



# THE DIXIE RANGER

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## COLUMBIA SPACE SHUTTLE RECOVERY

By Dave Jolly

All of us remember that fateful morning, February 1, 2003, when, glued to our TV's, we watched as Columbia broke up over East Texas and Western Louisiana just 16 minutes from touchdown in Florida. Most of us will long remember exactly where we were when we learned of this terrible tragedy. Our thoughts were first for the families of our astronauts and then for our country. Thus began the gargantuan task of finding our astronauts and as much of the space shuttle as possible.

Within four hours of the break-up of the Columbia, Sabine District Ranger Marcus Beard organized 80 searchers including 22 people from his 31 employee district. As you might expect, Marcus was concerned about safety and, above all, finding the astronauts. Marcus said, "We told everyone not to touch the shuttle material as we knew it could be hazardous." The job was to flag and GPS all shuttle fragments for later recovery after people had been made aware of the dangers involved with the hazardous materials aboard the shuttle. Initially the search was done with volunteers supervised by employees of the US Forest Service and Texas Forest Service.

In their first steps off the road they found human remains, and, by

the eleventh day, all seven of the fallen astronauts had been found. Every time human remains were discovered, a special "Evidence Response Team" was summoned. This recovery group was always comprised of two FBI agents, NASA astronauts, and members of the local law enforcement community. Reverend Fred Raney, Pastor of Hemphill's First Baptist Church accompanied the team. "My main purpose was to let the families know that we were there for the people they loved, and that we remembered them and honored them", said Raney. He led these on-the-spot memorial services in the woodlands and pastureland, wherever they were found, before the astronauts' remains were removed. "The people on these volunteer teams were always extremely professional in how they handled these situations. But there's absolutely no way anyone can be prepared for this. Critical Incident Debriefing Teams were brought in and made mandatory for all people", said Ranger Beard.

To organize the search, Greg Cohrs, Sabine District Timber Sale Forester, gathered information and data from the ground search teams, and using GPS, established a "debris line" to help pinpoint the next day's follow-up search grids. During

those first critical seven days, Greg single-handedly planned each day's operation. After 11 days a NASA team of "rocket scientists" began their own daily search grid targets, using hundreds of GPS points. With few variations their data mirrored Greg's calculations. Do you suppose that Greg, in his wildest dreams, ever thought he would find himself attached to such a major historical event, playing such a significant role and doing it so well?

So, what were the searchers up against? Most of you who have worked across the deep South from East Texas to southern Virginia in the coastal plain and lower Piedmont country will have a good feel for what faced the men and women who were in the field looking for the pieces of the shuttle. Gary McKee, a Hemphill Volunteer Searcher, described it well. "Teams averaging 20 people lined up 20 feet apart and on command began their journey through the woods. People were walking straight into eight-foot high briar patches, brush with visibility of six feet, crisscrossing creeks and occasionally having a nice stroll in the woods. One person might have a nice walk, yet 20 feet away the next team member might be enmeshed in a briar tangle. But it was their job to forge on through without help as that would destroy the line. Our team leaders, a U. S. Forest Service employee and a Jasper County Sheriff, always kept us in line and moving forward."

Adding to it all, there was cold rain, very sticky mud, ornery cattle, wild hogs, poison ivy, barbed wire fences and sometimes bank-full creeks. Then, when the weather warmed they were confronted with snakes, mosquitoes, chiggers, and tornadoes. And in the end, a race against time to beat the "green-up",

which could make an already difficult job next to impossible.

After several days searching with volunteers, FEMA and NASA decided to bring in Incident Management teams. At this time federal firefighting crews were dispatched from all across the country and began to replace the volunteer search effort. There is always something special about volunteers coming to a situation like this and giving of themselves, doing all manner of things to help. This case was certainly no exception. There were over 2,000 people volunteering and many of them beat themselves up pretty badly getting through the brush and contending with the other elements.

The local people were fantastic. Among a myriad of things, they let searchers tramp across their land and climb on their fences. They volunteered their bedrooms so that some of the searchers would have a place to stay, and astoundingly, before the caterers arrived, a handful of Hemphill volunteers served some 32,000 meals at no charge to anyone. "We estimated they provided us \$620,000 in services for free!" marveled Ranger Beard.

By February 12<sup>th</sup>, the Forest Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service and State Forestry Organizations were called on to bring the Incident Command System and their wildland firefighters to finish the job. Many don't realize that, aside from their role in fire suppression, these federal wildland firefighting teams, using the Incident Command System, are also called on to help with everything from hurricane disasters and the World Trade Center terrorist attack



aftermath, to the recent outbreak of the fatal virus, Exotic Newcastle Disease, that effects all bird species and is the world's most infectious poultry disease. It was the first time FEMA requested an Incident Management Team to be used in an operational mode, rather than solely for logistical support purposes.

This mid-February blitzkrieg arrival of Incident Management Teams and wildland firefighting crews propelled and improved the ongoing search efforts. Just as if it were a summer wildland fire, these people rotating in and out by the hundreds, from February through April, heeded their country's call. They responded to this non-wildland fire event (using the same dispatch coordination and mobilization system) from practically every state in the Union. These are the men and women who staff the all-important Incident Command System (ICS) positions. They are experts in logistics, operations, fiscal management, planning and safety. They bring with them the 20-person wildland fire suppression crews who quickly became highly competent space shuttle searchers.

Astronaut "Dom" Gorie said that in those first days, after the accident, his NASA team drew a line four miles wide and 240 miles long. "We thought we could ground search it. It was audacious. It was crazy. But the Forest Service signed up for it. They went out and got it started and never thought twice about it." Wayne Farley, FEMA's Chief of Operations on the Columbia recovery incident, reinforced this when he said, "When we asked the forest guys (Texas Forest Service and the U. S. Forest Service) if they thought they could do this, it wasn't a *'we think we can'*, it was a definite *'yes'*. That showed the dedication

and attitude of those people. And the success of our search just mushroomed from there."

Before it was over, more than 130 federal, state and local agencies, and 270 volunteer groups and private organizations joined forces under the leadership of FEMA and the Texas Forest Service, to help in this unparalleled national undertaking.

