the problems that occurred in restoration efforts



*California retirees' October lunch gathering, starting from lower: Helen Flach, Ron and Marilyn Hoppes, Ed Schmidt, Dan Toan, Arturo Carvajal, Walt Sykes, Bill Ward, Ron Schultz, Stan Moorehead, Harold Honeyfield, and Shirley Leeper.*

after the January 9<sup>th</sup> disaster event. Each of the proposed measures has clear and definite benefits that will contribute to expediting the overall restoration of the work.

A big focus of the remedial measures includes modifications to all three towers to reduce the potential for plugging of the towers and principal spillway conduit, and improving access for heavy equipment to certain areas of the basin. California retirees **Doug Toews** and **Bill Ward** played essential roles in the development of the report.

Doug Toews, retired NRCS Engineer, was hired by Santa Barbara County in June, specifically for his experience and technical expertise to work with NRCS in all efforts related to financial assistance needed for Santa Monica Debris Basin improvements. Doug had primary responsibility for the county to prepare the written report and worked closely with key county staff, engineers and maintenance crews in investigating the problems and identifying remedial measures to help avoid problems experienced this year, and greatly expedite future restoration work.

Bill Ward, retired NRCS Engineer, began working with Doug shortly after the January 9<sup>th</sup> disaster event to document all aspects of the disaster, the performance of Santa Monica Debris Basin, and assist in county efforts requesting NRCS assistance with emergency or remedial work. Bill worked closely with Doug as problems with the basin restoration effort developed and alternative measures were identified and considered. Bill provided review of the final report, with recommendations for revisions and ultimately provided strong concurrence for all the final recommended remedial measures.

**Current Status of Proposed Work.** The normal process for preparation of the Engineering Report required for remedial funding approval is the appointment of an NRCS committee to prepare the report for the Director of Engineering to approve. Both **Doug Toews and Bill Ward** were hopeful that the quality of the Engineering Report, prepared by Santa Barbara County in accordance with all NRCS requirements, would avoid the need to have this “duplicate effort” adhered to.

“To make a long story short and cut out all the complaining that Doug and I shared between ourselves, we were not successful in avoiding that scenario. A committee of four NRCS engineers and one geologist from the West was appointed to write an ‘Engineering Report.’”

**Bill Ward Goes to Santa Barbara.** “There was one silver lining for me that came from that ultimate decision, a trip to Santa Barbara! The committee scheduled a site visit and meeting with Doug Toews and county staff October 16<sup>th</sup>. I traveled down to Santa Barbara to assist Doug and county staff in working with the committee to try to make their job as easy as possible.”

Doug Toews set up an excellent agenda for the committee. We started with a welcome and overview meeting of what all had transpired since the disaster event January 9<sup>th</sup>. We took the committee out to Montecito, where clear effects of the devastation are still obvious. From there we took them to the outlet of our Carpinteria WS project, and Doug provided a broad overview of the entire watershed project.

We spent all of that afternoon at the Santa Monica Debris Basin. We showed them each proposed remedial measure and answered any questions they had regarding the measures. When the day was done, Doug and I felt the day had been very productive in support of the work and importance of all the proposed remedial measures were.

It remains to be seen how the committee will prepare their “Engineering Report.” We suggested they consider doing a “peer review” of the County’s engineering report, with recommendations for revisions (if needed) for approval by the Director of the Conservation Engineering Division. From our perspective, this is by far the most logical course of action.

Here are a few photos that I showed the committee to better understand what happened and how important the proposed remedial measures were. Please note the following in the first photo of the three towers: the January 9<sup>th</sup> debris flow had buried all three towers to an elevation five feet above Tower C, the tallest tower!



*Tower's C, B and A in the restored basin.*



*Tower A, Doug Toews.*



*Some of the Montecito Destruction Committee members look at repair work beginning on Tower A.*



**Bill Ward, Tom Fayram, Santa Barbara Co. Public Works Deputy Director, and Doug Toews.**



**NRCS Committee in basin bottom, Tom Fayram and Doug Toews discussing needed remedial measures.**



**The complete NRCS Engineering Committee, with Doug Toews, Bill Ward, and some local NRCS staff.**

We expect that all the proposed remedial work will get approved and funded, and construction is planned for next spring. That's all for this time around folks. Wishing you all the best from California!

## IOWA

**Mark Jensen, ARCSE Representative**

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Thanks to **Rick Cordes** for sending this picture of the group from one of the most recent get-togethers of retirees in Area 3 (northeast Iowa). This group generally meets every other month, rotating between Elkader and Manchester. Rick says that others attend from time to time, but this was the group that attended that particular day.



**Area 3 retirees from left to right: Rick Cordes, Jim Brown, Dave Gibney, Keith Krause, Jim Wolfe, LaVonne Koch and Jerry Muff.**

**Roger and Donita Link** visited Scotland and Ireland September 4-14. Their tour group visited several grand castles constructed for royal residences or military purposes. Cities visited included Glasgow and Edinburgh in Scotland and Belfast, Derry, and Dublin in Ireland. A high point was the Titanic Belfast Museum and the ship yard where the doomed passenger liner was constructed and launched. A tour of Glenboye Distillery was enhanced by a taste of Scotch Whiskey. Only eight employees help with the whiskey making, but 43 employees are used to conduct tours. Interesting! Roger said that even though there were high temperatures and not much rain early this summer in Ireland, the rain came back and it was green and beautiful when they visited. They also viewed wetlands where there was harvesting of peat that is still used to heat homes. There was no mention if a Corps of Engineers "404" type permit was required! It was rainy every day and not warmer than 51 degrees, but they had a great time with fellow travelers.

Thanks to **Ron Hersom** for telling us about their travels: "We (Ron and **Jo** Hersom) spent eight weeks going and coming. We started at the Amana campground (and ended there too). We then went to Lebanon, TN, for a five-day rally. We stopped at Big South Fork National River and Recreational area where we enjoyed lots of hiking trails and canoeing. We saw Norris Dam that supplied power to Oak Ridge, where they worked on the nuclear bomb development. A few buildings are still there housing museum items--very interesting. We spent a day at Appomattox learning that General Lee did wrong to get caught there and ultimately needing to surrender.

Our big camping Rally was at Doswell, VA, just north of Richmond. It was at the county fairgrounds, which had been the horse farm where Secretariat was raised and trained. Upon his death, they learned his heart was 3 times the size of any other horse, which helped him to maintain his running pace. The farm had many top horses, with their blood lines traced. We then spent a week touring the Jamestown and Williamsburg colonial area. I've always wondered how early settlers ever made it through all those trees (seems after crossing the Mississippi, it was all trees).

Jamestown was a good initial place for a settlement (deep water close to the shore line) but had no room for expansion - thus Williamsburg. Once in a while those signs along the interstate are helpful. At Stanton, VA, we visited Woodrow Wilson's home and museum. For us, that makes seven Presidents' museums toured. Our two-day stop at Cincinnati allowed us to visit the Creation Museum near Burlington, KY, and the ARK. The ARK is huge, built to scale, and depicts how things might have been inside. It takes most of a day to go through. The ARK should be on everyone's bucket list. We included six RV rallies on this trip, stayed in a variety of campgrounds, and are still trying to get settled in at home. Next year will be the Balloon Festival."

"**Ann and I (Mark)** went with a group of folks on a bus tour down to New Orleans. Some of the highlights of the trip included a guided tour of New Orleans with a stop at one of their above ground cemeteries, the National World War II Museum, tour of the historic Destrehan Plantation, tour of Mardi Gras World, a ride on the Creole Queen paddle-wheeler boat, and quite a bit of time in the French Quarter where it seemed like we found ourselves constantly eating. As my 4 year old grandson would say, "you've got to try" a praline beignet. Wow! On the trip south we stopped at the National Ornamental Metal Museum in Memphis. Coming back north, we made stops at the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum in Jackson, MS, and the Rock 'n' Soul Museum in Memphis. Another good trip in the books!"

I have one health related item to report. Future retiree **Mark McCurdy**, the Assistant State Conservation Engineer, was diagnosed with stage two cancer. He underwent surgery on October 23<sup>rd</sup>. The surgery was successful, and the doctors are confident that he will have a complete recovery. Let's keep Mark in our thoughts and prayers.

During the past few months, we have added several names to our retiree roles. Welcome and congratulations to the following new retirees: **Dora Guffey**, Resource Conservationist on the Area 2 staff; **Jim Gertsma**, State Wetlands Specialist stationed in Sioux City; **Clifford Foster**, Soil Conservation Technician in Toledo; and **Wayne Shafer**, District Conservationist in Corydon.

## KANSAS

**Deanne Lull, ARCSE Representative**

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Guess what? The contest to predict the date of the first snow fall in Salina will not be held this year, as Salina received approximately two inches of snow the middle of October. We have had unusual weather this month as October started off with a number of dreary, rainy days in which we received 8 to 9 inches of rain. Then came some very chilly, actually cold days, followed by snow and freezing temperatures, which took care of all the flowers that were still blooming. I am certainly not ready for winter!

While I was highlighting **John Ourada** (former State Conservation Engineer) and spouse **Linda** regarding their volunteer activities in Salina in our last newsletter, they were waiting in the wings to receive the Volunteer of the Year Award from the Greater Salina Community Foundation and Salina Area United Way. The **Ourada's** volunteer for a number of different businesses and organizations and express that they get a lot out of volunteering by giving of themselves for someone else.

**Erma Leuthold**, who was an Office Automation Clerk at the Plant Materials Center in Manhattan, Kansas, retired in 2011. She is very active in her community and church and regularly attends NARFE meetings. She serves her church as the organist, superintendent, communion stewardess, church board member, and Ladies Aid treasurer. She is the treasurer for the Fort Nightly Community Club which meets monthly, and secretary for the Ashland Family and Community Education which also meets monthly. In addition, she has many house plants and outside plants and a big yard, to care for, which requires a riding lawn mower. And I think I am busy!

There were three recent retirements. Retiring on September 29<sup>th</sup> were **Robert K. Stutzman**, Supervisory District Conservationist in the Wichita Field Office, with 31 years of service, and **Coleen K. Davison**, Soil Conservationist in the

Lawrence Field Office, with 35 years of service. Retiring on October 1<sup>st</sup> was **Charles W. Atkinson**, District Conservationist in the LaCrosse Field Office, with 36 years of service.

No retirees recently passed away; however, we were saddened to learn of the deaths of two spouses. **Robert "Bob" N. Gerdes** passed away on August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2018. His spouse, **Dorothy J. Gerdes**, survives. She served as a Personnel Management Specialist in the Kansas State Office. **Juanita Colleen Belcher** passed away on September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2018. She was the spouse of **Larry D. Belcher** who survives. **Larry** retired as the District Conservationist in the Pratt Field Office.

