Volume 34 No. 3 *Winter 2026*

NAU Retirees FLASH

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

Winter 2026 Holiday Luncheon

Date: **Thursday, December 10th**
Place: **NAU University Union**
Havasupai A/B
Program: **NAU Carolers**
Social: **11:00 - 11:30**
Lunch: **11:30 - 1:00**
Price: **$25 per person**
RSVP: **Friday, December 4th**



Sunday Supper Menu

- Rotisserie Style Chicken
- Old Fashioned Three-Cheese Macaroni
- Garlic Roasted Green Beans
- Rosemary-Garlic Red Bliss Potato Salad
- Fresh Garden Salad
- Cranberry-Cornbread Muffins
- Apple Cobbler with Streusel Topping and Brownies
- Lemonade and Cucumber Mint Infused Water

Make luncheon reservations by Friday, December 4th. Enclosed with this newsletter is a reservation form for the luncheon. You can RSVP and pay on-line 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 4th. 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

"Change is the only constant," Heraclitus, a Greek philosopher said some 2500 years ago. "There is nothing permanent except change."

Mother Nature proves this statement to be true with the coming and going of each season; and in your own experiences, you will probably agree. With new commitments looming, and old ideas hanging on to your coat tails, let us be open to CHANGE.

Our amazing NAURA friends that have newly retired, may need a bit of inspiration from us folks that began this journey a while ago, while some of us older retirees may need some new and fascinating ideas from our newly engaged retirees. Never-the-less, CHANGE is a beautiful part of becoming who we are, who we were meant to be, and how we are to manage change in our lives.

Just this past week, the leaves in Flagstaff became a kaleidoscope of color. Some leaves stay green; some lose their brightness and have turned to gold, orange, and the beautiful shades of brown that remind us of Mother Nature's fertile land. Even in central Arizona, we have enjoyed the hint of the new season. We can take a lesson from autumn leaves. We can remain the same, adapt to change, and add to the steady growth of our association. The invitation to participate in the many opportunities offered with a NAURA membership is yours.

Here we are on the brink of another season. A season of change and of service. As we leave the classrooms, the offices, the gardens, and buildings that made us part of the NAU community, we know that change will greet us with its exuberance and challenge.

Please join me with your spirit of challenge, your spirit of forward thinking, and your spirit of joy that welcomes new ways to change and bring a pattern of growth to NAURA.

How can we do that? By being part of a group of retirees that finds value in our Northern Arizona University retirees' status. Choose an opportunity to be a part of an amazing group of friends. There are new challenges of service, new beginnings, and new commitments to make that will help our association become an important contributor to the culture of NAU.

Please consider how NAURA can be part of your retirement. Be bold. Be adventurous. Be willing to accept new opportunities to meet the needs of our Northern Arizona University Retirees Association. Come join the constancy of change!

Yours most truly, gratefully serving,

Claire Schonaerts
NAURA President



Northen Arizona University

Treasurer's Report

TREASURER'S REPORT: Submitted August 15, 2026

Starting Chase Bank Balance: May 15, 2026 $ 21,479.77

Revenue: $ 7,672.98

Dues / Deposits -
(120 Annual & 12 Lifetime memberships; 3 picnic lunches; $475 in scholarships)

Expenditures: ($ 3,613.46)

NAU CSV - $3,319.05
Zoom Account - $144.41
AROHE - $120.00
Member Reimbursement - $30.00

Total in Chase Bank Account: August 15, 2026 $ 25,539.05

Edward Jones Account Balance: May 15, 2026
$102,496.53
Gain in Account Value $ 70.62

Total in Edward Jones: August 15, 2026 $102,567.15

Total in both accounts: August 15, 2026 $128,106.44

Scholarship Donations Fiscal Year 2027 $ 230.00

*I will not show amounts from Vanco until they are 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

- NAURA Members had the opportunity to attend two events in the past few months when the weather was perfect and the food was plentiful and delicious. The **Schonaerts BBQ Gathering** in Munds Park in August and the **Fall Picnic** at the Ponderosa Pavilion on the NAU campus were delightful settings for enjoying the company of fellow retirees.







