



The National Cooperative Observer

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Summer 2016

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Brandt-Wilson Family Marks 100 Years of Service



From left, NWS Greenville/Spartanburg, SC, OPL **Chris Horne**, Honoree **Barbara Wilson** and State Senator **Thomas Alexander**

Excerpted from an article in The Keowee Courier in Kiowee, SC.

Barbara Wilson, the Walhalla, SC, observer since 2001, accepted a 100 Year Family Heritage Award on behalf of the Brandt-Wilson family. Barbara's Grandfather **Henry W. Brandt** began taking weather observations in 1916, followed by his daughter **Henrietta Brandt** in 1950. In 1984, Henrietta's commitment to service was recognized with the COOP program's, highest honor, a Thomas Jefferson Award.

The Family Heritage Award was presented during the annual Brandt family reunion at the Biggerstaff Retreat Center, on the shore of Lake Keowee near Seneca, SC. Also on hand, was State Senator Thomas C.

Alexander, who presented a senate resolution to recognize and congratulate the Brandt-Wilson family for its service.

Alexander recalled that when he worked at WOOO radio station early in his career, Henrietta was the weather observer. He remembers how every weekday at 8 a.m., she called in her weather report without fail.

The Brandt-Wilson family has also faithfully reported the weather data to *The Keowee Courier* throughout the 100 years.

NWS Greenville/Spartanburg, SC, Observation Program Leader (OPL) **Chris Home** presented the award.

NWS thanks the Brand-Wilson for their exceptional contribution.

NWS History

The following article is excerpted from "An NWS History of the Signal Corps," the Signal Corps was the predecessor of the National Weather Service. Henry J. Cox was one of the country's weather pioneers.

Personal View of Henry J. Cox

After graduating from Harvard College in June 1884, I enlisted in the Signal Service in Washington [D.C.] the first of the following August. I was rather surprised at having to undergo a critical physical examination, even to the noting of a little mole on my back. I found this precaution was taken so that I could be more readily identified should I desert from the Corps.

I successfully passed the ordeal and was routed for Ft. Myer, VA, that day in a government ambulance, drawn by two mules, the first government mules to come under my observation. The fort in those days was not imposing and its mediocrity was in strong contrast with the pretentious post of the present day.

Upon arrival at headquarters, and just before disembarking, I heard a faint call from a distance, and this call, unintelligible to me, was repeated two or three times. I asked the driver what it was and he replied that the boys over on the barracks veranda were calling "Fresh Fish."

"And what does that mean," I asked.

He replied, "That means you. You are the fresh fish. So are termed all recruits who come here."

Such was my introduction to Fort Myer, often called by connoisseurs who have passed through its portals, making both debut and exit, "The Signal Service Training School."

My experience at the Fort, with its rigid discipline and fixed hours for everything from reveille until taps, was in strong contrast with my easy going life at Harvard during the previous four years.

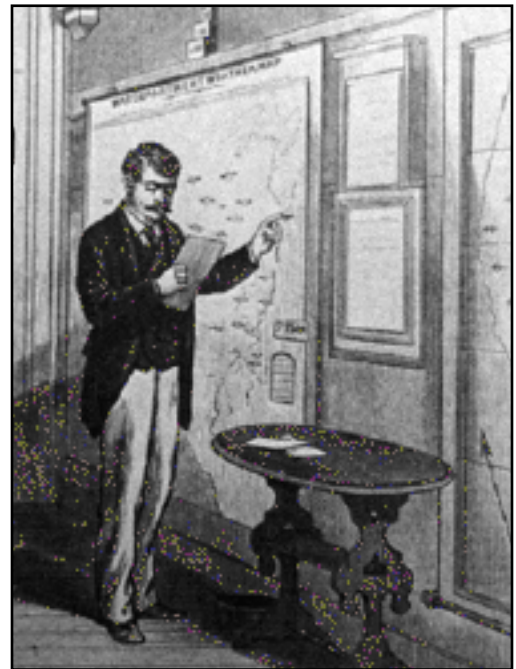
My experiences at the Fort were much the same, doubtless, as those of others of

the boys in the old Signal Corps. The chief burden of the fellows in my class was the super abundance of Second Lieutenants present at the time, who were taking the course prescribed for officers. We had to help them out with their military signalling, in addition to doing our own, and this help was not always confined to merely waving flags and swinging torches, but sometimes included reading the messages from the opposing stations.

Two of my experiences in signalling with officers come strongly to mind.

