

# NAU Retirees FLASH

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

## Fall Picnic 2025

**Date:** Thursday, September 4th  
**Place:** Ponderosa Pavilion west of Walkup Skydome  
**Program:** Athletics Rep and Student Athlete  
**Social:** 11:00 - 11:30  
**Lunch:** 11:30 - 1:00  
**Price:** \$15 per person  
**RSVP:** Friday, August 29th

### Picnic in the Pines Buffet

- All Beef Hot Dogs
- Classic Hamburger
- Veggie Burger
- Lettuce, Tomato, Onion, Cheese
- Classic Potato Salad
- Assorted Lay's Chips
- Iced Tea and Water

**Make luncheon reservations by Friday, August 29th.** Enclosed with this newsletter is a reservation form for the Fall Picnic. You can RSVP and pay on-line at [nau.edu/naura](https://in.nau.edu/naura) or you can mail your check along with the reservation form to the NAURA Treasurer, NAU Box 5601, Flagstaff, AZ 86011, in time to arrive by August 29th. A prepaid reservation is required.



## President's Corner

Dear NAURA Fellow Associates and Friends,

I am delighted to be part of the team that supports your ever-growing zeal for NAU Faculty, Staff, and Students! YES! We are NAURA and we are well known for our ongoing service to others. As retired members of NAU, we have learned along the way that connections are key to a successful transition from employment to "retirement!" Truth be told, we might be busier now than when we gave NAU our best 40, 50, 60 hours a week. And here we are to celebrate our love for this university, its teachers, staff, and students. What a gift and opportunity we have as members of NAURA!

On Friday, August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025, 11:00 -3:00; we are inviting all NAURA members to a gathering at my and Phil's home in the cool pines of Munds Park, just 20 minutes south of the NAU Campus and 105 minutes from Phoenix. The offerings are simple: burgers on the grill, with lemonade, iced tea, beer, and wine to celebrate our retirement and our membership. Let's begin this year of Service to Others by celebrating who we are and *Catch the Volunteer Spirit!* Watch for more information via a SPARK email.



We need volunteers on many levels. Recently, a friend shared with me why service through volunteering is so important. By volunteering to NAURA, we are offered many opportunities to help our community. An example is how we designate a day to clear the highway of unsightly trash. Another is how we support student scholarships.

By volunteering, we make a difference by creating positive change in the lives of others. Our interactions with each other and with the community that meets us are truly significant. That changes US, and we can't help but grow from these interactions. How powerful! How meaningful! How lasting! By building new relationships, we gain personal growth and we are never too "retired" to learn. And perhaps one of the most important reasons for being part of an amazing organization is to give yourself and your spouse an opportunity for FUN! Yes, we all deserve fun opportunities, fun times, and fun memories! Let's make some fun together!

I am honored to serve as you president of NAURA. After 50 years in the field of education, I retired from the College of Education. I was honored to be the commencement speaker at graduation upon my retirement and continue to celebrate the graduates from our beloved NAU as a Marshall ever since. As selected Teacher of the Year from the College of Education and recipient of the David Williams award for Innovation, I am certain that no one stands alone. Those whose shoulders touch ours, and whose hearts are aligned with ours, make the difference. Nothing is done alone. We do this together.

I bless the opportunities to serve you, our students, and our communities. Together we can truly make a difference! I look forward to seeing you at NAURA events this upcoming year.

Be part of something wonderful! Be an active member of NAURA!

Dr. Claire E. Schonaerts  
NAURA President 2025-2026

# Treasurer's Report

<b>TREASURER'S REPORT:</b>	Submitted May 14, 2025	
<b>Starting Chase Bank Balance:</b>	February 12, 2025	\$ 27,408.63
<b>Revenue:</b>		\$ 2,229.06
Dues / Deposits - \$1,770.96		
(13 memberships - 9 Annual and 4 Lifetime;		
\$10 scholarships; 10 lunches)		
Name Tag Donation (Grabe/Stoller) - \$187.54		
Edward Jones - \$270.56		
<b>Expenditures:</b>		\$ 199.41
Name Tags/Misc.—\$199.41		
<b>Total in Chase Bank Account:</b>	May 14, 2025	\$ 29,438.28
<b>Edward Jones Account Balance:</b>	February 12, 2025	\$ 89,394.39
Paid to Chase Account		(\$ 270.56)
Loss in Account Value		(\$ 679.50)
<b>Total in Edward Jones:</b>	May 14, 2025	\$ 88,444.33
<b>Total in both accounts:</b>	May 14, 2025	\$117,882.61
<b>Scholarship Donations Fiscal Year 2025:</b>		\$ 755.00

