

Director's Note

As I write this month's Director's note for the newsletter it's a couple of days before Thanksgiving. I can't help but think how grateful I am to have all the blessings I have. I am thankful for living in a beautiful area of the greatest nation on earth. I'm thankful for all of the wonderful people I have the good fortune to work with here in the Nebraska Panhandle. I also want to thank each of you for the work you do

and the service you provide to others. Thanks also for participating in the recent District and State Fall Conferences, I felt both were productive and beneficial. I look forward to the coming weeks and months to become even better acquainted with all of you. Have a great month.

Jack

Panhandle staff recognized for years of service

A number of Panhandle Extension District Staff were among the 1,046 faculty and staff who received honors for years of service to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The awards are presented to UNL employees for completing years of service in five-year intervals.

A Sept. 30 awards ceremony at Lincoln also included the announcement of emeriti status for 88 retired faculty, including Gary W. Hergert and Robert G. Wilson, who retired this year from the Panhandle Research and Extension Center.

Panhandle staff who were recognized for years of service include:

40 years (30 total employees at UNL): Clay Carlson, Gary Hergert, and Tom Nightingale

35 years (54 total recognized): Dave Reichert

30 years (56 total recognized): Nabor Guzman, Jenny Nixon

25 years: (94 total recognized): Bob Hawley

20 years: (106 total recognized): Jamie Goffena, John Thomas

15 years (153 total recognized): Gene Kizzire

10 years (196 total recognized): Jackie Guzman, Jay Jenkins, Matt Luebbe, David Ostdiek, Carlos Urrea

5 years (253 total recognized): Harrison Boateng, Jeff Bradshaw, Pat Randolph

Panhandle Monthly News is a newsletter for Panhandle Extension District staff. Its mission is to share information about staff members and their accomplishments, honors, awards, and employment milestones; updates on personnel changes; news about policies; and messages from Jack and the administrative team. Panhandle Monthly

News will be attached as a PDF to the Weekly Happenings once a month, and back issues are archived on the Staff Resources page of the Panhandle Extension website (<http://extension.unl.edu/statewide/panhandle/panhandle-staff-resources/>), where lots of other information can also be found.

Staff Profile: Cec Meyer, Extension Educator—Learning Child

Background: I was born in Lincoln, but grew up in Scottsbluff. I'm a recent implant to Alliance, and I love calling our downtown "The Bricks!" My parents live in Salt Lake City. My brother is in Scottsbluff, and my sister is in Fort Collins, so everyone is relatively close. ☺ Plus, travelling so much to the eastern part of the state lets me reconnect with my extended family.

Education/Career: I received my Bachelor's in Linguistics from University of Colorado at Boulder. (No, I'm not a Buff fan!) My Master's in Early Childhood Education is from Concordia University in Seward. Before starting with Extension, I had been teaching children ages birth through 5. I look forward to being part of a team with extension that will help the workforce provide quality child care/early childhood programs for the Panhandle.

Hobbies/Interests: Song writing, crossword puzzles, running, biking, dancing, cooking, Netflix marathons. I've dabbled in crochet...

Other personal information: I really like smiley emoticons. Can you tell...? ☺



Grant Award Notices:

\$23,827 from Nebraska Department of Agriculture Potato Development Board for a project entitled Economic Importance of Nebraska Potato Production. Lead PI Larry Van Tassell. Term of award: July 1, 2015, through June 30, 2016. (Jessica Groskopf, Gary Hergert)

\$15,249 from Nebraska Wheat Board for a project entitled Establishing a Long-Term Crop Rotation Study to Evaluate the Benefit of Alternative Crops in Dryland Wheat Production Systems in Nebraska. Term of award: July 1, 2015, through June 30, 2016. (Cody Creech)

\$32,618 from Nebraska Wheat Board for a project entitled Impact of Cultural Control Tactics for Wheat Stem Sawfly Management. Term of award: July 1, 2015, through June 30, 2016. (Jeff Bradshaw)

\$5,544 from South Dakota State University for a project entitled Identification of Best Heat Stress Mitigation Management Practices and Facilities Design to Improve Beef Production and Animal Well-Being. Term of award: July 15, 2015, through Dec. 14, 2016. (Matt Luebbe).

