



THE FAR-B NEWS

Dedicated to promoting the research and education programs of the BELTSVILLE AREA, Beltsville, MD

Friends of Agricultural Research-Beltsville, Incorporated P.O. Box 1061, Beltsville, MD 20704-1061

JUNE 2015

Editor: Hank Becker



President's Message

The Annual Meeting of Friends of Agricultural Research – Beltsville was held May 19 in the Conference Room of Building 005, BARC-W. About 60 members and guests attended. The keynote speaker was Dr. Naomi Fukagawa, the new Director of the Beltsville Human Nutrition Research Center. The title of her talk was “Forty-four days and counting...BHNRC update.” (See her bio on page 8).

She is very optimistic about doing joint research on a whole farm basis. Her presentation created lots of interesting discussion.

She was followed on the program by Dr. Dariusz Swietlik, NE Area Director. He spoke on “The Current State of the Northeast Area and a Look into the Future.” His message was Beltsville can't do everything. He is hopeful that there can be more collaborative efforts between scientists within the whole area. Again, there was good discussion.

I was not able to present the *Vernon G. Pursel Student Scientific Achievement Award* this year because Poster Day was held the day after our Annual Meeting. FAR-B was again able to finance four summer interns in 2014 for scientists in the Beltsville Area. However, the Area Office decided to divide the funding six ways and have the Laboratories picked up the difference.

FAR-B funding supported Dr. Michel Cavigelli (Sustainable Agriculture Systems Laboratory) who

chose Alexandra Barrett, a student at Washington University, as the FAR-B funded Summer Intern; Dr. Jill Demers (Systematic Mycology and Microbiology Laboratory) who chose Lindsay Garnett as the FAR-B funded Summer intern; Dr. Xiangwu Nou (Environmental Microbial & Food Safety Laboratory) who chose Lydia Nichols-Russell as the FAR-B funded Summer intern; Dr. Savi Natarajan (Soybean Genomics & Improvement Laboratory) who chose Travis Latchman as the FAR-B funded Summer intern; Dr. Pei Chen (Food Composition and Method Development Laboratory) who chose Mengliang Zhang, and Dr. Harry Dawson (Diet, Genomics, and Immunology Laboratory) who chose Paula Wang as the FAR-B funded Summer Intern.



FAR-B members attending the Annual Meeting last May were captivated and engaged with the topics of discussion.

Again this year, FAR-B continued to judge Middle School Science Fairs in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties where gift certificates were given to first, second and third place winners in Plant Science, Animal Science, Natural Resources, Medical/Public Health, and Computer Science. We provided refreshments

and/or lunches for Poster Day Participants and the 6th annual Leaders of Tomorrow – end of summer event. We also supported seven programs sponsored by the BA Diversity Task Force, and cosponsored the Maryland Agriculture Education Foundation Science Trailer at the Beltsville Academy. FAR-B helped with the 4th Annual BA-UMD Fall Symposium, *Trends in Agriculture. Organic Agriculture: Food, health and Ecosystems.*

On March 27, FAR-B submitted written Outside Testimony prepared for the Senate and for the U.S. House of Representatives Appropriations Committee,

Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food, and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies. This testimony was made possible by the dedicated work of Board members James Butcher and K. Darwin Murrell. Thank you Jim B. and Darwin. FAR-B's testimony will be available on our web site (www.far-b.org/Testimony.html) soon.

FARB total membership is about what it was last year. This includes full members, patrons, and associate members. We invite anyone who is interested in promoting the research programs of the Beltsville Area including all USDA retirees and active USDA employees to join FAR-B. Full membership (non-employees of USDA) is \$30, Patron membership is \$100, and Associate membership (active employees) is \$15. All FAR-B activities are paid for by membership dues, donations, left over funds from workshops, symposia, etc., that FAR-B helps cosponsor. FAR-B is very pleased that we are now back in the CFC. We want to thank the employees who so generously donated through CFC and on line.

Election of FAR-B officers and new Board of Directors was held. Our new President is Dr. Allan Stoner. New board member is Dr. David Kuykendall. We are very pleased to have David aboard. The proposed changes in the Bylaws were past. We have eliminated the Vice President and replaced that position with a Past President position. The Past President will be in charge when the President is unable to attend meetings, etc. We are still looking to find new Board members to serve FAR-B and help support the research efforts at the Henry A. Wallace Beltsville Agricultural Research Center. Please contact me or other Board members if you are interested in serving on the BOD's.