\*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

- **ANNUAL Membership Renewals**—Parking permits expired on June 30, 2025 so if you haven't already, it's time to renew your annual membership to NAURA. To renew, go to [nau.edu/naura](http://nau.edu/naura) and follow the instructions on the Join/Renew Membership link.
- **Highway Clean-Up**—Eleven great volunteers braved the chilly wind on May 14th to clean the NAURA section of Highway 180 (Fort Valley road). All told, they picked up 11 bags of trash plus assorted odd things like tires, car bumpers and a running shoe with a can of beer stuffed in it (empty of course). Thanks to all the volunteers and please look for a notice of the next cleanup coming in October.
- **Nestle Purina Tour**—NAURA is working with Purina to arrange a tour of their Flagstaff facility in August. Watch for a SPARK email in July for more details.
- **BBQ at the Schonaerts**—NAURA members are invited to a gathering at Claire and Phil Schonaerts' cabin on Friday, August 1st from 11am—3pm in the cool pines of Munds Park—20 minutes south of Flagstaff and 105 minutes north of Phoenix. Watch for a SPARK email with more details and instructions to RSVP.



- **ASRS Pension PBIs**—Thanks to NAURA Member, Billy Davis, for relentlessly pursuing an explanation from Arizona State Retirement System (ASRS) related to Permanent Benefit Increases (PBI) to retired members receiving an ASRS Pension. For clarification, ASRS does not provide annual Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) based on inflation rates. Instead, ASRS provides PBIs based on investment gains and losses over a 10-year period. The last PBI received was in July 2022. When pressed about changing how adjustments are provided, ASRS explained that the benefit structure is determined by the State Legislature and ASRS cannot provide benefits that are not authorized by statute. Paul Matson, Executive Director of ASRS, did indicate that future changes in funded status and contribution rates could result in further discussion with policymakers about the impact of inflation rates on retiree benefits. For more information about ASRS PBIs go to <https://www.azasrs.gov/content/permanent-benefit-increase>.
- There are four open positions on the **NAURA Board**: President-Elect, Secretary, Benefits Committee Liaison and Athletics Department Liaison. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact NAURA at [naura.nau.edu](http://naura.nau.edu).

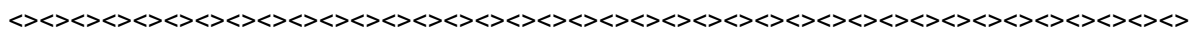


## Centennial Scholarship Recipients—2025-2026



My name is **Aubrey Schrameck**, and I was born and raised in Phoenix, Arizona. I am a Data Science major with minors in Mathematics and Statistics, graduating from NAU in May 2026. My academic and professional goals are rooted in a desire to use data as a tool for positive change. I am passionate about applying data-driven decision-making to address real-world challenges, and in my career, I aim to produce insights that help organizations and policymakers make informed, ethical, and impactful decisions that serve the greater good. This scholarship plays a critical role in supporting these aspirations as it will ease the financial burden of my education and allow me to fully engage in coursework, research, and internships that will prepare me to make a meaningful impact through data.

My name is **Gabe Wallace**, and I was born and raised in Flagstaff. I plan to graduate in 2027 with an English degree. I hope to continue my education to the doctorate level. There I hope to conduct research and teach at a university level. I want to research the impacts of digital communication on language, rhetoric, and public discourse. This scholarship helps me by giving me time. Every \$15.50 I receive through this scholarship saves me one hour, to devote to classes, homework, and writing. This equates to nearly 7 hours each week. This time will not be wasted as I strive to reach my goals.



On behalf of the NAURA Service Board, we would like to thank all NAURA members who have made a donation towards the NAURA Centennial Scholarship fund. You make it possible to continue to support excellent students such as Christine and Daniel in a manner that has a real impact on their ability to continue their education. If you have not contributed and wish to, please go to the Give Back tab on the [nau.edu/naura](http://nau.edu/naura) website for instructions on how to donate online or you can mail a check to NAURA Treasurer, PO Box 5601, Flagstaff, AZ 86011. Please indicate the funds are for the Centennial Scholarship.

