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Smokejumper Magazine, July 2012

National Smokejumper Association

Gary Watts

Del Hessel

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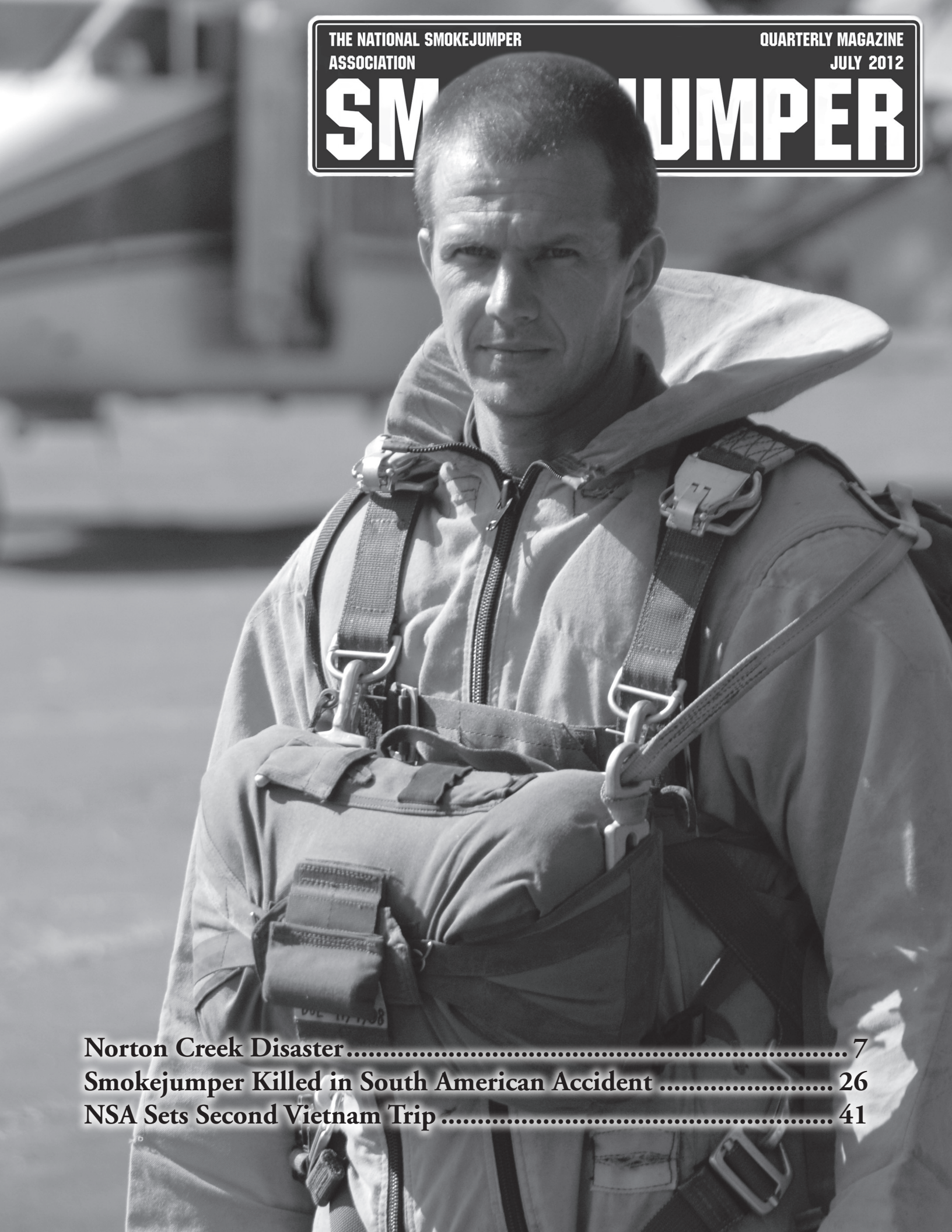
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SMOKEJUMPER



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Message from the President



by **Jim Cherry**
(Missoula '57)
PRESIDENT

THIS BEING MY first message to our NSA membership, I want to lead off with a sincere thanks to **John Twiss** (RDD '67) for the outstanding leadership that he provided through these past several years of growth for our organization. He hands off his duties to me with the NSA in a strong position for facing our future challenges. Along with us for the ride into the future are new board members: **John Packard** (RAC '65), **Mike Overby** (MSO '67), **Hiram (Doc) Smith** (MSO '59) and **Gary Baker** (MSO '67).

Second, I want to thank our NSA membership for the excellent response to the Board of Directors' request for your voting on the question of whether to change our organizational structure from being "member driven" to being "board driven." This had become a critical issue if we were going to be able to do business and fulfill our mission statement. With our large and widely dispersed member base, it was no longer practical to have

an annual meeting that would meet the quorum requirements for conducting business. You responded with a vote of 762 in favor of becoming a board-driven organization and 9 opposed. Your action allows the NSA to continue to thrive.

Third, I can report that the NSA Trails Program is heading for another outstanding year. A total of 23 projects are on schedule for this summer. Projects will take place in 9 different states (UT, MN, WV, CO, OR, CA, ID, MT, WY) from May to September. So far, that amounts to 190 volunteer weeks of commitment and doesn't include all the time and energy put in by the Trails Organizing Committee to make it all come together. That's impressive! Our hats are off to all of you who are getting set for another week of fun, fellowship and a valuable contribution to our nation's resources.

Fourth, our NSA Board of Directors has a couple of committees that are hard at work to bring better service to our membership. One committee under the coordination of Mike Overby is working to develop a stronger and more flexible NSA website. This is important in our ability to communicate with our membership and also to be able to tell our story to the general public. The committee is looking at ways to better include our photo gallery/history section which has not been available since a hacker infected our site and caused us to take the site off-line for a period of time in order to rebuild. An-

other issue the committee is looking at is more inclusion of the Trails Program that would ideally allow for on-line registrations and much more.

The other NSA Board committee under John Packard's coordination is looking at our whole financial investment/management policy and practice. Earlier this year the NSA received a \$125,000 bequest from the estate of **Richard Eriksson** (MSO 60). It is the desire of the Board to encourage other major gifts through bequests, insurance policies, deferred gifts and other gifting channels. The committee will be helping our membership to understand these gifting opportunities

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Smokejumper base abbreviations:

Anchorage.....ANC	GrangevilleGAC	Redding.....RDD
Boise.....NIFC	Idaho City.....IDC	Redmond.....RAC
Cave Junction.....CJ	La Grande.....LGD	West Yellowstone WYS
Fairbanks.....FBX	McCall.....MYC	Whitehorse Yukon YXY
Fort St. John.....YXJ	Missoula.....MSO	Winthrop.....NCSB

and how to implement them in their personal desires to leave a legacy through the NSA.

It was an honor for the NSA to work in collaboration with the USFS and BLM base managers in making the first of the annual awards for the *Al Dunton Smokejumper Leadership Award*. Award winners for 2011 were **Gary Baumgartner** (FBX 88) and **Frankie Romero** (MYC 89). Congratulations to Gary and Frankie. The selection process for the 2012 award is now underway.

Don't forget that the NSA has a scholarship program for providing financial support to students who are committed to obtaining advanced education. Applicants must be: 1) direct family members of smokejumpers or smokejumper pilots who have died in the line of duty or military service, or 2) active smokejumpers or smokejumper pilots, or 3) direct family members of active smokejumpers or smokejumper pilots, or 4) currently enrolled in an accredited program that will lead to a college degree or other accreditation. For further details and an application, contact Larry Lufkin at 360-790-8351 or jumpercj63@aol.com before June 15, 2012. 📧

Help Needed in Locating MSO 1969 Rookies

Dave Dayton (MSO-69) is trying to put together a trail project in 2013 for the Missoula Rookie Class of 1969. If you have any contact information for anyone listed, please contact Dave at 406-251-3914 or smjdave@msn.com.

- John J. Adams
- Richard M. Barry
- Douglas S. Chester
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- John Mohn
- Ronald L. Myers
- Gary G. Owens
- Michael T. Stewart.

Pounder And Jumper Team With Wives To Save Chianti

by John Snedden (Boise '73)

In late September 2011, our friends Janie and Bruce Johnson – brother of Gary Johnson (FBX-74) – and my wife, Mary, and I made a trip to Croatia and then on to the Chianti region of Tuscany in Italy. Our goal in Italy was to drink wine, sample food, give thanks, and enjoy the process.

Our “hotel” was a charming room in a thousand-year-old castle on one of many hills near Greve, 12 miles south of Florence, surrounded by vistas so gorgeous that it was almost surreal.

The scenery from the castle included thousands of acres of mixed-species forest in autumn yellows and reds, punctuated with sporadic inclusions of large, neatly cultivated olive orchards and an infinite number of carefully manicured vineyards.

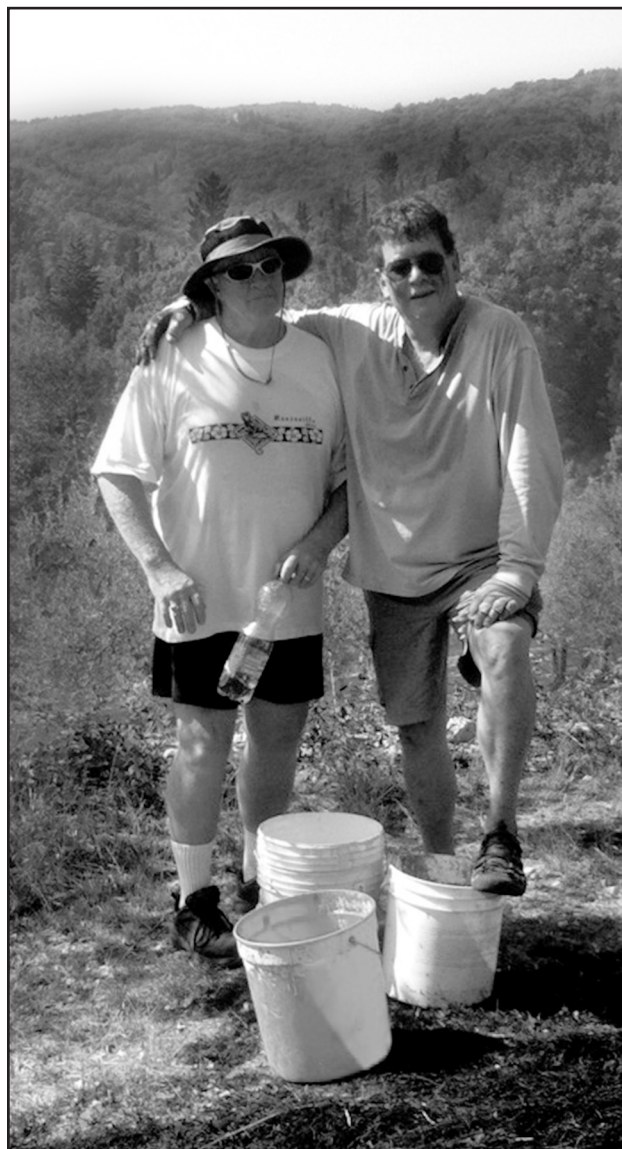
From our castle there were hundreds of forested hills and valleys visible. On almost every hill there is a castle, a town or a huge personal estate –and each one grows grapes and/or olives, and all produce wine and/or olive oil.

The bad news this year is the severe drought in the entire Chianti region. With little rain and higher-than-normal temperatures, the forests are tinder-dry and many olive orchards are near collapse from lack of water.

Hiking along the various roads and trails that course through the forests, vineyards and orchards is more than pleasant. All the grapevines were in neat rows and heavily laden with huge clusters of Sangiovese grapes for next year’s batch of Chianti wine. The only barriers along both the paths and the steep, rutted roads were some electrified fences around certain vineyards to keep the wild boars from destroying the precious grapes, and a few huge gates to protect old family estates and/or castles from interlopers.

For some inexplicable reason, we extended our stay at the castle for two days. The day before our new departure date to Florence, Bruce and Janie were up early and out for a long walk. Mary and I were up later but enjoyed a good two-hour hike through the hills, hoping to glimpse a wild boar.

When we returned I was running the water for a shower when my wife suddenly pounded on the bathroom door and yelled, “John! John! There’s a fire in



L-R: John Snedden (BOI-73) and Bruce Johnson

the olive orchard and you need to come help ASAP!”

With my gym shorts, tennis shoes and t-shirt back on in record time, I ran down the old stone stairs, through the arched gate of the castle entrance and down the path to the olive orchard to see what was causing the excitement.

It did not take long to understand the situation. The olive orchard was obviously on fire with 15-20 olive trees burning. The fire was burning slowly up the

hill in sparse clumps of short, tinder-dry grass. The light wind was gently pushing the fire through the clumps of dry grass in the orchard and torching the taller grass around the olive trees. The fire continued to spread unchecked up the hill towards both the vineyards and also thousands of acres of tinder-dry forest. Some of the olive trees just smoldered, but others actually torched with a semi-crowning burn and the all-too-familiar sound of a tree crowning.

Several very kind guests, along with both the widowed castle owner and the castle gardener, were slowly filling five-gallon buckets of water from the hose to carry and then douse the burning olive trees. Meanwhile, the fire continued to spread unchecked in 85-degree temperatures with hundreds of thousands of acres of forest a few blocks away. It was obvious that once the fire burned into the grapes, the fire would spread into the forest.

Once into the tinder-dry forest there would be no way to stop this fire, and that night the fire would be on world news. Two Americans would also probably be in jail for “causing the fire” as this was just a few days before Amanda Knox had her appeal granted in Perugia, and Americans were very unpopular in some political and judicial circles.

On initial inspection of the fire, there was a dirt road running along the bottom of the olive orchard and continuing up the hill on the left side of the fire. This road was a good fireline and was containing the fire both on the downhill side of the orchard and on the left side of the orchard going uphill.

The only possibility for stopping the fire was to tie a new fire line into this road uphill at the head of the fire, continue the line back downhill on the right side and tie into the castle entrance road below. This new fire line would contain the fire inside a triangle-shaped area.

Running to the head of the fire, I grabbed the only tool in sight – an old garden rake. At the head of the fire at the road I started a scratch line in the hard, rocky soil and used my tennis shoe sole to stomp out the small flames. The ground was horrible for digging line, as there was no ground – just a rocky shale hillside with no organic matter and many, many rocks of various sizes.

After about 15 minutes the antique rake broke, so the only line-digging tool was the rake handle. My wife yelled to see what was needed, and I told her any tool she could find to dig line.

It had been a long time since smoke had burned my eyes and made breathing difficult. With mucous streaming from my nose, I slowly gained on the fire at the head in spite of no digging tool. But then the

familiar noise of fine fuels igniting below me really boosted my adrenaline.

The fire was spreading laterally below me in some tall grass, flanking me as the wind pushed it uphill – possibly making my existing fire line uphill totally worthless. This sudden spread also made me evaluate my escape route, just in case.

Then the scenario changed for the better with a good deal, times three. First, my wife arrived with digging tools from the gardener’s shack where she had used a rock to break the antique lock and liberate an ancient hoe and a pick - both circa 18th century.

Directly behind my wife was my friend Bruce, who had many years of helitack experience in Alaska. Instinctively our professional firefighting experience kicked in. We hoisted our wonderful new tools (the old pickax and a ancient garden hoe) and set off with renewed vigor to hold and complete our line.

Then, with no words, Bruce started from the bottom as a pounder and I returned to the top as a jumper to dig downhill to connect the line and keep the fire from advancing, either laterally or at the fire’s head. Bruce’s wife, Janie, and my Mary continued to pack water to us in buckets to hit the worst of the burning olive trees (sort of an improvised mini-retardant dump).

For an hour it was touch and go, as the four of us scrambled to contain the fire with our tiny scratch line in the rocky soil and hit torching trees with buckets of water. More than once it seemed doubtful that we could do it.

About this time, however, we got our third break as the wind suddenly reversed course 180 degrees and started gently blowing downhill! This wind change allowed us to quickly complete the line, tie it to the castle road, and allowed the fire to back-burn to our line. The fire suddenly was contained and the only burning was within the line as olive trees continued to blaze and some grass still burned.

Bruce and I took a break to gasp for breath and marvel both at our still-functioning hearts and at our success in stopping the fire with our scrawny fire line. As two retired dentists, it has been a long time since we had blisters on our hands and sore eyes from smoke. About this time we had officially declared the fire “controlled” and the local fire crew arrived (more on that to follow).

By now there were about a dozen people watching, pacing, or helping douse the fire with water buckets. One man beat at the fire with a non-wetted burlap bag that only spread the flames. Bruce tried to show him how to wet the burlap but the man was afraid that Bruce would keep his weapon.

One man in his eighties arrived with his suit coat off and with a 1920s-era metal P-pump on his back, but was not sure where to spray. His wife came looking for him because he had a heart condition and no water in the pump.

The owner of the castle was beside herself and her potential for legal repercussions if it was determined she was at fault for the fire. The garden hoses did not have the same couplings so people were trying to do a workaround or find adaptors. It was an interesting sight, as if out of a movie.

The arrival of the local fire brigade was a relief. They had a small Jeep Universal-type-vehicle with a 100-gallon tank and pump. The problem was that the nozzle operator did not spray flames and ignored our pleas to knock down the three burning snags next to our line at the head of the fire. Our requests were repeatedly ignored, so it was our time to bow out as it was now their show.

The primary fire inspector had been on site for an hour with two cell phones pressed to his ear as he yelled simultaneously into both cell phones while wildly gesticulating with both hands in the air. Another small pumper arrived along with more inspectors and officials. The tree specialist arrived to try to save some of the hundreds of damaged trees, with the estimate that 50-100 olive trees in this orchard of 500 would die.

No one probably noticed, but the wind changed back to its original uphill direction, but the line was now cold and the fire clearly controlled. Only the owner, who had watched the entire event from a distance, understood what our four-man crew had done to save her orchard and surrounding area. In Italian she thanked us profusely, but for us it was just another regular day's work in international fire control.

All Chianti (and probably all of Tuscany) was saved by the experience and hard work of our four-man crew. The honor of both U.S. helitack and U.S. smokejumpers to defend good wine, delicious olive oil, human life, wild game, habitat and dwellings from the ravages of fire was upheld. The fire was stopped before the carbon footprint of the castle was endangered.

European history books will undoubtedly record this seminal event with respect just short of hero-worship. And the mystique of the smokejumper will continue to propagate worldwide. My wife is concerned that facts might have been embellished or some exaggerated claims were made for this article.

Those who have heard other jumper stories will quickly realize this article as a straightforward, humble account of a jumper story – nothing more and nothing less.

John jumped at Boise 1973-76 and lives in Sandpoint, ID. He can be reached at: jsnedden@unicep.com. 📧



BLAST FROM THE PAST



Down To The Fire In 'Chute Is An Esquire Tale

by Jack Demmons
(Missoula '50)

THE *DAILY MISSOULIAN* newspaper reported on smokejumper activities in its Tuesday, January 16, 1945 edition that read: "The Missoula regional office of



the U.S. Forest Service and the efficiency and effectiveness of its parachute 'smoke-jumpers'

are the subject of Alan MacDonald's article 'Down to the Fire in 'Chutes,' in the February issue of *Esquire*. MacDonald describes the operations of the super-speedy fire fighters, and illustrates his story with a specific incident ... a fire in the Bitter Root Mountain country last August.

"A.B. Gunderson, ranger of the Moose Creek station, reported an early-morning fire on Cub Creek by radio to the Missoula office, and asked for an airplane to parachute 'smokejumpers' to

the spot before the fire could explode into a holocaust of the timber. The plane took off shortly before 9 o'clock from Johnson Brothers' field [Hale Field] at Missoula, and stopped at Moose Creek station to pick up Ranger Gunderson and his assistant, Herb Wilkerson, and flying orders (two lookout towermen had taken compass bearings on the smoke and radioed them to the station).

"By 10:38 Pilot Dick Johnson lifted the tri-motor from the runway and headed her up through the shadows of the canyon. Johnson sighted the fire at 10:54 in an old burn at the bottom of an open canyon.

"Then came the preliminaries ... dropping ten-pound sacks of sand with parachutes attached for

judging the wind drift, and dropping the plane down to 500 feet above the fire to get an accurate estimate of the true altitude of the spot to be 'hit' so the pilot could be sure of being at the right elevation, between 1,000 and 1,200 feet, when the jumpers took off.

"The first jumper stepped out of the plane at 11:03 ... the next, two minutes later, and the other two jumped in turn at two-minute intervals. All landed clear of snags and none of them more than 200 yards from the ring of fire.

"The plane droned back up the gorge and, as it came in again, dropped to about 200 feet to drop four tool and supply packs out of the doorway, one after the other. At 11:10 the job was done,

so far as the plane was concerned. At 11:40 the plane was back at Moose Creek field.

