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Brian Gatzke, ARA (2021)
Dave Koenigshof (2021)
Loy Matthes, ARA (2019)
Don Threadgold, AFM (2019)

YPN:

Barb Hegerfeld & Jordan Bauer

Committee Chairs:

Membership: Kim Larson

Social: Jeff Barker, ARA

East River Breakfast
Barb Hegerfeld

West River Breakfast
Norm Edwards, ARA

Fishing Social
Jeff Barker ARA &
Curtis Brooks

Education
Travis Shaykett & Jason Vaith

SDSU Relationships: Brian
Gatzke ARA & Allan Husby ARA
Career Fair – Barb Hegerfeld
Curriculum - Gatzke/McKnight
Network Event–Ryan McKnight
Scholarship – Keith Newman
Student Involvement
- Jordan Bauer

Assessors Conference
Ron Ensz, ARA

Education Foundation Auction
Ron Ensz, ARA

Government Relations
Terry Leibel

Appraisal Review & Ethics
Allan H, ARA

Mentor: Jim Dunlap, ARA

Kjerstad Member Scholarship
Terry Leibel

Nominating Committee
Craig Sommers

Communication
Paul Reisch, ARA
Newsletter – Amanda Leighton
Website – Adam Nelson



American Society of Farm Managers & Rural Appraisers

THE MOST TRUSTED RURAL
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SOUTH DAKOTA CHAPTER www.asfmra-sd.com

6/2018

Enhancing Our Members' Ability to Succeed in Their Rural & Agriculturally Related Professions!

DATES TO REMEMBER!

June 24 – 29: Education Week – Des Moines, IA
July 12: West River Breakfast Meeting – Rapid City
July 20: East River Breakfast Meeting – Sioux Falls
August 2-3: Chapter Leader Day - Denver
September 7-8: SDSU Network Event - Brookings
September 10-14: Leadership Institute – Washington, D.C.
October 3: Ag-Bio Career Fair
October 29 - November 2: 89th ASFMRA Annual Meeting – Chandler, AZ
January 23-24: Winter Education & Joint Meeting W/PAASD – Chamberlain

CHAPTER MEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

<u>Member</u>	<u>Join Date</u>	<u>Years</u>
Paul Joerger	7-9-1988	30
Ron Ensz	7-26-2002	16
Charles Doom	7-16-2004	14
Michael Norgaard	7-01-2006	12
Donald Threadgold	7-22-2010	8
Keith Newman	7-24-2013	5

Thank you for your support!!

CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Retention is 94% (89 out of 95) including anticipated drops. New members are one associate member and five student members. Two members have moved to retired status. The committee has 8 potential member prospects identified.

Summary of Current 98 Members / 73 accredited / associate / academic:

1 ARA / AFM 11 ARA 7 AFM
51 Associate – 42 appraisers / 9 farm managers
3 Academic 12 Student 2 Affiliate 6 Retired 5 Partner

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings Fellow Members;

(History of Agriculture Continued)

Due to his seemingly unsympathetic attitude towards the farmer's plight, many of the state's farmers breathed a sigh of relief to hear of Secretary of Agriculture Burtz being forced to resign in 1976. This good news was overshadowed by bad news; the severe drought, particularly in the central part of the state. High temperatures and strong winds made it the worst drought in the area since 1934. One-third of the state's farmers experienced a severe economic setback because of the drought, and the state incurred a loss of over \$1 billion dollars in farm income.

In 1977, under the new Carter administration, the tide turned at the federal level, as it was a strong supporter of the family farmer. However, it was unable to stem the tide of surplus production and, subsequently, farmers leaving the land to seek work in towns and cities. The 1977 Food and Agricultural Act authorized the Secretary of Agriculture to withhold land from production. Thirteen million acres were taken out of production in 1978, but farmers actually produced 300 million bushels more wheat than the year before. An expected increase in exports did not materialize and once again production outpaced demand and, of course, resulted in falling prices. An embargo of grain to Russian in 1979 further added to the surplus.

