

IASCOE

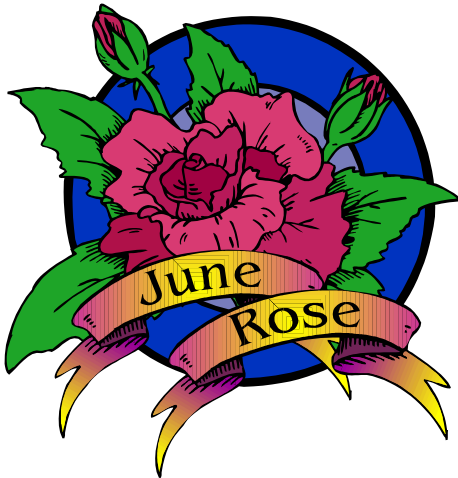
The Iowa Association Of FSA County Office Employees

June 2011

USA



Flag Day
June 14th



June 19th



2011/2012 IASCOE OFFICERS

President

Jeff Davis
CED Plymouth County



jeff.davis@ia.usda.gov

tigerhawk89@hotmail.com

Vice-President

Cindy Pistek
PT Hancock County



cindy.pistek@ia.usda.gov

Cindy.Pistek@gmail.com

Secretary/Treasurer

Judy Dameron
PT Louisa County



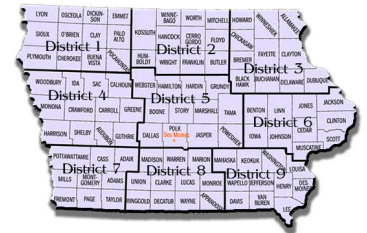
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jldameron@iowatelecom.net

2011-2012

IASCOE DIRECTORS & ALTERNATE DIRECTORS

DISTRICT NUMBER	PROGRAM ASSISTANT AND COUNTY	COUNTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND COUNTY
1 Director Alternate	Karen LaCour, Dickinson Nancy Heideman, Clay	Jeff Davis, Plymouth Larry Lago, Dickinson
2 Director Alternate	Cindy Pistek, Hancock Jeanine Diekhuis, Hancock	Tammy Pruin, Wright Barry TerHark, Cerro Gordo
3 Director Alternate	Karen McNeil, Winneshiek	Cindy Mensen, Clayton Kevin Keegan, Buchanan
4 Director Alternate	Brenda Albright, Audubon Mary Lageschulte, Ida	John Landgraf, Sac Heidi Nickol, Ida
5 Director Alternate	Chris Grieder, Polk Teresa Heck, Polk	Steve Kennedy, Jasper Lee Ann Davis, Boone
6 Director Alternate	Jessica Yuska, Scott Joni Birkhofer, Muscatine	Devalyn Wilson, Cedar Randy Madsen, Muscatine/Scott
7 Director Alternate	Sue Beemer, Taylor Judy Lundgren, Page	Cindy Bebout, Fremont Lynette Gruchow, East Pottawattamie
8 Director Alternate	Julie Derby, Marion Connie Bence, Madison	Kelly Cain, Madison Joyce Frost, Wayne
9 Director Alternate	Judy Dameron, Louisa Dawn Stewart, Henry	Dee Ann Lehn, Keokuk Gretchen McLain, Jefferson



COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2011-2012

LEGISLATIVE CHAIR – Dee Ann Lehn

BENEFITS CHAIR – Kelly Cain

<u>District</u>	<u>Member</u>	<u>County</u>
1	Rex Wittrock	Buena Vista
2	David Stromer	Kossuth
3	Karen McNeil	Winneshiek
4	Pat Warmbier	Harrison
5	Teresa Simonton	Poweshiek
6	Joni Birkhofer	Muscatine
7	Chris Irvin	Page
8	Kelly Cain	Madison
9	John Bartenhagen	Louisa

AWARDS CHAIR – John Landgraf

SCHOLARSHIP CHAIR – Tammy Pruin

1	Larry Lago	Dickinson
2	Jeanine Diekhuis	Hancock
3	Connie Straw	Chickasaw
4	Denise Dugan	Woodbury
5	Connie Safley	Dallas
6	Angie Reynolds	Muscatine
7	Phyllis Reineke	Taylor
8	David Wynn	Monroe
9	Carol Long	Mahaska

PUBLICITY CHAIR – Brenda Albright

1	Kelsey White	Emmet
2	Barry TerHark	Cerro Gordo
3	Rose Woerner	Black Hawk
4	Heather Muenchrath	Shelby
5	Kitty Benda	Marshall
6	Jessica Yuska	Scott
7	Carole Dawson	Taylor
8	Rhonda Cooper	Union
9	Anna Boecker	Van Buren

MEMBERSHIP CHAIR – Karen LaCour

1	Mark VonArb	O'Brien
2	Janine Schwarck	Mitchell
3	Sheri Rodman	Clayton
4	Cathleen "Skip" Borst	Carroll
5	Rodney Biensen	Story
6	Renee Schultz	Cedar
7	Dan Wells	Adair
8	Marla Morlan	Monroe
9	Cynde Briggs	Mahaska

PROGRAM CHAIR – Jessica Yuska

EMBLEMS CHAIR – Chris Grieder



2011 IASCOE Directors

Other Roles

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2011 Awards & Scholarship Committee



2011 Publicity Committee



2011 Membership Committee



2011 Legislative and Benefits Committee

PAST IASCOE PRESIDENTS

1959-61 Kenneth Hatcher
1961-62 Raymond D Vanderhorst
1962-63 Luther Stock
1963-64 William H Holiday
1964-65 Charles Bacon
1965-66 Gaylor A Thayer
1966-67 V. Deane Thornton
1967-68 Marguerite Liddle
1969-70 Warner C Walrath
1970-71 Janet Hemm
1971-72 Carl Lantz
1972-74 James A Riekens
1974-76 Cecil F Zollars
1977-79 Garnita Ewart
1979-80 John Ace Parker/Gary Brewer
1980-82 Gary Brewer
1982-84 Larry Niles

1984-86 Joe McLaughlin
1986-87 Pat Drew / Ronald Parker
1987-88 Mike Houston
1988-90 Ronald Reuvers
1990-92 Steve Abbas
1992-94 Kevin Fitzpatrick
1994-95 Jerry Frank
1995-97 Kevin McClure
1997-99 Jolene Fechter
1999-01 Trice Smith
2001-03 John Landgraf
2003-05 Tom Lane/Alan Donaldson
/John Landgraf
2005-07 Dee Lehn
2007-09 Steve Kennedy
2009-11 Cindy Mensen

2011 IASCOE Convention



John Whitaker, SED



Myron Stroup,
NASCOE President



Steve Kennedy receiving award



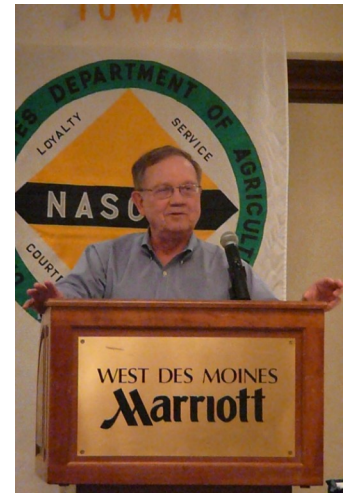
Joni Birkhofer and Judy Dameron,
Registration Table



Deb Krusemark, WDC
wouldn't miss Iowa Convention



Tom Abbas & Curt Houk,
Legislative Delegates



Jim Book,
Final time at the podium



J M Marketing talking about
our benefits



Tony Augustine
MWA Director



Scholarship Winner

Sheltered Reality - entertainment at Convention
They put a lot of us on the drums! Luckily, not all of us got caught on camera!!!



I won \$25 in the raffle drawing at convention and I would like to say "thank you" to IASCOE for the money. Would it be possible to put that in the next newsletter? Thank you.

Cheryl Anderson, Admin. PT
Buena Vista County FSA Office

A Message from our State Executive Director

We all have many things in our lives which we are proud of. Our family, our friends, our accomplishments and our country. I have all of the FSA employees in Iowa to be proud of as well. The manner in which all producers are welcomed with respect into our county offices. The way all of you work to help our producers with whatever concern they have about farm programs. Iowa's farmers and ranchers are truly blessed to be served by the FSA county office staff.



Working for the government over the past few months has posed some additional challenges. With continued budget uncertainties and heightened media criticism, it has not been easy to be a government employee. Despite the challenges and because of your selfless professionalism, you never skipped a beat in the delivery of federal farm programs to the farmers and ranchers of Iowa.

Will Rogers said, "The best way out of a difficulty is through it." Our employees moved through recent difficulties without complaint or cynicism. We elected to take the high road rather than let fear or negativity overcome pride and productivity.

Rest assured you are greatly appreciated. Thousands of producers nationwide rely on the services provided by FSA. They appreciate knowing each of you is a phone call (or an e-mail) away.

Like farming and ranching, civil service is not just a job. For most; it is a, "call to service" - In our case, service to agriculture - an industry that is one of the cornerstones on which this great country is built.

After this week is over, we will continue to work long and hard, but smart. More challenges lie ahead but together, I'm confident we will overcome those as well.

John Whitaker



Meet our new 2011-2012 IASCOE President



Hello Everyone,

I am writing from a new position since I talked to you last time. I was elected as President of IASCOE at the March meeting of the IASCOE Directors during the 2011 IASCOE Convention. I am surrounded on the board by a bunch of good people and I am very happy to be elected as the President.

Since I have become IASCOE President, we have almost had a government shutdown in early April and boy was that one eye opening process. We have been told, after six plus months already gone of the 2011 fiscal year, that we are going to have a budget that is about 4.5% less than the 2010 fiscal year. With the budget it seems that there are a number of other agencies that think they can do our job better than they think we can. To say it has been an exciting time in the last couple of months might just be an understatement. The truth is, this may just be the tip of the iceberg because I have heard a number of times that if you think that 2011 is a rollercoaster ride, wait for the ride in 2012.

