

FUN News

for

People, Recognition, Enthusiasm, Communication

Panhandle District Monthly News

Volume 2 Number 1

January, 2006

Happy New Year

Are we ready? Several have said that 2005 seemed to pass quickly and 2006 started at a fast pace. There's no denying that -- the newsletter is late!! . . . like I didn't know January 1 was coming!!

Last year in the first issue of fUN News for PREC we talked about resolutions involving change and improvement. We encouraged you to share your news, and we want to thank everyone who participated by sharing their stories or providing news clippings for the bulletin board in the break room. We have received many positive and encouraging comments, so we plan to continue the newsletter (on time!). This means you need to continue sharing your news by sending that information to the Staff Advisory Committee, c/o Sharon Holman, fax 308-632-1365, mail 4502 Avenue I, Scottsbluff or email sholman1@unl.edu.



Suggestions or Comments?!

Along with a New Year comes New Ideas -- we want to hear your ideas! A "suggestion" box is in the work room by the mail boxes. Please provide your input concerning anything you wish to express. Your suggestions and comments can be directed to the Staff Advisory and/or the District Directors Advisory Committees. We would appreciate you including your name, but please be assured you will not be identified. For those of you in the counties, please know that we also want to hear from you.

Old Things Are More Beautiful

Old things are more beautiful
than many things brand new
Because they bring fond mem'ries
of things we used to do.

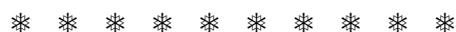
Old photographs in albums,
love letters tied with lace,
Recapture those old feelings
that new ones can't replace.

Baby shoes, a teddy bear,
a ring that grandma wore,
Are treasures waiting there behind
a door marked "Nevermore".

Old things are more beautiful,
more precious day by day,
Because they are the flowers
we planted yesterday.

Clay Harrison - Source: I deals

Today is a good day to "plant" the flowers
that will be remembered tomorrow.



Special Thanks

. . . to all of you who helped make two families' holidays special by providing items for the food baskets that were delivered on December 21 from the Panhandle Research & Extension Center. Your generous donations provided all of the items needed for a turkey dinner, plus enough food to contribute to at least a week's worth of meals. This was a very meaningful activity that we hope to continue next year as we celebrate the holiday season.

Thanks goes to the Center and Community Relations Committee for organizing the Friday Treat Days, the Hall Decorating Contest, the Holiday Trail-Mix Mixer with our Adopt-a-School (PAL) students, and finally the Winter Holiday Gathering last Friday evening. That event was well attended and if anyone went home hungry it's only because they were watching their diet too closely -- there was plenty of delicious food to share and enjoy!

Reminder!

If any of the PREC faculty and staff have not paid their annual social fees -- please see Marilyn Miller.

Suggested contribution: Faculty - \$27.00 and Staff - \$6.00. These dollars are used for such things as sending cards and flowers to employees and families when circumstances arise. Your contribution is appreciated.

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Panhandle Trivia

Back by Popular Demand!!

At one time, which town had a population of 800, but currently only 9 people live there?

Tech Tip

Want to see all your files organized by type? In Windows Explorer on the right pane, click on the Type bar and this will put all your files together by type. Provided by Carol Laurent

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PLAN TO ATTEND

Directory Management

How to Organize and Backup Your Files and Understand Your Profile

Training Session is scheduled to repeat on January 23, 27 or 31 for two hours from 10:00 to noon.

Register for the day that works best for you by emailing Carol at claurent2@unl.edu. These sessions will be offered at the PREC or via polycom -- indicate your location preference.

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Reflecting and Accepting

Performance appraisals will be on the agenda soon. This is usually a dreaded time of the year, when actually it should be viewed as a great time for reflecting on accomplishments and accepting new challenges. These accomplishments and challenges should be shared by employees and managers (supervisors) alike. Before this year's appraisal process begins, each of us should take time to look back on what was accomplished this past year and then look at what projects are ahead of us. Now, think of how you are going to use what was accomplished to improve on the new challenges. These are thoughts that should be shared during the performance appraisals.

