

**Friends of Agricultural Research-Beltsville, Inc.  
PO Box 1061, Beltsville, MD 20704-1061**

**Dedicated to promoting the research and education programs of the  
Henry A. Wallace Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, Beltsville, MD**

# **THE FAR-B NEWS**

June 2009

Editor: Hank Becker

## **FAR-B Plans Friendship Day Gathering To Raise Funds**

After a successful poinsettia plant sale in December 2008, plans to raise funds for FAR-B include a FAR-B/BARC Friendship Day gathering at the home of BARC retiree, Freddi Hammerschlag on Saturday, June 27, 2009 from 1-5 p.m.

The cost for adults is \$10 per person and children under 18 are free. All proceeds will support the 2010 BARC Centennial events. This event not only aims to raise funds but also to promote stronger ties between BARC employees and FAR-B members. You can download the flyer and send a check by mail ([www.far-b.org/friendshipday.html](http://www.far-b.org/friendshipday.html)) or pay by credit card on line.

FAR-B will also sponsor another poinsettia sale in December with notices going out in August/September.

Hope you will support FAR-B by attending Friendship Day and/or by purchasing Holiday poinsettias!

**Freddie Hammerschlag**, Fundraising Chair

## **President's Message**

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I am pleased to report that we had an excellent turnout for the 2009 FAR-B Annual Meeting on May 14. About 60 to 70 people were on hand to welcome Dr. Kitty Smith, Acting Under Secretary for Research, Education and Economics (REE), who was our keynote speaker this year. Dr. Smith is no stranger to BARC having spent

considerable time over the years in the National Agricultural Library while working on a M.S. and Ph. D. in Ag Economics, and attending many meetings at BARC in connection with her various positions in the Economic Research Service (ERS). She brought news that Dr. Rajiv J. Shah had been confirmed on May 12 as Under Secretary for REE, and that she would soon be returning to her position of Administrator of ERS.



Dr. Kitty Smith, Acting Under Secretary for Research, Education and Economics

Dr. Smith indicated she holds ARS scientists in highest regard for their dedication to finding solutions on the full range of problems in agriculture and human nutrition. She indicated that the Obama administration has designated several priority areas for ARS research emphasis that include: food safety,

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nutrition related to childhood obesity, sustainable and economic production of bioenergy, assessing and mitigating the risks of global climate change to agricultural production, and combating world hunger.

On April 21, I had the privilege of submitting FAR-B's annual testimony to the U. S. House and Senate Subcommittees on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations. If you take the time to read that testimony (located at [www.far-b.org/Testimony.html](http://www.far-b.org/Testimony.html)) You will see that our funding requests for BARC are clearly in line with the priority areas Dr. Smith discussed during the annual meeting. However, it remains to be seen whether any increase in funding will find its way to BARC. One thing is certain – Maryland's congressional politicians aren't in danger of being accused of Pork Barrel spending for BARC!

Later on during the meeting John Peter Thompson, President of the National Agricultural Research Alliance – Beltsville, provided an update on his recent activities. He pointed out it has become evident that gaining support of Maryland's congressional leaders for BARC needs to begin with politicians at the county and state level. He strongly believes if BARC gained that support, then support at the national level would follow. Unfortunately, it appears to me that at present most local politicians are only concerned with making sure BARC's green space is maintained, rather than making sure that the world-class research that BARC provides is maintained along with its fields, forests and wetlands.

FAR-B business that was conducted during the annual meeting included the nomination and election of Jim Anderson to another 3-year term as Secretary, and election of Dr. Lewis Smith to the FAR-B Board of Directors. Lew began his career at BARC in 1961 in the Dairy Cattle Research Branch and held positions as Research Assistant, Dairy Scientist, Research Leader, and Institute Director before joining the National Programs

Staff in 1988. We are pleased to have Lew on the FAR-B Board.

Please take note of the details regarding FAR-B / BARC Friendship Day to be held on June 27 at the Hammerschlag's lovely yard and garden. Proceeds from this fund-raising event will be used to support the 2010 BARC Centennial events, which will also be discussed later in this newsletter.

