

1-1-2008

Smokejumper Magazine, January 2008

National Smokejumper Association

Ken Hessel

Bill Yensen

Follow this and additional works at: https://dc.ewu.edu/smokejumper_mag

Recommended Citation

National Smokejumper Association; Hessel, Ken; and Yensen, Bill, "Smokejumper Magazine, January 2008" (2008). *Smokejumper and Static Line Magazines*. 63.

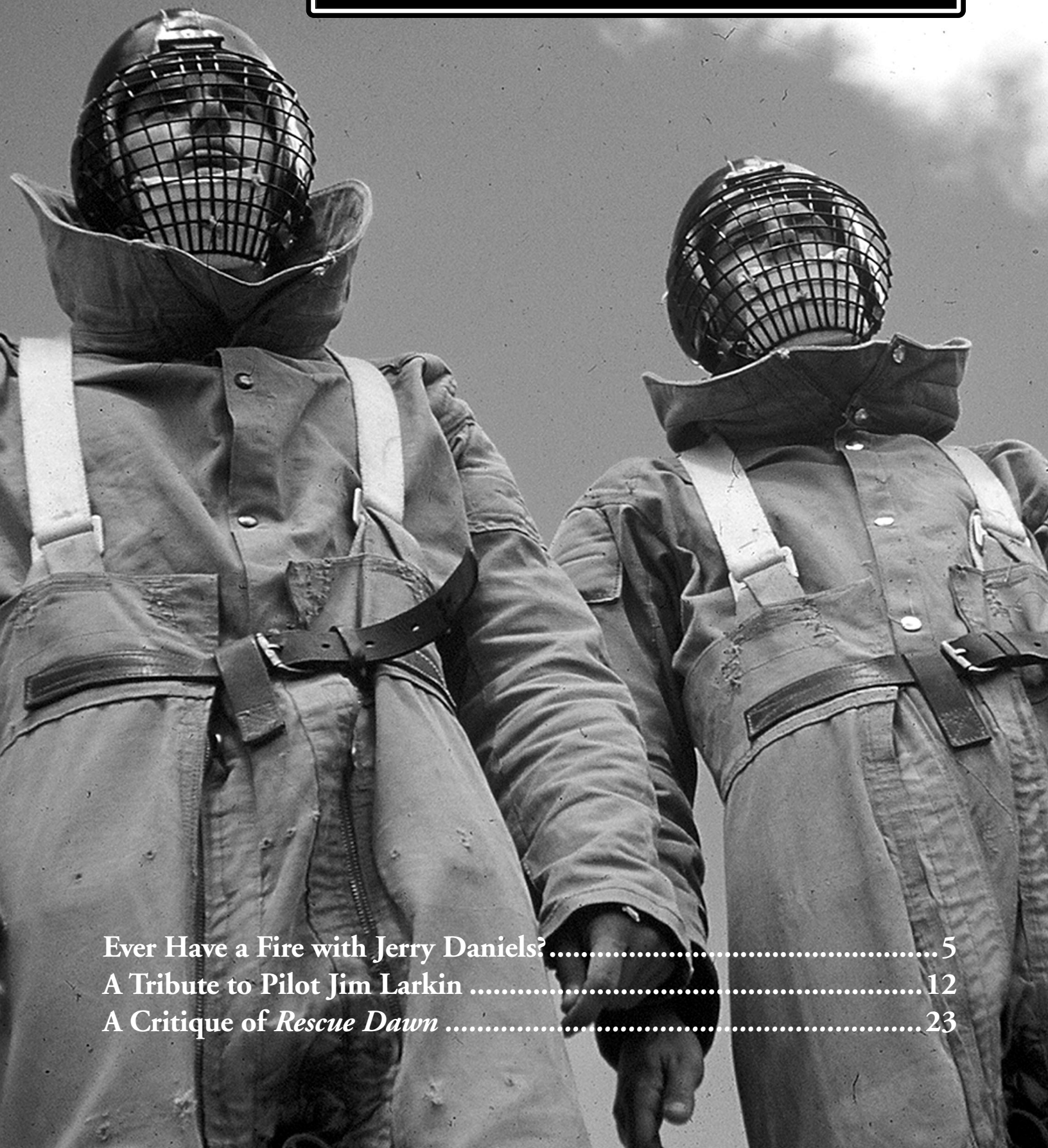
https://dc.ewu.edu/smokejumper_mag/63

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the University Archives & Special Collections at EWU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Smokejumper and Static Line Magazines by an authorized administrator of EWU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact jotto@ewu.edu.

THE NATIONAL SMOKEJUMPER
ASSOCIATION

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE
JANUARY 2008

SMOKEJUMPER



Ever Have a Fire with Jerry Daniels?	5
A Tribute to Pilot Jim Larkin	12
A Critique of <i>Rescue Dawn</i>	23

CONTENTS

Message from the President 2
 Idaho Needs to Welcome the Morgans Home 3
 Elections for NSA 3
 Were You Ever on a Fire with Jerry Daniels? 5
 Odds and Ends 6
 Fire Information 8
 Jumper Ingenuity in Alaska, 1961 9
 Spotting 10
 A Tribute to Jim Larkin-Forest Service Pilot 12
 A "Friends-Helping-Friends" Request 14
 New NSA Life Members Since January 2007 14
 The View from Outside the Fence 15
 Jumping the Steens 16
 Ted Dethlefs Collection Centerfold 18
 John E. "Jack" Nash-Another Pioneer Jumper
 20
 Russian Smokejumper Ivan Alexandrovich
 Novik 21
 If It Could Go Wrong, It Did! 22
 A Critique of the Movie Rescue Dawn 23
 NSA Offers Gift Membership 24
 NSA Trail Crew 25
 Summer Trail Project-It Was Different 25
 Memories of Dave Crowder 27
 Memorial Service NCSB Reunion
 September 2007 28
 Off the List 29
 Touching All Bases 30
 Play the Pipes for Me 32



SMOKEJUMPER, ISSUE No. 58, JANUARY 2008
 ISSN 1532-6160

Smokejumper is published quarterly by:
 THE NATIONAL SMOKEJUMPER ASSOCIATION
 C/O 10 JUDY LANE
 CHICO, CA 95926

The opinions of the writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect those of the NSA. Permission to reproduce *Smokejumper* in any manner must first be obtained in writing.

NSA Web site: <http://www.smokejumpers.com>

Managing Editor: *Chuck Sheley*

Editing: *Ed Booth, Bill Fogarty, Johnny Kirkley, Jill Leger, and K. G. Sheley*

Illustrators: *McElderry Books, Nick Holmes, Chris Demarest, Ken Morris, Dan Veenendaal, and Eric Rajala*

Printing: *Larry S. Jackson, Heidelberg Graphics, www.HeidelbergGraphics.com*

Cover photo: *Missoula 1947 (Wally Dobbins collection)*



Message from the President



by Doug Houston
 (Redmond '73)

PRESIDENT

TOP OF THE MORNING to You all. Paige and I just returned from the NCSB reunion. What a great event, with jumpers from the 40s thru the rookie class of 2007. Combined with the Redding and Boise reunions, it was quite a year of renewed friendships and opportunity to make new friends. One of those for me was Charley Moseley (CJ-62) from LA, that's Lower Alabama. He's quite a character with a great outlook on life. You look at the sweat equity of all of the volunteer hours put into these reunions, the cost of travel, lodging, food for everyone; however, when you see old friends hugging one another and new acquaintances shaking hands, the value of all of this is.....priceless.

In conversation at NCSB, I learned that some present day jumpers refer to the NSA as "not smokejumpers anymore." I guess that means the NSA is just for those that can't step foot out the door any longer. This reference bothers me quite a lot. We could have named the organization NASA, meaning "not active smokejumpers anymore;" however that acronym was already taken. The fact is, and it is reinforced at every reunion or just in conversation with jumpers and ex-jumpers, we all are jumpers for life, whether we jumped for one year or 20. It is who we are, our identity of character integrated as a part

of our soul. We are jumpers, active or not. The reality is that the next jump by any one of these young jumpers could bring them into their definition of the ranks of the NSA.

I was very fortunate not being injured thru 535 jumps, often feeling bulletproof just like a lot of the young jumpers. However, that could have been altered at any jump. So, those that think the NSA is just for those outside the ranks of the active, please rethink that concept and accept the fact that we all are one, bonded by the smokejumping experiences of the past, present, and the future. It's all good.

Until next time, there's 100 yards of drift, the whole world is a jump spot, your static line is clear, and the door is yours. Get ready. Enjoy the ride, each and every day. 🙏

Please Tell Us When You Change Your Address

The postal service does NOT forward your copy of *Smokejumper* when you move or leave home for an extended time period. It is returned to us and the NSA is charged an additional first class postage fee. With 30-40 returns per mailing it gets expensive and takes a lot of time. Please let Chuck Sheley know if you have any change in your mailing address. His contact information is on page three.

Idaho Needs To Welcome The Morgans Home

by Tim Woodward

Reprinted with the permission of the author and the "Idaho Statesman" from the Monday, September 3, 2007 edition.

Clay Morgan (MYC-74), husband of the famous teacher-turned-astronaut, sent an e-mail this spring that still makes me laugh.

In it, he described his wife Barbara's training schedule while preparing for her space mission. One day, she was flying a test plane in California; the next, she was training in Canada. Then she was off to Cape Canaveral or some other exotic spot.

The e-mail ended with Clay saying he was "home cleaning the grout in the kitchen."

It was an example not only of the role reversals that have become commonplace in our society - once it was only men who blasted into space - but of how much the Morgans' lives have changed.

When they left their McCall home nine years ago for Barbara to train as an astronaut in Houston, the two Morgans were about equally well-known in Idaho. Barbara was a third grade teacher who had succeeded Christa McAuliffe as the designated teacher in space. Clay was one

NSA Members — Save This Information

Please contact the following persons directly if you have business or questions:

Smokejumper magazine

Articles, obits, change of address

Chuck Sheley 530-893-0436
cnkgshley@earthlink.net
10 Judy Ln
Chico, CA 95926

Membership

John McDaniel 785-668-2093
jumpercj57@hotmail.com
P.O. Box 105
Falun, KS 67442-0105

All else

Doug Houston 406-844-0326
doughouston@centurytel.net
NSA President
P.O. Box 1022
Lakeside, MT 59922

Trails Project

Jon McBride 406-728-2302
N2601@aol.com

Elections for NSA Board of Directors

Chuck Sheley, Election Committee Chair

The Board of Directors is the governing body of the NSA and meets three times a year to conduct NSA business. The meetings are held at various places in the Pacific Northwest. The terms of four members of the BOD will expire July 1, 2008.

Even though you would be obligated to three meetings a year, it is important to remember that you can be a valuable working BOD member regardless of where you live. In the day of e-mail, a functioning board can work with its members spread across the U.S. If you have ideas and are willing to roll up your sleeves, please consider joining the NSA work force.

Election timeline and procedures:

1. Jan.-Feb. 15, 2008, fill out personal information sheet. Must be in my hands by Feb. 15.
2. Personal information on each candidate inserted into the April issue of *Smokejumper*.
3. Ballot sheet inserted into the April issue of *Smokejumper*.
4. Ballots must be received by May 20.
5. New board members to take office July 1st, election results published in the Oct. issue of *Smokejumper*.

Please call, write or e-mail for your filing papers. My contact information is on the left side of this page..

The time to act is now!

Smokejumper base abbreviations:

Anchorage	ANC	Grangeville	GAC	Missoula	MSO
Boise	NIFC	Idaho City	IDC	Redding	RDD
Cave Junction	CJ	La Grande	LGD	Redmond	RAC
Fairbanks	FBX	McCall	MYC	West Yellowstone	WYS
				Winthrop	NCSB

of the state's best-known authors. He helped organize and host writers' conferences in McCall, and his "Santiago and the Drinking Party" was one of the best-reviewed books of its time by an Idaho writer.

Moving to Houston couldn't have been easy. Few places could be more different from McCall. McCall is small-town charm. Winter sports. A picture-book mountain lake. Houston is a muggy, sprawling metropolis.

In McCall, recreation for the Morgans was literally outside their door. Their sons snowboarded past their house. In Houston, recreation often meant a roughly hour-long drive to the beach at Galveston.

"It's basically jogging, cycling, surfing and skateboarding," Clay said.

While Barbara traveled or worked long days at the space center - astronaut training tends to be all-consuming - Clay stayed home with the boys.

"I had to keep an eye on them because she couldn't," he said. "I had to know where they were. I cooked meals, did housework.

"We have meetings for the spouses of the astronauts, and I'm usually the only male. The women are very nice to me, but after a while, they tend to forget I'm there. It's like I'm an out-of-body experience at those things."

I asked if he ever felt like John Lennon during his house-husband period.



Barbara and Clay Morgan at McCall airport 1987 (Courtesy C. Morgan)

"No," Clay said. "I have my work, and even down here Barb has supported me more than I have her. She's always encouraged me. As a writer, you're not taking the proven path, and she's always been so supportive. I don't feel like the guy behind the gal at all."

With the boys nearly grown - Adam is in his second year as a film major at a college in Texas; high-school senior Ryan, is considering Boise State University - their father has more time to spend on writing. His newest book, "The Boy who Returned from the Sea," is being released this week. It's a sequel to his first children's book, "The Boy who Spoke Dog."

"Sequels are hard," he said. "Now I understand why top authors often contract out sequels and just direct them. You're supposed to keep the same character and just put him through different paces. I had a hard time doing that. It took about a year to write and about 2 1/2 years with the revisions while working around other things. You have to make money, too."

To that end, he's writing screenplays and working for a company that owns space capsules and space stations it hopes to use for commercial purposes from engineering to tourism. He also wrote a history of the program that put American astronauts on the Russian space station Mir. It won him a NASA public service medal.

So both Morgans are tied to space in one way or another. And to Idaho.

"Barb would like to fly again, but as you know, they're going to ground the shuttle in three years, and a lot of people are in the queue, including educator astronauts she helped bring in. So it will be difficult for her to get to go again.

"She wants to keep exploring and discovering and helping teachers. If she can do that best through NASA, that would be a good thing. But now that this part of her life is done, we feel a huge pull to get back to Idaho. Maybe Boise. I don't know if we could afford to live in McCall now."

You'd think the Morgans would be deluged with invitations to return to Idaho, but the only ones Barbara's received so far are from the University of Idaho, the Idaho Science Teachers and the McCall Winter Carnival. Meanwhile, Clay said, Scotland and Wales have asked her to tour schools there - an invitation that has to be close to her teacher's heart.

Not to be picky, but it seems a little odd that she hasn't been asked to speak to kids in Idaho. Barbara Morgan is arguably the most famous Idaho woman since Sacajawea - and look what happened to her. She got kidnapped and to this day is claimed by North Dakota. Now Scotland and Wales are after Morgan.

This is a woman who did something no other Idahoan has done or probably will ever do. And her husband played a big part in helping her dream come true. They deserve a proper Idaho welcome home. 🍷

Barbara Morgan and six crewmates launched August 8, 2007, aboard the space shuttle Endeavour to continue assembly of the International Space Station.

Were You Ever On a Fire With Jerry Daniels?

by Ken Hessel (McCall '58)

Gayle Morrison (author and oral history specialist), is in the process of writing a book about Jerry Daniels (MSO-58) and asked if I had ever been on a fire with Jerry. I had; however, I did not meet or see Jerry on the fire. Shep Johnson was on the same fire, and with his assistance, this is my response.

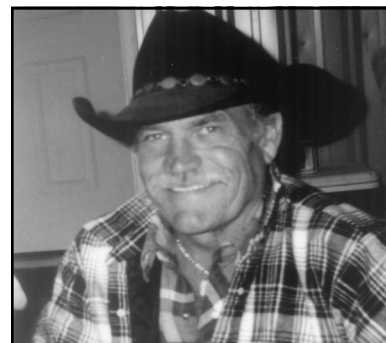
According to my records, on July 23, 1960, I was part of a Ford-load of eight jumpers headed for the Waterfall Creek Fire on the Salmon N.F., about 45 minutes out of McCall. Wind was a problem when we got over the fire, but squadleader **Bob Donnelly** (MYC-52) jumped anyway to check it out. He laid out an "X" on the ground, indicating too much wind to jump safely. The rest of us flew on to Salmon, Idaho, to spend the night, drink copious quantities of beer, have a nice steak dinner and generally paint the town red before flying back out to jump the fire the next morning. Unbeknownst to us, a Twin Beach with four jumpers from McCall had been dispatched earlier that morning to help Donnelly with the fire. **Thomas "Shep" Johnson** (MYC-56), **Richard "Paperlegs/Pete" Peterson** (MYC-47), and two others were in this load. They were dropped on the Waterfall Creek side of the ridge, which separated it from The Middle Fork of the Salmon River. Along about 1600 hours, the fire escaped the Waterfall crew and went to the top of the ridge. As a result, they called for the "A" team, which had been sitting at the Salmon airport all day nursing hangovers, to come and bail them out.

When we got out there, it was damn near dark, and there was a DC-3 from Missoula dropping a dozen Missoula jumpers on the fire. We had to wait until they finished before we could start making our jump runs. It was a good

thing we had a full moon. We all got down on top of the ridge safely, and within the next 24 hours, our crews and some ground pounders, that had hiked in from the Flying-B Ranch, pretty much had the blaze corralled at between 800 and a 1000 acres.

Donnelly, Shep, Pete, two other McCall jumpers and the Missoula crew worked the Waterfall Creek side of the ridge, where the fire had started from lightning. We worked the Middle Fork side of the ridge and, as a result, I never saw any of the Waterfall crew except for five or six Missoula jumpers, who had come to the top of the ridge with the rest of us to be helicoptered out to the Flying-B Ranch as things were winding down. To provide a little excitement, I had found a be-headed rattlesnake on the fire line and pitched it under a tarp where five or six Missoula jumpers were hunkered down out of the rain waiting for the helicopter. This caused quite a stir. I was a safe distance away and playing the innocent bystander by the time those lads got their wits together and started looking for the culprit. Until now, I have been fortunate enough to remain anonymous. The snake was payback for some cans of food that I and other McCall jumpers had been relieved of on previous fires by our Montana brothers. Our canned goods were always in great demand as the Missoula jumpers usually showed up with "C-rats" or some other type of cardboard to eat. They did produce a six-pack or two of beer on occasion, which I have to say, was like gold when it came to trading for real food. They could clean some of us out in a hurry. Suffice it to say, neither outfit, Missoula or McCall, ever missed a chance to have some fun at the others expense - believe me.

