

Ranger School Alumni Association

Fall-2025

RSAA Alumni President's Report

Good day!

I hope this finds you well and you have been enjoying this fine end of summer/beginning of fall weather we have been experiencing. As I write this, the leaves are turning and we are planning on closing the alumni house and having a Board Of Directors (BOD) meeting on Saturday October 18. The opening and closing of the alumni house are a spring and fall event where alumni pitch in to complete some minor tasks around the house while winterizing it in the fall, and preparing it for rental season in the spring. Announcements are made prior to each event. I hope you can make it in the future! It is a fun time and more hands make the work go by quicker and easier.

In regards to the BOD, I have a sad announcement to make: Lee Berry ' passed away in September. He was on the Alumni Board for over 22 years and was a good friend to the school, and to fellow alumni. He will be deeply missed. Our condolences to Sue and the Berry family.

As we draw closer to Thanksgiving, I would like to thank a couple mentors I have had along the way. Unfortunately, I was unable to make the past reunion so I would like to take this opportunity to thank C. Westbrook & T. Martin for their continued support. Their dedication & passion for the Alumni Association has been very valuable in its ability to continue to serve the alumni. Thank you to Greg De La

Fleur and the rest of the reunion committee for providing the alumni with another fun filled reunion. And a special thanks to Sam MacDonald, our Office Manager, for all of the hard work and professionalism she puts into the position.

I look forward to seeing you at the next reunion in August '26.

Be well and Keep in Touch!

- Mike Rozeski- '90

2025 Reunion Report

A beautiful summer weekend was enjoyed at the 89th Annual Alumni Reunion. More than 160 fellow alumni registered and including family and guests there were over 250 people in attendance!

Many familiar faces were present as well as quite a few first timers. Special recognition to the class of '75 with 10 members celebrating their 50th and an extra special recognition to the class of '53 with 4 members celebrating 72 years!

There were no presentations of the Philip J. Haddock Award of Excellence or the Kermit E. Remele Award as there were no nominations. We encourage all alumni over the next year to think of someone who would be a qualified recipient so we can recognize them for their outstanding contributions service.

Saturday evening presented a Hawaiian themed night. A celebration

of the tropics with folks dressed up in festive shirts and other fashion accessories that were provided. Festivities concluded in spectacular



fashion with the ever popular live auction. Many unique and one of a kind items were sold, raising over \$2100 for the Legacy Scholarship fund. Thanks to the following alumni who graciously donated items to the live and silent auction: Wayne Kusmierczyk, Mark Cacamis, Karen Wright, Ellen Wright, Maren Stoddard, Jim Helmbrecht, Matt and

Megan Losey, Sue Berry, Noah Herne, Steve Whalen, Dana Miller, Adirondack Experience, Anne Pickering, ADK Holy Grail, Mike Webb, Tom Martin, Steve Racette, Jeff Sheldon, Class of 2015. It is only with everyone's continued support that this event is as successful as it is.

The reunion committee is already hard at work preparing next years reunion and I would like to personally thank them for all of their efforts to provide an enjoyable and fun experience for everyone.

What will the theme be for next year? Come join us for the 90th and find out. Save the date, August 7 & 8, 2026. We look forward to seeing everyone again.

Greg De La Fleur '94

My Friend Lee Berry-

Class of 1968 passed on September 18, 2025

Everything I learned from Lee Berry; he learned from trees. "Its important to have roots." Lee spent his life in and around Adams NY, a North Country, lake effect snow wilds. He was first in his Ranger School class of 1968. We all know how relentless, intelligent, diligent and helpful the number ones in all of our RS Classes were and are.

He was on a higher plane than the rest of us. Most of us were just happy to make it through the year and pass. He went to Vietnam in 1969-1970. He was a conscientious objector and refused to carry a gun. He served as a Med Tech during his tour. They said the cancer he beat NUMEROUS times in his life, the cancer which finally took him, was due to his service in Vietnam, the agent Orange and other effects of war.

