

The mountains will always be there; the trick is to make sure you are, too. —Hervey Voge

The Yodel

September, 2011



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ONE STEP AT A TIME (OSAT) MISSION:

To provide a clean and sober environment for members and friends of 12-step recovery groups, to participate in outdoor and social events in the spirit of conservation, preservation, and ecology.

ON GRANITE MOUNTAIN JUNE 4, 2011

By Ponytail Bob



Not that difficult following snow steps ascending steepness between two chutes. There is hesitation to turn around and actually look downward. The most recent snow is becoming mushy in a seemingly unfriendly way. So, onward anyway to approximately 200 feet from the top. As we face upward, there is a small avalanche in the chute to our right lasting a few minutes. The leader decision is to turn around; the original plan was to summit, then find an easier route for descending. Now looking downhill things appear as exaggerated steepness. Oh s**t. I'm 20 feet or so above a bare section with little boulders, scree, sparse plant life and lichens. I decide I'll glissade down to it then walk down that to where the snow is directly below. No ice axe; didn't think I'd need it. Also no helmet. We have traction devices and trekking poles. Sit down and shorten the poles to use them as a brake. At first I don't start to move, then in a second I'm sliding too fast and out of control. During that second everything changes; I am truly in a state of powerlessness and frantic disbelief. Could break bones, whack head, die. Could die. Oh s**t. Oh God. Please, please help me. I hit some small boulders in a sitting position and that interrupts my downhill momentum. I come to a stop sitting on yet another rock. Good, good. Stopped. Above my left knee something hit the leg in such a way I thought a bone might have been cracked. How am I going to get down? Definitely not by glissading. Janet yells down to a couple descending just below us. They come up. The guy offers to carry my pack to the trailhead parking lot. He suggests I try walking with my poles. Well, okay. I slowly make my way down this bare patch just about to where the ground has snow on it. My left leg hurts and is

doing some cramping. Psychologically I'm afraid of the steepness, and that I'll only have one good leg. We discuss the situation. Should we make the call? 911 for King County Search and Rescue. I'm still trying to figure out some way down. Well, I can't do it. I need help. We make the call. I'm just mentally too freaked out. So, we begin phone communication with the Sheriff's Deputy Coordinator. We later found out that the Search and Rescue people were practicing down I-90 at Mt. Si. A bunch of them came to the parking lot at the Granite Mountain trailhead. Two in our party continue on down. Janet stays with me. We wait. It's a beautiful day, sunny and warm. We can see Mt. Rainier. I keep returning to the fact that I'm alive. I believe a higher power has saved my life. Time passes. I actually hoped a helicopter would arrive and fly us off the mountain. No, my injuries are definitely not life-threatening. The first Search and Rescue Team of three people reach us; this after a phone call urged us to make ourselves visible, or yell or something. They have some rescue gear. What they do is put a harness on me, attach a rope to that and an improvised picket buried in the snow; then proceed to belay me down the mountain. It seems to be working pretty good. They constantly reassure me that they have got me. Janet can walk down the same rope using a prusik knot. She is accompanied by a Search and Rescue woman named Bree. I'm so grateful for the help we are receiving. A second rope becomes available from another team; then I can be lowered 300 feet at a time. There is one final bit where they wrap me in a sleeping bag and strap me into a pod. They attach a rope to the head end, with a guy on each side of it with straps they hold onto, to stabilize it. This ride brings me down a section of a chute. I believe I can actually walk once we reach dirt trail. We get there and they unstrap me and I get out of the pod. They give me my poles and off we go. When it gets dark they put a headlamp on me and I walk down to the trailhead and parking lot. Get there around 10:30 p.m. Thank God, and Thank the rescuers.

