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# NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter for Retired Conservation Service Employees

Vol. 52, No. 6 Nov/Dec 2025

The **ARCSE Newsletter** is published bi-monthly by the Association of Retired Conservation Service Employees (ARCSE)

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

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Becky Fletcher, ARCSE President*

Fall is here, and the holidays are right around the corner. It's hard to believe this unprecedented year is already winding down. As of today, we remain in a government shutdown, yet it's remarkable how much continues to feel "normal" despite the uncertainty. I believe that's a testament to the dedication and resilience of federal employees and agencies across the nation.

If you're able, please reach out to support furloughed employees during this challenging time. Many of us have weathered shutdowns before, but none quite like this. More than ever, it reminds me how important it is that we stay connected and encourage one another.

Looking ahead, we have a great opportunity to do just that on November 7<sup>th</sup>, when you are invited to visit via Zoom with **Harold Klaege**, retired state conservationist and Nebraska president of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE). Harold will share insights on legislative activities that affect retirees and conservation, as well as updates on the federal budget, retiree benefits, and insurance issues. There will be time for questions and discussion afterward. The Zoom link contact information for the conference is shown below.

Our Membership Drive kicked off in September, and we're off to a strong start thanks to the efforts of **Chris Tippie, Paul Benedict, and Becky Ross**. We all know that a personal invitation goes a long way—what if each of us asked just one person to join ARCSE? Hundreds of NRCS employees have retired or left the agency this year, with more expected in the months ahead. Let's connect with them now to get their personal contact information before they leave. Remember, the first year of membership is free! Details are available in this newsletter and at [ARCSE.org](http://ARCSE.org).

One last thing—have you checked our Facebook page lately? **Julie MacSwain** is our new media coordinator, and she is doing an amazing job. There are several new posts each week, and we are getting lots of interaction with retirees. If you like what you see, please invite others to follow our page. There is an "invite link" on the right side of the page. Click on the three dots for a drop-down menu and then click "invite friends." A list of your friends will appear, and you can select those you want to invite. Don't forget the spouses or partners of retirees. This is just one more way to stay in touch with our SCS/NRCS family.

As we move into the busy holiday season, keep an eye out for more ARCSE updates as we continue work on our plan of action. I wish you and your loved ones a safe, peaceful, and joyful holiday season—and a very happy New Year!

**ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED CONSERVATION SERVICE EMPLOYEES**



**2026 Annual Dues are due January 1, 2026.**

## Special Zoom Meeting

ARCSE is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

You are invited to join us for a visit with **Harold Klaege** on Friday, November 7<sup>th</sup>, from 10:30 am –12:00 pm Central Time via Zoom (See the connection info below).

Harold is a retired state conservationist and former agricultural engineer. He is currently serving as the President of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE) for the Nebraska Federation and stays well informed on issues affecting federal retirees. Harold is an active participant in the Nebraska retirees' group, and he works to keep ARCSE members in Nebraska updated on NARFE actions, especially legislative activities that affect retirees and conservation. Harold is quite knowledgeable about other topics that are of interest to retirees, such as the federal budget, retiree benefits, and insurance issues. We will have time for questions and answers following the discussion.

The session will be moderated by **Craig Derickson**, ARCSE editor of News from The Potomac and former state conservationist in Nebraska. For more information about NARFE, <https://www.narfe.org/>.

Topic: Special Event for ARCSE Members

Time: Nov 7, 2025 10:30 AM Central Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82809846773?pwd=jbf5Ty7HtMy0Zvn2Y2SUoNnUpzBlS.N.1>

View meeting insights with Zoom AI Companion

<https://us02web.zoom.us/launch/edl?muid=77855f24-e2bf-421a-adcd-c2525c0d03eb>

Meeting ID: 828 0984 6773

Passcode: 433584

One tap mobile

+17193594580,,82809846773#,,,,\*433584# US

+13462487799,,82809846773#,,,,\*433584# US (Houston)

Join instructions

<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/82809846773/invitations?signature=tnLRylcErcKGKd9U2UFW7DqwhesxdA5cu7uZAi2Ho2M>

## NOTES FROM THE POTOMAC

–Craig Derickson

### Government Shutdown October 2025

As we have seen now for many years, Congress has failed to reach agreement on funding the government before the fiscal year ended on September 30<sup>th</sup>, and thereby causing the first government shutdown since 2019. In fact, Congress has not passed the annual appropriations bills on time without a Continuing Resolution (CR) since 1997. According to Pew Research, “In 1996 three final appropriations bills for fiscal 1997 (one of them a six-bill omnibus package) became law on Sept. 30<sup>th</sup>, the day before the new fiscal year began. Since then, Congress has never passed more than five of its 12 regular appropriations bills on time. Usually, it’s done considerably less than that: In 13 of the past 15 fiscal years — including this year — lawmakers have not passed a single spending bill by Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>.” For more information see: <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2025/10/01/congress-has-long-struggled-to-pass-spending-bills-on-time>.

The House of Representatives voted to approve a CR on September 18<sup>th</sup> that would fund the government through November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025. However, in the Senate, it takes a majority of 60 votes to approve a temporary spending bill, and Republicans only hold 53 seats, which is not enough to pass the CR. Democrats say they won’t approve the House bill unless Republicans agree to extend expiring health care subsidies for Affordable Care Act premiums. The parties are currently in a stand-off over the proposed CR, and there is no end in sight at the time of this writing in late October.

Keep in mind that the current political debate is only over passage of the proposed CR and does not provide long-term appropriation funding for the government. Even if the Senate votes to approve the proposed bill, the government would only be funded until November 21<sup>st</sup>, and then the whole process starts over again. The Committee For Responsible Federal Budget reports: “Congress needs to approve 12 annual appropriation bills for the fiscal year (FY) 2026 that began on October 1, 2025. During a shutdown, Federal agencies must stop all non-essential functions until Congress approves funding. Until Congress approves the appropriate bills the government has no authority to incur obligations and make payments for services and programs, like defense, education, and transportation.” See:

<https://www.crfb.org/papers/government-shutdowns-qa-everything-you-should-know> .

The USA Facts Organization maintains a list of the 12 subcommittees that must produce annual appropriations bills for Congress to approve, including:

- Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, And Related Agencies
- State, Foreign Operations, And Related Programs
- Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, And Related Agencies
- Legislative Branch
- Labor, Health and Human Services, Education
- Interior, Environment, And Related Agencies
- Homeland Security
- Financial Services and General Government
- Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies
- Defense
- Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies
- Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration

See: <https://usafacts.org/articles/what-are-appropriations-bills-and-how-are-they-approved/> .

The Bipartisan Policy Organization reports “at least 700,000+ federal employees have been furloughed, with nearly as many continuing to work without pay. Additionally, 3 million active-duty personnel and over 750,000 National Guard and reserve personnel are also required to serve, potentially without pay.” See <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/explainer/who-is-missing-paychecks-in-the-2025-shutdown-when-and-where/>.

Even though many federal employees will miss getting their regular paychecks, under a 2019 law under the Trump administration, they are required to get paid retroactively when the shutdown ends.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, a government shutdown is costly, with a 2018–2019 shutdown costing the US economy an estimated \$11 billion, including a permanent \$3 billion loss in GDP. The total costs include billions in back pay for furloughed workers, administrative expenses to wind down and restart operations, and negative economic impacts like reduced consumer confidence and business slowdowns. See: <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/54937>.

### Expanded Benefits for Agriculture

In an October 25 report by **Barry K. Goodwin and Vincent H. Smith** from the American Enterprise Institute, they noted “the One Big Beautiful Bill (OBBB) Act substantially expands benefits for farmers from the generous subsidy programs that were authorized under the 2018 Farm Bill, increasing federal agricultural subsidy payments by \$65.5 billion over the next 10 years. The OBBB also increases coverage levels and premium rate subsidies to farmers and other subsidies paid to private crop insurance companies, which operate the federal crop insurance program, the major source of federal welfare payments for farmers today. Agricultural committee members are discussing a potential “skinny farm bill” that would address issues ignored in the OBBB, such as conservation and research, but passage before 2026 is unlikely, given legislative gridlock, the narrow partisan balance in Congress, and other issues with which legislators are currently dealing.”

See: <https://www.aei.org/research-products/report/changes-for-agriculture-in-the-one-big-beautiful-bill-act/>.

### USDA to Reopen FSA Offices to Make Aid Payments

On October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2025, the Progressive Farmer DTN site reported “Agriculture Secretary **Brooke Rollins** said she will reopen USDA Farm Service Agency offices on Thursday and announced release of \$3 billion in aid to farmers. The Trump administration is looking to reshape some narratives tied to the US taxpayer currency bailout of Argentina, as well.” The Trump administration recently entered into a currency swap agreement with Argentina for up to \$20 billion to help stabilize the Argentine peso.

In multiple posts on social platform X, Rollins said FSA offices will resume “core operations, including critical services for farm loan processing, ARC/PLC payments, and other programs.” Rollins referenced over \$3 billion in assistance farmers have counted on in their business planning decisions. DTN reported “after hearing from cattle producers, several Republican US senators also spoke to President **Donald Trump** and other senior officials to discourage Trump from increasing beef imports from Argentina as a way to lower consumer prices.” Rollins announced on cable news channels that she would be making an announcement tied to beef prices, as well. See:

<https://www.dtnpf.com/agriculture/web/ag/columns/washington-insider/article/2025/10/22/ag-secretary-plugs-3-billion-aid>.

### Government Shutdown Impact on Farmers

An October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025, the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC) reported “the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), with employees around the country currently totaling around 80,000, offers hundreds of programs in communities nationwide that support farmers and ranchers, rural businesses, and other food system stakeholders.” The current Farm Bill, the 2018 Farm Bill, the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, expired on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025, at the beginning of the government shutdown. This means that funding for many programs has stopped, causing uncertainty and halting services like loan applications and payments. While some essential programs like crop insurance and nutrition assistance continue due to separate funding, many others, such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), have been suspended, and a new, permanent Farm Bill has not been passed to replace the expired one.

With roughly half of USDA’s staff furloughed as a result of the shutdown, the impacts are sure to be felt widely. However, these shutdown impacts cannot be viewed in isolation. The NSAC reported “In fact, for the nine months prior to the government shutdown, many of the programs and services that USDA offers have been under threat as funding has been frozen— actions resulting in devastating consequences for farmers and rural communities. As with anything, context is important.” See:

<https://sustainableagriculture.net/blog/how-the-government-shutdown-is-impacting-farmers/>.

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

*Paul Benedict, Membership Chair*

### New Members

**Bob Price** – Little Rock, Arkansas  
**Dan Meyerhoff** – Hays, Kansas  
**Donna Hopwood** – Cheverly, Maryland  
**Karma Anderson** – Vancouver, Washington  
**Dale Faulkner** – Des Moines, Iowa  
**Gary L Hilmer** – El Dora, Iowa  
**Kristin G. Chavez** – Corrales, New Mexico

### 2026 ARCSE MEMBERSHIP DUES and HARD COPY NEWSLETTER FEES are due Jan. 1st, 2026

Please see the 2026 Dues Notice that accompanied this newsletter. For your convenience ARCSE annual dues and hard copy fees can be paid by credit card via **PayPal**: <https://arcsecommunications.wordpress.com/renew/>

Or you can pay by check. Make the check payable to ARCSE and mail to: ARCSE, PO Box 131, Stillwater, OK 74076

The annual membership dues are \$25/year, and hard copy fees are \$15/year. If you are a Life Member or are an Honorary Member (Member with 5 or more years of paid membership who turned 91, or will turn 91 in 2025 or earlier), you do not owe annual dues. Life and Honorary members receiving the printed newsletter in the mail must still pay \$15 for that service. If you have questions about your membership or newsletter status do not hesitate to contact me at [soilwarden@verizon.net](mailto:soilwarden@verizon.net).

**Donations** to ARCSE are always appreciated. Donations can be mailed to the address above (please mark **contribution** on your check), or they can be made online at <https://arcsecommunications.wordpress.com/give/>

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

Members receiving the electronic newsletter: Members receiving the electronic newsletter whose dues are due will receive a separate email from ARCSE with dues notice attached (WATCH FOR IT). Life Members, honorary members, and members who have already paid their 2026 dues will receive an email assuring you that your membership dues are paid.

### 2026 Membership Contest

Please see the article later in this newsletter with information about the Membership Contest for 2026. The person who recruits the most new members in each ARCSE Region will be awarded a lifetime ARCSE membership, or a \$200 gift card if already a life member. If you have any questions about the contest don't hesitate to email me.

#### ARCSE MEMBERSHIP DUES Due by January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026

Member	\$25 per year
Affiliate	\$25 per year
Life (One-time payment)	
Age 64 or younger	\$325
Age 65 thru 74	\$275
Age 75 or older	\$175

*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 \$15.00 per year.  
Please submit Dues to ARCSE at P.O. Box 8965 Moscow, ID 83843*

### Have you moved, have a new phone number, or changed your email address?

If so, send us your updated contact information now, before you forget. We will soon have a webpage where you can fill out and submit your updated information. In the meantime, you can fill out the information on this form: <https://arcse.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/update-contact-information-fillable.pdf> and email it to me at [soilwarden@verizon.net](mailto:soilwarden@verizon.net).

## Opportunities for Donating to ARCSE

—by Julie MacSwain and Becky Ross

Over the past few years, ARCSE has streamlined the process for individuals to contribute to our organization. Donations to ARCSE serve as funding for specialized projects that enhance our services to members, thereby increasing our visibility and relevance.

Furthermore, your contributions have enabled us to maintain the complimentary first-year dues for new members and facilitate partnerships with the Soil and Water Conservation Society. It is a major transition for many new members when they retire, and our organization can help those who want more interaction with other conservationists.

We encourage you to consider making a donation to ARCSE today. Here are two convenient options:

- Mail: Write a check payable to ARCSE and include the memo "Donation." Send the check to ARCSE, PO Box 131, Stillwater, OK 74076.
- Online: Enter the desired donation amount in the number of items block below: <https://arcse.org/give/>

Finally, we should add that we are not a 501(c)3 organization, and donations are not tax deductible.

—Thank You.

## Earth Team Volunteer Program – An Opportunity to give back

What a wonderful way to reignite the Earth Team volunteer program in the spirit of celebrating our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. For more than four decades, Earth Team volunteers have helped NRCS and America's farmers, ranchers, and landowners achieve their natural resources goals. Earth Team volunteers help NRCS advance its conservation goals and create change for local communities, on a large-scale. From on-farm technical assistance to administrative duties back at the office, Earth Team volunteers from different walks of life work alongside USDA employees in every state to perform mission-driven work every day. Each Earth Team volunteer hour is valued nationally at \$33.49, which is a value that could never demonstrate their true intrinsic worth. However, it shows the enormous value these volunteers provide. It requires a great network of people working together to get the job done, and that is the culture of the NRCS Earth Team volunteer program.

*Do you know someone who has the time to volunteer and a desire to make a positive impact? Encourage them to apply to join our NRCS team and complete the OF 301a Volunteer Service Agreement.*



**Qualifications:** Anyone 14 years and older can apply to volunteer. There are many opportunities available—full time and part time, indoors and outdoors, whether they prefer to volunteer individually or as part of a group. International volunteer opportunities are also available. We can use volunteers with a wide range of skills—including office work, public speaking, education, training, conservation planning and implementation, computer skills, soil conservation, wildlife habitat management, clerical tasks, photography, budgeting, contracting, and more.

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## Staying Connected After Retirement– Recruiting new ARCSE Members

Retirement is a time to celebrate a lifetime of public service and dedication to conservation and to embrace new opportunities, as well as finding new ways to stay engaged. This is where the ARCSE comes in. It's in our Purpose statement "to help its members keep in touch with each other and with the NRCS and its activities and to view conservation issues and programs from a non-governmental point of view, so that the members may be better able to assist the conservation effort."

We are a network of retired and active conservation professionals who share a lifelong commitment to the land and each other. Joining ARCSE allows you to stay connected with colleagues and friends who understand the satisfaction of "helping people help the land." Through our bi-monthly newsletter and social media, members enjoy updates on conservation news, legislative activities, personal stories and examples of how we continue to give back through mentoring, volunteering, or other conservation projects and activities.

The newsletter can provide ideas for get-togethers in your area, helping members rekindle old friendships, and build new ones. These connections help keep our community strong and remind us of the lasting impact we've had—and can still have—on conservation.

Staying connected in retirement is more than just being social—it's about belonging to and celebrating what we've accomplished together and finding new ways to continue to support conservation.

