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# NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter for Retired Conservation Service Employees

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Website: [www.arcse.org](http://www.arcse.org)

## NOTES FROM THE POTOMAC

### **Doug Lawrence and Patty Lawrence**

*We hope that you and your families are well and continue to stay healthy through the COVID-19 pandemic. We thought that an article summarizing the recently published research that assessed the post-mortem condition of seven patients who died of COVID-19 highlights the need for everyone to continue taking common sense COVID-19 precautions. The COVID-19 post-mortem research found evidence of extensive damage to the lining of blood vessels, abnormal blood vessel growth in the lungs, and widespread blood clotting. This is a big deal. The authors emphasized that although COVID-19 is transmitted by a respiratory virus (severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 or SARS-CoV-2), it manifests as a **vascular disease** that leads to severe injuries to blood vessels throughout the lungs. The damage to vascular cells may help explain why serious blood clotting has been observed in many patients. Damaged blood vessels may also underlie other problems, such as "COVID toe," "multisystem inflammatory syndrome" in children, stroke, and other seemingly unrelated problems. In short, this is not the flu.*

*As many of you already know, the 16<sup>th</sup> NRCS Chief, **Matthew Lohr**, has retired. He plans on returning to fulltime farming at his 5<sup>th</sup> generation family farm located in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. **Kevin Norton** is serving as the Acting Chief. We wish Matt all the best in "retirement."*

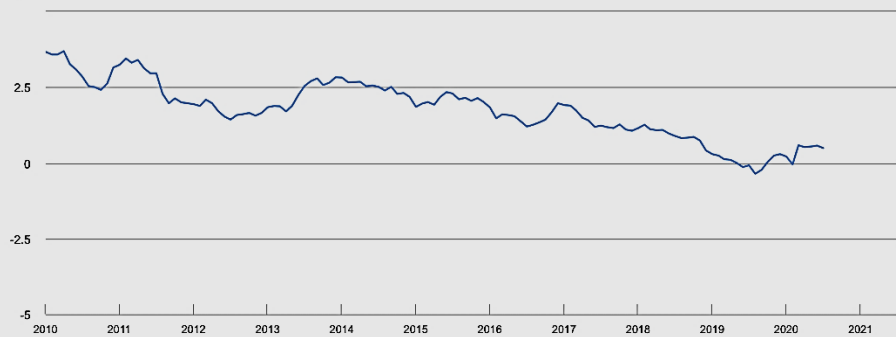
## PERSONAL FINANCE

**Federal Retirement Annuity COLA** – The Federal retirement annuity COLA is determined by comparing the change in the CPI-W from 2019 to 2020, but since it is based only on the average of the third-quarter months of July, August and September, we won't know with certainty what the COLA for 2021 will be until the September 2020 CPI data are available. The good news is that estimates of the 2021 COLA have climbed into positive territory, because inflation rates increased this summer, and the current COLA estimate is 1%.

**TSP G Fund Interest Rate Cap** – For those of you who have money in the G Fund, it will be worth watching what the FED does with their policy on "yield curve" caps. In general, a yield curve is a line that plots yields (interest rates) of bonds having equal credit quality but different maturity dates. The slope of the yield curve gives analysts an idea of future interest rate changes and economic activity. The yield curve that the FED and others focus on with respect to the US economy is the curve (or graph) created by plotting the difference between interest rates on Treasury securities of ten years (long term) and three months (short term). In a strong economy, the interest rate on 10-year treasury notes is higher than the interest rate on 3-month treasury notes. When the economy is weak, like it has been this past year, the short-term 3-month treasury rates can be higher than long-term 10-year treasury rates (see the graph below). You can see in the following graph that since late 2019 they are near zero, which has historically been a good predictor of an imminent recession. This, and other leading indicators, resulted in the FED taking action to stimulate the economy even before the COVID-19 crisis.

Treasury Term Spread: 10 Year Bond Rate - 3 Month Bill Rate

Percentage points (monthly average)



**ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED CONSERVATION SERVICE EMPLOYEES**

Usually, the Fed seeks to manage the economy by raising or lowering very short-term interest rates, such as the “federal funds rate” that banks earn on their overnight deposits. But the Fed has already reduced the federal funds interest rates to near zero, and it has essentially exhausted policy options associated with manipulating the federal funds rate. The FED has also used two tools it deployed during the Great Recession: forward guidance (the FED publicly announces what it plans on doing in the future) and quantitative easing (The FED injects money into the economy through large-scale purchase of assets such as mortgage-backed securities, long-term Treasury securities, corporate bonds, etc).

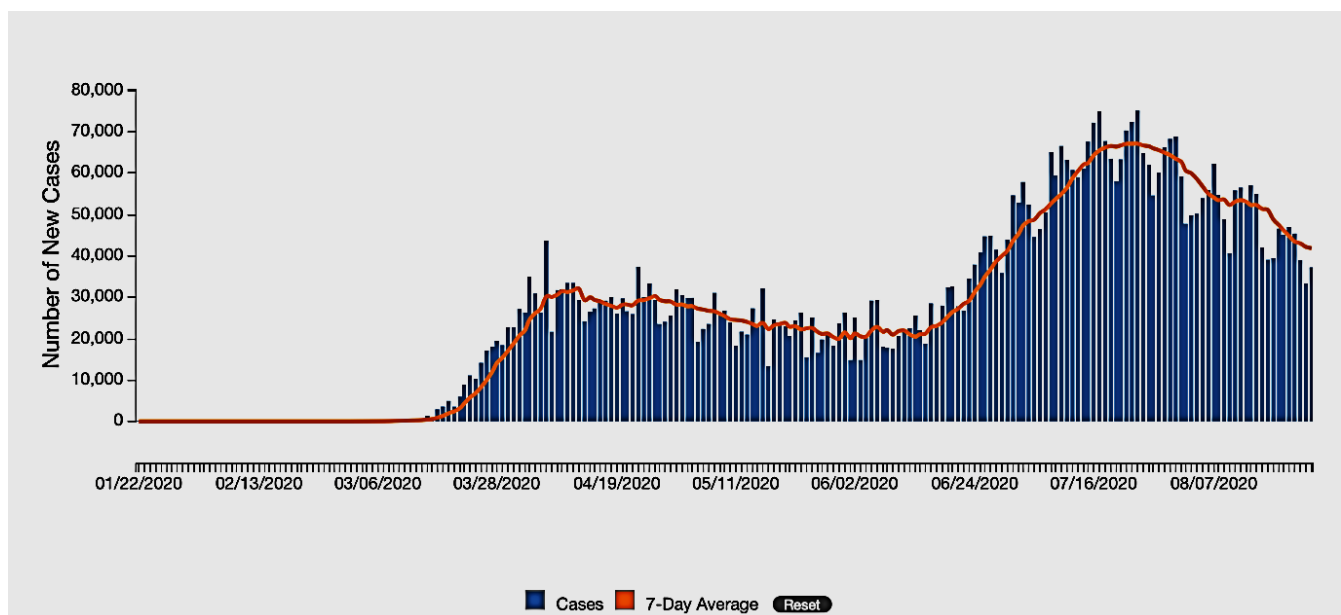
Since 2019, and more intensely this year, the FED has been assessing additional tools to address the economic downturn. One tool that is beginning to emerge as a potential stimulus tool is yield curve control, sometimes referred to as yield curve caps. Implementing yield curve caps would require that the FED purchase Treasury securities (effectively printing dollars) to keep Treasury security yields below a specific target rate (i.e., the FED would create an interest rate cap through their actions on Treasury securities). Fed officials discussed yield curve caps extensively at their June 2020 meeting. One option is to cap the interest rate of one-year Treasury notes to a near-zero rate for a specific period. If that is not enough to stimulate the economy, the strategy would be to apply an interest rate cap to Treasury securities with longer maturation.

The reason we have rambled on about the FED is that the FED’s strategy regarding capping the yield curve could significantly affect the Thrift Saving Program, because the G fund interest rate is determined by a weighted average of intermediate and long duration Treasury securities. So, if the FED is able to lower intermediate term treasury securities – it has already lowered short-term rates – we could see the returns on the G Fund fall.

## COVID-19 UPDATE

CDC data indicate that the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the US has risen to over 5,753,000, and the number of confirmed COVID-19 deaths has risen to about 178,000. Currently, CDC is reporting about 37,100 new cases per day and about 1,140 deaths per day. As the chart below indicates, the number of reported COVID-19 cases per day has fallen since the peak in July, but it is still at about the March peak.

A recent CDC study estimates that actual COVID-19 cases are about 10 times the number of reported cases. In Missouri the study found actual cases to be 24 times the number reported. This is important because it indicates that there is a high number of asymptomatic cases of COVID-19 that accelerate the spread of the disease and reinforce the need for people to continue to practice social distancing and other CDC recommendations, even if they don’t feel ill.

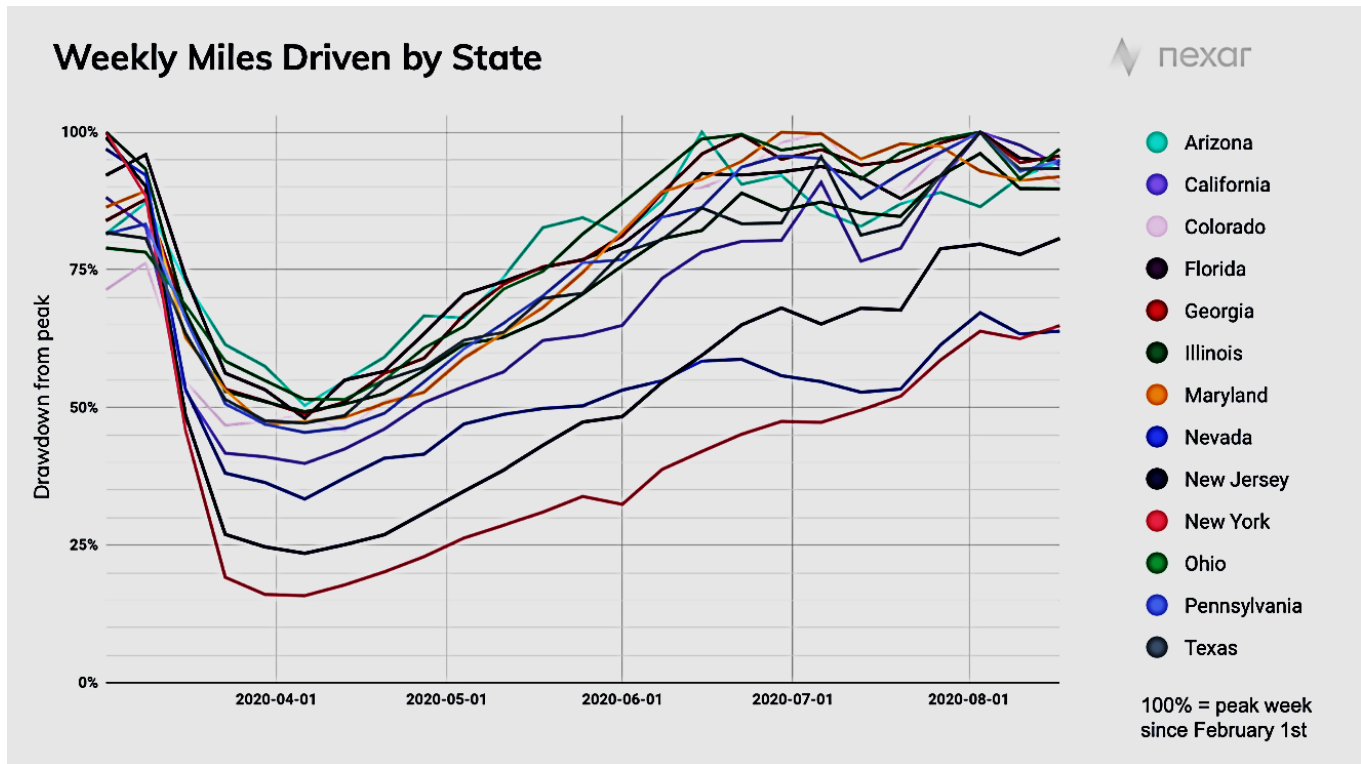


The undercount of actual COVID-19 related deaths was investigated in a Yale University study published in early July. The researchers found that, nation-wide, the estimated actual number of COVID-19 deaths was 28% higher than the number of reported deaths. The largest undercount was in Texas, where it was estimated that actual COVID-19 deaths were 55% higher than reported deaths.

Last week, CDC received forecasts of national COVID-19 deaths over the next four weeks from 33 modeling groups. The models predict that 3,700 to 9,600 new COVID-19 deaths will be reported during the week ending September 12, and that 187,000 to 205,000 total COVID-19 deaths will be reported by that date.

While working as an economist with NRCS, I developed a great appreciation for proxy data because collecting the data I needed for an analysis was not always possible. A good example of a proxy is using the sale of antihistamines and decongestants in lieu of surveying people to ask them how severe their hay fever was. The people at Nexar have updated their Mobility Report which summarizes driving activity in the US, and this can be used as a proxy of the pace at which the US is returning to pre-COVID-19 conditions. The report indicates that from mid-July to mid-August driving increased by about 15%. They also noted that while the number of drivers is flat to slightly-up, they are seeing a marked increase in miles driven per driver. This is likely because people

are substituting driving for airline travel during peak vacation season and the continued return of professional drivers. Note that they are defining “peak” weekly miles driven as the most miles driven since February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020.



One of the many impacts of COVID-19 is a \$42 billion decline in state and local government sales tax collections during April, May, and June. This is a 10% decline during the second quarter of this year, compared to the same three-month period last year, according to federal estimates.

To address the ongoing need to offset the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the House passed a \$3 trillion coronavirus relief bill in May that would include \$1,200 checks for individuals, \$25 billion in additional funding for the U.S. Postal Service, and a \$600-per-week supplement to unemployment benefits. In July, Senate Republicans introduced a \$1 trillion bill which would also include \$1,200 payments to individuals, but they are now working to release a new, scaled-back bill that would not include stimulus checks, but would include \$10 billion for the U.S. Postal Service and \$300 weekly unemployment benefits. It appears that the House, Senate, and Administration are not close to resolving their differences; and with the House and Senate on recess until mid-September, we will have to wait to see if they can craft a compromise bill.

With respect to money management, **Erik Nielsen**, chief economist at UniCredit, told CNBC that investors have never had to deal with so much uncertainty as a result of the current health and economic crises. Even in certain European countries, where cases had fallen in recent months and their economies reopened, new regional coronavirus outbreaks have emerged. As a result, predicting the economic consequences of the pandemic, as well as the potential government response, has become an unprecedented challenge. Nielsen said, “In the 30 years I have been an economist we have never had this much uncertainty about the effects of the shutdowns, the future of the shutdowns because of the pandemic, the policy response, and people’s fear, in a sense. We are running in complete blindness right now. There is no way of being confident about the outlook.”

Nielsen had concerns about data released August 25<sup>th</sup> showing U.S. consumer confidence falling to a more than six-year low in the month of August, amid concerns about labor market prospects. Stringent measures to contain the spread of COVID-19 have impacted businesses worldwide, with many forced to close their doors for months. As a result, unemployment levels are on the rise, and there is a question mark about how many companies will manage to survive the ongoing shock. For example, American Airlines announced that they will lay off 17,500 employees, and United sent lay off warnings to 36,000.

Nielsen believes that central banks have done all they can to mitigate the current shock, telling CNBC that “Jerome Powell has done all he can. Central banks are doing everything they can...but they cannot solve the problem. What we need is fiscal policy and then we need news on the pandemic that things are coming back to normal,” Nielsen said.

In the short-term, traders have been focused on an August 26<sup>th</sup> speech by Federal Reserve chairman Jerome Powell. In the speech Powell said that the Federal Reserve would, in a significant shift in policy, keep interest rates low for longer periods and said it would focus on keeping unemployment low and allow inflation to run slightly higher in good times.

In the past, the Fed would commonly raise interest rates, as joblessness fell, to avoid economic overheating that could end in breakaway inflation. However, in recent years, inflation has been very low. The changes are an explicit recognition that too low, rather than too high, inflation is the problem.

Mr. Powell, in explaining the changes, said that “with interest rates generally running closer to their effective lower bound even in good times, the Fed has less scope to support the economy during an economic downturn by simply cutting the federal funds rate.”

## FY-2021 APPROPRIATIONS

The House passed the USDA 2021 appropriations bill on July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020 by a vote of 224 to 189. It's part of a \$259.5 billion package consisting of four bills that fund the State Department, Agriculture, Interior, and Veterans Affairs. The Senate has not yet passed a 2021 USDA appropriations bill. Here are details on what's in the House bill.

## CONSERVATION OPERATIONS:

2020 appropriation – \$829,628,000  
 2021 President's budget request – \$830,186,000  
 Provided in the 2021 bill – \$833,785,000

The Committee directs USDA to allocate from the Conservation Operations funding:

- \$11,715,000 for the Snow Survey and Water Forecasting Program
- \$9,559,000 for the Plant Materials Centers
- \$79,665,000 for the Soil Surveys Program
- \$732,846,000 for Conservation Technical Assistance
- \$2,458,500 for the farmers.gov Customer Experience Portal program

**Composting** – The Committee encourages NRCS to explore creating a composting practice within the Conservation Stewardship Program and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. A composting practice may include an activity to produce compost from organic waste that is generated on a farm or brought to a farm from the nearby community, and use of compost on a farm to improve water retention and soil health.

