

IASCOE NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2009



IRELAND AGRICULTURE: DIFFERENT, YET THE SAME



Submitted by: Cindy Pistek



2009/2010 IASCOE Officers

President



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Vice President



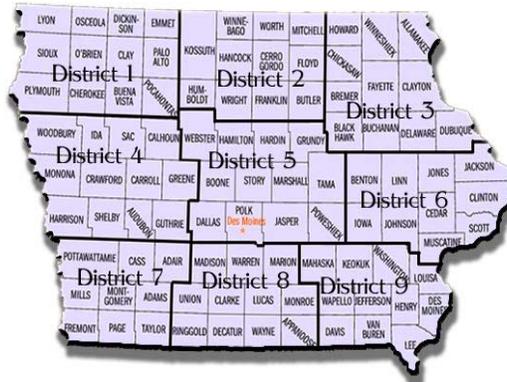
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IASCOE DISTRICTS



2009/2010 Directors

<u>District</u>	<u>P.T. Director</u>	<u>C.E.D. Director</u>
1	Glenda VonArb - Sioux Alt - Nancy Heideman - Clay	Jeff Davis - Plymouth Alt - Larry Lago - Dickinson
2	Cindy Pistek - Hancock Alt - Jeanine Diekhuis - Hancock	Tammy Pruin - Wright Alt - Dave Stromer - Kossuth
3	Tammy Eibey - Delaware Alt - Karen McNeil - Winneshiek	Cindy Mensen - Clayton Alt - Kevin Keegan - Buchanan
4	Mary Lageschulte - Ida Alt - Amy Carlson-Hammen - Calhoun	John Landgraf - Sac Alt - Kevin Fitzpatrick - Greene
5	Chris Grieder - Polk Alt - Teresa Heck - Polk	Steve Kennedy - Jasper Alt - <i>Vacant</i>
6	Jessica Yuska - Scott Alt - Joni Birkhofer - Muscatine	Devalyn Wilson - Cedar Alt - Randy Madsen - Muscatine/Scott
7	Sue Beemer - Taylor Alt - Judy Lundgren - Page	Chris Irvin - Page Alt - Warren Schuler - Montgomery
8	Patsy Bence - Madison Alt - Connie Bence - Madison	Kelly Cain - Madison Alt - Joyce Frost - Wayne
9	Judy Dameron - Louisa Alt - Dawn Stewart - Henry	Dee Ann Lehn - Keokuk Alt - John Bartenhagen - Louisa

2009/2010 IASCOE COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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2009/2010 IASCOE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

District 1

Benefits/Legislative: Rosie Kahl - Lyon
Awards/Scholarship: Larry Lago - Dickinson
Publicity: Nancy Heideman - Clay
Membership: Mark VonArb - Cherokee

District 2

Benefits/Legislative: David Stromer - Kossuth
Awards/Scholarship: Jeanine Diekhuis - Hancock
Publicity: Lisa Forburger - Kossuth
Membership: Janine Schwarck - Mitchell

District 3

Benefits/Legislative: Karen McNeil - Winneshiek
Awards/Scholarship: Connie Straw - Chickasaw
Publicity: Rose Woerner - Black Hawk
Membership: Sheri Rodman - Clayton

District 4

Benefits/Legislative: Pat Warmbier - Harrison
Awards/Scholarship: Denise Dugan - Woodbury
Publicity: Candy Hoyle - Greene
Membership: Cathleen "Skip" Borst - Carroll

District 7

Benefits/Legislative: Chris Irvin - Page
Awards/Scholarship: Phyllis Reineke - Taylor
Publicity: Carole Dawson - Taylor
Membership: Dan Wells - Adair

District 8

Benefits/Legislative: Kelly Cain - Madison
Awards/Scholarship: Dave Wynn - Monroe
Publicity: Rhonda Cooper - Union
Membership: Marla Morlan - Monroe

District 9

Benefits/Legislative: John Bartenhagen - Louisa
Awards/Scholarship: Carol Long - Mahaska
Publicity: Anna Hornbaker - Van Buren
Membership: Cynde Briggs - Mahaska

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IASCOE Newsletter Editor

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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



Become an IASCOE Member...

FROM THE DESK OF JOHN WHITAKER, SED

After just a few weeks on the job as the new SED, I have found that all of the STO and DD folks are as committed to Iowa farmers as I have always found the local FSA employees to be. As a farmer for thirty years, I have participated in many of the program opportunities FSA has to offer. I have always found the County Office staff to be courteous and helpful and this is in spite of the fact that not all of us on the other side of the counter are as friendly. The jobs which each of you do everyday keeps our farmers financially stable, our soil in its place, and our young people getting started. **Thanks for all of your hard work!**

I know that our agency has had a few minor challenges this year. We have implemented new and complex farm programs on a limited training budget. We are still waiting to get rules for some programs such as LIP and larger loan limits on FSFL. We are still working diligently on cleaning up after last years flooding and storms through the ECP. Oh yes and we are dealing with unusual weather again this year (does anyone remembers what usual weather is like?).

I know that some of you have heard my comments in the media about the need to help beginning operators. I believe that FSA can be the “lender of first opportunity” to a whole new generation of Iowa farmers. I remember one of my sons saying that the question was asked in one of his classes at Iowa State “How many of you would like to start farming?” Every student in the class held up his or her hand. Then the professor asked “How many of you believe that you will be able to start farming?” Only one student raised their hand. There were nearly 50 young people from our state in that class. I truly believe that we can improve that number and improve the odds for those young Iowans who do choose to be our next generation of farmers. If any of you have ideas of how we can accomplish this, please drop me an email.

Again, I am honored to work with each and every one of you and look forward to the opportunities which lie ahead.





