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DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE  
RESEARCH & EXTENSION  
University of Arkansas System

April 2021

No. 4

## Doug Petty: Bugging out in the best way for Extension

Doug Petty was known for his tendency to “bug out” from time to time in Extension. His passion for entomology was evident to those around him, and that is what eventually got him hired at Extension.

After graduating with his degrees in agriculture from the University of Arkansas, he started out teaching high school agricultural education, but soon realized that was not his passion.

“I was a big fan of working in an environment where people asked to learn about agriculture,” Petty said.

Petty was asked to come work for Extension to explore his true passions in 1981. He spent time in Lonoke, Woodruff and Miller counties. He preferred being in the field rather than being in the office, but Petty said the people he worked with made it all that much better for him.

“I was told once that staff chairs are only as good as the team under them,” Petty said.

For him, it was nice to be on teams that really embraced cooperation and hard work. He said it was pleasant to work in those offices.

“I was always happy to see my team members,” Petty said. “I never had a qualm with any of my teammates that could not be resolved, and I appreciated that about them.”

He retired in 2014, but he never stopped working with Extension on projects. He still helps with fire ant research, shooting sports and retrieving buffalo gnats from the river to aid in research.

“Getting to work with Extension after retirement has kept me busy, but I love being able to study insects and still do something that makes me happy,” he said.

Petty traveled quite a bit more than he used to, specifically to see a special person in his life.

“Every couple of months, I head up to Baltimore to see my granddaughter,” Petty said. “My wife retired from teaching school when my granddaughter was born, so that really encouraged me to also retire.”

Seeing his granddaughter isn’t the only thing that keeps Petty and his wife on the road. They have also toured the western United States and taken cruises.

“Of course I enjoy all the traveling that I do, but going to see my granddaughter is definitely my favorite time to travel,” Petty said.

His activities do not stop there. He picked up woodcarving, and it is one of his favorite ways to pass the time.

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Doug Petty works to fight Buffalo Gnat outbreaks.

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## Doug Petty, cont.

"I learned it from Ken Scott, who used to be a horticulture agent in the 80s," Petty said. "He was the one who wrote the Extension handbook on woodcarving."

He gives his pieces away as gifts for family and friends simply because he loves bringing a smile to their faces. Petty is part of a woodcarving group that meets regularly and takes trips to seminars in Missouri.



Doug Petty's Christmas Woodcarvings.

"I love making figures, Christmas Santa Clauses and folk art," Petty said.

Petty is also invested in his community and taking care of those who cannot take care of themselves.

"There are a couple of older ladies at my church that I help take care of," Petty said. "I do yard work for them and fix things around the house for them."


Not only does he take care of the people in his church, but he also cares for the building itself.

"My church is over 100 years old, so I spend a lot of time working on it as well," Petty said.

His time in Extension was special to him, and he felt at home there.

"Everyone I worked with was so eager to share and offer help when I needed it," Petty said.

"We all pitched in for just about everything from 4-H to Master Gardeners."

For Doug Petty, Extension felt like a family. 



Doug Petty traveling with his wife and grand kids.

## Feeders linked to bird disease transmission

Backyard birdwatcher Amy Cole has noticed some disturbing scenes around her house.

Cole is the extension digital media program manager for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture based in Pulaski County. She enjoys having birds at her feeder, and they are often a subject of her paintings.

"I have seen three dead birds my house in the past two days, and two today let me get so close I can almost touch them," she said. "They just wouldn't move. It's certainly very unusual behavior."

Social media has been lighting up with news about Salmonella outbreaks among siskins in Oregon and California, with advice to readers to take down the feeders, since they cause birds to congregate and spread infection. In Arkansas, the issue showed up in February in the Wild Birds Unlimited Facebook group and other places. Signs of infection can include lethargy, having their feathers fluffed up and staying on the ground and avoiding flight.

Dustan Clark, extension veterinarian at the Division of Agriculture said the West Coast outbreak "is thought to be related to a shortage of their natural food base in their overwintering grounds in Canada. The food shortage has caused them to leave the wintering grounds in search of food which they find at feeders."

"Unusual weather patterns catch the birds off guard," he said "With limited food resources, birds either choose to stay or use their remaining energy to migrate to a better locale. The wrong


decision could be deadly."

