

THE DIXIE RANGER

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President's Corner

The summer has finally arrived in the beautiful South. I would hope a lot of you will be getting some traveling in this summer. One idea is the Forest Service Retirees Reunion in Missoula, MT this year. The reunion is Sept. 7-12, 2009. Visit the reunion website at www.2009forestservicereunion.net. Hope to see a lot of old (young) friends there.

On June 5th at our summer Southern Region Retirees' luncheon we had 48 retirees in attendance. Johnny Allen won the honor of being the longest retired there. Johnny has been retired 26+ years. Howard Burnett came in second with 23+ years. Congratulations to both. **Is there anyone out there who has been retired longer than 26+ years?** I sure would like to know and recognize you in the November issue of the Dixie Ranger. A nominating committee comprised of Nancy Sorrels, Mike Sparks and Dave Jolly was appointed to come up with a slate of nominees for various positions for the next 2 years, starting in January, 2010. If you are interested in helping out by holding one of the offices, please let one of the above folks know. We especially need help with the Dixie Ranger. This is the lifeblood of the Association.

Our guest speaker at the luncheon was our new Regional Forester Elizabeth (Liz) Agpaoa. Liz did a great job of bringing us up to date on FS activities, transition activities and actions affecting the Forest Service and what specifically is happening in Region 8. Liz is very anxious to work with the Retirees Association and was very active with them when she was in Region 6.

A recent "Employee Satisfaction Survey" presented some very troubling statistics regarding employee satisfaction within the Forest Service. The Forest Service placed near the bottom of the overall rankings for agencies, 206th of 216 agencies. At a hearing before a House subcommittee in March, Deputy Chief Hank Kashdan acknowledged the decline in morale and said the agency's efforts to centralize business operations, business processes, information technology, and budget and finance operations had played a significant role in employee satisfaction. Kashdan also noted that "contentious issues and the associated legal complexities" that delay or prevent project implementation, as well as transfers of funds to wildland fire suppression from other natural resource management accounts also contributed to the decline in morale. What's happened to the once "proud" and "can do" outfit we all remember? I would hope our new Chief, Tom Tidwell, will set this as his number one priority to deal with. Without a highly motivated and high-morale workforce our cherished National Forests and natural resources will flounder. The results of the survey, called "The Best Places to Work in the Federal Government 2009" are available via the website: <http://data.bestplacestowork.org>. Users of the site can generate customized reports. We, as Forest Service retirees, need to help the present FS managers in any way we can to get the agency back on track to increase employee morale so we can return to the high ranking we once held among all government agencies as the "best place" to work.

Enjoy your summer and retirement.

Jean Paul Kruglewicz, President

JUNE LUNCHEON NOTES

In addition to the comments made asking for help with the Dixie Ranger by Jean Paul in his letter, several people did volunteer to help with the Treasurer/Editor duties of our association. Tom Tibbs volunteered to take charge of the membership data base, keeping track of dues payments, changes of addresses/phone numbers, banking, etc. Jim McConnell will gather and prepare the obituaries and Sonny Cudabac will coordinate a digital transition of *The Dixie Ranger* to a publisher who can handle the task of labeling and mailing as well as publishing the newsletter. Details of how this will be accomplished and the changes as to where you will send your letters, dues, etc. will be in the November *Dixie Ranger*. We will still be doing the Editor's job of creating the newsletter. There are lots of details to be worked out. Any suggestions you might have would be appreciated. **Remember, there are no changes until January 2010**

New attendees recognized at the luncheon were Bill Kane and Jim Fenwood. Everyone enjoyed the festive table decorations provided by Nancy Sorrells and the great door prizes which were selected and beautifully packaged by Joyce Keith. Lee Cromley also donated door prizes, and his woodworking skills were appreciated by the six lucky members who won one of the wooden pens he made and donated. There was also a one-year SFSRA Dues Certificate which was won by Wayne Miller and a gift certificate from the Petite Auberge Restaurant which was won by a lucky member.

Eight members indicated that they would be attending the 2009 Forest Service Reunion in Missoula, MT, in September. We hope many other members will be there as well.

It's not too late.....

NATIONAL FOREST SERVICE RETIREES REUNION - September 7 - 11, 2009

**Headquarters - Hilton Garden Inn
North Reserve Street
Missoula, Montana 59808
406-532-5300
1-800-782-9444**

Be sure to ask the desk assistant for the "2009 FS Reunion" block of room & rates before booking. First come, first serve. Deadline to reserve your accommodations at all hotel/motels is Midnight August 6, 2009. There are many motels in Missoula.

www.2009forestservicereunion.net

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

NEXT LUNCHEON/MEETING DECEMBER 3, 2009 - at the Petite Auberge Restaurant in the Toco Hills Shopping Center, 2935 North Druid Hills Road. We gather at 11:30 a.m. for fellowship and lunch is served at 12:00 noon. The cost of the meal is \$15 per person. Reservations must be made by Monday, November 30th. Call either Nancy Sorrells at (770) 469-5799 or Joyce Keith at (770) 277-5841. Leave a message on their answering machine if you do not reach one of them.

An old farmer says, "Do not corner something that you know is meaner than you!"

Officers for 2008/2009

President: Jean Paul Kruglewicz
jpkruglewicz@bellsouth.net

Vice Pres/Pres-elect: Larry Bishop
lmabishop@hotmail.com

Secretary: Sonny Cudabac
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Historian: Jim McConnell
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Treasurer: Dave Jolly
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Dixie Ranger Co-Editors: Dave & Peggy Jolly

R-8 member of the board, National Association of FS Retirees: Ralph Mumme
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Bob James (10)
bjandsjames@aol.com

Clair Redman (11)
clairredmond@bellsouth.net

Jerry Coutant (Ex-Officio)
coutfj@bellsouth.net

RETIREE GET-TOGETHERS

Northeast Atlanta - Retirees meet the last Tuesday of each month (except December) at Matthews Cafeteria in Tucker at 7:30 a.m. for breakfast. Spouses are welcome. The address is 2299 Main Street. The cafeteria is next to the railroad tracks. Main Street is in front of Tucker High School. If you get lost, just ask anyone - everyone in Tucker knows where Matthews Cafeteria is located.

