

**Friends of Agricultural Research-Beltsville, Inc.  
PO Box 1061, Beltsville, MD 20704-1061**

**Dedicated to promoting the research and education programs of the  
Henry A. Wallace Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, Beltsville, MD**

# **THE FAR-B NEWS**

*January 2006*

*Editor: Hank Becker*

## **President's Message**

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

As your incoming president and a former BARC director, I want to emphasize how excited I am about the opportunity to sit on the FAR-B side of the table. Beginning in 1987, as director, I enjoyed the opportunity to work with FAR-B on projects and issues that were of utmost importance to the success of our great research center. In those days, FAR-B was finding firm footing, refining its voice, defining its role while on its way to becoming the effective advocate for the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center that it is today.

It has been rewarding to me to watch the organization gain stature, to grow its effectiveness. Due in large measure to the exceptional leadership of such recent presidents as Phil Kearney, Ralph Bram, and Bill Wergin, FAR-B has taken great strides toward fulfilling its essential purpose, to provide real and effective support to this great research institution

Those past presidents are tough acts to follow. Nevertheless, I am enormously encouraged and reassured by the superb effort and support of the entire Board, which includes Vern Pursel, Jim Butcher, Essex Finney, Allan Stoner, Hank Becker, Nancy Thrush, Morton Beroza, and Jim Anderson--along with those past presidents Kearney, Bram, and Wergin. The collective enthusiasm, initiative, and

wisdom of the Board supply the critical

force that sustains FAR-B, and drives the organization forward.

Moreover, FAR-B is blessed to have the regular support of two extraordinary ARS employees. Dianne Odland of the Information Staff is central to the success of our award-winning community outreach effort. And research scientist Dave Chitwood provides the vital liaison link between the Board and the BARC Director. I am enormously grateful for and impressed by the resourcefulness that these outstanding employees bring to the table.

I am fortunate to work with such a dedicated group!

Now, let me turn for a moment to less rosy news. I'm sure it comes as no surprise that BARC now faces a very challenging budgetary climate. This is a time of tightly controlled government funding--especially for such activities as research, and the consequent belt-tightening required at BARC is a matter of great concern.

In this difficult time, FAR-B has re-doubled its efforts to help the Area Director in any way possible for FAR-B to blunt and mitigate the negative effects of budgetary shortfalls. Our efforts include emphasizing to various audiences how essential it is to the national well being to sustain BARC's research programs--a point we need to drive home to the general public, to the

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agricultural sector, and, most importantly, to the political interests.

Consequently, we are striving to grow our financial assistance programs for BARC scientists, and to expand our science education outreach activities for schools and communities.

Obviously, our financial capability directly determines the level of support that FAR-B can muster for these activities. Hence, we are engaged in several income boosting efforts. One obvious way to generate more income is to expand our dues-paying membership.



**FAR-B**

Friends of  
Agricultural  
Research-  
Beltsville, Inc.

FAR-B is a non-profit organization  
dedicated to promote –

Research,  
Educational,  
and  
Outreach Programs

at the Henry A. Wallace Beltsville  
Agricultural Research Center  
(BARC), Beltsville, Maryland.

New Membership Committee Chair Allan Stoner is taking the lead in putting together a new list of people who may have an interest in BARC. We will use that list for recruiting new members. To aid in this, Phil Kearney, Vern Pursel, and Hank Becker have designed a beautiful new FAR-B recruitment brochure. (See the FAR-B website— <http://www.ars.usda.gov/ba/far-b> — if you did not receive a copy of the new brochure in your membership renewal notice.)

Another major fund raising activity is the one led by Phil Kearney--our participation in the annual Combined Federal Campaign. Past CFC campaigns have proved to be very productive. We are indebted to Phil for his leadership and to all those generous employees, who have donated to FAR-B. We also are looking at expanding our "Sustaining Member" category, which is designed for large organizations such as businesses and non-government organizations.

You can help FAR-B in its mission to aid BARC by taking every opportunity to discuss FAR-B's mission and the importance of membership to others--whether employees or community members. Another important contribution is volunteering your time and knowledge to FAR-B activities, especially the Outreach Committee's programs. (See "Beltsville Elementary School Needs Help" on page 6 of the newsletter.)

I wish all of you a wonderful 2006, and look forward to joining with you in working for the enhancement of BARC.

Warm regards,

**Darwin Murrell**, President

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## *Friends of Agricultural Research-Beltsville, Inc.*

### **Area Director's Message**

Happy New Year to everyone. This year, 2006, will be BARC's 96th year. We are already through the first quarter of the fiscal year, having finally gotten an appropriation in November. We received only a small increase in our appropriation, about \$1.6 million and we are awaiting an across-the-board reduction of about 1 percent when Congress returns and deals with a supplemental appropriation to fund recovery for Hurricane Katrina.

