



# Ozark Trails

Newsletter of the Greater Ozark Chapter of YMCA Alumni  
Serving Missouri, Northern Arkansas & Eastern Kansas  
September 2025

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...

I hope that all of you are treating life well. We are so excited about the upcoming fall and spring programs that we have scheduled for our members and their friends who are looking to join our Alumni group. We are looking for members who are interested in serving on our Board, and we are currently in need of a Vice President who can assist me in the planning of future Alumni events. Please contact me for more information. Also, if you are interested in more information about the National Alumni Association, please watch this video by Phill Morgan, current President of the YMCA Alumni Board:  
<https://youtu.be/CdhBrHxnhZ4?si=TVZwitCsjVPBZlOt>



For those of you who often find your calendars very crowded, please reserve the following dates:

- STL Cluster meeting October 16th beginning at 11:30am at the Carondelet YMCA. Lunch will be provided so please RSVP to me ([njbagnardi@gmail.com](mailto:njbagnardi@gmail.com)) by October 10th.
- KC Cluster meeting November 4<sup>th</sup> at 12 noon at Penny's in the Village, 4160 West 71st Street, Prairie Village, KS. Watch your email for more information.
- Greater Ozark Chapter Annual Spring Retreat scheduled for May 1-3, 2026 in Branson, known as the "live entertainment capital of the World". More information will be forthcoming.

I look forward to seeing you soon. May the upcoming holiday season bring you joy, good health and happiness, and have a super fantastic fall.

Smile out there!  
Nels Bagnardi,  
Greater Ozark Chapter President



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**All blue, underlined words are links to web sites for further exploring.**



## A look back at the April 2025 meeting in St. Charles, MO



Members of the Greater Ozark and Mott chapters gathering in St. Charles, Missouri, in April. Wet weather didn't keep us from exploring the history of this early river town.



Renee Tillman, Executive Director of the St. Charles Y, welcomed us



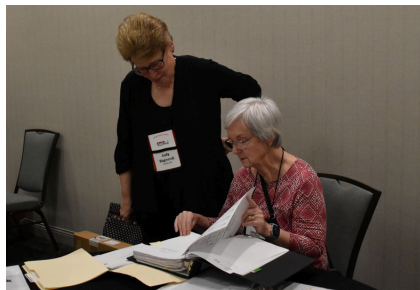
Andrea Allison-Putman, from Y Retirement



Table games, led by Carrie Simpson, Bill & Mary Ching's daughter, were a hit!



Dave Rogers & Karen Anderson at the Lewis & Clark Boat House Museum



Judy Bagnardi, incoming secretary-treasurer and Naomi Hundley, outgoing secretary-treasurer



Louie Warren & Nels Bagnardi at the first Missouri State Capitol



The Soda Museum and Main Street Arcade was a fun walk down memory lane. Bill Ching & Dave Rogers; Debbie Redmond, Connie Zimmerman & Naomi Hundley





# NATIONAL SERVICE PROJECT -YMCA Alumni-

Ribbon cutting  
& dedication  
Sept. 21, 2025



Ribbon cutting for North home with  
elders volunteers and Y CEO



Kitchen & dining



Jackie Bird sang  
and danced



Living room/bedroom



Drummers: Wakinyan Maza



Loft bedroom

- Planning began in 2020
- Countless Zoom meetings
- 4 years of construction
- 22 waves of volunteers
- 350 volunteer weeks
- \$1 million raised

 Bonnie Graham, above  
Deb Phillips, below

Click below to watch the  
[NSP dedication &  
celebration on YouTube](#)



Bathroom

Each home has 3  
murals painted by  
native artists.

Each home has a washing machine. One  
home is ADA compliant. Some have  
twin beds in the loft.



Kim & Deb Phillips  
and Dave & Marty  
Rogers represented the  
Greater Ozark  
Chapter. Kim & Dave  
worked to level the  
step to a house.



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

- ISC goes to Y Camp in the Czech Republic
- Travel Club has new offerings for 2026
- World Fellowship of YMCA Retirees (WFYR) will meet July 28-24, 2026 in Toronto

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World Fellowship of YMCA Retirees will have an international Zoom October 8<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m. EDT focusing on the July 2026 joint conference with the World Alliance of YMCAs and the World Fellowship of YMCA Retirees. Join by clicking here: [International Zoom](#)

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The ISC has been busy this year in the Czech Republic, Tijuana, Mexico, and over Zoom with teens from Siberia. Recently the ISC sent letters seeking donations to continue this work to provide YMCA Alumni with expertise and skills needed by a YMCA in a foreign country.

YMCA Alumni volunteers who are fluent in Spanish are needed for potential short-term assignments in Spanish speaking countries. If you are interested, please contact Tracy Muckey.