Cobb County Georgia - Retirees are now meeting at "My Country Kitchen", 2740 Summers Street, Kennesaw, Georgia. We meet on the last Tuesday of the month at 9:00 a.m. Good time for all with great fellowship.

Ouachita National Forest - Retirees, spouses and friends meet the third Tuesday of each month at 8:30 a.m. for breakfast at the Cracker Barrel Restaurant in the Cornerstone Shopping Center, Hot Springs, Arkansas.

Jefferson National Forest - Retirees get together at noon on the second Wednesday of even numbered months at the Roanoker Restaurant in Roanoke, Virginia. They have been meeting for the last 16 years. No dues are collected and only rarely are there programs or expressions of professional concerns. For information, contact Charles Blankenship at (540) 774-6272.

George Washington National Forest - Retirees, spouses and friends meet for breakfast on the first Wednesday of **even** numbered months at 9:00 a.m. at the Village Inn Restaurant. This is located on U.S. 11, a short distance off I-81 at Exit 240.

Francis Marion & Sumpter National Forests - Retirees meet the third Wednesday in April and October of each year. You may e-mail Vicki Scott at cyberfogie@aol.com or call Glenda Wood at (864) 445-4751 for further information.

The old farmer also says, "Forgive your enemies, it messes up their heads".

LETTERS FROM MEMBERS

BILL BRYAN - Georgia - Just received my copy of the March 2009 *Dixie Ranger* and am enclosing a check for \$30 for dues to carry me over!! You folks do a good job. Thanks. Would like to make the June Luncheon but probably won't.

SHIRLEY HERBERT - Georgia - For 20 something years I worked for the US Forest Service in the Regional Office in Atlanta - Office of Information. I always read with great interest the newsletter and the directory. Enclosed is a check for a couple years dues. Thanks for a great job!!

MARY ANHOLD - Virginia - Reasons why I like *The Dixie Ranger* and the directory are because there are some people I know. It's a way to stay in touch with friends and co-workers and to keep up with what is happening in the Forest Service. Thank you.

BRIS PRICE - Louisiana - Doesn't time pass when we're having fun? Ms. Tommye and I must be having a ball because the pages on the calendar come off faster than we'd like. All is well with us. We're home in the "briar patch" here in LaSalle Parish, LA. Always enjoy getting *The Dixie Ranger*. Noted that it is time to pay our dues, so here's payment for the next two years. Our best to all.

ROGER DENNINGTON - Georgia - Thank you for the wonderful job you do for the SFSRA. Kathy and I have relocated and can be reached at our new address (listed in the Changes section of this newsletter). Enclosed is a check to cover dues for 09, 10 and 11.

BOB DODSON - Florida/Georgia - Here are dues for *The Dixie Ranger* thru 2010. Our whole family surprised us with an appearance and party at our church on our 60th wedding anniversary in December. Barbara and I are enjoying good health. We spend summers at our mountain place off Lake Notterly near Blairsville, Georgia. When in the area, y'all drop in. Go Gators!

JIM MORPHEW - Arkansas - Thanks for your work. I am late with renewing but here is a check for \$30 to apply to my membership. You probably hear this all the time, but I will say it again...*The Dixie Ranger* is great. I did notice the request for volunteers. Karroll and I are volunteers on so many things around here, I think I can relate to your request very well.

BRYANT WATTS - South Carolina - Sorry to be late. I really enjoy *The Dixie Ranger* and all the stories, especially those by Mike Sparks, O.D. Smith and Don Ashworth. They all worked with me. Joyce had a light stroke August 4, 2008. No physical damage - words and numbers a bother. She's doing well. Thanks to all who called or e-mailed.

DAVID HARRIS - Virginia - Sorry I'm late with my '09 dues but time just slips away. Please discontinue my membership at the end of this year. I hardly know anyone who is mentioned anymore. I have enjoyed the paper for a good number of years.

JACKIE MOUNT - Georgia - Here is my check for \$20 for dues for two years. Also, I have a new address (listed in the Changes section). I appreciate your good work for SFSRA. Thank you.

STAN POSTLETHWAIT - Kentucky - Please change our mailing address (listed in the Changes section). We are moving into an assisted living area. Thank you.

JIM WENNER - Arkansas - Jim wrote to pass along information of interest to those of us who have lived on the Mena Ranger District of the Ouachita National Forest in Arkansas. Barney Sherrer,

retired Mena Ranger, sent this note to Jim: "We had minor damage - trees down, slight roof damage, some fences down, but our son and his family lost their home. We rejoice that they are okay, as they were in probably the only closet where they could have survived. What is left will be bulldozed, although they did salvage a few things. But things are just that - things, and can be replaced. We are grateful for their lives. It's a miracle that more were not killed. The devastation is unbelievable." There was an article in the Arkansas Gazette with pictures and quotes from the Sherrer family.

The following are excerpts from the article for which the information was provided by Andy Davis of the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette: "For the storm survivors who filed into this battered town's Catholic church on Sunday, the old, stone building held new meaning. When the sirens sounded Thursday night, they rushed to the church's basement. Windows shattered around them. Just steps away from the church, homes were in ruins; giant trees were uprooted. The next morning's downpour hampered cleanup efforts and wreaked more havoc on tattered homes. The hardest-hit area was west of the downtown square that was flooded with volunteers and workers Friday and Saturday. Mena, which is in Polk County and near the Oklahoma state line, was the hardest hit after Thursday's round of tornadoes. Polk, Sevier and Howard counties have been declared disaster areas. The Sherrer family took a break from putting their lives back together to worship at the First Baptist Church on Sunday. In sweatshirts, track pants and jeans, instead of their usual Easter best, the family hugged their friends and shared their harrowing story. When the EF3 twister ripped through killing three, the family of five huddled in the closet of their big brick house on the west side of town. There were no Easter baskets or egg hunts for their three children this year. And, they will have to rebuild their house from top to bottom."

