



OLYMPIC MOUNTAIN RESCUE NEWSLETTER

A volunteer organization dedicated to saving lives through rescue and mountain safety education
June 2006

Missions

Mission No: 2006-6 (DEM 06-1452)

Date: May 29
Location: Lake Blanca; Snohomish County
Type: Missing Hikers
Personnel: Jim Groh (baseOL), Jason Bausher, Tony (fieldOL) and Susan DiBenedetto; Roger Beckett (ITC)
Mac McDowell and Dick Waldo on Standby

A call was received from the Kitsap Co Sheriff at 0710 indicating that Snohomish Co had requested assistance in searching for 2 overdue hikers on a day trip to Lake Blanca NE of the town of Index. The man and woman (in early 20's) were to have returned on Sunday evening. Jim and Jason were on Standby for the weekend.

Jim met Sue and Tony at Kingston Albertsons heading for the 1005 Kingston ferry. With holiday traffic and an expected tight arrival time, arrangements were made with State DEM to have ferry officials give special loading to the OMR truck. The ticket agent was expecting the team and ushered the truck its' own priority holding lane and minutes later we were directed to the bow position on the ferry. For the few minutes we waited in the lane several ferry workers came to inquire what was going on and where did we hide the search dogs. The truck team met up with Jason in Lynnwood, who had driven up from Aberdeen via Olympia and Tacoma. We arrived at search base approx. noon just as a large TMRU team was heading up the trail. Strategy was planned for the OMR assignment and by 1300 the OMR team of 3 was on the trail uphill. We were advised that upon our

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Meeting

Next meeting : Tuesday, June 13th at 1900. The training for the evening will be knot passing, in systems under tension. The instructor will be John Stieber. This training will be a good refresher of the basics of knot passing, as there is a good chance that we will be passing at least one knot while on the weekend training which is discussed below.

Training

Upcoming training : Saturday, June 17th. This training will be a scenario based training. The location is on Lena Creek near the Lena Lake trailhead. The OMR truck will be leaving Westgate Firehall at 0700, with the plan to meet at the west end of the trailhead parking lot at 0845. This training will entail the use of a reaving system or a tracking line system to reach and secure the subject. Other issues, which may arise, will be getting the line across to the other side, communications, knot passing and team coordination.

Since knot passing always seems to be a complicated issue for some, included in this newsletter are the instructions for the passing of knots. Both in a raise and a lower system.

Summer Stand By

The summer season is here. It is time to think about which weekends you want to sign up for. OMR is trying a new sign up system which you can access through the OMR website member's section. You have the option of signing up for one day or for the full weekend. When signing up you will have to sign up for individual days. While this will sound short, OMR only has about 20 active members. So we need everyone to sign up for a weekend or three. If you have ever complained about not getting called for missions, then sign up (or shut up). Remember if you are on the standby team and there is a mission, you will be one of the first people called.

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arrival approx. 30 searchers had been in the field and 8 dogs, sad to say at this point NO positive clues or tracks had yet been discovered. Earlier teams had established a SAR cache at approx 4100' (trailhead 1900') so in case of rigging or med needs gear would be more centrally located. Snohomish uses 155.415 mHz radio for SAR questions except this time he did not ask about dogs! But all of a sudden as I am signing the credit card he says, "by the way I used to climb with Fred Beckey, even did couple first ascents....." we all immediately looked up and said "ya sure....get outta here" So he started to describe his first ascent of Tenpeak Mountain with Mr B, it was actually sounding credible. So at that point I immediately tried to recruit him to OMR but he felt he was too out of shape for rescue duty. Well check it out your selves, Pete Williamson was one which we did not think OMR radios supported, so Jim monitored the OMR team progress on State SAR 155.160 which actually worked well since there was so much traffic on the SnoHo frequency. The search terrain was typical; several steep descending streams with waterfalls and cliff-bands, steep trail disappearing into posthole deep snow, sharp ridgelines...the usual thing. OMR of course landed probably the ugliest drainage but took on the challenge and used GPS and bushwhacking skills to effectively reach the assignment. By mid afternoon the weather was decent for flying so King county was requested for Heli search support (I put in a word for USCG-PA at Joel's suggestion but Deputy wanted to stay in his OPS protocol). Just as the OMR team had been reassigned to an even uglier stream search objective the two missing hikers strolled up the road into base (approx. 1600) and announced to a bunch of dumbfounded SAR coordinators that they were probably who we were looking for. They were looking pretty exhausted and hungry but had been drinking water so were doing fairly well. The woman mentioned a possible 200' slide down a steep slope bumping her head but refused any med attention. Seems most likely they lost the trail fairly soon after leaving the parking area, probably just kept hiking thinking they were still on way to Lake but only continuing to get more lost. Luckily they got lost to east side of trial ridge which was the less steep option.