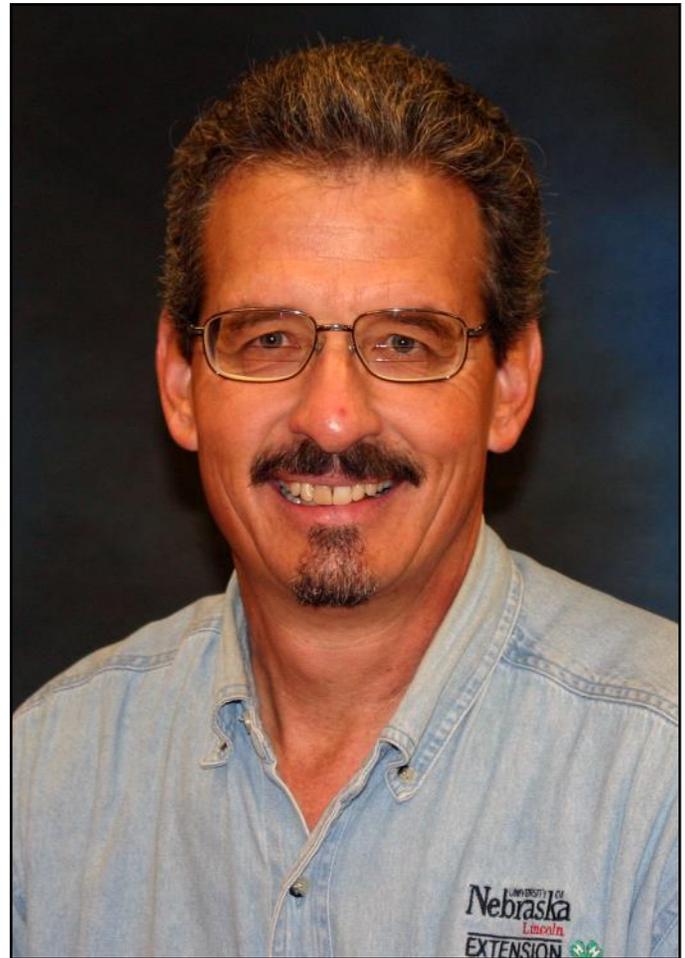
Staff Profile: John Thomas, Extension Educator–Agriculture

Spouse: Debra Thomas

Children: Andrew is age 21 and he will be going back to UNO in January 2016 for spring semester. He finished basic training and AIT training a year ago and he has also completed one year of college at UNO. His training in Army National Guard is as a Cavalry Scout. Lauren is a senior at Mitchell High School and will be going to Nebraska Christian College in Omaha next fall to take classes in Missions and then get medical training in radiology and ultrasound.

Background/family: My family homesteaded in western Nebraska in 1887 north of Morrill. My Great Grandfather's (Valentine Thomas) sod house is preserved and displayed at the museum in Gering. My Dad was in World War II and ended up working in Colorado as a mechanical engineer. I grew up in Evergreen, CO, but we made frequent trips to Nebraska to visit family. I enjoyed the mountains and outdoors growing up. Our family still spends a lot of time outdoors with annual trips to Colorado and Wyoming for fishing and mountain climbing. We enjoy hunting in western Nebraska as well.

Education/career: I got my bachelor's degree from Colorado State University in 1981 in forestry and range management. After working in Ethiopia for three years as a vocational missionary on a water development project, I returned to the U.S. and worked with my brother on his farm for a year, then ended up working with Gary Hein in Entomology at the Panhandle Research and Extension Center. After working for 4 years I got my Masters in Entomology (2001) with the help of Gary Hein. I continued working with Gary, then worked for more than 4 years with Carlos Urrea in dry bean breeding before taking the position in Box Butte County as Crops Educator about 3 ½ years ago.