"Already a party with mules had been established with the 'smokejumpers' on the fire. That evening the Cub Creek blaze was reported to be 'dead out,' but it was two days before the four fire fighters got back afoot to the Moose Creek station.

"Many foresters, continues Esquire, believe that we are well on the way to revolutionizing the business of fighting forest fires. Last summer and early fall in the Northwest, 126 'chute fire fighters, trained and equipped by the Forest Service, put out more than 150 incipient backwoods fires before they could 'blow up' and become big fires." ♣

Remembering The Norton Creek Disaster And The Deaths Of Two Friends

by Gary M. Watts (McCall '64)

I am sitting here, in my home in Southern California, poring over a map. The map is a product of the United States Department of Interior Geological Survey. It is a 7.5-minute (topological) titled "Pungo Mountain, Idaho."

In the southwest corner of the map, the Middle Fork of the Salmon River snakes roughly from southwest to northeast. Situated on a bluff north of and overlooking the river is Indian Creek Landing Field. The runway runs east to west, is about 5,000 feet long and lies at about 4,700 feet elevation. At the western end of the runway, several buildings make up the Indian Creek Guard Station.

About 200 yards north of the center of the runway there is a grave marked on the map. I helped dig that grave.

But, I'm getting ahead of myself.

Day One

The story begins on Friday morning, July 9, 1965. It was a beautiful morning in McCall, Idaho; my spirits were very high as a second-year smokejumper.

The four training jumps the week before had gone well, and a long Fourth of July weekend at the bottom of the jump list had been a very enjoyable road trip to San Francisco in **Jon Petterson's** (MYC-64) Triumph TR-3. **Carl Brown** (MYC-65) and I alternated between the passenger seat and curled up behind the seats. It was uncomfortable, but so what? We were smokejumpers! Invincible, titans of testosterone in White brand boots!

But that trip is another story.

After a hearty breakfast at the smokejumpers buffet that made Denny's look like a soup kitchen, we played a few games of jungle-rules volleyball while management sorted out the work details, and then hung out around the loft waiting for assignments.

It wasn't long before the fire buzzer went off with so many buzzes I lost track, so I hung around to see if I was going somewhere.

I wasn't, but I was now near the top of the jump list.

The fire call was for 16 jumpers on the Payette National Forest; they left immediately to load their equipment on the Johnson Flying Service DC-3 (the Doug).

The top four on the jump list were now **Jim Tracy** (MYC-61), **Ron Maki** (MYC-64), **Mike Kohlhoff** (MYC-64) and me.

It wasn't until after lunch that our work party finally went to work; we were digging holes alongside the runway of the McCall Airport – something to do with runway lights, exactly what has been lost to history after 46 years.

I do remember, though, several airplanes dipping down on final approach over the small rise at the north end of the runway and landing straight toward us.

It was getting late in the afternoon when the green Forest Service truck towing the equipment trailer, with our jump bags already loaded aboard, skidded to a dusty stop beside us.

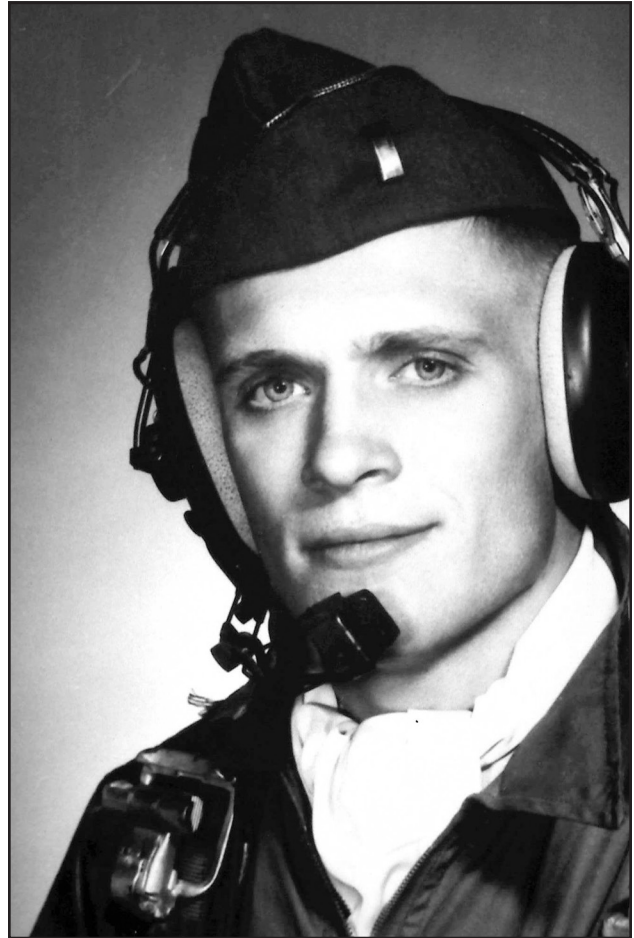
Moose stuck his head out the window, green baseball cap, coke-bottle glasses, lantern jaw and the big **Ken Salyer** (MYC-54) grin. "Hop in, guys. We've got a fire!"

We jumped in back and leaving a rooster tail of dust, Moose drove the truck around the airfield perimeter and pulled up beside the silver and blue, Johnson Flying Service twin-engine Beechcraft (military designation: C-45), known as the "Beech."

The pilot, Byron "Skip" Knapp III, bounced out of the passenger seat, climbed into the plane, and went up to the cockpit to do his checklists, look over his maps to locate the fire, and plan a route to get us there. Skip was a former Air Force jet fighter pilot with 1,266 total hours but only 72 hours in the Beech. He was well liked among the jumpers, known as eager and enthusiastic.

Skip was born and raised in a suburb of Chicago but was a country boy at heart. After high school, he attended the University of Idaho for two years, then transferred to the University of Florida where he received a degree in Forest Management and a commission in the Air Force.

While waiting to begin flight training, Skip met,



Lt. Byron "Skip" Knapp (Courtesy Doug Roloff)

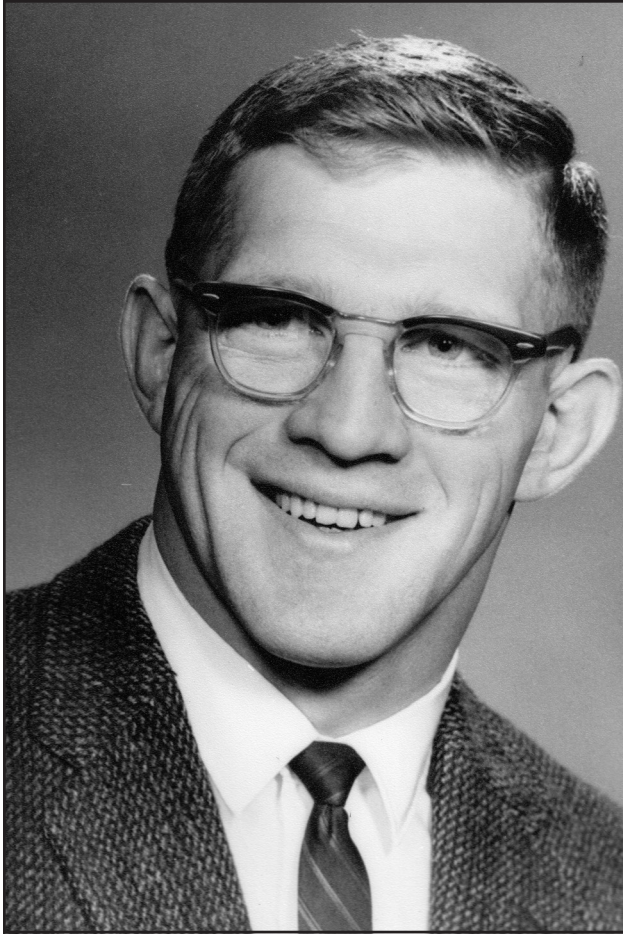
and after a whirlwind romance, married Pat McNerny.

At the completion of his military service, Skip and Pat, now with four young sons, returned to Florida where Skip managed his parent's citrus grove and owned a charter flying service.

When the grove was sold in 1964, he entered the job market and soon had the choice between being a United Airlines pilot or going with Johnson Flying Service and flying smokejumpers out of McCall, Idaho. Skip, Pat and the boys chose the wilds of Idaho.

As Moose loaded our equipment aboard the plane, we jumpers zipped ourselves into the heavy nylon jumpsuits, then helped each other into our parachutes – taking extra care to cinch the harness tightly against the crotch webbing to prevent opening-shock falsetto syndrome.

We put on our mesh-faced helmets (mine was a brown leather, vintage Knute Rockne-style that looked funny but fit like a glove, and I loved it like a pet hound) and waddled up to the airplane in reverse jump order. We put our knees on the aircraft's deck and Moose, already wearing his spotter's chute, boosted us through the hatch and inside the Beech.



Kenneth Neal "Moose" Salyer (Courtesy Mary K. Sprague)

We scuttled forward, took our seats on the wooden benches and began the wait.

It took about 25 minutes to reach the fire; a bumpy 25 minutes. Skip began to circle as Moose studied the wind, terrain and progress of the fire. He was hanging halfway out of the airplane, and I was again amazed at the sheer strength of the man.

He was huge and solid – hence the name “Moose” – and had the tight, muscular build of a wrestler. He had been a national wrestling champion in high school in Waterloo, Iowa, and during the school year he was a wrestling and football coach at Fairmont Junior High School in Boise. Salyer had been a smokejumper for 12 years and had 57 career fire jumps.

Over the fire, Moose leaned way out and threw down two crêpe-paper streamers in quick succession, then flopped on his belly to watch the streamers through the Plexiglas window built into the belly of the Beech. He wasn't happy with the direction the streamers were taking, and he told Skip over the headset to set up for another streamer drop.

The results of the second streamer drop were similar to the first and Moose got on the headset with Skip,

who had been talking to the dispatcher in McCall, and discussed the pros and cons of attempting to jump on this fire because of the high, gusty winds and the late time of day. They decided to go ahead with the jump.

By this time my excitement level was way up there. It's been said that anyone who would jump out of a perfectly good airplane has to be crazy. It's also been said that smokejumpers are thrill-seekers. I think it's a minor adrenaline issue. But that's just my opinion.

Moose decided to let us in on what was going on: “The winds are really strong down there,” he yelled at us over the air stream and engine noise. “But the terrain's not too bad, and the fire is on the ridge line spreading pretty fast, so I'm going to put all four of you on that fire.”

Yes!

“The winds are strong and gusting from all directions.”

Moose looked very concerned. My fun meter dropped off a couple of points.

“Watch out,” he continued, “for bad downdrafts on the downwind side of the ridge.”

He looked at each of us through his thick glasses. “Okay?”

I'm sure we all nodded in agreement. At least I don't remember any questions or complaints.

“All right – let's do it,” Moose yelled as he helped Jim Tracy into a sitting position with his legs hanging out the port side of the airplane.

Skip flew a wide circle and lined up with the fire with Moose giving him a few last-minute corrections. A slap on the back and suddenly Jim was gone.

Moose reeled in the static line and chute bag, then helped Ron Maki into the open doorway.

It wasn't long before Ron was gone and I was sitting in the doorway, the air stream roaring through my brown leather helmet. The terrain below my White boots was high, round-topped mountains with steep descents into deep, thick-growth valleys. We were in a left turn, circling to line up for my drop. I could see the fire across our turning circle; it was putting out quite a bit of smoke.

“The other two guys landed pretty close to the fire,” Moose yelled into my helmet's ear hole.

His Christmas ham-sized hand gripped my shoulder. Hard. “There are a lot of good landing spots down there! Aim for the fire, and then pick whatever spot looks best when you get low! And stay out of those tall trees!”

I nodded.

Skip made a couple of small course corrections.

Then it's time! Moose slaps me on the back and yells, “GO!”

A last word and touch from Ken Salyer.
I'm out the door. Weightless. Quiet. A surge of adrenaline.

WAHOO!

WHAM! Opening shock!

A swing and a twist and I look up to check out my canopy. No problem. I grab the guidelines and look for the fire.

WHOOOPS – it's behind me and getting further away every second.

I make a 180-degree turn, pull down on the front risers and begin to plane (a maneuver to increase forward travel distance), trying to get closer to the fire. I'm fighting a strong headwind as hard as I can and I'm still losing ground. I realize I'm getting low as I descend below the ridgeline and begin looking for a landing spot. I see a nice grassy area and begin to circle around a couple of tall trees.

I feel a tug and realize my chute didn't clear the tall trees. I come to a skidding stop with my back against the trunk of a huge Ponderosa pine; the ground is way down below me. My canopy is hung up high in the top of the tree and doesn't look like it will be coming down any time soon. Smokejumper letdown training is about to become invaluable.

* * *

Ron Maki and Jim Tracy landed in grassy areas not far from the fire. After climbing out of their jumpsuits and packing up their parachutes, they met at the fire and discussed the strategy to bring it under control. The flames were burning hotly in ewe grass and scattered sagebrush.

The swirling, gusty winds were driving it in one direction, then another. They would have to react to the changing direction of the burn and dig some fireline to stop the greatest threat.

As they waited for the Beech to make the cargo drops that would provide them with their tools, Mike Kohlhoff drifted down and landed nearby.

Ron remembers the Beech coming in very low on the first cargo pass. Moose pushed the gear bags out directly over the ridgeline, into the hotly burning fire. Bull's eye!

Jim, Ron and Mike rushed into the blazing fire to attempt to save the equipment. The shovels and Pulaskis were desperately needed to fight the fire. They kept their eyes open for the second cargo drop; it would be critical if they lost the tools from the first drop in the fire.

The second cargo drop never came.

* * *

I was hanging in my chute, my back against the thick tree trunk. I've tied the descent line to the parachute risers

using the advertised three half hitches. The line is routed through the harness loops and dangles down below me, not quite reaching the ground.

As I reach above to disconnect the harness release fittings, I heard and feel in my gut a loud WHUMP!

What the hell was that?

The noise was baffling, but I could only afford to think about it for a few seconds. I had to get out of that tree and go fight a fire.

I slid down the nylon line until it ran out, and I fell the final few feet to the ground. I looked back up at my parachute and decided it was there to stay; any attempt to salvage it would either be too dangerous or too destructive to the parachute. I'd have to explain that to Wayne Webb (MYC-46) when we got back. Wayne wouldn't be happy.

I scrambled out of the reserve chute, harness and jumpsuit and headed up the hill toward the fire.

By the time I arrived, the others had the fire pretty much under control. I grabbed a shovel with a slightly singed handle and began attacking some of the hot spots.

It wasn't long before all four of us had noticed a thin column of smoke rising from a valley about two to three miles away. We all came to the same conclusion, almost simultaneously, that our plane had possibly gone down after the first cargo drop and before the second.

As the reality of what was happening began to sink in, a big, empty space began to develop, like a black hole, in my stomach. My fun meter was no longer pegged to the right. I realized what that loud "WHUMP" was.

We discussed drawing straws to decide which two of us would go over to investigate the second fire, but decided that because there was no way we could reach the site before dark, that we would defer the decision until the next morning.

* * *

The lookout on Norton Ridge had called in the original smoke, which would soon become known as the Norton Creek Fire. He had watched the jumpers dropped from afar and shortly after had noticed the second column of smoke.

* * *

The smokejumper dispatcher at McCall had lost radio contact with the Johnson Flying Service Twin Beechcraft shortly after the pilot reported the original fire in sight. When he got word of the second fire from the Norton Ridge lookout, he suspected the worst. He reached for the phone to call Idaho City.

* * *

Idaho City was a satellite smokejumper base for the McCall facility. The Idaho City Neds (first-year jump-

ers: “Ned, the new guy”) had finished their training at McCall the week before and the veteran jumpers completed their refresher jumps before that. The base was just gearing up for the fire season, preparing packs, settling into the loft and bunkhouses. This would be their first fire jump of 1965.

One airplane, exactly like the one he was flying, had already – he was pretty certain – lost the battle with Mother Nature.

James B. “Smokey” Stover (MYC-46), base foreman of the Idaho City “Rock Pile,” took the call from the McCall dispatcher. He listened intently, copying down the fire’s location, then he acknowledged the information and slowly hung up the phone. He lit up a cigarette and went to round up a pilot and the four jumpers at the top of the jump list.

* * *

The flight to the fire in the Idaho City Beech was so filled with tension it could be cut with a dull Pulaski. The pilot, Ray O’Brien, knew it would be a tricky drop. The sun was getting low and the shadows growing long; the air was filled with wind shears, mountain waves, down drafts and the valleys were steep and deep and the mountaintops were high in the thin air.

One airplane, exactly like the one he was flying, had already – he was pretty certain – lost the battle with Mother Nature.

Smokey Stover, who would be the spotter on this drop, sat in the right seat of the Beech, scanning the terrain ahead, looking for the telltale smoke. He knew just about all of the McCall jumpers; most were dear friends of many years. He hated to think of losing any of them.

Clarence “Ty” Teichert (IDC-55) was scheduled to jump first; he was an 11-year veteran squad leader with 110 career jumps. He was also very familiar with the McCall jumpers. So was **Marion Horton** (IDC-63), a three-year veteran with 29 career jumps, who was scheduled to go out second.

Wayne Sugg (IDC-65), a first-year Ned who’d never made a fire jump, was due out third.

Dick Graham (IDC-58), an eight-year veteran with 61 jumps was due to go out last. Dick was especially apprehensive because his brother, **Allan Graham** (MYC-64), was a second-year jumper out of McCall that summer.

They spotted both fires at about the same time and began to circle. The larger fire was in a saddle near the

top of a mountain. The smaller fire was deep in a valley along an arm of Norton Creek.

As they circled lower they saw what appeared to be a wing tip in the smaller fire, then an “R” appeared near the larger burn, indicating the need for a radio. They’d soon counted four jumpers on the larger fire and though still worried, some of their fears were alleviated – especially Dick Graham’s.

* * *

When the Idaho City Beech began to circle, we finally got our brains back in gear and laid out an “R” signal on the ground, requesting that they drop us a radio. They dropped one on the next pass, and we let them know our situation and that we only had two packs.

We asked them if they had the other fire in sight. They said they had and, confirming our direst fears, told us it looked pretty certain that the fire was caused by the crash of our Beech, and that they were shortly going to put four jumpers on it. They were sorry, though, that they had no extra fire packs; we would have to wait until the next morning.

They jumped into an area below the crash site, near the creek bottom, into heavy brush. One by one they disappeared from our view behind a ridgeline.

* * *

When the Idaho City crew reached the fire, they found it was small: one-eighth to one-quarter of an acre, and not going anywhere, as the vegetation on the North slopes was still green that early in the summer. The crash site itself was very small, which, along with the fact that most of the trees in the area were untouched, indicated that the plane was going straight down at impact.

Several fireplace-sized logs that were chopped from the trunk of a tree 8-10 inches in diameter confirmed the airplane’s near-vertical flight path and meant that at least one of the C-45’s propellers was turning at a high RPM to be able to chop up the tree in such a manner.

It was evident that the fire had been very intense; pools and streams of silver, molten metal were still cooling in the disturbed soil.

Once the crew had the hot spots in the wreckage under control, they began the grim task of recovering the bodies. Moose was taken out first, then Skip. They were both wrapped in cargo chutes and secured with a nylon letdown line to a single stretcher that had been dropped with the equipment.

Since the Idaho City Unit was still in the initial process of setting up for the fire season, some of the rescue equipment that would normally have been used was not yet available.

The four jumpers each took a corner of the stretcher and as darkness descended over them, fought through thick brush over very steep and rocky ground to carry the heavy burden down the mountain to their base camp alongside Norton Creek.

It had been a treacherous and exhausting trip down the mountain, and the jumpers were ready for a few hours' rest.

* * *

When Pat Knapp was contacted by Forest Service officials to notify her of the accident, she requested that Skip be interred at the crash site.

* * *

When it was confirmed that a smokejumper plane had gone down and that there had been fatalities, the smokejumper chaplain, **Stan Tate** (MYC-53), a former McCall jumper and contemporary with Ken Salyer, was notified. Stan, who at the time was working on his doctorate in Watts, Calif., first called his wife, Lynn, who was in McCall, to inform her of the tragedy, and then set out to hitch a ride back to McCall with the Nevada Air National Guard.

* * *

By sundown, the wind had died down and our fire was down to some scattered hot spots that probably wouldn't last till morning. We built a campfire and using the "bleep" method (you throw a can of food into the fire; when the can makes a bleep sound it's ready to eat) heated a few cans of grub we'd salvaged from the fire.

As we ate in silence, we watched the almost-full moon rise in the eastern sky. We'd heard on the radio that our two friends had been recovered from the wreckage and were ready to be picked up in the morning.

A few hours before, we'd been on top of the world, as high and full of ourselves as only young smokejumpers could be. Now, we were about as low as humanly possible – approaching the gates of Hell.

There was very little conversation around the campfire that night; we were in a state of shock. A few hours before, we'd been on top of the world, as high and full of ourselves as only young smokejumpers could be. Now, we were about as low as humanly possible – approaching the gates of Hell.