Within ARS, we are also expecting a one-time across-the-board assessment of about 0.8 percent to fund per diem costs for displaced ARS employees from New Orleans who are temporarily stationed at other locations while the Southern Regional Research Center is being cleaned up and repaired. While such an assessment cuts into the funds we have available for research, we are glad we can help. And we know all too well that the shoe could be on the other foot.

We anticipate being able to announce the arrival of a new Center Director for the Beltsville Human Nutrition Research Center sometime during January. This has been a long haul, since Dr. Joe Spence moved to NPS as an Acting Deputy Administrator shortly after 9/11.

Our new Poultry Facility has walls up, and we anticipate construction being done this spring. We also have three new greenhouses going up in Range 1 that are actually part of our recovery from the Sept 2001 tornado. And they too should be ready to use this spring. We are also progressing on construction of an insect-quarantine facility that was on the facility priority list in 1984!!

John Van de Vaarst, our Facilities Director, retired at the end of October, and we are currently evaluating the duties of that job to make sure it will meet current needs, before we go out on the street to recruit.

Our complex and aging facilities make such a job a critical one.

We continue to have a terrific staff of scientists and support people here, and 2005 was a great year. Dr. Bob Davis, RL of the Molecular Plant Pathology Lab, was elected to the National Academy of Sciences. Dr. JP Dubey of the Animal Parasitic Diseases Lab is the most-cited scientist in animal science globally for the last 10 years. And 20 percent of our GS-15 scientists are in the top 1 percent for citations in agricultural research worldwide. With outstanding people like these, I know that 2006 will be another banner year for science at BARC.

**Phyllis Johnson**, Director

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### **FAR-B Membership**

At this time FAR-B membership is 178. Of these, 102 are patrons or personal members, and 76 are non-voting associate members who are BARC employees.

During 2006, the Board of Directors anticipates making a concerted effort to substantially increase the membership in all categories, including Sustaining Members. To help accomplish this, we are developing a database with the names, addresses and phone numbers of as many retirees and former BARC employees as we can identify. We then plan to contact non-FAR-B members and appeal to them to join.

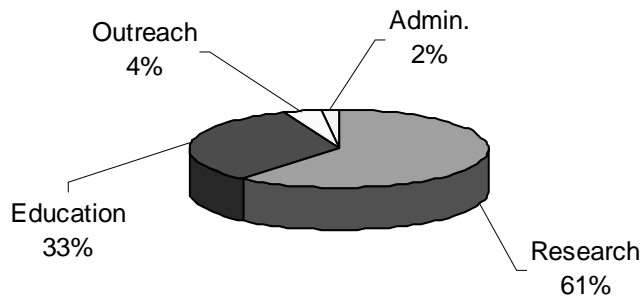
In addition to using the database to help recruit new FAR-B members, we anticipate it will be useful to BARC management and ex-employees who are trying to locate someone's address and/or phone number.

**Allan Stoner**, Membership Chairman

## Financial Report

Although FAR-B had to dip into financial reserves this year to cover the \$25,000 to assist the Systematic Entomology Laboratory in the purchase of the computer-controlled remote microscope, we had an exceptional year financially on nearly all fronts.

First, our CFC and other member contributors gave us a nice boost compared to last year. Second, FAR-B's assistance paid off quite well for handling the financial arrangements for the 21st Annual Meeting of the International Society of Chemical Ecology last summer in Washington D.C. Third, interest on FAR-B's investments increased three-fold this past year.



In addition, our dues collections were up slightly this year, even though our number of members continues to gradually slip. It's always nice to see our income increase across the board, so that income can keep abreast of our financial support of worthy programs and events at BARC.

The graph above shows the distribution of FAR-B's expenses. Please note that only two cents of every dollar goes to administer FAR-B's program, and much of that is for our printing and mailing The FAR-B News to the membership.

**Vernon Pursel**, Treasurer

## FAR-B Receives President's Volunteer Service Award



It isn't everyday that a volunteer organization receives The President's Volunteer Service Award. But, then, the resources of FAR-B when combined with the clout of BARC

and its Beltsville Human Nutrition Research Center, a retired University of Maryland professor, an assist from the National Agricultural Library, and the help of still others, form no ordinary enterprise.

As reported previously in this newsletter, for the past two school years FAR-B and its BARC collaborators have presented science enrichment programs to students and teachers at Beltsville Elementary School. One year, we presented a tailored overview of the popular *Science in Your Shopping Cart* publication and video. Former BARC scientist Allan Stoner, now FAR-B board membership chair, carried the lion's share of the instructor load. In what seemed a natural follow-on and using a slightly more team-oriented approach, we presented our Human Nutrition program the second year. Students and teachers lapped up these targeted presentations, asked for more.

