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## Smokejumper Magazine, April 2013

National Smokejumper Association

Jim Veitch

Lori Messenger

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THE NATIONAL SMOKEJUMPER  
ASSOCIATION

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE  
APRIL 2013

# SMOKEJUMPER



**Three Decades of Women in Smokejumping..... 13**  
**Brinkley Leads Farewell to DC-3 at Ceremony..... 22**  
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## Message from the President



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

PRESIDENT

I'M PLEASED to report to you that your NSA Board of Directors has now successfully established the **National Smokejumper Association Endowment** using the services of the Montana Community Foundation. Why is this important? There are several reasons:

- First, having an endowment is an important step in securing the long-range financial security of the NSA so that we will be able to continue fulfilling our mission.
- Second, it provides you with multiple options for being able to make a gift to the NSA, including legacy-level gifts, remembering that time in your life that was such a life-shaping event.
- Third, through certain types of gifting options you have the opportunity to establish an income stream that currently far exceeds the income you would be receiving from savings accounts and CDs.

- Fourth, there are significant, tax-saving benefits.

Allow me to briefly describe some of the various ways in which you can support the NSA Endowment:

- **Cash gifts** of any amount may be donated at any time and qualify as a charitable donation for tax purposes.
- **Stocks, bonds and property** may be donated. You may find this type of gift carries with it additional tax advantages, especially if the value of the donated item has increased significantly over time.
- **Bequest by will.** You can designate a gift or portion of your estate to give to the NSA Endowment at the Montana Community Foundation and, in some cases, receive a substantial reduction in federal gift and estate taxes. This type of gift would not transfer to the NSA Endowment until the time of a person's death. However, the NSA would appreciate being informed if a person does choose to include the NSA in his or her will.
- **Charitable gift annuity.** You can make a gift of cash or property to the NSA Endowment at the Montana Community Foundation now, get immediate tax benefits, and ensure that you or a loved one receives fixed quarterly or annual income payments for life. A CGA gift qualifies for the

Montana Endowment Tax Credit. This option is available only to Montana residents. The minimum initial gift is \$5,000.

- **Pooled Income Fund.** Each gift to the fund results in the creation of two distinct interests: an income interest for your designated beneficiaries and a remainder interest, the underlying assets, irrevocably dedicated to the NSA Endowment at the Montana Community Foundation. The interest earnings on the PIF are higher than that currently being paid on most savings accounts and CDs, and the donor continues to receive a charitable tax deduction. The minimum initial gift is \$5,000.

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### *Smokejumper base abbreviations:*

Anchorage.....ANC	Grangeville .....GAC	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

- **Montana Endowment Tax Credit.** The Montana Endowment Tax Credit allows donors to pay less in Montana state income taxes when they give a qualifying planned gift to the NSA Endowment. The incentive is 40 percent of the gift's federal charitable deduction up to a maximum \$10,000 tax credit per year, per individual, and a credit of 20 percent of a direct gift by a qualified business up to a maximum of \$10,000 per year.

Your donation to the National Smokejumper Association Endowment becomes an asset of the Montana Community Foundation for the exclusive benefit of the National Smokejumper Association. The Montana Community Foundation has exclusive legal control over all contributed assets. All endowment funds are subject to the foundation's variance power, which gives the foundation the authority to redirect the gift to a similar community purpose if that is ever necessary.

For detailed information and assistance in making a donation to the NSA Endowment, please contact the Montana Community Foundation at MCF, P.O. Box 1145, Helena, MT 59624, or by calling (406) 443-8313. You can also visit the foundation's website at [www.mtcf.org](http://www.mtcf.org).

Congratulations to the Trail Program leadership team for having once again put together a wide range of interesting and challenging projects in diverse locations across our nation.

In addition, I want to express appreciation for all of those who came from across the United States, at their own expense, to share in the unique fellowship of a trail project and give something back to the country we all love. The program continues to grow, thanks to your interest and enthusiasm for what we accomplish in working together.

Our Smokejumper magazine has a circulation of approximately 1,500 readers, the majority of whom are current and former jumpers. Other readers are associates, while a few copies go to libraries and some to other readers who have an interest in what we believe and do through the NSA.

Some copies of the magazine go to high-ranking decision makers when it comes to fire policy, budget making and legislation. We believe that we can, through thoughtful articles in the magazine, influence decision makers by doing some "soft lobbying."

I want to encourage you to help us in this "soft lobbying" effort by stepping forward in your area of expertise and write articles for publication in the magazine. This is not an easy assignment. It will require research, focus on facts rather than feelings, and raising thoughtful questions when answers are not easy to reach. 🍄

# Averting A Chain Saw Massacre – The King Creek Fire, Part III

By Major L. Boddicker (Missoula '63)

In parts I and II, Boddicker described an unusually dangerous fire jump, an aggressive hot fire, and a serious personal conflict with an inexperienced fire boss, who had ordered Boddicker and his crew into a death trap. Boddicker and crew disobeyed orders and executed a safe strategy.

Within 24 hours, the crew had completed the fire line in their sector, which stopped the hottest front of the fire, and hooked up with the neighboring crew. Part III continues the story on day five.

On day five, it rained and got cold. We spent many hours bivouacked in our plastic visqueen tents. On days six and seven, we improved the fire line and put out hot spots inside the line, often in a cold drizzle. It quit raining on day eight, but it still was cold and overcast, so I sent the crew up the hill for one last line inspection and improvement.

I stayed in camp and worked on reducing my pile of time sheets and reports. After lunch, I crawled into my tent for a nap and dozed off. The next thing I knew, one member of the crew was yelling at me to get my gun and get up the mountain. One of the crew had gone nuts and was chasing the other guys around the timber, trying to kill them with the chain saw. Cowboy was down and injured.

“Sweet Jesus – what’s next?” I thought as I struggled to get my boots on, revolver loaded and buckled on, and radio hooked on my belt. Up the mountain we sprinted.

It was wet, cold and muddy running up the fire line. We had climbed about a half-mile when I could hear screaming and yelling and a chain saw revving up and backing off. As we got closer to the chain saw’s roar, we had to top over a bench to see what was happening. I pulled my Super Blackhawk revolver as I popped up over the ridge.

A Vietnam vet, who was a drug addict, had run out of legal and illegal drugs and blown his fuses. He was hallucinating about the crew being Viet Cong. He was fighting them off with the chain saw.

Cowboy was screaming, writhing in the grass and mud, holding his knee, which had a significant groove cut in it by the chainsaw. The vet was taunting Cowboy, poking the chain saw at him and revving it as he did.

I can’t remember the vet’s name, but he had been a loser from the beginning. I’ll call him Frank. He had nailed Cowboy because Cowboy had the guts to try to control Frank. The rest of the crew were circling Frank about 50 yards out. Frank was too fat and out of shape to catch them.

“Frank, God damn it, put down the saw!” I yelled as loudly as I could.

“F— you! F— you!” he screamed. “I’ll kill you if you try to take it away,” he threatened, revving up the saw and poking it at Cowboy.

I cocked the Ruger Super Blackhawk and pointed it right between Frank’s eyes from about 15 feet away.

“Look at this, you piece of s—-. See the hole in this thing. Take a good look. When it goes off, your head splatters over this mountain,” I yelled, meaning business.

I could tell from the look on his face that he was having an attitude adjustment. I took two steps forward.

“Frank, think about what’s happening here. These people are your friends, not enemies. They don’t want to hurt you. Put the saw on the ground and get away from it.” I stepped steadily closer, the Blackhawk pointed in his face.

Frank slowly dropped the saw down by his side, but was doing that as a tactic. I could tell from his eyes and face he was loaded and ready to nail me with the saw when I got into range.

“Oh s—-, now what?” I thought. We were at the moment of destiny, no turning back. A few seconds ticked off in the standoff.

“Relax, Frank. I’m not waiting much longer. Drop the f——saw,” I said sternly.

He cracked an evil half-grin and tightened his finger on the saw trigger. I quickly lunged forward and swung the Blackhawk forward and against his upper cheek and jaw; the seven-inch barrel connected in a solid *thump*.

Frank entered temporary never-never land. He went down like a well-cut snag, out like a light. The Blackhawk was cocked, and I remember being relieved that it didn’t go off when I cracked him. I immediately uncocked and holstered it.

“Sarge, get the saw!” I exclaimed. “Tie this bastard



*Julius Kusz, Polish immigrant, great guy. The two cans in front of him are full of raisin jack mash. (Courtesy M. Boddicker)*

up,” I ordered.

I sent the messenger, who came to get me back to camp, for the first-aid kit. Several of us had basic first-aid training. We tried to make Cowboy comfortable until we could get the Demerol in the first-aid kit to work. We took some parachute cord from a saw tool bag and tied up Frank, who was still nicely in dreamland.

I gathered my wits and made the radio call.

“King Creek base, this is Smokejumper Boddicker. Over,” I checked in.

“This is base camp. Over.”

“We have an emergency – two seriously injured men on the southwest sector about one-half mile north of King Creek, up the mountain on the fire line from the line camp. Over,” I reported.

“Ten-four. What do you need?” the dispatcher asked.

“Injuries are not life threatening. One man has a serious chain saw cut into the bone of his leg. The other is out cold from a blow to the jaw. Possible broken jaw and cheekbone,” I reported.

“Ten-four. Do you need a chopper for evacuation?” he asked.

“Ten-four. It looks like we’re getting rain and cold settling in here. It will take some time to cut a helispot. Try to get a chopper here ASAP, but it’s not a dire emergency,” I said.

“Ten-four. We will try to get to you as soon as possible.”

“If the chopper is weathered in, send a first-aid kit with a supply of Demerol by foot up the King Creek trail. We are about six miles directly up the trail – can’t miss us. We have about 12 hours worth of Demerol, and the leg-injured guy needs it,” I added.

“Ten-four. Can you handle it with what you have for a few hours?” the dispatcher asked.

“Ten-four. We are in reasonable shape – not fun – will check in to report status. Over.”

“Sarge, pick three men and get back to camp, bring back the first-aid kit, three tents, six sleeping bags, rope, a case of rations, soap and water, and stuff to start a fire,” I ordered. “We need to bivouac these guys until we can get the chopper in here.”

One of those Alaskan light, cold rains started to fall. It was just what we did not need.

The two guys who were good with saws were put to work cutting a helispot. Several men leveled out the mountainside with pulaskis and shovels.

The first-aid kit arrived with clean water and soap. A Vietnam vet with a lot of medic training took over the job of cleaning out and sterilizing Cowboy’s wound.

I can see it in my memory at this moment. The big sciatic nerve that drops down on the outside of the knee was clearly showing but did not appear to be cut. The medic flushed out the bone chips and marrow plus the mud and spruce needles. He irrigated the wound with an antibiotic solution, covered it with a gauze pad and bandage and wrapped it up. Cowboy was feeling no pain, courtesy of the Demerol.

The supply crew made record time getting the tents, sleeping bags and rations up to the site. They went to work to get Cowboy and Frank out of the rain, warm and comfortable.

Frank started coming to about the time the supply crew returned. He was dazed and incoherent. We made damned sure he stayed tied up. We saw to him after Cowboy was under the tent, in his sleeping bag and comfortable.

“Hey Frank, do you know what’s going on?” I asked.

“I’m f——hurting. What happened?” Frank mumbled his words, barely recognizable.

“You went nuts, tried to kill Cowboy with the saw. Don’t you remember?” I replied.

“No, I’m really f—— up in the head sometimes,” he mumbled.

“Behave yourself, Frank. We’re going to keep you tied up until we can get you out of here in the chopper,” I spoke.

I checked his hands to make sure the restraining cord was not too tight, and I checked his swollen face. I could not feel any broken bones. He said his teeth were all still in place.

The rain picked up. After we had Frank and Cowboy in the tents, the whole crew pitched in to build the helispot. The helispot was completed about four hours later. I picked three guys with the Vietnam medic to stay with the injured guys. The rest of us returned to

the line camp to get out of the cold rain, to eat and rest. We were exhausted.

“King Creek base camp, this is Smokejumper Boddicker. Can you read?” I radioed.

“Ten-four, base camp,” the dispatcher replied.

“I’m updating my report. The two men are stabilized and have first aid to the limit of what we can do. They are out of the rain and are comfortable. It is total overcast, very low ceiling. We will be okay for 12 hours. If the chopper can’t get here by then, send a ground crew with Demerol and antibiotic for possible blood poisoning. One of the men will need to be restrained until he can be hospitalized. He needs a psychiatric examination. The helispot is ready and is at the pickup site. Over,” I said.

“Ten-four. The weather is supposed to clear by 5 a.m., so we should get them out about then. Over,” he reported.

“Ten-four. Great. Over,” I finished.

“Base clear,” was the reply.

Julius, the Auschwitz survivor, stoked up a smoky fire. The rain stopped. Julius, the Brit, the Nazi, the French alcoholic, and I sat around the fire discussing the events of the day for several hours. We *bleeped* some C-ration cans and had a late dinner.

(Bleeping was putting sealed C-ration cans into the fire coals to heat them. When the cans expand they make a bleeping sound. That meant that the food was hot and ready to eat. When they bleeped, one had 20 seconds or so to pull them out of the fire before they blew up and showered the area with beanie-weenies.)

I pulled out a pint of blackberry brandy from my ditty bag. All eyes lit up like Santa had knocked on the door. I pulled out the brandy only when things got bad enough. Things were bad enough!

“Get something to drink out of. I’m pouring,” I announced.



*Frenchie, French-Canadian alcoholic, tasting his raisin jack. (Courtesy M. Boddicker)*

They each scrambled for a container.

“A little taste of heaven,” the Nazi remarked.

“Somehow men can always come up with one. We even found them in Auschwitz,” said Julius.

We slowly sipped the brandy and talked well into the night, mostly about their experiences in World War II and world travel since. Amazing, the talent and experience these men had. If you want to read stories about an old Nazi soldier, get the book *The Forgotten Soldier* by Franz Sajer. Their experiences were very similar.

I woke up to the sounds of a chopper coming in about 6 a.m. I ran up the mountain and got to the site just as the men were being loaded into the chopper.

The first-aid medic who came with the chopper came over to me.

“Looks like you have these guys ready for a ride,” he said.

“Watch the big guy. Keep him tied up so he can’t get to the pilot. He is off his meds and has been violent,” I continued. “He attacked the small guy with the chain saw and tried to attack the others.”

“Okay, will do. How about the other guy?” he asked.

“Chain saw cut about one inch into his tibia below the knee. Nasty cut. No big blood vessels or nerves cut that we can see. It needs to be cleaned and checked ASAP. Thanks for getting here quickly,” I finished.

I tipped my cowboy hat to the chopper pilot; he nodded and lifted off. I radioed base camp with the details.

We all sat down, brewed up some of that black bitter instant coffee and breathed a big sigh of relief. That morning was one of Alaska’s best.

About 9 a.m., we packed up the gear and garbage from the helispot camp and hiked back to line camp. We could not see a hot spot or see or smell smoke. The rain had been heavy enough to kill any remaining fire inside the fire line.

“Smokejumper Boddicker to base camp,” I radioed.

“Base camp, go ahead,” the dispatcher replied.

“The fire is out in this sector. We are ready for reassignment. Over,” I reported.

“Ten-four. The plan is to chopper you out of there about 6 tonight. Unless the weather changes, proceed with that plan,” he instructed.

“Ten-four. Great news. Boddicker, clear,” I replied. “Sweet Jesus, the fire is about over.” Well, not quite.

I let the men rest and recuperate the rest of the day. It was warm and sunny so most of us slept. At 4 p.m., we decided we could tear camp down and pack it up for departure. We were ready to go at 5:30 p.m. At that moment, a large line crew from the mountain

above us hiked into camp. I was informed that they were instructed to go out first, two at a time.

The helispot that had been chosen for us was a BHPP10 (butthole pucker factor rank 10). The pilot had to worm the chopper into a small hole in the trees and set the machine down on a sand bar in the creek. It was plain to see that the pilot did not like it. As he was about to leave on his second load, he looked up at me and pointed to the ground, then brought his forefinger across his throat.

Okay, I got it. I waved a thumbs-up.

After he left, I called for the men's attention.

"Hey, listen up. Who chose this location for a helispot? We need to discuss moving it to a safer place," I announced. Nobody replied.

"Load up the gear and move up the creek about 125 yards. We will break out into a large open meadow that will be a lot safer," I said.

Some of the other crew grumbled about it, but we all loaded up and moved to the new spot.

When the chopper came back, the pilot gave me a thumbs-up, sat the chopper down easily, and quickly loaded up and left.

Out of the new group, someone bellowed, "Who the hell countermanded my order and moved the helispot?"

"I did," I replied. "The pilot signaled me that the first spot was too dangerous, so I moved it."

"I give the orders here, I'm the BLM sector boss and I don't need your insolent bulls—. We know about you, a—h—," he counseled me.

"Why didn't you speak up when I asked who chose the spot?" I replied.

"I wanted to see how you operated. Load up and go back to the first spot!" he ordered.

So, we all loaded up and hiked back to the Hell-hole.

When the chopper came back, he circled the new helispot, and then hovered over the Hellhole spot.

Over the loudspeaker on the chopper, the pilot said, "Who is the stupid SOB that moved everyone back to this stinking hole? I'm not going back into it again. Get your butts back to the new spot on the double or you walk back."

The BLM boss would not look at me and stayed small in the crowd. Just before he left, he walked over to me and apologized. He said he was tired and ornery and not thinking clearly. My helispot was a whole lot safer, and he was glad he was flying out of it rather than the one he chose. I accepted his apology and agreed we had been on the fire line too long.

When he and his crew were gone, we all gave a big cheer. I went out with the last load, so got a chance



*Louseman—the Brit who was host for all three species of human lice. (Courtesy M. Boddicker)*

to speak to the pilot. He wanted to get together for drinks in Fairbanks. I asked him if he and the fire boss had watched the fire blow up on the ridge on that third day.

He replied that he had made sure the boss saw it. He had remarked to the fire boss that it was sure lucky for the boss that I had taken a different route than the one he had ordered. He thanked me for moving the helispot.

I thanked him for his tactful instruction on safe helispots to the BLM expert. We never managed to get together for the drinking session.

I always wondered if he had called in the first fire boss' mismanagement to Fairbanks, which resulted in the Bigman Park Service boss being relieved after that third day.

When I got back to base camp, only three jumpers – **Bob Hooper** (CJ-67), **Bill Meadows** (ANC-66) and I – remained on the fire. Things had shifted into mop-up mode and several mop-up crews were arriving by bus. That is when I met Richard Dick and the Inuit crew, which will be my next story, "The Lost Inuit."

Some lingering questions remain. I expected to be replaced on the fire and get fired for insubordination as the Bigman Park Service boss threatened. It never happened, perhaps because of the chopper pilot's special tour and remarks to the fire boss during the blowup. In total, there had been three fire bosses on the fire.

When I got back to base camp after our sector was out, two fire bosses had been replaced. Why? Generally, as smokejumpers know well, when an incompetent overhead gets into place, he is usually obnoxious and incompetent to everyone else. When the insufferable prig gets too far out of line, he gets promoted out of there.

We lower forms of life who make things work – like the chopper pilot and me – look out for each other. Sure is a good thing most Alaskan fires have jumpers



on them so the fire gets put out and firefighters get home safely.

When the chain saw massacre was over and Frank was unconscious, laying in the mud and rain, from my Super Blackhawk tranquilizer, the thought occurred to me that I would spend the next two weeks filling out government forms, or worse. Amazing – after the chopper lifted off to haul Cowboy and Frank out of there, I did not hear even a whisper about it. It was like it all never happened, disappeared in the sea of Alaska fire paperwork. That suited me just fine.