As this is my last report to FAR-B as President, I'd like to thank the BOD's and members of FAR-B for all their support during the past 4 years. I especially want to thank Jim Butcher for all he has done on keeping FAR-B in the loop for the Beltsville Academy, with maintaining communications with the Washington Baltimore Chamber of Commerce, and getting the Outside Testimony ready for Congress. Thank you Jim for all you have done to keep Beltsville in the lime light. Also, I'd like to thank Hank Becker who is responsible for publishing FAR-B's Newsletter. Without his dedicated work in getting

folks to get their material submitted, FAR-B would be without this Newsletter to let the membership know what is going on. Thank you Hank for your outstanding contribution to the Newsletter, but also for volunteering in being the go-to-person for making sure we have food for luncheons, etc. That made my life so much easier.

James Anderson, President

Area Director's Message

Since my last report in February, the Northeast Area (NEA) continued to be extremely busy executing our research programs, hiring new scientific and support personnel and developing new, unified procedures. On April 20-22, we held our first NEA Center Directors and Research Leaders Meeting under the overarching theme "Working Together." Our goals were to introduce members of the leadership teams from the former BA and NAA to one another, learn more about our respective research programs, scientific expertise, research infrastructure and equipment capabilities and needs.

We also discussed our current practices and procedures, lines of communications, existing bottlenecks and the locations' expectations in terms of services provided by the Area Office, Eastern Business Service Center and selected components of the Administrative and Financial Management (AFM). We also heard an informative and stimulating presentation by Randy Olson, a marine biologist-turned-filmmaker, on the challenges to communicate science to the general public and scientific community. Based on the feedback received from the attendees, it was a successful meeting that is expected to create more productive working environment through increased opportunities for collaboration and resource sharing across the entire NEA.

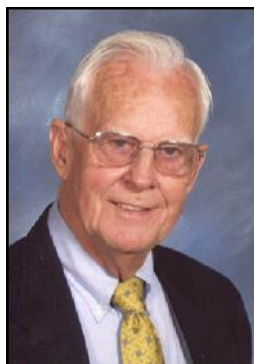
On May 20, the National Agricultural Library hosted the Twenty-Six Annual Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC) Poster Day. This year's event was very well attended and characterized by high quality papers. It also was historical as it marked the first Poster Day after the merger of the former Beltsville Area (BA) with the North Atlantic Area (NAA). The merger broadened the scope of the event by offering new Research Scientists, Visiting Scientists and Post-doctoral Research Associates from out-

side Beltsville, the opportunity to present their latest research results. In fact, for the first time, we had posters from the Foreign Plant Disease-Weed Science Research Unit in Frederick, MD. We thank the Friends of Agriculture Research- Beltsville for their support and financially sponsoring the event.

Dr. Richard T. Olsen was appointed the Director of the USDA-ARS United States National Arboretum (USNA) in Washington DC, effective May 3. This appointment was enthusiastically received by our stakeholders and customers. Richard is a recognized international leader in the public garden arena. He possesses deep scientific expertise and practical knowledge that made him uniquely qualified to lead the USNA. Until his appointment, Dr. Olsen served as a Research Geneticists and Lead Scientist in the Floral and Nursery Plant Research Unit (FNPRU) at the USNA. He also served as Acting Director of the USNA in 2014 and most recently as Acting Assistant Director of the USDA-ARS BARC.

Ms. Donna Geiman and Ms. Dallas Rausch have joined the Northeast Area Office as new NEA Program Analysts effective May 3. These two positions are critical to proper operation of programmatic part of the Area Office. Prior to joining the Area Office, Ms. Geiman served as an Agreements Technical Assistant for the BARC and a Program Support Assistant for the Hydrology and Remote Sensing Laboratory at BARC. Ms. Rausch worked as a Program Support Assistant in the Systematic Mycology and Microbiology Laboratory and Genetic Improvement of Fruits and Vegetables Lab at BARC. She also served on a long detail as Program Analyst in the Northeast Area Office.