**Conservation Data Collection** – The Committee directs the Department to conduct a study to assess data collected from producers, across all USDA agencies, related to conservation practices and describe how that data can be used to increase and improve conservation efforts. The report should consider and share what additional data would improve the ability to better quantify the benefits of these practices. The Committee directs the Department to share its findings with the Appropriations Committees no later than one year after enactment of this Act.

**Cover Crop Management** – The Committee provides \$1,000,000 from Conservation Operations funding and directs the NRCS to bolster ongoing efforts of the Soil Health Initiative working to link soil health and cover crop management with an On-Farm Research Network, in conjunction with public and private sector partners.

**Critical Conservation Areas** – The Committee supports Critical Conservation Areas and the collaborative regional approach to address common natural resources goals while maintaining or improving agricultural productivity. The Committee encourages NRCS to provide additional Conservation Technical Assistance funds for work in Critical Conservation Areas in order to address conservation planning backlogs.

**EQIP Outreach** – The Committee understands the value of carbon capture and sequestration to improve soil health and directs NRCS to increase awareness and outreach of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to farmers in distressed watersheds, in order to incentivize farmers to improve soil carbon capture for improved land and water health.

**Forestry and Wetlands** – The Committee recognizes the importance of wetlands and forests as effective land cover for maintenance of water quality. The Committee directs NRCS to study the ability and effectiveness of managed forestry best practices to aid in combating and mitigating waste runoff and toxic elements in affected large water sources and watersheds where overapplication of toxins and manure is harming freshwater drinking supplies.

**Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs)** – The Committee recognizes soil erosion as a leading cause of nutrient runoff, which substantially increases the frequency, size, and intensity of HABs. The Committee strongly directs NRCS to continue funding NRCS's ongoing work to reduce nutrient loading from agricultural sources that can contribute to the growth of harmful algal blooms. The funding shall be used for targeting of watersheds where harmful algal blooms pose a threat, and implementing a variety of conservation systems to address all transport pathways of phosphorus from agricultural land uses. NRCS shall coordinate efforts to address harmful algal blooms with other federal partners through the Interagency Working Group on Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia Research Control Act as authorized by Public Law 115-423. Further, within one year of enactment, the Committee directs NRCS, in collaboration with the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, to report back on comparisons between soil health, water quality, and HABs presence in the Great Lakes.

**Mississippi River Basin** – The Committee recognizes that the Mississippi River basin from Minnesota to Louisiana is a vital American waterway. The Committee urges the Department to participate and coordinate as an essential federal stakeholder with the Environmental Protection Agency on developing a Mississippi River restoration and resiliency strategy focused on improving water quality, restoring habitat and natural systems, improving navigation, eliminating aquatic invasive species, and building local resilience to natural disasters.

**Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production** – The Committee directs NRCS to maintain grants to support urban agriculture outreach and innovation and encourages NRCS to consider expanding the number of grant programs available. To this extent, the Committee provides an additional \$7,000,000 for this office. Of this amount, \$1,000,000 is for pilot programs. The Committee also acknowledges the need for expanded research in support of urban agriculture in food-insecure communities.



Communities that lack access to fresh produce face growing epidemics of obesity-related diseases. The Committee believes urban farming and food production closer to the home is a viable solution to these challenges and encourages the Department to create partnerships and, with its extension programs, to assist urban agricultural production.

**Resource Conservation and Development Councils (RC&Ds)** – The Committee recognizes RC&Ds have been valuable partners in conservation and encourages NRCS to continue working with local councils, as appropriate, to ensure conservation programs meet local resource needs.

**Sage Grouse Initiative** – The Committee supports NRCS's sage grouse conservation efforts.

**Soil Health and Food Nutrients** – The Committee understands that different regions of the country have different soils needs to optimize food nutrient density. The Committee directs NRCS to conduct targeted regional studies on carbon capture related to nitrate and phosphorus to the soil components in restoring regenerative soils and their impact on nutrients in vegetables, fruits, and farm products, particularly in agricultural regions where human health has been placed at risk.

**Soil Health on Federal Lands** – The Committee directs the Secretary, in coordination with the Department of the Interior, to conduct a study on the state of soil health on Federal lands in the United States and provide a report on its findings 180 days after enactment. This study should include an analysis of the impact that grazing, wildfire, recreation, and invasive species have on the soil; and it should include recommendations for legislative or regulatory action to improve soil health, increase carbon sequestration, and improve community benefits of soil health programs on Federal lands.

**Soil Restoration in Watersheds** – The Committee is concerned about soil quality near watersheds such as the Great Lakes Basin, Salton Sea, Lake Okeechobee, and the Chesapeake Bay. Water from these sources, used for agriculture, affects crop production and soil health, and through groundwater and surface water run-off, the health of the soil in turn affects adjacent water sources. Therefore, the Committee directs NRCS to evaluate outcomes of watershed and cropland projects implemented through its Conservation Effects Assessment Project, and report back to the Committee within 180 days of enactment on the results and effectiveness of conservation program practices. Emphasis should be placed on regenerative soil findings, soil health standards that can be established, and means to improve water quality.

#### **WATERSHED AND FLOOD PREVENTION OPERATIONS**

2020 appropriation – \$175,000,000

2021 budget estimate – \$0

Provided in the bill – \$155,000,000

#### **Watershed Rehabilitation Program**

2020 appropriation – \$10,000,000

2021 President's budget request – \$0

Provided in the bill – \$12,000,000

#### **CREATE ACT**

A bipartisan group of senators introduced legislation the week of August 23<sup>rd</sup> that would create a multi-agency initiative for the research and development of carbon removal technologies to make the air cleaner and environment healthier. Senators **Lisa Murkowski**, R-Alaska; **Kyrsten Sinema**, D-Ariz.; **Sheldon Whitehouse**, D-R.I.; and **Shelley Moore Capito**, R-W.Va., introduced the "Carbon Removal, Efficient Agencies, Technology Expertise Act" (CREATE) to bolster carbon reduction efforts.

"Carbon removal technologies have significant promise and could someday present an opportunity to substantially reduce net levels of global greenhouse gas emissions," Murkowski said. "Our bipartisan CREATE Act will help ensure coordinated leadership across federal agencies as we pursue the development of innovative technologies that remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and the oceans."

If enacted, the legislation would establish a carbon management committee within the National Science and Technology Council that would include officials from the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy; Energy, Agriculture and Defense departments; and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The committee would create a strategic plan for federal research and technology development on carbon removal and storage as well as oversee four working groups. These groups would focus on oceans, air, and land carbon removal through geological and technological-based strategies.



**ARCSE Annual Meeting. Session 1 Virtual Participants, ARCSE, Current NRCS and SWCS Participants. Participants, L-R Upper Row: Joe Derry, ARCSE Intern; Cheryl Simmons, ARCSE President; Clair Lindahl, Chief Executive Officer, SWCS; Joe Otto, SWCS Historian. Middle Row: Kurt Simon, Iowa STC; John Peterson, Senior Conservationist; Jack Carlson, ARCSE Secretary; Earle Norton, Invocation. Bottom Row: Arnold King, Future ARCSE President; NRCS Chief, Matt Lohr; Dana York, Past ARCSE President; Rex Martin, Chair, SWCS Board of Directors.**

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

**Cheryl Simmons**

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

Greetings! Around 75 members and guests joined online or called in to the first virtual annual ARCSE meeting. It was an enjoyable morning spent looking at seldom-seen **Hugh Hammond Bennett** artifacts and hearing from our panelists. Connecting and staying connected in 2020 and the Future: [ARCSE Annual MtgReplay\\_](#)

- ARCSE helps members stay connected and informed on conservation problems and programs from a non-governmental point of view so that the members may be better able to assist the conservation effort
  - ✓ Student support – Intern for SWCS
  - ✓ Mentors
- Members can be Active or Affiliate and more
  - ✓ First Active year is free
  - ✓ \$18 annual member fee

The meeting kicked off with our own **Bill Ward's** Western Lights Band supporting a short video on some historic and current NRCS funded work near Santa Monica California: [NRCS Story](#). **Earl Norton** delivered the invocation. Awards, general welcomes and reports took up the first part of the meeting. Senior Conservationist **John Peterson** visited briefly with the group, along with SWCS **Clare Lindahl**, **Rex Martin**, and NRCS **Kurt Simon** and Chief **Matt Lohr**.

**Joe Otto**, SWCS Historian, then took us through an historic event with drawings, objects, and articles detailing Bennett's adoption as a tribal member in early Soil Conservation Service-NRCS history.

Next **Joe Derry**, ARCSE and SWCS Intern, presented options for cooperation and joint benefits for the ARCSE future. Ideas for ARCSE includes shared membership efforts, periodic joint newsletters, and support for student conservationists. The sessions wrapped up with the traditional board meeting through Zoom video conferencing.

Over the meeting week, ARCSE representatives were able to join an online SWCS/ARCSE "hang-out" and met with Women in Natural Resources (WiN) President **Kristie McKinley**. We are working with WiN and SWCS to offer short-term mentor opportunities for our members. Let us know if you would like to be a resource for younger NRCS WiN members looking for short visits from an experienced retiree. It is another way to stay connected and support conservationists working in the field.

As we look to the future for ARCSE, we are in need for volunteers to serve as regional contacts on the ARCSE Board. The following States need help in staying in touch with communications from members:

Looking for States in need of an ARCSE Representative:

- Connecticut/Rhode Island
- Delaware/Maryland
- Hawaii
- Kentucky
- Mississippi

- Puerto Rico
- South Dakota
- Washington National Capital Area
- Wyoming

Please let us know if you are serving as a State Rep. in one of these States. We apologize if this list is incorrect.



### Association of Retired Conservation Service Employees

Join Us and Join In! Thank you for your support.

A message from **Joe Otto**, SWCS Historian:

"Hello ARCSE members, SWCS Historian Joe Otto here. I've asked Cheryl to communicate my request to you for help. The SWCS's archive of annual conference programs is missing several editions from the 1990s and 2000s. Did you by chance save any programs from the SWCS conferences you've attended in the past? If so, would you be willing to donate them to the master archive at SWCS headquarters? The years I am looking for are: 1965/Philadelphia, 1996/Keystone, 1997/Toronto, 1999/Biloxi, 2000/St. Louis, 2001/Myrtle Beach, 2006/Keystone, 2007/Tampa, and 2013/Reno.

If you have any of these programs and are willing to donate them to the Society, please contact Joe Otto at [joe.otto@swcs.org](mailto:joe.otto@swcs.org), or mail them to:

Soil and Water Conservation Society, c/o Joe Otto, Historian  
945 SW Ankeny Rd., Ankeny, IA 50023. Thanks very much for your help! Sincerely, Joe Otto"

**A message about SCAMS:** Please be vigilant against scamming! ARCSE Board email addresses are on the web page, and scammers often "mask" or create similar names to scam. If you look at the details or right click the email, you can often see a strange email address. ARCSE never asks for money or gift cards to be sent directly to the board as individuals. We *do* accept contributions and dues through Pay Pal on the website or by mail to PO Box 8965, Moscow, ID 83843.

## ARCSE Annual Meeting Update

**Jack Carlson, ARCSE Secretary**

Just a few more words about the ARCSE Annual Meeting and kudos to **Cheryl** for the great job emceeding the virtual event. Some very nice comments were posted to the chat stream from those tuning in. SWCS was kind to provide a link to the proceedings if you would like to play it with your Zoom app: [ARCSE Annual Meeting proceedings](#).

The business meeting continued to focus on ways to build membership while financially maintaining its core responsibility to organize and publish the bi-monthly Newsletter. The new draft ARCSE/SWCS Partnership Plan outlines several "shovel-ready" opportunities for recruitment, including newly registered SWCS eligible members having option for the complimentary one-year ARCSE membership, exchange of ARCSE and SWCS promotional literature, SWCS contributions to the ARCSE Newsletter, and ARCSE contributions to "Conservogram." The plan also includes longer-term opportunities to build interest and vitality of the organization, such as shared interns, SWCS provided media support, and a volunteer ambassador program. The draft plan will be distributed for review within the organization in the coming days, and the feedback will guide Board decisions going forward.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

**Donna Beggs**

INCOME	
Annual Meeting -PA	\$1,035
Dues – Annual	6,396
Dues – Life	1,437
Contributions	1,677
Hardcopy Fees	1,127
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$11,672</b>
EXPENSES	
Administrative	\$3,567
Annual Meeting – PA	3,341
Annual Meeting – IA	500
Special Incentives	500
Newsletter	4,104
SWCS – Intern Sponsorship	5,000
Website/Internet	1,051
Awards	97
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$18,160</b>
<b>NET CHANGE</b>	<b>(\$6,064)</b>

During FY2020 income decreased, due primarily to an overall 15% decline in membership dues, compared to the previous year. The board approved a payment of \$5,500 to SWCS for the sponsorship of a student intern and the virtual Annual Meeting. These funds came from moneys previously held in savings. Collecting dues in 2020 was the first year for ARCSE to use PayPal to receive members' dues and hardcopy newsletter payments. Over 70 members used this form of payment. Contributions to ARCSE may also be received through PayPal.

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

**Paul Benedict, Membership Chair**

**New Members:** **P. George Martin**, Auburn, AL  
**Kathleen Woida**, Des Moines, IA

**New Life Member:** **Edward E. Marshall**, Silver City, Iowa

Thank you to all who send in obituary notices for the newsletter. It is greatly appreciated. Please send them directly to me at [soilwarden@verizon.net](mailto:soilwarden@verizon.net).

As you have the opportunity, please share information about our association with other retirees who are not members and with NRCS employees approaching retirement. The membership application is available online as shown below. Current NRCS employees can become associate members and convert to full voting membership when they retire.

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

### ARCSE MEMBERSHIP DUES

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

*NOTE: Dues payment includes receipt of the bimonthly electronic newsletter only. All members (both life members and those who pay annual dues) who desire a hard copy of the newsletter must pay an additional fee of \$12.00 per year.*  
**Please submit Dues to ARCSE at P.O. Box 8965 Moscow, ID 83843**

## ALABAMA

**Earl Norton, ARCSE Representative**

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

The Alabama group of retirees who meet monthly on the first Monday for breakfast in Auburn met the last two months at Chappy's Restaurant. This is a new location for our group because our previous eatery had closed just before the COVID-19 put a major strain on restaurants. Four retirees attended one month, and three the other. This reflects that our members are staying at home unless a trip is necessary. As in recent meetings, the COVID-19 virus and members' health were the main topics of importance. Like other retirees over the country, we in Alabama are looking forward to the day when we can go about our activities without the worries related to COVID-19.

I was honored by the ARSCE during the Annual Meeting on July 27<sup>th</sup> by receiving the President's Award for Outstanding Community Service. I did not have an opportunity to make remarks during the meeting and would not have had enough time to cover everything that might be said, so I would like to share the following statements in this newsletter. I am a product of an outstanding system (SCS/NRCS) that promotes wise use of human resources, and I have accomplished very little by myself. I feel that the award reflects the results of outstanding teamwork, and I sincerely appreciate all of the support that I have received over the years from colleagues.

In keeping with our intent to feature the activities of one of our Alabama retirees in each newsletter, we are featuring **Rev. Cliff Jones** in this newsletter. Cliff Jones transferred from NRCS in Mississippi in 1981 to the district conservationist job at Phenix City, AL. Later he served as the NRCS Liaison to Tuskegee University and served in his last NRCS assignment in Alabama as the state resource conservationist. He retired from NRCS in December 1996 and became the full-time minister/pastor of Greater Peace Missionary Baptist Church in Opelika.

Growth of facilities and activities of Greater Peace has been phenomenal since Cliff became the Pastor. The membership of the church in 1996 was 330, and it is now 1,065. The church has a 35,000 square-foot Worship Center and a Family Life Center. Under Cliff's leadership, the Greater Peace Community Development Corporation (GPCDC) was established as a nonprofit (501c3) to impact the Jeter community in Opelika and East Alabama. The GPCDC built an affordable housing subdivision with 48 houses, with a program enabling the residents to be able to purchase their home and become homeowners in 15 years.

Another development of the GPCDC is a Child Development Center which houses a pre-K program of 36 children and 10 three-year-olds. The church conducts the following programs: A Youth Leadership Academy; a STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) after-school program for grades 1-12; a Summer Education Enrichment Program; a Tutorial Program for Kindergarten through grade 9 two days a week; and a two-acre community garden for residents. Along the way, Cliff served two terms on the City of Auburn School Board. He has not only been a busy fellow in retirement, but he has made major contributions for the betterment of the citizens in the Opelika-Auburn area. We are proud of the accomplishment of our retiree Cliff Jones.





