



The Dixie Ranger

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OPEN SEASON ON FOREST SERVICE VEHICLES

By John Courtenay

One spring day in 1950, a Forest Service car pulled up in front of the Tellico Ranger District Office and Les Shontz, TMA out of the Cherokee National Forest Supervisor's Office, came blustering in. His first words were, "Some crazy woman just shot at me as I came by that boat landing at the mouth of Oosterneck Creek." Knowing that landing was where Ike Allen kept a little boat to cross over from his house on the other side of Tellico River and that Ike was out in the warehouse working on the fire tool cache, Ranger Bryce Ledford sent for him. When Ike came in, Bryce said, "Ike, Mr. Shontz says that a woman shot at him as he drove by your boat landing." Ike answered, "Yeah, that's Margaret." (Margaret was Ike's wife.) When asked why Margaret would shoot at Mr. Shontz, Ike responded, "What was you a-driving, Mr. Shontz?" "That green Forest Service vehicle out there!" came the reply. "Oh, she thought you was Joe Floyd," said Ike as he walked out and back to his tool sharpening. Case closed.

Ike's analysis and answer was undoubtedly 100% correct, but it took some explaining by Ranger Ledford and dispatcher B. W. Chumney to make Mr. Shontz understand that there really wasn't an open season on Joe Floyd, a recreation aid who also drove a green Forest Service vehicle.

The facts were that Margaret was an excellent shot who regularly made head shots on squirrels so as not to spoil any meat and since there wasn't a bullet hole in the Forest Service car, it was obvious that she had not been shooting at it. As Margaret knew most of the District people, it is likely that the shot was her way of

saying "Hi" as a friendly greeting to Joe Floyd or whatever green car driver it may have been. Situations scary and puzzling to the uninformed are routine for the Ranger who knows his district and its people.

John Courtenay, retired Forest Supervisor, Lufkin, Texas

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HOW DID WE SURVIVE?

Looking back, it's hard to believe that we have lived as long as we have.

As children we would ride in cars with no seat belts or air bags. Riding in the back of a pickup truck on a warm day was always a special treat. Our baby cribs were painted with bright colored lead based paint. We often chewed on the crib, ingesting the paint. We had no childproof lids on medicine bottles, doors, or cabinets, and when we rode our bikes we had no helmets. We drank water from the garden hose and not from a bottle.

We would spend hours building our go-carts out of scraps and then rode down the hill, only to find out we forgot the brakes. After running into the bushes a few times, we learned to solve the problem. We would leave home in the morning and play all day, as long as we were back when the streetlights came on. No one was able to reach us all day.

We played dodgeball and sometimes the ball would really hurt. We ate cupcakes, bread and butter, and drank sugar soda, but we were never over weight; we were always outside playing. Little League had tryouts and not everyone made the team. Those who didn't had to learn to deal with

disappointment. Some students weren't as smart as others or didn't work hard so they failed a grade and were held back to repeat the same grade. That generation produced some of the greatest risk-takers and problem solvers. We had the freedom, failure, success and responsibility and we learned how to deal with it all.

~author unknown~

A CONTINUATION OF RIK ERIKSSON'S FOREST SERVICE CAREER -

As staff member in charge of timber management for the Mississippi National Forest, interviewer J. McConnell asked "What did that involve?"

Eriksson: It was mostly reforestation but there was some timber cutting on the Homochitto National Forest and later on, on the Delta National Forest. It has some virgin hardwood timber. We did a lot of erosion control on the Holly Springs NF in the northern part of the state.

J. McConnell: Tell us about the Delta NF. It was a unique forest. It was one of our few bottomland forests in the South.

Eriksson: Of course, it was during the depression and, I forgot who the owner was, but even good hardwood timber couldn't be sold readily, so we bought a good chunk of virgin hardwood timber and some that had been cut over. That comprised the forest and we were making some sales of hardwood timber but it was just a jungle of undergrowth there. It was full of poison ivy, vines and snakes, - you just name it. Mosquitoes too.

J. McConnell: After that you went to Texas?

Eriksson: I went to Texas. They had a three-way switch. Ernie Harris was in Texas and he went to Arkansas, Harold Wise was in Arkansas and he went to Mississippi. That was in 1939. I stayed in Texas until August of 1941 and then I joined another branch of the U. S. Government.

