

# The Dixie Ranger

Editors: Bert and Betty Bray Vol. XXVII No. 1 February 1997

## OFFICERS

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## FOREST SERVICE CHIEF STEPS DOWN

Chief Jack Ward Thomas, the first wildlife biologist to head the agency after decades of foresters at the helm, resigned effective mid-November.

In his resignation statement of October 10, 1996, Mr. Thomas said "When I became Chief, I established some personal and professional goals for myself. These goals have been met. In the last three years, we have taken ecosystem management forward nationwide, integrated science into management decisions, brought about a cultural change, diversified the Agency's leadership, and set the Course to The Future for the Forest Service.

Since these goals have been met, the time has come for me to retire. During my remaining tenure, I will be working with Secretary Glickman and Under Secretary Lyons in the selection of my successor. Meanwhile, the Forest Service remains committed to meeting our public obligations and protecting natural resources for future generations.

I will be moving to Missoula, Montana, where I have taken the position of Boone and Crockett Chair at the University of Montana. This teaching position will enable me to continue my personal commitment to conservation.

I look forward to returning to the West. That's where my heart is. The opportunity to work with natural resource professionals in an academic setting, and be part of one of the more progressive natural research organizations in the World is exciting. Now that I have fulfilled my personal and professional goals with the Forest Service, I look forward to this new challenge.

*Southern Forest Service Retirees Association, 1973 Hwy 34 East, Newnan, GA 30265-1327. Printed in February, May, August and November. Dues are \$8 per year, payable in January.*

It has been a privilege to have represented the Forest Service. Among its ranks are some of the most dedicated conservationists I have ever met. Forest Service employees are true Conservation Leaders. Most importantly, I have found that these dedicated people care about the land, and they care about people. The dedication and support of the Forest Service employees, during my tenure as Chief, will never be forgotten. Their dedication and commitment to me will be one of the great memories I take with me of my Forest Service career and one that I will take with me as I seek new personal challenges".

### ***MEET NEW CHIEF***

Dr. Michael P. Dombeck, 48, became the 14th Chief of the Forest Service on January 6, 1997.

Dr. Dombeck was born in Stevens Point, Wisconsin. He earned undergraduate and graduate degrees in biological sciences and education from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point and the University of Minnesota. He earned his doctorate in fisheries biology from Iowa State University and is noted for research contributions on muskies and lake habitat management.

He has taught biology, chemistry, science, zoology, and fisheries management at public schools and universities. He spent 12 years with the Forest Service primarily in the Midwest and West. Before transferring to BLM in 1989, he was the National Fisheries Program Manager, in the WO. He spent a year as a Legislative Fellow working in the U.S. Senate with responsibility for natural resource and Interior appropriations issues. Dr. Dombeck became Acting Director, Bureau of Land Management, in February 1994.

He lives with his wife and daughter in Northern Virginia.

### ***NEW OFFICERS SFSRA***

At the annual meeting on December 12, the following were elected to the Board of Directors:

Robert Erickson, President Elect  
Dan Sims, Board of Directors (1999)

Bob was born in Rocky Ford, Colorado, in 1937. He graduated from Colorado State University with a BS degree in Business Adm in 1960. He joined the FS in 1962. Bob worked in the Rocky Mtn Forest Exp Station in Fort Collins as an Adm trainee and then was assigned to Tempe, AZ. From Tempe, he returned to Fort Collins as Budget & Accounting Officer before going to the WO in 1972 as a management analyst. Bob was Asst. Dir. for Adm in the Northeastern Forest Exp Station before coming to Atlanta in 1984 where he filled in behind Jim Webb as Deputy RF for Administration. Bob retired as Deputy RF for Operations in Atlanta in 1996.

## "I LIVED"

Part II of "I Lived" by Otto Whittington continues:

The Forest Service did not bother the moonshiners and mountaineers. In exchange they cooperated to help keep forest fires down. The fires would bring in fire fighters and reveal their still operations.

The ranger on duty before Taylor had gotten civic minded and decided to help the government revenuers. This was a dumb move on his part as one night while driving down a mountain road in his green pick-up, he came upon a large tree limb that had supposedly fallen across the road. He got out of his pick-up, walked up to remove it and was blown away with shotgun blasts.

Ranger Taylor said we were charged with protecting the forest and could do a better job if we left other things alone. Taylor got mad as hell at the sheriff's office when I told him I had been asked to report whether two men, supposedly lost, came by. The sheriff said the men were lost for several days and might approach the tower looking for food. Taylor said the sheriff was trying to get me killed. He said the men had escaped from jail in Fort Worth, Texas, and were last spotted in the Mena area of the Ouachita National Forest. The men were Hamilton and Underhill, former members of "Pretty Boy" Floyd's gang and were armed and dangerous.

My only recreation during the boring days of looking for smoke was eavesdropping on the Forest Service phone line that stretched for miles across the mountains. My phone line started in Dick Huddleston's general store in Water, Arkansas. This was the store and town made famous in the "Lum and Abner" radio show. On the show Water was called Pine Ridge. It became famous so the people had the town's name officially changed to Pine Ridge.

Listening to young boys and girls talking and giggling on the line only made my lonely station more isolated. Usually I am considerate of my fellow man and do not intrude. Sometimes when I felt so isolated and wanted to talk, I would interrupt a romantic conversation by ringing the line and stating I needed it for Forest Service business. I would then call a good friend I had never met, Demp Rose, who had served on Buck Knob tower for over fourteen years. On the map Buck Knob was approximately six miles away but not in my sight because of a taller mountain between it and Wolf Pinnacle.

Cooking above the timber line on a kerosene stove is an art as food takes much longer to cook. One day Ranger Taylor came up to put a new map on my fire finder. I had put on a pot of beans before daylight so I asked him to have lunch with me. Although the beans



had been cooking for over seven hours, they rattled when I dipped them out on the plates. I learned that in the thin air above the timber line, beans must be soaked and then still took hours to cook.