**Rev. Cliff Jones, NRCS retiree and Pastor of Greater Peace Missionary Baptist Church since December 1966.**



**Greater Peace Missionary Baptist Church**



**Part of the 48 affordable houses developed by the Greater Peace Community Development Corporation.**

An email from **Greg Brannon** provided an update on his time on the Appalachian Trail this summer. He continued the hike that he started in 2018. Greg retired in January 2016 after 32 years with NRCS. He was a Soils Data Quality Specialist (soil scientist) working with the MLRA Region 7 Office and headquartered in Auburn. Greg has continued his work in soil science and works regularly as a soils evaluator for on-site sewage systems, commonly referred to as septic systems.



**Greg Brannon hiked 50 miles along the Appalachian Trail this summer. This picture was made in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. Greg said, "This year's hike was a challenging adventure."**

## ARIZONA

**Ken Cookson, ARCSE Representative**

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

**Rod Alt Report:** My son **Rodney** and wife **Mary** from Lubbock, TX spent the fourth of July weekend with us to celebrate his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday.

On July 8<sup>th</sup>, we flew to Huntsville, AL to attend **Sally's** grandson's wedding. We returned to Phoenix on July 12<sup>th</sup>. We did not do any sightseeing due to the coronavirus. I did play golf a couple of days while we were there.

## CALIFORNIA

**Bill Ward, ARCSE Representative**

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

**Greetings from California.** California is struggling with the Corona Virus like many parts of the country. As of August 12<sup>th</sup>, California had documented 586,000 cases and 10,650 deaths. Some "bending of the curve" on those rates has occurred, but plenty of restrictions persist on normal activities in counties doing poorly, with high case numbers and/or deaths. The most recent good news in California was that hospitalizations had been reduced from dangerously high levels July 21<sup>st</sup> by about 20 percent! To my knowledge, California retirees are generally doing well, staying close to home and following safe social distancing practices.

**Virtual ARCSE Annual Meeting and 75th SWCS Anniversary Meeting:** As a member of the ARCSE Board (West Region VP) I enjoyed being part of the "Virtual" ARCSE annual board meeting on July 27<sup>th</sup> this year at home. There were two virtual working groups or sessions. Session 1 included key ARCSE board leadership, SCWS staff, and current NRCS staff including current NRCS Chief **Matt Lohr** with participants as shown below.

**Session 1.** A primary goal of Session 1 was to network past, present, and next generation conservationists, looking forward to the decades of work ahead. Following is a link to a YouTube video ARCSE used to open the meeting. We used a California success story on our Santa Monica Debris Basin set to music provided by my band, the Western Lights, to set the tone for the meeting. Welcoming comments and music: <https://youtu.be/SmSHqudC2Sc>

The Session 1 agenda included partner presentations from SWCS, ARCSE, and talks by NRCS leadership, including the Iowa STC, **Kurt Simon**; and NRCS Chief, **Matt Lohr**. It was good to hear both these men share encouraging news about the recognized value of our agency's conservation work and good outlook for funding and the ability to hire staff.

Well-deserved ARCSE Presidents Awards were presented to ARCSE members, including the following:

- President's Award for Meritorious Service – **Dana York**
- President's Award for Distinguished Service – **Norm Kempf**
- President's Award for Outstanding Community Service – **Earl Norton**

SWCS presentations included a report from **Joe Derry**, an SWCS intern hired by ARCSE to help with cooperative work between SWCS and ARCSE; and **Joe Otto**, SWCS Historian. The presentations by SWCS Historian Joe Otto of never-seen-before **Hugh Hammond Bennett** artifacts was particularly interesting. In particular, his story about the presentation of a "War Bonnet" gift made from Golden Eagle feathers from a Native American tribe to our agency's Chief in Hardin Montana in 1947 deserves to be shared in more detail here.



**Big Horn SCD "War Bonnet" Gift to Hugh Bennett, 1947**



The occasion for presentation of this gift was a speaking event for the Chief, with the title "Soil Conservation Can't Stand Still" to an audience of some 5,000 people. To think about a Native American Tribe presenting such a gift to honor a white American man, our agency's first Chief, is really remarkable and says something special about our Chief and our agency's work. Later, after a follow-up communication from me to Joe, he sent me the following two "news photos" covering the event that day.



*Big Horn SCD "War Bonnet" Gift to Hugh Bennett, 1947*

At the conclusion of this Session 1, I came away with a good feeling about the future funding for our agency, as well as the partnership ARCSE and SWCS have established and continue to strengthen. All ARCSE members were invited to dial in and observe this Session 1 Virtual Meeting, and a good number did.

Our **Session 2** virtual working group consisted primarily of ARCSE Board members taking care of the annual meeting business, reviewing and approving budgets, reports, meeting minutes, etc. Those taking part are shown below:



**Session 2 Virtual Participants for ARCSE annual board meeting.** Upper Row: Jack Carlson, Secretary; Bill Ward, West Region VP; Jerry Bernard, Editor; Cheryl Simmons, President. Middle Row: Melvin Womack, East Region VP; Arnold King, Future President; Joe Derry, ARCSE Intern; Bill Kuenstler, South Region VP. Bottom Row: Dana York, Past President; David Buland Webmaster; Becky Fletcher, Midwest Region VP; Donna Beggs, Treasurer.

**California Retirees' Second Zoom Gathering.** California enjoyed our 2<sup>nd</sup> "first Wednesday of the month" Zoom gathering that has replaced our monthly lunch gatherings we used to have in Davis, prior to the corona virus shut down. We had a group of eight NRCS retirees connect via Zoom August 5<sup>th</sup>. It was enjoyable for all of us to see each other and share what was new. The group who participated are shown below.



**NRCS California Retiree Zoom gathering participants, August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020. L-R Top Row: Chester Bush, Bill Ward, Walt Sykes. Middle Row: Madalene Ransome, Al Cerna, Darwyn and Susie Briggs. Bottom Row: Hank Wyman, Harold Honeyfield.**

**Bill Ward's latest music project.** With more free time than usual, I have started to document the 30-year history of my Western Lights Band. I have finished Chapter 1, and I am close to being finished with Chapter 2.

*Western Lights, a 30-year history of Treasured Musical Memories and Friendships, Chapter 1:* <https://youtu.be/SmSHqudC2Sc>

Until next time, wishing all retirees the best and to be safe!

Bill Ward, California ARCSE Representative, PE; Former Design Staff Leader, Davis, CA.

2020 continues to be a year we would all like to put behind us, with the hope to never see anything like it again. The current wildfire situation, on top of the Pandemic, is just the latest. At this time **Bill Reed** is the only fellow retiree who was required to evacuate, according to **John Rogers**. John shared the following information with me about Bill:

"Bill was a soil scientist. He worked on the Sacramento survey and was the party leader in the Santa Clara and Colusa county surveys. He moved to the State Office and was the CNI coordinator. He retired a few years ago. After retiring he built a home in the English Hills. That is rural Vacaville."

Thankfully a follow-up message from John to me was that Bill's house was spared. I have since added Bill to my group e-mail list. If you know of any other retirees impacted by the wildfires, please let me know.

I thought a "good story" in the midst of so many trials we are all dealing with would hopefully bring a smile to your faces, so Dana and I have one to share.

Two years ago, our youngest son **Steven** (now 34) moved to the LA area to work in the music industry, specifically in the recording area of music. Since then his life has dramatically changed for the better.

First, he finally met the woman who would become his wife and in fact did so last week. In addition, he found a new job doing what he loves, working for a music industry company based in Finland, with some very exciting things planned for Steven after the first of the year.

But the unfolding of the story is what is especially fun and charming! **Steve and Courtney** met through a dating service shortly after he arrived in LA. So that can work. They were both at an age and a place in their life when they were serious about their future and wanting to meet the right person. Our family has met Courtney numerous times when they have come up to Sacramento, and we all love her! How fortunate is that! Courtney and Dana hit it off immediately, and she has become almost like another daughter. They do things together in the kitchen, making bread. They talk sewing, etc. Here is a picture of all our kids when Steve and Courtney came up for Christmas last year. Followed by a photo of our entire family the same evening.



**Jimmy, Becca, Jennifer, Steve and Courtney**





**Bill and Dana and family**

In early August, Steven called Dana and asked her if she could set up a Zoom meeting with the family. "Aha!" we said, they are going to announce they are getting married, we thought!

It turns out we were right. They did announce they were going to get married October 31<sup>st</sup> but that is not all they shared. I indicated above Steven works for Neural DSP, a company based in Finland that is all about "music plugins and tone." Here is a link to information about his company. This link will tell you more about Neural DSP. They also have a YouTube channel, on which Steven posts a lot of product demo. [Neural DSP](#).

After the marriage announcement, then came the bombshell. Steven shared with us that Neural DSP has asked Steven to move to Brighton, England with a significant increase in salary, to work for them there as part of a large work group. That's right – I did say Brighton England! At that moment I could see all my family's faces and jaws dropping in stunned amazement at this announcement! It was a mixed reaction initially, as Dana immediately thought of how far away they would be. That did not last long, however, as it became clear that this was such a wonderful opportunity for both of them and a good excuse for us to visit them in England. Dana has visited England several times with her Mom and thoroughly enjoyed those visits. "Holy cow!" is all I could think!

So, at that time the plan for the wedding was for the immediate family to come down October 31<sup>st</sup>. But the surprises were not over!

On Thursday August 13<sup>th</sup>, the family got a text from Steve and Courtney with the following two pictures. They were married – Holy cow, another stunner! After the dust settled, they explained that when they went down to the courthouse to get things ready for their upcoming wedding, they were asked if they wanted to actually go ahead with the ceremony. It did not take them long at all to say, "why not?" Getting this done now allows them more time to work on visas and things they will need for their move to England. And important to Dana is that we will go down for a reception-type celebration even on October 31<sup>st</sup>.



**Officially Mrs. Steven Ward!**

So, there you have it folks, I hope this little story brought a smile to your face. Dana and I smile about it all the time. Best Wishes to you all and be safe – Bill and Dana.

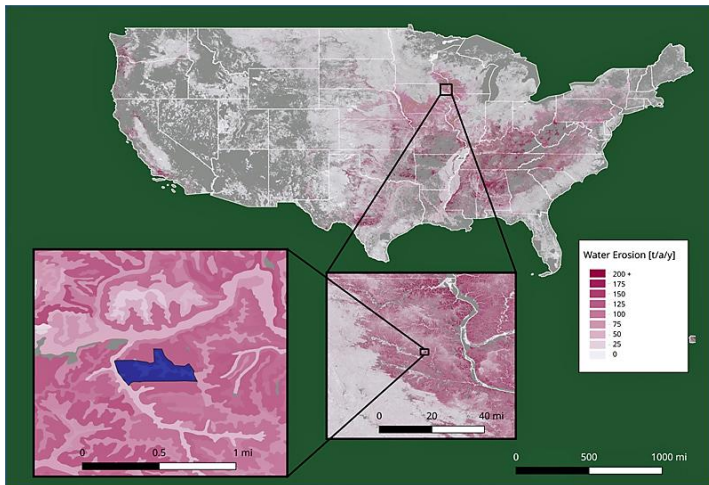
## COLORADO

**Jack Carlson, ARCSE Representative**

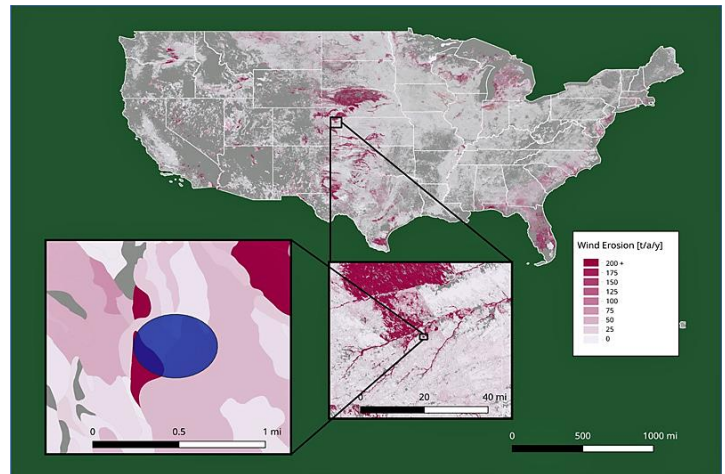
**Email: [pspicata@gmail.com](mailto:pspicata@gmail.com)**

Eleven foursomes made their rounds at the 10<sup>th</sup> **Annual Allen and Kathy Green** Golf Outing under sunny skies on July 24<sup>th</sup> at the Highland Meadows course. NRCS retirees at the event included **Allen, Dan and Chris Meyer, George Cleek, Chris Pacheco, Steve Park, Stu Simpson, John Fusaro, Steve Jeldon, Frank Riggle, Wendall Oaks, and Jack Carlson**. Allen, course management and staff did a great job with logistics and etiquette with the current constraints we all face.

In the last newsletter we posted a map of Colorado showing wind erosion prone areas. The following two maps show water and wind erosion prone cultivated land areas for the continental U.S. They are part of a project to develop new water and wind erodibility computational methods for environmental benefits indices (EBI) for program ranking purposes. The maps were created by running the Water Erosion Prediction Project (WEPP) and Wind Erosion Prediction System (WEPS) models for a continuously tilled-fallow management on each soil mapunit polygon intersecting cultivated land. More than 17 million mapunit polygons were simulated with WEPP and WEPS, using data services for 10m DEM average slope calculations, inputs from the NRCS Soil Data Mart, and 4km PRISM adjusted climate input to the models. With testing and quality control, the effort involved more than 50 million model runs and ~8 years of computing time, with scaling condensed to a month.



**Tilled-Fallow Water Erosion Map (Erosion rates from 0-200+ tons/acre/year)**



**Tilled-Fallow Wind Erosion Map (Erosion rates from 0-200+ tons/acre/year)**

## FLORIDA

**Bill Kuenstler, ARCSE Representative**

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

From **Bob Halstead**: Not too much to report from beautiful downtown Homosassa, FL. **Sue** and I have been pretty well hunkered down since the start of the pandemic. We have started a collection of beautiful face masks and cleaned out a lot of stuff these past five months. We did have another great grandchild, bringing that number to 18. Since I cannot remember all their names, I am now numbering them – makes it a lot easier to remember them. We are Zooming our church services, and the fish are practicing social distancing when I am on the water. The highlight was that a local magazine did a feature story on us last month, so I got to brag about SCS and the good old days.

From **Bill Kuenstler**: It's a rainy day in the Florida Panhandle as I write this, thanks to Tropical Storm Marco. What better time to look back on the first six months of this year.

My wife, **Rita**, has been dealing with some major medical issues. She had surgery for colon cancer in late February. The surgery went well, and the doctor and lab tests showed that they got the entire tumor (stage 2), and there was no spread to the lymph nodes. Because of that, no chemotherapy was required.

About a month after that surgery, she was back in the hospital – this time for surgery to patch a perforated ulcer. That surgery went well, also. Then about six weeks later, I took her to the ER because her heart rate was dangerously high. The doctors found she had blood clots in her legs and lungs, so she was put on blood thinners and sent home.

After all that, she is recovering remarkably well. She had lost about 35-40 pounds in the six months before her first surgery, and I'm happy to say she has gained about half of that back. But because of all these health concerns, she is particularly vulnerable to COVID-19, so we have been especially careful about potential exposure. I go to the grocery store once or twice a week, and that's about it. Most of my volunteer activities (one day a week at the local hospital: Master Gardener activities) have been suspended because of COVID-19.

One volunteer activity that I continue to do is sea turtle watch. I walk a 1.5-mile section of beach one day a week looking for sea turtle nests. I can do this because I'm out on the beach by 5am, and there are few people around then.





**Green Sea Turtle**

Even if someone is out, it's easy to keep your distance from them. The turtles are having a pretty good year. Volunteers in the South Walton Turtle Watch have marked 77 nests this year – not a record, but much better than last year, when we found only 47. This year 21 of the nests have been Green Turtles, which might be a record for that species here. In past years, there have been only 2-4 Green Turtle nests in our county. Green Turtles (so named because their fat is green, due to their diet) are Federally endangered, so it's nice to see so many nests. I'm happy to report that I found one nest this year, and it was a Green Turtle nest, so my year is a success!

I hope everyone is staying safe and healthy. Keep your masks, hand sanitizer, and sanitizing wipes at the ready. We'll get through this!

## IOWA

**Mark Jensen, ARCSE Representative**

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

Prior to August 10<sup>th</sup>, I'm guessing that for most Iowans, except meteorologists, the word "derecho" was not in our vocabularies. Now, we're all familiar with it. The storm that went across Iowa, Illinois, and Indiana that day was one to remember. **Neal Struthers** provided one firsthand account of some of the damage: "We (**Neal and Sheryl**) picked up my sister-in-law's frozen, or semi-frozen, food last night (August 12<sup>th</sup>). She is in Cedar Rapids and may not get power back for two to three weeks. So, our freezer is a little fuller. The damage that we saw was extensive. Corn was flat five miles north of CR, and all of the taller trees in CR seemed to have been given "trims." We saw one church with the west wall mostly gone. My sister-in-law had damage to trees, with one branch poking a 3-inch hole in the roof (new shingles last summer). I patched in a shingle tab to keep water out as long as there is not a lot of wind." This is a somewhat typical report of the damage across the central part of the state.

