



## Newsletter of the National Organization of Professional Hispanic Natural Resources Conservation Service Employees

August 2003

# The President's Greeting

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NOPHNRCSE currently has two committee chair vacancies for which we are seeking volunteers to serve. The committees are the membership and constitution and bylaws committee. In order to increase membership

participation, the National Council is seeking volunteers to serve as chair of one of these committees. Interested members should inform their respective Regional Representative and me by email prior to September

1. The selected chairs will be informed once approved at the September National Council teleconference. We will only be as good as our participating membership make us. Thank you.

**Pedro Ramos**  
President

## NOPHNRCSE Loses a Friend, *Martha Guerra Arteaga*

As the heavens began to cry bringing forth raindrops upon the earth, our Lord called upon Martha Guerra Arteaga. On July 15, after a year-long battle with cancer, Martha passed away, leaving grieving family and friends.

Martha was born May 27, 1967, in McAllen Texas to D.V. and Carmen Guerra. She was a graduate of Saint Joseph's Catholic School and Edinburg High School. After graduating from Texas A & M University in 1989 with a Bachelor's of Arts Degree in Speech Communication, she began her career with USDA-NRCS as a Public Affairs Specialist.

Enthusiastic and eager to learn her position, she assisted colleagues in designing and presenting educational programs to a wide array of audiences. People of all ages gravitated to her embellished sense of humor and enjoyed the smile that always illuminated from her.

During her professional career she received many merits and awards including the prestigious USDA group Honor Award from the Chief of the NRCS for providing outstanding outreach programs aimed at the Hispanic Community and socially disadvantaged.

She was a member of various organizations including NOPHNRCSE, the Southwest Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society and the Communicators in Conservation.

Martha is survived by her husband, Gustavo, and their children, Dario Vidal, Gustavo Enrique, and Diego Salvador Arteaga. She is also survived by her parents, D.V. and Carmen Guerra; her sister Mari Carmen McDermott and her brothers Dario III, J.E. "Eddie", Ricardo and Luis.

Martha will be greatly missed by all that were lucky enough to grace her presence. She inspired many to live everyday to its fullest. We will always miss her smile and will always cherish the time we had together.

ADIOS.



### 2003 Award Recipients

Natural Resources Conservation - Erasmo Montemayor, Texas

Hispanic Community - Becky Fraticelli, Puerto Rico

Amigo - Joe M. Cantu, Texas

Leadership - Eddie Garcia, Texas

Visionary - Martha G. Arteaga, Texas

## Successful Conference

Each year the planning committee, national council, host region and state, and members do everything to make our conference a success. This year was no different.

For the first time the conference was held in Iowa, the Midwest region. Many of us had never been to Iowa and had the opportunity to visit the state, meeting NRCs' and viewing conservation practices unique the area.

### Scholarship Night

*Amanda Hasemeier, Scholarship Committee, Chair*

Can you believe it the scholarship auction brought in \$5,970.00 – yes, over 5 thousand dollars! We had a great auctioneer and very generous members who just kept bidding. Two Cuban cigars went for \$280.00. We had a quilt that went for \$500.00. There was about \$100.00 leftover from the Hospital-ity Room fund and it is being donated to the scholarship fund.

We received two donations to our scholarship. One from Tanya Meyer, on behalf of the American Indian Alaska Native Employees' Association for NRCS and Doug Davenport, on behalf of the Asain Pacific Islander Organization. We are very pleased to have their support and thank their organizations very much.

## 2004 Membership Drive

As part of the registration for the 2004 conference, those who registered for the conference and were not members of NOPHNRCSE received a complimentary membership for the year. Welcome to NOPHNRCSE:

**Alabama:** Bob Jones, Carolyn King

**California:** Hugo Calvillo, Cori Clavert, Ana Lilia Soria, Chuck Bell, Michael Wafer

**Colorado:** Fernando Morales, Allan Dix, Jack Carlson

**Florida:** Rosa Reyes

**Georgia:** Leonard Jordan

**Iowa:** Laura Griener, Doug Davenport, Laurel Foreman, Renae Ford, Bill O'Donnell, Brad Harrison, Bruce Tratms, Maridely Loyselle, Carroll Oskuig, Denise Miller Chirstopher Knudsen, Tricia A. Dunfee, Donna Olson, Richard Tremain, Dennis Pate, Leroy Brown, Shelly R. Duboy, Marty Adkins, J. M. Wallace, Tanya Meyer-Dideriksen, Jim Frederick, Astor F. Boozer, Nancy C. Lobo, James Zeigler, Kristie McKinnley, Shaffer Ridgeway, Demitrice Boozer, Susan A. Cross