The National Museum of Forest Service History wrote to say, "Thank you very much for your \$500.00 donation to the National Museum of Forest Service History's Building Fund. We sincerely appreciate your efforts to preserve the history of the U. S. Forest Service." They also wrote that, "The NMFSH is embarking on a proactive campaign to preserve the history of the U. S. Forest Service. Our challenge is to develop interest and support of individuals and partners nationwide to assist the U. S. Forest Service in achieving this goal. With the help of supporters like you we will be successful in this challenge. All gifts to the Building Fund will be recognized in a commemorative book available at the Museum." The letter was signed by Dave Stack, Vice President of the NMFSH.

MICKEY BELAND - North Carolina - Some of us need all the help we can get. I have been putting this off for a while, but today I'm feeling it's time to put it on the table. So here's my money for the next three years and a short story I would like to share. I have been working for the FS for over 40 years now (28 NFS + and over 12 now at Schenck Job Corps). Over these years I have had much help from a lot of folks who for many reasons saw my needs and provided assistance. I could go on and on about my many needs, but that's not what this story is really about.

Back in 1962 when I started my wonderful career with the Forest Service as a Forester on the Lake George Ranger District in Ocala, FL, I did what all young foresters did at that time. I started doing compartment exams and writing prescriptions. Now we all know that a young forester doesn't really know much about those things because they are "Green, Green, Green". Of course that didn't stop us from doing them and stumbling, fumbling along in the woods thinking we were doing "Professional Forester" work. Well, my first attempt at compartment examination and prescription writing was the Redwater Lake and Swamp Compartment.

I picked out the aerial photos, put on the cruise lines and plot locations, gathered the forms and tools of our trade and headed to the woods. Finally, I'm out of college and practicing important forestry. My cruise lines were initially easy to locate and the going was good for a while. The terrain was flat,

and although very brushy, I managed to record the necessary data needed for my first several plots. Then it happened. Wham! I came up to the edge of Redwater Swamp. I looked into the swamp and thought to myself, "Oh @#%* what am I going to do now"! I walked into the swamp for just about ½ chain and decided the water was too deep, there was too much greenbriar, and I was sure the area was infested with cottonmouth moccasins. No one would expect a sane, Georgia-trained forester to take plots in that swamp, cause I was sure that no one would ever do any timber management work in there anyway. So I modified my plan and only took plots for the rest of the day on high and dry ground....that is any land that is out of the water in the Coastal Plains. I actually felt pretty good about it too.

Well, when I drove into the work center at Lake Bryant Ranger Station, I ran into our top Timber Technician, Spurgeon McDuffie who asked me how my day in the woods went. I told him it went fine until I came up to Redwater Swamp. He asked me to explain and I did, and he laughed a bunch and told me to meet him at the office in Ocala the next morning at 7:00. I said that was a little early, but I'd be there. The next morning at 7:00 a.m., I met McDuffie at the office and he told me to get my gear and get in his truck; so I did. He told me to show him the spot at the edge of Redwater Swamp where I had been; so I did. He then said, "Come on, follow me", and I did. We splashed right into that swamp and waded up to our knees, then stomachs for a while. I thought that it wasn't so bad until McDuffie stepped into a big ole stumphole and all but disappeared. We finally got to the first plot, then others, and sometime that afternoon we crawled out of Redwater Swamp.

I had just received my first of a long line of help-sessions from what I will always believe is the Life-Blood of the Forest Service, the Forestry Technician. I have worked with some incredible people in my days and have enjoyed countless adventures that many folks would pay to experience. I will always be indebted to many who shared their knowledge and woods-savvy, especially the technicians who held my hand.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

NORMAN ALLEY (RUTH ANN)

P. O. Box 179
Perryville, AL 72126
Phone: (501) 889-5645
E-Mail: alley@arbbs.net
Ouachita NF, Winona RD

FRANK FINDLEY (JAN)

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Phone: (828) 479-6487
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Nantahala NF, Cheoah RD

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Marion, VA 24354-1658
Phone: (276) 783-2703
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REED JENNINGS (WANDA)

695 Bill Jones Road
Afton, TN 37616-6774
Phone: (423) 639-9266
Cherokee NF, Nolichucky RD

ARVIL (BUD) LAWS (MARY SUE)

4030 Greystone Road
Greenville, TN 37743-8605
Phone: (423) 638-6623
Cherokee NF, Nolichucky RD

DIRECTORY CHANGES and ADDITIONS

John Archer- e-mail change: rangerjohn33@gmail.com
Duke Barr- phone number change: (423) 542-5275
Sheila Barron - correct spelling of first name
Joyce Braswell - add e-mail: jwbraswell2001@yahoo.com
Roberto Cox - add phone number: (770) 416-1592
Roger Dennington - new address: 3595 Shepherd's Lane; Loganville Ga 30052
phone: (678) 580-0671; e-mail: rogerdennington@comcast.net
Clifford Faulkner - new phone number: (863) 699-1786
Sid Haggard - e-mail change: sidhaggard@att.net
David Harris - phone number change: (540) 797-2346
Joe Harrison - add phone number: (423) 639-1004
Shirley Herbert - e-mail change: sherbert@windstream.net
Wilma Hooper - e-mail change: hoopla307@yahoo.com
Mary Hoover - new address: 2801 Aldersgate Rd. Apt#124; Little Rock, AR 72205-7052
Phil Kromer - e-mail change: phrukro@bellsouth.net
Bobby Larkey - new address: 11547 Sand Springs Road; Mt Vernon, KY 40456-8965
phone: (606) 256-8321; e-mail: larkey@localnet.com
Jack McElroy - remove wife's name. Marjorie passed away in 2003.
Jim Morphew - e-mail change: jimmorphew@windstream.net
Jacqueline Mount - new address: 1000 Applewood Dr, Apt#158; Roswell, GA 30076
Stan Postlethwait - new address: 300 Stocker Dr, Apt#201; Richmond, KY 40475
Vickie Sell - e-mail change: morganza@windstream.net
Jimmy Short - e-mail change: jjshort60@comcast.net
Jimmy Walker - add phone number: (770) 277-5452 - e-mail: annwalker411@comcast.net
Emma Wengert - 227 Whittington St; Mount Ida, AR 71957-9443
Edward (Jim) Wenner - e-mail change: jimwenner@cablelynx.com

