



The National Cooperative Observer

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Thomas Jefferson Award



Pictured from left are NWS Spokane Meteorologist in Charge (MIC) **John Livingston** with **Bill and Alice Hofmann**. This picture was taken by NWS Spokane OPL **Mark Turner**.

Bill and Alice Hofmann of Rosalia, WA, were the most recent recipients of the NWS Thomas Jefferson Award, the highest honor given to a Coop Observer.

The Hofmanns received this award for exemplary reporting of meteorological observations over the past 43 years. Their highly accurate and detailed temperature and precipitation records are a valuable resource to the nation's climate and weather programs.

Rosalia is an agricultural community in the region of the state known as the Palouse, the fertile hills and prairies north of the Snake River in Washington. The region is famous for its production of wheat and lentils.

Rosalia was also the site of the 1858 Battle of Pine Creek between American soldiers under the command of Lt. Col. Edward Steptoe and a large band of Spokane, Palouse, and Coeur d'Alene

Native Americans. The site is now home to Steptoe Battlefield State Park.

In addition to their contributions to weather records, the Hofmanns are active in their community. Bill helps run the local and state Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) chapters, heading up the Rosalia Veterans Day activities and serving in the VFW State Honor Guard. Alice volunteers at the Gifted Grannies thrift store, raising funds for underserved area youth and other community interests, including the fire department and ambulance service. The Hofmanns are both longtime members of the local Lion's Club.

The Hofmanns have three grown children, a daughter, Terry, in Brooklyn, NY; a son, Gary, in Kent, WA; and a son, Keith, who is serving in the U.S. Army and recently returned from deployment in Djibouti in the Horn of Africa. They are also very happy to be the grandparents of Julie, Anna and Natalie.

History of the Weather Service: 1887 to 1891

Previous editions of this newsletter detailed the early history of the National Weather Service. The story continues in 1887 with the expansion of the Army's Signal Service role, one of the first federal offices responsible for providing weather information.

General Hazen maintained the Signal Service should enjoy the status of a separate corps, and therefore, more freedom in controlling its own actions, as did the Army Engineers. Although the Signal Service was



General William B. Hazen,
courtesy, www.old-picture.com

able to maintain a certain degree of freedom, it was becoming apparent the Army was not happy with the Signal Service in general, and the Weather Service in particular. It also was becoming clear the War Department was not enthusiastic over having the Weather Service. The Signal Service had been almost completely absorbed by its new mission, and should its military services ever be needed, its personnel could not be spared from their weather duties.

In 1887, General Hazen died and the Army named General A.W. Greely as his successor. The Greely administration failed to quiet the storm of protest resulting from the previous 7 years of discord. Coupled with the increasing external criticism was internal disharmony.

The discord came to a head when Lieutenant John C. Walshe, inspector for the Signal Service, told reporters the man in charge of the forecasts in Washington, D.C., was too much a scientist and too little a weather observer, preventing the transfer of his theories into accurate forecasts.

By 1889, General Greely became convinced it was futile to try reconciling opposing factions within the organization as well as correcting shortcomings within the Weather Service. These admissions by the top official of the military Weather Service solidified adverse congressional reaction.

Although Greely attempted to correct the problems building for over 7 years, the dye was already cast and in 1889, President Benjamin Harrison recommended transfer of the National Weather Service to the Department of Agriculture. Congress agreed, and on October 1, 1890, an act transferring the Weather Service to the Department of Agriculture was signed into law by President Benjamin Harrison. According to the new law:

"...The enlisted force of the Signal Service, excepting those hereinafter provided for, shall be honorably discharged from the Army on June 30, 1891, and such portion of this entire force, including civilian employees of the Weather Bureau shall, if they so elect, be transferred to the Department of Agriculture."

The work of the Signal Corps' Meteorological Division ended 20 years after it began; yet in that brief period, it established the foundation for the new Weather Bureau. The United States already led the world in providing public weather information, forecasts, and warnings. Charles Patrick Daly, a famous jurist of the day, wrote:

"Nothing in the nature of scientific investigation by the national government has proved so acceptable to the people, or has been productive in so short a time of such important results, as the establishment of the Signal Service (Weather) Bureau."

At the time of the transfer, General A. W. Greely wrote:

Although the Signal Service was able to maintain a certain degree of freedom, it was becoming apparent that the Army was not happy with the Signal Service in general, and the weather service in particular.