National Association of FSA County Office Employees
Celebrating 50 Years of Serving American Agriculture
1959-2009

MIDWEST AREA REPORT

Jon Williams
Midwest Area Executive



This past year was a year of transition for USDA and FSA. As an Executive board and Association we worked hard to present our concerns and issues to management but due to the transition in Administration, many of our efforts resulted in frustration and inaction on the part of the agency. Although not unusual, the slow appointment of FSA Management personnel delayed decisions that were and still are important to the membership. Delays in farm bill implementation caused frustration for county office employees and our customers as well.

It was hoped that we would get some decision on the PT Classification at the National Convention however that did not happen. The new FSA Administrator, Jonathan Coppess, said he would do his best to work with HRD and DAFO and arrive at a decision by the end of the fiscal year. I have a positive feeling that there could be an opportunity for higher graded PT positions but as of now there is nothing. The thing to remember is that even if a new position is approved by HRD and DAFO, the need for such positions must be established by the state and support for the position from the DD and CED will be required before it can be announced and made available to PTs in a county office.

There has been some significant legislation under debate that could impact FSA and CO employees. This ranges from the Cap and Trade bill to health care. We still would like to see credit for unused sick leave for FERS employees and the increase in age for covered dependents included in some of this legislation. Because of this, I encourage everyone to make sure their home email addresses are current in Cap Wiz so we can make sure you receive the Action Alerts. I am sure there will be some coming this fall. If you haven't signed up for Cap Wiz go to the NASCOE website and click on the Cap Wiz icon to sign up.

I look forward to working with our new Administrator and DAFP. Although they are new to FSA and don't have much background or knowledge of the agency, they seem energetic and are getting a keen understanding of the challenges we are facing. They showed a desire to help us meet the challenges we are facing as an agency. The budget will force us to do things differently but we must give approach these changes with an open mind and give them a chance.

I decided to run for a third year as Midwest Area Executive and was reelected to that position at the National Convention. It is indeed an honor to represent the MWA on the Executive board and I will continue to do my best to represent our interests on the NASCOE board and keep all states informed and up to date with NASCOE's efforts to protect our interests and benefits.

Some things to think about: If man evolved from monkeys and apes, why do we still have monkeys and apes?

Where do forest rangers go to "get away from it all"?

A President's Perspective By Cindy Mensen



Something for Iowa to celebrate: our state had the most NASCOE members in the nation from 7-1-08 through 6-30-09! Texas actually has more CO employees than Iowa – but we beat them out in the member category. Sure wish we could get more of you involved in IASCOE/NASCOE. It is a great chance to meet others from across the state – and across the nation—who have the same job title and work with the same national notices. Plan now to get more involved—I guarantee you will be glad you did! If we have new employees in our offices, please invite them to join IASCOE!

Thanks to all that went to Tennessee and helped NASCOE celebrate a wonderful 50th Anniversary! Attendees included: Jeff Davis, Tammy Eibey, Dee Lehn, Judy Dameron, Joni Birkhofer, & myself. We also counted Jeff's wife, Jeanette, Dennis Olson and Deb Krusemark as representatives from Iowa. Many new faces from WDC addressed the convention attendees including our new FSA Administrator, Jonathan Coppess and the new DAFP leader, Brandon Willis. Both of these men spent considerable time and effort on the 2008 Farm Bill. Mr. Coppess already realizes that FSA has limited resources and unlimited needs. He mentioned three priorities: people, system and programs. Training will be direct from the National Office through a new webinar system to the CO that is supposed to have a lot of capacity. He sees BCAP and SURE (manual calculations) potentially adding significant workload to our offices. He is also hopeful to get us access to query SCIMS data. Mr. Willis said Iowa had nearly ¼ of all ACRE contracts. LFP will be rolled out in September and SURE yet this calendar year. We also were told that the staffing levels will remain steady in 2010 -- but the FSA budget is not enough to fund that level. 2011 is potentially projected to be worse. WebTA and the Activity Reporting System (ARS) will be implemented in FY 2010. They really wanted to start Oct 1st but it won't be ready. Jim Gwynn is the OCIO IT specialist – very knowledgeable and is working to overhaul FSA technology. He also feels GIS is under-utilized. One thing we learned is that WDC staffs both want and need to hear what is working and what is not working – especially with the computer systems. **NOTE:** Help them help us --if you or another staff member have a suggestion, submit it through NASCOE (email to Iowa's Jessica Yuska who is our IASCOE Programs Chair) by using one of these two options: ***program issue:** for suggestions to improve the processing & implementation of programs or forms ***negotiation item:** for anything that affects your employment

PT Classification: For years NASCOE has worked for PT reclassification, but the FSA management team would not accept a proposal that included an across the board upgrade for Program Technicians. Finally, a task force proposal will be taken to the FSA Administrator. Grade 8 promotions may be in the future for some employees (if this is approved).

Membership: In Iowa (& many other states), county office employees that are "GS" are allowed full rights and privileges to be members of IASCOE & subsequently NASCOE, which means they pay the full membership rate. STO employees may only be associate members. You must either be a regular member or an associate member to buy JM Marketing products at discounted premium rates. Remember that ANYONE can become an associate member—so please mention that to your COC members and even your family members. If they become an associate member, they may also take advantage of JM Marketing products.

Legislation: FERS sick leave has been an issue supported by the House --but not the Senate -- it has been added to at least 2 HR bills and then was removed in conference committee. Let your voice be heard on this issue! We are also working to get the dependent age moved up for health care coverage. Watch a proposal that has been made in Congress to begin taxing our health care benefits. If you want to stay informed, [sign up for CAPWIZ](#) at www.nascoe.org A parting reminder – get your 2010 calendar out and note the dates for the IASCOE Convention: March 26 & 27, 2010.