My comment to my wife in a letter written on that fire was that a pickup firefighter had to be evacuated by a chopper because of a chain saw injury. No point in worrying her.

In hindsight, I could have probably chosen a different way of dealing with Frank, like shooting the saw out of his hand or organizing the crew to come after him with clubs. My course of action just seemed the best at the moment.

Back at South Dakota State University that next October, I ran into Cowboy, who was also back in school. His leg was healing well. He thought he would be ready for riding bulls in the spring rodeo.

He said he could remember only parts of the nightmare. He spent a week or so in the Fairbanks hospital, then flew back home to South Dakota to recover. After

he and Frank had been unloaded at the hospital, he had not seen or heard about Frank again.

When Meadows, Hooper and I got back to Fairbanks, we just had time to clean up and wash clothes before we were assigned to protect Alatna and Alakaket from three huge fires burning toward them.

This story was about conflict, luck, and competence. One of the challenging aspects of smokejumping was you could be the lowest, dirtiest pulaski swinger one minute, and a sector boss of 60 men five minutes later. Jumpers expected it and successfully did it.

During my four years of jumping, I do not recall ever having any doubts or questions about smoke-jumper leadership on fires. Harry Roberts, Hal Sam-sell, Ted Nyquist, Dave Bennett, Dayton Grover, Larry Iseman, Roger Savage, Len Kraut, Larry Fite, Larry Cravens, Berndt Gaedeke, Don Gordon, Chuck Wilde, Jim Clairmont, Doug West, Neil Walstead, Chuck Sheley, Lyle Brown, Dee Dutton, Gene Hester, Dwight Smith, Larry Nelson, and all of the other smokejumper overhead I worked under were straight talkers, logical thinkers and firefighting experts who commanded confidence. When they recognized problems, they fixed them. They had the guts to stand up to and refuse lousy and dangerous orders from overhead from other institutions. I appreciated that then and now.

A salute to all my former bosses! 🍄

# Moon Trees And Smokejumping – Hope For The Future?

by Jim Veitch (Missoula '67)

## YOU *Need* TO READ THIS ONE AGAIN:

*The article below was published in Smokejumper in January 2001. Alaska Smokejumper Jim Veitch comments on the Aerial Delivered Firefighter Study (reprint January 2013 Smokejumper). With the increase in recent years with large fires and money spent, there has been pressure to add aircraft to the fleet of the dwindling number of retardant aircraft.*

*At the same time ideas have been floated to reduce the smokejumper program as being “expensive to operate.” When I asked officials if the amount of money saved by quick, initial smokejumper attack in preventing larger fires is factored into this equation, the answer seems to be “no.”*

Check the NSA Web site

*What Jim wrote over ten years ago seems very relevant to our current situation.*

**A**s the Apollo XIV command module rounded the moon in 1971, a smokejumper watched the earth rise on another lunar morning. Lunar orbiter commander **Stuart Roosa** (CJ-53) had jumped at the Siskiyou Smokejumper Base, Cave Junction, Oregon.

With him aboard the lunar orbiter, he carried symbols of hope for the future in a tiny packet of seeds. Upon returning to earth those seeds were planted by the U.S. Forest Service to grow as symbols of our nation's spirit and accomplishments. Planted across America, they were called Moon Trees.

Two of the precious trees were planted at the Siskiyou Smokejumper Base to honor the astronaut and smokejumper. The jumpers cared for the little Douglas Firs and nurtured them. The Forest Service closed Cave Junction for economy reasons in 1980; both Moon Trees are now dead.

The Forest Service concluded a study in October (2000) analyzing the economics of smokejumping. The study, called “The Aerial Delivered Firefighter Study,” or ADFE, examined the advisability of “centralized versus decentralized smokejumper bases” and the “tradeoffs of helicopter versus smokejumper” operations.

It used a computer game, called a model, to run hypothetical fire dispatches using ground, helicopter and smokejumper resources to compare costs. One simulation was based on the existing jump bases; another run simulated various jump base consolidations.

The use of a computer model is nothing new and can be a good way to sort through complex problems. The tough part is making the game rules as close as possible to real life. Give the computer the wrong rules and you get bogus information – “garbage in, garbage out.”

A Management Options Team (MOT) has been assigned to review the ADFE study along with comments and other considerations. In addition to cost issues the MOT evaluation criteria is to cover safety, effectiveness, implementability and “other factors” before making its recommendations March 15.

Take a moment to remember the fate of the Moon Trees at Cave Junction. All veteran and active smokejumpers interested in the future of smokejumping should consider offering constructive comments to the MOT, the Forest Service and to their congressional delegation.

When alive the Moon Trees were a symbol of smokejumping’s bold and exuberant heritage. Dead, they are a symbol of Forest Service economics. Because the MOT has been instructed to consider more than just money, it is useful to review some of the important issues if you decide to contribute suggestions to the Forest Service or your congressional representative.

## A. Safety

Smokejumping is a potentially dangerous occupation. Risks of wildland firefighting are added to problems of parachuting into rough terrain. Smokejumpers reduce risks with teamwork and shared knowledge.

Local knowledge of conditions is critical for safety. The Umpqua Forest of southwest Oregon is a good example. Some valleys of the Umpqua have notorious fir stands with downsloping branches. The Cave Junction

jumpers knew which areas were too dangerous to jump because of treacherous trees and would select alternate landing spots for safety.

That local knowledge has been lost from smokejumping since the cost cutting closure of Cave Junction. Now the Redding and Redmond bases rarely jump the forests of southwest Oregon. Likewise, North Cascades and West Yellowstone cover some of the most hazardous jump country, but from years of experience, they know their terrain.

When a booster crew flies in they rely on that expertise. Without local knowledge jumpers would either be injured or abort many fire runs.

Lack of local knowledge concerning fuel types and conditions contributed to the deaths at Storm King in 1994.

Another factor in the tragedy was poor liaison with local fire managers. Having a working relationship with the local managers can be crucial. The loss of local jump bases would diminish both fuel condition knowledge and a strong working relationship with local managers.

These were lessons learned the hard way. Reducing local smokejumper knowledge would be a move away from safety

Smokejumping is aviation; every jump is a flight into uncertainty. A Navy aviator (and veteran smokejumper) told me jumping into the woods compares quite nicely to sticking a jet on the back of a bucking carrier at sea. In aviation, more flight time means added safety.

Likewise, more fire jumps improve crew performance; every fire sharpens skills making them better firefighters and safer jumpers. Statistics show that new smokejumpers sustain more injuries than experienced jumpers do.

*The wise use of smokejumpers dictates they are kept as busy as possible.* Consolidation in a few large jump bases can cause a slow rotation of the jump list and lower jump currency for the crew. Smokejumpers need action to be at their best. Does rationing out jumpers save money? A number of the jumpers on Storm King hadn’t jumped a fire in more than a year due to inaction.

## B. Effectiveness

The ADFE focuses on money instead of the mission: effective fire management. Smokejumpers provide a service and every service needs customers. The proper use of smokejumpers throughout the West affects fire management “effectiveness.”

There are huge areas that don’t use jumpers due to management inefficiencies. Some fire management

officers don't understand jumper flexibility; many dispatchers don't know how to use them or order them. Some fire managers see smokejumpers as eating their cut of the fire funds pie.

As a national resource, jumpers are often overlooked or excluded from dispatch. Having a local jump base establishes liaison and credibility with surrounding forests. The present jump bases have worked hard to build relationships with local forests to maintain a customer base.

Base consolidation would isolate jumpers from their customers and reduce their use. California is a good example of the existing system. It is one of the most underutilized smokejumper areas in the country with close to 25 fire helicopters on contract each summer. The helicopters are locally controlled and not highly mobile.

Two smokejumper bases – one north, one south with 2-3 aircraft each – could handle a large part of the initial attack that the 25 helicopters now handle. But the artificial barriers to smokejumper use in California are significant and deeply entrenched.

Because the USFS is highly decentralized and regionally autonomous, smokejumpers have had little national support, and are viewed by many as a group with little to offer outside of small-fire initial attack.

Smokejumpers are not just small wilderness fire fighters but a highly flexible resource. Yet, due to misinformation, smokejumpers are viewed as extremely expensive, and many fire managers are covetous of smokejumper funds.

The heart of the issue for effective nationally mobile resources is the dispatch system, not jump base consolidation. The ADFFF study manufactured a hypothetical, centralized dispatch system thus highlighting the real crux of inefficiency.

Smokejumpers are already capable of flowing quickly to where the action is because of their long-range mobility. *What the existing structure lacks is a coherent, centralized dispatch system like the one used in the computer model.* Freed from artificial barriers like forest and regional boundaries, BLM vs. USFS, and the limited worldview of the local dispatch centers, smokejumpers could accomplish a huge amount of successful initial attack over a large area.

Until the national dispatch system changes, the best way to foster smokejumper customers is with small bases that can liaise with surrounding forests. How often would dispatchers call for Redding Smokejumpers to jump the north side of Mt. Baker? Never. They would spend half the day organizing a local helicopter for the job.

Kill NCSB or West Yellowstone and jumpers will rarely be used in those areas. A historical example is

the scant use of smokejumpers in southwest Oregon since the closure of Cave Junction.

## C. Cost

The ADFFF highlights that closing Missoula, West Yellowstone, NCSB and Redmond would produce savings. But close reading of the study reveals that closing bases is not the best way to save money.

In Montana and Idaho, closing jump bases might save \$6 million, but investing \$1 million in the existing bases would yield an improvement of \$24 million, a gain of \$18 million for investment instead of closure. In Washington-Oregon-California the same calculation yields a gain of \$22 million.

The ADFFF's figures argue strongly that it *is wiser to increase investment* in the existing smokejumper base structure instead of closing bases.

The study also ran a series of tests using the existing jump bases compared to helicopter firefighters. The results may have been unexpected. The ADFFF found that by increasing funds to the existing bases by just \$2 million would yield resource savings of up to \$48 million in Montana-Idaho and up to \$59 million in Washington-Oregon-California. It shows that jumpers are a better value than helitack, dollar for dollar.

The Forest Service is now faced with a decision. On the one hand it might want to close jump bases, *but increasing smokejumper funding is what its own study indicates as the smart move.*

## D. Implementability

Jump base closures should not be implemented because recommendations are based on a dispatch system that does not exist. Over the years smokejumper bases have bypassed provincialism by forging inter-base agreements for mobility and reinforcement.

Smokejumpers are presently capable of mobility primarily because a network of jump bases exist, despite the nature of provincial dispatch establishments. To destroy the jump base infrastructure prior to an overhaul of the dispatch system would be horrendously counterproductive.

## Balanced Scorecard

Federal agencies are required to strategically plan how they will deliver services to their customers, and measure performance. The Forest Service is now required to use the "Balanced Scorecard" approach to obtain a balance of both the operational and financial factors simultaneously.

Financial performance has traditionally been used as the guideline of success but often managers sacrifice other factors in order to perform well financially. The

ADFF reflects only the financial perspective.

The MOT opens the door to fulfilling the broader Forest Service strategy of balanced performance by focusing on the customer, internal system performance and innovation. The ADFP recommendation for base closures can be seen as only one leg of four under a table.

## Heritage

The historical North Cascades Smokejumper Base is targeted for closure. NCSB is the birthplace of smokejumping and is important to smokejumpers and our national heritage. NCSB is an economic factor important to the Methow Valley and a tourist attraction that brings goodwill and support to the Forest Service ... like Moon Trees.

The Congressional delegation from Washington has previously demonstrated strong support for NCSB, reflecting the wishes of its constituents. The historical significance of NCSB is not a small matter and must be weighted heavily in any decision. Likewise the other jump bases carry the heritage of their homes, of many strong, young firefighters willing to meet the challenge.

## Deficiencies in the Study

A guiding principal of the study was to “examine the cost of institutional barriers to total availability, mobility, and flexibility” (Chapter 1, *Guiding Principles*). Yet the study completely ignores any such examination.

It never examines the costs and inefficiencies of the “many local policies, institutional barriers, and cultural practices that prevent efficient use of initial attack resources” (Chapter 4, *Findings*). Instead it creates “an idealized centralized dispatch initial attack system, (that) could be more efficient in allocating resources than the existing more decentralized system” (Chapter 4, *Findings*).

Extrapolation from the “idealized, centralized dispatch” to the real system is fanciful. The study makes it clear that the existing decentralized dispatch system is what needs first attention.

The study “was charged with looking at a smoke-jumper program with fewer bases” (Chapter 2, *Simulation Model*, paragraph 3). This objective goes beyond the purely academic and seems to be the root objective of the study, thus prejudicing its findings. Penetrating questions into the study might further illuminate this bias.

The study makes no distinction between fire-line production value of helitack, ground forces or smokejumpers. This is unrealistic and skewed against smokejumpers. Smokejumper candidates are usually selected from the best of the ground forces.

*Smokejumpers should be modeled as more productive fire-line workers, yet they are not.* If jumpers had been weighted even slightly better, a different outcome would have shown an even more dramatic comparison with helicopter crews.

The study criteria state every smokejumper initial attack time includes “45 minutes walking to the fire” (Appendix 3). Rappelers are only penalized with a 15-minute walk time. A closer approximation would be 15 minutes for both smokejumpers and rappelers. A more realistic smokejumper walk time would have further increased the comparative efficiencies of smokejumpers.

## Conclusion

The ADFP asks the wrong question and comes up with the wrong answer. Closing any of the present smokejumper bases would be counterproductive.

First, the right questions need to be asked about fire management on a national basis. The archaic fire-management structure needs to be scrapped and streamlined to enhance the economic use of highly mobile, professional fire resources. Ironically the existing smokejumper base network is one of the few cases which currently bypass the provincialism inherent in the system.

Funding should be increased to smokejumpers to enhance the capability of nationally mobile resources at the expense of small provincial resources. The ADFP figures argue strongly that increased funding is the wisest alternative. Such funding would increase the pressure for systemic reform and dramatically increase savings in resource values.

Astronaut and smokejumper Stuart Roosa passed away in December 1994. May he rest in peace. Gone, too, are his jump base and Cave Junction's Moon Trees. Who tended the symbolic trees when the smokejumpers were gone? Who guards the trees, and appreciates heritage enough to nurture them? You can no longer protect Roosa's Moon Trees, but you can still stand up for smokejumping. 🙏

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## Do You Have News To Submit To The NSA Website?

The recent website survey completed in January shows that the membership goes to our website ([www.smokejumpers.com](http://www.smokejumpers.com)) for news and information about friends.

If you have any news that you feel should be posted on the NSA website, write it up and forward it to me at [cnkgsheley@earthlink.net](mailto:cnkgsheley@earthlink.net).

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# SOUNDING OFF from the Editor



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

LAST SEPTEMBER I was walking the tarmac at the Chico Municipal Airport during an air show. Standing out among the aircraft on display was a white British Aerospace 146-200 (BAe-146), considered by some as the “next generation” air tanker. I went over to look at the high-wing aircraft equipped with four turbofan engines. It can cruise at nearly 500 mph and should carry about 3,000 gallons of retardant when converted.

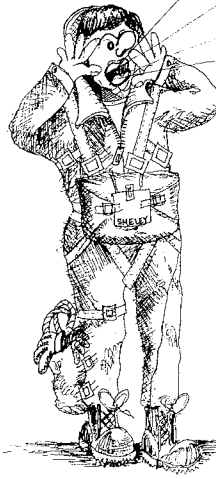
About that time a familiar face appeared, Ravi Saip, one of my Cross Country runners from 30+ years ago. As we talked, he informed me that the owners of the BAe-146, Air Spray Aviation of Canada, had established a U.S. headquarters in the old Aero Union buildings at the Chico Airport. Air Spray will be converting the former airliner into an air tanker with a goal of having one (maybe two) ready for the 2014 fire season, and he is the General Manager for the project. Air Spray will be involving the

FAA and the USFS in all stages of their conversion process.

Aero Union was one of the largest and most innovative air tanker companies in the world. One of the founders, **Dick Foy**, was our smokejumper pilot at Cave Junction in 1959. Dick and Dale Newton started an air tanker operation in 1960, eventually moving to Chico in 1962 and naming the business Aero Union. Over 200 employees worked for Aero Union in Chico, and the company operated in seven buildings at our municipal airport. Aero Union was good for the city of Chico, and we hated to see them move to Sacramento in 2010.

In 2011 the USFS cancelled its contract for six air tankers from Aero Union. The announced reason was the failure of the aircraft to meet required safety inspections. In talking with employees, I heard that this is one of those “Paul Harvey-Now The Rest of The Story” situations. There were reasons why the aircraft failed those inspections beyond what has been made public. Some guess that it might have been more of a management issue than a non-compliance issue.

Aero Union had a highly skilled labor and design work force that was spread far and wide after they shut down operations in 2011. They developed an improved Modular Airborne Firefighting System (MAFFS) for



the military C-130s used to drop retardant. This highly complex system is now in need of replacement parts but, with the demise of Aero Union, parts might be hard to find, if at all.

Air Spray is working locally with Griffon Wing of Chico to design the tank for the BAe-146.

Sel-tech of Chico, a local aerospace manufacturer who employees a number of former Aero Union people, is also involved in the tank system.

Hopefully, as Air Spray becomes a bigger player in the air tanker business, parts of the old Aero Union team will be reassembled back in Chico. It's a good town in which to live, and many former employees have indicated their desire to return.

We'll see what happens in 2014. 🐼

## North Cascades Smokejumper Reunion

Mark your calendars now as NCSB is planning a reunion to celebrate 75 years of smokejumping. The dates are: **September 12-13-14, 2014.** More details to follow in future issues.

# Three Decades Of Women In Smokejumping

by Lori Messenger (Missoula '00)

**T**he invitation as issued on the brochure: *Come women, and men smokejumpers who are or ever were spouses and partners, pilots, and all those who ever stuck a Pulaski into a burning log or knew or worked with those who did.*

Our purpose: *To gather and honor women smokejumpers of the past and present in a meaningful way. To serve as a reminder of why it's important to have women in fire, specifically smokejumping, and to celebrate.*

The event took place in Missoula, Mont., the weekend of Nov. 2-4.

## Friday

The morning dawned foggy – both inside and outside of my head. I'd been up late finishing the slide show for this Celebration of 30 years of Women in Smokejumping. But whether I felt ready or not, today people would be driving and flying into Missoula from all over the country and the event would happen.

**Margarita Phillip** (MSO-88) and I took on organizing the 20-year reunion held in Sun Valley, Idaho, 11 years ago. This year we were supporting **Jessie Thomas** (MSO-04), as incident commander, and her crew, consisting of **Kim Maynard** (MSO-82) and **Cindy (Wallace) Super** (MSO-98). We reached out to each base: Grangeville, **Jodi Stone** (MSO-02); Boise, **Sandy (Ahlstrom) Romero** (FBX-90); North Cascades, **Kat Russell** (NCSB-98) and **Ashely Reeves** (NCSB-07); Missoula, **Sarah Altemus** (MSO-01), **Kristina Pattison** (MSO-09) and **Wanda Wildenberg** (MSO-07); Redmond, **Renee Lamoreaux** (RAC-89); Redding, **Deb Yoder** (RDD-00); and West Yellowstone, **Jen Belitz** (MSO-01). **Kasey Rose** (NCSB-89) and **Kelly Esterbrook** (RAC-86) charged in hard in the final push, as well, and a hodgepodge of other fine women helped to get it done.