More than 22,000 people spent 1.5 million hours on the search. They found more than 82,500 pieces of the Columbia Space Shuttle, weighing some 84,000 pounds - almost forty percent of the shuttle's dry weight. This astounding total is more than three times what the professionals predicted could be recovered. The mission was the largest search effort ever carried out in the United States and is the country's first "National Homeland Security" incident. Of the 167 potential hazardous material finds, only 50 were actually hazardous. It's a credit to the incident's precautions, training and protocol that no one was ever exposed or injured by hazardous material. Sadly, Texas Forest Service aviation specialist, Charles G. Krenek of Lufkin and pilot J. "Buzz" Mier of Rayne, Arizona, were killed March 27 when their helicopter crashed while searching for shuttle parts over the Angelina NF.

It is a tribute to the Forest Service, and the people who pioneered and developed the ICS that is employed often to manage catastrophic events whenever and wherever they occur.

Much more could be said about the heroic efforts of all the people who worked so hard for the success of this important mission. As with anything like this, there are many stories to tell. The Forest

Service has published a documentary, which I used along with some work on the telephone to put this article together. The documentary captures many of those stories and provides a great deal more detailed information about all aspects of the mission. If you are a Forest Service retiree you cannot help but have a feeling of pride in the way "our" people turned out and did their job. They brought recognition and great credit to the agency. A great deal of respect is also due all the people who were there for the way they worked together to achieve success. I believe the seven astronauts who gave their lives for their country would say, "Well done!"



#### LUNCHEON DATE: JUNE 24

Please mark your calendar now for the next luncheon on June 24. We'll meet at 11:30 a.m. at the Petite Auberge restaurant in the Toco Hills Shopping Center on North Druid Hills Road. The price of the meal is \$13 and reservations are required. Please phone in your reservation with either Nancy Sorrells at 770.469.5799 or the Brays at 770.253.0392 no later than June 22<sup>nd</sup>.

*When you were born, you cried  
and the world rejoiced. Live your  
life so that when you die, the  
world cries and you rejoice.*

*Old Cherokee Proverb*

#### **Welcome New Members ...**

**Alan Alsobrook (Anne)**, 1500  
County Road 609, Etowah, TN  
37331-9302. E-mail:  
[Aalsobrook@aol.com](mailto:Aalsobrook@aol.com)

**Carolyn W. Johnson**, 1404 Sugar  
Hollow Dr., Bristol, TN 37620-8030.  
Phone: 423.878.3173

**Kenneth Alford**, 39 Sherwood  
Forest Dr., Arden N. C. 28704

The following are changes to the  
Directory with underscoring to  
indicate the change:

**Bob Bowers** - e-mail:  
[bobvera84@bellsouth.net](mailto:bobvera84@bellsouth.net)

**Remer H. Crum**, 3747 Peachtree RD  
NE, Apt 1803, Atlanta GA 30319-  
1367.

**David B. Drummond**, 151 Sandy  
Beach Dr. Prosperity, SC 29127-7631

**Robert Erickson**, 1220 Nassau Way,  
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**Inez D. Haskill**, 478.474.1291

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**Herbert L. Mansbridge**, 105  
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Bobby Simmons e-mail:  
bsimm86865@knology.net

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### Remembering Wayne Ruziska From Tom Heffernan

I was assigned to timber stand inventory as a new FS employee in February of '62 out of Somerset, KY. Wayne was the DR there at the time and we were assigned to the District for safety sessions and fire. I was single at the time and one night some buddies of mine who were locals wanted to introduce me to moonshine. They took me way up some holler to an old mountain shack and the old boy living there took out some mason jars full of moonshine and we sipped and listened to him play a great banjo. The next morning I woke up in a farm house some where with the worst head I ever had. My buddies drove me back to my rooming house and a few minutes after I laid down, I got a call from Wayne that they had some fires going and needed me to report to the Ranger station. I arrived and Wayne said "Heffernan, where the hell were you last night?" I guess it was obvious that I'd had a bad night by the looks of me. Anyway, he asked me if I could make coffee and I said I sure as hell could make a good cup of coffee. He said you stay by the radio, keep me in coffee and forget about fighting fire today. I was one grateful guy that day!

Another time we were having a safety meeting at his office and Wayne announced to the primary lookout that from now on when he signed on and off each day he was to say "Buck Knob" rather than KIF777. The lookout was upset with Wayne over having to change his

procedure. Wayne decided to make a contest out of it. He told the old time lookout that Bill Zeedike (his assistant ranger) would be the time keeper and at the count of three he would say KIF777 and Wayne would say "Buck Knob" and whoever said it fastest would win. The lookout was willing to do that. Keep in mind that Wayne was originally from NY where folks talk really fast. Anyway, at the count of three Wayne had "Buck Knob" out before the poor lookout had the K out of his mouth. The lookout looked forlornly at Wayne and said "Ranger, that ain't fair, you talk faster than I do." We all laughed ourselves silly over that except the lookout who never cracked a smile. I really liked Wayne and I'm sorry I didn't learn of his death sooner.  
*(Mr. Ruziska died on Oct. 15, 2002 - Editors).*

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### OUACHITA NATIONAL FOREST RETIREEES

Parties, celebrations, book of letters, farewell gifts and fond wishes for a bright future. This is the beginning of 'the new life' the old forest Service employee has before he or she says those last good-byes. And then reality sets in.

You visit the old office to find your desk moved and precious files tossed. You go to the personnel office for help and get blank stares. "You don't work for us. Your file is gone. Here's the phone number for OPM. Call them for help."

You ask the Supervisor's secretary for a list of retirees and she is sure one is around, try Public Affairs. "Ah, yes, we do have a list it's not in the computer though. Its been around awhile. Here, let me make you a copy." It sure has been around, a sizeable number of people are long dead!

So early in 1989 a Ouachita retiree sent out a questionnaire to 197 Ouachita retirees asking their interest in keeping up with the Forest Service, and the Ouachita NF in particular. Not surprisingly, most responses asked to be informed, but few said "Involve me," and no one checked "I volunteer." By July we had a relatively up-to-date retiree list which we presented to Ouachita NF Supervisor Mike Curran.

