



# History 1977 to 2013

**North American Strawberry Growers Association, Inc.**

[www.nasga.org](http://www.nasga.org)

**John Maas  
Ed and Betty Burns  
J. W. (Bill) Courter**

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**Why Do You Join An Association?**

You don't buy a newspaper, you buy news.  
 You don't buy life insurance, you buy security.  
 You don't buy glasses, you buy vision.  
 You don't buy awnings, you buy shade.  
 You don't buy membership in an association. . .  
 You buy the cooperation of people in your profession  
 with whom you can join hands to do the things . . .  
 that you cannot do alone.



## Mission

*NASGA's mission is to promote strawberry production and marketing throughout North America by encouraging sustainable culture, supporting basic and applied research, providing educational and marketing programs, and acting as an advocate and spokesperson for strawberry growers.*

# North American Strawberry Growers Association, Inc.

## History 1977 to 2013

John Maas, Ed and Betty Burns and J. W. (Bill) Courter

### INTRODUCTION

The North American Strawberry Growers Association, Inc. (NASGA) was organized by strawberry growers with support of educators and researchers in the strawberry industry. The organizational meeting, held March 2, 1977 in Wooster, Ohio, was arranged by grower George McConnell and Dr. Elden Stang (Fruit Specialist, Ohio State University). The following officers were elected:

President – **William Fulton**, Ohio  
President Elect – **Ralph Wetherell**, Connecticut  
Vice President – **Dan Scheel**, Wisconsin  
Secretary – **George McConnell**, Ohio  
Treasurer – **Ed Makielski**, Michigan  
Executive Secretary – **Glenn Stadelbacher**, Maryland

The stated purposes of the North American Strawberry Growers Association were to “promote production and marketing of small fruits, promote research, and to promote state berry associations.”

NASGA’s mission (revised and strengthened from time to time) is to promote strawberry production and marketing throughout North America by encouraging sustainable culture, supporting basic and applied research, providing educational and marketing programs, and acting as an advocate and voice for strawberry growers.

We recognize and thank the progressive growers, individuals and nursery owners with initiative, foresight and energy to organize and commit resources to NASGA for benefit of their industry and members past and present. This history is a tribute to them as well as the membership that followed during the last 35 years.

NASGA has improved strawberry production and marketing through support of USDA, state/provincial programs, promotion of beneficial legislation, educational publications and printed materials, marketing methods and information, conferences and meetings, international and domestic tours, farm visits and over \$1,000,000 given for research.

Every member can be proud of NASGA and its accomplishments. Today NASGA represents more than 250 members in 40 states, 10 provinces of Canada and 15 countries. NASGA continues to be a grower-based association strongly rooted in the original philosophy that ongoing research and education will provide knowledge to strengthen and improve strawberry production and marketing.

Strawberry culture and cultivars have changed and improved with time and technology. Likewise, NASGA has adapted to needs of members. We are pleased to document and record this history of your association.

# NASGA HISTORY

## SITUATION and BACKGROUND

The strawberry industry in the eastern United States prior to the 1940s was primarily invested in wholesale production. However, with increasing production and shipments from California, Louisiana, and Florida to eastern markets, growers in the east and mid-west began to depend more and more on local and on-farm sales. Pick-Your-Own (PYO) fresh fruit sales and retailing fresh pre-picked fruit and processed fruit became the major marketing mechanisms in the 1970s and 1980s. In the late 1980s and 1990s, PYO operations became limited due to changing demographics of local customers, where both parents of a family worked and fewer opportunities were available for consumers to pick their own fruit. A new marketing concept became extremely popular to customers; fresh pre-picked strawberries and strawberries processed for consumer consumption sold at on-farm markets. PYO continues to be highly successful in suburban environments although planting acreage has declined.

Glen Stadelbacher (Consultant and owner of Berry Associates, Salisbury, MD), suggested strongly in 1977 that growers consistently evaluate every aspect of their operations and make unbiased appraisals of the following: (1) potential income of each crop they grew, (2) evaluating the local competition and (3) the price lowering impact of wholesale markets in their region. He believed that individual growers must take responsibility for all phases of their operation, especially their marketing system, to ensure that their farm and family obtained a fair and reasonable income. Dr Stadelbacher also emphasized the value of learning gained from the experiences of other growers. He, therefore, encouraged membership in NASGA (*NASGA Newsletter* No. 2, October 5, 1977).

Many berry growers were thinking along the same lines as Stadelbacher. They believed that self-help was their most reasonable option to continue in the strawberry production business in eastern Canada and United States. As a result, the North American Strawberry Growers Association, Inc. (NASGA) was organized in Ohio as a non-profit corporation in 1977 and received federal 501(c)3 tax-exempt non-profit status February 4, 1981.

During these times of change in the strawberry industry, production education for growers was available through state experiment station research as well as through local and regional grower meetings. Strawberry schools were commonly held in many production areas where local growers were kept abreast of cultivar performance, cultural, and mechanization information. However, there still was a need for greater availability of information on fruit production and marketing. Legislative efforts were needed to support and influence federal (USDA) funding of horticultural and breeding programs deemed essential for the future success of the strawberry industry.

