



# OLYMPIC MOUNTAIN RESCUE NEWSLETTER

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

October 2002

**The next meeting will be at the Westgate Fire Hall at 7:00P.M. Training will be:**

**REPORTS** of Chairman, Officers, Coordinators, and Committees:

**TRAINING:**

**UPCOMING:**

**Oct. 8<sup>th</sup>** - General Membership Meeting - **Blood Borne Pathogens** - Boyle. Don't miss this requirement. Certificates will be available for those that need them.

**Oct. 19<sup>th</sup>** - **Advanced Rigging** - Barron/Gelineau. More info at Meeting or call Greg or Paul.

**Nov 16<sup>th</sup>** - **Navigation** - Ellsworth. Don't miss this most excellent training.

## MISSIONS

Mission No: 2002-8 Date: September 3

Location: Dosewallips River, High Bridge

Type: Evacuation/ Standby

Personnel: (Field team) John Stieber, Greg Barron, Cass Whalen, Loring Bemis, Barry Pealstrom, Dick Waldo, Duane Stewart, Tony DiBenedetto (In Town) Jim Groh, Roger Beckett, Tom Banks.

The answering service called at 17:23 and Beckett took the call and then was in contact with Larry Nicky at the Olympic National Park EOC in Port Angeles. Nicky explained that Steve Chaffee, ONP ranger from Hoodspport and 3 other rangers were with a "sick" woman at the Dose bridge. This bridge over the river canyon is out and a cable for emergency access had a tree on it taking it out of service. The hiker had been reached by going down river and



carefully climbing down, crossing the river and ascending the other side. It was possible that some assistance would be needed to evacuate the woman across the river. Groh was contacted and he made an all hands page and a standby team was formed up.

Nicky called Beckett at 1900 to report that the river crossing had been made safely with the onsite crew and we could stand down. Groh notified all hands by 1930.

*Prepared by Roger Beckett with input by Jim Groh.*

Total Personnel: 11

Total Hours: 21

Total Mileage: 0

\*\*\*\*\*

Mission No: 2002-9

Date: September 13

Location: Glacier Peak, Snohomish

County

Personnel: John Stieber(OL), Sarah Armstrong, Deb Legg, Loring Bemis, Mark Hendrickson, Jim Groh  
InTown Coordinator: Roger Beckett, Jim Groh

We received this callout from the State DEM at approximately 2320 Thursday the 12th. The report indicated that five climbers were stranded on Glacier Peak at the 9000' level with a sixth having been flown out from the 1600' level. OMR was requested to provide 6-8 climbers.

John Stieber reports: We were to rendezvous at 0330 on Friday morning at Westgate fire station. From there we would drive around as it was still too early to catch the Kingston ferry. The plan was to arrive



at the Darrington Airport by 0630 to get briefed by the sheriff and get the teams flown in by helicopter. During the brief we found out that the stranded group consisted of five males in their mid twenties. Only two of the group had any mountaineering experience. One of those just barely. The others had never been mountain climbing. The group had used a cell phone to call the sheriff the night before and reported that they were getting extremely cold and hypothermic. With this information and the fact that they were stuck at about 9,000 ft the sheriff decided to call in one of the Navy helicopters which had a much higher flight capability. OMR split into two teams. Each team took enough gear to set up and operate a raise or lowering system. Also present at the briefing were Seattle Mountain Rescue and Snohomish County Rescue. With them another three teams were made up. Snohomish was flown in first by the Huey helicopter to 6,800 ft. From the airport it was about a half hour round trip flight. It was then obvious that it was going to take a while to fly all the teams in. The Navy's helo was still on the ground at Whidbey due to fog.