The terrain they came out from was searched at times by more than one team, but this turned into a self-rescue, and everyone was happy with the results anyway. It took a couple hours for all the field teams to return to base, but OMR was on the road home at 1800. We joined thousands of holiday travelers on SR2, but buy the time we passed Sultan traffic was moving along good so our worst fears for total traffic gridlock did not materialize. We again lucked out on the return ferry connection, very little wait time and another incredible story to tell. So while I was paying the toll the agent was of course asking all the usual rescue of Fred's partners for the Sept 22, 1971 first ascent.....Beckey Green book. Small world.....truck back at Westgate approx 2200.

Total Personnel: 5

Total Hours: 60

To Help or Not To Help

There has much talk of late of the helping of other climbers in distress, which are not part of your party. It is said that this is becoming an international issue. While I am sure that there is probably some lawyer or congressman out there who is trying to write up a law to help those poor mountaineers. I do not see the issue. It only boils down to one question . . . Can you live with yourself if you leave someone to **DIE**.

Now I have never been to Mt Everest, so I do not know the conditions. But I have been to the top of Mount Rainier, in some of the nastiest weather it could dish out. Even then the top was not worth a life. I had spent a lot of time and effort planning for the climb and tossed it away to help another. I know that my time and effort were nothing compared to the time and money put into planning for an Everest summit bid. I suppose it comes down to another question . . . How much is a single life worth to you? To their children or spouse? If it was one of your loved ones would you want someone to help or just leave them?

I don't believe that this sort of issue will ever come up with our members, on a mountain. However, it does come up every time there is a callout. I realize that OMR is a volunteer group. But we train for a reason. So others may live. Just something to think about.

Truck Fund Raiser

Over the past few years the unit has been looking into sources of funding to replace our aging rescue truck. Though still fairly reliable, the truck is almost 17 old and can't be expected to last forever. The unit plans to replace this vehicle with new Ford F350 with a commercial grade cap. The cap will have access doors along the side for storage of the commonly used rescue equipment such as radios and rigging. The inside will be used primarily for storage of less used and larger equipment along with personnel gear. This should eliminate our current issues with crawling over packs and stuff to get to the radios. This new vehicle is expected to cost approximately \$43,000.

To date, the unit's efforts have focused on submitting large-scale grant applications which have not proven productive. John Ellsworth with the help of the board however has also been soliciting smaller donations from local organizations such as the Peninsula Wilderness Club and from individuals including family members, climbing partners and work associates. These efforts have raised over \$2,000. Based on this initial success, the board has decided to expand this effort by asking all unit members to lend a hand. The plan is relatively straightforward. All a member needs to do is mail out 10-15 fund-raising flyers. These flyers provide a historical background of the unit and outline/explain our fund-raising efforts to replace our rescue truck. A self-addressed stamped envelope is also provided for donations.

John will be bringing these fund raising packages to the June meeting, making them available to the membership. These packages will include the flyers along with both mailing and self addressed return envelopes.