## MAINE

**John Simon, ARCSE Representative**

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**July:** Last Tuesday, July 10<sup>th</sup> we had a crowd of seven retirees which included: **Karen and Bruce Champeon, Judy and Charlie Boothby, Art Taylor, Roger Ashe, and John Simon.**

Bruce informed the group that he had the cataracts removed from both eyes last month all within a one-week period. He is loving his new-found eyesight without glasses. Congratulations Bruce on your great success! Many of us have been there and understand your feelings.

I recently drove by the house of **John and Lola Ferwerda** and noticed a for-sale sign on their house, and the house looked vacant. Their email no longer is active. I finally located John and Lola. They are now in an assisted living community. The information is as follows: Winterbury Heights, apartment 102, Bangor, Maine 04401. Lola is suffering from dementia, but John is OK and still drives around town to shop and do errands. Both are 93 years old. No phone number available yet.

**August:** We had a Tuesday breakfast on August 14<sup>th</sup> at Dysarts. Attending were **Karen and Bruce Champeon, Art Taylor, and myself.** A good time was had by all!

Thursday August 16<sup>th</sup> was the **Tom Davis** Wake and Friday his Mass and funeral. Tom Davis was a local dairy farmer and long-time county commissioner who was a big supporter of Penobscot County SWCD.

The following week **Noreen** and I were at camp enjoying the company of our grandkids, ages 11 and 9. Grandkids are such a pleasure to watch them grow up! The following week we attended the wake and funeral mass and burial of my sister-in-law in south Portland. She was 90 years old.

**September:** We had quite a crowd for Tuesday's breakfast for September 11<sup>th</sup> although we were relegated to the "truckers section" because of the overflow crowd. In attendance were nine happy retirees: **Janet and Chris Jones, Judy and Charlie Boothby, Karen and Bruce Champeon, Roger Ashe, Art Taylor, and John Simon.** Fun was had by all.

Heard from **Tom Smith and Connie** who indicated they had been in Nova Scotia on vacation. They send their best wishes to all.

**Bill Moulton** sent an email indicating he and **Pat** had been in New Brunswick enjoying a vacation. Bill indicated he finally installed a mini-split heat pump on Sept 24<sup>th</sup>. I am sure he and Pat will enjoy it a lot more than lugging wood for the stove. Bill did not say if the heat pump was upstairs for air conditioning or downstairs for heating. Bill Moulton indicated that **Chad Arms** recently passed away. Chad was the long time dairy specialist for Kennebec County, and his wife **Barbara** was the long time district manager for the field office in Augusta. Many of us knew them both well.

We were all saddened by the recent and unexpected loss of **Judy Hunter, Richard Hunter's wife**. All our thoughts and prayers go out to the Hunter family in their time of sorrow. Dick was the long-time computer specialist in the State Office of NRCS in Orono.

**October:** The Tuesday October 9<sup>th</sup> 9am breakfast at Dysarts was attended by **Karen and Bruce Champeon, Judy and Charlie Boothby, Art Taylor, and John Simon.**

We were again relegated to the truckers section of Dysarts for lack of tables and waitresses in the regular section!

I happened to mention that I had just finished a novel called Origin by Dan Brown, only to find out that Karen is a big, big fan of Dan Brown's books. She even has several autographed copies! She passed on a lot of info about Dan Brown that was quite interesting to us readers and his fans.

The tree colors in Bangor are peaking and leaves are falling. Another week or two and leaf drop will be done. Boo hoo. I am heating my home quite comfortably with my single mini-split downstairs (so far)!

Till next time take care and God bless.

## MISSOURI

**Dave Rastorfer, ARCSE Representative**

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The annual retirees' luncheon was held on September 13<sup>th</sup> at the Senior Center in Columbia. There were 45 retirees and spouses in attendance.

**Dennis Shirk:** "Hello all. Life is good. Not too many aches and pains for Lois and me. We had a very wonderful fall revival, with our son-in-law doing the preaching. I am feeding two animals for Christmas beef, one for our families and one to

sell. I'm leaving in the morning for Pinecrest and a brief camping/riding trip (south of Salem, MO). Nothing much else to report. See ya down the trail."

**Jim Rickman** (Native Missourian now in Texas): "Been traveling, now up to 90 different countries, and on track to get to 100 before I expire. Just got back Friday from the coast and caught several nice red fish. This one was 24 inches long and the largest. Have to admit getting back into the boat was a struggle, and wearing a T-shirt was ill advised. I got a sunburned neck, but still had a great time fishing with **Jim Robinson** and **Billy Teels** near Rockport, TX. Went to my HS reunion and was amazed at how many of my classmates had aged. I might have too, as some of them asked who I was."

**Bill Pauls:** "Definitely fall now. I enjoyed seeing some of the ol' NRCS gang at the annual get-together in Columbia. We are in our li'l RV Wolf Pup in Bristol, CT. Finished marathon #103 in Hartford yesterday (a wet/cold one, I had to earn that one). Will tour CT and MA during this week (heal up), then run the Bay state marathon #104 in Lowell, MA on my birthday, October 21<sup>st</sup> next Sunday. The fall foliage is already good out here. The Berkshires were very pretty. Should be back in the Ozarks mid-week next week. Still enjoying the family (all healthy; 2 kids, spouses and four grandkids and two family dogs (theirs, not ours), volunteering, and church activities. Life is good. We are blessed. Prayers and good wishes out for everyone from the Pauls."

**John Turner: Donna and John Turner** accompanied their daughter and son-in-law to San Antonio to attend the graduation of their granddaughter, Airman 1<sup>st</sup> Class **Kayla Lackman**, from Air Force Basic Military Training. The ceremonies and associated events were impressive and memorable, and the effect of the training and discipline on the new airmen was quite amazing. The Air Force graduates over 600 new airmen each week; over 5,000 are in various stages of Basic Military Training at any given time. Graduates serve in the active duty Air Force, Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard. Kayla is presently receiving medical training at the Military Education and Training Campus (METC) at Fort Sam Houston, part of Joint Base San Antonio along with Lackland and Randolph Air Force Bases. The METC is the consolidated Department of Defense training facility for medical and health service specialties for all service branches. With a staff of 1,200, the METC offers courses ranging from Patient Administration (four weeks) to Cytology (52 weeks) and graduates 16,500 personnel each year with an average daily student count of 5,500. Sent by a very proud grandpa!

**Bob Harryman:** "Much to my surprise I had a heart attack on October 1<sup>st</sup>, and after a quick trip to North KC Hospital and two stints, I am home doing well and starting rehab, and should be good for another 20+ years. I was surprised because there is no history of heart problems in my family. Otherwise, **Doris** and I enjoyed senior citizen bus trips to NYC and Chicago this summer. I had a big garden again this year (30 tomato plants) but had to haul a lot of water to keep the tomatoes producing. Hope you all are doing well, and GO TIGERS and CHIEFS!"

**Frank Miller:** "I'm sitting here in my recliner recovering from my shoulder surgery. Things are looking better on the 4<sup>th</sup> day after. I will be down for a while, as I cannot drive for six weeks. Lots of reading and TV, I guess. See you soon if able to get around in Nov."

**Mike Blaine:** "Well, the drought broke big time in the last month. We have had 12 to 14 inches of rain in the last month. Gravel roads near the farm are washed badly, stream crossings washed out, and the ground is as soft as I can remember it ever being. If it keeps raining, deer season may be very interesting, NOT! Headed to Branson in the not-too-distant future to see a few shows and have some fun. I did get the repairs done on the house that were waiting. Got along pretty good with it even with my right 'wing' not being up to snuff yet. And we had the Amish window crew install eight new windows and two new external doors. It turned out well. I love the fall time of year. It is very pretty right now with the colors of the trees. Best wishes to all!"

**Mary Louise Igert:** "Diane Gillespie asked me to share that her mother, **Lena Thompson**, passed away this past Saturday, October 20<sup>th</sup>, in Jefferson City. Lena had resided with Diane and family for several months. Lena was the wife of **Mel Thompson**, the former Area Conservationist in Springfield, who retired in 1980. He and Lena were both so very helpful and caring to **Jim—RC&D**—and to our family. SCS folks had a fine group for many years who enjoyed each other and helped each other on professional and social levels. The majority of these folks have now left this world. I do not have any specific information on services although Diane told me that they will be in Springfield."

**Jess Epple:** "In July, **Jess and Phyllis** were married sixty fantastic years! In August, all of our family met in St. Charles, MO to celebrate! It wasn't easy 'rounding up' the entire group, but it happened and it was great! St. Louis was where many of the Epples settled along with their French relatives. Jess's Grandfather was French and German. Some of this group had become U.S. Citizens and settled in St. Louis, MO before Jess's Grandfather arrived. Jess visited 'Bangert & Epple place' while he was in St. Charles. The street was still present, but a shopping mall had nearly destroyed it. That's progress! This was the area where some of Jess's German/French relatives settled, east of Lambert Airport. We haven't done much traveling this year. We have been trying to organize sixty years' worth of 'stuff.' On a positive note, our hay crop was great, and we are trying to get it hauled before the next rain. Be well and be careful."

## MONTANA

**Dick Gooby, ARCSE Representative**

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### Montana Big Sky Report

**Gooby Ranch Report:** When our irrigation pivot is running, it sometimes has Bald Eagles, Hawks and has hundreds and hundreds of black birds on it. Sometimes the blackbirds hop down on the ground and take a shower. Other times they get back about 50 feet from the pivot, where it has watered, and they are busy eating something. The hawks and bald eagles sit on the pivot and dive down and grab a ground squirrel for lunch. I've been curious what the birds are eating on the ground. I put on

Mary Ann's to-do list that she sit on top of the pivot with a tablet and binoculars and see what the birds are eating. When she got up on the pivot, all the birds flew away. After Mary Ann rode around on the pivot for a couple days, the birds got used to her and lit back on the pivot. The only problem is that our binoculars aren't strong enough for Mary Ann to see what the birds are eating, other than grasshoppers.

I've decided to put in for a wildlife friendly grant that will allow us to get a strong telescope so Mary Ann can see what the birds are eating. We are including in the grant a request to put a tractor cab on top of the pivot with a heater and air conditioner. They will be plugged into the pivot's electrical system, along with a microwave oven and hotplate, so Mary Ann can cook my meals while she's watching what the birds eat. We will title the grant application "Meals On Wheels."