Communication -- a Two-way Street

Communicating Better at Work

Communicating isn't over
when you finish delivering your message.

Employees often show concern about the quality and quantity of communication at work. Some claim that management gives only lip service to open communication but does little to really communicate with them. Others contend their organizations believe that posting notices on bulletin boards and sending out memos provide adequate communication. Still others say they receive vague instructions that are difficult to follow.

Ineffective communication often results in poor cooperation and coordination, lower productivity, undercurrents of tension, gossip and rumors, and increased turnover and absenteeism. Experience shows there are many ways managers can improve internal communication. Here are some things to try:

- *Understand that communication is a two-way street. It involves giving information and getting feedback from employees. It isn't finished when information is given.

- *Put more emphasis on face-to-face communication with employees. Don't rely mainly on bulletin boards, memos and other written communication.

- *Ask yourself each time you give an instruction, if the message is clear. Most vagueness is caused by failing to be specific. Example: Don't just tell an employee to "show more interest" in his or her work, if an employee spends too much time chatting with others, be specific about it.

- *View information as "service to" employees and not "power over" them.

- *Listen to employees; show respect for them when they speak. They'll feel like part of the team and will tend to be more dedicated and productive. One way: Ask questions to show interest and clarify points.

- *Don't just talk open-door policy. Practice it by walking around and talking to employees. Allow people to disagree and to come up with new ideas.
- *Conduct one-on-one meetings. Ask each employee to tell you how you can help him do a better job. Then how he can help you do a better job.

- *Concentrate on building credibility with employees. Managers who lack credibility and fail to create a climate of trust and openness are not believed -- no matter how hard they try to communicate.

Source: Communication Briefings newsletter

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Getting Along With Your Boss

Whether you're working with a new boss or one you've been reporting to for quite a few years, the following suggestions might be helpful:

- *Stop trying to change your boss. Change your own behavior to get along with the boss.

- *Don't assume that you know your boss's goals. Make sure you're fully aware of what the boss is trying to accomplish. If necessary, ask clarifying questions and point out inconsistencies when tasks seem out of line with stated goals.

- *Make sure your priorities are in line with the boss's priorities.

- *Don't indulge in petty resentments. Go more than halfway to make the relationship work.

- *Study your boss's personality style and preferences. Know the best time and the best way to present information to the boss and to get approval for something you want to try.

- *If the boss doesn't accept one of your suggestions, try to look at the decision from the boss's point of view.

Source: enRoute Magazine

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How to Be a Great Manager

*Develop positive vision. See success before it arrives. Example: Successful managers -- when visualizing themselves walking across a high wire-- see themselves walking to the other side. Managers who struggle usually have their focus on not falling off the rope.

*Think big. Look for ideas that will be contagious and excite people.

*Encourage others to do their best. Successful managers believe that people do want to make a significant contribution. Coach, counsel and develop people to live up to their potential.

*Set and maintain high expectations for all who work with you. Mediocrity does not generate a highly motivated work force.

*Overuse polite phrases. Unsuccessful managers don't seem to find the time to say "please" and "thank you".

Source: The Manager's Advisor, Peter Stark

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Remember When!?

Share a special Valentine's Day with us! It may be a funny story about trading paper valentines in grade school, a special date (could have been a blind date), the way you met your significant other, a romantic proposal, or a unique way you celebrate Valentine's Day with those who are special to you. Send your stories to Sharon Holman at sholman1@unl.edu by Friday, January 27.

Debra Underhill will be celebrating a special Valentine's Day this year -- her husband will be home from Iraq. She and Joy are going to Hawaii on January 20 to meet him. Charles was sworn into the National Guard on February 14, 1985.

