

Mess of Possums

By Iva Campbell

Some people say, "A mess of this or a mess of that" if there is enough of it for a meal. Well this mess of 'possums, though not enough for a meal, was surely enough for an armful of fun that lasted for several weeks.

Iva Campbell, wife of the Superintendent of Hot Springs National Park, answered the phone one day to learn that she was about to become the "mother" of three tiny baby 'possums. They had been found in a flooded ditch after the storm and needed love and care.

At first the little mouse-size creatures nursed a medicine

See POSSUMS, Page 3.



Iva Campbell and friends at Hot Springs National Park.



NEWSLETTER



U. S. Department of the Interior National Park Service

VOL. 4

NO. 22

A SERVICE PUBLICATION FOR SERVICE PERSONNEL

OCTOBER 30, 1969

By the time President Nixon signed the Daniels-McGee retirement bill into law, October 20, 1969, some 30 NPS employees had already filed their retirement papers in anticipation of this favorable legislation. Now that the retirement bill is a reality, the total number of NPS employees expected to file for retirement before the October 31 deadline may well pass the hundred mark. For the edification of all Service employees, the Newsletter has reprinted, with permission of the Washington Post, the following article by Mike Causey,

The Federal Diary

THE WASHINGTON POST Tuesday, Oct. 21, 1969

Retirement Floodgates Open Wide

By Mike Causey

The cliff-hanger Daniels-McGee retirement bill became law yesterday as the President reluctantly signed the legislation that provides a 5 per cent annuity bonus for this month's federal retirees. Between 15,000 and 75,000 workers may retire within the next 11 days.

Enactment of the new law will open up the floodgates for thousands of eligible employees who want to get the bonus and benefit from the more liberal features of the act.

Employees who retire on or after Oct. 20 will be able to draw annuities based on their highest three years' average salary. This change, from the old "high-five" formula, will mean an additional \$20 to \$50 a month for most when they retire.

Workers will be given day-for-day service credit for any unused sick leave they turn back to the govern-

ment. This won't permit them to retire earlier than usual but it will increase their annuities by allowing them credit for the leave.

Workers who want to get the 5 per cent annuity bonus have to act fast. It will be given to the 900,000 Civil Service retirees and survivors already on the rolls, and to those who retire by Oct. 31. Employees retiring after that date will not receive it.

All provisions of the bill were effective on enactment, except for one. This last requires agencies and employees to increase their contributions to the Civil Service Retirement Fund next Jan. 1, from 6.5 to 7 per cent of gross salary.

Mr. Nixon delayed action on the bill to dramatize to Congress that he is unhappy with it. The administration opposed the liberalizations, but decided to accept the legislation because of the badly needed additional

See RETIREMENT, Page 4.

HEAP BIG SMOKE, MUCH FIRE coming from the ladies of the Southwest Region. As we read the message, the editors of THE SMOKE SIGNAL have spelled out—clearly and concisely—their procedures for gathering, editing, publishing and distributing all the news about the ladies of the Southwest Region. Now, all they need to make this fine publication an even greater success are answering “smoke signals” from all over the southwest. To help kindle these signal fires, the NPS Newsletter presents the following “procedures,” as prepared by the editors of THE SMOKE SIGNAL, Saguaro National Monument, Arizona.

The next four issues of THE SMOKE SIGNAL will be assembled and distributed by the ladies of Saguaro National Monument. Procedures remain basically the same and are as follows:

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscription form for four (4) issues of THE SMOKE SIGNAL remain \$1.00 payable to: WONAPAS, THE SMOKE SIGNAL, Saguaro National Monument, P.O. Box 17210, Tucson, Arizona 85710.

Gift subscriptions to those within the Southwest Region, other Regions, retirees, or other interested parties are encouraged. An acknowledgement card of such a gift will be sent to the recipient with their initiating issue.

PREPARATION

Paper — 8" x 10" mimeograph—standard government size.

Margin — One (1") inch from left hand side of paper.

Area Name — Five (5) spaces from top of page:

CAPITAL LETTERS & UNDERLINED.

Page Limit — One (1) sheet of paper: printed “turnable” fashion if both sides are to be used, as fasteners will be placed at the top of the pages.