In one of these, Kimball and I were the poor privates accompanying the Second Loot [Lieutenant]. We drove off one morning late in the fall of 1884 in an ambulance to the designated point, Munsons, VA.

We were to be absent merely for the day and were to signal to another party located at the Soldiers Home in Washington. The ambulance did not remain after taking us to Munsons, but returned to the Fort with the understanding that it would come back at 10 pm; however, after we got through signalling,



Weather Briefing, late 1800s

the ambulance was not at hand and it did not show up finally until 2 am to 3 am the following morning. It seems that the sergeant in charge of the stables had forgotten about the signalling party being out, and it was not until after the wife of the Loot in charge of our

"The boys over on the barracks veranda were calling 'Fresh Fish.' I was told, 'That means you. You are the fresh fish. So are termed all recruits who come here.'"



Signal Service transportation at Jacksonville, FL (1898)

party, missing her husband, stirred things up, that the ambulance was sent on its way to our rescue.

Our return journey, however, was not without mishap. In crossing a wooden bridge over a small stream, one of the mules partly broke through the bridge, and the more we tried to extricate him, the farther down he went. We finally found the easiest way was to let the mule slide down all the way into the water in the stream below, having first removed the harness. While we were attempting to extricate the first mule, the second one broke through the bridge. Our experience with him was much the same as with the first one. We were forced to let him down into the water also. We then drove them both out onto the road and reharnessed them to the ambulance and went on our way, reaching the Fort just as the bugler was sounding reveille.

As my class was organized in midsummer of the year 1884, the course naturally closed in the following midwinter. Examinations were held soon after New Years and it was understood that there would be some three weeks thereafter before the papers were marked and the assignments to stations made.

Word came early, however, that three of the fellows would be ordered immediately to the Central Office for clerical duty, pending transfer to stations; and when the orders came, my name was included. How we were

envied by the rest of the class as we left the Fort, bound for Washington! Our classmates had, previous to the examinations, been relieved from guard duty, etc. Their places having been taken by regular Army guards, but now that the examinations were ended, our fellows had to go back and take their turn walking post, doing police duty, and all the other "beautiful and desirable things" that befall to buck privates; and this in midwinter.

How enjoyable were those three weeks at the Central Office! How we fellows enjoyed ourselves in not having to be routed out by a bugle call in the cold of the January morning! I can remember even now the big room on the top floor of 2020 G. St., which we occupied. In Washington we were in absolute comfort, and when we awoke in the morning, we could turn over and take another snooze until 8 am.

We often acted as hosts for our envious companions left at the fort when they made the journey to Washington on pass.

Finally the orders of assignment came to the entire bunch, including those on temporary duty in Washington, about 22 men in all. And on the last night in January we were shipped out to all corners of the country, to the Atlantic and Pacific, on the Great Plains and the Great Lakes, and in the South, never to meet again. My assignment happened to be Chicago.

Look for more insights into early weather service history in the next National Cooperative Observer newsletter.

Now that the examinations were ended our fellows had to go back and take their turn walking post, doing police duty, and all the other "beautiful and desirable things" that befall to buck privates; and this too in midwinter.

John Campanius Holm Awards



From left, observer **Sharon Dale Marsh** of Escalante, UT, proudly displays his 2015 John Campanius Holm Award. NWS Salt Lake City Meteorologist in Charge (MIC) **Randy Graham** presented this award. Also present was Sharon Dale's wife, **Eve**. Sharon Dale took over observations from his father in 1981. In total, the Marsh family has been observing the Escalante weather consistently for more than 47 years. As a rancher and farmer, Sharon Dale recognizes the importance of climate and weather reports, and as such ensures there are no missing observations. Photo by Acting OPL **Lisa Verzella**, NWS Salt Lake City.

Alton, UT, observer **Orval Palmer** (center) has earned the prestigious 2015 John Campanius Holm Award for exemplary weather observations taken during the past 38 years. NWS Salt Lake City MIC **Randy Graham** presented the award to Orval and his observation teammate, wife **Gerta**.

Orval was the mayor of Alton from 1990-1998, and both he and Gerta currently operate the Alton Post Office out of their home. Having been a southern Utah rancher nearly his entire life, Orval is well-versed in the local weather and hasn't missed a single weather observation in the past several decades. Photo by acting NWS OPL **Lisa Verzella**.



