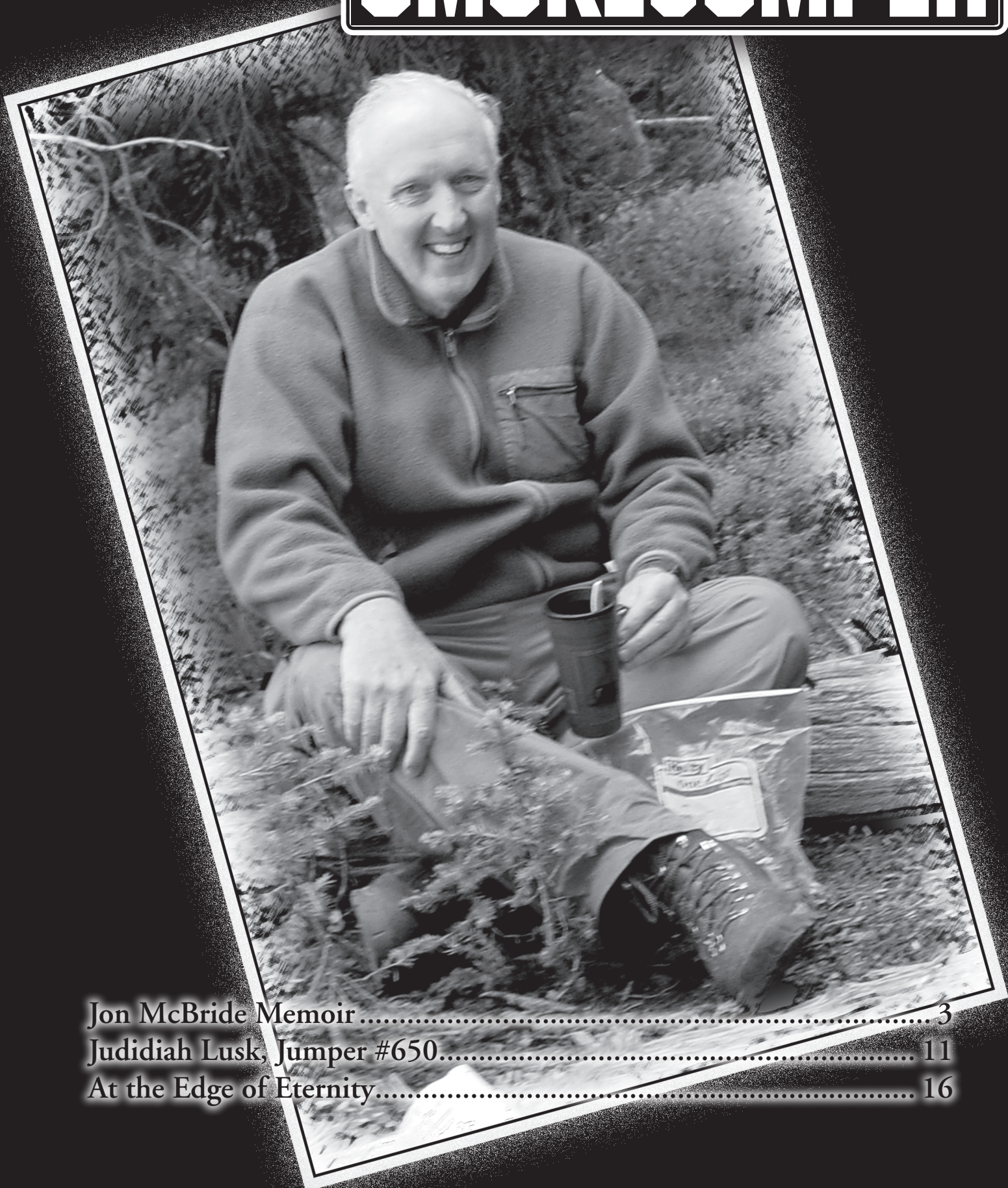


THE NATIONAL SMOKEJUMPER
ASSOCIATION

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE
OCTOBER 2010

SMOKEJUMPER



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Message from the President



by John Twiss
(Redmond '67)
PRESIDENT

I HOPE YOUR summer went well and you're enjoying the fall weather. I always enjoyed those fall fires as a smokejumper because the fires were usually small and easy to put out, forest colors were in full bloom, the air in the airplane door crisp and at night I could usually hear an elk bugling in the distance. I also looked forward to some time off after the fire season and the beginning of hunting season.

At our last National Smokejumper Association Board of Directors Meeting in Redding, California, we learned from various speakers, such as Tom Harbour, the Forest Service National Fire and Aviation Director (who's son Derek is a Missoula Smokejumper), that smokejumpers have become much more than aerial, initial-attack firefighters. Today smokejumpers serve on large fire teams, work on prescribed fire assignments, help with tree disease issues across the United States and serve in numerous other fire and non-fire capacities. Tom and other smokejumper leaders see this as a continuing trend because

of the lack of qualified personnel (many agency personnel no longer participate in fire activities) and the need for skilled/available employees.

We also learned that smokejumpers can be difficult to find and assemble when a large fire bust or emergency takes place, because of the above assignments and the difficulty in working with the centralized and decentralized reporting structures of the smokejumpers (some report nationally, some report to regions, and some report to national forests). I am happy that today's jumpers are being more fully utilized (I often felt underutilized as a smokejumper), yet concerned that the quick, initial-attack objective of smokejumpers not be compromised with competing assignments and organizational barriers. Quickly attacking the right wildfires in remote and non-remote areas saves lives, resources and money. Smokejumpers are still one of the best tools in the agencies' tool bag!

We will continue to work with the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service fire leadership to learn more about the current role of smokejumpers and issues facing the smokejumpers today. Congratulations to David Williams (son of National Smokejumper Association Board Member Jerry Williams) for completing Rookie Training in Missoula. 🌲

Jon McBride: A Personal Memoir

by Carl Gidlund (Missoula '58)

With the exception of my wife Sally, Jon McBride was my best friend. I'm not sure I was *his* best friend, and I bet plenty of folks share that uncertainty.

No matter. He was the kind of guy who attracted people, men and women alike. Jon made me and everyone he encountered feel very special, so special in fact that, when he had a task in mind, he could gently persuade us that what he proposed would be easy to accomplish and probably a lot of fun.

We were polar opposites politically, and if you knew Jon, you surely know the pole to which he was closest. But although we disagreed about politics, that never affected our friendship.

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Trails Project

Smokejumper base abbreviations:

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

He was flexible, too. Initially he was adamantly opposed to including spouses on our volunteer projects. But he was eventually persuaded – by **Jim Cherry** (MSO-57), I believe – that our ladies could contribute. So, last year we had two “couples projects” that have proved very successful.

Jon, 74, died June 2 surrounded by friends, his “Boys of Wednesday,” a group of guys who live in the Missoula vicinity and who, every Wednesday of the year, go biking, hiking or skiing. He stayed in great shape, but his heart gave out and he died instantly, surrounded by friends in the outdoors he loved. His was a passage to envy.

Although I live too far from Missoula to be a member of that group, he and I got together as often as we could for one-day and week-long ski trips and an occasional biking tour. Those were wonderful times.

I didn't know Jon during his smokejumping years; he joined the Navy in 1957 after three years of jumping. That was the year before I rookied in Missoula where Jon had been a squadleader. We met in 1992 while Jon was still working for Mobil. **Art Jukkala** (MSO-56) and I and a couple of non-jumper buddies had been planning a pack trip into the Bob Marshall Wilderness.

Art brought along an old friend. It turned out to be Jon who was then considering where to retire. We all had a great time, and I believe that trip solidified his desire to return to Montana, which he did when he retired three years later.

Our friendship that began in “The Bob” solidified over the next several years, as we both got involved with the nascent NSA. To a great degree, he was responsible for shaping the outfit into what it is today, an organization that includes a healthy representation from all the jumper bases.

During its formative years the NSA was Missoula-oriented, with all of its meetings in that city. Jon and I, **Chuck Sheley** (CJ-59) and a few others shared a vision that the outfit should encompass jumpers from all the bases and, to that end, we should conduct our board meetings and recruit members in the other jump base cities.

Jon didn't want to be president, but preferred to manipulate stuff behind the scenes. Recognizing that I was “manipulatable,” he persuaded me to run for president in 1999 with the promise that he'd serve as treasurer. Chuck volunteered to reform the National Smokejumper Association's newsletter into a magazine. As soon as we took office, we began conducting board meetings and

socials at other jump bases, beginning with Fairbanks.

During my tenure as NSA president, Jon and Art Jukkala approached me with the suggestion that we should field volunteer trail crews. I was happily manipulated into agreeing with their concept, and the first two trail crews of nine men each took to the field in 1999. When Art died of a heart attack on that first project, Jon assumed full leadership of the program.

And look at how it's grown under his guidance: In 2009, 318 one-week volunteers cleared over 150 miles of trail on 28 projects in eight states. Over the years our volunteers have also rehabilitated guard stations, lookout towers and other historical structures, built many corrals and erected miles of fence.

A natural leader, Jon recruited a staff of jumpers and associates to perform the many tasks required to field the crews. He also formed a trails advisory committee to, frankly, rubber-stamp the various initiatives he dreamed up. But owing to his great people skills, he remained as liaison to the various organizations and forests the trails program interfaced with to get the jobs done.

He was imaginative, too. Jon secured funding from various organizations, including his old employer, the Mobil Corporation. Under his management, the program amassed enough money to buy tools and equipment. When he built up more than enough money to fund the program, he invented the Art Jukkala Fund to provide scholarships for children of jumpers killed in the line of duty, recently amended to include children of jumpers killed in war.

Although program management took much of his time and effort, he thoroughly enjoyed working with his trail crews and made sure to take part in one or more projects each season.

I was fortunate that he invited me to accompany him on the very last project he worked before his death. It was a five-day adventure to the Dixie National Forest in Utah, two days down from Missoula and two back. We'd planned to spend at least a couple of days working with the crew after delivering gear, but after only one day of work he said he wanted to return home. We did, and in retrospect, I think we left early because he wasn't feeling well. Of course, he didn't complain.

It was a wonderful last trip. We shared laughs, thoughts, argued and enjoyed some long but comfortable silences.

That's what you do, of course, with your best friend.

Remembrances From Friends

Jack Calhoun (Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy, Ret.)

A number of recollections come to mind when thinking about my oldest and dearest friend, Jon McBride. He

was always an inspirational role model, quiet, gentle, and non-judgmental.

My most memorable recollection is the day he saved my life. In 1957 while we were in flight training at Pensacola, Florida, Jon and I were enjoying a day at the beach. As a dumb kid from the Ozarks, I knew nothing of rip tides or how to survive them. So, in spite of the warnings, I was swimming alone and got caught. After becoming totally exhausted trying to swim back to the beach, I reached the point of giving up and accepting the fact that I was going to drown. Then Jon showed up, told me to just relax and said he would take care of me. He did and I lived to survive many more dumb mistakes.

Unlike most Naval Aviation Cadets, Jon had his own parachute. On weekends he would pay a guy with a Piper Cub to take him to a thousand feet or so where he jumped. Not a lot of free fall time but after a few of these cycles, which included repacking the chute on the ground, a cloud of dust and debris was released every time his chute opened. Always generous, he offered me the opportunity to try the chute, but I never accepted his offer.

After flight training we maintained our friendship through the years. When Jon was flying fighters at NAS Miramar, I was flying seaplanes at NAS North Island. I used to take him for rides in my seaplane. We frequently dined at a Mexican restaurant in Coronado where Jon would eat the extra hot salsa like soup and ask for more.

When Jon was an instructor pilot in an instrument training squadron at Miramar, he demonstrated some of the finer points of jet flying with me in his back seat. One night we were on our way to a wedding on the east coast. During final approach to a refueling stop, I pressed the fire warning test switch in the back seat, which illuminated the FIRE light in the front cockpit. Before initiating a dual ejection, Jon took the time to ask if I had pushed the test switch. Thanks for asking, Jon.

While I was stationed at Monterey, Jon asked me to fly down to San Diego to spend a night with him and Trish. Jon had a well-studied copy of Aviation Week and Space Technology with a feature article about Mobil Oil's "air force" which, as I recall, consisted of more than a hundred airplanes.

He was thinking about applying for a job as Mobil's first professional jet pilot since they were about to take delivery of their first Gulfstream II. That was the beginning of his long and illustrious career with Mobil. During those years we rendezvoused infrequently at various places in the USA as well as in Athens and Singapore.

My wife and I spent some time with Jon and Trish when he was at Mobil's corporate headquarters in Washington, D.C. Jon was soft and pudgy. The next time we visited was at their home in Missoula, and by that time

he was once again lean and mean. His smokejumper pals had whipped him back into shape!

Our last time together was almost two years ago when Jon drove across country to spend a couple of weeks with my wife and me in Virginia. When he got here he said he didn't want to just sit around but wanted to do something worthwhile. So we rigged up a pole saw and cut every branch we could reach on every tree in our backyard. Our house is now the only one in the area with the tree canopy 30 feet off the ground. And we ate Jon's homemade chicken pot pies, and we did some sailing on the Chesapeake Bay.

I never enjoyed being with Jon any more than during that last, brief rendezvous. He was a great friend and a great American. The world is a lesser place without him.

Hal Howell (MSO-55)

I first met Jon in 1955 when I was a rookie and he was a second-year man. He, Art Jukkala and I jumped the famous Lost Packer Fire. Forty-three years later Jon was squad leader of one of the crews that started the smokejumper trail maintenance program in 1999.

We camped at the Silvertip Cabin and what Jon failed to mention until we got there was that every morning at 7, we had to wade the Spotted Bear River to get to the trail we were working and (we had to do) the same every night. It was only up to our B!! I mean

shorts. Jon said it's only a walk in the park.

A great man. I am proud to have been his friend.

Henry L. "Hank" Jones (MSO-53)

Each spring for the past few years, Jon would send a project notice to me via e-mail and asked if I would be interested in getting a crew together to work it. He always selected good projects. It was a pleasure working with Jon.

Jimmie Dollard (CJ-52)

Most of us remember the tremendous contributions Jon made to the trail project in setting up the projects, getting funding, handling the logistics, and lining up the crews while assuring that everyone met Forest Service requirements.

I remember loading out for projects at his house where he had everything totally organized, and I recall his brief visits as he hiked in to see how things were going. I believe Jon was happiest when he was up to his elbows in hard physical labor. I was privileged to work with him on two such projects in Colorado. They were in September, so Jon's logistics work was done and he was free to roll up his sleeves and be one of the crew.

The first project was in 2004 for the Colorado Trails Association and Forest Service. We later called it the Three Bridges Project. It was a challenge to bridge

Blaha's Roman Candle

by Howard Chadwick (McCall '52)

Above all we believe
in the opening of parachutes.
Blaha, our trainer, hooks
his static line into the cable,
kneels in the doorway. Steps out,
with assurance, into air.

But his chute snakes out in a tangle
of shroud lines, a pocket of air like
an apology at the apex. He glances up,
reaches for the handle at his chest.
The second chute wraps around the first.

On the ground his wife, watching.
You can hold your breath
for the entire time it takes
to fall a thousand feet.

From the plane the rookies see
his tiny hands claw in the second
chute, fling it out again
to crack open just before he crumples
into the soft ground and is still.

The plane circles for a year or two
then slowly, like an old wino,
he crawls to his feet and waves.

a large, fast stream. Jon did much of the heavy lifting as we built buttresses of large rocks and he was always on the heavy end as we maneuvered the heavy logs into place.

He was always smiling, positive and having fun. Jon took immense pride in what the NSA trail crew accomplished, but I think he was more pleased that he had the opportunity to be one of the crew.

The second project was in 2006, the Twin Lakes Project. It was to relocate a Colorado Trails Association trail. We had promised the association and the Forest Service 12 workers, but many had to cancel for a variety of reasons. We could only come up with six Coloradans, plus Jim Cherry from Iowa and Sue Palmer the cook. Jon volunteered to come down and expedited qualifying four local associates to fill out the crew of 12.

It started raining soon after we pitched camp and continued to rain until the last night of the project. We built trail, dragged logs and built bridges in the mud until our clothes and gloves were solid mud. Jon was right there cheerfully sharing the misery.

At the end of the last day the sun came out in a beautiful sunset, and we all washed off the mud in cold showers (no sun for solar showers), put on dry clothes and gathered around the campfire. Jon, along with the rest of us, was exceptionally cheerful as we recounted the misery and humor of the project.

I broke out a bottle of Crown Royal, took a swig and passed it to **Bill Ruskin** (CJ-58), who promptly

threw the cap in the fire, took a swig and passed it on. No one kept score on how many swigs were taken by whom, but by the time we wandered off to bed the bottle was empty and we'd had a roaring good time.