In 2024–2025, ARCSE's membership drive brought in over 80 new members, with complimentary first-year memberships. For 2025–2026, we'll continue our efforts and reward the top recruiter in each region with either a Complimentary Life Membership or a \$200 gift card (if already a Life Member). Incentives will be awarded by June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026.

When recruiting, remember that we have two types of membership: both regular members and affiliate memberships for those who are still employed at NRCS or in another conservation field. Please consider recruiting potential members before they retire.

We strive to maintain our annual membership at an affordable rate. For those interested in long-term commitment, information on lifetime membership options is available on our website at [www.arcse.org](http://www.arcse.org). In addition to paying for awards and other administrative expenses, your membership dues help support one or two summer interns who assist us with our annual meeting, social media, special projects and help SWCS plan student activities at their annual conference—an investment in cultivating the next generation of conservation leaders.

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## Media Manager Report

–Julie MacSwain

The Soil and Water Conservation Society is the premier international organization for professionals who practice and advance the science and art of natural resource conservation. When you join SWCS, you join a community of conservationists who care about the future of natural resources. Our members include SWCD employees, researchers, administrators, extension workers, students, producers, policymakers, USDA employees, educators, consultants, retirees, and more.

[Join Online](#) [Join by mail](#) [Renew Membership](#) [NRCS Employees](#)

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## Success Stories of the ACES Program

The United States has a long-standing commitment to conservation, supported by various organizations and initiatives. Among these is the Agriculture Conservation Experienced Services (ACES) Program, which has played significant roles in connecting experienced professionals with ongoing conservation challenges.

On July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024, during the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ARCSE, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was formalized between ARCSE and the National Experienced Workforce (NEW) Solutions (<https://newsolutions.org/>). The MOU outlines resource-sharing commitments by ARCSE toward achieving common objectives. For more information about this MOU, [https://arcse.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/arcse-and-new-solutions-mou-july-2024\\_final-executed.pdf](https://arcse.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/arcse-and-new-solutions-mou-july-2024_final-executed.pdf)

The effectiveness of the ACES Program is closely associated with the involvement of ARCSE. The association provides a pool of skilled retirees and supports a service-oriented environment. ARCSE members often join ACES as an extension of their work in conservation.

Through ACES, retired professionals have contributed substantial hours to conservation efforts nationwide. Assignments include technical support for soil and water conservation, mentoring new employees, leading educational workshops, and participating in additional projects.

One notable aspect of the ACES Program is its mentorship initiative. As staff turnover and retirements increase, mentorship supports knowledge transfer and continuity. Retirees work alongside new hires, sharing both technical expertise and professional values.

In summary, the collaboration between ARCSE and the ACES Program emphasizes the ongoing contributions of experienced professionals to conservation and the importance of intergenerational knowledge transfer.

## Mike Monnin

Mike Monnin worked as an engineer for SCS/ NRCS in Ohio for about 40 years before retiring in 2015. Monnin served as a field engineer until transferring to the Ohio State Office as an Environmental Engineer, and then as the State Conservation Engineer (SCE) for the last seven years prior to retirement.

In 2016, Monnin began co-chairing the Ohio SCS/NRCS retiree group, joined ARCSE, and worked with **Scott Jerome**, co-chair as the Ohio ARCSE representative. And in 2016, he was invited and joined as an advisory committee member to the Ohio Department of Agriculture Division of Livestock Environmental Permitting.

"In August of 2018, I was invited by **Bruce Atherton**, Ohio NRCS State Conservation Engineer (SCE) to become an ACES employee. I have been working 32 hrs. per pay period since starting," said Monnin.

According to Monnin, he initially started by writing Statements of Work (SOWs) for practice standards. This later evolved into revising Conservation Practice Standards and other associated documentation posted to the Field Office Technical Guide. Additionally, he prepared state supplement revisions to the Engineering Field Manual and Handbook. A significant part of Ohio's engineering workload is related to animal waste storage and management.

"Prior Environmental Engineer and SCE experience, along with a professional link to Ohio's livestock facilities permitting staff, has benefitted completing my ACES work responsibilities," said Monnin.

After Bruce Atherton retired in 2000, the OH SCE position was filled by "acting" field engineers until a new SCE (**Blake Arthur** - hired from outside NRCS) started in January, 2022. Blake resigned from NRCS in June 2025, and a field engineer is again the Acting SCE.

"During these transitions, I have helped the SCEs by mentoring and accepting a variety of ACES work responsibilities," said Monnin.

## Cheryl Simmons



Cheryl Simmons worked with SCS/NRCS in several positions, including Soil Conservationist, District Conservationist, Natural Resources Specialist, and National Technology Specialist. She worked in the field in Kansas and Maryland, National Headquarters in Washington, DC, and the Central Technology Support Center in Fort Worth, Texas. As an ACES employee, Cheryl has helped North Dakota, Idaho, and the Soil Health Division. These experiences played a key role in her life, and to this day, as she is enjoying retirement in Idaho.

"Working with SCS/NRCS was a growth experience for me, and one in which I am grateful for this career journey," said Simmons. One of the greatest experiences was in helping with technical transfer of knowledge with Mexico and traveling to Pakistan to help with Soil Health and supporting young women in agriculture professions.

Shortly after Simmons retired, **Mary Podoll**, ND NRCS State Conservationist, contacted Simmons to see if she might be interested in working with ND NRCS as an ACES Enrollee. This led to an employment opportunity after Simmons retired.

"I found working as an ACES Enrollee in North Dakota to be a great way for me to give back in retirement," said Simmons. "As I left the position in ND, another position opened in ID. Moving to the Soil Health Division has been great. I can't tell you how much I have enjoyed this, and staying connected to conservation with like-minded conservationists has meant the world to me."

"Even in retirement, I had the chance to help with Conservation Boot Camps for Idaho and the national Technical Service Providers program," said Simmons. "Soil Health training for Washington State and a webinar for Working with Tribes and Interim Conservation Practices are also great experiences."

Shortly after Simmons retired, she joined ARCSE. Joining this organization reconnected Simmons with several retiree friends, and acquaintances, along with making new retiree connections. Attending luncheon meetings, and zoom meetings, was a great way to keep the connections going into retirement. "I recommend ARCSE to acquaintances and any new retirees – near retirees I meet".

"I was contacted by **Dana York** to run for the ARCSE President-Elect position," said Simmons. "This seemed like a great opportunity for me to help others as they transitioned into retirement, and for those who have been retired for a while, a way for me to share with them what's going on at ARCSE, and of course, NRCS."

During Simmons' tenure in the ARCSE organization, she served as President-Elect, President, and Past-President. Shortly after Simmons had completed her leadership roles, it was decided to start-up an SWCS Liaison position. Simmons expanded this role into working closely with the Women in NRCS (WiN) for connecting ARCSE retirees with NRCS employees through mentoring efforts.

In August, 2025, Simmons received the Distinguished Service Award recognition at the ARCSE Annual Business Meeting in Costa Mesa, CA. During Simmons' tenure as President, she started several activities for ARCSE, including: Hiring SWCS Interns, ARCSE Facebook, Working with WiN on mentoring NRCS employees, Zoom meetings, and much more.

## Jerry Bernard



Jerry Bernard's career as a Geologist for the SCS/NRCS began in 1972, with assignments in Ohio, Mississippi, Nebraska, and headquarters for over two decades. He retired at the end of 2011 and held his retirement luncheon at Phillips seafood restaurant in Washington, DC. At that event, **Ron Marlow** approached Bernard to consider editing the ARCSE newsletter. Bernard agreed. Marlow also assisted Bernard with printing logistics and other details.

Bernard commented, "Since 2012, I have enjoyed compiling the ARCSE newsletter, and especially the contacts with the state representatives, over the last several years." His role as editor led to further involvement with ACES. "**Cheryl Simmons** put me onto an opportunity to be the writer/editor in compiling the National Rangeland and Pasture Handbook, which I completed several years ago. I've since been working as an ACES employee on a wide variety of Engineering Handbooks and Manuals published on the eDirectives site for the agency," Bernard said.

## ALABAMA

**Earl Norton, ARCSE Representative**

**Email: [earl\\_norton@yahoo.com](mailto:earl_norton@yahoo.com)**



*Meeting at Chappy's in Auburn on October 5, 2025 to enjoy breakfast, fellowship and solve local and national problems were retirees: (L-R): Mac Nelson, Steve Musser, Earl Norton, Charles Bush and Rev. Cliff Jones. Also, the group congratulated Cliff Jones on his recognition by ARCSE in August as the Community Service Award recipient for 2025.*

## ARIZONA

**Wade Biddix, ARCSE Representative**

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

In August and September, **Wade Biddix** and his wife **Joanne** took a 3-week African Safari to South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Botswana using Overseas Adventure Travel (OAT). The trip was entitled "Ultimate Africa." It was a group of 16 travelers – some of them family members and friends.

We flew to Johannesburg and spent 3 days there touring the city, the Apartheid Museum, and the Soweto slums. We then traveled to four different tent camps in Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Botswana, and finished up in Victoria Falls. We flew several bush planes between camps or used buses for transport. The camps were staffed with cooks, guides, etc. and the tents had flushable toilets and showers. However, the camps were in areas with wild animals all around. You couldn't go out at night without an escort.

It was amazing, and we saw so many animals and a variety of animals. We saw thousands of impalas, hundreds of elephants and zebras, many giraffes, wildebeest, kudu, jackal, etc. The highlights were 8 cheetahs, 10 leopards, 24 lions, 40+ wild painted dogs, and 30+ cape buffalo. The rhinos are now all kept in reserves due to poaching, so we didn't see them. I knew we would see animals but didn't realize how many and how close we would get to the animals in the wild. We got really close to many of them in their natural environment. We didn't see an active chase and kill but we saw several animals feeding on recent kills.

OAT did a great job coordinating our trip, and our group leader was fantastic. The food was good and plenty. Our typical day started out with an early wake-up, quick coffee and continental breakfast before a game drive. We returned around 10:30 for a huge brunch, free time for a few hours, afternoon presentations on habitats, poaching, government corruption, history, etc. We then did an evening drive, had a sundowner drink in the bush, and returned for dinner. We also had high tea in the morning and afternoon. Then off to bed and did it all over again. Exciting!

I highly recommend this trip. It's called "Ultimate Africa" by OAT. It requires some long flights, and the jet lag is real, but the trip was well worth it.

Below are a few pictures from our trip.



*Wade and Joanne Biddix in their "bush" attire. The sunsets and dark skies at night were incredible.*





**Wade and Joanne Biddix celebrated their 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025.**



**We saw a total of 24 lions, 10 leopards and 8 cheetahs on the trip.**



**Wade and Joanne Biddix at Victoria Falls. These falls are on the Zambezi River that is the border between Zimbabwe from Zambia. They are over 350 feet high and about 2 kilometers wide. One of the 7 natural wonders of the world.**



## ARKANSAS

**Ralph Mashburn, ARCSE Representative**

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



**Bob Price , president**

The Arkansas SCS/NRCS Retirees, led by President **Bob Price**, held their annual meeting on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025, at Whole Hog BBQ restaurant on Cantrell Road in Little Rock. The gathering brought together fifteen retirees from various parts of the state.

The following individuals were present at the meeting:



**Front Row: Rick Fielder, Dick and Lori Babeu, Ralph and Nancy Mashburn, Glenda Miller. Back Row: David Tencieve, Ken Ziegler, David Heffington, Bob Price, Bill Garner, Charles Fultz, Lewis and Judy Mayfield, Rick Miller**

Bob Price, serving as president and master of ceremonies, coordinated the meeting and ensured a smooth flow of the program. The event featured two main presentations:

**Tammy Blenden** of Blue Cross/Blue Shield: Tammy provided attendees with informative updates, distributing valuable materials and sharing insights on healthcare benefits.

**Ralph Mashburn's PowerPoint Presentation:** Ralph explained first that he was not trying to recruit members or ask for donations. He was just presenting what he hoped would be interesting history and some human-interest stories and humor. He began by explaining the origins of Gideons International, founded in 1898, and their mission of placing Bibles in hotel rooms and other places worldwide (<https://gideons.org>). He then told about his exciting week-long trip to Wroclaw, Poland, where he joined a team from the USA and Germany to assist the local Gideons to distribute Bibles in high schools, colleges, hospitals, and on street corners. A total of about 40 Gideons were divided into 8 teams and given assignments each day for places in the city to distribute Bibles.

Ralph was impressed with the gratitude of the Polish people, who had been unable to have Bibles during the many years under communism. Many stopped to ask questions and even asked to have multiple copies for their families and friends. One medical student from Sweden spoke English and discussed the verses on salvation with Ralph using an English version.





*The Gideons' Mission in Wroclaw Poland*



*Polish Gideon*

Ralph was surprised, but also impressed, that some of the Polish Gideons were former tough-guy criminals who had become Christians through reading Gideon New Testaments. During this week they insisted on changing their assigned locations so they could go into the dangerous parts of the city to give out Bibles. They made up the team that gave out the most bibles during the week.

One testimony came from this Polish Gideon with a tough wrestler-like appearance, who told about coming from a criminal lifestyle to becoming a Christian through the influence of a Gideon Bible in prison. Now he gives his testimony, lectures against crime, alcohol and drugs, and distributes Bibles in prisons and high schools.

From **Dick and Lori Babeu**

Dick and Lori Babeu (and Ralph) really enjoy attending, visiting with friends and other football fans, and to hear outstanding speakers such as the Razorback and other college coaches and celebrities, such as **Peyton Manning, Jimmy Johnson and Kelli Finglass**, Dallas Cowboy Cheerleader CEO.



*Dick and Lori Babeu and Ralph at a recent Little Rock Touchdown Club weekly luncheon. This is known to be the best such club in the country and has been meeting for over 20 years. Attendance runs from a normal 400 to over 1,000 for popular celebrities.*

Attendees thanked Bob Price for his efforts and expressed their appreciation for both presentations. Bob was again unanimously elected president for another year. As usual, the meeting involved plenty of time for personal visits with one another and enjoyment of the Whole Hog BBQ restaurant's delicious food.

Comments and questions are welcomed by Bob Price: [rgprice@swbell.net](mailto:rgprice@swbell.net) or Ralph Mashburn: [ralphmashburn@gmail.com](mailto:ralphmashburn@gmail.com)

## CALIFORNIA

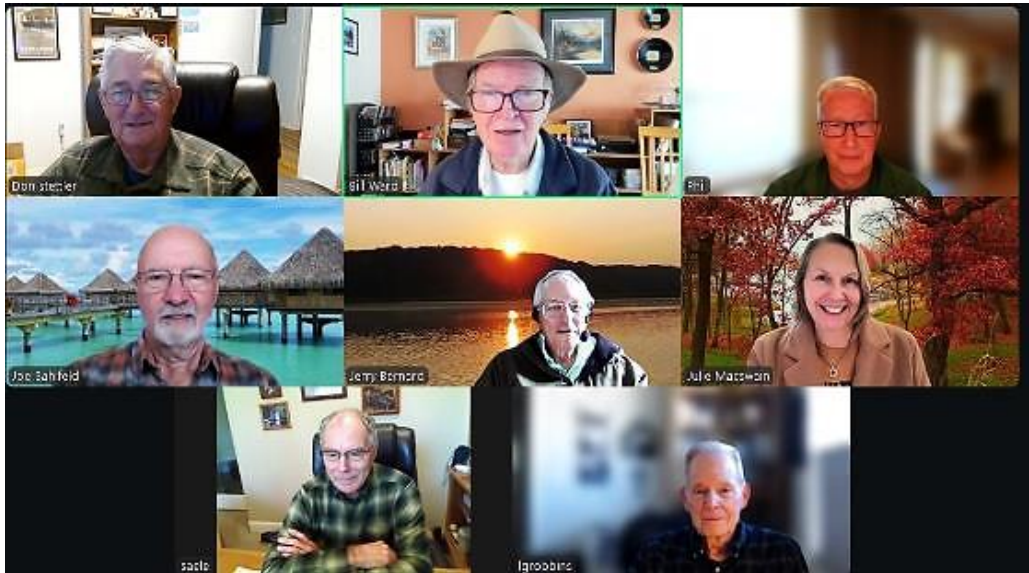
**Bill Ward, ARCSE Representative**

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

Hello to all my fellow retirees all across the Country from California!

