

# MERIDIAN

Winter 2014



The Quarterly Publication of the Mountain Rescue Association

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## The Alpine Near-Miss Survey



**-NASAR Conference 2014-**

**-What's in My Winter Rescue Pack?-**

**-The Rescue & Caving Industry Loses a Pioneer-**



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Winter 2014

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Dave Clarke cuts the back of Rutschblock while on a back-country ski tour in the Wasatch Range. Cover photo by Rocky Henderson.

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## The Alpine Near-Miss Survey

By Cory and Chris Jackson

Cory Jackson is an attorney and part-time climbing guide. He is a director of the Ouray Ice Park, and a Member of the Ouray Mountain Rescue Team. Chris Jackson is an employee of Rigging for Rescue and a volunteer Member of the Ouray Mountain Rescue Team in Ouray, Colorado.



# The Alpine Near-Miss Survey

The Alpine Near-Miss Survey (the Survey) is a platform for collecting near-miss and accident reports from mountain-rescue professionals, climbing guides, and recreational climbers. During the summer of 2013, we conducted a small campaign to collect reports and test the platform – we called it “The First 100 Reports”. The campaign generated many reports and gave us extraordinarily helpful feedback on the reporting system itself. Based on this feedback, we are reorganizing the website and reporting platform, updating the mobile reporting app and improving the catalog of reports as a whole. Those updates and site itself are available at <http://www.alpinenearmiss.org>.

The First 100 Reports project was a program designed to publicize the Survey and provide a representative pool of data to use to further refine the Survey and the report database. We publicized a call for reports on various social media and related online platforms common to the mountain rescue and recreational climbing communities. In conjunction with the Petzl Foundation, a prize of Petzl equipment valued at \$1,000 was given away to a randomly selected reporter. A pool of near-miss and accident reports collected during a forty-five day period was entered into a database and reviewed for common error types and factors.

Before commencing the Project, we speculated that near-misses would fall into three categories: equipment related issues, environmental issues and human errors. To be so categorized, a near-miss had to show clear and express evidence of such a factor. Evidence of environmental or equipment failures is easy to identify. Examples of narrative statements that show evidence of human error are harder to identify, but some examples are below.

### *Communication Error*

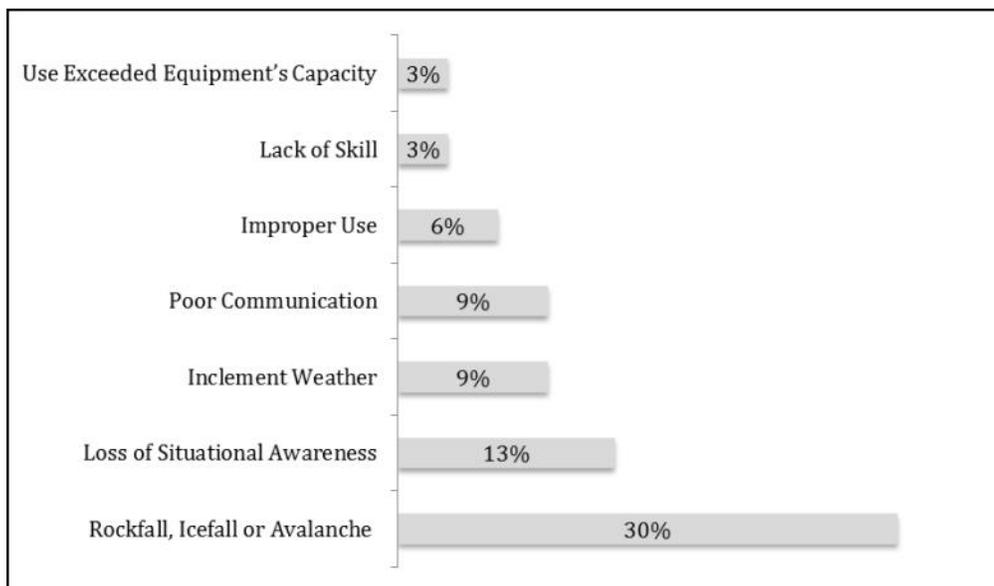
“Roll call was conducted in a hasty and unorganized fashion and did not adhere to the standard communication structure. Mainline operators experienced difficulty during pre-tensioning and attempted to relay this to communications (not clearly understood because of distance and high winds).”