Clark said some of the birds themselves could be carriers of the Salmonella bacteria which they can spread to other birds when congregating at feeders. Salmonella, other bacteria and fungi can also "grow in spoiled feeds in bird feeders. It is always a good idea to periodically clean and disinfect bird feeders and waterers to prevent disease."

Clark suggested people clean out any hulls or seed residue which would get moldy or rot in spring's warmer and rainy weather.

He warned that Salmonella can also cause illness in people and urged people to take precautions. Cats and any other animals that eat the sick birds can become sick or infected.

"If you pick up a dead bird, wear gloves or use a plastic bag over your hands and turn the bag inside out once you've picked up the bird, then wash your hands with soap and water," Clark said. "When you clean the feeder, wear gloves as well."

To read more, go to <https://www.uaex.uada.edu/media-resources/news/2021/march2021/03-23-2021-Ark-Bird-Feeder-Contamination.aspx>. 



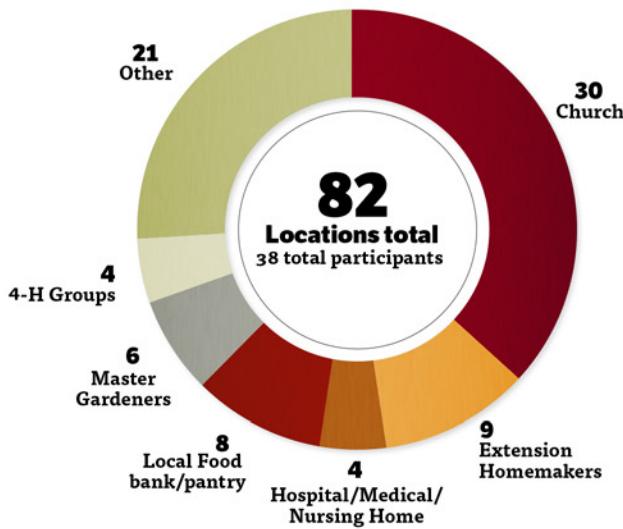
SICK BIRD — Lethargic pine siskin at a feeder. Taken March 11, 2021. (U of A System Division of Agriculture photo by Amy Cole)

# Extension retirees go to work in their communities!

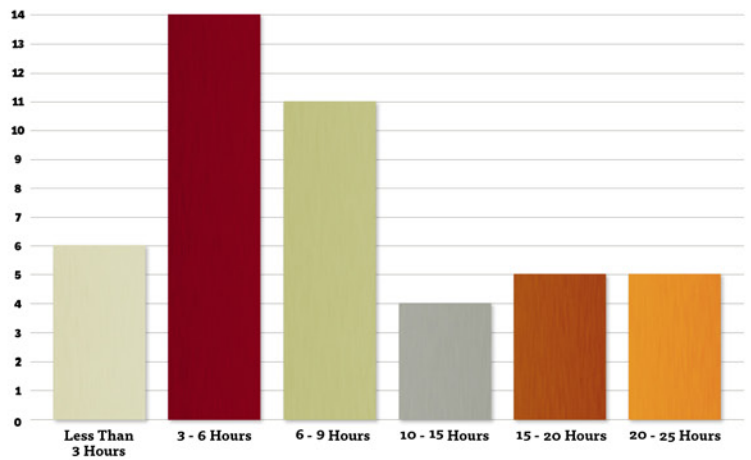
April is national volunteer month and no one exemplifies that better than Extension retirees. When it comes to helping their communities and others in need, Extension retirees are all in. Extension is so proud of our great volunteers!

Independent Sector for Arkansas recently placed the value of volunteer hours at \$21.57 per hour. It is estimated that Americans, on average, volunteer 137 hours a year. Extension retirees greatly exceed that amount and serve others selflessly day after day. ☺

## Where Extension retirees volunteer



## How many volunteer hours members work per week



## To our Extension retirees

This spring certainly has a different feel to it than a year ago. I remember the empty shelves at the grocery store and the news reports about the coronavirus outbreak like scenes from the first part of a science fiction movie. There was an ominous feeling that things were getting bad.

Fast forward to 2021 and what a difference a vaccine can make. I cannot help but feel optimistic as we go into this year that things are quickly returning to normal at the Extension Service. It is so good to be able to approve events like the Extension Homemakers Council spring workshop in North Little Rock, the Master Gardener plant sales taking place throughout the state, and all the other programmatic things we have planned. There is a real energy in the state office, and I think throughout the counties, and I can tell that folks are ready to get back to business and fun.

