



# NORTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAIN RETIREE ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2021

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Forest Service Retirees:

We've been living through a worldwide pandemic that many thought would be improbable. COVID has affected all of us in ways most never imagined. We're now beginning to see the light at the end of this troubled tunnel.

Thanks to those who have found effective vaccines we can look forward to returning to a time when we can meet without fear. Also, thanks to the leadership of the Museum of Mountain Flying, retirees have been able to assemble in person the last three months at the Museum. We appreciate being able to meet in a facility where we're able to socially distance.

We've had some great presentations. In January, Dave Stack discussed recent developments at the Museum of Forest Service History. In February, Bryan Douglas, a pilot and author of *Every Reason*

*to Fail*, spoke about Miss Montana and the mission to Normandy.



I hope you will be able to attend future meetings, spend time with friends, hear from and interact with those who cover interesting subjects. We will keep you informed about meetings as we transition into summer.

Tim Love

### Retiree Gatherings

- A **Coeur d'Alene** group of retirees meets weekly for coffee. If you are interested in joining them, contact Al Underwood at [abunder61@gmail.com](mailto:abunder61@gmail.com) or 208-664-3395
- **Missoula area** retirees are meeting monthly for lunch (bring your own lunch) and a talk. As soon as the weather is warm enough, we will move outside, most likely to the grassy area behind the Fort Missoula Historical Museum. This is a pretty safe group who are masked up and have had their Covid shots. Everyone within about an hour of Missoula will get an email notice of the gatherings. Hopefully by fall we will be able to go back to inside dining.
- **Helena area** retirees generally meet for a summer picnic and a Christmas party. Contact Maureen Cole [maureencole2616@gmail.com](mailto:maureencole2616@gmail.com)

# THE ONLY FORESTER AVAILABLE

by Tom Schenarts

My roommate and I headed west the evening of June 12, 1955 for jobs with the Forest Service. We had just graduated from UCONN and I had received three job offers. I picked the Priest Lake Ranger District on the Kaniksu NF in Nordman, Idaho because it was the farthest away. The last night on the road before we got to Nordman we slept on the floor of a tavern near Rathdrum, Idaho because it was pouring rain. On June 20<sup>th</sup>, my roommate left me at the Ranger Station in Nordman where the Ranger told me to dump my stuff in the bunkhouse and grab a lunch because I was off to fire school.

The evening of the third day of fire school (my birthday) we had a lightning storm and some of the guys from other Districts had to go home. The next morning, we went back to the Ranger Station and I was assigned with two others to a fire on Orwig Mountain. It was a tough climb and my introduction to buckbrush. We got to the big burning cedar tree in late afternoon. Working most of the night we felled the trees and put out the fire with the help of the rain that started. They had given me a heavy radio to pack, and I had no coat, only a cotton shirt. It rained hard as we made our way back through the downed timber and wet brush. The radio was useless, and we could not make contact with the station. I was tired, wet and cold and had not had a hot meal or a bed in five days. This was my introduction to the Forest Service.

It seemed like it rained at least part of every day in north Idaho that summer. At least I now had a warm bed in the bunkhouse and hot meals in the cookhouse. We made our own lunches from a

great array of food that was set up on tables in the hallway leading to the dining area. Because I had a tough time finding money and food for four years in college, I made very large lunches. One day after breakfast, I went to pick up my lunch sack and it was missing. The cook said “the Ranger wants to see you. I went to his office and there sat Ranger, Vern Erickson looking at this large cloth sack filled to the top so that it could not be closed. It was my



*Tom Schenarts*

lunch. He looked at me and then at the lunch and asked me if I really ate all that. I told him I did, and he said “Okay, just don’t waste any”.

Along about mid-August, Vern called me into his office where he was looking at a District map and some aerial photos. He said that they had to have surveys done in the Upper Priest country to determine the extent of the spruce bark beetle infestation. It was a large remote area and for safety reasons he should send two people, but I was the only forester available. “How do you feel about

going into this country alone and doing these surveys?” he asked. Having only been in north Idaho for about two and a half months and somewhat naive about the dangers involved, I thought this sounded like a great adventure. I told him I thought I could handle the job just fine.

The next morning, after a graphic description of safety concerns by Vern and others, I gathered my gear and supplies and headed north. The road went from gravel to dirt and ended at Hughes Meadows. At Hughes Meadows there was a cabin, a barn, corrals and a log garbage pit. It was the jumping off point to the wild country from there to the Canadian border. A hand cranked phone on the cabin wall was the only communication. The cabin had a porch, several bunks, a wood fired cook



*Hughes Cabin*

stove, couple of chairs, a table, some shelves and lots of atmosphere. The meadows were beautiful. This was to be my sometimes home and periodic check-in point with the ranger station.

For about a week I could work my surveys by hiking from Hughes Meadows and back each day. When the distance got too great, I carried my sleeping bag and some grub and slept out wherever I happened to be at the end of the day. I would stay

out until my grub gave out and had to hike back to the cabin for resupply. I would phone in and the folks at Nordman were always happy to hear I was still alive. One day back at the cabin, I fixed a really nice supper because I knew that the packer, Frank Stoner would be in late and hungry. Supper was pork chops, mashed potatoes, peas and cobbler for dessert. Frank came in and asked about supper. I told him what we were having, and he said “peas! I never eat peas”. He grabbed the pot of peas, went out on the porch and threw them into the night. We had corn.

