

**November 2008  
Volume XIII, Issue 1**

## PMR Newsletter

**Editor:** Kyle Petrocine

**Contributors:** Monty Smith, Hugh O'Reilly, Glennis Merrifield, Greg Robinson, Tom Stringfield

### Ramona Falls 8/27 Rescue Thank You *By Glennis Merrifield*

To all Your Wonderful Volunteers:  
I can't begin to thank you enough for your efforts on behalf of my son Kyle Merrifield, up at Ramona Falls on Sunday, August the 27<sup>th</sup>. One reads in the paper or hears on the nightly news about lost or injured climbers or hikers and the efforts made by Portland Mountain Rescue to bring them to safety. You think to yourself how great it is that people volunteer their time to do

such things all the while not having a clue what it is really like when a loved one of your own is in a position to need that help and how awesome it feels to have so many dedicated people drop everything (sleep for instance) at a moments notice and gather together in such an organized and purposeful manner and take on a task that is strenuous and possibly life threatening. Thank you, thank you, thank you for bringing my son

up that treacherous mountainside and getting him home to us. He is (was) in the hospital, but expected to come home tomorrow with fairly superficial injuries and a great deal of "road rash". I will remember your organization with my kudos to everyone who will listen and with my checkbook as you are going to the top of my list of charities of whom is truly worthy of the support.

#### Upcoming Events:

<b>PMR Annual Banquet</b>	<b>12/5</b>
<b>Kent Swanson Jr. Avy Course</b>	<b>1/30 - 2/1</b>
<b>MRA 50th Anniversary Conference</b>	<b>6/25 - 6/28</b>

### Bleeding Your Way Off the Top of the World *By Monty Smith*

In April-May of this year I had the opportunity to take a crack at Everest via the South Col route. This was during the Chinese-imposed closing of the mountain while they brought a specially-designed Olympic torch to the summit. Closing the mountain involved the Nepali police searching tents, snipers at Camp 2, and one protesting American climber being forced out of Camp 1 and deported. In the end, the Chinese moratorium had little effect on us, as they summited before the prime season opened up – everyone who wanted to go for the summit had ample chance, with good weather. That included my partner and me. We'd teamed up on climbing Shishapangma (8012m, Tibet) in 2005 and agreed to tackle the South Col route together. Everything

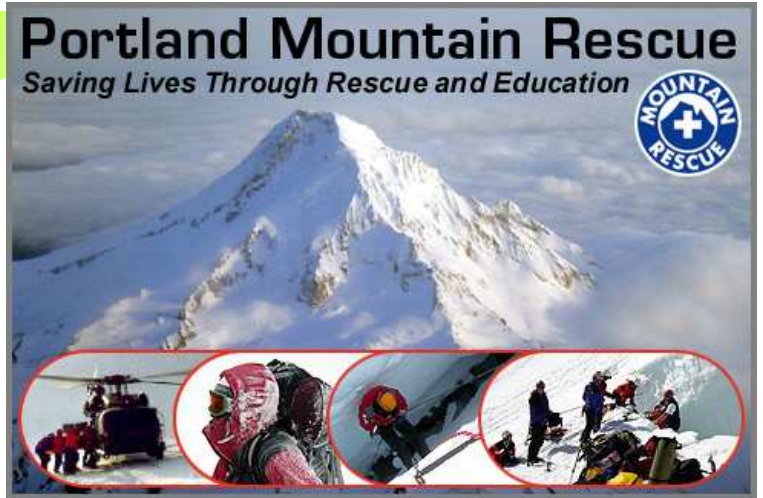
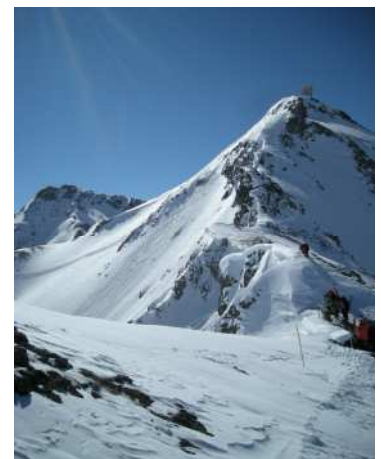
was ready for the summit – we felt great, the weather was stable, fixed ropes and camps were in – what could stop us? Of course, even thinking such hubris is to court disaster. Only hours later, my summit bid was halted by a "massive internal hemorrhage next to my brain" - known in lesser circles as a nosebleed. At 3am on the morning we were due to move to Camp3 (24,000ft) I felt my nose running. No problem. I rolled over to wipe it and as I leaned, found the runny nose was blood. Drat! Why now? (That's a family-safe approximation of what was actually stated). Never having had serious problems with nosebleeds, I wasn't worried, at least until it wouldn't stop. Soon I had one emergency room doctor join me in my tent with two more on the radio, and we tried everything,

