

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

President-Elect
Cheryl K. Simmons
9779 Eagle Mountain Dam
Road
Fort Worth, TX 76135
817-542-2725
cksoil@aol.com

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

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

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

WEST
Bill Ward
3029 Nikol Street
Sacramento, CA 95826
916-769-0280
bluegrassbillward@gmail.com

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

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

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

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

Webmaster
VACANT

Notes From the Potomac
VACANT

Senior Conservationist Chronicler
Marc Saifley
11975 William and Mary Circle,
Woodbridge, VA 22192
(703) 494-8074
jsaifley1@verizon.net



NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter for Retired SCS and NRCS Employees

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NOTES FROM THE POTOMAC

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

2018 Annuity Cost of Living Adjustment—About two-thirds of the 2.1 million Federal retirees are in the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS), and they will see their annuity increased by 2% in January, the largest increase since 2012. In addition, retirees covered by the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) should see their civil service component and their social security component both increase by 2%.

In related news, the Mid-Year Medicare Trustees Report projects that Part B premiums will not increase in 2018 and 2019. However, the average Federal Employees Health Benefit premium for 2018 will increase by 6.1%. The President has set the default raise for Federal workers at 1.9%, which will go into effect unless Congress takes action.

2018 Continuing Resolution—Happy Fiscal Year 2018. In September, the Congress approved and the President signed a fiscal year 2018 continuing resolution which funds the government through December 8th, 2017 and provides emergency funding for hurricanes Harvey and Irma (\$15.25 billion). The bill also temporarily suspended the debt limit through December 8th, 2017.

2018 Appropriations—As reported in August, the House and Senate appropriations committees approved their respective 2018 Agricultural Appropriations bills in July, but the bills have not reached the floor and will not until the 2018 budget resolution is passed, and budget allocations are made to the appropriations committees. Both bills reflect a strong commitment to conservation.

2018 Budget Resolution—There is one very important thing to remember with respect to budget resolutions: they are not laws; they are not signed by the president. Consequently, any specific statements in the budget resolution about program spending are not to be taken as a given. The budget committees do not have the jurisdiction to make such decisions. The authority for program funding decisions, and even determining the spending cap for each of the 13 appropriations committees, falls under the jurisdiction of the appropriations committees.

Congressional Republicans are keen on passing the 2018 budget resolution because of their interest in passing a tax reform bill, which—not to be too cynical—is linked to the 2018 mid-term elections (hence the urgency). With the budget resolution they can then make tax reform part of budget reconciliation which means the Senate will require only 51 votes to pass the tax reform bill, instead of the 60 votes that would be required under normal Senate rules.

Here's where we stand near the end of October 2018: The House and the Senate have passed their own versions of the 2018 budget resolution, but there are several important differences. The big difference is how the tax cut in the tax reform bill will be paid for. The Senate budget pays for the tax cut by adding up to \$1.5 trillion to the federal deficit. In contrast, the House's plan would require the tax reform bill to be deficit-neutral and would force Congress to find more than \$200 billion in savings from changes to mandatory programs like Social Security and Medicare. Senate Republicans and the President view cutting Social Security and Medicare as a self-inflicted political wound. Since the clock is ticking, House Republicans made a major concession to the Senate and have agreed to drop their more fiscally conservative bill and instead vote on October 25th to formally back the Senate's budget resolution.

Farm Bill—As mentioned above, the House has agreed to approve the Senate version of the 2018 budget resolution. This is good news for the farm bill because the Senate-passed budget resolution, unlike a version the House approved earlier this month, does not require cuts in agriculture spending.

See Page 5 for Instructions Concerning Payment of 2018 Dues and Payment of Additional Fees for Printed Copy of the Newsletter.

ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED CONSERVATION SERVICE EMPLOYEES

Farmers and ranchers would like to see a new farm bill "sooner rather than later," said Kansas Senator **Pat Roberts**, but he is still in the process of listening to members and various interest groups, while waiting for final budget numbers. The chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry says formal work on a new bill can begin sometime after those efforts are complete. The current bill expires on Sept. 30th, 2018.

As they prepare to write a new farm bill, the House and Senate Agriculture committees are sorting through dozens of requests for increased funding across every title, and lawmakers have no new sources of money to fill the demands. The demands include the billions in new commodity-program spending requested by dairy, cotton and other crops, as well as requests for hundreds of millions of dollars in funding for conservation programs and agricultural research. A single proposal, to increase the cap on the Conservation Reserve Program, would cost up to \$500 million a year if the limit were raised to 30 million acres from the current 24 million. Groups also are asking Congress to continue and even increase funding for many of the 37 expiring programs in the 2014 farm bill that have no funding, or "baseline," beyond 2018. The expiring programs alone received more than \$2.6 billion under the 2014 farm bill. House Agriculture Chairman **Mike Conaway** (R-TX) said after a recent farm bill field listening session, "There was not one speaker who requested a cut in a program."

There are two major sets of proposals before the Agriculture committees, one of them from a coalition of environmental groups that includes Defenders of Wildlife, Environmental Defense Fund, Natural Resources Defense Council, the World Wildlife Fund, the National Farmers Union and National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition. This coalition wants funding for conservation programs increased, but it has not requested specific funding levels. Among their proposals:

- Raise by an unspecified amount the 24-million-acre limit on the Conservation Reserve Program.
- Increase the payment rate for the Conservation Stewardship Program.
- Preserve the conservation compliance linkage to crop insurance as well as conservation and farm programs and mandate a 5-percent spot check rate for each state to ensure farmers are following the requirements. The farm bill should also mandate the collection and public reporting of aggregated data on determinations of wetlands and highly erodible land and acres that are out of compliance.

The second set of proposals is from a coalition that includes sportsmen's groups as well as the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and The Nature Conservancy. Among that coalition's proposals:

- Increase the CRP cap to 35 million acres. Raising the cap to 30 million acres would cost nearly \$3.3 billion over 10 years.
- Fund the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program at \$500 million a year. Funding for the program is dropping to \$250 million in 2018.

In addition, the Senate Ag committee's ranking member, **Sen. Debbie Stabenow**, is working on a bipartisan effort to increase resources for the Regional Conservation Partnership Program.

One potential source of new money for the farm bill is to require farmers to update their crop base acreage, which determines what they receive in commodity payments, but the idea would face significant political challenges. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that a mandatory base update would save about \$470 million over the next 10 years.

USDA Reorganization—USDA is reporting that while creating the Farm Production and Conservation mission area, it became apparent that across USDA there are redundancies and inefficiencies in the mission support activities such as information systems, human resources, and procurement. Consequently, the Secretary is consolidating agency support functions at the Mission level. As a result of the consolidation, agencies will no longer have direct control over support functions.

People—During the first week of October, the Senate Agriculture Committee approved the first two Agriculture Department nominees since **Secretary Sonny Perdue** took office in April. **Steve Censky**, the CEO of the American Soybean Association, was approved to be the USDA Deputy Secretary. The committee also approved the nomination of Indiana Agriculture Director **Ted McKinney** to become the department's first Undersecretary for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs.

During the week of October 23rd, 2017, the full Senate is expected to approve the nominations of Iowa Agriculture Secretary **Bill Northey** and Nebraska Agriculture Director **Greg Ibach** as USDA undersecretaries. The Senate Agriculture Committee approved both nominations last week. Northey will serve as Undersecretary for Farm Production and Conservation, which oversees the Natural Resources Conservation Service, as well as the Farm Service Agency and the Risk Management Agency. One would expect that once Northey is on-board, we will see increased activity related to appointment of a new NRCS chief.

Jim Gulliford is returning to the EPA as Region 7 Administrator, which covers Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska. Gulliford was the Executive Director of the Soil and Water Conservation Society from 2009-2016.

The Center for Behavioral and Experimental Agri-Environmental Research recently honored **Jeremy Peters**, CEO of the National Association of Conservation Districts, with its 2017 prize for Agri-Environmental Innovation.

Waters of the United States Rule—The Supreme Court appears to be poised to allow challenges to the "waters of the U.S." rule to proceed in federal district courts, as sought by dozens of farm groups. We should have a ruling by spring.

USDA Surveys—A National Academy of Sciences report found that USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) needs an array of updated and alternative tools, as well as new statistical models to reduce farmer survey burdens, improve accuracy, and enhance farm policy making. Given NRCS's data collection role, there may be implications for its data collection activities. The report argues that the emergence of remote sensing tools, precision agriculture data collected by farmers, data collection by other agencies, and data collected by businesses could be used to augment NASS surveys.

Guest Workers—House Judiciary Chairman **Bob Goodlatte** (R-VA), is planning to move a bill to replace the H-2A farmworker visa program after overhauling the legislation to address concerns of **Steve King** (R-IA) and other immigration hard-liners. In addition to this bill, Goodlatte's committee will vote on separate legislation that would require all employers to use the E-Verify system to check the legal status of hires.

NAFTA—At the end of the 4th round of North American Free Trade Agreement renegotiations, U.S. Trade Representative **Robert Lighthizer** said, "Frankly, I am surprised and disappointed by the resistance to change from our negotiating partners from both countries." Lighthizer also said that a deal would not be reached this year, as was earlier hoped. Instead, he said there will be one more round of talks in November, in Mexico City, with the goal of finishing a new agreement by the end of March 2018.

The Farm Economy and Crop Insurance—Critics of crop insurance are laying the groundwork for amendments to the next farm bill that could slash premium subsidies as well as support for the insurance industry. At the core of their argument is evidence that the farm economy has recovered. "At worse, we're average, and at best, we're above average if we're the agricultural sector," economist **Vince Smith**, a visiting scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, said at an October 4th meeting of about two dozen groups that are working on a strategy for the farm bill debate. Net cash farm income, a measure of farm cash flow, is expected to reach \$100.4 billion in 2017, an increase of nearly 13 percent over last year and close to the 2000-2016 average when adjusted for inflation, according to USDA. However, the same data show that farm income is down sharply from 2011-2014, the period when the current farm bill was written.

Joe Glauber, former chief economist for the Agriculture Department, presented data at a separate forum showing that many agricultural sectors are actually doing better this year than in 2016. Farm business income is up 40 percent for dairy producers, 35 percent for hogs, 29 percent for cotton, 14 percent for cattle, and 12 percent for wheat. Income on corn and soybeans is flat, he said.

Glauber, Smith, and Barry Goodwin of North Carolina State University have coauthored a report that calls for replacing the crop insurance program with a simpler disaster-assistance program that would compensate farmers for crop losses, with payments triggered according to indexes for plant growth. Their report claims the current crop insurance program "encourages farmers to waste resources" and disproportionately benefits large, successful operations that don't need the assistance.

Sage Grouse—The Interior Department will be reviewing protections for the greater sage-grouse in land-use plans for 10 western states, part of **Secretary Ryan Zinke's** effort to allow for more energy development in the bird's habitat.

Tax Reform—Two of the components of the President's tax reform proposal are likely to affect farmers and ranchers. The tax proposal calls for capping the tax rate for small businesses, including partnerships, sole proprietorships and S corporations, at 25 percent. Such pass-through entities are currently taxed at "individual" income tax rates, which range from 10 percent to 39.6 percent. Most farms are organized as partnerships and sole proprietorships. The proposal also eliminates the estate tax. Farmers are often used as a group that would benefit from elimination of the estate tax. However, USDA's Economic Research Service estimated that 663 farm estates, representing 1.7 percent of total estates, would have been required to file an estate-tax return in 2016. Of those, 161 farm estates would likely have owed taxes. The current exemption for a couple is \$11 million.

Precision Ag—Over the last few decades, U.S. farmers have made great strides in conserving soil and enhancing water quality, but there's a growing awareness that more can be done, especially with respect to water quality. At the same time, there's a realization that federal funding to assist in this effort may be shrinking, rather than growing. A new white paper, "Heartland Waters Initiative, Advancing Precision Conservation in Agriculture" argues that using science and technology, like yield monitors and GPS equipment, to more precisely focus conservation investments where they can generate the greatest economic environmental bang for the buck. The report states, "We should move beyond government subsidies and enable large-scale investments from multiple sectors. Permit holders outside of agriculture, such as wastewater treatment facilities or industry can meet environmental performance requirements at a lower cost." The report proposes a revolving "agricultural conservation fund" to be authorized through the farm bill. Other recommendations include: countercyclical payments and crop insurance premium reductions to participating producers, improved water management practices, creation of a targeted conservation investment grant programs with states, more research on performance outcomes, and outreach to renters and non-operating landlords.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dana York

January 3rd Almost Here

How many of you retired on January 3rd in order to get your first payment within your first month of retirement? Federal Employees have to retire by the 3rd of each month. Many wait until January 3rd because of the tax advantages. With that in mind, why not take the opportunity to invite a new retiree to join ARCSE? You can go to the Association website, arcse.org, and download an Application for Membership and take it to their retirement party! REMEMBER the first year is FREE!

