

NAU Retirees FLASH

NAU Retirees Association (NAURA)
<https://in.nau.edu/naura/>

Winter 2024 Holiday Luncheon

Date: Wednesday, December 11, 2024
Place: NAU University Union
Havasupai A/B
Social: 11:00 - 11:30
Lunch: 11:30 - 1:00
Price: \$20 per person
RSVP: Thursday, December 5, 2024



Native American Buffet Menu

- Seasoned Ground Beef and Fry Bread
 - Green Chili and Pork Stew
- Baby Greens Salad and Balsamic Vinaigrette Dressing
 - Aztec Corn and Pinto Beans
- Sour Cream, Shredded Lettuce, Diced Tomatoes
 - Peach Cobbler
- Assorted Soft Drinks and Bottled Water

Make luncheon reservations by Thursday, December 5th. Enclosed with this newsletter is a reservation form for the Winter Luncheon. You can RSVP and pay online at nau.edu/naura or you can mail your check along with the reservation form to the NAURA Treasurer in time to arrive by December 5th. A prepaid reservation is required.

Donations this year will be to NAU's food pantry—Louie's Cupboard. The types of items needed are hygiene items, vegetarian foods, gluten free food, soups, healthy cereals and spices. Donations will be taken to Louie's Cupboard located in the University Union following the luncheon.

President's Corner

Greetings Fellow Retirees!

First, a thank you to Wally Rande and Nydia Nittmann for planning a fantastic Fall picnic. This was the largest attended event for the NAU Retirees Association since COVID. Yes, it was a bit windy, but it seemed everyone enjoyed catching up with folks they hadn't seen for a long time. We had retirees attend from the Phoenix and Tucson areas, and of course, Flagstaff and surrounding areas. The food was good, but the camaraderie was wonderful.

Fall is upon us, even though the weather outdoors seems to be saying it's still summer. However, as the leaves are turning a golden color and falling off the trees, and as Halloween is approaching, we are definitely in Fall. Our days are getting shorter; I was surprised the other day when I took my dog for a walk and realized it was dark before returning home. Thankfully, I always carry my phone with me and used the flashlight to not only light the way home, but provide a light so I could be seen by cars.

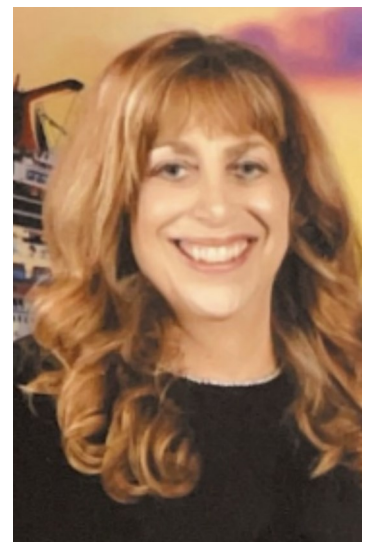
Things we can enjoy in the Fall include bluer skies, pumpkin spice lattes, pumpkin bread, and Fall also evokes the smell of cinnamon. I'm a "bootist", so Fall also gives me the opportunity to wear boots and cozy sweaters. While on hikes on crisp Fall days, the crunching of leaves underfoot is a sound I enjoy, as long as it's not in my backyard. The task of raking leaves and pine needles isn't the most fun, but being outdoors while doing so allows me time to talk with

neighbors, enjoy the scenery of the mountains, and get the outside of my home neat and clean for the winter. Yes, sometimes I hire someone to clean my yard, but I usually try and clean the front and let someone younger clean my larger backyard.

All that is to say, enjoy your surroundings this fall. Enjoy the sights, smells, and tastes of Autumn. Before long, those of us still living in Flagstaff will be having to shovel snow and wish we lived in warmer climates where that wasn't a necessity. Just like those of you who live in warmer climates are jealous of our summers, we are jealous of your winters. One day when I was griping about the snow, Clara Lovett, who was then the NAU President said to me, "Carole, just remember it only snows about 11-12 days a year."

With that, wishing everyone a great Fall and hope you'll join us for our holiday luncheon in December. Until then, take care,

Carole Mandino
NAURA President
2023-2024



Treasurer's Report

TREASURER'S REPORT: Submitted October 15, 2024

Starting Chase Bank Balance: August 15, 2024
\$33,071.56

Revenue:

Dues / Deposits - \$600 (6 memberships - 5 Annual and 1 Lifetime; \$10 scholarships; 10 lunches)	\$ 2,695.64
Edward Jones - \$270.56	
Vanco* - \$1,825.08 (22 memberships - 19 Annual and 3 Lifetime; 27 lunches)	

Expenditures:

Fall Picnic - \$724.82	\$ 3,631.40
Operations (CSV) - \$2,750.86	
Scholarship Gift Fee - \$155.72	

Total in Chase Bank Account: October 15, 2024 \$32,135.80

Edward Jones Account Balance: August 15, 2024 \$86,694.26

Paid to Chase Account	(\$ 270.56)
Gain in Account Value	\$ 4,098.13

Total in Edward Jones: October 15, 2024 \$90,521.83

Total in both accounts: October 15, 2024 \$122,657.63

Scholarship Donations 2024: \$ 2,070.00

*I will not show amounts from Vanco until they are actually recorded in a Chase statement. Hence, payments from Vanco (and some debits) will be slightly behind by roughly three weeks.

