

**Calendar**

- December 7 7:00pm WINTER SOCIAL
- December 8 7:00pm TRAINING COMMITTEE MEETING
- January 4 7:00pm UNIT MEETING
- January 24 7:00pm EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

**NOVEMBER SKILLS WORKSHOP** -- how I saw it

by Joy Linn

When I showed up it was around 1330 and the temperature had managed to climb to the upper 30's. Seven men were rubbing their hands and stomping their feet to stay warm, and to keep their fingers mobile enough to manipulate rope. Most were relieved that it had at least warmed up enough to melt the ice the low overnight temperatures had left on vehicles. Participants represented a good cross section of experience and knowledge. Three stations had been set up: the raising and lowering system, a pick-off, and patient packaging.

After a once around where Nate and Jason W., the two hosts of the workshop, demonstrated the stations, and had most people do a quick run through, the group was divided into 3 teams of 2, with one roving observer, and one helper. Each team was allowed 5 minutes to complete their station. A little more was given to those doing the pick offs as sometimes switching over from ascending to descending is tricky. While the show and tell went on, Matt was busy building two Aztec systems. It worked out very well as both systems were used and bounced on to check Matt's work -- which was great of course! We also got a mini lesson on tips to facilitate dressing the rope on two double pulleys.

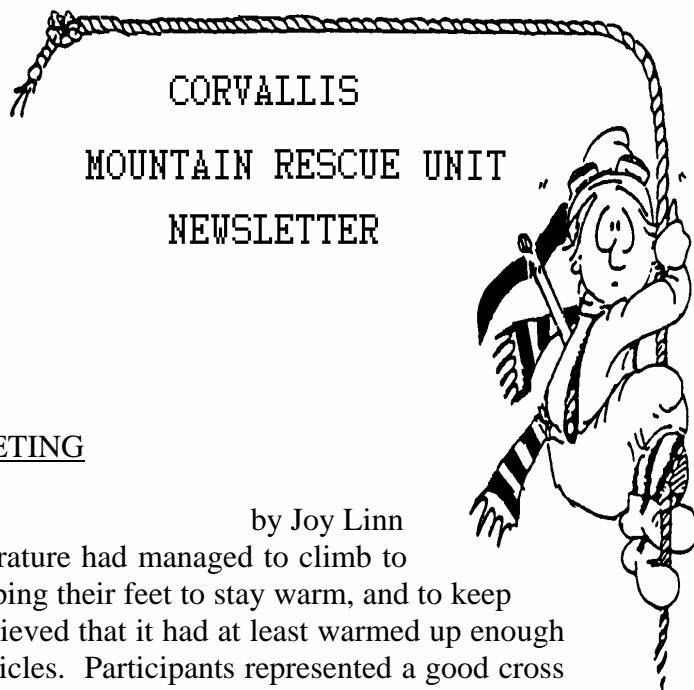
The raising and lowering system was put together in an orderly fashion by all three teams. Those in attendance demonstrated a high comfort level with the numerous parts that build the system. After completing the station, each team packed the gear back up, so the next team really started from scratch. How did we do these sorts of trainings before Don built that board, and the log anchors came into being?

The patient packaging station was handled differently by each team. Sometimes, a patient got to lie on the almost frozen concrete, to be bundled into the Integral Designs sleeping bag and bivy sack. I've yet to see that combo come out and not receive accolades! Sometimes, the spider was attached to the litter. All went smoothly until it was time to discuss the two locking carabiners that join the plate to the main and belay lines. It would seem that putting one line per biner provides the most flexibility should a line need to be removed for some reason.

The pick off was the most interesting (amusing?) to watch... The 'subject' had an iron constitution, patiently waiting as rescuers learned how to switch over from ascending to descending while using a vertical system designed for someone 12 inches taller than themselves. It was a really good thing Matt had his system there because it got a good work out! And, watching Matt visualize how to get Jason W. off his ascenders and on to the mini-rack was poetry in motion, Matt hardly missed a beat. Once switched over to descending, the rescuer positioned himself with respect to the 'subject', flipped upside down, hooked the Aztec into the 'subject's' gear, used the Aztec to raise the 'subject', got the 'subject' off its rope and lowered it safely down! Personally, I think everyone got on the rope because it was the only way to warm up!

