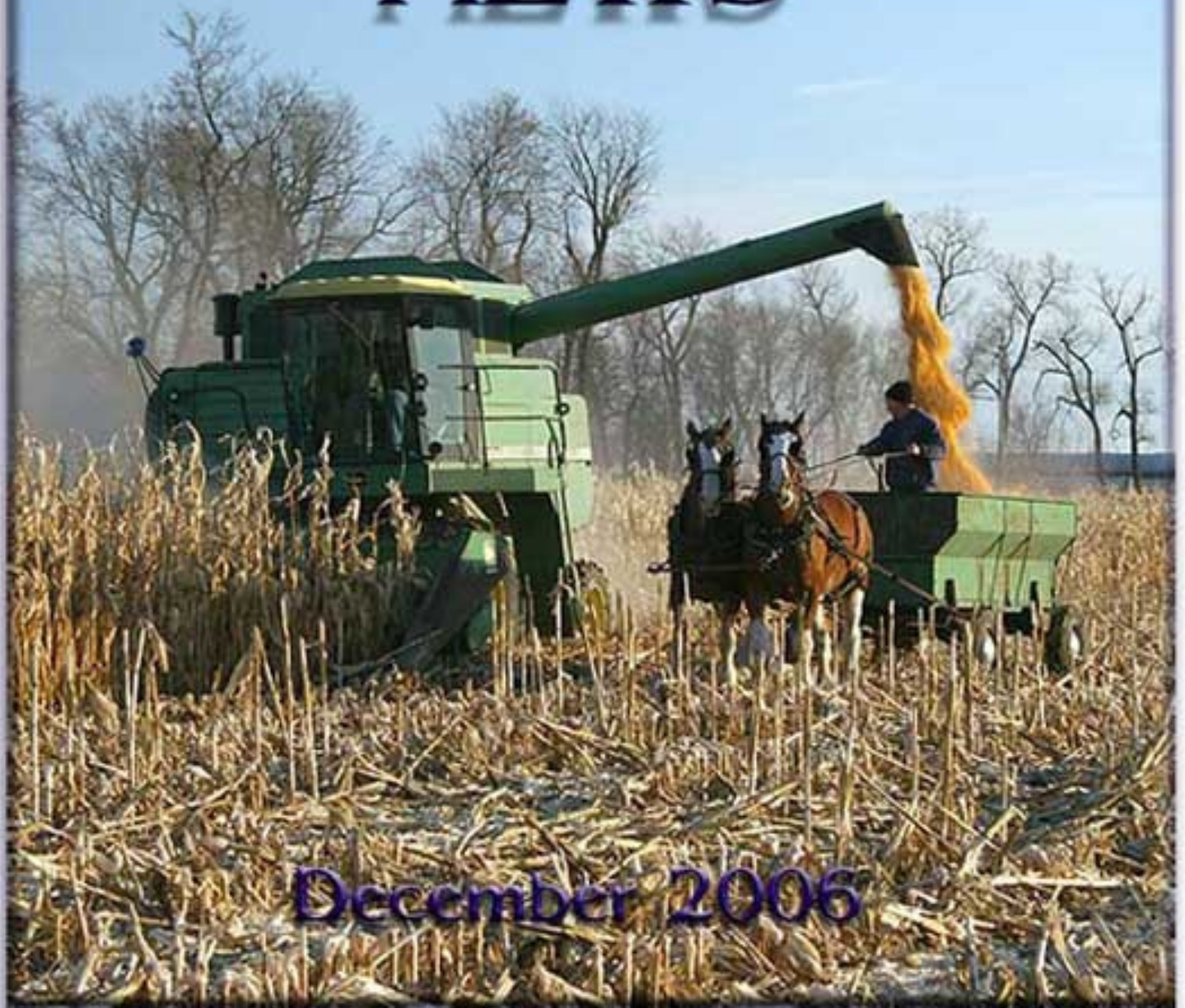
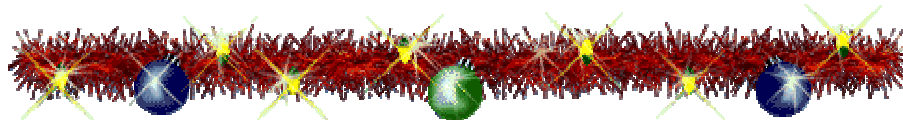


The Iowa Association Of FSA  
County Office Employees

# IASCOE NEWS



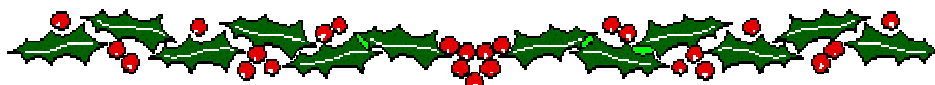
December 2006



# IASCOE December 2006 Newsletter

## Table Of Contents

- 3 *From The Desk Of Derryl McLaren - SED*
- 4 *Dee-liberations By Dee Ann Lehn - IASCOE President*
- 5 *Where Do We Go From Here By Steve Kennedy - IASCOE Vice-President*
- 6 *Improper/Erroneous Payment Report From Dan Root - NASCOE President*
- 8 *Season's Greetings From Bonnie Heinzman - NASCOE Vice-President*
- 9 *NASCOE Goes To Washington By Mark VanHoose - MWA Executive*
- 10 *2007 Legislative Conference By Trice Smith - NASCOE Legislative Co-Chair*
- 11 *CAP WIZ By Tammy Eibey - NASCOE CAP WIZ Coordinator & MWA Legis. Chair*
- 13 *Meet Your Midwest Area Committee Chairs By Jon Williams - MWA Alternate*
- 16 *Season's Greetings By Sue Beemer - IASCOE Sec/Treas*  
*20 Years Of Service from Cindy Seda - PT Harrison County*
- 17 *Everything You Ever Wanted To Know About Me!*  
*By Judy Vos - PT Woodbury Co.*
- 18 *Automation of Farm Loan Programs By Dave Hoaglund - IACS President*
- 19 *2007 IASCOE/IASC/IASE Joint Convention*
- 20 *E.J. Brown and Associates Presentation &*  
*Greene County Receives A Flag From The 67th Area Support Group -Iraq*
- 21 *American Flag Pre-Order Form*
- 22 *The NASCOE Store*
- 23 *New Additions To The Families Of Judy Dameron & Alan Hilleman*
- 24 *The Warrior's Holiday By Deb Esselman - CED Taylor-Price Counties Wisconsin*
- 25 *The Cat Story By Judy Vos - PT Woodbury County*
- 26 *An Old Farmer's Advice - From The Farmer's Almanac*  
*By Candy Hoyle - PT Greene Co*
- 27 *Celebration Time!! Kitty Litter Cake Recipe From Sioux County*
- 28 *Holiday Recipes*  
*Submitted By IASCOE Members Compiled By Carma Reiss - Benton County*
- 34 *Membership Has Its Rewards! - Becky Zirpel, NASCOE Benefits Chairperson*
- 35 *Article Written By George Carlin. Submitted By Lisa Forburger - PT Kossuth Co.*
- 36 *The Perils Of Polly PT Chapter 20 By Roseanne Woerner - CED Black Hawk Co*
- 37 *The FISH! Philosophy Submitted By Cathleen Borst - PT Carroll County*
- 38 *Ovarian Cancer, The Silent Killer By Tammy Eibey, FLO Delaware County*
- 43 *IASCOE Scholarship Program*



*The cover photo shows John Landgraf, CED Sac County, trying out his Clydesdales in a little fieldwork this past fall. John's daughter-in-law Tonya Landgraf took the photo.*

## FROM THE DESK OF DERRYL MCLAREN, SED



Do you still enjoy your job? Someone asked me that the other day. "Absolutely!", was my reply. It is a lot like farming, where no two days are the same. I cannot recall any two growing seasons that were alike, yet rainfall and temperatures always seem to average-out for the year. This Fiscal Year, I'm sure, will be no exception.

This is my sixth year with the Agency, and it seems to be your unanimous opinion that we are starting the Fiscal Year by leading with the wrong foot. We should be ecstatic! There are no LDP's! So why the glum faces? Maybe I can sum it up in two words, "erroneous payments".

You need to understand the significance that in accordance with the provisions of the Improper Payment Act (IPEA), our Agency is undergoing scrutiny of our fiscal controls and procedures. Independent audits of prior years have shown an error rate less than 1%, meaning the right person received the right amount over 99% of the time. OMB is demanding greater scrutiny of procedure and supporting documentation than existed in those previous audits in order to satisfy the Act (IPEA). To accomplish this, OMB contracted the services of our own ORAS to perform these more detailed audits. OMB provided the definitions and objectives and ORAS developed the operative criteria and format.

At some point, ORAS adopted the OMB audit results and objectivity as their own, and it became a National Target Review. The review was structured as a drop-down list, and since the criteria and format did not allow for variations of severity or "degrees" of improper documentation, all failings of procedure became reportable findings. For all we knew, they were all thrown into the erroneous payments "bin", and that is the assumption we operated under. Without further clarification or corrective action, erroneous payments require a refund, and that is not an assumption. Think of it as keeping the criminal code but eliminating the sentencing code. It is like arresting and jailing people for murder, J-walking, speeding, grand larceny, OWI, and parking tickets, but there is no longer a way to distinguish between or among the "crimes" as to their severity. Having removed any points of reference to direct us, it became necessary for Washington to issue new guidance as to what constitutes an erroneous payment, which errors can be fixed, and what will require relief. This guidance includes, but is not limited to, signature authority Q & A's, eligibility checklists, relief guidance, 1-CM revisions, and training.

Washington is doing their best to provide us direction, and additional guidance is in the works. They recognize that we all need normalcy in our lives, something solid to hold onto. We expect the lights to come on when we flip the switch, water to come out of the faucet when we turn the handle, and computers to work when we strike the keyboard. I know there is no one with a greater desire than you to serve the producer, follow correct procedure, and make the proper payment. You are making the corrections to insure the fiscal integrity of the Farm Bill and meet the new expectations of our Agency.

I applaud you and encourage you to be earnest in your efforts. We all need to stick together, follow our instructions, and paint-by-the-numbers. Note the deficiencies in the paperwork, make corrections to the best of your abilities, and go to the next producer file. We will get through this together. Whatever you do, don't be a maverick, slight the significance of this exercise, or think you are smarter than the process.

As serious as this issue is, don't let it consume you. Take a break, utilize some leave, go Christmas shopping, baby-sit the grandchildren, whatever it takes to relieve stress. Accept the advice of an old farmer, and believe me when I tell you that it all averages-out to normal. The floods and droughts, heat and cold, all negate one another. We will accomplish our task and share pride in a job well done, just like normal in Iowa. I sincerely wish you a Happy Holiday Season filled with the love of family and friends.



# Dee-liberations

By Dee Ann Lehn  
IASCOE President / CED Keokuk County

As I sat down to write my column for this newsletter, I found I was at a loss for words. I want to keep my comments positive and upbeat but I know many of you are feeling anything but positive and upbeat due to the heavy load most county offices in our states are bearing at the present time. Not only are we trying to complete the REX enrollment requirements by the end of the year but most counties are dealing with GIS cropland changes which in turn causes DCP base acres adjustments and CRP contract revisions. In addition, we now are charged with completing a review of all payment eligibility files and all related files and all signature authority requirements. The burden seems massive and there appears no end in sight to the amount of workload that is being piled upon us.



I have received comments from many of you expressing your concerns and your frustrations and I want to assure you I have passed those concerns on to our NASCOE leaders and our state administration. As FSA employees, we have proven time and time again that we are willing to meet the challenges put before us and we give everything we have to give to complete the tasks asked of us. We have a huge task before us once again but as always, all you can do is the very best you can. As long as you can go home at night and say, "I did my job well today", you have succeeded. This does not mean you accomplished everything that needed to be done during day but what you did get done was done well.

We are only human and we will make mistakes no matter how hard we try to avoid making mistakes. We can review the same file several times and still miss something—this is just bound to happen. Nothing in this world is perfect and try as we may, every single file in our offices will not be perfect but we can do better than we have done in the past by taking more time to check our work and asking others to check our work for us. This all takes time and we have to realize we need to grant ourselves the time to do the best job we can.

The holiday season is now upon us and reminds us of all that we have to be thankful for. Be thankful you have a good job when many are unemployed. Be thankful you are healthy enough to hold down that job, as many are not able to work. Be thankful for your co-workers as they can share in your successes and you can all offer support to each other through the difficult times. Be thankful for the house you have to clean and maintain for it means you have a home. Be thankful for those obnoxious in-laws for it means you have a family. The list goes on and on. Look for the good in everyone and every situation and you will be much happier. Find ways to help those who are less fortunate and you will be the richer for doing so. Put all the things in your life in perspective and concentrate on those people and things that are truly dear to you.



Enjoy this Holiday Season!  
Dee

## Where Do We Go From Here?



Are you feeling like you're being asked to cover all 3 bases and still sell popcorn in the stands at the same time? I know I sure feel this way.

Much has been said about the "improper / erroneous payment" issue. The terms used are deceiving in themselves when a majority of the findings were due to incomplete paperwork. The actual overpayment amount was less than 1%. A pretty amazing fact when you think of it. Especially considering the conditions we have been operating under: reduced budgets, reduced staffs; increasing workload; increasingly complex programs and forms; a sorely inadequate computer system. If anything, the improper / erroneous issue has highlighted the tremendous strain our agency has been under for some time. NASCOE / IASCOE has been sounding the alarm for a number of years and **WILL** continue to point out these deficiencies. Real change cannot be achieved without honestly addressing these problems.

