

Federal Veterinarian

Vollume 80, Number 5&6

May - June 2023

REMINDER

Members, Our new website has tons of information for you on:

- Upcoming CE
- Financial wellness
- Latest news
- Public Veterinary Jobs
- New Legal Service

To make sure you're getting the most out ofyour membership, make sure that you have access to our member-only portal on our site. You'll be able to access the information listed

NAFV ACCOUNT SIGN-IN

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The Role of the National Association of Federal Veterinarians on Members Morale

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) measures employee engagement and satisfaction with their workplaces, or in other words morale. The FEVS serves as a tool for employees to share their perceptions in many critical areas including their work experiences, their agency, and their leadership.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) and its Office of Employee Experience (OEX) use the results of FEVS to inform efforts and the initiatives currently underway with the "Best Places to Work in the Federal Government" ranking according to the Partnership for Public Service on employee satisfaction, engagement, and morale—all of which support and inform USDA's 2022-2026 Strategic Plan and the Secretary and Deputy Secretary's FY2022 priority to "Make USDA a Best Place to Work."

And this is where an association such as the National Association of Federal Veterinarians (NAFV) can come in.

Today's veterinarians are the only doctors educated to protect the health of both animals and people. These dedicated professionals apply their medical skills not in "private practice" but in "public practice" in the service of every American through the many programs administered by the federal government. Though federal veterinarians touch the lives of every American every feel undercompensated, day, many underappreciated, and overworked. These feelings can contribute to high employee turnover rates, which impact overall morale of the team, the health and wellness of Americans, and the agency's bottom line. Many times, there are significant gaps between the perceptions of an agency's executive leadership and the realities of mid-level management. This can be even

Key Points:

PSLF Summary of Changes

New Rules for Qualifying Payments

Which PSLF Requirements are Waived

How to Find Out if You Qualify for Additional Payments

Next Steps: How to See if You Qualify

Q & As

worse when including agencies rank and file grassroots employees. The majority of NAFV members (and most of the veterinarians employed by the federal government) work for the USDA. The results of FEVS indicated that morale is USDA is low, ranked 16 of 17 large federal agencies, only slightly better than the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). When you look at the sub-agency rankings our major membership comes from the Food Safety and Inspection Service and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

For those working there, this may not come as a surprise. But, how can these agencies benefit from working with NAFV, as an association of managers and supervisors? There are finer points of job satisfaction that the FEVS cannot measure. The impact of mandatory deployments on people's job satisfaction, for example. When that

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> Executive Vice President National Association of Federal Veterinarians 1910 Sunderland Pl., N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036-1608

Any veterinarian employed full time by the federal government may become an active member. Dues are \$260.00 annually, payable annually, semiannually, PayPal (annually or monthly), or by federal payroll deductions (eligibility for payroll deduction is limited to USDA veterinarians --of \$10.00 authorized by signing USDA Form AD 1054 (FSIS) or SF 1187 (APHIS)). Uniformed veterinarians' dues are \$160.00 annually. Active-duty uniformed veterinarians- please contact theNAFV office. Associate membership is granted to active members when they retire from federal service. Associate members pay no dues. Associate members receive the NAFV newsletter by email.

The National Association of Federal Veterinarians is a non-profit corporation and the purposes for which it is formed are to promote the veterinary profession, to improve the professional efficiency and material interests of the members, to acquaint the public with the activities of veterinarians in the federal service, and to cooperate with the American Veterinary Medical Association, the United States Animal Health Association and other similar groups with common interests.

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When deployments are viewed as on people's job satisfaction, for example. When that deployment is seen as furthering the mission of the agency, it can be a positive motivating factor; however if that mandatory deployment is seen as making up for an agencies failure to fill critical vacancies, it has just the opposite effect on morale. When deployments are viewed as employed

where certain individuals seem to be exempt from deployment, then it can destroy the sense of accomplishment. This level of detail can't be reached by the FEVS, but through consultations with our members and executive leadership these insights can be addressed. In many cases, just hearing a third party explain the situation can make all the difference in how the issue is perceived.

In service of these public servants, the NAFV strives to serve both veterinarians and the agencies they work for by facilitating communication, making suggestions for improvements, and working collaboratively to address issues of concern.

