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National Smokejumper Association

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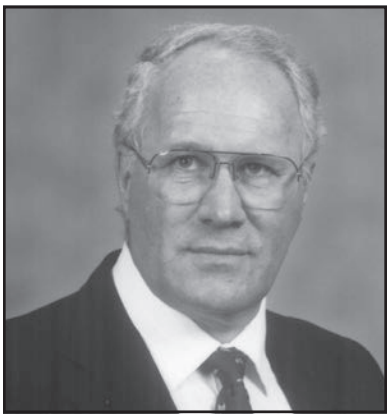
Message from the President



by Jim Cherry
(Missoula '57)
President

Mark your calendars, ladies and gentlemen! Our next **National Smokejumper Reunion** will be taking place during **the third week in June 2019 in Boise**.

There will be details in the months ahead as the organizing committee works through the logistics of schedules, food, beverages and meeting places. Major emphasis will be placed on providing blocks of time for conversations with old friends and the telling of tall tales over a suitable beverage of choice. Stay tuned to the NSA webpage at *www.smokejumpers.com* and the January 2019 issue of *Smokejumper* magazine.

For the second year in a row, the NSA Scholarship program has received a total of 19 applications. As of late June, the selection committee is in the process of reviewing the applications. It's a tough job.

I wish we had many more than the six scholarships that are available because the applicants are so worthy, based on their scholarship, their need, and their vision for their future. Applicants of this quality are an indication that our future will be in good hands with the next generation.

I want to challenge you readers to consider making a special gift to the Scholarship Fund. If the response is sufficiently strong, we could increase our scholarships in 2019 from the present six to maybe seven, eight or nine annual scholarships of $2,000 each. Some of you might even have the individual means to establish an NSA scholarship – maybe through a gift of appreciated assets or the designation of funds from an IRA. Give it some thought. Contact me at *jimcherry@wctatel.net* if you have questions.

Even though we are presently soaking wet here in Iowa, where I live, I am fully aware of the Western fire season making its annual migration from the Southwest to the northern Rockies. I look from time to time at the *Incident Information System* link on our smokejumper website to get a broader look at the fire picture beyond what the evening news shows us.

It's another tough and tragic year with the loss of forest and rangeland acreage, and the loss of homes and liveli-

hood for so many in the paths of these fires. It has become a very different fire environment than the ones we knew in the 1940s, '50s, '60s and '70s.

I also check the *Smokejumper Status Report* link on our NSA webpage and see that there is a lot of boosting taking place from one base to another. It's good to see that jumpers are being stationed where the action is taking place.

The next meeting of the NSA Board of Directors is scheduled for the Seattle area Oct. 24, 2019, at the Residence Inn in Tukwila, Wash.

Our meetings are always open to having you come as a visitor. We are always interested in having your input. Just let me know in advance so we can include you in the count for our working lunch.

NSA Members—Save This Information

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

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***Smokejumper** base abbreviations:*

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

Wildfire Suppression— A Problem No One Can Solve?

by Chuck Sheley (Cave Junction '59)

One big advantage of being part of the smokejumper community from past years is getting continual feedback from people who went on to jobs "in the real world." Many of these individuals formed the backbone of the USFS and were movers in wildland firefighting for years.

Their experience and insight, in my opinion, has been relegated to the back burner by the current wildfire community. There is a new generation in control. Refer to **Dick Rath's** (MSO-73) article on page 10. I know there has been a climate change, the fire season is longer, and many things have changed. But, as much as things have changed, many things have not.

I'm going to print as much feedback and thoughts from these individuals as possible in this issue. Anything coming from our membership and the NSA that will change the current methods of operation will have a snowballs chance of effecting change.

Somewhere along the line, the taxpayers will have to demand a change. But, maybe that will never happen. Fighting wildfire takes highly skilled people—the public knows little about that but is frightened about the end results of uncontrolled wildfire. The budget is open-ended when fire starts burning down houses, and it becomes a blank check situation.

Last March at our NSA board meeting in Boise, we had a chance to get feedback from top fire personnel in the BLM and USFS. A key phrase stood out—"risk adverse." This has become such a big factor that aggressive initial attack (IA) has become a thing of the past. Don't do anything that will get someone hurt.

Problem with that is the longer you wait to make IA, the larger the fire grows. The larger the fire, the more people and resources involved. The more resources on the road going to a fire, the more chances of an accident. Transporting crews over the highways certainly involves one heck of a risk. Highway accidents are commonplace.

If prompt IA can limit a fire to a couple of engines and two Hotshot crews to control it, isn't the "risk" greatly decreased from a fire that eventually grows into an incident that requires several hundred or a thousand firefighters?

The article by Ben Smith (MSO-64) in the April 2018 issue of *Smokejumper* concerning the Whetstone Ridge Fire stands key in my thoughts. Please read that one again just to refresh your mind. Ben was run around the block by the USFS all the way from the district level to the regional level. He immediately found out the FS was off base on the initial reporting of the fire by four hours. Refer to Ben's "Letter to the Editor" on page 19.

Ben asked the question as to why smokejumpers were not called immediately as there were available resources listed on the daily resource report. We were told at the Boise meeting that the daily status report is not always accurate and that smokejumpers might not have been available.

The forest administration said that there were two Hotshot crews on the way, so, in effect, why call smokejumpers? The key factor was that the two Hotshot crews arrived 23 hours later.

Let's explore some ideas, input from our members, and expand our thinking about how to handle the current fire situation.

Making Money Off Wildfire

Two years ago a close friend, a retired Fire Chief, and I opposed a move by the Chico Fire Dept. (CFD) to keep 17 staff that were funded by a federal grant. The main argument by the CFD was that the reduction in staff levels would put the community at risk—the fear factor at work.

After a good letter writing campaign and us talking to city council members, the retention of

those firefighters at taxpayer expense was voted down 4-3. The taxpayers of Chico are saving about one million dollars a year and untold millions in future benefits and retirement. Chico firemen average $120,000 a year and receive an additional $50,000 in benefits.

With the CFD telling the public of the woes of being understaffed, they still manage to put out a good number of that staff on wildfire during the summer. Why would they want to do that?

Well, as they say, let's follow the money. Once they are dispatched, they are paid 24 hours a day until they return to Chico. Assignments can run up to 14 days before they have to return. A Fire Apparatus Engineer could make about $12,500 in overtime PLUS his/her regular salary during that period of time. In common lingo, it can also be termed the "kitchen remodel."

Nowdays they have many new positions to fill on a fire. One that is sometimes filled by local fire departments is the Medical Unit Team—an Emergency Medical Team—essentially a "band-aid and blisters" unit. Could be filled by local EMT's at a pretty reasonable expense. When it comes from the fire department, sometimes a Captain goes along. He/she annually makes $200,000-$220,000 locally. They would probably make $14,000 in overtime on a 14-day assignment. I used to have my crews treated by local EMT's and take them to the local emergency room if they required additional treatment.

Another unit that is confusing is the Technical Rescue Team. Locally they are usually involved in technical rescue situations and are a very valued and trained resource. But, do we need them on a fire just to fill in one of the spots on a manpower chart? I remember when we just hauled injured firefighters to the top of the hill, loaded them on the truck, and went back to work. Now we have to have a Technical Rescue Team. Are you seeing that fire is a big business?

Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up To Be Cowboys—Cal Fire Better!

Waylon Jennings and Willie Nelson's song from 1978 tells it all. The future is bleak for you taxpayers—things are not going to get better in the wildfire situation. Best bet for the young person—join the ranks.

This is a success story from one standpoint. In the 1980s, I started what I think were the first Asian fire crews in the U.S. The Hmongs are people from the hills of Laos and were our mercenary army in the Secret War in Laos. When our government finally allowed them to immigrate to the U.S., Fresno, California, became the "Hmong Capital" of America. From there they moved north to Stockton, Marysville, Willows and Chico.

At that time, I was running the Type II Crew Program for the Mendocino N.F. Someone told me about this little-known source of manpower. These were people who were hill people and soldiers—pretty good background for wildland firefighters.

Problem—how was I going to put them through the necessary classes to become wildland firefighters? I took one of my best 8th grade Hmong student from my P.E. class and had him translate, one sentence at a time, through 16 hours of classroom training. It was not easy, but it worked. It was amazing. All of these men showed up with government approved identification, social security numbers, a pencil and paper. Quite different from the college student types I was used to teaching. Another big difference from the everyday students I had been teaching—after each class, every one of them came up and thanked me for being a teacher. Wow!

Bottom line—I had four crews of Hmong firefighters. They were good. Problem was that the USFS could not figure out how to feed them or just didn't care. These men did not eat steak and potatoes and the regular fire camp menu. I told the Forest Service that all I needed was a 50 pound sack of rice, a cook, and my guys could get by on a lot less than they paid the fire camp caterer. Try to explain that to a person in "Contracting." I had an overweight person sitting in a chair with four wheels telling me what is the required diet for firefighters. Common sense is not a trait of the USFS.

A few years later Johnny, my 8th grade translator, graduated from the Fire Academy at a local community college. I was so proud of him. The graduation ceremony was special. Every member of Johnny's family, youngest to grandparents, was there. I had a special invitation and sat with the

Hmong family that filled the whole top row of the bleachers.

Johnny now works for Cal Fire. He has a high school education and a diploma from the Fire Academy. Last year he made $110,000—more than twice what I made as a 38-year teacher with a Master's Degree. Good for Johnny. Do you see what the future job market is going to be? If Waylon and Willie could update their song, it might be: "Let your babies grow up to be Cal Fire firefighters."

Building in Areas That Will Burn

Santa Rosa Fires—Even after the devastating fires of 2017, they are now rebuilding even more houses in the same areas than were there in the first place. Three major fires burned some of the same areas: 1930s, 1970s (40 yrs.) and 2017 (47 yrs.). What were open fields in the 30s are housing developments now.

When building projects came before the local County Supervisors, Fire Marshalls said fire safety measures for construction were good. National Public Radio (3/18), however, pointed out that 94% of the homes that burned had these safety measures. Project approved 6-1.

The County Supervisors seemed to feel that you can't tell people where they can or cannot build. People don't want to be told where to build even if they are in fire prone areas. They don't want to take basic steps to protect their house—removing vegetation and trees next to houses.

Dave Blakely (MSO-57) wrote a great article published in the July 2018 issue about him "sheltering in place" during a firestorm in Australia in 1983. At the time they sheltered in the home of David Packham, "one of Australia's renowned wildland fire researchers." While reading Dave's article, which was heart-stopping at times, I thought—If Packham is a renowned fire researcher, and his house was not prepared, how can the average citizen have any clue on what to do?

Here was the house of David Packham: Tall grass surrounding the house, no shutters on windows to prevent breaking of glass and fire entering, house surrounded by trees (standing eucalyptus—worst possible), propane tanks near his house unprotected (brass caps melted away), pile of lumber near the end of the house, pile covered with plastic tarp (toxic when burning), 2nd pile of lumber laying against the house. It's a miracle Dave is still with us after looking at this.

People want to be protected by agencies, e.g. fire dept., and want to be told how to evacuate vs. planning ahead. In other words, they don't want to be told they are in danger but want to be protected when the stuff hits the fan. When that happens, even the best of planning will not do the job.

Stop here and go to "Stop The Fire—No Fault Fire Zones" by **John Culbertson** (FBX-69) on page 13. How about it? Build it in a wildfire zone—protect it yourself. In a country that prides itself on individual independence, is it unreasonable to expect those individuals to take some personal responsibility?

Insurance Companies

The Insurance Commissioner in California said that the claims for losses total nearly $12 **billion** dollars from the wildfires that burned during October and December 2017. Go back and read **John Culbertson's** (FBX-69) experiences in the April 2018 issue of *Smokejumper*. John's everyday experiences gave us a great window into living with wildfire day after day.

Some residents are receiving non-renewal notices for their home insurance. I read about homeowners complaining about the drought causing trees to die and so on. Jeez—if you live in an area surrounded by trees, aka a forest, trees will die, burn, and grow over a period of time. You pick the place you live and determine the risks. Again, people want to be independent on one hand but don't want to be told they are living in a fire or flood-prone area and, on the other hand, are disturbed when their insurance rates go up.

They are independent Americans who don't want to be told where to live. At the same time, they are dependent Americans when it comes to natural disasters. Let's up everyone's insurance so "I can live in an area surrounded by trees—subsidize me so I can live on the hilltop. Surround my area with defensible space—that takes work and planning. I pay taxes for fire protection."

Anywhere from 20% to 50% of the houses in the northern California areas are identified as high

or very high risk areas. The state Insurance Commissioner wants the state legislature to change California law to prevent homeowners from losing their coverage because of wildfire risk. I really don't want to side with the insurance industry but, in this case, this seems like a good idea.

I'm using California as an example but, regardless of where you live, the situations are similar. Any houses in Montana and Idaho being built in high risk areas? As Red Ryder said, "You betchum, Little Beaver."

Tom Kovalicy (MSO-6) recommended that I read "Salmon River Fire" by John Sangster. Great read on the job volunteer fire people do answering the call and saving homes and property in Idaho.

One thing stands out and will never change, be it in Idaho or any other state. The great majority of property owners will not even take the basic prevention steps to protect their homes and out buildings. Wood piles and trees touch the houses—tall grass and brush on the property has not been mowed or cleared. Basic firewise steps that could be done at the owner's leisure during the off-season are left undone. During the firestorm, the firefighters are left to correct the ills of the unprepared property owners.

My recommendation is that only property that has been worked ahead of time and inspected for firewise work would be defended. Put your efforts on those who will take the time and effort to prepare their property for the fires that will come. As in the fable "The Little Red Hen,"—You don't help grow the grain, you don't eat the bread.

Look Out for Yourself—Plan Ahead

Let's look at a national disaster, the Napa/Sonoma/Santa Rosa Fires (2017). High winds (70 mph) downed trees that downed power lines that caused transformers to blow. The local resources were quickly overwhelmed. The 911 systems were overwhelmed. The ability for emergency agencies local/county/Cal Fire to communicate was overwhelmed.

First responders had to wait until downed power lines were inactivated by PGE—they couldn't cross active power lines on the ground. Dispatch centers lost power and, in some cases, rooms filled with smoke. Surrounding towns and counties were also overwhelmed with fire, negating the possibility of mutual aid. Everyone was up to their a-- in alligators at the same time. Chaos!

Power can be shut off during a natural disaster. Downside—disrupts hospitals and other critical facilities, traffic lights become inoperative. Some advantage—a lot of disadvantage. It is hard to imagine the nightmare emergency responders from all agencies were facing at that time. You could have had an engine and crew on every corner, and the result would have been a lot of lost engines and crews.

Bottom line—people are going to have to do a better job of protecting themselves—shelter in place. Build it to burn and it will.

A National Fire Academy

Refer to Les Joslin's article on page 15. Concerning a USFS Academy. There are a lot of good ideas there from Les. Looking at the current wildfire situation, it is evident that experienced and knowledgeable people are needed. We have military academies that produce professional soldiers—why not an Academy that specializes in wildfire management?

Coordination Between All Resources

Read **Tommy Albert's** (CJ-64) article on page 12. A great example of a mix that results in the tail wagging the dog. Air Tankers are immediately dispatched and lead planes waiting for approval from high up.

Tommy goes on to say, "When I was in Redding, the fire siren would go off, and we (lead planes) watched the tankers take off and disappear over the horizon before dispatch would call for us to launch. I would go over to dispatch and ask what was going on? They said lead planes are a 'National Resource,' so they had to go through the geek, gack, and the gook to get permission to launch. So, on our way out to the fire, we, the LEAD plane, would ask the RETURNING tanker what the fire was doing."

National Resource

I've heard many times that smokejumpers are a "National Resource." At our NSA meeting in Boise last March, I head that smokejumpers are

still being "held" by home units.

From **Dave Nelson** (MSO-57): "This fallacy of 'National Resource' availability has been the same for at least the last 40 years. Most national resources, like Hotshot crews, IMT's, smokejumpers, etc., are assigned to units – either districts, forests or regions, and the old adage 'possession is nine-tenths the law' remains true with any asset assigned to a unit."

Reflex Time

Reflex Time is the time it takes to submit an order and for that resource to arrive at the incident. The system is broken. We can see from incident to incident that "Reflex Time" moves at a snail's pace. I continue to ask the question: "If your house was burning, would the local fire department call a meeting and decide when to send a fire engine?" Please go back to Ben Smith's article on the Whetstone Fire in Montana in the April issue of *Smokejumper*—23 hours. Are you satisfied with that response?

Detection

The most critical key to preventing major wildfire events is quick detection and quick initial attack. Refer to my article on the Chetco Bar Fire on page 26. This fire cost over $61 million. In addition, it burned in the footprint of the Biscuit Fire that went over 500,000 acres and more millions. Wouldn't it seem logical to be on the alert for fire in that area? Pre-plan on how to fight fire in that area?

