



RESCUE RUCKSACK

A PUBLICATION OF THE
 TACOMA MOUNTAIN RESCUE UNIT
 P.O. BOX 696 TACOMA WA. 98401
 EDITOR: GUS BUSH
 TMRU WEB SITE: <http://WWW.TMRU.ORG>

VOLUME 47 NUMBER 12

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- SORRY I'M LATE
- HOUSE BILL 2619 IS DEAD
- FEBRUARY TRAINING

February 2010 TACOMA MOUNTAIN RESCUE

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i> 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM Membership Meeting	<i>11</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>13</i> 7:00 AM Medical/First Aid and CPR, Med Pt Plg
<i>14</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>21</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>24</i>  7:00 PM - 9:00 PM Board Meeting	<i>25</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>28</i>						

March 2010

TACOMA MOUNTAIN RESCUE

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i> 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM Member- ship Meeting	<i>11</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>13</i> 7:00 AM Rigging I @ II
<i>14</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>21</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>28</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>31</i>			



**Be ready
next time
the phone
rings.**



SORRY I'M LATE

I had to travel for my 9 to 5 job to Illinois and did not get back till last Friday the 5th. So please forgive me for getting the rucksack out late. Gus Bush, Editor

HOUSE BILL 2619 IS DEAD

On Jan 19 the following bill was filed in the State legislature as house bill 2619. AN ACT Relating to electronic signaling devices; and adding a new chapter to Title 70 RCW. BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) A person who engages in mountain climbing during the months of November, December, January, February, and March shall use an electronic signaling device (*An electronic signaling device is a distress beacon that can be manually or automatically activated to transmit a distress signal to a satellite. They are often used to help pinpoint the exact location of a person, Editor*) when climbing a mountain at a point above the timberline. A person who guides for compensation an organized group that includes children under eighteen years of age on any mountain above the timberline shall carry an altimeter, an electronic signaling device, a contour map of the area, and a compass. As used in this section, an electronic signaling device includes emergency locator transmitters (ELTs), emergency position indicating radio beacons (EPIRBs), and personal locator beacons (PLBs).

The following was written by Tacoma MR member Fran Sharp as a position paper she planned to present at the hearing on the bill on 26 Jan in Olympia I hope that this will give you some ideas and talking points when folks ask you about it. (which they will). Of course, you can also mention that every snowmobiler, hunter, fisher, photographer and hiker will need to carry one since below timberline actually makes searches more difficult. And, let's not forget those who choose to drive a car on any back road. If the family in Oregon only had an ELT in their car... Yes, the list can go on and on.

The Mountain Rescue teams of Washington State as well as the national organization are opposed to the mandating of emergency communication devices for mountain climbers as outlined in HB 2619. This bill largely stems as a reaction to the media reports and drama that has unfolded in our neighboring state, Oregon, on Mt. Hood. And, at first pass – it seems to be a possible solution. But please let me take a few minutes of your valuable time to expand your knowledge on this subject and present the views of the folks most impacted by this legislation – the mountain rescue community.

At first review, our statement opposing this legislation may seem hard to reconcile as the purpose of our organizations is to provide search and rescue services

for our communities. But I would like to share with you a bit of first-hand experience with wilderness search that will provide undeniable evidence that this bill will actually work to the contrary of its stated purpose – to save lives.

The mountain rescue community realizes that you are considering OUR safety when writing this legislation. We thank you for those thoughts. But, what we have found over and over again is that ANY deterrent for a victim who is lost or injured in calling for help actually puts our teams at more risk. When a person is truly lost, many emotions run through their heads. For the lost person, there is a built in time delay while they wrestle with their egos in regards to calling for help. Add to this delay, a fear of monetary punishment and the corresponding media attention that it will garner and they delay calling for assistance even more. This postponement of the call for help can greatly add to the difficulty of our reaching them in time. Inevitable darkness, weather deteriorating and even them moving themselves into a more difficult area is of great possibility. This puts the subjects and our rescuers at greater risk. We have many “stories around the campfires” that we share as rescuers that corroborate these facts.

Our experience also has shown that these devices can create a false sense of security and in some cases can be misused. Folks we have rescued have noted that they were emboldened by this false security and hiked, climbed, snow-machined and skied into areas typically beyond their skill and comfort level. They believed that they could “push a button” and get help. Much like calling 9-1-1 in the urban environment and having resources sent within minutes. Of course, this isn’t the case in the hills and mountains of our state. What we have found is that this actually increases the amount of search and rescue operations in our state as well as increasing the risk for the rescuers.

I will defer to my colleagues to address the small impact that climbers and in general search and rescue affect costs to taxpayers.

It’s also important to note that the vast majority of search and rescue operations in our state are NOT for “mountain climbers”. In fact, less than 3% of all search and rescue operations are for “mountain climbers”. Although these search and rescue operations are great for media stories, they constitute a very small amount of the already low costs in regards to search and rescue. Our state’s stunning backcountry lures many more hikers, hunters, snowmobilers, photographers and others to its wilderness. These provide the bulk of our search and rescue operations. Contrary to popular lore, the cost to taxpayers for search and rescue is amazingly low. Nearly ALL search and rescues in our state are performed by the volunteers of various organizations at little to no cost to taxpayers.

We care greatly about the citizens of Washington State for whom we leave the safety and warmth of our homes, jobs and loved ones to save. Please know that we as a professional organization would never work against any legislation that could possibly save lives. Our members, your constituents, give thousands of hours of their time every year to do just that – save lives. But, we feel it is our duty to oppose such legislation that could put more of our community and more of our rescuers at risk.

At the hearing were a group of 5 from the state mountain rescue community (1 from Central, 2 from SMR and 1 from Everett plus Fran from TMRU). Also there to answer any question on SAR in our state was Chris Long, State DEM, and a rep from Cascade Climbers. There was a good physical presence in opposition to the bill. However, they didn't even get to testify. The bill was pulled OFF the hearing. The sponsor decided there was too much opposition and that the stakeholders (Mountain Rescue and the climbing community) were not for it. It could come up again but rumor has it that the originator of the idea had decided to not push it. So the bill is dead at least for this session, but there are always those who think they can legislate safety and we must stay on guard.

FEBRUARY TRAINING

Fletch Taylor will give a hypothermia presentation and possibly a brief hypothermia extraction scenario on Wednesday night. Saturday's training will be announced at the meeting.