125, 100 Year Honored Institution Awards



The **Utah Climate Center** at Utah State University received an Honored Institution Award for 125 years of daily weather observations for the **Logan Utah State University**. For this remarkable period, Utah State Climatologists, university students and other observers have recorded daily maximum, minimum and at-observation temperatures, in addition to precipitation, snowfall and snow depth. This award was presented to current Utah State Climatologist **Robert Gillies** by NWS Salt Lake City MIC **Randy Graham**. Pictured from left are observer **Martin Schroeder**, **Robert Gillies**, **Randy Graham** and observer **Boniface Fosu**. Photo by acting OPL **Lisa Verzella**.

The **Salt Lake City Public Utilities Watershed Division** in Salt Lake City (SLC), UT, received an Honored Institution Award for 100 years of daily weather observations at the **Silver Lake Brighton** site. NWS Salt Lake City MIC **Randy Graham**, left, presented this award to Director of SLC Public Utilities **Laura McIndoe Briefer** and primary observer **Joe King**. Joe has been taking observations for more than 25 years. Joe and former observers have taken over a century of daily maximum, minimum and at-observation temperatures, in addition to daily precipitation, snowfall and snow depth. Photo by acting OPL **Lisa Verzella**.



100, 75 Year Honored Institution Awards



The **Utah Lake Pumping Plant** in Lehi, UT, received an Honored Institution Award for 100 years of daily weather observations for the Utah Lake Lehi site. The award was presented to primary observer **Greg Lewis**, himself a dedicated observer for more than 30 years. Greg and former observers have taken over a century of continuous daily maximum, minimum and at-observation temperatures, in addition to daily precipitation, snowfall and snow depth. Photo and award presentation by acting OPL **Lisa Verzella**.

The **Cattaraugus County Department of Public Works** (DPW) was presented with a 75 Year Honored Institution Award for taking observations in Little Valley, NY. NWS Buffalo OPL **Dan Kelly**, left, presented the award to **Jim Bowen**, the primary observer. Photo by **Angela Lockwood**, Cattaraugus County DPW.



75 Year Honored Institution Awards



The **Weber River Water Users' Association** in Sunset, UT, received an Honored Institution Award for 75 years of daily weather observations for its Echo Dam, UT, site. Dedicated dam observers have provided continuous daily maximum, minimum and at-observation temperatures, in addition to daily precipitation, snowfall and snow depth. The award was presented to **Ivan Ray**, Manager of Davis and Weber Counties Canal Company, center, by NWS Salt Lake City MIC **Randy Graham** and acting OPL **Lisa Verzella**.

Tampa Bay, FL, OPL **Thomas Dougherty** (left) and Science Operations Officer (SOO) **Charlie Paxton** (right) present a 75 Year Honored Institution Award to the Tampa International Airport Contract Weather Office. Accepting the award is Supervisor **Cathy Zimmerman**, and observer **Laura Monk**.

NWS Tampa Bay would like to thank the Contract Weather Office for taking the weather and climate observations at the airport, which has been at its present location since 1941. Their duties now include augmenting the automated observations.



55 Year Benjamin Franklin Award



Bev Chaplin of Hubbard, IA, receives her Benjamin Franklin Award for 55 years of dedicated service. A large group of Bev's family and friends attended the presentation.

From left, COOP Program Manager (CPM) **Brad Fillbach**, NWS Des Moines, IA; Honoree **Bev Chaplin**; NWS Central Region Headquarters Chief Program Officer **Ken Harding**, and acting MIC **Andy Bailey**.

50 Year Honored Institution Awards



From left, **Randy England** and **Rusty Hardin** of the **Claiborne County Utility District** in Tazewell, TN, accept a 50 Year Honored Institution Award. Photo taken, and award presented by OPL **Derek Eisentrout**, NWS Morristown, TN.



Jason Bergman accepted a 50 Year Honored Institution Award for the **Placer County Water Agency**. The agency manages the **Hell Hole Reservoir** in a remote area of Placer County. Hell Hole, elevation about 5,000 feet, supplies water for most of the county. Hell Hole is just 95 miles from Sacramento, but takes 3.5 hours to reach due to windy roads and rough terrain.

50 Year Honored Institution Awards



Carrol Proffitt of **Newport Utilities** receives a 50 year Honored Institution Award presented by OPL **Derek Eisentrout**, NWS Morristown, TN.

B.J. Delozier receives a 50 Year Honored Institution Award for the **University of Tennessee's Agricultural Research & Education Center**. The award was presented by OPL **Derek Eisentrout**, NWS Morristown, TN.



