



ALUMNI NEWS



JUNE 2020

Our NSP alumni members are the heart and soul of the organization

With our alumni ranks growing to near 5,000 members, here are capsules of several alumni making a positive difference for their patrols, the NSP and our country. Long-term NSP members populate our ranks; some use the program to bridge a gap in active NSP service when “life gets in the way”, while many alumni remain “super achievers”! Here are several examples:



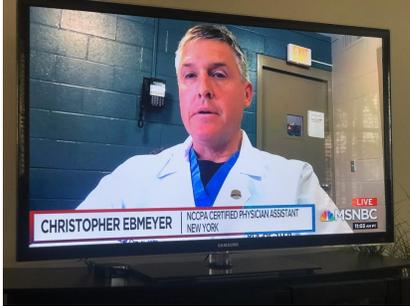
Meet **Denis VanWinkle**, who used the alumni program to bridge a gap in his active NSP status. Denis joined the Willamette, Oregon, Backcountry Ski Patrol, Pacific Northwest Division in the mid-90’s as a volunteer patroller and held several patrol positions including Finance Director and Patrol Director.

When his work situation changed and he inherited expanded duties, Denis also realized that he would not be able to stay fully active as a patroller.

Denis switched to alumni status and kept up his OEC refreshers and yearly training, remaining as active in the patrol as he could with his work and family obligations.

Following retirement from his “day job” in 2013, he returned to full patroller status and, this year, his patrol honored Denis with their “Outstanding Patroller” award. Whatever your reason for choosing it, the alumni program is a great way to stay connected!

Cheer on **Christopher A. Ebmeyer**, RPA-C, taking a lead role in the COVID-19 response. Here are his own words as a patroller and medical professional, “I first learned to ski at age 2 in upstate New York. My father was a member of the Swain Ski Patrol eventually becoming the Patrol Director and, attaining his National



number.

"Early on my brother and I, along with some of the other patrollers' kids, formed a tight knit group of 'Patrol Brats' terrorizing the slopes, yet in awe of the dedication and true camaraderie we would see from such a tight knit group of volunteers. We spent years anxiously awaiting the time to pass so we too could join the ranks of the Ski Patrol.

"My mother would join the Patrol as an Auxiliary, and then my brother became a member of the Swain Jr. Ski Patrol in 1981. A year later in 1982 I became a Junior Ski Patroller. All of the friends we grew up skiing with joined the patrol as well. As a group, would go on to travel to Crested Butte Colorado in 1983 to attend the National Jr. Ski Patrol Conference, which was such an amazing experience.

"Having grown up being around injured skiers and watching how the members of the Ski Patrol would administer first aid and emergency care, really sparked my interest in Emergency Medicine. I continued to Patrol through college, but upon graduation in an unrelated field, I felt the need to pursue something else. Something that I had been around my entire life.

"I decided to attend Physician Assistant School at Hahnemann University in Philadelphia PA. During my short school breaks I continued to patrol at Swain and upon graduation took my first job in San Diego, California. I was able to transfer to the Bear Mountain Ski Patrol for the duration of my stay, until moving back East.

"I joined the Hunt Hollow Ski Patrol in 1993 and remained an Alpine Sr. Patroller until deciding to become an Alumni after nearly 32 years of active patrolling. After 29 years practicing medicine, I find myself on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic, covering a 20 bed Intensive Care unit for 14 hours a night. I work alone as an Intensivist Advanced Practice Provider (APP), filling a role and performing invasive procedures typically done by a Physician.

"I feel that I owe my career and love for Critical Medicine to those 'early years' watching my father, and the other patrollers doing something that they truly loved. I feel honored to have been and remain a member of such a noble organization; the National Ski Patrol."

Well stated, and thank you from your fellow alumni!



Active alumni programs

Some of you have wondered what makes NSP alumni programs tick across the country. Here is one summary from the Western New York Region Alumni Program in the Eastern Division.

Joan Reynolds, veteran alumni member and active in western New York, shares these observations: "Western New York Region

alumni consist of an estimated 100 members in good standing. Many of them live out of state, but those that have remained in close proximity to our ski area have been the most active.

I took on the region alumni advisor position along with my long-time patroller friend Rita Wolf in 1996. She and I worked together patrolling together at Holiday Valley for over 50 years. I spent six years of that time as patrol director with Rita as my assistant. It was a breakthrough at that time to have women in this leadership position. The six years reflect three elected terms, so we must have been doing something right.