Dariusz M. Swietlik, Area Director, NEA



IN MEMORIAM

Terry B. Kinney, Jr.

Former ARS Administrator Terry B. Kinney, Jr., died on April 4, 2015, in Gastonia, NC. He was 89 years old.

Dr. Kinney, who joined ARS in 1961 as a poultry geneticist scientist, became Administrator in 1980 and served until his retirement in 1988.

Dr. Kinney's tenure as Administrator saw a restructuring and streamlining of the organization that included the headquarters staff; a reduction in the number of regional areas from 25 to 8; the separation of the Cooperative Research Service and the Extension Service (now parts of NIFA) from ARS; and the reintroduction of Human Nutrition research. Dr. Kinney also supported efforts to establish a new research unit within the ARS that would use molecular genetic approaches to advance American agriculture. In 1983, the Plant Gene Expression Center was established adjacent to the Western Regional Research Center (WRRRC) in Albany, CA.

During Dr. Kinney's last years in office, he commissioned the National Academy of Science's Board on Agriculture to investigate the peer review of research at ARS following a round of public criticism of the way ARS research was planned and approved. The July 1987 study, "Improving Research through Peer Review," concluded that what ARS called a peer review system at that time was not true peer review and that it should be strengthened. Dr. Kinney oversaw the implementation of several of the panel's recommendations, including the wider use of non-ARS reviewers, revision of ARS' policy to clarify review guidelines, and the requirement that researchers report past accomplishments and significant publications.

A native of Norfolk, MA, Dr. Kinney served in the U.S. Army during World War II. He grew up on his family's poultry farm near Boston, and held degrees from the University of Massachusetts and a doctorate in genetics from the University of Minnesota. In 1988, the French government honored Kinney as a Commander of Agricultural Merit for his efforts to strengthen scientific ties between the two countries. Two years earlier he received a \$25,000 award and a presidential citation for his work at ARS.

Survivors include his wife, Carolyn Harbuck Kinney, six children, and 11 grandchildren. Letters of condolences can be sent to the family in care of McLean Funeral Directors, 700 South New Hope Road, Gastonia, NC 28054.

FAR-B Seeks Candidates for the Aileen Lee Support Staff Award

Two years ago Aileen Lee left a generous bequest to FAR-B that the board voted to be used to support training and advancement of Office Professionals at Beltsville. The purpose of this award is to promote the advancement of office professionals through training--defined in the broadest sense to include leadership courses, details and other forms of specialized training. Approximately \$5000 yearly has been approved by the FAR-B board to support this training.



Office professionals in the geographic Beltsville location are eligible for this award. This includes the Henry A. Wallace Beltsville Agricultural Center, Human Nutrition and National Arboretum Labs located at Beltsville. Award will be based on the goals of the applicant and the need for the training. Applicants can be self-nominated or nominated by their supervisor. Initial approval will be needed from both the applicant's supervisor and the Area office. Final selection will be made by a FAR-B committee. At the end of their training, awardees will give a presentation to the FAR-B board based on the training they received.

Anyone interested in applying should contact FAR-B or any Board member.

Phyllis Martin

Financial Report

In the first six months 2015 FAR-B had operating income of \$21,170. This included \$4,666 from dues and donations, \$6,400 from the Combined Federal Campaign, and \$10,104 from the reserve funds. Many expenses for 2015 will occur in the second half of the year. Some of the planned expenses will include: support for four student interns at Beltsville laboratories (\$18,400); awards for winners of the Montgomery and Prince Georges County Science Fairs (\$800); support of the Diversity Task Force (\$2,500); and various workshops/seminars to held at Beltsville (about \$10,000). On May 20, FAR-B again supported the Henry A. Wallace Scientific Poster

event, by funding the awards (first place \$300, second place \$200, and third place \$100) and also providing refreshments for participants. We are planning for our support activities to cost \$10,000 more than income received. This will be a smaller deficit than in 2014. The FAR-B Board of Directors strongly believes that we can operate successfully by spending some of our reserves to better support the agriculture research and outreach needs at Beltsville.

