



Green Mountain Council BSA Alumni

Spring 2021

Volume II, Number 2

In This Issue

- A Scouting History in Vermont
- Work Days at Mt. Norris
- Alumni Spotlight

Upcoming Events:

05/06/2021 – A Scouting History in Vermont

05/22/2021 – Work Day at Mt. Norris

06/12/2021 – Work Day at Mt. Norris

For more information check out our Facebook Event Pages.

Check us out online:

Facebook @gmc592aa

or

<https://www.scoutingvermont.org/council-alumni-association.html>

Alumni Committee Members

- Monica Gragg
- Brad Jenkins
- Dave McAllister
- Walter Morris
- Barry Simays
- Richard Simays

A Scouting History in Vermont

Join us on Thursday May 6th at 7pm for a live presentation about Scouting's History in Vermont put on by Brian Kent and Barry Simays. Both Brian and Barry have a wealth of knowledge about the history of Scouting in Vermont. This presentation will include dozens of photos of historical memorabilia, newspaper articles, event pictures and more. Learn more about the Councils and Camps which created today's Green Mountain Council.

Use the following web address to register for the event:

<https://scoutingevent.com/592-VTHistory>

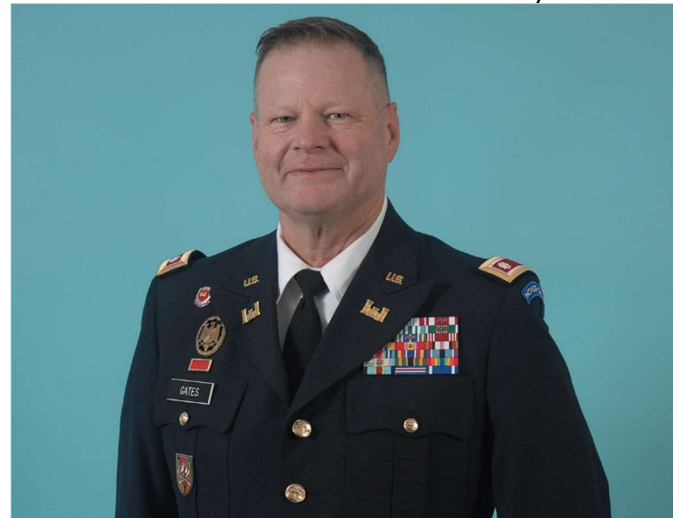
Work Days at Mt. Norris

The Mt. Norris Scout Reservation Alumni Association will be hosting work days on May 22nd, June 12th, September 11th, and October 23rd. If you'd like to help out, please contact mtnorrisalumni@gmail.com.

Alumni Spotlight

We have a new feature for our newsletter! Each quarter we will be get to know a GMC BSA Alumni. He or she may be a familiar face from Scouting, or they could be someone from the public who you didn't know was involved in Scouts.

This month we would like to introduce you to Col. Randall Gates!



Contact Us

info@gmcaa.org

What is your current rank and responsibilities in the VT Army National Guard? Have you been involved in the Guards response to Covid – testing, vaccinating, etc.

I am a Colonel in the Vermont National Guard. I have been in the VT National Guard since 2001 and before that in the California Army National Guard and in the United States Army Reserves. Before that, I was in the Active Army for five years. I just completed my 37th year in November. In the Vermont National Guard, I am the Director of Military Support. This means two things: I am the Emergency Preparedness lead for the VT National Guard and I am the Adjutant General's principal liaison to all the VT State Government agencies and departments. I am heavily involved in the Covid-19 response from the VT National Guard and have been since last March. The VT National Guard currently has missions supporting both the Department of Public Safety (where VT Emergency Management is located) and the VT Department of Health. The VTNG is helping with contact tracing, warehouse management, medical test kit assembly and, most recently, with actual vaccinations to the public. We will continue to do that until the Governor says we are no longer needed.

How long have you been involved in scouting? As a Scout? As a volunteer?

I first joined scouting in the early 1970's in Easthampton, MA and then moved to Dudley, MA in 1974 where I joined Troop 177. With Troop 177 I went from Tenderfoot through First Class. My family moved back to Manchester, NH in 1977 where I joined Troop 133. I made Star and Life in that Troop and had all the requirements for Eagle completed except my project when I aged out. (Big regret not being a better time manager). In 1979 I was on the summer staff at Camp Carpenter in the Daniel Webster Council. College forced me to find a better-paying job in my subsequent years. I am currently an Assistant Scoutmaster in Troop 539 in Vergennes and part of the adult leadership team that saw the Troop grow from 6 to 32 (it can be done!). My son, Shea McLaren, is a current Eagle candidate and only needs his Board of Review.

What leadership positions have you held in Scouts?

While I was in Scouts I was a Patrol Leader several times. I don't have a record of ever being the SPL and my memory is kind of foggy after 42 years. Looking back in my things I see that I completed the BSA mile Swim on 21 July 1975. That must have been at Hidden Valley as that was our camp for Troop 177. One thing that surprised me looking at my sash this afternoon was that I didn't have the Beekeeping MB. I have kept bees for 25 years and watched my dad keep his. He was the counselor for the MB. I thought I had done that one. Shows how memory works.

How has scouting prepared you for your career in the Guards?

Scouting prepared me for a career in the military because it capitalized on a deep sense of adventure developed from 1973 to 1979. I went off to college in 1979 and graduated in 1983. My younger brother Bill (not the guy with all the money) was already stationed in the former West Germany as a Tow Missile Repairman. He said I should join the Army and get an overseas tour guaranteed. I did that, joined him in Europe and have been in ever since. I did have a one-year break in late 1988 to late 1989 between Active Duty and in the Reserves. I used that time off to plan and hike the Appalachian Trail from end-to-end from 27MAR89 to 07SEP89. Best thing is, and I love recounting this all

the time, I met my wife as a fellow hiker and we have been married for 30 years.

Leadership is obviously an attribute nurtured by my time in scouting. I think it is the intangibles that have really helped me, however. During two long tours in Afghanistan, it was easy for me to put hardship in perspective. I knew I could get through the tours with my teammates. A year in a combat zone is long enough; trying to do it alone just makes it harder. My first lessons in resilience were in Scouting. I remember the challenge of my Wilderness Survival MB. It rained all weekend.

How are you involved in Scouts now – we understand you are very involved in Mt. Norris as they try to reopen for 2021?

Yes, I am involved in MNSR. For the past several years I have revamped the Ecology/Conservation MB offerings and put my Master's Degree in Environmental Curriculum to work. I want to see MNSR thrive in its reopening so I help when I can with what I can. I am currently the chair of a facilities sub-committee. The facilities sub-committee works toward identifying and resourcing all the things that will help support the reopening preparation.

Tell us more about you and your family.

I live in North Ferrisburgh with my wife, Lou McLaren. My wife is a healthcare professional and pretty high up the food chain at Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Vermont. We relocated to VT in 2001 because of her job. My daughter, Munro, just turned 21 and is a junior studying film and screenwriting at Farleigh-Dickenson University in NJ. My son, Shea, is a Junior at the St. Johnsbury Academy.

