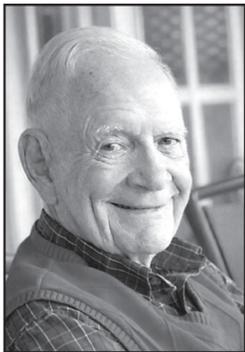


Obituary



Virgil Ralph Franz
1928 - 2026

Virgil Ralph Franz left this world at the age of ninety-seven to join his heavenly family on the evening of Sunday, January 18, 2026. Virgil was born in Rozel, Kansas, on December 27, 1928.

Virgil grew up on a farm in Burdett, Kansas, where his father—"Grandpa Ralph"—to many of us—was a wheat farmer. He learned to fly a plane as a teenager while crop-dusting area farms. Virgil was a passionate private pilot throughout his life. In 1995, he received a certificate from the National Aeronautic Society for his participation in the Largest General Aviation Formation, a 132-plane flight between Rockford, Illinois, and Oshkosh, Wisconsin—an accomplishment of which he was very proud.

Virgil later moved to Larned, Kansas, where he married Betty Lucille Deering Franz in 1949 and worked as a linesman, volunteer firefighter, and salesman for Weddell Electric. One of his duties as a volunteer firefighter was to set off the annual fireworks display at Mofett Stadium in Larned, a task he always enjoyed.

Virgil and Betty raised their three children (Julene, Mark, and Lori) in Larned until the early 1960s. Virgil's work with Motorola required him to live in several cities throughout his career. He and his family lived in Wichita, KS; Lake Quivira (Kansas City), KS; New Orleans, LA; and Dallas, TX. Virgil went on to have a successful career with Motorola Communications until his retirement.

One of the sporting events Virgil and his father, Ralph, hosted for many years—and greatly enjoyed—was the annual pheasant hunt at his father's farm. Family and friends gathered from near and far at a warm, dry farmhouse on the open prairie, where a group of city boys came to hunt, eat, sleep, gamble—then emerged three days later looking like hairy prairie dogs. These times of camaraderie created treasured memories for everyone involved, especially his son, Mark; son-in-law, Ron; and his two lifelong best friends, Roger Caudill (Hideaway, TX) and Larry Showalter (Kansas City, KS).

Virgil later married Barbara Franz, his wife of forty-six years. Virgil and Barbara spent many happy years living at Hideaway Lake in Tyler, Texas, where he continued to enjoy golf, boating on the lake, playing

cards with friends, and relaxing in retirement. In 2010, Virgil's name was published in the Tyler Morning Telegraph for making a hole-in-one at the Hide-A-Way Lake Club's golf course. Virgil and Barbara shared an active church life at the Hideaway Lake Community Church. Virgil loved watching sports—especially Dallas Cowboys and Kansas City Chiefs football games—and professional golf tournaments.

Virgil is survived by his wife, Barbara Ann Franz, daughter and son-in-law, Julene Franz Reed and Ron Reed (Memphis, TN); son and daughter-in-law, Mark LaVern Franz and Alla Chavdarova and her daughter, Sasha (Austin, TX); daughter and son-in-law, Lori Jean Franz and John Coll (Kempner, TX); and his three stepchildren, Kathy Johnson, Cynthia Short, and James Arledge, and their spouses.

He is also survived by his two granddaughters and their husbands, Angela Lynn Reed Tull and Benjamin Tull (Memphis, TN), and Amanda Nicole Reed Ferguson and Marvin Ferguson (Chicago, IL). "Grandpa Virgil" was dearly loved by his four great-grandchildren—Bailey Grace Ferguson (Chicago, IL), Riley Grace Tull (Memphis, TN), Reed Marvin Ferguson (Chicago, IL), and Amelia Catherine Tull (Memphis, TN).

Virgil was an amazing uncle and surrogate father to his nieces, Janice Mann Bogle (and husband Ron), and Shela Mann Shank. He was a second "father" to them as well as their uncle, and their mutual love for one another was a gift to all. He took great joy and pride in all they did.