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Employee in the Know

This section of the newsletter has received the most favorable comments. People enjoy reading about their co-workers and getting better acquainted on a more personal level. We hope to have all Panhandle employees featured by the end of the year. Therefore, you need to have your stories ready -- you'll be contacted soon! You may be able to postpone the date, but no one can talk their way out of this assignment . . . your raise may depend on it (just kidding!--but it was worth a try).

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Linda Boeckner
Extension Nutrition Specialist

Not really knowing what I should say about myself, let's just say I was Nebraska born and raised. I entered the world in Grand Island, Nebraska, moved to Giltner at the age of 1 and then to Fairbury when I was 8 years old. My folks had been dairy farmers but in 1962 they became owner-operators of the bowling alley in Fairbury. I was the gutter duster at the alleys, and became a Fairbury Jeff.

I started college life at the University of Nebraska as a design major (career counseling for girls at Fairbury High was pretty non-existent). Eventually my mother convinced me to consider a more "useful" profession so I ended up with a major in foods and nutrition. Graduate school at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio and a dietetic internship soon followed. I landed in Hickory, North Carolina immediately following that stint to hone my skills in Southern dialect, and to work as a public health nutritionist at the Catawba County Health Department.

Along the way, I engaged in a three-year letter writing campaign to the Navy guy and ended up saying yes to his proposal of marriage after a Christmas week in Nebraska in December 1977. We were married in August 1978 after David removed himself from active duty assignment and continued on with the Naval Reserves. We stayed one more year in North Carolina and then moved back to Nebraska where I entered graduate school again. (I was really just looking for a job and they had another neat deal to offer me.)

The next few years are a muddle of graduate school, babies, and moves. Abigail arrived in 1980 while we lived in

Lincoln, I finished my PhD in 1982, and Laura was born in 1983 when we lived in Fairbury. For about five years, I took special assignments and part-time teaching positions at the local community college or UNL summer school. In 1987 David and I transplanted ourselves and our family to Scottsbluff where I began life as a University of Nebraska extension nutrition specialist.

My greatest accomplishments thus far have been staying happily married and raising two daughters to adulthood, with a minimum number of serious consequences. Following the example of her mother, Abby headed south two years ago for her first job as an occupational therapist in Mississippi. As of December 17, 2005 when Laura graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, we closed a chapter on getting children through school and college. Laura now awaits a Peace Corps assignment. We added a son to our family on December 31, 2005. David thought it was time that he counteracted the female influence in his life and agreed to Dale Russell's request to marry Abby in Greenville, Mississippi (I guess my Southern dialect training might pay off after all). My passions are traveling with my family, "re-grouping" in the mountains on camping trips, and building casitas on the Mexican-U.S. border with fellow church members. I go crazy over Laura's dog, Taylor, and spoil her (the dog) more than I ever spoiled my children, or so they say. Who knows what the next 50 years will bring?



Abby, David, Laura

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Kathy Bosch
Extension Family Life Specialist

It's always fun to think about my childhood because I had such a wonderful family to grow up in. You're never lonely or without a playmate when you're the oldest of 6

children. And I was only 9 years old when my youngest baby sister Trish was born. So, we tease Mother and Daddy to this day about being busy in all respects! I spent my childhood in England where my parents were involved in missionary work with our church and where Mary, Peter, Timothy and Patricia were born. John and I were born in the U.S.A. We lived in Sunderland in a shipyard town on the North Sea for 6 years, and in London for 7 years. We went camping every year for 2 weeks and traveled to Germany, France, Spain, Italy and Wales. Our main expense was to cross the English Channel and then we tented in the tent my parents sewed in our living room on my mother's sewing machine, bought fresh milk and eggs from farmers, and fresh bread from market places. We would pack food in the trailer that my father built. The trailer would hold our supplies, and then fold out to be a picnic table with benches to seat 8. When it rained in Wales for 2 weeks, we pulled the trailer in our tent to keep baby Trish warm and dry in her carry cot. We saw many cathedrals, museums, historic buildings, art work, and met some wonderful people. When we went to Spain for 2 weeks, we only ate one meal out and I shared it with my sister Mary. But I haven't forgotten that special meal where I first ate cold gazpacho soup. Today, it is a regular during the summer.