We spent the night like zombies, dragging our tools around the fireline, catching a little sleep when possible; Ron and Jim in the two bed rolls that had survived the fire, Mike and I wrapped in the one cargo chute. Memories of Skip and Moose pushed, uncalled upon, into our thoughts constantly.

* * *

Lynn Tate, Stan's wife, upon hearing of the disaster, first contacted Mary K. Salyer to give her what comfort she could; then she visited Pat Knapp.

Pat told Lynn of her wishes for Skip to be buried in the wilderness with his aircraft. She also told Lynn that she didn't think the Forest Service officials took that request very seriously. Lynn told Pat that she would see what she could do about that.

Day Two

Dawn, Saturday, July 10, 1965, found us dirty, depressed and using our last can of water to brew some smokejumper coffee.

We were enjoying the muddy brew when the Idaho City Beech flew over and contacted us on the radio. We reported that the fire was out, dead cold, and we didn't really need an equipment drop. They acknowledged that and said to prepare a helicopter landing zone and be ready to be picked up later in the day.

We were in a saddle on the ridgeline. A flat spot up the hill a short way needed only a minimal amount of preparation to make an excellent landing zone.

As we went to work on the helo pad we saw a helicopter descending down the valley toward the crash site. We watched until it disappeared behind the ridgeline that blocked our view of the crash site.

* * *

The Idaho City crew watched the helicopter land in a small meadow beside Norton Creek. As the rotor blades wound down, two men – one in uniform – exited the cabin and approached the crew. They introduced themselves as the sheriff and the coroner of Valley County. They asked the jumpers several questions pertaining to their knowledge of the accident.

They were then taken to the casualties where they conducted a preliminary investigation. The jumpers then hiked with them up the hill to inspect the aircraft's wreckage.

When the officials were satisfied that they had all the information they required, Skip and Moose were put into black, rubberized body bags and loaded into the helicopter. The sheriff and coroner climbed aboard, waved good-bye and the helicopter lifted off and headed for the airfield at Indian Creek.

* * *

We had finished preparing the flat spot suitable for a helicopter pick-up and were resting from the task when the Valley County helicopter departed the crash site. We watched, knowing it carried our brother smokejumper and pilot, until it disappeared in the west.

Ron Maki grabbed a shovel and announced he was going to take a walk down to the trees. The rest of us began picking through the few cans of food that we'd rescued from the fire.

We soon saw Ron returning from his "walk in the trees," and it appeared that he was carrying a shovel in each hand. When he got closer, we could see that one of the shovels was actually a very large rattlesnake with a mush melon-sized lump, indicating that he'd recently enjoyed a tasty lunch.

I was delighted as I'd always wanted to try rattlesnake steaks, and I volunteered to clean and cook the impressive reptile.

Ron reluctantly handed me his trophy, but not before making me promise to return the skin and rattles (Ron, to this day, still has that snakeskin. He claims it is spotted with fire retardant, but since I don't remember any fire bomber or slurry stains at the fire, I think it is more likely that someone threw up on it. But no one has stepped forward to admit that).

Mike and Jim watched me closely, skepticism and doubt clouding their faces.

To begin the evisceration, I made a surgeon-like incision, with my Buck lock-blade, from rattle to neck stump. When I opened the stomach cavity there was this huge, gooey, half-digested rodent smiling at me.

Kaboom! A malodorous stench that would have put a skunk to shame erupted from the snake like the explosion of a land mine.

I dropped the evil serpent like a live grenade and we all staggered backward several steps.

Lunch was no longer an option.

* * *

The Forest Service bureaucracy, because of the constant pressure applied by Pat Knapp and Lynn Tate, and the fact that it was too late to bury Skip with his aircraft had come up with a compromise: Skip was in the Valley County helicopter, at Indian Creek airfield, which was temporarily grounded because of high winds.

The Valley County sheriff and coroner didn't have any objections; they just wanted the wind to die down so they could go home, and they had plenty of labor available in the form of four smokejumpers who, conveniently, had been the last four to jump out of Skip's airplane.

It was decided that Byron H. "Skip" Knapp III

would be buried at Indian Creek and the four Norton Creek smokejumpers from McCall would provide the burial detail.

* * *

It was almost dark by the time the winds died down enough for a helicopter to pick us up. We arrived at Indian Creek shortly after the Valley County helicopter had departed. The ranger at Indian Creek, wearing suspenders and a Smokey Bear hat, met us and explained why we were there, instead of home at McCall: We were to spend the night, then, in the morning we were to choose a suitable site and bury Skip.

The ranger led us to a small, one-room cabin with bunks, a sink and an outhouse.

There wasn't much small talk that night before we finally turned in. We were alone with our thoughts. It had been a long two days that had been too full, and tomorrow was not a day we were looking forward to.

Day Three

We were awake before the sun came up on Sunday, July 11, 1965. When it was light enough outside that we could walk around without breaking a leg, we went looking for a burial site.

After we had rejected a couple of possibilities, we came upon an area that we all agreed would be perfect for the final resting place for Skip Knapp. It was a grassy area in the shade of a grove of large pines. The ground rose slightly to the north and to the south. The view overlooked the Indian Creek runway. Beyond that the Middle Fork of the Salmon River flowed steadily through the deep canyons.

It was a beautiful, scenic, peaceful and secluded location where, if I were ready to be buried, would like to be buried.

We returned to the cabin, and it wasn't long before the ranger arrived, still in his suspenders and Smokey Bear hat. He led the way to a large barn, unlocked a padlock on the door and ushered us inside. The barn was dark, and empty except for a rubberized body bag containing Skip's remains.

Using handles that were sewn into the bag, the four of us carried Skip to the gravesite we had chosen. Taking turns, we used our tools with the singed handles from the fire to dig around and hack at the large tree roots.

It was hard work and because of the roots and rocks and the need to swing the Pulaski, the grave took on an odd shape with large dimensions. Finally, we deemed the hole to be deep enough but, not knowing any burial protocol, went off to find the ranger to get final approval for our asymmetric open grave.

When the ranger returned to the site, he gave the grave a very close inspection, then granted us his approval and told us to place Skip into the pit to make sure everything was okay.

We all expressed approval of our workmanship, and it was decided that prior to filling in the grave it would be proper to hold a short memorial ceremony.

Being smokejumpers, we couldn't be humbled for long, but we'd never be quite so arrogant again.

The ranger removed his hat; we all bowed our heads and he offered a simple but emotional prayer, then invited us to offer a few words, if we wished, in memory of Skip.

The actual words that we uttered that morning were few and have been lost on the gentle breeze that was blowing through the pines, but their sincerity and heartfelt emotion will remain in that hallowed ground and within us, forever.

When the grave was filled in we placed a cross, fashioned out of pine branches, on the mound of fresh earth over the grave, to serve as a temporary marker until a permanent memorial could be installed.

The site was later designated a historical cemetery.

We were four young, arrogant, bulletproof smokejumpers who only two days before had been Kings of the World. Emperors of the Universe.

Now we were four kids, insignificant little creatures, crawling along the forest floor, humbled by Mother Nature's fierce mountain wilderness.

Of course, being smokejumpers, we couldn't be humbled for long, but we'd never be quite so arrogant again.

That afternoon we were flown back to McCall in a replacement Beech from Marana, Ariz.

Aftermath

On Sunday, July 11, 1965, the same day the four of us interred Skip's body at Indian Creek and Pat Knapp's 30th birthday, a memorial for Skip was held at the Episcopal Church in McCall.

The next day, an outdoor service was held for Byron Harry Knapp III at the Bioscathedral of Indian Creek Guard Station and airfield. Several chairs were set up around Skip's grave in that grassy grove of pine trees overlooking Indian Creek airstrip and the Salmon River.

Skip's parents, wife and four young sons flew in for the service in their twin engine, six-passenger Beech-

craft. Friends of the family, smokejumpers and Forest Service officials also flew in to attend the funeral ceremony.

Dr. Tate conducted the services. He tells the story of a Swainson's hawk that was circling overhead during the ceremony, then landed on a branch above the altar and appeared to be observing the proceedings.

The ground was consecrated, and then, at the request of the family, Tate read a commendation from the Book of Common Prayer:

"In sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ, we commend to Almighty God our brother Skip; and we commit his body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust. The Lord bless him, the Lord make his face to shine upon him and be gracious unto him, the Lord lift up his countenance upon him and give him peace. Amen."

At the conclusion of the ceremony, the Swainson's hawk took off and spiraled upward, like a jet fighter, until it was lost from sight.

Later that summer, a plaque commemorating Skip's birth and death and with a line from one of his poems (he was the author of a book of poetry titled: "Random Thoughts on Social Evolution and Nature: Poems," published by The Crackerbarrel) replaced the temporary marker we'd made out of pine branches.

The line on the marker at Skip Knapp's grave at Indian Creek reads: "In Knowledge that God's way is right – Skip"

* * *

On Wednesday, July 14, 1965 at 2 p.m., there was a funeral held for Kenneth Neal Salyer at St. Andrews Episcopal Church in McCall. All of the McCall and Idaho City jumpers attended; Missoula had agreed to cover for us for the day.

My main concern that morning was what in the world I was going to wear. I had no suit, no tie, no Sunday-go-meeting clothes whatsoever. My best dress-up, off-duty, have a beer at the Cellar or the Shore Lodge outfit was a clean pair of Levis, a snap-button plaid cowboy shirt and a pair of somewhat-worn sneakers. I opted for White boots, with a little saddle soap, instead of the sneakers.

Several of us from the barracks piled into one of the green pickups and headed for the small chapel at the edge of town. We were all wearing White boots.

The little church was bursting at the seams, filled to overflowing with smokejumpers and locals who were friends of Mary and Ken Salyer.

I found a place to stand by a window, open to provide fresh air for the congregation.

Rev. Stanton Davis Tate conducted the services: His eulogy told of Moose's being a champion wrestler and star

football player, but despite his size and strength, a gentle, sensitive soul.

Gazing out the window I remembered the year before, when during my Ned training I seriously pulled some stomach muscles doing Allen rolls off the back of a pickup. It was painful to walk, impossible to do sit-ups or The Rack. Moose could have washed me out right then.

Instead, he came up to the barracks, where I was lying on my bunk in agony, and gave me a girdle-like affair, constructed of heavy canvas and leather straps and buckles that he said he found in some storage locker.

Even though I still couldn't do sit-ups or The Rack, I could do Allen rolls and that damned girdle got me through Ned training. I guess Moose saw something in me worth saving.

Stan continued with the eulogy, telling stories of fires he and Ken had fought together, of his spirituality and sensitivity, and how he had met his wife to be and love of his life, Mary K., while they were in math class together at Boise Junior College.

Stan cleared his throat and went on, his voice crackling, clearly devastated by the loss of his close friend. He read several of his and Ken's favorite scriptures, then asked for comments from the congregation.

Wayne Webb stood off to the right side and faced the group: "We can summarize Ken's good life in one sentence. He always kept his promises."

After the benediction Rev. Tate announced that the smokejumpers had passed the hat and had purchased a purebred Black Labrador puppy for Skip and Pat's four children.

Several days later, Ken Salyer's burial service was held in Boise, Idaho; he was laid to rest in the Morris Hill Cemetery.

* * *

In 1995, Skip Knapp's second son, Doug Roloff, alone, made a very special journey in an attempt to find the crash site on Norton Creek, to connect with the place where his father was taken away from him. He did, finally, arrive at the site, even though the actual location had been incorrectly recorded by the Forest Service.

In ensuing years, Doug returned to the crash site several times, sometimes accompanied by his brothers, to take photographs, draw maps and examine the wreckage. On one occasion he returned a canteen (quite possibly mine), that he had recovered and to which attached a permanent engraved commemorative plaque, as a marker to identify the mishap and honor those involved.

These journeys would provide the basis for some great stories that are begging to be told.

An interesting footnote to Doug Roloff's journeys

to Norton Creek is that several of the photographs he took seem to show that one of the engines may not have been powering its propeller at the time it made its impact with the ground.

That would mean that "engine failure" could be added to the list of "probable cause factors" that the NTSB assigned to this accident.

Author's Notes

Memories: The human mind is an amazing instrument, and its memory capacity is unbelievable. Picture the warehouse where Indiana Jones's lost ark was stored, only full of filing cabinets. HUGE capacity!

The problem lies in the filing and retrieval system. Picture again a harried secretary, arms full of files, rushing to put those files into the correct cabinets. Then when you try to remember something, the secretary runs back into the huge warehouse, grabs what files she can find and rushes back to the front office.

Over the years the filing cabinets fill up and the secretary begins to show her years. My beautiful, voluptuous, efficient secretary of my twenties is now a grumpy old crone, with pencils sticking out of a gray bun at the back of her head, pushing a walker. My retrieval system has gone to hell.

Putting all the memories together of the six surviving smokejumpers of both fires, despite the combined bungling of our elderly recall secretaries; I was able to scrape together a fairly accurate account of the events of those few days.

There were holes and discrepancies in all of our perceptions and several outright conflicts in what we remembered. For instance, one of the Idaho City jumpers remembers that they didn't drop us a radio, while the other definitely remembers dropping us one.

Did we put out an "R," a signal requesting a radio? I don't remember specifically, but of course we would have, once we suspected our plane had gone down.

Did we put out an "R," a signal requesting a radio? I don't remember specifically, but of course we would have, once we suspected our plane had gone down. Did we get a radio? Yes – how else would we have known for certain our plane had crashed? That's one way that discrepancies were resolved.

Another way that I treated memory discrepancies was with available records (smokejumper databases and Smokejumper magazine, NTSB reports, newspaper articles, maps, moon phase calculator, Internet and official records). Other holes were filled in by using logical assumptions, some speculation, and where necessary, a little creative license.

“The Norton Creek Disaster” may have some historical mistakes, but it is as close to the truth as, given the existing constraints, I could make it. Any mistakes or historical deviations are my responsibility and mine alone. The italics are mine and for the most part represent my own vivid recollections.

Thanks to **Leo Cromwell** (IDC-66) and **Carl Gidlund** (MSO-58) for their help in accessing applicable records and finding details and locating participants of this story: Wayne Sugg, Mike Kohlhoff, Dick Graham and Jim Tracy for their sharp memories and enjoyable telephone conversations; Ron Maki for his timely recollections and for driving all the way to Julian for an enjoyable visit; Stan Tate for his invaluable help and for the copy of his book, *Jumping Skyward*, which was an invaluable reference and source of inspiration; and especially to Mary K. Sprague for her time, memories and generous provision of historical material; and **Matt Ingram** (MYC-09), rigger at the McCall Smokejumper Base Paraloft, for photographs and archival material. A special tip of the hat to Doug Roloff for the wealth of information and the treasure trove of photographs, maps, poetry and historical data he has made available.

Epilogue

Mrs. Pat McNerny Knapp Roloff (Skip Knapp’s widow). Two years after the mishap, Pat met and married Donald Roloff, a former Air Force navigator who is now a veterinarian. Don adopted all four of Skip’s sons; the eldest, Byron H. “Randy” Knapp IV, kept the Knapp surname in remembrance of his father and for posterity. The other three sons, Doug, Dan and Jim opted to assume the Roloff surname. Randy Knapp currently resides in Monroe, Ore. Doug Roloff lives in Boise, Idaho, with his wife and his son James Patrick Knapp Allens Roloff. James Roloff also lives in Boise and Dan Roloff, the youngest, calls Eagle, Idaho, his home.

The Black Labrador puppy, a female named Cookie that the smokejumpers passed the hat for, lived a long, happy life with four extremely active boys and died of natural causes.

Mrs. Mary K. Stuart Salyer Sprague (Ken Salyer’s widow) married a former smokejumper and family friend, Lynn Sprague (MYC-59). Lynn stayed with the

Forest Service for nearly 38 years, retiring as the regional forester in California. Mary and Lynn have two sons, Mike Salyer, who is in the construction business in Boise, and Joe Sprague. The Spragues currently live in Boise, Idaho.

Dr. Stanton D. Tate was chaplain for the McCall Smokejumpers, the 124th Fighter Interceptor Group, the Canterbury House at Oregon State University and the Idaho Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution. He has worked for Gritman Medical Center and Latah Health Services in Moscow, and Idaho Juvenile Justice Commission. He taught at the University of Idaho and Boise State University. Stan and his wife, Lynn, currently live in their own Bioscathedral in Meridian, Idaho.

James B. “Smokey” Stover was the smokejumper foreman of the Idaho City “Rock Pile,” from 1948 to 1969, and of the Boise base until retirement in 1972. Smokey passed away in May 2004.

Clarence D. “Ty” Teichert jumped for a number of years in conjunction with teaching junior high school science in Caldwell, Idaho, until multiple sclerosis cut short his jumping career and his life.

Marion H. Horton served in Vietnam after jumping, then returned to Idaho where he worked in the insurance business in Boise and ran a fruit ranch in Emmett. He died on Dec. 6, 1995, in Boise, Idaho.

Richard W. Graham went to work that fall for Intermountain Aviation in Marana, Arizona, for seven years, then farmed in Payette County until 1990, when he began a career teaching 4th grade in Payette, Idaho. Dick retired in 2009 and now lives in St. Louis, Missouri.

Wayne H. Sugg went on to jump three more seasons, pursued a career in Human Resource Management and is currently enjoying retirement in McCall, Idaho.

James H. Tracy worked around the country in various specialties including aviation and software. He is currently retired in McCall, Idaho.

Dr. Ronald J. Maki went into the Army after smokejumping, then went back to school. He graduated in Clinical Psychology from San Diego State University. Among other interesting assignments, Ron worked in the California Penal System. He is currently retired in San Diego and travels around the country with his wife in their motor home.

Michael E. Kohlhoff, Esq. graduated in 1966 from Lewis and Clark College and went on to the University of Oregon School of Law. He worked in private practice and district attorneys’ offices and is currently the city attorney for Wilsonville, Ore.

Me? I became a flyboy. But that’s another story. 🦋

Another Kind of Volunteering Jemez Caldera Dendroglyph Survey

by Chuck Mansfield Cave Junction '59

The Valles Caldera, located just West of Los Alamos, NM, is one of the 10 largest volcanic calderas on earth. About 1 million years ago, a series of eruptions began which destroyed an ancient volcano and formed the present Jemez Mountains. Man has used the resulting geologic feature for thousands of years. During the expansion of the country into the west, the Baca Land and Cattle Company exchanged their original Spanish land grant near Las Vegas, NM, for nearly 100,000 acres and created the Baca Location No. 1. This land has been used ever since as a cattle ranch and a source of timber and for limited mining activities. (See the reference to Land Use History below.)

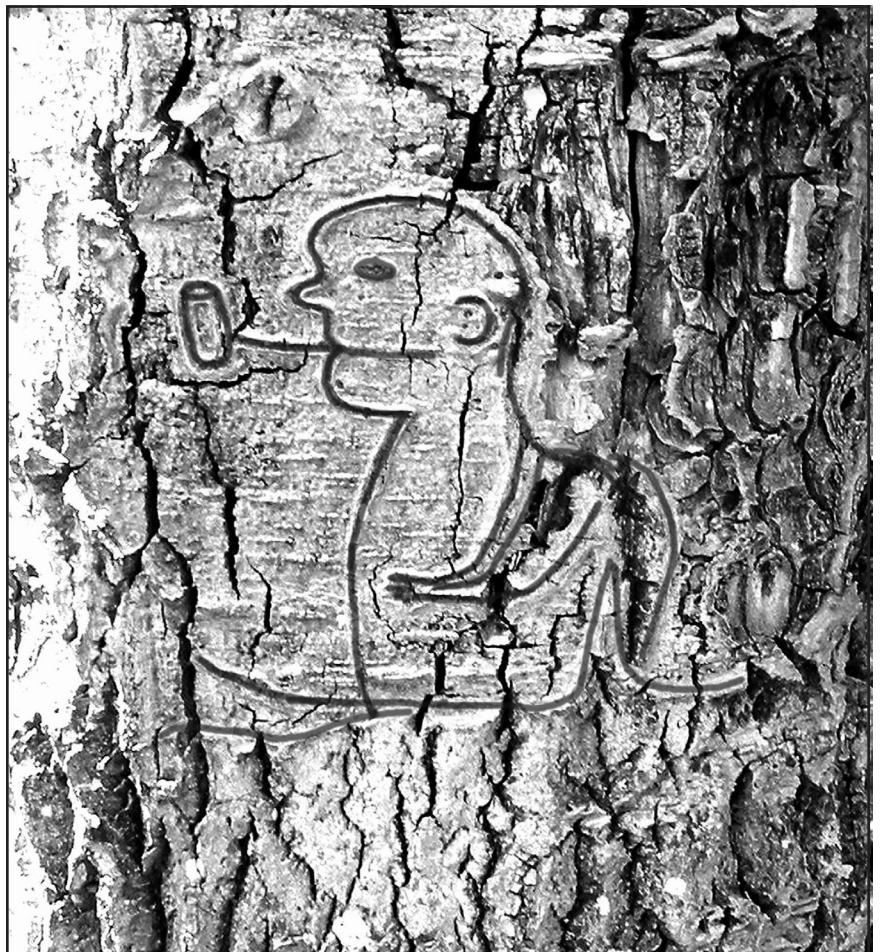
During WWII the Los Alamos National Laboratory was created three miles east of the Baca land for the Manhattan Project. The narrow strip of land has been the Los Alamos community, and the Baca land may be one of the heaviest used USFS lands in the country. In 2000 the Baca properties were purchased by the Federal Government and placed under the aegis of the USFS. The Valles Caldera National Preserve is now working as an independent entity within the USFS. The operating entity has to eventually manage the Preserve without cost to the U.S. Treasury.