I was honored to host a special zoom meeting this month on top of my normal monthly California NRCS retiree zoom meeting. This special zoom meeting was a "**Don Settler** Best Wishes" Zoom meeting that took Place Monday October 13th. Don is one of the ARCSE State Representatives in my ARCSE West region. Don has served as the State rep for Oregon for about 20 years and is now stepping down from that position. What a great job Don has done all those years, helping Oregon retirees stay connected and consistently providing information for the ARCSE newsletter.





I had approached Don with the idea of him letting me host a “Best Wishes Zoom meeting” for him with retirees we both knew from Oregon, Washington and a couple of other locations. It all came together and what a great time the group shown below had at this zoom meeting. It was a fun zoom meeting for me to host for Oregon and Washington NRCS retirees, **Julie MacSwain**, past ARCSE President, and **Jerry Bernard**, ARCSE Newsletter editor. It was a fun time for us to share stories and memories about knowing and working with Don.

Don, we all wish you the best as you let **Denise Troxel** take over the State rep duties. Again, best wishes to you, Don from all of us!

I shared that **Dana** and I had recently taken a trip to San Diego, a family reunion on her side of the family. We took that opportunity to visit the Midway Aircraft Carrier Museum. If you are ever in San Diego, make sure you visit this amazing piece of our country's military history. Here is a picture taken as we boarded the ship/museum. Dana and I went on a number of tours on various decks of the ship.



**Dana and Bill Ward at the Midway Aircraft Museum in San Diego**

I found it impossible to describe the experience of visiting this museum but did find a great video I will share with you here that does a good job of describing this experience

Make sure you put this on your list of things to do if you are ever in San Diego. <https://youtu.be/LsSqZCCBi8Q>, A look Inside the Midway Museum

#### **October 8<sup>th</sup> California NRCS retirees Monthly Zoom Meeting.**

The group shown below enjoyed our opportunity to get together via Zoom and enjoyed the opportunity to reconnect.

It was an enjoyable get-together and a chance for a number of us to reminisce about previous opportunities we had working together. There was a time period where **Bob Snieckus** was the National Landscape Architect at NHQ at the same time and **Randy Gray** was our National Biologist there. I believe that time also overlapped with the time that **Doug Toews** was the National



Water Management Engineer. So these three California employees did pretty well in their careers getting to work at the very top level of our agency.

**Chester Bush** had a chance to share about his recent trip to Washington DC, honoring him and a number of Viet Nam War Veterans. It was clear that it was a very enjoyable experience for Chester. Thanks for sharing that experience with us, Chester and thanks for your service to our country. We also learned that **John Peterson** was also a Viet Nam War Veteran at an earlier date. Thanks for your service to our country as well, John.

Best Wishes to all, Bill Ward, CA ARCSE State Rep., ARCSE West Region VP



**John Peterson**  
**Bob Snieckus**

**Bill Ward**  
**Ron Schultz**  
**Ed Schmit**

**Randy Gray**  
**Chester Bush**

## COLORADO

**Jack Carlson, ARCSE Representative**

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

The Fort Collins breakfast club convened the first Tuesday in September, including **Wendall Oaks, Frank Geter, Tim Carney, Barb Pursley, Dennis Lytle, Bernie Shafer, Phil Smith, Jack Carlson, and Chuck Hart**. Frank and Jack helped to conduct an organic matter (soil carbon) balance workshop co-sponsored by Field-to-Market at the 2025 SWAT Conference in October. SWAT is the Soil and Water Assessment Tool, which continues to underpin the USDA Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) through several farm bills and increasingly supports field-scale water and soil quality assessments by public and private sector organizations in the U.S. and beyond.



**September Fort Collins Breakfast Club**





**2025 Participants at the SWAT Conference in Fort Collins**

## CONNECTICUT, RHODE ISLAND, NEW HAMPSHIRE

**Carl DuPoldt, ARCSE Representative**

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

What Bees Can Tell Us About Conservation and Land Use. Researchers analyzed 84 species of wild bees across 165 sites in the northeastern US. Published on October 16, 2025

<https://www.morningagclips.com/what-bees-can-tell-us-about-conservation-and-land-use/>

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. — A new study has challenged a long-held belief in ecology: that a bee's body size determines how far it travels and, in turn, how much land around it matters. The authors of the study, published in *Ecography*, tested this idea—called the “mobility hypothesis”—by analyzing 84 species of wild bees across 165 sites in the northeastern U.S. What they found was surprising: body size didn't predict how much land a bee responds to. Instead, when a bee is active—its phenology—is a better clue to where it's found. Rachael Winfree, an affiliate of the Rutgers Climate and Energy Institute and professor in the Department of Ecology, Evolution and Natural Resources, is the senior author on the study. She and her colleagues found that spring-flying bees are more likely to be associated with forests, while bees active in summer prefer open, sunny habitats like meadows or farmland. This pattern reflects where flowers bloom: forests bloom earlier in the year, while open spaces bloom later.

The research has important takeaways for conservation and land-use planning. Conservation efforts often focus on open meadows, especially in summer. But by doing so, we may be missing key species that depend on spring flowers in forests. Protecting a range of habitat types—including forests—is essential to supporting a full diversity of bees, which are vital for pollination and food systems.

“Ecologists often assume that larger animals need larger areas of habitat,” said Winfree. “But our findings show that we can't make assumptions based on body size alone—we need to understand the natural history of the bee species. That's how we'll best protect pollinators and the ecosystems they support.”

By improving our understanding of how wild pollinators interact with land use, it can inform public policies that support biodiversity, sustainable agriculture, and regional planning in areas like New Jersey and beyond.

You can read the full study [here](#).

This article was written with assistance from Artificial Intelligence, was reviewed and edited by Oliver Stringham, and was reviewed and edited by Rachael Winfree, senior author on the study.

CT

For November and December 2025, conservation activities in Connecticut include volunteer workdays, winter preparation workshops, and guided nature hikes. Numerous nature centers, land trusts, and museums across the state will host events, while the fall and early winter seasons are ideal for bird watching and identifying tracks.

**Dr. Doug Tallamy** is an entomologist, conservationist, author, and professor at the University of Delaware, whose work has transformed our understanding of the relationship between native plants and wildlife. Date: Wednesday, November 5, Time: 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Location: Online via Zoom. Admission: Free. Questions: Email [slprograms@biblio.org](mailto:slprograms@biblio.org) or call 860-354-2455. This program is brought to you by the Sherman

Conservation Commission, The Sherman Library, Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy (NCLC), and The Connecticut Audubon Society's Deer Pond Farm.

November 6–8: Yale Clean Energy Conference—<https://cleanenergyconference.yale.edu>

Focus: A forum exploring topics related to clean energy access, finance, technology, and policy. Location: Yale School of Management, New Haven.

#### NH

There are numerous conservation-related activities happening across New Hampshire during November and December 2025, including guided hikes, educational events, and volunteer opportunities. Northeast Greenhouse Conference & Expo (November 12–13): Hosted by the Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Hampshire (NOFA-NH), this event covers sustainable agriculture and greenhouse operations. - <https://www.negreenhouse.org/> - Wednesday, November 5, New Hampshire Mushrooms and the Ecological Importance of Fungi. Time: 5:30 p.m. Location: Burley Farms, Epping. Description: A presentation by mushroom enthusiast Maxwell Leavitt on New Hampshire's native fungi and their ecological role.

<https://secure.givelively.org/event/southeast-land-trust-of-new-hampshire/self-field-trip-donations/new-hampshire-mushrooms-and-the-ecological-importance-of-fungi>

#### RI

In November and December 2025, Rhode Island will host various climate, conservation, and environmental events, including nature walks, volunteer cleanups, guided bird walks, and educational forums. The events are organized by groups such as the Eastern Rhode Island Conservation District, Southern Rhode Island Conservation District, and the Roger Williams Park Conservancy.

2025 Climate Action Strategy - The 2025 Climate Action Strategy is the next step in our implementation of the Act on Climate which requires the state to incrementally reduce climate emissions to net-zero by 2050. This plan will be developed in tandem with the EPA's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) process. - <https://www.epa.gov/inflation-reduction-act/climate-pollution-reduction-grants> - Green Calendar - <https://www.provgardener.com/calendar/ri-environmental-calendar> Seed Collecting & Native Plant Propagation - - <https://earthplace.org/event/nativeplantworkshop/November> 15, 2025 @ 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm.

#### VT

In November and December 2025, Vermont hosts several significant climate, conservation, and environmental events, including the annual conferences for VECAN and the Energy Action Network, as well as workshops from the Fish & Wildlife Department. Numerous organizations also offer volunteer opportunities and nature-based activities throughout the state. VT - 2025 Forest Ecosystem Monitoring Cooperative Conference -Date: Thursday, November 20. Location: Davis Center, University of Vermont. Forest dynamics and stewardship at a crossroads: science, partnerships, and adaptive strategies for moving forward - <https://www.uvm.edu/femc/CI4/cooperative/conference/2025> VT - Some Vermont Webinars in Nov and Dec: <https://www.vtfishandwildlife.com/Current%20Webinars%20%26%20Trainings> and <https://www.vtfishandwildlife.com/event-types/webinar>. Resource Guide for Vermont's - New and Aspiring Farmers - <https://www.uvm.edu/newfarmer/resourceguide71107.pdf>

## INDIANA

**Jane Hardisty, ARCSE Representative**

**Email: [dirtlady52@aol.com](mailto:dirtlady52@aol.com)**

A quick meet up of ARCSE friends. As **Becky Ross** and wife **Julie** continue their camping trip around the country in October, they made a few stops in Indiana to catch up with friends and family.



**L-R: Jane Hardisty, Becky Ross, Becky Fletcher, Susan Meadows and Jill Reinhart**



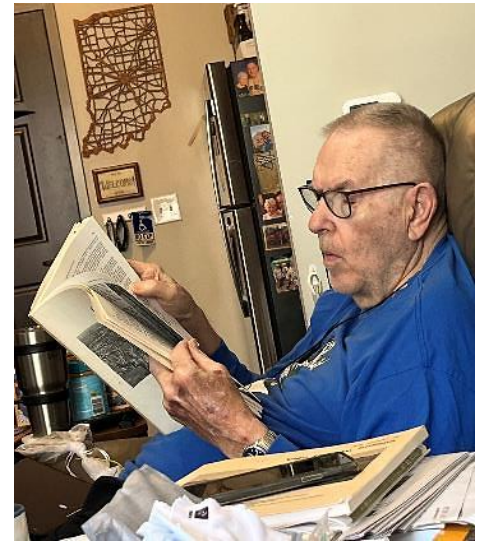
From **Becky Fletcher**—

Retired State Conservationist **Bob Eddleman** enjoys looking at the printed editions of Indiana's soil surveys. In fact, if you stop by to visit him, you will usually find a stack near his chair. That may be because Bob is a map person. When other people are reading novels, he is probably scanning a map. He especially likes to look at the areas where he and his wife **Pat** lived.

In this picture Bob is checking out Crawford County, located in southern Indiana along the Ohio River. He was born there in 1938 in the small rural town of Milltown, situated right on the border of Crawford and Harrison Counties.

When he was still an infant, his Dad bought a farm near Pilot Knob where they raised a variety of crops and livestock. Bob was actively involved in the farm work. Before he went off to school at Purdue, he built a barn for his Dad to help pay for college expenses.

As state conservationist during the eighties, Bob supported the accelerated soil survey efforts bringing together the conservation partnership to complete all 92 counties in Indiana by 1986. Today all our maps are digitized and available on the Web Soil Survey, but there's nothing like looking through the good ole printed editions for some folks.



Bob Edelman reading soil maps

## IOWA

**Mark Jensen, ARCSE Representative**

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



**Jenny, Barb, and Randy Stewart hiking in the 4 corners area**

**Barb and Randy Stewart**, along with their daughter, **Jenny** who is a current NRCS employee, are spending some time during the government shutdown, enjoying hiking in Monument Valley and Antelope Canyon in the Four-Corners area.

**Marty Adkins** provided us with an update of some of their activities. "Carol and I are working on another show. She's directing and I'm working on sets and anything else she needs help with. **Matilda the Musical** will run November 6, 7, 8 and 9 at the Knoxville Area Community Theater. LOTS of young people in this one! We had a nice circle trip around Lake Superior this summer. If you've never done that trip, I highly recommend it. We've also done a lot of biking and are looking forward to a ride in Wisconsin. Our family is good. The grandkids are all experiencing new things, including young adulting, learning the trumpet, early teen stuff, and one is learning German on the fly as an exchange student near Berlin until next summer."

**Jim and Marsha Ayen** have done quite a bit of travelling during the past year. Jim shared the following about their recent trip to the northeast. "Marsha and I took a roundabout way to the Batavia, NY area for my grandson's wedding. Of course, we headed to Green Bay and Door County WI. Then we traveled along the Lake Michigan north shore drive to the Mackinaw Bridge. We toured the Colonial Michilimackinac, an old French fur trading fort and village restoration and the light house museum. We spent the first weekend with dear friends in Hope, MI. I met them when I was the District Conservationist in Crookston, MN. We then headed to Niagara Falls on the Queen Elizabeth Highway in Ontario, Canada. Always beautiful, the Falls have always amazed me. We left there for Batavia, NY for my grandson's wedding. While there, we visited the Jello Museum and the Grand Canyon of the East – Letchworth State Park."



**Grand Canyon of the East in Letchworth State Park in New York**

The northwest Iowa retirees had their October breakfast gathering in Sioux City. Thanks to **Scott Osborn** for providing the picture of the group.



**Northwest Iowa Retirees Gathering (L–R): Marla Conley, Judy Clause, Terry Sage, Roger Braun, Dick Hall, Sheila Cox, Renee Braun, Jeri Ducommun, Dave Sage, and Scott Osborn.**

The central Iowa retirees who meet at iHop every Wednesday had a couple of special “guests” on October 22. **Lyle and Charlotte Asell** were in town and stopped by for breakfast with the group. We all enjoyed visiting with them.



**Central Iowa Retiree Group (L–R): Mark Jensen, Roger Link, Lyle Asell, Jim Ayen, Duane Miller, Charlotte Asell, Donita Link, Dave Beck, Dale Bruce, Dennis Miller, Richard Rogers, and Don Peterson**



During the past couple of months, we have been saddened by the passing of **Randall Larsen**. He was a long time Soil Conservation Technician in southwest Iowa.

## MAINE

**Mary Thompson, ARCSE Representative**

Email: [mpthom@roadrunner.com](mailto:mpthom@roadrunner.com)

The picture is from our September breakfast meeting at Dysart's in Hermon. If you are ever in Maine, we meet on the second Tuesday of the month at 9:00am. Please join us! Those in the photo are left to right: Knox Thompson, Bruce Champeon, Chris Jones, Art Taylor, Dan Baumert (standing), Patty Wright, Karen Champeon, Brian Stuart and Mary Thompson. Weston Thompson was hiding. Weston introduced his brother, Knox, to a biggie waffle.



**(L-R): Knox Thompson, Bruce Champeon, Chris Jones, Art Taylor, Dan Baumert (standing), Patty Wright, Karen Champeon, Brian Stuart and Mary Thompson. Weston Thompson was hiding. Weston introduced his brother, Knox, to a biggie waffle.**

Our gatherings bring lots of laughter, times of concern, and stories of our careers in helping those help the land. I just finished reading the book, Acadian Hard Times – The Farm Security Administration in Maine's St. John Valley, 1940-1943, written by **C. Stewart Doty** with photos by **John Collier Jr, Jack Delano, and Jack Walas**.

I have never heard of the Farm Security Administration (FSA), which was the principal New Deal agency fighting rural poverty in the Great Depression. The FSA provided struggling farmers with operating loans, made available farm purchase loans for tenant farmers, and helped communities in establishing cooperatives. The FSA photographic team travelled the American roads to photograph those who were helped by the FSA. Therefore, the book mostly contains the black and white photographs taken by John Collier Jr. and Jack Delano of the people who struggled to survive, along with photographs of their farms, landscape, and farm machinery – mostly horses — during this time period. The book was published by the University of Maine Press at Orono, Maine in 1991. Copies are available for sale online.