The laughter that would carry us through Friday night began as we ran and hiked through the woods near Margarita's lovely Arlee cabin, just north of Missoula. In the tradition of the Hash House Harriers, dots of wheat flour marked our course, and every quarter of a mile or so came a flour circle indicating an intersection.

Margarita, Kim, Kasey and I had played the part of the "hares" as we set the course earlier in the afternoon. Now we joined the "hounds" trying to follow the path and sniff our way home. Those hounds reaching the



Lori Messenger (Courtesy Julie Pendleton)

culmination of dead-end routes discovered prizes of beer, juice boxes and candy.

When sure of having discovered again the correct trail, hounds shouted, "On, on!" calling back any who had been off trail. As afternoon faded toward evening, the fog lifted partially, exposing the snow-dusted ridges of the Rattlesnake to the east and the more-impressive Mission Mountains to the north.

Twilight added extra emphasis to golden aspens and larches, as well as deep red ninebark bushes, as we neared the end of the approximately three-mile (depending on how many dead ends you followed) course.

As we navigated the trail, conversations bounced about like Great Basin foursquare balls: Who knew whom from when, what people have been up to, who we knew was coming for the weekend. Jump stories alternated with dating, pregnancy, and birth stories for graphic hilarity.

A Hash House Harrier with the alias "Stray Dog" noted that, "Hashing is a state of mind – a friendship of kindred spirits joined together for the sole purpose of reliving their childhood or fraternity days, releasing the tensions of everyday life, and generally, acting a fool

amongst others who will not judge you or measure you by anything more than your sense of humor” (from the *Global Trash Hash Bible*, a complete reference for the Hash House Harriers).

As organizers hoped, the first Women Smokejumpers’ Reunion Hash turned out to be a perfect tone-setter for the weekend – an active way of reconnecting for a wide assortment of current fitness levels. We were a relatively small group, around a dozen, but our candid conversation and laughter brought us back to Margarita’s house in high spirits, and as newcomers drove up, we were able to pull them right into our exuberance.

And the evening just got better and colder. Those of us who had run earlier pulled big coats and hats over our workout gear. Two firefighters from the Great Northern Crew, Andreas Orozco and Terra Hanks (who were famous on their crew for their cooking skill as well as strength with a Pulaski), cooked us up a giant pot of stew, along with yummy salads and breads. We filled bowls and hunkered in around a propane heater and two bonfires to fill our bellies, re-connect with old friends and make new ones.

The fog dissipated entirely and the stars popped out like shards of crystal through the black of a burned landscape. And more folks kept arriving. By 10 p.m. around 30 of us lounged fireside. Two dads and the cook turned out to be the only men there. Nothing had explicitly said that Friday night was for women only, but it was clear that who we most cared about being with on this particular night was each other.

In a work world where women smokejumpers find themselves most normally entirely with men, and generally even enjoy that, it is novel and fun to be in the robust majority now and then.

Kasey Rose brandished a bottle of whiskey, stood and raised the bottle. “Listen up,” she said. It took a few minutes to get everyone’s attention, but then she had it. “I have waited 20 years to play this game again!”

Gleeful hoots erupted from those who had been there in 1981 at that cabin in the mountains above Bend, Ore., or knew the story about the 10-year reunion. And the second women smokejumper’s “I have never ...” game to be played in 30 years ensued.

While there had been laughter everywhere before, now it grew more uproarious and focused as everyone paid rapt attention and tried to put their friends on the spot with such tidbits as: “I have never lost my breast milk pump and had to have my bro’s grid for it on a fire.” Or the older tried to get the younger: “I have never texted from a fire.” Which brought on a righteous comeback from the younger gals: “I have never had a hot flash.”

Any who had experienced the proffered statement had to drink. I will tell you that **Jenn Martynuik** (GAC-99)

became woodland imp, ducking behind a giant log periodically to whisper new mischief into the ear of someone trying to come up with the next dare. I will tell you that Kasey spurred the mud diggers on from start to finish; that the late arriving Altemus-Lalicker-Pendleton-Craig cohort produced the next bottles when the first ran dry; and that a multitude of other who-did-what-and-where-with-whom stories were unearthed. But I won’t divulge the details: for that, you had to be there.

The clouds had cleared completely, and we could see our breaths as we cried for stories at the most tantalizing admissions. The varying shades of increasingly cheap liquid rolled down upturned throats – while the dedicated non-drinkers steadfastly participated with water.

We howled our laughter to the lopsided, egg-shaped moon after a few rounds. Younger jumpers listened avidly as some of these older women they’d heard tales about came into sharper focus, and suddenly didn’t seem old at all. **Julie Pendleton** (RAC-03) remembered that when she walked up to that bonfire Friday night, she “felt so privileged and honored to be a part of such tough and outstanding women. It felt like ‘home’ in some way. Even though I didn’t know a lot of these women, it felt like I did. It felt like a family reunited.”

At some point we moved to a round of introductions, saying our names, where and when we jumped, and a few random things such as any “firsts” we were part of.

I came up with being part of the first brother/sister jumping duo – soon to be followed by **Tory and Mara Kendrick** (MSO-01). **Aicha** (GAC-03) and **Ramona (Hull) Atherton** (RAC-06) were the first sisters. **Mimi Scissons** (MYC-89) proudly announced being the first female Native American to jump, and Margarita Phillips the first Hispanic female.

There were first women pilot-spotter-jumper combos; firsts in the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management and at individual bases. **Leslie Anderson** (MSO-84) talked about jumping the very first “no-manner” with **Robin Young** (MSO-84) in 1985. She noted that the most striking occurrence was realizing how relaxed she felt on that fire.

At that point she was a competent, confident firefighter, but had not realized how, even so, she felt a level of constant stress working entirely around men that she couldn’t detect until there weren’t any present.

Another woman related how on her first “no-manner” she rolled, peeled her jump suit off, “dropped trou’ and peed, right there on the jump spot!” Such a feeling of freedom.

The most meaningful moment of the evening, however, for Leslie occurred when a young woman stood up for her introduction and said, “Well, I wasn’t the first at anything ...”

“That was the coolest moment,” Leslie told me. “That is where we want to be, where women are no longer a side note. We are it.”

People waxed back and forth between funny and serious – and the warm, connective, wild-edged atmosphere that organizers had hoped for was achieved. Some folks headed back to homes and hotels, and a dozen of us crawled into hooches or the cabin, leaving one intrepid stargazer, **Marge (Tabor) Kuehn (RAC-91)**, to put the fire to bed.

## Saturday

Saturday morning (well, midday, really), women mostly divided four ways. Kim Maynard – inspired by the enthusiasm of Leslie Anderson and **Deanne Shulman (MYC-81)** – invited the older crew (and any youngers who wanted) to her house for lunch. Another group drove to Snowbowl to decorate and prepare for the evening’s party. A third group went for what (of course) became a more epic run than originally planned. The fourth “not group,” in typical smokejumper stray-cat form, did their own thing and arrived at the evening’s festivities at their own time.

The idea for the run started spontaneously over continental breakfast at the hotel where a group decided to cruise the flat Kim Williams Trail, paralleling the Clark



*Tara (Townsend) Rothwell (Courtesy J. Pendleton)*

Fork River from the university. However, when someone pounded down Sarah Altemus’ hotel room door to invite her, Sarah understood that to mean they’d ascend the “Smokejumper Trail,” which branches from The Kim Williams to the top of Mt. Sentinel. She had been thinking she was hung over, but with that lofty prospect in mind decided to act like she wasn’t.

So they set out, chatting as they ran: Sarah Altemus, Aicha and Mona, **Sara Brown (RAC-03)**, **Garrit Craig (GAC-06)**, **Lindsay Lalicker (MSO-03)**, Julie Pendleton, **Nan Floyd (RAC-00)** and Deb Yoder. When the group reached the intersection, Altemus shouted, “Hey! You guys! Do you want to go up the backside of the M? Here it is!” A collective groan ensued, and then, probably not surprisingly, they slipped into single file and turned their sneakers upwards.

As Julie later explained, “It was too cold to stand around and ponder it, really.” Altemus reported from the back how cool it was to see all those women lined out, heads down, pushing one foot in front of the other up the same trail many of us associate with rookie training – when we never knew when anything would end, just that if someone else could do it, then so could we. I’m told that Julie and Deb led a hard charge at the summit. They only arrived to the party a little bit late and with very rosy cheeks.

Meanwhile, those “Women of a Certain Age,” popped some ibuprofen (I don’t actually know that) and drove around the south shoulder of Mt. Sentinel and up Pattee Canyon to Kim Maynard’s cabin in the woods. The group – Kim, Leslie Anderson, Deanne Shulman, **Carlene Anders (NCSB-86)**, Gracie (non-firefighting friend), Donna Kreinsieck, Sandy Romero, **Tara (Townsend) Rothwell (RAC-92)**, **Cynthia Lusk (RAC-87)**, Kelly Esterbrook, Renee Lamoreaux – hiked up the hill behind Kim’s place, enjoying the chance for longer conversations among the pines. Afterward they ate salad and sandwiches on the porch, where it was still a tad chilly, but full of sunshine.

The previous night’s keg remains arrived with a few more latecomers and was, it turned out, not very popular. A few of the more responsible matrons reportedly were able to smugly enjoy a beer. Did they not howl so wildly at the moon the night before?

Cynthia Lusk brought her photo album to share, and the chatter ebbed relatively softly, until it was two minutes past time to depart for the gala event at Snowbowl ... and no one had yet changed into their party duds. Insiders report that the ensuing effort to select outfits and fix hair was far more slumber party than suit-up drill.

While no one was surprised by Margarita’s application of mascara, Kasey Rose received some shock-and-awe responses as she slid on eyeliner and bright lipstick – since,





*Hiking Group (Courtesy J. Pendleton)*

after all, she would be speaking into a microphone. She slid her still somewhat-callused “dawgs” into fashion boots and made her way up the mountain.

Group number three, including me, negotiated the careful transfer of “Trixie” – West Yellowstone’s famous, flaming-skirted, female smokejumper mannequin – from **Cindy Champion**’s (MSO-99) Subaru into Jessie Thomas’ pickup for the journey up Snowbowl Mountain Road at the crack of noon. Thankfully, **Jen (Anderson) Belitz** (MSO-01), **Melanie Pfister** (GAC-01) and recent rookies **Megan Mckinnie** (MSO-11) and **Ashley Taylor** (MYC-12) met us up there to deck the lodge with round and square canopies, streamers, candles and, most importantly, to hang “Trixie” from the ceiling and adorn her bodacious ta-tas with fiery-orange flicker lights to welcome all comers.

While the event schedule announced a 4 p.m. start, folks didn’t really roll in until 5ish. This time, while the majority remained female, lots of men showed up to party with us, bringing our total evening revelers to something like 75 people. Long-time jumper/pilot and current Grangeville contract pilot **Nels Jensen** (MSO-62) took up a microphone as master of ceremonies and got things moving in his usual, positive, energetic style. Could there be a more enthused supporter of women in smokejumping?

Our first speaker of the evening came to us from Central Montana’s White Sulphur Springs: Sara Calhoun, founder and owner of Red Ants Pants. She inspired us with her story of recognizing the great need women workers had for pants that fit them right, how she designed such a pair and proceeded to build an ethical company. After regaling us with hilarious stories and photos (many of which you can see on her website at [www.redantspants.com](http://www.redantspants.com)), she summarized the three things that have been most important to her in this endeavor:

- If I can’t run a business with integrity, then I don’t deserve to be in business. Nobody does.
- If I can’t run a successful clothing business and keep manufacturing on American soil, than I refuse to run a clothing company.

• If I can’t have fun connecting with our customers and make it personal, then I don’t want to be in business.

“So step into these pants,” she urged us, “or into whichever pants fit you the best. And whatever good work it is that you are doing, perhaps you will stand a little taller, work a little harder, and maybe even walk with a little more pride in your step.”

We next turned to honoring five smokejumpers who have done some especially cool things in the last ten years with Bruce Ford prints. Nels and **Jodi Stone** (MSO-02) presented one to **Robin Embry** (GAC-85) for being the first woman to retire as a career smokejumper. Mostly Nels thrust the mic into Robin’s hand and she did the talking – in her usual straightforward, gracious way.

She noted how important these connections with other women smokejumpers are to her, and I will include her heartfelt, post-celebration words at the end of this story.

**Wayne Williams** (MSO-77) honored **Sarah Doehring** (MSO-91) for becoming the first female base manager. She took the reins at Grangeville in the summer of 2012.

Sarah thanked Wayne, especially for seeing “something in me which, at the time, I did not see. I will be forever grateful for the mentoring and the trust that W gave to me in managing the Silver City Smokejumper Base. I know that I had help from others and I am grateful for that.

“When I decided to try my hand at being a smokejumper, I wasn’t sure I was cut out for the job. I thought if I ever made it through rookie training and the time came to make my first jump, the only way I would make it out the door would be a boot in the butt. But as you know, training kicked in and (my rookie trainer) **Walt Smith**’s (BOI-71) calm voice asking me if I saw the jump spot and do I have any questions, and then the slap was all I needed. If my path as a smokejumper inspires anyone, female or male, I am honored.”

**Andy Hayes** (MSO-79) thanked Margarita Phillips for her Unparalleled Mentorship of Women in Fire for Over 20 Years. I looked over the assembled crowd and thought about the impact Margarita has had on the life and career of almost every woman (and many of the men) in that room. Next year she will get her own final “boot” out the door and follow Robin as a career retiree.

She joked that she suspected any award to her might have to do with managing to start every fire shift with fresh mascara in place. What she might not know is that this use of makeup became a kind of symbol to many of us: of her consistent, quiet, determination to do this job that she loved and to do it as fully as she was herself. All those who followed her through rookie training runs know that makeup graced incredible toughness.

What she said when she took the mic was, “It has



*Kelly Esterbrook (Courtesy J. Pendleton)*

been just such a privilege to work with so many beautiful, talented, strong women in my career. I consider these women probably the strongest group of women in the nation, almost in the world.”

Sandy Romero was given long-overdue recognition for being the first female to rookie in Alaska, the final frontier in more than one way.

Donna Kreinsiek (first woman firefighter on the Boise National Forest and long-time friend of Sandy’s), **John Gould** (NIFC-81) and **Rod Dow** (MYC-68) came forward to talk about how much Sandy has personally and professionally inspired them. Some of the factors that contributed to Sandy’s success in Alaska were her undisputable speed as a runner and her upper-body strength that became legendary.

Evidently, as a young gymnast, she did handstands all the time just for the fun of it. John noted that Sandy was also able to get along with everybody – that she treated all equally and had a good sense of humor.

Sandy encouraged all the current jumpers in the room to just know how tough they are, to not be concerned with having to prove themselves every day.

“As a woman, I was always made to feel somehow I wasn’t as tough or couldn’t endure with the guys,” she said. “But as women, we are tough; it is in our DNA. We have had to be tough throughout history and endure.”

Sandy advised current smokejumping women to enjoy their time doing this job with these people, because

in the end, that’s what it’s all about. In retrospect, she wrote: “And hats off to John Gould, Rod Dow, and all the other bro’s brave enough to join in the festivities!”

Deanne Shulman, Kelly Esterbrook and Tara (Townsend) Rothwell presented the “Tiny” Broadwick, or “Most Inspirational” Award, to Cynthia Lusk. Deanne explained how this award is named for the first woman to have parachuted from an airplane, and the first human to ever free-fall and deploy her own parachute. “Tiny” went on to make over 1,100 jumps before retiring from jumping in 1922.

Kelly and Tara spoke with tears in their eyes about Cynthia’s uniquely positive and loving attitude towards life and everyone she encounters.

“It’s been a rough couple of years since my son, Jedidiah, was diagnosed with brain cancer and passed away 11 months later,” Cynthia recently wrote to me. “Our family is still reeling from the shock, but we are pulling together and hanging in there like tough jumpers do. What was REALLY inspiring was the way Jedidiah was treated by the smokejumpers in Alaska, when he got to go up there on his Make-A-Wish Trip in July of 2010. So many, MANY great people assisted in that TRIP OF A LIFETIME for the WHOLE FAMILY.... It was Simply Amazing. A great many good-hearted smokejumpers all put their spirit into helping Jedidiah in so many ways ... All across the Nation. The Family of Smokejumpers,



*Kasey Rose (Courtesy J. Pendleton)*

you know, is widespread and overly generous! We have a great number of superb memories and some excellent photos – I might add, taken by Mike McMillian, BLM SMJ. And the National Smokejumper Association helped a whole lot, too. We owe them many gratitudes from our whole family!”

Our final speechmaking of the evening came from Kasey Rose, whom the organizers had invited to pay tribute to the literal mothers of smokejumping. She shared with us a slice of her story that she called “The Evolution of a Stay-At-Home-Mom.” Several times as she spoke, three-year-old Steel came up to tug at her pants, ask questions and share her limelight. Eight-year-old Diesel sat still beside his grandma, watching his dynamic mom speak, while Eric Messenger (GAC-00) smiled at his wife from the back of the room.

Kasey concluded by saying, “I still don’t know what I’ll do when I grow up. I remember hearing that the average American mother loses 12 years of her career to raising children, and I remember scoffing at that number! I am at eight years, and Steel won’t be in full days at school for three more years. I have always pictured myself working again.

“Before leaving, I read through HR manuals and briefly, this is what I remember: If you have held an appointment in a primary FFT position for at least three years, you have earned lifetime reinstatement and can actually simply be reinstated to a position. (Good luck with that one.) You don’t lose your firefighter retirement, but you have to go directly from a primary to a secondary position without a break in service.

“Will I do this? It is hard to picture us both doing fire again. I love fire. I love lighting it, putting it out, being part of the scene: the spontaneity, the fitness, the sense of humor, and the stupid flips. A Russian smokejumper once asked me, ‘Kasey, I no understand. Why woman smokejumper?’ I sputtered out a few comments about liking getting hungry and tired, and the ultimate satisfaction of that which was received with the blank look of incomprehension, before finally saying and then repeating for emphasis, ‘I like it for the same reasons you do.’

“Igor nodded, enough to acknowledge some level of comprehension, and walked away.

“We have become smokejumpers. Some of us have been pregnant smokejumpers, some of us have been mothers and smokejumpers. I think it is Rod Dow who loves to tell the story of Margarita rushing to demob a fire so that she could get home in time to prevent her son from trying out for football because she thought it was too dangerous.

“Steve Mello (MYC-74) tells the story (among many, many others) of how his wife cared for baby Zach Mor-

row for over a month when Karen went on a boost, before the days of 14s and 21s, or even cell phones. We would just literally get lost on the road.

“Leslie Anderson left primary fire, but stayed professionally with fire R&D. Cynthia Lusk has spent summers away from her family jumping, balancing her time between fire and family. Sarah Altemus had support to jump while her daughter was with Grandma. Lori and Scott alternated availability on the jump list. Many never had kids. Many who haven’t yet are perhaps are thinking: ‘What the hell am I going to do?’

“This is just my story. Every woman in here has her own, complete with lots of the personal details that can perhaps be helpful – sometimes gory! – often repetitive, but we all build our own information caches and access those when experience mandates a little backup.

“You will seek out info to support what you do. You can Google ‘Do I work after having children?’ Perhaps you will find the research that demonstrates how women become more efficient with their time after having children and are more productive, even though they may spend less time at work than their counterparts. You may read about how women stay loyal to a company that supports them through their maternity leave and family commitments.