Lookouts

Lookouts seem to be a thing of the past. We need to revert to a system that worked. A single lookout could save millions in suppression expenses. The USFS is asking for volunteers for many jobs. I'm sure a well-managed program could find hundreds of qualified volunteers to man our forest lookouts—that is, if they even exist any more. Refer to **Karl Brauneis** (MSO-77) article: "Fixed Lookouts vs. Aerial Detection" on page 20.

Murry Taylor's (RDD-65) article on page 21 gives us some insight on how lookouts are still being staffed—volunteers, paid staff, open during high fire danger times. See any ideas there that could help in your area?

Hiring Problems

When we come up 40+ short of smokejumpers for a season (2017), there is a glitch in the system that needs to be fixed. Refer to my article on page 28. I've spent six months on this piece and feel like I'm chasing my tail.

Management of Wildfires on National Forest Lands

Bill Derr (Associate) does an excellent job (page 31) of presenting a consensus of opinions regarding future wildfire suppression and aerial firefighting issues garnered from attendees at the Aerial Firefighting Conference, March 12 to 14, 2018, Sacramento, CA. A lot of food for thought there.

Harvesting Our Forests

When the logging industry was shut down years ago, we lost the ability to thin our forests. Towns dried up, schools were closed, and jobs were lost. One thing we do know—trees will grow.

There has to be some common ground in the middle that both sides can agree upon where we can start our lumber and harvesting industry again. Restarting the lumber industry will have many benefits: Reduction of the fuel load, creation of jobs, tax money going back into communities in depressed areas, and reduction in the annual costs of fighting wildfire. Let's get the USFS back into the field of sustainable, professional logging. Read **Bud Filler's** (MYC-52) article on page 32. The President wants to put more coal miners back to work. How about thinning our forests—a process that will never end.

Preventing The Disease VS Treating The Disease.

I do not have the expertise of being a professionally trained Forester. But, I'm guessing that the professional foresters in the USFS, BLM, and other departments are frustrated with the lack of emphasis given to the management of our forests. With the amount spent annually on fighting wildfire, forest management has to have been pushed to the back seat.

My wife, K.G., reads and proofs every article that goes into *Smokejumper* magazine. She knows

a lot about fire and smokejumping. Last weekend we took a 1400-mile road trip to attend the McCall Reunion—great reunion! She continually comments about the overload of growth we see as we are driving through our forests—trees touching trees. Every now and then, we come across an area that has been thinned. You can see open space and good trees—an amazing sight.

What would happen if we would put a couple **billion** into the management of our forests on an annual basis? Did you know that we have spent over a TRILLION dollars in Afghanistan since 2001? I don't like to delve into politics, but we spent $30.8 billion there in 2016. Someone please show me the results for that expenditure. History has shown that our trillion-dollar war will not achieve any of the expected goals.

Just think what we could do with 10 billion of those dollars. There are millions of acres of our forests that are at a high risk from wildfire. The amount of acreage is increasing each year. Someone in the higher levels of government needs to make the decision to spend a lot of money on the treatment of our forestlands. The easiest way to fight wildfire is to prevent wildfire.

For someone to make a decision to move in this direction is going to take a big set of brass balls. The wildland firefighting industry in the U.S. is making big bucks and expanding. It seems like everyone that has a surplus jet wants to get into the air tanker business. How long before we see the Airbus A380-800 being outfitted with tanks that can drop thousands of gallons of retardant? Has anyone evaluated the effectiveness of these very large air tankers? How many of the smaller Air Tractor aircraft could we put on a fire for the cost of a single DC-10? The DC-10 can carry up to 12,000 gallons of retardant. An Air Tractor with a scoop system can deliver up to 14,000 gallons of water on a fire per hour if there is a local water source.

Final Thoughts

I started putting together this issue nine months ago. This issue of *Smokejumper* is different, as I have cut out many of the shorter articles in order to address the problem of wildfire in the U.S. It is now July 2018 and I'm fast approaching my deadline for the Oct. 2018 issue of the magazine. I just got back from a trip to San Francisco and drove most of the way under a cloud of smoke from fires burning around the Clear Lake area in Northern California. I'm beginning to wonder what is left to burn? Cal Fire is very aggressive in initial attack (IA) and still the situation is out of control.

What is going to happen to our forests where IA is very slow at times? I'm guessing our readers in Montana, Idaho, Washington, and Oregon will be recovering from smoke inhalation by the time this issue gets to them In October. Most of California should be black.

Let's do some thinking. Will the fire seasons get any less severe? No way! It's going to get hotter and drier with no end in sight. 2018 will be worse than 2017 and on up the line.

Will the USFS re-establish lookouts and beef up aerial detection in order to get to the fires earlier and cut expenses? No way! In a country that prides itself on volunteerism, the FS needs to be a leader in this area.

Will we ever get to the point where homeowners who build in high-risk areas are responsible for protecting their own property? No way! As much as we want to claim we are independent Americans, people want to be protected from flood, famine and fire. The American public can be likened to the young smiling face of Alfred E. Neuman, the star of MAD magazine from the 1950s—"Me Worry?"

Will the amount of money spent on fighting wildfire decrease in future years? No way! The taxpayers will foot the bill for any amount of money if their lives and property are threatened. Fighting wildfire will have a blank check for the foreseeable future.

Will the future billions of dollars spent make any difference? No way! Get ready to see that amount increase on an annual basis.

Will there be any accountability for the way fires are fought and the lack of initial attack? No way! The "at risk" card can be played at any time.

I'm not a professional forester, but I think I have a good deal of common sense. In my opinion, the best and most fiscally responsible option is to prevent the disease, rather than treat the disease. If we do not reduce the fuel load, there is

no way we can stop the annual burn and terrific amount of money spent on wildfire control in the U.S.

Read "The Forest Fire Debate" by **Bud Filler** (MYC-52) on page 32.

Bud has spent close to 60 years in forestry from smokejumping to mills and management. Bud has some common sense ideas that would go a long way in reducing the wildfire problems in our forests.

It is really hard to get people to think about preventing or reducing the disease (wildfire) vs. treating the disease. Prevention is not in the thought process of the citizens of this country. How much do we spend on rebuilding and aiding those who build their houses on a flood plain? Same with those who build on the coast line in hurricane-prone areas. Go back to the start of this article and see what is happening in the areas in Northern California that were burned in 2017. They are rebuilding at an increased density. Guess what's going to happen down the line in 10-20 years?

Let's move to the dream world. There is suddenly a change in the country. We have figured out that trees grow. They can be harvested. There can be a tremendous amount of jobs created by harvesting trees. People look around their house and figure out that it is mostly made of wood and that the furniture is not concrete. Wow—where does this wood come from?

On the trip that I took to Laos and Vietnam five years ago, I saw forests being cleared with no professional management. When our vehicle passed one of those logging trucks on the narrow road, I hoped that it would be a quick pass as those logs were stacked way too high and tilting our way. So, I'm guessing that a good portion of your house and furniture might have come from another country. Let me know if your house is constructed from Styrofoam and you will get an award.

In this day of such political animosity, can't some group sit down and develop a plan to reduce the fuel load in our wildlands? Logging and fuel reduction can be done that would meet the aims of the majority of our citizens.

I went to a wildland fire conference a few years ago and heard from a bunch of educated and dedicated people. The most discouraging part of the conference was a comment from a high level forester who dealt with the "extreme conservationists." Bottom line: They would rather the forest burn than be thinned or logged. I cannot fathom that this would be the desire of the majority of the people in this country.

Sure, there have been many practices in the past that have not been environmentally sound. But, at the same time, does that mean that we give up and go completely the other way? There has to be a middle ground reached. We cannot allow the radicals to rule the roost.

We have so many acres in the United States that need to be thinned. Jobs would be created, new industry would also be created. What would be better—jobs and industry or black ash?

SPECIAL WILDFIRE EDITION

Large Fire Growth

by Dick Rath (Missoula '73)

After leaving the jumper organization, I truly became a company man and rode for the brand – i.e., the U.S. Forest Service. Over the next three decades, I gained experience in a variety of positions.

During the same time period, I was assigned to both Type I and II incident management teams. My primary area was operations, but I became qualified as a fire behavior officer in the mid-1980s and enjoyed that position immensely.

In 1987, I was part of **Dave Poncin Sr.**'s (MSO-58) Type I team and in September of that year, I spent the most challenging month of fire suppression I had ever faced. As I returned to Montana, I realized that something had changed. These fires were not following the normal pat-

tern of fire suppression as I had grown to know it.

The following year, 1988, I saw in the Northern Rockies a similar condition, where the behavior that the fire exhibited was far beyond what research and we practitioners understood. The benchmark "Yellowstone Fires" received worldwide attention.

In 1990, I recruited the regional fire ecologist – a person named Jack Lewzenski – who spent a great deal of time educating me on fire's role in the ecosystem, some of which actually took.

During the 1990s, the number of large fires that increased in size and acres burned were growing significantly each year. During that same time period, significant drought conditions played a part in wildland fire fatalities. Those included Storm King Mountain and the Thirty Mile Fire in R-6 in 2001.

At that point, the Forest Service was in lockstep with diversity at all levels in the organization. The leadership positions were filled with very bright minds and potently good leaders, but they had not been tested under fire, nor had they grown – as they once were – through the professional trainee programs. That is, you start at the bottom and work yourself up the ladder. Instead, many moved up the ranks based on gender and ethnic preferences.

By the turn of the century, my old mentors had retired, and I found myself training district rangers in fire management issues, who had little or no fire qualifications – or they completely lacked interest in fire management. Their only desire was to have someone make the fire go away.

Incident commanders were beginning to question whether they wanted to take on the responsibilities of running a fire team. When developing the daily incident action plan, I called for fireline safety, so when the safety officer questioned the operations persons in taking the risk, it was easy to default to "doing nothing."

During the 2017 fire season, the Forest Service in Region 1 chose a strategy that I have been told is called "the Big Box." It goes like this: Once a fire has been detected and initial attack has not been selected, the incident management teams – in their delegation of authority – are to keep the fire within that area.

The strategy does nothing. When the fire makes a run and reaches the perimeter of the Big Box, it is often too large to contain. If this breech takes the wildfire off National Forest lands and on to private ownership, it becomes the responsibility of the local rural volunteer fire department and, ultimately, the financial responsibility of the state of Montana.

This is a costly strategy that has reduced the State of Montana's treasury, to the extent that a special legislative session was convened last fall to determine how to pay for the huge amount of red ink for fire-suppression purposes. The shortfall from last fire season (2017) was $47 million.

In a nutshell, here are those things that have compounded the problem:

- Successful fire suppression since European settlement has taken fire's natural role out of the ecosystem. In some cases, we have missed five fire cycles.

- Global warming has expanded the length of the fire season while raising daytime temperatures and lowering relative humidity.

- A large share of the conifer forest in the West has to reach culmination, and insect and disease are playing their role, which increases the available dead fuel loadings.

- The skill set with leadership in the federal agencies is not to the level commensurate with the job at hand.

- During a dry, lengthy fire season, prompt initial attack takes a back seat to covering management's rear.

I could go on, but those are my primary concerns. I have to quantify this, saying these are my concerns for Montana since I no longer have exposure to the other Western states.

On occasion, I have wondered whether management is looking toward using wildland fire as a tool to recycle as many acres as it can, without any public outcry. Just a thought.

Firefighting Costs Soar As They Reflect Today's Methodology

by Tommy Albert (Cave Junction '64)

Federal firefighting agencies alone spent a record $2.1 billion on wildfires in 2017. Using statistics from the last 18 years, the 2017 season only ranked third in the number of acres burned, seventh in number of fires, but averaged second in acres burned per fire. This is according to *NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information: Wildfires, March US release.*

Wildland fire suppression expenditures have become unprecedented during recent years with no change in sight. Agencies blame "global warming" and the accumulation of fuels as the reason for the escalating costs of wildfire suppression.

The higher-than-normal drought conditions are a factor, but let's not kid ourselves. An equal influence is how we are fighting wildfires today.

A key contributor to this are the safety restrictions placed on fire managers. These restrictions, in essence, require firefighters to fight fire with one arm tied behind their backs. Managers' careers are placed in jeopardy if they are deemed too aggressive in their suppression decisions.

Aerial suppression – air tankers and helicopters – is often used ineffectively as a result.

Because managers are often reluctant to put crews on the line during active burning and are unable to take advantage of reduced activity during the night, they feel compelled to attempt to, at least, slow the progress of the fire using aerial resources. This results in dropping retardant and water when flame lengths render the drops virtually ineffective.

Retardant is exactly what its name states – retardant, not suppressant. It needs ground crews to take advantage of the "retarding" properties of the resource.

Water drops are a greater waste of money without ground resources. Aerial suppression is only effective when there are ground resources "on the line," not standing on the road or in safety zones. It goes without saying that both ground and aerial resources are most effective when the fire is small and hasn't had time to gain intensity and momentum.

It will be difficult to alter current rules of engagement to address this. The best and most effective way to reduce fire expenditures is through initial attack (IA). To do this, not only will IA forces need to be significantly expanded, but dispatching procedures must be changed to assure rapid deployment of IA forces.

Expenditures on initial attack resources make up a small percentage of wildfire suppression outlays. Unfortunately, the federal budgetary system presents a challenge for pre-suppression funding.

Unlike large incidents that are largely financed from the general fund, pre-suppression dollars come out of allocated agency budgets. Initial attack resources are expensive but, when used effectively, pay for themselves many times over.

Dispatch centers are a vital part of the fire management system. The task of coordinating resources is a monumental task because of geographical and jurisdictional considerations, varying levels of fire danger and activity, and political interaction. The dispatching community developed a system to address these factors, but in doing so, hindered initial attack.

The "system" has precedence, and common sense and prudence often suffer, resulting in the tail wagging the dog.

As an example, lead planes were designated as a "national resource." Consequently, when an initial-attack request was received, air tankers that were considered forest or regional resources could be immediately dispatched.

Lead planes, on the other hand, being national resources, could not be dispatched until the request was approved by a series of higher-level dispatch centers. This resulted in the air tankers arriving over the incident well ahead of the lead plane – the cart-before-the-horse scenario.

A single Type I incident can equal or exceed

the total IA pre-suppression budget. It gets down to "pay me now, or pay me later," and that "later" comes with a hefty price tag. Aggressive and timely initial attack will significantly reduce the unprecedented destruction to our natural resources and private property that we are experiencing today.

National resource agencies need to come to terms with this and take positive steps to address it. The public is beginning to question wildfire expenditures and the lack of progress suppressing large fires.

The "global warming" excuse has been overused and is coming into question. The public will no longer accept this explanation *carte blanche.* Effective initial attack is the one tool that is available to turn the tide on this costly trend and begin regaining confidence of the public.

Special Wildfire Edition

Stop The Fire—No Fault Fire Zones

by John Culbertson (Fairbanks '69)

I recorded my observations during December 2017 as the Thomas Fire burned from Santa Paula, Calif., 40 miles away, through our town of Carpinteria and on to Montecito and Santa Barbara, becoming the largest fire in California history. The still-smoldering fire combined with a heavy rain event in January to produce a catastrophic debris flow in Montecito, isolating Carpinteria for weeks as all road access was inundated with mud.

Of necessity, the Army Corps of Engineers moved in and, at this writing in April 2018, they are still removing mud and debris.

During this period, with each rain, our town has come under mandatory evacuation orders – some lasting weeks. The effect to our communities is extensive. Jobs lost—small businesses faltering and a school year in complete disruption—the mountain recreation area is completely burned, and the ocean remains polluted and not safe for swimming.

Everyone knows someone with major loss. All are affected and stories of loss are part of every family's dialogue. It would be fair to say that despite much good work by charities and relief organizations a general state of post-traumatic stress disorder has set in.

I concluded my December fire narrative saying that I should learn something from all that has happened. And one hears the standard talk that comes after a fire. The public feels indebted to the firefighters. The politicians beat the drum for money. And the lawyers move in as organized groups, reminding all that somebody has to pay.

It is a hard thing for me to say, but I think this is all beside the point. Yes, the firefighters work hard. And yes, the government will never have enough money. With loss, we seek compensation. But I think there is a different way to look at it.

I keep going back to my observation that an odd mosaic of green formed during the fire. Where homes sat on hills or at mid-slope, the fire was largely held at adjacent canyon bottoms, dozer and road lines, while the public lands burned and the fire front moved onward to other communities.

The firefighters showed great skill in doing this—not only saving homes but the green around them as they limited the spread of fire.

And that is the problem. Firefighters were so busy protecting structures that they had little time to stop the geographic spread of fire. In the end, the landscape scale of this fire produced catastrophic loss. Certainly fire managers were hampered by a focus on structure protection, even when structures were illogically situated in a fire-prone landscape.