DEADLINES

Receipt — October 25, 1969 (news for July, August, and September)

January 15, 1970 (news for October, November and December)

April 15, 1970 (news for January, February and March).

July 15, 1970 (news for April, May and June)

Mailing — Assembled copies will be mailed as soon as possible after deadline dates.

COPIES

Mail 200 mimeographed pages of your area news to: WONAPAS, THE SMOKE SIGNAL, Saguaro National Monument, P.O. Box 17210, Tucson, Ariz. 85710.

If you do not have facilities to do mimeographing, send your TYPED STENCIL, plus \$1.00 (per issue) to cover the cost of paper. PLEASE DO NOT SEND BLANK PAPER. The area printing your news can obtain, less expensively, bulk paper of the proper kind and size for use with their equipment.

CONTENTS

Reporting — Try to cover as much of the areas items of interest as possible. Include as many of the areas' employees as possible in each issue. ALL names should be in CAPITAL LETTERS. “Hello's” and “Goodbye's”, social affairs, awards of employees or their families could be included. Anything of

general interest that you might include in a letter to a friend is the type of reporting needed. Remember, THE SMOKE SIGNAL is not intended to be a “professional” product; rather, it is to foster enjoyment and fellowship amongst all NPS women. So, PLEASE, don't feel you have to be a polished journalist in order to submit your area news! Our aim is 100 percent friendly participation.

Special Features — On a separate sheet of paper please write, or type, your items for the SPECIAL FEATURE page. DO NOT include these items on the stencil with your regular area news. The editors will combine items from all the areas, cut the stencils and thus form the SPECIAL FEATURE page. Submit items from as many women as possible giving individual credit to such items. The editors will give credit for duplicate suggestions.

Alumni News — Please send any Alumni news to: HAP DODGE, 465 Camino Manzano, Santa Fe, New Mexico 78501. All alumni news is to be compiled and reported on one page. This should include any news of NPS widows and widowers.

FORECAST

Special Feature — Topics for the next four issues: October: “CHRISTMAS IN A NPS KITCHEN” (recipes, etc.)

January: “THE LIGHT SIDE OF MOVING” (how you make a move easier for your family or for others.)

January Extra: “VOLUNTEERS OF WONAPAS” (any volunteer or service projects in which either as a group, or individually, our gals have participated, or at present participating.)

April: “HOW DO YOU MEET & GREET THE SEASONS?” (tips on enjoying your particular area to the fullest, and how you prepare for the seasons.)

July: “INSPIRATIONS FOR A SOUTHWESTERN PICNIC.” (recipes for food that travels well in our arid country, and helps on how to keep things cool enroute, etc.)

FINANCING

The yearly \$1.00 subscription fee for one copy mailed quarterly is utilized to cover the cost of mailing envelopes and postage. This cost is the same whether you send the material already mimeoed or if you send in, your typed stencil, plus the \$1.00 to cover the cost of paper.

Small areas, with few employees, who would like to participate, but who do not have an organized group to help defray the cost, might find it feasible to combine with another small area. Each area could use just one side of the paper. A typed stencil would still be required from each area but the cost to each would be split equally.

Total cost for one year's subscription for participating areas breaks down approximately as follows: \$1.00 for 4 issues of THE SMOKE SIGNAL.

\$4.00 for paper to print your news for four issues.

\$1.00 approximate cost of four stencils you will need.

\$1.00 postage for mailing to Saguaro Nat. Mon.

TOTAL Cost — \$7.00

By—Bob Burns

Spotlighting an environmentalist can inject the term "environment" with vitality. As a member of that fraternity which counts nature as an intimate friend, Elmer Kohl has much knowledge to share. He knows the plants and wildlife of Hopewell Village, not because he read about them but because they have been his life-long companions. He plays a dual role at the historic site, maintenance man and collier.

This latter job classifies him as part of a vanishing breed; you might say charcoal burners are an endangered species! When iron furnaces dotted the southeastern section of Pennsylvania 150 years ago, charcoal was needed to keep them alive. Elmer's skill in "firing the pit" gives visitors to Hopewell's furnace community charcoal chunks to handle, charcoal dust to coat their shoes, and charcoal smoke to line their throats. A strong whiff of charcoal can convince anyone of historic authenticity.