**Marty Adkins** reports that he and **Carol** have been neck deep in a long-deferred home improvement project since mid-May. The last phase, for now, will be landscaping in a reshaped back yard. Their volunteer work is resuming after a COVID-19 hiatus. Marty and his son **Drew** are scanning and logging archival photos of the construction of Lake Red Rock, among other things. Another activity is helping with their church baking project. Marty has also worked with the Knoxville Field Office District Conservationist **Holly Giombi** to start up Soil Health training for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers land managers.

Thanks to **Lyle Asell** for the following: "Our life is full of adventure while avoiding COVID-19. The trip to the grocery store is usually the big excitement for the week! Since we live on a paved county road, we drink coffee on the front porch and watch vehicles play deer roulette as they whiz by. We also watch birds and have ground-nesting bees in a flower bed by the porch – thus we talk about the 'birds and bees.' Monarch caterpillars are hard to find in the Butterfly Milkweed plants, so it takes a lot of time each day looking for them. In case we run out of things to talk about, we have a conversation with Chloe or Lucy (Boston Terriers) about bunnies, squirrels, chasing sticks, or if it is time for FOOD.

**Abby**, our oldest granddaughter, will be a high school senior this year in Indianola and decided she wanted her senior pictures taken around our farm. We do not see our kids as often as we would like to, so it was fun hanging out with **Andy** and his family while the pictures were being taken. **Stacy**, Andy's wife, teaches middle school math in Indianola and is quite concerned about returning to the classroom. Our family remains COVID-19 free, and most work from home or in an adjusted environment.

Staying home is really pretty nice! There is always something to do around the farm and far from boring. I'm already up to 1997 tasks to be completed and looking forward to breaking into the new century. We lost a couple of trees to the storm, but they were both in the pasture so didn't hurt much. In case you and your chain saw need more work, come on down." Note to Lyle: My chain saw has seen enough action for a while, and its operator is ready for a break. I cut some of our downed trees into firewood-sized pieces. There are so many trees down around here that I can't even give away the firewood.

Just like most of us, **Brian and Kathy Peterson** have stayed close to home for the past few months. Brian told me about an honor he received last school year. He received an Iowa High School Athletic Association "Friend of the School" award. The award was presented to him by the Corning School Superintendent. The award was given for his service to the athletic program for announcing sports activities for more than 30 years. He has announced all local sports in Corning, with the exception of volleyball. In the past 20 years he has announced primarily football and wrestling. While it wasn't a part of the award, he has also announced homecoming and other local parades for more than 30 years.



**Brian Peterson (center) receiving the Friend of the School Award**

**Dick Hall** recently celebrated his 86<sup>th</sup> birthday. Happy Birthday, Dick! He reports that due to the pandemic, he has done very little traveling. He is feeling pretty good and still mows his own lawn with a walk-behind mower and is planning to do his own snow blowing this winter, if necessary. Dick's son **Jeff** is an engineer; **Mindy** is a math teacher; **Theresa** and **Jenny** are nurses; and **Janet** is a CPA.



**Dick Hall with his kids (L-R): Jeff, Theresa, Janet, "The Old Dude," Mindy, and Jenny**

While on the subject of celebrations, **Lee and Alice White** celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on August 15<sup>th</sup>. Congratulations Lee and Alice!

It was good to hear from **Steve Stover**. He reports the following: "Jan and I are doing well for 'old folks' and staying close to home. We were able to spend time in Arizona at the Sunflower RV Resort from January 15<sup>th</sup> to March 28<sup>th</sup>. All of the many activities at the resort were canceled, and the buildings locked on March 13<sup>th</sup> due to the virus. The resort is a 55-plus site, and the average age is much higher! The management company was trying to be sure the virus did not get a foothold with the aging residents. We decided it was time to head home on March 28<sup>th</sup>, as the virus started to spread in the Phoenix area. We self-isolated at home for 14 days and had help from a neighbor getting groceries. We have continued to be careful with our shopping activities. We definitely do not recognize anyone with the masks. One of the best virus cartoons received was 'I never thought I'd walk into a bank with a mask on and ask for money!'"

**Ronald Hersom** tells us about their travels and details of their most recent camping caravan: "**Jo** and I have been doing some kind of camping since 1973. We joined a local camping club and did mostly weekend camping. After retiring in 1993, we progressed to motor-homing and started being snowbirds to AZ, TX and FL. In 2002 we settled on Weslaco, TX as a winter destination. Our motor-homing leads us to all parts of the country. We were blessed for that opportunity. We toured Alaska the summer of '98, caravanned the Baja in '99, spent the winter in Key West, and then caravanned the Maritime Provinces in 2000. In Sept. 2017 we did a 10-day rally to New York City. Glad we made it then, not now.

Last year (2019) we joined a 24-day caravan of the ancient people of the southwest in AZ and NM. Some highlights included Sedona; the Grand Canyon; the famous Richardson Trading Post in Gallup, NM; jeep tours of Canyon de Chelly National Monument and Monument Valley National Park; and several Aztec and Navajo museums and ancient settlements across northern AZ and NM. We stood 'on the corner' in Winslow, AZ where the name sake song was referenced. We toured Taos, canoed the Rio Grande River there, and toured Santa Fe. Of course, there were many opportunities to taste 'local food.' We then spent 12 days in Albuquerque at the Balloon Festival with another caravan company. Besides the mass balloon ascensions, some even landed right next to our rally site. Talk about a front seat! We also toured Old Town Albuquerque, Sky Mesa (an active Native American village), and a local home that was an enormous Turquoise museum.





***Turquoise Jewelry at the Richardson Trading Post in Gallup, NM***



***Mass Balloon Ascension at Albuquerque, NM***



***Canyon de Chelly National Monument in AZ***

We are certainly fortunate as the same tours this year are all cancelled. If you have a bucket list, fill it soon. Tomorrows are fewer every day."

During the past few weeks, we've added several more folks to our retiree family. These are: **Kurt Simon**, State Conservationist; **Shelly Grimmus**, Executive Assistant to the STC; **Doug Peterson**, IA-MO Regional Soil Health Specialist in Des Moines; **Bonnie Wichman**, Administrative Management Assistant in the Sioux City Area Office; **Terri Arry**, SCT in Tipton; **Ruth Ehley**, SC in Webster City; and **Curt Donohue**, DC in Newton.

In June we were saddened to learn of the passing of **Keith McCall**. Keith was a long time Civil Engineering Technician in the Shenandoah Engineering Office. On a personal note, when I was a student trainee in the Creston Engineering Office with **Larry Dorgan** in 1970, Keith came over to our office and was the first person to walk me through the nitty gritty details of designing small dams.

## KANSAS

**Deanne Lull, ARCSE Representative**

**Email: [rlull2@cox.net](mailto:rlull2@cox.net)**

Summer is about over, and Kansas is still in an upswing of virus cases. Yours truly continues to be very cautious about getting out and about. It's sad that my excitement for the week is going to the grocery store! *[Editor's note: Amen to that!]*

Only eleven gathered for the Kansas Chapter of SCS/NRCS Retired Employees' annual meeting and dinner at the Hilton Garden Inn in Salina, KS on June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Attending were **Harold** and **Paula Blume**, Salina; **Dennis Brinkman**, Carbondale; **Duane Evans**, Salina; **Deanne and Ron Lull**, Salina; **John** and **Linda Ourada**, Salina; **Robert** and **Carolyn Roth**, Great Bend; and **Mary Shaffer**, Salina.



**Kansas Retirees meet**

**Dennis Brinkman** (former agronomist and district conservationist) was the speaker for the evening. He opened the meeting by sharing pictures showing "What We Eat" by comparing the amount of weekly food available for a family of four in the United States, a family of twelve in Egypt, a family of nine in Ecuador, and a family of six in Africa. He later gave a fast-paced presentation about details he served on during his career, taking him from the Gulf of Mexico to the Canadian border, Wyoming, North Dakota, and even one in Kansas.

A short business meeting was held. Officers **Harold Blume**, president, and **Mary Shaffer**, secretary-treasurer, will continue to serve next year. A memorial service was held honoring 18 retirees and spouses who had passed away the past year. Brief reports were given by **John Ourada** on NARFE and **Deanne Lull** on ARSCE. **Harold Blume** closed the meeting with a fun quiz on USDA history, awarding treats to those with the most correct answers.

After seeing many thank-you signs and banners, it occurred to **Linda Ourada** (spouse of retiree **John Ourada**) that postal and federal employees should also be recognized as essential workers during the pandemic. She had signs made that were placed in yards around Salina. **Linda** has also been working with a group of volunteers to keep the landscaping in the Salina city parks looking nice.



**One of the signs that Linda Ourada had made and placed around Salinas**

The Kansas State Office lady retirees and several past employees honored **Karen Churchman** (former State Conservationist's secretary) with an afternoon get-together. **Karen** suffers from health issues and has only been able to attend a few of our monthly meetings the past several years. An enjoyable time was had sharing fond memories and visiting.



**Kansas State Office Retirees**



Three joined the retiree ranks. **Henry (Hank) C. Letourneau** retired July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020, as a Soil Conservation Technician in the Minneapolis Office in the Abilene Management Unit. On August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020, **Kenneth W. Nelson** retired with over 40 years of service. He retired as a Soil Conservation Technician in the Washington Office in the Washington Management Unit. He followed his father's footsteps (**Laverne**) who worked as a Soil Conservation Technician in the Washington Field Office from 1950 to 1979. **Steven E. Nelson** retired on August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020, as a Soil Conservation Technician in the Concordia Office in the Belleville Management Unit.

"It's only the primary election, I'm busy today, and my one vote won't make much difference anyway, so I think I will skip voting." Have you ever had any of these thoughts? The Election Day votes for retiree **Jon L. Ungerer** and his opponent running for State Representative resulted in a dead heat. The race was too close to call for a couple of weeks until all the provisional ballots were counted, and **Jon** came up just seven votes short of winning the State Representative seat.

Only one retiree was lost. **Cecil D. Palmer** passed away August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020. **Cecil** retired in 1994 as a Soil Scientist headquartered in the Hiawatha Field Office. His wife, **Marilyn**, preceded him in death.

It was learned that two retirees in Texas who started their careers in Kansas have passed away. **Robert Hans Zinzer** passed away on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020. He started his career in 1967 in Smith Center, KS, and worked in the Greensburg and Osborne field offices and the Strong City RC&D office before leaving Kansas in the mid-80's. **Daniel Holmes** died on July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020. His boyhood home was Lincoln, KS, and he began his career in February 1949 in Abilene, KS. Since my personnel directories start in 1957, I have no record of the time he spent in Kansas.

## MASSACHUSETTS

**Jim Wesoloski, ARCSE Representative**

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I am sorry to report that my dear wife **Betty** passed away on June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020 after a year of declining health. She died at home as was our hope.

I am devastated after losing my partner of 47 years. To add to my distress, my vision has deteriorated significantly, and I suspect this may be my last newsletter submission; so, we could use a volunteer or two to monitor the Mass. Retirees' activities.

I failed to report the passing of **Dick Standish**, retired contract specialist, and the passing of **Debbie Ritzer**, widow of **Henry Ritzer**. I am sorry I do not have more information on their passing, but you can Google it. On a brighter note, I talked with **Chris Clarke**, retired State Conservatist, who is now starting her second year of retirement and is happy as Queen of the Hill in Jamestown, RI.

## MINNESOTA

**John Brach, ARCSE Representative**

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COVID-19 has put a damper on everything, but the poker game still happened. Masks, hand sanitizer, and a breezy barn helped make it safe.

The hop harvest is under way on John Brach's Stone Hill Farm. He grows for local craft breweries and is also a trial grower for the USDA and University of Minnesota hop breeding programs. John spent four years perfecting his picking machine to eliminate most of the labor. He says the Friends and Family picking program only works the first year.



L-R: Pete Cooper, John Brach, Tim Koehler, Scott Swanberg, and Charlie Meier (spouse of Helen Beeler).



*John Brach's hop harvest*

## MISSOURI

**Dave Rastorfer, ARCSE Representative**

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**Price Paula:** My big news is the 200 bats formerly living in my attic. The second time in eight years. They're gone now and I hope not to ever return. Clean up is done, and the hatch has been closed down. Little critters aren't very welcome in my attic! Neighbors had 300 in a much smaller house. Had to wonder where they stuffed all of them.

**Jack Schneider:** Hanging around the farm trying to keep up the mowing odd areas and removing overhead branches. My brother-in-law gave me a long pole saw he no longer uses, which makes the branch project much easier and can prolong regrowth. Braving the coronavirus, we made a road trip to Yellowstone in May with my son and family from Delaware. They drove to Missouri, and we took off from there. Food consisted of takeout and keeping a cooler stocked. Most western counties in May had very low, if any, infections. We stayed in Cody and Jackson. More tourists around than we expected. Too bad no luncheon this year, but hopefully next.

**Bob Harryman:** Greetings from Bethany, MO. With the COVID-19 virus we are distancing and wearing a mask to try to stay safe. So far no one close to us is aware of having it. Our church went back to in-house services with masks and social distancing a month ago. This has been a good year. Our garden has done well. We are sharing tomatoes with family, friends, and neighbors. A year ago, a hailstorm ruined our garden and damaged our home and two rentals. One is not repaired yet. We get down to the home farm on Elk River in McDonald County two to three times a year for a family float trip and cook out and to check on the renter and the hay crop. **Muriel Broce, Bill Broce's wife**, is still living here at age 95. Bill was an AC here. **Julia Hintz, Ernie Hintz's wife** is here in Bethany, but is soon moving to Florida. Ernie was a DC in Missouri then went to Lincoln as an agronomist. I enjoy seeing postings from SCSers on Facebook. Best wishes to you and yours.

**Dennis Shirk:** Hello everyone. We are well and trying to do our part if we have to get out, and we're doing our best to stay safe. Our spring camping trip to Lesterville and the gaited club ride was cancelled; and I just got word that the October ride is still scheduled, so I will slowly be getting the camper ready. It hasn't been out since last October when I put it away. See you down the trail and stay safe.

**Gena Michalson:** We are still doing well. New granddaughter, **Lily Grace**, was recently born in Houston, TX and we hope to visit in a week or so. With all the rain, I've been mowing, mowing, mowing. Still enjoying the puppy. And daughter is doing well with the young horses at the horse shows. We recently had a deck built that we had been planning for some 30 years, so we are enjoying sitting out there in the evenings looking out at the lake. We had a lot of landscaping work done around the lake, taking down a lot of nuisance trees, so we can now see it better and have a horse trail through the woods around it. Bought a tractor, now need a working brush hog. My lineage-based societies are slowly starting to meet again, so I'm looking forward to that, but not to wearing a mask at the meetings.

**Aton Taylor:** When will it be over? May have to get accustomed to mask, sanitizer and rubber gloves. Rain gages have been neglected all year. May have the triplets down for Labor Day. They should have their beginner driver's license by then. My circle remains the same, but still contact weekly. A plan is being processed to go to Oregon in October to see the seashore and mountains, and I am invited.

**Craig A King:** A different kind of summer, but we did take a family vacation to Pensacola Beach the second week of June. We had a great time, and everyone seemed to do their social distancing on the beach. When we returned, the kids started with school summer activities. They have done a good job with the guidelines. We have been to a couple of football invite camps for Weston and school visits. He has a couple of offers so far. We will visit some other schools in the future when it is time. The schools are having to make adjustments, so we will wait and see. His football practice has started, and the first game is scheduled for August 28<sup>th</sup>, at Christian High School in St. Peters, MO. **Candra** has started softball camp. School will start here on Monday, August 24<sup>th</sup>. **Andrea** has been busy as usual but more so dealing with the virus – when to open offices and everything that goes with it, etc. I completed a year last week hauling ethanol/fuel for a friend of mine. Too much riding in the little cab for these long legs, and I wanted to be close to home in the day. So, now I am working for a local farmer. I have been hauling grain but nice to



be close to home. Now, if the family needs me, I can be around, not in East St. Louis or central Iowa. We are doing great! Hope all is well with all of you! God Bless!

**Gary Noel:** Jerry and Jean Kaiser, Steve and Shirley Bruckerhoff, Keith and Lori Jackson, Reese and Terry Coulter, and Gary and Natalie Noel took a bicycle trip to southern Minnesota.



*From left: Jean Kaiser, Steve and Shirley Bruckerhoff, Gary and Natalie Noel (apparently Jerry Kaiser was on the other side of the camera).*

The location where we camped is about 35 miles southwest of Rochester and the town near our campground is Preston, MN. The Root River flows through the area. The landscape is beautiful with many dairy farms that grow soybeans and corn with alfalfa growing on the steeper slopes and on the contour between the row crops. Wheat is also in their rotation. The weather was great with temps in the early morning in the low 50s and highs in the afternoon reaching into the low 80s and the humidity at the warmest part of the day about 50-55%. There are many small towns there that settlers were drawn to, with the river big enough there to use to transport goods. The railroads were built later which also offered opportunities for business to grow. Many of the towns have lost population, with folks moving to the big cities; but there still remain enough people, and they keep their towns so clean, appealing to vacationers and others. Actually, it reminded us of how things were when we grew up. The railroad beds are now all paved and provided us with great biking. We also did a canoe trip on the Root River which runs along the old rails, now bike trails. We had a great time and really enjoyed catching up with one another every night around the campfire and sharing meals together. **Keith and Lori Jackson** and **Reese and Terry Coulter** were there, but they had to leave earlier than planned. I highly recommended this area for vacationing. Spending time with retired NRCS/SCS employees made us all realize how lucky we were to work together and now play together.



