

Celebrate our NSP Alumni!



Celebrate!

NSP alumni members: 5,000 strong

In July, 2020, NSP alumni members topped the 5,000 number; we tip our hat to our active alumni in this new “Celebrate our Alumni” feature on the NSP’s Alumni website page. Here are recent profiles of alumni doing good work!

Donna Short, long-time Nordic patroller, now active alumni member:

Five of Donna’s Forest Service colleagues were some of the first Nordic patrollers at Crater Lake National Park. She started as a volunteer patroller for the 1988-89 season and was hooked. Becoming an NSP patroller was her next step during this time. She took WEC (now OEC) with the aspiring patrollers from the Santiam Pass Patrol and her Nordic skills test was quite memorable as Donna had to set up the Z pulley system inside the rim of the crater! Passing all tests, she became a full NSP patroller for the 1992-93 season.

In 1996, the Willamette Backcountry Patrol allowed Donna and several others to register with that patrol while doing all our patrol days at Crater Lake. A highlight from this period was traveling to Washington, D.C. when the Crater Lake Ski Patrol was recognized as National Volunteer Organization of the Year for the National Park Service in 2003.

In 2006, Donna and her partner decided that driving past Willamette Pass on their way to patrol at Crater Lake no longer made sense; and began patrolling out of Gold Lake Snowpark with Willamette Backcountry Patrol. She learned all about Ski Swap, eventually becoming a team leader, a role she continues since becoming an Alumni patroller in 2019.

Notes Donna, “I have also continued to help publish the patrol’s newsletter and help out at the patrol cabin when I can. Patrolling has been such a big and positive part of my life that just stopping did not appeal to me. Being Alumni keeps me connected to my ski patrol friends, new and old, and allows me to still share my skills and serve our visitors. Throw in continuing access to NSP training, education, magazines/newsletters and pro deals and it is quite the deal”!



Donna Short in the backcountry

Ralph S. Smith brings over 60 years of NSP service to the table!

Ralph was an active patroller for 53 years prior to becoming an Alumni member, totaling 62 years of active NSP membership to-date. He has served as a Patrol Director, S&T Examiner and CPR/Red Cross Instructor. Ralph began patrolling in 1958 at Highmount Ski Center located in the Southern New York Region. When the resort closed, he chose Plattekill Mountain as his home base and was an active member until going alumni in 2011. Ralph was awarded his National Appointment in 1964 by none other than Minnie Dole at the Thayer Hotel at West Point.

More recently, he has been an active member of a group of patrollers who include both active and alumni patrollers who have had leadership experience within the Division. The purpose of this group is to gather and celebrate their experiences and the rich history of NSP at a yearly event. Ralph has been responsible for coordinating the gathering for the past four years which includes maintaining a membership database, securing a venue, coordinating contracts and planning a banquet.

He has been an active member of this group since 2004. Without the dedication exhibited, the priceless and rich vibrant stories around the history which is recalled, shared and maintained, would be long forgotten. Many stories, activities and anecdotes regarding past Division events and activities could be lost without Ralph's dedication to this group. At 88 years young Ralph continues to consider skiing a priority and actively skis at this event, and makes an effort to ski throughout the season as circumstances allow.



Ralph Smith, early NSP days and current photo

Carl Dahl, American River Bike Patroller, Sacramento, CA: Carl retired as a patroller from Homewood Ski Patrol, Far West Division, California in 2003 after 35 years of outstanding service as a patroller, OET instructor and the head instructor at Homewood and a Senior Instructor with the Mother Lode Region. He has taught and mentored many patrollers who have gone on to be outstanding leaders and trainers. He began his career with Sierra Crest, a Bay Area-based patrol; before coming to Homewood he patrolled at most of the Lake Tahoe-area resorts.

Since retiring he continued as an active alumni, one who could always be counted on to be a well-acted patient at our annual OEC refreshers. He and four other active alumni continued to ski together and serve as an extra set of eyes and often hands helping out with active patrollers. He could always be counted on to help sweep the mountain at the end of the day because he knew the mountain so well and continues to be such a strong skier.

When we first started the American River Bike Patrol he was one of our first recruits. His background in NSP and long love of biking and riding the American River Bike Trail made him a natural. He recently completed his Outdoor First Care and Trail Readiness training and has already committed to patrolling three mornings a week. He is a great example of a dedicated ski patroller retiring, transitioning into an active alumni and now returning to serve as a high-energy bike patroller.

Carl's insight was forwarded by **Dr. Jim Margolis**, Far West Division alumni advisor. Doc Jim was one of the founding fathers of the newest NSP bike patrol, with members acting as trail ambassadors and first-aiders along the 32-mile American River Parkway multi-use trail in Sacramento, California. He heads up Outdoor First Care training, with 50 bike patrollers trained as the patrol pioneered on-line trail training and OFC delivery and physically-distanced hands-on training in the face of the COVID19 pandemic.