At age 10 Elmer began "coaling" with his father in the Pennsylvania woodlands. Five months out of the year were devoted to making charcoal, the remainder channelled toward farming the land. "Nowadays children don't work hard anymore," he laments. To earn a day's pay once meant labor from 6 a.m. to dark, with an hour for dinner, sometimes. Since "nobody wanted to learn," Elmer has not passed on the techniques of his craft. That is our loss. Perhaps nobody was interested in rousing himself four times a night to check a smoldering pile of wood.

If you want to know how to extract birch oil from bark, shock corn, make barrel staves, or plant beans, Elmer is a valuable source of information. This information stems from working at a variety of jobs.

Before joining the National Park Service twelve years ago, Elmer worked as a stonemason, carpenter, and steam engineer at a sawmill. Leisure time means fishing, hiking, and hunting. The outdoors is his home; here is a man who would have difficulty getting lost in the forest. Born in a farming district in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, about 20 miles from Hopewell, Elmer, 62, is stationed now in home territory.



QUESTIONS & SUGGESTIONS

Any questions and/or suggestions concerning THE SMOKE SIGNAL may be sent to either the Southwest Regional Chairman, BETTY PETERSON, Big Bend National Park, Texas 79834, or directly to the Editors at Saguaro. We want this to be a paper that represents all the women in the Southwest Region and any suggestions are encouraged and welcomed.

The ladies at Platt-Arbuckle are to be commended for their efficient handling of THE SMOKE SIGNAL this past year. Under their care it has flourished and they have established sound practices that will enable our area to enjoy this project during the coming year.

THANK YOU LADIES!!! We will try to do as well.

The Editors,
THE SMOKE SIGNAL



Elmer Kohl "Fires the Pit."

A Mess of Possums

Continued from page 1.

dropper filled with warm milk or chicken broth, sometimes all three trying to nurse at once. Then they graduated to scrambled eggs, cooked hamburger, boiled chicken and bananas.

Possums have the nicest inbred manners, never greedy, never cross with one another; always sweet, gentle and quiet. The only sound ever made was a little sneeze when frightened.

Our little 'possums, "Little Bit", "Nosey", and "Shiver", believed in education. They attended school several times, going from first through fourth grade in one school and as high as sixth in another teaching the children all about marsupials. The 'possum is one of the few primitive animals left and the only marsupial native to North America. Marsupials carry their young in a pouch, but the 'possum is the only one that has as many as fifteen young at a time. Much smaller than a bumble bee, they live in the mother's pouch until they are strong enough to climb on her back.

Finally these little 'possums grew big enough to run about the garden eating bugs and worms. "Nosey" would often chew a fishing worm and was in the habit of rubbing it all over her fur coat when she was finished. We expected her to be unacceptable even to 'possum society, but strangely enough she was just as sweet and pretty as ever. That must have been the 'possum version of the mud pack beauty treatment.

One day they decided to go 'possum hunting, maybe for more 'possums. Anyway they couldn't be luckier, because they can run free in all of Hot Springs Mountain, protected from hunter and dogs by the National Park Service.