While we are thinking of the New Year, remember:

- Membership Renewal is just \$18
- You can be an Affiliate Member even before your retire for just \$18.
- You can also consider making just one payment and become a Life Time Member (\$250 for those who are 64 or younger, and less for those who over 64!).
- You can make an end-of-year donation to ARCES to help us defray the cost of our Newsletter.

So as the Holidays approach, I hope you have had a great year and looking forward to 2018! Invite a new (or old) retiree to join ARCSE. Enjoy the season! Dana

Editor's Note: ARCSE is looking for a new webmaster to help maintain the Association's Website! The amount of time is fairly minimal, but if you are interested please contact Dana York at dyork818@yahoo.com or call her at 410-708-6794! Your service would be greatly appreciated!

A BIT OF HISTORY

Douglas Helms, Historian

Email: douglas_helms@verizon.net

SCS and World War II Preparedness

Recently I received an email asking for help determining the location of an SCS-supervised CCC camp. There was a possibility, though unconfirmed, that the camp had been located on a military base. This request prompted me to write this history item about the Soil Conservation Service's contribution to the war effort during World War II.

In July 1940, 17 months before Pearl Harbor, SCS signed an agreement with the Secretary of War to assist in acquiring land for military bases. SCS signed a similar agreement with the Navy in February 1942. SCS transferred thousands of acres of land acquired in the Land Utilization Program to the military for bases. SCS's Land Acquisition Division also helped the military acquire additional lands.

SCS staff, primarily agronomists and engineers, prepared erosion control and revegetation plans for 185 Army cantonments, forts, air bases, and other Army units. After Pearl Harbor, SCS transferred CCC camps to work on military bases and closed the remaining camps, since many of the enrollees were entering the military service. The SCS camp designation was changed to ASCS, meaning Army-Soil Conservation Service. There were a couple of NSCS camps, meaning Navy-Soil Conservation Service. Much of the engineering and agronomic work was accomplished by April 1, 1942, by soldiers, WPA workers and CCC enrollees. In Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas and Louisiana alone, 100 SCS technicians were working and supervising the work of enrollees of 14 CCC camps. In 1942 SCS nurseries supplied seed and 20,000,000 trees and plants for plantings on bases.

SCS released its Chief Agronomist, **Charles R. Enlow**, to the U. S. Army Engineers to direct the technical work of seeding airfields and developing conservation on bases. Among other things, he worked with the military services on camouflage problems.

As one example of this assistance to the military, Camp ASCS-2, Camp Croft, worked on the Army base in Spartanburg County, South Carolina, from February 2 to July 17, 1942. After World War II the base was converted to Croft State Park.

SOUTH CAROLINA - Spartanburg County, Spartanburg (Camp Croft)	
ASCS-2	Revised Eighteenth Period Program (National Defense) Fourth Congressional District. - J. R. Bryson (D)
	Date of Occupancy:
	Company No. 2413 Veteran White
	Field Work Started: February 2, 1942
	Approved for Nineteenth Camp Period in place.
	Liquidation: Field work ceased: July 17, 1942
	Camp discontinued: July 18, 1942



Correction: Unfortunately, the Memoriam section of the September/October newsletter incorrectly stated that Pat Champeon of Glenburn, Maine had Alzheimer's disease. Pat died after a long battle with Progressive Supranuclear Palsy (PSP). Thank you Bruce Champeon for providing the correct information.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Ron Marlow, Secretary Treasurer

New Honorary Members

The following 16 members of ARCSE have celebrated or will be celebrating their 91st birthdays by the end of 2017. With this milestone, each of these members becomes an Honorary Member. As an Honorary Member, no dues are required for calendar year 2018 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
Robert W	Belcher	FL
Eleanor	Bogner	MD
William J	Brune	MN
Arlie F.	Culp	NC
Gerald M	Darby	VA
Jay E	Farr	IN
Olice "Ted"	Gerbaz	CA
Frank A	Griffin	MI
Eileen	Hayhurst	WV
Karl R.	Klingelhofer	AZ
Robert E	Kohnke	VA
Cecil N	Martin	GA
Charles C	McKee	IN
John H	Miner	SC
Tom H	Pointer	TN
Charles M	Thompson	TX

DUES AND ADDITIONAL FEES FOR PRINTED NEWSLETTER IN 2018

Ron Marlow, Secretary Treasurer

2018 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.

2018 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 nearly \$20.00 per member to print and distribute the printed newsletter.

2018 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 2018 dues will receive an email assuring you that your membership dues are paid.

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
<i>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</i>	

ARIZONA

Ken Cookson, ARCSE Representative

Email: ckcookson@aol.com

Karl Klingelhofer Report: Nothing to report this time except I had to cancel my trip to Cuba because of left eye surgery for glaucoma on Aug. 3rd. Recovery has been very slow. Cannot fly my airplane, play tennis, or do anything strenuous. Hopefully, I will get released by Nov. 1st.

Glen Johnson Report: It has been a good summer in North Dakota but now the days are short, cool (sometimes cold)--still some gold leaves on the trees but falling fast, so it is time to "go where the wild goose goes"--south. Crops were pretty good this year with a lot of soybeans. Health is good but need lots of pills to keep me going. Had a melanoma problem in the spring but all clear for now. That makes me thankful to have been around for another great summer.

CALIFORNIA

Bill Ward, ARCSE Representative

Email: bluegrassbillward@gmail.com

Greetings to all our fellow Retirees across the Nation! Since my last report many of you know from watching the national news that California has experienced numerous devastating wildfires. One week in early October has been called the most "devastating wildfire week" in California history. One wildfire that started in Napa County raced into Santa Rosa in four hours, killing a total of 22 people in Sonoma County. Statewide, 42 people were killed and 7,700 homes and buildings were destroyed. Current estimates of the damages exceed one billion dollars.



Deadly Santa Ana winds up to as high as 50 mph caused the fires to be uncontrollable raging infernos that consumed entire housing developments and everything in their path. The other circumstance that contributed significantly to the loss of life was the fact that some of the fires reached their peak fury in the night when many residents were asleep. Here are just a few pictures that indicate the magnitude and intensity of the fires and the damage they inflicted.



Santa Rosa Subdivision before fire



Santa Rosa Subdivision after fire

Another tragic thing to report as a result of the fires is the death of one of our own retirees, former Soil Scientist and Party leader **Roy Bowman**. Roy and his wife **Irma** perished in the home which was one of many destroyed. The following announcement of this tragic news came from **Dave Smith**, former California State Soil Scientist who shared this with many of our NRCS family

From **Dave Smith**, Former CA State Soil Scientist: "Sad news. Roy Bowman and his wife Irma died in the Redwood Valley fire in Mendocino County this week. I'm familiar with the California north coast counties—Mendocino and Lake Counties in particular because I've lived and worked there in the past—and so have been watching the status of the current major fires in the area. I found the unhappy news about Roy and Irma in the L.A. Times when I awoke this morning: <http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-in-fires-20171013-story.html>

I knew Roy to be a kind and gentle man, a dedicated soil scientist, and a good trainer. He was my first supervisor and the Soil Survey Party Leader of the Eastern Mendocino County Soil Survey Project when I started with the Soil Conservation Service as a

soil scientist intern in the spring of 1978. Roy greeted me at the office door on my first day and proceeded to give his undivided attention in welcoming and orienting me to the job, and introducing me to everyone in the building. I was a college kid who'd landed an internship not knowing what to really expect, and Roy helped me feel content that I was in the right place with the field work of soil survey. He was an experienced soils mapper who'd previously authored the San Diego County and Santa Cruz County Soil Survey Reports. Roy taught me a great deal about the science and art of soil survey during my first 2.5-month-long intern period, and in particular about building partnerships with people on the job and working within the *script de corps* of the soil survey. He was a practical thinker and carried himself with dignity and respect toward other people. He taught good lessons, and although we only worked together directly for that one spring, I consulted with him often for advice over the next few years on the job. He was a good man and a good soil scientist, and a friend. Rest in peace Roy and Irma."

Here are some additional responses from others close to Roy that were shared with me.



Roy Bowman, "in the field," circa 1981

From **Rich Casale**, retired District Conservationist, Capitola, CA: "Bill, what horrible news. I worked with Roy on the Santa Cruz Co. soil survey from 1975-77. He was amazing, and I learned so much from him. What a terrible loss. My sincere sympathies go out to his family and all who knew him and his wife. Let's hope these fires are fully contained very soon."

From **Maxine J. Levin**, National Leader for Soil Interpretations, USDA NRCS: "Roy Bowman with his wife Irma died in the California fires last week. I am devastated since he was my first project leader for Soil survey (Eastern Mendocino County) and was the person most responsible for me being hired by SCS as a soil Scientist in 1979. This is a picture of him circa 1981 that I have kept prominent in my office even today!"

From **Don Berry**, Former NRCS Area Forester, Red Bluff, CA: "Thanks Dave for sending out the kind words about Roy. One of my fondest memories is of seeing him open his lunchbox and finding a small "love note" from his wife taped inside, seemingly every time I ever sat with him to eat lunch. He was a man with a good heart. A sad day to learn they died in a fire."

Oroville Dam Primary Spillway Repair Update

I continue to keep a close look at how the Oroville Dam Spillway repair work is moving along. At this time the project is on schedule to meet the original goals of having a functional primary spillway for a discharge of up to 100,000 cfs by November 1st, which as you are reading this report is now here. At this time the projected cost of this repair is now close to a half billion dollars!

Here are two video recordings, the first an October 19th drone flyover of the spillway by the California Department of Water Resources. The second video provides more detail on the status of the work as well as information on the projected planned operation of the dam and spillway.

<https://youtu.be/eL0s3Py3zdE>, <https://youtu.be/a4t2pPOpNWI>

California retirees continue to have a monthly luncheon and breakfast for all who can make it. Thanks in large part to Pat Grover's return to our monthly luncheon that day in September, we had a great turnout of retirees.



September Retiree lunch group

Update on **Dave Smith**, Former California State Soil Scientist, newly retired.

In addition to sharing the initial news to me on the tragic deaths of Roy Bowman and his wife Irma Dave gave me the following information on his current status:

"As for me, I just retired from NRCS at the end of June 2017. I moved from California to Washington, DC into the position of Director, Soil Science Division in 2012 and went to serve as Deputy Chief for Soil Science and Resource Assessment from 2014 to mid-2017. I now live in old town Annapolis, MD, just a few blocks from both the Capital Building and the Naval Academy. It's good to hear from you and I would like to keep tuned in with SCS/NRCS retirees and become a member of ARCSE. Please add me to your California e-mail list." Dave Smith

On September 9th **Harold Honeyfield's wife Valma** celebrated her 85th Birthday. It was a wonderful occasion for the Honeyfield Family, Valma's "quilting group" and friends who were able to attend. It was also very enjoyable for me and my band as we enjoyed providing music for this special occasion. Here are a few pictures:



The Honeyfield Family



Valma with one of her many quilts



Harold and Oldest Son Collin



The Band

Well, that is all from California this time around. Wishing all our fellow retirees across the nation the best!

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

IDAHO

Jim Cornwell, ARCSE Representative
Email: idahoarcse@gmail.com

The Idaho retirees began the new year of our monthly lunches on September 28th. Those in attendance were **Paul Malone, Mike and Judi Somerville, Paul and Harriet Calverley, Shelby Brownfield, Keri Gibbs, Amos Garrison, Gene and Beverly Crisman, Frank Fink, Sharon Norris, Rob and Kate Fredericksen, and Jim Cornwell**.

Our special guest was **Curtis Elke**, Idaho State Conservationist. Curtis briefed us on the status and activities of Idaho NRCS. The hiring constraints they are operating under are truly a challenge for Curtis and his staff. With the numerous programs administered by NRCS, it is much different from what we retirees remember during our careers. To Curtis and his staff's credit, Idaho NRCS is striving to maintain the traditional great customer relationship with cooperators, Districts, and partner agencies. We look forward to having Curtis keeping us up-to-date at future meetings.

All attendees have had a busy summer with travel, family and hobbies. Hopefully in the future we can get a few more details of activities for the newsletter. The next lunch meetings are November 16th and December 21st. Any of you retirees in the area on those days come join us at the Golden Corral, 8640 Emerald Street, Boise at 11:30 on those days.

ILLINOIS

Dale Benz, ARCSE Representative
Email: daleab@sbcglobal.net

Illinois SCS/NRCS retirees gathered in Champaign for lunch and visiting on October 5. Attending were **Judy and Salvador Valezquez, Wiley Scott, Dave Dalzell, Leo Downing, Jim and Bonnie McQuilkin, Dick Dickerson, Gene Evans, Ray Coombes, Lee and Nancy Bridgman, Elsie Campbell, and Dale and Nancy Benz**.

