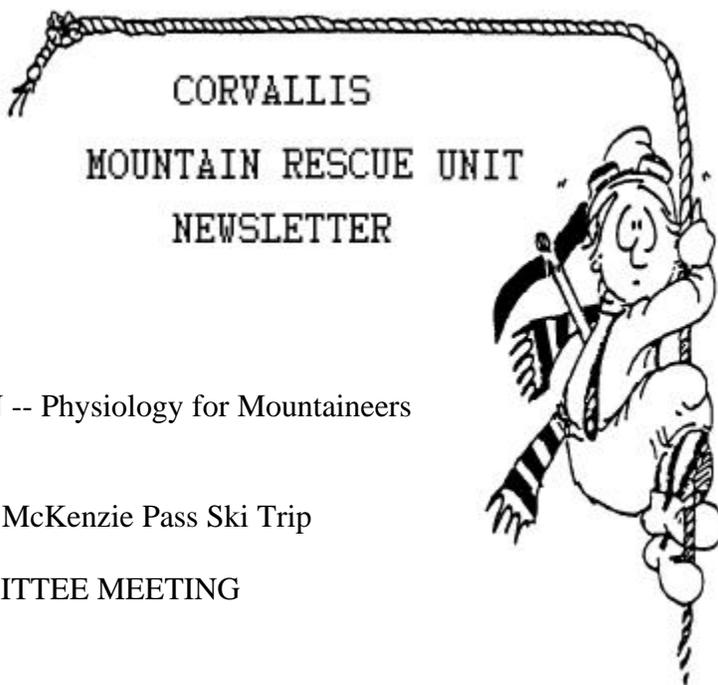


**Calendar**

February	2	7:00pm	UNIT MEETING -- Training: Rescue Equipment Overview by Don Lacer.
February	17	7:00PM	TRAINING SESSION -- Physiology for Mountaineers by Spencer Wood.
February	20-21	TBA	FIELD PRACTICE -- McKenzie Pass Ski Trip
February	22	7:00pm	EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
March	2	7:00pm	UNIT MEETING -- Training: Unit Organization and Call-out Procedures by Joy Linn.
March	17	7:00pm	TRAINING SESSION -- Basic Mountaineering
March	20-21	TBA	FIELD PRACTICE -- Unit Climb: Leutholds's Coulior, Mt. Hood
March	29	7:00pm	EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING



[Editor's note: This article describes a climbing accident which happened over New Year's weekend on Mt. Hood. It describes the feelings of the subject or patient and helps personify that part of a SAR mission. Lest we forget.]

Rescue - from a Patient's Perspective

by Matt Jarvis

The climbing party consisted of Dustin, Faron and myself. Our plan was really simple. Head up to the Illumination Saddle on Friday night, bivy for the night, do the South Side route on Saturday, come back, play around building shelters and such, bivy Saturday night and climb a different route on Sunday.

The trip up Palmer was pretty uneventful, though climbing by moonlight is always rather unique. We came across a few of the chairlift towers that had been bent over in the previous storm. Wow!

Reaching the top of Palmer we decided that we were high enough for the night (around midnight) so started pitching camp. Dustin and Faron set up Dustin's new North Face tent while I dug a shallow trench and set up Dustins' bivy sack. We hung out in the tent until around 3 then off to bed.

We got up around 8am, had a quick bite and headed up around 9am. This was my 4th attempt at Hood (two cancelled by weather, one failed summit climb) and I was pretty determined to finally make it. We powered our way up with Faron usually in front (doesn't he ever get tired??), taking several rest breaks on the way. We could see Mary's Peak above the clouds covering the valley and considered ourselves fortunate for being in such fine weather.

Getting to the Hogsback we encountered a bit of a traffic jam as expected. Two Mazama teams were slow going up and there was another group of two in front of us, so we had a short (and in my case, needed) rest before that near vertical hell known as the Hogsback. The Bergshrund was completely filled in.

After trudging up the 'Back and to the top, the guys let me have the honor of being first on the summit. Of course, the views were spectacular. We were up there for about 20 minutes taking pictures, making phone calls and feeling pretty proud of ourselves. But it became apparent that we were all feeling pretty queasy, so we quickly got our stuff together and proceeded on down. This was about 2:30pm.

We reached the top of the Hogsback and again waited for our turn. We discussed roping up but decided against it since we had seen several teams both ascend and descend without one. Plus the fact of my size, compared to Dustin and Faron, we just decided to do without.