In the summer time I became a nudist to cut down on carrying water up the mountain trail to wash clothes. I could see any vehicle coming up the mountain about two miles away. And, being above timber lines, I could see anyone on foot about a mile away. One day I was looking in the opposite direction when Forester Thorsen decided to make an unexpected visit and got within a mile of the pinnacle before I spotted him. I climbed down the ladder as fast as possible and slipped on some pants just as he drove up to the door. He laughed when I came out and said I looked naked coming down the ladder but he knew of no Forest Service regulation against nude tower operators. From then on I kept pants in the tower.

The most lonesome day on the mountain was Christmas, 1937. My only link with the rest of the world was a single galvanized wire across miles of forest. On Christmas Eve, I received a call on the old hand crank phone from the ranger station inquiring about my food supply. My only rations were a half pound of Vienna sausages and a box of crackers. They advised me that if the truck could not make it in the day after Christmas, they would send men on foot with back packs filled with rations. I decided to eat my Vienna sausage and crackers about mid-afternoon Christmas Day. That night looking out across the icy forest, I could see lights of small villages in the distant valleys. Suddenly I was struck with the most intense feelings of hunger and loneliness. I could envision the houses full of warm family festivities with tables filled with good food. The next day, in the middle of the afternoon, I saw the Forest Service truck with chains and ice tires slowly coming up the road out of the timber line. Those men were more welcome than Santa Claus.

Spring brought another type of problem and increased the threat of fires in the forest. This part of the country was very susceptible to spring lightning and electrical storms. It became apparent why my tower was grounded with half-inch copper cables on all four legs. The tower stood out like a large lightning rod and drew tremendous bolts during an electrical storm. You could smell the sulfur odor when a bolt hit the tower. The cab would appear to be a ball of fire and fire streaks would shoot down all four legs into the ground. I had to try and keep up with the bolts as they hit across the forest, take bearings and make a note to check after the storm.

On June 24, I became 18 years old. Forester Thorsen had been suggesting that I take the Forest Service examination and join the Forest Service on a permanent basis. But when I told him my schooling had ended in the ninth grade he suggested I finish school



before trying for employment. My joining the CCC had helped my family with their financial problems and they had moved to Sweetwater, Texas, while I was on Wolf Pinnacle. Dad had a job and had been writing for me to come home and go back to school. I decided this would be best and notified Ranger Taylor I was quitting Wolf Pinnacle. Thorsen brought up a relief man and drove me to Mena where I caught a bus for Sweetwater. Coming into Sweetwater was much different than the last time I had come into town...when I was just dropped off a freight train. This time I know I was proud of what I had done.

The tower man is now a relic of the past, as are the towers. The Forest Service patrols the forests with low flying spotter planes and can send in tanker planes which make fighting fires much more effective than in my day.

My life has taken many turns. Briefly, these are the experiences I have had. I've been a lumberjack, sawmill worker, circus roustabout, horse soldier, infantry soldier in the Philippines; Battle of Bataan, Fall of Bataan, death march, held prisoner in Kikura. (After the war, I learned the second bomb's primary target was Kikura with a secondary target of Nagasaki. The day was overcast and finding no breaks in the cloud cover, the bomb was dropped on Nagasaki instead). I became a university honors graduate with no high school education and eventually became an attorney. I practiced law in Virginia, California and Texas. I married a wonderful lady, Maxine, and this year we will celebrate our 50th wedding anniversary. We have one son and two grandchildren. I am retired now and enjoy my life with my family. We live in Houston, Texas, but I will always remember my life experiences in Arkansas.

I have gone back and revisited different places of my life. Fifty eight years later I went back to the Wolf Pinnacle area. Last summer I met with Freddie Woodral of the Poteau Ranger District and Carolyn Callahan from the Supervisor's Office in Hot Springs. I shared my story with them. My cousin, Perry Wiseman and I rented a plane and flew over the area that used to be my home...the tower has since been dismantled but the mountain is there as beautiful and majestic as ever."

Carolyn Callahan says "Talking and getting to know Otto and his wife, as well as his cousins, Perry and Lee Wiseman, was my pleasure. Lee did a wonderful pen and ink sketch of Wolf Pinnacle Fire Tower. She has agreed to share it with us. I have to let you know that a book could be written about this man and all that he has experienced. Otto has recorded his experiences and willingly shares them with others. He helps students learn world history vicariously through his life's memories. When I asked him how he wants to be remembered, he said simply, 'I Lived'".

Mr. Whittington would welcome sharing this rich and colorful life with others who are interested. You may contact him by phone or fax (713) 443-6364 or E-mail him at: tjd05@prodigy.com.

Many thanks to Jim Wenner, Harry Wright, and Jim McConnell for suggesting this article for *The Dixie Ranger—Editors*

## EATING ON THE ROAD

By George Stevens

Anyone who has ever traveled much in the field knows that in some areas you better pack a lunch, know where there's food not too far away, or do without until supper time. Nowadays, there seems to be fast-food joints around every corner, but it was not always so. In some remote areas, it still isn't so.

I was traveling in rural Arkansas with a couple of Engineers. One was local, the other from the RO. After a long morning checking out several projects, we decided to stop for a lunch break. The local engineer directed us to a small general store where we could get sandwiches. We entered the store and were greeted by a genial, bearded man in bib overalls. When he asked what we wanted, we pointed to a cooler on one side of the building which contained luncheon meats and other condiments. He nodded and told us that, "she will fix them for you." At first, we didn't see anyone, but then when we looked over and behind the counter, we saw a small, harried looking woman with a very young baby. The woman said, "be right with you, soon as I finish." What she was finishing was changing the baby's diaper. She threw the soiled cloth diaper into a basket, washed and powdered the baby's bottom, pinned on a clean diaper, and placed the child in a crib. Not missing a beat and without even wiping her hands, she turned to us and cheerily asked, "Now, what can I get fer ye?" The engineers went ahead and ordered sandwiches (engineers are a hearty lot), but I suddenly lost my appetite and settled for a Coke and pack of cheese crackers.