By Ponytail Bob

The Little Happy Hippie Hat

By Vivian Johnson

I'm the little happy hippie hat
 Upon her head I'm perched
 For miles and miles the trails we tromp
 And gorgeous views we search

I'm the little happy hippie hat
 So bright and cheery
 I warm the hearts of hikers so tired and weary
 They've often gove for miles and miles
 But still they greet us with big goofy smiles

I'm the little happy hippie hat
 As happy as can be
 The reason I'm so happy is
 God loves me
 Soooooo
 If you get tired, sad and blue
 Just remember that God loves you



The relationship of height to spirituality is not merely metaphorical, it is a physical reality. The most spiritual people of this planet live in the highest places. So do the most spiritual flowers . . . I call the high and light aspects of my being spirit and the dark and heavy aspect soul. Soul is at home in the deep shadowed valleys. Spirit is a land of high, white peaks and glittering jewel-like lakes and flowers . . . People need to climb the mountain not simply because it is there, but because the soulful divinity needs to be mated with the spirit.

-- 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet

OSAT takes the Pyramid (Pyramid Peak in MRNP)

Pictures by Alexei E



Last weekend I climbed Kautz glacier route....

By Laura Potash

...with a guy I know from Mountain Rescue. We had a great climb and made good time - left high camp Saturday night (Sunday wee hours) of 2 am and summited at 6:20 on windy but otherwise glorious weather. Route conditions were unusually straightforward for this time of year - all hard snow where there is usually blue ice, and we didn't have to belay at all (except over one crevasse that required a little leap). Got back to camp around 10 am and started to descend around 11:00. Joe was glissading kind of sideways in 1/2 self arrest position and around 9000' I saw him sitting still in the glissade track. I caught up to him and, because he is a wilderness EMT and known for being cool headed in an emergency he very matter of factly informed me "Laura, I broke my leg." I thought because of how he said it that he must be joking, just like he was mentioning the Dow-Jones average for the day but He said "No, I hit a rock and have a tib-fib fracture". He had a "spot" device and cell phone so was able to contact the climbing rangers. Luckily there were 2 guys not too far away and I solicited their help to stomp a path from the snow to the rocks, where I set up the tent. I made a splint out of the sleeping pad and strapped the ice ax to it to keep his leg in place and with some difficulty we moved him to the tent. Two climbing rangers arrived around 4 pm and four more around 7 pm (no small feat as all of them had summited that day and were not nearby at all). We left camp around 9pm and about 3 or 4 hours later we were descending this very steep snow slope where I took a mini somersault but self arrested immediately. Only my stupid plastic boots have too much play in them so my right foot twisted inside so when I started walking again I had to say "Ummm ... sorry guys, I'm going to have to go slow from now on...I think I tweaked my right ankle". And honestly it wasn't the boots that are stupid it was me for not replacing them, o well. As you might imagine it was embarrassing because here I was wearing my Mountain Rescue insignia, trying to help and now became another headache for the rescuers... but thankfully they were professional and gracious about it. It hurt with each step especially when I had to bang my boot with the ski pole to get the snow from balling up under my crampons - but nothing like childbirth, so it was tolerable. So I hobbled down with

the team the rest of the night, got home Monday afternoon and Scott insisted I don't unload the car but immediately elevate and ice my leg. Oddly I did all that (RICE) all afternoon and night but it looked worse not better the next day. So I went to my doctor on Tuesday and she insisted on an x-ray, and when she came out she said she said "Laura you do not have a sprained ankle. You have a *broken leg* !" WTF, how can that even be possible?! I said "Are you *sure* ?!" (doctors love it when you ask that). But sure enough the fibula was obviously broken and yesterday I went to the specialist they referred me to and he said that because more than 5 mm offset they need to reset the bone when the swelling goes down. So yesterday they put on this big 'ol plaster cast and scheduled the surgery for this coming Thursday August 4th and told me I must be on crutches for 6 weeks after that. You would be really proud of me for how I am handling it ...trying to focus on work and tell myself Hey I don't have a tumor or MS or anything that won't heal up nicely in 6 weeks or so. That said I did observe that on my way to the pharmacy crutching along that I had been for the last block been vehemently chanting outloud [a torrent of curse words that won't be repeated here] for 3 minutes straight like a crazy person on the bus. Not what The Dali Llama would say. So too bad I just bought nonrefundable tickets to climb in the Tetons with my buddy John and too bad it's not early November and so on but fortunately I am so healthy I expect to heal up well. Given recent history you won't start to think of me as a walking liability hazard and those of you who are my climbing buddies will continue to climb with me? I know you will write back "Oh DRAG - let me know if there is anything I can do!" Sure Ok you can send lots of cash cause now would be a good time to visit the art galleries and eat my way through Italy. Ok of not that then your lovely company would be almost as good. There is still a lot to be grateful for especially that I have such dear friends and family, but better go now before I get too mushy. Hope YOU are well...I'll keep you posted.

