



OLYMPIC MOUNTAIN RESCUE NEWSLETTER

A Volunteer Organization Dedicated to Saving Lives Through Rescue and Mountain Safety Education

February 2001

The next meeting will be at the Westgate Fire Hall on February 13 at 7:00P.M. Training will be: Splinting & Back Boarding

REPORTS of Chairman, Officers, Coordinators, and Committees:

CHAIRMAN:

A View from the Chair.

As you all probably know by now, during the January OMR Board meeting elections for the Chair position were held. The result being, it's now my turn to be your target, I mean Chairperson. I thought I'd ask your newsletter editor, Dale Boyle, to leave a bit of space for a few lines from me. And, rather than bore you or make you laugh by discussing a grand plan for the future, I thought I'd take the opportunity to discuss a few issues that I see as having a significant effect on us as a Mountain Rescue Team.

Today, OMR as a volunteer organization is subject to increasing calls for documentation from the State and County agencies for which we provide services. Compliance with these requirements is normally a job that your Board handles and usually has no impact on individual members. However, I feel that it is important that you, as a member of OMR be kept fully aware of these requirements and of how your Board responds to them. During the coming year you may be requested to provide information relative to these official requirements. Please do not construe these requests to be a personally invasive condition for membership in our unit. In this current atmosphere it has simply become a condition of being part of OMR.

Another topic, which I feel strongly about, is that of unit moral. During the recent past seasons we've seen a decline in mission activity. This is in no way limited to us. My recent discussions with representatives from Mountain Rescue unit's nation wide indicated that this decline is prevalent all over. I believe I can speak for all of us when I say that we're in Mountain Rescue for just that, coming to the aid of folks in need. It's not because people are staying home or exercising greater caution in the mountains, then it gets a bit boring just hanging around.



Mt. Townsend summit in mid-December - Yes, that's grass and rock!

Over the past three years we, your board has been thinking of methods to keep the unit's members interested. Fortunately, OMR has a well-developed sense of dedication by its members, which makes the job of keeping the interest level strong a bit easier. Thanks. However, there are limits to everything. One vehicle we've used is the training events. While some of the subject matter is a bit repetitive we've sought in experts in the various fields greatly improving the quality of the information presented.

We've change the training events to be more driven by scenario's that we would likely encounter during an actual mission. We've afforded members the opportunity to be creative by conducting advanced skill events, such as the rigging high lines. Later in the season there will be a mock mission (that is if it doesn't get preempted by a real one!).

Another way I feel we can keep OMR functioning, as a unit in these somewhat "dry" times is to hold more informal gatherings. The annual banquet is a once a year chance for all of us to get together, the annual picnic serves the same function, although to a somewhat lesser extent. We are placing a strong emphasis on the unit

climbing opportunities. These events provide a great chance to climb with fellow members and reinforce the bond that all climbers have with each other. I encourage all members of the OMR "family" to participate in at least one. And if you're going climbing, think about extending the offer to other unit members. After all, we are climbers! Nothing can really take the place of that feeling one has while on a mission. The rush of activity, the pride of knowing what's required and doing it well, the camaraderie of the team and the personal reward of a successful outcome. However, if we all understand the importance of staying involved we can retain the enthusiasm, which is a critical part of our functioning effectively as a Mountain Rescue Team. Respectfully submitted.

Paul Gelineau, Chair OMR

TREASURER:

Treasurer Barron reports that the bills have been paid and funds remain adequate. He noted that a sizable saving account is required as we are self insuring the contents of the trucks. The insurance for the trucks does not include contents. Greg also completed the sizable task of submitting the United Way



paperwork.

TRAINING:

JUST PAST:

Meeting Training:

Hypothermia - Andy Schmucker FF/PM discussed the signs and symptoms of hypothermia as well as the treatment - primarily stopping the heat loss.

UPCOMING:

Patient Packaging - This annual requirement is being offered twice on week nights. Choose either night.

