

# VA Lists Presumptive Conditions For Claims

by Carl Gidlund (Missoula '58)

First, some background: I keep my hand in journalism, a profession I followed for several years, by writing occasional pieces for a regional newspaper. While researching a story a year or so ago on health care available for veterans, I learned that if a person served in any branch of the military and subsequently contracted Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) – also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease – the Veterans Administration presumes that the disease was caused by the strain of military service.

An Army buddy of mine had died of ALS, so I contacted his widow, and she applied for VA assistance. She is now receiving some \$1,200 per month, tax-free, and has other privileges associated with her status as a veteran's survivor.

My friend had served in Vietnam, but service in that nation is not a condition of the VA award. Basically, anyone who served 90 days or more and has a diagnosis of ALS is eligible for VA medical and compensation benefits. There is no time limit on the onset of the disease following military service.

So, a veteran who has died from ALS has a service-connected death and there are benefits for eligible dependents. Even if the veteran passed away years ago, the surviving spouse can file a claim for a service-connected death.

After publication of the piece with this information, I sent it to several smokejumper friends whom I knew to be vets. **Larry Lufkin** (CJ-63) was one of those. He immediately contacted a brother-in-law, **Keith Fitzjarrald** (CJ-62), a Navy veteran who was suffering from ALS. As a result of that contact, his family filed a VA claim for him since his disease was so advanced he was unable to do so himself. Keith was accepted into the system, received medical care and, after he died in May, his widow began receiving her tax-free stipend.

That article also prompted Lufkin to submit an application for VA benefits owing to a heart condition that may be related to his Vietnam service. He's awaiting a decision from the agency.

During my research for the article, I learned there are other diseases the VA presumes to have been caused by exposure to Agent Orange in those who served on the ground in Vietnam or in the Korean Demilitarized Zone

in 1968 and 1969. Lufkin has urged me to publish this information in Smokejumper magazine since many of our members are fellow Vietnam and Korea vets. The list of those diseases follows:

## Agent Orange Presumptive Conditions Service-Connected Disability Claims

- Prostate cancer
- Respiratory cancer (cancers of the lung, bronchus, larynx, or trachea)
- Chronic lymphocytic leukemia
- AL amyloidosis
- Hodgkin's disease
- Chloracne
- Multiple myeloma
- Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma (see list of associated terms below)
- Acute and subacute peripheral neuropathy
- Porphyria cutanea tarda
- Diabetes type II
- Disabilities in the children of a herbicide exposed veteran (see list below)
- Parkinson's disease
- Ischemic heart disease
- B-cell leukemias
- Soft-tissue sarcomas (see list below)

## Types of Soft-Tissue Sarcomas

- Adult fibrosarcoma
- Alveolar soft-part sarcoma
- Angiosarcoma
- Clear-cell sarcoma of aponeuroses
- Clear-cell sarcoma of tendons and aponeuroses
- Congenital fibrosarcoma
- Dermatofibrosarcoma protuberans
- Ectomesenchymoma
- Epithelioid malignant leiomyosarcoma
- Epithelioid and glandular malignant schwannomas
- Epithelioid sarcoma
- Extraskeletal ewing's sarcoma
- Hemangiosarcoma
- Infantile fibrosarcoma
- Leiomyosarcoma
- Liposarcoma
- Lymphangiosarcoma
- Malignant fibrous histiocytoma



*Don Bisson (CJ-78)*



*Betty Stoltenberg*

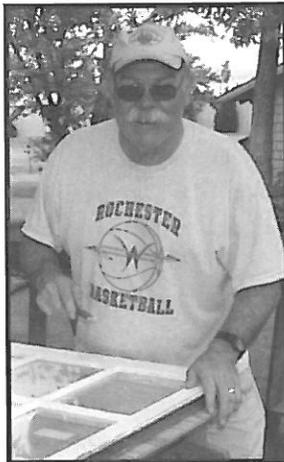


*Doug Bucklew (CJ-67)*



## Gobi Restoration Project 2010

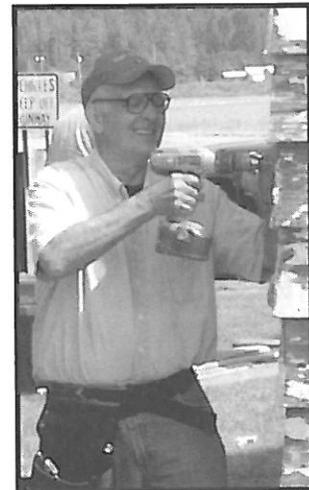
*Photo's Courtesy Roger Brandt*



*Jerry Katt (CJ-67)*



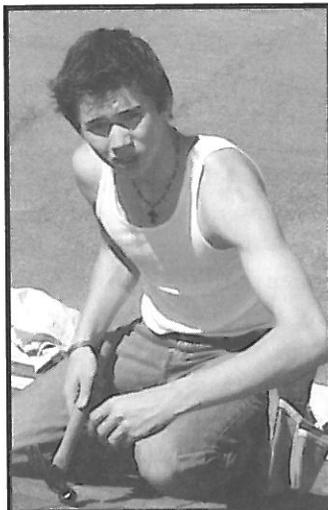
*Jim Cherry (MSO-57) & Jimmie Dollard (CJ-52)*



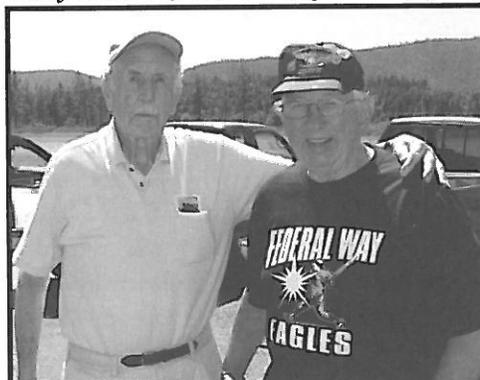
*Ron Lufkin (CJ-60)*



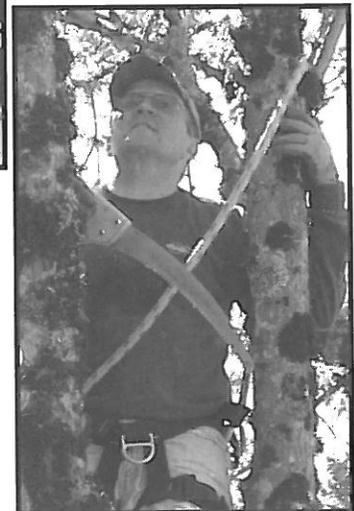
*Garry Peters (CJ-62) & Larry Peters (CJ-62)*



*Jim Buck*



*Jim Allen (NCSB-46) & Jim Oleson (CJ-53)*



*Mark Corbet (LGD-74)*

*Layout Design: Johnny Kirkley (CJ-64)*

19,008 pounds at takeoff, but the maximum weight to lift was 18,445 pounds. If USFS safety guidelines were followed, the weight would not have exceeded 15, 840 pounds.