## LUNCHEON DATES FOR 1997



March 20, June 12, September 11, December 11

Please circle these dates on your calendar for our luncheons during 1997. It worked so well the last time for making reservations with either Peaches Sherman 770 253-7480 or the Brays 770 253-0392 that we will do it again for the March 20 luncheon. Just remember to phone in your reservation no later than March 18. The luncheons begin at 11:30 a.m. with fellowship and lunch is served at 12 noon. Location: Petite Auberge Restaurant on North Druid Hills Road in the Toco Hills Shopping Center.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT  
THRU 12-31-96

1/1/96 Balance Forward	\$3,430.00
Income (Dues & Donations)	<u>\$3,634.41</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$7,064.41</b>

EXPENSES:

	Projected	Actual
Printing	\$1,200.00	\$1,589.16*
Postage	455.00	540.18**
Door Prizes	100.00	99.31
Misc.	<u>100.00</u>	<u>122.97***</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,855.00</b>	<b>\$2,351.62</b>

PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 1997

Printing (4 issues @ \$380 ea.)	\$1,600.00
Postage	575.00
Door Prizes	125.00
Misc.	<u>225.00</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,525.00</b>

Projected Income:	
164 Members @ \$8	\$1,312.00
Carryover from 1996	<u>4,712.79</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$6,024.79</b>

Note:

\* Overrun on printing due to first issue including Directory and cost increase of paper by Printer.

\*\*Included cost of First Class letters for non-payment of dues and to verify addresses.

\*\*\*Miscellaneous costs: Ribbon for printer, frame for certificate, seals for newsletter, bank charge for counting cash, printing of deposit slips and guest speakers for luncheons. In the 1997 Budget, \$100 is to go to the National FSX Club to help with cost of maintaining the Internet for the National Forest Service Retirees Association in Washington, D.C.



## REUNION '96

—Jim and Doris Wenner

A severe case of Retirees' "I Don't Have Enough Time" disease stopped a news story for the November issue.

We left for Park City, Utah, in our 5th wheel in time to visit historic sites in Kansas, test our rig over the Rocky's Berthoud Pass, and study Dinosaur National Monument. Seeing those ancient bones put us in the mood for the reunion to come. We were surprised at the beauty and size (657 units) of the Uinta NF's Strawberry Reservoir Recreation Area, about 40 miles SE of Park City. This area also draws snowmobilers during the winter. And we can heartily recommend Jordanelle State Park. Jordanelle, brand new this year, was just five minutes via Interstate from the reunion site. On reunion day we looked up from our campsite at the Smokey Bear Balloon riding high in the clear crisp air, morning sun intensifying its brilliant colors. Little did we know at the time we were watching Chief Jack Ward Thomas literally at the pinnacle of his career!

George Olson, who retired in Ogden, did a superb job as activities and field trip chairman. On Monday (9/9) we took the Sundance Lodge tour. Robert Redford didn't personally greet us but a worthy assistant guided us through the lodge, explained the ski facility, and fed us lunch. Skiers are limited to 700 per day to maintain a quality experience. They have a new goal this year: to break even financially! Nearby Mount Timpanogos (11,750') and surrounding wilderness remind some of the Swiss Alps. A Forest Service volunteer described his job of leading an emergency team into the wilderness each weekend to assist inexperienced mountain climbers. This one ranger district has 8,000 volunteers! Back in the busses we headed up a steep narrow road. These big Greyhound's negotiated a series of switchbacks with rear wheels hanging over the edge, clutch-slipping up the steep grades, and belching clouds of diesel smoke. It was a road best suited for 4x4's that took us up into colorful Aspen stands to Cascade Springs Interpretive Site. At this contractor-operated fee area, boardwalks wind through large springs cascading down the mountain slopes into a series of limestone terraces and pools.

Our Wednesday tour was over Mirror Lake Scenic Byway, a 65-mile route up Provo River to 10,687' before dropping into Bear River and ending at Evanston, Wyoming. We touched the High Uintas Wilderness in the Uinta Mountains. These and the Brooks Range in Alaska are supposedly the only east-west running mountains in the country. They hadn't heard about the Ouachitas yet. To orient R-8'ers who didn't attend, the Uinta Mountains are in the Wasatch NF while the Wasatch Range runs through the Uinta NF; perfectly clear to R-4 people.

The main event was in Park City on Tuesday (9/10). Several speeches, but also lots of mingling, good stories, exhibits and camaraderie. One-time R-8 personnel officer and Chamblee neighbor John Sandor with wife Lee flew in from Juneau to claim the distance prize. They lost. It actually went to our good White Mountain friends Beverly and Verland Ohlson from Conway, NH. Bruce and Mary Merrill from Florida came in a close second. John Maslick has been pestering Bruce to take over the Florida spring FS picnic but Bruce claims his 80-year old mind wanders too much.

The record attendee had been retired for 29 years.

There were a lot of familiar faces and we visited many one-time R-8ers. Mickey and Mary Dean Beland came from Fletcher, NC. They promised to convey our greetings to their neighbors Betty and Pete Hanlon. Mary Dean is originally from Danville here on the Ouachita.

This was the first I visited with Lamar Beasley since he was Kisatchi supervisor. He worked with Russ and Mary Dahl in WO and asked to be remembered to them.

Jim and Jo Brewer flew in from Bemidji, MN, and afterward headed for their winter home in Parachute, CO. Jim was Ouachita deputy supervisor under Alvis Owen until 1970. John and Sue Chaffin got an update on how Alvis is doing.

Norm and Eve Gould just sold their Oregon home and arrived in a new 5th wheel for a new life of full-timing. He felt good about his new Dodge diesel after looking at mine still going strong after 215,000 miles. Bert Bray liked this idea but Betty says no way will she travel by trailer.

Jim Moore, Ogden, who used to work for S&PF in Athens, GA, described his past aircraft and fire control problems with politicians and the State of Florida. Jim and Andree Hefner, retired in Athens, spent their career in California and are no relation to Kelley Hefner.

Whit and Carol Whitfield were as charming as ever. Whit got his law degree after retiring and still works as a lawyer; they are neighbors to Vaughn and Kay Hofeldt in Redding, CA. I worked with Vaughn in good old R7 and then in the old 7th Street building when we moved to R8. Whit asked, "Jim, are you working?" "No, just enjoying traveling" I replied. "Humph, well I am working, full time." I couldn't tell whether he envied me or was proud of his occupation.