We wrote Mike "...Personnel should include a retiree interest form in each retirement packet...start drawing retirees in the Hot Springs area closer to the SO...invite to Christmas party...notify of Forest Plan activity..." Mike endorsed our recommendations and invited retiree involvement in social and public affairs activities.

Next I remember it was about the turn of the century (as close as a retiree can remember), Bill Walker was retired as Ouachita Resources Team Leader. Bill noticed his buddies on the Ozark were getting together and he knew the Ouachita could not be outdone by that Forest to the North. So he made an executive decision that Ouachita NF retirees would meet for breakfast once a month. Word was passed and soon we crowded the back corner of Shoney's on Central Avenue in Hot Springs to share news of the month; brag about new grandchildren and great-grandchildren; lie about the big buck seen but not shot; tell of great golf strokes; and always narrate great stories of past Forest Service exploits (especially those that could not be verified). And we've been meeting for breakfast the third Tuesday of each month ever since. We spent so little money that Shoney's shut down, so we moved to

Cracker Barrel where the folks welcomed us with open arms. We always had a good crowd of 10, 20 or 30 or so. Spouses got jealous so we invited them too and they have their own tales to swap with each other. We make a special effort in December to round up those who don't regularly attend. Many of these retirees join in our "Annual FS Retiree Christmas Breakfast."

*Jim Wenner, Hot Springs, AR*

There are other areas in the Forest Service where retirees get together. If you will notify the Editors we will put a notice in *The Dixie Ranger* of your meeting dates.



LETTERS

**Bobby Simmons, Prattville, AL -**

My wife, Sandra, and I eagerly look forward to seeing each issue of your paper and "race" to see who gets to read it first. It is a great way to stay in touch with friends from our 32 years with the Forest Service, and serves as a great reminder of what a wonderful time we have had.

Sandra and I have been fortunate enough to do some traveling the last couple of years. We spent a week in London and then returned to the United States on the QE2. My, what an experience that was! Late last year we went to Nassau, and then in February, 2004, we were on a cruise to the Virgin Islands. I can certainly get used to the accommodations very easily.

You and Bert are to be congratulated on the great job you have done publishing *The Dixie*



*Ranger*. You have been so faithful in this endeavor for the past 15 years, and I can certainly understand your wish to retire, but you will be sorely missed. I do not think I would like to follow in your footsteps.

Good luck to you both in the future, and thanks, again, for the wonderful job you have done.

**O. D. Smith**, Russellville, AR – Thank you so much for all your hard work. I look forward to receiving *The Dixie Ranger* and reading about all the happenings, recent as well as ancient history. Even though I do not know all of the writers personally, they almost always refer to some person or place that brings back a memory.

I am sad to know that you will be retiring from the editorial positions because I know you will be hard to replace. You have done a wonderful job and I wish you all the best in your retirement.

**Chuck Steele**, Woodstock, GA – dues for another three years. Thanks for the great work. Heidi and I did your Netherlands trip last year with German relatives. As you said, it's a great area. Amsterdam is a unique and beautiful city. Heidi is going to retire from CDC this year, so we'll put a lot of miles on the Ford Explorer to visit/re-visit much of the good ole USA. Seeing friends will be part of that journey.

**John C. Barber**, Warsaw, VA – Yes, I had the last issue on my desk (not always in sight) with those paving stones of "Good Intentions." Receiving the February issue reminded me – enclosed is my check to avoid forgetfulness next winter.

Francene and I are still in reasonable health and stay on the go working with local activities and

issues. She runs a Volunteer Museum for the county, active in Church, and stays on top of travel and tourism in the area.

I'm busy with my environmental work for S&WCD, RC&D; County Planning Commission and the Church. Also involved with a farmland preservation group (it includes forests) with the Northern Neck Land Conservancy. Then here in Virginia we are writing new Tributary Strategies for our rivers flowing into the Chesapeake Bay. Living on the Rappahannock, that gives me a bit more to do. I gave up working as a Forest Service Volunteer with the Bay Program in Annapolis; those long commutes and days were getting too stressful.

Our grandson, Carlton, whom we raised, is now a Marine stationed in the Pacific, shipboard out of Okinawa. Hopefully they will have Iraq settled before he gets his next move.

Thanks for the great work you do in putting out *The Dixie Ranger*, though my jobs in the South were in Research, I worked with and knew many NFS and S&PF people. Regrettably, I see too many of those names in the Obits – like Frank Finison who was a classmate at NC State, and Mary LeGrand who was at Monks Corner in 1948 when I got my first job with the Forest Service.

**Bill Leichter**, Covington, VA –It seems most of over the hill retirees forget our dues until we look at the number after our name. I notice an O4 after my name so here are my dues for another few years. I am looking forward to the Oral Histories and the order form in the June issue of the DR. I try to keep up with what is happening in the Forest Service, especially in the areas where I spent my career and compare with what

took place in the past. It is very evident it is not the same outfit that we all knew so well. It has changed with the times for the good or bad of the organization and the resources it manages. Only time will tell which. I am reminded of what my first Ranger, L. R. Smith, told me one day early in my career. We think we are doing what is best for these lands, but it will be left to the next generation to determine if we were correct in our management practices. It seems we were wrong in our efforts in wildlife control measures if the present generation is correct in their assessment of what has caused the major fires in the West for the last few years. I believe the jury is still out on this issue.

**Richard Marsalis, Ashland, MS** - Like a number of others, I meant to send dues with the last issue of DR, but it got buried on my desk and I forgot. Forgetting is becoming more frequent now for some reason. Here is a check for three years at the new rate.

I read the DR cover to cover sometimes more than once. Mike Sparks and the others tell a good yarn. I would like to have that talent. Speaking of Mike, I would like to publicly thank him for his vigorous support when Ken Johnson, Supervisor, NFS in Miss, combined the timber and Fire shops after Gene Sirmon's retirement and I became the Staff Officer over both. I was overwhelmed. The only timber background I had was some marking in the early 60's on the Mendocino NF in R5. Without his guidance, coaching, and mentoring I would have been a complete wash out. Thanks, Mike.