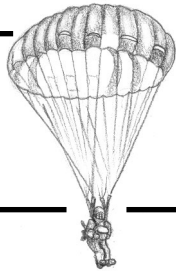
Nobody I knew was in that group



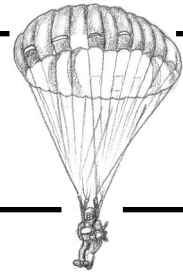
Ken Hessel (NSA file)

on the ridge. According to Shep, the rest of the Waterfall crew, including Jerry Daniels and the rest of the Missoula jumpers, all walked down Waterfall Creek to where it emptied into the Middle Fork. Most of them then walked down the Middle Fork about a mile, crossed the river on a pack bridge, and walked back up the other side about three miles to the Flying-B Ranch and airstrip. That was not so with Jerry Daniels and **John "Jack" Cahill** (MSO-58). According to Shep, Jerry and Jack swam the Middle Fork at the Waterfall Creek confluence and risked their lives to take a bath and save a couple miles of easy walking. The Middle Fork of the Salmon is a mean SOB and has claimed more than its share of would-be swimmers over the years. It seems reasonable that a packer from the Flying-B probably was hired to pack the jump gear off the fire for these guys. If Pete had anything to do with it, that damn sure happened.

In conclusion, that's where Shep and Pete first met Jerry Daniels and Jack Cahill. Three years later, five of us on that fire, Shep, Pete, Jerry, Jack and me, would wind up at Marana (Arizona) working together, and as Paul Harvey sez, "Now you know the rest (some more) of the story." 🍄



Odds and Ends



by Chuck Sheley

Congratulations and thanks to Gary Baker (MSO-67), Richard Trinity (MSO-66), Rayland Scholl (MSO-63), Mike Hodge (CJ-54), Charles Rodgers (MSO-64), Jeff Bass (MYC-77) and Paige Houston (FBX-95) who just became our latest Life Members.

Buzz Teter (RDD-79): "I've moved north of Manzanillo (Mexico), and the Smokejumper magazine will never reach me unless it comes by burro, so take me off the mailing list for now. You did an outstanding job when I lived in Las Brisas. The ONLY mail I ever received in three years from the States was the Smokejumper magazine. Thanks, guys, for keeping me in the loop for that time."

If you want to know something about the Triple Nickles involvement in smokejumping, **Mark Corbet** (LGD-74) would be our in-house expert. Mark has spent years gathering together USFS reports and documents. He is responsible for correcting the location of the first smokejumper death. His story in the July 2006 issue of *Smokejumper*, "The Death of PFC Malvin Brown," presented a chilling description of the probable actions that led up to that tragic event. At the same time Mark has been trying to find out more about **Malvin L. Brown** (PNOR-45), but the task was almost impossible.

Now he has made a major breakthrough:

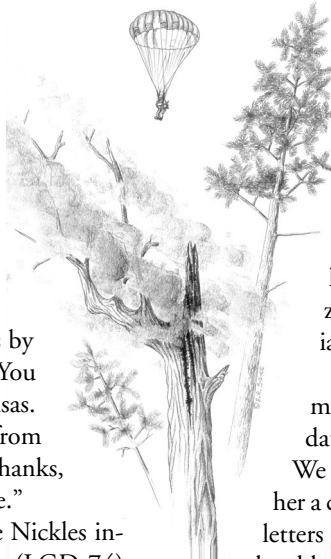
"I have made contact with a family member of Malvin L. Brown! Total strikeout trying through the Brown family. About three weeks ago it came to me that I should try to locate relatives of Malvin's sister. Her name, Dorothy Atley, was on his next of kin list and is a somewhat unique name.

(I) looked up all of the Atleys living in the area of Pennsylvania where he had lived and then sent out a stack of envelopes to the closest dozen.

Got a letter back from a Charles Atley that said his grandmother's brother was named Malvin Brown and that they lived near Narbreth, PA in the 1940s. He was headed over to visit Vernell Atley, Dorothy's daughter and would take along any info I had about Malvin.

Another week (passed) and I got an email from Vernell confirming that Malvin was her uncle and that her sisters and she were "overwhelmed" to receive the information after all this time. She also said he is buried in Baltimore at the Mt. Calvary Cemetery.

I wrote back tonight and sent her four documents about Malvin and asked if there was any chance of learning exactly where in Baltimore he is buried and if she had, or could get, a picture of him. Have high hopes to learn



much more."

Speaking of smokejumper history, I have my own story to tell. About six months ago I was contacted by one of the young men who started their firefighting careers on one of my crews in the 1980s. He now has advanced through the ranks and is a Captain in the fire department of a city about 50 miles south of Chico. I had been sending him copies of *Smokejumper* magazine to put in the station day room so he was familiar with smokejumper history.

Through a person, through a person etc., he put me in contact with **Frank Derry's** (MSO-40) granddaughter who was living in a town near Sacramento. We have communicated several times and I have sent her a copy of *Smokejumper* magazine. She has pictures and letters "packed away." At some point I'm hoping we will be able to get copies of these, now historic, materials.

I had a nice visit with **Larry Casey** (MSO-46) who was traveling through Chico on his way to Lake Tahoe. Larry gave me a call and we went through a couple Sierra Nevada's at his hotel lounge. Larry was in the first group to train at Missoula after WWII. He flew P-47s in the Pacific Theatre and continued flying for a total of 62 years before calling it quits. All five Casey brothers served in the military during the war as officers. Three others were in the Army Air Corps (as was Larry) and one in the Navy. He is retired from the BLM and living in North Bend, Oregon. Larry is 84 year old now and still gets up at 0430 in the morning to get ready for his tennis matches at 0530. No wonder he's still on the go. It was a great visit, and Larry bought the beer.

Roger Brandt (Associate heading up effort to save the Siskiyou SJ Base):

"This September we received and planted a Moon Tree at the Siskiyou Smokejumper Base. What is a Moon Tree? The command pilot of Apollo 14, **Stuart Roosa** (CJ-53), took tree seeds with him when he went to the moon. When he returned, the seeds were planted as part of an experiment and then distributed in 1976 as a commemorative tree for the nation's bicentennial celebration. Stuart Roosa was inspired to carry the seeds because of his experiences as a smokejumper at the Siskiyou Smokejumper Base. For this reason, the base is considered as the home of the Moon Trees. Becky Soules, a high school student from Coos Bay, donated the tree. She entered five NASA sponsored writing contests and won the national middle school award in 2003 for Science and Technology journalism (her story was about Moon Trees). She also took second and third prize in two other NASA writing competitions. She was instrumental in getting the Moon Tree at the Oregon capital reg-

istered as an Oregon Heritage Tree. A dedication ceremony will be held April 26, 2008 at the base.”

August 8, 2007, Cape Canaveral, Florida- “Space shuttle Endeavour roared into orbit Wednesday carrying teacher-astronaut Barbara Morgan, who was finally fulfilling the dream of Christa McAuliffe and the rest of the fallen Challenger crew. Endeavour and its crew of seven rose from the seaside pad at 6:36 p.m., right on time, and pierced a solidly blue sky. They’re expected to reach the international space station on Friday.” Barbara is the wife of **Clay Morgan** (MYC-74).

Dateline NBC (Aug. 8, 2007) aired the story featured in the July issue of *Smokejumper* magazine titled “Troop, Jerry and the Pirates vs Chinese Slave Traders.” Their title was a bit shorter but the production made for interesting viewing showing a couple of aging smokejumpers (**Troop Emonds** CJ-66 and **Jerry Howe** CJ-65) as they made their way through the Philippines and Malaysia on a mission to retrieve Troop’s niece.

Jerry Howe (CJ-65): “It (the show) was all new to me when I saw it last night. We spent weeks with them and had no idea what they were going to show. I have been getting emails from all over the country. Mostly people I know, but many strangers too. NBC is interested in some future rescue missions and three producers want to do a reality show.”

Glen McBride (CJ-59): “This December I will retire from the USDA’s Food and Safety Inspection Service. They sent me everywhere on the West Coast and Alaska. My five kids are all married, graduated from college and working. Hope to be able to go to some of the NSA reunions in the future. The one Jan and I attended at CJ was a blast.”

My wife and I saw Werner Herzog’s “Rescue Dawn” yesterday (8/16/07). I don’t know if I’ve ever been more disappointed in a production in my life. Having spent the better part of a year putting **Phisit Intharathat’s** (Associate) story and Dieter Dengler’s Book “Escape From Laos” together in the *Smokejumper* magazine two-part story “Prisoner in Laos,” I have a good knowledge of the story. The movie could have been titled “The Assassination of Gene DeBruin.” The Charles Manson-like character that represented Gene had to come from the mind of a person who chose to discount all the facts of the story. Since it was written by Herzog, he must be the man.

Even when I re-read the story (Oct. 2006/Jan. 2007), I find it compelling. They say the truth is always better than fiction. Why did Herzog choose to denigrate Gene’s character and reputation? We know Herzog had previously done the film “Little Dieter Needs to Fly.” Did Herzog feel that, while making Dengler the hero in the film, he needed to defame Gene DeBruin in order to raise the status of Dengler?

I don’t know if Herzog was even aware that Phisit survived his imprisonment and is still alive. In any case, Phisit was not even contacted by Herzog when the film was made.

Even with Phisit’s story, Herzog had Dengler’s book which was the foundation for the film. When I did the series for *Smokejumper*, I incorporated Dengler’s “Escape

From Laos” because he did such a good job in developing and giving the reader a great insight into Gene DeBruin.

Gene was the glue that held the group together. No one in the group wanted to include the older and sickly Y.C. To in their escape group. Dengler said, “I wanted to go (escape) with Gene and Duane (Martin/USAF) because we got along so well.” They all knew that whomever went with Y.C. had no chance of escape.

Gene would not abandon a friend. He probably would be with us today if he had gone with Dengler and Martin. How in the world can Herzog take a hero and make him into a deranged human? Herzog has no class! Probably one of the most disappointed people with Herzog would be Dieter Dengler, if he were still alive.

Charley Moseley (CJ-62) mentioned something that happened during the NIFC base tour at the Boise Reunion last summer. **Jenny Camp** (NIFC-06) was making a good presentation to the group of reunion attendees and noticed Charley’s Siskiyou Smokejumper shirt. She asked Charley where that base was? “Cave Junction,” was the reply. “I’ve never heard of that base.” Out of sight, out of mind and now out of smokejumper history.

Clay Morgan (MYC-74): “Barbara (teacher/astronaut-Endeavour August 2007) flew a McCall smokejumper patch on her mission.” With **Stuart Roosa** (CJ-53) in Apollo 14 and Barbara in the Endeavour mission, we have had a smokejumper and a smokejumper’s wife as key participants in our space program.

Roland “Andy” Anderson (MSO-52): In reference to “Smokejumpers of Silver City” published in the October 2007 issue of *Smokejumper*: “It’s hard to believe that you found an article by Star Jenkins that’s 50 years old. One correction, I didn’t jump 25 fire jumps in 1953, just 20. I think somebody did 25 in the next year or two. **Starr Jenkins** (CJ-48) came by the Gila again a year or two later and wrote an article he called “Hay Drop On The Gila.” I think he sold it to a magazine called *FORD*.

Karl Maerzluft (FBX-67): “Over the weekend I received an invitation to return to Anchorage for the October 5th anniversary celebration of the picture frame shop I started 31 years ago. The fellow that bought it from me is now 74 years old and tired. He wants to hang it up. I am trying to make arrangements to go, because time slips away so fast.

With that in mind, I decided to try and be the first to include the NSA in my Living Trust. Perhaps this will get the ball rolling with some others for starting a basket of gift opportunities.”

The NSA Board of Directors has discussed this on several occasions. Perhaps Karl’s lead will inspire other members to do the same.

Char Davis, sister of **John T. Davis** (NCSB-66): “I need to inform you that our brother John lost his long battle with cancer early Sunday (9/16/07). He was in his glory just three days prior when a library in Vancouver was named “The John T. Davis Memorial Library.” His entire family was with him to witness this special event. On Friday John told me he was too tired and he felt the cancer had won and to please let him go. His four children, sisters and

brother will miss him terribly, but we are so very proud of his many wonderful accomplishments.”

Jerry Dixon (MYC-71): “I floated the Roaring Fork near Glenwood Springs, CO. Where the Roaring Fork runs into the Colorado River there is Two Rivers Park. In the center of the park is a wonderful memorial to the 14 firefighters that died on July 6, 1994 on Storm King.

There is a full size bronze statue of three firefighters in the center: two men and a woman. Around the statue are 14 plaques with photos and stories of the firefighters. Two of the men from my McCall Smokejumping Unit died on that day: **Jim Thrash** (MYC-81) and **Roger Roth** (MYC-92). I jumped with Jim. He was a jumper of merit. An endowment was started by smokejumpers for his children’s college education. I have contributed every year to that fund. I was very interested to read on Roger’s plaque that he was a descendent of the Iroquois Nation and was a helicopter pilot.

The memorial is in the center of the park and is very well done. This past summer I summited alpine peaks in five states, ran rivers and traversed mountains. Viewing this memorial was one of the most moving aspects in my summer.”

Charley Moseley (CJ-62) wants all of you to mark *September 19-21, 2008, for the first ever Redmond Smokejumper Reunion*. The committee met recently after the NCSB reunion and the planning process has started. Look for registration packets to be mailed in April 2008.

Jim Hickman (MSO-52): “I sure enjoy *Smokejumper*. I had just received a BS in Chemistry the first year I jumped in 1952. I was raised in the woods of Colorado and Wyoming as a sawmill kid and had worked my way through college logging, and figured that’s why I got the job. Anyway, **Fred Brauer** (MSO-41) was my first foreman. We had just finished our practice jumps and were on project when I got orders to report to Navy OCS, so I never got a fire jump. I was commissioned an Officer in the Navy in December 1952 and reported to a unit called “Beachjumper Unit 1” at the Amphibian base in Coronado (CA). Immediately I volunteered for the Underwater Demolition Team about 10 years before the Navy started the SEAL program. Spent quite a bit of the next three years swimming and blowing things up. In 1955 I enrolled in the Forestry School at Utah State, and was again accepted by smokejumpers in Missoula. Made my first fire jump on the Shasta-Trinity with **T.J. Thompson** (MSO-55). The next summer I flew aerial patrol for the Lolo, then got my Forestry degree in May 1958. I became a District Ranger in R-1, spent time in Alaska, then went to Washington Office, back to R-5 as Fire Staff on the Sequoia, then spent three years in fire research at Riverside, became Director Fire and Aviation Mgmt. for R-3 in 1980 and retired in Albuquerque in Jan. 1993. It’s been a wonderful life.”

Bob Ingrum (MSO-59) in email to **Jerry DeBruin** (Associate) concerning articles in *Smokejumper* magazine about **Gene DeBruin** (MSO-59): “Jerry - read the article about Gene in the October issue of *Smokejumper* and was very disappointed. Gene and I trained together in Missoula in

1959 and spent a season ski bumming in Sun Valley, Idaho. We shared a 6 x 10’ room in the basement of the Sun Valley Lodge for three months. We skied together just about every day, although Gene was an accomplished skier and I was not.

I had gone to West Point on a football scholarship - blown out a knee - medically discharged and returned to the family ranch down on the Mexican border in South Texas. After an operation and recovery, I joined the Marines, spent three years as a machine gunner - became friends with a former jumper in my company - went to Missoula, enrolled at the University of Montana and then started smokejumper training that summer. I like to think that I know something about good quality people and Gene DeBruin would be at the top of the list. Best regards to the brother of one of the best friends I ever had.” 🙏

Fire Information

What’s the situation Mr. Information?

What’s the situation?

It’s all in arbitration

A circular oscillation

Cluster combination

Could be a conflagration

Or a mop up operation

“Low intensity burn out collaboration”

Or community confrontation

That’s my interpretation

But it’s gone to consultation

Please hold for confirmation

The answer - in documentation

And I’m timed out on this rotation

Going on vacation

And end this conversation

On fire information

Composed on the Orleans Complex in Northern California, August 10, 2006
Copyright @ Karl Brauneis 2006



Karl is a member of the Cowboy Poets of Wind River and can be reached at brauneis@bresnan.net in Lander, Wyoming

Jumper Ingenuity in Alaska, 1961

by Don R. Mathis (Missoula '52)

It wasn't much of a fire, but for early June in Alaska it was one of those four-man adventures. The call came in just before two o'clock in the afternoon and within 20 minutes we were in the air headed for the vicinity of Hughes on the Koyukuk River. Remember how drafty that old DC-3 was with the door off? **Gene DeBruin** (MSO-59) and **Gid Newton** (CJ-55) were the Fairbanks jumpers, and **Doug Shaner** (MSO-60) and I were part of the Missoula augmentation that year.

It took about an hour and a half from Fairbanks to get over the fire. It was kicking up quite a bit of smoke in some tough alpine spruce. There was a small tributary of the Koyukuk near the fire. The terrain was relatively flat with some low rolling hills covered by brush, tundra, and spruce trees. The fire was not going to go anywhere.

We jumped right by the fire, gathered up our gear, and went to work cooling it down and mopping it up. We kept just enough of the fire going to give some heat and set up camp for the night. Gene was in charge and made the assignments. Our sleeping bags were army-surplus down bags. They were certainly an improvement over the Kraft paper bags we used in the lower 48. Those Alaska jumpers sure had it soft. We put down plastic to keep the moisture and cold of the ground out of the bags.

It never did get dark that night, something those of us from down south had trouble getting used to. The next morning we had a P-51 patrol plane overhead and were instructed when the fire was cold to pack our gear down to the Koyukuk where we would be picked up by a Grumman Goose. It was going to be a tough packout going cross-country following only game trails made by moose and bears and fighting brush all the way. What jumper wants that?