Respectfully Submitted,
Greg Larkin
Treasurer



Announcements

- **Open enrollment for retiree health plans** this year are as follows:
 ADOA including NAU BC/BS PPO Plan: October 28th – November 15th
 ASRS: November 1st – November 30th
 Medicare, Medigap, Plan D, Medicare Advantage: October 15th – December 7th

This is a passive enrollment period for ASRS and ADOA plans so unless you need to change your plan, no action is required. However, there are significant changes to plans, costs, benefits, deductibles and coverages so a review of that information is highly recommended.

Information about the 2025 plans has been mailed to you and is also available online. NAU Human Resources provides links to ADOA and ASRS guides and separately the NAU BCBS PPO. You can find these at <https://in.nau.edu/human-resources/benefits-retiree-open-enrollment-central/>. Additionally, an NAURA SPARK with additional information was emailed on October 14th.

Retirees are advised to consult the resources provided by ADOA, ASRS, Medicare, NAU Human Resources, and/or qualified insurance agents to make sure your selections still meet the needs of you and your family.

- **Highway Clean-Up** — On October 9, the NAU Retirees Association held its fall highway cleanup event. The cleanup started right near Cheshire and eight intrepid cleaners showed up for the event. We picked up nine full bags of litter. Even though this sounds like a lot, it is less than previously, and it looks like our efforts are having an effect. Thanks to all who worked on the clean-up. We will have another one in May, 2025, so please keep an eye out for an announcement in the spring and consider coming out to join us.



- The **Legislative Liaison** position on the NAURA Board is still vacant. If you are interested in following legislation that affects retirees and updating the membership, please contact NAURA about volunteering on the board.
- The **Benefits Representative** position on the NAURA Board will become vacant early next year. This position works closely with NAU to articulate retiree concerns, understand the structure of health insurance options and communicate to retirees options as to benefits and costs. If you are interested in volunteering in this position, please contact NAURA.

Announcements—continued

- The **Fall Picnic** held at the Ponderosa Pavilion on the NAU Campus on September 17, 2024 was a fun and well attended event. Although it was a windy day, the Pavilion provided nice cover while attendees enjoyed burgers and hotdogs and socialized with fellow retirees. Thank you all who attended the picnic and hope to see as many, if not more, attendees at upcoming events.



- As the **NAURA Activities Chair, Wally Rande** wants to make sure NAURA offers you activities in which you are interested. Watch for a survey in the next few months asking about your interests and the kinds of activities you would like to see offered by NAURA.
- Thank you to all members who renewed their membership for the upcoming year. The NAURA membership consists of 214 Annual Members and 462 Lifetime Members.



In Memory of our Beloved Members

Our condolences to the families of these NAU retirees who have recently passed away. (Information is from published obituaries). If you know of a retiree or spouse who has died, please contact Nydia Nittmann at nydia.nittmann@nau.edu.

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**Dean Blinn (1941-2024)** – died peacefully with family at his home in Kirkland, WA, on July 22, 2024. He was born in Carroll, IA, graduated in 1964 from Simpson College and married Sandra Lynn Haarvig in 1965. They were blessed with twin sons, Christopher Dean and Eric Lawrence in 1967. Dean continued his education with an MSc degree in plant ecology from the University of Montana and a PhD in aquatic ecology from the University of British Columbia, Vancouver B.C. His first faculty position was at the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks, ND. He then accepted a position at Northern Arizona University (NAU) where he was a faculty member of the Department of Biological Sciences at NAU for 30 years. Teaching undergraduate courses in General Biology, General Botany, and Microbial Ecology, and graduate courses in Phsycology, Limnology, and Stream Ecology, 48 of his students earned a master's or doctorate degree. Dean and Sandy moved to Washington in June of 2006 to be near their sons. Dean's life was blessed with a wonderful childhood, a beautiful, loving and caring wife, two sons beyond expectation, five wonderful grandchildren, an exciting career, and an active retirement.