We can argue all we want about the cumbersome nature of large fire organizations. But looking at it another way, given the systems skill level at stopping fire when needed, I ask: How could we free up firefighters to limit the geographic spread of fire, in addition to the legitimate and necessary protection of communities, farms, ranches, resources, and businesses situated in or adjacent to wildlands?

Poorly situated and unwisely permitted hilltop and mid-slope homes in high fire-danger areas are disrupting this process by consuming too many resources.

I propose that we consider model legislation that could be adopted by states that could establish no-fault fire zones within very high fire-danger areas as determined by state or local fire authorities. Within these zones, a property owner would be free to build on his or her land, but could hold no one responsible for loss—including the government.

Guarantee of insurance coverage by the state or the insurance industry could be eliminated in no-fault fire zones. The responsibility would be placed on the landowner entirely. Fire agencies would continue suppression action but be free to alter that action for the greater good as they see fit. Loser houses could be left to stand on their own while fire forces would have the option to commit to stopping the spread of the fire.

The concept of no-fault fire zones would be unacceptable to the lawsuit-driven aspect of the legal industry, but bright minds would also come forth with inventive solutions that might find application in some of our states faced with an out-of-control proliferation of housing built in high fire-danger zones.

Legislation acceptable to state governments, a rethinking of insurance and pooled risk, and the upgrade of building safety and defensible space driven by owner involvement are all potential plusses. Stopping the spread of fire benefits all.

What we have now is not working. Individual property rights, influence of wealth, improper planning, ineffective enforcement and a powerful legal industry has held the fire service and the public at bay. We endlessly argue about fine-tuning what is not working, but more firefighting stuff and more building codes and more government won't do it.

More personal responsibility—driven by the reality that you are responsible for your loss if you build in a high fire-danger zone—offers the potential for change.

This is not a new subject. The first laws enacted in the colonies were directly focused on stopping the spread of fire. Personal responsibility and individual loss versus community protection were the themes. This is an ongoing dialogue in America and it must be continued.

One must come out of an experience such as the Thomas Fire and Debris Flow with more than a sense of loss. We owe it to those left behind. And to be sure, there are a number of other factors contributing to large fires.

Many are now under public discussion, including a lack of clear fire policy, fire management versus fire suppression and ineffective initial attack. It is my feeling that no-fault fire zones should be added to the list.

John Culbertson has worked for public and private fire agencies and his own fire management company. He volunteers on trail and community public service projects, is an ocean swimmer and writes short stories and poems. He lives in Carpinteria with his wife, Kathy. They have four adult children.

Rich Grandalski (RDD-64) and Leas Dickey (RDD-61) after helicopter rappelling training 1964. No, the bottle was found on the lawn. (Courtesy R. Grandalski)

A Campus And Curricula For A U.S. Forest Service Academy

by Les Joslin

Reprint from July 2011 *Smokejumper*

It's one thing to propose and justify the notion of a U.S. Forest Service Academy, as I did in the Summer 2010 "OldSmokeys" newsletter (re-printed April 2011 issue *Smokejumper*), but it's quite another to give shape and substance to such a notion. Encouraged by positive responses to the academy notion from accomplished Forest Service people I have long admired and respected, I share a notion of what such an academy's campus might be and what it might teach.

The campus

The residential campus of a U.S. Forest Service Academy – at which an entry-level officer candidate course and a mid-career advanced course would be offered – should be located at an easily accessible site on a national forest in the West that has a significantly diverse multiple-use resource management program and a large recreation and other public uses program that would provide the widest possible array of curriculum-related field experiences for students.

Student field experiences would materially benefit the hosting national forest by accomplishing much of its workload. This hosting national forest would be, in effect, a "teaching national forest," operating akin to the way a "teaching hospital" operates with interns and residents.

The campus would be modern, functional, and reflect the aura of the Forest Service. It would comprise of: a central hall for administrative and instructional offices, classrooms and a library; residential dormitories; a practical skills center, equipped with tools and a shop; an equestrian skills center and stock facility; a physical fitness obstacle course; and other appropriate and essential outbuildings in a properly landscaped setting. Most building and grounds maintenance could be performed by students.

The academy staff would comprise of a superintendent, a registrar, a counselor, a technology assistant, and a faculty organized into several instructional departments. All would have appropriate Forest Service backgrounds as well as academic, professional, and practical experience, and would be selected for their abilities to teach and inspire. All staff would work daily with students.

The curricula

The curricula for both entry-level and advanced courses should be geared toward developing all-around forest officers with the psychological and physical wherewithal and the all-important desire to be forest officers first and specialists second.

Entry-level officer candidate students would be persons already possessed of academic degrees (or significant agency experience) in a natural resources management discipline, engineering, business and management, and the "ologies." Every component of the entry-level curriculum would have classroom theory, reinforced by practical and productive and meaningful fieldwork on the hosting national forest.

Advanced students would be experienced forest officers selected for district ranger and other leadership and management positions. The curriculum of their shorter course would focus on administrative management and leadership skills updating for such positions. Academic rigor would be a feature of both curricula.

Four instructional departments would teach courses sequenced in a highly structured flow in which academic theory and practical experience would be mutually reinforcing. In the officer candidate course, such departments, as below, could offer the instruction indicated:

- *Department of Heritage Studies* could help students gain appreciation for and knowledge of Forest Service history, tradition, literature, and ethics as a basis for professional service,

and enhance their appreciation of what OldSmokey Lyle Laverty terms the "incredible treasures" of the National Forest System.

- *Department of Professional Skills* could teach the art and science of rangering (including how to look and act like a forest officer), as well as provide a common grounding in such basic forestry skills as cruising timber, surveying, road and trail engineering and layout, range surveys, and public speaking and presentation to a wide range of audiences.
- *Department of Leadership and Management Skills* would teach the difference between leadership (of people) and management (of assets). Students would learn that to lead they must first learn to follow. They would learn leadership by precept and example. They would come to value a congenial and constructive form of command and control leadership and management that gets things done efficiently and effectively, and that should replace the current counterproductive collaboration-and-control model that precludes timely progress at great personal and public cost. They would learn the organization and mission of the Forest Service, National Forest System law and policy, and Forest Service administrative management systems and procedures (which, one would hope, will be improved) which implement the law and the mission.
- *Department of Traditional Skills* would make woodsmen of students. Students would become adept at traditional backcountry skills, including trail and cross-country travel on foot and horseback, animal packing, hand- and power tool use in trails and facilities construction and maintenance, etc. Students would become adept at forest protection skills and qualifications, including skills leading to basic firefighting qualifications. Daily physical fitness training would continue throughout the course.

In sum, the officer candidate course, during an academically and physically rigorous and rewarding experience of perhaps four months, would teach much of what a junior professional on a ranger district should know how to do, or at least what he or she should know how to do, to be an effective and productive member of a district resource management team, cognizant of resource interfaces and interoperability and able to work across resource disciplines and in the field, as well as in the office.

In the process, these junior professionals would internalize a culture of pride and professionalism in public service that would enable them to provide appropriate training to the many seasonal employees and volunteers in their charge, who often represent the Forest Service and the National Forest System to the public.

These same instructional departments would develop and present the curriculum for the mid-career advanced course.

The challenge

The challenge is first to get the attention of Forest Service leadership and communicate the need for such a U.S. Forest Service Academy in a way that convinces and compels that leadership to secure the resources needed for the academy's development and implementation. The challenge then would be to design entry-level and advanced-level courses of instruction and performance that would address the relevant knowledge, skills, and ability elements identified above – and any I left out that should be added – in a reinforcing and rewarding program.

I don't know – given what I see these days – if such a concept has a snowball's chance of even being considered, but it's got no chance if we don't try.

I do know – as a former district-level supervisor and a university adjunct instructor who taught a forestry course – that there is a lot of eager, raw talent that, along with the National Forest System and the Forest Service, could benefit from such a career forest officer development program that, I believe, is essential to retool the Forest Service into the viable agency it once was and is essential to the future.

I challenge the chief to make it happen and stand ready to help.

Les Joslin is a retired U.S. Navy commander and a former U.S. Forest Service firefighter, wilderness ranger and staff officer. He writes and teaches from his Bend, Oregon, home. He can be reached at: lesjoslin@aol.com

Klump Pump Offers Many Significant Advantages

by Jim Klump (Redding '64)

Reprint from *Smokejumper,* October 2014

For the past several years, I've been reading comments here in *Smokejumper* magazine that many NSA members are dismayed at how the various agencies, mainly the U.S. Forest Service, are fighting fires. And I agree.

However, the two largest losses of lives on fires in recent years have not been under Forest Service jurisdiction. One was the BLM in Colorado and the other in Arizona.

Common threads, which exist with these two fires, are that these officials sat there and skunked around for a considerable length of time. I wonder if, by any agency not taking aggressive initial-attack action, they are creating a potential time bomb.

Putting out fires creates a safer environment for firefighters, saves taxpayer money, and protects the environment.

I want to introduce you to a machine I invented some 15 years ago now. The troops in the field named it the "Klump Pump." The idea of this machine sprang from my years as a smokejumper, Type 1 operations section chief, and district fire management officer.

This machine, when you look at it, is a "no-brainer." It's a Type II engine without a chassis. The 1,000-gallon capacity, 2,200-foot hose complement and fitting complement fit the Type II engine classification. The decision to use a machine such as this is also very simple. If an incident decision maker asks him/herself, "If I can get a conventional engine on this, would I?" If he or she can't, the logical solution then is another "no-brainer" – order Klump Pumps!

We have 11 Klump Pumps. They are delivered to an incident on either two- or three-unit trailers. They are unloaded at the helibase and setup takes 20-30 minutes per machine. The leveling jacks are attached. Hose, fittings, and support equipment are stowed into their compartment for air transport. The lifting harness is fixed to the four lifting points. The machine was designed aerodynamically. It remains quite stable in flight at 80 knots. Once delivered out to the line, it's a matter of a few minutes to level, begin filling and hose deployment.

The uses for the machine include initial attack, support of burnout and back-fire operations, mop up, remote helispot dust abatement, crash and fire rescue, reinforcement of a safety zone, and protection of remote structures and other sensitive features.

Some testimonials:

- "I've used this machine on several fires. It adds a degree of aggressive firefighting we haven't had before. In 2008, the Klump Pump was instrumental in picking up the entire south end of the Basin Complex. It extends your ability to burn out several hours each day. A few years later, I employed five Klump Pumps on the Backbone Fire in northwestern California, and they were instrumental in picking the fire up in one week. This fire had the potential to burn for several more months."
  —John Truitt, Operations Section Chief, T-1, U.S. Forest Service
- "Three of us picked up a 2.5 acre fire spotting in sub-alpine fir. We stopped it at 3.5 acres with a Klump Pump. It had the potential to go to project size."
  —Todd Sexton, lead crewmember, Caribou-Targhee Helitack
- "In addition to the added safety feature of having water in reserve, the Klump Pump cuts the need to staff line in heavier fuels by days. I plan on training my crew on the use of the machines this spring."
  —Robert Daniel, Superintendent, Feather River Hotshots (R5)

These are just a few of the comments from operations people.

We have a long way to go with regard to this

machine being used to its fullest capacity. **I recommend quicker dispatch and pre-positioning to anticipated hot spots.** Also, we need more dialogue in the various agencies by upper management.

Four years have passed since the original article by Jim. When I first heard of the "Klump Pump," I thought that this is a tool that every forest should have in their inventory—water to a fire that is applied directly as opposed to air drops that are dissipated by trees and brush. Certainly every manager responsible for fire management would know of and use the Klump Pump. Wrong again! I asked Jim for an update for this issue of Smokejumper *which follows below. (Ed.)*

Pump's Creator Persists Despite Frustrations

by Jim Klump (Redding '64)

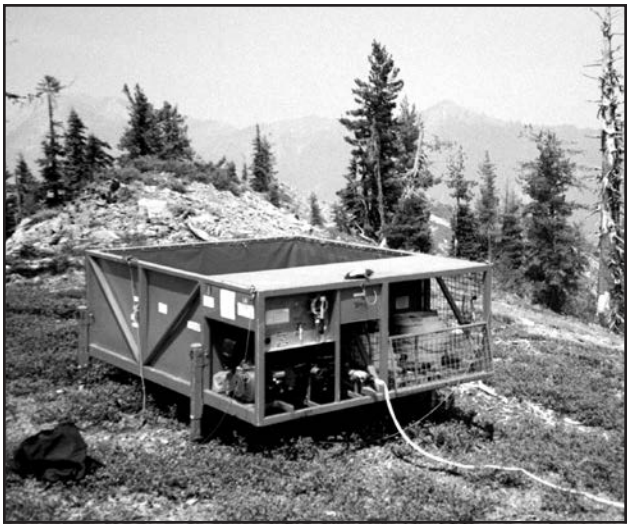
In the Oct. 2014 issue, I submitted an article to *Smokejumper* magazine regarding how the machine I invented and patented – the Klump Pump – could provide a positive contribution to wildland firefighting efforts. Chuck has asked me to update the progress of how the machine is being utilized by various agencies.

My company is still experiencing the inability to be dispatched in a smooth and timely manner by the federal system. There is currently a system called VIPR, which apparently runs much more smoothly than with what I have to contend.

Having spent considerable time on trying to get into the VIPR system, my company, Uni-Engine, has been told that we are a "unique piece of equipment." VIPR is designed for common resources, such as engines, water tenders, dozers, etc.

I quoted in the previous article testimonials of several operations people who realize the effectiveness, efficiency, and added safety features of the Klump Pump. Somewhere above this level is a gap which is preventing efficient ordering of my equipment.

In the case of my equipment, the feeling of crisis prevails each time an order comes through. I believe organizational attitudes are hampering getting the job done efficiently.



Klump Pump in Action (Courtesy Jim Klump)

As most fire people of my generation realize, fire is not a crisis. It happens every year somewhere and simultaneously in the Western United States. This proven design will not be fully utilized until it is incorporated into the training process.

Perhaps I've been talking to the wrong people. I've written letters to the previous heads of Fire and Aviation at the Washington level and have written to Ryan Zinke, Secretary of the Interior—all to no avail. I plan on forwarding the October 2014 issue and this current article to the regional fire staff here in California.

For those of you who want more information regarding my equipment, please call me at (530) 675-0474 or look up "Klump Pump" or *www.uni-engine.com* on the web.

A good video is on Youtube. Search the "Laguna Hotshots 2014 Klump Pump." Many thanks to the Laguna Hotshots for demonstrating how the Klump Pump works.

On the other hand, we have a preset agreement with Cal Fire that operates how I envision the dispatching of private-contractor resources should work. That system allows an initial-attack or extended-attack fire person to order us directly and alert their emergency command center to issue control numbers.

I want to thank those folks who have realized the value of the machines and have used us in the past, especially those Hotshot crews. As long as there are fires to fight, people and land to protect, Uni-Engine will be here.

Letter To The Editor Of The *Missoulian*

(Missoula, Mont.)

by Ben Smith (Missoula '64)

Appeal to Leanne Marten, U.S. Forest Service Northern Region Forester – Jan. 30, 2018

On July 13, 2017, at 4:32 p.m., a forest fire was called in to the Granite County 911 dispatch in Philipsburg, Mont., by a member of the public.

I talked to the 911 dispatcher and confirmed that she immediately passed the information to the Dillon Dispatch Center (DDC) of the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest (BDNF). This fire was the Whetstone Ridge Fire and was about 12 miles from my home southwest of Philipsburg.

I tracked the fire daily on Inciweb and went to the first public information meeting at the high school in Philipsburg. By this time the fire had grown into a major fire, merged with the Meyers Fire, and was being turned over to a Type 1 Incident Management Team (IMT).

My contention is that this fire should have been discovered sooner and should have been contained by an aggressive initial attack. After a month of sucking smoke, I decided to try to find out why this did not happen.

I talked with and exchanged emails with Pintlar Ranger District personnel Melany Glossa, the BDNF supervisor, and Leanne Marten, the Northern Region forester in Missoula.

This is what I was told: The fire was not located until 10:18 the next morning even though there were over five hours of light left on July 13. Two hotshot crews arrived on site 23 hours after the fire was reported. The fire was 25 acres in size when the hotshots arrived and only grew to 374 acres over the next five days. This fire did not immediately blow up.

In her letter Ms. Glossa stated that her orders to the BDNF were for "full suppression" on every fire. Smokejumpers were available but not used. Forest Road 5110 ends a quarter-mile from where the fire started. The time it took to get eyes and people on this fire cannot qualify as "full suppression."

Within the next two weeks, three fires were discovered within 30 miles of the Whetstone Ridge Fire, in similar terrain and fuel loading. All three fires received an aggressive initial attack, including smokejumpers and retardant. All three fires were contained in a few days.

