

Inyo County Search and Rescue

February 2019 General Meeting Minutes

February 7 2019

Call to Order

The February Inyo SAR general meeting was held at the Posse Hut, called to order shortly after 7PM by president Elsbeth Otto.

A number of new people attended the meeting: Carson who snowboards, hikes and climbs, Tom Reid, an ophthalmologist here for ~20 years, Andreas Sanchez (? on names), who did SAR in high school, now back in Bishop and wants to do it again, and Billy, who's doing an EMT class right now and got conned into coming by Ariana.

January 2019 Events

02 Feb Snow Anchor Training: Ryan reported that after something like a 70-page slide show, folks went to Aspendell and practiced picket placement, using webbing, bounced on anchors and stress-tested them with full weight. He wouldn't have hucked into a crevasse on one of those anchors, but would have felt pretty good lowering on them.

28 Jan Installation Dinner: Elsbeth reported that fun was had by all, particularly the H80 crew, who joined in with their families and closed the place down! Todd won the Captain's award, and 20+ folks who devoted excessive amounts of time to SAR last year were named as rescue members. Vic reported that Kent Miller from Cal OES attended and was very impressed.

MLK Weekend VA Lakes: Ian recounted that he was out skiing near VA Lakes when his friend hit a tree. Patient was found unconscious and not breathing. After restoring airway, and putting him in a recovery position, patient regained consciousness after 5min or so with altered mentation. Ian used personal InReach to call Mono SAR, and after assessing spine, decided to sidestep downhill with friend, given the temperature, time and terrain. Took about 2 hours to get to snowcat-accessible terrain, which remarkably was about the total time it took Mono SAR from first contact to VA Lakes, even in blizzard conditions. Friend was evacuated to trauma center in Reno.

Ian's takeaways: Really glad for InReach (as was Elsbeth, who as the emergency contact on the other end, reported that the experience was great). You should always have your full complement of winter essentials on you – a puffy, handwarmers, etc. can completely change your outlook when things go wrong. Also glad he decided to walk the patient out instead of wait – Mono SAR's plan to attempt the ~30-degree slope in the snowcat wasn't going to work, which also highlighted a mission-planning aspect: they should have brought snow-shoes, etc., for that eventuality. Finally, Elsbeth underscored the importance of helmets – this guy was not a crazy skier doing crazy things; he hit a submerged log which catapulted him headfirst into a tree.

19 Jan Aspendell Snow Training: Todd led AVY + snow travel training in Aspendell, with approximately 20 people. Cam reported the group went to the end of the road just after a recent storm. There were avalanche warnings for the area that day, and shooting cracks and whumpfs were observed (If you are not familiar with the technicalities of *whumpfing*, you can read about it [here](#)). Todd demonstrated digging snow pits and examining layers. The group practiced with beacons and rescue techniques. Apparently a buried metal lunch pail can be penetrated with an avalanche probe – ouch, but better poked full of holes than dead.

15 Jan Birch Creek Mission: Victor recapped the Jan 15 callout at the connector between Buttermilk road and 168. Group of ~4 people including an infant, whose vehicle got mired in deep snow. A group of friends failed to get them out, so instead they called SAR and went to Denny's. Nate took the Jeep but turned around when he got into deep snow. Mike and another deputy took the snowcat and got everyone out. They had the key for the gate across the road, but Vic pointed out that **we should be sure to keep lock cutters with our gear.**

Vic also discovered that our cold-care gear was in a sorry state. Reached out to the team and Laura, Bob, and Ryan went through all of it. All cold-care gear is now in duffles, clearly labeled 'patient cold care'. There is now one complete duffle in First-out, and 2 more in the hut, **in the medical room** – *note: not in the gear room.*

Mike wants to train a couple more folks on the snowcat (Ryan, Chris and John Weissman indicated definitive interest in participating)

12-14 Jan AIARE AVY1 Course: Erik recapped the excellent AIARE AVY1 course that he and Rose took with Mono SAR. Taught by Todd Vogel, Ryan Huetter and Mike Phillips up in Mammoth. We went through beacon use, search and rescue techniques, trip planning with use of online avalanche reports and caltopo tools, proper snow pit excavation and layer examination, compression tests, and in-the-field terrain evaluation and snow sampling. Big takeaways for me were: don't rely on single-point samples to evaluate conditions over a broad area – even pits dug within ten feet of each other can give significantly different results. One the other hand, even casual sampling with inverted ski poles as you move through a landscape can help you build a good picture of the global layer conditions, and a good understanding of how conditions vary with aspect.

Team Business:

Recert team is finalized, and includes Julia, Bob, Nik, Darla, Cam, Laura, Ian, Ryan, Elsbeth, Ed and Sonja, with Rachel and Julie as evals. It will be the first Saturday in March (March 2).

Also noted that we will be doing heli training again this year at Millpond with H80 crew, sometime TBD in May.

Ed reports that the first winter race brought in \$2600, with over 100 runners – approx. 3x normal!

All members present voted to admit Cam as a full member – we were unanimous that Cam has been a great addition to the team!

Vic reports that Sheriff's dept continues to work on door locks, and that we do have a key for the main door – will figure out a sensible place to put it. Also working on the pile of seats in the garage. **And requests that everyone remember to turn lights out when you leave the hut/garage (don't forget there are light switches behind the climbing wall).**

We had a discussion about whether the O2 fill works (consensus is yes). Paul and Bob are trained – Bob points out that there are good instructions that live with the system (currently behind the pile of seats in the garage).

We talked briefly about the tragic accident with the Fillmore SAR team, who *were* going to come up here and stage at the posse hut for MRA accreditation. You can read about it, e.g., [here](#).

Upcoming dates:

09 Feb Winter Race #2 Ed put a callout for a volunteer to do raffle ticket sales. Reports that he has merchandise from 70 businesses up and down 395. Millpond 7:30 for volunteers, 8am registration, 9am start.

16 Feb Snow Training Snow/ice recert-oriented training, likely Bishop Creek/Table Mtn. Meet at the hut 8am. Focused on the recert, but open to all. Plan will be to set up raise/lower on steep snow slope without traditional anchors.

Adjournment

Elsbeth Otto adjourns the meeting shortly before 8 PM, in anticipation of Ryan's vacuuming demo!