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## Catching up with Celia Boon Shireman

Celia Boon Shireman began and ended her career working with extension – first in Texas and later in Arkansas.

After earning a degree in home economics from Texas College of Arts and Industries, in Kingsville, Texas, (now part of the Texas A&M University), she got her first job with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

“I got to go back to the Rio Grande Valley, Texas, where I was from,” Celia said. She spent several years teaching nutrition, doing home demonstrations and using her ability to speak both Spanish and English to educate the large Hispanic population of south Texas.

During this time, Celia met her husband, Bill Boon. After having their first of two daughters, they moved to Bentonville, Arkansas, where Bill was from. Celia spent a few years teaching middle school home economic classes before putting her career on hold to raise their daughters. After her daughters had gone to college and married, though, Celia went to work for the Cooperative Extension Service. Her work involved the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) in Benton and Washington counties where she supervised and trained program assistants to teach classes in Spanish and English. The lessons had the ability to educate and improve the lives of many families.

During this time, Celia’s husband, Bill, passed away and she found support from many friends in extension. “Working really got me through a lot,” she said.

In 2017, Shireman retired from extension and married Ken Shireman, who she met through a mutual friend.

They live in Fayetteville, where Ken recently retired from owning KSR Architecture.

Ken and Celia spend much of their time appreciating the arts, the outdoors and Razorback sports. They frequently visit Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, the Walton Arts Center, and TheatreSquared. They enjoy spending time outdoors, especially at Hickory Creek and Prairie Creek, and they love boating.

Throughout the year, they attend Razorback football and basketball games. Celia’s two daughters, sons-in-law and four granddaughters visit her in Fayetteville regularly and often come for gameday activities, including their family’s tailgate set up. The couple also enjoy traveling to Colorado, where Ken’s son and family live.

Celia stays busy with the Bentonville Garden Club, monthly book club and the Philanthropic Education Organization (P.E.O.), a national organization that helps women advance through education and previously served as the chair for the organization’s state convention.

In many ways, Celia’s support of the organization is similar to her extension work.

“That’s an organization I love,” Celia said. “We have helped so many women get educated.” ■



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## Cooperative Extension Service summer internship program alumna plans for career in extension

When considering whether to pursue a summer internship, Rayvin Callaway has three words of career advice: “Just try it.”

Callaway was among the first class of Cooperative Extension Service interns since the institution reintroduced the program in 2022, working a 10-week paid summer internship at the Bradley County Extension Office.

Callaway, 20, is a junior at the University of Arkansas at Monticello, where she’s double majoring in Animal Science and Plant and Soil Science. A native of Star City, Callaway was a member of the Lincoln County Critters 4-H Club, where her main project was livestock, including cattle, rabbits and poultry. She said her participation in 4-H was one reason she applied for the internship program.

“I knew I loved working with 4-Hers, and when I got accepted to the internship program, my passion for extension went off the rails,” Callaway said.

While based in Bradley County, Callaway said she also traveled frequently to work in Cleveland, Desha, Drew and Lincoln counties.

“They really instilled in me, throughout the entire summer, how awesome of a job extension is,” Callaway said. “You get good family time, you work with 4-Hers, you get to do the research side, and you get to do the learning side. I’d never really worked with horticulture crops, so when I got to do that, that was very new to me. All summer, I was learning new things and picking up on new ideas.”

Though Callaway’s assigned program area was agriculture, she said she learned about the roles of family and consumer sciences and 4-H agents as well. Over the summer she attended agent trainings, the Farm Bill hearing in Jonesboro, worked with 4-H members and got to see firsthand how multi-faceted an agent’s role can be.

“Every day is different for an extension agent, and that was something that really made me more interested in the job,” she said.

Though Callaway said she “does not have a green thumb at all,” one of her favorite experiences of the internship was working with John Gavin, Bradley

County extension staff chair, to transplant one variety of tomato plant into another variety.

“You conjoined them together to make them grow. One was resistant to fungus, and one had good yield,” Callaway said. “I was like, ‘Wow, I didn’t know this was something you could do.’”

Gavin said Callaway “brought a boost of energy, creativity and enthusiasm” to Bradley County extension’s agriculture, 4-H and family and consumer sciences programming.