Sharing that work, hardships and laughter with Jon is my fondest memory of him.

Don Courtney (MSO-56)

Jon made us laugh. He could crank out the most outlandish stuff, in that serious, velvety, Missouri voice. You could see the little twist at the corner of his mouth that said, "If you believe this, you're a lot dumber than I think you are, and you'll also have to believe that I am dumb, too. And If you believe THAT, you are really, REALLY dumb. But let's try it anyway."

The first gag I ever heard him pull was during rookie training in 1956, when he was an under aged squadleader. McBride dropped this serious information bomb: "Some women use the telephone like a Demerol kit."

I still don't know exactly what that was supposed to mean, but have pondered it, off and on, through the years, and chuckled about it without knowing why. More recently, Jon would explain hunting tactics as we were setting off for antelope.

"What you've got to do, every hour on the hour, is fire a shot aimed in each cardinal direction – even if you don't see an antelope. You can't expect to bring home meat if you don't keep bullets in the air."

Like all good humorists, Jon knew that funny is

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funniest when it calls the laughs down upon his own head. And Jon made us laugh.

Max Dressman (Corporate pilot)

Jon was a gentle giant. I had the privilege of working for him at Mobil from 1988 to 1995. He was not only my boss but also a dear friend and mentor. I was a flight mechanic on Mobil's aircraft and traveled the world with him. Jon gave me the opportunity and the coaching to upgrade to a pilot position. He was a patient man with a great sense of humor.

During my extensive training, Jon always had time to answer my many questions. When Mobil relocated the flight department from Westchester County Airport in White Plains, N.Y., to Virginia, Jon and his family became our extended family, and we spent a lot of time and holidays together. When my daughter Samantha was born, the McBrides were a great help. Jon was her other grandfather.

To sum it up, he was one of the best, and everyone will miss him.

Jim Mandell (Corporate pilot)

Jon and I joined Mobil Aircraft Operations at Westchester County Airport, N.Y., about the same time. Jon was fresh out of Navy carrier-based operations and applied to Mobil for a position as pilot on the Lockheed Jetstar, our corporate jet flagship. As I had been flying the Jetstar for over three years in the Air Force, I was assigned as flight instructor for Jon.

That was one of the most enjoyable tasks I have ever been given. With his warm people-skills and great sense of humor we hit it off right away. To take a naval aviator out of a high-performance jet fighter and convince him that it is not necessary to make 30-degree turns and pump the throttles on final approach to maintain a 30-degree glide slope angle was quite an interesting training exercise.

Jon was blessed with what is known in the flying ranks as a set of "good hands." In no time at all, he smoothed out his flying technique, and I was able to switch seats with him on cross-country flights. Jon never forgot a thing he was taught.

Along with superior flying skills he soon made many friends within Mobil Oil executive ranks. I was asked by Jon and Trish to be their son Jon's godfather. Needless to say I was very flattered to become part of their family. I will miss him very much. I always considered him to be one of my best friends.

Although we parted in 1975 when I was assigned to Saudi Arabia, we were able to spend time together when Jon flew out to the Middle East. He was one of the "better angels" of my life.

Jim Phillips (MSO-67)

Appreciation—"I want a picture of Tom Blunn in front of this stack of food boxes. He built all these and a lot more." (Gear Cleaning Day, 2010)

Work—"It was sure fun working with you on this project!" (Utah 2010)

Program—"I work (as trailmaster) at the pleasure of this advisory board." (Board meeting, 2006)

Respect—"This work day will be cut short so we can attend the memorial for Fred Brauer." (June 2007)

Humor—"I don't understand why you only carried four cases of beer up to Young's Pass." (Scapegoat, 2001)

Future—Q: "Jon, what will happen to this program if NSA merges with another association?" A: "I don't know but we're going to ride this horse till it drops!" (May, 2010)

In character—Me: "It's hard to have a conversation with a taciturn person." Jon: "Yup." (January 2009)

On Business Management—"I ran a multi-million-dollar private airline without a business plan." (Missoula, 2006)

On Socializing—"Carl Gidlund is having a party at my house." (July 2005)

On Dying—Me: "Jon, we need a succession plan. We're all going to be dead in 10 years." Jon: "I hope not!" (Spring 2007)

Roland Stoleson (MSO-56)

My first recollection of Jon was while training as a rookie on the shock tower. Jon was a squadleader, the guy hooking us up and coaxing us to jump. I knew he was also attending the Montana State University's forestry school but hadn't met him there. He kind of flew under the radar at school.

While looking through the annuals for the years he attended I found only one photo of him and that was in a group photo of the entire Forestry Club.

My first fire jump in '56 was on Trapper Creek and Jon was there, along with about 50 other jumpers, so we didn't have much interaction. But the next time we were on fire together was on a three-manner in the North Cascades, the headwaters of Lake Chelan. That was a memorable jump because it was early morning after a day of heavy thunderstorms.

As usual, mist was rising off the wet forest and we actually lost track of each other for a while when descending through the mist and fog. Fortunately, the mist cleared before we hit the jump spot.

The fire was in three very large hemlocks, so we had a crosscut dropped and spent a lot of time felling those giants. Jon was a "horse" and it was really good to be a part of his crew. He was also inventive: He had us dig

a ditch from a melting snow bank so we had plenty of water to put out the fire in the smoldering logs.

We were glad to see Jon and his wife Trish move back to Missoula after the years he spent as a pilot. We worked together in various capacities for the NSA, he as treasurer and me as director and president. He was devoted, dedicated and knew what he was doing.

I worked for 10 years with him on the Trails Program and remember especially our pleasure for his thoughtfulness in meeting us at a trailhead on the Flathead Forest with an ice chest full of beer after our 14-mile walkout. He drove more than 100 miles from Missoula to take care of the troops. What a guy!

We continued to see each other, and it became a habit to meet at the Mo Club for a Mo-burger and Coke anytime I visited Missoula. I am missing Jon already.

Ted Nyquest (MSO-54)

Why is this loss so heartfelt? I am always amazed at the magnitude and scope of Jon's lifetime accomplishments, but it was his personal social interactions that drew my deep admiration and respect. He treated everyone the same – with courtesy, candor, generosity, friendliness, humor and a fun-loving perspective. He was a gentleman in the most profound sense. And a very accomplished one at that.

John McMahon (MSO-58)

The leadership qualities that Jon demonstrated throughout his military and civilian careers continued during his years of volunteer leadership of the NSA Trails Maintenance Program and in his efforts in establishing the Art Jukkala Scholarship Fund that benefits children of smokejumpers killed in the line of duty or in war.

Jon exemplified the best qualities of his peers among his fellow smokejumpers, and he will be greatly missed by those who had the pleasure of knowing him and working with him.

Charles Brown (IDC-56)

My associations with Jon were through the Trails Maintenance Projects and working with him to incorporate the program's finances into NSA financial statements. I was amazed at his ability to accomplish so much in the Trails Maintenance Program and his leadership skills that inspired others to work toward a common objective. He certainly shared my love of the northwest forests and mountains.

Some other attributes that come to mind are that he was a hard worker, humble, sharing (his knowledge and his house), an excellent listener, loyal ... I could go on and on. Jon was a unique person and his achieve-

ments and spirit will guide us in future NSA and trail maintenance activities. He was a true friend and a very special person. We are going to miss him greatly.

Tom Blunn (Associate)

The BOWs (Boys of Wednesday) group was started by **Roy Williams** (MSO-60), Art Jukkala, **Roger Savage** (MSO-57), Ed Bangan, and Helen Robinson.

I retired in 1990 and Art asked me to join their group. Jon had been a roommate of Art's during their college days and they had kept in contact. When Jon decided to move back to Missoula, Art asked him to join. We hike in the summer, ski in the winter, and bike during the spring.

Jon had never skied so he took up this sport at the age of 65. He became proficient enough to handle most slopes but never did care for loose snow or the bowls at Snow Bowl. One could always pick Jon out on the slope because of his wide stance and orange coat.

Biking was one of his favorite things to do. We not only biked on Wednesdays but also made several extended trips out of state.

Soon after he joined the group Jon purchased a large Suburban rig and outfitted it with ski and bike racks, which allowed him to haul a good portion of the group. He enjoyed taking the BOWs in his rig and we enjoyed riding with him. Many issues were discussed while we traveled.

As more and more people retired who liked to do these activities, they joined in the fun and now there are upwards of 20 people involved. It is a loose-knit group but centered on Jon, because he was the one who sent out the weekly notices as to where to meet and what direction we would be heading. Jon was always friendly and helpful which helped attract others to join the group.

How he became the leader of the NSA Trail Maintenance Program is another story, but because he was the leader, he enlisted the help of as many of the BOWs as he could to make the NSA trail program run smoothly.

John MacKinnon (MSO-57)

Jon was a generous, hardworking, loyal, and wonderful friend to all who had the privilege of knowing him. He will be greatly missed by all of us.

Dennis Pearson (MSO-62)

I met Jon at the inception of the NSA trail projects and was a member of his crew that first year. He and Trish made me feel like part of the family from the get-go. And though I've only been able to enjoy his company when I come out for trail projects each sum-

mer, I treasure the good times I've been privileged to share with him over these *past too few* years.

The exemplary life he lived is his legacy. I'm reminded of how Captain Call eulogized Deet's death in Larry McMurtry's novel, *Lonesome Dove*: "Never shirked a task, cheerful in all weathers, splendid behavior." *That* was Jon.

Tom Kovalicky (MSO-61)

To know Jon McBride was to know life and its good qualities. He gave freely of his time, friendship and resources and cooked fried mush for breakfast (some sort of a Missouri thing and how they acquire that accent). He stepped up when others stepped back. We were classmates and roommates at the University of Montana College of Forestry from 1954 to 1957 along with **Ed Bloedel** (MSO-56). Early one spring morning in 1957 he looked at me over his fried mush and announced, "I am leaving college." I was stunned as we had made a pact to smash four years of college into a 12-year program. "Why, Jon?" "I was accepted into the Navy Aviation Program. I am going to make it happen." He packed his bag and 39 years later he and Trish walked into my Hong Kong hotel and took me out for supper. Guess what! It was an upscale Mexican joint

operated by Chinese. He had made the leap; no more fried mush. The rest is history. I loved and admired this guy.

Bill Ruskin (CJ-58)

NSA Trail boss Jon McBride quietly, firmly and effectively cast his leadership role over the Rocky Mountains from Missoula to Colorado on bridge and trail projects in the La Garita Wilderness, and in the Gunnison and Pike/San Isabel National Forests. Jon endorsed letters of support for grants from family foundations in Durango, helping to secure funds for the renovation and preservation of the historic Glade Ranger Station on the San Juan National Forest. He successfully guided applications for a grant from the American Hiking Society for tools and equipment. The Colorado NSA trail crew salutes Jon's military service as a Naval Aviator and his contributions to the many successful NSA trail restoration and maintenance projects in Colorado.

Doug Stinson (CJ-54)

Jon McBride was a very talented and dedicated man. The 10 years Jon gave to the trail program was a wonderful gift. Thank you Jon.

Continued on **page 38**

East Coast Trail Maintenance Project Is First Of Its Kind

The Monongahela National Forest in West Virginia will be the site of a trail maintenance project in June 2011, **John McDaniel** (CJ-57) announced recently.

It's the first project of its kind ever scheduled for an eastern forest and will encompass one or two weeks working the Canaan Valley-Black Water Falls area of the Monongahela Forest.

Eric Sandeno, U.S. Forest Service recreation program manager, is the point of contact and has selected more than 10 projects that will occupy volunteers for the next

three years.

Initially this project will involve repairing several miles of the Allegheny Trail System. Specific information and photos are available to interested participants.

Those jumpers and associates desiring to volunteer for this one or two-week opportunity should contact John McDaniel at jump-ercj57@hotmail.com or by phone in the evening, Central Time, at (785) 668-2093. You should also apply via process in next January's issue of the Trail Maintenance Report, and then send that material to **Jim Cherry** (MSO-57). His address will

appear on the application.

The only requirement is that you're an NSA member, in good physical health, and willing to stay the one or two-week period. Thirteen jumpers have already signed up. We will transmit the specific date for the project to volunteers when we've solidified lodging and feeding arrangements. However, early June 2011 is the target.

The USFS is currently in negotiations with the Black Water Falls Lodge to provide six-man cabins – including hot showers, kitchen facilities, etc. – plus eating facilities at the Black Water Falls Lodge. 🦋



Sounding Off from the Editor



by Chuck Sheley
(Cave Junction '59)
MANAGING EDITOR

THE NATIONAL REUNION in Redding has just been completed (June 11-13). Our numbers were down from prior reunions, but one has to take into account that the number of jumpers who attend reunions is also down. I've written 50 obits in *Smokejumper* magazine since January. **Dave Nelson** (MSO-57) put together a great working group for the 2000 reunion in Redding and also did the same for this event. The bottom line is that the reunion was an excellent event. When I looked at the participants at the Friday evening barbecue, the Saturday dinner and the Sunday Memorial Service, I was impressed with the fellowship among the attendees at all events.

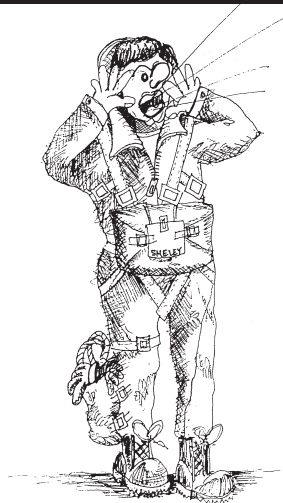
The NSA has meant a lot to me. I jumped at a small base in Southern Oregon. Cave Junction only had 397 jumpers work there in the 39 years it was operational. I consider many of these people to be my closest and most respected friends. Even after 36 years of teaching, fellow smoke-

jumpers are a closer family. The NSA has been the conduit to reconnect with old friends and make new ones among the jumper community. At the reunion I had a chance to visit with two friends from Cave Junction whom I haven't seen in fifty years.

Immediately after the Sunday Memorial Service, my wife and I, along with **John McDaniel** (CJ-57) and **Jim/Judy Cherry** (MSO-57), headed north to work on the "Gobi Project," which hopes to save the historic Siskiyou Smokejumper Base. This year was another amazing effort. Under the leadership of **Gary Buck** (CJ-66) and **Roger Brandt** (Associate), 60 people started work Monday on three buildings. Each day new people arrived to replace those who left. When totaled, the Gobi Project must have involved close to 100 people over the course of the week. Five of the NSA Board of Directors took part in this effort. Thanks for your support.

All of this leads me to the point of this editorial—the future of the NSA. The number of potential jumper members continues to dwindle due to the aging and passing of our people. The smokejumper of today spends many more years on the job than we did in the day of smokejumping being a great way to finance a university degree. Currently rookie classes only total 20-30 at all nine bases combined.

One of the main topics at



our board of directors meeting in Redding was planning for the future of the NSA. What will this organization look like in 20 years and will we be on a sound financial foundation?

The passing of **Jon McBride** (MSO-54) had a sobering effect on the group. In recent meetings we have discussed developing a backup leadership plan for the Trails Program and the publication of *Smokejumper* magazine. We'll hear more about the Trails Program leadership in the Jan. *Trail Maintenance Report*.

Although I have no intention of giving up *Smokejumper* magazine, I presented a tentative plan in the event of my inability to do this job for any reason. I am going to shift more responsibility to Ed Booth (Associate) who has been doing copy and research for the past few years. I also stressed that somewhere down the line we are going to have to pay someone the going rate to edit our publication. My stipend is \$1000 per issue (\$2.77/hr) which covers the 30+ hours a week my wife, KG, and I spend on the magazine. A cheap editor will run over \$20,000 a year and would need to be committed for a multi-year period.

My point in this is that even with declining membership numbers we can still be a strong and effective organization twenty years from now. However, it is going to cost more and all of us need to step up and help build

the financial foundation that will take the NSA into the year 2040.

Life Memberships are a key. That money is invested and only the interest is used for operational expenses. We have had nine new Life Members join in the last six months and are now up to 245. Thank you all!

There is an area in which I have a real concern. I have done over 50 obits in the magazine since January 2010. In *only two cases* have the deceased requested that donations go to the NSA. Now that I've done hundreds of obits I find the great majority of them list local organizations as the beneficiary of memorial gifts. Yet, in almost 100% of the cases in which I sit down and talk to jumpers, they continually say how those few years were the best time of their life and smokejumping had an enormous effect in their achieving success in their careers.

