



The Dixie Ranger

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Back to the Forest Service

By Rik Eriksson

This is the conclusion of Rik Eriksson's oral history as given to Jim and Elaine McConnell:

Eriksson: After being released from the Army, I went back to the Forest Service on the Nantahala NF and stayed there for twenty-two months as assistant Supervisor. The headquarters was in Franklin, NC. That was before the Nantahala NF was taken under the supervision of the office in Asheville. I then went to the Regional Office in Personnel.

J. McConnell: Wait - who was the supervisor on the Nantahala?

Eriksson: Well, I had two supervisors while I was there. The first was E. A. (Art) Shilling. He was there only for a few months. And then E. W. Renshaw came in. And I was succeeded by Paul Russell on the Nantahala.

Eriksson: In Personnel in the RO, I was the training and safety officer. I never worked in accident prevention anywhere. In the army they didn't stress safety too much. We were trained, literally to kill people, not to save their lives. The training part wasn't so hard because in the army when the enlistees come in they assume you don't know anything so they really stress training. That was not too hard for me. The accident prevention thing was a real challenge. I think at that time the Forest Service had an accident record that was almost equivalent to the mining industry. That in the amount of lost time. Let's see. I was in the Regional Office for five years. At the time I left, Region 8 had the best safety

record of any region in the Forest Service. I was in the regional office from 1947 to 1951.

Eriksson: From the Regional Office I went to the Ouachita National Forest as the Supervisor. The Ouachita NF has forests in two states - Arkansas and Oklahoma. That was a real active forest. It's a big forest. It was the largest forest east of the Mississippi River except the Superior NF. Lots of timber, a lot of it virgin timber. A well-balanced program - activity in timber management and game management.

J. McConnell: Parts of the Ouachita NF were eminent domain, were they not? Never cut over?

Eriksson: Oh yes, we had quite a number of sections that had never been cut. Virgin timber, very high quality lumber, dense grain and soft texture. It brought a good price. I know we were selling after the war, and lumber had a boom in the price at that time. Of course, all of the sales were sold by auction and I know I received one telegram from Portland, Oregon, from somebody there in the Forest Service, and they couldn't believe the price we were getting per thousand feet for stumpage. I don't remember what the price was but it was something to brag about.

E. McConnell: Was the forest in Oklahoma different from the one in Arkansas or were they pretty much the same?

Eriksson: The Oklahoma part was just an extension of the Ouachita Mountains. Incidentally, the Ouachita Mountains are unique too. It's the only

mountain chain, I guess, in the United States where the axis runs east and west instead of north and south. Which is rather unique because the pine trees grow on the south slopes and the oak trees grow on the north slopes. We had very few pine stands on the north slopes but we did have oak stands which were sold mostly to people who were in the stave business - barrel staves. Of course, the Ozark Forest in the north was quite famous for that. The forest in Oklahoma had been completely cut over. There was no virgin timber in Oklahoma. The further west we went, it wasn't very far, just one county, it kinda petered out to scrub oak. We had one ranger district there when I started and when we left, we had three ranger districts. Two on the original land and then we took over a land use area south of the National Forest which was incorporated as part of the Forest.

J. McConnell: After the Ouachita, you went to the Regional Office in Region 2?

Eriksson: Yes, I went to Region 2 in 1958 to be in charge of timber management and pest control. Pest control was a big activity there with the bark beetles, bud worms and things of that kind.

E. McConnell: How did you do pest control?

Eriksson: Most of the pest control was aerial spraying under contract. It was a big operation and we had a special unit to take care of that for us. They were spraying for bark beetles and bud worms. The White River National Forest, which is mostly spruce, was completely wiped out with it. It was dubbed the "white forest" for a good many years because all you had was just the white snags that were left there. The trees were completely killed off by the spruce bud worm. Timber Management in Region 2, in the Rocky Mountains, was a real challenge because anybody that had lived in the South could see timber grow. For instance, in Mississippi we planted trees in 1935 and before the war in the CCC days, and when I came back as a

training officer, we were cutting the first timber off as pulpwood. When I went to Region 2, I saw some spruce pine plantations that were planted in 1911 and I think they were eight feet tall when I went there in 1958. Timber Management in Region 2 included all of Colorado, part of Wyoming, South Dakota and a little bit of Nebraska. I stayed in Region 2 until 1963.

J. McConnell: Then you came back to Region 8 in 1963?

Eriksson: Yes, as Deputy Regional Forester. They hadn't had a deputy regional forester since Joe Kircher was here and he was the first Regional Forester. When I came in Jim Vessey was the Regional Forester. I stayed with Jim Vessey and when he left I served under Ed Shultz and then Ted Schlapfer. That was a pretty good system. Of course, now they have several deputies. I guess, maybe, it's a change in title because we had lots of assistant regional foresters. It may have been a system of up-grading. With Vessey our division of responsibility was pretty good. Vessey concentrated on external relations with the general public, state and private and industry. He left the operation of the national forests, pretty much under my direction. It made a good division of jobs. I retired from the Deputy Regional Forester's job in 1971.

