



# NORTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAIN RETIREE ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2019

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Forest Service Retirees:

This is my second attempt at a President's letter and I hope it will encourage more participation in our association.

We had a great response to our last newsletter and we also received a great return of memberships and we had our largest turnout for our monthly lunch at Jaker's. It was great to see some old friends as well as some folks I met for the first time. At each of our lunch meetings we attempt to hear from a current Forest Service employee and it has been a great way to help us retirees keep up to date about current activities within the agency.

Since we were just coming out of government shutdown, we had a proposal to try to help current employees if that should occur in the future. The proposal was to offer short term no interest loans to employees who need help getting through extended shutdowns with no pay. The proposal found

unanimous support so we will be able to provide some assistance to those in need if it occurs again. We still have to work through the specifics of how we accomplish this but I thought it certainly was a step in the right direction.

We hope you find this newsletter of as much interest as the last one and that you find time in your schedule to join us for lunch the first Tuesday of the month 1130 at Jaker's on Brooks.

Thanks to all of you who paid your dues as it does help pay for the production of the newsletter. And many thanks to Vicky Maclean for her work in getting the newsletter out.

Barry Hicks,  
President



News and stories are welcome. Electronic format is preferred. The Newsletters come out in the spring and fall, so please send information to the editor by March 1<sup>st</sup> and September 1<sup>st</sup> for April and October mailings.

Please include a short bio with your article about where you worked and what you did for the Forest Service.

Send to Vicky MacLean at [agillabs@mcn.net](mailto:agillabs@mcn.net) or P.O. Box 608, Ronan MT 59864.

# 2018 FOREST SERVICE RETIREES NATIONAL REUNION FINAL REPORT

by Dave Jolly and Sig Haggard

On June 3, 2015, the Southern Forest Service Retirees Association (SFSRA) approved a recommendation and motion to request from the National Museum of Forest Service History that the SFSRA host the Eighth National Reunion of Forest Service Retirees in Asheville, North Carolina, the last week of September 2018 (Note: the NMFSH is the “keeper of the queue” for the reunion hosts. The SFSRA membership appointed Dave Jolly and Sig Haggard as Co-Chairs. Since that approval 3 ½ years ago a lot of work has gone into making it happen. Along with Dave and Sig, there has been more than 30 people involved spending their time and some personal funds to ensure the Reunion would be one of the best ever.

The week of September 20, 2018, about 450 retirees, employees, and friends met in Asheville for the Reunion at the Cradle. With the theme of “Rediscovering the Birthplace of Forestry in the United States” they reconnected with old friends and co-workers, heard presentations about the early beginnings of the Forest Service and visited sites in the Asheville area. There were stories and history of the Pinchot family shared by Bibi Gaston, a great-grandniece of Gifford Pinchot. The shared untold stories of brave souls who launched the American Conservation movement. They also heard from Chase Pickering, a great-great-great grandson of George Vanderbilt. As a fifth-generation family owner of the Biltmore, he shared his family’s mission to preserve Biltmore as a conservation effort. These two speakers set the stage for the week of exploring the Cradle of Forestry in America, the Birthplace of science-based forest management in the U. S. Everybody enjoyed the presentation by Lisa Tate, Executive Director of the National Museum of Forest Service History. She shared recent happenings with the Museum which will include a premier virtual exhibit which is now available to view at:

[www.forestservicemuseum.org](http://www.forestservicemuseum.org)

There were two field trips: one to the Cradle of Forestry which included a visit to the Blue Ridge Parkway Visitor Center and to the Cradle located on the Pisgah NF. The group learned about Carl Schenck and saw his first American forestry school in Pisgah. This unique tour showcased the culture and music of the Southern Appalachian Mountains. A luncheon of local taste treats followed by a local musical and story teller was also included. Great stories, all in attendance won’t soon forget.

The second field trip was Biltmore Behind the Gate Tour which took folks behind locked gates to explore conservation history connections with Gifford Pinchot and Carl Schenck, who established the first American forestry school on the Biltmore property. This tour also included the mansion, gardens, and highlighted limited engagement of Chihuly Glasswork.

A highlight of the week was the banquet on Thursday evening that featured the Bailey Mountain Cloggers from Mars Hills College in the Mountains near Asheville. They even taught some brave folks to Clog – our group has talent.

Friday morning saw a tired, but happy group sad to say “Goodbye” to those they had reconnected with during the week. The Southern Forest Serviced Retirees Association closed out the reunion by passing the baton and a \$5,000 check to the 2021 Reunion Hostess, Nancy Gibson. The 2021 Forest Service Retirees national Reunion will be held September 13-17, 2021, at Harrah’s Lake Tahoe, Stateline NV. It was a great week and was enjoyed by everyone.