We've had some great ideas thrown out at our last two board meetings about setting up pro-

grams where we can bequeath money to the NSA upon our death. Ideas always come up at board meetings and I continually say, "Good idea, who's going to do the work?" We're working toward the point where we can present you, the membership, with some options to keep the NSA strong for future generations. Maybe we have a leader in this area?

I've said that I want to leave the NSA \$10,000 upon my passing. Give me some options and tell me exactly how to do it. The ball is in that court now. I'm sure there are many of you who feel the same way but are looking for guidance from our Board of Directors.

What can you do at this moment while we await a plan from our BOD? I've added a bit to the header on the *Off The List* column encouraging memorial gifts to honor our deceased be sent to our Good Samaritan Fund.

You can make that request known to your family and/or survivors.

Please refer to the excellent article by **John Helmer** (RDD-59) and the Lusk family in this issue to see how the NSA is there to help smokejumpers and their families.

Ray Farinetti (CJ-64) was among our friends at the Redding Reunion and the following workweek at the Siskiyou Smokejumper Museum Project. An email from **Tommy Albert** (CJ-64) on July 6 informed me that Ray had died of a heart attack at his home in Florida. **David Atkin** (CJ-70) said, "Hard to believe. He looked so good and was so vibrantly alive a couple weeks ago at our Gobi Project." **Larry Welch** (CJ-61) went right to the bottom line with, "Makes me think we all, including me, need to make our final wishes known."

There is no better way to make your final wishes known than to include the NSA in your bequest and keep us alive and functioning long after we have taken our last jump. 🌲

Alaskan Smokejumper #650— Jedidiah Lusk

The Good Sam Fund In Action - Helping Jumpers & Their Families

by John Helmer (Redding '59)

Smokejumping runs in families. Names like **Derry**, **Lufkin**, and **Longanecker** will forever be found in the history and record books. The **Welch** brothers from Texas were the stuff of legends.

Actually, there have been many instances of three or more jumpers from the same family, but nothing quite like the **Lusk** family in tiny Cromberg, California.

Scott Lusk (FBX-81) jumped five seasons in Alaska, where he helped develop the ram-air canopy. He was one of three BLM jumpers detailed to West Yellowstone and McCall in 1987, an early chapter in the ongoing

saga of the rounds-and-squares evaluation. His eighth and final year as a jumper (1988) was in Boise.

He's now the Plumas National Forest's resident authority on livestock grazing and riparian ecosystems. OK, make that livestock grazing *versus* riparian ecosystems. No, it's not an easy job.

Scott is proud of what he has accomplished, but doesn't wear it on his sleeve. He's not like the gypo logger who owns the only Peterbilt parked in front of a timber-town roadhouse, surrounded by dusty Kenworths. Somehow that fact will manage to work its way into the first

10 minutes of conversation with any new acquaintance therein. "Yep, that's mine, all right. Ain't she a peach?" By contrast, at Humboldt State University 27 years ago, although Scott was very attentive and sympathetic to the pig-tailed Cynthia Nichols' story of thwarted ambitions of becoming a smokejumper, it wasn't until the second or third date that he confided that that's what he did in Alaska every summer.

Cynthia Nichols Lusk (RAC-87) washed out on her initial try as a rookie in Redmond. She couldn't do the pull-ups. So she installed a bar across the top of her dorm room entrance at Humboldt State, and, when base manager **Doug Houston** (RAC-73) invited her back the following year, she was ready.

She jumped a total of seven years, all in Redmond. Along the way she's helitacked, operated engines, packed mules, dispatched air tankers, raised and raced horses, run marathons, and teamed up with her old jumping buddy, **Tara Rothwell** (RAC-92), in ride-and-tie races (one horse, two runner/riders over a long, rough mountain trail).

She and Scott also built a two-story house (literally, except for some framing help) in the mountain town of Cromberg, 16 miles east of Scott's office in Quincy.

There they have nurtured and raised their three marvelous children, ages 19, 16 and 9. They've had some help. The eldest member of the Lusk household is "Blue Nanny," Cynthia's mother. Nanny runs things when Cynthia commutes to Redmond during the fire season. Cynthia's the assistant manager of the tanker operation there.

Blue Nanny is a registered nurse. Earlier this year, it was she who finally convinced Scott and Cynthia that something was wrong with Jedidiah, the youngest child.

On Sunday, February 14, Valentine's Day, Cynthia took Jedidiah to the emergency room in Quincy. Two hours later he was helicoptered to the University of California medical school in Davis. He did not return home until after St. Patrick's Day.

The diagnosis: Glioblastoma Multiforme (GBM), an aggressively growing tumor deep inside Jedidiah's brain. It's not operable. The biopsy surgery alone left Jedidiah partially paralyzed. For details see sister Jessica's candid, devoted and upbeat journal entries on: <http://www.caringbridge.org/visit/jedidiahlusk/journal/30>.

Heroic, indeed desperate, medical efforts to contain the rapid GBM growth have included massive doses of steroids, which have changed Jedidiah's appearance considerably from the skinny little third grader he was at the beginning of the 2010. One thing is a constant, however, in every single one of Jessica's photos of him: Jedidiah Lusk is smiling and so should we all.

Fast forward to the 4th of July. The word is out, and

everyone that Jedidiah knows, or who knows Jedidiah, or who knows *about* Jedidiah and shares anything in common with him, wants to help: Cub scouts, boy scouts, skiers, public and private schools' staff and students of all grade levels, snow boarders, bikers, horse people, church people (several different denominations), the Feather River College rodeo people, Forest Service people, stock car people, a wannabe rock star, and all the local dentists,

Quincy merchants and restaurateurs, a Reno casino and a Tahoe ski lift operation, the Quincy SWAT team, the "Brockness Monster," a reserve power forward for the Sacramento Kings by the name of Jon Brockman, the mayor of Fairbanks, and, to top it off, Santa Claus himself have *all* checked in and done something for Jedidiah.

But it was the Alaska smokejumpers that added the Lusk family name to the roster of three-or-more jumpers in the same family.

On Wednesday, July 7, 2010, in Fairbanks, with appropriate ceremony, Jedidiah received his rookie pin as Alaskan jumper #650. He is now **Jedidiah Lusk** (FBX-10).

The story of the Make-A-Wish trip to Alaska, Jedidiah's training as a spotter, his graduation and the party that followed, is best told by the talented **Mike McMillan's** (FBX-96) captioned photographs. Go to ... <http://www.smokejumpers.com/gallery/v/Alaska-Fire-Season-2004/2010+Wildfires/> ... and click on View Slideshow. 📷



Lusk Family at their home in Cromberg, California. L-R: Cynthia, Scott, Justin and NSA representative John Helmer. Jedidiah is holding the letter with the donation from the NSA Good Samaritan Fund. (Courtesy J. Helmer)

NSA Good Samaritan Fund Contributions

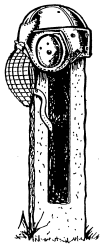
Contributions since the previous publication of donors, July 2010

<u>Donor</u>	<u>In Memory/Honor of</u>
Friends of Robert Berry	Bob Berry (CJ-57)
Lowell (MSO-58) and Joan Hanson	Earl Cooley (MSO-40)
Dorothy Nagy.....	Earl Cooley (MSO-40)
Fred Donner (MSO-59)	Jedidiah Lusk
Milton K. Beer (RDD-65)	Jedidiah Lusk
Stan DeLong (RDD-65)	Jedidiah Lusk
Jim Klump (RDD-64).....	Jedidiah Lusk
Estelle Beer	Jedidiah Lusk
Mark Lewis (LGD-75)	Larry Hyde (NCSB-70)
Al Hammond (MSO-46).....	Ed Ladendorff (MSO-46)
Loyle V. Washam (MSO-51)	Larry Graydon Looney (IDC-54)
Jim Lancaster (MYC-62).....	Ken "Moose" Salyer (MYC-54)
Greg West (FBX-64)	Arden Davis (FBX-64)
Randy Woodward (MSO-62) and Woodward Family Charitable Foundation.....	Earl Cooley (MSO-40)
Roland "Andy" Andersen (MSO-52)	Glenn "Smitty" Smith – "One-Eye Smitty" (NCSB-40)
Robert I. Gara (MYC-51)	Bob Caldwell (MYC-46)
Phil Robertson (MSO-62)	Dianne Ryan
Kathleen, Robert and Zach Joy	Jim Allen's (NCSB-46) 87th birthday
Emily Allen.....	Jim Allen's (NCSB-46) 87th birthday
Bill Woolworth (MSO-68)	Bert Tanner (MSO-68); in honor of Squad VI
Patricia Armstrong.....	Jim Diederich (RDD-70)
Barry Reed (MSO-60).....	Billy K. Hester (MSO-58)
Major L. Boddicker (MSO-63).....	Dennis Parker (MSO-67)
Michael S. Burney (IDC-66).....	Idaho City Smokejumpers
Ron Marker (MYC-52)	Miles Johnson (MYC-53)
Sara Brown	Smokejumpers everywhere
Travis, Alicia and Dalton Doyle	Jedidiah Lusk
Adam Lauber (RDD-99).....	Chris Wayne Gunter (RDD-01)
Les Domingos (NCSB-64)	
Richard D. Austin (MSO-53)	James Austin (MSO-52)
Bob Kruckeberg (NCSB-51).....	Rod Snider (NCSB-51)
Bob Pell (NCSB-56).....	Gene Wahlstrom (pilot, deceased)
Robert Cushing (MSO-59)	Gary G. Williams (MSO-59) & Jon Rolf (MSO-57)
Michael Denis Michaelson.....	Doug Michaelson (MSO-56)
Chris Sorensen (Associate)	Earl Cooley (MSO-40)
Friends of Jim Diederich.....	Jim Diederich (RDD-70)

Total funds received for the NSA Good Samaritan Fund, as of May 6, 2010 – \$16,511

Total funds dispersed to smokejumpers and families since 2004 – \$9,800

Mail your Good Samaritan Fund contributions to:
Charles Brown, 2723 Wilderness Ct., Wichita, KS 67226



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:

Charles Brown, NSA Treasurer
2723 Wilderness Ct.
Wichita, KS 67226-2526

Keith V. Fitzjarrald (North Cascades '63)

Keith died May 6, 2010, at his home in Omak, Washington, following a lengthy illness. Keith served in the US Navy and worked for more than 30 years for the Forest Service, including being a smokejumper and Fire Management Officer. He jumped 1963-64 and 1970-71 at NCSB.

Harold L. "Harry" Roberts (Missoula '53)

Harry died May 17, 2010, of lung cancer. He spent his work career with the US Forest Service in fire suppression. Harry jumped at Missoula 1953-56 before spending two years in the US Army. He returned to Missoula in 1959 and jumped there until 1971, finishing with 252 fire jumps. After a stint as forest dispatcher, Harry moved to McCall where he was Base Manager from 1978-84, when he retired. He was a charter member of the National Smokejumper Association.

Hal Ewing (Pilot)

Hal died March 9, 2010, in Grants Pass, Oregon. He joined the Navy after graduating from high school in Great Falls, Montana, and earned his Naval Aviator wings at Pensacola. His first assignment was in a Kingfisher seaplane and flew everything from the PBYs to Bearcat fighters. Later in his career, he flew the A-6 Intruder logging 92 night carrier landings. Hal retired as a full Commander in 1965 and moved to Cave Junction, Oregon. He flew "Gobi" jumpers until the base closed in 1982, and then continued as a lead-plane pilot out of Medford, Oregon.

Marshall E. Spencer (Missoula '42)

Marshall died May 29, 2010, in Hamilton, Montana, from bladder cancer. He graduated from the University of Idaho Forestry School in 1943 and went to Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Georgia. Marshall landed at Omaha Beach as a replacement officer shortly after D-Day and was in combat in France, Belgium and the Netherlands. He was seriously wounded in October of 1944 and was hospitalized for 19 months. Marshall was awarded the Bronze

Star and Purple Heart. After the war he went to work for the USFS for 35 years before retiring in 1977. His last assignment was in Berkeley, California, as assistant director of the Pacific Forest and Range Experiment Station.

Clifford D. Dalzell (Missoula '61)

Cliff died May 17, 2010, after an eight-week battle with melanoma. He graduated from the University of North Dakota in 1964 and worked for the USFS as an accountant. In 1977 Cliff moved to Boise for a job with the Office of Aircraft Services. Since retirement, Cliff and his wife, Marge, have split time between Idaho and Arizona. Cliff jumped at Missoula 1961-64, 1966 and at West Yellowstone in 1965.

David P. Lodzinski (Missoula '52)

David died May 19, 2010, at his home in Vale, Oregon. He graduated from Utah State in 1955 and worked for the BLM for 34 years, serving as Assistant District Manager in Vale from 1980 until his retirement in 1989. He jumped at Missoula in 1952 and served with the 25th Infantry Division during the Korean War.

Jon H. McBride (Missoula '54)

Jon, 74, died of acute heart failure while on a bicycle trek with the "Boys of Wednesday," a group of close friends, on June 2, 2010, near Missoula. The "boys" biked, hiked or skied every Wednesday throughout the year.

Jon graduated from Springfield (MO) Central High School in 1953, studied at Drury College in Springfield, and worked in white pine, blister rust control for the US Forest Service near Haugan, Mont. He studied forestry at the University of Montana from 1954 to 1957 and, while attending the university, was a smokejumper and smokejumper squadleader 1954-56 fire seasons. He qualified for the Navy's NAVCAD Program in 1957 and was trained as a fighter pilot, eventually flying the F-8 Crusader from the carrier Bon Homme Richard with VF 191. He also served in an instructor training squadron at Miramar, Ca-

lif. Following his discharge as a full lieutenant from the Navy in 1965, Jon was hired as one of Mobil Oil Corporation's first corporate jet pilots. While flying for that firm, he was stationed in White Plains, N.Y., Singapore and Washington, D.C. He retired as Mobil's Worldwide Director of Aviation in 1995 and returned to Missoula, where he had attended college and was based as a smokejumper.

With former smokejumper **Art Jukkala** (MSO-56), he founded a trail maintenance program for the National Smokejumper Association in 1999. Jukkala died of a heart attack that year while on the program's first project, and Jon assumed its lead. Under his management for the last 10 years, former and current smokejumpers have rehabilitated well over a thousand miles of trails for the US Forest Service and the National Park Service and restored dozens of structures, including historic lookouts and ranger stations in Montana, Idaho, Alaska, Oregon, California, Colorado, Utah and Minnesota. Jon also founded and managed a scholarship program in memory of Jukkala to benefit children of smokejumpers killed in the line of duty or in war. His leadership was recognized in a letter from President Barack Obama and an award from the chief of the U.S. Forest Service.

David A. Engels (Idaho City '66)

Dave, 64, died May 30, 2010, after a long-time battle with Parkinson's disease. He graduated from the University of Idaho with a bachelor's degree in 1970 and a law degree in 1973. Dave worked two summers with the Slate Creek (Idaho) Hotshots and then jumped at Idaho City 1966-69 and Fairbanks 1971-73. He began private practice in Anchorage, Alaska, in 1974, then worked with the US Dept. of Energy from 1976-1984 in Washington, DC. Dave was a partner with the law firm of Banks, Newcomb and Engels in Portland, Oregon, when he retired due to illness.

Charles C. Harsh (Missoula '66)

Charlie died May 27, 2010, at his residence in Silver City, New Mexico. He retired from the USFS in 1994. Charlie jumped at Missoula 1966-68 and West Yellowstone 1969-75.

Orville "Orv" Dodge (Missoula '46)

Orv, 89, died March 7, 2010, in Phoenix, Arizona. He attended Dickinson State College and joined the North Dakota National Guard in 1939. Orv saw action in the South Pacific and stayed in the reserves after the war and was discharged as a major. He jumped at Missoula in 1946-47 along with his brother Bob. Orv received his Bachelor's degree from the College of

Great Falls, his Master's from the University of Montana, and his PhD from Montana State University. He was the head of the education department at Carroll College from 1965-72 and retired in 1980.

"Tiger" Ted Lowry (Pendleton '45)

Ted died June 14, 2010. He was a member of the Triple Nickle 555th Airborne unit that trained at Pendleton, Oregon, in 1945 to be smokejumpers. Ted was a boxer and twice went the distance against Rocky Marciano, becoming one of only five fighters to do so. He retired from boxing in 1955.

Dr. Amos R. "Bud" Little Jr. (Missoula '43)

Dr. Little, 93, died June 22, 2010, in Helena, Montana. He received his bachelor's degree from Dartmouth and his medical degree from Johns Hopkins University in 1942. Bud served with the US Army Air Force, Air Rescue Service and received his parachute training at Missoula in 1943. In 1944 he parachuted to the 11,000-foot crash site of a B-17 and provided medical attention to four surviving crewmembers. At the time, it was listed as the highest parachute landing on record. After the war Bud settled in Helena and practiced medicine there from 1946-78. He was active in International Skiing and served as the vice president of the International Ski Federation from 1970-88.