## MISSION

The need was apparent to support small fruit research at Beltsville, Maryland. Research budgets were being reduced, or eliminated, due to economic pressures. High on the list of concerns was the goal to support continuation of the USDA strawberry breeding program with retirement of Dr. Donald Scott in 1976. The need became urgent to support small fruit research at Beltsville. The USDA seemed to have little interest in continuing or funding the strawberry breeding program following Dr. Scott's retirement. New, locally-adapted varieties were needed to maximize production in eastern North America. USDA-Beltsville programs have been most successful in satisfying these needs. There also was concern in 1979-1980 that a small-fruit horticulturist might not be hired at the new USDA-ARS Appalachian Fruit Research Station in Kearneysville, WV. With NASGA lobbying efforts, these objectives were satisfactorily accomplished. Dr. Gene Galletta filled Dr. Scott's position at Beltsville and Dr. Fumiomi Takeda was hired at Kearneysville. These researchers, along with Dr. John Maas, Plant Pathologist, at Beltsville, strengthened the USDA Small Fruits Program.

The purposes of the Association were amended in 1978 to include the "exchange of information among members and to receive funds to support association goals." In 1981 additional amendments included legislative activity and the publication of papers, books, newsletters and periodicals.

A conflict in understanding, or interpretation of NASGA's mission, surfaced in 1982. Leaders stated that NASGA's goal was to bring growers together and exchange information about successful practices. Others thought NASGA's goal was to inform growers how to do a better job of growing. The latter was declared the job of the Cooperative Extension Service (at the state or local level) and the Executive Secretary, Dr. John Tompkins, wrote "some might think these objectives are identical but in reality they are worlds apart."

This was illustrated in President Ralph Wetherell's President's Message included in the *NASGA Newsletter*, May 24, 1982: "It is not the purpose of NASGA to promote any one growing system but rather to gather and disseminate information, good or bad. Sometimes a report of a failure and its reasons is more valuable to the industry than a grower success story. Dr. Glen Stadelbacher, Maryland strawberry consultant for about 50 growers, would have been the first to tell you that no two of his growers utilize the same growing system, but rather tailor basic cultural practices to fit their own soil types, climate, equipment, and individual desires for grower sophistication." And he said, "No system is final and changes are ongoing as information becomes available and proven, so it is with us."

A new formal mission statement was approved in 1995: *NASGA's mission is to promote strawberry production and marketing throughout North America by encouraging sustainable culture, supporting basic and applied research, providing educational and marketing programs, and acting as an advocate and spokesperson for strawberry growers.*

The Code of Regulations and Constitution of the North American Strawberry Growers Association was prepared in 1978, amended in 1981 to comply with ARS requirements for tax exempt status, and again in 1992. Since then, several amended editions of the NASGA Bylaws have been published that reflect the growth and evolution of NASGA. In 2005, and most recently in 2012, the Bylaws were amended to correctly reflect needs, duties, and other aspects of the organization affecting its current members, officers, and organizational structure.

## Recent Bylaws Amendments

Executive Director Pat Heuser in 2004 led a discussion of organizational issues that affected the NASGA Bylaws. The Bylaws Task Force proposed several changes to be incorporated into the new document. Amended Bylaws were accepted by the membership in 2005. The new Bylaws were published in the *2009 Membership Directory*.

**Purpose:** the lengthy rambling purpose for existence expressed in the 1992 Code of Regulations and Constitution was changed to incorporate the one developed by Bill Courter for the "*Eats and Treats*" cookbook:

"The North American Strawberry Growers Association promotes production and marketing of strawberries throughout North America by:

- Providing educational programs to members,
- Supporting basic and applied research,
- Encouraging sustainable culture,
- Developing marketing programs, and
- Serving as an advocate and voice for strawberry growers."

**Membership categories:** the categories of membership will consist of three classes (the Associate category was eliminated):

**Individual:** *i.e.*, professional (researchers, extension professional, government representatives, and others associated with educational or non-profit organizations and with full voting privileges).

**Business:** *i.e.*, sole proprietorships, partnerships, corporations, etc.

**Honorary:** honored members to receive full benefits of dues-paying members, but have no voting privileges. (Overseas membership distinctions were not included.)

**Size of the Board:** increased from 9 to 10 voting individuals, allowing the Past President to be a voting member. The composition of the Board increased from two officers (President and Vice President) to four (President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, and Secretary/Treasurer) plus five Directors. The Secretary/Treasurer in effect was to be the chief staff person ("Executive Director") and responsible for the financial and record keeping of the organization. The Second Vice President would be involved in planning and executing of annual conferences to more easily assume the chair of the First Vice President.

**Operational Year:** the membership year, fiscal year, and program year were shifted to the same calendar date, January 1.

**Committees:** only the Nominating and Research Committees were “standing committees” to allow more flexibility in appointing other committees appointed by the president. The Research Committee was to evaluate research proposals, recommend funding, and present recommendations to the Board of Directors for approval. The Board of Directors will approve all funding for research.

**Annual Meeting Quorum:** ten percent of members present at the time of a membership meeting will constitute the quorum necessary required to conduct business.

**Association’s Research Allocation:** changed to 5% - 25%. These funds were to be set aside for support of research, the amount to be determined at the discretion of the Board of Directors. Previously, the amount set aside for research support was mandated at no less than 25% of annual membership dues.

**Classes of Membership:** “The Board of Directors may establish additional classes of membership at any time” which apparently reinstated Overseas Membership categories, although at no time since the Association was incorporated were Overseas Memberships denied, but rather encouraged.

In 2012, the Association’s Bylaws were amended to update them to agree with current functions and officer positions. The position of Secretary was removed and replaced with Executive Director and the Treasurer's Office was recognized. Duties and responsibilities of both positions were delineated. A Corporate Membership also was added. A significant change was in the section regarding approval and funding of research proposals by the Board of Directors to “The Research Committee shall solicit, review, and evaluate proposals for research projects, presenting recommendations to the Research Foundation regarding funding support, sponsorship, or recognition. The Research Foundation shall approve all research funding, based on, but not exclusive to, the recommendations of the Research Committee.”