Judy and Salvador Valezquez had a busy summer with Judy attending her 50th high school reunion and Salvador having a knee replacement. **Wiley Scott** spoke for most of us. He is either doing house maintenance or body maintenance!

Leo Downing went on a trip to Albuquerque, New Mexico with a friend for five days this summer and had a good time. They drove some on the old Route 66 on this trip. Leo said he drove Route 66 several times in his younger years when there was no interstate option. He was the Grand Marshall for the Oakwood 4th of July parade this summer.

Dick Dickerson has downsized! With the urging of Dick and Jan's children they sold their home and moved to a duplex in Champaign. Dick's woodworking shop and his woodworking tools are gone. Those retirees who have received an "Illinois clock" made by Dick may want to protect them as they are now collector items--no more are being made. Most Illinois SCS/NRCS retirees have received the clock made by Dick on their retirement, so Dick has made several hundred over the years.

Lee and Nancy Bridgman were in Alaska in June visiting their son and family and are going to a funeral at the Arlington National Cemetery in November. They are planning to be in Arizona again this winter. Lee just can't take the mild Illinois winters anymore!

Dale Benz reported that his implanted defibrillator paid for itself back in May. He had a cardiac arrest one evening and within 15 seconds he was alive again. Then it happened two more times that night and defibrillator again did its work. He said that, fortunately, he was unconscious each time so he didn't feel the shock.

Jean McConkey retired in August from the position of Office Assistant for Ecological Sciences, Engineering, and Soil Science. Welcome to the ranks of the retired, Jean. To begin her retirement she had a knee replacement the first day of retirement and is doing well.

I am sorry to report the passing of **Ron Sprague** on September 8. Ron had retired as a Soil Conservation Technician in the Champaign Field Office. We offer our sympathy to his wife, **Diane**, and their family.

The next gathering for the retirees will be April 5th, 2018 in Champaign.

INDIANA

Harold Thompson, ARCSE Representative

Email: harold.thompson58@sbcglobal.net

We had around 40 people in attendance for our retirees' gathering. A big "thank you" goes to **Jane Hardesty** for her support of the Indiana retirees and hosting our retiree's luncheon the last two years. Our retirees enjoy going back to the NRCS State Office to interact with each other and present NRCS employees.



Indiana Retirees

Jane Hardesty, Indiana State Conservationist, wrote the following to Indiana NRCS Employees: I know many of our newer employees might not know the folks in the photos, but I thought many of you would recognize some of the folks from our annual meeting with the SCS/NRCS retired employees. We met at the NRCS State Office on October 3rd and had a great time. We had Creek Bank Taters and grilled pork chops that **Mike Cox, Gary Struben and Harold Thompson** prepared for the group. We shared some updates and projects currently happening with the group and in return listened to their activities over the past year. It was great to catch up and be with members of our SCS/NRCS family. For those of you who know Harold Thompson, you will get a laugh from the photo, which shows he is an IU fan at heart. I hope if any of you see any of our retirees please take time to thank them for their federal service and the conservation work they accomplished. I also encourage any employee that retires continue to meet with this group to stay in touch.



Harold Thompson, IU fan.

IOWA

Mark Jensen, ARCSE Representative

Email: amjens1@gmail.com

Russ and Anita Hopp became proud grandparents on May 6th. **Callum Charles Hopp** was born in Iowa City to their son **Alex** and daughter-in-law **Shelby Hopp**.

Art Bryant reported that after being urged by their daughters for several years to move closer to them, **Art and Mary Jane** decided it was time to do it. So, as of August 9th, they sold their home in Indianola and now are at home in Peotone, Illinois. They are five minutes from one daughter and an hour and a half from the other daughter.

Thanks to **Ron Hersom** for the following: “**Ronald and Jo Hersom**, Marshalltown, have had a busy year with their motorhome. Besides spending the winter at Weslaco, TX, we have been to rallies at the Amana RV park twice; been to Lima, OH twice; visited the Neil Armstrong Air & Space museum at Wapakoneta, OH; visited the bicycle museum at New Bremen, OH; toured the Air Stream factory at Jackson Center, OH; and toured the National Museum of the Air Force at Dayton, OH. The museum has recently opened a fourth hanger that includes three presidential planes: Roosevelt-Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy plus more than you can see in one day. Did I mention it was free?

We spent 10 days at the Liberty Harbor RV Park in Jersey City, across the Hudson from Ground Zero in NYC. We had six days of bus tours in New York City. Some highlights included Trump Tower, Liberty Island, Ellis Island, and an evening river cruise with the lights on for the Twin Towers. Did you know that Russia sent a 9/11 memorial to us, but NYC wouldn't accept it, so Jersey City found a place for it?

The Marshalltown Chamber of Commerce is hosting a tour to Panama, so we will be just getting back from that before the dinner at the Machine Shed. We'll get a trip up the canal and visit some of the local people and attractions. Then it's Thanksgiving and packing for three months at Weslaco. Next summer we will visit THE ARK at Williamstown, KY. We are whittling down our bucket list!”

Brian Peterson retired in 2009 as the State Grasslands Specialist. When I called him to talk about this article, he was out harvesting his peanut “crop” from the garden. Starting in about 2010, he began doing substitute teaching in the Corning school system. He is certified to teach any subject in grades K-12, and over the past seven years, he's taught all elementary grades and nearly every subject in high school. In addition to substitute teaching, he has remained active in the Iowa Forage and Grassland Council and has led several grazing schools/training sessions through the Extension Service. One of his volunteer activities has been the public address announcer for Corning high school football games for over 30 years, announcing wrestling meets, and serving as the announcer for the homecoming parade. His wife, **Kathy**, retired last spring from the Corning school system as the full time school nurse. She plans to substitute for the current school nurse on an as-needed basis. Brian and Kathy have three children and eight grand kids: two in Grimes; three in Dallas Center; and three in Olathe, KS.

Lynn and Candy Betts journeyed to the Black Hills and Rapid City, SD, for a summer family vacation with their daughter and son and their families in July. As their grandkids said, they went to see “the faces” (Mt. Rushmore) and other attractions in the area! Lynn and Candy have six grandchildren and try to get to the Chicago area to visit their children, spouses, and grandchildren as often as they can.

Neal and Sheryl Struthers traveled with friends to the Custer area of the Black Hills with their horses the first week of September so they could see the Black Hills from a perspective that most visitors do not get to see. Neal says the world always looks better when viewed through the gap between the ears on a horse! Some of the areas where they rode horses include the National Forest south of Custer, the French Creek area of Custer State Park, the Centennial Trail area in the northwest part of Custer State Park, and the Black Elk Wilderness. They rode horses to the hitching rails and picnic area across the road from Mount Rushmore. When riding in the French Creek area, they saw bison sign, but to Sheryl's relief, no bison! They did some exploring by vehicle too. Some highlights included Custer State Park and Coolidge Peak; the wildlife loop through the park where they saw bison, antelope, and burros; the Needles Highway; and Falls Park in Sioux Falls. The Coolidge Peak Fire Tower was built by the CCC. While staying in Sioux Falls, Neal was surprised to see the Sioux Falls Quartzite. He never saw that quality of riprap in northeast Iowa!



Neal and Sheryl Struthers with friends at the Coolidge Peak Fire Tower



Neal and Sheryl Struthers at Falls Park in Sioux Falls



Neal and Sheryl Struthers on horseback with Mount Rushmore in the background.

KANSAS

Deanne Lull, ARCSE Representative

Email: rlull2@cox.net

My, what a month October has been for me. I started having vision problems the first week of October that developed into not being able to read anything and everything across the room was very blurry. Here I am trying to run a Bible study that Ron and I chaired, take and transcribe minutes for my circle, and host a church 90th birthday party for all members who are 90 and above. Would you believe that out of 62 in my Sunday school class, there are 9 over 90 who are still very active. And guess what? The ARCSE news was due! I was working with a font size in the high 20s in word and, of course, could not read any of the tool bars, etc. I was able to zoom the Internet setting to 400 which made the page format hard to use. But I have survived thanks to a thoughtful surgeon who worked me into his very busy schedule and corrected the problem in both eyes.

Fall is in the air. There is a nip in the air in the mornings, and the trees are changing colors. The cottonwoods adorned in their yellows are especially pretty.

One never knows when life will throw you a curve. With a plate full of activities scheduled in October, I started having vision problems the first week of the month. On October 5 I learned that I would need a capsulotomy on my right eye (a breaking up of the sac that holds my lens implant). I was very shocked on the next Saturday morning to find I could not see to read the paper or use the computer and everything in the distance was very blurry; thus I certainly was not going to drive. So in ten days it was back to the optometrist to learn that I had experienced a rare occurrence by the sac in my left eye suddenly clouding over. I was very fortunate that the surgeon was able to do the procedure on both eyes soon and I am now marveling how bright the colors are on Wheel of Fortune!

Robert K. Harkrader, Supervisory District Conservationist, in the Burlington, Kansas, Field Office retired September 30th, 2017. I am aware that two more retirements may be coming soon.

Robert Hagen (former State Administrative Officer in the Kansas State Office) fell and broke his shoulder while working in his front yard. A passerby saw him lying in the yard and stopped to give him assistance. He is recovering at his daughter's home in Wichita, KS. **Dorothy Gerdes** (former Personnel Management Specialist in the Kansas State Office) also has fallen, and although she did not break any bones, she is presently recovering in the hospital and may need some rehabilitation.

Of interest to our retirees is the announcement that **Eric B. Banks**, Kansas State Conservationist, has accepted a position as Director of the East National Technical Service Center in North Carolina. **Eric** has given Kansas nine years of leadership, support, and dedication to conservation. **Sheldon L. Hightower**, Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations, in Hutchinson, KS, will serve as acting State Conservationist for 120 days.

Three retirees have passed away. **Harold D. Heise** passed away on August 21st, 2017. **Harold** spent 38 years with the Soil Conservation Service, retiring as the District Conservation in Butler County. He was instrumental in construction of many watershed dams in Butler and adjacent counties. His wife, **Theresa**, preceded him in death.

Maxine Peier passed away October 2nd, 2017. She worked for the USDA for 26 years and retired in 1994 with the Soil Conservation Service as the Area Administrative Assistant in the Hays, KS, Area Office. Her husband, **J. Dale** also passed away 15 days later on October 17th, 2017.

Loren J. Pearson passed away on October 15th, 2017. **Loren** retired in 1993 as a Resource Conservationist on the Technical Staff in the Hays, KS, Area Office. His wife, **Darlene**, survives.

Another spouse has also passed away. **Marjorie "Marj" L. Gilliland** died on October 2nd, 2017. Her husband, **Maurice Glenn Gilliland**, previously predeceased her in 2009. He retired as a Soil Conservation Technician in the Holton, KS, Field Office.

KENTUCKY

Vacant, ARCSE Representative

Note: Billye Haslett is no longer the Representative for Kentucky, and a replacement is needed. But she has graciously submitted the following:



Kentucky Retirees' Meeting. Front Row, L-R: Anthony Burns, Charles Turner, Greg Stephens, Don Henry, Jimmy Marcum, Cil Marcum, Faye Overhults, Rodney Hendrickson, Billye Haslett, and Betty Ballard. 2nd Row, L-R: Rosalee Kelley, Diane Croney-Turner, Gladys Linville, Ira Linville, Drusilla Hatchett, Doug Hatchett, Gerald Hart, Connie McKinney, Rudy Forsythe, Jerry Laurie, Mike Andrews, and Fred Alcott. Back Row, L-R: Glenn Kelley, Tom Marcum, Tom Butcher, Roy Toney, Steve Crabtree, Kenneth Overhults, Joel Legris, Gene Jarvis, E.T. Kash, George Ballard, Billy Hartsell, and Paul Howell

The KY SCS/NRCS retiree association met on October 2, 2017 at Blue Licks State Resort Park near Carlisle, KY. Retirees and their spouses posed for a picture afterwards.

The following deaths were reported: **Archie Weeks**, State Office Watershed Engineer 8/22/17; **Wilson (Shorty) Boggs**, SCT 09/07/17; **Ralph Basham**, Construction Inspector, 10/15/17; **Beatrice (Bea) Hamilton**, 7/13/16.

**DEADLINE FOR JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2018 NEWSLETTER
CONTRIBUTIONS IS DECEMBER 25TH, 2017**

MISSOURI

Dave Rastorfer, ARCSE Representative

Email: daverastorfer@aol.com

Alton Taylor: Vena and I will spend November in Arizona with Gail and Harvey. They take good care of us. We made a trip to the high plains of Texas this week. Cotton everywhere you look and most of it was good, even dryland.