The Reunion was also very successful financially. While there were no plans to raise money for the SFSRA, the Reunion included a fundraiser for the National Museum of Forest Service History. The silent auction, which included items donated by many people netted over \$7,800. There were several monetary donations

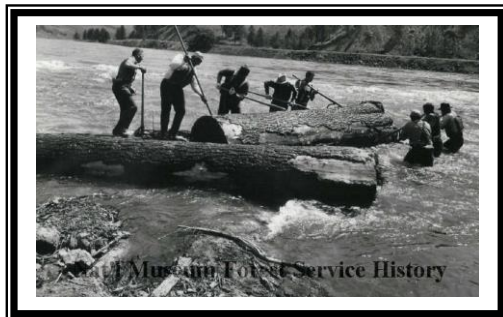


made to the museum. Others made donations to help with the expenses of the reunion. The registration fees paid for the food and other Crown Plaza Resort expenses. In the end, the Museum received a check for \$24,341.87. The Southern Forest Service Retirees Association received \$13,057.47. By any measurement, the Eighth Forest Service Retirees National Reunion was a huge success. Many thanks to all the volunteers that made it possible.

## A UNIQUE PART OF THE CLEARWATER – GONE! By Tom Schenarts

The Clearwater country is timber country. In addition to the National Forest lands, Weyerhaeuser acquired hundreds of acres of prime white pine early in the last century. Logging was a big part of life in the North Fork of the Clearwater and the river drives were legendary.

The first log drive was in 1928 and over a 40 + year period, millions of board feet of logs floated about 90 miles down the North Fork and main Clearwater rivers to Lewiston, Idaho. The Weyerhaeuser mill at Lewiston was the largest white pine mill in the world when it was built. The Clearwater Timber Company later became the Potlatch Corporation as it is known today.



River pigs work to get a log unstuck.

During the year, loggers cut logs and stacked them along the shores of the North Fork in huge decks over 40 feet tall and strung out over miles. In the early years, long flumes were constructed in the side drainages to chute the logs down to the river landings. Later tractors were used to skid the logs to the decks. A number of

logging camps dotted the North Fork drainage to house and feed the loggers.

When the river began to rise from the spring melt in the mountains the drive got underway. About 35 men especially selected for their agility, physical ability and toughness worked the drive and were known as “river pigs”. The logs were released into the swollen river and using wooden bateaus that they rowed and later motor-powered aluminum jet boats the crews followed the log mass. As logs hung up and began to pile up on gravel bars and rocky points, the “pigs” had to pry the logs loose with their peavies and jump from log to log to keep from falling into the swirling mass where they could be crushed or drowned in the ice melt water. It was a dangerous job. Occasionally when the log jams were too large, dynamite was used to break them up. The river would be filled with logs from bank to bank and as far up the river as you could see.



The wanigan headed down the North Fork of the Clearwater.

Keeping pace with the drives progress was the “wanigan”, a floating cookhouse, dining area and two 16-man bunkhouses. It was built on large cedar logs in three sections. Later it rode on inflatable pontoons.

In 1967, while I was Ranger on the Bungalow District, I got to view one of the last log drives on the North Fork. The drives would soon end (1971) with the completion of the Dworshak Dam near Ahsahka, Idaho. A total of 43 million board feet of logs were in that drive run by Charles “Red” McCollister who was a legendary foreman for many drives. It was quite a sight and one we will never see the likes of again. My wife, Barbara and our two daughters still remember this unique event. When we visited the “wanigan”, Harvey Speers, the cook gave each of my daughters a cookie. They were not ordinary ones like at home but were the size of saucers! Also, in 1967, Disney Corporation was filming the log drive for the movie “Charlie, The Lonesome Cougar”. They had four trained cougars. The movie is still available on DVD.

The last log drive in the West was in 1971 just as the dam was about completed. The logs were floated to the

dam and were shot through the diversion tunnel in the dam. Hundreds of people lined the main Clearwater River to view the last drive to the Potlatch mill at Lewiston. Potlatch Corporation made a movie of this last log drive,” Last of the Log Drives” that you can view on You-tube as well as “The Clearwater Log Drives- A photo essay” by Charles “Red” and Sandra McCollister.



Logjam on the North Fork

*Tom spent his early career on several Idaho districts in Region 1 followed by time in the Northern Region office then in the Washington Office. He lives in Missoula MT. A detailed bio is in the “Artists Among Us” story elsewhere in this issue*

## WANTED

The National Museum of Forest Service History has been preserving for the past 30 years the heritage you built while with the Forest Service. They have, in your repository, over fifty thousand archives, artifacts, photos, documents, and personal stories about careers and experiences in the Forest Service.

Your stories may never be forgotten, but they should to be captured before they are lost. In 1937, Gifford Pinchot wrote an appeal requesting from his “Old Timers,” narratives of their experiences. He received over 5,000 pages that are preserved in the Library of Congress. Your stories with the “outfit” may not be

preserved in the Library, but the next best place is in your Museum.

Photos, diaries, letters, books, documents, official reports, memoirs of your experiences, and other artifacts are welcome. The Museum staff welcomes inquiries which should addressed to Dave Stack at [dave.stack@forestservicemuseum.org](mailto:dave.stack@forestservicemuseum.org). If you have questions about possible donations, you may contact Dave at 406-541-6374. If you are not a member of the Museum, please consider doing so by selecting from one of the membership options at the website [www.forestservicemuseum.org](http://www.forestservicemuseum.org) or by contacting them by phone.





