



Diary of a Midlife Crisis

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So it has happened. At 53, wondering if I'd traveled so far past my prime that there's little left to do but coast toward retirement, and thinking that greater ease might not be so bad because I don't deal well with challenges anymore, I somehow decided to prove myself to myself. This ship needs to cast off from the comfort of the dock, and seek adventure. Must be a midlife crisis; apparently they exist after all.

Tuesday, June 30, 2015

Last year, after a couple of summers of volunteering with the Timpanogos Emergency Response Team by spending occasional weekends on Mount Timpanogos providing trail directions and first aid, I conceived the notion that I should try out for the Utah County Sheriff Search and Rescue team, which does countywide backcountry rescue year round. I'd started volunteering with TERT because our kids had grown and I was doing less of things like coaching soccer or working with Scouts, and needed to find some other way to help in the community. Doing something in the outdoors seemed desirable, and TERT fit the bill. However, it didn't give year round service opportunities. Following several months of bolstering my resume by taking a Wilderness First Responder class, an Avalanche 1 class, an Advanced Open Water Diver class, and a Rescue Diver class, and hitting the gym, while serving another year with TERT, I turned in my application today. In the fall I'll learn whether I'm worthy of UCSSAR's attention. Given that Utah County's SAR team bills itself as one of the best teams in the country, with members thoroughly trained in a variety of disciplines, I'm not sure whether I'm too old to keep up. But we'll see.

Tuesday, November 3, 2015

Today SAR interviewed me for probationary membership on the team! Apart from not answering clearly a question about my avalanche class because I assumed they knew more about formal avalanche training than they do, it went pretty well. But I still feel old. The team leadership is middle aged, but the other people I saw being interviewed were young—twenty somethings, I'd say.

Monday, November 19, 2015

Accepted! Wow! That's an exciting letter to receive. Now I need to fill out some paperwork, get a physical, and buy a radio and an as yet unspecified amount of equipment.

Tuesday, December 1, 2015

Got my doctor to certify me fit for duty both in the valley and at mountain elevations. Basically I told him I'd been climbing Timp so I must be fit enough. Let's hope so.

Thursday, December 10, 2015

This evening the "support members" (that's the new term for what SAR usually calls "probies," members in the first, probationary year), met at the Sheriff's Office north annex building for an orientation meeting. There were seventeen of us on the original emailed meeting notice, but a couple have apparently dropped already. After a few hours I went home badly shaken and on the verge of quitting. DB, our trainer, introduced himself, as did GB, our technical advisor. The search and rescue team is a 501(c)(3) charitable volunteer organization with a president and a board, and the president, SC, introduced himself also. Here's where the organization gets interesting: search and rescue in Utah, as in most places, is the responsibility of the county sheriff, and so search and rescue organizations aren't independent. This organization's board is picked by the membership, and for training purposes the board assigns members to be "sergeants" over various search specialties, and also over fundraising and so forth, but the ICS incident command system that actually runs specific rescue call outs is made up of a group of team members designated by the Sheriff, and are called "lieutenants" within SAR (although no one really calls SAR people "sergeant" or "lieutenant," that's more appropriate for the deputies assigned to work with us who actually are sergeants or lieutenants within the SO, but even with them we often use first names in practice). There are about sixty volunteers on the team. Each year about ten to twelve new members come in, although only about half of them are still there by the end of the first year. Ultimately, this whole thing falls under the umbrella of the SO's Emergency Services Division. Lt. CB from Emergency Services and Sgt. NG were at the orientation meeting; Sgt. HF couldn't make it. One of them decides whether dispatch will call out the team, then they and ICS run the call out. Two thirds of call outs occur in the summer, most of them at night or on weekends, and the average length of a call out is about four hours, although they can go much longer. Utah County has the second most busy search and rescue unit in the state, behind Grand County down Moab way, but ahead of Salt Lake County. SAR gurus FH and OG from ICS came, and OG pitched the importance of assessing right now whether we have the time and money to stay with the team. That is the issue. Probies have to attend at least ten of the twelve monthly first Thursday evening team meetings and the following Saturday morning team trainings, and at least 80% of the support member third Thursday evening meetings and the following Saturday morning trainings, and must go to at least 40% of the year's call outs (normal members must go to at least 30% of the

call outs). Also, beards are not allowed, or long hair, and that'll affect four of us, although recently the board decided to allow goatees. This is a nutty view of professionalism, especially given that most of the best SAR people in America were dirtbags from the Yosemite climbing community who built YOSAR, but goatees it is. All of that is doable. However, Utah County dearly loves frugal government, and that tightfistedness filters down into SAR. It seems to be a badge of honor that SAR doesn't issue much gear to members, just a 75 foot rope, a couple of lengths of webbing, two prusiks, and a few other things, and mostly makes volunteers buy rescue gear themselves. Although we toured the facility and looked at the snowmobiles and the new airboat and various other resources the team has available, DB and GB were happy to also show us how full of personal gear their own trucks are, and to talk about having each spent around six thousand dollars on gear in their first year as volunteers. I appreciate that enthusiasm; I was like that when I was a young EMT and basically wanted to equip myself like an ambulance just in case a dramatic emergency might unfold right in front of me. But now, not so much. What is this gear they want us to buy? Apart from clothing and boots suitable to extended periods in the outdoors in all weather, the required gear includes a handheld VHS radio, radio chest harness, car radio, GPS unit (preferably Garmin's new and expensive wifi capable color screen unit), orienteering compass with mirror and inclinometer, flagging tape, notepad, a backpack (preferably a particular Black Diamond model), sleeping bag, personal bivouac shelter of some sort, two quarts of water, 6000 calories of nutrition (I estimate that's more than two dozen Snickers bars), sunglasses, first aid kit with BSI materials, whistle, mirror, firestarter, climbing helmet (preferably a particular red Petzl model), headlamp and a backup light, locking carabiners of more than usual strength (27+ kn, which means people's existing biners probably won't do), Scarab rope rescue tool (that's well over one hundred dollars right there), leather belay gloves, avalanche beacon, avalanche probe of longer than usual length (300 cm), avalanche shovel, ice axe, crampons, snow shoes, motocross helmet for snow machine and UTV/ATV use, PFD, summer wet suit, dry suit, and an SO dress uniform for when we are sworn in if we make our numbers the first year and pass our six month review and the end of the year three day ORI (Operational Readiness Inspection) test. There are rumors of other things, too, like blankets and additional climbing gear. Good heavens! When I first looked into SAR, the SAR web site listed some gear we'd need, about two thousand dollars worth, most of which I already have (it turns out I also have both hitch sizes the team uses on its trailers, 2" and 2 & 5/16"), but this longer list is well over four thousand dollars worth of gear. I went home sick at heart. Having put a lot of effort into getting accepted onto the team, and having told my extended family and my boss that I'd made it, I want to stay with the team, but I don't see how I can possibly justify spending so much money. With four kids in college next year, and two surgeries likely necessary in the family, there are more important places to put our limited funds. At least dues aren't so bad. DB wants us to meet for a hike on Saturday. I'll ask him how much of this expenditure is absolutely necessary, and based on what I learn, My wife and I will decide what to do next.

Saturday, December 12, 2015

I suspect this hike was a test to see who can actually dress for the winter, and carry a pack up a mountain. Surprisingly, not everyone came through. Given that the recent orientation meeting was a bit disorganized, and that directions to the trailhead and instructions on what we'd be doing today were a bit thin, I threw a lot of clothing and winter travel gear into the truck so I'd have what I'd need for whatever might come up. Turns out we were walking up Battle Creek for a mile and a half or so, and I was ready for that. At least I wasn't in sweats or jeans, which couldn't have been very comfortable for those who were. Thankfully I'm not the slowest of the probies, and that was encouraging. Unfortunately, RF was lagging quite a bit on the hike up because he was sick, and he ultimately turned back. All of us had wanted to try to keep up with DB, but I really should have dropped back and encouraged RF, and I'm ashamed to have mixed up my priorities. I brought this up, and DB's take is that we should keep an eye on the person behind us, and not get out of sight of them. Up the trail, DB showed us how to set up an anchor system. Some of the knots instruction was cursory but we did learn how to put a "wrap three pull two" webbing anchor on a tree, and that's an important skill. On the way back to the trailhead three of us who are older chatted our way down the trail as the younger set hurried ahead. At 54 I'm the oldest probie, although not terribly older than GH and GU. Back at the trailhead DB looked at my 280 cm avalanche probe and compared it to a teammate's 300 cm probe and thought it was good enough, but was less enthused about my old non-wireless sharing GPS unit, although he thought it could conceivably work. I'm just not going to buy a mobile radio for my car in addition to a new handheld radio, or a redundant compass, or a fourth backpack, or another GPS unit, and I'll put off a dry suit and dress uniform indefinitely. That'll cut expenditures down to not much over a thousand dollars for now, which is what I'd anticipated for the whole year. My wife says we can make that work, and is adamant that I not let financial concerns stop me. Between hanging in there on the hike, and being confident my wife can make the budget happen, I think I can do this thing. Still, it's a bit annoying to keep hearing stories about the gear the board occasionally buys for members as surprises, when most members already have what they need; their customized down jackets are nice, but didn't they already have jackets? Perhaps the board should focus more on issuing rescue equipment to new members, or just get some gear for the team that anyone who gets called out can access.

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

An email from DB says we're on the Everbridge system now, for notifying the team of call outs. We'd been told at the orientation meeting that Everbridge is a smartphone app, and I found some Everbridge apps on the app store, but it wasn't clear how to set them up. It turns out that we don't need an app, the software works on the other end and we just wait for regular texts. Still, we're not supposed to respond to call outs—if there is one before the January team meeting we're supposed to just turn on our radios and listen to see how the team responds. I doubt that many people have radios yet, though, or have gotten them programmed if they do. Also, it turns out there's some

disagreement over whether the Icom radio we were told to get is a good choice or just a relatively inexpensive one; the ICS guy who is into radios, PT, likes Motorola radios more. So do I, but I don't like the cost. Just another thing most large teams would normally issue their members. It's a shame ICS doesn't like Baofengs, because mine works on both public safety and on amateur (including TERT) and FRS frequencies and is perhaps legal to use for most of those purposes, it has a better aftermarket antenna and a better aftermarket battery, and its versatility makes it an interesting possibility, but ICS doesn't trust cheap Chinese radios for life safety matters, and they might be right. I should soon have a radio coming from a low cost internet dealer, hopefully a reputable one. So far I'm finding good sales online even for gear that usually has a fixed price. Promotive and Liberty Mountain and occasionally some other businesses sometimes have good pro deals also, for industry trendsetters like us.

Monday, December 28, 2015

PT programmed my Icom radio, and apparently it'll now hit a number of county repeaters used by the Sheriff's Office. Turns out he's the ICS commander. Channel 2 of 16 is programmed for checking in on the West Mountain repeater when there's a call out, and channel 3 is set to SAR tactical for simplex use while in the field. The rest are mostly Sheriff's Office frequencies, although channel 1 accesses the old statewide SAR frequency that Life Flight sometimes uses for talking to people in the field, channel 14 is Provo's repeater in Provo Canyon, and channel 16 is NOAA weather broadcasts. There hasn't actually been a call out since our orientation meeting, so there isn't anything to listen to yet. Meanwhile I'm getting unclear guidance on what sort of shelter we're supposed to carry so that we can be self sufficient for twenty four hours whenever we go into the field. It seems our leaders find those foil bags sufficient for emergency bivvys. I walk a line between needing to go light for purposes of babying my joints and keeping up my strength, while wanting some basic level of comfort and safety especially in the winter. So, I splurged on a small REI ultralight tent that was half off, and if I have to spend a night outside in the wintertime then I'm going to somewhat enjoy it!

Wednesday, December 30, 2015

Now the chickens have come home to roost, or rather the Amazon orders flowed in mostly all at once and it's harder to duck what I've done to the family budget. Pretty much everything is now here that I plan to order in the next several months except for some climbing hardware that DB might put an order in for so he can get us a little discount. There's even a little vinyl figurine of The Dude from the movie "The Great Lebowski," who may not be the best role model and certainly has nothing to do with required team gear, but does remind me to calm down and "abide." My wife may need to abide when she transfers the rest of savings over to checking. The Dude will go in the truck, on the dashboard. For now I am just waiting for the first team meeting, on January 7, which is kind of like waiting for Christmas morning when you're little. I don't expect or want to be the tip of the spear on every call out, but I do want to go out and be a reliable supporter of the mission.

Friday, January 1, 2016

Today, on the first day of our probationary year, there was a call out! Since we're not allowed out until after the January 7 meeting, that's not quite as exciting as it would otherwise be. It was for an injured snowmobiler off of Skyline Drive, which is currently snowbound territory on the bottom edge of the county, so the rescue would necessitate snowmobiles. I don't actually know how to ride a snowmobile, but I imagine I'd have figured it out sometime along the ridge southward, if given a chance (which likely wouldn't have happened). And if I'd noticed the text message. I'm going to have to start carrying my phone with me instead of leaving it on a counter or a desk, or I won't hear the beep. Come to think of it, a single beep isn't much of a signal, so I've changed the alert tone for SAR texts to an excerpt from the song "Dead Man's Party," and set up the alert to periodically repeat.

Thursday, January 7, 2016

It turns out that the snowmobiler last week hit a tree at high speed, got himself a hemopneumothorax that could have become a rapidly life threatening tension pneumothorax, and is fortunate that Life Flight got him to the hospital quickly. We learned about that at the first meeting of the year. The meetings are in the training room of the SO's main building, which meant waiting by the door for someone else from SAR to let us in. A couple of Sheriff's Mounted Posse people came to introduce a new officer and trail boss. Early on the new members were asked to introduce themselves. There was distinct interest in which of us can tow; I guess that's the main thing we're good for at present. I allowed that I can tow, but whether I can back up is another question. Then we had a presentation on avalanches, and a demonstration of how to put a person into a hypothermia wrap. After that it was business, with an inspirational listing of recent donations, which amounted to well over ten thousand dollars. On to patches and so forth that the organization will buy for everyone but probies; some of these people really love official looking clothing. Sadly, I was there in my flannel shirt, sheepskin jacket, and furry trapper hat. Pretty much on purpose. Anyway, recently the team members were given new, very expensive Arc'treyx jackets, and at the meeting the team members were told to turn in their old jackets so they can be handed down to us, although the old dogs are kind of queasy about probies wearing anything with a Mountain Rescue Association patch on it. We're to clean the jackets and try to restore water repellency and so forth. Apparently presents are regularly scheduled for the team; one of the sergeants was chatting with someone about maybe getting us all radio chest holders. Now that we've bought our own per instructions? Bless their hearts! There was some more discussion of things the team had been issued recently, particularly Garmin's top of the line handheld GPS units, which we had earlier been told to buy, although at one point DB had said he was trying to get the board to get us some. This leads to the astonishing story of the night: after the meeting DB assembled the probies to tell us three times that what he was about to relay to us was not from him, it was from the board. When he finally did spit it out, the news was that the board decided that although there were twelve leftover GPS units, they didn't want to issue

them to us because the board was worried that they wouldn't get some units back if probies quit this year, so for us (not for the rest of the team) we could get the GPS units but we'd have to pay full retail price as a deposit, and we could get that deposit back at the end of the year. I'm unclear on what's hard about routinely issuing gear, as is common on other large teams. Apparently it hasn't occurred to the board to concern itself with why the team has so much attrition of new members, which I doubt has only to do with an unusually long probationary period; I'm pretty sure it has at least something to do with making people choose between family finances and personally funding the team. Now I'm back to where I was in mid-December, given what this mess is costing. Thankfully, though, when new leaders for the year were announced we were told there would be a new position, of morale "sergeant." So no doubt our morale will all be raised soon. Hmmm, I wonder what a good way to do that might be? Getting back to what else happened at the meeting, there was additional discussion of training opportunities for the main body of the team but not for probies: some snowmobile training so more people can actually use the machines, a free EMT class, etc. Then an explanation of recent activity, which in this case means calls for which the Sheriff did not dispatch the team: parents who wanted the team to hike up to the hot pots to make sure their kids were OK, a guy who drove onto Utah Lake ice and wanted the team to rescue his truck when it broke rough the ice into some mud, a call about someone else who broke through the ice but when a deputy went over with binoculars for a look it was just a log on the ice, and someone concerned about a bicyclist riding across the lake. That last thing provided an opportunity for the deputies out experimenting with the airboat to either slide across the ice, or break some channels in the ice, depending on how thick the ice was on various parts of the lake, while looking for the bicyclist, which someone else at the meeting observed would seem to have effectively cut off the bike's return route. Finally it was time to plan for the training on Saturday. It would for sure be avalanche related training at Aspen Grove at 9:00 a.m., but beyond that the details seemed a little elusive. What to wear, and what to carry, varied depending on who was asked. Apparently we ought to carry either very little, or everything necessary for a hypothermia wrap, among other things. That's three sleeping bags, a pad, and a tarp, all of which we're apparently assumed to own and to want to make available for team use. I think most of us will just dress warm and take up a radio, a beacon, a probe, and a shovel. We don't have our call signs yet, so radioing in will be interesting. I'm looking forward to seeing if my avalanche probe passes muster, as I don't want to buy a slightly longer one. Here's something: after the meeting the quartermaster tossed us some hand warmers and a SAM splint! I dropped them onto a pickup backseat that is pretty much awash with gear.

Friday, January 8, 2016

Since we aren't on the team email list yet, DB forwarded us today's emails about tomorrow's training. Apparently there will be seven or nine victims, depending on which part of the email one reads, and we'll divide into teams with K9s going in first, then beacon searchers, then probers, then shovelers, and perhaps we will do a no-beacon probe line search as well, and we'll also do a couple of medical treatment and evacuation scenarios. We'll be using non-tree anchors, which will include bollards,

which is a form of snow anchor. That's right, using a horseshoe shaped snow trench to anchor a rope. Those can be shored up with ice axes, but still.... People are encouraged to adopt a probie so we get integrated into the training, and everyone gets to use their new wireless GPS units ("everyone" not, of course, meaning "everyone"). I hope to not get lowered off a bollard. Should be an adventure overall. Hopefully the fee station will let the probies by without team IDs.

Saturday, January 9, 2016

As it is notorious for doing, SAR clogged up the Aspen Grove trailhead today, and in a truly spectacular way. The mobile command post came up for the training; it's a big mobile home with a telescoping camera pole and lots of communications equipment. The deputies had their new drone out buzzing around. North Fork Fire Department joined us. Then—who'd have thunk—a team member who owns his own little helicopter flew in and set down in the middle of the parking lot! As for myself, I checked in, then went over to OG, who was acting as safety officer, for a survey of my gear and approval to go into the field, and then the support members grouped up and DB told us we'd be the probe team. He also thought I should have been carrying a full pack instead of just a one with just avalanche gear for the training. It seems there were ten simulated victims up the steep, forested hillside at the end of the parking lot, some real, some buried beacons, and some bags of snow simulating a body. The dogs did their thing, the beacon searchers dealt with the predictable confusion over whether they were reading buried beacons or signals from searchers who hadn't switched their beacons from transmit to receive (in every beacon search practice I have ever been in, someone left their beacon on "transmit" instead of switching it to "receive" at the beginning of the practice search, despite repeated verbal instructions for everyone to switch their beacons over, and that really fouls up the exercise), and we got broken up into small groups that kept being sent here and there. A couple of us were sent for a 200' rope, then three of us were assigned to join a beaconless probe line. Unfortunately, I didn't get to watch a raising and lowering system being set up, because I spent a long time on that probe line, and the reason it took so long is that it took three passes over the same patch of ground before the people in the middle of the probe line found the victim (a buried big bag of snow, now well punctured, which apparently was supposed to be distinguishable from the adjacent snow). Finally we were sent over to another area to look for the second victim (another buried big bag of snow), and that went more expeditiously. Most everyone had snowshoes for the morning, although LB's snowshoes wouldn't stay on. With a number of people borrowing other people's gear, a problem arose when at the end of the training when fellow probie SB found he'd lost an older team member's probe. I helped him look for it, but it seemed to be well under the snow somewhere, having fallen off his pack. That's a painful learning experience, but it was lessened a bit later when he got home and found it inside his pack. Speaking of painful, I kept getting whiffs of a terrible smell, like a mix of concentrated urine and some feces, and wondered if I was somehow generating a new odor, and how long it would be before someone said something; thankfully, it eventually dawned on me that the nearby pit toilet must be venting occasionally. When people began assembling for debriefing the quartermaster passed

out some used coats for us. He also reminded us of the \$270 deposit if we want the fancy GPS units everyone else was issued for free, but that didn't impress one of the probies who noted that those units sell for \$230 on Amazon. Debriefing was in the parking lot, with a group photo by the nifty toy before it took flew off. The general feeling at the debriefing was that there had been some disorganization. I am beginning to think that's nothing to be surprised about. But that's OK. For now. It was beautiful up there!

Monday, January 12, 2016

GU emailed DB to ask if, not having our official identifying numbers yet, we're supposed to go to call outs. That's a yes, but I'm pretty sure that the query was really a way of prodding a bit on the issue of why some things are taking so long. It's good to see that another probie is also impatient over SAR's failure to get basic administrative tasks completed, which is especially annoying given how anal they've been about us doing everything just so.

Monday, January 18, 2016

It snowed wet snow yesterday, and my back got sore from trying to shovel too much of it. Thank goodness for the holiday today. But then came a text from DB asking where the probies were, and wondering if we'd received the call out text. I replied with "What text?," and then others followed up with variations. No reply. So I got dressed just in case. A couple of people radioed in, but were told no one else should respond. Much later we learned that a small jet had crashed over by Cedar Fort. At least I was able to get to a doctor's appointment a little later, for another matter. It seems I need surgery for what's hopefully just a nasal polyp. I told the doctor it needs to be worked in around my SAR training schedule. Today we also received this text, which I will quote without further comment: "S: SAR Notification This is a test. Please reply with a 1 when you get this message. To confirm: reply with YES and send."

Thursday, January 21, 2016

So I went home in the late afternoon, only to get a nosebleed just before heading off to SAR probie training. Got the nosebleed stopped, bent down to pick some tissue off the bathroom floor, and got an incredible pain in my back. Still had to get to training. I found DB outside the north annex looking a bit agitated, and he said he'd need to commandeer my truck, but then decided to jump in and have me drive him over to a fenced in area. It was getting dark at this point. He checked a trailer and then went here and there looking for something, and I was afraid he was going to want me to tow a trailer over to the classroom, which would have meant helping lift the tongue to position it on the hitch, which my back wouldn't enjoy. But he couldn't find what he was looking for. In the classroom, on the phone, he figured out it was in that original trailer he'd looked at. He told the class we had an ice rescue call out, which got some people excited until they found out we didn't. Then he had the class march over there while I drove, and they loaded an ice rescue contraption from the trailer onto my truck,

and I drove it back. It's a good thing there wasn't an actual ice rescue call out, because someone would have gotten pretty cold in the water while waiting for the team to find the right gear. After class when I stood up and went to my truck, I almost couldn't stay up. My back was thrashed, and I hadn't even been lifting things. But I forced myself into my truck, drove the ice rescue contraption around to the trailer it came from, other people pulled it out of the back, and I drove home, bouncing over railroad tracks and wondering how much worse things could be. My wife thought calling the doctor in the morning would be a good idea, and I agreed. Meanwhile, I need to remember the following things from the training. The ice rescue sled folds open into two plastic pontoons with two crossbars and two handrails, the thing can be pushed across the ice with a rope attached to it for shore support to pull it back, and there's an oar with a spike on it for either paddling through leads of open water or for pulling the sled back onto ice, and it would be good not to skewer a victim, or let a victim grab at the oar and self skewer. Also, there is a strap arrangement for dragging someone part way up onto the thing. There was more gear discussion. We may not need a dry suit the first year, but will get into water regardless. Get boots and gloves for that. There are a couple of approved PFDs; thankfully, the one I already bought is one of them. A Gerber river shorty knife, blunt tip, would be good to have, as would a throw bag (neither is on the equipment list), and a whistle. A waterproof bag for our radios might be helpful. We also went over mountain rescue gear. When tying prusiks, the tails should be not under one inch long but not much more, despite tails on everything else being a few inches long. Mark the end, not middle of webbing. There is a gear replacement budget available if personal gear is lost or destroyed on a call out. The SAR padlocks are all the same code, a particular radio-related number. When we're radioing, we state the number of who we're calling, or "Valley" to talk to dispatch, then our number. Call out check ins are something like "701 [an abbreviation of, in this case, 1J701] from 4J [a city code for, in this case, Springville]." Going back over previous training, there has never been a live avalanche rescue. By the time the team gets there, it's a body recovery. A live rescue on a call out would be more likely if one of the team was caught in an avalanche while searching. At scenes like avalanches, we need to keep the reporting party present, to collect relevant information from them. The Utah Avalanche Center has a daily email we should consider subscribing to. For our upcoming probie training on Saturday we should bring a pack with avalanche and snow travel equipment, warming material for hypothermia, food and water, a stove and pot, fire starters, and a whistle, and we'll do something up at Tibble Fork.

Friday, January 22, 2016

The doctor says I'll keep hurting my back if I don't do back exercises, but if I do them I should be fine, so a month of ibuprofen. Except that I have nose surgery coming and my ENT says no ibuprofen because it apparently thins blood a bit. Apparently my spine isn't actually the issue, but my lack of flexibility is, because without flexibility all the physical stresses are transferred directly to my spine. So, daily stretching is the trick.

Saturday, January 23, 2016

Off to Tibble Fork for snowshoeing up the mountain to do some training at the Granite Flat campground site. There were lots of Scout troops winter camping along the way up American Fork Canyon. I'd emailed DB that I might be going slow due to my back. A couple of teammates didn't have snowshoes; they were slower. Oddly, even when the ibuprofen wore off, the exercise seemed to be good for my back. It felt better as time went on. We practiced setting wrap three pull two anchors and tensionless anchors, and then did beacon searches with little instruction and much confusion. One beacon was in a tree, which DB said is a trick they like to do at ORI. I did almost pitch into a creek while crossing on a small log on snowshoes, which happened to be right by a slope where a few years ago a BYU student died in a small avalanche immediately adjacent to parking.

Sunday, January 24, 2016

We finally got SAR rosters today, with everyone's numbers on them. I'm 1J751. Also a new gear list, with a horse and a motorcycle tossed in as options. Very funny, GB. He does like a particular locking carabiner that's about \$20 a pop, but I can get a pro order of a good Petzl biner for under \$10 each, and I'm going to go the least expensive adequate way.

Wednesday, January 27, 2016

Now we're finally on the SAR email list.

Saturday, January 30, 2016

Nose surgery went OK yesterday, except that I told everyone we needed to avoid anesthesia that would cause urinary retention, and they said they would, but it happened anyway so during the night we had to drive to the ER for a catheter. So now I'm wondering how a call out would be toting a bag of urine around. Please, please, no call outs!

Monday, February 1, 2016

I was waiting at the house for my wife to get home with a daughter who was seeing the pediatrician because she has been feeling sick, after which I'd go to the urologist to get my catheter removed, when they came home crying, announcing that my baby girl (17 now) has type 1 diabetes and must go to the hospital in Provo immediately. So I dropped them at the hospital, went across the street to get my business done at urology, went back to the hospital, and we learned our girl would be in the hospital for probably four days, and would be on insulin for the rest of her life, needing to carefully manage her blood sugar. Our younger son would be returning from his mission during the week, our older daughter would be getting scoped for digestive issues, and our

older son would be dealing with a stressful situation out of state. And there would be two SAR trainings during the week. The SAR expense issue gets worse and worse for us, and now I need to take more time with my family. Life is hard. But we are a good family, and we will make it through. Especially with the help of the hospital's pediatrics floor. Those people are magnificent, and a great help!

Thursday, February 4, 2016

Hospital discharge for our daughter in the afternoon, SAR meeting in the evening. Short meeting, thank goodness, but it seemed to drag at the end. There was training on flat ice—the old Scout teaching of “reach, throw, row, then go” in that order of preference, holds, although row and go in the case of ice are pretty much the same, using the ice sled. Ice is slippery, so it's important to have proper footwear and a helmet, and SAR requires a PFD when within fifteen feet of water. It's best to stand on the back of the sled to let the other end lift up onto ice when being pulled from water to ice. Pick of Life tools are handy to have to get back up onto ice if one falls through the ice on one's own. Medical training on hypothermia followed, with long time member UP talking about how he got profoundly hypothermic on a call out once, and how we need to take care of ourselves. We were also encouraged to get fit, although there is no physical fitness standard after all. There were descriptions, with slides, of our main rescue areas, and of how Mt. Nebo is getting divided between us and Juab County: apparently we take everything north of Andrews Canyon. The Nutty Putty cave turnoff is at mile marker 7 (but we won't much need to know that anymore, since the cave was closed following a fatality at a failed rescue a few years ago, and I'm still bitter about that closure; my wife and I went on our first date there—our first date that I didn't miss by being hours late, that is). In other news, we need to complete a survey for the quartermaster, there's a Google calendar they'll try to get the probies on, stats are on Dropbox (which probies also aren't on), the National Guard invited SAR to watch a training but it was a busy week so the board declined and then the Guard ran across some lost people that we'd have otherwise had to look for (apparently we just don't use their helicopter in our rescues, although especially at night it is more capable than the hospital helicopters we ask to help us), a dispatcher got in trouble for incorrectly dispatching the team during the jet crash, the team is getting two side by side utility vehicles with trailers, apparently in team history someone once towed something into a gas station canopy by accident, and we should report trail problems to Sgt. NG so he can talk to the Forest Service. Also, the Forest Service is supposedly going to do some restoration on the Timpanogos Shelter at Emerald Lake.

Friday, February 5, 2016

There's some kind of member's training link on the SAR web page that wouldn't register me because of some domain expiration or some such thing, but when that got fixed I still couldn't get on; hopefully it's not important.

Saturday, February 6, 2016

Flat ice training at Utah Lake State Park. But first, group photos, squinting into the just risen sun. A non politically correct member observed that we'll end up looking like Utah's biggest Asian search and rescue team. At training there was a station for practicing taking the ice rescue sled out to a team member in a dry suit pretending to be a victim, a similar station with rope throws and one team member in a wet suit who probably actually was cold, and a medical station on shore, and we went through them with varying degrees of success. I loaned my helmet to a teammate so he could do a station. GH wanted to try her new dry suit but she hadn't purged enough air from it, and that could have been a mess had the air inside gone to her feet, but someone grabbed her and kept her upright. The water wasn't very deep. Afterward, Sgt. HF was grilling chicken back at the state park building, where we had a nice lunch and I chatted with the UP and DL and the park manager and some other folks.

Thursday, February 11, 2016

On the email list, the mountain rescue "sergeant" has been discussing some periodic trainings to get ready for Mountain Rescue Association recertification. I emailed him just curious about what the "E" in EMRT training stood for ("extra," it seems), while acknowledging that as a probie I wasn't supposed to be going to extra trainings for regular team members. Apparently he got another specific question about attending, because he invited everyone, whereupon our trainer told us only to go if we wouldn't burn out on too much activity. Since I have no clear understanding of how to pass knots through a lowering system, I showed up because I need the help. GH showed up also. Funny MRT guy—he said we'd be hiking three or four miles. Actually, it was just up the mountainside to get some slope beneath us, then we set up a couple of anchor stations on sagebrush bushes. I was thinking I'd just watch and learn, but they assigned me the task of setting up an anchor, then setting up a lowering device, then lowering a litter, and then helping make a prusik and helping pass a knot past the Scarab. Except for repeatedly not remembering to repeat commands during lowering, it went OK. There was lots of advice, which was mostly helpful, although sometimes there was contradictory information. Also a bit of advice that was just incorrect: I was told to put a twist in one loop of a wrap three pull two anchor, which I did, but with that anchor type the twist has no effect on safety, because that trick is meant for sliding X configurations off of two anchors. I do need to find out how they transferred things at the stations downslope. About the time I was being released to go downhill I noticed the anchor AT had quietly clipped me into because she was worried about me slipping. That was nice. I was sent down to switch with GH at the litter, managing the foot end of it as the rope teams payed out the ropes attached to the head end. It struck me that this probably wasn't the sort of strain on my back that the physical therapist I'd been to that afternoon would approve of, and indeed I did pay a price for it. I managed to avoid descending into a low tree in the dark. All in all, a pretty good training, although when hiking out I was just behind DB and SC, who were talking about dry suits, expenses, and whether more support members would drop out, so there was some kind of thought process afoot I'd like to have heard more of. It sounded as if they thought they

needed to put more financial pressure on people early on to see who'd leave. I'm in economical no quitting mode, myself. Speaking of technical rescue, here is how rope rescue works with SAR. We do not have super climbers who do amazing feats to get to people and get them down, it's more straightforward and simple than that (we don't actually have many good climbers at all, and half of those we have were good back in the day). The basic drill is to get up above someone, set up an anchor and a lowering system, and then lower a rescuer down to them with another team member up top controlling the lower. Then the rescuer will get the victim on rope, and both will be lowered down to flatter ground somewhere below. Sometimes lowering down but then using a pulley system to raise the victim and rescuer back up is necessary. The main line typically runs through a Scarab descent control device, and a backup belay line runs through some prusik knots minded by another person, and those prusiks should tighten and catch the belay line if the main fails. So the rescuer would be tied into two ropes, for safety. But since we supposedly build systems to have ten times the strength needed for a typical rescue load (considered 600 pounds), there isn't supposed to be equipment failure. If the victim has to be in a litter, then that complication is dealt with.

Thursday, February 18, 2016

SC did medical training for the probies tonight. He's a NOLS WMI instructor too. There was instruction on patient assessment, with practice in the classroom, and then he wanted us to go outside for scenarios. We don't generally dress for outside on Thursday evenings, seeing as some people are coming directly from work, so BH was in a suit laying on a pad while I assessed him. But it all would have been dandy, except that shortly before the last scenario I learned by telephone that my daughter's blood sugar had plunged suddenly to the low 30's, and my wife had gotten it back up, but we don't know why it happened.

Friday, February 19, 2016

I had just got home from work when about 5:30 p.m. my phone's SAR text message jingle went off. Now that's a confusion! After a month and a half of nothing, what's this thing that's happening? Technical rescue up Grove Canyon by a waterfall. That confused me because the waterfall in that area is up Battle Creek Canyon. I changed clothes and started up north, and we got word to divert to the Battle Creek trailhead. A young man had been hiking and had gotten himself ledged up, then had called his mom, and so we got called, and eventually they got him to phone 911 so the dispatch computer could get GPS coordinates from his phone. Team one and team two were about to head out as I arrived, and a small group of probies was scrambling to get ready and to get everything packed that the safety officer said to have. I went up trail with team four at dusk, and we were to stage by the waterfall since at that point GB on team two was almost to the guy from below and thought he could readily lower him; team one was still approaching from above. Our team had SG leading, with FW, both old team members so we moved slow, and three newbies. It got dark, and we watched stars come out. GH and LB came up scattered from their team and LB headed off on his own. After awhile as I pondered whether to add a clothing layer, team two brought

the guy down the trail and we followed them out. Oddly, at this point my right nostril was hurting quite a bit, where the surgery was, although it wasn't especially cold out. It was really bothering me by the parking lot. But when I took off my climbing helmet from over my warm cap, the pain largely cleared almost immediately. That was strange. We hung around awhile until circling up for a debriefing, and I saw that some support members were in the parking lot and had to hang out there since there were enough people on the mountain. Later I learned that an ICS member had suggested to ST that they do some beacon search practice, and he declined. DB had to explain to him that blowing off ICS that way is a good recipe for not leaving the parking lot ever. Wow, kids! Home with dirty equipment to eventually clean and repack. At least DB didn't decide it would be good training to bivouac on the mountain and take up training on site in the morning!

Saturday, February 20, 2016

Up and off to Dry Creek in Alpine for probie MRT training. We waited for stragglers to arrive, then fired up our GPS units to learn to input coordinates. Unfortunately, the people with the fancy new units couldn't figure out how to do the wireless thing, since even DB wasn't familiar with his unit. I reconfigured mine so the coordinates were in the degrees and decimal minutes format they favor, and we all entered coordinates manually. OK. Then we turned on our beacons and hiked up the trail a ways, and individually took turns doing beacon searches. This was frustrating because I can do beacon searches, but my beacon was displaying erratically. But I got through that, and we went up a bit more to divide into two groups to set up a lowering system. We learned a lot up there, but I did see GB and FH disagreeing some over a Scarab on the main line. GB taught us a radium release hitch, and interlocking bowlines, but later DB taught us the radium release hitch a different way at the belay system, so there are still glitches in the system. Although training seemed generally productive, belaying was difficult. The belay system doesn't run rope through a mechanical device, the rope runs through two prusik knots that will grab the rope and seize down on it unless you "break" the prusiks by physically bending them and the rope with your hands and then keeping them broke for the duration of the lower. Hard to do, and in practice neither DB nor any of the rest of my group except one guy for a short while could do it at all. There has to be a better way. DB let slip that the better way would be by a MPD device, but ICS hasn't approved it. He also showed us a way to break the prusiks that actually works, but it's unapproved since it involves pulling backwards on them slightly, which could cause slight shock loading of the belay line if the main line failed. Actually, the arched rope method allows for shock loading also, so I'm unclear on why that would be superior to the cheater method. I'm for what works, since seizing up the system on a lower halts the whole operation until the lines can be put right. I had worried earlier that I wouldn't be able to figure out things like the radium release hitch, but it is doable (that hitch can be unwrapped to put some slack into a belay system so as to loosen up tightened prusiks while the main line holds tension). Perhaps I'll become competent at mountain rescue.

Tuesday, February 23, 2016

A week or so ago a SAR member told the mailing list that a depressed colleague of his from work had gone missing, and the family was worried about him, and perhaps people could keep an eye out for his truck at trailheads or wherever. Last night he sent another text saying the family had gone through the man's Google maps viewing history and found a couple of spots on the west side of the lake he'd looked a lot at recently. I figured that would probably lead to a call out, and in the mid morning it did. I was standing in my office contemplating what to do about a defense attorney who was going off the deep end to defend a gang banging car thief, when my SAR text tune started jangling. Once again I stared at my phone in confusion, wondering if it could be true. Sure enough, a call out for a hiker in Israel Canyon, a place I'd never heard of, but on Google there was such a place west of Saratoga Springs. I'm thinking we're going to have to read minds to find call out locations sometimes. So I hit the Wendy's drive through for the second fast food, principle busting meal in a week, and got on the radio. The Utah County Sheriff's Mounted Horse Posse was also responding, but few SAR members were checking in. Headed around the lake, and FW with his personal trailer of ATVs was there, and probie SB from my probie group. Sgt. HF had us get ready, and FW asked if I had a helmet so I put on my motorcycle helmet, climbed in with FW, and we went up to where the victim's truck was. It looked as if the truck might have been stuck and the victim had tried to put sticks under the tire for traction. The truck had probably been there just over a week. In hindsight, it never did occur to me to make sure that someone had checked the truck interior before we headed out. Two posse guys were also riding up there then. Since the plan was to check the immediate area for tracks, I left my pack and helmet in the ATV and started cutting for sign up the north side of the muddy, snowy road, and the posse guys went over to the south side of the road and worked up that way. I was about to loop back down the north side as instructed, when the posse guys asked if I had binoculars. No, but I went over and saw that they were looking at a patch of orange on the hill, and we'd been told the victim might be carrying a dull orange bag. The younger posse guy and I climbed up the hill for a look, and found part of a broken bright orange Home Depot bucket. I mentioned that this spot looked like a good place to pause and look about, and from that vantage point I looked over the area I'd be heading down to, and MM the posse guy looked across a ravine to the hillside above where they'd been riding along the road, and saw a patch of dull orange. So we went down the ravine and up the hill and found a dead man lying on the snow with a handgun and a bloody head. He wasn't visible from the road below because he was on a flatter part of the hillside, so it was actually good fortune that we'd gone on the wild goose chase up the other hill. Unfortunately, after MM called it in I was grilled on the radio by a SAR superior who wanted to know if I'd checked for signs of life, and I explained that the victim appeared visibly dead and had a handgun and wound, no signs of breathing from a distance, and lividity, and we hadn't approached because it was a potential crime scene. He agreed we should stand off. I shouldn't have given that description on an open frequency, though, as family was staged down the mountain where a deputy was present with a radio. Later we were told that the family had a meltdown at that site. It isn't clear to me whether that was because the family was upset about not being allowed to go up the mountain to help

search, or if they did overhear that discussion on a radio. Here is an interesting thing: there was an air search by fixed wing before we were called out, and they didn't spot the guy. More of our team arrived, mostly probies, piled onto the back of a side by side utility vehicle, which left Sgt. HF appalled. FW had thought I was still in the south area, so there was some communications confusion about where they should go, although I thought I'd spelled out in detail where we were. I learned that sometimes we need to leave the push to talk button held down on our radios a bit before speaking; that's good to know. I'd left my pack in FW's vehicle, and for some reason probie SB told LB to carry it up. I thought LB's gear looked a lot like mine when he hiked up, not recognizing at first that it was mine. The rest of the team was texted to tell them that no one else needed to respond. I was standing by the body as that SAR text came in, which meant "Dead Man's Party" was playing on my phone. Per instruction, I scouted a route down the snow for lowering the body when the litter arrived, and carried up some of RF's technical gear so the team could start laying out a tag line, while RF waited to help carry up the litter when it arrived. On the way down I found a line of shallow, rounded depressions in the snow that were almost for sure the victim's footprints coming up the mountain. Detectives arrived, did an investigation, and let us put the body in a plastic bag and then into a zipper bag, and we put it in the litter with a couple of people on webbing in front to guide and pull the litter over the snow, and more on a tag line behind to brake. LB and I were on the front webbing, and there was more pulling than braking, it seemed like, with LB happy to call out instructions but seeming less enthused about getting reminders to pull to the side so we could stay on track and I wouldn't keep getting run into by the litter. I'm afraid that at one point I made a joke that was probably inappropriate since PC turned out to be a colleague of the victim, and I apologized and later called him to apologize again. Black humor is prevalent among rescue workers for relieving tension, but he was not amused. After we finished up, Sgt. HF took us to Wendy's for burgers, and we tracked a lot of mud in there. Then back to the office to talk to the police about what to do with a ten year old frequent sex offender, and off to the temple in the evening with my wife where I put the the SAR victim's family on the prayer roll. I later learned from the internet that the victim was a locally born BYU graduate and returned LDS missionary who was gay and unhappy at work, where he was always worried someone would find out. He had recently gotten a job in another state, but apparently that wasn't enough to pull him back from the abyss. I'm not especially liberal on these issues, but there has to be a basic level of decency and support for everyone so that no one, no matter what their predilections, feels trapped in so much pain. At the end of the day at home I was glad to see my wife, and my two younger children playing and singing jazz standards on the piano, and that my mom was doing OK with her cold, and I phoned my other two children to tell them I love them, and concluded that any day in which you come home to your family is a good day.

Thursday, March 3, 2016

The team meeting today was on raising and lowering systems, but the training didn't involve much more than looking at diagrams taken from the Lipke manual. That's the bible, but it isn't a particularly self explanatory bible. Then a review of fracture

management, with some splinting practice with material from our first aid kits. Oops, that should probably be “medical” kits, because we’re official and all. When the business meeting part came up we all got free t shirts of a sort of casual nature, with a message on the back about victims being our family. I didn’t have any pancakes to squeeze that syrupy goodness over. We were reminded that SAR coats and the like are not for regular wear, and we were cautioned not to take advantage of being in SAR. I know from my day job in the Utah County Attorney’s Office that someone got booted for that. Radios will largely stay as VHF because 800 MHz for everyone is prohibitively expensive and sometimes shorter range anyway. There are going to be GPS mounts placed on all SAR vehicles, and SAR members were encouraged to buy the matching pieces for the GPS units most people were given. Meanwhile, the SO got two new side by side UTVs for SAR use. There was discussion of our call outs, and of a couple of situations we were almost sent on, including a horse that wandered back to a trailhead without a rider in the saddle (he trudged out awhile later). The Israel Canyon search on Tuesday was apparently the fastest ever, although there was discussion of proper radio traffic, and as I thought about it later I thought it odd that on ambulances we’d give complete patient reports but here we’re supposed to not say anything for fear someone is listening. Still, afterward OG said he’d heard I did good work, and that’s a nice compliment.

Saturday, March 5, 2016

Team training on mountain rescue today, up on the north side of American Fork Canyon, in Tank Canyon. On Friday by email, ZM had sent out an invitation for someone, probies welcome, to be his medical partner, while still getting in on the training. I said I’d like to, since I had questions about medical. When I went to a medical training awhile back that TERT was invited to sit in on, and also from listening to this and that during SAR trainings, I got the impression that medical sees itself as somewhat distinct in terms of its role on call outs. So I met up with him and he showed me his gear, and talked about us being actual medical in case a real injury developed today (not simulated medical for the fake patients). He thinks ICS too often just figures there’ll be medical people on any given team; there’s some kind of political thing going on about wanting a dedicated medical team at call outs. Since he’s rather forthcoming, and since it was the topic of discussion between some people on the mountain, I later asked him about the Nutty Putty cave rescue, where the victim died and politicians sealed the cave; he described it as a situation where there was no way to get the victim out of the narrow sloping tunnel he’d wriggled into. He wasn’t critical of that rescue, which he was on, but he was quite critical of the county taking so long to deal with the little avalanche at Tibble Fork that killed a BYU student, which Lone Peak Fire was so exercised about in the press a few years ago because deputies didn’t call them in be the first responders. Anyway, when we carpoled up canyon, I found DB frowning when he heard about this be-ZM’s-assistant thing. But ultimately I also got to tag along with team four, and we waited up on the side of the mountain for a raising operation to commence, prior to a lowering operation that would get a litter down to a second lowering station we were setting up, as we dodged rockfall. It was a tough mountain to bushwhack up, and DL looked to be struggling but didn’t need help. At the second

lowering station they needed a radium release hitch, and I had one, so it went into the belay system, albeit wrong end uphill, and I pointed that out. After a bit the team leader assigned me to go with AG to scout and try to clear a lowering route down the mountain, busting branches from down trees as we went. We found a big live standing tree that AG thought should be used as a third lowering station, and since it was just me and him there he had me set up a main line anchor with a wrap three pull two webbing anchor, which barely had enough webbing to pull out adequately away from the big tree. We also set up a rope based tensionless hitch belay anchor, all using my own gear, except that my radium release hitch was elsewhere so we used a Scarab on the belay system as a release hitch. Eventually some other people set up a four rope, two Scarab arrangement a bit above us, for using prusiks to take the load up on the litter when it came down, prior to transferring it to our system. It's essential to understand how all of this actually works, not just to try to follow some directions without knowing what's going on. I think I grasp a lot of this MRT stuff, now. People had been gravitating to my station. RF was just downslope, and he found an aircraft beacon that had been used in the early morning for practice location of downed aircraft, and attached it to his harness for safekeeping, but apparently that beacon locating drill was still going on because some team members with radio antenna contraptions showed up at the bottom of the hill wondering why the signal kept moving. Kinda funny. GH was with them, so we tossed her a line to help her up the hill since she was coming straight up. I managed to avoid having to become a litter attendant on the last lower, and got to run the belay, which I really wanted to do to learn, since we'd mostly all botched it so badly in probie training last month. People weren't listening to me when I said I didn't understand how to manage the prusiks, and I promptly locked up the system by stupidity, so we used the Scarab arrangement to lower weight back onto the main line, then we reset the prusiks, and ZM had me do it the effective cheater way (as opposed to the book way). I get it now. Finished the lower. Went to the parking area and we mostly all eventually got our scattered gear back. There was a debriefing, primarily about radio clutter, confusion over who was communicating lowering directions, and improper use of Purcell prusiks as litter attachments for litter attendants. The latter issue was attributed, correctly and with good insight, to the fact that simulations aren't really about teaching new techniques, they're about practicing what you're already supposed to know, and in the absence of specific and detailed classroom training beforehand, people aren't going to know how to rig a litter and no one else is likely to have a lot of time to teach them. That's a good lesson!

Thursday, March 10, 2016

The medical people had their own training today, and it was on airways, and it was at American Fork Junior High in ZM's classroom. I went, to get more familiar with the medical aspect of SAR. Sadly, to him, the animal shelter hadn't euthanized anything today so there was nothing to practice cricothyrotomies on, or whatever other procedures. That wasn't so sad to me. We had a small group that talked about asthma and inhalers, and practiced drawing up epinephrine, and bagging CPR dummies, and using King supraglottic airways. PS was there; I was wondering if she'd dropped.

Some people we see less than other people. I'm wondering how things like that will work out, because some people are also short on basic gear.

Saturday, March 12, 2016

Today was another not required training that I went to for experience. K9 training, on avalanche searches. Several days ago someone wanted to donate a bloodhound to someone in SAR. I'd like a bloodhound, but a dog isn't practical for us. But MB, who was a new guy last year, got that dog and brought it today. MB also told me he still doesn't have all the required gear, but got through ORI; he thinks medical people get cut more slack on things like attendance. DL brought her hyperactive dog, OD brought two dogs including his aggressive dog that kept going after other dogs, SP brought his water dog that loves to bite other people for fun, and I brought myself so I could be buried in snow up by Aspen Grove and the dogs could practice finding me. They weren't trailing or looking for a known scent, they were searching an area to see if they could smell a person, and when they focus in it can be pretty apparent. But overall this whole deal seems more like dog lovers on the team trying to get their dogs to cooperate and be productive, than finely honed dog teams doing miracles. OD had spent a load of money on a transmitting camera that goes on his good dog, and displays to a screen on his wrist. Regarding this training, one might wonder, is being buried alive in the snow very enjoyable? No, it isn't. We dug a trench into the snowy hillside and then hollowed out a snow cave for my head and chest, and got my legs buried so they weren't visible, and then I waited. The problem is, propped up on my elbows in the mini snow cave, I can't focus well on my iPhone screen because there needs to be a few more inches of headroom for me to do that without reading glasses. And there weren't any reading glasses nearby. So that's unfortunate, since it left little to do but ponder mortality and wonder whether agreeing to do this training at the bottom of the site of frequent major avalanches was such a good idea. After we were through, I cross country skied nearby on skis Lauren and I had rented yesterday for skiing in AF Canyon. The snow on the Provo Canyon side wasn't any less hard, and I'm much more ungainly than I used to be. Thankfully, no one was around to watch me fall on my butt.

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Two things at probie training this evening: pack checks with a lecture and discussion on what should go into packs when we're heading up the mountain, and practice on tying people into a litter. I'm gathering that it would be rare to stay out overnight, as searches are often suspended for the night, so except for on the ORI test or when I have good reason to believe we may be caught out, I'll generally forego the tent, mattress, and sleeping bag. Unfortunately, the "extra small" rope bag I bought seems cavernous for my 75 footer, so there are gear tweaks to be made. We were also told that some more technical pieces of gear would be good, like rappel rings. Some probies bought cheap carabiners that don't open widely enough to fit over the litter rails—that's a problem! Tying the litter into the rope is pretty straightforward, although with two ropes there need to be very long tails on the interlocking bowlines so that the tails can be used to tie off to the victim's harness and to an attendant. This led to a

perhaps unfortunate comment from one of the young whippersnappers about having enough tail, that would turn into a recurring bawdy joke. We will usually be doing low and medium angle rescues, not the high angle, dramatic thing where the litter is being lowered through the air with someone hanging beside it; I don't know that they'll even teach us that this year. We practiced using Purcell prusiks from the frame of the litter through the belay loop on a victim harness to keep them from sliding to either end of the litter. We put DB in and turned him upside down and he didn't fall out, so that was good. There's still divergence of opinions among our instructors and among others about basic things from the book and other things like whether to put a half twist on one part of a wrap three pull two anchor, and that's disconcerting. I did tests at home to verify that a half twist does nothing if the anchor fails; it only does any good on a V shaped anchor from two bolts, where one anchor fails (as opposed to the webbing failing), which isn't the same situation as with a single anchor.

Saturday, March 19, 2016

More probie medical training, on planning, spinal precautions, head injuries, and wound management. The latter included demonstrations with a knife and a tangelo, which was clever. There was some confusion because at some point elsewhere ZM had told a nurse probie that everyone should be an EMT regardless of medical training in other fields. That doesn't make sense. Today SC taught wet to dry dressings, which Dr. ZD also emphasizes in TERT. We practiced BEAM patient lifts, several people lifting a supine patient at once, and we pioneered using that to put someone in a litter with the wheel already on it. We got the litter from the storage cage, which took some doing because the padlock wasn't a standard number like we were told earlier that SAR locks would be, so some climbing was necessary. Good BEAMing technique: instead of asking if everyone is ready, ask if anyone is not ready. A medical technique one member was told about in Mexico for dealing with an injury caused by a stingray: slap the injury with a sandal; this may become our go to treatment: slap it with a sandal!

Friday, March 25, 2016

After being sick all week with gastroenteritis, I tried to put in a full day at work, but the text alert went off almost as soon as I drug into the office. 41 year old hiker with a broken leg, three miles above Lindon. On the drive north, the radio said that someone with the victim had hiked out and tried to borrow a backboard from the Pleasant Grove Fire Department for carrying back up to retrieve the victim. The Fire Department said no, that's not how it works, and called SAR. Additional information was that a family group of males trying to summit Timp via Everest Ridge last night had triggered an avalanche that took a dad a long way down mountain, over cliff bands, burying him and leaving him with a broken leg. Apparently it was quite a shallow burial, and the guy was part way out when the two people with him reached him. They did not have beacons, so the guy is pretty lucky. Then they drug him down the mountain over the snow before one went for help, and that probably felt less lucky. When SAR arrived at the Dry Canyon trailhead, the old guys got to load up on the helicopter to be shuttled up to the Baldy saddle, and the probies got to stand around ready to go but with

nothing to do. So, they made work for us. Sgt. NG put me in the brand new side by side UTV he was driving, which had four tracks on it instead of wheels, and we scouted up an old road to see how close we could get to the victim. Now this was interesting because the helicopter was going to an avalanche victim, and we were on a dry, dusty dirt road getting filthy. But it got a lot more interesting. Up the mountain a ways there was a spot where the road bed, which was not much more than a trail, had eroded well away leaving a path distinctly narrower than the width of the side by side. Indeed, from where I was sitting on the passenger side there was an impressive view nearly straight down for some distance through the air that was apparently supposed to hold the contraption up. Sgt. NG went for it, and we didn't crash. By this roundabout route we got up to a meadow on the other side of the gates (cliffs at the base of the canyon, through which the straight line distance between the trailhead and the small meadow wasn't all that far, but the side by side couldn't get through that way). Then we were told to shuttle more people up, and he took me back instead of leaving me there, so I got more adventure at the eroded spot. Back up with more people, then he went down for another load. We'd seen where the helicopter was going, which was far from where we were, and we all agreed none of us were going to be doing anything on this call out. Just standing around looking busy. But when the side by side came back again, the right front track had come off the rollers, and was just flopping! When the side by side had originally been delivered there was a plan to get final adjustments made to the tracks, and to pack tools in the vehicle, and that was to take place tomorrow. Repair in the field wasn't possible with just a couple of Leatherman pocket tools. Since the patient was being packaged for flight out at this point, most of the group hiked down through the gates to the trailhead, and that left just a few of us to wait for tools to be hiked up. We laid down on the sunny grass as the sun broke through clouds, and prepared to take a nice nap. But then the radio suggested that we head up trail to meet the team up above, who weren't going to get flown out, and help them carry their gear down. We dumped our packs and headed up. I was tired, and having a hard time keeping up. On the way back down, every joint in my lower half fired up in pain, especially my right knee, which doesn't do well on long, rocky descents, but this one was only a mile and a half or so. I hope I'm not too old for this. By the time we got down to the meadow, more help had arrived, and with real tools, plus by using the winch and a pulley both to get the rear track up on a boulder used as a jack and to tug the front track into place, they'd almost got the track back on. I stayed and rode out, although at the nasty spot one teammate got out and walked, and I hung over off the uphill side of the UTV to try to weight it better. Everyone who was still at the trailhead went to Subway for the SO to treat us to a sandwich, which is a story in itself related to sanitary conditions and one particular worker coming back from a very long potty break, but we'll just try to forget that.

Thursday, April 7, 2016

We got an email from PC, who is willing to take probies on a canyoneering trip to Pine Canyon in Zion National Park in June. That'll be exciting! Tonight's SAR meeting started with discussion of tomorrow night's training (Friday night instead of Saturday morning), which has a very long list of things to be practiced, which raises questions in some of

our minds about how all that will work. Apparently that's still being figured out. Something will happen. I just know that when I volunteered to tow, it meant I'm supposed to be there early. It turns out that a few days ago AirCare figured out that if they want in on some of Life Flight's action, they should train with us so we get to know about them. So a guy came and talked to us, and said they'd come train with us tomorrow and fly all three medical victims around a bit so we can practice hot loading while the rotors keep turning. With three separate teams on the mountain, I think it's unlikely the timing will work, but we'll see. The team's medical presenter was late, so part of the business meeting was moved up in time, but only some of it because ICS was busy in the back reprogramming non-probie 800 megahertz radios, so their part had to wait. The batteries in half of those radios were dead. Regarding the UTV incident, it seems the tread has been fixed, and also that SAR originally paid for the tracks. Seems like a non-deputy ought to be able to drive the UTVs, that being the case. There's a new medical attachment for the back of it, with a litter tie down and an attendant seat. That's gotta be an incredibly uncomfortable ride for a victim. We learned a little more about the avalanche victims from last month. Apparently Orem Fire Department wanted Life Flight to fly their people in. The deputy said no, it would be a SAR thing. Life Light flew five SAR people back, one at a time. If the fire guys had gone in there without crampons it would have been interesting, and more interesting when they would have had to hike all the way out like SAR did, but without water. So, it worked out for the best even if the firefighters were disappointed. There are sometimes conflicts between fire people and SAR, as fire people wonder why SAR doesn't use heavy NFPA approved equipment and whatnot, and SAR wonders why urban fire people want to wander into the backcountry in heavy urban gear. The climbers in this case were from California, and the wife at the trailhead wanted to have him carried out so they could save money and drive him to the hospital, if all he had was a fracture. But there were hypothermia and foot perfusion concerns, so the team had him flown. Training at the meeting continued, with a slide show on medical emergencies. After the meeting, probies waited a good while while the old dogs yammered, before we could get various things done, in my case, getting an ATV trailer for training tomorrow. Which I got into my driveway, even though I'm an awful backer.