J. McConnell: Tell us about your army service.

Eriksson: I have a complete booklet about it. In World War I they had forestry units which were regiments then. Colonel Greeley was one of them. Colonel Graves was one and Major, forgot his name, he was Regional Forester in Region 1. After WWI most of those people that were in forestry units retained their military titles when they reverted back to civilian status. In WW II

they, about 1942, organized forestry units as a company level, not in regiments or battalions in the beginning. I had been called to active duty being a reserve officer in the infantry. I had been to Fort Benning and had been refreshed since I hadn't done much military duty since I was in ROTC. And then I was in Camp Cross, South Carolina, at Spartanburg when I noticed something in the *Army Times* where they were going to setup the forestry units in WWII. Well, I knew a little about them in WWI so I applied to the Adjutant General for an assignment there and they assigned me to A.P. Hill Military Reservation in Virginia, which is half way between Washington and Richmond. So, I reported to A.P. Hill in July, I think, of 1942. I reported to the headquarters which was at an abandoned school house. I reported to the adjutant and said I was Captain Eriksson and I was reporting for duty to the 800th Engineer (Forestry Company). He said "Well Captain, I'm glad to see you because you're it." So I was the 800th Engineer Forestry Company. I had to recruit my cadre from Fort Belvoir engineers. And then I had to get the draftees that were assigned to me. The people that were inducted into the 800th Engineers were suppose to be according to your occupational skills. Being in the sawmill business you had to have people who could operate machines so I received quite a few who could operate machines but they had to operate sawing machines and things of that kind. They were from New Jersey and New York and absolutely worthless to me. Finally, by contacting the Chief of Engineers, he agreed to replace half of my company with people from the Northwest - Washington, Oregon and Idaho. Didn't make any difference who they were, they all had experience in logging and we really had a good outfit consisting of five officers and one hundred and seventy-five enlisted men. We trained at A. P. Hill over the winter, no closed barracks, all under tents in the wintertime. Snow and everything. It was really good training for them. After we finished at A. P. Hill, we went down to Camp Clayborn in Louisiana for a few months. Then we were shipped overseas.

We were shipped first to North Africa. We waited around Oran for about two months for our equipment to catch up with us. It was scattered all the way from

Algiers to Casablanca. We finally got together and setup our operations in the Atlas Mountains of Tunisia. We cut hardwood. The material we cut there was for General Patton's invasion of Sicily. It consisted of bridge timbers, planking and things of that kind. General Patton went through Sicily so fast that he was through Sicily before the lumber got to him.

J. McConnell: The logging equipment you used, did the Army actually have logging equipment.

Eriksson: We had one portable sawmill. We had chainsaws that were specially made with five-foot blades, two-man outfits. Incidentally, we never used them. They were always breaking down so we relied on the old-fashioned two-man crosscuts. We had trucks and bulldozers and all the equipment necessary to produce lumber. I think we produced a million board feet of timber in the Atlas Mountains.

After Italy was invaded, we moved from Tunisia to Naples. From Naples we moved south about a hundred miles into the instep of Italy which is in the province (region) of Calabria, really the province of Cosenza. There we set up operations in the Sila Mountains at about three to five-thousand foot elevation. Lots of good pine timber there. Similar to our loblolly pine. We were twenty-five miles away from Cosenza which was the mail rail head. Those twenty-five miles were connected by a narrow gauge railroad. In addition to our GI mill, which was a circular saw mill, we had requisitioned civilian mills that were there. They produced timber for us. We bought timber from them. They were not allowed to produce it for anyone else. We were shipping lumber of all descriptions, ninety-foot pilings to fix up the harbor at Naples and to setup the land facilities at Anzio. We also made bridge timber, railroad ties, dimensional timbers, two-by's, planking, boards for dunnage - you name it, we made it. At the height of our operations we were shipping twenty-five car loads of lumber a day from our shipping point to the engineer depots north of us.

J. McConnell: With just one sawmill?

Eriksson: No, with one GI mill and fifty-five private sawmills under our command. Toward the end of the war we had a branch outfit operating north of Rome, just below Genoa. It operated for a short time. The timber there was requisitioned from a

nobleman - The Duke of Salviati. It had been in the war zone and the timber was all imbedded with shrapnel and we had to use our circular sawmill and the minute the saw hit one of those pieces of shrapnel, it just ruined the teeth. We had to run over the log with mine detectors to determine where the shrapnel was and cut it out with an ax before we put it through the mill.

E. McConnell: Did you go up into the other sections?

Eriksson: I left Italy. The war in Europe was over in May and our outfit was alerted to go to the Pacific. Our total time overseas was about two and a half years, counting the time in both Africa and Italy. Hostilities in the Pacific were over so most of us went home in the fall.

E. McConnell: Was your unit the only forestry unit?

Eriksson: Our unit was the only forestry unit in the Mediterranean Theater. They had other forestry units that operated. One was in the South Pacific, one operated in India which the 800th furnished the cadre for and later on, I believe, there was one forestry battalion in the European Theater.