**Vern Pursel, *President***

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### **Area Director's Message**

The Beltsville Area is jumping into the annual ARMPS or budget process this time of the year. This will help to identify funding issues for the coming fiscal year. We are optimistic that our efforts to control indirect research costs will begin to pay off and that we will not have to use our precious research dollars for anything other than research.

Along the lines of cutting costs, we are about to receive from the contactor a thorough review related to space utilization and recommendations for consolidation. I think this report will be more valuable to us than we had originally anticipated. Part of the reason is that we now have independent expert advice on the savings that could be realized as we move ahead with consolidation plans. As we can better utilize our existing facilities, we can then reap energy and maintenance savings.

We would like to see an ever increasing investment in our research; however, in the current environment that is not likely to happen. Many of our scientists have been aggressive and quite successful in attracting extramural grants and contracts. This has not only had the benefit of increasing our available resources but it has greatly increased the visibility of our research and our researchers. Competing for these funds has clearly demonstrated that Beltsville scientists are seen as among the top researchers in their field and can easily compete with academic researchers. A great example of a Beltsville success story is the

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bovine genetic prediction research being conducted in our Bovine Functional Genomics Laboratory. This research is revolutionizing the dairy industry and is a great model for other areas of genetic prediction in and outside of agriculture. This work was reported in *Science* – it is the April 24<sup>th</sup> issue with the cow on the cover! It is a great example of BARC scientists aggressively pursuing extramural support to leverage base funds to get the work done. This genomics approach is directly applicable to other commodities that are actively being pursued here.

Tom Sexton and I have completed our in person updates with each of the 32 labs in the Beltsville Area. It was a real pleasure to get to meet the scientists and staff and to hear of the really exciting research that is being conducted. Across the board, there were many examples of really the best agricultural research in the world. As we approach our centennial year, one can't help but wonder about how much this research is adding to the legacy of a long line of research excellence at Beltsville. I am convinced that we have best scientists and staff in ARS located at Beltsville. The new technologies that are available today greatly enhance our capabilities but the real strength of BARC is our ability to combine the technology with the on-farm expertise and capabilities that we have. There is no question that we delivery a tremendous value for the investment that the taxpayers have made in our research.

**Joseph Spence**, Area Director

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### **FAR-B Community Outreach**

It was another terrific year at the Beltsville Elementary School! FAR-B's 6<sup>th</sup> all-school Science Enrichment Program was held in the school's gymnasium April 28-30. "Chemistry in Everyday Life" was the theme, featuring hands-on learning stations on insect chemistry, food chemistry, and chemistry and the environment. Heartiest congratulations are in order to all who

participated—including a number of BARC scientists and several from FAR-B's Board of Directors.

A few juicy comments from teachers:

- "The presenters were knowledgeable, engaging, enthusiastic, and very good with the students!"
- "The students learned a lot and had fun while learning!"
- "The students LOVED being able to TOUCH!"
- "It's a great program!"

The event was followed by an all-school poster contest. Five winners were selected from each grade and were invited to a ceremony in which certificates and prizes were awarded by Dr. Joe Spence.

What's next on the agenda? Well, this month, FAR-B is sponsoring the BES Science Coordinator's attendance at a 5-day Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation (MAEF) program featuring hands-on workshops, field trips, and classroom-ready resources. The program is designed to help teachers effectively share the impact of agriculture in their daily lives using interesting and unforgettable lessons.

Then, next fall, FAR-B will partner with MAEF and *Sigma Xi* (The Scientific Research Society) to sponsor a 2-week BES visit by one of MAEF's mobile science labs. Working in teams, students will investigate problems using the scientific method and scientific equipment. Pretending they're BARC scientists, they'll hypothesize an experiment, collect data, and draw conclusions during hands-on activities related to everyday life.

FAR-B looks forward to this new direction and may, in the future, even consider expanding the program into additional schools.

The following Prince George's County Gazette article appearing on May 7 about says it all.

**Diane Odland**, Liaison with ARS Info Staff

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[Reprint from Prince George's County Gazette]

### **Beltsville Elementary School Gets Interactive Science Lesson**

#### **Program Unites Students, Retired Researchers**

by David Hill | Staff Writer  
dhill@gazette.net

Beltsville Elementary School students were treated to an "in-school field trip" April 28-30 when a group of scientists used games and hands-on exhibits to teach them the importance of chemistry.