I would like to ask everyone to be alert to all that is going on with our agency and IASCOE/NASCOE at this time of turmoil because of the budget. There are so many questions and it seems that there are not many answers. I promise to do my part and get the word out as much as possible. If you have questions about anything, please do not hesitate to give me a call.

There are a number of things that we **cannot** share by using a government computer. That is the reason that I am going to ask everyone to get their home email address to your IASCOE Director for your district. With things the way that they are right now, it would be great if we had a way to access everyone so they didn't have to depend on hearing the information we need to get out to our members. Sometimes there are very time sensitive issues that need to be met head on with maybe a day or two notice. Access to information is what I am trying my best to get implemented. It is easy to set up an email just for general information dealing with IASCOE/NASCOE or information that may need to be processed timely. The only thing that you would need to do is go to a general email supplier (such as hotmail or yahoo or some other email processor) and set up a new email account. They are free and reasonably easy to set up. The only thing you would have to do then is give the email address to your IASCOE Director and then check the email on a regular basis for updates. If we could get this done by every member of IASCOE we would have one great way to get the information out to everyone timely.

I do know that our NASCOE Executives are working very hard for you and me. They are putting in countless hours each and every day to keep us updated. We all need to stay together because there is strength in numbers. We all need to be on the same page as far as information or knowledge and I will do my best to let you know what is going on.

Stay tuned for more information.

Jeff Davis, IASCOE President

Introducing the 2011-2012 IASCOE Vice-President!

Greetings everyone! I hope you all are gearing up for a great summer; we definitely are ready for some warm weather. If you attended the IASCOE Convention in March I'm sure you had a great time. If you missed attending you missed some great informational speakers, making some new friends, saying good-bye to others and just enjoying the company of fellow FSA employees.

Each year the IASCOE Directors need to elect the officers for the next year. This year we said good-bye to Cindy Mensen as our president. Cindy did a great job as a leader of IASCOE and worked diligently for all members of the organization. Jeff Davis served as Vice-President working with Cindy as we met the challenges of the past two years. Sue Beemer, our Secretary-Treasurer, decided it was time to step down from her position and we will miss her expertise. These changes brought on the need for all new members of the Executive Board.



Jeff Davis was elected as our new IASCOE President and Judy Dameron stepped up to bring her own talents to the Secretary-Treasurer position. Finally, I was honored to be elected to the position of Vice-President for IASCOE! I have to say this was not without much thought and consideration prior to accepting the nomination. My fellow directors encouraged me and willingly offered their assistance as I take on these new responsibilities.

IASCOE responsibilities are not new to me. I was elected as a director in 2004 and was appointed as the scholarship chairman. I served in this position through the 2008 scholarship season. My responsibilities as a committee chairman were not yet complete; I was given the daunting task of Publicity Chairman. Tammy Eibey was my predecessor and mentor. Tammy's assistance was invaluable as I learned the challenges of publishing a quarterly newsletter for IASCOE. Thankfully, Anna Boecker agreed to work with me to create a publication not only informative, but enjoyable to read.

Life experiences are our best teachers. My husband and I have raised three children. Doug, our oldest child, works for Pella Corporation and lives in southern Iowa with his wife and teenage daughter. Kathleen lives in San Antonio, Texas working for Ryland Homes, Inc as a Marketing Director. Our youngest, Marie, will be starting her junior year at UNI this coming fall. We have farmed in Hancock County for 31 years and enjoy being active members of organizations within our community.

Of course as we all know budget will be our next "high hurdle". It will be critical that NASCOE remains vigilant in the quest to maintain FSA's involvement in the mission to provide services for our customer. A fellow employee (now since retired) always referred to the producers as "her farmers". When I first started working for the agency, I thought that comment was a little unusual. Twenty-five years later I can say that the people I serve are "my farmers". This agency truly is a "family" of people dedicated to Agriculture and the programs we provide.

As your newly elected Vice-President I am truly excited to serve my "family". I'm well aware of the challenges that lie ahead for us all. I'm grateful for all of the experiences I have had with my Church, family, IASCOE/NASCOE and community. This organization is strong and can work together to "get it done" as they say. I will do my very best to serve you all as Vice-President of this great organization as we face the challenges TOGETHER.

Cindy Pistek
IASCOE Vice-President

And here's the 2011-2012 IASCOE Secretary/Treasurer!



Have you ever gotten yourself into a situation where you had to stop and ask yourself, “What the heck just happened”? That’s exactly what I said to myself after the election of IASCOE officers at the Annual Convention on Friday morning March 25.

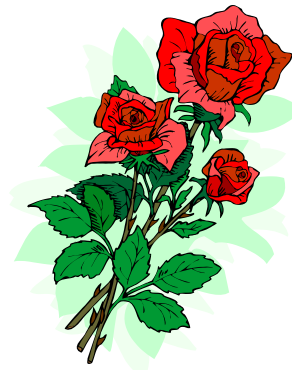
I had been pursued for months about running for Vice President and I respectively declined each and every time. Then Sue Beemer decided to step down from the Secretary/Treasurer position. We then were now looking for a Vice President and a Secretary/Treasurer. By the Friday morning March 25 director’s meeting, we had no one willing to step up and volunteer for either office. The meeting started and a nomination was made to elect Jeff Davis as President. Jeff was elected unanimously. We then took nominations for Vice President and no one came forward. Nominations for Secretary/Treasurer had the same outcome. Jeff was worried because he thought he was going to have to run the whole show by himself. We took a 10 minute break and everyone gathered in the hall to try and persuade someone to step up to the plate. Once the meeting reconvened, we ended up electing Cindy Pistek as our Vice President and me as the Secretary/Treasurer. What the heck just happened?!? After approximately two months of my official duties, I am thinking that Vice President might have been the easier way to go. However, I am thrilled to be representing our state as your Secretary/Treasurer. If there is anything at all that I can do for you, please do not hesitate to contact me. My e-mail address and phone numbers are located on the IASCOE website.

I have worked in the Louisa County FSA office for the past 27 years. I have been responsible for the program areas of Payment Limitation, Price Support, and FSFL. I am also the District Trainer for Price Support in the new District 5. I have been an IASCOE member since 1986 and a director for the last 8 years.

I have two daughters Kristy and Kelsey. Kristy is 24, married and she is the mother of my two adorable grandchildren, Braxton (4), and Emma (2). She has an Accounting degree from Iowa Wesleyan and works for Carl Nelson and Company in Burlington working in Accounts Payable. Kelsey is 20 and is attending Southeastern Community College in Burlington and hoping to transfer to Western Illinois to study Sports Management. I have lived in Wapello all my life and can’t imagine living anywhere else. My favorite past times include watching stock car racing, camping, dancing, and hanging out with family and friends. Of course my grandchildren are my number one past time.

I hope you all have a great summer and remember to make time for family and friends.

Judy Dameron, PT Louisa County
2011/2012 Secretary/Treasurer

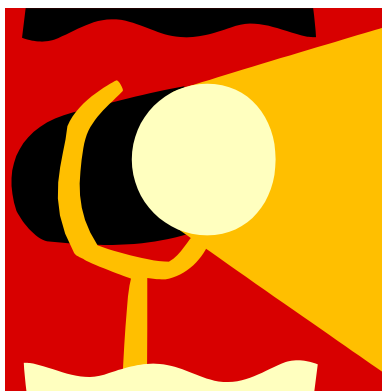


Also for the 2011-2012 IASCOE Season, we are pleased to welcome 2 New PT District Directors! Here's just a brief introduction and where you will find them:

Brief "spotlights"

My name is Julie Derby and I've been at Marion County as the CRP Program Technician for 14 months. I am a Marion county native and grew up on a diversified farm; we raised beef, hogs, and dairy farm. I met my husband at a Young Dairy Farmers meeting 30 years ago. We currently raise a small herd of Texas Longhorns.

Julie Derby
Marion County PT



My name is Brenda Albright and I've been at the Audubon County FSA office for almost 9 years. I have the Payment Limitation Program as well as the Livestock Disaster programs and other miscellaneous duties as they come up. I was on the State EEO/Civil Rights Committee as a representative for District 4 from 2007 – 2010, and also served on the USDA Joint EEO/Civil Rights for the 2010 year. My husband and I will celebrate our 26th anniversary this year and have 3 daughters ages 24, 16, and 13. I enjoy spending time with my family and being involved in all of their activities.

Brenda Albright
Audubon County PT

National Legislative Conference 2011

Submitted by
Dean Lines, Floyd County PT
Curt Houk, Poweshiek County CED
Tom Abbas, Hamilton County CED

On March 7-10, seven IASCOE members were part of this year's delegation at the 2011 National Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. For the three of us writing this article, it was our first time attending the National Legislative Conference. As we traveled from Iowa we thought about the employees and producers that we were going to represent. We were in for a huge task, but one we were ready to handle. All of us but Tammy Eibey had the same flights and we made it to D.C. without any troubles or delays. However, our shuttle ride to the hotel was a different story. The van was weaving in and out of traffic, slamming on the brake one second, and then pedal to the floor the next. Somehow we managed to get to the hotel unscathed and ready for an evening of relaxation and networking opportunities with fellow FSA employees from all over the nation.

On Tuesday, March 8th, the NASCOE 200+ delegates, in whom about half were new attendees, met to go over the position papers and learn how to make effective congressional visits. NASCOE leaders prepared the attendees and helped us to devise our plan. The message was pretty clear; "BUDGET" and our organization wants and needs to be assertive and instrumental in helping and educating Congress so that they can make sound decisions that impact our future. We also had the opportunity to listen to several great informational speakers. These included Robert Redding, NASCOE Legislative Consultant and Congressman Stephen Fincher, member of the House Ag Committee. Presentations were also made by MIDAS, NASCOE PAC, RASCOE, and NAFEC.

Congressional visits were made on Wednesday and appointments were set up to meet with all of Iowa's five Representatives and two Senators. We were able to meet with the majority of the congressman in person, and for the others we met with their aides. All visits were about 30 minutes long and everyone seemed interested in the issues we presented. The message was simple and an easy one for the congressmen and women to accept. All of them expressed that they are looking for ways to cut spending and we discussed some ideas regarding removing the duplication of services between agencies which would do that. FSA and its employees operate on the smallest margin and have a proven track record of providing services that can and are used by other USDA agencies. At the end of the day, we feel like our team accomplished our goals and informed our Nation's leaders of the effectiveness and importance of county offices.