There was plenty of danger. This was bear country including grizzlies. I worked mostly off trail, high on the mountain sides, where if I fell and got injured, they would never find me, and I could have gotten lost or sick. All I had was a pocket first aid kit. The only bears I saw were large grizzly tracks in the mud along Hughes creek. I was aware of bears, so I didn’t hesitate to make noise, even singing as I hiked on the trails. One other concern were illegals crossing into the US and some of the uranium prospectors, both which didn’t care much about encountering a “fed” back in the wilds. As I was hiking down the trail, not far from the Canadian border, I smelled wood smoke and came upon a campfire burning, complete with coffee boiling, dishes and camp gear but no people. I hollered but got no answer and I began to get this feeling of self-preservation. They were obviously close by and watching me. I left a note to be sure to put the fire out and got out of there. Another time, I ran into a group of five armed uranium prospectors who gave me kind of a bad time, thinking I was some sort of spy on their operations. I talked my way out of that situation. Except for Frank Stoner, the packer, those were the only people I met on the trail in three weeks.

The survey consisted of marking a point on a trail, taking a compass bearing at right angles up the mountain and following that bearing cross country stopping at specified intervals to take a plot. This consisted of inventorying the spruce trees and recording them a risk factor by observing the degree of spruce bark beetle damage. This was steep country with lots of downed trees and brush. It was where I learned about Devil's club, a large, leafed plant about 4-5 feet high with a main stalk and leaf undersides that were covered with nasty spines. After grabbing some for support in climbing, I carved a four-foot Samurai sword from a tree limb and then used it to hack my way through these demons.

Many nights I camped out except for a few when I found old, abandoned cabins. I spent a couple of nights at Rock Creek cabin which was still standing but had been abandoned but still had a decent roof. I also slept one night in an abandoned prospector or trappers shack near Malcolm Creek. The inside had a table, a bed frame with wire, a lot of rusted empty tin cans and smelled of decay and rodents. There was one window that had no glass but had two old crosscut saw blades nailed across it to keep out the bears. The key to the door was in a glass bottle that hung outside above the door which was common in those days. The lock still worked. I hauled in a good pile of fir boughs for a cushion on the bed. That night I awoke to sounds in the cabin. Turning on my headlamp I saw several sets of bright beady eyes-packrats. I threw something at

them and went back to sleep. I canceled my reservations and didn't stay another night.

After one of my long periods away from the cabin, I hiked backed to the cabin at Hughes Meadows for food and rest. After I phoned in to the ranger station, I cooked a big meal but before I could eat, the phone rang. It was the fire dispatcher telling me a lookout had reported a fire near the head of Upper Priest Lake. I was to take a fire pack, drive to the trail head about two miles away and hike a trail to the fire. Meanwhile, a fire crew with a pumper was headed out and should arrive about the time I would. It was about a four-mile hike in the dark. I hit the trail hard and was sweating even though the night was cool. When I arrived at the lake it was a bunch of campers at the Navigation campground who had a bonfire and lanterns hung in a tree. In about a half hour the Forest Service boat called the "submarine", with the crew arrived. I rode back in the boat and it was really cold because I was only wearing a sweat soaked cotton shirt and the life vest didn't provide much warmth. That night I got to sleep in a real bed with sheets and consumed a big breakfast before getting a ride back to my pickup to continue the surveys. It took about three weeks to finish the whole job. For a new forester in a new country who happened to be available, this was a Great Adventure.

*Tom worked on several districts in Idaho, the Regional Office in Missoula, and the Washington Office. He retired in 1988 and moved back to Missoula in 2005.*

## MONTANA SITE STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

by Kelly Keim

Ever wonder what secrets those Forest Service archies are guarding? Want to learn more about archeological sites in Montana? Better yet, want to help protect a site or two on Montana public lands?

Participate in the Montana Site Stewardship 2021 training weekend, learn lots, and become an official Site Steward.



Sites are being impacted by visitation, looting and natural forces and archaeologists could use your help monitoring those impacts. Site Stewards visit a site at least once a year to record its condition. You'll work with a federal archeologist for your site assignment based on your interest and practical considerations. Want a tipi ring site where you can imagine that nomadic life? A travois trail evolving into a recreational route. An historic mine complex (no underground duties required)? A site you can drive to or one in the back country? You'll need a vehicle, a camera and a sense of adventure. You'll be given information on your site and a monitoring form to guide your site inspection. You'll look for and document evidence of your visitation, vandalism, natural impacts, and general site condition. You'll get privileged information, keep secrets to protect the site, and possibly acquire an aura of importance and mystery. Are you ready?

First you must attend an annual Montana Site Stewards training weekend which includes a classroom session, transportation to a site for a day

of field monitoring, and a sack lunch for the field day. You are on your own for lodging and other meals.

The Montana Site Stewardship Program started as a partnership between the BLM and Project Archeology program based out of Montana State University. Soon after, the Forest Service signed on. The goal is to educate the public on the value of cultural resources and offer opportunities to get involved in site preservation. Questions? Ready to sign on? Contact Nancy Mahoney at [Nancymahoney@montana.edu](mailto:Nancymahoney@montana.edu)

*Kelly recently retired from her job as an archeology tech on the Lewis and Clark, based out of the Judith Ranger District at Stanford.*



## MEMBERSHIPS/NEWSLETTERS

by Vicky MacLean

I am going to try not including a membership form in the newsletter under the assumption that if you are getting a newsletter, you are a member. Please spread the word to nonmember retirees and encourage them to join. They can contact the editor at [agillabs@mcn.net](mailto:agillabs@mcn.net) or Vicky MacLean at P.O. Box 608, Ronan. MT 59864 for a membership application. Renewal notices will be sent out late winter. If your address is within about an hour of Missoula and if you have provided an email address you will get monthly lunch notices. My file of stockpiled articles is shrinking, and it would be great if you could share some of your FS stories or

even do a bit of research on a favorite FS topic and put together an article. Anything from 1 to 3 pages is perfect. Longer or shorter is also OK. Photos and artwork are welcome too. Please send electronic copies as your editor does not like to type.