## LEADERSHIP

NASGA was organized and is directed by progressive strawberry growers, nurserymen and small-fruit researchers who served their industry well. Nine members served as directors in rotating three-year terms. Membership grew to over 400 in 1984 ranging from 420 to 473 during the next ten years. Carol Patterson brought valuable insights to serve members in marketing programs in 1982. Susan Butler followed her father’s footsteps to become president in 1996. Nate Nourse followed his father as president in 2009.

### Presidents

William Fulton	1977, 1978
Phil Ahrens	1979, 1980
Charles Thompson	1981
Ralph Wetherell	1982, 1983
George Butler	1984
Doug Carrigan	1985, 1986
Tim Nourse	1987, 1988
Tom Halat	1989, 1990
Don Belluz	1991
Norm Grieg	1992, 1993
Dave Whittamore	1994, 1995
Susan Butler	1996, 1997
Bill Jacobson	1998, 1999
Sam Irwin	2000, 2001
Charles Keddy	2002, 2003
Rudy Heeman	2004, 2005
Anne Geyer	2006
Steve Polter	2007, 2008
Nate Nourse	2009
Simon Parent	2010, 2011
Gary Bardenhagen	2012, 2013

### Executive Secretary and Treasurers

Glenn Stadelbacher & Ed Makielski	1977
George McConnell	1978 -1979
John & Gladys Tomkins	1980 -1985
Ed & Betty Burns	1986 -1990
Dick & Shirley Funt	1991
Ed & Betty Burns	1991- 1992
Bill & Treva Courter	1992 -1996
Bob & Donna Cobbledick	1997 - 1999
Erin (Griebe) Bruzewski	2000 - 2002

### **Executive Directors (new title)**

Pat Heuser	2003 - 2006
Kevin Schooley	2006 - present

#### Executive Director's duties:

Duties of the Executive Director include but may not be limited to:

1. Maintain financial records and Board minutes
2. Facilitate the Annual Membership Meeting
3. Support Research Foundation Activities
4. Coordinate a Summer Board Meeting and Tour
5. Produce a quarterly/bi-annual newsletter
6. Keep web-site & correspondence up-to-date
7. Increase membership as incentive for compensation

### **Treasurers (new title)**

Steve Polter	2010
Jami Simmons	2011 - present

#### Treasurer's duties:

Duties of the Treasurer are to prepare financial reports at each Directors meeting and a final year-end report for the Annual meeting, and submit books and vouchers for the audit when instructed to do so.

### **A huge "bump" in the road for the Association and its leadership –**

Dr. Richard Funt, and his wife Shirley, resigned unexpectedly, as NASGA Executive Secretaries during the 1991 Annual Meeting in St. Petersburg, FL. Dr. Funt was still working full-time as a horticultural specialist at The Ohio State University in Columbus, OH. It was assumed that professional time lost and family responsibilities were major factors in their decision. Don Belluz, NASGA President in 1991, asked Dr. Ed and Betty Burns to take over as Executive Secretaries again until they could be replaced by Dr. Bill and Treva Courter at the 1992 Annual Meeting in Williamsburg, Virginia.

Erin (Griebe) Bruzewski's first meeting as Executive Secretary was in Primm, Nevada (2000). Initially, it was a disaster since the hotel had changed all the parameters including the meeting room sites and the hotel section devoted to our bedrooms. Bob and Donna Cobbledick had negotiated

a perfectly good contract with the Primmadonna Casino and Convention Hotel. NASGA got "bumped" by a large computer company and we had to move. Our convention meeting rooms went from standard hotel ballrooms to an arena where sections were separated by drapes. The meeting itself was completed successfully although our members were disturbed by the noise impinging from near-by sessions. Without the help of Sam Erwin and Bill Jacobson, Erin might have quit right there. Prior Executive Secretaries have always been husband and wife teams from Gladys and John Tompkins to Bob and Donna Cobbledick. Bob Cobbledick later helped Erin set up the summer tour in 2000 but had no further contact after that.

Pat Heuser of Calabrese and Heuser Organizational Resource Group, an organizational management firm in Pennsylvania, was hired following Erin Griebe's departure in 2003. Ms. Heuser's position as Executive Secretary was changed to Executive Director as a condition of her being hired by NASGA. She, and her colleagues, Georgene Thompson and Jeanmarie Kline, managed other associations and performed duties in a like manner with NASGA. Position names have evolved ahead of Bylaw officer positions and statements; i.e., the Executive Director position was established to give separation of some duties and consolidation of others. Ms. Heuser kept the secretarial functions and also financial and organizational responsibilities.

Ms. Heuser was Executive Director from 2003 (the Puerto Vallarta, Mexico Annual Meeting) until the meeting in Savannah, Georgia in 2006 when she gave notice not to continue working for NASGA. The board agreed and began looking for another Executive Director. Kevin Schooley was hired as Executive Director in April, 2006. However, after paying annual meeting expenses and final management fees to Calabrese and Heuser, NASGA was fiscally in the red and in jeopardy of not being able to finance the upcoming summer tour and the following annual meeting.

During this troubling time Anne Geyer took over as President of NASGA (2006). Prior to that, Ms. Geyer worked closely with the board, and especially with Vice President Steve Polter. Steve, as the acting Treasurer, worked with the North American Strawberry Growers Research Foundation (see page 9) to stabilize finances, file 2005 tax forms, establish a new checking account, and initi-

ate the QuickBooks system as well as to improve other functions until Kevin Schooley was hired in April 2006. In addition, the IRS required that since NASGA was headquartered in Pennsylvania at the time and its Fulton Bank account also was in Pennsylvania that NASGA must be chartered there. Because NASGA is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization and originally incorporated in Ohio, and since the NASGA bank account was moved to the Fulton Bank in Pennsylvania meant that NASGA needed to be re-incorporated in Pennsylvania. The charter registration change was made as indicated in the amended Bylaws of 2008.