# ARTISTS AMONG US

By Vicky Maclean

As Forest Service Employees head for retirement they have the opportunity to explore new activities or have new found time to expand interests that they already had. Many of them are engaged in their communities, traveling, writing, and in these cases, being artistically creative.

**Charlie Fudge** of Polson Montana, who retired in 1989, started his FS career when he was still in high school on a blister rust crew in Haugen Montana. This was followed by more seasonal work at Trout Creek and Priest Lake. With a degree in geology from Iowa State, followed by a stint in the Navy, followed by a forestry degree from U of M, Charlie started his professional career at the old Ant Flat Ranger Station between Fortine and Trego on the Kootenai Forest. This was followed in the 1960s by assignments as District Ranger at Sylvanite on the Yaak, Deerlodge and Nine Mile. A stint on the Lolo and the RO as timber staff preceded his move to the WO where he also worked in timber management. The WO assignment was followed by a move to Region 2 where he worked in timber, insect and disease and cooperative forestry.



After his retirement he signed up for a furniture design and construction course at Red Rocks Community College (Colorado) which he did for two years. From here he started designing

Charlie and his wooden bowls.

and making wooden bowls, at first plain ones, then segmented ones with as many as 365 pieces. Charlie does his wood working in the shop at the retirement community where he lives in the winter in Arizona and at home in Polson in the rest of the year. For some time, he sold his bowls at craft fairs and art shows and now

only at the Sand Piper Gallery in Polson where he is a member of this artists cooperative. It was here, one day last year that I met Charlie who was manning the sales desk, when I wandered in wearing a Forest Service tee shirt and he asked me “do you work for the Forest Service?”

**Maureen Cole** grew up in Helena enjoying outdoor activities with her family. She worked in Human Resources on the Helena Forest her whole career and retired in 2010. When I first knew her she was a fiber artist, a weaver. After retiring Maureen signed up for a community pottery class at the Archie Bray Foundation when Jane Kollmeyer, retired Forest Supervisor from the Sawtooth Forest, asked if Maureen wanted to join her in a class. She thought it would be fun to give it a try. Her first class was a throwing class (with a wheel) and it did not go so well. She later found her niche in a hand building class where objects are made from rolled out slabs of clay. Maureen also slip casts which involves making molded pottery pieces.



Maureen and her vase.

She enjoys working in black and white, having drawn her inspiration from designs that her daughter likes, from the desert southwest pottery and from the magic of the Archie Bray Studio on a winter morning.

Most days Maureen can be found at the Archie Bray, or out of doors hiking or paddling. Maureen is married to another FS retiree, Larry who retired from a position in Lands on the Helena Forest.

**Tom Schenarts** graduated from forestry school at the University of Connecticut. His Forest Service career began in 1955 on the Priest Lake District on the Kaniksu NF in Idaho. Tom worked on several other

districts on the Kaniksu and in 1963 became the ranger on the Bungalow RD of the Clearwater NF. After that he spent nine years in the Regional Office in Missoula holding several positions. In 1976 he went to the

Washington Office in State and Private Forestry where he had many different jobs including assignments in the White House and in Liberia, West Africa. In 1982, Tom became the Director of the Northeastern Area, retiring in 1988 to his Christmas tree farm in southeastern Pennsylvania. In 2005 Barbara and Tom moved back to Missoula where he has been active in the FS retiree's association, volunteering at Travelers' Rest State Park as a Lewis & Clark interpreter/ speaker and painting and sculpting.



Irvie, trail crew foreman on the Bungalow Ranger District.

Tom credits his artistic beginning to his high school math teacher who, when he was failing trigonometry,

offered to give him a D if he dropped her class. Tom accepted and took an art class. That teacher inadvertently launched his life-long journey in art.

Tom is a self-taught painter and sculptor, working in watercolor and acrylic. His sculptures have been cast in bronze. Tom was very active in the Montana art market in the 1970's. This included one-man shows in Missoula, three years in the Russell auction in Great Falls, art auctions in Spokane and various juried shows in Montana, Washington and Virginia. His work was in several Montana galleries and he was one of the artists featured in the book "Montana's Own".

Time demands of his jobs in Washington D.C. and as Director of the Northeastern Area gave Tom very little art time and he set his painting aside for a number of years. When he returned to Missoula in 2005, he resumed his passion for painting and is again actively engaged. Since returning, Tom has had three solo shows in Missoula. His work was selected for the 2014 and 2015 "Icons of the West" national juried exhibitions as well as the 2015, 16, 17 and 18 Montana Watercolor Society Watermedia juried competitions. Tom is a signature member of the Montana Watercolor Society. Most of his subjects are people and wildlife and he paints about 25-35 paintings a year. Much of his art is donated to fund raisers for various causes. Tom will have a month long one man show at the Berkshire Hathaway show room in Missoula starting May 3<sup>rd</sup>.