Friday, April 8, 2016

I practiced backing the trailer in the high school parking lot before heading out, but didn't learn much. Just before getting to Saratoga Springs we got the training reminder message, which also moved training back a half hour. Out at Israel Canyon one of the ATVs wouldn't start, a jump pack wouldn't start it, and then finally someone figured out it did have a pull cord. It had started last night before I hooked up the trailer. We were eventually divided into three teams. I rode up the dirt road in a tracked side by side driven by Lt. CB with the team leader and our evaluator. I need to never again get in something with tread. So much dirt! Just covered with dust. We didn't have GPS coordinates, and when we finally got them we apparently got one or two bad sets. People had trouble with their fancy wireless GPS units. OG was our evaluator and he told us to stop fiddling with GPS and start rushing through a raising system and knots. I nailed most of those knots. Apparently he wanted us to hurry so we wouldn't miss the

helicopter. I asked if all we'd done could count for the ORI, kind of a joke, but he diligently acted as if he didn't know there was such a thing as the existence of the ORI. Of course, the idea of popping a major, days long surprise practical test on people may be wondrous notion, but it doesn't work in real life, as we have to free up time for such a thing, so the ORI really can't be a secret. Anyway, then we were off to another location to basically stand in the dark and be quizzed orally on helicopter operations. Finally we were supposed to ride up a hill but most people headed off the wrong way at first. We got to an area where we searched down a steep hill through sagebrush for someone acting the part of a person with altered LOC due to alcohol, suffering from a rib injury and a neck injury. At this point the helicopter was on the mountain so the decision was that the patient would be considered ambulatory and didn't need a litter (that was especially good since someone had taken our litter from the ambulance trailer we had attached to an ATV). They wrapped a sleeping pad around his side and a blanket around his neck, and OG kept throwing more medical problems in all the way up the hill, and it ultimately seemed as if our main intervention was simulated intranasal Fentanyl every time the patient felt a little worse. Since the victim was taking my seat I almost got to drive the ATV, but cooler heads prevailed and I ended up riding on the wobbly seat on the empty ambulance trailer. We eventually got to the helicopter, and it sounded from the radio like the last team was still bogged down in a raising operation that I think may have been called to a halt eventually. By the time the last victim got to the helicopter the old dogs didn't even want to stick around for another short flight, but AirCare flew that volunteer down to the parking area. At the parking area we loaded up, and there never was a debriefing, but eventually people left, so I could head back to gas up the trailer and put it away. Thankfully, I didn't have to clean stuff, as it was after midnight at that point. My back still bugs me some, and I groaned a slight bit when putting the trailer back; gotta not do that where people can hear. My thrust in SAR is getting to everything on time, helping, and staying to the end, and I'm doing well at that. A delightful eight hours today, I'm sure.

Monday, April 11, 2016

Just after getting home from work and turning on the oven so I could heat something up for the kids, my wife being out of town but having left dinners for us so we would not perish, the text went off. An injured hiker up Bridal Veil Falls in Provo Canyon, who'd been hit on the head with a rock. Shame this didn't come in a half hour earlier, when I was still in Provo. On the radio on the way north it became clear that the first people to reach the guy thought he could walk the short distance to the parking lot, and they called us off as I was futilely trying to get up North University Avenue before everything wound up. Before they called us off, GH asked if she should stay in the valley, and they said yes, but she stayed on the radio, and when they did a roll call she checked in. That might be an easy way to keep stats up! At least we get credit for trying. And I did get back in time for dinner, as would have a large part of the team that had been driving in from all over.

Thursday, April 14, 2016

This week I'm going to a couple of non required trainings that groups within SAR are doing. The people who like mountain rescue did EMRT training today, up Tank Canyon again. This time, there was a short walk through the dying rain to a cliff, for practice doing completely vertical raising and lowering. That's something SAR usually doesn't have occasion to do in real life, although it seems like a silhouette of a litter and litter attendant being lowered through the air is on half the logos of SAR teams in the country. I first helped with the haul line. Especially with the rope having a lot of friction from running over the top of a boulder between us and the anchors, it was a tough haul. We gave up on hand over hand pulling on the rope, and took to all pulling at once, then getting another grip, then pulling again all together, but sadly we were later informed that this sort of pulling resulted in a very jerky vertical ride. I didn't hear any radio traffic about that because I'd loaned my radio to the team leader. After getting the litter and attendant up the cliff and then back down, we redirected the rope with a couple of pulleys to reduce friction and to let us walk down a hill while holding the rope. However, I was then sent down to be a litter attendant, although upon getting down I was immediately sent back up to be an edge attendant. Two of us hung out off the edge a bit on ropes to help the litter attendant with the edge. My partner was told by the safety guy to check my gear carefully before I leaned back on my rope, and I was plenty happy with that double check. He told me not to hold the prusik as I got into position because if I slipped and panicked while holding it and didn't let go, I'd keep zipping down the rope, advice probably based on noticing me holding the prusik and sliding without realizing why I was sliding. Unfortunately, once in position I held onto my end of the litter too long when it was lowered back down, and when I let go that end dropped three or four inches, which isn't good. Oh, well. It was slippery and eventually dark up there, but everything went mostly OK. GH and I seem to be the probies making it to the most extra things, although RF is working hard at providing medical training to the team (he has an EMT school). I was missing some gear, but GH noticed it on WO's harness, so I eventually got it all back and squared away.

Saturday, April 16, 2016

This was the second of the week's extra trainings, with the K9 people at a park in Springville. I went through a field and then into some trees, leaving a hat for scent. DL's dog found me, but it wasn't tracking the ground scent so much as just running all over. However, later he did a better job of tracking me. OD was proud of his dog following a scent cone up to me, but I think the dog was eyeballing me for awhile before he zipped across the field at me. Non-probie DD has a new dog that immediately needed surgery for an injury it got, and now needs dog physical therapy, but it was there. A Rocky Mountain Rescue Dogs guy came; he's with a dog-specific group that will help around the region. OD was telling him that OD had buried some cadaver scent near the Trefoil Girl Scout camp, and the guy got an expression on his face and said they'd had a training conference there where their cadaver dogs were all over the wrong place, not the scent they themselves had placed. It must have been the scent OD had put nearby earlier. That's funny. While we were doing K9 training, UP got an ICS text saying that

there might be a SAR call out to Tibble Fork for someone missing from his car, which still had the cell phone and keys in it. Unless it was a suicide, it seemed like an odd situation for a call out, as someone would probably just be somewhere along or near the road. Instead of driving north and waiting to see if it turned into a call out, I went home, and that call out never came. That evening, though, a different call out did come in. The call out was for six people to help with a body recovery, and we were told to text Sgt. NG if we wanted to go. I was #5. Got to the SO just as they were leaving with a UTV on a trailer, and an ambulance trailer on another trailer. I was low on gas but wasn't going to admit that, so I followed them out and as we went a few other trucks joined in. Way out the other side of the lake someone had been four wheeling with a friend, and had rolled the vehicle down a steep hill. The friend survived and went to the hospital, but the driver died. At the scene there were a number of ICS guys, two with their wives, and I was the only probie. Some people got on the UTV and went a quarter mile up a steep hill to the site, and when it became apparent they weren't sending the UTV back down, three of us trudged up after it. By the time we got up there they'd bagged the guy, and I just helped lift the litter onto the back of the UTV. It was taking a long time for the mortuary services contractor to get even as far as to the turnoff from the highway, and we didn't all have to wait for them to arrive, thank goodness. Cold, in the meantime; I had helped OG's wife out with my coat, which I hope didn't seem too mercenary. Of the four call outs that I actually did something at, half of them have been dead guys.

Tuesday, April 19, 2016

I got up early because starting this week I'm trying harder not to be late for work. While sitting on the bed looking at email, a text notification popped up, but the phone didn't vibrate or ring. That was very odd. It was a SAR call out. Apparently when my phone defaults to a do not disturb mode at night, it allows through voice calls from family and SAR because they're on my designated favorites list, but doesn't allow through texts even if from a number marked as a favorite. Good to know. Anyway, there was a person up at the hot springs in Diamond Fork who was having trouble. Most likely that means drunk or stoned out of their mind. I had an 8:30 a.m. court hearing, but really didn't want to miss a call out. So I started out, and luckily got ahold of someone who could cover my 8:30. Deputies and an ambulance were at the Three Forks trailhead, beyond which the road was still closed, but I was the first SAR person to get there! AirCare was coming too, for some reason. I wondered if I'd get to go with them or be a hasty team, but no. This was one of the call outs where there wasn't an ICS set up taking roll and checking safety and all, just a deputy generally directing; I'm unclear on when we do it more formally or less formally. After a bit PC and PG arrived, and we went up with the litter parts. While we were heading up, another guy who arrived in his pajamas was changing on scene behind his truck. I have a picture of that. PG is mighty fit, and I didn't think it would be easy to keep up, and by the time I could smell the hot springs I decided to rest a minute, so they got a little ahead. But then it turned out that AirCare was on scene. As expected, they hadn't been able to land anywhere, but a ways up above the hot springs the pilot did find a place to put the front of a skid on a knoll and let his flight nurse and paramedic hop out, and they hiked down to the hot

springs, checked on the lethargic and disoriented and half dressed young woman in a hot pot, got her dressed, and started walking her down trail while holding her up as she went. After we met them and started down trail with them, a second team came up and walked back down with us, and a couple of SAR dirt bikers met us, including DB. Fox 13 TV news was at the trailhead shooting video. I was in a hurry to try to get back in time for by 10:00 a.m. hearing, but during debriefing it turned out that LB had arrived and tried to catch up to the last team, and hadn't ever found them. He was lost. No one was sure what to do. I tried to raise him on the radio, but got no answer, either due to terrain or because we'd been told that radio communications would be on 800 megahertz radios (which weren't issued to probies) instead of VHF so his radio may have been off. Earlier I'd been on tac anyway, and had heard a call for our team leader, and handed him my radio (the VHF frequency we call "tac" is supposed to be our default, in the field frequency). Anyway, LB is kind of like a big puppy, who runs off enthusiastically but perhaps not always wisely. Apparently there was a breakdown in communications about where he should turn and where not to. He turned right where he should have gone straight, and ended up four miles away at Sheep Creek road, with big blisters, before being spotted by AirCare and returned on the back of DB's dirt bike. Instead of staying for all that, I got permission to leave, driving back and only getting to court a few minutes late, in my SAR clothing, and the judge was OK with that.

Thursday, April 21, 2016

New member training, by FW, on using the four wheelers (but not the side by sides). We learned about pre-ride inspections, tips for starting them up, and riding safety. I'm still a little unclear on why there are three brakes. We looked over the machines, and I made a boo boo in that when EG had left a headlight on and DB got after me to turn it off, I pointed at EG; I should've just turned it off without saying anything. We wound things up on a different note, with anchor setting out in the parking lot, and passing knots. We're pretty sketchy on all of that, without our book handy (and even with it handy). Also, our belay prusiks slid instead of catching, perhaps because they aren't broken in well enough. That's kind of scary.

Saturday, April 23, 2016

At quarter after twelve in the morning, we were called back to the hot springs for some kind of medical emergency possibly involving an allergy. I was a few miles down the road when the radio announced that the person was with the ambulance on Diamond Fork road, and we could all go home. They took roll over the radio, and hopefully I was counted. Later, we heard someone had some kind of reaction to the sulphur fumes up there, and his friends had left him to go call for help. Back to bed. Sunup brought ATV training. The training this morning was moved to the SO instead of having us tow to west Payson as originally planned; we towed across the complex, unloading a very short distance away and then took the four wheelers out into a field. DR and I had unloaded two ATVs from a trailer off to the side of a building, and they were nice so we confiscated them for ourselves and rode them over. At first, everyone rode back and forth through cones, in a big square, to get the feel for turning. That deteriorated into a

race, which got pretty fun. Then we practiced driving across a field straight at FW until he gave us a signal at the last moment, and we either stopped quickly or swerved left or right as directed. Later, with DB signaling, EG went ripping across the field too fast and nearly ran DB over. I wish I had video of that! There was a tall, steep berm we rode up, and then down the other side. EG went right over his handlebars when he went up it fast and had to brake hard going down the other side. There might be a pattern here. Finally, a side hill traverse along the side of the berm, which caused a little nervousness since it isn't clear exactly how steep a hill we can sidehill along before the ATVs will tip over sideways. It all worked out pretty well, though, and we were having lots of fun ripping around. Apparently they want us to take, and pay for, an online watercraft course, although all these courses are actually for kids since Utah doesn't require adults to take them.

Sunday, April 24, 2016

A pleasant Sunday morning snooze shattered by that blaring text tone. Body recovery at the reservoir in Spanish Fork. Primarily a SCUBA thing, but the whole team was called out. Just as well. I was the second SAR person there since it's not far from home, and waited around awhile. Dive people wandered in and kind of pondered suiting up. Someone eventually brought up the Achilles inflatable boat, and a plan developed to put divers in the water to snorkel around in near zero visibility by where a fisherman had left a few personal effects on the side of the reservoir. A drone flew over a dark patch on the water but didn't see anything. This is a secondary irrigation reservoir with a beach on one end and sloping concrete sides on the other sides, and those concrete sides get slippery with green slime; an SFPD guy fell while we were there. The thought was that the guy may have fallen in last night and been unable to get out; something like that apparently happened a few years ago. Most of us were standing around, since walking around the reservoir more than once doesn't do much good. Then someone decided that those of us who had wet suits or dry suits should suit up, so I got out my new dry suit that I'd bought from a value manufacturer. Fortunately, before I got in the water I remembered that when I'd been in street clothes I'd put my radio in a PFD pocket (we wear PFDs even when in street clothes but near water), and I got the radio out of the PFD and LB held it for me. Eight or so of us split into two teams that each started at the same place, and went in different directions to work our way around the reservoir and meet on the far side. Each team formed a line from near the edge of the water out into the water to a barely able to touch bottom depth (which is where I was), to probe with poles as we waded or occasionally swam. My high floatation PFD does seem to make it hard to swim. There's lots of vegetation down there that feels soft, and lots of really stinky mud underwater. I still don't know why someone didn't just get a fishfinder and look for him that way. We got almost all the way around, as did the other team, when they found something. Whatever it was started drifting along the bottom toward deeper water when they bumped it so they stopped it from moving, then SP snagged it between his ankles and lifted it up with his legs, and it was the leg of the fisherman, with the rest of him attached. SFPD said to just bring him up, so the Achilles came over and used a net attached to the side to get under him and sort of roll him up into a bag in the boat, and I helped unload him onto

the beach. A young guy just out of his teens who probably slipped and couldn't get out or swim far enough. We debriefed, and the dive team acknowledged they had improvements to work on. Sgt. HF said we could wait an hour or so while things wound down and he'd take us to lunch, but I didn't want to hang out, so I headed home. Probably should have stayed to help with whatever. Down the road a bit, the victim's family and friends looked pretty unhappy. They were flying an American flag and a Mexican flag in their parking area, which was interesting; it left me wondering if the guy was an immigrant from an area where kids didn't get swimming lessons. I had to do a lot of cleaning at home to scrub off the stink from the reservoir muck. Then church, which was promptly cancelled because of an electrical smell that brought the fire department. Along about bedtime there was a loud blast from the phone, and it was off to Covered Bridge Canyon, a gated community in Spanish Fork Canyon, for something about a hiker. I got there second, just after FW, like this morning. The deputy's truck was there, but I don't know where he was. We eventually got in through the gated community's locked gate. Just up on the hill not far away was a light, and that was where the guy was. He hadn't been spotted by an earlier overflight, but was found by a couple of local residents who had noticed the SO's initial search and then saw a light on the hill and found the guy. As the SAR call out unfolded, FW and I wanted to go, but on the radio ICS had us wait. AF arrived, then OG, and he let the three of us go. On 800 MHz again, so my radio was worthless (although I later heard people had gone to tac). I think we figured this would be quick and easy. FW didn't even take a helmet, which vexed OG. Good thing I'd switched to boots, because it was a steep, brushy, largely trailless climb, not easier while also carrying a big oxygen bag. My boots are far and away my best item of gear; they make functioning on these steep and rocky areas possible. I got to the victim first, and started assessing him. AF arrived and I turned him over to her. Then FW arrived, scratched up from brush. I'm still not sure how long the guy was laying up there. He had been searching for shed antlers, had set down his pack and couldn't find it again and had done a lot of searching for it, and had gotten dehydrated. The people who found him gave him some water. It is possible that he seized and fell. He had a history of various medical problems, and at the time had a big painful spot on the back of his head and high cervical neck pain, in addition to pain all over. I got my jacket and blanket over him. According to the pulse oximeter his oxygen saturation was a bit down, so we got oxygen going. AF put a helmet on him. FW put a cervical collar on him. ZM arrived. Except for LB having me help him rig the litter webbing, I stayed with the patient and my team, providing light and trying to keep him warm. A lot of other people arrived and set up lowering stations and cut brush. SAR worships the idea of getting an IV in, apparently as an end in itself, and kept trying periodically, but never got one in. Later I was talking to GH about that, and I hope it didn't bother the nearby med people because I was thinking I didn't see the point of spending so much time on IVs. ZM might have heard that and gotten peeved. We had gotten a vacuum splint under the victim and the valve turned out to be near me, and I'd never used a vacuum splint and told people I didn't know how the valve worked, but I could reach it and so they wanted me to attach the hose. The valve didn't close the way I guessed it did, and air went back in. The second time FW reached over and closed the valve, but air got in again, and it sounded like the valve was slightly open. Getting the victim into the litter and tied in was a mess, and he was

really uncomfortable. I hope his neck was OK, especially what with the helmet, and not fitting well in the litter. He was eight out of ten on the pain scale and SAR seems to like Fentanyl, but he didn't get any, perhaps because he was relatively close to the ambulance and it shouldn't have taken long to get him out. Lowering went OK, and I watched for falling rocks from above, and helped a little with ropes at changeovers. Back on the semblance of a trail, a couple of litter carriers fell. I helped one up and tried to help another, but when he pulled away I briefly steadied myself on the litter and bumped the victim, and felt really bad about that because it caused him pain. The people who found him had a vehicle at the base of the hill and we used that to get him over to the ambulance. While walking along next to LB, who was blustering a bit, I suggested that perhaps he had a need for some humbling of his attitude. He walked right into that, wondering how I'd go about doing that, so I opined it might have something to do with pointing out that he got lost and required rescue at our recent call out. Poor guy, I don't think he's going to live that down soon. At debriefing, AF and FW were working on the report form so I covered initial contact and assessment, but forgot to mention the helpers who had initially found the victim. I wish I'd thought faster all that night, so I could have done various things better. Sometimes I get tunnel vision. We got finished and I was glad to get home, and hoped for a reprieve for awhile; maybe I'm ambivalent about getting more call outs because I don't want the time to come when I miss one. So far I've made all the call outs the probies actually received, gone to all meetings and trainings, and five extra trainings, which probably puts me ahead of most if not all other people on the team. That's somewhere in the ballpark of 75 hours of meetings and trainings, and 30 or so hours of call outs, and a lot of other personal time spent practicing rope work or getting gear ready or cleaning up. And about \$2,230 in new gear expenditures and about \$150 worth of gas for about 1000 miles worth of travel on call outs. And also about \$2,000 spent earlier for classes and the associated gas and gear, for padding my SAR application so I would get accepted in the first place, not counting about \$1,000 in better tires and a rear facing backup camera largely to make the truck more useful for SAR call outs. So a third of the way into the year, I think I'm doing OK.

Monday, May 2, 2016

A text message came in telling people to check their radios because someone's kid was playing with with one of them (second time this year there have been spurious transmission issues).

Thursday, May 5, 2016

Team meeting, with some cursory training on swiftwater rescue and on environmental medical emergencies. After an hour we were nearly through. But then it was the SO's turn, and Sgt. HF had a lot to say. Apparently it's a tradition to help with safety on the Salem triathlon, probably because they donate to SAR for that, so that's coming up. We're getting free Sheriff hats, and maybe free shirts soon, but we're not to use them to for personal advantage; I asked if we could at least use them at Winchell's Donuts, but apparently that's not funny. Team pictures came in today. There are some other

trainings coming up, and a BBQ for new members and spouses. After discussing all that we got to a couple of instances in which agencies had conflicts with SAR, and the SO worked to get people liking us since it's not OK for people to have an unflattering opinion about us. Those people must be required to change. This is an odd thing that I've noticed in more than one context. They're really rigid about keeping up appearances and not having anyone rock the boat. Sgt. HF proceeded to discuss complaints about the Covered Bridge Canyon call out in particular. Apparently all the efforts to get in an IV, including in the parking area by the ambulance, drew some ire from the ambulance people. ZM made quite a number of excuses for that, and there was much assurance from Sgt. HF that we're fully supported, but most of that was whitewash of a ridiculous situation. ZM admitted an IV wasn't necessary, just "protocol," which makes it all the more indefensible that SAR people refused to transfer the patient to the Spanish Fork ambulance immediately, but more to the point it was completely nuts that the ambulance people were supposed to be criticized for daring to suggest the SO do things better. Amazing. Sgt. HF also said he'd checked the vacuum splint and it works, and I told him after the meeting that I'd not gotten the valve closed correctly at Covered Bridge Canyon due to not knowing how, and not getting feedback when I said I didn't know how, so that was human error rather than an equipment problem. I talked with PT afterward about radios, and he said that people shouldn't be saying we'll be on 800 MHz on call outs, and to just go to tac on VHF in the field. Some of the regular members sure like their expensive, SAR paid radios, though.

Saturday, May 7, 2016

This was a high stress training day! Swiftwater rescue on the Provo River, by the trestle. It's spring, and the water is running fast. We suited up, and I was going to try my thin wet suit but someone thought I should definitely go with a dry suit, so I did. Good idea, although my model isn't built for a lot of abuse. At safety check in, AF didn't have her knife but they let it slide; I don't think safety people want to make established people sit things out, which might or might not be good. We broke into three groups and rotated through three stations. At the first station we practiced throwing rope bags on land. Then we practiced forming lines parallel to the current to brace each other and walk across the river. PG wanted to try a circle arrangement instead, without explaining that we were sort of supposed to rotate our way across the river, but I figured out we were rotating instead of being a wedge, and also noticed that we had a lot of drag with that formation. It felt as if we were constantly on the edge of being swept away, like we were doing the physical equivalent of playing some kind of high risk mashup of Jenga and dominoes. Indeed, as we hit a difficult patch of water toward the far side the whole formation started to disassemble, and at that point I was on the side toward the center of the river so I just sort of bulldozed the circle sideways toward the shore, which we made. I did not want to go back across, but of course we did, crossing a few more times. The line way typically has the upstream person either facing upstream and leaning on a pole, or facing downstream toward the other people who are facing upstream and grasping the person in front of them's PFD. The first person sort of breaks the current some, and is held in place by the second person, everyone keeping

a death grip on another person's PFD. PG wanted to try that with everyone facing upstream but without the lead person having a pole, and OM in front stripped off to the side, and then AF and the rest of us peeled away and went for a swim. From the shore, one throw bag came arching over to someone else, as I watched it and pondered that. But OM and I just swam to the other bank with him towing me a bit, which I didn't realize he was doing at first, but it's nice that people help probies. I hadn't wanted to go for a swim just because it represented failure, and I was more concerned about failing than swimming. It's probably good to test to failure, though. Anyway, we learned that the smallest person should not be in front on these lines, but the heaviest. The third time we did it with a heavier lead person facing downstream, and we seemed to be getting the hang of it, and that time it worked best. But I don't see the point, as doing this thing might in some circumstance get us somewhere in a river, but doesn't seem like a very safe way to move a victim back to a river bank. Heck of a way to make sure SAR people can deal with the water, and work on trust during training, though! We also took turns floating down the river and getting throw ropes tossed to us, and took turns being the thrower. Those ropes put a very strong pull on you, whether you're the victim or the rescuer. Hard to hold onto if you're in the water. Also hard to hold someone from the bank to let the current swing them to the side. It works best for people floating if they stay on their back with the rope over the shoulder opposite the side of the river from which the thrower stands, as that helps keep their face from rotating into the water, and it helps if the rescuer walks downstream to ease the pull on the rope (or sits and does a hip belay if necessary, as I had to do at one point) so the rope handler doesn't get pulled into the water. I doubt many victims will know how best hold a line, or would even be able to hold one tightly, but I guess throw ropes are better than nothing. The second station involved a rope set up as a high line on a diagonal down across the river, to which we clipped a pulley and a loop, and then dropped into the river holding the loop in one hand, and let the river zip us across on the diagonal. That was fun. Then we were to float downstream, legs up in front of us to avoid foot entrapment, which is a very real and serious danger that is rapidly fatal when bad luck strikes, and at an eddy we practiced rolling over and swimming into the eddy. After the first station that wasn't as scary, at least after the first trip downstream was over. The third station was a medical simulation. We discussed timing CPR chest compressions to the beat of Staying Alive or Another One Bites the Dust, and determined that following the varying beat of the Imperial March from Star Wars would not be wise. But PG thought pain meds for head injuries might be good, which our scenario medical trainer, PN, properly wasn't enthused about. There was to be a final scenario, but someone decided to dispense with it, so I put on my wet suit to try it in the cold water, and LB spotted me with a rope. It turns out cold water is cold in a thin wet suit. LB didn't have water gear yet; I'll no doubt catch more flack from him for being a rich lawyer. But I'm a poorer one now: my new river knife broke at the sheath clip and disappeared into the river at some point. Overall, this was intense and interesting training. There's more next week, but probies aren't allowed.

Sunday, May 8, 2016

Today, the day after all probies were supposed to have river gear, GB announced a 30% off NRS river gear order coming up through some guy on the team. I'm guessing some probies are peeved about now. In other news, for whatever reason Springville City's emergency alerts go out over the same text system as SAR, so on my phone they set off the SAR alert jingle I use. There wasn't a SAR call out, but there was a city alert about a wandering old man in town. If it had been a call out I would've missed Mother's Day dinner.

Monday, May 9, 2015

A disastrous call out. A strong storm blew through the county in the afternoon, and not all boaters had the sense to get off the lake. About the time I was starting burgers, a call out came with a request to tow personal watercraft. SAR's PWCs are mostly Jet Skis, and a couple of Wave Runners. I picked up one of the trailers at the SO, as some county fire guys were there to open the door and help, and then sped out to Lincoln Beach. Since my gear had been drying since Saturday it wasn't in my truck, and I had thrown an armload of it in before leaving but I forgot my PDF. I called home to ask someone to bring it out. Meanwhile, on the radio there was confusion about whether there was one boat in trouble, or two, and where they were. The one we were dealing with was just outside of the Lincoln Beach boat harbor, with a dead engine, supposedly taking on water. Sgt. HF and GH were already on PWCs, and she was really excited she was getting to go out. PT asked us if any of the rest of us wanted to go out, to get some time on PWCs, and I did but didn't have my PDF yet. AT and OD were happy to let the probies go while they stayed on shore, and OD said I could borrow his PFD, so to save time and for modesty I skipped my wet suit and just pulled a dry suit on over what I was wearing. Then my wife arrived with my water gear and I switched to my PFD. Sgt. NG had dropped his radio in the water at the boat ramp, and I tried crawling around feeling for it with my hands while he shuffled about searching for it with his feet, but didn't find it. Instruction on using the PWC took about half a minute. By then, the boater was back with the PWCs. There'd been discussion of leaving his boat out there, but ultimately Sgt. HF went out again and towed the boat in. I followed CM out, who had RF on back. However, her watercraft overheated. She told me to stay out and play. I did, and had a lot of fun buzzing around, although the waves were pounding when crossed perpendicularly, and there was a lot of spray. I decided to do one more run before going back in, to see how fast the thing would go, and it goes pretty fast, but then I realized I was getting close to the shallows quickly. It stays shallow way out into the lake there. Instead of turning hard for deeper water, I cut the throttle and turned. Bad idea, as having no power slows the turn and also meant I came off plane and settled deeper into the water. I then saw some muck in the water behind the PWC and worried that I might have sucked debris into the intake. Not being sure what to do about the latter situation, I shut off the engine and called on my radio for assistance. For a long time I tried dragging the watercraft against the wind and waves to deeper water, but even when LB waded out to help that didn't work. Wind kept pushing it in to shallower water and over rocks on the bottom. LB left, and OD brought out a trailer

through the few inches of water where the PWC was at that point, and GH and CM came out but we couldn't get it up onto the trailer without more people, and enough people weren't coming. Tipping the trailer back to try to get an angle for winching didn't work. Eventually Sgt. HF waded out with no shoes but with a scowl, we pushed the PWC out deeper, and he just started it up and rode to the boat ramp. Seemed to be working, so I guess I didn't suck anything in. They'll check it out later, and hopefully it will be alright. His truck was still on the beach, so I drove it back, and GH minded his gun. I'm a cop car driver. Some of us searched some more for Sgt. NG's radio, but it never turned up. PT, Sgt. HF, and I put three trailers back, and I headed home sorely embarrassed. As I was leaving, Sgt. HF was saying he was going to check Sgt. NG's desk for the radio, just in case, and I later heard it was there; he hadn't dropped it after all.

Tuesday, May 10, 2016

CM had sent out an email about cave rescue training, which was being held just into Salt Lake County on some place called Potato Hill. I wondered why, and when I got there and saw a number of strangers I wondered about that also. It turns out we had CM, me, GH, and ZM there from SAR, and the other folks were cavers or caver wannabes from grottos as far north as Brigham City. Apparently cavers rescue cavers. Some county search and rescue teams just let cavers call other cavers to put together an ad hoc team for a given rescue. It seems a lot of caver training is about self rescue and rescue of companions. So we were trained on some techniques and equipment SAR doesn't use. There were four stations. One was on anchors, which ZM taught. One was on contingency systems, which a caver taught, that focused on the importance of having rope set up such that if someone gets immobilized in midair, instead of suffering suspension trauma they can be lowered to a surface using the existing setup. One was on using the Ferno rigid basket stretcher, and one was on using the flexible plastic sheet comprising the SKED stretcher. It got cold, but pizza arrived, and that was nice.

Thursday, May 12, 2016

There's a swiftwater rescue technician class this week, but probies were not invited. Apparently SAR is paying most of the cost for those who want to take it from the company offering it. But someone dropped, no one took their place, and since it starts today, PP opened it up to probies. I waited until midafternoon to see if GH would take it, since I'd heard she'd asked about it earlier, but when neither she nor anyone else signed up, I jumped in. This evening was a class at a conference room at a fitness center in Orem where the instructor works. RD used to be on UCSSAR, before being booted for an unpaid parking ticket long ago. Now he's on Wasatch County's SAR team and is training us for Rescue 3 International. DB was there, I think for recert, and he had heard of my PWC debacle. He doesn't think it's as much to live down as LB has for getting lost, and he guessed that the PWC would be OK. I hope so. Haven't heard yet. I was going to forgo spending \$50 bucks to take this class, but the main reason I

thought of not taking it is because swiftwater training scares me some, so when I realized that I decided to take the class.

Saturday, May 14, 2016

Our swiftwater rescue class gathered at the river, the beautiful Provo River, up at Canyon Glen, for a day of river drills. The water here is cold spring runoff flowing fast, but not deep enough to keep us from smacking submerged rocks. Also, some of the waves were hard to get through without sucking water. We worked on defensive swimming and active swimming. The former involved floating on our backs with our feet up to avoid entrapment on rocks, feet forward so we could be looking downstream, doing sort of a backstroke to turn our bodies at a ferry angle to the current so it would push us to this side or that side somewhat. Active swimming involved rolling over and crawling hard for an eddy. We worked on throw lines and pulling people in, and again it's quite hard to pull on them when the current catches them up tight against the rope, and to keep from being pulled over. At such moments there's a strong temptation to wrap the rope around one's hand or wrist when leaning back, but it's dangerous to get wrapped up in a rope. Our instructor, RD, liked to send down groups of swimmers, or have a swimmer lose a rope, to see how we'd respond. In one instance, that would be by staring dumbly as someone unexpectedly floated by. We did a drill where one person had two ropes attached to their rescue PFD, one going to each side of the river, and people on each side were supposed to lower them down to someone trapped in the river, and then pull them upstream to loosen a foot entrapment, and guide them to one side of the river. Before we got that "V" system set up, RD lowered himself into the river with a line tied to a footbridge. The team across the river threw a line across the top of his line, which didn't really work, but meanwhile RD was getting hammered by the river and he pulled the tether release on his rescue PFD to release the rope attachment, and swam to safety. Then we got our system set up to send a person downriver to him, which was me, and he went back into the river on his line, and the pairs on each side of the river lowered me down to him by two ropes. I grabbed the back of his PFD and signaled for the rope teams to begin maneuvering me, but we didn't seem to be budging. I was sinking deeper into the water that was blasting all around me and pushing me under him, and my mouth was full of water. About that time I decided that too much was going wrong for me to stay there, as I was supposed to be being pulled upriver with him rather than drowning, so I pulled the ball attached to my release buckle, but nothing happened. After a couple of seconds, though, the strap finished pulling through the buckle and let me go, and I popped up and floated off. As I meditated upon the joys of being able to breath air, I realized I needed to swim instead of just float along, and headed for the side. Our instructor decided that was enough of that drill. Which was fine with me; live bait drills aren't always fun. We were supposed to have a short lunch, and I got back fifteen minutes late and felt pretty bad about that. Unified Fire from Salt Lake County was down doing swiftwater training then, and we joined their strainer drills. By lowering a four by four beam from a footbridge down to just above the water, and having people float downstream in a defensive posture, grab it, and then see if there's any way to climb up over it it, one gets a feel for the power of the river and the danger of strainers

like trees in the water catching you, since you can't climb up over them. On that drill my first whitewater entry, which involves jumping into the water so as to land as flat as possible on the surface, resulted in discovering a submerged rock with the front of my thigh, and that sort of thing happened to people all day. We also tried swimming aggressively head first at the simulated strainer, to slap down on it and launch up over the top of it quickly. Out of maybe twenty or so people between the two groups, I think only about three made it. I tried, and got smacked in the face, coming out of the water with a bloody nose and with an upper lip and upper front teeth that would soon start to hurt. We worked on swimming rescues where we jumped out into the current and tried to intercept someone coming downstream, while tethered. I jumped a bit early, but my rope managers figured out that with my angling upstream and stroking hard, if they kept a little tension on the line I'd end up just where I needed to be. The end of the afternoon was knot and rope training at a picnic table, which also led to some discussion of whether fire departments would increasingly try to take over search and rescue functions. It seems to me that rural counties still have their jeep patrols and whatnot, but that in urban areas the fire departments are trying to do more and more off pavement rescue. This swiftwater training was interesting, fun at times, scary at times, and nearly always hard. Expecting some rest in the evening, I was settling down after dinner when a call out came. Someone fell at Stewart Falls. Not an uncommon occurrence. I got up to the Aspen Grove trailhead, and no one was there. BH drove in at the same time, and we were both confused. We went to Sundance, up Stewart Road to the locked gates, and back up to Aspen Grove to find DR looking around similarly. No one would answer the phone or the radio. It was very frustrating. Later, we learned that the Stewart Falls call outs assemble past the locked gates one gets to by turning off at Stewart Road, the staging area being at the top of where the gated community ends, which now isn't far below the falls. If we'd known, and had the gate codes, we'd have been there. I went home sorely vexed at SAR. I had heard on the radio while back in the valley that the team with the patient needed another vacuum splint sent up, because theirs wasn't holding air. I guess our little vacuum splint mess up at Covered Bridge wasn't so unusual.

Sunday, May 15, 2016

Thankfully, RD didn't start this day with a fun swim, as he had us do after lunch yesterday. We talked in a pavilion for awhile while it stormed outside, and listed to a police car chase rush by. I'd brought muffins to try to make up for being late back to lunch the day before. We practiced swimming ropes across the river, and then we used the ropes to practice maneuvering a person on a river board around the river. I was with AF on one side, standing behind her, and I asked her if she wanted me to help hold the rope or to hold her PFD. She didn't know, so I let her manage the rope and I held onto her PFD to keep her from being pulled in. Unfortunately, the rope was slipping, because it's very hard to hold on against the kind of forces pulling on the rope when it goes taut in the pull of the high spring runoff with a person on the end. This was the final event of the month that convinced me of this. I tried to find a place to grab it to help her, but there was something like a wad. Then she was crying out that her hand was caught in a loop. That's very bad; it could pull off fingers or maybe cut off

her hand. I tried grabbing at the rope out in front of her, and only succeeded in awkwardly knocking her aside by pretty much going over the top of her to try to grab at the taut part of the rope, and I landed in the water in front of her holding the rope with both hands to try to take up tension so she'd have slack and could get untangled, and the rope was pulling me down the river over rocks and logs in the shallow eddy, in what I'm just going to characterize as a unique dynamic belay. Her hand was really hurting, and she didn't want to say much, but I think she broke fingers. I felt really bad about that, because I probably should have done something more effective. Some hours later, when I thought I could approach her, I asked what I could have done better, and she said nothing because it was her fault, but I don't know whether that's true. She seemed angry. We practiced group in line river crossings until failure, and back on the grass we practiced rope systems for trying to get someone with foot entrapment up above the water. Then a written test in Orem, and home early so I got to church for twenty minutes to sit with my sweetheart, which was nice after such difficult, dangerous training; I think NB has a divot in his leg from an injury.

Monday, May 16, 2016

At about 9:00 a.m., a call out came for a search near a mine somewhere. Directions were unclear. I got a colleague to cover my cases, feeling guilty because it was on short notice, but I'd never missed a call out and didn't want to start. It turns out that way down in the southwest corner of the county, near Eureka in Juab County, there was a car up against an embankment by an old abandoned mine, and the lady who had been driving it was missing. Mounted Posse had already been arriving, but I was the first SAR person there. When a few of us assembled, we were told to split into two teams and start looking around, or to look down a big nearby vertical shaft. We decided the thing to do was explore shafts. So the probies set up anchors while a more experienced guy leaned over what he described as an eighty foot shaft with a car frame in the bottom, and used a headlamp to look for a body. He was 90% sure no one was there. Normally 90% seems like a good number, but given that this was a wide hole quite near the car of a reportedly emotionally and mentally distressed person, it didn't seem so good to me. But that's not my call. I pointed to a couple of odd concrete chutes I'd found that appeared to go somewhere, but I couldn't tell from the top. We set up anchors, and PC climbed down inside them and didn't find anything. This area was like a western ghost town, only of mine ruins instead of saloons and so forth, but with enough concrete thrown in to add a post-apocalyptic feel. We did some searching northward, and I went off up a side canyon I shouldn't have taken the time to check because it made people wonder where I was. Unfortunately, I'd transferred my radio to a coat pocket earlier, then subsequently moved my coat down to around my waist, and my radio had stripped out of my pocket somehow. I looked for it, then found my team, and PC and I looked for it for awhile, then we returned to the search. In the afternoon, Sgt. HF shifted the search up the road a ways. We were supposed to spread out into a line to sweep across an area, but the left side where I was seemed to totally break down into older members not wanting to cover much ground. It's probably difficult to manage a dog and maintain a spot on a search line, also. Frankly, the entire search seemed a bit disorganized. We reassembled, and Sgt. HF told us a lot we

hadn't heard before. We knew the woman had mental problems and had recently had a dispute with her husband, had supposedly left with a cashbox full of money, and had left a different box under a tree near the car and had scattered personal effects more broadly. We learned that someone who had seen the car with its windows down had called it in after it had been there another day. The box with cash was never found. The husband at first said they didn't do drugs, until the police found some. It's a mystery. Most of us hadn't known that the evening before some SAR people who were called out by telephone instead of text had done a search, the State's aircraft with FLIR sensors had flown the area, as had a county aircraft, but nothing was turning up. RP's helicopter flew while we were searching. She may be down a shaft somewhere, or may have gone somewhere else. About midafternoon they sent us home. So I went back to search for my radio some more. No luck.

Tuesday, May 17, 2016

Sitting in court I learned I hadn't silenced my phone. Call out to Stewart Falls. After court I headed up there, changing in the car as I went, and fell in behind ST, who caught up to another SAR member who knew the way in. The gate was open, we went right to a nice staging area by a meadow and creek within sight of the falls in the distance. North Fork Fire was there. We didn't need to gear up, as OG just waved us up there so some SAR people would be involved. By the time we got up maybe a third of a mile to where a lady had slipped on the trail and injured her ankle, North Fork was ready to put her in a full body vacuum splint preparatory to putting her in their litter, which is a little nicer litter than what we use since it has padding. Litter carryouts on Timp's trails use a contraption consisting of a litter that comes in two halves that can be carried in by separate people, a wheel that can go under the bottom center of the litter once the litter is assembled, and long pipe handles that project out the front and out the back and are attached to the litter frame by hose clamps. A person up front, and a person in back, move the litter along, turn it, keep it from tilting, and lift it over obstacles. A couple of people behind hold webbing tag lines attached to the back of the litter, to help with braking. Once I got up to the scene I helped with litter packaging, and put my blanket on the patient, for which she was grateful since she was a little cold. Mostly, it was North Fork Fire's show. They appear to be quite competent. maybe more so than us. One funny thing was that at the end we were standing in a circle for debriefing, and someone joked that it was time for a closing prayer, and one of the younger North Fork people quickly folded her arms before realizing he was kidding. Reminded me of me. Later, I finished the online boating safety class, and took some muffins to the SO as an apology for making Sgt. HF wait at the Lincoln Beach call out due to my PWC debacle. Earlier today he told me the SO might replace the radio I lost; he's asking about that.

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Yesterday evening SAR kept texting and also using an automated phone system I hadn't heard before, to say that SAR wanted six people to go down to the mine area where the lady was reported missing over the weekend, and search some more. I'm

really busy at work this week, and finally bit the bullet and said no to myself. I'm going to miss this call out today. And I did miss it.

Thursday, May 19, 2016

During probie training a call out for just two people came in, asking people to telephone PT and see about doing something at Three Forks. DB wouldn't let any of us go. So I guess that's a missed call out also. But we heard that these limited personnel call outs don't actually count against our stats, but can inflate them if we go since they're like extra credit. People were talking about the SAR online Dropbox spreadsheet that lists who made what meetings and call outs. GH is worried about her call out stats, and as she's the most gung ho of us, hopefully she'll get them up. I'm tied for the most call outs, and should probably have the most separate trainings but a lot of them aren't on there. EG and his new wife moved into our neighborhood, to a basement apartment. He doesn't have much gear, and neither does LB and maybe a few others. I hope this isn't turning into too much of a mess for them. Someone said that LS, who we haven't seen at anything for months, was at the last general meeting. Seems like there'll have to be a winnowing in the next month or two, which won't be fun. Something is going on with the equipment cage, and the powers that be are wondering who has been getting into it, but no one is saying exactly what is going on. Training was on safety factors, Pine Creek canyoneering planning, GPS usage, and swiftwater. We also did a beacon search. I'd mark a beacon as found and then my receiver would spontaneously unmark it so its signal would interfere with the search for the next beacon. Frustrating. Between that and my GPS unit having a long history of erratically shutting down, I need to figure something out before ORI, because electronics that are plagued by gremlins are frustrating. There's gossip we may be asked to go back to the mine area on Saturday after helping with the Salem Spring triathlon sprint.

Friday, May 20, 2016

While pondering what to do after dinner, my phone answered the question. Body recovery by the mine near Eureka. My radio came today but isn't programmed, so I texted my probie group requesting a relay of any relevant information they might hear. It seemed as if most people weren't responding, but DB called me and said the location wasn't at the mine but was on a nearby road. When I got there I didn't see any SAR people, but a detective said Sgt. HF had just gone in with someone and had said that when two more people arrived they should take an ATV in. I promptly put on my helmet and sat on the available ATV to see if I could get to drive someone in, but then along came DB, and he thought he'd drive. Can't argue with that, but it was a nice try. The victim was a couple miles north of our search site. Her naked body was lying in a draw, bloated and discolored, face down. The husband and family had been searching by ATVs, and had found her. Since the side by side had not arrived yet, GH (who was first SAR there), me, DB, and ST did a ground search pattern for footprints and clothing articles. The woman seemed to be walking around the same area a lot, but it was hard to track her back toward the car. No clothing articles nearby. DB seemed interested in

making sure I was following instructions about how close to stay to the search line; I'm guessing I'm in the doghouse for wandering off up a side canyon on Monday. While we were out, others arrived and bagged the body, which is just as well. One good thing I learned is that earlier in the week, at the husband's urging, SAR did send DB down the shaft near the car to clear it. The shaft was apparently almost a couple hundred feet deep.

Saturday, May 21, 2016

Our new member training was essentially to not have training but to form up with the overall team to be water safety at the Salem triathlon, a mini triathlon they do each spring that apparently results in a large donation to SAR if we bring our equipment, put out buoys on Salem Pond, and then rescue any tired swimmers. Per someone's instruction, I floated a PWC off a trailer and rode it to shore, and Sgt. HF and DB definitely didn't want me buzzing around on it or approaching the bank with the engine on. Mostly, I rode on the back of one, facing backward, so as to assist anyone needing help onto the rescue board attached to the stern. One swimmer called for help but only needed to hold the end of the rescue board and rest. Probably a rule violation, but we're just here to keep people alive. The slowest swimmer was really lagging, but one of our people had fins and a float, and swam with him the whole way. I helped put equipment away at the SO; one PWC may have had a hull leak, but it was one with a purple safety lanyard, and the one I'd ridden in Utah Lake had a red one. Then I made a late appearance at TERT training at Aspen Grove, where it turned out ZM was teaching them medical stuff, and encouraging the stocking of more advanced equipment in the cache, which may not be the best idea. He had one TERT EMT so enthused she was trying to figure out how to lay in a Fentanyl supply.

Sunday, May 22, 2016

At 3:00 p.m., at the end of Sunday School, I got a call out to help a hiker with an ankle injury up Tibble Fork. It turned out that my younger son had blocked the driveway with his car and had gone to church at another building with his girlfriend, and taking another car I couldn't find him to get his key so as to move his car, and back home I couldn't find where my wife had put the extra key to his car, so I had to go find her to tell me. Unfortunately, I'd left my radio on my truck upon starting this key finding escapade, figuring I'd pick it up quickly and take it to the call out to see if PT was there since he needs to program it, and when I finally got a key and moved his car out of the way I forgot the radio was on the truck's bed rail, and it fell off and was run over in the street and destroyed. So that hurt. At Tibble Fork, two teams had already gone up, and ICS didn't have anything for the rest of us to do, but eventually they sent us up to set ropes at steep or muddy places to have a lowering system available to help the litter if need be. Which there didn't turn out to be a need for. Lots of people doing little work, to bring down a lady who slipped on the trail and hurt her ankle. A lot of middle age women are falling on wet trails lately. Sometimes it seems like the big turnouts are at the wrong call outs. Lots of SAR call outs seem to involve just hauling out a litter with an injured person or a body in it. I got back to Springville halfway through my younger

daughter's seminary graduation, where I sat in the back in my SAR outfit in time to watch her be recognized.

Wednesday, May 25, 2016

We had just settled down in bed and were drifting away to sleep, when the racket went off. A call out for a couple of women lost up Grove Creek. I got dressed, stopped at a gas station to add a few gallons, and was about to take the on ramp to the interstate northbound when a followup came calling off everyone south of Provo. There has to be a more efficient way to do these things. I'm trying to be diligent (first SAR member to arrive April 19 and May 16; second to arrive on April 16, twice on April 24, and on May 20; and third to arrive on February 23), but it's becoming apparent why one might want to pick and choose which call outs to go on based on whether one is likely to actually get there before being called off, much less having a thing to do if one does get there.

Thursday, May 26, 2016

New member BBQ for new members and their spouses, and the high command, at Canyon View Park in Provo Canyon. OG had us doing skill demonstrations. Nice to meet people's spouses. A bit cool and windy. Timp had some new snow on it. Pretty up there. Lt. CB had a photo of watercraft scratches. Ouch. At least the impeller is OK.

Saturday, May 28, 2016

Memorial Day weekend, so it could have gotten interesting. But as it turns out, it was more frustrating. In the early evening there was a call out to Nunns Park up Provo Canyon, for a man in his sixties who had dementia and was missing from the park. With my new radio still not programmed, I drove up to see if I could be of help before his family found him. Near the entrance to Nunns Park I found LS dressed up in river gear and walking around, visibly peeved. She'd been picnicking there with her family, had been excited when the call came in since she'd be the first there, but then she couldn't find anyone at the meeting point. It turns out people were being assigned by radio to various stretches of the canyon as they called in, and she didn't hear any of that. I picked her up and we drove through the park and found FH pulling in, and we parked by him. LS and I were told to start searching down the side of the river there, when word came in that the guy had been found down canyon a ways off the trail up the hillside. So not drowned, thank goodness. I headed back to Springville, and about a mile short of home got a call out to go right back to Provo Canyon for a hiker with a broken ankle a couple of miles up Big Springs. There's an old road there that a UTV could zip right up. Moments later another call out came, for two missing young boys on the Stewart Falls trail. I emailed PT, then texted OG, to try to figure out which to go to, and got no response. Settling on Stewart Falls since it was getting dark and there might be a need for most people to be there to search for those boys, I went up to Aspen Grove. Shortly after arriving we heard that they might have linked up with another party of hikers heading back. Then a SAR team up the trail found them, and said they'd like some handwarmers. Some of us got some and started up, and ZM

wanted to shortcut straight up the side of the mountain to intersect with the trail, but I could see the headlamps already moving toward the final switchback and I pointed out we'd miss them if we didn't go over more toward the base of the trail and start up. Which we did, and wound up meeting them about a hundred yards from the trailhead. I went home thinking this hadn't been a very efficient use of the day. I could begin to see why the plan Salt Lake County had awhile back to use set small squads of largely full time people to do a lot of search and rescue might actually make some sense for many call outs, although that plan did result in the resignation of a lot of their best people. At any rate, my first of the year concern that UCSSAR would be some sort of hardbody group of special ops-like backcountry experts and rescue superstars, of a cut above us mere mortals, now seems overblown.

Monday, May 30, 2016

My wife predicted a 6:00 p.m. call out, and was almost right on the nose. Off to Bridal Veil Falls, for another injured hiker. This time for a boy hit on the head by a rock. Not our first this year, and it sure won't be our last. Without a radio I didn't have an idea of how far up the side he was, but it turned out he was well up and into the cliffs, so this would not be a quick call out. The entire side of the canyon in that area, minimalistic trail, cliff bands, everything, was crawling with people. That's not really a place built for people, especially clueless people. And there were moms with babies in their arms trying to balance on what passes for a trail, an unusual number of immigrants compared to other local recreational areas, testosterone poisoned kids climbing here and there, and then a stroller contingent that set up right at the bottom of the scree chute we were climbing in and sending rocks down, because they thought that was a good place to watch the spectacle. North Fork Fire was up above taking care of the head wound, and a team was going up to help with anchors. I was kind of being ignored at the trailhead; I guess that's how things go sometimes. But I got sent up with a team. The older guys ignored GU telling them there was an easier access, as they wanted to hike right up a scree chute. At one point a hiker stood on the trail below us screaming at us, demanding to know what we were doing and commanding us to stop kicking rocks down on him. All the flashing lights in the parking lot, people in uniform, and so forth apparently didn't make a dent in his thinking. He eventually clued in that we were on a rescue, and then stood there with his family in the middle of the chute until I yelled at him enough times to move that he finally grasped that he needed to get his family out of the chute. Eventually the trail got closed. There was a fair amount of arguing about radio frequencies, with ICS at the command post telling us to all get on tac, and people on the mountain not wanting to go to tac because they were all using their precious 800 MHz radios. Our lowering station didn't have VHF (my new radio still hasn't been set up). So we made do with yelling. A lot of those guys aren't any more agile on their feet than I am, so in a way that's good because it means I'm not the weak link. The team member I was following seemed to be pressing me to pick an anchor, and I'm a probie so I thought that should be his call, especially since I wasn't clear on the ultimate plan. We settled on two good trees instead of scrub oak he'd been leaning toward, and I set up a belay anchor and then went up to where he was and set up a main anchor. It turned out he was uncomfortable with his MRT skills, which left me a

little worried since it meant the entire station's safety depended on my beginner's skills, so we had WO come check things out. With everything squared away, we then waited quite a while for the litter to come down. About this time I was feeling pretty good about things, and called my wife and Facetimed her a live feed for a few moments to show her what was going on. When the litter reached us and we transferred the ropes to our anchors, I belayed all the way down and didn't lock up the prusiks at all. However, as they transferred at the next belay station and unexpectedly pulled on the rope, a prusik locked off and I had to extend the system quickly at the Scarab we were using in lieu of a radium release hitch, and that all worked out. The kid got down just before dark, and we reopened the trail after offering some food to people waiting to finish coming down. It felt like a real rescue! Except that it also might have been possible to put him in a wheeled litter and squeeze him down the trail. My wife pegged pretty quickly from my description that someone pretty much picked the more exciting evacuation option, and the kid may to some extent have been a training opportunity. EG came out; haven't seen him in awhile.

Tuesday, May 31, 2016

In the news there was a blurb about a very early morning search for a woman in a bikini wandering in the reeds at the edge of the lake, lost. Supposedly SAR was involved, but there wasn't a call out.

Thursday, June 2, 2016

What a day! In the middle of an afternoon trial, I heard that my wife had taken my mother to the ER for chest pain. As soon as I could I got over there, but I had to text DB and let him know I wouldn't be available to tow PWCs to the lake. At the ER they didn't find anything, and sent my mother home. I went out to the lake, saw people in wet suits instead of dry suits, and suited up accordingly. We were having a combined meeting and training, with training first. Three stations. One was a rescue swimmer thing, with reach, throw, row, and go practice. The row was sort of a token thing in that it was with a canoe, and we never use canoes for SAR. Our combative victim tried but failed to swamp us as he got in, and not wanting to give him many more opportunities I rolled him back out of the canoe like a log. But then, padding back, we somehow capsized ourselves! I did a swim to a combative victim, and by the time I started swimming him in I was tired and having difficulty getting my breath. My PFD was cinched up too tight, and the snug wet suit started reminding me of a couple of dives on California beaches where I had to get out of a wetsuit quickly because of overheating. I called for a guy nearby to toss me a rope and pull me in, because I was wanting a rest from swimming, even though I was only a few yards from shore. Loosened up my PFD and felt better. The next station was PWC. Two people came and got me and we changed over in the Provo river mouth, which was really shallow, and I was astonished people had taken PWCs in there. I heard a rock ping off the intake grate when it was sucked up as they headed into the river's mouth; I was glad I wasn't driving. Three at a time is unstable on those, even though they're supposedly built for it, but soon I was out on the lake on my own, and that was like fun, only funner. We

searched for a couple of bouys, and we practiced being picked out of the water and transferred to a boat the state parks guys had out. My PWC didn't seem to go very straight, but that's OK. It was really nice out there. Then in to the third station, where the Mud Buddy—an odd shallow draft boat with a moveable horizontal beam out the back that the propeller is on—wasn't working. But the airboat was, and we rode out to some reeds that we were to walk through to learn about the reeds (or phragmites, whatever), and what I learned is that those reeds, the moment you go into them, have millions of midge flies that rise, and they're astonishingly dense. Seemed like there were more flies in the air than there was unoccupied air. It was good to get out of there. When I was a kid there was a TV show about an airboat in the Everglades, but I didn't expect to get to ride on one someday. Out of the reeds it was pretty, with the sun going down and ducks flying. Then practice on vacuum splints, which turn out to be simple when you're actually trained on them. One trailer tower left early, so I hitched up the trailer that person had brought, and learned to use the boat ramp. Then there was a meeting at the park's visitor center, with burgers and brats. The park ranger was peeved that some people had been zipping in and out of the harbor above wakeless speed. Good point. PG was dumping on CM for not understanding why PG was so adamant that we must always say "carabiners" instead of "biners" (everyone everywhere calls them biners, except apparently a few politically correct fire departments); eventually he spelled out that the reason he was so dogmatic about that is that someone could think we're saying "beaner," and slandering hispanics. In the meantime, though, he was very rude and demeaning to CM for not understanding why he was so opposed to using what seemed to her the far and away most common name for a piece of climbing equipment. If you'd go into the Black Diamond store and ask for a "carabiner" they'd probably think you were some sort of newbie. SAR stats are in, and my training hours are incorrect or I'd be #1 there. I do have the highest call out percentage. The number of probies left in SAR this year has come down, and may be settling at about eleven for now. The thing in the press this week that none of us were called out on turned out to be something where a couple of SAR deputies drove out to look at the situation where a woman was missing in the reeds for hours after getting off a grounded boat, and they heard her, and figured if she was somewhat near they didn't need the whole team out. They eventually extracted her from the reeds, and she had nothing on but her bikini bottom. Alcohol probably was involved. I hope that helped her tolerate the flies.

Friday, June 3, 2016

Awhile back PC told the probies he'd take the group on a canyoneering trip through Pine Canyon in Zion National Park, and almost the whole group signed on, plus DB and GB. Good team building opportunity and rappelling experience. I picked up EG and we met people at GH's house and divided into a couple of vehicles to carpool down in, and the GB joined us in his vehicle. Those of us in GH's car, which included LS and RF, had a nice talk about what had brought each of us to SAR. We thought we saw GB's vehicle by the side of the road as if it had a mechanical problem, and we turned around to look, but it wasn't him. That put us behind the other cars a bit, and out of radio range, so when we got to Mount Carmel Junction east of the park and the

other people in the car wanted to go south instead of west because they trusted their GPS, we weren't able to get a voice on the radio to say no. We went south. Then, for some reason, east. That put us in the middle of nowhere on a dirt road where we nearly got stuck in sand. After that wild goose chase I got us to go back the the junction and then west, and another GPS track took us to the BLM land where the others were camping. Which we could have reached just by following written directions. One of many times when reliance on GPS is overrated, especially if one lacks a basic sense for the lay of the land. At night coyotes were yelping often, and wild turkeys were gobbling, and there was a beautiful sky.

Saturday, June 4, 2016

Morning of the probie adventure. PC made us Dutch oven Scout hash. We headed into the park and people eventually got the shuttle set up, while the rest of us got into wet suits and helmets, and packed dry bags. There's a little parking lot by the east entrance of the tunnel, and we dropped down from there into the canyon and very shortly had to jump into a pool of stagnant water. At that point it's pretty much a commitment to keep going. Very soon we were at our first rappel station, a two stage rappel on one rope that goes over both rappels there. We rappelled it off of the sketchy webbing that had been there awhile, using a single line of the doubled rope so a second person could be setting up on the other while the first descended to the water at the bottom. Once we got down we'd belay the next person from the bottom, since if they got out of control we could pull down on the ropes and lock up their belay device. There was a handline spot, the first of two, where DB was saying something about Ninja Warrioring it (like the TV show) on a timer, which didn't explain that we weren't rappelling there, just using a line to help ourselves down a tricky spot. Sometimes he's a bit obscure like that. Another rappel, and then the Cathedral rappel. The top has a ramp with water on it, which makes for an interesting approach to the anchor around the corner at the edge of the drop. The bottom is gorgeous in good light, as it's a tall cavernous space with big holes in the rock walls like multiple arches, although it was more shadowy while we were there, and cold in the water, and hard to belay in water where you either had to tread water while belaying, or try to balance against the wall on steeply sloping underwater footing while belaying. Awhile below that we had a break where there was light and warmth in the canyon, but then on to a breezy and dark section of the slot where some of us shivered a bit. On through the pretty convolutions, to a place where we had to lower ourselves between a log jam and the side, into a dark hole, to get down a level. The second rappel from the last was nasty, scraping gear and arms as it involved an awkward dihedral and a crack and changing footing along the side. But that set us up for a high adventure rappel, with a somewhat exposed scramble on slickrock to the belay station, where we gingerly edged down a couple of small sloping ledges to the jumping off point. One hundred feet of straight down air. Other than inadvertently cross loading a biner gate when I was setting up, it was a hoot! Except for GH, who inverted in her harness and was slipping out of it, and had to grab the rope above her with both hands while EG controlled her descent from below. That was a double rope rappel using our longest rope, so it's good she didn't need rescue in midair, and really good that she didn't fall. PC had energy bars dropping off of him into

the pool as he came down last, then he pulled the rope and we hiked down the creek bed. A creek bed without a trail, just a mile plus of immense boulders necessitating constant boulder hopping and scrambling, which put holes in my pants. EG went zipping off up the side of the canyon, calling from the distance about a better route which we never found, but GB and I got pretty tired chasing him and trying to get him back to the group, and I got a lot of thorns in my shoes and socks from the vegetation up there, and PC was annoyed the group wasn't staying together. I think EG realized he'd blown that. On the road back, DB went out the west entrance of the park, the shorter way, but GB took some of us back to camp out the east side of the park so we could get to GH's car, and then we too headed home. We did have dinner at a fast food place where GB joined us, and actually talked to us for awhile, which is unusual for him because he's usually pretty detached. He said there were about eighty applicants for this year's SAR spots, and maybe thirty interviews. We were surprised to hear that, as we were thinking maybe they took most of the people who applied. He said he was asked to help with the probies because we're a big group, and because DB can be a bit scattered, which a couple of the other people agreed with. But we all agreed DB is a really good guy. Then we were back on the road, and EG had thought I would be a short way behind their car and so could pick him up off an interchange in Utah County, but they were an hour ahead of us so that didn't work. I'd planned to call PT when I got to Payson to see if he had our radios ready, but just before we got to GH's house there was a call out for someone who had gotten separated from her group while tubing the Provo River below the dam on a popular tubing run by a busy road where it would be quite hard to get lost. GH was groaning at that, LS's gear was off in a vehicle her husband had out of town, and RF looked at his truck and found a flat tire with two nails in it. My gear was scattered between home and wherever my pack was that had gone in the other carpool vehicle. Still, I called my younger daughter on the last of my battery and asked her to carefully take my truck, which is big and which she's never driven before, to the interstate interchange near Springville and I'd meet her and switch vehicles, and make due with the gear I had. Really, I figured that given the nature of the call out it wouldn't last long. I telephoned central dispatch to ask them to relay that I was responding, and then shortly thereafter it was indeed called off. A new call out came immediately, though, for a supposedly mentally unstable lady missing from a campground up AF Canyon. It seems she had a fight with her husband and stomped off. To me that meant she was probably in town somewhere, or on her way. And that proved to be the case, but not before we spent awhile searching the side of the river in the dark. SG was in charge of our team, and he was trying enforce some order at least in our group. I also noticed DB taking EG aside to remind him to stay with his group and not run off. Regarding radios, EG—who is also waiting for his radio to be programmed—had reached PT but PT wasn't in town, so still no radio.

