



The National Cooperative Observer

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Summer 2013

Inside

Cooperative Observer Gives Reports Despite Losing House During Flash Flood
2

History of the Weather Service: Signal Service
3

75 and 50 Year Honored Institution Awards
4, 5

25 Year Honored Institution Awards
9

Length of Service Awards
40 Year: 7
35 years: 8
30 Year: 8
25 Year: 8
20 Year: 11
15 Year: 12
10 Year: 13

August, September, October Temperature and Precipitation Outlook
14

Farming and Weather: 60 Year Commitment



Ed Somerfeld shows his 40 Year Length of Service Award out on his Montana farm back in 1993.



From left, **Michael Mercer**, Meteorologist in Charge (MIC) at NWS Great Falls, MT, presents the **Helmut E. Landsberg Award** for 60 Years of dedicated volunteer service to Observer **Ed Somerfeld**.

By *Jerome Saucier, Observing Program Leader (OPL), NWS Great Falls, MT*

The NWS Great Falls, MT, office recently presented a **Helmut E. Landsberg Award** for 60 Years of service to Observer **Ed Somerfeld** of Power, MT. Presenting the award was MIC **Mike Mercer** of the NWS Great Falls, MT, weather forecast office.

Ed began his fascination with weather at just 10 years old. As the son of a farmer and a life long farmer himself, he knows weather is vital to the future of his farm.

In the last 60 years he has seen a lot of change at NWS. He says the biggest difference is advances in technology that have improved forecasts. "Satellites seemed to help the most," says Ed.

What are some of the most memorable weather events of his long career as an Observer?

"The winter of '78-'79 was terrible. I helped a lot of people in the area after the big blizzard. Only snow mobiles could travel the roads. I used my backhoe and a front-end loader to dig people out. In 1964, there were flooded roads in the area after thunderstorms dumped over 3 inches of rain. I think drought seems to be happening more often and extreme weather events are more common."

So what does Ed enjoy besides farming and tracking the sky? He created his own battery powered car for use on the farm. He also invents ways to use solar and wind power on his farm. Ed isn't married but enjoys time with his nieces.

Cooperative Observer Gives Reports Despite Losing House During Flash Flood

By NWS News Staff

NWS Observers are known for often going above and beyond to collect invaluable weather observations. **Steve Gottschalk**, the Observer for Lowden, IA, did just that when he measured the rainfall event of a lifetime — 6.25 inches in 6 hours on June 24. The ensuing flash flood destroyed Steve's home,

by our office, local media and the Iowa state climatologist.”

Steve's standard precipitation gauge floated away during the storm. Water came almost to the top of the Fischer-Porter recording precipitation gauge; despite the high water, the automated unit captured the entire

The ensuing flash flood destroyed Steve's home, flooded his weather instruments and damaged his garden, but it did not dampen his spirit. Despite the flood, Steve didn't miss a single daily report.



Observer Steve Gottschalk sitting next to the mud-filled Fischer-Porter recording precipitation gage.

flooded his weather instruments and damaged his garden, but it did not dampen his spirit. Despite the flood, Steve didn't miss a single daily report. He kept the NWS Davenport, IA, office updated in real time on the impacts of the flood in his community.

“The effort and passion Steve displayed is an example of his commitment to provide high quality observations for more than 50 years,” said **Terry Simmons**, NWS Davenport Data Acquisition Program Manager (DAPM). “Steve is recognized as a local weather expert

rainfall event before flooding took it out. Steve's maximum and minimum thermometers and Cotton Region Shelter barely survived. He took measurements from it later that night. With the help of family members, he was able to save his extensive collection of weather records

Steve has been collecting weather data for the past 51 years and reporting it to NWS for almost 30 years. For his efforts, he received the John Campanius Holm Award in 2006 and has been nominated for the Jefferson Award.

History of the Weather Service: Signal Service

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 Office, one of the first federal offices responsible for providing weather information.

Signal Service Office in Washington, D.C.

Because of its location, the Washington, DC, office was the central forecast center for the entire country until 1887. The first Signal Service weather office in Washington was in the building of the Chief Signal Officer on G Street near the War Department.

In 1871, this location was the Observers office. The building offered a wooden observatory on the roof, designed to compare thermometers and other instruments. Also on the roof was one self-registering rain gauge and one wind vane. All changes required at other Signal Service offices, as well as all new instruments, were thoroughly tested before being implemented.