## NORTH DAKOTA

**Bob Bird, ARCSE Representative**

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North Dakota Annual SCS/NRCS Retirees' Reunion on Thursday, Sept. 20<sup>th</sup> at Bismarck Elks Lodge Room. Front row, left to right: Dez Havelka, Mary Ewine, Laurie Coleman, Cheryl Senechal, Jackie Miller, Kren Sando, Diane Mittelstedt, Gladys Demke, Back row (L-R): Ken Miller, Ron Sando, Wes Ewine, Tom Coleman, Myron Senechal, Bob Bird, Herb Mittelstedt, Pat Johnson and friend, Bob and Lynell Boone.

## OHIO

**Jon Gerken and Bob Parkinson, ARCSE Representatives**

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Left to right: Jon Gerken, Jim McCluskey, Lennie Losh, Paul Chester, Tom Sewell, Jim Piper, Art Brate, Larry Porter, Bob Parkinson, Larry Tornes, Richard Rush, Anna Tornes, Merv Skiles, Nancy Jervis, Rick Gehring, John Armentano, and Jim Stafford.

On August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2018, twenty two current and retired NRCS/SCS employees gathered for lunch at the MCL cafeteria at 5240 East Main Street in Whitehall, OH, along with four additional family members. Attendees enjoyed a slide show of recent and historic employee and family activities.

Attendees included John Armentano, David Berna, Art Brate, Paul Chester, Terry Cosby, Rich Gehring, Jon Gerken, Ralph Gray, his wife, Betty and their grandson Daniel, Keith Huffman and his wife Joanne, Nancy Jervis, Lennie Losh,

**Jim McCluskey, Bob Parkinson, Jim Piper, Larry Porter, Richard Rush, Tom Sewell, Merv Skiles, Mark Smith, Jim Stafford, Larry Tornes and his wife Anna, and Jon Warner.**



*Rich Gehring updates the group on recent activities*

Following lunch, **Terry Cosby**, State Conservationist for NRCS in Ohio, updated the group on current agency activities. Following his update, the group heard from a representative from Cooper, Adel and Associates, a law firm specializing in elder law. Retirees then updated the group on recent activities.

"In May and June this year, my wife **Diane** and I (Jon), took another item off our bucket list with a trip to the Canadian Rockies, along with a number of other locations we wanted to visit along the way.

The trip started by heading up into Michigan and traveling through Frankenmuth, an area that we had heard about for many years, but had never visited. From there we continued north and across the upper peninsula of Michigan, which Diane had never visited.



*Terry Cosby, State Conservationist for NRCS in Ohio, updated the attendees on recent agency activity.*

Our next area of interest was to revisit Erskine and Crookston, MN, where I had lived and worked during the summer of 1987, doing "Farm Bill" soil mapping. Obviously, over 30 years some things had changed, but much of the area was still very familiar. I had taken a travel trailer with me and lived in Erskine in a trailer park that was just being constructed by a local electrician, planning for a source of retirement income. It was good to see that the park was completed and doing a thriving business when we were there.



*The transition from plains to the Canadian Rockies is sudden and very striking.*

From Crookston we turned north and entered Canada between Grand Forks and Winnipeg. It had been quite a few years since I had crossed into Canada. After checking internet references, I wasn't sure what to expect regarding searches of our car which was packed for 3-4 weeks on the road. As it turned out, their only interest was whether we had any weapons or ammunition, and our word that we didn't have any was good enough for a pass.

From Winnipeg we traveled west on National Highway 1 to Regina and then northwest to Saskatoon. Then we turned back to the west on National Highway 16 to Edmonton and then on west to Jasper National Park. The expanse of the plains in Canada is truly impressive and makes the rapid change to the Rockies even more striking.



*Going west from Winnipeg, the flat plains went on for hundreds of miles and like most places in the northern plains, there were many threshing machines sitting out along the highway.*

In Jasper Park we followed Highway 93 south, traveling upstream along the Athabasca River toward the ice fields near the south end of Jasper National Park. After a stop at the ice fields, we continued toward Banff National Park following the Bow River downstream through the park and on to Calgary.



*Our route followed the Athabasca River upstream through Jasper National Park, giving us beautiful views of mountains on both sides of the highway.*

The scenery in the parks is magnificent. Following Highway 93 you are in a river valley with the mountains on both sides. There are numerous turnouts along the way, and each one offers views worth stopping to take pictures. In addition, there are many side roads and trails starting at the turnouts that offer opportunity for more sightseeing or hiking. We spent two days in the park and didn't scratch the surface on things to see. The only disappointment was not seeing Lake Louise. When we were there, the main parking lot was closed (full), and we chose not to go to the secondary lot and then take a long bus ride back to the lake.

Following our time in the Canadian Rockies, we had several other places we wanted to see before returning home. The first was Glacier National Park. We had been there in 2004, but because of fires in the west side of the park, we could only go half way on the Going to the Sun Road and then had to turn around and go back out the east entrance. With our trip being much earlier in the year this time we hoped we would be able to drive all the way through the park this time. We were early enough to get there ahead of any fires this year. Unfortunately, we were also early enough that the road had not been opened yet because of snow, so that experience remains on our bucket list.



***Our route took us past ice fields where we could study documentation of glacial recession over the past hundred years. The ice fields are at the divide between the Athabasca River and the Bow River, near the boundary between Jasper National Park and Banff National Park.***

Our next stop was Coeur d' Alene, ID. My wife had never been there and was interested in seeing the city and that part of Idaho. The day we were there it was raining so we weren't able to get a good look at the floating green at the golf course, but it was a nice drive through the area.

From Coeur d' Alene we traveled to Yellowstone National Park. We had also visited this park previously in 1982, but we came in from the south on that trip and only saw the south loop. This time, coming in from the north entrance, we drove the north loop. We didn't see as much wildlife as we saw on our earlier trip, but we were able to see some bears this time, which we didn't see on our first trip. The only drawback with bear sightings was traffic would stop and park on the side of the road where there was no accommodation for parking, and pedestrians crossed/walked in the road with little concern for traffic. Traffic was backed up for long distances, and proceeding was stop and go for extended periods.



***In Yellowstone bison sightings created only slight traffic slowdowns, unlike bear sightings which took much longer to get past.***

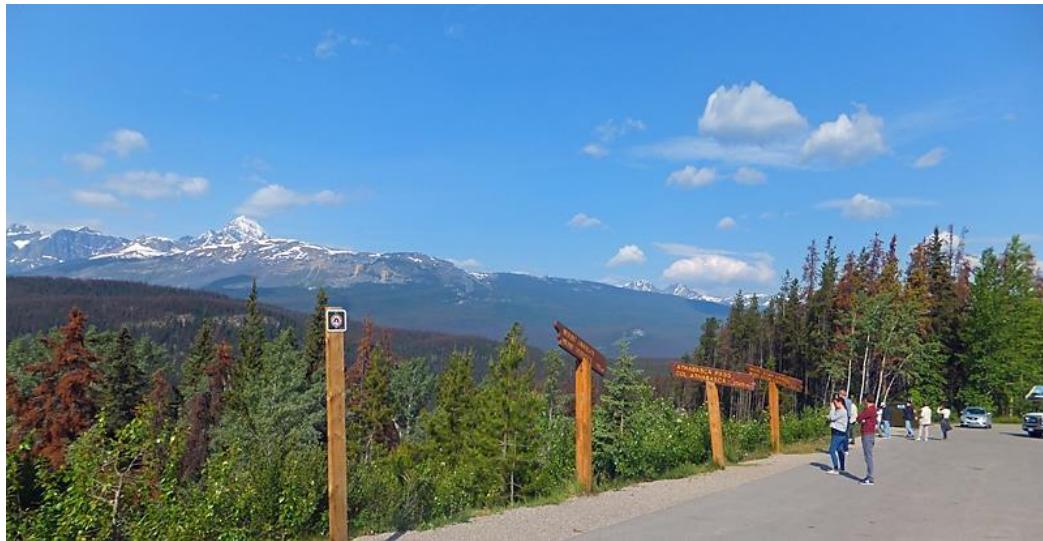
From Yellowstone, we started our return to Ohio, taking routes that we had never previously traveled whenever possible. We saw many new areas in Montana, Wyoming and Missouri on the trip. We made one last sightseeing stop in Hannibal, MO. We spent a day visiting many of the Mark Twain sites in the downtown area.

It was a long (5,677 miles) but very enjoyable trip, but it was time to be getting home. We had had lots of rain in Ohio while we were gone, and the garden was in need of a good tilling before the weeds took over.



**Hannibal** was a fun place to wander the downtown area, visiting many of the locations around which Mark Twain's books are based.

Next on the bucket list is a return to Alaska. I was there for one brief trip, but that is one of the states my Diane hasn't visited yet."



**The highway through the parks had many turnouts that offered opportunity to take pictures, and had ample signage about the sights you were seeing along the route.**

It is with great sadness for me to inform you that the son of John (Rob) Skidmore, former CET in Pickaway County, passed away Saturday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Rob retired from NRCS in 2017 and has been working part time at Pickaway County Soil & Water. The link to the obituary is below.

<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/circlevilleherald/obituary.aspx?n=john-robert-skidmore&pid=190181883&fhid=8714>

## OREGON

**Don Stettler, ARCSE Representative**

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

Considering all the activities available this time of year for those living in the Northwest, there was a nice turnout of Oregon retirees for the Fall lunch at Clackamas The Old Spaghetti Factory. Those attending were **Eldena VanderZanden, Lowell and Marian Kenedy, Jon Lea, Gail Voge, Thor Thorson, Kay Denfeld, Clifton and Marva Deal, Tom George, Tom Fujii, Bette Holscher, Dick and Kathy Sylvester, Joe Sahlfeld, Leland Saele, Beth Zetter and Butch Hockett, Anna Certotsky, Bobbie Hart, Lee Hardy, Terry Mitchell**, and yours truly **Don Stettler**.

**Don Wallin** sent his regrets explaining he would be sitting on a stump in Eastern Oregon for the first day of elk season. **Leonard Gilson** said he and **Sharon** would be spending a week at Eagle Crest with Sharon's brother. **Jack Kanalz** wrote that he and **Geneal** would be cruising the Mediterranean, celebrating their 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Their cruise visits ports in Italy, Spain, and France, including a day in Monte Carlo. **Stefanie Aschmann** told me she would be in Huatulco, Mexico for a total immersion Spanish language class.