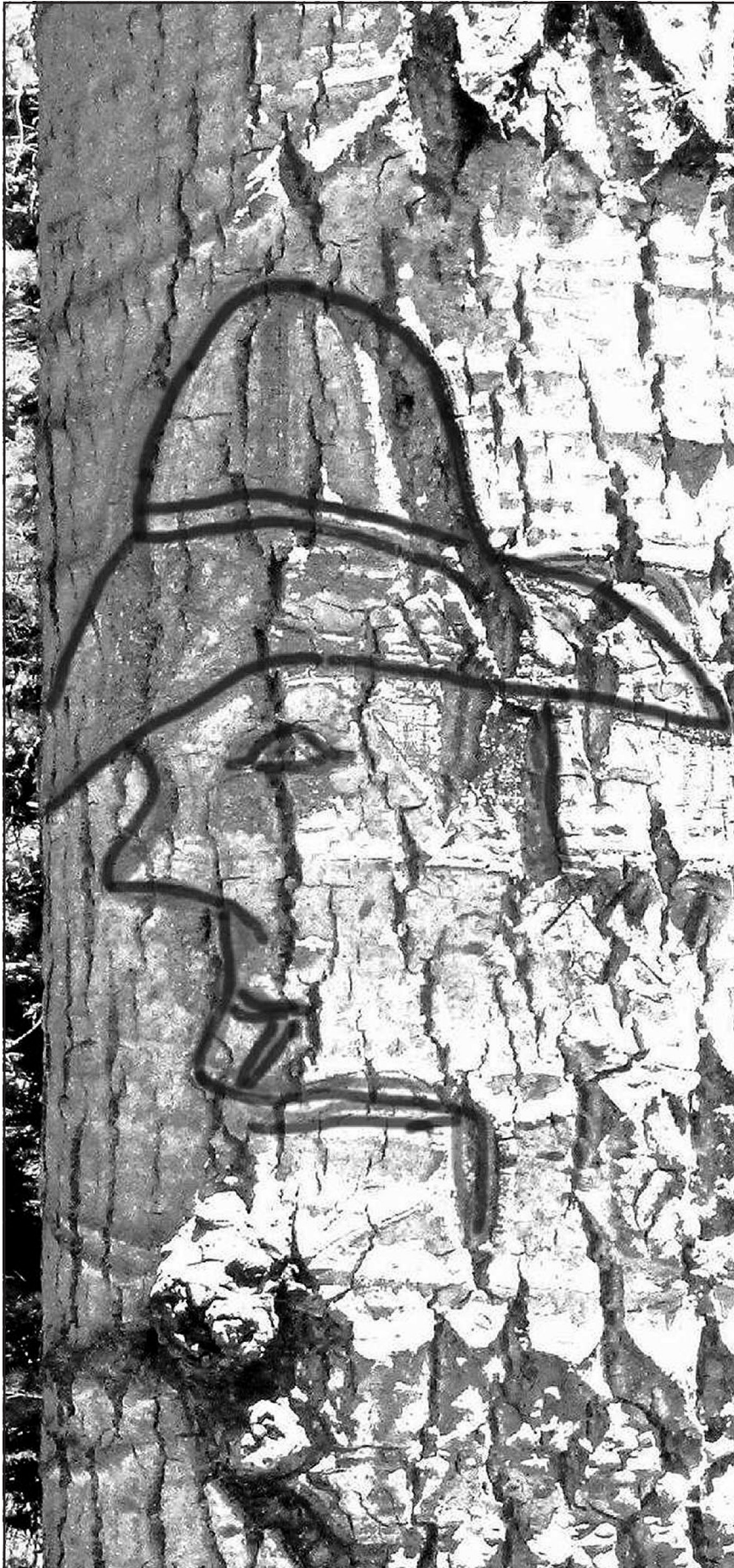
A major source of information about the people who have lived and worked in the caldera over

many years is carvings on Aspen and other trees. These carvings have been called dendroglyphs. During the past four years, my wife, Arlene, and I have led small teams of up to six people to document these carvings. In our search we gridiron an area on a mountainside. When a tree is found, the team converges on the tree and we begin our documentation. Among the data which we document are the GPS location, species of tree, estimates of tree health, height, diameter, GPS

location, side of tree the carving faces, height above the ground, and any significant human information, such as roads and camp sites. Probably the most important information is an artist drawing and photographs of the carving. This information, along with any dates, yields a wealth of information.

The carvings can be categorized in three classes. The first class is purely artistic. The first photograph has been called the Smoking Man. The date of this





carving is not known. However, the tree was dead.

Another carving is a profile of a (Cow Hand) Cowhand. The Aspen tree is about two feet in diameter and the tree is alive.

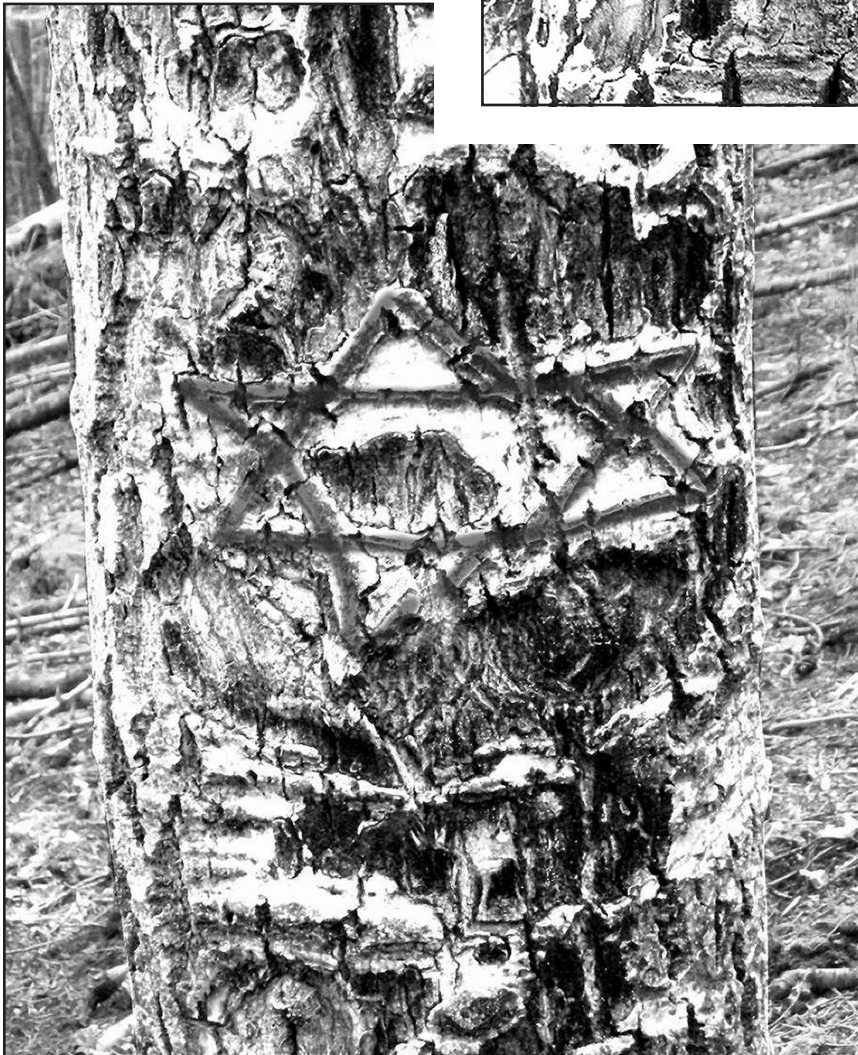
The next class of carvings are Religious in nature. The (Heart) next photograph is typical of many of these. People of Spanish descent carved the majority. An anthropologist from the University of Wisconsin gave a seminar to all of the teams on a mountainside. In his seminar he included an interpretation of the carvings. The interpretation of this heart carving is that the person was probably a Catholic. Since he was probably far from his local parish, he spent the day of particular significance in prayer. The meaning of the heart is that he (named in the carving) was in the heart of God because he had spent the day in prayer. The angle below the heart tells us the order (Jesuit, Franciscan) of his local Parish Priest. If the Village is named, then a researcher can go to that Parish and may be able to find out more information about this person. This tree is dated 14 August 1914.

An interesting carving that we found in our first season was a Star of David. We thought that this was unusual because most of the people that worked for the early Baca Company were probably Catholic. A recent story on television concerned the recognition of a group of people, along the Northern Rio Grande River, who are now called the "Crypto Jews." These are people of Jewish Faith who escaped the Spanish Inquisition by coming to the New World. Apparently, they outwardly professed the Catholic Faith but, at home and in private, they continued to practice

their Jewish Faith.

The third class of carvings we have called the naughty trees. These carvings were made by men who had been in the woods far too long. Photographs of this class have not been included since this is a family publication.

My role in this has been as a Scientist and Woodsman. I have to take a small team of people from the Eastern cities and train them so that they can safely work in dense forest with steep terrain. This last summer our team discovered the oldest carving found in the Preserve. The tree had died several years ago. The stump, 10 feet tall, had several carvings that we recorded in



the field. However, when I began working with the photographs, the date 1889 suddenly appeared. A nearby tree was dated 1899. On the East side of an area called Valle Seco, we found a peak of use dated in 1932 and 1933. Heavily rotted, sawed off stumps implied that this was the site of a logging operation. Deep ruts in the area are probable evidence of the use of a cleated tractor.

The Las Concha Fire last June burned about 1/3 of the land of the Preserve. The survey team had not worked in most of that area so any historical information is now lost.

Reference: Anschuetz, Kurt F. and Merlan Thomas, Gen. Tec. Rpt. RMRS-GTR-196, Fort Collins, Colorado, USDA FS, Rocky Mountain Research Station 277p.

My Toughest Race

by Del Hessel (McCall '59)

While in college at Colorado State University, I had a fairly successful career in track and field. I had become a nationally ranked 800-meter runner, winning the conference twice, competing in both NCAA and USA championships and the U.S. Olympic trials.

I had been accepted as a candidate for the smokejumpers after my sophomore year of college and had also qualified for the NCAA championships.

After competing in the championships, I went home, gathered up my gear, and headed for McCall. I was very fit after the NCAA championships, and my weight was down to my best fighting/racing weight. I had to put on some weight to meet the minimum requirements, so I ate bananas, drank lots of water, had rolls of pennies in my pocket, and wore my boots at weigh-in. I weighed 134 pounds at 5-foot-7.

Getting through the physical training was not a problem for me. Getting out the door for the first jump was an anxious time but went just fine, as did the next few practice jumps, but the true challenge for me was yet to come.

The last practice jump was to end with a full-pack hike back to the base camp four miles away. The average smokejumper's pack weighed about 80 pounds, a fairly standard weight for a full pack that contained the jump suit, helmet, tools, food, water and spare clothes. At 5-7 and a mere 135 pounds, 80 pounds is heavy.

This hike was not your Sunday stroll through the woods. As

it turns out the old-timers were betting on the top four finishers, and a large sum of money was to be had. Many had me picked in that group because of my running experience, and I had set a record for the obstacle course.

However, a hike through the sagebrush, over hills, through gullies, and other rough terrain with 80 pounds on one's back was a whole different matter. The hike even started with a gunshot. I went out too fast across the sagebrush flats and through a deep gully.

It soon became evident to me that I was not going to finish in the top four.

I set my goal to finish. I had gone out too fast and was getting passed. By the time I reached the road to base camp, about a mile

I decided to take the pack off and drag it down the road, but that, too, was very slow.

As I sat there on my pack out in the road, the last two rookies came out of the woods. They were the smart ones. The foreman said if we completed the hike in a reasonable time we would be accepted into the jumpers. So they merely set a nice comfortable pace.

As they approached, they saw I was in trouble and they wanted me to finish. I told them I thought I could finish if I could get the pack on my back while I was already standing up. I stood up and they put the pack on my back.

With my legs under me and being on-balance, we took off down the road finishing together. I learned a great deal about

I did not want to finish last, so I decided to give one final effort for the finish line.

away, I was in sixth place and worn out. I sat down by a tree near the road to rest. Another member passed me by and said some encouraging words.

I did not want to finish last, so I decided to give one final effort for the finish line. This hike was the last test and everyone who finished would become an official smokejumper.

As I tried to stand up with the pack on my back, I could not do so. My legs were worn out. I simply could not stand up. I was furious. I thought about finishing on my hands and knees. So I tried it, but the gravel hurt my knees; plus, it was very slow.

myself that day and gained great respect for my new jump partners. I was amazed to learn that **Al Stillman** (MYC-59) – a tall, slender woodsman from Idaho – finished first.

No race on the track would ever compare to this effort. I learned I could try harder and this experience improved my track career. I also learned that there are some really tough guys out there, not running track and field, right there in the smokejumpers. I truly admired those guys and wanted to be as fit and as tough as they were.

Del Hessel coached in the NCAA

Division I ranks at three universities, spanning a 35-year career. He was voted conference coach of the year 16 times. He was on the USA vs. Great Britain coaching staff and the World Cup staff in Spain. Del was on the

Olympic Development staff for middle-distance runners and took teams to Europe for 10 seasons. He has been nominated for the U.S. Track & Field Coaches Hall of Fame and is a member of the Colorado State

University Hall of Fame. Del wrote three books pertaining to track and field. Del retired from coaching from Colorado State and is currently writing his fourth book. He also serves as a meet referee across the country. 🏆

The Legacy Of Skip Stratton And The Ridge Runner

by Jim Clatworthy (Missoula '56)

Why we became smokejumpers often comes up on trail projects and reunions. The stories are as varied as the political opinions of those gathered, but the induction stories have a common theme of courage, tenacity, perseverance and brotherhood/sisterhood (a collective band of brothers and sisters).

Attaining the status of smokejumper gives you a special sense of pride in the broad sense of community service and dedication to country. That's what we need now: a smokejumper majority in Congress. Smokejumpers excel at putting out fires and would make quick work of the mess in Congress.

Maybe that's why smokejumpers went on to professional careers in forestry, military, aviation, medicine, dentistry, nursing, education, law and the ministry. **Fred Bauer** (MSO-46) – bless his soul – was always interested in hearing how smokejumping influenced a person's professional life.

This is for you, Fred, and **Art Jukkala** (MSO-56), **Dave Barnhart** (MSO-56) and **Jon McBride** (MSO-54) on your high-mountain two-manner, wherever you are. You all touched my life and were a part of my smokejumping treasures.

Skip Stratton (MSO-47) was my mentor for two summers and guided me into the smokejumpers – a big “thanks” to you, Skip! Stay healthy, and all the best!

How it all came about – the tale unfolds

In May 1953, I found a *Look* magazine at my local barbershop with an article about Potlatch Forest Company's logging operation in Idaho's Clearwater National Forest. The pictures and story were interesting and I thought, why not try to get a job after graduating from

high school the following year?

I already had a summer job lined up where I could continue to practice distance swimming. I was an all-city, 200-yard freestyle swimmer from Detroit and elected co-captain of the Cooley High School swim team for my senior year.

Following graduation from Cooley in January 1954, my high school friend and fellow swimmer, Roger Babcock, and I decided we would find local jobs until June and then head out to Idaho. We wrote letters to Potlatch, but they were non-committal about a definite job. The best they could offer was for us to check into their office in Orofino when we arrived.

We hitchhiked our way from Detroit to Orofino via Winnemucca, Nev., and Burns, Ore. – not a recommended route – but we made it with only a couple of nights sleeping on the ground. We struck out for jobs at Potlatch and the Forest Service; however, we were able to secure part-time day jobs and even a long weekend over the Fourth of July working at a gold mine.

Our departure from the gold mine was due to the owner's loony-tune brother who liked to shoot mice in the cabin while we tried to eat. Back in Orofino, we were desperate for jobs that would last the summer, so we tried the Forest Service again and pleaded for work – any work – as our meager funds were running out.

Fate has a way of making things right. To our great surprise and pleasure, we were offered work on the Canyon District, Clearwater National Forest, by Ranger Skip Stratton and ended up working out of Potlatch Forest Camp 60 (Cabin 24) as brush apes – piling slash after the logging operation.

The work was boring and by the end of July my friend quit, but I found the loggers interesting to talk with – but not in the mess hall, where silence is strictly observed – and the logging operation so fascinating that I had my parents send out the family's 8-millimeter movie camera,

and I filmed it over a couple of days. My only regret is that I didn't have sound.

For me the best benefit was the great chow and the fantastic fishing and recreational activities (shooting rapids) on the North Branch of Clearwater River at the Canyon Ranger Station.

The summer of '54 was a roaring success, and I was asked back for the next summer. When I was a little hesitant, Ranger Stratton assured me I wouldn't be pil-ing brush. He wanted me to attend scaling school and timber-cruising school and work on each during the summer. I was sold!

That fall I enrolled at the University of Michigan as an Engineering major and made plans for a ride back to Headquarters, Idaho. When I returned to Camp 60 in June 1955, I was assigned to scaling school in Pierce, Idaho, followed by cruising school.

I got my first fire July 12, but was called off after two days of chasing fake smoke. Our timber-cruising crew left Canyon Ranger Station July 14 and set up a rag camp on Sneak Creek. We all came back to the ranger station Friday night and at breakfast the morning of Saturday, July 16, a visitor stopped by to talk with Ranger Stratton.

He was small at 5 feet tall, or 5-foot-2 at most, and had a Forest Service pack full of huckleberries. He offered us enough to fill a large bowl that he said would go well with our pancakes. He talked about his garden, his aches and pains, and the trouble he was having with moles. He wished the ranger and all of us the best and left.

There were no introductions, so finally someone asked, "A friend of yours, Skip?" Ranger Stratton waited a bit and then said, "Fellas, you've just met the Ridge Runner, Mr. Marlin" (only Skip knows his first name). Mouths dropped open, eyes widened, and finally someone broke the ice with a profound, "No s—!"

We all talked about that for days and how the Ridge Runner was the phantom nemesis of Potlatch and Diamond Match. He was top of the list, even ahead of Big-foot, and up until then none of us had seen either one. Ranger Stratton had a working arrangement with Mr. Marlin and privately kept him supplied with essentials, like salt and flour and some canned goods, as well as giving him access to Forest Service cabins during the winter.

In return, the Ridge Runner left Forest Service property alone and in some cases even did needed repairs. As Buckminster Fuller would have said, "It's a synergistic relationship."

Our timber cruising continued and I got a fire call around 12:30 a.m. July 24, while at the ranger station. I found the fire around 4 a.m., got it out and cleaned up by 7 a.m., and was back to the ranger station by 11:30 a.m.

After a shower and lunch, I returned to the timber-cruising camp. We broke camp on Sneak Creek July

29 and returned to the Canyon Ranger Station, where I found out I was being assigned to the Cedars Ranger Station for scaling.

It was during that weekend while in Pierce that I met **Larry Gunn** (MSO-55) on project and was fascinated to hear all about the smokejumpers. Larry told us the standard line: "It isn't the fall that kills you – it's the sudden stop!"

The seeds for next summer were planted. I decided to apply for the program, but realized I didn't have much fire experience and would need a strong recommendation to be accepted.

I returned to the Cedars Ranger Station late July 31. The next morning the assistant ranger, Brandenburger, assigned me to scaling logging trucks. I got time and a half for more than eight hours, so that was very welcome.

When trucks were loaded with non-government logs, we had a break. We were able to make friends with the drivers, so on Friday, if we wanted a ride into Superior, Mont., we could usually arrange a round trip. For example, we got a ride into Missoula Sept. 2 and went out to the smokejumper base (Aerial Fire Depot) on Saturday.

We saw fellows in casts with broken arms and legs after being dropped in a meadow that turned out to be grass-covered rocks. Not a good introduction to smoke-jumping, but realistic in what could happen, a far cry from a high-mountain two-manner. We hitched back to the Cedars in two rides.

I had another fire Sept. 4, but we didn't find anything. We saw some great scenery – God's country! Sept. 9 was my last day, and I got a ride into Missoula and another ride to Idaho Falls.