After our day on the Hill, we had Wednesday night free and five of us decided to take a 3.5 hour bus tour of the city. We were able to see many of the major landmarks and monuments in D.C. and had 15-40 minutes at most to walk around and take pictures. Everyone really enjoyed the tour, especially those of us who had never been to D.C. before.

This was a great opportunity for us. One of the best ways that we have heard NASCOE described is, "From the outside looking in you can't understand it and from the inside looking out you can't explain it." We truly appreciate the opportunity to represent Iowa at the National Legislative Conference. The IASCOE leaders are looking to get more first-time delegates at future legislative conferences, so please let them know if you are interested. We encourage all employees to join their State Association, sign up for CAP-WIZ, and become a PAC contributor. For anyone who would like to read the position papers that we presented to the Representatives and Senators, they can be found on the NASCOE NOW from the NASCOE website. If anyone would like more information about the conference, feel free to contact us and we would be glad to answer any questions.



From L to R: Tom Abbas, Dean Lines, Greg Jobe, Curt Houk, Cindy Mensen, Trice Smith



IASCOE Membership is Vital to Your Job

We all know that becoming a member of IASCOE is elective and is a personal decision. This is still true to this day. If you have elected to not become an IASCOE member for whatever reason, I would just like to share with you that now, more than ever, with the very serious budget cuts that FSA is facing that your decision in becoming an IASCOE member could save your job and the job of your co-workers. If the dues may be a reason for not enrolling, please remember that there are many IASCOE benefits out there, from cell phone discounts to Sam's Club memberships, theme park tickets, and many more that easily cover the cost of the annual dues for IASCOE. You can choose to have your membership dues done through automatic payroll deduction for only a few dollars a pay period. For those that have been an IASCOE member I wish to thank you for your support, and hope you elect to continue your commitment to the IASCOE mission. Now let's go on to explore what is at stake for all FSA employees if we cannot get representatives on the ground in our State and Washington to fight for our jobs, benefits, and the services we provide.

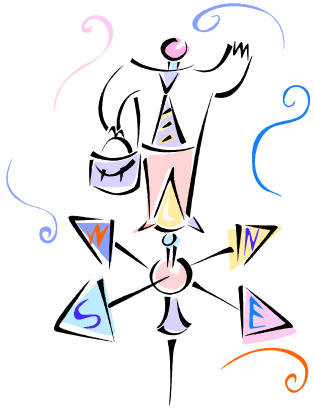
Have you been reading, discussing, and begun implementing any of the recent information on what cost saving measures that we are encouraged to undertake just in our local offices? I have, and it is frightening to know that many of these measures depreciate our standard of service to our customers and yet, are necessary to keep us employed. In reading some of the cost savings measures you could say to yourself, how are these going to help? These "currently" requested cost savings measures, at this point in time, are being implemented in part to help divert monies from those areas we are cutting back on to help pay our wages and benefits. How can we be expected to maintain our high sense of public service from FSA if we do not provide the most basic services to our customers and keep them coming through the door in order that we can be employed. Some may say, well in this age of our computer driven society we don't need to provide copies of documents to a producer and they should get online to do self service measures. This is self destructive to FSA's existence and we are nowhere near the level of customer's access nor proficiency in the computer world to go even consider this route at this time and not affect our customer's view of the services we have been providing and their need for our services if we cannot provide them how they want or need them. What will keep them coming through the door? What will then keep us on the job?

In summary if we are unable to get adequate representation out there to present our ideas, thoughts, views, and spread our words of the necessity of our agency's services that keeps us employed we will surely realize undesired results. Our IASCOE representation has not equaled that of other agencies for a long time and some of those agencies have not realized the cuts as severely because of their ability to represent their employees through their high numbers in membership. Our recent loss of two years of COLA's was in part due to our inability to effectively represent our need for funds, and there is a proposal to extend that COLA loss for another five years. What benefits or jobs are next? If FSA is unable to represent its ability to effectively and efficiently provide the programs and services we currently offer and lose them to other agencies it would prove to be disastrous to FSA.

I welcome all FSA employee's comments and suggestions, either positive or negative, regarding IASCOE membership so that we can research how we can enhance IASCOE membership to encourage enrollment. What will it take to bring IASCOE to 100% membership? I know we are a "can do" agency, so let's do it here in Iowa!

Sincerely,

Karen A. LaCour
IASCOE Membership Committee Chairperson
Email: cmego@evertek.net
Phone: 712-330-1347



Are You Prepared To Make Change Happen!!

Jessica Yuska, Iowa Programs Chair
jesshovie@hotmail.com or jessica.yuska@ia.usda.gov

Have you found your office subject to a COR review recently? Has the reviewer documented an improper payment because procedure dictates the program one way and practicality calls for a different approach? Well here is your chance – *make change happen* and submit a recommendation through NASCOE Programs committee to avoid future improper payments. The **NASCOE Program Efficiency Submission Form** has been included in this newsletter and is available on the NASCOE website. So get your recommendation ready to submit today!

Your suggestions do not have to go through me. I want to ensure Iowa's ideas reach NASCOE Programs Chair for consideration. I am all for improving the FSA environment and making our work lives a little less complicated. Here is a bit of help in order for you come up with a fantastic idea: Programs items may include difficulties you encounter in your daily activities that cause problems for you and/or our customers. I encourage you to provide a solution to make things easier, faster or perhaps to increase FSA customer satisfaction.

Earlier this month I received a copy of a Program Efficiency Submission from the Kansas Programs Chair, expressing a concern about 6-CP procedure on completing AD-1026 for Revocable Trusts. He was wondering if Iowa CORs had found similar errors with Revocable Trust's AD-1026? Across Kansas, county offices are being written up for listing the name of the Revocable Trust (using grantor's SSN) at the top of the form. Whereas procedure found in par. 401E, states the grantor and/or beneficiaries are to complete the AD-1026, not the Trust. Then when comes time to load data into Subsidiary, the grantor's 1026 information is under the SSN which FSA software lists as the Revocable Trust. So we are doing a form that does not match the software...and Kansas has shared their immediate concern through the NASCOE programs committee to *make change happen!*

I am excited to see Iowa's ideas through to success so please consider contacting me or submit the form on the NASCOE website to our MWA Programs Rep: rosemarie.gallagher@mi.usda.gov. We had an outstanding state response last year – let's improve upon it! Please let me know if you have any questions or need some help formulating your plan... I am after all here to *make change happen!!*

Enjoy your summer ;-D

Jessica

**NASCOE PROGRAM EFFICIENCY
Submission Form**

STATE _____ COUNTY _____ DATE _____

ISSUE *(i.e. program efficiency/area of concern and procedure reference if applicable):*

FACTS *(i.e. circumstances of the concern):*

SOLUTION *(i.e. your suggestion for correcting the inefficiency):*

Submitted By: _____ Phone: _____ ext: _____
(name and address) _____ Email: _____

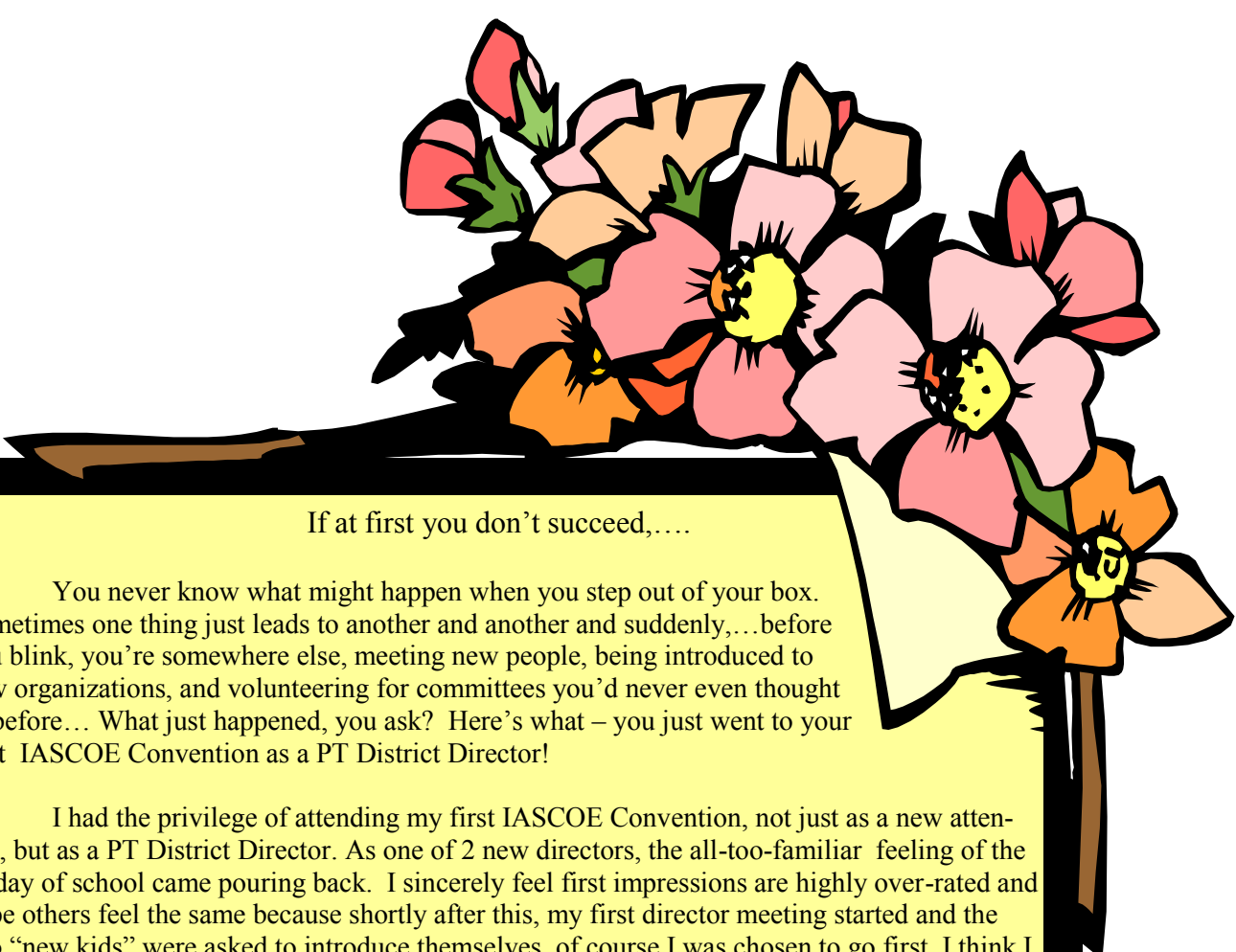
Items of concern may be submitted at anytime. Timing could be critical to program efficiency. It is not necessary to wait for negotiation/consultation time. These items will be acted on upon receipt.