*Vicky is the newsletter editor and spent her whole career on the Helena working in Range Management.*

## MOOSE IN THE MENAGERIE

By Ellen Childress

Black Rock Ranger Station on the Teton Forest, was a snow covered 40 miles from the Town of Jackson, Wyoming. In summer tourists and bison posed traffic hazards and in the quieter winter, moose sometimes challenged vehicles and often were seen grazing on the aspen and willow tips along the highway. The whole area from Togwotee Pass to Jackson was considered Moose Winter Range and the Station where we lived

was right in the middle of that area. They were so common that our son's first word was not "Mama" or "Dada" but "Moooze!"

Not only were there moose, but Grizzly Bear, Elk, some deer and a few stray antelope frequented the area. Smaller animals such as martins, squirrels, otter and numerous birds, both aquatic and land based livened the scene. The Ranger Rick magazine which

our daughter loved, had an article on making a backyard wildlife habitat. I laughed when I read it as there was already everything wildlife would want all around us and we were frequently entertained by their antics.

I remember one rare foggy morning in spring when the landscape seemed painted in shades of gray, black and white. I had put a stale biscuit on the bird feeder for a Stellar's Jay which came with a flash of muted blue. Soon there was a ruckus of indignant screeching and I looked out to see the biscuit, traveling at a high rate of speed down the top rail of the buck and rail fence with the Blue Jay in hot pursuit. Upon looking more closely I could see that the biscuit was not self-animated but was clamped in the jaws of an opportunistic squirrel who was rapidly racing to his nest. Squirrel, fence and fog had obscured the view and only the biscuit stood out which gave the comical impression that the Jay was chasing an errant biscuit.

With moose being prevalent and owning the territory around the compound where we lived, we became very moose aware and gave them the space and respect due a very large, very fast mammal with tendencies to become irritated over little things. It was with caution that we made our way across the compound twice daily to feed the horses. We became even more aware when the moose started to recognize the sound of the hay shed gate and would come from over a mile away on the river bottom to join the horses at feeding time. Fortunately, the horses were dominant which was not always the case in other locations, but we did sometimes use them as shields as we spread the hay. The same group came often enough that we started to recognize them as individuals and some even gained names.

We did a lot of cross-country skiing as a family but of

Monthly luncheon meetings are held the first Tuesday of the month at Jaker's Bar and Grill located at 3515 Brooks Street in Missoula at 11:30 A.M. Join us for visiting and informational speaker from the R.O.

course our son was too small to participate. We had made a harness for us and fastened a wooden box on the toboggan for the kids to sit in so that we could ski and pull them along. Our son was still in diapers, during his second winter and, being so far from town, I had run out and had to borrow some from our Ranger's wife who had a daughter about the same age as our son. On our next trip to town, I bought a replacement box for her and decided to return them as soon as I could.

It was a lovely sunny day so I decided to bundle up our son, fasten the diaper box to the toboggan and ski up to the Ranger's house across the wide, white sagebrush flat. Our daughter was not due home from Kindergarten for few hours, it was only about a mile, the snow was packed hard with a nice bit of powder on top and we needed the outing. I started out across the open flat with the dog following and enjoying the hard crust of snow. Our long-haired cat followed the dog as he liked outings as well.

Did I mention that moose are also curious? At one point I looked back and there was the dog, followed by the cat, followed by the calf moose we had named Rocky, followed by his mother whom we called Bubbles!! My heart leaped, there was no way to avoid an encounter should they choose to become "frisky" so since the equilibrium seemed to be working, I just kept going at steady pace. As we neared the Ranger's house they sheared off into the thicker willows and I continued on with a reduced menagerie and slowing heart rate. We all then caught a ride home in the truck with my husband.

*Ellen is a retired school teacher who worked as a lookout during her college days and on various crews and as a relief lookout during the 1990s.*



# VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

## TRAIL RESTORATION AND MAINTENANCE PROJECTS

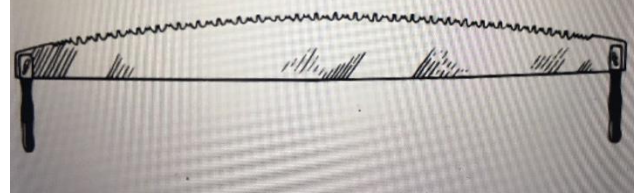
By Fred Cooper

The National Smokejumper Association has a TRAMPS program that has been operating for 20 years. TRAMPS, Trails Restoration and Maintenance Project Specialists are volunteers who work on the maintenance of trails and structures on National Forests. The program started with former smokejumpers in 1999 who had retired from their primary life-time occupations. TRAMPS has now evolved to where they now have many Associates who were not smokejumpers, some retired and some not. Associates include retired Forest Service employees like you, and friends who were not smokejumpers. What is important is that TRAMPS volunteers want to help maintain our Forest Service trails and facilities and enjoy getting out into the woods to do some physical work and spend time over evening campfires talking about "old times."