The first Signal Service weather office in Washington, DC, also served as the central office of the country. Weather observations from across the country were compared for errors.

In addition, forecasters at the office prepared maps and various weather bulletins, including forecasts, for the eastern part of the United States. In 1871, Signal Service forecasts and other weather information were posted in the Signal Service office, the post office, and at the main office of the Western Union Telegraphy Company. Maps also were posted in the principal hotels in the nation's capitol.

This Signal Service office contained a printing department to produce maps and other weather information. In addition, a separate department evaluated weather instruments and another checked weather observations. Finally, to support the various departments and functions of the office, the Service included correspondence and clerical staff.



Reading of the Barometer, 1880

NWS People During Signal Service Years

The early Weather Service had its share of characters. Since many Signal Service weather offices were occupied by just one employee, personal discretion was important. Unfortunately, this was not always the case. One Observer in the Midwest who was addicted to poker playing, frequently lost large amounts of money. The Observer went to a local pawnbroker and pawned the station's instruments.

When the Signal Service inspector arrived on station, he found no instruments. He found the instruments in the pawnbroker's store and the Observer taking observations in the pawn shop, instead of at the weather office.

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

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75 Year Honored Institution Awards

From left, **John Williams**, Assistant Lockmaster, and staff member **Randy Hitchcock** accept a 75 Year Honored Institution Award on behalf of **Bellevue Lock and Dam 12**. The award was presented by Meteorology (Met) Intern **Tim Gross** of NWS Davenport, IA. Photo by Forecaster **John Haase**.



The **Wisconsin Rapids Water Purification Plant** in Wisconsin Rapids, WI, receives a 75 Year Honored Institution Award. Accepting the award for the plant are Superintendent **Dale Scheunemann**, left, and Operator **Mike Zarn**, right. Presenting the award front and center is OPL **Pat Hein** NWS Green Bay, WI. Photo by MIC **Gary Austin**.

75 and 50 Year Honored Institution Awards



From left, **Jay Bartlett**, Operations Manager of the **Ayers Island Hydro Station** in New Hampshire, accepts a 75 Year Honored Institution Award near the plant in Bristol, NH. Jay Bartlett accepted the award from MIC **Hendricus Lulofs**, NWS Gray, ME. Photo by OPL **Nikki Becker**.

MIC **Sally Johnson**, NWS Sioux Falls, SD, presented a 50 Year Honored Institution Award to **Todd Letcher** of the **Bridgewater Public Works Department**. Official weather observations of rain, snow and temperature began at the Water Department location on April 1, 1963, with records for the Bridgewater area dating back to 1947. Photo by **Brad Adams**, Hydro-Meteorological Technician (HMT).



50 Year Honored Institution Awards

Dinosaur National Monument, CO, was recently presented with a 50 Year Honored Institution Award from NWS Grand Junction, CO. The Monument staff have taken high and low temperature, precipitation and snow readings daily for NWS since 1962. From left are Rangers **Nate Wiedow, Jeremy Spiess, Joseph Flores** and DAPM **John Kyle**.



From left, OPL **Shawn Byrne**, NWS Topeka, KS, presents a 50 Year Honored Institution Award to **Brad Cox** of the **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Pomona Lake Reservoir**. Since 1963, the staff have provided accurate measurements of temperature, precipitation, snowfall and snow depth.

The **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers** staff at the **Hopkinton Everett Lake** facility in Hopkinton, NH, accepted a 50 Year Honored Institution Award. From left are Park Rangers **Bradley Clark, Karen Hoey, and Jennifer Samela**; MIC **Hendricus Lulofs**, NWS Gray, ME; Project Manager **Stephen Dermody**; and Operations Manager **Alister Shanks**. Photo by OPL **Nikki Becker**.



40 Year Length of Service Award



Malcolm Gregory of Santuck, SC, shows his 40 Year Length of Service Award. The presentation was made by OPL **Chris Horne**, NWS Greenville-Spartanburg, SC. Malcolm was a Jefferson Award recipient in 2010. The **Jeter-Gregory** family has taken observations at Santuck since 1893!

Robert Lund of Paonia, CO, was recently presented a 40 Year Length of Service Award from NWS Grand Junction, CO, by Forecaster **Julie Malingowski**. Robert's exceptional history as an Observer includes receiving the Holm and Jefferson Awards in past years. At 90 years of age, Robert remains a top notch Observer, as well as a farmer and rancher in the North Fork river valley.