## CLOSING THE LOOKOUT

by Larry Stone

It was in the late 1950's when Ranger Andy Arvish directed me to close the Gisborne Mtn. L.O. The lookout was located on the Priest River Experiment Station, which was part of the Falls Ranger District. The lookout was originally named "Looking Glass", I don't know how that name was chosen, but was changed to Gisborne. Harry T. Gisborne was a long time Director of the Experiment Station and was a renowned fire research forester. He developed such things as: the thermal belt, time-lag fuel moistures, 20 ft. wind speeds, and who knows what else. Harry died in 1949 of a heart attack while investigating the blow up fire behavior that happened on the Mann Gulch Fire in Montana; where 12 smokejumpers died as fire over ran them. Harry's death was the 13<sup>th</sup> fatality of that fire. Thus, Looking Glass was renamed Gisborne in his honor.

Anyway, it was just a routine day to button-up a L.O. for the winter. Arriving at the L.O. I discovered a strong wind must have happened after the L.O. had left at the end of the fire season, and had blown a shutter loose from its hinges, and it sailed way down over the hill. It was very obvious, as the white side was up; they are painted white on the outside and F.S. green on the inside, to reduce any reflections or glare. Well of course, it was laying on the forest floor with all that white paint shinning in the sunlight. As I prepared the L.O. for winter; I kept thinking of some excuse I could use for not seeing the blown away shutter. I hurriedly set forth removing the binoculars, radio, L.O. satchel - containing forms, records, etc. along

with any personal gear, got them to the ground. Then covered the fire finder, greased the stove, rolled & hung the mattress to keep any marauding mice from nesting- covered and tied down a bucket over the stove pipe; and then lowered and secured all the shutters, except ONE! It was time to head back... But I knew if I left that bank of windows open to the weather, there would be Hell to pay should wind and ice break the windows and fill the cabin with snow. So, I had to go after the shutter. I had to be down the hill 10 chains or so, but it seemed like a quarter mile. Getting there, I lifted and leaned it against my shoulder and with much staggering, sweat, and gasping for air; I got to the foot of the tower. Then I had to get it up three flights of stairs and through the trap door. Finally, I was on the catwalk, got the shutter up and nailed it in place. WHEW!



*Falls Ranger Station*

The next day I told the Ranger of the shutter situation, and that come spring we would need to take some bolts up to reattach it to the hinges. The

Ranger didn't say much, but I knew I'd done a good job. Then come spring, The Forest Carpenter, and a couple of helpers went up; built a new lookout tower, and the tower that I saved from winter's wrath – came down and was gone forever, never to be seen again. TRYING TO BE SKOOKUM AND GET AN ATTA-BOY DOESN'T ALWAYS WORK...

*\*Footnote:*

I got in late that night and hurried to the Cookhouse, as I looked in, I saw the tables were cleared and the Flunky was mopping the floor. The rules were: if you don't make it to supper on time, the next meal will be breakfast at 0630. The cook saw me staring in and motioned for me to come around back. As I waited at the back door,

soon the cook appeared with a full plate of grub and a hot cup of coffee. I sat on the back porch and enjoyed a fine F.S. meal. As cantankerous and hard-nosed the cooks tried to be they have a soft side and don't want to see any of their men go hungry.

*Larry started at the Falls R.S. in 1955 as a smokechaser, and was later promoted to Fire Dispatcher on the Clark Fork Dist. In 1962 and was promoted to FCO. In 1973 (during forest and District consolidation) he moved to the Sandpoint District as FMO and retired from there in 1990. He worked for another 18 years for the Idaho Dept. of Lands as a Forestry Tech. and continued as an I.C. on a Class II Fire Team. Some guys just have a hard time knowing when to quit.*

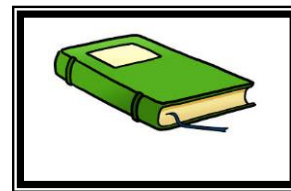


## BOOK REVIEW

by Vicky MacLean

**The Dreamer and the Doctor, A Forest Lover and a Physician on the Edge of the Frontier** by **Jack Nisbet** is a recently published (2018) book about plant lover John (Jack) Leiberg and his physician wife and their years in the Northwest in the late 1800s. He carried out botanical surveys on the Forest Reserves and provided maps for some

of the early Forest Reserve reports including those dated 1890 of the Bitterroot Reserve.



## PERMITTEES – FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE

by Vicky MacLean

Unlike some Forest Service projects such as a timber sale, a trail clearing contract or a fire, which are over and done with in a relatively short period

of time, grazing permits and permittees, for better or for worse, go on almost forever. Most of the permittees on my district (Helen District) were

second or third generation permittees. It is important to be able to get along with them and at the same time be the cow cop, an advocate, a mediator and to some extent, a friend. Years ago, at an SRM (Society for Range Management) meeting I saw a note on a bulletin board, obviously from a former student to his/her former professor; it read “you were right, its more about managing people than livestock”. I found this to be very true.