Board members Rudy Heeman, Anne Geyer, Ron Troyer, Robin Bailey, Dean Henry, Phil Johnson, Steve Polter, Del Yoder, Dr. Chad Finn, Dr. Pam Fisher, Charles Keddy, Pat Heuser and staff, and later Kevin Schooley, volunteered much time, dedication, expertise, and networking to minimize spending in 2005 and 2006 while carrying on the mission of NASGA during a year of great pressure and uncertainty.

The Board obtained a temporary loan of \$12,000 in 2005 from the North American Strawberry Growers Research Foundation, to finance the upcoming summer tour in Ontario and western New York and the annual meeting in Savannah, Georgia. Kevin Schooley working closely with the Board was instrumental, along with a successful summer tour, to put NASGA back onto a sound financial basis and repayment of the loan in 2006.

The joint meeting of NASGA and the 6<sup>th</sup> North American Strawberry Symposium, held in Ventura, California in 2007, was highly successful. Robin Bailey, of Lassen Canyon Nursery, enlisted large numbers of supporters for financial backing of the meeting. Assistance provided by the American Society for Horticultural Science (ASHS) was arranged by Dr. Barclay Poling, North Carolina State University, and on the ASHS Board, and Dr. David Handley, University of Maine. ASHS did on-line registrations and other administrative support. High attendance at this meeting of over 300 registrants, with a financial return greatly exceeding expenses, allowed NASGA to put \$50,000 into a CD while retaining sufficient reserves to finance operating expenses, including future tours and meetings.

## FUNDING

Money to support NASGA programs has been a constant source of discussion. In the beginning, funds primarily came from dues. Dues (see below), however, were insufficient to carry out the goals, projects and ongoing programs.

The Marketing Committee created projects for members, but the revenues were basically only self-supporting.

Creation of the Research Foundation and Grant Program (see page 9) followed by the Nursery Committee and voluntary donations from plant-sales provided additional funds. Funds were allocated for research through grants via the NASGA Research Committee and the North American Strawberry Growers Research Foundation.

### Dues

Dues have been raised (and lowered) over the years to balance needs with member concerns:

- 1977 - \$50 plus \$2/acre
- 1981 - \$100 plus \$4/acre
- 1985 - \$165; Professional from \$15 to \$80\*
- 1994 - \$175; Professional from \$35 to \$55
- 2011-
- New Member: \$85 USA, Canada, Mexico  
\$95 for other countries
- Renewal: \$175 for USA, Canada, Mexico  
\$190 for other countries
- Individual: (Professional, Student)  
\$55 for USA, Canada, Mexico  
\$65 for other countries
- Corporate: \$500

\*This resulted in a dramatic drop in Professional membership. The dues for Professionals was subsequently lowered.

## NASGA and Research Foundation Grant Program

The NASGA Bylaws originally required that not less than 25 percent of dues (a range of \$40,000-50,000) will be used to support research. Proposals are evaluated and recommended for funding by the Research Committee with individual grants usually ranging from \$1500 to \$10,000. **This “seed money” is matched 10-fold, or more, by cooperating universities or experiment stations.** In some instances, researchers may need to obtain grants from NASGA as a prior condition for receiving additional funds from their institution or other sources. NASGA has provided funds for research often amounting to 25 percent, or more, of the total research budget (which often exceeds \$100,000 in many years). Prior to 1992 NASGA funded research through small grants. Following the inception of the Research Foundation (see page 11), NASGA and the Foundation shared in funding research programs until the late 1990s when the Foundation took over the nursery contribution program and funding of research programs. NASGA currently supports research with 5% to 25% of annual dues. Much of these funds have been contributed to the Research Foundation rather than directly funding research projects.

## COMMITTEES

Over the years, various committees, Standing and Temporary, have been established. In 1992 and 1993, Standing Committees were the Research (Marvin Pritts, 1992 and 1993 Chair), Marketing (Ann Cline, Ellen Todd, Linda Stanley), Nominating (Don Belluz 1992 Chair, Doug Carrigan 1993 Chair), Membership (Linda Struye 1992 Chair, Wayne Robertson 1993 Chair), Legislative (Tim Nourse 1992, 1993 Chair), and Program (Ellen Todd 1992 Chair, Dave Whittamore 1993 Chair). Temporary Committees were Marketing Research (Del Yoder 1992 Chair, Frank Skaff 1993 Chair), Finance (Norm Grieg 1992, 1993 Chair), and Newsletter (Susan Butler (1992, 1993 Chair).

Some of these committees have been absorbed by the present structure of NASGA with an Executive Director whose duties include those of several committees (eg.: *NASGA NEWS*, and Finance, Marketing, and Program committees). In the 2008 NASGA Bylaws, the only Special Committees designated are the Nominating Committee and the Research Committee. However, several committees have been appointed that operate for unrestricted tenures: Nursery, Legislative, and Membership. Marketing has been deemphasized, except during Summer Tours and the Finance, Program, and Newsletter committees are now responsibilities of the Executive Director.

### Legislative Committee

The Legislative Committee studies and reports on national and regional legislation that affect member growers and interacts with other groups to the same ends.

