



TUESDAY, JANUARY 26, 2010 5:26 am

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BLOG

The Buzz
Hey, you got tax in my peanut butter cup



YOUR TOWN NEWS

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JULIE MUHLSTEIN

Columnist Julie Muhlstein's take on life in Snohomish County.



Latest: County residents will have to accept that things are changing

KRISTI O'HARRAN

Columnist Kristi O'Harran writes about people in Snohomish County.



Latest: Birds of different feathers flock together

LATEST GALLERY



Everett High Grads

January 22, 2010 (15 photos) [More Herald photos]

WEEK IN REVIEW

MONDAY

- Couple sentenced to year in jail for role in G...
Battle won, Wal-Mart gets to work in Arlington
Last year's Snohomish Slew returns for Groundfir...

SUNDAY



- Everett High School's grand old hall turns 100
Everett City Council president promises more op...
Edmonds tackles tough economy

SATURDAY

LOCAL NEWS

Published: Tuesday, September 23, 2008

Hiker safe with help of ham radio

The man, who used a radio to send out a call for help, was one of two rescued on Sunday.

By Jackson Holtz Herald Writer

A series of dots and dashes bouncing off the ionosphere Sunday helped save a hiker stranded on Buck Creek Pass east of Glacier Peak.

The hiker who broke his leg used a low-voltage portable radio and Morse code to send out a call to help.

Six hundred miles away in Bozeman, Mont., Robert Williams was testing his ham radio Sunday when he heard the call signal, "W-7-A-U."

Williams replied and quickly learned, in the dashes and dots, that he was talking with a 62-year-old Corvallis, Ore., man, who had slipped and hurt himself in the high Cascades of Western Washington.

"I just happened to be at the same frequency," Williams, 65, said Monday. "It's just a stroke of luck that turned out great."

Williams called 911 and was connected to Snohomish County search-and-rescue officials. He spent much of Sunday and Monday relaying information including GPS coordinates from the hiker to rescuers.

"It was quite an experience," Williams said. "I'm just glad that he was a ham radio operator and that I was able to talk to him. It made the difference for him."

On Sunday, rescue crews reached the man who had set up camp on Buck Creek Pass, at about 6,000 feet just west of the Chelan County line.

He was taken to safety Monday on horseback.

The call set in motion one of two mountain rescues Sunday.

A second team of rescuers went up Three Fingers Mountain after a man there fell about 200 feet on a glacier near the summit.

Including the weekend rescues, search-and-rescue teams this year have now responded to 100 missions, Snohomish County sheriff's Sgt. Danny Wikstrom said.

Both of the injured men in the past two rescues were well prepared for the wilderness conditions, he said.

"To have that equipment will save your life," he said.

The man on Three Fingers was hiking with three other people when he fell. His climbing party summoned help, officials said.

On Monday afternoon, he was taken by helicopter off the mountain to Providence Regional Medical Center Everett, sheriff's Lt. Rodney Rochon said.

He wasn't able to walk when he was loaded into the chopper, Rochon said. He apparently had sprained his ankle and knee in the fall.

Bad weather Sunday prevented helicopter rescues of both men. Teams spent a night in snow and frigid conditions in the mountains.

Rescuers on Three Fingers used a pulley system to hoist the man off the glacier and onto the trail, Wikstrom said.

HIKERS IN TROUBLE



(click to enlarge)

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Robert Frank, City Editor
frank@heraldnet.com



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HeraldNet: Hiker safe with help of ham radio



Teams then carried the man to Goat Flats, where he was loaded onto the chopper.

Rescuers on horseback reached the man on Buck Creek Pass on Monday morning.

The trail from Darrington was washed out from recent storms and wasn't passable, so crews approached along the Trinity Trail near Lake Wenatchee, Wikstrom said.

- Get to know the woods on a snowshoe tour at Ste...
- Workers' pay one of Washington state's first cuts
- Granite Falls' books too messy even for state a...

It isn't the first time amateur radio operators have helped out with an emergency situation, said Allen Pitts, a spokesman for the American Radio Relay League based in Newington, Conn.

The radios work well when other kinds of communication fail, he said.

Ham radio operators were of paramount importance after Hurricane Katrina and when a tsunami ravaged southeast Asia.

FRIDAY



- Heavy-duty I-5 barriers going up through Marysv...
- Are Everett's secluded meetings legal?
- This time, it's easier to hire for the census

Still, it's rare that Morse code is used to initiate a rescue, he said.

Amateur radio operators used to be required to know Morse code to get a license. That requirement was dropped a few years ago.

Since then, Morse code has actually gained popularity, Pitts said.

"Morse code will get through when no other type of communication will," Snohomish County Hams Club President Grant Hopper said.

Williams, the Montana man, said he was able to understand the injured man's code even when his signal became very weak. Voice communication over the airwaves likely would have become garbled or misunderstood.

The man had a low-voltage radio transmitter, which operates on about as much power as it takes to make a tiny Christmas tree light sparkle.

THURSDAY



- Mukilteo hopes to show off a gem of marine science
- County jobless rate climbs to 10.3 percent
- Eight county school districts ask voters for help

In the right conditions, radio signals can bounce off the Earth's atmosphere and ricochet thousands of miles.

"A signal like that can skip a long way around the world," Williams said. "You can talk to Europe or Asia given the right conditions."

This is the first time Williams has helped someone in danger using his radio.

The rescue likely wouldn't have been possible if the injured man weren't a competent radio operator, Williams said.

"My guess is that he was just waiting to hear from somebody," he said. "I happened to be the lucky one."

Reporter Jackson Holtz: 425-339-3437 or jholtz@heraldnet.com.

WEDNESDAY



- Stanwood offers treasure trove of glass artwork
- County Council joins in request for investigation
- Senate victory in Massachusetts seen as a boost...

Learn more about amateur radios

An injured hiker on Buck Creek Pass used a ham radio and Morse code to summon help Sunday. There are about 654,000 licensed amateur radio operators in the United States. To learn more or to take a licensing class, check out the Snohomish County Hams Club at www.wa7law.com or the American Radio Relay League at www.arri.org.

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TUESDAY



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- Stuck in Brazil with an ill child
- Federal help for state? Maybe

MOST READ

MOST COMMENTED

1. Puget Park Drive-In theater closing to make way for Swedish emergency room
2. Battle won, Wal-Mart gets to work in Arlington
3. Gold Bar-area couple to be sentenced today for cruelty to dogs
4. Hard work alone won't rebuild our economy
5. Pacific Northwest Aerospace Alliance's conference in Lynnwood features Boeing, Airbus speakers
6. Couple sentenced to year in jail for role in Gold Bar-area puppy mill
7. Fitness boot camp in Everett pushes folks of all levels
8. Work to begin on pedestrian bridge in Lynnwood
9. Lake Stevens schools pin hopes on levies
10. Last year's Snohomish Slew returns for Groundfrog Day, thanks to devoted caregiver

ENTERPRISE NEWSPAPER

SC BUSINESS JOURNAL

- Meadowdale boys hold off Glacier Peak in fourth quarter
- Fast start helps Archbishop Murphy girls master Cedarcrest
- Balanced scoring boosts Jackson boys
- Edmonds-Woodway beats Jackson, breaks first-place tie with the Timberwolves
- Improv yourself
- Royals upend Warriors
- Getting fit, boot-camp style
- T-wolves pull away from Knights

The Enterprise
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