

# Ozark Trails



Newsletter of the Greater Ozark Chapter of YMCA Alumni  
Serving Missouri, Northern Arkansas & Eastern Kansas  
July 2026

Nels Bagnardi, President  
Marty Rogers, Newsletter Editor

*The mission of YMCA Alumni: To provide opportunities for members to Connect, Travel, and Serve while nurturing worldwide Christian fellowship.*

## From the President's Desk...

Greetings fellow alumni! I hope this summer finds you well. It was great seeing many of you in Branson for our annual retreat in May. There was fun and merriment for all! For those of you who couldn't attend, we are planning 2 short one-night alumni get-togethers - one in the upcoming fall and one next spring. More details will follow.



Bruce Wands, our former Care & Concerns Officer, will now be our Chapter's EAF (Emergency Assistance Fund) Chairman. Franciene Gill has agreed to take over the position of Care & Concerns Officer. We are excited to have Franciene join our Executive Committee, and we know she will do a fantastic job!

Many people ask why they should belong to the YMCA Alumni group. I tell them that it's to reconnect with old friends that you've made throughout your Y career, the many opportunities for service through meaningful volunteer projects, as well as traveling with friends through the YMCA alumni sponsored travel club, Go Travel. Also, events where spouses are involved makes membership even more fun.

If you are interested in helping with the planning of upcoming events, and/or if you are interested in a Chapter leadership position, please reach out to me at [njbagnardi@gmail.com](mailto:njbagnardi@gmail.com) if you have any questions or suggestions.

Take care of yourselves, remember to hydrate, and have a super fantastic summer!

Nels Bagnardi  
President



## Highlights from The Connection: National news from YMCA Alumni

- Margaret Fogarty has been named President Elect of YMCA Alumni
- The Travel Club is offering a Swiss Rail trip for April 2027
- The World Federation of YMCA Retirees will meet in Toronto July 19-24, 2026



**SAVE THE DATE!** The 2027 YMCA Alumni Reunion will be in Kansas City, July 16-19, 2027. Put it on your calendar and join Y Alumni from all over the US for fellowship and fun. We'll be staying at the Embassy Suites near KCI. Watch for information on registration in the fall.



In June presidents from YMCA Alumni chapters from all over the US gathered with the Board for **48 Hours**, a training session held every other year. Participants shared ideas and success stories, as well as connecting with friends old and new. Nels Bagnardi represented the Greater Ozark Chapter.

Dave Rogers, Central region VP, and Louie Warren, Mott Chapter chair at 48 Hours in St Louis in June

The links below will take you to the websites shown.

[YMCA Alumni](#)

[YMCA Alumni  
Travel Club](#)

[Events & Chapter  
Resources](#)

[YMCA Alumni  
Facebook](#)

[Reconnect & Renew  
Membership](#)

[Join Us - New  
memberships](#)



We're asking for any help you can give to finish the National Service Project for the YMCA of the Seven Council Fires with excellence. **The Twig in LaPlant, South Dakota** will help the YMCA break new ground in serving people in their vast, low-population-density service area with youth and family programs. The Twig will serve as a model for the YMCA and others to serve those distant from their “local” YMCA facility.

To complete the project, the Y is...

- bringing in the storage containers that, with a wonderful architectural design, will become the Twig facility
- getting the infrastructure (foundation, water, electrical and sewer service, internet/phone, etc.) put in
- providing overall project management for the building efforts

YMCA Alumni has scheduled 6 Waves (groups of volunteers working for one-week each) to do the remaining work to make the Twig operational. The Waves run Tuesday-to-Tuesday, similar to the Tiny Home Waves of past years.

- a. Wave 1 – August 18 – 25
- b. Wave 2 – August 25 to September 1
- c. Wave 3 – September 1 – 8
- d. Wave 4 – September 8 – 15
- e. Wave 5 – September 15 – 22
- f. Wave 6 – September 22 – 29

The Twig Waves will be smaller than the Tiny Homes Waves – 10-15 people, because we’re working only on one building.

If you are interested in helping or have any additional questions, please contact [Gary Graham](#) or [Lee Muckey](#) to learn more about what’s involved and/or to sign up to help with one of the Waves.

# Greater Ozark Chapter Meeting

## May 1-3, 2026

The Greater Ozark Chapter had a great time in Branson! YMCA Alumni president, Phill Morgan and his wife, Marti, joined us from North Carolina. A highlight of the meeting was Debbie Redmond's report on the history of the Ozark Chapter of YMCA Alumni and her work in moving the history to the Missouri State Archives in St. Louis. She had copies of newspaper articles about various alumni from their years working for Y's around the US.