Associates are welcome on crews that range in size from 4 to 12 members. Projects are week-long and crew size depends on the nature of the work. Some projects we drive-to and others require pack-in. Pack-in projects are supported primarily by the Back-Country Horsemen.

By the time this article is published, projects for this summer will be finalized. TRAMPS anticipates having as many as 20 projects ranging from New York to California. At least half a dozen will be in western Montana and northern Idaho this summer. You are welcome to sign up on the Registration Form on the website at [www.nsatrails.com](http://www.nsatrails.com). More information is also available on the website, including Annual Reports for projects for past years. If you have questions, you are welcome to leave a message on the website or contact Fred Cooper at [frederi920@aol.com](mailto:frederi920@aol.com).

We look forward to seeing you down the trail and by the campfire.



Retirees from the greater Mission Valley area are starting to plan a picnic gathering sometime this summer. Location will probably be at the Bison Range. If you are interested please contact Vicky MacLean at [agillabs@mcn.net](mailto:agillabs@mcn.net) or 406-459-6731 and we will keep you informed as plans firm up.





# PLEASE JOIN US!

## THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF FOREST SERVICE HISTORY

by Lisa Tait

The National Museum of Forest Service History – the only museum in the country dedicated to preserving and sharing YOUR history of the Forest Service and conservation – is on a roll!

Many Forest Service retirees are members, but if you're not, they'd like you to consider joining them. Here's why:

The Museum is a nonprofit organization separate from the USFS; however, we work closely with the agency and have a Memo of Understanding with the Chief's office. We work diligently and collaboratively to archive and share your important history. A Capital Campaign is on-going to build a world-class facility in Missoula, MT.

Simultaneously, here are the ways your history is being preserved, and how your story is being told:

- 50,000 items in the collection – documents, photos, artifacts, and equipment – many of which are now available online to students, teachers, researchers and the general public. They have, for example, “A Primer of Forestry,” a booklet published in 1900 written by Gifford Pinchot.
- Virtual and Traveling Exhibits – their newest virtual exhibit, “Case Study #1” is a fascinating look at the first timber sale on U.S. government land in 1899 on the Black Hills Forest Reserve in South Dakota. A traveling exhibit, “Minerals We Use Every Day: Mined from our National Forests” has traveled coast to coast, and is currently at the Cradle of Forestry in western North Carolina.
- High-caliber conservation education for students and teachers, through very successful Library of Congress funded teacher workshops, and Field Days for students at the Missoula 36-acre campus.
- A Missoula campus now open to the public. Newly opened in 2017, the campus features a variety of conservation education exhibits, such as:
  - An historic Ranger's Cabin from the Bungalow Ranger District (ID), which serves as a Visitor's Center with exhibits and small gift shop;
  - A winding interpretive Forest Discovery Trail among a Champion Grove of trees, with beautiful signage of Forest Service history, including a 100-year timeline;
  - A pack corral built by volunteers of Backcountry Horseman, where, for example, the Ninemile Pack Team can come and serve as literal living history; and
  - A L-4 Fire Lookout, originally built for the Smithsonian Folk Art Festival on the Washington, D.C. mall.
- Educational, community, family events like an “Old Fashioned Forest Service Christmas” which drew more than 750 people in a single afternoon with Santa (and his Pack Team!), live music, campfire, and refreshments; and an “Evening with Teddy: Roosevelt Comes Alive!” event, Sold Out in Missoula and upcoming in Phoenix, AZ (April 12th) with Roosevelt portrayer and “Illustrator” who tells, and draws! Roosevelt's rich conservation story and the history of the USFS.

Join Today! And Join the hundreds of your Forest Service retiree colleagues who are supporting YOUR history, YOUR legends, YOUR incredible dedication to conservation. Go to:

<https://forestservicemuseum.org/become-a-member/>

Several Membership notices have bounced back from a mailing to life members.

Does anyone know the whereabouts of Joe Collogan, Chuck Fisher, John Forsman, Juliette Gauthier, Don Burris, Warren Davies, Dick Strong, Jack Sater, or James Spaulding?

If so, please contact Ray McLaughlin at:

[raymclaugh@aol.com](mailto:raymclaugh@aol.com)

# THE ORANGE GATE

By Larry Cron

When I was Ranger on the Fernan R.D. In Coeur d'Alene in the early 80's we were getting heavily into closing and gating roads, and we were about to order and specify a number of gates for that purpose. The question arose as to what color they should be. Existing gates varied widely from white, silver, and yellow to green, brown, and black. I asked George Ward, my multi-resource staff assistant to figure out what the best answer would be. George assigned the job to Calley Ramsey.

Cal was one of those steady hand type older (50's or early 60's) forestry techs who could handle just about anything. I think he started out on the Priest River District under some pretty strong rangers. The point being that as a forestry tech you had better walk pretty softly around the Ranger or you might be either walking down the road kicking rocks or find yourself assigned to an undesirable job.