From there I took a bus to Salt Lake City and then flew to Albuquerque to visit my brother, John, and his wife, Gretchen. My brother was a Marine Corps specialist assigned to the Nuclear Weapons School at Sandia Air Force Base.

During the visit I interviewed for a Marine Corps Platoon Leadership program in aviation for college students and received a recommendation from Capt. McCullen, who wrote his major friend at the University of Michigan. I was prepared to enter that program when I returned to Ann Arbor.

I left Albuquerque Sept. 19 and returned to Detroit, and then to Ann Arbor to start the fall semester.

During the fall of 1955 I had two irons in the fire. I applied for the smokejumper program and asked Ranger Stratton for a recommendation. I also applied for the PLC in Marine Corps Aviation, but when given the color vision test, I flunked it cold! I couldn't see most of the numbers or letters in the circles due to a red-green color deficiency.

I was crushed! I'd never had a color-vision test before,

but this closed any chance of getting into any military aviation program.

Fortunately, I was accepted into the smokejumper program, thanks to Stratton. And later I found out about his historic and influential role as a smokejumper.

He inspired me to consider Forestry as a major, and I did well in some pre-forestry courses, but switched from Engineering to History – my strongest academic subject – since my drafting skills were considered below average.

I think we all know why smokejumping training prepares people for leadership roles across a wide spectrum of professional careers. If you successfully complete training and receive your Jump Wings you have persevered over physical and mental obstacles and know that whatever comes up you can work your way through it – it's a self-confidence for positive success ... or as the Marine Corps would say, "the Can Do!" spirit.

The Airborne, Marine Corps, Special Forces and Rangers all have this special *esprit de corps*, band-of-brothers experience that gives a person a powerful self-confidence and a tenacity to persevere.

Post Script

My rookie year of '56 was a great success. I only had four fire jumps and one rescue jump, but at least I had two high-mountain two-manners. My first was with **Bob Nicol** (MSO-52) on the Bonnita Dist., Lolo NF. My end-of-season fire in California's Mt. Shasta area was a two-manner with Pete Hoirup (MSO-55). The day before my jump, my roommate, **Ken Knoll** (MSO-56), was injured on his last jump with a broken ankle and went home early.

I had some excellent project assignments at Kelly Creek in the Clearwater National Forest and at Seeley Lake in the Lolo National Forest.

My final work project, digging a drainage ditch at the Missoula base, ended in a spectacular mudslinging affair Friday, captured by **Don Courtney** (MSO-56). The next day, Sept. 8, I started on the return trip to Detroit with Lenard Latham, a lookout returning to Michigan, and Dave Barnhart, and drove through in three days. Dave and I had a few enjoyable days with my parents, and then I returned to Ann Arbor; Dave hitched a ride south on U.S. 24 (Telegraph Road) to North Carolina.

My second year of smokejumping was cut short when I was working on a pool construction job in late May '57, just two weeks before I was to report to Missoula. I nearly lost my Achilles tendons in both ankles working in cement without proper boots. The burns were so severe, I was on Workman's Comp for the entire summer and lost out on a second year of smokejumping.

I joined the Michigan Air National Guard in April

'58 and spent most of that summer in basic training at Lackland AFB, Texas. Although I was always interested in a Forestry career, I decided to major in History and took both my bachelor's and master's degree in History from the University of Michigan, and later my Ph.D. in Comparative Education under a National Defense Education Act Fellowship. This was shortly after my marriage to Julie Shepardson, women's editor of the *Port Huron Times Herald* in August 1962. Julie was fortunate to secure a position as assistant women's editor at the *Ann Arbor News* and in January '63 took the position of editor of the University of Michigan Hospital's *Hospital Star* magazine.

Our wonderful daughter, Jennifer, was born in October 1963, and we all spent the year in England from August of '64 to July of '65, while I was doing the research for my dissertation on British Colonial Education Policy. When we returned to Ann Arbor, I received a Research Fellowship from the U.S. Office of Education and was able to spend the year in Ann Arbor, working on the research for the dissertation and finishing the French and German language requirements.

I accepted a position at Michigan State University-Oakland in Rochester, Mich., and started there in August 1966. The attraction was that MSU-Oakland was a new campus, and faculty were able to create their own courses. It was a young faculty with no junior status faculty, like at large universities.

I completed my dissertation (published by the University of Michigan and the U.S. Office of Education) with my wife's excellent editing assistance in 1970, the same year MSU-Oakland became Oakland University with its own board of trustees and no longer under the wing of Michigan State University.

It was also the same year that the faculty organized a collective bargaining unit under the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), a first for any college faculty. I remained at Oakland for 36 years and spent the last 15 years as associate dean and professor in the School of Education and Human Services, retiring in 2002.

My wife and I now live along the St. Clair River – its flow rate is 1.365 million gallons a second – facing Point Edward on the Canadian shore just south of Lake Huron, and enjoy the wonderful St. Lawrence Seaway with all the variety of ships. We also enjoy late afternoons on our patio watching the way the sun shines off clouds and turning cloudbanks into majestic Rocky Mountain ridges.

It's been a long time from the North Branch of the Clearwater River to the St. Clair River, but every time I see the latter, I'm reminded of the former and all that Ranger Stratton did for me. 🍄



Rich Hilderbrand (MSO-66)



Russell Heaton, Steve Vittum (MSO-71) & Dave Singer

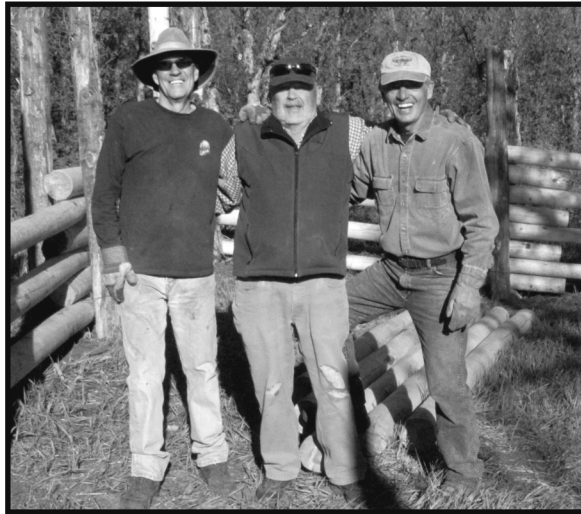


*Steve Vittum (MSO-71)
Doug Witt*



Colorado Glade Guard

Photo's Courtesy Bob D



*Warren Pierce (CJ-64), Joe Lord (MSO-56) &
Bill Ruskin (CJ-58)*



Work Crew Colorado



Building Restoration & New Fence



Melissa Childs & Erik Everett



Bob L

Layout Design: John



MSO-71) & Wamsley (MSO-65)



Dave Ferguson, Dave Singer & Russell Heaton



Ron Siple (MYC-53)

Station Project 2011

orran & Dave Ferguson



Glade Project 2011



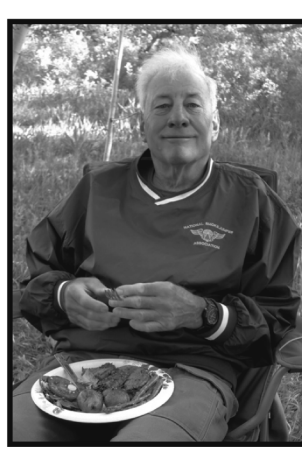
L-R: Dave Ferguson, Warren Pierce (CJ-64), Dave Singer & Julie Coleman



*Doran
Kirkley (CJ-64)*



Don Whyde (MSO-66)



Doug Wamsley (MSO-65)



Bill Ruskin (CJ-58) & Warren Pierce (CJ-64)

Well-Known Kayaker And Author, Smokejumper, Swept Away In South American River

by Kate Mather

(Copyright 2012, the Portland Oregonian.)

Mark Hentze (RAC-00) was born and raised in Baker City, but after a trip to Colombia in 2005, the avid kayaker and photographer couldn't get the South American country off his mind.

"He fell in love with the people, the rivers and just everything about Colombia," said his father, Dick Hentze.

When he wasn't working as a smokejumper for the U.S. Forest Service in Redmond – where he jumped through 2011 – Mark Hentze would paddle Colombia's rivers and explore new terrain. Aside from a trip home for Christmas, Hentze, 37, had been abroad since November, doing what he loved, his father said.

Hentze camped along a remote stretch of the Santo Domingo River with a traveling companion the evening of March 6, 2012. Suddenly water rushed through the area – the river reportedly rose more than 10 feet in 10 seconds. The companion scrambled up a nearby bank, but Hentze was swept away.

His body was found Thursday near the town of San Francisco, in the northwestern province of Antioquia.

"It was a total freak accident," said Aaron Rettig, 26, of Portland, a friend and fellow kayaker. "We identify these different risks in the sport, but you didn't think this would be one of them."

Rettig met Hentze several years ago when the Oregon natives were introduced in Colombia. After several trips, including one that lasted about a year, they teamed up to write "Colombia Whitewater," a well-known guidebook that put the nation on the map for whitewater enthusiasts.

After the guidebook was published in 2009, Rettig said he was ready for new projects in new places. But Hentze wasn't.

"He really never lost focus on Colombia," Aaron Rettig said.

Hentze began a nonprofit, Colombia Whitewater, "to promote a positive image of Colombia," his father said. Rettig said he focused on exploring rivers previously inaccessible because of political conflict.

"He'd go down to Colombia and not even have a paddling partner," Rettig said. "But he'd end up paddling with a French paddler here, a Colombian there, an American here ... He just went for it all the time."

Dick Hentze said his son, who graduated from Eastern Oregon State University and was fluent in Spanish, always had a sense of adventure.

"He was raised to enjoy the outdoors," he said. "He'd been backpacking since he was four."

After his ashes are brought back to the U.S., Hentze's family – which includes his mother, Jan Hentze, and younger brother, Brad – will scatter them in places important to Mark, Dick Hentze said.

Colombia is on that list. They plan to travel there and see the places Hentze loved.

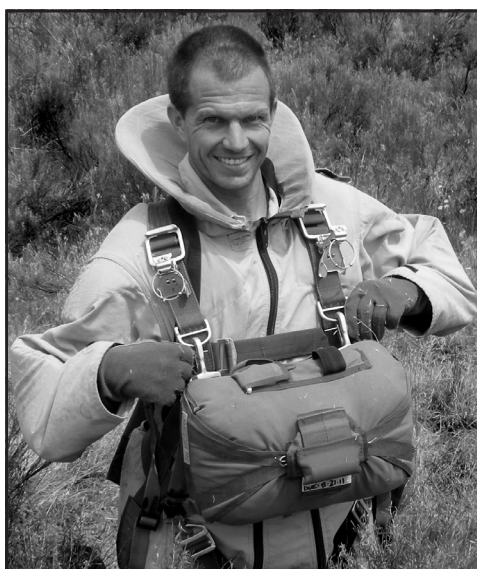
"Mark wanted us to see Colombia," his father said. "We intend to honor that."

Rettig said the news of Hentze's death has hit people the he met very hard.

"It's been pretty incredible to see the support from the Colombian community," he said. "It just shows how he really made a huge impact on Colombia whitewater. That was his legacy."

Dick Hentze said he was proud of all that his son accomplished.

"He was a special guy. And that's something we take comfort in," Hentze said. "He was in a place he loved doing something he loved to do. He crammed a lot of living in his 37 years." 🕯



Mark Hentze (Courtesy Josh Voshall)

A Smokejumper's Experience With Death Was A Lifesaver

by Major L. Boddicker (Missoula '63)

Contemplating the impact smokejumping had on our lives is a common activity among us old-fart jumpers. As I've heard my old jumper buddies say many times: jumping was a life-changing experience. For me, it has definitely been that in many aspects of my life.

Contemplating death is another facet of life in which us old-fart jumpers get more interested as we read the "Off the List" column in each Smokejumper magazine.

K.R. Adams (MSO-63), who recently went off the list, was in my squad during new-man training in 1963 in Missoula. He was a quiet, responsible, unassuming jumper. K.R. was exactly what a professional Forest Service man should be, and he was that throughout his career.

I think K.R. jumped only in 1963 and '64 and then began a career in Forest Service districts in Colorado and Montana. I saw him only once after 1963 when he showed up for a trapping short-course I gave at Pagosa Springs, Colo., in the winter of 1981.

I remember K.R. as usually having an understated grin on his face, did his work, and was there but didn't do it.

He was often just ahead of me in lines as we went through new-man training. One of our first practice jumps was on a cool, rainy day southwest of Missoula.

After the jump, we collected for lunch before going to "building-fire-line" school. The cook crew had erected a big, long tent to cover the food. We jumpers lined up and worked along the line to get our grub, which the overhead (foreman and squad leaders) dumped on our paper plates from big kettles of grub.

Earl Cooley's (MSO-40) sister, Eva Leibel, was the head cook. Her food was great.

As we stood in line in the misty, cool air, K.R. and I observed a robin fussing about us getting too close to its nest. For a bird, it was really putting on a show.

K.R. ducked under the tent in front of me. As I ducked under the tent, the robin flew over my shoulder, down the grub line, and s--- in the salad. Not a little insignificant turd, but a big oyster-shaped glob landed in the salad.

K.R. was right behind the next jumper in line at

the salad kettle and, naturally curious as to what would happen next, K.R. turned around and gave me a huge grin.

The squad leader dishing out the salad did not hesitate but picked up the robin s--- with salad in huge salad tongs and dumped it on the next jumper's plate. His only comment was, "Next."

Why I should remember the robin bomb as significant only confirms that I have always had a strange memory function.

So, K.R. and I missed the robin bomb. That was the kind of luck a jumper needs and was a good omen. I'm sure K.R. Adams would appreciate with his big grin that the last significant memory I have of him was the robin-turd-in-the salad experience.

Managing the emotions of fear, terror, dread and stress, along with boredom, were lessons jumpers learned by repeated experiences. I do not have what could be called post-traumatic stress disorder, nightmares, cold sweats, or any other negative, delayed reactions to my experiences in jumping. I do have a lot of jumping experiences that come into my mind repeatedly, which are vivid and detailed.

Some are probably fiction; most are not. Some of these vivid memories have guided my future actions.

It was June of 1968 at Missoula, after refresher training, as we were resculpturing the lawn for the 47th time under the excellent leadership of **Len Krout** (MSO-46). We were called out on a recovery mission. A pilot with three passengers had taken off from the Missoula airport and flown into a thunderhead to the northwest. The thunderhead ripped the plane into two pieces.

The three passengers had augured into the mountain with the biggest piece of the plane. The pilot had come loose from the other piece and free-fell thousands of feet into the mountain. The passengers and both pieces of the plane had been recovered, but the pilot was still missing and presumed dead. Not too many folks survive a 5,000-foot free-fall.

A big jumper crew was hauled up to the crash site and formed into a long line to sweep the mountain in search of the pilot. **Keith Seim** (MSO-66) was on one side of me and a squad leader was on the other side.

The three of us were on the end of the line.

Up until that point in life, I had seen several dead folks lying in coffins looking rather attractive for being dead. I was an altar boy, so I assisted the Catholic priest at funerals and weddings, witnessing both the greatest joys and sorrows in life up close and personal.

It was also my job on our clay-hill farm in Iowa to skin out dead cows before we dragged the bloated, putrid carcasses to the hogs. I salted the hides and sold them to the local junk and hide dealer for a few bucks. A 1950s Iowa farm boy was accustomed to stink and death.

We circled the mountain about 10 yards apart, carefully looking around deadfalls and rocks for what was left of the pilot. I remember walking up a steep incline under a bench of the ridge. I remember Keith seeing the cadaver first.

"There he is," Keith said. He looked back at me and the other jumper with a queasy expression and sat down.

"Man, he looks like he needs a cigarette," the squad leader remarked as he walked up to the corpse for a closer inspection.

When I topped the ridge, I was face-to-face with the corpse roughly 10 yards away. The pilot had fallen down through a thick spruce tree, cleaning out the limbs and branches in his path, hit the ground hard – making a shallow indentation – bounced up and landed against a log with his head resting on his right hand, head upright, looking like he was resting, looking over the mountainside.

He was wearing a dull, dark-green shirt and pants, which rather closely matched the color of his face. His face had dried out and cheeks were sunken, lips dried back from his teeth. The fly maggots had consumed his eyes and were happily finishing the job in his eye sockets. Wow – he was not pretty to see or to smell!

You might be wondering why I remember such details, and all I can say is this: I was not shocked or repelled by the view at hand – just curious. The pilot was way beyond sympathy.

The squad leader called the sheriff on his radio. A deputy rode up with a mule and a body bag, and we rolled the corpse into the bag. Not a pleasant job considering the corpse had been there for five or more days in the summer heat.

The sight of the corpse certainly left me with an indelible memory, which occasionally recycles as I ponder the world. This memory of the pilot's corpse came back to save me.

I called Keith to see if his memory would verify my recollections. He affirmed my story.

In 1977, I was working for the Fishery and Wildlife Department at Colorado State University as the extension wildlife specialist. At the time, I was on the road giving in-service workshops on furbearer management, varmint calling, and predator control to Colorado Division of Wildlife employees, mostly game wardens.

I was traveling to the last of three workshops at Montrose, Colo. About three weeks earlier, I contracted a bad chest cold, which I couldn't shake, for which I was taking an antibiotic. When I got to Cimarron, Colo., I felt terrible, stopped for dinner and could not finish it. I checked into a motel, took a very hot shower and went to bed about 8 p.m.

About 11 p.m., I became aware of someone in my room. I opened my eyes and was hallucinating. Standing next to my bed was the pilot's corpse. He was standing next to my shoulder looking down at me with a very ugly, toothy grin on his blue/green face.

The face was the pilot's, the clothes were the same, and the maggot-filled eye sockets sealed the deal for me. My mind registered that the Grim Reaper was paying me an introductory visit in the form of the pilot.

There was a definite telepathy in the visit, which said, "Get your butt to a hospital. You are about to die."

I got up and dressed, then started a very painful cough that brought up gobs of orange-colored phlegm and lots of blood. My next move was to call the Montrose Hospital emergency room and let them know I was coming. I told them if I didn't show up in 30 minutes, send an ambulance up Highway 50 looking for me; I would have passed out.

The trip to Montrose Hospital went fine. I checked into the emergency room. The doc checked me out with his stethoscope. I remember the conversation well.

"You have congestion in here, but it doesn't seem that bad. Your fever is 101 degrees but that isn't unusual with a touch of pneumonia. I'll prescribe some antibiotic for you. Go get a good night's sleep – you will be fine," he repeated.

"Doc, better check again. I'm way beyond that. I've had this bronchitis for three weeks. It is so bad I know I am getting much worse, fast. I coughed up blood with my last coughing spell. It wasn't just a small amount," I stated. "I'm hallucinating too, seeing ghosts."

"Do you want an X-ray?" the doctor asked.

"Definitely," I replied.

So, into the X-ray room I went. A technician shot me from three positions, and I went back to the emergency room to wait for the results. After ten minutes

or so, the doctor walked in with the X-rays.

“Good thing you stuck to your guns. Did you bring your cleanup kit? You are going to be here for a while,” he said.

I was quickly hooked up to two intravenous tubes; a big dosage of Ampicillin was started. A blood sample was taken to measure my blood’s oxygen content. About one-third of one lung was working, the rest of my lungs were plugged with pneumonia.

If I had gone back to the motel and to sleep, I would have joined the pilot in never-never land. The doc said I had about four hours left.

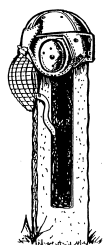
For the next eight days, I studied the popcorn finish on the hospital room ceiling. That was all I had the energy to do. It took two weeks to get back on my feet

and a month before I was strong enough to handle work.

The memory of the pilot’s corpse retrieved from my sick brain as a hallucination saved my sorry butt.

Since that summer day in 1968, when the Grim Reaper is mentioned in conversation, the mental picture I immediately have is the pilot’s face staring at me. One could speculate as to whether the pilot’s corpse was representing eternal bliss or eternal damnation. I’m not going to argue that issue. Since that time, I am just thankful he showed up when he did. After all, do all angels have to be beautiful?

The question unanswered here is this: Who was the squad leader or foreman who was with Keith Seim and me? 🙄



Off The List

Remember and honor fellow jumpers with a gift to the NSA Good Samaritan Fund in their name. Hard times can fall on many of us at any time. The NSA is here to support our fellow jumpers and their families through the Good Samaritan Fund. Mail your contribution to:

Chuck Sheley
10 Judy Lane
Chico, CA 95926

Merle Hoover (McCall '44)

Merle, 90, died Nov. 8, 2010, in Bluffton, Indiana. He earned his bachelor’s degree from Manchester College and a master’s degree from Ball State University. Merle was a teacher in the Central Noble Community Schools district until retiring in 1982. He jumped from McCall in 1944-45 and was a part of the CPS-103 jumpers.