"It pays to branch out." He built houses and finally acquired and ran Berry Brothers Lumber with his brother Gary for the rest of their lives. "If you really believe in something, don't be afraid to go out on a limb." They started in logging and lumber, branched out to land acquisition, and carved a life out for themselves and their families.

"Be flexible, don't break when a harsh wind blows." And "Sometimes you have to shed your old bark to grow." The mill burned a couple of times, and they rebuilt and continued forward every time. "Grow where you're planted." I could usually find him at the mill when I needed to get his opinion on anything. "Its more important to be honest than poplar." He taught me how to be brutally honest, and not to embellish. I was taken aback at the first dinner I had with the family at the totally honest and frank conversation. I never knew such honesty growing up. I couldn't beat him in Scrabble, or much of anything. Lee had sawdust in his veins and he and his wife Sue were forest people. Always in the woods, walking, working, four wheeling, Jeeping and sometimes just taking it

all in; never being still.

We were always doing projects, building camps and houses. I thought I knew how to work until I met Lee. A family friends son said to me after I told him we did all sorts of projects: "Really?! Lee makes you work until your gut hurts!" That he did...

I met Lee when he came to the Ranger School to visit his son, my classmate. He was using a walker to walk, and it wasn't until much later that I learned he was recovering from a house trailer falling on him in the middle of a thousand acres on Tug Hill. I then met his daughter, and I became part of the family. "Its OK to be a late bloomer." And then I wasn't part of the family. But Lee helped me move and told me that there was no animosity between us, and his honesty was right there to embrace me.

"Avoid people who try to cut you down." I spent a bunch of years travelling the US for work, seeing my son when I was back on Tug Hill. One of those weekends I had a heart attack, dropped my son off with his mom in Watertown and went to the ER. The only people who came to that ER were Lee and Sue. I was transferred to Syracuse, I had two stints put in and there they were again, picking me up to take me home from the hospital, checking on me to make sure I had everything I needed since I lived alone.

Lee and I were on the Ranger School Alumni Association Board of Directors for a dozen or so years together, I ran into some trouble and Lee was there with his hand out to help me up and let me know I could lean on him at any point in my life. I left the RSAA, and he continued, and when I stopped travelling and returned to NY, he asked me to come back to the RSAA Board. I reluctantly did and was able to serve with him for another 7 years. It was during this period that his cancer fight was real, and we travelled to

and from the board meetings together. These rides were important to me, and the conversations we had were priceless.

I bought a house south of Syracuse, but before I did, I asked him to come down and check it out. He did and confirmed my thoughts that the house and property had good bones, and I could work with it. Lee came down almost EVERY Saturday after I bought the house starting in the spring and right through the fall. Every time we finished on a Saturday, he'd give me a list of what to have done when he returned the next week, and I always had it done. We built a deck in a day and remodeled every room in the house.

I knew Lee for nearly three decades and although I wasn't his son, he treated me as though I was long after I stopped being his son in law. He was there for me every time I needed him to be and all the times I didn't know I needed him. Lee LOVED the Ranger School, and I believe this is what drew us to be so close. He donated time, knowledge, experience, finances and love to this school.

Those of us who were fortunate to know his dry humor and sharp wit won't easily forget him, and the knowledge lost with another Ranger School Alumni passing. If you're lucky, you can hear that wisdom as the wind whispers through the pines.

I will carry him in my heart until I am no more in this forest, and if I am lucky, we will meet again in the next stand of timber.

- Bob Diehl Ranger School Class of 1997; RSAA Secretary

From the Archives: Ranger School Grad to ADK Author



Jim Burnett was born in Antwerp NY in 1918 and graduated from the Ranger School in 1938. He married Florence in 1940. They moved to Cranberry Lake in 1949 and spent the rest of their lives there.

Jim worked many jobs - as a fishing and hunting guide, a diesel truck mechanic at Benson Mines, a boatman and

groundskeeper for the SUNY College of ESF's summer camp, a carpenter, and the owner of a local radiator repair shop.



Florence worked with Jim at ESF's summer camp, then at the Cranberry Lake post office from 1950 - 1975.