Feb. 15th (Thursday) - Westgate Fire Hall - 6:00 - 10:00 - McAuliffe

Feb. 16th (Friday) - Westgate Fire Hall - 6:30 - 10:00 P.M. - Boyle.

1st Aid / CPR - This annual requirement is offered one time through the unit.

Feb. 17th - Westgate Fire Hall - 09:00 - until finished - Knoepfle. Call Willie with questions.

Unit Climb - Mt. Rainer - Gibraltar Ledge/Ingerham-D.C. - **Feb. 17-18 or Feb. 24-25.** Rainier in the winter is both exhilarating and a much more genuine wilderness experience. Weather conditions will dictate date and route. Climbers should be prepared for high altitude winter conditions. Contact Steve Leslie to get involved.

Unit Climb - Mt Washington - **Feb.19th** - We will be having a unit climb of Mt Washington on February 19th. This is a Monday and a Federal holiday. We hope to do two or three routes on the mountain, with weather and avalanche danger the deciding factors. This is a good short climb to get you ready for the spring rescue season. Any specific questions may be directed to me. *Greg Barron*

Ed. Note: This climb coincides with a

Peninsula Wilderness Club Climb of Mt. Washington. Those who would be comfortable in a rope leader spot for PWC members please contact Dale Boyle

MEMBERSHIP:

At the January general membership meeting, the membership voted to accept five new members into the unit at Rescue Support status. We are pleased to welcome:

- Sarah Armstrong
- Paula Engborg
- Deborah Legg
- Nikki Nicolet
- Gabe O'Hare

EQUIPMENT:

Six pair of rope rescue gloves, of various sizes, have been placed in the White Truck. These are being trialed for possible inclusion in unit equipment.

The 540 belay device should be available in April. The unit will obtain one to trial.

ELECTIONS

The board held an election for Chairman which resulted in some changing of roles of board members. The officers currently are:

- Chairman - Paul Gelineau
- Vice Chair - Dale Boyle
- Treasurer - Greg Barron
- Secretary - Kelly Muldrow
- Training - Patrick McAuliffe
- Membership - Steve Leslie
- WMRA/MRA Steve Leslie

MISSIONS

QUEETS RIVER, O. N. P.
 JAN 28-29 Misn# 2001-3 (01-0205)
 Patrick McAuliffe (OL) Loring Bemis, Mark Hendrickson, Debra Legg, Paula Engborg, Jerry Rickaby, Gabe O'Hare, Sarah Armstrong, John Stieber, Roger Beckett (ITC) & Jim Groh (ITC)

OMR was called at 1545 (28th) and responded to Olympic National Park, Emergency Operations Center. They were asking for 10-12 searchers to look for an 81 year old man missing, at that time for 24 hours, on a fishing trip out of the Queets Ranger Station. The OMR team was to arrive Queets at 0700 (29th) being prepared to stay two days. A number of other members were available for Tuesday if needed. The following reported by the Operation Leader:

The above team departed Westgate

Fire Hall at 0305 hours (29th) for Queets Ranger Station. All the gear was loaded into the White Truck, and overflow people loaded into Armstrongs car for the journey around with designated driver Rickaby in charge. Weather on the way up consisted of rain, strong winds, hail, rain/snow mix and starry skies in 10 min. intervals, and pretty consistent for the remaining day.