When the alumni came into existence in our area some 25 years ago, Rita and I took on the task as region alumni advisors. To my knowledge, we were the first to serve as active advisors in our region. The first WNY Region Alumni Day was held in March 1997 at Holiday Valley in Ellicottville, NY with complimentary lift tickets graciously provided by the Holiday Valley Resort for each alumni patroller and their guest. The day also included an expansive lunch prepared by alumni chefs, grilled hot hogs and many side dishes with plenty of dessert choices. Everyone had such a great time we decided to make it an annual event. So for the past 23 years, we have hosted Alumni Day at Holiday Valley, usually the first Friday of March. We typically have 40 to 50 alumni and their guests participate each year and it's a golden opportunity to reconnect with fellow patrollers from around the region.

The events are so well received that alumni members and their guests look forward to returning each year for the great skiing, great lunch and great fellowship. The menu still includes grilled hot dogs along with quite a spread. Expenses are picked up by the Region, and most alumni bring their specialty dishes to share.

After the passing of my dear friend Rita, Don Weaver came on board as my assistant in 2013. I received names of active alumni each year from Al Pels until his passing. E-mails and/or phone calls are made to the alumni notifying them of the upcoming Alumni Day and requesting RSVPs to help with the planning. Posters are also designed and posted in the region's patrol rooms.

Most of our members have retired from their careers although there is a younger contingent that left active patrolling early, have registered as alumni to stay connected and join in for alumni day. Some alumni are still active instructors at the eight ski areas in our region.

We are unique in the fact that we have eight ski areas in the WNY Region all within a 2-hour drive of each other. With the Holiday Valley Resort centrally located, the relatively short travel time is helpful to the success of the alumni program.

Submitted by Joan Reynolds, National Appointment #4591, a veteran patroller of the Holiday Valley Ski Patrol for the past 56 years and currently patroller emeritus. Joan is known as the Patrol's "Energizer bunny"; she's always into multiple jobs and eager to help in any role. Joan has served as Patrol Director, OEC instructor, CPR instructor, Awards Committee Chair and heading up the Holiday Valley winter carnival pancake breakfast since 1964.

Notes Allan Miller, Eastern Division alumni advisor, "The success of the WNY Region's alumni program is directly related to Joan's enthusiasm and leadership over the past quarter-century".

Special thanks, to Central Division's long-time alumni advisor, Mark Holtan. Mark's busy life has him stepping back from some of his NSP tasks – we offer a special thanks for Mark's energy and



enthusiastic support of our alumni and building the alumni program in the Central Division!

Seeking NSP involvement opportunities?

Often, your old patrol or region has a need for veterans with special talents (they might be administrative, marketing skills, organizational and the like). Alumni talents are sometimes overlooked, so seek opportunities out if you have that interest. And, don't overlook growing NSP bike patrols and mountain host programs as renewed involvement opportunities for alumni. For future alumni options to get more involved, consider:

Special events involving your old patrol or region/division: Check with your patrol and regional leadership, and...volunteer. Or, consider a few larger events, like those, below!

Volunteer at the huge Sea Otter Bike Classic, Ft. Ord National Monument between Monterey and Salinas, CA, scheduled for October 1-4, 2020: Be part of a 60 person bike and trail first-aid safety patrol to watch over 10,000 competitors over four days of intense downhill, cross-country, road bike, dual slalom and Gran Fondo races, handling 100+ first aid codes, making new friends, then disbanding after four days. Alumni and family can join as course marshals for the National Ski Patrol first aid and safety patrol that serves the huge Sea Otter bicycle classic, each year for the past 16 years. As an additional plus, each participant gets free camping, lunch, t-shirt and their patrol receives a donation for their service. For more insight, please go to:

[Sea Otter flyer.](#)

Join us in Whitefish, MT, for our annual Alumni Celebration Week, February 28 to March 6, 2021: Join fellow alumni, family and friends for 4 days or a week of exciting skiing, tours into Glacier National Park and revisiting old NSP yarns. We have a special rate for one of the nicest hotels in the area, just \$79 a night, and Whitefish Mountain, annually rated in the top 30 ski and board destinations in the US, offers special low rates for seniors over 62, and really low rates for seniors over 70. Fun for alumni, family and friends! For more info, please download [the flyer.](#)

Promoting the NSP Alumni Program

If you know of a patroller who is considering either retiring from active patrolling or in need of a temporary break, please suggest they speak with either their Patrol Representative/Patrol Director or local Patrol Alumni Representative about the opportunities and benefits of the Alumni Program. For a link to the "Become a Member Today" form, click button below or go to the Alumni page in Member Resources at nsp.org. Also, feel free to forward this copy of Alumni News to others who may benefit from it.



[Download the "Become An Alumni Member" form](#)

Enjoy the summer season, shelter in place and remain resolute! If you have ideas for future issues of the Alumni News, contact your National Alumni Advisor, Tim Viall, tviall@msn.com.

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