The educational pay-offs to this high-performing, minority-majority public school are enormous. Whereas Beltsville Elementary students would have received virtually no science lessons in their regular curriculum, every student in grades 1 to 6 received a full hour of illustrated science instruction delivered teams by FAR-B and BARC scientists. Students received not only illustrated science instruction, they also received related publications and other materials to use back in the classroom or at home. The best student posters were on display at the 2005 BARC Field Day.

This fine work has not gone unnoticed or

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unrewarded. During this past summer, we received word that the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation had approved the school's application to present the President's Volunteer Service Award to FAR-B. The citation reads:

**Presented by the President's  
Council on Service and Civic  
Participation to**

**Friends of Agricultural  
Research – Beltsville**

**In recognition and appreciation  
of your commitment to  
strengthening our Nation and  
for making a difference through  
volunteer service.**

In a November ceremony at the school, the following team members received a personal copy of the certificate, each accompanied by a beautifully struck lapel pin: Allan Stoner, Jim Smith, Nancy Thrush, Richard Ahrens, Jeanette Baylor, Betty Li, Jim Anderson, Jay Green, Evelyn Lashley, Kay Behall, Daniel Scholfield, Jim Butcher, and Dianne Odland. Well done!

FAR-B is well on its way to planning a new science enrichment theme for the current school year. Our planning committee has met with school officials, and has agreed to work up a presentation that we are calling for now "Life Sciences—Animals." Preliminary plans call for exhibit-presentations featuring agricultural animals, entomology, parasitological, diseases, and other ideas.

All FAR-B members and interested parties are invited to participate in these activities. The school is constantly on the outlook for tutors, by the way. If you live in the general area and have a little time to invest in a worthy cause, please give us a buzz. Jim Butcher is the outreach chair, but any board member can steer you in the right direction.

**Jim Butcher**, Outreach Chair

**National Visitor Center  
Highlights for 2005**

In 2005, several groups visited NVC including:

Chesapeake Bay Day: the Hawaiian Agricultural Leadership delegation; Florida fire fighters' Olympics; 50 home economists from Fairfax City Teachers Food and Consumer Services; a group from Prince Georges Community. College; Trinity University middle school science teachers; George Mason University students: students from Anne Arundel Community College Culinary School; the American Veterinarian Biologics Association and seniors from Asbury Village.

On the international front, the center hosted visitors from Africa and India; several Chinese delegations; the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources; a delegation from Spain; and a group from Thailand.

They also gave tours to a woman whose father, Charlie Lambers, helped to build the Log Lodge for the Civilian Conservation Corp and a physician working with terrorism. Also several troops that have been wounded from Bethesda Naval Hospital, and Walter Reed Hospital were given tours.

In January, John Kucharki retired as head of the NVC. Ruth Coy of the Information Staff is acting until the position is filled.

**Jay Green**, National Visitor Center

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## ***Friends of Agricultural Research-Beltsville, Inc.***

### **CFC Report**

We are preparing our application for the 2006 Combined Federal Campaign. This application receives an in-depth review at CFC headquarters in Washington.

For the 4 last, years we have been selected to participate in the campaign. There are several reasons why have we been selected over other applicants. First we are a very efficient organization. Our overhead costs are 2 percent of our total budget. In other words, we return 98 cents to BARC for every dollar donated.

Some big organizations have overheads of over 50 percent. One reason we are successful is that we are an all-volunteer organization. We have no paid employees. All of our databases are kept and updated on Board member's personal home computers.

The main reasons we are successful are the scientific and educational programs we sponsor at the center. Our outreach programs are a huge success. We are in the process of planning the 2006 outreach program. Plans are underway to revamp and upgrade our awards program. Others programs will be reviewed and upgraded over the next year.

**Phil Kearney**, CFC Chairman

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### **Beltsville Elementary Needs You**

Beltsville Elementary School (BES) needs FAR-B's help! They are in dire need of tutors/mentors to help students one-on-one with reading and math. This involves 1 to 3 hours per week in the Reading Lab

and/or classrooms at BES during school hours (7:45 a.m. to 1:45 p.m.). Training and materials are supplied.

Please call or e-mail Maggie Schmidt, Reading Specialist and Volunteer Coordinator at (301) 572-0630, x 242; mschmidt@pgcps.org.