American River Bike Patrol Rep Jim Cheng notes, "Carl is one of our most consistent patrollers, clocking in 18 miles a day patrolling the Parkway. Having been an NSP Instructor he brings that experience and knowledge with him. We are lucky to have him on the Patrol". As to Dr. Jim Margolis; "Words cannot begin to capture how important Doc Jim has been for the Bike Patrol. He helped establish the Patrol and continues to bring an overwhelming amount of knowledge and experience; as Patrol Medical Advisor one outstanding contribution has been establishing protocol for hands-on training amid the Covid Pandemic. He also makes overwhelming contributions to the region as the Far West Alumni

Advisor and has been awarded 2020 National Alumni of the Year". Since the ARBP debuted in July, our members have been credited with saving a life by administering CPR on the trail, provided first aid to dozens of injured park users, repaired flat tires, guided parkway users back to their cars, and removed safety hazards along the parkway.



Carl Dahl and Dr. Jim Margolis ready for shift on the American River Trail

Rob Scharf, Sierra at Tahoe Mountain Host, central Sierra, California: Rob patrolled at several Lake Tahoe resorts from 1997-98 to 2008-09 and notes, "I simply got burned out driving 2+ hours to the ski resort to be there by 7am, working until 5pm, then driving 2+ hours home. So, I took a year off by going alumni. After realizing that I missed the camaraderie of the patrol and that good feeling we all get when helping a guest of the resort, I returned as a Sierra at Tahoe mountain host, active from fall, 2010 to the present.



Rob Scharf, Sierra at Tahoe mountain host

"Our unit is grateful to have alumni patrollers like Rob to lead our Outdoor First Care training and to mentor hosts who do not have extensive medical knowledge," states Sierra at Tahoe Mountain Host Patrol Rep Diane Neill. "Past patrollers are important leaders of our 90 member unit which adds about a dozen new recruits each year."

Marilyn Burnside, Rocky Mountain Division treasurer, Colorado: Marilyn, after 25 years with the Loveland, CO, Ski Patrol where she was active as secretary, then Division Leadership Advisor, Assistant National Treasurer and National Treasurer. She received the Distinguished Service Award, Yellow merit Star, Outstanding Service Award and Patrollers Cross. She stays active with her old patrol by assisting with the annual CPR refresher and serves as the Rocky Mountain Division treasurer.



Marilyn Burnside, Rocky Mountain Division treasurer

Rosemary and David Flynn, Eastern Division

Since Rosemary and David Flynn moved to NSP alumni, they have received a lot of questions about what alumni are. Notes David, "We chose to become alumni after mounting injuries made it the most sensible way to continue to serve the NSP. We still ski often with the patrol that trained us, and maintain many friendships ongoing.

We are from the Eastern division, which has 6,158 patrollers and 1,577 alumni, it's about 4 to 1 ratio (similar nationwide, with our 5,000 alumni). The fact that alumni aren't scheduled on the hill can be an advantage in performing other duties that require time away from work and family. We still assist our local ski patrols, by offering our assistance in the training of candidates, retraining of regular patrollers and fundraising. Here is what we contribute:



Rosemary and David Flynn

Fundraising: We decided to keep up our OEC credentials current, including CPR and FEMA. When the patrol needs added volunteers for a fundraiser, we attend. Especially when my wife is running in a race where the patrol is doing the medical race support; she runs, and I volunteer as part of the first aid team. Medical race support can be a long day for half marathons and longer races.

The patrol also runs the regional ski swap yearly. As candidates, we helped with the marketing campaign. As alumni, we bring things to sell, and support the event.

Our volunteer hours here add up for a separate donation to the patrol. My wife's company donates \$10 for every volunteer hour each of us spends helping the patrol as part of the company's charitable outreach, and we make sure that money goes to the patrol that trained us. Our overall contribution averages about \$1000 a year, which is dedicated to patroller training and trips.

Training: Two of our local patrols work together for OEC training, and candidates join in one large class. There are 36 chapters to cover in class followed by an exam, and then 8 weeks on the hill practicing splinting, backboarding and trauma training. We realized during our candidate experience that there are so many things to learn that little time remains to actually internalize the practical skills. So we invented a home-grown solution called OEC Practice Dinners. This program lasts 8 to 10 weeks at our home, with the whole candidate class invited. We also invite several instructors. Everyone arrives at 6:30 for dinner cooked by us. This provides a 30 minute buffer that allows for city traffic and late arrivals after work. From 7-9 PM, the instructors take over on everything from oxygen to quick splints. Both my wife and I are involved throughout, and serve in every role needed from "how to tie that", to "tie that on me." Our time contribution adds up to about \$50 every time the candidates come, due to my wife's company match. So in the end, they get dinner, trained, a donation, and interestingly, this helps them become a team.