Hobbies/Interests: I enjoy rural living and the outdoors. We have 10 acres of irrigated pasture and have horses and raise 2 or 3 steers every year to sell for beef. The kids have raised 4-H hogs for 10 years and showed them at fair. I enjoy hiking and climbing mountains. I have climbed 38 of the 54 fourteen-thousand-foot peaks in Colorado as well as Kilimanjaro and all three of the Tetons. My family accompanies me on most of the climbs. I also enjoy hunting and fishing and the family participates in those activities as well. We faithfully go to church and our Christian faith is central in our lives.

Staff Profile: Carol Kleinsasser,
Office Manager, Box Butte County

Spouse: Wendell (Dog) Kleinsasser is a Carman at BNSF

Children: All three of our kids (and their spouses) are University of Nebraska at Kearney graduates. Jared and wife, Amber, live in Lincoln, NE. Jared (38) is the Financial Controller at Fiserv and Amber is the Human Resource Consultant at *Sandhills Publishing Co.* They have 3 children, Mason, 7, and twins Drew and Alexa, 2. Baby No. 4 is due in April. Casey (35) and wife Susie live in Aurora, NE. Casey is a CPA at Dohman, Akerlund & Eddy and Susie works in accounting at the Aurora Cooperative. They also have twins, Macie and Isaac, who are 4. Hilary and husband, Dale, live in Kearney, NE. Hilary (29) is a Pharmaceutical Rep for Allergen Pharmaceuticals and Dale is the owner of Van Housen Construction. Their son, Vance, will be a year old in December.

Education/Career: I've been the Office Manager at the Nebraska Extension in Box Butte County for 17 years, and the years have absolutely flown by! I've seen many changes in programs, procedures, staff and especially technology. I'm thankful for my job and enjoy working with our office family, as well as the interaction with other Panhandle Extension offices.

Hobbies: Dog and I greatly enjoy family time in Alliance (I have a HUGE family), and the special times we get to spend with our kids and



grandbabies. We log lots of driving hours on Highway 2 - it's a good thing the Nebraska Sandhills are so beautiful! We are college and NFL (Broncos and Vikings are our favorites) football fanatics, as well as anything Huskers. We walk several miles daily and I've been known to run a 5K with the kids every now and again. We play a lot of golf when the weather allows, but summer lap swimming is, and always will be, my true passion.

Personnel Update

OPEN POSITIONS

Panhandle Center

Soil and Nutrient Management Specialist: Candidate review begins Jan. 15.

NEW HIRES

Shelly Altena, office staff in Garden County, July 20

Nevin Lawrence, Integrated Weed Management Specialist, Jan. 4, 2016

Stefani Cruz, Financial Associate, Nov. 9

Michelle Kovarik, Accounting Associate, Nov. 9

TRANSITIONS

Stephanie Cole, Financial Associate, to North Platte full-time

Staff Profile: Deb Kraenow, 4-H Assistant, Box Butte County

Spouse/Significant Other: Gary Kraenow

Children: Zachary lives in Sturgis, S.D., and manages the family campground. He also raises show cattle, does some consulting and operates a fitting service. He is a doting uncle and recently had a pony delivered to his nephew. Kate lives at Pierce, NE. She and her husband, Jarrod, have a 4-year-old son, Corbyn. Kate works from her home office editing cattle video for on-line livestock auctions, manages a number of social media sites for businesses and cattle producers, and is a “virtual assistant” for an auctioneer from Texas. Jarrod is a welder for a company that manufactures steel trusses for industrial buildings. They also run about 100 head of ewes and sell some club lambs.

Background/family: I am the oldest of 4 kids ... the bossy oldest sister syndrome! My high school sweetheart Gary and I will celebrate our 45th anniversary in the spring. We enjoy spending time outside, riding our Harley and visiting the grandbuddy.