We were given a chance to go around a descending team of Mazamas which we did. While going around the last one I slipped but caught myself after only slipping a couple of feet. No problems here I thought. I was the last of our three and made it around the Mazamas and was just going on down, minding my own business taking care to get good footing when my left foot slipped. I tried to catch myself with my right foot but it slipped too and the next thing I know I was zipping down the rather steep east side of the 'Back. I remember thinking that this wasn't a problem as I went into self-arrest, this time keeping in mind to keep my crampons up.

However, it didn't work. I slid and slid and slid - my axe just wasn't slowing me down very much at all. I still didn't think I had much of a problem as I kept sliding down until I started to bounce quite a bit. Then all Hell broke loose as I started to tumble, roll and cartwheel my way down the slope. I managed to get into self-arrest position two more times but each time was the same -- I would just keep zipping down the slope, start bouncing again and then back to the tumbling....

I remember feeling a really big "thud" against my right leg and then realized that I had a very serious problem. I resigned myself to the fact that I was going to die or get seriously hurt and waited for the blow against my neck, breaking it. If not that, then impaling myself with my axe. After what seemed like a minute (I was told later that the whole thing lasted about 15 seconds) that I lost my ice axe and started to panic, still tumbling and waiting for the end to come.

Then, miraculously, I noticed that I was on softer snow. Remembering what Mardi had taught me, I immediately started digging my hands and knees into the snow as a last ditch attempt to slow down before crashing into the Devil's Kitchen -- which I knew was somewhere below me. It worked.

I came to rest on my left side and started doing a self-assessment - wiggling my toes, fingers, feet etc. I noticed some severe pain in both legs but was pretty sure they weren't broken. My right hand, elbow and shoulder were very sore and there was some bleeding. I thought for sure my hand was broken, but it turned out my glove was just so packed with snow that it made my hand immovable.

I raised my arm in the air to let anyone know that I was still alive, and then waited several minutes until two men showed up and started helping me. Rolling onto my back was very painful because I moved my legs. This was not a good sign. Shortly, a lot of people showed up, including Dustin, Faron and a bunch of Mazamas. Someone was asking around if anyone had advanced medical training and as it turned out I was the only one. I had the thrill of walking them through doing an assessment on myself.

They put some ensolite under me and started wrapping me in jackets, emergency blankets and, later, sleeping bags. I was very, very cold and shivering violently. Faron swapped out my snow packed gloves for his OR mittens and eventually a hot water bottle was placed in my groin to help warm me. I would guess that it was about 35 degrees out with a pretty decent wind blowing.

Someone grabbed a cellphone and called 911. They got Clackamas County and reported the accident. 911 said they would pass it down the line and mount a rescue. Dustin used my cellphone to call his wife and asked her to let Bob know that a rescue was in progress but it was under control.

Over time, people started getting pretty cold. The decision was made to start sending folks down the mountain so we didn't have a whole bunch of hypothermic people that high on the mountain. Eventually I was left with Roy and Ellen of the Mazamas caring for me. They were having a difficult time staying warm and functional while seeing to my needs. I was wrapped up in a cocoon of sleeping bags, emergency blankets, jackets and ensolite. But I was still so cold I could hardly stand it and was still shivering violently.

At around 6pm or so, it was becoming apparent that rescue was not quickly forthcoming and the thought that I might freeze to death was a distinct possibility. On the mountain, we just didn't have any sign or indication that our calls for help were being answered. Two emergency locator units (MLU's) had been activated but we had no indication if they were working or not.

Finally, around 7:30pm, Jim Tripp of the Timberline Ski Patrol arrived with a litter. As it turns out a RAT (American Medical Response *Reach And Treat*) team had started out way ahead of him but they had become lost somewhere on the mountain. Another RAT team was responding, but they hadn't even left Timberline yet. The three of them worked at putting me in the litter -- which was a very painful process for me as I had to help them quite a bit. I had some thin ensolite pads underneath me and two sleeping bags on top for insulation.

Roy asked about my gear and Jim said to leave it behind, despite my pleas with him to bring it along. He was right, of course, but I didn't want to leave behind my camera, climbing gear and CMRU's GPS unit. I discussed with Jim about posting a reward for my gear and he said that there were enough climbing animals in the patrol that I should not be too much problem getting my gear back. The three of them brought me down a couple of hundred feet to near the Steel Cliffs -- which I thought I recognized when I dared to peek out from under my insulation.

Roy and Ellen decided to head on down as they were getting very cold. I was left with Jim for a couple of hours as we waited for more help. I could hear him talking to the first RAT team but; from he said, they were clueless to either where they were or where we where. Jim settled down in the snow next to me and tried to chat with me about life, the universe and everything else to take my mind off how cold I was, telling me to try and relax. My hip sockets were in terrible pain because I had been lying completely flat in the litter for several hours now, plus all the while I was shivering so much that my hips seemed to be cramping up. I found this to be more painful than my leg injuries.