Ted and Beth Schlapfer stay active caring for 20 acres of apple and Christmas trees in Oregon. Bob and Lee Spivey came from Milwaukee. Jim and Jeanne Webb asked to be remembered to John Orr.



Dale Robertson said that on election night in 1992 he knew his time had come and started packing immediately for retirement in Sedona, AZ. He had no kind words for the Administration. Dale knew Mike Curran had retired from the Ouachita but hadn't heard Al Newman replaced him. Dale was a classmate of current Ouachita deputy Supervisor Dave Hammond. When Dave was a JF at Truckee, CA, Bob Peterson was Ranger. Bob and wife Betty who were at the reunion became "honorary grandparents" to Dave's son Keith and last year attended Keith's wedding here in Hot Springs. The Petersons retired to Missouri.

Russ and Phyllis Rogler, who retired in R-4, were reunion hosts. Russ, Steve Law and I worked together on the White Mountain in the early 60's (Jack Godden would remember.) Steve, then Russ moved to the Jefferson NF. Russ later returned to the White Mountain as Forest Engineer.

After the reunion we headed north to the rugged peaks of Grand Teton National Park and geysers of snowy Yellowstone. Grazing antelope watched us cross the Wyoming prairie to Devil's Tower National Monument and the Black Hills National Forest in South Dakota. Presidents Washington, Jefferson, Roosevelt and Lincoln gazed down from Mt. Rushmore to ponderosa pine, buffalo and antelope. We traced the route of Lewis and Clark past the Homestake Gold mine in Leadville, saloons and gambling parlors at Deadwood, Badlands National Park, state capitol of Pierre, Akta Lakota Museum in Sioux country, and the Corn Palace at Mitchell (entire exterior decorated with ears of corn).

Reports are that an R-1 crew has already started planning the next reunion for the year 2000. All association members should get prepared to attend en masse.

\* \* \*

### **Annual US Forest Service Retirees' Potluck Picnic**



April 3, 1997 Oscar Scherer State Park, US 41 at Osprey, Florida

Attendees are invited to bring foods to share and their own beverage and table service. Friends or retirees, and even active F.S. employees within reach are welcome to come and mix. We usually break up by 3 p.m. We encourage retirees not yet on the mailing list to make a note of the date or get in touch with

John S. Maslack  
2065 Oyster Creek Drive  
Englewood, FL 34224





JACK HAMBRICK - Russellville, AR You guys really do a neat job on *The Dixie Ranger* (to my grand kids, "neat" equates with "excellent"). In my heyday, I would have said you do a "swell" job. But that's reflecting on the past which is a whole other story.

In the August issue you listed my name in the "new Member" column. I think I am a charter member but my memory sometimes deceives me these days. I am sure I was a member when I retired in 1975. I was late with my dues, again, last summer so when they finally got there you probably assumed they were from a new member. Anyway, no big deal—just keep my DR coming. It's the best thing that comes to my mailbox.

In mentioning "assuming" above, I am reminded that jumping to conclusions has always been one of my own most frustrating faults. It has gotten me in trouble a couple of times. Once in college, but I don't want to talk about that. Instead, will relate a little incident that didn't get me in trouble but was quite embarrassing at the time.

Years and years and years ago, I was running a timber marking crew on the Trinity District in the deep piney woods of East Texas when we noticed an individual apparently following the crew. He was wandering around, peering into bushes and looking up into the tree tops now and then. At first I thought he was a squirrel hunter, but he didn't have a gun. It wasn't muscadine season and the mayhaws were all gone, so what was he up to?

Suddenly it hit me. He was a timber buyer from one of the local sawmills looking over the up-coming timber sale with bidding in mind. (This is called "assuming"). Since Forest Service sales hadn't been moving so well, I decided to stretch my job description a bit and give this guy a little sales pitch.

I waited for him to approach and we shook hands. He seemed reluctant to talk much but I proceeded to give him the low-down on the size of the sale, it's boundaries, old woods roads for access, and where the best timber was, etc. He seemed only mildly interested but he did ask a couple of questions. He wanted to know why we were marking so many "red-heart" trees, and where the NF boundary was and if it was painted.

After fifteen minutes or so he wandered off into the woods. I rejoined the crew feeling that I had failed to impress this guy.

A few weeks later I had to visit the Supervisor's Office in Lufkin for some reason long forgotten. In making the rounds of people I had to see, I walked past an office with the door open. I glanced inside. Lo and behold, there sitting behind a desk and grinning from ear to ear was my "timber buyer." He was introduced to me as Paul Vincent, the new Assistant Forest Supervisor.

So much for assuming.

MERLIN DIXON - Homosassa Springs, FL I can't thank you enough for the DR. I read it verbatim when I get it. A few issues back (1996) there was an article by Bill Williams. Bill was my assistant ranger when I was on the Francis Marion. I couldn't have had a better assistant. He was a great help on our annual work plans and he was my timber management man. Of course he did everything else well too.

At one time a mentally ill aid tried to get both of us fired. The truth finally came out and the aid lost his job. Ask Paul Russell for details.

FRANK SHARP - Venice, FL I made my summer visits with my children. They are scattered from coast to coast—New Jersey, California, Colorado, Texas, and North Carolina.

I was in a most unusual event this fall. I attended Earth Mass (Messa Gala) at the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine, New York City, October 6. It was the Feast of Saint Francis—the cathedral's 12th annual celebration. I was in the procession "The Living Earth: Opening of the Bronze Doors and Silent Procession." I carried a tiger turtle, a rather large, beautifully marked land turtle of Africa from the Essex County, New Jersey Turtle Back Zoo. I wore a coarse cloth, white Monkish robe with pink carnations pinned on my left shoulder. At the head of the procession were a huge elephant, a camel, two llamas, a small donkey, a miniature horse, sheep, a pretty black cow with black horns tipped with white (a small breed of Milch cow from Ireland), and a man with a wheelbarrow, adorned with many flowers, a broom and a shovel. Following were a small white and pink pig; large snakes draped over shoulders, around necks and waists; a chimpanzee and some monkeys; a buzzard, owls, falcons, birds and fowl of many kinds, and many other creatures that people have for pets. A little boy carried a small bowl with two gold fish; a girl carried toads; a man carried an observation hive of honey bees; and another had a nice arrangement of mosses and lichens in a large shallow bowl. The whole procession gathered about the alter for the blessing.

