



THE STATIC LINE

NATIONAL SMOKEJUMPER
ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 4081

Missoula, Montana 59806-4081

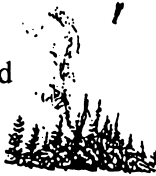
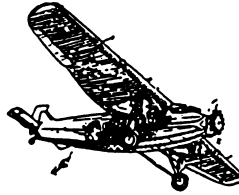
Tel. (406) 549-9938

E-mail: smokejumpers@smokejumpers.com

Web Address: <http://www.smokejumpers.com>

Forwarding Return Postage

Guaranteed, Address Correction Requested



NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

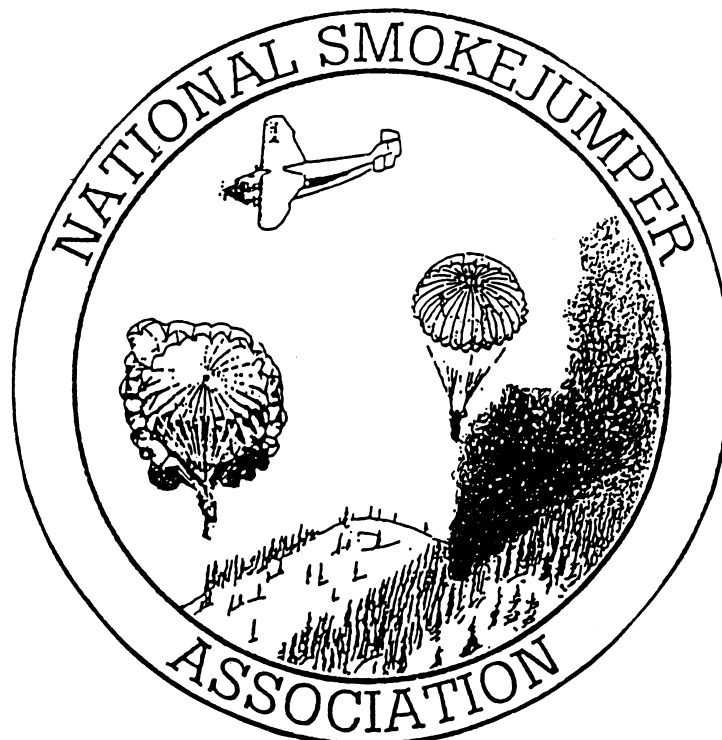
MISSOULA, MT
PERMIT NO. 321

Volume 4

Quarterly

October 1997

Edition 4



THE STATIC LINE

THE STATIC LINE STAFF

COMPILER-EDITOR: Jack Demmons

ADVISORY STAFF: Don Courtney, Art Jukkala, Roger Savage

COMPUTER OPERATORS: Phil Davis, Scott Belknap, Nichole Llewellyn, Jack Demmons

SMOKEJUMPER HISTORICAL VIDEO

Excellent progress has been made in gathering material and raising funds for this project. To date, more than \$15,500.00 have been raised, with more commitments having been made. Steve Smith, from Echo Productions in Seattle, has been very busy interviewing individuals, taking pictures and gathering materials. He has visited each of the nine jumper bases at least once each this summer. Fred Rohrbach and other members of the video committee have more information about the project in one of the inserts.

NEW MEMBERS

NAME	ADDRESS	BASE	1ST YEAR
Abrams, Steve	P.O. Box 91, Scotia, CA 95565-0091	RDD	79
Apicello, Mike G.	4900 Sandee AV, Boise, ID 83704	CJ	78
Bird, Douglas M.	4882 S 800 E, Ogden, UT 84403	MYC	57
Boesel, Craig A.	RT 1 Box 265, Winthrop, WA 98862	NCSB	66
Borcherding, Kurt A.	65 Stockton ST, Princeton, NJ 08540	GAC	95
Crowder, Dave L.	3178 Panama DR, Melbourne, FL 32934	MSO	59
Geiger, Dan	7370 Oak Hill RD, Loudon, NH 03301	MSO	80
Kisling, Arley	111 S Russell ST, Lakeport, CA 95453	RDD	69
Reed, Steve M.	#12 Perkins DR, Prescott, AZ 86301	MSO	95
Weyerman, Gary L.	5446 Prospect DR Missoula, MT 59802	MSO	63
Wilburn, Monty, D.C.	1015 S Lemay, Fort Collins, CO 80524	RDD	72

NSA LIFE MEMBERS

As of October 11, 1997, the National Smokejumper Association has 18 Life Members. They are: Fred O. Brauer, MSO '41; F. James (Jim) Clatworthy, MSO '56; George Cross, MSO '74; Dave Cuplin, MSO '48; Robert (Bob) Derry, MSO '43; Charles (Chuck) Fricke, MSO '61; Orval Gastineau, MSO '63; Mike Greeson, MSO '59; Joseph (Joe) J. Gutkoski, MSO '50; Tom Kovalicky, MSO '61; Jerry Linton, MSO '48; Michael (Mike) D. McCullough, MSO '56; Jim Murphy, MSO '48; Robert (Bob) Quillin, FBX '71; Fred Rohrbach, MSO '65; Maynard Rost, MSO '58; Mike Seale, Associate (Mike's membership was paid for by Porter Pierce, Associate.); One anonymous member.

See one of the inserts for particulars relating to Life Memberships.

DECEASED JUMPERS AND PILOTS

The names shown below are new to the N.S.A. Obituary listing. Should dates and other material not be correct or incomplete, please let us know. Also, if you submitted names and information for this section and it is not shown, please get back in touch with us. Thanks.

