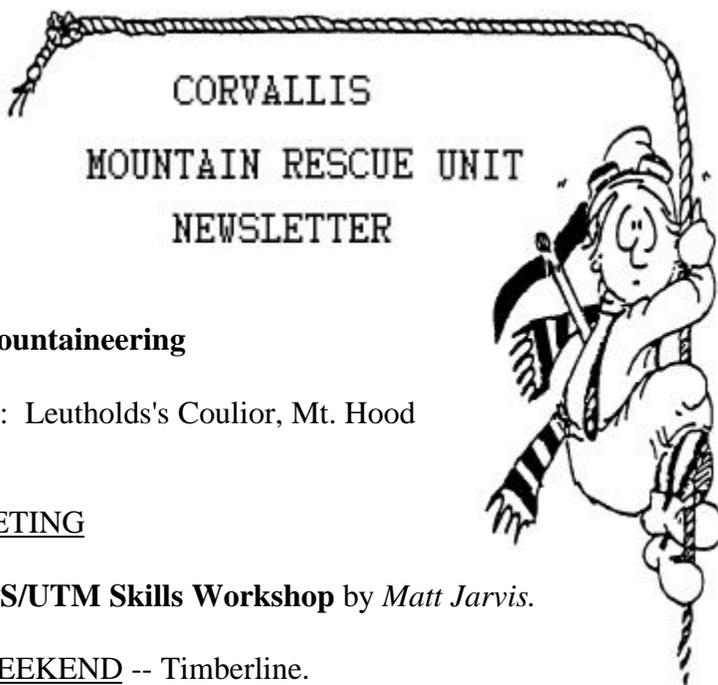


Calendar

- 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 TBA FIELD PRACTICE -- **Unit Climb:** Leutholds's Coulior, Mt. Hood
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- March 29 7:00pm EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
- April 6 7:00pm UNIT MEETING -- Training: **GPS/UTM Skills Workshop** by *Matt Jarvis*.
- April 17 9:00am OMRC REACCREDITATION WEEKEND -- Timberline.
- April 21 7:00pm TRAINING SESSION -- **Litter Rigging and Command System** by *Bob Freund*.
- April 26 7:00pm EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING



February Training -- revisited or *WHY CROW'S FLY* by Don Lacer

The snowplowing stopped about a mile short the snow gate on the East side. A sign there said it was 33 miles to McKenzie Bridge. That should have been my first clue that this would be a *long* trip, but I didn't want to dwell on that and spoil the enthusiasm. CMRU members Lindsay Clunes, Jon Sears, Farron Anslow, Jim Dagata, new member Ann Grediagin, and myself were gathered for the purpose of skiing over the pass (old McKenzie highway 242) to the snow gate on the West side. After unloading all the gear, Lindsay and Ann had to drive their rigs to the other side and get shuttled back. They followed the rest of us on about a 3 hour delay. Just enough time, Ann pointed out, for us to make camp really cozy prior to her arrival. Yeah, right.

Dee Wright observatory is located at the summit, and our plan was to camp near there. Eight miles and 1600 vertical would get us there. This was sort of new adventure for me, going low-angle for a long distance, as opposed to steeper and shorter. I soon discovered, as my feet were heating up from the friction, that my randonee ski gear liked steeper better. There's nothing like moving the vehicles twenty some miles away to solidify one's sense of commitment!

A campsite was selected at the edge of the trees about a half mile East of the Observatory. Jon and Jim both had Megamids for shelter, and I had Lindsay's VE-25 tent. We stomped out 3 platforms and connecting trails. Lindsay was careful not to arrive until after I had puzzled through the pitching of his unfamiliar tent with its unusual footprint. Credit Farron with the assist; we nearly got it right on the first try! We had 3 shelters and 3 stoves, and 6 hungry people. It was to be a bad weekend for Peak Stoves. My feather 400 had some pump problems, but finally fired up and got us through dinner. Jon's stove – another feather 400 – was randomly spewing fuel in places other than the burner plate. The flames were impressive -- from a distance. Meanwhile, Jim's MSR Dragonfly simply started when he lit it, and cooked their meals to simmering perfection. Pretty boring. He was, of course, quite popular the next morning since both of the Peak's died in their sleep and we all wanted hot water for coffee.

The next short leg of our journey Sunday morning was to get to the observatory. Lindsay had skied in the weekend before and logged in the location on his GPS. This was helpful since visibility was poor and the wind was steady at 30mph and gusting to 50. Over the next several minutes, we played a really cool game of "Navigation by Committee" as we sought the location of the highway under the wind-swept barren landscape. It took us face into the wind, which was a lesson for at least one of us who packed hurriedly and left goggles at home. Also, my feet were heating up again, but it was "all downhill", and, according to the GPS, only 12 miles to the gate (as the crow files).

By the time we stopped for lunch, we were down in the forest out of the wind and conditions were pretty decent. Conversation revolved around nutrition and diet, with Jim and I trying to convince Ann (who's finishing a masters degree in the subject) that carbohydrates are way over-rated and a higher fat diet is really the ticket. She didn't budge, and proceeded to make her point for carbs by breaking trail at a fast pace most of the afternoon. Correspondingly, me and my sore feet and high fat brought up the rear. At the next break, Lindsay announced 4 miles remaining. We unanimously agreed that was too far, based on elapsed time and a reasonable rate of travel. That's "as the crow flies" he says. I'm thinkin' I want to kill that crow. My feet have been worse since lunch, and before long, Jim starts getting some soreness in his knees. Oh good, another cripple to stay back and keep me company!

Another hour, another break, another estimate of still too far to go. The grade got a little steeper and we could actually glide some. A welcome relief for my feet, but no better for Jim's knees. Will we actually get out of here before dark? I'm starting to wonder. We pass Alder Springs campground; a good sign. Fresh snow makes the going easier. Jim wants drugs. I want out of my boots. The next sign says ¼ mile to the youth camp, and with great relief, I remember that the snow gate is at the entrance to the camp. YAHOO! We're outa here!

In our various activities as a unit, we encounter harsh conditions, deep snow, long trails, gear failures, physical discomfort, navigational problems, imperfect communication, and various human flaws and foibles. If, in the course of our training, we duplicate these elements so as to be better prepared, then this 23 mile ski trip must be declared a smashing success! The remaining 10 miles to McKenzie Bridge were covered by car and immediately followed by a big meal at the Log Cabin Inn. I ordered the pasta. Good source of carbs, you know.

NEW MEMBER -- welcome, Ann

The Unit welcomes Ann Grediagin as a new Trainee. Anne is a Major in the Army who is doing graduate work in Nutrition Research at Oregon State. She has climbed peaks throughout the northwest, and she is familiar with volunteer SAR operations. Most recently, she demonstrated an "out front" style of leadership as cited in the story above.

Corvallis Mountain Rescue Unit
Post Office Box 116
Corvallis, Oregon 97339-0116