The team arrived at the Queets RS at approximately 0645 hours for a briefing at 0700 hours. We were going to work as teams of two so I had Hendrickson go to the briefing with me to pick-up anything I might have missed. Keith Flanery (NPS Ranger) gave the following information in the briefing: son, father and grandfather Floyd Herron of Gig Harbor(subject) were to go camping/ fishing on the North side of the river Saturday and Sunday. The three were well prepared and crossed the river by boat at approx. 1300 hours Saturday with three Evergreen college students. The three college students quickly left up the trail to camp at High Crossing, while the three older men started out a little slower. The son and father stopped to use the outdoor facilities, so Floyd walked on ahead thinking the son and grandson would catch-up to him, this was approx. 1400 hours. The son and grandson continued all the way up the trail until they reached the college students camp at High Crossing, never encountering Floyd. The two came back down about 4 miles and camped at Lower Crossing due to darkness. Sunday morning the two walked out and tried to find a ranger to report Floyd as missing. The two found a ranger and reported the situation at about 1410 hours on Sunday. A hasty team found a 5 foot stick with three notches cut into it in the middle of the trail about 50 yards up from the water crossing, and three boards laid across each other further up the trail. A containment team was located between the stick and trail/ water crossing area. Floyd was equipped with food, sleeping bag, internal frame pack, extra clothes, knife, camp ax and misc. items, but no shelter.

The original park plan was to have each two person OMR team go with a Ranger

providing support, and having me lead a dog team and OMR member into given areas. All teams were scheduled to stay in the field, and in different areas, so resource sharing was not going to be possible between teams. I broke our team up into a new member and a seasoned member in the following manner;

Team 1-Stieber and Armstrong, along with Ranger George Leite to fly up and search down trail from High Crossing (helicopter ground school was provided at my request to new members flying).

Team 2-Bemis and O'Hare (since they both have swift water experience) to search the river banks and log jams with Ranger Lynn Dwan

Team 5-Hendrickson and Legg searching river banks from water crossing down stream for 1.1 mi. with ranger Brian Bell and Grays Harbor Dog Team 1 (this was a high priority and tough area to work).

Team 6-McAuliffe and Engborg to also search in the same area as team 5, but inland more with Grays Harbor Blood Hound Team 2 (this was a high priority and tough area to work).

We had a last minute team change because of one less OMR member than first expected. Ranger Sanny Lustig would be entering the field by herself as team 7, but since my team and team 5 were going to be in the same general area, I would be able to maintain Legg and Engborg, so I sent Hendrickson with Sanny. Rickaby provided base support and ferried people around (as well as fixing the heater in the R.S.)

All teams were in the field by 0930 hours either by helicopter or by raft. Both dog teams got a scent item and were sent out, but wanted to go North instead of West (downstream), so we followed them until we kept ending up back at the water crossing. As we started down our intended search area my team got alerted on a scent and followed it to a canteen wedged into a pocket in a tree about 100 yards down and 50 yards in from the containment camp. This was very deliberate since the moss was removed and placed on the ground almost as bedding. The clue was radioed into base to check with the family. Team 5's dog came into the area and also alerted at the canteen, the area was marked and called into base about the second alert. The family did not know if it was Floyd's canteen or not, but said it was common for him to make beds out of moss, and usually traveled down stream. My feeling was he got lost, made the moss bed and slept there Sat. night, got up to travel downstream Sun. morn and

left his canteen there by accident. There were tracks in the mud going downstream, but were filled with water so they were hard to positively tell the age of them. We decided to follow the dogs and ended up doing large loops back to the canteen, or back to the water crossing. I decided to get the teams back on our area and head downstream as far as possible with having the helicopter come in and search from the river. We lost the footprints in leaves, and had no alerts from the dogs, but continued searching down to a steep drainage just above the Boulder Creek drainage. Both teams impression was Floyd would only have been able to pass this by going into the river, or hiking up about .5 mi. to cross, then come back down to the shore line. The dogs still didn't get anything and there wasn't and noticeable clues, so we headed back to the water crossing to have the dog teams picked up by 1630. On arriving at the water crossing at 1600 we heard by radio that King 5 chopper had spotted smoke from a small fire and a possible sighting in the Boulder Creek drainage. The park flew in and confirmed that this was our subject and landed to walk to his location. We were then ferried back to the trailhead and were at the Ranger station at 1645 hours, just in time to meet the incoming helicopter with Floyd aboard.