While the second team was being flown, we received word that the Navy helo had been able to lift off and was enroute. The Huey dropped the 2nd team off and tried to get as high as possible and see if they could see the stranded climbers. During all of this the family of three of the climbers showed up at base. They made it a point of talking to nearly everyone at base and thanking for helping the climbers. Word came in that, even though the Huey couldn't make it high enough to land safely, they did make it high enough to see the climbers. All five were moving around on a shelf at approximately 9,000 ft. The family was understandably relieved to here that they were ok. The Huey returned to base for fuel and the Navy helo, which had arrived, decided to try to reach the climbers or higher and took off for the attempt. At this point, only two teams were in the field, with Seattle and OMR still on standby in base. The Navy helo radioed in that they made it nearly high enough and felt that if they were lighter they might be able to affect a hoist with the jungle penetrator. They returned to base offloaded two crew members

and everything not bolted down and not needed. After a short break to refuel and eat the Navy helo took flight to try to retrieve the climbers. Meanwhile the teams stuck in base were told to continue cooling their heels. For a while it was a bit tense in base as we waited for word to come back from the helo. The first news we had was that the helo was hovering at full throttle testing the altitude to see if they could hover safely enough nearer to the ridge. They said they could do it but that they were burning fuel and had to proceed quickly. It took the Navy crew about twenty minutes to pull all five climbers off the shelf they were stranded on. The helo returned to base uneventfully to very happy friends and family. It should be said that the father of three of the climbers asked if the chopper could drop them off at their climbing base camp to let them walkout. The semi-serious request was politely denied by the sheriff. After the sheriff talked to them, we found out that the climbers had reached a point where their rope wasn't long enough to reach the next safe shelf and the three non-climbers in the group refused to go down, being a bit scared of the crevasses they crossed earlier. They were dressed appropriately, so the danger of hypothermia was low. OMR waited until all teams were out of the field before heading home. We caught the Edmonds ferry and were home by 1730 that same day. If the Navy helicopter had not been able to extract the climbers, it would have been a very long and dangerous mission, given the condition of the glacier.

*Report by Roger Beckett and John Stieber*

Total Personnel: 7 Total Hours: 90  
Total Mileage: 475

---

### OLYMPUS HIKERS

12 Sep 2002 (informal standby)

"The missing duo walked out last night. Briefly...they were on Mt Tom and while raising a pack the

knot slipped in the rope and the pack was lost. They tried but were unable to recover it... The lost pack had most of the food.

Three days of bad weather had them in a survival mode as they began the trek back to the car. Arriving at trailhead on South Fork Hoh they discover that the lost pack also had the car keys in it. Trail head

being a very long way from reality, they waited for someone to come by in a vehicle...which finally happened and they were able to hitch a ride.

*Roger*

---

### **BROTHERS ON THE BROTHERS**

Back on the 27th of August Forrest and I had planned to climb the Brothers. We asked a few people if they had wanted to come, but alas no one wanted to join the masochistic brothers on a one day climb of the Brothers. Only 17 miles and 6,000 vertical feet of hiking and climbing. Piece of cake. Ha!

Little did we know what we were getting into. The day started at 0600 when we left home and headed for the trailhead, with the morning forecasted to be cool with a chance of light drizzle. Wouldn't you know it the weather man was wrong again. By the time we reached the trailhead at around 0815, there wasn't a cloud in the sky and the temperature was already creeping into the upper 60s. Cool for some people but not for us. We burned up the trail and made it to the climber's camp in about two hours. We were feeling good.

Great in fact. As neither Forrest nor myself had been able to push ourselves on any hikes lately, it felt good to stretch out the legs and pick up the pace. We were amazed at



the fact the stream that was normally encountered about a half mile up the trail from Lower Lena Lake didn't show itself for almost two miles. We stopped at climber's camp for a short break and filled up the water bottles. The temperature was definitely not feeling cool. The grade of the trail, as you all know, got steep from here. We were wishing for some of that drizzle in the trees, as the trail was dry.

