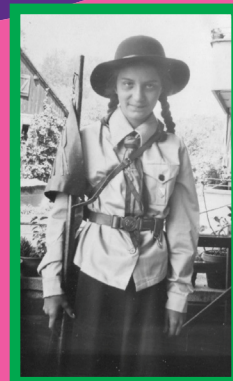


Meet Alumna Margrit Firehammer

When did you start with Girl Scouts?

1950 - Seventh grade meant a new school and a new route to walk there. I often shared this with Christa, a 9th grade girl who lived down the street. She told me about the Pfadi (Girl Guides), where she was a Patrol Leader, and invited me to a meeting. My mother was sure this was a one-time thing and cancelled my piano lesson so I could attend a meeting of Troop #9. As usual, the troop met somewhere in the forest. That first day we made tin can stoves and cooked tea. I loved it all. I have been a Girl Scout ever since and have not had another piano lesson for 72 years!



Summer 1950

Where were you a Girl Scout?

I started as a Pfadfinderin (Pfadi for short - Girl Guide) in Zürich, Switzerland, and moved up through the ranks to First Class, Troop Leader and Service Unit Manager of the Abteilung Manegg in Zürich. When I got married in 1964 and moved to Bozeman, I brought with me a Letter of Introduction from the Swiss International Commissioner. It did not take me long to find the Bozeman Girl Scouts. Within weeks I was a helper in Junior Troop 520 at Irving School, and the rest is history. The Bozeman Girl Scouts are not quite rid of me yet!

What is a favorite Girl Scout memory?



Troop 9

How many pages do we have?? I would not have lasted this long, if I had not enjoyed it all, from the girls at regular troop meetings to international opportunities. I was fortunate enough to have several of those, to see different parts of the world and - most of all - to meet some very special Sister Girl Scouts.

While I was still wearing the blue uniform, the list includes a troop camp with British Guides, the 1957 World Camp for the Baden-Powell Centennial, several stays at Our Chalet, Landsleir 1991 in Norway, attending Sea Ranger meetings (incl. rowing on the Thames) in London and shaking hands (the left!) with Lady Baden-Powell, the first Chief Guide for Britain.

While my kids were little, I did not go very far but stayed busy with the Bozeman Girl Scouts, had a successful 10-year+ tenure as Service Unit Manager and directed Day Camp numerous years.

Girl Scouting is a sure remedy for empty nest depression: In the last 30 years I was able to be a Conference Assistant at the 1984 World Conference in Tarrytown NY, was a visitor at the National Convention in Minneapolis, lead a troop trip to Seattle, participated in four program sessions at Our Cabaña - once with a group of Big Sky Council girls, three times on my own - and accompany the Bozeman Senior GS Troop on their trip to Paris, Our Chalet and Pax Lodge. All these trips made wonderful memories that I love to share with young Girl Scouts. However, what is closest to my heart is our local Day Camp. It gets a little harder every year to find staff, but the girls love it and make it all worthwhile.

What was your favorite Girl Scout achievement?

First Class in Switzerland was no big deal, one just did it! So, for some strange reason I received my Thanks Badge in the 1970s, long before I understood its significance or deserved it. But the award I really appreciated, was the Thanks Badge Two, which I received at the Annual Meeting of Big Sky Council in Missoula in 1996. Many old acquaintances attended the meeting and rejoiced with me. After dinner Council reserved the Carousel, and some of us happy old ladies became quite young again!

What are you up to now?

I am getting up there, and my stamina is shrinking. I can't physically keep up with the girls any more, but I still try to help out the Bozeman Service Unit whenever and however I can. I got the ball rolling again this year for a successful Day Camp.

And, I became a Lifetime Member of GSUSA in 1996 and plan to get my money's worth!



Irving Juniors 1968

Expand on your journey:

I am absolutely sure that I would not have ended up in Montana, had it not been for Girl Scouts. Scouting gave me the confidence to go places by myself and the curiosity to investigate them. In Switzerland we never had a fixed troop meeting place. Instead we used a telephone tree to inform everyone where in the great outdoors the next meeting would be held. This meant that on a certain Saturday I had to catch the #7 streetcar to downtown, change to #5 and ride it to the end of the line, where about 45 minutes after leaving home the troop assembled, and together walked to the nearby forest. Considering that I walked to school every day and my mother could walk to the grocery store, this was quite a trip. Later on, the trips expanded: I spent several months in England to practice my English. While there I ventured on an extended hitch hiking trip to Scotland. A few years later the travel bug struck again; my visit to the USA started out as a group trip but continued as solo travel by a Greyhound bus all around the country. The result of all this, of course, was my marriage to a native Montanan and settling down here in Bozeman.



Margrit Today

If you could give a young Girl Scout of today some advice, what would that be?

Stick with it! It gets better all the time!

Be as active a Girl Scout as you can and seize all the opportunities you can find.

We would love to catch up with you too! Please contact Missy at missyl@gsmw.org so we can tell your story.