This advocacy includes emphasizing professionalism and expertise in federal service but also promoting continuing education, teamwork and morale, and a standard of excellence. NAFV can work with you to improve it and your professional working environment.

NAFV can approach senior leadership in the department with your concerns and possible solutions, not as a union but as an organization that represents you medical/scientific professionals.

Our goal is to enhance your work life's productivity and impact, instilling a positive sense of accomplishment. When a veterinarian is lifted, that positively reflects the team, and that morale boost translates into increased productivity and pride in your work which makes all the difference. USDA starts highly pathogenic avian influenza vaccine trials



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is testing the efficacy of a handful of vaccines against the current strain of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) hoping to stem the spread of the largest outbreak of bird flu in the nation's history. The virus has so far been reported in all but one state, Hawaii, and has resulted in the deaths of nearly 60 million poultry.

While four vaccines are licensed for avian influenza-HA subtype, H5N1, H5N3, and H5N9—none are approved for the more virulent strain, H5N1 clade 2.3.4.4b, found in the current outbreak. This strain likely originated in wild birds, subsequently reached commercial poultry operations, then spilled over into nonhuman mammals, including mountain lions, coyotes, and bottlenose dolphins, which many have ingested infected birds. Researchers with the USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) started testing four vaccine candidates this April, beginning with single-dose trials, according to a USDA spokesperson. Initial data from the trials are expected to be available this May. Researchers expect to have two-dose vaccine challenge studies with results in June.

While vaccination can substantively reduce mortality and has the support of some sectors of the poultry industry, others worry that vaccinated birds could still contract the disease and transmit it, effectively masking the spread of the virus and hindering surveillance efforts. There is also concern about the rapidity with which HPAI can mutate, which could reduce the efficacy of a vaccine. STORY AND PHOTOS BY R. SCOTT NOLEN

Annual legislative fly-in brings veterinarians, veterinary students, and legislators together on Capitol Hill

AVMA News

The AVMA annual legislative fly-in brings veterinarians and veterinary students to Washington, D.C., for hands-on advocacy experience. Participants receive in-depth briefings about the top policy issues affecting veterinary medicine and meet with their members of Congress to advocate on those issues.

Nearly 120 veterinarians and veterinary students urged Congress to support two AVMA-backed bills aimed at ensuring dogs are healthy when imported into the United States and to combat trafficking of the animal sedative xylazine without hindering veterinary access to the drug. Attendees of the 2023 AVMA annual legislative fly-in, held April 17-19 in Q, D.C., also sought a funding increase for the Food Animal Residue Avoidance Databank (FARAD), from \$2.5 million to \$5 million annually. The money would go toward attracting scientists to the national food safety program and investing in new technologies.

The fly-in is hosted by the AVMA's advocacy team in the nation's capital to teach attendees how to be effective advocates for the veterinary profession within their state and at the federal level. For the past two years, the popular event was held virtually because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but this year saw a return to the in-person format. In addition to learning the ins and outs of advocacy, attendees heard from AVMA staff members about the broad range of veterinary issues in which the Association is engaged. These issues include animal and public health, animal welfare, small business, telemedicine, scope of practice, and educational debt relief. When needed, the AVMA will assist state veterinary medical associations with policy issues in their courts and legislatures. Tara Barron, a second-year veterinary student at Lincoln Memorial University and Student AVMA (SAVMA) president-elect, assisted in bringing a delegation of 40 veterinary students to the fly-in. Barron described the event as an exceptional opportunity for students to learn how to become effective advocates.

The Healthy Dog Importation Act (HDIA)

The HDIA is bipartisan legislation aimed at reducing the number of unhealthy dogs imported into the U.S. that are primarily intended for sale or adoption. In June 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) temporarily suspended dog imports from more than 100 high-risk countries for canine rabies. The suspension has been extended several times and is currently set to expire on July 31.

Prior to the CDC suspension, of the over 1 million dogs imported each year, an estimated 113,000 were imported from countries that are high risk for rabies at transmission. The CDC only requires a rabies vaccination certificate for entry if a dog is from a high-risk rabies country. For the 950,000-plus remaining dogs imported from low-risk or rabiesfree countries, the CDC requires no documentation or proof of vaccination.