## Community Engagement

On behalf of the Center for Service and Volunteerism and NAURA, THANK YOU to members who participated in the Earth Day service projects around the Flagstaff area! We could not think of a better way to celebrate Earth Day and National Volunteer Week than by spending a sunny day outside improving and restoring Flagstaff's natural community resources with an amazing group of volunteers.



## Welcome New Retirees - 2/24/2025—6/11/2025

Bridget Bero	Larry Liebowitz	Donald Peter Normandin
Shirley Bighorse	Eulla Lee Locket	Jennifer Francis Lynn Offutt
April L Brady	Yvette J Loeffler-Schmelzle	Brian Painter
Marcelle Lavieue Coder	Mike Dennis Marlow	Harlan Robert Teller
Susan Hilda Gillette	Julie Marie McCormick	Laura E Wasylenki
Andrea Redcay Graves	Susan Ann Miller	Mary Elizabeth Watwood
Kelly Ann Hays-Gilpin	Mercedes Milligan	Mark C Young
Paul Quinn Helford	Margaret Montfort	
Chris Edward Inguanti	Debra Nankivell	

## In Memory of our Beloved Members

**Our condolences to the families of these NAU retirees who have recently passed away.** If you know of a retiree or spouse who has died, please contact Nydia Nittmann at [nydia.nittmann@nau.edu](mailto:nydia.nittmann@nau.edu).

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**Terence Wayne Crites (1959-2025)** - Passed on February 27th, 2025. Terry Crites was born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1959 and went on to become a lifelong educator. He taught mathematics at the University of Missouri (Mizzou) before relocating his family to Flagstaff, Arizona, in 1990, where he continued teaching until his retirement in 2021.

He was a devoted father, son, husband and friend, and he actively volunteered with the Coconino County CASA program—an organization that advocates for the best interests of abused and neglected children in the courtroom. He was preceded in death by his parents, Ralph and Bergie Sue, and his older brother, Gene. He is survived by his sons, Michael and Andrew, his siblings Jay, Sherri, Donna, and Beth, and numerous cousins, nephews, nieces, and friends.

**Evelyn Lucile Lewis (1923-2024)** - Was born in Wichita, Kansas, on January 25, 1923, the third child of James Rolf and Edith Yoho Rolf. She was raised in Laverne, Oklahoma, in the heart of the dust bowl, with her six siblings. She endured a spartan life through her early years, which included the Great Depression. As a child she attended a one-room country school, Mt. Pleasant, and then Laverne High School, where she was valedictorian, class of 1940. She then attended Oklahoma Baptist University and married in 1942. After a stint in Alabama as the wife of an Army Air Corp enlistee, she continued her studies at OBU and completed her degree at OBU in 1949. In the interim she went off to the Navajo reservation in Arizona to teach Indian children in Dennehotso and in Lukachukai.

After her graduation from OBU, she continued with her career in education, teaching at various places in Arizona, including Maricopa, Camp Verde, and Wellton. She began teaching in primary grades, eventually progressing to high school. She obtained her Ed.D at Arizona State and continued her career as a professor at Northern Arizona University. Along the way she authored a textbook, *Housing Decisions*, which is still widely used in many high school classrooms, having gone through several revisions in its over 40 plus year history. Throughout her life, Evelyn consistently held to her firm love of God and her true Christian values. She was a regular contributor to her local church, the Arizona Baptist Children's Services, Arizona Baptist Foundation and the James and Edith Rolf Scholarship fund at OBU. She was a proud member of PEO.

Her impact on her students has been profound. A number attended her 100th birthday celebration; many reminded her of the great effect she had on their lives. A most rewarding thing she heard from former students was: "you were the best teacher I ever had" or "you were like a second mother to me".

Evelyn was "sharp as a tack" until the most recent illness that claimed her life. She would have been 102 had she made it to her birthday, January 25, 2025. Until the last year of her life, she kept herself busy with her water exercises and walks, reading and volunteering.



# In Search of the Ancestral Puebloans

By Tom Combrink

If you like adventure, new scenery, meeting interesting people and tasting new food . . . all while learning about the mysterious Ancestral Puebloan people who lived and disappeared in the southwestern US . . . then this article is for you. This is a summary of a trip called **“Ancestral Homelands: Hopi, Navajo, and Chaco Canyon”**, that I recently worked on for Road Scholar (RS). The trip covers the footprint of the Ancestral Puebloan influence, covering lands that are now mainly occupied by the Hopi and Navajo tribes. This trip is part of the regular catalog of trips offered by the NAU Road Scholar program.