Low commodity prices and high interest rates contributed to a continuing depopulation of South Dakota. Although another 8,500 farms disappeared from South Dakota in the 1970's, acres were not taken out of production, but were incorporated into larger farms. This caused inflation and the average value of land in the state increased from \$85 to \$292 (an increase of 344%) during this ten year period. Although South Dakota's family farmers experienced many setbacks in the 1970's due to federal farm policies and unstable markets, there was some success within our state. Due to the bad reputation of the personal property tax (referred to as the "liars tax") because of minimal validation of self-assessment forms by farmers, and no method of uniformly applying it throughout the state, in 1978 the personal property tax was repealed.

Because South Dakota was losing more than 1,000 farms a year on average, and land owned by corporations was increasing, a full-scale attempt to curb corporate farming was undertaken. Anti-corporate legislation was defeated during the 1971-1973 legislative sessions, however, the Family Farm Act of 1974 prohibited non-farm corporations from engaging in agriculture within the state. Because of concerns about foreign investments in rural America, the 1979 legislature voted to limit the purchase of farmland by non-residents to no more than 160 acres.

(More Next Time)

Most (probably not all) of the state has either already received or will receive good precipitation over the next several days. Of, course, in some places, there is too much moisture, and maybe all the crops haven't been, or won't be, planted this spring. Overall, the majority of our state has been blessed. In South Dakota too much rain (minus the hail and wind) is almost always better than not enough!

Our second annual fishing social was again a success; the write up is in this newsletter. (Good networking!) Thanks to Jeff and Don for getting it organized, and to all those in attendance for making it happen. Also, the Summer Education Week is upon us; I know we have a number of members going.

Later;

Terry Leibel Email: midstateaprsl@aol.com

ALL BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT AT JUNE 4, 2018 BOARD MEETING

By Paul Reisch, ARA

Meeting highlights not addressed elsewhere in the newsletter:

Newsletter: The board was informed that Curtis Brooks will be taking over the newsletter as a result of Amanda Leighton's career change. Transition Plan:

- Amanda and Paul will work on June edition with Amanda pulling together for final distribution.
- Amanda, Curtis, and Paul will have joint meeting in July. Curtis will be involved with July distribution.
- Curtis will put out August edition and future editions with support of Amanda and Paul.



Nominating Committee: Nominating Committee members are Chair Craig Sommers, Scott Heimes (appointed), and Keith Newman (elected). For the 2019 elections, the committee needs to address officer positions, Jeff Barker / Loy Matthes / Don Threadgold director positions, and 2020 Nominating Committee member. Don can serve another term. Jeff and Loy cannot.

Chapter Leaders Day: Paul Sickler and Kim Larson are registered to attend the August 2-3, 2018 event.

Patron Chapter Recognition Program: It is anticipated two new members are needed by September 1 to meet the requirement of member growth by 1 since October 1, 2017 excluding student members. It appears the

chapter can meet all other criteria.

Continuing Education Refund Policy: The board approved the Education Committee Recommendation

1. Full Refund if cancelled prior to the final order to the education provider (normally about 10 days before the class).
2. 50% refund if cancelled prior to 24 hours before the class.
3. No refund if cancelled within 24 hours before class.

Governance Changes : ASFMRA President-Elect Tim Fevold covered the proposed national changes in governance to the board members. These changes have three goals:

1. To gain more member input for the work of the Committees, the Executive Council & Chapters.
2. To make more timely decisions to keep up with a faster-paced world.
3. To cast a wider net for leadership development in order to match leaders with volunteer roles to enable volunteer success.

The board is supportive of the changes.

Members can find details of the proposals on the national website. Log in and [access the Governance Structure Community](#) and view the Governance Change Key Elements, the Governance Change FAQ and the Governance Change PowerPoint.



CHAPTER BOARD APPROVES KJERSTAD MEMBER SCHOLARSHIP CHANGES

By Paul Reisch, ARA

At the June 6, 2018, board members approved additional scholarship opportunities. The changes are highlighted in yellow.