Hope to see you there -- Cindy M

Hello All,

The NASCOE National convention is gone and it was a very informative time. I went to the convention not knowing what to expect as I have never been a delegate for the convention. It was a learning experience to say the least. I saw a lot of people that I had met last year in Omaha and met a lot of people that I hope to see in Hot Springs, Arkansas next year at the Convention.

The biggest thing that I think I learned was that I am getting older. In listening to some of the officials out from DC along with our administrator I learned that the times are changing. The people are not much older than my kids. The things that I learned a long time ago was that people in Washington do know who NASCOE is and we do have some influence on some of the things that go on in Washington.

One of the other things that I learned is that we alone are a small piece of the pie. We can not get everything we want just by asking. There is a process and it may take a number of times asking the same question before someone takes the message and knows the right people to get the job done.

The biggest thing and I feel the most passionate about is getting involved and staying involved. If you could see where we came from and compare that with where we are today it would blow your mind. This year was the 50th Anniversary of the inception of NASCOE. Hearing where the employees of this agency were before NASCOE was formed it just about brings tears to my eyes thinking about all of the blood, sweat and tears shed over the year. I am proud to be a member of this organization and I am doubly proud to be a representative of IASCOE at the NASCOE convention.

In closing I would like to leave a couple of things with you. If at first you don't succeed it doesn't mean that it will never happen, it only means you need to find another way to get your point across so others see the big picture. Just because it might be something that only seems fair doesn't mean everyone shares your opinion.

Get involved and make a difference. IASCOE/NASCOE is an organization that works for everyone. They do what they can but they are not the ones that make the rules and regulation, they only give advice on what we think would be good.

I will see you at the IASCOE convention next spring and maybe even In Hot Springs, Arkansas at the NASCOE Convention.



Jeff Davis, IASCOE VP

NASCOE Members Scholarship Program

This year marks the third year of the NASCOE Members Scholarship Program. This scholarship program is set up specifically for NASCOE Members who are enrolled in adult education courses to further enhance their careers with FSA.

NASCOE will award one deserving individual in each Area with a \$200.00 award! Please consider taking a few minutes from your studies and complete the nomination form to compete for the award! This form can be found on the NASCOE website at www.nascoe.org under the scholarship tab.

The deadline to submit the scholarship application to your Area Chairperson is January 15, 2010. Please notice that this application is completed and mailed directly to your area chairperson.....for our Midwest Area that would be:

Les Maierhofer
7775A Route 47
Yorkville, IL 60560
630-553-5821 (Office)
630-553-7442 Fax
les.maierhofer@il.usda.gov

IASCOE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

School has just begun but it is never too early to be thinking about scholarships!

IASCOE will again this year be offering 4 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. These scholarships are worth \$300 and are paid after the completion of the first semester of post secondary education. The applicant must be a legal dependent of an **IASCOE** member, a member's spouse, or even be an **IASCOE** member. The **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.

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. The scholarship application may be printed from the NASCOE web-site @ www.nascoe.org. Once you are at the site, click on "scholarship" and you will find the scholarship application. You may type in your information and print the application, or print the application and complete. **BE SURE TO PRINT THE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION CHECKLIST** as well as this page will assist you in making sure you have all required information submitted.

Please note the checklist return date should be **January 31st** for the Iowa Scholarships. State winners are then forwarded on to the Area Scholarship committee to be judged for Area and National awards.

Please return the completed applications to me at the address below by January 31st, 2010.

DON'T PUT IT OFF, GET YOUR APPLICATION COMPLETED TODAY!

Tammy Pruin
16316 190th St
Mason City, IA 50401

515-532-2849 (Office phone)
515-532-3506 (Office Fax)
tammy.pruin@ia.usda.gov

IASCOE Legislative Committee Report...

The 50th Annual National Convention was held in Gatlinburg, Tennessee August 11 to August 15th. There were 7 from Iowa that attended the meetings. There were people from the National office and the highlight was to have our Administrator in attendance and speak then take questions from the floor. All National Officers gave reports as did the Area Executives and National Committee Chairs. The National Committee Chairs have break out meetings with their area committee members or others that would like to attend their meetings. Deb Essleman Baird from Wisconsin completes thorough transcripts for the general sessions. These are posted to the Midwest area page of the NASCOE website. You can get there by the links on the www.nascoe.org or www.iascoe.org websites. There will be more posted to the NASCOE website on all committee pages after the new webmaster takes over September 1st. There will also be articles in the NASCOE Now issues in the next couple of months, plus the printed National Newsletter will have pictures and information from the convention. The printed newsletter will be issued in October 2009.

Dee Lehn and I are the new IASCOE Legislative Co Chairs and we both attended the National Convention. I am continuing to serve as the NASCOE National Publicity Chair and the CAP WIZ coordinator for the national legislative committee, while Dee is continuing to serve as the Midwest Area Benefits Chairperson. We learned that there are several things that we as IASCOE and NASCOE members need to be keeping track of on the legislative side of things. I am not to go into full detail but will be highlighting the major topics.

REORGANIZATION: this has been put on the back burner due to other items like the economy and health reform. We have our legislative consultant in DC watching this issue. He believes it may come up again this fall.

Appropriations: FY 2010 will be adequate but there has been language put into the bill during committee that calls for to keep track of. It stated that 5 million dollars would be removed and given to NRCS from our budget. Also in this bill, the house cut out the Animal ID program. We will continue to monitor.

CAP and Trade: USDA has a strong position in this bill now than it did in the very beginning. FSA may be asked to step up and administer this program. It is worth monitoring and making sure it includes funds to FSA to administer.

Health Reforms: This has been very controversial but we need to keep an eye on this since it could ultimately affect our benefits that we currently have with our health insurance.

FERS Sick Leave: There had been a couple of bills where these were added as rider amendments and passed in the house, but were stripped out of the Senate versions. We need to keep on this as it is important for all our FERS Employees.