"In parting from the civil employees, the Chief Signal Officer feels assured that the new chief in another department will receive from them the same loyal, faithful, and efficient service they have rendered the government while serving under his orders. The scientific staff have in view important additional duties looking to the extension of the Weather Service in the interests of agriculture and still further development of the science of meteorology. The Chief Signal Officer will follow with deep interest the development of the new scientific field of weather forecasting and the application of meteorology to agriculture, on which grounds this liberal reorganization of the Weather Bureau was planned and carried out."

So on July 1, 1891, the weather stations, telegraph lines, apparatus, and personnel (military people whom were honorably discharged from the War Department and were now civilians) were transferred from the Signal Corps' Division of Telegrams and Reports for the Benefit of Commerce to the Department of Agriculture's new civilian Weather Bureau.

History of Fort Myer

From 1871 to 1886 most weather training for Signal Service forecasters and Observers was conducted at Fort Myer, VA. In fact, Fort Myer was named for General James Myer, the Army's first commander of the Signal Service.

Fort Myer is just across the Potomac River from Washington, D.C. The base was named Fort Whipple when it was built in 1863.

During the early years of the Civil War, a federal defense committee recommended a series of military forts be built on the high terrain of Virginia to protect the nation's capitol from the Confederate Army, one of which was Fort Whipple, named to honor Brevet Major General Amiel Weeks Whipple, an 1841 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy.

Initially, Fort Whipple was comprised of earthworks, tents, and temporary frame structures. By the late 1860s, the Signal Corps had taken over the post because its location and elevation made it ideal for visual communications.



Calvary troupe at Mt. Myers shows its skills in a show circa 1920.

General Myer established the Signal Corps' headquarters, the Signal Corps School, and the Weather Service School at Fort Myer. Fort Myer's hosted the Weather School For Forecasters And Observers until 1887 when the fort was converted into an Army cavalry installation.

The first military test flights were made from the parade field at Fort Myer on September 3, 1908. On that date, Orville Wright succeeded in keeping his plane aloft for 1 minute and 11 seconds. Six days later, he made 57 complete circles over the same field.

On September 17, 1908, Orville was accompanied by an Army Lieutenant on a flight over the parade field when a propeller broke and the aircraft crashed. Wright was severely cut and bruised, but the Lieutenant was killed, becoming the first fatality associated with a powered aircraft.

Today, Fort Myer is an active Army Post. It is under the jurisdiction of the Commanding General, U.S. Army District of Washington, D.C., but has its own post commander. It also is the home of the U.S. Army Information Systems Command, which staffs the Pentagon Telecommunications Center as well as other signal operations in the National Capital Region.

The story continues in the summer edition of the National Cooperative Observer.

General Myer established the Signal Corps' headquarters, the Signal Corps School, and the weather service school at Fort Myer.

John Campanius Holm Awards

Bill Greenway of McCracken, KS, was presented with the John Campanius Holm Award by MIC **Larry Ruthi**, NWS Dodge City, KS. Bill also received congratulatory letters from U.S. Senators **Pat Roberts** and **Jerry Moran** and U.S. Representative **Tim Huelskamp**.

The McCracken observing site was officially established in October 1911 by **E.D. Floyd**. Bill took over on August 1, 1987, from **Phyllis Higgins**.

He has been the longest serving Observer for McCracken. His wife, **Paula**, is the backup Observer. Bill reports daily precipitation and snowfall. He is also the mayor of McCracken and the head of the Fire and Water Departments.



Meteorologist **Matt Gerard**, Observer **Bill Greenway**, MIC **Larry Ruthi** and Meteorologist **Kelly Sugden**. Photo by **Jesse Lee**, Observing Program Leader (OPL) NWS Dodge City, KS



From left, MIC **Rick Dittmann**, Observer **Steve Kunz** and OPL **Gary Wicklund**.

MIC **Rick Dittmann**, NWS Pocatello, ID, presented **Steve Kunz** of Bern, ID, a John Campanius Holm Award for his outstanding service. The award was presented at a ceremony in Paris, ID.

Steve began recording weather and climate observations on January 1, 1992. During his tenure, he has provided uninterrupted observations of daily precipitation and temperature data, as well as critical storm spotter information. Steve also received a 20 Year Length of Service Award during the presentation at the Bear Lake County Commissioner's meeting. Steve's flawless and informative observations have been instrumental in providing NWS with critical weather information.

In addition to NWS, Steve provides his observations daily to all the local newspaper, television, and radio stations in the Cache area of Idaho and in Rich County, UT.