We also did a truck check, including the siren and the loud speaker. We're happy to report that both work! It was noticed that the check list calls for checking the brake fluid level. In the truck, the brake fluid is hidden in a grimy metal(?) case, that is not straight forward to open. Brake fluid is nasty stuff, so the wisdom of that check was questioned.

The highlight of the training came around 1600 when 2 F-15 Eagles flew right over our heads as we stood outside the truck building! (I was the look out as the others packed up gear.) Although they weren't there for us, they were there for the kick-off of the Civil War game, we got the best view! The paper had said they'd be at about



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**NOVEMBER SKILLS WORKSHOP** (continued)

1000 ft going 300 mph, they sure seemed lower! They screamed over the top of the firs along the train track, so low that they weren't visible until they were actually on top of the trees! Every detail of their underside was clearly visible, my impulse was to wave at them they were so close! Then, they kicked in the throttle, gained altitude and quickly disappeared. A real treat.

As always, lessons were learned and observations were made:

1. It is important to let people know what gear to bring to a specific training. And, it is important to attend a training prepared for a variety of tasks. And, to remember that if you are getting on a rope, gloves and a helmet go with you.
2. A pair of well fitting gloves makes a huge difference in one's ability to work carabiners, mini-racks and ropes.
3. When using a webbing sling with a knot, watch where the knot is with respect to the carabiners. If the knot is across the 'biner when it is loaded, the user gets a small surprise in the form of a quick, short, unexpected drop as the knot slides off the 'biner.
4. Raising the 'subject' off the floor to be picked off was a challenge, and the suggestion was made to install a pulley at the middle rope location. This would also enable members to practice ascending longer sections of rope. They will usually need to ascend more than 15 or so feet to reach a subject, and some found that distance challenging.

**THANKS TO ALL** – from out-going President, Joy Linn

Congratulations to the incoming board! There is something about beginning a new year that offers hope and a chance for change. What better time to welcome new blood into CMRU's Executive Board.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who have contributed in front and behind the scenes this past year. In front: Aaron Lee for his efforts in guiding training throughout the year. Bob Freund for his well presented minutes, and for keeping track of volunteer hours. I hope that you have appreciated Bob's emailed minutes. Anne Greenwood for her thorough maintenance our assets and presentation of our budget throughout the year. Iain Morris for attending and representing CMRU at various OMRC meetings, and reporting back to the Board. Lindsay Clunes for meeting and greeting prospective new members, and helping those willing to make the leap with the application and interview process. And, Jim Dagata for attending and representing CMRU at BCSAR Council meetings, and reporting back to the Board.

Behind the scenes: Bob Freund for his tireless production of the CMRU newsletter. Matt Crawford for managing our pro deal connections and dealing with a variety of requests from unit members. Jeremy Adolf for keeping track of our medical protocols, medications and supplies. Jim Wach for his assistance with the CMRU truck. Iain Morris for his support of the CMRU web page. All of you who volunteered to organize and present a training topic. Everyone who helped out during the Corvallis Ski Swap. And everyone in the Unit for representing CMRU in various capacities throughout the year. CMRU has a good reputation in the state of Oregon and that is because we have a great team with a good attitude.

Membership in Corvallis Mountain Rescue Unit is a responsibility you all take seriously. The commitment is a big one - time, training, sacrifices. No one is here for public recognition, just to help others in need. I am happy to pass the baton on to the new board for 2005: Jim D., Matt, Becky, Anne and Jeremy. It has been an honor being your president the past 3 years. Thank you.

**SEASON'S GREETINGS AND HAPPY HOLIDAYS  
FROM THE EDITOR OF YOUR  
*CORVALLIS MOUNTAIN RESCUE UNIT NEWSLETTER***