What can we as individual employees do? I offer a few suggestions:

**Continue to give your best** - Go back and read that again. See the word "continue"? It is easy when the procedure is changing daily to wonder if anything you've done is correct. Be proud of all the work you have done in the past; all done under some incredibly difficult circumstances. "Continue" to do the same in the future.

**Help each other** - Now more than ever, we need to work together. Whether it is a fellow co-worker at the office, a FSA employee in the neighboring county, or a STO employee, let's work together. We are all feeling the pressure. Let's not add to that pressure.

**Take care of yourself** - **You are a valuable person to this agency; to your co-workers; to your area producers; and to your family. It is vitally important that you treat your self with care.**

**Stay Involved** - As this storm swirls around us, it is easy to forget about what is happening elsewhere. In fact another storm is brewing - **The next farm bill**. Higher commodity prices along with a major shift in the political landscape in Washington portend a very uncertain future for FSA. As members of NASCOE / IASCOE, we must stay engaged in the process. A team from Iowa will be attending the 2006 Legislative Conference in February. They will be making direct contact with Iowa's Congressional offices and reminding them of the valuable services our employees provide.

This is all easy to say, but difficult under the conditions to act on. I am preaching to myself too, folks. We are all in this together.

Sincerely,  
Steve Kennedy  
IASCOE Vice President



# National Association of FSA County Office Employees

www.nascoe.org



**President**  
Daniel L. Root  
1400 West Main St.  
Albert Lea, MN 56007  
(507) 373-0725 - NASCOE  
(507) 373-7960 - Office

**Vice President**  
Bonnie Heinzman  
711 Fifth Street  
New Martinsville, WV 26155  
(304) 266-2480 Cell  
(304) 758-2351 - Office

**Secretary**  
Darlene Schouten  
1008 W. Lincoln Ave  
Olivia, MN 56277  
(320) 523-2075 - NASCOE  
(320) 523-1550 - Office

**Treasurer**  
Larry Segars  
PO Box 112  
Dewitt, AR 72042  
(870) 946-3815 - NASCOE  
(870) 946-3331 - Office

Dear NASCOE Members:

Over the past several weeks, we have all heard a lot about the improper and/or erroneous payment issue that is facing the agency. The NASCOE Executive Committee feels it is time to address the membership on this issue.

First and foremost, I want every member to know and understand that NASCOE has not taken this issue lightly. Many conversations and meetings have taken place between NASCOE and USDA/FSA personnel since the report was issued. NASCOE has made, and will continue to make, every effort to represent the best interests of our membership. NASCOE will continue to stress the fact that this issue is directly related to understaffing, reduced budgets, poor software, lack of training and pressure to get payments issued. NASCOE has also stressed, repeatedly, that these issues must be addressed and a different approach taken if there is to be a different outcome. The Administrator and DAFO have assured NASCOE that they are working very diligently to defend and support us to the Secretary of Agriculture and others.

NASCOE believes it is important to distinguish the enormous difference between *apparent* improper payments vs. *actual* overpayments that may require refunds. The overwhelming majority of the error findings was due to paperwork that was not 100% complete. The number of overpayments was miniscule - actually less than 1%. We realize the goal is always 100% accuracy and we are committed to attaining that goal. NASCOE is doing everything possible to convince the administration that the underlying causes of the findings must be corrected. However, NASCOE believes the study, through its less than 1% actual payment error indication, proves that the quality of work has not declined to such a degree that the program delivery system is in need of major changes.

Although NASCOE does not agree with all of the findings in the report, the problems identified are manifestations of concerns that NASCOE has continually reported to USDA/FSA and Congress. Obviously, the underlying causes of the findings did not arise over night. These findings can be directly traced to understaffing, reduced budgets, lack of training, poor software/hardware, and the unending pressure on field offices to "get payments out". NASCOE's major concern is that the underlying causes are not being addressed. How, then, can the problems go away? *NASCOE continues to identify these issues and continues to suggest ways to work with USDA/FSA and Congress to resolve the underlying causes.* Through the combined efforts of county staff, state officers, area executives, and officers, NASCOE has compiled and provided a report to the FSA Administrator detailing the findings that we believe were incorrect. *The FSA Administrator has agreed to review and follow up on the items in question.*

For as many years as we can count, we have been told that FSA was staffed at 85% of workload. County office staffing was cut by 20% between 1995 and 1999. Staff cuts have continued with regularity since 1999. The permanent staff for 2006 was 18% less than was available in 1999. At the same time county office workload continues to escalate. According to all reports workload has increased by at least the same amount as the staffing has declined. FSA has issued approximately \$14.3 billion in program payments over the last decade. *Although we continue to address this problem with USDA/FSA and Congress, we have not received any reassurance that any additional permanent staffing will be funded. NASCOE has, and will continue, to do everything possible to obtain additional staffing. Resources could and should be dedicated to field level program implementation through staffing.*

Continually reduced budgets have become the norm for much of federal government and FSA is no exception. However, that does not dismiss the fact that money has been siphoned off the salary and expense allocation to support contract services, IT needs, and e-Gov initiatives. *NASCOE continues to work through the proper channels to request that the county office employee salaries and expenses become a separate line item to deter the siphoning off of these monies.*

Lack of training, poor training, and inadequate program direction have also become the norm in FSA. The reason we have continually received for this is “lack of funds”. *NASCOE continues to address this issue with USDA/FSA and Congress. We believe that if proper training and direction had been received the findings noted in this report would have been significantly lower. The FSA Administrator has pledged that training is now FSA’s top priority. Training is being developed for COR’s to help insure correct findings in future reviews. Training is also being developed for county office employees with Signature Authority training first on the list.*

Poor software/hardware has been, and continues to be, a stumbling block in performance of the duties of a field level employee of FSA. It must be agreed, that this also contributed to the findings of the report. *NASCOE has identified many software/hardware issues to the Administrator. Task forces have been formed which are currently reviewing many of the software problems we face on a daily basis with hopes of correcting the problems poor software creates in getting the job done.*

Over the past several years, every county office employee has been challenged to “get the payments out now”. In many cases payments were made without proper training, procedure, or software, and shortcuts were taken to speed the process through. FSA Administrator Lasseter began last spring to tell us to “Slow down and ensure the payments are made correctly with the proper documentation.” Yet, we were still feeling the pressure to get the payments made and avoid any late payment interest. *NASCOE acknowledges that we must “slow down and ensure the payments are made correctly with the proper documentation”. However, NASCOE has also insisted that we cannot be held accountable for late payment interest when the payment is late due to efforts to correctly document the transaction. NASCOE has provided to the Administrator examples of unreasonable deadlines. The Administrator has extended those deadlines. We will continue to address these cases as they arise.*

We, your Executive Committee of NASCOE, thank you for continuing to do everything that is expected and requested of you. We know that NASCOE members are committed to quality and to the issuance of timely and accurate benefits to our producers. America’s farmers and ranchers depend on our service. We know that you have been, and will continue, to do your best to get your job done regardless of the stumbling blocks that have been set before us. Your comments and suggestions have been heard and are always welcomed. This is your organization and we appreciate your input and look forward to suggestions from you.

Sincerely,



Daniel L. Root  
NASCOE President





*Wishing you peace,  
hope, and all the joys  
of the season!*

*Dear NASCOE Members,*

*Each year the Holiday Season is the time when we pause to give thanks for the blessings we've received, and to look forward to a brighter tomorrow.*

*Although the past several weeks have been very trying for all of us, I know that we each are doing our best to insure a brighter tomorrow. I give thanks to each of you for being caring, dedicated, NASCOE Members and FSA Employees. My hope is that you will each have a wonderful Holiday Season.*

*Many of you have "use or lose", but even if you are not in that situation please plan some time away from the office during the holidays. Take time to enjoy the gift of Family and Friends. Be proud of who you are and what you do, and please say a prayer for our sons and daughters in the military.*

*Wishing you peace, hope, and all the joys of the season!*



*Sincerely,  
Bonnie Heinzman  
NASCOE Vice President  
711 Fifth St.  
New Martinsville, WV 26040  
(304)266-2480(N)  
(304)758-2351 (O)  
[bheinzman@charter.net](mailto:bheinzman@charter.net)*





## **NASCOE GOES TO WASHINGTON!**

The NASCOE executive board just wrapped up our fall meeting with management November 28 and 29<sup>th</sup>. We met Monday before the management meetings to conduct our organization business and prepare. The following topics were discussed with management:

- Proper face-to-face training for all COF staff. It is the Administrators hope to give all CO employees good training meetings, but there is no guarantee. It is being planned.
- Staffing levels. I heard nothing that gave me hope of increases here. Management supports the President's budget.
- A discussion was held concerning workload pressures for GS compared to CO staffs. No resolution was reached.
- Web applications and IT. The IT folks are very concerned about the speed of web applications but funds are not there to make changes that should happen. Please continue to report slow performance.
- Check lists. NASCOE encouraged management to train in areas deemed deficient and not place unreasonable burdens on county offices. NASCOE also stated any real solution must involve more staffing, better training and improved IT equipment and applications.
- Accountability. NASCOE has a real concern about employee adverse actions when adequate staffing and training are not provided and NASCOE will be monitoring for this concern.
- No Fear training. CO employees are not covered by the whistle blower act. This training gives the impression that CO employees are covered. Management will send out a notice clarifying this.
- Purchase cards. We still have states that are restricting the use of purchase cards in county offices. Management has dropped the ball in responding to NASCOE on this issue. We will keep pressing this issue.
- Some state associations are not being included in the office restructuring process. Management continues to say that this is at the option of the SED and STC. In my opinion this mistake will, in all probability, lead to failure of plan acceptance in Congress.
- Extension to complete REX work. There seems to be an opportunity for an extension. State associations should push for their state to request as needed.
- State staffing ceilings. This report was requested by NASCOE and will be provided to the NASCOE president.
- A-123. There will be continued emphasis on second party reviews and separation of duties as we continue into this new fiscal year. It isn't that we aren't trusted; it is more a result of Enron and changes that Congress is mandating. The potential for abuse must be removed. This will cause local authority/accessibility to diminish and require more employees in county offices to be accountable for different duties. Things such as the ability to change bank account information will need to leave the county office level (even though they have no plan at this time).

There were other topics of discussion and I will get more to you later on this. I want you to continue to let me know about your concerns and I appreciate each state president for getting me information on issues. As always, your grassroots concerns are why we have NASCOE. Minutes of our other business will follow as well. Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Midwest Area Executive!

Sincerely,  
Mark VanHoose – Midwest Area Executive

# 2007 Legislative Conference

By Trice Smith, NASCOE Legislative Co-Chair

This year will be very important for American Agriculture, as Congress will write a new Farm Bill that will certainly shape the future of Agriculture and possibly the role of FSA. The 2007 NASCOE Legislative Conference will be a very important conference for the Iowa members will play a very essential part in this conference as we have many Congressional people that will possibly be on the Agriculture and Appropriation Committees. States should make every attempt to send as many attendees as possible to attend the conference and attendees should be "well versed" on the message that NASCOE will be presenting to Congress. This year's conference will most likely have a somewhat different agenda than previous ones and will include some new types of events.

The NASCOE Legislative Conference is scheduled for March 4-7 at the Sheraton Hotel in Crystal City. Participants should begin arriving on Sunday, March 4<sup>th</sup>. General Session will be on Monday, March 5<sup>th</sup> with area breakout sessions in the afternoon. Visits to the hill on Tuesday and if needed continuing on Wednesday. States selected as having "key contact visits" should those "key contact" visits on Wednesday if at all possible. NASCOE Legislative Consultant, Robert Redding will conduct a meeting with those identified as "key contact states" late Tuesday afternoon. This meeting will provide targeted items towards these Congressional contacts. Further details will be given as they are developed.

Before the conference it is very important that you do some work at home. State Presidents were given 3 goals or challenges by the Legislative Committee. One was to increase the participation on CapWiz by 50%. CapWiz is a very good tool to get our message to Congress and membership should use it to the fullest extent. Please sign up and then make good use of this tool.

Presidents were also asked to increase their coalition contact listing and report those contacts to the Legislative Committee. Coalition building has always been a NASCOE goal and we are trying to "step it up one notch" with this challenge. The Legislative Committee will be giving a coalition award at the National Convention and is asking the States to consider developing a similar award.

The third challenge was to educate members about the PAC. A PAC Informational Guide developed by the Legislative Committee was sent to the state presidents to help them with the education of the NASCOE PAC. If you are interested in this booklet it is available on [www.nascoe.org](http://www.nascoe.org). Look for it under New Items or under the PAC page.

These 3 items will be a large part of the preparation for the Legislative Conference in March. Anything we can do at home can prove to be just as important as being in attendance at the Conference in Washington. Your best work can be done at home through the Area Congressional offices. Do not be anxious about contacting a Congressman when asked to by NASCOE. They want to serve and hear what you have to say. If you have any questions concerning Legislative work please contact Mike Mayfield, Tammy Eibey or myself.