**Illinois:** William J. Graddle, Julie Jacobs

**Indiana:** Jane E. Hardisty, Nikki McClain

**Kentucky:** Walena Breeding

**Louisiana:** Michael D. Tullos, Donna Remides, Lincoln M. Moore, Donald Gohmert

**Maine:** Amy Jones

**Maryland:** Willie Pittman, David P. Doss, Andrew Johnson

**Minnesota:** William Hunt, Ann M. Lewandowski, Julie A. MacSwain, Melissa Berrios, Kari Good, John Nicholson

**Maine:** Davis Bandrowski, Jessica Modert, Ronald C. Williams

**Missouri:** Angie Van Dyke, Roger A. Hansen, David R. Speidel

**Nebraska:** Stefanie Aschmann, Doug Christensen, Susan Riedel

**New Jersey:** Ruben E. Perez, Garry Lee

**Ohio:** Kevin Brown

**Oklahoma:** John Glover, Jose Vielma, Ed Kephart  
**Oregon:** Bruce Wilson

**Pennsylvania:** Robin Heard, Juan C. Hernandez

**South Dakota:** Colette Kessler

**South Carolina:** Steve H. Anderson III

**Texas:** Arnold Norman, J. Keith Laird, Larry D. Butler, James Tillman, Dan Caudle, Serafin Garcia, Blas Saenz, Jr., Ricardo Luis Diaz

**Virginia:** Davis L. Faulkner, Robert Mouller

**West Virginia:** Cassey Shrader

**Wisconsin:** Charles Whitmore, Linda DiPietro, Gary O'Neill, Percy Magee, Gary Kobylski

**NHQ:** Sonia Paula Ayerdi, Anne Dubey



## Meet the New NOPHNRCS National Council Members

### New NOPHNRCS Council Members

Vice President,  
Carmen A. Diaz;  
Treasurer, Zaragoz  
Rodrigues, III;  
Regional Representative - West,  
Arturo Carvajal,  
CA; Regional  
Representative -  
Southeast,  
Gilberto F.  
Guerrero, VA;  
Regional Representative - South  
Central, Michael  
A. Castillo, TX

#### Vice President, Carmen A. Diaz

I am a retired NRCS employee with 27 years of service. I am a graduate of the University of Puerto Rico, with a B.A. in Economics and an M.S. in Urban/Regional Planning. I served as Agricultural Economist, on a Watershed Staff with SCS in Puerto Rico. In 1978 I transferred to Nevada and served as a Personnel Management Specialist, and later as a Budget Officer. I moved to Washington D.C. in 1995 on a temporary detail where I served as core member on the Administrative System Transformation and Redesign of Operations (ASTRO) team. In 1998 I served on another temporary detail

as a member of the Full Cost of Programs Team in the Financial Management Division in Washington, D.C as Management Specialist. In 1999 I transferred to a permanent position to Washington, DC and served as Financial Management Specialist. I have also served as Hispanic Employment Program Manager while in Nevada. I am a Charter member of the organization and have served on the National Council as Treasurer. I have also participated as member and Chair of different committees of our organization. I ran for Vice-President because I believe in the Mission

and Principles of our Organization. I can and will work for the organization and the members. I did not run for this office with my needs in mind. I ran because I feel that now I am in a much better position to represent you – and I plan to do that. We in the National Council need to hear from the members. We not only need to know what we are doing right, but we also need to hear from you when you have recommendations for improvement. We can only help if you let us hear from you. Working together, we can make a difference. Thank you for your vote of confidence. I will do my very best to not let you down. Let me hear from you!

#### Treasurer, Zaragoz Rodrigues, III

I am a resident of Zapata, TX where I graduated in 1968. I attended Texas A&M University, obtaining a degree in Range Science in 1972.

I started out with the agency as a student

trainee in June 1970. In May of 1972 I started full time. I have served as a Range Conservationist, District Conservationist, and RC&D Coordinator in various locations in Texas.