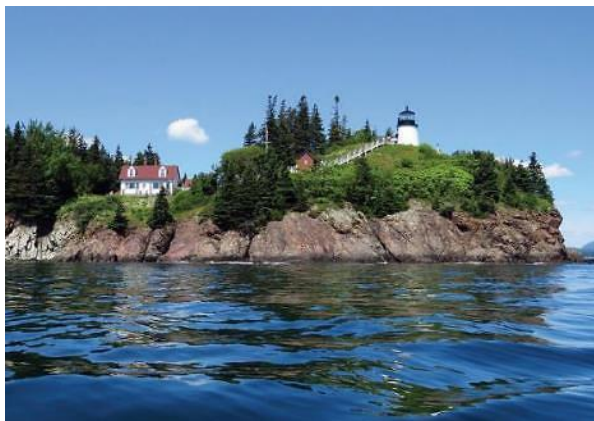
The leaves have turned their color and fallen off the trees, the drought continues here in Maine, with some rain predicted. The temperatures are fluctuating, which seems to be the norm. The wild blueberry fields are being pruned by flail-mowing conventional fields and burning organic fields, and so far only one night of frost in Union, Maine.

—Yours in Conservation, **Mary E. Thompson**

Some pictures submitted by **John Peterson** from his trip to Maine.

One of Midcoast Maine's most popular lighthouses is Owl's Head Light, where from its lofty perch, the beauty of Penobscot Bay sparkles before you! Visit the 1854 Keeper's Quarter's Museum, which features exhibits on Owl's Head Light and the Coast Guard's modern lighthouse keeping role. Owl's Head Lighthouse sits majestically atop an 80-foot bluff overlooking Penobscot Bay, near the entrance to Rockland Harbor along Midcoast Maine. Once atop the lighthouse visitors have the chance to admire the gorgeous fourth order Fresnel lens that dates back to 1856, while enjoying panoramic views of the bay, islands, and marine traffic, including Maine's elegant windjammer fleet.





*Owl's Head, St. George, the Marshall Point Light, Port Clyde, Thomaston*



*Maine sunrise over Penobscot Bay, Vinalhaven Island, and the Atlantic*



*Marshall Point Lighthouse with Blanche Peterson*

## MIDATLANTIC STATES

**Terry D'Addio, ARCSE Representative**

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



*L–R: Ron Marlow, Paul Benedict, and Bill Irwin (Jerry Bernard photographer).*

Some Virginia ARCSE Members meet for breakfast the first Tuesday of each month at the Woodbridge, VA, Bob Evans restaurant. The topics for discussion at this Sept. 2<sup>nd</sup>, gathering included “Where were you on 911?”, how to handle prolonged drought for lawns, pictures of gardens (especially tomatoes), and the best Electric Vehicles to buy or lease.

The group met again on Oct. 7<sup>th</sup>, including **John Peterson, Ron Marlow, Bill Irwin, Dave Thackeray, and Jerry Bernard**. Discussion items included the demise of the NTCs, the continuing government shut down, and genealogy (Bill Irwin's Scottish ancestry quests). Bill also related that he had attended an annual concert at the Library of Congress, at which Stradivarius instruments were played. He had won tickets through a lottery, and this annual concert is done in accordance with the wishes of an historical owner of the instruments.

**DEADLINE FOR THE JAN/FEB 2026 NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS IS DECEMBER 25<sup>TH</sup>, 2025.**

ARCSE retirees in the Midatlantic region had a luncheon on Oct. 16<sup>th</sup> at Madigan's on the Waterfront at Occoquan, VA. They plan to have it again on the first Thursday of May and October.



**L-R: Melvin Womack, Janet Perry, Gary Margheim, and Ron Marlow.**



**L-R: Blanche Peterson, Ann Margheim, Paul Benedict, and John Peterson.**

From **John Peterson**:

"Even though we are only two days into this year's Maine visit, I thought I would send some pictures from today to let you know we got here without incident and only saw a couple of minor accidents on the way (724 miles). We stayed in Chelmsford, MA last night, visited **Shanon, Jeremy, and William** this noon, and were in our Samoset condo by 4:45. We did have help getting our things into the condo, which we needed. Dube's had a busy day. William had a HS soccer game at 1:30 and a homecoming dance tonight. He is a HS Jr. and his date is a Sr., I believe. When I get some homecoming pictures I will send them to the family. Some pictures from today. **Lilly** is a Jr/Sr accounting major at UMaine, and her boyfriend is a mechanical engineering student and pilot. We hope to see them both on this trip. Lilly will graduate a semester early.

Vinnie is the Dubes' newest Bernese Mountain Dog. They lost their last one in April. The Bernese Mountain Dog is a large, gentle breed known for its striking appearance and friendly temperament, originally bred in Switzerland for farm work. They are quite expensive. This at least their 3<sup>rd</sup> Bernese and is a 4-year-old female. She really is friendly.



**Jeremy, Shannon, Vinnie**





*Cumberland Pumpkin Patch.*



*View of Penobscot Bay and the Atlantic Ocean from our condo.*

From **Barbara Osgood**:



*Barbara Osgood with Remi and Rosie*

Here are my latest Lab rescues, **Remi**, 13 years old, and **Rosie**, 8 years old. Remi has the fat gene (yes there really is one) and a weight control problem. His family took him to the shelter in Richmond, Virginia, last year and said he was "too old."

Rosie came from a rural shelter in West Virginia. Her owner died. I call her my "West Virginia Wild Child".

They are my 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> Lab adoptees. They are also my family!

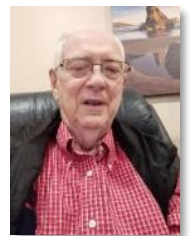
## MISSOURI

**Dave Rastorfer**, ARCSE Representative

Email: [daverastorfer@aol.com](mailto:daverastorfer@aol.com), [moarscse@aol.com](mailto:moarscse@aol.com)

The annual retiree's luncheon was held at the Columbia Senior center on September 11<sup>th</sup>. Those attending were **Mike and Pam Blaine**, **Ed Smith**, **Jerold and MayReeSue Crowder**, **Odie Swanegan**, **Larry and Bonnie Pollard**, **Dennis Hoffman**, **Bob and Lenore Ball**, **Roger Hansen**, **Jack Cronhaardt**, **Jean Herman** and **Dave Rastorfer**.

**Bob Harryman**: Greetings to all of you. After enjoying 25 years of retirement, my wife, **Doris**, suddenly passed away December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024. After dealing with that and congestive heart failure, I have relocated to an assisted living facility in Liberty Missouri. The address is apartment 217, Oxford Grand, 8280 North Tullis Avenue, Kansas City, Missouri 64158.



*Thanks, Bob Harryman*

**Mike Baine**: We are in the process of a total redo inside our house. Walls and ceiling painted, almost all carpet being replaced, and a little repair along the way (I found the floor had deteriorated under our very heavy safe). It's all going to be done by November before our big all family Thanksgiving. That's the news from Blaine Hill. Happy Thanksgiving to all!



## NEBRASKA

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

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

Submitted by **Norman Kempf and Jim Culver.**

Participating in the September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025 First Friday of the Month Retirees breakfast were **Mark Willoughby, Dennis Schroeder, Harold Klaege, Pat Mc Grane, Ed Chmelka, Jim Harder, Mike Kucera, Craig Derickson, Steve Scheinost, Ken Noonan, Jim Culver and Dave Griffith.** Discussion was quite relaxed and a good time was had by all in attendance.

Participating in the October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025 First Friday of the Month Retirees breakfast were Ken Noonan, Doug Christensen, Harold Klaege, Jim Harder, Craig Derickson, Steve Scheinost, Dave Griffith, Jim Culver, Dennis Schroeder and Norm Koester.

Two regular members of our group, **Harold Klaege** and **Craig Derickson**, will be featured in a special zoom event for ARCSE Members.

Harold Klaege will lead a special event sponsored by ARCSE on Friday November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025, from 10:30 am –12:00 pm Central Time via Zoom. Harold is a retired state conservationist and former agricultural engineer. He is currently serving as the President of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE) for the Nebraska Federation and stays well informed on issues affecting federal retirees. Harold is an active participant in the Nebraska retirees' group, and he works to keep ARCSE members in Nebraska updated on NARFE actions, especially legislative activities that affect retirees and conservation. Harold is quite knowledgeable about other topics that are of interest to retirees, such as the federal budget, retiree benefits, and insurance issues. We will have time for questions and answers following the discussion. The session will be moderated by **Craig Derickson**, ARCSE editor of News from The Potomac and former state conservationist in Nebraska.



**Our Nebraska September breakfast meeting was well attended. L–R: Steve Scheinost, Ken Noonan, Mark Willoughby, Dennis Schroeder, Harold Klaege, Pat Mc Grane, Ed Chmelka and Ken Norman.**



**There was a lot of good discussion as we finished an excellent breakfast at our October 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting at HY-VEE.**



**The service was excellent at our September 17<sup>th</sup> breakfast at Greenfields Restaurant. L-R: Steve Scheinost, Larry Brown and Gus Dornbusch.**



**Norman Kempf, one of our long-time members, is putting on a show for us – certainly one of his lighter moments!**



**Rob Lawson, Nebraska NRCS State Conservationist periodically attends our meetings. We always welcome Rob as he consistently provides us an excellent overview of NRCS activities, progress, and concerns of conservation work in Nebraska.**



**L-R: Steve Scheinost, Dave Hoover, Dave Camper and Norman Kempf. Dave Hoover recently retired as USDA-NRCS Director of the National Soil Survey Center. We were very pleased to have Dave join us at our October breakfast meeting. He plans to become a regular member of our Lincoln NRCS Retirees Club. Congratulations Dave!!**





**L–R: Jim Culver, Steve Scheinost, Dave Hoover, Dave Camper, Norman Kempf, Craig Derickson, Norm Helzer, Gary Muckel, Harold Klaege, Bob Engel, and Doug Christensen.**

The September meeting was called to order by Chairperson **Doug Christensen**. Attending were **Doug Christensen, Bob Engel, Norm Helzer, Gus Dornbusch, Larry Brown, Steve Scheinost, Jim Culver, Thomas Reinsch, JoAnne Thiele, Donna Dornbusch, Norman Kempf, and Craig Derickson**.

The October meeting was called to order by Chairperson Doug Christensen. Attending were **Doug Christensen, Bob Engel, Harold Klaege, Gary Muckel, Norm Helzer, Craig Derickson, Norman Kempf, Dave Camper, Steve Scheinost, Jim Culver, JoAnne Thiele, Mike Kucera, Donna Dornbusch, and Tom Reinsch**. David Hoover was present as a guest.

**Doug Christensen** said that the Department gave NRCS an extra month to review the proposed reorganization plans for comments.

**Jim Culver** noted that **Harold Klaege** has been asked to prepare an article on NARFE benefits for the newsletter.

Jim Culver introduced **David Hoover**, whom he has known for a long time. Dave retired as the director of the NSSC in 2017. Then he began a temporary appointment with NSSC, going through 50 file cabinets of NSSC material in order to sort and copy the appropriate documents. That appointment ended on the day the government shutdown began. He originally was a soil scientist for UNL, working in various Nebraska counties before beginning with the NSSC. He worked with **Craig Derickson** on the move of the NSSC, SML, and state office to the new federal building. His address is 4233 Bluebell Ct., Lincoln, NE 68516; telephone number 402-890-2253; and e-mail [hoovernssc@gmail.com](mailto:hoovernssc@gmail.com).

**Jim Harder's wife** is at home now on hospice; she has been diagnosed with ALS.

**Tom Reinsch** and son floated down part of the Platte River recently.

**Bob Engel** and his five siblings will board a bus and travel to the Smoky Mountain area in September.

**Norman Kempf** said five of his wife's relatives visited in September. His wife **Sylvia** currently resides in assisted living but was able to spend two days at home for the visit.

**Jim Culver** attended his granddaughter's wedding in Alabama. Jim also visited Wheeler County in Nebraska to see the largest cottonwood tree in the world.

**Mike Kucera and his wife** had planned a trip, but instead his son and a friend went with Mike. They traveled various places, i.e., Jasper and Hot Springs, and many other places along the way. They also went white water rafting.

**Gary Muckel** went to Reno, Nevada, to visit his daughter. His granddaughter started at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln this year and has had a number of incidents, i.e., accidentally putting super glue in her eye. She is recovering. He also visited his sister-in-law in Elkhorn, Nebraska.

**Doug Christensen** said that he will not be at our November meeting because he and his wife will be on a ship going to Buenos Aires. They will leave from California and stop at various steps along the way before reaching Buenos Aires. The trip will take about 50 days. Doug will become a grandfather for the first time in February.

**Norman Kempf** turned 85 in October. **Steve Scheinost** and his wife celebrated 53 years of marriage in September. **Doug and his wife** will celebrate their 43<sup>rd</sup> wedding anniversary in September.

Jim Culver said that Craig Derickson will monitor a zoom meeting on November 7 featuring Harold Klaege speaking about the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE). Harold is currently the President of NARFE for the Nebraska Federation and stays well informed on issues affecting federal employees. Information for the zoom meeting is listed below.

Meeting recorded by Donna Dornbusch. Submitted by Norman Kempf and Jim Culver

## NEVADA

**Liz Warner, ARCSE Representative**

**Email: [ewarner130@aol.com](mailto:ewarner130@aol.com)**

I recently traveled with my husband through some beautiful country, making a loop into Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, and Utah – and back to Nevada. We spent three days hunting pheasant with **Cub Wolfe** (retired NV Native American Coordinator), and his wife **Tracey Jean** (retired NV range conservationist). Driving home through Wyoming, we stopped to visit **Jim Doughty** (retired NV State Resource Conservationist) and his wife **Gloria** in Buffalo. Jim and Gloria celebrated their 65<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary last summer. We reminisced about the old days – which were really old since Jim retired with the first buyout in 1994. Jim was particularly proud of his work getting range site descriptions done alongside the BLM. Jim was also coordinator for the Total Quality Management Team. Some of you may groan hearing that term, but the principles and skills were invaluable, if applied. An added surprise of our visit with Jim and Gloria was that their son, **Dave**, was there. Dave retired from Nevada NRCS last December as an area engineer, having started as an intern with SCS.

–Liz Warner, Retired Public Affairs Officer



*Clif Warner, Cub\* and Tracey Wolfe\*, and Randy Warner, hunting in Gettysburg, SD (\*=retiree)*



*Dave\*, Gloria and Jim Doughty\*, and Liz Warner\*, Buffalo, WY in front of historic Occidental Hotel (\*=retiree)*

## NEW JERSEY

**Nancy Paolini, ARCSE Representative**

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

**Cape May Plant Materials Center 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration**



*PMC Wagon*



Almost 200 people attended the Cape May Plant Materials Center 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration on September 25<sup>th</sup> on the grounds of the center. The USDA's NRCS in New Jersey, in partnership with the DelAtlantic Conservation District, hosted the event which featured a variety of guest speakers, a continental breakfast, delicious lunch, and tours of the facility.

Speakers included **Chris Miller** who gave a presentation on the history of the center, as well as **Julie Hawkins** from USDA-NRCS NJ, **Kasey Taylor** from USDA-NRCS Northeast Region, **Frank Minch** from the NJ Department of Agriculture, **Bob Andrzejczak** from the USDA Farm Service Agency, **Allen Carter** from the NJ Farm Bureau, and **John Englert**, who is the National Plant Materials Program Leader for the USDA-NRCS. In addition, a presentation was made by our board member **Joe Lomax** who is the Vice-Chairman of the DelAtlantic Conservation District Board. The mission of the plant center is to help people help the land through improved plants and science by addressing conservation concerns on agricultural land and coastal environments and enhancing coastal plant systems through plant selection and technology development. (Photos and article courtesy of the DelAtlantic Conservation District.)



PMC Table

For more information about the Cape May Plant Materials Center, visit <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/plant-materials/njpmc>.

**NJ Retirees picnic:** About 21 retirees and spouses attended a wonderful picnic on September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025 at the home of **Barb and Steve Phillips** in Ringoes, NJ. Great food and conversation were highlighted as we caught up with old friends. At least four in attendance were not yet retired, but that added to the conversations as we heard of all the latest changes and updates. Disciplines included engineers, Biologists, a State Conservationist, and three former State Soil Scientists. How cool is that?



NRCS Collage, 2025-9-28

## OREGON

**Denise Troxell, ARCSE Representative**

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

*This is Don Stettler's final report as the Oregon ARCSE Representative.*

The Oregon Retirees met for the fall quarter lunch on October 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Stir Crazy Chinese Restaurant in Aloha. Attending were **Lowell Kenedy, Cliff Hillebrandt, Tom Fujii, Dick and Kathy Sylvester, Ralph Wadleigh, Joe Sahlfeld, Bobbie Hart, Gail Voge, Stef Aschmann, Leland, Russ Hatz, Kay Denfeld,** and Don Stettler.