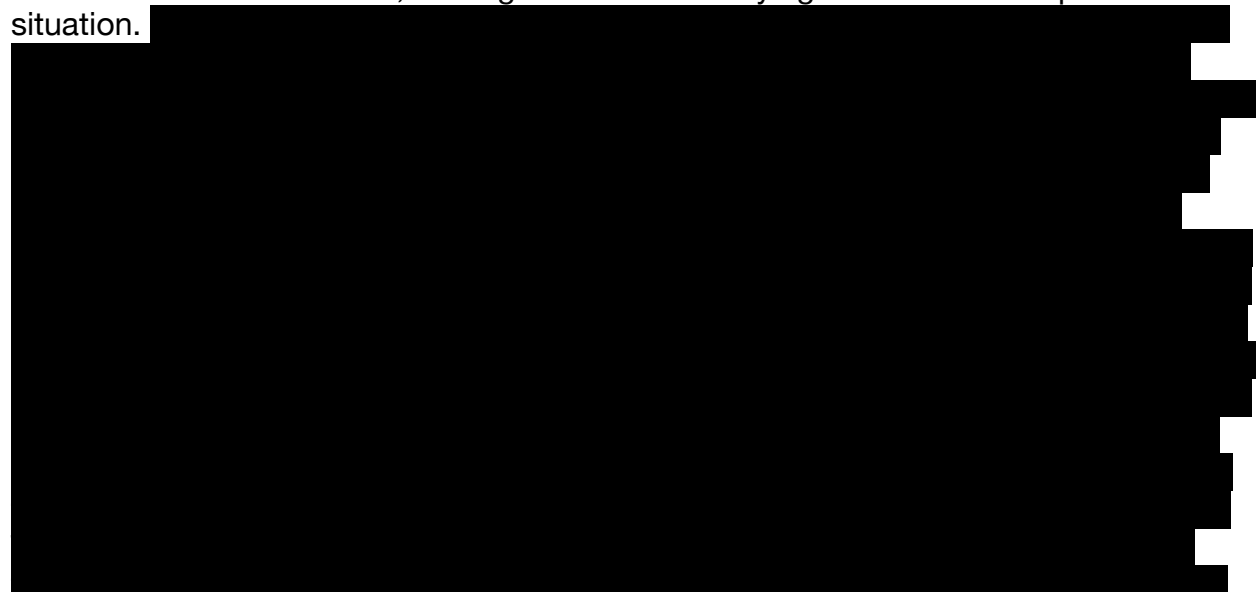
Thursday, June 9, 2016

Immediately after driving south from Provo to go home early, there was a call out to go north to the Lindon Marina. I figured it would be short, and it was called off just before I got there, but not having a radio I continued on so as to check in personally. The Utah Lake State Park boat made it to a couple of clueless people on a cheap little inflatable

raft that had blown out into the lake and wasn't holding both occupants well. That evening we had EMRT training in Tank Canyon, with practice on the ground of pick off techniques for getting someone hanging on a rope off that rope and onto the rescuer's rope, and also techniques for getting a harness on someone who climbed too high and got stuck on a cliff.

Friday, June 10, 2016

EG and I finally got our radios back today, just in time for a call out that is now #1 on GB's list of bad, horrifying call outs. Just after I got home, there was a call out to Balsam campground, up Hobble Creek Canyon, the canyon behind our home. Only it wasn't at Balsam, it was four miles further up the dirt road. So I was only the second SAR person there, instead of the first. FW beat me because he had an idea where the actual location was, while I was trying to find a CP where we'd been told to go. Springville's police chief and fire chief and the Balsam campground host and a deputy were up the road. Apparently some Scouts biking down the dirt road had noticed tracks going over the side and into a deep ravine, and called in the possible auto wreck. Meanwhile a Scout who had ridden ahead was missing, and eventually some people came to wonder if the wreck involved someone trying to miss him. I couldn't find good anchor trees or rocks, so FW decided to anchor off the campground host's truck, but then the police chief wanted it to move so that some people could get past. A SAR guy who said he knew the bottom of the canyon had said it was impassable and so we would have to set up a raising system, but he was contradicted by dirt bikers who came up and said there was a good trail down there. The decision was made to bushwhack down and then lower as necessary rather than raise. Good decision, as it turned out the canyon bottom was Wardsworth Canyon, which has a trail. Those bikers also gave obviously confused directions for finding the wreck from the bottom. A deputy had scrambled down earlier because he thought he had heard signs of life (that may have been people hiking the canyon bottom) and had collected GPS coordinates of bodies, and Sgt. EG had been flying the drone to scope out the situation.





I took the rear handles of the litter with the man's body in it, and went down trail. Memo to me: never let go of a litter handle to adjust your glasses, you need both hands on the handles to keep the litter balanced, not just one hand. At the trailhead we sorted gear, and I tossed out my contaminated prusik loops used for handles on the litter. Hopefully no one's bloody arms came in contact with either victim's blood. The missing Scout had shown up elsewhere. While we were busy, another rescue had started. A hiker with an ankle injury on the top of Cascade Peak had called for help, and a team was airlifted up to try to access that group, but couldn't figure out how to get up to the correct part of the mountain, and Life Flight dropped supplies to the hikers and that rescue was delayed until morning. After debriefing, eight of us were recruited to go do a body recovery at yet another call out in Provo Canyon's South Fork. On the way I stopped by the house, which was almost on the direct route there, and my daughter had me a bowl of ice cream. Headed on with dry socks and shoes. GB took a few people across a flat and up a hillside, leaving the probies since unlike some old dogs we obeyed the order to stay. Then he called for the rest of us to bring some saws and stuff, with a couple of us sort of volunteering to carry other people's 200 foot ropes. GH and LS scurried ahead and sounded like they couldn't find where the first group had gone, but we all eventually got there. GB didn't want saws then, though, and didn't need the ropes, and didn't like having all the actually small team there. I could see an odd webbing arrangement above where the group was huddled, and was confused by it, and GB blew off my question about what we were doing with it, but it turned out it was not ours but was something the guy had used to hang himself. I didn't know it was a hanging. Apparently friends had been looking for him, and one had a dog that found him. One of the SAR guys knew the victim and had stayed in the parking lot. I didn't have anything to do, so I started looking for a better way out than what we'd come up, and AG got mad at me for not being where he thought I should be, and cursed and hollered at me to get my crap together (not precisely his word), which left me very peeved. Later, as they didn't manage to keep a

litter team together on the litter, I stepped in and helped carry. Got home quite late, and quite tired, and quite burned out on this whole SAR thing.

Saturday, June 11, 2016



Sunday, June 12, 2016

With the evening winding down, the phone decided to interrupt a progression toward going to bed. There was a boat taking on water, and SAR needed to rush to the rescue. My younger daughter wanted to come. We went down to the SO to tow PWCs, but no one was there yet to let us in, and the radio was indicating the vessel might be limping in to harbor then anyway. So, we were called off that incident. Meanwhile another incident developed, where some young hikers were lost. Per instructions, I located one of the recently cleaned litters in the mini command center vehicle, and put it in my truck, and headed up that way. The call out said Horsetail Falls, then Phelps Canyon, and both are accessible from the Dry Creek trailhead, so I went there. The kids were a couple miles up, and a team went up the north side where they were, a second team followed to help, and our team went up the south side because the thought was that there would need to be a rope system set up across the creek to get them over to the better trail on our side, but the team that reached them decided just to walk them down. Although one of the boys was half shoeless. SP had been making slow progress on the way up, and BC somewhat slow, so our team wasn't getting far very fast, but we turned around and headed down in good time. My daughter was snoozing in the truck, and we headed back about 1:30 a.m. Nice to be with her some. Unfortunately, that afternoon SH had called on the phone to see how I was doing following the mess Friday, and my daughter heard the conversation (and then some more with Lt. Q at the Dry Creek trailhead), and was probably with me in part because she was worried about me. But I'm OK. Might be able to tolerate some more of this time and money wasting hobby I've gotten into.

Monday, June 13, 2016

Another day, another phone call about how I'm doing. I guess I'll sign up for the critical incident debriefing they're having. Really, I only need to debrief it with my wife. Shame she's out of town.

Tuesday, June 14, 2016

While in Salt Lake, a call out for Utah Lake came in. By the time I was down toward the top of Utah Valley to where I could call in, it was already over because the state park boat had gotten there. Seems like the full time park rangers beat us to everything on the lake. I did pick up some supplies up there for me and for probie SB, though,

including a head net so if I ever have to go into the Utah Lake reeds again I won't suffocate on flies.

Wednesday, June 15, 2016

I was driving to Zupas with my younger daughter so we could see my younger son work, and get some dinner, when the alert went off, and my daughter was all for going on a call out to the lake with me. We were hanging out because my wife is off on an adventure with my older daughter, and that means looking for excuses to go out to dinner. We went to the SO to tow a PWC trailer, and headed out to Lincoln Beach, listening on the radio to hear an aircraft deploying to spot, and to hear the state park boat deploying once a SAR guy got on and they decided not to wait for whoever was coming from Orem and had the notion they should get on also. About the time we got to Lincoln Beach, the ranger boat from Utah Lake State Park in Provo reached the kayaker who was in the water following some kind of capsizing, and we were going to go back to the SO but then the deputy decided the four PWCs could go out for some play, excuse me, training. There were other people ready to go, so my daughter and I waited around for them to come back and load up onto the trailer, and then we took the PWCs back and finally got some food. Lt. CB says one PWC is getting the bottom recoated, but my impression is that it's the one that was leaking at Salem Pond, which I don't think is the one I had on the lake in May because its key lanyard is a different color than the one on the PWC I was on. Someone noticed some damage on one of the PWCs, which may have happened when someone ripped off a side mirror off of it at June training. I have no idea how that's even possible to do.

Thursday, June 16, 2016

Tonight there was a critical incident stress debriefing for people involved in the weekend fatalities, at least for those who wanted to come talk about it. I didn't want to go talk about it, but after ICS, the SO, and DB talked to me in the last few days, I figured I'd better show up to look like I'm on top of my mental and emotional health following those call outs. Which I pretty much am. But I'm also one of only a couple of people that didn't say anything, so people are still watching. The images from that evening stick, but learning about the circumstances surrounding the Israel Canyon suicide had bothered me more than this call out.

Today for an early Father's Day present I also got an underseat storage container for the back seat of my truck, but it doesn't hold enough to let me be equipment free on the back seat. Does save some room, though. My wife thinks I need a truck bed storage box, but those are expensive and have no climate control. I miss her. It'll be nice when she returns.

Friday, June 17, 2016

A sunny Friday at my desk at work, actually hoping for a call out so as to get a break from the computer. And at lunch time, it came! An injured hiker near Stewart Falls, who had hurt his knee. PG had been at the falls with his SAR hat on when someone told him of an injury nearby. North Fork Fire got their litter up there. I was on team two, and we met them on the trail a bit below the falls, and helped get the litter down. Not much to do, but a pretty day. People were taking pictures like mad. I learned how FW gets to call outs before other people: he listens to radio traffic between dispatch and the SAR deputy on call, and heads out before the call out is even sent.

Friday, June 24, 2016

Late in the afternoon there was a call out to Stewart Falls for a lady with an ankle injury. A few minutes later there was a call out to Battle Creek for a disoriented hiker (who would turn out to be a ways away from Battle Creek, but he called the Forest Service for help instead of 911, which greatly increased the response time reminiscent of how the Forest Service botched a call a few years ago about a problem bear that later killed someone). I missed both call outs because I preferred to pick up my wife and older daughter at the airport that evening.

Saturday, June 25, 2016

Got about my least favorite kind of call out, a missing tuber on the Provo River. It's a busy stretch of river, with a highway right next to the segment that people go tubing on, and an easily hikeable railroad track on the other side, so it's mystifying why anyone calls for help. People who get separated show up pretty quickly. In this case, just minutes after the page.

Monday, June 27, 2016

I tried to squeeze in what I thought would be a quick call out that came in at lunchtime, but it wasn't quick, so I missed joining my younger daughter at her diabetes nurse appointment, and missed a 4:30 hearing that my secretary did get covered. Some missionaries went on a P-day hike up Big Baldy, underhydrated, overdressed, and perhaps insufficiently unified. A sister missionary had a heat related emergency up there. I was first SAR at the Dry Canyon trailhead, although Orem Fire Department was there with ATVs, and they said a couple of officers were hiking up (I assumed two fire guys, but it was two police officers). A missionary at the trailhead had a location description so I pointed him at OG, who had arrived and was trying to find a way to open a gate. PG told me to get the med box, so I did and put it in my pack and got a helmet, but then he said to give it to someone else, so I didn't ride partway up with team one. It took awhile for team two, which I was on, to start hiking up with the litter and ropes. When we got up to where the old road that ATVs could come in on intersected with the hiking trail that we were on, team one was amazingly still nearby because they had been gone over to the wrong side of the canyon. Apparently they

trusted their GPS instead of directions. Then they rode up a little ahead of us toward Big Baldy, and meanwhile team two spread out along the trail, moving at different speeds. As we hiked up, medical was asking for a hoist ship but ICS kept going on about finding a landing zone for the local helicopter. Eventually Ogden sent down their helicopter, but then there was discussion of having it offload weight in a meadow by the UTV that had come part way up, with the deputy using smoke as a signal, instead of landing at the trailhead parking lot to unload weight there. That didn't make a lot of sense, in my view, since smoke means fire hazard and the grass was dry. It took some time for the helicopter to come, and when it came near us it flew the wrong way but eventually found us, and then it took a long time for it to offload equipment before it could come back and hoist. When it did, they lowered their flight paramedic into scrub oak instead of a small clearing on the slope. Meanwhile medical had gotten a couple liters of IV saline in the patient by pressure bagging, and had wanted two to four more liters but didn't have it. ICS had started a couple more liters up by foot with another team, even though they would be more than an hour away. All this focus on rapid normal saline fluid isn't actually the wilderness medicine standard for heat stroke care. It didn't look to me as if there was much active cooling going on, which would be the main thing, although a lot of us were pretty low on water. In lieu of cold water immersion, which wasn't possible there, stripping off some of her clothes and spraying or soaking her with cold water would be the best thing, although that probably would not have gone over well with her. Still, medical got her blood pressure up a bit, and her level of consciousness improved some. The Life Flight paramedic used a net to transport the patient, one that didn't wrap around the patient's ends very well, but she ultimately didn't fall out of it so that's good. She'll never forget being flown across the foothills on the end of a cable! It was over a hundred degrees on the hot, steep, brushy trail, and if we'd have had to carry her out there could have been additional casualties from heat. More water!

Tuesday, June 28, 2016

In the past five weeks we've had four women in their fifties injure their ankles while hiking to Stewart Falls, today being the most recent. And that doesn't count the sixty five year woman old above Tibble Fork in the same time period, or the boy on Cascade Mountain. I've been wondering how many of these people just twisted their ankles and called for help they didn't need by claiming they had fractures. Today had both sides of that question. I got a call out on the way to court in the late morning, finished court, still hadn't seen the call out called off, so radioed in to get counted while basically figuring it would be called off soon, but as I drove north I found that it didn't look like it would be. North Fork Fire had their engine and ambulance up on the Three Sisters road, which is the access we use for relatively quickly getting to Stewart Falls, and had taken their litter up. I pulled in and minimally geared up since it was hot and I didn't want to carry a lot of weight if a batch of people were already on site with what they'd need, and headed up with ZM. An obese grandma and a large grandpa had gone hiking with their grandkids, who were in flip flops, with no one apparently carrying a lot of water, and something had gone wrong. North Fork had splinted her broken ankle and given her some pain meds, and the debate over how to get her into North Fork's already

assembled wheeled litter was about to begin. There was also debate over which trailhead to head for, which was eventually decided by trusting North Fork's judgment. Regarding getting grandma into the litter, the scheme was to stand her up on her good leg, trying to keep her off the bad one, and have her swivel onto the litter and sit into it and then lie down. That was a painful, sketchy endeavor that took two tries. There wasn't a lot of good footing there, which made things extra interesting. I had been holding the back handles, and when she weighted the litter there was an immediate feeling that something had gone mechanically wrong with the litter. I said I thought it had broken somehow in the middle, but people weren't very interested in listening. There was a combination of too many chiefs, the tunnel vision that seems to plague even experienced people on the team, and the usual not listening to probies. We'd give a lot better care if people would stop fixating on their medical procedures and start looking around and thinking about helping patients with things like bare skin banging against hose clamps, or getting into stinging nettle. Heading down trail was miserable for the grandma, who quickly just held things in and lived with the pain. Although it could be that she was helped by a lady who lurked nearby until the litter got near her, and then stepped in quickly to put her hands on the victim's head and wish her the Lord's blessing of health and healing, before ducking away quickly. It was a tough trip, with the guy up front refusing to avoid rocks and roots, figuring we could lift over them or something, but from the back they aren't visible. On the Wardsworth Canyon body recovery there was a very meticulous positioning of the litter all the way down trail with constant direction from up front. Nothing like that with this live patient. The litter kept tilting to the right side, and various people kept yelling at me to put muscle into it. I was putting muscle into keeping it from tilting, and simultaneously putting muscle into lifting over obstacles, and into tracking straight, and into braking, and into not tripping and falling. We had to redo the rear handles because they had slipped in their hose clamps, and also it wasn't clamped to the back crossbar at all. Eventually I asked LB to step in, as he is strong, and he struggled mightily. Then the mouthy old dogs took turns at it, and they couldn't do any better. In the parking area I noticed that the wheel wasn't lined up quite straight, and the railing of the litter was actually bent here and there. This call out basically trashed North Fork's litter. I wouldn't be surprised if their wheel didn't survive it either, given that it was getting hammered. At debriefing ICS took pains to make sure everyone was accounted for, since I guess on an earlier Stewart Falls call out LS got lost on the trail by herself and was left behind when the call out ended, and later complained to some people. The grandkids at this call out got a ride in the fire engine back to the normal trailhead. Then Sgt. HF took us to lunch at JCW's. Later, as I was leaving court to head home, there was another call out to Stewart Falls for a female with an ankle problem, this time a younger woman. At the Aspen Grove trailhead I grabbed some bottles of water per PG, then both halves of our litter, and with BC and LS headed up. She was doing her rush ahead thing, and after awhile came back saying to assemble the litter on the trail where we were, a bit short of the group up the trail. Apparently PG decided to piggy back the lady down the trail. This all was stupid and annoying on so many levels. Being there at all was pointless; her own hiking group could have piggy backed her down if she didn't want to walk on her sore ankle. We were supposed to magically assemble the litter in moments even though most of us didn't have much experience with that, and then we were supposed to

catch up with guys who were showing off how fast they could piggyback someone down the mountain. We had difficulty getting the litter together, and decided to forgo trying to attach the handles in favor of catching up, which we barely did, and in the parking lot found out we hadn't been given the correct tool for the handle clamps anyway, and then someone was unhappy that the brake cable had snagged on the wheel and dinged the cable sheath a bit, possibly (although we never, ever use that cable). On the way down the trail the three of us did a good bit of complaining to each other about what a waste of time call outs like this are. When I told BC about the put-some-muscle-into-it complaining at today's earlier call out, he immediately guessed who it was. Not hard to know who's behaving badly on this team. LS said she'd heard the Cascade Mountain rescue that involved SAR and Life Flight and the Mounted Posse was for a boy who hurt his toe. Wouldn't surprise me a bit.

Wednesday, June 29, 2016

On the way home from the podiatrist, who'd fiddled with my ingrown toenail without doing more surgery on the root (which I was hoping to avoid), there was a call out to the Three Forks trail in Diamond Fork, which goes up to the hot pots. Apparently someone fell and hurt their head. I was not in a hurry to go hiking, so I went on home and changed, and then headed off figuring that a leisurely approach would keep me off of team one and allow for a slower walk. And it did, because a few minutes after radioing in but not being recognized, we were entirely called off since the victim was walking out to the ambulance. It seems like my part of Springville and Mapleton is a dead zone to the radio repeater, which is odd since it's not terribly far away.

Saturday, July 2, 2016

SAR stats for the first half of the year are online, and I have more call outs attended than anyone else in SAR, and more training hours. So that's far enough ahead of minimum standards that I shouldn't be kicked off over being too low even while actually being above the cutoffs, which I've heard has happened in the past.

Sunday, July 3, 2016

The quintessential call out. A boat just a short distance outside the Lindon Boat Marina was supposedly taking on water, but really just had a motor that was not working, so the people on board were getting all worked up. All of SAR was called out, with PWCs being towed even as the State Park boat was already heading out. The difference this time was the State Parks couldn't send out their main boat due to low channel depth, so sent out their Mud Buddy, and its sides are too low profile for waves and so it took water and had to turn around. In fact, the State Parks rangers have been putting out the word in the press that they can't get their main boat in the water and that rescues will likely be of people only from now on, and owners will be on their own as far as getting their boats towed; recently one guy had to hire a helicopter to get his boat back after he and his party were plucked off by PWCs and his boat was left to drift. Anyway, on today's call out by the time we got PWCs to the lake, the people in the boat in

trouble had figured out they should just head back using its trolling motor. Meanwhile, a couple of guys on ancient Jet Skis had one break down, and the other was trying to tow it in, as the owner of the broken one hung on and also sort of swam, so SAR people kept an eye on that. Mostly, though, it was a lot of SAR people standing around in the parking lot, half of them in dry suits hoping they'd get to go out on watercraft even though more weren't launching. Kind of a big waste of time. At least I missed some of it because for awhile I was in my hammock but had left my phone inside.

Monday, July 4, 2016

This illustrious holiday deserves to top the previous day for the most quintessential call out, so our call out this evening was to a remote reservoir on the southeastern edge of the county that a lot of us had no idea how to reach. There was an ATV rider who had an accident. Some of us went to tow UTVs, which ICS wanted badly, even though a helicopter was already on the way. SG had me turning a trailer jack winch that I observed seemed to not be working correctly. The bolt that was holding the handle on actually sheared off and went flying in pieces. We tried to use a vehicle jack to lift the trailer tongue, but it was about a half an inch too short. Meanwhile, the jack handle cut my arm. Then SG wanted to go so he left me to work on things. I found wood to go under the jack, and upon lowering the jack so I could put the wood under it I learned that the people who had said they'd chocked the tires had not done so. Then a couple of officers showed up and helped reposition the trailer and were going to help work on the jacking issue, and that was nice. However, a deputy said he'd been listening to radio traffic. I hadn't heard it because my radio was in the truck. It turned out that the helicopter had indeed beat everyone to the scene, and would be transporting. So, across the county people turned around. Since according to the deputy a new call was developing on Timp at this same time, I got on the radio to explain the trailer situation and ask if I should redeploy, and OG got pissy about me not being on tac frequency, which frequency we have never used in the valley for responding to call outs, in my experience, but I promptly switched. We pushed the trailer back into the equipment bay. I used my water supply to wash my arm, and then the bandaid wouldn't stick due to sweating in the heat of the nineties. Then I headed up to Aspen Grove, where a man in his seventies and his Down Syndrome son in his twenties were apparently struggling somewhere along the trail. Midway to Timp we were told to get on 800 Mhz, which no probie has access to due to only having VHF radios. According to initial information, the victims were supposedly only three quarters of a mile up the trail, but it turned out they were much further up the trail, having been hiking all day since early morning, and making slow progress down. Without water or other supplies, apparently. HM told us to pack for possible overnight bivying in rain, which I did, but when we met again later with OG for more instructions I mentioned that if they were really five miles up as we'd been told then there would be snow on the trail, which no one seemed to realize. I mentioned that because I had been thinking that such conditions might call for some technical gear and snow gear, to help the victims safely across snow fields. OG went off on me for that one sentence, telling me not to argue. I didn't know I'd been arguing. We sat around quite a bit longer as a hasty team went up, and some people went off to eat at Sundance. GH was pretty exercised because she thought some SAR members

had been dumping on her in past weeks, especially at the recent Lincoln Beach call, and that there's too much of that going on, and it makes her wonder if she's doing something wrong or if some SAR people are just jerks. It's the latter. North Fork's chief stopped by and was talking about helicopters and how Air Med doesn't fly to the mountain. I told him that Air Med had been sent up to rendezvous with TERT at Emerald Lake just a couple of years ago, which they disbelieved until I showed them a photo (which was interesting since North Fork reportedly sent them up). SAR doesn't know everything or do everything on the mountain. Dusk arrived, people in the valley proceeded with their holiday celebrations while my family and I both separately wondered what I was doing albeit for different reasons, and up the trail the hasty team said that the old man was coming down slowly with half the SAR group, and the second group was behind them and was trying to motivate the young man to keep moving instead of staying immobile, and would like some help. So a few of us went up a couple of miles, most with packs but I left mine because it was clear we weren't going to be camping and that everything the two might need was already up there; I did carry some things in my pockets that proved useful. We helped the young man down, and he didn't fall much. He could be a little set in his thinking but we reminded him he'd just been deputized as a SAR member and so needed to help keep us moving, and we kept general conversation going about his interests. Still, there were a lot of stops. By the time we got to the last mile we took turns playing musical packs so we could switch off piggybacking him, so it was a good thing I didn't bring a pack. I got a turn right at the one uphill bit, and GH marveled that I could carry him so far. I didn't know I was viewed as being that old. The young man was insistent GH carry him at some point too, so she did the final bit across the meadow. The old man was very apologetic for having been so very unwise. He'd been on some drama thing earlier about how maybe they were going to have to just sit down and die, but we saved them. I doubt other people coming down would have ignored them, but this is a case where it's a good thing we were there. Unfortunately, he was also asking about other hikes in the area, so maybe we'll see them again. The young man got a plastic badge, and a SAR coin in the parking lot. I didn't know we had SAR coins. Maybe we should start carrying that stuff, for kids.

Thursday, July 7, 2016

BBQ tonight, for the whole team and spouses, at a pavilion amongst trees next to the Provo River by the BYU Motion Picture Studio. Few of us knew that picnic area was there; it's a nice little spot hidden away in the middle of the city. We started with a blessing on the food, of course, which I like. Steak and potatoes, a couple of awards, and distribution of shirts to everyone as a freebie. Nice evening.

Saturday, July 9, 2016

EMRT training on the grassy slope of Rock Canyon Park in Provo, a good place for ice block sliding, not that we were doing any of that. What we did was practice timed setting up of raising and lowering systems, passing knots, patient packaging in the litter, and a few other things. There was a handy tip about holding the rope in your

mouth to keep it out of the way during one part of making interlocking bowlines. There were predictable differences of opinion among some team members about this and that, but overall it was good training.

Monday, July 11, 2016

Finished this call out perhaps a bit ebullient. At the end of a meeting in Salt Lake County I noticed this call out, and figured I might get as far as the county line in time to radio in that I was en route but probably wouldn't get as far as the turnoff to head east toward Provo Canyon before it would be called off, and that would be fine. But it increasingly appeared the response was slow and I might make it all the way to Three Sisters to stage, which is what happened. We've had hot days for weeks, and hot days ahead, but this one day was only in the seventies. And pretty. And although some mom had panicked about her preteen boy falling at Stewart Falls, and a helicopter had actually landed in the meadow to stand by, he wasn't hurt bad. A group of us hiked up there, met the teams that had already checked that boy out and put him in the litter, and we helped bring him back down. Things were orderly, cheerful, respectful, and fun. SG was concerned that so many of us were wearing our SAR baseball hats instead of our plastic helmets, but the hats are mighty convenient for dipping in the stream to cool our heads, and I joked and told him he'd be explaining to my wife my death from heatstroke if I hadn't done that, whereupon WO wondered if she'd really mind. Loads of good fun. I even helped AG, who I'd smoked on the hike up, put the litter back in its bag. It was kind of interesting to watch North Fork Fire thank us for helping them, and our leaders thanking them for helping us. That's a dance we do a lot. They may invite us to their BBQ this month.

Tuesday, July 12, 2016

Sgt. HF had mentioned earlier that he'd probably try to offer some PWC training at some point, although it would probably be on short notice, for whoever could make it. This afternoon he said anyone who could meet him at 4:00 should call him, and I postponed a dental appointment so I could get on the lake. Sgt. HF and DB were there, and RF, LS, and I showed up but no one else. We went to Utah Lake State Park and put in, and on the way out there was algae or something matting the surface of the harbor, and near the entrance the water was a thick green soup. Better on the lake. We practiced slow speed maneuvering, and then rapid stops from high speed. The quickest way to stop is just to turn hard while maintaining throttle, and the PWC will whip around very abruptly and nearly stop, which can throw a rider off if the rider isn't holding on well. It also throws up some water, which RF did a few times to drench me before I figured out what he was doing, and drenched him. But that got me a warning for not maintaining adequate distance, and for being too old for that kind of thing. Too what? I didn't feel too old out there. It was great fun, and at one point when LS and I traded machines, I had her faster machine maxed out, racing RF. We also did pickups, and DB liked my technique for plucking him out of the water. He also enjoyed trying to tip us over while riding on the back after a pickup, but I valiantly kept things pretty much upright. I had some trouble on the drill to upright a capsized PWC, but figured it

out by using the intake grate to hold onto, with the engine off, of course. We went out to Bird Island, which is just a wide area of rock barely out of the water, that gulls nest on. We had thousands of birds swirling all around us, like a dome of birds. It was amazing. Except for Sgt. HF, who got pooped on. Then off to show us the direction to Lincoln Beach, and the location of Sandy Beach. Sgt. HF didn't say anything about the trailer jack for the UTV, but Sgt. NG was in the equipment bay when we returned and he joked about me breaking things. It's a reverse Midas touch, I guess. We were supposed to be out for an hour, but we were out for two or three, and it was lots of fun. This gig has its moments.

Wednesday, July 13, 2016

Odd shortened call out. We were headed up to Battle Creek trailhead for a kid who fell, with a lot of people reporting in, and as we went ZM was up there already on the radio talking about what Pleasant Grove Fire Department was doing. Apparently they had a key to the gate and they had a vehicle, and planned to pretty much handle things themselves. He was told by ICS to wait for SAR teammates to show up before going in, but from the way he was reporting on patient packaging, it sounded as if the fire guys weren't waiting for a wheeled litter, which would have caused a delay. A few SAR guys had started up the trail in a truck when ZM said everyone should just be called off. Which happened, but I'm guessing it occurred to ICS that PG Fire never even seeing SAR guys because people left, doesn't further the impression that SAR has an important role in search and rescue, per statute if nothing else. Missed rock climbing with my daughter for this mess.

Friday, July 15, 2016

Interesting news today. On Saturday we're supposed to help with the Provo triathlon, but yesterday the event organizers said they wouldn't do the water portion in the boat harbor as planned because of an algae bloom, and today the Health Department actually closed the entire lake because of high cyanobacteria levels. The only time they've ever done that. So I guess that green sludge and the floating mats of gunk at the marina entrance we saw Tuesday when heading out on PWCs were a bad thing. In other news, there was another Stewart Falls call out today for a middle aged woman with an ankle injury on the trail that goes down to Sundance. The county was going to leave the entire thing to North Fork Fire, because initially it sounded as if the victim was close to a road, but North Fork still hasn't replaced their litter, so we got called up. When the page said a 250-300 pound woman was involved, I pondered whether to even go at all. But I did, and managed the back of the litter, and it went well in that there was decent communications and no hurry, and no litter damage either. It turned out that her mom was further up the trail, and barely able to keep going. The mom didn't want to go to the hospital but was sitting on the ground not wanting to move, and then groaning just to have to get into the litter, despite having no actual injuries. I hurried down trail with my saw to cut out some roots that were projecting from a bank into the trail right at hand level at the most hazardous spot on the trail, where we don't want our hands being stripped from the handles. Those roots had been a problem for

us on the first carry out. I got the big root cut away just as the litter arrived, but PG scraped his hand on a little one, and I got that and one other removed thereafter, although he was going on at debriefing about how someone needed to go trim those roots back. Then back to the valley to wash up after the usual scratches and dust.

Sunday, July 17, 2016

I was sitting in priesthood meeting at the beginning of what was sounding like another unprepared lesson, when a call to Aspen Grove came in saying something about needing a crew. Good. I wasn't sure what the "crew" part meant, but I was happy to go, so I walked across the street to home and got my radio and thus began a comedy of errors. On the radio I heard something about SAR only needing a few people to show up. I called in and mixed up my city number codes and gave a Provo location instead of a Springville location, and was told to head up. But then I couldn't find my phone and glasses that I'd tossed somewhere when I got home, and was in a hurry due to being south of Provo and realizing I'd indicated I was closer, so I just headed off without them, and then there were traffic problems and this and that, and things kept going wrong even at the trailhead, down to my thumbnails chipping away again and again. But we had a nice little group that took a wheeled litter not much over a quarter mile up the trail before meeting North Fork Fire coming down with a dehydrated hiker who'd also been bitten or stung by some insect and had hives. The trip out was quick and easy. The guy wanted to throw up, and did in the parking lot despite North Fork not being eager to accommodate him, and then he decided he could drive himself off the mountain. Meanwhile, there was something going on at Tibble Fork involving a lady with head injuries who wanted to drive herself to a place where Life Flight could land for her. What could go wrong with all these wise decisions? We didn't get called to that. Sgt. HF told us that the night before TERT had helped a family down the mountain that was stranded in the dark and was scared. Apparently the dad thought they could climb the mountain in a few hours, and had ignored the TERT people warning him on the way up that his plan wouldn't work. In the evening there was another call out, up in Highland for a body recovery up a hill just above a subdivision. I radioed in, and Sgt. HF asked if I had a vehicle that could carry 600' rope spools. I said yes, but that being a probie I had no way to get into the cage. He said someone would head that way. Then there was discussion of ICS preferring not to use that rope on a scree slope, and of not needing the mini command center ("White Lightning"), and just before I got to the SO AF said she'd get the spools. I continued on anyway and got them, and helped hook up a UTV trailer for Sgt. HF and helped unhook the bomb trailer from White Lightning. I think AF was peeved when she arrived. Then we caravanned up to Highland. There were already teams on the mountain, so BC and PC and I had to hang around the street corner doing nothing for some time. LB arrived, walking up the street shaving with a battery powered razor as he came. AF did get assigned to walk up the hill, get a bag, and walk down, and she took CM for that. The rest of us just watched a neighborhood party developing as more and more gawkers showed up. LB found a tarantula on the street. That, and me backing up FW's UTV a short distance at his instruction, were the most exciting things I got into that evening. Well, there was also seeing SG in a suit and getting after him for not wearing a helmet, as he'd gotten after

us on the 11th. The teams up the hill lowered the body down another direction, and so the neighbors missed the action. We broke up and I went back to the SO, and Sgt. HF didn't come back with his UTV trailer but eventually White Lightning showed up so I was able to return the rope spools. The call out was not very exciting. No one seemed to know what was up with the body.

Tuesday, July 19, 2016

I heard a rumor that Lt. CB took some Health Department sampler people out on the lake to measure the cyanobacteria, and got really sick. I emailed him and told him I hoped that would pass soon, without him turning into a blue-green swamp monster or something, and he said it was a brief thing and he's fine. I'm guessing, though, that lake sampling will now be done from the shore.

Wednesday, July 20, 2016

Exhausting and demoralizing. In the evening we were called up to some hikers lost somewhere west of the Granite Flats trailhead. We staged at the mouth of American Fork Canyon. The Sheriff's airplane was dropping supplies to a dad and his two sons who had apparently set out on the Box Elder Peak trail and somehow dropped down into American Fork Canyon in the vicinity of a side canyon off Tank Canyon. AirCare from Payson was asked if they'd transport some SAR people up, and they took a couple of people up to to the ridgeline, but the hikers were almost a thousand feet below them, getting instructions to try to bushwack down a ridge. WO's team started up Tank Canyon to try to find them from the bottom, and our team followed, led by DB. I was carrying a bunch of water, rope and technical gear, and some night gear. There was no real trail. Footing was bad in places as we scrambled, and I was tired and at about the limit of my ability to stay upright on the sketchy spots. DB was skedaddling right along, and our team divided into a faster group and a slower group; I stayed with the slower half. We got to the bottom of the side canyon just after nightfall, where we'd originally been told to wait for people coming down, but per new instructions we followed the rest of the team up. However, at this point the going was really tough, it was dark, I was afraid I wouldn't physically be able to go up the side of the canyon very many hundreds of feet, and I had important early morning court to go to that would be wrecked if we had to camp in canyon until resuming a search in the morning. I felt some anxiety creeping in. While calming myself I heard that the hikers were nearly down to somewhere near us, and our part of the team went back a bit to spread up and down Tank Canyon so no one would miss the hikers if they got past DB's group in the side canyon. DB's group found them, and brought them to us, where we'd been cooling some water bottles in the stream. Then DB's group, and WO's team, headed down canyon with them, and our little group stayed behind to wait to make sure AG and LT got down. They eventually did, and we hiked out with them. GH fell in the stream a couple of times, but she's still gung ho about SAR. Except for complaining about DB to too many people for not instructing us as much as she'd like, she's all into this SAR thing. In contrast I was quite tired, was happy to give AG and LT a ride down to the staging area after we had boxed sandwich meals from Sgt. HF's tailgate, but

was happier still to go to bed a ways after midnight. This call out was hard on a number of us.

Thursday, July 21, 2016

For our Thursday probie meeting and training, we went into one of the equipment bays where DB was hanging ropes from the top, and he told us to start practicing ascending. Good idea, except we didn't know how, and could have used an explanation. He said to follow the Lipke book, but literally all that book has is a single small picture of a guy with Purcell prusiks on a rope, that's it. GB showed up and offered a few tips, but mostly it was the blind leading the blind, as we all tried to get up the ropes and back down. Getting past a knot placed in the middle was the trickiest thing. I'm going to blow more money now on climbing gear just so I can do the rope ascending part of the ORI; I'll probably blow a bit more on swiftwater gear while I'm at it.

Friday, July 22, 2016

Got a text about a Vivian Park call out being cancelled. Strange we didn't get a call out in the first place.

Saturday, July 23, 2016

Probie training was cancelled for today because DB was off with his family at Flaming Gorge. The TERT team on Timp had some people bail from this weekend's team, so I had told the team leader I could help out a little but not all weekend because my son and his wife are visiting with our grandbaby. About 3:00 a.m. I got up and did an early morning hike to high camp, and almost as soon as the team hiked on up to Emerald Lake there was an ankle problem, a knee problem, a blister problem, and a lost hiker with anxiety problem, among other things. Another team member wrapped the ankle and also the knee while I tried to sort out on the radio how the wrong way hiker could meet up with her friends. When the ankle problem was resolved that group of six should have been able to piggy back her or help her hobble down, but in an hour or so they were calling 911 and dispatch was calling us, and SAR didn't want to deploy for a sore ankle, so the guy who wrapped it headed down trail to see what was going on with the ankle patient. Meanwhile I had helped the knee patient, accompanied by the anxiety patient, to find the trail cutoff back toward the Timpooneke trail, and to get down the talus and snow into the Timpooneke Basin. Because she wrenched her knee again on that descent into the basin I was worried about whether she would get better or worse on the way down, worse being bad because there's usually no cell service on that side. Back at Emerald Lake when it sounded as if the team leader would be pushing for SAR to deploy, I suggested I go catch up to those women and see how the knee was so we could use SAR there too if they ended up being called out. So I did that, but before I caught up to them I found a mom having trouble getting her special needs son to get off off the ground and keep moving down trail. I stayed with her a bit, then found the knee patient, and she was able to keep moving, especially with me

carrying her pack. The anxiety patient had some increasing issues, and no water, but we dealt with that. Saw a mama moose and a baby moose too, and a guy with a camera apparently trying to get himself attacked, but I didn't have to radio for a body bag. On the way home there was a text beep, and two texts had come in at virtually the same time, one announcing a call out to Battle Creek and one canceling it immediately.

Tuesday, July 26, 2016

With a court hearing at noon, a call out came at 11:10 a.m. for somewhere at Sundance. An ankle injury, of course. I couldn't get coverage, but I figured perhaps the call out would still be going when I finished court. But ten minutes later it was called off, with Sundance's bike patrol, it sounded like, saying something about using some kind of device to get a patient down themselves. Looking at my stats at present, there are 184 training hours and 118½ call out hours for 302½ total hours, and 3,154 total miles of travel between trainings and call outs. Call out stats are 43 attended out of 42 that everyone was called out to (there were 52 total call outs, but some were small or simultaneous so don't count for running percentages), giving me 102% call out attendance.

Friday, July 29, 2016

A call out to Stewart Falls for a woman with heat stroke came, and awhile later a call out to Battle Creek for a woman in and out of consciousness. I was at the Provo City Center Temple with my wife. Upon getting finished at the temple, the Battle Creek call out had been wound up but I called in to see if the Stewart Falls call out was still ongoing and if they needed any help. They had pretty much finished that one too. That evening there was a call out for an ATV rollover near Carbon County, and I headed off that way, but after a few minutes they called it off because the victim was dead and apparently that meant we weren't needed. I don't think they plan to count that call out even for those of us who were already driving.

Saturday, July 30, 2016

I went on a date with my dear wife to see a new Star Trek movie, and as we got there a call out came for a woman with an ankle injury on Aspen Grove trail. I opted to stay with my eternal companion. But midway through the movie my bowels felt like they were in rebellion, perhaps because of a chili cheese dog, so I went to the bathroom and was there awhile. I also saw a second text asking for more personnel. Well, I'd love to help, but not on my date and not with sketchy bowels. When we got home, another call out came asking for people to go to the Timpooneke trailhead, and I figured I should head up green bowels or no. I called in to see which part of a Timp I should go to, Aspen Grove or Timpooneke, and was told Timpooneke. Upon arrival, there was a small SAR group, and the Mounted Posse was saddling up. Life Flight was on the mountain. Apparently a girl on the summit had been reported being unconscious, then conscious and in terrible pain, according to a doctor who happened to be up there and saw the drama. The SAR scheme was to fly to the saddle, hike up, take her around to

the glacier, and lower her to Emerald Lake. But Life Flight couldn't land on the saddle, so they stopped in Timpanogos Basin. Then the people who ran the adolescent residential treatment program the girl was in decided she was faking because she didn't want to hike down, and they adamantly refused care per the TERT people who were on the summit at that point, and we were told we could go. GB left, and OD and I chatted a bit and he was going to take DL to the valley while her husband finished coordinating getting people down from Timpooneke, when Aspen Grove suddenly decided we should come over there and help. They had a team getting a lady with an ankle injury down that trail in the wheeled litter. OD and I went over there and loaded up bottles of Powerade and water while listening to radio requests for fluid and for fresh bodies to help get the litter down. There were actually Mounted Posse people there, which is odd, and Sgt. EG talked a couple of them into letting OD and I ride up to First Falls with the posse, to get further faster with more energy. So we borrowed a couple of horses and followed one of their people up, and that was fun, and it got us in a position to help quicker, although my horse kept bumping OD's horse. She also seemed to enjoy seeing if tree limbs would strip me off. Once hiking, OD pointed out to me that many places on that trail are spots where the original trail was lost as people beat in a little down and up dip over to the side of the trail where things have slumped. We reached and rehydrated the main group, and fell in to help. Getting a litter down that trail was a bear. While standing off the trail in some brush to steady it, I learned that there is stinging nettle on the Aspen Grove trail. Thankfully there was also some lamb's ear, which helps ease the stinging. At one point a couple of probies handling the litter were yelling for help as they nearly lost the litter down a steep part. I myself tipped it a bit when taking my turn, and made the lady gasp. It's hard to both keep it upright and moving slow, and to simultaneously lift and lower it gently for each root and rock. When FW took the handles I carried his pack. We got her down, GH and LS helped her go to the bathroom in the pit toilet, and then people took the splint off of her so her husband, who was enjoying the whole scene too much and then delayed departure more so he could get group pictures, could drive her home or to a doctor. Then we learned the Timpooneke side horse posse had carried down an injured hiker and a tired hiker while returning. The Aspen Grove people had done first aid on a couple of people, and our side's horse posse had waited awhile to see if anyone would need a ride out, but no. We learned that while all this was going on, patrol deputies had been looking for a missing bicyclist up Tibble Fork, and a few people had been doing a technical rescue at Bridal Veil Falls. There wasn't a call out for the latter; I'm guessing that was set up by phone call, with WO and DB and a couple others doing a rope rescue of a couple of BYU students who somehow got ledged up in a very odd place. Meanwhile, PT was watching about a thousand people swarm the cliffs around the falls, which don't have much in the way of trails, and saw them slip in the falls, and so forth. KSL had done a news piece about unknown adventures in Utah, one of which was rappelling directly down the falls themselves, and some people were attempting that. PT was astonished we have so many calls to Stewart Falls and so few to Bridal Veil, which is much more dangerous. There were mini Jimmy John's sandwiches waiting for us. I was not as thrashed as people who had been hiking hours more.

Monday, August 1, 2016

There was a call out in the morning, and I hoped to be through with court soon but one isolated late case that just refused to get resolved in a timely manner kept me there most of the morning. I listened to the radio a lot of that time, and it sounded like Lone Peak Fire had decided to hike for miles up the trail even though they didn't know where they were, to try to find a kid reported fallen with arm and rib fractures. Life Flight couldn't find the kid. Eventually he was located. By the time I called in, things were far enough along they told me not to respond.

Tuesday, August 2, 2016

On the TV news, KSL had a story about SAR being stretched thin with rescues this past weekend in Utah County. People who got their pictures shown are going to have to bring ice cream to the next meeting.

Wednesday, August 3, 2016

We got a call out for kids overdue after exploring down a mine out by Eureka off Dividend Road. However, after I'd driven not far at all it was called off, as the boys crawled out of the mine. And got in trouble. But they were trying their hardest to think the best they could. In order to avoid possibly dangerous mine gasses, they were sharing a medical mask between them as they went.

Thursday, August 4, 2016

I am still alive. We got a call out to Pittsburg Lake up American Fork Canyon. A colleague agreed to cover my noon hearing, so I went up. Life Flight was already where we were staging at Tibble Fork, and Lone Peak Fire Department's people were there too. One of our people was going to be flown up, and Life Flight was apparently going to do two trips. DB had his own sporty side by side with four seats, and he put AG and I in it and went roaring up the dirt road past Tibble Fork. This is one of my least favorite dirt roads, and he was apparently hoping to beat the helicopter. Just running flat out. It was breathtaking. And completely white knuckle. Then he headed up the main Mineral Fork drainage (Pittsburg Lake is up on the east side of the drainage up its own trail), and we were rock crawling in ways I didn't know were possible without rolling. Getting close to where Snowbird spills over into AF Canyon, he was wanting me to spot the helicopter, and apparently he thought it would be behind us to the west. So I was craning my neck to look for it while being bounced in every imaginable way, and some other ways as well. At Snowbird the remains of the road was blocked off by boulders. He worried about going past their no vehicles sign, and then going to jail, but sort of got permission from ICS to proceed, and ultimately blew through some willows around the boulders and on up the mountain on an old access road overgrowing with wildflowers. At a part where the road looked dug away, and had been hayed above as perhaps part of reseeding, he stopped and we watched the helicopters shuttle back and forth behind the ridge; Life Flight's hoist ship had come down too. Ultimately, that's

as far as we got; FW and SC and I'm not sure who else only got partway up the mountain in the clunkier SAR UTV behind us. We all stayed in our places in case we needed to hike in or some such thing. DB and AG shot the bull about TERT politics, who can effectively control elections, and about who has done this or that and who is the rising star, and how someone wrecked someone's side by side and didn't pay for it. Apparently, sought after low member ID numbers don't just reflect time in SAR, but some people have been jumped ahead of older members to get lower numbers. Eventually we headed down and DB was still pushing it. Through the water, around the other UTV, and back at top speed. AG was amazed too. The memory of that adrenaline rush will last awhile. Lone Peak was reportedly getting along with us better than things have sometimes been in the past. We went down to Wendy's so the SO could buy us a meal. While there, a caller from Stewart Falls was trying to get Sgt. HF to send SAR in to carry her out because she was tired, and he declined. I suggested that she would surely have an ankle injury soon, but miraculously that didn't happen. Then back to work, briefly, and on to the monthly SAR meeting. Training was on taking care of our own health, a bit of MRT, and then business. Often they give out little freebies, and a half dozen of us who are really active in things at present got a strobe light for PFDs that would be handy if it weren't water activated instead of switch activated, but it's nice to be recognized. I think EV was there, but he'd been sent a letter due to low attendance so I don't know if he's still part of us. AD isn't.

Saturday, August 7, 2016

Deliberately missed SAR training today, since it was more important to join my oldest son and his family with our family at home to go camping at City of Rocks in Idaho on Friday, near Almo where my dad grew up. The SAR training was on rope lowers and changing stations, which we'd done at the Bridal Veil Falls call out awhile back, so I didn't miss a great deal, plus we were climbing in the City anyway. Got home Saturday evening, and then a minute before midnight a call out came to Squaw Peak Road for a technical rescue. I figured it might be important if it was a middle of the night thing, and while I wasn't enthused about it I hauled myself out of bed and managed to stay awake for the forty five minute drive. Just before I arrived, it was called off. Turns out a guy on foot who was stoned out of his mind was running from the police down the dirt road, and ran right off the edge of the road. The deputies found him and got him back up to the road.

Thursday, August 11, 2016

Medical training on IVs and meds. Half dozen of us there. I left before IV practice sticks began. There was also EMRT training this evening, but probies don't get to go to those anymore this summer because it is now preparation for Mountain Rescue Association recertification. Some teams, mostly in the west, certify as teams as part of the MRA. Some individuals, perhaps mostly in the east, certify as SAR techs with NASAR.

Saturday, August 13, 2016

There was a call out to Timpooneke that mostly probies went to, perhaps because most SAR people didn't want to go up for someone who reportedly didn't want to keep hiking because her knees hurt. Understandable, especially with the Mounted Posse responding and possibly rendering us superfluous. When I got there a TERT person was already with the lady, PG and BH had gone up the trail to check on the hiker's condition, Lone Peak Fire was agreeing to defer to SAR, and horse trailers were pulling up. I put on my wee ultralight pack, and Sgt. HF asked if the place I bought it from also sold men's packs. Oh, funny. I did carry up bottles for people to drink. GH set off with just a camelback. RF did hump his pack, but it was mostly unloaded; he still had trouble with the hill. As we went, PC began to worry that maybe we should have carried the litter up, just in case, and some technical gear. I'd been assuming the horses could carry the litter, and they did, and I figured we wouldn't need technical gear. And only RF brought a helmet. But it all worked out fine. As we went up, people on the trail told us there as a missing boy somewhere, but that didn't develop. Apparently a couple of potential call outs didn't develop that day. While we were walking, GH said she'd been told we'd be expected on the ORI to move from one rope to another rope midair. We haven't been trained in that, I suspect some of us would refuse that for safety reasons. Eventually we reached the hiker. It turns out she has had several knee surgeries, she got as far as the saddle, and then tried to limp out before her family started carrying her. Then someone gave a heads up to TERT and SAR. The SAR medical people didn't have any ibuprofen, just TERT, and that person's bottle got dropped down the mountainside before giving the hiker a second dose, so I got out my personal stash of ibuprofen to share. That makes me a medical hero guy. Make the patient comfortable! BH did bushwhack after the TERT pill bottle. We got her onto a horse, with her complaining a lot but probably being better off than shot full of narcotics, and bounced down the trail in the litter. Then off down the trail, bracing her from the sides when the horse went down rocky steps, and occasionally having impatient hikers try to push through from behind until getting a clue. So, she did probably need some help, and we got in a nice day hike. That evening there was a call out to the Aspen Grove trail for a lady with an ankle problem, and since my wife found out that I change clothes while driving, and expressed her disapproval, I took time to change at home before getting in my truck, and in that short period the people on the mountain figured out they could actually limp down, so we were called off before I left the driveway.

Tuesday, August 16, 2016

A real rescue! We got a call out for a paraglider injured near the Squaw Peak overlook. That meant there was a good chance we'd be doing a technical rescue, so there was a big turnout from SAR. Provo Fire got there a bit before us, then Life Flight, then PG and me shortly behind. PG and I each took a litter half down, he checked with the paramedics, and Provo Fire and Life Flight had medical well in hand, while I began assembling the litter. Oddly, the opening in the patch of scrub oak we were in was significantly hotter than the slope on the way down. Not a lot of working room in there.

Unfortunately, after screwing one side's rail together, the other side wasn't quite lined up, so I tried to unscrew the first side, and it was just stuck. It took probably fifteen or twenty minutes for me and then eventually BH and GP to free it, so we could finish assembling the litter. Tiring and embarrassing. Meanwhile the medical people were getting the guy into a vacuum splint, and the SAR people still arriving were setting up a raising system. There wasn't a spare harness for the patient, and PG said not to use our own gear on patients because that's bad practice since we need our own safety gear first (although why we would need personal safety gear on this hillside eludes me), so the patient was secured with a lot of webbing. There might have been too many people working on the webbing. The guy had smacked the mountain hundreds of feet below the launch point, had been blue and breathing poorly when the first medical people arrived, but with oxygen and some care he got to a much better condition, at which point back injury became the main concern. It was time to get him to the helicopter, and I took the front of the litter to help guide it sideways across the slope and up a bit to the bottom of the rope system, and that traverse went a lot better than I'd thought it would. Wearing a pack at the front of the litter tends to bang the litter itself, and possibly the patient's feet, so a bystander took my pack. We got rope hooked up, and with a 2:1 raising system and a lot of people hauling we did a series of raises and resets, and raises and knot passings, and pretty much ignored a firefighter's thought we just muscle the litter up the mountain. I asked BH to spell me out midway up even though it shouldn't have been very hard at that point, because I was hot and a bit woozy, but that cleared quickly, and it gave me time to find some Gatorade in my pack to share. Up top we got the guy into the helicopter, and it took off. We had our debriefing. I found the webbing bag that had spilled from my pack up top. It wasn't a perfect call out, but a lot of people did a lot of different things to make it come together, and it went pretty well.

Wednesday, August 17, 2016

My wife saw my picture in the newspaper. And who knew rescue euphoria could last this long?

Thursday, August 18, 2016

I like my probie group, and we don't have so many times left together before we're assimilated, so I made cobbler and got some ice cream, and took it to training. There were cops in the north annex training room, and no instructor for us who could ponder evicting them, so I laid the goodies out on the tailgate of my truck and we had treats while we waited. President SC came after a bit, and got us into the SO's Emergency Operations Center, and the EOC is nicer anyway. He did more medical training, on splinting and so forth. But first he told us that for the first time the ORI won't be OG's baby, and there will be an attempt to more closely tie it to exactly what we've been trained on. It's supposed to be less of a "rite of passage" now. Some kind of politics are going on; I just don't know what. Unfortunately, the board seems to be assuming that the various specialty area "sergeants" have been working with us, and they haven't, so the idea that the board can just go to the "sergeants" for information on

what we've been taught, will not actually work. GH complained about DB some more (he wasn't there), which is becoming unseemly; she also asked if we're going to have to change ropes in midair, and SC said no and seemed to think that would be an odd requirement. I had some questions about whether some things would be on the ORI that I'm hoping not to see, like obscure knots, and they won't be. I don't think it'll be all that bad, and am actually wanting to get to it and get it over with. Frankly, I wonder if they should start the probationary period in May or June with some backpacking, then with the busy season starting let people see what SAR actually does before they spend a lot of money on it, and concentrate the training in an organized way that is tied to written objectives that also form the basis for the ORI, winding the probationary period up by the end of the year.

Friday, August 19, 2016

North Fork Fire invited SAR to their BBQ at Aspen Grove, and six or eight of us showed up, most of us with our spouses. It was a good opportunity to talk to them and find out more about how their department works. It seems folks at Sundance can afford to have professional firefighters and medical people, at least during the day. They also have volunteers. The chief, who is about to move to go to a new job, lives in my neighborhood. There was volleyball after the food, but my wife and I went for a walk in the woods instead. NB was at the BBQ and still has a divot in side of his calf from swiftwater training this spring.