*From left: Jean and Jerry Kaiser, Natalie Noel, Shirley and Steve Bruckerhoff (apparently Gary was taking a nap somewhere).*

**Hugh Curry:** Things seem to be little changed the past couple of months. I sometimes wish it would all go away, but then decide things are pretty good and could be a lot worse. I get around without aid, being ever mindful of balance issues. So far, I have stayed upright. Left arm and leg still numb. Still walking up to two miles and riding trike up to 10 or 12 miles a couple of times a week. **Sharon** and I stay close to the cottage and only get out for necessities. Must admit things are pretty good here in northern Michigan.

**From Greg McManus** (son of Ken McManus): **Kenneth G. McManus**, retired State Conservationist for the state of Missouri, died on July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020. He would have been 98 years old on September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020. He had been a Fort Myers, FL resident for the past five years. Ken served in the Marine Corps during WWII in the Pacific Theater. He worked for SCS in Michigan and was

an Area Conservationist and Assistant State Conservationist there. He served as Deputy Director of the South NTC in Ft. Worth before coming to Missouri as State Conservationist. He retired in 1981 from his STC job in MO and moved to Sun City, AZ. He was always a gentleman, well dressed, and a great supervisor – and a great golfer. (Thanks to **Steve Black and Hugh Curry** for their contributions to information about Ken.)

## MONTANA

**Dick Gooby, ARCSE Representative**

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**Montana Big Sky Report: Phyllis Ann Philipps**, after a long battle with breast cancer, has gone to be with God. Phyllis passed peacefully in her home in Conrad surrounded by family on Wednesday the 5<sup>th</sup> of August 2020.

Phyllis was born December 28, 1958 in Alhambra, CA to Anthony and Josephine Caputo. She was the youngest of six children. She attended high school in Alhambra and later attended Humboldt State University where she followed her passion for performing arts, nature, and John Denver. She married her first husband, **Andy Faulkner**, in California in 1980 and gave birth to her daughter, **Lauren**, in April of 1981. In 1982 she received a Bachelor of Arts Degree. She found her calling in the Natural Resources Conservation Service and excelled at her job until 2014 when she retired. In 1988 she married her second husband, **Jerry Philipps**, a local producer in the Conrad area. In 1991 she gave birth to their son, **Brandon**.

**Pete Husby Report:** Hiking, playing my mandolin, studying Spanish, helping a Honduran immigrant family, tutoring a Peruvian with English.

**Joyce Swartzendruber Report:** No report from me. I took census enumerator training and hope to help count enough Montanans to get another representative in Congress.

**Gordon Decker Report:** My only news is the passing of **Robert Lohmiller**. No obituary or service announcement yet. He passed on Monday, Dahl funeral home announced. Bob retired as the Montana State Resource Conservationist.

**Gooby Ranch Report: Bob Lohmiller** was the Montana State Resource Conservationist when I moved to Montana in 1983.

I met Phyllis Philipps when I was at a meeting in Washington DC. She was the Secretary for the Director of the RC&D Program. He introduced me to Phyllis and said she was a top-notch employee. Phyllis had just completed a couple of courses to qualify as a Soil Conservationist. We hired her as a Soil Conservationist in Montana, and she worked in several locations in Montana, growing her career. Phyllis worked in several other states, retired as State Conservationist in Colorado, and moved back to Conrad, MT.

We are busy hiding out on the ranch. Last week we were able to hide out so good that four different bill collectors couldn't find us.

The other day I was looking out the window and **Mary Ann** was in the yard while the horses were grazing the lawn. She rotates them to a new yard spot every day. The horses do a good job keeping the lawn mowed. The problems I saw was that Mary Ann was closer than six feet to the horses, and she didn't have a face mask to protect the horses when she gets too close.

I set up a training program to show her how far six feet is. To conduct the training program, I cut a stick six feet long and had Mary Ann touch the horses with the stick so she would know exactly how far six feet is.

Everything I read says your social distancing needs to be six feet away. When Mary Ann is with her horses, she has to be very specific on the distance between her and the horses. If she is seven feet away, that doesn't meet the requirements for six-foot social distancing. As I understand, the rule is that seven feet is too far away, and five feet is too close.

In order to put a halter on the horses so she can take them back to the corral after they eat, she has to get next to the horse's head. I studied the problem and came up with the idea that she has to use two six-foot long sticks. I tied a pair of pliers to one stick and tied a string on the handle of the pliers so Mary Ann can close the pliers. That way she can hold the halter six feet away while she gets it on the horse's head and neck and is able to tie the halter.

The two-stick system didn't work worth a darn, so Mary Ann came up with a better suggestion. Since she needs to stay six feet away from the horse's head, she decided to take ahold of the horse's tail and lead it backwards to the corral. That worked like a charm once the horses figured out what she wanted them to do. I was so proud of Mary Ann that I let her have a quarter of one of my beers. That Mary Ann is one good horse trainer.

The next day when it came time to put the horses away, I was in the house watching a movie. Mary Ann came in and suggested that since I wear my mask 24-7, I can put the halters on the horses and put them away. Because of Mary Ann's good work, the next time we go to town I am going to get Mary Ann a mask for a present. That way she will be able to get close to the horses to put their halter on them.

## NEBRASKA

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

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The Nebraska Retirees group has canceled their morning breakfast for the past four months due to stay-at-home directions from our mayor and governor. It has been a good move, because when we compare our numbers to other states, we are doing well. We are not aware of any retirees or their families who have tested positive for the virus. The last count as of August 23<sup>rd</sup> shows



that the state has had 31,780 cases and 376 deaths. Our home county has had 3,618 cases and 19 deaths. We consider ourselves fortunate, and most people are staying close to home and behaving themselves.

We have not had a breakfast meeting for several months, so **Jim Culver** called a number of people and asked them to provide us with updates on activities. The response was great, and below are several responses.

**Norman Kempf Received a Distinguished Service Award from ARCSE.** Since retirement in 2001 Norman Kempf has been very active in the Nebraska chapter of the ARCSE. He served as chapter vice-president and president, followed by many years up to now as the Nebraska State ARCSE Representative, as well as Midwest Region ARCSE Vice-President. As Midwest VP since 2004, Norm has communicated with State leads regularly by mail, e-mail, or phone to remind and encourage them on such things as news article write-ups, securing new retiree's information, and new ARCSE members, nominating Senior Conservationists, reporting deaths and participation. Norman retired in 2001.

Deaths: **Cecilia S. Dunnigan**, wife of **Lorn Dunnigan** died on July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Lorn was a soil mechanics engineer with the NRCS in Lincoln. **Ottie G. Johnson** died on July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020 in Stillwater, OK. He was a geologist with the USDA Soil Conservation Service until his retirement in 1986 in Lincoln, NE.

**Chris Chapman's** granddaughter **Madeleine Chapman**, who lives in New Zealand, has recently published her second book. The first is *My Life, My Fight* the life story of NBA star **Steven Adams**. Adams was a top prospect in the 2013 NBA draft. He signed a four-year contract with the Oklahoma City Thunder. She writes of his life story and reflects on his humble beginnings as well as the multiple challenges and setbacks he faced, growing up in a family with 13 siblings. Adams is New Zealand's highest paid sportsperson ever. The story is told with warmth, humor, and humility. Chapman has just published her second book, *Jacinda Arden – A New Kind of Leader*, which is about New Zealand's Prime Minister. The book will be available here in the states in mid-September.

**Russ Schultz:** Our daughter **Selina** was just selected as the Adjunct Professor of the Year at Pepperdine University. She became interested in mediation and got an advanced degree in Conflict Resolution at Pepperdine. She teaches classes on campus and online. Selina is an attorney in Pittsburgh and has been involved with mediation for the past 25 years. She has opened an office "Conflict Lab" ([theconflictlab.com](http://theconflictlab.com)).

**Bill Hance** reports that the COVID-19 situation has curtailed Bible Teaching in Lincoln prisons. After being shut down for several weeks, volunteers were allowed to go back in for a few days but are now limited again until at least Aug 22<sup>nd</sup>. Bill and his wife **Colene** send their greetings to all.

**Keith and Maryalice Sheets** are proud to announce that they have a new great-granddaughter as of Friday, August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020, 7pm. She is their sixth great-grandchild.

**Gary Muckel** reports that he is golfing several times a week and is involved with Kiwanis activities for the NE/IA District. He is also keeping up with his cartridge collecting with individual trades and auctions. This year was limited to only two shows in Brookings, SD and Abilene, KS. Gary still writes the nine-page newsletter every other month for the Nebraska Club he founded in 1992 and handles membership for the International Ammunition Association. His wife **Nancy** plays bunco via Zoom but misses going out for card games, lunches, and dominoes.

**Norm Helzer** has provided strong dedicated assistance to his wife **Linda** in managing the school garden at Elliot School in Lincoln during these difficult times. Many hours of weeding, watering and coordination with other volunteer helpers have resulted in an outstanding school garden that all can enjoy and take advantage of some quality fresh vegetables.



*Linda Helzer, a Lincoln Center Kiwanis volunteer, views an outstanding Elliot School garden.*

**Harold Klaege** reports that "the virus has us seeing a lot of our house, but that is better than a hospital."

You know during our careers we have seen things done over and over. An old way we did it is a new idea now. I was contacted by the state office concerning a watershed I worked on in 1975. We planned a series of dams to control flooding using PL-566. In 1978, the locals rebelled and would do land treatment instead. We planned over 5 million acres in PL-566 land treatment.

The local district now has secured PL-566 funding to hire a contractor to plan a project to control flooding. I am the only one alive who worked on it in 1975; and maybe before I die, they will control the flooding.

**The 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Soil and Water Conservation Society** convention held by Zoom was well organized with excellent quality professional presentations by many presenters. There were very few technical quiches. Overall a "Big Thanks" to all those who had responsibility in the organization of an extraordinarily successful three days of meeting. **Norm Helzer** and **Jim Culver** were recipients of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conservation Professional of the Year Honorable Mention in recognition for outstanding accomplishments in practicing and advancing the science and art of natural resource conservation in honor of the Soil and Water Conservation Society's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

**Steve and Jan Stover** hosted a "garage social distancing" celebration for **Lou and Evelyn Buller's** 65<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on July 3<sup>rd</sup>. We offered our garage since restaurants were not available; and we were the only ones with a garage, since the other three other couples are in senior living facilities. Not our normal hosting event but we all had fun celebrating Lou and Evelyn's special anniversary!

**Thomas Reinsch:** Last year, 2019, I decided to get to know more about Lancaster County, Nebraska by biking on the numerous section line roads. Lancaster County is four townships east to west and six townships north to south, or 24 by 36 miles. After riding around my local area to build up strength and stamina, I decided to ride around each township, including traveling to the four county corners. I ended up logging over 1,500 miles and learned a lot about the county. I discovered a bison herd, lots of wildlife, road graders, wild flowers, small towns, historic sites, cemeteries, good water stops, which roads to avoid, low maintenance on county boundaries (not my road), gravel, mud, and ruts. I passed by new and abandoned homesteads, observed soil and plant conditions and lots of conservation practices. It was nice to see the results of years of cooperation between ranchers, farmers, and dedicated conservationists. I also discovered the hazards of biking on rural roads during fall corn harvest. The rides were a relaxing and peaceful journey through the rural county scenery. I added the task of taking headstone pictures at cemeteries when a request was made on the "Find a Grave" website.

I started 2020 with the determination to ride the county roads again. With over 1,400 miles logged this year, I have found the perfect event for this travel-restricted year.

Note, 2,900 miles of bike riding is a lot! According to Alexa, it is 2,288 miles by car from Bangor, ME to San Diego, CA.



*Norm Helzer transporting mulch in a wheelbarrow for use in enhancing the Elliot School Garden Project.*

**Jim Culver**, along with others from the Lincoln Center Kiwanis Agriculture and Environment Committee, did volunteer work at the Eastern Nebraska 4H recently to repair an arbor that had been built several years ago. Major participants were **Ryan Ohs**, **Jim Culver**, **Mike Kucera** and **Dayle Williamson**. Dayle Williamson now retired and was once an Agriculture Assistant to Nebraska Senator **Ben Nelson**.



*L-R: Ryan Ohs, Jim Culver, Mike Kucera (Agronomist at the National Soil Survey Center) and Dayle Williamson repairing an arbor at the Eastern Nebraska 4H Camp as one of the many Lincoln Center Kiwanis volunteer projects.*



## NEW YORK

**Nancy Lee, ARCSE Representative**

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New York is opening very cautiously with the pandemic. So far, we have been making progress with openings. Schools will open in a few weeks. This will be the best test of how we are progressing.

Our annual retirees' picnic was not well attended. Only five people came. **Greg and Joyce Currier, Nancy and Mel Lee, and Peter Wright.**

We received word that a couple of our former co-workers have been hit with cancer. We will keep them in our thoughts and prayers.

Everyone is sticking close to home so not much news.

## NORTH DAKOTA

**Robert "Bob" Bird, ARCSE Representative**

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First the good news, I have a newborn great-granddaughter born in July. That makes seven great-grands. Like some others who are somewhat isolated at home, I've been calling friends and family who I haven't talked to in years. Some of our recent losses include **Gene Giese**, who I first met in the 1970s when I was working in the Grand Forks Area Office and provided assistance to the Fessenden office. One of these memories include a field in that area that had so many surface rocks that a farmer had hired someone to remove them. They had a machine that was windrowing the rocks and loading them to a hopper to be hauled to a rock pile. The way this area in central ND has rocks, they will probably have to do it again in a few years as the frost heaves more rocks to the surface. Another loss was **Jim Thompson** who was the District Conservationist in the Grafton Field Office when I worked in the Project Office there. Jim always had a joke to tell and attended many of our annual reunions and never wanted to tell his jokes to the group, but always seemed to end up at the podium telling jokes. I was in Devils Lake, ND for a ND SWCS conference about a year ago and had a great telephone conversation with him. He said he was having trouble getting around, but his son lived in town and took him wherever he needed to go. The next day at the conference I was approached by his son, **Paul Thompson**, who I discovered was the DC in Devils Lake. Another big loss recently is **Jim Thiele**, who served as the treasurer for our ND Retiree group for many years. As we talk about annual reunions, last year we were invited to have our reunion as a pot-luck lunch at the State NRCS Conference room. It was a great time to talk to some current employees and some contemplating their upcoming retirement. We were invited to return again this year on the third Thursday of September. In looking at the need to social distance and the impact this devastating virus can have on our age group, plus the small conference room, has caused us to cancel this year's annual meeting and keep safety uppermost. Even our previous meeting place, the Bismarck Elks, has a sign on their door that they are closed until further notice.

With so much of my time spent at home these days, I have spent time sorting through all the stuff saved over 70+ years, and getting back into searching and documenting my family tree, while trying to keep in touch with family, friends, classmates, and fellow soldiers from Vietnam. I hope everyone across the country is staying safe and healthy during this historic pandemic that has been particularly hard on our age group.

## OREGON

**Don Stettler, ARCSE Representative**

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**Eldena VanderZanden** reports that she served as captain for her Relay for Life team, "Bedes of Sweat." They raised \$13,274.69 for the American Cancer Society. Good job, Bedes of Sweat.

Most Oregon retirees are hunkered down to avoid contact with someone having COVID-19. **Terry Mitchell**, along with others, I am sure are enjoying the Portland Trail Blazer games being played inside the NBA's "bubble" at the Walt Disney World Resort in Orlando. Several – including **Beth Zetter, Terry Mitchell, Stefanie Aschmann**, and myself – are doing some vegetable gardening with good success. Warmer temperatures are assuring that this will not be the infamous year of the "Green Tomato."

Some, however, are venturing out. **Garry and Janie Schaefer** left the lot where they had parked their motorhome and began the tour they had delayed because of the virus. Recently, they spent some time at Lake Powell and then went on to the North Rim of the Grand Canyon, Cliff Dwellers, and Bryce Canyon. **Leonard and Sharon Gilson** took a break from moving to a smaller home by taking a trip to Depoe Bay on the Oregon Coast. Leonard says that moving is hard for a couple of Octogenarians.

Depoe Bay is a very popular tourist destination. It has a population of about 1,500 and promotes its six-acre harbor as the world's smallest navigable harbor. A few years ago, I went with my sister and her husband on a whale watching cruise out of Depoe Bay. Our boat soon encountered a whale that was putting on a show diving, surfacing, and spouting. It was a sight to see, but once again I proved that I was not cut out to be a sailor. Despite having taken two Dramamine, I was soon hanging over the rail, feeding fish. I long for the pandemic to be behind us so it will be safe once again to drive to Depoe Bay to enjoy the sights and enjoy a seafood dinner at Gracie's Sea Hag.



*Depoe Bay on the Oregon Coast*

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## PENNSYLVANIA

**Bill Bowers, Tim Murphy; ARCSE Representatives**

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From Carl DuPolt, some interesting web sites.