**Jolyne and Jon Lea** sent their regrets telling me they would be up to their necks getting ready for the Vancouver Kennel Club all-breed dog show. Recently Jolyne enjoyed a cross-country drive, returning from New Hampshire. She stopped to visit their daughter in Minneapolis, and they visited the town of Albert Lea, named after Jon's distant second cousin.

**Leland Saele** told the group that he, along with other fellow members of the Sons of Norway and others of Norwegian heritage, were celebrating the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of the Sloopers in New York. The Sloopers were the first organized emigration of Norwegians to the United States. They sailed on a single-masted sloop, *Restauration*, leaving Stavanger on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1825, with 52 people on board and landing in New York Harbor on October 9<sup>th</sup>, 1825. The 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration included a recreated voyage of the *Restauration*.



*Replica of the original Restauration that recreated the Sloopers' Voyage.*

**Gail Vogue** is enjoying the fall season by going to football and soccer games. Recently she went to Hood River to watch her fourteen-year-old nephew play. She is looking forward to a trip to Disneyland. **Kay Denfeld** is recovering from back surgery. She very much appreciated her sister's help in the early days after the surgery. Kay also told us that she and Gail enjoyed a trip to Nashville to attend a Dolly Parton event.

**Bobbie Hart** recently spent some time at her condo at the Inn at Otter Crest on the Oregon Coast. **Stefanie Aschmann** has been busy moving to her new home. Since it involves downsizing, getting rid of stuff is the hardest part. **Cliff Hillebrandt** volunteered at Habitat for Humanity for fifteen years. That ended with COVID. Since then, he has kept close to home tending to family matters. **Ralph Wadeigh** is looking forward to greeting his first great grandchild. Recently, he located a friend who was his best man. The friend is now deaf but a device that converts voice to text allowed an almost normal conversation with him.

**Joe Sahlfeld** has been cleaning up his vegetable garden. He also has a job, working for a friend with his filbert (hazelnut) harvest. Many of us as children remember picking up the nuts while crawling on our knees. The harvest is now highly mechanized, and Joe operates a forklift moving boxes of nuts. Traveling about the Willamette Valley it is hard to miss all the newlyplanted orchards. Since 2008, about 51,000 new acres have been planted, adding to the 28,000 of mature and producing filberts.

**Dick and Kathy Sylvester** are staying close to home. They keep busy with their yard and vegetable garden. They are much relieved that the car accident matter is now behind them. **Lowell Kenedy** reported on his tour from Vancouver, British Columbia to Halifax, Nova Scotia. Involved were five days of traveling by rail.

**Tom Fujii** has made some life changes that involved moving to a retirement home. He reminisced about how fortunate he has been to have spent most of his adult life in Washington County, away from the infamous Columbia Gorge winds on Portland's east side where he grew up. **Russ Hatz** told us he still does inspections for sustainability certifications. He also very much enjoys his two-year-old granddaughter.

*This will be the last column I will write for the newsletter. I want to thank everyone who has helped me by providing news to share over the twenty years I have had the lead for the Oregon Retirees. I also want to thank all of you who have taken the time to read the column.*

*I very much appreciate the recognition I was given for my time as the Oregon Representative. Reward enough would have been the support I have been given over the years. It has been truly and honor and a pleasure to serve in this way. My hope is that it will be extended to Denise Troxell who has graciously agreed to take the lead.*





**Kathy and Dick Sylvester, and Joe Sahlfeld**



**Russ Hatz, Tom Fujii, and Lowell Kenedy**



**Ralph Wadleigh, Cliff Hillebrandt, Stef Aschmann, and Bobbie Hart**



**Kay Denfeld, Gail Voge, and Leland Saele**

## PENNSYLVANIA

### ARCSE Representative: Currently vacant

Excerpts from the PA Bugle submitted by **Tim Murphy**, editor.

Ebensburg, Cambria County was the location of our very enjoyable annual meeting on September 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>.



**PA Meeting attendees, L–R: Debby Shrump, Chuck Shrump, Virgil Wilford, Norm Wolfrom, Nevin Ulery, Dale Kriner, Gwen Schrock-Kriner, Barry Frantz, Glenna Latshaw, Hosea Latshaw, Alice Sheets, Phil Sheets, Gary Smith, Anne Smith, Tom Calvert, Debbie Watson, Tom Sierzega, Gina Murphy, Rita Brzostek, Ed Brzostek, Rob Clauto, Tim Murphy, Mary Smith, Ed Sanders, Martin Smith, and Susie Sanders. Not pictured: Lori Tatarko, Judy Ulery, and Rose**

**Stacy Mitchell** reports: "I retired from the agency at the end of 2012 and moved back to Bozeman six months later. Bought a season ticket for my Montana State Bobcats football, which has kept my Fall sport season occupied and was able to spend a few years with my Dad before he passed almost 4 years ago now.

Have had some health issues in the last few years and more joint replacements but still smiling and laughing. I remember my years in PA w/great fondness for the work and especially the people! And I like hearing the news of the folks I remember and the work being done by the ones I don't know. But I admit I'm happy being back in the West w/the snow in the winter, driving over to Yellowstone NP in the spring to see the baby animals, and enjoying my Montana "Blue Skies" pretty much all year-round!

**Alan and Judy Wood** just returned from a trip to Japan, Korea, and Mongolia. The Mongolia segment included the Gobi Desert with camel rides and yurt (tent) accommodations.



**Alan and Judy Wood on camels**



**Mongolian yurts**

From **Frank and Jane Resides**: "We have been here at the Bellingham Senior Living Center for over a year. It has been a good move for us. We have everything we need here.

Our health is fairly good; and our daughter, **Leigh** and grandson, **Matthew**, are doing well, and we see them often. Life is good at Bellingham!

**Rosie Updegraff** writes: "In September I was with my daughter and son-in-law in Chincoteague, Virginia for the Plein Air Arts Festival. Fifty artists paint for the week on the island. At the end of the week, their paintings are displayed for sale. It's a great time to be on the island, and there's a wide variety of beautiful art. We ate lots of crab because Rick catches and cleans them. I think he had about 20 which made crab quiche and other delicious recipes."



**L–R: Tim Peters, Shannon Levan, Andy Hibbs, Don Gordon, Ken Harvey, Angie Bowman, John Coleman, Paul Yankovich, and Mark Groshek.**"

**Mark Groshek** reports that "**Angie Bowman** recently hosted a get-together of old friends at her house in Benton, PA. I believe all had a great time!

The story by **Wayne Bogovich** in the Summer 2025 PA Bugle about patrolling Oakmont Country Club for feral bees reminded **Frank Resides** of an incident which happened several years ago.

"Jane and I were on our way to our cabin in Tioga County and had stopped at Hardee's in Dauphin as was our custom. We made this trip three or four times a year. While we were eating lunch (those good chili dogs which they don't serve anymore) a man walked over to our table and said "I thought I heard a familiar voice in here." It was Wayne, my former colleague, friend and fellow Beekeeper. As I recall, he was traveling from the Washington, DC area to Connecticut. We had a delightful 15 to 20-minute reunion. While discussing our apiary activities, he told us how he established a couple bee hives on the roof of the Secretary of Agriculture Building, after getting a special permit to use a bee smoker on the roof. This was a pleasant, coincidental encounter that we will always remember."

#### From **Frank Resides**

*The Canadian Rockies  
October 2010  
Frank E. Resides*

*Jane and I left Philadelphia about 6:30 AM on October 1<sup>st</sup> during the tail end of a torrential rainstorm that dumped from 4-6 inches on southeastern PA and along the coast. We had uneventful flights to Calgary, via Minneapolis. There we visited the Calgary Tower, a 626 ft. structure that affords a view of the entire city, including the Stampede building and grounds, Olympic Park, site of the 1988 winter games and the Bow River and its confluence with the Elbow.*

*After a bus tour of the city, we headed west to Banff, a beautiful town in the mountains. We did some sightseeing by helicopter over Banff National Park, a unique and exciting experience, flying in a glass "bubble". A four passenger craft; I sat in front with the pilot where we could see down through the floor. We also rode a gondola to the top of a nearby mountain, which gave a good view on the town, the same Bow River and the famous Banff Springs Hotel. We saw some large bull elk and a few Mule deer near Banff.*

*Our next stop was at the Lake Louise Hotel, located on the lake, where we had lunch and enjoyed the lake and glacier scenery. We stayed at the Lake Louise Inn that night. The next day we reached the Columbia Ice Fields, where we took the 6-wheel drive "Glacier bus" up onto the ice. We walked on ice that was over 400 ft. thick, an interesting experience! We passed the Dome Glacier, which forms a triple continental divide. Melt waters from this block of ice flow to the Atlantic, Pacific and Arctic oceans. Later in the day we took a raft ride on the Athabasca River, still in Alberta. where we traveled about 8-10 miles in an hour. This river has continuous swift current or rapids the entire trip. Some of you old timers may recall the early 1960s movie: River of No Return, with Robert Mitchum and the woman on a raft. It was filmed where we traveled and our guide pointed out Marilyn's Island, where some of the scenes were filmed. The raft was fun, but some of us did get wet.*

*Our bus tour ended in Jasper, B.C., another beautiful alpine community. We visited several lakes and waterfalls in the area and saw mountain goats, Bighorn sheep, elk, Mule deer, a Marmot and Pikas—all close to the road. Medicine Lake is interesting; a large relatively shallow basin with a major stream/river running into it. However, all of the water disappears?? This lake only fills from snowmelt and spring rains every 4or 5 years, then the water is soon gone. There are a number of theories and legends as to why this happens. The Spirits may be drinking the water, but dye tests have shown that it is seeping into the gravel bottom and emerging in several streams in the vicinity.*



*From Jasper, we took a 2-day train ride to Vancouver, stopping overnight in Kamloops, a city of over 100,000, known as the tournament capital of Canada. They have over 65 playing fields, arenas, golf courses and other sports facilities there. While on the train we followed the Thompson and Frazer rivers all the way to Vancouver. We saw many Bald and Golden eagles, a couple bears, more Bighorns and some deer along the rivers. The lower Frazer Valley is a large and diverse agricultural area. Crops grown include: onions, Korean Ginseng (grown under partial shade), alfalfa, small grains, fruits, berries and nursery. Beef cattle and sheep are the primary livestock.*

*In Vancouver, we had our first day of light rain since leaving the east coast. We took a bus to a huge farmer/specialty market, checked a lot of shops, had lunch beside the harbor and returned to our hotel by water taxi.*

*Our last day, we took a bus to Whistler Village, about 80 miles north, where the 2010 winter Olympics were held in January. There we rode a gondola that took 25 minutes to reach the mountaintop. At the top we transferred to the Peak-to-Peak cable car, which carried us over to an adjacent peak. These cars were all windows with glass bottoms. The last supports on each side of the valley sides are almost two miles apart! A lot of cable. A good opportunity to take aerial photos! How high we were above the valley floor, I don't know.*

*This was a great trip, procured through the Go Ahead Travel Co. from Cambridge, MA. We did and saw a lot more things, but I wouldn't want to bore you with details. –The End*

## TENNESSEE

The meeting was held at the Golden Corral in Cookeville. In attendance were:

**Patty Lane, Anna and Jack Chidester, James Sims, Dewitt Simerly, Denise Watkins, Terry Gupton, Debbie Brasfield, Nancy Harris, James Creasy, Andy Neal, AnnSue Wattenbarger, Allen Crowe, Gary Handley, Pam Hoskins, and Traci Horne**, and special guest **Jana Sims** (not sure of her married name)(James' daughter).



Jana came, surprising James, and brought a birthday cake to celebrate James' 85<sup>th</sup> birthday. Happy Birthday James and thank you to Jana!

**Dewitt Simerly** brought a treat for everyone with a jar of his homemade apple butter for all in attendance. Thank you to Dewitt!

**Anna Chidester** brought sympathy cards for everyone to sign for **Paula Schroth** and **Brenda Moore**. Thank you, Anna.

**James Sims** let us know of the passing of Brenda Moore, Bobby's wife. He and Bobby have been friends since 1960. James is still working for ACES, squeezing his hours in between doctor appointments.

**Anna Chidester** retired in 1995. She and **Jack** are doing well and still living in their own home. They are planning to attend the Oak Ridge Boys concert in Pigeon Forge in a few days.

**Denise Watkins** just retired and stopped by on her way back from her Mother's place in Illinois. Her two sons are in college, and her husband Jimmy is still working. They live on Jimmy's family farm of 68 acres. She lives about 50 miles from "Mayberry" Mount Airy, NC. She may do some consulting work but plans to enjoy some time off first.

**Andy Neal** states that he is the bus driver for all his grandkids. He enjoys travelling as much as possible unless there is a conflict with the grands' sporting and other events. He has doctor visits and is enjoying retirement.

**AnnSue Wattenbarger** loves being outdoors doing her pruning and gardening (she has over 60 bushes and shrubs that she hand-prunes). She has had some carpal tunnel issues, probably related to the pruning. She has a 14-year-old cat that is good company to her. She also goes to the Y.

**Terry Gupton** and his wife are doing well, living on 263 acres and running cattle (he has 100 head right now) and will sell off a big part of them by winter. He has been conducting pasture training at his place for beginning farmers. Has grandkids and great grandkids. He is hoping to stay healthy.

**Nancy Harris** will be officially retired on 9/30. Spending lots of time with her grandsons, keeping one of them all summer. She is enjoying being off from work. They are leasing out their family farm. She is glad to be here and to see everyone.

**Debbie Brasfield** is staying busy. Still working ACES and helping the resource soil scientist do land judging. She has two granddaughters 6 and 8 years old. Both are very active in sports.

**Patty Lane** recently had knee replacement surgery in June with physical therapy all summer. She is now doing well. She is planning a trip to Branson, MO with her pals **Nancy Harris, Faye Floyd** and **Traci Horne**.

**Gary Handley** is now waking up every morning at 3am for no good reason. He is still picking up antiques, and just recently had 3 antique streetlamps from the 1940s installed at his place. He is still decorating his 4-car detached garage with more antiques such as gas pumps, vintage coke machines and whatever else strikes his fancy.

**Allen Crowe** is still maintaining his family's vehicles and doing repairs. He is doing well and only has two prescriptions that he takes. He has recently added twin great-grandchildren to his family, and they will be coming to visit in November. They live out in California between LA and San Francisco.

**James Creasy** had a heart attack a year ago in June. He had been training for a triathlon when he had the widow-maker heart attack. He had a stent installed, but the medication gave him an ulcer. He took medicine for that, which caused bursitis. He has now dug out of all the health issues and is doing well. Life is good.

**Dewitt Simerly** was glad to be here and see some folks that he hasn't seen in a while. He has two grandkids, one just born on 4/1. He enjoys his farm and has been there for 6 years now. He is loving retirement and brought some apple butter.

**Pam Hoskins** was glad to see everyone and enjoys having her daughter's family living there on the farm with her, especially that baby grandson. Her son lives in Brentwood and is a financial analyst. She stays busy fencing and building sheds, taking care of her animals, and having a lot of fun. Her kids are pressuring her to take a vacation, as she has not done this since she retired.

**Jana** will officially be retired on 9/30 from her career at the IRS. Her husband is still working.

**Traci Horne** has had some health issues with her shoulder, Achilles tendon, and while doing PT injured her back. The back injury knocked out her trip out West that she and **Terry** had planned to take. Terry is working a lot of EWP in East Tennessee due to Hurricane Helene, and he won't finish that up until next March. She did take a trip to Washington DC with her nieces.

Notes from those unable to attend:

**Kevin Brown** is babysitting his grandson in Clover, SC so that his daughter and son in law can take a vacation. **Carol Shearron** says hello to everyone. **Shirley Childs** could not attend due to health reasons. She also mentioned that **Laura Lee** has moved to a nursing home.

Our next meeting will be on Thursday, December 11, 2025 in Lebanon. It will likely be at Shoney's, but it has not been confirmed yet. I hope to see everyone there.

–Traci

## TEXAS

**Mike Bogard, ARCSE Representative**

**Email:** [mbogard41@gmail.com](mailto:mbogard41@gmail.com)

The Fort Worth NRCS Alumni Club met on September 10 at Prima Pizza and Pasta in Fort Worth, TX.

Those present were **Willeen King, Arnold King, Dale and Joe Bergeon, Ken Twitty, Mark Boysen, Carol and Jim Robinson, Dave Stockbridge, Clyde Goodman, Eng and Dave Buland, Dave Drennon, Rafael Guerrero and Doug Seibel**. Attached are two pictures of the group.