- **Retiree Health Benefits Open Enrollment** for coverage through ADOA runs from October 19th through November 6th, 2026. If you are keeping your current coverage, YOU DO NOT NEED TO RE-ENROLL. If you need to make a change, go to az360.az.gov to change your carrier, add or remove dependents or make other changes. ADOA sent all enrollees a letter in late September describing changes to premiums or carriers.
  If you are covered through ASRS, their information will be mailed to you starting on October 13th. ASRS open enrollment runs the entire month of November.

- **Volunteering with NAU Athletics** – Some staffing changes in the NAU Athletics Department has brought about changes in retirees' opportunities to volunteer at athletic events. This year, retirees can volunteer at football and basketball games in exchange for two comp tickets to an upcoming football or basketball game. If you are interested in volunteering, contact Ashton Stowell at Ashton.stowell@nau.edu. Watch for a SPARK email for reminders of upcoming games.



On the Road—Basel, Switzerland

By Sandra Dannenfeldt

Do you love chocolates and croissants?
Do you love public transport that is on time to the minute and always clean?
Do you love history from Roman times to the present?
Then a holiday in Basel, Switzerland is for you as much as it was for us!

Basel evolved into the 4th largest city in Switzerland from Roman settlements going back centuries. Now a town of 190,000 population, the Roman name *Basilia* first appeared in 374 AD. Basel recognizes its Roman past with lovely bath murals in the old town.



Basel became the 12th canton (state) of Switzerland in 1501. The City Hall was built between 1504-1513 in recognition of Basel joining the Swiss Confederation. How would you like to be a city employee going to work in a 500-yr old building facing the Marketplatz where a daily farmers market is set up? All you need to do for lunch is step outside and buy an apple or a sandwich and coffee from the many vendors.

Not to be outdone by a Roman mural, Basel also boasts a great mural to music icons from around the world. How many can you recognize?
We spent plenty of time in front of the mural admiring the likenesses of our favorites. . . ABBA in the right hand front corner won for us. Who can go past "Dancing Queen" or "Desperado"?





On the Road—Basel, Switzerland - continued

The Holy Roman Catholic Church, Martin Luther and the beginnings of Protestant faiths, and mythology are on display in Basel. This now Luthern Church — formerly a Catholic Church — pays homage to knights of yore slaying dragons so worshipers can safely enter the church. Interesting, yes?



Grand Slam men's tennis champion Roger Federer is from Basel. Similar to the movie stars in Hollywood, he has his plaque in the Sidewalk of Famous Persons in Basel.



And finally, a picture of the Rhine River which brings Switzerland, France and Germany together as three of Europe's most visited countries.



Community Engagement

The goal of the Community Engagement section is to share stories of your activities in your communities. If you would like to share your story, send an email to naura@nau.edu with a short description of your activity and its support of your community. Thank you to all who provide a service that is beneficial for the health and well-being of the community.

Dr. Cathy A. Small – The Man in the Dog Park

It began more than a decade ago. I had an uncomfortable encounter one morning at Thorpe Park where I took my dogs to run before I went to work at NAU. It was early on a November morning, barely light yet. There was this bearded man already inside the park, slumped over at a picnic table with an army jacket and baseball hat. He looked homeless. There was no one else in sight, and I did not feel safe. I stood close to the fence gate, to exit quickly if he came toward me. I let my dogs run briefly, took them home, and felt I had just been lucky that nothing happened.

That chance and troubling meeting at the dog park set me on a journey that I could never have expected. I would see the man again and again at the park. He had never done anything alarming or suspect and took good care of his dog. It bothered me that all these negative impressions and attitudes were swirling in my head. I thought about this and decided to take one little step. One morning I sat down near him and said hello. Then we spoke, exchanging first names. After a few more meetings, we began talking—about the weather first, then about ourselves. A friendship grew over weeks, then months, and now years. It was more than five years after we first met, when I really knew Ross's story and cared about him, after our friendship had become real enough that Ross might trust me, that I asked Ross if he wanted to write a book together. I still remember his face.

We DID write that book together. I spent seven years interviewing people who live in their cars, on the streets, in shelters or in the woods in Northern Arizona. I checked in with Ross regularly about my findings, asking where I needed to go that I wasn't looking. The experience pulled me deeper and deeper into a world I had never seen of shelters and street living, panhandling and day labor, pawn shops and payday loans. It changed me personally. I started keeping (and still do) little giveaway bags in my car with snacks, water, sanitizer, and a bus passes. I came to know many unsheltered people who, previously, I wouldn't have spoken to, and I witnessed first-hand the obstacles they faced to get out of homelessness. I began volunteering at the public shelter, and continue to be a conduit for individual and church donations there.