“You will find that Canadians get one year of materni-



Renee Lamoreaux (Courtesy J. Pendleton)



*Kim Maynard/Jessie Thomas (Courtesy J. Pendleton)*

ty leave, Czech mothers three years, that Finland provides paternity leave. That other ‘rich’ countries have fabulous day care available to the general population. You will find out that America is the only ‘rich’ country with no paid maternity leave (government lets you use SL), that until 1978 a woman could be fired for being pregnant, and until ’93 women couldn’t take time off to deliver.

“You will read that children under one year old sent to out-of-home care will be slower to develop. You may do some math and discover it is not financially savvy to pay for day care. You will read that poverty is terrible for children. You will read that the longer you are away from work, the harder it will be to get back in.

“You will do what is right for you. You will find ways to ask for help. You will find support. You will do what is right for you. At least, it will turn out that way.”

Even though many moms found it easier to leave children at home for this weekend gathering, a number of babies and toddlers were conspicuously present at the party and had a good time running through the crowd and playing near the fireplace.

After Kasey spoke, we turned to the business of eating dinner and drinking beer with glad hearts – except for me, who was struggling to make the slide show equipment work the way it had when I’d practiced with it earlier in the afternoon. Finally, with a little help from some savvy techies, we got it going and watched snapshots slide across the screen from 30 years of women in smokejumping.

We had hoped to get some dancing going, but it turned out that the bar’s stereo system wasn’t up for it. So we talked and laughed and talked some more, doing our best to soak up our last moments, for a while at least, in this particular company. Ashley Taylor, a McCall rookie this year, later told me what was best about the gathering for her.

“When I was in McCall, I got a hold of a copy of the book from the last reunion with a bunch of women’s stories in it. My goal was to read through it before I got to the reunion this year. The coolest thing for me was meeting some of the people who were in that book – it was the most humbling thing I’ve ever experienced being in a room with all these amazing, cool women that I’d read about. It was such an honor for me to get to do this the same year that I rookied.”

My late-night highlight came when former shot and discus thrower **Carlene Anders** (NSCB-86) challenged all comers to arm wrestle her. I took my turn, and felt my arm womped down onto the table as easily as everyone else’s. It made me grin; it was just plain fun to be in the presence of such awesome strength.

## Sunday

Around 20 women gathered for Sunday breakfast at The Shack. People were sleepy, but happy to be together and full of ideas for how to keep in touch. There was relaxed talk about what’s been hard about being a woman in fire as well as about what’s been good. There was this

great feeling of energy from the weekend and a sense of urgency about people wanting to figure out how to do it again, perhaps as soon as next year.

For any of you who were not able to make it this time, your absence was noticed and your presence was missed. We'll do our best to keep you in the loop. Trying to track down everyone every 10 years has become more and more challenging as our numbers grow and time passes. Look for some form of communication soon with a plan for keeping contact information better updated and for more frequent, perhaps less-formal, opportunities to gather. 🍷

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## **Robin Embry's response to being honored as the first woman to retire as a career smokejumper**

I used to flinch a little at the idea of “a women's smoke-jumper reunion,” as I did not want to separate out my experiences and the people I have come to know and love and respect based on something as inconsequential as gender. (Hey, wasn't that how all this got started in the first place?)

Also, I did not want to give the impression that I am oblivious to and ungrateful for the majority of men throughout the years who welcomed us into the ranks, were equally blind to gender in their support and friendships, and allowed us to play by the same rules. I firmly believe that the success of the smokejumper program has always been, and forever will be, the sum of all its parts.

However, I finally realized that simply giving recognition and appreciation to the women amongst us that we admire and that have strengths we'd like to draw on or emulate in some way, or who have forged ahead where I might have hesitated, does not detract from others in the program. In recognizing these women, what we are really doing is making a commitment to ourselves – to take that quality we admire and make it our own. We are also recognizing and reinforcing our own desire to walk the path of excellence.

In the past we have honored “the first woman smoke-jumper,” and we continue to honor “the first woman smokejumper” to do this or who did that. But what I would like to do is to honor ALL women smokejumpers. What has made the program successful isn't really “the firsts,” but it is all of you women who have come afterwards and who continue to hold that bar of excellence to such a high mark, and who continue to push it even higher.

In 27 years of smokejumping, I got to see a lot. I

saw people at their best, their worst, and everything in between. What I truly learned to appreciate and want to thank ALL of you for is the steadfast way you go through your day-to-day business with style and grace and grit-tiness and flair.

You should be proud of yourselves in that your commitment to excellence has continued to carry us down the road to a point where (as Deanne Shulman put it) “there are no more firsts.” Seeing “a woman smoke-jumper” at any level in the program is no longer considered unusual or even worth remark. This is a true sign of how well women have integrated themselves into the program, how professionally you have carried yourselves, how hard you have worked to excel, and it is a credit to all women in the smokejumper program.

Lastly, I would like to thank the women who took the time and effort to bring us all together. You all have obviously known these things about appreciation long before I ever came around to it, and that is something I hope to carry forward into the rest of my life. Thank you. 🍷



*Lori Messenger and son Virgil (Courtesy Julie Pendleton)*

# Dunton Prize Honors Engineers Of Joint Rookie Training

by Hector H. Madrid (McCall '89)

The Bureau of Land Management smokejumpers has selected two individuals for this year's Al Dunton Leadership Award – Chris Swisher (FBX-03) and Ben Oakleaf (NIFC-05).

The decision to share this award was based on the combined effort of these two esteemed smokejumpers for sharing the philosophy of “Two Bases, One BLM Smokejumper Program.”

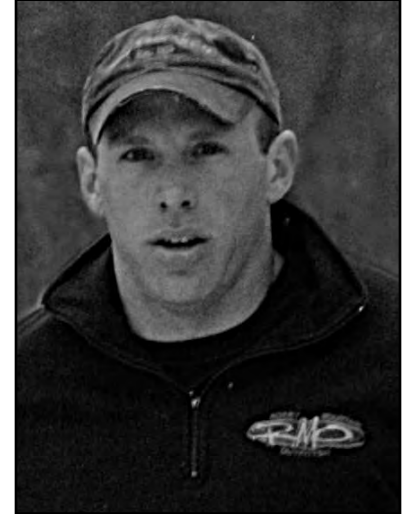
Chris and Ben are two individuals cut from the same cloth – hardworking, physically fit, professional, and always leading by example. They shared a vision for the BLM smokejumper program to once again conduct combined rookie training for NIFC and Fairbanks. Such a combined effort had not taken place since 2000.

Their goal of having combined rookie training was only a dream if they could not lay out a good plan. They participated in each other's rookie training as cadre members to begin to analyze how they could come up with a solid plan to present their case.

Their planning efforts took place over the course of a few years. They not only stayed engaged in the rookie training, but also in all aspects of BLM smokejumper and fire training. They recognized early on that the more the two bases were on the same page, the more it would make sense to combine rookie training once again.



Ben Oakleaf (NIFC-05) Al Dunton Leadership Award BLM



Chris Swisher (FBX-03) Al Dunton Leadership Award BLM

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*“... two strong leaders who set the example for smokejumpers and firefighters alike.”*

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They were analytical, deliberate, mutually respectful of one another's opinions, and ultimately convinced that the timing was right to give this combined effort another shot. They developed guidelines, a training syllabus, a logistics plan, and selected a cadre that shared their viewpoints on rookie training.

Boise sent a cadre of three instructors, along with five rookie candidates, to Alaska in spring 2012. Chris was the lead trainer and appointed cadre members from both bases with designated roles. Both Chris and Ben were determined to make the training a success and accomplish their goal.

Combined rookie training is planned to take place in Boise this spring.

These two individuals are

amongst the BLM's best. Chris and Ben take their jobs seriously, recognizing the importance of hiring the best people while fostering strong leadership, group dynamics decision-making, and individual competence under stress. They are responsible for both the professional and leadership training of our next generation of smokejumpers.

They continue to lead this effort by sharing a philosophy of *esprit de corps* for two bases, realizing that the BLM smokejumper program will be judged as a whole.

The interagency fire program is fortunate to have two strong leaders who set the example for smokejumpers and firefighters alike. It is obvious they will continue to be mentors for future generations. 🍄

# Brinkley Leads Farewell To DC-3 At Ceremony

*(Editor's note – The following was given by McCall Base Manager Joe Brinkley (MYC-98) at the Oct. 24, 2012, retirement ceremony for the R-4 DC-3.)*

First and foremost, I would like to recognize Stan McGrew for his vision of a turbine-powered DC-3. His persistence extended the operational effectiveness of the aircraft for at least 20 more years. Secondly, I would like to share a personal experience with you in honor of N142Z.

It has only been 15 minutes since I've arrived. Two hundred others stand with me, but no one speaks. The hot sun beats down, and what movement of air there is does nothing to cool us. Sweat begins to move down my back as I place my hands behind me and stand at attention. Others begin to join me without a word spoken.

Looking to the east, through heavy smoke, I see sagebrush and juniper-covered hills from wildfires that

continue to remain a burden for those that are on the front lines trying to protect others. I don't want to be here. I wish I was there. I wish I were anywhere but here. I wish ...

Thirty minutes pass and I am now sweat-soaked from this unbearable sun – this waiting, this oppressive heat, the reason I am here. Two lines have formed and we are 100 strong, 50 on each side, 50 looking to the east and 50 looking to the west. Others have arrived – 500 in all, all looking into the sky, at each other, at the ground, back to the sky, but no one speaks.

Time stands still. The wait is deafening, but no one speaks.

Did I hear it? I look around at others to see if they heard it too. As I do, 500 people begin to look skyward. From the west it comes. You can hear it long before you see it. It is the sound of turbine engines coming from a Douglas DC-3TP. It circles overhead. As it does, it looks to me like it's showing off. Its grace-



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ful lines, its snub nose, and its windows that look too small for pilots to view the outside world. Once, twice it circles, then starts its downwind leg for final. A lump begins to grow in my throat. I fight the urge. I stand at attention. God, it's hot. Still, no one speaks.

As the DC-3 moves from the runway to the ramp, its presence becomes overwhelming. Is it the heat and noise of the turbine engines? Is it the sheer bulk and size of the aircraft? Is it the iconic stature? Is it the fact that the Forest Service has come to show support for the people assembled on the tarmac? Or is it the knowledge of what's on board? People begin to cry.

As the sound of the engines become silent, time stands still. Soft cries are heard, the heat is stifling, no one speaks, and I wish I wasn't here. As the lump grows again in my throat, I look to the heavens and I see a red-tailed hawk circling overhead. Why am I here?

Minutes seem like days as I move closer to the shadow of the aircraft. Inside the DC-3 I can hear people walking up and down the hollow interior. The voices become louder as they move toward the rear door. I watch as the handle moves down and the door opens. I peer in the cavernous belly and, on the empty floor of the DC-3, coffins line the sides draped in American flags. Please, God – tell me why I'm here.

Official-looking men and women in Forest Service uniforms off board the DC-3. Only two smokejumper spotters remain. These two gentlemen are stoic as my father moves toward them. Inside, the two spotters stand guard as my dad spends time with each of the fallen. He takes the time to touch each flag and say a prayer to honor their name and the sacrifice they've made.

After finishing my dad moves close to the spotters and stands as stoic as they do.

It is then that the spotters move toward the casket. With care they grab each corner of the American flag, fold it in a perfect triangle, and offer it to my dad. My father accepts and they begin removing the straps holding the precious cargo.

I wait outside as the lump continues to grow in my throat, and I fight the impulse to cry. I wait. After removing the cargo straps, the two spotters carefully move the coffin to the middle of the floor. There, they get on each side and, in one motion, lift it waist-high where outside I await the arrival of my brother.

As the front of the casket leaves the aircraft, I place a hand along the outside and run it down the cool exterior. I continue to move toward the end while friends and family members maintain a grip near the front. My brother, Levi, has exited the aircraft and returned home.

I pause, not wanting to leave the comforting shadows of the DC-3. It is the only thing that makes sense – the only thing that offers security and protection from the day, from the heat, from the oppressive sun.

My legs are leaden as I feel the weight of my brother on my right side, and I stumble forward as I follow friends and family to the waiting vehicle. Forest Service officials talk, but I don't hear them. Instead, I look over my shoulder at the aircraft that brought my brother home. It sits patient, enduring, tolerant. I wish it could fly me away from here. I wish it could take me away from the pain I feel inside. I wish I were anywhere but here. I wish ...

In honor of N142Z and the firefighters that it has brought home. 🙏

*Joe Brinkley's brother, Levi, was a member of the Prineville Hotshots and died in the South Canyon Fire in August 1994.*

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## Missoula Base Reunion Set For This Summer

A Reunion for all Missoula Smokejumpers is scheduled for July 12 & 13, 2013. A BBQ will be held the evening of July 12 and a dinner the evening of July 13. Other activities are being planned. There will be lots of time available for renewing old acquaintances. Other Based Jumpers are also welcome to attend. A special Base Tour is being planned for July 13 along with practice jumps, weather and fire situations

permitting.

July 14 is a travel day for those who volunteered to work on an NSA Trails Project the week of July 15 to 19.

Specific Registration Information will be sent in March and April. In the meantime, reserve July 12 & 13 on your calendar and please give us the following information to assist us in planning:

- If you will attend **OR** may attend. (Please specify which.)

- If your Spouse will attend.
- Email Address **OR** Mailing address if no Email.
- Missoula Rookie Year **OR** other Base and Rookie Year.
- If you need Motel Reservations.
- Activities you recommend be held.

Please email the above information to Sandy Evenson, Registrar, at [nsa.jumpers.mso@gmail.com](mailto:nsa.jumpers.mso@gmail.com) **OR** to NSA MSO Reunion, PO Box 4081, Missoula, MT 59806. 🙏





*Kim Hulia (MSO-Pilot)*



*Kasey Rose (NCSB-89)*



*Aicha Hull (GAC-03)*



*Cindy Champion (MSO-99)*



# Women Smokejumpers

*Photo's Courtesy: Julie Pendleton*



*Julie Pendleton (RAC-03)*



*Jen Belitz (MSO-01)*



*Nancy Floyd (RAC-00)*



*Kim Maynard (MSO-82)*



*Wanda Wildenberg (MSO-07)*



*Melanie Pfister*

*Layout Design: Job*



*Sara Brown (RAC-03)*



*Leslie Anderson (MSO-84)*



*Sarah Doehring (MSO-91)*



*Robin Embry (GAC-85)*

# aper Reunion 2012

*Pendleton (RAC-03)*



*Margarita Phillips (MSO-88)*



*Cynthia Lusk (RAC-87)*



*Kirkley (GAC-01)*



*Carrie Johnson (MSO-07)*

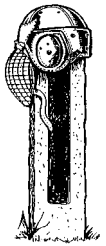


*Christy Behm (MYC-01)*



*Lyndsey Lalicker (MSO-03)*

*Amy Kirkley (CJ-64)*



# 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

### Duane ‘Gil’ Gillmore (Missoula ’46)

Gil, 84, died July 10, 2012, in Bellevue, Washington. He attended Montana State University and spent the summers of 1946-47 jumping from Missoula. Gil and his wife owned Gillmore’s Motel in Missoula.

### Ivan Amstutz (McCall ’45)

Ivan, 86, died July 12, 2012, in Kidron, Ohio. He attended Hesston and Goshen colleges before serving as a CPS-103 jumper from McCall in 1945 because of his Mennonite faith. Ivan was a dairy farmer with registered jerseys, and also worked in the insurance and banking industries.

### Richard Jeppson (McCall ’67)

Dick, 65, died Nov. 14, 2012, in Salt Lake City, Utah. He was a professor of entomology at Idaho State University and was a world-renowned taxidermist. He jumped at McCall during the 1967-73 seasons.

### Lt. Col. Harry Brizee (Missoula ’51)

Harry, 80, died Sept. 24, 2012, in Annandale, Virginia. He earned a degree in Forestry at the University

of Idaho, as well as a U.S. Army commission. He spent his college summers working for the Forest Service and jumped from Missoula in 1951. Harry, who had joined the National Guard at age 16, was a distinguished military graduate in 1954 and was assigned to the 11th Airborne Division in Germany. He also served in Korea, Vietnam and England, as well as Ft. Benning (Georgia) and Ft. Campbell (Kentucky), and was the Army’s legislative liaison in Washington, D.C. Harry received military decorations which included two Legion of Merit awards, a Meritorious Service Medal, three Army Commendation medals and the Senior Parachute Badge. He was interred in Arlington National Cemetery.

### Wesley Brennan (Missoula ’47)

Wesley, 85, died Dec. 18, 2012, in Sun Lakes, Arizona. He attended the University of Montana after a stint in the U.S. Navy, stationed in Hawaii. Wesley jumped from Missoula during the 1947 season. He worked for Carpenter Paper Company and later Nationwide Paper, living in New Mexico and Texas before returning to Montana during that career.

## NSA Good Samaritan Fund Contributions

### Contributions since the previous publication of donors, October 2012

<u>Donor</u>	<u>In Memory/Honor of</u>
Doug Stinson (CJ-54) .....	Walter Begalka (MSO-51)
Bob Gara (MYC-51).....	Carl Rosselli (MYC-48)
Jim Clatworthy (MSO-56) .....	Dave Barnhardt (MSO-56)
	Jon McBride (MSO-56)
	Art Jukkala (MSO-54)
Bob Whaley (MSO-56) .....	Jon McBride (MSO-56)
Hiram “Doc” Smith (MSO-59).....	Kirk Smith (Mormon Lake HS Supt.)
Christina Ptasinski (Crane Worldwide Logistics).....	Scott Wicklund (NCSB-91)

**Total funds disbursed to smokejumpers and families since 2004—\$22,800**

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

### **Robert “Bob” Watson (Missoula ’51)**

Bob, 84, died Dec. 6, 2012, in Kansas City, Missouri. He served in the Marine Corps during World War II and received the Good Conduct Medal, World War II Victory Medal, and National Defense Medal. Bob studied Forestry at the University of Montana, jumping from Missoula in 1951 and Grangeville in 1952. He studied Aeronautics at Embry-Riddle University following the war and became a commissioned officer in the Air Force. Bob was recruited to fly with Air America in Laos and served as a captain for 10 years.

### **Scott Wicklund (North Cascades ’91)**

Scott, 46, died Dec. 27, 2012, in Kirkland, Washington. He jumped exclusively from NCSB (21 seasons) but was an accomplished skier and surfer, traveling to Indonesia, Singapore, New Zealand and Thailand, as well as Europe, to pursue his adventures. Scott also was an expert ski photographer, resulting in publications such as *Ski* magazine, the *Seattle Times*, *Northwest Skier* and *Washington Winter* printing his works. He also had advertising contracts with Stevens Pass, Mission Ridge and other ski resorts. Scott vol-

unteered to join and graduated from a class teaching Forest Service jumpers in the use of ram-air parachutes in 2008. He was a senior parachute rigger, a task-force leader and a Type-3 incident commander. Scott had suffered traumatic fractures to his pelvis and right femur, and lesser injuries to his left shoulder, ribs, left knee and face as a result of a March 2012 speed-wing skiing accident, which resulted in hospitalization of nearly a month. He then underwent nine months of rehabilitation.