Saturday, August 20, 2016

Oh, politics! Today at probie training DB and GB began with classroom review of much of what we've gone over this year. I got the impression DB was a little unhappy. Then we went outside to review knots, and to practice lowering and raising systems. Probie SB and LS and I figured out how to reconfigure a system, with absolutely no guidance, and it turned out to be an acceptable solution. Some people are completely focused on the ORI, while some don't even know when it is. I am unclear on why some people with low stats are gone and some remain. The next month or two will be interesting, but I'm not especially worried about myself anymore. I think I have this thing mostly nailed down. But does it matter? It seems we are past our prime. And by "we," I mean search and rescue teams. There was a call out to Aspen Grove in the afternoon, and on the way the radio traffic looked to North Fork Fire for information, and then to Life Flight to hoist an older man off the mountain who had fallen near the rockslide. We got up to the trailhead and watched as Life Flight flew around in the wrong place not finding the guy although supposedly being on a GPS coordinate, and when Life Flight got on a frequency that TERT could access then TERT guided them in from their vantage point higher up the mountain where they were watching with a spotting scope. The patient had a head laceration and a pneumothorax, and Life Flight flew him to the hospital. There were a lot of SAR people standing around at the trailhead, although a small group had headed up the trail hoping to beat the helicopter. OD talked to me some about his issues with the Forest Service charging fees to park for hiking, and then about the changes in SAR over the decades. He said we don't do "search and rescue"

anymore, we do “concierge search.” A victim’s cell phone provides an easy means of getting bailed out of whatever inconvenience a backcountry traveler may get themselves into, and transmits their location directly to dispatch. Then we get them. Or the Fire Department does if they’re close by, or perhaps a helicopter if they’re far away. We’re litter carriers for people with minor injuries. And on that encouraging note, it was off for dinner at home, which due to kids starting to exit the nest and leave my wife and I to eat alone, was salad. Not long thereafter, an evening call out to Aspen Grove came for a woman up the trail a couple of miles with a broken ankle. There was radio traffic about asking AirCare if they’d use a helicopter to shuttle some of us up, and Life Flight to send down their hoist ship again. We can dream about flying in. But it was not to be. However, Life Flight eventually launched, and PG and ZM got some medical gear together while LS wondered when the new nurses would ever be included in the old boys club (I got the impression CM told her that would be unlikely). PG and ZM declared that Life Flight would learn that they support SAR and not vice versa, but then Life Flight arrived and began prepping to hoist without much of a glance at us. So, once again we all cooled our heels around the trailhead. It seemed very familiar. And not a soul was sent up the trail. Although despite being told they weren’t needed due to the patient supposedly being somewhere low on the mountain, TERT’s high camp asked dispatch for the victim’s phone number, and in talking to her got directions to where she was and found she was just ten minutes away, so their high camp team quickly reached her and splinted her leg. She was crying out at every movement or thought of movement. Then the helicopter came and hoisted her. It was the second ankle TERT had splinted that day; they had SAM splinted a sprained ankle earlier, given ibuprofen, and sent that person down without requiring carry out. I learned that in between the two call outs, a SAR guy hiking the Stewart Falls trail came across someone with a medical problem and called up some SAR people who hadn’t left the area yet to give aid. Also, TERT’s trailhead people found someone with a medical problem and got SAR medical people who were still nearby to help; TERT’s trailhead people from the other side meanwhile helped put out a wildfire. Glen from TERT spent part of the day at Stewart Falls to see if TERT should maintain a presence there. While standing around on the evening call out I heard that someone up the mountain was having a hard time getting down. From listening to TERT on my old radio, I knew the TERT high camp team was going to come down that night instead of the next morning, so I suggested to the command post that TERT could make contact on the way down and help as needed. Then we headed off. Sgt. NG said we could go to a restaurant, and I figured I should not miss that chance to get into SAR conversations. Not being very hungry, and not wanting to waste a lot of the county’s money, I just got a dessert. CM told me about being a police officer in Seattle, and talked some about the ORI. I told her I didn’t think the scenarios would be all that difficult, and she said the difficulty is in how scenario follows scenario over and over. She really didn’t like it when in the old days people had to go to OG’s house for an evening beforehand to watch an old movie he likes that gave him the idea for ORIs, “A Gathering of Eagles.” I also talked to another guy about sous vide cooking. While we were there, Sgt. NG got called again by the hikers who were not moving rapidly, and he encouraged them to keep hiking, and PT too thought it would be best for us to stay put and get our food.

Sunday, August 21, 2016

It's Sunday, the day of rest. After a fire department BBQ at Aspen Grove on Friday evening, probie training on Saturday morning, a call out to Aspen Grove on Saturday afternoon, and another call out to Aspen Grove on Saturday evening, that's something to look forward to. I believe I had just started to sleep when a few minutes after midnight there was another call out to Aspen Grove, for the hikers TERT was helping down. My wife thought I should skip it, but the call out said that only a handful of people were being paged, and I figured that if I was being picked, I'd better show. Tired most of the drive up, it began to occur to me that the ORI could indeed be hard if we were kept going continually. I did get a bag of doughnuts at a convenience store, for the people we'd be meeting. PP, LT, ZM, PG, and I marched up to second falls, where we met the group coming down. They had earlier called family members for help, and one brought up two 2x2 boards and a blanket to fabricate a stretcher, but they weren't using that. We layed the young man down on the ground, and after quite a lot of trying PG and ZM eventually got an IV in, and because he'd been throwing up for hours they gave him an anti nausea drug, and a lot of fluid. Then they finally got enough blankets on him, including mine. I gave my water to the people with him, who had run out, and shared doughnuts. Rehydrated, the young man was much more mobile after most of an hour of rest, and he moved quite well the rest of the way down the trail. By quarter after four in the morning I was back home, and sleeping in more than usual on Sunday.

Saturday, August 27, 2016

Only one trip to Timp today, but of course it was a waste of time and money, and that in the middle of the annual Springville emergency drill. A kid supposedly fell 200 feet from near the summit. Given those facts, there might have been a real rescue brewing, maybe even one with helicopter shuttling up of personnel. Except that the kid didn't fall that far, he probably just slid a fraction of that distance, and he just got a cut on his head. So, although we and the Mounted Posse were called out to Timpooneke, Life Flight plucked the kid off the mountain and flew him down to his daddy's vehicle so his dad could drive him off the mountain. And I scratched the side of my truck against a sign in the crowded parking lot. One thing SAR didn't go to, and probably didn't know about, was a guy who dislocated his shoulder when he fell below the saddle, but reduced it himself and refused medical attention from TERT.

Thursday, September 1, 2016

Our team meeting started with training from AF on mass casualty incidents, half of it about the National Incident Management System (NIMS), a nationally standardized bureaucratic way of organizing a management structure for any given disaster, based on an incident command structure (SAR's ICS is sort of a different animal, as it's more the name for the group of leaders, albeit the group from whom incident commanders will be drawn), but most UCSSAR members don't understand the NIMS structure at all. There was also some training about triage and some practical tips for scene management involving things like minimizing radio traffic from individual units. Also,

command centers have a green light on them. Three blasts means to run away. Injured team members should be triaged as red for morale purposes, supposedly. After learning these things we looked at the mass casualty incident trailer. After that training, the business meeting portion had new webbing handed out to non-probies so old webbing can be retired. There's a jiggling of how to count stats going on. The wind farm at the mouth of Spanish Fork Canyon wants SAR to train on how to rescue their people, and although one would think that's the fire department's job. The wind farm people have donated money to us, though, so we're happy to do it. I don't think PG wants probies training on that, though, just like we weren't to be around for MRA recert. I like those windmills; I call them "The Majesty," which bugs my wife because she thinks they're an eyesore. ICS apparently expects that we'll be helping with fires soon, directing traffic or evacuating people or some such thing. We were told that a Life Flight helicopter broke down recently in Salt Lake during a mission, and that's why we continue ground operations even if they're planning to hoist. We were also told their hoist ship is old and running on scavenged parts, and that the newer helicopters can't easily be retrofitted with a hoist because they're heavy and underpowered. The Salt Lake Tribune has been running stories on how under regulated small helicopter companies with little single engine helicopters and not thoroughly trained medical crews are making immense amounts of money plopping helicopters down at bases all over rural Utah and then charging tens of thousands of dollars for responses. Life Flight and AirMed are really peeved with them for undercutting the old dogs, and getting away with it because of the regulatory climate, or rather the anti-regulatory climate. Lt. P wants the SO to get a rough water boat, and he's trying to get the airport to get an airboat out of airport expansion money for use in aircraft wrecks in the lake.

Friday, September 2, 2016

Inauspicious. We got a call out to Stewart Falls. Not an ankle, this time. A guy who had fallen. He'd been trying to climb the falls by going up the steep dirt slope to the side, and had lost his footing and tried to run the dirt slope out but had tumbled at the bottom. Pretty fit guy, but he wound up in the stream, in pain. North Fork Fire was there, and a helicopter was on the way, so why get us up there? To get out of work, I suppose. NB and I arrived together, first and second, with LS close behind. North Fork had two medical people at the falls, and had assembled their litter at the trailhead, so NB, LS, and I took the litter up, and more people kept dribbling in. As we were on scene, someone asked me to support the man's back while they worked on him; he was sort of half sitting up against a rock. One person was trying to fashion a pelvic sling/pelvic binder out of gauze, which was peculiar, and another person was fashioning one from a trouser belt, which could stabilize a pelvic fracture if nothing else was available. Apparently they thought there was some pelvic instability. But when the man started complaining about spasms in his thigh, I asked if the thought was hip or femur. LS said the right leg was shortened, and it was a hip problem. But she was listening to the medical people who were already there, and a shortened leg would happen from a femur fracture. Someone said there wasn't swelling or deformity suggesting a femur fracture. I didn't see bruising to suggest the level of force that would cause one, but then I didn't have a good view of all of the thigh, and that's not

dispositive anyway. When FW arrived he apparently wondered about a femur also because he later told me he said he had a traction splint, but North Fork said they had one too but didn't need one. FW took my blanket and started cutting it up so that it could go under the man but have strips on each side for tying his legs together; I thought that was a really interesting idea. I'd set my Ridgerest foam mattress out to pad the litter, and then PP did too, and when someone decided to use a mattress as a splint PP handed them mine, and they attached it to the side of the man's hip and thigh as some sort of splint, with a SAM splint inside. So we had a mix of wilderness medicine and urban medicine going on. PG arrived with a pelvic splint/pelvic binder, which they put on him as I followed instructions and helped lift him so they could get it under (after I got another helper to help manage the weight). It wasn't initially apparent how the pelvic sling buckled, and the person putting it on was hesitating, so I asked PG to talk to him. When they tightened it the man said it was hurting, and I said that it would be somewhat uncomfortable, but if it was really hurting he should tell them. He didn't. AirCare landed back toward the trailhead and hiked up too, but they seemed to mostly hang back on scene. At this point there were a lot of people doing things, and it wasn't clear to me who the medical leader was. The guy started shivering so I put a blanket on his torso. We got him into the litter and down the mountain, and he was refusing additional pain meds and so that was a painful ride down the trail. The helicopter took him away. OG was not enthused about replacing my Ridgerest, which went with the helicopter, and I went by the ER to see if I could get it back. The guy was getting a CT scan and it wasn't with his stuff. PN from SAR was working a nurse shift at the ER and said the guy had a femur fracture. The man's fiancée was there, and was nervous about what she'd Googled about femur fractures. I told her femur fractures were serious fractures, and there would probably be things online about them once having high mortality, but that was a century ago, and now orthopedic surgeons can manage them just fine. When the guy came back PN found all the stuff still attached to him, and she said she'd bring it to SAR training on Saturday. I wished the guy well, and he seemed unhappy. Back at home I was agitated by how things were unduly messed up, and had a hard time settling down enough to sleep that night.

Saturday, September 3, 2016

Mass casualty incident training in Provo Canyon, for the whole team. There were a number of simulated victims up the side of the canyon, and not enough people to deal with them, which was a point of the training. So there was triage, and practice getting people to transport in the correct order according to the seriousness of the patients' injuries, and so forth. A lot of it seemed to go well, except for the part I was involved in, which was highly aggravating. I got assigned to a technical rescue team, but when no need for technical rescue developed we were told to form a search team off to the side of the area with most of the victims, to bushwhack through the brush and look for additional victims of a mudslide or some such thing. I actually found a victim pretty quickly, a teenage girl feigning unconsciousness with stickers on her that indicated she was breathing and banged up. Apparently there was supposed to be a pelvic injury sticker also, but we didn't see it. We assumed because one sticker was yellow that she'd been triaged yellow even though I thought she was red, but later we found a

patient with an actual triage tag in addition to stickers, so I think the triage team missed the girl. At any rate, I radioed for medical, kept trying to get someone to come over, and no one did. All I got were questions about whether the girl's name was such or so, and I couldn't answer that because she was unconscious (at one point I did say I didn't know her name but she looked like a such or so; I probably shouldn't have been flip on the radio). We were to keep searching, so we did. When it looked as if all the patients had been found and either transported, or in the case of a lady we found way up the hill were being transported, I asked again why I hadn't heard any radio traffic about our first find. I was sent down to look, and there she was, with no one by her. So I got back on the radio and wondered if maybe some medical person could finally come over. PG came over, and just about then there was a three blast warning to evacuate immediately, leaving patients and gear due to imminent (simulated) danger. We had no interest in leaving the girl, so PG picked her up over his shoulder and carried her out while I walked in front on the downhill side in case he lost his footing and pitched forward. I was exasperated at how this patient was lost in the shuffle, but I kept silent through the long and self congratulatory debrief.

Sunday, September 4, 2016

In the evening we were called out, along with the Mounted Posse, to South Fork, for staging at Big Springs because someone had fallen from a horse somewhere and couldn't ride back out. North Fork was there, and Life Flight, although the helicopter had supposedly been called off but apparently came anyway since it was already flying. There was the first of what would be a variety of GPS coordinates, indicating the person was way up Shingle Mill Canyon to the south, past a Girl Scout camp. When Life Flight took off it flew north, though. Then they went off radio for a half hour, which annoyed ICS. Meanwhile, SP had been sent to the equestrian trailhead with his radio, and then I was asked to use my pickup truck to take a litter there. When pulling a litter half off of FW's side by side, which he used to drive parts down to my truck at the lower part of the park (due to limited parking above), I managed to bang my lip with it. Getting ungainly in my middle age. Once at the equestrian trailhead, the horse people wondered if we had the bag with straps so they could carry it that way instead of in big saddle bags, and I didn't have it but volunteered to go back for it, and they argued with each other awhile about what to do, and I just went and got it in case it would help. So they took it and didn't use it at first because a guy was able to get on a horse with the litter parts on both sides, but later he put it in the bag. I didn't see the point of going back and possibly being assigned to a night time hike that could take hours, to a location without easy access that no one seemed to be sure of anyway, just so a helicopter or the horses or the motorcycles could deal with things before the hikers would get there, and I was probably still responsible for returning the litter, so I stayed and chatted with SP until we got word the helicopter had picked up the patient. Since they couldn't hoist, I don't know how they got the patient to wherever they landed. The posse brought back the litter, and I returned it and headed home. This was the only call out we had over the entire Labor Day weekend. Which is fine, since my back hurts from carrying a litter patient out during training Saturday.

Saturday, September 10, 2016

My wife and I went on a hike this morning and talked about things. I opined that SAR is a bit of a disappointment because it does not seem like a team of finely trained rescue experts, but more like a bunch of people who can't even manage a good ground search. But that might be both a bit harsh and premature. Later, there was a call out to Stewart Falls. On the radio it sounded as if they might cut off responses once a few people entered the canyon, since they guessed that not a lot of people were needed, but not so many people checked in so it turned out I didn't need to worry about being called off. At Stewart Falls itself you can see the lower falls just fine from the bottom because they're right there, but some people want to see more of the next falls up and so have beat a route up the north side where there was vegetation but it is now just bare, eroding dirt. It's dangerous, but a lot of people try to get up there (or across the top of that area from a side trail), including the guy last week who fractured his femur attempting it. Today an older man who was hiking tried to get across from the side trail but by going a little higher up in some ledges, and he got to where he felt he couldn't go safely in any direction. So he stayed put and phoned for help, which is the wise thing to do. When SAR got to him by scrambling up, he told FA he'd read about staying put in a book about Utah County Search and Rescue, which book FA happened to have written. While a couple of people were helping him down, a couple of us were keeping people out of the path of possible falling rocks. I was supposed to go to the top of the steep, eroded, slidey place to do that. It was sketchy, and I wouldn't have gone up there hiking on my own, and it was where the guy broke his femur. I was thinking of femur fractures all the way up. Later, coming down, I used my webbing looped around a root to minimize fall danger. But it was good to help someone who needed help. Afterward Sgt. HF took us to lunch. He's from south county, and wonders where our south county call outs are. Maybe when hunting season comes.

Thursday, September 15, 2016

We got a GPS coordinate to meet at for our new member meeting, which arrived less than an hour before the meeting. It was for a spot two hours out in the west desert. The subsequent correction put us at the mouth of Whiting Canyon, which is quite near my house. DB and GB had hidden some beacons up the trail, and we were to go to GPS coordinates and then start searching for a nearby beacon. In my little group, GU pushed forward past where I thought our destination was, and ended up a ways away because he had inputted a wrong number. LS and I stayed on target and found that beacon, but near a subsequent beacon I didn't pick up anything until very close, and then later my receiver started worked correctly again. Frustrating. Some other people were wandering aimlessly, but we all had a jolly time. Back at the equestrian trailhead where we were parked we worked on litter tie ins. At our litter, there were many junior high level jokes. The group I was with is a nice group of guys, but they're also the handful of whom I sometimes wonder why they're still on the team, as they could be a bit more committed. While we were training, probie SB emailed that he is dropping the team. Later we were supposed to go down to the SO to learn how to tie down ATVs and PWCs, and put them on a charger after use, and so forth, but most people wanted

to bail on that and maybe do it Saturday. A few of us went down. I don't think we're going to be the most diligent group that ever existed. While at the SO, DB told us more about something he'd mentioned at the canyon. The board is apparently entirely scrapping the venerable title of the ORI in favor of calling it the New Member Evaluation or some such thing. There may be no rope ascending past a knot, and there might be more flexibility in how to ascend. It sounds as if the whole thing is going to be more of an evaluation, and less of a trick and pressure the probies type of thing. Which works for me. Although the acronym of the new test is a problem. DB had mentioned a couple of times that it would be good if people didn't throw him under the bus. When people were leaving, I told him I knew there had been someone worried about being trained for ORI but I was grateful to him for working with us. I'll email the SAR president about that also, so he knows there's definite support for DB.

Saturday, September 17, 2016

Probie training today was our last medical session. Heat and cold injuries, and so forth. GU brought chocolate milk and pastries. Three of us contributed to a gift card for ST's new baby. SC had us do a patient assessment scenario where midway through, the person evaluating the patient suddenly fell unconscious. It was interesting to see how the people doing the assessments responded. Then home for lawn mowing. Around 9:30 p.m., as the day was winding down and there'd been another long stretch without a pointless call out (or in other words, if I were to be cynical, without a call out), we were summoned to Bridal Veil Falls for a technical rescue. That had the distinct possibility of being a big deal, although it turned out to be a walk off with a couple of hikers who didn't get down before dark and were nervous even though they had a light. A hasty team went up, and LS was vexed she didn't get to go with them. Some more of us went up to set a couple of hand lines in bad spots. GH and I tied two 75 footers together and then sat around waiting. She seems convinced her comments have resulted in the ORI changes. I think they should change the name of the new ORI from New Member Evaluation to New Member Assessment so the acronym sound like "enema" instead of "enemy." The last two guys coming down volunteered to undo our ropes if we wanted to use them to get down first, which worked for me. GH fell on the trail; she does that, but she gets up and keeps going. Adequate turnout despite a BYU game in Provo. RF didn't go up the cliffs, as he has some medical issues. ST has been dealing with foot problems, which makes it hard to hike and so hard to go to call outs. ST, EG, and GU are low on call outs, but apparently SAR is letting it slide.

Tuesday, September 20, 2016

In early November I noticed in the SAR stats that I went to a medical training at the SO on this evening. Can't remember it, though.

Friday, September 23, 2016

CPR class tonight at RF's; he has an EMT training business, and is doing CPR training for SAR team members some evenings for free (or SAR is paying, or something). The

Steeles, and RF's girlfriend Tori also took it. I made cookies. We all passed, despite my teaming up with Tori on infant CPR and leaving her laughing when she came to the scene and asked what happened and I said "My baby suddenly stopped crying and peeing and burping and pooping!," and then hollering "Stop molesting my baby!" when she took a femoral pulse.

Sunday, September 25, 2016

Oh, this could have been a big one! At church I initially missed the vibration of a text alert on my phone, but soon enough noticed the call out to the lake for a plane crash. Wow, that would be a lot bigger deal than another injured ankle at Stewart Falls! I ran all the way home, although these days I do seem to be built for comfort, not for speed. Anyway, I changed quickly and was about to head out when the radio said the plane looked like it took off. Took off? What, did someone report a floatplane landing as a crash on the lake? I don't know, but I do know this was a mighty short call out to something that didn't actually happen, and that's all good, and yet it didn't feel quite 100% good.

Friday, September 30, 2016

Two weeks of nothing, and then a page up Jacobs Ladder in the evening, which has a reputation for long rescues. I didn't read the text carefully at first, though, and it turned out to be a body recovery. While people headed up, I went to the SO to get a trailer with a couple of ATVs on it, and I towed it up to a church parking lot in the Suncrest area by the ridge between our county and Salt Lake County, where we staged. Also, I did a wily thing. Just before arriving, I put on my motorcycle helmet and goggles. So when I got out of my truck, Sgt. NG looked at me and asked if I'd trained to ride, then OG looked at me and said I wouldn't be riding, but ultimately he let me! DB was a bit concerned because there would be some technically difficult spots, and there were. I followed his side by side UTV up, which had probies in it. I was under direct orders to follow him and not to try to race ahead, which was silly. First of all, I wouldn't have known where to race to, and second, outrunning DB is pretty unlikely in any event, but I did my best to be obedient. We probed a few different places, trying to find a spot amongst the new construction where we could get out onto the old jeep roads cross crossing the foothills, finally found a path, and then worked our way over to the Jacobs Ladder area and up the mountain a ways. Some of it was pretty steep and rocky. I followed DB diligently, except he kept losing me, and at what turned out to be the last hundred yards or so I lost him again and just waited for FW to come up on his ATV and lead me. The group turned out to be just around a corner, parked at a trail junction. We had been told there would be a victim perhaps forty feet down an embankment, but after a half mile or so of hiking there was a hiker just fifteen feet or so off the trail, on a slight slope, just right there. Face down, wearing a backpack, as if he'd stepped over to the scrub oak to do some business. The detective finished investigating, and we didn't need to wait for the ME, so we bagged him and put him in a litter. He had one trekking pole in his hand, and some blood on his hand and forehead and on the handle of the trekking pole, where perhaps he had fallen onto the hand and handle during

some kind of medical episode. There was one tricky part of narrow trail where the people with the litter had brief difficulty, but then we made it to the UTV with the ambulance litter platform on back, and strapped the litter on. Brought out the victim's backpack too, and it was heavy. By then it was dark. It was a sad event, but I felt satisfaction at a team working well together. At about this time, in the Salt Lake Valley people looking for the wife heard from neighbors that the victim often hiked with his autistic son, but we didn't see anyone else. I offered to let BH or GH ride the ATV out, but they declined, although I think BH wanted to. We started out, and I was told to follow FW precisely, right in his tracks, and I'd be all right. I don't recall who said that, maybe FW himself, but at any rate that's what I did. We got to a spot where the lead UTV was stuck at a tight corner and they took awhile finding a way through it, and not without damage. Then we got to a spot where FW was just inching his way down a steep bit of rock, being very slow and careful, and I was thinking that if it was that hard for FW, it was going to be an experience for me. Suddenly his machine pitched down and sideways, with the left back wheel coming up a foot off the ground, and I thought he was going to go over, but he gunned it to flatter ground and made it. I hollered down at him to come up and take my machine through that part, but he told me to do it, and to swing to the left a bit instead of going straight down. He did walk up and DB walked down, and they stood there and stepped me through it, giving conflicting advice the whole time. Then we headed further down the mountain, until at one point where old jeep roads braided someone went roaring by on one that split off the the right. So much for staying together. And then I couldn't see anyone behind me. We got further down, catching up to the UTV with the litter, and no one else was coming. On the radio it sounded as if DB had gone to the right. Some people were lost, though, and FW and I rode back up, found a couple of machines returning from having split left and gotten nowhere, and led them back, and then we all went to the church parking lot. DB said I should have stayed with him. Perhaps, although hard to do given the advice to follow FW's tracks, and given that DB broke off from behind us without telling me he was doing that. Oh, well. There didn't seem to be a lot of enthusiasm for going to get a bite to eat, but ultimately a number of us showed up at a Wendy's. I go to those because, apart from not having had dinner, it's helpful to get to know people, and the SO pays for the food. Midway through that, we learned that the victim's wife had just been reached, and her first question upon learning that her husband had died while hiking was "where's my son?" They were definitely hiking together, and he's severely autistic, and they'd left Thursday so it was possible the boy had already spent one night alone on the mountain, but for sure was now into at least one night alone if not a second. The detectives got the dad's phone plugged in, found photos on it apparently from this hike, and it looked as if the boy, then believed to be 18, had a backpack with some equipment in it. After some thinking, Sgt. NG decided to go back to the church with OG, and try to get Life Flight to fly and see if they could spot anyone. I said I'd be happy to take the ATVs up to the church and wait with them, but I was sent back to the SO with them. There were muzzleloader hunters on the mountain and there was hope they would find something. There was also hope DPS would bring their aircraft with FLIR capability up from the St. George Marathon, to use the infrared sensor to look for body heat, but they didn't. Life Flight came up but didn't see anything with their night

vision goggles. SAR and Mounted Posse were put on notice to be at church at first light for daytime ground search.

Saturday, October 1, 2016

Up early, off to the SO to reattach the trailer, and then north on very little sleep since I was worrying all night. Almost plowed into a Provo cop who was headed to the jail and made what I thought was a bad lane change. At the church, Salt Lake County SAR was there, and a lot of the horse posse. It took an hour and a half or more to get people assigned to something and deployed; Salt Lake got tired of waiting and went over to their side of the mountain to begin ground search. A fixed wing airplane was searching, and Life Flight came back up and took ZM and AG high on the mountain to spot, and then continued to search for awhile by air. ICS distributed photos of the boy, who we later learned was 21, and some aerial photos of the area. OG sent K9 and horse teams to some foothill areas by just circling an area and saying to search it. OG told me I could take an ATV again but I knew BH wanted to so I mentioned that BH knew the area better than I do (which is true) and could ride it, and OG nodded. Vehicles were sent off somewhere. But that seemed to cost me deployment, because people mounted up and headed for the mountain, and GG and I were left standing along in the parking lot while ICS retreated to the command center. That was odd. With press showing up, I figured I should look busy so I got out my binoculars and climbed up into the bed of my truck and peered around for a long time. GG went up on the hill for a different vantage point and a homeowner let him use a deck. It looked as if what was happening was a lot of overlap and retracing of paths on the jeep trails in the foothills, very little hiking up the mountain, and I don't know whether anyone went to the spot where the body was found to search from there. The aircraft were spending a lot of time looking at the higher places. Late in the morning ICS called back a UTV and told me to join PG and HG, go to Alpine to get a guy who knew where the victims usually hiked and where they had cached some gear, and take him up with us to show us that area and search it. That sounded like a really good idea, but while we were arriving in Alpine we got better news on the radio. A hunter or hiker on the mountain found the young man. A lot of people knew we were looking, and I think that helped turn the many people already on the mountain into searchers. In fact, there were so many people on the mountain not seeing anything, I'd worried that what with the young man not being quickly found he may have fallen somewhere hard to see, or was curled up under brush, or something. But he was apparently just walking around perhaps a quarter mile above where his dad had died. A bit after he was reported found there was somewhat concerned radio traffic indicating that no one was sure where the guy was. Salt Lake didn't have him, we didn't have him, and it was possible he'd left the hiker who found him. Ultimately he was reacquired. By then his mom, who had been in the parking lot, was put in a UTV and taken up the mountain to meet him. He was nonverbal and didn't say anything about what happened. However, a bunch of box lunches from KFC had just been delivered, and he and his family really liked launching into them along with us. Meanwhile ZM and AG were still hiking down. Not much of a debrief, and then I left as soon as I could. On channel 2 news there was a fine story featuring a picture of my truck, as I was in it with binoculars. It is a heroic truck.

Thursday, October 6, 2016

While at a prosecutor's training conference in Vernal there was a call out for a body recovery of a hiker in the Silver Lake Flat area, who was found dead the morning after what was to have been a short evening day hike. I missed that call out. In the evening there was a monthly team meeting, and I missed that too.

Friday, October 7, 2016

Twice a year there is night training, and so tonight we had the general team training instead of doing it tomorrow morning. There were three stations, focused on basic MRT skills, up at the Aspen Grove trailhead. Sadly, the first one went poorly. We were supposed to do hypowraps, but none of us brought sleeping bags or tarps from our cars, so we had to go scrounge stuff. On all the call outs and trainings I've been on, no one has ever tied a patient into a litter as shown in our bible the Lipke book, but GH insisted on not only doing a Lipke tie in, but not doing the low angle hypowrap tie in, which was our scenario, but a high angle tie in. She wrapped webbing onto our victim's thighs, and skipped a chest webbing harness. I argued the whole time, including about whether we should be using square knots, which are usually a bad knot to use when life safety matters (Lipke does mention a "square bend" for one limited use). It was a little contentious. At our second station we practiced improvised webbing harnesses and knots. The last station was rappelling using Scarabs, which is a little different and I had to take a few minutes to nail it down, and simulated pick offs. There was a little campfire at the end, and I stayed to help put it out. Pretty up there under the stars.

Saturday, October 8, 2016

I put a rope up in a tree by my house, and spent a few hours trying to work out how to ascend it and pass by a knot going up and down. We may not get tested on that, but it's still possible. Rigging up prusiks to ascend isn't so bad, just uncomfortable and physically draining, but getting past a knot can be miserable. I figured out that I could use my personal anchor sling to clip a small ascender onto the rope above the knot, hang from it, and then instead of untying prusiks below and then tying them above and trying to get my feet into the loops again, just leave prusiks attached below, unclip from them, and clip into ascenders above. It sort of works. Better than a progress capturing prusik did on a pulley system I showed my wife in the yard: it utterly failed to grab the rope. That seems to happen with new probie prusiks. It isn't good. Later, when we went to bed, my wife said I'd probably be woken up with a call out soon, and I told her I was so tired that such a thing just couldn't happen.

Sunday, October 9, 2016

At 12:30 a.m., woken up for a call out. Hiker up Whiting Canyon needing help down, part of a party of three elk hunters. That's just minutes away. I was the first SAR guy there. A lot of people checked in, but I didn't see so many people on scene. Maybe

they heard AirCare was flying in, and maybe they didn't want to do a middle of the night hike for nothing, which is what happened. I'm guessing Mounted Posse was wondering about being summoned to this also. Anyway, PT had me shuttle up trail a bit first, with FW driving a side by side, and I showed FW where the trail junction is. Could have gone farther on the UTV, but PT didn't believe that. As team one assembled up at the trail junction, PC, PG, me, and BC started up, but BC fell back immediately, and so I hiked nearer to him. The airplane was flying overhead, not seeing much. A motorcycle started up canyon, but missed the turnoff. BC and I weren't getting good radio reception, but when PG and PC stopped and we caught up, it seemed from their 800 MHz radios that FW found two hunters who bushwacked out the wrong drainage, and AirCare got the reluctant hunter to force himself to his feet and hike a quarter mile to their helicopter. Team two caught up to us. When we got word the helicopter had lifted, we hiked back. Years ago I hiked this trail to the top, and the trip down was incredibly painful on my knees. This time I had my trekking poles, and they earned their keep both ways on this shorter hike, especially for stabilizing on the cobbles. GH tends to fall in terrain like this, so I hiked behind her and helped her get up. I got the gate locked, after digging out some rocks that had fallen into the hole the gate post drops into, told PT that gate lockup was handled, and got home by 4:00 a.m. Pretty skies up there, and not too cold, but especially given that it is a Fast Sunday at church, this call out made for a tiring day.

Thursday, October 20, 2016

WO the MRT "sergeant" had planned an EMRT thing for tonight, which is also the new member meeting night, and DB told us to go to the EMRT thing and then he'd meet with us for a bit at the end (although he never did actually show up). WO wanted to test lowering systems in which instead of a main line and a belay line, there are two main lines. Since main lines usually go through a hand controlled friction device that doesn't automatically lock up, whereas belay lines go through tandem prusiks that supposedly automatically lock up, dual mains haven't been considered safe by most anyone. But the expensive MPD rescue device will do raises and lowers without separate prusiks and will automatically grab the rope if it starts sliding fast, and there was recently an article published that WO emailed around about using two MPDs in a lowering system, so some agencies are planning to use those devices for this sort of "twin tensioned system." WO wanted to test Scarabs and brake bars to see if they might work in a twin tensioned system instead of MPDs, since SAR doesn't want to spend money on MPDs. As it happens, the article he sent around specifically said that Scarab use would be questionable because the person doing the lowering would have adjusted tension for about half the weight being lowered, and a sudden failure of the other line would immediately put a considerably greater amount of load on the remaining Scarab with that Scarab's horns not having been wound for that much load. Whether the person holding the rope could manage was the question. Also, a dual Scarab system fails the whistle test, which is the concept that if at random someone blew a whistle and every person managing a rope system let go of what they were doing and put their hands up in the air, the system would still hold the load. The article basically said twin Scarabs would be dangerous. Tonight, after testing various lowering configurations while cutting

anchors as people walking down a hill with a litter were putting weight on the system, the powers that be seemed to like their low budget dual tensioning system. One virtue is dividing the load between two ropes. I think it might work on a low angle rescue, and it is nice that it doesn't involve trying to keep prusiks from locking up at the wrong time, but adopting this system might be a bit of a stretch. They're going to do more tests, with video and better documentation. It would be nice if we also gave a little more attention to edge protection of the rope.

Saturday, October 22, 2016

Final probie training before the NME (ORI) next month. Suddenly, ascending ropes is supposedly back in the NME, supposedly the test may go Friday through Sunday with not a moment to stop except when in camp in the boonies for a few hours of sleep, supposedly DB and GB aren't supposed to be giving us any hints, and supposedly it may even be harder than when OG ran it. Whatever. I don't know where this last minute back-to-hazing nuttiness came from, but I think a bunch of us just want to get this test over with. Especially since some of us have effectively already been tested extensively on how we handle stress in the field, given almost a year's worth of call outs. CM showed us an ascending technique. We practiced putting people in a litter using the doable Lipke low angle tie in method (after DB had EG climb into the cage to retrieve a couple of litters for us to practice with). There was confusion again over GPS formats, and despair over the hint that it might be helpful to be able to read a map; it is astounding that we have people on the team with zero land navigation skills. It was also frustrating that my own GPS wouldn't find satellites upon startup for a very long time. Later in the day I tried ascending a rope in a tree at home using CM's technique, but without her gear setup I had a hard time getting down. Perhaps I just need to make adjustments and keep trying.

Wednesday, October 26, 2016

Yesterday there was a text message asking who could go on an evidence search today or tomorrow. I could do it this morning. It turns out that down by Indianola, just inside the county line, some hunters found a shallowly buried body. And it seems the young man had been beaten, stabbed, and burned before being buried. So that's not a natural death. The SO was hoping that a large group of searchers might find some cast off evidence somewhere nearby. AG's dog was pooping all around the burial site, and that was interesting. We formed a line like a radius projecting out from the burial site and did a 360° search of the area along a creekbed and up the sides of a small floodplain, first doing a circle close to the site through grass and burrs and snaggy scrub oak, and then a circle further out through the pinyon and juniper. Then we swept up the canyon on one side of the creek, and down the other. Found lots of inconsequential things, but not anything that stood out as great evidence. I pointed out an old shotgun shell that OG had just stepped over without seeing, which was kind of funny. It was a nice morning out in the frost under the slowly rising sun, especially once the sage started getting aromatic.

Saturday, October 29, 2016

Yesterday while walking into work I got a burst of severe mid back pain out of nowhere. The bottom of my back has been sore, but this new thing was out of the blue. Then it happened again at lunch, leaving me reeling. I mostly took it easy the rest of the day and today, my birthday. This needs to go away before the NME. I need to restart my back and leg exercises to build flexibility. Of course, on this day the trusty phone text went off, calling us up to a late evening body recovery at Bridal Veil Falls. My wife said not to go, and I listened to her. But later my younger son noticed water leaking into the basement bathroom from upstairs, making a mess of the wall under the paint. So I was slightly agitated that night.

Sunday, October 30, 2016

At the crack of dawn, another call out to Bridal Veil Falls, for a missing hiker. And once again my wife said I should save my back for the NME, and I did, but probably missed quite a technical lowering setup. It turns out the hiker last night was a Chinese foreign exchange student who died in a fall and whose badly broken body was found by other hikers who tried to do something for him, and needed to be washed off, and at the time the team knew he was hiking with one of his sponsors. The adult's body was found quickly this morning on the west side of the falls, and it's endlessly amazing that people go to that area. Fatal mistake.

Wednesday, November 2, 2016

ZM had been emailing SAR encouraging people to help be victims for training purposes at a local EMS conference. I had part of an afternoon available so I went over, but I was the only SAR person; almost everyone else there was from his junior high school class. There was some good moulage, and his daughter really made the participants work when she led the screaming, and she would also run back into the scene after having been taken out for triage. No sense in it not being an adventure for the people being trained!

Thursday, November 3, 2016

Team meeting. Some abbreviated CPR/AED refresher info from RF, and then just odds and ends. OG was given an engraved knife for his work with ORI over the years. PG gave us a checklist of things we're supposed to know for the NME, most of which we're ready for, although prepping the Achilles boat is on there and we have never done that. Ascending a rope is on there, and they won't say if that involves going past a knot. I'm in a state of unease because I ordered a caving harness so I can ascend more readily (a caving harness allows a lower attachment point for a harness mounted Croll ascender, which helps make ascending more efficient), but there's no sign it shipped and no response from the company. The board has moved the start time up a half hour, and GH announced she couldn't do the Sunday day because her son has a missionary farewell, and we immediately opined that we should go to the meeting to

support her, but that last part didn't fly with the board. Interviews for the new probies will start soon. I think my old physical therapist may have applied. There have been a few call outs but with only a couple or three people going out. The airboat has gone out on the lake for duck hunters, for example. There's a funny story about a small team being sent to hike off trail up a mountain where the airplane had spotted a light assumed to be some lost hikers, and the team found no one, but ES, the SO's pilot in the plane, assured them they were right on target, and then they noticed a dying headlamp on the ground that had been dropped some time earlier by someone. There was a vote the probies couldn't participate in about changes to team guidelines, which wasn't a big deal. There was some more discussion of team standards and going to new things like twin main lines, and whether we should be leading in the development of search and rescue techniques instead of following and being scared of legal liability. One liability lowering thing they are apparently going to work on is incorporating rope usage information into ICS forms, tied to unique identifiers on each rope, at least for each 200' rope.

Friday, November 4, 2016

Got a call out to some reservoir in Payson Canyon that turned out to be right off the road by the mouth of the canyon, which an ambulance could pretty much get to, for some guy who hurt his leg. So that was a very short call out, and although I radioed in I doubt I (or probably anyone) will get credit for it; but OG did complain about too much radio traffic.

Saturday, November 5, 2016

Team training. Today was planned to be short, just a rotation through the various storage areas for gear to make sure we all know what gear we have, and where to get it if we're assigned to go load or tow some. We looked at the ATVs, which we already knew about, but also got to drive a side by side around a bit, and the old army Humvee. We looked at the snow machine trailers; someday we'll need training on riding them. We looked at the PWCs and the Achilles inflatable boat with the rigid platform. That boat is mostly for body recoveries. We didn't really look at the big houseboat, but we did peek in the big mobile command center. We also saw where drinks are stored if we need to resupply Gatorade or water or whatnot. There's also a side room I hadn't seen before where the Mud Buddy boat is kept, and also a light pole and generator, and a towable ski ambulance it seemed they were pointedly ignoring. Some of our gear, like the little hovercraft, seems to be like that: largely abandoned but still sitting around. We went to the fenced in yard where there's a dive trailer of sorts, and ice rescue trailer, the two MCI trailers, and some metal pipes that can be used to put into the river as a grate to catch a body. The best thing was that afterward Sgt. HF had arranged with the SO's pilot to fly us in groups in the larger of the two Sheriff airplanes, which are old Cessnas, a 180 and a 210, for twenty minutes or so, to give us a feel for what the circling is like during searches since it makes some people sick (like Sgt. HF, and it turns out, LS). Now people know whether to volunteer to help spot from the plane. I did OK, although I am actually sick as of yesterday.

Friday, November 11, 2016–Sunday, November 12, 2016

LS and LB had CM do a pack check for them Friday at lunchtime to get ready for the NME, and I went over to have CM look at my caving “frog” rig so I could see if it was set up well for ascending rope in case that turns out to be on the NME. She said that what I had was a caving setup (which I knew, since I built it) but I only needed something more basic, so she redid it, and then had me go up her rope that is permanently mounted in her vaulted living room. I got tired and nervous, and wasn’t breathing well, and she could see that and told me to slow down and stay calm. Then she adjusted stuff and made me do it again. Fastest time up and down, but I was not happy again. If this is part of the NME, I need to take it slow, especially camming down the rope. Some efforts just jam up when you try to do them too fast. Then I went home to pack. I got out my old, enormous pack, and loaded it with many things. Then I lifted it, and my back almost broke in two right there in my home. That led to getting out my lighter weight pack and figuring out how much I could leave behind. I spent all afternoon working that out, and then headed up to a restaurant in Orem where our probie group had decided to meet and eat. Due to still being getting over a cold, I wasn’t very hungry. It’s funny that SAR thinks the secrecy of the test is so important for building fear or whatever, when it really can’t be as secret as they want because people have to schedule the time off on their calendars. I don’t think it’s all that scary because I don’t think they plan to fail us absent some glaring inability to perform. And, I think some of us already know who can do what while under pressure. At any rate, we got a message at 5:30 p.m. to go to the SO to start the NME, and for some reason not everyone arrived together, with one of us lagging a long time. The first stage involved driving into a well lit equipment bay and then getting out our gear to show we had everything we needed. I didn’t have my recently acquired backup headlamp, for some reason, and showed by phone flashlight as a backup light, which didn’t go over well, although I later realized I had a flashlight in my glove compartment and another light in my water gear. My knife was a mini Swiss Army knife and they thought something bigger would be better like the multitool I left behind, but generally I was set. While waiting for others I decided to use a dark ditch to urinate, since there is no facility in the equipment bays, and sadly discovered there was water in the ditch. That could have gone a lot worse. We then all set off for the lake, for a scenario out at Lincoln Beach, and got into our water gear to look for someone missing along the lakeshore. Most people went along one part of the lakeshore, but a couple of us were assigned by our probie team leader to check the jetty on the other side of the channel. We didn’t find anything there, and couldn’t make radio contact with our team leader to see what to do next. He later said he couldn’t hear us but was trying to reach us, and ICS said they could hear each of us. There was so little water in the lake. Less than a foot over the mud in the boat channel, maybe. My partner experimented with walking across the channel rather than going back around by the boat ramp, immediately sunk in to his knee, and decided that was enough. When we eventually reached the other group they had found the first victim and a boat, but not a second victim. ICS got after them to search the other direction, which was mud flats. I headed into the mud and it was impassable, it nearly took my bootie, and I got thoroughly messy and stinky when I fell down forward and then backward in it. Then we got called back. Later we learned there

was no other victim, just the one: HG playing a drunk duck hunter with long hair. He had got up and stared wildly at my face in the dark, so I smooched his cheek, which set him back. The next thing was a scenario up Payson Canyon at the Grotto. There was a GPS coordinate, and instead of following the established trail as it wound up the short canyon, some people followed their GPS in a near straight line up the north edge of the canyon floor, and that didn't work out as well. We had a victim with a leg injury there by the waterfall, and we worked on that awhile and I helped a bit as directed, and then someone was told to scout down the trail for a better route out and I was to help him, but he didn't want to keep doing that and came back, whereupon I got chastised for having followed him back. It turned out we were supposed to find a non trail route on the south side of the creek that was supposedly better than the Forest Service-established route with footbridges that all the families hiking up there follow. OK. We got the victim out, finished another debrief, and were off to Diamond Fork. There was a group campsite past Red Ledges where a lot of SAR board and ICS people had their expensive travel trailers set up for the weekend, and were living large. We left our cars there and were taken to the Monks Hollow trailhead and dropped off with instructions to find a simulated missing person up on the mountain who had gotten lost looking for the hot springs. We slogged up a narrow gully and through scrub oak for about a mile. I was on the faster of the two parts the team sort of split into, and I noticed a route up out of the gully, and it looked from tracks like people had taken it earlier that day, so I showed it to my probie team leader, and we found the guy pretty readily from there. At that point he said he had a hiking buddy was further up the mountain. We split into two separate teams, and a different probie team leader took the other group up the mountain looking for the other guy. They went the wrong way and never found him, eventually getting to him only when the team leader had to have ICS radio them a GPS coordinate. Meanwhile, we made a fire and a shelter and a bed for our victim and gave him warm clothes, and I got out some chocolate for the water and then a noodle dinner and then candy bars for dessert, and we fed him. His accommodations weren't quite as good as some of ours, but were pretty decent. Meanwhile, the upper victim was the older but irrepressible GG from SAR, who had gotten into things perhaps a bit much by stripping off some of his clothes so he'd actually be hypothermic. They bundled him up and warmed him, and took care of business there. We got to bed about 2:00 a.m., and were up a bit after 6:30 a.m. It was cold that night, but I only felt cool for a short time. Saturday morning some of us made some breakfast and we broke camp, and the other team hurried down the mountain before us, because their team leader was trying a bit hard. We did not have rides at the bottom, but had to hoof it up the road to the group campsite. I was really vexed with this scenario, because one of the ICS members specifically and repeatedly told us to bring technical gear including our ascending gear, and we didn't need any it. That is many pounds of unnecessary and bulky gear, and if we were to have a rope ascent test popped on us in the middle of the night it would be absolutely essential to have. Since I can't carry unlimited weight, that meant I left behind things that would have helped the victim be more comfortable on the scenario we actually had. From there we drove to the Red Ledges picnic area, where there were six testing stations that we rotated through in pairs. Each station required a practical skills test and a written test, and one probie would do one, while the other did the other. I started with avalanche skills, and while my teammate took the written test I

searched for four avalanche beacons. Being the first person doing the test, everything was covered and hidden, and they had squirreled away the beacons so well that even upon reaching them, they were hard to find. Since there was no snow, they were hidden in rock and dirt. I got the first two quickly and burned the entire rest of my time apparently within a foot or two of the third. In hindsight I should have skipped it and looked for the fourth, but I noticed hardly anyone else got any further. Thankfully, the rumors through the year that we would fail if we didn't do every single thing completely turned out to be false. Next, medical. I went off to the side and took a written test and apparently did quite well; SC was amazed and later said it was the high score. I then did a patient exam on someone with a wrist injury, and that went well. There was one awkward moment when I was lifting up a pant leg as part of a head to toe examination, and found what I thought at first was an ankle monitor like parolees wear, and I wasn't sure what to say about that in the moment, but it turned out to be an ankle holster. Then another station and another test, and litter tie in. Things went a bit downhill there because although I made GG quite comfortable in the litter with my air mattress and down jacket pillow and blanket roll under his knees, I didn't get my clove hitches tied correctly and I was tired and didn't care to try to fix them, and also my leg stirrups weren't routed quite like in the Lipkie book and I didn't even have the first memory of how to do that the book way. But it was still functionally OK, and AG thought instead of following Lipke we should be using trucker's hitches instead of the clove hitches that I've never seen anyone actually use in the field, and I sure agree with that. While I was doing the written test for that station my teammate took his turn at the litter using my stuff, and GG actually fell asleep in the litter. So, near the end of the rotation we weren't sure whether to wake him, and not having time to pack up I had to carry armfuls of gear in relays. The next station was knots, and I nailed all of those, including the clove hitch, and gave good answers on safety standards. By the ropes station that came next, though, I was really tired and hungry. However, I remembered how to set up a 3:1 raising system along with a belay system without looking it up (which it turns out they weren't allowing us to do after all, despite earlier being told we could). Then I converted it over to a 2:1 raising system. I blitzed through all that, and I think the written test went well also. The final station was GPS. There was an extra credit question about the location of our vehicle, to reward people who had a GPS location for the trailhead, apparently, and I just wrote in that my truck was in the Red Ledges parking lot. Accurate enough, and probably better information than a GPS coordinate. But I do think I botched a coordinate conversion to UTM. The nice thing about that station was there were muffins and chocolate milk, which perked me up. I wish it had been my first station instead of my last. Then I went on the GPS treasure hunt where I found all the markers fine and retrieved them for PT, since it was the final rotation. That was it for individual testing, and we got a short break for a lunch they provided us back at the group site. Big sandwiches, although I wasn't especially into eating a lot at that point. We knew that just after we'd started Friday, PG had emailed our spouses inviting them to come to a demonstration at midafternoon Saturday, with a dinner to follow. We were told to suit up in river gear after lunch, and figured that would be part of a show for the spouses. But they only got there at the end of that scenario, which involved searching the river. One teammate didn't have a throw bag, so I lent him my extra. I found a little river rock slide to slide on, but it was too bumpy and shallow to be much fun. I

probably should have been more serious, as when we retrieved the victim pretending to be drowned and I wanted to start compressions. I was in the river and actually saw the guy first but a teammate got down from the bank and beat me to him, barely. My wife was there and we walked back to Red Ledges where the probies were given another scenario. A cliff fall, with Rescue Randy the 250 pound dummy, and a team at the bottom to do medical and rig a litter, and a team at the top to set up and use a raising system and then convert to a lowering system. It was a more complex situation than we usually do on our own, and that exasperated MS, one of the long term team members who thought we were being made to spend hours on a difficult situation that was beyond our training, but we mostly made it work. I guess at one point the litter flipped, but Rescue Randy stayed inside. LT thought I initially rigged a Scarab wrong, which is true, although I had recognized that and fixed it correctly by the time he said anything. Meanwhile he sat on a cactus. Twice. I was having some difficulty running the belay system by myself as quickly as the group that was running the raising system was doing their raise, but it all worked out and eventually ran pretty smoothly. There is a saying: "slow is smooth, and smooth is fast." The probie team leader on the bottom spent too much time yammering on the radio, using his "rogers" and "overs," which we don't do, and that led to some kidding by some people. Apparently I got impatient and said to myself, albeit out loud, that they ought to do something like "just pull on the rope and move the litter, darn it," or some such thing, when the lower team wasn't getting the litter off the ledge. But that was probably pretty difficult for them to do from their angle. It was getting toward dusk and I wasn't looking forward to the scramble down even in partial daylight, which had a dangerous spot at one point that stymied me for a short while. My wife helped me put up ropes, and we went back to the group area for a dinner, where it was rapidly getting cold. There had been a lot of gossip that dinner would have some sort of ceremony and we'd be finished, but I wasn't so sure of that. Indeed, the spouses were called over and told we'd be staying another night, as we were told separately to gear up for another scenario. At that point my wife had already left, though, because my mother is having some health problems at our home, and our older son and his wife are in town because her dad died today. We got a little pep talk about how sometimes calls pile up, and stress levels go up, and there was one more thing for us to do that would test our mettle and resilience and so forth, and if we wanted to quit at any point we should talk to MS the psychologist. A couple of probie team leaders were appointed, and I think everyone but me was a team leader at some point in the weekend. It was a medical scenario that FW and some of his friends put together with many injuries and many things going wrong. I thought we'd have to stay up all night caring for a critically injured patient, but we didn't, we just had to run the scenario, which was bad enough. There was, predictably, a second patient not initially part of the call out information. Some of us set out to search for him while one team member who was way overexcited was so busy shrieking supposedly urgent instructions that my other teammate started muttering unkind things about her, and we simply stopped listening to her. We found the second victim, who had wriggled under a downed tree so it looked as if it had fallen on him. As it happened the guy playing the victim had been laying in the cold without much clothing for some time, and was shivering in real life, so I put blankets on his legs and chest (the tree was in the middle) and a jacket over his chest just so he would be OK while pretending to be a victim. I

discovered simulated leg injuries, but they had bled only a little and were not actively bleeding, so even with fractures they weren't first priority. But instead of then working on these leg injuries that I had reported repeatedly to the medical people, they had me come around the tree and do spinal stabilization. This situation was wildly chaotic. Our team leader was in over his head, the teammate next to me was pretending to know what he was doing while screaming at me for not helping him do the wrong thing, and when the other medical team came over from the first victim and sort of took over, there was continued mass confusion. My team medical guy told me to put a tourniquet on an arm, and the main medical guy, a doctor in real life, told me absolutely not to. I've seldom seen so much tunnel vision, and so much overexcitement. It was a situation that begged for one person to have everyone step back, and then call them in one at a time to do specific tasks and nothing else, assessing the patient and taking care of business in an orderly manner from most important things to least important things. I did splint an arm, and someone liked how I molded the SAM splint to my own arm and hand before placing it on the patient's similarly sized arm. Better than the idea one leader had to pull sticks from the woods and tie them to the patient's legs—I joke about Boy Scout splinting, but to see it advocated here was scary. Finally the fiasco was over. PG debriefed it, and decided to get after me for not taking care of the legs. I took exception to that since I'd been ordered to leave the legs and manage the neck. That went back and forth for awhile, since PG doesn't have an ego that does well with people not showing obeisance, and PG ultimately concluded that since none of us had experience leading teams in traumatic situations—which isn't true in my case—that we shouldn't feel too bad about how things went. The thing is, he was peeved that I didn't just jump in and do something on my own. That, however, is the main problem with the team: everyone wants to jump in and be a helper. Hence, probies run off away from their team to look for more exciting things to do. Multiple people begin multiple treatments on the same injury, as at the Stewart Falls femur fracture where rampant tunnel vision and a failure to communicate meant that people fixated on a supposed pelvic injury and missed the femur fracture that FW and I thought should have been caught. People literally pull litters in different directions as if they're trying to draw and quarter it. That sort of tunnel vision from being hyper excited is endemic in the team and has hurt patients. It's really embarrassing. Professionals don't do that. To get chastised for doing what I was told to do was especially ironic given that when I interviewed for SAR a year ago, there was a specific question about what to do if one thinks a particular medical course of action is appropriate but the medical leader wants to do something else, and it was clear that the answer they were looking for was that in non-life threatening situations we will do what we are told, and discuss it later. When the scenario debrief was over we hiked to an area with fewer cow pies, and set up camp. I had my ultralight tent again, and everyone else bivvied. I did share a blanket and an extra sleeping bag. Before bed, though, we had a campfire and MS was there to do a talk about what we'd been through, and the stress of changed expectations, and how to be resilient. We talked about each scenario through the weekend, and about possible improvements to the NME. Then he sent us to bed, and he and most of the rest of the team lined up right at the head of my tent and eventually complained about snoring. Snoring? Me? Yeah. I like my ultralight gear, but I got a bit chilly after awhile, until pulling my parka into the bag and over my torso. I was too lazy to get out

of the bag to look for hand warmers, or to actually add a layer. Sunday morning we were taken back to the group site and fed a big breakfast, which we woofed down in one of the travel trailers. Then we had a debrief in an equipment trailer, although a couple of people had left right after breakfast. It turns out that no other team has been kept two nights before. Once a team had to stay after dinner for more scenarios because the board was mad at them. But we supposedly did super, and got held over as an experiment. Also, apparently we're supposed to vote or something on what to do about one member leaving early to go to her son's missionary farewell, which I can't imagine any of us think is an issue. We talked about chipping in for a gift for DB and GB. It seems that even though we all passed, the board wants to talk to us individually about our scores, and it seems we still have to be voted in by the membership. PG made a comment I'm not sure how to take about whether my wife was OK because she left early; I didn't spell out in detail why. I hope my stepping on his ego last night doesn't sink my little boat. It was good to get home, and I got to see my son, daughter in law, and grandson before they left.

Friday, November 18, 2016

I've been doing SAR odds and ends: sending a check for the trainers gifts, making cookies for CM to thank her for helping me prepare, and returning to her some electrolyte shots she'd given me to distribute that were left over, and sending an email to the team with a photo of the prusik I put on my harness during the NME so someone can identify it and get it back (that email didn't go through for a couple of days). A team member told me about a rumor that I was in trouble with PG for arguing with him, and there that there was a perception among some people that I'd argued too much during the NME instead of being humble, and I should fix that quickly and be very meek during the post NME interview later this month, because I ought to stay on the team since we need new blood, and I need to not upset people known for not being forgiving. It seems it's not good to be on PG's doo doo list, and is best to avoid the politics related to people who have not exactly worked their way up the ladder entirely through altruistic works. OK, I was worried about that last scenario debate. So I emailed PG an apology today, and I'll be very meek later this month. But I think I've probably ended any chance of being on the wind turbine rescue team PG is building.

Sunday, November 20, 2016

There was a page to Bridal Veil Falls, and I figured I'd better go and see what my status on the team is, although I lacked enthusiasm for charging up the mountain in the dark on those sketchy rocks. I was bushed after yard work Saturday, perhaps because of giving blood Friday, and I was still tired today. At home we had loaded things into the truck to take to the transfer station tomorrow, and I didn't want to take the truck on the call out, so I threw my pack and technical gear in my wife's car and headed out. Still got there before team one left, but thankfully was put on team two, so I didn't have to join the initial rush with the testosterone poisoned group. OG was on a safety push to make it clear that with the seasonal change we need to be more concerned with rain gear. I had on nylon pants, but nothing over the top of them, and was low on backup

light also (although I neglected to mention that), since a lot of my gear was back in the truck. But I made it through the safety check. Even so, DB and BH were moving quickly once our team started off, but not everyone else was, so I tried to stay in between and keep an eye on both contingents. I'm almost never the slowest hiker on a team, but I do believe that most times it's good to not get out of visual range of the person behind you. The rain picked up and started washing mud over the rock, which made things more interesting. I made it up a good way before we were told to set up a hand line. I traded a 200 footer I was carrying from OG for a 75 footer, and HG and I, with some help from AG, clipped the 75 footer into some anchors while DB and BH set up a 200 foot hand line a bit ahead. Then I layered up, checked by radio at HG's request to see if we were supposed to wait or move forward, and was told to stand by, with no further word arriving. So I sat there wondering what I was doing on a cliff in the middle of the night in the winter rain, and waited for team one to bring the hikers down. It turned out there were four of them, not three, and they didn't need a raising system to get them out of where they were found, and could walk out. After they went by I got word from DB to go up and disassemble the 200, and while I was doing that he showed up with the final SAR people and took over stuffing the rope bag, because I'm a slow stuffer apparently. We went down to the next hand line and other people took it down after some of us used it. The hand line below was already gone. I found a patch of ice or snow off to the side, maybe from some earlier snow, and someone observed that if it was colder and the rain iced, it would be a mess up there. I let my elders, of a sort, go ahead at various points where we'd clumped up, and so came out last of a line of people, to see that the college students who'd been hiking were mighty happy they were down safe, and able to drive off. It was a good rescue. Gave OG back the 200 I had that I thought was his but given the trading of gear was not sure about, but he thought it was the right rope. Debriefed, and went home. As one can see, I am a very good behavior. For some reason, though, I didn't sleep really well. I don't know what it is about high places in questionable conditions, or fear in general, that seems to stress me.

Tuesday, November 22, 2016

Some email came saying an IHC doctor training program that likes to do an annual outdoor day with avalanche training, and likes a SAR person to help, but the regular person won't be available in January. I volunteered provisionally, so long as no one else better qualified wants to do it. The emailer person said I would be fine, but then WO said he'd like to do it, at which point I tried to bail but WO said we both should help. So that'll be an interesting day, to see what IHC does with that program. Also coming up early next year: manning a booth at an outdoor expo thing for sportsmen, organized by the husband of a lady we hauled off Timp, who wants to let us have a booth there.

Tuesday, November 29, 2016

The dreaded end of year interview. I knew there would be criticism, I just didn't know what the end result would be. And indeed, the group led off with PG observing there had been problems at the NME with my mouth, but that he had got my apology email

and distributed it and thought it was a good thing, and that I probably knew what changes needed to be made (although they kept circling back to this subject, including to some gallows humor from our Israel Canyon body recovery which apparently offended someone, probably PC, quite a bit). I passed everything, even the litter tie in (which I specifically asked about, and they looked at that evaluation and thought it looked good except there was something about padding, which was actually the best thing I did there). It seems I got the highest score on the MRT section, which is our bread and butter, and which I'd knocked off pretty quickly, so I was happy about that. SC didn't say much about medical, so I don't know if my medical test score was indeed the highest, as he'd suggested at the time. I had chatted with GH beforehand since she had just finished and RF was back being interviewed before me, and she was peeved that she had not in fact passed, due to not making a harness from webbing and also not setting a tensionless anchor, on account of not having been asked to demonstrate them. I told her I thought no one imagined she couldn't do those things, it just needed to actually be checked off. I suspect she didn't get asked to do those things during the MRT session because she ran out of time while doing other things, but I'm quite sure she can pass those off to FA in just minutes when she gets an appointment to show him she knows how to do them. I passed everything, and will be voted on with the other probies on Thursday, which apparently is a group ratification vote.