NAME	BASE YEAR	COMMENTS
DOLAN, CHET		Chet had been a Johnson Flying Service pilot. He passed away at Stevensville approximately one year ago. Prior to relocating in Stevensville, he had moved to Broadus to work on the family ranch, and left flying at that time. We will have more information about Chet at a later date.
KELLOG, BRIAN "PAT" PATRICK	MSO 79	Pat died Saturday, August 23, 1997 after he fell to his death while paragliding above Mount Sentinel behind the University of Montana. He was a graduate of St. Joseph School and Hellgate High School in Missoula. Pat was a smokejumper for several seasons. While in the U.S. Navy he served on the carrier Coral Sea for three years. Pat was an avid athlete and also very active in community affairs. He spearheaded the fundraiser for specialized playground equipment for children with disabilities at Bonner Park in Missoula. He was a jumper from '79 - '83 and had been employed by the U.S. Postal Service for 12 years.
NYSTROM, JERRY	MSO 56	Jerry died this spring. He had been a captain with United Airlines. We will follow up on details leading to his death.
SULLIVAN, MARSHALL	MSO 58	Marshall fought a courageous battle against a rare form of cancer. He passed away on Friday, August 8 of this year at the Holy Rosary Health Center in Miles City. He and his wife Randy had been living in the Broadus, Montana area in the southeastern part of the state. He was born July 16, 1933 in Miles City and attended elementary school there until moving to Broadus while in the 4th grade. After graduating from high school, he attended Montana State University in Bozeman for one year and then transferred to the University of Montana in Missoula where he earned a degree in business administration. As a graduate student he studied anthropology and archeology. In 1957 he entered the University's Reserve Officer's Training Corps and then trained as a paratrooper at Fort Benning, Georgia. Upon his return to Missoula he became a smokejumper from 1958 to 1959. He and Lila "Randy" Randolph were married at Broadus on May 28, 1959. They owned and operated the Broadus Mercantile for awhile and then he returned to college and obtained a degree in education and started teaching in 1971, while continuing to farm. Marshall was an assistant wrestling coach and a team leader for wrestling teams that went to Finland and West Germany. He was President of the National AAU Wrestling Association and organized teams for foreign exchange wrestling teams. Marshall was a private pilot and loved photography. We have a picture of Marshall and Randy taken earlier this year on the Eiffel Tower in France when they were traveling in Europe. Marshall told your compiler that his disease was terminal but he was going to travel and live life to the end. He is survived by his wife Randy at Broadus, a son, Kristen and a daughter, Heather.
SMITH, KEN	MYC 55	Ken passed away August 22 of this year at Idaho City where he suffered a massive heart attack. Stan Tate, MYC '53, officiated at Ken's funeral. He jumped at Idaho City from 1955-1969, and at Boise 1969-1970 when the unit was transferred there. Ken had suffered severe injuries in a helicopter crash. He was Jim "Smokey" Stover's chief assistant at Idaho City. (Smokey was at that base from its start in 1948 through to its discontinuance in 1969.) Ken was born July 21, 1932 at Caldwell, Idaho. When he retired in 1970 he became deeply involved with the Idaho City Historical Society. The above information was given to us by Smokey Stover, retired at Waldport, Oregon; Gordon "Gordy" Henson, MSO '63, Helicopter Program Manager, USFS, Region 1; and Eldon Askelson, MYC '66, currently USFS Region 1 Airplane Manager and pilot for both heavy and light Forest Service aircraft.

BOB JOHNSON'S TRI-MOTORS

This article is about the Tri-motors Bob Johnson (Johnson Flying Service, Missoula, Montana) owned during the life of his company (1929 to November, 1975). There will be a story about Bob Johnson at another time. Bob owned



eight Tri-motors during the period 9/3/34-5/69 and they were a common sight in the skies of the Northwest during those years, from California to northern Washington, to Oregon and southern Idaho as well as Montana, and many points in-between, flying rescue missions, dropping cargo, experimenting with water and chemical retardant drops on fires, flying smokejumpers and other firefighters, transporting passengers and flying freight into back-country airstrips, among other duties.

Johnson owned three Model 5-AT's and five Model 4-AT's. Most of the 4-AT's had Wright R-975A 300 hp engine and the majority of the 5-AT's were fitted with Pratt & Whitney Wasp 450

hp engines. "AT" stood for Air Transport. The 5-AT's were considerably larger than the 4-AT's.

The history of Bob Johnson's Tri-motors: "P" relates to date of purchase. The number following "AT" signifies the plane's sequence in the production of the type

1. 5-AT-102. NC-435H. P-9/5/34. This ship crashed at the Big Prairie airstrip in what was then known as the South Fork Wilderness Area—now the Bob Marshall Wilderness Area—while landing on 9/3/38. Dick Johnson, Bob's brother, was at the controls and the only one on-board and was injured. See story and picture on third page of this article.

This is a picture of Bob Johnson at the controls of one of his Tri-motors. It was taken in the 1940's. The upright bar behind his right hand was known as a "Johnson bar" and was used for braking the aircraft. Pushed to the left, it braked on that side, to the right and the right brake would react. If the bar was pulled straight back, there would be braking action on both wheels. Bob's pose is similar to that of pilots when they were watching spotters near the door for hand signals-left, right, steady, cut the throttles, etc.

2. 4-AT-55. NC-9642. P-4/10/39. NC-9642 crashed while on a spraying mission out of Townsend, Montana on 6/9/57. Pilot Penn Stohr Sr. and Bob Vallance were killed.

3. 4-AT-46. NC-7861. P-9/19/39. The last Tri-motor Johnson owned. Sold To Dexter Coffin of Palm Beach, Florida in May, 1969. It was later donated to the Naval Aviation Museum at Pensacola, Florida where it is today, painted in U.S. Navy colors and designation. The U.S. Navy, Army & Marines once operated Ford Tri-motors.

4. 4-AT-62. NC-8400. P-3/31/41. Tri-motor NC-8400 crashed near Basin, Montana south of Helena on a spray mission 7/14/53. Pilot Jim Dillon and Dick Duffield were killed.

5. 5-AT-58. NC-8419. P-6/5/51. NC-8419 crashed while landing at the Moose Creek strip in the Nez Perce Forest on 8/4/59. Two smokejumpers and the Nez Perce Forest Supervisor died. Ron Stoleson, Smokejumper spotter, was seriously injured. *Cont on page 5.*

BOB JOHNSON'S TRI-MOTORS, CONTINUED

5. 5-AT-58 continued. NC-8419 was reconstructed by Kal Aero from the wrecks of several Tri-motors, to include parts from NC-8419. Upon completion of the restoration, Penn Stohr Jr., with Evergreen Aviation, took it up for its first hop. The plane now belongs to the Kalamazoo Aviation History Museum in Michigan and flies quite often during summer months, bearing its original designation, NC-8419.

6. 5-AT-40. NC-9684. Later, after modifications were added, this Tri-motor went by the designation N-69905. P-8/1/53. Tri-motor N-69905 crashed while taking off from the Spotted Bear landing field in the Flathead

Museum Foundation at Hales Corner, Wisconsin. The Tri-motor was rebuilt from many of the original parts, plus pieces from other Tri-motors and newly manufactured structures. It is now in the possession of the EAA Air Museum Foundation at Wittman Field, Oshkosh, Wisconsin, and like NC-8419, flies quite frequently. It bears its original designation, NC-8407.

8. 4-AT-55. NC-9612. P-10/28/57. This aircraft was delivered new to Nick Mamer in Spokane, Washington on 10/14/36. Bob Johnson sold it 2/21/69 to Jack Adams Aircraft Sales, Walls, Mississippi and it became part of Dolph Overton's Wings and Wheels Museum



A picture of the Johnson Flying Service at Hale Field in Missoula in the early 1950's. In the foreground, from left to right, are Tri-motors NC-8419 and NC-7861. At the far left center is NC-9642. NC-8400 is in the center of the picture by one of Johnson's C-47's. At left center is a Twin Beech C-45. A PT-17 Boeing Stearman is parked in front of the office. Missoula smokejumper buildings are at right center.

Photo courtesy of Dick Komberec.

National Forest of Montana on 8/17/53, a little more than two weeks after Bob Johnson bought it from Charles Fresnsdorf of Orofino, Idaho. See story and picture about this crash on the following page.

7. 4-AT-69. NC-8407. P-5/22/58. This Johnson Tri-motor was sold to LeMaster-Glenn Aerial Spraying of Ottawa, Kansas on 3/29/63. It was severely damaged by a tremendous storm on 6/6/73 while sitting on the ground at Burlington, Wisconsin where it had been participating in an All-American Air Show benefit for the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA)

at Orlando, Florida on 4/9/81.