E. McConnell: And what rank did you acquire?

Eriksson: I stayed in the Army so long in WWII as a captain that I didn't think they had any other grade. I was released from active duty as a Major and I stayed in the reserve for a few years. I retired from the reserve at age sixty-five with the rank of Lt. Colonel. (Mr. Eriksson was awarded the Legion of Merit. The 800th Engineers were awarded four separate citations for Meritorious Service).

J. McConnell: And then you went back to the Forest Service?

We will continue the oral history of Rik Eriksson by Jim and Elaine McConnell in our next issue of The Dixie Ranger - Editors.

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This tale comes from a Catholic elementary school .. Up at the head table in the cafeteria, one of the nuns had placed a big bowl of bright red, fresh, juicy apples. Beside the bowl, she placed a note which read, "Take only one. Remember God is watching." At the other end of the table was a bowl full of freshly baked chocolate chip cookies, still warm from the oven. Beside the bowl, a little note scrawled in a child's handwriting read, "Take all you want. God's watching the apples."

FINANCIAL STATEMENT - YEAR 2002

Proposed		Actual
Printing	\$1,950.00	\$ 1,402.03
Postage	600.00	542.58
Door Prizes	200.00	200.00
Miscellaneous	325.00	249.18*
Interviews	<u>200.00</u>	<u>211.99</u>
TOTAL	\$3,275.00	\$2,605.78

*Includes \$100 to FSFSX Club for Web Site,
\$100 to National Museum of FS History,
bank charge and gift to past President.

PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2003

Printing	\$ 1,950.00
Postage	600.00
Door Prizes	200.00
Misc.	300.00
Interviews	<u>250.00</u>
 TOTAL	 \$ 3,325.00
 Carryover from 2001	 \$5,724.93
Income	<u>2,574.86</u>
 TOTAL	 \$8,299.79
Less Expenses	2,605.78
 BALANCE FORWARD	 \$5,694.01

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THE ROYAL FORESTS OF MEDIEVAL ENGLAND

A book review by Jim McConnell

I had the name of this book in my files for several years. Noticing that our county library was receiving various awards for good service, I decided to give them a test. I asked for an inter-library loan and within two weeks, there it was. I guess we do have a good library system. What really made me decide to get and read this book was reading Edward Rutherford's new novel entitled The Forest. His book is certainly good but covers only a small segment of the concept.

The Royal Forests of Medieval England started in 1066 with the Norman Conquest. The Normans established a new concept from the continent that would affect the status of the wooded areas of

England and the lives of the inhabitants for centuries.

First, let's get our definitions straight. To the English forests are areas that contain trees, fields, pastures, houses and other places that consist of everyday life. Woods are where trees are. The English Royalty loved to hunt and recognized that game needed a variety of sites to flourish, therefore, they declared both large and modest areas to be Royal Forests and no one but royalty could hunt or take game. No one could cut a tree, kill a rabbit, pasture cows or hogs or do anything necessary for comfortable living. Others could live there but could do little without permission or paying a fee.

Soon forest law, separate from English common law, was established. Forest law established the principal that Royalty could do things that the common man could not and if the common man was caught they would be heavily fined, or even forfeit their life. Soon the Crown recognized that the Royal Forests could, and did, provide an excellent source of income. Nobility and even the clergy were required to pay. As with so many things that result from a centralized government, and Royal government is certainly central to just about everything, it soon became oppressive. This went on until 1217 when bad King John, who was holding the throne for good King Richard, precipitated the Charter of the Forest which became linked with the Magna Charta. The Magna Charta established several things, from a free church to freedom from oppression and, to me, the very basic concept that you could not take a person's life if they stole property, only if they threatened or took a life. It was not until 1919 that Royal Forests were declared national forests for all the people.

This long history of England should cause us to stop and ponder the situation we are now in where our national forests are being set aside for so very few. Rules and regulations are being written, proposed and enforced by a central government to the effect that no one can do anything but look at our national forests. Acts of Congress abound that govern the conduct of what can or cannot be done on or to a national forest. In many cases the intent of Congress is being circumvented by those who think they know better. The Royal

Forests of Medieval England By Charles Young is dry, but fascinating reading. It was published by the University of Pennsylvania Press in 1979.