Be sure you get your *Dixie Ranger*! Because we send the newsletter with bulk mailing rates, it will not be forwarded to any temporary or seasonal address. Please make sure we have your correct address. When sending in your dues, or at any other time, let us know about your activities - special anniversaries, birthdays, volunteer work, travel or your historical reflections. AND send us pictures of your special family or retiree gatherings for our new photo pages which will be in each new *Dixie Ranger*.

With the mailing of the March 2009 newsletter and directory, two members copies were returned "Not Deliverable As Addressed - Unable to Forward". These were Esta Childres (Franklin, NC) and Claude Moody (Montgomery, AL). If anyone can help us locate these members, let us know.

IN MEMORIAM

Ed Gryczan passed away in early June just 5 weeks after being diagnosed with acute leukemia. Many in the Forest Service will remember him from his work in Timber in Region 2, in the WO, Fort Collins and on fire teams around the country. At the time of his death, Ed was just short of his 80th birthday.

Claude Hallowell, age 56, of Jonesboro, GA passed away July 8, 2009. Claude retired from the Forest Service where he worked in Engineering in the Regional Office for about 10 years. He is survived by his wife, Olivia; children Alec and Alyse; 3 brothers and 4 sisters. Walt Sternke reflects

that, "We will miss Claude's quite effectiveness and his caring attitude. We enjoyed sharing military stories."

Margaret Ramsey, long time Ranger Clerk on the Tenaha District of the Sabine NF in Texas, died some time about the last part of September or the first part of October, 2008. She was in her mid 80's. Having retired around 1983, Margaret served under several Rangers including Walter Fox, Jake Moore, Larry Trekell, Ken Crawford, Bill Clark and Milt Evans. Many young foresters were "whipped into shape" under Margaret's helpful oversight. Her husband, George, who was the local Postmaster for many years, preceded her in death by quite a number of years. Info provided by Larry Trekell

Cheryl S. Fauhl, 60, of Hot Springs, Arkansas, passed away on July 1, 2009. Cheryl worked as a budget technician for the Forest Service for 18 years. Survivors include her parents, Edward and Mary Smith; her daughter, Sherry Speer; one brother and sister-in-law, Terry and Debbie Smith; and one granddaughter, Lauren Speer White all of Hot Springs. She was predeceased by her sister, Linda Smith.

Joyce Wilson, wife of Tony Wilson, passed away on July 2, 2009. Tony was a technician on the Cherokee National Forest for many years and retired recently.

Bill Allison, 66, died when his plane crashed in NC on July 17, 2009. He was a pilot and had flown for over 50 years. Bill came to the Forest Service from the Office of Personnel Management about 1978. Becoming one of the Zone Air Officers under Regional Air Officer Red Myler, he served in this capacity until about 1990 when he was named Regional Air Officer. He was a strong advocate in modernizing the Regional fleet of aircraft and increasing aviation safety in the fire program. After retiring, about 1999 or 2000, Bill formed his own company Houston Air which he operated until his death. He is survived by his wife, Wanda, of Helen, GA; three sons, Todd, Mark and Jeff; daughter, Ashil Harley; one stepson and 5 grandchildren.

REMEMBERING Ed Fraser - Transition Ranger

by Mike Dawson

It would have been hard for anybody, following in the long shadow cast by Mr. George M. Tannehill, the District Ranger Emeritus of the Winn Ranger District. No matter the skill level, experience or the determination, the person following Mr. George would be destined to have a long and hard row to hoe. I suspect that before the organization brought Ed to be *the man*, the bosses fully informed him that it would be a short tour. He would be the *Transition Ranger*.

The majority of employees on the District, and the local residents as well, did not know life outside the sphere that Mr. George so completely occupied. The digging of graves, cutting firewood for widows and hiring of reformed arsonists (well, may be *reformed* is a bit of a stretch...) as part and parcel of Mr. George's management style was just what the Forest Service did on the "Winn National Forest". And even though many of us knew what was to come during the post-Mr George era, most everyone else did not.

You only have one chance to make a good first impression, me grandmother used to say. My first impression of Ed would be proven wrong as time went along. Tall, graying hair along the temples, not thin, but not thick either--without much of a smile, but with eyes that would stare right through you. This is the way I first remember meeting Ed. Simply put, he would not have made it in the Diplomatic Corps. Blunt and curt, and all business are other descriptions. Back home, they would have called him "plain spoken." It was unfortunate that Ed's persona was one of a more harsh

reality, rather than the kind and considerate person that he was below the surface. Most people did not get the opportunity to see this side, but I did.

Looking back, Ed clearly saw his role, and that was to serve as the catalyst of change. And change comes hard. There were encroachments, unauthorized driveways and a wide array of land use/permits issues that needed to be addressed. And did I mention the digging of graves, covering of same and the cutting of firewood for widows and orphans? (Ok Ok. I know it's widows, but just cannot help using dialect and local vernacular for effect....mgd).

Too often we misjudge people, either by speech, appearance or demeanor. And after many episodes of Ed's plainspokenness, I had concluded that Ed was just unfeeling and unmoved by the human condition and life in general.