What a celebration it was! Several thousand people, many of them with their pets to be blessed after the service by Cathedral clergy at the Animal Festival in the Cathedral Close.



The Feast of St. Francis Fair followed on the Pulpit Green from 1-5 p.m. Events included performances and games for children, environmental presentations and concessions, and music.

It was a wonderful experience!

JACK GODDEN - Fox Point, WI Thank you for the August issue that included my tribute to Chuck Sabiotes.

In reading your opening "A Look Back Twenty Years Ago", is Paul Russell still alive? I knew him and Tom Hunt from my Cherokee days 1954-56. Tom was always giggling me for not paying dues for *The Dixie Rangers* that he would mail me occasionally. As you and others knew, he was a legend, a character hard to forget.

Tom had a liking for good "shine" and I was in a position to make it available to him at no charge. But he felt a little cheap and would trade me a fifth of bonded bourbon for two quarts of shine. He was a few miles closer to Chattanooga than I was in Etowah which was totally dry within the city limits.

My source was as "gifts." Melvin Dalton, a GS-2 from Epperson was hired to be my helper and "guide" for placing 240 permanent timber inventory plots over the District. On meeting up with many at their place of business in the woods, Melvin would profess himself a man of religion, a good Baptist, churchgoing, haven't touched a drop since he was 30! I didn't look that part and usually became a victim of tasting their batch; then usually accepting a quart mason jar. This wasn't a daily work occurrence as we circulated the news of where we would be working at George Murphy's store in Coker Creek, Webbs in Reliance, and to another store owner in Farmers. A two-week notice through their intelligence system usually meant they had the time to run off the batch and move out of the area we were to be working in. Catching them by surprise was usually met with some kind of confrontation—once with two shotguns held by the Lakey boys on Starr Mountain. (After our meeting they were accused of killing a bootlegger, hiding his body on the mountain. They were sentenced for a few years to the State penitentiary. The story made the pulp magazines calling it "Bloody Starr Mountain!".)

As our nearest Catholic church was in Cleveland, Tom and I would make the trade discreetly—usually after Sunday mass over one of Yvonne's breakfasts at their home. Our two daughters, one only six months old would accompany us to church. Tom always accused me of pinching one and having to carry one out of church about the time of the collection. Tom and Yvonne made us feel like family, as all of us were in those early days—part of the Forest Service "family" that today's employees seem to avoid any reference to.

And, yes, I did hear from Tom about some of his Atlanta friends (Ed Littlehales among them) posting Tom and Yvonne's house for sale

while they went on vacation. Yvonne as some will remember gave piano lessons to many students. They were the ones that called Yvonne on their return upset about their daughters no longer having Yvonne as their teacher if they sold the house and moved. I can imagine it was then Tom's time to "turn the screw."

See how effective your thoughtfulness was in mailing that August copy. It got my memory box a'going and this old computer of mine did the rest.

FRANK HOTARD - Russellville, AR Here are my 1997 dues. I hope this covers them, if not, let me know. I am no longer able to write but really enjoy reading *The Dixie Ranger*. It brings back memories. The article from Dick Woody made me think of Mev Woody. Ethel and I rented two rooms from her. She was really a mother to us.

HOWARD BURNETT - Deale, MD In the last issue of *The Dixie Ranger* I particularly enjoyed A.P. Mustian's good mention of Bill Cranston and his days on the Osceola. I was one of the mentioned "Charcoal Kids," and have many fond memories of those days in 1956.

The Charcoal Kids were six or seven of us single JF's who could, and did, move fast and cheap to the Osceola to harvest the timber killed by the Osceola's portion of the Buckhead Fire. We worked out on the burned area for four months and came in every night covered with charcoal. We must have been a pitiful sight, but we got a lot of wood salvaged.

Ranger Bill Cranston took time every Wednesday evening after work to hold a seminar on how to use some FS form or other, like a fire report, an accident report, or a timber sale form. We learned more in those two hour sessions than we could have by trial and error in later years, as cases came up. Personally, this was invaluable, as I went from the Osceola to an Assistant Ranger position, and needed to know these forms and information. Thanks, Bill!

Bill Cranston also coached our softball team that kept us off the streets a couple of nights a week. Although mostly uncoachable, I suppose, we were part of a four team local league, and did some serious ball playing. Again, thanks Bill, for your time and effort to make our lives better. You did.

I look forward to the next *Dixie Ranger*. I always find much to remind me of the days that used to be, and fellow foresters who shared some of those days.

JOHN COURTENAY writes: Reading A.P. Mustian's memories of Bill Cranston in the last issue brought back a few of my own.

What A.P. called memos of "impertinent logic and subtle disdain" were that indeed. I recall one that prompted Supervisor Joe Riebold to remark, "There is a limit to even my forbearance."

One day in August of 1959 or 60, I wandered into Bill's office in Lake City and was told, "Well, John, I got my World Series tickets today." (In Yankee Stadium, of course.) When asked if he had considered the possibility that the Yankees might not be in the Series when October came around, Bill's reply was, "Then there won't be any World Series this year." Not a Yankee fan myself, I still felt pleasure for Bill's sake when the 1996 Yankees went all the way.