### *Loss of Situational Awareness*

“We were in a rush for some reason (not out of weather or darkness) and I untied and started pulling up the rope.... Once I pulled up most of the rope, I looked down before leaning back and noticed I had failed to connect myself to the anchor.”

In all, 39% of incidents reported showed evidence of environmental issues, 27% displayed clear human elements, while only 9% of incidents evidenced equipment related issues.

Upon reviewing the submitted reports, several narrower categories emerged. Those error attributes and their proposed definitions are as follows. Near-misses additionally displayed the following error attributes.



We feel that the First 100 Reports project generated enough interest from the recreational climbing and mountain rescue communities to justify continuing the Survey as a whole. Going forward, we are focused on three areas.

First, we have come to agree with and rely on academic research that indicates that there are four critical components of successful near-miss reporting systems.

1. Reporting is anonymous or confidential or both
2. Incidents are reported to an agency that is wholly separate and distinct from any agency that may govern or regulate the workplace or activity
3. Reports are rapidly published giving timely feedback to reporters
4. Reporting is easy and quick

We will continue to review the reports generated by the First 100 Reports project, as well as these four guiding principles, to refine the reporting platform. Improving the look of the website and reporting form itself, as well as improving the sort fields and output methods of reports themselves is a priority. In addition, several updates to the mobile reporting app are being finalized.

Second, we will continue to enable research into the causes of near-misses and accidents. The Survey will be facilitating follow-up research into decision-making during emergency responses in conjunction with Boston University. Near-miss reporters who volunteer and whose report indicates that the reporter will be a good candidate for an interview by BU researchers into their decision-making process will be contacted for follow-up research.

And finally, we are pursuing a number of partnerships with trade groups and other agencies to generate near-miss reports and to, in turn, publish industry-specific reports. In particular, we are building a rescue-specific section of the website to give reporters and researchers better access to rescue-related information and incidents. We hope that this will encourage greater use of the system by mountain rescue professionals with the ultimate goal being greater awareness and safety for rescuers. More information is available at <http://www.alpinenearmiss.org>.





**FOR THE 2ND TIME  
THE MRA AND NASAR  
WILL COME TOGETHER  
TO PRESENT THE  
2014 NATIONAL SEARCH  
& RESCUE CONFERENCE  
JUNE 5-7 ~ WOODCLIFF LAKE, NJ**

*The conference is hosted by New Jersey Search & Rescue*

- Pre-Conference Workshops - Monday-Wednesday, June 2-4
- Federal & State SAR Coordinator's Meeting (Invitation Only) - Tuesday & Wednesday, June 3-4
- Exhibit Hall Open - Wednesday-Friday, June 4-6
- Conference Dates - Thursday-Saturday, June 5-7
- MRA Business Meeting - Sunday, June 8



The 2014 National Search and Rescue Conference is a multifaceted exposition featuring a conference program and trade-show that caters exclusively to decision-makers and SAR professionals involved in all aspects of search and rescue. The conference program educates the search and rescue community-offering novice through advanced classes focused on a diverse array of topics. Subject matter ranges from swift water/flood, public safety diving, urban, canine, to general information.

Presentations will concentrate on advice for and solutions to field and management search and rescue concerns-not merely emphasizing threats and recapping prior disasters. Session attendees will seek positive, practical input for a proactive approach to search and rescue.

Be sure to check [www.nasar.org](http://www.nasar.org), and [www.mra.org](http://www.mra.org) for upcoming information and registration materials.

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## President's Message

As 2014 begins, the MRA is moving forward in fundraising, marketing and educational projects. Fundraising Committee members attended the Outdoor Retailers show in January to meet with industry representatives for corporate sponsorships.

The Education Committee is finalizing the next online learning program. The first online program was Helicopter Safety. The second online program is on Backcountry Safety. While the Helicopter program was for MRA members, the Backcountry Safety program will be available to the general public as part of the Preventative SAR education. The content of the Backcountry Safety Program is going through final edits and we are looking for high quality photo and video content to go along with it.

The International Commission on Alpine Rescue (IKAR) reports are available on the MRA web site. IKAR Terrestrial, IKAR Air Rescue and IKAR Medcom (medical) reports can be accessed under the Training and Education header on the website, at <http://www.mra.org/training-education/ikar-reports>. IKAR 2014 will be held in the United States for the first time, at Lake Tahoe in October.