Although the book '**The Man in the Dog Park'** was published in 2020, and won the local Viola award for storytelling, we realized that most folks probably wouldn't read a book on homelessness. With the support of the NARBHA Institute, we made an animated short film that is designed to spread a message of compassion about people living without shelter. It has been shown in schools, libraries, book clubs, civic organizations, and even government agencies. You can watch this touching 14-minute film free and pass it on freely at: **themaninthedogparkfilm.org**.

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.

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Stanley Beus (1930 – 2026) - Stanley Spencer Beus, 95, died on Wednesday, June 24, 2026. He was born July 31,1930 in Salt Lake City, UT-the oldest son of Rulon and Hope Beus. On February 18,1953, he married Carma Albrechtsen (deceased in 2003) in the Salt Lake temple.

Stanley grew up in Menan, ID graduating from Midway High School. Attended Ricks College, Utah State University, earned his PhD at UCLA. Served a mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, served in the U.S. Army during the Korean war. He and Carma later served a mission in Laie, Hawaii.

He was a lifelong devoted member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints where he served in various capacities. A paleontologist and regent professor at NAU in Flagstaff, AZ for 33 years. Retired to Sedona, AZ for 27 years. In 2006 married Mary Jane Smith (deceased 2024), returned to Flagstaff in 2021.

He was a devoted husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather. Stanley and Carma raised five children: four daughters and one son. He is survived by three daughters, one son, 17 grandchildren, 48 great-grandchildren, and two great-great-grandchildren.

Constance Kim (1937 – 2026) - Connie was born to Vernon and Inez Ferrell Weld in Seattle WA in 1937. Her first family lived on a farm near Poulsbo, WA until the early 40's when they moved to Portland, OR. Connie graduated from Girls Polytechnic High School in 1955, then began her college studies at Whitworth College in Spokane, WA. She interrupted her studies when she met and married Richard Kim. After the birth of their two children their family moved to Wisconsin and later to Michigan.

Connie and her family moved to Arizona in 1971. Always an active member of the First Federated Community Church, she sought to dedicate her life to service.

In 1986, years later after her move to Flagstaff, Connie finished her college degree at NAU (Go Lumberjacks!). As a sociology graduate, she led as well as followed up on the business of numerous local organizations such as the Dreamers Scholarship Committee and the NAACP. She also helped to establish the Flagstaff Townsite Historic Residential District. N.A.U. was her employer for 20 years where she worked until retirement as the friendly face of the Payroll Department.

Connie is survived by her daughter, Allyson Hazlehurst (Monte) of Eugene, OR and her son, Curtis Kim of Chicago, IL. Additionally, she is survived by grandchildren, Wes Hazlehurst, Topeka KS, Meg Hazlehurst, Seattle, WA, and John Curtis Bruun, Chicago, IL.
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In Memory of our Beloved Members – continued

James Pacey Kirk (1938 – 2026) – James died in Tucson, Arizona on April 30, 2026. Jim met his wife Nancy while they were both attending the University of Kansas. They were married at First Presbyterian Church, Salina, Kansas, on August 4, 1963. He taught math for one year at Hays (KS) High School, five years at West Junior High School in Lawrence, Kansas, and starting in 1968, 31 years at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, Arizona. Of the three levels of school he taught - junior high, high school, and university - he always said he liked junior high the best. In 2009 Nancy and Jim moved to Tucson to enjoy their retirement in warmer weather.

Despite his decline into Alzheimer's Disease, Jim remained himself in many ways to the end. As his Alzheimer's doctor said to Nancy, "He was a lovely man."

Jim is survived by his wife, Nancy Dodge Kirk, their son, Roger Hugh Kirk (Holly) of Long Beach CA, his sister, Elizabeth Ann Kirk Nelson of Topeka KS, and his brother, Gary Lee Kirk (Carol) of North Las Vegas NV.

James Manley (1953 – 2026) – Jim passed away on February 3, 2026. Born in Kansas City, Missouri, Jim was known for his determination, curiosity, and, as a teacher, his love and dedication to his students through the years. Jim enjoyed his teaching career in the Mesa School District, including Jefferson, Stevenson, and Mendoza Elementary Schools, and Northern Arizona University. His many professional accomplishments included a National Presidential Award for Excellence for Math and Science, 2000 Arizona Teacher of the Year, and the Milken National Education Award in 2000. He took immense pride in teaching and mentoring his students, community involvement, and enjoying life to the fullest.