Bill Pauls: Another fine morning in the Ozarks :) I actually don't dread the upcoming season, I look forward to it, love the fall here, and the peace & quiet of "winter at the lake," two very pretty times. We purchased two new-to-us vehicles (a '14 Silverado truck and a '15 Jeep Cherokee) both 4-wheel drives, so we should be ready for climbing these winter Ozark hills. The winter also lets me cool down a bit during the running. Speaking of that here is my "news." Marathon #98 is in the book as of October 1st. Kris and I had a great RV travel trip to the Finger Lakes area of NY. A simply beautiful area of upstate NY wine country. I ran from Bath to Corning and got another beautiful glass medal (got my last one there 12 years ago, two years before I retired from SCS/NRCS). Marathon #99 is scheduled for my 68th birthday weekend starting at the Bally Casino on the Boardwalk in Atlantic City, NJ (hopefully not "Under the Boardwalk"-great sixties song by the Drifters). Trying to decide where #100 will be. Would like to run it with my son Jeff who got me started doing this crazy marathon thing over 21 years ago. We're well into fall here at the lake, a neat time, and looking forward to the peace and quiet of the winter season--very pretty around here then too. Still volunteering a lot and

active in the St. Anthony Parish. Kids and grandkids are all healthy and doing well. Very blessed indeed, welcome mat is always out! Next up, Thanksgiving, a lot to be thankful for!

Dennis Shirk: Howdy, Folks. We are well. I have been doing quite a bit of short trip day-riding. Several more day-rides on the schedule. Spent several days camping and riding at Lesterville. I hope everyone is doing well and fairly healthy. I feel very blessed and am enjoying retirement life fully. "See ya down the trail."

Dan Switzner: Switzners are doing well. Dad (**Doug Switzner**) moved up to Smithville where Janet and I live a couple of years ago primarily due to Dana's (Mom's) Alzheimer's. She is in a memory unit now and is doing fine considering the circumstances. Dad comes out to the farmette almost every day to raid the garden, check the steers/chickens/ponies. He is a great farmhand although he can be distracting by wanting to go fishing every day. He only lives one mile away which is a blessing. We did have a great fishing trip to Roaring River at Cassville a couple of weeks ago. Grass finished steers go to the locker plant next month. Pretty sure they have gained over 2 lbs. per day, Yah! Had them sold back in June, so this has been fun. Incredible to see the change in the pasture composition/production with frequent rotation. Still don't have a handle on raising bees. If I was smart, I would talk **Clayton Lee** into handling mine for me. Like Motel 6, "The light is always on" for visitors.

Jess Epple: (in Oklahoma). Phyllis and I are preparing for winter, here on the ranch. We just finished draining all of our large 'tire tanks' and placing our temporary tanks in the barn. The diesel injector pump, on our loader tractor, quit so Jess has been practicing his mechanical skills recently. After getting the tractor fixed we have been hauling large round bales to the "bale yard." We sold our cattle so we plan to sell the hay. We went to Alaska in August and spent several days at Anchorage, McKinley, Denali, and a long day traveling, by train, to Whittier (South of Anchorage) and boarded the Coral Princess. We saw glaciers, Skagway, Juneau, Ketchikan on our way to Vancouver, B.C. We highly recommend this cruise and doing the interior trip first. We enjoyed seeing everyone at the September SCS/NRCS retirees meeting in Columbia. We plan to go to Huntsville, AL soon to see another great-grand-son! We now have eight great-grandchildren! Both of us continue to volunteer at the Honey Springs Civil War Battlefield near Checotah, OK. Until next time, from 'Indian Country', we wish all of you Happy Holidays!

Mike Blaine: I am enjoying this fall weather. I really like the season change into fall. News from Blaine Hill is pretty slim. I had a hip replaced on September 19. I am getting along well with the recovery. I am impatient to be more active and get all those fall jobs done but the health care people say I am doing very well. Looks like we may have a good deer season in NEMO. Lots of them are moving around now that harvest is in full swing. You all have a great Thanksgiving and rest of the year!!

John Rice: The Rices have had a mostly quiet summer. Our church (small country church) is in the process of adding a two story 40' x 44' fellowship and education building. John is on the building committee/volunteer construction crew. Garden did well this summer, sweet corn, tomatoes and green beans. We both do a lot of volunteer stuff. John is still on the Grundy County SWCD Board (treasurer) and the Missouri Baptist Children's Home Board (Properties Committee) and also a member of the local VFW Honor Guard which provides military Honors for any military veteran's burial in this area. October 7 was our Rice family gathering at the farm to make gallons of apple cider. In the past we used the old family cider mill and press, however, after it got too far gone to use any more John built a modern version which is much more efficient. Family members came for the weekend from Kansas, North Carolina and Missouri. The cider making is just the excuse to get the family together. Besides picking, cutting, and squeezing apples we also gathered and roasted chestnuts over an open fire. The children and younger adults enjoyed rides in the horse drawn spring wagon.

Jim Rickman: Just got back from Iceland and I would really recommend it. Food is very expensive at most places, but you can find some diners that serve close to affordable food. Went swimming in the blue lagoon and it was much better quality water than the lagoons of Missouri. Enjoying good health with minimal exercise.

Peggy Fricke: I'm still here, out and about! Following a fall last November that broke and dislocated my shoulder, thru the grace of God, I am happy to say "I'm back!" Back to building 'stuff' in my garage, following grandkids 'ball' games, helping neighbors, friends and relatives and most importantly being able to drive again! So good to be back to "normal." Just got back from a four-day road trip with Virginia Roberts to North Missouri scouting out places to go, see, do for a family get together she's having. Put just under 680 miles on the car. Lots of great experiences in places we'd never been within the state of Missouri--good times and much laughter as well as into the night catching up with each other. Hope everyone is enjoying each and every day to the max as I am.

MONTANA

Dick Gooby, ARCSE Representative

Email: inca@3rivers.net

Montana Big Sky Report

We didn't get a lot of retiree's reports this month because everyone is trying to fill their freezers with deer and elk, etc.

Lisa Coverdale is going to retire as the Montana State Conservationist October 30th, 2017. She is going to move back to Iowa so she can take care of her folks. Lisa and her husband have an 80-acre farm to move back to Madison County. I hired Lisa to start work for NRCS when I was working in Iowa way back when. She has had a good career and did an excellent job with NRCS. My Mother said to always hire people that are smarter than you. So that's what I did. It really paid off.

Gooby Ranch Report: A few weeks ago **Mary Ann** and I were up in the mountains looking for feral cows we could round up and take to the sale yard. While we were riding up a trail through the trees, we were constantly running into spider webs. Mary Ann rides in front in case we run into a bear that scares the horses half to death. The horses think that by putting on a big bucking and kicking show it will scare the bear off. In the meantime, Mary Ann gets to practice riding a bucking horse.

Mary Ann's catching most of the spider webs, except those that are higher than her head, then I catch them since I'm taller than she is. Every now and then I would come upon a spider web that was a single web about 10 feet between two trees limbs. It was also about 10 feet off the ground. I got to wondering how a spider can build a web 10 feet off the ground and 10 feet between trees. According to my biology teacher, spiders don't fly. When we got home, Mary Ann checked out the computer but wasn't able to come up with an answer.

Every few days we have been riding in the area where the spider webs are. Mary Ann rides on up into the mountains looking for feral cows, while I stay where the spiders are to see if any spider is in the process of building a web between two trees. I think that's called conducting a "webinar." Mary Ann makes me a big picnic lunch so I don't get hungry while I'm watching the spiders. So far I've only fallen asleep twice each time I've been watching the spiders. The spiders wait until I fall asleep, then they build the 10-foot high web. I think if I can get Mary Ann to help me conduct a webinar and I pretend to fall asleep we may be able to trick a spider into building a 10-foot high web so Mary Ann can see how it builds the web.

We have a malting barley grain stubble field by the house that has over a 1,000 Sand Hill Cranes in it morning and evening. I sit on the deck with my shotgun and try to harvest some Sand Hillers. The only problem is that the Sand Hill Cranes are so drunk from eating the malting barley that they don't fly in a straight line. It's impossible to figure out where they will be flying when I get ready to take a shot at one. They are worse than a drunk driver.

NEW YORK

Nancy Lee, ARCSE Representative

Email: mlee0006@rochester.rr.com

Chris Henry, Engineering Staff, has retired. **Patty Hammer**, of the former Administrative Staff in the Purchasing/Contracting section, will retire at the end of November.

Nancy Lee writes: Alaska, the last frontier according to the advertisements, is certainly that! Our trip started in Anchorage, on to Denali for two days, and then the Dome Rail Car from Denali to Whittier, and on to the Princess Cruise ship for seven days, stopping in Skagway, Juneau, and Ketchikan, before docking in Vancouver for the return trip to Syracuse. In Denali we saw Mt. McKinley (Denali) in its full glory, not once but on two different days. In addition, we also viewed the Northern Lights. It was truly a most memorable trip, and the beauty of the state is indescribable!

The State Office "Cookie Day" will be Wednesday, December 13th.

NORTH CAROLINA

Jim Canterbury, ARCSE Representative

Email: jhcanter@bellsouth.net

Eleven retirees and guests from the Raleigh area met at Bob Evans Restaurant in Cary for breakfast on September 12th. This event takes place several times each year. Attending the breakfast were **Jim Canterbury, Albert Coffey, Dr. Maurice Cooke, Tommy Cutts, Frank Evans, Coy Garrett, John Garrett, Ed Helmey, Harold Lile, Cecil Settle, and Horace Smith**.



North Carolina retirees' breakfast at Raleigh, NC.

NORTH DAKOTA

Robert "Bob" Bird, ARCSE Representative

Email: Rajmbird@aol.com



NRCS/SCS Reunion September 14th, 2017

Back row: Ron Kerzman, Tom Coleman, Bob Bird, Chris Hansen, Herb Mittelstedt, Bob Boone, Wes Ewine, Wes Wiedenmeyer, and Myron Senechal

Front row: Earl Erickson, Jackie Miller, Robbie Obach, Jean Hansen, Diane Mittelstedt, Lynnel Boone, and Vi Person

OHIO

Jon Gerken, ARCSE Representative

Email: jgerken47@gmail.com



Ohio Retirees: (L to R) Mike Laughrey, David Gray, Ralph Gray, Merv Skiles, Betty Gray, Carolyn Steiger, Joe Steiger, Jim Piper, Dan Conrad, Byron Nolte, Joe Branco, Art Brate, Ardith Nolte, Marge Branco, Richard Rush, Rex Mapes, Jon Warner, Larry Tornes, Anna Tornes, Norm Widman, Ed McConoughey, Jon Kreglow, Mike Monnin, and Jon Gerken.

On August 23rd, 2017, 25 current and retired NRCS/SCS employees gathered at the MCL Cafeteria at 5240 East Main Street, in Whitehall, OH, along with eight additional family members.

Attendees enjoyed a slide show of recent and historic employee and family activities. Following lunch, retirees updated the group of their recent activities.

Attendees included Joe Branco and his wife Marge, Art Brate, Dan Conrad, Jon Gerken, Ralph Gray, his wife Betty and their grandson, Daniel, Jon Kreglow, Mike Laughrey, Rex Mapes, Ed McConoughey, Mike Monnin, Byron Nolte and his wife, Ardith, Bob Parkinson, Jim Piper, Richard Rush, Merv Skiles, Joe Steiger and his wife Carolyn, Larry Tornes and his wife Anna, Jon Warner, and Norm Widman. Photos courtesy of Bob Parkinson.

Geraldine "Gerry" M. Landon passed away on October 15. See the In Memoriam section for more details.



L-R: Joe Branco, Marge Branco, Mike Monnin, Betty Gray, Norm Widman, Merv Skiles, and Richard Rush.



L-R: Byron Nolte, Ardith Nolte, Anna Tornes, Larry Tornes, Rex Mapes, Joe Steiger, Carolyn Steiger, and Jon Gerken.



L-R: Jim Piper, Art Brate, Mike Laughrey, Jon Kreglow, and Ed McConoughey.

OREGON

Don Stettler, ARCSE Representative

Email: don.stettler@comcast.net

After proving once again it can rain in the Willamette Valley with a deluge the previous week, October 25th was a nice sunny day for the quarterly lunch for the Oregon retirees at The Old Spaghetti Factory at Clackamas. Attending were **Lowell and Marian Kenedy**, **Ralph Wadleigh**, **Gary Formaek**, **Thor Thorson**, **Eldena VanderZanden**, **Ed and Mary Weber**, **Kristi Yasumiish**, **Jon Lea**, **Dick Sylvester** and **Kathy Sylvester**, **John Hedlund**, **Lamont and Karen Robbins**, **Jeff Repp**, **Tom Fujii**, **Bruce Franssen**, **Bette Holscher**, **Beth Zetter**, **Roy Mann**, **Linda Mann**, **Jim Marron**, **Jack Land**, **Leland Saele**, **Lee Hardy**, and yours truly.