John Campanius Holm Awards

Hank Odegard of Prichard, ID, accepts the NWS John Campanius Holm Award for his outstanding service in reporting precipitation and river levels from his two Coop stations in Prichard for more than 22 years. His award presentation at the Sprag Pole Inn in Murray, ID, was attended by family and friends, as well as representatives of county and state government.



From left, staff member **Sid Smith**, Sen. Risch office; Shoshone County Sheriff **Mitch Alexander**, NWS Spokane MIC **John Livingston**, Observer **Hank Odegard**; staff member **Vicki Fulton**, Sen. Risch office; and staff member **Aaron Calkins**, Rep. Labrador office. Photo by NWS Spokane Service Hydrologist **Katerine Rowden**.

100+ Year Honored Institution Award



OPL **Leon Wasinger**, NWS Wichita, KS, presented an Honored Institution Award for 107 years of service to the **Iola Water Plant**. Accepting the award were Observers **Toby Ross**, left, and **Lyndon Kern**. The plant provides temperature and precipitation readings. NWS extends our sincere appreciation to the IOLA employees for their many years of dedicated service.

55 Year Benjamin Franklin Award

NWS Omaha, NE, presented a 55 year Benjamin Franklin Award to **Ray “Swede” Crosier** of Oakdale, NE, recognizing his outstanding commitment to excellence. Swede began recording weather and climate observations on February 1, 1957. During his tenure, he has provided uninterrupted observations of daily precipitation and temperature data as well as critical river level information on the Elkhorn river in Antelope County. He has taken more than 20,000 observations, never missing a single day.

In 2005, he was honored with the agency’s Thomas Jefferson award for outstanding service in the Coop program, NWS’s most prestigious award. Swede’s flawless and informative observations have been instrumental in providing NWS and other government agencies with critical weather information.



Brian Smith, Warning Coordination Meteorologist (WCM) at NWS Omaha, NE, presents a Benjamin Franklin Award to **Ray “Swede” Crosier**

Edward R. Stoll 50 Year Awards



Stuart J. Haby, right, of Vanderpool, TX, was presented with an Edward H. Stoll 50 Year Length of Service Award from OPL **Steve Smart**, NWS Austin/San Antonio.

Stuart has been a Coop Observer since January 1, 1963. Photo by **Mark Lenz**, Senior Service Hydrologist, NWS Austin/San Antonio.

50 Year Honored Institution Awards

Water Treatment Lead Tech. **Daniel Babyak**, left accepted a 50 Year Honored Institution Award on behalf of the **Moffat Treatment Plant** in Lakewood, CO. The award was presented by Data Acquisition Program Manager (DAPM) Byron Louis.



Special Service Award



The **Lowell Wastewater Treatment Plant** received a Special Service Award for its outstanding record of precipitation and river gauge measurements. In 2012, the plant had a perfect record of observations. In recent years, the city of Lowell contracted out its water treatment operations to United Water, which has continued to provide excellent precipitation measurements and river gauge readings.

The plant began providing river gauge readings during high flow on the Grand River in 2002 and has been reporting precipitation since 1972. These measurements also help the plant make operational decisions.

Frank Martin served as the primary Observer at the Plant from 1978 to 2011, when he retired. **Mark Mundt**, Plant Supervisor, and **Brian Vander Meulen** then took over as the primary Observers. Brian accepting the award from OPL **Brandon Hoving** and NWS Meteorologist Intern **Evan Webb**.

The city of Lowell has a rich tradition of providing these critical observations. Precipitation observations date back to 1939 when they were sent by the city's water works. Over the next 33 years, weather observations moved to different locations in the greater Lowell area.

40 Year Length of Service Awards

Mike and Sherryl Whittle of Oakley, ID, have contributed to the NWS Coop program for 40 years. The Whittles began their observing on January 1, 1973. Their unselfish and dedicated service in weather observing and weather record keeping for the community of Oakley and NWS provides valuable climatic information for Idaho Manager and the nation.



From left, OPL **Gary Wicklund**, NWS Pocatello, ID, presents a 40 Year Length of Service Award to **Sherryl and Mike Whittle**.
Photo by MIC **Rick Dittmann**.



John Chaddock, right, of the Southwest Michigan Regional Airport, accepts a 40 Year Length of Service Award from NWS Northern Indiana OPL **Brentley Lothamer**. John always strived to make sure his observations were correct. Because he is near Lake Michigan, he also dutifully measures a lot of snow.
Photo taken by **Lee Scherwitz**, Southwest Michigan Regional Airport Director.