[Whales on the New Jersey Shoreline](#)

[Micro-Plastics on the New Jersey Shore](#)

[Rural Realities' Podcast Series to Address Farmer Stress](#)

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## SOUTH CAROLINA

**Grady Adkins, ARCSE Representative**

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**Betty Bagwell Shuler**, 92, passed away on Saturday, August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020. See the In Memoriam section for more details.

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## TEXAS (NORTH)

**Arnold King, ARCSE Representative**

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**Arnold King Report:** Not a lot to report here in North Texas. We are still patiently waiting for the right time to have our monthly luncheon meetings.

Sadly, we lost **Dennis Erinakes** on July 29<sup>th</sup>. after a lengthy illness and a number of health issues, including the COVID-19 Virus that finally took his life. Dennis was very fond of his favorite dog, and they both passed away within a few days of each other. Dennis got his final wish that his dog is buried with him, which was no surprise to anyone knowing how Dennis felt about that dog. Many of you have worked with Dennis while he served as an engineer and geologist.

I got a call from **Larry Butler** earlier this month. He is in the final editing process of a book he is working on entitled Out on the Land. He had previously produced several television programs via RFD TV under the same title but had to give it up due to not being able to market the program and produce the televised material at the same time. His book is centered around the history of the Soil Conservation Service and the line/staff/technical organization that made it so great. His objectives include preserving part of the SCS history and providing a teaching aid for young NRCS employees interested in learning about the original agency.

**Willeene** and I traveled to Gunnison, CO, during the first week of July, where we have gone each summer for the last 35 or so years. We were a little reluctant to go this year but practiced safe distancing, masks, and the whole bag of tricks for safety. There were some trails to ride, and we enjoyed some fantastic rock crawling and trail riding on four-wheelers designed for that purpose.

I am currently planning to go back to the cabin during November for the 3<sup>rd</sup> season elk hunt. I have about quit hunting and just cook for the hunters. The game laws in Colorado have become so weird, it is hard to plan a hunt.

**Jim and Jere Rickman** continue to generously take folks to their cabin in Arkansas. They plan a trip up there every month. The trout fishing is excellent, and everyone enjoys going up there for a few days.





*Arnold and Willeene King on vacation in Colorado*



*Four-wheel trail riding, Colorado*

## VIRGINIA

**Ken Carter, ARCSE Representative**

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**George Norris**, former State conservationist, reports that he and his wife **Ellen** are doing fine and settling into a routine now that his hospital stay that was reported in the last newsletter is over.

Former PAS for Virginia, **Helen Jeter**, offered suggestions for beating the boredom from the stay-at-home conditions in doing jig-saw puzzles. She reported starting off with a 1,000-piece puzzle and decided after it was finally done to stick with more reasonable 500-piece projects. I agree. The grandchildren and my wife and I have a 1,000-piece one going, and I flat-out gave up.



*Neil and Jeanne Sampson celebrated their 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary at a recently re-opened café in their area.*

On a personal note, September 9<sup>th</sup> marks the one-year anniversary of my heart transplant. Doing great, getting stronger, but still bored.

## WASHINGTON

**Ken Kaul, ARCSE Representative**

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

From **Stefan Fechter**: Well, not much happening here. Good news – we decided to pull the house off the market and continue snowbirding rather than relocating to Arizona. Too much COVID-19, too many protests across the country, and too much summer heat there.

From **Larry Edmonds**: We stopped by Timber Creek after a doctor visit. The building is being remodeled. Probably need to consider a different beanery.



By **Trista Crossley**: In recent years, the Hangman Creek Watershed in southern Spokane County has become something of a flashpoint in terms of water quality and nonpoint sources of pollution. The Spokane Conservation District (SCD) is hoping that \$1.75 million will go a long way to helping clear the water.

The SCD funding is part of \$23 million in grants and loans awarded in June by the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) for high-priority, clean water projects in Eastern Washington. The SCD will combine the Ecology money with other state and federal funds to continue work already happening in the watershed and establish incentive programs for farmers. "Starting this fall, a stakeholder committee will be formed to help determine how to best utilize the money over the next three years," said **Walt Edelen**, SCD Water Resources Program manager.

"That will get things kicked off and start moving all of the different wheels that need pushing to get all these things set up," he said. "This really helps Ecology reach some of those (water quality) goals. It's work that we do anyway, but it's great to get support, get funding, and be able to make a difference out there with these types of programs."

Some of the projects that the money is likely to be used for include:

- Continuing work on repairing streambanks. The SCD just finished a project at river mile 17 where they repaired about 3,000 feet of streambanks, shaped and stabilized them, and planted vegetation along them. The Ecology money will go towards phase 2 of that project, focusing on streambanks in the Valleyford area.
- Approximately \$1 million of the money will be used for a direct seed program for producers in the watershed. Edelen said he is hoping to get more money for this project, considering that "\$1 million could be just two pieces of (direct-seed) equipment."
- Setting up a cost share program for direct seeding. Ecology currently limits cost share at \$28 per acre, up to a maximum of 250 acres per contract. Edelen is hoping to increase those limits.
- Funding for the SCD's livestock program that provides up to 75 percent cost share on certain best management practices to help livestock operations address typical issues, such as management of manure and sediment.
- Funding for a riparian restoration program, also providing up to 75 percent cost share on projects, similar to the SCD's commodity buffer program.
- Funding for a large streambank project on the Little Hangman Creek.

Edelen said the SCD will be reaching out to producers in the coming months as the stakeholder committee is formed and as programs and plans become finalized. The SCD has also just submitted their renewal application for the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), which pairs federal money through the Natural Resources Conservation Service with local and state partners. To date, the RCPP in the Spokane River Basin has prevented more than 400,000 tons of sediment from reaching waterways, helped install 119 miles of commodity buffers, established no-till operations on 125,000 acres, and made about 3,500 acres of forest stand improvements.



**Hangman Creek Watershed, Washington**

"Put all that together and we've got kind of a perfect storm of opportunity for us to get projects done to help improve operations and really make an impact on water quality," Edelen said. "I think we have good support in Spokane to do great work and to continue our legacy of improving water quality in Hangman Creek."

The Hangman Creek Watershed has been the focus of water quality efforts in the past few years. In 2018, Ecology settled a lawsuit brought by the Spokane Riverkeeper in 2015 that claimed Ecology wasn't doing enough to clean up the Hangman Creek Watershed fast enough. According to the agreement, Ecology will complete an assessment of the watershed to analyze its health, document pollution inputs, prioritize improvement work, and monitor the effectiveness of best management practices.

Edelen called Hangman Creek a "young system" geologically, explaining that it is still moving back and forth, which naturally creates sediment. Human activity, such as straightening the stream, cutting off meanders, and deforestation are also issues that have impacted the watershed. To investigate agriculture's impacts on water quality, the SCD has been doing edge-of-field

monitoring along the creek between conventionally tilled fields and direct-seeded fields. Edelen said the difference in the amount of runoff (both water and sediment) between fields is huge until the conventionally tilled fields get vegetation on them.

"Hangman Creek has a lot of fine particles in it, clay and loam, and when that stuff erodes, it becomes murky," he said, adding that there are reports from the 1800s that described the water as murky during high flow periods. "Hangman Creek is just a nasty beast. Will it ever be perfect? I don't know, but I believe, and it's my understanding, that there are improvements."

**Carl Vennes** provided this article about Hangman Creek Watershed. After he retired from NRCS, he worked for the Conservation District for two more years.

The conservation program started with early settlers in Southern Spokane County and Hangman Creek Watershed in the early 1900s. The landowners transitioned from the horse and plow to early tractors and then to modern machinery.

One of the early figures in the conservation movement was **Wesley Cornwall**, a landowner and farmer in the Hangman Creek Watershed. Wesley was involved in the organization of the Washington Association of Conservation Districts. He was a member of the Spokane County Conservation District for over 40 years.

Many Soil Conservation employees work in the Hangman Creek Watershed. Some of the most notable SCS members are **Judson Melton**, District Conservationist from 1974 to 1994; **Lee Bonko**, engineering technician to the Fairfield Sub office; **Paul Dorning**, Soil Conservationist at the Cheney Sub office; and **Steve Sprecher**, Soil Conservationist at the Spokane Office. **Carl Vennes**, Soil Conservationist and District Conservationist, from 1983 to 2001, works with many landowners in the watershed.

The SCS/NRCS employees work with the landowners in the Hangman Creek Watershed with many conservation practices that include no-till and minimum tillage seed, grass waterways and divided slope farming, to name a few.

## WASHINGTON NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA

*We are still looking for a replacement for John Peterson as the ARCSE Representative.*

From **Carl Bouchard**: The last time I was in a tornado was in the 80s, and that happened in Wall, SD as we were having dinner. Well, I experienced another one during the remnants of Hurricane Isias. While listening to the broadcasts which projected a path about 15 miles west of us, we suddenly heard the telltale sound of the freight train coming through. By the time I realized what it was and to head for the basement, it had gone by and was over. A couple of my grandkids were with us and one said, "I'm glad your house is a brick house since we are still standing." I told him I designed it to withstand hurricanes and tornadoes and made sure it was built that way.

All the damage I sustained was the loss of one shingle on the roof and the emblem knocked off one of the AC units from the neighbor's 60-foot tulip tree that fell on it. No other damage to the house, but I did have about a dozen trees broken or twisted off that will remain as critter and bird habitat. Another neighbor had a dozen Leyland cypresses toppled over and blocked another street. On the south side of the lake, several trees fell on houses and blocked streets. This was classified as an EF-1, and I must say we were lucky. Now I have to get a half dozen trees that escaped but could do severe damage.

From John Peterson: **John and Blanche Peterson** recently spent two weeks at the Massanutten Resort in the Massanutten Mountains near McGaheysville and Elkton, VA. They normally spend time there with some of their grandchildren this month, but the virus made that uncertain. Three of the grandchildren did come with some of their parents. They all enjoyed the Blue Ridge Mountains, playing miniature golf, visiting local wineries, War Between the States battlefields, a lavender farm, and a quilting trail where quilts are painted on barns and fences.

After those fun two weeks when the children and grandchildren went home, **John and Blanche** spent a week at another of their favorite places, Hilton Head Island (HHI), SC. While at HHI they always stay at the Ocean Cove Club at Palmetto Dunes. They had great weather at HHI, but signs of how we all are reacting to the virus was evident. Restaurants and stores were open with all wearing masks and distancing from others being practiced. People still flocked to the beach to enjoy the ocean and beach itself.

**John** stepped down from serving as the Director of Government Relations for The Land Improvement Contractors of America (LICA) on July 15<sup>th</sup>. He held that position for 12 years. He is still a director and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District (NVSWCD) and very involved with the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (VASWCD) and the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD).

## WEST VIRGINIA

**Peg Reese, ARCSE Representative**

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**Doris Brackenrich**, District Conservationist for Grant, Hardy, and Pendleton Counties retired on August 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Robert Bernell Lough**, of Grafton passed away on June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The retired district conservationist returned to SCS as an Earth Team Volunteer for the Grafton Field Office.

**Dee Weston** reported that **Claude Calvin Persinger** died June 23<sup>rd</sup> in Winchester, VA. According to Dee, "Calvin replaced **Vic Zanotti** as head of the Contract/Procurement section when Vic became the head of Personnel. Calvin had a stroke 21 years ago." **Judy Persenger**, Calvin's daughter, said he graduated from WVU with an agricultural sciences degree and worked for SCS, Department of Agriculture, Federal Aviation Administration and retired from the General Services Administration in DC as the director of IRM Service's Planning and Support Division.

According to **Sam Sheets**, "Three retired NRCS employees are now Conservation District Supervisors. Myself from the Little Kanawha CD, **Bill Harris** from the Southern CD, and **Larry Greynolds** from the ELK CD. There may be others, but these are the ones I am aware of. **Delmas Carr** is an associate supervisor for the Little Kanawha CD. I ran into Bill and Larry at the quarterly meeting of the WV Association of Conservation District Supervisors. Recently, I attended my first national meeting of the SWCS, even if it was done virtually. I enjoyed all the educational programs, and all I had to do was pay the \$50 registration fee and sit at the computer for three days. Never could afford it or had time to attend when I was working. It is great to be retired."

## NEW SENIOR CONSERVATIONISTS

*Prepared by Marc Safley, Senior Conservationist Chronicler*

Leland A. ("Lee") Hardy	Salem, OR
Paul R. Newcombe	Springfield, VA
Stanley R. Simmons	Fairfield, IA

*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. No new Senior Conservationists have been named as of this issue.*

### SENIOR CONSERVATIONIST CHRONICLE

#### Senior Conservationist

#### Paul R. Newcombe

Senior Conservationist **Paul Newcombe** was born in Detroit, Michigan, September 18, 1933. (Less than 18 months later Hugh Hammond Bennett testified before Congress. Paul says that his career with SCS was almost fore-ordained.) Paul's family moved to Saint Louis, MO, where he started elementary school. They later moved to Lincoln, NE, where his father worked in the war industry. Paul graduated from high school in Lincoln. During high school he worked in retail sales. After high school he served in the United States Navy during the Korean War. He married **Kathryn Cruise** in August of 1956. Following his military service, he enrolled in the University of Nebraska. He graduated from its College of Business in January of 1959 with a Bachelor of Science degree. During his college years he worked as a part-time mail carrier.

In July 1959 Paul was hired by SCS as an Administrative Assistant Trainee at the Nebraska State Office in Lincoln. He worked in that capacity for a year. Then in July 1960 he moved to Columbia, MO, first as Administrative Assistant until October of 1966. From October 1966 until August 1967 Paul held the position of Personnel Management Specialist at Columbia. He then accepted the position of Administrative Officer of the Northeast Technical Service Center and Training Center located in Upper Darby, PA. He served in that capacity for the Center and the region from July 1967 until May 1971. Paul then moved to SCS National Headquarters. During his almost 19-year career there he served first as Budget Officer in the Budget Branch of the Budget and Finance Division. He then was promoted to Budget Branch Chief, then Director of the Budget and Finance Division. His last job before he retired January 1, 1990, was Director of the Financial Management Division. Following his retirement from Federal service, Paul worked as an auditor in the Commonwealth of Virginia's Department of Taxation. He served in this position from 1991 until 2004.

Paul has received many honors during his career. Among them are Certificates of Appreciation for his work to introduce computer technology into USDA and SCS manual financial systems. He served as a member of "Reform 88" and other management initiatives to reduce fraud, waste, and abuse in Federal financial systems (1982-1984). In 1974, while in Upper Darby, he was a member of the Regional Council of Federal Agencies in Philadelphia which worked to identify and provide employment opportunities for mentally and physically handicapped persons and released perpetrators of non-violent crimes. He was the recipient of a Certificate of Merit from the Federal Service Joint Crusade for his outstanding service in support of the international relationship agencies: the American-Korean Foundation, Radio Free Europe, and CARE. During his time with the Virginia Department of Taxation, Paul was a member of the field team that tested and implemented the Department's conversion from a fundamentally manual auditor system to modern computer and statistical methods.

Paul and his wife Kathryn (deceased) had two sons, **Keith** and **Dean** (deceased). Paul lists his hobbies as social bridge, ballroom dancing, and golf. He also is engaged in bible studies as a facilitator. He is a member of The American Legion, Greenspring Post 123, as Commander.

Paul writes "Throughout the past seventy years working in public enterprises, state and federal governments, and charitable organizations, I was always learning new endeavors and changing business practices and organizations to new ways to perform work and work environments 'To Do Less, To Do More.' And even now in my third retirement I am not done. Old rocking chair needs dusting."



