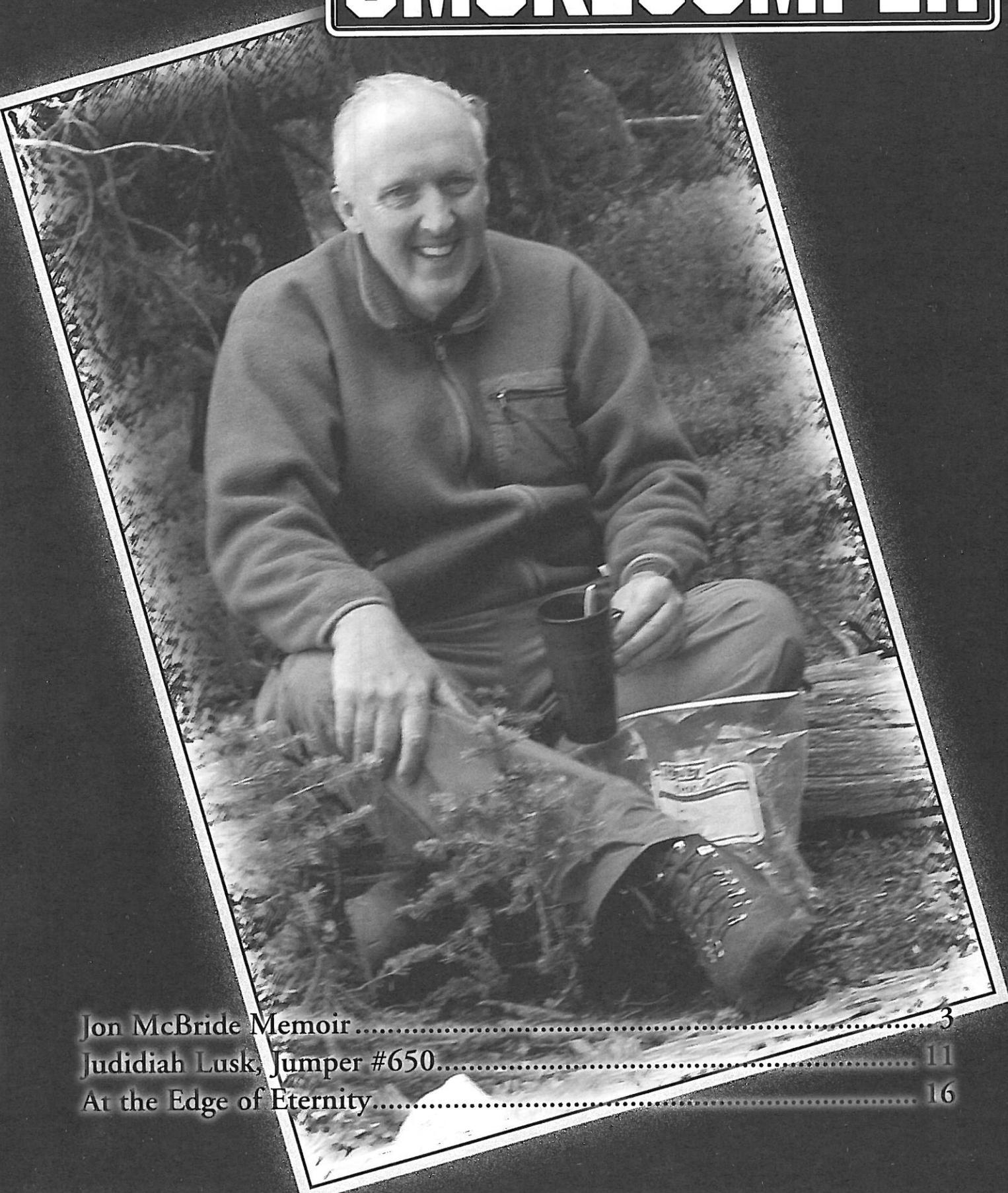


SMOKEJUMPER



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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	GrangevilleGAC	Missoula.....MSO
Boise.....NIFC	Idaho CityIDC	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 McMahan (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