I was set straight one afternoon, out in Wolf Creek bottom, when my boss, Mike Sparks, the TMA, paid me a visit. I think I had the best job in the Forest Service at the time. I was strictly a field forester, doing inventory work and preparing what were then called Compartment Prescriptions. We now call them Project Plans. Not much of a ring there. Anyhow, Mike Sparks showed up later one afternoon. We just sorta kicked back and discussed world affairs, basal area and the price of delivered logs--important stuff like that. The talk soon came around to the New Ranger, his management style and what was to be expected. I expressed what would be considered a negative opinion, but Mike's response was not what I expected. "You gotta get past that hard exterior," Mike said. "You'll see." Indeed.

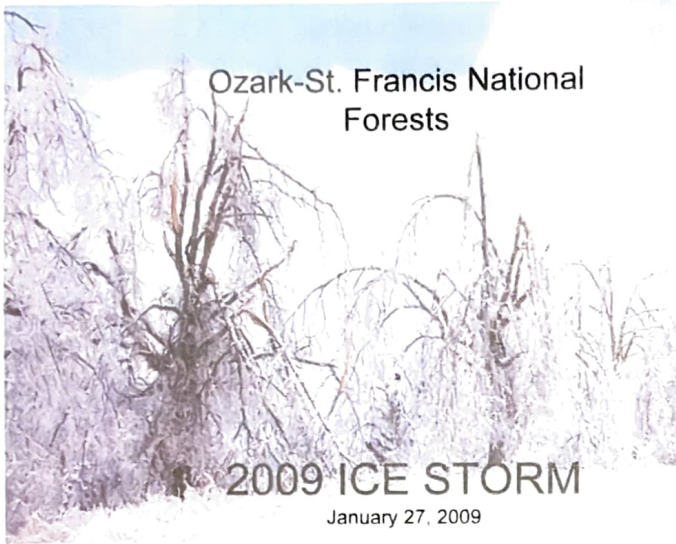
Just a bit of background may be necessary before the story takes on much meaning. At that particular time, each professional employee was required to sign an Availability document. Simply put, it was a single page, and you were required to check a block which described your status. It might be likened to a loyalty oath, a vow of poverty, etc. If memory serves, the choices were something like...*Available*....*Not Presently Available*.... *Available After*....well, you get the idea. Each person checked a block, signed the form, along with the immediate supervisor, then they were sent on down to the Supervisor's Office (the Big House), and ostensibly filed in some high flautin' cabinet, awaiting perusal by the authorities. You know, kinda like your permanent record that we have all had since second grade. I had this vision of the Bosses pouring over all these dossiers, late into the night, with a spot light and making notes in red ink. But I suspect it was not like that at all. Scuttlebut had it that nobody, but NOBODY, ever checked anything but *Available* and *Available Right Now*. For not to do so would most surely bring down the wrath of the bosses. This would prove to be true, by the way. Ah, but I digress....

I knew when I signed on that I had to move around. We all knew that. Nowadays, the trainees sign what is called a Mobility Clause. But then it was a given, and would only change as money dried up. My beloved spouse and I had an urgent family issue, and a legal requirement to remain in the state for six more months. I did not see this as an impediment to my career or to the government in general. So, I checked ***Unavailable*** on the form, and explained to Mike Sparks and Ed, who agreed. It got sent in and sorta forgotten about. Wrong!

Within two weeks, I got a radio call from the office. Seems as though the Forest Supervisor and Administrative Officer wanted to meet with me and Ed that afternoon. Mike Sparks was on leave that day; so at 1 p.m., I reported to Ed's office. I was apprehensive to say the least, and wondering what the heck could possibly be the matter. I thought somebody had passed on to the next life. Even Ed rarely summoned me to his office...about anything. Lamar Beasley was the Supervisor, and a

(cont'd pg 12)

Beginning with this issue color photos will appear regularly. We are counting on **you** to send us photos of special family events, retiree meetings, whatever would be of interest to **all** of our membership. The following are from our most recent December 4th 2008 and June 4th 2009 SFSRA Luncheons in Atlanta and a few others which were sent to us via e-mail.



Board Meeting - Officers and Directors

Fern Coutant decorates the

Bill Hughes, Clair Redmond
Larry Bishop



Jerry McIlwain, Bruce Baldwin & Tom Tibbs



Shirley and Vickie Sell



Jim & Jackie Rogers with Mary Morris



Bill Hughes & Wanda Smith



Audrey & Ralph Kunz

George Gibbs & Bill Balmer



Darley Parks & Tom Smith



Winston & Wanda Smith,
Pat & Ed Cook, Elaine McConnell



John Allen & Howard Burnett



Joyce Keith, Helen Thomas & Ann Jones



Dave Jolly, Bill Ryburn, Jim Naylor & Ben Cobb



Larry Bishop & Regional Forester, Liz Agpaoa



Tom Tibbs & Mary Ann Burns



Larry Bishop, Krugie, Liz Agpaoa, Marnie Kruglewicz



Elaine McConnell & Peggy Jolly



Weeta Baldwin



John Allen, Shirley & John Lamb



Wayne Miller & Jim Rogers

more polished, sophisticated gentleman you will never find. He just had that natural born gift to communicate with people, to get them on his side. I suspect he could have sold hot tamales in Hades. And Lamar explained to me how one **just does not check Not Available** on the form, and to do so, well, it just was not done. It was not a lecture, but more of a pep talk. Ed said nothing. Then Sam LeFever sorta repeated what Lamar had just said, only in more clearer terms. I sat there, just hoping Ed would speak up for me, but he said nothing. I was summarily dismissed.

Sam and Lamar left, and Ed called me back into his office and closed the door. I was ready to launch into an attack or to at least have him explain to me what had just happened. Ed rocked back in his chair and smiled at me. His whole countenance and demeanor softened, and I could tell something was different. It was like my favorite uncle talking this time. Same body, same voice, different person. I began to wonder who had kidnapped Ed and replaced him with this, this gentlemen who now sat behind Ed's desk. "Mike", he said. "I know what you and Jerry have been going through these last few months. I want you to go home and not worry about this. I'll see to it that you stay here until that issue is settled. You're very valuable to the Forest Service, and you've got a great career ahead of you."