The Statistics Committee has been researching different web based data and reporting programs, and will present its findings at the Winter Business Meeting in February. The goal of the research is to give teams a useful tool for tracking mission information and reporting statistics. Last year about 63% of MRA teams turned in reports. Some issues that led to difficulties in reporting statistics online have already been improved. In the meantime, I encourage all teams to compile and report their 2013 statistics using the current system. Statistics help us tell the story of who we are and what we do. They show how volunteers unselfishly give their time to help others in need.

For example, appreciation for volunteers was reinforced recently during a search near Juneau, Alaska, for a grandfather and grandson who got disoriented while hunting. The two were overdue, in the woods, and in the dark with deepening snow and dropping temperatures. Troopers coordinated the search while the family gathered near the hunter's truck. As search teams were being dispatched, the family, especially the grandmother, was heard to say that they could not believe that "all these people were spending their evening, in the snow and cold to look for her former husband and grandson." As time went on the anxiety of family members increased, despite text messages from the younger hunter letting everyone know they were okay. Family members remarked over and over about how appreciative they were of the rescue team members who stopped what they were doing and gave their time to help someone they did not even know.

The grandfather seemed somewhat embarrassed as the two hunters walked out of the woods and into the arms of relieved family members, but the 12 year old was stoked. Relief came to those who had waited, knowing that their loved ones were all right.

This is what the MRA is about. This is only one example, from one mission. The statistics of the teams providing these services needs to be reported so we can share with other agencies, associations, the general public and the media about our efforts each year. Statistics help us tell the story of who we are and what we do. They show how volunteers unselfishly give their time to help others in need.

*Doug Wessen*, Juneau Mt. Rescue

*If any MRA members have access to photos and videos that can be used for the online learning programs, send them to [Bryan Enberg](#).*

## Interview with Neil Van Dyke

*Can you tell me what it was that attracted you to mountain rescue, in the first place?*

It was really a marriage of my interests in emergency response and outdoor recreation. I was a member of the local ambulance service and fire departments in Stowe, and we kept getting called to challenging rescues of backcountry users. A few of us with outdoor experience figured there had to be a better way to effect these rescues than using ladders and bunker gear, so we started doing some research, getting training, and eventually founded what is now Stowe Mountain Rescue.

*What do you wish you had known when you started, that you know now?*

What a load releasing hitch is! We had to learn things like that the hard way—initially by trial and error. I'm also much more conservative and safety conscious now than when I started. It's not that I didn't "know" you need to do things safely, but with experience and maturity it brings it to a whole different level.

*You have recently been hired to be the coordinator for search and rescue for the state of Vermont. Congratulations! Can you tell us a bit about your new job? And, how your SAR training and experience will help you in this position?*

It's an amazing job. The thing I love the most about it is that it is a brand new position, so there is no precedent or dealing with "but we've always done it this way." I get to decide what is important and develop my own program. Right now I am focusing on outreach to all of the SAR providers in the State and trying to improve communication and get folks on the same page. EVERYTHING about my training and experience helps me, but if I had to pick one thing it is probably my longevity of working in SAR in Vermont. I know all the players and they know and respect me. It makes my job so much easier already having relationships with all the different SAR partners in the State – State Police, Fish & Wildlife, Ski Patrols, Fire Departments, EMS and of course the volunteer SAR teams like Stowe Mountain Rescue. They've all been incredibly supportive of me in my new job.

*Five years from now, what do you want to be able to say has been accomplished in the job you are going into?*

I want people around the country to look to Vermont as a model of how to have a cooperative and efficient statewide SAR program. Got to think big!

*Can you share a story about an event that involved you and the MRA that was a game changer for you?*

The game changer for me was not a single event, but joining the MRA. Having exposure to how the other MRA units work was, and continues to be, one of the primary reasons that we are successful at what we do, and has allowed me to grow professionally in a way that would not otherwise have been possible.

*Of all the SAR missions you have been on, what one mission taught you the most?*

That's both an easy and a hard question to answer. I suffered significant injuries during a technical rescue in 1993 and spent 5 days in the hospital. It taught me (the hard way) why personal safety and the safety of your team are always the #1 priority on a mission. It changed the whole culture of how we do business as a mountain rescue team and we're far better for it.