Upon talking with him, he did actually sleep in the moss Sat. night and left Sun. morning to head downstream, and was extremely happy when we produced the canteen that he had accidentally left behind. When asked about the ravine crossing he stated that he was going to try to wade around it, but instead spent most of Sun. going up and around it. Floyd was in extremely good condition and even had raingear in his pack he didn't know about. He thanked us all and we had the dogs come up and smell him to give them some closure as well.

All the teams were pulled from the field and in the Ranger station by 1900 hours. The Park had arranged for dinner and lodging at the Kalaloch Lodge for us upon leaving the Queets R.S. The team decided to have dinner, but skip the lodging in favor of making home to loved ones.

After dinner we departed and were back at Westgate Fire Hall at 0000 hours (12a.m.). I thanked everyone for their hard work and congratulated everyone on a great earch. Hours: 204 Miles:1305 Patrick

HURRICANE RIDGE

Dec. 30 - Jan. 1 Ann Theisen & Dale Boyle.

Sunny weather and awful snow. The team set up a Park service, ski patrol type litter, with a system of webbing for securing the patient. On Dec. 30 - The team performed a binocular search, from the end of the road, of the Little Creek basin and spotted overdue snowboarders that had underestimated how long it would take to climb out.

On Jan. 1 - Dale assessed and treated a three person family involved in a rollover crash of a pickup truck. The family suffered multiple contusions and abrasions. The adult male was treated for a painful elbow. The family was transported by ambulance to the hospital. Dale

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Sunday **Jan. 7** John Stieber, Gabe OHare, Nikki Nicolet

Weather : High clouds through out day, 30% in the morning to 90% at closing time. Temperature low to mid 30s all day. Winds were light all day. No new snow.

The sledding area did not open at all on this day. The ski area did not open to skiers. However, the park did open two sledding runs in this area at approximately 1300. These were on the lower half of the intermediate slope. The following is a list of the injuries that occurred between 1400 and closing.

1400 -- Ankle injury(possible break), 12 yr old female, was standing in the sled run when another sledder clipped her in the back of the legs.

Parents transported to hospital.

1445 -- Ankle injury (possible sprain), 14 yr old male, was snow boarding and not paying attention. He clothes lined himself on one of the guy line cables for the rope tow, at about knee level. Parents transported to hospital.

1530 -- Knee injury (torn and ripped tendons/ligaments), 17 yr old male, snowboarding out of control and above his skill level, wrapped himself around a sign pole. Park and OMR transported to the hospital, no ambulances were available.

1545 -- Lower back injury (tenderness, but not to pressure), 13 yr old female, sledding and went over two foot jump. Came down hard. Transported by parent to hospital, after expressed concerns from OMR and Park personnel.

1615 -- Not treated by OMR. Minor head injury (small bump and bruise), young female slipped in parking lot. Parents transported. John

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Jan 13-14. Crystal and I arrived at the gate a

little bit before 0800 Saturday morn. The Ridge had been receiving snow off and on since Wed. evening and had accumulated enough Fri. night to delay the gate opening. Mac showed up and we had a caravan up to the lodge following Kyle (ONP volunteer) at 0915.

The gate opened to the public at 0930, then was closed down at 1030 due to low visibility, snow, icy road conditions, and a sand truck that wouldn't operate. The twenty or thirty cars that had made it in had the whole place to themselves. Dick and Andrew had made it up in the midst of the vehicles going into the ditch. Since it was a light crowd, we had time to snowshoe around, and help maintain the limited amount of people on the tubing runs.

Sun. morning the plows were out again for the 1" of new snow, with more lightly falling. We had a training on avalanche beacons in the lodge, followed up by some in-field searches. Attending were: for OMR - Dick, Mac, Andrew (Dicks son), Crystal, Myself : for ONP - Janet , Kyle, and Mike.

We broke the day up into 1.5 hour shifts to help the park police the tubing runs, which got very busy at around 11:00.