Walter "Bud" Lloyd (North Cascades '49)

Bud died June 17, 2010. He grew up in the Winthrop/Twisp area and jumped at North Cascades 1949-50. Bud worked for his brother most of his life at Lloyd Logging and was known for his strong work ethic and running a tight ship. In his 50s he became interested in running, winning many races in his age class, and continued to run into his 70s.

Raymond John "Ray" Farinetti (Redmond '64)

Ray, 66, died July 6, 2010, at his home in Titusville, Fla. from a heart attack while working in his yard. He graduated from Cisco College in Texas before joining the Redmond smokejumpers for his 1964 rookie season. Ray then jumped in Anchorage in 1965 and Cave Junction in 1966; he served in the U.S. Air Force before he returned to Cave Junction for the 1970-73 seasons. He went to work for the Bureau of Land Management in Fairbanks for several years and finished his career at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge as a fire management officer in Florida. He attended the reunion in Redding in June before helping at the Cave Junction base restoration effort the following week. 🙏

At the Edge of Eternity

by Major L. Boddicker (Missoula '63)

During the spring of 1962, I was a sophomore at St. John's University at Collegeville, Minn. My dream summer job with the Canyon Ranger District, Clearwater Forest, had come through so I could escape the steamy cornfields of Iowa.

After a long trip in the rain via Libby, Mont., with my 1955 Hudson Hornet, I slogged through the rutted and potholed road between Pierce, Idaho, and the Canyon Ranger District. I parked in the rain overlooking the Clearwater River. When I walked up to the office to report in, the trail crew foreman walked out on the porch wearing two mother-of-pearl-handled Colt revolvers and stuck out his hand.

"Howdy, son," he said.

I remember thinking this must be as close to heaven as I am going to get.

The summer of 1962 was wonderful. First, I was assigned to the brush piling crew. I attacked the brush with vigor since it was such a piece of cake compared with tossing 55-pound hay bales around at home. I spent two weeks piling brush and was then moved to a sawyer crew, cutting snags on the ridge tops around the district.

My foreman was Babe McPherson, whom I instantly liked. His first orientation advice was this: "Boys, for Christ's sake, don't waste your money chasing these local babes. We have two great whorehouses here – Maggie's Bend and the Rex Rooms, where for \$5 you can f— yourself silly. Then go spend your money on beer, where it really counts."

Now, how can you dislike a boss like that?

"Take my advice and you will go home with some money. Don't take my advice and you won't get any p—, and you will need to borrow money to get home," Babe concluded.

It is interesting how and when we determine who our heroes are.

Disregarding Babe's advice, I chased the local ladies all summer and had to borrow \$60 to get home.

Orofino, Idaho, was a fun and friendly place in 1962 as long as you held your own in the local bars and bought your share of the beer. I met a gal that summer who loved to dance and could handle a brandy just fine.

The life-changing event of the summer was a fire on Black Mountain, my second fire. We were choppered in to a helispot about two miles from the fire, to which I packed the chain saw, tools, gas, food, etc. About the time we got to the fire, we heard a Twin Beech jumper

plane and watched two firefighters jump a fire on the next ridge. Then and there I decided if I was going to stay in the firefighting business, smokejumping was the way I wanted to get to the fire.

The life-changing event of the summer was a fire on Black Mountain.

Harry Cummings (MSO-46) was our FCO and McPherson's boss. Toward the end of the summer, I asked Babe if he could arrange a meeting with Harry so we could have a talk about smokejumping. Both Babe and Harry had remarked to me during the summer that they liked my work, especially on the three fires we had. Harry said not only would he recommend me, but also he would go to Missoula and personally recommend me to his old friend, Earl Cooley (MSO-40).

I trained during the monsoon of June 1963 at Missoula where 65 new men endured torrents of rain for three weeks. I think 60 of us were awarded smokejumper pins.

Though my memory may be faulty, I remember a new-man training lecture by Len Kraut regarding a smokejumper being a hero that went something like this: "God dammit, fellas, there won't be any f— heroes in this outfit. If there are heroes it means somebody f— up bad. You are expected to save each other's bacon, period. I don't want to hear about any f— heroes." One thing about Len, he lived up to his word.

There were several squadleaders and foremen who really encouraged me during new-man training. Billy Hester (MSO-58), Dayton Grover (MSO-55), Hal Samsell (MSO-49) and Lyle Brown (MSO-54) seemed to have the right words of encouragement to get my spirits up when I was sucking wind, trying to drag my oversized butt up the rope climb, pull-up bar, and over-hand rope course.

My memories of the summer of 1963 are rather vivid. Missoula was my base, and I recall jumping in Idaho and Montana, as well as fighting pounder fires in Arizona, Wyoming and Idaho.

Typical of my luck, I often ended up within hollering distance of Kraut, who practiced on me. Len chewed me out for reporting to the dinner bell ahead of the rest of the crew on my first project fire jump. He took great pains to show me how to drive the lawn mower so

that it would not throw gravel through the jumper base windows. Unfortunately, the mower tossed a golf ball-sized rock through the window of a passing taxi instead, under my guidance.

When I reported in for work in June of 1964, there were several spots open on the Grangeville crew, and I put my name in for one. Kraut was the man to talk to. Man, I figured I was sunk. Len looked at me like he should remember why he did not like me, but he couldn't, so he approved my spot on the Grangeville crew.

Wow! What a great group of guys the 1964 Grangeville crew were. **Ted Nyquest** (MSO-54) was the foreman, with **Dave Bennett** (MSO-61) and Grover as the squadleaders.

Between August 1962 and June 1964, I had found my love, gotten married, and had a new baby girl. Jan was a good sport about following me around on my various adventures and managed to set up housekeeping at Grangeville in a very tiny, one-room house. The fire season was slow, so we had a great time enjoying swims in the Locksaw River, exploring the back country, and socializing at the smokejumper picnics.

In no time it was Aug. 18, 1964. I remember the day well; it was the usual gorgeous northern Idaho day. There had been a small thunderstorm go through that night and a few tiny columns of smoke curled up from the central Idaho mountains.

Fire call! Grover and I suited up and lumbered out to the Twin Beech with Frank Borgeson piloting. There was a special climb-in ceremony with getting into the Beech – sort of a squat and crawl backward. The planes

we flew in in those days built character in the troops. The right propeller of the Ford in which we flew that summer broke, fired a piece through the fuselage, and the left engine dropped off. Borgeson and Nyquest flew it back to Grangeville several weeks after I terminated for the summer.

We headed northeast to the Locksaw District to a fire called Jesse Peak. The fire was located above timberline, maybe one-quarter mile below the summit in an old snag – a piece of cake.

The jump spot was a fairly level green patch of bear grass about one-eighth mile above and one-half mile to the east of the fire. Not a cloud in sight.

Because the weather was so beautiful, the forecast was clear, and the fire was such a cream puff, we left our gear laid out in the open. That turned out to be huge mistake number one.

We jumped and landed on target. Our fire packs were dropped with us. Because the weather was so beautiful, the forecast was clear, and the fire was such a cream puff, we left our gear laid out in the open, no cover. That turned out to be huge mistake number one. The fire packs were opened, and we pulled out our Pulaskis and a shovel and headed for the fire.



1964 Grangeville Crew: Kneeling L-R: Ted Nyquest ('54-Foreman), Jim Asher ('63), Bill Laney ('63), Romie Deschamps ('61), Roy Korkalo ('61), Larry Schmidt ('62), Dayton Grover ('55-Squadleader), Digger Daniels ('61). Standing L-R: Frank Borgeson (pilot), Major Boddicker ('63), Dave Bennett ('61-Squadleader), Robin Field ('63), Jerry Jacobsen ('63), John Scott ('63), Dave Yonce ('63), Eric Hansen ('62), Larry Ferguson ('62), Tony Peiffer ('61). (Courtesy M. Boddicker)

The fire was one of those great little fires that had largely burned itself out. We worked on it with rolled-up sleeves in bright sunshine. When the fire was lined and out, we ate a leisurely lunch of Forest Service rations, then loaded up and headed back for our gear.

The packout was about 12 miles, one mile into a rugged boulder and snag-strewn canyon, then a mile climb up and out of the same boulders and snags to a ridgetop and trail. The trail then ran southeast on the top of the ridge to a trailhead and parking lot about 10 miles away. I remember contemplating taking a shortcut down and around the boulder field and snags.

It should have been easy, but Dayton and I could not find our gear. When we started back from the fire, we did not climb high enough on the mountain to get our ridge count right. So we ended up searching two ridges, which were between the fire and our gear, for two hours. That was big mistake number two.

As the two hours passed, an ominous cloud bank moved in. The clouds turned into thick fog, then a cold mist, then a cold rain. By the time we located our wet gear, we were soaked to the skin and were very cold.

It was close to 6 p.m. when we sat on the dry side of a gearbox contemplating what to do in a driving rain.

"This is one hell of a fix. Do you have anything to start a fire with?" Dayton asked.

"No, everything is so wet I am not sure we could get anything to burn. Maybe my passport (toilet paper) is dry enough," I replied. "Do you have a lighter or matches?"

"No," Dayton replied. Big mistake number three.

"So, what if we do get a fire going? My guess is, it is going to snow, it's so damned cold," I said.

"I am going to call the district and tell them to get a pickup to the trailhead. We are coming out," Dayton said.

"Okay by me," I replied.

Dayton radioed the Locksaw District and barely got through. He reported that we were headed to the designated rendezvous point, we were wet, and it was beginning to snow.

"Be damned sure to have the guy there and stay there until we get there," Dayton said.

Dayton estimated we would be out at about 1 a.m. We got a "10-4" reply. The radio then cut out. Weak batteries. It would have been nice to have had strong and hot batteries.

I put on my wet, light down jacket over my jumper shirt and a flannel shirt. I then put my jump jacket over all of them. I loaded up my ditty bag with rations and pulled out my flashlight and extra batteries. I tested it. Dead. I tried a combination of eight batteries and found four that gave me a fairly good beam. Our fire packs were a year old, and no one had checked the batteries.



L-R: Major Boddicker and Dayton Grover at 1995 reunion in Missoula. (Courtesy M. Boddicker)

Dayton's light was almost dead.

After 46 years, I cannot remember exactly our conversation, but I remember thinking that we were in bad circumstances that could easily kill us. Dayton and I probably discussed that obvious fact. The boulder field and snags we had to climb into, through, and then out of, was an obstacle course from hell in good weather.

When we hitched up our ditty bags and started down the mountain, I felt like I was jumping out of a plane with no chute. Trying a shortcut was out of the question.

*I remember thinking that we
were in bad circumstances that
could easily kill us.*

I led the way. Big snowflakes started dropping as we entered the boulder field. It was 7 p.m. We had two hours of light to clear the snags and boulders and find the trail.

Dayton was 31 and in great shape. I was 22 years old and in great physical condition as well.

It is hard to describe the boulder field. Basically the boulders were huge and sharp, covered with lichens and moss, big snags helter-skelter across them like the game *Pick-Up Sticks*. Now, spread on that mess one-half inch of slimy snow. We fell and slid down the boulders, banged and bruised ourselves using all of our strength to crawl and wedge ourselves to the bottom.

Then we had to climb uphill through that gauntlet to the ridge top to get to the trail. One bad slip and we were badly out of the game. By 9 p.m., after two hours in that hellhole, we topped out on the ridge and located the trail.

"F—, Dayton, I'm in bad shape," I sputtered. "How ya doin'?"

"Really, really bad," Dayton groaned. "I am freezing, have cramps, and am out of gas."

"Let's try to radio the Locksaw and report our progress," I suggested. "Maybe we can get some guys to come after us."

"Here. I am not sure I can get my fingers to work," Dayton replied as he handed me the radio.

"Locksaw District, this is smokejumper Boddicker, Jesse Peak Fire. Do you read?" I called.

Nothing. The batteries were dead.

"No good, Dayton. Batteries are dead," I reported. "Do you want something to eat?"

"No, I already have heartburn, cold food will make it worse," he replied.

"Man, you need some energy. You ought to drink some fruit juice or something," I suggested again.

"No, let's go," Dayton said. Big mistake number four.

"Just a minute. I'm going to have a bite and catch my breath," I said as I opened a can of fruit and pound cake and some beanie weenies and wolfed them down.

"Is your flashlight any good?" I asked.

"No, the batteries are dead. How about yours?" Dayton replied.

"Bad shape – maybe I have 15 minutes left, so we walk in the dark until I lose the trail. Then I will use it."

"So, are you okay? Think you can make it?" Dayton asked.

"Never been so damned cold. Not sure, but we don't have a lot of options. How about you?" I replied.

"I'm hurting," Dayton said. By that time our conversations were short.

It is funny how in the movies at such dangerous, miserable, and hopeless of times, the characters can find time to get philosophical and carry on long dialogues, make love, etc. I can recall clearly that Dayton and I did not speak an extra word. Love was not in the forefront of our thoughts either. Not even beer crossed my mind.

In my life before and since, I have been in some very serious spots, but none where the outcome looked so bad and hard to beat. We had 10 miles to go in the dark, in a roaring blizzard, with minimal clothing, no radio, and no workable lights.

In the faint light, Dayton already looked like a frozen dead man. The wet, heavy snow was piling up sideways on his cheeks and right side. There were about 3 inches of snow on the ground when we hit the top of the ridge. I remember thinking this would not be a good time to die, with a new baby and beautiful wife.

"Let's go," I said, and we pushed off.

Dayton and I both moved pretty well for the first several miles. I led the way, using my feet to feel for the sides of the trail, which were cut quite deeply into the gravel. When I would lose the trail, I would switch on my failing light until I found it again. When we began to descend from left or right, I would climb back up until

I felt we were going down the other side. I would then move uphill again, always pushing forward.

The feeling of hopelessness hung there as we took each step. The steady blizzard wind kept me oriented. I stepped out and pushed it as fast as I could and Dayton could keep up with.

We felt the snowflakes slapping against our faces and sides were beating us to death softly. Balls of ice froze on our eyelashes, and we had to pinch them to break them to get them off. We wiped the snow from our faces with cold and soaked jumper gloves.

There is no way of describing distances traveled in that white, gloomy blizzard with howling wind. It was so dark it was hard to see my feet. My light was nearly dead so I kept it off for longer intervals.

"Dayton, how you making it?" I asked as I stopped to wait for him to catch up.

"I'm about done," he said. "I can't feel my hands and feet. Don't get too far ahead because I can barely keep up and I'm fading out, man," Dayton croaked. He could barely stand.

Dayton said nothing and was shivering seriously. I was so cold that I hurt; my toes and fingers were stinging. I figured, looking at Dayton, that he was going to tip over soon, so I stayed with him.

We moved okay for maybe one-half mile, then Dayton started wobbling so I shook him, which seemed to put some life into him. We moved another one-half mile.

"I'm done," Dayton whispered.

"The hell you are," I said. "You're too damned big to carry," and I shook him again.

The next one-quarter mile, I shook him and slapped his cheeks, working to keep Dayton on his feet. He went down twice, which was a huge problem because I was in bad shape myself.

The third time Dayton collapsed I couldn't get him up. He couldn't talk. What could I do? Look for a place to stash him. So I used my last flashlight power to locate a big boulder that had a small cave back under it that was dry and full of leaves. I went back to Dayton and dragged him by pulling from under the shoulders and behind about 20 yards to the boulder. I dragged him into the cave, and then covered him with leaves and dry dirt.

"S—, he looks dead," I thought. I ate a Butterfinger candy bar and caught my breath. It felt very good in the cave out of the snow and wind. I was tempted to cover myself up with leaves and go to sleep.

"Sweet Jesus" was my favorite epitaph when I jumped out of a plane. I said it as I stepped out into the blizzard again.