Staff members at **Lancaster Water Works** in Lancaster, OH, were honored recently for their 50 years of temperature and precipitation observations. Thank You Lancaster Water Works for your dedication and service!



From left are staff members **Paul Vamos**, **Aaron Conn**, **Rob DeVol**, **Michael Wickham**, **Mary Joslin**, **Phil Beyer** and NWS Wilmington, OH, Meteorologist **Ashley Novak**. Photo by Hydrometeorological Technician (HMT) **James Gibson**.

45 Year Dick Hagemeyer Service Award



John and Helen Lehman, observers from Coldwater, KS, were presented with the Dick Hagemeyer Award for 45 years of service by NWS Dodge City, KS, MIC **Larry Ruthi**. John is the primary observer for Coldwater and his wife, Helen, is his backup. The Coldwater station was started in 1888! John is the longest serving observer in the station's history. He records temperature, precipitation and snowfall data. John took over the observing duties from **Vernon Pepperd** in 1971.

From left, OPL **Jesse Lee**, SOO **Aaron Johnson**, Honorees **Helen and John Lehman**, NWS WCM **Jeff Hutton**, NWS Central Region Director **Chris Strager** and MIC **Larry Ruthi**.

40 Year Length of Service Awards

Chris Mahnke, of Cobb CA, received a 40 year Length of Service Award for his sister **Mary Loveall** who recently passed away. The award was presented by MIC **Dan Keeton** (not pictured) and OPL **Johnnie Powell**, right.

Chris took over as observer to keep up the family tradition started 62 years ago in 1954. The station Mahnke was named after the family to recognize this commitment. Cobb, CA, is located in Lake County at elevation 2,390 ft. and averages over 40 inches of rain a year.



35 and 30 Year Length of Service Awards



John Barker, left, observer at Bridgewater, ME, receives his 35 Year Length of Service Award from NWS Caribou MIC **Richard Okulski**. John is the acting Fire Warden for the town and is often the go-to person for weather information. John's 35 years, combined with his father's prior 23 years of observations, totals 58 years of family service. Photo by OPL **Pete Rahe**.

NWS Sioux Falls, SD, HMT **Tim Masters** presented a 30 Year Service Award to **John Hoffmann**, of Wessington, SD. John's site dates to July 1929. John has been reporting daily rainfall and snowfall at his farm since 1986, when he took over for a neighboring farmer. In that time, John has seen more than a few wind storms, a couple of tornadoes, and several heavy rain events. He has documented that if there is enough rain to keep the pond to the west of his house from drying up during the summer, the fall harvest will be good. When he is not tending to his fields, taking care of cattle, or reminiscing about weather events, John enjoys representing the District 3 Wheat Growers COOP, hunting pheasants with his sons' dogs, and serving as the Wessington Township Treasurer for the Board of Beadle County Commissioners.



Byron Smith, left, of rural northwestern Morton County, KS, was presented with a 30 Year Length of Service Award by NWS Dodge City, KS, MIC **Larry Ruthi**. Byron has recorded precipitation data since 1986. The site has been in the family since 1941. **John Smith**, Byron's grandfather, took over the station from the **Soil Conservation Service** in January 1941. John was the observer until he passed away in 1974. His wife, **Oлга**, took over the duties until 1986. Byron became the primary observer in January 1986.

Photo by OPL **Jesse Lee**.

30 and 25 Year Length of Service Awards



Roy Lee Standefer, of Pikeville, TN, receives his 30 Year Length of Service Award from NWS Morristown, TN. Award presented by OPL **Derek Eisentrout**.



Randy Baumert of Howells, NE, shows his 25 Year Length of Service Award. The award was presented by HMT **Joni Brand** of the NWS Omaha/Valley, NE, office.



Margaret Carvalho, of Newman, CA, accepts a 25 Year Length of Service Award from OPL **Johnnie Powell**, NWS Sacramento, CA. Margaret has been an excellent longtime observer for the office. The station dates to 1889! She also serves as a volunteer for Newman City Museum. Newman, which sits in a valley, gets extremely hot. The city's record high is 115°F on July 24, 2006, and Margaret was on the job!



Kathy Creighton accepted a 25 Year Length of Service Award for **Dick Herriford** and the staff of the **Absaroka Lodge** in Gardiner, MT. NWS Billings, MT, OPL **Larry Dooley** presented the award.

25 Year Length of Service, Honored Institution Awards



From left, **Gail Lawrence**, of Jerico Springs, MO, received his 25 Year Length of Service Award from NWS Springfield, MO, OPL **Thomas Olsen**.
Photo by Electronic Technician **Jason Howard**.