My move to the backwoods of North Mississippi (Benton County)

has been one of the best moves in my life. I have a small greenhouse where I germinate a few trees and flowers. Right now I have white oak, catalpa, cypress, buckeye, marigold, tomatoes, and orange butterfly weed. I have a garden spot 50 x 150 feet with the traditional veggies and have added blueberries, blackberries and raspberries.

While somewhat remote, I'm about 10 miles south of US 72 on the east side of Benton County. The road is paved. I'm on a hill just above the headwaters of the Wolf River. Anyone passing through is welcome to stop by for a visit or spend the night. We can sit and rock on the front porch, watch the world go by, and have a bit of fermented juice of the grape.

One last item, if any one sees Ralph Mumme, ask him if he wants a dog. Thanks again for everything that you have done.

**J. V. MacNaughton, Harrisonburg, VA** - As usual, I enjoyed the February issue of *The Dixie Ranger*. After reading my old boss Ernie Finger's note, I check my address label and sure enough, I'm behind. Here's 2004 and two more years at the new rate of \$10 per year.

I was sorry to read that you are retiring as Editors of the *Ranger* at the end of this year. You have done a wonderful job and you should be very proud of the last 15 years! Many, many thanks for what you've done for *The Dixie Ranger*.

**Dave Larson, Alpharetta, GA** - I'm reporting the death of Al Friedrich. I checked all the back issues of *The Dixie Ranger* and couldn't find it. That does not mean it wasn't there - my eyesight misses a lot these days.

Al's daughter wrote me last October that Al died March 5, 2001



at Westminster Oaks Health Center after a bout with pneumonia.

**Odom McDaniel, Jr.,** Edmond, OK – During the winter of 2002-2003, Dona and I arranged (in chronological order) all the photos which we had accumulated since I came into the FS family in 1955. I've always had a practice of writing the date-taken on the back of our photos, so this really wasn't as difficult as it was time consuming. One thing that struck me was that many photos were taken at our then-current residence, often with our then-current cars and/or trucks in the background.

This past winter I decided to create a photo-narrative album of the vehicles we've owned since 1955 and the houses we've lived in (both as renters and owners) in OK, FL, SC, LA, GA, AR and back to OK. To my surprise I discovered that we have owned twenty-nine vehicles. Using Dona's memory and our old income tax returns, their supporting documents and other sources, I was able to determine who sold us each vehicle, who we sold to, the prices paid or received, dates of ownership, mileage figures, description of each vehicle and it's equipment options, etc. The album is one way we will pass a bit of our FS experience to our descendants.

The first vehicle was a 1938 Chevrolet, which I drove from Bogalusa, LA, to Heavener, OK, to report to Ranger Dave Devet. Our latest is a 2000 Buick LaSabre Limited. Over the years we sold more of our used vehicles ourselves rather than trade them in. We did sell to three FS employees, who I hope received good service from the vehicles. Harry Kay Erwin bought our 1966 Chevrolet pickup truck while in the Kisatchie SO, Jim

McConnell bought our 1977 Buick LeSabre and Mike Linden bought our 1977 Toyota Carolla, both while in the RO. Of special interest to us was that our good friend Hector Slaughter bought our 1955 Chevrolet 210 Deluxe for his teenage son. Mickey went on to become, as best I can recall, the first quarterback of the Denver Broncos expansion team, via LA Tech.

I would probably never think of some people I've know in the past until they are mentioned in *The Dixie Ranger*. Thanks to all who make it happen (editors, officers, contributors) and for keeping us in touch this way.

**Marv Meier,** Wausau, WI – Just a note to acknowledge that I noticed I'm a '3' and need to be a '4'. Enjoyed the latest *Dixie Ranger* - as usual! Particularly enjoyed Mike Sparks' "Hog Hunt" and the many updates from folks I knew back when - will be 10 years in June since I retired and moved North! Jim and Doris Wenner's travel report told y'al about the north country we'al enjoy year around. Yes, the snow has (almost) melted. I, too, spent a few days on the North Shore this fall and we spent many other nice fall days around our home in north central Wisconsin. Did visit our Georgian daughter and old friends in Atlanta as well. I'm still active in Wisconsin Woodland Owners Assoc., and do a bit of forestry consulting and work in my own woods. Joleen is active as a volunteer in several situations that keep her in contact with 4-6 year-old-kids - her specialty. We plan to celebrate our 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary with family and friends in June.

Also remember that our welcome mat is out. Thanks for all your good work!

**Betty Wells**, Montgomery, AL - Do enjoy all the *Dixie Rangers* and am surprised I know as many. Loved the "diet" by Jim Wenner.

Glad Jerry Rocket corrected Tuskegee NF's place as #1 smallest forest. I was in NFs in Alabama shortly after Jerry left, but I heard many nice things about him. After he left they got a clerk and as he would say, "Things got a little better."

Hate to see you two retire from DR but know it is very time consuming and you need to go while you can enjoy it.

Great-granddaughter tells teacher first day of school that her "mamaw" always fixes sacks for the classmates for holidays - thank goodness she only has 18 - the grandson had 34! Thank goodness school is out for 3 months.

**Walt Fox**, Martin, GA - Here is a check for my dues for a couple of years. Time keeps marching on and reminds me that there are many new names in the *Ranger* - people who started work when I retired and now are close to retirement.

My forestry business continues to thrive. Never did I think that I would be thinning pine stands that I planted 17 years ago!! Plus my consulting contract with Fieldale Farms Corp. continues to keep me busy. And, the kudzu keeps growing and providing some summer activity. A few years ago I sold my kudzu treatment equipment and now contract all the work.

Elizabeth and I have been to Austria (her home country) twice in the past 8 months. A beautiful country. My first visit there was from the air in 1945 when we bombed every railroad in the country. I didn't mention that

during our visits! Most Europeans have a handicap - smoking, and there are few restrictions.