Cal's job at Fernan was dealing with signing, road management, recreation, and any job assigned. So, Cal decided to circulate a document around the various staff groups asking for input on what color we should make our gates and posts that we were about to order. After several weeks George informed me that we were ready to put the question on the weekly staff meeting agenda for discussion and a decision.



Skookum Butte Lookout

Our staff meetings were held around a long oval table in a basement conference room. I always sat at one end and it just happened that Calley sat at the other. After all the other agenda items were done, the meeting was turned over to Cal. He explained what the question was about and stated that he had received a lot of input about what color the gates should be “and one damn fool even suggested they be orange.” Immediately every head on both sides of the table snapped from looking at Cal to looking at me. This was not lost on Cal who immediately lowered his head and muttered, “Oh \_\_\_\_!” To which I burst out laughing followed closely by the entire staff group. If anyone's bucket list included laugh-until-you-cry, they could cross that one off the list.

After thorough discussion as to why visibility was the key concern where snowmobiles, motorcycles, and other vehicles were a mix of user, it was agreed that orange they would be.

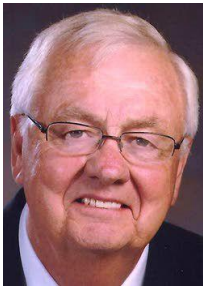
*Larry spent his career in regions 5 and 1. He retired from the Kootenai in 1998 where he was staff for planning, recreation, minerals, lands and heritage.*

There will be a PIT project this summer to start restoration work on the Skookum Butte Lookout on the Montana Idaho line east of Lolo Pass. This lookout is one of the last of the old L5 lookouts. Volunteers' gear will be packed in about a mile from the trailhead and there are opportunities to stay for one week or two weeks. A camp cook will be feeding the crew. For further information, see:

<http://www.passportintime.com/skookum-butte-lookout-i-2019.html>



## WE REMEMBER



**David E. Poncin** “Dave” passed away December 23, 2018 at Sacred Heart Medical Center in Spokane. He was born, the youngest of 5 children, in 1937 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa to Aleta Stenner Poncin and Lee Howard Poncin. During summer vacations he visited his aunt and uncle in Polson Montana where he was smitten with the love of fishing, hunting and all things outdoors. During his senior year in high school he applied for a summer job with the Forest Service and after graduation in 1955 went to Headquarters Idaho to work as a “Ribes Goon” in the blister rust camps. That fall he enrolled in the University of Montana Forestry School. He worked his way through college doing a variety of forestry jobs including a lookout job on Mount Jumbo in the Bob Marshall Wilderness and as a smoke jumper. He met his wife Emily at the U of M and they were married after they graduated.

In 1960 he got his first permanent Forest Service job in Lincoln MT where both of his children, David and Greg, were born. His career took him to Kooskia Idaho, Libby, Gardner and Eureka Montana and finally to Grangeville Idaho where he and Emily stayed when he retired. Dave’s career was as a forestry generalist working in forestry and fire and then as district ranger in Gardner and Eureka. His final position was Fire, Recreation and Lands staff officer on the Nez Perce Forest. Fire management was his passion and he was a National Incident Commander on a type 1 team in the 1980s.

Dave was involved with various community organizations where ever they lived. He is survived by Emily, his wife of 58 years, his two sons and 5 grandchildren and two sisters. Services were held in Grangeville Idaho and Helena Montana.

Donations may be made in Dave’s memory to Syringa Hospice or the Grangeville United Methodist Church.

<https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/name/david-poncin-obituary?pid=191109338>



**Stephen Alexander Clairmont** “Buttercup” passed away December 6, 2018 after a hard-fought battle with pancreatic cancer and complications from diabetes. He was born June 30, 1942 in St Ignatius and grew up in Dixon at the tribal agency. He was a proud member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribes of Montana. After graduation he headed to California to fight fire with the Las Prietas fire crew out of Los Angeles. After a year on that crew he joined up with the Missoula Smokejumpers in 1962. He retired in 1994 after 32 years and 504 jumps.

After retirement he continued to work at the smokejumper base, packing and loading until 2015, and rarely missed a jumper reunion or rookie party. He also traveled around the west recruiting youth in small towns and reservations for careers in smoke jumping. Steve enjoyed many outdoor activities: wood cutting, fishing, hunting, hunting, mountain

biking and mushroom hunting with his son. He was also an avid skier. Steve worked out every day at the local fitness center where he made new friends and enjoyed the company of other retired jumpers.

Steve married Catherine Louise Doney and had four children. He later married Terry Puckett who he met during the 1986 fire season. He is survived by three of his children, seven grandchildren, twin great grandsons, and four siblings. Donations may be made to the National Smokejumper Association Scholarship Fund, the American Diabetes Association or toward pancreatic cancer research. A celebration of Steve's life will be held in the spring of 2019. [https://missoulian.com/news/local/obituaries/stephen-buttercup-alexander-clairmont/article\\_57d2bad8-604b-52b1-a74a-1bd931a2d28d.html](https://missoulian.com/news/local/obituaries/stephen-buttercup-alexander-clairmont/article_57d2bad8-604b-52b1-a74a-1bd931a2d28d.html)



**Connie Saylor Johnson** 76, was last seen on October 2 at a hunting camp near the Moose Creek Ranger Station in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest where she was working as the camp cook. Several weeks of searching yielded no sign of Connie and eventually when her dog turned up at Moose Creek the search was called off.