Seven of the firefighters were from Grayback Forestry, founded by **Mike Wheelock** (CJ-76) and **Ray Osipovich** (CJ-73).

**Harold Hartman** (CJ-65): "Your editorial in the last *Smokejumper* was so good. Best I've seen on the subject! If our entire society could just have an idea, we actually could change things for the better."

**Barry Reed** (MSO-60): "Chuck, thank you for the wonderful job that you do for the NSA. Each issue seems to get better and better. I especially enjoyed the story by Ross Parry and the Higgins Ridge Fire.

"During rookie and refresher training, each person had a canvas jumpsuit that we wore for our practice jumps, and we used the nylon jumpsuit for the fire jumps. **Ted Nyquist** (MSO-54) was a squad-leader in 1961. His nylon suit burned up on one fire and his canvas suit burned up on another fire and no more were available.

"Using smokejumper common sense, he 'borrowed' Oscar, the dummy's suit and helmet. Oscar's suit was made for a person who weighed at least 230 pounds, and Ted weighed about 145 soaking wet. Ted waddled around like a duck wearing that one. Since Oscar was normally on display for tours next to the parachute tower, Ted covered him up with a sheet.

"Unfortunately, **Earl Cooley** (MSO-40) did not know of these circumstances and was giving a personal tour for some bigwigs from Washington, D. C. Earl's exact words were: 'This is what we look like when we jump out of airplanes.' Earl grabbed the sheet and jerked it off. Man, Earl was pissed!"

**Bob Crowe** (MSO-46): "I received the January issue of *Smokejumper*, looked at the cover, and remembered that the last time I looked like that was 61 years ago on our way to a fire in Idaho.

"I was second on the squadleader jump list that day and **Bill Hellman** (MSO-46) was first. Five p.m. came and Hellman left the base (to go home). A moment later an 8-man fire call came in for a fire near Pierce, Idaho. I took the crew to Pierce. Hellman took the fire the next day - Mann Gulch."

**Ross Parry** (MSO-58): "A short thank you for your perseverance in publishing my Higgins Ridge Fire story. I have received some positive responses to the article. Also wanted to express my support to your editorial commenting on the work ethic of our youth."

After 39 fire seasons, **Doug Gochnour** (BOI-74) has retired from the Forest Service as the Forest Supervisor of the Malheur NF. "I started on an engine crew

the week I graduated from high school and spent the first half of my career in various fire jobs. It's been a great ride, but now it's time to catch a few more fish and make a few birdies on the golf course."

**Luke Birky** (MSO-45): "I trained at Nine Mile in the spring of 1945. Our training squad included two men who were in the military (I am sorry, but I cannot recall the names of either one right now). We were not given a great deal of information, but they were to receive jumper training for use in the military. One was a sergeant, the other, a major. The major was a physician. Later in the summer, we learned that the doctor died. After he left Missoula, he was up in one of the Dakotas and did some kind of training jump into a lake. There apparently was enough wind that he was not able to collapse his chute and he drowned. Our squad was pretty sad."

**Myron Tollison** (MYC-66): "I am retiring from my work with Farm Bureau Insurance Companies after 33 years." *Congratulations, Myron.*

**Gayle Morrison** (Associate): "Just wanted to say how much I enjoyed the January 2011 magazine. I was deeply moved by so many interesting and heartfelt stories and tributes about **Al Dunton** (FBX-67). I never knew the man, but wish I had. Those who wrote about him clearly took the time to craft fine eulogies in the great jumper tradition of wit and affection. Having all of them appear together in one edition of the magazine made for some powerful reading. I know it takes as much thought and effort to edit, organize and sequence the tributes as it does to write them. This was a particularly special edition in a long line of fine editions. Thanks, Chuck!"

**Bill Cramer** (NIFC-90): "Jedidiah Lusk died last night (Jan. 3) after a 10-month battle with cancer. Please keep his parents, Scott (FBX-81) and Cynthia (RAC-87,) and his siblings, Jessica and Justin, in your thoughts and prayers during this difficult time."

**Jim Clatworthy** (MSO-56) in a note with his Good Sam Fund donation to NSA Treasurer, **Charlie Brown** (IDC-56): "I was saddened to see the obit for **Dave Barnhardt** (MSO-56). I'd lost track of him when he shipped over to Vietnam. We had some great times in Missoula with **Art Jukkala** (MSO-56) between fires. Then Dave hitched a ride with me and a lookout, who were driving back to Michigan."

**Luke Birky** (MSO-45) and **Dick Flaharty** (MSO-44) are among the WWII conscientious objectors interviewed and featured by author Kevin Grange in the winter edition of *National Parks* magazine.

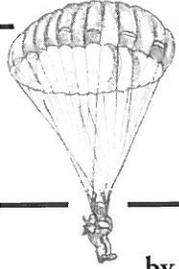
Laura Nielsen, wife of **Bernie Nielsen** (MYC-47), wishes to thank the smokejumper community for its support in the passing of her husband last December. 🙏

sidekick **Roland “Andy” Andersen** (MSO-52) arrived on the scene with a flight-line fire extinguisher, and with the help of the rest of the crew – who also lost no time exiting the aircraft in various ways – put the fire out. Thus ended the rescue mission of 007.