Scholarship opportunities for accredited, associate, and academic members when their employer does not pay the cost include:

- **Pay basic member registration fee and transportation up to \$500 for Leadership Institute attendance --** Priority for the scholarship - Chapter President, board member, member who has never attended, member who has attended. Interest to be communicated to Chapter President by **March 15th**.

Farm Manager

- **Pay member registration fee first ASFMRA education course that is a part of obtaining AFM accreditation after becoming a member.** - Member would inform President and Treasurer of intent to attend. Scholarship paid to member upon confirmation of course enrollment and adequate funds. If inadequate funding, will be reimbursed in future when adequate funding secured.
- **Pay member registration fee for accreditation education class for those committed to achieving accreditation.**
- Any member can provide written intent for the upcoming calendar year by December 1st to Chapter President. The written intent will convey the member's status regarding educational requirements and his / her personal timeline to achieve completion of educational requirements, demo report, and sitting for the exam. Scholarship approval will be communicated to a member by March 31 of the calendar fiscal year. The member can be paid member registration fee toward the cost of a class still needed within 3 years of scholarship approval.
- **Pay for cost of ALM 4 Review for Exam, application fee, and accrediting exam** - Payable upon application and approval to sit for exam as communicated by member to President and Treasurer. The **cost of application fee** and exam would be paid on a one time only basis.

Appraiser

- **Pay member registration fee for two ASFMRA education course(s) that is a part of obtaining trainee license after becoming a member or all three if taken as Trainee Bundle at Education Week.** - Member would inform President and Treasurer of intent to attend. Scholarship paid to member upon confirmation of course enrollment and adequate funds. If inadequate funding, will be reimbursed in future when adequate funding secured.
- **Pay member registration fee for two ASFMRA education course(s) that is a part of obtaining certified general appraiser license after becoming a member.** - Member would inform President and Treasurer of intent to attend. Scholarship paid to member upon confirmation of course enrollment and adequate funds. If inadequate funding, will be reimbursed in future when adequate funding secured.
- **Pay member registration fee for accreditation education class for those committed to achieving accreditation.**
- Any member can provide written intent for the upcoming calendar year by December 1st to Chapter President. The written intent will convey the member's status regarding educational requirements and his / her personal timeline to achieve completion of educational requirements, demo report, and sitting for the exam. Scholarship approval will be communicated to a member by March 31 of the calendar fiscal year. The member can be paid member registration fee toward the cost of a class still needed within 3 years of scholarship approval.
- **Pay for cost of A500 Appraisal Exam Prep, application fee, and accrediting exam** - Payable upon application and approval to sit for exam as communicated by member to President and Treasurer. The **cost of application fee** and exam would be paid on a one time only basis.
- **Pay for cost of the accrediting exam** - Payable upon application as communicated by member to President and Treasurer. The cost of exam would be paid on a one time only basis.

CHAPTER BOARD APPROVES BYLAW CHANGE

By Paul Reisch, ARA

The chapter currently has an Appraisal Review & Ethic Committee that was required by the national organization..

At one time, an Appraisal Review Committee had a function in the accreditation process. That is no longer the case. Ethics Committees responsibilities were to coordinate with national and act on complaints involving chapter members. When issues came up in Chapters, often national was requested to handle it. These referrals happened for a variety of reasons, most often because it was “too close to home.”

In recent years Leonard Meador, AAC and Eddie Lumpee, ARA (who are both Ethics instructors) worked, at the direction of the Executive Council, on a very important project. This was looking at the functions of the Appraisal Review and Ethics Committees and made recommendations on how to utilize those committee member’s time and talents more effectively and efficiently.

Due to the work they completed, the Bylaws changes to combine the Ethics and Appraisal Review Committees was presented to the membership, voted on in 2016 in Indiana Wells, CA, and approved. The new committee – Ethics and Standards Committee – was approved and went into effect on October 1, 2017.

Due to the combining of these two committees, the Chapter Ethics Committee was also voted and approved at the same time to no longer be required. The Chapter Appraisal Review Committee was, at the same time, voted and approved to no longer be needed.