Love from Laura

IN RETROSPECT... here are some things I would do differently: 1) I already mentioned about my ice climbing boots not fitting properly. Over the years the inner liner has squashed down so even if I wear extra socks there is movement inside the plastic boots. But I had been climbing ice waterfalls in Lillooet BC the year before so rationalized that they would be good enough for the Kautz. Not. 2) I am still of two minds about the crampons. Although it is hard to diagnose exactly when during the somersault I got injured, I wonder if it didn't start because the snow was too soft for crampons. I wanted to take them off but the rescue team leader said no, I think because he expected occasional patches of ice and didn't want us taking them off and on. 3) Shortly after I worked my way to the bottom of the slope I looked up and saw one of the climbing rangers starting down, facing into the slope and yelling up to the team to warn them that it was at least 50 degrees. I remember watching him and thinking, "Right Laura, that would've been a smart idea to face into the slope (the way you descend down a ladder). I'm mad at myself because I knew better but I must have been too exhausted for it to occur to me at the time. I guess that's why they say "Hindsight is 20/20". I find it embarrassing to share war stories but am doing so in the hopes that we can learn something. If you want to talk with me about it feel free to give me a call (not email) 206 547-3199, and hope the rest of you KCM&DS!

P.S. For a number of reasons 2011 has been a rough year, and to get through it without panic I have been trying hard to recognize that I have been given many "silver linings". One that I am especially grateful for occurred during in the last hour of this climb. We had more or less been awake for the past 48 hours, and had just staggered up the last steep slope from the Nisqually glacier towards Paradise. All night long we could

see flashing lightning to the south. Dawn broke as I crested the ridgetop and I could see the entire sky in the background to south and east was dark purple, almost jet black, with huge bolts of lightning. In the foreground was the snow-covered Goat Rocks and jagged peaks of the Tatoosh Range, which were all brilliantly illuminated by the sunrise. It was one of the most stunningly beautiful sights I have ever seen and I will always be grateful that I got to witness it.



An OSAT Blast on Mount St Helens

By Nancy Soltez

On August 22-24 this year, I had a blast on Mt. St. Helens with my treasured OSAT family! Not only was the adventure top-notch, but the event also shined with OSAT history, tradition and recovery. It is my pleasure to answer Kathy C's request for Yodel support and share some of the highlights of this amazing experience.

The trip was led by Rik A, and he posted it on the OSAT Activities Calendar as "a 3-day hike/camping trip around Mt. St. Helens...literally, following the Loowit Trail and circling the mountain in a clockwise direction. The trip was approximately 33 miles total including the approach to and return from the trail, encompassing about 4000 feet of cumulative vertical, covered in 3 days with 2 overnight wilderness camps. The northern portion of the climb (last day) must be completed in a single day over the fairly strenuous terrain of the devastation zone, as no camping is permitted in this area. It would be dusty and, if sunny, might be uncomfortably hot." I could hardly wait to sign up and go!

Before we even left for this event, I was extremely impressed with Rik's leadership. He communicated with us often, bonding us together and offering us vital information to help us be prepared. When it was finally time to go, we all met at the trailhead fired-up, geared-up and beaming with joy. We circled up for the administrative and first aid business, the Serenity Prayer, a hearty "Keep climbing mountains & don't slip!" and off we went.

As the photos show, we were exposed to an amazing variety of terrain. We hiked over bleached rock, sand, snow, blackened rock, dirt, water and boulder fields. We also hiked through lush forests, destroyed trees and beautiful wild flowers. We saw waterfalls, washout areas, lakes, neighboring mountains, a herd of 120-150 elk and also into the Mt St Helens crater.