Mail or email to your State Program Chair

(State Program Chair add comments and forward to Area Program Chair. Area Program Chair add comments and forward to Area Exec and National Program Chair)

State Program Chair comments: _____

Area Program Chair comments: _____



If at first you don't succeed,....

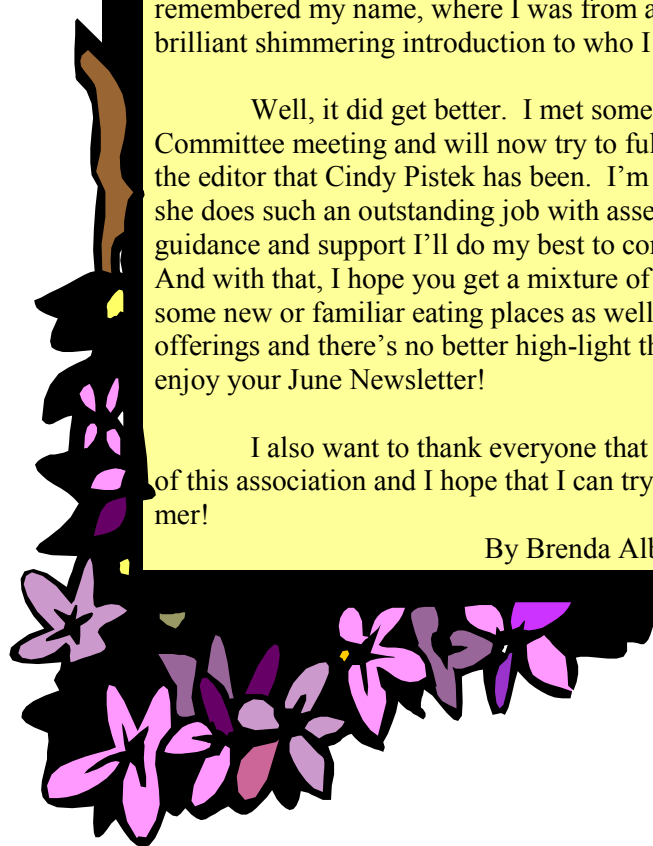
You never know what might happen when you step out of your box. Sometimes one thing just leads to another and another and suddenly,...before you blink, you're somewhere else, meeting new people, being introduced to new organizations, and volunteering for committees you'd never even thought of before... What just happened, you ask? Here's what – you just went to your first IASCOE Convention as a PT District Director!

I had the privilege of attending my first IASCOE Convention, not just as a new attendee, but as a PT District Director. As one of 2 new directors, the all-too-familiar feeling of the 1st day of school came pouring back. I sincerely feel first impressions are highly over-rated and hope others feel the same because shortly after this, my first director meeting started and the two “new kids” were asked to introduce themselves, of course I was chosen to go first. I think I remembered my name, where I was from and how long I've worked for FSA. Yes, that was my brilliant shimmering introduction to who I am.

Well, it did get better. I met some wonderful people, was a “guest” in the Publicity Committee meeting and will now try to fulfill the role of Chairperson. I only hope I can be half the editor that Cindy Pistek has been. I'm so thankful to have Anna Boecker to work with as she does such an outstanding job with assembling everything she's given! With their amazing guidance and support I'll do my best to contribute everything I can to the publicity committee. And with that, I hope you get a mixture of information, entertainment, and a fun glimpse into some new or familiar eating places as well as wineries and breweries! Iowa is creative in its offerings and there's no better high-light than food and drink. So, please sit back, relax, and enjoy your June Newsletter!

I also want to thank everyone that contributed to this newsletter. It's great to be a part of this association and I hope that I can try for a better second impression. Have a great summer!

By Brenda Albright, Publicity Chairperson



First Time a Charm

Hi, my name is Natalie Sugira, and I joined the Farm Service Agency in July 2010 through the COT program. This year I attended the IASCOE Convention for the first time. The invitation of joining an organization was not a new concept to me. I belong to a number of National and International organizations that do meaningful work. Contrary to IASCOE, the other organizations that I belong to, I volunteered to join them.

My IASCOE inviters were convincing and persuasive and difficult to turn away. One CED went as far as to say that joining IASCOE was the best thing that he/she ever did! There were also my fellow COTs who have been IASCOE members for a number of years and every now and then they would find an opportunity to blog about IASCOE. So, after listening to all sorts of arguments and why signing up to become an IASCOE member is beneficial, I made a decision to wait until I became a CED to join.

Then came the announcement about the Convention dates and place. It turned out it was the last weekend of the COT training. After talking to Steve Abbas whom I was training with at the time, I decided to ask for the last day of training off so I could attend the one and a half day event. Those who had been attending for years assured me that the convention is such a fun event that I should consider bringing a guest! I had been telling my husband about the STO staff, my trainers, and all the PTs I had met through the COT training and assured him that they all were going to be at the convention and that if nothing else, he would at least get to meet some of my colleagues.

We left Cedar Falls early enough to be in Des Moines before 10:00 am. While driving on I-35 South and I-20 West, I had so much anticipation! We pulled in the Marriot Hotel parking lot and it looked like people were getting into cars and leaving. I glanced around trying to find a familiar face but everyone was rushing to get to their cars as the wind was blowing behind. "Do you recognize anyone?" my husband asked. I looked at the hotel confirmation to make sure we were in the right place. As we walked towards the hotel main entrance I could see in the lobby and there were familiar faces.

The sessions I attended were informative. I did not know about membership benefits such as travel discounts, electronic device purchases and so on. It was obvious to me that the IASCOE organization works as a team similarly to the FSA. This was communicated through the presentation made by the group that went to DC earlier in the month to speak to our representatives. I did learn about the essence of communicating with our policy makers and how very important it is to the functionality of our agency. In the past I have gone to DC for lobbying and it was somewhat intimidating for a first timer. However, the presenters made the process sound much more manageable that I too could see myself going to DC again and speaking of the importance of the Farm Service Agency.

I also enjoyed the evening hospitalities – Fun and Relaxing! When you have such an event with people who have worked together for years, there must be time for conversation. I keep hearing people referring to the old days "we used to have such meeting", they would say. The IASCOE Convention was and should be the place to revisit and celebrate what has been accomplished throughout the year, to get together for the sake of old days, but also for newcomers like myself to learn about the good of the organization and to make new connections.

Submitted by Natalie Sugira
COT, Black Hawk County

WHAT IS A CALORIE?

Calories are the little things that get into your wardrobe
at night and sew your clothes tighter.
MY CLOSET IS INFESTED WITH THE LITTLE BUGS!



Weddings. A Fathers Point of View



PART 1

How does it all start? How do any of these events start? It is a plot! A plot to separate fathers from as much money as possible in the name of “love”. “Don’t you love me enough to want the best for me dad?” How many times have us fathers heard that one? Of course we love our daughters. They are the “apple of our eye”. The “ray of sunshine on a cloudy day”. The one who can melt our hearts with just a smile and a bat of their eye lashes.

But where does it say that love equates to dollars. The more love, the more dollars. Less dollars must mean less love? It is such a mystery to me. And there is not a handbook available to explain the whole process. You have to learn as you go. And by the second one, it all changes again. Let me tell you a little about where I am coming from.

My daughter and her “friend” have been dating for about 2 years now. I know it is serious, but I am holding out for as much time as possible before I have to deal with losing my first daughter. So it’s March, Valentine’s Day has passed and I figure I am out of the woods for a while when all of a sudden the “friend” pays me a visit. I give him the dark stare like “just try me”. But he is not scared. He has been warned about my bark being worse than my bite. And here comes the question. “You know your daughter and I have been dating for quite a while now and I really love her, and I was wondering if it was ok with you if I ask her to marry me?”

How does a father answer that? “Heck no, you aren’t good enough for my daughter. No one is good enough for my daughter”, or, “how are you going to support her? Can you provide for her in the way she is accustomed?” Sounds really old fashion, doesn’t it?

Accustomed? What is she accustomed to? She has been living in a college apartment for the last 3 years. How much could she be “accustomed” to? But I rule that response out and move on to the response that will get me in the least amount of trouble. “Well son, (he isn’t my son! Why do I say that?) the wife and I really like you, and think you have treated our daughter very nice. So we would be honored if you would ask our daughter to.....”

“To what” I think to myself? Where do I go from here? I can’t say “marry my daughter and have wild passionate sex?” but I know that is what he is thinking!!! Or, “marry her and let her support you the rest of your life?” or “marry my daughter and stay with her until she gets her inheritance and then divorce her and take half with you?”(How about half the debt I leave them?) Remember, fathers don’t think rationally at times like these, so to pause and collect my thoughts would be recommended. But that may be seen as a waiver of indecision and that would be bad too. What to do???

So, like most fathers, I do the smart, safe and typical thing. I look straight into his eyes; formulate the perfect speech; and say, “OK”.

And there you have it. I have just shown my future son-in-law my spectacular ability to articulate intelligently when presented with an awkward situation. I am done for!!!

Regardless, he has received the answer he was looking for. And what if I would have said no? Like he would have not asked her! Sure he would have!