Considering these actions the board took the following action at the June 6, 2018 meeting.

Changes SD Chapter Bylaw – delete strikethrough; add yellow highlight

ARTICLE VIII

CHAPTER COMMITTEES

Section 1. Standing Committee. South Dakota Chapter shall have ~~an Appraisal Review and Ethics Committee,~~ and a Membership Committee.

At least one member of the ~~Chapter Appraisal Review, Ethics or Membership Committee~~ shall hold the ASFMRA Accredited designation, ~~or if such classification is not available, at least one member shall hold the ASFMRA Professional classification.~~

Section 2. Other Committees. In addition, the South Dakota Chapter may have a Communications Committee, Education Committee, Government Relations Committee, Kjerstad Member Scholarship Committee, Mentor Committee, Public Relations Committee (Assessor Conference, SDSU Relationships), and Social Committee (East River Breakfast, West River Breakfast, **Fishing Social**).

Chapter bylaws state “ Members shall be given notice of the proposed amendments no fewer than 14 days prior to the amendment, and the amended Bylaws shall be consistent with the Articles of Incorporation and the Bylaws and the Regulations of ASFMRA.” So these changes will be effective 14 days after distribution of this newsletter to membership.

ASSESSOR CONFERENCE BANQUET

By David Baker

The banquet for the South Dakota Association of Assessing Officers (SDAAO) was held on May 24, 2018 at the Dahl Fine Arts Center in Rapid City, South Dakota. Three Black Hills gold watches (two ladies and one man's watch) were given away during the banquet. Dave Baker represented the SD ASFMRA, and President Joe Doran represented the SDAAO.

Winners of this year's watches were Dari Schlotte of Day County and Allison Forbush and Melissa Sears, both of Codington County. This was also a fundraising event for the John Ritter Foundation. The fundraiser, a casino night, raised \$1,534. An estimated 200 people attended the banquet.

In conjunction with the banquet, eight names were drawn from those in attendance for a chance to win \$25,000 by getting a specific roll on a set of dice. Unfortunately, no one got the specific dice roll needed to win the \$25,000 prize.



(Left to right) Dari Schlotte of Day County, Dave Baker of the SD ASFMRA, Joe Doran, President of SDAAO, Allison Forbush of Codington County, and Melissa Sears of Codington County.

MEMBERS ENJOY FISHING SOCIAL

By Curtis Brooks



Good times were had by several chapter members on June 6th & 7th. The Kimball/Chamberlain area played host to the second annual fishing social, which took place in conjunction with the board meeting. Jeff Barker and Don Threadgold organized this event and did an outstanding job of providing a great experience for an exceptional value.

On Wednesday afternoon, there was a board meeting at Chuck's (the fishing guide) shop south of Kimball. Following the meeting, Chuck provided a fish fry then let us know the plan for the following day. Most of the board members along with a good group of chapter members

enjoyed an excellent meal where there was plenty of good food, drinks, and conversation.

Most of the fishing party went to the Dakota Winds Motel in Kimball after the meal where a "parking lot party" ensued. The party consisted of a circle of lawn chairs, night cappers, the identification of the world's problems, the solution to those problems, and a couple "R rated" jokes narrated by Loy.

The weather Thursday morning was nice and cool. The conditions were just right for a morning on the water. We set out a spread of coffee, juice, and rolls at the hotel. Over breakfast we decided who was going to fish on which boat, then we were off to the river.

Three boats docked from Cedar Shore with our sack lunches and went north. There were times when all three boats were fishing in the same area, but we all went our separate ways most of the time. The guides communicated throughout the day and worked as a team to catch fish.

When the day was done, we all gathered at the cleaning station. It was clear the event was a success. We all caught fish, strengthened relationships, and had a good time. Last year I was on a boat with Paul & Tamara Joerger and we had limited fishing success. This year we teamed up again along with (our secret weapon) President Elect Tim Fevold. It's safe to say we enjoyed some redemption as we caught the biggest fish and were the highest grossing boat. (Hey, if I'm writing the article, you're going to get my fishing story)

The fishing participants included: Jeff Barker, Don Threadgold, Loy Matthes, Paul Reisch, Ron Dunker, Paul Sickler, Jim Dunlap, Norm Edwards, Tim Fevold, Paul Joerger, Tamara Joerger, and myself (Curtis Brooks).