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### RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

October 1<sup>st</sup> is the beginning of YMCA Alumni membership renewal season. The easiest way to renew is by clicking the Reconnect & Renew link below.

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### Save the Dates - Greater Ozark Chapter

- October 16<sup>th</sup> St. Louis area Cluster Meeting 11:30 am at Carondelet YMCA. Lunch will be provided. RSVP to Nels Bagnardi by Oct. 10th
- November 4<sup>th</sup> Kansas City area Cluster Meeting 12 noon at Penny's in the Village, 4160 West 71st Street, Prairie Village, KS
- Greater Ozark Spring Meeting in Branson May 1 - 3, 2026.

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](#)



## News from around the Chapter

**Nels & Judy Bagnardi:** Where did the summer go?? Judy and Nelson have been very busy gardening, landscaping and sightseeing. We haven't traveled far from home this summer, due to the fact that Nelson had shoulder replacement surgery recently. Once he is healed, we hope to head to New England and New York to visit family and friends. Our daughter, Emma, will be visiting us at the end of October from Great Barrington MA. It's been awhile since she's made the trip home, and we are looking forward to it!



Nelson LOVES college football and he is excited about the upcoming season. In case you were wondering, Nelson's favorite college football teams are Colorado, Notre Dame, and Missouri!

Have a super fantastic fall from the Bagnardi's.

**Kim & Debra Phillips:** This photo was taken during our 50th anniversary this spring where we renewed our vows. The date, day of the week and even the time was the same as 50 years ago.



**Les Boone:** Les loves baseball and has been attending the Society for American Baseball Research for years. He connected with fellow researcher, Tom Hufford, at the annual convention in Dallas this year. Both were at the 1974 convention in Philadelphia.



Les and buddy Tom Hufford



Les at duck race fundraiser for Carondelet YMCA



Les and daughter Laurel at Busch Stadium for Savanna Bananas



**Charlie Lord:** Thanks to all of you for your patience with these e-mail and for helping me promote my book "A Love Story Between 2 Worlds"! Also Thank You for your personal reviews and suggestions! We have been lucky to receive several ratings of 4 - 4.5 and many 5 star ratings from various book publishers and promoters. Also we just received the books second best seller award for a month!

As Peggy's entire investigation wraps up, I am planning the 3rd and final edition of the book sometime next year! I really appreciate everyone's support - as we finish up a large promotional opportunity with the On-Line Book Club this month!

Greetings from **Dick and Jani Flynn:**

Since our last update, we had a fun winter and spring in Jupiter, FL. We enjoyed going to the St. Louis Cardinal's spring training games, going on a cruise with Dick's brother and sister, and hosting several visitors.

We recently survived the hot days of summer in Lawrence, KS. We celebrated a high school graduation, a college graduation, an engagement of a granddaughter, who will be getting married in Brooklyn next May. Now our youngest grandson is starting his freshman year at Yale and will be a member of the Lacrosse team. Our college graduate is attending the University of Arkansas Law school. We enjoyed a visit from our oldest granddaughter and her husband who are living in Slovakia.



One good thing that happened due to the pandemic is school sports are now streamed, so we are able to watch our grandson and granddaughter's lacrosse games wherever they are playing.

We had a great trip to Rochester, NY in June for a Flynn family reunion and a fun trip to CO in August before everyone headed back to college and high school.

Looking forward to seeing everyone this spring in Branson.



Chris, Dave, Marty,  
Stephanie & Wing at the  
Prado in Madrid



Montserrat, JC, Dave & Marty  
in Barcelona

**Dave & Marty Rogers:** Dave started his Y career as a World Service Worker in Madrid, Spain, 1974-1976, but had never been back until March 2025, when our family spent a wonderful week together in Madrid. Dave and Marty saw a bit of Seville and had a fabulous time in Barcelona and a couple of other places in Catalonia, hosted by JC and Montserrat. JC was a former YMCA international counselor from Barcelona who had worked for Dave for four summers before becoming a doctor.

Other travels found us in Pennsylvania, Florida, Minnesota, and California connecting with family and friends.

Marty is chair of the Administrative Board at church, and Dave continues to work with high school seniors through Flight Training, a year of preparing for life after high school. Dave's Spanish was helpful during their mission trip to Costa Rica in June.



World Service Workers  
1974-1976 gather for lunch in  
Minneapolis



**Bill & Mary Ching:** Bill is still in the choir for two services each Sunday and going to his weekly Bible study. He made 36 pints of Salsa to give to friends and relatives this summer. We went to a Ching Family reunion in Canada and were warmly greeted. We felt like our northern relatives looked at us as the cousins that have to put up with the crazy things happening in the USA.

We were hosts to our niece and nephew and their spouses for a few days last week. One couple from SD had not seen the Arch in St Louis so our daughter, Carrie, was their tour guide.