There are two tools available for NASCOE members to use to be active in the legislative process. One is the NASCOE Pac. NASCOE has established a funded PAC to help get and keep NASCOE's name in the legislative process. The legislative committee had received approval to give a financial donation to the state with the highest percentage for members to donate by payroll deduction or by a one time payment. Kentucky was the recipient of the 2009 award. They committee was approved to offer this for the next year. So...Iowa...if we have the greatest increase of donations from now until the next convention in Hot Springs, we could receive a bonus! If you have more questions concerning the PAC, let us know.

The other main tool is CAP WIZ. Iowa has 224 signed up as subscribers, 67 disabled or automatically disabled, 12 never subscribed and 15 unsubscribed. We had two large alerts this winter concerning the FERS Sick Leave that was added into the Tobacco Bill and one in a Defense Spending bill. Iowans sent 287 of the 4198 messages sent. They were targeted to the House and Senate members. I do encourage you all to sign up and be an important tool in the legislative process. It is very easy to send the message once you receive the alert. If you would like to sign up you can do so from the IASCOE or NASCOE website or you can email me your name, full address (mail) with zip code and your home email address. If you sign up with a USDA address, I do disable that address. If you have questions concerning CAP WIZ, let me know.

If you have other questions or comments, please feel free to contact one of us. We would welcome your assistance with legislative and benefit issues that affect all of us. Be an active IASCOE/NASCOE member!

Tammy and Dee



MEMBERSHIP

The initial membership drive has ended and I want to thank the membership committee and all the employees who signed on for another year and those who joined the team for the first time. We had to raise IASCOE dues this year to keep in step with the increase in NASCOE dues. This meant the completion of new forms for automatic payroll deduction. Evidently you continued to see the value of a strong organization that is constantly representing your interest. Even though we haven't heard from everyone yet, we have 89% membership. There are 77 counties that have 100% membership and Districts one and seven are 100%. If you are reading this and haven't yet sent in your check or your payroll deduction form, please contact me or a director or membership committee person in your district. A strong membership is vital to the success of obtaining new benefits and maintaining those we already have. If you have ever had a cost of living increase, a within grade increase, or enjoyed a compressed day you know IASCOE has been working for you. Visit us at www.iascoe.org to see all the other benefits IASCOE/NASCOE has to offer.

Glenda Von Arb
Membership Chair



Daily TSP Rates

For September 1, 2009

	Close	Change	YTD>
G	\$12.9878	+0.0012	+1.94%
F	\$13.1778	+0.0136	+4.75%
C	\$11.7497	-0.2653	+12.61%
S	\$14.5138	-0.3432	+18.9%
I	\$17.0047	-0.4849	+19.29%
L 2040	\$14.5312	-0.0001	+16.35%
L 2030	\$14.2313	-0.2440	+12.74%
L 2020	\$14.2775	-0.2028	+11.03%
L 2010	\$14.6704	-0.0893	+6.06%
L Income	\$13.4533	-0.0622	+5.23%

Monthly Specials For September



[Tie-Dye Embroidered Tee Shirt](#)
~~\$12.00~~ \$10.20
Save: 15% off



[Sister Tee Shirt](#)
~~\$18.00~~ \$15.30
Save: 15% off



[Ladies Classic Fit Rib Tee Shirt](#)
~~\$14.00~~ \$11.90
Save: 15% off



[Unisex USA Made 100% Cotton](#)
~~\$14.00~~ \$11.90
Save: 15% off



[River Washed Short Sleeve Ladies Tee Shirt](#)
~~\$18.00~~ \$15.30
Save: 15% off



[Unisex V-Neck Tee Shirt](#)
~~\$20.00~~ \$17.00
Save: 15% off



[Black Cap/Tee Set](#)
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Provincial Reconstruction Team

Submitted by Dee Ann Lehn
CED, Keokuk County

Ray Lehn has volunteered to serve a one-year assignment in Afghanistan to help rebuild that country's agricultural sector. Ray is the husband of CED, Dee Ann Lehn. He left for his assignment back in February. Ray is stationed at Kala Gush in the Nuristan Province located in the northern part of Afghanistan near the Pakistan border.

Ray is servicing as the Ag Advisor for his PRT (Provincial Reconstruction Team). Volunteers like Ray are needed to contribute their specialized skills to help farmers, citizens, and national and provincial government leaders of these two countries. Ray took a leave of absence from his job as a forester for the Iowa DNR.

In 2003, three USDA employees were among the first civilians to offer their technical expertise as agricultural advisors serving on Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in Afghanistan. Since then, approximately 40 advisors have been deployed. PRT advisors work on a variety of projects depending on the needs of the province. All projects are aimed at helping Afghanistan reconstruct the physical and institutional infrastructure of its agricultural sector.

In Afghanistan, PRTs are led by the U.S. Department of Defense and are typically composed of about 50-100 military personnel and several civilians. The PRT agricultural advisor is one of only a few civilians on the PRT; the others usually being U.S. Department of State representatives and U.S. Agency for International Development field program officers.

In addition to PRTs, USDA has many activities and programs aimed at strengthening the capacity of the Afghan government, rebuilding agricultural markets, and improving management of natural resources. For example, ongoing USDA technical assistance has led to the planting of more than five million trees on Afghanistan's devastated landscape, construction of agricultural extension centers in half of Afghanistan's provinces, the training of key Afghan agricultural officials, and the initiation of a national system to detect and control animal disease.



Ray and Afghanistan Advisor



Meeting with local government officials



Ray with one of the local children

A Little Too Much Excitement by Alicia (Kennedy) McCain (daughter of Steve Kennedy, CED, Jasper County)

>> MONDAY, AUGUST 10, 2009

Sometimes I find myself wishing for a little more excitement in my day to day life. It would be nice to have more to blog about than just "we're here, things are the same, here's some pictures!" But after what I went through yesterday, I don't need any more excitement for awhile now.