Bill Mateer of Sheffield, IA, recently received his 25 Year Length of Service Award. The award was presented by CPM **Brad Fillbach**, NWS Des Moines, IA.



Edward Mekelburg, right, observer at Robbinston, ME, receives his 25 Year Length of Service Award from NWS Caribou OPL **Pete Rahe**. Edward has been keeping personal weather records and has studied climatology for over 50 years. He is considered by many to be a local climate expert.
Photo by NWS Intern **Richard Norton**.



From left, **Mike Godsey** and **Drew Short** of the **Lebanon Virginia Water Treatment Plant** accept a 25 Year Honored Institution Award. Photo and award presentation by OPL **Derek Eisentrout**, NWS Morristown, TN.

25 Honored Institution Awards, 20 Year Length of Service



From left, NWS Wilmington, OH, Meteorologist **Ashley Novak** presents **John Lee**, of the **Newark Water Works** with a 25 Year Honored Institution Award. Photo by HMT **James Gibson**. Thanks Newark Water Works for your dedication and service!



Greg Haubrich of the Rock Valley Waste Water Department in Iowa accepts a 25 Year Honored Institution Award from NWS Sioux Falls, SD, OPL **Brad Adams**. Greg enjoys spending time outdoors, is an avid hunter and also enjoys fishing area lakes. He's also volunteers at his church and for other community groups.



Marion Bates, left, observer from Topsfield, ME, receives her 20 Year Length of Service Award from NWS Caribou, ME, Intern **Richard Norton**. Photo by OPL **Pete Rahe**.



Verla Cole of Beaver Dam, AZ, shows her 20 Year Length of Service Award. Photo and award presentation by NWS Las Vegas, NV, OPL **Nathan Foster**.

20 Year Length of Service Awards



Mike Crum received a 20 Year Length of Service Award from NWS Sacramento, CA, for his dedicated service at Colfax, CA. At an elevation of 2,380 feet, Colfax receives about 47 inches of rain a year and about 8 inches of snow. Mike has volunteered at the NWS office during the flood years to help explain the threat of floods to other observers. He is known around Colfax as the local weather man. We appreciate Mike's hard work.



From left, NWS Springfield, MO, OPL **Thomas Olsen** presented a 20 Year Length of Service Award to **Larry Dennis** of Mansfield, MO. Larry works at the **Mansfield Mirror Newspaper**. His data is used both nationally and locally since it's printed in the newspaper as well as sent to NWS.



From left, NWS Austin/San Antonio, TX, OPL **Steve Smart** presents a 20 Year Length of Service Award to **Calvin Hutzler** of Rio Medina, TX. Calvin has been measuring, recording and reporting the official Rio Medina rainfall data for since 1996.



Fred and Alice Kaufman, of Andice, TX, receive a 20 Year Length of Service Award from NWS Austin/San Antonio, TX, OPL **Steve Smart**. Fred has been measuring, recording and reporting the official Andice rainfall data since 1996. Alice serves as his backup.

20 and 15 Year Length of Service Awards



Don and Marlys Nielsen of Lake Wilson, MN, show their 20 Year Length of Service Award presented by OPL **Brad Adams**, NWS Sioux Falls, SD. In addition to weather, Don also enjoys the outdoors, hunting and fishing, and is involved with community activities in Lake Wilson. Marlys likes to spend time in her flower garden and taking care of her cats.



Shane Overton received a 20 Year Length of Service Award from NWS Sacramento, CA, for his observations at Hat Creek, near Cassel, CA. Shane is a supervisor at the **California Department of Fish and Game**. The elevation at Hat Creek is 3,015 feet, and the area receives about 28 to 29 inches of rain a year. Snow is rare at this elevation but occurs about once every 2 years. Shane takes observations while trying to keep the lakes, ponds and rivers stocked with a bountiful amount of fish.



Mark Smith, observer at **Greater Rochester International Airport**, near Webster, NY, was presented with a 20 Year Length of Service Award by OPL **Dan Kelly**, NWS Buffalo, NY. Mark goes beyond requirements to ensure the accuracy of all hourly, 6 hourly and 24 hourly precipitation, snowfall, snow depth and snow water equivalent observations at the Rochester Climate Site. This site averages nearly 100 inches of snow per year.



Stacy Brown, left, receives a 15 Year Length of Service Award for assisting in the daily observations at her ranch in Powderville, MT. The award was presented by NWS Billings, MT, OPL **Larry Dooley**.