### **Alex Theios (Cave Junction ’65)**

Alex, 68, died Jan. 14, 2013, in Boise, Idaho, after a lengthy struggle with Parkinson’s disease and dementia. He was an accomplished skier, surfer, hunting and fishing guide, and manager of a Western guest ranch. He also bred and raced Alaska sled dogs, earning a top-10 ranking among mushers in North America. Alex jumped from Cave Junction during the 1965, ’66 and ’69 seasons, and from Fairbanks in 1967, ’68 and ’70. He became an accomplished rider of bucking broncos, using this skill to work as an extra and stunt man in a Western movie. 🐾

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# **Scott Wicklund – Jumper Who Lived The Large Life**

(Reprinted from the *Methow Valley News*, Jan. 16, 2013.)

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**S**cott Wicklund (NCSB-91) was a resident of the Methow Valley for more than 20 years, working at North Cascades Smokejumper Base and living on the base for many summers.

He spent winters traveling, taking photographs, skiing and playing in the snow between Mount Baker, Stevens Pass, Mission Ridge and the North Cascade Mountains. He worked in the restaurant industry in high school and used that skill to ski from Sun Valley to Snoqualmie to New Zealand as a young man. He enjoyed surfing and traveled wide to places like Indonesia in pursuit of that joy.

Scott was born in Kirkland, Wash., on May 6, 1966, the youngest of five children for Francis (Fritz) and Mary Wicklund of Kirkland.

Scott’s father was a masonry contractor by trade and had a shop near the Kirkland waterfront. Fritz built the family home on a hillside near a forested area. He died of a heart attack when Scott was just 6 years old.

Mary worked in a school cafeteria and was a Eucharistic minister at Holy Family Catholic Church, where they all attended church and school. Scott called her a saint. She died in 2007.

Scott Wicklund chose to end his life on Dec. 27, 2012, after a nine-month rehabilitation period following a speed-wing skiing accident last winter. He had been flying on Little Buck Mountain the morning of March 23, 2012, and was found at the base of the Loup Loup Ski Area at about 11 a.m. by staff on a day the area was closed. He suffered traumatic bone fractures to his pelvis and right femur and lesser injuries to his left shoulder, ribs, left knee and facial lacerations. He was hospitalized for nearly a month in Seattle and Kirkland, but a few months after the accident he remained optimistic that he would return to flying again.

Scott started work with the U.S. Forest Service in the summer of 1988. As a new employee with the agency, he attended “guard school” in June of that year, which is in-

tended to teach all new firefighters the basics of wildland fire suppression. Scott worked for the Forest Service in the Leavenworth District for the next three years, where he had some exciting times manning the Alpine Lookout before deciding to join the smokejumper program.

In the spring of 1991, Scott was accepted into the smokejumper program as a rookie candidate. He successfully completed rookie training and earned his jump wings in June of 1991. Scott made his first parachute jump during rookie training on June 17, 1991, near Redmond, Ore. His first fire jump would come less than one month later on July 10, out of the North Cascades Smokejumper Base on the Okanogan National Forest.

Over the next 20 years, Scott had a very exciting jump career, allowing him at least one operational fire jump from every Forest Service jump base in the nation, including La Grande (which is now closed).

In the spring of 2008, Scott volunteered to join the new man Ram-Air program. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) also has a smokejumper program. They are based in Alaska and Boise, Idaho. The BLM jumps a Ram-Air parachute, which is square, and the Forest Service jumps a round parachute. Scott knew that the only way for him to get experience on the ram-air parachute system was to either transfer bases or volunteer for the new man Ram-Air training. This training is intended to allow Forest Service jumpers a chance to experience the other system. Scott accepted the challenge and graduated from the new man Ram-Air class in the spring of 2008.

Scott was one of three spotter/squadleaders at the North Cascades base. As a spotter, Scott was responsible for the safe and effective delivery of smokejumper personnel and equipment to wildfires. Scott attained an FAA Senior Parachute Rigger certificate in 1997 and, along with rigging, did extensive repairs to damaged parachutes. Scott would tackle a repair that others would shy away from.

Scott was a qualified Task Force Leader and a Type 3 Incident Commander. Scott made his last fire jump on Sept. 9, 2011, on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, his 161st fire jump. His last practice jump was Sept. 29, 2011, at NCSB. Scott made a total of 396 jumps, 161 of them on fires.

Scott had a real passion for skiing and, prior to his Forest Service work, attended the Wenatchee Valley College ski coaching and teaching program. He was well beyond expert at telemark skiing and could drop a knee in the toughest terrain and conditions.

He consistently placed high at the annual Sven & Glenn telemark race at Stevens Pass and traveled for other telemark ski races. Scott was a valued member of the community of backcountry skiers, both in the Methow and Leavenworth / Wenatchee areas. The free-

dom to head off in the mountains with snowmobile, skis and friends was of utmost importance to him.

On his sponsorship profile on the Black Diamond “climbers & skiers” web page in 2004, he is quoted saying “Surfing, skiing, parachuting, mountain biking, kiting, climbing or any other excuse to bounce around in this giant playground we call earth is what feeds my soul.”

Last February, the tragic avalanche at Stevens Pass took three skiers from Scott’s world, including best friend and college buddy Jim Jack.

Scott was an avid reader with an early interest in journalism. While adding photos to a backcountry ski story submission, “Northwest Extreme Dream, Ulrich’s Couloir” in *Northwest Skier* (January 1991), he got a request for more pictures and a career in ski photography was born. Scott had his photographic work published with clients such as *Powder* magazine, *Ski*, *Skiing*, *Snowboarder*, *Ski Journal*, *REI*, *Helly Hanson*, *Seattle Times*, *Snoqualmie Summit*, Stevens Pass and Mission Ridge ski areas to name a few.

Grant Gunderson of *Powder* magazine wrote, “Scott was one of the guys who inspired me to get into ski photography, and he was THE guy that put skiing in Washington on the map in the ’90s and especially Stevens Pass. One of the things that I always liked and admired the most about Scott, was that he was out shooting photos of people skiing because he was the most passionate skier I have ever met. He didn’t care about fame, fortune or the recognition; he was just so stoked on skiing and wanted to share that passion with others.”

Scott is survived by his loving partner, Sharla Lynn of Twisp, brother Don Wicklund and sister-in-law Belinda Wicklund of Kirkland, Wash., his sister Geralyn Bandur and brother-in-law Paul Bandur of San Ramon, Calif., his sister Barb Wicklund of Redmond, Wash., and his brother Douglas Wicklund and sister-in-law Sharon Wicklund, and his nieces Selena and Kathleen Wicklund of Spring, Texas.

Scott is our brother, uncle, friend and real-life hero. We have always said that Scott never met a stranger; he only met more friends.

Scott wrote in his final note, “I loved this life, friends, family and it’s been 46 pretty darn good years.” The reality is that Scott would very likely not have been able to do the things that he loved doing. Scott simply could not envision any life other than the life he had been leading prior to his injury. Scott did not want people to feel bad or sad and felt terrible knowing they would. He has asked everyone to please try and be happy for him. He wrote, “This quick life is/was good. Enjoy it while and when you can.”

In classic Scott form he wrote, “If you look at a few of my close calls I lived several bonus rounds, extra credit.”

Everyone who ever met Scott was proud to know him and be a part of his life. He treated everyone with kindness and respect. Scott will be sorely missed every day, but his smile, enthusiasm, inspiration and stories

will live on with us forever. We have always been so proud of Scott and that will never change. Scott lived his life to the fullest and that is how he would want us to remember him. 🕯

## Leaping Legends Meet in Boise

by Jim Lancaster (McCall '62)

A bunch of jumpers and pilots in the Boise area gather at 10:00 a.m. on the *second Wednesday of every month* for coffee, visiting and spinning tall tales. We had a good showing at our “Leaping Legends” Christmas coffee gathering this past December (12-12-12). This is our second Christmas coffee with cake and decorations. The group started meeting about eight or nine years ago and named themselves the Leaping Legends. While many of us may be legends only in our own minds, we do have two real legends who attend fairly regularly. These two are Jim “Smokey” Alexander (MSO-40), who made the second fire jump in the Forest Service, and Lloyd Johnson (MYC-43),

who was base foreman when the McCall jumper unit was started. There are 24 jumpers/pilots in the photo of our December gathering, plus Smokey’s daughter, Denise. We welcome visitors. If

you are interested and need more information, please contact me at: 208-365-1062. The group meets at the Lakeview Golf Course Club House, 4200 W. Talamore Dr., Meridian, Idaho. 🕯



Jim “Smokey” Alexander and Lloyd Johnson. (Courtesy Jim Lancaster)



The Christmas gathering of the Leaping Legends group in Boise. (Courtesy Jim Lancaster)

# Jungle Jumpers And Ecuadorian-Style Forest Management

by Mathew Mendonca (Redmond '05)

*Editor's note – Redmond smokejumper Mathew Mendonca traveled to South America to teach foresters how to climb trees using ropes. During his trip, he learned a few things about the jungle and its inhabitants.*

**M**y feet soaked in a hot tub of sweat that had accumulated in my rubber boots. The contents squirted through my toes with every step as I unloaded and stacked boards with a “slosh, squirt, slosh.”

I was alone on the hot ridge top except for the insects that I battled to defend my exposed flesh, and the colorful lizards with which I shared the sunbath. The nearby tribe of howler monkeys periodically updated me on their whereabouts with the loud exclamation that gives them their name.

## The call to action

In between stacking loads of boards, I sat on a log and stared into the deep, dark, green drainage in front of me. I could only see the surface, but like looking across the sea, I knew that concealed below was a continuous storyline with millions of living, breathing characters acting it out day and night. Isolated breezes swept through the draw and tickled the tree canopies, furthering the surface appearance of an ocean swell's trough.

A thumb-thick cable stretched across the drainage to the next ridge. A load of 12 freshly-milled, two-by-six, tropical hardwood boards zipped along the cable towards me, dangling high over the deepest part of the jungle trough. I heard the pulley squeak and buzz along the cable before I received the load and stacked the boards.

I had been in Ecuador for more than a month, and this was my third hitch at the logging site. Months earlier, my older brother connected me by letter to the foreman of the logging operation, Blair Rynearson, Flathead Hotshots, in November 2010.

*Mat,*

*We're attempting to create a working forest reserve in order to conserve an intact chunk of forest located in an area that's been decimated by land conversion and reckless logging. You won't really feel that you're helping with conservation, as you'd likely be working with me on extraction and watching employees falling trees in virgin*

*rainforest. To access our farm is a four-hour hike and the jungle can be brutal.*

*Timeline – we'll be working with the portable sawmill and cables into next year. We have a steady work schedule of 17 ten-hour days per month. We generally break that into an 8-day and a 9-day hitch. You can come down whenever you like. Just let me know a month ahead of time so I can be at the airport to meet you.*

*How's your Spanish?*

*Blair*

## On the edge of a frontier

I jumped at the opportunity to dabble in international forestry work. I ended up in Ecuador for a month and a half and spent three stints at the logging site that were about a week each.

I arrived in Quito in mid-January, walked outside into the morning sun, and started trying to pick Blair out of the crowd of people waiting for arrivals. He described himself in an email as “the extremely tall, blonde guy.” There he was, like a balding, blonde giraffe with glasses towering over the crowd of short, dark-skinned Ecuadorians. He was lean, looked around 30, was fair-skinned, and had patchy blonde facial hair. He bellowed out my name over the crowd and his giant hand engulfed mine as we greeted.

We sat and ate breakfast at no place in particular while getting acquainted.

Blair grew up on Bainbridge Island, west of Seattle. With a hint of reluctance, he admitted his upbringing as privileged, but despite a number of paths paved for him that would have been easier on his feet, it was clear he chose his own adventure. For the last two years Blair worked for *Ecomadera* as the foreman of the logging operation.

During his college years he worked seasonally for the Forest Service in Montana, spending a few summers doing trail work in the Bob Marshall Wilderness and one summer on the Flathead Hotshots.

After finishing college, Blair went to Ecuador to visit a friend. She brought him to a dinner where he met Peter Pinchot, the *Ecomadera* founder and visionary. Blair recalled: “... If I would not have gone to that dinner where I met Peter, then I'd probably be an engine captain for the Forest Service right now.”



*Mat Mendonca (RAC-05) Huaraz, Peru. (Courtesy M. Mendonca)*

He went back down in 2009 to volunteer, spending four months with the project before Peter offered him a job. He mentioned that although trail work and a hotshot summer are both very strenuous, his hardest days of work thus far have been logging in the jungle.

Peter Pinchot is the grandson of Gifford Pinchot – the first chief of the U.S. Forest Service – but prefers not to call attention to the association. He went to Ecuador in 2001 where he visited his friend, David Smith, who was working for the Peace Corps.

Peter was looking to get his foot in the door of international forest conservation and David had just the place to start in the Chocó wet forest of northwestern Ecuador, just outside the town of Cristobal Colon. It was, and is, on the edge of the frontier, where land conversion and virgin rainforest meet with little hope for the forest to remain pure.

With a healthy sense of urgency, they initiated the forest management project called Ecomadera in 2003. With much of his own money, Peter bought 500 hectares – about 1,235 acres – of forested land and hopes to buy more.

## Four short and sturdy loggers

The local tropical hardwood company stemmed from Ecomadera is called Verde Canande. The community of Cristobal Colón is half-owner in the company and 33 community members are employed by it.

Typically, tropical hardwood extraction operations target one or two species of hardwoods that have proven viable in the market, while Ecomadera selectively harvests mixed hardwood species based on abundance and sells them as a mixed container. Most of these species are new to the market but they plan to establish a market for them, mostly for flooring.

With a goal to keep extraction impact low, they are exploring alternatives to roads for wood transport. They have worked with mules, and now with cable systems. Another strategy was bringing a portable Peterson sawmill into the logging site. Cutting the boards at the site makes the wood easier to transport on the cable system and adds value to the wood product as opposed to simply selling the log.

A few days later we caught the early bus off the



west side of the Andes, down the switchback road that meandered around washed-out sections, waterfalls and steep drop-offs to angry rivers. It was dark and pouring rain when the bus pulled into Cristobal Colón.

From the main street we ducked down a dark and puddled path and walked down to the Ecomadera *casita*. We dripped and sloshed up the stairs where he knocked on the door to wake up Rafael. He was excited at Blair's arrival and they caught up in loud voices in order to hear over the rain that was thundering on the metal roof.

I woke up to the cook clanking around in the kitchen, staggered out, and enjoyed my heaping plate of white rice topped with two eggs. Blair told me to get used to a pile of white rice at every meal.

In our rubber boots we walked through town to meet up with the loggers. Looking west was a flat landscape, but to the east, the mountains jutted up from the Rio Canande. Sharp ridges and steep drainages were covered in second-growth timber, but the untouched was just beyond the first ridge. Happy people we passed greeted Blair by name and stopped to chat. He was back in town, and that meant he and the other loggers would be heading back into the woods soon.

At the entrance of the balsa mill, the four short but sturdy loggers showed up one at a time and shook our hands with the greeting *buenos dias*. They were Freddie, Gerardo (aka Don Gera), Jairo and Alberto.

## Into The Jungle

### The tram system

Blair helped to introduce me by explaining the type of work I do back home as a smokejumper. I had my backpack next to me with a bright orange waterproof cover. Alberto sneered, unimpressed, and pointed at my loudly dressed backpack, facetiously asking if that was my parachute.

The river was too high to cross, so we caught a ride with our gear to the village of Simon, just upriver. We had a chain saw, propane, saw gas, food, and some pulleys and parts. We buzzed down the river in a 20-foot canoe with an outboard motor.

It slid up onto the slimy shore, and we hauled the gear to the first tram station on the ridge. There are seven in total that serve as connecting points for the five kilometers of cable. Toward our destination the jungle rolled up steep ridges and drainages with no sign of anything that was not green.

We split off into pairs and planned to leap frog tram stations while sending and receiving the gear. I was with Jairo.

From station to station a cable went across the drainage and was anchored into sturdy trees on the ridges. By the anchor trees, wooden stands were built to anchor the pulley wheel and hold tension on the circulating rope that looped around the wheels at each end of the cable section. Gear or boards are moved by attaching the load to the circulating rope and anchoring it to the cable on a runner pulley.

The load can move across the drainage downhill by gravity, with speed controlled by a brake on the stationary pulley wheel, or uphill with a motor attached by a belt to the pulley wheel. On this day we used a chain saw head for our motor with a machined sprocket that fit the belt.

Jairo hiked fast and nimbly through the jungle. He seemed to know right where to step so as not to sink or slip in the mud. He stopped only to point out things of interest, like guanta – a 30-pound rodent – or pig tracks. In the afternoon, it rained ... hard.

The last bundle didn't hit the last tram station until dark. We wearily made our way to the finca that sits in a small opening on the hillside. A set of stairs went up to the 20-by-20-foot windowless shelter on stilts; inside I saw three tents surrounded by a complicated grid of clothes lines at eye level, looking like a laser security system drying clothes.

Below was the kitchen with some benches and a propane cook stove. The wash station was just below where a black hose constantly poured cold water from the creek above. After work each day the loggers washed off the jungle mud, moss, mold and fungus.

### Women and soccer

We rose at daylight. Over coffee and *colada* (a ground oatmeal drink), Blair and Don Gera discussed the plan of attack for the day.

They were preparing to move the portable Peterson saw mill to a new location uphill and closer to the next trees to be cut, but first, a new cable would need to be installed.

I helped Don Gera take apart the mill while Freddie cut a right-away for the new cable. Don Gera struggled with the rusty bolts while I handed him tools and made conversation.

He has been cutting trees since he was 16. That was when he and his family homesteaded Cristobal Colon before there were roads to it, and he and his dad cut trees all day using axes. He has worked for Peter since '05 as the main faller.

Each day, quitting time was 5:30 p.m. when we hiked back to the finca. We broke up into pairs to take turns cooking. Alberto and I were a pair, but he took cooking rice very seriously and mostly just trusted me

with washing dishes. Don Gera handed us mugs of hot chocolate that we sipped while talking about women and soccer and listened to the radio.

The workweek was shortened to five days, but the brevity was to my benefit as I was already starting to lose the battle with foot fungus. The day we left, Alberto and Jairo tightened the new cable with a large come-along and the rest of us finished dismantling the Peterson so it was ready to send up the cable on the next hitch.

## Cutting a fluted tree

Don Gera had cut three trees and had one more to fell before we left. The tree was 100 feet tall and buttressed out at the base. The bole was straight and limbless until close to the top where it grew into a widespread canopy.

The base had a complicated shape where six large flutes extended up from the exposed roots to about 10 feet up the tree before dissipating to the round bole. At chest height the flutes were 1-2 feet deep, creating vertical ridges and valleys.

Don Gera does not use wedges. After clearing the vines away from the bole with his machete, he started in with a chain saw that did not have a functioning bar oiler. He got the bottom cut through a few flutes, then pulled out the bar and held it towards Freddie so he could pour motor oil on it.

Once the face was cut out, he negotiated the rest of the flutes on the back cut, leaving more of the uphill flute intact so that it would pull away from another tree in its path. Wood chips flying, the tree slowly started to tip and, like peeling back a sunroof, light poured in behind it.

As it picked up speed, I could hear the large canopy displacing air in its path: *Whhhhhooooosh*. It fell right where he intended and with a ground shaking *BOOM!* and violently bounced off the forest floor, sending an explosion of organic debris in all directions.

Alberto and Jairo cleared the rest of the vines off the downed tree up to the crown and cut it into 2.5-meter-long (roughly eight-foot-long) logs. It produced four logs before the bole spired out into the canopy.

## The old timers glowed with nostalgia

When we started hiking out, Jairo took off, never to be seen again that day. I followed Alberto and Freddie at a fast pace. I mistakenly anticipated that they would tire out quickly, but they did not. Eventually they were at a dead run, bouncing off of rocks and roots, jumping over logs and skiing down the mud.