The visit was part of the Science Enrichment Program, a partnership between Beltsville Elementary and nonprofit Friends of Agricultural Research-Beltsville.

"We're lucky to have them come in like this," said Catherine Hopkins, a sixth-grade science teacher. "It's something different from the day-to-day."

Each year, retired scientists from FAR-B come to the school and lead a series of interactive lessons.

"We sort of consider Beltsville Elementary our adopted school," said Diane Odland, of West Friendship, outreach coordinator for the Agricultural Research Service and adviser to FAR-B. "The teachers and kids both look forward to this program every year."

The program began in 2004, when FAR-B members became worried about what they considered a decreasing emphasis on science in many schools. They approached Beltsville Elementary, less than 2 miles from BARC, about coming in and teaching the students.

"We thought, in a small way, we could help fill a void," said Allan Stoner of Hampstead, a 40-year BARC employee who now sits on the FAR-B board of directors. "[Science] is not becoming less important in their lives. It's probably become more important."



Photographer: Susan Whitney/The Gazette

(From left) Retired Agricultural Research Service scientist Allan Stoner, with the group Friends of Agricultural Research-Beltsville, shows Beltsville Elementary School second-graders Michelle Vasquez, 8, Oliver Masangcay, 8, and Francisco Salvador, 8, how chemicals dumped irresponsibly in watersheds can make their way into the Chesapeake Bay. The activity was part of the school's Science Enrichment Program on April 29.

In past years, the program has focused on nutrition, animals and plants. This year's theme was "Exploring Environmental Science."

Over three days, scientists taught one-hour lessons to first- through sixth-graders. Each class spent 20 minutes at three stations, each with its own distinctive lesson.

At the nutrition station, students learned the importance of food labels and played a rapid-fire game of "name the nutrient." At the insect station, they learned about blood-sucking bugs while sticking their hands — protected by netting — into a box of mosquitoes.

"It's all interactive," Hopkins said. "The kids are engaged in what they're doing. They're not bored to tears."

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At the chemical science station, a model city was used to demonstrate the dangers of pollution. Stoner placed a few drops of food coloring, representing a pesticide, on the town's grass. Students then used spray bottles to rain on the town, causing the dye to spread into the city's rivers.

"[This] can be helpful so you don't harm the earth by using bad chemicals," said Samantha Sweeney, 11, of Beltsville.

The lesson persuaded Richard Ayodele, 11, of Beltsville, to take better care of his own community.

"When I'm on the street, I'll sometimes litter. But now I know how much it affects the environment," he said. "We shouldn't do things to mess up the environment."

This is the sixth year that FAR-B has come to Beltsville Elementary.

This fall, FAR-B will partner with the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation to bring mobile science labs to the school.

James Anderson, now of Silver Spring, worked at BARC for 37 years before retiring in 2005. In addition to helping with the enrichment program, he tutors reading and math at Beltsville Elementary once a week.

For Anderson and his colleagues, the program gives them a chance to help the community in which they've worked for more than half their lives.

"I used to live in Beltsville. My kids went to these schools," said Anderson, also on the FAR-B board of directors. "Maybe this is just a little way I can help back."

[http://www.gazette.net/stories/05072009/prinnew174856\\_32544.shtml](http://www.gazette.net/stories/05072009/prinnew174856_32544.shtml)

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### **Financial Report**

The financial condition of FAR-B is still solid. Major expenditure so far this year have been in support of the Beltsville Poster Day in April, the Science Enrichment Program at Beltsville Elementary School, and middle school Science Fairs in Howard, Montgomery

and Prince George's Counties as well as support for an ARS exhibit at the American Chemical Society meeting this summer in Washington, DC.

Income from dues has been strong but it appears that support through the Combined Federal Campaign will be lower than last years' as will be the interest earned on FAR-B's savings accounts. A grant was received from *Sigma Xi*, through the D.C. Chapter, to support a new type of outreach program at Beltsville Elementary School this fall.