Connie was a retired wilderness ranger who had spent her career on the Nez Perce and the Clearwater Forests. She grew up on a farm in Iowa and was a teacher when she took a summer class about American wilderness leadership. She fell in love with the concept of wilderness and helped write a grant to pay for teachers in Iowa to come to the Selway-Bitterroot on a service project. Connie quit her teaching job to move to Idaho in 1988 to work on the Lochsa District in Kooskia and later as the wilderness ranger on the Moose Creek District. She was a lifelong educator who brought students from Iowa to Idaho to work on wilderness projects, a program that continues to this day.

In her retirement Connie was the volunteer coordinator for the Lochsa Historical Ranger Station, scheduling volunteers to staff the station through the summer months. She also organized the annual "Living History Day" for area fourth and fifth graders at the Lochsa Station where students got a chance to learn about wilderness topics such as crosscut sawing, using a fire finder and how to bake biscuits.

Connie was honored at the winter meeting of the Selway-Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation, an organization that she helped to establish. The Foundation is establishing the Connie Saylor Johnson Wilderness Education Fund to award grants to teachers for wilderness-related programs. Donations are welcomed at [selwaybitterroot.org](http://selwaybitterroot.org).

[https://lmtribune.com/northwest/driven-to-bring-people-to-the-selway-bitterroot-wilderness/article\\_7d8edde7-7f21-5018-b22e-e26c628e4913.html?utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=email&utm\\_campaign=user-share](https://lmtribune.com/northwest/driven-to-bring-people-to-the-selway-bitterroot-wilderness/article_7d8edde7-7f21-5018-b22e-e26c628e4913.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=email&utm_campaign=user-share)



**William Covey** "Bill" passed away January 13 in Kalispell of a stroke at the age of 90. Bill was born in Missoula in January 18, 1928, the youngest of 8 children. He grew up in Missoula and joined the Forest Service at the age of 16 working as a lookout on Kenelty Peak, between Kalispell and Libby. In 1946 he joined the Army and was sent to Japan. Following his honorable discharge, he returned to the Forest Service as a smoke jumper based in Missoula. Bill worked as a smoke jumper for six seasons and in the winter enrolled in the forestry school at the University of Montana. After graduation he rejoined the army as a counter intelligence officer for three years then returned to the U of M to earn a master's degree in forestry.

His first job as a forester was in Seeley Lake, then his job took him all over the west, to locations in Montana, Idaho, California and Oregon where he was Forest Supervisor on the Klamath National Forest. He retired as director of Timber



Management from the Regional Office in Missoula. Bill and his wife of 65 years, Ruby Gene, moved to Flathead Lake then Kalispell after his retirement. He was active in outdoor activities and a passionate supporter of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. Until a week before his death he was shoveling snow and living independently with his beloved Schnauzer “Tyke”. Bill is survived by a son and a daughter, 5 grandchildren and a great granddaughter.

Donations may be made in memory of Bill to the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation or a local Humane Society.

[https://missoulian.com/news/local/obituaries/william-bill-covey/article\\_a0991ffd-f9ad-587d-a9c7-b9e38c95ead2.html](https://missoulian.com/news/local/obituaries/william-bill-covey/article_a0991ffd-f9ad-587d-a9c7-b9e38c95ead2.html)



**Kirk Malcolm Horn** - Kirk was born November 30, 1939 to Harriet and Francis Horn. He passed away February 10, 2019. Following are excerpts from his obituary by his daughter Frances:

Kirk’s childhood on the family farm in Cottage Grove, Oregon was one of hard work, love and occasional mischief. He completed college at Lewis & Clark College and Pacific University and then went on to graduate school at the University of Arizona with degrees in biology.

The best thing in his life came along when he had a summer job at Crater Lake National Park in 1965 where he met a lovely female ranger. Best friends for the next 50 plus years. Kirk and Beth worked for the Forest Service, careers that lasted until 1999.

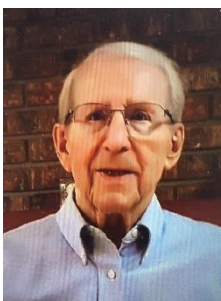
After stints in Portland and Washington, D.C., Kirk and Beth and Frances settled in Missoula, MT in 1985 where he was Director of Wildlife and Fisheries for the Forest Service.

In 1999 Kirk and Beth fully retired and moved from Missoula to the shores of Hebgen Lake outside of West Yellowstone, MT. Dad filled his retirement years by continuing the work that made him who he was: educating people and working with large mammals. He was on the board of the Grizzly and Wolf Discovery center in West Yellowstone. He always found it to be a source of pride and esteem to be able to teach people about the animals that he so loved.