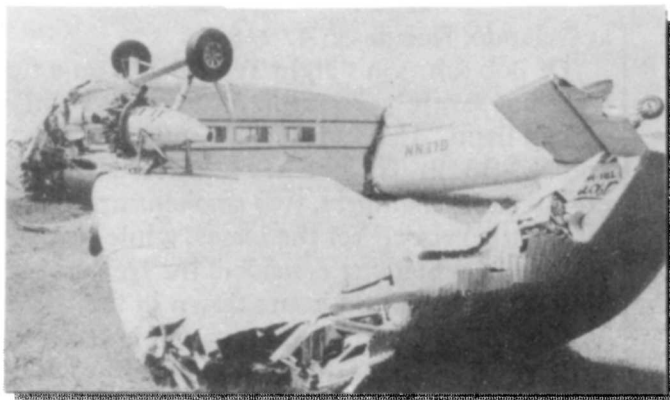
Of Bob Johnson's eight Tri-motors, only three were not severely damaged or destroyed while he owned them. They were: NC-7861, NC-8407, and NC-9612. The crashes resulted in the deaths of four crew members, two smokejumpers and a forest supervisor. Yet the losses, while tragic, were light when one considers the tremendous number of miles and hours flown in the mountains by these Tri-motors, often under very harrowing circumstances. Bob Johnson had some of the finest, most experienced pilots in the world. He too, was one of the very best. *Cont. on page 6.*

BOB JOHNSON'S TRI-MOTORS CONT.



Bob Johnson's Tri-motor NC-435H, Model 5-AT-102, after a crash landing at the Big Prairie strip in the South Fork Wilderness Area—now the Bob Marshall Wilderness Area—of Montana on 9/3/38. Bob's brother, Dick, was the pilot and suffered serious injuries, but was back flying within several weeks. The Missoula-based Museum of Mountain Flying has been working through the Forest Service in trying to reclaim the wreckage. Photo credit—U.S. Forest Service.

The wreckage of NC-69905 (formerly NC-9684) in the Flathead National Forest of Montana after crashing during takeoff from the Spotted Bear Ranger Station on 8/18/53. Former McCall smokejumper and long-time Johnson pilot Kenny Roth was at the controls when all three engines quit. Kenny did a great job in bringing the plane in, but suffered a broken arch in one foot. There were smokejumpers on the plane and Bob Graham received a broken leg. Several others had bruises. Johnson had owned the Tri-motor for about two weeks. It had been purchased from Charles Frensdorf of Orofino, Idaho. Kenny and others flew to the site September, 1997 and he found a piece of the wreckage (from an engine cowling), most of which had been removed in August of 1953. The plane was Model 5-AT-40. Photo courtesy of Kenny Roth



Johnson once owned NC-9407, but sold it to LeMaster-Glenn Aerial Spraying of Ottawa, Kansas on 3/29/63. It was destroyed on the ground during a violent wind storm at Burlington, Wisconsin on 6/16/73. The Experimental Aircraft Association Air Museum Foundation at Oshkosh purchased the remains and rebuilt the plane. It flies quite often from the EAA base in that city. It is Model 4-AT-69. This Tri-motor was one of three, out of eight, of the Johnson Flying Service that was not destroyed while a part of that organization.

DAN MCCARTHY, RDD '94

Dan, currently an active jumper out of Redding, California, volunteered to be a "cub reporter" for The Static Line. Scott Belknap, creator of the SILK STORIES, Fractured Fables From the Fireline for our newsletter, had asked for such volunteers in one of his articles. After the fire season was over for the Redding jumpers this year Dan went back to school at the University of Massachusetts. His story is about a recent training-work assignment.



Squad B walking out from their trail-clearing project after jumping into the area. At Left, Dan McCarthy. Group at Right, Front to Rear—Tim Dolan; Rick Haagenson, with crosscut saw over shoulder; Jerry Arrellano with crosscut saw over shoulder; Stan Hill-face showing behind Jerry; Dorsey Lightner, far right rear.

Wednesday morning we all arrived between 8:00 and 8:15 a.m. The boxes of steaks, corn on the cob and fresh fruit, to name but a few items of food, still had to be strapped, manifested and loaded before the scheduled pre-jump briefing at 9:10 a.m. The atmosphere at the base was thick with a silent excitement. Those going on the three-day training assignment into the headwaters of the Eel River in the great Yolla Bolly Middle Eel Wilderness could not resist smiling. Our smiles were like the fleeting glint in the eye of a gambler who is about to win a

lucrative poker hand. We knew it was a sure thing, almost, and would have fun—if we went. Only Big Ernie, the deity that controls the fire season of all faithful smokejumpers, could deny us our anticipated work assignment

We hastily squared away the cargo, so as to not remind those jumpers left behind of the "good deal." Whatever the motivation, the long faces on some of the men who came to watch us load

the plane were like faces of children who were told to come inside on a warm summer evening. They just wanted to come and play. Upon securing the food boxes, 25 gallons of drinking water and two crosscut saws, or "misery whips", we attended to our personal gear. Tim Dolan, one

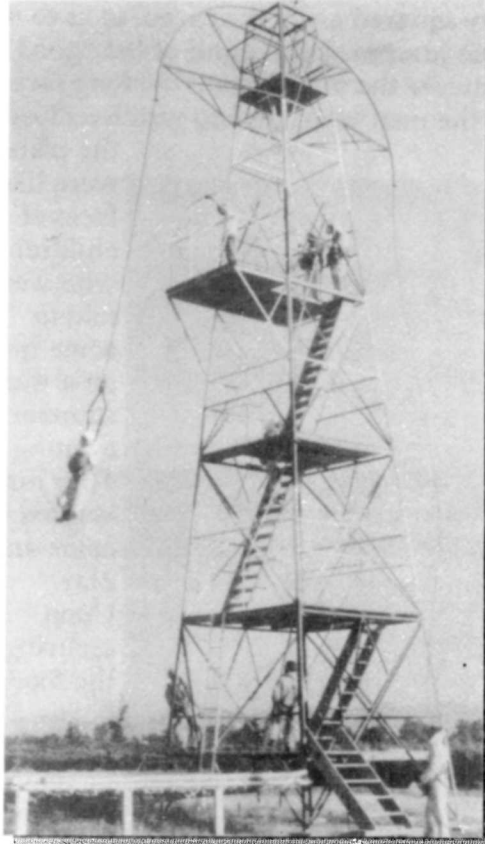
of the chosen few, packed a transistor radio and a copy of *Les Miserable*. Jerry Arrellano, a rookie, brought his camera, while Rick Haagenson, the project leader, gingerly nestled his high-powered binoculars into his gear bag. Once settled, we had but one thing left on our "things to do list"—wait.

We waited through the base manager's cautionings and review of malfunction procedures for the newest chute being instituted by the jumpers. We listened with half an ear.

Cont. on page 8.

DAN MCCARTHY, RDD '94, CONTINUED

Finally, Rick called us into the training room to brief us about our mission. He wanted to make certain we knew that this wasn't going to be a vacation. We had a job to do and less than three



Former Redding jump tower. It was replaced by another structure in the early 1980's. A very unique design.

days to clear 15 miles of trail. The plan was to use good old-fashioned elbow grease and crosscut saws. He decided to divide the eight of us into two squads. One was to work Devil's Hole Ridge in the direction of Frying Pan Camp while the other would move towards Chicago Camp. He logically chose to split the crew by age. Squad A to be made up of those 31 years old and over, while Squad B was to be formed by jumpers age 30 and younger. Squad A, having a larger and more arduous section of the trail, immediately started teasing the "old guys" about having to carry the weight of the crew. Although the jokes were harmless, the men took them as a challenge, thus sparking the competitive urge present in all jumpers.