Dry and dusty. Every step kicked up a small cloud of dust. Every hundred yards or so we had to stop to rinse our mouths to clear the caked dust. But then, this is what we call fun. We made lunch rock at about 1245 and stopped, go figure, for lunch and the view. It was turning out to be a beautiful day. Still no clouds and the only people we had seen were six campers at Lower Lena Lake. After lounging for twenty minutes or so, we started off once again to attack the mountain. It really is amazing the difference between climbing in the spring and in the late summer. No snow for one thing and lots and lots of scree. Our pace was radically slowed by this, but still we endured. About 1,000 ft above lunch rock, we heard what sounded like rock fall above us. As we were looking around to see if we had to run, we saw a lone climber coming down. We talked with this young man, who had nothing with

him except water and a few snacks. He had just decided to go up the trail from Lower Lena and see where it went. About the time he was hand over hand climbing, nearly to the summit, he said he decided to go down. Probably a wise choice we told him and continued on our way. We wondered if we would see this gentleman on our way down needing our help, but this never happened. Another hour and a half brought us to the summit. We checked our watches, only 1515. We had made it to the summit in about six and a half hours. No wonder we were feeling tired. Kicking back and rest we began to admire where we were. The visibility, unbroken by clouds, was limited only by the horizon. With a whisper light breeze blowing, the temperature was most enjoyable. And the most important no other people. We both agreed, it was times like this that made the bonds between Forrest and I so strong. The brothers had conquered the Brothers. As the old saying goes, 'all things must come to an end' and so it was that we had to depart the summit and start down. The afore mentioned scree made for an interesting descent. What had taken us nearly two hours to climb up, took us only twenty minutes to surf back down and we made it to lunch rock in 45 minutes. Ours knees were feeling the stress of down



climbing in the scree. Mine more so. On the way down to climber's camp, we picked and ate wild blue berries. A pleasant change from granola bars. We reached climber's camp at 1830 and my knees were screaming. After popping some aspirin and resting a bit, we continued on. The worst of the trail behind us my knees felt better if not great, but there was still seven miles to go and my pace was slowing down. We hit the bluff above Lower Lena Lake an hour before dusk. More than enough time to make it out. A short water break and we were off again. As we started to think that the day had no more surprises, we came across two firemen on the trail who asked us to hold up. At which point they asked if we would be bothered by seeing a dead body. As it turned out, an older gentleman had suffered a heart attack and had died right on the trail, about half way between the bluff and the upper bridge. They were waiting for the Jefferson Co Sheriff and Coroner to arrive with JSAR to evacuate the body. Unknown to me my knees had stiffened up during our break

with the firemen. As soon as we started again, it was painfully obvious it was going to be dark by the time we would make the trailhead. On the way down we met the Sheriff, Coroner and about fifteen JSAR members coming up the trail. The trailhead greeted us about half an hour after dark, with the bustle of SAR base. A little sore, but none the worse for the wear, a very interesting day climb had come to an end.

*John Stieber*

---

### **RAINIER OBSERVATIONS**

Saturday 9-14-02 I hiked the Muir Snowfield with a few work colleagues. Not much of a feat in itself to report to the OMR membership, however I made a couple observations I thought worth sharing.

First of all, a reminder that your OMR membership badge is good for admission to the park. I have used this technique at least two times now and not had any hesitation from the entrance booth staff. Second you may want to keep your head lamp handy for the parking lot visit to the rest rooms at paradise since all the power

was turned off. Judging by others comments this was not the first time this reduction in park services has been noted. And for nourishment there is a relatively new

5-star restaurant in Eatonville that I am confident would impress most appetites and at very reasonable prices.....but not burger fair. I cannot remember the name now because if was long "Bread..." something, it is in a converted house across from the Mexican restaurant. I will have more details for anyone interested.

Now for the snowfield. In my numerous visits over the past 25 years

many things remain the same about the slog up the snowfield. On any given day you are still likely to see hikers in tennis shoes, tank top, running shorts, fanny pack and carrying a can of soda. Along with these wackos are the expertly provisioned, huge climbing teams marching to high camp with gung ho climbing plans for the next day. Even though the reputable weather services have today reported that freezing levels will drop from 13,000 to 7,000 feet overnight, winds are increasing, clouds are building and the three day forecast all but guarantees rain.

The single thing that did change for me this year was my observation of glacier evidence on the MUIR ---- crevasses! I can honestly say I have no recollection of seeing this myself previously – although I usually try to avoid snow climbs/hikes this time of year. While the dimensions are not human swallowing proportions, they could easily cause disabling injuries to klutz prone hikers. I have included a photo to substantiate my observation, the pose is intended to interject some

humor.

*Jim Groh*