all to no avail. After about five hours I made the difficult decision to descend to base camp while my partner left to ascend to Camp3. Moving down the Western Cwm, and then the Khumbu Icefall, was extremely difficult. I had toilet paper plugs jammed into both nostrils, which became disgusting bloody projectiles when I sneezed. Following climbers must have wondered about the numerous blood patches dotting the icefall. I don't mind saying I was fighting horrible emotional reactions due to abandoning the summit bid... to a nosebleed!

Cont'd on page 2.

#### Unit Stats (Yr to Date):

- **Missions:** 12
- **# Rescued:** 8
- **Mission Hrs:** 926
- **Training Hrs:** 3,622
- **PubEd Hrs:** 73
- **Admin Hrs:** 688



## Bleeding Your Way...Cont'd *By Monty Smith*

Upon arriving at Base Camp, I headed straight to the medical tent of the Himalayan Rescue Association. Examination showed the bleeding was somewhere inside my nasal cavity and could not be reached by cauterization methods. Since we couldn't stop the bleeding, the next step was to block it – a product known as a nasal tampon. If you've never had the pleasure of a one, imagine a 3/8" x 3" long stick shoved into your brain. Trust me – it SOUNDS better than it feels. And the resulting headache is not to be missed! This helped – sort of. Now all the blood was simply re-routed out the other nostril. So the following day I had a second one driven in (oops, I

mean 'inserted'). My nose was no longer bleeding, but it was all running down my throat. It didn't take long to get horribly nauseous, so now my only choice was to lean over a bottle and spit. Any activity caused the bleeding to start again, plus I was getting very fatigued – and it's a 34-mile walk to the nearest airport (there are no roads in the Khumbu). After wondering how I was going to get out of there, the doctors finally authorized a military helicopter evacuation. That was the final humiliation – being evacuated, apparently healthy, with big plugs sticking out of my nose that's the size of a balloon. Once in Kathmandu I had them removed, with the bleeding finally stopped. Over-

all it was a great adventure, although not the way I wanted it to end. Besides, standing atop Mount Everest, reaching the highest summit on the planet, to some the pinnacle of climbing achievement, I hear is overrated.



## Forever on the Mountain Book Review *By Hugh O'Reilly*

Four friends, each an experienced mountaineer, went to Denali in May of 1987. About four weeks later they came home...as friends. Somewhat to their surprise, they had learned that the most vital skill the party contained was "compatibility".

Forty years ago, twelve men went to Denali in early June and by late July seven were dead at or above 17,900' and lie "forever on the mountain". It is not a stretch to note that fundamental compatibility was glaringly absent from the group. To call the men a "group" may seem unfair, however to call them a "team" would be truly inaccurate.

The four Colorado men were ready when an auto accident removed one individual. The National Park Service said there must be a minimum of four. The remaining three Colorado men appealed to a nine man Seattle group, the Joseph F. Wilcox Mount McKinley Expedition, for permission to join. After a year of preparation the Colorado men were indeed

desperate; after a year of preparation the Seattle men didn't want any strangers. Wilcox granted permission, Wilcox's leadership was accepted, and the difficulties began.

Here are two groups separated by strong reservations about each other, who don't practice together on Mt. Rainier, who don't ride together the road route to the Park, who don't really cross together the tundra approach to the Muldrow Glacier. This is followed by differences in strength, speed experience, route finding, roping up, and most evident, attitude. The Colorado men appreciated that windows of opportunity are scarce on Denali.

At 17,900' a window is presented. The Colorado men want to move and Wilcox knows it is a realistic move and goes with them. They are short on wands but summit and return in ten hours! A load of supplement wands do not come up from a lower camp. One Wilcox man is not feeling well, one descends with the

summit four, and seven head out. They head out into what will become a massive double storm, a storm larger than any recorded in 33 years of July observations.

The end is obvious. Rescue resources are unbelievably slow to respond and mobilize. The five man Mountaineering Club of Alaska team on the Muldrow route at 12,000' are directed to affect a rescue. This is a cruel joke! The storm continues, the MCA team fights to 17,900' and finds one dead man, and in improving weather, reach the summit without finding a living soul.