Rick clued everyone in on the trail crew assignment. He told us the importance of observing proper safety precautions. He also reminded us of the obvious—we would be jumping in and working our way out. He stressed

that smokejumpers were being tested. "It's been a long time since we jumped a forest to help on a project. This is our time to show resourcefulness, efficiency and quality work production," counselled Rick, "plus what's special about this mission is that it's a training assignment for the rookies and an assistance to the district in meeting their objectives. You new guys will become acquainted with the crosscut saws we use on wilderness fires and in the districts we work for."

So, with a look that asked if there were any questions, he ordered, "Aw' right, suit up!" With as much hesitancy as a runner exploding from a starting block, we leaped from our cushioned chairs in the direction of our lockers. Some jogged. Others walked, using long strides in almost a strutting gait. The vibe in the locker room quickly picked up the pulse that always accompanies a fire call. Voices get louder, shouting out parachute numbers and last minute requests for extra water bottles. The sounds of the Kevlar jumpsuits being donned, leg zippers being zipped and harness clips snapping closed, join together to create a buzz that fills the air.

Adding to this buzz, is the high pitched whine of the plane's turbine engine. At first, it starts painfully slow, but soon that pitch is lost by the wheeze of exhaust and finally forgotten by the heavy drone of the spinning propellers.

A quick roll call, an inspection by the spotter, Arlen Cravens—base manager, and one by one the jumpship is boarded. The hot air inside the plane made it feel like an oven. Sweat dripped down the faces of some guys like oozing layers of thick, wet paint. For other jumpers, their faces became beaded with perspiration the same way cold beer mugs collect moisture on a hot summer's day.

Dolan chose to focus not on how soaked his shirt was getting, but rather on securing his stuffed leg pockets. Dorsey, with his muppet-like hair, quickly, almost spastically, checked for the missing rookies. Jerry, restricted by his bulky jumpsuit, casually hobbled onto the plane in a modified East L.A. walk. Low monotonic voices filtered from the cockpit as the pilots went through their check lists in near boredom. Before long, we had our helmets on and the wheels came up. *(Dan's article will be completed in the January, 1998 issue of The Static line.)*

MISSOULA JUMPERS, SUMMER OF '97, BY CHARLIE PALMER, MSO '95, ACTIVE JUMPER

The Forest was full of smokejumpers this summer. However, the Forest was not the Bitterroot or Lolo, nor the Beaverhead or the Custer. Nix the Idaho Panhandle and the Gallatin as well. The Forest full of smokejumpers in this summer's case was the Forest Lounge, located approximately two miles southeast of the smokejumper base. Due to an inactive fire season, we Missoula jumpers found ourselves with a rather inordinate amount of free time on our

hands. It seems that if jumpers are not actually jumping fires, we are probably sitting around somewhere telling stories (substitute lies) about when we did. You know the ones. They all start about the same way, "No Shatner, there I was!" and end up with something like, "And that ain't no lie!" or "Say, get me another cold one since you're up." This summer provided ample time for such stories to be told. Old jump stories aside, here is a quick time line review of Fire Season '97:



Missoula jumper exiting a DC-3-C on a training jump near Silver City, New Mexico during the Spring of 1997. This was in the Gila National Forest area of Region 3. Photo courtesy of Bob Schoeber. Many years ago jumpers operated out of Deming, New Mexico.

April 14: Fire Refresher begins.
May 12: Eight R-1 jumpers to Silver City, NM for detail.
May 20-22: Mann Gulch monuments installed.
June 2: First fire for Missoula jumpers. Unfortunately, it was a small grease fire in the dormitory kitchen.
June 16: Second Refresher begins.
June 17: All hope for a fire season ends.
June 29: 22 MSO jumpers to Redding as booster.
August 10: 10 MSO jumpers to McCall for booster.
August 21: First fire jumped out of Missoula. Two-maner on the Nez Perce N.F. Twenty-two MSO jumpers leave for the fire bust on the Nez.
August 22: Eight MSO jumpers to Grangeville, Idaho (GAC) for lunch.
August 23: 10 MSO jumpers and West Yellowstone (WYS) jumpers to fires in the BNF (Bitterroot N. F.).
August 27. Four MSO jumpers to BNF for Switchback Fire.
September 7: 10 MSO jumpers to Dept. State Lands (DSL) Morrison Peak Fire.
September 8: 10 MSO jumpers to KNF. (Kaniksu N. F.) for Miller Creek Fire.
September 30: Last day of work for temps and short term appointees.
Oct 4: T-party at Snowbowl.

As a sidenote: While doing some research on smokejumpers in the Mansfield Library at the University of Montana I discovered on the Griznet computer card catalog system that smokejumpers alphabetically fall between meat and smokeless tobacco. What could be more perfect? Some sizzling Spam, a hungry jumper, and a small pinch of Copenhagen for desert!

MARK KLINGER, FBX '79, BOISE '86

Mark began his jumping career at the Bureau of Land Management base at Fairbanks, Alaska in 1979. He then transferred to the Boise BLM jump base in 1986. While stationed at Fairbanks, he had been sent to Grand Junction, Colorado on detail in 1980 and 1982. Boise became the home base for the "GJ" stand by unit, and at

Junction, and jumping out of Stead, Nevada, plus traveling to Forest Service bases to "provide extra bodies for the 'dance with the devil,'" he said. Mark also commented, "The big thing about jumping out of Boise was you packed a bag and left in May and got back sometime in October. Alaska to New Mexico, Colorado to Washington, you just never knew where you would end up. I loved it! It was an experience I will never forget."



Mark Klinger getting ready to hike out above Pyramid Lake in Nevada after putting out a fire he and others had jumped to. Mark said, "Yes, BLM jumpers do pack out!" Photograph courtesy of Mark.

times the Boise smokejumpers refer to themselves as the "Great Basin jumpers." The Great Basin includes Utah, Nevada and part of Colorado. Their subbase in Nevada is at Battle Mountain, along HWY 80 in north-central Nevada near the Humboldt River. (Steve Nemore, a foreman with the Boise jumpers, helped provide some of the above details.)

During his first year with the Boise jumpers they operated out of a trailer next to the current smokejumper building. That year they spent most of their time at Grand

Mark left the jumpers in 1990 and became a Firefighter III/EMT-D for the Boise City Fire Department and has worked with that organization ever since. He said, "It is similar to jumping in the comraderie and brotherhood, but as different as night and day as far as the job goes. We respond to medical emergencies as well as fire calls, so I get a wide range of experiences. I have helped set up physical fitness rooms in all the stations in town (11 at present) and am known as the 'Reverend of Fitness.' I am also active in the Fire Fighter Combat Challenge, a competition for structure fire fighters held around the country at various sites...I don't do too badly right now. I am 16th in the country for over the age 40 category."