So a couple weeks go by, and in the middle of a presentation in front of 35-40 peers, my cell vibrates. I quickly hit the button to stop it and continue like nothing happened. But now I wonder who it is? Is there a problem? What if there is an emergency? Should I look at it? I can’t. It would not be polite. Oh no, I am losing my train of thought. I am going to screw this up if I don’t focus. And I recover! Better end this so I can check my cell phone and see who that was. Oh no, it’s my daughter. This can’t be good. She never calls at this time of the night unless she needs something. Oh no. This is it. I just know it! So once I have left the meeting, I call her back just in case it is something else and also so I don’t look like I am avoiding her.

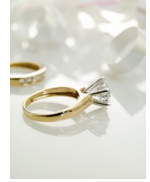
“Hi dad. Guess what? I am getting married!!!! Aren’t you excited??? And don’t worry, it’s not going to cost that much! I will keep it simple and reasonable”. All that without a breath. Already I’m terrified. All the important words have been said, and I haven’t even got a chance to say congratulations. “Married”. “Simple”. “Reasonable”. And “it’s not going to cost much”. What that really means to all us fathers is: “get the check book out cause your darling daughter is going to make this day perfect, regardless of the cost and you better get on board or there will be fireworks”. And it is not the fourth of July!

Let me back up a minute. This is not a total shock to me. I had been forewarned. Remember? Her...boyfriend; fiancé; guy she has been dating; I don’t even know what I am suppose to call him. Well, this guy asked me if he could marry my daughter. So I knew it was coming, but not the actual date. So as all dads do, I was hoping for a few “years” to prepare. Well, maybe it will be a long engagement! This will all work out. And I was right; they were looking at next spring.

(Continued on next page)

Perfect! I have a whole year to budget, save money, get prepared and get ahead of the train before it leaves the station. Maybe there is hope yet.

This is the same thinking a gambler has about “one more bet, and then I will quit”. I am just fooling myself. It is not going to make any difference whether it is one year or one month. In fact, one year just gives them more time to think about what else would be “just perfect” at the wedding reception. Face it; there is nothing that is going to keep this under control short of miracle or natural disaster.



A Fathers Point of View PART 2

So just like at the Olympics, let the games begin. Oh, did I say games? What, you don't think it is a game? Let me explain. If they want red silk roses, start with something really exotic. Add a few tears, and then make it look like you will “settle” for the red silk roses. And if it is steak they want for the meal? Well, start with Lobster, show dad the price and then sulk a little and say “okay, steak will be fine”. They get their way, dad feels like a schmuck and next time will cave even easier.

So a month goes by, then two, and suddenly, there is only 11 months till the wedding. We better get to work right away before it is too late!

First we need the dress. Let's visit 5 different shops and then go back to the first one and order the first dress I tried on. Okay? Here is where us dads make our first really “big” mistake. We quietly suggest, just as an idea, that maybe they could look on Craigslist for something. “BOOM” That was the explosive response I got. “There is no way I am going to wear a ‘used’ dress, dad!” “What are you thinking? Do you want your precious daughter wearing someone else's used dress?” “How could you possibly think something so ridiculous?”

They are right. What in the world was I thinking? I buy used cars, used tractors, used machinery, used clothes from garage sales and used furniture, but a used wedding dress that she is going to wear for a total of 16 hours? Really, what was I thinking? I must be smoking something or be sick or something.

Score; Daughter “one” and Dad “zero”. Round two coming up.

So the dress is taken care of. Bridesmaid dresses are not my problem. (one plus) and then there is the flower girl and ring bearer. Guess what, not having one. Excellent, two less mouths to feed at the reception! Oh oh, the receptions. Where is that going to be? Well there is the local dance hall and that is not too expensive. I could get someone to Bar-B-Q a hog and we can make it a party. PROBLEM.



“Dad, we want to get married in Des Moines. All our friends are here and it would be so much easier planning things from down here.” \$\$\$\$\$ Guess I could get someone to BBQ down in Des Moines. Ok, this will still be ok. I mean, how much can it be to rent a hall for a reception? This shows how much I know. What's wrong with this picture? HELLO! Des Moines may be in Iowa, but nothing about Des Moines says BBQ. Can we say “hotels” when we look for banquet rooms? Yes there are some other options out there, but you better not have more than 300 guests. Well why do we have more than 300 guests? I don't know! But there are, so hotels here we come.

Now I thought a-la-cart was only used when ordering food at a fancy restaurant. But guess what, it works on banquet rooms too. You start with the room it's self. (main course) then you choose the package you want. They ask, “do you want table cloths?” (potatoes) “Do you want seat covers?” (vegetables) “Do you want the head table with the lights and lace?” They call this tooling? (salad) “And what would you like us to do extra in the room?” (desert) Okay sir that will be \$2000 for the room, \$15 per table cloth, \$2.50 per chair cover, and \$250 for the head table and so on.

“If you would like a back drop, extra lighting, drop cords or anything to help you decorate, just let us know. We have everything you need.....for an additional fee. And don't worry about the food. We have 3 caterers to choose from.”

“But I was going to bring down my BBQ and serve that with all the fixings.” I explain.

“Not in our hotel you're not. Don't worry sir, we can serve several different meals and all for as little as \$20 per plate.” “\$20 per plate?” I ask. “Do we get to keep the plates?”

“Ha Ha sir. No you don't get to keep the plate. But we only charge an 18% gratuity fee on the entire bill. That is very reasonable” she says to me.

(Continued on next page)

“BOOM” second explosion and now it is close to the 4th of July but there were no fireworks involved.

After I got up off the floor and assured everyone that it was not a heart attack, we pulled out the calculator and started punching numbers. 15 minutes later, I was sure that they needed to go back to school to learn math. What they were performing was more like calculus and had no place in this negotiation. Needless to say, it was double what I was planning on everything. And we had not even talked about the “adult beverages” that I was going to need by this time on the day of the wedding.

“Well sir we have kegs available for only \$450 per keg. And however many you would like, we can have one on reserve just in case.” She politely explained.

“So these are like 35 gallon kegs right? Because I can get a 16 gallon keg from Kum N Go for about \$125 so these can’t be like those.” I explain insistently.

“No sir, these are the 16 gallon kegs and before you ask, no you don’t get to keep the keg too” she sarcastically replies. “This is really quite common sir”.

“Not in Garner, Iowa it is not” I rebuttle.

“But sir, you are not in Garner Iowa.” She explains with a placating smile.

That shut me down. Game, set and match!

Toto, you are not in Kansas anymore! And because of that, get the hell back to Kansas!!!

So, it was back to the farm with my tail between my legs. Boy had I been put in my place! And I got the feeling that she would love to put me back in my place should I ever venture out of my place again. (I might be misreading her, she was actually quite nice) So now I know that we are not having the wedding in our home town, we are not doing BBQ, we are not going to look on Craigslist for a dress and we are not going to find a good deal anywhere in Des Moines to plan a reasonable wedding. And at this rate, I am not sure I am going to survive until the wedding day.



Weddings. A Fathers Point of View PART 3

Well, winter comes, one of the worse we can remember, and everyone is tired, frustrated and oh yes, I turn “50”. Now I am not paranoid about age, but why do I have to turn 50 and also have my oldest daughter get married all in the same spring? And being a farmer, why would my daughter be getting married in spring anyway??? That is planting time!

But the magical day approaches and the snow has all melted in record time with no flooding or major complications and everyone is excited about the sun, the flowers coming up and the trees turning green. I am finally coming to grips with the fact that this is for real and my daughter is really going to get married in just a few days.

We have planned for over a year. Made sure everything was done, and double checked everything again. The day of the event is here. The morning was bright with sunshine. The air was crisp, but with the promise of warm 60’s to 70’s by afternoon. The ball-room was decorated, the guys were dressed and assembled at the church and the girls were still putting on their final touches on makeup and accessories. Mom is with daughter and keeping her calm, or upset depending on the topic being discussed. But where is dad? “Dad! Dad! Where are you dad?”

(Continued on next page)

Where is dad? Where would you be? Contemplating the meaning of life? Wondering how I am ever pay for this when the final bills start coming in? Maybe he is out having just one beer to calm his nerves? Maybe he is still trying to talk the caterer into dropping the 18% gratuity. No, actually, dad is over in one corner of the sanctuary, out of everyone's way, thinking about the first minute he laid eyes on his new little baby girl. Thinking about how she came out mad at the world and already so strong like she could take on the whole nursing staff if she did not get something to eat soon! And then how she quieted down and just stared at her dad holding her so delicately. She just stared at me with a puzzled look on her face like; "so you're the one that talked to me and sang to me the last 5 months I was in mom's tummy." I also remember the first time she asked a question that totally surprised me and made me pause and think, wow; she is a little person, not just a little kid. And of course I remembered the first time she came to me for advice, and then did the exact opposite, but at least she asked. I thought of how many times I had disciplined her, grounded her, got impatient with her or ignored her and wondered if she too remembered them and held them against me. I tried to remember how often I had taken time to play basketball, or softball or just read a book together. I did remember the replacement car we bought and at the same time thought about the terror of hearing she had been in an accident and the car was a total wreck. How had she walked away from that? I have shared with several people that it was because she had an angel watching out for her. Perhaps her angel was my brother who was killed in a car accident not ½ mile from the same spot as her accident. I thought of so many things. Her first date, first dance, first real boyfriend, her riding in the squad car with me so many times and being so interested in who we were going to arrest that night. And finally I reflected on the important things. Did I teach her how to take care of herself? How to make good decisions? How to be financially responsible? How never to let anyone tell her she can't do something if it is important to her. Did I ask her for her opinions enough or just bark out orders? Did I ever take her fishing? Did I teach her how to ride her bike or did her mom? And if mom did, what was I doing that was more important than her learning how to ride her bike? All these things migrated into my thoughts. Not in a particularly bad way like feeling guilty, but just concerned. But the biggest question that ever parent asks themselves at times like these, is does she know how much I love her? Did I tell her how much she means to me and how blessed I am to have her as a daughter? With the beginning of a tear leaking from the corner of my eye, I was interrupted in thought by a "where have you been?" coming from my son. "Mom is looking for you. You need to go see Gretchen."