L to R: Joe Sahlfeld, Beth Zetter, Bette Holscher, and Butch Hockett

News from attendees included **Thor Thorson** telling us that after hunting elk for many years he had tired of the discomforts involved and decided not to go. **Jon Lea** is busy serving as the president of a kennel club that is putting on a dog show. **Lowell and Marian** celebrated their 62<sup>nd</sup> anniversary in September. They are enjoying learning about their ethnicity. **Clifton and Marva Deal** enjoyed a visit to Napa, ID as well as being involved in their grandchildren's activities. **Leland Saele** told us about his window cleaning efforts. First, he needed to retrieve the power-washer which he could not find. He drove 20 miles to the church thinking he had left it there. It wasn't. Returning home, he found it in plain sight in a slightly different position than he normally kept it.

**Lee Hardy** is still involved in his engineering practice. Currently he is working on the design of an aerobic composter for a huge turkey operation. **Tom Fujii** is still playing golf and reveling in Oregon State University winning the College World Baseball Series Championship. **Tom George** is resettling in the Portland area after being away for some time. Recently, he spent a week in Maine with one-time co-workers, enjoying lobster for dinner every night.

**Eldena VanderZanden** recently completed training as a Master Recycler. She is now prepared to train in the nuances of recycling. **Anna Certotsky** is enjoying visits from her family. She also continues to volunteer at the Milwaukee Hospital. **Kay Denfeld** recently went crabbing for the first time. She managed to trap five Dungeness crabs, one of which was a keeper (male and over 5-3/4 inches). **Bobbie Hart** recently spent time on the coast enjoying perfect weather and fishing with Larry.

**Gail Voge** recently experienced the joys of jury duty. **Terry Mitchell** told of being busy working in her yard and watching her nephew play ball. She also made a trip to Georgia. **Dick and Kathy Sylvester** have been working hard getting their yard in shape and also getting a new driveway constructed.



Kay Denfeld, crabbing.

**Joe Sahlfeld** mentioned that he and **Beckie** recently spent two weeks traveling in Spain and Portugal. They also have been visiting grandchildren. **Beth Zetter and husband Butch** have also been enjoying grandchildren. They also had quite a time improving their well. Getting the job done required taking off the roof of the pumphouse. **Bette Holscher** told us that she is staying close to home.

## PENNSYLVANIA

**Bill Bowers, ARSCE Representative**

Email: [wbowers@comcast.net](mailto:wbowers@comcast.net)

and **Timothy Murphy**, [vindemurph@verizon.net](mailto:vindemurph@verizon.net)

**From Bill Bowers.** What a great time at Donegal and Fallingwater! The 2018 version of the PA Retirees get-together included a great meal Sunday evening at Brady's with excellent food and even better conversation. The place was busy, and the SCS/NRCS group fit right in.



*First Row L to R: Bill Parrish, Gary Smith, Gina Murphy, Anne Smith, Rosie Updegraff, Bill Bowers, MaryAnn Bowers, Chuck Shrump, Nevin Ulery, Debby Shrump. Second row: Alice Sheets, and Judy Ulery. From Top of Stairs: Rita Brzostek, Ed Brzostek, Jackie Bogovich, Wayne Bogovich, Ann Akers, Tim Murphy, John Mank, Ellen Mank, John Akers, Deb Bennett, Hosea Latshaw, Allan Bennett, Phil Sheets, Shirley Lindsey, and Don Lindsey.*

The Holiday Inn Express was the location where the out-of-towners stayed and enjoyed a “wake-up” breakfast. Then there were several homemade jellies and jams to spread on bagels during the registration period.

At the business meeting it was decided to allow the Keystone Chapter of SWCS to handle the scholarship in 2019. The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary SCS belt buckle raffle was won by **Phil Sheets** who agreed to bring it to the 2019 meeting. A total of \$432 was raised for the scholarship. Thanks to all!

The Association of Retired Conservation Service Employees recognizes folks who have reached the age of 83 and have completed the Senior Conservationist questionnaire. I am happy to announce that **Graham T. ‘Munk’ Munkittrick**, former State Conservationist in PA, has achieved that status. He and his wife **Mo** celebrated their 90<sup>th</sup> birthdays this year! Congratulations to both of you! Any of you who have reached your 83<sup>rd</sup> birthday, please go to the ARCSE website <http://www.arcse.org/qFormSenior.htm> and complete the questionnaire and send it in! If you need help with the questionnaire, let me know.

**Susan Marquart**, Asst. State Conservationist for Partnerships, represented the State Conservationist and gave a report on many of the current NRCS programs and activities. The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy provided two speakers to explain their activities in natural resource management in western PA.

It was decided that the 2019 meeting will be September 15–16 in the Hershey area, with the Antique Automobile Club of America Museum as the afternoon attraction (<https://www.aacamuseum.org/>). Put that date on your calendar.

Although it rained all morning, as we drove to Fallingwater the skies brightened and the sun even peaked out as we toured the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed summer home of the Kaufmann family of Pittsburgh. The water was really flowing, and the home was spectacular. The engineers were intrigued by the cantilevered rooms as the guide explained “reinforced concrete” to them. Ha, Ha. It was a great tour!

Thanks to **Nevin and Judy Ulery** and **Chuck and Debby Shrump** for making the local arrangements and providing the cookies to go with our catered lunch. A good time was had by all!



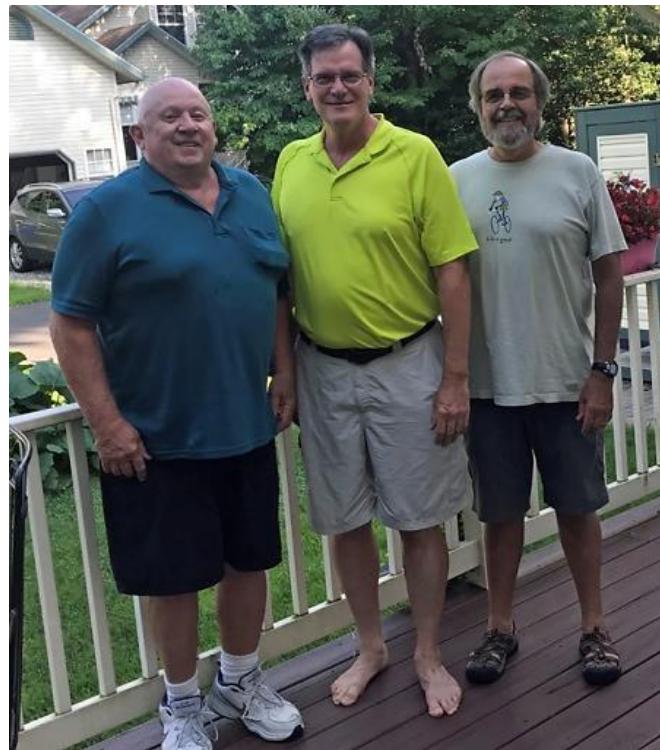
**Fallingwater, Frank Lloyd Wright's design.**

**Scholarship Report by Gary Smith.** The SCS/NRCS Retiree's Organization and the Keystone Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society combined their funds to award two \$500 scholarships. Recipients of the Chapter's Scholarships in 2018 are as follow.

**Jessica Hunter** from Mars, Butler County PA is a senior at Penn State University majoring in Biological Engineering/Natural Resource Engineering. She is very active in campus organizations and has had many employment opportunities to earn funds for college as well as to enhance her professional development in engineering. Jessica has a keen interest in site design and stormwater management design. We wish her well in her career.

**Laura La Grave** from Lewisburg, Union County PA is a junior non-traditional student at the Pennsylvania College of Technology. She is majoring in Horticulture/Plant Production and Horticulture/Landscape. After serving three terms with Americorps, Laura now is a volunteer at the Food Pantry and Community Gardens and has held employment positions that support her future career. Laura has a real interest in sustainable agriculture and local food. We also wish Laura well in her career.

**Wayne Bogovich** says he and **Jackie** were in Ocean View, DE next to Bethany Beach in early August for a pre-construction conference for their new house. Afterwards we got together with **Ed and Rita Brzostek** who live there and **Barry and Pam Kintzer** who were vacationing there that week for a picnic at Ed and Rita's home. We enjoyed many stories of those good old days working in PA.



**Ed Brzotek, Wayne Bogovich, and Barry Kintzer**

**John Akers** reports that it has been a busy summer with mowing the grass 2-3 times a week between the rain showers. John writes:

"On July 17-18 the PA Association of Conservation Districts (PACD) had their summer meeting at the Double Tree Resort in Lancaster along with the North East Regional meeting of the National Association of Conservation Districts. I am the South Central representative for PACD, which serves as the Conservation Districts' representative in Harrisburg.

On August 15<sup>th</sup> I took in the Ag Progress Days' event then in the evening I went over to **Joel Myers'** farm for supper and the Keystone Chapter meeting of the Soil and Water Conservation Society. The National Society will have their meeting in Pittsburgh next year.

On August 23<sup>rd</sup> the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau had their annual conservation farm tour in Bedford County for the south central region for DEP staff and Conservation District staffs. I helped set up the tour with the Bedford District staff and **Brad Michaels** of NRCS. We toured three farms that had done extensive manure handling systems on their farms.

I celebrated my 65<sup>th</sup> Carlisle High School class reunion on September 1<sup>st</sup> at the Carlisle War Memorial. The Conservation retirees had met there a couple of years ago. It was a nice event with about 70 class members out of a class of 212.

**Ann** and I enjoyed the PA retirees' event this year, and it is always nice to share memories and stories about our time with SCS/NRCS."

**Bill** and **Mary Ann Bowers** visited the Canadian Rockies in August. Beautiful mountains and lakes and rivers. We traveled from Banff to Lake Louise to Jasper and then boarded the Rocky Mountaineer train from Jasper to Vancouver. Beautiful sites and very relaxing travel. On the way back east we spent 5 days in Whitefish, MT attending niece **Heather's** (**Bowers**, brother **Don**'s daughter) wedding. Saw Glacier National Park, played some golf and ate some freshly caught white fish from White Fish Lake.



*Mary Ann and Bill Bowers*

**Tim and Gina Murphy** transitioned from Donegal, Ireland to Donegal, PA in less than 4 days, returning from a two week visit to the Emerald Isle with son **Evan** to celebrate his 30<sup>th</sup> birthday. We had a great time visiting numerous historic, pre-historic, and natural wonders, plus a few pubs and a distillery.



*Dunluce Castle Northern Ireland*

On the way to Donegal, PA we again visited the Great Allegheny Passage, where we biked several miles west of Meyersdale. All the rain has made a mess of the local grape crop, so I will only be making about half the amount of wine compared to other years.

**History Corner by Fred Bubb.** Last issue I asked for anyone who was the first Work Unit Conservationist (WUC) in a new conservation district. This presented a unique opportunity to set up a SCS field office your way. I did get responses!