Stammering, flummoxed, at a loss for words...."...but, Ed, the Available thingee....I just signed.."

"Ah, don't give it a second thought. You know, sometimes documents get misplaced, lost...things just happened. Now go home and don't worry about it." I just sorta staggered out of his office, and down the stairs to my vehicle, and went home. I told my beloved spouse what had just happened. Her comment: "Well, you see how wrong you can be about somebody." Yes indeed.

Underneath that hard shell, that front that Ed put up, there beat a heart of gold and as big as Texas. He was a softie inside. Only a few people saw this, but I never forgot. Ed and his family moved to a Job Corp Center in Tennessee, I believe, then on to Florida sometime later, and he became the Forest Engineer, a fitting role, in my judgment. He retired soon after, and opened a nursery. And it was only recently that Ed passed away. But I think of that day quite often, and how wrong I was in my haste to make a judgment. It made an impression on me and I find myself thinking of Ed and the things he faced, and how he dealt with them. He was indeed the Transition Ranger, and a mighty good one.

THIS AIN'T THE WORLD I GREW UP IN

by *Mike Sparks*

My 12th grade English teacher would come and get me if she read the title of this article. Ending a sentence with a preposition was definitely not proper. Ms Priddy was a perfectionist...using the word "ain't" was inexcusable and cause for a failing grade when included in an essay or discussion. But I use it now to express my desire to return to those simpler days gone by.

There was a time before computers, before cell phones, go back further...days before video games...days when moms stayed home and were there when the kids got home from school. Go back to the days when the worst "crime" you could commit in school was chewing gum in class. Go back to a time when our heroes were really heroes...Audie Murphy, Roy Rogers, Gene Autry, Hopalong Cassidy and many others. John Wayne was a great American we all admired. Go back

before air conditioning. Go back to a time when country folks had to draw their drinking and bathing water from a deep well with a rope and an elongated bucket...outhouses were in vogue and the Sears and Roebuck catalog was a necessity along with corn cobs in season. You had to be a bit "savvy" about going to the outhouse in Summertime as there was always a chance that red wasps had built a nest under the seat. Ouch!

Go back to a time when there were no interstate highways (now that's not necessarily good...there have been some improvements in the past 60 years). But I long for the days gone by when "grass" was something you mowed, when gay meant happy, when we played games like hopscotch, hide and seek, Red Rover and many others. A time when the worst thing that could happen to you was being chosen "last" for a neighborhood game of sandlot baseball and then you had to play in "right field". I spent a lot of time there pulling up dandelions and watching the cloud formations, imagining how they resembled some creature.

Life was simple then...the worst problem my mother had was on Monday which was washday. She would boil the dirty clothes in a big black kettle using lye soap. The heat was provided by kindling wood. She would wring them out by hand and hang the wet items on the clothesline to drip dry. The problem she dreaded usually occurred because we lived on a dirt road and when the occasional car came by, it raised a dust cloud which settled on the wet clothing, sometimes necessitating another washing. Mama wasn't happy and as the saying goes..."If mama ain't happy, ain't nobody happy" (there's that "ain't" word again).

We oftentimes refer to this time as "The Good Ole Days" but for some folks...they weren't so good. I remember my first year in school, I had to walk thru the black community to get to school. I was terrified because mother told me that I was not to talk to any of those folks I passed because they would grab me and take me away from my home. Mother told me this to keep me from associating with them. Consequently, I was scared of black folks, but I eventually made a friend. His name was David. His school was a ramshackle building with broken windows, a leaky roof and no door. He lived in a one-room house with his mother. The inside walls were papered with newsprint and broken windows covered with cardboard to keep the cold wind out. One Summer David and I found and sold enough soda pop bottles for 2 cents apiece to get into the movie theater. It only cost a dime if you were under 12 years of age. So we paid our two dimes and went inside. As I started thru the curtain door, David said, "I can't go in there". "Why not?" I replied. "Just because" he said.

I didn't push him about it so we went upstairs where I later found out he was allowed to sit. There was a brass railing which divided the balcony and he went to the other side of the rail. I suggested we sit in the middle so we could better see the movie but he insisted we sit on the narrow side of the rail and look at the movie from a skewed angle. So I sat with him. The theater manager came up later and told me I could not sit on that side of the railing but he didn't tell me why. So...we improvised and used our creativity as most kids did in that era. David and I sat side by side, with the rail between us and enjoyed the movie...a double feature Saturday afternoon movie with cartoon and serial. All cares were forgotten as we watched the hero "whup up on the bad guys". I never did understand why we couldn't sit together downstairs in the main theater until later years. It still didn't make sense but thankfully, some of the bad things in my childhood have changed for the better.

There was not a lot of money when most of us were kids so toys were a luxury. One time I remember wanting a bow and arrow but Dad couldn't afford a store bought set so I made a bow and arrow from some dead cedar limbs I found in the woods using my pocket knife which, incidentally, I

carried to school each day along with my marbles and yo-yo. (Kids today don't carry pocket knives as they could be arrested for carrying a weapon.) We used imagination and creativity to have our fun. Whatever happened to "playin' marbles"? We would put our marbles on the ground, draw a circle around them in the dirt and however many you could knock out with your "TAW", you could keep if the teacher didn't catch you. We all liked to show our prowess with the yo-yo with such tricks as "walk the dog" and "around the world".

Nowadays, I am greatly concerned about today's young people including my grandchildren and the environment in which they must grow up and live. It's a fantasy world...not unlike our fantasies as kids when I took my Red Ryder BB Gun into the woods below my house and hunted lions, tigers and bad outlaws. But that was fantasy according to my imagination...today's kids can see their fantasies in real life on hand-held video games, TV or Blu-Ray (whatever that is), and the ultimate video game systems such as Wii and X-Box.