**OBITUARY INFORMATION****Paul Benedict, Membership Chair**

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

Surname	Year	<i>In-Memoriam</i> (Note: These are recent notices. For a complete list, please see <a href="http://www.arcse.org">www.arcse.org</a> )
Bossuyt	2020	<b>Kathryn May Bossuyt (née Knobloch)</b> (100) of Tucson, Arizona passed away June 19, 2020. Kathryn was the spouse of retired USDA-Soil Conservation Service Tucson District Conservationist, <b>Maurice J. Bossuyt</b> , who passed away in 2015. She was a graduate of Catholic University of America and a professional Librarian during her career, serving in many leadership roles including serving on the Governor's Committee on Libraries and as an officer of several professional organizations.
Bossuyt	2015	<b>Maurice John Bossuyt</b> (95) of Tucson, Arizona passed away October 25 <sup>th</sup> , 2015, at Mountain View Assisted Living Facility. Maurice was born in Moline, Illinois on October 10, 1920 to <b>Alberic</b> and <b>Rachel Bossuyt</b> . Maurice was a World War II veteran, having served 5 years in the US Navy aboard the battleship USS Arkansas and the aircraft carrier USS Santee. Maurice and his wife <b>Kathryn Knobloch</b> married in November 1950. He attended Augustana College, Rock Island, IL, completed his studies at Iowa State University, earning a Bachelor of Science in Agronomy in 1950. They moved to Arizona in 1951, where he took a job with the University of Arizona Extension Service and was assigned to the office in Casa Grande, Arizona. Later, he was employed by the USDA-Soil Conservation Service and transferred to Tucson where he served as District Conservationist until he retired in 1987. At the time of his death, Maurice was survived by his loving wife <b>Kathryn</b> , son <b>Joseph</b> of Tucson and daughter <b>Colette (David) Kramer</b> of Pueblo West, Colorado.
Bump	2020	<b>Gary Francis Bump</b> (73) of Lincoln, California passed away peacefully on January 21, 2020. Gary was born July 7, 1946 in Chowchilla, California. He worked on the family ranch, and graduated from the California State University of Fresno, receiving a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering. Gary spent his career working for the US Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, and Natural Resources and Conservation Service in the fields of transportation engineering and then information technology for a combined 42 years of public service. He was a highly intelligent, renaissance man who could fix anything and loved woodworking, playing and watching sports, coaching his daughters playing softball, and being out in nature. He is preceded in death by his wife <b>Judi Bump</b> . He is survived by his daughters <b>Sheri Lasick</b> and <b>Vicki Dean</b> , and grandchildren <b>Robert Lasick</b> , <b>Cheyenne Lasick</b> , <b>Raven Lasick</b> , <b>Shania Dean</b> , <b>Tawnee Dean</b> , <b>Bethann Dean</b> , <b>Anna Dean</b> , and <b>Kylie Dean</b> , and great-grandson <b>Mason</b> .
Carter	2020	<b>Johnnie Lee Carter Sr.</b> (76) of Davis, California passed away July 8, 2020, at Kaiser Hospital in Vacaville, California after surviving kidney failure and transplant for 17 years and a more recent battle with dementia. Johnnie was born October 14, 1943 to <b>Fred</b> and <b>Betty May (Goings) Carter</b> in Dyersburg, Tennessee. He attended Tennessee State University in Nashville, Tennessee where he earned a bachelor's degree in agronomy in June 1965. He was drafted into the U.S. Army the same month. After his honorable discharge he returned to work with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS; formerly Soil Conservation Service) in Nashville. On Oct. 14, 1967, Johnnie was united in marriage to <b>Dorothy M. (Fuqua) Carter</b> . While working for NRCS, the family lived in Tennessee, Illinois, New Jersey, Kentucky, and California. After settling in Davis, California in 1975, the family took weekend and holiday trips exploring their new state from top to bottom. He often shared with family and friends his passion for fishing, jewelry making and was an avid golf enthusiast. While working for NRCS as a Civil Rights Administrator, he created many opportunities and encouraged careers for minorities, women, and individuals with disabilities that crossed several local, state and federal agencies. Johnnie is survived by his wife <b>Dorothy Carter</b> , son <b>John Carter, Jr.</b> , grandson <b>Johnnie Lee Carter III</b> and many others, including <b>Nancy</b> – his "Angel" kidney donor. Contributions in Johnnie Carter's memory can be made to the Northern California Alzheimer's Association, Sacramento Office at <a href="http://www.alz.org/norcal">www.alz.org/norcal</a> .
Dunnigan	2020	<b>Cecilia S. Dunnigan</b> (91) of Lincoln, Nebraska passed away July 30, 2020. Cecilia was the wife of ARCSE Member and Senior Conservationist <b>Lorn Dunnigan</b> who worked for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service. Lorn was the head of the Soil Mechanics Lab in Lincoln. He retired in 1989 and passed away in 2014. Cecilia was born January 1, 1929 in Cavalier County, North Dakota to <b>A.G. and Thorlaug (Finnsen) Magnusson</b> . She was raised in an Icelandic community and taught school in rural North Dakota until she married Lorn Dunnigan on September 8, 1951. She was an accomplished seamstress and avid gardener. She was also a Food Service Manager for Lincoln Public Schools and a member of St. Andrew's Lutheran Church. Cecilia is survived by her Children <b>David (Joy) Dunnigan</b> of Clatonia, Nebraska, <b>Diane (Tom) Lamb</b> of Lincoln, <b>Joan Dunnigan (Bob Cohn)</b> of Louisville, Kentucky, <b>Karan Dunnigan (Gary Connelley)</b> of Billings, Montana, and <b>Brian (Jody) Dunnigan</b> of Lincoln; 14 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.
Erinakes	2020	Life Member <b>Dennis Erinakes</b> , (80) of Burleson, Texas passed away July 29, 2020 from complications related to COVID-19. Dennis was born June 6, 1940, in East Greenwich, Rhode Island. He was a graduate of Brown University and received his Master's degree from the University of Maine. Dennis was an engineering geologist and retired from the USDA-Soil Conservation Service (SCS) as National Groundwater Specialist in 1992. He later was Vice President of one of the largest water boards in Texas, as well as an avid goose hunter and fisherman. He had a deep love for training his hunting dogs and taking in an occasional stray. Dennis was the youngest commercial pilot on the east coast when he earned his credentials in 1956, and he used his status to spot swordfish off the coast for fisherman. He was an Eagle Scout, along with his son and grandson in Davisville, R.I., Troop 1. Dennis was a member of St. Ann's Catholic Church and always was willing to help anyone who asked. Dennis was on the board of directors of the Prairielands Groundwater Conservation District. He will be loved and missed by his friends and family, including his sons, <b>Michael Erinakes (Angela)</b> , <b>David Erinakes (Elaine)</b> ; and grandchildren, <b>Danielle</b> , <b>Allison</b> , <b>Hunter</b> , <b>Megan</b> and <b>Ethan</b> .
Giese	2020	<b>Gene Giese</b> (87) of Fargo, North Dakota, passed away June 23, 2020 at Sanford Health, Fargo. Gene began his career with the Soil Conservation Service in 1958 as a Soil Conservationist at Selfridge, North Dakota, then worked at Napoleon, North Dakota and Cavalier, North Dakota. In 1970 Gene moved to Fessenden, North Dakota, as a Soil Conservation Technician, where he worked until his retirement in April 1986. He then worked as a manager for the Soil Conservation

District in Fergus Falls, Minnesota and Wheaton, Minnesota. Gene is survived by his wife of 63 years, **Hilda Giese (Kramlich)**; one son **Glen (Stephanie)**, of Fargo, North Dakota; two daughters **Audrey (Victor) Nordstrom**, and **Karla (Darrell) Schlagel**, both of Fargo, North Dakota; six grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

- Goodwin**      2020 **Danny P. Goodwin** (70) of Mayflower, Arkansas passed away August 16, 2020. He was born September 19, 1949 to **Wilford Goodwin** and **Betty Jo McDonald** in Griffithville, Arkansas. Danny served in the United States Navy during the Viet Nam Conflict. He attended the University of Central Arkansas, earning two Bachelor's degrees, and Memphis State University, where he earned a Master's Degree. Danny spent 30 years as a Groundwater Hydrologist assisting all 50 states and projects in Guam and China. He worked first for the Arkansas Soil and Water Conservation Commission (ASWCC), where he actively engaged and supported the East Arkansas Water Conservation Project, a partnership effort among ASWCC, the USDA-Soil Conservation Service (NRCS), and United States Geological Survey. He moved over to the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in the late 1980s as a water quality specialist. He was a principle planner on the Buffalo River Tribes PL-566 project to help manage animal manure waste in the Buffalo River watershed. He became a hydrologist at the National Water Management Center in the late 90s, assisting state NRCS specialists to further document and assess the need for water conservation efforts and improve water quality. Among those left to cherish his memory are his wife **Becky Goodwin** and stepson, **John Franklin**. Danny was preceded in death by a stepdaughter, **Alicia Franklin**.
- Henry**          2020 **Johnnie F. Henry** (82) of North Little Rock, Arkansas passed on to his Heavenly home on July 9, 2020. He was born in Ft. Worth, Texas on May 6, 1938 to parents **John** and **Frances Henry**. Johnnie received his Bachelor's Degree from the University of Texas. He enjoyed a 30-year career as a Civil Engineer and as the State Design Engineer for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service in Little Rock, Arkansas, retiring in 1990. He also served his country in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve. He was of the Methodist faith and a member of the Gardner Memorial United Methodist Church for 53 years. Johnnie enjoyed sports and worked on the NLR High School chain crew for over 40 years. Left to cherish his memory is his wife of 54 years, **Linda Alexander Henry** of North Little Rock; son, **David (Pam) Henry** of Conway, Arkansas; daughter, **Diane (Russ) Moore** of Maumelle, Arkansas; and grandchildren **Jakob Henry**, **Abbey Moore** and **Zachary Moore**. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Gardner Memorial United Methodist Church, 1723 Schaer St., North Little Rock, Arkansas 72114.
- Holmes**        2020 Senior Conservationist **Daniel E. Holmes** (96), former resident of Fort Worth, Texas, and of St. Francis Village (SFV), Crowley, Texas, passed away on July 12, 2020, on the birthday of his beloved, already deceased wife **Betty Holmes**. Dan was born in Chillicothe, Missouri, and spent his early years on the family farm near Lincoln, Kansas. Dan was a U.S. Navy Veteran of World War II. In 1946 he married his high school sweetheart, **Betty Hundertmark**. They enjoyed a long, happy union and were blessed with four sons. Dan earned a B.S. Degree in Agronomy from Kansas State University and a mid-career Master's Degree in Public Administration from Harvard University. Dan's employment was with the USDA's Soil Conservation Service (SCS), where he devoted his life to providing encouragement and technical assistance for land users to protect the nation's natural resources. He rose through the ranks, serving in positions in Kansas, Iowa, Washington D.C., Missouri, Illinois, Texas, and finally becoming an Assistant Chief of the Soil Conservation Service, the position from which he retired in 1980. He received many awards and commendations for his technical expertise and leadership during his career, capped by the USDA's Superior Service Award while serving as State Conservationist of Illinois. He was a Charter Member of the U.S. Government's Senior Executive Service. He was a member of the Soil and Water Conservation Society of America, the Association of Retired Conservation Service Employees, the North Texas SCS Alumni Club, the National Association of Retired Federal Employees, the Knights of Columbus, the St. Vincent de Paul Society, the St. Bartholomew Prime Time Club of St. Bartholomew, and the American Legion. After his retirement, Dan volunteered his assistance in many activities at St. Bartholomew Church and St. Francis Village. Survivors are his son **Richard Holmes (Bronia)**, of Columbia, South Carolina; son **Steven Holmes** of Emeryville, California; son **Joseph Holmes (Deborah)**, of Columbia, South Carolina; five grandchildren; and four great granddaughters. In addition to his wife Betty, a son, **David**, preceded Dan in death at 16 years of age.
- Hunter**        2020 **Iona Catherine (Bennett) Hunter** (88) of Taloga, Oklahoma passed away June 28, 2020. Iona was the daughter of **Gale Ward** and **Clara Beatrice (Nordquist) Bennett** and was born October 8, 1931 at Eagle City, Oklahoma. On April 23, 1954, Iona married **Daniel Osborn Hunter**. Iona was the secretary for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service and the Dewey County Conservation District, a career spanning 46 years. She enjoyed crocheting afghans, making several for friends and each grandchild. She also enjoyed embroidery work, completing a beautiful state bird quilt for her daughter. In 2006, Iona became a member of the Taloga Precinct Election Board. Iona was preceded in death by her husband Daniel in 2003, son-in-law **Wallace Donnelly**; and grandson **Joseph Gerard Vandeven**. Her survivors include children **Darrel Hunter** of Taloga, and **Debra Donnelly** of Bartlesville, Oklahoma; three grandchildren and six great grandchildren.
- Jahns**         2020 **Chester "Chet" Arno Jahns, Jr.** (74) of Rockford, Washington passed away June 20, 2020. Chester was born in Spokane, Washington on January 25, 1946. He graduated from Washington State University with a degree in Agriculture Engineering. After getting his degree, Chester worked as an engineer for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service and later managed Viewpoint Farm in Rockford. Chester was active with the Washington Farm Bureau, Secretary of Spokane County Crop Improvement. He was on the board of directors for Mica Peak Cemetery, the citizen's advisory committee for the Spokane County Air Pollution Control Authority, and President of the Spokane Swing Dance Club. Chester was a faithful member of Rockford United Methodist Church. Chester loved to travel to many places, including Germany and Ukraine to observe their farming practices, and he enjoyed participation in the German American Society. Chester is survived by his son **Kelly Jahns**, daughter **Tamara Scarcello**, and two grandchildren.
- Johnson**      2020 ARCSE Member **Ottie G. Johnson** (89) of Stillwater, Oklahoma passed away July 25, 2020 in Oklahoma City. Ottie was born in Hughes County, Oklahoma on May 22, 1931 to **Goldie** and **Alta (Free) Johnson**. He married **Virginia Blevins** on December 30, 1950 in Ozark, Arkansas. He was a geologist for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service until his retirement in 1986. For decades, he also wrote a weekly newspaper column. Ottie is survived by his wife Virginia; son **Russell Johnson** of Greeley, Colorado; daughter **Jayne Cross (Kevin)** of Newberry, Florida; grandchildren **Kenny**, **Katrina**, **Alyx**, **Adam**, and **Jon**; and eight great-grandchildren.

- Laber**      2020 **Doris "Dottie" Walter Laber** (84) of Wells, Maine passed away peacefully June 25, 2020, at Avita of Wells Memory Care Community. Doris was born on March 4, 1936, in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. In 1958, she graduated from the University of Maryland with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Journalism. After getting her degree, Dottie worked full time for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service as a public information officer, which led to travel and projects around the country. She enjoyed visiting farms and farmers and writing for publications on soil conservation. On June 9, 1963, Dottie married **Larry J. Laber**. Dottie and Larry lived many places including Chicago, Illinois, Athens, Georgia, Montana, Wyoming, New Hampshire, and Orono, Maine. Along the way, Maine became their home base. She was preceded in death by her beloved husband, Larry, in 2018. Survivors include her sister **Lynn Walter Meier (Paul)** and many loving nieces and nephews. Donations in memory of Doris Walter Laber may be made to Animal Orphanage, 71 Airport Rd, Old Town, Maine 04468 or Sarah's House of Maine, 346 Main Road, Holden Maine 04429.
- Lohmiller**      2020 **Robert Lohmiller** (84) of Bozeman, Montana passed away August 17, 2020. Robert was the retired Montana State Resource Conservationist for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service. <https://www.dokkennelson.com/obituaries/Robert-G-Lohmiller?obId=17962146#/obituaryInfo>.
- Lough**      2020 **Robert Bernell Lough** (95) of Grafton, West Virginia passed away on June 26, 2020 at his home. He was born in Fairview, West Virginia, August 16, 1924, the son of **Thomas Samuel** and **Ellen Marie Brewer Lough**. He was preceded in death by his loving wife **Mary Ellen Fox Lough** on January 26, 2015. Robert was a Veteran of the US Army/Air Force in Iceland from 1943-1946. He graduated from West Virginia University in 1951 with a Degree in Agriculture. He worked at Fairmont Foods for fifteen years and then for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service for eighteen years. He finished his federal career as the District Conservationist in Grafton. In addition to his wife, Mary Ellen, he was preceded in death by his daughter, **Sandra Lough Murray**. Robert is survived by one granddaughter, **Ashley Lamphere**, of Essex Junction, Vermont, and one great granddaughter, **Aniyal Lamphere**. Graveside services were held at the West Virginia National Cemetery on June 30, 2020
- Louviere**      2020 ARCSE Member **Don Louviere** (75) of Weber City, Virginia passed away after a brief illness on July 5, 2020 at Holston Valley Medical Center in Kingsport, Tennessee. Don was born June 21, 1945 to **Octave** and **Frances Ducato Louviere** in Beaumont, Texas. Don worked for USDA as a Soil Conservationist for 30 years, retiring in 2002. After his federal retirement he was a food sampler at Food City, Weber City for over 15 years where he was known as "The Voice of Food City." He served as a District Conservationist in both California and Virginia. He is fondly remembered as a colorful character by many of his colleagues. DrDirt was part of his email address and personalized vehicle license plate number. Don is survived by his daughter, **Veronica Guidi-Louviere**; son, **Vincent Guidi-Louviere (Erin)**; grandchildren, **Owen Kenneth Guidi-Louviere** and **Luca Vincent Guidi-Louviere**; and mother of his children, **Karen Guidi**. Mass of Christian Burial was held July 10, 2020 at Saint Dominic Catholic Church with Father Michael Cummins officiating. Burial was at Holston View Cemetery.
- McCall**      2020 **Keith LeRoy McCall** (87) of Shenandoah, Iowa passed away July 20, 2020 at Nebraska Medicine in Omaha, Nebraska. Keith was born on August 29, 1932 to **Jesse** and **Leta (Mattes) McCall** in Hamburg, Iowa. He entered the US Army on December 10, 1952 and served during the Korean War. He was honorably discharged in November 1954. Keith married **Mary Alice Kish** on April 16, 1955 at the First Methodist Church in Shenandoah, Iowa. The couple was blessed with 40 years of marriage. Keith was a long time Civil Engineering Technician in the Shenandoah Engineering Office for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service, retiring in 1989. He was preceded in death by his wife, Mary Alice. Those left to honor his memory include his children, **Kathryn (Ron) Barker** of Omaha, Nebraska, **Richard (Pam) McCall** of Omaha, Nebraska; five grandchildren, and a great-granddaughter
- Palmer**      2020 **Cecil Dean Palmer** (84) of Ellis, Kansas passed away August 7, 2020 in Ellis. He was born May 27, 1936 in rural Osceola, Iowa, to **Ralph** and **Esther (Foland) Palmer**. He graduated from Iowa State University with a Bachelor's degree in Agronomy. Following graduation, he served as a high school science teacher in Russell, Iowa where he met his wife, **Marilyn (Ford)**. He also served six years in the US Army with a combination of Active Duty and reserve time. Shortly after, he began his career with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service as a Soil Scientist, where he stayed until retirement in 1994. He worked in Fort Dodge, Iowa and in Norton, Stockton, Hiawatha, and Salina, Kansas. Cecil is preceded in death by his wife Marilyn. Cecil's surviving family include daughter, **Melissa Robb** of Ellis, Kansas; son, **Dennis Palmer (Adrina)**, of Little Elm, Texas; and daughter, **Deborah Palmer**, of Salina, Kansas; six grandchildren Kerry, Kevin, Kelly, Patrick, Gabrielle, and Alexis; and one great-grandson.
- Persinger**      2020 **Claude Calvin Persinger** (76) of Winchester, Virginia passed away at his home surrounded by loved ones on June 23, 2020. Calvin was born May 15, 1944 in Burnsville, West Virginia. He promptly married his sweetheart **Judith Eileen Skinner** after graduating from high school. They moved to Morgantown where he started his Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Sciences at West Virginia University. He graduated in 1967. He then began his career with the federal government working as an economist and procurement officer with the USDA-Soil Conservation Services and Federal Aviation Administration. He retired in 1994 from the General Services Administration in Washington, DC as the director of IRM Service's Planning and Support Division. After retirement Calvin became President of Net.Works in Chantilly, Virginia. He suffered a devastating stroke in 1999 and was cared for by his wife, family, friends and many wonderful medical professionals and caregivers. Calvin is survived by his devoted wife of 57 years Judith, daughter **Lisa Robertson (Kelly)**, son **Shawn**, and grandchildren **Claudia** and **Atticus**.
- Philipps**      2020 **Phyllis Ann Philipps** (61) of Conrad, Montana passed away peacefully at home, surrounded by family, on August 5, 2020 after a long battle with breast cancer. Phyllis was born December 28, 1958 in Alhambra, California to **Anthony** and **Josephine Caputo**. She attended Humboldt State University where she followed her passion for performing arts, nature, and John Denver. Phyllis was active in the Sierra Club and US Youth Conservation Corps where she explored the mountains and maintained trails. She married her first husband, **Andy Faulkner**, in California in 1980 and gave birth to her daughter, **Lauren**, in April of 1981. In 1982 she received a bachelor's degree in Art. She found her calling in the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and excelled at her job. She began her work in Washington DC and in 1984 she and Lauren moved to Conrad where she became a soil conservationist. She moved to Townsend, Montana in 1987 to continue her work as a soil conservationist until she moved back to Conrad as a District Conservationist. In 1988 she married her second husband, **Jerry Philipps**, a local producer in the Conrad area. In 1991