**Merv Skiles** wrote from Ohio that he was the first WUC in Armstrong County in the summer of 1963. He was joined by **Roy Harnish** as Conservation Technician later in that year. Armstrong was the next to the last county in PA to become a CD, (Delaware Co. was last). Merv went on to be WUC in Dauphin and Bucks Counties before transferring to Ohio, where he retired as State Resource Conservationist.

**Phil Sheets** tells that he was the first WUC in Elk and Cameron Counties. If my memory serves me, I went to Union County in 1958. At that time there was a sudden surge in new districts and a lack of people to fill the WUC positions, so I think it was eight, relatively new employees who were selected to fill the vacancies. A week-long intensive training session was held in the SO, and then the newly trained wonders were turned loose. Besides myself, I remember **Karl Hellerick** (Venango), **Jack Davis** (Juniata) and **Bill Steiner** (? Co.). Can anyone help with others?

My own start in Union County was a disaster. **Joe Sacco**, Sunbury, covered Union Co. as a "white county," so he was helping me get started. Took me out to meet the CD directors. First one we visited told us there was no District. Disapproved application due to a technicality. AC **Jim Wise** said, let's keep this quiet or **Mac** will be moving you somewhere else. Jim's guidance was "meet the 'future' directors, and ride round and get acquainted with the roads." How long can you do that? Neighboring Snyder County WUC **Clayt Best** said he could use help surveying the 100-acre block (remember the 2% soil survey of all the USA?). I was glad for something to do, and all was well until my time card arrived in Harrisburg. Got terse, quick orders to get back in Union County. It finally worked out, even if I did make a trip to the hospital in Danville to be treated for a nerves problem.

**Dan Dostie**, SRC in the NRCS State Office, sent the following note:

"I wear another hat outside of my SRC gig, as current President of the Keystone Chapter of SWCS. Next year will be an exciting and busy time for us as the National SWCS conference comes to Pittsburgh on July 28-31, 2019. The last time Pennsylvania got to host such a conference was in 1965. It was held in Philadelphia that year. Sure would be neat to dig up some history about it. I wonder if anyone in the retiree network has any stories to share?" If you recall the 1965 meeting, contact Dan or Tim Murphy

[Daniel.Dostie@pa.usda.gov](mailto:Daniel.Dostie@pa.usda.gov), [vindemurph@verizon.net](mailto:vindemurph@verizon.net)

## SOUTHEAST PENNSYLVANIA

**Frank Resides, ARSCE Representative**

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Nearly another year has gone by. Each one seems to go faster. We returned from a six-day trip to South Dakota on October 1<sup>st</sup>, where we were based in the BW Ramkota Hotel in Rapid City, from where we took daily bus trips. We visited Mt. Rushmore on the evening of Sept. 26<sup>th</sup> for the outdoor program and Lighting of the Mountain Ceremony. Very impressive, but a bit chilly at 40 degrees. We returned later in the week during daylight hours for a better look and some pictures (the 3rd person in the picture is Doug, our bus driver who was from North Dakota and did a wonderful job.) Other points of interest included: the Crazy Horse Monument/construction site, the village of Keystone where we had dinner one evening, a drive through the Badlands--really beautiful and unique topography--and of course Wall Drug. It must be the Number One Tourist Trap west of the Mississippi. I'm not complaining for I enjoyed the free coffee and donut they give to each veteran, otherwise I would have had to pay a nickel for the coffee!



**Frank Resides, Bus Driver Doug, and Jane Resides at Mount Rushmore, SD.**

A highlight of the trip was a visit to **Kevin Kostner**'s museum, "Tatanka--the Story of the Buffalo." A Lakota Sioux gave an excellent and informative presentation about the artifacts in the museum and the culture and history of the area. He then gave a guided tour of the grounds where several life size sculptures of bison, horses and riders are displayed.

Another day we took the 1880s train from Hill City to Keystone, a slow-moving carrier, so we saw several deer and other wildlife on the snow-covered ground along the way. A less exciting day was the annual Buffalo Round Up in Custer State Park. We left our hotel at 6am that morning, and after a one-hour ride to the park, we sat in the bus until about 10am when the herd of about 800 appeared at a distance, driven by "cowboys" on ATVs, in pickups, and a few on horseback. The animals were too far from us to really get a good look; however, we returned there the next day when many were close to the roads, and many pictures were taken.

We rode through the town of Custer one day where I noticed the Gold Pan Saloon and a store dealing in Guns, Knives and Traps, but had no chance to visit either.

Another day we were dropped off in historic Deadwood for a 4-hour stay, which turned out to be a long afternoon. When you've seen one casino, you've seen them all. However, we did enjoy a visit to the Days of '76 Museum and later had dinner at the Deadwood Social Club where legend has it that **Wild Bill Hickok** was shot in 1876. If you haven't been to South Dakota, I'd say it's worth the trip.

Our grandson, **Matthew**, graduated High School in June, and started at Bloomsburg University in August. We don't hear much from him, but we hope and pray that things are going well. **Jane** makes him a "care" package to supplement his dining needs occasionally.

We had a good year with the bees, but it will probably be my last, after 39 years in the business. Without **Matthew** available to help when I need him, I have trouble with the heavy lifting. The honey was a beautiful color this year, a medium amber, so it's always good to quit when you're ahead.

We were blessed on August 31<sup>st</sup> with a visit from our good friends from Massachusetts, **Jeff and Ann Perchak**. Jeff worked with SCS there many years ago and helped me get into bee-keeping in 1979. It's great to have friends who are so easy to reconnect with.

**Leigh** continues her working career at FIS, and we spend some time together with her and Matthew at our cabin in Tioga County.

## SOUTH CAROLINA

**Grady Adkins, Ellis D. Morrow, ARCSE Representatives**

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South Carolina retirees met on October 18<sup>th</sup> at Clarks Lodge and Restaurant in Santee, SC for fellowship, lunch, and remembering. Following lunch, the group discussed options for future meetings.



Left to right, seated: **Frances Anderson, Shirley Melven, Linda McNeill, Sylvia Williams**. First Standing: **Ann Christie, Bunny Anderson, Bill Melven (w/JOLantern), Al McNeill, James Williams**. Second Standing: **Ellis Morrow, Jimmy Sanders, Dan Guy (Magic Photographer), and Grady Adkins**.

## TEXAS (NORTH)

**Arnold King, ARCSE Representative**

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**Arnold King report:** The good news is that monthly meetings continue to be enjoyed by the regular members, but the bad news is that attendance level continues a slow decline because new retirees do not join, and I don't need to say what is happening to our older members. We generally have around 15 attendees at our monthly meetings and 60-70 at the annual state-wide spring meeting at New Braunfels. The planners for next year have decided to make the event over a weekend rather than the traditional Tuesday and Wednesday routine. Time will tell how that works out toward increasing new retiree interest in socializing with their fellow retirees. The following updates travel and social events reported and enjoyed by our Texas members. **Willeene** and I recently took a cruise with friends to Havana, Cuba (main stop) and got a glimpse of what goes on there under a socialist regime. To meet their needs for survival, each citizen receives \$22.00 per month and a supply of beans, rice, and flour. Kind of bleak, but they seem relatively happy. The situation outside of Havana may be a different story. The highlight of the visit to Cuba was a tour of **Ernest Hemingway**'s home near Havana. We are glad we went but are not planning to return. Tourism is based more on curiosity than entertainment usually available on a tropical island. We also went on a road trip to Sodona, AZ and on to Gunnison, CO where we met friends and took a great four-wheeler tour in a more or less wilderness area where parts of the movie "True Grit" were filmed."

**Dennis Erinakes:** "I have been dealing with a serious shoulder problem and need to be cared for by my son until things get better. My son has constructed a kennel for my dogs so they will be taken care of. The doctors are not sure what my problem is, but the pain is almost unbearable. My big regret is not being able to attend my grandson's wedding."

**Clyde Goodman:** "I continue to keep up with retired SCS/NRCS friends through the national newsletter and travel. My wife, **Marla**, is still having serious health problems and had to be kept in a respite healthcare facility while I attended a family reunion and two weeks' vacation in Kansas. We do plan to take a Disney Cruise to the Western Caribbean during Christmas."

**Dave Stockbridge:** "**Barbara** and I attended a friend's wedding in Minnesota during August and enjoyed two weeks of cooler weather up there. Our daughter, **Erica** and husband **Joey**, bought a house in Ft. Worth where Joey will be teaching at a local high school. Erica is teaching at the college level in that vicinity."

**Tom Hodges:** "I'm still going strong at 87 years old and recently made pickled relish (referred to as chow-chow in Texas) for family and friends."

**Dennis Gaster:** "I have had a busy summer upgrading my 36-year-old house beginning with foundation repair. Windows, soffits and facia were replaced along with a ton of new landscaping. I plan to tackle the interior next year. We continue to enjoy our grandson's football career at Frisco High School. I have also been in contact with **Don Kapalka** who recently fell and underwent surgery to repair back damage. He is now undergoing rehabilitation."

**Morris Lobricht:** "Our daughter recently received her master's degree as a nurse practitioner. I still report at the Ft. Worth center for duty as a volunteer. And I recently found out I will need heart valve replacement surgery before long."

**Doug Seibel:** "I continue to volunteer at Bass Hall in Ft. Worth and also work as a volunteer at the office, as needed. My wife was recently injured rather badly in an elevator accident. She received a bad laceration but is healing up nicely."

## TEXAS (SOUTH)

**Rosendo Trevino III, ARCSE Representative**

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*Michael Hall, Retired Southeast Pasture Specialist, and Cheryl Simmons, Land Stewardship Specialist, met up at the Society for Ecological Restoration meeting in Spokane, WA.*

**Rosendo Trevino**, retired STC-NM, returned to New Mexico to help celebrate **Ken and Linda Scheffe's** retirement from Lincoln, NE this year. Pictured below in Ken and Linda's retirement home in Corrales NM are most of New Mexico's now-retired Leadership Team from the year 2000.



From left to right: Norman and Rosie Vigil, Ken and Bonnie Leiting, Ken and Linda Scheffe, Rosendo and Norma Linda Trevino, and Troy and Linda Hood.

## WASHINGTON, DC, NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA

**John Peterson, ARCSE Representative**

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In the past months, we in the National Capital Area have lost a number of friends and colleagues. Among them were **Anna C. "Dolly" Maresch**, **Ida Cuthbertson**, **Warren Fitzgerald**, **Fred Garst**, **Doug Helms**, **Joe Haas**, **Al Geiger**, **Richard Lawrence**, and **John Skidmore III**, son of NRCS'er **Bob Skidmore**. Their SCS/NRCS contributions will be long remembered.