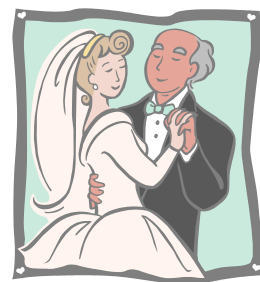
Jolted back to reality, a sudden pang of fear hit me wondering what she needed to see me for. She was not having second thoughts was she??? No way, she is so responsible, so solid. But could be wrong? As I hustled over to the elevator to take me down to her dressing room, I noticed my hand was shaking ever so slightly and I had a bead of sweat going down the back of my neck. As I stepped off the elevator, I was quickly stopped by several giggling girls (I did not think they giggled after the age 23) and told "just a minute!" As they hurried into the elevator, I waited and could hear my wife and daughter somewhere around the corner. Then I was told it was ok and to come into the room.

Words cannot describe the site of a dad's 1st born dressed in white, hair done up like a queen, smiling from ear to ear saying "what do you think dad?" To say my heart melted would be an understatement. All I could do was stand there and beam at how grown up my little girl was. How she had to be the most beautiful bride ever to grace this dressing room. I know I was bias, but every dad is. All I could say was "you look wonderful." And with a tear running down her cheek, and one running down mine, and my wife quickly following suit, we all hugged and enjoyed the moment.

As we headed upstairs, she regained her composure and was back in charge reminding me of my part of the ceremony. She is always the leader. And in a blink of an eye, it was over. I hadn't tripped or forgotten my only line. I had not blubbered or lost my cool. But now she was someone's wife. Yes, she was still my little girl, but not in the same way as before. It was not me who was going to be there for her when she needed air in her tire or to check her oil. She was truly a woman and now had a husband. One of the best in the world I was convinced, and now I was just another dad standing by and watching in awe of how such a miraculous thing could have happened. All thoughts of money gone and all worries of how the day was going to go were in the past. This is what was the most important.

So how does the story end? No, everything did not go perfect. The caterer shorted the food by 50 plates, so that was a disaster. The beer ran out at 8:00 pm, 4 kegs worth. So that was a disaster for the people who wanted to drink free the rest of the night. There were many things that were less than perfect. But the thing I remember the best, was the Father and the Bride first dance. And the one thing that I did get was my requested song. Butterfly Kisses. And of course we both cried.

Would I do anything different? Probably not. Do I regret anything? No. And am I as proud as I can be of my new son-in-law and my daughter? I couldn't be prouder. And now I get to use everything I have learned with my second daughter who will be married in December.



So what is my next "first time" adventure??? I am going to be a Grandpa in August. I am not sure I can handle all these life changes in such a short number of years. But I am looking forward to it; a lot!!!

By David Stromer

Summer and traveling - and places to eat!!

We asked for articles on local places to eat.

Food Memoirs of a Traveling COT
Pat Derdzinski

One benefit of being a COT is the cuisine experiences we encounter in numerous towns across Iowa. I must profess I am not a corresponding culinary expert as Guy Fieri (Diners, Drive-ins and Dives). But residing in a hotel for several weeks in one location will broaden anyone's search for gastronomic excellence.

As such, when stationed in Humboldt City, I was referred to a local, favorite food establishment in the Humboldt County seat of Dakota City. It is called Vinny's BBQ, located at 507 Main St., Dakota City, just south of Hwy 3 east of Humboldt City. The restaurant owner is Gary Vinsand, a former John Deere mechanic. Gary had a hobby of experimenting with ribs and sauces and had entered numerous contests. His love of BBQ eventually led to opening Vinny's BBQ. The restaurant serves lunch and supper every day.

But if you ever travel through Dakota City (right next to Humboldt City), on a Thursday, you cannot miss their Thursday rib tip special. You can order your choice of sauces which includes a hot BBQ sauce and of course, their own house special. Portions are ample and the prices are very reasonable.

Vinny's BBQ also gained notoriety for cooking the Guinness world record pork burger. The patty was 42 inches across by 10 inches deep and used 240 lbs. of pork. So the next time you're looking for a small town favorite, I highly recommend Vinny's BBQ. Contact information: Vinny's BBQ, PO Box 118, 507 Main St, Dakota City, IA 50529 (515)-332-2046

Little Chicago Pizza and Gyros - location 11 2nd St, Mason City - I have only had the pizza. It is a thin crust pizza that is out of this world. If you are in a hurry or are seeking a nice "atmosphere" it probably isn't the place to go, but excellent pizza. We usually do the carry out.

Pastime Gardens - location 404 S Madison Ave, Mason City - Excellent Mexican food. The building is extremely tiny, and the hours it is open are limited, but the food is excellent. I think they are only open Tuesday and Thursday during the evening and only during the day on Saturday.

Bill's Bar-B-Q - location 215 S Madison Ave, Mason City - Only one selection either with the dinner or without, but very good if you like BBQ.

Sum Hing Chinese Restaurant - location 247 N Clark St, Forest City - excellent Chinese food. If I can find a reason to go to Forest City we will typically eat here.

The Hungry Mind - 16 S Commercial Alley, Mason City - I usually get the gourmet burgers. The restaurant really brings back good times from my youth more than anything. Very good gourmet burgers.

Barry G. TerHark, CED, Cerro Gordo County

Some Favorite Iowa Hot-Spots!

My favorite place to eat is called Bonaparte Retreat - located in Bonaparte, in Van Buren County. The building itself is unique - an old mill turned into a restaurant. Lots of old items on display throughout the building and it is located on the bank of the Des Moines River. They serve everything from sandwiches to steaks. They hand cut their own steaks and are absolutely the best I have eaten anywhere! Go hungry - they serve large portions!

Anna Boecker, COT



I would like to submit Duck's Bar and Grill on Main Street in Aredale. He serves on Friday and Saturday BBQ Ribs that are the best I have ever had, also good fish and chicken. He makes the ribs himself by grilling then slow cooking in the oven. For \$7.95 you get coleslaw (also the best), baked beans, potato choice, a roll, and your choice of meat. For \$2.00 more you can make it all you can eat but I always have a hard time eating what you get for \$7.95. It is really clean, always has great service, and they do take out. They often times have entertainment on the weekends. Don has a huge fenced in beer garden with outside bar and entertainment. This area has a beautiful corner water feature, horseshoe pits, a place for a bonfire, and he hosts a popular bean bag tournament during the summer.

Vicki Heeren-Franklin County



Northwestern Steakhouse, 304 16th Street NW, Mason City, Iowa 50401. 641-423-5075. Check out their menu at www.northwesternsteakhouse.com

"If you have ever longed for the perfect steak, you don't have to go to Kansas City to find one. Just look to the north side of Mason City.

Established in 1920, the Northwestern Steakhouse sits on the very most northern edge of Mason City nuzzled between the baseball fields where many citizens of Mason City spend their summers playing ball."

The atmosphere is one where the walls are adorned with black and white posters of Marilyn Monroe, Charlie Chaplin, and John Wayne.

With a menu touting the finest beef in the Midwest and prepared Greek style with a top secret recipe in olive oil, you can choose from steaks Porterhouse, New York Cut, Rib Eye, Sirloin, and their famous Fillet. Whatever your preferred cut of meat, each butter-knife, piping hot, tender bite of steak will melt in your mouth. Meals are served with your choice of baked potato, fries, rice smothered in butter, olive oil and Greek seasonings, or spaghetti, made the same as the rice, with bread and a salad.

You are welcome at Northwestern Steakhouse no matter your attire. We have gone here on a date and also as a family sweaty and dirty right after a baseball game. Either way we did not feel out of place. Do however plan to spend at least \$20 a person to enjoy this dining experience (it is well worth the price). And if you do check it out, give us a call; we'd love to join you!

Joni TerHark

Check These Out!

Hometown Pizza and Pub

If you are driving along I-35 in North central Iowa and are feeling really hungry, get off I-35 at the Highway 3 exit, bypass Dudley's Texaco, and head east about 1 mile and then turn south to Coulter. Coulter is about ½ mile south of Highway 3. You will not have any trouble finding the Hometown Pizza and Pub right on main street. There will probably be a bunch of pickups sitting out front. You don't have to get dressed up, blue jeans and a sweat shirt will blend right in.

My personal beverage preference is a Busch light in a frosted glass. I would have to say this might be the coldest beer on tap I have ever had. Other beverages are available. The house specialty is pizza but they do serve other eats. My wife and I enjoy the Kathy's special which consists of a number of pizza fixings. They have a number of other pizza combinations which are mighty tasty. If you are bringing a larger group, the Pub also has a party room.

If you are looking for a fancy, get dressed up type of place, with fancy linens and such, don't venture to Coulter. If you want to drink some good cold beer, have a great pizza, and relax and enjoy yourself, Kathy and George Minor have the place you are looking for at the Hometown Pizza and Pub in Coulter.

Submitted by Steve Abbas



PM Park is one of the only two eating establishments left on Clear Lake's shoreline in north central Iowa. It is a restaurant along with a small summer retreat located off South Shore Drive next to Clear Lake Boats. It is one of our favorite places go on our motorcycle.

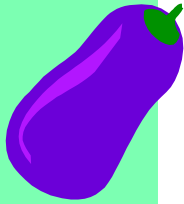
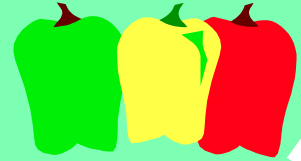
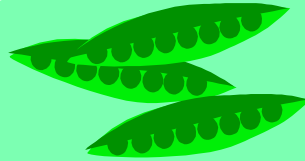
The restaurant is a step back in time. The front dining rooms overlooks the lake while the main dining room is one large room with a laid back casual summer atmosphere. Every wall has pictures featuring the history of Clear Lake and PM Park. The second floor of the building is used as a party room for wedding receptions or reunions. There are also tables for outside seating to enjoy summer by the lake. A lakeside Tiki Bar has been added serving beverages until midnight and on special occasions live music. Wedding celebrations are common every weekend there as a gazebo built on the large lawn is a perfect setting for a summer outdoor wedding.