35 Year Length of Service Awards



Conrad Banda, center, of Pearsall, TX, accepts his 35 year Length of Service Award from Hydrometeorological Technician (HMT) **Joe Baskin**, left, and Senior Service Hydrologist **Mark Lenz**, NWS Austin/San Antonio, TX. The city of Pearsall has hosted the weather station for more than 50 years. Conrad has been the official Observer for 35 of those years.

Gayle Kingery, Observer at Bailey, CO, was presented a 35 Year Length of Service Award. Pictured from left are Gayle's eldest son, **Scott Kingery**; Gayle; her youngest son, **Shawn Kingery**; and grandson **Andrew Kingery**. Photo and presentation by DAPM **Byron Louis**, Boulder, CO.



Jim Lee, left, forecaster at NWS Des Moines, IA, presents **Paul Fobian** of New Hartford, IA, with his 35 Year Length of Service Award.

30 and 25 Year Length of Service Awards



Randy Wheatley of Adair, IA, receives his 30 Length of Service Award. Photo and presentation by Forecaster **Aubry Bhattarai**, NWS Des Moines, IA.



Johnny Hoyle, of Lincolnton, NC, was presented a 25 Year Length of Service Award by OPL **Chris Horne**, NWS Greenville-Spartanburg, SC. Johnny was a Holm Award recipient in 2008.



E. McKay Willis, right, of Laketown, UT, shows his 25 Length of Service Award. He received his certificate and lapel pin from OPL **Gary Wicklund**, NWS Pocatello, ID. Photo by MIC **Rick Dittmann**.



David Rueber of Kanawha, IA, receives his 25 Length of Service Award. Photo and presentation by WCM **Jeff Johnson**, NWS Des Moines, IA.

20 and 15 Year Length of Service Awards



Steve Kunz, right, of Bern, ID, received his 20 Length of Service Award from OPL **Gary Wicklund** of NWS Pocatello, ID. Photo by MIC **Rick Dittmann**.



Jack Passmore of Candler, NC, show his 20 Year Length of Service Award presented by OPL **Chris Horne**, NWS Greenville-Spartanburg, SC. Jack was an employee of the National Climatic Data Center in Asheville before retiring in 2007.



N. Max Altenbern, Observer at Altenbern, CO, was presented with a 20 Year Length of Service Award. Max took over observing duties from his parents. The Altenbern family has been ranching and observing weather in the Roan Creek area since 1942. Photo and presentation by Cooperative Program Manager (CPM) **Becky Klenk**, NWS Grand Junction, CO.



John Beltz, left, of Jefferson, IA, receives his 15 Length of Service Award from WCM **Jeff Johnson**, NWS Des Moines, IA



Tim Boyle, at California State University, Northridge, accepts a 15 year Length of Service Award. The award was presented by Coop Rep. **Bonnie Bartling**, NWS Los Angeles, CA.

15 and 10 Year Length of Service



Craig Hall, right, of Brooklyn, IA, receives his 15 Year Length of Service Award from Electronics Technician **Chris Southerlin**, NWS Des Moines, IA.



Tom Greenbough, winemaker at Saucelito Canyon Vineyard, accepted a 15 Year Length of Service Award for the Arroyo Grande Cooperative Observer site. **William Greenbough**, Observer, was unable to attend. The award was presented by NWS Oxnard/ Los Angeles Coop Rep. **Bonnie Bartling** and Intern **Scott Sukup**.



OPL **Gary Wicklund**, NWS Pocatello, ID, left, presented a 15 Year Length of Service Award to **Sharyl** and **Lloyd Haterlie**, far right. Also attending were back-up observers **Kevin Kelley** and **Deena Ostler**. Photo by MIC Rick Dittmann.



Tom Stevenson was presented a 15 Year Length of Service Award for the Chanute, KS, area. OPL **Leon Wasinger**, NWS Wichita, KS, presented the award to Tom. Kansas State University also collects the data and it can be requested by the public.



From left, **Vicki Delalla**, of North Stratford, NH, accepts a 10 Year Length of Service Award from HMT **James Brown**, NWS Gray, ME. Photo by OPL **Nikki Becker**.



Dr. Chester Todd and **Alice Todd** of Rocksprings, TX, were presented a 10 Year Award by HMT **Cory Van Pelt**, NWS Austin/San Antonio, TX. The Todds have been providing excellent observations since January 2003.

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June, July, August Temperature and Precipitation Outlooks From the Climate Prediction Center