The ARCSE National Capital Area retirees met for their fall luncheon at the Ft. Myer Officers Club on Thursday, Oct. 4<sup>th</sup>.



Washington, DC National Capital Area retirees met for lunch at Ft. Myers Officers' Club near the Pentagon. Not in the picture but at the luncheon were Ann Marlow (behind the camera) and John and Blanche Peterson.

In attendance were **Paul Benedict**, **Jerry Bernard**, **Bill Boyer**, **Roger Cronshay**, **Doug Holy**, **Bill Irwin**, **Ron and Ann Marlow**, **Diana Morse**, **Barbara Osgood**, **John and Blanche Peterson**, **Marc and Kendrick Safley**, **Lee Shields**, **Stuart Shelton**, and **Rick Swenson**. After a moment of silence for our many recently departed colleagues, the group enjoyed

reminiscing and telling of recent family travels and happenings. Our Spring Luncheon will be Thursday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2019, probably back at Ft. Myer. The luncheon buffet there is simply great! Any retirees traveling in the area then are welcome to join us. Just let **Diana Morse or Barbara Osgood** know you are coming at least a week in advance.

From **Jim Spitz**. "Hi **John**, don't know if I ever brought you up-to-date about some changes in our lives or not. Anyway, there have been several. After living at Smith Mountain Lake for 26 years, we sold our home and moved to The Glebe, a life care retirement community in Daleville, VA. Daleville is a little North and West of Roanoke, VA in Botetourt County. We live in a cottage on campus and enjoy wonderful facilities and entertainment.

After being involved in many volunteer activities at the Lake and for the Commonwealth, I got bored in our new environment and joined the Daleville-Fincastle Lions Club where I've been very, very busy with vision screening, eyeglass recycling, white and broom sales. Also, I had to give up 19 years of service in a volunteer fire, rescue and dive organization where I served many of those years as a line officer in rescue and a member of the board of directors. I took a Life Membership.

Upon arriving in Daleville, I soon discovered that, although unincorporated, Daleville is the fastest growing community in the county. With six 3-story apartment buildings, The Glebe with a 1,2,3,4 multistory building housing almost 300 elderly residents, and fast-growing industrial development, there is no fire/EMS capability within nine miles. So, I've introduced myself to the County's Battalion Chief for fire/EMS, and as a Lion have developed a program to be presented to Glebe residents and the Community at large. Our objective is to present that program and get the Battalion Commander to address the situation. The Board of Supervisors, like many others, embrace the growth but do not think ahead to impacts on postal, law enforcement, educational and fire/ems needs to support the growth.

So, once again I am busy. **Hilde**, a classic type A lady, is also busy. Several years ago, she put together a group of Germans, men and women, and a band to sing the old drinking and party songs. Currently they are rehearsing for the Octoberfest to be held at Smith Mountain Lake. She plays the accordion with six other musicians and 25 or 26 singers. They do it annually, and at the retirement communities. They meet once a month for lunch, gossip and singing. She also sings here at The Glebe. She recently put together a program here at The Glebe to notify one another if there is an illness, hospitalization or death. It bypasses The Glebe which cannot do it, due to HIPPA restrictions. It really took off with the full blessing of the "Head Shed" here. Guess that's all **John**. Hope you, **Blanche** and family are all doing well!" Spitzs have been busy. Thanks, **Jim**.

**Warren and Barb Lee** will be taking their annual trip to Arizona for the winter around Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>. See you in the spring! Enjoy the warm weather **Lees**, and visit many other retiree snowbirds there.

**Ron Marlow** sends, "After a reception in the South Building to celebrate Dave Thackeray's retirement, around 25 individuals including the Director for the Conservation Engineering Division, Noller Herbert, continued the celebration at a luncheon at Kirwan's on the Wharf in Washington, DC. Eight of those attending were retirees who had served on the NRCS Conservation Engineering Division staff. They represent over 107 staff years in CED and are shown in the photo taken on the waterfront by Claudia Hoeft, National Hydraulic Engineer."



Retired NRCS Conservation Engineering staff: left to right Barry Kintzer, Bob Snieckus, Dave Thackery, Bill Irwin, Don Woodward, Wayne Bogovich, Ron Marlow, and John Moore.

**John and Blanche Peterson** spent two weeks in Maine in October and November visiting daughter **Shannon** and her family who live in Cumberland, near Portland. **Petersons** stayed at the Samoset Resort near Rockland, the Lobster Capital of the World. **John** tried valiantly to rid the Atlantic of those pesky critters, but after years of trying he doesn't seem to be making a dent. In addition to enjoying the Maine grandchildren, they love driving the Atlantic Coastline and visiting all the quaint villages. A stop at L.L. Bean is always part of this annual trip.

**John** has been serving as the SWCS Washington, DC Representative for many years, and will be stepping down from that role at the end of 2018. **Norm Berg and John** are the people who have played that role for SWCS to date. SWCS will be looking for someone to replace **John**."

Received this from **John Moore** in September. "**John and Chris Moore** spent the month of April visiting the five National Parks in southern Utah, including Zion and Arches as well as many state parks. Awesome scenery and geology! We then spent the month of June in Newfoundland, Canada which we think should be declared a World Heritage Site in its entirety. Saw amazing example of rarely exposed rock of Earth's mantle and some outstanding examples of early multi-cellular fossils that occur in few places on Earth. Visited an old Vermont friend who moved there in 1974 and I haven't seen since and another gal whom we met on our previous trip to Newfoundland in 2012. We loved the people there--they unabashedly call you 'my darling,' 'my luv,' 'my dear' and are so open and friendly!" **Moore**s have seen some beautiful sites.



*Chris and John Moore, Utah*

## **WASHINGTON**

**Ken Kaul, ARCSE Representative**

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

Attendees at our monthly lunch meeting at the Timber Creek Buffett and Grill were **Joe Carmack, Larry and Jean Edmonds, Stefan Fechter, Chet Jahns, Ken Kaul, Harry Riehle, Ralph Schmidt and Carl Vennes**. We were all saddened at the death of **Jerry Richard**. **Stan and Kathryn Hobson** from Boise, ID joined us at Jerry Richard's memorial service. Joe Carmack and Stefan Fechter are heading south for the winter.

## **WEST VIRGINIA**

**Peg Reese, ARCSE Representative**

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

The Morgantown State Office has two fewer people as Personnel Specialist **Karen Fitchett** retired at the end of September and engineer **Joe Seybert** plans to retire at the end of October.

Recently, West Virginia lost two retirees. **John Paul Carr**, retired RC&D Coordinator for the Little Kanawha RC&D, died on October 6, 2018. Former member of the Romney engineering staff, **Ralph Hartman**, passed away on October 9, 2018. You can read more about John and Ralph in the In Memoriam Section.

A small group of retirees met on October 17<sup>th</sup>, to celebrate our chapter's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We enjoyed looking at old photographs and reminiscing about our working days. **Alan Staddon** shared his experiences of climbing 14,000 foot mountains in Colorado. Fortunately, he brought books about his adventures as an equipment failure prevented him from showing his prepared videos. **J.R. Wolfe** has agreed to organize our 2019 meeting.

**Sam Sheets**, retired District Conservationist, missed the annual meeting as he will be representing Roane County at a State Farmland Protection training meeting at Canaan Valley Resort instead. Sam "is a Little Kanawha Conservation District

supervisor and a member of the LKRC&D, Master Gardeners for our area, and the Hill and Hollow Garden Club. I stay busy and fortunately I am in good health."

Retired district conservationist **Bill Harris** is using his free time to build a high tunnel. He plans to plant vegetables and berry bushes.

## WISCONSIN

**James Enlow, ARCSE Representative**

Email: [jjenlow@att.net](mailto:jjenlow@att.net)

The Wisconsin retirees met for lunch on October 11<sup>th</sup> at the Monona Garden Family Restaurant in Monona, WI. Pat Leavenworth was the gracious host. Those in attendance included **Pat and Phil Leavenworth, Jim and Lynnette Enlow, Current State Conservationist Angela Biggs, Jim Kaap, Keith and Dottie Behling, Bob Weihrouch, Greg Igl, Tom Thrall, Julie Wombacher, Rick Zirk, Bob Uhrig, Steve Rake, Donna DeVoe, Bill Conner, Mike and Ember Lieurance, Gene and Annemarie Nimmer, Larry Decker, Ted Manning, and Barb and Arne Janson.**

**Angela Biggs**, State Conservationist for Wisconsin, gave a presentation on current NRCS programs and activities and answered questions from the retirees. **Larry Decker**, former Area Conservationist, returned to Wisconsin from Florida for the summer. The group enjoyed the meal and fellowship. The next luncheon will be held in February 2019 at a site to be announced later.



DEADLINE FOR  
JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2019  
NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS IS DECEMBER 25<sup>TH</sup>, 2018