*If you were lost, whom would you want to find you first, and why?*

That's not fair!! I want every single MRA team out looking for me! OK since you've put me on the spot and I can't wiggle out so I'll give it a shot. I would love to see folks like Dan Hourihan, Monty Bell, Bruce Fosdick and George Janson running the search. When they find me stuck halfway down a 200' cliff with a bunch of broken bones I hope the evac team will consist of a crew with the likes of Rocky Henderson, Dave Clarke, Roger Yensen, Tom Wood, the Sharp's, Scott Sutton and Doug Veliko from my own team. When they get me off the cliff Skeet Glatterer and Ken Zafren would be waiting to treat me. In case things go downhill Charley Shimanski, Ken Phillips and John Dill would be hanging out nearby ready to call in a chopper. Now I won't be able to show my face at a meeting for awhile due to all the people I didn't mention. I love you all!!



*Photo by Gary Hall.*

## ITRS 2013 Report

*By Dave Clarke, MRA Vice President, Portland Mountain Rescue*

The International Technical Rescue Symposium (ITRS) convened at Albuquerque, N.M. on November 7-10, 2013. As always at ITRS there was an interesting mix of topics and research that either confirms or challenges conventional wisdom. One thing is certain, ITRS is always thought provoking.

In recent years there has been an effort to place the presentation papers online at <http://itrsonline.org/papers/>, so even if you haven't been able to attend you can still benefit from this great exchange of knowledge. As of this writing the papers from 2013 have not been posted but please check back. There is a great selection of papers from previous years as well. Although it's not a complete compendium of technical rescue topics it is a great source for the latest ideas and research.

First, a word about ITRS in general: there is no technical or editorial review of any of the presentations, thus the MRA and the other sponsors of ITRS take no responsibility for the safety or applicability of any of the techniques presented. Further, it is strongly suggested that you test any new technique or method under controlled, safe conditions and consider carefully whether it fits your needs. Or, as it says in bold print in the Symposium proceedings binder, "**Do** Try This At Home."

This year's major presentations included:

Trackline Forces, Truth and Lore by J. Marc Beverly, PA-C and Stephen Attaway, PhD., from Albuquerque Mountain Rescue Council. The authors created a mathematical model of the forces on a trackline as commonly used in a highline or guiding line configuration. Then they tested it with an actual highline and used the data to validate their model. They went on to apply their model to current teaching and practices to determine if current rules of thumb are conservative and to determine conditions and loads that are unsafe. This summary is too brief to do their work justice. However, the paper concludes with the recommendation that Prusiks should not be used to anchor tracklines. The research and the paper are quite detailed and deserve a serious read by anyone who is teaching highlines.

Empirical Observations of Anchor Failure Points in Old and Retired Webbing by Thomas Evans. The author obtained a variety of retired 25mm webbing and slow pull tested it to failure in basket hitch, wrap three pull two (W3P2), and simple loop configurations. Notable conclusions are that failure of basket hitches and W3P2 anchors failed at the carabiner, not the knot. Also, they all failed at above 20kN indicating that the webbing was retired before its strength had degraded below a 10:1 SSF for a 2kN load.

Thomas Evans also presented a technique used in cave rescue called The Diminishing Loop Counter Balance. This 2:1 raising system is an elegant solution for small party self rescue when conditions are favorable. It was an excellent example of ideas from the cave rescue community that are new to mountain rescuers like me.

Rocky Henderson from Portland Mountain Rescue shared observations from a recent training exercise on Mt Hood. Titled Snow Caves and Emergency Locator Devices, the report details the actual activation of a Spot, PLB and a Mt Hood specific Mountain Locator Unit (MLU). Since this was just one test it's difficult to draw firm conclusions but one main takeaway is that not all devices are capable of working from a snow cave.

Cory Jackson provided a summary from the Alpine Near Miss Survey "The First 100 Reports". See his website for more information: <http://alpinenearmiss.org/>.

John McKentley from CMC rescue and the LA County Sheriff's Montrose Search and Rescue Team presented Don't XXX On Your Rope. This was follow up research from an article presented in 2001 and 2003 at ITRS. The original project tested the slow pull breaking strength of nylon rope after it was exposed to various common contaminants. This time around they replicated the tests with polyester rope. None of the results were alarming however the recommendation is still "If in doubt, throw it out". One additional test did get a lot of attention. They tested 25mm nylon webbing that had been through multiple decontamination cycles with a 10% bleach/water solution. The thinking was that webbing used to lash a patient to a litter often gets decontaminated. They found that it had an 87% strength loss, from 4220lbf to 530lbf. John promised to test this further and report back next year.