Virgil was predeceased by his father, Ralph Mark Franz, and stepmother, Myrtle E. Franz (Larned, KS); his mother, Elsie Viola Jones (Bertrand, NE); his sister, Delores Franz (Burdett, KS); his stepsister, Ruth Felder (Rush City, KS); his sister-in-law Arlene Mann Yeager (Larned, KS); and his former wife, Betty Lucille Deering Franz (Memphis, TN).

A celebration of Life is planned at the Larned United Methodist Church in Larned, KS, followed by a graveside service at Larned Cemetery, where he will be laid to rest next to other members of his beloved family. The dates and times for these services will be announced in the very near future, once inclement winter weather allows family members to travel to Larned.

The family requests that any donations be given to either the Alzheimer's Association or St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in care of Beckwith Mortuary, PO Box 477, Larned, Kansas 67550. Personal condolences may be left at www.beckwithmortuary.com.

Senior Sense.....

Stop buying the processed meats in the grocery store; those in the deli section, as well as the ham, bacon, sausage. These harmful meats are loaded with salt and chemical preservatives which act like pouring gasoline on a fire, contributing to heart disease, inflammation in the joints, high blood pressure.

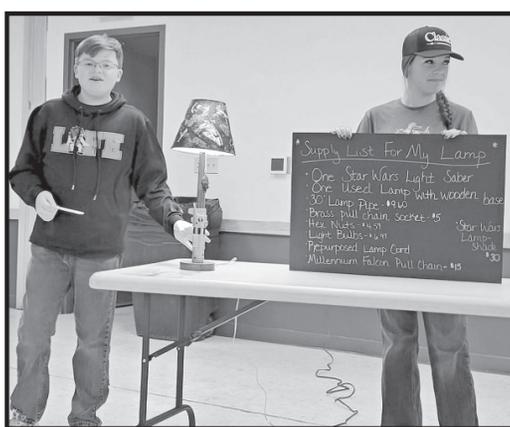
Club Note

Gem Dandy's 4-H Club

The Gem Dandy's 4-H Club meeting started on January 5th, 2026, at 7:00 pm. The meeting was called to order by fill-in President Erin Stuchlik. A new member joined us—Madison Harbert! Jaxson Seeman held roll call—our favorite part of Christmas break. There were 23 members and 2 leaders present. Jaxson then gave the minutes from the last meeting. There was no Treasurer's report. Tatum Miller gave the Reporter's report. Audra Seeman gave the Leader's report about YQCA, 4-H Day, and shooting sports.

We then proceeded to the program. Jaxson Seeman showed and discussed how he made his Star Wars light saber lamp, and then we heard a LEGO talk by Conner Hill. We finished up with a recreation game of "Four Corners" by fill-in recreation leader Eli Kelty. Then President Kelty adjourned the meeting. Erin Stuchlik and Karisa Meckfessel provided refreshments. The next meeting will be on the first Monday night in February. We will be practicing our Model Meeting for 4-H Day on February 14th.

—Tatum Miller, Club Reporter



Kansas Business Hall of Fame Honors Lee Borck

Former Larned resident, Lee Borck, of Manhattan, Kansas was recently honored by the Kansas Business Hall of Fame.

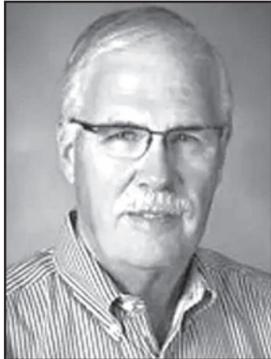
In 1988, the Kansas Business Hall of Fame (KSBHF) was founded to honor and preserve the legacy of Kansas business leaders and celebrate the achievements of individuals and organizations that embody excellence in entrepreneurship, innovation, and community impact. The KSBHF attracts recognition from some of the most accomplished leaders in Kansas and serves as a world-class platform highlighting the "Best of the Best" in business.

The organization is guided by a Board of Directors that reflects the state's broad business and civic landscape, and draws leaders from across Kansas in higher education, state government, law, and private industry. Together, this diverse leadership team supports KSBHF's mission to honor outstanding business leaders who have shaped Kansas' economic growth and inspire future generations through recognition and education.