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Three Little Words: I suppose some degree of commerce would grind to a halt if telephone solicitors weren't able to call people at home during the dinner hour. But that doesn't make it any more pleasant. Now Steve Rubenstein, a writer for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, has proposed "Three Little Words" based on his brief experience in a telemarketing operation that would stop the nuisance for all time. The three little words are "Hold on, please." Saying this while putting down your phone and walking off instead of hanging up immediately would make each telemarketing call so time-consuming that boiler rooms

would grind to a halt. When you eventually hear the phone company's beep-beep-beep tone, you know it's time to go back and hang up your handset, which has efficiently completed its task.

Submitted by Howard Burnett



LUNCHEON JUNE 26

Our first luncheon in 2003 will be on June 26 at the Petite Auberge restaurant in the Toco Hills Shopping Center. The price is \$13 per person and reservations are required. We usually gather at 11:30 a.m. for fellowship and lunch is served at 12 noon. Reservations should be made no later than June 24 by calling either the Brays at 770.253.0392 or Peaches Sherman at 770.253.7480. We always look forward to seeing everyone, so please join us.

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From the President of the Board of Directors, National Museum of Forest Service History:

"The past few months have been exciting for the museum and for me. The museum is in the process of acquiring archives and artifacts from the Angeles National Forest. The collection of materials is to be delivered to Missoula, Montana, around the second or third week of April 2003. Under the able hands of Mr. Harvey Mack (Forest Service, retired), these materials were solicited from many sources over a period of time. The Cleveland National Forest originally commissioned Harvey to display what was acquired at Corona, CA, but the resulting collection was later transferred to the Angeles NF. This collection is now known as the Harvey Mack Collection. It will be a significant, quality addition to the National Museum of Forest Service History's existing collections. Thanks to the two National Forests, to Harvey Mack and to the

collection's contributors for making it available to our museum.

The Museum's Board of Directors commissioned several of its members to recommend the outline for a strategy to implement a capital campaign for the construction of the first sizable exhibit building at the museum site. The recommendation was presented at the January 9, 2003, Board Meeting and subsequently sent to the remainder of the Board across the nation for their consideration and comment. Further action by the Board is scheduled. This is a positive step, and, as a result, members of the museum should realize that they have a strong, resolute, resourceful and hard working Board of Directors.

A Memorandum of Understanding between the NMFSSH and the U.S.F.S., covering our mutual relationship, is being negotiated with the Washington, D.C. office. The signing of this document will take place soon.

As for me, I decided to step down as President and therefore instructed the Chair of the Nominating Committee not to consider my name as a possibility to continue in that position. Fourteen years as President is probably long enough. I made this decision about a year ago not to continue after this past year was over. A Transition Team has been appointed and in concert with the Board's Executive Committee and the Executive Director their tasks are to carry out the business of the museum and to nominate a new President.

It's been a great ride! I've enjoyed it. The enjoyment came because of the people I was working with, locally and across the country.

Thanks for the opportunity."

Gary G. Brown

The perks of being over 50:

- You have a party and the neighbors don't even realize it.
- You no longer think of speed limits as a challenge.

Submitted by Ray Hall



IN MEMORIAM

B. W. CHUMNEY, 88, a resident of Cleveland, TN, passed away on March 21. Mr. Chumney retired from the Forest Service after 43 years of service. He had a great love for history as well as being an avid sports fan. His major historical interests included family, regional and especially the Cherokee National Forest.

He is survived by his son, Gary, and daughter-in-law, Doris; one grandson and a granddaughter, and two great-grandsons.

LEWIS R. GROSENBAUGH, of Gainesville, FL, passed away suddenly on April 22 from a cardiac arrest. He is survived by wife, Wilma.

MARVIN D. HOOVER, 87, of East Wenatchee, WA, died February 8th. He had lived in the Wenatchee area for the past 21 years. He obtained a BS degree in 1938 from the University of Michigan and an MS degree in 1939 from the University of California. Except for a brief duty in the US Navy, Mr. Hoover worked as a Research Scientist for 33 years with the Forest Service, with a focus on hydrology and forest influences. His employment with the Forest Service began in 1940 with the watershed research at the Coweeta Hydrological Experimental Forest, near Franklin, NC, which was part of the Southeastern Forest Experiment Station. He was at Coweeta from 1940 - 1949. He also worked as Chief of the Division of Watershed Management Research at the Rocky Mountain Forest and Range Experiment Station, Fort Collins, Co. Mr. Hoover was an internationally recognized authority in the field of watershed management and was frequently requested for consultation by Federal agencies, universities, industries and others. He was a full

member of the graduate faculty, Colorado State University, College of Forestry and Natural Resources, in Fort Collins from 1954 - 1973.

Mr. Hoover was very active in retirement serving for 20 years as a volunteer forest and watershed activist in Washington State.

Survivors include his wife, Susan; daughter, Caroline V. Wood; son, M. Gary Hoover; and 6 grandchildren.

MARJORIE MCELROY, wife of Retiree Jack McElroy, died on February 25 in Tyler, TX.