Burnett's Model A Ford "doodlebug" and furs

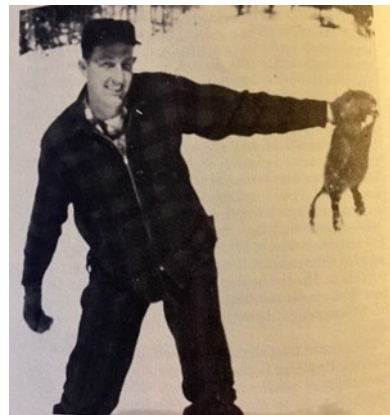
Jim

Burnett authored three books about his outdoor adventures. Adirondack Snow Flurries was published in



Burnetts' cabin - Matilda Bay

1987 and featured stories about living with snow, ice, and beavers in the Cranberry Lake region, including how he acquired a Model A Ford for \$50 and made it into a "doodlebug" to buzz up and down the lake



Burnett with a young beaver

Burnett's second book, What the Hell, came out in 1994 with his stories of working as an Adirondack hunting and fishing guide as well as stories about old guides and woodsmen he had encountered. His third book, Sporting in a Foreign Land, was published in 1997 and describes his experiences hunting and fishing in Canada.

Jim and Florence Burnett are buried in the Cranberry Lake Cemetery on Tooley Pond Road.

-Kathy Smith Greenwald '79

Ranger School Gathering in Montana

On Friday evening October 3rd I had the opportunity to meet with a group of Ranger School Alumni and former faculty members who live in the vicinity of Missoula, Montana. I had a planned visit to Missoula and thought it would be good to set up a gathering of Ranger School people while I was in town.

Thanks to a friend of mine, we were able to secure a conference room in the offices of the Downtown Missoula



Partnership. While there we were able to introduce ourselves to the group and share various memories of our time at the Ranger School. I was also able to give the group a brief update on the Ranger School.

After the gathering several of us continued our conversations at a local restaurant. It was my observation that all those in attendance appreciated meeting with fellow graduates of the Ranger School. Hopefully we will be able to organize future gatherings of alumni who live in other areas of the country.

Chris Westbrook '73

Missoula Gathering Participants: Chris Westbrook '73, Jona Malo '94, Godot Apuzo '92, Jeff Janke, former RS Faculty Member, Dick Schimer '62, Gary Ellingson '79 Shawn Cleveland, former RS Faculty Member (not pictured)

RS Alumni and Students Hit the Trails



In late August and early September, RS Alumni were joined by Class of 2026 students, faculty, and staff as they participated in the national event, 46CLIMBS, to raise awareness of mental illness and suicide prevention. Tim O'Mara and Jamie Savage led the Outing Club on two hikes in the High Peaks region. Tim and half the club hiked Hopkins Mountain and Jamie led the other half up Roostercomb. Brian

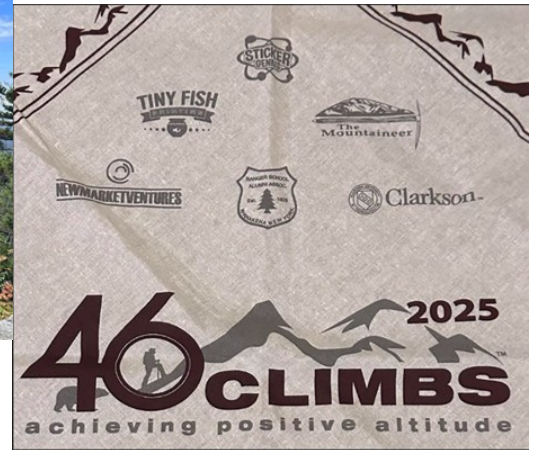
and Caren Donovan led a small group up the local favorite, Cat Mountain. Past RSAA president Tom Martin along with his wife, Linda, and brother hiked Poke-O-Moonshine.

The RSAA was a proud sponsor of the event this year! To date, the Ranger School Team raised \$1,475.00 for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP)!!