The next meeting will be Tuesday, December 11 at Prima Pizza and Pasta in Fort Worth, TX.

See you then! –Doug Seibel



From **Ron and Edith Hilliard**



***Edith and I just completed a one-week trip that began with attending the 53<sup>rd</sup> annual International Balloon Festival in Albuquerque NM, Oct 3–6.***

Then onto Alpine, Texas for the Texas Section Society for Range Management. And ending the week in Houston, Texas.



***Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, Archery Competition for FFA and 4H with youth from across the state of Texas.***



***Over the course of the weekend, we hosted 328 Target and 206 3D contestants, including parents, families, and coaches.***

Our incredible cook team prepared over 2,800 meals to include a fabulous BBQ plate dinner for Finals Sunday afternoon. Over 25,000 arrows were shot over the 3 days.

We handed out approximately \$145,000 in cash and prizes to 85 3D contestants, 128 Target contestants, including awarding a Top Archer award to our high overall male and female contestant.

We got back home on Sunday after logging 2,518 miles, Enjoyed this last week resting.

**John Mueller** wrote:

Kate and I visited Colorado in late August, and we had a great time. We spent most of our time around Estes Park and Rocky Mountain National Park, but also stopped in Colorado Springs to enjoy the Garden of the Gods. In the park late one evening, we saw an elk bedded down near an access road and were able to drive close enough to get this picture without disturbing him.



***Sprague Lake has a nice walking trail about one mile long around its perimeter.***



I also booked a guide and did a little fly fishing for the first time - what an experience (thanks for the recommendation, Arnold)! The largest fish was a rainbow trout weighing an estimated 3.5 or 4 pounds, and I was catching trout most of the morning.

—Best, John and Kate

## WEST VIRGINIA

**Peg Reese, ARCSE Representative**

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

We lost three members of the NRCS/SCS Family recently: **Betty Ball, Clay Handley, and Chuck Thornhill**. Betty, Retired Area Clrk for the Parkersburg Area Office, died on September 22<sup>nd</sup>. Clay worked in the Summersville office prior to his retirement and died on July 16<sup>th</sup>. Chuck and **Carol Thornhill** died August 12<sup>th</sup> as a result of injuries sustained in an automobile accident. Chuck was a Soil Conservation Technician prior to his retirement. More information about Betty, Clay, and Chuck can be found in the "In Memoriam" section of this newsletter.

Coach **Jim Thompson** shared the following news about the WVU Soil Judging Team. "The WVU Soils Team was in Raleigh, North Carolina, to compete in the 2025 Southeast Regional Collegiate Soils Contest. The 10 students from the Davis College of Agriculture and Natural Resources were among 76 students representing 11 different schools. The "red clay dirt" of the southern Piedmont landscapes proved to be a challenge, but three days of practice prepared the team for the unfamiliar soils and helped them calibrate their soil judging skills to the local conditions.

The contest was hosted by North Carolina State University. Other schools that participated were Auburn University, Clemson University, the University of Florida, the University of Georgia, the University of Kentucky, the University of Puerto Rico-Mayagüez, the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, Tuskegee University, Virginia Tech, and Western Kentucky University. The students who traveled with the Team were **Haydon Ammons** (freshman, Environmental Soil and Water Sciences), **Aubrie Benavidez** (junior, Environmental Soil and Water Sciences), **Aaron Finley** (junior, Environmental Soil and Water Sciences), **Thomas Gigenbach** (senior, Environmental Soil and Water Sciences), **Emma Quint** (sophomore, Wildlife and Fisheries Resources), **Will Simpson** (senior, Environmental Soil and Water Sciences), **Raleigh Sterling** (freshman, Environmental Soil and Water Sciences), **Daisy Stemple** (junior, Environmental Soil and Water Sciences), **Abigail Thornbury** (senior, Environmental Engineering), and **Doreen Winter** (freshman, Environmental Soil and Water Sciences).

I am pleased to report that, once again, the team performed well. When the results were announced, four WVU students placed in the top 25, with **Thomas Gigenbach** finishing 10<sup>th</sup>, **Abby Thornbury** 13<sup>th</sup>, **Doreen Winter** 24<sup>th</sup>, and **Will Simpson** 25<sup>th</sup>.

These individual results propelled WVU to a fifth-place finish in the team competition. The WVU Soils Team will now begin to prepare for the 2026 National Collegiate Soils Contest, which will be held in March and will be hosted by North Carolina State University. The other schools who finished in the top six and will represent the Southeast Region in the national contest are Virginia Tech (first), Auburn (second), Tennessee-Knoxville (third), Georgia (fourth), and Kentucky (sixth).

As always, I am extremely proud of the accomplishments of all these students, and I hope that you will join me in congratulating them if you have them in any of your courses, or if you interact with them in other ways. These students continue to build upon the past success of the WVU Soils Team, and students and faculty from other schools recognize these students' achievements. I believe this speaks to the quality of the training that these students receive from the School of Natural Resources and the Environment. It also reflects the overall strength of the academic programs across the Davis College. Thank you for your support of these students, particularly when they are away from campus for extended periods at critical times during the semester."

Those wishing to help the team compete in the national competition can make a donation to help cover their travel expenses by making a tax-deductible donation to the WV Chapter of the SWCS Soil Judging Endowment Fund 3V1001 at <https://wvuf.org>.





**WVU Soil Judging Team**

## WISCONSIN

**Deb Legear, ARCSE Representative**

Email: [deb.legear@gmail.com](mailto:deb.legear@gmail.com)



**Becky Ross and Julie MacSwain, plus dogs.**



Staying connected in retirement can be a challenge. Fortunately, I have stayed connected with an NRCS employee and recent retiree, **Becky Ross**. Becky and I crossed paths through our membership in SWCS over 25 years ago, and though both of us have moved a lot, we stayed connected. Becky recently visited me in Wisconsin. I had a great time reconnecting with Becky and her spouse.





Pictures from the Shawano Luncheon



Pictures from Verona





## SENIOR CONSERVATIONISTS – Paul Benedict.

Senior Conservationists have reached the minimum age of 83 years and have completed the Senior Conservationist Questionnaire (download at <https://arcsecommunications.wordpress.com/senior-conservationists/>). 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.

### SENIOR CONSERVATIONIST CHRONICLE

#### Senior Conservationist

#### Rhett Johnson

**Rhett Howell Johnson** was born 11/28/1942 in Elbert, Texas. He earned his BS in Rangeland Management at Texas Tech University in 1965. He married Sharon on 09/07/1963. He has 2 daughters, 4 grandchildren, and 3 Great Grandchildren.

He grew up on a farm one mile west of Elbert (Newcastle). His early work experience was working on the farm and working at a grain elevator.

Student Trainee, Graham, TX FO June to Aug '63

Student Trainee, Brady, TX FO June to Aug '64

Range Con., Albany, TX FO June 65 to 4/68

Range Con., Stephenville, TX 4/68 to 7/69

District Con., Uvalde, TX 7/69 to 5/71

District Con., Jayton, TX 5/71 to 10/73

Area Range Con., Pecos, TX 10/73 to 2/76

State Range Con., Temple, TX 2/76 to 4/88

Regional Range Con., Fort Worth, TX 4/88 to 1996

Dir., Grazing Lands Technology Institute 1996 to 12/97, Fort Worth, TX

Rhett retired as the Director of the Grazing Lands Technical Institute in Fort Worth in 12/1997.

#### Honors received (during and after career)

–Numerous performance awards from the SCS/NRCS

–Texas section of SRM, Outstanding Contribution to Range Management, 1997

–Texas section of SRM, Fellow Award, 1994

–Texas Tech University, Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, Davis College, honored Rhett H. Johnson as a Distinguished Alumnus

–In recognition of professional achievement and contribution to Society, awarded 04/08/2024.

#### Work after retirement

–Consulting on range management to ranchers in Texas.

–Consulted on and managed the Wisenbaker, Rancho Hielo Brazos, 3,100-acre ranch from 1999 to June of 2021.

–Taught Master Naturalist group the basic principles of range management for a number of years. This was in groups of about 40 people. I did this on the ranch I was managing. We did classroom exercises with grass samples, and then went on a trailer ride to see the work we were doing. I provided handouts of the principles.

#### Hobbies and activities

–I have enjoyed quail hunting all of my life with good bird dogs.

–I have enjoyed Texas Whitetail deer hunting, Elk and Mule Deer hunting in Colorado with my cousin who grew up hunting there. Good to have a guide.

–I love to fish for bass, catfish, and stripers. The Brazos River is our back yard.

–We have a small ranch that we inherited and purchased that keeps us busy. It was settled in 1892 by my wife's family.

–We are members of the Acton Baptist Church where we just celebrated our 170<sup>th</sup>-year anniversary. David Crockett's son-in-law was a pastor of the church. His wife attended and is buried near the church. Her burial plot is the smallest State Park in Texas. I am a deacon in the church, a teacher, and a member of the choir. I have served on a number of church committees.

#### Health

–The past year has been downhill. I fell in the river because of dizziness and hurt my shoulder. Surgery was attempted, and while I was being prepped for surgery, my heart started Afib, negating the surgery. They did an ablation on my heart to correct the Afib. When I woke up the next morning, the nurse set me up in bed to check out my dizziness. I could not set up or stand up. So I have been in rehab for the dizziness. It did not help. So it is a matter of time to recover. I have not driven since the bad dizziness.

–I am also contending with kidney failure and am on the verge of requiring dialysis. We are trying to hold off on that with medication.

–A couple of years ago they took 4.3ft of dead small intestine out of me. I do not recommend having to have the surgery. It is deadly if you do not have the surgery.

–Getting old is not for sissies. The Good Lord is looking after me, and I know he has a place for me. Put your faith and trust in Him, and he will take care of you. I did when I was 11 years old.

#### Special Experiences

–I enjoyed my career very much. I enjoyed the challenges of learning new ecosystems and then helping land owners and employees to understand them. I enjoyed seeing the "light" come on when they understood why the ecosystem was changing and how we could use the livestock management plan to correct it.

–I worked from the desert to the piney woods and everglades. And then I got to help Puerto Rico staff to understand that they had rangeland and how to manage it.

–I got to help the University and Extension Specialist to understand forage management and how to solve their pasture problems with grazing management. These were exciting times for me, and I miss it.

Rhett's contact information is 8504 Auburn Ct., Granbury, Texas 76049. (817) 279-2384, [r\\_johnson2004@charter.net](mailto:r_johnson2004@charter.net).

## SENIOR CONSERVATIONIST CHRONICLE

### Senior Conservationist

#### David Donald Breitbach

**David Donald Breitbach** was born on August 28, 1942 in New Hampton, Iowa. He married Kay Puth on June 6, 1964, and they had 2 sons, 3 daughters, 5 grandchildren, and 7 great grandchildren.

**Work Experience Before SCS/NRCS:** Grew up on a diversified 160-acre farm in northeast Iowa. During high school and the summer between my freshman and sophomore year at Iowa State University (ISU), I worked as a farm laborer on the family farm and for neighbors. This included manual labor as well as operating typical farm equipment. Between my sophomore year and junior year at ISU I worked for a commercial limestone company taking soil samples and promoting limestone applications. This was a special program developed between ISU and the limestone industry in Iowa.

#### Career Positions with SCS/NRCS:

May 27, 1963, through June 1964 – Student Trainee, New Hampton, IA  
 June 1964 through June 1967 – Soil Conservationist, Malvern, IA  
 June 1967 through June 1970 – Work Unit Conservationist, Anamosa, IA  
 June 1970 through June 1981 – District Conservationist, Waukon, IA  
 June 1981 through December 30, 1997 – Conservation Agronomist, St. Paul, MN  
 Retired December 30, 1997

**Honors Received (During and after Career):** I was fortunate to receive numerous awards for work and performance during my career. These included four within-grade increases, six letters of recognition, and nine certificates with cash awards. My first cash award was when our Work Unit Staff was recognized for assisting landowners in Mills County, Iowa install 155 miles of terraces during fiscal year 1966. I was also fortunate to receive recognition from several cooperating organizations including: SWCS MN Chapter (1985); MN Professional Engineers (1986); Civil Servant of the Year from the Federal Executive Board of the Twin Cities (1988); Minnesota Forage and Grassland Council (1988); American Society of Agricultural Engineers (1991); SWCS Fellow Award (1994); Society of Range Management – North Central Chapter (1995); Ridge Tillers of MN (1999); and at retirement, Farm Service Agency of MN, USDI/USF&WS, Regional Director, Partner in Wildlife; and MN DNR Forestry.

**After retirement work:** After retirement I worked 10½ years for Truax Company, New Hope, MN. This company builds and markets equipment designed specifically to plant native prairie grass and forbe seeds. My role included participation in record management of units produced and sold, assembly of small units, updating product literature and manuals, and participation in marketing activities, including manning exhibit booths at trade shows.

**Special Experiences, Publications, etc.:** Throughout my SCS/NRCS career I had the opportunity to participate in numerous conferences presenting information on agronomic practices in ongoing conservation programs. I co-authored with the MN Extension Service two publications: *Contour Farming*, and *Shrub Species for Single-Row Field Windbreaks Under Center-Pivot Irrigation Systems*. In addition, I was included as a co-author with University of Minnesota Specialists on more than twenty papers, reports, and manuscripts on crop residue management and conservation tillage.

His hobbies and activities include lawn care, gardening, and reading fiction. His health is good “as long as I stay current wit doctors, medicines, and a reasonable diet.”

Dave's contact information: 5513 Springbrook Drive, Ames, IA 50014, (515) 292-2123, [ddkcbreitb@centurylink.net](mailto:ddkcbreitb@centurylink.net).

## 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 internet, Paul Benedict will be glad to do the search. PLEASE SEND DEATH NOTICES AND OBITUARY INFORMATION DIRECTLY TO PAUL BENEDICT 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> )
Ball	2025	<b>Honorary Member Betty Anne Ball</b> (94) of Athens, Ohio (formerly of Parkersburg, West Virginia), passed away September 22, 2025, at the home of her son in Athens, Ohio. Betty was born February 4, 1931, in Parkersburg, the daughter of the late Edward S. Fox and Helen Virginia (Drennen) Fox. She was a graduate of Parkersburg High School, she served as Area Clerk for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service, covering 16 counties in West Virginia. She received numerous accolades for her work over the years, including two Superior Service Awards from the Secretary of the USDA. She retired in 1988 after 32 years of service. Betty was an active member of the Mt. Pleasant United Methodist Church in Mineral Wells, West Virginia. She was active in the Church's Bible Study, United Methodist Women, Food Pantry and the Kid's Christmas Shopping Program activities. Betty is survived by her daughter, Debra A. Ball of Athens, and her son and daughter-in-law, Edward E. and Sandy Ball of Athens. She is preceded in death by her husband, Everett Eugene "Gene" Ball, who passed away in 2002, and a sister, Patsy Butcher.