We stopped at the bottom with the big, muddy river in front of us and panted and sweated. It was about 80 meters across and was moving slowly. I followed them off the bank with backpack over head and, once up to our chests, we let our feet bounce along the bottom with the current.

In town we were greeted by street bystanders with smiles, handshakes and inquisitions on the status of the campo. The old timers, who spent their younger days in the forest, glowed with nostalgia when seeing us muddy from head to toe.

## *¡Mateo, dame el llave!* (“Mat, give me the wrench!”)

After some days off it was back to that land of perpetual wet, where everything is alive, and if it dies it is immediately consumed. I picture a Sunday comic with a character dropping a crumb ... next frame, a slimy reptile darts out to eat it, and immediately a slightly larger critter darts out to eat that one, and yet another to eat that one, which gets poisoned, dies, and is carried off by ants so they can eat it before the mold and fungus do.

There was not much gear to haul into the job site this time, so we just carried the food we needed for the hitch on our backs. We commenced on a different route, crossing the bridge over the big river on the edge of town and taking an old trail on the other side.

The loggers were talkative. I told them about my days off at the beach and helped them envision bikini-clad Argentine women hopping in the sand.

I asked Alberto what he did, to which he scowled and grumbled that he worked on his house. He doesn't get to go on beach vacation. Jairo spent his days building a house for his family. They had been in his brother's house, but his brother was moving back. So, in five days, Jairo cut some trees, milled the logs, and built a house.

As usual, it started raining in the afternoon about the time we arrived at the job site and we spent a few hours tightening cables. Alberto was starting to enjoy bossing me around, and I liked playing along. *Mateo, dame el llave!* I pretended not to understand and watched him get annoyed and shake his head with a sigh.

## Skidding

With the new cable system functional, we were able to send up the Peterson mill, part by part. The 300-pound motor was the most challenging. They started sending it up by gunning the winch motor at the bottom, connected to the pulley wheel.

When the Peterson was halfway up the cable, the belt on the winch started slipping and the Peterson stalled and dangled. Uh-oh – if it slid back down the cable, it would be shrapnel and smithereens at the bottom.

Alberto urgently directed me to set the brake, so I ran up and stuck a thick stick through the pulley wheel. They had to move it the rest of the way manually. The five of them strained, grunted and dug their rubber boots into the slope, heaving the motor a few feet at a time before yelling, *Seguro! Seguro!* which was my queue to ram in the brake stick so they could rest.

Once assembled at its new position, the Peterson mill was ready to cut some boards, so Alberto, Jairo and I skidded a few logs to it. We chained the chain saw wench to a stump and dragged out the cable.

Before hooking the end to the choker on the log, they set the cable through one or two pulleys anchored to trees for mechanical and angle advantage. Alberto gave me the signal, *Jala Mateo!*

I started the chain saw winch, held on tightly, and gunned it as it bucked violently in my hands straining against the heavy log. The log slowly skidded through the mud for 10 feet until it hit a mud bank and got stuck. They signaled for me to stop and Alberto stood over the log, scratched his head, scowled, and cursed. Jairo grabbed the cant hook and wrestled with the log while I gunned the winch again.

Each log was a new problem to solve and together they talked out a plan. The choker needed to be in the right position on the log; mud and obstacles considered, along with geometric angles for path of travel. Jairo and Alberto were all business during a skid; when the winch was screaming along, and the tension and force was building as the log either bound up or slid along, they barked orders and moved fast.

I watched their reactions to get clues on the severity of what was going on. When the logs got stuck, they stopped everything. Alberto was sent into furrow-browed frustration, and we started in on the new problem.

We got four logs dragged to the Peterson by quitting time. Jairo and Alberto charged hard all day fueled on rice, and I never saw Jairo take a drink of water! This was his norm. He was an oak, strong and solid. I never saw him falter or get frustrated.

Alberto was a bit more of a venter, not afraid to show his contempt for a stubborn log. He acted annoyed and scowled throughout the day, but it seemed like more of an act because he was quick to smile, laugh and jest again.

## Cutting sapan palo boards

It was not long before we were able to put the first

log in place in the mill and Don Gera and Freddie started cutting boards. The first log was a *sapan palo*. The heartwood was marbled in dark guitar-top tone, while the rind was a pale contrast.

Don Gera and Freddie stuck to milling for the rest of the hitch – the old salt and the young buck. I nicknamed Freddie “The Ant” because, although small, he could carry six times his body weight. Jairo, Alberto, and I mostly skidded logs, and Blair was either helping them or us or scouting.

The days became more labor-intensive as preparation and set-up were through and we were able to get into a logging-and-milling groove. Toward the end of this hitch, Alberto ran the winch while Jairo and I set pulleys and chokers. With much effort we got all the logs staged just below the mill.

## Tree-climbing clinic

To start out the next work hitch, I was scheduled to put on a one-day, tree-climbing clinic. Just outside of town eight pupils – the four loggers and four timber cruisers – sat in front of me on leaf mats. I introduced the climbing gear and talked about trees and knots.

Jairo was an expert with knots and was able to learn new knots after just one time of watching me. Once I demonstrated something, they would take over teaching it to each other, and critique and poke fun at each other.

I put on the spurs and demonstrated some technique after cutting the vines away from the tree. Alberto said I looked like a woman dancing in high heels.

Jairo, Alberto and Freddie were the only ones who did not have experience with spurs, and they nervously took their first spiked steps up the tree and gripped the lanyard rope with white-knuckled hands. They took to it well, but as expected, took plenty of critical jousting from the peanut gallery.

Blair says they hope to eventually use tree climbing to collect botanical samples, set up cables, and when possible, cut limbs out of the way of the cable instead of cutting entire trees.

## Shotgun and cigarettes

Heading back into the logging site, we hauled supplies using a mule and a horse that Blair rounded up. I was surprised at how well the hooved helpers negotiated the mud, slick rocks, creek crossings and steep slope.

The electricity was out in town, meaning we had no meat for this hitch. So, after quitting time, Jairo and Freddie took the shotgun, cigarettes (bug repellent) and hammock, and went for a guanta hunt. The rest of

us stayed up and waited for the hunters.

After a few hours the hunters finally showed up with a successful harvest. There was no guanta, but instead a sack full of big crawdads that were more like lobster at 8-10 inches, with long pincers, and quite meaty!

## A venomous visitor

The next evening as we were winding down after dark, Blair was on the other side of the kitchen just outside the shelter when I heard him say loud and frightened, *Un Coraaa!*

We all stood up to peer where he shined his light and saw a red, yellow and black-striped coral snake slither calmly in front of the finca and down into the vegetation below. Don Gera jumped into action and went after it with a green limb, killing it with several whipping blows. Before Blair saw it he was in his sandals tooling around in front of the kitchen. They are not an aggressive snake, but if he would have stepped on it ...

## I meet Peter Pinchot; a sense of urgency

We got in a good groove of eating rice, and sawing and staging boards. Peter was coming into town and I wanted to meet him, so I hiked out a day early with Blair. On my last morning we hiked up to the mill and chatted and stalled our goodbyes. I shook hands with each of them and knew that I would wonder about them after I had gone.

Back in Cristobal I met Peter, who looked like a mad scientist with a full head of frazzled white hair and wire-framed glasses. He is in his 70s, is friendly, high-energy and charismatic.

After a conversation with him about the project, it was clear that he has grabbed onto the task of conservation with a sense of urgency due to the high rate that land is being converted all around this parcel of forest. Thus far it has been a pilgrimage with mostly challenge and just enough victory to keep them going, and still many unknowns.

It occurred to me that nothing is paved, no trail blazed, for the cutting edge or the innovative. I remember seeing a lot of books in Peter's Quito apartment. I gathered that he had to educate himself fast and in differing subjects in order to play the global-market game with the unknown market of mixed tropical hardwood species, and had to build off of the little that is known about tropical forest management.

## A brighter future

Much was riding on the first container of hardwoods that was going to Pennsylvania because it would be the first test of the market. In the meantime, Ecomadera was looking for funding to buy more parcels of forest to protect and manage.

It had been several years of building the operational foundation, like the cable systems and harvest plan, but now it was up and running with only a few kinks to work out. He is optimistic that it will only get more smooth and efficient.

I asked Peter what Cristobal Colón was like 10 years ago and how much has changed. There's a little bit more money now from the project and from palm oil. There were neither cell phones nor motorcycles, and there was only one car in town. Now we see a few dozen motorcycles, a dozen cars, and everyone has a cell phone.

Despite evidence of modern technology, he still compared it to the U.S. in the 1880s when the west was being settled; life and people were hard, families lived off the land, and hopes were high for a brighter future.

## Adios

Blair would be heading back into the logging site with Peter after I left. Peter had not been up there for several months, so it should have looked different to him. I told him, "It's a running logging operation, no doubt. Trees are going down, logs are being milled, and boards are heading out." He was excited to see it.

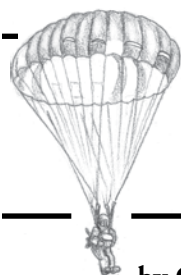
My bus left at 8 the next morning. Blair said his goodbye: "I'll miss having a fellow gringo at the finca to speak English with and talk about something other than work, soccer and women."

I shook his huge hand and said, "Watch your top knot out there."

*Mathew Mendonca is working on getting smokejumpers funded in South American forestry operations. Contact him at [woodmendonca@gmail.com](mailto:woodmendonca@gmail.com). If you'd like to visit Ecomadera's operations in South America or volunteer, contact James Buden at [jbuden@yahoo.com](mailto:jbuden@yahoo.com).*

Live Videos

- Live video of sawmill in the jungle – <https://vimeo.com/50856754>
- Working tram – <https://vimeo.com/50856755>
- Mathew Mendonca demonstration – <https://vimeo.com/50856751>
- Trainee learns the ropes – <https://vimeo.com/50856752>
- Jairo's first steps on ropes – <https://vimeo.com/50856753> 🐼



# ODDS AND ENDS



by **Chuck Sheley**

**Congratulations and thanks to Jim Snapp (MSO-65) and Fred Sittner (RAC-76) who just became our latest Life Member(s).**

**Dick Flaharty (MSO-44):** "Hi Chuck! This week I did a call-around to all of the CPS jumpers for whom I had phone numbers just to see how many were still alive and kicking. I was able to reach 20 and received news of one death. The jumpers I reached by phone were: Ned Arnett, Luke Birky, Warren Downs, Lester Feltis, Erling Gamble, Chalmer Gillin, Dwight Hostetler, Dan Kauffman, David Kauffman, Earl Kenagy, Dale Landis, Lee Miller, Ralph Miller, Norman Olson, Clarence Quay, Homer Rice, Earl Schmidt, Marlin Shelter, Weir Stone, Robert Stutsman, and Richard Weaver."

**Tyson Atkinson (MSO-11):** " I want to thank the NSA for awarding me the \$1,000 Jukkala-McBride scholarship for the 2012 school year. Without the help of NSA, my continued education would not be possible. It is both appreciated and reassuring to know that your group understands that advanced education is vital to the smokejumper organization. I am committed to using my degree to help promote sound decisions in wildland fire management, in particular the jumper organization. I think we can all agree that being a jumper is the best job anyone could have. Further, I believe the NSA is vital to the continued development and longevity of the program."

**Carl Gidlund (MSO-58)** was honored last November by the city of Haden, Idaho, as the city's Distinguished Veteran of the Year. Carl is active in community service and a volunteer for the Hospice of North Idaho. Congratulations Carl.

**Tom Kovalicky (MSO-61)** sent along an article from the Dec. 2012/Jan. 2013 *Field and Stream* magazine. In a survival section, it tells about handling injuries while hunting. **Joe Gutkoski (MSO-80)** was the feature person as Joe broke his fibula while in the field.

Byron "Randy" Knapp: "To the fine folks at NSA:-I want to thank **Gary Watts (MYC-64)** for his article (July 2012 *Smokejumper* "Remembering The Norton Creek Disaster And The Deaths Of Two Friends")."



As you may have guessed, the pilot that was killed (Byron "Skip" Knapp) was my father. I was 8 years old when he died. Over the years, I have heard many verbal accounts of the accident, and have also read a semi-fictional account in Stan Tate's book, but Gary's article is the real deal. It moved me deeply. I was taken aback (and greatly pleased) to read about the Swainson's Hawk at the funeral. This ties in with feelings I hold close to me about what happens to our spirit after death. Who knows for sure, but thanks to Gary, I now have the pleasure of carrying that image with me for the rest of my days."

**Romie Deschamps (MSO-61):** "Season Greetings, Chuck. I just returned from NY City as a volunteer for two weeks with Alaska Disaster Medical Assistance Team as their team Pharmacist for Hurricane Sandy victims. Great experience."

**Fred Donner (MSO-59):** "Interesting article (Jan. 2013 issue) by pilot Marc Anderson about the DC-3. However, his statement that 'The DC-3 served the U.S. military through World War II, the Korean Conflict and Vietnam' needs clarification. The military version of the DC-3 was the C-47 with heavier flooring, landing gear, engines, and other modifications. Other DC-3 military variants were the C-53, the C-117, and the Navy R4D. Did the Forest Service ever have a C-47? Just curious."

**Roland Moore (MSO-67):** "First is to say how much I enjoy the NSA publication, good job! 2012 was a bad fire year for many. I read in *Smokejumper* about the jumper whose home was threatened and saved in Colorado. I have a similar story.

The Bear Trap 2 Fire (June 26) jumped the Madison River and burned part of my ranch (Cold Springs Ranch), burning seven horses. Four were killed outright and the other three had to be put down. They were in a 540-acre pasture. The fire took off the next day (June 27) and almost took our home and buildings. Friends and neighboring ranchers saved our home.

On June 28 USFS resources came with dozers, tankers and people. About 2 p.m. the fire made another run at us, and it took all of the resources. We were then 80% surrounded by black. 2,500 acres

and seven miles of fence line were lost, plus seven horses dead.

The fire burned 15,000 acres and was man-caused. The loss of the horses was the hardest on my wife and myself. We are so blessed to have good friends and a home.

As so few of us fought so hard to save our land and buildings, I had lots of time to reflect on my past as a jumper (six years): My emotions, my fears, my work ethic and how much influence the jumpers had on my life."

Got a call from **Donald Hostetler** (CJ-45) the other day. Donald updated me on some information on the pilots during the 1945 season. Always appreciate the information as we fill in the blanks in smokejumper history. Donald is currently living in

West Liberty, Ohio.

**Ron Stoleson** (MSO-56): "There is a new book out that will appeal to many jumpers, especially those from McCall and Missoula. The book's title is *Bound for the Back Country* and is about the back country airstrips in Idaho. It also has sections on smokejumping, Johnson Flying Service, Intermountain Aviation, military aircraft crashes in Idaho, etc. The author is Richard Holm, Jr., a pilot, who lives in McCall and has done a great job of gathering detailed information about this subject. Those who have been into Mackay Bar, Cold Meadows, Dixie, Moose Creek and other strips in Idaho will enjoy the read and the many pictures of those areas. The book's first edition has sold out, but the second edition is in preparation and should be available soon from Amazon.com. 📖

# A Short History Of Wildfire Control

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

**A**s winter was descending on the southern reaches of the Rocky Mountains, **Jim Cherry** (MSO-57), **Chuck Sheley** (CJ-59), **John Helmer** (RDD-59) and other senior members of the National Smokejumper Association approached me, asking if I would write a short article on the national wildland fire situation.

Family, nation, science and forestry are all subjects about which I am passionate, though there is a degree of conflict in the last sentence. By its definition, "science" is a dispassionate approach to a person's view of the world. I leave it to my readers to decide how I have resolved this conflict.

## History as a guide to current events

Many viewed the resources of this growing nation before the mid-1800s as being inexhaustible. The denuding of the forests in New Hampshire and Vermont became a subject of concern in the 1800s; two different schools of thought arose.

The view of persons like John Muir and Henry David Thoreau was that the resources of government-owned lands should be **preserved** in their present state forever. By contrast, Gifford Pinchot and his followers recognized that a growing nation needed resources, and that the resources should be **conserved** for future generations.

The General Land Office was established shortly after the nation was formed. The arable lands were sold to the public to encourage people to occupy the lands claimed by the new nation. In the 1800s, the forested lands



*Chuck Mansfield (Courtesy Chuck Mansfield)*

owned and managed by the U.S. Government General Land Office were set aside as the "Forest Reserve" under the Department of the Interior.<sup>1</sup>

At that time the Department of Interior was a very corrupt organization, with the Teapot Dome scandal being a prominent example. The Forest Reserve was transferred to the Department of Agriculture; the people at the working level became the initial corps of Forest Service personnel.

An Act of Congress created the U.S. Forest Service in

1905, operating it within the Department of Agriculture. The enabling legislation said in part that the new service shall manage the lands under their control to “provide for a continuing resource of timber, watershed, grazing, wildlife and recreation for the benefit of the people.”

Pinchot knew that in order to meet this mandate, the Forest Service operations had to be based on science. To meet this goal, schools of forestry were established in many of the Land Grant universities.

An example of the lack of knowledge about the forested lands is that little was known about the extent and distribution of tree species. Teams were sent into the forests to gather that information. During this effort, 10 percent of all of the trees on Forest Service lands were touched and documented.

At the outset, officials realized that control of wild-fire would be a problem in accomplishing the mandate.

The fires of 1910 brought wildfire control into sharp focus. Probably in excess of 15 million acres of forest burned during the summer of 1910; the fires extended from Northern California to the Canadian border and as far east as the Dakotas.

Policy was established that all Forest Service personnel were, first and foremost, firefighters.

The initial problem was detection of fire. Lookout stations were located at good observation positions. In the Pacific Northwest, there had been around 3,000 observation stations in the history of the Forest Service.<sup>2</sup> There were often no roads, so that materials to construct the stations and supplies for the observer had to be delivered by pack string.

Many of the early stations consisted solely of a “rag camp,” with this name derived from the tent in which the observer lived.

There was often not a good view of the surrounding forest from the ground, so various kinds of “perches” were set up for the observer. The Cook Creek spar tree near Cle Elem, Wash., was an early example of an elevated cabin.

The most important consideration was that there had to be good visibility of as much forest as possible. This meant that the observation posts were built on the tops of mountains. The book by Kresick<sup>1</sup> documents all of the lookout stations in the Pacific Northwest, as well as a few stations in other parts of the country.

Observers often detected very small fires. In the

beginning when a smoke was spotted, the observer was expected to close the station and hike to the fire. The stations were spaced so that multiple observations from different stations could locate the fire to within a few hundred feet.

The prime instrument for determining the location of a smoke was the Osborn Fire Finder. The 1934 instrument survived several competitors and is still in service in the remaining stations.

With this instrument, the azimuth (compass bearing) from the station and the elevation angle above or below the horizon could be determined to an accuracy of 1 arc minute. If a smoke could be seen from more than one observation site, the position of a smoke could be determined to within a few hundred feet at several miles.

The Osborn Fire Finder is but one example of the innovations made over the years to aid in forest man-

agement, engineering and firefighting. I remember a trail tractor that intrigued me as a boy; it was a 3-foot-wide “caterpillar” tractor that was used in trail construction and maintenance.

Another “tool” which saw use was a single-cylinder-engine-powered litter designed to carry injured personnel from the forest.

The USFS established an employee incentive award to encourage employees to cre-

ate better tools for the job. In today’s money, these awards amounted to several thousand dollars.