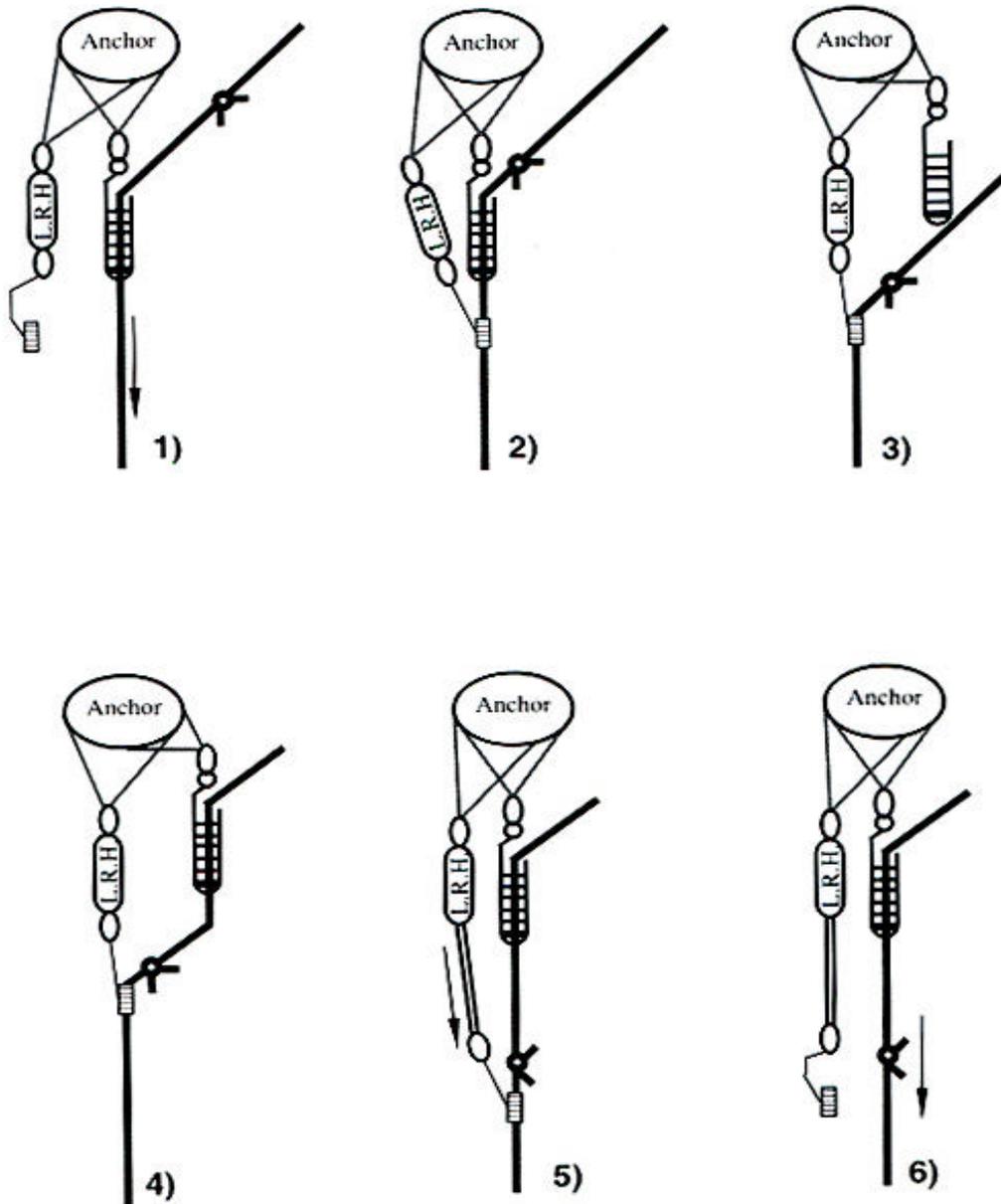
Those wishing to participate can pick up a package at the June meeting or contact John directly at (360) 779-5382. The fund drive will run through January of next year and monthly updates will be incorporated into the unit's newsletter. When January rolls around, those who help raise over \$500 will receive special recognition from the unit.

Though not required, there are a few additional steps one can do to help maximize the success of this fund drive. The first is to call the people you are planning to ask for support and give them a heads up. This ensures that they are expecting the brochure and when it arrives they take a look at it so it doesn't end up in the "junk mail pile". Secondly, it helps to include a short note that thanks them for taking the time to consider our cause along with detailing a few of your unit adventures. This puts a more personnel touch on the request. Lastly, if a donation is not received, you could always call and politely inquire if they had received your note. This works as a gentle reminder just in case it somehow ended up in the "junk mail" pile.

The board hopes this drive will raise between \$3,000 to \$5,000 putting the overall truck fund at around \$6,000 or almost 15% of our final goal. After completion of this fund drive, we will once again begin submitting grant applications and approaching businesses for donations. With a substantial percentage of the required funds raised by the members of the unit, these organizations may be more willing to add to the existing fund.

Submitted by John Ellsworth

Passing a knot in a lowering system



1) As the knot approaches the lowering device attach a load release hitch (radium release hitch) to the line with a prussik knot, below the lowering device. See figures 1 and 2.