In retrospect, it’s interesting that this movie stunt was conducted in one take and conducted no differ-

ently than a “real world” mission. In today’s movie world, computer graphics depict what is seen as too dangerous or too expensive to create “real world.”

To the pilots and recovery crew of the B-17 during the summer of 1965, it was demonstrated once again that the Fulton Skyhook was a viable rescue system. What an adventure! 🦅



## Odds and Ends



by **Chuck Sheley**

Congratulations and thanks to **Bill Long** (CJ-55), **Bob Smee** (MSO-68), and **Steve Anderson** (MSO-63) who just became our latest Life Member(s). Thanks to the Redding Reunion Committee who honored **Bob Kersh** (Assoc.) and **Dick Tracy** (MSO-53) with Life Memberships for their contribution to smokejumping in Region 5.

A summary of an article originally published in the Whittier (Calif.) *Daily News*, Oct. 12, 2010: Despite serving as a smokejumper for only one season, **Rachel Smith** (MSO-00) is extremely well-versed in firefighting protocol ... having been fighting fires since age 17.

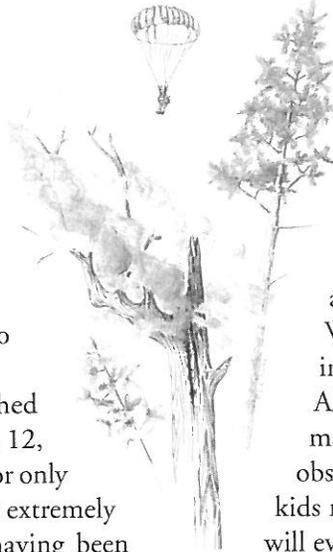
She’s so well-versed that she created a non-profit organization, Firescaping, which provides resources to communities interested in protecting property from wildfire. She offers free information about local fire-safe councils and home preparation on its website, [www.firescaping.org](http://www.firescaping.org).

Smith’s efforts got the attention of the National Fire Protection Agency, which invited her to join a committee to develop professional wildland firefighter standards. Those standards are model codes adopted by fire agencies worldwide and are set for publication in 2012.

Currently, Smith makes a monthly commute to the University of California in Berkeley, where she’s studying for a doctorate in environmental science, policy and management.

Smith – also a fire ecologist – researches ways to reduce fire threats in communities. She also facilitates meetings to help those at risk of fire in their area to get informed, prepared and involved.

“Whether you’re short on time or are on a tight budget, there are plenty of things you can do to



prepare your home for wildfire,” Smith said.

**Karl Brauneis** (MSO-77): “Hi Chuck, outstanding editorial! You nailed it. Wyoming is a right-to-work state, so many of our kids are just plain tough. I would put some of our 14-year old cowboys up against anyone. Last year we went to the Mountain West Conference Track & Field Championships in Fort Collins, Colorado, to watch Keith run. After the meet my wife and daughter went to the mall and shopped. I walked around the place and observed. The kids were beyond fat. Those kind of kids need to miss meals and starve before the light will ever come on.”

**Gayle Morrison** (Associate): “I just signed a book contract with Texas Tech University for *Hog’s Exit*, the story about **Jerry Daniels** (MSO-58). You know it’s been a LONG time in the making. The book won’t be available until spring 2012, so you’ll have to wait another year to see it.”

**John Culbertson** (FBX-69): “Your *Sounding Off from the Editor* was the best ever. This piece transcends all management concepts in the natural resource agencies, Department of Labor, and Department of Education combined. It should be read on the floor of the Senate and in Congress. I hope there is some way that this piece can move up the line to a point where it might have some effect on the agencies. My hat is off to you for a fine editorial.”

On August 5, 2008, the crash of a Carson Helicopters Sikorsky S-61N killed nine firefighters being flown from the Iron Complex Fires. In news reports being released today (12/8/10), the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) said that “Carson intentionally altered documents to exaggerate the helicopter’s performance capabilities in order to win a Forest Service contract.” The board said that the helicopter weighed

comes from the fact that the crew was told to avoid any media events that might occur, lest it slip out that, in some circles, Intermountain was said to have ties to the CIA.

Now, back at the movie set – a barge off Key Largo in the Florida Keys.

Okay, it wasn't really Sean Connery and Claudine Auger who got plucked out of the ocean by the B-17, but two life-sized dummies (Bond holding the woman in front of him) that were finally winched into the tail of the aircraft. "Finally," the dummies were onboard after multiple "reel them in, let them out, reel them in" commands from a chase plane that was filming the pickup.

Now here is where the real daring-do started: The plane, on its way back to West Palm Beach, Fla., declared an emergency. The right landing gear wouldn't come down. The four crewmembers located the hand crank and proceeded to manually lower the landing gear. This procedure took a while, but finally the gear locked into place.

By this time the dreaded news media had heard (via scanner) that a weird-looking B-17 was about to land at the West Palm Beach airport. (In 1965, any B-17 in the air would be an oddity, I think, not to mention one with a Skyhook yoke attached to its nose.)

Upon landing, the crewmen were directed to get the dummies out of the tail of the plane and make themselves scarce. They were more than happy to do this as media folks were beginning to show up on the ramp. Robert Fulton, inventor of the Skyhook system, was at the airport – fortunately – to head them off and field their questions as the crew disappeared.

Another point of interest, maybe, was the fact that Fulton flew a World War II P-51 fighter everywhere he went. It was sitting at the airport, also.

I was privileged to see an old, grainy 8-millimeter film of the event with the four smokejumpers – Hessel, Tag, Hannon and Lehfeldt – removing the dummies from the plane. When you first see the dummies in the film, just their bare legs are protruding from the tail of the aircraft. Only the upper half of the dummies could be winched into the plane because they were in a sitting position when picked up out of a raft.

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*They took a double take on the strange-looking B-17 with two sets of bare legs sticking out of the tail.*

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The dummies, clad only in scanty swimsuits, which you can't really see, look to be in an exotic Kama Sutra position to the wonderment of all. To people driv-

ing along the highway on the other side of the airport fence, one can only imagine what thoughts were going through their heads as they took a double take on the strange-looking B-17 with two sets of bare legs sticking out of the tail.