**Bruce & Karon Wands:** What a busy time since our spring gathering in St Charles. We took a couple of Amtrak trips – one to Washington, MO to visit son Derrick and family. He has made a remarkable recovery after his heart attack. Thanks to the many friends and relatives for prayers.

Another train trip just a little further east to Kirkwood Missouri to visit with Bill and Mary Ching and see “Come from Away” at the Muny. Always a great time with these special Y friends!

In mid-July we flew to upstate New York to celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Bonnie Brae Farm where Bruce and his four siblings grew up. There was a big celebration on the front lawn of the farm, complete with music and a catered dinner under a huge tent cover for 85 people! Bruce also got to visit with his high school friends at their 67<sup>th</sup> class reunion. We shared an Airbnb with brother Scott and Wendy from Anacortes, Washington.



Bonnie Brae Farm

Bruce’s sister, Cynthia, who he was very close to, was in the hospital during this time and chose to go into hospice care back at the farm shortly after we came back to Missouri. We all knew it was coming and we cherished the time spent with her. Memories, conversation and laughter...we were all so blessed to know her!

We had planned a 3 1/2 week, 4500 mile Amtrak trip west in August/September but due to Bruce’s Restless Leg Syndrome and being a “Fall Risk”, the doctor advised no travel. Legs are somewhat better and if they continue on that path, we will put another trip together and try again.

We are looking forward to seeing our Mott Chapter friends in Omaha in October. And also the Kansas City Cluster meeting to be scheduled. Will celebrate Christmas at Thanksgiving time in Atlanta at home of oldest grandchild and hubby. We are excited to tell you that they are expecting our first GREAT grandchild in December! Karron continues to be active at church and Bruce still volunteering with the “Wednesday Crew” for Habitat for Humanity.

### **Dick & Naomi Hundley:**

The Hundley’s have had an exciting year so far and look forward to more! Dick’s 90th birthday celebration was epic. Family traveled from Connecticut, Ohio, Maryland, Utah, Missouri and Alabama to celebrate with him. This was all arranged by our kids and a surprise to both of us. We were able to go to Branson with our kids in July. The Chings and the Wands were there the same weekend, so we got to visit briefly. We saw David at the Sight and Sound theater and loved it. We look forward to spending Thanksgiving in Missouri with daughter, Beth and family and will stay through Christmas. It will be fun to be with the great grandchildren! We hope to see everyone in Branson in 2026!

**Dick Hundley received a Lifetime membership in YMCA Alumni from chapter president Mary Ching. Naomi Hundley received a beautiful purse in recognition of her many years as secretary-treasurer.**



**Karen Anderson:** spent 10 days in Nova Scotia, Canada in July on a “finding your roots” trip. She visited four cemeteries in 3 towns where she has distant relatives buried, learned about sailing ships some of those relatives built, and saw stained glass windows dedicated to her great grandparents and a great uncle in a church that was built in 1958, though the great grandparents died in 1909 and 1917. She decided that “Archivists are reference librarians on steroids as they help you find your family story.” Now I understand why my mother, a reference librarian, always had such joy in sharing at the dinner table about the people that came to her desk with research questions. If you plan to visit towns with historical societies, give yourself at least 3 days per town because there will be more things to research than you knew when you started. Schedule ahead with them before you go so you choose days they are there. It gives them time to already pull the information you are seeking. She visited Amherst, Mount Allison in New Brunswick, Parrsboro, Advocate Harbour, Truro, Iona and Baddeck in Cape Breton, Halifax and Lunenburg. Most of the rest of the summer she has been babysitting in Wylie, TX most M-Fs with her now 16 month old grandson. At the end of the day she feels like a tired walking dictionary after naming everything they see and getting him to repeat it after me. She wishes that she had sheep so she didn’t have to mow her yard on her days at home.



Nova Scotia  
trip to find  
her roots



Karen with  
grandson  
Wylie



**Mary Reid & Butch Michael:** Mary is still Volunteering at Assistance League Thrift Shop weekly and participating in YMCA Silver Sneakers exercise classes 3 times weekly. She has recuperated from a compression back fracture. A fun Family Reunion was held over the 4th of July in Oklahoma. Choir restarted this fall as did Bible Study Fellowship. She hasn’t strayed too far from but enjoys eating out frequently!

Butch is looking forward to more Nebraska University winning football Games this season. 3 – 0 Record for now --- waiting to see how they do when they hit the BIG BOYS! He received a pacemaker in April and oversaw a couple of home remodel jobs this spring. Butch just doesn’t know how to say no and Bible Study, Choir, social activities at Avidor, a 55+ Active Living facility keep him busy. Time seems to fly by. He is thrilled for great granddaughter playing her first year of pro basketball in Bulgaria. Her season starts the first of October and Butch is eager to watch her play.