

# August 1998

## Vol. XXIII No. 8

Member of the Mountain Rescue Association  
The *Corvallis Mountain Rescue Newsletter* is published monthly  
to keep friends and members of the Unit informed of our activities.  
Editor: Bob Freund

### Calendar

August 4	7:00pm	UNIT MEETING - Training: Incident Command System by Bob Freund.
August 6	7:00pm	7:00pm SUMMER SOCIAL at Walnut Park
August 19	7:00pm	TRAINING SESSION - Search Techniques by Anne Greenwood.
August 22/23	7:00am	UNIT CLIMB -- Mt. Washington by Lindsay Clunes
August 31	7:00pm	EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
September 1	7:00pm	UNIT MEETING - Training: Ice Techniques by Don Lacer and Tim Fitzpatrick
September 16	7:00pm	TRAINING SESSION - Evacuation Systems
September 19	TBA	ICE PRACTICE - Eliot Glacier by Don Lacer
September 28	7:00pm	EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

CORVALLIS MOUNTAIN RESCUE UNIT  
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#### **MISSION REPORT 98-07: Missing Climber, North Sister** Member-hours: 103

On the weekend of July 4th, Martina Testa, a 35 year old woman from Albany decided to climb North Sister by herself via the Thayer Glacier route. Although well equipped for outdoor travel and camping, she had only about one year experience climbing. She had left a list of her equipment with a friend along with a planned return time; but no description of which route she intended to climb.

She approached the east side of the mountain from the Pole Creek Trailhead and put in a camp on the Southeast Ridge just about timberline (6800 - 7000 ft.). During the day on Saturday, she spoke with some other climbers telling them of her intention to climb the mountain alone. It appears that she suffered a fall (estimated to be around 800 to 1000 ft) and survived long enough to move from the snow to a rock ledge; but fell from the ledge back onto the glacier coming to rest among rocks at the toe of the glacier.

When she did not return as expected on Sunday night, July 5, Deschutes County Sheriff's office was notified she was overdue and a search was begun. Deschutes and Lane counties as well as US Forest Service personnel were involved with ground searching on Monday, July 6. A Civil Air Patrol aircraft and a National Guard helicopter were brought into the area on Monday. On Monday night, CMRU was called to assist. Four members drove to the trailhead that night and participated in ground searching the southeast side of the mountain on Tuesday. EMR was searching the west side of the mountain. By Bob Freund

#### **>From Don Lacer:**

Dave Dobler is the training coordinator for Deschutes County Search and Rescue. When he called me Monday night (July 6) "to see if you guys wanted to come over and play," I thought he probably had some joint training activity in mind. I was wrong. Dave is also a deputy with DCSO, and he was calling

from the Pole Creek trailhead as the Incident Commander on a search for a missing climber. Didn't sound like play to me. I referred him to BCSO, but in Jim Swinyard's absence, Bob Freund quickly got us activated.

Our field crew would consist of myself, Jim Dagata, and Lindsay Clunes, while Susan competently filled her valuable position at the truck. We arrived at Pole Creek around 0200 and were told to get some sleep and be ready to depart with the other fresh troops at 0800. Our subject was a 35 y/o female who failed to return from a solo climb of North Sister. Described as very athletic, she had been climbing for about a year. Search efforts the previous day, by both ground and air teams, had found no trace of the climber or her camp.

Our team assignment was to search the southeast ridge of the mountain. As the three of us headed up the trail, I was delighted to learn that North Sister had been one of Lindsay's favorite destinations over the years. His knowledge of the area, location of climber's trails, and terrain features in general, proved to be extremely helpful. We angled through the forest toward the ridge, looking, listening, and blowing whistles as we went. Emerging into the open above treeline, we spread farther apart and broke out the binoculars. The terminal moraine of the Thayer glacier was in our path to the ridge, and seemed, logically, to warrant a close look. It is, basically, a giant catching feature for anything coming off the east side of the mountain. We remained split, with one man going directly to the moraine and two flanking to the south, then rejoining on the southeast ridge about an hour and a half later.

We were at 7600' and it was now about 1500. We took a break and checked in with SAR Base. Dave wanted us to continue our search higher up the ridge, and also requested that we find a bivy site where we could spend the night. A short time later, we noticed that the helicopter, which had been flying grid patterns above us, had disappeared into the bowl behind the terminal moraine. And it stayed there. A long time. Over the radio we heard the request to go to cell phone, and shortly thereafter, confirmation that they had, indeed, found the subject. The three of us were stunned. We'd just been there and seen nothing! Dave radioed to put us on standby in case the helicopter crew needed any assistance. They didn't, and all field teams were soon instructed to return. We passed near the scene on our way down. The moraine had indeed caught her, and dressed in dark clothing, disguised her as one of it's many rocks. We got back to the trailhead around 1800, grabbed some dinner in Sisters, (thanks to Deschutes County for picking up the tab) and headed home arriving in Corvallis about 2330.

Participants: Lindsay Clunes, Jim Dagata, Don Lacer, and Susan Leach.

### **Summer Social -- Walnut Park**

This year's summer social has been rescheduled for Thursday, August 6, at the barn in Walnut Park (since the originally scheduled event was suspended due to Mission 98-07). As before, this event will feature CMRU's first ever campstove cookoff as well as a sampler of members' favorite mountain cuisine. For the cookoff, participants need to bring their stove, assembled or disassembled as it would be carried in a pack. The competition will include assembly time, warm-up, and time to boil a calibrated volume of water. "Standardized" containers will be provided for the competition. The sample of members' favorite mountain cuisine can either be prepared ahead of time or prepared on site. Bring your own table service and favorite beverage -- mountain or otherwise.

### **Unit Gear - do you know how it operates?**

When all we had were some ropes, carabiners, Stokes litter, and an old army surplus sleeping bag, most of us had no problem knowing how to use the gear! But times have changed and if you are going to be a professional SAR expert, you need to know how to operate and get the most from an impressive array of equipment CMRU keeps stored in the truck and garage. From low-stretch ropes to radio equipment to maps to GPS receivers to artificial anchors to computer/cellular phones it seems the list is endless; but when a page activates us for a mission, each of us is expected to be proficient in the use of all of this Unit equipment.

Several years ago, the Executive Committee adopted a policy which allows members to "borrow" items from the truck during the week (Monday night through mid-day Friday) for educational purposes. This is

a way for members to learn how to use equipment at their own pace and in the "peace and quiet" of their own homes. The rules that apply:

- \* Sign out the equipment on the dry erase board in the truck (with your name and a telephone number where the equipment will be located/used).
- \* Have the equipment back to the truck by mid-afternoon on Friday.
- \* You are responsible for getting the equipment back to the truck or to a mission location if a mission is paged.

