



OLYMPIC MOUNTAIN RESCUE NEWSLETTER

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

Missions

Mission No: 2005-13 (DEM 05-3349)

Date: December 5

Location: Stevens Pass, King County

Type: Search

Personnel: Steve Leslie (OL), Mac MacDowell
Roger Beckett and Jim Groh (In Town)

Standby: Tony and Susan DiBenedetto, Rick
Lorenz

That classic 0200 call from the State Department of Emergency Management with the announcement that some mountain rescue people were needed at Stevens Pass ski area to help look for a missing snowboarder. Mid-20 year old male had failed to return after his last run for the day and the Ski Patrol had failed to turn up anyone. The 0510 ferry out of Kingston was the boat of choice, but about 0330 the Incident Commander advised Leslie to only send up skiers or boarders for first thing in the morning. Our available skiers not able to depart until later, were placed on standby. This search was big for local news radio and TV and was well covered. Not long into the morning it was announced that the subject had been found at a friends home so the mission was called off.

Turns out that the subjects car had been moved by fellow riders while he made that last run. On return to the ski area parking he didn't see the car and hitch hiked down the hill to a friends house...of course not thinking anyone would be looking for him.

Hours: 5

Miles: 0

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Meeting

Next meeting : Tuesday, January 10th. The slotted training will be Blood borne pathogens, with Andy Graham as the instructor. This will satisfy the requirement for the blood borne pathogen training. Please make an attempt to attend.

Training

Upcoming training : Saturday, January 21st. Snow training up at Hurricane Ridge. The instructor will be Greg Barron.

The Votes Are In

At the December meeting the attending membership voted on the two vacant board positions. Sarah Armstrong and Cass Whalen were voted to continued on in those positions for another three years.

The Board members are as follows :

Steve Leslie - Chairman

Shawn Herndon - Vice Chairman

Greg Barron - Treasurer

Sarah Armstrong - Secretary

John Stieber - Member at large

Cass Whalen - Member at large



Attaching the litter to the next brake station

Mission No: 2005-14 (DEM 05-3166)

Date: December 16-17

Location: Shelton, Mason County

Type: Search-Body Recovery

Personnel: Steve Leslie (OL), Shawn Herndon, Margaret Brownell, Bella, Mark Hendrickson, Loring Bemis, Sarah Armstrong, Jason Bausher, Dick Waldo
(In-Town) Roger Beckett and Jim Groh

At noon on the 16th, OMR was called to assist Mason County search for a 53-year-old Olympic College professor that had been missing since mid-November when he went for a walk. He was thought to be missing in a residential/rural area SE of downtown Shelton. The 17th was to be a good clear cold day and the plan was to give one more day of searching with dogs and other personnel.

The truck left Westgate about 0600 and was in Shelton prior to a briefing at 0800. After an area assignment the team proceeded to the search area. Shortly after that a dog team found the subject in an old shed. OMR was requested to bag and remove the body a few hundred feet out to a road and the Coroners vehicle.

Hours: 86

Miles: 800

OMR Banquet

The annual OMR banquet is fast approaching. The scheduled date is January 7th and is being held in Poulsbo. Most of you should have already received your banquet flier in the mail. If you haven't received your invitation yet and you plan on attending please give Steve Leslie a call, so he can plan for you and your guests to attend. This will be a catered buffet style event with the guest speakers being a couple of noted local climbers.

Why Do I Do This?

Not long ago, a person asked me what I liked to do. I had replied that I liked hiking and climbing. Which eventually led to us talking about mountain rescue and what we do.

After we had talked about this for a while, he asked me something that I had to think about. what he asked was, "Why do you do this?"

My initial response was a pretty generic statement, "Because I like being outdoors and helping others."

To this he soon came back, "I understand that, but why??"

I have to admit I could not respond quickly to that question.

This generic response is something that covers a deeper feeling, that is hard to explain to most people. Even putting it into words is more difficult than you would imagine.

We, as volunteer rescuers, put ourselves through a lot of hard ships to help others, that we do not know, and for no pay.

These hard ships include time away from friends and family, one hundred plus hours a year of training, and the physical hard ship of difficult missions. Where we may have to search through the night without sleep, hike 12, 15 or even 18 miles in the dark to make it to an injured person. When we do get a chance to sleep, it is often in not the greatest of weather conditions. Cold, wet and muddy are descriptions that come to mind.

To top it all off, then comes the mental aspect of our job. What could be so mentally challenging about our job one might ask.

To start with, in your head is the knowledge that not just one life is on the line with what you do. No. On the contrary, besides the patient, you have yourself and your teammates to worry about. All of these lives literally can be hanging in your hands.

Our training gives us many tools and techniques with which to help others and ourselves if need be. Which anchor to use or which system will work best in a given area. Choosing which of these tools is best for a given situation can, at times, be stressful.

But with all of this there are rays of sunshine. The moment when you return a lost child to it's parents.

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The look in the eyes of a subject you just found and are preparing to aid and rescue. Included in this, surprisingly enough, would be the hugs received from a friend or family member of someone who had perished in a wilderness accident and you returned.

I once saw on the news an interview with a family member, of two lost hikers, who had seen what some of the rescuers (ESAR youth in that case) were doing. These rescuers were catching some much needed sleep, by wrapping up in a tarp to keep the rain off, and snoozing on the muddy ground. The family member, who was in tears, could not believe that there people out there that would put themselves through that sort of discomfort to help other person, whom they did not know.

All of these things produce a warmth inside, which can make all of the hard ships worth the sacrifice. There have been times in the past where I have considered leaving my rescue group. Then when it seemed to much to take and I would rather walk away from it all, there would come a mission that would erase all of the hard ship tensions and make me feel refreshed and able to take on the world again.



Preparing to test the stability of the snow slope during avalanche training.



The improper way of testing the stability of the snow slope.