In fact, Ken said that there was a significant traffic jam developing over there by the time Mr. Fulton arrived to take on the media. In the film, the four crewmen all appear with big smiles as if minutes before they had not faced a serious landing emergency.

So, the airplane returned to its home base in Marana, Ariz., but the story doesn't end here. On the downwind leg of the approach into Marana, at night via Picacho Peak, a turbo charger, oil pan fire ignited on the right inboard engine.

The four crewmembers donned their parachutes, just in case. Ken surmises that people driving on Interstate 10 between Tucson and Phoenix must have had a great view of a ball of fire slowly descending into the desert – no doubt wondering what the hell that was!

Pilot Schas told the crew not to worry: "Boys, hang tough. We're going to make it." They could all see the runway lights at the Intermountain base and know it was only minutes until they were on the ground – one way or another. At this point, jumping was not an option because of altitude, and if the truth were known, nobody was too anxious to jump into that cactus country at night, anyway.

In an interview about these white-knuckle events, Ken told me that as soon as the plane touched down and slowed on roll out, he was determined to exit the aircraft thru the Joe-hole. The plane, with the engine still burning brightly, landed safely. Ken, sitting on the edge of the Joe-hole watching the tarmac pass under his dangling feet, grossly underestimated the speed of the roll out and left the aircraft way too soon.

This serious miscalculation, of course, resulted in him being launched 10 or 20 feet through the air on contact with the pavement – kinda like a tennis ball being served up. As it turned out, the launch was probably a fortunate thing as it got him clear of the tail wheel – a risk that had occurred to him, but apparently had no effect on his decision-making.

Miraculously – thanks to a tried-and-true Allen roll of all Allen rolls, and a lot of luck – he came to a stop unscathed, and was on his feet in time to see Hannon exit the aircraft through the crew door on the right rear side of the fuselage. This exit also resulted in a pretty fair catapult, according to Ken, but one not nearly as spectacular as his. The bottom line – nobody got hurt.

When the plane finally rolled to a stop, who should appear out of the night in a pickup truck but Intermountain CEO Gar Thorsrud (MSO-46). Gar and



The B-17 used in the movie has been restored to its original WW II configuration and is on display at the Evergreen Aviation Museum in McMinnville, Oregon. (Courtesy T. Beltran)

## They Flew To Save James Bond

by Tony Beltran (Idaho City '69)

It was 1966 and I was enjoying my last day and a half before I reported to Fort Bliss, Texas, for Army Basic Training. I was sitting in one of those old-style, opera house-sized theaters in El Paso watching the movie "Thunderball." It was the last few minutes of the movie, and 007 and a team of Navy SEALs had just dispatched the bad guys in an underwater battle.

The villain, a madman named Largo, escaped in his yacht. 007 climbed on board and kicks the stuffing out of the crew, while Bond's female interest (for the movie moment) spear-guns the villain. Bond and this love interest, Domino, jump overboard and the yacht hits some rocks and explodes.

Wow! Bond is in a pickle. He has quite a few miles to make it to shore and now has the added responsibility of this "Bond Girl" (as they were known in the 60s).

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*Not to worry, James – out of the clear blue, western sky comes an Intermountain Aviation B17.*

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Not to worry, James – out of the clear blue, western

sky comes an Intermountain Aviation B17, rigged for personnel pickup with the Fulton Skyhook System. At the controls are pilot **Dave Schas** (MYC-48) with co-pilot Bob Zimmer.

The other four crewmen, manning various positions to execute the pickup, were **Bruce Lehfeltdt** (MSO-54) in the nose, **Paul Tag** (MSO-60) on the winch (positioned in the compartment just forward of the Joe-hole), **Ken Hessel** (MYC-58) at the Joe-hole (the jump and observation hole in the floor of the B17) and **Gary Hannon** (MSO-60) in the tail. These former smokejumpers scooped James out of the ocean, allowing him to live to fight another day.

By my count, James Bond is now about 85 years old, living on Viagra, more than 50 multi-vitamins, and vodka martinis (shaken, not stirred). He would never have made it were it not for the fearless crew and pilots of the Skyhook B-17.

Now, as Paul Harvey used to say, "the rest of the story." First, let me say that in 1966, I didn't know this was an Intermountain Aviation venture. As I later learned, the Skyhook rigged B-17 and crew were simply leased to the movie producer to provide James with an avenue of escape from certain death. The twist

through lowdown-littered forests. The prescribed burns along the Gunflint Trail stopped the fire's advance toward structures and private land.

The regeneration begins with fast-growing hardwoods, eventually replaced with red pine, jack pine, white pine, fir, spruce and cedar. While the regeneration in the Cavity Lake burn area is young, it puts on a colorful show in the fall.

Reaching Ogishkemuncie Lake, we selected a beautiful campsite above lake level with a spectacular view of burned and unburned landscape. For the next week this camp served as our base of operations, leaving us a paddle and portage of a lake or two to reach our scenic project area. Our mission was to replace handrails, uprights and cross-member supports on the bridge spanning the beautiful cascading outflow from Agamok Lake to Mueller Lake on the Kekekabic Trail.

The job was easy, as it involved selecting appropriately sized cedar to cut and peel for the three different dimensions required. Once a stockpile of "parts" was prepared, the woodworking artistry of Tom Carlsen came into play. We all had that old smokejumper work ethic that was a joy to find still intact, but it was Otto who lent efficiency to the reconstruction process.

We only had three days to work on the bridge since two full days of travel were required to get out and back to Seagull Lake. We were able to complete all the bridge work and start roughing out a portage reroute around a beaver-dam-flooded portion of the Kekekabic Trail near the bridge.

There might have been a sore muscle or two amongst the group during the week, but the campfire stories and food kept us going till the project was complete. Our days were filled with work which

kept us from wetting any fishing lines. That little problem will be corrected on the next project.

The weather during the week was a mix of everything from sunny to breezy to windy to overcast and even a sprinkle or two. Wouldn't you know it that rain would fall steadily the night before our departure? We all know what wet gear on a packout is like, but canoe camping is like car camping, and the portages are short enough that the wet weight is not an issue.