He misses smokejumping but manages to keep up with what is going on by checking with Sean Cross, current Boise Base Manager. Their sons play on the same soccer team and attend the same school. One of his recreational pursuits is riding a mountain bike in the Boise foothills.

Mark provided us with 21 pictures and some have been included with this article. There will be more in the Jan. 1998 issue.

He said, "I would be glad to hear from any of my former jumper bro's. They can e-mail me (Mkffsmj@aol.com)." *Cont. on page 11.*

MARK KLINGER, FBX '79 & BOISE '86, CONT.



BIFC's (Boise Interagency Fire Center. Now the National Interagency Fire Center) Bureau of Land Management Parachute Loft at Boise Around the Spring of 1987. Photo Courtesy of Mark.

Boise Jumpers and a Twin Otter on Stand By at Bishop, California, 30 Miles Southwest of the California-Nevada Border Near the White Mountains and 200 Miles East of San Francisco-San Jose. Steve Norrod, MYC ?, is at the Right. The Identity of the Jumper on the Left is Unknown. Does Anyone Recognize Him? Photo Courtesy of Mark.



Bill Ferguson, MYC '88, Taking a Lunchtime Siesta From the Rigors of Rigging Parachutes. Boise Jumper Loft Around 1987-1988. The Sign Below Him Reads: Standard Square Pack Chutes. Photo Courtesy of Mark.

MCCALL JUMPERS, 1947 & 1997

Marvin "Bus" Bertram, MYC '47, sent us some interesting photos, taken of a McCall group in 1947, and then again in 1997, with the exception of one '47 jumper—Bruce Paris—who is deceased, and Jim "Smoky" Stover, who was a jumper and instructor, and could not make the gathering. Bus lives in Moses Lake, Washington. He has a total of 2,800 jumps to his credit and at one time was vice-president of the U.S. Parachuting Association. In 1972 his association hosted the National Parachuting Championship at Marana, Arizona.

The The Star News of McCall carried an account and pictures of the 1947 and 1997 gatherings. The article said in part: "Fifty years ago, seven smokejumpers, known as the 'Boise boys' posed for a photo, young and proud, as the first-ever jumper class trained at McCall. On Monday—summer of 1997—six of the surviving seven Boise boys returned to McCall and relived that moment of glory on the tarmac at the McCall Smokejumper Base.

"...are now all in their 70s. But their gleaming faces belied their years as they climbed into modern smokejumper suits and posed before McCall Air Taxi's 1929 Travel Air 6000 plane, a type they all jumped from in their days as smokejumpers."

Bus was the one who got the former McCall jumpers together. He got in touch with Neal Davis, Base Manager for the McCall jumpers, who let them borrow the suits, chutes and equipment for the picture

The Star News also reported that Bus commented: "In his day, jumpers used leather football-style helmets with wire face masks, and wore canvas jump suits...the smokejumping profession was in its infancy."

Glen Nielsen told The Star News, "The early jumpers were mostly college students who would fight fires in the summers, then return to school in the fall and move on to another profession once they graduated. 1947 was a 'pretty good' year for fires, which in smokejumpers terms means there were a lot of fires." Glen logged about a dozen jumps that season before heading back to college.

The McCall paper said: "But their smokejumping days still live strong in their memories. Once a jumper, always a jumper, they say, which is evident in the frequency they still see each other. Most attended a reunion for all smokejumpers held in Missoula, Mont. several years ago (July 1995), and those still living in the Boise area meet with retired jumpers every three months as part of an informal club."



*McCall, 1947
Left to right: Dick
Wilcomb, Rod
Davidson, Bus Bertram,
George Schreiber, Bruce
Paris, Leo Compton,
Glen Nielsen, Jim
"Smoky" Stover, squad
leader and instructor.
Note: Bruce Paris
passed away in 1981 in
west Texas. He was a
traveling salesman in
Arizona, New Mexico,
west Texas and
California and lived in
Phoenix.*

Cont. on page 13.

A REMINDER: THE NEXT NSA REUNION WILL BE HELD IN THE YEAR 2000 AT REDDING, CALIFORNIA. DATES HAVE NOT BEEN SET.

MCCALL JUMPERS, 1947 AND 1997, CONTINUED



McCall 1997

Poses are similar to those in the 1947 picture-position of hands, legs and bodies.

Left to right: Dick Wilcomb, Boise; Roger "Rod" Davidson, Boise; Marvin "Bus" Bertram, Moses Lake, Washington; George Schreiber, Issaquah, Washington; Bruce Paris is not pictured. Deceased 1981. Leo Compton, Boise; Glen "Ace" Nielsen, Eagle, Idaho; Jim "Smoky" Stover not pictured. He was unable to make the gathering. He is living at Waldport, Oregon. All of these jumpers are members of the NSA.

The aircraft is Travel Air NC-

8865, once owned by the Bradley Mining Co. of Boise and later by the Johnson Flying Service. It was with the Staggerwing Museum at Tullahoma, TN many years and is now based at McCall, Idaho and flying frequently.

MCCALL SMOKEJUMPER BASEBALL TEAM, 1947



One tough looking crew! Left to right, standing: Jack Short, John Ferguson, Coston Aguirre, Bruce Egger, Ray Mansisidor, Kenny Roth. Left to right, kneeling: Bat Boy, Wayne Webb, Willie Stevenson, Sonny South, a Nonjumper. Photo courtesy of John Ferguson, MYC 42.

**A REMINDER: THE NSA E-MAIL ADDRESS IS: smokejumpers@smokejumpers.com
AND THE NSA WEB PAGE ADDRESS IS: <http://www.smokejumpers.com>**

BILL MORIN, MSO '46

Bill Morin dropped by the office this summer and had some pictures of the early days when he first started jumping—1946. Bill is living at Butte, Montana and has yet to retire.

He had a story to tell about an incident that happened in 1947, along the North Fork of the Blackfoot River northwest of Ovando, Montana. At the North Fork Cabin a packer was staying overnight and was to take a lookout to his tower the next day. The following morning the packer came down from the loft and playfully grabbed the lookout, pulling him out of bed. There was a revolver on the window sill and somehow in the scuffle it went off and a bullet pierced the lookout's face beneath his nose and lodged in the back of his skull.

Smokejumpers were alerted and a rescue mission, with Bill Wood in charge, was launched from Missoula in a Tri-motor. After parachuting in—Bill Morin's chute caught in a small spruce

and he touched the ground gently—they found that pararescue doctor Amos "Bud" Little had already jumped in from a Travel Air.

The wounded fellow was placed on a Stokes Stretcher—with a wheel attached below it—and carried by the jumpers a considerable distance to Coopers Lake, where a boat was waiting. The injured lookout was taken across first, and a different Tri-motor from the one the rescue team had jumped out of, was waiting at Kleinschmidt Flats. Dr. Little and his patient boarded it for the flight to Missoula. The jumpers were invited to dinner at a nearby ranch and later flew back to their base in a Tri-motor. The lookout survived the bullet wound.