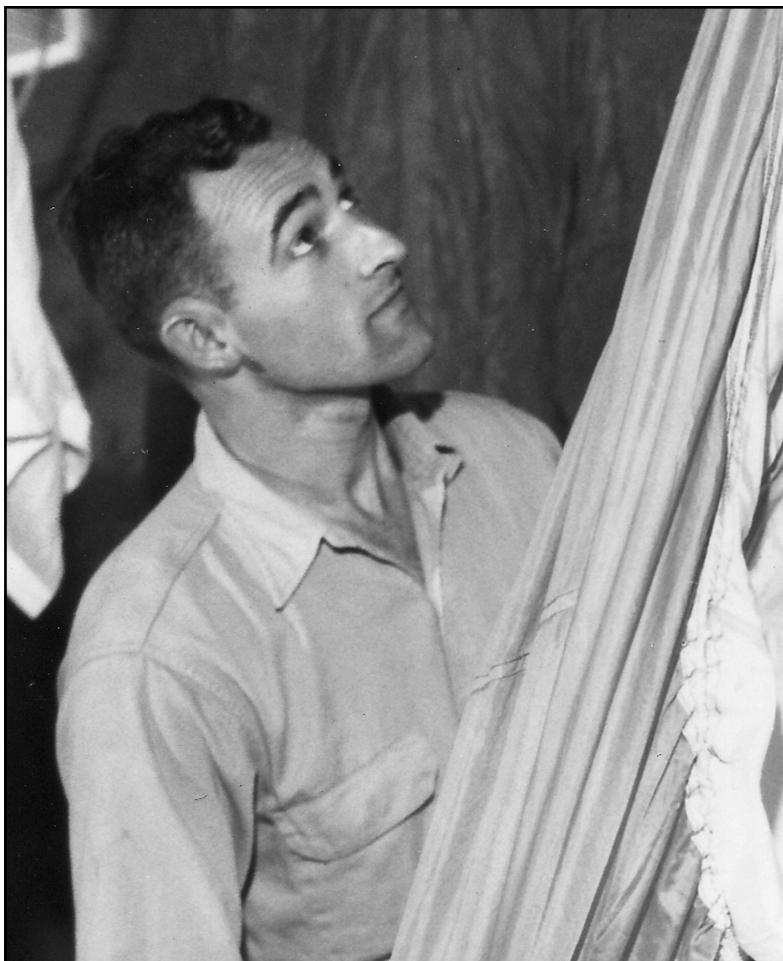
We hit on an alternative. Why not lash together a raft with letdown ropes and float the stuff out? So most of the morning was spent cutting logs along the stream and fashioning a raft. We wrapped our chutes and jump gear in plastic and, when the raft was finished, loaded it with Gene and Gid on board carrying poles to keep it in the current. Our calculations were just a bit off. With gear and jumpers, the raft floated about eight inches under the water. No problem since Gene and Gid were going to ride the rapids past the snow banks which fed the stream. Alaska jumpers are so tough! Doug and I cheered them on from the bank.

It was evening by the time we got to the Koyukuk. We set up camp again to wait for the

Goose. A warming fire helped restore feeling in Gene and Gid's wet, cold feet. Radio contact told us that a Goose was not available and that we would be picked up by a boat from Hughes. About two o'clock in the morning a boat pulled into our campsite. We loaded it up and were taken upstream to Hughes. Hot food and warm beds were provided for us in the trading post, and we settled down for some sleep.

On the afternoon of our third day of adventure, a Goose finally landed on the gravel strip at Hughes, and we were back in Fairbanks shortly after four o'clock. One more fire jump near Huslia a week later marked the end of the 1961 Alaska season for the Missoula group and our return to big timber fires in the lower 48. 🐦

Gene DeBruin and Gid Newton both went on to work for Air America in Southeast Asia. Gene's plane was shot down on September 5, 1963 and he is still MIA. Gid was killed in 1963 when his plane hit a ridge in Laos. (Ed.)



Gid Newton (NSA file)

Spotting

by Wild Bill Yensen (McCall '53)

As far as I know there has never been an article in the *Smokejumper* devoted to spotting. Any jumper knows the value of a good spotter. He is the guy who gives you the best chance at getting into the jump spot and landing safely.

The spotter on my first jump was **Gene Ellis** (MYC-51). I'll never forget that jump. Gene slapped me on the back and said, "Hit'er Billy!" and out I went. The spotter for my first fire jump was **Lloyd Johnson** (MYC-43). I'm sure he did a good job, but I was so green and scared I missed the spot by at least a 100 yards and landed in a snow bank. That was on the War Eagle Fire, July 11, 1953.

I jumped in '53, '54, and '55, got drafted and sent to Germany in '56 and '57, and jumped again in '58. In '59 and '60 I had to go to army reserve summer camps. I came back in '61 and made squadleader in '64. When I made squadleader, the boss just tossed me a set of keys and told me to go spot the rookies (NEDs). I had no formal training on how to spot. **Wayne Webb** (MYC-46) had explained all the theories on how to do it right, and I still think he was one of the best spotters ever. As Wayne explained it, you fly directly over the spot and drop a drift chute. You watch the drift chute go down, then fly over the drift chute directly into the wind and drop another one an equal distance up wind from the spot. If that one lands near the spot, you have a pretty good shot at getting a jumper in OK. Then you get the jumper in the door and hooked up and kick him out where you threw the last drift chute. If Big Ernie smiles, the wind will hold steady and your jumpers will descend safely into the spot.

1964 was a very poor fire year. The McCall jumpers only got one fire jump each. It was my first year as a spotter. We jumped every fire call we got. We were using two Twin Beech airplanes that year. My first spotting job was out in the Chamberlain area, and Wayne Webb was my first jumper. He made sure I did it right and was I glad!

The next time I had to spot, I had to do it by myself. The fire was on top of Pollok Mountain. **Dick Lynch** (MYC-64) and **Dennis Symes** (MYC-63) were the jumpers. I guess I did it right as they both landed safely and put out their fire.

My next spotting job nearly scared me to death. It was out on Loon Creek. The jump spot was marginal, a green patch about 75-yards long down wind from a steep face. I got streamers in pretty close, so I put **Jon Petterson** (MYC-64) in the door and kicked him out. I let him out a little early, and he got in the air that was going over that steep face with the turbulence whipping him around something terrible! He steered his way out of the turbulence and landed on the edge of the spot OK. I carried the other three jumpers a little farther, and they all landed OK. They were **Stan Ramsay** (MYC-58), **John Cramer** (MYC-63) and one other I can't recall. I've thought about that jump, and in later years I probably should have passed. However in a lean year like '64, the guys were eager to

go and would have killed me if I had not jumped them.

Later that year we got a fire call for the Root Ranch. We loaded up the Twin Beech and took off in record time. When we got there we found a small fire in a bunch of trees surrounded by a big grassy meadow. The smoke went straight up for about a 1,000 feet and then drifted east very gently. The guys and I thought it was a gravy jump with a great place to land and an easy fire. I opened the spotter's box and there were no streamers! In our rush to get airborne I had not checked it. The previous spotter should have refilled it. So here we are 75 air miles from McCall and no streamers. I explained the situation to the two jumpers, who were eager to jump. One was **Frank Odom**



Bill Yensen (NSA file)

(MYC-63). I told them that by looking at the smoke we could figure out how to get them into that lush meadow without going clear back to McCall for streamers and letting the wind come up. They said, "Go for it," so I kicked them out, and they both landed next to the fire in some nice soft grass. Needless to say, when I got back to McCall I filled up the spotters box with streamers.

As I mentioned before, in the early '50s we used drift chutes. In the late '50s we changed to crepe-paper streamers that were weighted by pieces of number nine wire. One of my near-disaster jumps was caused by the spotter, **Reid Jackson** (MYC-49), not recognizing the difference between the two types of drift chutes. At the time we had lots of old army reserve pilot chutes that we were using for drift chutes. As those got scarce we started making drift chutes out of a square piece of muslin, with a break cord for lines and a bag of dirt for weight. Reid used one of the muslin chutes that went down faster than the pilot chutes. I was first in the door of the Ford, but I didn't say anything as Reid was the boss. Just as I feared, I was let out a little too soon and blew over the spot and hit the top of a tree on the crest of Red Mountain on the Challis Forest at above 9,000 feet. I grabbed the very top branches of that tree, which immediately broke, and fell backwards. It was a tall tree and on the way down my chute was re-inflated by the wind and that saved my ass. **Frank Tweedy** (IDC-52) was on the ground and told me about it. The guys on the Ford

thought I was a goner.

Streamers were a lot better than drift chutes as you could see them ever so much better. We had red, blue, and yellow which all showed-up well against the green forest background. Wayne Webb taught me another trick that came in handy about spotting. He would drop two streamers, then hold another one for two seconds and drop it. Air currents in the mountains are very capricious and this method allowed you to identify what he called "split air." The first two would go one way and the last one would go another. I used that trick many times to good use.

My longest day as a spotter happened in '70 at La Grande. We sent a DC-3 load over to back them up, and I was the only spotter in the load. For the next week all I did was spot, which p—— me off as I liked to jump and fight fire. One day at 0800 we flew to the John Day Forest to drop three chain saws. The pilot didn't know how to get there, so we flew and flew and finally got back to La Grande at about 1045. I hadn't any more than got my feet on the ground when the buzzer blew, and I had to run to the Twin Beech and fly off to the Umatilla and drop four guys. We got back at noon and they were taking orders for lunch. I ordered a burger, fries and shake. They no sooner handed me my lunch when the buzzer blew again. Back to the Umatilla to jump four more guys. Back on the ground in La Grande and barely gassed when the buzzer blew again. This time we were off to the far reaches of the John Day Forest through some pretty rough air. It took quite a while to locate the fire, and by that time the air was really rough. My stomach was having a hard time with my lunch. When we found the fire it was small, and there was a green pickup heading for it. The smoke was laid out and showed there was way too much wind to jump. We headed back to La Grande, and all the way back I was wondering if I could make it. I had just decided I could when we got in sight of the La Grande runways. Then disaster! **Julio Bilbao** (IDC-64) lost his lunch, and it was like turning on a switch. I couldn't even grab a barf bag in time; just dump it in my lap. That's what I got for spending over 11 hours in rough air.

Being the only spotter, I got jumped around twice. So I went to **Lee Walton** (RDD-63) and complained. He felt sorry for me and sent to NCSB for another spotter. He was a new spotter with little experience. Next fire call I'm number one in the door. We flew northeast to the Imnaha River area where the fire was on Mahogany Creek. The Twin Beech had a trap door in the belly forward of the door that you used for spotting. There was a toggle switch to signal the pilot right or left and jumper away. The spotter dropped his streamers and we watched them. I told him, in the roar of the plane, to line it up and I would go when I wanted. He apparently didn't hear me or understand. He did line it up good, and when I saw where I wanted to get out, I left. **James "Duke" Norfleet** (MYC-70) was next, and he said about three seconds after I left the spotter turned and slapped at thin air! I landed in a nice grassy spot right next to the fire. Duke watched where I got out. On the next pass the spotter grabbed Duke and pushed him against the wall and said, "Don't you jump till I slap you!" Duke was no dummy, and he got out where I did. He landed right next to me. We have often thought of that spotter slap-

ping at thin air again. The next two guys were carried too far and landed in a rocky area and luckily were not hurt. Big Ernie smiled.

In '72 we had the Caribou in McCall for about a month, and I had to spot out of it a lot. In the Caribou the spotter had to look backwards out of the rear door to see where you were going. In doing so the spotter's left ear was about four feet from an exhaust port of a two-bank radial engine. Even with ear-phones on, the roar was in the hundreds of decibels. That month of spotting out of the "Boo" may be a prime reason I am wearing and need hearing aides. Later we got ear plugs.

Another trick to spotting was identified by **Thad Duel** (MYC-56). He timed the streamers to see how fast they went down by using a stopwatch that he carried in the spotters kit. I always had a watch with a second hand and used that. One of my most memorable jumps came about because the spotter didn't time the streamers. On August 23, 1973, **Mike Young** (MYC-71) and I jumped in a "sinker" that the spotter could have recognized if he had timed the streamers. I felt the opening shock, checked the canopy, reached for the toggles and "Boom," I was in a tree and so was Mike. We survived. Big Ernie was good to us.

Other experiences come to mind. On the Nez Perce Forest in '79, I was spotting out of the Beech 99. On this run I had to remember a time back in August of '58 when **Merle Cables** (IDC-48) spotted a Ford load of us on the Clayton Fire. The wind was high, and Merle carried the streamers about three miles from the spot and got them in. There was no drift from about 500 feet above the ground. He gave us a long ride but got us all safely into about 40 acres of sagebrush. Merle was an excellent spotter. I threw out a set of streamers, and they blew almost out of sight, but the last 500 feet they went straight down. I remembered Merle's spotting job and carried the streamers 15 seconds past the spot and got them in. Then I did it again. The wind was all up high, and the last 500 feet was dead air. I talked it over with the two jumpers, **Eric Brundige** (MYC-77) and **Bob Shoemaker** (MYC-76). I knew if we didn't man this fire it would turn into a holocaust. I explained what the streamers showed and they were ready to go. I carried them 15 seconds past the spot in the Beech 99 and they both got in. They saved a holocaust.

Once while flying over the Eagle Caps in Oregon, we saw a lightning strike start a fire. As the storm passed we circled over the fire, and I threw out a set of streamers that went straight down. We could see turbulent air coming, so I had both jumpers hook up. **Jim Rush** (MYC-65) was second and did a great "kip" exit out of that small Twin Beech door. They landed safely. When we dropped the cargo the wind really came up, and they had to chase the cargo chute. They had that fire out 15 minutes after the lightning started it.

Another time in Oregon, I was spotting out of the DC-3. The first jumper was Dick Lynch. The spot was a big meadow, and Dick told me that he nearly straddled a cow elk when he landed.

It always makes you feel responsible when someone you spot gets hurt. In '69 I dropped **Ron Pond** (MYC-66) out near the mouth of the Middle Fork. He landed right in the middle of the spot, but hit a rock and broke his ankle. Wind shifts

are a big problem because they can happen so fast. In '79 I spotted **Tom French** (MYC-75), and he got a wind shift. He headed for a nice green patch of brush, and we thought he would be OK, but under the brush he hit a rock and broke his ankle.

Spotting entails checking the jumpers to make sure they are safely suited and parachuted, lining the airplane up with the spot, throwing the streamers, reading the streamers, then making the decision to jump or not. It's a serious business. Then after the jumpers are out you have to drop them their cargo. Once I dropped four guys out of the Turbo Porter up near

Hershey Point. I was back getting a chainsaw pack ready to drop when the pilot banked the plane so sharply the chainsaw pack slid out the door, and all I had hold of was the static line. The chute opened OK, but poor **Jerry Blattner** (MYC- 63) had to hike a half-mile to get his saw. Having a spotter that you know has good judgment and lots of experience gives a jumper confidence. All the spotter can do is give you the best shot. When he slaps your leg and out you go, the rest is up to you. 🦋

Bill can be reached at Yensenw@infowest.com

A Tribute to Jim Larkin-Forest Service Pilot

by Dale Matlack (Pilot)

My first realization that Jim was a different pilot than most was on short final to the Garden Valley Airport in the spring of 1968. Jim was introducing me to the backcountry of Idaho, and Garden Valley was a good place to start, as it was all uphill from there on. I remember Jim asking me if I had performed my GUMP check. My response, as you might guess, is what is a GUMP check? He explained that it is an abbreviated checklist of essential items that must be performed prior to landing, easy to remember, and so simple you would never forget. Since we were flying a Cessna 180, a formal checklist, such as you would have in a larger airplane, was not available, and perhaps not necessary given the size of the airplane. He further explained that it meant: GAS, UNDERCARRIAGE, MIXTURE AND PROPS; just the essentials, but immensely important items for any safe flight. Little did I realize that I would learn to use this anachronism for the rest of my flying career, always on short final, and after the formality of more sophisticated and elaborate checklists.

Jim was my boss and in charge of the Region 4 Western Zone Air Unit, headquartered at the Boise airport. We shared hangar space with Intermountain Helicopters, near the present location of the airfield tower. I was just six months into my new primary assignment as the Infrared Mapping Unit manager and pilot. That week in

the backcountry taught me many things about Jim Larkin. First off, you had to plan ahead as stops at ranches and airports in the back country invariably meant at least one or more cups of coffee, and that there was no relief tube in the aircraft. More importantly, it taught me that Jim Larkin knew people all over the state, wherever we went. That included Alaska and many other states that my travels with Jim entailed. I became convinced at an early age that Jim was able to talk to anyone, be it a janitor or congressman, on just about any subject or situation. He was one of the most gregarious people I have ever met, bar none. Jim could also write, which you might not expect, but as an interested conversationalist, he was indeed in his element. He had a knack of including some related simile into any conversation adding interest and depth. He was never reticent but participated wholeheartedly and with enthusiasm.

As for his flying, Jim was like no other. He was truly a pilot's pilot. As a military trained pilot, I had been trained to fly by the numbers. Jim, on the other hand, wore the airplane like an old suit of clothes. He was totally at home and was always in his comfort zone in the toughest of conditions. Flying to him was so much an essential part of his life that he continued to fly as late as the fall of 2006. He logged over 25,000 hours in the course of 69 years of flying and received many awards of recognition. He was affili-

ated with the McCall Mountain Canyon Flying Seminars for many years, received several million-mile and safe-flying awards, the USDA Certificate of Merit Award, FAA Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award, and was inducted into the Idaho Aviation Hall of Fame in 2006.

Jim started flying in 1937 in a Curtis Junior airplane out of the Donnelly airstrip he and his brothers built on the home place. He completed his training in the Civilian Pilot Training Corp in 1939, moved on to the USAAF Instructor School and then to the Rankin Aeronautical Academy where he helped graduate several cadet classes. He was then assigned to the Air Force Transport Command where he ferried airplanes all over the Pacific. After completing High Altitude training, he flew Curtis C-46 aircraft over the "hump" supplying the China-Burma Theater.

Along with his three brothers, flying was a family affair. He and his brothers engaged in timber and crop spraying after the war. This led to a job with Johnson Flying Service, where he flew Travaire and Ford Trimotors. He made his first smokejumper drop in the Travaire in 1947, his favorite airplane, dropping **Wayne Webb** (MYC-46) and **Del Catlin** (MYC-47) on a fire near Cottonwood Creek. He became so proficient in Ford Trimotor that the FAA made him a Designated Pilot Inspector authorizing him to provide check rides for a type rating in



Jim Larkin (Courtesy D. Matlack)

this venerable aircraft, as no one in the FAA was so qualified. It was about this time that Jim performed timber spray missions in New York flying C-97 aircraft and, later that year, made the first retardant drop on a fire near Trinity Peak on the Boise National Forest flying N-9638C, a Boeing C-97. Jim left Johnson Flying Service in 1956 and started his own operation. While operating Larkin Flying Service, Jim started hauling smokejumpers and paracargo for the Intermountain Region. In 1957 he was hired by Karl Bryning, R-4 Air Officer, and retired in 1978. In 1973 Jim was asked to provide instruction in low level C-47 training for USAF pilots in Pakistan spraying for a Rice Stem Borer infestation in that country. The request for his services arrived on a Friday, and Jim was on his way late Monday. Such was the urgency attached to his VISA and passport that it was hand carried thru the State Department in less than 24 hours, a remarkable record by itself. He received a presidential award for this successful operation. Jim received helicopter pilot training at the US Army Rotor Wing Training School at

Mineral Wells, Texas, in 1961. After retirement, he flew for Albertson's and callback work with the Forest Service.

