

John (Jack) Willard Shaeffer

Jack Shaeffer was born in Ligonier, Pennsylvania, on March 30, 1907. With a pair of Northland skis won by his older brother in a card game, Jack became the first person in Ligonier to own a pair of store bought skis. Jack skied at the Laurel Mountain Ski Area after it opened in 1946 and in 1957 the manager told him to “go pick out a Ski Patrol jacket”. This was the start of Jack’s formal thirty year participation in the sport of skiing and patrolling. Jack served as a member and also as patrol director of the Laurel Mountain Ski Patrol. He became an American Red Cross First Aid Instructor and spent many years training new patrollers. When a new ARC multi-media first aid program was introduced; he volunteered to teach it to employees of the City of Pittsburgh. The Patrol Leader position led to his election as Section Chief in 1966. This entailed the coordination of training and oversight of five patrols and allowed him to push for and recruit more First Aid Instructors from the patroller’s ranks.

In the early 1970’s Jack Shaeffer was elected as the Appalachian Region ski patrol director. In that position he was responsible for fourteen Pennsylvania ski patrols with over 500 members. The ski industry grew in the Western Pennsylvania region, as it did nationally during the 1970’s and 1980’s, which created a continuing challenge to recruit and train skiers who would become dedicated ski patrollers, able to effectively serve the resorts and the skiing public. In the mid 1970’s, the National Ski Patrol System developed its own first aid training program called “Outdoor Emergency Care.” It required many more hours of in-house work retraining everybody involved in the delivery of emergency care. Once again, Jack Shaeffer’s strong leadership, salesmanship and communication skills helped his team of patrol leaders and their Outdoor Emergency Care Instructors complete this task.

During Jack Shaeffer’s tenure as Western Pennsylvania Regional Director of the Eastern Division of the NSPS, he promoted the idea that the Western PA region should host the Annual Fall Forum meeting of all ski patrol representatives from the Eastern Division. The Forum was hosted by the Western PA Region in 1976 at the Seven Springs Resort and was a great success. The Forum helped establish Western PA as a weekend skier’s destination of choice. In 1978, Jack was asked to become the Eastern Division’s second Chair Lift Evacuation Coordinator. Within two years he had put together and filmed a one hour narrated color slide

presentation that was utilized as a new training tool for all eleven states in the NSP Eastern Division. Jack Shaeffer turned over the reigns of the Regional Directors job in 1987. For over thirty years he represented the National Ski Patrol System as a dedicated volunteer. Jack cherished his National Appointment number (NSPW532) which he received for his many contributions to the organization John (Jack) Shaeffer died on November 24, 1998.