DR. GENE NAMKOONG, 68, of Leicester, NC, passed away March 3. Of Korean ancestry, Dr. Namkoong was a native of New York City. Dr. Namkoong received his BS degree in 1956 and his MS degree in 1958, both from the State University of New York at Syracuse. He received his Ph.D. from North Carolina State University in 1963, in forestry and quantitative genetics. He worked for the Forest Service from 1958 to 1993, based at North Carolina State University, where he also held professorships in Departments of Genetics, Biomathematics and Forestry. In the mid-1970's, he was appointed to the rare status in the Forest Service as a Pioneer Research Scientist. In 1993, after retiring from the USFS, he accepted the Department Head, Forest Sciences, position at the University of British Columbia. He served in that position until his retirement in July 1999, when he and his wife Carol moved back to NC.

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Flying Story: The following was sent to us by a friend whose daughter is a flight attendant. All too rarely, airline crews make an effort to make the in-flight "safety lecture" and their other announcements a bit more entertaining. Here are examples that were heard and reported:

"Thank you for flying Delta Business Express. We hope you enjoyed giving us the business as much as we enjoyed taking you for a ride."

"Your seat cushions can be used for flotation; and, in the event of an emergency water landing, please paddle to shore and take them with our compliments."

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS -

Bruce L. Baldwin (Weeta), 3202 Cobblers Walk, Loganville, GA 30052.
Phone: 770.554.9318. E-mail: nasman6@aol.com

Mary Beth Brondhaver, P. O. Box 431, Mountain View, AR 72560.

Jack Wengert, Rt. 3, Box 93A, Waldron, AR 72958. E-mail: e_wengert@yahoo.com

Please make the following changes in addresses and e-mail addresses. Underscoring indicates change.

Phil Archibald - 132 Brown Street, Hartwell, GA. 30643-1717. E-mail: pbarch@hartcom.net.

William H. Arlen - 6012 Ronna Ct. Colleyville, TX 76034-6002

Mickey Beland - 6 Meadow Brook Dr., Fletcher, NC 28732

Russ M. Daley - 31 W Madison Ave, Johnstown, NY 12095-2808.

Chris Epps - 13376 N. Cedar Grove Rd, Lead Hill, AR. (Same location, just a new 911 address).

Larry Fleming - 4436 Huntscroft Lane, Charlotte, NC 28226. E-Mail: lf3270@bellsouth.net or larryanddj@bellsouth.net.

Edith Griffith - 1225 Martha Custis Dr., Apt 718, Alexandria, VA 22302-2020

Peter J. Hanlon - 2085 Wayne Rd., Apt 215 Chambersburg, PA 17201

Tom Poulin - 96 Little Catawa Creek Rd., Troutville, VA 24175

Deward W. Singleton - 150 Julie Road, Tyrone, GA 30290-2115

Mike Sparks - Msparks9@juno.com

Keith Utz - 410 Bio Lane, Hartwell, Ga 30643-5458

George W. Whitlock, Jr. - 197 Morrisons Point Dr., Wedowee, AL 35278-4063

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FOREST SERVICE WILL HONOR GOLDEN EAGLE PASSPORTS

Visitors to the National Forests can now use the Golden Eagle Passport for all federal basic day-use recreation sites nationwide. This includes recreation sites operated by the Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Visitors who frequent public lands where recreation passes are required may save time and money by using an annual Golden Eagle Passport. For example, a visitor can now use a Golden Eagle Passport for entrance to both National Parks, as well as National Forest basic day use locations. This includes developed day-use sites, picnic areas, trailheads, visitor centers and parking. Prior to this change, visitors would have spent \$30 for an annual Forest Pass in addition to the \$65 Golden Eagle Passport. Now only one pass is required, for a savings of \$30. Local passes will continue to be sold and honored alongside the Golden Eagle Passport.

The Golden Age and Golden Access Passports provide similar benefits to cardholders. The Golden Age Passport is a ten-dollar lifetime national pass available to citizens or permanent residents of the United States who are at least 62 years of age. In addition to the benefits provided by the Golden Eagle Passport, the Golden Age Passport provides a 50% discount at campgrounds, developed boat launches and swimming sites, and for

specialized interpretive services. The Golden Access Passport is a free lifetime national pass available to citizens or permanent residents of the United States who have been medically determined to be blind or permanently disabled. The Golden Access Passport provides the same benefits as the Golden Age Passport.

From National Forests in Alabama



LETTERS FROM MEMBERS

John & Sue Chaffin, Green Valley, AZ - First, thanks for continuing to edit the newsletter and take care of the money. You're doing a great job. By the way, I enjoyed Rik Eriksson's interview and Paul Russell's article in the last issue.

We completed our 20th move into a retirement community last June here in Green Valley. So far, so good, but there were adjustments. I had to give up my weekly vacuuming and periodic window washing and that's been difficult. We also celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary in December. Time does fly!

Our best to all you fellow SFSRA'ers.

Charles Blankenship, Roanoke, VA - Here's my check for past dues. We have our own little group here that meets regularly on the second Wednesday of even numbered months. Attendance is usually 25-30.