Several sent their regrets. **Gail Vogue** and **Kay Denfeld** just returned from a trip to Tennessee. There they took in Dollywood, President Andrew Jackson's home, Nashville, and the Grand Ole Opry. **Dick Verboort** told me that he has really retired now by allowing his PE and CWRE licenses to lapse. **Jack Kanalz** had an appointment to initiate cataract surgery. This surgery seems epidemic for our age group as yours truly just went through that during July and August.

The group welcomed **Bruce Franssen** and **Ed and Mary Weber** as first time attendees. News from within the group included hearing from Lee Saele that he and his brothers did a "shed raising" during his visit to North Dakota. **Eldena VanderZanden** attended a family reunion in Indiana. There she found out that relatives had served in the Union Army during the Civil War. **John Hedlund** is still into the snowbird routine by alternating six months between here and Arizona. **Bette Holscher's** big news was that she has a new grandson. **Thor Thorson** is still volunteering at the State Office and working part time for Home Depot. **Jim Marron** continues to coach girls' softball at Aloha High School. **Dick and Kathy Sylvester** have been busy working in their yard. At last count they had planted 450 plants. **Bruce Franssen** enjoyed a trip to Ireland.



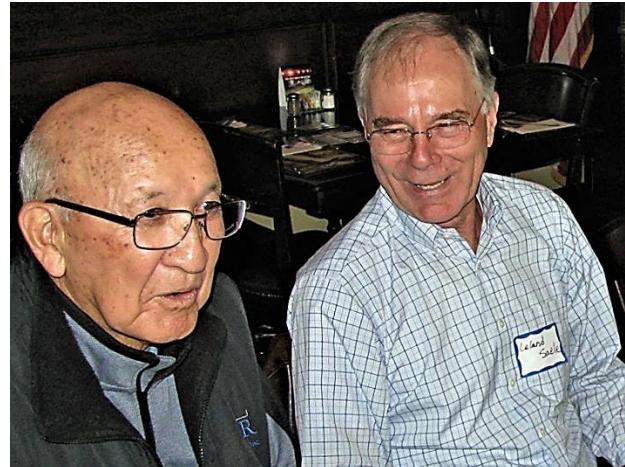
Thor Thorson, Jim Marron, Ralph Wadleigh



Bruce Franssen, Thor Thorson, and Jon Lea



Kathy Sylvester, Dick Sylvester, Lee Hardy, Kristi Yasumiish and Jeff Repp



Tom Fujii and Leland Saele



Beth Zetter, Bette Holscher, Gary Formanek



Jack Land, Eldena VanderZanden, Lowell and Marian Kenedy



The latest in Redneck lawn chairs – Ed Weber (right)

PENNSYLVANIA

Bill Bowers, ARSCE Representative

Email: wbowers@comcast.net

and Timothy Murphy, vindemurph@verizon.net

A BIG THANK YOU to **Gary Smith, Rose Marie Updegraff and Tim Murphy** for taking charge of our annual get together at Altoona. **Mary Ann** and I were very disappointed that we could not attend. I am dealing with a severe side effect from my melanoma immunotherapy treatment. I spent 32 days in Hershey Med July to August. Muscle inflammation caused double vision, droopy eye lids, swallowing difficulties, voice loss and overall weakness. I am recovering at home and am gaining strength. My voice is stronger and I've graduated to walking with a cane. Recovery is slow but steady. Thanks for the card from the folks at the meeting and the other emails, texts and cards. We are looking forward to next year's meeting!

Let's welcome **Deb Eckley** to the world of retirement! Deb worked in the state office and retired September 30. Keep sending Tim news of your retirement activities, including pictures. Also send in some stories from the "Good Old Days." Have some fun with your former co-workers and supervisors!

A total of 34 people attended the annual gathering in Altoona, PA. Of those, 25 arrived on September 17th and met for dinner and evening conversation.



**John Mickley receives
plaque for 15 years of
service as Treasurer**

On September 18th, we convened at Hoss's Restaurant. The day began with bagels and home-made jams and jellies (Thanks to all who donated). This was followed by introductions of all attendees and **Rosie Updegraff's** reading of a note from Bill explaining his health situation. We welcomed first-time attendees **Hosea Latshaw, Terry Simkins and Chuck and Debby Shrump. Rob Clauto**, DC in Blair County, then gave an informative presentation on his year long experience as a USDA employee embedded with a U.S. Army forward operations unit in Afghanistan.

The business meeting was then conducted. **Rosie Updegraff** recognized **John Mickley**, who has stepped down from the Treasurer's position. John received a plaque in recognition of his 15 years of service. Thank you, John!

Gary Smith, treasurer, gave the scholarship report. Last year we contributed \$450 to the Soil & Water Conservation Society scholarship fund. We had agreed to provide a minimum of \$400 to the scholarship fund this year.

Pete Vanderstappen, acting State Conservation Engineer, gave the NRCS report. For FY 2017 NRCS obligated 30 million dollars in 769 contracts. Including current contracts, there are about 60 million dollars' worth of conservation practices to implement. Current staffing is around 192 with our ceiling of 202. We have been allowed to fill six positions following the hiring freeze this spring. We anticipate some movement in early FY 2018. We have over 100 affiliates that we hire to help us carry out our programs. We have eight dam rehabilitation projects in various phases of planning and design.

Tim Murphy gave a report on ARCSE and NARFE and provided membership applications for both organizations. Tim also explained the logistics for the afternoon visit to the Horseshoe Curve, and the optional railroad museum and portage railroad visits.

We discussed plans for the 2018 meeting, and the consensus was to visit the southwest area of PA. **Chuck Shrump** and **Nevin Ulery** volunteered to take the lead in organizing the meeting, with suggestions of visiting Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater and Fort Necessity. Other suggestions are welcome. Mark your calendar now for September 16 and 17, 2018!

The raffle of an SCS 50th anniversary belt buckle was won by Chuck Shrump, who will enjoy the buckle until next year's meeting. Proceeds from the raffle go to the scholarship fund.



L-R: Al Bennett, Deb Bennett, Gina Murphy, Tim Murphy, Anne Smith, Gary Smith, Dale Updegraff, Judy Ulery, Nevin Ulery, Rosie Updegraff, Hosea Latshaw, Donna Mickley, Ellen Mank, Bill Parrish, Mark Mickley, John Mank, Chuck Shrump, John Mickley, Debby Shrump, Jane Schuetz, Maryellen Young, Fred Schuetz, Sam Young, Frank Resides, Jane Resides, Harvey Pinkerton, John Akers, Vickie Pinkerton, and Ann Akers. Not in the photo: Harold and Marie Wingard, Rob Clauto, and Pete Vanderstappen.



Following lunch at Hoss's, we traveled across town to the Horseshoe Curve to view the exhibits in the visitors' center, and to see a train climb the curve which has been in operation since 1854 to provide rail service across the Allegheny Mountains.

The SCS/NRCS Retirees and the Keystone Chapter of SWCS provided two \$500 scholarships in the spring of 2017. The Retirees contributed \$450. **Mary Smith**, **Frank Schneider**, and **Gary Smith** were the judges. The applicants were all excellent and we had two really outstanding recipients.

Casey Pearce, daughter of **Thomas and Marlene Pearce**, is a junior majoring in Environmental Science at Mansfield University and is from Eynon in Lackawanna County. Casey has a 3.9 GPA. She is the captain of the women's softball team and a dormitory resident assistant. Although both Casey's parents work, they are able to contribute very little, so she has worked several jobs including highway flagger and restaurant work. In her essay, she indicated she would be working on a research of agricultural soils and the offsite impacts. Her references were very complimentary of her work ethic. Casey expressed her sincere appreciation for the award.

Allison Starr, daughter of Anne and Edward Starr is a junior majoring in Environmental Studies at Drexel University and is from Philadelphia. Allison has a 3.87 GPA. She is involved in many activities including the Catholic Newman Center on campus and does the newsletter for the Penn Vet working dogs. She has worked for the Philadelphia Water Company and in concession stands. In her essay she said she lives at home and works multiple jobs to lessen the financial burden on her two working parents. Allison's references expressed that Casey was both intelligent and hard working. Allison is thankful to all in both organizations for their contributions to the scholarship.

We received the following note from **Gerald Root** after he received the summer issue of the PA Bugle: Sorry I don't have opportunity to attend PA meetings. I worked in PA from 1957 to 1974, then went to Wisconsin as assistant state conservationist for three years and then to Headquarters in DC as deputy director of conservation planning. I retired after 37 years and moved from Woodbridge VA to Lake Anna VA where I became busier than ever. I helped to organize the Lake Anna Civic Association and the Lake Anna advisory committee consisting of supervisors from the three counties surrounding the Lake, who checked water quality, controlled Lake usage, weeds, erosion and other items to keep the lake healthy, and then worked with a three-county team to prepare a Lake Anna Special Area Plan for supervisors.

John Akers reports: I helped with the Capital Region RC&D cover crop survey again this June for Bedford, Blair, and Cambria Counties. We check about 800 predetermined points in each county to see what crops were planted, what kind of tillage was used and if any of the cover crops that were planted last fall are still visible on the ground. This is part of the Chesapeake Bay study to see what is being done to reduce pollution in the Bay.

Ann and I did two mystery bus trips this summer. One was to Philadelphia where we went to the visitor center and overlooked the city, and in the afternoon we visited the old PA prison. The other was to Lancaster where we visited three old churches in downtown and then went out to eat supper country farm style in a corn field at Bird-in-Hand. In addition, we also did a bus trip with the Fulton County Historical Society to visit the Johnstown flood museum and the old dam site that broke and flooded Johnstown in 1936.

We helped to celebrate our grandson **Andrew's** graduation from Liberty University in Lynchburg, VA in June. We hope all have a nice fall and holiday season.

Alan Wood spent the last two weeks of September in South Korea working with Engineering Ministries International on a community center. This was his first time back in Korea since serving there 44 years ago with the Army. Two days before he left, his first grandson was born in Frisco, CO.

Don and Shirley Lindsey report: We were disappointed to miss the Retirees' meeting in September, but had non-stop company for a month. Our son **Scott** is just now getting ready to go back to Alaska. We've also had a week of reunion of Don's siblings, especially wonderful as some of them are not in very good health.

Autumn is really here in tropical PA with 39 degrees this morning! The deer stroll through our backyard every morning and evening.

We had a trip to Alaska in July, and on the way **Shirley** attended the International Master Gardener Conference in Portland, Oregon.

Don has been busy with church work, local historical society (Good Ole Days) in August, trekking around to museums and festivals to recruit craft people for next year, Woodworking at Union Mills and in his shop.

Tim and Gina Murphy and son **Evan** traveled to Kentucky and Tennessee in August to visit Gina's sister and family, view the total solar eclipse, and tour Mammoth Cave National Park. The eclipse was quite a spectacle, with a park full of people cheering as the moon covered the sun for more than two minutes. Mark your calendars for the total eclipse which will be visible in western PA on April 8, 2024.

A memory from **Fred Bubb**. The recent hurricanes reminded me of the worst couple of hours I spent in SCS. Hurricane Eloise was causing flooding in 1975, and the USDA desk had to be staffed. STC Benny Martin asked for a volunteer for overnight. Since my family had not yet relocated, I said I would do it. I relieved the State ASCS Director who said "any problems, give me a call." I settled in for a boring night but about 2am the phone rang. I was told I needed to provide breakfasts for 2,700 people. Asking how, I was told that was my problem. I called the ASCS director, but he would not answer his phone. The only thing I had was a several inch thick manual. I didn't even have a couple loaves and fishes and certainly did not do miracles. After an hour or so of panic, I decided to start calling other USDA agency directors. The first person I decided to awaken was the Food & Nutrition Director. Wonderful words came to my ears: "you called the right person. I'll take care of it." Incidentally, Maybe I should have called Benny since he got me into this situation.

Fred Bubb, historian, reports that he now has a complete list of State Conservationists in PA. Just missing years served by a couple. A little searching around should provide the missing dates. Still looking for information on three group meeting photos. I am not in them so I assume they are for years prior to my time as a member.



Earliest one is a photo at the Millersburg ferry--date on the back is Sept. 1986. Were you there? Who is in the photo? I recognize **Munk and Mo Munkittrick** standing on the right, and possibly **Corky Miles**, in the dark Penn State sweatshirt, standing on the left. Is that **Nancy Linville** seated on the right? Any information appreciated. Send your recollections to Febubb77@verizon.net or to my home, 711 15th Street, New Cumberland, PA 17070.