Twenty-four participants from California, the Midwest and the East Coast arrived in Flagstaff on a Sunday to start their 7-day adventure. An orientation meeting was held to allow trip leaders, drivers and participants to introduce themselves and to set expectations for the trip as most of the trip took place either on the Hopi or Navajo reservations. Travel on the reservations can be challenging for participants from urban areas, as food choices and amenities are limited and sometimes non-existent.

The travel portion of the program started on Monday morning when participants boarded vans and drove to the Museum of Northern Arizona (MNA). At MNA, participants were divided into groups and were taken on an hour and a half tour after which group members had an hour to explore on their own. The museum exhibits provided a good overview of the ethnography and geography of the Colorado Plateau where we would be traveling. After lunch, we drove to Walnut Canyon National Monument to explore Ancestral Puebloan ruins. Group members who were willing and able to climb the 736 steps to the bottom of the canyon were taken by a group leader to visit the cliff dwellings on the Island Trail. Those who found the stairs too strenuous were taken on a guided nature walk along the rim trail. After dinner, a Pueblo culture overview and travel planning meeting was held at the hotel.

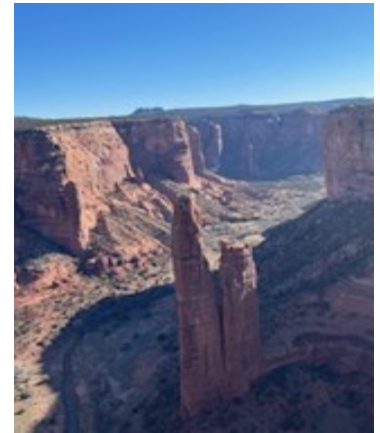
We departed Flagstaff Tuesday morning and drove to Chinle, AZ – the group’s base for the next two days. The scenery on the drive was startlingly beautiful moving from the Ponderosa pines of Flagstaff, through Pinion-Juniper scrublands to the isolated windswept Hopi mesas. We visited the Hopi Cultural Center on Second Mesa where group members were treated to a traditional Hopi pottery demonstration by well-known Tewa potter, Dorothy Ami. Dorothy is an accomplished speaker and quite the raconteur. One of my favorite Dorothy stories is about how she grades the sheep dung she buys from Navajo farmers that she uses to fire her pots. If there is too much salt in the dung, it will cause problems with the firing, and she refuses to buy it from the farmers. She always says with a smile, that “she knows her shit.”



## In Search of the Ancestral Puebloans—continued

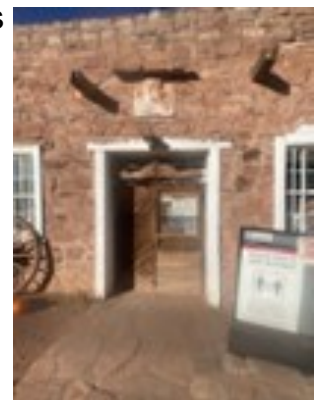
After lunch we drove to the Hopi Village of Walpi, located on First Mesa. Walpi village is considered to be one of the longest inhabited settlements in the US, having been occupied for at least 1000 years. Non-natives can only tour Walpi village with an official guide. The drive up to the old village is stunning as you pass through the Tewa villages of Hano and Sichomovi, where both villages cluster tightly to the edge of the mesa.

On our second day in Chinle, we toured the south rim of Canyon de Chelly. Our tour started at Spider Rock, a towering Navajo Sandstone pillar at the northern end of the canyon and ended at the National Park Service Visitors Center in Chinle. A local Dine' NPS Ranger lead us on a tour of a hogan located on the property. The participants learned about the importance of the hogan to the Dine', the structure and materials used in the construction, how the doorway to the hogan always faces east towards the rising sun and when you enter a hogan you move clockwise. Lunch was a traditional meal of hominy mutton stew, corn mush, fry bread and Navajo tea provided by a local woman at her house.



We proceeded to Canyon de Chelly in jeeps by entering the canyon via the bed of the Canyon de Chelly wash. Everyone was grateful for the skill of the jeep drivers and their ability to drive in thick sand and running water. We got to view petroglyph panels and saw evidence of dwellings in cliff niches everywhere in the canyon. The trip into the south arm of the canyon terminated at the famous White House Ruin, an outstanding example of a multi-story structure. After a fun day of seeing some additional isolated and spectacular sites, we arrived back at the hotel for dinner and a lively conversation about the Hozho' Navajo way of life.