**Tom Albert** (CJ-64) invented a two-headed climbing rope that allowed a tree climber to pass over a limb without untying the knot on the rope. I invented a sound-making device (to be attached to cargo dropped in dense areas) that would survive being thrown out of an aircraft at an altitude of several hundred feet. We carried out early testing of this device by throwing a “buzzer” out of an MG at 90 mph as **Hugh Rosenberg** (CJ-60) drove over the Rough and Ready Creek bridge.

How would the observer communicate to the ranger station the fact that he’d noticed smoke rising? When a “single-wire, ground-return” telephone system was constructed, a report could be called to the district ranger station. Heliographs, fitted with a shutter, were often used to relay information between observers by means of Morse Code and a shutter.

Communication was the second problem to be solved in fire control. Guard stations were established at critical locations in the forests. The Fire Guard maintained

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*There was often not a good view of the surrounding forest from the ground, so various kinds of “perches” were set up for the observer. The Cook Creek spar tree near Cle Elem, Washington, was an early example of an elevated cabin.*

---

a small tool cache and often became the first responder to fires.

Due to the time it took for personnel to hike to fires, these blazes often became too large for a single person to control by the time the fire was attacked. Fire crews comprising 200 men with pack animals, major food, and tool caches were often formed in USFS districts with histories of large fires.

There was one such crew at the Redwood Ranger Station, located at Takilma, Ore. – now the Illinois Valley Ranger Station at Cave Junction. Even so, it might take a day or two for the crews to hike to a fire.

At some point in time, a rule called the “10 a.m. Rule” was implemented. Under this rule if a fire was not under control by 10 a.m. the day after the first report of a fire, a count-down clock started. If the fire was not under control by 10 a.m. the following day, the district ranger had to present a defense before a regional-level “Fire Board of Review.” These reviews were carried out the following winter.

If the district ranger could successfully defend his actions, a memo was sent to all parties “to read and learn.” These memoranda were used as a basis for modification of policy at the regional and possibly the national levels of the organization. Should a district ranger be found guilty of malfeasance, the result could be career ending at best.

During the winter of 1958-59, Al Boucher (CJ-49), the Cave Junction base foreman, made a study of the fire records of the Siskiyou National Forest. He found that, in many areas of the forest, if a fire was not manned within a half-hour after smoke was detected, the probability was high that the fire would exceed the 10 a.m. rule.

As a result, the Cave Junction base was under a five-minute rule. The clock started at the time a fire request was received. The request had to be filled out, maps marked, parachutes issued, fire packs and tools loaded into the aircraft, engines started, aircraft taxied to the end of the runway, full power run-up of the engines made, and the aircraft launched – all within five minutes.

Seldom did the base’s personnel fail to beat the clock. The typical problem was that all available aircraft were already in the air with jumpers on board, and the base had to wait until an aircraft returned for another crew.

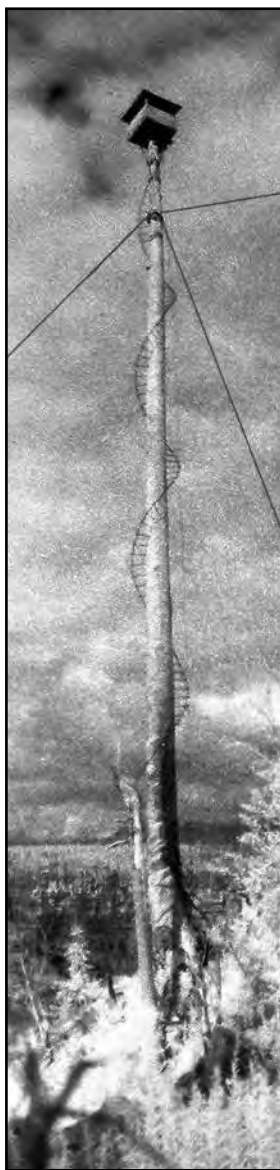
A series of environmental, social and safety bills Congress passed in the 1960s began to adversely affect the USFS operations. In addition, presidential edicts put

even greater pressure on the employees. For many years, the USFS had attempted to maintain a sustained-yield practice in logging. Until that period, USFS employees took pride in returning money to the U.S. Treasury each year.

President Lyndon Johnson decreed that the USFS increase the cut of timber in order to gather funds to help finance his “Great Society” programs. The net result was that the USFS lost much of its corporate knowledge. This was especially true with regard to fire control.

While the Forest Service had been a “can-do” organization, its operations began to exhibit aspects of a “can’t-do” philosophy.

The nation is now faced with a major loss of forested land, coupled with a lack of funding to reforest the burned areas. The original mission has, in a large part, been abandoned. As a result, streams and reservoirs are clogged with the remains of topsoil, the wildlife has been diminished, grazing is now limited, and the public has to scramble around on bare rocks for recreation. 🗿



Cook Creek Spar Tree  
(Courtesy USFS)

*Chuck Mansfield began his firefighting career early when his father, a District Ranger on the Malheur N.F., took him on a small fire at age seven. He was a rookie at Cave Junction in 1959 and jumped until 1969 while going to college. Chuck received a PhD in Physics from the University of Idaho in 1970. His career included a postdoctoral at the Manned Spacecraft Center and 17 years as a Senior Scientist at the Los Alamos National Laboratory. He retired in 1993 and now operates Coyote Aerospace, Coyote Aviation and Coyote Tales Publishing. Since the Cerro Grande Fire (2000), he has been very active in the issue of Wildland fire control. For the past 5 years he has led a small team recording the carvings on Aspen Trees in the Valles Caldera National Preserve.*

*He may be contacted at [coyote2@swcp.com](mailto:coyote2@swcp.com) or his web site// <http://www.CoyoteAerospace.com>.*

#### Citations

1. *Uncle Sam’s Cabins – A Visitors Guide to Historic U.S. Forest Service Ranger Stations of the West.* Les Joslin, Wildernes Associates, Bend, Ore.

ISBN 10: 0-9647167-8-X

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2. *Fire Lookouts of the Northwest.* Ray Kresek, Ye Galleon Press, Spokane, Wash.

ISBN 0-87770-317-5





# BLAST FROM THE PAST



by Jack Demmons (Missoula '50)  
*THE DAILY MISSOULIAN* paper of Wednesday, Sept. 19, 1945, had an article with the title "Navy blimp no tougher than Forest Service flights over Montana, says Merle Lundrigan."

Navy blimp flying has its discomforts and its rough moments, but it is no tougher, and in some ways, not as rugged as some of the experiences one may have on Forest Service patrol over the mountains of Western Montana. Such is the considered opinion expressed yesterday by Navy Chief Parachute Rigger **Merle Lundrigan** (MSO-41), who has an intimate acquaintance with both.

Chief Lundrigan, recently arrived in the city following his discharge from the Navy, was visiting at the Forest Service Fire Control Headquarters, where he was chief foreman of the parachute squad in the old days when that was the top position in the smokejumper project.

He explained that in the Navy he was foreman of the fabric shop at Tillamook, Oregon, but was also under flying orders, and that meant that he went on blimp patrols from time to time.

"Mostly, it's very much like flying in one of those planes out there over the high Bitterroot Mountains, only in a blimp, it's slower. It's fine in good weather, but in rough weather, it is not always so pleasant."

One difference that did not appeal too much to an old smokejumper, however, he added, was that instead of climbing above the fog or clouds,



blimps go down under them. "There have been times when we skimmed along about twenty feet above the water, just high enough to keep the spray from splashing on us – much too low for a parachute to do any good," he said. "If we'd come down much farther, we'd have been in the drink."

Thermals affect blimps in about the same way they do planes, the speaker said, and he has known the time when the blimp lost 100 feet of altitude much more quickly than was comfortable.

Chief Lundrigan said his long-range peacetime plans are not yet settled, but he intends to remain here if he can successfully buck the housing shortage and find shelter for his family, and one of the first things he is going to do is go hunting, not for Japanese submarines off the Oregon coast, but for the game found in Western Montana fields and forests. 🍄

*Author's note – Merle, originally from Farlington, Kansas, moved with his family to Puyallup, Wash-*

*ington, at age one.*

*After graduating from high school, he went to work as a seasonal employee for the U.S. Forest Service and moved to Missoula in 1927, where he received a permanent appointment with the Forest Service in 1933.*

*He became the chief foreman of the smokejumper squads for the fire-control division in 1941.*

*After service in the Navy during World War II, he was stationed on the Cabinet National Forest, and then transferred to the Siskiyou National Forest in Oregon in 1946.*

*He returned to Region 1 headquarters in Missoula in 1947 and retired from the position of general supply officer at the Aerial Fire Depot May 26, 1962, after more than 30 years of service.*

*(I remember him from my days as a Missoula smokejumper.)*

*Merle Lundrigan died February 4, 1992, in Missoula at age 84. He was interred at Sunset Memorial Cemetery.*

*There is one story involving Merle while he was in the smokejumpers.*

*On a flight to a fire in the Nez Perce National Forest in 1940, Merle almost fell to his death. While dropping cargo from a Johnson Flying Service Travelair 6000, his legs got tangled up in ropes, and he was pulled out of the door of the plane; he was barely hanging on the doorstep. The pilot immediately banked hard to the left, tossing Merle back into the plane.*

*From that time on, cargo kickers have had to wear parachutes.*

# Mathiesen Boosts Jumper Program, Earns Dunton Honors

by Daren C. Belsby (North Cascades '86)

I would like to congratulate **Josh Mathiesen** (RDD-94), Redding's assistant operations manager, on being selected as this year's recipient of the Al Dunton Forest Service Smokejumper Award.

Josh has performed beyond the requirements of his position and consistently demonstrates the attributes of wildland fire leadership that have earned him this award.

Josh has shown a passion for the Smokejumper program and for the U.S. Forest Service. He has gone above and beyond the duties of his position to promote, educate, and lead the smokejumper program.

Josh was an integral part of a group of smokejumper and regional managers responsible for setting up the Porterville Spike Base for the 2012 fire season. The base was operational for eight weeks and was very active. Twenty-seven fires were jumped

from the base; several fires with large fire potential were caught in initial attack. Mathiesen's efforts directly helped contain these fires with extreme fire potential.

On two occasions, Josh also showed his selflessness by volunteering to fill in as the duty officer for the Cleveland National Forest during the fire season. This forest is known for its high-complexity fires and a complicated mix of human factors due to its proximity to the U.S.-Mexico border.

His leadership on the Cleveland National Forest brought the smokejumper program a great deal of positive recognition.

Josh is now filling in for the assistant fire management officer for the Shasta-Trinity National Forest on a temporary basis. In this position Josh has the opportunity to promote the smokejumper program through his day-to-day contact with forest personnel and regional leaders.



*Josh Mathiesen (RDD-94)*

Within the unit, Josh has continuously and passionately worked hard to strengthen the smokejumper program and its employees. As an operations manager, he makes decisions to put the smokejumper program and its employees in a position to be successful for the benefit of the taxpayer and the Forest Service. 🌲

# Mennonites, Brethren Proved Patriotism Doing Dangerous Work At Home

by Preston Knight

*Copyright 2012, the Harrisonburg, Va., Daily News-Record*

Insults sometimes flew at **James Brunk** (MSO-45) like the bullets his harassers wish the man were dodging. "Yellow-belly," a derogatory term referencing one's supposed cowardice, was the most popular name. During World War II, some thought it applied to Brunk and

other conscientious objectors bound by their religious beliefs to a life of nonviolence.

A Harrisonburg native and Mennonite, Brunk was one of thousands of men who stuck to their religious convictions as conscientious objectors and received exemptions from military service during World War II. But that doesn't mean Brunk didn't serve his country. His

contribution took place not on some foreign soil but on American soil for the Civilian Public Service, not overseas in a branch of the U.S. military.

Specifically, Brunk fought forest fires, parachuting 2,000 feet more than 14 times from a Ford Trimotor plane in the Northwest.

“There really was no way I could kill folks,” said Brunk, who turned 86 in May 2012. “I wasn’t put here for that.”

## First CPS camp in Virginia

The CPS was created through the Selective Service and Training Act of 1940 for those who were exempt from military service based on religious views.

About 38 percent, or 4,665, of the 12,600 men drafted into the program were Mennonite, the largest of any denomination, according to the Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online.

Mennonites are strongly opposed to violence and war, and believe peaceful means should be used to resolve disputes.

The first CPS camp opened three miles east of Grottoes, Va., in May 1941 at a former Civilian Conservation Corps site. The CPS camps offered labor in soil conservation or forestry projects, based on location. Grottoes campers cleared pasture lands, stabilized gullied banks and provided other work to prevent soil erosion.

There was no pay in the CPS, and as part of the law establishing the program, the men could not be sent to a camp within several hundred miles of home. No limits were set on the number of hours a service member worked a day or week. Among the rules at the Grottoes camp was one that sounds straight from a military guide: “Hazing and rowdiness belong to motives and attitude other than Christian ones.”

The men also had to be ready at all times to fight forest fires, according to the camp’s manual. The forestry units built and maintained firebreaks, roads and trails.

A select few were smokejumpers and parachuted to battle blazes.

## ‘Hardest work’

According to the National Smokejumper Association, Clarence Quay (MSO-43) of Bridgewater, Va., is the only other Valley smokejumper still alive.

Quay, 95, was born in Chester County, Pa., and joined three others from his Brethren church in the CPS. Meanwhile, 16 other church members went to war.

“I found my beliefs [were] Jesus taught us a way of love and not hate,” said Quay, who moved to the Bridgewater Retirement Community 15 years ago. “I went in with the idea of wanting to help the country, but not helping them do work that was harmful to others.”

When someone claimed religious beliefs as a reason to not serve in the military, he went before a local draft board. Some men were rejected and sent off to war, however.

For Brunk and Quay, their “war stories” involve battles of a different sort. A thunderstorm in the Northwest could trigger 200 forest fires, far more than the roughly 250 CPS men used to fight them could contain.

Brunk smacked against a rock in his second-to-last jump.

“I had to ride a horse for 18 miles,” he said. “I could hardly sit down or stand up for two weeks.”

On another occasion, Brunk carried a fellow smokejumper several miles after that man hit a rock and broke his back. Brunk crafted a stretcher out of jump jackets and poles.

Quay’s closest call with severe injury was on his first try. He parachuted into a dead tree. Its limbs started falling. Quay, fortunately, did not.

“I was scared,” he said. “Some of the things we were doing were maybe more dangerous than you realize when you were doing it.”

Yet it was worthy work for their country, even without pay, the local smokejumpers say.

“I never heard [yellow-belly] after I went into smokejumping,” said Brunk, who now lives at Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community. “With smokejumping, I could prove I wasn’t ‘yellow’ after all. It was the hardest work, physically, in my life.”

Some CPS campers worked in mental hospitals and prompted systematic change by unearthing widespread patient abuse, said Lois Bowman, librarian at Eastern Mennonite University’s Menno Simons Historical Library.

That’s still not to say they were always celebrated. Like Brunk, Quay said he was called “yellow-belly” and “coward.”

“Even in your own community,” Quay said, “you never knew who was going to be against you.”

Bowman said: “Sentiment was strong against these guys, and the Mennonites in general. I can’t really blame anyone who actually saw action for resenting those who didn’t.”

But any hard feelings seemed to dissipate over time, especially for smokejumpers, as soldiers returned to the United States.

**Larry Longley** (NCSB-72), historian and second vice president of the NSA, said the two groups were able to coexist because veterans realized the objectors were basing their actions on religious beliefs.

“They were opposed to shooting someone, but they didn’t mind risking their own lives fighting fires,” Longley said. “They did their part for the community, that’s for sure.” 🦌

You can save 36% by pre-ordering this book on Amazon.com

## Hog's Exit

*Jerry Daniels, the Hmong, and the CIA*

Gayle L. Morrison

**IT JUST DIDN'T SIT RIGHT.** Not with his friends, not with his coworkers, not with his hunting and fishing buddies, and certainly not with his family. The American Embassy in Bangkok had reported the accidental death of Jerry "Hog" Daniels by carbon monoxide poisoning. Three decades later, his family and most of his friends remain unconvinced that the U.S. government told them the truth about his death.

As a former CIA case officer to legendary Hmong leader General Vang Pao during the "secret war" in Laos, Jerry Daniels was experienced, smart, and careful. Those who knew him well said he wasn't the type to die as reported. Raising even more doubts, his casket was "Permanently Sealed" by the U.S. State Department before being shipped home to Missoula, Montana, where he was honored with a three-day funeral ceremony organized by his former comrades-in-arms, the Hmong hilltribe warriors from Laos.

This book examines the unique personality and reported death of a man who was a pivotal agent in U.S./Hmong history. Friends and family share their memories of Daniels growing up in Montana, cheating death in Laos, and carousing in the bars and brothels of Thailand. First-person accounts from Americans and Hmong, ranchers and refugees, State Department officials, and smokejumpers capture both human and historical stories about the life of this dedicated and irreverent individual and offer speculation on the unsettling circumstances of his death. Equally important, *Hog's Exit* is the first complete account in English to document the drama and beauty of the Hmong funeral process.

*Hog's Exit* provides a fascinating view of a man and the two very different cultures in which he lived.

*Hog's Exit* instantly vaults into the top five books on the CIA's covert war in Laos and its long, long aftermath. It's a wonderful work of storytelling and scholarship, and it opens up the spiritual world of the Hmong tribe as few have done before. —**ROGER WARNER**, author of *Shooting at the Moon: The Story of America's Clandestine War in Laos*

In *Hog's Exit*, the poetry of the hills of Montana and of Laos speaks to us through the memories of those who knew him, leaving all the questions and explanations and memories to follow in a stream. Jerry Daniels the CIA officer becomes Jerry Daniels the human being, someone we can understand. —**REBECCA WELDON**, anthropologist

PETER F. MORRISON



**GAYLE L. MORRISON** has worked with the Hmong community since 1977 in education, refugee services, private enterprise, and as an oral historian, researcher, and writer. Her first book was *Sky Is Falling: An Oral History of the CIA's Evacuation of the Hmong from Laos* (1999). Based on the quality of her oral history research, she received a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) in 2003-2004. She lives in Santa Ana, California, and Missoula, Montana.



A portrait of the rowdy life and mysterious death of a former CIA officer, as told by those who knew him

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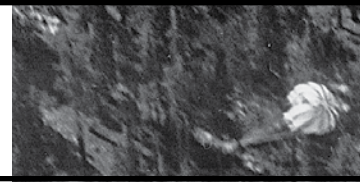
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# THE JUMP LIST



*The Jump List is intended to bring you up-to-date on your fellow NSA members. Send your information to Chuck Sheley; see his contact information on page three of this magazine.*

**William A. "Wild Bill" Yensen (McCall '53)**

**Now living in:** St. George, Utah

**Jumped:** MYC 53-55, 58, 61-86

**Since jumping:** Graduated from University of Redlands (1955) after growing up on farms in Nebraska and Idaho, finishing high school in Coachella, Calif.; began smokejumping in McCall; draft board let me finish my graduate year at San Diego State and immediately drafted me; by that time had married my wife, Arlene; was trained to be a mechanic and was sent to Germany; Arlene joined me in Germany in 1957 and we traveled all we could; I got out in 1958 and jumped that season; went to Army summer camps in 1959 and 1960, so did not jump; came back in '61 and jumped every year until '86; taught high school and coached in the Sweetwater Union High School District in the San Diego area from 1958 until 1992.