Whetstone Ridge Fire Early Stages (Courtesy USFS)

One of these fires, the Butler Fire, cost $400,000 and spanned 17 acres. The Meyers/Whetstone Ridge Fire grew to over 62,000 acres, cost $32 million and was extinguished by snow in mid-September.

Question for Marten: Who has been held accountable for the ineffective early detection, the lethargic initial attack, and the extreme cost in dollars, timber, and public health of the Whetstone Ridge Fire?

I have seen many letters to the editor to the *Missoulian* and other Montana newspapers, complaining about the decisions that were made fighting these fires. The Lolo Peak Fire comes to mind. Why has there been no public response from Ms. Marten or news media interviews with her that answer the public outcry?

My appeal to Marten: While we debate the effectiveness of the current wildland fire policy of managing and not controlling fires, the impact of global warming, the effectiveness of prescribed burns and thinning, etc., would you please prepare your region for a robust early detection and initial attack strategy for the 2018 fire season? Small fires are safer to fight and less expensive than large fires.

Fixed Lookouts vs Aerial Detection

by Karl Brauneis (Missoula '77)

Author's note: My favorite pilot was Terry Watson, an Army fixed-wing and helicopter aviator. She was also a graduate and instructor at the National Outdoor Leadership School here in Lander, Wyo. "Tougher then a two-dollar steak," Terry knew the Wind River country like the back of her hand. We flew many years together on aerial fire detection flights. Our record was something like nine fires in one day. I knew that if we ever crashed, Terry would get me out alive. I trust the feeling was mutual. We shared the old smokejumper and forest aviator ideal of a brotherhood.

Our standard flight pattern took us south out of Lander to gain altitude before turning north at South Pass for our high-altitude pass over the backcountry and wilderness areas.

We flew detection for the national forest, Wind River Indian Reservation, and Bureau of Land Management public and state lands on most all of our patrols.

We flew north over the reservation and on to the Wind River District, turning along the Teton Forest Line, then east over the Ramshorn country before turning south along the front of the Wind River on a lower pass to touch down back at Lander.

One key landmark for me was the abandoned logwood cupola Bold Mountain Lookout on the Wind River Indian Reservation. It was said that the lookout got its name for anyone "bold" enough to staff it.

On this particular flight, all was clear above Bold Mountain. We were then called north to assist in locating a fire west of Cody, Wyo. After refueling in Cody, we spent several hours in the North Fork Canyon of the Shoshone River and finally located the fire and directed a crew into it.

We now turned for home, and a big surprise. Upon entering the Wind River Valley, we saw a huge convection column rising near Bold Mountain. Several hours earlier, the sky was clear. Now a running forest fire was on the move.

Later, I put pencil to paper. I compared the cost of the Bold Mountain Fire to the cost of keeping the lookout open over the years that it was closed. I can't remember the exact calculations, but something like this: The lookout would have paid for itself four times over when compared to just the cost of one fire.

I always believed that aerial fire detection was only a supplement to an established fixed-lookout detection system. This fire proved my thoughts were correct.

That winter I proposed rebuilding the old Warm Springs Lookout near Dubois, Wyo. From this lookout point, one has a spectacular view of the Wind River Ranger District. The old lookout and tower were torn down years ago.

Part of my assessment for a new lookout took into account the increase in property values due to the present-day urban interface that boast million-dollar homes in the area. I proposed a Job Corps build of the lookout with operational costs to be shared by the U.S. Forest Service, state forestry, and a homeowners association.

I sent the information out through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) scoping notice process. I found that the greatest critics were internal within the Forest Service. Comments and phone calls amounted to a "you can't be serious" attitude.

With a delay in construction of the new Job Corps facility at Riverton, Wyo., I decided to wait for better timing. Unfortunately, better timing for me came about with my retirement. The Warm Springs Lookout idea died.

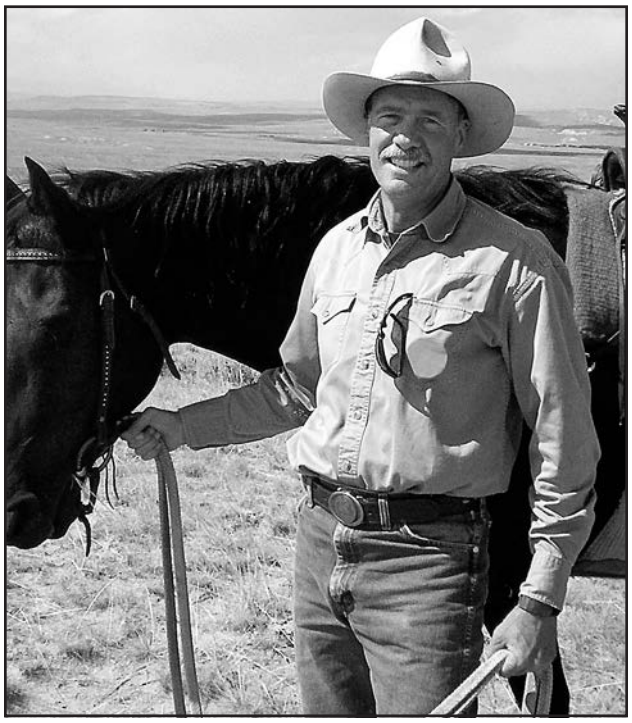
Fast-forward to the recent Lava Mountain Fire of 2016 within the old Warm Springs lookout view shed. This fire characterized all of the detection and staffing problems as noted in **Ben Smith**'s (MSO-64) article (*Smokejumper* April 2018) on the Whetstone Ridge Fire. The Lava Mountain Fire cost $19.8 million to control and burned more than 14,000 acres. The fire threatened approximately 300 homes along with nu-

merous cattle and guest ranches.

It does not take much of an accountant to reach a conclusion on fixed-detection costs versus large-fire costs. Today, we have the added advantage of homeowner associations willing to share in the detection facilities. We also have outfits such as the Job Corps and the National Guard who can learn and train, on the job, to assist with construction.

Conclusion

I loved the old Forest Service. I am saddened at what it has become. Looking back over 45 years of forestry, I can clearly see a "long trail to disaster." Some of those seeds of destruction were sown when the Forest Service turned its back on her lookouts. A re-emphasis on fixed-lookout detection will not in and of itself solve the multitude of problems facing the Forest Service today. It just might, however, be a step in the right direction.



Karl Brauneis (Courtesy K. Brauneis)

SPECIAL WILDFIRE EDITION

Fire Lookouts: Then, Now, And Maybe Always

by Murry A. Taylor (Redding '65)

Thanks to our fearless literary leader in all things jumpers, fire, and otherwise, **Chuck Sheley** (CJ-59), you now have this piece. Chuck knew I'd been a lookout for Cal Fire for the last 17 years and, I suppose, considered me a possible sage source on the topic. I did some research and here's my best shot.

Until around the turn of the century, I thought lookouts had gone the way of the itinerant cowboy, the solitary gold miner, and other icons of the older, wilder West. That changed in 2002 when Cal Fire asked if I'd like to staff – they don't say "man" anymore – Paradise Craggy Lookout, just north of Yreka. I did that for two years and then moved to Duzel Rock, my lookout home for the past 15 years.

Duzel Rock Lookout stands at 6,020 feet, the highest point in the Mineral Range east of Scott Valley, where I live. During my first years on Duzel Rock, I came to see that lookouts were back, at least partly.

The story of fire lookouts begins in 1876 when the Southern Pacific Railroad built the first one on Red Mountain, near Donner Summit, to watch for train fires. By 1908, as part of Chief Forester Gifford Pinchot's new, energized fire-suppression program, California had built three.

The Forest Service added more, year by year. At first they were very primitive – just a camp on a rocky high point, or some simple "crow's nest" affairs in the tops of tall trees.

During the Great Depression, President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Civil Conservation Corps and assigned its employees various tasks in our National Forests. Building lookouts was one of them. These were the cab-on-a-tower lookouts most common today.

During the heyday of the late 1930s, there

were 8,000 lookouts nationwide, 600 in California alone. The Army utilized lookouts during World War II for early warning stations against enemy aircraft. Some were staffed 365 days a year.

The year 1944 marked the beginning of lookouts staffed by women. A lot of them made history. Nancy Hood, for example, staffed Lake Mountain Lookout for 63 straight summers here on the Klamath National Forest. She retired two years ago.

Hallie M. Daggett was the first woman fire lookout employed by the Forest Service. She served on Eddy's Gulch Lookout on the Klamath from 1913 until 1927.

During the 1960s and the 70s, most of the lookouts were phased out, along with their faithful occupants. With increased use of airplanes for fire detection, helicopters for suppression, let-burn policies in wilderness, and the growing numbers of visitors and residents in the forests, attitudes toward staffing lookouts changed. Most were abandoned and considered relics of the past.

There are only a few hundred in operation today. Once a proud symbol of our nation's conservation heritage, the forest fire lookouts of old may now be facing extinction. Or not? There is more to the story.

Although many lookouts have been abandoned, vandalized or destroyed, there is a growing trend toward lookout revival. Lookout buffs and concerned historians are involved in restoration projects, including rebuilding, remodeling, creating museums, and the Forest Service's practice of renting them out to private citizens for special mountain retreats.

The love and devotion to this old American icon has in many instances been its saving grace.

While many have gone their way, many are still used today just as in the past. In California, Cal Fire lookouts still play an important detection role in the northern part of the state. These lookouts are staffed in several different ways – by volunteers, by seasonal personnel, or by old-time fire people (like me) who still want to be part of the wildfire scene.

Cal Fire staffs its lookouts here in the Siskiyou Ranger Unit in this way and usually just during periods of lightning, high fire danger, or of units being gone from the unit on other fire assignments.

In the Siskiyou Unit there are five lookouts: Quartz Hill, Duzel Rock, Paradise Craggy, Black Fox and Siskiyou Bear. Historically, Cal Fire has had as many as 77 lookouts statewide. Only 24 are currently staffed. Of the total California lookouts listed online, 505 still exist. Of those 88 are staffed either full-time during fire season – as with the Forest Service – or on a call-when-needed basis, as with Cal Fire.

The Klamath National Forest currently staffs eight lookouts. You can review the lookout scene further in California by going online and typing in a search window: California Lookout Sites, 505 active and abandoned sites listed. Revised April 2018.

As you will see, other agencies having lookouts include the National Park Service – including monuments and national recreation areas, state parks, the Bureau of Land Management, Indian reservations, and private land owners.

I didn't research the lookout situation in other western states but feel it's likely similar in terms of total and percentage staffed, especially with the Forest Service, BLM and National Park Service. There are varying opinions as to why the lookouts are again viewed a good idea.

This is my take. First, the Clinton Administration asked for $1.6 billion in 2000 for increased personnel and forest thinning. Then George W. Bush and Barack Obama followed suit with various increases in federal wildfire budgets. All that helped, but the biggest thing, I think, by far, was the realization that these fires are becoming more dangerous to suppress, more threatening to private property, and outrageously more expensive.

Given these factors, there is an increased need for quick detection. Although aircraft fly routine patrols after lightning events, most of the fires – at least here on the Klamath N.F. and Cal Fire response areas – are picked up by lookouts. With the prevalence of cellular communication, many fires are turned in by people – that is, where there are people.

Most lookouts, however, watch country out of sight and far in the backcountry. Cell phones rarely play a role there.

Be assured that lookouts quickly report a respectable number of wildfires. The most I've turned in during one season is 10; the fewest, only one, and that was last year.

On some mornings after a lightning event, the Klamath Forest lookouts and local state lookouts have reported as many as 25 fires by 10 o'clock. I've turned in fires as far away as the Oregon border 40 miles to the north. I turned in one fire before the logging crew knew that they'd started it.

Another time – on a very hot summer day – I reported a fire started by a local farmer cutting dry oats before he could get to his pickup and call it in.

The most dramatic smoke I turned in was a lightning fire just below a person's remote residence. The owner had worked the fire the previous night, scratching a line, then left the next morning without checking it.

I spotted it just as it began to run up the hill toward his house, garage and outbuildings. By the time the first unit – a Cal Fire engine – arrived, the fire had spread up to and partly across his parking area, burning under one vehicle. In five more minutes the fire would have been on the house.

I think my experience is representative of most lookouts. Besides early detection, most lookouts – given their knowledge of the country and road systems – often help initial-attack crews by suggesting the best routes to access fires.

As to the experience of being a lookout, as I've told friends, "It's not a bad thing to spend time alone on a mountain."

On lookout you go to bed when it gets dark and get up at first light. There's something wonderful about watching the sunrise over a cup of coffee. There's also something wonderful about watching the passing of a common, ordinary day. I call it grace.

In the quiet peace of a lone mountaintop, nature reveals a wonder not normally seen when distracted by regular life. Some sunsets are simply spectacular. Of course, the most exciting time is during an actual lightning storm. As lightning hits around the tower, the wind sometimes reaches 50 mph, and hail blasts the cab with such force that one cannot shout over the roar. Then comes the calm, the light shafts down between clouds, the remaining sheets of virga track the storm, and good lookouts have their binoculars scanning the areas where the strikes hit most.

The typical fire report goes in like this: "Yreka dispatch, Duzel Rock, fire traffic." After a moment, "Duzel Rock, Yreka." And then, "Yreka, I'm picking up a smoke on the north side of Russell Peak, southeast corner of Section 7, Township 44 N, Range 9 West. Single column, mid-slope, low rate of spread."

After Yreka acknowledges the report, the call goes out to the local Cal Fire station and resources are launched. That's how it goes with Cal Fire.

The Forest Service responds, but not as aggressively. For example, one morning in 2014 when the Feds already had a number of fires being worked, there were 24 new fires reported by Forest Service lookouts by 9 o'clock. The response was the local fire-management officer calling for a reconnaissance flight of the area.

I couldn't understand that so I called the FMO, reached his cell and, since he didn't answer, left this message: Why call for a recon? We already have a big problem with existing fires. Now there are more. A recon may be in order, but why not also order a load of jumpers to check it out and jump what they can?

I never heard back. So while detection by lookouts seems to be working fine, sometimes the initial-attack response by the Forest Service is not what I'd call aggressive. It's frustrating, to say the least.

Some fires go as much as two days before being staffed; some get away and go big. To be fair, initial attack seems to be getting better lately in the wake of so many big fires in the last five years here on the Klamath Forest. They are using more jumpers, mostly from Redding.

Another good move is that in 2017, the Klamath used the R-5 Redding jumpers for a couple of Type III teams, plus some single-resource guys to great effect. These folks made a strong positive impression on the forest. I know, because the forest staff has told me so. Hopefully that use will continue.

I hope this gives some idea of where we are with lookouts these days. Some of my stats may be a bit off since they came from various (sometimes conflicting) sources. Still, as I say, "It's not a bad thing to spend time alone on a mountain." And, it's not a bad thing to know that there are still local sentinels watching over our national treasure of wild land.

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Let's Talk About The Chetco Bar Megafire

by Chuck Sheley (Cave Junction '59)

In this issue we're doing a lot of discussion about wildfire and initial attack (IA). I want to review the Chetco Bar Fire on the Siskiyou N.F. in the Kalmiopsis Wilderness Area. It burned 191,090 acres and billed the taxpayers $61 million and had 730 personnel assigned at one time.

The fire was started by a lightning storm around June 25, 2017. It was finally spotted and reported by an airline pilot on July 12, 17 days later. I'm trying to be objective on this, but that is hard to do. This is the same story as the Biscuit Fire in 2002 that burned 500,000 acres and cost hundreds of millions of dollars. Added to that, it is in the footprint of the Biscuit Fire.

Wouldn't common sense dictate that you fly the forest after a lightning storm? Fly it for a few weeks. Do we have to rely on an airline pilot to report a fire? Wonder how many lookouts you could finance for $61,000,000? Is there any accountability anywhere in the Forest Service?

After the airline pilot's report, the fire was attacked by airdrops and four rappellers—all within an hour and a half of the report. That is good. The fire was reported at three-fourths of an acre. It looks like the rappellers built a helispot and no one went to the fire.

Dave Nelson (MSO-57) is probably one of the most experienced firefighters in the country, having spent years in the business and having lead a Type I team for 10 years. With this background, Dave asks a few questions:

Why didn't they discover the fire before 17 days? Why only four rappellers the first day? Smokejumpers available?

There are some more questions, but they are the same as you and I would ask. Bottom line—no one went down to the fire. Ground was "too steep and slippery."

On the second day, four more rappellers went to the helispot. I'm using information from Bill Gabbert's *Wildfire Today* website to complete the timeline—thanks to Bill for making it easy.

The second load of rappellers viewed the fire from the air. They noted steep ground, etc. Wow—these are Siskiyou N.F. rappellers and they noted steep ground in the Kalmiopsis. This is new and unexpected?