Harold “Hal” McElroy (Missoula '51)

Hal, 84, died Jan. 22, 2012, in Grass Valley, California. He served in the Navy during World War II before earning a bachelor’s degree in Forest Management from Utah State Agricultural College, now Utah State University. It launched a 33-year career with the U.S. Forest Service, and his transfer to Grass Valley in 1978 would be his last as he retired there. Hal jumped at Missoula in 1951.

Andrew “Andy” Stevenson (Redding '66)

Andy, 74, died Feb. 1, 2012, in Mount Shasta, California. He served in the U.S. Army before embarking on a career that culminated as fire management officer with the U.S. Forest Service. He was one of a group of 12 founders that brought the Mt. Shasta Snowman Hill Group back to life in 2002. The membership has

grown to over 425 senior ski, snowboard and telemark enthusiasts age 50 and over.

Andy jumped at Redding during the 1966-74 seasons.

Merle “Mick” Moore (McCall '77)

Merle J. “Mick” Moore Jr., 56, died of an apparent heart attack Jan. 30, 2012. He had suffered from staph infection, which had weakened his body severely. Mick jumped from McCall during the 1977-95 seasons. He was a squad leader in McCall from 1984 until he became a dispatcher for the Payette National Forest in 1996, from which he retired.

Ray L. Morrow (Redding '64)

Ray died in Santa Rosa on February 7th at the age of 74. He was a Lake County resident for over 40 years and retired from the US Forestry Service after a 31-year career. After his rookie year at Redding, Ray jumped 1966-69 and 1972 as part of the Retread program.

E. Harland Upole (Missoula '50)

Harland, 79, died Sept. 17, 2011, in Cumberland, Maryland. He served in the Army during 1952-54 following two stints with the Maryland Department

of Forests and Parks, as well as jumping from Missoula in the 1950 season. Harland assisted the Air Force in recovering a B-52, along with two surviving crewmen and the bodies of three others, after the bomber crashed in Savage River State Forest in Maryland in January 1964. He received letters of commendation from Air Force Gens. Curtis Le May and Thomas Power. Upon learning of the crash, Harland immediately organized a search and rescue party, made his home available to the operation's directors, and used his superior knowledge of the area to materially contribute to the success of the operation. Harland was promoted to regional law enforcement fire control officer in Allegany County in 1967; he retired from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources in 1980, after which he operated a Christmas tree farm.

Warren Webb (Cave Junction '54)

Warren, 77, died Feb. 28, 2012, in Lebanon, Oregon. He attended Oregon State University, where he received bachelor's degrees in Business and Forestry, including a doctorate in the latter. Warren jumped from Cave Junction during 1954-56, Redding in 1957 and 1959-61, and Fairbanks in 1962. He went on to teach and perform research in the fields of forestry and microclimatology at Oregon State, including a year's sabbatical in New Zealand. In the 1990s, Warren planted and managed an apple orchard on the banks of the Luckiamute River in Oregon.

William "Bill" Thompson (McCall '58)

Bill, 71, died March 14, 2012, in Ogden, Utah. He earned a bachelor's degree in Forestry at the University of Idaho before embarking on a 36-year career with

the U.S. Forest Service. Bill was also the State of Utah's off-road vehicle coordinator for 11 years. He was an excellent athlete who enjoyed competitive skiing in high school along with ATVs and motorcycles. Bill jumped at McCall from 1958 through 1962.

Lyle H. Brown (Missoula '54)

Lyle died March 13, 2012, after a long battle with cancer. Lyle jumped at Grangeville 1954-56, West Yellowstone in 1957 and Missoula 1960-63.

Parley E. "Bill" Cherry (Missoula '47)

Bill died March 17, 2012. He graduated from the University of Idaho and lived in the Denver area from 1960 until his death. Bill served in WWII and Vietnam and was a member of the Colorado Air National Guard. He retired from the military in 1985 as a Lt. Colonel in the Air Force. After his rookie year in Missoula, Bill jumped at Idaho City for the 1947-48 seasons.

Mark Hentze (Redmond '00)

Mark, 37, died March 6, 2012, when he drowned in a flash flood on the Santo Domingo River in the South American nation of Colombia. He graduated from Eastern Oregon University in 1999, and while studying he worked as a Forest Service seasonal firefighter. Mark jumped from Redmond from 2000 through 2011. He was also a freelance writer and photographer and had made kayaking and photography expeditions around the globe. He first traveled to Colombia in 2005, returning every year thereafter to explore and document rivers for the book *Colombia Whitewater*, which he co-authored with Aaron Rettig. 🙏

NSA Good Samaritan Fund Contributions

Contributions since the previous publication of donors, April 2012

<u>Donor</u>	<u>In Memory/Honor of</u>
Squad VI.....	Bert Tanner (MSO-68)
Roland "Andy" Anderson (MSO-52).....	Jack Wall (MSO-48)
Roland "Andy" Anderson (MSO-52).....	Lyle Brown (MSO-48)

Total funds disbursed to smokejumpers and families since 2004—\$15,800

**Mail your Good Samaritan Fund contributions to:
Chuck Sheley, 10 Judy Ln., Chico, CA 95926**

Patagonia And Machu Picchu Volunteering – Give A Little ...Get A Lot

by Gene Zimmerman

Like many couples, my wife and I had visions of some traveling when I retired. But iconic destinations like Patagonia and Machu Picchu were not on our minds. Nonetheless, there we were at Los Angeles International Airport, headed for Patagonia.

We were filled with anticipation and excitement as we met the other volunteers we would be with for the next two weeks. Punta Arenas – the southern-most commercial airport in South America – here we come!!

Let me back up. I spent 44 years with the Forest Service, finishing up in Southern California, but having worked mostly in the Northwest. So volunteering was not new to me, but I was usually on the receiving end ... other folks volunteering to help me manage the lands for which I was responsible.

As a result of seeing literally thousands of people volunteer on public lands, I felt it was my responsibility to do the same after retiring. But I thought it would be on forests and parks in the U.S.

This is where Rich Tobin came in. Rich was working on the Los Padres National Forest, but had been to Patagonia and had seen what terrible condition the trails were in, and how poorly equipped the few local rangers were to deal with the situation. After consultation with the management of Torres del Paine National Park in Chile, he went to work, on his own time and nickel, to mount an expedition of volunteers from the U.S. to “help out.”

He asked my wife, Anne, and me to come along and help out. We agreed on one condition – that I only had to perform trail maintenance ... no leadership “stuff.”

So, about 24 hours after meeting the other volunteers, we were aboard a plane looking at the craggy mountains and astonishingly huge ice fields of Patagonia from about 35,000 feet above. Truly one of those “once-in-a-lifetime” moments to remember. Soon we were settling in at the new, modern-style hostel Refugio Grande, looking up at a towering peak that has been climbed only twice. We were in the park!

We soon discovered what Rich had experienced ... clearly, the increasing visitation had outpaced Chile’s ability to protect what many believe to be one of the

world’s greatest wilderness areas. They needed our help. They need YOUR help, but more on that later ...

Let me share a long quote from Chris Braunlich, a volunteer in March 2007: “Our first trip proved to be everything we hoped for and more. Torres del Paine is magnificent, which is why it is a UNESCO World Heritage site as well as a sister park to Yosemite National Park. Our lack of experience with repairing trails was not a problem because ConservationVIP started the program by training us to handle the required tools safely, and then they taught us the basic trail maintenance techniques and supervised our work.

“The park’s trails were definitely in need of repair, but it was very rewarding to see the amount of trail improvement which a group of people could accomplish in such a short time, as well as to realize how appreciative the park staff was to have this group of foreigners come such a long way to help them.

“We found our fellow volunteers to be interesting, enthusiastic, and shared with us a real appreciation of the beauty of the park and the excitement of seeing condors, guanacos, and so much more. Finally, like many of the other volunteers, we took advantage of being in Chile to explore Argentine Patagonia as well as other parts of Chile before returning home.”

(Chris has since joined the board of directors of ConservationVIP.)

Towards the end of this trip, Rich engaged me and two others in a conversation that resulted in the formation of Conservation Volunteers International Program – www.conservationvip.org – a 501(c)(3) non-profit headquartered in Briones, Calif. We are dedicated to the conservation and preservation of some of the world’s greatest landscapes and cultural sites.

ConservationVIP also organizes and leads trips to Machu Picchu – one of the Seven New Wonders of the World. We have been given the keys to the City of Machu Picchu by Mayor Edgar Miranda for our efforts to protect the Sacred City of Machu Picchu. In addition, we received the Sons of the Sun Medallion, Machu Picchu’s highest award for community service.

ConservationVIP is the only volunteer organization allowed to work within the Sacred City. More work is urgently needed because of the annual influx of tour-

ists to the famed Inca citadel may prompt UNESCO to add the jungle-shrouded ruins to its list of endangered World Heritage Sites.

We provide opportunities for ordinary citizens to get their hands dirty doing extraordinary volunteer services. We engage others – local park rangers and managers, local government, other non-profits, businesses, academia and others – in our work. Working together, we repair trails, restore archaeological sites, replant vegetation, protect fish and wildlife, encourage community support, and learn from each other.

We make a difference in our world. Remember when I mentioned that YOU could be part of the solution? This IS that opportunity.

Our work is just beginning. This year we have already led a trip to Machu Picchu, with two more scheduled. In addition, we are leading two trips to Yosemite and an early December trip to Torres del Paine. Come join us. Because we are a non-profit, you

may be able to claim your expenses as a tax-deductable donation to ConservationVIP.

In addition, if you participate in a South American trip, ConservationVIP will donate \$100 in your name to the non-profit of your choice. The same applies to your spouse and/or travel companions.

REI Adventures, recently named one of the top ten “Best Adventure Travel Companies on Earth” by National Geographic Adventure Magazine, is co-sponsoring the expedition. If you are interested in any of our trips, contact ConservationVIP at info@conservationvip.org. Please see www.conservationvip.org and www.reiadventures.com for more information.

Oh ... did I mention that Chilean wine is very good and quite inexpensive?

(Gene Zimmerman is a retired forest supervisor, San Bernardino National Forest, and board member, Conservation Volunteers International Program.) 🐼

BOOK REVIEW

THE CUSTODY OF SHA-ASH'GAZ

by Milt Knuckles (Missoula '61)
Lt. (J.G.) Pauline “Tinker” Bell is the U.S. Navy’s first female operational combat fighter pilot in this story, authored by Gary Watts (MYC-64). After finishing her training, she is flown to Hong Kong to join an already-deployed squadron aboard the USS Carl Vinson.

Upon arriving in Hong Kong she is assigned to a JAG investigation into the murder of a local prostitute; a Navy sailor is the main suspect in the case.

Pauline, a local defense attorney and two NIS agents begin their in-depth investigation. They suspect that the accused sailor is innocent and that one of his buddies is guilty.

The logistics between Hong Kong and her takeoff and landing training aboard the USS Carl Vinson becomes a perplexing situation for Tinker. She is also staggered by thoughts of Lt. Jason “Jay Bird” Pierce, her former

instructor pilot and boyfriend, and by the sexual harassment she encounters at the pilots’ social events.

Things get interesting when one of Tinker’s F-14 divisions lead pilots shoots down an Iran Air 737. The ensuing air battle finds “Tinker” and “Jay Bird” in the air at the same time. Tinker is able to display her skills as a fighter pilot and gains the respect she desperately seeks.

The JAG investigation ends with a life-and-death struggle on Victoria Peak in Hong Kong.

The book is written from “Tinker” Bell’s perspective and should appeal to a broad range of readers, both male and female.

The author has included a glossary which will assist non-military readers in understanding military terms and acronyms.

Author Gary Watts was a McCall smokejumper in 1964 and 1965. After graduating from the University

of Utah, he qualified in and then flew F-8 Crusaders, F-4 Phantoms and F-14 Tomcats for 20 years, including combat tours in Vietnam 🐼.



The Custody of Sha-Ash'gaz by Gary M. Watts, 1st Book Library, 340 pages, ISBN 978-0759604155

Have Any Fire-Related Items From the 50s?

The Siskiyou Smokejumper Base Museum (SSBM) project is getting close to restoring this historic base. The Mess Hall, Administration Building and Parachute Loft are under long-term leases. Now you can help.

Any smokejumper/USFS-related items from the 40s-70s that might be hiding in your garage will help bring the base back to life. Don't let your heirs throw away that valued elephant bag and letdown rope after you go "Off The List."

We're looking for: radio gear (tube type from 50s); old sewing machines, elephant bags, oak crank telephones, old oak office chairs, and any firefighting and jumper-related equipment from the 50s/60s.

If you have anything that you feel would help this restoration effort, contact Chuck Sheley: (530) 893-0436, 10 Judy Ln., Chico CA 95926 or cnkgsheley@earthlink.net.

Get Smokejumper Magazine One Month Ahead Of The Rest

NSA members are signing up for the electronic version of *Smokejumper* that is delivered via email. It is sent in a PDF file that contains everything that is in the hardcopy issue.

The advantages are: early delivery (a month ahead of USPS), ease of storage, and NSA postal expense savings. If you like the hardcopy, you can download and print it at home.

NSA Director Fred Cooper (NCSB-62) says: "I will opt to have my magazines delivered electronically rather than via USPS to save us direct \$ in printing and mailing, not to mention your hand labor in processing. I think I mentioned in an earlier message that I'm having other magazines/newsletters delivered electronically. It takes less space to store them electronically and if I do want a hard copy, it is easy to print using the *Fast Draft printer option* which allows printing 48 pages in less than two minutes on my printer and uses a lot less ink."

If you want to be added to the electronic mailing, contact Editor Chuck Sheley (CJ-59): cnkgsheley@earthlink.net.

No matter which you choose, you'll love how it looks!



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LETTERING
AND TRIM**

Stylish and comfortable, our newest cap model has the features you love ... *at two sensational prices!*

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NSA Trail Crew



A Story of A Historical Structure And Persistence

by Richard L. Hilderbrand (Missoula '66)

The Glade Guard Station is one of the oldest structures in the San Juan National Forest. It was initially built as a log cabin in 1905 and replaced with a wood frame building and a barn in 1916.

The current site is the result of modification to the main guard station and the addition of a garage, meat house (now a tool shed), outhouse, and stonework by the Lone Dome Civilian Conservation Corps around 1934 and 1935.

The summer provides a spectacular setting in a glade surrounded by lakes, forests, wonderful views, and great habitat for the many animals of the area. The Glade Guard Station remains remarkably unchanged, a virtual time capsule harkening back to the early days when the lone district ranger was “guarding” the national forests.

The story of the renovation of the Glade Guard Station started long before a diverse group of volunteers appeared at the site to begin work. An old station in need of renovation was discussed as a possible project by National Smokejumper Association members in Colorado over several years.

Bill Ruskin (CJ-58) contacted Elaine Sherman, an archaeologist with the Dolores Public Lands Office in Dolores, Colo., in 2007 and found that, indeed, there was a Glade Guard Station (listed on the State Register of Historic Places) that was in need of restoration. Julie Coleman, an archaeologist and heritage team lead with the San Juan Public Lands Center in Durango, Colo., was soon added as a contact with the U.S. Forest Service.

The enthusiastic Coleman successfully located funding of about \$32,000. Thanks are due to the San Juan National Forest, Bacon Family Foundation and Ballantine Family Fund for the first year's funding that resulted in the preservation of the guard station.

The first year's session of the project was June 21-27, 2008. The project was described in the 2008 NSA Trail Maintenance Special Report.

To fully appreciate this project, one must understand the various tasks that were taking place. I served as squad leader and the other volunteers were

assigned to a crew – roofing, painting, carpentry, or foundation work. The ex-jumpers began to arrive June 21, 2009.

The first objective was to re-roof the guard station. The roofing crew immediately began the removal of the old, cedar shake shingles. This task was hampered by the extremely steep pitch of the roof and the absence of footholds, but went rather well and was accomplished by noon on June 23.

New plywood sheeting was applied and nailed securely, at which time we encountered the true nature of the task which we had accepted. The plywood was new, the sun was hot, and the adhesive on the back of the Grace ice and watershield membrane was extremely sticky – which meant that any time the adhesive touched the wood surface the membrane was stuck, immediately and permanently!

The resolution was for the work of applying the membrane to start in the cool of the early morning. The work schedule then began with reveille by a yodeler and the subsequent barking dogs at 5:45 a.m., followed by coffee/cake at 6:15, a 6:30 start, breakfast at 8 and coffee at 10.

The roof was all sealed with the Grace waterproof membrane. The remaining one-third of the shingles were completed later in the summer by Jason Chuiпка, Vince Macmillan, David Singer and Coleman.

The second objective was to prepare and paint the guard station. The NSA paint crew began the process of scraping, sanding and priming the siding. After the primer coat was applied, the filling of cracks and holes was a major task and required some 50 tubes of caulk and some carpentry work. The application of the first finish coat of paint was completed and the second coat initiated.

At that time, and fortunately for the crew, a professional painter came out from Cortez, Colo. with a paint sprayer and long paint wand. He completed the task in a much-shorter time than our roller method would have taken. The dry wood soaked up two coats of finish paint.

The wooden doors and window frames had deteriorated and windows were broken. The carpenters,

led by **Jimmie Dollard** (CJ-52), jumped into action and soon had doors and windows removed to start the renovation. Any rotten wood was removed and replaced.

Each opening was essentially a “custom fit” since each door and window had been hand-fitted at the time of construction. The south porch rail was repaired, essentially back to the original, and then painted to match the building.

Other tasks that were completed in 2008 were the tuck-pointing of the chimney, filling of cracks in the stone/concrete foundation, replacement of screens over the crawl space and vent openings, and grading of the area around the main structure to allow water to drain. Of significance is that a new, telescoping flagpole – donated by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of Cortez – was installed on the same site as the flagpole that had been placed in CCC days.

The second year of the project was June 5-11, 2009, and was covered in the 2009 NSA Trail Maintenance Special Report. The objectives were to re-roof the garage, prepare and paint the siding on the garage, re-install windows in the main residence, restore the floor and door, and re-roof the meat house/tool shed.

Coleman assisted in finding the funding, organization and completion of the actual repair and renovation. Thanks are due to the San Juan Public Lands Center in Durango, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the Dominguez Archaeological Research Group for providing funding for the second year project.

Elevated Fine Foods continued its previous tradition of providing exceptional gourmet food for the volunteers.

The roofing crew went to work immediately. With experience obtained roofing the residence in the previous year, a smaller roof with less pitch, and a batch of shingles that were wider than tongue depressors, the roofing job was completed in a matter of a couple of days.

New roofing was placed on the meat house and work started on the outhouse but was not completed. Work on the meat house included removal and replacement of rotten floor joists, removal and replacement of old and rotten floorboards, and repair of the door to strengthen and refit to allow complete closure.

The garage siding was scraped, sanded, primed, filled and painted. The garage doors were repaired, realigned and painted. An additional finish coat of paint was applied to the main residence.

Jimmie Dollard and **Russell Heaton** (Associate) took on the difficult challenge of restoring the rail-

ing on the west side of the porch that was missing. The south side railing had been repaired in the first year. The missing west side was rebuilt to replicate the original rail with similar balusters and was re-fastened to the concrete of the porch itself.

Herm Ball (MSO-50) was named as “paint meister” for his work preparing and painting the garage and awarded a plaque shaped by the carpenters in their usual “get’r done” mode. Also, at week’s end, the forest treated volunteers to a barbecue attended by Dolores District personnel, including District Ranger Steve Beverlin.

The NSA did not participate in the Glade Project in 2010. Coleman and the San Juan Public Lands Center continued their work. Funds were obtained to install solar power, test the well, and set a solar pump to provide water to the site. Water was piped to various locations around the site, including the barn, and concrete pads were installed to prevent erosion at the faucet sites. In addition, a propane tank was set to provide gas to the residence, and a septic system/leach field installed.

The fourth year of the renovation took place June 5-10, 2011. Following a year of rest, enthusiasm was restored and the NSA volunteers were prepared to take on the restoration of the barn at the Glade site.

The fourth-year project objectives were to re-roof the barn with cedar shakes, prepare and stain the siding, and build a corral. I continued as squad leader and coordinated the assignments to the work crews.

Singer again provided materials, support and tools necessary to complete the work. He also acted as consultant on the restoration activities and assisted in achieving the work objectives. Sherman and Coleman provided research on the location and type of corral that would have existed, since there were no remnants of the corral.

Thanks are due the San Juan Public Lands Center in Durango and the Dominguez Archaeological Research Group for providing funding for the work on the barn. Elevated Fine Foods again provided exceptional gourmet food, a campfire for evening social events, and a general contribution to the good morale of the team.

The first item was to initiate work on the roof of the barn. The old shingles were removed and old nails pulled. The old sheathing boards were re-nailed and the work started on the application of the tarpaper underlayment. Cedar shake shingles were nailed and the job completed in record time – the previous experience with roofing contributing to the successful completion of the task.