Permittees on the district were a mixed bag, as they are everywhere: one PhD, several with various ag related degrees, an engineer, some out of state transplants, and some who had attended school in a one room schoolhouse and maybe made it through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Some were bright, others not, some whose whole family was involved in ranching and one whose wife did not even know the ranch had a FS grazing permit when her husband died. Several of them still put-up hay with a beaver slide and a few still feed with horses. How the range management folks get along with the ranchers is critical to getting things done on the ground. Some choose to wield a big stick and others a slower approach with much instruction and persuading along with some occasional arm twisting. I always felt that time on the ground with a permittee (preferably on horseback) or at their kitchen table over a cup of coffee yielded better compliance results than phone calls and threatening letters. I did learn, however, that if I wanted to pass on unwelcomed information that the best time to call and leave a message was when I knew everyone would be out in the hayfields. The downside of this was that a permittee could work up a good head of steam and call back and scream at me later in the evening when I was in the shower. Its best to do some planning before you call to say, “you need to move cows now”.

The permittees, in many ways, were the best part of my job. That, along with days on horseback are the most memorable parts of my career. A number of ranchers are, for better or worse, what I remember most about my job. Some for perhaps one memorable incident, others for a general long term good or bad relationship. Following are some reminisces about a few of my most unforgettable permittees.



*The author moonlighting on a hay crew.*

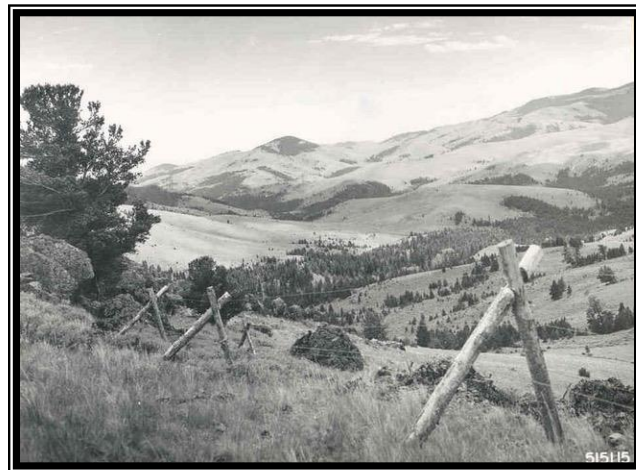
Norm A. was a neighbor, an elderly fellow who ran a small herd just west of town on Mount Helena. Every winter I braved his terrible long steep driveway to have coffee (I hate coffee) and cookies with him and his wife, Margaret, to rehash the previous grazing season and plan for the upcoming season. Every summer I spent one day in the field weed spraying with him. He was a fanatic about weeds. Of course, there was much chatting and philosophizing and much to my surprise, when Dorothy Bradley was running for governor in the early 1990s, he talked about how good it would be to have a woman governor! His most memorable comment though, was the day he said to me “we need to find you a nice young rancher” I almost choked – on the one hand it was sweet and thoughtful of him, but on the other hand visions of 3 bachelor permittees flashed through my mind: two geezers, one who was a terrible drunk and the



other who looked pretty much like a homeless person, and the third, who was a very odd duck.

Many of the district permittees lived “over Mac Pass” in the Elliston/Avon and Deerlodge areas. These were small town folks most of whom had grown up on the family ranch. Though not politically correct to have favorites, some of my favorites were John and Margaret. John was a second or perhaps third generation permittee. He grew up on the ranch and had attended a one room schoolhouse down the road. In the past his family had been in the sheep business, having switched to cattle in the early 1980s. John was a joy to ride with and he was full of area history information. He also had stories about accompanying his father, in a horse drawn wagon, to supply their herders’ camps on their sheep range. He pondered the fate of his ranch; the daughters had left, the son was on the ranch, but his boys had no interest in ranching. It obviously weighed heavily on him. On several occasions I helped move cows with him onto the Forest in the early summer and helped with gathering cows in the fall. The fall roundup was accompanied by a wonderful picnic at the old Hat Creek homestead surrounded by National Forest land. There was an old homestead cabin and a newer one, also a grove of aspen trees that were a bright shimmering yellow at the time of their off date. One winter I invited myself to go feeding with him. He still fed with horses and it took me back in time, rocking and lurching from side to side in a hay wagon out to the stacks. The horses knew where they were going, and I learned how hard it was to pitch hay from a moving wagon while standing on a load of loose hay. After we were done my face was red from the cold, my feet and fingers were tingling, we unhitched horses and went in for coffee and our annual meeting. To this day I wish I had thought to bring along a camera.

They no longer feed with horses and John is in his 80s. His ranch is on the way back to Helena and I sometimes stop in to see them when I am headed that way.



*North Crow Allotment, Helena National Forest*

Annual winter permittee meetings in Avon were a tradition. I tried to schedule several days over there to catch up with as many ranchers as I could. As per their request this had to be after they were done with the morning feeding and before calving season started. This time of year, usually meant cold, sparkling blue sky days. First stop was always John and Margaret’s place as mentioned above. I always choked down some coffee, laced with lots of milk and sugar and they never figured out that I really was not a coffee drinker. Next stop was down highway 12 at the adjacent ranch. This ranch is the one along highway 12 with the big haystacks and several beaver slides. I always had lunch here while going over the previous season’s grazing inspection notes and got caught up on the local gossip. The most terrible piece of gossip was not whose daughter was pregnant or who was having an affair, but who had switched from beaver slides and loose stacks to round bales! Over the years I watched their children grow up and was invited to their graduation parties and weddings. These

permittees came to my retirement party and gave me the gift of a shovel and work gloves so I could come help with irrigating. I never got into irrigating, but I spent considerable time running a dump rake there during haying season. I still keep in touch with these folks, and we exchange cookies at Christmas time.