A big thank you goes out to all who helped with this event, especially Jeff & Don! I had a great time and look forward to attending again next year.



MEMBER PROFILE

Describe your experience and education related to the property professional field (appraisal, farm management, consulting, academic relation).

I was born and raised on a farm south of Chamberlain, SD. I currently live on a farm/ranch operation with my husband, Joel, and two sons, Ladd & Ned, south of Pukwana, SD. I graduated from the University of South Dakota in May of 2008 with a BA in Finance. I started a career in finance working as a Financial Advisor for Ameriprise Financial, Inc. In 2016, I began working for First Dakota National Bank as a Real Estate Appraisal Trainee. Currently, I am licensed as a State Registered Appraiser in South Dakota and am accumulating education and experience hours under the supervision of State Certified General Appraiser, David Koenigshof.

Describe what has led you to becoming a chapter member of the South Dakota ASFMRA and why you remain a member, if a member for a number of years.

I joined ASFMRA to take advantage of their education classes that focus on ag-related appraisal work. I enjoy the networking opportunities that ASFMRA provides through not only the classroom, but also chapter meetings, socials, and online resources, etc. I've met some pretty great people that I love keeping in touch with.

Describe personal background items that would be of interest to fellow chapter members (e.g. family, ethnic heritage, other communities lived, other jobs / careers, main hobbies or interests).

Having grown up on a farm and marrying into another farm family, I love all things "Ag." I'm a cow loving, Beef promoting, agricultural advocate. I also love children and am passionate about education. Some various community and state organizations that I like to volunteer with are:

- Brule County 4-H
- Hungry for Truth / SD Soybean Research and Promotion Council
- South Dakota Prime Cattlewomen Member
- Junior Achievement of Chamberlain
- Kiwanis Club of Chamberlain

I also love traveling, cooking, and enjoying the great outdoors.

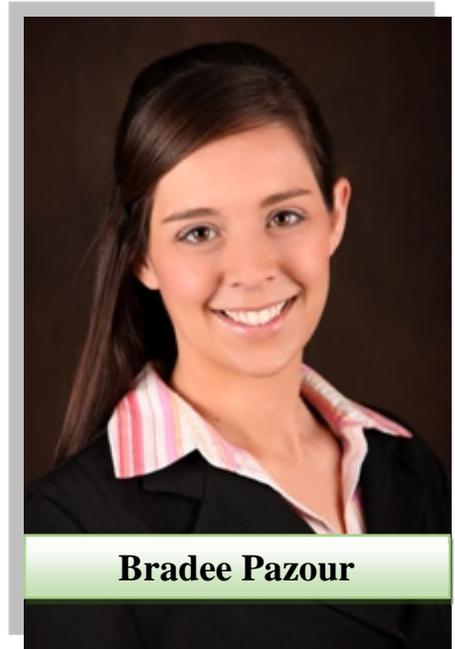
Describe a few memorable or unique experiences in your life.

--My best experience in life has by far been becoming a mom to two little boys.

--While attending college, I actually spent a semester going to school in Hawaii through the National Student Exchange program. It was pretty great going to class then hitting the beach almost every day.

--I "starred" in a commercial through Hungry for Truth playing a soccer mom alleviating fears about GMO's. At the end of the commercial, my on-screen son and I climb into a big tractor and drive off. At the time of filming, I didn't have kids old enough to be in soccer, but I'm pretty sure people don't drive tractors to practice, but maybe they do?!? =) Needless to say, the commercial grabbed lots of viewers' attention and created lots of good conversations about food and farming. It has been a rewarding experience to be a volunteer for the SD Soybean Research and Promotion Council.