Thursday, December 1, 2016

We wrote on cards for DB and GB, and I hope more probies paid GU for the restaurant gift cards because he bought them in the full amount (\$100 each) before knowing if he'd get checks from everyone. The team meeting started with pizza, and a video on the year, put together by FW. I began to be concerned when I saw how much of the video would be about the last scenario of the NME, where I didn't do so well (although in watching the river part, it was clear I was more tired there than I thought). He put in an excerpt where I was, in a peeved voice, inquiring into who was medical command, and upon seeing that I said "Thanks!," and he called back that he could have put in more. True, but not much more. There was a vote to allow the group of nine of us onto the team, and it was unanimous, for which I was grateful since I was a bit worried about getting past that last hurdle. However, the vote was for everyone but LB, who apparently didn't pass the MRT part of the NME and didn't show at the meeting today. GH got sworn in and he didn't. Twelve new probies will be coming in next year, including Brendan's brother and LS's husband. Thirty thousand dollars worth of VHF radios are almost ready to be distributed to us. GH says she and I will get the GPS units handed out to others earlier. A sunglasses company donated sunglasses to the team. There were thank you letters to SAR and donations. A report on efforts of the board to, among other things, raise morale by getting the SO to send us out on more things over the year. Two people are on probation and five got warning letters for not meeting stats. GB bolted some rock on Bridal Veil Falls, and may do some more, for rescue anchors. The Ranger UTV is fixed from the day people were looking for the autistic man on Jacob's Ladder. Sgt. HF had a pin map, and also a chart printout, showing the year's call outs, and there were several I wasn't aware of that weren't

paged and weren't talked about at subsequent meetings. PC was added to the ranks of the ICS people, LS got the probie of the year award, and PT got the member of the year award. The latter was a no brainer, although he wasn't the only possibility. The former was interesting. LS has no land navigation skills at all and has a hard time making GPS work as a substitute, and also is overly excitable and does not quite know her limitations. I'd have picked GU or ST or BH or GH (although she may have offended the powers that be by undercutting Brent despite being cautioned that would not be a good idea). There was also an award for most call outs, but miraculously PG's call out percentage shot up a month ago overnight, and he edged me out. Imagine that! Sgt. HF did create a runner up award for that most call outs category and gave it to me, and since the prize was goggles instead of an engraved knife it was actually more useful. There were some awards for lifesaving and other things, and the life saving group testified to prayer as a means of finding victims. I do like that people in SAR aren't afraid to pray before meals, or occasionally on call outs, apparently. Other people can quietly tolerate that, and this is how things really ought to work in civil society. But I digress. The SO had a gift for us: a headlamp and a folding saw. So, everything in my stash of gifts I already had at least one of, but that's OK. Then elections. PG was installed as president by acclamation, which should have required a unanimous vote but there was a nay vote that was ignored. LT became vice president; I voted for FW even though he'd dinged me in the video, and had earlier gotten bunged up at me in Israel Canyon because he wasn't listening to the radio well about what I was saying regarding victim location. LT got after me at the NME about a Scarab rigging I'd already fixed, and is one of the people trying to rise fast whereas FW has paid his dues, and I'm not sure I trust the younger people as much as the older ones. Plus, in my experience with volunteer organizations there are always people who want to feel important and so they go after elected positions, but they don't necessarily then put in the time to do the job, and it actually takes a lot of time to adequately do most of these kinds of volunteer jobs, so there has to be more than just ambition for glory as a motivator. Anyway, now two guys who were really nice to me today but that I know are peeved with me, are running things. Some people kept seeing if I'd run for something but I didn't want to. GH ran for quartermaster but lost, and was a little annoyed by the old boys club in the SAR board. We probies will be sworn in at the January meeting in front of the new probies. I was bothered more than I thought I would be by this evening, probably by PG overrunning everything he could as it smacks a little of bullying, but perhaps I'm overly sensitive. I do see little point to putting in the effort next year that I put in this year. That said, SG and DL and CM and PT and Sgt. NG were really complimentary to me about the year and my being important to the team, so that's nice. After thinking about it, I concluded that the reason the election bothers me is that it reminds me of Myrtle Point. So here is that story, as a little digression:

The joke was, "How do you tell a good EMT in Myrtle Point?" That question's pithy answer explains much about how things go right in public safety endeavors, and how things go wrong, across the decades and across the country.

After graduating from high school in a small southwestern Oregon town thirty some years ago, I took a few classes at the community college in Coos Bay. SWOCC also offered night classes in the farther flung rural communities, and I took an Emergency Medical Technician class in Myrtle Point, thinking it would improve my first aid skills. It didn't take long, though, to get hooked on the world of ambulances. I was the only person in that class from the nearby community of Coquille, and figured I'd be volunteering on Coquille's small ambulance crew. I didn't know it at the time, but that would have been a limiting experience, since at that point my town's ambulance service was horrifyingly incompetent. But our instructor liked my performance, and had the paramedic who ran southwestern Oregon's largest ambulance service drive across the county to come to the class, where he met me and ultimately invited me to train with them. Getting experience in Coos Bay also led to the ER nurses in the area's largest hospital insisting I come train in the ER frequently. All of this was a great break. In fact, it became a dream job. In those days, the EMTs I worked with, unlike the volunteers in the surrounding communities, worked above their official certification levels, at pretty much whatever level they and the local EMS system thought they should be functioning. So those were heady times. I was training new EMTs, doing air transfers as well as ground ambulance, and hoping for more 100+ hour weeks. Our ambulance service was probably what the reformers writing for the Journal of Emergency Medical Services were calling at the time "cut throat ALS," as were many non-metropolitan systems trying to provide higher level service on a shoestring, but for me it was just a rush. I knew I was doing well at important work, and I figured I'd eventually overcome my liabilities of being young, naïve, and hampered by a tendency to think like a mechanic instead of like a patient care person.

My boss made one thing clear early on, without saying much of anything. We were hurrying up Highway 101 to a head on collision between a pickup truck and a little Ford Pinto. Word was that there were people trapped in both vehicles, that the pickup was leaking gas, and the Pinto was on fire. Agencies from all over the area were responding. I was ecstatic. My boss was driving, and told me to give him my arm. I reached out, mystified, and he reached over and checked my pulse. It was, of course, racing because I was excited. I don't recall if he even said anything, perhaps he just made a face. But I conceived the notion right there that providing emergency services isn't for wannabe heroes to fantasize about great deeds, it's about calm professionals managing the task at hand.

Soon I brought along to Coos Bay a former EMT classmate who seemed to be flagging in the Myrtle Point environment, and she taught me about jackets. It turns out that the two of us had passed the final practical

exam, but most of the class failed. This was something of a calamity for the Myrtle Point people. Many of the ambulance volunteers there were very clubby. They knew who they wanted in their clique, and they didn't want anyone else. My classmate was not one of them, but the people who failed the exam had friends in the organization who had wanted them to join, and the established EMTs there were worse than unwelcoming to her. They were cruel. They didn't just try to shut her out, they tried to drive her out, and some went further. Meanwhile, they did their other thing. Highway 42 ran right through town, and next to the highway sat the community's sit down restaurant, with big picture windows along the sidewalk. The EMTs who considered themselves the crème of the community permanently appropriated a booth with a window view, and loved to sit there for hours, wrapped up in their patch-covered Dyna Med jackets, ever the superheroes longing for action. A few people didn't join in, like my EMT instructor, a logger who constantly emphasized putting patient care before everything else, and who didn't spend time playing games that focused on EMTs instead of patients. But the self-professed, overeager heroes, they were something to behold. And to avoid.

This restaurant thing led to the answer about how you could recognize the good EMTs in Myrtle Point: they had their jackets stuffed under their car seats.

Myrtle Point had a troubled organization with leadership problems, in which good individuals withered when they spent too much time focused on patient care instead of kissing up to the institution. Thinking back after the December meeting, I realized that I've smelled this smell before.

Saturday, December 3 2016

CM was doing cave training, an introduction to the cave environment, at a cave near Oak City. I didn't want to go, since I've been in caves several times and could do without spending a day away, but she has been a support to probies and I wanted to support her. So Saturday morning GH, LS and her husband, PC and three of his kids, and I showed up at the SO and carpooled down an hour and a half to the middle of nowhere outside a little teeny town, to a cave where the entrance had been broken open wider by the film crew that used that cave to make the movie about the attempted rescue at Nutty Putty. It turns out that breaking open the entrance just a little made the cave more humid generally and the earth slightly wet instead of dry. The bacteria that colors the walls of the cave may have spread more also. Thankfully, it didn't make the rattlesnakes more active; there is a pit just inside the mouth of the cave that rattlesnakes live in. This cave had actually been highly decorated once, but now due to so much public access it gets thoroughly trashed. Lots of spray paint. It's still a live cave, but the formations will never grow fast enough to counter human impact from kids climbing around in there. I'm surprised I haven't heard of rescues down there, because it's a maze of a cave that would be easy to get turned around in. Lose light,

and you'd be truly lost. There were some tight crawls, but they were optional—something to do for adventure instead of going the easier way. I did not like this cave, actually. There was lots of popcorn and coral, and those formations were very hard and there was even a fair amount of it low, and on the ground (sometimes broken off). So it was really rough on the clothes and skin, and often unavoidable. A cheese grater of a cave. I did go down one squeeze, was halfway through, and got a burst of rapidly mounting claustrophobia, and shimmied back up and out of that section. Personally embarrassing even if no one else noticed. Another reason I wanted to go on this trip was to hear chatter about SAR, since there is some virtue to being tied into the grapevine a bit. I rode down with GH. She was somewhat unhappy about the NME, because she says she did tie a harness and set up a 2:1 raise, but that FA was expecting something else more commonly done in the team, whereas GH went by Likpe. I gather that when she eventually showed that to FA, he let the board know she'd done things correctly, so she's set. I'm unclear on whether that discussion happened at the NME or later. LB apparently failed the MRT section of the NME, which is the part the board seems to care the most about, and gossip is that his ego is wounded. CM said he'd skipped some appointments to train with her, and has another this evening. I sent him a couple of texts of encouragement telling him I'd had to swallow my ego and apologize and that sometimes we just have to let our ego be hurt but push onward, and I hope those texts get him to see CM so he can demonstrate things to FA. During the cave training PC talked to me about the NME since everyone on SAR seems to want to know what we thought about it and particularly the extra night. I think the extra night was simply annoying, due to being pointless. The blather about stress and not quitting and using the provided psychologist was bizarre. All we had to do was lay down and sleep until morning. That's not difficult. Rope ascent came up, and he said that back during the week of the search of the mine area for the lost woman, DB and a few people went back to the pit to clear it, and DB went all the way down, while PC and others had a 3:1 raising system backed up on him in case he got into trouble with vapors at the bottom, or exertion, or anything else, but he ascended faster than they could work the system. So they think ascending skills can be handy. GH had to leave early, so I rode back up with CM and with her friend FF who had come. FF is the person who has been making a documentary on SAR, although in the year she followed SAR there weren't many call outs. That drive back included rampant and interesting gossip. Eight hours of travel and training, and when I got home to wash my dirty clothes, I found the washer was broken in a way I am finding difficult to fix. Such is life. When my wife came home from grocery shopping I did get to sit down and relax with her, which is always the best end to a day.

Monday, December 26, 2016

I loaded up my Christmas present, a truck box for my truck bed, with SAR gear. That box holds most of my gear except for what is in underseat storage below the back seat, leaving the back seat free again. We're getting email about next year's schedule. Looks like they want to schedule EMRT at times when the probies will be busy with their own training; I'm guessing that's on purpose. Also, it looks like the board wants to have more frequent medical training, focusing on advanced EMT skills. I went back

over these notes this week, and it seems that there were some good things that happened in SAR. We have a son getting married next year, and a daughter with serious health problems, and there are other challenges in the family that are more important than SAR, but in the coming year I'm going to fit in some time to be a rescue hero.

Thursday, January 5, 2017

We former probies, we happy few (nine of us), were sworn in today at the team meeting. We didn't have to buy uniforms, we just wore our brown official looking shirts and stood up in front and took an oath. PG seemed to think AD was still with us. LB wasn't there but apparently is still able to work on passing off MRT. Every time during the meeting someone said something about new members this or that, I started thinking it was for us, but it's not anymore, which is nice. AF was added to ICS. There's a boy from Eagle Mountain missing but no one has a clue where he went, so sometime in the future we may have to go search some areas for a body. Not so much information this year on money the board will spend on members, and the quartermaster didn't have the GPS units for the few of us who never got them, and there weren't new non-probie window stickers for the former probies, and there wasn't quite a plan yet for getting us IDs with access cards, but it may take another month for things to settle out. Hopefully Sgt. HF will put together some snow machine training soon; I suggested it, pointing out that I haven't wrecked anything in quite some time. Ideally I'll get one of the newer parkas on Saturday, and a probie will get my jacket. CM was replaced as cave "sergeant," which is odd but I didn't ask her about that. JL from Utah Avalanche Center came and taught us today (he also works as a Jenny Lake ranger, one of the best SAR teams in the country), and asked some questions to see what resources we have, all of which is good since we're not especially on each other's radar enough. He also had a saying that I think we should pay attention to, about slowing down and taking a breath before charging into a situation: "Don't just do something, sit there!" Saturday will be avalanche rescue training at Aspen Grove, and it sounds like trainings this year will be less scenario based and more about specific individual skills. One interesting thing: I had noticed earlier that in the final stats two of my Aspen Grove call outs were missing. When RS fixed it, I had 110% call outs by SAR stats, which beat PG by a couple of points. Of course, that wasn't mentioned at the meeting. So, another year begins, and UCSSAR blunders onward toward glory.

GENERAL TEAM MEETING*	Attended?
January 7, 2016 (Thursday)	Yes (Introductions, avalanche, hypowraps) 11mi/3h
February 4, 2016 (Thursday)	Yes (Flat ice, common rescue areas) 11mi/3h
March 3, 2016 (Thursday)	Yes (MRT, fractures) 11mi/3h
April 7, 2016 (Thursday)	Yes (LZs, medical emergencies) 11mi/3h
May 5, 2016 (Thursday)	Yes (Swiftwater, environmental medical) 11mi/3h

June 2, 2016 (Thursday)	Yes (Open water, vacuum splints)	12mi/7h
July 7, 2016 (Thursday)	Yes (BBQ)	10mi/2h
August 4, 2016 (Thursday)	Yes (Self care, MRT)	11mi/3h
September 1, 2016 (Thursday)	Yes (MCI)	11mi/2h
October 6, 2016 (Thursday)	No (Hypowraps, odds & ends)	
November 3, 2016 (Thursday)	Yes (Cardiac care, odds & ends)	11mi/3h
December 1, 2016 (Thursday)	Yes (Awards, elections, etc.)	11mi/4h
<p>*The June team meeting and training were combined; mileage and hours are listed here. This list does not include the optional June 16, 2016 critical incident stress debriefing, which I did attend, although mileage and hours are listed in the total below (22mi/2½h). This list does not include the optional August 19, 2016 BBQ that North Fork Fire Department invited us to, which we did attend, although mileage and hours are included in the total below (51mi/2½h). This list does not include the end of year interview, although mileage and hours are included below (11mi/1h).</p>		
11/12 =92%		

GENERAL TEAM TRAINING*	Attended?	
January 9, 2016 (Saturday)	Yes (Aspen Grove for avalanche training)	63mi/6h
February 6, 2016 (Saturday)	Yes (Utah Lake for photos & flat ice)	25mi/6h
March 5, 2016 (Saturday)	Yes (American Fork Canyon for MRT)	60mi/5h
April 8, 2016 (Friday)	Yes (Lake Mountains for rope, med, & LZ)	68mi/8h
May 7, 2016 (Saturday)	Yes (Provo River for swiftwater)	44mi/5h
June 2, 2016 (Thursday)	Yes (Utah Lake for open water)	20mi/6h
July 9, 2016 (Saturday)	Yes (Rock Canyon Park for MRT)	21mi/4h
August 6, 2016 (Saturday)	No (MRT)	
September 3, 2016 (Saturday)	Yes (Upper Falls for MCI)	38mi/4h
October 7, 2016 (Saturday)	Yes (Aspen Grove for MRT at night)	52mi/4½h
November 5, 2016 (Saturday)	Yes (SF for asset familiarization, & flight)	13mi/4h
<p>*The June team meeting and training were combined; mileage and hours are listed in the team meeting section. There was no December training.</p>		
10/11=91%		

SUPPORT MEMBER MEETING*	Attended?
December 10, 2015 (Thursday)	Yes (Orientation) 11mi/3h
January 21, 2016 (Thursday)	Yes (Ice rescue, radio usage, gear needed) 11mi/3h
February 18, 2016 (Thursday)	Yes (Medical) 11mi/3h
March 17, 2016 (Thursday)	Yes (Pack checks, litters) 11mi/3h
April 21, 2016 (Thursday)	Yes (ATVs, MRT) 11mi/3h
May 19, 2016 (Thursday)	Yes (Beacons, safety, GPS, swiftwater) 11mi/3h
June	Yes; Pine Creek counted as our training this month
July 21, 2016 (Thursday)	Yes (Ascending, navigation) 11mi/4h
August 18, 2016 (Thursday)	Yes (Medical) 11mi/3½h
September 15, 2016 (Thursday)	Yes (GPS, beacons, litters) 16mi/3½h
October 20, 2016 (Thursday)	Yes (EMRT) 14mi/1h
*This list does include the December of 2015 orientation meeting. This list does not include the optional May 26, 2016 BBQ at Canyon View Park in Provo Canyon for probies and their spouses, which we did attend, although mileage and hours are included in the total below (32mi/3h). On June 3 and 4 we went on a trip to Zion National Park to go canyoneering in Pine Creek, which I did attend, and DB later said that would count at the probie meeting for June.	
11/11 =100%	

SUPPORT MEMBER TRAINING*	Attended?
December 12, 2015 (Saturday)	Yes (Battle Creek for hike & anchors) 41mi/4h
January 23, 2016 (Saturday)	Yes (Tibble Fork for snowshoes & anchors) 68mi/4h
February 20, 2016 (Saturday)	Yes (Dry Canyon for GPS, beacons & rope) 50mi/4h
March 19, 2016 (Saturday)	Yes (SO for medical) 11mi/3h
April 23, 2016 (Saturday)	Yes (SO for ATVs) 11mi/3h
May 20, 2016 (Saturday)	Yes (Salem Triathlon water safety assist)
June	Yes; Pine Creek counted as our training this month
August 20, 2016 (Saturday)	Yes (SO for review & rope practice) 11mi/5h
September 17, 2016 (Saturday)	Yes (SO for medical) 11mi/3½h
October 22, 2016 (Saturday)	Yes (SO for review for NME). 11mi/5h

*This list includes the December of 2015 orientation training, and it includes the Salem Triathlon in May that was essentially our training for that month, although since it turns out SAR considered that a call out the hours and miles for it are included in the call outs section. On June 3 and 4 we went on a trip to Zion National Park to go canyoneering in Pine Creek, which I did attend, and DB later said that would count at the probie training for June; mileage and hours are included in the total below (36mi/28h), since that trip was not originally part of this list. In July our training was cancelled.

10/10=100%

NME*	Attended? Passed?
November 11–13, 2016 (Friday–Sunday)	Yes/Yes 121mi/41h

*The New Member Assessment was called the ORI before this year.

CALL OUTS*	Attended?
February 19, 2016 (Friday evening)	Yes (Battle Creek hiker ledged up) 41mi/4h
February 23, 2016 (Tuesday morning & afternoon)	Yes, 3 rd (Israel Canyon search/recovery) 68mi/5h
March 25, 2016 (Friday morning & afternoon)	Yes (Dry Canyon/Timp avalanche) 50mi/4h
April 11, 2016 (Monday evening)	Yes (Bridal Veil Falls short call out) 25mi/½h
April 16, 2016 (Saturday evening & night)	Yes, 2 nd (Chimney Rock MVA recovery) 84mi/4h
April 19, 2016 (Tuesday morning)	Yes, 1 st (Diamond Fork Hot Springs drunk) 43mi/3h
April 23, 2016 (Saturday night in the early a.m.)	Yes (Diamond Fk Hot Springs short call out) 6mi/½h
April 24, 2016 (Sunday morning)	Yes, 2 nd (SF reservoir search/recovery) 15mi/3h
April 24, 2016 (Sunday evening & night)	Yes, 2 nd (Covered Bridge Canyon hiker) 22mi/4h
May 9, 2016 (Monday evening)	Yes (Lincoln Beach boater) 44mi/4h
May 14, 2016 (Saturday evening)	Yes (Stewart Falls fallen hiker with ? CP) 69mi/1½h
May 16, 2016 (Monday morning & afternoon)	Yes, 1 st (Eureka mining area search) 84mi/7h
May 17, 2016 (Tuesday afternoon)	Yes (Stewart Falls fallen hiker) 63mi/2h
May 18, 2016 (Wednesday morning)	No (Eureka mining area search with dogs)
May 19, 2016 (Thursday evening)	No (Three Forks two person only call out)
May 20, 2016 (Friday evening)	Yes, 2 nd (Eureka mining area recovery) 84mi/4h
May 21, 2016 (Saturday morning)	Yes (Salem triathlon water safety assist) 22mi/3h
May 22, 2016 (Sunday afternoon)	Yes (Tibble Fork fallen hiker) 68mi/3½h
May 25, 2016 (Wednesday night)	Yes (Grove Creek but south was called off) 8mi/½h

May 28, 2016 (Saturday evening)	Yes (Nunns Park missing older man)	35mi/1½h
May 28, 2016 (Saturday evening)	No (Big Springs simultaneous call out)	
May 28, 2016 (Saturday evening)	Yes (Stewart Falls missing boys)	42mi/2h
May 30, 2016 (Monday evening)	Yes (Bridal Veil Falls injured boy)	35mi/4½h
June 4, 2016 (Saturday evening)	Yes (Provo River tuber short call out)	36mi/1h
June 4, 2016 (Saturday night)	Yes (AF Canyon missing wife)	60mi/2h
June 9, 2016 (Thursday afternoon)	Yes (Lindon Marina people on raft)	40mi/1h
June 10, 2013 (Friday evening & night)	Yes (Hobble Creek MVA recoveries)	31mi/5½h
June 10, 2013 (Friday evening-Saturday morning)	No (Cascade Mountain simultaneous call out)	
June 10, 2013 (Friday night)	Yes (South Fork of Provo Canyon recovery)	42mi/3h
June 12, 2016 (Sunday night)	Yes 1 st at SO (Lincoln Beach short call out)	22mi/½h
June 12, 2016 (Sunday night)	Yes (Dry Creek lost hikers)	54mi/3½h
June 14, 2016 (Tuesday afternoon)	No (Provo Boat Harbor capsized)	
June 15, 2016 (Wednesday evening)	Yes, 1 st at SO (Lincoln Beach kayak)	44mi/2h
June 17, 2016 (Friday afternoon)	Yes (Stewart Falls hiker knee injury)	33mi/2h
June 24, 2016 (Friday afternoon)	No (Stewart Falls ankle injury)	
June 24, 2016 (Friday evening)	No (Battle Creek disoriented hiker)	
June 25, 2016 (Saturday evening)	Yes (Provo River rafter short call out)	1mi/½h
June 27, 2016 (Monday afternoon)	Yes, 1 st (Big Baldy hot hiker)	28mi/5h
June 28, 2016 (Tuesday afternoon)	Yes (Stewart Falls ankle injury)	35mi/4h
June 28, 2016 (Tuesday evening)	Yes (Stewart Falls supposed ankle)	46mi/2h
June 28, 2016 (Tuesday evening)	No (Lincoln Beach simultaneous call out)	
June 29, 2016 (Wednesday afternoon)	Yes (Diamond Fk Hot Springs short call out)	6mi/½h
July 3, 2016 (Sunday evening)	Yes (Lindon Marina boat with no power)	20mi/2h
July 4, 2016 (Monday evening)	Yes, 2 nd at SO? (Smith Reservoir ATV)	11mi/½h
July 4, 2016 (Monday evening and night)	Yes (Mount Timpanogos distressed hikers)	50mi/6h
July 11, 2016 (Monday afternoon)	Yes (Stewart Falls fallen boy)	60mi/2h
July 13, 2016 (Wednesday evening)	Yes (Battle Creek short call out)	36mi/1h
July 15, 2016 (Friday afternoon)	Yes (Stewart Falls two hikers)	31mi/2h

July 17, 2016 (Sunday afternoon)	Yes (Aspen Grove hiker with hives)	52mi/2h
July 17, 2016 (Sunday evening)	Yes (Highland recovery)	58mi/3½h
July 20, 2016 (Wednesday evening and night)	Yes (AF Canyon lost hikers)	60mi/5½h
July 29, 2016 (Friday afternoon)	No (Stewart Falls overheated hiker)	
July 29, 2016 (Friday afternoon)	No (Battle Creek semiconscious hiker)	
July 29, 2016 (Friday evening)	Yes (Emma Park ATV rollover short call out)	5mi/½h
July 30, 2016 (Saturday afternoon and evening)	Yes (Timpooneke hiker)	35mi/1½h
July 30, 2016 (Saturday afternoon and evening)	Yes (Aspen Grove ankle injury)	33mi/3½h
July 30, 2016 (Saturday afternoon and evening)	No (Bridal Veil Falls hikers ledged up)	
August 3, 2016 (Wednesday evening)	Yes (Dividend mine boys short call out)	2mi/½h
August 4, 2016 (Thursday afternoon)	Yes (Pittsburg Lake injured hiker)	52mi/5h
August 6, 2016 (Saturday night)	Yes (Squaw Peak road short call out)	68mi/1½h
August 13, 2016 (Saturday afternoon)	Yes, 3 rd (Timpooneke knees problem)	70mi/4h
August 13, 2016 (Saturday evening)	Yes (Aspen Grove ankle lady short call out)	0mi/½h
August 16, 2016 (Tuesday afternoon)	Yes, 2 nd (Squaw Peak paraglider)	33mi/2½h
August 20, 2016 (Saturday afternoon)	Yes (Aspen Grove hiker who fell)	52mi/3h
August 20, 2016 (Saturday evening)	Yes (Aspen Grove broken ankle)	52mi/4h
August 21, 2016 (Sunday early morning)	Yes (Aspen Grove tired hiker)	52mi/4h
August 27, 2016 (Saturday morning)	Yes (Timpooneke boy who fell)	70mi/2h
September 2, 2016 (Friday afternoon)	Yes, 2 nd (Stewart Falls femur fracture)	41mi/2½h
September 4, 2016 (Sunday evening)	Yes (Big Springs fallen horsewoman)	100mi/3½h
September 10, 2016 (Saturday afternoon)	Yes (Stewart Falls ledged up hiker)	49mi/3h
September 17, 2016 (Saturday afternoon)	Yes (Bridal Veil Falls ledged up hikers)	42mi/3h
September 25, 2016 (Sunday afternoon)	Yes (Utah Lake short call out)	0mi/½h
September 30, 2016 (Friday evening)	Yes (Jacobs Ladder recovery)	73mi/7½h
October 1, 2016 (Saturday morning & afternoon)	Yes (Jacobs Ladder hiker search)	71mi/8h
October 6, 2016 (Thursday morning)	No (Silver Lake Flat recovery)	
October 9, 2016 (Sunday early morning)	Yes, 1 st (Maple Mountain hunter)	9mi/3½h
October 26, 2016 (Wednesday morning)	Yes (Indianola evidence search)	70mi/4h

October 29, 2016 (Saturday night)	No (Bridal Veil Falls recovery)
October 30, 2016 (Sunday morning)	No (Bridal Veil Falls recovery)
November 20, 2016 (Sunday evening)	Yes (Bridal Veil Falls ledged up hikers) 37mi/3½h

*This list does not include the January 1, 2016 Skyline Ridge call out we probies were told not to attend because it was before the first team meeting, or the January 18 jet crash call out with two fatalities that never actually went out on Everbridge but only on the old system to some non-probies, or the May 19 two person call out to the hot pots (which does not appear on the SAR stats spreadsheet). This list also does not include call outs that we heard about in the press or otherwise, to which some people were apparently summoned by individual phone calls, or which were handled by SAR deputies, or very short call outs, such as the April 15 initial mining area search, or the June 2 lady in the reeds, or the July 22 Vivian Park incident for which we got a cancellations text but no call out, or the July 23 call out to Battle Creek that was cancelled literally seconds later, or the July 26 call out to Sundance that was cancelled quickly, or the November 4 Forebay Reservoir very short call out. It does include the June 14, June 15, June 25, July 29, July 30 (to Bridal Veil Falls), August 13, September 17, September 25, October 9 call outs that were not included in the SAR stats spreadsheet. Some call outs for which under ten people were requested, such as the April 16, May 17, May 18, May 28, June 9, a June 24, a June 28, the June 29, July 17, two of the July 30 call outs, the August 1, August 4, August 21, September 10, October 6, and October 26 call outs, do not count as team call outs but are like extra credit, going into the numerator but not the denominator, so to speak, which potentially allows one to get over 100% call out attendance. If there are simultaneous call outs, as on May 28, June 10, June 12, June 24, June 28, and July 30, we were apparently supposed to get credit for all of them or at least not docked credit, but it is unclear how often that is happening. The numbers in the fraction leading to the percentage are call outs I actually attended divided by the number of call outs that SAR counts toward attendance stats; the number in the parentheses immediately following the fraction is total call outs there were including those that do not count toward attendance stats. At the December team meeting there was a chart printed out of call outs that showed a number of call outs that most of us were unaware of: a February 22 call out to the Tucker rest stop area for lost ATVers, a March 4 call out to Deer Creek to use the airboat to help get a dog off the ice, a May 7 call out to Utah Lake for a suicide (which is not included in the recovery total below), a May 11 call out to Utah Lake for a kayaker in distress, a May 31 call out to Utah Lake for a stuck boater, a June 3 call out to Jacobs Ladder for a lost hiker, a June 18 call out to Utah Lake for stuck PWCs in Goshen Bay, a June 28 call out to Utah Lake for a capsized boat, a July 16 call out to Timp for a set of lost hikers, an August 4 call out to Stewart Falls for a tired hiker, an August 20 call out to Sheep Creek for an overdue hiker, an August 20 call out to Timp for an overheated hiker, a September 1 call out to Timp for a hiker, a September 13 call out to Timp for an overdue hiker, an October 25 call out to the Nebo Loop for a lost hunter, and an October 27 call out to Fifth Water up Diamond Fork for lost hunter. In addition, at that meeting there was also a pin chart showing a few other call outs most of us were unaware of: a June 11 call out to Timp for a lost hiker near Aspen Grove, an October 8 call out to Maple Mountain for a lost hunter, and an October 16 call out to Utah Lake in the Mud Lake area for duck hunters. None of the call outs learned of at the December meeting are included in the total below.

66/63(80)=105%

Extra, unrequired trainings attended:

- 2/11/16 MRT, lowering, at night on the mountainside east of PG 44mi/3h
- 3/10/16 medical, airways, at AFJH 47mi/3h
- 3/12/16 K9, avalanche search, at Aspen Grove 63mi/3h
- 4/14/16 MRT, vertical, in AF Canyon 60mi/4h
- 4/16/16 K9, trailing, in Springville 14mi/2h

- 5/10/16 cave, ropework & SKEDs, at Potato Hill 70mi/3h
- 5/12/16, 5/14/16, 5/15/16 swiftwater, SRT course, Orem & on the Provo River 97mi/16h
- 6/9/16 MRT, pick offs & improvised harnesses, in AF Canyon 60mi/4h
- 7/12/16 equipment, personal watercraft use, on Utah Lake 32mi/3½h
- 8/11/16 medical, IVs & meds, at SO 9mi/2h
- 9/20/16 medical, mass casualty, at SO 11mi/1½h
- 12/3/16 cave, introduction to cave rescue, at Oak City cave 11mi/8h

Team related training not sponsored by the team:

- 5/17/16 Utah Boating Education Certification 0mi/4h
- 9/23/16 CPR 56mi/5h
- 11/12/16 rope ascent practice at CM's house 7mi/2h

2015 Pre-SAR resume building expenses (WFR, Avy 1, AOW Diver, and Rescue Diver classes):

- \$2,000

SAR specific gear and training expenses:

- \$3,029 (doesn't include some truck-related expenses)

SAR meeting/training and call out hours (doesn't include personal training time or cleaning and repacking time):

- 292 hours meetings/training and 190 hours call outs, for 482 hours total

Of call outs attended, was first, second, or third SAR member to arrive at call out location or at the SO to tow (admittedly, it's not hard to be one of the first tow people):

- About a quarter of them

SAR mileage, for meetings, training, and call outs:

- 4,468 miles (about \$575 gas)

Average miles per call out attended (including short call outs):

- $2,840/66=43\text{mi}$

Average miles per call out attended (not including short call outs):

- $2,633/54=49\text{mi}$

Average hours per call out attended (including short call outs):

- $190/66=3\text{h}$

Average hours per call out attended (not including short call outs):

- $183/54=3\frac{1}{2}\text{h}$

Number of bodies SAR recovered:

- 14 (9 that I went on out of the 12 that at least some probies were called out to); there may have been a 15th recovery during the year as well, but not on a regular call out

Number of SAR call outs that did not seem largely pointless:

- Perhaps about a third



Glutton for Punishment: Year Two on UCSSAR

Paul Wake

Like the chanting monks in *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, I move forward joyously through a second year with the Utah County Sheriff Search and Rescue team.

Thursday, January 5, 2017

First team meeting of the year. We former probies, we happy few, were sworn in today at the team meeting. We didn't have to buy uniforms, we just wore our brown official looking shirts and stood up in front and took an oath. PG seemed to think AD was still with us. LB wasn't there but apparently is still able to work on passing off MRT. Every time during the meeting someone said something about new members this or that, I started thinking it was for us, but it's not anymore, which is nice. AF was added to ICS. There's a boy from Eagle Mountain missing but no one has a clue where he went, so sometime in the future we may have to go search some areas for a body. Not so much information this year on money the board will spend on members, and the quartermaster didn't have the GPS units for the few of us who never got them, and there weren't new non-probe window stickers for the former probies, and there wasn't quite a plan yet for getting us IDs with access cards, but it may take another month for things to settle out. Hopefully Sgt. HF will put together some snow machine training soon; I suggested it, pointing out that I haven't wrecked anything in quite some time. Ideally I'll get one of the newer parkas on Saturday, and a probie will get my jacket. CM was replaced as cave "sergeant," which is odd but I didn't ask her about that. JL from Utah Avalanche Center came and taught us today (he also works as a Jenny Lake ranger, one of the best SAR teams in the country), and asked some questions to see what resources we have, all of which is good since we're not especially on each other's radar enough. He also had a saying that I think we should pay attention to, about slowing down and taking a breath before charging into a situation: "Don't just do something, sit there!" Saturday will be avalanche rescue training at Aspen Grove, and it sounds like trainings this year will be less scenario based and more about specific individual skills. One interesting thing: I had noticed in the final stats that two of my Aspen Grove call outs were missing. When RS fixed it, I had 110% call outs by SAR stats, which beat PG by a couple of points. Of course, that wasn't mentioned at the meeting. So, another year begins, and UCSSAR blunders onward toward glory. Since I'm still in it, I'm going to keep plugging along doing my best.

Friday, January 6, 2017

Midway through the afternoon there was a call out. Frankly, I've been hoping we wouldn't have much in the way of wintertime call outs, especially this week where temperatures are in the single digits after dark. And then, there's the fact that today my winter gear is at the foot of my bed, waiting to be put on for the training tomorrow. And that it was just a call out to rescue a dog, which we normally wouldn't even do, and which Provo Mountain Rescue (Provo City's rescue team, which claims that the backcountry immediately adjacent to Provo is their turf) was not doing. But I figured it would be a quick out and back to get a dog off the hillside, so I headed up the east bench to the end of the houses on an upper street and found no one there. When LS arrived she thought a house near the end of the street was PC's, so I went up to it and his wife brought out some notes with his phone number. I called him, and he was up on the mountainside without a radio, but I got some information. Then OG rolled up and talked to him, and I dressed in what clothes I had. We mighty members of team one set off through the snow down the power line road, did not get a call from PC telling us when to head uphill, figured it out for ourselves with a little backtracking, and slogged way up the steep mountainside to a cliff band where a dog had somehow gotten onto a ledge and gotten itself stranded. I was sort of racing LS up; I'm a bit of a stronger hiker, but nothing compared to when I was in my twenties. We were first told the dog's name was Barry, later Mary, and that it was a beagle, then a wolfhound (it was an American Foxhound), and that it had been up there for a week, then overnight. Typical jumbled information. LS and I invited each other to be the fifth of five people they needed up top, and she seemed to want to get home to her kids and let her probie husband head to the call out, so I went up top behind ST. The rock getting up to the top of the outcropping above the dog was sketchy for me, but doable. Up top, though, given a choice between working the edge or managing rope I indicated that I was not comfortable right on the snowy edge but would rather manage rope from the rope bags further back, and I did that while PC and PA lowered FA off a webbing anchor slung around rock. I don't think PC liked me mumbling about needing to pee, but I also noticed a rope routing problem that they were glad to get a heads up on and get fixed. FA went down quite gingerly, and it seemed like he took a long time with the dog. From video on his chest GoPro video camera that went up on YouTube later, it was clear the dog was very wary, kept retreating down a narrow ledge, and did not want to be petted and captured. FA had a dog harness for roping up the dog, but couldn't even get the dog to let him clip a carabiner onto its collar. About this time the sun was going down, and I was getting nervous about the prospect of scrambling down that rocky part in the dark. And I got more and more nervous as time went on and as it got more and more cold. I did stay put, but it was not very fun up there. After awhile we rigged up a second anchor to one side, to put someone down that way and try to box in the dog. There were no good anchors for that lower, and we rigged off of little scrub oak bushes, the same type of bushes the probies below us were busting off by hand to make a pile of firewood. I didn't want to descend on that anchor, even with PC rigging it, so I let ZM take my harness and go. They didn't get anywhere with the dog. Meanwhile, PC had me fetch a flare out of his pack and climb down to the probies to try to start a fire. The wood would not catch fire. Team leader AH didn't have me go

back up. After awhile they called off the rescue, deciding we could try again in daylight and greater warmth. They left a rope bag on the ledge with some heat packs in it to give the dog a bit of a bed, and left some more food. PC had been up there without much clothing, and the probies standing around had to be freezing. One of the older probies asked me if call outs were typically about this level of difficulty, and I told him that there might occasionally be longer hikes, but they would be on trails, and that this was about as physically demanding as call outs were likely to get, and if he could do this he could do whatever else we will do. When we got down there was pizza and hot chocolate by the cars. When a probie asked me about all the MRT skills there are to learn, I acknowledged that those skills can be intimidating, but told him that there is list of core skills probies need to know, and that he should get that list from DB. At about that point PC rushed over and in a challenging tone asked what I was telling the guy. Wow. Just, wow. I got my gear back, and went home after a five hour adventure.

Saturday, January 7, 2017

Training was delayed an hour on account of the call out last night, and moved from Aspen Grove to Big Springs on account of avalanche danger or snow removal on the road or some such thing. We did three training stations. After counting off, the third of the attendees I was with went to a medical station with a hypowrap. OG had put his commercial hypothermia wrap thing on the table to show it to us, so I appropriated it and my group used it. Because he likes that thing, the wrap went better from his perspective than using three sleeping bags (which we didn't have). Here's how it went, on one of three practice run throughs there: OG urged us to hurry and all jump in and do something, anything, on the patient, we just needed to all be doing things. But we also needed to abbreviate patient assessment as much as possible because getting him warm was supposedly most important. However, the patient was unconscious, so I think the cause of that should have been pretty important, especially with a needle in his pocket. No one seemed to want to follow up on whether the patient had insulin or anything like that. I mentioned maybe giving him some naloxone and dextrose in case he was unconscious from drugs or insulin shock. Turns out he was simulating in part a diabetic thing. The medical response was as chaotic as one would expect in these circumstances; it really should be obvious that multiple people doing patient assessment at once without coordination is not wise. Even lifting and moving the patient had people pulling different ways at once, as usual. I am endlessly mystified by why this kind of uncoordinated effort is considered the standard of care. Or by why people who should know something don't know squat about simple things like what a narcotic antagonist does. The next station was beacon search practice, which went OK. Then over snow travel up to the flat on the top of a hill that we hoofed up, the point of which was to teach layering (very clever!), followed by some instruction on traveling anchors over snow, and probe line practice. Then it got interesting. There was soup and there were muffins back at the trailhead, and as we were standing there with our just poured bowls of soup, a probie hollered that PT had just heard about an avalanche at Stewart Falls, with seven people buried. So things ended abruptly as we dumped soup and headed for our trucks to rush up to Aspen Grove. I checked my phone on the way to look for my older daughter's location, since it would be possible she could be

up there doing things with her friends, but she was in town. Much of the team arrived nearly simultaneously at Aspen Grove. Then we stood around and waited. Some ski patrollers from Sundance skied in to the avalanche area. There was talk of a helicopter. The reporting party was unavailable, so people interviewed snowshoers as they came out from that area. A spotting team went up on the ridge on the other side of the road to try to see something. Eventually the SO began running license plates and trying to get information on people whose cars were still in the lot. At one point someone went around the parking lot urgently telling people to turn off their cell phones because there was going to be a beacon search and cell phones might interfere, a concern that seemed to overlook the fact that we weren't engaged in a beacon search, and that if there was to be one it would happen a couple of miles away. HM had his Humvee, a real former Army one, not the fake commercial version, and he and BC and LS and I went around to the Three Sisters Road access to Stewart Falls, which was not plowed, and then tried coming up from the bottom of that loop, and found Sgt. HF there. We waited to see if anyone came out that way. HM was worried because he thought he had kids in the area. Eventually we returned to Aspen Grove, and about then ICS concluded there were no burials. It would have been a mess if there had been. Sluffs all over the mountain were sending up frequent plumes of powder. PG was pointing out the wind loading to the ski patrollers so they could benefit from his vast expertise. I would like to see whoever panicked and called this in just assuming an avalanche might have buried someone, or thought it would be funny to call it in, get a talking to. As we were assembling for debriefing, we learned that the owner of the dog on the mountain above Provo had gone up and coaxed the dog to jump, and it was bloody but OK.

Sunday, January 8, 2017

At church, in testimony meeting, I delivered the parable of the dog who bit the hand that fed it, a story about a dog who was more interested in doing its own thing in the limited area in which it was comfortable, then accepting a harness from someone who wanted to help it get to a better place. People liked the story and analogy.

Wednesday, January 12, 2017

This evening was interesting. The SAR medical people, who have taken to defining themselves as the credentialed folks so that there's essentially the advanced group and then there's everyone else who should pick up wilderness first aid level training separately, have set up a monthly training for themselves and are further carving out their own niche. However, I went to this evening's training anyway because I'm interested, and don't believe in cliques in SAR, and am pretty sure some of those people aren't especially good at wilderness medicine anyway. The focus seems to be on EMS level care (prehospital, ambulance type of care), which may be OK since the doctor and nurses mostly don't have a lot of emergency care background and most of the medical people are EMTs or advanced EMTs, although there are limits to how well EMS protocols apply in the wilderness. UCSSAR is in an odd spot since many patients are so close to civilization that there often isn't much of a wilderness medicine

component because there is little wait for access to urban level care, although there are still some circumstances in which the best available care is wilderness medicine in the sense of improvised care in an austere environment, and it can be hard to tell which standards to apply: those based on urban medicine or those based on improvisation with minimal medical equipment over long periods of time away from definitive care. This led to interesting discussions such as what to do about oxygen, when an EMS protocol called for 100% oxygen in a particular circumstance, which might work well during a short transport to the hospital since it could help and probably wouldn't hurt, and since it's easy to carry ample oxygen in an ambulance as opposed to the backcountry, but was a bit simplistic for DR's taste (the doctor on the team), and impractical where we go. And, no one seemed to have a feel for why that protocol existed or whether a different one (perhaps based on monitoring) might be more appropriate. Oh, well. I was mostly quiet in group discussion, apart from acknowledging that I wasn't there as an advanced person of any sort (GH went to bat for me, though), but mentioned that if the subject was altered mental states, attending might help me better understand RF. After general discussion, in which there was surprisingly little consensus, we had three scenarios. The first seemed immediately like diabetic ketoacidosis, especially since the fact pattern involved someone with thirst and frequent urination, but was somehow supposedly hypoglycemia. The second was altitude sickness and hypothermia. The third was someone responsive only to pain, with large pupils, but who turned out to be in narcotic overdose despite having dilated rather than pinpoint pupils. Some of us wondered whether PA might should have nailed down those scenarios a bit more. Still, it was less awkward than I thought it would be. Some eager probies came.

Monday, January 16, 2017

The newspaper did an article on SAR, following PC and AH and FA up the mountain to photograph them doing what we did during the dog rescue. Those guys also went after the rope bag that was left behind. It's a marvel that animal rescues get so much more attention than people rescues. ABC World News Tonight also covered the rescue attempt on their TV news broadcast.

Wednesday, January 18, 2017

Last year there was no dive training, and only one call out involving divers. This year OG is the new dive "sergeant," and he wants to do more. We had classroom training on how to use the body recovery bag, which involved blindfolding people (since we would usually function in very low visibility due to the bottoms of Utah lakes and ponds being so silty), and perhaps should have involved earplugging them too (since there isn't talking underwater), while they put someone into the moldy bag (which had been bleached somewhat the night before to try to kill the mold). A few people don't have gear but are divers, and SAR just figures we should all buy our own gear. Meanwhile, on the internet one can watch Cache County's SAR divers talking to a USU club about how that county does things, and they supply their divers with full coverage dry suits to protect them from environmental contaminants, and full face helmets with

communicators in them so they can talk to each other and the surface. Which is what every properly run organization does, since public safety diving requires specialized public safety gear. When those guys told the students more generally what becoming a SAR member there entails, they explained that Cache County SAR issues a few thousand dollars worth of gear to new members: GPS, avalanche beacon, radio, etc. Which, again, is what most properly run organizations do. But our SAR team glories in how many thousands of dollars it can push each member to spend on gear. It seems our team may have bought four full face helmets a bit ago, but two of them are apparently missing already. We heard that Sgt. EG is organizing a new dive trailer, which apparently has some old tanks and a few BCs, but no regulators. Sometimes this team mystifies me.

Thursday, January 19, 2017

There were supposedly going to be monthly third Thursday MRT trainings this year, instead of irregular training. But tonight there wasn't one, and there wasn't a message about that either.

Friday, January 20, 2017

Toward the end of work there was a call out for someone in some kind of trouble up Diamond Fork in the Sawmill Hollow area. That area is past where the road is gated off in the winter, as everything up that far is in snow. So this would be a snowmobiler in trouble, or perhaps a skier. Which means we'd be sending up snowmobiles. Which means I'd be stuck at the staging area, since I haven't been trained to ride snowmobiles. I stayed at my desk and finished some work and then called in, but no one answered that I could hear. When there was radio traffic about towing trailers, I didn't volunteer because I didn't want to end up trying to turn a long trailer around at the end of a narrow, snowy road. Basically, I did not have a good attitude toward this call out. When I got there hardly anyone had arrived yet, which was surprising since I'd been dawdling, although some probies started showing up pretty quickly. I was told to get a snowmobile and go up with team one to get a snowmobiler who was five miles up the road. Apparently this is someone the team had rescued before, when he had gone into a river. He even has a personal emergency locator beacon, so he must know he's sort of a danger to himself. When I told OG that I had a conceptual understanding of how snowmobiles work, but not a practical understanding, he thanked me and had me stand aside. So, I figured I'd spend the evening warming myself in the truck. But then after a while OG said to get on a snowmobile and go up with team two. OK with me. It was a flat, snow covered road. What could go wrong? Well, we'll get to that. But first I asked our team leader for a one minute overview of how to ride, and he groaned. The basics aren't that hard, it's just point and shoot. We wound our way up a steep hill and through some trees to find a way around the Forest Service gate, and then back down and off along the road. We knew the first team had already retrieved the guy, so it was just a training run for a few miles. Upon meeting up with team one and returning, ICS pondered things and said that the call out was effectively over and anyone who wanted to go home for a date or whatever else they had planned could certainly leave,

but if anyone wanted to stay then we would help the snowmobiler out by going back up and getting his machine onto the road from where he had gotten it stuck down a bank. The probies were all for staying if they'd be able to ride, and I was for staying also. There was the fact that the guy had hiked out ten of the fifteen miles from where his machine was, and so we would have a much longer trip back in through the dark and somewhat cold. But that's OK. We set out with a tracked ATV and a tracked UTV and a half dozen snowmobiles. Just like the UTV churns up dust in the summer, it churns up snow in the winter, and coats everything and everyone in it with a lot of snow. I'm glad that wasn't me. Because the road was hard packed snow for the first few miles, we had to stop periodically to kick loose snow from the side of the road up into the track mechanism of the snowmobiles, since it seems snow lubricates all of that to keep it from overheating. The further we went, the less traveled and the snowier the road got. We intersected the Hobble Creek loop and turned east toward Strawberry Ridge, and started climbing. I learned a couple of things. It seems that if you stop in snow and then start off again, you can sometimes get stuck by essentially digging yourself a hole with the spinning track as the machine goes down more than forward. Also, when you slow down in soft snow in which the machine can tilt, you can tip right off of it if you don't shift your weight over quickly enough, and that's embarrassing. These snowmobiles didn't have the extendable handlebars that allow for getting up off one's butt and shifting weight more easily while riding. Standing beside the machine and physically repositioning it so you can go forward again is pretty tiring, and left me feeling overheated and worried about my conditioning. But we forged on. It turns out the guy's snowmobile was barely off the road, dug in facing uphill, and unlikely to get directly up the short but steep stretch to the road. But by turning it sideways, it would be easy for a good rider to go along the side of the hill and on up to the road. Which, after shoveling it out and shoving it around, is what happened. On the way back, the tracked vehicles went ahead of us and were effectively digging two trenches with a pillow of snow between them, and the snowmobiles tilted back and forth on the middle pile of snow. I was up front of the rest of the snowmobiles, and figured I was probably tamping some of the snow down, but others felt it too. I only tipped off once on that mess. So, I'm the most incompetent snowmobiler (except maybe for our victim), but that's OK. Two of us picked up a couple of hikers back near the hot springs trail and gave them a ride out; it's a bit of a feat to drive all scrunched up on the front of the seat. Earlier we had told a kid in shorts and sandals that the hot springs were not in fact adjacent to the paved road, but miles over the snow, and he managed the sense to go home. Sgt. NG said a cougar wandered by the CP while we were away. Finally we headed back to town, where I found some gas station hot chocolate and junk food, and then I went to the SO to help put the trailers back. My right elbow (which had been hurting recently) held, and my back (which I had dinged again a week ago) held, so it was all thirty miles or so of a grand adventure.

Thursday, January 26, 2017

Late last year there was an email about the doctors at the hospital having an annual wilderness medicine/avalanche training today for medical students and young doctors, that someone from SAR would usually help with, but that the normal SAR person was

unavailable. I told the doctor in charge that I'd do it if no one else signed up. It sounded like they wanted someone present in a SAR jacket to both add cachet, and to help with teaching rope litters, and I can do the latter. Later on WO did sign up, so I tried to beg off, but WO thought both of us should do it. Then early in the week the doctors became concerned about avalanche danger at Aspen Grove, and decided to move it to Soldier Hollow, and WO thought he couldn't do that but I said I still could, while also suggesting Big Springs as an alternative, and then the doctors learned there is an event at Solider Hollow, but apparently there was some objection to Big Springs from people who wanted to go tubing. Ultimately, on Wednesday they canceled on us for Thursday, although WO showed up Wednesday because he was confused about the day. The good thing about this little mess was that PT thought I'd do fine handling it on my own.

Thursday, February 2, 2017

The meeting tonight was about flat ice rescue, and they encouraged people to buy ice awls, which I got last year. So, we'll be doing self rescue on Saturday, which will be interesting. We also practiced taking vitals. Regarding next week's "advanced" medical training, they don't want non-medically licensed people there. No distribution of the new radios yet, and apparently we don't get new non-probie window stickers automatically. Everyone did get new 75 foot ropes, and I got one of the GPS units they wanted us to leave a deposit for if we got one at the beginning of our probie year; whoever had it before kept the owners manual, and I'm unclear where the SD card with SAR map information is, but at least the thing works. My own old GPS unit has become unreliable in that it turns itself off randomly. Still, I am mostly decked out like a veteran, now. I'd heard at work about a contract the county was working on for two new snowmobiles for SAR, and I told Sgt. HF I'd be happy to test them out (not likely to happen). It turns out that two of the deputies spent the afternoon playing on them today. Apparently they're much nicer than the old machines.

Saturday, February 4, 2017

We were supposed to meet at Spring Lake, a pond south of Salem. I got there early just after a Sheriff truck left driving back the other way, and no one was there. Most of the ice had melted in the past day's warm weather. Then we were paged to Lincoln Beach on Utah Lake, where there was still ice, and I drove over there and suited up. We broke into three groups, and my group went out on the ice where there was a bit of thinning, and we dropped through a hole in the ice to practice self rescue. I was briefly pretty nervous about that, since one hears about how hard it is to self rescue out of a hole in the ice, but it was actually fairly easy, even trying it without using ice awls. But then, we did have dry suits on that had a lot of air in them, and PFDs on, so we were already floating high in the water, and weren't freezing to death. It would be much harder in street clothes. I rode behind FW a bit on his hovercraft to see what it was like. We also rode around on the airboat and then practiced pulling people into the airboat from a hole in the ice; one needs to counterbalance the airboat so it doesn't roll and swamp, which would be immediately disastrous. Finally, we did ice sled practice, and

since my group had split in two because we couldn't all go on the airboat at once, and I was left with a couple of probies, I trained them. One of them was more amenable to listening and learning than the other.

Monday, February 6, 2017

I contacted SR at the SO about getting a SAR ID and key card, and met her in the afternoon to get a picture taken and do the paperwork. Meanwhile, my booties and gloves still have not dried out from Saturday training.

Saturday, February 11, 2017

The Utah County Sheriff's Mounted Posse invited us to their training to see what they do, so I went; no one else from SAR did, though. They were at the North County Equestrian Park, in the arena, warming up horses before doing annual testing on various skills. I rode one of their horses for an hour, doing some of the test: stepping the horse across an 18" obstacle; getting her to cross a scary surface (a tarp); pulling a log with a lariat; etc. A lot of horses make a lot of poop.

Sunday, February 12, 2017

5:00 a.m. call out on the day the family planned to go up to Idaho to see a new grandson. I figured maybe the call out would get over in time to leave as scheduled, so I wandered up to near the hot pots. AT was ICS, FW was unloading an ATV, and one of either me or the probie NJ would go be a hasty team with FW. I told the probie to go, and I waited there. Turns out the drunks were only a half mile up the road, so a UTV ultimately retrieved them quickly. It was pretty up there at dawn.

Friday, February 20, 2017

President's Day holiday, and a couple a young people took their ancient, one eyed Australian Shepherd dog up Dry Creek into the snow, and somehow got off the trail and down toward the stream bed to a spot they supposedly couldn't get back from. While I was shopping with my wife for a suit for our younger son's wedding, the call out came. I saw it most of an hour later, called in, and was told to come on up. An hour and a half after the initial call went out I was at the very clogged trailhead, and figured that before parking down the road I should drive up and see if there was anything in particular I should pack, based on what by then should have been good information about what was going on. PC was ICS but OG was safety check in, and OG said the initial text said technical gear, so bring that. Potty training difficulties strike again. With many people already up the trail, the likelihood that every single person still going up should be taking rope and hardware was exceptionally low, but carrying that much gear would slow us down, so sticking to "carry technical" because it was the first guess at what would be needed made little sense. As it happens, I found a parking spot nearby, and got dressed. Team three was leaving as I walked up, so I was assigned to team four, which waited at the trailhead. It turned out that despite having

GPS coordinates, and the victims only being a mile and a half up the trail, team one still hadn't quite reached them, and team two was lost in a sense due to wandering with bad directions from team one. Eventually the first two teams found and got the pair moving uphill to the trail using ropes, and we were sent up with a litter, just in case. But we all dumped heavy technical gear first. At the meadow, which was snowed over, some of the team built a fire while we waited, and then since according to radio traffic the dog was apparently having trouble and the scheme to drag it along on a tarp was having only mixed success, we hiked further on up to meet them. One of the litter rail screw-in parts jammed, as it is wont to do. Eventually we got the dog in the litter without the wheel attached, and slid it down the trail using tag lines to control the litter. The dog was pretty happy about that. There was cold pizza for us at the bottom. We stood in a circle and debriefed, with the dog sitting there, and the dog did not want to leave the circle when its owners wanted to go. Our team leader got back late because he was walking out with one of the probies who is a bit on the old and unsteady side of life, and I had mistakenly told ICS I thought our team leader was back, so I looked foolish.

Monday, February 27, 2017

I had slipped into my pajamas and was climbing into bed, when a noise tried to keep me from being with my sweetheart. It was my phone, with a call out to the Spanish Fork River near Thistle, where a car had gone into the river. Since I am one of the closest SAR members to Spanish Fork Canyon, and am swiftwater rescue trained (formal training, not just a couple of hours of team training), I hurried to dress and get going, because if people were still in the river it would be good on this dark and cold night for me to get there quickly. I was feeling quite excited about the possibility. Unfortunately, the roads were exceptionally icy and uncooperative so it was hard to make much forward progress. Then, about halfway there I heard on the radio that two people had been in the car but they made it to the bank and were warming up in a passerby's car. So the ambulance continued, but SAR was called off. It takes awhile to get to sleep after that.

Thursday, March 2, 2017

At tonight's meeting we had training on mountaineering skills, mostly videos about crampon use and ice axe self arrest. PP was thinking that there will be snow on Timp well into, if not through the summer, and we should keep our winter gear ready all year. SC did a little more training on patient assessment. Announcements were interesting: we are getting our numbers changed again. I went from 1J751 to 1J749 at the beginning of the year, but due to some member drops we're renumbered once more and I'm now 1J747. Which I like, because 747 aircraft are big and old and lumbering, but they're also distinctive and good looking and functional. Also, and this is kind of funny, PG is now 1J727. The universe has a sense of humor. There has been snowmobile training this year, but sadly I didn't get called about it. Dredging of the Provo boat harbor is being postponed to the fall, so contrary to initial expectations the harbor will be open this summer. The posse mentioned that I'd trained with them. PT

brought radios, and all the non-probies were given Motorola VHS radios, with amateur radio frequencies also for the hams, and UP got DPS to let SAR program in public safety frequencies from across the state. Very nice radios, probably used. Apparently we're really going to be moving more from the 800 MHz radios some people have back to VHF all the time. It seems many people have Motorola chargers for their old radios, so SAR didn't buy any chargers for these radios, but that means all of my year's group have a radio with no charger. It would be nice to have a charger. Christmas continued after the meeting! The quartermaster had my year's members go over to the cage, and he hauled out a box of the old fluorescent yellow green jackets that SAR gave out a few years ago, and had us pick through them for a size that fits. I waited for other people get in on them first, and it looked like I'd be out of luck, but he had a couple more back there, so I got one. But then the really nice thing happened: he hauled out some Black Diamond backpacks like the older members have with their names embroidered on them, and distributed them, and at first there weren't enough, but he hauled out a few more so I got one. No names on them, but more importantly they are really nice backpacks. My ultralight personal backpack was beginning to get hammered, and this one is a little heavier but will last a lot longer, and is not as heavy as my big backpack at home. I will have to improvise an ice axe loop, but that's doable.