15 Year Length of Service Awards



From left, **Mike Helmley**, observer for Kiowa, KS, was presented with a 20 Year Length of Service Award by OPL **Jesse Lee**, NWS Dodge City, KS. WCM **Jeff Hutton** was also in attendance. The Kiowa station was started in November of 1891. After a long break from 1895 until 1938, **Adolph Meixner** reopened the station. Mike took over in 1996.



Johnny and **Carol Kimmons**, of Whitwell, TN, receive their 15 Year Length of Service Award from NWS Morristown, TN. The award was presented and photo taken by OPL **Derek Eisentrout**.



Mark Rueschmann, of Ava, MO, received the 15 Year Length of Service Award from OPL **Thomas Olsen**, NWS Springfield, MO. Thanks Mark for your dedication.



Susie Sicilia, observer at the **Montecito Water District** office, received her 15 Year Length of Service Award. Susie records the precipitation data each month from **Juncal Dam**, which opened in 1925. The award was presented by OPL **Bonnie Bartling**, NWS Los Angeles-Oxnard, CA.

15 and 10 Year Length of Service Awards

Gayle Warzecha of Falls City, TX, was presented a 15 Year Length of Service Award by HMT **Cory Van Pelt**, NWS Austin/San Antonio, TX. Gayle is continuing a family precipitation record that began on March 16, 1943, when her grandfather became the observer for Falls City, followed by her uncle in 1946. In 1950 her father, a World War II veteran, took over the family observing duties and recorded precipitation for 51 years, before passing the measuring stick to Gayle in 2001. No photo.



Robert Sutter received a 15 Year Length of Service Award from NWS Sacramento, CA, for his observations at Gold Run, CA. Gold Run is in the Sierra Nevada at an elevation of 3,320 feet. The site has an average annual precipitation of 56 inches and about 1 foot of snow. Robert loves weather observing. He measures rain in difficult weather conditions. Gold run lies within the wet belt of Northern California, where the storm track persists during the winter months.



Sonia Taylor received a 15 Year Length of Service Award for observations for **Collins Pine Company** in Chester, CA, from NWS Sacramento, CA. Chester is in the northeast mountains of California. The company operates 24 hours, rarely misses an observation. Chester has an elevation of 4,530 feet and receives 32 inches of rain a year, with about 128 inches of snow.



Kenlee and **Sarah Calvin** with help from their daughter receive a 10 Year Length of Service Award from OPL **Thomas Olsen**, NWS Springfield, MO. Thank you for your continued support to the NWS observer program.



Tom Eckhoff, left, of Cole Camp, MO, receive his 10 Year Length of Service Award from OPL **Thomas Olsen**, NWS Springfield, MO. Thanks Tom for your dedication to the observer program.

10 Year Length of Service Awards



Justin Gompf of the **Vail Golf Club**, Vail, CO, was recently presented with a 10 Year Length of Service Award from NWS Grand Junction, CO, DAPM **John Kyle**. Justin, with assistance from the rest of the staff, takes daily temperature, rain and snow observations for the NWS. Records from the golf course date back to March 1, 1985.



Stacy and Wayne Grosz, observers in Kanab, UT, were presented with a 10 Year Length of Service Award. The team promptly enters weather observations each day in time for the Regional Temperature and Precipitation Product. Photo and award presentation by Acting OPL **Lisa Verzella**, NWS Salt Lake City, UT.



Dianne and Steve (not pictured) **Hunn**, observers in Duck Creek Village, UT, were presented with a 10 Year Length of Service Award. The Hunns are excellent observers in this remote, high-elevation area of Utah. Photo and award presentation by Acting OPL **Lisa Verzella**, NWS Salt Lake City, UT.



Rodney Truax Sr. of Parkersburg, IA, received his 10 Year Length of Service Award from CPM **Brad Fillbach**, NWS Des Moines, IA. Rodney's most memorable weather event was seeing the EF-5 tornado in Parkersburg, IA, on May 25, 2008.



Sandi Woods, of Ava, MO, received her 10 year Length of Service Award from OPL **Thomas Olsen**, NWS Springfield, MO. When Sandi's husband got too busy to take observations, she stepped right in and took over. Thanks Sandi for your dedication to the observer program.

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National
Cooperative Program
James.Zdrojewski
@noaa.gov

Managing Editor
Melody.Magnus
@noaa.gov

Editor:
Nancy Lee

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September, October, November Temperature and Precipitation Outlooks From the Climate Prediction Center