What was I thinking about? I concentrated on how to get to the trailhead. Staying on the trail, walking in the

Continued on page 22



*L-R: Roger Savage, Roy Williams, Eddy Bangen, Gary Weyermann,
Ron Larsen, Don Murry & Jon McBride*



Jon McBride



Remembering Jon McBride

Photo's Courtesy Roger Savage Collection & Ron Larsen



*Back L-R: Ron Larsen, Wendell Beardsley, Paul Loehnen, Don Murray, Jon McBride, Ed Bangen & Roy Williams
Front L-R: Gary Weyermann, Ivan Kays, Joe Aquino, Gary Graham & Al Hinman*



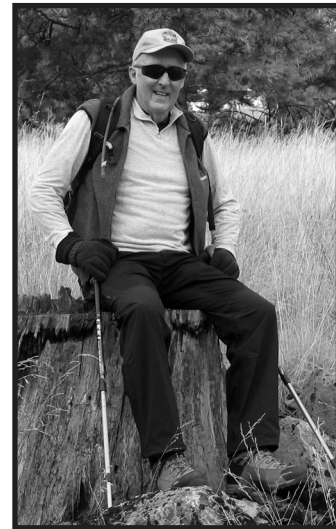
Roger Savage, Roy Williams & Jon McBride



*L-R: Ron Larsen, Jon McBride, Fred Rohrbach, Eddy Bangen,
Roger Savage & Roy Williams*



*L-R: Ed Engebretson, Roger Savage, Roy Miller, Jon McBride, Eddy Bangen,
Don Murray & Tom Blunn • Background Image of Art Jukkala*



Jon McBride



L-R: Roger Savage, Jon McBride, Don Murray & Roy Williams



*Back L-R: Tom Blunn, Wendell Beardsley, Gary Weyermann,
Roger Savage, Al Hinman & Jon McBride
Front: Ron Larsen & Don Murray*

Layout Design by Johnny Kirkley (CJ-64)

right direction, wondering if Dayton was going to die. My biggest fear was straying off the trail and onto a side ridge that would have led to oblivion. No serious unconcentrated thoughts – just focus on getting out of there.

I had no idea how far we had come or how far I had to go to get to the trailhead, but go I did. The blizzard raged. The snow was wet and stuck to my cheeks, head, and right side like it does on a highway sign. I would wipe it from my face and pop the ice balls from my eyelids when they glued my eyes shut.

I could tell I was losing my grip on things, the pain was gone. Hypothermia – I'd had it twice before, so I knew what it felt like. If I had to choose a way to die, it would be by hypothermia. It doesn't really feel that bad. After you get to a certain point, you feel euphoric.

I started slowing down. I stopped occasionally to try to get some energy back. After each stop, I hiked shorter distances between stops. Like a wound-down clock, I knew I was getting close to the end of it.

"Oh, my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended thee and I detest all my sins because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell ..." so when a sinful Catholic boy figures he's dead, that is his last prayer. I seriously thought this one was my last prayer.

I remember looking at my legs and seeing small pings of light, like sparkler sparks, shooting up at me.

On packouts, I always wore my Colt .22 Woodsman pistol on my belt. This seemed like a good time to use it on the faint hope someone would hear it. So, I pulled it out, popped the safety, pointed it in the air and fired it 11 times. I took a deep breath and put the pistol back in my holster and stood in the blizzard, out of gas!

"Lights! There are lights?" By God, there were lights. The ground-pounder that Locksaw had sent to pick us up was waiting there in the warm truck. Somehow over the engine and heater noise, he heard my shots. He got out and ran up to me yelling something about making it. I was about 75 yards from the truck when I shot my signal. The lights of the truck in a tunnel of snow looked like the descriptions of a near-death experience.

My memory of the next hour or so is not the best, but I think it is fairly accurate. The man helped me to his truck. I stripped and wrung out my clothes as best I could. He had two Thermoses of coffee and hot chocolate. I drank one of each. He had several extra sweatshirts, which I put on. He kept asking me questions and my brain got clearer as I warmed up. The time was 2:30 a.m.

Several times I told him we needed to go back to get Dayton. He agreed but wouldn't until he said I was strong enough to help him. I'd guess in 30 to 50 minutes I was ready.

"Sweet Jesus," I said as we stepped back out into the blizzard.

The guy knew what he was doing and had brought two strong flashlights. We carried the Thermoses of hot coffee and chocolate, too.

The blizzard had made a serious attempt to fill up my tracks. After a mile or so, my tracks were erased for long distances.

"How far yet?" he asked for the 20th time.

"Hell, I don't know," I replied. He was breaking the trail and I was trying to navigate. It was hopeless because we could see only a few feet even with the strong flashlight beams shooting out ahead of us. Both of us wondered at what point we should call it quits and head back and save our butts.

Sometimes the Great Spirit smiles on his hunters. We came to a break in the snow where the drifting was reduced by a row of boulders. I saw in the snow where my tracks came back into the trail from the right.

"Hey, this is it. Dayton is to the right. Follow my tracks," I yelled.

We moved as fast as we could over to the boulder and cave and crawled in.

"Here he is!" the guy exclaimed and quickly raked off the leaves and dirt from Dayton.

*"Here he is!" the guy exclaimed
and quickly raked off the leaves
and dirt from Dayton.*

"Is he alive?" I asked.

"Is he alive?" I asked.

"Don't know," he said matter-of-factly. "Damn, he is cold. I don't see him breathing, no steam from his breath."

We dragged Dayton out of the cave into the snow. He was tucked in a tight ball and very stiff, lying unmoving in the snow like rigor mortis had set in.

"We can't carry him this way. We'll have to straighten him out. Grab his armpits. I'll take his feet," he said.

We pulled and pried.

After maybe 15 minutes of working on Dayton, we got him straightened to a position we could get an arm over each of our shoulders and drag him.

So, after I downed all the coffee and chocolate, out into the roaring gloom we went again, dragging and carrying Dayton, following our tracks. The trip back to the truck is a blur but seemed to go rather quickly. The hot chocolate and coffee gave me a recharge.

The ground-pounder was a real workhorse. When we got to the truck, I held up Dayton as the driver opened the truck door and started the engine.

I do not remember our conversation but we took off Dayton's clothes around his stiff limbs down to his underwear out in the blizzard. I shucked my clothes. I jumped up into the truck pulling Dayton's stiff upper body in and trying to bend him to fit. The driver was doing the same to Dayton's legs.

We got him in and sat him on my lap as best we could and closed the door. I wrapped Dayton up as best I could with my body. He was very cold with no discernible movement and totally out of it.

The heater was on high as the driver headed for the Locksaw Ranger Station. Maybe 15 minutes into the trip Dayton showed some signs of life much to our satisfaction. His bowels let go and he vomited. What a mess! But, he started to come around and moan. It seemed like the trip to the Ranger Station took an hour. Knowing Dayton was alive was a huge relief and encouragement.

When we got to the ranger station, several people were waiting to help us. They took Dayton and me into the shower room. I got into the shower and turned it on to a temperature that was close to Dayton's body temperature. Another person helped hold him up and washed him. We slowly turned the heat up and Dayton slowly improved.

It took about an hour to get Dayton to where he could walk with help and could answer questions.

The cook got up early and fixed us a great breakfast, which I downed with no problem. I don't think Dayton could handle it yet, but held down hot chocolate and coffee.

Someone washed our clothes and dried them as we were resting and eating breakfast. Warm, dry clothes felt wonderful. At about 6 a.m. we were ready for the trip to Grangeville.

Dayton went to the hospital for a rest and checkup.

I slept on the trip back to Grangeville. They delivered me to my tiny house. Jan and baby Debbie, who were unaware there had been a problem, were glad to see me. Debs was a baby who always was a cuddly little thing. Her warmth felt wonderful. Jan wondered how the fire was. I replied that it was a bit of a challenge, the weather got cold and snowy but we made it. She made a great breakfast, and I recharged my ditty bag with fresh, dry clothes. I found it was advisable to minimize the death-defying talk with my pretty wife.

I reported back to work about 10:30 that morning. I jumped another fire about 10 a.m. Aug. 22 on Cliff Creek with Larry "Fergie" Ferguson (MSO-62) and Jim Asher (MSO-63).

While I was on the Cliff Creek Fire, Dayton flew with the chopper pilot to recover our gear from Jesse Peak.

Several of the Grangeville crew had been caught in the storm but had the sense about them to get a camp set up

before the storm hit. They had a cold and uncomfortable couple of days camping in the snow, but none of them danced with the Grim Reaper like Dayton and I did.

I don't remember talking much about our experience. I went out on a fire three days after our disaster while Dayton recovered at Grangeville. The next week, I terminated and loaded up the car and family for the return to South Dakota State University to continue graduate school. I don't even remember saying good-bye to Dayton after the event when I terminated, like it was no big deal. Crap happens!

We are all heroes. ... That's what makes being a smokejumper so special.

Dayton finished out the year and jumped again in 1965. In the fall of 1966, Dayton signed up for the CIA and went to Southeast Asia.

During the 1965-67 seasons, I researched grouse and big game diseases for my Masters and Ph.D. programs at SDSU. I returned to jumping in 1968, based in Missoula, and 1969 out of Fairbanks.

After the hot fire season in Alaska in 1969 and more than my share of close calls, my lovely wife, then with three kids, suggested that it was time to grow up and get a real job. I did get a real job but growing up has been beyond my capabilities. Dayton Grover and I connected again at the 1995 reunion in Missoula.

I agree with Kraut about being heroes between smokejumpers. We are all heroes. Some of us have a greater opportunity to save our buddies' bacon. But generally, we all get a chance to have our bacon saved sooner or later. That's what makes being a smokejumper so special.

When I think of the many serious screw-ups and tiny pieces of good luck that occurred during those few hours, I am thankful. If any of those tiny flashes of good luck had gone the other way, we would have died. The experience has made for some rich memories and great stories for the grandkids around the campfire.

One of the open chapters that I work in my memory is this: I would like to know the name and phone number of the Locksaw Ranger District employee who saved our lives. Dayton and I want to thank him and buy him a drink and the best steak dinner we can find. I have tried to identify the person and track him down, with no luck. If any of you jumpers would have a clue, let me know. I have tried the Locksaw District and Orofino Forest Service offices, which were dead ends.

So what is the message in this saga? Remember Len Kraut's advice? Don't f— up! 🍄

The View from Outside the Fence



by **Chris Sorensen**
(Associate)

I HOPE ALL of you who attended the Redding reunion enjoyed it as much as I did. All of the activities were well organized and well planned. One of the highlights of the reunions is always the Base tour. In Redding visitors were allowed to walk through the loft at leisure and there were also formal guided tours. I was on one of the guided tours lead by **Brian Kvisler** (RDD-03). Brian did a very professional job of leading the tour. At the end I jokingly told him that I would sign off on his PIO Task Book. I was a little taken aback when Brian then asked me for feedback on how he had performed on the tour. I gave him a couple of tips, but all in all he had done such a good job that I had little to offer him. I like to think I can recognize talent, and I can see that Brian has tremendous potential as a PIO. Someone needs to start grooming him for a future position. I was very impressed with the professionalism of all of the Redding jumpers from the rookies on up both on and off

duty. All of you are a tribute to your profession.

Yet another Montana politician has gone after firefighters in an election year. Montana Representative Denny Rehberg (R) and his attorney wife are suing the Billings Fire Department over a wildland-urban interface fire that occurred July 4, 2008, on their Rehberg Ranch Estates subdivision. They are suing for a million dollars for the loss of value of their property. I have never visited the Rehberg Ranch Estates, but it is an area of cheat grass and scrub pine. No structures were lost. A check of newspaper archives reveals the Billings Fire Department, Logan International Airport, Lockwood Fire-Rescue, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation fought the fire with engines and two Type II helicopters and volunteer departments from Absarokee, Red Lodge, Columbus, Reed Point, Shepherd, and Blue Creek. It's a tribute to the volunteers that some of them responded from as far as 60 miles away from their own districts on the Fourth of July. A few days after the suit was filed, Rehberg spoke to the Montana State Fireman's Convention and then met behind

closed doors with officers and members of the Billings Firefighters union. Neither party would disclose what was discussed in the meeting. We can only speculate what Rehberg promised the Local. It was only four years ago that Montana Senator Conrad Burns got in an unprovoked "altercation" with the Augusta Hotshots at the Billings airport. Burns crass tirade caused a national political firestorm that has generally been blamed for his defeat by 1500 votes, less than three months later. While the merits of this case will stand or not stand on their own in a court of law, it should be noted that Rehberg is the 14th wealthiest Congressman with a net worth of 56 million. It is highly unlikely Rehberg will be defeated in the fall. The Democratic opponent is weak, at best. There is speculation that Rehberg may run for Governor in 2010 when Governor Brian Schweitzer (D) is term limited out of office. The general election season isn't very far off, and it's a guarantee that a variety of groups are going to use this lawsuit to their advantage.

A tip of the hard hat to **Jedidah Lusk** (FBX-10) for becoming the 650th Alaska Smokejumper! 🧯

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

Quarter-Century Marked Since Jumper's Life Cut Short

by Christine Twohig

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Twenty-five years ago this week (Feb. 2010), my brother, smokejumper **Daniel Joseph Twohig** (MSO-79), died in an avalanche at Lolo Pass, Idaho, at the age of 33.

Danny was a special person, and we were extremely close. His memory is with me every day. I hope to erect a memorial bench in Yarmouthport (Mass) in Danny Twohig's name. You might see it one day and wonder who he was.

This is our story.

I am the youngest of three children. Kathy is the oldest and Danny, almost four years my senior, was the middle child. We lived on a farm in East Longmeadow until I was 16. It was a great life. At the end of our street was Redstone Lake, where everyone learned to swim.

When Danny was in seventh grade, he decided to see if he could hatch chicken eggs for the school science fair. He won second prize and was very proud of his success.

As kids, we'd often knock on the wall to communicate; my room was downstairs, his was upstairs. But one day, while doing our knock-knocking, I fell between my bed and the wall. My mother walked in and yelled for my father.

This was my first seizure, at the age of 8. I know Danny was concerned. I could play kickball, but not football. Danny said, "You can be a spectator." I didn't know what that meant, but he said it was the most important person.

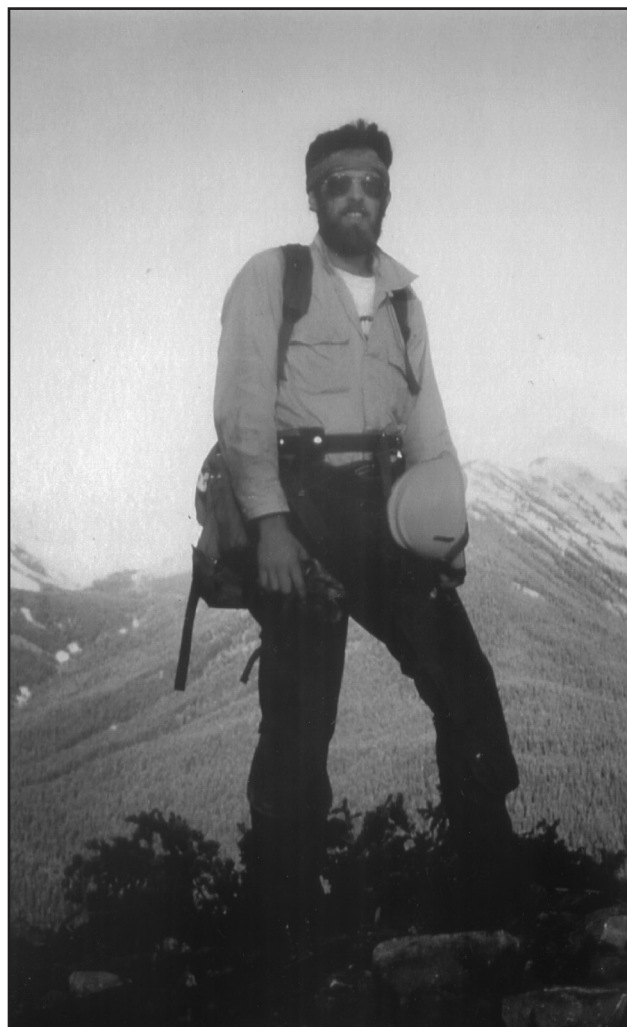
When Danny graduated from high school and went on to Holy Cross, I cried my heart out. The family moved to Cape Cod, and I felt lost. But Danny and I stayed closely in touch. I would write to him about my problems, and he always wrote back with some encouraging words.

After his graduation in 1973, he asked if I wanted to drive across Canada with him and a group of friends. I was 18 and when my folks OK'd the trip, I jumped at it.

It turned out to be one of the most memorable experiences of my life.

The trip was to begin from Montreal, but Danny's car broke down on the way north. So we pooled our resources and came up with \$125, which bought us a 1963 Pontiac, (the P was missing), but it got us from Montreal to Vancouver.

The mountains were my favorite part. We camped at Lake Louise in the Canadian Rockies and were wickledly amazed at what we saw. Unfortunately, Danny ended up missing one of the most incredible moments of the trip. He and four of our friends hiked up into the mountains to camp, but the extras loaded on my backpack were too much for me to carry, so I



Danny Twohig (Courtesy Christine Twohig)

stayed behind – and at 2 a.m. woke up to growling and shouting.

“There are bears out there! Get out of the tent!” someone yelled to me. We dashed into the car.