Currently, I am the

Coordinator for the Rio Bravo RC&D in South Texas. I also served 2 years in the military.

**Membership dues should be sent to my home address: Box 5648 Stop 56C, Zapata, TX 78076.**

#### Regional Representative - WEST, Arturo Carvajal, CA

I'm having fun representing the West Region membership and we keep all communication channels open!

My wife is Julia and I have 3 sons: Carlos, Phillip and Nicolas (Nick). Julia is our family's fearless leader, very supportive of all of us and a great cook. In return, we all work hard to make her a happy wife,

a proud mother and grandmother of Sebastian Carvajal-Adames. Sebastian lives with his parents Carlos and Carmen in Florida. I'm a Water Management Engineer working for NRCS in the Davis, CA, State Office. I hold a Master of Science in Irrigation from UC Davis and have been working

on agricultural water conservation projects for the last 18 years, first with a Resource Conservation District in Kern County, CA, then with the California Dept. of Water Resources and now with NRCS. I also am the HEPM for California and do as much outreach as possible to the Hispanic Community within NRCS and among our customers.



## Meet the New NOPHNRCS National Council Members

### Regional Representative - SOUTHEAST, Gilberto F. Guerrero, VA

I began as a Student Trainee in Jim Hogg County, Texas in 1988. After my father passed away, I joined the US Army and went back to Texas Tech University and graduated with BS in Environmental Conservation of Natural Resources. In the summer of 1998, I went to my first NOPHNRCS training

conference in Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Soon after, I was accepted as a WAE in Dixon, California. While in California, I applied for and was selected as a Soil Conservationist in Union County, Iowa. I served in Union and Van Buren counties. In November of 2002, I accepted a position as District Conservationist

of Fairfax, Virginia.

All the while, I remained a member of NOPHNRCS and have served on and assisted on Conference Planning and Recruitment & Career committees.

Please feel free to call me if you have any questions; I look forward to hearing from you.

### Regional Representative - SOUTH CENTRAL, Michael A. Castillo, TX

Michael A. (Mike) Castillo a native Texan, born August 16, 1958. Hired as a NRCS employee in May 1979. Soil Conservation Technician at Eagle Pass, Texas, Field Office, 1986-88 served as a TopCon Specialist on Area staff. 1998-2002 served as surveyor/ inspector on EWP cadre for Texas. Since 1998, have serve as

Civil Engineer Technician for the Eagle Pass Team that covers 3.0+ million acres of land.

Charter member NOPHNRCS (1993) was elected SC Regional Representative in 1995, served 2 terms, 1995-1998. Also served as interim Vice-President 4 months in 1998, Voted NOPHNRCS Outstanding

Member in 1996, Constitution and Bylaws Committee Chair 1997-1998, 1998-1999.

Have been taking pictures at conferences since 1993. I guess that makes me closet Public Affairs person. Thanks to my good friend Martha Arteaga, she made me get involved with this organization. (We will all miss her).

C-SPAN and COMCAST present Students & Leaders Lessons on Leadership and Public Service at Metro DC Schools. You can view these sessions on the web by logging on to [www.studentsandleaders.org](http://www.studentsandleaders.org).

## Former Chief Reed Retires

Pearlie S. Reed, Chief of NRCS from March 2, 1998, until May 2002, retired on July 3, 2003.

He started his career 1968 as a student intern in Arkansas and progressed through the ranks to State Conservationist, Associate Chief and Chief. Most recently, he served as Regional Conservationist for the West.

Reed served as Team Leader of the USDA Civil Rights Action Team and Acting Assistant Secretary for Administration.

## Around Town in Washington, DC

*Sharyn Alvarez, Communication's Committee, Chair*

C-SPAN and COMCAST present Students & Leaders Lessons on Leadership and Public Service at Metro DC Schools

"During May 2003, C-Span is teaming with Comcast, its Washington, DC affiliate, to create a unique educational experience for students at 40 DC-area schools. National journalists and leaders from the Administration, Congress, federal courts, and federal agencies will be invited by C-SPAN to "return to the classroom" at schools in Comcast's service area to discuss leadership and their commitment to public service. C-SPAN cameras will record the events so these lessons in leadership can be shared with students across the country and with C-SPAN's national viewing audience." You can view these sessions on the web by logging on to [www.studentsandleaders.org](http://www.studentsandleaders.org). It is well worth your child's time to view these sessions.