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Speaking of books - Robert Lentz, Retiree from Region 8, has published a book - Trees of Inspiration - the story of an American artist and his mission to preserve the history and beauty of special trees. Robert says "I found my artistic niche by preserving the history and beauty of special trees. I seek trees with special meaning to their owners, or ones that come from historic places. I turn them into works of art. The history of each tree is captured in a certificate that accompanies the artwork. The history of the tree is more important to me than the quality of the wood. The stories give my artwork a personal touch. I adapt my techniques and create a unique style to suit the condition and the particular type of wood.

"My raw materials often come from trees that blew down or were pushed over for roads, subdivisions, or new developments. Most of these trees are piled to burn or left to rot. I basically recycle the waste wood. Natural features such as knots, holes, cracks and gaps are blended into the overall design of the piece. Spalter wood, or wood that is beginning to decay and has fungus growing through it, is often used. Sometimes I save logs for 2 years or more to allow the fungus to grow through the tree. This creates interesting textures and explosive colors that add unique character to the work.

"This book is about my work to capture the natural beauty of wood and the special stories behind each tree which inspired the work of art. It shows the amazing forms that are derived from waste wood and showcases the striking raw natural colors of many species of trees."

This sixty-four page book is in full color with over 75 sculptures and vessels, each with its unique history. There are stories about historic homes, sites and famous people. Also included are inspirational quotations and verses about trees.

This book may be ordered from Robert Lentz, P. O. Box 387, Pungoteague, VA 23422 or purchase online at

www.RobertLentz.com. The cost is \$19.95 plus S&H (\$2.50) for one to three books, from 4 to 9, S&H is \$5, over ten books, shipping is \$10. Visa and Mastercard, plus personal checks are accepted.



LUNCHEONS FOR 2003

There will be two luncheons in 2003 - the first is June 26 and the second one is on December 11. The price of the luncheon has increased to \$13. Luncheons will be held at the Petite Auberge restaurant in the Toco Hills Shopping Center. Reservations are required and we request that you do make reservations. Lunch is served at 12 noon, so come early to have a time of fellowship before we eat. Reservations may be made with either the Brays, 770.253.0392, or with Peaches Sherman, 770.253.7480. Please make a notation on your calendar now so that you will not overlook the luncheon. We miss you when you are not there. Please make your reservations on the Tuesday before the luncheon on Thursday. I may be able to get another newsletter out before the first luncheon, but in case I don't, record the date now so you don't forget.

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A husband looking through the paper came upon a study that said women use more words than men. Excited to prove to his wife his long-held contention that women in general (and his wife in particular) talked too much, he showed her the study results which stated, "Men use about 15,000 words per day, but women use 30,000." His wife thought awhile, then finally she said to her husband, "it's because we have to repeat everything we say." The husband said, "What?"
From the Internet

Only in America ...do we leave cars worth thousands of dollars in the driveway and put our useless junk in the garage.



IN MEMORIAM

John Beal, 91, of Tuscaloosa, AL, passed away November 9th, 2002. During his career with the Forest Service, Mr. Beal worked at one time in the Lands Section on the Ouachita NF. He was a member of the Retirees association and appreciated all the Ouachita news reported in *The Dixie Ranger*. He is survived by his wife Vietta.

Mary E. Glasco Carpenter, of Blairsville, formerly of Atlanta, passed away January 5. She is survived by husband, Benton E. Carpenter, Jr., Blairsville, son Scott and Jill Carpenter, Alva, FL.; daughter Laurie Carpenter and Kerek Luebbe, Hangzhou, China, several grandchildren and a sister and a brother.

Colleen Nix Corpe, 75, of Mesquite, Nevada, died November 5 in St. George, Utah. She is survived by her husband of 54 years, Ed, two daughters and one son, and two grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Earl Davis, retiree from the Ouachita NF, died December 3. He was an engineer on the Ouachita before retiring many years ago.

Opal Harris, wife of retiree David L. Harris, died November 28, 2002.

Carl Franklin Hoover, 74, of Little Rock, died November 6, 2002. He worked for the Forest Service for 33 years and then 10 years with the Arkansas Territorial Restoration. During his 33-year career with the Forest Service, he worked in Arkansas, Georgia, Virginia and on the YLT in Miss. He is survived by his wife Mary. They were married 47 years. Carl is also survived by two sons and daughters-in law; a brother, two sisters, and five grandchildren.

Wayne Ruziska, 80, of Atlanta, passed away October 15, 2002. Wayne worked for the Forest Service for 31 years. He held positions in Kentucky, Virginia, Mississippi

and the Regional Office in Atlanta in Aviation and Fire Control from which he retired in 1984. Wayne served in World War II in the Battle of the Bulge. He received a purple heart for his heroic actions and was another one of America's "Greatest Generation", who are rapidly passing away into history, but not forgotten. He is survived by his wife Ann.