We tried to make good time so that we might get across Seagull Lake before the predicted winds hit the 20- to 25-mph range. We were still in good shape when we launched on Seagull and decided to cross the greatest expanse of the lake on the southern end and use the leeward side of Three Mile Island to shelter us as we paddled north to Fishhook Island.

We were better than halfway across Seagull when the wind-driven waves started to give us a little pause. We fought the broadside waves another 10 minutes and

finally decided to turn downwind to the bottom of Three Mile. We didn't have to paddle going downwind. We only had to steer.

Our strategy to use the island for wind protection worked on the wave action, but since Three Mile Island was prescribe-burned as part of the protection strategy for the Gunflint Trail, we had to paddle into a character-building wind. When we pulled into the Wilderness Canoe Base to a relieved group, our young guide, Will, confessed that he would have parked a lesser group for the night and paddled the remainder the next day. We figured since he said nothing that he was anxious to get us all back to the assisted-living facility.

It was a fabulous week of adventure, satisfying work, friendship and canoeing. Ron vowed he would not come back next year unless Otto came, and Otto said he wouldn't miss it for the world.

Mark next year's BWCAW project down on your "do not miss" list for a very different wilderness experience. 📌



Four members of the Idaho City unit (64-67) together as they joined to support Bobby Montoya at the funeral of his Mother in October 2010. L-R: At the Pinos Alto Cemetery north of Silver City, NM, Bobby Montoya, Tony Beltran, Benny Ortiz and Francis Mohr. (Courtesy F. Mohr)

91). They had similar experiences on their Classic canopies; the main difference between the Pro and the Classic being the Pro was modified to have a slightly steeper angle of attack. This increases the descent rate and increases the turning capabilities of the Eiff Pro.

The Eiff receives high rankings for its smooth sink and stall. It has the ability to recover quickly coming out of a stall. With the Eiff, the jumper can maintain a good sight picture while in deep brakes. This is what makes the Eiff a better canopy than the DC-7 when it comes to jumping tight timber jumps with little to no wind.

Although the name implies a round canopy, the CR360 is a Ram-Air canopy with 360 square feet, slightly less material than the 375 square feet on a DC-7. This allows the CR360, as well as the Eiff, to pack easier into the deployment bag (rigging is one of the many items to evaluate in the process).

Evaluators jumping the CR360 included **Bobby Sutton** (MSO-91), **Brian "Rocky" Ahshapanek** (GAC-90) and **Jake Besmer** (MSO-03). All seemed to agree that the CR360 had similar attributes to the DC-7, but it also shines when it comes to the sink and stall characteristics.

Sinking the CR360 takes significantly longer to reach.

A jumper needs to wait a good 5-7 seconds before the canopy will begin to sink. Therefore, if you turn in on final at the same spot as a DC-7 or turn in while not in a sink, you'll probably overrun the jump spot.

The stall on the CR360 is not as drastic of a falloff as the DC-7 and is therefore easier to keep a good sight picture of the jump spot while on final approach. With enough training, the CR360 also does well in tight timber jumps with low wind.

My experience of jumping and evaluating the Eiff Pro for three days has convinced me that there are many canopies available that can accomplish the smokejumper mission. An evaluation canopy may have a favorable characteristic and may be specifically what a smokejumper may want, but there is always a tradeoff.

Originally when I started jumping the Ram-Air, smokejumpers would ask what I thought of the system. I always replied that I would choose the DC-7 for a fire jump 90 percent of the time. I would choose the round FS-14 canopy the other 10 percent of the time for tight timber jumps with no wind. Now with more experience in sinking the DC-7 canopy into tight timber jumps and sinking that Eiff Pro into those tight timber jumps, that percentage is shrinking. 🦄

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## Good Camaraderie, Satisfying Work Overcomes Paddling Against The Wind

by **Scott Belknap** (McCall '83)

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**N**ever could I imagine that one day I would paddle the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness with someone else covering my expenses.

This magical place has held me captive now for over 50 years. My love of this unique wilderness is so deep that it prompted me to take my last assignment on the Superior National Forest and retire in Northern Minnesota. Now, thanks to Jim Cherry and the National Smokejumper Association's TRAMPS program, I am able to give back to the wilderness I so dearly love.

The 2010 Superior Nation-

al Forest projects offered a little something for every skill and fitness level. One option was trail restoration work within day-tripping distance of the Wilderness Canoe Base. The other was a five-day project deep within the wilderness during the peak of the fall hardwood color display. I opted for the five-day project, as this part of the BWCAW was new scenery to me.

Our group of four – including three NSA members, **Ron Baylor** (MSO-58), **Tom "Otto" Carlsen** (MSO-70), me, and **Will Tanner**, a guide from the Wilderness Canoe Base – launched from Fishhook Island on Seagull Lake en route to

Ogishkemuncie Lake.

The first-day paddle totaled a little over 10 miles and four portages. The route took us through the area affected by the July 4, 1999, BWCAW derecho. Nearly a half-million acres of mature timber was mowed down by this straight-line windstorm.

In the following years prescribed burns completed by the U.S. Forest Service created a line of protection for the interface area at the end of the Gunflint Trail. During the 2006 fire season on the Superior National Forest, the Cavity Lake Fire ignited by lightning, burned 31,830 acres mostly

# Forest Service Evaluates Ram-Air Canopies

by Mark Belitz (West Yellowstone '01)

For three years the U.S. Forest Service Region 1 Smokejumpers, with the help of the BLM Smokejumpers, have been increasing the number of individuals who are jumping the Ram-Air system. Currently Region 1 has 22 individuals actively jumping the system.

During fall 2010, the Region 1 Smokejumpers reached another goal of using their knowledge of the DC-7 Ram-Air canopy to evaluate other Ram-Air canopies: the Eiff Classic, the Eiff Pro, and the CR360.

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*The purpose was to gain enough knowledge of the Ram-Air canopy to evaluate all canopies available for the smokejumper mission.*

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From the conception of the Region 1 Smokejumper Ram-Air program, it was never the intent to adopt the BLM canopy or system. Rather, the purpose was to gain enough knowledge of the Ram-Air canopy to evaluate all canopies available for the smokejumper mission. The BLM has done an excellent job of sharing its knowledge of the Ram-Air system, and they continued their support by leading us through their four-phase canopy-evaluation process.