Throughout his life, Jim had a strong interest in many things and especially appreciated the outdoors. He loved to camp, bike, hike, and ski. He favored tie-dyed t-shirts, tinkering with things at home, and listening to music of all genres. Jim was always curious about things and deeply dedicated to his family and students. Together with his wife, Julie, they enjoyed bike touring in many parts of the country. Jim's story was uniquely his, and he will be remembered in his way by those whose lives he touched.

Teressa Wiechec (1945 – 2026) - Teressa Ann (Carlson) Wiechec, loving wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, sister, and friend, passed away suddenly on May 12, 2026. After graduating from high school in North Dakota in 1963, Teressa completed secretarial training before marrying her high school sweetheart, Harvey Hiatt, in 1964. They welcomed two children and Theressa embraced family life with joy.

In Memory of our Beloved Members – continued

Following a move to New Mexico and later Flagstaff, Arizona, Teressa began a 26-year career at Northern Arizona University. Her exceptional organizational skills, attention to detail, and strong work ethic earned her the respect of colleagues and a series of promotions, culminating in her retirement as Business Manager for the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences in 2010.

In 1988, while singing with the Shepherd Singers at Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church in Flagstaff, Teressa met George Wiechec. Their marriage brought renewed joy, companionship, and countless adventures.

Nothing, however, brought Teressa greater joy than her family. She was an immensely proud mother to Bradley and Sheri and devoted to her grandchildren.

Teressa is survived by her beloved husband, George; her children, Bradley (Dana) and Sheri (Shelly); her grandsons, great-grandsons, stepchildren, family members and treasured friends.

Welcome New Retirees -

James A Allen	Nancy Johnson	Julie A Ryan
Diana Casillas Betoney	Kevin Glen Ketchner	Karen A Sealander
Edgar R Civitello, Jr	George William Koch	Donna Marie Simon
Joe Edward Crouse	James Leonard Latham	George Van Cleve Speer
Rand Decker	Warren Cecil Lucas	Rick A Stamer
Pia D M Driessen-Knittle	Claudia Leigh Mayer	Mitchell Strohman
Cynthia Fangman Farrell	Richard Greene McNeill, Jr	James W Swift
Kathleen Lynne Freel	Matthew Robert Mitchell	Suzanne Lea Taylor
Marjaneh Khadem Gilpatrick	Fernando Porfirio Monroy	David Allen Vining
Paul T Gremillion	Patricia A Nelson	Mary Catherine Walton
Charles Hammersley	Robert Neustadt	Joseph C Wegwert
Rebecca Dawn Hawley	Lorinda B Nuvayestewa	Jerry Lee Wellman
Emily Rachel Hoppe	Sylvia Ann Padilla	Franklin D Willis
David William Huffman	Russell R Prust	Julie A Wolfe
Russell Joseph Hunter	Kimberly Anne Ramirez	Tamara L Wyman
Paul W Jagodzinski	Karen J Renner	
Danny Johns	Vicki Dea Ross	

Executive Committee Directory – 2026 - 2027

ELECTED:		
President	Claire Schonaerts	claireschonaerts@gmail.com
President-Elect	VACANT	
Past President	Carole Mandino	carolem.naura@gmail.com
Secretary	VACANT	
Treasurer	Greg Larkin	greg.larkin@nau.edu
APPOINTED:		
Membership Chair	John Nauman	johnknauman@gmail.com
Newsletter Edito	Nydia Nittmann	nydia.nittmann@nau.edu
Scholarship Chair	Nydia Nittmann	nydia.nittmann@nau.edu
Web Master	Leslie Mathews	leslie_mathews@hotmail.com
Member-at-Large	Mirna Lord	mlord03@icloud.com
Member-at-Large	Tessie Moate	tgmoate@gmail.com
Member-at-Large	VACANT	
Admin. Support	Nydia Nittmann	nydia.nittmann@nau.edu

NAURA PRESIDENTS LIST – last 20 years

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 Schonaerts
2016-2017	Toni Fox	2026-2027	Claire Schonaerts

NAU Retirees FLASH Newsletter

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