**Richard Zimmerman**, *Treasurer*

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### **Combined Federal Campaign**

Based on the information provided in our application, The Local Federal Coordinating committee for the Combined Federal Campaign of the National Capital Area (CFCNCA) approved FAR-B's participation in the 2009 Campaign. We join approximately 4,000 charities in the National Area database.

The successes of our applications are primarily based on the outstanding outreach program coordinated by Dianne Odland and her cooperators.

Last year, our local CFC campaign at BARC yielded approximately \$5,370. It is apparent that the current economy is having a negative impact on our contributions. Our 2008 committee distributed brochures to about 285 scientists located in the 33 labs in three institutes. We also contacted each support personnel who might be interested in contributing to FAR-B's CFC fund.

**Phil Kearney**, *CFC Chair*

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### **BARC Centennial Program Plans for 2010**

The Centennial program kickoff event will focus on 100 years of progress. Research contributions of historical significance will be highlighted along with more recent achievements related to issues of human

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nutrition, animal and plant health, food security and sustainability of production that are facing the nation.

The introductory presentation will be followed by a tree-and shrub-planting ceremony that establishes a Centennial Grove of trees and shrubs at BARC. The grove will include both old and new introductions developed at the U.S. National Arboretum. The initial event will provide an opportunity to welcome and inform leadership and the USDA, elected officials and the general public.

An issue of *Agricultural Research* magazine will be published that documents 100 years of progress. In the spring of 2010, the BARC Field Day will be convened that will demonstrate current research accomplishments.

Throughout the year, several lectures and mini-symposia are also planned. Topics will include high priority 21<sup>st</sup> century programs and projects at BARC. The overall chairperson for the BARC Centennial program is Kim Lewers. If you have question or comments, she can be contacted at Kim.Lewers@ars.usda.gov.

**Roger Lawson**, *BARC Centennial Planning Committee*

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### **IN MEMORIAM**

**Paul L. Lentz**, 90, a world-renowned expert on mushroom classification who led USDA's Mycology Lab and the National Fungus Collections, the Poison Fungi Center and research projects on fungal biology, died Jan. 14 at Vindobona Nursing Home in Braddock Heights. He had dementia.

Lentz joined the USDA at BARC in 1947 and rose from staff mycologist to chief of the laboratory. He wrote 47 papers on fungi, contributed to many others and made major presentations to the International Botanical Congress in 1959 and the Hesler International Symposium in 1968.

Those not as familiar with scientific literature might know Dr. Lentz's work through his

contribution to Microsoft's *Encarta Encyclopedia* on mushrooms.

Paul Lentz worked to develop the U.S. National Fungus Collections by obtaining funds to computerize the specimen data. This was started in the mid-1970's when computers were just becoming part of science.

Initially the data were typed on OCR (Optical Character Reader) sheets using special typewriters and sent to the National Agriculture Library to be read into the large mainframe computer. After 20 years, data from all one-million specimens has been entered so that scientists throughout the world can search on-line to find specimens needed for their research on fungi.

He taught at George Washington University and the USDA's Graduate School at the National Institutes of Health. He was made an honorary curator and later a collaborator for the Smithsonian Institution's Department of Botany. In 1971, he was appointed to the National Science Foundation's biological sciences advisory panel.

Paul Lewis Lentz was born in Indianapolis, where he graduated from Butler University. He received a master's degree in mycology at the University of Iowa, and then served in the Navy during World War II in Panama and at the bacteriology lab at the National Naval Medical Center at Bethesda.

After his military discharge, he settled in the Washington area to work for the USDA. He received a doctorate in mycology from the University of Iowa in 1953.

Dr. Lentz was a volunteer with the Boy Scouts and volunteered at Greenbelt Community Church. He was also on call for local hospitals in cases in which someone consumed wild mushrooms. He was an expert at determining which ones were poisonous.

Survivors include his wife of 65 years, Mary Ellen Cone Lentz of Frederick; two sons, Paul S. Lentz of Walkersville and David W. Lentz of Springfield; two sisters; and three grandchildren.