The PM in the name stands for Patriarchs Militant. In the 18th century, this was the name given to the people left behind when war broke out to take care of the children, orphans, women, and elderly. They are a uniformed branch of the Independent order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F.). In the 19th century, orphanages were common so they set up 'PM Parks' to take care of the widows and orphans. At one point in time, every state in America had one or more PM Park. The Clear Lake PM Park is one of the few left. It was established in 1914 and still to this day it is owned by the Patriarchs Militant. They lease the facilities to Rahn and Cris Brager to run the restaurant and lodging facilities. At least once a year, the Patriarchs Militant make their way to the park for a week at a time holding meetings, ceremonies and various events usually in July.

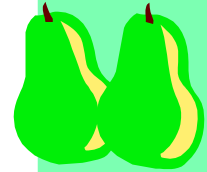
The main building that was once used for a gathering place for eating and entertainment for the children's camp is being used as the restaurant. The second original building that was once the dormitory is still being used for lodging. The rooms have been modified and somewhat updated to accommodate individuals not just a group of children. There are also short term apartments available just up the road as well as a cottage for summer rental to enjoy the summer lake vacation experience.

PM Park is open from mid May to mid September seven days a week for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Sunday morning features a brunch or you can order off the menu but you won't go away hungry or disappointed. Watch for two large bluish-purple buildings as you cruise Clear Lake whether it is by boat, car or motorcycle and stop in for some food, drink, and relaxation. Check out some great pictures on Facebook under Clear Lake Tiki Bar.

Submitted by Jeanine Diekhuis, Hancock Cty



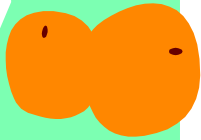
How To Plant Your Garden



FOR THE GARDEN OF YOUR DAILY LIVING,

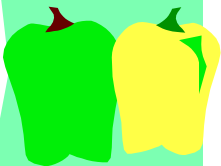
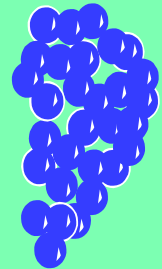
PLANT THREE ROWS OF PEAS :

1. Peace of mind
2. Peace of heart
3. Peace of soul



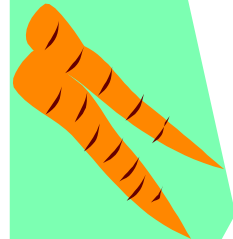
PLANT FOUR ROWS OF SQUASH:

1. Squash gossip
2. Squash indifference
3. Squash grumbling
4. Squash selfishness



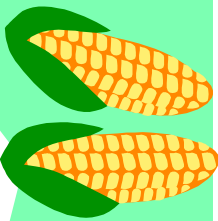
PLANT FOUR ROWS OF LETTUCE:

1. Lettuce be faithful
2. Lettuce be kind
3. Lettuce be patient
4. Lettuce really love one another



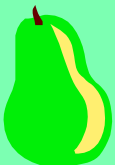
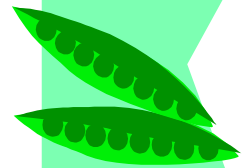
NO GARDEN IS WITHOUT TURNIPS:

1. Turnip for meetings
2. Turnip for service
3. Turnip to help one another



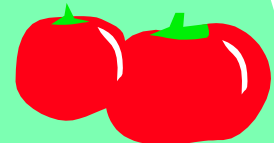
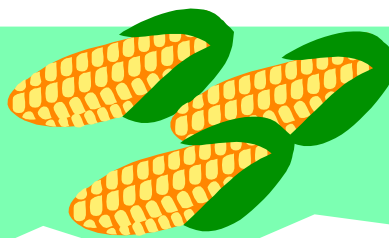
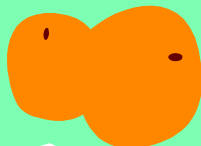
TO CONCLUDE OUR GARDEN WE MUST HAVE THYME:

1. Thyme for each other
2. Thyme for family
3. Thyme for friends



WATER FREELY WITH PATIENCE AND CULTIVATE WITH LOVE.

THERE IS MUCH FRUIT IN YOUR GARDEN
BECAUSE YOU REAP WHAT YOU SOW.



Local places for wine and Beer



Bel-Aire Estates is a small winery in North Iowa that focuses on selling quality wines made from local produce. Located two miles west of St. Ansgar, Iowa, just off Highway 105, the owners, Steve and Lorraine Beland moved to the area in 1992, planted an orchard over the next three years and the vineyard in 2001. The company was started with co-owner Adam Strouf and awarded its winery license in 2006. They produced their first bottle of wine for sale in the spring of 2007.

They currently have 350 apple trees and an acre of grapes. They pick all of their grapes and apples, ferment and bottle everything on site. With over 3 acres of fruit grown on site, the vintners at the winery have created multiple varietals to suit a wide variety of palates. Currently available are 4 grape wines ranging from dry to sweet, 4 apple wines, rhubarb and watermelon. The wine is sold locally and also at both Mason City Hy-Vee stores. They also have jams, jellies, and apple butter which are sold on site. An apple fest is hosted each fall.

They invite you to stop by any time during winery hours to taste their wine as well as pet their three signature donkeys. Current hours are Tuesday through Friday from 2 pm to 8 pm and weekends 12 pm to 8 pm. Many people also enjoy their 4 fainting goats (two of them twins born on April 6th) and two pot bellied pigs plus two dogs and three cats. During warm weather months they are also open late for viewing of their popular outdoor movies. You can check them out at their web site at belairewinery.com. Find them elsewhere on the web at Facebook and Twitter. If interested in a tour of the winery, they are also open by appointment. Contact numbers are located in the [Find Us](#) section at their web site.

On a personal note, I enjoy their sweeter, less dry wines and very much enjoy the names they use for their wines.

By Kim Svejda

The Corning Winery is conveniently located on the corner of Highway 34 and Highway 148 so would be easy to stop by and take a tour. The establishment is owned and operated by Ron and Barb Corey of Corning and features an assortment of award winning wines they produce from their own vineyards.

Currently, they are working on a floating 'tasting room', a bigger gift shop and adding menu items to be served. Definitely worth a look - stop by and take a tour and a taste!

By Rhonda Cooper, CES in Union and Adams



Eagle City Winery

Looking for something to do? Want to see some picturesque scenery in Iowa? How about taste testing some wine made in Iowa?

Nestled in the Iowa river Greenbelt area between Iowa Falls and Ackley in NE Hardin County is the Eagle City Winery. Eagle City was the first settlement in Hardin County on the banks of the Iowa River. Settled in 1850 by Jacob Kidwiler, a mill was built and early settlers would have grain ground at the mill. By 1883, Eagle City consisted of one store, one blacksmith shop, one gristmill, six houses and a post office. Eagle City vanished over time.

In 1991, Dr Ken Groninga and his wife, Carolyn, purchased an acreage on the site of Eagle City. Dr Ken practiced veterinary medicine for over 30 years, primarily in NW Iowa. Dr Ken originally grew up in the Ackley area and wanted to return to his roots. There are a lot of various wild fruits and berries in the area so Dr Ken started experimenting with wine making using the fruits and berries around their acreage. He started entering wine competitions and even had the Best of Show for a non-grape wine at the 1998 Iowa State Fair. Ken enjoyed making wine and he and Carolyn decided they would try opening a small winery on their acreage. They both thought that is something they could enjoy in their retirement. They started a small vineyard and constructed a winery. They started selling their wine, both retail and wholesale, in late 2000.

The winery is open 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM daily except Mondays. They are also open from 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM on Sundays. Each Spring and Fall they have an open house which attracts a large number of people over a Saturday and Sunday weekend. The Spring Open House this year is slated for June 4 and 5. The open house runs from 1:00 PM to 5:00 pm each of the two days. This is the opportunity for guests to sample the great wines that Dr Ken makes. The open house also features Hors d'Oeuvres, a live band, and even donkey cart rides.

Currently, Dr. Ken makes 17 different wines. They include: Eagle City Red, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Riesling, Riesling Reserve, Cranberry, Rhubarb, Red Altar, Apple, Concord, American Golden Riesling, Raspberry, Edelweiss, Ruby, Black Currant, and Sweet Riesling. Dr Ken has told me that Rhubarb is his best selling wine. Personally, I love the newest addition which is Black Currant. He has everything from dry red's to very sweet desert wines. If you venture to the winery, you will find the scenery in the area to beautiful. However, the roads wind all over. Ask me, I have been lost on several occasions in this area. Dr Ken has provided GPS coordinates on his website. The coordinates are N 42 degrees, 28.191 and W 093 degrees, 08.908. There is also a map on the website. The website is <http://eaglecitywinery.com>.

Submitted by Steve Abbas

Northwest Iowa or Napa Valley California??

Ok, now I will admit, after this winter there is a big difference between California and northwest Iowa, but when spring finally comes around a fun afternoon can be spent at a locally winery just 1 ½ miles north of the small town of Superior in Northwest Iowa. They opened the doors in May 2003 and their wine is now a staple in Iowa.

Little Swan Lake Winery is family owned and operated and features a tasting room, a remodeled 1920's barn, 18 different wines all produced on site, a selection of cheeses and buffalo meat from their own herd which roams nearby. Their vineyard consists of two acres of northern cold hardy grapes. Every Sunday they have special entertainment and feature a local artist. If you are ever in Northwest Iowa it is worth a trip to the Little Swan Lake Winery to spend an hour or even an entire afternoon. You will be pleasantly surprised what can be found in a small town.

Submitted by Kelsey White

TEMPLETON RYE

Templeton, Iowa

By: Donita Kenkel, PT, Shelby County

I walked into a quaint new liquor shop on the corner of Main Street in Dunlap. They were having an open house to celebrate their beginning business. As I walked through sampling the “goods” my eyes focused on a bottle of something I had only heard of but was never able to get my hands on. In fact, my husband had been on a waiting list for months now for “the good stuff”. I was in shock as I stood there staring at the bottle in front of me... Templeton Rye. I lunged at it grabbing the last bottle off the shelf. The ladies with me laughed as they saw me weed through the crowd to get it. “What’s so special about this stuff”, one of them asked? It’s Templeton Rye! I said. “So”, one of them said. “You don’t get it, this stuff is rare! Many are on waiting lists to get one bottle! My husband will fall in love with me all over again if I get this for him,” I said.