# CAP WIZ

**By: Tammy Eibey**

**MWA Legislative Chairperson  
NASCOE CAP WIZ Coordinator**

Hello IASCOE,

I am currently serving NASCOE as the MWA Legislative Chairperson. In April of 2006 I also began duties as the CAP WIZ National Coordinator. The past newsletters have had informational articles regarding CAP WIZ in general. I also have provided an article for the early November NASCOE NOW issue which is posted to the [www.nascoe.org](http://www.nascoe.org) website. I thought I would take the time in this Newsletter to inform you on some of the Alerts and Messages that had been sent out in the past several months. They are in no specific order:

- Pay Equality Resolution Alert
- Disaster Bill Action Alert
- NASCOE Pac information and donation request Message
- Health Insurance Action Alert
- Whistle Blower Protection Act Alert
- Office Closure Language in the Appropriation Bill Alert

Some of these messages went to specific Congressional Offices so not all members received the Alert or Message. The most recent Alert and Message that was sent (that NASCOE felt was of high importance) went out November 5, 2006 in regards to the need to continue the language for the handling of FSA Office Closures in the New Ag Appropriation Bill. Messages and Alerts may be found at the NASCOE website [www.nascoe.org](http://www.nascoe.org). Here are some details regarding that message (overall) and how Iowa did in getting the message to our own Congressional Offices.

- 2113 CAP WIZ subscribers were sent the message Nationally
- 489 Total IASCOE MEMBERS
- 174 Iowa CAP WIZ Subscribers
- 10 Iowa CAP WIZ Subscribers that acted and sent the message

Break Down based on Congressional Offices:

- Harkin 10
- Grassley 10
- Nussle 5
- Boswell 3
- King 1
- Latham 1
- Leach 0

So, only 5.6% of the Iowa subscribed users sent the message...

**IS THAT GOOD ENOUGH????**

*continued...*



NASCOE uses this method for its Legislative purposes when items of high importance need to get out to members quickly and give the members a resource to use to contact their Congressional Members with a united message. Most messages can be altered some to meet the needs of specific areas and states as well. I complete reports and articles for other areas and states and feel we need to be aware that the messages and alerts are sent out because they are **IMPORTANT** and need to be **ACTED** on when received.

I did notice that in Iowa, several of you that are subscribed to the internet service of Iowa Telecom, the last message was bounced back to me. When I noticed this common problem, I sent a message out through the Directors to let you know to check your junk mail and filter status. Hopefully this has been resolved.

As we get more involved in the next Farm Bill development, many more messages and alerts will be sent out through CAP WIZ. I hope you all take the time and take action on each of them when received. They wouldn't be sent if not important.

If you have any questions or comments you may contact me at any time. Also, Cindy Mensen is our IASCOE Coordinator.

Thank you,  
Tammy Eibey  
Delaware County



## MEET YOUR MIDWEST AREA COMMITTEE CHAIRS

We all know it is much easier to get things accomplished if you work as a team. I would like to introduce you all to the Midwest Area Team that helps provide information and help to each state so our members are aware of the benefits and opportunities that are available to them from NASCOE.

**Charlene Neukomm – Negotiation Consultant:** Charlene started her career with ASCS in the Iroquois County, IL office as a temp in September, 1987, working the night shift, 2-10:30 pm. Her duties included data loading loans and filing PIK certificates. In August 1989, she obtained permanent employee status. In June of 1990, the employees of the Iroquois County ASCS office took a trip to WDC to receive the Administrator's Award. During her 19 years, she has worked with nearly every program administered in Iroquois County. Her current duties include Conservation and NAP. She also serves District 2 as the Advisory PT for Conservation. Charlene has been an IASCOE/NASCOE member since her permanent employment began in 1989. She has received MWA and NASCOE publicity awards. In March 2005, she was elected Secretary-Treasurer for IASCOE, an office she still holds today. She has served IASCOE as a delegate to the National Convention the last two years

She lives on a farm in rural Cissna Park, with her husband Walt and three daughters, Hannah, Natalie, and Lyndsey.

**Jake Bourget – Programs Chair:** Jake has been here since 1988 starting out as a field reporter after working for SCS. “Another field reporter was giving me a hard time about me telling him what to do and he threw the COT application form at me and told me to fill it out if I wanted to be his boss!!!! If he never would have done that I never even would have known the program existed”. The rest is history!! County profile: Jake has been a CED for 14 years doing shared management with Portage/Wood Counties in central WI for 10 years. There are over 175,000 acres under irrigation plus dry land acres. There are 2700 DCP contracts of which, 400 have vegetable reductions. There are 640 dairy farms in the MILX and 250 CRP contracts. We dabble in the rest of the programs as we get around to telling them about them!! :) Jake has served as the Benefits Chair for three years since becoming the programs chair when it was established.



**Dee Ann Simmons Lehn – Benefits Chair:** Dee has been the CED in the Keokuk County office located in Sigourney, Iowa for 4 years. She was a PT in Jefferson Co. for 17 years prior to that. She is currently serving as the President of the Iowa Association of FSA County Office Employees.

I make my home on an acreage just north of Fairfield with my husband, Ray. We are currently in the “empty nest phase” of our lives as our youngest started college last fall. Ray is a DNR District Forester covering a 6 county district in southeast Iowa. Together we have 4 sons, Derek, Drew, Andrew and Chris, whose ages range from 23 to 19 years of age.

Becky Zirpel, the National Benefits Chairperson, has already done her best to initiate me in to the world of the NASCOE benefits Committee sending all sorts of information to pass on to the members. I’m looking forward to serving the Mid West area and promise to do my best to keep you all information and find answers to your questions. Please feel free to contact me at any time and I’ll do my best to assist you.

*continued...*

**Barbara Stoll – Publicity Chair:** Barb has over 20 years of service with FSA. She started her career as a temporary "data entry clerk" in 1986 and got into management training in 1994. She was hired as the CED in the Stark Ohio office in 1995. She has served as the state secretary and as district PT and CED representatives. She has attended many conventions and participated in several legislative trips over the years. Her and her husband also operate a 160 cow dairy farm and plant about 700 acres of crops each year. They have raised 4 children and their two sons are active in the farm operation with them. Barb took over as the area Publicity chair last year.

**Tammy Eibey – Legislative Chair:** Tammy has worked in the Delaware County FSA office in Manchester, Iowa for the last 20 ½ years. She started as a PT with compliance, PL, Recons, Disaster and DCP. She currently works as a FLO. I have been involved with IASCOE in some way since I started in 1986. I was a committee person for awards, benefits and legislative and now, as director, I am the Publicity chairperson. Tammy also serves as the NASCOE CAP WIZ Coordinator. IASCOE/NASCOE is very important to all employees. There are a lot of great people around the nation working to secure funding for more full time employees plus better benefits to mention a few items on the burner now. I encourage all who are not members to think about the things they have gotten based on that hard work from the NASCOE/IASCOE directors and committee people. Put aside office politics and personality differences and work together for the benefit of all FSA Employees.

**Tom Oasen – Scholarship Chair:** Tom is a CED in Walworth County, in the South East corner of Wisconsin and as been employed with ASCS/FSA for 18 years, and have been a WASCOE/NASCOE Member each and every year along the way. Tom was elected as a WASCOE Director, served in that position for a few months, and was then called upon to be the WASCOE VP. He served as the VP for 5 1/2 years, and is now currently the WASCOE President. "Since getting thrown into the fire as VP, I have attended all NASCOE Conventions, MWA Rally's, and Legislative Conferences along the way. These are all very important events. However, I have to say that my first NASCOE Convention in Minnesota will always be my favorite, as it was like the "first kiss" that you never ever forget!"

"Since my first NASCOE Convention I have been "Hooked"! I am now in my fourth year as your NASCOE MWA Scholarship Chairperson. I may have the fancy title, but the Judges and the Scholarship Applicants are the individuals that deserve much more than I do to write a Bio about themselves!"

"I have met many of the State Scholarship Chairpersons, and I am completely humbled by the dedication of each and every one of your Chairpersons! Please let me know if you have any questions I may be able to help you with."

**Steve Morrison- Awards Chair:** Steve has worked with FSA since 1987 when he was hired as a COT. He served in Mississippi County MO for about a year and a half before moving to Stoddard County MO. One of Steve's first jobs in MASCOE/NASCOE was as a state benefits chair and later he became the MWA Scholarship Chair. He has been a State President, moved my way through the ranks of MWA Alternate Exec, then MWA Exec, served as NASCOE Vice President when Randy Cook was President and then had the honor and privilege to serve as NASCOE President from 2002 through 2004.

"The best part of the experience was getting to meet the members out in their own states. Each state and its membership have their own unique personality, but we are an organization full of remarkable talent and dedication."



*continued....*

“I was asked to serve this past year as Awards Chair and I feel that as a group we do not give enough recognition to the many members in our organization that go beyond what is expected from them. I would encourage you to take just a short amount of time to nominate someone you know for an award. Whether it be an award at work or a distinguished service award through NASCOE, there is nothing more touching than to be recognized by your peers for doing something that you may feel is just part of what you are supposed to do. In the current environment at work, there is someone you can give a lift, by nominating them for an award. One of the most precious gifts we have is time. Take time to encourage someone else. Most likely if you are reading this, you are already serving others through our organization called NASCOE. Thank you for being willing to make a difference. “

**Ronda Bozek-Smith – Membership Chair:** Ronda is a CED for Ingham/Livingston Counties, which was shared management for quite a few years, but combined a couple of years ago. She's been a CED for over 20 years. Ronda has been involved in MASCOE the whole time she's been employed by FSA. She has served as the President for MASCOE, and also has served as the publicity chair for a lot of years. She has attended 5 or 6 legislative conferences and many, many national conventions. She is married and has two daughters, both in college. She was the Mayor of Williamston, MI, back in the late 80's.

**Mindy Trogdon – Emblems Chair:** Mindy has been with FSA for 20 years starting as a PT in September 1986 in Edgar County, Illinois. She has served as an Advisory PT for Production Adjustment and has been to WDC for an Administrator's Award. She is currently the Emblem Chair for IASCOE as well as Midwest Area Chair for NASCOE. She has been a member of the association since her permanent employment and has also served as a Negotiating Consultant for the Midwest Area. Mindy lives in Paris, IL and has two children Jared and Jenni who are both attending college.

Four of the committee chairs are in their first year in their current capacity and I want to thank those individuals who served the Midwest Area as Committee Chairs in the past.

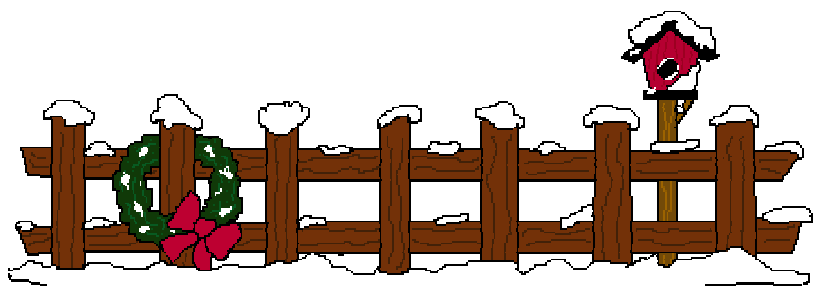
**Kay Lumsden – MI,** served as Benefits Chair for the last two years and **Will Herr – IN** served as Membership Chair last year. **Rosie Kahl – IA,** served as the Midwest Area Awards chair for several years and **Betsy Mace – IL,** serve as the MWA Negotiation Consultant for several years as well.

I encourage the Committee Chairs for each state to work closely with the Area Chairs. They are your resource person and work closely with the NASCOE Committee chairs to provide you with current information and updates from the NASCOE Executive board. These chairs will be glad to help with any questions that you may have and assist you with you committee activities within your State.

I wish you all a safe and Happy Holiday Season.

Sincerely,

Jon Williams  
Midwest Area Alternate Exec



## Season's Greetings From Your Secretary/Treasurer



I know everyone has been under a great deal of stress lately as a result of the Improper Payment Act. In our office we just start making some headway and have to stop and take a few steps backward and start over again. I'm confident we will soon have all the documentation needed to have proper signature authority and over the next several months we will have our eligibility files reviewed and corrected if necessary. As one person looks at this it seems like an enormous task, but when the entire office pulls together it won't take long to climb the mountain.

During this Christmas season be thankful for all you have. We live in the greatest nation on earth and have so many blessings. May the wonder of this season touch your heart in its own special way and may your home be filled with the love of family and friends.

Wishing you a very Merry Christmas!!!!

Sue Beemer  
Secretary/Treasurer  
PT Taylor County



### Cindy Seda – Harrison County 20 Years of Service

Cindy Seda recently celebrated 20 years of service with FSA. She began working for the agency in the Fall of 1986 as a TO working on maps. In 1987, Cindy became a full-time permanent employee. Eventually, she became an expert in Production Adjustment and Reconstitutions, which she continues to be in charge of today. Cindy always keeps her FSA family laughing with her witty comments. Congratulations Cindy!



Cindy receives her 20-Year Certificate from CED Pat Warnbier



## Everything You Ever Wanted To Know About Me!

By Judy Vos – PT Woodbury County

I was born and raised in a little town in South Dakota. I was the third child of six, and second girl of three. I grew up in Jefferson, SD (that small town) and went to nurses training in Sioux City, IA for 2 years, started working for a group of orthodontists in the summer, and never went back to school. I met and married a Dutchman, who loves to farm and feed cattle. We have been married for 38 years, have three grown children, and six absolutely adorable (and a few) hilarious granddaughters. They keep us amused to say the least. They are 12, 6, 3, 3, 1, and 10 months. Trust me, when they are all home it is busy!!