Service Hydrologist **Thomas Hawley**, left, NWS Gray, ME; and MIC **Hendricus Lulofs**, right, congratulate Observer **Charles Sanborn** of Epping, NH, on his 40 Year Length of Service Award. Photo by OPL **Nikki Becker**.

35, 30 and 25 Year Length of Service Awards



Vermillion Waste Water Treatment Plant

Observers **Paul Brunick** received his 35 Year Length of Service Award and **Fred Ballewag**, his 20 Year Award. **Shane Griese**, left, accepted the award for Paul. The award was presented by HMT **Brad Adams**, NWS Sioux Falls, SD. Fred and Paul are dedicated Observers whose attention to detail is reflected in the daily weather observations. Fred and Paul both enjoy outdoor activities such as hunting, fishing, and golfing in their spare time. Records for the Vermillion area date to back to 1899.



Byron Tolman of Jensen, UT, was recently presented with a 30 Year Length of Service Award from NWS Grand Junction, CO. Byron has taken high and low temperature, precipitation and snow readings for the NWS since 1983. He recently retired. He and his wife are planning on doing some extensive travel. Byron has passed on his weather observing duties to an enthusiastic neighbor. Award presented by DAPM **John Kyle**.



Marc Freeman, primary Observer at the Marion, IN, **Sewage Treatment Plant**, accepts a 25 Year Length of Service Award. Photo and presentation by OPL **Brentley Lothamer**, NWS Northern Indiana.



Tom and Joyce LeFevre, Observers at Maybell, CO, were recently presented with a 25 Year Length of Service Award from NWS Grand Junction, CO. Photo and presentation by CPM **Becky Klenk**.

25 Year Length of Service and Honored Institution Awards



Winston Sayre of Indianola, IA, receives his 25 Year Length of Service Award. Photo and presentation by DAPM **Rob Deroy**, NWS Des Moines, IA.



From left, MIC **Larry Ruthi**, NWS Dodge City, KS, presents a 25 Year Length of Service Award to **Bill and Barbara Schreiber**, Observers at Ransom, KS. Bill is the primary Observer and Barbara is the backup. The Schreibers have recorded precipitation data since 1988. They took over from Barbara's dad, **Ulrich Yost**. Ulrich, in turn, took over the site from his brother, **Fred Yost**, who started it 55 years ago in 1958. Photo by OPL **Jesse Lee**.



Observer **Phil Virden** and his family, of Lake City, CO, celebrate 25 years of service to NWS. From left are his wife **Carolyn**, brother **Robert**, **Phil**, daughter **Dasha**, sister-in-law **Mary Lee**, and Forecaster **Julie Malingowski**, NWS Grand Junction, CO. In addition to taking weather observations, Phil owns and operates the local movie theater, is active in local and state education issues and has taught in Kenya.



Jane Thieme, primary Observer at the Decatur, IN, **Sewage Treatment Plant**, accepts a 25 Year Length of Service Award. Photo and award presentation by OPL **Brentley Lothamer**, NWS Northern Indiana.

25 Year Honored Institution Awards



From left, Observer **Steve Meyer** of Apple River Canyon, IL, State Park shows a 25 Year Honored Institution Award. The award was presented by Forecaster **John Haase**, NWS Davenport, IA. Photo by Met Intern **Tim Gross**



From left, General Manager and Primary Observer **Gabe Chenoweth** of Glenwood Springs, CO, Radio Station **KMTS** and NWS Grand Junction, CO, DAPM **John Kyle**. Gabe displays his 25 Year Length of Service Award and John shows the station's 25 Year Honored Institution Award.



From left, MIC **Justin Weaver**, NWS Lubbock, TX, presents a 25 Year Honored Institution Award to Sheriff **Paul Raisse** of Floydada, TX. Sheriff Raisse accepted this award on behalf of his dedicated staff at the Sheriff's office. Floydada has been providing meteorological data since 1939. Photo by OPL **Shawn Ellis**.

Berlin State Fish Hatchery in York Pond, NH, accepted a 25 Year Honored Institution Award. No photo available.



Mark Riegelman, manager of **Manitowish Waters Airport** in Vilas County, WI, shows a 25 Year Honored Institution Award. The award and photo by OPL **Pat Hein** Green Bay, WI.