Want to help but time is limited? Sign up as a quizzer for MINDCORE for just 2 hours on Wednesday, February 15, either 8:00 to 10:00 a.m., 10:00 to 12:00 noon, or 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the BES gym. Contact Maggie Schmidt for details.

**Dianne Odland**, ARS Information Staff

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### ***SCIENCE IN YOUR SHOPPING CART* REVISED AND NOW REPRINTED**

A revised edition of the highly successful ARS publication, *Science in Your Shopping Cart* (USDA Program Aid 1558), came off press in October 2005. The first edition was written, photographed, and designed by ARS Information Staff in 1996 to help explain to nonfarm, nonagribusiness audiences how agricultural research benefits our everyday lives.

This edition went through several printings totaling well over 100,000 copies and has been a perennial favorite of,

among others, the USDA Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service's Ag in the Classroom program.



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The revision updates facts and figures, replaces some ARS accomplishments with other, more recent ones, puts a bit more emphasis on ARS nutrition and food safety research, and comes with a few new photographs and a new cover.

ARS funded a press run of 40,000 copies, most of which have been distributed to ARS field locations for redistribution to customers, stakeholders, and partners. CSREES's Ag in the Classroom funded an additional 50,000 copies for distribution to their state partners to use in local AITC programs.

While supplies last, single copies are available by emailing Lynda Welsh [lwelsh@ars.usda.gov](mailto:lwelsh@ars.usda.gov). Give your full mailing address and specify that you're ordering *Science in Your Shopping Cart*. An Acrobat PDF of the revised book is available at <http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/np/shopcart/shopcartintro.html>.

**Ruth Coy**, Chief of Information Products and Services Branch, ARS Information Staff

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## **In Memoriam**

### ***SAMUEL ASEN***

Samuel Asen of Chevy Chase, Maryland, died on Monday, January 23, 2006. Sam began working at the USDA in 1955 and retired in 1985. His research focused on determining the biochemical basis of flower color.

The three-man team of Bob Stewart (genetics), Sam Asen (physiology), and Karl Norris (engineering) discovered that flower color was due to the binding of

specific colorless molecules (co-pigments) to the anthocyanin pigments.

They also discovered that the color of the anthocyanin/co-pigment complex was determined by pH. As the pH became more alkaline, the color turned bluer. The research was foundation for the current experiments throughout the world on genetically engineering a blue rose.

### ***KARL von VORSE KROMBEIN***

Karl von Vorse Krombein, 93, a retired senior scientist and world-renowned entomologist with ARS and the Smithsonian Institution, died on September 6, 2005.

An expert on wasps, he discovered many species in the United States and Sri Lanka. His professional colleagues around the world named almost 90 species of insects after him. He named two of his own discoveries after his wife and one of his daughters.

He worked for USDA from 1941 until 1965, serving for almost 15 years as its chief of taxonomic investigations for hymenoptera or wasps.

In 1965, he moved to the Smithsonian as chairman of the entomology department, a post he held until 1971. He became senior entomologist in 1971 and senior scientist from 1980.

He retired in 1993 but kept an office at the Smithsonian and continued to work full time until 1999.

He wrote or co-wrote more than 210 technical monographs, revisions and shorter papers and several books on wasps and bees.

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*Friends of Agricultural Research-Beltsville, Inc.*

**Board of Directors**

**President:**

K. Darwin Murrell  
*kdmurrell@comcast.net*

**Past President:**

Ralph Bram  
*rabram@rcn.com*

**Vice President:**

William Wergin  
*wwergin@msn.com*

**Treasurer:**

Vern Pursel  
*vpursel@comcast.net*

**Special Advisor:**

Essex Finney

**Membership:**

Allan Stoner  
*stonerfam@earthlink.net*

**CFC:**

Phil Kearney  
*pkearney@asrr.arsusda.gov*

**Symposia:**

Morton Beroza  
*mhberoz@aol.com*

**Legislative Liaison:**

Jim Butcher  
*Jim.hickory@verizon.net*

**Publicity:**

Hank Becker  
*hankbecker3@verizon.net*

**Director Emeritus:**

Frank Longen  
*flongen2@juno.com*

**Secretary:**

James Anderson  
*Janderson1@mac.com*

**Board Member**

James Smith  
*Zincdr@aol.com*

**Administrator's Liaison:**

David Chitwood  
*chitwood@ba.ars.usda.gov*

To contact the FAR-B Board:

**email** – *farbboard@comcast.net*

**phone** – (301) 854-9758

**Beltsville Area**

**Area Director:**

Phyllis Johnson

**Associate AD:**

Ron Korcak

**Nat'l Visitor Center:**

Ruth Coy, Acting

**FIRST CLASS**

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PO Box 1061  
Beltsville, MD 20705-1061