From Bill Gabbert: "Upon landing, their *(second group of rappellers)* perspective changed. 'The ground was really, really steep. We know views from the air can be deceiving, but we couldn't see the fire or the smoke from the helispot. I originally thought the trees below the helispot were reproduction from an old fire, but then I realized the slope was so steep, I was only seeing the treetops. They were actually 200 foot tall, 4-foot DBH (diameter at breast height) trees,' said a senior firefighter on the second load of rappellers. *(Try parachuting into these same trees—you get a different view from 200 feet above the ground but, somehow, we made it to the fire. Ed.)*

One rappeller said, "The ground was covered with Madrone leaves that were slick – combined with the steep terrain, it made staying upright a challenge. At one point, I remember it taking me 30 minutes to move about 20 feet. I was having to cut away brush to clear a narrow path. I kept falling, and basically had to belly crawl across the slope. The extremely steep slopes covered in Madrone and tan oak leaves made it very difficult to walk, especially downhill because of how slippery the ground cover was," he said. By the time he returned to the helispot, his pants (Nomex and Kevlar) were in tatters. "I kept thinking to myself, It's too steep, too dangerous in here."

(Why not use chainsaws to cut a path down to the fire, making initial attack by reinforcements possible? Ed.)

Then two Type II crew bosses (40 firefighters) declined the assignment for various reasons. Later that afternoon, day two, all resources were taken off the fire.

From the *Grants Pass Courier* October 17: "Fire officials explained that steep terrain and extreme danger in fighting the Chetco Bar Fire's early stages in the Kalmiopsis Wilderness kept them from snuffing it when it was less than an acre in mid-July.

"Someone asked if the agency has learned anything from catastrophic fires, such as the Biscuit Fire in 2002 which overlapped the Chetco Bar footprint and was more than twice as big.

"What we've learned has been offset by climate change and lots of fuel buildup, and we have more severe fire than ever before," said Craig Trulock, deputy forest supervisor. *(What they didn't learn from the Biscuit Fire is that tardy initial attack leads to a megafire. Ed.)*

"Firefighters described how hard it was to walk on steep slopes with brush and slick Madrone leaves. Snags from the old Biscuit Fire posed extreme danger of falling on firefighters. *(Another example of how the hills have gotten steeper since the closing of the Siskiyou Smokejumper Base—that excuse would not have been acceptable to* ***Jim Allen*** *(NCSB-46). Ed.)*

"Monty Edwards, fire management officer based at the Wild Rivers Ranger District in Cave Junction, showed photos on Day 1 and Day 2 of 'rollout' fires, where burning material caused spot fires downhill. Any benefit from water dumps was offset by those dumps knocking more fire down the steep hill. *(Wonder what the fire would have been like 17 days earlier? Ed.)*

"He decided against sending in two 20-person teams because of the safety concerns. Another group of rappellers made the same decision. At 4:38 p.m. on that first day, all firefighters were called off. There was no way to get tight to the fire, so an indirect strategy was adopted." *(Best way to get tight to the fire would have been to cut a line from the helispot to the fire. Certainly 40 firefighters would have been able to do that. Ed)*

"Had firefighters been sent forward and someone been hurt, 'It would be difficult to look a parent in the face later and justify that decision,' said Virginia Gibbons, forest spokesperson." *(The safety card will be the major hindrance to getting aggressive firefighting back in the picture. It's an easy, acceptable way to hide the results of poor initial attack. Ed.)*

Let's see how this fire might have been attacked with the available resources. There were at least eight rappellers, 40 Type II firefighters and three helicopters that had already made 17,280 gallons worth of drops. The fire was at 3/4 of an acre. The water drops from the helicopters were ineffective and knocked more fire down the hill.

Plan of attack using the above:

1. Use crews to build line down to the fire from the helispot.

2. At same time, set up "Klump Pump" at or near helispot. What is the Klump Pump? Invented by **Jim Klump** (RDD-64) and covered in *Smokejumper* October 2014, it is, as Jim describes it, a "Type II engine without a chassis." It has a 1,000-gallon capacity and comes with 2,200 feet of hose. It is set up at the helibase, attached with a lifting harness to the helicopter and flown to the fire. It remains quite stable in flight at 80 knots. Using the attached leveling jacks, the outfit is ready for filling by helicopters in a matter of minutes. (Refer to Klump Pump article page 17.)

With this, you have a large amount of water that is on the ground and effective.

I looked at a photo of the fire on July 13, 2017, on day two after the fire was reported. This country was the same as I dropped Cave Junction jumpers on many times. If I had returned to the base with a load (four jumpers) still in the Twin Beech, **Jim Allen** (NCSB-46) would have sent me down the road. I'm glad I worked for a boss who wanted the job done—he didn't disregard safety, but he wouldn't allow us to use that as an excuse for not doing the job.

In 1944, Jim parachuted into the Netherlands in Operation Market Garden. He was 19 at the time. Later he was wounded at the Battle of the Bulge. We were never told to be unsafe or take chances at the Siskiyou Smokejumper Base in Cave Junction. However, not doing the job we hired on for was unacceptable. Too bad we don't have people from the "Greatest Generation" leading us now.

Hiring Problems

By Chuck Sheley (Cave Junction '59)

At our March 2018 meeting in Boise we heard that the USFS smokejumper program was 43 positions short of their goal of 320 jumpers for the 2017 season. There seems to be a real breakdown in the process from the Albuquerque Human Resources Management, who screens the applications and forwards them to the hiring unit.

I listed some of the problems the smokejumper Base Managers were having and forwarded them to the appropriate people. The questions were kicked up the line. The answers I got back from Human Resources Management (HRM) were confusing, and I could not match them to the questions I submitted. Having only a B.A. and a Master's Degree, I forward them to some of our PhD's and smokejumper lawyers for interpretation.

Former NSA legal counsel **Guy Hurlbutt** (IDC-62) responded with an answer similar to several others: "Overall, the responses from the Forest Service are unintelligible and come chillingly close to the bureaucratic 'Doublespeak' we were warned about by George Orwell in his classic book '1984.' I have rarely seen better crafted non-responses to straightforward questions."

I'm going to print the response to my questions that I received from Human Resources Management (HRM). I am not going to list my questions for two reasons: Space, and I can't relate any of the answers to the questions. I'll list Guy's thoughts after the HMR response. Try to bear with the acronyms and not getting lost in the alphabet soup.

From HRM: *The Forest Service's Human Resources Management (HRM) and Fire & Aviation Management (FAM) Leaders work in partnership to fill FAM positions agency-wide.*

HRM relies on our FAM hiring managers to tell us the positions they need to hire to meet their program areas needs. HRM will always adhere to the hiring policies and regulations established by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

Guy Hurlbutt: "The response does not describe the makeup of the 'FAM hiring managers.' Are actual smokejumpers included? This is critical in understanding the knowledge of the FAM selection team. Further, it appears the only role of the FAM hiring managers is to advise HRM of 'the positions they need to hire.' They are not invited to participate in actual hiring decisions."

From HRM: *Who does Human Resources Management (HRM) work with to hire smokejumper positions?*

For permanent smokejumper positions, HRM's National Fire Hire Staffing Team works directly with identified Regional FAM Points of Contacts (POCs). Permanent smokejumper positions are hired using centralized hiring events.

For temporary smokejumper positions, HRM's National Temporary Employment Team works directly with the FAM POC who submitted the personnel action to HRM to hire a smokejumper temporary position.

Guy Hurlbutt: "These two responses are mostly unintelligible. Who are the 'FAM Points of Contacts'? What are 'centralized hiring events'? There is no indication that smokejumper base managers or similarly qualified people are part of the process."

From HRM: *How does HRM interact with the smokejumper managers to fill positions?*

For permanent positions, HRM's National Fire Hire Staffing Team meets regularly with Regional FAM POCs about all positions to be hired using centralized hiring events, which does include smokejumper positions.

For temporary positions, HRM's National Temporary Employment Team schedules meetings prior to the beginning of seasonal hiring to provide information about the hiring process. These meetings are open to anyone who wants to attend.

HRM does meet regularly with Regional FAM

POCs to review their regional temporary hiring needs, which does include smokejumper positions.

Guy Hurlbutt: "See my comments to the earlier questions. There is no indication in this response that qualified smokejumper representatives are substantively involved in the process. On the contrary, the role of the FAM POCs (whoever they are) seems limited to providing information on 'hiring needs.'

"The final question posed to HRM (possibility of returning to local hiring decisions) does not appear to be addressed by the Forest Service."

John Culbertson (FBX-69) responded: "Chuck's questions are direct, reasonable, and relate to a considerable problem in wildfire administration; an understandable hiring process that connects supervisors with workers. Answers from the Forest Service Albuquerque Service Center (ASC) appear generated by an automaton and are unfocused on all but government processes internal to that office. The ability to clearly communicate is key to effective administration. That is a missing element here.

"I have fifty years experience in public and private fire suppression, prevention, public information, research and administration. ASC seems uniquely problematic. I hope the Forest Service will consider returning hiring to the Forests and Administrative Units. The human element in personnel management is essential, and one is closer to that with the home unit."

Dave Bennett (MSO-61) responded: "The FS response indicates that there are plenty of applications for jumping. However, the number of job openings listed by the HRM doesn't tally with the unfilled vacancies sighted in your last board meeting. The ambiguities need to be cleared up so we can figure out what the story really is.

"Out of the 91 vacancy announcements, 18 positions were not filled:

1 position was not filled due to an error

17 positions were not filled and the reason stated by the hiring manager was 'no selection made'

"With regard to 'no selection made,' it seems like there might be a problem with qualifications of the applicants in the eye of the hiring manager(s), or the hiring manager fouled up somehow."

Rich Hilderbrand (MSO-66) responded: "Having spent some 30 years of my life involved with working at hiring, managing, and even firing Federal Civil Service workers, there are a number of explanations that come to mind about the recruiting of smokejumpers. In my time of recruiting and hiring of various job classifications, we had some flexibility at the local level and could find people through local advertisements and then help them complete the difficult application process. That most likely will still work, but limits the number of potential applicants.

"Here is my take on the information the ASC-HRM provided – maybe right, maybe wrong.

1. The situation:
   a. 43 jumpers short in 2017 and, ***over 3 years***, ASC-HRM says only 91 vacancy announcements sent with 19 not being filled. Someone is not doing their job at getting the vacancy announcements out for applications and to be filled. Is this the USFS (smokejumper administrators) or OPM?
   b. ASC-HRM says 40 applications received per vacancy announcement and almost 460 applications per year for the 20 to 30 vacancy announcements. Applications don't appear to be the problem.
   c. 55 of these were permanent positions, and I would hope were filled from among temporaries that had shown potential. Thus, perhaps creating some additional vacancies in the temporary slots that would not be filled until the following season.
   d. One important question not addressed is the reason for non-selection—person not interested, not physically qualified, can't pass drug test, etc. This is a key factor.

2. The U.S. Office of Personnel Management likes to centralize and control the application process primarily through the *www.USAJOBS.gov*. So I tried the website and found:
   a. Search for 'smokejumper' produces no results.
   b. Search for 'firefighter' gave a start, and

I finally found job classification 0462 Forest Technician.

c. Then found Forestry Technician (Fire) for wildland fire.
d. There were no vacancies listed that appeared to be smokejumpers.
e. This may explain why USFS gets applications for people not interested in smokejumper duties – someone just applies as a Forestry Technician (Fire) that can be USFS, DOI, NPS etc.
f. Also, the website is difficult to navigate – even if one knows the system. USFS does not want techies that play video games but can't lift their sneakers without pain. The guys USFS needs are probably lifting hay bales and not working their computer – not particularly computer savvy.

3. The OPM and HR staffers that I worked with were not particularly good about selecting qualified applicants to pass through to managers for additional review."

Here are my thoughts:

The problem appears to be in the number of vacancy announcements being prepared and advertised. Combined with losses and promotions, etc., the pipeline is not sufficient to meet the needs for qualified applicants. There appear to be a credible number of applicants if qualified.

There may have been hiring restrictions that played into this shortage. Nothing we can do about that restriction.

Ask OPM to establish a *job classification specifically for smokejumpers* (and for hotshots, as well). I could not find one, but it may exist. Then an applicant will be screened for the actual job and desire to fill that job.

That hotshot crews be used as personnel sources with some heavy recruiting.

My opinion, this is a recruiting and HR problem, not an interested applicant problem.

Fred Cooper (NCSB-62) gave some very valuable insight. Fred was Human Resource Officer on three forests and retired as Recruitment & Employment Policy Staff Director in D.C. He stated that he, too, had a disconnect with the questions and answers.

I'm going to summarize some of Fred's thoughts:

1. It is imperative that continuous dialog be present between Fire & Aviation Management (FAM) and Human Resources Management (HMR).
2. HRM needs to understand FAM issues and be open to resolve those issues.
3. If they are not getting it, Smokejumper Managers need training and updates from HRM about HR standards, regulations, and procedures.
4. It appears recruitment may be the issue. It is the role of FAM to recruit quality applicants for positions, not HRM.
5. For Smokejumper positions, perhaps FAM should conduct personal outreach recruitment to Hotshot Crews. Use the Military recruitment model in which soldiers in uniform do the recruiting, not their HRM staff.
6. If minimum qualification standards, timing of vacancy announcements, or there are other process management issues, FAM and HRM together need to change those regulations, standards, or administrative processes. There are policies for making changes.

How about Fred Cooper coming out of retirement, sitting down with FAM and HRM and solving the smokejumper hiring problem.

On a side note, I took the following from the Lewiston, Idaho, *Morning Tribune*: "There are 58 jumpers at the McCall smokejumper base, down from a high of 70 two years ago. Johnson (Payette Forest) said some of that decline has to do with a change in the parachute training program, and the difficulty of finding people who want to be stationed in remote areas where they may not have cellphone service."

Do we need to add cellphone service offered to the smokejumper recruitment program?

On the BLM side we have input from **Bill Cramer** (NIFC-90): "We've seen a gradual reduction in total number of candidates in the last decade. It has our attention but we still have far more quality candidates than we do openings.

"Alaska would like to move towards career-sea-

sonal positions for our rookie positions versus the current temporary appointments. Overall, there are considerably more career-seasonal appointments in wildland fire, and we certainly lose some whom would otherwise apply. Boise has been able to do this but our budget situation is different and has precluded us from getting there."

From Great Basin Smokejumper Base Manager **Todd Jinkins** (NIFC-98): "I think that any time you 'Centralize' systems in remote locations you have a tendency to lose those personal connections. Luckily for us here in Boise, our HR office is 100 yards away and we can work directly with them on positions. That is beneficial when we have those face-to-face discussions with our HR officers. The USFS lost that ability when they moved everything to Albuquerque. Maybe they will decentralize at some point in the future.

"As far as quality applicants, I think that across the fire community we are seeing a decrease in the amount of interest we have for this profession. As state minimum wages increase, the federal wages have stagnated for decades. To start as a GS-3 firefighter, you would have to accept $12.50/hour while you could make $15/hour in California, Washington or Oregon at a minimum wage flipping burgers at McDonalds. I don't know how sustainable that model is."

Special Wildfire Edition

Management of Wildfires on National Forest Lands

by Bill Derr (Associate)

April 10, 2018 NAFSR Fire Committee Meeting, Sacramento, CA

The potential added fire suppression, resource, and property damage costs of managed fires must be considered versus immediate full suppression designed to contain and control wildfires as soon as possible. Therefore, what are the annual costs (suppression and damage) of all "managed fires" versus the costs had these fires been suppressed at the outset? Another factor is the added risk to firefighters and the public due to increased burned acreages over longer durations with more firefighters on the line. The relative risk potential becomes greater versus full suppression at the outset. The unavailability of firefighting resources already committed on a "managed fire" translates to fewer firefighting resources available for new starts.

Doubling the burned acreage between 2015 and 2016 thru "managed fire" raises some concern about future increased acreages and cost, absent more complete assessment data.

Reporting managed fire acreages as treated acres in the context of "achieving natural resource management objectives" can look like a shell game to some observers. Adequate funding for increased use of prescribed fire is a better alternative to the relative uncertainties of "managed fires." The issue of appropriation integrity in the use of FF funds for "managed fires" remains, despite the assumed protective cloak of "forest plan objectives." At some point, Congress, OIG, OSC, GAO, and OMB will likely review a managed fire program.

Following is a consensus of opinions regarding future wildfire suppression and aerial firefighting issues garnered from attendees at the Aerial Firefighting Conference, March 12 to 14, 2018, Sacramento, CA:

- Enhanced fire prevention efforts are needed to focus on historical ignition sources in areas of highest occurrence during high to extreme fire danger periods with special attention to areas with resistance to control and escape potential in addition to beefing up current across-the-board efforts.
- State of the art remote sensing technology, including satellites for wildfire detection, needs to be developed and used.