Combating Illicit Xylazine Act (CIXA)

CALIFORNIA REP. JIMMY PANETTA, A SPONSOR OF COMBATING ILLICIT XYLAZINE ACT IN THE HOUSE, TAKES A BREAK FROM THE HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE HEARING TO TALK WITH DRS. GEORGE BISHOP AND DIANE MCCLURE.

The CIXA is a bipartisan measure meant to curb the trafficking of xylazine without disrupting veterinary access to the drug. Xylazine is a Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved nonopioid sedative that has been used to ensure the safe handling of cattle, wildlife, and other animals for the past 50 years.

Alarmed by the growing frequency with which xylazine is being found as an additive in opioid street drugs, a combination known as "tranq" or "zombie drug," public health officials in the Biden administration recently declared it an "emerging threat."

Introduced in March, the CIXA would, among other things, impose Schedule III penalties under the federal Controlled Substances Act on anyone found importing, manufacturing, or possessing xylazine meant for trafficking or use in people. Manufacturers and distributors of legitimate xylazine would be required to report sales and inventories regularly as well as report any unusual activity or change in ordering patterns.



Food Animal Residue Avoidance Databank (FARAD)

 Dr. Sosé Arce, AVMA immediate past president

 Mit House Majority Leader Stevens Scalise and

 Calie Ezell and Kristen Weimer, students at the

 Dusiana State University School of Veterinary

FARAD is a key federal program that helps protect the U.S. food supply from contamination of animal-derived foods from substances not safe for human consumption.

Medicine.

The USDA-supported, university-based program develops and maintains the most up-todate, comprehensive, and scientifically robust collection of drug withdrawal time and safety data in the world. Highly trained scientists provide veterinarians and animal producers with real-time, scientifically based expert advice on if and when an animal can safely enter the food supply.

FARAD has operated at its authorized amount of \$2.5 million annually since the fiscal year 2018 but is unable to invest and grow. More funds are needed to attract and retain scientists, keep pace with inflation, invest in technology, and conduct critical safety validation studies. The AVMA is urging Congress to increase FARAD's authorization to \$5 million to help ensure that our food supply remains safe for human consumption.

Federal Retirees Could Be a Great Talent Source



Federal agencies are now competing for talent in a cut-throat seller's market exacerbated by historically low unemployment and overheated worker demand, and that condition is likely to persist. To compound the problem, federal agencies are handcuffed to the past, competing for that talent from traditional sources—mostly younger, post-Millennial applicants for entry-level career positions.

They're also using tools (like pay and benefits), procedures and assumptions that are woefully out of date. And they are hampered by the relatively low opinion that many of those same younger recruits have of federal service, both generally and as a prospective career choice.

With the support of the Hewlett Foundation and the Democracy Fund, the Convergence Center for Policy Resolution brought together a group of civil service experts (including us) to answer these questions. And at the risk of stating the obvious, we concluded that most of those same agencies are forcedby that same obsolete federal civil service system-to neglect an increasingly large and well-qualified talent source: those of their own employees who are (or will soon become) retired, and who, if asked, would come back in a nanosecond, but for the financial penalty that they'd have to pay.

By law, the pay of federal retirees who come back to work as civil servants is decreased by the amount of their annuity, often reducing their net pay down to a relatively meager amount, and substantially less than what the annuitants could earn as reemployed contractors or elsewhere in the private sector. The U.S. is undergoing its worst bird flu outbreak ever.



The deadliest outbreak of bird flu in U.S. history is prompting growing concern in Congress, and Department of Agriculture researchers are awaiting the preliminary results of four trials of vaccines for poultry.

Some lawmakers are warming to the idea of a vaccination campaign, long considered a fringe idea due to the cost and potential consequences. Trade groups warn that vaccinated poultry would not be accepted in many overseas markets, disrupting exports. While bird flu likely poses little health danger to humans, it's contributed to spikes in U.S. egg prices and decimated poultry flocks. Among the domestic poultry affected are chickens, turkeys, pheasants, quail, ducks and geese — in both big commercial operations and increasingly popular backyard flocks.

