

My first contact with Extension was as a first time Home gardener having soil samples analyzed to achieve the optimal additive mix to improve vegetable production. With the help of the extension service we produced and consumed beautiful and delicious broccoli and tomatoes from a previously worn out backyard garden. My wife, Joan, and I also raised feeder pigs and found a market to sell them with the help of the Iredell County Extension Service.

In 1977 I graduated from UNC-Charlotte with a degree in Philosophy. Entering the insurance business, I contracted with the NC Farm Bureau in 1981 and the family and I moved to Burnsville in Yancey County in 1986.

Over the next several years I became involved as a volunteer with the extension service, working with C.E.D. Jim Ray and his successor Johnny Hensley. C.E.D. Hensley was a great promoter of Farm City Week and Yancey County Extension continues to use Farm City Week as a way to showcase their work. I have been Farm City Week Chairman since 1991. The next C.E.D. in Yancey County, Joyce Watts, developed and strengthened the Yancey Advisory Council and helped develop the skills of council members as advocates for extension programs.

C.E. D. Watts and Interim C.E.D. Denise Baker helped appoint me to the State Advisory Council with the approval of now retired District Director Harvey Fouts. I have enjoyed my involvement with the S.A.C., continuing to advocate for the good works of Cooperative Extension with much help from Joy Staton and her able administrative assistant Pam Dickson. Now, with the budget shortfall facing the state of North Carolina, this advocacy with the state leaders has become even more important to assure continued support of Extension programs.

C.E.S. is of vital importance to small isolated counties like Yancey. We continue to serve the people here under the leadership of C.E.D. Tres Magner and his capable staff. I am proud to be a volunteer for the organization that indeed is the extension of the universities to the people of our great state.

Jim Parlier