Next stop was usually the Avon Café. I had a good relationship with the Avon Café. Two bachelor permittees usually ate here and since they either didn't have answering machines or didn't return calls, the cafe was my connection. "Hello this is Vicky from the Forest Service, is Hank there?" then depending on the answer it would be "could you put him on the phone" or "next time he's in would you ask him to call me". With a few phone calls and messages, I could connect and plan two meetings at the café where someone usually insisted in buying me a piece of pie. But let me go back a bit in time to an earlier meeting with Hank. It was one of my early years on the forest. My boss, Kurt Cuneo, and I set up a meeting with Hank at his place, an old homestead built of hewn logs. It was a rancher's version of a bachelor pad; messy, dirty and the final straw – mouse poop all over the kitchen table. Kurt and I hightailed it out of there as fast as we could and that's how meetings at the cafe got started.

Having survived the first shift of winter meetings I would write up my notes then plan a day in Deerlodge. There were three permittees over here. The very memorable permittee here was Lars O. who was rather portly and lived in a tumble-down old house and was retired from his day job as a school bus driver. His wife still had an "outside" job and was never home when I stopped by. Every year I heard about his heart attack and subsequent surgery. One year he showed me his scar before I had the chance to say "NO!" – yikes – never again.

He, or perhaps it was his wife, also had an enormous collection of Beanie Babies which more than once I had to look at before I could head back to the district. I thought this was a very odd thing for a rancher to collect. Perhaps they thought this would be a good retirement investment?

Meanwhile, east of the divide, the permittees were a bit more urban and presented a bit less of a united front as the permittees from over the pass who were used to taking care of problems themselves. One advantage to this was that often their neighbors gossiped and inadvertently provided useful information. One day I was riding outside of the little town of Clancy and ran into a hiker and got to chatting. I asked how far he had hiked, and he said something like "from the old Dennis ranch". My ears perked up, I was sure that was one permittee's base property. A little research when I got back to my computer and the Montana Cadastral site revealed that the base property was now a little subdivision. No base property, no grazing permit. Goodbye permittee.

Don B. was one of my educated, well-traveled permittees. He had a registered herd of Simmentals and was very much into the genetics of cattle breeding. For years he took an annual trip to Africa with a local large animal veterinarian to put on seminars about cattle breeding and management. Don also had Parkinson's disease and was very unsteady on his feet. One of his prized possessions was a cane made from a bull penis. The last time I ran into him was at the Helena airport. Don was there, cane in hand and, forgetting that I had seen the cane before, asked me if I knew what it was made of. When I announced "a bull penis" I am sure he thought I was the smartest Forest Service employee that ever existed!



*Peters Spring – Spotted Dog Allotment*

Also in the Clancy area was an old homestead surrounded totally by FS land of the Big Buffalo Allotment. This was owned by two out of state doctors (Drs. H. and E.) who knew nothing about ranching. Sometimes there were ranch hands there which I am sure had just been picked up at the homeless shelter in Helena. Mostly the cattle were just not managed. Cows were everywhere, they calved all year long. Dr. E. lived at the old homestead part of the time. About 6 miles of

boundary fence enclosed the homestead. It was never maintained. I spent an inordinate amount of time calling, writing threatening letters, and inspecting fences, all to no avail. He never replied or complied. I even made one trip to the ranch with our Law Enforcement Officer to talk to Dr. E. One spring I found salt blocks up on the Forest in April and a trail cut onto the forest from ranch headquarters. That was the final straw and the end of what remained of his permit. This ended up in Federal court where I was the main witness. We won, he lost. You would think that would have been the end of the story, but several months later Dr. E. called and asked me for a date! I was sure he was plotting to murder me.

*Vicky worked in range on the Helena Forest from 1988 to 2008. She is retired and lives in Ronan, MT.*



## RANGER ROLL CALL MUSEUM PROJECT

by Dave Stack

In 2020 the Museum started the “Ranger Roll Call” as a way of remembering the importance of the Ranger. Museum Curator Dave Stack, with help from volunteer Samantha Hamilton (graduate student at San Jose State University), other volunteers and Forest Service staff are working to collect the names of every District Ranger on each National Forest and Grassland (and their years of service) back to 1905. Twenty-six National Forests lists are complete, and lists are under development on many additional forests.

The link to these records in the Museum’s online collection: [National Museum of Forest Service History Online Collection](#).

### **William “Billy” Kreutzer**

William “Billy” Kreutzer was born near Sedilia Colorado in 1877 and was an experienced cattleman and horseman. He was appointed the first Ranger of the Forest Reserves in 1898. His letter of appointment outlined his duties; “To protect the public forests from fire or any other

means of injury to the timber growing in said reserves.”



*William "Billy" Kreutzer*

His job was to protect the Plum Creek Timber Reserve which later became part of the Pike National Forest. He later was assigned to other Colorado Reserves, eventually becoming the

Supervisor on the Gunnison Forest and the Roosevelt Forest. He died in Fort Collins Colorado in 1956.

In Region 1 the Ranger Roll Call research indicates that there have been several long serving rangers in Montana. Marshall Ramsey served on the Beaverhead from 1917 to 1940. He first served at the Battlefield ranger station, then in Wisdom when those two districts were combined.

Vergil Lindsey served on the Beaverhead on the Ennis District starting in 1967 then on the Madison District when districts were consolidated, until 1988. Currently Mike Munoz from the Rocky Mountain District is aiming to break these records.

