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## Meet The Members

“Team Pressel” - Loretta and Ron Pressel

Many of you may know the Pressels as the workers behind the Ways and Means tables, but there is much more to these active members. Joining the Indiana Gourd Society in 2000, Ron and Loretta have been married for 15 years, having met in church. Loretta has five grandchildren; Ron has three, with three great grandchildren.

Ron has a deep farming background. He has a degree in Agronomy from Purdue, and runs a 350 acre farm, in Walkerton, LaPorte County. He enjoys antique farm equipment, when not farming or working on his gourd art. He has been the Director of Kankakee Valley Rural Electric Members Co-operative for 12 years. Most people don't know that he is also an electronic specialist in guided missiles. He has served the IGS in many capacities: 2<sup>nd</sup> V.P., director, state fair chairman for 3 years and volunteers to help with whatever projects are needed.



Loretta worked for 30 years as a quality control inspector at Hawmet, which makes parts for aircraft engines. She takes that quality control mindset with her to the garden, as she deals with their extensive vegetable and herb garden, flower garden, grape arbor and tree nursery. She has been a Master Gardener for 12 years. After reaping the rewards of the garden, she enjoys preserving the produce, and entering fairs with all kinds of preserves, canning and baking, as well as all kinds of crafts. Using gourds, she has done leather dyeing, painting, weaving, decoupage, and other techniques. Loretta is currently IGS Recording Secretary and has served as Ways and Means chair several times.

“Team Pressel” go to auctions together, travel together, work on gourds together, volunteer at the LaPorte County Fair Development Committee and Log Cabin Committee, recreating pioneer days with fun and food. They are leaders in their church.

They grow their gourds on trellises, and that covers approximately one acre. They've grown most varieties of gourds, especially extra long handled dippers, apples, and cannon balls.

Ron learned to woodburn from Joe Lee, though he has enjoyed drawing since second grade. This urge to draw has fascinated him, has been a strong, lifetime interest. Ron has researched the themes of Native American Culture for many years, to understand the patterns they chose, and the culture behind the patterns. It is with this kind of respect that Ron and Loretta, as do many of our gourd artists, work on their pieces. “Artists try to honor those cultures through their gourd pieces. They put part of their own souls into their work.” It shows.

by Ruth Moorhead