I brought it home and he was indeed in shock that I had found this bottle of “The Good Stuff” that he had been on a waiting list to get.

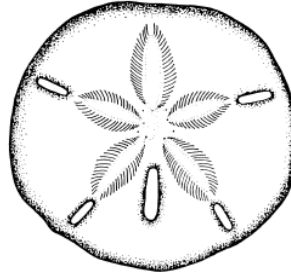
I did some research on this coveted bottle of whiskey and found that it has quite an interesting history. Templeton Rye is so named for the town it was created in. Templeton is a small little town in western Iowa that was struggling with the rest of the country during World War I. In 1920 bootlegging began to appear in Templeton and this whiskey was on the top of the list. It was created from corn in the early days but later the famous rye whiskey was commonly produced. It has even been noted to be a favorite of Al Capone’s!

This whiskey is much too strong for my taste, even with adding Diet Coke, but my husband loves its smooth quality! You’re even able to take tours through The Templeton Rye Distillery which is located at 209 East 3rd Street in Templeton, Iowa. You’ll want to call for reservations to find a time in which they do their tours or check out their website at Templetonrye.com. We are planning a tour with some of our friends this summer and can’t wait!



2011 NASCOE CONVENTION

SEA, SUN AND SO MUCH FUN!!!!



CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS
AUGUST 11-13, 2011

THE ***2011 NASCOE CONVENTION*** WILL BE HELD AT
THE OMNI HOTEL IN CORPUS CHRISTI!!!
DON'T LET THIS OPPORTUNITY PASS YOU BY!
MAKE YOUR PLANS TODAY!

***VISIT THE OMNI HOTEL
ONLINE!***

Omni Hotel

1. Click on FIND A HOTEL
2. Select CORPUS CHRISTI BAYFRONT,
3. Click on VIRTUAL TOUR on the top right of picture

For information regarding reservation availability
you may call

1-800-843-6664 (1-800-The-Omni).

Make sure you let them know you are with NASCOE

Sign up for the Loyalty Program for special benefits and offers!

If you have any problems making a reservation, please e-mail Herb or Penny at
herb.sorley@tx.usda.gov or penny.kelton@tx.usda.gov

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HOT TOPICS

CONVENTION

LEGISLATIVE

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EMBLEMS

SCHOLARSHIP

AWARDS

PUBLICITY

TASCOE TALES

SPECIAL EVENTS

QUICK LINKS

NASCOE

FANTASCOE

CONTACT US

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10TH

King Ranch 8 am - 4:30 pm Visit the King Ranch Website!!!

USS Lexington/Texas State Aquarium 9 am - 3 pm

USS Lexington
Texas State Aquarium

Day at the Beach *On your own*

NASCOE Golf Tournament 1 pm

Southwest Area Night "Savor the Southwest" 6:30 pm - Midnight

YOUTH ACTIVITY-Get Acquainted Hospitality 4 pm - 5:30 pm

THURSDAY, AUGUST 11TH

NASCOE Scholarship Auction 6 pm - 8:30 pm

Casino Night "Ocean's 13th" 9 pm - Midnight

YOUTH ACTIVITY-Texas State Aquarium Visit the Site! 10 am - 3:30 pm

FRIDAY, AUGUST 12

RASCOE Luncheon 11:30 am - 1 pm

Texas Night "Sea, Sun and Fun" Beach Night 6:30 pm - Midnight

YOUTH ACTIVITY -Corpus Christi Museum of Science and History Visit the Site! 10 am - 3:30 pm

SATURDAY, AUGUST 13

Social Hour 6 pm - 7 pm

NASCOE Awards "A Night Under the Texas Stars" 7 pm - 9 pm

DANCE - LIVE BAND 9 pm - 1 am

YOUTH ACTIVITY -NRA Safety Rules and Beware of Bullies 9:30 am - 11:30 am

YOUTH ACTIVITY -Arts and Crafts 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm

YOUTH ACTIVITY -Pizza Party with Games 6 pm - 9 pm

**You can purchase TASCOE Raffle Tickets for
\$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00 for the chance to win
Gift cards in the amount of
\$500, \$250, \$100, \$75, \$50 and \$25**

**52nd Annual NASCOE
Convention 2011 Drawing**

Chance To Win a
“2010 Polaris Ranger 400”

Value \$7,999

\$20.00 Ticket

Need Not Be Present To Win.

*Drawing to be held on August 13, 2011 at the
NASCOE convention in Corpus Christi, Texas*

The cost of a raffle ticket is not a charitable contribution. Sales tax (if not exempt) and title transfer fees are the prize winner's responsibility. Prizes are not transferable and are not redeemable for cash.



**For more info or Tickets
Contact: Kelly Lindsey @ 940-553-4394**



52nd NASCOE Convention
August 11th – 13th, 2011
Omni Bayfront Hotel
Corpus Christi, Texas
800-843-6664

2011 REGISTRATION FORM

Name:		Other Guests:	
<i>Circle one:</i> Delegate Member DD RASCOE NAPEC Honorary Mbr			
Address:			
		FAX:	
Work Phone:	Cell:	Email:	

"Sparkling City by the Sea", Corpus Christi, Texas, will be the site of the 2011 annual NASCOE Convention. Guests are reminded to ask for "NASCOE" when making reservations at the Omni Hotel to take advantage of the special \$87.00 per night single room. Cut-off date for reservations is July 15, 2011. We encourage you to sign up for "Omni Select Guest" program for benefits prior to making reservations.

Please register for ALL events you are interested in even if there is no charge!

Everyone over the age of 13 must register and pay registration fee; NASCOE Honorary Life Members only need to register.

Date/Times	Events	Cost per person	How Many?	Total Due
***	Registration Fee <i>before June 15, 2011</i>	\$30		
***	Registration Fee <i>after July 1, 2011</i>	\$35		
***	Registration Fee <i>after July 15, 2011</i>	\$40		
Wednesday Aug. 10 th 8:00am - 4:00pm	"King Ranch" (Transportation and meal included) Working ranch; guided tour of cattle & horse operations, gin, feed lot & mill, farming, Saddle Shop	\$50		
Wednesday Aug. 10 th 9:00am - 3:00pm	"USS Lexington/Texas State Aquarium" (Transportation included; Lunch on your own - restaurants located in area)	\$26 12 & Under - \$17		
Wednesday Aug. 10 th <i>On Your Own</i>	"Day at the Beach" (Transportation <i>not</i> provided) tour area beaches of Port Aransas, Mustang Island, South Padre National Seashore, Corpus Public Beach	Free		
Wednesday Aug. 10 th 1:00pm	NASCOE Golf Tournament (Lunch included) NorthShore Course in Portland <i>Handicap:</i> <i>Preferred Team Members:</i> _____	\$45		
Wednesday Aug. 10 th 6:30pm - Midnight	Southwest Area Night – "Savor the Southwest" Shrimp Boil (Offsite, Transportation & Meal included) 9:00pm - DJ/Dance (Omni Bayfront) <i>If you wish, dress as Southwest/Western character for dance</i>	Free		
Thursday Aug. 11 th 6:00pm – 8:30pm	NASCOE Scholarship Auction <i>Show your support with your presence and/or participation</i>	Free		
Thursday Aug. 11 th 9:00pm - Midnight	Casino Night – "Ocean's 13" (Meal <i>not</i> included) <i>If you wish, dress as Casino/Gambler/Gangster character</i>	Free		
Friday Aug. 12 th 11:30am - 1:00pm	RASCOE Luncheon	\$26.25		
Friday Aug. 12 th 6:30pm - Midnight	Texas Night – "Sea, Sun and Fun" Beach Party (Offsite, Transportation & Meal Included) Family Entertainment; Live Band Music by "Flashback" <i>Wear your Lime Green Convention T-Shirt</i>	Free		

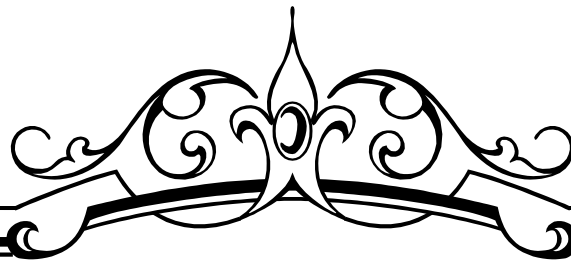


Once again, a special thanks to all who have shared their favorite places to dine and /or wine and for the information that keeps us all updated. We can be sure there will be much more information generated and shared as we struggle to not only live within our newly specified means, but also to begin to tighten our belts for 2012. These times they are a changin' has never been as true as it is today.

Please continue to respond to the requests for support for our agency representation. We need to remember that it is no longer the time to feel that it's only up to certain people to make their voices heard and to fight for our agency benefits. It is going to take each and every one of us as IASCOE members to make a difference. Our voices can be heard thru such tools as CAP WIZ and the volume of our voices will solely depend upon how many of us speak up. We cannot say that any of our agency representatives have failed us if we, ourselves, are not willing to step up.

For the next newsletter, I invite more people to share unique and wonderful places to eat as well as to share information and locations of wineries or breweries as they have really become quite popular places in the last few years. I hope that we can also include some uplifting stories of success, celebrations, and positive topics – it's easy to see and hear so many negative situations in our day to day living and I challenge you to send in some 'good news'. Have a great summer!

Brenda Albright



RETIREMENTS

After many years of service to FSA, the following individuals have decided to retire and begin a new chapter in their life. We wish them well

Thomas Kain - Kossuth
David Smalley - Mitchell
Jim Book - STO
Diane Wise - Greene
Myrna Leu - Mills

We have tried to include the names of all individuals who have retired. Our apologies if we have missed someone.