I recently played a video game called "Off Road Racing" with my grandson. I had to quit because the game was so realistic that I got carsick. Always had problems with motion sickness and this game was not a fantasy but a real life experience. To play the current generation of video game systems, you've gotta be 8 years old. The controllers come with 47 or more different buttons to push for a variance in the game experience. I'll take hopscotch anytime. Today's kids don't get much exercise playing video games, but we certainly did as kids with games we played like hide and seek and playing chase. We would run like the wind until we couldn't run anymore and then we ran a bit further. Life was simple.

This ain't the world I grew up in...watching the six o'clock news yesterday, the first 5 news headlines were all about murders, drugs, crooked politicians, prostitution and kidnaping. When I was a kid in Arkansas, I remember one murder in the news the entire time I was growing up. Now, my grandkids can hear about at least one murder almost daily here in the Atlanta area.

And isn't it strange how the meanings of words have changed. Gay used to mean "happy" as in, "We had a gay time". Not anymore. Drugs...used to be something you took to cure an illness...now it means something illegal and bad. Grass...we used to roll and play in it or mow it; now it means marijuana or "dope". Sex...never heard the word until I was in high school and now it's on TV or the internet 24/7. I have a bit of fun when I go to a new doctor's office which is quite often nowadays. When I must fill out the form about my medical history, one of the blocks states "Sex" and I am supposed to indicate with an M or F. I write in the word, "Yes". Really draws a reaction from the receptionist. I never heard most of the bad 4-letter words until I spent time in the Army and there, I saw and heard things I never want to experience again.

Blackberry...cobbler that is. Now I don't know what a blackberry is by today's definition, except it's some sort of communications device. Gimme the cobbler anytime, with ice cream too. Blue Tooth...if a kid had a blue tooth when I was a child, you went to the dentist and had it pulled. Nowadays, it has something to do with the ear because they're always sticking out of the ear as a person drives or works

This ain't the world I grew up in. How I long for those days gone by, but, thank goodness, I still have those wonderful memories of childhood and the innocence that we once knew. I hope I never lose the ability to recall those good memories, but, as I get older, some of those great memories are fading. In fact, I find that sometimes, I can now hide my own Easter eggs.

WHEN I WAS ON OUACHITA NATIONAL FOREST RANGER DISTRICTS by JOEL NITZ

It was October 1951 when Forest Service Chief Lyle Watts scheduled a farewell trip that included a visit to the Mena District. The Ranger was Vern Taylor; I was just starting out as a Junior Forester. I felt it quite an honor to be present with the Chief and one of the best Rangers in the Forest Service.

The Ranger's office was in the basement of the Post Office. Upon entering the office, I was quite taken aback to see a pair of rattle snake skins mounted above the door. They were the largest snakes I have ever seen. According to one of the research foresters who found them, the pair was in a mating position.

That same year I was on a crew with a couple of research foresters who planted several types of Chinese Chestnuts on north slopes. By the time they were checked for mortality, I was transferred to the new Cold Springs District. The research team had come from Beltsville, MD.

Fred Ames was in Fire Control out of the Regional Office. He was making the rounds to determine the feasibility of constructing fire lines in rocky soils. While Fred was leading the tractor operation, I kept records on slope, aspect, depth of soil, drainage, etc. I can't remember the machinery tested.

One day a circus came to Mena. An accident occurred when one of the animals mauled a young girl. The circus then continued to proceed toward Hot Springs. It was raining and sleeting as they drove. One of the circus wagons slid off the road and into the ditch, releasing its wild cargo. Some of the animals escaped, some stayed close to the wagons and some were shot and killed in the next few days. It was a sad situation.

The little saw mill town of Forester shut down. Over a period of a couple of years, the small shotgun houses were gradually assimilated by the community around Mount Ida. More on the mill town of Forester. Mena District Ranger was Vern Taylor and Del Thorsen was a forester working out of Mena (1936?). One of his duties was to scale logs, which were cut from a large area on the Ouachita, at the mill in Forester each day. After much of the old growth was logged off, the mill was shut down. The company houses were sold to folks near and far. The old green shacks were painted white, added to and otherwise improved. In fact, one of the JFs, Jack Welch, rented one of the improved houses in Mount Ida. Loopy Lane was Womble's Ranger at that time.

I was transferred to the new Cold Springs District where Harold Bergmann was Ranger. When Oden Ranger, Ed Howell, was on extended sick leave, I was appointed Acting Ranger for about 8 months. My wife, Irene, our infant daughter, Debbie, and I were permitted to make our home on the second floor of the Ranger Station. Tony Slankouskos made his home in one of the offices on the first floor. Irene cooked for all of us, using a two-burner hot plate, and all her baking was done in a roaster oven.

Next, I served as Assistant Ranger under Jessieville Ranger Al Williams. During this time Blakely Mountain Dam was completed. As the water rose quickly, the flooded logging trails were cut off, making difficult access for fire control.

STIMULUS PAYMENTS TO FEDERAL (CSRS) RETIREES

The following information is about applying for the 2009 stimulus payment if you're a federal retiree and do not receive Social Security payments. The stimulus bill provides a one-time \$250 payment made available to Social Security, Veteran, SSI and Railroad Retirement benefits. However, many Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) retirees have not worked enough to qualify or have never worked in Social Security covered employment and consequently, **will have to file for the stimulus payment next year** when submitting their 2009 federal income tax returns (even if they did not earn enough money to be obligated to file a tax return).

THE EVA BRADY STORY

by John Archer

The Eva Brady Story (or talking in tongues) made the hair on the back of my neck stand on end.

This happened some time in 1967. I was District Ranger on the new Mt Rogers NRA and we were buying land big time. Also the Mt Rogers State Park folks were buying land. Both parties used the power of eminent domain at times.

One day I got a call from someone in the SO saying a lady named Eva Brady had written the President of the United States a letter saying that we were going to take her land and she was very unhappy about the situation. The address was White Top, VA, and that was about all I could tell about where she lived. Tony Decker, our Fire Control Officer, gave me a clue on where to start. I should talk to our fire warden who lived in that neck of the woods. This I did and found out that he thought she lived up Helton Creek, but where up Helton Creek he didn't know. I had never been up that creek before.