Like all pilots, war stories embellish their life. One that I have heard many times involved a flight Jim made in mid-winter 1957 from Fairbanks to the lower 48 in a recently-purchased Cunningham-Hall, N444 aircraft. On this bitterly cold day over Muncho Lake on the Al-Can, with only 5 minutes fuel remaining, Jim tried to change the fuel selector valve to a full tank, only to find that it was frozen in place. No amount of force would move the selector, so Jim decided to use his coffee thermos to try and unfreeze the selectors. However, the thermos was in the cabin of the airplane and had to be retrieved. No autopilot was available, so Jim trimmed the aircraft nose low and proceeded to the cabin to retrieve the thermos and then back to the cockpit where the hot coffee did unfreeze the selector, and the flight continued on uneventfully. Smokejumpers viewed the Cunningham-Hall with some trepidation. With the door removed, the Cunningham-Hall had a huge opening on the side of the aircraft, and even the

most fearless of jumpers hugged the back wall. Jim used to say that the aircraft tried to kill him every time he crawled into it, but that it could take a full load of cargo into mountain strips as short as 800 feet.

Jim was involved in many backcountry rescues, flying into fields too difficult for many pilots. One unusual rescue involved flying four horses out of Sulphur Creek in the Cunningham-Hall. The horses had become trapped in heavy snow and, rather than destroy them, they were rescued. With the assistance of a Veterinarian, the rancher, and a block and tackle, all four were flown to safety, one at a time.

Jim is survived by his wife, Bev, and three children from his marriage to Maxine, who died in 1990 after 42 years of marriage; Teresa Johnson, Carol Vega and James P. Larkin, as well as four grandchildren and two stepdaughters, Robin and Tammy, from his marriage to Bev. His record of 35 years of smokejumper flying will probably stand for many years. You can rest assured that he will be missed by all who have known him.

New NSA Life Members since January 2007

Thanks for your support!

#	Last Name	First Name	Base	Year
174	CLIPPINGER	DAVID	MISSOULA	1951
175	KING	LOWELL	MISSOULA	1957
176	JENSEN	NELS	MISSOULA	1962
177	SMITH	BEN "SNUFFY"	MISSOULA	1964
178	KRUCKEBERG	ROBERT	NCSB	1951
179	HANSON	LOWELL	MISSOULA	1958
180	SCOTT	ROSS	MISSOULA	1951
181	CLITHERO	BOB	MISSOULA	1950
182	VARI	RON	ASSOCIATE	
183	HOUSTON	DOUG	REDMOND	1973
184	NICHOLAS	VICTOR	FAIRBANKS	1969
185	BENTON	HUGH "CORKY"	NCSB	1957
186	KOLAR	BILL	MISSOULA	1959
187	BERNHARD	DOUGLAS	NCSB	1958
188	WEST	GREG	FAIRBANKS	1964
189	JENKINS	STARR	CAVE JCT	1948
190	RIDGWAY	JACK	CAVE JCT	1960
191	KIRKLEY	JOHNNY	CAVE JCT	1964
192	MCMILLAN	MIKE	FAIRBANKS	1996
193	LUND	RON	FAIRBANKS	1964
194	RUSKIN	BILL	CAVE JCT	1958
195	BURLEIGH	JIM	MISSOULA	1958
196	LEAVITT	BYRON	ASSOCIATE	
197	MELLIN	DAVID	REDMOND	1966
198	BAKER	GARY	MISSOULA	1967
199	TRINITY	RICHARD	MISSOULA	1966
200	SCHOLL	RAYLAND	MISSOULA	1963
201	HODGE	MIKE	CAVE JCT	1954
202	RODGERS	CHARLES	MISSOULA	1964
203	BASS	JEFF	MCCALL	1977

You can find a listing of the first 128 Life Members in the January 2005 issue of the NSA Smokejumper Magazine and Life Members 129-140 in the January 2006 issue, and also by checking the NSA website at

www.smokejumpers.com

A "Friends - Helping - Friends" Request

Scott Anderson (MYC-84) has been diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukemia. At this time (Sept. 2007), Scott has been hospitalized in Boise for over nine weeks and has undergone four rounds of chemotherapy. He will require a bone marrow transplant at the Seattle Cancer Care Alliance within the month. Thankfully,



Scott Anderson (NIFC file)

Scott's personal health insurance should cover most of the \$350,000 in medical expenses. Unfortunately, it does not cover many of their out of state expenses and medical items like: transportation, living expenses near the medical center, donor

search fees, and other non-covered hospital/medical costs.

It is expected that these non-covered medical and other miscellaneous expenses will easily exceed \$10,000. This is your opportunity to assist the Anderson's during this phase of Scott's treatment and those additional financial burdens certain to come.

In order to help them, a tax-deductible account has been established in Scott's name with the *National Transplant Assistance Fund*. The NTAF is a nonprofit organization that has been helping the transplant community for over 20 years. All donations will go directly into an account designated for medical related expenses and are tax deductible. The initial goal is to raise \$9,000 to \$10,000 to assist the Anderson family for the uncovered medical costs and expenses during the estimated three-month treatment period in Seattle.

This is an opportunity to help a fellow jumper in need. Your

contribution in any amount will go a long way in helping the Anderson's through this trying time.

Make checks payable to: NTAF National Transplant Assistance Fund

Print in memo section: In Honor of Scott B. Anderson

Send to: NTAF, 150 N. Radnor Chester Road, Suite F-120 Radnor, PA 19087

To make a credit card donation, please call National Transplant Assistance Fund at (800) 642-8399 or go on line to www.transplantfund.org. If you have any further questions or need assistance with this process, contact Rich Caballero at (208) 871-1557 or Marie Bates at (208) 387-5506. ☎

The View from Outside the Fence



by **Chris Sorensen**
(Associate)

A TIP OF THE HARD hat to **Jack Helle** (MYC-54) for sending in information on **Dr. Bill Klunder** (MYC-55). I knew Bill years ago. He was a super guy and a true sportsman in every sense of the word. If I have the story correct, Bill was fishing the salmon run in Bristol Bay when he took a nap on his boat and died of a heart attack in his sleep.

Another tip of the hard hat goes to Astronaut Barbara Morgan, wife of **Clay Morgan** (MYC-74), for finally making it into space after 21 years on the list. Barbara grew from backup Teacher in Space to full fledged Astronaut, patiently waiting her turn while unqualified Senators and others were given joy rides on the shuttle. Probably like many of you, I worried that she would never get her own turn in space before the end of the shuttle program. She is an

inspiration to all of us!

In his "Tribute to Fred Brauer" (October 2007), **Ron Stoleson** (MSO-56) mentions a man synonymous with University of Montana athletics, Naseby "Doc" Rhinehart, and credits him with helping **Fred Brauer** (MSO-41) design a conditioning program for smokejumpers, including the famous "rack." Naseby came to Missoula in 1931 from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and played football, basketball and ran track at the University. After graduating in 1935, Rhinehart became the Grizzlies Head Athletic Trainer. He stayed at the University for 47 years and retired in 1982. He was one of the first people in the nation to develop an athletic training curriculum (1971) at a university. He passed away June 11, 1991, at the age of 80. Montana's athletic training facility was named in Naseby's honor in 1993. If you scratch hard enough, it seems like almost everyone in the West has a connection to smokejumping.

There is a good article on risk management and changing culture in the summer 2007 issue of "Speaking of Fire," which is published by Oklahoma State University Fire Protection Publications. According to the article entitled "The Challenge of Changing our Culture," in the U.K. Fire Service there is a strong emphasis on continual training on the importance of ongoing risk management. I encourage everyone to read this

article by pointing your browser to http://www.ifsta.org/ifsta/pdf/SpeakingOfFire_Summer2007.pdf.

The American Association of Political Consultants has recognized the International Association of Firefighters with the prestigious Pollie Award in the "Independent Expenditure/527 Communications" category for their direct mail piece "Wildfires." The winning mailer was part of a four-piece direct mail campaign the IAFF used during the Montana general election in 2006. The IAFF launched the campaign after Senator Conrad Burns publicly criticized wildland fire fighters for their efforts in fighting wildfires in Montana. During his three terms in the U.S. Senate, Burns consistently voted against funding fire programs, including 16 votes against funding since 9/11. The Pollie Awards are the national showcase for recognizing the best in public affairs and political communications. Judging is conducted by a bi-partisan team of consultants who reviewed more than 2,300 total submissions.

"Since I spent my life in an industry that helped pollute the environment, it's probably no surprise that I came late to enlightenment on this subject. One of the reasons I didn't support Al Gore for President in 2000 was that I thought he was a little nuts on the subject of global warming. But then I saw Gore's movie, *An Inconvenient Truth*, and I have to say it opened my eyes." Lee Iacocca ☎

Jumping The Steens

Brett Fairchild (Redmond '05)

The plane had just lifted off, and finally the cooling sensation of the rushing air filled the fuselage. On the airplane ramp in Redmond, Oregon, it was well over 100 degrees. In our jump suits we were sweating out the water we had been trying desperately hard to keep in all day. The cool air was a godsend...and so was the fire we were turning towards. Burns BLM District was our destination on a well-known mountain range called The Steens. Fire size was unknown, but on the map the terrain seemed like it was on a bench between two drainages.

The area had just been claimed a wilderness area, and the local helitack crew wasn't allowed to land their helicopter inside wilderness boundaries. Wilderness rules say that no motor vehicles are allowed inside the designated wilderness area. This was a mission for the jumpers.

Normally our plane, a Sherpa (officially Shorts C-23A Sherpa), can hold ten people, but our load consisted of eight (Ryan Koch/RAC-01, Mark Hentze/RAC-00, Dirk Stevens/RAC-91, Gary Atteberry/RAC-97, Jim Hansen/RDD-87, Jon Hernandez/RAC-01, Jeff Shipley/RAC-01 and myself) due to the overly hot temperatures.

The Steins tower roughly 10,000 ft. above sea level. The west face is somewhat gradual compared to the east, which is basically a drop off. We were to jump the west.

Flight time was an hour before we could see the fire. It looked to be roughly 20 acres burning in grass and sagebrush, torching out a juniper on occasion. Towards the head of the fire looked to be a wide-open jump spot; however, we didn't jump it. In retrospect, that was good for two reasons. After we jumped the fire blew up, and we would have been sacking and bagging our gear quickly, concluding with a very quick hike out of harms way. Also on a low flyby, we noticed a substantial amount of boulders and lava rock in our jump spot.

The alternate jump spot was a mile away in a nice park-like, grassy meadow. This was a wise decision on spotter Mark Gibbon's (RAC-87) part. With 300 yards of drift, the first stick hooked up and was briefed. We turned on final, the video recorder was turned on, the spotter yelled, "Get ready!!!" and then slapped the first man's leg. They hurled themselves out into space 1500 feet above the high desert. "Young Jim Hansen (RDD-87) and I were next in line. Gibb signaled us to hook up our static lines and gave us our briefing. We turned on final, and "Young Jim" got into the door. "GET READY!" Gibb yelled. Jim cocked into position like a loaded spring and, after a slap on the leg, propelled himself out into the cool, swirling air. I was right behind him, falling into space, in my head counting my four-count. Jump thousand, two thousand, three thousand, look thousand, and looked up to see my chute deploying into a beautiful blue and white round canopy. This was a chute that I had packed, the second one of mine I was

to jump, so I did have my doubts.

I turned 90 degrees as my suspension lines straightened just in time to see the Sherpa fly off towards the horizon. I located my jump partner, then the spot and opted for the second grassy meadow next to the lush green spot. Too bad, my spot had quite a few more rocks in it. The scenery was beautiful and like most jumps I wanted to fly forever. However, what comes up must come down. After a hard landing, I yelled over to Jim, "I'm OK," and started packing my jump suit up in my packout bag.

With everyone on the ground, Gibb decided to drop the cargo up by the fire. During the cargo runs I noticed a menacing dark cell (storm cloud) moving directly over the jump spot. I didn't think much of it though, being a snookie (2nd year jumper), and was concentrating on the growing fire to be fought.

The cell moved directly up the rocky ridge we were ascending to the fire. Jonny, Shipley, Dirk and I were in a group ready to slay the land-scorching dragon. As we moved up the ridge, a couple of lightning bolts hit somewhat close to us. No one thought much of it. Then, BAM! Like a stick of dynamite exploding 20 feet away, a lightning bolt hit leaving us deaf and dropping us to our knees. We had almost been hit by lightning. Our hearts were beating as we realized how close we had come to being hit.

Dirk, who was twice as tall as the Juniper tree that was struck, still had his tent poles in his shaking hand. No one knows why he didn't get struck instead; I guess Big Ernie was looking out for him.



(Courtesy B. Fairchild)

Dirk slowly moved over to a flat rock and gently put his tent poles down, murmuring something about his hand feeling funny. I didn't quite hear him as my ears were still ringing. Shipley was on one knee, shaking his head in disbelief, and thinking what idiots we were for hiking up a rocky ridge in a lightning storm. Jonny was quiet, just kneeling there with his piercing dark eyes studying the situation and thinking about our luck.

The lightning was still blasting about every 50th juniper on that ridge...and guess what? We started hiking again, minus Dirk's tent poles and all the radios turned off. The four other jumpers were also experiencing near-death situations on their way up as well. As most of us started congregating on the ridge, we started looking for cargo. Splat!! "Ouch," splat, ker-splat, "Ouch, ouch." All of a sudden, marble-size raindrops started pelting everything under the huge black thunder cell, including us. We sought refuge under a space blanket.

A full 20 minutes later, it slowed down. We exited our cocoon to observe the rain's effects on the fire. It pretty much put it out. There were no flame lengths over two feet high, and most of the fire's edge was smoldering around in the wet juniper duff.

We spread out trying to locate the cargo. Fifteen minutes later, Dirk hollered, "We've got cargo, we've got cargo." Luckily Gibbons had recognized the danger of the possible wind switch and had dropped the cargo into cold black, where there was no possibility of a re-burn. As everyone hustled to collect all the cargo, the bone-soaked chills started to set in.

Before long all the cargo was collected in one spot. Dirk and a few others grabbed what food they wanted and went to scout and put in a scratch line around the now 160-acre fire. The rest of us took turns grubbing and watering up. Before long we got a call from a fellow jumper that a hot burning juniper near the tail of the fire would be just the ticket to dry our gear out.

Shortly, four half-naked smokejumpers were hovered around a blazing millennium-old juniper drying our clothes and gear out. After warming up, another rain came and drenched us again. Finally, after about an hour, our stuff was somewhat dry. We needed to get on the fire line before the fuels started drying out.

Several hours later all of us gathered near an ancient juniper on the westernmost edge to grab a bite and discuss the fire. Not surprisingly, after the torrential downpour, the fire was in good shape. A couple of knotted, nasty "junies" needed to be felled sometime in the foreseeable future. Besides that, the rain pretty much kicked the fire's ass. The ancient juniper was designated the camping spot, so three of us started hauling cargo there. The rest continued scratching line and cutting "junies." By the end of the day, a 20-person Hotshot crew had been ordered up, and the realization of a long but fun fire set in.

After a jumper grub-box dinner (spam, canned foods, dried foods and more spam), Shipley and I hiked down to the jump spot to camp where our tents and camping gear was located, while the others chinked out respectable beds in their ridge top lava.

Shipley and I woke up early on day two, stuffed our bags

full of food and hiked up to the other bros. Over coffee and a popart, we discussed the day's plan and then set to it. I hiked around the fire scratching line here and there where the "juniduff" was getting somewhat dry.

Before long the hotshot crew showed up, and the jumpers congregated on the northern edge of the fire. For the rest of the day, we all slowly dry-mopped the hotspots and started to put the fire entirely out. The jumpers were working on a ridge towards Little Indian Creek, which gave us some refuge and privacy from the shot crew. Not that we didn't like the shot crew but jumpers stick together and like to work with other jumpers. We have our own little system.

With the fire in control and not too much to worry about, the jumpers took turns retreating to the coolness of the creek for a well-needed bath and a little enjoyment. When my turn came up, I grabbed my film canister full of fishing flies, spinners, and hooks. After searching 200 yards of water, I located a nice, deep hole that looked "fishy." After a few minutes, I hooked into a 7-inch rainbow. Not quite big enough to fry up on a shovel and feed a herd of hungry jumpers.

After a few more tries, I headed back up to the fire to let another bro take his turn at the creek. After several hours of pounding ultra-dry dirt and breathing black dust, we started migrating back to camp. Spam, chili, soup, ramen, whatever your choice; we had a 7/11 selection...kind of. After another dinner Shipley and I headed back to the jump spot for another night's rest.

Day three found Ship and I heading up to the other bros after breakfast. Even though it was a mile away over rocky ground, we preferred the lush green meadow for a good night's rest to the rocky ridge next to 160 acres of black. I think I saw four not-too-rocky camping spots, and there were six jumpers up there. You do the math.

The plan of attack was the same as the day before. Stick to the Little Indian Creek side and put out the smokes. We could visit the creek as we wanted, and we also needed to send a few people back to the camp to receive a para-cargo fresh food drop. Now a fresh food drop (especially down south or lower 48) is music to any firefighters ears. Living off dried and canned goods and the same menu selection of MRE's tends to make a hard-working firefighter crave...let's say fresh fruit, meat, bread...well hell, just about anything that's not in the grub box.

The Sherpa flew down from Redmond with Loughton and Gibbons aboard (what a pair) to kick out our treasured food. After about a dozen passes, all the cargo was on the ground and, before we had a chance to look it over, it was being torn apart and devoured, not much different then locusts on a field.

We stayed one day longer after that putting out the last of the smokes 100 feet from the line, enjoying a nice little dip at the creek, and dining on fresh food that magically fell from the sky. Life was good. The last night as we ate a huge dinner supplemented with fresh trout I caught, we took in our surroundings. The sunset was one in a thousand, the country was open high desert, and with all of us sitting around the campfire at our rocky ridge juniper resort, it reminded me why I love this job. 🍷



Roland Fisher



L-R: Lee Davis, Leonard Krout & Ted McDonald

Nine Mile Camp Montana



Summer 1947 - #1



L-R: John Brinkerhoff, Chuck Burk & Richard Denison



Spotter Lee Davis & Chuck McDonald



Supply Room

Layout Design by Johnny Kirkley (CJ-64)



*L-R: Robert Gorsuch, Leonard Krout, Robert Collins,
Fred Brauer & Bill Cherry*



Art Cochran



Dave Burt (L)



L-R: Chuck Burk & John Brinkerhoff



Awaiting Practice Jump

Photos Courtesy Ted Dethlefs Collection

John E. “Jack” Nash-Another Pioneer Jumper

by Chuck Pickard (Missoula '48)

He was a great woodsman, great rifle shot and a good friend to many who knew him. The older Missoula jumpers from the 40s and 50s will remember him as a man who knew his way around parachutes and all that goes with jumping.