Amanda Mortimer, PhD., and Roger Mortimer, MD, presented Improving Search and Rescue Training with Scientifically Supported Approaches. This was a fascinating presentation for me and I suggest that if you are a trainer for your team that you will get some valuable tips from the paper as well. This work highlighted practical methods based on scientific research "on how minds work and how teaching can most effectively be done."



*Photo by Dave Clarke.*

Buddy Lane and Allen Padgett related the story of A Complex Rescue in a Deep Cave. In 2013, a caver was seriously injured in the extensive and remote Ellison’s Cave, beneath Pigeon Mountain in Georgia. The presentation detailed the series of problems rescuers had to overcome and how they solved them. It’s a great example of the teamwork and cooperation of the area’s cave rescuers and emergency responders.

Another recap of a major rescue was presented by Will Smith, MD, Paramedic, FAWM, Lightning Strike MCI at 13,000 Feet! This was a mass casualty incident (MCI) on the Grand Teton. Three parties of 17 total climbers were high on the mountain during a lightning storm. The story is a testament to the skill of these rescuers as well as the value of training and planning for a large scale event.

Phillip Spinelli and David Pylman from Joshua Tree Search and Rescue wondered if the results of slow pull testing of equipment would correlate to drop testing. Their presentation, Is Slow Pull Testing of Equipment Realistic? detailed their drop testing results on aluminum carabiners and 25mm webbing in a basket hitch configuration. They compared the results to similar slow pull testing done by others which had previously been presented at ITRS. They concluded that, on average, the slow pull and dynamic breaking strengths are similar. However, they reinforce that “the very large range in the dynamic results should lead to caution when applying a simplistic analysis to determine system strength in the field”. This report is definitely worth reviewing as there are a lot of takeaways to be gained from their efforts.

Reports from this year’s IKAR were also presented as well as a video report. These can be found on the MRA website.

This covers the larger presentations from this year’s Symposium. Of course there is much more information exchanged at ITRS through shared “hasty topics and at the hospitality room. If you want to learn more about our rescue systems or just like “geeking out” on the latest and greatest concepts in technical rescue, then ITRS is the place to be. Next year’s ITRS is in Denver, CO on November 6-9, 2014. I’ll be there and I hope to see you there too.

**Do you know where to find the MRA?**



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## Selective Spinal Motion Restriction in Mountain Rescue

By Aaron Zabriskie, MD, Portland Mountain Rescue, MRA Medical Committee

**Selective spinal motion restriction should be used only by rescue personnel with specific training under a physician's medical direction.**

The decision to motion-restrict and protect potential cervical spine injuries is one of the most common and important considerations for MRA teams in the field. Due to the fact that true spinal immobilization during transport is almost impossible, the term "spinal motion-restriction" is what is endorsed in the most current medical literature. Many patients treated by MRA teams have undergone trauma that could cause unstable cervical spine injury and should have appropriate spinal motion-restriction because the consequences of not protecting an unstable cervical spine can be dire. However, the common challenge of long transports over difficult terrain in the SAR environment also dictate that we not subject the patient to potential complications of spinal motion-restriction, including prolonged extrication and evacuation, unless necessary. Among the problems associated with spinal motion-restriction are increased rates of head and neck pain, increased numbers of radiologic studies once the patient arrives at definitive care, pressure-related tissue breakdown, and restriction of ventilation. The decision to provide spinal motion-restriction then should follow a standard protocol endorsed by the local medical authority to ensure that patients do not have unnecessary spinal motion-restriction applied.

Multiple prehospital algorithms have been tested in large studies and include some common elements that should be considered for use in every SAR jurisdiction. One of the largest studies tested used a specific algorithm that assesses patients for the following in order:

- altered mental status
- presence of other injuries which may make it difficult to localize pain ("distracting injuries")
- neurologic deficits such as numbness, weakness, or paralysis in extremities
- significant midline spinal pain or tenderness (pain with palpation)

If any of the above elements are present, at any time during the evacuation, the spinal exam should be stopped and spinal motion-restriction should be applied. The manner of spinal motion-restriction should be dictated by local protocols, but the methods endorsed by the International Commission on Alpine Rescue (ICAR) are well validated and appropriate for all teams in the MRA. In general the ICAR recommendations endorse the use of full-body vacuum mattresses instead of traditional rigid backboards, the details of which can be found in the guidelines linked at the end of this article. If the patient meets very low risk criteria for unstable spinal injury, then SAR personnel can confidently evacuate the patient without spinal motion-restriction.