A note here for Jim McConnell - are you interested in the early history (1963-65) of the Nation's Wild and Scenic Rivers Program? I was the USDA southeastern Study Team member and responsible to Rik Eriksson (Deputy RF).

Betty and Bert - I can only echo what all of us think - you do a super job with the *Ranger*.



#### SEARCH FOR EDITORS A SUCCESS

Dave and Peggy Jolly are the new Editors of *The Dixie Ranger*. They will assume the editorship in January 2005 beginning the 35<sup>th</sup> year of existence of the Southern Region's Retirees' Newsletter. There have been only three editors during this time beginning with Tom Hunt, followed by Rip Williams, and then Bert and Betty Bray.

Dave retired from the Regional Forester's position in Region 1 in 1995. He has worked in Region 8, 9, the WO, Regions 3 and 1. Dave began his career on the Francis-Marion NF in S. C. He has served as Deputy Forest Supervisor, Ozark NF. After completing one year of post-graduate work at the University of Washington, he was assigned as the Regional Environmental Coordinator in the R.O. He later served as Forest Supervisor of the Shawnee in Illinois. Next, a term in the Chief's office as Deputy Director of Timber



Management. Dave was a Deputy Regional Forester and Regional Forester of Region 3 in Albuquerque. From Albuquerque Dave went to Missoula as Regional Forester.

Peggy has had a varied career in real estate and as a tax consultant with H&R Block. She worked in the Comptroller's office of George Mason University in Northern Virginia. While in the D. C. area, Peggy served as Secretary to the Chairman of the Merit System Protection Board. In Albuquerque, she worked as a civilian at Kirtland Air Force Base.

We are indeed fortunate to have Dave and Peggy as our Editors.

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#### ASTOUNDING EDITORIAL WORK

By Ed Littlehales

The annual Society of American Foresters convention was held in Atlanta in 1962. Forest Service people provided the core of planners for the event. We were also charged with handling the publicity. Jim Vessey, Regional Forester, urged his I&E people to do their best to highlight the SAF meeting.

Background articles, photographs, tables, charts and interviews with important speakers were prepared. All submitted to *The Atlanta Journal* and *Atlanta Constitution*, plus other major radio, TV, and print media in the Southern Region of the USFS.

We even had the temerity to draft editorials for the two Atlanta papers. Editorials are the sole prerogative of publishers, but we took a chance it might give them an idea. We worked very hard to showcase the SAF meeting - hoping to get some little mention of an event about which most readers cared little. The theme of the

convention was something like "Planning for the Year 2000."

The Cuban missile crisis broke a day or two before the conference opened Sunday, October 21, 1962. There was widespread concern that attacks might be launched against the U.S. Miami and Atlanta were under high alert. We figured that our efforts would be overshadowed by the international crisis, and that our publicity efforts had been for naught.

To our amazement, the Sunday Atlanta papers front-paged the SAF conference, and our suggested editorial was the lead on the editorial page. It was really astounding - we could not understand why our stuff had not been pushed to the back page or cut entirely.

Several days later, I visited my contact on the editorial board to ask what happened. With a broad grin he told me that the hysteria of a possible attack on U.S. soil bothered them, and they needed a way to defuse the growing public concern and calm their readers. "What better way than to highlight the arrival in Atlanta of several hundred professional foresters planning a half-century ahead for the future of our forests?"

So they not only front-paged our message, but ran several photo sheets and interviews during the several day convention. We stole the headlines from the crisis, and even were played right along side President Kennedy's October 22 successful demand that the Soviet Union dismantle its missile bases in Cuba.

The SAF headquarters in Washington was ecstatic with the publicity - the best they ever had for a convention. Never did tell them how it happened.

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*Correction - Our apologies to  
Raleigh Meadows whose retirement  
on January 15 was reported as  
Ralph Meadows retiring. Editors*  
• • •

*The Positive Side of Life ...*

*...Living on Earth is expensive, but it  
does include a free trip around the  
sun every year.*

*...Birthdays are good for you; the  
more you have, the longer you live.*

Submitted by Jim Wenner, AR

#### IN MEMORIAM

**Joseph Martin**, 68, husband of  
retiree, Elinor, died April 16 in  
Lilburn, GA.

**Don Emerson Williams**, 82, of  
Mountain View, AR, died February  
15. He is survived by his wife of 61  
years, Mary Lowe; two daughters and  
sons-in-law, Revs. Kay and Bob  
Burton of Augusta, AR, and Janet  
and Tom Uttley of Heber Springs;  
and three grandchildren.

Mr. Williams was born in  
Springfield, MO., on Sept. 21, 1921.  
He graduated from the University of  
Missouri at Rolla. He served in WWII  
and the Korean conflict. His varied  
career all over the United States  
ended as Deputy Director of  
Minerals, USFS, in Washington, DC.  
He was the Project Engineer on  
Blanchard Springs Caverns. After his  
retirement, he and Mary moved to  
Mountain View.

**John Maslack**, 90, died on  
December 22, 2003 in Englewood,  
FL. Mr. Maslack was the Timber  
Staff Officer on the Green Mountain

NF, Vermont, when he retired in  
March 1973 after 37 years of  
service. He graduated from the  
University of Georgia with degrees in  
forestry and engineering.  
• • •

#### Request for Information:

Larry Grimes, Fire Operations Safety  
Program Manager, RO, Fire &  
Aviation, is compiling a list of fire  
related fatalities. There has not  
been a list maintained before now  
and Larry has gone back in records  
to 1961. Most of the information  
was taken from the Office of Worker  
Compensation Program records.  
There may be names missing from  
the list. If you have knowledge of  
any one who's name should be on  
the list, please notify Larry at  
404.347.1025. Cell phone:  
404.909.0240.

