

HONORED: Murray Smith

Murray Smith, a resident of Andover for 28 years who now lives in North Sutton, returned to Mount Sunapee on December 6 to begin his 41st year on the ski patrol.

Murray was born to the late Dorethea Phelps Smith and Murray Elsworth Smith in 1941. Early in his life he developed a love of snow and winter activities. At age four Murray used to have his mother time him as he skied around their property on Smith Road in Andover. Murray was also known to do ski jumping at the Proctor Academy ski area during his Andover High School days.

After returning from a stint in the Army in 1965, Murray tried several jobs before settling into his own business as a contractor in the summer and a patroller at Mount Sunapee in the winter. This joint "career" has suited Murray well.

Murray has always been a regular at the employee's party given each year at Mount Sunapee. He is the one who arrives at 4 AM to ready the equipment for cooking the pig and roast beef. Murray has always managed to have the barbeque done for the chosen dining time.

Honored For 40 Years

Last April the Mount Sunapee Resort hosted a celebration to honor Murray for his 40 years of service. There were over 200 people in attendance for the event.

Many people spoke well of Murray's performance during the last 40 years, while others took the chance to publicly "roast" him. He received many thoughtful and heartfelt gifts, including a Honda ATV (soon to be used on his ice fishing jaunts), lifetime hunting and fishing licenses, a lifetime skiing pass, and many other gifts.

One especially notable tribute was that a trail on Mount Sunapee was named after Murray. It is called Stovepipe. You'll have to ask Murray about the name!

Having served at "The Mountain" for 41 years, Murray is a wealth of information about the ski business.

Andover Beacon: What have been some of the most notable equipment changes for patrollers over the years?

Murray Smith: Probably the release bindings. The early bindings would only release in three directions, whereas now they release in nine directions.

AB: I understand you did not use radios for patrolling when you first started. How did you find the accidents, and how did you communicate the victim's needs?

MS: There were trail phones that skiers could use to phone a lift attendant to notify them of an accident. The lift attendant would then call the ski patrol building.

Skiers can now reach a patroller directly. A Safety Service team also skies "The Mountain" to help foster a safe environment. They can directly reach the



patrollers with their radios.

AB: Have the equipment changes for the public changed the type and frequency of ski accidents over the years?

MS: Years ago, patrollers dealt with many broken legs. Now we see more breaks in the upper extremities, especially with the snowboarders.

AB: What are some of the most humorous things you've encountered over the years?

MS: There have been many humorous situations. A few I distinctly remember were:

- One day I saw a skier with boots on the wrong feet.
- Another time a young lady was warming her boots by the fireplace, and they caught fire and burned!
- There are always many "domestic disputes." Usually these occur when a person is taken to the top of the mountain and is unable to ski down.

AB: How has the training for ski patrollers changed over the years?

MS: All patrollers now have to be certified in Outdoor Emergency Care.

AB: What are the reasons you have lasted as a patroller for 41 years?

MS: I have always loved skiing. Also I meet many interesting people, and I enjoy the people I work with.

AB: What changes have you seen in "The Mountain" in 41 years?

MS: When I started patrolling on December 15, 1966, there was no snowmaking. Snowmaking started around the mid-70s. Of course, the equipment was not as sophisticated as it is now.

In the recent years, since the Okemo owners have operated the Mount Sunapee Resort, there have been major improvements in snowmaking and in equipment. One improvement that skiers notice is the lift speed. It used to take skiers 16 minutes to get to the top of the mountain, and now they can get there in six minutes.

AB: When you stop ski patrolling, what will you do in the winter season?

MS: (with no hesitation) I'll be ice fishing!

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