As work was being completed on the roof, the

preparation of the siding for staining was underway and the stain applied. A second coat was applied for additional preservation.

The most challenging job was the completion of the corral. The logs provided were 6-10 inches in diameter and about 15 feet long, and a challenge to even move around. A powered auger was available and used to dig the post holes more than two feet deep.

Two vertical posts were set side by side about six inches apart at each section length of the fence. The rails were then dropped between the vertical posts, alternating direction. On the next to last day of the project, Ruskin and several others were clearing drainage and discovered large quarried stone work installed by the CCC as culverts and drainage at two different locations on the site.

The stonework was still in remarkably good shape, but years of dirt and rock had accumulated and needed to be removed. With the completion of the cleaning of the drainage, work was finished, the work site was cleaned, tools put away or returned, and the Glade

Project came to an end for the NSA, but the story of the Glade continues.

Continuation

The Dominguez Archaeological Research Group was able to complete the rehabilitation of the Glade Guard Station in July 2011 with funds from the State Historical Fund, the Gates Family Fund, and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds.

The interior of the guard station residence was restored to its original condition – floor joists reinforced, French drainage installed, walls replastered, floors re-finished, bathroom and kitchen re-plumbed, and solar electricity, propane refrigerator and stove installed.

The guard station was furnished, including the original table and benches in the kitchen. The station will be ready for visitors this summer; reservations will likely be handled through the private, nonprofit Jersey Jim Foundation, which also rents out the Jersey Jim Fire Lookout Tower northeast of Mancos. 🦋

Long Delay Finally Ends As Crew Completes Bridge



By Bob Whaley (Missoula '56)



It is done. The Hang Tough “Bridge,” after six years of delay, is finally complete. It should have been called the Hang Fire, since we’ve been waiting so long to get it done.

The usual suspects, **Jim (Doc) Phillips** (MSO-67), **Gary Wyermann** (MSO-63), **John B. (JB) Stone** (MSO-56), **Larry Nelsen** (MSO-56), **Bob Schumacher** (MSO-59), **Dennis Pearson** (MSO-62) and **Jim Lee** (MSO-77) departed Elk Summit trail head 25 July with packer Jim Renshaw and his three trusted cohorts, Paul McConnell, chef Larry Cooper and Joe Robinson, for the 11-mile trek into the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness to “get ‘er done.”

It was actually a puncheon job with a bridge outcome (but I figure if I had advertised it as such, I would have been all alone) with sill logs, stringers, planks and rails.

Day two was engaged on selecting the right fir trees for the sill logs for each abutment of the bridge, and then finding the right trees in length and girth for the stringers. They were selected, felled, and summarily

stripped for the eventual movement and placement over the sills. Larry Cooper and his famous and trusted steed, the wonderful horse “BJ”, again accomplished the “mule skinning”. What a guy!

This is the third year Larry and “BJ” have come to our rescue in trying to manhandle freshly cut, long, wet, slippery and very heavy timbers into place. We all figure this team cut a whole day off the job, getting the product out of the timber, down to the creek site, and hauled into place.

On day two, Jim Renshaw and Joe Robinson, who proved a great help throughout the project, went all the way back to the trailhead and loaded up their stock with the planks, returning on day three. This allowed the job to continue and nearly finish on day four.

With the time saved, we scouted and cleared some blow down and snags on Trail No. 71 from the ridgeline above Hidden Lake down to within a mile and a half of Trail No. 50, the Colt Killed Trail from Cold Killed Cabin and trailhead. The following



L-R: Jim Lee (MSO-77), Bob Schumacher (MSO-59), Bob Whaley (MSO-56), Larry Nelsen (MSO-56), John B. (JB) Stone (MSO-56), Dennis Pearson (MSO-62), Gary Weyermann (MSO-63), Jim Phillips (MSO-67). (Courtesy G. Weyermann)

day, Trail No. 9 down to Hidden Lake was cleared, and the job at Hang Tough was concluded one day early for the departure back to Elk Summit trailhead Saturday.

Once again, we greatly appreciated the help from Jim “Beak” Beale, of Powell Ranger Station, in getting us started on the right foot and ensuring we were doing it right before he had to depart. This may be Jim’s last year with us, and he will be sorely missed. He has many arrows in his quiver.

The Idaho Back Country Horsemen’s Jim Renshaw and crew made the venture professional, safe, and as entertaining as ever. The “Renshaw Roundup” on several occasions was always an attention-getter and, of course, the fare provided by Larry “Chef” Cooper, with the help of Paul McConnell, was always appreciated, especially the Dutch oven delights that he so expertly delivers that make our fare a feast.

Renshaw caught fresh trout from Hidden Lake, rolled it in corn meal, and cooked it in bacon fat on morning four which was a rare feast!

The expertise of the crew with all their varied talents once again demonstrated that they were the right picks for the job. The engineers in Gary and Bob, the bulls of the woods in Phillips and Lee, and all-around standouts in work ethic and expertise in Larry, Dennis, and JB proved to be the right team for the right job.

Entertainment was nightly, reliving the highs and lows of the day as we recounted how to do it better next time, particularly when it came to dropping a tree on Dennis’ backpack and destroying his very nice camera ... but sparing his real cheap sunglasses! Go figure.

Renshaw and Doc Phillips also provided entertainment around the campfire with our annual favorite cowboy poetry readings, which is always a delight.

The project concluded on Saturday, July 30, with everyone gathering at the trailhead for our final loading and “goodbyes” for another year. Once again our greeters were there as Jerry Power

and Lonnie Rogers (a former squadron mate of mine) provided us with libations to quench the trail dust collected on the long trek out, which always seems somewhat longer coming out than going in.

So another successful year in God’s country was concluded. It was good to finally meet Linda Cooper, Larry’s wife, when we all met at the trailhead on the way in. Linda has been faithfully helping be the liaison “go-to gal” for our project with those involved in the packers’ efforts, which is so critical for the proper coordination of these projects. Thanks, Linda.

Once again it was a pleasure working with Katie Knotec from Powell Ranger Station and Rob Mason and the Selway Bitterroot Foundation in putting together this long, overdue effort. Can’t wait to see what’s in store for next year and, God willing, we’ll all be there.

Thanks, crew! 🍷

Corral, Storage Shed Highlight North Fork Project



By Doug Wamsley (Missoula '65)

The North Fork Corral Project was for the Seeley Lake Ranger District on the Lolo National Forest. The mission was to replace corral fence rails at the site's existing corral and to complete a "built-from-scratch" feed storage shed adjacent to the corral.

The site is seven miles north of the North Fork of the Blackfoot River trailhead on the Hobnail Tom Trail. It is a beautiful corner of the Scapegoat Wilderness area with a cabin more than 90 years old next to the North Fork of the Blackfoot.

The crew consisted of some trail project regulars: **Monroe "Spud" DeJarnette** (MSO-49), **Jim Snapp** (Missoula '65), **Wendy Kamm** (MSO-85), master chef **Chuck Corrigan** (Associate) and me. We were joined by three NSA trail project first-timers: **Mike Prezeau** (MSO-67), **Bill Hutcheson** (MSO-74) and **Jack Kirkendall** (MSO-74). Our U.S. Forest Service straw boss was Jake Long from the Seeley Lake District, a young guy who is an old hand at coordinating NSA projects

on the district – that speaks volumes about his good humor and patience.

The project began July 17 when we met at the trailhead and discovered to our delight that our packers were there early. After helping to load the string (mostly by staying out of the way), we began our seven-mile hike on the Hobnail Tom Trail. The trail was well-maintained and is a very popular trail for packers.

Our oldest and youngest members, Spud and Wendy, decided to start ahead of the rest of us because they weren't going to walk too fast. They were waiting for the rest of us when we arrived at the cabin.

The area around the cabin was a very nice, level spot with plenty of good tent sites and easy access to the river.

Work began the next morning with the crew dividing between the two main tasks. Prezeau and Hutcheson volunteered to work with Long on the storage shed using materials that Jake had packed in the previous week.



L-R: Mike Prezeau (MSO-67), Bill Hutchinson (MSO-74), Doug Wamsley (MSO-65), Monroe "Spud" DeJarnette (MSO-49), Wendy Kamm (MSO-85), Chuck Corrigan (Associate), Jim Snapp (MSO-65) (Courtesy J Snapp)

The rest of us trooped off to the nearby Dry Creek to harvest lodge pole pines for the new corral rails.

It was decided we would need 82 of the 14-footers cut, hauled, and peeled. Whoever did the counting (there were no confessions) apparently didn't realize that we were replacing a four-rail fence with a three-railer. This oversight was, of course, discovered after the poles were cut, hauled and peeled.

Careful planning is everything on these projects! Oh, well – Jake now has 30 poles peeled and neatly stacked for future projects.

Hauling the poles almost a half-mile from the harvesting site to the corral promised to be a long and painful process. However, Corrigan didn't think so. Chuck is not only a very good cook, but also an accomplished packer who arrived at the project with two saddle horses and Smokey, his wonderful pack horse.

Smokey had never skidded logs before but caught on right away. With Chuck leading on one of the saddle horses, Smokey was soon making 14-minute round trips with two logs on each return.

In the midst of the pole harvesting, we were

joined by **Jim Phillips** (MSO-67), NSA Trail operations director. He stayed with us for two days and cheerfully admitted to being a spy sent by the NSA Trails Team, but we got some good work out of him anyway.

After lunch on the first day, Spud volunteered to take over peeling logs at the corral site. As the pole project progressed, Kirkendall and Kamm joined him. The bark flew!

While all of this was going on, Mike, Bill and Jake made amazing progress on the 8-by-12, 10-foot-high feed shed. By Friday night the shed was virtually complete, needing only some missing door hardware, and there were 51 new corral rails nailed up. The extra materials were stowed and the site cleaned up.

Saturday was pack-out day, and the district's contract packer, Ray Woodside, arrived promptly at 8 a.m. Ray has packed other NSA crews, including the crew of **Art Jukkala** (MSO-56) crew on the first NSA Trail project in 1999. After a farewell lunch at Trixie's in Ovando, Mont., we all headed home, having agreed it was a good project, and we all plan to be back for more in 2012. 🐾

Trails Program Seeks Grant Writer

Reports to/coordinates with: Finance Director Chuck Fricke – frickech@aol.com

1.0 MAJOR FUNCTION AND PURPOSE

- Responsible to research grant programs, write or assist in writing funding applications, coordinate and lead the activities of a grant program.
- Follow the process through to write project completions reports, as needed, to funding agencies.

2.0 ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS

- Collaborate with NSA Trails officers, board of directors, and membership, to identify and prioritize program opportunities and needs.
- Provide assistance in resolving issues and conflicts with funding agencies.
- Serve as liaison between the NSA and outside funding entities and groups.
- Track revenues, expenditures, and project status to ensure proper expenditures are made for all grant projects.

3.0 EXPECTED QUALIFICATIONS

- Strong skills in written and verbal communications.
- Grant writing experience, or equivalent education and/or experience that provides the skills and knowledge

to perform the tasks.

4.0 KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- Exhibit strong organizational skills.
- Has the time and energy to meet deadlines for grant opportunities.
- Ability to take initiative to utilize innovative techniques and ingenuity in preparing grant applications.
- Excellent interpersonal skills.
- Willing to travel when application protocol and organizational business requires personal attendance.
- Ability to participate as a team player.
- Ability to read, interpret and apply laws, rules and regulations.
- Ability to plan, prioritize and coordinate multiple projects.
- Ability to gather, analyze and evaluate a variety of data.

5.0 WORK ENVIRONMENT

- Position holder will provide his/her own work environment, set his/her own hours and utilize his/her own equipment. If you are interested contact **Jim Phillips** (MSO-67): jimphillips@bresnan.net 1709 9th Avenue, Helena, MT 59601 406-443-2052 🐾

THE VIEW FROM OUTSIDE THE FENCE



by **Chris Sorensen**
(Associate)

BACK IN MARCH, our colleague, Bill Gabbert, who runs the website *wildfiretoday.com*, posted an excerpt from an interview in the NFPA Fire Journal with the new administrator of the United States Fire Administration, Ernest “Ernie” Mitchell Jr.

Read Bill’s post at: <http://wildfiretoday.com/2012/03/09/us-fire-administration-seeks-to-share-command-of-fires-with-forest-service>.

Here’s an excerpt from the interview in the NFPA Fire Journal:

“I’d been in and around the fire service for about 40 years, and I thought I had a pretty good idea of what the fire administration did, but I’m becoming more aware of its potential role within FEMA.

“With our increased awareness of the need to be prepared to respond to all hazards, and with FEMA being as active as it is, USFA is developing a larger role in this area.

“For instance, we’re exploring the idea of the fire administration and some of our partners getting together to establish cadres of

firefighting personnel to be deployed to large disasters as needed. It’s been done in the past, but there hasn’t been an organized effort to plan for it in advance.

“Similarly, we’re looking at sharing the command function for certain wildland fire events with the U.S. Forest Service, which has typically held command itself. We’re looking at sharing that when the incident is more structural. In some cases, we might be in command. It’s about coordinating efforts with other fire service partners.”

Read the article’s full text at: http://www.nfpa.org/publicJournalDetail.asp?categoryID=&itemID=55616&src=NFPAJournal&cookie_test=1.

So the United States Fire Administration wants to share “command functions” when a fire occurs in the wildland-urban interface. Most of the federal incident management teams are interagency already, aren’t they? I don’t really know what the USFA hopes to bring to the table that isn’t already in place.

Most of the wildland-urban interface fires that have risen to a Type I or Type II incident have occurred in half a dozen California counties. Those jurisdictions include some of the best municipal fire departments in the country, all of whom are experts at managing large all-hazard incidents.

Do you really think the Los Angeles City or the Los Angeles County Fire Department or the Orange County Fire Authority needs the help of the USFA to manage a wildland-urban interface fire? I don’t have a good

feel for how or if FEMA has improved post-Katrina, but most wildland-urban interface fires don’t last more than a couple of operational periods.

A tip of the hard hat to **Travis Dotson** (MYC-07), the 2011 recipient of the national Paul Gleason Lead By Example Award in the Motivation and Vision category. The Wildland Fire Leadership Development Subcommittee of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group sponsors the award.

Travis is currently an analyst with the Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Center. Among the projects in which Travis has been involved are the development of the Incident Response Pocket Guide (IRPG), Dutch Creek Response Protocol insert, involvement with the YouTube video “We Will Never Forget You: Remembering Andy Palmer,” NWCG committee chairman of the FireFit Program, continued involvement in Facilitated Learning Analysis and Lessons Learned Review opportunities, and development of mentoring and student goal-tracking programs related to the Fire Use Training Academy.

I have been intending to visit the bases I have not visited previously and rumored base closings have made that goal more urgent. If you are a base manager and receive an email from me, I would appreciate a reply. You can be assured I won’t drop in unannounced during a busy operations or training. I will work around your schedule.

As always, work safely. Re-

NSA Second Vietnam Tour Set for February 2013

by **Chuck Sheley** (Cave Junction '59)

In January 2007, **Fred Rohrbach** (MSO-65) led a group of over 30 NSA members, wives and friends on one of the most unforgettable travel experiences in which I have ever taken part. The 11-day adventure covered the southern portion of the country, starting in Ho-Chi-Minh City (Saigon). The cost of the trip included our stay in *five-star hotels, three meals a day, tour guides, transportation and travel insurance*. The tour guides and Fred handled everything. Our economy plus seating on EVA airlines was comparable to first class on other U.S. airlines. You could not ask for better.

This time we will see the northern part of the country. NSA Director, **Bob Dayton** (MSO-65) who has traveled SEA extensively, says: "You will love the north. The scenery is spectacular! I've posted numerous photos on my facebook page." Bob and his wife have already indicated they will go. The same for myself and my wife, K.G.

Fred Rohrbach is currently a businessman nearing 40 years experience in Asia and Vietnam. He says this trip will take about 12 days, leaving from Seattle, flying to Hanoi and back to Seattle. Among other places, we would visit three main spots in the north: Hanoi; Sapa; an old, French hill-station in the Tonkinese alps sitting at 4900 feet near the Chinese border; and Ha Long Bay on the gulf of Tonkin and one of the wonders of the world with hundreds of limestone karsts rising from the sea.

The price per person for this 12-day trip (double occupancy) will be \$3,756, which is an excellent value *as it includes everything* (airfare, all meals, 5-star hotels, all ground transportation, tour guides). Single occupancy adds on \$798. The group needs a minimum of twenty, and we will close it out at thirty. A deposit (to be determined later) will be needed. My contact information is on page three of each issue. Let me know if you are interested.

One of the great things about Vietnam is that it is a

fairly inexpensive place to enjoy. The difference in cost between SE Asia and Europe is significant.

Itinerary With Comments from Bob Dayton

Day #1 Depart Seattle on EVA Air approximately 1:00 am. Change planes in Taipei before arriving in Hanoi. I have flown EVA many times and it is a wonderful airline.

Day #2 & #3 Arrive Hanoi mid-day where we will spend two nights at Hanoi Hilton Opera Hotel. Hanoi is full of great destination sites. It is a good walking city.

Day #4 Drive to Haiphong and take hydrofoil to Cat Ba Island and Sunrise Resort.

Day 5 Take five-hour tour of Halong Bay.

Day 6 Overnight train to Sapa (sits over 5,000'). The train provides European-type coaches for sleeping. Arrive early on day seven.

Days #7, #8, & #9 Sapa, Vietnam. Quite certain we will be staying at the Victoria Hotel. Encourage you to Google Sapa. I've been to Sapa twice. One of the top scenic areas in Vietnam. I can send photos if you would like.

Day #10 Overnight train back to Hanoi.

Day #11 Arrive Hanoi early morning. Stay at Hilton Hotel.

Day #12 Depart mid-day for the states. Arrive in Seattle on the same day (remember, you gain a day) approximately 5:30 pm.

Fred Rohrbach: "Everything on this trip is top of the line." 🕯

The U.S. Forest Circus

by Dirk Chandler (Redding '64)

The Forest Service has not seemed to learn a lot
when it comes to cutting the cost.
Quality control is certainly not its goal
and the taxpayers cover the loss.

It sets priorities especially for minorities
for which it can't maintain.
And it's no sure bet that the people it gets
are of a quality we want to retain.

The irony of it all is that to answer the call
women were put on the force.
This isn't so bad but it became rather sad
that there was never any recourse.

And with the consent decree the men will flee
because justice is now at hand.
It's a consent born true and choke 'til you're blue
but women will soon manage the land.

And it's such a miff when you talk about RIF
which means a reduction in force.
If the money doesn't come you might be the one
to be reduced of course.

A quota for lumber we try to encumber
and cut the forests bare.
And WWPA* at large is basically in charge
so why in hell should we care?

The terrible waste of money is not very funny
within the Forest Service.
And the loss that we incur is certainly sure
to make the public nervous.

And don't worry at all if the government should fall
just because it's a little lax.
In just a short while we'll show our true style
and just up the timber tax.

Now morale is an item that goes on ad infinitum
and management won't get involved.
Management lacks class and on this item they'll pass
and nothing will ever get solved.

The organization keeps straining to give us useless training
which to some is very subjective.
With an incompetent staff it becomes quite a laugh
to teach us "Management by Objectives."

Bad management has a trend that never seems to end
and generally it gets very confusing.
The employees take the brunt from the foreman to the grunt
and it is seldom very amusing.

The performance rating is an extreme undertaking
that is only relished by some.
And the old basic rule that generally holds true
is the old screw in the thumb.

The wages we receive are sometimes hard to believe
and it barely keeps us alive.
To get to the gist we're at the bottom of the list
and it's very difficult to survive.

The health benefit association is a misappropriation
and it really isn't much of a plan.
You become deeper in debt the sicker you get
so you'd better stay well if you can.

The people running computers are real troubleshooters
and are creative without a doubt.
And you become quite smitten by what's been written
mostly garbage in and garbage out.

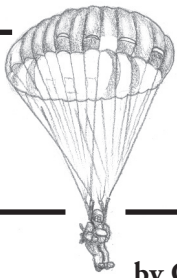
It is utterly absurd to put into words
just how the Forest Service works.
It is mass orientation in demoralization
from the head man down to the clerks.

And it's a downright shame to put the blame
on people who give what they can.
They do their best while the welfarers rest
so why should they give a damn?

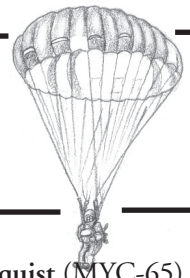
For value received you had better believe
that some have given their best.
The good ones quit because they don't give a s---
and take a deserving rest.

**Western Wood Products Association*

*Dirk wrote this poem in agreement with Les Joslin's article
"Lassitude and Ineptitude in the US Forest Service" published
in the January 2012 issue of "Smokejumper." (Ed.)*



ODDS AND ENDS



by **Chuck Sheley**

Congratulations and thanks to **Gil Boundy** (CJ-62), **Cameron Lawrence** (GAC-91) and **Jim Fritz** (CJ-59), who just became our latest **Life Members**.