Retraining/refreshers: Many Alpine patrollers serving today are years past their OEC training and exams. We found the refreshers were great, but we honestly wanted to be better prepared if someone else's life was in the balance. We discovered that doing the OEC hybrid classes, regional refresher, CPR and the FEMA retraining left us wanting more repetition. By adding the 8 to 10 weeks OEC Practice Dinners, we fill the gap. We decided to invite regular patrollers who wanted to teach, watch, or be practice victims. While we get more candidates than Alpine Patrollers, people like the symposium style atmosphere.

Timing: Holding an event like our OEC Practice Dinners can't be done too soon or too late. For our group, every Wednesday a week or two after Labor Day is about right. We planned 8 weeks last year, but it got so popular that we extended it to 10. We had up to 18 people a week in total, which frankly was a trick to seat and feed. But we never had less than 10, and that was only on one week because of a last minute schedule change. The response from instructors was very positive, as they could see the candidates improving week by week. One instructor came to our event for the first time and exclaimed, "So this is the place of legend." We love helping our team, and seeing all our friends. Once it's done it's something we all miss. And I won't say it isn't a lot of work. But it is a perfect task for alumni who are not otherwise assigned. Submitted by **David Flynn**, NSP Alumni # 258585.

Dr. Jim Margolis, Far West Division:

Not content to be an active alumni with Tahoe's Homewood Ski Patrol and the division's alumni advisor, Doc Jim was one of the founding fathers of the newest NSP bike patrol, with members acting as trail ambassadors and first-aiders along the 32-mile American River Parkway multi-use trail in Sacramento, California. He heads up Outdoor First Care training for the new bike patrol.



Dr. Jim Margolis on the American River Trail

Over 50 bike patrollers were trained, as the patrol pioneered on-line trail training and OFC delivery and physically-distanced hands-on training in the face of the COVID19 pandemic. Since the ARBP debuted in July, its members have been credited with saving a life by administering CPR on the trail, provided first aid to injured park users, repaired flat tires, guided parkway users back to their cars, and removed safety hazards along the parkway. Dr. Jim exhibits the highest energy and dedication to the new bike patrol.

Jim Swirczynski, Pacific Northwest Division:

NSP member since 1989, Jim has served as Training Director, Patrol Director, Pro Deal Coordinator, Search and Rescue Coordinator, Patrol Advisor, MTR, Nordic, and Avalanche Level I Instructor, IT, Oregon Region Nordic Advisor, PNWD MTR Advisor, Nordic Senior and received his National Appointment #8612. He took Outstanding Nordic Patroller Award (Oregon Region, PNWD, and National); Silver Merit Star, Yellow Merit Star, Gold Merit Star and Lifetime NSP Member since 2011. He now adds his expertise to keep the patrol's generator and electrical systems maintained for our radios and cabin.



Jim Swirczynski, Scott Robbins, and Dan Miller on top of Liao Rock, Crater Lake

Notes Jim, “As an NSP Alumni I appreciate still having access to most of the Pro Deals, and the NSP Catalog. I’m pretty sure that the money that I’ve saved has more than paid for my Lifetime Membership. The Ski Patrol Magazine, PNWD Northwester, and Alumni news letters help keep me up to date with what’s going on with many of the people and patrols that I am friends with and have continued to stay in contact with over the years. I’m happy that I chose to stay in touch with my many Ski Patrol friends by becoming an Alumni with my patrol, and with the NSP”.

Denis Van Winkle, Pacific Northwest Division:



Meet Denis Van Winkle, 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!

Chris Ebmeyer, Eastern Division:



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!

Joan Reynolds, and active alumni programs, Eastern Division



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.

Robert Feldman, Southern Division:



Bob Feldman (aka Ranger Bob) was a long-time patroller at the Wolf Ridge and Cataloochee ski areas in the Southern Division. He became an alumni member in 2016 but has continued to be a presence at Cataloochee ever since. He always comes to OEC refreshers to help with logistics and to serve as a patient. He is a master at repairing equipment such as snow fences, signage, coffee pots and many other things. On the snow he assists at incident sites by directing traffic, carrying equipment and providing other help when asked by the patrollers on duty. In addition, he always helps guests in locating the various area services such as the ticket office, ski school, information office etc. Ranger Bob is an example of a “working Alumni” and hopefully will be recognized for his dedication to patrolling even after “aging out” of active duty.

Clifton Goodgame, Southern Division



Cliff is a good example of an alumni who uses the program to bridge a gap in NSP service. Clifton joined the NSP and the Cataloochee Ski Patrol in 2004 and patrolled until 2010 when his business interests and family did not allow him to commit to patrolling any longer. His business even took him to the military base at Guantanamo, so life got in the way for Clifton. To maintain his connection with NSP he registered as alumni until this year. He had to take OEC all over again but now is back on the patrol. He is an excellent example of a patroller using Alumni status to keep in contact with NSP while he bridged the time gap of family and work.

We are seeking short profiles and a good photo of active alumni members!

If you have a suggestion of a worthy alumni to profile, contact your Division alumni advisor, or send info to National alumni advisor Tim Viall, tviall@msn.com!