People on the move—

NEW FACES

Harbert, Stephen R., to Appraiser, WSC

NEW PLACES

Barden, Lawrence S., from Pk. Ranger, Horace M. Albright TC, to same, Acadia NP
 Blinn, Gilbert E., from Supv. Pk. Ranger, Death Valley NM, to Mgmt. Asst., Katmai NM
 Brazill, George M., from Admin. Clk., Bryce Canyon NP, to same, Organ Pipe Cactus NM
 Cammack, Leslie W., from Ch. Pk. Ranger, Petrified Forest NP, to Supt., Capulin Mtn. NM
 Cunningham, Erson A., from Foreman III, Maintenance, Death Valley NM, to Foreman III, Bldgs., Glacier NP
 Fladmark, Donald B., from Pk. Ranger, Horace M. Albright TC, to Pk. Tech., Bryce Canyon NP
 Garcia, Alexander, from Pk. Guide, Colonial NHP, to same, Fort Caroline NM
 Gordon, Garland J., from Archeologist, Effigy Mounds NM, to same, SW Archeological Center
 Gringer, Harold F., from Foreman III, Bldgs., Glacier NP, to same, Death Valley NM
 Hall, George A., from Supt., Mount McKinley NP, to Hist., SFSC
 Harris, Rodney W., from Pk. Guide, Carlsbad Caverns NP, to Pk. Tech., Navajo Lands Group, El Morro NM
 Holden, Robert J., from Hist., Fort Davis NHS, to same, Tumacacori NM
 Ice, Ronald J., from Archeologist, Tonto NM, to Pk. Ranger, Sanford RA & Albates NM
 Jamison, Lynn D., from Pers. Off., Mount Rainier NP, to Class. & Wage Spec., WRO
 Jones, David P., from Enrollee Supv., Wellfleet JCCCC, Cape Cod NS, to Pk. Tech., Zion NP
 Lusk, H. Gilbert, from Hist., WASO, to Environmental Programs Spec., Southern Utah Group, Cedar City, Utah
 Mathis, Paul E., from Supv. Pk. Ranger, Blue Ridge Pkwy., to same, Great Smoky Mtns. NP
 Morris, Robert L., from Supv. Pk. Ranger, Great Smoky Mtns. NP, to Supt., El Morro NM, Navajo Lands Group
 Olsen, Melvin L., from Pk. Ranger, Yellowstone NP, to same, Assateague NS, DS: Chincoteague, Va.
 Pemberton, Heath L., from Writer-Ed., WSC, to Ed., WASO
 Rabenstein, William M., from Pk. Nat., Great Sand Dunes NM, to same, Big Bend NP
 Siglin, Roger J., from Pk. Nat., Big Bend NP, to same, Timpanogos Cave NM
 Thompson, James B., from Program Analyst, WASO, to Supt., Theodore Roosevelt NMP
 Wallace, William F., from Supt., Gran Quivira NM, to same, Capitol Reef NM
 Zart, Sally A., from Hist., JNEM, to same, Fort Donelson NMP

Retirement Floodgates

Continued from page 1.

financing it provides for the CS Retirement Fund. If it hadn't been approved, officials estimate, the fund in 15 years would be paying out more than it was taking in.

In addition to the annuity bonus, high-three-year formula, and credit for sick leave, these features are provided by the new law:

- An additional 1 per cent will be added to cost-of-living raises given federal retirees and survivors, to take into account the six-month lag between the cost-of-living survey and the time annuitants actually get the money.

This provision will add 1 per cent to the pending 4 per cent annuity increase that will go to anybody retired before Nov. 1. Workers retiring after that date will not receive a retirement income adjustment.

- Permit remarriage of widows or widowers of employees who died, retired or left the government before July 18, 1966, if the survivor married after that date and was receiving an annuity payment before remarriage. This will permit those aged 60 or more to keep their survivor pension upon remarriage.

- Provides an annuity (for survivor annuity purposes) similar to Social Security survivor payments for employees who have completed 18 months of federal service.

- Give the surviving spouse at least 55 per cent of 40 per cent of the employee's average salary, or 55 per cent of the annuity projected to age 60, whichever is less.

The new law was the brainchild of Rep. Dominick V. Daniels (D-N.J.) who heads the House retirement subcommittee. Extra benefits were added by Sen. Gale McGee (D-Wyo.) of the Post Office and Civil Service committee before the Senate okayed it.

Daniels convinced House leaders to accept the Senate amendments rather than send the bill to a conference, where it could have gotten bogged down.

The only casualty in the bill was a Senate amendment that would have exempted the first \$3,000 of retirement income from federal income taxes. It was dropped after objections by Sen. John Williams (R-Del.) who pointed out that such revenue matters are supposed to originate in the House. Both McGee and Daniels agreed to cut it out, so the bill could move swiftly through the legislative process.

JOINING THE ALUMNI

Duncan, John C., from Pers. Staffing Spec., NCR
 Hoover, Aulton Neuton, from Supv. Pk. Ranger, Glacier NP
 Pease, Floyd E., from Det. Lt., NCR, U.S. Pk. Police

NPS NEWSLETTER, issued biweekly by the Office of the Director as a communications medium for Service personnel. Edited and Published by Div. of Park Practice, Cooperative Activities. Items of general interest to Service personnel on management, operations, economies, public service, and Service organizations are solicited. Address: Colin Ritter, Editor NPS NEWSLETTER, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.