Its sub-committee, the USDA Committee, interacts with researchers and administrators involved in support of funding, hiring, and research objectives of the strawberry breeding program at Beltsville, Maryland. Support of Dr. Gene Galletta being hired in 1977 as replacement for Dr. Don Scott and reestablishment of the Beltsville strawberry breeding program in the federal budget in 2008 are prime examples of the effectiveness of the Legislative Committee.

### **Legislative Committee Chairs**

Glenn Stadelbacher	1978 -1987
Doug Carrigan	1988 -1990
Tim Nourse	1991 -2006
Anne Geyer	2006 -2010
Steve Polter	2011 - present

### **U.S.D.A. Strawberry Breeding: History-Beltsville, Maryland**

George Darrow	1919 - 1957
Donald Scott	1946 - 1975
Arlen Draper	1964 - 1988
John Maas*	1968 - 2002
Gene Galletta*	1977 - 1998
Stan Hokanson*	1998 - 2000
Kim Lewers*	2001 - present

\*Serve(d) on the NASGA Research Committee and are/were very active in working with and supporting NASGA.

### **Research Committee**

The Research Committee was established as a Standing Committee explicitly to solicit strawberry research proposals in production and marketing research, to evaluate research proposals and recommend funding of research projects deemed to be of benefit to NASGA members.

### **Research Committee Chairs**

Dan Scheel	1977 - 1982
Phil Ahrens	1983 - 1990
Marvin Pritts	1991 - 1994
Gail Nonnecke	1995 - 2011
Kim Lewers	2012 - present

### **Marketing Committee**

NASGA since its inception has been heavily invested in marketing initiatives. During the heyday of pick-your-own strawberries, on-farm pre-picked fruit sales added enticements for customer participation, marketing was considered one of the most important programs that benefit NASGA membership. The marketing committee developed posters and signs, advertising, logos, newspaper inserts, recipe contests, a coloring book, crafts, video tapes, cook books, and many other aids. Formal marketing committee activity was deemphasized in the late 1990s. However, marketing continues to be a major theme during annual meetings, summer tours, and through the *NASGA NEWS* and the NASGA web site.

Marketing concepts are provided during the summer tours where members visit successful operations from a wide range of farms in Canada and the U.S. The NASGA leadership has developed successful summer tours and annual conference programs that have invigorated the Association by bringing interesting and updated programs to growers, but they are financially successful for the Association as well.

### **Marketing Committee Chairs**

Bill Courter	1984 - 1991
Claire Belluz	1988 - 1990
Ellen Todd	1990 - 1994
Florence Heeman	1995 - 1996
Bea Statz	1997 - 1999
Anne Geyer	2001 - 2002
Discontinued	

Linda Stanley Ramos was hired by NASGA from 1984 to 1996 as a marketing consultant who brought her expertise to marketing committees and membership, especially during annual meetings where she presented demonstrations and gave talks on marketing initiatives suited for on-farm sales and advertising.

### **Nursery Committee**

A voluntary nursery-plant sales assessment program was proposed in 1991 by Dr. Marvin Pritts and the Nursery Committee was formed in 1992.

The NASGA Nursery Committee, first chaired by Tom Halat and organized with Dale Spiegelberg as well as other nursery owners, lead to a formal agreement to establish a system whereby voluntary contributions based on plant sales would support strawberry research in North America. The NASGA Research Foundation was established in 1992 as a result of these initiatives.

### **Nursery Committee Chairs**

Tom Halat	1992 - 1997
Don Belluz	1998 - 2001
Bill Jacobson	2002 - 2010
Blaine Staples	2011 - present

## RESEARCH FOUNDATION

The Research Foundation was proposed by Dale Spiegelberg and initiated through the untiring efforts of Tom Halat and several nursery owners to fund strawberry research (see below).

The North American Strawberry Growers Research Foundation, Inc., with IRS 501(c)3 status, was established by NASGA members in 1992 to function as the granting arm of NASGA. Funds have been raised, since 1993, primarily through a cooperative and voluntary program whereby nursery owners contribute according to plant sales. This program has been very successful! Additional funds are derived from grower contributions, NASGA dues, and silent auctions held at annual NASGA meetings. The nursery component of this initiative has changed over the years, with some going out of business and others entering the program. At present 12 nurseries in Canada and the United States are the backbones of the research grant program. Annual contributions vary in proportion to nursery plant sales.

The Research Foundation has the responsibility to administer funds contributed by strawberry plant nurseries to ensure continuance of a viable program for funding strawberry research of regional impact. Research grant proposals first are evaluated by the NASGA Research Committee and then submitted to the Research Foundation Trustees for approval. In rare instances, the Trustees may add or delete specific proposals, but generally all recommendations are approved. The Foundation President presents this information to the Nursery Committee, the NASGA Board of Directors, and at the annual Membership Business meeting during the annual meeting. The Foundation President is an ex officio member of the NASGA Research Committee and the Chair of the Nursery Committee serves as Trustee of the Foundation.