Many will probably remember Jimmy Short from Mississippi, Arkansas, Virginia, and Tennessee. He was seriously ill and in intensive care for a couple of months, but has made a remarkable recovery. His address is 60 Wyndemere Drive, Troutville, VA 24175, if folks would like to drop him a line.

Jim & Carolyn Moore, North Ogden, Utah - We stay busy and here are some of the highlights of our experience with the Olympics last year. Carolyn worked in the Media Center at the Luge/Skeleton/Sky Jump Site in Park City. Each volunteer got 1 ticket to the dress rehearsal for the Opening Ceremony. By trading, we both got to the opening rehearsal which was fantastic!. There was so very much off-camera that just made it spectacular.

In October we flew to London, rented a car and visited Bath, the Cotswolds, Wales and back to London for a few days.

We continue to go to the lecture series through Senior Friends -- got to keep the old brain working.

We truly appreciate the excellent job you do on the Ranger. We love keeping up with our friends in the Southern Region. Thanks so much.

Joe Bennett, Hertford, NC - I see by the mailing label that I've forgotten to send in my dues. Seems like that is becoming more common lately (forgetting things, that is).

Last year was an eventful year for Pat and me. In April we took a riverboat cruise in Europe. We flew to Vienna, cruised up the Danube to the Danube-Main Canal, through the canal and then down the Main River to the Rhine River. Then down the Rhine to Amsterdam from where we flew home. We stopped every day to see the sights. Never knew there were so many castles and cathedrals in all of Europe, let alone on three rivers. The food was excellent, as were the accommodations. We would recommend the trip to everyone. It was a 16-day trip.

In July we became great-grandparents of a beautiful boy. This was exciting since both of our grandchildren are girls. Now if reaching the great-grandparent stage doesn't make you feel old, nothing will.

I have two thoughts to pass on, both of which you have probably thought of. Have you asked the RO to include an application to the SFSRA in the retirement package for new

retirees? There are probably many that don't even know of the existence of our organization. And the second I'm sure you have done, but not lately. Include a copy of the application in the newsletter. We could copy it and send to people who have retired and not joined. I'm pretty sure you did several years ago.

I appreciate all the time and effort you put into putting out the newsletter. Keep up the good work. I look forward to receiving it.

(Thank you for the suggestions. I am enclosing an application in this issue of The Dixie Ranger - Betty)

Bert Cox, Norcross, GA - Here's money to keep me solvent for a while. I look forward to every issue and am so happy that you all are still publishing it.

I'm still able to sit up and take nourishment. I also work a little in the shop where I produce a prodigious amount of expensive sawdust.

Robin Shaddox, Russellville, AR - Thanks again for all the hard work you do in getting out *The Dixie Ranger* to us. Outside of our retiree group here on the Ozark-St. Francis, I don't hear too much Forest Service or retiree news. The D.R. sure helps to keep us up to date on the latest happenings.

We have lost several of the Ozark-St. Francis retirees the last year or so - Jack Fortin, Eldon Lucas, Ed Harris, and most recently, L. J. Hickman. Sure miss these guys.

Bud Johnston, Prattville, AL - Time flies by and here I am in arrears with my dues. The enclosed check should handle the next several years. I know you have heard it many times but let me echo it again - "Keep Up the Good Work." *The Dixie Ranger* is one of the few publications I read cover to cover when it comes in. It has interesting articles and is a great way to keep up with old friends.

Don Pomerening, Alexandria, VA - Sure do appreciate keeping in touch through *The Dixie Ranger*. Time is moving on.

I've been retired just over 25 years ago in January 1978. It's been a long time since I left Jackson, MS, for Albuquerque, NM, in 1962 and again moving to D. C. in 1966.

Keep in touch with Jay McConnell. He's mighty active. For an 80-year-old I'm quite well. We have a trip planned to China and Tibet in May. My wife, Audry, is still working full time as a CPA. She's a partner in a small firm and is the tax expert.

Dave Scott, Portland, OR - Your recent newsletter reminds me I am once again behind on my dues. The enclosed is for a couple years. I have a hard time remembering what day it is much less remembering to pay my dues.

The past year has been eventful. My partner and I dropped our contractors license after deciding we were too old for ladder work anymore. Audrey's mother died at 93 thus ending four years of difficult care giving. We sold a cabin on the Winema NF and bought another one on the Gifford Pinchot NF (much closer to home). We volunteered for a "dig" on the Toiyabe NF. In between all these, we tried to meet the demands of 3 children and 6 grandchildren. I'm almost out of breath from writing this down!

I'm also working on the committee planning the F. S. retiree reunion for 2005. Let me be the first to invite all R-8 retirees to come on out and see the West Coast. I'm sure you will have a good time. Further, some time in the next year or two we will be looking for someone to host the next Reunion. Ted Schlapfer and I think R-8 should volunteer - there is a sprinkling of other R8 alumni here in the Northwest who also support the idea. Maybe R-8 and R-9 could get together and host one in Kentucky. It's a lot of work but many of us Westerners need an education from you Easterners. I remember seeing Jim Wenner, Ed Ellenberg and Dave Jolly at the Reunion in Missoula, so you have the nucleus of a committee right there!