Continued



MEMBER PROFILE CONTINUED

--Another thing that we checked off the bucket list was owning a race horse. His name was Huxley Hall and we raced him in Ft Pierre, SD, Aberdeen, SD, Columbus, NE, and one time in Grand Island, NE. My husband and I enjoy going to horse races and owning a race horse was something we always wanted to do. I really wanted my picture taken in the winner's circle. Hux won twice for us along with other 2nd and 3rd place finishes and we proudly display our winner's circle pictures in our home. Every time he raced it was so exhilarating and exciting. He was not the sleeper horse that came up from the back on the last turn or straightaway—he was the one to take charge of the entire race and stay out front the whole time.

SEVERAL CHAPTER MEMBERS ATTENDING EDUCATION WEEK

By Amanda Leighton

The South Dakota Chapter has nine members planning to attend Education Week in Des Moines, IA.

Course Offerings:

- Basic Appraisal Principles (A101)
- Basic Appraisal Procedures (A102)
- 15-Hour National USPAP (A113)
- Ag Land Management 1 (ALM1)
- Ag Land Management 2 (ALM2)
- Ag Land Management 3 (ALM3)
- Ag Land Management 4 (ALM4)
- Advanced Appraisal Exam Prep Course (A500)
- Ag Consulting Principles (AAC1)
- Ag Consulting Practices (AAC2)
- Income Approach for General Appraisers, Part 1 (A303)
- Property Rights: Why Haven't I Heard This Before?
- Valuing Rural America: The Complexities of Data Analysis in a Low Volume, Non-Uniform World
- Valuing Specialty Livestock Facilities: Dairy Farms
- Managing in Tight Margins Seminar & Panel Discussion
- Thinking Outside the Box: Appraising Unique & Atypical Properties

Members known to be attending include:

- Darwin Thue: Ag Land Management 4 and AFM Exam
- Seth Van Duyn: Ag Land Management 4 and AFM Exam
- Mark Elder: Valuing Rural America and AgWare Exhibitor
- District VI President Paul Reisch: Valuing Rural America and Executive Council Meeting
- Paul Sickler: Managing in Tight Margins
- Academic District Vice President Jack Davis: Executive Council Meeting
- Jim Jansen: Ag Land Management 1 and Ag Consulting Practices
- Brian Gatzke
- Matt Gunderson

RUSSELL AND BETTY WYATT CELEBRATE A LIFE WELL-LIVED

By John D. Taylor

The Rapid City Journal featured the following article about long time SD Chapter Member Russell Wyatt and his wife Betty. The article appeared in the paper on August 9, 2016, but was only recently brought to the attention of the Editor.

“Seeing the world through their eyes is like a trip back in time.

HOT SPRINGS - When you see the world through the eyes of Russell and Betty Wyatt – in June, Russell turned 90; Betty, 80 – you get a trip back in time: To the days of Fall River County before Angostura Dam was built, when Oral area farmers grew sugar beets instead of corn, and the Brainerd Indian Training School’s 16 buildings still occupied the Cascade location where The Nature Conservancy’s Whitney Preserve now stands.

Both Wyatts lives have intertwined with the changes that have taken place in Fall River County across their many years.

Russell’s roots hark back to the family farm and ranch near Cascade. His grandparents, Ira and Harriet (Hattie) Tillotson, homesteaded the land in 1883. Currently, his brother, Harold, and Harold’s wife, Dorothy, now live on this land.

Betty was an Alabama girl. She transplanted her life west, to the Brainerd Indian School, during the 1960s, and found a new life in the Black Hills.

“I first got into real estate in high school, in Edgemont,” said Russell, recalling how he and Harold, two years his junior, shared a “typewriter and a desk” in a small real estate firm in Edgemont. (Russell has been involved in selling and appraising real estate – and farming – for much of his professional life.)

However, the lure of the farm proved greater than real estate back then, because he left real estate to begin a crop harvesting business, primarily combining wheat in Texas.