The fellowship on this event was simply fabulous too. Under Rik's humble and solid leadership, unity and teamwork flourished among us. We ranged in ages

from under 20 to well over 50, with backpacking experiences from new to wise, and program involvement from friend or family member status to

months & decades of sobriety. Yet in prime OSAT fashion, "inclusion, never exclusion" was apparent and the desire to support and help each other was endless. We all shared our skills, weaknesses, food, water, sprays, lotions, lip balm, gels, powders, laughs, stories - and most of all ourselves. I got to experience the thrills of this incredible adventure while also feeling extremely safe and cared about. Wow, that's the stuff that I crave in recovery!

During our evening AA meeting, the parallels between climbing and recovery as well as between outdoor experiences and spirituality were discussed. As I have many times before, I felt deeply grateful for the vision and early work by Jim Hinkhouse in starting OSAT. It is stated on the OSAT.org website that Jim "found mountaineering to be a healthy and satisfying passion which he felt was important to his own recovery, and began to envision how he could weave his mountaineering interest into a way of fulfilling the twelfth step in the Alcoholics Anonymous regimen." It is touching to know of the deep friendship between Jim and Rik, and I cherish that Rik shares a historical OSAT perspective along with his experience, strength and hope.

I love AA. I love OSAT. As I trudge the road of happy destiny, I want to thank all of you from the bottom of my heart.



Twenty Years Later – Why Am I Still Here?

By Rik A

What keeps someone who is not in Alcoholics Anonymous in OSAT, fraternizing for twenty years with a community of people who unabashedly refer to themselves as “a bunch of drunks”? OSAT is the source of my chosen climbing and hiking companions, but why do I bother going up Tiger Mountain Sunday mornings?

Sure, I’ve built up friendships that go beyond outdoor activities, but why participate in club activities where I may only really know 20%-30% of the people by name, and sometimes even less?

I got to thinking about these questions after a friend asked me about my early involvement in OSAT. My thoughts coalesced on one of those Sunday morning hikes up Tiger, in a way that I know many in OSAT can relate to. I came to the realization that my relationship with OSAT has evolved, and that with every step on that path the bond has strengthened.

Initially the reason for my involvement was obvious. Jim, Dick, and Shirley had become my regular climbing companions, as Jim and I both drifted away from involvement in BOEALPS, several years before he began organizing the “First AA Mount Rainier Expedition”. I jumped at the chance to help out when Jim and Dick started training “The Irish Curse” basketball team for their abortive 1990 attempt on Rainier, a climb that ended with my daughter and I spending a night at Camp Muir while Jim and his basketball buddies retreated into a typical early season Muir whiteout.

As OSAT evolved out of the first Rainier climb, after a year off due to back problems (1992) I again became active with Jim and his growing circle of climbers. The draw was primarily the mountains, but Jim and his group was the path. I did a few scrambles and trips on my own, but a couple of hairy solo off-trail wilderness situations soon had me leaning toward the security of climbing with friends. OSAT provided the needed companionship. I also began to realize that what I was learning in the OSAT-AA meetings was rubbing off. I found opportunities to apply what I learned to my own life. I’d even shared now and again, beginning in 1993 on Cowboy Mountain after an ice ax arrest class, where I explained a debt of gratitude I owed to AA from a time before I moved back to the Pacific Northwest.

During the second five years of OSAT’s existence, much of my commitment came from a feeling of obligation to Jim. His death brought me to a new level of understanding about spirituality, and my relationship to others in OSAT and the debt of gratitude to the group continued to grow. Some time after he died, I read a

copy of the Big Book that had been in his library. I’d been going to Tiger Mountain AA meetings for three or four years by then. Although I gained a great deal of understanding about what made the alcoholics in OSAT tick, and what had attracted them to our group, I finally committed myself to learning more about AA, which is the soul of OSAT. My relationship to the organization became based on the principles of growth and sharing, and it wasn’t just mountaineering experience and training I was sharing, it was being a part of something that was bigger than any of us: a concept and organization that would truly be self-sustaining.