Since the current strain of highlypathogenic avian influenza — H5N1 began circulating in the country in February 2022, farmers across the country have lost or had to cull more than 58 million poultry birds. The USDA estimates it has already spent more than \$670 million in insurance indemnities and sanitation services to combat the ongoing bird flu outbreak. The USDA is testing two proprietary vaccines developed through its Agricultural Research Service, as well as bird flu vaccines from pharmaceutical companies Merck Animal Health and Zoetis, Inc. But animal health experts note that a bird flu vaccine is not the immediate solution that some believe it to be.

Jenny Lester Moffitt, undersecretary for marketing and regulatory programs at the USDA, said at an April 24 press event that it will take a minimum of 18 to 24 months to produce a viable vaccine, which is not guaranteed to be effective against infection.

Federal Employee Salary Gains



The federal employee salary is a source of concern and contention. Opinions about whether federal salaries are too high or too low or about right often depend on the economic interest of the person holding the opinion.

Federal employees often see information about the average annual pay raise that typically starts paying out in January. The federal pay system is very complex. Locality pay makes a big difference. Locality pay adds a considerable amount to a federal paycheck over time. Less is known about how this complex system increases federal employee salary levels without direct Congressional or presidential involvement. Federal employee unions comprise the most members of the Federal Salary Council (FSC). The FSC plays a major role in determining federal employee salaries as they make recommendations each year on locality pay.

There are a large number of locality pay areas now and more are being added. Since 2015, the number of locality pay areas has gone from 33 to 53, a 61% increase. The Federal Salary Council (FSC) recently recommended adding four more areas to be designated as locality pay areas. This will put the total number of locality pay areas at 57. The President's Pay Agent approved the addition of these new areas recently and this will likely be implemented in 2024.

In addition to the complexity, some federal employees are now working from home and collecting locality pay while living outside the local pay area. The Federal Salary Council routinely reports that federal employees are paid substantially less than private sector employees.



National Association of Federal Veterinarians

Introducing the One Health Security Act

To assess, prevent, prepare for, respond to, recover, and mitigate biological threats by establishing the One Health Security Council.

Public Health Preparedness Summit Presentation

- Worldwide, 75% of all emerging human infectious diseases originate in animals, and with the pace of global trade and travel diseases originating on one side of the world can quickly spreadimpelling lives, weakening economies, and impacting national security.
- 80% of pathogens of bioterror concern also originate in animals. We do not know whether the next biologic event our country faces will be natural, human-generated, or accidental but we know we as a nation are not well-prepared.
- We need a better integrated "One Health Secity" approach to better protect our nation, its citizens, and their livelihoods.

Joseph F Annelli, DVM, MS Executive Vice President National Association of Federal Veterinarians

Why is One Health important?



Highlights

- · Lessons learned of One Health governance and coordination practices.
- Fragmentation of government agencies is a barrier for cross-sector collaboration.
- One Health strategies facilitate definition and alignment of goals across sectors.
- Leaders can strengthen knowledge translation across sectors and reduce homophily.

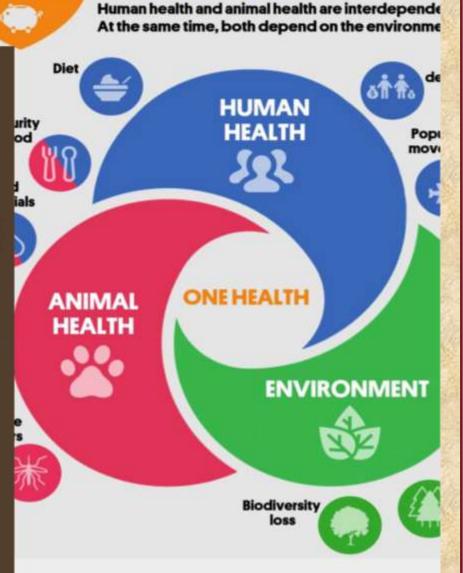


What can be said about the One Health Security Act?

 The significant advantage of this bill is that it provides a coordination mechanism that considers all the current and past related bills. The One Health Security Act

 "The most significant piece of legislation among all the pandemic prevention and global health security bills that are out there,"

 Establishes an all-of-government and ultimately, all-of-society approach to emerging and pandemic disease identification and response."