Back row, L-R: Beth & Gary Anders, Phill & Marti Morgan, Naomi & Dick Hundley, Franciene Gill, Nels & Judy Bagnardi, Kim Phillips

Front row, L-R: Debbie Redmond, Debra Phillips, Dave & Marty Rogers, Charley Redmond



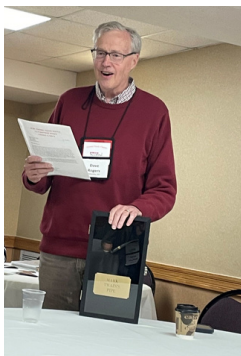
Marti & Phill Morgan



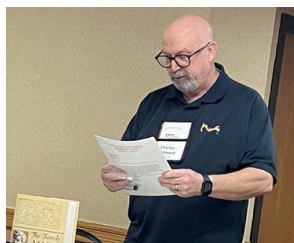
Dick & Naomi Hundley with their daughter and son-in-law, Gary & Beth Anders



Franciene Gill & her friend Cassandra Turney



Dave & Charley before auctioning off Mark Twain's pipe to raise money for World Service



Beth, Judy, Dick & Dave reminiscing

## News from around the Chapter

### Nels & Judy Bagnardi:



Recently, Nels and Judy Bagnardi hosted some old and dear friends from Vermont. Tom & Trudi McEnany were the Property Managers at YMCA Camp Abnaki in the Champlain Islands of Vermont when Nels became its new Director in 1996. They then followed Nels when he took the Executive Director's job with YMCA Camp Letts (part of Washington, DC), then continued working with Nels when he became the Executive Director of YMCA Trout Lodge & Camp Lakewood in Missouri, a branch of the Gateway Region YMCA in St. Louis.

Judy & Nels have been busy around the house this summer, mainly taking care of their vegetable and flower gardens, as well as taking short excursions around the state.

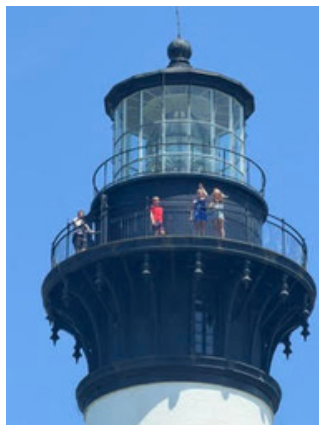


**Les Boone:** In early June I cruised with other Y Alumni to Alaska. Our first dinner on board the Celebrity Edge found us dining together! From the 7 position and clockwise: Jean Bock, our director from Georgia, Janet & Lowell Nees from Ohio, Karen Kohl & Steve Mott from California, Leslie Boone from Missouri, Joyce Forman & Deborah Winter from Indiana, Bert Bock from Georgia!



### Nancy & Craig Battersby:

The Battersbys just came back from a week at the Outer Banks of North Carolina. Our extended family came with us including our older daughter Kim, her husband Troy, and their kids (Paige - 22 and Payton - 17) and our younger daughter Erin, her husband Chris, and kids (Jackson - 13 and Scarlett - 11). I am attaching a few pictures including some of our crew in the waves under an interesting sky, grandkids waiving from the top of the Bodie Island Lighthouse, and an adventure at an Escape Room on a day it was too rainy for the beach. I cherish these group vacations where we can all be together.



**Dick and Jani Flynn:**

We've been busy with grandchildren's med school graduation, college graduation and our granddaughter's wedding. Hope to see everyone at the next get together.

**Dave & Marty Rogers:**

We stopped in Springfield on our way to Branson and helped celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of US Route 66. Hopefullt we'll be able to travel on more of the Mother Road this fall.

Dave recently traeled to Lima, Peru, with a youth mission group from our church. They worked with a local church serving the poorest of the poor. Before leaving Peru the group traveled to Cusco and Machu Pichu.

Marty has been busy in her role as chair of the church Administrative Team saying goodbye to one pastor and welcoming a new pastor.

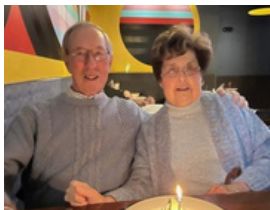


Overlooking Lima



Dave speaking at the church in Lima

Marty in Springfield celebrating 100 years of Route 66

**Bill & Mary Ching:**

We traveled to NE Iowa recently to celebrate Bill's brother-in-law's 90th birthday. He is still preaching every Sunday and Bill's sister continues to play the piano for the church.

Bill is nurturing his growing garden of tomatoes and pepper plants so he can make salsa to give to friends and family.

Mary is scheduled to have a hole in her heart fixed in mid-July. It is a bit of a surprise, but, does explain some of her health concerns. The Dr. says it is a short hospital stay and recovery for this type of surgery.

We are planning to go to SD and IA to visit friends and relatives in mid-August.

Bill received "Just Another Cakewalk Award" for a top fundraiser at the local YMCA.



### **Bruce & Karon Wands:**

We keep busy planning trips and cancelling trips (at the last minute) to visit Family and Friends So I guess there is a flicker of hope for the abatement or a solution of our health issues. We are over three months of not holding our first Great Grandson, soooo lots of reason to plan , hope, and pray!

Thank the Lord that Karron is my Care Giver, and that she stays healthy through this ordeal.

We are so looking forward to seeing our Y- Alumni Family. Thank you for all your prayer, phone calls and encouragement.

### **Kim & Debra Phillips:**

We were visiting Wye Mountain Arkansas this past spring. The Methodist Church conducts a fundraiser each spring at their daffodil farm and you can buy bulbs or make a contribution to come take family pics.



### **Charlie Lord:**

When Charlie is not relaxing with Apollo or following baseball, he is promoting his books A Love Story Between Two Worlds. Click here for an interview with Charlie:

<https://deepikabiblio3.wordpress.com/2026/06/09/interview-with-author-charlie-lord/>



### **Debbie & Charley Redmond:**

Debbie will be attending the World Council of YMCA's in Toronto later in July as chair of the Gateway Region Y International Committee. She hopes to attend meetings of the World Federation of YMCA Retirees, also.