The NSA wants to thank **Bob Dayton** (MSO-65), **John Parkes** (MYC-57), **Jim Murphy** (MSO-48) and **John E. "Jack" Lewis** (ANC-63) for their contributions to our annual fund. The April issue went to print before the donations arrived.

Roger Savage (MSO-57): "R1 and R3 Fire Records are currently available via the internet.

If you jumped out of Region One (Missoula, Grangeville, West Yellowstone) or Region Three (New Mexico) between 1940 and 1972 your computerized fire records are available via the internet. These records include the date, forest, names of the fire, location, aircraft type, spotter, check spotter and names of other jumpers on the fire with you. To request a copy of your fire records, E-mail your request to jumperfires@aol.com. Records will be sent as an Excel file. If you don't have Excel in your computer, request a PDF file and if you don't have a computer, arrangements can be made to send you a hard copy." Roger can be contacted at: Mtsavages@aol.com or 614 Spanish Peaks Dr., Missoula, MT, 59803.

Gary Watts (MYC-64): "Hey, Chuck, I have a few items for your 'It's a Small World' file:

- 1) I was the Operations Officer of an F-14 squadron (about 1981) tossing back a couple of cold ones at the NAS Miramar Officer's Club in San Diego when I ran into my NED-mate and good buddy **Tom Chiprany** (MYC-64), who was the XO of an E-2 Squadron at Miramar. (Tom died of a cerebral hemorrhage in 1998). On that same night, I saw **Neil Satterwhite** (MYC-65) sitting in the lobby and stopped to talk to him. We talked about the Tet Offensive where he was seriously wounded. (Neil died in Pocatello, Idaho, in 2011).
- 2) Several months later, the air wing deployed aboard USS Kitty Hawk. There I ran into **Bill Strawn** (MYC-61) who was a pilot in the ship's helicopter detachment.
- 3) I was a captain for US Airways (about 2001) and was talking to another US Airways captain in a jetway at the Pittsburgh International Airport when I realized that captain looked familiar. Turns



out it was **Bruce Granquist** (MYC-65). Bruce then recruited me into the NSA. 4) I'm retired now, living near the small, Southern California mountain village of Julian (town population: 300, one 4-way stop sign) and have run into and formed friendships with two smokejumpers: **Monti Leraas** (MSO-60) and **Jerry Brownwood** (CJ-66). I've been to Disneyland, rode the ride, hate the song, but it really is a 'Small, Small World.' Bravo Zulu."

Missoulian February 13, 2012: "Republican **Roy Morton** (MSO-67) of Corvallis filed to run in the governor's primary race, which includes seven GOP candidates. A single father of two children, Morton has lived in Montana for 40 years. He worked for the government for six years, working on trail maintenance crews in Riggins, Idaho, on hotshot crews in Montana and California, and as a smokejumper stationed in Missoula. His work in the private sector has been predominantly in the logging industry; he co-owned M&K Logging. Morton currently owns Roy's Tree Landscape and Handyman Service. This is Morton's first run for political office."

Martha Gonzalez, daughter of **Richard "Paperlegs" Peterson** (MYC-47): "Thanks for the PDF. It is an excellent way to receive the magazine. Your article on the 'Demise of NSA' was quite interesting. The archiving that the group has accomplished is admirable. Sad to see the end of the era, but I do believe you are right in your assessment."

The "PDF" that Martha is referring to is the electronic version of the magazine that I'm now sending to our members who live outside the U.S. and also to a few of our members who prefer to get their magazine in this form. Martha lives in the Netherlands and was able to receive her April issue of *Smokejumper* yesterday (March 2, 2012), even before the first printed edition had gotten off the press. If you would like to be added to the electronic mailing list, just let me know. I can also send you the hardcopy in addition to the electronic mailing.

More on the electronic version of the magazine from **Fred Cooper** (NCSB-62): "My AOL account would not let me open/save a mim file. Thanks to a geeky friend, he advised that I could probably open it using my G-mail

account. It worked. It is wonderful———

I will opt to have my magazines delivered electronically, rather than via USPS, to save us direct \$ in printing and mailing, not to mention your hand labor in processing. I think I mentioned in an earlier message that I'm having other magazines/newsletters delivered electronically. It takes less space to store them electronically, and if I do want a hard copy it is easy to print by using the Fast Draft printer option, which allows printing 48 pages in less than two minutes on my printer and uses a lot less ink."

Comment from a member on editorial and President's Message from April issue: "Regarding your recent comments and those of John Twiss about the contributions former smokejumpers have made, not only to the Forest Service, but to the nation, I could not agree more. One of the pleasures of NSA volunteer crews and reunions today is seeing the outstanding career successes in so many endeavors of people I knew 50 years ago. **Fred Brauer** (MSO-41) was off the project before my time, but I understand he was very proud of his jumper's achievements in so many fields. It struck me that the smokejumper bases are exactly like our national military academies. Few people have thought this out, but the career successes and contributions to the nation of West Pointers and other academy graduates have been as great outside our military services as inside. And, likewise, jumpers. Jumping certainly put my life on the right track."

Mark Corbet (LGD-74): "I have some fairly complete records of the Region 8 fire jumps made in 1976, the last season. For any jumpers who would be interested, I would be happy to look up details on any fire jumps they made there in 1976. I can give them a list of who jumped the fire with them as well as who spotted, aircraft flown, forest and district jumped, and usually the pilot's name. Could be interesting to some or useful for writing down grand memories. Contact me at: mcorbet97756@gmail.com."

Tom Butler (MSO-61) on **Don Brennan** (NCSB-54), who recently passed away: "I went to Fairbanks on the crew sent up for part of the 1962 season. I remember Don Brennan and think everyone thought he was an interesting and likeable character.

He supposedly jumped into the North Korean headquarters when he was 17 and, as I remember, he won a silver star. Don had a row of round scars across his upper stomach area from getting shot.

In Fairbanks that summer, there was some time spent cutting and piling brush in front of the loft. When we got off work in the evening, Don would go up to his room and sleep until about 8:30 p.m. and

then head for town, coming back in time for work each morning. We got a 15 or 20-minute break in mid morning and then back to the brushwork. I remember a few times someone would ask, "Where is Don?" as we started back to work. About that time, from out of sight and from under the brush pile, Don would crawl out ready to go back to work like the rest of us. Just trying to catch up on sleep. It looked like a tough road to some of us but guess he was just enjoying himself a little more than some of us could. Over the years some of us would talk about past jumpers who we'd worked with, and now and then his name would come up. We'd wondered about him and whether his hard living might have taken him out. But 10-12 years or so ago at a Redding reunion, I ran into him and we had a good visit. I was amazed, he looked in really good shape and healthy as a horse. I finally decided that he was just tougher than some of the rest of us. I suspect he was welcomed by the Lord."

Tommy Albert (CJ-64): "First, I want to congratulate you on the editorial. We have long discussed how there appears to be a lack of foresight in the Forest Service jumper organization. Unlike the past generations of jumpers, who primarily jumped during college and then moved up the ladder in management, the career smokejumpers may well be putting the nail in their own coffin.

I know that throughout my post-jumper career, I was always amazed at the levels of management the ex-jumpers achieved. I also knew the importance of having these people in upper management where the important decisions about the future of programs are determined.

The BLM jumpers seem to have bridged this dilemma and are still placing people into key management positions, and the health of their program reflects this. The helicopter types in the Forest Service have also moved up, and the health of their program also reflects this. The Forest Service jumper program, as viable as we know it is, seems to have to fight for everything they get, and that is directly the result of not placing people in the vital, key management positions.

As budgets shrink, the repercussions escalate rapidly, and programs that do not have support, where it counts, suffer. Once the door closes in the Regional Office and Washington Office conference rooms, those who are not represented lose out. Unfortunately, the grades, even at the top of the jumper organizations, do not reach into these conference rooms. I hope the 'Bro's' open their eyes and start encouraging people in their organization to take the

hard, but necessary step to hang up their harness and move up the ladder.

As a lifetime member of the NSA, I know how our organization strives to help promote smoke-jumping and have succeeded in doing so where we can. We will be even more successful if we have members who are on the 'inside.' I hope the current generation of jumpers start looking outside their tight, closed circle and join us in this effort."

(Tommy jumped seven years in Oregon and Alaska and ended his career as North Zone Aviation Manager, R-5, for the USFS.)

Charles "Smokey" Cranfill (RAC-66): "When I was a rookie in '66, the Redmond base was just a year old, and all of the RAC jumpers had a real sense of pride working under **Jim Allen**, **Al Boucher**, **Hal Weinmann**, **Tony Percival**, **Fred Cooper**, **David 'Skinny' Beals** and the rest of that excellent training crew. As a rookie, I couldn't hear enough of their jump experiences, and they were 'wild!' Those were the greatest summers for me, and the smokejumper experience greatly affected my 44-year federal conservation career afterwards. I didn't know about the NSA until a few years ago and have been a member since. It is great to read articles of you older jumpers, and I greatly admire ya for what ya had to endure. Of my 50 fire jumps, all but four were 'barn burners.' The four wilderness jumps I made with a partner were the best because we got to stay out longer. I've carried those memories with me all these years and wished I had the talent to write about them. Hope to see you at the RAC Reunion in September."

Keith Wolferman (MSO-91) in email to NSA President **John Twiss** (RAC-67): "I just wanted to drop you a line and pass on my appreciation to you and all the staff members of the NSA for your hard work. I just gave my annual speech regarding the NSA membership issue at our smokejumper refresher yesterday. I read **Chuck Sheley's** (CJ-59) editorial regarding aging members and dwindling numbers verbatim and left it at that. I didn't feel I could have put it any better, you could have heard a pin drop. Hopefully we will see some new members out of this. I reinforced the fact that rookies first year is free, so I hope that has not changed. Thanks again and know that though we are in the busiest part of our lives right now, we really do appreciate all of your efforts. I thought **Jeff R. Davis's** (MSO-57) article on the history of jump equipment was great!"

George Straw (CJ-63): "Chuck, good editorial on the future of the organization. As we age our numbers, as you well noted, will just keep dropping until we become just another history lesson like the veter-

ans of WWII. I sent a birthday card to **Jim Allen** (NCSB-46) and mentioned you as two guys that really taught me how to overcome perceived limits and push on into previously unknown and what appeared impossible frontiers. Had a great hunt in Mongolia; its Gobi is worse than ours ever dreamed of being. Heading to Argentina on Wednesday for a hunt there. I was working traffic as a Reserve Deputy Sheriff on the North Fork Fire (Colorado) last Friday, and the USFS Fire Safety Officer came by and we were chatting. He jumped in the 80s (Redmond I think) and knew **Trooper Tom Emonds** (CJ-66). Small world."

Denise Sanders in email to our website: "I'm writing to correct my father's obituary. My father was **Frank Sanders** (MSO-63). His eldest daughter's name is Melodie rather than Melanie as stated in the obituary. I would also like to say thank you for everything that this organization does for the families of jumpers who have died. Your efforts assist those of us left behind through a difficult time. My dad will be gone 24 years this month, yet I still remember fondly all the guys he worked with and their support when he died so suddenly when I was only 16. The jumpers were the ones that gathered the funding to fly my sister to Montana from Washington so she could attend his memorial service. Thank you again from a family member who has been blessed by the efforts of this organization and its members."

Tom Kovalicky (MSO-61) in a note about a new novel *Chasing Fire* by Nora Roberts: "This is a murder mystery and a hoot to read. The author must have known a smokejumper. We think it is about **Barry Hicks** (MSO-64).

The flyer reads: 'Rowan Tripp, daughter of legendary Missoula smoke jumper Lucas *Iron Man* Tripp, has been fighting fires since her 18th birthday. To her nothing is as thrilling as fire jumping and holding off Mother Nature.'

It goes on to mention that a rookie threatens to complicate things. The question for Tom: Is Barry the rookie, Iron Man Tripp or Mother Nature?"

Don Heinicke (MSO-51): "Chuck, your editorial about the future of the NSA was well put. Back when we started, it was an adventure, challenge, and finally an accomplishment. Many of us had never even been in an airplane and to jump out of one was almost unbelievable. Most of us were college kids who jumped a few years and then went on with our lives in our chosen professions. We wanted adventure and comradery, and found both in smokejumping. That is why we like to keep memories alive through *Smokejumper* magazine.

Maybe the days of adventure are over, but for those of us who lived and loved the adventure, it was a great ride. We greatly appreciate the *Smokejumper* magazine and the stories that some of us lived or only dreamed about.”

Roger Brandt (Associate-Siskiyou Smokejumper Museum Board): “I was reading the April 2012 edition of *Smokejumper* Magazine and noted that both **John Twiss** (RAC-67) and **Chuck Sheley** (CJ-59) commented in separate articles about the dwindling support for smokejumping among USFS/BLM leadership and the fading interest among younger smokejumpers in joining the NSA.

I appreciate the tightly-knit culture of smokejumping and can imagine how they have come to feel that the only people they can depend on are themselves. There is a long history that has pushed smokejumping culture in this direction and will continue until smokejumping becomes so isolated that it fades away into extinction. The reality of the situation is smokejumpers are absolutely right - the only ones you can depend on are smokejumpers, and the only ones who are going to keep smokejumping alive are the smokejumpers themselves. To accomplish this might require an effort to steer away from the comfort zone, where smokejumpers have always found their support among themselves, and start learning how to become more effective at connecting with the public.”

Roland Fisher (MSO-47): “Really enjoy the magazine. It’s a stretch back to 1947, but the stories and events I read about puts a little more hustle in the memory tank—good for a few more miles.”

John Parkes (MYC-57): “I was saddened to read about the passing of **Carl Rosselli** (MYC-48) in the April issue of *Smokejumper*. I had five outstanding fire seasons working with Carl and other great guys. It was of interest to note in Carl’s obituary that he had served in WWII with the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment. **Bill Payne** (MYC-59) and I were privileged to have served in the 508th years later, 1954 – 55, at Fort Campbell, KY, and Beppu, Japan. At that time the Army had formed it into an independent fighting unit, the 508th Airborne Regimental Combat Team. Recently, the American Legion Magazine, in its February 2012 issue, featured the 508th and its men for their distinguished WWII record. Today the unit is with the 82nd Airborne in Afghanistan.

A final note: I grew up in Jacksonville, Florida. In 1942, at the age of 7, I remember seeing planes, one after another, with paratroopers jumping. Their ‘chutes at first streaming, then blossoming and floating down below the horizon to the ground. They filled the sky and I watched in awe. It was the 508th, newly activated at Camp Blanding. In a little more than 11 years, I would be one of them.”

We give final tribute to Carl Roselli for a full and proud life. Farewell, Carl.” 🕊

Smokejumpers Win First NSA Leadership Award

by **John Twiss** (Redmond ’67)

Bureau of Land Management smokejumper **Gary Baumgartner** (FBX-88) and U.S. Forest Service smokejumper **Frankie Romero** (MYC-89) have been selected as the first recipients of the Al Dunton National Smokejumper Association Leadership Award. This annual leadership award was established by the interagency smokejumper base managers, in conjunction with the National Smokejumper Association, to recognize outstanding leadership among the ranks of current smokejumpers.

The award named for the late **Al Dunton** (FBX-67) who was a smokejumper for 18 years, Fairbanks Smokejumper Base manager from 1972 to 1984,

BLM Nevada state fire management officer and BLM National Fire Director.

Al was widely known for building strong, loyal, effective teams. He was a modest, behind-the-scenes leader who gave everyone else the credit, empowered people to be creative and work together for best overall results. He believed in high-performance interagency partnerships.

Selectees for this annual award must, in part, be technically sound, make sensible and timely decisions, know and develop subordinates, be team-builders, seek and accept responsibility, and set the example. The selection panel is comprised of one BLM smokejumper



Frankie Romero (McCall '89) (Courtesy Bill Selby)

base manager, one USFS base manager and one National Smokejumper Association board member.

A traveling plaque is placed at the winner's smokejumper base and a plaque is awarded to the individual.

Gary Baumgartner has been a recognized smokejumper leader in Alaska for more than 24 years. He is an outstanding trainer of rookie smokejumpers. He has hired and trained smokejumpers in both Boise and Alaska, and during the course of his tenure, Gary has hired or trained 60 percent of the current BLM smokejumper section supervisors.

After the Liston fatality in 2000, Baumgartner was a critical player in the BLM's efforts to recover from the accident by working countless hours to identify the cause of the accident and the technical fixes that would result in a safer, more robust parachute system.

He was the first person to test jump the parachute modifications and is the leader in ensuring that the

memory of the accident – and subsequent lessons – are passed on to the next generation of smokejumpers.

Life was not fair in 2010 to **Jedidiah Lusk** (FBX-10), the 10-year-old son of former jumpers **Scott Lusk** (FBX-81) and **Cynthia Lusk** (RAC-87). Jedidiah was diagnosed with terminal brain cancer.

One of Jedidiah's wishes was to become a smokejumper, and Gary was instrumental in making that wish come true. Gary developed the "rookie training program" for Jedidiah and oversaw the procedures and training drills that allowed for a memorable experience for the whole family. All this during the busiest Alaska fire season in 20 years.

Frankie Romero has been a tremendous asset to the smokejumper program. Frankie has served as the McCall Smokejumper Base manager since 2005 and holds a bachelor's degree in Computer Science and a master's degree in Fire Science.

Frankie is widely known for his proactive leadership style. He leads by example and is always one of the first to volunteer for assignments that will help the smoke-



Gary Baumgartner (Fairbanks '88) (Courtesy Bill Cramer)

jumper program locally and nationally.

Frankie develops smokejumpers to be leaders in and outside of the smokejumper program, and he encourages smokejumpers to seek Forest Service careers in fire and other areas.

He has worked outside of the smokejumper program on the Gila and Payette national forests, and most recently as the zone fire management officer on the western slope of Colorado, prior to assuming base manager duties at McCall.

Frankie has served as the lead representative for the Forest Service smokejumper base managers. His superior leadership and communication skills allowed him to effectively communicate with the Washington, D.C. office for all base managers, input regular updates to the Smokejumper Operations Guide, and serve as the Forest Service representative to the Interagency Mobil-

ization Guide Committee.

Frankie volunteered to participate in a validation study of the National Smokejumper Physical Training Standards to ensure that the standards were appropriate and valid. Frankie always goes the extra mile for the smokejumper program.

Since this award was announced, both Baumgartner and Romero have been promoted to jobs outside of the smokejumper program. Gary is now serving as the BLM Alaska state aviation manager and Frankie has assumed duties as the Forest Service national fire ecologist.

Congratulations to both Gary and Frankie on their awards and their recent promotions. The BLM and Forest Service need outstanding leaders who have been developed in the smokejumper program. Gary and Frankie are leaders in the finest smokejumper tradition. Make us proud! 🦋

NSA Improving Social Media Effort

by Chris Sorensen (Associate)

Through a collaborative effort the NSA is improving its presence on some social media platforms in order to be more relevant to the membership. I have been given administrative privileges in some areas of the NSA website so that news can be posted on the website on a timely manner.

On Facebook, you will find new activity on the NSA page, including breaking news, information on reunions, photos and more. Administering the NSA Facebook page are **Bob Dayton** (MSO-65), **Mike Overby** (MSO-67) and **Chris Sorensen** (Associate).

Facebook is not intended to replace the NSA website but rather to enhance it. There is and will be information on the website that won't be on Facebook and vice versa. It is our plan that they will complement each other.

There has been a lot of comment over the last dozen years that we don't provide enough current news. In that vein, we did have the news of the death of **Mark Hentze** (RAC-00) posted on our site within ten minutes of this news being posted on the World Wide Web. Information on **Scott Wicklund's** (NCSB-91) paraglider accident was posted on the NSA site within minutes of receiving it.

For current news there is nothing better than Bill Gabbert's *Wildfire Today* page, www.wildfiretoday.com. Everyone should have Bill's page bookmarked to check daily.

Information flows in both directions. We need your participation on Facebook. If you have relevant smokejumper news, you can send it to me at cmsorensen59@gmail.com or to the Editor (Chuck Sheley).

If you send something to me, please put "smokejumper" on the subject line so that I know it is not spam.

If we get participation on Facebook, we might go to the Board of Directors and ask permission to start an NSA Twitter account.

Are You Going to Be "Temporarily Away"?

As more of our membership moves with the weather, I am getting an ever-increasing number of *Smokejumper* magazines returned by the post office marked "Temporarily Away." Since we mail the magazine via bulk mail, it is not forwarded, and we are charged first class postage for its return to me.

If you are leaving your mailing address during the months of March, June, September and/or December, please let me know. I can hold your magazine and mail it upon your return OR mail it to your seasonal address. Please help us save this *triple mailing expense*. My contact information is on page three. 🦋