*Sources: "Saga of Forest Ranger: A biography of William Kreutzer, Forest Ranger No. 1 by Len Shoemaker. Gifford Pinchot letter, Aug 17, 1944, included in Shoemaker's book; historic newspapers at newspapers.com*



## FOREST SERVICE MUSEUM NEWS

by Ed Levert

As the new R-1 director for the National Museum of Forest Service History, I have been assigned a number of tasks that are important for completing the mission of the Museum. One is obviously to improve the knowledge of FS retirees, FS employees and the public about the rich history and important work of the museum. Other tasks include continuing to collect important artifacts, oral and written histories of retired employees and events and to build the new Conservation Legacy Center to properly house and display these collections.

Currently the "Ranger Roll Call" is being compiled of all the recorded district rangers in the United States. Many of R-1 Forests are completed, but we still lack complete information on the Custer Gallatin, Dakota Prairie Grass Lands, Lolo, Helena, Lewis and Clark, Bitterroot, Flathead and Idaho Panhandle(IPH). Vicky Maclean and Dave Stack have led the effort in compiling much of this information, but investigative work is still necessary to complete the job.

There are a number of efforts that are ongoing, but numerous opportunities exist to further the



Museum objectives. Gary Rahm, IPH Cadre liaison is currently doing oral interviews of retired employees. He feels that women and technicians have been overlooked in our history. Another opportunity includes organizing retiree gatherings across Region One. Museum staff members are willing to do a Zoom presentation to retiree groups about the Museum. Fund raising includes increasing Museum memberships, the annual silent auction and sponsoring “Teddy Events”. A

“Teddy Event” is a wine and cheese social that include a Teddy Roosevelt illustorian and a silent auction.

**You can help.** We need a liaison for each Forest. Volunteers are wanted for the Flathead, Lolo, Bitterroot, Gallatin and Kootenai. If you would like to help please contact me at (406) 293-2847 or at [televert@kvis.net](mailto:televert@kvis.net). You can make a difference.



## CONNIE SAYLOR-JOHNSON WILDERNESS EDUCATION FUND

Connie was a wilderness ranger on the Nez Perce for 20 years. She was an educator specializing in young folks and organized the volunteers and Forest Service children’s education day at the Historic Lochsa Ranger Station. Connie went missing in the fall of 2018 when she was working as a cook for an outfitter in the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness. She was in camp with her dog while the outfitter was moving camp to a different location. When he got back to camp Connie and her dog, Ace, were missing. A large air and ground found. Three weeks later her dog showed up at the Moose Creek Ranger Station.

The Selway Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation is working to establish a sustainable \$50,000 scholarship fund, in memory of Connie for teachers engaged in Wilderness Resources and its

Stewardship. At the present time the foundation is focusing on fund raising and hopes to be accepting grant applications in the spring of 2021 for award in 2022. Donations may be made through the SBFC website at [www.selwaybitterroot.org](http://www.selwaybitterroot.org) The Foundation will most likely not be accepting grant applications until the spring of 2021, for award in 2022.



*Pack Bridge*

Jack Puckett is looking for information about the Lochsa pack bridges; construction dates, removal or replacements, incidents in construction and so on. You can email Jack at [jack.lois2307@gmail.com](mailto:jack.lois2307@gmail.com)



## THE MUSEUM OF MOUNTAIN FLYING

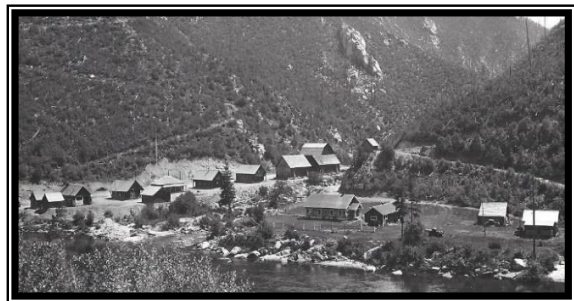
The Museum of Mountain Flying in Missoula will be open from Memorial Day to Labor Day it is located just east of the Missoula airport. The museum has a variety of planes associated with the Forest Service and mountain flying including the plane that dropped smoke jumpers on the Mann Gulch fire. This summer the museum will host a B-17 bomber from the Commemorative Airforce on August 3 through 8<sup>th</sup>. There will be tours of the plane as well as some flights. Details of the Missoula stop can be found on the following link.

<https://www.azcaf.org/location/missoula-mt-tour-stop/> There are other stops all over the country which are listed on their tour schedule on their web site [www.azcaf.org](http://www.azcaf.org)



*Beargrass blooms about the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. If you put the stalks in water with red and blue dye, the flowers will absorb the color and you will have a red, white, and blue.*

The National Museum of Forest Service History Visitor Center will be open for the summer from Memorial Day through Labor Day from 10:00 to 4:00. This is located on Broadway west of the Missoula airport. There will be some new trails and signage added this summer and the lookout exhibit will be completed. The gift shop will be open. Volunteers are welcome. Contact Lisa Tate at [lisa.tate@forestserviceuseum.org](mailto:lisa.tate@forestserviceuseum.org)



*The Bungalow Ranger Station in 1935. The ranger's dwelling in the center is now the visitor center/gift shop at the Museum site.*



## ADVENTURES ON THE LINCOLN DISTRICT

by Jerry Stern

### Ambulance Duty

I was “drafted” into the Lincoln Volunteer Fire Department and all members were also assigned ambulance duty. My partner was a tough local named Mortz Weiderhold. We had many experiences, and I will tell of four.