Jack joined the jumpers in 1942 and helped carry the jumpers through the war years with the conscientious objectors. I am sure those who jumped at that time will remember Jack as a problem solver. He jumped for a number of years (1942-45) and stayed working the loft from 1946 through 1969. He worked along side of legends **Jim Waite** (MSO-40) and **Glenn H. Smith** (NCSB-40). Between “Smitty”, Jim and Jack Nash, most new parachute designs and modifications came into use. Both Smith and Nash were wizards on the battery of sewing machines in the loft.

Jack was a full-time employee with the Forest Service and in the winter months, when the packing and parachute repair was done, worked the router table making

signs for the forests.

He was married to a wonderful lady named Lillie. As I recall, she was raised on a small ranch somewhere northwest of Missoula. She wore long ankle-length dresses. The Nashes lived in the southwest section of Missoula where Jack always boasted of owning a half dozen lots, saying that was going to be his retirement.

Jack was an elk hunter who always made a kill each fall. He mostly hunted by himself and had a love for the Bob Marshall Wilderness Area. He was once hunting in the Mission Mountains and, on his way out, ran into a grizzly who came after him. He shot that bear only to face the bear's mate who also started for Jack. Well, Jack had to kill that bear too and always swore by his old faithful 30/40 Krag rifle.

In 1948 he was returning to Missoula from Nine Mile when a mountain lion ran across the roadway. At that time Jack drove an old gray Chevy “coupe.” Well, he grabbed his rifle, bailed out of the coupe and took off after the lion, as there was a bounty on lions at that time. It wasn't long before he returned to the car with a lion on his shoulder.

Fred Brauer (MSO-41) called Jack “Mother Nash.” It was fitting as Jack always went out of his way to help someone. If a new jumper was having trouble of some kind, Nash would do his best to help the man. I'm sure the CO's still alive can attest to this.

Earl Cooley (MSO-40) depended on Jack to keep the parachute loft in order. Nash was a rigging instructor and a good one. He didn't settle for just anyone packing chutes and wanted a particular type of person with certain traits. I was lucky enough to be trained by Jack.

Jack was awarded the Silver Beaver medal for his many years work as a Boy Scout Leader in the Missoula area. There are many adults in Missoula today who can look back on their scouting experiences led by Nash. Once Jack developed a collapsible camping saw that worked like a charm. Today similar saws are on the market.

Jack was a good man. He passed away December 27, 1991. 🐾



Jack Nash instructing a Boy Scout (Courtesy C. Pickard)

PROFILE: RUSSIAN SMOKEJUMPER IVAN ALEXANDROVICH NOVIK

by Bruce Ford (Missoula '75)

IVAN ALEXANDROVICH NOVIK is a big man with an easy smile and looks younger than his 68 years. Indeed, he is five years younger than his documents attest, as all his records from Minsk, in Byelorussia, were destroyed during the war. His mother was killed when the Germans invaded Byelorussia and his father died fighting as a partisan. He ended up in an orphanage and was going by the name of Nicolai until reunited with his grandmother, who confirmed his birth name as Ivan.

He entered the army as a paratrooper at sixteen, as he was big for his age and had documents saying he was older. His early army training jumps were from a balloon tethered at 400 meters, the straight-down fall considerably more disconcerting than jumping from a moving airplane. He remembers that some jumpers had to be given a boot in the behind as an incentive to exit. Another had a change of heart just after jumping, turned, and grabbed the edge of the gondola. With adrenaline-crazed strength, he did a pull-up with full gear and scrambled back in. Ivan never forgot how he was struck by what fear could induce a person to accomplish.

Ivan started smokejumping at the newly-opened 20-man Krasnoyarsk base in 1956. They were jumping the An-2 with hand-deployed chutes. Due to a shortage of KAP-3 automatic activation devices, they had the ex-paratroopers jump without these backups, even though their previous jumps had been static-lined. Ivan says he counted to four in about a second and a half and nearly threw his arm out of joint pulling the ripcord.

On a fire jump in his second year, he had a malfunction in which the lines failed to completely deploy, and the canopy stayed in the bag. They were jumping a narrow valley, and

his trajectory carried him toward a hill, so that by the time his reserve deployed, he was ready to land. Fortunately, some foresters showed up with a jug of moonshine to help repair his jangled nerves. In '56 and '57 the number of such malfunctions with the hand-deployed system led to the adoption of static lines in 1958.

In those days, firefighting techniques were fairly basic: back-pack pumps, shovels, burning out from natural barriers, and swatting the fire edge with branches. Ivan remembers one fire where they tied a birch tree to a horse and dragged it along the fire edge. He and his fellow

jumpers were once weathered in for a week with no food but a bit of bread and salt pork. They had a shotgun, but game was scarce, and they succeeded only in killing a few small birds.

Flying in the days of dead reckoning also had its risks. Once Ivan took off as fog was moving in on a village, and they had to circle straight up through a hole while avoiding the surrounding fog-shrouded mountains. Once up, they found the Angara River and followed it toward the town of Kezhma, but again ran into fog. Only when a little YAK plane popped up through the fog could they locate the town.



Ivan Novik (Courtesy Bruce Ford)

Another time, he took off with a load of fireline explosives in a plane that turned out to be overloaded. He saw a pine tree looming in front of the plane, which somehow managed to zig-zag through the trees and finally get altitude.

The established ground-to-air signal to call off a practice jump was to pull the panel in the jumpspot. Once during a jump in Kezhma, the wind started to gust strongly, so they hastened to pull the panel, but were too late to prevent the next stick from jumping. A woman jumper, light to begin with, sailed off to crash into some distant trees. Sure she was busted up, they ran off in search but were met by the grinning

jumper trudging back with her gear.

On one fire, as the jumpers were gathering gear, someone spotted a sow bear and two cubs nearby. Everyone started looking for trees to climb and turned to the self-proclaimed hunter of the group, who jumped with a fancy rifle. As push came to shove, it became apparent the guy was more of an armchair hunter. Just as well, as the “sow and cubs” turned out to be tree stumps.

Ivan worked at several sub-bases in Krasnoyarsk region and went to Pushkino, near Moscow, for jumper instructor training in 1962. He became the head jumper for the Krasnoyarsk base in 1968. In 1972,

he mobilized jumpers to go to the fires raging that summer around Moscow. They brought Siberian know-how in fighting large fires and did a lot of burnouts and backfires over the objections of local foresters, who were unused to large, running fires. Some of those mobilized wound up in Afghanistan, ostensibly to fight fire, but also to establish a Soviet presence, he suspects.

Ivan jumped fires every year he was a smokejumper and wound up with over 1500 jumps without a serious injury. He is now the base safety officer and still helps out with jumper training and operations. Recently, he marked his 50th year working for Avialesookhrana. 🍄

If It Could Go Wrong, It Did!

by Mark Romey (Missoula '75)

This jump was supposed to be just a nice, pleasant two-jumper fire with my good friend, Bruce “Mooseling” Ford (MSO-75). It was the Cedar Ridge Fire, a small



Mark Romey (Courtesy M. Romey)

fire in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. On board with us were: **John Ford** (LDG-74); **Ron McGinnis** (MSO-68); **Larry Fite** (MSO-60), spotter; **Greg Houska** (MSO-69), spotter trainee; and “**Wild**” **Bill Yount** (MSO-69), spotter trainee. The pilot was Doug Devereaux; I’m not sure who the co-pilot was. We were flying in a DC-3 owned by Chrysler Air.

I was first man in the door, and, as we were circling the fire, Fite was showing me the jump spot and the way to pack out. The left engine started to sputter, then it quit. Fite ran up to the pilot and then the right engine started to sputter. Fite told us to hook-up for an emergency jump. He was going to kick us out over a small meadow. After a few minutes, while I could barely stay in the plane due to all the bodies piled up against me, Fite told us to get on the floor into crash position because “we were going in” to a meadow. We were coasting down the drainage on one engine. As we landed, I was the farthest in the rear by the door. I yelled out, “there’s a cabin and another one.” We were at Moose Creek Ranger Station and none of us knew that’s where we were headed. When we stopped, we all jumped out and relieved ourselves under the wing and were chattering like a bunch of magpies. I’m sure the DC-3 would not have made it if it were not for Fite’s knowledge of the country and his directions to the pilot. The pilot was looking for a lake to ditch in before Fite intervened.

After almost two hours, another DC-3 from Chrysler came in to pick us up, with one engine smoking. We were not exactly crazy about getting into it, but in a while, we were above the fire once again. Fite asked me if I saw the jump spot. I answered, “That little meadow.” Fite smiled and said, “Yeah, that meadow.” I soon found out that when jumping without your glasses, all patches of ten-foot alder look like meadows.

He threw the streamers, and Bruce and I followed. We didn't care how much drift there was, we were getting out of the DC-3. We wished the rest of the folk good luck.

Well, not only did we land in ten-foot alder, but our gear and cargo chute treed-up in a huge spruce "schoolmarm" that split 30 feet up. I tried my hand at climbing up the limby monster, but after a half-hour came back to earth for a disappointing breather and let Bruce give it a shot. He got to the cargo just before dark and lowered it with his letdown rope. It was still 20 feet off the ground. Bruce let it rip. Luck had it that poor Bruce spurred himself pretty badly (should have had stitches, but I had forgotten my sewing kit). The next day we decided neither of us was going back up for the chute. Both of us eyed the saw and then eyed each other. We took the saw, felled that limby monster and recovered the chute. We then carefully covered the stump so the detection flight wouldn't see it.

The logs we had to buck on the fire were almost as wide as the saw. There were about two inches left on the saw when we were sawing through the logs, and bucking took forever. Needless to say, we eventually put out the fire and prevented havoc in the wilderness.

That night as we worked the fire, we had the usual smokejumper discussion on the philosophy of life. We talked

about our rookie class of two years prior and, at first, both agreed we were the handsomest and most skilled class ever. Then reality hit. Our thoughts were shattered when Bruce reminded us that **George Weldon** (MSO-75) and **Jim Beck** (MSO-75) were in that class. So much for handsomeness.

The packout was another fiasco. The map we were given had us mis-spotted. We were to cross-country to a ridge to catch the trail. The problem was we were two steep ridges away and packing all our equipment. This added an extra day. Poor Bruce took a headfirst fall down a steep slope and was almost beaten to death with the shovel. I was praying that I wouldn't have to quarter him and pack him out before we made it to Elk Summit. His arm went to sleep from those comfortable army pack boards, and it didn't wake up for a week.

We were finally picked up and taken back to Missoula. On the way, we stopped at Lolo Hot Springs for a burger and, to the driver's dismay, a beer. While we were emptying the last of the beer, Bruce said, "It can't get any worse than that jump. It was hell!"

Bruce and I just recently had a beer reminiscing about that jump from almost 30 years ago. 🍷

Mark can be contacted at: romey@montanasky.us or 91 Airfield Rd., Libby MT 59923.

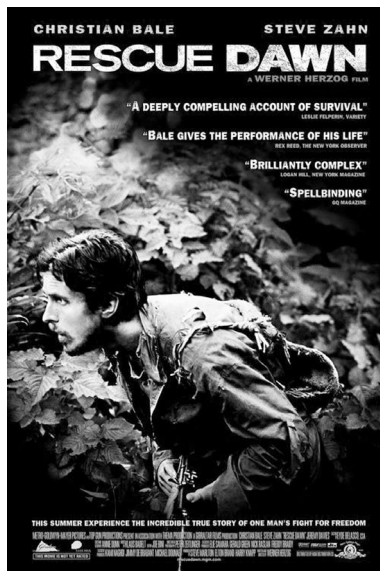
A Critique of the Movie *Rescue Dawn*

by Pisidhi Indradat (Associate Life Member)

After seeing "Rescue Dawn," I learned that it is a good movie for people who do not know the real story. For those who do know the real story, it is another "Hollywood style" movie full of exaggerations and lies. However, I would like to give credit to the location manager who understood how to choose the location which looked similar to the area of the prison camp, and all the camera crew who made the film at least look like a good production.

Concerning Producer Werner Herzog:

I heard from many people that Herzog is a good film producer who produced many good movies. I have never seen any of the movies he produced prior to this movie. For *Rescue Dawn*, Herzog neglected and failed to make an effort to obtain accurate details and facts before



making this film. The failure to research and get accurate information resulted in this film being 90% bullshit (mostly untrue). I will point out important mistakes Herzog made in this film as follows:

The total number of prisoners in the camp:

There were seven prisoners in the camp at the time we made our escape. In the movie, there were only six prisoners. The missing prisoner was Prasit Thanee. In the prison camp at the time, there were three Americans, three Thais and one Chinese. There names are as follows:

1. AMERICAN

Eugene Henry Debruin (MSO-59) - Air America

Duane Whitney Martin - USAF Pilot

Dieter Dengler - US Navy Pilot

2. THAI

Prasit Promsuwan - Air America

Pisidhi Indradat - Air America

Prasit Thanee - Air America

3. CHINESE

Y.C. To - Air America

Prasit Thanee was the youngest of the prisoners. He was around 23-24 years old at that time, and he

was the tallest and the biggest among our group. He was able to speak and understand the Laotian language very well. He was the one always listening to the guards when they spoke to each other. He would then relate the necessary and important information to me or to Prasit Promsuwan in Thai. After, either Prasit or I would relay the information to the rest of the prisoners.

The Character of Eugene DeBruin:

Rescue Dawn portrayed the character of Eugene DeBruin as a crazy, abnormal, and emotionally unstable person. This false representation of Eugene's character truly hurt my feelings, and I was very disappointed with the way Herzog developed Eugene's character in the movie. The movie's representation of Eugene DeBruin could not be further from the truth. From what I knew about Eugene, he earned a Bachelor's degree in forestry from Montana University. Upon graduation, he got a job as a smokejumper at the base in Missoula. Later, he worked with Air America at the Vientiane station in Laos as an airfreight specialist. There is no way that Eugene could have been a smokejumper or worked for Air America if he actually possessed the characteristics shown in the movie. I absolutely cannot accept this distortion of his character in this film! During the two years that I spent with him in prison, I have come to a conclusion that Eugene was a brave, polite, calm and loyal person. He always kept his promises. He was in top mental and emotional condition throughout the whole ordeal, and there were none of the character traits that his character had in the film.

Props that were misused in the film

1. THE BIG WATER JAR
I noticed in the film that there was a big container of water made of clay or cement placed in the prison camp. This is an obvious

sign of bad research of the actual prison camp because the prison was located deep in the jungle between Vietnam and the Laos border. Who is going to carry that jar to the prison camp?

Other inaccurate events portrayed in the film

1. THE HANDCUFF SCENE
The part where Dieter Dengler made a small knife and key to unlock our handcuffs was inaccurate. What really happened was that I was the one who made both objects at Bantham prison, and this was even before Dengler moved into the prison! The handcuffs shown in the film did not resemble the real handcuffs at all.
2. THE ESCAPE SCENE
During the escape in the film, Dengler and Martin made up one team, while DeBruin, Pisidhi, and Prasad made up the other team. However, the movie portrayed only Dengler and Martin as being the only ones to fend off the guards. In reality, there were indeed two teams, but my team did carry out our part of the plan. In the film, it seemed

like we just disappeared after agreeing to meet at the guards' kitchen. This is not true. I also fought four guards and shot one during the escape.

3. THE SHOE REFERENCE

After our escape from the prison, we met that very night on top of the mountain. The film showed that Dengler met DeBruin and asked him why he did not go through with the plan. He also asked what happened to the supplies that they agreed to take along with them. DeBruin replied that Pisidhi was the one who took three pairs of shoes. This kind of script writing is preposterous! Do you think I can eat those shoes? Instead of taking three pairs of shoes with me, don't you think it would have been a better idea to take the rice and salt instead?

Overall, there are still a lot of mistakes I found throughout the film, but I think this is enough to give you an idea of the gross inaccuracies that were carelessly portrayed. I will be glad to let you know more about the mistakes I observed in case you have any questions. 🙏

NSA Offers Gift Membership

by Carl Gidlund (Missoula '58)

Since you're a member of the NSA, you undoubtedly enjoy the benefits of membership in our association. Those include our quarterly magazine that provides you the latest news on issues of current interest to active and veteran smokejumpers plus a plethora of historic features.

NSA membership also gives you the chance to connect with old buddies at national and regional gatherings and to work with fellow jumpers on projects that benefit the national forests.

Now, through gift memberships, there's a way to share those benefits with *non-member jumpers*. As a result of an action by the NSA board, current members can now purchase one-year half-price memberships for fellow jumpers. This is *\$15.00 for a 1-year membership*.

Gift memberships *are non-renewable at the half-price rate*.

They may be purchased by mailing a check to NSA membership coordinator John McDaniel, P.O. Box 105, Falun, KS 67442-0105.

The purchaser must provide the NSA with the new member's correct address. And, the purchaser is also responsible for notifying the new member that he or she is making the gift.



NSA Trail Crew



Summer Trail Project-It Was Different

by Roland Pera (Missoula '56)

THIS YEAR'S TRIP TO Montana began on July 18 with an afternoon drive to Seward, Cornhusker land, 25 miles west of Lincoln. I have found that spending the night with my sister, Marcy, always means that the food is good and the price is right.

My route took me through the always-beautiful Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks. While in West Yellowstone, I noticed smoke billowing from a fire in the park. As it turned out, smoke from many different fires was a constant sight for the entire time that I spent in Montana and Idaho. The Montana people say that they are working on an eight-year drought.

Dillon, Montana, is a two and one-half hour drive from West Yellowstone and is the home of **Bill Murphy** (MSO-56) and his charming wife, Stevie. They were kind enough to feed and house me for the evening. Why did it not surprise me that "Murph" just happened to have some cold beer on hand?

Then it was on to smoky and hot Missoula. The trail project was soon to begin, and little did we know what surprises were in store for us. Before we left Missoula, we had the customary send-off dinner with all the ex-jumpers who were going on projects. A new wrinkle this year was that we were given a three-hour course in CPR and first aid by the FS.

On Tuesday, July 26, our crew of nine headed for the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness Area in the Clearwater National Forest. This put us into Idaho. We left Highway 12 and drove on the Elk Summit road to our trailhead. This might be the worst road in Idaho (stay tuned for the second worst road).