Yesterday was my Grandma's birthday, so I planned to travel with my parents up to her house in Sac City to have a birthday dinner with all my aunts, uncles, and cousins. Mike had some things he needed to get done, so decided not to go. Sunday morning my parents and I headed out in their van and stopped by to pick up my sister, brother-in-law, and my two nieces to ride up all together. I was having a good time playing and reading books to Teagan when we started to notice that the sky was getting really dark. It wasn't too surprising since we knew we might hit some storms that day, but thought the worst would be later in the afternoon/evening.



We were talking about how dark it was and Nicole commented that it would make great napping weather. But it just seemed to be getting darker, so my mom suggested maybe we should try to turn on the radio to see about the weather. So my dad turned it on, but we couldn't really get anything in. I was starting to get just a little worried and as we passed by an exit, I had a passing thought that we really should have pulled off there. Next thing I know it starts raining. And then starts raining very hard and is very windy. By this time, we are really on edge and trying to figure out how to check the weather on somebody's phone. Unfortunately my sister, the only one with web access on her phone, left her phone at home, thinking it wouldn't matter since everyone else had phones.

Then out of nowhere we heard a loud CLUNK. It didn't register at first what had happened, but then we started hearing CLUNK CLUNK CLUNKCLUNKCLUNKCLUNK and Teagan started screaming. Somewhere in the middle of this we realized it was hail. We're really scared at this point and then the next thing I remember, Nicole, who is clear in the back, yells out that she's getting wet. I look back at the window, but no cracks, then I look up front and realize there isn't a driver's side window anymore and the windshield is completely cracked. The wind was blowing so hard and it was so loud we thought there was a tornado. I quickly get on my phone to call Mike to ask him to look up online to see if there is a tornado in the area. He couldn't hear what I was saying and I was shouting with my voice shaking badly with fear. We ended up finally getting to an overpass, which was completely lined with cars on both sides, so we just had to park in the middle of the interstate. Mike has finally figured out what I was asking and realizes that there's no official report, but someone has reported that they think there is a tornado. So he's wanting us to get out of the car and up under the bridge. But with two babies and 5 adults, we have no idea how to manage this.

While I was on the phone with Mike, Nicole had called 911 and got dispatched to a police officer who was not the most compassionate guy out there. All he said was that we needed to get our car out of the middle of the interstate and that if we could get under the bridge to go for it. The whole time the wind was blowing so hard and I could see debris from the fields flying across the windshield. Plus, I'm getting soaked with water and we have golf-ball sized hail littering the floor of the van. Quick thinking mama Nicole threw a blanket over Teagan and hovered over Harper's car seat in the back.

Finally, after what seemed like forever, it seemed to be letting up. At this point, Nicole and Mom are really pushing Dad to pull forward to get off the road. This means we're going to get even more soaked, but we can't risk staying on the road and having someone bash into us from behind. Right after we pulled over a semi-truck came barreling by at full speed. We still didn't know if it was over, or if there might be a tornado or more hail on the way, but we decided to make a run for the next exit. We ended up being farther north than we thought, so drove longer to get to an exit that actually had somewhere to pull off to without having to drive 10 miles to the nearest town. I was freezing in the car- we looked at the temperature on the van and it was only at 56 degrees even though just before the storm it had been in the 80's! My hands and legs were shaking so bad because of being cold and because of the adrenaline.

When we pulled off and got to the gas station, my Dad got out and had blood running down his legs and on his arm. He also had a huge welt under his chin where he had gotten pelted by hail. We met lots of new friends (most of them bikers on their way back from Sturgis) who were amazed to see the damage to the van and the glass all over. Then we headed to Kmart to get some new clothes for Dad and me and to get plastic and duct tape to patch the window. When I went to try on pants at Kmart, glass fell out of my shorts as I took them off. We got patched up with the help of some strangers in the parking lot. Nicole who is a nurse, became Dad's personal nurse and got him all cleaned and fixed up with ice to put on his chin and finger. We rode the rest of the way to Grandma's house in shock and on edge, as the clouds ahead stayed ominously dark. Thankfully rain was all we encountered.



After a great afternoon at Grandma's, we headed back home. The whole way it was raining lightly and lightening all across the sky, but again, fairly mild weather compared to earlier. When we passed the spot we got hit, we were amazed to see the corn and bean fields just decimated. We also noticed a couple big farm houses with all the west side windows boarded up due to busted out windows, and saw a line of trees in the middle of a field knocked over.

Apparently, what I gather from news reports, after it hit us, the storm continued straight east to Eldora, where it did some very serious damage and released hail even bigger than the golf ball sized chunks we were hit with. There were reports of 70 mph winds- and I believe it!!!

The good news is that Dad really only had minor injuries, and we all came out shaken, but safe and healthy. We were amazed at how God had worked things out for us. We could easily have had both babies up front, or Eagan's car seat could have been on my side and she would have gotten soaked and cut with glass. If Mike had come with us, Nicole and Brandon would have been in their small car with both girls in the back and Nicole would have had much more trouble getting them covered. We are praising God that he kept us safe through the storm. I am praying though that this is the last of my excitement of that sort for awhile!!



STORMS...STORMS...STORMS!



On Friday June 19th Benton, Linn, Buchanan, Delaware and Dubuque Counties were hit by a storm carrying winds up to 90 miles per hour. The picture shown is of the Ryan COOP in Delaware County. Ryan is about 10 miles south of Manchester on highway 13.-



And it continues....



Fayette, Clayton, Delaware, Dubuque and Jones Counties were hit by a severe hail storm on Friday, July 24th. The storm had hail measuring up to softball size hail. In some areas it hailed for 20 minutes!