<b>Bourlier</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>Bobby Gene Bourlier</b> (93) of Norman, Oklahoma, passed away September 11, 2025. Bobby was born on May 18, 1932, in Custer City, Oklahoma. After graduating from Oklahoma A & M (now Oklahoma State University) in 1954, Bob began his career as a Soil Scientist with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service in Estancia, New Mexico, in 1955. His journey took him to Aztec, New Mexico, and later to Pawhuska, Oklahoma, where he worked for a decade before eventually relocating to Norman, Oklahoma, for nearly another decade of service. Bob's lifelong commitment to the stewardship of our natural resources was evident throughout his distinguished career with the Department of Agriculture, where he served with honor until his retirement in 1994. His passion for the environment extended beyond his professional life to include outdoor pursuits such as hunting, fishing, camping, and farming. He also possessed a remarkable talent for woodworking, crafting beautiful cabinets, desks, gun stocks, lamps, and cedar chests. Among his cherished creations were intricate plant sculptures made from locally sourced rose rocks, which he generously gifted to friends and family. A man of faith, Bob was raised in the Methodist tradition and remained devoted to his church community, actively participating in the First United Methodist Church in Pawhuska, McFarland Memorial United Methodist Church in Norman, and Independence United Methodist Church in Custer City. He is survived by his loving children: Marilyn (Tom) McAuliffe, Gina Harmon, Gary Bourlier, and Lora Bourlier (Richard Thomason). Bob took great pride in his grandchildren—Robert (Marilyn) Yarbrough, Justin (Michelle) Bourlier, Calla (Brett) McGee, Brody Tucker, Kerrigan Bourlier, Noah Smith, Robyn Smith, and Jordan Thomason—as well as his great-grandchildren, Xander Yarbrough, Rose Yarbrough, Kinsey Bourlier, and Jameson Hodge. Bob was preceded in death by his first wife, Marilyn Geraldine Lorah, with whom he shared 45 wonderful years, his second wife, Loretta Jane Ashurst, who passed in 2023 after 22 years of marriage, and his son, Dr. Robert Eugene Bourlier.
<b>Boyer</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>Member William Wilson Boyer, Jr.</b> (71) of Chester, Maryland, passed away August 31, 2025, after struggling with the effects of metastatic squamous cell cancer. Bill was born to William Wilson, Sr. and Nancy (Springer) Boyer on November 2, 1953, and joined his older sister, Louise (Scottie), at the family farm on Bush River near the Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland. After his mother died when Bill was a toddler, he was raised by his father's second wife, Catherine Stansbury Boyer, whom he loved and admired not only for her nurturing, motherly care but for the many practical skills that she taught him. Bill attended St. James preparatory school in Hagerstown, Maryland; Wesley College in Dover, Delaware; and the University of Maryland College Park where he earned his B.S. degree in Agriculture in 1979. Including part-time work during college, Bill spent a rewarding, happy 36-year career working as a conservationist for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service, later renamed Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). There, he spent many years in agency field offices in Pennsylvania and Maryland helping farmers and other land owners install and implement erosion control techniques designed to conserve the soil, water, and other natural resources of their land. For the last decade of his career, Bill served in various positions in the NRCS national office in Washington, DC as a Natural Resources Specialist. He retired in January 2014. Apart from his work, Bill was happy with and proud of his home life as an openly gay man living with his partners Taylor and Don since 1985 and 1997, respectively. Over the years, the three became welcomed members of each other's original family and friends and travelled with and hosted their respective parents, siblings, and friends on many occasions and in many places. Bill delighted in the loving bonds and stability of his chosen family. In 2013, Bill was diagnosed with pulmonary fibrosis, and in 2014, he became the lucky recipient of a life-saving lung transplant performed at the INOVA Heart & Lung Transplant Center in Fairfax, Virginia. In succeeding years, he lived as fully and happily as possible while also avoiding unacceptable risks to the gift of his donated lung. Partly as a result of exceeding the life expectancy averages for lung transplant patients by several years, Bill developed metastatic squamous cell cancer in 2024 that his suppressed immune system couldn't prevent, and current medical care couldn't stop. In addition to his life partners, Bill is survived by his sister, Scottie (Steve) Lay, and his half-sister, Jan (Oliver) Hofmann, whom he met several years ago for the first time and with whom he has developed a good and loving relationship. He is also survived by five Hofmann nieces and nephews and by many cousins and stepcousins.
<b>Brewer</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>Jimmy Lee Brewer</b> (86) of Rush Springs, Oklahoma, passed away at home peacefully on August 19, 2025. Jimmy was born on September 26, 1938, in Chickasha, Oklahoma. He graduated from Rush Springs High School, a milestone that marked the beginning of a life characterized by dedication and service. Jimmy's work ethic was evident to all who knew him, as he devoted over 37 years to the government with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service, a role in which he excelled and found great purpose. He worked on the Watershed Staff and was a Civil Engineering Technician in the Duncan Area Office. Jimmy's life was a testament to love and commitment, particularly evident in his cherished relationships. He married Carol Veronica Bratcher in 1958 in Rush Springs, and this union was blessed with four loving children: Gregory Brewer and his wife Laura, Scotty Brewer and his wife Cindy, Tony Brewer, and daughter Janna Jasso with her husband Robert. Jimmy found love again and married Juanita Lorine Turney on January 4, 1984, who preceded him in death on March 23, 2015. He later found companionship and joy in his marriage to Mary Frances Botts on December 4, 2016, in Rush Springs. His family grew to include stepdaughter Carla Wasson alongside her husband Larry and numerous adoring grandchildren and great-grandchildren, who will forever cherish their memories with him. His interests were many, but above all, he relished the thrill of music. He was often found strumming his guitar alongside buddies at the Ninnakah Senior Citizens center, sharing melodies that resonated with the hearts of many. His love for the outdoors was unparalleled, with camping, fishing, and motorcycle riding being activities that brought him immense joy. Jimmy was also a devout member of the Vimy Ridge Baptist Church, where he found spiritual solace and community.
<b>Cherp</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>William "Bill" Cherp</b> (83) of Ivanhoe, Minnesota, passed away on August 21, 2025 at the Hendricks Community Hospital Nursing Home in Hendricks, Minnesota. Bill was born on November 4, 1941, in Tyler, Minnesota to Harry and Ferne (Madoll) Cherp. He was a 1959 graduate of Ivanhoe High School. After graduation he went to work as a Technician for the Remington Rand Corporation in Minneapolis. In 1961 he married Diane Janssen of Ivanhoe at the Basilica of St. Mary in Minneapolis. In 1964 they moved to Brookings, South Dakota and Bill enrolled at South Dakota State University where, in the winter of 1969, he received his Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Engineering. His 25-year professional career was spent working for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service (SCS) as an Engineer in Ivanhoe and Rochester, Minnesota, and as an Area Engineer in St. Peter, Minnesota. In 1995 he accepted the SCS's offer of early. This gave him the opportunity to chase his lifelong ambition to continue the farming legacy his father had started years earlier. Bill was an avid hunter and fisherman and had a passion for conservation and land preservation which took him on several journeys, many with his son Mike, to their favorite destination, the mountains of the Western United States. Bill was a member of St. Peter & Paul Catholic Church. Bill was preceded in death by his wife of 61 years, Diane, in 2023. Survivors include his four children: Peggy (Mitch) Rasmussen, Mike (Stacey) Cherp, Jane (Mike) Schwarz and Tom

		Cherp; seven grandchildren: Luke (Alana) Rasmussen, Shane Rasmussen, Kyle (Mandy) Rasmussen, McKinlee Cherp, Jacquelyn, Josslyn and Justin Schwarz; and five great-grandchildren.
<b>Coggins</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>Brent Wayne Coggins</b> (66) of Lake City, Minnesota, passed away on October 17, 2025. He was born on April 22, 1959 to Jack and Alice Coggins. Brent dedicated his professional life to serving his community. He worked for the City of Rochester and then the USDA-Soil Conservation he worked as a Conservation Engineering Technician on the South Zumbro flood control project, helping design and improve the city's flood management systems. Later, he worked for the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT), where his knowledge, dedication, and integrity earned him the respect of his colleagues. Brent also ran for Mayor of Rochester in 2016, reflecting his commitment to civic engagement and public service. Brent was best known to many as "SinGee the Magician." Through his performances, he combined faith, laughter, and wonder to share the message of God's love. He performed multiple times for the Eagle's Cancer Telethon, using his magic to help raise funds and awareness in the fight against cancer - a cause that became deeply personal when he faced his own leukemia diagnosis in March 2024. He met that challenge with unwavering faith, strength, and grace, continuing to uplift others through his words and example. Brent was a lifelong, active member of Trinity Lutheran Church of Rochester. Brent is survived by his loving wife, Virginia "Ginny" Coggins of Lake City; his daughter, Jacquelyn (Nate) Proper; stepchildren Jessie Rueb and Jerik (Susan) Brumm; eight grandchildren – Jaxon, Nickolys, Caleb, Kirsten, Clayton, Nina, Ema, and Mia – one great-granddaughter, Eleanor; his brother Lee (Sheila) Coggins; and niece Charlotte Coggins.
<b>Crews</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>Larry Eugene Crews</b> (80) of Elizabethtown, Kentucky, passed away on September 11, 2025, surrounded by his family. Larry was born in Edmonton, Kentucky, on May 27, 1945, to Andy and Evelyn Crews. He graduated from Western Kentucky University in 1967 with a bachelor's degree in agriculture and obtained a master's degree in Agronomy from the University of Kentucky in 1969. He spent his entire career working for USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service until his retirement in 2004. Much of that time he served as the District Conservationist in the Elizabethtown, Kentucky Field Office. Larry loved being outdoors with his family - hunting, hiking, and canoeing. He enjoyed watching NASCAR and restoring vintage corvettes. Larry was preceded in death by his daughter, Mary Lynn Crews Van Buren. Survivors include his wife, Alice Stahl Crews of Elizabethtown; his daughter, Larra Crews Rose (Steve) of Cincinnati, Ohio; his son-in-law, Chris Van Buren of Atlanta, Georgia; grandsons, Austin Rose and Anderson Rose; and granddaughter Hadley Van Buren.
<b>Crider</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>Duane Crider</b> (76) of Yukon, Oklahoma, passed away September 9, 2025 in Edmonds, Washington. Duane was born Feb. 8, 1949, in Enid, Oklahoma Mary Lou and John Crider of Lamont, Oklahoma. Duane attended Oklahoma State University, where he met the love of his life, Jan Walker, and they married in 1969. He earned his Bachelor of science degree in Agronomy and Turf Management in 1972 and began working for the U.S.D.A. Soil Conservation Service (now NRCS). During his career, Duane worked in the Oklahoma field offices in Tahlequah, Pawnee, Geary and most recently was the District Conservationist for 30 years in the El Reno Field Office. Duane and Jan were active members of First Christian Church in El Reno and Duane became a faithful member of the choir. They served either as a Deacon or an Elder for over 41 years. Duane and Jan enjoyed traveling, especially with their grandchildren. Survivors include his wife, Jan; son, Greg Crider (Beverly), their two sons, Aspen, and Dylan; his daughter, Jenna Crider (Alex Smithwick), Jenna's two sons, Drake and Dawson Holland, bonus grandchildren, Maddox and Oliver Smithwick, Lorina Birdshead and her children, Aizleigh and Dayton.
<b>Ebert</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>William (Bill) Andrew Ebert</b> (66) of Stevens Point, Wisconsin, passed away peacefully on November 8, 2024, at home surrounded by family and friends, after a long battle with cancer. Bill was born on April 28, 1958, in Stevens Point, Wisconsin, the son of Paul Ebert and the late Florence (Molter) Ebert. After high school, Bill moved to Madison to attend the University of Wisconsin-Madison and initially lived with his brother Steve. He learned that the traditional classroom was not for him and moved to University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point to earn a degree in Soils Science and worked at jobs that would fuel his passion for the outdoors. He worked for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). He taught farmers the ins and outs of land conservation to improve the quality of ground and water that we all share. It was here that he met Chris Ewer who was a farm loan officer in 2001. He was able to retire early from the NRCS in 2010, allowing him and Chris to purchase their dream home on the river. Bill's love of the outdoors stayed with him throughout his life. Some of his favorite sporting activities included fishing – both summer and winter and hunting. Whether on the river in Stevens Point, any lake in Wisconsin or the beaches in the Florida panhandle, you would find Bill with a fishing pole and a smile! He was also an avid gardener and was found in his garden on many summer days relishing in the bounty of home grown produce. Bill is survived by his daughter Rachel (Garett) Chisholm and their daughters Auden Beaudry and Riley Chisholm; devoted companion Chris Ewer and her 3 children, Sara Beth Ewer (Mike Friske) and their children Tully, Gemma, and Wyatt; Steven Ewer and daughter Cassidy Ewer, and Todd Ewer (Allison Birr). He is also survived by his father Paul.
<b>Handley</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>Clay Rolland Handley</b> (72) of Craigsville, West Virginia, passed away July 16, 2025, at his camp on Sugar Creek. Clay was born August 21, 1952, in Mississippi and was the son of the late Rolland and Marilyn Thompson Handley. He was a graduate of West Virginia University with a degree in Agricultural Forestry. Clay was employed by the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service as a Soil Conservation Technician in Summersville, West Virginia, for many years. Clay enjoyed the outdoors, traveling, gardening and was a skilled banjo player. Survivors include his daughter, Rexana (Jamie) McCourt and son, Joshua (Rena) Sill; grandchildren Madeline and Julian Sill; brother, Craig Handley and sisters: Chris Yardley and Zane (Roy) Handley.
<b>Hausner</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>Georgene P. Hausner</b> (85) of Spring Green, Wisconsin, passed away September 22, 2025. Georgene was the wife of former member and retired District Conservationist Eugene "Gene" Paul Hausner who worked for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service. Georgene was born on July 23, 1940, in Hastings, Minnesota, to Clifford and Bernice (Fecker) Wolterstorff. Growing up on a farm, she developed a strong work ethic and an advocacy for agriculture, proudly showing cattle in 4-H and serving as the Dunn County Dairy Queen. She earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Stout in 1962. While working at the Marquette County Extension Office, Georgene was introduced to a young Soil Conservation Technician who worked in the same town. They married on July 2, 1966, at St. Luke's Catholic Church in Boyceville, Wisconsin. A master of creativity, Georgene "invented" many dishes, to inspire confidence in young cooks and make memorable time together. Georgene celebrated life, from bringing her young daughters to visit and sing songs for nursing home residents, to being a steadfast advocate for the unborn and receiving special recognition from the Sauk