While I guess I'm a Westerner, my six years in R-8 hold a special place in my memory bank.

Gerald V. Ward, Mtn. View, AR - I really enjoy reading *The Dixie Ranger*. Enjoy the articles written by retirees. Mrs. Thorsen's article was really interesting. They sure moved people around a lot back in those days.

The CCC's did a lot of good work in the 1930's. Not many of those men are around anymore. My Dad joined the CCC's when the school district could not pay teachers where he taught school. We lived about 4 miles from Camp Hedges. The CCC's were building buildings at Blanchard Springs and also building roads, trails, etc. Several trucks would be full of men going to Blanchard each morning by our house. About 10:00 A. M. the chow truck would pass our house taking them their noon meal.

We were pretty destitute as Mother and 5 kids had to eat mostly what was grown in the garden. We also had a cow for milk and chickens for eggs. Dad had to stay at the Camp. A lot of the enrollees could not read or write and he taught them at night in the Camp library in addition to his day time job. He asked the enrollees, who were working at Blanchard Springs, if they would throw off at our house any left over food from the noon meal when they passed on their way back to Camp. They couldn't stop and give it to us since it belonged to the government. So, each evening, if they had left overs, such as apples or bread, they flung it off the truck in the gravel road and we would rush to get it. We picked the gravel out of it and ate it and was glad to get it. We would be disappointed if they failed to throw off anything.

Looking forward to the next issue.

Paul Timko, Roanoke, VA - Thanks for being patient waiting for my dues. Thoroughly enjoyed Rik Eriksson's recollections.

Larry Trekell, San Augustine, TX - As always, I look forward to, and enjoy *The Dixie Ranger*, but get busy and forget my dues. Am sending you enough for you to put (05) behind my name.

After my buy-out retirement in 1994, when Clinton & Gore "reinvented government", I went into consulting for timber purchasers. Recent news is that one of my sales, a 761-acre sale north of Neches, TX, was shut down for a week while crews combed it for space shuttle debris. I was there on Monday when they brought out four pieces. We were allowed to resume logging the next day.

Doug Shenkyr, Rockville, MD - How time doth fly. As usual am behind again. Enclosed is a check to bring me up-to-date. As always, we enjoy the *Ranger* and all the news from old acquaintances.

We still spend our summers in Minnesota but may close out this year as long as the demand for lakeshore property is strong. Also, the close to 1,400 mile trip seems to get longer each year. My wife, Bernadette, had a tough year with rotator cuff surgery in November. She is coming along o.k. but still in therapy to regain use of her arm.

We managed to survive the big snowstorm in the D. C. area but were snowbound for 3 days. The snowplow even got stuck when they tried to plow our street. Oh, well, the good old days and the golden years.

Cliff Faulkner, Lake Placid, FL - I just noticed a big (03) by my name. Accordingly, enclosed is my check. The February issue slipped up on me. On Feb. 9 I had a mild stroke that took me out of circulation for a while. Fortunately, I had no paralysis or muscle weakness, only balance and voice. I'm happy to report that I went to choir practice last night and plan to participate in this Sunday's service.

Melvin Anhold, Bridgewater, VA - I certainly enjoy receiving *The Dixie Ranger*. When it arrives I immediately

read the complete publication. Its arrival is the high point of my day. You folks do a fine job of keeping us old timers informed of the happenings of fellow retirees.

Last year was a hard one for me with health problems that kept me close to home and doctors. This year looks brighter and traveling again is something to look forward to. Mary and I have just returned from six weeks in Florida. That warm weather is sure hard to beat when the snow is flying in Virginia.

Stan Adams, Four Oaks, NC - Thanks for the reminder - sorry I'm behind in my dues. Here's a check to cover my arrears and a few more years.

All is well in the working world - still having fun, but I'll admit some days are more fun than others. The budget problems that have hit State governments are tough to handle. Lately I've decided there really were some good old days and normal must be tomorrow.

We look forward to reading *The Dixie Ranger* and catching up with the news.

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TAPS

Here is a legend about TAPS, the bugle call that brings lumps to our throats:

In 1862 the Confederates were on one side of a narrow strip of land near Harrison's Landing, Virginia. The Union Army was on the other side. Union Captain Robert Ellicombe heard a soldier moaning and crept at night into no-man's land to pull him back into the encampment. The soldier he tried to rescue died, but in dawn's light he discovered the soldier was his son!

The lad had studied music in the South, and when war broke out he enlisted in the Confederate Army. In his pocket was a series of musical notes the soldier had written - the haunting melody we now know as TAPS.

These words were later put to the notes:

Day is done...gone the sun...from the lakes...from the hills...from the sky...all is well... safely rest... God is nigh.

Fading light...dims the sky...and a star...gems the sky...gleaming bright...from afar...drawing nigh...falls the night.

Thanks and praise...for our days...'neath the sun...'neath the stars...'neath the sky...as we go...this we know...God is nigh.