If accident victims were dead, we left them and called the coroner. Drunk drivers were the worst to deal with. At one pick up, I was driving, and Mort was attending when our patient started to vomit. Soon I heard both vomiting and tough Mort had the window open

We were called to Doc Smith’s office where a pregnant woman was in labor. She had borne about 10 kids before but had gone swimming in the cold river and started in labor. We had three choices to get her to a hospital: 80 miles to Great Falls, 70 miles to Missoula or 25 miles to Helena over washboard gravel. We chose Helena. Of course, tough Mortz jumped in the driver seat and I was in attendance counting the time between contractions. “Faster Mortz, faster Mortz” were my words. We radioed ahead and were met at Emergency. She had the baby in the elevator. I had delivered many animals but never a woman. A close call!

Don Roos was also a driver and District FCO (Fire Control Officer). Our ambulance was

equipped with a siren and Don loved to use it. We always knew when he was driving.

A lady at a local truck stop fell and broke her hip and pelvis while helping unload a truck. We immobilized her as best we could and started to Great Falls. Tough Mortz was again driving, and I was in attendance. The ambulance was equipped with two cots, and the lady’s husband took the second cot and fell asleep. Every little bump or jiggle really hurt her. She was crying and asking “Jerry, would you hold my hand?” We often wondered if they stayed married!

*Jerry was the District Ranger in Lincoln, Helena National Forest in the 1960s. He lives in Sagle, Idaho.*



*Lincoln District Office 1969*





## WE REMEMBER



**John Baker** – was born August 31, 1942 to Raymond and Avis Baker. He passed away August 31, 2020 in Missoula Montana. John grew up in Springfield Missouri. In 1961 he enlisted in the U.S. Marion Corps Reserves and served until 1967. He then attended Missouri State University where he graduated with a degree in accounting. In 1968 he married Ann Gambill, then had one child, Gregg. John worked for the Forest Service for 32 years and retired from his position as Branch Chief of Financial Management at the Washington Office in 1998. He lived in Missoula since his retirement.

John loved to fish, hunt and golf. He enjoyed watching Griz football and basketball, He loved to tie flies and was a long-time member of Trout Unlimited. John is survived by his son, Gregg Baker, a granddaughter, twin sisters and numerous nieces and nephews.



**John Wesley DeYoung** – passed away September 27, 2020 in Mesa Arizona. He was born December 27, 1943 to John Wesley and Mary Louise DeYoung and grew up on the family cherry orchard on Flathead Lake. He was married to his high school sweetheart Linda Lee Dickson for 51 years until her passing in 2014. He was then married to Myrna Jayne Hinton until his passing.

John graduated from the University of Montana with a degree in Business and worked for the Forest Service as an administrative Officer for the Kootenai National Forest.

John is survived by his wife and her children Chad and Darren and their children and grandchildren, also by his children Sean and John, three grandchildren and two great granddaughters. John is also survived by his brother Gary and sister Nancy.

**Nancy Bergetta Bird Deden** - wife of Richard Deden. October 13, 1937 – December 27, 2020.

**Carolee Kambich Fifield of Butte** - wife of Norman Fifield. June 28, 1938 – October 22, 2020.

**Helen MacKenzie** - wife of William (Bill) H. MacKenzie. May 11, 1926 – August 31, 2020.





**Tom Heintz** of Twin Bridges passed away of a heart attack while hunting in the Greenhorn Mountains southwest of Sheridan Montana on November 24, 2020. Tom was born May 16, 1953 to Willmer and Ella Heintz in Pierre South Dakota. At a young age he developed a love of horses, hunting and the outdoors. After graduating from high school, he attended South Dakota State University where he earned a degree in range management.

Several years after graduation Tom accepted his first job with the Forest Service in Wisdom Montana. This was the start of a 38-year career which took him to Ashland MT, Lemmon SD, Philipsburg and Dillon MT. Tom served as a district ranger and also held several positions in the Beaverhead-Deerlodge S.O. Tom was also a wildland firefighter and an Incident Commander on a type 2 team.

Tom is survived by his wife Judy, sons Justin, Jason, Dan, and daughter Heather. 8 grandchildren, his 3 brothers and a sister.



**Roger Wesley Helms** – was born in Eureka on December 4, 1934 to Hubert and Rachel Helms. Roger passed away on October 29, 2020 in Missoula. He graduated from Gonzaga in 1957 with a degree in Business Management and started work for the Flathead Forest as a trainee shortly after graduation. His career took him to the Lewis and Clark, the Nez Perce, Helena, and Gallatin Forests. His final position was at the Regional Office in Missoula in the manpower program branch where he remained until his retirement in 1989.

After many years of bachelorhood Roger married Kaye Carter who predeceased him in 2015. He enjoyed watching sports on TV and playing golf. Roger is survived by stepson Richard Carter, three granddaughters, six great grandchildren and six great- great grandchildren and numerous cousins.

**James G. Huntley** of Grangeville Idaho passed away November 20, 2020. He was born April 9, 1940 in Nevada, one of 8 children of Guy Huntley and Ada Poland. He spent most of his life in Idaho where he hunted to feed his family. He married Joan Campbell and together had 2 sons. They divorced shortly after that and he married Doroleta Pratt. Together for 40 years they had fun enjoying each other.

James retired from the Forest Service in 1993 and afterwards enjoyed time involved with the Huntley National Association, Sons of the American Revolution, and the Idaho County Historic Preservation Commission. He was preceded in death by his wife Doroleta, a sister and 6 brothers. He is survived by 2 brothers, a stepson, his sons James and Shawn and a companion Michelle Ball.

James ended his obituary with “if there happens to be a celebration of my life come have a few drinks, a good time and never take life very seriously.”