At last, Steve Rollins of PMR arrived and relieved Jim. Rollins was all business as he gave me some heating pads for my armpits and groin. After radio contact with some paramedics, gave me some Goo and a little bit of water to help with my hypothermia. There was an on-again, off-again possibility of a helicopter rescue. Steve gave our UTM location from his GPS to base, then again after translating to Lat/Long for the helicopter crew. After another hour or so the paramedics of AMR showed up. They checked out my packaging and were shocked when they realized that I was not actually in the sleeping bags but that the bags were just laid on top of me. They went to work getting me into the two bags, a very painful process -- but in the end well worth it because within an hour or so I had actually finally stopped shivering. Thank God! They gave me a choice of some morphine, but said that the drug would interfere with my rehydration. I knew I was getting hypothermic so I asked for some Advil instead. Guess what? Paramedics can give you narcotics but they can't give you over the counter meds. So, I had to take the pain as-is and to top it off they never gave me any fluids anyway....

We were then told that a helicopter rescue was not coming and that I would have to be taken down the mountain the hard way. After a while, members of what I assume were PMR arrived and then out of the darkness a familiar voice - George! My God, I can't tell you what a relief it was to hear his voice. That's when I started to feel like I was going to get out of this alive. [As a side note, George had heard that we were climbing this weekend and rushed up to Mt. Hood to join us. He heard about a rescue in progress and went to tell people in charge that three of CMRU's finest were on the hill, only to find out we were the rescue - go figure!]

From then on I was either fading in and out of consciousness or falling asleep from exhaustion, but I know that my rescuers were doing a running belay down the mountain to the top of Palmer. This seemed to take an awful long time but from the conversations I overheard they weren't taking any chances. We made it to the top of Palmer where a snow cat was waiting. They loaded me in and a few rescuers piled in as well for the ride down. One of the guys was leaning against my injured thigh with his hand, but no one could hear me yelling for him to move his hand for what seemed like an eternity.

We arrived at the Timberline patrol room where they put the litter on the floor and started an assessment. They cut away my new HH underlayer and checked out my legs. No right angles or poking bones, thank goodness. I looked at my watch and was shocked to find out it was nearly 4am. Fourteen hours since my fall!!! At their suggestion, I agreed to go to the hospital. Believe me, it didn't take very much convincing. After getting down the mountain I was transferred from the AMR ambulance to a Multnomah County rig and about a half hour later arrived at Mt. Hood Medical Center in Gresham.

From there, I was examined by a couple of doctors and had X-rays taken of my back, ankles, knees, thighs, hips, hand, elbow and shoulder. It turned out that nothing was broken but they somehow knew that I was bleeding inside my right knee and from a urine sample that I had some minor internal bleeding.

I attempted to leave the hospital with Dustin and Faron, but I couldn't even manage to get into a wheelchair for the ride to the front door. Since I couldn't care for myself it was decided that I should stay for at least a day.

Looking back, I consider myself very fortunate that all along the line, people were able to help me every step of the way. After seeing this process from a patient's perspective, I have some observations that we can do to help others in my same situation. Something, ANYTHING, should be done to let people know that help is on the way. Send up a flare, do a fly by, fire a cannon -- something! When it was just the three of us (myself and the two Mazamas) up there, it seemed like it might become necessary, for their own survival, to leave me behind since it was getting extremely cold and help just didn't seem to be coming. I realize that these things take time to get going, but to be honest we felt pretty alone in the world up there. [How about leave the cellphone on scene! -- Ed.]

When packaging a patient, especially where the trip out is going to be extreme, do what it takes to get it right the first time. I was so miserable in that litter I couldn't tell which was worse - the cold, my injuries or the cramps and strains I was getting in the litter. I'm sure my 6'6" frame didn't help matters, but a bit more comfort sure would have helped out.

Steve Rollins of PMR really knew his stuff, and was quick with the GPS and the coordinate systems. This really made it sink in to me that CMRU members should be much more familiar with our GPS units. I've been working with one quite a bit over the last few months and I'm told that we've scheduled training sometime in April.

My injuries will heal, but to be honest, I am more concerned with the lasting psychological effects of such a traumatic incident. Nothing in my 13 years of law enforcement was at all like this, and I can't even close my eyes for a second without reliving the panic I felt when I started tumbling down that hill. As a rescue unit, perhaps a thorough follow up with our patients and/or next of kin would be of great value to them. Perhaps it would provide them with a "bridge" from the trauma to the reality of dealing with it.

One final thing to think about: this accident took place on perhaps the easiest route on one of the most accessible mountains around. Just think what could have happened if this were on Mt. Jefferson.