Winton Lee Slade, 75, of Tioga, LA, passed away May 30, 2002. He was a 1955 graduate of Louisiana State University where he received a degree in Forest Genetics. He was a decorated Navy veteran having served in WWII. He was the Nursery Operator of Stuart Nursery at Pollock, La, and retired from the U. S. Forest Service in 1972. Survivors include his wife, Dorothy of Tioga; one son, David and a grandson of Tioga. A brother also survives.

Johnnie Chesnut Smith, Atlanta, died December 12. Johnnie worked for the Forest Service for a number of years. Johnnie was great with humor and famous for her "one-liners". She is survived by nieces, nephews and many friends.

Eileen J. Woody, 76, of Suches, GA, died December 21. She was the wife of retiree, Arthur Woody, former Supervisor of the NFs in Alabama. Two sons and five grandchildren also survive.

Our deepest sympathy to those families who have lost these loved ones. The Editors

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JOHN R. MCGUIRE AWARD

The National Association of Forest Service Retirees (NAFSR), in cooperation with the Forest Service USDA, is pleased to announce the establishment of the John R. McGuire Award, in honor and memory of the distinguished late Chief.

NAFSR takes great pride in accomplishments of the Forest Service in managing the National Forest System in providing the technical and scientific knowledge for management of the nation's forest resources, and for implementing programs in support of state and private forestry. The Forest Service has enjoyed a well-founded reputation as an effective "can

do" outfit. In recent years escalating regulatory requirements, changing public attitudes, appeals, and lawsuits have frustrated efforts to complete many essential activities.

Retirees are aware that there continues to be strong commitment to sound resource management within the agency. Dedicated individuals and groups are finding ways through the complex processes, mobilizing public support, and accomplishing needed resource management activities. NAFSR wants to provide recognition to outstanding examples of such accomplishments.

Individual Forest Service employees, groups of employees, and organizational units that have outstanding accomplishments in implementing the mission of the Forest Service are eligible for consideration for this award.

Forest Service employees and members of NAFSR may nominate candidates for the John R. McGuire Award. Nominations must identify the responsible Forest Service employee(s) or organizational unit. Nominations should describe the nature of the accomplishment, how it relates to the Forest Service mission, and why it should be recognized as outstanding. Nominations should be submitted to regional representatives of NAFSR. Dave Jolly, djolly@webshoppe.net is the Southeastern representative. There is no deadline for nominations.

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A TRIBUTE TO WAYNE RUZISKA From Jack Godden

My days with Wayne go back to the Cumberland when he was appointed Ranger on the Somerset District in 1957. He replaced a Ranger who unfortunately misappropriated some "impress cash" - maybe the first year of its use on the Ranger District. I was then Timber Project Assistant (the first in the Region) working for Spud Hile and later Bill Wentz, scouting out timber for possible sales. Wayne spent a few days in the woods with me, most interested in "silvics" - that District having some good shortleaf pine stands and white oak (sold for lumber rather than appraisal for stave material). He was also one that accepted some of the first log grading training. He was a straight shooter, good

listener, willing to accept assistance that was supposed to be my job.

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

Sam Halverson, 915 Santa Anita Drive, Woodstock, GA 30189. Phone: 770.926.1634. E-mail: samandee2@cs.com

Herb Mansbridge, 100 Rocky Reef Circle, Hot Springs, AR 71913. E-mail: h1bridge1@juno.com

David J. Samuel (Bonita), 439 N. Ross Maddox Road, Pearcy, AR 71964-9421. Phone: 501.296.1872. E-mail: david.Samuel@mail.state.ar.us

John Waters (Julianne), 142 Weatherstone Pkwy., Marietta, GA 30062. Phone: 770.971.3339

New addresses:

Danny Britt - 126 McIntosh Lane NE, Cleveland, TN 37323.

Russ Daley - 826 Coburg Village, Rexford, NY 12148. Phone: 518.243.6476.

Robert N. Kitchens, 16900 Forest Hills Lane, Andalusia, AL 36420

Ed and Edna Littlehales - 900 Tamiami Trail South, Apt. 616, Venice, FL 34285. Phone: 941.486.5159. E-mail: elittlehales@bigplanet.com

E-mail addresses:

John M. Archer - rangerjohn@hsnp.com

Ben Stansel - benstansel@aol.com

Phone Numbers:

Dick Wengert - 859.745.1779

Marriage:

Walter Fox - married Elizabeth on November 23, 2002. Congratulations!