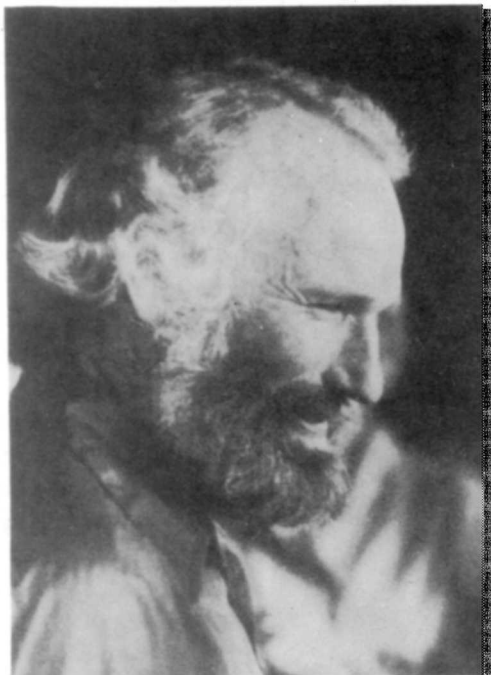
It should be mentioned that Bill Morin first jumped between his junior and senior years at Missoula County High School. He was on the football team and takes part in that school's Golden "M" Club meetings almost every year.



1946. Left to Right: 1. Bill Morin with fish caught near the Spotted Bear Ranger Station in the Flathead N.F. 2. Bob Petty tries his hand at panning gold near Spotted Bear at the confluence of the South Fork of the Flathead and Spotted Bear Rivers. 3. Bob Dodge on the left and Al Bellusci on the right, ready for take off from Spotted Bear in a Travel Air to a spot fire. 4. Lower Left, Left to Right: Ozro Black-deceased; Al Bellusci; Bob Petty; Duane Gilmore; Norm "Little Bear" Watkins-deceased; Steve Maciag; Norm Allen; and Vincent Jones. Photos courtesy of Bill Morin.

WILLI UNSOELD, CJ '50

A number of smokejumpers have asked what happened to Willi Unsoeld, who first jumped out of Cave Junction in 1950. We were able to contact his widow, Jolene Unsoeld, residing in the Olympia, Washington area, and she very graciously provided us with information and pictures of Willi and members of the family. (Jolene served for four years in the Washington



A photo taken of Willi during his mountain-climbing days. Photo courtesy of Jolene Unsoeld.

State legislature and then six years as a U.S. Congresswoman from Washington.)

Willi was born in Arcata, California and attended high school in Eugene, Oregon and Shafter, California. He graduated from Oregon State College at Corvallis, Oregon in 1951, earning a B.S. in physics, a year after he first became a smokejumper at Cave Junction, Oregon. He attended Oberlin Graduate School of Theology at Oberlin, Ohio and then received a B.D. in theology from the Pacific School of Religion at Berkeley, California in 1954. Willi spent four years at the University of Washington in Seattle, and in 1959 earned a Ph.D. in philosophy.

He held a number of positions from 1958 through 1979, to include being an associate

professor of philosophy and religion at Oregon State University; Director of the Nepal Peace Corps Project; and a faculty member of the Evergreen State College, Olympia, Washington, which included being associated with six different programs at that institution.

Willi's great love was mountaineering. At the age of 12 he was climbing mountains and through 1946 had scaled peaks in the Washington and Oregon Cascades, Yosemite Valley and the Tetons.

Some of his adventures included being on the first successful ascent of Masherbrum (25,660') in the Western Himalaya with the American-Pakistan Karakoram Expedition in 1960. Willi was with the first ascent of the West Ridge route on Mt. Everest in Nepal with the American Mt. Everest Expedition during 1963, and this adventure included the first successful traverse of any Himalayan peak and set an altitude record for survival, following a forced bivouac at 28,000'. (Mt. Everest is 29,028' high.) In 1976 he was co-leader of the Indo-American Nanda Devi Expedition, which made the first ascent of the North Ridge. Willi once served as a mountain-climbing instructor at the Indian Military Academy in Dehra Dun, and at the Washington and Oregon State Universities.

He was the co-recipient of the Hubbard Medal, *National Geographic Society*, 1963 and the Elisha Kent Kane Medal, *Geographic Society of Philadelphia*, 1963.

The family had four children, Regon, Krag, Terres and Devi. Devi was named for Nanda Devi Mountain in the Indian Himalaya area, a name that means Shining Goddess. Tragedy struck the Unsoeld family in 1976. Devi suffered a blood clot while climbing that mountain and conditions were such that it was impossible to recover her body and she remains there today. Willi said that experience opened his life to the reality of death and he could never look at it again quite the same way. He had asked, "How does one handle the death of a surpassing human being?" His answer was "You don't. It handles you. It rubs your nose in the reality of your morality...We are not in charge in the face of reality and nature, and in the final analysis, I wouldn't have it any other way."

Cont. on page 16

WILLI UNSOELD, CJ '50, CONTINUED



Willi with his daughter Devi during one of their mountain-climbing expeditions. She was named for the Nanda Devi Mountain in the Indian Himalaya area. She died on that mountain in 1976 after suffering a blood clot. Photo courtesy of Jolene Unsoeld.

the mountain early in the week, but by mid-week good weather and stable snow conditions allowed them to ascend to Camp Muir and then establish a base camp at 11,800', from which the group made an unsuccessful attempt to reach the summit.

The party was hit by a storm late that Saturday and on Sunday was descending in high winds and heavy snowfall when an accident occurred.

Willie and Jani Diepenbrock, one of the students, were on the lead rope when an avalanche was triggered, carrying them 500' down the slope and burying them under several feet of snow. The third person on the rope managed to keep a hand above the snow and was quickly located by a fourth person who had been only partially buried. Quick rescue

On March 4, 1979, Willi was with a group of his students from the Evergreen State College and they had been on Mt. Rainier—elevation 14,410', 40 miles southeast of Tacoma, Washington—for a week participating in a winter mountaineering expedition, which was part of the Outdoor Education program he taught at the college. Inclement weather had kept them down low on

efforts by him and the second rope team helped save the third climber, but Willi and Jani died under the suffocating snow before they were located, about 45 minutes after the incident. This expedition had been the first real mountain attempt by Willi after he had had both of his arthritically-deformed hips resurfaced in March and June of the previous year. During that expedition Willi had been jubilant at being back at 10,000'. As a youngster he had written on his parka, "Life begins at 10,000". He had experienced great joy being back in the clouds, snow and icy slopes. Jolene later wrote to friends.