**William Pfeifer** – of Mesquite, Nevada passed away on December 2, 2020 from COVID -19. He was born May 7, 1953 in Hayward California to Oscar and Lucille Poppe Pfeifer. He served in the Air Force from 1971 to 1975 and later in the Army National Guard. In 1976 he married Jayne Cook.

Bill worked for the Department of Justice and the Forest Service. After his retirement he taught contracting law courses for the Northwest Procurement Institute and Managements Concepts Inc.

Bill was very involved in community service, especially the Montana Lions Club. He is survived by his wife Jayne, sisters Luella, Charlotte and Machele, and brother John.



**Glade William Roberts** was born in American Fork Utah on August 25, 1927 to Ralph Joseph and Lorena Maude Roberts. He passed away on February 17 of 2021. He was preceded in death by Dora Dean Roberts, his wife of 73 years and his three brothers. He grew up outdoors helping his father herd sheep in the Uintah and Wasatch National Forests. He was an Eagle Scout, joined the Civil Air Patrol and enlisted in the Navy after his junior year in high school. After the Navy he finished high school and studied engineering at Utah State University. His first job was with the Bureau of Public Roads in Alaska where he and his wife and to small children lived in a 9x9 tent. His jobs took him all over the United States and he retired from the Regional Office in Missoula as the Assistant Regional Engineer.

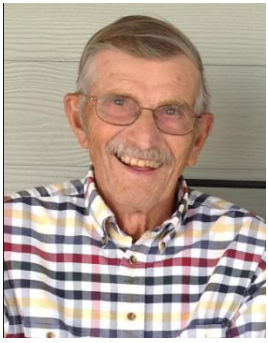
After retirement he worked in Saudi Arabia designing water systems and the National Arabian Horse Center. In 1987 he joined the Peace Corps in Malawi Africa where he designed and oversaw construction of schools and hospitals. After that he spent time working for the Norwegian Refugee Council in Malawi. After really retiring he and Dora became snowbirds and enjoyed many outdoor activities including flying into back country airstrips in Idaho for camping trips. Glade and Dora had four children, 16 grandchildren, 22 great grandchildren and 2 great-great grandchildren.



**Jeff Scussel** of Florence, Montana died of Covid on November 19, 2020. Jeff was born in New York City on October 6, 1946 to Gelso Scussel and Tatianna Rewiski Scussel. He graduated from Northern Arizona University with a degree in forestry then spent 40 years working for the Forest Service in California, Alaska, and Montana. In California he met and married Tracy. Children Tanya, Chad, and Tammy came along as his career moved him around the west. Along with children were his beloved Labradors Ben, Brandy, Hunter, and Gunnar.

During his tie in Libby, Jeff found his passion for firefighting and became a Type 1 plans chief. A move to the Regional Office in Missoula where he worked in Fire and Aviation was his last position before he retired in 2008.

Jeff was a member of the Church of Latter-Day Saints where he served in many leadership capacities. He is survived by his children and 12 grandchildren.



**Vern Thompson** – passed away November 17, 2020 at the age of 97, only two months after his wife Roxana. Vern was born in Wisconsin. After a stint in the Coast Guard in WWII he and Roxana moved to Missoula where they were married in 1947. Vern studied forestry and range management at the University of Montana. His first Forest Service job was on the Lolo where he and Roxana were fire lookouts. He worked for the BLM in eastern Montana then started with the Forest Service in Nye Montana. He had ranger jobs at Ennis and Livingston, staff jobs on the St Joe, Regional Office, and the Custer. He was Forest Supervisor on the Humboldt and finished up his career on the Washington Office where he retired after 30 years of service.

Vern spent much of his time on horseback in some of the most beautiful country in the world. He loved Montana, reading, talking with ranchers and environmentalists. After his retirement Vern lived in Arlee, Missoula, and Florence. Vern is survived by a sister, four daughters, four grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

**Roxana Thompson** - of Florence died September 11, 2020 at 92 years of age. Wife of Vern Thompson.



**Deanna Williams** – of Tucson, Arizona passed away September 21, 2020 with her husband of 62 years, Jerry at her side. She worked at the Regional Office and retired as Director of the FS National Advanced Fire and resource Center in Tucson.

**Dick Wilkinson** – passed away July 29, 2020 with family by his side, He was born June 19, 1942 to Alvin and Alice Wilkinson in Missoula and was raised and spent most of his life in Superior, Montana. He participated in high school sports and after graduation attended Whitworth University. After college he enlisted in the Army where he served in the Signal Corps for three years.



Upon returning to Superior Dick married Karolee Courser and together they had three daughters. They later divorced but remained friends. He went to work at the Superior Ranger Station for 42 years where he was a wildland firefighter and retired when he was a civil engineering tech. Dick had many interests: he loved to travel and play all sorts of games with friends and family. He was a Seahawk and Griz fan. He was a gifted musician and played the guitar and sang,

Dick is survived by his three daughters, two brothers, three bonus daughters, eighteen grandchildren, one great grandchild, several nieces, and a nephew.

***Note:** more complete obituaries may be found by googling the deceased's name. Also, it has been decided that due to space limitations spouses who were not FS employees will just be listed in this section of the newsletter.*

**Northern Rocky Mountain Retiree Association**

P.O. Box 3215  
Missoula, Montana 59806

[Type the recipient name]

[Type the recipient address]

This photo of an unknown Ranger Station was found in an album with many photos from the old Madison Forest, however it does not appear to be any of the stations on the Madison. The museum has been unable to track down information on the photo number. Do you know where this is?