I enjoy working in my yard, although the drought this summer has killed practically every form of plant life in my yard, except for the daisies. I also enjoy painting and decorating. My claim to fame is that I have painted for friends and family from Florida to California.

I started working for FSA in 1986 and I am not in charge of anything, except the counter. I celebrate my 20 years with FSA on September 8, 2006, and sometime soon after that, I hope that it sounds good financially, to retire, so that I can spend more time with my husband on the farm, and with those 6 little girls, before they get too old to want to bake cupcakes and have tea parties with their "Grandma Judy".

I also want to get reacquainted with my old friends that I rarely get to see now. I foresee many long games of Scrabble, cards, good books while lounging in my hammock, and a clean house. (That will probably require a dump truck to accomplish that task).

I have some "Girlfriends" who love to travel, and I can see us on some new adventure, somewhere-anywhere, if time, health, and money allows. I feel so lucky to work here with the same people that I have worked with for 20 years. It is scary to think that I won't see them everyday, once I bid them goodbye, but I wouldn't trade the good times here for anything--Except my family. Life is good!!!

Judy Vos



## **\*\*\*Automation of Farm Loan Programs\*\*\***

By: Dave Hoaglund  
IACS President

The goal to have all FLP applications web based with a single sign in and one time data entry is the end of FY 2007. This is called the Farm Loan Program Information Delivery System (FLIPDS).

Information on the Farm Loan Programs Systems can be found at:

<https://indianocean.sc.egov.usda.gov/flp/IndexServlet>

This site includes two pages with links to manuals and documentation about the FLP systems. One page is manuals in .pdf format. The second page is the Presentations page providing information from the 2006 National Farm Loan Program Training including PowerPoint presentations, spreadsheets, and word documents.

Two key components of FLIPDS are:

FLP Risk Assessment (FLPRA) which uses a scoring formula to assess the risk of each office's portfolio. From the assigned risk, offices are selected for review. Each office will be reviewed at least every three years. FY 2007 will be the second year of this program.

Direct Loan System (DLS) – The Loan Making section is scheduled for implementation in December of 2006. A Nationwide net conference training was held September 12, 2006.

### **\*\*\*COMING SOON\*\*\***

A New Guaranteed Loan System will soon be implemented. This system will include three main components and will assist FSA field offices and their local lenders.

- Guaranteed Web-based Status Reporting – This will automate the filing of the Semi-Annual Status Reports in time for the March 2007 report.
- Guaranteed Loan Closing GLS Web Process – This will allow lenders to input loan closing information directly in GLS
- Guaranteed Loss Claim GLS Web Process – This will automate the initiation, review, processing, and approval of loss claims through GLS.

### **\*\*\*REMINDER\*\*\***

As of October 1, 2006 the limit for guaranteed loans increased to \$899,000.

### **\*\*\*Upcoming Events\*\*\***

Zone B Meeting – 2/8-10, 2007 KCI Marriott - Kansas City, MO

FMA National Convention - 3/25-29, 2007 Hilton Crystal City Hotel - Washington D.C.

National Convention – 6/25-27, 2007 Millennium Hotel - Cincinnati, OH



Visit our website at [www.iascoe.org](http://www.iascoe.org)



## 2007 IASCOE/IASC/IASE Joint Convention

*It's time to think about making your reservations to attend the 2007 IASCOE/IASC/IASE Joint Convention. This upcoming event will be held March 30 and March 31, 2007 at the Stoney Creek Inn in Johnston, Iowa. Last year's convention was at this same location and we were very pleased with the facility and the staff was wonderful and very accommodating.*

*The Stoney Creek Inn has a unique way of letting you enjoy the great outdoors indoors! The atmosphere is that of a hunting lodge decorated with an abundance of items that make you feel as if you are sitting around a warm campfire in the middle of wooded wonderland.*

*The Stoney Creek Inn is just a few miles from Des Moines and all that our Capitol City has to offer. Great shopping, fine dining and a variety of entertainment options are just minutes away.*

*If you are interesting in helping with the convention, please contact one of the IASCOE directors. We always welcome anyone who has a desire to become more involved in their employees' association.*

*To make your reservation please call the Stoney Creek Inn reservations line at 1-800-659-2220.*

*Please mention you are attending the IASCOE convention when making your reservation to get the special rate of \$73.00 per room.*

*We hope to see you there!*



## An E.J. Brown and Associates Presentation

On Wednesday, Oct. 25, 2006, Joshua Katcher and Ed Brown representing ING Associates, delivered a very thought provoking presentation on Retirement Planning to staff members of the Allamakee, Howard and Winneshiek County FSA Offices at the home of Julie Vulk. Not one person present felt any pressure to purchase or sign up during this presentation.

Joshua and Ed gave us real life examples of what we needed to be thinking about regarding that particular time in our lives should we decide to retire. What issues did we have in regards to aging parents? Long-term care? Annuities? If you listened, or read any of the material offered, you were the one who made the decision, "Do I need to visit with someone in more detail about my own financial matters? "Where am I headed with my life?" If you felt you needed to speak to them personally, you are the one to make the contact. We know we are not going to be bound to any contract, or pushed into making a purchase of any product. What a great way to make decisions about your life, NO added pressure!

Anyone of us who attended this meeting would have to say, "Great job guys, thank you!!" Now it's our turn to take the next step.

Julie A Vulk – CED Winneshiek County

**Give Ed or Joshua at EJ Brown & Associates a call!**  
**Visit them at their website: [www.ejbrowndassociates.com](http://www.ejbrowndassociates.com)**

Ed Brown  
119 rd St. NE Suite 333  
Cedar Rapids, IA 52401  
866-304-0043 ext 218  
[ed.brown@ffcltd.com](mailto:ed.brown@ffcltd.com)

Joshua Katcher  
P.O. Box 363  
Hampton, IA 50441  
641-425-2573  
[joshua.katcher@ingfp.com](mailto:joshua.katcher@ingfp.com)

Securities offered through ING Financial Partners.  
EJ Brown & Associates in not a subsidiary of nor controlled by ING Financial Partners

This past year the Greene County FSA and NRCS office working together (!! ) sent several packages to Iraq for John Wills and others serving in his unit. We tried to include as many items as we could from their wish list such as Snickers, popcorn, drink mixes, personal hygiene items, crossword books etc. Packages averaged about 100 pounds each time we shipped them. The servicemen were always very grateful for these items and said they were distributed very quickly. They even had a raffle for the stuffed rabbit we sent with their Easter packages. We felt like we were doing a small part to help them during this difficult time and really enjoyed supporting them.



Imagine our surprise when we received a package from Iraq. On June 1, 2006 an American flag was flown over the 67th Area support Group Garrison Command Headquarters in Al Asad, Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom in honor of the USDA Service Center in Jefferson, Iowa. The flag and a certificate signed by John and others in his unit was sent to us as Thanks for the support we gave them. These items now are proudly displayed in our office. A constant reminder of the fight for freedom we take so for granted. John and his unit arrived safely back in the United States in September.

Candy Hoyle, PT Greene County



## 5-73 CAVALRY SQUADRON FRG American Flag Pre-Order Form

The 5-73 Cavalry Squadron Family Support Group is sponsoring a special fundraiser this fall! The funds raised will be used to sponsor activities and functions for the young families of our deployed paratroopers.

Americans are among the most patriotic of peoples—who among us wouldn't be proud to fly the flag of our nation? We would like to offer you the chance to own a unique American flag—one that has been flown in Iraq by the paratroopers from the 5-73 Cavalry Squadron, 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division! The flags are 3'x5' feet, beautiful, embroidered, and all-weather nylon. Your flag will come with a certificate of authenticity—signed by the Commander and Command Sergeant Major of 5-73 CAV. — with the date on which it was flown in Iraq. The flags are \$25 a piece, and for \$5 extra per flag, we will ship it to you!

We hope that this flag, a symbolic piece of history, is something you and your family will treasure for generations. We can also guarantee that your flags will arrive to you by December, in plenty of time for you to wrap them up as Christmas presents. By signing your name on your check, you will have helped the families and paratroopers of our unit, AND knocked out your Christmas shopping all in one fell swoop!

You may pick up your flags at Ft. Bragg when they arrive, OR have them mailed to your home. Please indicate how you would like to receive them. For more information, please contact Lori Sylvia (910)213-5825 or e-mail at [sylviaclan@earthlink.net](mailto:sylviaclan@earthlink.net)

Please make checks payable to: 3/505 PIR FRG (former name of our unit, still used for our banking) and mail your check and this form to: Beth Poppas (5-73 CAV. FRG Leader)  
310 Damsel Ct. Linden, NC 28356

**THANKS SO MUCH FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF OUR TROOPS AND THEIR FAMILIES!**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Phone(s): \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

I will be picking them up at Ft. Bragg \_\_\_\_\_ (Yes or No)

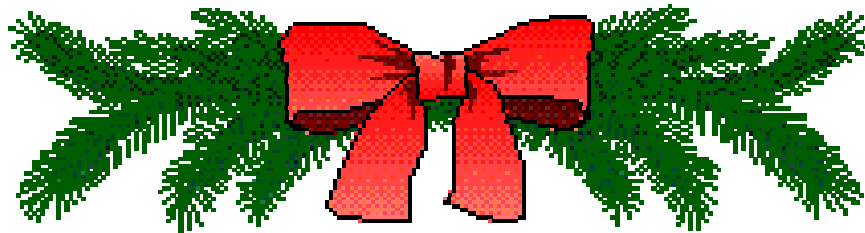
I would like them mailed \_\_\_\_\_ (Yes or No).

Please mail them to the following addresses:

1.) \_\_\_\_\_ 2.) \_\_\_\_\_






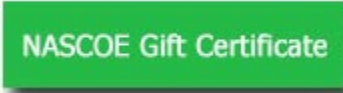
Number of flags you are ordering: \_\_\_\_\_ x \$25 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Total for flags  
(Please add \$5 onto the cost of each flag if you would like us to ship it to you.)

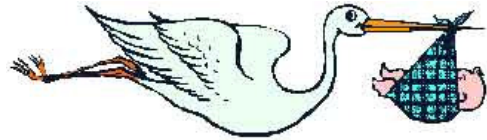
Total Amount of Your Order: \$ \_\_\_\_\_



Visit the [NASCOE STORE](http://thenascoestore.com) web page!



		
<p>Unisex Fleece Sweats &amp; Sets \$19 to \$38</p>	<p>Denim Shirts &amp; Jackets \$23 to \$28</p>	<p>Caps \$7.50 to \$15</p>
		
<p>Golf Goodies - \$6 to \$20</p>	<p>Polo &amp; Sport Shirts \$16.50 to \$26</p>	<p>His, Hers &amp; Youth Tees \$5.50 to \$18</p>
		<p>➔ <b>Click Here!</b> ➔</p>
<p>NASCOE Logo Everything \$1.25 to \$10</p>	<p>NASCOE Gift Certificates \$10, \$25, \$50 &amp; \$100</p>	<p>ORDER FORM</p>



I am officially a grandma now!!  
 Braxton Lee Hutchinson was born on  
 September 14 at 8:24 p.m.  
 He weighed 7 lbs. 12 oz. and he was 21  
 inches long.

Cute as a button!!

*Proud Grandma...Judy Dameron  
 PT in Louisa County*



Hi! I'm Brooke McKenzie Hilleman, 1st Granddaughter (2nd grandchild) to Alan Hilleman. "My grandpa is the CED for the Marshall County FSA Office. I think CED stands for Cuddle Every Day, because he loves to cuddle me! Don't tell him but, I love it too!!!"



*"I'm sleepy, don't you people ever chill and just take a nap!"*



*"Hey, are you still talking about me!"*



### Contribute To The Next IASCOE Newsletter

If you have any stories, photos, jokes, quotes, or information that you would like to include in the next IASCOE Newsletter, send them to Tammy Eibey at [tammy.eibey@ia.usda.gov](mailto:tammy.eibey@ia.usda.gov).

## THE WARRIOR'S HOLIDAY

Submitted By Deb Esselman – CED Taylor-Price Counties Wisconsin

The holidays are upon us  
And Christmas is drawing near  
But for far too many Families  
There won't be a "Happy New Year".



Their loved ones are off at War  
In some far-off foreign land  
Some of them are gone forever  
Not at all, what they had planned.

Many of them, "weekend Warriors"  
Who planned Serving in their hometown  
Some promised one Tour of Duty  
But sent for one more "turn-a-round".



There are numbers to toss about  
But to those Families just, that "One"  
As they Pray for a safe return  
And the day that War is done.

They all go and do their Duty  
Find a special Camaraderie  
Which only those in Battle know  
Becoming part of their Family.

But, it really isn't quite the same  
Especially, on that Christmas Day  
They think of loved ones back at home  
Who send Prayers and Love their way.



Another New Year is coming soon  
Another one we'll be at War  
And one more Holiday Season  
That won't be like it was before.

Especially if you're a lucky one  
Who doesn't live with that haunting fear  
Think of all those who Sacrifice  
And hope it will be better next year.

If you know a Service Family  
With either Blue or a Gold Star  
Take a moment to thank them  
Show them how grateful that you are.

When you see a Military Uniform  
Proudly coming toward your way  
Give a Salute, say, "Thank you!"  
For the price they have to pay.

As we Celebrate these Holidays  
Shared with Friends and Family  
Remember those who went to War  
So we all can have our Liberty.