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LETTERS FROM OUR MEMBERS

Willa Carswell, Canton, NC - Just enjoyed the last newsletter with the 01 on it. Here's check for two more years. Have had a busy 15 months since Ed passed away on July 31, 2001. Have tried to keep busy with canning and going to Atlanta and Murphy. My family and all my friends have been just great to me. I kept the house (4389 square feet) - don't know of anywhere I'd like to live unless it would be on Hiwassee Lake at Murphy. I kept the place there, too.

This week I have gone through a lot of F. S. papers from my career. It is amazing how long it has been since I retired - 27 years.

Vera Thorsen, Mount Dora, FL - After reading my last "Dixie Ranger" and articles on Paul Russell and Rik Eriksson, I thought I'd write a few of my experiences of a Forest Service wife, starting in 1939.

In 1936 Del graduated with a degree in Forestry from the University of Minnesota. He passed his civil service exam at the age of 20 and reported for work with the U.S. Forest Service in Hot Springs, AR. We were married when he was on leave in Minneapolis in October 1939. I went to Mena, Arkansas, as a bride (population 2500). We lived in a boarding house in Mena. Del was gone all week working out of Oden at the Buck Knob CC Camp. Our room and board (2 rooms) was \$6.50 a week. Several other foresters lived there also - Dick Millar and Spence Palmer. I met "Lum and Abner" - Chester Lauck and Ed Goff. I also met and got to know most of the characters they portrayed. Del and I stayed at the "God Be Here Hotel" in Oden. It made "Ripley's Believe it or Not" national newspaper column.

The first two years of marriage we moved over 10 times. All Ranger Stations on the Ouachita - Heavener, Okla., and Mountain View, Ark., in the Ozarks. We also were at 3 CCCamps - Buck Knob, Dutch Creek, and Eagleton. I learned to cook over a wood stove in Mt. Ida, Ark. In Oden we had a coal oil cooking stove, refrigerator and hot water heater that had to be filled every night. We also had wood stoves in the dwelling for heat. In Heavener, we lived in the guest room at the office. Del was Acting Ranger. When staff was out I helped

out answering phone, etc. We ate all our meals out at the only café in town listening to the jukebox playing Bob Wills and Hank Williams, Jr., songs.

In 1942 Del enlisted in the U. S. Marines and served in the 3rd Division all over the Pacific. I worked at the Morris Plan Bank in Washington, D. C. When Del went overseas, I went home to Minneapolis and worked in a bank there until Del was discharged in 1945.

We went back to Hot Springs by train. Our Jim was born in Hot Springs in 1946. To rent a house there we had to buy 5 rooms of the furniture in the house, so I started with all used furniture. We had our name on lists for a car, refrigerator, vacuum cleaner and many other household items.

When Jim was 3 years old, we were transferred to Forest, Mississippi, and lived in a four-room guard house. I cried when I saw the condition the house was in. For months we cleaned, painted and mouse proofed. I got Monk's cloth at Ash nursery used to cover seedlings and made curtains and drapes. When we finished it looked like "House Beautiful."

We transferred to Hattiesburg, Mississippi, and bought our first home on the GI Bill. We planted trees and St. Augustine grass. In two years we were transferred to Tallahassee, Florida. Del was Deputy Supervisor. Two years later we were transferred to Atlanta. Roy White, Forest Engineer, bought our house. Del was in State & Private and Fire. By then Jim was in the 5th grade and fifth different school. After 20 years, as a housewife, I went to work at Davison's, now Macy's, Department Store part time.

From Atlanta, Del was transferred as Deputy Supervisor to Jackson, Mississippi. We bought another house, planted trees and put in a new lawn. Later, Del was detailed to Brazil with Merle Loudon, John Chaffin and Dave Devet. They were gone 6 weeks. Jim graduated and went to Mississippi State for a degree in Forestry.

We were transferred to Montgomery, Alabama, where Del was Supervisor for 3 years. On to Columbia, SC, as Supervisor and ended up in Asheville, NC, where Del was Supervisor. After 40 years of service, Del retired and went into consulting. I worked with him going out on cruises and tallying, also did the office work. What a wonderful life meeting Senators, Governors,

State Foresters, Forest Service Chiefs, and Forestry School Deans.

I am happy to be back in Florida. Waterman Village here in Mt. Dora is very nice and I am close to Jim who is on the Ocala NF. He includes me in some of their socials so I am still part of the Forest Service family. I miss our yearly get-together at Bob Cooper's Golf outing on Jekyll Island, Ga. I still keep up with our many friends. I am glad I married a "Forester."

Bob Thatcher, Asheville, NC - I enjoy receiving *The Dixie Ranger* and the fine job you continue to do to keep us informed of the "doings" of fellow retirees and the reminiscing about the "good ol' days."