“She showed an exceptional passion for working with livestock and a broad spectrum of interest in agriculture, including commercial horticulture lawns and gardens,” Gavin said. “We enjoyed our time with Rayvin and benefited from her enthusiasm.”

Callaway said that before her internship, she was double majoring in Animal Science and Agriculture Business, but after working with extension, she switched her second major to Plant and Soil Science.

“Once I stepped into the role as intern, I thought, ‘Maybe I do need that plant and soil science background,’ especially because of where I’m from in the state,” Callaway said. “We mainly have row crops here in the southeast portion of the state. So, with Plant and Soil Science, even just a bachelor’s degree in it would help me in the long run. This whole experience has just jump-started my knowledge and supported my choice to change majors.”

Callaway said that when she finishes school, she plans to pursue a career as an extension agent.

“When I graduate, this is exactly where I want to be,” she said. “The people there are nice, the whole organization is where I want to be.” ■



Rayvin tries her hand at grafting a tomato plant while based at Bradley County extension.

## Longtime extension agent appointed consumer horticulture educator, Arkansas Master Gardener coordinator



The Cooperative Extension Service has a new consumer horticulture educator who will lead statewide outreach and coordinate Master Gardener programs.

Randy Forst, who has served as a county extension agent for 13 years, has been hired as the consumer horticulture educator for extension, part of the University

of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture. In his new role, Forst will provide leadership for statewide horticulture programs and coordinate the Arkansas Master Gardeners program, the state's largest horticulture volunteer and education organization. Forst began the new position Oct. 3.

"Randy is the perfect person to lead our consumer horticulture program and Master Gardener program," Dr. Bob Scott, director of the Cooperative Extension Service, said. "He has worked in the Delta, Ouachita and Ozark districts and is an expert when it comes to Arkansas horticulture. He will be an asset to our agents as well as to the hundreds of Master Gardeners we have volunteering across the state."

Started in 1988 in four counties (Garland, Jefferson, Pulaski, and Saline) and with 40 members, the Arkansas Master Gardeners program now has more than 3,400 volunteers working in 67 of the state's counties. Volunteers maintain hundreds of gardens and landscaping projects across Arkansas. Last year, they donated 128,994 service hours and provided 73,555 education hours.

Forst will support county extension agents across the state in managing all aspects of the Master Gardeners volunteer program, including policies and procedures, recruitment, training and management.

Forst has previously served as an agent and horticulture expert in St. Francis, Carroll and Pulaski counties. He most recently served as the staff chair for the Pulaski County extension office, where he worked with 560 Master Gardener volunteers.

"I just love it. The Master Gardener program is a great resource for Arkansas, and our volunteers do an exceptional job of educating others in their counties about horticulture," Forst said. "It's amazing the different projects we have across the state."

Forst has a Bachelor of Science in Landscape Design and Urban Horticulture and a Master of Science in General Agriculture, both from the U of A. Before joining extension, he was a landscape architect in Tennessee. ■

## New Arkansas 4-H Video Crew members to train in video production

In an increasingly digital world, young people need to develop the technical skills necessary for success in many career paths. For students interested in video technology, the Arkansas 4-H Video Crew offers an opportunity for hands-on learning with industry professionals.

The Arkansas 4-H Video Crew recently announced 10 students from eight counties throughout the state as its members for the 2022-2023 school year. Kerry Rodtnick, extension videographer and leader of the 4-H Video Crew, said the program provides training that might not be available in students' schools.

"The Arkansas 4-H Video Crew gives opportunities for 4-H students across the state to get their hands on

equipment they might not otherwise have the chance to use," he said. "The training they receive is on the level of a university experience. Most of the students tend to be homeschooled or come from smaller school districts that don't have this kind of program."

The group's primary project is the multi-camera livestreamed broadcast of 4-H State O-Rama.

Read more [here](#). ■



## Scholarship donations

The following gifts were recently received to support professional development opportunities for faculty and staff of the Cooperative Extension Service.