Mary Lynn Waite, Homochitto  
RD, NFs in Miss. 02.06.01

James Burnett, Cherokee NF,  
08.11.00

Martin Wauson, Magazine RD,  
Ozark, 01.11.99

Kenneth Bullock, Somerset RD,  
Daniel Boone NF, 11.04.96

Mary Jo Brown, Brasstown RD,  
Chattahoochee NF, 11.20.94

Bedford Cash, Tuskegee RD,  
NFs in AL, 02.26.94

Clifford Dias, Winona RD,  
Ouachita NF, 07.07.85

Thurman (Paul) Kinner, Poteau  
RD, Ouachita NF, 04.25.84

James Frizzell, Poteau RD,  
Ouachita NF, 04.25.84

Lawrence Brumbelow,  
Homochitto RD, NFs in Miss,  
09.26.83

Roscoe Moore, Recreation, RO,  
09.09.81

Basil Rollins, Daniel Boone NF,  
05.11.78



Howard Double, Trinity RD,  
NFs in Texas, 03.23.76

Wallace Merrill, Regional  
Office, 07.22.75

James Meadows, Croatan RD,  
NFs in NC, 04.03.73

Carl Heczko, NFs in Texas,  
09.27.72

Ralph Moyle, RO, 02.01.71

Robert Emory, Jefferson NF,  
10.27.70

Chloe Millinix, Ozark NF,  
02.25.67

Cecil McGhee, Homochitto RD,  
NFs in Miss, 01.30.67

John Dillon, Ouachita NF,  
09.29.66

Robert Flora, Forest Health  
Protection Unit, 06.22.64

Lester Elbert, Jefferson NF,  
07.05.61

• • •

#### ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY ...

In 2002, active Forest Service employees could not continue their commitment to roadside cleanup. So in May, 2002, the environmentally-friendly FS retirees of the Ouachita NF took on the job of roadside cleanup of 2 miles of US 270 near Charlton Recreation Area. You can tell where the area is, a stretch of highway right-of-way bounded by two signs exclaiming: "Adopt-A-Highway. The next two miles is maintained by Ouachita National Forest Retirees." Between those signs, the roadside is clean!

On March 19, 2004, the latest cleanup, 34 bags of trash, rather than the usual 20 were collected.

Submitted by Jim Wenner

*If there are other active retiree groups, please let the Editors know so that we may write of your good deeds.*



#### A BOOK REVIEW

*TREES & WOODLAND IN THE BRITISH LANDSCAPE*, The Complete History of Britain's Trees, Wood's & Hedgerows by Dr. Oliver Rackham. Great Britain has a long and varied history. Much of that history is recorded and the records are still at hand both on paper and in the field. Dr. Rackham has made a life-long study of the trees and woodlands of England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland. When you attempt to read books of this nature you have to relearn the English language. For instance, areas covered with trees are woodlands. Forests, also called chases, are areas that are mostly covered with trees and are owned and/or controlled by the Crown or Nobility. Without exception both woodlands and forests have been in the business of providing goods and services for hundreds and thousands of years. Early on the English learned the art and science of coppice (trees are cut near the ground every so often and then grow again from the stump or stool) and pollarding (trees are cut at 8 to 12 feet above the ground and allowed to grow again to produce successive crops of wood). They also figured out that you could, actually, grow more wood this way.

Ancient woodlands have been under a system of coppice with standards for more years than we have been a nation. Standards are trees that have seeded in naturally, usually only a few to the acre. Dr. Rackham believes that planted trees are an abomination and are doomed to failure. The book is just full of neat things, that over hundreds of

years, the British have done to and in their woodlands. For instance, woodbanks have been placed around many woodlands and forests. Woodbanks are mounds of soil, two or three feet high and eight to ten feet wide, usually with the accompanying ditch that the soil came from. Think about it, how would you like to dig a ditch by hand around forty acres? It must have meant a lot to them to do this because labor has always been expensive in England. It seems to me that it would be easier to make a fence and pleach it. Pleach, to interweave branches, vines, etc., for a hedge or arbor. Most woodlands have also been used for pannage, the fattening of domestic pigs on acorns, grazing for cattle and taking of deer. It was a fun book to read but I certainly had to concentrate on the language. "Trees & Woodland in the British Landscape" by Oliver Rackham, Phoenix Press, \$21.95 but I found my copy on a bargain counter for less than five bucks. Your library can probably find a copy on inter-library loan.

Review by *Jim McConnell*

#### *ETERNAL TRUTHS ...*

...Middle age is when broadness of the mind and narrowness of the waist change places.

...Learn from the mistakes of others. You can't live long enough to make them all yourself.

Submitted by *Jim Wenner*

#### *CAREER SNIPPETS* by *Bert Bray*

Betty gave me this opportunity to recall notable (at least to me) memories from my Forest Service days. What other career would have yielded opportunities like these:

Playing poker well into the night with Chief Ed Cliff and Budget Officer Clare Hendee in Gifford Pinchot's Grey Towers.

Raising against Director Tom McClintock, with him holding 3 aces showing. Frank Pylor, Station property man said "Bert, the last person to do that is now in Alaska." This was a Friday night game in Asheville. Monday morning I was notified that I was being moved to Research Triangle Park near Durham as AO.

Trying on a 120-pound Space Walk suit at Mission Control, Houston.

Fighting a grass fire alongside the Oklahoma State Forester.

(Unofficially) flying planes ranging from Cessna 152's to Beech 99's while the pilots told jokes or played cards with the other passengers (I earned my Private license while a high school junior).

Riding to the top of Jamaica's highest mountain in the 'suicide seat' of the Chief Forester's VW wagon, to have a picnic on a Holy day.

Flying and canoeing into the Boundary Waters Canoe Area for picnics, in between four consecutive weeks of Environmental Education workshops in the Great Lakes Area.

Working for the last twenty years of my career with some of the finest, most dedicated people at all levels and with all types of experience that one could possibly hope to be associated with. It has been a privilege to share another fifteen years working alongside Betty as helper on *The Dixie Ranger*.

• • •

*Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off your goals.* Author Unknown



## USFS REUNION 2005

The 2005 reunion and 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Forest Service is fast approaching. The reunion will be from September 5 to 9, 2005, at the Double Tree Hotel, Jantzen Beach in north Portland on the bank of the Columbia River, across from Vancouver, WA. The hotel is an AAA triple diamond, has plenty of parking, is easy to reach from Interstate 5 and a short distance from Portland International Airport.