Class of 2026 Students Hopkins Mountain (left) and Cat Mountain (below)



RSAA ~ proud sponsor of the 46CLIMBS 2025 event



Class of 2026 students and the Donovan Family on Cat Mountain



Class of 2026 Students and Professor Savage on top of Roostercomb



For more information about this national event, visit 46climbs.com. Plan ahead and mark your calendar now to join us in 2026!!

HUGE thank you to Sam MacDonald, Greg Vaverchak, Tom Martin, and Dr. Johnston for their help in networking the RS Alumni and current RS students!!

Past RSAA President and family on Poke-O-Moonshine

RSAA Archive Committee Request

The committee has been trying to put together three complete collections of the "Alumni News" books. One set to be kept in the RSAA office, one in storage, and one on display for perusal at the Alumni house. Working with the Office Manager, it was found that the following years are missing from the house set: '28, '29, '30, '40, '54, '88, 2009, '20, '21, and '24

If you have any of these and are willing to donate them, please send them to the Alumni Office or bring them to the next Reunion. The committee and the Association greatly appreciates your efforts and generosity in this matter which will maintain a hands on and visual history of our unique group of people, along with some of their stories.

Are you current on your dues?

If you haven't paid your dues, you can do so on our website at www.nysrsaa.org or by filling out the enclosed Information Sheet.

Even if you are a life member, we appreciate you taking the time to fill out the information sheet. This lets us be sure we have the most current contact information for you.

Dues paying members receive the annual Alumni News, can make reservations for the Spaulding Memorial Alumni House, and pay lower Alumni Reunion registration fees!

AND REMEMBER- IF YOU WANT YOUR NEWS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE 2024 ALUMNI NEWS BOOK IT MUST BE RECEIVED IN TO THE ALUMNI OFFICE BY MAY 1.

Social Media Report

Our "new" website is no longer new since the transition in February! We have not received problem notifications as we did with the "old" website! Our current webmaster is receptive to major change requests and minor ones can be completed on our own. Please contact us with any problems, questions or suggestions!

The website, Facebook/Instagram, Flickr and LinkedIn are updated regularly. Please check the links below!

Chuck Carline, 2019

Keep in touch with your fellow Alumni!

NYS Ranger School Alumni Association, Inc.
nysrsaa.org

RSAA website through SUNY ESF:
<https://www.esf.edu/rangerschool/alumni/>

RSAA Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/RSAAinc/>

RSAA Instagram
https://www.instagram.com/nys_ranger_school_alumni/

Ranger School:
<https://www.esf.edu/rangerschool/>

Main Campus SUNY ESF Alumni:
<https://www.esf.edu/alumni/>

Ranger School Flickr:
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/rangerschool/>



Projects and Properties



Greetings Alumni

Another summer season has come and gone. The alumni house was occupied most of the summer! The alumni house was rented beginning on 11 May until 13 October and the campgrounds had regular visitors.

The alumni house was closed up for the year on 18/19 October. Please feel free to join alumni for the opening and closing of the property. The weekend is a chance to see alum and help with the chores that are necessary to winterize and prepare for summer use.

Some changes you may have noticed is the increased signage entering the property. These signs will be a reminder for alumni using the campgrounds to deposit the user fee in the slot on the garage. The other signs are a reminder that the property use is for dues paid alumni only.

If you have any suggestions for updates or repairs, please contact me or the board.

The process for renting the alumni house remains the same. Also, you must have paid your yearly alumni dues if you plan on using the house or campgrounds.

As we look forward, the opening of the alumni house and campgrounds will be in late April 2025.

Jerry Butler '05
Properties and Projects Manager

Ranger School Student Newspaper

Hello! My name is Ava Vogel and I am the writer of the Ranger School World News, a silly weekly newspaper here at the Ranger School this year. It mostly consists of new events or activities each week. For example, some new clubs this year include a club Rugby Team, a D&D club, and a Ham Radio club. I also promote events such as Knotty Patty concerts, the DEC Fall Photo Contest, or discounts at local stores. It started as a fun tradition from the camp I work at. We would make daily papers in the same way, providing info on events in a silly style. I missed writing it since it was a huge stress relief so I figure it would be nice to write one for the Ranger School. If there are any events, hikes, or information any alumni would like to share to this year's class I would be more than happy to share it here. Here is my email: avogel@syrr.edu, I write one every Friday and post it that night!