**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. Just one to report this newsletter.*

Eldon C. Weber

Ames, IA

## OBITUARY INFORMATION

**Ron Marlow, Secretary-Treasurer**

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

Surname

## In Memoriam

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

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>Addison</b>     | Honorary Life Member and Senior Conservationist <b>Albert "Bob" Clyde Addison</b> (100) of Portal, Arizona passed away in Tucson on December 21, 2017. After serving as a State Conservationist for the USDA Soil Conservation Service, Bob retired in 1977 as the Director of the Northeast National Technical Center.   |
| <b>Belcher</b>     | <b>Juanita Colleen Belcher</b> (74) of Pratt, Kansas passed away on September 24, 2018 at Kansas Heart Hospital, Wichita, Kansas. Juanita was born in Macksville, Kansas. After she graduated from Kinsley High School in 1962, she attended Fort Hays State University where she was awarded a Degree in General Science and diploma in nursing in 1966. She went on to complete a Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing. On August 7, 1966 she was united in marriage to <b>Larry D. Belcher</b> in Kinsley, Kansas. <b>Larry</b> retired as the District Conservationist for the Soil Conservation Service in the Pratt Field Office. They shared over fifty-two years of marriage. To this union two children were born, <b>Amy</b> and <b>Julie</b> . Juanita was active in Pratt's Pilot Club, United Methodist Church prayer group, and the United Methodist Women. Memorials may be made to Pratt Pilot Club or First United Methodist Church in care of Larrison Mortuary.   |
| <b>Benson</b>      | <b>Bradley T. Benson</b> (59) of Bismarck, North Dakota passed away on September 3, 2018, after a long battle with cancer. He served in the Navy as a missile assemblyman from 1981 to 1987. He worked as a geological engineer for the North Dakota State Water Commission and later NRCS in Bismarck, ND. Surviving to honor and remember his love are his mother, <b>Evelyn Fay Benson</b> ; wife, <b>Leann Benson</b> ; daughter, <b>Ashly Benson</b> ; stepchildren, <b>Lindsay (Jeremy) Nordeen</b> , <b>Sarah Tschider</b> , <b>Matthew (Nicole) Tschider</b> ; four grandchildren; two sisters, and three brothers. He was preceded in death by his father and a beloved niece.   |
| <b>Carr</b>        | <b>John Paul Carr</b> (77) of New Martinsville, West Virginia passed away peacefully at his home on October 6, 2018 while surrounded by his family. John was born in Gassaway, Braxton County, WV. He was a retired Resource Conservation and Development Coordinator for the USDA Soil Conservation Service, former Vo-Ag, FFA teacher and shop teacher at his home school in Sand Fork, WV, graduate of WVU, past member of New Martinsville Lion's club, one of the founders of Hundred Area Pride, and counselor for Conservation Camp at Cowen, WV for many years. John enjoyed gardening, hunting, fishing, spending time with his family and reading the bible. He was a member of First Baptist Church where he had served as a deacon. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by four brothers and an infant grandson. Surviving are his wife of 55 years, <b>Jean (Freed) Carr</b> ; son, <b>Tracy Paul (Robin Neff) Carr</b> of Middlebourne, WV; daughter, <b>Christina Dawn (Tony) Tharp</b> of New Martinsville, WV; a brother, four sisters, and seven grandchildren, and several nieces, nephews and cousins. Memorial contributions may be made in John's name, to First Baptist Church, 841 Fourth St., New Martinsville, WV 26155, or WV State Conservation Camp, 4290 Greenwalt Gap Rd., Upper Tract, WV 26866.                   |
| <b>Cuthbertson</b> | Life Member and Senior Conservationist <b>Ida Cuthbertson</b> (89) of Springfield, Virginia (formerly of Sarasota, Florida) passed away on September 1, 2018. Born in Cleveland, Ohio, Ida graduated from The Ohio State University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in economics in 1961 and from Virginia Tech with a Master in Urban Affairs in 1974. She served as a community planner for the Soil Conservation Service and retired in 1993 after serving for 12 years as its Public Participation Coordinator. Earlier in her career she was a statistician with the Ohio Department of Health and also worked for SW Michigan Hospital Council and the Research Analysis Corp. Ida served as the Association of Retired Conservation Service Employees Vice President for the South from 2006 to 2012. Her hobbies were fitness, choral singing, and traveling (seven continents and 50 states), her most memorable trip being a visit to her father's birthplace, Reinhart (Osinovka), Russia, just east of the Volga River in Samara Province. She is survived by her daughter <b>Becky</b> , son <b>James</b> , other family members, and friends.  |
| <b>Fitzgerald</b>  | Honorary Life Member and Senior Conservationist <b>Warren Fitzgerald</b> (95) of Sun City, Arizona passed away on September 3, 2018. He was born in Manitowoc, WI. He was raised on a farm in Manitowoc County in the community of Osman. He graduated from the University of Wisconsin in 1949 with a Degree in Agriculture. He worked with the Soil Conservation Service for 33 years, retiring as State Conservationist for Illinois in 1982. He previously worked for SCS in Michigan and New Jersey before going to Illinois. Warren served in the 11th Armored Division under General Patton in WW II, was wounded in the Battle of the Bulge and was awarded the Purple Heart. He and his wife, <b>Rita</b> , moved to Sun City in 1988. They were avid golfers for many years, and Warren golfed in the Willowbrook Men's League. He is survived by his wife of 69 years, Rita; two sons, <b>Mark (Sharon)</b> , Urbana, IL and <b>Scott</b> , Overland Park, KS; and a daughter, <b>Ann</b> , Glendale, AZ. He is also survived by six grandchildren. Interment was at National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to the St. Vincent de Paul Society <a href="http://www.st.vincentdepaul.net">www.st.vincentdepaul.net</a> or to Hospice of the Valley <a href="http://www.hov.org">www.hov.org</a> |
| <b>Geiger</b>      | Honorary Life Member <b>Alfonso (Al, Fonce) F. Geiger</b> (93) of Silver Spring, Maryland passed away peacefully on September 15, 2018, at his home in the Riderwood community. He was born on his family's farm in Saranac, Michigan, the fifth child of eight to German immigrants August and Emma Geiger. After serving in the U.S. Navy during WW II, he graduated from the University of Michigan with a degree in Geological Engineering. His job as a geologist for the Department of Agriculture first brought the young Geiger family to Greenbelt in 1957, where he lived for 49 years. He retired as the National Geologist for the Soil Conservation Service in 1980. He was a professor of geology at George Washington University until his retirement. He was a gifted gardener, carpenter, boat builder and game player who enjoyed making a competition out of any activity. He is   |

preceded in death by his wife, **Mary Agnes**, and son **Paul Allen**. He is survived by his second wife **Ellie Friend**, his sisters **Arlene** and **Shirley**, his children **Maureen, Patricia, Kathleen, Thomas** and **Ellen**, their spouses **Kate, Ted, Mark** and **Patty** as well as his 10 grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

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| <b>Gerdes</b>  | <b>Robert "Bob" N. Gerdes</b> (90) of Salina, Kansas passed away August 21, 2018. He was born in Amorita, Okla., and graduated from Amorita High School. Bob joined the United States Navy as did so many young men in those years. He had 11 brothers and sisters. All but his sister, <b>Mary</b> , have preceded him. Bob and <b>Dorothy</b> were Charter Members of Christ the King Lutheran Church and were very active there. Bob married <b>Dorothy Maltbie</b> of Amorita, May 28, 1947. They have been married 71 years. They have three children, four grandchildren, three step-grandchildren; and 16 great-grandchildren. <b>Dorothy J. Gerdes</b> served as a Personnel Management Specialist in the SCS Kansas State Office. Memorials are suggested to: Christ the King Lutheran Church, Sunflower Lions, or the Municipal Golf Course, in care of Ryan Mortuary, Salina. For more information or to leave condolences: <a href="http://www.ryanmortuary.com">www.ryanmortuary.com</a> .  |
| <b>Haas</b>    | Senior Conservationist and Honorary Member <b>Joseph W. Haas</b> (87) of Winchester, Virginia passed away on September 8, 2018. He was born in Danville, IL, and was the youngest of six boys. He spent his formative years living and working on various farms in and around Rossville, IL. He met his wife, <b>Lavona (Green) Haas</b> , on the high school bus in 1948 and graduated from Rossville High School in 1949. They married on June 14, 1953 and were married for 61 years until Lavona's passing in 2014. They had one daughter, <b>Cindy</b> , in 1957. Joe received a bachelor's degree in Agricultural Engineering from the University of Illinois in 1953. Soon thereafter, he was drafted into the Army and spent two years serving our country. He got a job as an Agricultural Engineer with watershed project responsibilities with the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) in Edwardsville, IL in 1955. Various promotions sent him to other Illinois locations, and in 1963 he was offered a fellowship to study Public Administration at Stanford University. While there, he also received a Master's degree in Civil Engineering. He returned to Illinois in 1964 as the State Engineer for SCS. A few years later he was promoted to Assistant State Conservationist in Harrisburg, PA. Only two years later, he was promoted to the Assistant Director of Watershed Planning at the National Headquarters for SCS in Washington, D.C. where he held many responsible positions on his way up to the number two position of Associate Chief of the agency and retired in 1988. He is survived by his daughter, <b>Cindy Siler</b> , of Round Hill, VA; a granddaughter, a grandson, one brother as well as numerous nieces and nephews. Memorial contributions may be given to the Alzheimer's Foundation of America, 322 8 <sup>th</sup> Avenue, 7 <sup>th</sup> Floor, New York, NY 10001. |
| <b>Hartman</b> | <b>Ralph Lawrence Hartman</b> (89) of Keyser, West Virginia passed away on October 9, 2018 at his residence. He was born at home in Junction, WV. Besides his parents, Ralph was preceded in death by his wife of 63 years, <b>Pearl Mae Hartman</b> (d. January 15, 2014), four brothers, and two sisters. Ralph is survived by three daughters; <b>Linda Mallow</b> of Elkins, <b>Jean Harman</b> and husband <b>Dr. Steven of Eckhart</b> , MD, and <b>Joan Hartman</b> of New Creek, one brother, one sister, seven grandchildren as well as ten great grandchildren. Ralph's career(s) were several; he was in the U.S. Army for 20 years, then worked as a surveyor for 20 years for the USDA Soil Conservation Service, and the final 20 years of his working career were spent at the family operated "The Can Do Construction Company" in Keyser. He was a charter member of the Chapter 9 Disabled American Veterans, a member of the Calvary United Methodist Church, a longtime member of the Mill Creek Ruritan, a lifetime member of the Disabled American Veterans and was instrumental in the establishment of the National Veteran's Cemetery in Grafton, WV. In lieu of flowers, please make memorial contributions in Ralph's name to: Calvary United Methodist Church, 233 South Mineral St., Keyser, WV 26726   |
| <b>Hunter</b>  | <b>Judith Wood Hunter</b> (73) of Orrington, Maine passed away peacefully on August 20th, 2018, surrounded by her loving family. She was predeceased by her best friend and sister, <b>Janet York</b> , and her brother, <b>Dr. Charles Larracey</b> . She lived most of her life in Orrington and was a proud member of the Brewer High School Class of 1962. Judy married the love of her life, <b>Richard Hunter</b> , in 2002. Dick was the long-time computer specialist in the State Office of NRCS in Orono. They had a marriage that all would admire. She leaves behind her three children, <b>Mark Hunter, Todd Hunter, and Jill Hunter</b> , her adoring six grandchildren, and a brother. A fund has been created to honor and continue what she loved doing, helping kittens find forever homes. Judy's Kitties, started by the Pixel fund, will continue her passion for many years to come. Donations can be made online at <a href="http://www.thepixelfund.org">www.thepixelfund.org</a> or checks can be made to the Pixel Fund and mailed to Karen Wood, 11 Abby's Way, Orrington, ME 04474.  |
| <b>Konopka</b> | <b>Paul Edward Konopka</b> (62) of Mechanicsville, New York, formerly of North Adams, passed away on September 20, 2018, at the Saratoga Center for Rehabilitation in Ballston Spa, NY. He was born in North Adams and attended schools in North Adams and graduated from Drury High School. He then attended Berkshire Community College, Pittsfield and received his Bachelors in Environmental Science from the University of New Hampshire. Paul worked as a soil scientist for the United States Government in Maine, New Hampshire, and New York. Besides his parents <b>Edward</b> and <b>Dorothy (Kluza) Konopka</b> of North Adams, he is survived by two brothers, <b>William Konopka</b> of Nashua, NH and <b>John Konopka</b> of Stamford, VT; one sister, <b>Mary Ellen Deming</b> of Ashley Falls, MA; two nephews, and a niece. To leave a message of condolences, please go online to <a href="http://www.paciorekfuneral.com">www.paciorekfuneral.com</a> .   |
| <b>Land</b>    | <b>Jack Dwain Land</b> (81) of Portland, Oregon passed away on September 23, 2018. He was born in Hastings, Nebraska. Jack attended Parkrose High School in Portland and later graduated. After graduation he enlisted with a buddy in the Air Force. He spent part of his career in Africa, Spain and Texas. He also served two tours in Vietnam. He left the service for a short time and later joined the Air National Guard. Later his daughter, <b>Kathleen</b> and son, <b>Robert</b> followed in his footsteps joining The Air National Guard. He served 23 years in the Military and 30 years in the Federal Service. Jack was a draftsman for the Soil Conservation Service at the West National Technical Center. Jack's passions included fishing, cooking, storytelling and dogs. Jack is survived by his sister; <b>Sylvia Turner</b> , son: <b>Robert Land</b> , daughters: <b>Renee Land and Jackie Dove</b> , Stepdaughters: <b>Terrie, Vickie, Kathy and Sherrie</b> , 19 grandchildren and 22 great grandchildren.   |
| <b>Mullen</b>  | <b>Glen Leon Mullen</b> (93) of Bethany, Oklahoma passed away on September 16, 2018. He was born on a farm in Lincoln County, nine miles north of Chandler, OK. He was a lifelong member of the Evangelical Friends Church and attended Chandler High School. He worked on the family farm with his father until he joined the army in 1943. He served during World War II in the European theater as a light machine gunner. He was discharged in 1945 as Private First Class in the Army of Occupation. He was a Purple Heart recipient. Glen married <b>Eunice Lorene Whiteman</b> on September 5, 1948. Glen attended Oklahoma A&M College and earned a degree in Agronomy in 1950. He was a member of the national and international award-winning crop judging team while in college. Upon graduation he worked as a soil conservationist for the USDA. He retired from the Soil   |