- *Virtually all wildfire starts require an immediate aggressive air and ground initial and extended direct attack with sufficient resources to contain and control them as soon as possible.* Failure to do so exposes firefighters and the public to increased risk of injury and death when wildfires are allowed to burn vast acreages over long durations with more firefighters engaged. Resource and private property damage increases as well as suppression and overall damage costs. The relative risk to firefighters is therefore greater than experienced by aggressive initial attack. *The successful history of Smokejumper use in swift aggressive initial attack proves this point*.
- Prescribed fire and harvesting of forest products remain the mainstay of hazardous fuel reduction.
- Managed fire (allowed to burn) is problematic due to the absence of pre-planning and approval coupled with the lack of pre-positioned firefighting resources and control lines. Past "managed fires" have been more destructive than beneficial to the natural resource environment and create significant exposure to criminal and civil liability.
- Scoopers and SEAT's are under-utilized by the USFS, and there is an overreliance on VLAT's and Large Air Tankers. Other agencies and countries are very successful in suppressing wildfires in the early stages with Scoopers and SEAT's. *A comprehensive cost/benefit analysis of all air tanker use is needed to guide future decisions regarding its use*.
- A "Wildland Fire Suppression/Industrial Complex" condition seems to have emerged and needs to be monitored very carefully, lest the supplier is driving the user. However, industry does provide new and innovative solutions to wildland fire suppression.

In addition to the above issues, concerns have been raised about the lack of Fire Management's knowledge, skill, and abilities (KSA) among a growing number of Line Officers. Ill-informed risk management decisions by these persons have prevented proper and aggressive full suppression responses to wildfires and have allowed some to burn as "managed fires" resulting in unnecessary escapes, thereby creating additional risks. These concerns recently surfaced at the NSA board meeting in Boise by current USFS and BLM employees. Other credible current and former Fire Management employees have raised similar concerns. The selection criteria for Line Officers needs to ensure that the person selected meets specific KSA standards related to Fire Management responsibilities. The adverse impacts of smoke from wildfires will drive efforts to contain and control them in the early stages and utilize prescribed fire in lieu of managed fire.

Presented by William A. Derr, retired Special Agent in Charge USFS, R-5 after 38 years with the USFS, including 17 years in fire management.

SPECIAL WILDFIRE EDITION

The Forest Fire Debate

by Bud Filler (McCall '52)

Just finished reading Michael Rains' letter to President Trump on *Forest Fires and Forest Management*, and also Jim Petersen's dissertation on *Taming the Forest Service Fire Culture* in the *Evergreen* magazine. Both presentations are right on, in my opinion. The authors have spent 30 years each in their careers of forestry.

Mr. Rains proposes increasing the U.S. Forest Service budget by a billion dollars, which includes a "fire fix." Mr. Petersen implies that the managers of the government have been seduced into believing that nature knows best, and the fires should be allowed to burn. Outdoor writers of our local press have been made to believe large fires are inevitable,

and to accept the smoke. What gives?

The government managers talk about a "fire fix" and "fuel reduction." I'm not sure I want to know what those terms and strategies mean.

Looking back, I too would like to contribute my thoughts, having spent 57 years, exactly, in the forest and timber industry, starting in the woods swinging a Pulaski as a smokejumper, then a forester, logger, and after that, the mills and management.

The last 23 years I was a co-owner of an engineered-wood products manufacturing company in Idaho. It was, when we sold it, one of the largest specialty engineered-timber companies in North America.

My partner was Wayne King, a Hotshot firefighter from the Angeles National Forest. We compared a lot of notes on throwing dirt on burning branches and building firelines.

Here are my thoughts on fire and forest management – of preventing large fires and of controlling our forest resources now and for future generations.

Our country's population is growing, as well as the world's. We will need all the wood fiber we can process. We need the cellulose, which nature provides and which our industry processes into lumber, paper, fiberboard, and a myriad of products.

Plastic waste is maxing out the landfills, polluting our rivers, and now the oceans. Some communities are stepping up and restricting plastic bags. There is also a finite source for plastics.

Not so with wood fiber. It continually grows. We will need more wood fiber for construction, for paper and newsprint, for containers, and, I predict, for the many products that are now plastic.

Let's not allow the trees to burn.

We should utilize Forest Service smokejumpers for the reason they were initially intended, suppressing forest fires immediately. I've read government statistics from the 1950s and '60s showing how firefighting costs were significantly reduced after the jumper program was started in the 1940s and early '50s. And that was before the Forest Service began using costly aerial retardants.

It's my impression that some politicians and managers in the upper bureaucracy of government think the firefighting smokejumpers are an adventurous, half-crazy (who would want to jump out an airplane in the mountains?) group of muscular prima donnas. I can assure you *they are not*. But they *are* smart, tough, and *very* experienced in putting out forest fires.

Most of them, after summers on the firelines, go on to become doctors, lawyers, professors, business owners, military officers, and government managers. The pilots who fly them to their firefighting work on the ridges are also very experienced. They remain in the aero profession for years.

I suggest doubling the smokejumper numbers for initial attacks on fires. For a lightning strike on a ridge, the expenses of a plane, a pilot, spotter, and two jumpers are minimal compared to retardant drops and dozens of ground crews and support personnel at fire camps.

We do not want these small fires to burn, and here is why I say this. I have traveled much of the backcountry of Idaho on horseback, on foot, and by plane. The drainages in central Idaho – the Salmon River country – have been burned over. Most of these beautiful valleys are now nothing but black snags and brush.

Ten to 15 years after a fire, these burned trees begin to fall, making passage on foot through the woods virtually impossible. Do we want to accept this as nature's way?

The whitebark pines on the high ridge tops, once centuries old, are gone, not from disease but from fire. Regeneration is lodgepole pine and brush. Twenty-five to 35 years later, lodgepole pines – the forest "weed trees" – become vulnerable to bark beetles, and the trees soon die. The forest becomes a tinder box, and the cycle starts over.

Some regeneration of ponderosa pine, Engelmann spruce, and Douglas fir begins on the edges of the burns. But the mixed forest is gone. Is this what we want?

"Fuel reduction." What is this? The environmentalists say the forests need fire. Experts say the Native Americans burned the forest. What? Who made that one up? Okay, maybe the grass on the prairies.

The timber industry – and our country – needs more wood fiber. Loggers face a social problem, not a scientific one. The tourist, driving through the Northwest, sees old clearcuts or streaks in the forest canopies from line logging, and the thinking is "the timber barons are ravaging the forests again." Not so.

Select logging management was practiced by the Forest Service in Idaho in the 1950s—the policy at

that time. This type of timber extraction followed sound principles: First, foresters marked trees for cutting a hundred yards away from the streams and forest roads. Then the selection for logging was to mark only several trees from a stand of mature spruces, pines, Douglas firs, and white firs.

Other trees were marked – mature trees with flattened tops, some with splits, lightning scars and potential decay. In a grove of similar species, selection was maybe one out of four.

Timber stands and species vary from slope to slope, soil types, exposure to the elements, and to moisture. Forget the clearcuts. The loggers may make the case as the species and the terrain changes. But the population rejects this kind of a forest. The purists say, never mind—let's burn. You get the idea.

Selected forestry is followed today by many government agencies and private companies who own the trees. This type of tree removal started in Europe and was learned and practiced by our first foresters, led by Gifford Pinchot, more than half a century ago. Why not bring these practices back—sound fire control methods, and tree selection?

The timber industry, as well as the Forest Service, has to give some. The logging trucks seen today transport logs from the woods of long lengths, probably 35-footers. The mills efficiently want the large logs with the largest diameters. "Overrun" at the mill is increased with the larger logs, and a higher grade of lumber is usually milled from big trees. This is a natural business desire, almost a requirement for the lumbermen.

Where are the short logs, the busted and small diameter logs? They are in the burn piles. Why doesn't the Forest Service "price" the small and broken logs at a number to be economically utilized by the lumber, plywood, and particleboard mills?

The Forest Service could move these reject logs at a significant discount off contract stumpage fees. The loggers would remove them, skid them from the woods – perhaps using separate equipment – and then on trucks with short log carriers.

If the Forest Service and timber owners could significantly discount these rejects, the slash piles would be smaller. The lumbermen and loggers will tell you "they can clean up the forest, saving government crews the work, and the taxpayers the cost."

Let's compromise. Return tree revenue to the public, the small towns, the schools, and keep folks employed.

I believe this kind of soul-searching is possible in collaboration with the Forest Service, the wood products operators, and the environmentalists. We cannot pass the task to nature to control and manage our forest lands. We cannot allow fires to burn, eroding the hillsides, filling the mountain streams with silt, destroying the nests and habitat of forest birds and small creatures, and even killing off some of the larger animals.

Where is PETA when these fires are allowed to burn?

Forest utilization can be achieved. When my partner and I were in the timber business, we had two manufacturing lines. The first was a high-speed operation where we produced the products the customers needed, in volume, and in time for construction.

The second line was a slower recovery process where we utilized short lumber lengths, retrimmed, resurfaced, and regraded the wood, and then applied adapted engineering principles to laminate these products for strength.

We made a nice profit on this secondary line. In addition to engineered products for the construction industry, nothing was wasted. Sawdust was used for fuel; shavings for particle board; and low grade and knotty lumber dried, graded, and trimmed again for non-stress portions of structural timbers or decking.

The point here is that the timber in the forest is aesthetically beautiful and commercially valuable. Black and gray burnt timber is worthless. In the wilderness areas, where there are no roads, and in the parks where there is no extraction, the woods can and should be protected from fire.

Okay, maybe Yellowstone 30 years ago was all dead bug-killed pines, waiting to burn. That was the exception. There was no thinning, nor care taken over the years.

The forests should not become a thicket of black snags and brush. If allowed to mature naturally through the years, we can look at wooded hillsides the way they once were, covered with large, mixed softwood species—the forests as they should be.

The smokejumpers should be used for the reasons they are trained for. Stop the fires on the ridges. Keep them small.

Visit our website at smokejumpers.com to see all items!

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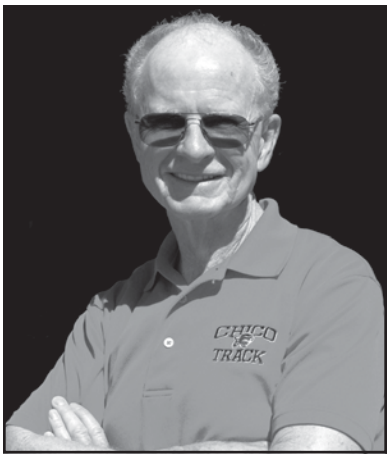
We've done it again! We introduced our newest addition to our line of extremely popular t-shirts ... navy blue with red, white and blue SMOKEJUMPERS logo. We're now pleased to offer you **long sleeves,** featuring the same logo, in response to member requests! M, L, XL and XXL. **$23 / $4 shipping**

Roosa: From airplanes to rockets

Smoke Jumper, Moon Pilot tells the astounding story of Stuart Roosa, who visited space aboard Apollo 14 after serving as smokejumper in Cave Junction in 1953. Makes an excellent gift! **$25 / $4 shipping**

Note that neither of the two above items appears on the order form. Please make a separate notation when requesting them.

SOUNDING OFF
from the editor

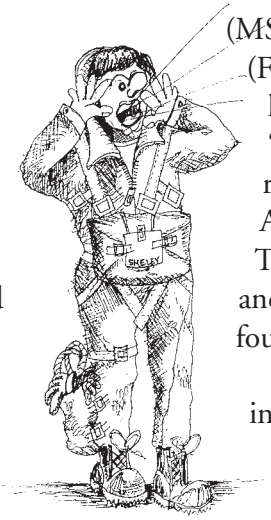


by Chuck Sheley
(Cave Junction '59)
Managing Editor

It has been almost 20 years since I took over the editorship of the quarterly NSA publication. **Jack Demmons** (MSO-50) had been doing a great job for the organization in putting together *The Static Line*. When Jack decided to no longer do that job, we were left with a void.

It was September and we didn't have anything ready for the October issue. I felt, and still do feel, that a publication is key to keeping us informed and together as an organization. The first issue of *Smokejumper* came out in October 1999. It was 28 pages and, looking at it, I can see that we have rounded many corners and made a lot of changes from the original.

Along the way, I was advised not to publish anything that might have a hint of controversy—in other words, keep it vanilla. That is not the way I taught school and coached. Listening to a variety of opinions and thoughts makes for good reading and discussion.



The first major part of our History Preservation Program is to record all issues of *The Static Line* and *Smokejumper*. Besides being available on the NSA website, they will be permanently saved and available to anyone in the world at the Smokejumper History Collection we are building at Eastern Washington University.

The October 1999 issue of *Smokejumper* was number 25 continuing the count from *The Static Line*. This issue is number 102. When I look back and read the past 100 issues, I am amazed at the amount of good writing and history we have preserved.

A couple articles stand out in my mind due to their significance and the possibility that they have never been published anywhere else in the world.

In July 2009 we started a four-part series on "The Birth of Smokejumping." I had received a large amount of information from **Bruce Ford** (MSO-75) and **Tony Pastro** (FBX-77). They had translated (from Russian) the "Notes of The First Forestry Parachutist," by Giorgy Alexandrovich Makeev. This story was intriguing and difficult to cut down to four parts.

In Makeev, I found an individual who had the same drive as **Frank Derry** (MSO-40) and our other smokejumper pioneers.

I could not figure out his age, but knew he was probably older and had some things going against him in establishing a smokejumper program in Russia. He was a professional forester with at least 10 years working in the field. He had fought in several "imperial and civil wars." Lastly, he easily got airsick. When he came up with the idea of dropping a retardant via parachute, he was asked who would apply this retardant once the bladder was on the ground. He replied, "People must be dropped by parachute."

The story is long—four issues. The amount of roadblocks thrown in his way by the naysayers was numerous. To Makeev, they were just hurdles to be overcome. He jumped right over the top of his bosses and went to the next level. To use our terminology, he took it to D.C. The more I read, the more I admired

Makeev. He was focused, intelligent, and his thinking way ahead of his time.

Somewhere along the way **Fred Rohrbach** (MSO-65) gave me 50 plus pages of a document written by **Pisidhi Indradat** (Deceased Life Member). Phisit was one of the five crewmembers that parachuted from a flaming Air America C-46 in 1963. One of those crewmembers was **Gene DeBruin** (MSO-59).

Those pages were condensed into a two-part article, "Prisoner In Laos," published in October 2006 and January 2007. It is an amazing story of survival. As Phisit says in the introduction, "This is a true story, one that has never before been revealed to anyone in writing. It is being told at the urging of my subordinates, and being published in the funeral memories of my mother. This story is a straightforward, unembellished account."

One very interesting part of this story is the addition of USAF helicopter pilot Duane Martin and USN pilot Dieter Dengler to the prison. Phisit, Gene, and the others had already been imprisoned for over two years at the time. The escape of the group was chronicled in Dengler's book (*Escape From Laos*) and the movie "Rescue Dawn."

At the time of the movie and book, only Dengler was known to have survived the escape. It is very interesting to read Phisit's version and that of Dengler. If Phisit had been an American, it would have been a best seller. Read it only in *Smokejumper*.

So many of our members have played a major part in the handling of wildfire in our forests and rangeland over a number of years. Smokejumpers went out into the Forest Service and BLM and were big-time players. Now, they have retired and many of them have passed away.

I respect the work that all of these people have done. Therefore, I'm taking a different approach with this issue—the feature will be on how we are handling the wildfire situation in the U.S. We're going to look at some ideas and input from people who have been successful in past years.

After reading some of these articles, you might think that the wheel has already been invented—we just need to revert to the days when it could roll down the road.

As Hawkeye Pierce and Trapper John from M*A*S*H* said, "Relax, the pros from Dover are here."

Struggle with the Titan

by Pat Harbine (Missoula '51)

The fire jump was an important one because it was near the border of the Bob Marshall Wilderness area. The DC-3 carried a full crew of smokejumpers. As we stepped out into the prop blast and our chutes opened, we could see the wisps of smoke and the orange markers of the landing zone. The sixteen-man crew assembled quickly on the ground and awaited the low level drop of tools. The last item from the airplane was oddly shaped and on a single chute. It was a two-man chainsaw! Most of the crew had never seen one, as they were uncommon in the early 50s. I volunteered with another jumper and inherited the heavy end with the engine. The unit appeared old and well worn. The brand name was stamped on the fuel tank, the Titan. A single bit axe, two wedges and assorted tools accompanied it.

My partner carried the tool bag over his shoulder and the two iron wedges in his rear pockets while handling the stinger end of the saw. I struggled with the broad handlebars on the motor end. Heavy brush impeded us as we worked our way to the fireline. We paused occasionally to lift the machine over deadfalls.