Education/career: In the nearly 11 years I have been with Extension I have had the joy of seeing 4-H members go clear through our program and am able to share in some of the successes they have achieved as adults. The life skills they took from the 4-H program into their adult lives have served them well. I cherish the “Extension Friends” I have made across the state as well as the close working friendships we share in our District Extension Family.



Hobbies/Interests: I enjoy photography, baking, volunteering in my church and spending time with our family and friends.



The Meridian School Bell Choir, from Educational Service Unit 13, entertained Panhandle Center staff on Dec. 2 with a concert of Christmas carols. Meridian was the Panhandle Center’s Adopt-A-School partner last year.

Awards and Honors

Extension Educator Jackie Guzman received the 2015 Nebraska Innovative Extension Educator Award for her programming efforts to bridge cultures, build community, and help at-risk youth fill their personal and professional potential. Jackie was recognized during the Nebraska Extension Fall Conference recently in Kearney. She has helped establish partnerships and collaborations to share services and funds. Her program emphasis is threefold: community outreach, helping to bridge the community and professional development. Jackie and the team helped develop and implement the Lakota Life and Culture Conference, the Food, Fun, and Fitness program, 4-H Photography Heritage Program, People Restoring Involvement Dignity Excellence (PRIDE) 4-H Youth Adult Partnership, Together Everyone Achieves More Success (TEAMS) Program, and the 4-H After-school Mentoring Program.

Cheryl Burkhart-Kriesel, Extension Community Vitality Specialist, received the 2015 National Excellence in Extension and Public Outreach award at the National Rural Sociological Society annual conference in Madison, Wis., this summer, recognizing her research and extension efforts that focused specifically in rural tourism development and new resident recruitment and retention.

Jessica Groskopf, Extension Educator Ag Economics, is a member of the Nebraska Extension Farm Bill Education Team that received the Omtvedt Innovation Extension Award. The enactment of the new Farm Bill contained in the Agricultural Act of 2014 required agricultural producers to incorporate new commodity-based income support payments and risk management practices into their operations and land investment decisions. The Farm Bill Education Team utilized a multi-platform approach to deliver research-based educational materials and decision aid tools.

Extension Educator Gary Stone and fellow members of the Upper North Platte River Weed Management Area were recognized Dec. 2 by the Wyoming Stock Growers Association as an "Environmental Stewardship Champion" for the

group's contributions in managing and controlling invasive plants and restoring habitat. The group was recognized at the Winter Roundup Convention in Casper. UNPRWMA was formed in 2007 to include five weed and pest district counties in Wyoming through which the North Platte River flows.

Cody Creech, Dryland Cropping Systems Specialist, will receive the North Central Weed Science Society (NCWSS) Outstanding Graduate Student Award on Dec. 9 at the annual meeting in Indianapolis. The award recognizes one outstanding graduate student who is a NCWSS student member and is actively involved in the Society, as well as contributor to the field of weed science through extension, research, and teaching.

Gary Hergert, retired Soil Nutrient and Management Specialist and Professor Emeritus, was named Honored Alumni during September during Ag Day at Colorado State University. The Honored Alumni Award was established in 2001 through the generosity of Wayne and Joyce Keim to recognize and honor outstanding graduates from the department. Recipients are selected based on the significant and diverse contributions that they have made to the field of agronomy. Gary joined the University of Nebraska in 1975 as a soil specialist at the West Central Research and Extension Center, where he also served as Associate Director and District Director before returning to the academic ranks in 2004 and moving to the Panhandle Center. He served as Interim Director at PHREC during 2013 and 2014. He retired July 2015. His research efforts have focused on soil and fertilizer management to improve crop production efficiency and profitability for major and minor crops in the High Plains.

Chris McCullough received first place in the graduate poster competition at the Entomology Society of America Meetings in Minneapolis, Minn., on Nov. 15-18. **Patrick Wagner** received 2nd place in the graduate poster competition. Chris and Patrick are graduate students under Jeff Bradshaw. Chris was also a member of the UNL Debate Team that received third place in the general competition.