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### **Ernest E. Saulmon**

Ernest E. Saulmon, 94, of Arlington, Va., died on March 25, 2008. Before retiring in the mid-1970s, he served as deputy administrator for Veterinary Services at USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. Dr. Saulmon began his 38-year career with the USDA in the former Bureau of Animal Industry. In 1947, he became a member of the American team that helped stop the spread of foot-and-mouth disease in Mexico. Dr. Saulmon then worked in supervisory positions in Louisiana and Washington, D.C.

From 1965 to 1967, he served as Deputy Director of Science and Education for the USDA. Saulmon was then named director of the Animal Health Division in the USDA Agricultural Research Service. In 1970, he was reassigned as Deputy Administrator for Veterinary Services at the newly formed APHIS. A member of the National Association of Federal Veterinarians, Saulmon served as its delegate to the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) House of Delegates in 1958 and from 1969 to 1974. He was twice elected to the AVMA Council on Public Health and Regulatory Veterinary Medicine, serving from 1968 to 1978. Dr. Saulmon served as the USDA representative to the White House Conference on Health from 1965 to 1967, and was a member of the National Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners for more than 10 years. He was also a member of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Apollo Lunar Quarantine Operations Team.

A diplomat of the American College of Veterinary Preventive Medicine and a past president of the District of Columbia VMA, Dr. Saulmon was a member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the U.S. Animal Health Association, the Washington Academy of Science, and Washington's Cosmos Club. He was also a member of the science advisory committees of the Pan-American Health Organization's Zoonoses Center and Foot-and-Mouth Disease Center.

Dr. Saulmon who graduated from The Ohio State University in 1939's received the Distinguished Alumnus Award in 1968. He was the recipient of the AVMA Public Service Award in 1973. He was a long time member of FAR-B.

Dr. Saulmon is survived by his wife, Catharine; a son; and three daughters. Memorials may be made to Clarendon United Methodist Church, 606 N. Irving St., Arlington, VA 22201; Arlington Chapter of the American Red Cross, 4333 Arlington Blvd., Arlington, VA 22203; or the Arlington Outdoor Education Association, P.O. Box 5646, Arlington, VA 22205.

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### **ARS Bees at the White House**

On April 9, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack joined First Lady Michelle Obama and a group of 5th graders on the South Lawn of the White House to talk about healthy eating, the availability of locally grown fruits and vegetables, and bees.

This July, USDA will be providing two types of parasite-resistant honey bees developed by ARS scientists to pollinate the plants in the new White House garden this summer. Both of these bees are rapidly gaining in popularity with bee keepers.

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**2009 FAR-B Board Members** (left to right): Dave Chitwood, Jim Anderson, Vern Pursel, Hank Becker, Freddi Hammerschlag, Al Stoner, Roger Lawson, and Dick Zimmerman

**Friends of Agricultural Research-Beltsville, Inc.**

**Board of Directors**

President: Vern Pursel  
*vpursel@comcast.net*

Vice President: K. Darwin Murrell  
*kdmurrell@comcast.net*

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*rhz1415@starpower.net*

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*janderso1@mac.com*

Special Advisor: Essex Finney  
*eefinney2@msn.com*

Membership: Allan Stoner  
*stonerfam@earthlink.net*

CFC: Phil Kearney  
*pkearney@asrr.arsusda.gov*

BARC Alliance Liaison  
& Community Outreach: Jim Butcher  
*jim.hickory@verizon.net*

Publicity: Hank Becker  
*hankbecker3@verizon.net*

Fundraising: Freddi Hammerschlag  
*peachnfrog66@comcast.net*

BARC Centennial: Roger Lawson  
*rlawson66@comcast.net*

Liaison with ARS Info Staff: Dianne Odland  
*dianneodland@ars.usda.gov*

Board Member: Lew Smith

Liaison with BARC: David Chitwood  
*chitwood@ba.ars.usda.gov*

**To contact the FAR-B Board**

email – *farbboard@comcast.net*  
phone – (301) 854-9758  
*http://www.far-b.org*

**Beltsville Area**

Area Director: Joseph Spence  
Associate AD: Thomas Sexton  
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**FIRST CLASS**

Friends of Agricultural Research-Beltsville, Inc.  
PO Box 1061  
Beltsville, MD 20705-1061