Richard Parry, Treasurer

CFC Update

FAR-B thanks the many federal employees who donated to FAR-B through the National Capital Area Combined Federal Campaign in 2014. Donations exceeded \$6,000, largely due to one very generous donor. The CFC has implemented improvements to increase efficiency. Those improvements include direct deposit, nationwide listing of charities, and automated 'thank you' to those who donated electronically. FAR-B has been approved to participate in the 2015 campaign and our charity number remains 20122.

Lew Smith

USDA Agency Retools Its Monthly Science News Magazine

Agricultural Research magazine has been a flagship publication of the USDA's Agricultural Research Service since 1953. In April, ARS debuts a new, all-digital version of the magazine called *AgResearch* that will make better use of information delivery and technology to meet the needs of an increasingly tech-savvy, time-pressed global audience.

In this and subsequent monthly issues, "Site visitors will encounter a new look and content layout to complement the ag-research reporting that's come to define the magazine over the years," according to ARS Administrator Chavonda Jacobs-Young. ARS is the chief intramural scientific research agency of USDA.

The monthly magazine is designed for a diverse, lay, non-scientific audience. The information will be useful for those interested in food and agriculture, including farmers/ranchers, commodity and industry groups, Federal and private researchers, policymakers (including Congressional members), regulatory agen-

cies and the American public. The magazine has also had a worldwide audience.

The new *AgResearch* magazine can be found at <http://agresearchmag.ars.usda.gov>. Users are encouraged to sign up to receive email alerts when a new issue is posted each month by sending an email that says, "Subscribe" in the subject line to agresearchmag@ars.usda.gov.

Jan Suszkiw, ARS Information Staff

26th Annual Poster Day and the Vern Pursel Award



Board member, Phyllis Martin (far left) and Area Director, Dariusz M. Swietlik (far right) pose with Poster Day Winners (from left to right): Elizabeth Johnson, Joshua Kawasaki, Pendo Abbo and Emma Thrift.

The 26th Annual Beltsville Poster Day was held May 20, at the National Agricultural Library. There was a great turnout of presenters and interested observers. There were 13 High School Student Posters and 72 ARS intern posters.

At BARC Poster Day, FAR-B treasurer Richard Parry presented the Vernon G. Purcel Award for 1st place to Elizabeth Johnson from Eleanor Roosevelt High School. Ms. Johnson also received a \$300 reward for her poster on "Looking for Mutants in Diploid Strawberries." She studied the genetics of a mutant she named "petiolulong" and set up two different thermotolerance screens for mutants with increased thermotolerance for high temperatures. The project found that the petiolulong gene is heritable and identified two potentially thermo-tolerant mutants. Her mentor was Dr. Janet Slovin of the Genetic Improvement of Fruit and Vegetables Lab.

Ms. Johnson, recently graduated with over a 4.0

cumulative GPA. In the fall, she will be attending Wellesley College, where she intends on majoring in either Environmental Science or Biology. She is a member of the National Honor Society and was the Vice President of the Latin Honor Society.

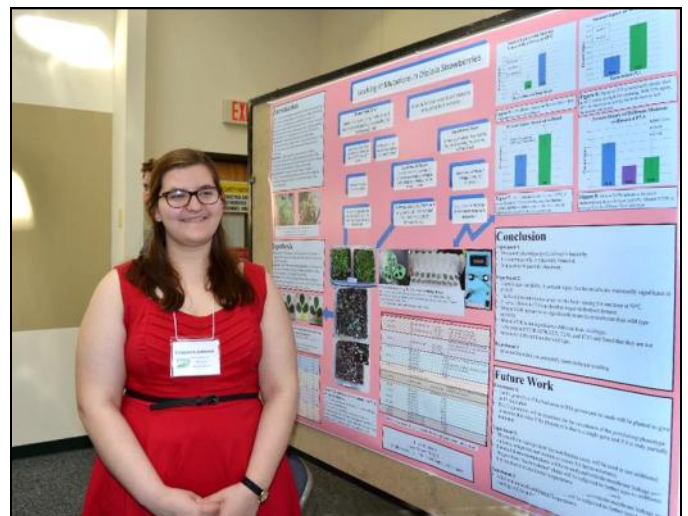
There was a tie for second place honors by Joshua Kawasaki and Pendo Abbo from Eleanor Roosevelt High School, who split a prize of \$200 but worked independently on "Honeybee Stress: Pesticide and Varroa Challenge." Their mentor was Dr. Judy Chen.