This has been a tough year for my wife Harriet. Hopefully, her medical problems will soon be resolved and we will get back to the things we enjoy doing. And I will be able to resume my volunteer work with SAMAB, NARFE and my church.

Marvin Hoover, East Wenatchee, WA - Enjoy reading *The Dixie Ranger*. I read with great interest Paul Russell's account and the interview with Rik. Both were helpful to me during my days at Coweta Hydrological Lab and Central Piedmont Research Center at Union, SC. Rik made possible a timber sale on the Fraser Experimental Forest in Colorado that moved along the watershed study on Fool Creek. This was the first "lump sum" sale in R-2. That and the clear cutting really shook up the very careful and conservative timber people of that region.

R. Fred Foster, Arden, NC - I sure appreciate all the hard work everyone puts into *The Dixie Ranger*. It provides about the only contact with the "past Forest Service" that I have. I sure hated to hear about Eckel Rowland's death. I worked with him a number of years on the Wayah District in Franklin, NC. Keep up the good work.

Herb Mansbridge, Hot Springs, AR - I retired from the Ouachita NF on December 31, 2001. I've been catching up on a lot of overdue traveling and visiting during the year. With four kids scattered from Florida to California, it takes awhile just to make the rounds. My longest trip was an 8,000 mile, two month drive to the West Coast and back, with side trips to southern

California, a few days fishing in Oregon and a visit to Vancouver, B. C. Along with several other trips, including two to Florida to stay a few days with my older daughter, I haven't spent more than a few days at home in Hot Springs. There is so much beautiful country to see! My next long trip will be a drive to Alaska next summer. I hope Canada has some good road maintenance programs!

I'm enjoying retirement and looking forward to receiving *The Dixie Ranger* to learn what's new with other folks.

Nathan Byrd, Maryville, TN - Sure enjoyed the last issue of the newsletter. Appreciate your good work very much. We are about settled here in Maryville, although we both miss long-time friends in the Atlanta area and I especially miss the breakfasts at Mathews in Tucker with the gang.

As we look out our front windows, we can see snow on the foothills and much snow on the higher elevations. Living next to our son and family has exceeded our expectations.

Please renew my subscription. By the way, we miss the luncheons too.

Phyllis Cloutier, Montgomery, AL - Another year has arrived. It can't possibly be as great as 2002 was for my husband, our 4-legged buddy, and me. We piled into our RV pulling along our pickup truck and hit the road on May 21st. Went to WI to visit family; Minneapolis to see the Mall of America; to Winnipeg, CN for a convention of mine; across Canada to Calgary to meet up with some friends; on to Jasper National Park, Banff and Lake Louise; back up to Edmonton, then to Dawson Creek and into Tok, AK. Spent time in Fairbanks, North Pole, drove up to the Arctic Circle, went to Denali National Park - lucky enough to have a perfectly clear day and view of Mt. McKinley - and on to Anchorage, Seward, Valdez then back to Tok and north to Chicken, AK. A total of one month in Alaska. What a beautiful place!

We next hit the Yukon Territory and after a few days there and in British Columbia, we began our homeward voyage. Spent that by visiting friends and family in WA, OR, CA, NV and over to Flagstaff, AZ, and toured Indian ruins and meteor craters around there. Headed north to Lake Powell and saw the Rainbow Bridge National

Monument, then west to Bryce Canyon, Cedar Breaks National Monument, Red Canyon and Zion National Park. From there we went east to Albuquerque, NM, for the Hot Air Balloon Fiesta – what a spectacular sight! After this, we headed to TX to visit with friends and family. We arrived home in Montgomery at 9:30 p.m. on October 24. This is just a “short” synopsis of the trip. We had a truly wonderful time and saw so many fascinating, beautiful sights. Our buddy is a 4 ½ year old Yorkshire Terrier, Thunder by name, and he took the trip in stride.

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National Forest in Florida Retirees Reunion – the 13th Annual

The 13th Annual Reunion of the National Forests in Florida retirees will be held at Silver Lake Recreation Area on the Apalachicola National Forest on April 12, 2003. Please contact Joann Webb, 1715 Hall Dr., Tallahassee FL 32303 if you are interested in attending.

About 60 retirees attended the reunion the year before and it was just great seeing new faces after 30 years.

We encourage you to attend.

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TOUCH AND GO ON THE CONECUH By Joel Nitz

One of the interesting activities on the Conecuh was what was occurring in the air space above the District. The Naval Air Force Training Center was located several miles south of the district, near Pensacola, Florida. The Navy used small yellow single engine planes which could be seen and/or heard most any time and anywhere over the south side of the District. They did a lot of simulated “touch and go” maneuvers at very low elevations.