ONE HEALTH

The One Health Security Act would establish:

• One Health Security Council: In accordance with the Apollo program recommendation, the National Security Advisor would lead a One Health Security Council responsible for coordinating whole-of-government One Health Security-related activities.

• One Health Security Strategy: The One Health Security Council would develop a strategy that would advise the President with respect to the integration of domestic, foreign, and military policies relating to One Health Security to enable Federal agencies to cooperate more effectively

USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Partners Webinar

Health Framework As the One coronavirus pandemic has proven, zoonotic diseases pose a significant threat, and the House Appropriations Committee recognized the need to improve the nation's response capacity. The new act directs CDC in coordination with other Federal departments and agencies to develop a framework based on a One Health address approach to zoonotic diseases and advance public health preparedness.

One Health Federal Interagency Coordination Mechanism The act directs CDC to work with the Department of Agriculture and Department of Interior to develop a One Health coordination mechanism at the federal level. This mechanism will be used to strengthen One Health collaboration related to prevention, detection, control, and response for the prioritized zoonotic diseases and related One Health work across the federal government.

One Hundred Seventeenth Congress of the United States of America

AT THE SECOND SESSION

Begun and held at the City of Washington on Monday, the third day of January, two thousand and twenty-two

An Art

Laking consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2023, and for providing emergency assistance for the situation in Ukraine, and for other purpos

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of he United States of America in Congress assembled,

ECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Consolidated Appropriations ict, 2023".

EC. 2. TABLE OF CONTENTS.

- ec. 1. Short title. ec. 2. Table of contents.
- 3. References. iec.
- ee. 4.
- Explanatory statement. Statement of appropriations
- ec. 6. Adjustments to compensation.

DIVISION A-AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2023

itle I-Agricultural Programs

- itle II—Rarm Production and Conservation Programs itle III—Rarm Production and Conservation Programs itle III—Rural Development Programs itle V—Domestic Food Programs itle V—Foreign Assistance and Related Programs itle VI—Related Agency and Food and Drug Administration. itle VII—General Provisions

DIVISION B-COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE, AND RELATED AGENCIES ADDDODDIATIONS ACT

Read More



As you know, Federal Veterinarians are critical in ensuring the nation's food safety and animal/livestock health with innumerable food safety initiatives, guidelines through FSIS, APHIS, DHS, CDC, and FDA, and various animal health programs. Many federal veterinarians also have the dual role of a manager, supervisor or officer within their respective agency. This leaves you extremely susceptible to allegations, complaints, or potential lawsuits- just for doing your job. Are you emotionally, financially and legally prepared to become the subject of an adverse administrative action, disciplinary proceeding, or civil lawsuit?

The following is based off a real claims scenario from a federal veterinarian

Picture this: You are the subject of an Internal Controls Staff investigation of employee accountability for the unsanitary conditions found at one of the meat processing plants you supervise, which had its operations suspended and resulted in the agency recalling over 50,000 lbs. of meat. The findings of the investigation lead the agency to propose your removal from federal service based on a charge of neglect of duty, alleging that you failed to perform your regulatory and supervisory duties at the meat processing plant. While you argue that your actions were consistent with sanitation guidelines, the agency maintains its position and issues a final decision to sustain that charge. You are forced to appeal and litigate your removal before the Merit Systems Protection Board, or risk losing your livelihood.

WITHOUT FEDS PROTECTION

rouspend monthspaying out nourigrees to expensive rederal employment attorneys in an attempt to defend yourself against the charges. The stress of the unknown begins to take a toll on your personal life, and as your savings begin to dwindle, youareforced to make the difficult decision to resign from federal employment in the best interest of your family's needs and finances and must begin looking for a new career.

WITH FEDS PROTECTION

You are assigned your own personal attorney specializing intederal employment law and MSPB appeals, paid for entirely by your PLI policy. Although it still takes months, your attorney handles all of the stressful paperwork and procedures, and succeeds in winning the appeal. You continue to be gainfully employed by your federal agency without loss in pay or grade

FEDS Protection is Affordable \$1,000,000 Policy Limit; \$280 Annual Premium* \$2,000,000 Policy Limit; \$380 Annual Premium* 50% Agency Reimbursement All managers & supervisors are eligible for up to 50% agency reimbursement for a net cost of only \$140 per year. *You must enter discount code "NAFV" for this pricing.