Cont. on page 17

WILLI UNSOELD, CJ '50, CONTINUED



Jolene and Willi standing on top of a mountain early in their marriage. Photo courtesy of Jolene Unsoeld

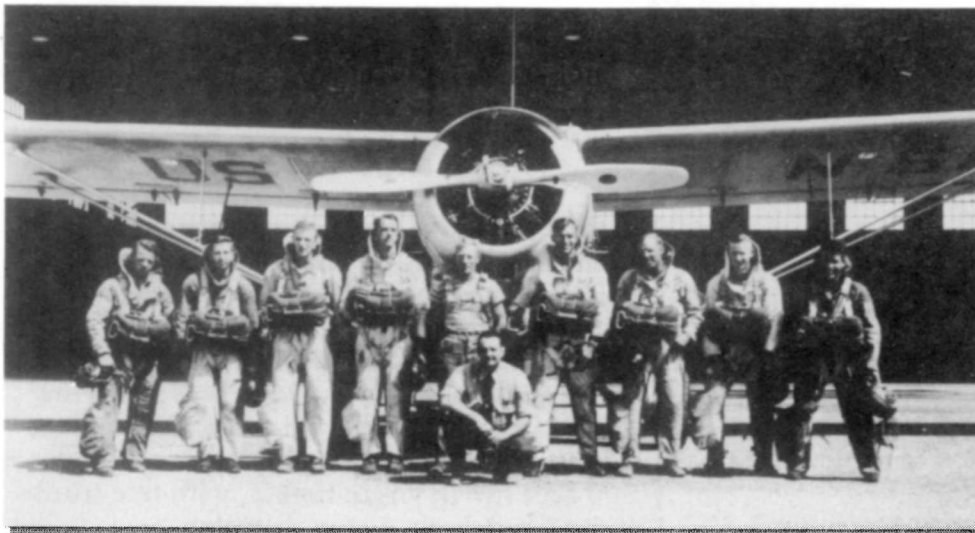
Jolene also wrote, "The empty space that has been left in our lives, as in so many others', often feels as deep as the crevasses Willi used to leap and as vast as the mountainous regions that used to echo his joyous yodels. Yet through our tears breaks an understanding smile, a shared recognition that here went two remarkable people doing what they chose to do knowing that in the mountains they would find wonderful beauty

along with the risk and the lesson of each other."

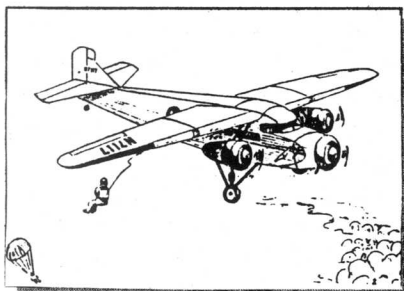
Another wrote: "And if Willi felt the push of high mountain snow, tons and tons and tons of it, hugging him tightly and blotting out the sky—it might have been just the kind of ride he'd ask for. They say he is dead; buried by an avalanche. But don't believe them, for it's not true. Hey Willi! You up there! Beautiful show! And Willi—Hey! Don't you ever, ever rest in peace..."

"Death," Willi once said, "is not too great a price to pay for a life full-lived."

At the age of 52, Willi, one-time smokejumper, mountaineer and an incredible individual, had lived life as few have. He was fond of saying, "It doesn't matter what it is, you have to have something to fight. Doesn't have to be a mountain, but it has to be something. And it isn't important whether you win or lose. Only that you keep fighting."

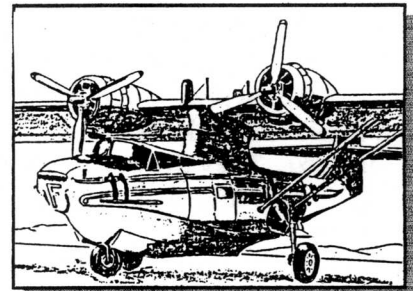


Missoula jumpers at Deming, New Mexico, spring of 1949. Left to right: Ozro Black, '46-deceased; Dewey Secrist, '48; Jack Wall, '48; Fred Barnowski, '42; Ed Scholz, pilot-deceased; Art Cochran, '42; Wally Dobbins, '47; Grover Tyler, '47; Berle Davis, '48. Photo courtesy of Wally Dobbins.



Ford Tri-motor on the left and a Consolidated PBY-5A retardant tanker on the right.

Drawings by Ken Morris, Associate.



GEORGE H. ROBINSON, MSO '44



Louis Goosen caught between two trees during a practice jump in the Nine Mile country west of Missoula—1944. Photo credit: K. D. Swan, USFS.

George Robinson, retired at Ocean View, New Jersey, has related some of his experiences while a CPS (Civilian Public Service) jumper during WW II. He gave us permission to relate some of them.

In 1944 George was a member of a jumper crew that was sent to fight fires out of Winthrop, Washington. They took off from Missoula at 5:00 a.m. in a Tri-motor, piloted by Dick Johnson. Most of the smokejumpers were fast asleep as the ship droned westward. Over Spokane, Johnson said it was time to wake them up, and pushed the wheel forward. They dropped in a steep dive for about 3,000' and that woke the jumpers up very quickly!" he said.

After arriving at Winthrop, the Missoula jumpers flew out to a fire that was out of control



Louis Goosen, MSO '43, a CPS jumper, is wearing an abdominal brace that was worn beneath the jump suits for a number of years. He is holding a 28-foot Irvin emergency chest pack.

Photo Credit: K.D. Swan, USFS..

in the Lyall Ridge area, approximately 20 miles from Lake Chelan—a lake whose bottom at one point is more than 400' below sea level. They skimmed through one canyon, with Dick Johnson at the controls, and about 20 feet separated the wings and rock cliffs. Another was so narrow Johnson had to kick the Tri-motor over on one side and they flew through it that way. It was a 300 acre fire in virgin timber, with tree trunks approximately six feet in diameter.

After several days, they received a radio call to pull out and jump on another fire the following morning. They loaded about 120 pounds of gear and chutes on their backs and started to stumble down to the lower fire camp, about a mile below them. George said: "This was really a killer. I was walking down through ashes about a foot thick, and red hot." He tripped and fell headfirst into the hot ashes. "You could say I had a 'hot head' as well as hot feet," he remarked.

George's stories will be continued Jan. 1998.

CHUTE THE BREEZE



Ed Heilman, Secretary-Treasurer for the National Forest Service Museum, gave us an update on this project. As you will recall, the NSA plans on having a wing in the museum when it is completed. There had been an exhibit at the Historical Museum at Fort Missoula, which included an old jumper suit and parachute, plus newer chutes. The exhibit has been taken down. The NFSM is in the process of preparing a short video, which will be a documentary of what the exhibit looked like. The site, located west of the Missoula Smokejumper Base and Intermountain Fire Sciences Laboratory, now has a road leading into the area—Anaconda Job Corps did the work. More has to be done on it. A temporary building will be erected on the site prior to construction of permanent structures. The NFSM had a booth at the National Society of American Foresters Convention at Nashville this year. **NFSM President Gary Brown** was there. The Museum has applied for grants and is awaiting results. Another report on the NFSM will be forthcoming in the January, 1998 issue of the newsletter.

Larry Lufkin, CJ '63, Francis' son, told us today, 10/18/97, that his father has shown some improvement. He can take a number of steps now, and while he can't talk much, he seems to understand what people are saying when they talk to him. His color is much better. Francis is still at the St. Francis Health Care Home in Bellingham, Washington. Francis was a long-time base manager at Winthrop, Washington and one of the experimental jumpers in 1939. We will continue to check on Francis' condition.

We had some reactions and comments about the picture **Wally Tower, former Jumper Pilot**, gave us showing **Mike Tabler, NCSB '67**, standing in the door of a Twin Beech, with three jumpers strung out behind attached to a chute. **T. J. Thompson, MSO '55**, called to say: "It's a _____ lie!" Others wondered just what did happen. The truth is the picture was staged at the La Grande, Oregon base years ago. Two of the jumpers trailing along behind the aircraft and holding on to the chute were actually lying on the runway. Through touch-up, the runway was wiped out and that part of the picture made to look like the sky. Great shot! I can still hear Wally laughing when he told your compiler how that photo was produced.