Wilcox will write a book claiming it was all about weather. The Colorado leader will write a book claiming it was all about leadership. The National Park Service will save face.

This book is a tough read. Mr. Tabor has brought all the evidence together. No agreement is in sight.

*Forever on the Mountain*, By James M. Tabor

## PMR Support Member Spotlight *Member: Greg Robinson*



Years in PMR: 2 years

Why volunteer? I stay involved with PMR because of the friends I've made and I enjoy the things we do.

Favorite recent climb: Mazama Glacier, Mt. Adams

Fixed or free heel: Fixed

Day job: Internal Medicine physician

Recommended recent read: *The Dive*, by Pippin Ferrers

Next outdoor adventure: Four cascade volcanoes in 2009.

Non-outdoor hobbies: Scrabble and family bike rides.

Family: Wife Lois and son and daughter in 10th and 7th grade.

## PMR announces the 2009 Kent P. Swanson Jr. Memorial Avalanche Course

### A Refresher Course and What's-New Course for Rescuers, Ski Patrollers and Guides

During the weekend of January 30 - February 1, 2009, Portland Mountain Rescue will be sponsoring the seventh mostly-annual Kent P. Swanson Jr.\* Memorial Avalanche Course. This course is intended for Oregon and Washington mountain rescuers, ski patrollers, guides and others involved semi-professionally in winter avalanche terrain. It is not an introductory course but is intended for those with previous avalanche training. The course will be both a refresher course in stability analysis, hazard mitigation and group self-rescue and an overview into what's new in the field of avalanche study.

The lead instructor for this course will be Grant Statham, of Canmore, Alberta. Grant's steady job is working as an Avalanche Risk Specialist for Parks Canada in the Rocky Mountain parks. In that role, Grant led the team that developed the avalanche terrain rating system used in the new Avaluator avalanche decision tool recently implemented in Canada. Grant is currently leading a group working to update the Canadian avalanche danger scale. Grant's background also includes 21 years as a certified

professional mountain guide and ski guide, including extensive experience guiding in avalanche-prone terrain. He has also worked: in private industry as an avalanche consultant (with Chris Stethem and Associates – Chris is a former Kent Swanson Avalanche Class lead instructor); as an avalanche forecaster for the Canadian Avalanche Association; and as an instructor and course leader for CAA Level 1 and 2 avalanche courses. Grant was the CAA Professional Member of the Year in 2005. Grant is also an accomplished rock and ice climber, with a significant climbing resume including guiding and first ascents on several continents. Like previous lead instructors for this course, Grant is among the best in the business.

For the field sessions, Grant will supervise a crew of trained assistant instructors, so that the field student:instructor ratio will be about 4 to 1.

The goal of this course is to provide practical information to help keep students and their teammates safe in avalanche terrain. We won't be looking at the intimate details of snow crystals. Instead, we will spend our time reviewing terrain, weather, and snowpack as they relate to avalanche hazard. We will be reviewing route selection and safe travel practices while in avalanche country. We will be looking at and practicing field tests for stability. We will be reviewing and

practicing avalanche transceiver searches, and we will practice our avalanche rescue skills in a realistic mock avalanche. This course is intended to provide continuing education to those who work in the winter environment; however, the course does not provide a US level or any other certificate, just great information.

The course will be based out of Mazama Lodge in Government Camp, Oregon. Lodging Friday and Saturday night and all meals from dinner Friday through lunch Sunday are included in the course fee. Vegetarian meals are available. Lectures will be held in the Mazama Lodge dining room.

Enrollment in the course will be limited to 35 participants. The fee for the course is \$100.00 for registration through January 9, 2009. This fee includes instruction, course materials and room and board at Mazama Lodge (sack lunch included on Saturday and lunch at Timberline Lodge included on Sunday). PMR encourages prospective students to register early. An Application Form and a Waiver Form are on the PMR website (see web address below). A deposit of \$50.00 and a completed Waiver Form should be returned with each Application.

PMR operates this course under a Special Use Permit from the Mt. Hood National Forest and is an equal opportunity provider.

\*Kent P. Swanson Jr., a young and talented member of Portland Mountain Rescue, was killed in a helicopter crash while attending an avalanche class in Canada in 1997. Donations from Kent's family help to offset some of the course costs to make it more affordable.

Visit <http://www.pmr.org/membersrv/secure/backup-all/misc/> to print out an application and waiver form.