About 10 years ago, the BLM Smokejumpers started systematically recording and documenting the research that goes into evaluating a canopy for the smokejumper mission, and came up with a four-phase evaluation process. The first phase determines if the canopy is safe enough and pertinent for the smokejumper mission.

Many canopies are cut from the program at this phase. Phase 2 places the canopy in tighter jump spots with varying wind conditions and terrain. Smokejumpers with different experience levels will begin to jump



Dan Helterline (GAC-89), outfitted with helmet camera and altimeter, is ready to evaluate the Eiff Pro. (Courtesy Mark Belitz)

the canopy.

Phase 3 of the program evaluates the canopy in smokejumper terrain, on fire jumps and difficult practice-jump spots. Phase 4 requires the canopy to get 1,000 reliable jumps, and only when confidence and reliability are high will the parachute be adopted as a canopy for the smokejumper mission.

The Eiff Classic, the Eiff Pro and the CR360 are in phase 4 of the process, and for three days the Region 1 Smokejumpers were involved in evaluating these canopies. The Eiff Classic and Eiff Pro have several hundred jumps on them and have been jumped for about as many years as the current DC-7 Ram-Air canopy.

Dan Helterline (GAC-89) and

I were evaluating the Eiff Pro. With the guidance of the BLM Smokejumpers and our Forest Service logistics, rigging, and support staff following us around like a NASCAR pit crew, we were able to get eight evaluation jumps in three days. These jumps started in a large jump spot, but decreased in size by the third day.

We had beautiful weather and were able to begin by jumping at 6,000 feet. By the second day we jumped at 3,000 feet with no wind into timber and higher winds on a ridge.

My summary for the Eiff Pro is that it is a good canopy for jumping tight timber spots with low wind. The canopy, as compared to the DC-7, has a harder opening shock and a slower turn. The turn rate, although slower, has the ability to pivot more tightly than the DC-7.

The other negative attribute is the noisy slider. Although this seems inconsequential, it should be noted that it does disturb the serene wilderness experience I usually have under canopy – that is, as serene as a jumper can be over a rocky boulder field surrounded by fire.

Jumping and evaluating the Eiff Classic were Mike Fritsen (MSO-95) and Keith “Skid” Wolferman (MSO-

He earned a degree from Idaho State University in 1966 after serving in student government and the Phi Sigma Kappa fraternity, as well as the ROTC Student Battalion commander. He was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Army Field Artillery Corps, completed officer basic training in Oklahoma, and attended Airborne and Ranger training at Ft. Benning, Georgia. After his initial assignment to the 101st Airborne Division, Neil fought in Vietnam in 1967 as a forward artillery observer and participated in the 1968 Tet Offensive. He was critically wounded by a mortar blast in February 1968, and underwent 18 months of rehabilitation in Tacoma, Washington. Neil received a medical discharge in 1969 with a promotion to the rank of captain. He then enrolled at the University of Arizona and completed a master's degree in vocational rehabilitation. This also allowed him to resume smokejumping, which he had done in McCall in 1965 and 1966. He jumped from McCall during 1969-73 and 1975, then from Boise in 1976 and 1977. Neil worked professionally at Idaho Rehabilitation Services in Pocatello, then established a halfway home and counseling center for young adults in Carson City, Nevada. He returned to Pocatello to work as a counselor at Idaho State's College of Technology. He was a strong supporter of area Special Olympics and veterans organizations and a Life Member of the NSA.

### **William H. "Bill" Roberts, Jr. (Cave Junction '58)**

Bill, 74, died Dec. 12, 2010, in Medford, Ore. He graduated from Shasta College after also attending Mexico City College. Bill saw action in the Korean War as a member of the U.S. Army's 82nd Airborne Division, then put this experience to work as a civilian, jumping at Cave Junction in 1958. Bill was an avid motorcyclist, competing in the Catalina Grand Prix in 1957 and the Big Bear Classic in 1958. Following retirement from the Medford School District, he took 27 overseas trips.

### **Scott Hudson (Boise '79)**

Scott, 53, died from cancer January 2, 2011, in South Lake Tahoe, California. He graduated from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, joining the staff at Tahoe Valley Elementary School in 1985 as a fourth grade teacher. He went on to become the elementary physical education specialist from 1989 through 2003, then teaching PE at South Tahoe Middle School since 2004. Scott trained at Boise, the final year it was a U.S. Forest Service base, and jumped from McCall 1980-82 and 1984. He also organized and coached the South Tahoe High School Nordic ski team and was an accomplished

rock climber. One of his proudest achievements was running the 100th Boston Marathon in 1996.

### **Richard "Dick" Anderson (Missoula '46)**

Dick, 87, died Oct. 18, 2010, in Hailey, Idaho. He earned a bachelor's degree in forest management from the University of Idaho in 1949 and a master's degree in forestry in 1953, having studied math, physics and engineering at Long Beach (California) City College before entering the Army Air Corps in 1943. While in the service, he was a B-24 tailgunner in Italy and took part in more than 50 missions targeting refineries and marshaling yards in southern Europe. He parachuted to safety after his plane was shot down in northern Yugoslavia. Dick worked as a snow ranger in Alta, Utah, from 1955 to 1965, and spent several summers building timber-access roads in Bridger-Teton National Forest in Wyoming. He also worked as a timber sales administrator in roadless areas. He served as a forest ranger in Idaho from 1965 to 1980. Dick trained as a smokejumper in Missoula in 1946, finishing his stint after the 1947 season. After retirement, he built a 50,000-board-foot house in Hailey, also cultivating fruit trees as well as an indoor orange tree that never failed to produce, even in Idaho's winters. 🌲

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## **Wings Of An Eagle**

by Hal Meili (Cave Junction '52)

He split from the cliff, dropping without drift  
through thunderheads below.

As if by recoil, through clouded turmoil,  
he trapped its upward flow.