The second ten years of OSAT’s existence have seen the group become stronger, develop new leaders and traditions, and prove the long-term viability of what started out as a dream for Jim. It has proven that the group and its direction of growth is bigger than any individual, albeit that is sometimes difficult for individuals to accept. Members have come and gone, and some have returned. But through all the turnover and transition, there are always new stories told at the Tiger meetings, the trials and joys of fellow OSATers, in the mountains or out, and trailside wisdom and observations about life that only AA members can express in an honest and understandable way. Listening to these, and using them as a mirror on my own life, brings real value. My own commitment to OSAT now has much less to do with mountaineering. My feeling of responsibility for teaching skills is diminished as I see the skill base develop in the organization. Now my attachment to OSAT is based more on my feeling that, as Jack Nicolson’s character said in *As Good As It Gets*: “You make me want to be a better man.”

The deaths in the last year of Dave Brown and Leah Morgan remind us that none of us will be here forever. As difficult as these losses are, they also serve to remind us that someday OSAT will consist entirely of people who never knew personally Jim Hinkhouse, John Repka, Dave and Leah and the others who started OSAT in the spring of 1991. I count it as a privilege and a blessing to have been involved from the start, but I am also both humbled and thankful to be a part of something that will be helping people long after my meager exploits in the mountains have been forgotten.

KCM&DS, Rik

sOSAT - On The Move

Pictures by Kathy C

Happy Birthday OSAT

Celebrated at first Thursday Night Meeting of 2011



sOSAT on Mount Si 8/7/2011



Rik & Margie



sOSAT at Pratt Lake Basin 9/5/2011



Making Dinner (these guys just amaze me)



sOSAT on the Kendall Katwalk 10/1/2011



And a Cake carried to the top of Tiger Mtn by Michael C. It was truly an amazing celebration

OSAT Quick Reference		OSAT Traditions
Board Of Trusted Servants (BOTS)		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Every OSAT activity has a designated leader. The leader makes the decision as to who is qualified for the activity. This decision must be based on principles and not personalities. 2) Alcohol and illegal drugs are not allowed on any OSAT activity. 3) Party members are not to separate from the group without prior permission of the activity leader. 4) An OSAT leader should have completed a MOFA course or ensure that at least one participant in the activity has done so. 5) When in a wilderness area, each party member will carry the 10 essentials. 6) Outdoor activities start with the Serenity Prayer while holding hands in a circle. 7) Each OSAT glacier climb will have at least two rope teams that include a person with crevasse rescue training. 8) Anyone can volunteer to lead an activity, even a technical climb. As a participant, you may want to "qualify" your leader. As leader, you should be certain that everyone on that activity has signed a Release and Indemnity Agreement. 9) Party size for OSAT activities will adhere to the rules of the appropriate jurisdiction.
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12 Step Meetings		
Sunday Tiger Mountain	suntigerleader@osat.org	
OSAT Club Meeting		
The monthly OSAT club meeting is held on the second Wednesday of the month at 7:30pm. Located at 4545 Island Crest Way, take the Island Crest Way exit from I-90, the church is 1.6 miles south of the freeway, on the right. The meeting is held upstairs in classroom #6.		

The OSAT Echo is our email list. There have been some problems maintaining the list lately. We will try to assure the list is current with respect to wishes expressed on your web site membership profile, but this is not automated at this time, so please bear with us. To post a message: send email to echo@osat.talklist.com. Please keep in mind that this goes to a large list. Try to keep messages short and appropriate to OSAT members. Please do



OSAT HISTORY: Dave N, Jim Hinkhouse, Shirley R, Rod B, and Rik A atop Little Tahoma, July 10, 1994

NOT "Reply All" to messages from the Echo, reply instead to the person posting the message.

To unsubscribe from the list: send a blank email to echo-off@osat.talklist.com.

If you are new and have not been getting OSAT emails, please send an email to any of the following omembership@osat.org, owebsherpa@osat.org, or otreasurer@osat.org to be added.

Thanks! KCM&DS!



The Yodel
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Ascending Mount Baker — Photo by Trevor Z.