We moved to Kansas when I was a high school freshman. So, I was busy making friends, getting to know my grandparents and extended family, learning a new culture, adapting to a new education style, and trying to cope with the dramatic changes in the climate. That same summer I was hired to work in the corn fields. The only problem was that I had never seen a corn stalk before. I surely didn't know they had male and female parts. I also had never experienced 100 degree weather. Needless to say, it was suggested that I didn't return the next day. I then volunteered at the nursing home until I was old enough to legally be a nurse aide and worked during high school and my first year of college caring for the elderly. I loved our visits to my grandparents and cherished getting to know them and spend time with them. Together with my parents, they were a positive influence in my life and gave me a firm foundation.

I was married and divorced after 21 years of marriage. You may ask me questions about my previous marriage when you see me away from the office. I learned that you can influence others but you don't control their behavior. God has since blessed me with a healthy relationship.

I have three wonderful children. When they were younger and even teenagers, I called them a "good handful"! I earned my degrees while parenting and working as an extension educator and associate specialist. My years of

study proved fruitful because I enjoy the work I do and am able to enhance the quality of life for families.

My Renee married Dave last October and is a personnel director working on her MBA. Jason is a 4th year medical student, will graduate in May, and then will do 3-5 years of residency in internal medicine. He just completed 10 interviews in the Midwest during December and was able to spend New Year's with me. Sarah graduated from K-State in December in business administration and is employed as a marketing consultant for a business firm downtown Kansas City.

My parents are happily married after 51 years and enjoy retirement. They go north to Alaska in the summer to fish for salmon and south in the winter to keep warm, do mission work, and have fun with each other and friends. My siblings and their mates are very special to me and have unique personalities and occupations. They are caring, considerate, and intelligent. Once-in-a-while, they try to boss me around and then I remind them that I'm the oldest, even though I'm the shortest! I am the proud aunt of 9 nieces and nephews. I am happy to be in Scottsbluff and now call it my home.



Kathy (far right) oldest of 6.

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Karen Schledewitz
Extension Assistant - Nutrition Program

I was born here in Scottsbluff on my oldest sister's 7th birthday. My Mom and Dad told her they had been called by the hospital to come pick up their new baby - she was quite upset they had to leave at THAT moment and send home the kids at her birthday party. I have been good at

interrupting fun ever since. I grew up with my two older sisters and parents on the family farm 1 mile west of Redington - south of Bayard and just across the Wildcat Hills. We still have a home there. My Grandmother Rice bought the farm with her own money - I come from a long line of independent women. My childhood was filled with playing by Pumpkin Creek, walking up to the hills, working in the garden, doing 4-H, playing piano, riding our Shetland ponies and raking hay in the fields (starting at age 9). My sisters and I were Dad's only hired help (\$.25 an hour). My fondest memories are of my Grandma Rice staying with us each summer and telling us pioneer stories - she was born in 1886 and remembered traveling in a covered wagon.

I attended the rural Redington K-8 school (with all of the Niensens) and felt it was the best education I could have gotten (do not ask what I think of the closing of Class 1 schools). I then attended Bridgeport High School where I met my husband Jerry. We were sweethearts through most of high school and married during college. I graduated from Chadron State College in '82 with a Bachelor of Science in Education and endorsements to teach Chemistry and Biology in grades 7-12. I taught junior high science until our son Dustin was born. Teaching junior high science was a true trial by fire (including bull snake and white mice escapees) and I proclaimed my own permanent moratorium on teaching 13 year-olds. Interestingly enough, my son is getting his Bachelor's in Middle School Education with Math and Science Endorsements.