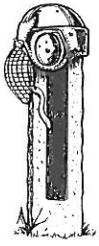
Shot aloft by an erupting trough, he mastered the sky.  
Scanning terrain o'er his domain with telescopic eye.

Spotting prey through stratus gray, bolting to his quarry  
With white bald head and talons spread,  
he ruled the territory.

When he screeches – airscaping beaches,  
it triggers inspiration.  
Proud 'n' free, ranging sea to sea,  
he's the symbol of our nation.

High overhead, with wings widespread,  
soars "A Smokejumper's Dream."  
It swells his heart, that prideful part,  
whenever the eagle screams.

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# 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

## **Norman C. “Norm” Knapp (Missoula ’47)**

Norm, 87, died Oct. 15, 2010, in Aurora, Colorado. He joined the U.S. Marine Corps in 1940 and, based at Pearl Harbor, he was deployed to the South Pacific as part of Marine Fighter Squadron VMF-123 during World War II. During his service Norman advanced to the rank of sergeant major, youngest to achieve this rank at the time. After the war, Norm moved to Missoula, where he entered the University of Montana. He jumped from Missoula for just the 1947 season. Finding school to be increasingly challenging, he joined the Missoula City Fire Department. Norm completed his studies in 1950 with a degree in geology.

Norm went to work for the Army Corps of Engineers’ Oahu Dam Project on the Missouri River. Mobil Oil hired him as a petroleum geologist, and he worked in Montana, North Dakota, Kansas, Oklahoma and Colorado. He had 33 years of service with the company.

## **Mitchell R. “Mitch” Ruska (McCall ’63)**

Mitch, 67, died Oct. 29, 2010, in McCall. Upon graduating from McCall High School in 1961, he took a job with the U.S. Forest Service, then trained to become a smokejumper in 1963. He enlisted in the Army in 1965, serving honorably in Korea with the 1st Cavalry, 2nd Division. He returned to jumping in McCall for the 1967-69 seasons before injuring his knee. Mitch took a job at the Port of Entry and later attended the state’s police academy, from which he was hired as a state trooper. He earned the nickname “The Mad Russian” from truckers due to his stern enforcement of highway laws; he once stopped three trucks at one time. He developed the “Just Say No” drug prevention program along with the McCall Optimist Club.

## **Richard “Dick” Peltier (Missoula ’46)**

Dick, 85, died March 30, 2010, in Kalispell, Montana. He attended Lincoln County High School in Eureka, Montana, quitting at 17 to join the Army when World War II broke out and served as a paratrooper. He was a part of the peace treaty ceremony between the U.S. and Japan in 1945. Dick worked with a mule

pack train in the Swan Valley in the 1950s. He later moved to Libby, Montana, where he was employed as a logger and bulldozer operator for the J. Neils Lumber Company. He jumped at Missoula in 1946-48.

## **Monte Brooks (McCall ’48)**

Monte, 82, died Dec. 19, 2010, in Boise. He attended Boise schools and earned his business degree at the University of Idaho in 1953. After graduating from high school, Monte spent 1945-47 in the Army Air Corps, stationed in the Aleutian Islands. He owned Brooks Insurance in Boise. Monte jumped at McCall in 1948-51. He became an ardent wildlife conservationist, volunteering for the Idaho Fish and Game Department and the Idaho Conservation League. He also contributed heavily to Boise State University’s expansion of its athletic program from a junior college to its top-tier status today and served as president of the Bronco Athletic Association.

## **Bernard Nielsen (McCall ’47)**

Bernie, 84, died Dec. 14, 2010, in Boise. Following graduation from Kuna High School in 1944, Bernie served in the Army Air Corps for two years, spending the last 10 months in Guam. He attended Boise Junior College – now Boise State University – where he played quarterback for the football team in the 1947 and 1948 seasons. He jumped from McCall in 1947-50, after which he worked as a lineman for Mountain Bell Telephone Company, retiring in 1984.

## **Robert “Bob” Steiner (Boise ’71)**

Bob, 61, died Dec. 14, 2010, in McCall. He worked as a Hotshot in 1968-70 before jumping from Boise in 1971-74 and Fairbanks in 1975. He earned a bachelor’s degree from the University of Montana after attending Missoula schools. Bob spent four years flying for different air companies in Alaska before becoming a captain for Federal Express, from which he retired in 2008.

## **Neil Satterwhite (McCall ’65)**

Neil, 67, died January 7, 2011, in Pocatello, Idaho.

# NSA Good Samaritan Fund Contributions

Contributions since the previous publication of donors, January 2011

<u>Donor</u>	<u>In Memory/Honor of</u>
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* Fred Sittner (RAC-76)	
* Vernon E. (MSO-47) and Katherine R. Sylvester .....	Mann Gulch casualties
* Charles W. Brown (IDC-56) .....	Jon McBride (MSO-54)
* John R. McDaniel (CJ-57) .....	Jedidiah Lusk (FBX-10)
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\* Indicates June 2010 GSF donors who were inadvertently left off the list of acknowledgments in the October 2010 edition of the magazine. We apologize for this omission.

**Total funds received for the NSA Good Samaritan Fund, as of Dec. 31, 2010 – \$28,940**  
**Total funds dispersed to smokejumpers and families since 2004 – \$12,300**

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



*Scott Belknap (MYC-83) & Tom Carlsen (MSO-70)*



*Will Tanner (Associate)*



*Scott Belknap (MYC-83)*



*Ron Baylor (MSO-58)*



*Scott Belknap (MYC-83) & Tom Carlsen (MSO-70)*



*Scott Belknap (MYC-83), Will Tanner (Associate) & Tom Carlsen (MSO-70)*

*Layout Design: Johnny Kirkley (CJ-64)*

# Get back on The Jump List!

*The Jump List is a compilation of facts the National Smokejumper Association receives from members, associates and friends. We'll use it to inform our readers of what jumpers are doing and where they reside. Mail this form to **Chuck Sheley** (CJ-59) at 10 Judy Ln., Chico, CA 95926.*

Please use the back of this page if you need more room.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Current home city (address not necessary) \_\_\_\_\_