We have entered Stage III of our COVID-19 management plan. This enables many to return to work in the state office, which has been closed since before I became director. Under this stage, we can expand our in-person meeting numbers, we can sit in an office together without masks if everyone is vaccinated, we can ride together in vehicles again and travel more, and we can now carry

4-Hers and others to events if we so choose. I am looking forward to our date of June 1 for stage IV, which will be a total return to normal. This is an arbitrary date for now and may change based on case numbers.

I had the opportunity recently to participate in this year's Arkansas Poultry Chain pick-up. I cannot tell you how nice it was to see everyone and meet more of our agents. It was good to be somewhere in-person doing something so fun. You have not lived until you have heard about 25,000 chicks chirping at once inside a metal building! (You can watch the TV coverage at <https://bit.ly/3elq3Op>) We will impact more than 1,300 4-H and FFA families this year by introducing them to backyard flock management, animal husbandry and maybe even a ribbon at their county fair. This teaches invaluable lessons in responsibility that I took for granted growing up on a farm. Not all kids get this, and I am glad to be a part of an organization that makes this type of youth development and learning possible.

As always, we thank our Extension retirees for their continued support of our scholarships, programs and activities. Get out and enjoy some Spring! ☺



## May Birthdays

Richard Klerk - May 3  
 Shirley West - May 5  
 Glenda Sutherlin - May 6  
 Kim Hughes - May 7  
 Lillie Teel - May 10  
 Terrence Kirkpatrick - May 10  
 Earl Wilson - May 10

Kris Rutherford - May 11  
 Donna Swift - May 11  
 Robert Rhodes - May 12  
 Clyde Stuart, Jr. - May 17  
 Debie Head - May 17  
 Dianna Cox - May 17  
 Deborah Dority - May 18

Harold Williams - May 18  
 William Russell Jr. - May 19  
 Teresa Booth - May 21  
 Vicki Brakefield - May 21  
 Charlotte Freeman - May 22  
 Kathryn McElderry - May 23  
 Donald Johnson - May 24

Faye Suitt - May 26  
 James Peachey - May 28  
 Larry Smith - May 29  
 Donald Slate - May 30  
 Darlene Zeh Millard - May 31

# Congratulations, Mike Phillips!

Mike Phillips, an Arkansas native and former director of the Southwest Research and Extension Center in Hope has been named director of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System.

Phillips, a native of Benton, Arkansas, began his new role March 1. He earned a master's degree and doctorate in agronomy in 1982 and 1985, respectively, at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. Phillips received his bachelor's degree in 1980 from the University of Arkansas at Monticello, majoring in agriculture.

"Dr. Phillips' professional background enables him to shape Alabama Extension's future. We look forward to his leadership and wish him well," Alabama A&M President Andrew Hugine Jr. said.

To read more go to <https://www.uaex.uada.edu/media-resources/news/2021/february2021/02-24-2021-Ark-Phillips-Alabama.aspx>.



Mike Phillips, Alabama Cooperative Extension System Director

## From The VP: Moving Ahead To Stage III

On **April 12, 2021**, the Division moved to **Stage III**, which allowed employees who had not already returned to work in the office to return if the supervisor determines there is an operational need and the ability to provide a safe working environment.

Additionally, the tentative plan for the Division is to move to **Stage IV** effective **June 1, 2021**.

"Our COVID stages have been a living document; each stage guided by what was known at the time about this virus. The administrative team has worked hard to revise the stages as recommendations from the CDC and the Arkansas Department of Health change and in the interest of the health of our employees," said Dr. Mark J. Cochran, vice-president-agriculture for the University of Arkansas System and head of the Division of Agriculture.

"I am hopeful, if COVID cases continue trending downward, and more of the population continues to take the vaccine, that we will have progress as soon as is prudent toward something like the way things were before March 18, 2020."



Dr. Mark J. Cochran Cochran, Vice President - Agriculture, head of the Division of Agriculture

Yes, I will subscribe to the *Extension Cord*.

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Yes, I want to support the fundraising initiative in support of the Cooperative Extension Service Retiree Scholarship.

Enclosed is my gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_. My gift is in honor / in memory of \_\_\_\_\_.

Name/Address for notification of honorary and memorial gifts:  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
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