Dad taught his twin grandsons to fish, ice fish, pee off the back deck (yes...he did do that and they then showed all the kids at day care how to do it, too), stack firewood, shoot a gun and—most importantly—how to love unconditionally. Our biggest regret is he didn’t get a chance to take them hunting, something he’d been looking forward to doing.

My dad taught me how to be compassionate, hardworking, kind and responsible. He taught me the importance of taking care of others; Francis often took care of people by giving them jobs on the farm if they needed it and dad made sure that we also took care of our neighbors and helped each other out.

I am blessed to have had you as my dad, Kirk Malcolm Horn. I hope you’re chasing bears or riding horses or short-sheeting someone’s bed wherever you are. I hope Harriet and Francis and you are enjoying being together after so long apart.



**Emil Michael Sabol.** Emil was born May 6, 1924 in Ironwood Michigan to Joseph and Anna Sabol, who had emigrated from Croatia in 1910. He was one of seven children. Emil passed away February 25, 2019. He graduated from High School in Ironwood in 1941 then entered the CCC where he worked on various forestry projects. After the CCC Emil entered the Army Air Corps and became a B-17 bomber pilot in the Eighth Air Force in England during WWII. On a bombing mission over Germany he was shot down and became a POW in Stalag luft #1. Following his military service, he attended forestry school at Michigan State University. After a stint as Gogebic

County Forester Emil joined the Forest Service, the start of a 40-year career. He served on the Ottawa, The White River, Deschutes, Willamette, Rogue River and Olympic National Forests in various capacities including District Ranger and Forest Staff Officer. Emil's career ended after time in Portland where he was Branch Chief of Timber Sale Valuation and Preparation, an assignment as Deputy Director of Timber Management in the Northern Region and then in Washington where he served as Assistant Director of Timber Management. Emil retired in 1986.

Emil was a member of a number of professional and civic groups including the Society of American Foresters, Old Smokeys, the Masonic Order, the Elks, Kiwanis and Lions. He served as president of the Oregon Chapter of the National Association of the CCC alumni for 10 years and was a member of the VFW, American Ex-Prisoners of War and the 305th Bomb Group memorial association. Emil was an avid golfer since his caddy days in the 1930s and enjoyed playing in Oregon and Arizona.

Emil is survived by Dorine Tippet, his wife of 69 years, son David and daughters Jan Brosnan and Patricia Dreher, six grandchildren and eight great grandchildren. Burial was in the Willamette National Cemetery.

<https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/name/emil-sabol-obituary?pid=191741880>



**Cameron Murray Johnston.** Cam 71 of Missoula passed away February 18 from complications of influenza. He was born July 16, 1947 in Missoula to Murray and Jean Johnston. In his youth he shot competitive trapshooting and international /Olympic competition. He developed a love for the out of doors including fishing and hunting. He studied computer sciences at U of M. He married Leslie Hanson and raised four children; Kyle, Krista, Shelley and Shane. He began his Forest Service career while in college, working in the computer science department in the R.O.

He later transitioned to fire management where he excelled in numerous capacities including regional, districts, and fire research at the Missoula Fore Sciences laboratory until his retirement.

Cam supported his children and grandchildren in their activities. He spent time on the rivers and in the woods. Cam also enjoyed golfing, cribbage and coffee with the fellas. He is survived by his wife Leslie, his children and seven grandchildren.

[https://missoulian.com/news/local/obituaries/cameron-murray-johnston/article\\_1d47301a-d818-5a94-97f6-e05f6c9a26ab.html](https://missoulian.com/news/local/obituaries/cameron-murray-johnston/article_1d47301a-d818-5a94-97f6-e05f6c9a26ab.html)

*My apologies for condensing obituaries, but we would have a whole newsletter of obituaries if I did not do so. Links following each name will connect readers with the complete obituary in the newspaper if one was available. If the link does not bring up the obituary, just google the person's name and newspaper.*



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To help us keep our mailing list current, please send us a completed information form when you pay your annual dues. Those with life memberships (no longer available) should submit a form annually so we don't lose track of you. We operate on a calendar year membership so if you get back to us late, we will send you whatever newsletter you have missed. Members we don't hear from annually will be removed from our mailing list. If you have newly retired friends or friends who are not members, please encourage them to join us.

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Make checks payable to:

Northern Rocky Mountain Retiree Association (or NRMRA)

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Missoula, MT 59806

Dues are \$15 per calendar year (spouses free). Donations to the NRMRA or the National Museum of Forest Service History (NMFHS) are always welcome. The latter will be passed on.

I am a life member or spouse of (no dues payment required): Yes \_\_\_\_

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Newsletters will be sent by email to reduce printing and mailing costs.

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Ranger Bill Bell (third from right) and his crew at Elk Summit 1920. Ranger Bell is the ranger in Norman MacLean's story "The Ranger, the Cook and a Hole in the Sky."