About 1 p.m., armed with tools and some personal items, we began the seven-mile trek to the campsite. Our crew, ranging in age from 59 to 73, was headed by **Bob Whaley** (MSO-56), an ex-stockbroker and Marine helicopter pilot (who was shot down and injured during the Vietnam War). Making up the rest of the crew were: **Chuck Fricke** (MSO-61), **Dennis Pearson** (MSO-62), **Jim Phillips** (MSO-67), **Gary Weyermann** (MSO-63), **Bob Schumaker** (MSO-59), **Don Larson** (MSO-74), **JB Stone** (MSO-56) and myself. After beginning our walk-in, we quickly discovered there was plenty of trail work to be done. Since this a wilderness area, we were not allowed to use chain saws, so the work was done with a large crosscut and an Oregon saw.

In addition to our crew of nine, there were six packers and helpers with 26 head of stock that hauled our personal gear (tents, sleeping bags, etc.), tools, food, and miscellaneous items (such as beer) to the campsite. The packers set up the camp and were our cooks for the week.

More on the packers – this very friendly and interesting group volunteered their time and stock to help make this project become a reality. They do have a vested interest in keeping the trails open, however; their help went way beyond that. We had cold beer, delicious meals, and heard incredible stories. The senior member of the group, Jim Remshaw, lived his early life in Selway Falls, Idaho, where his father schooled him in becoming an outfitter. To this day there is no road into Selway Falls. The packers were lots of fun, were articulate and, most of all, were a

savvy lot; people who knew the ins and outs of outdoor life.

As we walked toward our camp we worked very hard on clearing the trail. Dennis Pearson and JB Stone were wearing shorts and by late afternoon, they were dripping blood and looked like Purple Heart candidates. Around 6:00 p.m. we were about two miles from camp and began to realize we would not finish the trail into camp that day, so we left most of our tools and headed for camp, arriving about 7:00 p.m. We enjoyed some cold beer, ate a pasta dinner, and then pitched our tents.

The next day proved to be interesting, to say the least. It was mid-afternoon. We finished the two-mile stretch of trail and were working trail beyond the camp when someone noticed a rather large cloud of smoke in the direction of our trailhead. The fire that caused the change of assignment and was not supposed to bother us was rearing its ugly head.

We received word via radio to evacuate. This meant walking two miles to our camp, taking down our tents that had been set up fewer than 20 hours before, and hurriedly preparing to leave. Around 5:00 p.m. after tossing some candy bars and water in our packs, we left our camp to repeat the walkout to the trailhead and our vehicles. The packers took our personal gear and some other items but left much of the camp behind (the rest was taken out by helicopter the next day). As it turned out we were not threatened by the fire on the walkout.

Around 8:30 p.m. we completed the walkout just as it was beginning to get dark. We then traveled the rocky and dusty road to the Powell

Ranger station and arrived about 10:30 p.m., tired, thirsty, and hungry. Our gang walked about 22 miles and cleared about nine miles of trail in fewer than two days.

The ranger was very kind to us – he gave us some ice-cold pop and took us to a house that was unoccupied. It had no beds but there was carpeting on the floors. Close to midnight I staked out a sleeping area, erected a couple of “no trespassing signs” and was more than ready for a good night’s rest. Little did I know that the strange events of the day had not ended.

About 3 a.m., I began hearing a chirping sound, the sound a smoke alarm makes when the battery needs to be replaced. I tried to ignore it but after one-half hour or so, I gave up, found a light to turn on, located a chair to stand on, and removed the battery. With the exception of one, the other seven jumpers admitted they heard it, but no one stepped up to the plate. Being a light sleeper anyway, that incident certainly disturbed my sleep when it was badly needed.

The rest of the week was pretty soft. We camped at a nice campground near the ranger station. The packers stayed and continued to do the cooking. Our work consisted of sprucing up a cabin and re-staining signs on the Lolo Motorway. This 80-mile stretch of road was built in the 1920s and was meant to duplicate the route of Lewis and Clark as they crossed the Bitterroots. Do not be fooled by “motorway” as this may be the second worst road in Idaho; however, it does offer spectacular views. Meeting another vehicle is both interesting and challenging.

The campground was located only four miles from the beautiful and rustic Lochsa Lodge, so we weren’t really toughing it out too badly. One of our guys had an average bar bill per day of \$127.42 (who is this guy? - hint, he has Norwegian roots). This was the result of paying for his beer plus buying drinks for many other people.



L-R: Roland Pera, J.B. Stone, Dennis Pearson (Courtesy R. Pera)

The tail end of the Montana experience was more than exciting. JB Stone, Dennis Pearson, and this writer had agreed to make a free-fall parachute jump. JB, who originated and sold the idea, meant it to be done last year, which was the 50th anniversary of our training (JB and I trained together in 1956). It turned out to be the commemoration of the 51st year of our training.

The location was 35 miles west of Kalispell, home of the Lost Prairie Skydiving School. We had no choice other than doing a tandem jump, which is a jump made while harnessed to an instructor. In spite of having jumped before, we would have had to do all sorts of training to jump on our own.

The place was really hopping as they were in the middle of a 10-day skydiving rally. Skydivers from all over the country were there. First on the agenda was the signing of all kinds of waivers and releases, followed by a “CYA” video that we were required to watch. I also signed up and paid for a DVD video of the jump – more on that later. Then it was hurry up and wait. About one-half hour before we boarded the aircraft, we met our jump partner and donned a jump suit and harness. We were also given a helmet with goggles

that made us look like World War I pilots. The instructors gave us about five minutes of instruction in leaving the airplane, positioning for the free-fall, and how to do the landing

About an hour before we got on the plane, we were pleased and surprised to see Sally and Carl Gidlund (MSO-58) appear on the scene. They were en route from Libby to Kalispell and timed it so they could watch our jump. Carl said he would have jumped had it not been for the 205-pound weight limit. My, what a convenient excuse that was!

Finally it was time to board the twin-engine Otter. I had some butterflies, but they were not big-time ones. It certainly brought back memories of 1956 when JB and I boarded our plane for our first jump. I can’t speak for JB or Dennis, but my butterflies were much greater a half-century ago. Actually, I think I was more worried about suddenly reverting to our smokejumper techniques than doing what our instructors had just told us to do.

Twenty-three jumpers, including Mary who was to shoot the video, were on the plane as it roared down the runway and lifted off into the blue mountain sky (it actually was a clear day in that area). As the plane

gained altitude we could see smoke rising from a nearby fire which certainly triggered smokejumper memories. Mary continued to shoot video in the plane. I finally became aware that she was wearing a parachute.

It took about 15 minutes to climb to 13,000 feet. During this time the anxiety level rose a bit. Eventually the yellow caution light went on and the jumpers began exiting the aircraft. The three tandem jumpers were positioned to be the last out with the exception of Mary who would jump right after Jeff and me.

Now it was my turn out the door and what a rush it was. Within four seconds we reached terminal velocity, which is 120 feet per second (I

believe that is around 120 miles per hour). Much to my surprise, during the free-fall, Mary suddenly appeared right in my face. We touched hands a short while and she shot more video. We free-fell about 6000 feet, which took about 55 seconds, and then Jeff popped the square chute about 3000 feet above the ground. The final very peaceful drop lasted approximately three minutes. This was the time to relax and enjoy the scenery. Jeff let me do a few turns. The chute is very responsive, turning much more quickly than our 1950s round smokejumper chutes. Soon it was time to think about landing. We all remember how hard our smokejumper landings were. When Jeff told me that we would land on

our butts with feet up, I almost thought he was joking. The landing was extremely gentle due to the technology of the square chute. Sally and Carl were at the DZ busily taking pictures with a number of cameras (one was mine).

The jump was over - the three of us were totally pumped, high-fiving as though we had just won the Super Bowl or climbed Mt. Everest.

That evening I started for home and got only as far as Butte. Lying in bed close to eleven, I was still so high that I had all kinds of trouble getting to sleep.

The next night I drove to Murdo, SD, spent the night with friends, and the day after I arrived home safely. It was truly a memorable 15 days. 🦋

Memories of Dave Crowder

by Robert Cushing (Missoula '59)

I was saddened to learn of **Dave Crowder's** (MSO-59) death in the July 2007 issue of *Smokejumper*. I didn't even know he was ill. As rookies in '59 and in subsequent jump years, we spent a lot of time together. I have a lot of fond and sometimes traumatizing memories.

I remember the exact moment that I first bumped into Dave. Actually, it wasn't Dave that I bumped into, but his chute on our first training jump. Fortunately, through no skill of my own, I bounced off and all was well. **Hugh Fowler** (MSO-47) was in charge of training, and he made it clear that he was not impressed by my performance. I think we were jumping in alphabetical order that day, which linked our fortunes, but luckily not our chutes, for that brief moment.

The next day we must have been jumping in reverse alphabetical order because I was first out this time, and Dave bumped into my chute. Like I had the previous day, he skillfully bounced off and all was well - until we reached the ground. This time a firing squad lined up. Hugh Fowler and **Earl Cooley** (MSO-40) were both there to greet us with what might be characterized as extreme displeasure. I don't think they would have minded shooting us if it wasn't for the getting up at dawn part.

Being the observant type, I did notice that we were in different aircraft on the third training jump. So much for alphabetical lists.

From these episodes, I thought maybe I was accident prone, but subsequent events proved that Crowder was the one to avoid. On a two-manner a cargo chute did not open completely, and we had grape juice all over everything including the sleeping bags. Crowder complained that he didn't look

good in pink and hated stickiness. On another jump we both had scrapes and bruises all over us when we mistook a cow for a grizzly bear on a moonless night.

I recall being part of a rescue crew sent from a nearby fire to attend to Crowder when he fractured his skull in a timber jump. He seemed like the normal Dave Crowder to us, and we made him walk out. It turned out he actually had a fractured skull. Our attention was directed more to his partner whose hands were badly burned - something about a letdown without looping the rope through the D-rings. It certainly must have been fast. I think he had gloves on, but they probably didn't do much good in a 120 mile per hour virtual free-fall.

One of my lasting memories of Crowder was watching him disappear down to the bottom of a massive canyon when his chute inverted on a 16-man jump. He must have been in the last stick out, and we all stood in awe watching his slow and lengthy decent, while the foreman, **Dick Tracy** (MSO-53), kept yelling at him to turn the damn thing around before he drifted into the river several thousand feet below us. It must have been one of the longest jumps ever for time, distance, and vertical drop. When he finally emerged from the depths, all the beer was gone (but that's another story).

It was not difficult for anyone to appreciate Dave's self-deprecating sense of humor and a sensitive side that he sometimes seemed embarrassed to show. As too often happens after making youthful promises to stay in touch that neither would keep, our subsequent careers took us down other paths. I wish I had seen him one last time to say how much I enjoyed his company. Jumper reunions are good for that sort of thing. 🦋

Memorial Service NCSB Reunion

September 2007

by Gerry Jessup (North Cascades '59)

Thank you all for coming to the memorial service this morning. We are here today to honor our comrades, our jump partners and our friends, who are no longer on the jump list.

As I read the obituary information on these men, I discovered something understandable, but also very sad. The comments regarding some of them were very brief and told nothing about them. Such as:

Larry Hyde (NCSB-70) died in truck accident in California in 1981.

Ray Rivera, (NCSB-61) died from gunshot wounds near Reserve, New Mexico, in 1977.

Edgar Mays (NCSB-51) died in 1991 at Lewiston, ID.

Harry Neal (NCSB-56) deceased.

Buck Pino (NCSB-56) died of pneumonia in 1996 at the age of 57.

Jack Johnston (NCSB-51) died when the plane he was piloting crashed into a hill near Yakima.

These brief comments tell us something about their deaths but nothing about their lives. Yet those who jumped with them remember every one on that list, and, as long as we are alive, they will be remembered and spoken of. In the book, *Spitting In The Wind*, which was created for this reunion, is story after story of training jumps and fire experiences, many of which involved those 71 names on our memorial list. For all of us, we need only to close our eyes, look back, and these men are alive again.

For example, I recall meeting Buck Pino when I rookied in 1959. He appeared to be very confident, if not arrogant, giving the impression that he had no fear of this dangerous job, and that each jump and each fire was just another day at the office. I soon learned that Buck Pino's life had been spared on the flip of a coin. He and **Jerry Helmer** (NCSB-53) flipped to see who would go on the cargo drop June 23, 1958. Buck lost the flip, the plane crashed, Jerry was killed and Buck never got over it. I remember being in the jump plane with Buck on two different fires in 1959 and 1960. In the doorway, Buck was not the same self-assured, fearless kid that he was on the ground. He appeared to be scared to death. However he overcame his fear, sat in the door, and when the slap on the back came, he stepped out. I always wondered why Buck continued to come back and face those demons. I had great respect for him because he stared down his fear, spit in its face and stepped out of the open door.

I recall my brother **Gene Jessup** (NCSB-57) relating his memories of **Gus Hendrickson** (NCSB-47). In 1957, Gene's rookie year, he and an old jumper he called Jim got into some "bubbly" one evening. After several chug-a-lugs, Jim decided it would be a good idea to spin some brodies around the jump plane in his 1950 Plymouth. Gene rode along, but the next day

he was called into **Francis Lufkin's** (NCSB-40) office. I quote from Gene's story: "That was the worst day of my life. Francis was my hero, the father I never had. I did not want to disappoint him, but I had. I think I remained standing as Francis mentioned something about Jim and me kicking rocks down the road; there was also a part about a smart jumper not spitting in the wind. Then he told me the story about having a bad bear in camp, and how it is sometimes necessary to shoot them to get rid of them. Fortunately, or perhaps unfortunately, Francis said he couldn't shoot me, but he was going to get rid of the bad bear. Later that morning, with my bag packed, I was wondering how I was going to get back to Wenatchee, hopefully, without too much walking and kicking of rocks. Jim and that damn Plymouth had already gone, saying he'd meet me at the Antlers. Gus Hendrickson stopped by and told me some of the squad leaders were willing to go to bat for me if I could refrain from 'spitting in the wind.' I told Gus there would be no more bad bear days. Get me another chance and I would make him proud. He did and I did." Most of us only know that Gus Hendrickson was killed June 23, 1958 in a plane crash on the Eight Mile Fire. Gene knew him as a fellow smokejumper, a squad leader, and as a friend on a day when he badly needed a friend. Gene will never forget Gus Hendrickson.

One of the real characters at the North Cascades Smokejumper Base in the 50s and 60s was **Jim Westcott** (NCSB-57). Jim was the most evenly dispositioned person I have ever met. To him, life was to be enjoyed and not taken too seriously. He was also one of the most unkempt people I have ever met. Personal hygiene was not something that demanded his attention each day. During our off-work hours, Jim would wear a red or possibly chartreuse tank top, ghastly orange sweat pants and slippers. If both of his pairs of underwear were dirty, which they usually were, he wore a bathing suit under his sweatpants. But, when you saw him coming, you couldn't help but break into a smile. He was so funny; you knew he would brighten the day.

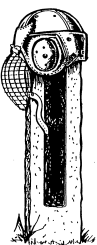
One evening, some of the boys went into Winthrop for a few suds. On the way back to the base, they lost control of the car; it rolled over onto its top and caught fire. They all scrambled out through broken windows to safety with only one apparent injury to be reported. For days and weeks afterwards, Jim would pull his pants down for anyone who would stop and listen so he could show them the singed hair on the last part of Jim to depart the burning car. It could have been a very serious situation, but with Jim standing there with his pants down around his knees, it was hard to keep a straight face.

One of my most vivid memories of Jim was one Friday afternoon when he informed several of us that there would be a whole bus load of Omak girls coming to the base that night car-

rying two cases of beer for our enjoyment. Excitement ran through our ranks at a fever pitch. Around 8:00 p.m., 25 or so jumpers could be found in the bathhouse for one last quick look in the mirror and a final splash or two of Old Spice. Around 10:00, some of the boys were beginning to question whether these girls were actually coming, but Jim assured us that they would be arriving any minute. About midnight several of us walked into Jim's room in the bunkhouse only to find him asleep with a little cherub smile on his face. Someone broke into song, "Away in a manger, no crib for a bed. The Little Lord Jimmie lay down his sweet head." And from that day forward, Jim Westcott would be forever known as "Little Lord Jimmie." But song or no song, the jumpers' patience had run out. "Little Lord

Jimmie," adamantly proclaiming that the girls were coming, was dragged out of the bunkhouse and thrown into the creek. At that point, all the jumpers headed for bed with the faint smell of Old Spice still wafting through the bunkhouse.

All of us have special memories of many of those who are on the memorial list today. We have come to honor them and to say thank you for the part they played in shaping our lives and in helping us to become the men and women we are today. We are grateful to those, the pioneers, who made those first jumps with experimental equipment and unproven techniques to pave the way for us to follow. We are very proud of them. It is with deep appreciation we say, "Thank You" and, dear brothers, we will never forget you. 🙏



Off The List

We want to know! If you learn of the serious illness or death of a member of the smokejumper community, whether or not he or she is a member, your Association wants to know about it. Please

phone, write or e-mail the editor (see contact information on page three of the magazine). We'll take it from there.

Thomas L. French (McCall '75)

Tom, 64, died July 2, 2007 of a brain aneurism while working at his desk in the Payette National Forest Warehouse. He never regained consciousness.

Tom was born May 22, 1943 in Ontario, Oregon. He graduated from High School in Reseda, California, and went on to Brigham Young University on a full-ride gymnastics scholarship. He received his masters degree from Utah State. His firefighting career began in 1967, when he held a fire control position, and he later worked on the Payette Hotshot Crew from 1972 through 1974. Tom jumped at McCall from 1975-79. He then went to the Price Valley helitack crew 1980-83, the McCall Airtanker Base in 1984, and the Payette USFS Warehouse 1985.

James R. Clark (Missoula '64)

Jim, of Crested Butte, Colorado, passed away June 25, 2006. He attended the University of Montana and jumped at Missoula from 1964-66 and was an NSA member.

Charles R. "Chuck" Whitt (McCall '46)

Chuck passed away December 10, 2006 in Reno, Nevada. He served in the Army from 1943-46 and later graduated from the University of Idaho with degrees in forestry and fisheries. Chuck worked for the forest service in Region 4 before transferring to Region 6 where he was a fisheries biologist on the Mt. Hood N.F. from the mid-70s until his retirement.

Robert G. Cramer (Missoula '46)

Bob died November 30, 2005 in Missoula. After serving in the U.S. Navy in the Pacific Campaign in WWII, he received his education and master's degrees at the University of Montana. He played basketball at Great Falls High and

the U. of Montana. Bob was a teacher and administrator in schools in Montana, Alaska and Idaho for over 30 years.