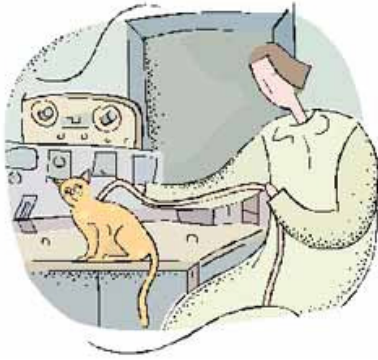
Let us hope for an end to War  
So that each and every day  
We can rejoice and celebrate  
The Warrior's Holiday.





# The Cat Story

By Judy Vos - PT Woodbury County



Our daughter, Suz, lives in Madison, WI and works at Penney's. She lives only 10 minutes from the store, so she often drives home over the dinner hour to do a load or two of laundry, check her mail, and grab a bite to eat.

On this evening she did just that. Took the wet load out of the washer, put it in the dryer, and ran upstairs to get a bite to eat. Before she left to go back to work, she took the dry load out of the dryer, put the wet load in, and put a dirty load into the washer, and went back to

work. When she got home around 10:30 PM, she noticed that her cat wasn't around. She called Him, but he never showed up, so assuming that he was sleeping upstairs, or wherever, Suz went downstairs to finish the laundry. When she opened the dryer, she had the horrifying realization that she had "fluffed" her cat to death.

She loved that cat and she felt terrible that it had apparently crawled into the dryer while she was shifting loads from washer to dryer to folding table. She was crying, and couldn't force herself to take the poor, dead, and hairless kitty out of the dryer. It was now approaching midnight, and she didn't know what to do, so she called a friend (who lived 100 miles away) and told him thru many sobs and tears, that her "Cat died". He said he would be right there. Suz said, OK-- and they both hung up the phone. Suz couldn't believe that he would come at midnight from 100 miles away to remove a warm, but very dead cat from her dryer.

Well!! He arrived in a little more than an hour, and came running in, gave Suz a big hug, and said, now, tell me what happened. Suz was still in tears, but thru more tears she explained that she was doing laundry and the cat must have just crawled into the warm dryer, and that was it. That was when Terry broke into a huge laugh. Suz was still crying over the fact that her "Cat died", and could not find any humor in it, until she told Terry that it wasn't funny.

Terry answered "Well it is pretty funny if you were me, and I thought that you said YOUR DAD died, and I brought my suit, and tie and took the rest of the week off, because I didn't want you to drive back to Iowa by yourself for your Dad's funeral. And I wouldn't have driven 100 mph all the way here for the death of a cat. Plus, now I have to explain all this to my construction boss, who I just woke up on the way here, to tell him why I wouldn't be there to lay the brick for someone's new house for the rest of the week. So, since your Dad is alive, and the Cat died, it just doesn't seem so sad. Suz did have to laugh a little over the fact that it could have been worse.

There is a bar in Dubuque, IA with a box of Snuggles (dryer sheets) in it. Only the little bear that is usually on the box, has been replaced by a picture of a cute little kitty. If anyone asks why, the story begins all over again. This is a TRUE story.

MEOW!



# An Old Farmer's Advice

From The Farmer's Almanac

Submitted By Candy Hoyle – PT Greene County

- \* "Your fences need to be horse-high, pig-tight, and bull-strong."
- \* "Keep skunks and bankers and lawyers at a distance."
- \* "Life is simpler when you plow around the stump."
- \* "A bumble bee is considerably faster than a John Deere tractor!"
- \* "Words that soak into your ears are whispered ... not yelled."
- \* "Meanness don't jus' happen overnight."
- \* "Forgive your enemies ... it messes up their heads!"
- \* "Never corner something that you know is meaner than you."
- \* "It don't take a very big person to carry a grudge."
- \* "You cannot unsay a cruel word."
- \* "Every path has a few puddles."
- \* "When you wallow with pigs, expect to get dirty."
- \* "The best sermons are lived, not preached."
- \* "Most of the stuff people worry about ain't never gonna happen, anyway...!"
- \* "Don't judge folks by their relatives."
- \* "Remember that silence is sometimes the best answer."
- \* "Live a good, honorable life. Then when you get older and think back, you'll enjoy it a second time."
- \* "Don't interfere with somethin' that ain't botherin' you none."
- \* "Timing has a lot to do with the outcome of a rain dance."
- \* "If you find yourself in a hole, the first thing to do is stop diggin'."
- \* "Sometimes you get, and sometimes you get got."
- \* "The biggest troublemaker you'll probably ever have to deal with, watches you from the mirror every mornin'."
- \* "Always drink upstream from the herd."
- \* "Good judgment comes from experience. And a lotta that comes from bad judgment."
- \* "Lettin' the cat outta the bag is a whole lot easier than puttin' it back in."
- \* "If you get to thinkin' you're a person of some influence, try orderin' somebody else's dog around."
- \* "Live simply ... Love generously ... Care deeply ... Speak kindly ... Leave the rest to God."



## *CELEBRATION TIME!*



Tammy Pruin, CED in Sioux County celebrated a special birthday November 6<sup>th</sup>.

The county office employees recognized the milestone by dressing in black and decorating Tammy's office with black streamers, balloons, and banners.

A special lunch was served in honor of the occasion. Shown here is Tammy with her Kitty Litter Cake.

*IT TASTED BETTER THAN IT LOOKED!*

### *Kitty Litter Cake*

#### CAKE INGREDIENTS:

- 1 box spice or German chocolate cake mix
- 1 box of white cake mix
- 1 package white sandwich cookies
- 1 large package vanilla instant pudding mix
- A few drops green food coloring
- 12 small Tootsie Rolls

#### SERVING "DISHES AND UTENSILS"

- 1 **NEW** cat litter box
- 1 **NEW** cat litter box liner
- 1 **NEW** pooper scooper

- 1) Prepare and bake cake mixes, according to directions, in any size pan. Prepare pudding and chill. Crumble cookies in small batches in blender or food processor. Add a few drops of green food coloring to 1 cup of cookie crumbs. Mix with a fork or shake in a jar. Set aside.
- 2) When cakes are at room temperature, crumble them into a large bowl. Toss with half of the remaining cookie crumbs and enough pudding to make the mixture moist but not soggy. Place liner in litter box and pour in mixture.
- 3) Unwrap 3 Tootsie Rolls and heat in a microwave until soft and pliable. Shape the blunt ends into slightly curved points. Repeat with three more rolls. Bury the rolls decoratively in the cake mixture. Sprinkle remaining white cookie crumbs over the mixture, then scatter green crumbs lightly over top.
- 4) Heat 5 more Tootsie Rolls until almost melted. Scrape them on top of the cake and sprinkle with crumbs from the litter box. Heat the remaining Tootsie Roll until pliable and hang it over the edge of the box. Place box on a sheet of newspaper and serve with scooper. Enjoy!



These tried and true recipes should make your holiday entertaining a little bit easier this year. We all know how busy our FSA lives are right now, but it is still important to spend time with our family and friends during this most beautiful holiday season. Enjoy it.

Submitted By IASCOE Members  
Compiled By Carma Reiss, Benton County



### Party Mix

Jolene Fechter, CED in Page County  
Member of the Membership Committee for District 7

Party Mix is a Christmas tradition in my home and I usually start making it around Thanksgiving. I probably make 10 - 12 batches of this before I quit around New Years. I give it to neighbors and friends and it is more addicting than popcorn

- 1 box Corn Chex
- 1 box Rice Chex
- 3-4 c Cheerios
- 8 oz Pretzels
- 12 oz can of mixed nuts

Combine all ingredients in a large pan such as a roaster or a metal wash pan safe for oven. Melt together the following and pour evenly over the cereal:

- 3/4 lb butter (must use real butter- margarine does not work)
- 2 T garlic salt
- 2 t celery salt
- 2 t worcheshire sauce

Bake in oven for 2 hours at 250 degrees stirring every 15-20 minutes. I usually bake it while I'm cleaning house so I swing through the kitchen every 15-20 minutes. When done, seal in a large tupperware container until cool. Enjoy eating or sharing as it makes a big batch!

Another favorite I make is Toffee

### Almond Crunch Candy

Jolene Fechter, CED Page County  
Member of the Membership Committee for District 7

In 2 quart microwave bowl combine:

- 1 c butter
- 1 1/3 c suger
- 3 T water
- 1 T corn syrup

Microwave on Hi 7 minutes stirring once

Add one package of slivered almonds and microwave HI 8-10 minutes to hard crack stage. Spread on greased cookie sheet.

When cool break up in pieces and dip in chocolate made of the following:

- 12 oz semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 6 oz milk chocolate chips
- About 1 c shaved parafin - enough to make the chocolate easy for dipping.

Melt this mixture in the microwave on Low. It takes a while before the chocolate mixture is hot enough to melt the parafin so be patient. It should be runny enough to easily dip the candy pieces.

This tastes like Heath Candy bars.



## Pizza Loaf

Paula Frazier, PT Benton County

1 loaf frozen bread dough, thawed  
2 eggs, separated  
1 tablespoon grated parmesan cheese  
1 tablespoon olive oil  
1 teaspoon fresh parsley  
1 teaspoon dried oregano  
½ teaspoon garlic powder  
¼ teaspoon pepper  
8 ounces sliced pepperoni  
2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese  
1 can sliced mushrooms  
1 can sliced ripe olives, drained  
1 can pizza sauce



On a greased baking sheet, roll out dough into a 15 x 10 inch rectangle. In a bowl combine egg yolks, parmesan cheese, oil, parsley, oregano, garlic powder and pepper. Brush over the dough. Sprinkle with pepperoni, mozzarella cheese, mushrooms, and olives. Roll up jelly-roll style starting with the long side; pinch seam to seal and tuck ends under. Place seamed side down; brush with egg whites. Do Not Let Rise. Bake at 350 for 35 to 40 min or until golden brown. Warm pizza sauce; serve with the sliced loaf.

## Microwave Caramel Corn

Vicki Pederson, Floyd County PT

Member of the Membership Committee for District 2

16 Cups popped corn  
1 Cup Brown Sugar  
1 Stick of margarine  
1/4 Cup light corn syrup  
1/2 tsp salt  
1/2 tsp soda

Put popped popcorn in a double brown paper sack. In another bowl mix remaining ingredients EXCEPT soda. Bring to a boil. Boil on high for 3-4 minutes, stirring several times. Stir in soda. Pour over popcorn. Stir. Roll down sack and put in microwave for 1 1/2 minutes, then take out and shake. Put back in microwave for 30 seconds and shake 4 more times. Rip sack open and let cool on counter. After cool, crush into smaller pieces.

## Crockpot Pizza

Vicki Pederson, Floyd County PT

Member of the Membership Committee for District 2

This one is good for a large group. It makes a big recipe and everyone seems to like it.

2 lbs. browned hamburger  
1- 14 oz. jar pizza sauce  
4 cups mozzarella cheese  
1- 8 oz. cooked Kluski noodles  
1-14 oz. jar spaghetti sauce  
1 or 2 pkg. sliced pepperoni  
4 cups mozzarella cheese

Layer in large crockpot as listed above. Cook on high for 3 hours. You may vary the meat and amount of cheese you put in, but my family likes all the cheese.

## **Pecan Pie Bars**

Cynde Briggs, PT in Mahaska County  
Member of the Membership Committee for District 9

### Crust

6 cups all purpose flour  
1 ½ cups sugar  
1 teaspoon salt  
2 cups cold butter (no substitutes)

### Filling

8 eggs  
3 cups sugar  
3 cups corn syrup  
½ cup butter melted  
3 teaspoons vanilla extract  
5 cups chopped pecans

In a large bowl, combine the flour, sugar and salt. Cut in butter until crumbly. Press onto the bottom and up the sides of two greased 15-in x 10-in x 1-in. baking pans. Bake at 350 for 18-22 minutes or until crust edges are beginning to brown and bottom is set.

For filling, combine the eggs, sugar, corn syrup, butter, and vanilla in a large bowl. Mix well. Stir in pecans. Pour over crust. Bake 25-30 minutes longer or until edges are firm and center is almost set. Cool on wire racks. Cut into bars. Refrigerate until serving. Yield: 6-8 dozen.

## **Garbage Bag Trail Mix**

Paula Frazier; PT in Benton County

1 large box Crispix Cereal  
1 bag pretzels  
1 bottle Orville Redenbacher Popcorn Oil  
2 bags Combos snacks  
1 can mixed nuts  
1 box Munchums  
1 box Cheez-its  
1 tsp onion salt  
1 Tbs garlic powder

Mix seasonings with oil. Mix all together. Bake at 250 for 10 to 20 minutes.

## **Blizzard Party Mix**

Teresa Noe, PT in Benton County

Nonstick cooking spray  
2 cups oven-toasted cereal squares  
2 cups small pretzel twists  
1 cup dry-roasted peanuts  
1 cup coarsely chopped caramels (about 20)  
Toll House Premier White Morsels

Spray 13 X 9-inch baking pan with non-stick spray  
Combine cereal, pretzels, peanuts & caramels in large bowl

Microwave Toll House Premier White Morsels in medium, uncovered, microwave-safe bowl on medium-high power for 1 minute. Stir

The morsels may retain some of their original shape.

If necessary, micro-wave an additional 10 to 15 second intervals, stirring just until smooth.

Pour over cereal mixture-stir to coat evenly.

Spread mixture into pan and let set.