\* \* \*



### *WELCOME NEW MEMBERS*

John R. Allen (Katherine) 3176 Summit Sq Dr, Apt G4,  
Oakton, VA 22124-2877 Phone: 703 938-1663

Richard Ames 4425 Arcadia Dr, Norcross, GA 30093

Duke Barr, Rt 9 Box 2695, Elizabethton, TN 37643

Frances Hurst, 3752 Seabury Ct, Burlington, NC 27215-8738

June Jones, 5903 White Pine Pl, Forest Park, GA 30050-4130

James H. Lewis (Wanza) 1100 Hershey Dr, Marietta, GA 30062 Phone:  
770 973-3002

Hugh E. Mobley (Rebecca) 114 Aegean Way, Wetumpka, AL 36093 Phone:  
334 567-4462

James F. Page (Sarah) P.O. Box 164, Smyrna, NC 28579-0164 Phone:  
919 729-1129

Jack Reichert (Marcia) 549 Lurene Circle, Montgomery, AL 36109-4950  
Phone: 334 271-1291

Roger Rich (Helen) 1428 Ridgewood Dr., Lilburn, GA 30247-5548  
Phone: 770 923-2116

Gordon H. Small (Virginia) 50 Lee Rd, Waynesville, NC 28786-9707  
Phone 704 452-5190

Charles E. Steele (Heidrun) 2580 Spencers Trace, Marietta, GA  
30062-4429 Phone: 770 578-9634

Larry Trekell, 506 E. Planters St., San Augustine, TX 75972-2142



CHANGES TO THE DIRECTORY: Please make changes as underlined.

Patricia Kane, 5060 Vernon Springs Dr., Dunwoody, GA Phone: 770 396-5837

Philip A. Newton, 26 W. Dogwood Dr., Franklin, NC 28734-3210 (Not a relocation, just address change for 911 purposes)

James K. Vessey, 411 Brentwood Ave., Deland, FL 32724-2411

\* \* \*

**LOOK**

NEW MESSAGE

I would like to compliment those of you who got the message regarding your dues. The numbers enclosed in parentheses after your name (96) indicates the year through which dues have been paid. This will appear on all your labels from now on. This also enables me to post dues on the computer. But, do look each time you get your *Dixie Ranger* because I have been known to make mistakes. With money it is a serious matter with me, so please let me know if your records do not correspond with mine.

Another reminder about the +four zip code. I can get that information from the U.S. Postal Service, but they will only allow me to ask for 5 addresses at one time. With over 175 names that do not have the +4 code, you can imagine the time it will take to get all of these. Folks, I don't have it. You can get this information from either your carrier or your Post Office and send to me on a post card.

I also need to tell you that you may not recognize your city as spelled out on your label. I'm using an Avery label for a dot matrix printer and it will hold just so many letters. I am abbreviating the city name to allow room for the 9 digit zip code. The Postal Service will not allow me to run all the zip code as one group of numbers; it has to be divided into 5, then 4. Their system is set up to read zip codes and as long as I have that correct, you will get your *Dixie Ranger*.

One other item, should you plan to be away from your home for several months duration, could you let me know? Even if the Post Office has been told to hold your mail, with the "address correction requested" printed on each issue, the Post Office may hold your *Dixie Ranger* and then they notify me at a cost of \$.50 to let me know you aren't at home. Strange isn't it? I have a few

members whom I know will be gone during the summer and I handle their mail accordingly. Some of you do let me know with an address change card. That's fine. With everything on the computer there is no problem changing addresses. You just have to let me know when you get back home. Any questions?

\* \* \*

#### INTERNET ANYONE?

As mentioned in the last issue, the National Forest Service Retirees Association has a registered domain on the Internet <http://www.fsx.org>

Do any of you have access to Internet or any other way to get E-Mail? Do you want to put your address in *The Dixie Ranger*?

Several of our members have E-Mail:

[bobbarberickson@worldnet.att.net](mailto:bobbarberickson@worldnet.att.net) (Bob Erickson)

[ralphmumme@worldnet.att.net](mailto:ralphmumme@worldnet.att.net) (Ralph Mumme)

The Chattahoochee-Oconee NF has a site on the World Wide Web too, <http://www.fs.fed.us/conf/>.

\* \* \*

#### In Memoriam

*Mrs. Mary Davis Black*, died October 15, 1996 in Decatur, GA. Survivors include daughter, JoAnne Smith, 4 grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren and one great, great-granddaughter.

*Robert E. Lee*, died December 6, 1996, in Alexandria, LA. He is survived by his wife, Louanne.

\* \* \*

Quote of the Month. What well-known person said: "I sleep each night a little better, a little more confidently, because Lyndon Johnson is my president. For I know he lives, thinks and works to make sure that for all America and, indeed, the growing body of the free world, the morning shall always come." See last pg for answer.

\* \* \*

*You know you've become a Senior Citizen when your mind keeps writing checks your body can't cash—Bob Neelands*

**Neelands Corner - A Few Words about the Proprietor**  
**By Russ Daley**

If memory serves correctly, Bob came to the Regional Office by way of forestry school in Michigan. Then he was at Marineland and the Southern Station, where he had the sometimes thankless job of putting the words of the scientists into something the average person could understand.

When Dan Todd decided to retire, Bill Huber had his eye on Neelands. In those days we put out an annual report. We decided the upcoming one would be on research. Of course, it never entered Bill's mind that since I would be spending some time in New Orleans, I could get an idea as to whether Bob might be interested in coming to Atlanta.

Bob was interested and did come. Huber, and later Stan Adams were always ready to volunteer their staff to help somebody out. Bob and I worked together on a variety of projects. One was an international Forest research conference where, with help from Shirley Herbert, we put out a newsletter in four languages.

Those were the days of the start of Environmental Impact Statements. Folks would gather from all over the Region and work for days, weeks and even months to put one together. I won't mention the name of a particular study, but several months after it was released to the public, somebody noticed that about 50 pages were missing.

Huber was thinking photography when he got Bob, but he got a lot more. In addition to being a top photographer, Bob was also a great editorial writer. And he headed a publications outfit which gave the Region the best publications in the Service. Even the Washington folks used the Region as an example of what a publications unit could do. Bob wasn't a one man gang and had lots of help from Harry Rossoll, Barry Nehr, Bob Hintz, Johnny Rogers and Sunny Jones. If I missed anybody, my apologies.

\* \* \*

*"Olie retired from the Eastern Region to a farm deep in the heart of Minnesota. One day his old friend Ranger Swen came to see how he was doing. While they talked a passing car got stuck in a mud hole on the road next to Olie's barn. Olie hooked up his horse and pulled the car out of the mud. The thankful driver rewarded Olie with \$10. Seeing this, Swen exclaimed, "Why, Olie, at this rate you could pull cars out of the mud hole all day and all night."  
"No," Olie mused, "I couldn't do that." "Why not, Olie? You could become a rich man." "Well, Swen, I just couldn't. It takes me all night to fill the mud hole back up with water!"*



L. B. JOHNSON AND ME  
By Don Ashworth

In 1965, L. B. Johnson worked for me. He wasn't the long, tall Texas I had known growing up in Texas. That L.B. was loud, obnoxious and a fantastic manipulator of people. This L.B. was short, quiet and was born and raised in Mississippi.