Submitted by Ed Littlehales



A Good Mystery

Book Review by Jim McConnell

Since I like to read, I hang around book warehouses and second hand book stores. Besides that, I have Scots ancestry and am naturally thrifty. Recently I was on my way to somewhere and stopped to visit a book warehouse. On the counter with the paperbacks was a book with the title "Hotshots." The price was \$2.49. I picked it up and, sure enough, it was about forest fires and the Forest Service. The author, Judith van Gieson, had written several novels so I figured there might be something to it. There was. It is a well-researched and written mystery about a hotshot team that falls into a tragedy. Nine die on the Thunder Mountain fire in Colorado. Later the parents of one of the team go to Neil Hamel, a female lawyer, with the idea of suing the Forest Service for negligence and wrongful death. Hamel, in investigating the fire, is trapped in an arson fire and saved by one of the surviving team members. Further investigation reveals a twisted plot that ends in terror and exposes the Forest Service management of the Thunder Mountain fire to willful and serious violations of OSHA rules and common sense. If you enjoy reading novels about the Forest Service, or even

a good mystery, I think you'll like this book. "Hotshots" by Judith van Gieson, Harper Paperbacks, usually \$5.50, but you may find a bargain.

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Forest Service Releases Draft Land Management Plans

Effectively creating the blueprint aimed at improving forest health, productivity and the enjoyment of national forests in the Southern Appalachians, the Forest Service released recently the draft of five land management plans. The plans include the National Forests in Alabama, Chattahoochee and Oconee National Forests in Georgia, Cherokee National Forest in Tennessee, Jefferson National Forest in Virginia, and the Sumter National Forest in South Carolina.

Maintaining and restoring healthy forests tops the list as the most significant goal of the revised plans that would direct forest management on 3.2 million acres over the next decade. The draft plans allow land managers to use an array of forest management tools to curb health risks from diseases, insects and wildfires, while insuring the outstanding ecological diversity of mountain forests.

"These draft plans represent an unprecedented effort of five national forests working together to address common challenges facing the Southern Appalachians," said Bob Jacobs, Regional Forester for the Southern Region.

"The plans are a product of citizen involvement that offered extraordinary access to the planning process, and a cooperative spirit among several federal, state and local organizations. Working together, and transcending boundaries, we hope to ensure that the Southern Appalachians will remain a valuable resource for generations to come."

Release of the draft plans opens a 90-day period of public comment and involvement. Public comments will then be analyzed and used as specialists finalize plans. The Forest Service aims to complete the plans by late 2003.

Copies of the draft plans, executive summaries are available electronically as well as printed versions. Visit website www.southernregion.fs.fed.us.

From NFs in Alabama

The Year 1937

The following was taken from "Happy Days", January issue, 1937, of a CCC newspaper from Camp 464, McClellanville, SC.:

CCC Pay Builds Homes for Three Enrollees and Camp Adviser. Following the lead of a camp adviser, three men of colored Co. 464, are using their CCC savings to build homes. When McTeer, the adviser, received his veteran's bonus, he supplemented it with other savings and began construction on a new home. The idea took hold. One man, whose house was destroyed by fire, asked the adviser to draw plans for a new one. The home is now completed and occupied by the man's family. Work has begun on a house for another enrollee and he himself does much of the work during his spare time. Material has already been bought for a third member's home, work on which will commence in January. Other men in that company are formulating plans to join in the construction epidemic. A two-year hitch in the CCC enabled another enrollee to purchase a farm - the other part of the story is that he lived on less than \$3.00 a month while saving for it."

A news item in this same issue read: "Congress Requested to Extend CCC to July". The Congress which opened Monday will be asked to extend the Civilian Conservation Corps program until the end of the present fiscal year, June 30, 1937, according to a statement issued following a conference between President Roosevelt and Director Robert Fechner. The period of extension will enable the President to determine the form of CCC continuance he will recommend. It is believed he wishes to wait for the reports of three committees which have been studying the possibility of

combining many existing governmental agencies before making a definite decision."

Used with permission of Jack Godden from his Daily Contact notes

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A TRIBUTE TO JOHN BEAL

By Jim McConnell

I noted with sadness the death of John Beal in the last *Dixie Ranger*. John was my first Ranger. It was a damp rainy Sunday in June, 1956, when I first met John Beal. All I had in hand was a letter stating I had been hired by the United States Forest Service and I was to report to the Catahoula District Ranger on the Kisatchie National Forest at Bentley, Louisiana. I should also mention that I had a map with a circle around Bentley, which was located between Dry Prong and Pollock. John was happy to see me and took me over to Miss Molly's and Miss Matty's house. The two old ladies were twins and about 70 years old. I was, certainly, an outsider and from south Louisiana, but since I worked for John, it was alright that I could have a room in their vast house. There were four bedrooms upstairs, two bathrooms, and a large hall lined with book cases filled with old National Geographic magazines. Don Peterson also moved in recently.