## Humming Bird Cake

Teresa Noe, PT in Benton County

3 cups flour  
1 tsp. soda  
1 tsp. salt  
1 tsp. cinnamon  
1 tsp. vanilla  
2 cups sugar  
1 1/2 cup Crisco Oil  
3 eggs  
1 (15oz.) can crushed pineapple  
3 mashed bananas  
Nuts

Mix sifted dry ingredients and pineapple and banana with oil and eggs, mix by hand. Bake in greased bundt pan for 1 hour. Cool completely and frost.

Frosting:

8 oz. cream cheese  
4 tbsp. butter  
1 tsp. vanilla  
1 cup coconut  
1 box powdered sugar



## Parmesan Bites

Calvin Rickels, CED in Benton County

1 package cream cheese  
1 1/4 cups parmesan cheese, divided  
2 cans crescent rolls  
1 cup chopped red peppers  
1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley

Mix softened cream cheese and 1 cup of Parmesan Cheese until well blended. Separate crescent rolls into 8 rectangles; press perforation together to seal. Spread 3 T cream cheese mixture on each rectangle; top with red pepper and parsley. Fold long end of dough up over filling halfway to center; fold up again to enclose remaining filling. Cut each into 4 equal size squares. Place seam side down on cookie sheets. Sprinkle with remaining 1/4 cup parmesan cheese. Bake 350 for 13-15 minutes. Note: can substitute pepperoni for red pepper and parsley.

## Easy Apple Dumplings

Trice Smith, CPT in Benton County

2 large Granny Smith Apples cut in 8 pieces each  
2 tubes crescent rolls (16 rolls)  
1 cup sugar  
1 tbsp cinnamon  
1 stick butter  
1 can Mountain Dew

Roll each apple piece into a crescent roll and place single file in a 9x13 inch cake pan. Crumble the following three ingredients together and sprinkle over apples and crescent rolls in pan. Pour on can Mountain Dew Soda over all the crescent rolls. Bake at 375 for 35 minutes. Serve warm with ice cream. Enjoy!



*Under no circumstances should you exercise between now and New Year's. You can do that in January when you have nothing else to do. This is the time for long naps, which you'll need after circling the buffet table while carrying a 10-pound plate of food and that vat of eggnog.*



### **Brucheta Chicken**

Cynde Briggs, PT Mahaska County  
Member of the Membership Committee for District 9

- 4 Bonless skinless chicken breasts
- 1 box stovetop stuffing mix
- 1 can Italian Tomatoes
- 1 Pkg. Shredded co jack cheese
- 1 bottle Kraft Red Pepper Roasted Parmesan Dressing

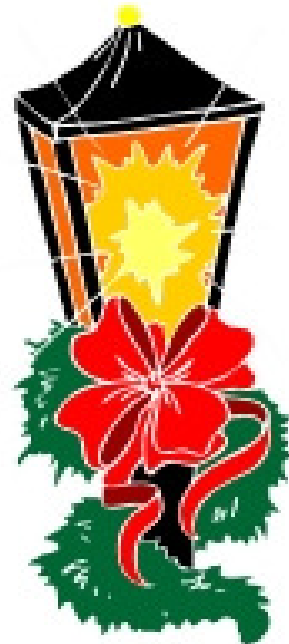
Wash and pound out chicken breasts and set aside.  
In mixing bowl, mix stuffing mix, tomatoes and cheese. Place mixture in chicken breast and roll up.  
Put in Pam coated baking dish. Pour bottle of dressing over chicken and bake at 350 for 45 min to 1 hr. In last 10 min. sprinkle with small of shredded cheese.

### **Hot Kielbasa Dip**

Paula Frazier, PT in Benton County

- 8 Ounces Cream Cheese, Softened
- 1/3 Cup Sour Cream
- 1/3 Cup Milk
- 1 tablespoon mayonnaise
- 8 ounces Smoked Kielbases, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup sliced green onions, maybe less
- 1/4 cup grated parmesan cheese

Combine all ingredients. Stir well Cook until heated through. I serve mine from a small crock pot. Serve with crackers or rye bread.



### **Olive Cheese Snacks**

Paulette Henkle, PT in Benton County

- 1- 5 oz. glass jar bacon cheese spread
- 4 T butter
- Dash of Tobasco or wor. Sauce
- Dash of A-1
- 3/4 cup sifted flour
- 1 small jar pimento olives 5oz. well drained

Blend cheese and butter until soft and fluffy. Add sauces and mix well. Form dough. Chill till set.  
Pinch off some dough. Flatten till it would wrap on olive. Cover olive and seal.  
Bake on ungreased cookie sheet at 400 for 12-15 minutes.

### **Wild Rice Dressing**

Kathy Boots, PT in Benton County

- 1 1/2 lbs. sausage, browned and drained
- 3 Cups Croutons
- 1 (^1/4oz.) pkg. Long grain wild rice(Uncle Ben's)
- 1 can cream of mushroom or celery soup
- 1 cup milk
- 1/2 cup chopped celery
- 1 Tbls. minced onion

Prepare Rice according to package directions. Mix all ingredients in crock pot and cook on low for 3 to 4 hours.



## Brownies

Carma Reiss, PT in Benton County  
Member of the Membership Committee for District 6

These brownies are more fudge-like than cake.

Melt 2 sticks margarine  
Mix together and add to the margarine  
7 T. Cocoa  
4 eggs  
2 Cups Sugar  
2 Cups Flour  
1 t. vanilla  
Walnuts (optional)  
Bake at 350 for 25 minutes in a 9X13 greased pan

Frosting for Brownies  
In a small sauce pan combine  
1 Cup sugar  
4 T milk  
4 T. Margarine  
Bring to a boil and boil 30 seconds.  
Remove from heat and add 1/2 cup Chocolate Chips.  
Beat with a spoon till thick and smooth. Enjoy



## Scholarship Auction!

One of the annual evening events at the National Convention is the Scholarship Auction. Each State is asked to bring an item to be used in either the live auction or the silent auction. The event is run by Herb Sorley, The National Scholarship/Awards/Emblem Chairperson. This year was again a huge success.

Below is the out come of the Auction and other income from the convention that went toward the scholarship fund.

Auction:	\$4,522.50
NASCOESTORE Commission received from year:	\$1,700.16
JM Marketing Donation:	<u>\$2,000.00</u>
Received:	\$8,222.66

Plus, the emblem table took in \$3,000.12 and NASCOE will receive some Commission from those sales as well.

Over all, per Herbs comment, the scholarship auction, emblem sales and donation from JM Marketing made this National Convention one of the best ever! Remember that through the emblem sales from thenascoestore.com we all gain and make it possible to do more for our scholarships! Keep up the good work and a BIG THANK YOU for all those who purchased items, donated items for the auction or have purchased items through thenascoestore.com.

Tammy Eibey, Delaware County  
(info from Tom Oasen, MWA Scholarship Chair and Herb Sorely, National Chair)

## **Membership Has Its Rewards!**

A new benefit has arrived for all IASCOE/NASCOE members and Associate Members.

**Alltel Cellular** phone service is offering the following discounts for our members:

- ✓ 15% monthly rate plan discount
- ✓ Waived activation fee
- ✓ New Motorola E815 flip phone only \$69.99 after mail in rebate
- ✓ Possible discounts on other accessories

Selected plans feature:

- ✓ Unlimited mobile-mobile minutes
- ✓ Unlimited night and weekend minutes
- ✓ Voice mail
- ✓ Caller ID
- ✓ Call waiting and more

This offer is good for any member or associate member of IASCOE/NASCOE on current Alltel Freedom plans of \$39.99 and higher. Available to new and renewing customers.

If you are on Alltel service customer or you are thinking of starting with Alltel and you are a member or associate member of NASCOE please contact Kathy White, State Benefit Chairperson, or your Area Benefits Chairperson, Dee Ann Lehn.

They will give you the contact information for you to receive you benefits through ALLTEL Cellular.

Working for the members for your benefits through

### **NASCOE Membership has its Benefits**

Becky Zirpel, NASCOE Benefits Chairperson



### **Subscribe To The IASCOE Newsletter**

To receive an email notification of new IASCOE Newsletters and web page updates, go to our web site at [www.iascoe.org](http://www.iascoe.org) and click on the subscription link.

This article was written by George Carlin. I thought it was pretty cool.

Submitted By Lisa Forburger – PT Kossuth County FSA

-----

*The paradox of our time in history is that we have taller buildings but shorter tempers, wider Freeways , but narrower viewpoints. We spend more, but have less, we buy more, but enjoy less. We have bigger houses and smaller families, more conveniences, but less time. We have more degrees but less sense, more knowledge, but less judgment, more experts, yet more problems, more medicine, but less wellness.*

*We drink too much, smoke too much, spend too recklessly, laugh too little, drive too fast, get too angry, stay up too late, get up too tired, read too little, watch TV too much, and pray too seldom.*

*We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values. We talk too much, love too seldom, and hate too often.*

*We've learned how to make a living, but not a life. We've added years to life not life to years. We've been all the way to the moon and back, but have trouble crossing the street to meet a new neighbor. We conquered outer space but not inner space. We've done larger things, but not better things.*

*We've cleaned up the air, but polluted the soul. We've conquered the atom, but not our prejudice. We write more, but learn less. We plan more, but accomplish less. We've learned to rush, but not to wait. We build more computers to hold more information, to produce more copies than ever, but we communicate less and less.*

*These are the times of fast foods and slow digestion, big men and small character, steep profits and shallow relationships. These are the days of two incomes but more divorce, fancier houses, but broken homes. These are days of quick trips, disposable diapers, throwaway morality, one night stands, overweight bodies, and pills that do everything from cheer, to quiet, to kill. It is a time when there is much in the showroom window and nothing in the stockroom. A time when technology can bring this letter to you, and a time when you can choose either to share this insight, or to just hit delete...*

*Remember; spend some time with your loved ones, because they are not going to be around forever.*

*Remember, say a kind word to someone who looks up to you in awe, because that little person soon will grow up and leave your side.*

*Remember, to give a warm hug to the one next to you, because that is the only treasure you can give with your heart and it doesn't cost a cent.*

*Remember, to say, "I love you" to your partner and your loved ones, but most of all mean it. A kiss and an embrace will mend hurt when it comes from deep inside of you.*

*Remember to hold hands and cherish the moment for someday that person will not be there again.*

*Give time to love, give time to speak! And give time to share the precious thoughts in your mind.*

**AND ALWAYS REMEMBER:**

*Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away.*

# **THE PERILS OF POLLY P.T.**

## **PART TWENTY**

*Written By Roseanne Woerner, CED Blackhawk County  
Created by Dee Lehn, CED Keokuk County*

Visit our website at  
[www.iascoe.org](http://www.iascoe.org) for the  
entire story of  
"The Perils of Polly PT"

Jonathan Craig farms about a million acres (kidding) and he keeps adding ground. So, I guess no one in the office finds it particularly startling when he saunters in to tell us about his latest acquisition. What does startle us is the way that Tessa Starr dive-bombs the counter so that she can wait on him. Allow me to regress.

Jonathan is a nice-looking man and he smells really great. He's also sort of conceited, which is why most of us prefer to admire him from afar. Might I add, that our standoffish attitude is pretty selfless and works for his protection. For instance, if he thought that we thought that he was a hunk, his already-big head might swell to such a gargantuan size, eventually, he would not make it through our standard size door. Lest we impede any future visits, we make every effort to vigorously yawn before we greet him.

Jonathan gives us all a nod as he struts his way back to Tessa's office. Never before has he experienced this sort of service from any of us due to the above-mentioned reasons and so he is literally preening. He slides into a chair across from Tessa's desk and then horror-of-horrors, Tessa closes the door. As soon as we hear them speak, we gather at Kadie Vaughn's desk to discuss this debacle. We take a poll and we all find Tessa's behavior especially troubling. But we can't talk to her about it until Jonathan leaves.

Kadie is our most courageous employee. So, when Tessa's laughter peals a bit too brightly, Kadie offhandedly moves in front of Tessa's window, so she can see what's going on. Luckily, her extra forms are in a nearby file that allows her a birds-eye view of Tessa's office. We all give Kadie a thumbs-up sign and just as her head slowly swivels toward Tessa's window, Tessa opens her door.

Tessa shakes Jonathan's hand. She tells him that she will see him tomorrow and as he swaggers toward the door, he turns his head and winks at us. "Bye girls," he says. We can't help ourselves. We all say good-bye in unison. Too bad he's got such a winning smile.

When Jonathan is out of earshot, Tessa gives us her 'let's get back to work' frown and I'm thinking that this is not the time to give her our best advice. She seemed buoyant for a few minutes there, but her increasing frown suggests a possible dip in mood. Further troubling is her comment as we move to our desks. She says, "Jonathan will be in at nine o'clock in the morning to see you Polly. He needs a recon but he didn't bring his deeds."

"Deeds," I say. "With an S?" Tessa doesn't respond.

I get to work early the next morning. I want to pull all of the maps for Jonathan's farms and run his 156EZ's.

"New perfume?" Kadie Vaughn asks when I pass her desk.

"No," I tell her. "This is the stuff I got for Christmas. It's been wasting away in my cabinet, so I decided that I might as well use it."

“Uh huh,” Kadie says and she chuckles a bit.

I walk into the map room where Darnel Finch is already busy with his compliance spot checks. He starts to say hi, but when he looks at me, he gets this startled expression and he says, “Wow. Big hair.”