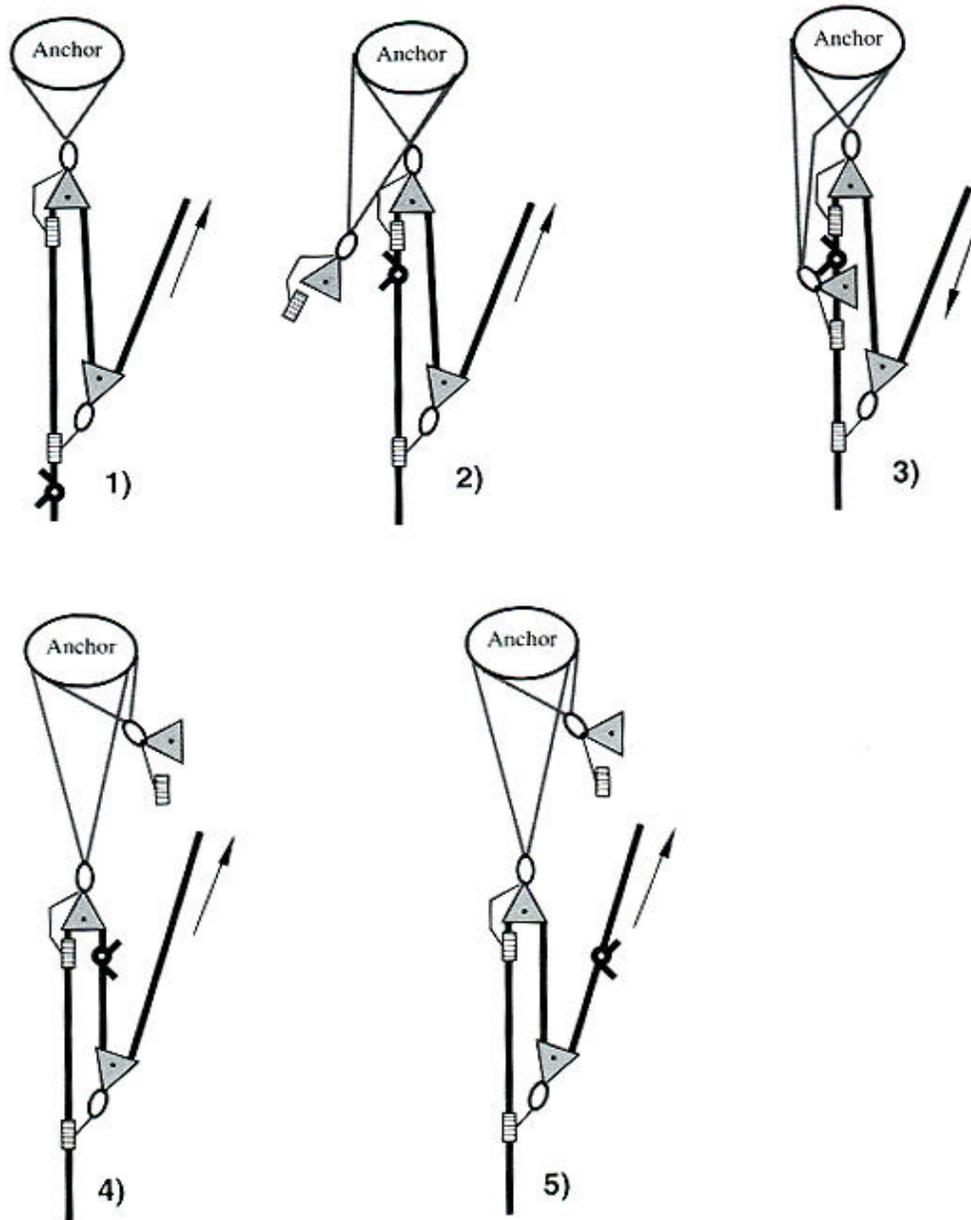
2) Once the radium release hitch is installed on the line, transfer the load of the line from the lowering device to the release hitch (Figure 3). Then reattach the lowering device above the knot (Figure 4).

3) With the knot now below the lowering device, transfer the load of the line from the release hitch back to the lowering device (Figure 5) by letting out on the release hitch.

4) Once the load is fully on the lowering device, remove the prussik and release hitch from the line.

NOTE : Passing a knot in a belay system is similar. However, two sets of tandem prussiks are used. Instead of one and a lowering device. Passing a knot in a raising belay is done in the reverse order.

Passing a knot in raise system



- 1) As the knot approaches the the pulley system, get the knot as close to the ratchet prussik as possible. Then move the lower pulley to the other side of the knot. The line load will be on the ratchet prussik at this point. Once the lower pulley is reinstated continue raising, until the knot is up against the ratchet prussik. Figures 1 and 2. During this time a second ratchet prussik and pulley should be staged. This second pulley should be a long enough anchor to reach below the existing ratchet.
- 2) With the second pulley and ratchet installed, lower the weight of the system onto the second ratchet. Note that you will have to mind the first ratchet during load transfer, so it does not lock up. Once the load is transferred, remove the first pulley and ratchet prussik from the system.
- 3) With knot past that ratchet pulley, it is a simple matter of moving each of the following pulleys past the knot, as the knot approaches the pulley or prussik.

NOTE : If you are lowering with the pulley system, simply reverse the directions as stated above.