John T. Davis (North Cascades '66)

John lost his battle with cancer and died September 16, 2007 in Vancouver, Washington. He was born in Winthrop, graduated from high school there and, after a near-fatal smokejumping injury in 1966, got his BA and Masters degrees from Eastern Washington University. After a stint as principal at Goldendale Middle School (Washington), he earned his PhD in Education from the University of Connecticut in 1985. John served as Assistant Supt. of Schools in Kelso, Washington, before taking a Superintendent's position in Hockinson, Washington. He retired in 2001 and this past September the high school library was dedicated to him.

Jack B. Elliott (McCall '47)

Jack died August 26, 2007. He was born and grew up in Nampa, Idaho. After graduating from high school, he joined the Navy V-12 program. After the finish of WWII, Jack graduated from the University of Idaho and continued his career with the Navy retiring in 1975 as a Lt. Commander. He was a member of the 1947 McCall rookie class and jumped one season.

Harold J. Weinmann (North Cascades '47)

Hal died September 10, 2007 in Redmond, Oregon. He started working for the Forest Service at age 16; working as a lookout, firefighter, and joining the smokejumpers in 1947. Hal joined the U.S. Navy and served on the USS Buck during the Korean War. After the war he returned to Winthrop and transferred to Redmond when that base opened in 1964 and worked there until his retirement at age 55. 🙏



Touching All Bases



Alaska Base Report

Mike McMillan (FBX-96)

The big news for the Alaska Smokejumpers in 2007 is 2008. Change is in the air and on the ground at the Alaska Fire Service, starting at the top. **John Gould** (FBX-81) was named AFS Manager, replacing Scott Billings.

Under Billings, resource management emerged as the priority of the Alaska Fire Service, often at the expense of fire operations.

AFS actually spawned from its proud smokejumper, hot shot and fire suppression specialist programs, historically cultivating good working relationships with state agencies as well as Alaskans across the state. AFS worked wildfire and wildfire worked for AFS.

But in the past decade, funding for fire operations was routinely a casualty of the diverse resource management responsibilities of AFS. New and permanent, full-time positions were often created to deal with problems. AFS became top-heavy and was starting to tip.

"I think Gould is interested in turning AFS into what it used to be," says **Gary Baumgartner** (FBX-88), assistant base manager for the Alaska Smokejumpers. Gould, a 14-year Alaska jumper, returns to Fairbanks from Boise, where he worked at NICC as a safety specialist for the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

"Gould's not afraid to make decisions," said **Bill Cramer** (NIFC-90), head of training for the Alaska Smokejumpers. "That's not *always* a good thing," he added, chuckling. "But he's still a hurricane of fresh air for the organization."

John was perhaps the best-dressed (certainly by his own account) smokejumper in the business, sporting an easy but dry wit to match.

Gould's transition into heading AFS was made easier thanks to **Rob Collins** (RAC-69), who served as interim AFS manager throughout Alaska's 2007 fire season. Collins came out of retirement last winter to accept the detail at the request of BLM State Director Tom Lonnie.

"Collins was the most positive change in management here in a long time," said **Baumgartner**. "He really turned AFS around, improving morale, attitudes, allowing people to do their jobs. He was never afraid to dive headfirst into problems, mostly coming out on top." Collins, also an avid hockey player, apparently brings that same determination to the ice. "He can cheap shot with the best of 'em," Gary said, laughing.

Also missing from the ranks of AFS in 2008 will be Ed



Strong (RDD-75), chief of AFS fire operations in recent years. "Ed brought common sense and a lack of arrogance to the position," observed Bill Cramer. He's got a thorough understanding of ground operations, thanks to his great background in fire." Strong was previously FMO of the Tanana Zone, and a USFS and Alaska Smokejumper for ten years. Back in the day, Strong assisted **Jim Veitch** (MSO-67) and **Ron Lund** (FBX-64) with their tireless efforts to establish the Ram-Air Parachute as the BLM canopy of choice. Thanks again, guys.

Another reason the Alaska Smokejumpers thrived this past decade is outgoing Base Manager **Dalan Romero** (FBX-83). Romero recently accepted a position with the Bureau of Indian Affairs

as deputy director of fire operations, based in Boise at NICC.

Throughout his 10 years at the helm, and during his 14 years before that, Romero has remained a great firefighter, jumper, spotter, and friend, and he'll be missed in Alaska. There's no word yet on Romero's interim or permanent replacement. "He'll be a hard base manager to replace," reflects **Tom Kubichek** (FBX-90), air operations supervisor for the Alaska Smokejumpers. "Dalan has an excellent mix of skills than enabled him to withstand pressure from the crew and upper management at the same time. Most base managers don't last so long because of that pressure," noted **Kubichek**. "Plus, he's honest and fun to be around."

Bill Cramer was proud to spot Dalan's last fire jump in late July.

"It was a good-deal 100-acre, ripping two-manner near the Chandalar River," reported Bill, who dropped Dalan and **Matt Corley** (FBX-97) at the tail of the gobbling tundra-spruce fire, a long mile's hike from pristine riverfront camping.

A full day later, eight more jumpers flew to join them. When we did (it was my 12th and last jump of the Alaska season), the ten of us gathered that night on the sandy banks of the Coal River, setting up tents and making camp. **Corley** walked off to fish the narrow river in peace, as the rest of us sat around the campfire. Fifteen minutes later, we heard "Bear" from an unalarmed voice approaching in the distance. "Bear," we heard again, closer now. Nine of us stood abruptly to see Corley sprinting directly at us, all 150 pounds of him, eyes glowing white in dimming daylight. Thirty feet behind Corley, a nice-sized black bear at full run was closing the gap fast, diverting course once it saw us. Still

we hurled verbal assaults and river rocks, dropping f-bombs and revving chainsaws, just as its sibling apparent crossed the river to join the fun. We watched both bears circle our camp – no doubt previously *their* camp, and they watched us chuck rocks and insults in their direction. Fortunately for those damn bears, none of the avid hunters on our jump load had a gun in their possession that was up to task.

I volunteered for night watch, convinced I could sleep a few extra hours in the morning before joining the mop-up brigade. A shotgun was delivered by helicopter that afternoon, but we co-existed with our buddy bears without bloodshed for another night before leaving. I remember Dalan remarking how it was a great, yet strange fire. Had he known that was likely his last fire jump, I think he wouldn't have had it any other way.

In the realm of extended details, **Joe Don Morton** (RDD-95) and **Kip Shields** (FBX-04) detailed to the Western Great Basin Coordination Center in Reno as dispatchers. **Oded Shalom** (FBX-95) detailed to the North Stars Fire Crew as saw boss. **Mike O'Brien** (FBX-98) detailed as air attack manager for AFS. **Jay Wattenbarger** (FBX-92) detailed as the fire management officer for the Yukon Zone, and **T.J. Gholson** (FBX-04) detailed to the Galena Zone, helping FMO **Dave Whitmer** (FBX-92) make Galena the go-to spot outside of Fairbanks. Gholson also led the charge on fabricating a tool room in our newly sided warehouse building 1512.

In other "off jump list" duties, our paracargo section welcomed back retired **Jon Larson** (FBX-89) during the heat of the 2007 Alaska season. Jon was paid AD (temporary) wages to wrap and strap mountains of cargo boxes and pallets, enabling regular PC specialists to get back on our needy jump list. "Larson's got a stellar work ethic and attention to detail," praised **Chris Silks**, (FBX-91) Alaska's paracargo supervisor.

In 2007, PC dropped 234,697 lbs of cargo on fires and projects throughout the state. Two paracargo rookies joined the ranks of the "doughnut eaters" as described by Silks. They are **Bobby "Da Bull" Schober** (MSO-95) and **John "Freebird" Fremont** (FBX-05). Relatively new to jumping, Fremont is already emerging as a provocative fireline philosopher. Recent gems include officially documenting one fire jump as "so easy it made mac & cheese seem overwhelming," and "the fire behaved well, complaining briefly of the general sogginess of the accommodations before retiring early."

Silks was pleased to point out the heavy representation his paracargo section makes to our rookie training program each year. Point noted, Chris.

Seven of 12 rookie candidates made it through rookie training, not to mention fire season, in 2007. They are **Kris Dudley**, **Bram Granger**, **Scott Hampton**, **Chad Rice**, **Ward Scanson**, **Chris Wennogle**, and **Tamar Young**. **Derek Patton** (RAC-00) led a rookie-training cadre consisting of **Jim Dibert** (FBX-99), **Randy Foland** (FBX-01), **Chris Swisher** (FBX-03), **Matt Corley** and **Gabe Lydic** (FBX-99).

The bulk of the 2007 fire season was highlighted by a week here and there of jump fun for everyone. Some folks

jumped seven fires during two weeks in July. In between such blessed bounties, we waited patiently for Big Ernie to spit more lightning our way.

With Alaska's crew head count at 62, we welcomed 36 boosters in 2007. We flew 80 fire missions and made 535 fire jumps in Alaska (jumping 146 more in the lower 48). In 2007 we made 642 training jumps in Alaska and 84 more down south.

In early July, two loads of bros jumped (for some) their second fire of the day - fire #420 - a small tundra and spruce fire near Ruby. Fire #420 provided many giddy memories, like the time when the 16 bros were just 100 yards from connecting their converging hoselays to catch the fire, right before it blew up to 3,500 acres, only to burn for weeks.

"It went nuclear," said **Robert Yeager** (RDD-92). "We asked for and were denied retardant. With retardant we would have caught it," he explained. "From the air it must have looked like we were right there. We *had* it," Yeager added.

"So was *that* the funniest part of the fire, when it went over the hill?" I asked Robert in my sincerest journalistic tone. After an uncomfortable pause, Yeager clarified for me. "It wasn't funny, it was more frustrating." I tried to change the subject. "**Dawson Kelsey** (RDD-95) did a great job as IC trainee. A kick-ass job," reported Yeager speaking louder now. "And **Matt Oakleaf** (FBX-05) also did a great job as strike team leader of eight crews."

The ever-happy Oakleaf, rarely caught without a smile, reportedly turned green after generously offering to share his only pouch of rolling tobacco with some of his crewlings. Passed around quickly, it was promptly decimated and returned to Matt, empty. "I think he was actually pissed," laughed Yeager. My calls to Oakleaf to ask if *that* was the funniest part of fire #420 have gone unanswered.

Also on fire #420, **Marty Meierotto** (FBX-94) kept his boots on for nearly two weeks – until his socks literally rotted off. "His feet looked like hamburger," observed Yeager. "They were so bad that **Jared Weber** (FBX-01) actually threw Marty's socks in the creek." Undaunted, **Meierotto** "plowed forward as division supervisor," Yeager concluded, sounding unsurprised.

Down south we filled details to Missoula, Grangeville, and Boise into October. Our jump king was **Porter McQueary** (FBX-06) with 19 fire jumps, followed by **Aaron Schumacher** (FBX-06) with 16. Shucks, Shoe, you were so close.

We'll miss **Dan Klatt** (FBX-05) in 2008. Dan plans to stay in Colorado to raise his young son. That's why we'll miss you, Dan.

Boise Base Report

Quincy Chung (NIFC-03)

Jump What! That was the buzz all winter long; however, the Boise season in the Great Basin crept up slow. Again 16 jumpers headed to Alaska at the end of May to offer support in fire suppression efforts in the north.

The remaining Boise Bro's and Sis's didn't see much activity through uneventful June; nonetheless, Boise

jumpers hit the ground running the first of July, not only in the Basin, but also in timber country. July, August and September proved to be very busy for all. Many of the Boise Bro's and Sis' headed to the land of shade and water to assist the other jump bases in suppression efforts. In doing so, it is sad to admit that two rookies ended up on the right load all summer long. Both jumped 18 fires and were recognized as Jump King Duo. Congratulations **Justin Reedy** (BOI-07) and **Scott Cook** (BOI-07). As for the rest of the base, the general average was 9-13 jumps. As well, **Wally Wasser** (MYL-79) hit a milestone this season. Congratulations, Wally, on reaching 350 + fire jumps.

In addition, **Ken Franz** (LGD-75) took his 30 + physical training test this spring. How can you stop a machine like that?

Although the fire season is a huge part of all our lives and livelihood alike, family always comes first. I would first like to say there must be something in the water in Boise. I cannot even count on both my hands how many jumpers in Boise are expecting little ones this winter and spring, myself included. I would like to congratulate **Jerran Flinders** (BOI-04) on being the first in a long line of expecting jumpers to have babies. He and his wife had a baby girl earlier this summer. Also congratulations to **Boone Zimmerlee** (BOI-2001) and **Frank Goodson** (RDD-95) for finally tying the knot: congratulation to the newlyweds. Remember the woman is always right! On a sadder note, **Zuri Betz** (BOI-02) has decided to leave jumping to be with his fiancé and pursue other facets of life. Best of luck to you, Zuri, on the journey of life that awaits you. You will be missed by all.

As for the operational side of things, this spring seven of 12 potential rookie smokejumpers made it through the Boise program. The class of 2007 is as follows: **Gabe Carr**, **Scott Cook**, **Jeff Hughes**, **Jon McDuffey**, **Justin Reedy**, **Amy Sampson**, and **Zach Walters**. Congratulations on the hard work.

As well, the loft always has projects. The calendar has been filled and there is plenty of stitch picking to be done. With the change-over and replacement of hardware on most all the equipment, folks will be very busy.

Also, after a season of testing the CYPRES Automatic Activation Device (AAD) live on most of the reserves, the base is currently constructing more containers to house the AAD.

Likewise for a Technical Fire Management project, **Brent Johnson** (BOI-92) is developing a larger triangle chute similar to that of some of the Forest Service bases.

In addition to the loft, the RX department is as busy as always. Thanks to the hard work from Prescribed Fire Manager **Rich Zimmerlee** (RDD-95), Assistant **Tim Schaffer** (MYL-92), and the Boise jumpers, RX is plentiful this fall and winter. The Bro's and Sis' have already been to Montana to help write and implement burn plans and are gearing up to join the Forest Service jumpers in a busy, southeast RX season.

A special thanks to **Lakota Burwell** (BOI-02) and **Quincy Chung** for recently traveling back to Emmitsburg,

MD, to participate as BLM Honor Guard members in the National Fallen Firefighter Memorial.

In closing, as the leaves begin the change of fall, people auger in for the long winter wherever it may be. Some have left for the tropical sun and many have decided to hold on for that last bit of work. Whatever the decision, jumpers will scatter like quail and the covey will return in the spring. Until then, everybody enjoy the winter and what it entails. We will see you when the clouds break and the dust is wiped from our lockers. From the Boise Base: enjoy the winter holidays.

Grangeville Base Report

Randy Nelson (GAC-87)

The great fire season of 07 finally seems to be over. It was not a record year in terms of initial attack activity at GAC, but the large number of seemingly never ending gobblers in the region kept most of our jumpers as busy as they wanted to be. We were able to participate in numerous overhead assignments on fires throughout the country and accomplished a lot of fire line and fire use training with our jumpers. Special thanks goes out to the ten Bros from Alaska who kept us well supplied with eager bodies and skills to help us contribute to fireline leadership roles as well as meet our initial attack obligation. They all happily dug in for the long haul here.

We would also like to thank folks from the numerous boosters from Missoula, Redding, Redmond, McCall and Boise. All of these fine people pitched in to help out on fires and supporting base operations when we needed them the most.

Brett Rogers (MSO-92) detailed to the Moose Creek Ranger District as acting AFMO for the summer, and **Jody Stone** (MSO-02) has detailed to the Lochsa District in Kooskia as acting AFMO this fall.

Now the scramble for winter project work and winter adventures is going full speed. Plans are under way to send some jumpers to the Southeast in the next few weeks, and there will be some local work in timber for a few of the real hard cores. Fall recruiting season is under way as contenders for future smokejumper positions suddenly have time to start working the phones and visiting our base now that fire season is over.

In other news, we welcomed three future smokejumpers to the GAC roster. **Tom Bates** (GAC-95) is the father of a baby girl, Darby, **Chris Young** (GAC, 92) is the father of a baby boy, Tucker, and **Randy Nelson** has a new baby girl, Laura, to supervise. Who ever thought we'd be sitting around this base talking about whose kid spits up the most and cries the loudest. Their arrival guarantees a serious decrease in the number of dirt bike injuries involving the Air Center personnel.

Construction at the base is in full swing at this time, and the permanent staff here has set up temporary quarters in the pilots' lounge across the back parking lot. When completed, we will have additional office, bathroom and training space. Plus we will have a brand new ready room and the loft will be twice as big, incorporating an additional

rigging table with room for all repair and manufacturing operations. We should be all moved back in by late May or early June of next year.

The construction of the Forest Headquarters building just across the road is nearly complete and the staff is busily moving in and getting ready for business. Soon we will be under the constant watchful eye of the Forest Supervisor, so we are learning to mind our manners. Actually it will have little impact on our operation other than an increase in traffic, but the coordinators are going to be closer, so that will be convenient at times. .

So, for now we are all just concentrating on the long list of mandatory computer based training that has caught up with us and dreaming of winter fun and hoping for next fire seasons excitement.

McCall Base Report

Rick Hudson (BOI-73)

A “good-deal” two-person fire was rare this season out of the McCall smokejumper base. Hardly any measurable precipitation fell all spring and summer in this region of Idaho. Every month, from March into the late summer, saw record fire indices above the 100% historical level contribute to extreme fire behavior. Initial attack often required a whole Doug or Otter load and sometimes “load and return” with more jumpers to try and crush a fire in the first shift. Like a nest of hornets, jumpships, heavy and medium helicopters, air tankers and air attack would swarm over a new fire until the last light of day.

A series of lightning storms in early July started fires on the Boise, Payette and the Nez Perce forests. Despite initial attack controlling 90 % of the fires, a few quickly escaped to grow and burn all summer along the entire South Fork of the Salmon River drainage. It became a regular occurrence to see multiple smoke columns boiling skyward each afternoon to the east of McCall. The 2007 fire season for the McCall jump base ended abruptly with rain and snow September 18th after burning a record 556,000 acres on the Payette National Forest.

The first jump fire of the season was June 23 on the Bridger-T, and the last was on multiple fires on the Nez Perce, September 16. A total of 383 fire jumps were made to 70 fires throughout the west without any lost time injuries by McCall jumpers.

The standard government owned jumpships consisted of 2 DHC Twin Otters (J-41 & J-43) and the TDC-3, J-42. One Otter, J-41, opened and closed the Silver City detail in New Mexico.

Jumpers that moved out of jumping and into the “real world” this season included **Mark Brondum** (MYL-81), **Mike Feliciano** (MYL-90), **Rod Kilner** (MYL-98) and **Toby Potter** (MYL-03).