Our role was to cut away deadfalls that lay across the fireline the others were building. The saw was intended to saw through sizeable logs

with its five-foot blade aided by the wedges. The alpine timber we confronted was seldom more than a foot in diameter. The saw cut would bind the saw when we were several inches deep, not deep enough to use the wedges but too deep to withdraw the saw blade. Removing the stinger handle to pull the blade free proved time consuming and the full-length bar above the blade prevented a cut from below. We resorted to chopping away at the sides of the cut with an axe to widen it when the saw was impossibly bound. Our day went slowly with frequent frustrations and more chopping than sawing.

It has been many years since I have thought about the old Titan chainsaw. Over the intervening years, I have successfully used many other models, but I recently became aware of people who collect such things. A quick check on the Internet and there it was, the 1947 vintage Titan that overcame two grown men in the remote forests of Montana.

We had left the one we used beside the trail hoping a wise old mule would refuse to pack it out!

Former Jumper Davis Perkins – Ever Watchful

by Bob Bahr, *PleinAir* Magazine

In his work as a smokejumper in Alaska and the Western states and as a paramedic in crisis hot spots around the world, California oil painter **Davis Perkins** (NCSB-72) needed to pay close attention to his surroundings—a discipline that has had a direct impact on his paintings.

Strangely enough, this prepared him for plein air painting.

"When you are fighting a fire in the forest, you are really cognizant of the terrain, of what kind of fuel is around, and certainly the nature of the wind and how it is going to affect the fire," Perkins says.

"When I was in the Army, I was a paratrooper, and with aviation, you are cognizant of the clouds as well. So this is where it all started. Once you are a smokejumper, it never leaves you. You are always calculating, *If the fire were to come up this draw, where would I go?"*

"Once you are a smokejumper, it never leaves you."

Examine the clouds in a Perkins piece, such as *Hills Above Nicasio* to see his informed depiction of clouds. Likewise, look at the mist described in *St. Mary's*.

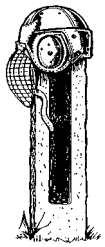
"I often think of smoke when I paint fog," says Perkins. "It has a similar consistency. I love capturing clouds and fog and their movement. I'm still trying to perfect the look."

The motif of fog is the subject of a 36-by-48-inch painting Perkins is completing for MarinScapes, a fundraiser for Buckelew Programs—an agency that helps people recover from mental illness, provides housing, and offers addiction services in Marin, Sonoma, and Napa counties in Northern California.

Perkins was chosen as the featured artist, which means his painting will appear on the event's posters, and the original will be sold to benefit the non-profit.

It's a prestigious honor. Susan Schneider Williams, the widow of Robin Williams and an accomplished painter, served as last year's featured artist at MarinScapes.

Perkins's path to Marin started in the Army's 82nd Airborne Division, where he was a paratroop sergeant; that is where he first became acquainted with aviation, clouds, and jumping out of airplanes. He moved on to a Special Forces unit, and after an honorable discharge, became a smokejumper.



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

Walter R. Holcomb (North Cascades '61)

Walt died April 19, 2018, in Winthrop. He was a lifelong resident of Winthrop growing up on a dairy farm where he acquired a strong work ethic that continued throughout his life. Walt jumped at Winthrop during the 1961, '63 and '64 seasons. He worked in the Winthrop area as a millworker, ranch foremen, and finished a 34-year career with the Okanogan County Electric Cooperative as a lineman and customer service representative.

Robert F. Schumaker (Missoula '59)

Bob died April 19, 2018, from brain cancer at his home in Hamilton, Montana. He graduated from the University of Idaho with a degree in mechanical engineering. Bob earned his commission in the ROTC program and was stationed in Germany after his graduation, earning the rank of Captain.

After his discharge from the Army, Bob worked for the Sandia Laboratory in Livermoore, California, and then at the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in Bremerton, Washington. While in Bremerton, he used the G.I. Bill to earn his pilot's license and was a member of the Seattle Mountain Search and Rescue group.

Bob was active in the NSA Trails Program, was an accomplished skier and spent many hours soaring as a member of a gliding club. He was a founding member of the Selway/Bitterroot Foundation and was also part of the volunteer group that manned the Salmon Mountain Lookout. Bob jumped at Missoula in 1959, '60, '62, '70 and at Grangeville in 1961.

Brent A. Smith (Redmond '78)

Brent, 60, died May 29, 2018, in Louisiana. Colonel Smith, USA, Ret., was originally from Tonasket, Washington, and will be buried with military honors in Twisp, Washington. Brent rookied at Redmond and transferred to Missoula where he jumped 1979-83 while attending the University of Montana. He jumped at NCSB in 1985 and finished with over 100 fire jumps and, like many others, said it was the best job he ever had.

Brent was commissioned a 2nd Lt. and attended medical school at the University of New Mexico on an Army scholarship. He took his residency in Emergency Medicine at Darnall Medical Center, Fort Hood, Texas. He deployed to Desert Storm in 1990-91, the Sinai Peninsula '94-'95, Afghanistan '04-'05, and Iraq '07. After leaving active duty, he moved to Louisiana where he worked for the Willis-Knighton Health System.

Doyne L. "Mike" Tank (Pilot)

Mike died May 20, 2018, in Ogden, Utah. He was a graduate of the University of Montana with a degree in Forestry. Mike started his career with the USFS in 1959 in Montana and Idaho. He moved to Redding where he was a pilot and managed the smokejumper aircraft support program. In 1981, Mike moved to Ogden, Utah, where he was Regional Aviation Officer until his retirement in 1988.

Mike served as a pilot in the USAF from 1953-1959 and in the Army National Guard Reserves retiring with 23 years of service. After retirement, Mike started a 17-year career as a charter pilot at Sunbird Aviation in Belgrade, Montana.

Bill Adler (McCall '82)

Bill died January 26, 2017. He lived in Sonoita, Arizona, and grew up in the Bay Area graduating from Napa High School. Bill loved the outdoors. Just prior to his death by a quickly spreading melanoma, he hiked five miles. Bill jumped at McCall in 1982-83.

Michael P. Utigard (North Cascades '71)

Mike died May 30, 2018. He spent his teen years in Omak (WA) where he went to Omak High School. He played football and was senior class president. Mike jumped at North Cascades 1971-76.

He studied art at Evergreen College, and his favorite mediums were drawing, carving and woodworking. Mike was involved in the family organic farm business in Tonasket, Washington.

Clyde D. Blake (Missoula '51)

Clyde died June 19, 2018, after a battle with cancer. He graduated from the University of Montana with a degree in Forestry in 1953. He served two years in the USAF and was in the reserves until 1959. Clyde worked for the USFS as a forester and ranger all over the Pacific Northwest retiring in 1988. He then worked the next eight years for the state of Idaho.

Issac B. Martinez (McCall '76)

Ike, 65, died June 10, 2018, at the McCall Rehabilitation and Care Center. He graduated from high school in 1971 and started working for the Payette N.F. 1974 in Council, Idaho. Ike rookied at McCall in 1976 and jumped there until 1980. He retired from the Alamogordo (NM) Interagency Dispatch Center as Logistics Coordinator where he worked for 11 years.

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Rob Shaver (MYC-67)	Good Sam Fund Chung family
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Contributions since the previous publication of donors July 2018
Total funds disbursed to smokejumpers and families since 2004 – $153,200.

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

Snapshots from the Past

by Jeff R. Davis
(Missoula '57)

Rescue Jump

Rescue jumps were neither routine or welcomed. Whether it was an injured smokejumper or one of our mountain pilots past his estimated time of arrival (ETA), we threw out all the rules when we mounted one.

When we found the injured jumper or the downed aircraft, we disregarded the jump list, excessive winds or bad terrain. We were going to jump, no matter what.

At the time of my first rescue jump on July 20, 1964, I'd had a fairly active season, receiving a call to head up a booster crew bound for Silver City, N.M., July 5. We flew immediately to Silver in Johnson's C-46, and I stayed busy dropping men and supplies for the next five days.

We returned to Missoula at 2:55 p.m. July 11. I made another practice jump July 12, dropped four jumpers on the Parsnip Mountain Fire on the Kootenai Forest July 13, and continued doing miscellaneous work in the parachute loft as loft foreman.

We were called for a rescue flight at 9 a.m. July 20. One of our TMB tankers – this one rigged for bug spray – was overdue. Hardy Sandvig had been spraying down around Lost Trail Pass on the Idaho/Montana divide, and was an hour past his ETA.

The senior foreman, **Delos "Dee" Dutton** (MSO-51), and I handpicked the crew. The six buck jumpers were **Nels Jensen** (MSO-62), **Dale Trenouth** (MSO-61), **Dan Hensley** (MSO-57), **Don Haugo** (GAC-61), **David Lancaster** (GAC-63) and **William Locklear** (GAC-63). We took off in 67 Victor, Johnson's DC-2, at 9:25 a.m. with Milton "Cookie" Calloway at the controls. I didn't know that familiar DC-2 could fly that fast. Cookie hammered it down to Lost Trail Pass on full military power, red-lining it all the way.

We spotted the TMB immediately as it lay crumpled near the bottom of a slight ridge. We also saw what looked like a white parachute canopy, strung out near the aircraft. Our hopes were raised; possibly Sandvig had survived despite the obvious wreckage splayed out below us.

The winds were high as **Leonard Krout** (MSO-46) threw out a single set of drift streamers. It didn't matter; we were going to jump anyway. I quickly devised a simple ground signal, since we were going to remain radio-silent: "X" meant "fatal" while "O" meant "alive."

It was a rough jump. I got to the ground OK, but some of the guys were scattered and one man was hung upside down in a juniper tree. We yanked him out. The plane was already roaring overhead, dropping the heavy bundles right on top of us.

We'd arrived over the downed aircraft a little after 10 a.m. By 10:30 eight men and five cargo bundles were on the ground.

We hustled down the ridge to the tangled TMB and Hardy Sandvig. He was emphatically dead. The aircraft had an unfortunate flight characteristic of inverting and diving if pulled into too tight a turn. That's what had happened in this case. The twisted props were a clear sign that he'd gone straight in with full power.

I expected a lot of blood when I first viewed the body; it was torn up pretty badly. There was none because the heart had stopped instantly.

I quickly ran back up the ridge and laid out the "X". Over the airnet I asked Cookie

if he'd seen the signal: "Do you see my "X" down here?" A one-word reply: "Yeah."

The impact had exploded Hardy out of the cockpit and opened his parachute on impact. The contents of Hardy's pockets had blown free and lay scattered around the body. At his head was a small juniper tree; it was festooned with bills from Hardy's wallet. There, stuck in the tree above his head, was a color photograph of Hardy and his wife and two young daughters.

It was so poignant I damned near wept. I've never been able to get that image out of my head.

We started immediately to cut a helispot. We couldn't touch the body until a coroner was on the scene and viewed it. We had it done by 1:30 p.m.; I never cut a chopper-spot that fast. For years I carried a large clasp knife with the large blade broken in half; I used it to snap the metal banding off the chainsaw box.

Within a half hour of finishing the helispot, the coroner arrived, and after my two-hour association with that slimy son of a bitch, I've detested coroners ever since.

He delayed for long minutes from viewing the body so the photographer with him could take five different shots of him posing near the chopper. Finally he went down and pronounced Sandvig dead. Then he counted the money scattered about and came up with fifty dollars. We'd already counted the bills and my diary showed the exact amount: $117. Dutton took the bastard aside and had a quiet little talk with him. He returned the stolen cash and nothing further was said.

We were eager to wrap the body in the coroner's rubber body bag and get it to the helispot and back to Hardy's widow, now probably notified of the tragedy and waiting at Missoula County Airport. The f—-ing coroner started to object to using his body bag, because "that bag cost me almost eight dollars, you know."

Before one of us could step over and strangle the miserable SOB, he saw the look in our eyes and handed over his precious body bag without further word.

It took all eight of us to pack our heavy burden to the helispot. We got there at 3:30 p.m. By 4:10 the body was on its way to Missoula and we breathed a sigh of relief. I took off in the second chopper at 4:30, arriving at the North Fork Ranger Station at 4:45. We were all shuttled to the Ranger Station by 5:30 p.m., and we left by pickup truck for the drive to Missoula, arriving there at 8:45 p.m. It was a silent trip for all of us; no one had anything to say.

If it had turned into a true rescue and we'd brought Hardy out alive, there would have been chattering all the way home. Not on this trip, it scarred us all.

Jerry Chisum: At The Controls Wherever You Find Him

by Lee Gossett (Redding '57)

*[Editor's note: Lee's story refers to the April 2018 Smokejumper magazine article by **Don Havel** (FBX-66) "Do You Remember the B-25?"]*

I first met Jerry Chisum in 1963, my last season as a smokejumper in Fairbanks. Three of us jumpers were flown by helicopter to an airstrip on the Yukon River to a waiting BLM Cessna 180 for a flight back to Fairbanks.

As we loaded our gear in the Cessna 180, I noticed this "young kid" pilot who was going to fly us back to Fairbanks, and he looked to be 15 years old. I sat up front with the pilot who turned out to be Jerry Chisum.

Being a commercial pilot myself at the time, I studied his every move, and it didn't take long to

figure out this "kid" really knew his stuff.

The next time I saw Jerry was during the summer of 1966 in Fairbanks. I had put in a year as an Air America kicker following my 1963 season in Alaska but decided I needed to "move up the food chain" and become an employed pilot.

I left Air America and headed for New Zealand and my first flying job as a crop duster. After the season finished, I returned to Oregon and flew fire patrol for the 1965 season.

Wanting to return to Air America as a pilot, I knew I needed to add bush pilot to my resume. Off I went to Alaska for the summer of 1966 and flew a Cessna 180 for the BLM.

Now Jerry is flying everything in the BLM fleet, but the prize was the "Pink Lady," a P-51, painted pink and equipped with two drop tanks of external fuel. Jerry could stay aloft for eight hours and covered most of Northern Alaska without refueling. Now Jerry looked all of 16 years old.

After the 1966 season in Alaska, Air America offered me a pilot position, so off I went to Saigon in late 1966. After several months, who should show up in Saigon? None other than Jerry Chisum.

I had requested a transfer to Vientiane, Laos, where I had been as a kicker, and my request had been approved. Jerry took my room in a guesthouse in Saigon, and off I went to Vientiane.

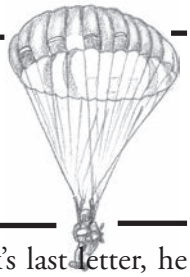
As my wife and I were leaving Laos on our first annual leave, who should show up in Vientiane? None other than Jerry Chisum. I tossed Jerry the keys to our house and my Mazda pickup for his use during his stay in Vientiane. Jerry is now a Platus Porter captain with Air America based in Saigon.

Many years passed and just by chance, I heard Jerry's name mentioned on a visit to New Zealand, where my wife, Mary, is from. Sure enough, it's the same Jerry Chisum, and we met up again after more than 30 years.

Jerry had immigrated to New Zealand, married a beautiful Kiwi girl, and was flying an F-27 on a night mail run. We reconnected and have stayed in touch since then. We have spent time with Jerry and Jan in New Zealand, and they have spent time with us in Oregon.

Jerry is a highly respected pilot in New Zealand and is one of the "chosen few" who was selected to fly the World War I replica aircraft at special air shows. Ask any pilot in New Zealand, and he or she will know Jerry Chisum. If it has wings, then Jerry has flown it.

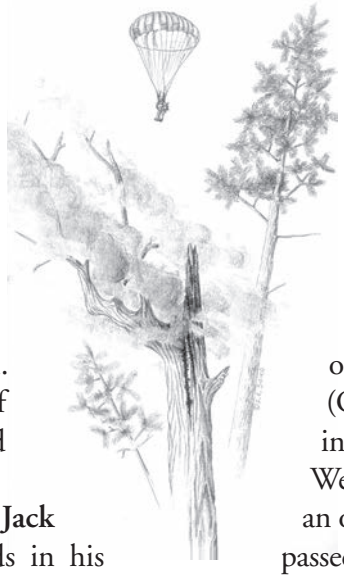
ODDS AND ENDS



by Chuck Sheley

Congratulations and thanks to **George Steele** (NCSB-72), **David Christensen** (MYC-52), and **Don Stenberg** (BOI-74) who just became our latest Life Members.

Ravalli County District Court Judge **Jim Haynes** (MSO-82) announced his retirement (April 2018) after more than 15 years on the bench. Jim was a graduate of the Univ. of Montana School of Law and practiced in Hamilton for 20 years.



It is always good to hear from **Jack Demmons** (MSO-50) when he sends in his "Blast From the Past" column for this magazine. In a footnote in Jack's last letter, he said he had walked 5,190 miles in the past 60 months and is going for 10,000. I'm guessing that most of the miles are to the library where he does a lot of his work. Keep it up, Jack.