### **Beverly Fountain**

*In memory of Mary Shaver*

### **Mark Keaton**

### **Mark Peterson**

### **Carroll & Kyleen Prewett**

### **Becky Reynolds**

Honorary or memorial donations should be forwarded to the Development Office, ATTN: Brian Helms, Cooperative Extension Service, 2301 South University Ave., Little Rock, AR 72204. If joint recognition is desired, please indicate. To ensure proper notification is sent, please also include in whose honor or memory the gift is made and the mailing address of the person to receive the notification. ■

## December Birthdays

Becky Mulhollen - Dec. 1	Dick Kluender - Dec. 14	Dennis Gardisser - Dec. 24
Dena Malone - Dec. 2	Donna Graham - Dec. 14	Blair Griffin - Dec. 24
Paul Martin - Dec. 3	Wayne Miller - Dec. 14	Margaret Goodson - Dec. 26
Linda Thompson - Dec. 6	Brenda Yusko - Dec. 18	Mitch Crow - Dec. 26
Barbara King - Dec. 8	Beverly Sims - Dec. 18	Liz McKay - Dec. 26
Toy Siler - Dec. 8	Mary Askew - Dec. 19	Sandra Smith - Dec. 27
Albert Squires - Dec. 9	Mark Peterson - Dec. 19	Judy Bloesch - Dec. 27
Richard DeSpain - Dec. 9	Cindy Golden - Dec. 19	Jeff Welch - Dec. 28
Susan Watkins - Dec. 9	Maureen Rose - Dec. 21	Denise Roulhac - Dec. 28
Darlene Horne - Dec. 10	Suzanne Hirrel - Dec. 21	Betty Brannan - Dec. 29
Joyce Bowlin - Dec. 10	Gayla Taylor - Dec. 22	Tom Leslie - Dec. 29
Shirley Lewis - Dec. 11	Audrey Hairston - Dec. 24	Judy Robison - Dec. 29
Jerry Foley - Dec. 11	Avonne Petty - Dec. 24	Saundria Ash - Dec. 29
Ann Behnke - Dec. 12	Cheryl Maxwell - Dec. 24	Anna Landrum - Dec. 31
Millie Henson - Dec. 13	Merle Gross - Dec. 24	
Jerry Markham - Dec. 14	Bobby Coats - Dec. 24	

### **Jane Newton Retires**

Jane began her career with Cooperative Extension in Jan. 1997. She retired Oct. 1, 2022, as a county extension agent – Family & Consumer Sciences in Lincoln County. Jane retired with 25 years of service.

## Message from the director

Fall has always been my favorite time of the year. I am not sure why. Probably because it's hunting and football season and the holidays. But for me I think it goes back even farther than that. When I was a kid growing up in Oklahoma, my Dad farmed peanuts. Back then things were less automated in many ways; this is the part where I sound old. Harvest was a great time of the year with lots of stuff going on. I could make some extra money topping off peanut trucks and sacking peanuts if that was the chosen way they were going to market. It was dusty and cold, but I loved it. Fall is also a good time of year for Extension as our Ag guys work hard to get those final fields harvested and we move into planning, evaluations, and awards season.

We recently held another Check In and Tune Up for new Extension employees, and it was good to see the enthusiasm that this group has for their new jobs. Brian Helms wrapped up a series of retiree meetings held across the state, and it was good to be a part of those and see old friends and make new ones. I want to continually and always thank and brag on our former employees' support of Cooperative Extension. These meetings were like family reunions in a way, and I can

only hope that our new employees stay with us to experience this feeling of belonging to our team.

This time last year, I mentioned that we broke ground on a new office building at only our second "Extension Center" in the state — the Jackson County Extension

Center. You may remember that this facility is home to the Jackson County Extension Office and is located just off Highways 67 and 14 near Newport. It is made up of an older shop and office building with little meeting space and about 500 acres of farmland used by Extension and some Research Ag faculty. The new building, which has much more meeting space, is now almost complete and has already hosted at least one meeting that I am aware of! We are very proud of this accomplishment and want to thank both the Arkansas Corn and Sorghum growers and Jackson County for helping make this facility a reality. If you get a chance, stop and say hi!

I am looking forward to the holiday season and time with family as I hope you are. Have a good month! ■



Dr. Bob Scott