Wanakena Historical Association News



At the 2025 RSAA Reunion, the WHA presented our Two Towns Story Project (TTSP), an oral storytelling and personal narrative project that collects stories from the Clifton-Fine community. The TTSP seeks to preserve and celebrate the unique history and co culture of the Clifton-Fine community – including the Ranger School – by

recording stories and memories for our audio archive, which you can visit at www.twotownsstoryproject.com.

We recorded some fantastic alumni stories at the reunion, and we would love to hear from you too! If you'd like to tell a story from your class year or share why the Ranger School is special to you, please contact Kathy Greenwald

(79) at 301-928-7566 or greenwald4@verizon.net. EVERYONE has a story and we want to hear yours!

If you're in Wanakena from June through October, be sure to explore the WHA's self-guided Historic Walking Tour and visit the History Center (21 Second Street) which features a new exhibit each season as well as a permanent exhibit about the history of the Ranger School.

Check out the WHA's new website at www.wanakena.com to learn about our exhibits, events, and how you can get involved – by volunteering your time, making a donation, or becoming a WHA member.

Jim Coufal's Ranger School Legacy

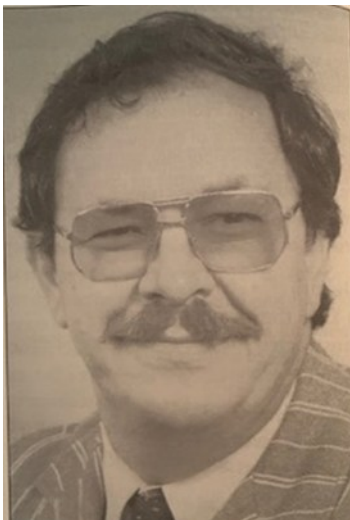
James E. "Jim" Coufal, age 87, passed away on August 13, 2025. He first came to the Ranger School as a student in the Class of 1957 - the last class to graduate under the leadership of Director James F. Dubuar. Director Dubuar instilled integrity and a strong work ethic in all his students and Jim Coufal carried those values with him throughout his life, passing them on to his students and colleagues.



After graduating from the Ranger School, Jim earned a B.S. in Forestry and a M.S. in Silviculture from the SUNY College of ESF. He worked as a staff forester for the Tennessee Valley Authority in Asheville, NC, before he and his wife, Carol, moved to Wanakena in 1965. Jim served on the Ranger School faculty for the next 17 years, including as Director for the last five of those years (1977 - 1982).

The Ranger School program evolved significantly during Jim's tenure, including the establishment of an A.A.S. Degree in Forest Technology, the move to a traditional school year calendar, and the admission of women to the program. These changes made the Ranger School more "in sync" with the outside world including with employers hiring during the field season, other colleges' academic calendars for students who wanted to pursue advanced degrees, and the expansion of career opportunities for women.

In 1980, Director Coufal set up the "Wanakena Institutional Development Account" through the ESF College Foundation for the Director of the Ranger School to be able to use funds from this account at his or her discretion.



In 1982, he transferred to the Faculty of Forestry at the College of ESF and served as Undergraduate Curriculum Coordinator and later as Interim Chairman of the Faculty of Forestry. While at ESF, Jim continued to advocate for the future of the Ranger School and its graduates. He retired from ESF in 1997.

His professional accomplishments included being elected President of the Society of American Foresters (SAF) which involved much travel and many speaking engagements. He is credited with instigating a modern era of the "land ethic" which resulted in the addition of a land ethic to the SAF Code of Ethics.