Saturday, March 4, 2017

Mountaineering training at Aspen Grove consisted of clogging the parking lot and then rotating through three stations. First, we put on crampons and picked up our ice axes and practiced going up and down and across steep snow mounds next to the parking lot, and then we practiced ice axe self arrests. My crampons are supposedly specifically designed to work on a wide range of boots, but the rear metal part that sticks up is too narrow to get around my sole, and they don't quite elongate enough to put it behind my sole. A bigger problem is that I had the strap configured wrong, and when someone helped me with that the crampons stayed on instead of flopping off. Which is good. At least I didn't tear up my pants legs with the sharp points, although I did ding a small bit of stitching. Stopping a slide with the ice axe is inherently risky given that the adze part is pointed into one's shoulder near one's neck, and that it's hard to remember to keep your knees bent so your feet will be up in the air so the crampons don't catch the snow and break your leg. I wrenched my left shoulder trying something from the video involving turning over and rotating from a head down, on the back sliding position. Hopefully it will be OK. Good practice for us to be working on. Then up the mountainside to dig two snow bollards, which is an anchor in the snow made from a big upside down teardrop shaped trench, and they actually did hold well enough to lower someone off a main and belay, then convert to a 3:1 raising system and raise him, and then switch the main to a belay and vice versa, and do it again. All, delightfully, in a nasty avalanche path under Elk Point. At this point I was really feeling the fact that I haven't been in the gym for months. One of my biners disappeared at that station. The final station was patient assessment, and I did OK. There were treats there, which was nice. Afterward I was saying facetiously to a couple of my teammates that now we're expert mountaineers, and GB was walking by and he just said "no." That was funny.

Sunday, March 5, 2017

I had my wife and younger daughter take some pictures of me in gear for a general search and rescue-related web page I've been fiddling with, not specific to UCSSAR. I'm awfully vain. It's horrifying. Also, I emailed SC inquiring about whether UCSSAR would pay for Wilderness First Responder recertification. He was surprised I am a WFR, which I've actually told him before a couple of times. No word on my question, though.

Saturday, March 11, 2017

Today was pretty much the armpit of my SAR experience. I went up to Aspen Grove to be buried for the dogs to find, in a bit tighter circumstances and with more snow on us than last year, and I got claustrophobic and got up, then tried again but got up again, and finally settled on partial burial on my back with just my face exposed. So that was embarrassing, and probably left DL wondering what the matter with me is. I wonder myself. This was not brave. Then off to an outdoor expo that the husband of one of our victims set up and gave us space in, and I spent six hours at the expo talking to hunters and little kids and so forth, because only one other SAR person had signed up (GU, for the morning). I'd suggested to the board that SAR update our web page if we're trying to reach out to the public, but no. Helped deputies take out the big Sheriff equipment they'd brought up, and hopefully Sgt. HF got over whatever seems to have him peeved at me.

Thursday, March 16, 2017

MRT training at Rock Canyon Park, on tying litters into raising and lowering systems. There was also discussion of WO's desire (although he wasn't there) to go to a twin tensioned system, which I've been studying a lot about because he asked me a legal question about that. I emailed him that I'm not SAR's counsel, but he might have (not "had," just "might" have) stated a legal argument that could win regarding negligence. The real question, though, is whether the "whistle test" is necessary to avoid negligence; that test says that if everyone lets go of the rope system at once, will it hold? Switching from a main line and an untensioned twin prusik belay line system, to a twin tensioned system based on Scarabs instead of CMC's MPD devices that SAR won't buy, could fail the whistle test. Prusiks catch automatically, supposedly, but Scarabs do not stop the rope automatically, although it is possible to awkwardly back them up with prusiks. It looks as if the Canadians have done a lot of testing recently in British Columbia, and are moving toward some sort of twin tensioned belay system using the MPD. There is a lot of SAR research coming from B.C., especially from one particular guy. Another center of SAR innovation is Arizona, where another guy has invented a lot of useful equipment, some of which is made here in Utah at Rock Exotica. At training I asked a couple of questions or made observations that PP kind of blew off, but then he turned around a few moments later and repeated them as his own. After the second time I started wondering about that, but then he did it to someone else. Maybe it's just an idiosyncrasy.

Saturday, March 18, 2017

A team member got a local climbing gym to give SAR a free evening of bouldering in the gym for our families, so my wife and the girls and I went up to Lehi and messed around for an hour. The gym is hoping people will buy a membership, but the membership doesn't apply at the closer Provo location, so we probably won't sign up.

Sunday, April 2, 2017

Sometimes tech is screwy. A SAR text message went through to my iPhone, but not my iPad, the latter being what was in the kitchen with me. Good thing I heard the phone in the bedroom. At any rate, a couple of hikers were overdue out of Monks Hollow trailhead. I figured I'd better wander up there. Some people were also being sent around to the other side of the potential hiking area, up Long Hollow. I couldn't get anything by radio from ICS on which place to go to, so I went to Monks Hollow. When I got there only the deputies and SS as ICS were there, so there was some waiting around ahead. Talked to Sgt. NG, and it turned out that what we were dealing with was some brothers who went looking for shed antlers on Friday, expecting to camp one night, and their mom became concerned on Sunday when they were a day overdue. DPS sent their helicopter, and it was searching. Horse posse came out, some four wheelers were towed up, and the parking lot slowly filled over an hour. Not as many people as I'd have expected given that it has been over a month since our last call out. Meanwhile, PT had me ask to find out who had good tracking skills, as he figured someone could go look for tracks. But it's a decent weekend with a lot of new tracks, with recent rain obscuring older tracks, so that was sort of busywork. The two guys I sent PT went looking up a nearby ridge for tracks, and they thought I should look up a valley, and I talked about that to LS and to her husband MJ, and about another plan someone was coming up with, and she thought there were too many people trying to be in charge. Which is true, as usual. I loaned her husband MJ a radio. The four wheelers hadn't been used in months and were cold, and didn't want to start. AG was assigned to check for approved helmets, and it was hard to get his attention to show him mine. White Lightning, the smaller mobile command center, came up. Eventually, with a lot of people undeployed and just as it got dark, something happened: the brothers wandered back to the trailhead, and just like that we were finished. Apparently people on the Long Hollow side had been searching for awhile. PT did ask me to follow the trailers back to the SO to help put equipment away, which I did. And I heard from Sgt. NG that last year when FW taught the probies to ride ATVs, he had us out on the just seeded jail garden, which because we tore it up had to be reseeded.

Thursday, April 13, 2017

At tonight's team meeting some BYU engineering people came to talk about strength testing they are doing on webbing, particularly old webbing that has been left outside for months to years on anchor stations. As one would expect, it gets weak. They want to expand their testing, and also are interested in knowing about anything it would help us for them to test. I think we'd be interested in the effects of temperature changes on

gear, specifically gear left in vehicles year round. Then SC gave a presentation on focused spine assessments. He asked a question, and someone guessed wrong, and then I gave the exact correct answer. Because I know stuff. In SAR news, the deconstruction of the old Bridal Veil Falls tram building and cliff-top restaurant ruins is now underway. Hopefully that will remove an attractive nuisance, and perhaps lead to fewer people on the upper cliffs. There is a SAR pickup truck for volunteers to drive when towing the big trailers. The side by sides (UTVs) have enclosures now, so less snow and mud will get in on passengers. There is a Utah SAR conference and the national MRA conference in Boise at the same time, and at the same time as our June training, but some people may get funding to go. All in all, not a very long meeting. GH says she is going on a two week land navigation/wilderness survival course. That is really impressive. She is upping her game in a big way, which isn't a surprise. Afterward, PT had chargers for our radios.

Saturday, April 15, 2017

SAR training at Dry Fork trailhead was largely about GPS. We were to follow clues to get from place to place as sort of a race, although people began bunching up pretty quickly near each area that had a clue. LS didn't know what NNW means as a compass bearing, and didn't get it even when I said "north-northwest." I marvel at that. Later, she was asking if we were on the same side of Timp as the Aspen Grove trailhead. No. I really think the application process for SAR should have a test on land navigation and the ability to travel off trail, and it would be easy to set one up on Timp. Then some remedial education in route finding when necessary. At any rate, at another station there was no clue waiting for us, but eventually someone wandered over with it. We were supposed to do a double rope rappel down a gully as a simulation of a vertical rappel (despite that we were only supposed to be carrying light technical), to get to a training station on litter bridle attachment and on spine assessment and patient rolling. I had most all my gear, so I told a probie to pretend he was a tree, I quickly looped my rope over him, and walked down. GH was doing the medical station for SC, and had him way excited about a method of using a SAM splint as a cervical collar that she learned at a wilderness medicine training. Last, we were to practice wifi sharing of GPS coordinates, and AT couldn't find the right menu icon for that, which I hadn't been able to find earlier either, but then had found it magically a few minutes later. Garmin needs to get things sorted out with making their units less kludgy (and more economical), if they don't want people to switch to using phones (which I prefer). Some people used their own GPS units rather than the team ones, which don't share between units the same way, if at all, although GU has a Garmin Rino that shows where other people with linked Rinos are, and he wondered why we don't all use those. A good question. Odd morning in some ways, but sunny and quick.

Thursday, April 20, 2017

Third Thursday, so there was MRT training. Belaying systems. I have gotten rusty since last year. There was some experimenting with a prusik backup on a twin system. Not many of us were there, perhaps because the medical people had scheduled something

at the same time (at the last team meeting we were all told that everyone can go to those medical meetings after all, not just the licensed providers). Also today I got my name embroidered on the back of my pack. The old dogs all got that done when they were given Black Diamond packs, but my group wasn't offered that when the quartermaster found some leftovers in a box. So I fixed it. Because it kind of annoys some of the old dogs when we young pups look just like them, since they think we aren't minding our place. Which is, in their view, to look and act like probies for some time to come. No, thanks! In fact, I have a gray puffy EMS jacket that sort of looks like the Patagonia jackets some of the grizzled veterans have, and DB grabbed it once to look at the tag and see if I'd somehow gotten the kind they have. It isn't; mine has better down.

Saturday, April 22, 2017

We got a call out for a half dozen people to go help a dog at Payson Lakes that had fallen through the ice. The road is still closed up there. I radioed in immediately and Sgt. HF had me go help tow. He was ready to go with a UTV about a minute before I got to the SO, and wanted to know if he should stay and help me hook up, and I'm not so dumb I'd say "yes" and keep him there when he was antsy to go, so I said I'd handle it. Didn't get very many miles down the road before turning around because a person up there at the lake somehow had a canoe and rescued the dog. I suppose it's possible we were called out in case someone already up there got in trouble going out on the ice after the dog. I neatly backed the trailer into its place in the fenced, gravel lot, as I'm learning to back up trailers much better. Today I also learned that RF got a dry suit at DI (thrift store), but it leaks.

Wednesday, April 26, 2017

I had a scare today. This evening the neighbor's bunny, which they have changed into a free range bunny, was trying to get past my net to our new raspberry shoots, and I chased it off. It was like running wind sprints because the rabbit kept going back and forth. Fun for a bit. But then suddenly I was breathing hard and was not able to get adequate air for a bit, and I didn't want to die in front of my just-home-from-college-daughter, because I chased a rabbit. Time to get off my butt and back to the gym.

Thursday, May 4, 2017

At the team meeting we watched a video on swiftwater rescue, and then went out on the grass and practiced patient rolling to check for spinal injuries. During the announcements and team business part, my group of former probies were given SAR challenge coins, which are sort of a heavy coin with one's unit insignia on them. The state parks guy said that the lake is about 62% full; it probably won't completely fill this year even with all the snow, but it will next year if we get another good winter. The posse has GPS units, and are trying to get PT to put a map card in them. So am I. Some people were sitting on a computer shelf along the side of the room and it collapsed, causing near disaster. There have been hardly any call outs, but supposedly

some close ones, and supposedly some near suicides or some such thing. The quartermaster lacked enthusiasm for getting me an extra length of webbing, bless his heart. I am not one of the privileged.

Friday, May 5, 2017

Today our younger son was married to a wonderful girl, and that made it a great day. There was a call out during the wedding dinner and reception, to go look for the troubled guy who walked away from his home several days ago, apparently because someone thought he had left a sign of being up by the Spanish Fork Reservoir, and I skipped that call out, of course. He wasn't found.

Saturday, May 6, 2017

This morning our older son got his master's degree up in Idaho, and that made it a great day. Because of that I missed swiftwater training on the river, and WO was going to experiment with the river boards he says we have, and I'd wanted to look into whether river boards would work well for scouting the Provo River. My suspicion is that what he says we have are actually just rescue sleds for attaching behind PWCs, which are too big to use as river boards, and a boogie board that is also in the equipment area, which is too small. I've never seen an actual Carlson river board in the equipment bays. Or hydrospeeds, which wouldn't work well for rescue anyway. So, I didn't find out about that today, due to being at a more important thing. While driving back from Idaho there was a call out for a boat in trouble on the lake, but the call out was terminated fifteen minutes later, and I was still far out of town in any event. In the evening there was a screening of a documentary that's going to be shown on KUED (PBS TV), mostly made a few years ago by FF, but not finished up by her until a few months ago, and it has a sequence of photos at the end, some of which have me in them, so that was a surprise.

Sunday, May 7, 2017

Amazing call out! Sunday morning, while getting ready for church, a text came in about a person trapped in a mine shaft way out on the northwest edge of the county, supposedly with no injuries. I went to the SO and grabbed a trailer with a UTV. SG loaded in a couple of coolers, and I headed off. By the time I got near the off road vehicle wasteland at Five Mile Pass, I heard on the radio that fire and SAR people had made it to the location and it sounded as if the person's level of consciousness wasn't very good. The staging area was moved, and no one was answering me on the radio on either frequency when I called for details on where exactly it had been moved to, but I found it. Four people promptly got into the UTV and took it, so I wandered around seeing what was going on at the base area. A couple of ATVs came in on SG's trailer, and other people got on them. Then a couple more with PT, and I figured I'd try getting one off the trailer and seeing if ICS would let me stay on it. AG was doing safety checks for them and he just waved me on behind SC, who rides kind of gingerly and so was easy to follow. The hasty team had followed the reporting party up earlier,

throwing strips of flagging ribbon on the ground as they went, and we tracked them up a dirt road into the desert foothills, on the side of a canyon in what was actually Tooele County. Sgt. HF decided we should just keep handing the response, although eventually Toole showed up. Unified Fire is from Salt Lake, but apparently they contract with Eagle Mountain, and so they had big rescue units sort of nearby in Eagle Mountain. They had loaded their gear from their fire trucks and brought up a high directional system, and had perched it on the edge of a primitive mine shaft going straight down from a flat spot on the side of the hill. We have one of those systems, but we never train with it. They're good for running rope over and edge and down steep places, since they keep the rope up off the edge itself, but they're notoriously prone to collapse if rigged wrong. There were main and belay systems set up, and other systems, and some glitches, but by the time I got there people were mostly ready to do a raise. Sadly, my gloves weren't where they were supposed to be, so I wasn't handling any rope. RF talked his way into going down to be the landing zone officer, since AirMed was on the way in. I stayed up top and helped where I could. There was not enough edge safety, but people couldn't much resist looking down the hole at the sight. The sight was a UTV jammed sideways in the hole maybe fifteen feet down, and the guy was somewhere below it. From talking to the guy's friends it seems that this guy was camping with friends across the way, and in the middle of the night had gone out driving around on a UTV looking for firewood, had gone across the canyon from camp and way up a hill, and was headed down a steep, roadless slope toward the bottom of the canyon, on what at best was a game trail. Not even a hundred more feet and he would have found the dirt road that we had later rode up on, and he could have followed it down. Instead, it appears that he slipped on the side of the steep slope, slid or tumbled in his UTV down a steeper bit of hill between a couple of trees, and then instead of coming to rest on the ledge that crosses maybe twenty or thirty feet below where he started to slide, he dropped into the open space at the mouth of a mine shaft—in other words, instead of stopping where there would normally be solid earth he just kept going, down the open mine shaft that happened to be right there. Kind of bad luck. Either that, or he somehow just drove across the ledge and into a hole. Either way, his UTV got wedged sideways in the shaft but he kept going to the bottom, which was about that much more just to where the shaft developed a floor and started angling further downward. He went down that slope, to maybe fifty plus feet below the surface. His friends tried looking for him after awhile, but gave up and waited for morning, and then found him when the sun came up, apparently after someone gave them a tip about the existence of the nearby mine shaft. They couldn't get any response from down the mine shaft, so they dropped a rock down. That got a response. So they called 911. By the time I got there we had four people down the shaft, SAR and the fire people had worked out how to get along, there was a gas monitor down the hole because fuel was leaking, PG and PA had—of course—started the holy IV, DB was down there, and CM went down with her Sked flexible stretcher. Ultimately they just put the guy in a harness and had him lifted up by himself, which was interesting, as he could barely stand, but AirMed had him driven down to their helicopter and they flew him off, after getting him out of his clothes so there wouldn't be fuel fumes in the helicopter. I carried some gear down on my ATV, which kept pulling to the right. DB had a broken axle, Unified Fire had a flat tire, FW had a smashed

oxygen regulator, and there were a few other things where the terrain hammered us, but that'll get replaced by the state fund, probably. TV crews were at the bottom, and when I drove the ATV up onto the trailer, I drove it onto the back half and left the front half open for the second ATV, and that proved to be unwise. The weighting tipped the trailer backward since the trailer wasn't attached to a truck as usual. Thankfully, the TVs weren't watching, and I jumped off and we tipped the trailer back flat. FW said he was towing once and he looked back and one of the vehicles was missing, having bounced right off the trailer, although it landed on its wheels. Lunch at McDonalds, courtesy of the SO. Then back to the SO to fuel and put the machines back, and a strap holding the UTV on the trailer had broken. Sgt. HF said the previous strap had broken in the same place. He thinks they're rubbing on the machine, but some of us thought they're rubbing on the crossing strap, which looks tougher and also a little worn in one spot. Six plus hours of good work. Before long the rescue had made national news, as the photo of a vehicle down a mine shaft is pretty interesting, although all the news coverage, and the accompanying online comments, tended to be wildly inaccurate. We were all feeling pretty good about ourselves, though.

Friday, May 12, 2017

Today there was an odd SAR text. We were to be on "standby," whatever that means, because someone saw an empty kayak and then a shoe floating down the Provo River. I figured someone just lost their boat, and would be found on the road along the river, so I stayed put. In a short while we were told to stand down. I don't think that counts as a call out. Snowpack is still above average, the Deer Creek Dam just started releasing a lot of water to try to make room for the melt, and the river is ripping along at about three times normal flow, nearly over its banks. Dangerous river to be in, or near.

Saturday, May 13, 2017

The annual Salem Triathlon took place today, which we help with by putting water safety people on Salem Pond, for which SAR gets a donation. I was at the SO at 6:30 a.m. to tow, and got two PWCs to the pond only to see people waiting to jump on them as soon as I arrived, mostly people from my probie year group; I don't think this year's probies were encouraged to come this time. CM wanted on a machine, and said that the women were seldom allowed to do anything, but she wanted on a PWC this time so she hopped on one before I backed down the ramp to where others were waiting, and she tried to hold the other for me, but one of the members who seldom shows up for anything took it. Such is life. She had me get on the rescue sled behind her to be a rescue swimmer, and then things all went to heck. Most people were being careful about the shallows, although GH had hot dogged just a bit a little further out before being hollered at. But CM turned the PWC on and throttled it up a bit to get it out into the pond, instead of letting it idle out, before having enough depth under her. In hindsight, I wish I'd told her to not turn it on yet, and pushed her out further. She immediately sucked rocks into the intake and through the impeller, stopping the machine. At that point she wanted to try to clear it in a couple of ways that some people onshore didn't like, as they wanted it on a trailer. While someone went for my

truck (as I was wet), she went off on the back of GH's PWC. Then apparently GH had her ride it a bit while GH was doing something, and CM didn't hear people calling her back, so it looked like she was just messing around instead of dealing with the problem. I had to actually swim the disabled PWC back to the gravel boat ramp, since it had been off to the side of the boat ramp where the water is deeper, so it's possible that from where CM was sitting the water looked deep enough. Once we got it up on the trailer, Lt. CB thought we shouldn't be trying to fish the rocks out, although we probably could have gotten them, because the machine would probably need expensive maintenance anyway. He was really steamed. I noticed awhile later that CM had left. ZM asked if I wanted to swim the race with him and the stragglers, and earlier I'd thought about using my fins to do that, but have been easily tired lately and didn't think it would be a good idea. While waiting around I did strip some gear off my PFD because ZM thought it might not be good to have things a panicking swimmer could grab. Then I was assigned to get on the back of the PWC that MS was driving, and after we deployed a bouy and then waited for the race to start, we went down to the far end of the pond to the swimmer's turnaround point to keep an eye on swimmers. We didn't have to rescue anyone, although I did think maybe we should have helped loosen one person's wet suit around her neck when she was having trouble getting air, but MS seemed concerned with not facilitating possible race violations. ZM was towing and pushing a couple of stragglers to help them finish, which was nice. After towing PWCs back to the SO, at the gas pumps I tried to go to bat for CM with Lt. CB a bit, but he didn't say a lot. Later, I emailed her, and she called me back, and it seems Sgt. NG hollered at her and then there was an extended unpleasant discussion with Lt. CB about everything anyone has ever said negative about her behind her back. Including, apparently, the recent mine shaft call out where she says PG especially but also PA were not functioning well in the underground environment, and she decided that the victim should just be hoisted out directly and quickly, which I guess was controversial. I suspect there were some personality issues down there, though, with CM probably rubbing it in a bit that they weren't familiar with the caving equipment she brought down. She also said that at the Bridal Veil Falls body recovery she and AT and CM and LS were kept in the parking lot until near the end, and then sent up with a new guy leading them, who she said got spooked on the cliffs, and the women decided to talk to PT afterward about sexism issues but only CM would speak up. Anyway, she was unhappy with the situation, and I encouraged her to hang in there.

Thursday, May 18, 2017

After the UTV in the mine shaft rescue, PG had gone on about how putting an IV in the guy had supposedly helped him. After the Salem Tri when I talked to CM, I got the impression people were complaining that she'd pushed for rapid evacuation from the mine shaft. So after noticing a recent news article saying the victim had sustained a skull fracture and been unresponsive for five days after getting to the hospital, I emailed the link for that article to the SAR mailing list. Yes, it was a serious injury that needed to get out of that hole and to definitive care quickly. Meanwhile, PP bailed on MRT training for this evening, ZM said he'd step in and arrange something, and when I got there only ZM and CC were there (although BC eventually showed up). CC is the

North Fork Fire Department's chief, and he's on SAR. They were chatting about how fire departments are doing so much search and rescue. Saratoga Springs is covering more of the lake, and many of the departments don't want to wait for SAR to turn out when they can respond immediately with what they believe is better training. Heck, they often probably do get better training since a lot of them are taking professional classes, although firefighters trudging around the backcountry in their turnout gear is kind of nutty. That has happened in Salt Lake. ZM said that there have been a number of rescues where SAR wasn't called out because fire departments dealt with mine shaft issues or people in the river or whatnot, and a number of times deputies have worked with fire departments and not called SAR, and a few times a couple of SAR people have gone out with a radio and checked something out or called in a helicopter. The thing CC and ZM were concerned with is that SAR volunteers will get burned out on SAR if they aren't used for anything but body recovery, which the fire departments are happy to leave to us. It was interesting that they're both, to some degree, also on the other side of that problem. Anyway, after BC arrived, ZM ran us through sort of a tabletop exercise on a mine shaft rescue with an injured ankle and delayed heavy equipment response, and said we were right that just hoisting the guy out sooner rather than later, even if it caused some pain on the injury, would be best. Then CC taught us how to tie back a tree so it can become a high directional anchor. He thinks there needs to be more training on advanced MRT subjects like setting up artificial high directionals on edges, so our ropes aren't just laying on the edge increasing friction and making edge transitions tricky (although the tripods have to be set up carefully so they don't collapse).

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Along about 1:00 a.m., we were awoken for a body recovery. The probies checked in promptly, as did a few other people. I did too, although I don't know why. As usual, I was tired for the entire drive. It turned out that a young man who had been suicidal for years had got some alcohol and a gun and went hiking along the trail south of the Squaw Peak overlook while in a bad mental state. A couple of brothers headed after him but he started shooting in their direction. One brother went back to the family at the trailhead, while the other kept trying to approach him, and offered him some smokes. Meanwhile, the police were figuring out how to respond. The guy had set the gun down, and his brother thought things were going better, but then the guy picked it up and shot himself, and that was that. At the overlook the dad had a heart attack when he heard what had happened, so an ambulance took the dad to a hospital. The SO dithered on whether to call SAR, and ultimately decided we should do the grunt work, hence the call out. We responded and hung around the parking lot for awhile while the investigators worked their way to the site, and the probies were taught about the importance of using radio codes rather than saying on the radio that someone is dead, because we don't want to upset family who may be near someone with a radio. Yes indeed. The probies hiked in the litter parts, and ZM had the detective spend some time showing them the body and what happens to bodies as time passes. I do wish ZM wouldn't have suggested to the probies that once we get the body, we don't much need to preserve anything for the ME because the ME is just a body transporter. No,

the ME is taking the body so they can do an autopsy, and help continue the investigation. ZM also had the probies put the guy's body in the "package" (the envelope and body bag), and do most of the carry out with the wheeled litter. Some of them had some trepidation about this call out; I hope it went OK for them. Those of us assembling the litter found that it was a new one to us, narrower than usual, and the handles were too wide to attach snugly to the sides. But we jury rigged things, and it all worked. I had PA check on it, as he was on scene command. In the parking lot one of the team members talked about being a little peeved with how bossy PA has been this year, but I thought he was decent today. Later in the day I emailed SC to see if SAR pays for Wilderness First Responder recertification, and it does not, so I may just let that certification slide. It seems the Board continues to take care of themselves: they're moving back the June meeting and training by a week so they can go to conferences.

Saturday, May 27, 2017

This morning my darling wife and I drove up to Bridal Veil Falls, which due to this being Memorial Day weekend was open for public enjoyment instead of being closed so that construction people could work on removing the old tram station by the river and the restaurant remains up top. I hiked up to the bottom of the falls with my wife. Then she waited there while I scouted further up to see exactly what the chute area past the higher part of the falls was like. It's sketchy just to get there, and I've only been partway there before, on night call outs, so I left my wife waiting longer than I should have while I was getting up there. We drove to a viewpoint where I could show her the whole falls, and we watched other people going up the cliffs: a group of girls who were scrambling along in the wrong direction, and a guy carrying a toddler on his shoulders up a steep and slippery gully. Amazing. Down at river level, the water is incredibly high and fast. Then we went up to Stewart Falls, where I used a SAR gate code to get to the Three Sisters area we use to stage from, and hiked up to the falls. I cleared some trail on the way to make litter passage easier, although someone had already done some sawing further up. TERT has a guy stationed at Stewart Falls on Saturdays now. People were climbing in all the usual dangerous places, plus up a snow field with a stream running underneath it, which is dangerous because it could collapse into a wet snow cavern. Upon returning we found a no parking warning notice on my windshield from the homeowners association or someone, bless their hearts. Then up over the Alpine Loop, which opened this weekend, chatting with the TERT Aspen Grove guy on the radio while driving. We detoured up Tibble Fork, which also just opened since construction on the dam has largely been completed. The reservoir is bigger now, and has a sort of floating pier and a sandy beach area. When we got home I emailed a report to the team on trail conditions in all these areas, which a number of people including OG and FH were complimentary about. I've also been posting on internet web pages that show pictures of the old restaurant and tram station at the top of Bridal Veil Falls along with hiking suggestions, to inform people that the ruins are not there anymore so there isn't much reason to risk one's life trying to see them.

Sunday, May 28, 2017

An evening call out message bemused me. A 32 year old woman was lost just off the Nebo Loop, by a campsite in the Pete Winward Reservoir area. How does an adult manage that? I was almost there when I heard broken radio traffic indicating she'd been found, but I kept going to see what was up. There were some SAR people along the road a few miles short of the campground, and it seems she'd been found on the road. GU said that her husband or whatever had driven by her and not seen her, but when he came back by after SAR found her, he started cussing her like mad, and drove off. I guess someone else in her party came and got her. Wow. There were only a half dozen or so of us up there, and not many more coming that I was aware of, so it was sort of an odd call out. I hope some SAR people have stayed in the valley over the holiday weekend.

Monday, May 29, 2017

It was both 100% inevitable that what happened today would happen sometime, and it was 100% avoidable. A four year old girl got into the Provo River in Provo Canyon and was swept away in the very high spring runoff. Her mom jumped in after her, as did her dad and some bystanders. No one, of course, could get to her, and the lucky ones managed to get out of the river pretty quickly. But the mom drowned and so did one of the bystanders who jumped in. I didn't notice the call out for several minutes, and then hurried along. Radio traffic was, of course, chaotic as there were multiple conflicting reports of how many people were in the water, and where. A firefighter apparently was almost able to reach for someone in the water, from what I heard driving up. Then someone was pulled out of the water and CPR was started; I saw that ambulance go by for the hospital. It wasn't clear where the command post was when I got to Canyon View Park, and I couldn't reach CP on the radio, although I did hear someone asking for help nearby, so I grabbed my PFD and ran up to the north side of the pool formed by the Murdock diversion dam, and UP had me stand with a throw bag as safety for a couple of people who were in dry suits and ready to swim if anyone floated down. Then SS pulled me off for another detail, and I got into my dry suit to go down river by the Riverwoods shopping center and business park, where SS and AT had AG and I do a rapid search of the river there. AG's side had a trail and a decent view of the river, but my side, as it turned out, got brushy and had thorn bushes and so forth, and was a challenge, since going into the river itself was out of the question. There was one point where I put one foot into an eddy to look under some roots, and the normally weak upstream flow of the eddy was astonishingly strong. With the Deer Creek reservoir dam rapidly releasing water to try to take pressure off of reservoir, the river was just too dangerous to get in. Meanwhile, there was radio discussion of a possible developing call out for hikers on Loafer Mountain who were overdue, and the fixed wing aircraft was diverted down there as Life Flight's helicopter continued to help search the river; I believe the Loafer Mountain situation resolved itself. DG and RS joined us to search upriver to the mouth of the canyon, while AG went somewhere else; DG had his dog. RS didn't have a radio so AT said she'd communicate through me, so I was sort of like a de facto leader, but not so much. There was a homeless encampment hidden away in

that area, and a low head dam that was a surprise to see. We got back up to Timpanogos Park late in the evening, and I was beat from hiking for hours in a dry suit, which becomes a portable sauna in the heat; RS refused to stay in his dry suit, saying he thought the heat danger was worse than the possible hypothermia danger from maybe getting into the water. AT thought they would be calling off the search for the night in under an hour and so we wouldn't be redeployed, but a couple of us were told to go over to the pool formed by the Murdock diversion dam and watch for anyone floating down, and as it happened we were there for quite some time. Lots of traffic had been backed up the canyon, and I no doubt cut a stirring figure standing there doing nothing. Thankfully, someone brought us boxes with sandwich meals. When I headed back across the way to where the big command post RV was and asked if we were to come back in the morning, PC said they'd sent a text about that, but those of us in river gear wouldn't have had access to it, and it turned out it hadn't been sent yet anyway. When I got it, I emailed my colleagues at work to see if anyone could cover the next day at work for me. By this point we believed that the mom and the bystander who had each been taken to the hospital with CPR ongoing, and the missing girl, were the only people who probably died (the original report was two children in the river). The two adults did die, and we needed to find the girl's body. Later, I would hear from a colleague that a county health department employee said that one deputy on scene initially did CPR on one of the victims, and turned CPR over to him, and then he couldn't get two other deputies to help with CPR; it'll be sensitive raising that with the SO since they're primarily concerned with image. Lots and lots of people from many agencies were up there eventually.

Tuesday, May 30, 2017

There's a big water pipe up high on the cliff on the north side of Provo Canyon, and occasionally the water people spill water out of it instead of letting it go a bit further and drop into the hydroelectric plant, and when it spills there's a big waterfall down the side of the canyon that then turns into a stream flowing into the river shortly before the mouth of the canyon. Most of the time there's just a dry stream bed down near the bottom. It turns out some people use that dry stream bed to get up into the trees to party or set up a homeless camp or whatever. A family was up there Monday evening when the water came on and blocked their exit route. At 1:30 a.m., with wind picking up and no end to the water diversion in sight, they called 911 and SAR got out of bed and headed up. We drove on the bike path to near the side stream, and hiked up the side of the immediately very sketchy side canyon. I was wondering if I would get across a sloped, shale covered mini ledge without falling, but I did, and caught up with the team. We found a mom and her two probably still teenage kids, and the mom told us she'd been shot repeatedly in the past and was a survivor. But she was really ungainly and nervous. After putting out the fire, most of the team went back to set up a hand line at the most sketchy part. The remaining three of us split up and I was tasked with leading us out and taking the two kids with me, and the other two team members set up my webbing on a nearby steep spot and together got the mom up that spot and moving along. When I got my people to the sketchy spot, the team people there took over getting them across. The lights of the teammates with the mom weren't visible yet,

so I went back to find them and help them out. Everyone got back OK, although when I had just gotten past the sketchy part there was a big falling noise, and LT had dropped off the side into brush, which caught him up so all was well, but for a moment we wondered if that would become a problem. But everyone got home safely. These near all nighters will catch up with me. Just before eight, a colleague said he could cover my work, so I was able to head up to the river, but late, and only got to the command post just as teams were heading out to search. Many agencies had been here yesterday, and today Wasatch County SAR was there, and Provo Mountain Rescue. The water people had agreed to cut releases from the dam, so the river was reasonably safe to get into. OG had me do safety at the diversion dam, and I found a rock to sit on under a tree, since it was likely to be a long sit on a warm day in a hot dry suit. That's all I did. Meanwhile teams were checking various sections. Apparently there was a plan to go down river right while keeping an eye on river left, or some such thing, and drivers were helping this way and that, and Utah County Fire was cutting away brush, although with some confusion and some stretching of resources. But it sounded more organized than usual. Eventually DG told me they were calling us back to the command post; he'd been assigned to safety also. It turned out a team with my Wasatch County SAR swiftwater instructor on it had found the girl's body jammed underwater in a log jam in a left side channel at the top of Canyon Glen Park about a mile below Bridal Veil Falls where she'd gone in, and had extricated her. So that was that. The SO had a grill brought in quickly, and grilled burgers and dogs for everyone since it was almost lunch time and a lot of people had been working hard. We were all out of river gear at that point, except for PG, who wandered over all decked out in his full gear, and took some ribbing for that. I don't know if he even got it. The family came over to thank us; they were having a hard time. Then some debriefing and people drifted away. However, that was not the end of the day. At the debriefing, we were told that searchers had found a big log jam in the Provo River in the middle of the Riverside Country Club, and it would be good if a few SAR people could go be water safety for some deputies from the SO who were going to blow up the log jam. I like the idea of blowing up a country club, even just a tiny bit of one, so I went as did BC (who was dithering on whether he had time) and GU. A lot of County Fire people went too. Apparently they were going to saw a lot of the logs first, but then they were called away to a fire. BC almost immediately wanted to leave then, so GU took him back, and since it appeared the SO was still going to place charges, I stayed. But the river level was low enough it was pretty clear it would be unlikely I'd have to rescue anyone. The SO's explosives guy was driving a UTV up the river to place the charges in the logjam, and someone was joking about watching out for the June suckers (an endangered fish). They put in six tubes of ANFO, and we retreated well back to the golf course, which meant we could not see the explosion. But when it went off I could feel it thump my chest, and then a fountain of wood rose up above the treetops and spread about, like a geyser of wood or a volcanic eruption of wood. Some chunks came down on the golf course, so maybe that'll change par for awhile. When we walked back, half the log jam was still there. The deputies hurried to put in three more charges, seeing as the dam had already begun releasing water and it was expected to arrive soon, and they set those off. That time the jam cleared. But apparently the blasting annoyed the sensibilities of some of the elites, because reportedly they called the police about wood raining down on their

distant mansions. So the blasting team hurried off, and as I was last to leave I had to find my way through the golf course using my memory, such as it is. There was a big chunk of wood over on the grass on the other side of the river, and people were golfing around it; a country club guy had been going over there to keep that area clear during blasting, though, so I don't think anyone would have been there when it came down. It seemed as if we'd done plenty of SAR work already today, but then in the evening a Stewart Falls call out came in. Especially with Timp's summit trails largely blocked by snow, I guess there'll be a lot of hikers going to Stewart Falls. So the deluge begins. This was an almost seventy year old woman who might have been having heart problems. The third or fourth call out of the day, depending on whether one counts blowing up the golf course. Staging was rerouted from Three Sisters to Aspen Grove, so our people actually beat North Fork to the victim. I got up there and no one else was waiting, but I volunteered to set off alone, and SS didn't think so. When LS showed up I asked if he'd like both of us to set out, and he thought it would be better to wait for more people, and then haul up gear. So we waited, and eventually took up the litter. The frequency for the operation was supposedly 800 MHz, which keeps happening. Many of us don't have those radios, and SAR is supposedly going to VHF, which is why they issued us all VHF Motorolas this year. Just on Monday I was in my hammock when LS emailed me wondering why we keep being told to be on 800 on call outs, when many of us don't have and aren't supposed to need that capability. Anyway, at about this time there was also word that something might be going on out on Utah Lake, but that didn't develop into a call out. Once we got the litter up, assembly became an issue. It's a litter that has to be perfectly aligned before screwing the two sides together, and if one side gets screwed in before the other, it'll likely bind and can take a long time to get fixed. It was visibly not aligned, and wasn't going together, and especially with some probies working on it I explained my experience with that litter in some detail, and eventually it went together. Then as instructed I got a blanket for the patient and kept asking where to put it, and was directly to put it around her head. On the way out, FW said I was irritating people. I asked how, and he paused and then said by talking about what other people were already doing. OK. Generally, or specific to this call out? He didn't say. But I think he didn't like the litter discussion. As we headed out, the probie on the back of the litter was letting it bang down after crossing roots and rocks, instead of lowering it slowly, and wasn't listening for awhile about how to do it. Then BC jumped in, and he's fond of gabbing about everything, so he was talking to the lady about his schooling, and the Pentagon Papers, and many other things, but eventually he was visibly tired and flushed, and snapped when a couple of us asked if he wanted to be relieved. He was also repeatedly demanding people get on the sides of the litter to steady it, which doesn't work on the narrow trail. People kept getting stripped off by trees and drop offs, or in my case once, by hikers. This sort of thing shouldn't happen. We don't need people on the sides of the litter on a narrow trail, we need fresh people on each end of the litter. When we got to debriefing, FW said that the metal on the litter connectors was galling, and needed lubrication. Maybe, but not all the similar litters behave like this one, and I know this one binds if not aligned correctly, and goes together if the two halves are aligned, so I think it is less metal transfer than imperfect alignment. I went to SS to check out, and he said he was already aware I was there. Yes, but we're supposed to not just check in, but to check

out also, so no one gets left behind. Which LS was happy to point out to him, since once she was walking back to Three Sisters last year from Stewart Falls and missed the trail turnoff to our staging area, and by the time she got back everyone had left. I was kind of vexed at the end of this call out.

Wednesday, May 31, 2017

While relaxing pleasantly at home, a call out came for a tired and sick fifty some year old hiker up Dry Canyon, on the far north edge of the county. A long way to drive. It's hard to understand why I go to these things. On the radio it sounded as if the guy was only a quarter of a mile up the trail. I fell in behind AT on the way up the interstate, and in her mirror she noticed me changing my shirt, which she thought was funny. But I left on my jeans and running shoes both because I figured we probably would get called off, and if not then we still wouldn't have much to do. AT turned off an exit sooner than I did, and I got up there before her, and put on my mini pack so I'd look halfway prepared for things even though it wasn't much necessary. Then I was standing around all alone, but OG let me go on up anyway. I took some water in case anyone needed any. A couple hundred yards up I met the litter team coming down, offered water, got a snarky comment from a probie about no one needing water that close to the trailhead, and chatted with DB on the way back, and with the guy's wife a bit. That's the way to do call outs! Mindful of what FW was going on about yesterday, once we got to the trailhead and people were trying to figure out how to move the patient I stayed out of the way and was quiet, until ICS told me to jump in and steady the litter for patient transfer to the ambulance gurney, and I did that with only one question about where to grab the litter. When we took the litter apart, one of the probies noted that it was a lot easier to use than yesterday's litter, which is true; this litter was from FH's truck, not the Sheriff's truck.

Thursday, June 1, 2017

It just never ends! Driving home from work there was a call out way up Jacobs Ladder, for a teenage hiker bit by a rattlesnake. I was close to the annex, so I drove over and picked up a trailer, and towed a UTV up to the church parking lot we stage at. That always spooks me because as some point I'll look in my rear view mirror and see a vehicle right off my tailgate, and be startled before realizing that I'm towing it. Apparently Unified Fire paramedics were hiking in from the Salt Lake Valley side, and DB rode his dirt bike up there but got a ridge over from the guy and had to hike, although he got there. Eventually a couple of UTVs went in, but one got wildly off, and I don't know if the other ever reached the location. Ultimately Life Flight picked the guy up and flew him to Unified Fire's staging area. Sgt. EG was really peeved about that, as he had told the mom to come to where we were, but she badgered the fire people into telling the helicopter to come to where she was. I'm a bit unclear on whether the hiker was grazed by a snake, or actually bitten, or just thought he'd been bitten; apparently there was more of a scratch than puncture wounds. Maybe it was a dry bite. Apart from amusing PT by showing up to tow while wearing a suit, my contribution was to help

unload gear from the helicopter prior to hoisting, getting a tarp to cover the gear when the clouds started to sprinkle, and helping reload when the helicopter returned.

Sunday, June 4, 2017

There was a call out for a litter carry out at Tibble Fork, but a few minutes later the south county team members were called off, and a few minutes after that everyone was called off. So, I didn't get too far down the road.

Thursday, June 8, 2017

We had team meeting, a week late because it became inconvenient for the board to do the normal meeting and training times this month due to conferences. A lady came who had made a giant thank you card for us with some people's signatures on it, and she presented it because of our work on the river search. KSL TV came to film themselves giving us a thank you dinner as a "high five" for the same search. There was some explanation of flat water search for our upcoming training, and news. Apparently the coverage of the river search led to a lot of people applying for SAR. Sgt. NG is being replaced with Sgt. SK, and I'll miss Sgt. NG quite a bit because he was unpretentious and friendly, usually pretty laid back. There was a Utah SAR conference last week, and I guess Utah County was impressive to a lot of the rural counties. Some people from rural SAR units might come up and watch how we do the NME. A few people also reported on the MRA (Mountain Rescue Association) annual conference last week. At a law enforcement awards thing somewhere, there were some SAR-related awards. MM from Mounted Posse got one for the quick Israel Canyon find of a body. GH noted in talking to me that I was there with him also, but it's no big deal.

Saturday, June 10, 2017

Team training was flat water, on Utah Lake, and I arrived early at the SO to tow. Three stations, but there wasn't a way to get a full training group (1/3 of SAR) onto the airboat, so the Utah Lake State Parks guys got their boats, and my group rotated between going with the rangers to look at a sunken boat with their side scan sonar, and the airboat. A few of us never got on the airboat, due to training timing issues, which is a shame because DB was driving it (or piloting it, or whatever), and he'd have probably been a hoot to ride with. Then onto PWCs, some doubled up (I was sitting behind TJ), to practice search patterns, with a line of PWCs abreast searching in a straight line, then pivoting around the end PWC to line up and search the next area of water, going the other way. A few people didn't grasp the pivot, but what was really surprising is how many couldn't form a straight line. It's almost beyond belief that some people just couldn't stay lined up side by side with others. Then off to the shallows in the Achilles inflatable boat, and the Mud Buddy, switching between them. The Achilles has a standard outboard motor configuration, but it can be mounted at a shallow water angle. Steering an outboard is a bit counterintuitive, as one pushes the motor's handle toward one side of the boat to get the boat to go in the other direction. The Mud Buddy is a flat bottomed boat with an odd motor that has a long boom projecting out the back

with a propeller at the end of it, which can be lifted out of the water or steered with the boom angled down and the propeller just barely in the water. This requires a long handle on the motor for manipulating the boom. Both boats can get into the reeds fringing the lake, at least a bit, to search for bodies. BH figured out the Mud Buddy. LS kept having the motor die, I'm not sure how, and grounded us over and over. It was astonishing. Our probie took it back across the lake to the marina; I'm a bit worried about him because he may lack some confidence, but he can do this if he keeps plugging away. GG had me take the Mud Buddy into the marina, and I found it not too hard to steer, after a bit of experimentation. He had me do a 360 around a bouy, during which I guess I struck an amusing pose as I stretched to push the handle far over while balancing on a leg. But he liked how I was doing so he said I could drive it onto the boat trailer. I let people off at the dock, and had a bad communication back and forth over the water with PA, who wanted me to put it on OD's trailer instead of GG's, and GG and I didn't know OD had taken GG's trailer. Once that was sorted out I got the Mud Buddy away from the dock, circled out to get a better angle on the trailer, and eased it right on. Lt. CB was watching, probably with a bit of concern, and came over and complimented the job. I really thought I'd nailed a skill quickly, and done unusually well, and was happy about that. Back home to see the grandbabies, who were down so one can have neurosurgery next week. That evening I was off to the Spanish Oaks Reservoir for a missing and likely drowned child call out, but bystanders found him and pulled him out and tried to resuscitate him before we got there. I don't know whether he went in from the beach side, or slipped down the concrete on one of the other three sides. Just before midnight there was another call out, asking for two people only, to get some equipment because a boater was stuck out on the lake. Our younger daughter was having a hypoglycemic episode, and they haven't given us Sgt. SK's cell number so I couldn't check in with him directly per the text anyway, so I let that one slide.

Monday, June 12, 2017

It's a day at home, waiting to hear how a grandbaby's neurosurgery went, but there was a call out in the morning. Since it was too early for surgery news anyway, I went. A hiker ledged up at Pine Hollow, reportedly, although on the way it sounded as if we were being diverted to the other side of the mountain, to Aspen Grove, but that got fixed. It was an astonishing call out. First of all, the older lady was not on cliffs, she was just up the dirty hillside of a road cut, perhaps forty feet from the road. Apparently when she and a nephew or grandson were hiking down a trail on the final straight stretch before the roadside trailhead, they decided that instead of staying on the trail they would try going right down the side of the mountain directly to the road below them, to then follow the road to the trailhead. That proved to be a bad idea when they broke through the brush onto the top of the loose dirt and rock of the road cut above the road. He got down, but she got scared and stayed in place. A Forest Service employee driving by saw her and scrambled up to her, called for help, and shared with her a bit of clothing, but they were both basically in cotton. Which brings us to the next bit of the astonishing part: it started to snow. With wispy snow in the air, you could see the air currents. There was a river of air flowing up canyon blowing the snow sideways,

and some blowing down canyon, and there was a sheet of air flowing crossways, and air going every which way, all of it cold. As I drove up, some team members were tramping down the road, and I stopped to see what was up, and they told me to go on up the road; they should have asked for a ride down to the trailhead, but some of the probies are kind of testy. The road was getting crowded up there, and I set up traffic control, with GU on the other side, like we did on the Nebo Loop not long ago. Three trucks promptly came speeding down the road, refusing to respond to arm signals to slow down, and I yelled at each of them to slow down. Apparently I was loud enough to be heard down at the rescue site, and the SO then just blocked the road. So next I tried to keep people from stopping on parts of the road where there was natural rockfall coming down wet gullies. Meanwhile, back on the road cut the lady was nervous about standing up to go down, even when tied into ropes, but she did, and they lowered her off with one rescuer. After which the Forest Service guy just scampered down the dirt on his own. Then the team went to AF for burgers as the SO's treat, and I went home to wait for the good news.

Saturday, June 17, 2017

My wife suggested yesterday that we go to Yellowstone this weekend after dropping our grandson off in Idaho (we were watching him to give his parents a break post surgery for his little brother), so I got someone to cover my hearings early next week, and she reserved a wee cabin in the park, and this morning off we went! We had only just left the county when the first SAR call out came in: a hiker who had fallen from a cliff on Big Horn Peak. That's on the border with Salt Lake County, just east of Lone Peak, but is usually accessed up Bells Canyon from Salt Lake County. Fifteen minutes later the call out was ended because Unified Fire Department in Salt Lake County was responding. Apparently a trail runner ran up to the top of Bells and just over the county border to view the sights in Utah County from the ridge, then started running back down Bells, and slipped on snow and fell to his death. A few hours later, there was a standby text for a Tibble Fork incident. I still don't know what we're supposed to do with those standby texts. But several minutes later there was a formal call out, to look for a couple of missing motorcyclists somewhere up there. So, my stats are dropping, but I liked being with my wife more.

Sunday, June 18, 2017

In Utah, there was a standby text for Jacob's Ladder, and then almost immediately a call out for a forty six year old woman who fell there. Apparently she got lost hiking down from Lone Peak after having headed up from Corner Canyon in Salt Lake County, and wound up dehydrated and confused on our side. A little over an hour later there was a call out for a forty six year old man who broke his ankle near the Tibble Fork dam, apparently in some kind of horse accident. However, I was busy eating mountain berry ice cream by a waterfall in Yellowstone, and then watching grizzlies and also a black bear and her cubs.

Friday, June 23, 2017

There was a call out to Aspen Grove for lost hikers. I was wondering how someone gets lost up there. But radio traffic suggested one hiker had called about another who slipped and then slid down a snow field. "Lost" in that context could mean that someone dropped into a crevasse in the snow, which would make this a bigger deal than carrying out someone who hurt their ankle a half mile from the trailhead. I got up there with Sgt. EG, falling in behind him as he passed slow traffic on Alpine Loop with his emergency lights on, and as the reporting party was explaining to us why she had called about the guy who slid, the guy showed up on the trail, walking into the parking lot! NJ had just showed up, so I figure that means the two of us found the guy. Sort of. Then a couple more people arrived. Some people were talking about how emergency lights on our cars would help us get up the loop quicker, and Sgt. EG took the opportunity to mention that following a vehicle with emergency lights on when one doesn't have them on oneself isn't especially safe. So I guess I was gently corrected. It sure was pretty up there. I volunteered NJ and I to stay and take some charges up and blow the killer snow holes, but Sgt. EG didn't think that would be very safe. For us. In the evening there was a call out for someone hanging from a rock for dear life, up off the Bridal Veil Falls so-called trail. That would seem like an emergency, but he was likely to either fall or climb up well before we got there. Indeed, he got up in just a few minutes. Seemed like the whole team was turning out, though.

Saturday, June 24, 2017

The afternoon call out was a bit of a farce. It was for a mountain biker in our county, but within the city limits of Draper, and Draper is in both counties. So their fire department initially responded, and the SO was called, then called off, then called again, and by the time we got there the fire people were toting the lady out on a backboard, of all things. Of course, it took awhile to get there because the directions were awful, complicated by roads closed for construction. Lt. CB went the wrong way to get there, and I followed him. Lots of people turned out, but few had anything to do. In the evening there was another call out, to Spanish Oaks Reservoir for a child, but thankfully the child hadn't drowned but was just lost and people had worried about a possible drowning. We were called off minutes after the initial text, when the child showed up safe.

Friday, June 30, 2017

In the afternoon, when our youngest daughter had a medical appointment, there was a call out for a fall at Stewart Falls. As opposed to typical hiking injuries, actual falls at the waterfall's cliffs can be very serious, so I went, but had my wife keep me on the speaker phone with the nurse practitioner. Then there was confusion about why we were going to Aspen Grove instead of Three Sisters, and then a Sgt. JA, who it turns out is replacing Sgt. HF starting today, wanted some of us go to a parking lot in Mandan cottages (although in telling us to follow him, he took off and lost us before we could turn around), where we have never staged. After some time were we told to leave

there and go to the bridge by the lower part of the trail between Sundance and Stewart Falls, where North Fork Fire was already preparing to carry out a lady who fell on the trail and hurt her knee, and where while we were standing around at Mandan cottages some other SAR people went up with a wheeled litter to have them use that instead. I ended up being sent up and then was told to relay some radio traffic to MS, and to get people's call numbers for roll. Turns out AG was the guy on the CP end of the radio, and I've never seen anyone try as hard to be ICS without actually being ICS; he is really pouring it on this year. However, today he was confused about the numbers I gave him, and it turns out they were accurate numbers but he was using a clipboard with the old numbers on it from before the odd mid-year renumbering the board did. Meanwhile, I was trying to listen on the phone to an explanation of how despite many previous tests and doctors missing it, our younger daughter supposedly conclusively has two more autoimmune diseases. Not the greatest afternoon.

Sunday, July 2, 2017

Called out to Stewart Falls for a hiker having issues, and North Fork and Sundance got there and handled it, so we were quickly called off.

Tuesday, July 4, 2017

In the late afternoon we got the call out I'd been expecting all day: a dehydrated and tired hiker who had lacked the sense to stay out of the sun in one hundred degree weather. We were supposed to go to Beer Can Flats, which I had never heard of and could not find on the internet, apart from a reference in a Facebook page suggesting it might be in Payson Canyon. Dispatch wasn't much more helpful, but by the time I got across town and to the interstate, we were being called off anyway because someone had gotten a bottle of Gatorade to the hiker. I hadn't noticed a great number of people turning out for the call out in the first place. Then ICS decided they didn't want to bother to count the call out at a stat.

Thursday, July 6, 2017

We had a team meeting today, and it was all very nice to see people, I'm sure, but I'm kind of tired of meetings. I sat by CM, who just got back from a non-SAR cave rescue training in Oregon. The team met Sgt. JA, who replaced Sgt. HF, and we learned that a couple of people are dropping out including ST from my probie group; he is going to medical school. The Mounted Posse is even more frustrated than SAR about lack of call outs, since they haven't been called for any of what we've had. A lot of what we've been to isn't showing up on team stats. I'm the only person with more than 100% attendance so far this year. Training was on how snowy and dangerous Timp still is, and on wrapping sprained ankles, and on getting to know more about access points along the Provo River. I quickly skedaddled out at the end.

Saturday, July 8, 2017

Saturday training was four stations at Rock Canyon Park dealing with basic MRT skills including litter rigging. We had checklists, and quizzes, and I did OK except for forgetting how to tie a couple of knots I should know well. Toward the end I noticed ICS and the deputies heading for the parking lot. A call out was developing. We started off at the end of training for it, toward Tibble Fork for something involving a motorcyclist who had been out all night, only to be quickly called off. Wasatch County had originally been working it. Light Flight ultimately handled it, though.