**Aaron Zabriskie, MD; Seattle Mountain Rescue, 2006-2013; Portland Mountain Rescue, Medical Committee; Family Practice Resident, Family Medicine Southwest, Vancouver, WA**

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All medical articles for the Meridian are reviewed and endorsed by the MRA Medical Committee; however, this article is for general information only. The MedCom makes no representation regarding the medical or legal information provided, and the views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the MRA.

As always, your suggestions and comments are encouraged—either directly to the author, to me, or via the Listserv to the MedCom.

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## What's in My Winter Rescue Pack?

*By Christopher Van Tilburg, MD. Chris is on the MRA MedCom, medical director of Crag Rats, and author of Mountain Rescue Doctor (St. Martins, 2007)*

### **ProKit: Gear for work and play**

Long ago as a medical resident, I taught a backcountry winter survival session with Portland Mountain Rescue. We played a game I now call: "What's in your pack?" All of the instructors unpacked their gear, despite the rather mysterioso taboo of disclosing one's personal pack contents. But, now, with a slew of junior members in our mountain rescue squad, I'd decided to unpack my winter kit again. It's nearly the same for winter rescues, backcountry tours and spring/summer ski mountaineering. I focus on gear that is light, compact and functional. Obviously for technical rescues, our team divides up the litter and rope rescue gear.

### **Clothing**

I'm a huge fan of the influx of European brands to the global outdoor scene. High tech fabrics are constructed into well-fitting garments with minimal accessories. Function, style and lightweight often come with a higher price tag, but cost is amortized if you keep gear for a long duration.

### **Bottoms**

- Synthetic boxers, Under Armor
- Synthetic long underwear, Patagonia capaline
- Soft shell pants, Mammut Castor
- Waterproof shell pant with full side zips, Patagonia Triolite

### **Top**

- Synthetic long-sleeve zip-t, Patagonia capaline
- Lightweight fleece, either a ¼ zip Millet pullover or full-zip Eider Hoody with a chest pocket
- Thin uninsulated softshell windshirt, which I find more functional than a bulky insulated softshell, Outdoor Research Ferossi jacket
- Thin synthetic-fill vest or sweater for cold days, Flylow Swindler jacket
- Waterproof Gore-tex shell, Mammut Eiger
- Warm puffy big enough to fit over all layers for belay, lunch and regrouping stops, Rab Xenon Hoody or Millet Belay Hoody

### **Accessories**

- Buff or neck gaiter
- Two hats
- Medium weight wool-synthetic blend socks
- Ultralight CAMP Speed helmet
- Oakley goggles with yellow lenses
- Oakley sunglasses
- Lightweight Smartwool PhD gloves (smartwool.com)
- Storm-proof Outdoor Research Gore-tex Ambit gloves





## The Rescue and Caving Industry Loses a Pioneer

*By Tom Wood, Alpine Rescue Team, Colorado*

The caving and rescue community suffered a tragic loss on December 19, 2013 when Pigeon Mountain Industries (PMI) co-founder and President Steve Hudson passed away unexpectedly while vacationing with his wife Diane Cousineau in Puerto Rico.

“Steve Hudson was a giant in our community of rescuers. I am not sure people realize how much of his time he gave to us. International Technical Rescue Symposium (ITRS) instigator and co-host, NASAR NATRS committee, SPRAT founder, NCRC leader and teacher, NASAR board member for years and so many standards meetings with NFPA, SPRAT, ASTM and ASSE. So many times he stepped up to lead an organization or chair a committee, giving us the benefit of his judgment, experience, patience, and humor,” said Jim Frank, Santa Barbara SAR member and Chairman and Founder of CMC Rescue.

“For all of us who put our lives on the line to help others, Steve’s contributions made us safer, wiser, and better. And for his teammates in TAG country (Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia country), he was right there with us. It is a great loss for his family and friends, colleagues at PMI, and for all of us in rescue.”