she gave birth to their son, **Brandon**. In 2002 she was selected to be the Assistant State Conservationist for the NRCS and began working out of Great Falls, Montana. In 2007 she was diagnosed with breast cancer. Despite her diagnosis, Phyllis did not let anything slow her down. She did multiple stints in Washington DC working closely with top officials in the United States Department of Agriculture. She became a Regional Conservationist, and she oversaw multiple states in the American Northwest. During the latter part of her career she was the State Conservationist for the state of Colorado. After retiring from the NRCS in 2014 she returned home to the farm in Conrad. Phyllis loved to travel and see new and exciting places. Her love for life was contagious to many around her, and she was an inspiration to all. Her amazing work ethic and high energy, despite her illness, gave many people hope and kept her doctors baffled. Phyllis was truly an extraordinary woman who touched many lives. Phyllis is survived in death by her husband, Jerry Philipps of Conrad; children, **Lauren (Gareth) Morrissey** of Delaware and **Brandon (Nicole) Philipps** of Conrad; and her four grandchildren, **Nora, Saorise, River** and **Poet**.

- Pranger**      **2020 Robert Joseph Pranger** (83) of Cornelius, Oregon passed away July 8, 2020. Robert was born in Hillsboro, Oregon to **Francis (Frank)** and **Anna Pranger**. Robert graduated with University of Portland Class of 1958. He entered the US Air Force as a Second Lieutenant in October 1958, was promoted to First Lieutenant, and served until 1963. Robert designed and tested parachutes while in the Air Force. He made 101 jumps. He dreamed of being an aeronautical engineer at NASA. Unfortunately, his military career was cut short when he developed type 1 diabetes. Robert married **Judy Grubbs** in Pendleton, Oregon, and they had seven children. He was faithfully married to Judy for 58 years. Robert worked as a general engineer for Boeing and then as a civil engineer for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service, designing bridges and dams all over Oregon for 35 years, until his retirement in 1993. Robert was the owner of Pranger Tree Farm for 40 years. Robert is survived by his wife, Judy; sons, **David Pranger** of Heppner, Oregon and **Charles Pranger** of Beaverton, Oregon; daughters, **Karen Hoholik** of Kihei, Hawaii, **Gretchen Powell** of Marysville, Washington, **Julie Pranger Talty** of Hillsboro, Oregon, **Susan Smullen** of Branchburg, New Jersey and **Mary Corcoran** of Tigard, Oregon; 16 grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. Remembrances may go to Hertel Center, St. Matthew's Catholic School, and the American Diabetes Association.
- Rasmussen**      **2020 Senior Conservationist Jack J. Rasmussen** (96) of Spokane Washington passed away June 27, 2020 just 12 days after his wife of **LaRee C. Rasmussen** (94) passed away on June 15, 2020. LaRee was born near Richfield, Utah to **Parley** and **Iona Shelton Christensen**. Jack was born in Monticello, Utah, raised in Ephraim to **John "Jack"** and **Bertha Colby Rasmussen**. Both were blessed with close-knit, loving families who knew sorrow early, as LaRee's father died when she was seventeen, and Jack's father died when Jack was only thirteen. After high school, Jack helped his older brother Thad run a cafe in Delta, Utah. Everything changed December 7, 1941 when Pearl Harbor was bombed. Jack went to the recruiter the next day and in January 1942 started four years' service in the 3rd Division of the Marine Corps. He was in the first group of Marines ever trained at Camp Pendleton. Jack was involved in military action on the islands of Bougainville, Guadalcanal, and the battles of Guam and Iwo Jima, where he was wounded. He finished his tour of duty as a Drill Instructor back at Camp Pendleton. Meanwhile, LaRee finished high school and attended one year at the University of Utah. Her cousins from Ephraim introduced her to the handsome Marine. They courted and finally married on September 1, 1948. As a result of her writing a winning essay, Jack and LaRee were married on a radio show in Hollywood and got gifts and a dream honeymoon. Jack finished his degree in Soil Science at Utah State Agricultural College (now Utah State University) and started work in Bellingham, Washington for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service in 1949. He retired in 1982 as State Soil Scientist in Spokane. Daughter **Terese** and son **Thad** were born in Bellingham, Washington. Sorrow struck again when their newborn baby was severely brain-damaged by RH blood incompatibility just a few days after birth. Despite many hospitalizations, he lived almost three years. Jack's work took him to Prosser and Toppenish, Washington and finally a big promotion to Spokane. He completed soil surveys of Whatcom County, Benton County, and most of Yakima County. LaRee resumed her college studies while in Prosser, earning an Associate of Arts degree from Columbia Basin College, then finished a Bachelor's degree in English and Elementary Education. Continuing on, she received a Master's degree in Education. She worked as a reading specialist for Nine Mile Falls School District and Spokane School District. Jack and LaRee were life-long members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Jack where he held leadership positions. In 2011, due to LaRee's increasing forgetfulness, Jack decided to move down the street to Touchmark Senior Living. They enjoyed many activities and freedom from housework there. This April, Terese was finally able to move her parents to the Tri-Cities. They are survived by daughter **Terese (Roger) Pratt**, grandchildren **Jonathan (Julie) Pratt** and **Jennifer (Richard) Pruiett** of Kennewick, Washington, **Rachel (David) Ritchey** of San Jose California, **Kristen (Carlos) Canalessi** of Sandy, Utah; and grandchildren **Sarah, Sam, Michael, Amilyn, Cielo, Rey, and Jack**.
- Ritzer**      **2019 Deborah A.P. Ritzer** (81) of Easthampton, Massachusetts passed away peacefully September 30, 2019. She was the widow of USDA-Soil Conservation Service Resource Conservationist **Henry J. Ritzer** who retired in 1985 and passed away in 2007. Deborah was born in Boston, Massachusetts. She attended Lasalle College and worked for the USDA for a while. She leaves her children **Scott, Michelle** and **Heather** and their spouses. In addition to her husband Henry, she was preceded in death by an infant son
- Schott**      **2020 Thomas E. Schott** (68) of Willits, California passed away on July 4, 2020 in Willits, California, after living with esophageal cancer for six years. He was born in Ft. Wayne, Indiana but spent most of his early years in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He graduated cum laude from the University of Minnesota's College of Forestry in March 1974. During and after college Tom worked for four different federal agencies: US Postal Service, US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Tom moved to Mendocino County, California in 1974 where he met his wife of 41 years, **Shirley Schott**. Tom spent many years working for NRCS as an area forester and District Conservationist. In 2004, Tom transferred within NRCS, to Riverside, CA where he was the Emergency Watershed Protection Coordinator of the multimillion-dollar, multi-year Southern California Watershed Restoration Project. Tom retired in 2008 and returned to Mendocino County in 2011, working part-time as a forestry consultant and a forester for the Mendocino County Resource Conservation District until January 2019. He also served on the Board of Willits Community Services, was active in the Willits Community Theater and St. Francis in the Redwoods Episcopal Church. In addition to his wife Shirley, Tom is survived by two sons and a granddaughter.

- Shuler**      2020 **Betty Bagwell Shuler** (92) of Columbia, South Carolina passed away August 15, 2020. She was born May 9, 1928 in Columbia, South Carolina. Betty was the wife of retired USDA-Soil Conservation Service Assistant State Conservationist **Norman Ernest Shuler**, who passed away in 2005. Betty was a graduate of Winthrop University after which she became a teacher for 34 years. She was preceded in death by her husband, Norman Ernest Shuler and son, **Norman Fred Shuler**. Left to cherish her memory are her two grandsons, **Robert Shuler** and **Jeffery Shuler**.
- Standish**      2019 **Richard Alden Standish** (89) of Spencer, Massachusetts passed away peacefully at home July 8, 2019. Richard was born July 2, 1930 in Pascoag, Rhode Island, the son of **Clairmont** and **Evangeline (Dimond) Standish**. He served in the U.S. Army from 1950-1953. He spent most of his career working for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service, first as a dam inspector, and later as a contract specialist for the Southeast Region. His work included hurricane recovery efforts in Florida, Puerto Rico, and throughout the Southeast United States. After retiring from federal service, Richard partnered with a former co-worker to form their own consulting business, R & J Contract Services. Richard is survived by his wife of 58 years **Sandra (Holden) Standish**; three children, **Merriellen Moroney (Michael)** of Shrewsbury, Massachusetts, **David (Ellen) Standish** of Spencer, and **Lauren Standish** of Atlanta, Georgia; and grandsons **Degory, Royal, and Alden Standish** of Spencer.
- Thiele**      2020 **James H. "Jim" Thiele** (83) of Bismarck, North Dakota, completed his journey through life on July 21, 2020. Jim lived all over North Dakota during his career as a Soil Scientist with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service (SCS). Jim married the love of his life, **Carolyn Freise**, on February 8, 1959. He, Carolyn, and their three children lived in Bismarck, Crosby, Bowbells, Rugby, and Bottineau, before he settled down again in Bismarck as his final home. He ended his career with the SCS as the State Soil Scientist for North Dakota in 1995. Jim is survived by his children, **David (Kelly) Thiele**; **Dan (Connie) Thiele**; and **Sue (Troy) Borud**; eight grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife, Carolyn, and a great-grandson.
- Thompson**      2020 **James R. "Jim" Thompson** (92) of Devils Lake, North Dakota passed away March 4, 2020 at a Devils Lake Hospital. After graduating from High School in 1945, he enlisted in the U.S. Army where he served in **General Douglas McArthur's** Honor Guard while stationed in Tokyo, Japan. After his discharge, he attended North Dakota State University where he earned an agriculture degree and started a long career with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service. During that 33-year career he worked in the North Dakota towns of Cooperstown, Cavalier, Mayville, and Grafton. He finished his career as Resource Conservation and Development Coordinator in Devils Lake, North Dakota, retiring in 1984. Jim is survived by his three children, **James C. (Peach) Thompson** of Houston, Texas; **Nancy D. (Dale) Woolhiser** of Missoula, Montana; and **Paul J. (Amy) Thompson** of Devils Lake, North Dakota; four grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife, Rosella "Sally"
- Wesoloski**      2020 **Betty Louise (Bushnell) Wesoloski** (92) of Hadley, Massachusetts passed away June 19, 2020 at her home with her loving husband, **James Wesoloski** at her side. James, or Jim as he is better known, is a retired USDA-Soil Conservation Service engineer who retired in 1997. He is the ARCSE state representative for Massachusetts/Rhode Island. James, or Jim as he is better known, is a retired USDA-Soil Conservation Service engineer who retired in 1997. Betty was born on November 13, 1927 in Spokane, Washington the daughter of **Crystal (Jackson) Bushnell** and **Milo Homer Bushnell**. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing from Whitworth College and Deaconess School of Nursing in Spokane, Washington and took advanced courses in Public Health training at the University of Washington in Seattle, Washington. After graduation, she was employed by the Indian Health Service on the Colville Indian Reservation in eastern Washington where she met Jim. They were married on October 6, 1973 at Newman Catholic Center in Amherst, Massachusetts. Betty also did Public Health work among the Pima/Maricopa and Apaches in Arizona and she worked as a Registered Nurse at the Veterans Administration hospitals in Spokane, Washington and Prescott, Arizona. Betty worked for the Amherst Board of Health for several years and retired as the Hampshire Regional High School Nurse in 1989. She is survived by her husband, **Jim**; a half-brother, **Bryce Abraham** of Walla Walla, Washington, a half-sister **Crystal Faye (Abraham) Hudson** of Vancouver, Washington; a brother-in-law **John Wesoloski** of Greenfield, Massachusetts; a step-sister, **Leona Mellott** of Vancouver, Washington, and many nieces and nephews whose birthdays she seldom forgot.
- Wohl**      2020 **Shirley Mae Wohl** (91) of Bismarck, North Dakota passed away June 19, 2020. She was the wife of Senior Conservationist **Art Wohl**, a former soil conservation technician, in Washburn, North Dakota. Art retired in 1983 and passed away in 2009. Shirley received a teaching certificate from Minot State Teacher's College. She later went back to Minot State and received her bachelor's degree in her late 40s. She taught school for many years. Shirley is survived by her children, **David, Larry (Jan) and Kari (Mike) Kramer**; five grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.
- Zinszer**      2020 **Robert Hans "Zip" Zinszer** (81) of, Tyler, Texas (formerly of Pocatello, Idaho), passed away June 5, 2020 surrounded by beloved family members. He was born October 13, 1938 in San Pedro, California, the son of **Richard "Dick" H. and Mildred "Mitzy" R. (Hall) Zinszer**. Robert attended high school in Rome, Italy while his parents lived in Saudi Arabia. In his youth and early adulthood, he spent time in Hays, Kansas and was fond of living and working on his Hall grandparents' Sweetwater Ranch. Later he joined the military, enlisting in the United States Army, where he served as a paratrooper with the 101st Airborne, stationed in Fort Campbell, Kentucky. After leaving his service in the U.S. Army, he graduated from Fort Hays State University. He married Margo Matlock on April 16, 1960 in Parkers Settlement, Indiana, and they celebrated 60 years of marriage this year. Prior to moving to Tyler in 2018, Robert and Margo lived in Pocatello, Idaho for 31 years. In 1994 he retired from the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service as an Assistant State Conservationist. Other locations he served and lived during his career were the Kansas communities of Smith Center, Greensburg, Osborne, Strong City, and Emporia, as well as Carbondale, Illinois. Robert was an avid gun enthusiast, fisherman, ham-radio operator, and card player with a special fondness for cribbage, poker, and "hand & foot." He especially enjoyed motorcycling and camping and was a frequent visitor to Yellowstone National Park and its surrounding area. Survivors include his wife; two sons, **Randy Zinszer (Cheryl)** of Flower Mound, Texas, and **Shawn Zinszer and (Kori)** of Jacksonville, Florida; a daughter, **Kimberly Stapp Gary** of Tyler, Texas; seven grandchildren, **Lacey Stapp, Taylor Stapp, Riley Zinszer, Carly Zinszer, Brennan Zinszer, Dallan Zinszer, and Kelsey Zinszer**.

**DEADLINE FOR NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2020 NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS IS OCTOBER 25<sup>TH</sup>, 2020**