“No it’s not,” I tell him as I pat the top of my hair down. “I just decided to curl it this morning. Sue me.”

“Yeah right,” he says. He’s chortling as I leave.

I walk into the break room, where Myra Stromberg is making coffee. I grab a can of Coke from the fridge and Myra laughs. “New outfit?” she asks.

“No,” I say. “This is that dress that I bought on clearance for twenty bucks last spring. I just haven’t worn it because it’s really a winter outfit.”

She can hardly control her giggles, which I find most exasperating. “Oh Polly,” she says and she wildly fans her face. “You always do the sweetest, dumbest things.”

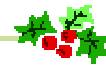
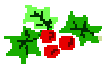
I’m kind of irritated. I smooch my hair a bit more and I say, “What’s with you guys? I always try to look nice. What does it matter if I happen to fix my hair a little and wear something new?”

“Nothing,” Myra says. “Well...normally nothing.” And then she lets out this giant guffaw.

“What!” I say, clearly exasperated now.

Myra puts her hands on my shoulders. “Now honey,” she says. “Don’t get upset. Jonathan is already here in Tessa’s office and Tessa is wearing that very same dress.”

TO BE CONTINUED...



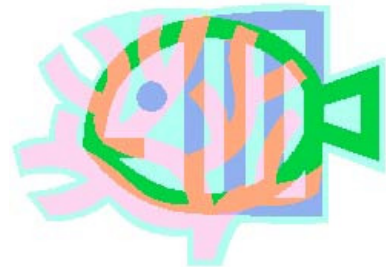
## The FISH! Philosophy

**Play!** It’s about having fun, enjoying your self, being spontaneous and creative. Life is too short to spend it frowning and FISH! Brings a smile to your face.

**Make Their Day!** It’s about doing something special for your customers and co-workers. When you make someone’s day, you have given a special gift they won’t soon forget. It feels good to give it.

**Be There!** It’s about being totally focused on the moment and on the person or task which you are engaged. When we are fully present with our customers and with each other, we are listening deeply and important opportunities do not escape us.

**Choose your Attitude!** It’s about accepting full responsibility for all of our choices, even our attitude at work. A positive attitude is a decision we make, moment to moment.



Submitted By Cathleen Borst - PT Carroll County



## Ovarian Cancer, The Silent Killer

By: Tammy Eibey, FLO Delaware County

1 ½ years ago my sister in law was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. The diagnosis came to a shock to her and our entire family. She didn't have any family history of any cancer nor did she know of any of the symptoms related to ovarian cancer. She had also not skipped her yearly exams and was only 3 weeks away from her next scheduled visit when she found out she had ovarian cancer. My sister in law was 54 at the time of the diagnosis.

My sister in law was told it was stage 3 and she had aggressive surgery then followed by 9 months of chemo and radiation treatments every 3 weeks. When she completed that round she was deemed cancer free and agreed to go on an experimental treatment for those just finishing her type of treatments. She was driving to Sioux Falls, South Dakota every 3 weeks for her experimental clinical trial. Unfortunately, in late August her blood counts revealed her blood counts had dropped and after extensive tests they found the cancer had returned. She is now set up for treatments once a week in Sioux Falls. This treatment is very rough and she is not feeling very well for 4 of the 7 days of the week,

I have been doing a lot of research on this horrible cancer and wanted to educate all of my friends and co workers. One thing I have found that the medical field considers this one of the SILENT KILLERS. The Mayo Clinic and several other medical centers, plus the Cancer Institute have a wide variety of information available on cancer issues. Hopefully you will take time to read this, especially the symptoms portion. Let's keep our fingers crossed that there will be a cure for this and all other cancers...

### Introduction

Women have two ovaries, one on each side of the uterus. The ovaries — each about the size of an almond — produce eggs (ova) as well as the female sex hormones estrogen and progesterone. Ovarian cancer is a disease in which normal ovarian cells begin to grow in an uncontrolled, abnormal manner and produce tumors in one or both ovaries.

According to the American Cancer Society, ovarian cancer ranks fifth in cancer deaths among women. It's estimated that about 20,000 women in the United States will develop ovarian cancer this year. About 15,000 deaths from ovarian cancer will occur in American women during that same time frame.

Your chances of surviving ovarian cancer are better if the cancer is found early. But because the disease is difficult to detect in its early stage, only about 20 percent of ovarian cancers are found before tumor growth has spread into adjacent tissues and organs beyond the ovaries. Most of the time, the disease has already advanced before it's diagnosed.

Until recently, doctors thought that early-stage ovarian cancer rarely produced any symptoms. But new evidence has shown that most women may have signs and symptoms even in the early stages of the disease. Being aware of them may lead to earlier detection.

### Signs and symptoms

Symptoms of ovarian cancer are nonspecific and mimic those of many other more common conditions, including digestive and bladder disorders. It isn't unusual for a woman with ovarian cancer to be diagnosed with another condition before finally learning she has cancer. The key seems to be persistent or worsening signs and symptoms. With most digestive disorders, symptoms tend to come and go, or they occur in certain situations or after eating certain foods. With ovarian cancer, there's typically little fluctuation — symptoms are constant and gradually worsen.

Recent studies have shown that women with ovarian cancer are more likely than are other women to consistently experience the following symptoms:

- Abdominal pressure, fullness, swelling or bloating
- Urinary urgency
- Pelvic discomfort or pain

Additional signs and symptoms that women with ovarian cancer may experience include:

- Persistent indigestion, gas or nausea
- Unexplained changes in bowel habits, including diarrhea or constipation
- Changes in bladder habits, including a frequent need to urinate
- Loss of appetite
- Unexplained weight loss or gain
- Increased abdominal girth or clothes fitting tighter around your waist
- Pain during intercourse (dyspareunia)
- A persistent lack of energy
- Low back pain

Doctors can usually diagnose ovarian cancer within three months of women first noticing symptoms, but sometimes it may take six months or longer before a diagnosis can be made.

### Causes

An ovarian tumor is a growth of abnormal cells that may be either noncancerous (benign) or cancerous (malignant). Although benign tumors are made up of abnormal cells, these cells don't spread to other body tissues (metastasize). Ovarian cancer cells metastasize in one of two ways. Most often, they spread directly to adjacent tissue or organs in the pelvis and abdomen. Rarely, they spread through your bloodstream or lymph channels to other parts of your body.

The causes of ovarian cancer remain unknown. Some researchers believe it has to do with the tissue-repair process that follows the monthly release of an egg through a tiny tear in an ovarian follicle (ovulation) during a woman's reproductive years. The formation and division of new cells at the rupture site may set up a situation in which genetic errors occur. Others propose that the increased hormone levels before and during ovulation may stimulate the growth of abnormal cells.

Three basic types of ovarian tumors exist, designated by where they form in the ovary. They include:

- **Epithelial tumors.** About 85 percent to 90 percent of ovarian cancers develop in the epithelium, the thin layer of tissue that covers the ovaries. This form of ovarian cancer generally occurs in postmenopausal women.
- **Germ cell tumors.** These tumors occur in the egg-producing cells of the ovary and generally occur in younger women.
- **Stromal tumors.** These tumors develop in the estrogen- and progesterone-producing tissue that holds the ovary together.

### Risk factors

Several factors may increase your risk of ovarian cancer. Having one or more of these risk factors doesn't mean that you're sure to develop ovarian cancer, but your risk may be higher than that of the average woman. These risk factors include:

- **Inherited gene mutations.** The most significant risk factor for ovarian cancer is having an inherited mutation in one of two genes called breast cancer gene 1 (BRCA1) and breast cancer gene 2 (BRCA2). These genes were originally identified in families with multiple cases of breast cancer, which is how they got their names, but they're also responsible for about 5 percent to 10 percent of ovarian cancers. You're at particularly high risk of carrying these types of mutations if you're of Ashkenazi Jewish descent. Another known genetic link involves an inherited syndrome called hereditary nonpolyposis colorectal cancer (HNPCC). Individuals in HNPCC families are at increased risk of cancers of the uterine lining (endometrium), colon, ovary, stomach and small intestine. Risk of ovarian cancer associated with HNPCC is lower than is that of ovarian cancer associated with BRCA mutations.
- **Family history.** Sometimes, ovarian cancer occurs in more than one family member but isn't the result of any known inherited gene alteration. Having a family history of ovarian cancer increases your risk of the disease, but not to the same degree as does having an inherited genetic defect. If you have one first-degree relative — a mother, daughter or sister — with ovarian cancer, your risk of developing the disease is 5 percent over your lifetime.
- **Age.** Ovarian cancer most often develops after menopause. Your risk of ovarian cancer increases with age through your late 70s. Although most cases of ovarian cancer are diagnosed in postmenopausal women, the disease also occurs in premenopausal women.

- **Childbearing status.** Women who have had at least one pregnancy appear to have a lower risk of developing ovarian cancer. Similarly, the use of oral contraceptives appears to offer some protection against ovarian cancer.
- **Infertility.** If you've had trouble conceiving, you may be at increased risk. Although the link is poorly understood, studies indicate that infertility increases the risk of ovarian cancer, even without use of fertility drugs. The risk appears to be highest for women with unexplained infertility and for women with infertility who never conceive. Research in this area is ongoing.
- **Ovarian cysts.** Cyst formation is a normal part of ovulation in premenopausal women. However, cysts that form after menopause have a greater chance of being cancerous. The likelihood of cancer increases with the size of the growth and with age.
- **Hormone replacement therapy (HRT).** Findings about the possible link between postmenopausal use of the hormones estrogen and progesterone and risk of ovarian cancer have been inconsistent. Some studies indicate a slightly increased risk of ovarian cancer in women taking estrogen after menopause, but other studies show no significant increase in risk. However, in a large study published in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute in October 2006, researchers report that women who haven't had a hysterectomy and who used menopausal hormone therapy for five or more years face a significantly increased risk of ovarian cancer.
- **Obesity in early adulthood.** Studies have suggested that women who are obese at age 18 are at increased risk of developing ovarian cancer before menopause. Obesity may also be linked to more aggressive ovarian cancers, which can result in a shorter time to disease relapse and a decrease in the overall survival rate.

### When to seek medical advice

See your doctor if you have persistent swelling, bloating, pressure or pain in your abdomen or pelvis. If you've already seen a doctor and received a diagnosis other than ovarian cancer, but you're not getting relief from the treatment, schedule a follow-up visit with your doctor or get a second opinion. Make sure that a pelvic exam is a part of your evaluation.

If you have a history of ovarian cancer in your family, strongly consider seeing a doctor trained to detect and care for ovarian cancer patients so that you can talk about screening and treatment options while you are disease-free.

If your primary care physician suspects you have ovarian cancer, he or she may refer you to a specialist in female reproductive cancers (gynecologic oncologist), or you may ask for a referral yourself. A gynecologic oncologist is an obstetrician and gynecologist (OB-GYN) who has additional training in the diagnosis and treatment of ovarian and other gynecologic cancers.

### Screening and diagnosis

Screening for a cancer means that you have no symptoms of the disease, and testing is done in an effort to find the

disease in a very early, curable stage. To be effective, screening tests must be able to reliably detect the presence of early-stage disease, yet not lead to an excess number of false-positive results — tests that suggest that cancer is present, when in fact there is no cancer. Effective screening tests are available for several common cancers, including: mammography for breast cancer, the Pap test for cervical cancer, colonoscopy for colon cancer, and the prostate-specific antigen test and rectal exam for prostate cancer.

But no standardized screening test exists to reliably detect ovarian cancer. Researchers haven't yet found a screening tool that's sensitive enough to detect ovarian cancer in its early stages and specific enough to distinguish ovarian cancer from other, noncancerous conditions. Doctors don't recommend routine screening for women at average risk of ovarian cancer.

For high-risk women, experts don't agree on exactly what to do for screening, when to do it or if it should even be done at all. If you're at high risk of ovarian cancer, you need to have a careful discussion with your doctor about the risks and benefits of undergoing screening tests. While you may wonder what harm could come from a screening test, know that these tests can lead to unnecessary operations or other procedures that have significant side effects. In one study of women at high risk of ovarian cancer, researchers discovered that use of screening tests led to 20 operations on women, only one of whom was found to have cancer — metastatic breast cancer, not ovarian cancer.

### Diagnosis

If your doctor suspects your symptoms suggest the presence of ovarian cancer, he or she may recommend one or more of the following tests:

- **Pelvic examination.** Your doctor examines your vagina, uterus, rectum and pelvis, including your ovaries, for masses or growths. If you've had your uterus removed (hysterectomy) but still have your ovaries, continue getting regular pelvic exams.
- **Ultrasound.** Ultrasound uses high-frequency sound waves to produce images of the inside of the body. Pelvic ultrasound provides a safe, noninvasive way to evaluate the size, shape and configuration of the ovaries. If a mass is found, however, ultrasound can't reliably differentiate a cancerous growth from one that's not cancerous. Ultrasound can also detect fluid in your abdominal cavity (ascites), a possible sign of ovarian cancer. Because ascites develops in many conditions other than ovarian cancer, however, its presence necessitates more testing.
- **CA 125 blood test.** CA 125 is a protein made by your body in response to many different conditions. Many women with ovarian cancer have abnormally high levels of CA 125 in their blood. However, a number of noncancerous conditions also cause elevated CA 125 levels, and many women with early-stage ovarian cancer have normal CA 125 levels. Because of this lack of specificity, the CA 125 test isn't used for routine screening in average-risk women and is of uncertain benefit in high-risk women.