Dan Dostie, SRC in the NRCS State Office, sent the following note: Thanks for letting the retirees know about our project to show current Pennsylvania NRCS employees with family and friends in Puerto Rico that we care. So far we received 13 donations totaling \$750, which was distributed among seven recipients. Five of the donations came from retirees. On behalf of the committee, please pass on my appreciation to those who contributed.

I hope to see you in southwest PA on September 16 and 17, 2018!

"To be a successful farmer one must first know the nature of the soil." Xenophon, author of "Oeconomicus," 400 B.C.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Grady Adkins, ARCSE Representative

Email: grady.adkins2@gmail.com



South Carolina Retirees' Mseeting, October 19th, 2017 (Underline = Retiree)

Front Row: Strauss Moore Shipley, Speaker, Linda McNeill, Jessie Thompson, Marcia Adkins, Laurely Nance, Carolyn Glasgow
Back Row: Billy Beard, Bill Melven, James Williams, Al McNeill, Bill Caldwell, Grady Adkins, Luke Nance, Niles Glasgow, Ellis Morrow, Hugh Caldwell. Photographer: Dan Guy.

The SC Retirees group met October 19th at The Front Porch Restaurant in Richburg, SC. Following the lunch, **Ms. Strauss Moore Shipley**, Project Director, gave a presentation and fielded questions about the many attractions of the Olde English District, one of eleven tourism districts in South Carolina.

For Snowbirds travelling to/through SC, stop at Exit 65 of I-77 to visit the Olde English Visitor Center & Market.

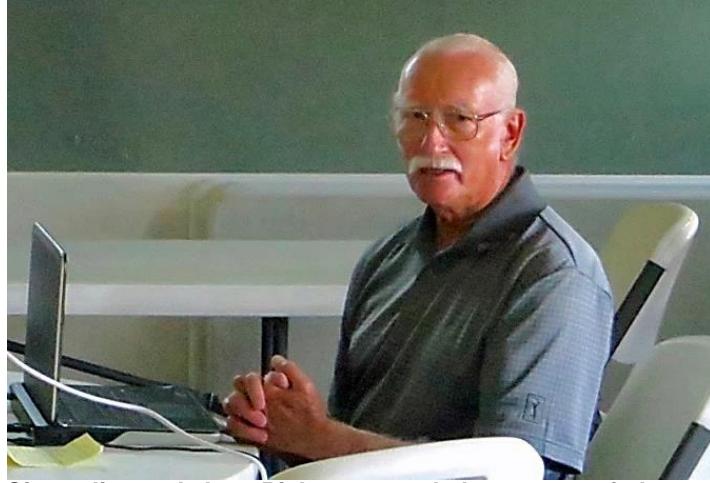
Luke Nance, retired Planning Engineer, was presented the Engineer of the Year Award by the Columbia, SC Chapter of the National Society of Professional Engineers. The award was for his leadership and involvement in the local Chapter and in recognition of awards received for his volunteer service from President Obama and NRCS HQ. He has worked over 5,000 hours as a Volunteer since his retirement.

TEXAS

Arnold King, ARCSE Representative

Email: arnoldking@hotmail.com

During the August meeting we had a spirited discussion on how the club spends its dues money, and the wonderful travel program by **Jim Rickman** and **David Stockbridge** took up the remaining time.



Since Jim and Jere Rickman traveled to many of the same places that Dave and Barb Stockbridge traveled to, Jim covered Belgium in his presentation and Dave covered the Netherlands.



Jere Rickman and Barb Stockbridge also added many highlights of their wonderful trips.



Atlantic Wall Bunker





Dennis' son, Don Gaster, assisted members of the Texas National Guard and local law enforcement during the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey.



Bernie Owen will have the annual FEHBP program on November 17th with representatives from Blue Cross Blue Shield and GEHA presenting their plans. Open season is November 13th through December 11th.

Jim Rickman had a great time fishing in Arkansas. He caught a 17-inch trout, but the next day **Jim Robinson** caught an even bigger one. I think **Jim** said it weighed 6.4 pounds, which equates to 25 inches! That can't be right or can it? I will ask **Rickman** again.

Maxine Owen's older granddaughters are both at Texas A&M, and she is looking forward to a visit from her two younger granddaughters.

Jere Rickman said **Jim** and **Dave Stockbridge** were going fishing to Arkansas the week of September 17th. *Giant trout will have that kind of effect on fisherman.*

Barb Stockbridge reported that their son got married on a cruise ship in Galveston, but Hurricane Harvey threw a wrench in the original plan for a cruise. **Dave** and she spent four days trying to get out of Galveston.

Dave Stockbridge reported that he was going to attend his 50th college reunion in October along with attending a big stamp show.

Dennis Erinakes reported that his grandson **Ethan** is engaged to be married. **Dennis** also said that his trailer in Collegeport was still right side up after Hurricane Harvey. He probably lost his second rice crop, however. **Dennis** is going to work on getting his one leg to match the other one in length, since it is one inch shorter after surgery. He is going to gradually add inserts to his shoe until things get better aligned.

Dave Drennan is back from a road trip to Colorado Springs. He did the driving, and **Jean** was the navigator. They visited old friends, and they made it to the top of Pikes Peak. Dave enjoys watching his grandkids do their sports activities.

The October 2017 meeting of the SCS/NRCS Alumni Club will be held at 10am on Friday, October 20, 2017, at St. Ann Catholic Church, 100 SW Alsbury Blvd., Burleson, Texas. Please join us if you can. **Dave Drennan** and **Arnold King** will be bringing the snacks.

WASHINGTON

Gerald Richard, ARCSE Representative

Email: gjr52pdr@aol.com

Present at our October luncheon at the Timber Creek Grill and Buffet were **Joe Carmack, Harry Riehle, Larry and Jean Edmonds, Jerry Richard, Carl Vennes, Ken and Tina Kaul, Stephen Fechter, Hans and Kathryn Krauss, Julie Young (daughter) and Jessica, Cody, and Alice Martin (granddaughter and great grandchildren)**.



Washington Retirees' October luncheon: Tina Kaul, Ken Kaul, Harry Riehle, Carl Vennes, Hans Krauss, Stephen Fechter, Jerry Richard, Katie Krauss, Larry Edmonds, Jean Edmonds, and Joe Carmack

Ken Kaul introduced and presented the ARCSE President's Award for Meritorious Service to **Jerry Richard**. It reads "In Special Recognition and Appreciation for Dedicated and Effective Service as the ARCSE Representative in Washington State for Over Twenty Three Years and as the Vice President for the West for 10 Years." Jerry thanked Ken and the National Officers for the Award and counted himself as extremely fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with great people and a great agency. **Joe Carmack** will be in Tennessee in October to help complete the fall harvest on the family farm. Over the years he has put in sprinkler systems to provide supplemental irrigation. We will get a more detailed report when Joe returns.



Ken Kaul presenting the ARCSE Presidential Award to Jerry Richard

Here is an update on **Jud Melton** as he recovers from a bad fall earlier in the year. After being at a rehab facility for four months, **Karen** has made changes to their home to meet Jud's needs, and he was able to return home on October 8th. He has daily therapy during the week, alternating between physical therapists and occupational therapists, and is able to use a walker around the house, and is steadily but slowly regaining some strength and mobility. He is happy to be back home and is especially enjoying Karen's home cooking.

WASHINGTON, DC, NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA

John Peterson, ARCSE Representative

Email: jwpeterson@cox.net

From **Barbara Osgood**. Greetings ARCSE Members—"It's like family!" That's the response we heard from the thirteen retirees who enjoyed a delicious lunch on Thursday at the Ft. McNair Officers Club in Washington, DC. Our featured speaker was **Craig Derickson**, State Conservationist for Nebraska, who is currently Acting Southeast Regional Conservationist.

Craig gave us a great update on the current status of NRCS. They are awaiting the appointment of a new Under Secretary of Farm Production and Conservation mission area, expecting that will lead to the appointment of a chief of NRCS. Associate Chief for Conservation **Leonard Jordan** has been Acting Chief. As Acting Southeast Regional Conservationist, **Craig** has also been very involved with the disasters in Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. We were pleased to hear that NRCS is sending a technical team to Puerto Rico to assess how NRCS can provide technical assistance within the scope of its programs. The traditional program providing NRCS assistance is the Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program.

As is our tradition, we went around the room, and everyone updated us on their activities since the last luncheon. We always enjoy hearing about travel, hobbies, grandchildren, sports events and other retiree pastimes. Attendees were: **Faye and Plater Campbell, Paul and Delena Benedict, Jerry Bernard, Valeria Butler, Diana Morse, Barbara Osgood, John and Blanche Peterson, Lee Shields, Roger Cronshey, and Ida Cuthbertson**. I want to thank **John Peterson**, who always obtains wonderful speakers for us from NHQ, and **Diana Morse**, who not only collected your checks, but had to deal with the entry forms for the post. We were concerned about the extra paper work, but everyone agreed that getting into the post was a piece of cake. **OUR NEXT LUNCHEON MAY BE THE LAST!** We have arranged with the Club to have our spring luncheon on Thursday, May 3rd, 2018. We must guarantee 20 participants. If we can't do that, it will be our last luncheon. Please mark your calendars now and plan to come!

On October 21st, **John Peterson** was honored with the EnviroCert International Inc.'s (ECI's) first Lifetime Achievement Award in a ceremony in San Diego, CA. The Lifetime Achievement Award is instituted to recognize those individuals who have contributed to the overall knowledge of environmental fields related to the national standards and professional certifications administered by ECI. All recipients have been involved in some combination of leadership, insight, research, and/or practice in the various fields related to ECI's Professional Certification(s).

Another key aspect for Lifetime Achievement Awards is each recipient has demonstrated honor and integrity throughout their work in the community and ECI. In this first ceremony ECI recognized seven people with the Lifetime Achievement Award. Five of them were retired SCS/NRCS officials. In addition to **John**, they are **James G. Barrett** (Posthumously) (OR), **Donald W. Lake, Jr.** (NY), **Rich Casale** (CA), and **Phil Hogan** (CA).

ECI administers five international professional environmental certification programs. They are the Certified Professional in Erosion and Sediment Control (CPESC), Certified Erosion, Sediment and Stormwater Inspector (CESSWI), Certified Professional in Stormwater Quality (CPSWQ), Certified Professional in Municipal Stormwater Management (CPMSM), and the Certified Professional in Industrial Stormwater Management (CPISM). There are tens of thousands of ECI certified professionals throughout the world. A direct link to the ECI awards page is at <http://www.envirocertintl.org/awards/>. John says a big benefit from this recognition is he no longer has to pay annual dues to keep his certification, and he no longer has to earn Continuing Education Units (CEU's) to maintain it. "Guess they think I'm getting old."

John and Blanche Peterson spent the last week in Oct. and first week in Nov. in Maine visiting daughter **Shannon** and her family who live in Cumberland, ME. **Peterson's** stayed at the beautiful Samoset Resort in Rockland/Rockport ME, the lobster capital of the world. Samoset looks over the Atlantic Ocean, and one of its golf holes is rated one of the most beautiful in the US. Makes **Petersons** wish they still played golf.

USDA tries to go Cage-free. One of the first things that **Sonny Perdue** vowed, upon taking the job as head of the USDA, was to get people to stop calling the waiting room outside his office "the Cage." Other USDA secretaries, including Perdue's predecessor **Tom Vilsack**, have tried to prevent people from calling the glass-enclosed space "the cage," but failed.

That has not dissuaded Perdue. The area, which is used mainly as a waiting room for visitors, is undergoing a transformation. Some of the couches have been replaced with rocking chairs, and a large glass jug with a spigot has been made the centerpiece of the (ahem) space.

Aides filled the jug with lemonade yesterday, and a source tells *Agri-Pulse* that a video is being made for the "re-naming of the area we're not supposed to call The Cage."

To complete the old-timey, rural motif, Perdue's official portrait has been changed. Gone is the stuffy Washington-esque suit-and-tie photo, swapped out for a picture of Perdue in shirtsleeves, standing in a soybean field.

No word yet on what Perdue wants to rename the (um) Cage.