John Ferguson, MYC '42, and his wife have moved from Ogden, Utah to Spokane, Washington at the insistence of their daughter Billie Rae and son-in-law Jim Pittman—who live close to Spokane— so they will be better able to look after them in later years.

Bill Moody, NCSB '57, sent us a news article about **Bob Derry, MSO '43**. At the age of 71, Bob went on a 3,300-mile bicycle odyssey from Everett, Washington to Williamsburg, Virginia, along with 40 others, to include bicyclists from Germany and Australia. The trip took 25 days and ended August 13 of this year. For a good part of that journey he averaged 135 miles per day, during 6, 7 and 10 hours periods, but later cut that down to an average of 100 miles a day. He celebrated his 72d birthday September 4.

Jim "Smokey" Stover, MYC '46, and long-time **Idaho City Base Manager**, is sending us information and pictures about the history of the Idaho City smokejumpers. We will have the first article concerning that base in January's newsletter. Smokey resides at Waldport, Oregon northwest of Eugene.

We came across a November 28, 1945 article in The Missoula Sentinel recently, mentioning that **Archie Keith, MSO '45**, had been released from the Thornton Hospital on Tuesday, November 27 of that year after having been hospitalized four months as a result of a broken leg. The accident took place in July when his chute hooked on a snag, which broke, causing him to fall 80' to the ground. Archie passed away in 1969 at Ottawa, Illinois. Mrs. Keith is a member of the NSA and told us recently she really enjoys reading the newsletters and saves all of them. One of their sons, Perry, died in an auto accident near her home in 1987.

Wayne Schrunk, CJ '57, lives at Dallas, Texas. He had a career as an airline pilot, retiring in 1995. He served in the U.S. Army from 1958-1965. Wayne earned a B.S. degree from Oregon State University.

Tom McGrath, MSO '57, was visiting the Missoula area this summer, driving his 1965 Volkswagen bus, which has more than 400,000 miles on it, and has gone through four replacement engines. (Tom became a master mechanic and his bus is full of spare parts and tools for repair work.) He has driven it through 36 states, to include Alaska. He also has a Cessna 140 aircraft that he paid \$2,500 for in 1956.

Jeff Davis, MSO '57, visited also, and was on crutches. He suffered severe injuries years ago from a parachute jump when he was with the Missoula Equipment Development Center. However, he underwent surgery on his right hip after returning to his home at Port Townsend, Washington this summer. Now, he has thrown his crutches away and is doing very well. We will use some of Jeff's material on the development of smokejumper parachutes in the next newsletter.

CHUTE THE BREEZE, CONTINUED

Larry Ashcraft, MSO '62, has been a pilot for Trans World Airlines for a number of years and currently works for that firm as an Airline Check Captain. Larry received a degree in Business Administration from the University of Montana in 1965, and that year became a pilot for the Johnson Flying Service after serving three years as a smokejumper while going to college. He lives at Bigfork, Montana.

Trooper Tom Lugtenaar, CJ '66, had a book published in 1969, with the title, Because It is Mine. It has been out-of-print for a number of years. It is a very interesting publication, with 226 pages and many pictures. It covers not only his career as a smokejumper, but also his exploits in Austria; hitchhiking across Asia, Ceylon, Australia, New Zealand, Hawaii, Canada; and at a cost of only \$6.00, 4,000 miles across the United States. Millie Good, wife of former Johnson Flying Service and airline pilot Garth Good, had a copy that Trooper Tom gave her in the 1970's when both were attending the same class at the University of Montana. She has donated it to the NSA. Trooper Tom lives at Nehalem, Oregon, south of Cannon Beach.

Conrad "Bud" Clarke, MSO '64, recently told us about the time he and other Missoula jumpers fought fire in Virginia. It was in the early 1970's when their booster crew was flown to the regional airport of the tri-city area of Bristol, Kingsport and Johnson City, Tennessee, in the far eastern part of that state. Another jumper crew from a different base, possibly La Grande, was already in the area. **Jack Deeds, MSO '65** and **Larry Nelsen, MSO '56**, were two jumpers with Bud. They had a Beechcraft 99 aircraft at their disposal. Bud remembers they made one practice jump while in Tennessee and a fire jump in the Jefferson National Forest of Virginia, close to the West Virginia line. He told of the people living around the airport coming out to watch their practice jumps, bringing cookies, soft drinks, etc., for them. They were deeply impressed by the smokejumpers. We would like to hear more stories about jumps made in the eastern part of the United States. Bud is at Missoula, Jack at Littleton, Colorado and Larry lives a short distance north of Missoula.

Arley Kisling, RDD 69: Arley first jumped in 1969 and then "retreaded" in 1970, requalifying in June. In those days "retreads" were California jumpers who were employed on districts, for example, but if there was a heavy fire season, they were recalled as smokejumpers. Arley received a B.A. degree in Art from Chico State University in 1973. His career has been that of a U.S.F.S. Engine Captain, deeply involved in fighting fires. Arley calls Lakeport, California home.

Jerry Zumalt, RDD '70, is the new base manager at Grangeville, Idaho. He replaced **Pat Wilson, GAC (Grangeville), '80**, who has been reassigned to the Missoula Technological & Development Center.

Walt Smith, MYC '71, and later a MSO jumper, left the smokejumpers several years ago to work with the Forest Service out of Darby, Montana. He is now retired and he and his wife have moved to Mexico. We will have more about Walt in the January, 1998 newsletter.

We are trying to locate **Phil Armour, RAC '77**, and **Mike Dosskey, RAC '74**, former Redmond, Oregon jumpers. Does anyone know their current locations?

Tom Kovalicky, MSO '61, Grangeville, recently sent us information relating to **George Cross, MSO '74**. The information came from the Golden Times/Lewiston Morning Tribune, dated September, 1997. The Idaho paper had two pages about George, who lives in the Lenore area close to Orofino. George was awarded five gold and two silver medals for track and field events at this year's Idaho Senior Games. He is now 72 years old and says he has to have physical activities. Those qualifying in state events are eligible to compete at the National Senior Games and George did so every year since he began competing—except for this year, because his wife, Marietta, had heart surgery, which prevented them from attending. George's favorite event is the 100-meter dash. He is a professor emeritus at the University of Montana where he taught physical education for 31 years. George began as a smokejumper at age 49, jumped for 12 years and quit when he was 61 years old. He was the oldest of rookies. A very remarkable man!

Dalan Romero, FBX '80, has taken over as base manager at Fort Wainwright in Alaska, near Fairbanks. He succeeds **Tom Boatner, FBX '88**. Tom has moved on to the position of **BLM'S State Aviation Manager** in Alaska. We always appreciated hearing from Tom, who gave us much help. We will keep in touch with him.

Kurt Borcharding, GAC '95, is one of our new members. He jumped out of Grangeville during the past two seasons. He is taking time off in order to pursue rowing. Late in July he was training at Princeton, New Jersey and made the 1997 U.S. National Rowing Team. Kurt competed in the World Rowing Championships in France last month. (We do not have the results yet.) His final goal is the year 2000 Olympics. When he has done that he plans on returning to jumping. He is from Madison, Wisconsin.