At various times in his life, Jim volunteered with the Jaycees, Knights of Columbus, Lions Club, Toastmasters, his local Parish Council, and school board. He always spoke his mind at meetings in his booming but compassionate voice! His many writings included forestry training manuals and books, presentations, magazine articles, philosophical essays, a local newspaper column, and poetry. He liked to make others laugh with a joke or a story, recognizing the power of joy and laughter in easing the tensions of life.

As a graduate, Professor, Director, and lifelong member of



the RSAA, Jim Coufal's commitment to the Ranger School was unwavering and recognized by the RSAA Board of Directors with the presentation of "The Phillip J. Haddock Award for Excellence" to him in 1993. Years later, when asked for his thoughts on being Director, he described **"the Ranger School as a big extended family whose members have experienced common discomfort, common triumph, and a love**

of place that creates a special bond." (The Director's Report, p. iv)

Donations to benefit the Ranger School in Jim's memory can be made through the ESF College Foundation online at <https://www.esf.edu/donate/index.php>. Please be sure to select "Ranger School" in the Fund Designation drop down menu, and then click on the box for "Tribute Gift" and type "In memory of Jim Coufal." Alternatively, checks made out to "ESF College Foundation," with "Wanakena Fund – Jim Coufal" specified in the memo line, can be sent to: ESF Development Office, P.O. Box 6486, Syracuse, NY 13217. Plans for ways to remember Jim at the Ranger School are being discussed.

-Kathy Smith Greenwald '79

Director's Report

Greetings from the Director's Office! We are entering our 10th week of the Fall semester. From our starting number of 62 students, the Class of 2026 remains strong at 60 students. The program numbers have finally settled, and we have one of our most even distributions with:

- Environmental and Natural Resources Conservation (ENRC): 20
- Forest Technology: 22
- Land Surveying Technology: 18

Student Activities: Student Government just got underway, with Class President Canyon Sundown and Vice President Lily Struble reporting in to the October 18 RSAA Board Meeting. Clubs are also active: the Outing Club is hiking (including two 26Climbs hikes at the beginning of the semester), Hockey Club is going into their third Saturday night skate of the year, Forestry Club has been hosting remote presentations and work days. New this year is the Amateur Radio Club, working with staff member Eric Wixon as their advisor. They are working on ham radio licenses and also to map radio 'dead spots' around campus to determine whether a repeater might help. We appreciate their work!

Budget Environment: You've been hearing about this in the news, so first thing to know – neither ESF nor the Ranger School are at any risk of closing! We (in particular the Ranger School!) do have SUNY's support, and the College worked hard over the last few months to develop a 5-year stabilization plan which SUNY has accepted. We are still in an austerity environment, and the 5-year plan does include staffing reduction as part of a voluntary separation plan. We do not yet know how the Ranger School may be impacted by this. We do know that we are being asked to do more with less, therefore if you are able to, please consider participating in the Ranger School Annual Appeal. Funds donated here will allow the Ranger School Directory to provide support for student activities, scholarship support, recreational equipment, academic equipment and supplies, faculty and staff professional development, and more. You may donate online using the QR Code shown here, or reach out to Chris Westbrook (westbrook@esf.edu) or me (mjohnston@esf.edu) for more information on how to help.



2026 Alumni News Book

This is the beginning of the 2026 ALUMNI NEWS. Please feel free to contribute articles, stories, artwork, photos, poetry, news etc. that are informative, entertaining and interesting to other alumni. These articles may not necessarily be the views or opinions of the RSAA Board of Directors, or the editor, but this is YOUR book.

Boosters are again available. This helps defray the costs of publishing and it is a good place to advertise. Wouldn't you or your company like to be included?

If interested fill out the order form below and email rangerschoolalumni@gmail.com with your ad. Or print and mail to RSAA, PO Box 48, Wanakena, NY 13695

Donations can be made via check payable to "RSAA" or via PayPal at <https://bit.ly/36w2CxH> If paying with PayPal please write "BOOSTERS" in the comment box.

_____ Whole page \$75 _____ 1/2 page \$40 _____ 1/4 page \$25 _____ one line listing \$15

Name: _____ Class: _____

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