John S. Moore, retired National Geologist, reports that he and **Chris** did a cross-continent, 85-day odyssey starting from their cabin in Vermont on May 1st in their Toyota Highlander with new all-season tires. We headed north as far as possible into Canada and followed 2-lane roads all the way that headed west to Alaska. Every Province provided its own special memorable features. Our route went along the north shore of Lake Superior and eventually into British Columbia and Yukon. We had awesome encounters with forest bison, black bears and cubs, mama foxes and kits, entered Alaska at Tok, and then drove to Fairbanks. We had perfectly clear weather to take a single engine plane flight around Denali (which **John** climbed in 1988) and landed on the Ruth Glacier. We spent a week visiting **Chris's** cousin in Dillingham at the base of the Aleutian chain, then sailed on the Alaska

Marine Highway ferries, with a six-day stop in Juneau to partake in sea kayaking in Glacier Bay, and to visit **Sam and Cindy Carson** (former NRCS National Construction Engineer, now with Forest Service). We crossed the northern 48 with a three-day visit with **Rick and Randy Van Klaveren** in Coeur d'Alene, ID. We made it back to VT to enjoy the rest of summer and fall at the cabin. Our daughter **Katie** and family (two boys, 12 and 10) visited us for a week in VT for boating and rock climbing training. Then **John** took a week to rock climb in Wyoming and topped it off with a climb of Devils Tower to celebrate his 70th birthday (hadn't done it for 32 years!) while **Chris** made a trip to North Carolina to visit our son David's family—three grandkids, two boys and a girl (ages 7, 4, and 1.25). A fantastic year for us!



Plane on Ruth Glacier, Denali, John and Chris Moore



John Moore, 500 feet up on Devil's Tower, WY.



Summit of Devil's Tower—John Moore with climbing partner Christina Leibner.

Jerry Bernard suggests reading the following article: "Bringing in the Beans," in Harper's September 2017 edition (<https://harpers.org/archive/2017/09/bringing-in-the-beans/>). The article features a farmer and his family's soybean farming decisions, as well as interesting historical notes about the advent of soybeans in the US and farm policies over time. For example, the article shows how the rise of the soybean in the US is attributable, to a certain extent, to Henry Ford.

Ron Marlow shows that the Northeast does have some nice leaf colors this year. He shot these photos that on Oct. 19th, 2017 in southeast New Hampshire while he and **Ann** were touring in New England.



HOW TO BECOME AN ARCSE MEMBER?

APPLICATION AT

<http://www.arcse.org/qFormMember.pdf>

WEST VIRGINIA

Peg Reese, ARCSE Representative

Email: pegreesewv@gmail.com

Alan Staddan "once again traveled to Colorado in August to hike another 14,000-foot peak in the Rocky Mountains with my friend **Dr. James Tucker**. We tent camped overnight at Quartzville and hiked to the summit of Mount Lincoln on Monday, August 14th. During breakfast, we had a doe mule deer appear in the area. She was having her breakfast too. Only 400 feet beneath the top we encountered a group of five Mountain Goats that had come around from the side of the mountain and fed below us, allowing a great photo opportunity. We reached the summit of 14,286 feet in just under four hours, climbing 2,583 feet of vertical relief.

While recuperating on Tuesday afternoon, Jim suggested that we try another 14-teener on Wednesday. Although this was not in my plans, I was here, and the mountains were calling. We left Jim's house at 5am and drove through Alma, CO and found our way to the trailhead below Mount Sherman. The clouds were low, hiding the top of the mountain, and the temperature was 35 degrees. After climbing for two hours, the wind picked up and continued to blow at 20mph for the remainder of the ascent. Before reaching the top, it started snowing as the temperature fell to 28 degrees. Jim and I completed our 2,464-foot climb of Mount Sherman, but we didn't stay around long to enjoy the beautiful views that are afforded from this 14,036 elevation.



Alan Staddon, mountain climber

WISCONSIN

Jim Enlow, ARCSE Representative

Email: jenlow@att.net

The Wisconsin retirees met for lunch and fellowship on October 12th, 2017 at the Monona Family Garden Restaurant in Monona, WI. **Jim Enlow** was the host. Those in attendance included **Jim and Lynnette Enlow, Donna DeVoe, Evonna Cheetham, Gene and Ann Nimmer, Chuck Cobb, Greg Igl, Steve Rake, Howard Gundlach, and Bob Uhrig**. Everyone enjoyed the lunch and fellowship. This was our last luncheon for 2017. We are planning to continue, having scheduled retiree luncheons in 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.*

Marion T. Mathis	Mansfield, AR
Ronald E. Moreland	Tucson, AZ
Joe Ausen	Ankeny, IA
Richard W. Hall	Sioux City, IA

William R. Evans	Lewiston, ID
Arthur B. Holland	Bluffton, SC
Wayne Chapman	Paris, TX

SENIOR CONSERVATIONIST CHRONICLE by Marc Safley, Chronicler, Senior Conservationist

Marion Thomas Mathis
Senior Conservationist

Senior Conservationist **Marion T. Mathis** was born in Yell County, Arkansas in 1934. Marion and his family moved to South Sebastian County the next year where he grew up on a general purpose farm. He graduated from Hartford High School where he was voted the outstanding senior by the faculty, was president of his FFA, vice-president of his class, and was an all-state basketball player. After graduation, Marion attended Arkansas Tech University for two years earning an Associate of Science degree in Agriculture. He then attended the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville where he received a BS in Agriculture and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Army Reserve. After completing his active duty, he married his college sweetheart **Treva Martin**. He returned to the U of A and earned a Master of Science degree in Agricultural Education. After graduation, Marion spent five years in agricultural chemical sales in Arizona and the Southwest.

He started his career with the Soil Conservation Service in 1965 as an economist on the Watershed Planning Party in Little Rock. In 1966 he transferred to the field serving as conservationist in Danville and Russellville before being promoted to District Conservationist in Sheridan in 1970. He served as DC in Clinton AR from 1974 to 1984, as DC in McGhee from 1984 to

1987, and as DC in Clarksville from 1987 to 1990. He was Area Resource Conservationist in Hope from 1990 retiring in April of 1994. Marion and Treva then moved back to the Mansfield-Hartford area where they grew up.

After a year and a half of retirement, Marion decided he needed to do something to keep him busy. He signed on to the City of Mansfield as Economic Development Coordinator for one year in September of 1995. He served as President of the Mansfield Economic Development Corporation (a non-profit), and as Executive Secretary of the Seabrook Economic Development Council. In that capacity, he wrote a number of grants for the improvement of the area. These included a wastewater treatment facility that now serves three communities, a senior citizens facility, and many grants for improvement of city streets and the downtown area. Marion was presented the Rural Community Assistance National Action Award from the US Forest Service in 2003. The one-year contract with the city turned into eighteen years as he retired (again) in 2013.

Marion and Treva have been married 58 years and have two children. Son **Stanley** was an engineer with NRCS (now retired). His wife **Katie** is a retired elementary teacher. They have two children, **Sarah** and **Joe**. Marion and Treva's daughter, **Cynthia**, is an occupational and certified hand therapist. Marion and Treva enjoy traveling and have visited all 50 states and about 20 foreign countries. They have represented Mansfield, Arkansas, in meetings of the Mansfield Sister Cities of the World Organization in Mansfield, England in 2000; in Mansfield, Massachusetts, in 2004; and, in Mansfield, Ohio, in 2008.

Marion loves the outdoors. He was a member and hiked with the Trail Blazers Hiking Club of Fort Smith for several years and was a volunteer on maintenance for the Ozark Highland Trail. He also has canoed and fished most of the rivers, streams and lakes in Arkansas. Treva and Marion are members of the Fort Smith Rose Society. Treva has won numerous awards, Marion served two terms as president of the society, and they were presented the Bronze Honor Medal of the American Rose Society in 2005. Marion is a member of the Arkansas River Valley Antique Tractor Club and has restored a 1955 Model 600 Ford tractor which he shows and drives in parades. Marion and Treva celebrate their February birthdays each year in Galveston, TX. They have been members of Gideons International for 32 years and are members of the First Baptist Church in Mansfield where they have served in various capacities. They live five miles east of Mansfield, AR on a 300-acre cattle ranch their son shares with them.

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. 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)

Alderson	James Stillman Alderson (70) of Star, Texas passed away on October 2, 2017 at his residence. He was born in Lampasas, Texas. He married Sharleen Clary on Sept. 4, 1971. He was a plant specialist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Texas. He was preceded in death by a son, Kirby James Alderson , in November 1975. Survivors include his wife; two sons, Cody Alderson and Kyle Alderson ; a daughter, Mitzi Reynolds ; three brothers, and 10 grandchildren.
Basham	Ralph Basham (78) of Madisonville, Kentucky passed away on October 11, 2017 at his home. He was born in Breckinridge County, KY and retired as a Construction Inspector for the Soil Conservation Service. He was a member of Victory Church. He is survived by his wife, Juanita (Goodman) Basham ; two daughters, Rhonda of Madisonville, KY, and Rena (Paul) of Hopkinsville, KY, two sons, Don (Paula) of Bowling Green, KY, and Russell (Dawana) of Mississippi, eight grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren. Don Basham , Ralph's son, worked for NRCS, but transferred to the IT organization when it evolved.
Basu	Dr. Arun C. Basu (85) of Herndon, Virginia passed away on September 26, 2017, leaving behind his wife, Sipra Basu of 60 years of a happy marriage and a wonderful son, Arnab Mark Basu . Arun came to the United States in 1962 and built up a spectacular career in the service of the USDA, serving as the Director of the Social Sciences Division for the Soil Conservation Service, and retired at the age of 75 in the Senior Executive Service of the government of the United States of America. His career is filled with spectacular achievements in the education field and a service dedicated to the benefit of mankind. He left his brother and a sister and a great many friends all over the world.
Boggs	Wilson "Short" Boggs (93) of McKee, Kentucky passed away September 7, 2017 at his residence. He is survived by his son, Tony (Teresa) Boggs , a granddaughter, and a great granddaughter. He is also survived by nine siblings. Short was preceded in death by his parents, five siblings and the love of his life of 69 years, Dora Aileen Davidson Boggs . He served in World War II. Short was employed by the USDA Soil Conservation Service. He retired in 1983 and then became employed at the FSA office in McKee. Short was active in the Jackson County Soil Conservation up to his death. Also, Short enjoyed farming, raising cattle, hunting, fishing and gardening. Short was a member of the Conway Christian Church. www.lakesfuneralhomemckee.com
Bowman	Roy Howard Bowman (87) and Irma Elsie Bowman (88) of Redwood Valley, California died in the Redwood Fire that broke out in Mendocino County late on the evening of Oct. 8, 2017. Roy retired as a soil scientist with the Soil Conservation Service. They were the type of people who settled into their community and did good without making a fuss." Roy was a U.S. Navy veteran. Irma Bowman loved to bake and "would tell us to speak well of other people."
Champeon (corrected)	Patricia Lee Champeon (80) of Glenburn, Maine passed away on August 17, 2017 at Dirigo Pines, Orono, ME. She died after a long battle with Progressive Supranuclear Palsy (PSP) . She was born in Lewiston, ME, Pat attended schools in Hartford, CT; Old Town and Bangor before graduating from Berkeley HS, CA in 1956. She married Alfred J. LeClair of Orono in July 1956 and they had three children. That marriage ended in 1978. She married ARCSE member D. Bruce Champeon in November 1983. In 1997, after a 25-year career in personnel and administration with USDA, Soil Conservation Service / Natural Resources Conservation Service in ME and NH, Pat retired as Assistant State Conservationist for Administration. Survivors include three children, Deborah J. Emoro (Tom) of MA, Brian T. LeClair of FL, and David J. LeClair (Gail) of FL.

her husband **Bruce**; two stepsons, **Steven J. Champeon (Heather)** of NC and **Kenneth A. Champeon** of ME; seven grandchildren, ten great-grandchildren, a brother, and a stepsister. Those who wish to remember Pat in a special way may make gifts in her memory to CurePSP, 30 E. Padonia Rd., Suite 201, Timonium, MD 21093. Condolences to the family may be expressed at www.BrookingsSmith.com.

Culp

Senior Conservationist and Honorary Member **Arlie Franklin Culp Jr.** (91) of Ramseur, North Carolina passed away on October 18, 2017, at Universal Health Care in Ramseur. Arlie was a native of Stanly County and a graduate of Catawba College. He was a veteran of the United States Navy during World War II and served as a crew member on a Navy patrol bomber as an aerial gunner. After the war, he was married to **Daisy Mae Farlow** of Randleman, his wife of 47 years, until the Lord called her home in 1997. Arlie worked as a teacher at Ramseur High School, served as a public health sanitarian for the Randolph County Health Department, and retired as District Conservationist in Randolph County after 25 years of service with the Soil Conservation Service. After retirement, Arlie was elected to the North Carolina House of Representatives where he served for 18 years. He was very active in his community, serving in the Jaycees, Rotary Club, Boy Scouts, Senior Adults and other boards and committees. Arlie was a member of Jordan Memorial United Methodist Church in Ramseur and was a 32nd-degree Scottish Rite Mason at the Marietta Lodge 444 in Ramseur. Arlie was also preceded in death by a daughter, **Mary Ellen Culp**; his parents, and four sisters. Arlie was a true and loyal friend. Survivors are sister, **Mary Culp Spires** of Charlotte; numerous nieces and nephews; and faithful friend and companion, **Sally Breedlove** of Ramseur. Condolences may be made online at www.loflinfuneralservice.com. Memorials may be made to Jordan Memorial United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 848, Ramseur, NC 27316.