Saturday and Sunday, July 8–9, 2017

An epic call out. TERT has been sending high camp teams up the mountain recently, even though it's snowy, and because their team leader this weekend likes to get to church on Sunday morning, he brought them down Saturday in the late afternoon instead of Sunday. They had ice axes, and crampons or similar devices, but at about quarter after five in the evening, while descending upper Primrose Cirque, there was a problem. Their team was crossing a snowfield and one member slipped and lost his ice axe, but grabbed a broken pine bough that was laying on the snow, and used it to self arrest. However, the next (and last) person across, a twenty some year old member of the TERT team, slipped on the snowfield, couldn't self arrest with his ice axe, tumbled or vaulted over the top of the other guy, lost his ice axe there (which provided the other guy with a replacement ice axe), slid down to the edge of a cliff band and dropped about thirty feet into a narrow moat where the snowfield below had been melting away from the cliff band, and broke both legs. Snowmelt flowing under the snowfield formed a waterfall splashing into the area where he landed. Thankfully he wasn't alone, or that spot would now probably be called middle killer snow hole. His team called for help, and SAR went to Aspen Grove. On the way across the valley I phoned into the radio phone patch TERT uses, to get a better idea of whether the incident was in snow, and I relayed information to CP about TERT having set out yellow pants on an ice axe by the trail to mark where they were off to the side. In the parking lot I added crampons and an ice axe, which seemed to surprise a probie despite us just Thursday having had a meeting at which PP told us Timp would still be snowy. I did not want to carry a lot of technical gear unless it was really necessary, and as I was going over to see if it was necessary I saw FH was separating people into two groups and getting them ready to go, so I figured I'd wait until he finished with that to see what I needed to take, but he told me to go pick up the litter handles and carry them up, so I jumped in and tied them on my pack quickly, and off we went. Up the Stewart Falls trail. It seemed no one knew they were going the wrong way, so I asked about that after several dozen yards, and then led the way across the meadow to the actual Aspen Grove (Mount Timpanogos) trail. As we went up the trail in the heat, I was very tired, and fell behind. Surprisingly tired. The handles lashed to my pack were sticking up in the air, catching on brush, and making it hard to physically push through. At one point I was down on my hands and knees going under some limbs that hadn't been cut back yet that season. Listening on the TERT frequency it was clear that those guys were wet and cold, tired of waiting for us, and irritated with the fact that radio communications weren't working well—the

TERT trailhead guy had left the TERT shack for the parking lot, and wasn't answering, and FW in the parking lot was on the radio demanding that TERT take the victim's boots off to check capillary refill, but TERT didn't think that was appropriate at the moment, and had a physician's assistant and two advanced EMTs of their own to make that call. Up by Second Falls I caught up, and PC transferred the litter handles to a younger guy. I didn't complain. PC was leading the group at this point, and TERT asked him to take the shortcut, and he didn't know where it was, but I did, so I pointed the way. That saved some time and helped us miss one snowfield. When we got to near the big rockslide with multiple snowfields, I spotted where the TERT team was signaling with a light, and pointed it out. We put on crampons, and mine stayed on snugly, which is nice. By the time we got up there, only a few SAR people were ahead of me. At about this time Life Flight was also flying the scene, but just as dusk was coming on they decided it was too high and too hot for them to have power to lift, and they left. Meanwhile, at the snow moat one could climb down into it ten feet down or so at the near end, then traverse along the bottom of the cliff band going deeper below the top of the snowfield, then down a several more feet into a wet, rocky hole with a waterfall. TERT had splinted their guy, and moved him out of the direct water. Their PA talked to me and was worried that their team leader was especially wet and cold, so I didn't exactly order the TERT team leader out of the hole, but I knew his name from having done TERT weekends on his team, and somewhat authoritatively indicated he needed to leave and warm up. I went to get him a blanket and pass him off to others, and one of the probies, who was in a shirt, asked if he could wear my shell jacket while he stayed down in the moat by the waterfall. OK, although at this point it was raining and hailing out on the mountain. Thankfully the weather passed quickly. The litter was coming up, and needed to be lifted on end and rotated head first so we could lift it out of the hole, and the litter team romped the ties down pretty hard onto the patient's groin area, and that created some of the most memorable moments of the event for him. Thankfully, that didn't go on for many minutes. There was supposedly a 2:1 raising system set up, but apparently it turned out to be only a 1:1. They put LS in charge of directing the pulling of the rope, and we pulled while people pushed from below, and got the litter up, although it was tough, and at one point when the rope was slipping I asked LS if that was supposed to be happening, and she said in a tremulous voice that she didn't think so. Someone might should have put a prusik in that system. During the early part of that process, squeezing past the litter to get up to the rope, I had accidentally brushed the patient's foot, and that was not a happy moment for him. Once the litter was up out of the moat, the litter was sort of slowly pendulumed across a small snow field to the rocky slope on the other side, and taken down the trail a bit and laid along the trail on a part where the trail was as close to flat as we were going to find. I stayed with the medical team, taking turns with a probie holding the bottom of the litter and keeping the litter stable, and eventually we stacked big rocks under the foot end to get him level. Department of Public Safety was willing to fly the site to see what they could do, and we waited an hour there for them. It was dark, as it had taken a long time to get to this point, in part because of continuing IV attempts. Eventually a stable IV went in that didn't infiltrate. That let the medical people switch from IM fentanyl and morphine to IV fentanyl and morphine. Improvised splints were eventually changed over to vacuum splints. TERT had already reduced the more than 90°

angulation on the open dislocation of the right tibia to much closer to straight, but the bone was still poking way out. There was distal circulation on both sides, although it looked to me as if the closed fracture on the left side was accompanied by odd color and lesser sensation in the foot. GP and LS had been doing medical, but then ZM and PG came up and jumped in also. There seemed to be a bit of delay in everyone getting on board with the need to keep a wet to dry dressing over the exposed bone, to protect the periosteum. Awhile after dark DPS flew in practically right on top of us, but couldn't find a place to land, and couldn't hoist at night; they only recently got hoist capability for daytime. They did get really close to ropes set up on the snowfield, and were urgently warned off; a DPS helicopter rescue in Salt Lake nearly went south not long ago when the rotor grabbed a rope. They said that they'd be back at five in the morning. Which created a conundrum: do we continue to evacuate, slowly penduluming across the big snowfield below a series of snow anchors? Anticipating that, I had been assigned to help manage the litter, and would try to do that, although we were not to put our own weight on the anchor, so it would be important both that the anchors hold for the litter and that the litter attendants not fall while wrestling the litter. The rigging was likely to be interesting, since the thought was to keep the litter sideways to the slope, not up and down it, and level. The ultimate decision, though, was not to put the team and patient out on the snowfields at night, but to wait for morning and hope the helicopter could hoist. That would probably get the patient to the parking lot in about the same amount of time, actually. I'd been sitting by the foot of the patient while those decisions were being made, so I just laid down on the slope there in my down puffy jacket, as the probie had asked to keep my shell jacket overnight. Fortunately, it did not get very cold. The patient was pretty well covered, but I got out some hot packs for his toes, to supplement the water bottles people had been heating and using to warm his body, and I cut my foil emergency blanket for the medical people to add as a vapor barrier to the dressing so it would not dry out at fast. I basically tried to be available and helpful with gear and whatever else might be needed. We each try to carry sort of a toolbox of SAR stuff for whatever might come up. The medical people monitored the patient, and I hoped that during the night his circulation would continue, and no compartment syndrome would set in, or infection, and that his orange urine peed into a bottle didn't suggest rhabdomyolysis, and that he wouldn't get pressure sores. The one really great thing was his attitude: it was incredibly positive. Morale was high with everyone because this guy just wasn't going to let this get him down, or let the pain overwhelm him, or any such thing! Toward the end of the night I actually got some sleep, after setting up a bit of a windbreak with my pack. One TERT guy stayed with us all night also. When DPS came, ZM picked me to be with the group staying with the patient. The helicopter was blowing grit, and I kept the blankets sealed over the patient's wound, and then when the DPS guy lowered down, I thanked him for coming. He laid out his lifting bag, which looked well designed but only just long enough to fit, and I lifted the patient's left leg as we moved him into the bag and tried to keep it from jamming up against the inside of the bag. Then we clipped the bag into the hoist equipment, and some of us moved off to hold down the now superfluous litter, and DPS hoisted and took the patient to the ambulance in the parking lot. Then the team loaded up for the march out. Crampons on, and they held. I was to take the bottom half of the litter down, and I decided just to hold it in my non-

ice axe hand because it was bloody and I didn't want to strap it on my pack. But PC told me to strap it on. Someone else said if it was bloody just to drag it with webbing. So I sort of did a compromise between the two, but it was flopping all around and making me unbalanced on the snowfield. FA came over and said he'd take it, and I asked if PC had told him to, and he said yes, so I said I could carry it but I would obey orders. FA just carried it across the snowfields in his hand, like I'd been doing originally. I got past the main snowfields and onto rock just above the trail, and I was going to go down to the trail and take off my crampons on a boulder, but some rock shifted, I snagged a pant leg with crampons, and fell over and rolled onto the boulders. My pack and possibly my helmet absorbed the impact, but I shredded a pant leg. And was quite embarrassed. LS and her husband went way down to the bottom of the snowfield and traversed on rock rather than cross the snow on crampons, so we waited for them to come back up. I carried half the litter the rest of the way down. On the main trail we did have one more snow field in a gully that most of us hazarded without putting our crampons back on; that's the gully the shortcut trail avoided. A couple of team members brought up last night's burgers, which were not actually popular at that point, and some water, which was. We were on the final stretch with the broken pavement, where my right knee typically hurts when hiking down Timp, and there is a little hill where the trail goes up and away from the creek area just a bit, and people asked me if we were still on the right trail. I said yes, and explained what we'd be seeing next, and on we went. There were some breakfast sandwiches waiting down at the trailhead, which was nice. Most of us were eager to leave. It was a long sixteen or seventeen hours. I took some TERT gear to their team leader's house near mine. He hadn't heard how things were with his injured teammate.

Monday, July 10, 2017

A somewhat epic call out. At about 9:30 p.m., there was word of an injured hiker on Bridal Veil, who had fallen twenty or thirty feet. I figured it would be a short call out. It wasn't. Apparently a family was scrambling around up where they should not have been, and one guy decided to go higher. He fell down the chute, and barely got stopped or he would have fallen all the way down the falls and died. His knee was slashed open but he could walk, so people were setting hand lines to help him down. I was actually chosen to go up with a small team ZM was leading, and that was a surprise, since there were a number of people in the parking lot. I was supposed to carry extra harnesses and a helmet, but they would ultimately turn out to be unneeded. Then the guy started passing out. So no more walking. The plan became to lower him in a litter on long ropes tied together, all the way down the cliff at the west side of the falls. Plans changed this way and that, and I eventually went up with FH and a group to the base of the falls. After quite a long while, the litter began being lowered, with the litter oriented vertically; SM came down with it as litter attendant. They got pretty wet and cold while waiting on the dark face for knot passes. FH and a couple of other people went over to help as the litter got near the ground, but most people were told to stay back because of the danger from rockfall. Rocks that had been falling exploded when hitting the bottom. Then the rest of us went over to help carry it back through the water by the base of the falls. People were practically running it across the wet rocks,

which didn't make a lot of sense to me but is what happens when people's sense of urgency becomes frantic, and the 200 foot tag line was still trailing back behind the litter, and I was worried it would snag on something and bring everyone to an unexpected stop on a slippery area. So I let the others carry him onward, and I stood in the water and pulled up slack on the tag line so it wouldn't snag. Then people dried the guy and put him in a wheeled litter, and we took him down the trail. Which isn't much more than a bare, steep patch of hillside in places, with a drop off. I eventually wound up on the webbing tag line that helps with braking, and helped control the descent. Earlier, I'd realized my glasses had fallen off my shirt while I was looking through binoculars. I'd gone down trail during a lull and found them in the parking lot. Scratched, unfortunately. In going down that time I'd gone down the wrong trail turn toward the end, and gotten into a steep patch just above the bottom. The litter people made the same mistake, but everything worked out. The family was there to clap. A lot of gear had been shared, and so there was a gear pile to try to get it back to the right people. Then home for another missed night of sleep. I'm glad I wasn't up top in that area that worries me, frankly. And that I wasn't hanging on the screwy eye bolt I saw up there when I was out galavanting around up there earlier this spring, because apparently they used it as an anchor tonight even though one can move that bolt by hand. Also today, I visited our Timp victim in the hospital, and thanked him for being so positive on the mountain.

Thursday, July 13, 2017

Talked to Sgt. SK about gear damaged this past weekend. I'm going to replace some of my stuff, but he got us into the equipment cage so I could get a replacement blanket and some hand warmers, and some hand warmers to take to ZM. Medical training in the evening, at a park in PG, with TERT and horse posse and everyone else in SAR invited. The Timp victim from this weekend was on speakerphone and told us about his perspective; he thought some things took a long time, like getting him out of the hole, and also getting the ambulance moving once he was down to there. I agree with him. He also said he'd had three surgeries, and it turned out he'd ripped a lot of ligaments and avulsed a piece of fibula from his left knee. His right elbow was scratched up but is OK. TERT's team leader was peeved at FW, who wasn't there, thank goodness. ZM will be medical sergeant for awhile because SC is busy; ZM showed off his equipment (which is almost entirely airway management, IV sets, etc.). We had time for only a quick bit on head trauma. I think ZM didn't like me interjecting questions about things like TERT volunteer forms, but this week at work I heard that the county's workers compensation insurance provider was thinking of not covering the victim despite that he's a TERT volunteer, and I've been beating the drum of moral outrage over that, and it's important TERT gets their paperwork correctly submitted because that guy almost wasn't covered. Also, asking him about pain from the litter rigging is important to bring out, because we need to listen to our patients. Our fundamental medical problem is that we have too many people who are more interested in procedures than in listening to the patient and making the patient comfortable. So wound care and warming and padding sometimes takes a back seat.

Saturday, July 15, 2017

I went up Provo Canyon with my wife and daughters to tube the flatter part of the river, from the Deer Creek Reservoir dam down to Vivian Park. On the way up, there was a call out to Aspen Grove, for a broken leg up by Hidden Lakes on Timp. That could be a long and difficult evacuation, what with the snow. Ultimately, though, Life Flight flew it, despite it being a thousand feet higher than last week's call out. I missed that call out. I did see a photo of it later, with a young guy in shorts and expensive mountaineering boots being carried off the helicopter by hand with no litter or splint, looking sheepish. When my family got off the river and back up to below the dam to retrieve my truck, I looked on my phone and saw a call out to Bridal Veil Falls. It seemed like it would be fun to show up at the CP in a swim suit and PDF, but almost as soon as I started driving down Provo Canyon, it was cancelled. I stopped by anyway. It turns out a girl had gotten scared on a ledge, but a guy nearby helped her down, so the call out was not very long. On the way down the highway after that, someone spilled stuff out the back of a truck, and I stopped to help Sgt. JA pick it up.

Sunday, July 16, 2017

OR had emailed about his harness that I'd carried as an extra for the patient on Bridal Veil Falls a week ago. I told him I thought I'd just confiscate it. He said he'd leave a dead fish on my doorstep. I told him to make it a lingcod, and to bring over some potatoes also. Turns out he likes lingcod too.

Monday, July 17, 2017

Another night of little sleep last night, this time due to having to get up quite early to get our youngest daughter to an medical appointment for a procedure. My mother went to the ER in the middle of the night last week for severe leg pain. Two call outs last week were all nighters or nearly all night. Being tired makes it hard to be energetic. Perhaps we'll have a nice break from call outs.

Tuesday, July 18, 2017

Just as I was getting into Springville after work, there was a call out to turn around and go to Stewart Falls for a lady who was having trouble with her hike. On the radio it developed that she was walking, then that she was close to the road, and ultimately that she was out. So we got cancelled. But my new radio speaker mic didn't seem to be transmitting well, and that was frustrating. Perhaps it was because the radio was inside the vehicle. When I got home it transmitted to my old radio OK, at least on simplex. In the evening I reorganized my gear and pack once more, and I think I now have my pack largely set up well so that in most cases once I'm dressed I can just grab it and go, and be ready for what comes without being overpacked; I'd just need to drop in specialized things, if necessary.

Sunday, July 23, 2017

Two call outs. In the afternoon there was a Stewart Falls call out for a teenage boy having a diabetic problem. I headed up. My radio didn't reach the repeater again on transmit, until I put the antenna out the window. Life Flight eventually flew. Our staging was moved from Aspen Grove to Three Sisters. I started carrying up the wheel, then someone took it from me, but he got tired and dropped it along the trail for me to pick up, I guess, but someone else picked it up. I was lagging. But it seems like after a mile or so of lagging, I pick up and then keep up. Odd. We got to this kid after North Fork reached him. His blood sugar was high, so that was interesting. People were assembling the litter. Apparently he had an insulin pen but was out of pen tips. I heard discussion about whether his insulin pen could be used as a source of insulin, with a syringe drawing insulin out. Our daughter does that with her pens to fill her pump, since she has switched from pens to a pump and doesn't want to waste the insulin in the pens. So I said that is possible. Tried repeatedly to get someone at home to answer the phone, and no one would. So I got visually and verbally frustrated while leaving voicemail, and PC told me to go over to the side because I was causing tension, which was true and which was certainly inappropriate, and I was ashamed of myself. Finally my wife called back, and my daughter explained how to do draw off the insulin, which was about what I thought. So I drew up just over sixteen units, flicked the syringe and squeezed off some to get to sixteen (which was as much as that syringe held; the boy's mom was thinking in terms of twenty), and handed it to North Fork so they could do what they wanted with it. They cleared it with their medical control, and injected it instead of having the boy or his mom do it. So I hopefully helped, but I also made an ass of myself. After talking to the boy, I suspect that maybe he has not been enthused enough about tight control, and has been letting insulin injections slide. He was probably above 600, according to what the mom said about when their glucometer reads "high," and that's potentially DKA already, especially with him throwing up and wanting to pee. Shame no one checked ketones. As we were finishing doing a lot of litter tie ins, a new call out came in for Timpooneke. Life Flight was parked down at a meadow, and there was discussion of having them leave to go look for the other hiker, and the boy's mom asked what we'd want to do if this was our boy. Good question. We told her that if his condition was life threatening, we'd want to fly, but if not, the helicopter is an awfully expensive way to get to the hospital. She agreed to ground transport, and we wheeled the boy out. Meanwhile, Life Flight found the hiker and decided they couldn't land nearby, so they just left. No shuttling of people up, no nothing. At the parking area at Three Sisters Lane, I took the parking warning notice I'd gotten some weeks ago and put it onto the windshield of North Fork's ambulance. I hope they found that amusing. A few of us went over to Timpooneke. At that point the team there was hurrying in sort of a contest to get to the hiker before Mounted Posse caught up to them from behind. They located the mother and daughter, checked them out and found them tired from hiking and perhaps dehydrated, and then put them onto horses when the posse arrived. A few of us hung out until they returned. The probies are paranoid about the NME, so we talked about that a bit, and some about their stats, which some of them should be doing better on. FH had them work on knots for awhile,

while I talked to one of the trailhead people from TERT. Lone Peak Fire was being curt with her when they arrived at Timpooneke, so she'd been feeling a bit peripheral.

Friday, July 28, 2017

Upon getting back to work from lunch my phone went off, but it was just an announcement rather than a real call out. Oh, well. Looks like my community service for the week will just be giving blood this afternoon after all. Earlier in the week more team stats came out; updated stats were sparse in the first few months of the year. A few days back I'd heard someone talking to FW about FW not having the highest stats, and his call out stats have climbed dramatically, so he must be happy. We're tied for first. I like high stats because it means I'm getting to understand SAR better, but I don't need them just for the sake of having high stats. It's pointless to try to be #1, or to pretend if you are that you've actually done more than others who are all in the same ballpark. I did email the secretary about having made a team meeting that didn't show, but did not raise not getting credit for July 15.

Saturday, July 29, 2017

There was a text asking for ten people to help Tooele County as an agency assist. I mentioned that I had given blood yesterday and thought that a long desert hike would not be a good idea, and PT had me stay in the county to help cover anything here. The request for assistance involved a search for a missing person in the desert west of the Great Salt Lake. A few hours later there was a call out to Jacobs Ladder. I was just getting to the interstate at that moment on the way to go river tubing with my wife, and I begged off from tubing so I could help our depleted numbers, and go over to the SO to tow ATVs. I did feel a little guilty about not going out with my wife, even though the skies over the river were cloudy, and it isn't fun to tube that river when it isn't sunny. Life Flight flew to locate the hiker by GPS, and to drop a care package that he was apparently unable to retrieve. It seems he had hiked Lone Peak from the Salt Lake side, gotten separated from his group and come down the Utah County side by accident (which seems to happen a lot), run out of food and water, gotten off trail, and called for help. AG went to the church on Suncrest quickly and was trying hard to be like ICS again. He sent up a couple of ATVs, a motorcycle, and a UTV, and they eventually found the hiker thanks to GPS. The rest of us hung around the parking lot. The probies are getting nervous about the NME, so I had some fun with them and told them that my group's test involved hiking Timp in two hours to the top, but those who failed to summit on time could stay in the NME by carrying down the packs of those who did make it on time, and then everyone hiked part way back up to dive into Emerald Lake preparatory to hypothermia drills while the evaluators cooked themselves food on a three burner stove nearby, and then down, and then back up with a litter to retrieve the stove. I think they were halfway believing that. But they didn't believe trying to ascend rope out of a vertical cave shaft before it flooded from water diverted into it for the test. Toward the end of the call out, word came of a developing call out in Santaquin where someone thought a paraglider might have smacked a mountain, but the county flew it

and didn't see anything. That evening there was a request to help Box Elder County in the morning, with a continuation of the Tooele County search.

Sunday, July 30, 2017

Up at 5:00 a.m., and down to the annex. Gossip was that when the team showed up yesterday, the chief sheriff's deputy from Box Elder County challenged them on what they were even doing there. Perhaps Tooele County invited us, and Box Elder didn't realize that. The line between the counties goes right through the search area. Our county had been flying the area today along with DPS, and our aircraft also helped locate two arrested car thieves who made off with the UHP trooper's car that they'd been placed in. DG had his cadaver dog out for a couple of hours. Reportedly, FW blew not one but two ATV tires on his machine. I guess some of those people got back late last night, and PC just stayed over in his car. Today, some people carpooled as it was a long drive, but I did not. We eventually went down a long, dusty road with fine white dust just billowing up and covering everything. Then in the middle of nowhere, there were a surprising number of people gathering. Utah County, Davis County, Tooele County, and Box Elder County had SAR people out. There were ATVs and a lot of horses, plus a whole bunch of civilian volunteers showing up. AT walked up and looked at me and said she needed a volunteer, so I raised my hand, and she sent me to go get OG's truck and bring it to the command post, although when I got back PC didn't want me to drive it up over the bumpy edge of the road. When I had first been walking down the way to OG's truck, I nearly got run down by a galloping horse that had spooked and thrown its rider. Another woman kept getting tossed up onto the neck of her appaloosa. Before things got going I also had an assignment to run AT back down the road to where a truck and trailer had been left, so she could tow it closer. I missed the group briefing, and saw a long line of people walking out across the flat through greasewood and cheatgrass, and I joined the line. SAR people were helping maintain some order in a search line doing fingertip to fingertip close search patterns through the brush. I saw a lot of jackrabbits, a kangaroo rat, and odd birds, and some people saw rattlesnakes, but no one saw the missing seventy some year old almost certainly dead man. Back for a break, and we heard that the SO had ordered our group a bunch of burgers, but they never arrived. At different times, I talked to the missing man's daughter, brother, and a couple of friends. This has to be tough for them. He has probably been missing for close to a week, although no one knew precisely when he set out for the area where his car was found, since he was living alone after his wife died. Apparently he was likely searching for artifacts, although I didn't see any of those. In the afternoon there was a group of people there who came out because their church was cancelled for the search, and it was hot and some people were getting testy. A guy was arguing with a Box Elder SAR person about whether we were overlapping our previous search area too much, and they got to yelling and cussing. Box Elder had people rest after the long afternoon sweep back and forth, all of this being over ground that was covered earlier in the week in less detail by Tooele and then by them, and by aircraft. I talked to LS for awhile. She thinks the final NME scenario we had was to test DR to see if he'd step up and essentially run a code. I don't know about that, although we did agree that there needs to be less jumping in and more direction in medical

incidents. LS hasn't done much nursing in some years, because she's doing administrative things. She was worried about finding her way out to the interstate and then going the correct direction to get to Salt Lake, and she is pretty adamant she doesn't want to cross any more snowfields on crampons, so she still mystifies me some. It still seems to be up in the air if this year's NME will go three days, and apparently that's a hush hush secret. At any rate, as we were gabbing Box Elder decided they didn't want to send people out for more sweeps, and decided to terminate the search. GPS tracks apparently showed the area pretty well blanketed. People were getting beat. But it was hard to fail. Their chief deputy came over to see if there was anything any of us thought could still be done, and our group didn't seem to want to talk to him, although I tried to be friendly and to commiserate. Earlier I'd asked if the victim's vehicle worked, since if it didn't then that would mean he wasn't in a short radius area but in a long linear area back up the road. I hadn't thought to ask about looking in the trunk, or about actual tracks leading away from the vehicle, my wife asking me about the latter when I got home. I went over to Box Elder SAR's trailer to thank them for letting us help, and wish them well. Sadly, White Lightning would not start. We put it on jumper cables on it, and it still would not start. I got my cables, and they hooked up not one but two batteries to it at once, and it still did not want to start. Eventually it did. It might have been that a ground clamp on what looked to me like painted metal might have been hindering things for awhile; I suggested moving it to definitely bare steel. The delay was helpful anyway, since GB, FW, and PC had been sent out on a special op by our people, to search a cave Box Elder hadn't wanted to check, which we thought should be checked, but would need to be checked discreetly so as not to step on their toes. So now maybe those three will get SAR special operations patches or something designed for them for fun. I want to do a black op! We all headed back toward Utah County, and some of us stopped at a McDonalds in Tooele. Actually at a Burger King, but they couldn't figure out a tax exempt order, so then over to McDonalds where they eventually figured out how to let the SO treat us. The citizen volunteer who had been arguing with Box Elder came in with some of his friends, and I went over and thanked them for coming out and helping, so hopefully that made them a little happier. Then, in Salt Lake County, FW radioed that it looked like there was something wrong with one of my tires. I stopped and looked at it, but didn't see anything. Since I need an oil change and a tire rotation, I dropped it off at the Toyota dealership in Orem with a note, and my wife picked me up. Plucking stickers out of my socks and shoes will wait until tomorrow.

Monday, July 31, 2017

A Stewart Falls call out came in, but my truck was in the shop and my wife was busy with her car, so I missed going to it. After twenty minutes they cancelled everyone who wasn't already in the canyon, so it was another typical call out. Toyota said my tires are fine, but they did want to do a lot of other maintenance.

Tuesday, August 1, 2017

Another Jacobs Ladder call out. This time, a tourist from England decided to hike up to Lone Peak from the Salt Lake side and then along the ridge somewhere, and then just bushwack down the Utah County side and work back along the base to his trailhead. Trying to descend directly off a major ridge, without following a trail, is not a good idea. Especially for someone whose idea of hiking developed in London. He either got a sprained ankle, or possibly a broken ankle. Motorcycles and ATVs went up after him, and eventually a couple of UTVs. The county airplane was spotting. It was a hard slog for them once they had to get off the vehicles and start hiking. I was left at the staging area, and mainly occupied myself helping with safety checking, and working the landing zone. Life Flight came to hoist, bless their hearts, and so we helped unload their helicopter of weight they didn't need for the hoist, and kept people out of the part of the church parking lot we had appropriated for a landing zone. The helicopter blew over an orange traffic barrel out on the road, so I went out there to get it out of the lane and set it back up, and PA was hollering something about putting it in the gutter, but I fixed it and stayed by it during the next landing, so it all worked fine. They hauled the guy out, an ambulance came and he refused it, and a couple of ladies who had driven up by with a little boy who wanted to see the helicopter said they'd drive the guy back to his trailhead. Earlier BC had jumped on an ATV, and was enthused to go, but didn't know how to shift gears on the ATV. Bad sign. I mentioned to Lt. CB the training issue. On the way back in the dark, he rolled it and injured himself. We sent up help. I could get Wi-Fi on my phone when next to the church, and when over that way the phone chirped an alert and I saw a very unusual glucose high on my daughter's monitor, so just as the team was arriving back at CP I left to see what was up with her. Meanwhile, people are going missing all over the state. There is, for example, a seventy some year old man missing in the western Uintas right now.

Thursday, August 3, 2017

The team meeting today was the annual BBQ, this time held at the Spanish Fork Fairgrounds. It was nice. My wife sat next to AG, and had a good talk, which will hopefully help him and me get along a bit better.

Saturday, August 5, 2017

During the night we got an email about the training today, and a text at 7:00 a.m. telling us to be at Dry Canyon by 8:00. More MRT, but this time a bit more advanced. Sadly, I had a brain cramp and went to adjacent Battle Creek Canyon before realizing I was a trailhead over, so I was a few minutes late. At one station we practiced litter tie ins for steep slopes, and I got it set up almost perfectly, and then we were taught about rigging for vertical descents. At another station we practiced passing knots through raising and lowering systems. At the third station we got up on a cliff and saw how to do pick offs, to get people who are stuck on the side of a cliff down by attaching them to us and then lowering them. Some people walked down to the parking lot from there, and some set up a rappel station for fun, but that group was debating the anchor and

there was a line of people wanting to rappel, so instead of waiting I walked down and went and got a milkshake. During the training there was a call out for six people to go to AF for a hiker, and mostly long timers went on that. In the afternoon, there was a call out to Timp for a hiker with a possibly broken ankle. As we were going up the canyon, UHP shut down traffic to allow a bicycle race through. Several people got up before closure, but several of us did not. By the time we got to Aspen Grove, Life Flight had come in and had a hard time with winds at the trailhead, but did land at the nearby BYU family camp, which I guess caused a kerfuffle. They carried a couple of SAR people up to Hidden Lakes, and called that good, I believe, because winds at Emerald Lake were apparently screwy. Those guys hiked up to Emerald Lake, where TERT was bringing a hiker off the glacier with a tarp rigged from what other hikers on the glacier were carrying. Another team was hauling a litter up the trail on foot. ICS didn't know for sure what was going on with the hiker, so I radioed TERT and got a location and condition report, and let ICS listen on my speaker mic. There wasn't much to do at the trailhead for awhile, then DPS sent their helicopter down, which landed in the meadow at the trailhead, went up to Emerald Lake and brought down the hiker, and then even went back and brought down the two SAR guys up there. Those DPS helicopter guys are pretty good, when they're available. During this time period I helped secure the meadow to keep people out of the LZ. Then we waited for our team with the litter parts to hike back down. Meanwhile, the hiker didn't even get in the ambulance, but got a ride down in a car. This sort of injury isn't actually supposed to result in helicopters going into the wilderness, but it was nice to not spend the rest of the day and part of the night getting the guy down the trail. There was a play in Provo my wife wanted me to go to with her, and I got back in time to do that.

Wednesday, August 9, 2017

Today was a learning experience. After dinner I noticed there had been a text a few minutes before, for a handful of people to go to Bridal Veil Falls for a guy supposedly only 150' up the cliffs. I figured there would already be the requisite number en route, but turned on the radio and heard they might need more. So I set out, changing my clothes on the way as I really shouldn't do. On the drive north, I saw off to the west some nasty looking weather blowing in over the lake. At Bridal Veil, AT said I should go up with team two, which would be formed soon, and pad the litter and put a tag line on the litter and provide safety help getting it down. EG and BH, who were at their cars getting ready when I drove up, had walked up to the EG behind me once they got ready. AT made me team leader, and sent the three of us up. I suggested those guys assemble a litter and carry me up, but we opted for just walking up the trail, with me going too fast at first and EG suggesting we take it easier. Good advice. But I still got tired, and most of the way up had to take a rest break because I was having difficulty catching my breath. EG might have been tired too, but BH assured us he himself was strong and ready to keep going. But we stayed together, which is good. I made a couple of small boo boos in route finding, but we got up a ways to where SAR and North Fork were getting ready to put the guy in a litter, which was well over 150' up the mountain. The patient's right ankle was splinted and it appeared the lowering system was almost in place, but even after we got the blankets we brought up put into the litter

for padding, there seemed to be indecisive dithering on what to do next, which happens often with the combination of medical stuff and rigging going on at the same time. North Fork was deferring to LS on medical, but they were nervous about no medical person going down the side with the litter, as opposed to SAR technical rescue people. FA was running things generally, and because BH and EG had harnesses on, they were designated litter attendants. FA had me scramble around and down a bit to help them descend a small cliff band while they were on the lowering system, and I had awful footing, and got hit by falling rock, and so was glad to get that part over with. Meanwhile the storm had blown in, and it was windy and rainy, and then there was a big lightning storm above us. We'd put gear together up top to try to keep the patient warm and somewhat dry, but he needed more, and I'm pretty sure EG never called for more blankets when I asked him to, so I hurried down to the parking lot to get more insulation. Back at the spot where the gully that the patient was being lowered down crosses the trail going across, we got the patient flat onto the trail. We were supposed to set up the wheel, but EG announced we should keep lowering. Instead of me contacting FA about that, or making a decision myself, we started talking about anchors, and there were no good ones above the trail, but a good one on the downhill edge of the trail. EG and BH didn't like that, but when LT came down he said that was the best place to set anchors up so we started to, but then FA came down and said to just use the wheel and go down the trail. That was the better choice. So then I was supposed to do multiple things at once, and that wasn't working. NJ jumped in and helped. Then FA told me to be downhill safety on a nearby narrow bit of trail, which I did, and I should have stayed near the litter afterward, but BH wanted me to help him gather anchors and other gear. I was inclined to come back for gear later, but I tried to hurry to help him and then catch up with the litter, and I suspect FA as unhappy that I didn't just stay near the litter. I did help it around a hairpin when no one else was jumping in. We got the guy down in the dark, after the storm had blown over. Then we needed a pipe wrench to disassemble the litter. I was left both elated that we'd pulled this all off during a sudden and horrendous and exciting storm, and peeved with myself that I didn't know how to guide my team better. Inadvertently having left my radio in my truck didn't help.

Sunday, August 13, 2017

We were leaving church when EG's wife saw me and asked why I wasn't at the call out. What call out? Apparently EG had received a call out text twenty or thirty minutes earlier, but my phone wasn't receiving well over there and so I didn't get it. Parts of our neighborhood don't get any cell reception. At home I got my radio and checked on whether something was happening, and Valley (central dispatch) said there was a call out but they were in the process of sending a message calling off anyone not already up that way. About that time the initial text showed up on my phone along with some other things that popped up with better reception. The call out was for someone who fell at Stewart Falls. I left the radio on to the SAR West repeater, and just a couple of minutes later heard talk of a possible second call out. So I changed clothes and started down the street, and a call out for Tibble Fork came in. Since it involved an ATV rollover in Snake Creek, it sounded like Wasatch County to me. AirCare was apparently at

Stewart Falls but was unneeded there so they were heading over, and both our people on the mountain and Wasatch County were heading there, and Lone Peak Fire Department was making a hard push to beat everyone and handle it themselves. In other words, it had the makings of a short call out. I went to the SO and hooked up an ATV trailer, but only got about halfway there before we were called off.

Thursday, August 17, 2017

MRI training this evening. It was about setting up a Kootenay highline, which we almost never do and which is interesting. Still, only a half a dozen people showed up, all late. We set up a track rope between two trees, running over a dip, and then hauled it taut with a pulley system. Then tag lines from each side to the pulley that someone would be clipped into on the track line, and more hardware on each side. Because of the horrendous stress this system places on rope and anchors as a horizontal system for going across rivers or gorges or what not, there were no knots in the track rope to weaken it, just tension wraps and prusiks. Our anchor tree was a little big and so it was hard to get a wrap three pull two anchor on it, so the three of us there did a wrap two pull one, which wasn't correct and we kind of got called out on it. I thought that putting in a load releasing hitch on our twin prusiks would be smart even though it wasn't in the book, and people seemed to think that was a really good idea; we used a Scarab instead of a radium release hitch, and in hindsight that also might allow for an easier conversion of the system to pull toward our anchor side in an emergency instead of just across in the direction of the other side; the basic system is set up to traverse someone across in one direction. There was some chit chat at the end about the diabetic boy call, and whether someone on our team should not have apparently told a North Fork paramedic not to administer insulin. Then some about abandonment law related to when a North Fork paramedic should descend with a litter, instead of a SAR litter attendant who is a lower level EMT. I guessed that the wilderness setting, particularly a vertical environment demanding specialized SAR skills, would be a rational exception to abandonment law and that medical people could pick up giving care at the end of the technical lower, but I guess ZM didn't get adequately backed up in a lawsuit that was brought against a bunch of SAR people several years ago, so he lacks some faith in the law being sensible.

Friday, August 18, 2018

A call out today, for a paraglider who crashed on Big Baldy, but BYU graduation for my older daughter had just started, so I skipped the call out and watched her walk. An hour later, the call out was called off when Life Flight plucked the guy off the mountain. EG got to fly as a spotter in the county airplane, from what I heard.

Saturday, August 19, 2017

We were called out to go to Tibble Fork for a dirt biker who was missing up on some Holman Flat area trail. No reported injury, so I was mystified by this. It turns out his group was dirt biking way up there, and left him there when his motorcycle broke

down, and didn't go back to look for him, but did let his wife know he was up there somewhere. It didn't make much sense to me. I towed ATVs, but wasn't assigned to ride one, and it wouldn't have been possible to get one up the trails they were actually on anyway. Medical got some of the ATVs, although there was no report of any medical issue. Most of us just stood around in the parking lot looking stupid for the crowd at the reservoir, until the guy walked out of the woods and into the parking lot. So much for containment of the area. The only interesting thing was that one of the probies was benched from taking his dirt bike up the trails he's familiar with, because he had refused to sign some sort of legal document they recently gave the probies. GH and I badgered GT until he explained that. I'd be interested in seeing that document. He thought it gave him too much personal liability in some way. He was getting dirty looks for talking to us about it, which meant I was getting into the doghouse too. Don't much care.

Sunday, August 20, 2017

I had to leave a neighborhood social to go off and tow again, only to discover that I left my access card at home with the stuff I brought in from last night. When I got on the radio to see if anyone was near the SO, I learned that GU was just about to pull in. So I got into the equipment bay, but sounded like an unprepared ding dong on the radio. Before we hooked up trailers, they called things off. This call out was to Nunns Park in Provo Canyon, for a missing twelve year old on a scooter. I don't get how that would normally be a SAR issue, and indeed the kid wandered back to the site shortly after the call out began. Of course, we routinely have limited and contradictory information up front. Indeed, the members of the team often don't usually find out much about the call out until debriefing at the end of the call out—the actual call out is typically just taking gear to where you're told, without ICS telling us initially what they think is going on.

Tuesday, August 29, 2017

Another Stewart Falls call out. This time for a woman stuck on a ledge. As I arrived at the trailhead, team one was about to set out. I picked up some cold water from the cooler on the deputy's truck, tossed my rope and technical gear into my pack, and helped assemble a litter and strap medical bags onto it just in case. Sometimes we take up a fully assembled litter. OG made me team leader of team two. We headed up with five of us, and it was hot and tiring, and once again the operation was on 800 MHz instead of VHF so I initially didn't hear CP calling me about something until ZM handed me his 800 radio. But our small team did get the litter up to the falls, and so it was all a great success! ZM later asked permission to head back down, which was cute. Nice of him to make a point of respecting the team leader thing. I made an observation at the base of the falls about helmets being a good protection from rock, but OD didn't take the hint, and I wasn't inclined to push the issue since he's been doing SAR for decades. The basic situation up there was that this lady from out of state had climbed to a spot where she was sliding and scared, and got so terrified that even when attached to a rope and with someone holding on to her while traversing out of there, it was hard for them to get her just to take steps. A friend had walked to her, and SAR

walked to her, but it took some time just to walk her out along hand lines. She was happier when she was down. While we were standing around, OD told stories of the good old days when Life Flight had a helicopter and a bold pilot named HH who would offload SAR teams from a skid landing on an outcropping, or through jumping, and the old dogs now were all doing that stuff then. I mentioned it to OG, and his face just lit up. I've also seen old photos of SAR deploying into the river off of that helicopter. Ten minutes after getting home, the phone went off again, so I dumped the leftovers I was heating into a mixing bowl and ate it while driving to the south of the county to an ATV rollover with a seven year old reportedly trapped. I wasn't sure how it would work out if the child was still trapped all the time it would take to get word to us and get us to get there. I got to a ranch up above Birdeye just behind OD, with the SO and SFFD already parked there. Off road vehicles were still being towed in from the SO. I drove the UTV off a trailer when it arrived, and took it over to the command post. There were a bunch of polygamists there, and I think it was their family up on the mountain. Sgt. JA didn't want to send one of their teenagers up on the UTV as a guide, which seemed like a bad call to me, especially since we bring non-SAR people down on them all the time anyway. The family member would have known the mountain. The UTV didn't send up ambulance people, it waited until our medical people were there, and then went, with ATVs following later. Eventually I hopped on an ATV, but AT ultimately put a probie on it. Oh, well. Suffice it to say, darkness fell and the team got lost. Everyone up there got lost. For a long time. Despite having GPS. Luckily, Life Flight had been able to locate the site and take the child at dusk, but everyone else up there waited for hours. Lt. CB asked me about my comfort on ATVs, and I told him I went down a stretch of Jacobs Ladder that nearly pitched FW over. He thought that was the hardest spot we go, and said we should go riding together. I got the impression I was quietly being kept off ATVs because someone at the SO conceived the notion that I don't know how to use them, which was annoying primarily because of who gets allowed to go: BC at Jacobs Ladder, who didn't know how to put it in gear and then rolled it, and EG at this call out, who had flipped one at probie training and also nearly ran over our trainer. Anyway, eventually AT told those of us who hadn't towed that we could leave, and I was happy to go, because those of us standing around were wasting our time, and it was painful to watch the whole debacle unfold so badly because of boneheaded choices by the SO. If the outcome had depended on us instead of on Life Flight, that boy would have been in deep doo doo.

Wednesday, August 30, 2017

There was a big storm this evening, with some wall shaking thunder that went on and on. Predictably, someone was out in it, and in trouble. So off we went to Upper Falls for a hiker who was hungry and tired and supposedly sitting down and waiting for rescue. Except that he decided to get up, hike the half mile out, and drive his car back to the valley, and the word didn't get to us. Oh, well. Sadly, one of my neighbors was also out in the storm riding his bike up a canyon near home, and a tree fell on him, and the ambulance responded quickly but no one knows if he will survive. Also today, I'd been meaning to talk to the civil attorney in the Utah County Attorney's Office who would know the most about the legal document GT was concerned about, and that attorney

got back from vacation this week, but I had quite a busy court schedule, and after a suggestion yesterday from Lt. CB that I try to get the two of them together I chatted with the civil attorney. It's the Utah County Volunteer Agreement that everyone needs to fill out and have processed in order to be a volunteer and be covered by county liability and workers comp insurance. I'm not sure what his issue is, but I encouraged GT to talk to the civil attorney and work things out.

Thursday, August 31, 2017

GT and I had some back and forths by email, with me encouraging him to hang in there and work out the liability concerns, but I had the impression that the language of the liability provision was not the precise issue of concern, and he privately said that what I guessed was the issue is basically what is going on. I agree with much of what he says, but was sad at how things panned out. There was medical training up Provo Canyon under a pavilion at a park, and I got the new trauma pack from the SO on call deputy's truck to bring up there for ZM. There were some scenarios, and the usual scary talk from overenthusiastic people about things like when to "trach" someone (that would be a cricothyrotomy, not a tracheotomy, and almost all of us should not be cutting air holes in necks). ZM is really into the notion that we're an ambulance service without the ambulance, and should be providing ambulance level EMS on the mountain; I'm more into figuring that SAR should provide wilderness medicine, and if someone can do something more like urban medicine, that's a bonus. ZM recently pushed ICS on the issue of the medical team being a separate and special thing rather than just whatever trained people are on the teams going up, by refusing to be a medical hasty team at the recent Stewart Falls call out, but instead packing and taking up a litter full of gear. Apparently the plan this year for EMT class scholarships will be limited to a few people sort of getting \$400 for it, but really getting \$200 somewhere close to up front, and then \$200 more after being an EMT on the team for a year and convincing the board one has been useful. That will leave people feeling like a fish looking at bad bait. GH is going to take on the new medical quartermaster task. It seemed as if fewer established medical people were at this training; I wonder what the politics going on here are?

Friday, September 1, 2017

I made of list of which days I'll have training on between now and mid-December. If I take the EMT class, then along with the rope tech class, the WFR recert, SAR meetings and trainings, and some other things it's something like four dozen separate class sessions running from four to eight or so hours per session. It's most days! Maybe this will end someday. Taking the EMT class might make it more likely that in some cases I wouldn't end up standing in the parking lot. But I do lack the enthusiasm for emergency medicine types of situations that I had when I was young.

Sunday, September 3, 2017

Towed a UTV toward Silver Lake where a couple of people were injured on an ATV, only to listen to Lone Peak Fire Department pretty much doing things themselves, and then

calling in two helicopters. Turned around at Pleasant Grove. We are forever getting squeezed between the fire departments and medical helicopters, until it's unclear how much space it left for SAR to be SAR.

Monday, September 4, 2017

This is Labor Day, a good day to sleep in. Until 5:40 a.m. Then, up toward Timpooneke where the parking lot was already full, to be routed instead by the Forest Service personnel to a developing landing zone in the nearby Altamont group camping site, later to learn that we needed to go over to the Timpooneke trailhead after all. I learned where we should finally be after not being able to reach the CP on the radio, and having to call TERT and ask them to ask ICS where we should be, at which point I relayed that to the SAR group near me. We were called out for a hiker with breathing difficulties that Life Flight sent a helicopter for, and then the hoist ship from up north. Apparently there was a small SAR team hiking up, and then the horse posse arrived and ICS sent them up with our technical gear while we hiked up behind them with our packs even though the helicopters were already on site. All of which was shaping up to be the normal waste of time, until there was an abnormal noise up the trail and NB warned on the radio that a horse was running down the trail, and indeed the pack horse came thundering down having been spooked somehow, and half a litter and the metal litter handles were hanging off the side of the horse banging and clattering and making things worse, much of the rest of the gear having already been scattered. I hollered down the trail to DG of Arabia (I'm calling him that because he was wearing a keffiyeh) and the hikers he was near to get off the trail. Further down the trail more gear went flying, and then the saddle slid around to the horse's belly, and the horse slowed down and stopped. We hiked along locating gear along the trail, and called that good and headed back because the folks up top had things under control. Turns out the litter was somewhat damaged. Then we waited for team one to return, which took quite a while. A few hours later there was a call out for six people to go up to the Sundance stables. I followed Sgt. JA up the road part way, but couldn't safely keep up. Two probies were about to hike up a dirt road to catch up with North Fork Fire and Sundance UTVs, and I caught up with them after OG got after me for not walking up to him with my pack on; I asked him if I should load heavy technical gear into it (sort of a smart alec way of pointing out that it helps to know what kind of gear to bring based on the latest information, and that requires asking). The three of us walked up to find that a patient who had passed out and fallen off a horse from Sundance stables was already loaded into a UTV, and they pretty much ignored us and drove back, and we turned around and hiked out. Easiest team leader job that FC the probie will ever have. We were chatting and AS said that at the debriefing after the ATV rollover by Birdseye, ZM was really peeved about confusion over communications and how people were on different frequencies depending on whether they had 800 MHz.

Tuesday, September 5, 2017

This was the first night of rope tech training that CC from North Fork Fire Department was putting on for his people, and some of SAR join in. I was on my way up to

Sundance early, and stopped at Bridal Veil Falls to look at the falls, when there was a call out to Big Springs, just up South Fork off of Provo Canyon. So I dithered and then went to the call out. There was no one there. Eventually Sgt. SK showed up. I mentioned to him that we could get a good way up the mountain in vehicles if the gate could be opened, since the lower part has a decent dirt road, and we'd likely meet the guy on it. Then EG showed up, who had also been on his way to training, and I suggested to Sgt. SK that the two of us could be a hasty team. He thought we should wait. AS showed up, and I brought up the possibility again of us heading up, and Sgt. SK thought we should wait. ICS arrived, and pondered what to do. FW came and was talking about Bunnells Fork, which he thought was in a different place from where it really is, which place I pointed to. PC asked if I'd hiked the Big Springs trail, and I said I had. Sgt. SK thought it was pretty rough up top, but I don't. PC had me stand over by the far side of the parking lot to talk to people hiking out to see if they'd seen anything. No one went up, and no one went up, and after more than an hour the hiker wandered out, doing OK. He'd supposedly had altitude sickness, the cure for which is descent. I was peeved at this waste of time, especially since we could have gone and got him in very little time, and grumbled to myself as I hurried by AT to my car to ditch that scene and get to NFFD. Training was classroom for the first day, and went over basics, and ended about 10:00 p.m.

Thursday, September 7, 2017

Team meeting tonight. Seemed put together at the last minute, as the training was on vital signs and people were organized to do stations just that day. There was also extended discussion of whether we should be using hose clamps to hold handles on the litter, but there isn't much other option. A couple of engineer types on the team, a probie and a second year, have been arguing for months that the clamps aren't strong enough for the job they're to do, and I think that exasperates some of the old dogs who believe the fact that the clamps work might indicate that they work. Supposedly they're 1,100 pound rated clamps, and they haven't broken yet. Hopefully, a requested grant will come through for three titanium litters with factory built handle systems. There was much well justified carping about so much radio traffic being on 800, which half of the people who actually respond don't have, which also involved the Birdseye ATV accident at which communications were poor all around, and there was some defensiveness on a number of issues from that call out. Afterward I went to the cage and tried to get some webbing, and once again got grilled and denied. Supposedly the quartermaster would sell it, but doesn't know how much for. So I'll get it at the climbing shop in Provo. Which says something about the current state of UCSSAR. Also, even though I could see them on the shelf, the quartermaster said there aren't any more 200 foot ropes available. Seems like it would be good to have one, since I go to more calls than anyone else. DB got one just by asking. This organization is remarkable dysfunctional. Also, no one mentioned it, but I don't think team stats have been updated since July, and this year's updates only show about half the action. I feel a little like a junkie who knows he's on something screwy, but just isn't giving it up. Guess I'm still waiting for a hero moment, or more likely am just doing my duty because I try to do well at what I've committed to do.

Saturday, September 9, 2017

Today was to be team training, on MRT, and CC was going to have his firefighters from the ropes class join us for joint training followed by more of his class in the afternoon. I went up to Dry Canyon an hour early to help him set up, and some of the SAR people were there getting ready to set up, and after standing around a bit shooting the breeze, a call out came in. The text said it was for someone who fell on Timp two days ago, up the Timpooneke trail. That made no sense, as that trail is so heavily traveled that it would be hard to fall on it and be there for two days without someone helping. Also, Life Flight was being called in. So, I stayed to take the class, as did GU and some others, rather than going up to Timp just to have Lone Peak or Life Flight do everything. Because PC showed up at the trailhead, CC went ahead and demonstrated some advanced things with the Arizona Vortex artificial high directional contraption so PC could see them, which was interesting for us all to learn about. I don't trust tripods that are under sideways load, but if it is rigged correctly then supposedly it does a safe job of getting rope over edges without all the 90° edge friction inherent in the rope being right on the ground. The trick is to make sure that the "resultant" force, the sort of average direction of force that sort of splits the angle of the rope at the pulley, points down between the legs of the contraption, which requires careful rigging and hopefully no major changes when the litter comes up under the AHD (which changes the angle of the rope and therefore of the resultant). As we were going through the morning doing this, we were concerned about two things. One was all the bees, which seemed especially attracted to me, perhaps because of my sunscreen, but were stinging someone else, and had another person with allergies mindful of the possibilities. The other was that on the radio it became apparent that the situation was not going so well on Timp. No one seemed to know how long the guy was on the mountain, because his mental state was not good and also he had a gun and a knife, and in addition two people he knew had recently died. But worst of all, as the horse posse was heading up one horse turned and then stepped off the trail and rolled down a scree field with the rider on it. That could have been extremely serious, but apparently was not. QuickClot hemostatic dressings work on horses. Meanwhile, the Wasatch 100 endurance race was going through American Fork Canyon, and a runner injured an ankle, and ICS was wondering whether to send a helicopter over there. For an ankle? At an aid station? It was on the border with Wasatch County, and they handled it; their team was pretty much already there. In the afternoon, class moved up Provo Canyon and we did more pretensioned tie backs, practiced belaying, and set up the Vortex again. Learned a lot. This is how good training works.

Tuesday, September 12, 2017

We had rope tech training up at North Fork Fire Department again, on mechanical advantage (pulleys for raising systems). The math and physics leave me somewhat confused, but as far as actually rigging them I do OK. Then patient litter tie ins. Although this class is covering too much ground too quickly for people new to it to really get things down thoroughly, it is clear that the older firefighters who have some training and background in this pretty much know their stuff. At Stewart Falls awhile

back SAR went with a SAR rope plan instead of NFFD's, but I found myself wondering today if perhaps we aren't the people to be throwing our weight around. I have to admit that some of the fire people often know what they're doing in the close backcountry. Then there was a call out, and we stayed and finished class, albeit a bit early. Afterward some of us were off to the Nebo Loop where by the time we got there they had already located two boys who got lost mountain biking when it got dark. The boys had planned to go in one direction, and went miles off route until they were off even game trails, and didn't have a clue where they were. SAR was initially in the wrong place based on a bad explanation of where the boys were going, until the boy with the better phone called in and dispatch got a GPS lock. A ground team found them, while motorcycle people were also looking.

Thursday, September 14, 2017

What a day! In the morning we were called out to Squaw Peak Road for something on Cascade Mountain, to a staging area on the west side of the mountain that I didn't think likely to be the site of any particular rescue need, involving a woman with a broken ankle. Then we were told to go further along the road to where I'd been afraid things would likely end up: at the base of Upper Pole Couloir. Cascade Mountain has a couple of trails that go part way up it, but they're long and start a bit out of the way, and there is nothing that goes clear to the summit. Much of the mountain is cliff bands and talus and scree. This couloir is a notoriously difficult west side route some people use to try to get up to the summit more directly, but it's narrow and very steep and packed with shifting rocks. I got to what is used for a trailhead, right after Sgt. JA, and we waited for others to arrive. But then some guy came hurrying in, saying his sister was on the mountain, hiking with the woman who had broken her leg, and according to him it was urgent that he get up there immediately. He fancied himself an expert on the mountain and a super athlete, who would take up pain meds he'd brought (which our medical guy told him not to administer). I later learned this wannabe rescuer is a guy who relentlessly promotes himself, has gotten on some TV programs as an outdoors adventure guy, and is somewhat notorious for crazy and questionably legal behavior. His brother apparently illegally rode up Timp in the winter on a SAR marked snowmobile when that brother was on SAR, so I guess it runs in the family. We couldn't get him to wait, although afterward the SO did detain him to discuss his driving behavior on the way to the trailhead, which had yielded complaints. But he did take up an extra radio of mine, and my flagging tape. And later he had lots of time for an amazing amount of self-promotion on KSL TV. We, though, had to wait for teams to assemble, and we soon got a mixed medical/technical group ready. I was made team one's team leader, for some reason, and worried about that due to the difficulty of the task ahead. We sort of went through safety with SG, but in hindsight I should have insisted on rigorous safety checks. I suppose I was antsy due to how long it was taking us to get ready, and wanted to stop talking about gear and stop arguing about whether to trust that guy to mark the route. I thought we had plenty of gear for a first team, and I knew enough about the route to get us there if the flagging looked wrong. So off we went, and it was steep immediately. After awhile I called CP and suggested splitting the team into faster and slower groups, and letting BH lead the faster team. They agreed. I

felt bad about slowing down, but if I can't lead, I can't lead. We were rapidly devolving from being a single team that could be led, into one that would be spread out all up and down the couloir out of sight of each other, due to some people being strong, and some slow, and one person being unlikely to get up the mountain at all. I wasn't sure how to handle that, so I figured I'd hike where I could keep an eye on half the group, and BH could manage the faster half. Ultimately, we still all got spread out to some degree all up and down the couloir, with DG eventually dropping off. After that I caught up to a probie and then to CC, as DG had stayed in place to consider fixing rope. CC talked about how in places like this there were too many people on our team physically unable to get up the mountain. True. I'm just not sure as a team leader how to lead a team with such varying physical abilities. I hope I got it partly right this time. I am impressed by what CC has done with his people at NFFD, especially with the rope and swiftwater training he puts his team through, and it was good to have some time to talk to him. People on Timp are lucky NFFD is there. During this call out, Life Flight from up north came down with their hoist ship, and didn't think they could get the patient up unless we moved her down the mountain away from a cliff face. We were still going up, though, so they parked in a meadow near the command post, and waited. AS charged up the last steep bit to the patient (he is a very strong hiker), and the rest of that part of the team got up there just as Life Flight was practically demanding that they get the patient ready for immediate hoist. From the radio it sounded like our people were, as usual, bogged down in their diagnostic procedures and splinting and analgesia minutia, when they should have simply slapped on the best splint they could if there was time, and started the evacuation, because the weather was rapidly getting worse. Life Flight came up again, backed right up to the cliff, dropped a paramedic down who grabbed the patient and took her up quickly, and as they were flying off the cloud cover came down and engulfed the helicopter, and within minutes the clouds filled up much of the couloir and started raining, and kept raining. It was a bit like walking into Mordor to get down that mountain; the couloir darkened in midafternoon. One of the probies in my slow group was having some difficulty with footing, and we were all slip sliding some, but we all got down. I even called the superhero back when he took an incorrect left turn near the bottom instead of a right. Another team had been tasked with bringing up a litter just in case, which they weren't terribly enthused about, but at least they didn't have to come up very far. I don't know how we'd have made a wheel work there, as someone thought would actually be possible, but we were close to spending the night trying to lower a litter down the slope with a rope belay. She got out in the nick of time. And, as ICS observed, a lot of the team wasn't ready to spend the night on the mountain, something that Cascade Mountain has demanded repeatedly in the past. I should have taken some prophylactic ibuprofen for my knees. It was good to be out of there with everyone and everything OK. On the way home I saw that my wife was shopping in Orem, so I joined her and also got a Cinnabon to reward myself, then decided a hot shower and rest would be better than going to Roundtable in the evening to meet with scouters from the local BSA district. In fact, we went to bed pretty early. Then off went the phone, and at 10:30 p.m. I was out of bed and heading toward the furthest out spot in the county, down to the southeast by Scofield Reservoir, with a UTV in tow. In the rain. Two guys were lost, having driven up from central Utah over dirt backroads and then walking into the woods east of Skyline Drive only to lose

their way when it got dark. A deputy saw their dim light, and our people went in to get them and help them to their car, which was not actually very far away from where they were. Two more ATVs arrived, and AT asked OD if he wanted to ride, and he did not but said someone else could, and I was the only someone else I could see around, but I guess that didn't work for ICS. Huh. OD wanted to drive down the road in his vehicle, which was a fine road for vehicles with four wheel drive, and I rode with him. We came across a long term member and a probie on ATVs, who were lost since there are a lot of road splits. OD drove on but they didn't keep up, and we never did see the other two ATVs so I'm pretty sure they took a bad road split and got lost also. But we did wait for the UTV and the two guys in their car to come out, and followed them back. A couple hundred yards from the highway the car we were escorting out got a flat tire. Good thing they headed out with us toward the nearby highway instead of trying to find their way more directly but through the dark on dirt roads getting slick with rain turning to slush, in a car that would have stranded them, on the first cool night of the year. Fall has arrived. Their spare was flat, and they didn't have a tire iron. Our team fixed the tire and sent them on their way safe and sound. OD told me about the early days, splitting off from Jeep Posse and building a team with OG and UP and FW, based on training instead of just socials. How at the beginning of the deer hunt they'd sit on OG's lawn waiting for the call outs to start coming in. No cell phones with GPS back then, so more actual searching. Bold rescues.

Saturday, September 16, 2017

A good call out. Up to Bridal Veil, where a group was stuck in the chute. Oddly, radios weren't working over the repeater, so it was hard to tell what was going on, and UP was ICS and was wondering if anyone was coming. It turns out some young worker at a residential treatment facility for youth conceived the notion that he should take some kids up the falls, clear into the chute, where almost no one should go, certainly not unroped, mildly autistic kids with little outdoor experience. They got scared, and had the sense to stop and call for help. I hadn't heard anything on the radio about what to take up, and team one was leaving as I arrived and said they had most of what they'd need and I should just get an extra harness and extra helmet, so I did that while dispensing with a rope, and joined team two. We weren't in a terrible hurry, but it's still tiring. People in the front of the team missed a switchback that isn't obvious, and went out onto talus, and I turned them around. We got up a ways and set up hand lines, and it would have been helpful if I'd brought my rope, and then we went to the base of the chute. Team three would later set up more handlines. At the chute, people were lowered down one at a time, and as one youth would come down, one of us would take them down the trail in via ferrata style. I got a young man down who had a little scrape on his knee with the skin disrupted but not enough to even bleed, so he was OK. A little unsteady, but I kept an eye on that. Over all, it seemed like the whole team pitched in doing useful different things, and accomplished some good.

Tuesday, September 19, 2017

We had rope rescue technician class at the NFFD equipment bay in the UDOT site near Vivian Park. It was all rope ascent, which is hard, and I tried various gear configurations and never did find an easy one. Perhaps I need one more piece of equipment so I can create a stripped down, non caving ascent system that would fit on my harness for easy carrying purposes, and be less cluttered on the rope. CC's is based on a Grigri and an ascender. Toward the end, EG mentioned a race, and I put my ascending gear back on, but then there was a call out up onto the Cascade Springs road off the Alpine Loop. Since this was just up and over the mountain above us, I assured EG that I would have schooled him but could not, given the call out, and we SAR people set off. He did not believe me. No one else was at the staging area when we arrived. Eventually PG came and moved us down the road a piece, where a dirt road headed off to the north. Eventually lots of the team showed up, and two UTVs. By then we knew that there were two hikers who had gotten turned around on a trail, were unable to travel in the dark, and were getting cold, supposedly in Mill Canyon, but that was actually over the ridge from where we were. The temperature was in the thirties by then, definitely fall weather. We had exact GPS coordinates, and they were on the dirt road, at a trailhead at the end of the road. One UTV went up while everyone else, except RF on his own ATV, stayed behind. PC had me come in the UTV, which was surprising. When my GPS said we were within ten second of them, we saw them. They were fine, and happy to see us. They went down, then PC came back for two of us who waited there. I suspect a lot of the team was disappointed by this call out, which was probably even a bigger waste than it would have seemed in that any one person with a truck could have driven up there and gotten that couple. I believe PG had pointed that out to PT on the radio, but ICS had the team do the team thing anyway. One problem I didn't know about at the time is that the reason the other UTV did not go up is that when PG was driving it off the trailer and turning it into position, he broke it due to turning with the differential in the wrong position, or some such thing. I'd guess he'll keep driving SAR equipment, though.

Thursday, September 21, 2017

Monthly EMRT training this evening. The probies were told to skip their own training and come. Not enough of the rest of the team came. We went to Provo Fire Department's training tower, which is a bit of a dizzying experience on top, and CC went over setting up the Arizona Vortex. We lowered a probie, and then raised him. Good training, but it is scary how much the probies don't know. One was insistent that carabiners can't be put on bolt hangers, just webbing directly, and that's way wrong. He also thought the prusiks I set up wouldn't work because one was a prusik given out this year that was slightly smaller in diameter than what we normally use, but our Purcell prusiks work and they're much thinner. Too much book learning without practical experience. Another couldn't manage the belay with the prusiks, blaming the setup being too close to the anchor, but he really just didn't know how to adjust the knots and to use them with the system under tension. Same problem with the person on the Scarab, who knew how to run the rope through the appropriate horns, but didn't

know how to loosen it when it was weighted. They've spent time setting up systems but clearly not enough time actually using them under load. Heaven help us. Especially since some of them don't know what they don't know.