Prior to the reunion, there will be a special Lewis and Clark overnight tour to Astoria and Fort Clatsop offered on September 4, which will start and end at the hotel. A second tour with the same itinerary will be offered starting on September 9. The tour will be by bus and boat and will visit a number of Lewis and Clark historic sites along the scenic lower Columbia.

Reunion registration is all day Monday, followed by an evening social gathering, and brief welcoming ceremonies.

Tuesday is day tours to a number of scenic places in the Northwest, including Mt. St. Helens, Columbia Gorge, Timberline Lodge on Mt. Hood, Oregon wine country and the Portland Metro area. Complete information about all tours, including Lewis and Clark, will be in the registration package available in early 2005.

Wednesday is for renewing friendships and "mini" reunions of regions, stations, forests and other FS units followed by a special dinner celebrating the people of the Forest Service.

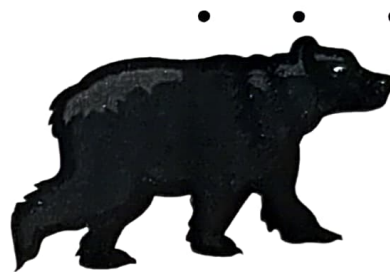
Thursday is centennial and nostalgia day with a series of presentations about our history and accomplishments. Chief and staff will join us for this celebration. In

the evening there will be an informal dinner honoring the people of the "outfit" and their contributions to the Nation and the Forest Service.

Friday is "goodbye" day after a buffet breakfast, and a short program launching the "Outfit" into its next century of service.

Questions and comments can be sent to John Marker, [jf37m@aol.com](mailto:jf37m@aol.com) or 6681 Hwy. 35, Mt. Hood, OR 97041.

You may wish to check out the web site: [www.oldsmokeys.com](http://www.oldsmokeys.com).



### CELEBRATING THE 4<sup>TH</sup> IN MONTANA

By Joel Nitz, AR

My memory is vague on a lot of things that occurred in the two summers that I was stationed in Warland, Montana, on the Warland Ranger District, Kootenai National Forest. The first year I worked there, I was still single. I cannot remember but I'll try to recall the names of some of the men I worked with. Dougal Gilchrist, the genial young fellow who was the District Fire Dispatcher and his shaggy-haired dog companion. Ranger was Roy Lewis, of course. The Assistant Ranger escapes my memory, but I remember that his wife was from Alabama. The Assistant had lost his ring finger when it got caught on the side boards of the truck as he jumped off. His wife had begged him to wear the ring!!! One of the summer students was Earl Berndsten who became a close friend for all these years.

Swede Daklin and I worked as the trail maintenance crew the first summer. The next summer Rolly (Roland), a jolly fellow, and I worked on the trail maintenance for several days. Irene and I stayed in the cabin under the tower. Rolly 'holed up' in the tower itself. The first day out, Rolly and I came back in the dark. Irene was beside herself, not knowing what to expect. Were we lost, injured or worse, confronted by a grizzly bear? The location of the tower was quite remote. There was no means to communicate with us on the trail. But Irene called us repeatedly, in vain.

When we finally returned Irene wanted an explanation. I tried to explain that trail maintenance required that we repair broken telephone lines, replace insulators, remove obstacles such as downed trees crossing the trail, brush that had encroached during the past year, rocks that had rolled into the right-of-way and that we carry all our gear, telephone wire, wire cutters, rope and come-alongs to stretch and splice wire, crosscut saw, ax, rope, wire splices, telephone tree climbers with spikes to climb and re-hang the wire, lunch and water, of course, and other miscellaneous tools and supplies. We began work as we left the tower and when we estimated we did enough for the day, we turned around and dead-headed back up the mountain to our tower. The trail had to be wide enough and high enough for a horse with rider to walk through without interference.

Well, we misjudged our time to return and came back later than we thought. When all this was duly brought to Irene's attention, she forthrightly told us that we weren't going to leave her behind the next day! Irene's duty on the following day was to carry our water. This

section of the trail was not real rugged. Irene's brown and white saddle shoes stood the trip real well. At lunch time we rested on a creek bank and used some canned corn for bait as we caught a few trout. I'm not sure how we handled the fish. Otherwise, we worked diligently with my mate by my side. Irene was a real sport and was she surprised when we calculated that we had worked 11 miles that day.

One day, when we were still living at the Ranger Station, we were saddened when one of our horses got sick. The Ranger did everything he knew how, but the horse was down and did not respond favorably. The Ranger called the Forest Supervisor in Libby for instructions. The poor horse had to go. The Ranger got his rifle and took care of the matter quickly.

How pleasant it is to recall, after the road was punched out, when Earl and Dougal drove up to the tower with some goodies to eat, including steak and ice cream. We had plenty of Argentine corned beef, but it was hardly palatable. We offered some to Dougal's dog but he just took a sniff and turned away. By the way, much of our rations were in cans on which the labels had long fallen off. So in meal preparation, we might have opened three cans of peaches instead of three different kinds of vegetables. Canned butter felt just a bit different than a can of peas, for example, when we shook them. We had a case of soap, but little water. We had to trek down the mountain about a mile to our spring. I carried a 5-gallon can of water on my back and a gallon in each hand. Irene carried a gallon slung over her shoulder. Wash water came from some ponded water left over from melted snow and ice.



After a few days at Banfield (?) tower, Irene and I were assigned to Siegler (?) tower for the rest of the summer. We asked the Ranger for some fresh vegetables and meat. He left us 12 dozen wieners at the end of the trail. We, of course, marched down the 2 miles of trail to where the road ended and picked up the box of groceries.

We ate wieners as fast as we could. There was no cooling or refrigeration and after a dozen or so, we had to pitch the molding weenies. I buried them at a designated site where our bathroom (HA!) was located. From our throne, the 360° view of our surroundings was great! A few days later, on the Fourth of July, we made our daily trip to the 'dump'. Irene, in front, (ladies first, you know) all of a sudden stopped when she saw a bear on the trail. It was probably a 2 or 3 year old and as surprised as we were. We slowly backed off and made our way back to the tower in which we resided.