Rookie base and season \_\_\_\_\_

Other bases and seasons jumped \_\_\_\_\_

What have you been doing since your jumping days? \_\_\_\_\_

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What else would you like to tell Smokejumper readers? \_\_\_\_\_

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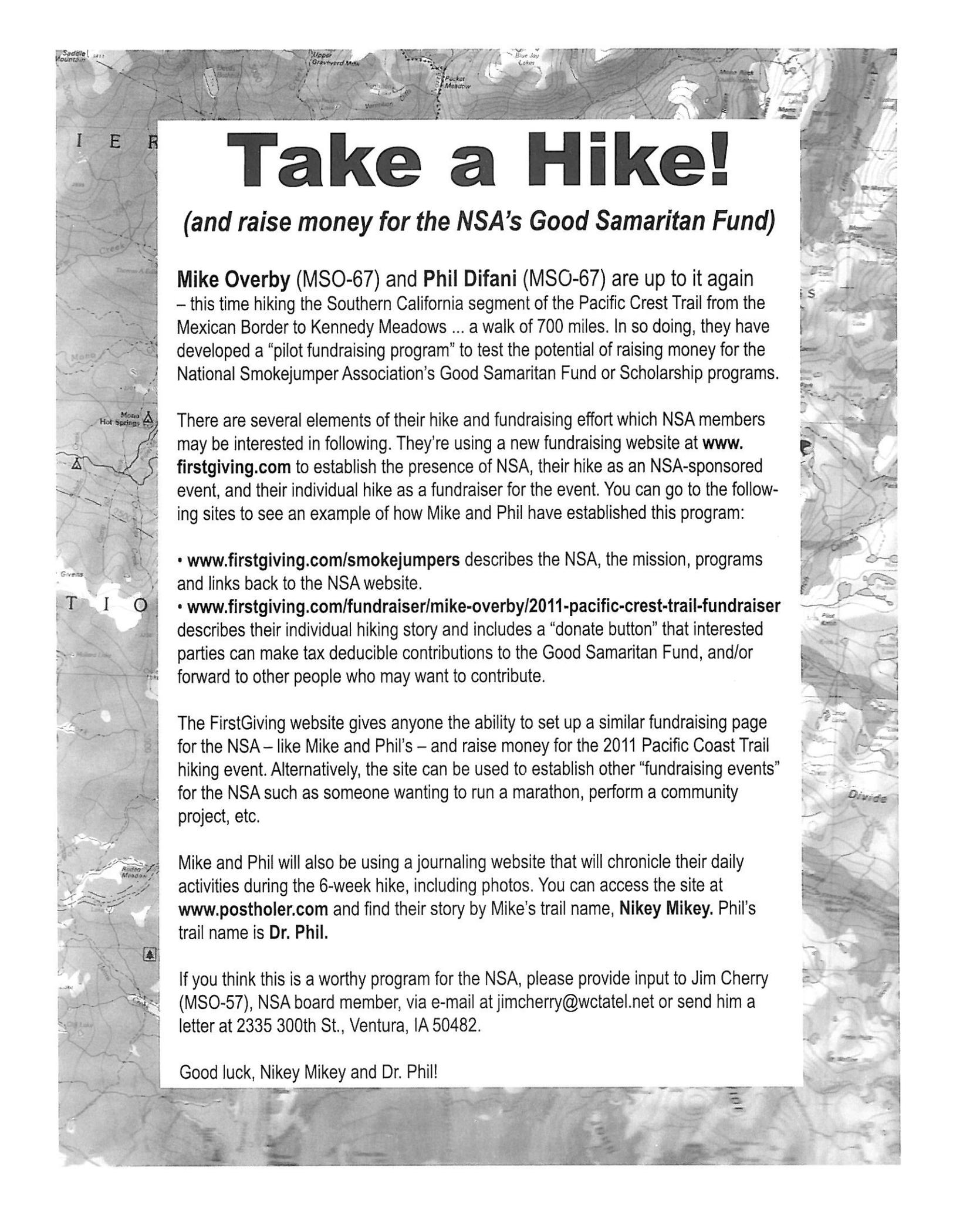
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***Thanks for your help – we appreciate it.***





# Take a Hike!

*(and raise money for the NSA's Good Samaritan Fund)*

**Mike Overby** (MSO-67) and **Phil Difani** (MSO-67) are up to it again – this time hiking the Southern California segment of the Pacific Crest Trail from the Mexican Border to Kennedy Meadows ... a walk of 700 miles. In so doing, they have developed a “pilot fundraising program” to test the potential of raising money for the National Smokejumper Association’s Good Samaritan Fund or Scholarship programs.

There are several elements of their hike and fundraising effort which NSA members may be interested in following. They’re using a new fundraising website at **www.firstgiving.com** to establish the presence of NSA, their hike as an NSA-sponsored event, and their individual hike as a fundraiser for the event. You can go to the following sites to see an example of how Mike and Phil have established this program:

- **www.firstgiving.com/smokejumpers** describes the NSA, the mission, programs and links back to the NSA website.
- **www.firstgiving.com/fundraiser/mike-overby/2011-pacific-crest-trail-fundraiser** describes their individual hiking story and includes a “donate button” that interested parties can make tax deductible contributions to the Good Samaritan Fund, and/or forward to other people who may want to contribute.

The FirstGiving website gives anyone the ability to set up a similar fundraising page for the NSA – like Mike and Phil’s – and raise money for the 2011 Pacific Coast Trail hiking event. Alternatively, the site can be used to establish other “fundraising events” for the NSA such as someone wanting to run a marathon, perform a community project, etc.

Mike and Phil will also be using a journaling website that will chronicle their daily activities during the 6-week hike, including photos. You can access the site at **www.postholer.com** and find their story by Mike’s trail name, **Nikey Mikey**. Phil’s trail name is **Dr. Phil**.

If you think this is a worthy program for the NSA, please provide input to Jim Cherry (MSO-57), NSA board member, via e-mail at [jimcherry@wctatel.net](mailto:jimcherry@wctatel.net) or send him a letter at 2335 300th St., Ventura, IA 50482.

Good luck, Nikey Mikey and Dr. Phil!