Third place award (\$100) was received by Emma Thrift for her poster "Pheromone Aided Trap Cropping of the Harlequin Bug." Her project focused on finding effective, and ecological ways to manage this destructive stink bug. Her mentor was Megan Herlihy and Don Weber, research entomologist and lead scientist for the ARS Invasive Insect Biocontrol and Behavior Laboratory.

Five days earlier on May 15, Ms. Thrift was a Grand Award Winner. She won 4th prize of \$500 in the Plant Sciences category on her Harlequin Bug control study. The competition was held in Pittsburgh, PA, by the Society for Science and the Public, in partnership with the Intel Foundation. Student winners are ninth through twelfth graders who earned the right to compete at the Intel ISEF 2015 by winning a top prize at a local, regional, state or national science fair.

FAR-B also sponsored the lunch for the young scientists which helped encourage interactions and discussions between the participants.

Richard Parry, Treasurer



Elizabeth Johnson from Eleanor Roosevelt High School. received a \$300 reward for her poster on "Looking for Mutants in Diploid Strawberries."

Diversity Task Force Update

The Beltsville Area Diversity Task Force would like to extend a sincere “Thank you” for FAR-B’s support of our recent endeavors. Since 2008, our group has had the mission to provide support and leadership to the Beltsville Area Administration to ensure that the research mission of ARS is performed at the highest scientific level possible. We firmly believed that the creation and maintenance of a workforce that represents the nation’s and surrounding community’s increasingly diverse population will ultimately aid in the achievement of that goal.

As of October 2015, we had a name change to being the Northeast Area (NEA) Diversity Taskforce. Since our rebirth 7-years ago, we have been awarded the ARS EEO/CR award twice for our efforts in the Area. This was accomplished in no small part because of the support of FAR-B and its membership. We have recently had great success in the implementations of such outreach programs as:

- Cultural Heritage Month celebrations (See article below on Back History speaker.)
- A flourishing Student Discovery Garden that averages 500 visitors a year and produce donations to a local food pantry of half a ton per year
- Continuation of summer internships for students from Hispanic Serving Institutions who are supported by grants given to their university from NIFA. Forty students will work in the BA this summer--an increase from thirty-two last year with some students returning from last year. Students come here from Universities in Puerto Rico, Texas and Florida.



Students from Bel Pre Elementary enjoy a fun-filled, educational trip to the Student Discovery Garden located on BARC-West. Established in 2010, the garden has produced more than 2000 lbs. of produce that was donated to local charities and food pantries.



Sumptuous refreshments donated by Area staff caps off the Diversity Task Force celebration of Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage month this past May. This year’s theme was entitled: “Many Cultures, One Voice: Promote Equality and Inclusion.”

FAR-B members have helped make all of these endeavors successful with their constant support. We anticipate that our efforts will inspire a diverse community of future scientists to see the wealth of possibilities in Agricultural Sciences and FAR-B will be an integral part of that achievement. We applaud your dedication to promoting the importance of Agricultural Science through outreach. We look forward to future collaborations.

Verneta Gaskins, Diversity Task Force

Diversity Task Force Features Quilters

On February 23, in honor of Black History Month, the *ARS Northeast Area Diversity Taskforce* hosted a lunch and learn presentation about the Quilts of Gee’s Bend that featured guest speaker and quilter Ms. Lavern Allen. The quilting tradition in Boykin, AL (also known as Gee’s Bend) goes back to the 19th century, when the community was the site of a cotton plantation owned by a Joseph Gee.

Perhaps influenced in part by patterned African textiles, female slaves pieced together strips of cloth to make bedcovers. Throughout the post-bellum years and into the 20th century, Gee’s Bend women made quilts to keep themselves and their children warm in unheated shacks that lacked running water, telephones and electricity. Along the way they developed a dis-

tinctive style, noted for its lively improvisations and geometric simplicity.

The quilts have been exhibited at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the Indianapolis Museum of Art, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the Whitney Museum of American art, among others. They have been compared to versions of works by *Matisse* and *Klee* arising in the rural South.