Just after finishing lunch Kevin radioed in an ankle injury about 1/2 mile down Chicken Eater Hill. Kyle led out on skis with a blanket, I followed with medical bag and splint with Crystal and Janet bringing the litter behind. The patient was at the Wolf Creak Trail Head with a moderately sprained ankle. After assessment we packaged her up and started pulling her out. When we made it to the lodge, we got another call for a dislocated knee in the meadow. Kyle and I responded to a lady with a reoccurring ACL injury, after assessing her, her husband transported her down to PA. The ankle injury was also taken down by family.

Patrick

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This is to continue the Hurricane Ridge report from Patrick.

Jan. 15th was a beautiful day!! Clear blue skies, beautiful sparkling snow (no new snow on Mon), and cold - temps of 21E in morning up to 29E by 4:00 PM. Waldo and I both had Tubing duty on Monday. Only incident I'm aware of Monday was one sunrise tuber teenage boy twisted his ankle and I helped him to his car. *Mac*

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1-27 & 28

Kelly and I had a spectacular day on Saturday. The sun was warm, very little breeze and all the mountains were out.

Jack decided against opening the sledding areas due to the concrete like consistency of the snow so there were no tubing related incidents. The parking lot was full most of the day and the road closed in the early afternoon due to the lack of parking space. Saturday evening we made use of my little Webber BBQ and grilled chicken and steak. A lone coyote took interest in the scent wafting from our dinner and came to within 20 yards for a look see. He certainly wasn't timid and stayed very close for quite some time. Saturday night was ultra clear so we spread our bivy sacks on the picnic tables and slept under the stars, watching the Northern Lights curtain across the sky. A wonderful night on the Ridge.

Sunday was very blustery with a wind out of the south gusting to 40 and the occasional bout of blowing snow.

Kelly and I skied out to steep and icy, however, it turned out to be steep and rocky. Most of the south facing slopes on the ridge have a serious lack of snow cover.

Returning to the lodge we heard the first reports for the missing hiker at Queets. At that time O.N.P. didn't think we'd be called out to provide any assistance, however.....as we know the situation changed.

Dee Renee released us at about 4:30.

Paul Gelineau

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Feb. 3 & 4. The snow was absolutely great! From the first through the weekend, about 25 inches of powder snow fell. On Saturday, there nearly unlimited visibility with almost no wind. The snow flurried all night and we gain another 5". On Sunday, the flurries continued through the day, with visibility dropping to about 1/4 to 1/2 mile. The wind also picked up, hanging at about 25mph, with gusts up to 45mph.

There were no injuries to report. We did come close to looking for an overdue skier, who skied into the trees at the bottom of the Hurricane Hill Bowl. It seems that he went until he ran out snow and then ended up having to hike back up in the knee deep powder snow. He came in about an hour after his wife started panicking.

A side note: The area where we conducted snow training has developed four highly defined layers. One of these broke off while I was digging a small snow pit. The others broke with very little pressure applied to each. At the time, the layers were at 2"(new snow), 1', 2' and 4'. The hill above the sledding area was relatively stable with very

small cornices at the ridge. Just thought you might like to know the last bit of info. *John*

While at the Ridge, members are reminded to allow time for Sunday AM training of OMR and Park personnel.

BOARD MEETING

The board meetings are held at Westgate Fire Hall on the first Tuesday of each month at 6:30 P.M. All members are invited. Please bring your interests and issues to the meeting.

PAGERS

The unit pager policy is under review. Members are encouraged to communicate your thoughts on this to a board member, or bring those thoughts to the board meeting.

BANQUET

The banquet was a great success this year with over 80 persons attending. Eric Simonson provided a very interesting and lively talk about the Mallory Everest Expedition which he led. He indicated that they would be heading back to look for Irving, so perhaps we will hear from him again. Many thanks to Debby Stewart for her excellent job of coordinating this event.