## Research Foundation Officers

### Presidents

Dale Spiegelberg	1992 - 1995
Edward Burns	1996 - 2002
John Maas	2002 - present

### Treasurers (non-voting)

Betty Burns	1996 - 2002
Sarah R. Maas	2002 - present

### Trustees (2013)

Jeff Allen	Florence Heeman
Don Belluz	Bill Krohne
Susan Butler	Simon Parent
John Cooper	Jeff Thompson
Kevin Edberg	
Blaine Staples	(Nursery Committee Chair)

### Cooperating Nurseries – 2010-2013

G.W. Allen Nursery, Centreville, Nova Scotia  
Indiana Plant & Berry Company, Plymouth, Indiana  
C.O. Keddy Nursery, Kentville, Nova Scotia  
Krohne Plant Farms, Hartford, Michigan  
Lassen Canyon Nursery, Redding, California  
Millen Farms, Ltd. Great Village, Nova Scotia  
Novafruit, Inc, Ste-Cécile-de-Milton, Québec  
NORCAL Nursery, Red Bluff, California  
Nourse Farms, South Deerfield, Massachusetts  
Ferme R. Labrecque, St. Charles, Québec  
Luc Lareault Nursery, Lavaltrie, Québec  
Pepiniere A. Massé, St. Cesaire, Québec

### Research Foundation Grants – 1993 to 2013

Through NASGA, the Research Foundation, and the California Strawberry Commission (CSC), a total of over one-million dollars has been granted from 1979 to 2013 in support strawberry research in the United States and Canada. Since 1993, the bulk of the funds provided to support research have been made available through cooperating nurseries. The CSC co-funding program began in 2005 as an initiative of the NASGA Nursery Committee and was an outreach effort to NASGA by the CSC. The CSC discontinued their program in 2010 that provided an annual maximum amount of \$5,000 per year.

## NASGA and Research Foundation Grants

1979 – \$1,500	1991 – \$19,020	2003 – \$32,818
1980 – 16,000	1992 – 27,000	2004 – 28,050
1981 – 10,000	1993 – 10,900	2005 – 32,600
1982 – 13,250	1994 – 9,680	2006 – 35,200
1983 – 22,929	1995 – 11,800	2007 – 43,056
1984 – 17,750	1996 – 10,500	2008 – 37,825
1985 – 20,000	1997 – 37,745	2009 – 37,438
1986 – 22,475	1998 – 40,000	2010 – 54,898
1987 – 26,775	1999 – 37,680	2011 – 60,793
1988 – 21,973	2000 – 33,918	2012 – 41,211
1989 – 22,900	2001 – 40,056	2013 – 53,750
1990 – 19,170	2002 – 30,289	<b>Total – \$1,021,234</b>

### MEMBERSHIP

#### **Membership in NASGA 1985-1999:**

The 1999 annual Membership Directory contains a comprehensive listing of Membership Categories from 1985-1999, Dues for each Category, members in each Category, and total Membership by year. In 1987 the Directory began listing Overseas Memberships. Subsequent Membership Directories were published for years 2001-2002, 2002-2003, 2009, and 2012. We have no records of directories having been published between 2003 and 2009.

Thirteen (13) membership classifications were listed for each of the 15 years from 1985-1999, and numbers of members for each are given for each of the years. On average, the total Membership was 411 members, of which Professionals contributed 20% (83), over the 15 years of reporting. The total Membership low was 339 in 1988, the high was 473 in 1989. The Professional Membership low was 35 in 1986, and the high was 105 in 1985. The total Overseas Membership (growers, nurseries, professional, and grower associates) averaged 32.4 members per year.

#### **Membership in NASGA's 2001-2002 Directory:**

Membership categories were reduced to seven: Farm & Supporting Nursery; Professional & Student; Representatives & Managers of a full member parent corporation; Associate; Overseas Farm & Supporting Nursery; Overseas Professional and Student; and Overseas Associates.

Total Membership was 347, of which included 66 professionals and 27 overseas members (from 14 countries).

#### **Membership in NASGA's 2002-2003 Directory:**

Membership categories were listed for 14 categories, totaling 267 members, of these 68 were Professional and 26 were Overseas members. Membership categories included Farm, Nursery, Supporting, Director, Grower Associate, Professional, Manager, Student, Representative, Supplier, Honorary and Overseas Professional, Grower/Nursery/Supplier, and Grower Associate.

#### **Membership in NASGA's 2009 Membership Resource Directory:**

Membership categories were not listed, except for Overseas Members. Membership totaled 239 members, including 22 overseas.

#### **Membership category added in 2011:**

A new category, Cooperate Membership, was added in 2011. Annual dues of \$500 provide corporate members with up to \$400 of advertising as well as exposure on the NASGA website as a Corporate Member.

#### **Membership in NASGA's 2011-2012 Membership Resource Directory:**

Three hundred North American and 27 overseas members are listed. No membership categories are provided.

## SERVICE TO MEMBERSHIP

NASGA supports members through educational meetings and conferences, tours, newsletter, website information, publications, marketing aids and surveys, and legislative efforts.

### Annual Meetings

Wooster, OH	1977*	Tucson, AZ	1993
Mt. Vernon, IL	1978	Niagara Falls, ON	1994
Hershey, PA	1979	Orlando, FL	1995***
Clermont, FL	1979**	Newport Beach, CA	1996
St. Louis, MO	1980***	Louisville, KY	1997
Sarasota, FL	1980**	Victoria, BC	1998
Anaheim, CA	1981	Orlando, FL	1999
Great Gorge, NJ	1982	Primm, NV	2000
Orlando, FL	1983	Niagara Falls, ON	2001***
New Orleans, LA	1984	Research Triangle Park, NC	2002
Toronto, ON	1985	Puerto Vallarta, Mexico	2003
Monterey, CA	1986	Tampa, FL	2004
Nashville, TN	1987	Nashville, TN	2005
Tampa, FL	1988	Savannah, GA	2006
Grand Rapids, MI	1989	Ventura, CA	2007***
Houston, TX	1990***	Hershey, PA	2008
St. Petersburg, FL	1991	New Orleans, LA	2009
Williamsburg, VA	1992	Grand Rapids, MI	2010
		Tampa, FL	2011***
		Las Vegas, NV	2012
		Portland, OR	2013

\*NASGA organizational meeting.