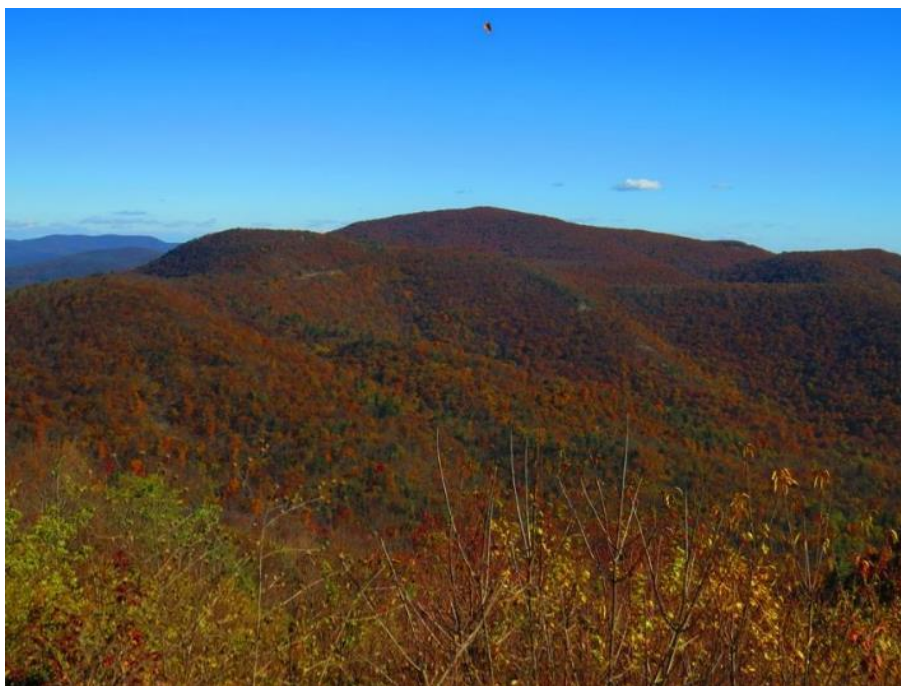


		County Right to Life, she encouraged all to recognize the beauty and value in every life, at every stage. For over thirty years, Georgene made a profound impact as a 4-H Leader, dedicating herself to being a mentor and coach in many projects from public speaking to foods to clothing. Georgene's survivors include her devoted husband of 59 years, Gene; her daughters Julie (Jon) Bauch, Mary Beth (Jeff) Wachsmuth, and Louann Hausner; her grandchildren Jordan Bauch, Amanda (Justin) Olive, Joshua (Randel) Wachsmuth, and Janessa (Brad) Dahlberg; and great-grandchildren Avery, Cullen, Ariya, Rudy, Raya, Dawson, and Lydia.
<b>Hendricks</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>Senior Conservationist and Life Member Ronald E. "Ron" Hendricks</b> (87) of Gann Valley, South Dakota, passed away on September 16, 2025, in the pasture he loved so dearly, with his beloved wife Mary at his side. Ron was born March 23, 1938, in Wessington Springs, South Dakota, to Ralph and Gertie (Kieffer) Hendricks. He grew up on a ranch in Jerauld County, attending a rural school through 8th grade before graduating from Wessington Springs High School in 1956. In 1961, he earned his bachelor's degree in Animal Husbandry from South Dakota State University (SDSU), where he discovered his lifelong passion for soils and grasses. During his school and college years, Ron worked a variety of jobs, from trucking to ranch work. While at SDSU, he met the love of his life, Mary Abernathy. The two were married on June 29, 1960, beginning a partnership that lasted 65 years. In 1964, Ron accepted a position with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service (SCS), a job that would become his lifelong career. Over the years, his work with SCS took the family to Walsenburg, Loveland, Pagosa Springs, Lamar, and Monte Vista, Colorado, with each new assignment a step forward in responsibility. His career also led him to positions in Oregon, Pennsylvania, and New York. He then served as the State Conservationist first in Maine, then Nebraska, and eventually back home to South Dakota. Ron retired from the SCS in 1994, devoting his days to improving the land, raising cattle, and enjoying the ranch life he treasured. He was a member of the Knights of Columbus and founder of the Grasslands Coalition. Ron is survived by his wife, Mary; children, Tim Hendricks of Montana, and Rodney Hendricks and his partner Andrea of Pennsylvania and their children Taylor, Noah, and Bella; daughter Kim Hendricks of Tennessee and children Keith and Victoria Haydu, Shelby Haydu, Kacy Haydu, and Sydney Haydu; brother-in-law Jim Abernathy; sisters-in-law Connie Stebbins and Janet Reuer; adopted grandchildren Gabe and Levi; and many nieces and nephews.
<b>Janowski</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>Leon Louis Janowski</b> (89) of Green Bay, Wisconsin, passed away peacefully on July 22, 2025, surrounded by his loving family. Leon was born to the late Leo and Regina (Brusda) Janowski, in Algoma, Wisconsin, on May 22, 1936. He proudly served his country in the United States Army Reserves and later went on to dedicate 34.5 years of his career to the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service as a Civil Engineering Technician. He retired in 1991. Following his retirement from federal service, he continued his engineering work for another 12.5 years as a Civil Engineering Technician for Brown County. Leon was a proud and active member of St. Bernard's parish serving in multiple capacities throughout his lifetime. Additionally, he was a member of the Knights of Columbus, living out his faith through service and fellowship. He also brought joy to many through his passion for music. A talented clarinet and saxophone player, he performed with the Russ Zimmerman Band, the Green Bay City Band, and participated in numerous other musical ensembles throughout his life. Leon's survivors include his loving wife of 63 years, Sheila M. (Kuehn) Janowski; son, Michael D. Janowski (Kelley), and their children, Matthew and Emily Janowski; daughter, Anne Marie Bolstad (Scott), and their children, Andrew and Genevieve Bolstad.
<b>Jones</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>Gilbert Douglas "Doug" Jones</b> (79) of Goldsboro, North Carolina, passed away peacefully on August 30, 2025, while surrounded by the compassionate care of Heartland Hospice at Rex Hospital. Doug was born in Lenoir County North Carolina to the late Johnnie Manley and Olive Williams Jones. Doug lived a life defined by service, family, and faith. He proudly served his country for 22 years with the United States Army National Guard. He treasured the deep friendships and lessons he carried from his time in uniform. After graduating from North Carolina State University, he began his career as a civil engineer with the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, where he worked with dedication and integrity. Throughout his life, Doug was a faithful member of churches wherever his career took him. In recent years, he was part of the First Baptist Church of Mount Olive, where he especially enjoyed supporting missionary work through the Fishers of Men group. Together, Doug and Gail opened their hearts and home to more than 20 foster children, leaving a legacy of love and care that touched countless lives. Above all, Doug's greatest joy was his family. He is survived by his loving wife, Gail Thornton Jones; his daughter, Glenda Jones MacDonald (David); his son, Brian Douglas Jones (Nicole); and a special daughter, Mary Feige Parker (David); his grandchildren, Nicole Smoot, Matthew Bunch, Stephen Bunch, Caleb Jones, Chris Feige, Doug Feige, and Kyle Feige; and great-grandchildren, Emory and Parker Smoot, Zoe Bunch, and Kaitlyn, Hazel, Waylon, and Josie Feige.
<b>Larsen</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>Randall Larsen</b> (76) of Walnut, Iowa, passed away August 25, 2025. On May 30, 1970, he married Marlys Petersen. Randall worked as a Soil Conservation Technician in southwest Iowa for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service. Survivors include his daughter Chantil Ellis of Council Bluffs, Iowa; son Nate (Reita) Larsen of Blair, Nebraska; and 5 grandchildren: Josie, Dex, Dane, London and Landry. He was preceded in death by his wife Marlys Jean Larsen in 2021.
<b>Losh</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>Senior Conservationist and Life Member Linus Burton "Lenny" Losh</b> (100) of Westerville, Ohio, passed away peacefully in his sleep on September 3, 2025, with his daughter by his side. Lenny was born in Lakewood, Ohio on March 12, 1925, to the late John and Cecilia Losh. Lenny was a true American Classic with an indomitable will, an exacting intelligence, and a disarming smile. He was a World War II veteran, whose unit, (the 97th Infantry Battalion) liberated the Flossenbürg concentration camp in Bavaria and was a leading element in General Patton's 3rd Army. His battalion met the Russian troops near the Czechoslovakian town of Cheb at the European war's end and, later, his battalion was then assigned the occupation of Japan. Lenny loved learning and was the first in his family to attend college. He obtained a bachelor's degree in agronomy and a master's degree in economics from Ohio State University. Lenny was a pioneer in American agricultural conservation policy. He spent a significant part of his career in Washington DC as the chief economist in the USDA-Soil Conservation Service and as a legislative aide to Senator Mike Oxley for Agricultural Policy. During his tenure in Washington, he helped develop the Resource Conservation Act and led the creation of the National Resource Inventory (NRI), which remains the Federal Government's principal source of information for soil, water, and related resources on non-federal lands in the US. He also procured major funding for conservation efforts in the Scioto River and the Darby Creek watersheds, as well as others, such as the Celeryville Project, in Ohio. Well into his nineties, Lenny continued to be consulted on conservation matters by engineers, conservationists, farmers, and other conservation and agricultural professionals. He was inducted into the Ohio Agricultural Council's Hall of Fame in 2007. Lenny was a

		devout Catholic and a staunch supporter of the Ohio State football team. He was married to the late Jeanette Hippler Losh for 63 years. He is survived by his two children, Lynnette (Lynn) Losh -Eisentrou (Richard Hoechstetter), Clifford Losh (Chakameh Habibi), his two grandchildren, Sarah (Steve) Caudill and Claire (Dustin) Krebs and his seven great-grandchildren: Jakob Caudill (25), Emaleigh Caudill (22), Lilah Krebs (7), Owen Caudill (6), Cameron Caudill (5), Bennett Krebs (4) and Carter Krebs (1). He was predeceased by his great-granddaughter Madelynn Caudill (eight months). The family wishes to thank Wesley Woods of New Albany, the Gables of Westerville and Riverside Methodist Hospital for the extraordinary care of our beloved Lenny. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests any contributions to be made to the Sisters Carmelite of the Holy Family, the St. Vincent DePaul Society, and to St. Paul Catholic Church.
<b>Nordaune</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>Curtis Jerome Nordaune</b> (92) of Montevideo, Minnesota, passed away on August 27, 2025, at Luther Haven Nursing Home in Montevideo. Curtis was born on May 12, 1933 in Montevideo to Jenny (Soma) and Elvin Nordaune. He graduated from Montevideo High School in 1952. He attended St. Olaf College for a short time and then farmed with his family. On August 9, 1964, Curtis married Betty Pederson of Starbuck, Minnesota. They were happily married for over 35 years until her passing in March 1999. Curtis started work with the Lac qui Parle Soil and Water Conservation District in April 1957. After seven years with the district, he had a chance to go to Windom, Minnesota, and work with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service (SCS). In 1971 he moved back to Madison as a Soil Conservation technician. He "retired" from the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (formerly SCS) in April 1994 but immediately began work part time with the Lac qui Parle Soil and Water Conservation District. Throughout his lifetime, Curtis volunteered on many committees and boards in church and in the community. Curtis was a lifelong member of Our Savior's Lutheran Church of Baxter. Curtis is survived by numerous in-laws, nieces, nephews, cousins and their families. He was preceded in death by his wife Betty, and a stillborn son in 1966
<b>Patrick</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>James Patrick "Jim" Lafleur</b> (91) of Norfolk, Nebraska, passed away peacefully on August 15, 2025, in Norfolk. was born on March 17, 1934, in Madison, Nebraska, to Marie (Olmer) and Rafael Lafleur. An exceptional athlete in his youth, Jim played football at the University of Nebraska. He married the love of his life, Lisabeth "Libby" Linn, on July 11, 1970, in Omaha, Nebraska. Jim proudly served his country in the United States Army, where he was stationed in Hawaii and was a member of the Rifle Team. Following his military service, he dedicated almost 40 years of his professional life to the USDA-Soil Conservation Service, work that reflected his deep connection to the land and his commitment to preserving it for future generations. Throughout his career, Jim and his family made their home in Pierce, Nelson, and finally Norfolk, Nebraska. Jim was a devoted member of Sacred Heart Parish in Norfolk, Nebraska, where his faith provided him strength and community throughout his life. He was an avid sportsman and outdoorsman who found peace and joy in hunting and fishing, often sharing these passions with family and friends. Jim is survived by his beloved wife of 55 years, Libby; his daughter Kristi (Jesse) Rosales of Burr Ridge, Illinois; his son Bill (Jade) Lafleur of Norfolk; and six cherished grandchildren who brought immense joy to his life.
<b>Sikes</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>David Arthur Sikes</b> (77) of Wichita Falls, Texas, passed away on October 9, 2025, after a lengthy illness surrounded by his family. David was born on May 6, 1948, in Long Beach, California to Delbert and Catherine Sikes. He proudly served in the United States Navy from 1966 to 1970 aboard the brand-new destroyer the USS Richard L. Page, patrolling the Mediterranean Sea. He graduated college at Southeastern Oklahoma State University and then attended Texas Tech University earning his Masters in Range Management. He worked for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service for over 30 years as a range conservationist in Seymour, Longview, Vernon, Haskell, Paducah, Guthrie and Aspermont Texas. He is survived by his wife of 57 years Shirlene, sons Aaron (Nadia), Andrew (Denise), and Nathan (Amy); grandchildren Chandler, Bryce (Addison), Eric, Brady, Ryleigh, and great grandson Walker.
<b>Smith</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>Myra (Parrish) Smith</b> (80) of Raleigh, North Carolina, passed away September 30, 2025. Myra was the wife of Life Member Horace Smith who served as Director of the Soil Survey Division of the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, retiring in 2002. Myra was born on January 24, 1945, to the late Charlie Turner and Helen Mae Parrish. She pursued higher education at Virginia Union University (VUU) in Richmond, Virginia, earning her Artium Baccalaureus in Sociology in 1967. At VUU, she was honored as an Alpha Sweetheart, Ms. Virginia Union Court, and served in the Office of the Dean of Students. In 1965, she was initiated into the Alpha Eta chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, beginning a lifelong journey of sisterhood and service. Myra continued her academic journey at The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio, where she met the love of her life, Horace Smith, in 1967 and earned a Master's in Social Work in 1969. They married in 1968 and built a life rooted in love, family, and purpose. Her professional career began in Columbus, Ohio, where she worked in adoption services, helping families grow through love. She later served in clinical settings in West Chester, Pennsylvania, offering end-of-life counseling and bereavement support. In the late 1980s, Myra transitioned to education, serving as a guidance counselor, assistant principal, and principal in Wake County Public Schools, culminating in her retirement from Durham Public Schools in 2006. She was a devoted member of Martin Street Baptist Church. She held roles including Ladies Auxiliary President and Bereavement Ministry Co-Chair. She was a passionate reader and a 30-year member of the Friday Night Women Book Club. Her dedication to uplifting women was evident in her work with The Links, Incorporated (Raleigh Chapter), and as president of Triangle Women in Golf (TWIG). Survivors include her devoted husband of 57 years, Horace Smith of Raleigh; daughters Cherie Smith Gibson (Russell) of Mitchellville, Maryland, and Stacy Joy Smith of Raleigh; son Christopher Horace Smith of Chicago, Illinois; and granddaughter Sarah Parrish Gibson of Mitchellville, Maryland.
<b>Thornhill</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>Charles Henry "Chuck" Thornhill, III</b> (72) and <b>Carol Jane Thornhill</b> (67) of Montrose, West Virginia, passed away August 12, 2025 in Elkins, West Virginia as a result of injuries sustained in an automobile accident. Chuck was born January 23, 1953, in Elkins, a son of the late Charles Henry Thornhill, Jr and the late Willa Jean Moyer Thornhill. Carol was born June 14, 1958, in Baltimore, Maryland, the daughter of the late Kermit Edward Thompson and the late Dora Marie Rowan Thompson. Carol and Chuck were married on December 17, 1977, at Montrose. Chuck received an associate in science degree in Agriculture from Potomac State College. He was employed as a Soil Conservation Technician with the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) prior to his retirement. He was a lifelong farmer and helped many local farmers through his career at NRCS. He spent his retirement years farming with his son, grandchildren, and nephew and was always happy to help anyone in need. Carol was a graduate of Davis & Elkins College. She was employed at Davis Memorial Hospital and later Davis Medical Center as the Health Information Coordinator prior to her retirement. She enjoyed gardening, sewing, quilting, and making crafts and especially enjoyed working on the family farm and spending time with her grandchildren. Carol and Chuck attended services at the Orlena



		Global Methodist Church at Gilman, West Virginia. Survivors include two children, Matthew Thornhill (Emily) and children Emma Grace and Matthew Tyrell "Ty" Thornhill, Jr. of Montrose and Amber N. Thornhill (Brendan Rinehimer) of Linthicum Heights, Maryland.
<b>vonWolfradt</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>Member Donald Burton vonWolfradt</b> (89) of Overland Park, Kansas, passed away September 17, 2025. Don was born in Sayre, Pennsylvania, on May 27, 1936. Donald grew up in Athens, Pennsylvania on a dairy farm, and attended Pennsylvania State University where he received his bachelor's degree in civil engineering. He was drafted into the United States Army Corps of Engineers and served from 1959 to 1961. He was a career federal employee with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service until his retirement in 1995 as River Basin Program Manager. He had a passion for photography and developing his own prints. He won numerous competitions, with one of his prints selected in National Geographic magazine. Donald was one of the original computer technicians and experts. He worked on the very first computers while in the Army and continued this passion through the first home computers. He had a love for family, travel, camping, hunting and fishing. His card playing was second to none and always won at Canasta. He will be greatly missed by his family. He is survived by his wife, Helen, of 59 years, his two children Timothy vonWolfradt and Greta Ryan, his son-in-law William Ryan, four grandchildren Colin, Alec, Nick and Frank and three great grandchildren. He is also survived by his two nephews, who were more like sons, Thomas Lindsey and Eric Lindsey and his family.
<b>Willis</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>June Gleghorn Willis</b> (94) of Stillwater, Oklahoma, passed away on October 2, 2025. June was the wife of the late Roland Willis, former State Conservationist and Life Member, who passed away in 2021. June was born August 31, 1931, in Mexia, Texas to Commodore Dewey and Elimina (Person) Gleghorn. She attended Conroe Community School and Sam Houston College. June married the love of her life, Roland Willis, in Conroe, Texas on July 2, 1953. A big part of her life was supporting Roland as he worked and traveled with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service, including when he was appointed State Conservationist for Oklahoma, a position he held until retiring in 1987. June also worked as a teacher and was a member of the Mulhall Methodist Church. She loved horses and especially enjoyed having coffee with friends. In addition to her husband Roland, June is preceded in death by her daughter Elesia Willis. She is survived by her daughters Nancy Willis and Wanda Willis Clark.
<b>Yeager</b>	<b>2025</b>	Soil Conservationist <b>Johnetta Marie Yeager</b> (51) of Versailles, Missouri, passed away September 22, 2025, because of a senseless act of violence outside her workplace office. She was a Soil Conservationist for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service in the Versailles Field Office. Johnetta Yeager was a devoted mother, daughter, and friend whose warmth touched everyone she met. She poured her heart into raising her daughters, Sydney and Kynzie, always putting their happiness and well-being first. Johnetta's loyalty and kindness were unmatched—she was the first to offer help to those around her, and her smile could brighten anyone's day. Her love for gardening was well known, and her beautiful flowers were a reflection of the care she gave to her family and friends.



*Blue Ridge Mountains, Virginia*



**DEADLINE FOR THE JAN/FEB 2026  
NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS IS  
DECEMBER 25<sup>TH</sup>, 2025.**