A black bear with two cubs was fighting a grizzly with three cubs. It went on for four hours. It was amazing! We all sat protected in the car, watching the bears.

When Danny returned to camp, I said, “It was wicked! You should have been here! You missed all the action.”

Another time, a big group of us hiked down to a beach to go swimming. I was the first one down the hill and Danny was behind me. I stopped dead in my tracks. “Danny,” I said. “These people don’t have any clothes on!”

“Yeah, I know,” he said.

Here we were, 15 people who didn’t have the nerve to take our clothes off, but we still had a great time on the beach. I put on a bathing suit and ran into the water. It was wicked cold. I wanted to go into the water just in case I didn’t get back to that beautiful place after our trip.

In the fall of 1973, Danny moved to Montana and married his girlfriend, Jeannie, and they had two beautiful daughters, my nieces Megan and Caitlin.

As a smokejumper, Danny would parachute into fires, anywhere from the Northwest to Alaska to California. I thought that was so cool. I had him up on a pedestal and he hated it. But in my eyes he was my hero. He was 6 feet, 4 inches, had a nice beard and he was handsome.

On Feb. 9, 1985, my brother went cross-country skiing with two of his friends at Lolo Pass in Idaho,

near the border of Montana. Three days before their ski trip, a man who knew how to read avalanches warned the lodge to post a warning. It didn’t, so Danny and his friends knew nothing about the danger.

Danny said, “I’m going for one last ski. Do you guys want to come?”

They said, “No, thanks. We’ll see you back at the lodge.”

But he never returned.

Danny got caught in an avalanche and wasn’t found for three days. His body was found Feb. 12, 1985 – 25 years ago today. I remember it like it was yesterday.

I had a hard time believing what happened. I had to go to Lolo Pass to make sense of it all.

Smokejumpers from across the country attended Danny’s funeral. There were 600 people at the Mass. I was amazed at how many people were there. Danny was well-liked and did a lot for people.

I look back now and remember my brother did a lot for me, too. He was patient and kind. He was always there for me and believed in me when I had trouble believing in myself.

I wish I had more memories of Danny, but the ones I have are pretty incredible. The summer before Danny died, I was in Ireland with my folks. When we got back from our trip, there were pictures on the kitchen table of Danny and Jeannie and their girls playing at the beach. If a person could only see the future ...

At least I have those early years. It’s just the past 25 that hurt. The pain doesn’t go away; you just have to live with it. 🙏

Christine Twobig lives in South Yarmouth, Mass. You can reach her at (508) 398-7722.

Jumping Into Helispots

by Ray Farinetti (Cave Junction ’64)

*Reprinted with permission from
“Book of Gobi II.”*

In the mid-60s all western forests were directed to initiate Pre-Attack Planning. This planning, when approved, designated logical places for development of such permanent features as helispots, pump chances, fire camp sites, etc. In 1966 the Sis-

kiyou National Forest proposed that the Smokejumpers based at Cave Junction would be used to construct 24 helispots strategically placed throughout the Coast Range of Southern Oregon. Our boss, **Delos Dutton** (MSO-51), agreed, as it would give early and late season work to his jumpers and promote good will with the Forest. The helispots would

be 150' in diameter on ridge tops with good access and egress points. They would be used for fire suppression delivery and pick-up points.

The plan was as follows: Two-three jumpers would jump onto a ridge on Monday morning, cut a 150' circle, leave our jump gear at the first spot and pack provisions, tools, and equipment the 2-4



Left photo Ray Farinetti (Courtesy Doug Beck). Right Photo: Wolf Emonds (Assoc.) and Ray at Gobi Project June 2010 (Courtesy Larry Longley)

miles down into the bottom of the drainage and up to the next ridge to cut another spot. This same procedure was to occur each day with a helicopter or cargo drop to re-supply us mid-week with additional food, water, and saw gas/oil. So the bottom line was to cut five helispots in five days. We were to be extracted by helicopter on Friday after we completed the fifth spot. At that time we would direct the helicopter to Spot #1, retrieve our chutes and jump gear, and return to the Aerial Project.

Well...the best laid plans of mice and men sometimes turn to rat #\$\$%& !

When **John Robison** (CJ-65) and I jumped onto a ridge, it seemed like a perfect plan as we cut the first 150' circle and, by mid-afternoon, proceeded to

pack to the next spot. If you have ever tried to pack cross-country in the southern Oregon Coast Range, you know how difficult a feat this can be. There were no trails to follow; just an impenetrable wall of madrone, manzanita, and tan oak. Our packs were soaked with the spotty, fall rains and the constant drip from the vegetation we attempted to penetrate. There were times when the fastest and easiest way to proceed was to climb on top of the canopy of brush and crawl over it as best we could. At any rate, there was no easy way to get to the next spot.

*We ate the last of
our provisions in
the dark*

We approached the second spot in near darkness and proceeded to eat and bed down. The next day we cut out the helispot and got an earlier start toward the next spot, but with no better results. We were still crawling through the brush at dark and reached the third ridge in total darkness and in near total exhaustion. We ate the last of our provisions in the dark and bedded down.

The third day was no better, with the highlight being that the weather had socked us in, and we could not be re-supplied with food, water or saw gas/oil. We had enough gas and oil to cut out the third spot. We accomplished that task and, without food or water, proceeded toward the fourth ridge, figuring that the fog would lift and we could be re-

supplied by late that afternoon. No such luck...

By this time we were getting pretty hungry. So hungry, in fact, that I shot a small bird and was almost ready to eat it raw when John convinced me otherwise. At that point, it was apparent that we were not going to get any food or water that day or, most likely, the next day either. I called the closest lookout on the radio and was told that our best way out was to proceed 3-4 miles down the ridge to a jeep trail approximately 1,000-2,000 feet below.

It was approaching dark and I looked at John and said, "Pull out your headlamp!" He looked at me like a deer in the headlights. I told him once again, "Pull out your headlamp!" Finally, he did as I requested. I then told him, "Smash it on a rock!" John was quick-minded...he knew! I said again, "Smash it on a rock!" He did. Then I pulled out my headlamp and proceeded to smash it in the same fashion.

I called the person again in the lookout tower, and I said we had 122 lbs. of gear to pack and no headlamps and it was getting dark. We would be proceeding in the morning.

At dawn, we proceeded to pack (scratch and crawl our way) to the jeep trail, only to discover that it had been washed out, forcing us to walk another eight miles to a place where we were retrieved.

In the end, our clothes were in tatters; we were cut, scratched, sore, and aching, but had the satisfaction that we made it. It was only tarnished by the fact we later heard through the grapevine that the local District Ranger thought that we had been screwing off.

In the spring of 1967, the project came to a disastrous end when **Tommy Smith** (CJ-61),

a squadleader, attempting to get from one ridge to the next, drowned as he crossed the swollen Illinois River. To my knowledge, he is the only Siskiyou Smokejumper to die in the line of duty.

We had the privilege to visit and work with Ray at the Redding Reunion and the Siskiyou Smokejumper Museum project the following week. Then came the email from Tommy Albert on July 6, 2010. (Ed.)

Tommy Albert (CJ-64): "Ray died of a heart attack today. They found him in his back yard where he was headed to water his trees. Ray had recently returned home from Oregon where he attended the NSA Reunion and then the workweek on the Gobi. He was also able to visit his daughter and grandchildren and be with his fellow jumpers, so in that respect, a good parting."

Terry Egan (CJ-65): "I am truly sorry that we have lost such a good friend and jump partner. I feel blessed that we got to see him one last time at the Gobi."

Larry Welch (CJ-61): "That is hard to believe. I thought he looked and seemed to be getting along pretty well. Just goes to show one never knows what will happen next. **Alex Theios** (CJ-65) and I worked with him most of the day (Gobi work project). I will miss him, but I know y'all (Tommy Albert) were the closest for the longest and know you will miss him more than anyone. Whenever I see the movie, 'The Wedding Crashers,' I think of the two of you for some reason. Makes me think we all, including me, need to make our final wishes known."

John Robison (CJ-65): "I was fortunate to know Ray as both a jumper and a friend. We had some interesting times together

at the Gobi. There were aborted salmon fishing trips out of Brookings and volleyball games in which Ray was still slightly inebriated from the night before and me hitting the volleyball off Ray's forehead, which precipitated a chase around the compound with Ray having every intention of pounding the ever-loving crap out of me.

"But the time I will remember the most is the time following Ray's most recent visit to the Gobi. I am fortunate to live within a short drive to Tommy Albert's home on the river. Tommy, probably Ray's best friend, hosted Ray for a week prior to and a week following the Gobi "gathering." Following the "gathering," I went up to assist Tommy, Kathy (Albert), and Ray in constructing a gazebo. Kathy informed me that Ray had never been to Sahalie Falls. Well, that was enough for Ray and me to escape any further "building anxieties." I took Ray to the falls and then we went up to Clear Lake, the headwaters of the McKenzie River and had lunch. Ray was truly impressed with the day, and I am thankful that I had that opportunity to spend that day with Ray. Adios, brother."

Tom Boatner (FBX-80): "I'm glad we all got to spend time with Ray at Cave recently. He was an FMO in Alaska when I was a young firefighter, and his younger brother, **Chris Farinetti** (FBX-79), rookied the year before me."

David Atkin (CJ-70): "Jeez, that's sad to hear, and really hard to believe. He looked so good and was so vibrantly alive and was being his usually funny self just a couple weeks ago at our Gobi reunion. He was a good man, and I feel blessed that I got to see him there at the Gobi one more time before he died." 🍄

An Old Light Pole Is Removed During the Workweek at the Siskiyou Smokejumper Base Museum Project in June.



R-L: Tom Boatner (FBX-80), Wes Brown (CJ-66), Mike Hardy (MYC-75), Wolf Emonds (Assoc.). Background L-R: Gary Buck (CJ-66), Don Bisson (CJ-78) and Willie Lowden (NCSB-72). Courtesy Jeff Duewel (AP/The Daily Courier)

Stan Tate, The Smokejumper's Chaplain

by Wild Bill Yensen (McCall '53)

Stan Tate (MYC-53) and I started smokejumping the same year; I was in the regular rookie class and Stan was in what they called the "Brush Jumpers."

While I and the rest of the regular rookies went through training, Stan and the rest of the Brush Jumpers were out on the South Fork piling brush. They came in and got their training in mid-July. Miles Johnson (MYC-53), John Lewis (MYC-53), "Englishman" David Booth (MYC-53), Howard Wolf (MYC-53), Jerry Light (MYC-53) and three more I can't remember were the rest of the Brush Jumpers.

Light had a near-total streamer on his first jump. He was very low when he got his reserve open and hit heels

first on a back oscillation, which laid him on his back and jarred him so badly he had internal injuries. That ended his jumping.

I didn't get to know Stan very well that year, as we never got on a fire together.

Stan was gone for a year and came back in 1955. I did get to know him then, as we went through refresher training together and we got our first DC-3 ride.

They had brought the DC-3 down from Missoula. We had a fire call on the Salmon River up near Warren, Idaho, and Stan and Dean Davis (MYC-57) jumped on it. I took a picture of Stan going out the door.

Once on the ground they had to retrieve their cargo

out of a tree and Stan went up to get it. In the process of getting it down, Stan slipped and fell near the bottom of the tree, but Dean caught him and got a tree spur gash in his arm. Stan made a tourniquet and quickly stopped the bleeding, bandaged the wound, treated Dean for shock and then took care of the fire.

I was drafted into the Army in 1956 and sent to Germany. I got out of the service in April 1958 and returned to jumping. Stan had taken those years off to operate a little church in Montana and he also came back to jumping. By that time we were both married and our wives became friends.

Stan jumped again in 1959. I had to go to Army summer camps in 1959 and 1960 to complete my military obligation, so I didn't jump those years.

We both came back in 1961; Stan got six fire jumps that year. I was on a couple of big fires with him that year and we had become good friends. By now Stan and I both had families.

I got to watch one of Stan's fire jumps that year. Stan and **Dave Austin** (MYC-61) jumped out of the Twin Beech out near Hida Point. I took my 8-mm camera and filmed that jump. I was number three so I didn't get to jump. They had a classic two-manner in a beautiful spot overlooking the Salmon River.

Stan came back again in 1963 for his last year of smokejumping. I remember when we were in refresher training, Stan and I marveled that we had started jumping 10 years previously. By this time a DC-3 and two Twin Beeches had replaced the Ford and Travelair.

These planes flew faster and could not slow down to about 50 mph like the Ford and Travelair could; therefore, we had to exit the aircraft around 100 mph.

We were still jumping flat packs, where the canopy would come out first and inflate, and when the lines came out, you would hit that inflated canopy and get a huge opening shock. It was so hard it would knock you silly.

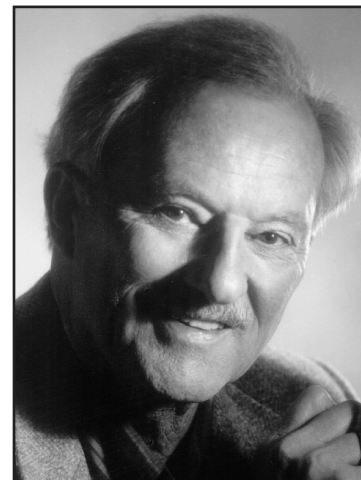
Something had to be done, so someone came up with a deployment bag system. The chute was packed the same old way, except at the end of the static line was a canvas bag into which the rigger stuffed the canopy. The bag was tied shut with break cord so that all the lines would come off the backboard first. Then the break cord would break and let the canopy come out, and it would open much more slowly, cutting way down on the opening shock.

When Stan and I went out to make our first practice jump, we were given chutes with D-bags. **Loyle Washam** (MSO-51) was the spotter, and he told us not to expect much opening shock with the D-bags on our chutes. We got in the Twin Beech and went up over the old slaughterhouse spot.

Stan was first to go and out he went. Washam

and I both stuck our heads out the door to watch the D-bag open and it didn't! Stan was spinning end over end, his body kept getting smaller and smaller, and we were yelling, "Pull it! Pull it!"

After we thought it was too late, we saw his reserve blossom.



Stan Tate (NSA file)

Here are Stan's own words describing that jump: "A few seconds after going out the door I felt a very small opening and I thought to myself, 'What a wonderful new world – just a little tug and no opening shock.' However, when I looked up to see an open canopy, there was just a bag like a folded sleeping bag where the canopy should have been. By then I was falling 100 mph.

"I reached with my right arm to open the reserve chute. That arm would not move! I became embarrassed, knowing my wife, Lynn, and my children, Teri, Scott and Flip, were watching. Instantly I used my left arm to reach around and try to rip it open. We had never been taught to do this. In fact, looking back, it didn't seem possible. Just like it couldn't be done.

"In a few seconds I would hit the ground. But some way I ripped the reserve open the wrong way. It opened in a second with a bang and jerked me right side up so I could hit the ground feet first. In less than a second I was upright and hit a soft spot on the ground between three large rocks. My feet went into the soil about five inches!

"As soon as I hit, the D-bag came down and hit me on the head. I had hit so hard I felt I had broken my legs and back and I laid down on my back. Soon the jumpers watching came running to see what was left of Chaplain Tate.

"**Shep Johnson** (MYC-56) was first and shouted, 'Hold Mrs. Tate back. I think he's dead.' While I was out for a few moments, by that time I was wide awake, and I said, 'I'm not dead, but let's see if I can stand up.'

"I stood up and thanked Almighty God for being alive. In the meantime, my best friend Bill Yensen, who was next to jump – also with a D-bag – had jumped."

Meanwhile, up in the plane, I told Washam I was going to jump so I could see if he survived. I had a D-bag and Washam didn't want me to, but I went out with my hand on the reserve handle. My chute worked just fine. I steered right down to where Stan's canopy was still on the ground.

I'll never forget walking up to Stan and saying, "Boy, am I glad to see you!" We shook hands and he said, "I'm just as glad to see you." They took Stan to the hospital and found nothing was broken, though he was sore and black and blue.

Our wives were watching together and my wife, Arlene, had a movie camera but was so awestruck she didn't shoot.

The next day, **Del Catlin** (MYC-47) told Stan he could jump first, last or not at all. Stan got in the airplane and went up and jumped. His chute worked fine and as he floated down, he thanked Almighty God for the miracle the day before.

The reason Stan's chute did not open was that the sewing between the D-bag and static line had not been properly sewed together, and the D-bag tore away from the static line, leaving the bag still tied shut.

The fire season of 1963 was slow, but we finally got a fire call on Aug. 6. Miles Johnson was first, Stan was second, I was third and I can't remember the last guy. On the way to the fire, I asked Miles if I could trade jump partners with him so I could jump with Stan. He said OK.