\*\*Strawberry seminars.

\*\*\*North American Strawberry Symposium

### Joint Meetings

Beginning in 1993, NASGA began to hold joint meetings with other groups. In 1993 it was held jointly with the North American Berry Growers Association. Since then annual meetings have been held jointly with regional and state or provincial grower organizations, marketing organizations, and major regional trade shows.

### Tours

Seasonal tours have become very popular with NASGA members, often held in summer in North America, but also during production periods in other countries. Tours include in-depth visits of successful farms, farm markets, marketing facilities, and distribution centers. Previous to summer tours on-site visits were made in conjunction with local strawberry schools, regional fruit and trade meeting and summer Board of Directors and Committee meetings. These were held in various locations in northeastern United States and contiguous Canada. Tours also are held in conjunction with annual meetings.

### Summer Tours

Ontario	1998
Springfield, MA	1999
Minnesota and Wisconsin	2000
Nova Scotia	2001
Southwest MI	2002
Philadelphia, PA	2003
Quebec City, QU	2004
Hudson Valley, NY	2005
Portland, ME	2006
Niagara Falls, ON	2007
Columbus, OH	2008
Chicago, IL	2009
Montreal, QU	2010
Mexico	2010
Cambridge, MA	2011
Halifax, NS	2012
Vermont	2013

### **Co-Sponsor of National and International Strawberry Conferences and Symposia**

As a benefit to NASGA members, annual meetings were held in conjunction with major North American strawberry research conferences and symposia which exposed researchers to large numbers of growers and nurserymen and to the needs of their stakeholders. These opportunities also gave researchers take-home information that could be used to convince administrators for continuance of their programs. NASGA has taken a leadership role for joint conferences with the North American Strawberry Conferences and Symposia by providing funding and promoting the conferences, and assuming a lion's share of the logistical responsibilities for setting up and running the conferences. NASGA and individual NASGA members have sponsored international symposia.

1980 – **2<sup>nd</sup> North American Strawberry Conference**, St. Louis, MO; organizers: Drs. James N. Moore, Norman F. Childers, Delbert D. Hemphill, Gene Galletta, Bill Courter, and Mr. and Mrs. George McConnell.

1990 – **3<sup>rd</sup> North American Strawberry Conference**, Houston, TX; organizers and conveners: Drs. Adam Dale and James J. Luby.

1992 – **2<sup>nd</sup> International Strawberry Symposium**, Baltimore, MD; organizers and conveners: Drs. Gene Galletta and John Maas.

1995 – **4<sup>th</sup> North American Strawberry Conference**, Orlando, FL; organizers and conveners: Drs. Marvin P. Pritts, Craig K. Chandler, and Timothy E. Crocker.

2001 – **5<sup>th</sup> North American Strawberry Conference**, Niagara Falls, ON; organizers and conveners: Drs. Stan C. Hokanson and Andrew R. Jamieson.

2002 – **Berry Breeding and Production Symposium during the 26<sup>th</sup> International Horticultural Congress**, Toronto, Canada; conveners: Drs. Peter Hicklenton and John Maas.

2007 – **6<sup>th</sup> North American Strawberry Symposium**, Ventura, CA; conveners: Drs. E. Barclay Poling and Fumioma Takeda; organizing Committee Chair: Anne F. Geyer.

2011 – **7<sup>th</sup> North American Strawberry Symposium**, Tampa, FL; organizers: Drs. Fumiomi Takeda, David T. Handley, and Kirk D. Larson; conveners: Drs. Kim S. Lewers & Natalia A. Peres.

### **Newsletters**

Newsletters have been an important communication to members since the inception of the Association. NASGA newsletters kept members up-to-date on upcoming meetings, new publications, timely cultural and marketing tips and the business of growing strawberries – because not all members are able to attend annual meetings and tours.

NASGA newsletters have been informative as well as professionally edited and produced. All newsletters presented important information to members on a timely basis and generally were prepared by Executive Secretaries with the exception of editions produced by Patrick Byers and Marilyn Odneal. Over the years, newsletters have changed in format from mimeographed sheets to professionally printed publications. No matter the format, their contents always reflected current issues, subjects and information beneficial to members.

### **Years of Publication Editors, and Newsletter Titles**

1977-1978	Glen Stadelbacher <i>North American Strawberry Growers Newsletter</i>
1979-1980	George McConnell <i>Strawberry Growers News</i>
1981-1985	George McConnell <i>Newsletter</i>
1986	Ed & Betty Burns <i>NASGA, Inc., Newsletter</i>
1987-1990	Ed & Betty Burns <i>North American Strawberry Growers, Inc., Vol. 12-15</i>
1991	Shirley & Dick Funt <i>North American Strawberry Growers, Inc., Vol. 16</i>
1992-1996	Bill and Treva Courter <i>NEWS LETTER</i>
1996-1998	Bob & Donna Cobbledick <i>NEWS LETTER</i>
1999-2002	Patrick Byers & Marilyn Odneal <i>NEWS LETTER</i>
2003-2006	Patricia Heuser <i>NASGA NEWS</i>
2006-present	Kevin Schooley <i>NASGA NEWS</i>

### **Strawberry Research Publications**

In addition to funding research of benefit to members, NASGA sought to provide current strawberry research for NASGA members and strawberry researchers through publication of a high quality research publication. Thus, *Advances in Strawberry Production* (1982-1991), later changed to *Advances in Strawberry Research* (1992-2003), was initiated. Changing the name from *Production to Research* was to reflect the increased stature of the publication for scientists and their administrators.