Crops in the area were devastated. It also caused severe damage to homes, buildings and vehicles. The pictures are from a farm 5 miles NE of Manchester in Delaware County. 5 hours after the hail storm we had a wind storm that carried about 50 mph winds.



Submitted by Delaware County FSA Office

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Travel Iowa!

THE CASSVILLE FERRY

By Rose Woerner, Black Hawk County

While the actual jaunt across the Mississippi is only about a six minute ride, getting there is a big part of the adventure. I'm speaking of the Cassville Ferry, located at the Turkey River Boat Landing in scenic Clayton County.

The car ride to the ferry has options. Thrill-seekers can careen around hairpin turns; view the wonder of neck-craning cliffs and overlook the majesty of the great Mississippi. Those given to moderation can travel through tiny, one-street, towns, where front yards border highway and backyards border standing crops. Whatever your choice, the trip is a true inspiration. Once off C9Y, the gravel road that leads to the boat landing is one of those 'off the beaten path' driving experiences. It is a winding piece of dirt and relatively long, but signs clearly point the way.

On the ferry, you can stay in your car or venture out on the dock for a bit of fresh air (gusty), as well as a bird's eye view of the river. You can strike up a conversation with fellow travelers or the kindly gentleman who guides the cars off and on the deck. He is especially glad to impart a bit of ferry history or directions to your next destination.

Once you arrive on the Cassville side, feel free to roam around the town and by all means stop at Vogt's Town Pump & Grill on the main drag, for a bowl of the best bean soup ever. Top it off with a tall draught Root Beer, the perfect drink to quench any thirst.

The ferry makes back and forth trips across the river seven days a week. The prices and times are posted on the website: <http://www.cassville.org/ferry.html>

You can take a virtual tour via slideshow on this link as well.





People in the Delaware County town of Edgewood unexpectedly went on a bear hunt. A small, black bear made his way into town early Wednesday afternoon, June 10, 2009.

The DNR says the young male has been in Iowa since Monday and has traveled through Winneshiek and Clayton County, and is now in Delaware County.

Most of us hear the words wild bear and we immediately think danger and that the bear will attack. But things are relatively calm here in Edgewood. DNR officials say black bears are docile.



The young male ran around the golf course in Edgewood. At one point, more than 50 people were crowded around a tree that the bear climbed to get away from all the commotion and ended up stretching out on one of the tree limbs and taking a nap.



DNR officials say the biggest concern is keeping people away.

"I think it's so cool that we are seeing a bear in Iowa cause we don't have bears here in Iowa. What probably happened is this young male is looking for love and wandered out of southern Minnesota," said Jennifer Lancaster, Iowa DNR.

The DNR says the bear is going to be disappointed because he's not going to find a mate in Iowa. DNR officials are following the bear and keeping an eye on him. The hope is they won't have to tranquilize the bear and he just returns home to Minnesota. People in the Delaware County town of Edgewood unexpectedly went on a bear hunt. A small, black bear made his way into town early Wednesday afternoon.



Goodbye Bear!

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 Cindy Pistek at cindy.pistek@ia.usda.gov or Tammy Eibey at tammy.eibey@ia.usda.gov

PRESERVING THE HISTORY OF THE TALLEST CORN STALK

No one grew taller corn in the 1930's-1950's than Don Radda of rural Washington. The tallest stalk he ever grew was 31 feet, 7/8 inch and he still holds the world record today. Don was also Iowa's first Master Corn Grower with record yields of 221.23 bushel per acre in 1948 and 209.6 bushel per acre in 1949. Don's daughter Julia Zieser lives and farms on the family farm north of Washington. Her dream and years of planning to replicate the corn stalk has now come true. With the help of the Washington Iowa Chamber of Commerce, the Washington County Fair Board and the Washington County Tourism Committee, the dream is now a reality! To preserve the history of Radda's tall corn a weld shop in Washington, Evans Welding, replicated a metal version sculpture and it will be placed on the Washington County Fairgrounds this week just before the Washington County Fair which is July 19-24, 2009. My husband and I hauled the metal corn stalk in two pieces to Manchester, Iowa where it is being painted. It will definitely be a tourist attraction. It is an awesome and extraordinary work of art to commemorate and honor the memory of my father and putting Washington, Iowa "on the map". T-shirts are also being produced to celebrate the event and resurrect the story. Just some of the history: Don Radda's corn stalk is in Ripleys Believe It or Not, Guinness Book of World Records, Britannica Encyclopedia, Iowa Trivia, Tallest Corn stalk Website, newspapers and magazines all over the United States, including "LIFE", September 11, 1939 which sold for 10 cents a copy. On the front of the magazine is a picture of Benito Mussolini. His corn stalks traveled for many years to the Rose Bowl and to the Big Ten football games. The governors from the many mid western states were very competitive and got into many heated arguments about which state would win the title year after year. Julia still receives phone calls and letters from every where in the United States even Canada and Costa Rica as people request (and even beg) for any information and secrets she has. The family has many trophies that she displays in her home. You may want to travel to Washington, Iowa which still proudly holds the title of "Tall Corn Capital of the World" and recollect the history of the tallest corn stalk with a 31 foot and 7/8 inch metal sculpture which will proudly be displayed at the fair grounds. Julia's siblings are Barb Kiene of Riverside, Carol Carlson of Coralville and Vernon Radda of Washington.