Gilliland

Marjorie "Marj" Lou Gilliland (90) passed away on October 2, 2017 at Aldersgate Village in Topeka. She was born in rural Atchison County. She graduated from Atchison County Community High School in 1945. On December 8, 1946 she married Maurice "Mose" Glenn Gilliland who retired as a Soil Conservation Technician in the Holton, Kansas Field Office of the Soil Conservation Service. He passed away, March 12, 2009. They spent most of their lives on the family farm north and east of Holton. Marj had worked for Santa Fe Railroad and had been deputy clerk of the District Court of Jackson County. In addition, she was a member of the First United Methodist Church in Holton. Two children survive: **Gayla Schmanke (Robert)** of Olathe, KS and **Raney Gilliland (Jill)** of Topeka, KS. Also surviving are three grandsons and four great-grandchildren. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests memorial contributions to the Johnson Center for Basic Cancer Research at Kansas State University c/o Mercer Funeral Home, P.O. Box 270, Holton, KS 66436.

Goings

Gregory William Goings (53) of Mt. Airy, North Carolina passed away on September 4, 2017. **Greg** retired as Soil Conservation Technician in the Dobson Field Office with the Natural Resources Conservation Service. He also helped out in adjoining counties. He was born in Surry County. He was a loving husband, father and brother. Among the many who will always cherish his memory are his devoted wife, **Michelle Poole Goings**; sons, **Jared Goings** and **Jordan Goings**; his mother, **Roena Goings**; and a sister **Kim (Michael) Thomas**.

Hamilton

Beatrice (Bea) Hamilton (100) of Harold, Kentucky passed away on July 13, 2016. She retired as the Area Clerk for the Soil Conservation Service in Hazard, Kentucky. She was born in Honaker, now known as Harold, KY. She was preceded in death by her parents, and her three brothers. She is survived by her one sister, **Nell Hamilton Jayne** of Flat Gap, Kentucky and several nieces and nephews. Beatrice was a member of the Church of Christ. She was an employee for the US Federal Government for three years in Washington D.C. during WWII, where she worked at the department of Commerce and later spent six years in Asheville, North Carolina working at the General Accounting Office.

Heise

Harold David Heise (95) of El Dorado, Kansas passed away August 21, 2017. He was a retired District Conservationist with the USDA Soil Conservation Service and U.S. Army Veteran of WWII. He was born in Osage County near Burlingame, Kansas. Harold graduated from Kansas State University in 1949 after serving in the U.S. Army in North Africa and Europe. Harold retired in 1987, having spent 38 years with the Soil Conservation Service and 23 of those years in Butler County, where he was instrumental in the design and construction of the many watershed dams in Butler and adjacent counties. He was a proud member of the U.S. Army Reserves and retired as a Major. Harold was a devout Catholic and a member of St. John's Parish in El Dorado. Harold was united in marriage to **Theresa Navinskey** on August 6, 1949 and they spent 65 years together until her passing. He was preceded in death by **Theresa** and son **Ronn Heise** and his wife **Paula**. Harold is survived by: son, **Rick (Jane) Heise** of Augusta, and their two children, Ronn's three children, five great grandchildren, and one brother. Memorial masses may be directed to St. John's Catholic Church. Please sign his online guestbook and leave a memory of Harold at www.carlsonkirbymorris.com.

Jagels

Frederick Jagels (73) of Ellsworth, Maine passed away on September 17, 2017 at his home. He was born in Rockland. He graduated from University of Maine studying Agricultural Engineering in 1968. He married Jane Barnes in 1968 and they had three children and five grandchildren. After working as a design engineer for SCS in Maine for about 10 years, Frederick worked 33 years as the State Engineer for Farmers' Home Administration. At the end of his career, he was Chief of the Rural Utilities Division. As one of his civic and professional leadership roles, he served as President of the Maine Society of Professional Engineers. Condolences may be expressed at www.jordanfernald.com

Landon

Geraldine "Gerry" M. Landon (78) passed away on October 22, 2017 surrounded by her loving family at Defiance Area Inpatient Hospice Center in Ohio. She was born in Clayton, Michigan. On June 7, 1958 she married **Gale N. Landon** and he preceded her in death on January 22, 2012. Gerry was a member of West Franklin United Methodist Church in Fulton County. Among other jobs, she worked for the Williams County Soil & Water in Bryan and Williams County. She was also active with many civic organizations. She is survived by her father **Carmon Kaiser** of Camden, Michigan, three children, four grandchildren, four great grandchildren, and three sisters.

Morgan

Perry Washington "P. W." "Crackerman" Morgan, Jr. (70) of Huddleston, Virginia passed away on September 7, 2017 at Veterans Administration Hospital in Salem from a lengthy illness. He was born in Bedford County. He retired after 35 years as a Soil Conservation Technician with Natural Resource Conservation Service and also retired after 12 years as Senior Conservation Specialist with Blue Ridge Soil & Water Conservation District. He was a lifelong farmer & owner of Morgan Farms. He was President and Chief of Saunders Volunteer Fire Company, was on the Board of Directors of Farm Bureau, and was Associate Director of Peaks of Otter Soil & Water District and was also a U. S. Army Veteran. He is survived by his wife, **Shirley Overstreet Morgan**; his son, **Eric T. Morgan** of Huddleston; his daughter, **Kimberly M. (Josh) Nowocin** of Roanoke; his two grandsons, as well as numerous other relatives and friends. The family requests those wishing to make

	memorials to consider Saunders Volunteer Fire Co., P. O. Box 14, Huddleston, VA 24104.
Pearson	Member Loren J. Pearson (80) of Hays, Kansas passed away on October 15, 2017 at the University of Kansas Medical Center, Kansas City, Kansas. He was born in Junction City. He graduated from Junction City High School in 1955 and on March 23, 1957 he was united in marriage to Darlene Rogers in Abilene, Kansas. They celebrated over 60 years of marriage. He attended Kansas State University and graduated from Fort Hays State University in 1965 with a B.S. degree in Agriculture. He was a range conservationist for the Soil Conservation Service until his retirement in 1993. For over twenty years he was owner and operator of Culligan of Hays until his retirement in 2007. He was a member of Messiah Lutheran Church. His hobbies included woodworking, hunting, fishing, and golfing, and he was famous for his coyote call. Survivors include his wife of over 60 years, Darlene , of the home, one son; Mike Pearson of Hays, three daughters; Kathy (Alan) Hoffman of Hoisington, Cory (Rob) Garrett of Dallas, TX, and Jean (Pat) Canaday of Wichita, one brother; Wayne (Cindy) Pearson of Junction City, twelve grandchildren; and twelve great grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents, one brother, and a granddaughter. Memorials are suggested in Loren's memory to The Lutheran Hour Ministries or Messiah Lutheran Church in care of Hays Memorial Chapel Funeral Home, 1906 Pine Street, Hays. Condolences may be left for the family at www.haysmemorial.com
Peier	Dale J. Peier (83) passed away on October 17, 2017, in Wichita. He was born near Pond Creek, OK. He graduated from Pond Creek High School and was recruited to play basketball at Oklahoma State University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in agricultural business. His first professional position was with the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service in Washington, D.C. He was an associate professor and concluded his career by serving as the special assistant to the president of Barton County Community College. Survivors include a son, Jeffrey Peier and wife, Dianne , Wichita; a daughter, Lynn Peier-Able and husband, Tim , Colorado Springs, Colo.; and a grandson. He was preceded in death by 15 days by his wife of 63 years, Maxine Peier , who retired from SCS in 1984.
Peier	Maxine (Wilson) Peier (83) passed away on October 2, 2017, in Wichita, Kansas. She was born in Pond Creek, Oklahoma. She earned an Associate degree in business from Oklahoma State University. She was an employee of the United States Department of Agriculture for 26 years, most recently serving as the Area Administrative Assistant for the Soil Conservation Service in Hays, Kansas, until her retirement in 1994. Maxine is preceded in death by her parents and two brothers. She is survived by her husband of 63 years, J. Dale Peier of Wichita, Kansas; daughter, Lynn (Tim Able) Peier-Able of Colorado Springs, Colorado; her son, Jeffrey (Dianne) Peier of Wichita, Kansas; a grandson and a brother. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests memorial donations to the Peier Family Scholarship Fund established with the Fort Hays State University Foundation, P.O. Box 1060, Hays, Kansas, 67601.
Schaller	William F. Schaller (86) of Richland Center, Wisconsin passed away on September 12, 2017 at his home. He was born in Bunker Hill, Illinois where he was raised on a dairy farm. Bill graduated from the University of Illinois in 1955 with a Degree in Agriculture. From 1955-57, he served his country in the US Army as an Instructor in the Field Artillery at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. In 1959 he became the District Conservationist of Clay County, then served for 11 years in Vandalia, Illinois and then in Rockford, Illinois. In 1973 he and his family then moved to Richland Center, Wisconsin continuing his career as an Area Conservationist until his retirement in 1994. Bill and Martha owned and operated The Schaller's Christmas Tree Farm from 1994 until 2014. Bill was an active member of the Richland Center Lion's Club, with over 50 years of service in the club in both Illinois and Wisconsin. He was also actively involved in membership at St. John's Lutheran Church in Richland Center, Wisconsin. Bill is survived by his wife of 64 years, Martha and their 5 children: Roger (Martha) Schaller of Morgan Hill, CA, Ron (Sarah) Schaller of Magnolia, TX, Russell (Dianne) Schaller of Gilbert, AZ, Rhett Schaller of Mount Airy, NC, and Rachel (Eric) Koegel of Richland Center, WI; 12 grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. Bill was preceded in death by his parents and brother George Schaller of Bunker Hill, IL. The family of Bill Schaller suggests memorials be directed to St. John's Lutheran Church, the Lion's Club, or a charity of your choice. Online condolences can be made at prattfuneralservice.com .
Sheehan	Wilfred J. "Will" Sheehan (92) passed away peacefully on July 4, 2017 at the Holton Home in Brattleboro, Vermont where he had been a resident since 2012. Will was born in Clinton, Massachusetts and was raised and educated in Springfield, Vermont. He served his country during WWII in the United States Navy stationed in the Asiatic Pacific Theater including the Island of Saipan. Following his discharge he returned home and attended the University of Vermont graduating in 1953. In 1955 he took a position with the Soil Conservation Service in Vermont working 10 years in St. Johnsbury, 10 years in Randolph and 10 years in Brattleboro as a Soil Scientist. He retired in 1986. He spent the summer of 1961 in Alaska, one of his more memorable assignments. He was married to Joyce Shepard in 1962 who predeceased him in 2013. Will loved square dancing with his wife and spending time at his hunting camp. He was active with the American Red Cross Blood Bank and the St. Johnsbury Rifle and Pistol Shooting Club. Will is survived by his sister Eileen Sandstorm of Littleton, Co. four stepdaughters, 7 grandchildren and 13 great grandchildren. A complete obituary may be viewed online at the BrattleboroReformer-legacy.com >obituaries.
Smith	Mel A. Smith (64) of Portsmouth, Ohio died on September 23, 2017 at Ohio State University Hospital. He was born in Columbus. Mel was a member of St. Mary's Catholic Church and recently retired from USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, having served as a District Conservationist in Pike/Scioto Counties. He is survived by his wife of 39 years, Julia (Fox) Smith , his four daughters; Keesha Nickison (Sean) , Allison Paige (Derek) , Melanie White (Matt) , and Elizabeth Ciriello (Chris) , 10 grandchildren; and two step-grandchildren. The family's favorite charities are Notre Dame Catholic Schools and St. Mary's Catholic Church.
Sprague	Ronald Gordon Sprague (80) of Champaign, Illinois passed away on September 8, 2017 at Presence Covenant Medical Center, Urbana. Ronald was born in Rankin. He married Diane E. Goudy on January 17, 1960 in Hoopeston. She survives. Also surviving are his children, Michael (Pia) Sprague of California and Rhonda (Brandon) Kim of Louisiana; three grandchildren, three step-grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, and two sisters. He was preceded in death by five brothers and one sister. Ronald was a graduate of Hoopeston John Greer High School and served the US Army in Security and as a Morse code operator. Ron retired as a Soil Conservation Technician for the Soil Conservation Service in Champaign. (www.morganmemorialhome.com). Memorial contributions may be made to the Champaign County Humane Society.