Lee Borck is a Kansas agricultural leader whose vision and innovation helped modernize the cattle feeding and beef marketing industries. A lifelong Kansan, Borck earned his Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Economics from Kansas State University, where he later served as Chairman of the Board of Trustees for the K-State Foundation and led both its Executive and Investment Committees. His career reflects a deep commitment to advancing Kansas agriculture, rural enterprise, and education.

As Chairman of Innovative Livestock Services, Inc. and the Beef Marketing Group Cooperative, Borck pioneered new approaches to aligning cattle producers with retail markets, improving efficiency and product consistency from feedyard to consumer. A founding shareholder and Chairman of American State Bank in Great Bend, he also brought business acumen to the financial sector, supporting the economic vitality of rural Kansas communities. His leadership extended nationally as President of Cattle-Fax and the Kansas Livestock Association, and as a member of the Cattlemen's Beef Board and the National Cattlemen's Beef Board.

Honored as a Kansas State University Alumni Fellow and named to Ingram's "50 Kansans You Should Know," Borck was also inducted into the Cattle Feeders Hall of Fame in recognition of his decades of service and innovation in animal agriculture. Though now retired, his impact on Kansas agribusiness, education, and community leadership continues to resonate across the state and industry.



DID YOU KNOW.....That in the building north of Redux, at 416 Broadway, there once was a hardware store? Robinson Hardware was owned and operated for many years by John and Stanley Shoup. Stan lived upstairs in a delightful apartment.

LEGAL

LEGAL

(First published in The Tiller & Toiler, January 29, 2026) 1t

Annual Report of Pawnee Township
Pawnee County, Kansas

The undersigned treasurer and trustee of Pawnee Township, submit the following report for the year ending December 31, 2025.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Name of Funds	Cash Balance Jan. 1, 2025	Total Receipts	Total Expenditures	Cash Balance Dec. 31, 2025	Unpaid Bills Dec. 31, 2025
General	49,545.12	2,545.35	6,565.66	45,524.81	0.00
Road	88,014.58	45,225.22	29,635.49	103,604.31	0.00
Fire	898.22	4,435.74	5,160.00	173.96	0.00
Noxious Weed	58.01	1,460.14	0.00	1,518.15	0.00
Special Machinery	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Totals	138,515.93	53,666.45	41,361.15	150,821.23	0.00

Total Cash Balance for all Funds 150,821.23
Does the Total Cash Balance for all Funds equal to Cash Balance Dec. 31? Yes

I certify that this financial report is a correct summary of all money received and expended as well as all unpaid bills for the township during the year ending December 31, 2025.

Date: 1/26/26
Jessie Pleasant
Township Treasurer

DEADLINE
for Legals, Ads and Articles
for The Tiller & Toiler:
2 PM TUESDAY
(for emails OR 1 PM Monday
for office drop-off)
for Thursday's paper.

LEGAL

LEGAL

(First published in The Tiller & Toiler, January 29, 2026) 1t

ANNUAL REPORT OF Pleasant Valley TOWNSHIP
Pawnee COUNTY, KANSAS

The undersigned treasurer and trustee of Pleasant Valley Township, submit the following report for the year ending December 31, 2025.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Fund*	Cash Balance Jan. 1 **	Total Receipts	Total Expenditures	Cash Balance Dec. 31	Unpaid Bills Dec. 31
General	1980	18,790	19,020	1,750	0.00
Road	26,800	52,190	63,420	15,570	0.00
Special Machinery	2,3730	350	0.00	24080	0.00

* Detailed fund pages are available at the county clerk's office.
** Includes all money the township has including checking account savings and investments.

I certify that this financial report is a correct summary of all money received and expended as well as all unpaid bills for the township during the year ending December 31, 2025.

Date: Jan. 26 2026
Kathy Hammabe
Township Treasurer

"What good is the warm of summer without the cold of winter to give it sweetness."
--John Steinbeck, Travels with Charley: In Search of America

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