I turned the old Jeep station wagon up the road that paralleled Helton Creek and started asking questions to any one that I might happen to see. The first thing I noticed was that there were lots of old cars scattered around the houses. This was untypical for the other parts of the district. Many of the cars were Hudsons from the 1940's. I had gone about 2 miles up the creek and hadn't found a person who knew of an Eva Brady. Finally, I ran on to a man who thought she lived at the last house on the left across the creek.

I parked the Jeep on the side of the road as there was no driveway. There was a path leading to a foot bridge that went to the house. The knock on the door brought a man in his 50's who invited me in. I sat on the couch beside him and started making casual conversation. His name was Brady, he was from West Virginia, and had worked in the coal mines until he was disabled by black lung. Mrs. Brady finally came into the room and started pacing back and forth between the kitchen and us. I decided I should ask the question. "Mrs. Brady, did you write a letter to the President of the United States?"

Well, she stopped pacing, stood right in front of me, put her hands on her hips and said, "I am anointed". Then she started talking in a language that I had never heard before. Every once in a while a few words from the scriptures popped out, but most was in tongues. The hair on the back of my neck stood up. I thought about running but that wouldn't be the rangerly thing to do, so I stayed. Finally after what seemed to be an eternity, she came back to earth. Shootings, shot guns and a few

other discouraging words were used by her a few times. Revelations was quoted freely, and there was mention that in West Virginia the gun settled problems of this sort.

I thought that I had her convinced that we had no desires for her land. We were trying to buy some land higher up on the mountain to build a recreation area. The land she had heard about being taken must have been for the state park, a couple of ridges over from her land. I finally left her in better spirits, I thought.

April 17, 1968, I got a call from John Greth in the SO. Our land line survey crew had been shot at while surveying a property line on a tract that we had just purchased up Helton Creek. The shots were fired from a distance but were hitting in the grass around them. They did the proper thing and ran. After talking to our land buying foresters, Al Childs and Harold Calhoun, and the survey crew, we decided to survey someplace else until we could get some law enforcement help. I suspected Eva Brady might be the culprit, and she might not want any federal surveyors within sight of her house, even though the land that was being surveyed did not join her land.

I called John back and asked if he could get us some law enforcement help. The nearest help of Forest Service law enforcement was the regional office. Special Agent Warren Cagle arrived a few days later. I told him of my suspicions. Warren went to the county seat and talked to the sheriff. He and a deputy went up Helton Creek and talked to Mrs. Brady. She denied the shooting but they were convinced I was right. That evening we came up with a plan. He and the deputy sheriff would stay with Mrs. Brady while the survey crew finished the job and got out of sight of her house. Warren said the deputy would have preferred to put the cuffs on her and take her in until the surveying was done.

The plan went into effect the next day and all went well. At day's end, Warren said he was worn out from the stress. Mrs. Brady had worn an old Mother Hubbard dress with the big deep pocket in front. He could make out the outline of a pistol in the pocket.

WHO PAYS

There was a little old lady who every morning stepped out onto her front porch, raised her arms to the sky and shouted, "PRAISE THE LORD!"

One day an atheist moved into the house next door. He became irritated at the little old lady. Every morning he'd step onto his front porch after her and yell, "THERE IS NO LORD!" Time passed with the two of them carrying on this way every day.

One morning, in the middle of winter, the little old lady stepped onto her front porch and shouted, "PRAISE THE LORD! Please Lord, I have no food and I am starving, provide for me, Oh Lord!" The next morning she stepped out onto her porch and there were two huge bags of groceries sitting there. "PRAISE THE LORD!" she cried out. "HE HAS PROVIDED GROCERIES FOR ME!"

The atheist neighbor jumped out of the hedges and shouted, "THERE IS NO LORD. I BOUGHT THOSE GROCERIES!"

The little old lady threw up her arms into the air and shouted, "PRAISE THE LORD! HE HAS PROVIDED ME WITH GROCERIES AND MADE THE DEVIL PAY FOR THEM!"

ACHIEVING A DREAM

Black bears typically have two cubs; rarely, one or three. In 2007, in northern New Hampshire, a black bear Sow gave birth to five healthy young. There were two or three reports of sows with as many as four cubs, but five was, and is, extraordinary. I learned of them shortly after they emerged from their den and set myself a goal of photographing all five cubs with their mom - no matter how much time and effort was involved. I knew the trail they followed on a fairly regular basis, usually shortly before dark. After spending nearly four hours a day, seven days a week, for six weeks, I had that once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and photographed them. I used the equivalent of a very fast film speed on my digital camera. The print is properly focused and well exposed, with all six bears posing as if they were in a studio for a family portrait.



I stayed in touch with other people who saw the bears during the summer and into the fall hunting season. All six bears continued to thrive. As time for hibernation approached, I found still more folks who had seen them, and everything remained OK. I stayed away from the bears as I was concerned that they might become habituated to me, or to people in general, as approachable friends. This could be dangerous for both man and animal.

After Halloween I received no further reports and could only hope the bears survived until they hibernated. This spring, before the snow disappeared, all six bears came out of their den and wandered the same familiar territory they trekked in the spring of 2007. I saw them before mid-April and dreamed nightly of taking another family portrait, an improbable second once-in-a-lifetime photograph. On April 25, 2008 I achieved my dream.



When something as magical as this happens between man and animal, Native Americans say, 'We have walked together in the shadow of a rainbow. And so it is with humility and great pleasure that I share these photos with you.'

Tom Sears - www.tomsears.com - Prints are available in various sizes.

P.S. As of today, August 22, 2008, the cubs are doing well but have gone their separate ways and there will not be another "family portrait".

"If you can imagine it, you can achieve it. If you can dream it, you can become it."

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REMINDER – December Luncheon reservations need to be called in by Monday, November 30th
Mark your calendar today!

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