## WANTED: CANDIDATES

If you are interested in running for office, please submit a narrative summary (no bullets) for the newsletter. They will be printed for the membership to review and will be helpful when it is time to vote. Submit the following information in the following format. The format is set up so all candidates provide the same information to the membership. Thank you.

Email your narrative summary (no bullets) to [sharyn.alvarez@usda.gov](mailto:sharyn.alvarez@usda.gov). Deadline: September 30, 2003. Questions? Call Sharyn Alvarez, 202-720-2771 or email me.

We are getting a headstart on the nominations process for the 2004 elections. Please plan to participate. We need you.

- Your Name:
- Occupation:
- State you reside in:
- Office you are seeking:
- Experience you have that will help you handle the office you are seeking:
- Why should we vote for you:

**WE ARE GETTING A HEADSTART ON THE NOMINATIONS PROCESS FOR THE 2004 ELECTIONS. PLEASE REVIEW CAREFULLY AND PLAN TO PARTICIPATE. WE NEED YOU.** In future newsletters we will print bios of those interested in running for office for your review. Pay your dues! You must be a member in good standing to vote.

## NOPHNCSE Nominations Committee Election Process

It is the interest of the Nominations Committee to inform the membership of our organization of the procedures and eligibility of council officials. The information that follows will serve as a guide on the procedure that we will use for this year's election process. We encourage all members begin thinking of possible candidates to help lead our organization, to get informed and involved in the nomination process. Anyone interested in being member of this committee is welcome. Please contact:

**Carlos E. Hernandez**  
Chair Nominations Committee  
PO Box 1971  
Mayaguez, PR 00681  
email: [chernandez@sg.inter.edu](mailto:chernandez@sg.inter.edu)

In accordance with article X of the constitution, the nominations committee will be conducting the **2004** elections. Nomination vacancies for the year 2004 are the **President, Executive Vice President, Secretary and the Regional Representatives for the Northern Plains, Midwest, North East and the Caribbean Area.**

### VOTER ELIGIBILITY:

1. Person voting must be a member in good standing of NOPHNCSE.
2. Member in good standing: NOPHNCSE membership dues **MUST** be postmarked **by February 28, of each year.**
3. Voting member's name, address and region **must appear on the ballot returned.** If not, the ballot will be considered invalid.

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You must be a member in good standing to participate in the officer election process.

VOTING PROCEDURE:

1. All NOPHNCSE members in good standing can vote for the President, Executive Vice-President and the Secretary.
2. Only the members of a specific Region can nominate and vote for the Regional Representative of such region.
3. To write-in a candidate, place a mark (X) by the write-in blank and write the name of the candidate on the line of the ballot form. To be an eligible write-in candidate, the candidate must be a paid NOPHNCSE member as of **February 28 of each year**.
4. When finishing voting, the election ballot will be mailed to the Nominations Committee chairperson by the designated date that will appear in the call for nominations paper.
5. Nominations may be sent by mail, or fax. For this year, the committee is proposing to the council to use electronic mail as another mean to submit the nominations and to vote by the same media.
6. An example form is included for your information.

(SAMPLE) Nominations/Ballot Form-2004 (SAMPLE)

NOTE: *Form used will be identical, for the exception that names of candidates submitted in the nominations form will appear in the ballot form*

DO NOT SUBMIT NOMINATIONS NOW.

President:

Name of candidate \_\_\_\_\_

Write - in \_\_\_\_\_

Executive Vice-President:

Name of candidate \_\_\_\_\_

Write - in \_\_\_\_\_

Secretary:

Name of candidate \_\_\_\_\_

Write - in \_\_\_\_\_

Regional Representative - Northern Plains:

Name of candidate \_\_\_\_\_

Write - in \_\_\_\_\_

Regional Representative - Midwest:

Name of candidate \_\_\_\_\_

Write - in \_\_\_\_\_

Regional Representative - Northeast:

Name of candidate \_\_\_\_\_

Write - in \_\_\_\_\_

Regional Representative - Caribbean Area:

Name of candidate \_\_\_\_\_

Write - in \_\_\_\_\_

Nominator: \_\_\_\_\_

Region: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_