Julia (Radda) Zieser
1934 200th St.
Washington, IA 52353
319-461-1903

C





Monday, July 20th, was an exciting day for the Kossuth County FSA. Christie Vilsack, wife of U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack, stopped in the office, very unexpected, while traveling through town along with her associate. The Former First Lady is now the Executive Director of The Iowa Initiative to Reduce Unintended Pregnancies and met with the Kossuth County Care Team in Algona before her stop at the USDA Service Center. The Initiative is a privately funded program whose goal is to serve as a model to prevent unintended pregnancies nationwide. This program aims to reduce the high rate of unintended pregnancies among Iowa women ages 18-30 through networking, research and public outreach. She is traveling state to state to open dialog and make this a mainstream, main street conversation. While doing so, she is making it her goal to also visit as many USDA Service Centers along the way as possible. She thanked the staff for the hard work and dedication while servicing the farmers in Kossuth and surrounding counties. Christie is very interested in learning more about FSA and finds it quite challenging to understand all the acronyms that we use on a daily basis. Her goal is too learn as much as possible for conversation with her husband whom she was joining shortly in Washington, D.C. We did have a group photo taken before she departed and encouraged her to stop again.



Submitted by Lisa Forburger

A LITTLE BIT OF HUMOR 😊

Pillsbury Dough Boy Memorial

Please join me in remembering a great icon of the entertainment community. The Pillsbury Doughboy died yesterday of a yeast infection and trauma complications from repeated pokes in the belly. He was 71 years old.

Doughboy was buried in a lightly greased coffin. Dozens of celebrities turned out to pay their respects, including Mrs. Butterworth, Hungry Jack, the California Raisins, Betty Crocker, the Hostess Twinkies, and Captain Crunch. The gravesite was piled high with flours.

Aunt Jemima delivered the eulogy and lovingly described the Doughboy as a man who never knew how much he was kneaded. Mr. Doughboy rose quickly in show business, but his later life was filled with turnovers. He was not considered a very smart cookie, wasting much of his dough on half-baked schemes.

Despite being a little flaky at times, he still was a crusty old man and was considered a positive roll model for millions.

Doughboy is survived by his wife Play Dough, three children: John Dough, Jane Dough, and Dosey Dough, plus they had one in the oven. He is also survived by his elderly father, Pop Tart. The funeral was held at 3:50 for 20 minutes.

SIMPLE SOLUTIONS

I sure have trouble keeping buttons on my husband's work shirts, especially when he's harvesting in the fall. Dental floss makes a great thread for attaching buttons to these work clothes. It's much stronger than regular thread and can handle rough treatment!

Do your colors lose their color in the wash? Add vinegar to the rinse water to hold color better.



FALL BRINGS ON THE GARDEN VEGETABLES – LET’S GET COOKING

This summer I planted two gardens. The first one was beautiful; full of tomatoes and pepper plants along with rows of peas, radishes, green beans, spinach and beets. I spent all day marking rows and putting in the seeds. It looked real good and I was real proud of myself. This wasn't my first garden experience and I knew this year I would have lots of food for canning and freezing. Several days later I walked out to my garden and saw the radishes coming and the plants looked good. The next time I checked my garden it wasn't the same, most of my plants were gone!! Some varmint had decided I was feeding it and those plants tasted real good. Not to be discouraged I hustled to the grocery store to gather up more tomatoes and peppers, of course they were on sale now (everyone else had things growing in their gardens). I took the plants to the garden and this time I sprayed with that smelly stuff that's supposed to keep deer and rabbits away AND I planted marigolds next to my plants (someone once told me that kept rabbits away). Well, long story short my husband's remark to me this evening was "I just took a look at your pathetic garden". He wasn't being mean, just factual....I now have only 5 tomato plants and two green peppers. All of my row vegetables are gone, but the flowers look great! Hopefully, all of you who planted gardens have much better luck than I and can use this recipe.

Canned Spaghetti Sauce

More than ½ bushel tomatoes – peeled and puréed in the blender
2 bulbs of crushed garlic

Cook the following for ½ hour

3# chopped onions
2 hot peppers

1 bell pepper (or 2)
1 pint olive oil (can use vegetable oil)

Add cooked mixture to the tomatoes and garlic. Then add the following:

1 T oregano
1 ½ cup sugar
4 – 8 oz cans tomato paste

2 or 3 bay leaves (remove before canning)
¼ - ½ cup canning salt

Cook all of this in a large kettle until thick. Should take around 2 hours. Put sauce in sterilized jars, seal and cook in a water bath as you would for tomatoes. Once your family has "home-made" spaghetti sauce you can say "good-bye RAGU"!

Submitted by
Cindy Pistek

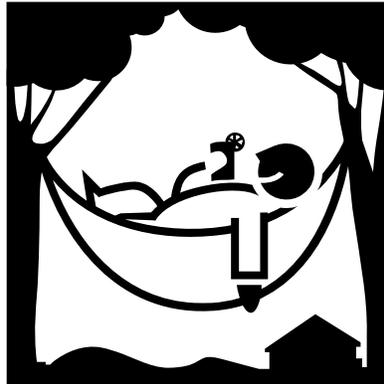


RETIREMENTS

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

Martha Buttolph	Calhoun	31 ½ Years
Shirley Whitaker	Polk	26 Year
Joy Neff	Washington	24 Years
Betty Vonnahme	Pocahontas	26 Years
Connie Johnson	Fayette	28 Years
Dennis Eberle	Butler	20 Years
Lynda Schnebbe	Iowa	17 Years
Barb Onnen	Shelby	20 Years
Sandra Richards	Mahaska	23 Years
LaVerda Fitzgerald	Poweshiek	22 Years
Kathy Siders	Sioux	30 Years
Dennis Castle	Worth	37+ Years
Jean Helmers	O'Brien	20 years

We have tried to include all retirements, but it is difficult to be sure we have included everyone. Our apologies if anyone was missed on the list.



WISHING YOU ALL THE VERY BEST AS YOU ENJOY FAMILY AND FRIENDS!