My first day of work was spent with John going through the training plan he had prepared. It was about an inch thick and included reading selected parts of the FS Manual - S-Sales, P-Personnel and all that. Darn, I thought, I just got out of school and I was ready to head for the woods. John also explained that any overtime I worked was to be charged to experience and not put on the time sheet. A day or two later he put me in charge of the TSI crew. Jet Keys was the foreman. There were a couple of Hataway's and old man Wallace was the water man and ax sharpener. John had taken me over to the warehouse at the Ranger Station and showed me that it was stuffed full of ammate (ammonium sulfate). As I

remember, ammate was an orange crystal and highly corrosive. The job of the TSI crew was make a frill with an ax around the scrub oak and then another man would place ammate in the frill with a spoon on a long wooden handle. The ammate would eat the spoons up quickly and one of my jobs was to keep them supplied with spoons. This was before the days of plastic and any kind of a metal spoon went quickly. It took all summer, and more, to use all the ammate in the warehouse.

Of course, I was just full of vim and vigor and new radical ideas. I can remember John sitting me down and saying, "Now, Jim, you can't ..." John would spend many a night out by himself prescribed burning. The next morning he would smell of smoke and be red-eyed but he would never let me go with him. I think he was pleasantly pleased several months later when I was drafted for military service and he could be shed of me. I learned a lot from Ranger John Beal. He was a fine example of why the Forest Service was, at one time, the shining example of an excellent federal service.

Good work, John, and thank you.

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Falling Water Creek Fire

By Jack Welsh

When I was District Ranger on the Buffalo RD, Ozark-St. Francis NF, I got a call one night from a man in Witt Springs, AR, who told me that there was a fire west of Witt Springs. I asked him if he could tell me if the fire was on the flat or down in the Falling Water Creek. He could not tell, so I thanked him and called Asst. Ranger Charles Young to gather a crew at Deer Work Center and bring the fire plow. I told him, also, that I would pick up Vernon Carpenter at Pelsor and go to Falling Water Creek to see if the fire was down in the hole. I told him that if the fire was not in Falling Water Creek area, he was to take the plow and crew to Witt Springs and go west out the ridge to the fire.

The fire was not in the Falling Water Creek Area and it was a long way from the creek to Witt Springs, except for the Witt Springs Fire Break, the dividing line between the Buffalo and Bayou Ranger Districts.

I told Vernon that I was going to try to drive up the Fire Break to get to the top and the fire in my two-wheel drive pickup. Vernon said I was crazy to even think of driving up that Fire Break at night. I had in the back of my mind that if I didn't make it, we could use the fire plow to pull me out of any jam I might get into. Some of the gulleys were three to four feet deep, but Vernon held on tight and we made it to the top and at the fire in no time.

I called Charles Young on the radio and told him that Vernon and I were on the fire and for them to come out the ridge. Vernon and I started building fire lines.

I would go back to the pickup and call to see why the crew and plow were taking so long to get to the fire. They got stuck and had to unload the tractor and pull the truck out.

When they finally got to the fire, they could not believe that Vernon and I got to the fire from Falling Water Creek via the impassible Witt Springs Fire Break in a two-wheel drive pickup at night!

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Great truths about life that little children have learned:

- 1) No matter how hard you try, you can't baptize cats.
- 2) When your Mom is mad at your Dad, don't let her brush your hair.
- 3) If your sister hits you, don't hit her back. They always catch the second person.
- 4) Never ask your 3-year-old brother to hold a tomato.
- 5) You can't trust dogs to watch your food.
- 6) Don't sneeze when someone is cutting your hair.
- 7) Never hold a Dust-Buster and a cat at the same time.

- 8) You can't hide a piece of broccoli in a glass of milk.
- 9) Don't wear polka-dot underwear under white shorts.
- 10) The best place to be when you're sad is Grandpa's lap.

Great truths about life that adults have learned:

- 1) Raising teenagers is like nailing Jello to a tree.
- 2) Wrinkles don't hurt.
- 3) Families are like fudge...mostly sweet, with a few nuts.
- 4) Today's mighty oak is just yesterday's nut that held its ground.
- 5) Laughing is good exercise. It's like jogging on the inside.
- 6) Middle age is when you choose your cereal for the fiber, not the toy.

Great truths about growing old:

- 1) Growing old is mandatory; growing up is optional.
- 2) Forget the health food. I need all the preservatives I can get.
- 3) When you fall down, you wonder what else you can do while you're down there.
- 4) You're getting old when you get the same sensation from a rocking chair that you once got from a roller coaster.
- 5) It's frustrating when you know all the answers, but nobody bothers to ask you the questions.
- 6) Time may be a great healer, but it's a lousy beautician.
- 7) Wisdom comes with age, but sometimes age comes alone.

Submitted by Jim Wenner

Many thanks to all of you who sent in articles for this issue of The Dixie Ranger - we appreciate it. The Editors.