The purposes for editing and publishing *Advances* were to (1) publish current strawberry research results from both NASGA-funded research and other articles submitted by researchers, and (2) to encourage strawberry research in general. All articles published in *Advances* were peer reviewed for acceptability. Research articles ranged in content from cultural system achievements, disease epidemiology and management, pest and weed control, new cultivars, to nutritional benefits of eating strawberries.

Copies of *Advances* were sent to NASGA members as part of their membership perks and by subscription to libraries of universities in North America and around the world. This in itself was a tremendous achievement, especially for a relatively small organization.

#### **Editors**

##### ***Advances in Strawberry Research***

Harry Jan Swartz	1981 – 1986
Chris Walsh	1981 – 1986
David Himelrick	1981 – 1986
John Maas	1987 – 1996
Gail Nonnecke	1997 – 2003

*Advances* was discontinued due to increased cost to produce an attractive high quality publication.

#### **Communications Director**

A new position of Communications Director was created in 2011 to foster greater interaction among members to share ideas on production, marketing, labor, and other aspects of strawberry production. This effort includes periodic e-mail messages to members and articles in the *NASGA NEWS*. The position presently is held by Blaine Staples. Importantly, this venue provides a “bulletin board” for timely questions that growers have and responses from other growers and researchers.

### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

Members can be proud of NASGA’s major accomplishments – a close productive relationship with the USDA Small Fruit Breeding Program at Beltsville, MD; support of research in North America with over \$1,000,000 through 2013; co-sponsorship of national conferences; publication of *Advances in Strawberry Research*; establishment of the North American strawberry Growers Research Foundation; a web page ([www.nsga.org](http://www.nsga.org)); planned annual meetings, tours, educational seminars and summer tours for members; marketing advice and materials. NASGA influence also kept the small fruit breeding program alive with the hiring of Dr. Galletta at the USDA in Beltsville, MD in 1977, again with the threat of closing USDA, Beltsville, small fruit research in 2004, and establishing the USDA small fruit horticultural program in Kearneysville, WV with the hiring of Dr. Takeda.

#### **KUDOS and APPRECIATION**

We (the authors, past members of NASGA), are proud of you—all NASGA members past and present. Your participation, energy, dedication, leadership and hard work established NASGA and served the strawberry industry well for over 35 years. Strawberries are a specialty crop; however, your vision included all aspects of production from the farm to research, education, government support and those in industry from nurserymen to machinery and tools. NASGA is a unique organization of strawberry producers, researchers and related companies in the world today and is recognized as such worldwide.

You supported and saved the USDA strawberry and small fruit research – the leader in breeding new cultivars for many years. Your dollars supported university research and extension outreach programs. You brought together the nurserymen, equipment manufacturers and other commercial interests to benefit growers as well as local economies. Our work and educational efforts strengthened the grower and marketer of home-grown berries. The consumer benefited through purchase of nutritious and healthy fruit. You envisioned the need for self-support of critical strawberry research through the establishment of the North American Strawberry Growers Research Foundation.

Well done! *Salute to you all!*

## FUTURE

Strawberry growers, however, are not without challenges.

These concerns were voiced a decade and a half ago; however, they seem to be just as important and critical to strawberry production today, as Bill Courter said “I am confident that NASGA will meet the challenges to improve strawberry production and marketing and will continue to serve members and provide leadership in the industry.”

Dollars for research – shrinking at state and federal levels. Can NASGA find additional sources? Is there a need for an endowment fund?

The USDA Small Fruit Breeding Program – the research program has no plant pathologist, faces pending retirements without replacement, plus restricted funding.

The homegrown strawberry enterprises have increasing competition from improved cultivars and shipping methods from Florida and California. Needed are day-neutral cultivars, new production systems, and marketing innovations.

Your customers – changes in family demographics, food preservation, food preparation, and preferences.

Public concerns about environment, pollution, chemicals, and health will continue, even escalate.

Membership – how to reach small growers and fund programs.

Mega-berry organizations – are there too many meetings already? How can NASGA bring state associations and other berry groups together for stronger representation?

Government regulations, politics and policies – pesticides, environment, cutbacks in research dollars, cheap food, inflation, labor availability and costs, and international agreements (e.g.; NAFTA).

## INFORMATION SOURCES

Newsletters and archived correspondence from 1997 to 2011; membership directories; and Board of Directors’ minutes from 2002 to 2011. We are grateful to the following NASGA members who provided printed records and historical perspectives:

Robin Bailey  
Susan Butler  
Bob & Donna Cobbledick  
Sam Erwin  
Anne Geyer  
Tim Nourse  
Virginia & Walter Rotthoff  
Kevin Schooley  
Blaine Staples

*Thank you!*

### Authors’ Endnotes

This account of NASGA’s inception and growth as a resource for members is a continuation of *A Brief History of NASGA* originally published by Dr. J. W. “Bill” Courter in 1997. However, any introduced inconsistencies, errors in fact, or misrepresentations present in this expanded and updated version are wholly my (JM) responsibility.

On reviewing documents and preparing this history of the North American Strawberry Growers Association and the inception and development of the North American Strawberry Growers Research Foundation we are impressed with the quality, steadfastness and resourcefulness of its leaders, and membership as a whole, who have contributed immeasurable amounts of time and energy in providing a vehicle that is supportive to all aspects of the strawberry industry in North America. The Association with its meetings, tours, marketing efforts, publications and research program has been an instrumental aid to develop and maintain sustainable, and profitable, economic farm and nursery businesses.

The respect of NASGA among growers and researchers around the world is a high compliment for all members past and present!

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