Our daughter, Kelsey, was born two years later and I continued to stay home with the kids but took night and summer classes to complete my MA in Education with a K-12 Counseling Endorsement. I was also able to summarize depositions for a law firm at home. When Kelsey started school, I started teaching again and taught science at the high school and yes, junior high levels for the next 4 years (I never said never again). I then worked as an elementary school counselor in Sidney for 6 years. However, while at Sidney, my husband began working in Scottsbluff; my son drove to Banner County High School and my daughter started at Bayard High. Consequently, our gas bills were about as much as my pay check. So we decided I'd go in the same direction as the rest of the flock and I started working here at PHREC. I love working in science research and education and am thankful for my great co-workers and boss.

My main hobby for 22 years was involving myself in every school, church and community activity in which my children became involved. It was amazing how much they did - especially considering that we lived out in the middle of nowhere. Jerry and I coached everything from baseball to Odyssey of the Mind and had a ball! Now that we are

empty nesters, we are trying new hobbies - last week I got to drive the tractor and pull my husband in our farm truck most of the way up to the hills and back with only 5 stops and no starting (of the truck, which was the goal). I have learned all of the farmers' sign language including the throwing of the hat which means the tractor is close to tipping over. Seriously, I love to read, listen to Christian rock and I still enjoy gardening and walking to the hills on the farm. My husband and I travel to Christian rock concerts whenever possible (as far away as Seattle) and visit our son and his wife in Kearney. Our daughter Kelsey is attending WNCC and will be attending UNMC School of Nursing next fall.

Martin Luther King Day

University of Nebraska Panhandle Research and Extension Center will be closed January 16.

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Trivia Answer

Beginning in 1890 the town grew rapidly. Marsland had a winning baseball team, community band and singing group. Potatoes were one of the main crops with a large storage cellar located there. Around 1900 the railroad contracted with Bill and Charley Gregg to furnish ice for refrigerator cars. A big dam was built so the water from the Niobrara River would back up and then freeze. From 200 to 300 cars of ice were shipped out each season. The thaw after the blizzard of 1949 washed away the dam, and with more modern means of refrigeration available, ice harvesting was discontinued. Marsland was the victim of many fires. In 1911 fire swept the town. A bucket brigade was organized but the flames were beyond control. In 1913 another big fire took many businesses and again in 1914, fire destroyed nearly all structures on the north side of the business street. The grain elevator burned in 1928, which ended grain sales in Marsland. The drought and grasshopper plague took a heavy toll on everyone and people started moving out. The bank went broke in the Depression, and the thriving potato business ceased. By the end of 1943 at least 35 houses had been moved out of the town to "greener yards". The Methodist church was the last to close, May 1967. The post office, 100 years old in 1986, is the only business in town. The last passenger train to go through Marsland was in August 1969. However, the rails have since been improved to accommodate 20 to 30 coal trains that pass by daily. Life in Marsland continues normally for all who still live there. The small grade school furnishes entertainment for the entire area with numerous parties and dinners. Every two years, a big reunion is held. Several hundred people come. Everyone who ever lived in Marsland, or is interested, is invited. There is a large card club which involves the whole area, two extension clubs, a large 4-H Club, and Bible study held at the schoolhouse each Tuesday morning. The 1980 census registered 27, but only nine people were living in Marsland in 1988. With the older people in the community, the saying is, "no news is good news".

by Opal Hinchley, postmaster - Source: Nebraska--Our Town.



Dustin & Erin - 6-17-05



Kelsey

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N-Lighten Nebraska

N-Lighten Nebraska works and the next three-month edition begins Feb. 1! Get three months of motivation—and a pile of other perks—for just \$13.

As promised, when we were all enjoying the Holiday treats on Fridays, it is now time to recruit teams again for N-Lighten Nebraska to get us back into shape. . . or at least walking for our health. For those of you at PREC, if you are interested in joining a team, please let Linda Boeckner lboeckner1@unl.edu know by Wednesday, January 18. She needs to register our team(s) by January 20. You will need to get your \$13 to her by then also. County folks who are interested, please remember to register your team. Jamie Goffena will be the coordinator again for the Panhandle, so if you have questions please contact her.