Steve’s passion for rescue and especially caving began nearly half a century ago, when he picked up cave diving in 1965. In 1969, as a college freshman, he began “dry” caving with the West Georgia Grotto, part of the National Speleological Society (NSS). He was active with the Society’s National Cave Rescue Commission (NCRC) for over 35 years, was a Fellow of the NSS, and was a recipient of the society’s “Outstanding Service Award”. Steve was also an active member and supporter of the Southeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. since its founding.

It was his relationship with cavers and caving that led to the founding of Pigeon Mountain Industries more than 35 years ago.

“I was privileged to purchase the first 600 foot section of rope they ever sold,” said caver and former PMI share holder Buddy Lane.

“Steve, along with Richard Schreiber, Smokey Caldwell and Bill Cuddington set out to change the vertical world by forming Pigeon Mountain Industries (PMI) in 1976. It wasn’t long after this that the company took off and Steve moved from the Atlanta area to LaFayette, Georgia, to work full time at PMI and as a volunteer with Walker County Rescue,” Lane said.

Steve dedicated 40 years of his life to Walker County’s Emergency Services Agency, organizing and managing the county’s specialty team for cave rescue. He served for many years as the Deputy Director of the Agency.

Along with Tom Vines, Steve co-authored *High Angle Rope Techniques* (soon to be published in its fourth edition) as well as many other rope access and rescue-related publications.

Steve was also active with the Cordage Institute, where he served as a Board Director for 15 years and as its President from 2005 to 2007.

Peter Lance, Executive Director for the Society of Professional Rope Access Technicians (SPRAT) and the Cordage Institute, expressed a sentiment shared by many who knew Steve. “He was such a great guy with a big heart.” he said.

“Steve was a founding member of SPRAT, and he was always an enthusiastic advocate for the organization and the rope access community. He was passionate about ensuring that SPRAT’s standards and technical documents represent the consensus of all members, and that every single member has the opportunity to actively contribute to the process.”

“As anyone who knew Steve can attest, he was passionate about standards development. He was committed to ensuring that the Cordage Institute’s standards, guidelines, and technical documents represent the consensus of all members, and that every single member has the opportunity to actively contribute to the process.”

“He’ll be missed by many, including me.” Lance said.



*Photo by Tom Wood.*

Active both in the field as a rescuer and behind the scenes as an expert in the field of rescue, Steve was active on ASTM's F32 Search and Rescue Committee, ANSI's Z359 Fall Protection Committee, NFPA's Technical Rescue Committee and NFPA's Committee on Special Operations Protective Clothing and Equipment. He was a Life Member of NASAR and served on the NASAR board of Directors for over nine years.

Steve's lifelong devotion and commitment to the worlds of sport caving and rescue continues to serve as an inspiration to anyone who has ever trusted their life to a rope or worked to rescue someone in need. His guiding principle in both business and in the world of caving and rescue was, "Always do the right thing," and it will endure as his legacy to cavers and rescuers the world over.

Services for Steve were held on January 25, 2014 at the Walker County Civic Center in Rock Spring, GA.

In lieu of flowers, the family would appreciate donations to one of the following organizations: **Heifer International**, **Southeastern Cave Conservancy**, **The National Speleological Society** (either the NCRC or the headquarters building fund), or the **American Cancer Society**.

## *Notes From the Editor*

There are a few changes afoot:

First, we are introducing a quarterly interview with a MRA member. This edition sports Q & A with past president, Neil Van Dyke. We encourage all (from the newest members, to the longest serving) to take part in future interviews. This is a way to get to know each other, and to build the MRA community. If you would like to be interviewed, or would like to 'volunteer' someone else, please send in his or her name and email address to [Meridian Editor](#).

The submission deadlines for contributing are moving to the beginning of the month, on the calendar. This will allow me time to seek help from the expert copy editors who have volunteered their time, and still allow two weeks for the graphic artist to work her magic. **The new content deadlines for the remainder of 2014 will be: April 1, July 1, and October 1.**

Since a picture is worth a thousand words, we will begin soliciting photography for a "Photo of the Quarter." Photos can be of people, places or things. They need to be of something that inspires you while you are involved in SAR related activities. Please include the name of the photographer, place taken, and a bit about why you took it. Any photograph submitted for consideration must be an original, non-published work that does not infringe any privacy, intellectual property or other rights of any third parties, and that the submitter either owns or has rights to convey any and all right and title in the submitted photo.