## Welcome New Retirees - 6/24/2024—10/142024

|                        |                          |                          |
|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Jean Ann Adams         | Clint William Gleason    | Thomas Anthony Patin, Jr |
| Tarek Saad Amer        | Mariella Mercedes Herold | Barbara Ann Polstein     |
| Edwin Roy Anderson     | Holly Gay Hulen          | Madeline Lillian Reagan  |
| Tina J Ayers           | Kurt Timothy Johnson     | Diane A Rechel           |
| Susan Elizabeth Bigley | Laura Jane Jordan        | Blase S Scarnati, Jr     |
| Carol A Bolden         | Kenric M Kesler          | Rebecca Ann Scarnati     |
| David Lewis Bruner     | Thomas E Kolb            | Herbert P Schweizer      |
| John F Cardani         | Christopher S Lanterman  | Stephen Milbourn Shuster |
| Glennaris G Carter     | Charles W Lyon           | Judith Diane Springer    |
| Sung C Cha             | James Fletcher Moses     | Timothy Sweet            |
| Rena Jean Fowler       | Sheila Nair              | Barbara A Youngs         |
| Lena Rita Gaddis       | Pin Tian Ng              |                          |

# Jewels of the Sonoran Desert—Saguaro National Park and Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument

By Harlan Johnson

The Sonoran Desert boasts a wider diversity of plant and animal life than any other desert in North America. Varied elevations and patterns of seasonal rains have allowed for this diversity. People of Arizona have been blessed with two of the most peaceful and beautiful parts of this enormous desert: Saguaro National Park and Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument. Both offer great opportunities for touring, hiking, biking, birdwatching, and relaxation.

Gae and I have enjoyed camping trips to Organ Pipe almost every year of our thirty years of marriage. Before retirement from NAU, we reserved the time from the day after Christmas through New Year's Day for the milder weather and relaxing atmosphere of the monument. It was wonderful to enjoy a campfire every evening, the stands of organ pipe cactus, saguaros, cholla, and prickly pear surrounding us, and the blazing colors of each sunset. After the sun had set, we were treated with the clearest, brightest starshine anyone could ever see. In more recent years, we have gone in March, when the weather is at its best.



Each stay at Organ Pipe included hikes to the visitor center as well as the 5-mile round trip hike to Victoria Mine, which at one time yielded a rich lode of silver. The trail runs from Twin Peaks Campground to the mine and, even though somewhat long, is not overly strenuous. At the site of the mine are the ruins of the stone mine store and a few scattered mining tool parts. Along the way, you will see birds and an occasional small animal.

The best birdwatching area is in or near the campground, where on one of our visits in December, 21 different types of birds visited our campsite during a five-day stay. Colors ranged from bright red cardinals to black-feathered phainopeplas.

The campground offers 34 tent sites, 174 concrete-paved RV sites. There are modern restrooms, numerous freshwater spigots, and solar showers available.

The Ajo Mountain Drive offers great views of Organ Pipe. It can be traveled by car, bicycle, or on a National Park Service bus, which departs from the campground at scheduled times.

## Jewels of the Sonoran Desert—continued

Most travelers through Saguaro National Park experience views of large stands of Saguaros along with many other varieties of cacti by driving loop roadways through both the east and west districts of the park. Even though east and west areas are separated by the city of Tucson, it is worthwhile to drive both loops.



We have had several trips exploring Saguaro National Park, especially the west section. A wonderful place bordering the park is White Stallion Ranch, and it was there we spent lots of time in the saddle, getting a close-up view of the desert. Most of the riding was pretty mild on each of our several trips there, and by the third spring of going there we graduated to the mountain ride, a ride which is not for the faint-of-heart. That ride does, however, involve fantastic views.

Each stay at White Stallion Ranch was a treat, thanks to the True Family, who have an agreement with the National Park Service for horseback rides into Saguaro National Park. There are so many opportunities for enjoying time in the Sonoran Desert. Gae and I feel so fortunate to have been able to take part. If you feel a need to escape a winter storm in northern Arizona (or anywhere else), think of one or both of these National Park Service offerings.

## Volunteer News

The **Center for Service and Volunteerism’s (CSV) Axe of Service** volunteer engagement platform launched in August!

The Axe of Service volunteer platform serves as a centralized hub where anyone in Flagstaff can sign up for volunteer opportunities/events and track their hours all in one user-friendly site. Axe of Service will connect you with many organizations that need your support and where you can contribute to your community.

If you would like to learn more about this platform visit [axeofservice.nau.edu](http://axeofservice.nau.edu).

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Thank you to all retirees who have **volunteered with NAU Athletics** at NAU Women’s Soccer and Volleyball games and caught the action at no cost. There are still some home Volleyball games remaining and you will soon see a SPARK regarding volunteering at Women’s and Men’s Basketball games. GO JACKS!