20 Year Length of Service Awards



David B. Connor, of Meredith, NH, shows his 20 Year Length of Service Award. Photo and presentation by OPL **Nikki Becker**, NWS Grey, ME.



Chris Kirkwood of Hartford City, IN, accepts a 20 Year Length of Service Award. Photo and presentation by OPL **Brentley Lothamer**, NWS Northern Indiana.



From left, **Dale Meyer** of Bone, ID, accepts his 15 Year Length of Service Award. Dale took over the site from his father, who started the station on November 8, 1955. OPL **Gary Wicklund**, NWS Pocatello, ID, presented the award. Photo by MIC **Rick Dittmann**.



Leland Miller, left, of Fort Hall, ID, shows his 20 Year Length of Service Award and pin. The award was presented by MIC **Rick Dittmann**, NWS Pocatello, ID. Photo by OPL **Gary Wicklund**.

15 Year Length of Service Awards



Brantley Boatright, Observer at the **Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge**, shows his 15 Year Length of Service Award. The Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge has been part of the Cooperative Observer program since 1945. Photo and presentation by OPL **Mike McAllister**, NWS Jacksonville, FL.

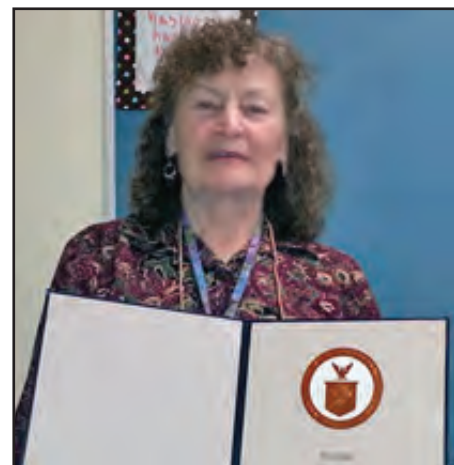


Dean Malcolm, of Butler, IN, accepts a 15 Year Length of Service Award. Being a farmer, Dean has many other farmers asking how much rain he received. Photo taken and award presented by OPL **Brentley Lothamer**, NWS Northern Indiana.

Alan and Laurie Brown in Bradford, NH, accepted a 15 Year Length of Service Award. No pictures taken.

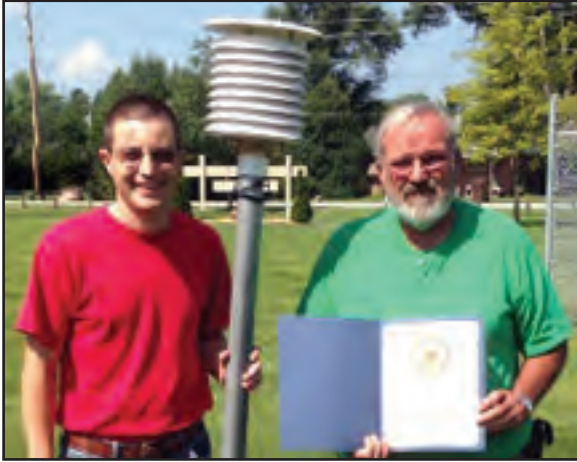


Gary Motowski shows his 15 Year Length of Service Award for **BPM Incorporated** in Peshtigo, WI. The award presented by OPL **Pat Hein** Green Bay, WI.



Dorothy Powell of Wentworth, NH, displays her 15 Year Length of Service Award. Photo and presentation by OPL **Nikki Becker**, NWS Grey, ME.

15 and 10 Year Length of Service Awards



From left, **Greg Stone** of Francesville, IN, accepts a 15 Year Length of Service Award. The award was presented by OPL **Brentley Lothamer**, NWS Northern Indiana. Photo by Service Hydrologist **Mike Rehbein**.



From left, **Hannah Sawyer** of Kingfield, ME, shows her 10 Year Length of Service Award presented by Service Hydrologist **Thomas Hawley**, NWS Gray, ME. Photo by OPL **Nikki Becker**.



From left, **Catherine Winslow** of Galena, IL, accepts a 10 Year Length of Service Award presented by Forecaster **John Haase**, NWS Davenport, IA. Photo by Met Intern **Tim Gross**.



Thom Wardell, Observer at Vernal, UT, was recently presented with a 10 Year Length of Service Award from NWS Grand Junction, CO. Photo and presentation by CPM **Becky Klenk**.

**The National
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August, September, October Temperature and Precipitation Outlooks From the Climate Prediction Center