A person submitting images grants the Meridian non-exclusive, royalty-free copyright license to publish the photos online. A photo must be an accurate representation of the scene, not digitally altered in any way. Images should not exceed 2 MB. To submit a photo, please email an electronic .jpg version to [Meridian Editor](#).

Please give serious consideration to contributing to the Meridian. It is your newsletter, and the MRA wants to hear from you. I would like to thank the members who regularly contribute: Doug Wesson, Skeet Glatterer, Howard Paul, Tom Wood, Loren Pfau, Mike Vorachek, Dave Clarke, and Dan Lack. We have all benefited from the contributions of these people.

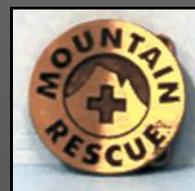
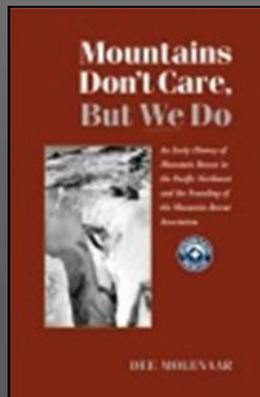
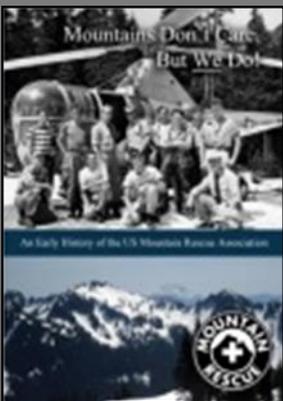
If you know of a story, or event, or would like to present new research, this is a good forum for reaching a wide audience. There are nearly 2500 of you. Please contribute!

I can be reached at [Meridian Editor](#) or 503-319-8615.

*Laurie Clarke*

Show your support of your team! Now is the time to replace your old and tattered MRA items. After you lost all that weight during the holidays, are you ready for a smaller tee shirt? Do you need more challenge coins so you don't get caught without one? (That can get expensive.) Did your hat blow off on that ridge, and you need a new one? Or do you need a gift for your team member who just attained rescue level status?

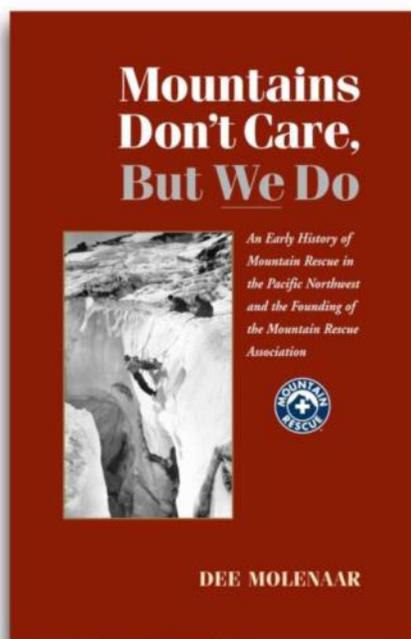
Log on to the MRA website, and place your order!



# Mountains Don't Care, But We Do

An Early History of Mountain Rescue in the Pacific Northwest and the Founding of the Mountain Rescue Association

By Dee Molenaar



Dee Molenaar, author of *The Challenge of Rainier*, has written fascinating accounts of the legendary mountain rescues and recoveries in the Pacific Northwest. In telling these tales of triumph and tragedy, he has also traced the formation and evolution of the mountain rescue groups that carried out these missions.

*"The old master has done it again, pulling from personal experience and scholarly research, a vital and vibrant history of mountain rescue in the Pacific Northwest to celebrate the Mountain Rescue Association's 50th anniversary."*

Tom Hornbein

*"Mountains Don't Care, But We Do, by Dee Molenaar, is a must read for those who enjoy high adventure and want to know the history of the Mountain Rescue Association."*

Jim Whittaker

**50th  
Anniversary  
Tribute**

*"Mountains Don't Care, But We Do, is a modest way of saying 'thank you' to the hundreds of mountain rescue volunteers who have come before us. We hope that they would be as proud of today's groups as we are of them."*

Charley Shimanski, President  
Mountain Rescue Association

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and outdoor stores!**



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