Remembering Tom Hunt

By Jack Godden

Having begun work on the Cherokee, I got to meet Tom Hunt, then A. O. who went on to Atlanta with his lovely wife Yvonne, retired there, and started *The Dixie Ranger* on his retirement. I've got a few good tales about him - he actually swapped bottles of J.W. Daniels or a jug of wine for two quart jars of shine made in Polk County, TN - the best and mostest in S.E. Tennessee. He could go to Chattanooga for the bonded stuff. I had a ready supply, never had to purchase any from the good mountain people who I met on my Timber survey activities, collecting data for a District T. M. Plan on the Hiwassee.

I was known as the "Skinny kid with glasses - don't shoot him, he's OK."

Our families were Catholic (four of five living in Etowah) and would go to church in Cleveland. Tom always accused me of pinching one of my little girls at the offertory and me getting out of the collection by going outside.

We did our own typing on old Underwoods. "Acting" Ranger one day, I awarded a 202-A contract to Noah Merrill, accepted his down payment on a salvage job, and told him he could go to work on Monday. Tom reviewed the copy of the contract I mailed in to the S.O and called me up telling me Noah and I had signed the wrong lines and to get another copy executed. That Sunday I loaded Dot and the kids in our car, went to church and on the way back drove to Noah's place above Archville, on "top" of the mountain. This was Dot's first experience with the mountain people - the whole clan being there for Sunday dinner. We were invited to stay for dinner - a real honor - but our youngest daughter had eczema and we had to get her home to cool her off. With regrets, we left. I had a signed contract in hand and Noah did begin work on some tornado blow down on Wolf Creek. Noah gave us a sincere offer to come back - "stay awhile with us." I found I honored him

by me and my young family visiting him on the Lord's Day. My deepest regrets we couldn't stay. He became a close friend - having a new bulldozer that we used cleaning up some squatters shack on the Hiwassee River. He was one of the few contractors I tried to teach constructing water bars that did it correctly - and that's hard to believe!

Tom and I wrote each other when he was retired - he working hours on *The Dixie Ranger* I'd guess with his old "Underwood", mimeographed copies. He followed my career until he passed on. He was a true F. S. legend, with a few good cuss words at times to set me straight as an Assistant Ranger, as I couldn't keep up with my training plans reading all those prescribed FS Manual sections.

Tom Hunt gave up being Editor of The Dixie Ranger in October 1985 after serving in that capacity for 14 years. E. B. (Rip) Williams was Editor from January 1986 to February 1989. The current Editors began in May 1989.

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This information just received:

Irene Gibson passed away on April 12, 2003. Mrs. Gibson was clerk on the Bankhead Forest (Black Warrior Ranger District) office in Haleyville, Alabama. So many of your members worked with Mrs. Gibson some years ago. She has been retired about 20 years and lived in Haleyville. Mrs. Gibson was the wife of the late Herman Gibson who also worked and retired from the Forest Service.

Mrs. Gibson was loved and respected by the employees. She knew that office very well and would help any employee every way she could.

Survivors include daughter, Betty, and son, John.

Submitted by James W. Cole, retiree, Class of 52-86, Bankhead NF, AL

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Only In America ...are there handicap parking places in front of a skating rink.

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Members: May I suggest that you cut this portion out and keep in a safe place in case you change your address or want to get in touch with us. This feature may not appear in all Dixie Rangers.

Because I have used all the material in the pages of this newsletter and I need just a little bit more to complete 16 pages, here's a brief synopsis of a river cruise that Bert and I took at the end of April. We wholeheartedly endorse Joe Bennett's recommendation on the cruise out of Vienna. We took that cruise two years ago in November.

Our latest cruise started in Antwerp, Belgium, to Amsterdam, Middleburg and back to Antwerp. We



flew home from Brussels. There were a number of highlights on this trip, but one in particular we'd like to share with you was the visit to see one of the remaining working windmills in the village of Kinderdijk. The scene shown above is also similar to a painting that Van Gogh did while he was in Kinderdijk. The towns visited were very quaint with cobblestone streets. On a visit to a Lutheran Church in the town of Hoorn, the organist at the end of the concert, played our national anthem. There were many teary eyes in the audience.

We visited the Aalsmeer Flower Auction, the world's largest. You would be amazed at the number of flowers that were presented to buyers. And to think within a day or two these flowers could be in your florist's shop.

The Red Light District in Amsterdam was a real eye-opener. I'll save that for another time.

One afternoon while in the city of Arnhem, I went to the Library to send an e-mail message to our children. I could even read my own e-mail. Small world indeed!

If you have never taken a river cruise in Germany, France, or Holland, we encourage you to do so. *Betty*

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A REMINDER – PLEASE PHONE IN LUNCHEON RESERVATION – see page 3

In This Issue:

<i>Back to the Forest Service</i>	<i>Page 2</i>	<i>Taps</i>	<i>Page 9</i>
<i>Luncheon</i>	<i>Page 3</i>	<i>Management Plans</i>	<i>Page 10</i>
<i>In Memoriam</i>	<i>Page 4</i>	<i>Tribute to John Beal</i>	<i>Page 11</i>
<i>Welcome New Members</i>	<i>Page 5</i>	<i>Remembering</i>	<i>Page 13</i>
<i>Letters from Our Members</i>	<i>Page 6</i>	<i>Application</i>	<i>Page 15</i>

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