Lee Gossett (RDD-57): "A group of 45, including six family members of **Roland Harry Korvinius Andersen** (GAC-52), better know as "Big Andy," met in Wenatchee, Washington, at the Coast Wenatchee Center Hotel to bid farewell to an old friend and former smokejumper who passed on December 12, 2017. Big Andy didn't want any sort of service, but many of us felt

he owed us a memorial. Many of those present were former smokejumper/Agency mates that served in Southeast Asia and other hot spots around the globe.

"Big Andy was present at the CIA ceremony, May 24, 2017, that honored three of our fellow smokejumpers that died in the line of duty while on a cargo resupply mission in Laos in 1961. **Ken Hessel** (MYC-58) also attended the ceremony and wrote a great article in the October 2017 issue of *Smokejumper* about the ceremony.

"Big Andy had quite a history, being a smokejumper, Air America pilot, Intermountain pilot, and finishing his career as a USFS lead plane pilot. I first met Big Andy in January 1964 in Vientiane, Laos, when we were both with Air America. They broke the mold with Big Andy."

"**Ozzie**" **Bender** (MSO-47): "I was reading that excellent article in our magazine by **Ben Smith** (MSO-64). I never met him, but his father, **Glenn** (MSO-40), was called 'Smitty' around Missoula in 1947-48. He was one of the originals, along with the Derry's, and only had one eye and was a rigger and originally a 'barnstormer' from California, and he also composed ditties. The one I remember most is 'Everybody ready said the spotter looking up?' to the tune of the Battle Hymn of the Republic.

"When I went to the Bob Marshall Wilderness Area on a Trail Crew Project a couple of years ago, none of the jumpers in the group seemed to know that song.

"I wonder if you could tell me the name of the jumper who appeared in a photograph in the *Smokejumper* magazine a couple of years ago with **Bob Crow** (MSO-46) and **Jim Ward** (MSO-46)? I can't remember their first names, but these guys were all from 1947. Ward was from Portland, Oregon, area and Crow was from Miles City, MT. Crow was one of the 7 other guys that carried **Carroll Rieck** (MSO-46) out after he broke his back falling out of a lodgepole when his chute collapsed. Ward sold his '81 Harley to me and another jumper, **Cliff Euwema** (MSO-46) for $600 in 1947. We rode it back to Michigan where we were both in College.

"I have enjoyed the *Smokejumper* magazine very much and look forward to receiving it every quarter. You should be commended for putting out such a good account of all the jumpers."

Recently I was communicating with a member about finding the smokejumper who was the oldest when he/she was actively jumping.

I went right to **Murry Taylor** (RDD-65) and got this reply: "My last season was 2000 and I was 59. BLM in Alaska, especially **Tom Boatner** (FBX-80) and **Jim Raudenbush** (FBX-82), worked with the overhead up there to allow me to keep jumping even though I was over the 57 limit. I had a break in service at one point and needed the extra time to get full retirement and they let me do it. I'm proud to say that I passed the Super PT test (the run for your job test) every time, on the first try. I finished with 205 fire jumps and 375 total, not a great record, but glad I got to 200 fire jumps. My last year was the year *Jumping Fire* came out, a fine ending to my years as a smokejumper."

Bob Reid (MSO-57) comes close to Murry and certainly had the longest break in service of anyone. After jumping at Missoula 1957, '59 and '60, he went into the USAF. After 35 years he came back and jumped a year at Redding (1995) at age 57. Wow!

John Spencer (NCSB-98) turned 58 last April and has been jumping since his rookie year. Three pretty amazing guys.

Fred Ebel (MSO-57) sent along a good article from the Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, newspaper. Retired Lt. Col. **Carl Gidlund** (MSO-58) was the main speaker at a Memorial Day ceremony in McEuen Park in that community. Carl's message was excellent and timely.

The "Mann Gulch Doug," housed at the Museum of Mountain Flying, will potentially take part in the 75th anniversary of D-Day. There is work to be done and airworthiness regulations to be completed. Stay tuned.

"**Swede**" **Troedsson** (MSO-59) passed along a remembrance of a jump he made in Redding in 1959: "In late July 1959, 17 of us Missoula jumpers, led by **Al Cramer** (MSO-43), flew to Redding.

"On July 25, 13 of us were dispatched to the Water Gulch Fire located on the shore of Lake Shasta. Upon arrival we observed that there was a line around the fire. While circling around the fire and over the lake, we saw recreational mo-

torboats circling to watch the jump show.

"My jump partner and I were kicked out early and landed on the lakeshore close to the water. A motorboat roared up to us and offered to take us to join the rest of the crew. We gladly accepted.

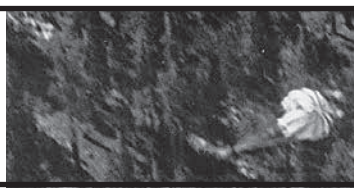
"The rest of the jumpers landed in a tall brush field. They were commenting that the brush had provided such a cushy landing. It turned out the fire was already contained, so we gathered our gear and returned to Redding.

"Little did we realize that the brush was poison oak. As I recall, six of our crew were off the jump list for two weeks recuperating from a poison oak infection."

Got an email from **Barrie Turner** (MSO-59) who is living in Thailand and receives this magazine via the internet. After jumping the 1959 and '60 seasons, Barrie joined the 101st Airborne and became a helicopter pilot in the 1st Air Cav. He participated in the battle of the la Drang Valley in November 1965 and received the Bronze Star. For a very interesting interview with Barrie, go to Youtube and type in "Warrant Officer Barrie Turner." Good to hear from you Barrie.

After 25 years as a founder and executive director of the Museum of Mountain Flying in Missoula, **Stan Cohen** (Associate) has resigned from the museum. "Just getting older, some health problems but still keeping busy writing and publishing and shipping books. Will miss meeting old jumpers as they visit."

THE JUMP LIST



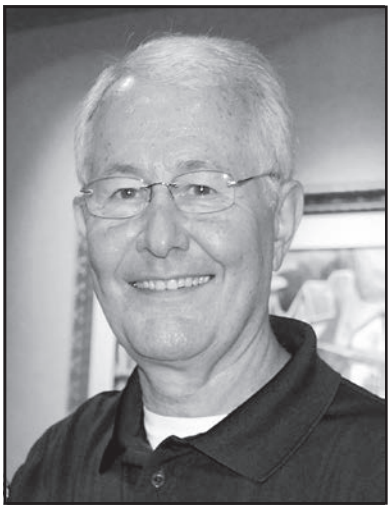
The "Jump List" is intended to bring you up-to-date on your fellow NSA members. Send your information to Chuck Sheley; see his contact information on page 3 of this magazine.

MIKE BINA (Missoula '68)
Bases jumped: MSO 68-69
Now living in: Baltimore, Md.
Since jumping: Mike has served as president of The Maryland School for the Blind in Baltimore since 2008. He and his wife, Mary, have three adult children, two grandchildren, and two Llewellin (English) Setters.

At 71, he is confident he could still jump, land, and if necessary get down safely from a "hang up," dig fireline, and get back to the base. He awaits a call from the dispatcher in the event of a shortage of jumpers. He could use the extra income and misses the adventure and camaraderie of fellow jumpers.

Mike enjoys running, woodworking and writing, which he will have more time to do when he retires. Two projects that provide great "therapy" for him are restoring a 1952 Ford Pickup and building a 5x12 foot O-scale train layout which includes exact replicas of each of the homes his family has lived in, including models of all the family vehicles. Thus far he has been able to keep secret from his wife the truck restoration cost. Periodically, she will probe, "Let me have it again – exactly how much money do you have into this project?" The good news: No special prosecutor has been named. That is, yet.

Mike vividly recalls going through U.S. Army parachute training after his smokejumping days. He can still hear the drill sergeants angrily getting on "his case." The drill sergeants' "red-



Mike Bina (Courtesy M. Bina)

faced and yelling displeasure" was due to Mike's confusion over the Army Airborne's Standard Operating Procedure which conflicted with the smokejumper parachute landing fall. He estimates he did 10,000 push-ups as discipline for not doing "it" the "Army way." This just proves old habits are hard to break. Bina admits when no drill sergeants were around on Army jumps, his landings were smokejumper PLFs.

Mike began his career in 1966 teaching swimming to students at the South Dakota School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, while earning his bachelor's degree at Northern State University. During college, he worked two years on the Nine-Mile Hotshot crew and two as a Missoula smokejumper.

Following college, he served three years during the Vietnam era as a U.S. Army Special Forces military intelligence officer. After military service, Mike earned a master's degree in Special Education in 1972 from California State University, Los Angeles, which three years ago honored him as a distinguished alumnus. He taught and coached at the Wisconsin School for the Visually Impaired, 1973-78, then earned a doctorate from the University of Northern Colorado in 1980. Mike has served in leadership positions at the Texas, Indiana, Hadley, and Perkins schools for the blind. Mike is currently board chairman of the United States Association for Blind Athletes. In this role, he attended the 2016 Paralympics in Rio de Janeiro.

Mike says: "Every time I fly, I look out the window and imagine jumping again. I dream of going to the back of the plane, hooking up, negotiating with God for a safe landing, jumping, being hit with the prop blast, and after seeing a full canopy overhead, marveling at the quiet calm at 1,000 feet. What a thrill, pleasure, and honor it was to have jumped. Only a few know and have had the privilege."

Sexual Harassment…There Is More To It

by Don Maypole (Idaho City '54)

Rightly so, many women are finding their voices to publicly describe experiencing sexual harassment at work. Politicians, movie stars, and businessmen have been identified as harassers. But there is much more to the problem than just these events.

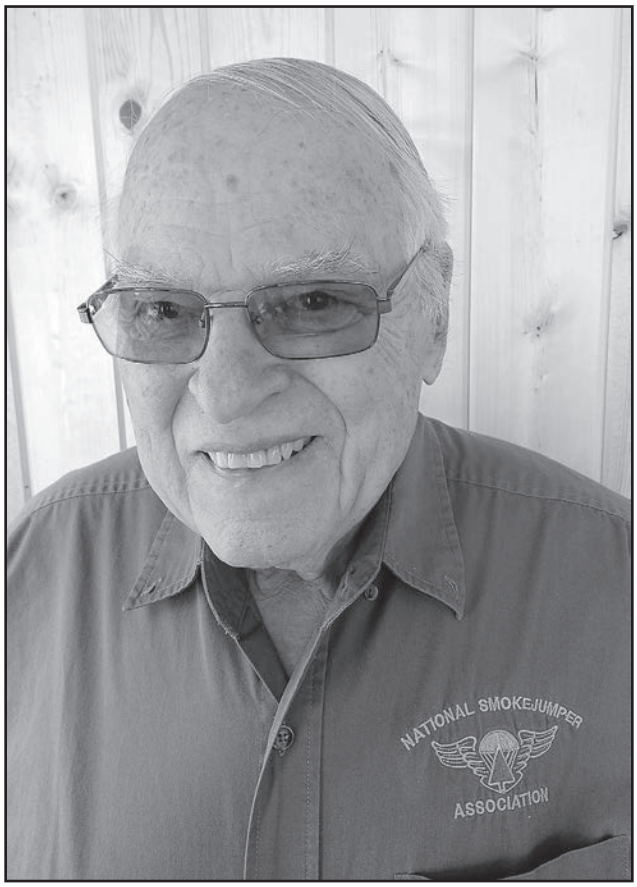
In the early 1980s, I conducted a research project to determine the incidence of sexual harassment of white-collar workers (social workers in public and non-profit agencies). Taking into account that the incidence of harassment is based on the perception of the victim, the reported rate for women was 36 percent and for men, 14 percent.

The harassers were identified as supervisors, coworkers and clients. Seventy five percent of the victimized women were between 25 and 44 years of age.

Most of the women saw the problem in terms of the dominance of men over women. Moreover, women emphasized that the harasser's behavior was unwanted. This understanding is supported by C. A. MacKinnon's definition, "the unwanted imposition of sexual requirements in the context of a relationship of unequal power."

This definition aids us in understanding the approach and the response to the rejection behaviors by the perpetrator, as well as the possibility of a hostile environment. The approach can involve sexually-nuanced language and touching. The perpetrator's response to the rejection could be punishment in some fashion, and the hostile environment could be cultural or physical, such as suggestive pictures on the wall.

The study victims were asked about what they did in three categories: conflict avoidance, diffusion, confrontation. In conflict avoidance, the victim looks the other way or leaves the situation, whereas in diffusion, the victim tries to minimize



Don Maypole (Courtesy D. Maypole)

it. With confrontation, the victim uses a power play or negotiation.

The responses of the victimized women in the study were unambiguous. With supervisors, they tried to avoid the harasser; with co-workers, they tried to defuse the situation; and with clients, to reason. No one attempted confrontation or any form of legal recourse.

These responses reinforced an understanding of the importance of the supervisor's control over working conditions such as pay, assignment of clients, promotions, effectiveness reports, etc. However, avoiding someone working at the next desk is another matter.

The acceptance of the work group is vitally important. The victim may try to underplay the harassment and even join in with jokes. This demonstrates that the victim accepts the behavioral norms of the work group. The potential fear and anxiety provoked by victimization can create psychosomatic problems, impaired social relations, and reduced effectiveness in one's work.

Victims are turning now to the mass media for social justice. Many of the perpetrators have lost their jobs. But there are other recourses available to victims, such as through Titles VII and IX of the Civil Rights Act, criminal law, and state employment laws. In some states, professional organizations may consider complaints as breaches of professional ethics and licenses can be withdrawn.

Is the phenomenon of sexual harassment different between the 1980s and now? Doubtful. But the cultural wave of change is expanding. Although it has been long in coming, the genie is now out of the bottle. As potential or actual perpetrators understand their vulnerability in their own work and personal lives, they may be led to curtail their behavior.

Dr. Maypole was the first director of the Department of Social Work at the University of Minnesota-Duluth and has taught and/or consulted in universities and agencies in Europe, the Middle East, and the Far East.

Get *Smokejumper* One Month Earlier

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

The advantages are: early delivery (a month ahead of USPS), ease of storage, and NSA postal expense savings. If you like the hard copy, 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*.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

by Jack Demmons (Missoula '50)
The Daily Missoulian,
May 1, 1988

Widow Remembers Mann Gulch

I AM THE former Mrs. Wagner Dodge (MSO-41). He was the foreman on the horrendous, heartbreaking, 1949 Mann Gulch Fire. Although Wag physically lived through that fire, he died that day.

When a smokejumper friend drove Wag to our home after the fire, his first words were, "The Old Boy upstairs has been riding in my hind pocket."

One of the *Missoulian's* articles stated, "Ultimately, he (Dodge) was blackballed, he was shunned by the jumpers." That is not true. He did not die at the age of 30. He died in his 39th year, at St. Patrick Hospital, and at the time of his passing he was surrounded by smokejumper friends and Bud Moore from the Powell Ranger Station (RS). His doctor called me out and asked, "Who are all these people? Is it necessary?" My reply: "They are all his friends and want to be with him as long as possible."

At the time of Wag's transfer from the smokejumpers to the Powell R.S., I was the only one who harbored bitterness because of the timing.

The "grim reaper" had come to share our home. Because of medical expenses, I returned to employment at Fort Missoula and later as secretary to Jack Barrows at the Northern Forest Fire Laboratory. Wag's transfer to the Powell R.S. ultimately proved to be a blessing for him. However, I could not be with Wag at the station. I deeply felt that he needed me. When an unwelcome guest invades your home permanently, it is necessary to become actors – great pretenders – in order to give each other courage and strength and normalcy during waking hours. As one attempts restful sleep, believe me, blood does run cold. We needed each other.

My prayers for the survivors of these young men who lost their lives in that fire were, and are, that time and Mother Nature decreases whatever bitterness they rightfully had and will forever be a part of their lives.

These young men did not know Wag Dodge. They knew their squadleader. In facing death it is natural to follow the one they knew, certainly not Wag Dodge whom they evidently "knew not" or trusted? I am sure the Forest Service has remedied the foregoing…

Smokejumper friends (I can not recall any "who shunned him") made a cross out of parts of the Trimotor engraved with the words "R. Wagner Dodge – Friend of the Forest." Smokejumpers and other friends of Wag's, in a Trimotor piloted by Bob Johnson, scattered Wag's ashes and dropped the cross in a remote wilderness area of the Powell R.D. The cross was later retrieved and permanently set as a monument. As we made that horseback trip into the wilderness, memory tells me there were jumpers with us. The front page of the Missoula Sentinel, June 2, 1955, had a picture of a Trimotor and Dick Johnson holding the cross, accompanied by an article stating, "Wag Dodge returned to the land he loved."

Fortunately, I have a great capacity for remembering only that which was good, happy, healthful and beautiful. To me life is like driving a car: Quick glances in the rearview mirror are most necessary, but in too many cases cause difficulties on the road ahead.