Russell also recalled helping to build Angostura Dam. It took the decade long drought, the Dust Bowl of the “Dirty 1930s,” to prompt building the dam, conceptualized as early as 1913. The dam was built between 1946 and 1949, part of the Angostura Division of the Pick-Sloan Missouri Basin Program, operated by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

Russell was a supply person, working for a carpenter supervisor, who oversaw the building of concrete pouring forms for the dam. He drove a truck, bringing carpenters whatever wood, tools or other materials they needed.

“I was doing this out of high school, when others were going to college,” he said. “I learned a lot – especially the value of time.”

Russell said everyone back then saw the dam as an irrigation project, not for recreation, which wasn’t “the deal it is now.” The dam was to store water to irrigate more than 12,000 acres of cropland along a 24 mile corridor of the Cheyenne River. The dam put water into the Angostura Canal, and the canal brought this water to farmers at 290 cubic feet per second.

When the dam was completed, most workers were laid off, Russell said. But he and some of the carpenters continued, building forms for the concrete parts of the canal, and to level the 12,000 acres of irrigated land. Even after this was finished, Russell hauled the carpenter’s gear and tools to Oral, to the railroad, to be shipped off.

Russell said he quit the dam and canal work once, and went back to crop harvesting, but was re-hired immediately after harvest season. His boss – an Alabama man – liked him, he said. “His boss was from where I grew up, in Alabama, and he was related to my aunt,” Betty said, a fact the couple found out later in a life, a life filled with coincidences.

Although cutting wheat appealed to Russell, after he married his first wife, it began to lose its appeal. He wasn’t home for long periods of time, and despite lulling two of his children, Jerry and Peggy, to sleep while riding in a “dirty combine” – there were no cabs or air conditioners back then, he said – he decided to get out of harvesting.

Continued

WYATT CONTINUED

Irrigation changed Fall River County agriculture: Before the dam, everything was dry land farming, growing wheat only, Russell said. Many tried to homestead 160 acres, but most of these homesteads failed, and the lands were sold back to the federal government for as little as \$5 per acre or they became grazing land for cattle. After irrigation, especially around Oral, the government came in, leveled land on the 12,000 acres able to be irrigated and the failed homesteads were sold to World War II veterans via a drawing, with as many as five applicants per parcel.

“Some of these guys made it, some didn’t,” he said. “That’s when I started renting ground to farm.”

After five years of renting, he bought a farm, built a house on it, and began making his living farming.

First, he raised sugar beets – 17 acres that first year. “Beets like cool nights and plenty of water,” he said. “No one had any money, so the sugar beet company subsidized the farmers – they gave farmers seeds, leased them the planters to put the seeds in the ground, and provided Mexican labor to hoe weeds and do other chores. All the farmer had to do was provide a place for the workers to camp.”

“Many farmers like me never saw a sugar beet before,” he said. “But I did well, became one of the larger beet growers. People called me the ‘Beet King.’”

Russell credited the beet company’s field man, a crop consultant who knew beets and what they needed to grow, for his success. The field man knew just what to do, and Russell followed his orders, used the right amount of fertilizer, etc., for success.

However, in 1961, another severe drought hit the region, and there was no water in the dam, he said. Since the sugar beet company wouldn’t pay farmers for crops they couldn’t grow, the beets-to-sugar factory in Belle Fourche closed, beet contracts were not renewed, and the Fall River beet industry imploded. Also, early in 1962, his first wife passed away.

Betty, meanwhile, was forging her own way in the world. The “Alabama city girl” had always been interested in becoming a missionary. She wanted to go to Japan as a missionary. Teaching school – the children of missionaries already in Japan had to send their children to a school 200 miles away – seemed like the perfect vehicle for accomplishing this goal. So Betty attended Southern Wesleyan University for a time, but dropped out when an opportunity to do mission work arose.

She was getting ready to go back to school, finish her degree, when an offer from the Brainerd Indian Training School in Cascade arrived. Betty initially wanted to finish college, and take this job the following year. She saw it as a stepping stone towards getting to Japan.