Saturday, September 23, 2017

NFFD's rope rescue training today, on the training tower. We rappelled using rescue 8's, Petzl I'D devices, and brake bars, and practiced tying off at mid-rappel. That's a big first step over the edge, with whatever equipment. Then we learned about pick offs, went to lunch, and instead of all of us getting to do pick offs in the afternoon, we set up a double Arizona Vortex system, and did some lowers. It was, though, a bit of a concern to see how many people, including non-probies, didn't know to keep slack out of the anchor slings. Yet some of the probies have ordered fancy Aztek rescue devices. Hopefully our rope class will have more time to get back to actually doing pick offs individually, so we may add a Saturday to work on that, and hopefully we'll practice more with natural anchors also. I'm more familiar with the fire heavy rescue gear now than with SAR's. It got cold and started to rain, so we didn't go past late afternoon. Snow had hit the mountaintops already, and by the afternoon was even in the tops of the foothills.

Monday, September 25, 2017

There was a call out to Santaquin Canyon for a woman who fell hiking and injured her ankle, maybe her back, and was reportedly having trouble breathing. I'm pretty surprised she could get a cell signal out of there. From radio traffic it sounded as if they had GPS coordinates for her that were on the road, and Santaquin was confused about where she was because she said she'd crossed the stream but there was no bridge there so it wasn't occurring to them that she might have just waded it (which is what she did). When I got there, AT had FW and I hop in Santaquin's ambulance at the staging area and go up the road with them to provide more manpower, after telling us that it was Santaquin's operation and to let them lead. We got to the approximate location, and I heard a fire guy on the hill yelling down, and walked up the road and spotted him. He directed us up a place that FW ignored in favor of going around to the left. I dutifully followed FW on his route at his pace. At the scene, which was only a steep hundred yards at most from the road, the woman was lying on her back in pain. It was wet and slippery, and her leg was caught under a rock. I found a good anchor and pointed it out to OG when he came up, and provided some webbing, then scouted a route down the way the fire guy pointed out, and started getting snow off rocks, and clearing branches with my saw, and clearing some loose rock, and I also carried up some gear. Some SAR guys did poke into the medical realm, but mostly we worked on the evacuation, eventually doing a sort of bucket brigade carry of Santaquin's litter down the hill with a belay line helping. I ended up sliding down the hill to get around the litter handlers after passing the litter by where I was, with someone hollering "man down!" but it was all fine. I found a radio dropped on that slope, which turned out to be PC's. OG snapped at FW for not helping with the litter, but FW said he wasn't going to lift. That was pretty snappish of OG. He did thank me for scouting a route down. It was

a pretty good evening, until I decided that instead of waiting to get my blanket from the SO I went to the barely busy local hospital to retrieve the blanket, and waited a long time before being told that the blanket that I'd been told twice was still tied to the patient's leg had actually been gone that whole time, taken by Santaquin EMS. Then home to pour the water out of my boots and put them on the boot and glove dryer, a luxury I got awhile back that is actually handy at times.

Tuesday, September 26, 2017

Dickens comes to Provo. I had gone home a bit early to change for the NFFD rope rescue class this evening, when there was a call out to the first park up Provo Canyon for someone having a heart attack. That mystified me a bit because that park is accessible by vehicle and I wasn't sure what we'd be doing there for a heart attack that Provo Fire could handle. Upon getting underway and listening to the radio, it sounded as if Life Flight was involved, so I was thinking I could respond but it would probably be a short enough call out so I could then go to class. On the radio there was confusion about where in the canyon to go, or whether to go up to the Squaw Peak overlook on the back road. Eventually someone figured out that the text we had been sent was wrong, and we were supposed to go to Rock Canyon Park in Provo. So I hurried and redirected there. When I got there, OR and FC were parked in the dirt area east of the park, and I drove toward that area faster than I should have, planning to circle around the copse of trees there to park by them, but but as I started that way I saw that it looked like the SO was down in the parking lot that is at the end of a narrow driveway that goes to the side of the field in the retention basin. So, after circling around the trees I drove down there. Life Flight was on the ground, but the local helicopter can't hoist so they had sent for the hoist ship from Ogden. Sgt. JA said we'd stage the team from up above and I was to go park up there, so I started back up the drive, slowly because there were people coming down. There was an angry looking woman, with a person or two walking near her, and some people on a motorbike who had started down behind her and were glaring at me also. I figured they were mad that I was on the drive, either because my truck was filling it up or maybe cars weren't supposed to be there. When I stopped to see what the woman's problem was, she lit into me for supposedly almost running over her and her family. I had no idea what she was talking about, as there had been no family anywhere to run over, and was irritated that she was interfering with an emergency for no good reason, so I was, unfortunately, rude to her. What I did is I muttered under my breath that I was sorry I missed her. I'm not sure if she even heard that. She appeared not interested in anything but ranting, and I was worried that she was irrational enough to jump at the truck if I started to move, so I tried out a commanding voice and told her she should step away from the truck so that the rear wheel wouldn't hit her when I drove forward. She just kept hollering, so I drove off and parked in the dirt area. She went down to by the helicopter to complain to Sgt. JA, and appeared to take quite a lot of his time doing so. Meanwhile, DG was wandering around in a state of excitement trying to find something to do, and he was talking about having the people who were present head up the mountain, and I suggested we wait for guidance from ICS rather than having probies set off on their own. He was repeating everything he'd heard from whoever, and he'd heard something

about Little Rock Canyon, which is unfortunate because that's not where our victim was. We could see where the victim was by watching Life Flight hover over the area, and then lower their paramedic onto an outcropping to the south. It was up on the mountainside, just below some big cliff bands, way up above us and a bit to the north. This is the west side, the valley facing side, of Squaw Peak. I could see there was a road we could get part way up. When OD arrived he said he knew the area and could guide us up. Once team one was eventually designated, I loaded them into my truck, some in the cab and some in back. Unfortunately, LU had decided to reposition himself in back just as I was about to start, so he got rocked on his feet when I put it in gear. I followed OD and he was headed way past where we should have turned, and I think he was headed for Little Rock Canyon. GB, our team leader, and ZM didn't have anything to say about whether to follow him, but I figured we'd lose a lot of time going to Little Rock Canyon, which I was sure was incorrect, so I turned around of my own accord and went to where I thought we should be, ignoring the probies who thought there was a street closer to the top. There wasn't; the street they were thinking of ended before getting as far south as where we needed to go. I went up the correct street and then bounced us up a dirt road a ways up the mountain directly below where Life Flight had lowered their flight paramedic, and we unloaded. Then we hiked straight up. When I was a clueless college student I tried backpacking that mountain straight up, and it didn't work well. This wasn't any easier, especially since I had the defibrillator in my pack and ZM wanted me to keep up with him. He's pretty much impossible to keep up with, but I did my best and did put the rest of the team a ways behind, but still ended up having to find my own way up through some rock as ZM disappeared ahead. Still, it was the way the others followed when I radioed down to them. When I was most of the way up, and ZM had already reached the victim, he radioed that we should drop our packs and just get there as fast as we could. Running wasn't an option on that slope and in that brush, but I got there as quick as I could, exhausted, and just ahead of FC and MJ. The victim was noncommunicative and shaking, and looked really bad. Not a heart attack, but a stroke. ZM and the Life Flight paramedic and the patient's wife had slid him part way down the mountain on a tarp. We carried him further down the slope to where Life Flight's patient bag for a helicopter hoist was sitting, and put him in it. While Life Flight was flying up I tried to get someone to stay with his wife, and got MJ to help me look for their packs further up the mountain. Just as the sun was going down behind the far mountains, they hoisted him, which is good because Life Flight can't hoist after dark, and it would have been disastrous for him to stay on the mountain with us trying to figure out how to do a nighttime lower or keep him alive until morning. Down at the park they transferred him to the other helicopter and it flew him to the hospital, and the hoist ship quickly came back and got the wife and flew her down and then to the hospital, which was very nice. We hiked and slid and climbed down in the dark. I still think it would have been good if Life Flight could have flown some of us up initially and tried to put a skid on a promontory early on to let us hop out, but I guess they don't take those risks anymore. Which is understandable, I suppose, since they've lost helicopters before in dangerous conditions. But I'd guess DPS would have done it. Actually, I think we should have short haul capability and training, with DPS. As we headed down, I ended up pathfinding through the rocky area to retrace our route up, which turned out to have some flagging but not a lot, and then I

rested and had some fluid while people caught up. We rendezvoused with team two, and hiked down together. I was pretty happy with my being able to forge on despite being older than other people. We drove back to the staging area and debriefed, and then the other half of the event began. The angry woman had stewed for awhile and then come back and wanted me arrested and kicked off the team and whatnot, so the SO had Provo PD come do an investigation so there wouldn't be a conflict of interest. That sergeant took statements, and I think OR told him I probably was going a little fast in the dirt but also told him that the lady had not yet unloaded her van so no one was out standing there by where I was so no one was endangered. Just at the end of my discussion with the officer he sort of mentioned in passing that she thinks I assaulted her by intimidating her, which is both hypocritical and absurd. The Provo PD sergeant is going to have the city attorney look at statements and determine whether to do anything; he seemed to think there was no offense committed under the law, because where I was driving in the dirt was not a public road or some such thing. I am not in a position to make an unbiased assessment, so we'll just see what happens. I emailed PT to notify him of the event, but he wasn't concerned, and CB, who didn't reply to me. Later, ZM emailed the team and said that we got that patient out just in the nick of time, through hard climbing, and the patient might be able to recover because of that. So, it was the best of times, and the worst of times. Overall, a good call out to end my time on the team if that's it, since we definitely did well today.

Wednesday, September 27, 2017

I went in to the SO to apologize, with pastries, to Sgt. JA for dragging him in to yesterday's mess. He and Lt. CB said they wanted to talk to me, and indicated that the angry woman had apparently spent some time going through Utah law to find terminology she could use to argue that I had somehow assaulted her. That just takes away any desire I have to apologize to her. Bottom line for now, though, is I'm prohibited from going on call outs until after Provo finishes their investigation, and then those two will have a talk with me about the future. I have grown very tired of police assuming that if someone complains, they're telling the truth and other people's lives should automatically be disrupted by lunatics. That's a good lesson to remember while I screen police reports for work, one that's easy to forget without such reminders. Sgt. JA was stumbling on about how I seem to have gone on lots of call out. Really, someone told him I'd been on lots of call outs? Nice he learned something about the team. But the most aggravating thing was Lt. CB's look of wonderment when he said that if my story was true, then maybe I didn't assault her. Maybe? You think? (That's a rhetorical question; I already know the answer.) He had the notion that I supposedly tried to run her over on purpose. He also warned me not to look up reports on the computer.

Thursday, September 28, 2017

We had medical team training tonight, and ZM debriefed the Tuesday call out, which he has followed up on, telling us tonight, and the team by email, that we saved that patient and the man may make some good level of good recovery. But also, a different

amazing thing happened. The TERT volunteer who broke both legs on Timp this summer, and who we pulled out from a snow moat and waterfall and then spent all night caring for by the edge of a snowfield, showed up on crutches. His non-open fractured ankle is actually giving him the most trouble, and he has an enormous surgical scar on his knee, and probably will need even more surgery on that ankle, but he's still in astonishingly good spirits. We can use that attitude on the team, if he recovers enough. Medical training was on trauma, with various practical stations on splinting and bandaging. I seem to know about as much as anyone about that, from the old days when I was an EMT.

Friday, September 29, 2017

There was a call out to Diamond Fork for a dislocated knee, up by the hot pots. I'll bet that was a miserable experience, but hopefully not a leg losing experience. Although I was home, which puts me closer than almost all of the team, I couldn't go due to being banned from call outs.

Sunday, October 1, 2017

Today, RF told me that because some people dropped out of his planned Emergency Medical Technician course, he won't be offering it. That's a shame. SAR used to pay for people to take that course. Now, the thing the board is doing involving maybe paying for part of it after the fact, which I still haven't heard anything specific about, is not nearly as palatable. Which is odd, because SAR supposedly needs new EMTs. I'm not sure I want to take the course from someone who is more expensive, especially since I may need to spend my money on a defense attorney.

Monday, October 2, 2017

I stopped by the hospital. The Tuesday stroke victim was asleep, but I talked to his wife for awhile. She said that he'd gotten to the hospital just in time to fall within the window for administering clotbusting medication, and since then he has been getting some ability to communicate back, and some of his sense of humor. His right side works better than his left, and there are some vision issues. Hopefully he'll qualify for intensive therapy to rehabilitate him; there is to be an evaluation today, but this morning for the first time he's sleeping a lot, so that may interfere.

Tuesday, October 3, 2017

Rope class at NFFD tonight, on litter handling on low and moderate angle slopes. Saturday will be on litters in a vertical environment, and then we'll be through unless CC wants to go back and help those of us who missed pick offs last week. We were working on about a 50° slope, and RH realized later, upon looking at a chart, that we were overtaxing the rope. So I guess we were fortunate. Some of us are still bemused by so many of the probies buying Azteks. They are going to look like rescue superheroes! Through the evening it was hard for me to keep focused, though. Now I

even feel sorry for people who actually broke the law and are worried about what consequences will come.

Thursday, October 5, 2017

Team meeting. Apparently the call out last week involved a femur fracture and there was some controversy over how it was handled. There have been a few call outs this month that weren't paged, probably because only a few people were telephoned to handle them. ZM talked about rapid evacuation sometimes being the important thing, and traction splinting femurs being controversial. Then there was a lot of talk about the upcoming multiagency mass casualty incident in Lehi on Saturday. I believe I'll skip that training, as it sounds awfully close to being a call out, and who knows what kind of world ending devastation I could cause if let loose on the public? No one volunteered to drive White Lightning up to Lehi. Of course, a previous mobile command center having burned to ashes while out probably makes people a little gun shy. Stats are supposedly caught up, and letters will go out to people who aren't getting to call outs; FW and I are the only people with over 100% call out stats (including the extra credit call outs).

Saturday, October 7, 2017

I skipped the team training today since it would have been awkward to go on something akin to a call out. But that's all right because I had a nice morning with my dear but currently sick wife of—as of today—twenty eight years. Later there was a call out up to Emerald Lake for a special needs hiker having some difficulty. I had to let that one go by. There was also a call out that the text said was to “Grove rive,” whatever that means (I wish our call out texts were more clear), for a middle aged woman with chest pain, and I had to let that go by also. They came in during NFFD's rope rescue class, and I stayed since I didn't have much other option although I was not inclined to explain why, and the SAR probies present weren't inclined to head out. Class was about vertical litter lowers. Challenging and interesting, and we did enough evolutions so everyone went over the side as a litter attendant. CC is having some problems, but he spent the afternoon up on the training tower with us. A few of us had missed part of the pick off class, and Stephen stayed into the evening to teach us that. But someone threaded an Petzl I'D device wrong and it locked off and we had to do a mini rescue to get a firefighter off the wall. Lots of learning experiences. With so many newer members having significantly more rope training than SAR gives, and with several of them having bought fancier gear than SAR typically uses, it'll be interesting to see how the team's rope rescue techniques develop. I stopped by the hospital to visit people. A neighbor was back in surgery. A SAR team member who was riding his motorcycle and was hit by a car, is going to be released soon with an external fixator attached but will have to return for orthopedic surgery. Our stroke patient from the mountain is on the rehab floor and is walking and feeding himself and smiling, but is still a long way from normal; his wife seems happy, though.

Thursday, October 12, 2017

Today I went to the urgent care clinic because from Saturday night onward I've had a great deal of pain coming and going in my upper back, right shoulder, and right arm, with some tingling also. It ranges from a dull ache to intense pain coming and then going in this spot or that. Apparently it's a muscle strain, probably from reaching out over the rail and pulling the litter up by the rope hand over hand. Several hours on the fire tower was probably overdoing it.

Saturday, October 14, 2017

Call out tonight to Cascade Mountain for lost hikers. Seeing as I'm starting my second week of pain from supposed muscle strains, I guess it's just as well I'm not allowed to go. This call out lasted all of thirteen minutes.

Sunday, October 15, 2017

Call out to Big Baldy for a woman stuck up there at night. Hope it went well.

Thursday, October 19, 2017

There was supposed to be monthly EMRT training this evening, but there wasn't.

Friday–Sunday, October 20–22, 2017

I paid for and took a three day Wilderness First Responder recertification course held up at the University of Utah, from NOLS instead of where I took the original course, because NOLS is the Cadillac of wilderness training, and recert with them didn't cost much more. There were a few short lectures, and practice with taping ankles, Steri-Stripping wounds and dressing them with Tegaderm, and so forth, but mostly it was patient assessment scenario after patient assessment scenario. Decent training, although I also recently read an article critical of the idea of WFRs that seemed largely spot on. Not that EMTs are the panacea.

Wednesday, October 25, 2017

One month of being banned from call outs. Also, went to the doctor and got X-rays because my pain has not entirely gone away, and what has gone away is replaced with what feels like nerves buzzing in my right arm and hand.

Thursday, October 26, 2017

SAR medical training, on hypothermia, and the new ketamine protocols. TERT joined us again, which is good. I introduced myself as "Paul." ZM said I was with SAR, and I said "sort of," and when someone wondered what that meant I said I was barred from

call outs so I wasn't sure if I'm still on SAR, which GH thought was joking. LS pushed me for details later. I'd also left a message with AG about the NME, telling him I didn't know if I was allowed to help with that anymore and so he should check on that if he wanted me to be there next month. In other news, not having heard anything about yesterday's X-rays, I went online and found the radiologist's report, and it said I have severe degenerative disc disease in my lower cervical spine. It would be nice to know exactly what that entails.

Sunday, October 29, 2017

My birthday! I got a birthday pie. Would have liked as Aztek also, but who knows if I'm even still in SAR? For Christmas, a riverboard would be nice since it would allow us to sweep the river immediately when kids fall in, but again, who knows? There was a call out in the late evening, up Jacobs Ladder, but I went to bed.

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

On Monday my doctor's office had called and said to come in and see the doctor to talk about the X-ray. That sounded a bit ominous. I set that appointment for later in the day today when my wife might be available, because she'll want to come if she can, and with her I can deal with anything. The doctor says...see a specialist for steroid injections into my spine. Sounds like great fun. I got home a bit early because of the doctor appointment, and then there was a call out to go up nearby Diamond Fork for a woman who was rock climbing and got her hair caught in the rigging. I bet that was miserable! Since I was perhaps the closest to there, it's a shame I couldn't deploy since hanging from one's hair isn't very pleasant, and I could've tossed my extension ladder into the back of the truck and been there expeditiously. Someone eventually got things taken care of.

Thursday, November 2, 2017

Tonight's team meeting did not seem especially planned. For the medical part ZM had people learn to set up IV bags. A couple of people were wondering how I got in trouble when the SO can scream at people with impunity, as they've done on some SAR call outs. I'm rapidly getting to where I don't care. Although I did sign up for BYU's EMT class.

Saturday, November 4, 2017

Saturday training was equipment orientation. As always, an odd month to do it in. We practiced putting up the light tower, and learned about a new generator. We now have new titanium litter handles, so no more hose clamps on kludgy pipes! The probies were practicing with the litter, and were struggling a bit with it. There was a fair amount of gossip about things like someone having lost a canoe off a trailer some time ago, a couple of people having damaged trailers, and so forth. The current wisdom of SAR is not to give people lock codes to the small equipment trailers after all, although the

trailers themselves are less secure than they used to be, and non-probie team members have access to the expensive equipment in the large equipment bays.

Monday, November 6, 2017

Late in the evening someone served me with notice that Provo City is pursuing a reckless driving charge against me for the September 26 call out incident; apparently they filed something over a week ago. I didn't commit that particular offense, but in American justice innocence doesn't much matter; when you're trapped in the system, the spider is going to come suck your juices. This charge normally requires three separate traffic violations but does have a vague provision about wanton conduct; it's one of the few traffic offenses that can be committed off highway, which is no doubt why they picked it, apart from to pander to someone they should have ignored. I thought Provo had more integrity than this.

Thursday, November 9, 2017

Call out up Tibble Fork for single track people only (dirt bikes). I'd have liked to show up to one of those some time with an old Honda Trail 90, see what would happen.

Friday, November 10, 2017

It seems that, although the SAR old boys network sent some of their buddies to the International Technical Rescue Symposium last weekend (and some others to formal rope training in Moab), they neglected to mention that CM was actually presenting at ITRS, on cave rescue, which actually deserves some congratulations (of course, they had removed her as cave rescue "sergeant" for UCSSAR and replaced her with someone who didn't do anything this year).

Sunday, November 12, 2017

Call out for a missing hiker somewhere above Alpine. And still, not a peep from the SO on my status.

Wednesday, November 15, 2017

Sgt. JA was urgently trying to see me today, so I went by the SO. He had a letter that he and Sgt. SK gave me, dismissing me from SAR. They bypassed the established disciplinary process for that. The letter claimed that with regard to the lady accosting me, "You should have handled yourself differently," and asserted that "Your actions also risked the safety and ability of a fellow Search and Rescue Team member to deploy." I certainly questioned the second thing, and Sgt. JA claimed I sprayed OR with rocks. First I've heard of that. There just isn't any use arguing with people this far gone, so I told them I'd get my SAR gear back to them within the thirty days given by the letter, and left. Sgt. SK was quite keen to not let a stitch of it leave with me, but I'm

not that accommodating to people who are basically saying they think I'm going to steal their stuff. Certainly not when they egregiously lie about jeopardizing missions. I did have to cancel my EMT course at BYU since there's no point to it anymore, but that's just as well since my neck and arm aren't back to snuff yet. It's a good thing I didn't really embarrass the SO, as by coming to a SWAT call out intoxicated, or sending a dead woman in a jail transport van to another county's jail, or wrecking patrol vehicle after vehicle after vehicle, or throwing someone down the steps of a theater when they annoyed me while I was there off duty with my family, or I'd have had to be given a stern warning!

Friday, November 17, 2017

I emailed the team a thank you message for the honor of working with them, as many of them are honorable people that do important work. DB called immediately, and a lot of people emailed back. A couple of them were surprised the SO hadn't supported me, and a couple figured it was the board working behind the scenes rather than the SO. Several people said I'd be missed, and some said things about dedicated service, wonderful service, and so forth, and some spoke of being surprised or shocked or thinking this was a sad and crazy situation. One worried that my day job would be on the line because of this, but I told him that people who know me aren't stupid enough to believe the accusation in the police report (although that accusation is also pretty much ludicrous just on its face, without reference to who is accused). One observed that over the many years he has been in UCSSAR, many people having been "hung out to dry," and it's making him jaded. I appreciated those messages quite a bit.

Saturday, February 17, 2018

It's well known by almost everyone in the justice system that defendants get to see the documents accusing them (sadly, though, Lt. CB isn't the first UCSO deputy to claim that police reports are secret). I'm not a fan of civil rights violations, especially when they're against me, so I ignored the September threat about looking at reports, and sent Provo City a discovery request because I want to see what's there. The city attorney took quite a while getting police reports to me, along with the parts of it in electronic media form, but most of it arrived in the mail today, after I pointed out awhile back that what they had sent me in response to an earlier request was woefully lacking. It was astonishing to go through this material. It turns out this whole stink isn't about me driving too fast to the call out, or muttering something once that I shouldn't have said. The Provo officer really hadn't related much of anything to me about an assault allegation, but from the report it is clear that on that night the complainer went on and on about how I supposedly tried to deliberately run her over with my truck after she stopped me to tell me I went too fast when arriving (she also thought I went too fast down the hill, although I doubt she could see the lane from up top, and no one at the CP said I came zooming toward them). Somehow while she was lecturing me I supposedly made my truck suddenly but quietly go sideways on dry pavement, which would be quite a feat considering its traction control, but I failed to run her over despite my best effort. She made up a conversation also, since she didn't know what I actually

said to her, although in reality it was pretty much a one way diatribe spewing into my face. Apparently I have a terribly scary face, and before she came back to the park to complain some more at the end of the call out, she had told her kids about how it looked like I wanted to eat her! There ought to be a TV show called America's Most Absurd Bodycam Videos. She also said she warned the motorbike people that I was about to run them over, when I supposedly barreled away from the command post only to somehow come to a complete stop from such velocity upon getting to her from not far away from the CP, all without anyone at the CP seeing this whizzing around, and with the motorbike people up the hill physically behind her. I wonder why all the people she said I was a threat to didn't join her in filing complaints? The Provo officer's report didn't assess her assault complaint at all. I think he's dealt with enough drama to know it's foolish to believe everything screeched by people who are increasingly getting themselves worked up. He did evaluate the reckless driving allegation, and said several times in his report that he did not think I engaged in reckless driving. We all agree I drove into the area too fast when I first arrived, but OR said in his sworn written statement that no one was in danger and that indeed the family wasn't even out of their vehicle yet when I arrived, but that I did get "dust" on him. The Provo officer viewed the thing as a demeanor issue, and since the woman insisted on complaining he sent in a report for review. Sgt. JA recorded his conversation with her son, and even with prompting the boy was hesitant to go along with all of his mom's wild tale. Sgt. JA flat out said in his own report that I sprayed rocks all over OR both when I first drove up, and later when I went back and parked. Rocks, two times? There's nothing in anyone's statements to back up so much fabrication.

Monday, March 5, 2018

Today was the pretrial meeting at which I finally got to meet a city prosecutor at Provo Justice Court. I'm going to digress here. When I was first hired as a deputy county attorney, I thought I would be doing all government civil work, but it turned out I would be doing a lot of juvenile prosecution also. I'd never been desirous to be a prosecutor, as some of the police in the rural area where I grew up had not exactly been exemplary people, the district attorney was dishonest, and I didn't have a high opinion of the justice system. At a statewide prosecutor's annual training conference I went to early in my career, a panel of some of the best prosecutors in the state gave an ethics presentation on screening cases, and emphasized how important it is to screen out bad cases. Perhaps a tenth of cases get screened out in a good prosecutor's office, either because the alleged conduct does not actually violate a law, or the evidence is insufficient to support a prosecution, or because the officer just messed up (there are a lot fewer dirty cops than one might think, but there are number of sloppy ones). A city prosecutor from southern Utah was at the training conference, and he was utterly mystified. He stood up and asked how on earth they could not automatically file everything the police sent in? The panel told him emphatically that it was their duty to do justice, not to win cases for the sake of winning, and that one thing prosecutors are is essentially a check and balance on the police. Perhaps it's understandable that the city prosecutor would be confused on that issue. Local governments across Utah have gone to having their own justice courts so they can rake in money, and over the years

they have raked it in, especially where prosecutors and justice court judges were pretty much in collusion. There have been some reforms in recent years, but the mindset of guilty until proven innocent has not entirely gone away. That day at the training conference, though, I was mighty proud of my profession. Sadly, I don't think the Provo City prosecutors were at that conference. Knowing how local prosecution sometimes works in Utah made me aware of the uphill road I faced in this case today. Before the pretrial I had written the city attorney's office telling them that if they really believed the complainer's story, they should have me charged with felony aggravated assault, so the county could prosecute me and put me in prison. They did not, of course, do that, because they know she wasn't telling the truth. But my first question to them at pretrial was to ask them why they charged me with reckless driving when their own officer said repeatedly that I didn't do that? The prosecutor didn't answer that, he just said that they were going to dismiss today. That's better than nothing, I suppose, but fulfilling their ethical obligation to screen cases and to summon up the courage to not file a bogus charge would have been better.

Friday, April 6, 2018

It has been about half a year since I've been a member of UCSSAR. Sleeping at night, spending time with my family, and not being a slave to my phone are all pretty nice. Eventually I'll write about my SAR experience, but in the meantime I'm going to put up on my general search and rescue web site an abridged version of these notes from my old call outs. The names have been changed to protect the innocent. I think that even in this unpolished form these notes might be helpful to people thinking of volunteering, so they'll have a better idea of what the experience entails before they commit. They might be of interest to people to see how SAR itself gets lost too often, in a multitude of ways. Frankly, these notes also let me define myself instead of being defined by people with a tenuous interest in the truth. Most importantly, they allow me to give a salute to some very good people who slog on in the service of others.

GENERAL TEAM MEETINGS	Attended?
January 5, 2017 (Thursday)	Yes (Swearing in, introductions, avalanche) 11mi/3h
February 2, 2017 (Thursday)	Yes (Flat ice, vitals) 11mi/3h
March 2, 2017 (Thursday)	Yes (Mountaineering, patient assessment) 11mi/4h
April 13, 2017 (Thursday)	Yes (MRT, spine assessment) 11mi/2½h
May 4, 2017 (Thursday)	Yes (Swiftwater, patient rolls) 11mi/2h
June 8, 2017 (Thursday)	Yes (Flat water, KSL dinner) 11mi/2½h
July 6, 2017 (Thursday)	Yes (MRT, ankles, Provo River) 11mi/2½h
August 3, 2017 (Thursday)	Yes (BBQ) 15mi/2h
September 7, 2017 (Thursday)	Yes (Vital signs) 11mi/3h

October 5, 2017 (Thursday)	Yes (MCI)	11mi/2½h
November 2, 2017 (Thursday)	Yes (IVs)	11mi/2h
11/11 =100%		

GENERAL TEAM TRAININGS*	Attended?	
January 7, 2017 (Saturday)	Yes (Big Springs for avalanche)	43mi/4h
February 4, 2017 (Saturday)	Yes (Utah Lake for flat ice)	48mi/4h
March 4, 2017 (Saturday)	Yes (Aspen Grove for mountaineering)	60mi/5h
April 15, 2017 (Saturday)	Yes (Dry Canyon for GPS)	41mi/3½h
May 6, 2017 (Saturday)	No (Provo River for swiftwater)	
June 10, 2017 (Saturday)	Yes (Utah Lake for flat water)	28mi/5½h
July 8, 2017 (Saturday)	Yes (Rock Canyon Park for MRT)	20mi/4h
August 5, 2017 (Saturday)	Yes (Dry Canyon for MRT)	41mi/5h
September 9, 2017 (Saturday)	Yes (Dry Canyon for MRT)	21mi/1½h
October 7, 2017 (Saturday)	No (Lehi for MCI)	
November 4, 2017 (Saturday)	Yes (SO for equipment)	11mi/4h
*The September 9 training did not go forward, as there was a call out during the morning that came just as we were setting up, but I counted the training because I was actually present at the Dry Canyon training site that morning, and was helping set up for the training. There was no December training.		
9/11 = 82%		

CALL OUTS*	Attended?	
January 6, 2017 (Friday afternoon & evening)	Yes, 1 st (Provo dog ledged up)	20mi/5h
January 7, 2017 (Saturday afternoon)	Yes, big tie (Stewart Falls avalanche)	16mi/4h
January 20, 2017 (Friday night)	Yes, 2 nd /3 rd (Diamond Fork snowmobiler)	48mi/6h
February 12, 2017 (Sunday early morning)	Yes, 3 rd tie? (Hot pots drunks)	39mi/2h
February 20, 2017 (Monday afternoon & evening)	Yes (Dry Canyon hikers & dog)	53mi/6h
February 27, 2017 (Monday night)	Yes, ? (Thistle short call out)	12mi/½h
April 2, 2017 (Sunday evening)	Yes, 1 st (Monks Hollow overdue hikers)	46mi/3h
April 22, 2017 (Saturday afternoon)	Yes, 1 st at SO (Payson Lakes dog)	24mi/1h

May 5, 2017 (Friday evening)	No (Spanish Fork search)	
May 6, 2017 (Saturday afternoon)	No (Utah Lake capsizing boat short call out)	
May 7, 2017 (Sunday morning & afternoon)	Yes, 2 nd at SO (Five Mile UTV in mine)	54mi/6½h
May 23, 2017 (Tuesday early morning)	Yes (Squaw Peak recovery)	40mi/4h
May 28, 2017 (Sunday evening)	Yes (Nebo Loop missing hiker)	45mi/1½h
May 29, 2017 (Monday afternoon & evening)	Yes (Provo River drownings)	31mi/6½h
May 29, 2017 (Monday evening)	No (Loafer Mountain hiker simultaneous call out)	
May 30, 2017 (Tuesday early morning)	Yes (Provo Canyon trapped hikers)	31mi/3h
May 30, 2017 (Tuesday morning)	Yes (Provo River drownings)	28mi/5h
May 30, 2017 (Tuesday afternoon)	Yes, tie (Provo River safety for demolition)	12mi/3h
May 30, 2017 (Tuesday evening)	Yes (Stewart Falls heart problems)	51mi/3h
May 31, 2017 (Wednesday evening)	Yes (Dry Canyon hiker)	41mi/2h
June 1, 2017 (Thursday evening)	Yes, 2 nd at SO (Jacobs Ladder snakebite)	71mi/3½h
June 4, 2017 (Sunday afternoon)	Yes (Tibble Fork short call out)	3mi/½h
June 10, 2017 (Saturday evening)	Yes, ? (Spanish Oaks short call out)	11mi/½h
June 10, 2017 (Saturday night)	No (Utah Lake boater two person call out)	
June 12, 2017 (Monday morning)	Yes (Pine Hollow hiker)	68mi/3½h
June 17, 2017 (Saturday morning)	No (Big Horn Peak short call out)	
June 17, 2017 (Saturday afternoon)	No (Tibble Fork missing motorcyclists)	
June 18, 2017 (Sunday morning)	No (Jacobs Ladder lost and fallen hiker)	
June 18, 2017 (Sunday morning)	No (Tibble Fork ankle injury)	
June 23, 2017 (Friday afternoon)	Yes, 1 st (Aspen Grove hiker)	36mi/1½h
June 23, 2017 (Friday evening)	Yes (Bridal Veil short call out)	7mi/½h
June 24, 2017 (Saturday afternoon)	Yes (Maple Hollow mountain biker)	70mi/2h
June 24, 2017 (Saturday evening)	Yes (Spanish Oaks short call out)	2mi/½h
June 30, 2017 (Friday afternoon)	Yes, ? (Stewart Falls hiker)	41mi/2h
July 2, 2017 (Sunday afternoon)	Yes (Stewart Falls short call out)	4mi/½h
July 4, 2017 (Tuesday afternoon)	Yes (Payson Canyon short call out)	11mi/½h
July 8, 2017 (Saturday morning)	Yes (Tibble Fork short call out)	1mi/½h

July 8–9, 2017 (Saturday overnight)	Yes (Aspen Grove hiker in snow moat)	51mi/16½h
July 10, 2017 (Monday night)	Yes (Bridal Veil hiker)	26mi/6½h
July 15, 2017 (Saturday afternoon)	No (Aspen Grove hiker)	
July 15, 2017 (Saturday afternoon)	Yes (Bridal Veil Falls hiker)	1mi/½h
July 18, 2017 (Tuesday afternoon)	Yes (Stewart Falls short call out)	16mi/½h
July 23, 2017 (Sunday afternoon)	Yes, 3 rd (Stewart Falls diabetic)	25mi/3h
July 23, 2017 (Sunday evening)	Yes (Timpooneke hiker)	45mi/3½h
July 29, 2017 (Saturday afternoon and evening)	No (Tooele County assist)	
July 29, 2017 (Saturday afternoon)	Yes, 1 st at SO (Jacobs Ladder hiker)	65mi/3½h
July 30, 2017 (Sunday all day)	Yes (Box Elder County assist)	244mi/15h
July 31, 2017 (Monday afternoon)	No (Stewart Falls hiker)	
August 1, 2017 (Tuesday afternoon and evening)	Yes (Jacobs Ladder hiker)	67mi/7h
August 5, 2017 (Saturday morning)	No (AF six person call out)	
August 5, 2017 (Saturday afternoon and evening)	Yes (Aspen Grove hiker)	58mi/5h
August 9, 2017 (Wednesday evening)	Yes (Bridal Veil hiker)	35mi/3½h
August 13, 2017 (Sunday afternoon)	No (Stewart Falls hiker)	
August 13, 2017 (Sunday afternoon)	Yes, 1 st at SO (Tibble Fork short call out)	45mi/1h
August 18, 2017 (Friday afternoon)	No (Big Baldy paraglider)	
August 19, 2017 (Saturday evening)	Yes, 1 st at SO (Tibble Fork dirt biker)	74mi/4½h
August 20, 2017 (Sunday evening)	Yes, 1 st at SO (Nunns Park missing boy)	11mi/½h
August 29, 2017 (Tuesday afternoon and evening)	Yes, (Stewart Falls hiker)	49mi/4h
August 29, 2017 (Tuesday evening)	Yes, 2 nd (Birdseye UTV)	43mi/3½h
August 30, 2017 (Wednesday night)	Yes (Upper Falls short call out)	14mi/½h
September 3, 2017 (Sunday evening)	Yes, 2 nd at SO (Silver Lake ATVs)	46mi/1h
September 4, 2017 (Monday early morning)	Yes, 1 st at Altamont (Timpooneke hiker)	60mi/5h
September 4, 2017 (Monday afternoon)	Yes (Sundance stables rider)	51mi/2h
September 5, 2017 (Tuesday evening)	Yes, 1 st (Big Springs hiker)	13mi/3½h
September 9, 2017 (Saturday day)	No (Timpooneke hiker)	
September 12, 2017 (Tuesday night)	Yes (Nebo Loop mountain bikers)	52mi/1½h

September 14, 2017 (Thursday day)	Yes, 1 st (Cascade Mountain hikers)	22mi/4½h
September 14, 2017 (Thursday night)	Yes (Starvation Creek hikers)	77mi/4½h
September 16, 2017 (Saturday afternoon)	Yes (Bridal Veil hikers)	27mi/3½h
September 19, 2017 (Tuesday night)	Yes, 1 st (Mill Canyon hikers)	51mi/2½h
September 25, 2017 (Monday evening)	Yes, 3 rd (Santaquin Canyon hiker)	53mi/4h
September 26, 2017 (Tuesday evening)	Yes, 3 rd (Squaw Peak stroke)	20mi/5h
September 29, 2017 (Friday afternoon)	No, (Hot pots)	
October 7, 2017 (Saturday afternoon)	No (Emerald Lake)	
October 7, 2017 (Saturday evening)	No (? short call out)	
October 14, 2017 (Saturday night)	No (Cascade Mountain short call out)	
October 15, 2017 (Sunday night)	No (Big Baldy)	
October 29, 2017 (Sunday night)	No (Jacob's Ladder)	
November 1, 2017 (Monday evening)	No (Diamond Fork)	
November 9, 2017 (Thursday evening)	No (Tibble Fork)	
November 12, 2017 (Sunday evening)	No (Alpine hiker)	
<p>*The numbers in the fraction below leading to the percentage are call outs I actually attended divided by the number of call outs for which a text went out, including short and quickly cancelled call outs as well as call outs for only a few members that were not therefore counted in team stats (call outs that only a few people go to may not be counted toward attendance stats in the denominator used for team stats, but are essentially like extra credit in the numerator, allowing the possibility of having a call out percentage over 100% on team stats; those call outs are shaded above). Through most of the year in 2017, though, team call out stats were in disarray and many of the call outs did not show on Dropbox. None of the post-September call outs are included in the tally below.</p>		
<p>57/81=70%; team stats on Dropbox showed 102% at the end of September, but see note above</p>		

Extra, unrequired trainings attended:

- Medical, altered mental state, 1/12 at the SO 11mi/2h
- Dive, recovery, 1/18 at the SO 11mi/2h
- MRT, anchors & twin tensioned system, 2/16 at the SO 11mi/2h
- K9, avalanche search, 3/11 at Aspen Grove 55mi/4½h
- Staff the SAR booth at an outdoor expo on March 11 (not exactly training) 14mi/7h
- MRT, litter attachments, 3/16 at Rock Canyon Park 13mi/3h
- MRT, belay systems, 4/20 at Rock Canyon Park 13mi/2½h
- Salem Triathlon SAR helped with on May 13 (not exactly training). 27mi/6½h
- MRT, anchors, 5/18 at Battle Creek 41mi/3h
- Check trail conditions on trails on or near Timp on 5/27 (not exactly training) 104mi/4h
- Medical, Timp debrief and head injuries, 7/13 at Manila Creek Park in PG 48mi/3h
- Utah Lake Triathlon SAR helped with on July 15 (not exactly training) 38mi/4h
- MRT, Kootenay highline, 8/18 at Battle Creek 32mi/3h

- Medical, airways, 8/31 at Canyon Glen Park 42mi/3h
- MRT, Rope Rescue Technician class, 9/5–10/7 at various locations 189mi/40h
- MRT, AHDs, 9/21 at PFD training tower 23mi/3½h
- Medical, trauma, 9/28 at Battle Creek 41mi/3½h
- Medical, WFR recertification, 10/20–10/22 at U of U 348mi/26½h
- Medical, hypothermia, 10/26 at the SO 11mi/2½h

My SAR specific gear and training expenses:

- \$1,729.36

My SAR meeting/training and call out hours (doesn't include personal training time or cleaning and repacking time):

- 191 hours meetings/training and 195 hours call outs, for 386 hours total

Of call outs I attended that were not short call outs terminated early, was first, second, or third SAR member to arrive at call out location or at the SO to tow (the latter admittedly not being difficult to achieve):

- About half of them

SAR mileage, for meetings, training, and call outs:

- 3,768 miles (about \$550 gas)

My average miles per full team call out attended (including short call outs) as of the end of September:

- 40mi, but the median was 40½mi (low 1mi, high 244mi)

My average miles per full team call out attended (not including short call outs) as of the end of September:

- 47mi, but the median was 45mi

My average hours per full team call out attended (including short call outs) as of the end of September:

- 3½h, but the median was 3h (low ½, high 16½)

My average hours per full team call out attended (not including short call outs) as of the end of September:

- 4h, but the median was 3½h

Average number of SAR members responding to call outs that SAR expected all members to respond to, as of the end of September:

- 22, but the median was 21 (total members plus probies, but not veteran status members, is about 65)

SAR members making minimum call out standards, as of the end of September:

- About 55%

Recreationalists are most likely to have problems motivating a call to SAR, at one of these areas:

- Stewart Falls, Bridal Veil Falls, or on either Timp summit trail

Number of bodies SAR recovered:

- 4 (all of which I went on), not including the search we assisted with west of the Great Salt Lake but no agency found a body

Number of SAR call outs that did not seem largely pointless:

- Probably less than a quarter, with perhaps a tenth of all call outs being clearly important

Number of SAR call outs necessitated by the victim's own bad judgment:

- Almost all of them



SAR PHOTOS

Paul Wake



The most basic (and yet quite tricky, given the gear UCSSAR uses) skill in SAR: fitting together the halves of the litter and then getting the two rails to screw together without jamming.

One of many variants for strapping a patient into a litter. This is one of NFFD's techniques; UCSSAR uses some semblance of the techniques described in Rick Lipke's "Technical Rescue Rigger's Guide"



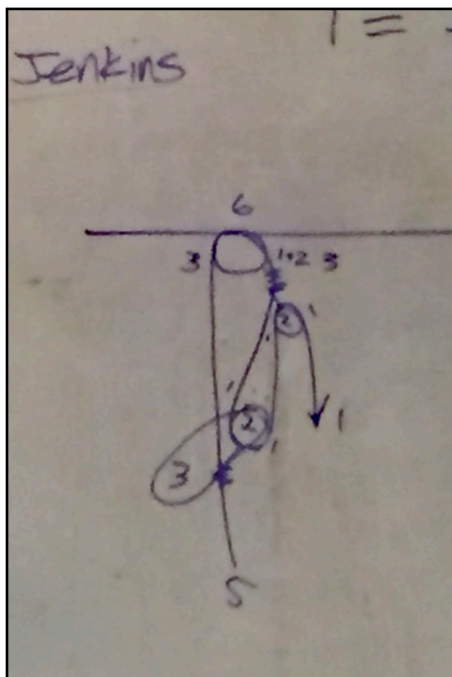
Probies using their trainer to test whether they have properly secured a person in the litter.



A low angle tie in to the litter, with lines on each side for tying into the patient and to litter attendants.



A “wrap three, pull two” webbing anchor on a tree, with a Scarab lowering device clipped into a 27kn+ biner on the anchor, theoretically providing a 10 to 1 safety margin on the main line’s expected rescue load (UCSSAR uses a static safety factor).



Pulley physics for designing raising systems. And learning about Leeroy.



Two prusiks tied onto the belay line, and clipped into their own anchor, which a team member will keep a bit loose during a lower but which should seize on their own and hold the belay line if the main line fails. Gloves might be a good idea here.



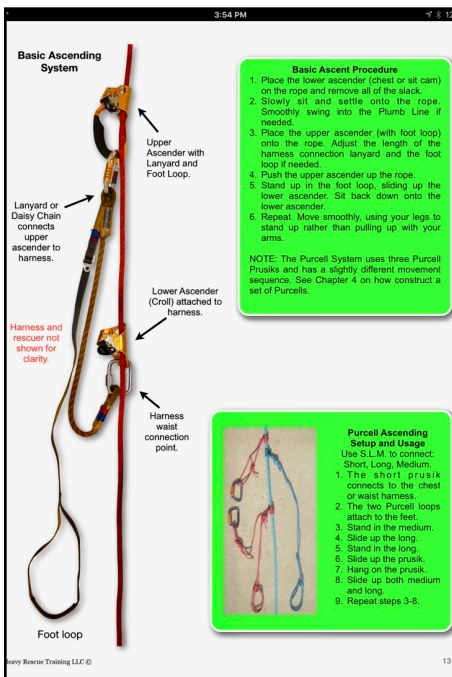
Training on an Arizona Vortex artificial high directional, figuring out what should be improved (one thing being use of an Omni-Block swivel pulley instead of the regular pulley). This setup is designed to keep the main line elevated up off of the edge. Usually the belay line will stay on the ground, but with an Aztec it can be lowered down to just off the ground, but kept higher when appropriate for an edge transition. Use of this gear is an advanced skill, and UCSSAR does not train with it and seldom if ever uses its own Vortex. NFFD provided some introductory training on this gear to a set of interested probies and second year SAR team members, some of whom figured it out, and some of whom did not.



More NFFD training, on the fire tower in Provo, in this case on pick offs: how to access someone stuck on the side of a cliff, get them hooked into a rescue system, and then get them down. This is a particularly elegant solution involving an Aztec, a piece of gear rare in UCSSAR until some newer members got their own rope rescue training and bought their own Aztecs. The rigging across the bottom is for the rescuer, and the rigging going up, toward the rescuer's left, is for attaching to the victim.



Up on the fire tower, learning a new knot from NFFD, and practicing lowering a litter with an attendant, down the Z axis.



An example from Steve Crandall's "Heavy Rescue Training" of a rig allowing a rescuer to ascend up a rope. Mr. Crandall is one of top experts anywhere, but NFFD's Corey Cluff (who trains his team in rope rescue and swift water rescue to an astonishing level of competence for a small fire department) uses a variation on this system that substitutes a Grigri for the Croll, since the Grigri allows an immediate transition to descent.



Ice rescue training on Utah Lake. There are ropes on the rescue sleds so people on shore can pull them back. Ice rescue training might be better for building courage amongst new team members than for teaching anything they are likely to use, but that's good too.



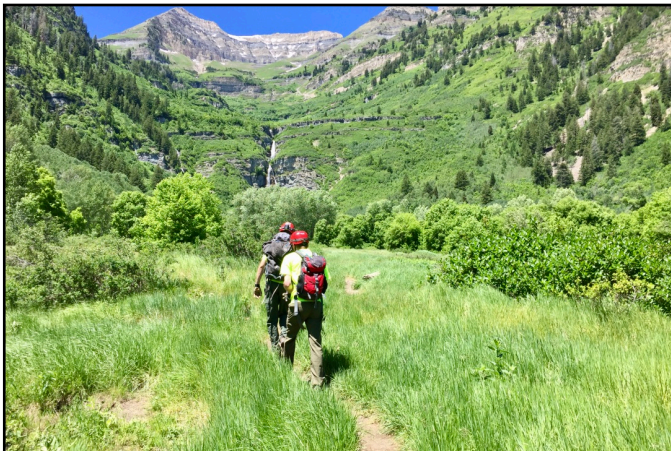
ATV training. Classroom, then practical. In and out of cones, up and over a hill, sidehilling, and abrupt turns. What could go wrong? (Quite a bit, actually.)



Cave training, in expendable clothing. Cave rescue training is not something required of the whole team; this one was just for people who wanted to go hang out with the one cave rescue expert on the team, and her trainings typically involve local caving grotto members also. One of UCSSAR's biggest debacles was failing to rescue someone from Nutty Putty cave years ago. When the victim died after more than a day of being stuck in the cave, government officials closed the entire cave. That cut back on cave rescues, since it was the most popular cave in the county for exploring in, but there are other caves out there. In this photo, the delighted grin perhaps has something to do with that there's a rattlesnake pit right below the happy caver's feet.



When the team begins to arrive at a trailhead for a call out, the first order of business may be to change into rescue gear. Even when the task at hand is just walking an intoxicated person out from the hot pots so they don't stay there and drown.



The most common call out in any given year: hiking this trail up to Stewart Falls on Mount Timpanogos, to help someone with a minor injury get back down. Occasionally, injuries there are much more serious.



The litter can balance on a wheel that attaches to the bottom, with pipes for handles out the front and the back of the litter, and that is how UCSSAR typically gets people down a trail, unless they're so badly injured that a helicopter is necessary and available: someone at the front of the litter and someone at the back, with other people behind holding onto a tag line to help with braking, as the litter bumps down the trail.



What could be better than dear friends?



A couple needed help getting back to a trail they had been hiking on. They were able to hike out once UCSSAR teams roped them up from the spot they'd gotten into. Their dog was tired, though, so the team had mercy on it, and slid it down the snowy trail on the litter. The dog wanted to stay at the team debriefing at the trailhead instead of going home with its owner.



BREAKING NEWS
GIRL FOUND 1 MILE DOWN RIVER
UTAH COUNTY



Three drownings at once on the Provo River in spring runoff, and it was very nearly five. Here, a UCSSAR team member checks for a body in brush along the side of a water retention area where the water has spread out and slowed down, while a teammate provides safety backup. Much of this river is not swimmable and usually not survivable during flood stage.



Our mountains are beautiful. Even after a Jacobs Ladder body recovery.



Recovering a body one night but not realizing the deceased hiker had left a child behind on the mountain, means that the next morning is going to be busy, with multiple agencies working hard to search for the son in the Jacobs Ladder area.

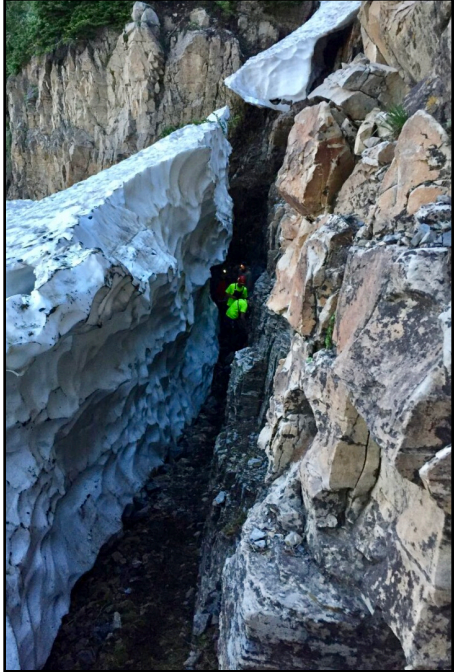


This is Bridal Veil Falls at night. Which is when UCSSAR frequently has to rescue people who didn't realize how foolish it was to try to climb cliffs that no one but experienced mountaineers should try. Here, the tiny dot of light is a team member being lowered down the cliff next to a litter with someone who is very lucky he isn't in a body bag.

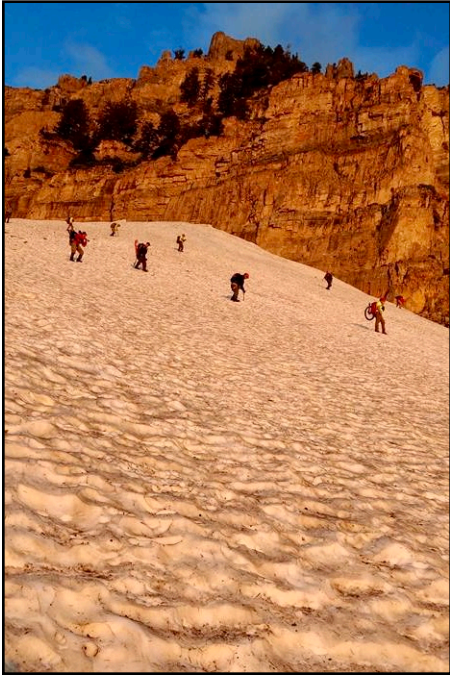
The most common activity of a UCSSAR team member: standing around waiting.



This is how Timp looks from Aspen Grove in the spring or early summer, and people assume it's safe and that the bits of snow are easily navigated. Nope. It's worse up top, and there are killer snow holes along the way.



Sliding on snow and falling into this moat on Timp broke both legs of a pretty good hiker, and left him in spray from a waterfall. TERT and UCSSAR got him out, and up onto a bit of rocky trail between two snowfields. But he spent the night there, due to the danger of trying to evacuate him out after dark on large snowfields.



After getting the hiker with two broken legs hoisted, UCSSAR and TERT had to get themselves back down, using crampons and ice axes.



Utah DPS sent a helicopter and hoisted out the hiker with two broken legs, at first light.



UCSSAR and other agencies figure out how to get a man up from this mine shaft in the desert, into which he had ridden his UTV during the middle of the night.



UCSSAR assists two other counties with a search on their county line in the west desert, for a missing hiker. This is the command post.



Without GPS from a victim's cell phone to narrow down a location, search gets old fashioned. This search line, which includes many community volunteers, turned up nothing, and the missing hiker in the west desert was never found.



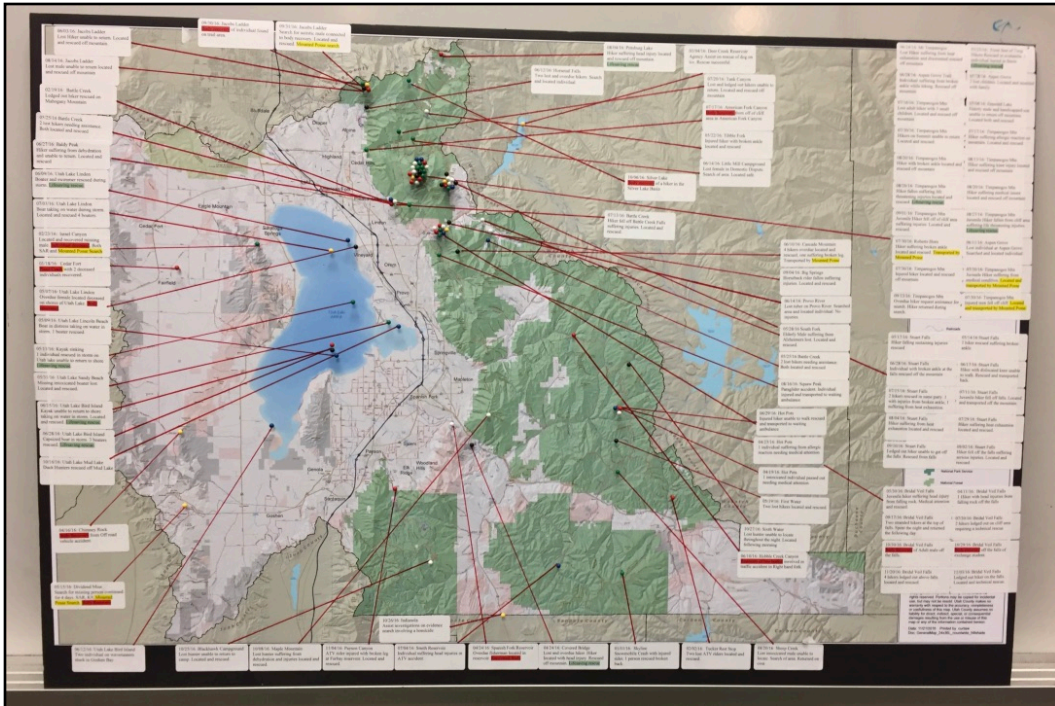
Midway up a couloir on Cascade Mountain, looking down at what the team has come up, and what the team will have to get a litter down if the team doesn't get to a hiker quickly enough to beat an incoming storm and get her to where she can be hoisted out.



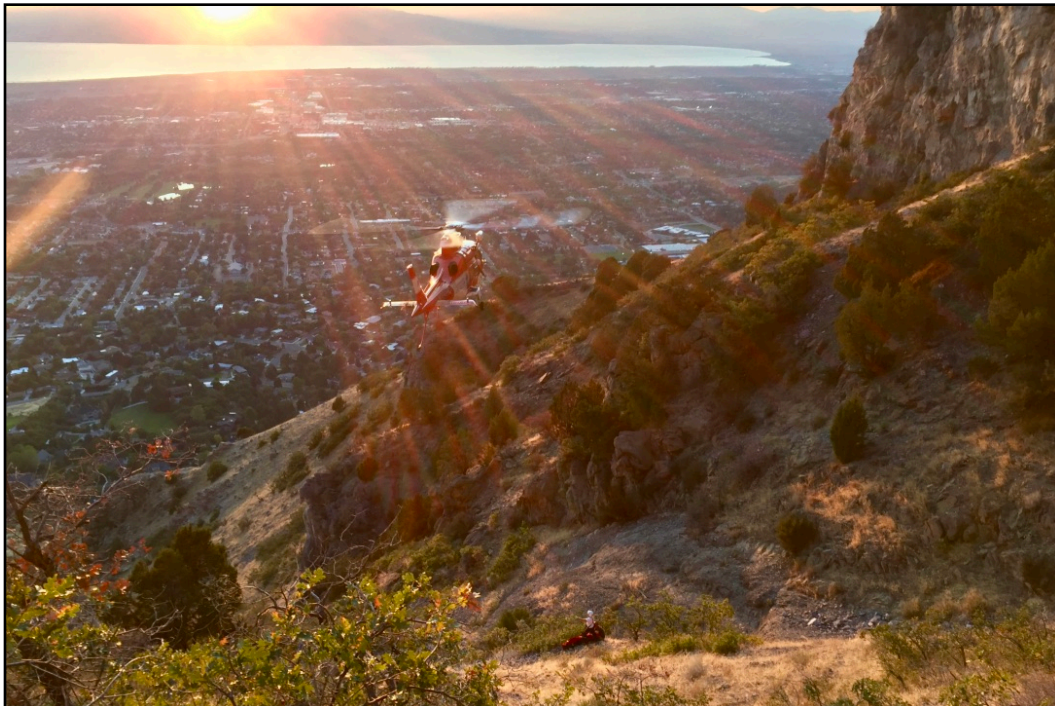
Looking further up the couloir on Cascade Mountain to where team one has arrived, and the hiker is lifted out just before weather closed in and entirely obscured the area, dumped rain, and darkened the couloir even at midday.



UCSSAR borrows a church parking lot to create a landing zone for Life Flight, which has just plucked off a mountain someone who thought it would be good to take a shortcut off a trail.



The types of call outs UCSSAR goes on: a one year's worth of call outs, showing concentrations on the Timp summit trails, at Stewart Falls, and at Bridal Veil Falls.



My best and last call out. A couple was hiking high up in the cliff bands above Provo when he had a serious medical emergency that would probably have killed him or at best left him vegetative. We climbed up the mountainside as hard and fast as we could, to get him to a spot where he could be hoisted while there was still light. Just made it! And he got the medication he needed just before the time in which it can be given would have run out.