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Your FEDS policy must be in place before any allegations or complaints in order for coverage to apply, so don't delay.

Enroll today at www.fedprotection.com or call 866.955.FEDS.

Chitwary





Larry was a beloved husband, father, grandfather, brother and friend. We will be sharing pictures, mementos and stories with the intention to show that as long as we remember him, part of him will always be with us. Buffet lunch will be served.

Jan D. Huber

Dr. Huber (Ohio State '58), 88, Sun City West, Arizona, died Dec. 5, 2022. He practiced large animal medicine for 16 years in Millersburg, Indiana, and worked for the U.S. Department of Agriculture for 30 years prior to retirement in 2004. While in large animal practice, Dr. Huber also served a period as resident veterinarian for Marlu Farms, a Jersey breeding operation in Lincroft, New Jersey. During his career with the USDA, he spent several years involved in brucellosis eradication, serving as national epidemiologist for the brucellosis program from 1985-90. Dr. Huber is survived by his wife, Rose Marie.



Steven Grant Stoops 1943 - 2022

Steven Grant Stoops found peace on October 18, 2022. He was 79 years old. Memorial services will be private. In lieu of flowers, please contribute to Twin City Mission in Bryan, TX.

Steve was born on St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 1943, in Von Ormy, TX, to Alonzo Grant ('Lonnie') and Johnnieve ('Joy') Stoops. Steve spent his first years in a tiny country house built by his dad and grandfather. He spent most of his days in the company of his grandparents John and Bobbie (who had built another tiny house next door), two people whose memories he would hold dear for the rest of his life. Though they moved to San Antonio when Steve was still a kid, part of him always considered those two little houses to be home. After graduating from Highlands High School in 1961, Steve attended several universities in Texas before finding his place at A&M. He earned his Bachelor of Science, then his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) in 1969. Unsurprisingly, he became a devoted Aggie and remained so until the end (while he was not involved in the kidnapping of Bevo that occurred while Steve was a student, he was very proud that he and his classmates photographed themselves with said steer). If an Aggie football game was being broadcast, Steve was sure to be watching it. His ring was worn smooth decades ago.

Steve did his veterinary residency at the Animal Medical Center in New York City. He was a South Texas boy in the Big Apple, and a fish out of water. But it turned out that moving there was the best decision he ever made, because it was there that he met the love of his life, Gail Thompson (who was a glamorous flight attendant for American Airlines...and also a New Jersey yankee). They were an odd match, but somehow Steve ended up being one of the luckiest men in history when he asked Gail to marry him, and she said "yes".

Not everyone has a true love, but Steve did. He and Gail married on March 14, 1970 and spent the next 52 years together. They didn't stay in New York very long, but instead began a migratory odyssey that lasted almost the rest of Steve's life. From New York they went to San Antonio, then Athens, GA (where their first son Matt was born); to back to San Antonio; then Rochester, NY; then back to Texas, first in Rosenberg (where their second son PJ was born); then Corpus Christi (where their daughter Stacy was born). When Steve went to work as a Veterinary Inspector for the FSIS branch of the USDA, the family moved to Gallup, NM, then back to Athens, GA, then back to Texas once again - this time to Fort Worth, then Burleson. Later they moved to College Station, then retired to Lake Jackson. Then of course they decided to move again, this time to Houston to be closer to kids and grandkids. Finally, they decided after all that College Station was home, and they moved back in 2020.

We will miss him terribly.

ACTIVE MEMBERS WE HAVE LOST TOUCH WITH

We have lost touch with the following list of members. If you know them, please prompt them to reach out to us at 202-223-4878.

Gillian Comyn **Robbie Haskins** Petru Oanca Noreen Murphy Donald Randall Michelle Goodnight Michael Bellin Michael McCown Gurmeet Guraya Mark Lehman Phillip Pickerill Rebecca Ogden-Baxter Gerald Kugel Samuel Fassig Lynne Craine Taylor Opel Cassie Rizzo Lennis Knight

INFO HUE



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