Not owning a gun, I now kept a double-bitted ax with me most of the time. I thought I could at least try to fend him off at night at the head of the stairs, should the bear think of giving us a visit. Well, we and the bear sort of respected each other's territories. We let him have the rest of the exhumed wieners while we tried to carry out our routine duties. Twice a day I had to check fire conditions at a secondary lookout, which was used to detect smoke from trains running through the valley far below. After the bear came, Irene stayed in the primary tower so she could check my goings and comings from the other tower about a quarter mile away. The bear left calling cards and messed up Irene's wash that hung on a clothesline close to the tower. After

about a week or so, the bear looked for greener pastures and we sort of missed the excitement and challenges of coping with the isolated and primitive environment in the Kootenai Mountains of Montana.

With low fire danger, we were permitted to come off the tower one weekend. It so happened that that Saturday was our first wedding anniversary. What to do for excitement? We visited the J. Neil saw mill! To this day my bride of 55 years often reminds me and tells everyone else how romantic that was!

Incidentally, my mother had told me that there was some business connection between my grandfather and J. Neil in northern Wisconsin. When operations were established in Libby, sons George and Walther were in charge of the mill and the woods operations. Both staunch Lutherans, they built a Lutheran church and a hospital for this community.

The Ranger station included living quarters consisting of a bunk house and mess hall for the road crew, the packer (horse), and a few others. Irene and I slept in a tent. The cooks were there only to prepare meals. They lived off the Station. When Irene and I came down from Siegler Tower, we also ate at the mess house with the others. We were so anxious to share our experiences at the tower that we just jabbered away. But nobody responded. Finally, someone quietly told us that there was a new policy: to forbid anyone to speak, unless it was like "Please pass the butter." In the meantime, we got the cold stare of our "friendly cooks." Later we were told that meals were for eating only; an almost universal practice in lumber camps all over.

## THE YEAR 1904 - SOME FACTS—

This is hard to believe, but true! The year is 1904. What a difference a century makes! Here are some of the U. S. statistics for 1903:

The average life expectancy in the U. S. was 47 years. Only 14 percent of the homes in the U.S. had a bathtub. Only 8 percent of the homes had a telephone. A three-minute call from Denver to New York City cost eleven dollars.

There were only 8,000 cars in the U.S., and only 14 miles of paved roads. The maximum speed limit in most cities was 10 mph.

Alabama, Mississippi, Iowa, and Tennessee were each more heavily populated than California. With a mere 1.4 million residents, California was only the 21<sup>st</sup>-most populous state in the Union.

The tallest structure in the world was the Eiffel Tower.

The average wage in the U. S. was 22 cents an hour. The average U. S. worker made between \$200 and \$400 per year. A competent accountant could expect to earn \$2000 per year, a dentist \$2,500 per year, a veterinarian between \$1,500 and \$4,000 per year, and a mechanical engineer about \$5,000.

More than 95 percent of all births in the U. S. took place at home.

Ninety percent of all U. S. physicians had no college education. Instead, they attended medical schools, many of which were condemned in the press and by the government as "substandard."

Sugar cost four cents a pound. Eggs were fourteen cents a dozen. Coffee cost fifteen cents a pound.

Most women only washed their hair once a month, and used borax or egg yolks for shampoo.

Canada passed a law prohibiting poor people from entering the country for any reason.

The five leading causes of death in the U. S. were:

1. Pneumonia and influenza
2. Tuberculosis
3. Diarrhea
4. Heart Disease
5. Stroke

The American flag had 45 stars. Arizona, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Hawaii, and Alaska hadn't been admitted to the Union yet.

The population of Las Vegas, Nevada, was 30.

Crossword puzzles, canned beer, and iced tea hadn't been invented.

There was no Mother's Day or Father's Day.

One in 10 U. S. adults couldn't read or write. Only 6 percent of all Americans had graduated high school.

Marijuana, heroin, and morphine were all available over the counter at corner drugstores. According to one pharmacist, "Heroin clears the complexion, gives buoyancy to the mind, regulates the stomach and the bowels, and is, in fact, a perfect guardian of health."

Eighteen percent of households in the U. S. had at least one full-time servant or domestic.

There were only about 230 reported murders in the entire U. S.

And I stole this from someone else without typing it myself, and sent it to a dozen people in a matter of seconds! Just think what it will be like in another 100 years.

Submitted by Bert Bray

*Here is a test to find out whether your mission in life is complete. If you're alive, it isn't. Richard Bach*



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A Reminder: Phone in Reservations for Luncheon by June 22. See page 4.

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Published quarterly in February, June, and November. Dues are \$8 per year, payable in January. Mail Address:  
Southern Forest Service Retirees Association, 70 Wilkes Court, Newnan, GA 30263-6124



ORAL HISTORIES  
Recorded by James L. McConnell

The following oral histories are available at a cost of 10 cents per page which includes copying, shipping and handling. Some histories were recorded to a tape by the individual and Jim transcribed them. They are unedited and presented as recorded.

1. John E. Alcock, dates of service: 1961-1993. 45 pages (\$4.50)
2. William J. Bryan, dates of service: 1951-1981. 154 pages (\$15.40)
3. Oliver Buckles, dates of service: 1958-1997. 44 pages (\$4.40)
4. Nathan Byrd, dates of service: 1951-1982. 40 pages (\$4.00)
5. Jerry Edwards, dates of service 1961-1997. 20 pages (\$2.00)
6. J. Frank Palmer, dates of service 1941-1972. 49 pages (\$4.90)
7. James S. Sabin, Jr., dates of service 1951-1983. 28 pages (\$2.80)
8. Archer Smith, dates of service 1934-1970. 24 pages (\$2.40)

Please fill in the order form below and submit to: Betty Bray, Sec.-Treas, Southern Forest Service Retirees Association, 70 Wilkes Court, Newnan, GA 30263-6124. Please make check payable to SFSRA. Orders will be accepted until July 2, 2004.

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