However, she formulated a different plan when a friend in Alabama told her how forced desegregation of schools there was beginning to create turmoil, something she didn’t want to deal with. Also, in another coincidence, Black Hills Wild Horse Sanctuary Director Susan Watt was one of Betty’s 4th grade students in Alabama.

So Betty said yes to the Brainerd offer, and moved to South Dakota. She taught at Brainerd for two years. Not wanting to return to Alabama, when a teaching job came open in Oral, she took it. It was here she met Russell.

Betty and Russell married in September of 1962. “People said it was too soon after my wife had died,” Russell said, “but it was what I needed. I had two teenage kids and needed help raising them. This ‘city girl’ from Alabama jumped right into it. She cooked for an irrigation crew of five guys. And I attribute her for my success.”

While farming remained a big part of their lives, Russell said he “got tired of seeing corn and cows,” and getting back into real estate, especially as a land appraiser, brought him full circle. Russell visited with an appraiser on what it would take to follow this path – he should sell real estate for 15 years, then pursue classes in Rapid City, before acquiring an appraiser’s license, he was told. Could he do this and still run the farm, he wondered? By that time, there were four children in the family, two still at home.

Continued

WYATT CONTINUED

Russell started attending night school in Rapid City, and earned his real estate selling license in 1968. "I didn't do anything for a couple of years," he said. "I tried to work for two offices in town (Hot Springs), but they didn't want salesmen." So he decided to go into business for himself. He rented a one-room office in 1971, sold some properties, but was only working real estate about one day a week.

During the early 1970s, there was a shortage of homes available in Hot Springs. People new to the VA and the railroad need homes, so why not build them, he thought, focus on rural development, low income homes, sold through the Farmers Home Administration (FHA) at 1 percent interest rates. He found a contractor willing to build such houses if he financed the business. He would also sell lots and the buildings.

This partnership resulted in 50 split-level homes being built in Hot Springs, all initially 912 square feet, but no two were exactly alike because the contractor had a knack for adding subtle differences. All of these houses were sold, for \$22,000 - \$34,000, before they were built, Russell said. None had yard landscaping or a garage, but many added these features later. Today, the same homes average about \$115,000- \$150,000.

Russell's real estate venture paid off, because he was earning money selling new homes and a second time as people moved into the area. Eventually, his real estate company had a three-man sales team and five part time people.

Russell also recalls having a hand in the Mammoth Site – as broker to sell the houses Phil Anderson intended to build when he hit mammoth bones while digging a foundation.

During the 1970s, Russell said, he sold ranches.

By the 1980s, however, with 20 percent home mortgage interest rates and the Farm Crisis tanking agricultural markets, Russell saw his house-selling days were numbered. So he switched gears and got into appraisals – needed now, with all the financial turmoil. He worked with FHA, and due to new rules for appraisal licenses, he had to go back to school and jump through a few other hoops.

During this time, Betty worked with him in the office, and as a teacher's aide in the school district. "That \$200 a week looked pretty good back then," she recalled.

Russell remembers times being especially tight in the 1980s. With two kids in college, they were just scratching by. He had to travel all over South Dakota for FHA appraisals. One job, a 13,000 acre ranch, earned him just \$225 in fees. He recalled a night in Lemmon, when he was to meet a man to sign papers on a property – Betty was along – and the guy didn't show till nearly 12 midnight. Since they couldn't afford a motel room, they just drove the four hours home.

Betty recalled working in the office, being responsible for organizing property photos – no digital cameras then. She had them developed, sorted them by property, numbered them and kept track of them. She also answered the phone, made appointments and typed letters.

Appraisals continued through 2005, Russell said.

Today, the Wyatts have moved into town, after selling their farm (2014). Betty said Russell almost balked at this in the 11th hour, and came close to selling the house they built on eight acres off Pine Haven Road. But she "straightened" him out – both smiling.

Succeeding generations carry on their work: Their youngest son, Jerry, does appraisal work

Russell is also working on a book about his real estate adventures, and enjoys his collection of John Deere toy tractor replicas. Betty enjoys her collection of dolls, some quite rare, and participates in local politics."