My career until June 1965 was a basic National Forest forester's life style. We fought fire, marked timber, made appraisals, went to meetings and did the usual forester chores.

John Tom Koen was Supervisor of the Ouachita National Forest and master of all those serving under him. He held his people in a tight grip, assigning people to various districts, etc., as his position gave him authority to do. Most of his decisions were accepted and complied with as a part of the Forest Service direction for our lives. This move to the Y-LT, however, was one I went to kicking and screaming. In my eyes, it was a boot in the rear, and a demotion from Timber Management Assistant on the Mena Ranger District where I had moved sixteen million board feet of timber in less than ten months. The timber was burned in the Eagleton Burn and my primary responsibility was to get it to market before it was lost to bugs and blue stain. I thought I had done a masterful job, but I guess John Tom had others he wanted to do the next phase of the job.

How wrong I was about the move to Lexington, Mississippi! A powerful little guy from Bangor, Maine, changed my perspective 180 degrees. Victor B. McNaughton was his name. His ability to inspire people to do their best was phenomenal. His love for people and dedication to a goal was beyond compare. This article is not about this outstanding individual, but I could spend days relating to his awesome approach to life. All who worked for him in the days of the Y-LT will agree with this assessment, I'm sure.

Each planting season, after securing land to plant from the local landowners, we would plant millions of loblolly pine seedling. L.B. Johnson was one of two forestry aides who worked for me (Mose Wigley was the other.)

L.B. was a great foreman and did a truly beautiful job of getting trees planted, but he could not read a map. One cold winter day I drove up to his crew as they were planting a forty-acre tract of severely eroded abandoned cropland. Since L.B. couldn't read a map, I was going to have him follow me to the tract he would plant next.

L.B. directed Precious Johnson, his strawboss, about where to plant trees in his absence. Precious was a six-foot-four black guy who weighed about 300 pounds. His feet were so big, he couldn't find

boots big enough to fit. He wore gum boots over bare feet, but he was a truly good tree planter and strawboss.

L.B.'s instructions to Precious went something like this, "Precious, I'm going with Don to look over our next planting location. Keep the crew in this field and don't cross that fence on the right no matter what you do. Do you have any questions?" We left the area for about an hour.

As we returned, we saw the crew planting about eight to ten acres in the field L.B. had instructed him not to plant (the field on the other side of the fence.) Frantically L.B. charged across the field and collared this huge black guy. It looked like a flea trying to redirect an elephant. As I approached, the conversation was all one sided. The usually calm little white guy was screaming at the top of his lungs. The awestruck mammoth black guy was wide-eyed and confused.

I asked L.B. to calm down and for Precious to explain his actions. His reply was simple, innocent and straight-forward. "Mr. L.B., we didn't cross the fence, we found a gap and went through that gap. No sir, we did not cross the fence."

L.B. was aghast. I was amused, Precious was relaxed as we pulled up eight acres of loblolly pine seedlings and returned to planting.

And that is the way it was on the Y-LT when Don Ashworth was a forester for Vic McNaughton.

\* \* \*

### ***Coming up in the next issue—***

Can You Identify These Gentlemen (Postponed from this Issue)

No Officers, No Program, No Agenda, and best of all, no Speakers!

"...and I don't mean just a little mad." A Run in with the USPS

Correcting a *Dixie Ranger* Oversight by Bob Neelands

Anecdotes about Ranger Lester Schapp and Grady Waldrop in NC

\* \* \*

REUNION 2000 - The Northern Rocky Mountain Retirees Association accepted the challenge and will host the next reunion in Missoula, MT in the year 2000. With several activities planned in that year, there will be something for everyone. Just remember 2000! From all the related stories about the Reunion '96, you won't want to miss the one in 2000.



#### MORE LETTERS FROM OUR MEMBERS

VAUGHN HOFELDT - Redding, CA Long time since May 1, 1995. The second shoe finally dropped when we sold our Gainesville house last December 6.

Youngest daughter Kim is happily working out of Ketchum, Idaho, with USFS at Sawtooth National Recreation Area HQ. Florida daughter Kris is moving to CA late this year. Kathy lives on the east shore of the Mississippi so we're all closer together now, or will be.

Best wishes to all with high hopes the parent organization will be taking the high ground again.

JIM WEBB - Fairview, NC Jeannie and I attended the F.S. Reunion in Park City in September. It was great visiting with old friends of many years and locations over our 34 years in the outfit. The folks out there did a fine job in hosting us. We look forward to the year 2000 and the gathering in Missoula!

Before and after the reunion, we traveled with our trailer on our southwestern swing. We had a great time enjoying the scenery, geology, Indian and Hispanic cultures, hiking, and the weather in many national forests, parks, and monuments. What a treasure these lands are and how lucky we are to be able to enjoy them!

We were shocked and saddened to hear of the death of Richard Mills. Richard was a teenager when we reported to the Croatan in 1956. His father, H.O., was our ranger, and Owen Jamison was the assistant ranger. You can't help but get off to a good start with folks like that to work for on your first F.S. assignment.

I was so pleased when Richard was selected ranger on the Croatan. I got to see him several times through the years there and on the Ozark. His enthusiasm was contagious, and his energy level had few equals. He served well. I was proud of him and I know H.O. would have been.

ROBIN SHADDOX - Russellville, AR Thanks so much for a good newsletter. My address label shows that it's pay-up time again. Here is a check to cover 97-98 dues.



Had a note from Jim McConnell to send you a report on the October 26 Catahoula Ranger District Reunion on the Kisatchie. About 35 retirees, wives and families met at the Catahoula work center (Old Stuart Nursery.) Many thanks to Bobby Sebastian for providing the facilities. Got in a lot of visiting time with both local and out-of-state folks. Several folks suggested the next reunion be a Forest-wide affair and this would be just great.