MY TRIP TO IRELAND

In August I went on the trip of a lifetime, my two daughters and I traveled to Ireland to do some touring and visit cousins who live in Cavan. We rented a car- Kathleen drove, Marie navigated and I read a book in the back-seat trying to keep my thoughts to myself as we drove down the wrong side of the road (they drive on the left)! Everything went wonderful; we saw the ocean, crossed the Shannon River on a Ferry, spent time at the Cliffs of Moher, Galway, and of course enjoyed pubs everywhere. We all got along for 10 days except for a few bumps in the road. Did you really think two daughters and a mother would get along without issues?

On August 9th we started our trip home as we looked forward to our own beds and food that didn't necessarily include potatoes! Our plane was supposed to leave Dublin at 2:20pm (8:20am at home) with an arrival in Chicago at 4:20pm. The plane was great with a video screen on each seat so you could select your own movie etc. When we arrived near Chicago the Captain announced that we would have to circle the airport for a while, the weather was stormy. After 45 minutes we were told that we would have to divert to Detroit, Michigan for our landing—we no longer had enough fuel to wait. Around 6:00pm we arrived in Detroit to re-fuel. This didn't seem to be a problem until we had been sitting for an hour and the Captain informed us that we could not get fuel because they wouldn't accept their credit cards! As we waited, I decided to watch another movie and at 8:00pm we heard from our Captain—it is unfortunate, but we will have to stay the night; are you kidding me! Since this was an international flight we had to wait for Customs Agents to arrive in order to leave the plane; at 9:00pm we were finally okay to disembark. Now it is 9:30pm and 300 people are entering an airport that is quiet with very few employees at work. First we waited in line to find our luggage (10:30pm), we waited in line to get our room assignment (11:30pm), we made our way outside to wait for transportation to our assigned hotel (12:00am) and finally waited in line to get our room (12:45am). When we turned the key to our room, we were tired and hungry. Where do you get food at 1:00am on Monday, you call for pizza delivery with arrival at 2:00am!

In the morning we called to find out our time for departure; would you believe 5:00pm? Oh yeah; we were spending the day in the airport☺. Once we finally passed the electronic scanning the girls and I decided we needed some real food and stopped at TGI Fridays. Kathleen decided she needed a beer and we waited for our waitress. Imagine our surprise when the power went out! Do we have a big cloud following us, or what? So....now we are only able to order cold items on the menu, but good news the beer still flowed.

Around 5:10pm we finally boarded the plane and were ready to head to Chicago. Imagine our surprise when we heard the Captain's voice telling us we were still waiting for the fuel and we didn't have our flight plan yet! The next communication was more encouraging; we now have our flight plan and we are getting fuel. The bad news—Customs wants to check a couple pieces of luggage on the plane and we don't know which pallet they are on!!! Finally at 6:15pm we were cleared for take-off. The entire plane of passengers (probably only 200 since many had ditched the flight this morning with other arrangements) cheered and clapped....good-bye Detroit, hello Chicago☺. We finally arrived at our destination at 7:00pm—one day late. How's that for the **LUCK OF THE IRISH!!**

Cindy Pistek – Hancock County

NASCOE'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY CONVENTION GATLINBURG, TENNESSEE

On August 11, 2009, Joni Birkhofer from Muscatine County and I loaded up the car and headed south to the beautiful state of Tennessee for the NASCOE National Convention. It was a great week of information, seeing old friends and making new friends. On Thursday, August 13 the entertainment for the evening was "Night at the Oscars". Attendees were asked to dress as their favorite movie star or character. So basically it was a costume contest. We got together with Dee Lehn from Keokuk County and came up with a plan. Anybody that knows us knows that we jump for a costume contest. Dee had the idea for Cat in the Hat with Thing 1 and Thing 2. Well, Joni and I could really relate to Thing 1 and Thing 2, so we said let's do it! We ended up getting an Oscar for the best Cartoon Character. Some of the staff from WDC dressed up as the Wizard of Oz and they won the best all around. Our own Deb Krusemark was Glenda the Good Witch.



Elvis is alive and well.....



Elvis Presley showed up at the 2009 IASCOE Convention to WOW guests with his own rendition of “Are You Lonesome Tonight – The Senior Citizen Version.” Was this really Elvis on his way to the Piggly Wiggly or just an imposter looking for his five minutes of fame? Who was this Elvis “wannabe?” Tell us what you think. Some in the crowd thought he performed as well as he did in his younger days while others thought he was a better entertainer than singer.

Either way, it was entertaining and gave the audience a few good laughs. Thanks, “Alvis!”



ROD BIENSEN

Rod Biensen is an accomplished musician. Growing up in State Center, Iowa, his family supported his musical talents in school and church. Rod's primary talent lies with ragtime and dixieland jazz piano. He also plays cornet and tuba.

In 1974, he started performing professionally at Shakey's Pizza Parlor in Ames, Iowa. This stimulated his interest in popular music from the ragtime and Dixieland jazz era.

Since 1978 Rod has performed in the ragtime and dixieland jazz circuit including 2 cruises. He has performed 3 concerts with the Alabama Symphony and 1 concert with the Arkansas Symphony. Rod can be seen every summer at Iowa community festivals.



Rod is also an avid dancer and loves especially the Savoy Style Lindy Hop Swing. He teaches swing and ballroom locally with his wife Tricia. Rod and Tricia also teach ragtime dancing at the Sedalia Ragtime Festival in Missouri the first weekend in June.

Support for educating the next generation about ragtime and Dixieland jazz music is also important to Rod.

Rod performs the third Saturday every month at Burgies Espresso Café located north of Lowe's at the Conoco gas station from 7:30pm to 10:30pm. Anyone interested in attending needs to call me at 515/291-0399 to insure there have been no changes. If you wish to be on an e mail list that verifies this and other performances, please send your e mail to Rod at picklesandpeppers@hotmail.com.



Pictured here is Rod entertaining guests at the 2009 IASCOE State Convention with some good old fashioned toe tapping music. Rod ended the evening with a tribute to all branches of the military. Rod is the Story County CED.