Ms. Lavern Allen shares the treasure of quilting throughout African American history with an enthralled audience at this year's Black History Month celebration.

FAR-B Continues to Support AG Science On Wheels

Carolyn Menne, an instructor with the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation (MAEF), quieted the kindergartners seated in the aisle of the outreach organization's Mobile Science Laboratory, parked at the Beltsville Academy in Beltsville, MD.

She held up a purple Baltimore Ravens T-shirt, prompting some kids to cheer, while others looked on politely. (It turned out that they were Washington fans.) The shirt was one of about a dozen items Menne used to illustrate the connections between agriculture and the students' daily lives—including

popular sporting events they like to watch, such as a Ravens football game.

The shirt, she explained, is made of the soft natural fibers of a crop called cotton. "The cotton growers grow [the cotton] and then sell it to the T-shirt makers," Menne said.

The class was actually one of 20 half-hour lessons Menne and other MAEF instructors taught over 4 days to the school's diverse students, grades K-5, as part of a unique partnership with FAR-B and USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Henry A. Wallace Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC), located a few minutes away from the school.

The event is part of partnership that FAR-B and BARC have with the school—and marks the 11th consecutive year of the partnership between FAR-B and BARC, and the third consecutive year with MAEF—noted FAR-B past president Jim Anderson, a former BARC researcher. This fall will mark the 12th year of this FAR-B sponsored event.

"Beltsville Academy has had a long tradition of partnering with BARC and FAR-B to enrich the science curriculum at our school," said Leslie Lowe, the school's principal. "The Mobile Lab is one of our most anticipated activities every year—by both students and teachers. The community connection and the support our school receives from FAR-B is an invaluable asset."

This year's volunteers included Susan Bentz, a horticulturist with ARS's U.S. National Arboretum, and Joe Alfieri, a physical scientist with ARS's Hydrology and Remote Sensing Laboratory.

Alfieri assisted MAEF instructor Jane Howe with "Fiber Up for a Clean Sweep," a lesson in which fourth- and fifth-graders learned about the nutritional importance of soluble and insoluble fiber.

The combination of science and agriculture under one roof—such as that of the Mobile Science Laboratory—is a unique opportunity to educate students about two important and intertwined topics that might otherwise escape their attention, noted Anderson.

"I like it when they get excited. I want them to think about what agriculture means to their daily lives from the minute they get up in the morning until the minute they go to bed at night," said Howe. "From the crayons they use to the ingredients in the foods they eat, somehow and somewhere a farmer made their life better."

BARC Human Nutrition Research Center Gets New Director

Naomi K. Fukagawa, MD, PhD, assumed the position of Director of the USDA Human Nutrition Research Center, in Beltsville, MD, this Spring 2015. She was a Professor of Medicine and Acting Director of the Gerontology Unit at the University of Vermont, Burlington, VT. She is a board-certified pediatrician and an expert in nutritional biochemistry and metabolism, including protein and energy metabolism; oxidants and antioxidants; and the role of diet in aging and chronic diseases, such as *diabetes mellitus*.

Dr. Fukagawa has served on numerous NIH review panels, served as the Chairman of the NIH study section for General Clinical Research Centers and recently completed a 5-year term on the NIH Integrated Physiol-



Dr. Naomi Fukagawa.

ogy of Obesity and Diabetes Study Section. Her membership in the *American Society for Clinical Investigation*, election as President of the *American Society for Clinical Nutrition (American Society for Nutrition)*, and service as an Associate Editor for the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, as Editor-in-Chief of *Nutrition Reviews*, and as Vice-Chair of the 2010 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee of the USDA and HHS speak to her national/international recognition.

She received her MD degree from Northwestern University and her PhD from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge. Her clinical training included residency at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania, Chief Residency at the University of Vermont, and nutrition/ gerontology fellowships at the Children's Hospital and Beth Israel Hospital, Harvard Medical School.



Left to right: Jim Anderson, Richard Parry, Dave Chitwood, Dick Zimmerman, David Kuykendall, Phyllis Martin, Essex Finney, Allan Stoner, Hank Becker, Jim Butcher and Lew Smith (absent: K. Darwin Murrell.)

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