Miles and his partner got a small two-manner, so they were happy. Stan and I jumped the Little Five Mile Fire.

We were reinforcements as there were eight guys on the fire already. **Wayne Webb** (MYC-46) was in charge and **Gordon Dickinson** (MYC-63), **Jon Strange** (MYC-63), **Coy Jemmett** (MYC-63), **Layton Smith** (MYC-62), **James Swartley** (MYC-63), **Larry Moore** (IDC-59) and **William Strawn** (MYC-61) were there. By the time we got there the fire was about five acres in very steep country on the ridge that had a north face overlooking the Salmon River and a west face overlooking the South Fork. It was very steep and near the top.

One draw was so steep we had to build a catch trench and station a guy there with a shovel to knock down the burning pinecones that rolled down out of the fire and could set fires all the way to the river. That guy had to be a good shortstop! We worked two days to get the fire out.

The neatest thing about that fire was a band of big-horn sheep that stayed on the next ridge south of us. There was a big, beautiful full-curl ram and his harem of half a dozen ewes. The sheep were over there watching us the whole time we were there. When we were about to leave, Webb wanted me to walk the line and double check for smokes.

When I got to the top of the ridge, I came face to face with that bighorn ram. He was on his side of the ridge and I was on mine and all I could see was his head. I froze and we looked at each other for several minutes. He finally turned his head and walked away. What a beautiful animal. To this day I can see him in my mind's eye. Stan said he ran into him and had a similar experience earlier that day.

The next fire jump was on Little Loon Creek. **Glenn Hale** (MYC-57), **Bill Strawn**, Stan and I were the Beech load. Catlin spotted us, and the jump spot was at the bottom of a deep bowl with some big rocks in it. I managed to miss the rocks but Stan didn't. He bounced off a big rock, which hurt him quite a bit, but he got up and did his share of the work. That was Stan's last jump. He had 45 total jumps.

In the following years, Stan was the Vicar of St. Andrews Church in McCall. In 1965, he held service for **John "Tex" Lewis** (MYC-53) and **Darrel "Yogie" Eubanks** (IDC-54), who were killed in a C-46 over Laos in 1961. That same year, he officiated at **Skip Knapp's** (Pilot) burial out in Indian Creek on the Middle Fork under beautiful ponderosa pines.

He has officiated at many other jumpers' funerals, including that of **Jim Thrash** (MYC-81), who died on Storm King Mountain. When **Ken Smith** (IDC-55) died, Stan, **Bruce Yergenson** (MYC-54) and I drove up to Idaho City where Stan officiated.

When Wayne Webb died, Stan officiated at his service and has done so for many others. When I last heard from him he was going to a service for **Larry Looney** (IDC-54).

Stan has performed many weddings for jumpers. He has married a Ph.D., a veterinarian, several doctors and lots more. After one special wedding at the Episcopal Church of St. Andrews in McCall for Bruce and Doris Yergenson, Stan came up and he told me this story. Bruce and Stan were in the back room and when the organ processional started, Stan said, "Let's go, Ned."

Bruce stopped in his tracks. "Don't ever call me a Ned. You're a Ned." They started down the aisle and they argued almost to the altar.

Stan explained that he had started in 1953, but missed 1954 and then returned in 1955. Bruce began apologizing, as he had started in 1954. Then his bride came down the aisle and that subject was dropped. This illustrated the special bonds that all smokejumpers have for each other. Stan told me that he is blessed by being accepted by brother smokejumpers even though he was a priest for more than 50 years.

Over the years the Tate family and my family have had many barbecues at our places in McCall. A few years ago, Stan and Lynn came to Las Vegas where we met them and we did the town; then on to St. George, Utah, and a trip to Zion Park. It was sad when they had to give up their place on the lake in McCall. I used to sail over to their dock and take them sailing. We had many good times.

Stan has held services at all the NSA reunions and all of the R-4 or McCall reunions. He is indeed the smokejumpers' chaplain. His health will not allow him to do that anymore, so he will be missed. We all love him. 🙏

Sheriff Candidate Parcell Touts Experience, Trust, Communication

by Tristan Scott – Missoulian staff writer

May 2, 2010, "The Missoulian," Missoula, Mont. Reprinted with permission.

Robert E. "Bob" Parcell (MSO-71) has jumped out of airplanes to fight wildland fires, commanded Iraqi police forces in Al Anbar Province, Iraq, and hunted ultra-rare sea-shells at depths of 200 feet off the coast of Okinawa, Japan.

He's also served as a deputy with the Missoula County Sheriff's Office since 1982 – during which time he was shot in the line of duty – and hopes to become boss of the law enforcement agency in November.

Parcell is the county's resident deputy in the Seeley-Swan area, and has held numerous duties at the sheriff's office, including detective and smokejumper liaison officer.

"I've always had an affinity for law enforcement, and I would like to put my expertise, training and education to work to bring the office of the Missoula County sheriff into the 21st century," he said. "I'm not running against anyone. I'm running for this office."

A career Marine, Parcell served in combat in Iraq as director of the Iraqi Police Service, and inspected police stations during the Battle of Fallujah, working to establish a sustainable police presence during and in the wake of combat.

He also spent eight years as a smokejumper, "jumping out of perfectly good airplanes on wings of nylon, and fighting fire throughout the entire West and Alaska," he said.

"As a member on these firefighting crews, and as a fire boss on fires, I learned valuable lessons about leadership and what it takes to inspire and motivate individuals who willingly go into harm's way," Parcell said.

Parcell says there's a host of in-house tasks he'd accomplish as sheriff, and that more funding, equipment and resources would be a boon to the department, which still hasn't recovered from the layoffs of 1986.

"But the tenor is set from the top down, and the

leadership of this department is what I'm focused on," Parcell said. "I'd like to strengthen the relationship with the public with a lot more open communication."

Living in the Seeley-Swan, Parcell said you only gain the trust of the community by interacting with its residents.

"If you're just driving around in uniform with the windows up and the AC on, you're just a piece of gear to them," he said. "If you stop and get to know them, they'll call you up directly."

Parcell said it's rare that a law enforcement agency solves a crime without the help of the public, which serves a vital role in the fight against crime.

"We almost always have information from the public. They do the legwork, and we just put it together. I want the trust and confidence of the public," he said.

As a Marine in Iraq, where hostile insurgents might appear harmless in civilian clothes, and as a deputy in a far-flung corner of Missoula County, Parcell's trust in the public has been shaken again and again.

One night in 1992, while investigating a fairly routine assault with a knife, Parcell was shot in the chest. The bullet struck his badge and caught the outside edge of his body armor, but the impact blew out tissue and a chunk of pectoral muscle.

"This was right about the time of Waco and Ruby Ridge, so no one was real eager to go storming into this guy's house," Parcell said. "He hid out for about three years before he was arrested."

Still, Parcell never lost faith in the important role that community plays in law enforcement.

"Solving crime and protecting the public is the goal of law enforcement, not just taking reports. Most crimes are solved due to the input and assistance supplied by the public; only a small percentage of crimes are solved by law enforcement personnel acting alone. Due to this fact, we will make it a priority to better gain the public trust and capitalize on our partnership with the public." 🐾

Tribute to Hal Ewing



Lee Gossett (RDD-57) takes off in his Super Cub with the ashes of Smokejumper Pilot/Commander (USN Ret.) Hal Ewing after the June 18, 2010, memorial service held at the Gobi (Siskiyou Smokejumper Base). With attendees giving Hal his final "Gobi Salute" (no plane would leave the Gobi without the crew lined up extending a single middle digit skyward), Lee flew west to the Pacific Ocean near Bookings, Oregon. Hal's ashes were spread over the ocean on a beautiful, cloud-free day. Lee returned to Cave Junction and the attendees celebrated Hal's life with pizza and beer, just like he requested.

In the background you can see the flag flying on the Tommy Smith (CJ-61) Memorial Flag Pole next to the newly restored administration office. Tommy was killed while on smokejumper duty May 5, 1967.

A Smokejumper Remembers Danny On

by Gordon Dickinson (McCall '63)

I just read the article about **Danny On** (CJ-46), and it brought back my recollection of the day he introduced me to smokejumping.

I grew up in Headquarters, a small logging town owned by Potlatch Forests in Clearwater County, Idaho. One summer day, I would guess it was in 1950 or 1951, a small plane repeatedly circled Headquarters in a curious

fashion. Then, suddenly a red and white parachute blossomed and floated down into the meadow in the center of town. My playmates and I were curious if this meant the plane was going to crash. We ran down from where we were playing to see what was happening. It was Danny On, a former smokejumper, making a demonstration jump. At that moment my imagination was sparked with

the hope that someday I might be a smokejumper, too.

I am clear on only some details about this event and the man. The man was Danny On. He was working for Potlatch Forest at the time. I think that he worked for my father, a logging camp foreman, at the time. I do know that my father had mentioned him as a terrific worker and wonderful guy. I have a vague recollection that he had worked for him before and had just come to demonstrate parachute jumping.

I have since learned that he was close to another link between smokejumping and me: **Harry Cummings** (MSO-46). Harry had also been with the 101st Airborne in Europe, but not in Danny's regiment (one was with the 501st regiment, the other in the 502nd). Harry jumped as a rookie in Missoula in 1946. A year later Harry jumped at Cave Junction, and he and Danny become friends. I think that they remained in touch for many years.

In 1962 I was a smoke chaser/trail crew hand on the Canyon Ranger District of the Clearwater National Forest, and Harry was the Fire Control Officer and my boss. We hit it off well, and he fired up my imagination about smokejumping. In those days I wore glasses, a disqualification for jumping. I switched to contact lens, and when my application was submitted I said nothing about glasses. I wonder

how many other jumpers have squinted like crazy to keep the lenses in place as they crouched in the door before a jump? I jumped in McCall 1963-66, summers never regretted.

I do not know that my father ever had further contact with Danny On, but he was aware of his death when the news hit the papers in the winter of 1979. He reported the details to me during our weekly telephone conversations, and I remembered clearly the first smokejumper I saw so many years earlier.

Thanks for printing the article and all of the others. Miami is so flat one can understand why it took people a while to learn the earth is round. And the only fires are grass fires cleaning up the everglades each year. Your magazine is a great connector, especially for those of us who have strayed far. Keep up the good work. 🙏

Gordon graduated from Gonzaga University in 1965, the University of Utah Medical School in 1969, and took his internship/residency in internal medicine at the University of Miami. He then spent four years in the US Army in Stuttgart, Germany, before returning to the U of Miami. Gordon is currently Chief of Infectious Diseases Department and Professor of Medicine. His time is split between patient care, teaching and research. He can be reached at: GDickins@med.miami.edu.

Thanks to Redding Reunion Committee

The NSA wants to thank all of those involved in the planning and operation of the 2010 Redding Reunion for their hard work and effort to provide us with another outstanding event.

Redding Smokejumpers, with special thanks to **Brian Kvisler** (RDD-03)

and

Dave Nelson (MSO-57) • **Nancy and Larry Boggs** (RDD-63) • **Scott Warner** (RDD-69)

Chuck Sheley (CJ-59) • **Rita and Stan DeLong** (RDD-65) • **Sherry Raley**

Brooks Henderson (RDD-69) • **Don Spence** (RDD-64) • **Murry Taylor** (RDD-65)

Pat O'Bannon (RDD-70) • **Jerry Spence** (RDD-94) • **Sid and Katherine Noble**

Andy Stevenson (RDD-65) • **Jack Howard** (RDD-59)

Bob and Alice Forbes • **Lana Haynes** • **Rhonda O'Bannon** • **Alice Bowles** • **Emily Kersh**

Jerry Vice (RDD-69) • **Larry Dodds** (RDD-69) • **Gordon Brazzi** (RDD-66)

Steve Wark (RDD-69) • **Patti and Dick Williamson** (RDD-67)

Leas Dickey (RDD-61) • **Betty and Kenny Peugh** (RDD-71)

Carol Tracy – widow of **Richard Tracy** (MSO-53) • **Colleen Murphy** • **Doug Tracy**



Alaska 1974. Jumpers on a patrol flight stop at Bethel to refuel and have an opportunity to be photographed in front of a rare Ford Trimotor still in use as a cargo and fish hauler. L-R: Greg Lee (FBX-73), Jon Klingel (CJ-65), Bob Betts (RDD-64), Ron Gardner (MSO-71), Dave Pierce (RAC-65), Rad Carlson (kneeling CJ-70), Gene Bartell (MSO-67), Freddie Pete (ANC-72), Scott Bates (MYC-69), Gary G. Johnson (FBX-74), Larry Ard (FBX-71). (Courtesy G. Johnson)

Visit The Storm King Memorial

by Jimmie Dollard (Cave Junction '52)

At the 2010 NSA convention in Redding, I was surprised by the number of jumpers who said they had passed through Glenwood Springs, Colo., and were not aware of the excellent memorial to the 14 firefighters who perished in the Storm King Mountain Fire – aka South Canyon Fire – located there just five minutes from Interstate 70.

If you ever travel across the Rockies on I-70 you will pass through Glenwood Springs. Please, do yourself a favor and visit this memorial. It will take only about 20 minutes but you will remember it for a lifetime.

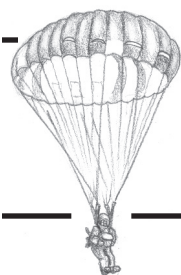
The centerpiece of the memorial is a bronze statue depicting two male and one female firefighters, but the heart of the exhibit is the plaques giving the background, accomplishments and implied potential of each firefighter. The horrendous tragedy of this fire is the loss of

these great young Americans – the best of the best. You won't be able to finish the exhibit dry-eyed.

To reach the exhibit from I-70, take Exit 116, take the access road (Sixth Street) west two blocks (0.3 miles) and turn left on Devereux Road, cross the bridge over I-70, and take the first left into Two Rivers Park. You can park next to the memorial.

If you don't have these directions with you, just ask locally where the firefighter memorial is located.

If you're up to a steep climb of about three hours round-trip, you can also visit the site at Exit 109 (Canyon Creek) and drive a half-mile to the trailhead. Plaques along the trail describe the events, and there's a cross marking the spot where each firefighter perished. It is gut-wrenching to see how close to the ridge top – and safety – these crosses are located. 🕊



Odds and Ends



by Chuck Sheley

Congratulations and thanks to Pete Landis (CJ-62), Ron Thoreson (CJ-60), Doug Wamsley (MSO-65), Dick Burns (FBX-64), David Oswalt (CJ-68), and Bob “Rigger” Snyder (CJ-48) who just became our latest Life Members.

Received an interesting email from a member the other day giving an example of more of your money going down the drain. He is a member of an Emergency Planning Committee that received an \$80,000 plus grant from the BLM to write a “Pre-disaster Mitigation Plan.” A former fire chief in his area was hired to write the plan that ended up conveniently costing the exact amount of the grant. The plan was never finished, the contractor kept the money, and his business went “belly up.” The ex-chief is now employed by another government agency. When this was mentioned to the local representative from the State Dept. of Disaster/Emergency Services, our member said, “The BLM didn’t care if they were defrauded and would just write us another check... they did.”

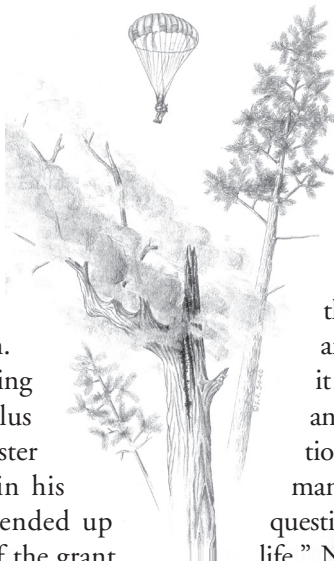
From *Stars And Stripes*, May 5, 2010: Stuttgart, Germany — Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group recently got a chance to try out the Army’s new MC-6 parachute, which they say will be put to good use when dropping into tight combat zones in Afghanistan.

The MC-6 is more maneuverable than the aging MC-1, which has been used by Special Forces soldiers for years, and the Stuttgart-based soldiers are the first unit in Europe to train with the new chute.

“When searching for a new parachute that could drop them into a small landing area, *Army Special Forces looked to the smokejumpers*, who are tasked with descending into the heart of Rocky Mountain forest fires,” said David Roy, program leader for the MC-6.

“The U.S. forest services have been using this canopy for about 16 years now,” Roy said. “They use it to get into postage-size drop zones in the Rockies as they go to put out fires.” (*Think he means BLM. Ed.*)

Bob Graham (MSO-52) relating to NSA President **John Twiss’ (RAC-67)** column in the July issue: “I, too, am still proud to have been a smokejumper and would like to relate one experience many years ago



that shows how significant having been a jumper is to a lot of folks.