Other diagnostic tests may include computerized tomography (CT) and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), which both provide detailed, cross-sectional images of the inside of your body. Your doctor also may order a chest

X-ray to determine if cancer has spread to the lungs or to the pleural space surrounding the lungs, where fluid can accumulate. If fluid is present, a needle may be inserted into the space to remove it. The fluid is then checked in the laboratory for cancer cells.

If these tests suggest ovarian cancer, you'll need an operation to confirm the diagnosis. In a surgical procedure called laparotomy, a gynecologic oncologist makes an incision in your abdomen and explores your abdominal cavity to determine whether cancer is present. The surgeon may collect samples of abdominal fluid and remove an ovary for examination by a pathologist.

In certain cases, a less invasive surgical procedure called laparoscopy may be used. Laparoscopy requires only a couple of small incisions, through which a lighted instrument is inserted, along with small tools used to perform the surgery. Laparoscopy may be used if a surgeon wants to remove a tissue mass to determine whether it's cancerous before proceeding with a more invasive operation.

If ovarian cancer is confirmed, the surgeon and pathologist identify the type of tumor and determine whether the cancer has spread. This will help determine the stage of the disease. The surgeon usually will then need to extend the incision so that he or she can perform a more extensive operation to remove as much cancer as possible. It's important that this type of surgery be performed by a doctor specifically trained to treat gynecologic cancers.

Before you have a diagnostic operation, talk with your doctor about what your treatment options will be if you turn out to have a noncancerous abnormality on your ovary. If you're near or past menopause, your doctor may recommend removing both of your ovaries to decrease your risk of ovarian cancer.

### Stages of ovarian cancer

Ovarian cancer is classified in stages I through IV, with stage I being the earliest and stage IV, the most advanced. Staging is determined at the time of surgical evaluation of the disease:

- **Stage I.** Ovarian cancer is confined to one or both ovaries.
- **Stage II.** Ovarian cancer has spread to other locations in the pelvis such as the uterus or fallopian tubes.
- **Stage III.** Ovarian cancer has spread to the lining of the abdomen (peritoneum) or to the lymph nodes within the abdomen. This is the most common stage of disease identified at the time of diagnosis.
- **Stage IV.** Ovarian cancer has spread to organs beyond the abdomen.

### Treatment

Treatment of ovarian cancer usually involves a combination of surgery and chemotherapy.



## Surgery

If you want to preserve the option to have children and if your tumor is discovered early, your surgeon may remove only the involved ovary and its fallopian tube. However, this situation is rare, and subsequent chemotherapy can cause infertility. But some women in these circumstances have gone on to successfully bear children after treatment.

The vast majority of women with ovarian cancer require a more extensive operation that includes removing both ovaries, fallopian tubes, and the uterus as well as nearby lymph nodes and a fold of fatty abdominal tissue known as the omentum, where ovarian cancer often spreads.

During this procedure, your surgeon also removes as much cancer as possible from your abdomen (surgical debulking). Ideally, less than a total of 1 cubic centimeter of tumor matter remains in your abdominal cavity after surgery (optimal debulking). This may involve removing part of your intestines.

In addition, your surgeon will take samples of tissue and fluid from your abdomen to examine for cancer cells. This evaluation is critical in identifying the stage of your disease and determining if you need additional therapy.

## Chemotherapy

After surgery, you'll most likely be treated with chemotherapy — drugs designed to kill any remaining cancer cells. The initial regimen for ovarian cancer includes the combination of carboplatin (Paraplatin) and paclitaxel (Taxol) injected into the bloodstream (intravenous administration). Extensive clinical trials prove that this combination is the most effective, though studies continue to look for ways to improve on it. The carboplatin-paclitaxel combination reduces tumor volume in about 80 percent of women with newly diagnosed ovarian cancer. Studies have also shown that the combination results in longer survival, compared with that of previously used chemotherapy drugs and combinations.

A more intensive regimen has recently been shown to improve survival in women with advanced ovarian cancer by combining standard intravenous chemotherapy with chemotherapy injected directly into the abdominal cavity through a catheter placed at the time of the initial operation. This intra-abdominal infusion exposes hard-to-reach cancer cells to higher levels of chemotherapy than can be reached intravenously.

This treatment typically involves six rounds of both intravenous and abdominal chemotherapy. Side effects — including abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting and infection — may leave many women unable to complete a full course of treatment or others to forego treatment entirely. But even an incomplete course of this treatment may help women live longer.

Other treatments being explored include new chemotherapy drugs, vaccines, gene therapy and immunotherapy, which boosts the body's own immune system to help combat cancer. The discovery of genes that are mutated in ovarian cancer also may lead to the development of drugs that specifically target the function of these genes.

## Prevention

Several factors appear to reduce the risk of ovarian cancer. They include:

- **Oral contraception (birth control pills).** Compared with women who've never used them, women who use oral contraceptives for three years or more reduce their risk of ovarian cancer by 30 percent to 50 percent.
- **Pregnancy and breast-feeding.** Having at least one child lowers your risk of developing ovarian cancer. Breast-feeding a child for a year or longer also may reduce your risk of ovarian cancer.
- **Tubal ligation or hysterectomy.** The Nurses' Health Study, which followed thousands of women for 20 years, found a substantial reduction in ovarian cancer risk in women who had had tubal ligations. The procedure also has been shown to reduce ovarian cancer risk among women with mutations in the BRCA1 gene. How the procedure reduces risk is uncertain. The Nurses' Health Study also indicated that having a hysterectomy may reduce ovarian cancer risk, but not by as much as does tubal ligation.

Women who are at very high risk of developing ovarian cancer may elect to have their ovaries removed as a means of preventing the disease. This surgery, known as prophylactic oophorectomy, is recommended primarily for women who've tested positive for a BRCA gene mutation or women who have a strong family history of breast and ovarian cancers, even if no genetic mutation has been identified.

Studies indicate that prophylactic oophorectomy lowers ovarian cancer risk by up to 95 percent, and reduces the risk of breast cancer by up to 50 percent, if the ovaries are removed before menopause. Prophylactic oophorectomy reduces, but doesn't completely eliminate, ovarian cancer risk. Because ovarian cancer usually develops in the thin lining of the abdominal cavity that covers the ovaries, women who have had their ovaries removed can still get a similar but less common form of cancer called primary peritoneal cancer.

In addition, prophylactic oophorectomy is controversial because it induces early menopause, which in itself may have a negative impact on your health, including an increased risk of osteoporosis, heart disease and other conditions. If you're considering having this procedure done, be sure to discuss the pros and cons with your doctor.

### Self-care

Eating well, managing stress and exercising are ways to promote your overall health and cope with any form of cancer.

#### **Eating well**

Good nutrition is especially important for people undergoing cancer treatment. But eating well can be difficult for a time if your treatment includes chemotherapy or radiation therapy. You may feel nauseated or lose your appetite, and foods may taste bland or unpleasant. You may find that the last thing you want to do is plan meals.

Even so, eating well during cancer treatment can help you maintain your stamina and your ability to cope with the side effects of treatments. Good nutrition may also help you prevent infections and remain more active.

Remember these strategies for eating well when you don't feel well:

- **Eat protein-rich foods.** Foods high in protein can help build and repair body tissues. Choices include eggs, yogurt, cottage cheese, peanut butter, poultry and fish. Kidney beans, chickpeas and black-eyed peas also are good sources of protein, especially when combined with rice, corn or bread.
- **Keep an open mind about the foods you might eat.** Something that is unappealing today might taste better to you next week.
- **When you do feel well, make the most of it.** Eat as many healthy foods as you can. Prepare meals that you can easily freeze and reheat. Also look for low-fat frozen dinners and other prepared foods.
- **Give meals a pleasant atmosphere.** Whenever possible, eat at a table set with attractive dishes and flowers.
- **Pack calories into the foods you eat.** For example, spread butter, jam or honey on bread. Sprinkle foods with chopped nuts.
- **Eat smaller amounts of food more frequently.** If you can't face the thought of a large meal, try eating small amounts of food more often. Keep fruits and vegetables handy for snacking.
- **Stay active.** Even if you don't feel well, try to stay physically active. A short walk or climbing the stairs can keep your muscles from deteriorating due to lack of use.

### Managing stress

Methods for reducing muscle tension can help you manage stress. One simple and powerful technique is to close your eyes and notice your breathing. Pay attention to each inhalation and exhalation. Your breathing will become slower and deeper, promoting relaxation. Another technique is to lie down, close your eyes and mentally scan your entire body for any points of tension.

In addition, activities that require repetitive movement, such as swimming, can produce a mental state similar to that achieved with meditation. The same is true of yoga and other stretching exercises.

Your doctor may have more specific suggestions about how to best care for yourself before, during and after treatment for ovarian cancer.

### Coping skills

A diagnosis of cancer can be extremely challenging. Even when a full recovery is likely, you may worry about a recurrence of the disease. But no matter what your concerns or prognosis, you're not alone. Here are some strategies and resources that may make dealing with cancer easier:

- **Know what to expect.** Find out everything you want to know about your cancer — such as type, stage, treatment options and side effects. The more you understand, the more active you can be in your own care. In addition to talking with your doctor, look for information at your local library and on Web sites affiliated with reputable organizations.
- **Be proactive.** Discuss with your doctor, family and those you rely on for support how you want to approach decision making. For instance, some women prefer to get all the information and make treatment-related decisions for themselves. Others would rather have another trusted person, such as a family member, friend, doctor or member of their health care team, take the lead in decision making. And some women blend these two approaches to find some middle ground. Use the decision-making approach that feels best for you.
- **Maintain a strong support system.** Strong relationships can play an important role in surviving cancer. Although friends and family can be your best allies, they may sometimes have trouble dealing with your illness. When this is the case, the concern and the understanding of a formal support group or other cancer survivors can be especially helpful. Although support groups aren't for everyone, they can be a good source of practical information. You may also find that you develop deep and lasting bonds with people who are going through the same things you are. Support groups for the families of cancer survivors also are available.
- **Set reasonable goals.** Having goals helps you feel in control and can give you a sense of purpose. But don't choose goals you can't possibly reach. You may not be able work a 50-hour week, for example, but you may be able to work at least half-time. In fact, many people find that continuing to work is helpful.
- **Take time for yourself.** Eating well, relaxing and getting enough rest can help combat the stress and fatigue of cancer. Also, cut back on time commitments and plan ahead for times when you may need more rest.
- **Look for a connection to something beyond yourself.** Having a strong faith or a sense of something greater than yourself helps many people cope with cancer.



Good Websites for information:

[www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/types/ovarian](http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/types/ovarian)

[www.ovariancancer.jhmi.edu](http://www.ovariancancer.jhmi.edu)

[www.cdc.gov/cancer/ovarian/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/ovarian/index.htm)

[www.4woman.gov/faq/ovarian.htm](http://www.4woman.gov/faq/ovarian.htm)

[www.ovariancancer.gog199.cancer.gov](http://www.ovariancancer.gog199.cancer.gov)

[www.ovariancancerawareness.org](http://www.ovariancancerawareness.org)

[www.lib.uiowa.edu/hardin/md/ovariancancer.html](http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/hardin/md/ovariancancer.html)

# IASCOE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM



**IASCOE** will again this year be offering scholarships to high school seniors, graduates or full time college students, up to the Bachelor Degree level. (Full time is a minimum of 12 credit hours) Eligibility requirements are a minimum of a “C” average (using the 4.0 system) in both junior and senior years of high school or as a college student. Also, the applicant must be a legal dependent of an **IASCOE** member, a member’s spouse, or even be an **IASCOE** member. The qualifying **IASCOE** member must be a county FSA employee with membership during the last five consecutive years or has been a member since becoming a permanent FSA county employee, including the current year. The **IASCOE** member who retires or transfers within the Agency during the Scholarship Year (September 1 to August 31) must have their entire **IASCOE** dues paid to the **IASCOE** Treasurer, regardless of dues withholding.

The student must use this award to defray expenses incidental to the student’s attendance at a four-year college, university, community college or commercial or trade school accredited by the Iowa Department of Education. **The awardee must satisfactorily complete at least one semester of schooling or return the award!!** All applicants will be evaluated on the basis of Ability, Incentive Assistance (desire/financial need) and Other Personal Characteristics. An individual may apply for an award more than once, but is not allowed to receive the State, Area or National Award more than once. If you are a past State winner, you may submit an application for Midwest Area (MWA) Judging. If you are applying only for the MWA judging, please send a note so that your application is properly forwarded.

**DON’T MISS OUT ON THIS OPPORTUNITY!!** Part of your annual dues goes directly to the **IASCOE** scholarship fund. If you or someone you know is an active member and will have a college bound student or has a student currently in college, take advantage of the **IASCOE** scholarship program.

Two chances...one application. In addition to an Iowa scholarship award, all applicants are automatically eligible for the MWA **IASCOE** scholarship award(s).

**All applications may be found at the **IASCOE** website [www.nascoe.org](http://www.nascoe.org). Click on “Scholarships” on the left and the next page has areas to select for printing off checklists and applications.** Applications can also be obtained by contacting Cindy Pistek, 2145 Maple Ave, Britt, IA 50423 or by calling 641-843-4573. **IASCOE scholarship applications are due January 31, 2007.** Once received by **IASCOE** they shall be forwarded for MWA judging in addition to **IASCOE** judging.