McCall base Loft Foreman **Pete Pride** (MYL-83) made his last jump and retired July 30 with 161 fire jumps and a total of 467 career jumps. He was instrumental in assisting in the ISDS program searching for a common parachute system. Fondly known as “the Hog,” **Pete** will keep busy building wooden boats and canoes and occasionally testing

Play The Pipes For Me

The following was given by Gene Jessup (NCSB-57) at the NCSB Reunion Memorial Service in September.

There is a NCSB Smokejumper reunion in early September in the year of our lord 2007. For many men of my generation of smokejumpers, this will be our last reunion. Many of the men that I embrace at this gathering I will never see again. Our voices will soon grow silent. I must accept this, for it is as it should be, a last farewell. We have no need for further reunions. Let us say what needs to be said, let us embrace the warmth of this good-by as we move inexorably to the end of our journeys.

My dear friends, those of us who share this place in time; I love and honor you, not only as fellow smokejumpers but also as fellow travelers in life. For a few, brief September days we will reminisce and recall with pride and joy the many memories that we share. In time, who and what we were, the things we did, will fade and become memories. And eventually, like old photos and worn books in a weathered trunk, these memories will be the only remnants of our passing. One generation moves on to eternity and the next steps forward to be tested.

I am content today to know that in my youth I shared a wonderful experience with a select group of very special men. In 1958 I was friends with **Gerald Helmer**, **Gus Hendrickson**, **Bob Carlman** and **Bob Cavanaugh** until the Eight-Mile Ridge Fire. I grieved for them then and I still do. **Francis Lufkin** was the man I wanted to emulate, tough, fair, honest; a man you could count on to be there if you needed a strong helping hand. I miss him. **Hal Weinmann**, the **Zander** brothers, **Chet Putman**, **Tony Percival** and many more of my fellow jumpers I will never forget as each helped me grow to manhood. They demonstrated for me all those outstanding qualities that made them unique in their own way: honesty, courage, commitment, loyalty, integrity, and the strong bonds of acceptance and friendship. I will remember these men with love, respect, and a sense not only of loss but of joy that I knew them at least for a little while as trusted friends, companions, and fellow smokejumpers. Gentlemen, I am grateful for the privilege.

And I accept that it comes to this, a Memorial Service for fallen and departed comrades with the awareness that the piper plays the pipes for me.

new parachute riggers as the FAA representative.

A rookie class of seven NEDS completed training for 2007.

One of the NEDS, **Garrett Hudson**, is a second generation jumper following father **Rick Hudson**. Rick will be forced into retirement in April of 2008 after 35 consecutive seasons jumping with 240 fire jumps and 604 career jumps (and 38 seasons breathing smoke). He owes it all to following in the legendary footsteps of **Jerry Ogawa** (MYL-67).

Steve Mello (MYL-74), who was reportedly retiring last year, was told he needed more time toward his full 20 years. At 57 years old, Steve therefore returned to another successful jump season and currently has not been told a firm retirement date.

The 65th **Region 4 Smokejumper Reunion** will take place June 13, 14 and 15, 2008 in McCall, Idaho. Check for registration information.

Missoula Base Report

Dan Cottrell (MSO-2001)

Things are quiet here in Missoula at the end of September with winter storm warnings posted for tonight in many of Montana's mountain ranges. These should finally put another busy fire season to rest in the Northern Rockies. One of the biggest accomplishments this summer was the critical role Smokejumpers played in suppressing emerging large fires and type 3 fires in the Northern Rockies. Smokejumpers were mobilized to most of the region's emerging fires, and a significant number of these were caught thanks to the rapid response of smokejumpers.

Work season started early here for many jumpers, including assignments to Mississippi, Michigan, Colorado, North and South Dakota, and R8 for prescribed fire as well as lots of local prescribed fire and timber stand improvement projects. As usual, Missoula also sponsored the Silver City Smokejumper Base on the Gila National Forest in New Mexico. Despite a somewhat slow season in the Southwest, Silver City provided critical fire support to the region. A couple highlights included a preposition in Prescott, AZ, as well as a good deal jump on the North Rim of the Grand Canyon.

Rookie training kicked off on May 21 and a cold and snowy rookie week took a toll on both rookies and trainers. By June the weather and the rookies were slowly improving and for the first time in years the rookies spent time training in Condon and even got to experience a water jump at Lindberg Lake. **Earl Cooley** (MSO-40) was on hand in Missoula on June 22 to present smokejumper wings to the 17 rookies who graduated. Of Missoula's nine rookies this year, three were detailers and six were regular hires. **Enrique Olivares** was our first rookie to spread his wings, jumping the Dry Creek Fire in Idaho eight days after graduation. He also tied for the prize for the most fire jumps by a rookie with **Ryan Theler**, both with 12.

Though fire season started late, with our first fire jump occurring on the last day of June, things picked up quick

and we were jumped out by July 11. The last fire (thus far) was jumped on September 19, which gave Missoula a total of 438 jumps on 71 fires. This was slightly more than last year and significantly higher than the ten-year average of 219 jumps and 46 fires. Missoula jumpers also played critical roles throughout the national fire program and filled many overhead roles on large fires throughout the region. Due to the high workload we also had many boosters pass through the base, and our thanks goes out to boosters from Redding, Redmond, and most of all Alaska, which provided 18 jumpers for a whopping total of 519 days.

2007 was also a year of transition and change at the Missoula Smokejumper Base. **Mike Fritsen** (MSO-1995) was promoted to assistant base manager in May. **Keith Wolferman** (MSO-1991) took over as loft foreman and **Boyd Burtch** (MSO-1988) was promoted to loadmaster foreman. **Mike Goicoechea** (MSO-1999) returned to Missoula as training foreman and **Keith Woods** (MSO-1991) was awarded the assistant training foreman. Finally, **Steve Reed** (MSO-1995) moved to loadmasters as the assistant foreman. **Rob Ellis** (MSO-1998) left on September 28 for a seven-month tour of duty in Iraq with his Marine Corps unit. We hope Rob stays safe, and we look forward to getting him back for the 2008 fire season.

As we move towards October, gears have been switched into project mode. Those who are not hunting or recreating in some other way are busy with fall project work or rehab projects on our local forests. We are also gearing up for a busy prescribed fire season with projects throughout the region as well as in the Southeast and elsewhere.

North Cascades Base Report

Michael Noe (NCSB-99)

The 2007 season started off with a massive BAER attack. The entire base was involved in the rehab efforts of the Tripod Fire, which burnt nearly 200,000 acres during the 2006 season. NCSB supplied the IC and operations positions, as well as fallers. We all could not understand how hazard tree removal did not warrant hazard pay, but we went out there and fell fire weakened trees onto ground covered in black jim- jam anyway.

The next big news was rookies. The last rookie class was in 2004, and the base needed some new blood. The training started with eight and ended with seven. There has not been such a large class since 1991, which graduated nine rooks. That was only sixteen years ago. Not bad for the Base that time forgot. The class of '07 is still on the lookout for whoever put that dead, rotten ground hog near the training tower, which aromatically challenged the class on a steamy June afternoon.

On more of a timeless note, NCSB hosted a reunion, which brought jumpers from decades past and present together in one place for three days. To see all the people and hear some of the stories makes me feel like a lucky person. Not many jobs create such a unique environment. All I can say is I'm happy to be part of this family.

The actual fire season was on the slow side of average for initial attack, but as always single resource assignment filled

in when there were no jumper fires. Finally this fall brought to us the most exciting news. There are two new members to add to the NCSB family. **Inaki Baraibar** (NCSB-98) had a baby girl and **Michael Noe** had a baby boy. Both are healthy and happy.

Redding Base Report

Dylan Reeves (RDD-03)

With ten fires jumped for a total of 58 jumpers out the door in May and fuel conditions promising an all but unavoidable, sky-darkening Armageddon, expectations were high for a record breaking season in 2007. While the four horses of the apocalypse never flared their steaming nostrils at us, the season wasn't without its high points.

The first of these was the 50th anniversary of the Redding Smokejumpers. The day began with an open house and smokejumper related demonstrations at the base, and culminated in a joyous celebration at Caldwell Park that left us digesting red meat and wringing out our livers for days to come. A fine retrospective video put together by **David Scott** "Jed" **Smith** (RDD-02), as well as many speeches by and conversations with jumpers whose rookie years dated all the way back to 1957, made it a proud day for all of us. It was truly a memorable event, I think.

Once again this summer, we staffed our San Bernardino base for most of the season and were able to prove ourselves useful, jumping five fires, pounding a few more, and neutralizing 37 gophers on and around the tanker base compound area. Our most prolific gopherman was **Derek** "Axel Grease" **Wheeler** (RDD-05) with 11 confirmed slayings, including one trophy gopher that scored 208 (Pope and Young) based on weight, ferocity and tip-to-spread measurement.

The more dubious distinction of most black eyes in a season goes to **Shane** "Fudgebat" **Ralston** (RDD-03), our uncontested winner with three shiners. Details have not yet been made public.

History was made on September 3rd when 10 brave young smokejumpers made the first fire jump since the dawn of time on the picturesque Angeles National Forest. Lucky dogs.

Four permanent positions were awarded this summer to **Brian** "Kvizzle" **Kvisler** (RDD-03), **Dylan** "Sodbuster" **Reeves** (RDD-03), **Brad** "I'm from Ohio" **Schuetz** (RDD-04), and **Dorsey** "Thunderbolt and..." **Lightener** (RDD-89). Welcome back to the jumping world, Dorsey.

Bob Bente (RDD-88), **Tim** "Real" **Quigley** "Like" (RDD-79) and **Steve** "Gene Smurphy" **Murphy** (RDD-88) were promoted to GS-11s, and their position descriptions have been updated to include "eating cake" and "online shopping." Keg fines can be sent to the welfare fund, accounts receivable. Seriously.

Not surprisingly, **Sean** "Hines" **Hines** (RDD-06) took the easy way out and declined a third consecutive year of rookie training. Instead, he spent his time pursuing his senior rigger license and working in PC, under the watchful eye of **Johnny** "John Wayne" **Casey** (RDD-99). Congratulations to **Tony** "Hair Bear" **Herbert** (RDD-05) for becoming

our newest senior rigger.

Our ice cream freezer has been spruced up a bit, and now features Cream Puffs, which are "filled with fresh whipped dairy cream." One bucket contains 90 mini-puffs, and **Josh Mathiesen's** (RDD-94) habit is up to a bucket a week. We'll all be able to watch Josh feed when **Kyle** "Karl" **Dornberger** (RDD-01) finishes his operations terrarium.

Hunting season is upon us, and thus far **Brad** "Gorilla Magillicutt" **Moschetti** (RDD-06) has proven unable to bring home a buck. Maybe he'll become a man next year. Luckier deerslayers included **Don** "Buckshot" **Graham** (RDD-01), **Brad Schuetz**, **Mitch** "Hokey" **Hokanson** (RDD-00), **Dave** "Cinnabear" **Johnson** (RDD-00) and **Jerry Spence** (RDD-94), who can use his newly relocated locker to hang his deer in his garage. At press time, **Mark Urbani** (RDD-06) has not yet bagged his buck, but is now looking forward to a winter of catching crabs. Speaking of which, **Brian** "Grucker" **Pontes** (RDD-03) will be staying in Redding this winter and working on his house, as he lacks the funds to travel the world. Maybe he'll be one of the lucky ones to draw a cougar tag for the coveted "A zone," which includes Billy Bombay's and The Tropics.

Ghost of the Year **Rick** "Jimmy" **Rataj** (RDD-2000), who stopped by the base briefly after his R8/Silver City stint, will once again be heading to New York for the winter and climbing the hardwoods of Dirty Jersey while listening to Bon Jovi on his iPod.

Most of us who are still here this fall will be heading to Region 8 to do some GPS-ing, snagging and burning, and if we're lucky, perhaps even slaying the dragon. Meanwhile, it'll be next season before you know it, so try not to get too fat.

Redmond Base Report

Jim Hansen (RDD-87)

Greetings brothers and sisters. First the bad news. Those of you looking forward to the trenchant commentary of last year's contributor **Mark Hentze** (RAC-00) may be distressed to find a second stringer hastily dragooned into service. While many have come to regard Mark as the Voice of his Generation, I regret to inform you that he has undergone – allegedly temporary – rendition to Region 8, accompanied by his handler **Tony Loughton** (RDD-83), with Tennessee native **Ryan Koch** (RAC-01) serving as interpreter. In his absence, the mandarins of RAC sought a substitute who would provide pellucid reportage, sparkling wit, and wry commentary. Unfortunately, nobody like that was available, so they found me.

While last summer was relatively tranquil by historical standards, with 243 jumps made on 46 fires, any dearth in quantity was offset by quality acquisitions in personnel to include transfers **Josh Voshall** (RDD-03), **Jonah Gladney** (WYS-06), **Bruce Card** (MSO-06), **Tye Taber** (WYS-06), and detailer **Jason Barber** (RAC-05). To these fireline ninjas add 2007 rookies **Marcel Potvin**, **Ben Bell**, **Guillermo Macias**, and detailers **Howard McGuire** and **Andrew Pattison**.

The reinforcement provided by these Knights of the Air will serve to offset the loss of **Jeff Shipley** (RAC-01) and **Jon Hernandez** (RAC-01). After squandering an engineering education beating a Pulaski into the dirt, Jeff will instead squander his degree moving heavy-ass ladders around and dragging unconscious junkies out of the restroom at Powell's Books as a member of the Portland Fire Bureau, while Jon joins RAC alumna **Margo Freeman** (RAC '90) as a member of the Kirkland, Washington, Fire Department. Best wishes, my brothers.

Despite offers being made to 17 rookie candidates, only eight deigned to show up, so fearsome is the RAC reputation (so we tell ourselves). This allowed us to host a follow-on class of Redding rookies **Ira Wiley**, **Travis McKinley**, **Scott Wickham**, and **Nick Ostrom**. **Shane Ralston** (RDD-03) accompanied these happy few to ensure that the appropriate degree of R-5 rigor was maintained. I don't know what the Redding overhead must have envisioned – a bunch of loosey-goosey RAC guys showing up in Birkenstocks, doing yoga in a darkened room, swilling maté, and...my God...they're right! Be that as it may, Shane was a welcome addition to the training cadre.

If, like me, you're planning a second career as a Bitter Little Man – and no, that's not a veiled hint at going to Boise – you might want to skip this part. This is where I report the spontaneous outbreaks of happiness and domestic bliss that accompany Life Changing Events. To wit, **Mark Gibbons'** (RAC-87) son **Jason Gibbons** (RAC-03) recently married **Angie**. **Aaron Skillings** (RAC-05) honeymooned in Ireland with his bride **Erin**, upon being married in a ceremony conducted by **Ralph Sweeney** (RAC-01). See, this is what I'm talking about. **Aaron**. **Erin**. The fact that **Aaron** showed hard by finishing 30th out of a field of like, 2000, in the Big Sur Marathon, and first in his age group is about the only thing keeping me from gnashing my teeth at the cuteness of it all. Meanwhile, **Geoff Schultz** (RDD-01) and his wife **Ann** welcome newborn daughter **Ella**.

Speaking of big babies, **Tony Sleznick** (RDD-92) was largely aloof this year, taking a leave of absence. The bon vivant and putative real estate magnate showed himself occasionally making claims of "fun" away from work. His wistful gaze across the sewing room on these visits, however, betrayed where his heart truly lies – hunched over the double needle, making it sing like **Judy Garland** with a belly full of percodan.

The science geeks among you probably realize that kinetic energy increases as the square of velocity. **Mike Jackson** (RAC-86) demonstrated this principle in the Eagle Caps this year at the expense of his femur. O Eagle Caps! Capricious mistress! She will clutch to her bosom those seekers of good deals, yet rise up to smite thee! **Heidi Bunkers** (RAC-04) is yet recovering from her **Umatilla** misadventure, having folded up a knee last year, spending most of the summer recuperating in the employ of the **Okanogan-Wenatchee**. She also keeps an eye on the folks at **NCSB**, who we allow some pretense of independence, despite being a wholly owned subsidiary of the **Redmond**

operation.

Tye Taber also demonstrated the subtleties of Newtonian mechanics when a tree in which he'd landed had the temerity to snap under his weight. His back sustained some damage, though having witnessed his unicycle-based rehabilitation regimen, I'd say he'll be in fine form in no time.

Your humble narrator, **Jim Hansen**, was granted a temporary spotter detail this year, with the RAC overhead kindly granting me the chance to spot some practice jumps and a few fires. Then my detail ended, and the experiment quietly shelved. Think of me as a streamer-throwing **Ryan Leaf**.

Thanks for joining me everybody. Please look out for your partner, face into the wind, and keep your feet and knees together. If you can't do that, then at least curb your dog, carry your ID at all times, and make sure the gate closes behind you.

West Yellowstone Base Report

Ernie Walker (RDD-01)

It was another good year for the West Yellowstone Smokejumpers. The base jumped 41 fires and numerous jumpers hit land marks with 50 and 150 jumps and one at 200. West had jumpers in **Silver City**, **Grand Junction**, **RAC**, **RDD**, **NCSB** and **MSO** this year. The **Retardant Base** also got a run for its money supporting fires with the **Madison Arm Fire** (came within a ¼ mile of the Base burned 3K acres in a few days) turning Tankers around in five minutes. West gained an addition to the family with **Kevin Ames** (WYS-06) and his wife **Kira** welcoming a new baby girl, **Ellie**, in September. **Mark Belitz** (WYS-01) and **Jen Belitz** (WYS-01) are also expecting a new addition next spring. **Sara Brown** (RAC-04) is in recovery still due to her accident earlier in **Silver City** this year. **Sara** should be up walking soon. Thanks to all the Bros for support in the **Riffle Raffle** to help raise money for **Sara** with her living expenses while she recovers. **Sara** sends a big thank you. The **Buffalo raffle** was also a success raising money for the welfare fund. **Dan Helterline** (GAC-89) won the **Riffle Raffle** and **Bert Starr** from our own dispatch center gets to shoot the **Buffalo**.

Some of the award winners at the T-party this year were **Ghost Award- Justin Horn** (RDD-03), **Jump King- JT Gilman** (WYS-06) and **Accuracy Award** to **Randy Leypoldt** (pilot). Winner of the fishing derby goes to **Kevin Ames** (WYS-06).

Many jumpers are off for the season but those left are busy with project work. West has jumpers working in **Bozeman**, **Dillon**, **Gardener** and around **West Yellowstone**. The Base is also sending jumpers to the **Shenandoah National Park** from mid-October to mid-November.

Next year the base is looking to support cross training on the **Ram Air Parachute** as well as supporting an air attack platform out of **WYS**. 🐾