The next morning, we headed to Gallup, NM where we spent two days exploring more historic sites. We visited two trading posts: Hubbell Trading Post and Richardson's Trading Post. Hubbell Trading Post is the oldest operational trading post on the Navajo nation and has been selling goods and trading in Native American Art since 1878. It was an amazing old building with creaky wooden floors and piles of trade goods and high-quality arts and crafts scattered about inside. Our party was able to visit the house of Lorenzo Hubbell, the founder of the trading post. At Richardsons Trading Post we learned about the intricacies and nuances of Navajo rug design and about the weavers and their history with the trading post.



## In Search of the Ancestral Puebloans—continued

In Window Rock, the capital of the Navajo Nation, we stopped at the Window Rock natural window in the Navajo Sandstone formation, visited a statue of Navajo Code Talkers from WWII, enjoyed points of interest mentioned in Tony Hillerman novels and visited the Navajo Nation Museum. We ended our first day in Gallup, NM at the hotel with dinner and an orientation for the trip to Chaco on the following day.

On the road to Chaco, we passed multiple sites of interest including Fort Wingate (birthplace of General Douglas A MacArthur), Thoreau (pronounced Threw) and Crownpoint. After a 30-mile drive on a dirt road we arrived at Chaco Culture National Historical Park. We knew we had arrived because we could see the Fajada Butte looming on the horizon.



After a quick stop at the visitor center, we proceeded to what is known as downtown Chaco, arriving at Pueblo Bonito which is the largest of the Puebloan great houses at Chaco. Pueblo Bonito was constructed in stages between AD 850 and AD 1150 and was the center of the Chacoan world. We were privileged to walk around the pueblo, listening to stories and feeling the magic of a bygone time as we squeezed through small doorways and investigated rooms in the open part of the structure. After a stop at the largest kiva structure, Casa Rinconada, our group had lunch near the visitor center and had the opportunity to try using an atlatl, a tool used by early hunters to throw spears.

We spent our final afternoon exploring Chetro Ketl, the second largest Chacoan Great House covering more than 3 acres and containing a great kiva and two rare elevated/tower kivas. The evening saw the group enjoying great Mexican food, margaritas, and reminiscing with their new friends about their journey from Flagstaff, via Hopi and Navajo to the fabulous and magical Chaco. Early the next morning the group headed back to Flagstaff to make their onward connections.

If you want to experience this, or a similar, adventure, visit the Road Scholar website at [nau.edu/roadscholar](http://nau.edu/roadscholar).

# Executive Committee Directory—2025-2026

## **ELECTED:**

|                        |                   |                            |
|------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>President</b>       | Claire Schonaerts | claireschonaerts@gmail.com |
| <b>President-Elect</b> | VACANT            |                            |
| <b>Past President</b>  | Carole Mandino    | carolem.naura@gmail.com    |
| <b>Secretary</b>       | VACANT            |                            |
| <b>Treasurer</b>       | Greg Larkin       | greg.larkin@nau.edu        |

## **APPOINTED:**

|                                     |                |                            |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Activities Chair</b>             | Wallace Rande  | wrande@gmail.com           |
| <b>Athletics Dept. Liaison</b>      | VACANT         |                            |
| <b>Health Benefits Cmte Liaison</b> | VACANT         |                            |
| <b>Highway Cleanup</b>              | Richard Coast  | richard.coast@nau.edu      |
| <b>ASRS/ADOA Liaison</b>            | John Hagood    | john.hagood@nau.edu        |
| <b>Membership Chair</b>             | John Nauman    | johnknauman@gmail.com      |
| <b>Newsletter Editor</b>            | Nydia Nittmann | nydia.nittmann@nau.edu     |
| <b>Scholarship Chair</b>            | Nydia Nittmann | nydia.nittmann@nau.edu     |
| <b>Web Master</b>                   | Leslie Mathews | leslie_mathews@hotmail.com |
| <b>Admin. Support</b>               | Nydia Nittmann | nydia.nittmann@nau.edu     |

## **NAURA PRESIDENT LIST—last 20 years**

|           |                             |           |                     |
|-----------|-----------------------------|-----------|---------------------|
| 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      |
| 2015-2016 | Warren Johnson              | 2025-2026 | Claire E Schonaerts |

## **NAU Retirees FLASH Newsletter**

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