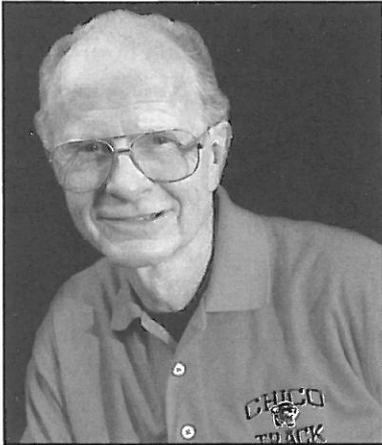
appear on the application.

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 Dávis. 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

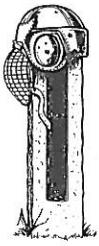
Contributions since the previous publication of donors, July 2010

<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

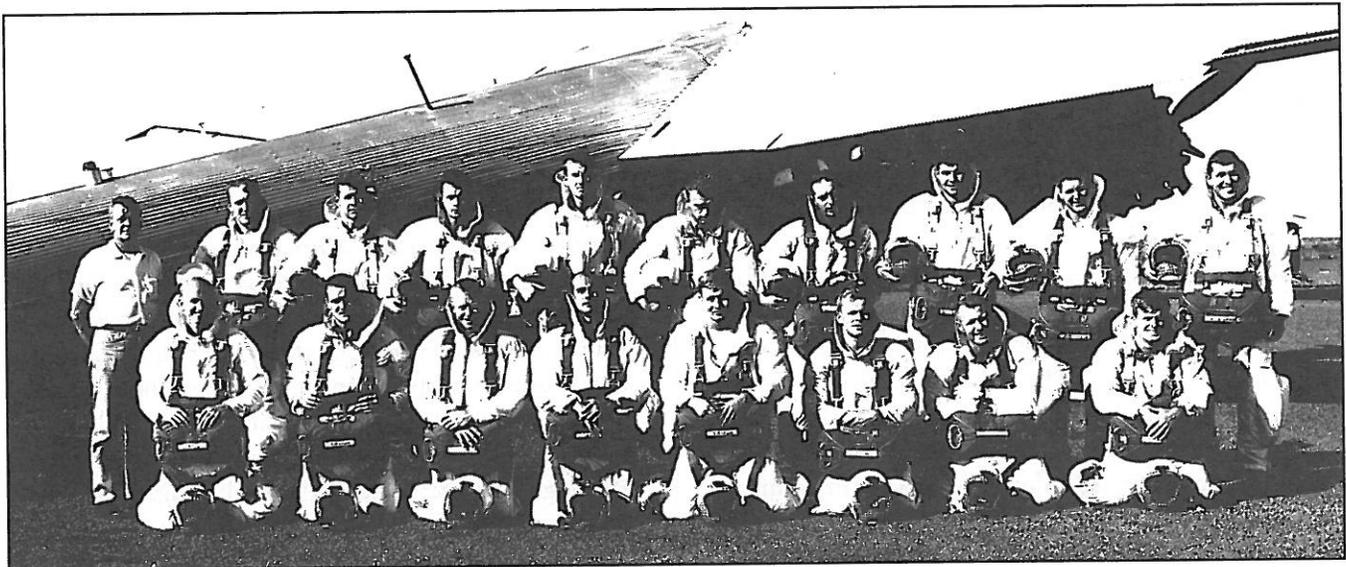
we flew in in those days built character in the troops. The right propeller of the Ford in which we flew that summer broke, fired a piece through the fuselage, and the left engine dropped off. Borgeson and Nyquest flew it back to Grangeville several weeks after I terminated for the summer.

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

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*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 Bangan & Roy Williams
Front L-R: Gary Weyermann, Ivan Kays, Joe Aquino, Gary Graham & Al Hinman*