**Bill says:** "I retired from teaching in '92 and we moved to St. George. We go to McCall every summer and spend the summers in the cabin my wife and I built during my 30 seasons of jumping. We love McCall because of the weather and the golf and lake and old friends who still live there. We did lots of traveling. Now I'm most interested in NSA trail projects. I look forward to May when I head up the Dixie Forest project for the sixth year. I am also looking forward to going back to Stanley and working with Deb Peters and all the guys. Trail projects are great fun and you meet lots of great old jumpers. People really appreciate what we do. I just turned 80 but I'll keep at it as long as I can carry my weight and do my share of what has to be done. I am still engraving knives and belt buckles for smokejumpers."

**Col. Bob Webster (Missoula '55)**

**Now living in:** Box Springs, Ga.

**Jumped:** MSO 55-57

**Since jumping:** At the end of the 1955 season, bought a free-fall rig from one of the overhead guys; he paid for flight so I could jump with this modified camo main with Derry slots but no tails; reserve was a Switlik 1942 silk 22-foot; the jump was my first free-fall and more exciting than a midnight ride in an Olds 98; graduated from Virginia Military Institute in 1957 and went into Army

in February 1958; graduated from airborne school and Ranger school, followed by fixed-wing flight school split between Camp Gary, Texas, and Tactical and Instrument at Ft. Rucker, Ala.; went to Okinawa in 1960 on a three-year stint that included helos off aircraft carrier, U.S. Air Force water-survival school (spent mostly in the ocean; my helicopter company became the first armed helicopter unit in 1962; we trained in Korat, Thailand, and then deployed to Vietnam where we were armed escort for CH-21 troop-lift helos; we built our own weapons system – two skid-mounted Browning LMG with the ammo belt feeding through a hole we cut in the floor and fuselage of UH-1A (hueys) and i-4 2.75-inch rockets; the sight was a grease-pencil cross on the windshield; I rotated back to the U.S. in 1963 and infantry advanced course at Ft. Benning, Ga.; later assigned to Ft. Rucker tactics Department of Aviation School; qualified in and then set up the helo-mounted M-22 guided anti-tank missile gunnery course; then went to the CH-54 flying crane school at Ft. Rucker, then to Korea as commanding officer and later exec of the Division Aviation company (A), 2nd Infantry Division; we flew CH-21 helos; there was a pilot shortage because Vietnam was heating up; returned to Ft. Rucker and the guided-missile school; returned to Vietnam in 1969 as CO of the 282nd Assault Helicopter Company; then got a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, convincing the 1st Aviation Brigade to let me put six guided missiles on four of our UH-1B gunships, which were factory-wired to accept the system; the brigade ammo officer informed me that I could have all the missiles as he was about to relocate them to the U.S.; I fired 200 missiles in nine weeks; returned to the U.S., went to Armed Forces Staff College in 1971; retired from the Army in 1978; flew helicopter for Air Logistics in the Gulf of Mexico in 1981, supporting offshore oil; Air Logistics sent me to Indonesia for nearly four years on a joint helicopter venture with the Indonesian government; flew for Air Logistics on the Exxon Valdez oil spill cleanup effort; got to co-pilot the last Air Logistics 212 from Homer, Alaska, to New Iberia, La.; met my second wife in Alaska; we got married and set up in Balsam Lake, Wis.; returned to Homer in 1990 so I could take a job flying Bell 206 helicopter for nine weeks, flying 385 hours – busy but good money; Betty and I lived in Wisconsin 16 years; she was diagnosed with fast-spreading lung cancer in October 2004 and died March 2005.

**Bob says:** “We were paid straight time at the GS rate of \$1.65 per hour, I think – no matter. It would have been a ‘good deal’ if I had to pay the USFS instead of being paid. I remember Fred Brauer (MSO-41) met me and two others at the Great Northern depot in Missoula. As we rode to the base, Fred offered us a dip of his snuff, or ‘candy,’ as he called the Copenhagen. From that first day in 1955, smokejumping was one exciting adventure after another. After completing our fourth training jump on a Friday, I went into Missoula to a late movie. After midnight I was hitchhiking the 12 miles to the base; a late-model Oldsmobile 98 pulled up and a nice lady asked me if I was a smokejumper. I had on a white t-shirt with ‘Smokejumpers’ on the front and an image of a jumper coming down. I told her I was definitely a smokejumper; she gave me an eventful ride to the base. I went to sleep that night thinking what I think to this day – being a smokejumper has got to be the greatest job ever! I almost left my Whites on. I moved to Georgia where I have four daughters with my first wife. I then had a massive heart attack and quadruple-bypass surgery. I am fine now; I ride a bike for exercise about 25 miles a day, three days a week. I have done 75 miles at a slow pop. I’m engaged to Bobbie M. Ashmore; she is a soldier’s widow and successfully raised eight children. I am in good, capable hands. We went to the NSA reunion in Boise and hope to go to the next in Missoula. I am enjoying life. Modern technology! Eye implants, total right-hip replacement, heart bypass, and lots of the wonder drug – aspirin!”

**Eric “The Blak” Schoenfeld (Cave Junction ’64)**

**Now living in:** Haines, Ore.

**Jumped:** CJ 64-66, 72, LGD 73-75, FBX 76-93

**Since jumping:** Having fun; camping, hiking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, fishing and hunting birds in local woods with my dogs, and every now and then, with my wife, Jen, of more than 40 years; “helping” neighbors and former co-workers who both want and could use my “help.”

**Eric says:** “Never assume the obvious. Beware of intrusively trying to do something ‘for’ others when you, in fact, may just be complicating their lives and annoying them. But, if someone obviously needs ASAP assistance, don’t hesitate.”

**Tom Tutt (Missoula ’64)**

**Now living in:** Gresham, Ore.

**Jumped:** MSO 64-65

**Since jumping:** Active duty, U.S. Air Force, five years; Oregon Air Guard, 25 years; lumber broker, 40 years; retired.

**Tom says:** “I was the U.S. Air Force F-4 ‘Top Gun’

competition winner of the William Tell Air Force World Wide Weapons Meet in 1986.”

**John Spencer (North Cascades ’98)**

**Now living in:** Entiat, Wash.

**Jumped:** NCSB 98-11

**Since jumping:** Still teaching high school chemistry and biology, with 24 years so far; involved as a temporary seasonal wildland firefighter 27 seasons, of which 13 have been as a smokejumper.

**John says:** “I just retired from coaching soccer for 30 years. I am currently training to get my air attack qualification, and jumping is still a kick in the pants.”

**Stephen G. Henry (Missoula ’65)**

**Now living in:** Alexandria, Minn.

**Jumped:** MSO 65-67

**Since jumping:** Finished medical school, 1970; worked in Indian Health Service, 1971-73; had private practice (family practice), 1973-2009; retired 2009.

**Stephen says:** “I’ve been on the NSA Trail Projects on five occasions – a wonderful experience. I’ve been addicted to the mountains since my Forest Service experience. I continue to hike and ski.”

**Kenneth Rea (Redding ’65)**

**Now living in:** Orofino, Idaho

**Jumped:** RDD 65

**Since jumping:** Graduated from Humboldt State University with a degree in Forest Management; served in the U.S. Army, three years; retired from Idaho Department of Lands in 2005 with 37 years of service; now drive an ambulance part-time as a first responder; studying to be a basic emergency medical technician (EMT).

**Kenneth says:** “Every day is a ‘mountain top’ experience.”

**Hank Carpenter (Missoula ’65)**

**Now living in:** Orofino, Idaho

**Jumped:** MSO 65, WYS 66, FBX 67-70

**Since jumping:** Worked for Natural Resources Conservation Service, six years; then transferred to the Farm Service Agency, retiring from there after 23 years; now raising hay to sell on the 160-acre farm where I grew up.

**Hank says:** “I enjoyed a moose hunt with my 1970 Alaska roommates **Paul Bradley** (MYC-65), **Gene Hobbs** (IDC-61) and **Wayne Sugg** (IDC-65) in fall 2010. Bradley got his moose. The four of us have enjoyed several hunting and fishing trips together in recent years.”

**Ron J. Pond (McCall ’66)**

**Now living in:** Pendleton, Ore.

**Jumped:** MYC 66-69

**Since jumping:** Earned degree in Anthropology/Sociology from Eastern Oregon University, 1974; got master's degree in Interdisciplinary Studies from Oregon State University, 1992; earned Ph.D. in Interdisciplinary Studies from Washington State University in 2004; retired as assistant professor from Washington State in 2009.

**Ron says:** "I was the first American Indian smoke-jumper at McCall in 1966, and am an enrolled member of the Umatilla Tribe in Pendleton, Ore., of Umatilla and Palouse descent."

**Michael S. Burney (McCall '66)**

**Now living in:** Taos, N.M.

**Jumped:** MYC 66, IDC 66-68

**Since jumping:** Pursuing Western American prehistoric and historic archaeology.

**David A. Torgenrud (McCall '66)**

**Now living in:** Rapid City, S.D.

**Jumped:** MYC 66-68, 70

**Since jumping:** Worked as aerospace engineer, well log engineer (oil fields), seismic navigation engineer (including offshore South Vietnam), airplane pilot, two-way radio technician, TV repairman, janitor, shipping clerk; have been on antidepressants and antipsychotics for 15 years.

**David says:** "Smokejumping prepared me for many things, one of which was not life in the Midwest. The best job I ever had was smokejumping. I had 57 jumps."

**Charles "Smokey" Cranfill (Redmond '66)**

**Now living in:** Carrizo Springs, Texas

**Jumped:** RAC 66-68

**Since jumping:** I had a bad accident on my 50th jump in the summer of '68 and could not jump anymore; devastating for me because that's all I wanted to do; spent a couple of years after college working as a Professional Scouter in the Circle Ten Council (Dallas area) before starting federal career of more than 40 years; worked for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for 22 years as a park

ranger, park/lake manager, outdoor recreation planner, and realty specialist (working in the district/division headquarters) and various lakes in Texas; then switched to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and worked for them for 18 years as a park ranger and outdoor recreation planner here in south Texas and western Oregon; after moving out to Oregon to work, drove my wife over to Redmond to show her the base; everything looked the same, except I saw women jumpers for the first time – my how things changed; have been retired from federal service for almost five years; reside in the Texas Hill Country, where I hunt and guide a lot; stay busy instructing Texas Concealed Handgun Licenses for Texas DPS every weekend I'm not hunting/guiding; during these federal service years, I managed to stay healthy enough to continue wildland firefighting and federal officer collateral duties, but my heart was always for smokejumping; wished I could have made a career out of it!

**Smokey says:** I was one of the most-awarded Boy Scouts in the history of the Alamo Area Council (San Antonio), and attended Stephen F. Austin State University (majoring in Forestry) while I was jumping. I had been a "smokechaser" for the Beaverhead N.F. (Wise River Ranger District) prior to my rookie season. My Scouting background well-prepared me for outdoor work, and I thoroughly enjoyed every bit of jumping. Past jumpers have alluded to this same opinion and I'm no different. It was, and always will be, a unique *esprit de corps* among us who have ever jumped! Thank you for your time and I certainly will want to meet you at the reunion as well."

**Randy "Doc" Gore (McCall '67)**

**Now living in:** Lake Oswego, Ore.

**Jumped:** MYC 67-75

**Since jumping:** Retired after practicing internal medicine plus doing cardiovascular research for 35 years; got bored and returned to work part-time, filling in for doctors who were on educational leave, maternity leave, etc.; wife and I rode bicycles from Prague, Czech Republic, to Vienna, Austria, last fall; still skiing, camping, backpacking, etc.

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## Are You Going to Be "Temporarily Away"?

As more of our membership moves with the weather, I am getting an ever-increasing number of *Smoke-jumper* 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.

If you are leaving your mailing address during the months of March, June, September and/or December, please let Chuck Sheley 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.

Another option *is join our electronic mailing list.* 📧

**Doc says:** “I define the essence of my being as a smokejumper, ranking equally to being a husband, father, physician and researcher.”

**Jay Scott (Cave Junction '67)**

**Now living in:** Dinuba, Calif.

**Jumped:** CJ 67, ANC 71, FBX 72

**Since jumping:** Earned a Bachelor's degree in Pomology from Chico State University, 1972; a Master's degree in Viticulture from Fresno State University, 1976; farming and farmers markets, Sacramento and Los Angeles; served in U.S. Army, 1967-70 (Vietnam in 1970).

**Jay says:** “Smokejumping let me see some of the world's prettiest forests in the lower 48 and Alaska. I learned to be independent and learned to deal with adversity.”

**Phil Difani (Missoula '67)**

**Now living in:** Missoula, Mont.

**Jumped:** MSO 67-75

**Since jumping:** After 1975 fire season, married Holly, then lived on her family's ranch until 1981; then moved to ranch near Polson, Mont., and raised a family there; divorced in 2009; I moved to Missoula where I renewed my ski bum and backpacking career.

**Monty Heath (Missoula '67)**

**Now living in:** Bullhead City, Ariz.

**Jumped:** MSO 67

**Since jumping:** Studied at University of Washington; drafted in 1968 and elected to join U.S. Air Force during the Vietnam War; graduated from college in 1974 and continued career with Forest Service; continued working in fire management and suppression, along with other duties, until retiring in 1997; relocated to “dry heat” for hopefully some relief from lower-spine arthritis and the tranquility of the desert.

**Monty says:** “Just one year of smokejumping, given the fire season of 1967, was a springboard to my future. I worked up the ladder over time to many seasons as a division/group supervisor. I also played a national role in wilderness and national park fire management. As a division supervisor, I had the opportunity to work with the best of the era. I'll never forget Paul Gleason and the Zigzag Hotshots, nor Tom Sheppard and the sorrow of the Prineville Hotshots. **Bill Moody** (NCSB-57) is a wonder. I was privileged to work with him frequently over the years. Larry Nelson was the best leader I have ever worked for, and **Earl Cooley** (MSO-40) gave me my 1967 jumper performance rating in his office Sept. 9, 1967. He said I was a good, average smokejumper. What more could I ask of a career in the Forest Service?

**Lynn Flock (McCall '68)**

**Now living in:** Agua Dulce, Calif.

**Jumped:** MYC 68-69, 72-81, FBX 82-85, NIFC 86-94

**Since jumping:** Served as Boise smokejumper pilot, 1995-97; Forest Service Region 5 lead plane pilot, 1998-2005; Neptune Aviation P2V first officer, 2006; Cal Fire Very Large Air Tanker (VLAT) lead plane pilot, Victorville, Calif., DynCorp 2007-10.

**Lynn says:** “I am anticipating my 43rd season of firefighting in 2011.”

**Victor Nicholas (Fairbanks '68)**

**Now living in:** Nulato, Alaska

**Jumped:** FBX 68, 70-73

**Since jumping:** Grew up in Kaltag, but living in Nulato since 1975; commercial pilot for local area (Galena) for years; started own air taxi and flew about 18 years for myself; started a grocery store in Kaltag and Nulato; was mayor and chief for Nulato; served on local and regional school boards; served on Tanana Chiefs Conference executive board for eight years; now vice-chair for Doyon, our regional for-profit corporation.

**Victor says:** “I enjoyed my years jumping. Without that I would not have had the chance to go to college and learn to fly. I enjoy the NSA and seeing familiar names and faces, and seeing where and what they are doing.”

**Alan G. Muench, M.D. (Idaho City '69)**

**Now living in:** Grangeville, Idaho

**Jumped:** IDC 69, BOI 71

**Since jumping:** Retired from U.S. Army; attended medical school; surgery residencies, general and plastic surgery; now operate medical practice in Lewiston, Idaho.

**Alan says:** “Hello! I'd like to hear from any old jumpers.”

**John Crues (Missoula '70)**

**Now living in:** Playa del Rey, Calif.

**Jumped:** MSO 70-71, GAC 75

**Since jumping:** Finished college at Harvard University, 1972; earned graduate degree in Physics, University of Illinois, 1975; went to Harvard Medical School, 1979; finished internal medicine (1982) and radiology (1985) residencies at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles and now practice radiology in Los Angeles.

**John says:** “We are all incredibly lucky to have had the experience of smokejumping!”

**Robert “Bob” Totten (Boise '71)**

**Now living in:** Danville, Calif.

**Jumped:** BOI 71-73, RDD 74-77

**Since jumping:** Administrative officer, U.S. Forest Service, 1978-83; special agent, FBI, 1983-2005 – Knoxville Division, 1983-85; New York Division, 1985-90;



FBI Headquarters, Washington, D.C., 1990-94; San Francisco Division, 1994-2005; retired 2005.

**Bob says:** "I'm happily retired! My e-mail address is [totten.robert@gmail.com](mailto:totten.robert@gmail.com)."

**James E. Coyle (Missoula '71)**

**Now living in:** Sandy, Utah

**Jumped:** MSO 71-75, 78

**Since jumping:** Currently employed with the National Park Service at Glacier National Park as a forestry technician in hazard tree management, weed management and fire control; currently red-carded as a FFT2 firefighter; have been with the Park Service since 2005; also self-employed at Coyle Graphics, an art company I started in 1974, working as an independent artist doing pen-and-ink drawings, picture framing and print sales.

**James says:** "I'm married to wife, Jennifer, and have two children, son Terry and daughter Briana."

**Steve Meyer (McCall '73)**

**Now living in:** Redding, Calif.

**Jumped:** MYC 73, RDD 74-75, 78-85

**Since jumping:** On medical retirement from the California Department of Forestry; now working at Mercy Medical Center in Redding.

**Steve says:** "I miss the people and I miss jumping. I would do it again if I were younger."

**Gary G. "Pops" Johnson (Fairbanks '74)**

**Now living in:** Sandpoint, Idaho

**Jumped:** FBX 74-80, 83-84, MSO 87

**Since jumping:** During remainder of fire career, worked in full-time air attack on Sierra Front, BLM, four years; district aviation manager on Sierra Front, BLM, five years; assistant fire management officer, Carson City, Nev., BLM, nine years; after retirement, served as defensible space coordinator, Carson City Municipal Fire Department; Bonner County Sheriff's Department, Sandpoint, Idaho, marine deputy on patrol boat on Lake Pend Oreille, 2005 to the present – "a great job helping people."

**Pops says:** "Diane and I have been married 34 years and looking forward to more. Both of our daughters are still in Nevada – Emily is in Las Vegas, and Dawn and husband Jed are firefighters for the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest in Reno."

**Bob James (Missoula '75)**

**Now living in:** Boise, Idaho

**Jumped:** MSO 75-78, 81

**Since jumping:** Fractured back in two places during fifth smokejumping season; due to that, went back to helitack in California and in 1985 moved to Boise and managed

the Boise National Forest Helitack crew for four seasons; due to back problems, left fire and became an electronic tech on the Boise N.F. until retiring in 2010.

**Bob says:** "Jumping was one of the best times of my life. I met a lot of good friends during this time. I would name them all, but there were so many, I wouldn't want to leave anybody out."

**David Stewart (Redmond '76)**

**Now living in:** Bend, Ore.

**Jumped:** RAC 76-84

**Since jumping:** Went to medical school; have been doctoring in Bend since 1990.

**Daniel Emry (Boise '78)**

**Now living in:** Shasta Lake, Calif.

**Jumped:** BOI 78-79, RDD 80, 83-86

**Since jumping:** Worked in Tehama County Probation Department, 18 years; chief probation officer, four years; retired June 2009.

**Daniel says:** "I married the Redding smokejumper clerk, Ilene Hess, in 1986. It remains the best decision I ever made." 🍄

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## Get Smokejumper Magazine One Month Ahead Of The Rest

**N**SA 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](mailto:cnkgsheley@earthlink.net). 🍄