One day, while I was in the District Office, one of the lookouts reported a downed plane. It didn't take me long to decide to see for myself what was happening. By the time I got to the site, I could see that the plane was upside down. The pilot was still in his parachute harness and suspended upside down and conscious. He said he couldn't reach his knife to cut his straps. He told the gathering people

that they should not break into the plexiglass canopy because sparks might cause an explosion.

There was little that we could do under these conditions, although a couple of men tried to dig under the canopy. In the meantime, fuel was beginning to drip on one of the wings. The pilot knew that his buddies in the air would have seen him and reported the downed plane and asked for assistance. Shortly, a rescue helicopter appeared and landed nearby. The rescue personnel acted quickly. The first thing they did was to talk to the pilot and dig out the soil under the canopy. One man took something like a fire axe and proceeded to smash the plexiglass canopy. Then another reached into the canopy and cut the straps of his parachute. The pilot, under his own power, scooted out of the shattered canopy like he was ejected. He surely wanted to escape the possibility of an explosion and fire while he was confined to the canopy.

According to one of the rescuers, the pilot experienced a sudden loss of oil pressure and had to land immediately. The pilot downed his plane in an overgrown field with vegetation about waist high, judging that he could land safely in the clearing. The pilot didn't have much choice where to land even if he had known that the field was terraced. Besides that, there was a barbed wire fence constructed on one of the terraces. The plane hit the fenced terrace with its wheels and tipped over. The plane did not appear to be badly damaged. Collectively, the observers on the ground heaved sighs of relief when the downed pilot was rescued safely.

Joel Nitz, Retiree, Hot Springs, AR

(Editor's note: County Rangers in Escambia County blamed many forest fires on lighted cigarettes thrown from these planes! –Bert)

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New Supervisor for the Chattahoochee-Oconee NFs

Kathleen Atkinson accepted the Forest Supervisor position on the Chattahoochee-Oconee NFs, effective February 9.

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Preventing Static Fires While Refueling

This topic has been getting some TV air time lately, but really is news to most of us.

Three "old" rules for safe refueling while filling up:

1. Turn off engine
2. Don't Smoke
3. Never re-enter your vehicle

Bob Renkes of Petroleum Equipment Institute is working on a campaign to try and make people aware of fires as a result of "static" at gas pumps. His company has researched 150 cases of these fires. His results were very surprising:

1. Out of 150 cases, almost all of them were WOMEN.
2. Almost all cases involved the person getting back in their vehicle while the nozzle was still pumping gas. When finished they went back to pull the nozzle out and the fire started, as a result of static.
3. Most had on rubber-soled shoes
4. Most men never get back in their vehicle until completely finished. This is why they are seldom involved in these types of fires.

5. Don't ever use cell phones when pumping gas.
6. It is the vapors from the gas that cause the fire, when exposed to static charges.
7. There were 29 fires where the vehicle was reentered and the nozzle was touched during refueling, in a variety of makes and models; some resulting in extensive damage to the vehicle, the station, and the customer.
8. Seventeen fires occurred before, during or immediately after the gas cap was removed and before fueling began.

Mr. Renkes stresses to NEVER get back into your vehicle while filling it with gas. If you absolutely HAVE to get in your vehicle while the gas is pumping, make sure you get out, close the door TOUCHING THE METAL, before you ever pull the nozzle out. This way the static from your body will be discharged before you ever remove the nozzle. (Or the gas cap, at the beginning of the refueling.)

The Petroleum Equipment Institute, along with several other companies are now really trying to make the public aware of this danger. You can find out more information by going to <http://www.pei.org>. Once there, click in the center of the screen where it says "Stop Static." Submitted by Howard Burnett

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From the Editors - We would like to make a special request of the members to send us letters. If you'll look back at some of the comments in this newsletter - "keeps us informed of the 'doings' of fellow retirees and reminiscing about the 'good ol' days'" and "it provides the only contact with the 'past Forest Service' that I have." For this newsletter to continue to keep you informed, we need to hear from you.

To those who have sent in articles - we appreciate them. We'll take all we can get and don't be discouraged if they are not printed right away. They're kept in a file and used appropriately.

Our next newsletter goes out around the first of June, so letters should get to the Editors no later than the 15th of May.

Please let us hear from you.

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*NOTE: Need a file cabinet.
Can use two or four drawer.
Please call Jim McConnell
770.923.1681 if you can
donate a file cabinet or
SFSRA will purchase.*

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