Conservation Service in 1981 as an area conservationist after working 30 years in Kansas and Oklahoma. Upon retirement he moved back to his family farm in Lincoln County, OK, and built a new home on the exact location of his grandparents' homestead. He volunteered with Friends Disaster Relief after national and international natural disasters. He is survived by his wife of 70 years, **Eunice**, his children **Stan (Marsha) Mullen**, **Carolyn (Jim) Luthye**, **Scott (Suzanne) Mullen**, and **Marilyn (Phil) Shipman**, grandchildren, and his great grandchildren.

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| <b>Pilgrim</b> | <p><b>Sidney A.L. Pilgrim</b> (84) of Mill Road, New Hampshire passed away on October 20, 2018 at the Dover Center for Health &amp; Rehabilitation. He was born in Berlin, NH. He had been a resident of Durham since 1964. He was the widower of <b>Faith (Martin) Pilgrim</b>, who died in June 1995. Sidney worked 32 years with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, as a soil scientist. He graduated from the University of New Hampshire with a degree in Agronomy in 1955. He was also a member of the UNH ski team. His soil scientist career began in Woodsville, NH. He worked in Indiana from 1961 to 1964, returning to Durham as the State Soil Scientist for New Hampshire. He retired from the USDA in 1989. He was appointed as an Adjunct Professor of Soil Science at the University of New Hampshire in 1979. He loved this second career, teaching Soil Science and Wetland Science until his retirement in 2015. At UNH he taught for the Department of Natural Resources, the Division of Continuing Education and the College for Life Long Learning. He also taught at Antioch College in Keene. He served in the US Army from 1956 to 1958 and with the New Hampshire Army National Guard in Woodsville. Family members include a son, <b>Paul Pilgrim</b> and a daughter, <b>Kelly Pilgrim</b> of Durham, a sister, three brothers, and several nieces and nephews. To sign our online guestbook, please go to <a href="http://www.purdyfuneralservice.com">www.purdyfuneralservice.com</a>. Donations may be made in his name to: New Hampshire Food Bank, 700 East Industrial Park Drive, Manchester, NH 03109.</p> |
| <b>Richard</b> | <p>Life Member <b>Gerald Lawrence Richard</b> (86) of Spokane, Washington passed away August 27, 2018 surrounded by his family just as he wanted. Jerry was born in Brush, Colorado. He attended grade school and high school in Brush, Colorado and then attended Colorado State University and Iowa State University with degrees in Agronomy and a minor in Soil Science. He married <b>Phyllis Hansen</b> in 1952 and they were happily married with four children for 65 years. Jerry and Phyllis resided in many states and overseas related to his work, some 17 moves in all. In his professional world, Jerry was proud of working overseas on a USAID project in the Helmand River irrigation project of Afghanistan and then as a team leader of the Resource Conservation and Utilization Project in Nepal. He then went on to become the State Soil Scientist in Boise, Idaho before retiring in 1989 and returning to Spokane with family. Jerry served ARCSE for 10 years as the Vice President for the West and for 23 years as the Washington State Representative. Jerry loved to travel, camp, fish, hunt, read, tinker with and fix anything, golf, play bridge and work with wood; inspiring these things in his family as well. Jerry is a member of the Manito United Methodist Church. He was preceded in death by his parents and his wife. He is survived by his two sons, <b>Don (Valerie) Richard</b>, and <b>Dale (Rashel) Richard</b>, his two daughters, <b>Lori (James) Fosmire</b> and <b>Julie (Cole) Young</b>, two brothers, six grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren and numerous other family and friends.</p>                   |
| <b>Skiles</b>  | <p>Member <b>Mervin "Merv" Samuel Skiles</b> (80) of Pickerington, Ohio passed away on October 24, 2018, at Mount Carmel East Hospital in Columbus. Born in Narvon, PA, Merv was 1956 graduate of Pequea Valley High School and a 1961 graduate of Penn State University. He worked for the USDA Soil Conservation Service for 37 years, retiring in 1995 as the State Resource Conservationist, and the Licking County Conservation District for 13 years. Merv was a longtime and very active member of Peace United Methodist Church in Pickerington. He is survived by his children, <b>M. Todd (Melanie) Skiles</b>, <b>Scott A. Skiles</b>, and <b>Jan (Dr. William) Stehle</b>; three grandchildren and a brother. Merv was preceded in death by his wife, <b>Betty Skiles</b>, in 2016 after 55 years of marriage. Donations can be made in Merv's memory to the Pickerington Police Department K-9 Unit, 1311 Refugee Rd., Pickerington, OH 43147 or Peace United Methodist Church. Online condolences at <a href="http://www.spencefuneralhome.com">www.spencefuneralhome.com</a>.</p>   |
| <b>Smoak</b>   | <p><b>Thomas Gilbert "Tommy" Smoak III</b> (65) of Barnwell, South Carolina passed away on October 9, 2018 at the Palmetto Health Baptist Hospital. Tommy was born in Bamberg County. He was a retired Soil Conservation Technician with the Natural Resources Conservation Service who worked primarily in Barnwell County during his 36 year career but also assisted in Allendale and Bamberg counties. He was a member of the Reedy Branch Baptist Church where he served as a Deacon and worked with the youth by cooking for them every Wednesday. Survivors include his loving wife, <b>Debra Pearson Smoak</b> of Barnwell; sons, <b>Derek (Pam) Dyches</b> and <b>Jamie Dyches</b> of Barnwell; a sister, a brother-in-law, and two grandchildren. He was predeceased by a sister and a brother. In lieu of flowers memorials may be made to the Reedy Branch Baptist Church or the American Cancer Society.</p>  |
| <b>Spaeth</b>  | <p><b>Jerome H. Spaeth</b> (92) of Fargo, North Dakota passed away on August 22, 2018. He served in the Army where he was trained as a tail gunner on B-29 bombers. He worked for the SCS in Valley City, ND and later Bismarck, ND as the Hydrologist and retired to Fargo, ND. He is survived by his children, <b>Kitty (Tom) Teigen</b>, <b>Becky (Mike) Shaheen</b>, <b>Janice Spaeth</b>, <b>Bonnie (Ken) Bremer</b>, <b>Laurie (Ted) Schepper</b>, <b>Paul (Kelly) Sid</b>, <b>Nancy (Robin) Gentry</b>, <b>Patrick (Laurel)</b>, daughter-in-law <b>Cindy Spaeth</b>, 27 grandchildren and 21 great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife, <b>Betty</b>, his son <b>Nicholas</b>, and great-grandson <b>Bentley Horner</b>.</p>   |
| <b>Tober</b>   | <p><b>Dwight A. Tober</b> (66) West Fargo, North Dakota, formerly Bismarck, ND, passed away on November 27, 2017, in his home under the care of Hospice of the Red River Valley. He worked as a range conservationist at Pierre, SD, then the Plant Materials Center in Bismarck, ND for 20 years (14 years as Manager) then as a plant materials specialist for ND, SD, and MN, retiring from NRCS in 2011. He is survived by his wife, <b>Loa</b>, West Fargo, ND; daughter <b>Erica (Chris) McCray</b>; son <b>Brian (Jenny Roper) Risch</b>; three grandchildren; one brother; two sisters; three sisters-in-law; and two brothers-in-law. He was preceded in death by his parents.</p>  |
| <b>Yates</b>   | <p><b>Sanford E. Yates</b> (82) of Nehalem, Oregon passed away August 19, 2018 from complications with Parkinson Disease. Sey, as he was also known, worked as an Engineering Technician for the Soil Conservation Service in the West E&amp;WP Unit Soil Testing Laboratory and also in the WNTC Engineering Staff from the early 1960's until the late 1980's. He later retired from the US Forest Service in 1996. Following his retirement, Sanford and his wife <b>Alice</b> moved from Portland to Nehalem. He is survived by wife Alice and sons <b>Dennis</b> and <b>Tom</b>.</p>  |
| <b>Ziegler</b> | <p><b>Carol Ziegler</b> (61) Bismarck, North Dakota, formerly of Beach, ND, passed away on April 23, 2017 in a Bismarck Care Center. She worked for SCS/NRCS at numerous locations throughout North Dakota for 29 years, retiring in Feb. 2016. Carol is survived by her four siblings, <b>Diane (Dean) Easton</b>, <b>Dale (Judy) Ziegler</b>, <b>Linda Mees</b>, and <b>Rita (Dana) Wright</b>.</p>  |