Charles Till was the oldest retiree in attendance. He hired on in 1929 when Charles Plymel was Forest Supervisor. I believe he was the first Kisatchie Supervisor. I visited Bob Lee (former Kisatchie A.O.) who was in the hospital at the time of our reunion. I heard later that he had passed away. Bob was a great guy and will be missed by many. He bailed me out numerous times with budget and other problems, but most of all he was a dear friend.

Jack Boren I read your write-up in the last *Dixie Ranger* and your comment about 20 years of diaries and all of us being fair game. Don't get carried away! I don't have diaries but I have some pretty good tales stored away just in case they're needed!

\* \* \*

### ***What's happening in the Region—***

The Southern Region is continuing to move forward with key natural resource management initiatives across the National Forests. Among the successes, is the completion of the assessment of natural resources in the Southern Appalachians. The successful completion of this document officially launched the revision of land management plans in Southern Appalachian Forests. The revisions of those plans are now well under way.

The Southern Appalachian Assessment has also earned the Chief's ecosystem management award, a national recognition bestowed upon outstanding efforts within the country that fully implement the ecosystem-based land ethic. An official award ceremony will be taking place in the next few weeks.

Efforts to revamp the Forest Service organization in the Region are also continuing. Officials are seeking to fill key deputy slots, while fully implementing the new organizational structure, which received national approval last year.

Arkansas - The Ouachita recently completed a legislated land exchange with Weyerhaeuser Corporation involving over 200,000 acres of land in Arkansas and Oklahoma. The exchange had strong support from Congressional delegations in both states, but was controversial with some environmental groups.

The Ozark National Forest is involved in a complex litigation with environmental organizations and the State Attorney General over management of lands in the Jasper County area. Numerous motions and hearings have been filed or held over the last two years. The District judge is about to rule on some issues in one of the cases. Another case is before the Eighth Circuit court of Appeals and could be decided within the next few weeks as well.

Georgia - The Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest is in the process of revising its land management plan. The process is drawing considerable public interest. At issue are timber harvest levels and roadless area and wilderness evaluations.

The Forest is involved in two lawsuits with environmental organizations. One involves Forest Service compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the inventory provisions of NFMA/NEPA as it relates to several timber sales in the Chattahoochee National Forests. The other relates to a Forest Service decision on a multi-year timber sale project in Rabun County known as the Tuckaluge Project. That decision was reached after mediation by the Forest Service among environmental and commodity interest groups. The consensus decision drew editorial support from *The Atlanta Constitution*. Litigation was brought by a local environmental organization afterward.

Florida - Forest managers expect to release in the next few weeks the draft for their revised land and resources management plan. The comprehensive document, which guides forest management for at least a decade, will address issues like the red-cockaded woodpecker management, wilderness designations and timber production.

North Carolina - Overruling nearly 100 citizen appeals, Forest Service officials upheld their highly controversial decision last November to cut timber on Bluff Mountain. The agency, however, delayed plans to implement the sale until they further address citizen concerns.

The Governor also opposed the sale and asked that an environmental impact statement be prepared before rendering a decision. His views conflicted with Congressman Charles Taylor who strongly favored the timber sale decision.

South Carolina - Forest Service employees filed a complaint last December with the Equal Opportunity Employment Commission, saying the agency discriminates against African American employees. The complaint has received national media attention, including *Jet Magazine*, and *The Washington Post*. The complaint has been expanded to include employees throughout the Southern Region.



Virginia - After nearly five years of analysis, the Jefferson National Forest announced they would likely reject American Electric Power company's proposal to build a 765KV powerline across the 12 miles of the Forest. Acting as the lead agency for the federal agencies that were also impacted by the proposal, the Forest Service released the draft environmental impact statement last summer. The public comment period for the document ended last fall.

**RECENT RETIREMENTS FROM THE REGIONAL OFFICE:**

Charles E. Dooley, Personnel Management  
Jerry L. Edwards, Engineering  
Betty Bates, Silviculture and Genetic Resources Unit  
Billie J. Sweany, Engineering  
Donald A. Crinchlow, Architect  
Rafael Berrios, Civil Rights

Alabama - retired 24

South Carolina - retired 4

**PERSONNEL ACTIONS:**

North Carolina - Deputy Forest Supervisor, Lou Woltering, has been designated to serve as Forest Supervisor effective January 19, until a new Forest Supervisor is confirmed and reports to duty. Bruce Jewell, Public Affairs Unit Leader, will serve as Deputy Forest Supervisor effective February 2, for an initial period not to exceed 30 days. Randy Phillips, prior Forest Supervisor, is now in the Washington Office.

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**Membership Drive Underway**

With the number of retirements taking place across the Southern Region, a special effort is being made to contact those who have recently retired and encourage them to join the Retiree's association. Letters will be mailed shortly to those folks for whom we have addresses. Should you hear of a recent retiree who did not get a letter, please furnish them information on how to join and where to send dues. Our address is on the front page of this newsletter. Our membership now stands at 375 members. As you can see, we have added 13 new names by just word of mouth. So we encourage you to talk about *The Dixie Ranger* to your fellow retirees and get them to join us. Through the efforts of Jim McConnell and Bob Erickson, 32 people will receive letters with applications.



DIXIE RANGER  
SO. F.S. RETIREES ASSOCIATION  
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NEWMAN, GA 30265-1327


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NOTE: CHECK YOUR EXPIRATION  
DATE ON LABEL OF EACH ISSUE

Answer to Quote of the Month: Jack Valenti, President of the Motion Picture Association of America. Mr. Valenti began his career as an advertising man in Houston and was the first member of the White House recruited by LBJ when Johnson became President in November 1963. He served at Johnson's side for 2 1/2 years as the most devoted of factotums and confidants. The quote came from a speech he made on June 28, 1965, before the Advertising Federation of America. He has been in the news lately because of his announcement of new classifications for television programming.

\* \* \*



Don't forget to call in your reservations to either Peaches Sherman or the Brays by March 18 for reservations to the March luncheon on the 20th. See page 6 for phone numbers.