I got hurt in the 1953 jumper season and couldn’t pass the physical for the ’54 season, but did get drafted into the army and passed that physical. About a year later, our regiment had openings for four corporal promotions and had 128 PFCs interview for the four grades. A review board of two colonels and a major interviewed the candidates. When it came my turn, I presented myself to the board, and one of the colonels asked me a military question. The major, who was my Battalion Commander, interrupted and said, “Never mind that question, ask Private Graham what he did in civilian life.” Naturally the answer was “smokejumper,” and that subject took up the entire rest of my interview. When the orders came out awarding the four corporal promotions to the 128 candidates, I was second on the list and the only draftee. I’m sure my promotion had nothing to do with my military experience, but all to do with my civilian job.”

Dan Tomich (MSO-61): “That sure was a shocker for me to learn that **Cliff (Dalzell/MSO-61)** had died. He was in my new-man training class at Missoula in 1961 and sure was a great guy. Along with Missoula and the reunions, I would see him in Boise and at NIFC when he worked at OAS and I worked for the BLM Boise District next door as an engineer.

At Missoula, Cliff would always drive an old beat-up car, Olds mostly, that he would get for 50 bucks or so. He would just change the plugs and pour in old oil to keep it going and always said that was the cheapest transportation for a college student.”

Bob Graham (MSO-52) relating to **Chris Sorensen’s** column in the July 2000 issue of *Smokejumper*: “I want to comment on Chris’s writings on ICS and ICS weaknesses, particularly in the training courses. I was IC (Incident Commander) for over ten years on a National Fire team, now known as Type 1, and had the highest red card rating possible. My rating was GHQ Fire Manager, GHQ Plans Coordinator and Line Boss 1. I also taught the Command Function at Generalship and Command sessions at Marana. I was on a national committee that helped design the ICS system. When I retired from the USFS, the local Government officials asked me to become the IC for all of their emergencies,

and I still hold that distinction. For years FEMA and Homeland Security insisted that I take the ICS courses, but I felt that this would be a waste of my time, as the instructors probably knew less of the subject than I. When I asked for a waiver of the training requirements, I was turned down and was forced to take ICS 100 and 200 by correspondence. The answers to the final quizzes were readily available from previous students, if desired. An additional weakness was that you were not allowed to know which questions you had wrong. If a person were to really learn, you need to know where you were wrong. Then I had to attend the 300-class in person along with about 28 others. Just prior to passing out the open book final exam, the instructors gave us the page number in the book that had the answer for each of the 25 questions. I doubt that anyone failed that course.

That brings up the most glaring weakness in the FEMA approach to ICS training. In FEMA's approach, as long as you have had the training, you should be able to be competent in your performance. The red card system had a really effective check and balance. First you were not qualified for a position simply because you had the training, you had to have experience on the ground. You also had to be approved for the position by the officer issuing the red card. At least half of the students in my 300 class totally lacked experience to be IC at any level, and at least half of all the class would never have what it takes to be a commander at any level."

Milt Beer (RDD-65) at the Redding Reunion: "For three days story after story has been told among us. Keep asking for folks to contribute—we all have a story."

Jim Wissler (MSO-48) in response to **Bill Yensen's** (MYC-53) article in the July issue of *Smokejumper*: "The Ford and Travelair were my favorites to step out of. I remember talking to one of the pilots and he told me they tried to maintain 75-80 mph over the jump spots. I think it was admirable for the guys driving a loaded airplane in mountainous terrain to get ten miles per hour above the stall speed so our opening shock would be less. Thanks for a great publication."

Karl Hartzell (BOI-70) concerning the Siskiyou Smoke-jumper Base renovation project: "The last few days capped a most stupendous week of volunteer work! Believe me that of all the volunteer projects I've done (and there have been a bunch), this just completed week of amazingly productive labor, done in the company of an incredible assemblage of talent and expertise possessed by such a super group of people, constitutes the most rewarding and fulfilling stint of volunteer work I've had the pleasure of joining. Talk about a labor of love. I had a ball helping out!

I cannot believe the diversity and amount of work

we accomplished, all in the pursuit of improving the buildings and grounds of this old jumper base.

You'll probably get several reports on the memorial service for Hal Ewing. I feel privileged to have attended. The many people who came up to recount memories of their time with Hal provided a sweet and splendid recollection of an obviously wonderful human being who, in the role of adept pilot, showed unrelenting attention and concern for his passengers, whether in the plane or on the ground!

I feel very fortunate to have been part of this fine effort and to interact with such a great group of people. (With a side benefit of hearing enough stories to get some sense of what life at the Gobi was all about!)"

Larry Longley (NCSB-72/NSA Historian): "I had a wonderful time at the Gobi Restoration project. For me, it was even more meaningful than the Redding Reunion the week before. My contribution to the "Gobi project" was that of taking photos and video of the work project, and also doing many video interviews. I have been doing video interviews for the NSA for the past four years or so, but it was a real treat to be able to interview so many at the Gobi work project. I did a total of 42 interviews on 32 one-hour digital video tapes."

Stan DeLong (RDD-65/In charge of Silent Auction at Redding Reunion): "Just days before the reunion, **Dave Bennett** (MSO-61) emailed us and asked if we thought a painting of the 'Buffalo Bar' in Silver City might be a worthy item for the auction. He noted that if a jumper was ever in Silver City, he probably had a stool with his name on it. We replied that we were sure it would bring back warm memories for someone and to please bring it to Redding. During the auction, a former jumper approached the auction table and asked for a 'Bidder number,' as he had seen something he just had to have. He explained he had been at the Buffalo Bar when he was a 25-year-old jumper and got a call at the pay phone in the bar informing him that his mother had passed away. The man's daughter was with him and had never heard that story until he spotted the picture. The Bennetts were delighted that this painting, which for years had remained unhung, had finally found a home with **Donald Clarke** (MSO-68) and became a treasured memory."

Jeff Martinsen (GAC-87) and his wife, Melody, owners of the *Chateau Acantha*, received the Master Editor-Publisher Award at June's convention of the Montana Newspaper Association in Bozeman.

MNA President Andy Malby presented the award during a luncheon. Cut Bank newspaper owners

Brian and LeAnne Kavanagh recognized the Martinsens' accomplishments as publishers of the *Acantha* for the past 20 years and for their work through many of those years for the MNA.

The Martinsens, both 44, have been the owners of the *Acantha* – a weekly newspaper – since July 1, 1990. They celebrated 20 years of independent newspaper ownership in Choteau.

Howard Chadwick (MYC-52): "The articles by **Earl Dodds** (MYC-49) and **Bill Yensen** (MYC-53) stirred some old memories. I jumped both the Travelair and the Trimotor in 1952. Being a slow fire year (I only made three fire jumps), I quit early and my buddy, Lou Spink, and I worked a month for a packer.

I jumped a two-man fire with **Del Catlin** (MYC-

47). Lightning had hit a tall Doug fir and started a small ground fire. Even though we didn't see any smoke at the top of the tree, Del said we should cut it down. Sure enough, we found fire in the top – a lesson that has stayed with me all these years.

I attended ROYC summer camp the following summer and then spent 3-½ years active duty. That one summer of smokejumping takes top billing in my memory."

"Doc" Reesing (MSO-61) sent an article from the *Alpine Avalanche* (Texas) that chronicles the first jumps by smokejumpers in Texas. Five jumpers from Silver City, NM, jumped a fire on the Big Bend N.P. on May 30, 2010. **Jim Kitchen** (FBX-87) is the Fire Control Officer for the Park. 🌲

Jon McBride: A Personal Memoir

Continued from **page 9**

Dick Wildman (NCSB-61)

We walked Mann Gulch together. The ridge was quiet and peaceful. Now you can tell jump stories with those 13 souls of yesteryear. God bless.

Doug "Digger" Daniels (MSO-61)

I first met Jon in 2001 when starting to go on smokejumper trail crews. After only a few minutes of visiting, Jon had a way of making a person feel like they had been best friends forever.

Jon did a very thorough and serious job of putting everything together for every crew so they could focus on their work project and on having a good time

enjoying each other's company. His highest priority for all the crew members was that they have a good time and enjoy the smokejumper camaraderie.

In his memory, have a good time – enjoy the times you spend together.

Stan Linnertz (MSO-61)

Phone call: "Jon, this is Stan Linnertz. I'm an ex-jumper interested in your trail program."

"That's great, Stan! We have a great opening in our trail program. Do you cook?"

"Jon, I cook in my backyard."

"That's great, Stan. You will enjoy getting back with the smokejumper gang. What do you think, Stan? Want to join us?"

Nine years later I am still cooking. One of the best things I have ever done. Jon was a very special person, a very special person in my life. Jon will always be in my heart. 🌲

More Success At The Gobi

by Stan "Clancy" Collins (McCall '67)

Stage II of the Siskiyou Smokejumper Base Museum Project, June 14-18, included 80 volunteers and over 1900 hours of volunteer labor. Volunteers not only included Gobi Smokejumpers and their families, but community volunteers and former jumpers from other bases.

A new roof, directed by **Tom**

Hunnicut (RDD-78), was put on the Loft. The historic loft has now been repainted, weatherized, and re-roofed. There were three generations of Hunnicutts working on the loft roof, three generations of **Emonds** (Troop CJ-66) working on various projects, and community volunteers providing meals and installing rain gutters to two

buildings. Gobiites and volunteers came from as far as Pennsylvania, Florida, Colorado, Kansas, Iowa, and several other states.

The exterior and interior of the Admin Office were restored. The exterior was restored and repainted to replicate its original 1936 appearance. The interior was rewired and, with the 'old world

craftsmanship' of Jimmie Dollard (CJ-52), Jim Oleson (CJ-53), and Jim Cherry (MSO-57), portions of walls, floors, and counters were restored.

The interior of the Mess Hall was cleaned and painted. Work was done on the exterior, including the replacement of rain gutters. Thanks goes to the father and son duo of Daryl and Alex Ponder, who own a rain gutter business and, who donated gutters and downspouts work on both the Mess Hall and Admin Office.

In addition, extensive clean up occurred to the grounds, to the Saw Shack, and to sidewalks.

With all the Gobiites involved, perhaps Betty Stoltenberg, our Secretary through the early 70s, provided a fitting reflection, "It seems like the old days with everyone



Historic Admin Office Restored: L-R: Tom Albert, Don Bisson, Garry Peters and Troop Emonds. (Courtesy S. Collins)

buzzing around doing something, but we are all just a bit rounder, slower, and grayer now."

Planning begins soon for next year, Stage III.

For a day-by-day progress in pictures, go to: www.highway199.org/siskiyou-smokejumper-historic-base/2010-project/2010-restoration-project.htm 📷

Western Montana Lives: Trail Crews Lose Irreplaceable Pioneer Jon McBride

by Kim Briggeman – Missoulian staff writer

(This article was published July 26, 2010, in The Missoulian, Missoula, Mont. Reprinted with permission.)

Here it was again. Two Julys ago it was my happy circumstance to accompany some boys of the summer skies into a proposed wilderness area in southwest Montana. They were one of more than 20 crews of former smokejumpers working on trail and facility rehabilitation projects in some of the forests on which they once fought fire, a few as far back as the 1940s.

Their hardiness, sense of purpose, easy fellowship and self-deprecating brand of machismo made me realize what I'd missed by never being one of them.

Here came that feeling again a couple of Friday mornings ago, as many of those same men and women gathered at a memorial service in Missoula for their leader, **Jon McBride** (MSO-54). For the past 11 years McBride sent these crews into the hills for a week or two as coordinator of the National Smokejumper Association

(NSA) trails maintenance program.

The big and gentle man died unexpectedly on a bicycle trek with friends near Drummond, Mont., on June 2. He was only 74, and if his huge heart hadn't given out, surely it would have broken in two for being done too soon.

Dozens of self-styled "old farts" who make up the NSA trails program this summer were back in town. They'd flown or driven in, on their own dimes, from almost every region of the country to keep this good thing alive. Before they headed out on their assigned forests, they and dozens of other friends and family of McBride's were gathered at the Missoula airport hangar that houses the Museum of Mountain Flying.

At least a hundred people were there, and there would be that many or more the following Friday for an inurnment service at the Western Montana Veterans' Cemetery in Missoula.

At the first memorial on July 16, many sat or stood

under a wing of the giant DC-3 that had dropped 15 smokejumpers on the tragic Mann Gulch fire more than 60 years ago. Through the open door of the hangar, planes landed and taxied off to their assigned duties, and big round bales dotted a far airport field.

But the scene beyond the speaker's podium was dominated by mountains – most prominently a still-snowcapped Lolo Peak – a summer blue sky of untold depths. A more fitting setting could not have been chosen to say goodbye to McBride.

Born in Missouri in 1935, he came to Montana to work on white pine blister rust for the Forest Service near Haugan and enrolled in forestry school at the University of Montana. He did his smokejumping during his college summers of 1954, 1955 and 1956.

McBride became a Navy pilot, and a good one.

"I forget how many landings he made on aircraft carriers, but it was a huge number," said **Tim Aldrich** (MSO-62) of Missoula, a former smokejumper himself who worked with McBride and the board on the NSA trails project for several years.

McBride was hired in 1965 by Mobil Oil as one of its first corporate jet pilots. The job took him around the globe, and when he retired 30 years later, he was Mobil's international director of aviation.

"Jon was still flying for Mobil when I met him," said **Carl Gidlund** (MSO-58) of Hayden Lake, Idaho, who read McBride's obituary at the service.

The two men and a common friend, **Art Jukkala** (MSO-56), spent a week or more in the Bob Marshall Wilderness, a trip that Gidlund said "kind of solidified Jon's desire to return to Montana when he retired."

McBride, wife Tricia and son, Jon, moved into a fine home in lower Grant Creek, one large enough, it turned out, to serve as McBride's highly organized equipment dispatch and reconnaissance center when he took over the trails program.

He jumped at the chance to help Jukkala, his old college roommate, get the trails program up and running in 1999. Tragedy struck on the second day of the first trail project. Jukkala had a heart attack and died in a backcountry camp in the Monture Creek country.

The infant program could have been doomed.

"They were just going into no-man's land at the start," remembers Jeanene Jukkala, Art's widow, who has helped with the program each of its 12 years. "They didn't get that much reception from people that first year. I think everybody was kind of leery of it."

Instead, McBride said, Jukkala's death served to coalesce the jumpers. They amassed at the memorial service 11 years ago and professed a determination to make his project fly.

With McBride coordinating things on a national level

and lining out a legion of eager volunteers, the program has expanded from its Montana/Idaho roots. There are now similar projects in Alaska, Utah, California, Colorado, Oregon and Minnesota – 27 projects and 282 volunteers in all last year.

It has cleared well over 1,000 miles of backcountry trails. If McBride had had his way that number would be much higher. A notorious non-complainer, McBride had one long-standing beef with the Forest Service: His crews were never getting enough work to do.

McBride was in on the ground floor in the creation of the Art Jukkala Scholarship Program for children of jumpers killed in the line of duty, and of the NSA's Good Samaritan Fund, which help meets the special needs of current and former smokejumpers. Gidlund said he chipped in \$5,000 to help launch a program that provides a scholarship for a smokejumper or child of a smokejumper who attends the University of Montana forestry school. And he secured grants for it all from the likes of Mobil Oil, his old employer, to the tune of thousands of dollars.

McBride was recognized last September when the U.S. Forest Service presented him with its highest national honor, the President's Volunteer Service Award, at its 2009 reunion in Missoula.

"Jon was my best friend, but I'm not sure I was his best friend," Gidlund said. "He had the facility to make everyone think he was their best friend."

Before, during and after the 55-minute memorial service, similar tributes flowed.

"You talk about a selfless individual, one who gave so much and so willingly and so transparently," said Aldrich. "There was no show in Jon. He was the real deal."

Four days after McBride's death, **Bob Whaley** (MSO-56), Aldrich and a handful of local NSA volunteers gathered for an emergency meeting to map out the trail program's immediate future. For one more year they would use as headquarters McBride's home – where young Jon lives and lays out the NSA newsletter – to dispatch and receive this year's trail crews, many of whom are out in the forests this week.

Whaley said a new base of operations will have to be found and a new management model will have to be found.

"Guys are dedicated to making sure this doesn't die," he said. "Now we're forced to find out what all goes on."

"Clearly it will not be with one person carrying all the roles, as Jon did," said Aldrich.

Maybe he was prescient, Gidlund said, but in recent years McBride was delegating more and more of his responsibilities in coordinating the program.

"It's got its own momentum, and I think it'll carry on," said Gidlund. "The question is: Who can replace Jon?" 🕊