Community Engagement

Previously, we introduced this Community Engagement section with the goal of sharing stories of your fellow retirees and their activities in their communities. Below are community engagement stories from a fellow retiree. If you would like to share your story, send an email to naura@nau.edu with a short description of your activity and how it supports your community. Thank you to all who provide a service that is beneficial for the health, strength and well-being of the community.

R. Shawn Nittmann - Coconino County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue Unit

I joined Coconino County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue Unit (SAR) as a result of a ride-along I did as part of a first aid class at Coconino Community College in 2013. I observed a military and civilian interagency mass casualty training exercise at Grand Canyon National Park. I was impressed with the SAR tech team's teamwork and esprit de corps and imagined the obvious service they performed for our community. As a life-long team player in sports and education – and a lifelong outdoorsman - I wanted to join and contribute and give back to my community in what seemed like a good fit for me. As it turns out, it has been everything I hoped for and more! I take great pride in the knowledge, skills and commitment of our team, who are great people and a privilege to work with, and the service that we perform day in and day out for individuals and families in Northern Arizona and visitors from outside our County. I enjoy this volunteer work because of the continuous challenge and the fact that no two incidents are alike.

The SAR unit consists of 3 paid Sheriff's Office personnel and over 100 trained volunteers who respond to about 150 calls for service annually in our county. We respond to calls that cannot be resolved by solo Sheriff's deputies or other agency first responders because of remote locations, challenging terrain, weather or other special circumstances. We respond to calls anywhere in Coconino County from 3,000 to nearly 13,000 feet in elevation in all environments and weather conditions from Sedona to Utah, on any of the Indian reservations and national forests from Winslow to Seligman. Most calls are resolved within 12 hours of the initial call-out. Calls are worked until they are resolved or the Sheriff's Office and family determines to suspend a search in the absence of new clues. A search may resume years after the original incident if new information warrants going back out.

Our volunteers are trained in everything from personal safety in the backcountry, wilderness medicine, off highway vehicle operation and trailering to navigation and search theory. We conduct back country (and sometimes urban) searches for lost and overdue persons, rescues for injured parties including hikers, climbers, hunters, mountain bikers and back country skiers. Additionally, we are deployed to assist with evidence searches in known or suspected crimes, fire or flood evacuations, traffic control during emergencies and to recover bodies ranging from those who died or were killed while recreating to murder or suicide victims. I personally am an operations leader, wilderness EMT and navigation and survival instructor for new volunteers, existing teammates and new Sheriff's deputies.

If you would like to learn more about Coconino County Sheriff's Search and Rescue Unit please visit coconinosar.org.

Executive Committee Directory—2024-2025

ELECTED:

President	Carole Mandino	carolem.naura@gmail.com
President-Elect	Claire Schonaerts	claireschonaerts@gmail.com
Past President	Kathleen Zahl	koz1946@hotmail.com
Secretary	Gae Johnson	gae.johnson@nau.edu
Treasurer	Greg Larkin	greg.larkin@nau.edu

APPOINTED:

Activities Chair	Wallace Rande	wrande@gmail.com
Archivist	Harlan Johnson	harlan.johnson@nau.edu
Athletics Dept. Liaison	Molly Munger	Molly.munger@nau.edu
Benefits Rep	Betsy Kerr	betsy.kerr@nau.edu
Highway Cleanup	Richard Coast	richard.coast@nau.edu
Legislative Liaison	VACANT	stan.lindstedt@gmail.com
ASRS/ADOA Liaison	John Hagood	john.hagood@nau.edu
Membership Chair	John Nauman	johnknauman@gmail.com
Newsletter Editor	Nydia Nittmann	nydia.nittmann@nau.edu
Scholarship Chair	Nydia Nittmann	nydia.nittmann@nau.edu
Web Master	Leslie Mathews	leslie_mathews@hotmail.com
Admin. Support	Nydia Nittmann	nydia.nittmann@nau.edu

NAURA PRESIDENT LIST—last 20 years

2005-2006	Harlan Johnson	2015-2016	Warren Johnson
2006-2007	Ben Zinnecker	2016-2017	Toni Fox
2007-2008	Charles Barnes	2017-2018	Norman Bertram
2008-2009	William Nietmann	2018-2019	Kathe Shinham
2009-2010	Zinnecker, Barnes, Nietmann	2019-2020	John Nauman
2010-2011	Walter "Hoppy" Hopkins	2020-2021	Rich Bowen
2011-2012	Don McCallum	2021-2022	Betsy Kerr
2012-2013	David Best	2022-2023	Kathleen Zahl
2013-2014	David Best	2023-2024	Carole Mandino
2014-2015	David McKell	2024-2025	Carole Mandino

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Published by NAU Retirees Association
Northern Arizona University
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