

NORTHFIELD MOUNTAIN NORDIC SKI PATROL



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NORTHFIELD MOUNTAIN PATROLLERS GO MOUNTAINEERING

by Jonathan Shefftz

During the depths of this past season, when the Northfield Mountain snow pack was about the equal of the snow pack where the Deams were sojourning, Northfield Mountain patrollers helped teach several courses at other ski areas for Mountain Travel and Rescue ("MTR") and avalanche safety.

Bob Duris was the Instructor of Record for a Level 1 MTR course at Ragged Mountain, NH, during the first weekend of February. Participants received classroom sessions on Saturday, then an overnight sleep out, and finally field exercises on Sunday. Bob taught the presentations on navigation and emergency sleds, and had also helped to set up the field exercises on a previous weekend. Jonathan Shefftz, an apprentice instructor, led the presentations on sleeping gear, travel equipment, and navigational tools (before skipping out on the cold overnight using a Sunday ski mountaineering race as an excuse).

The next weekend, Jonathan was scheduled to take the second part of the MTR Level 2 course, the previous year's course having been cancelled on account of no snow, and the first part having been held at a snow-less cross country ski area in December. Ironically, this year's MTR 2 was cancelled on account of . . . too *much* snow! With the nearby town having recorded over 130 inches over the course of several days, the host site, Salmon Hills (on New York's famously snowbound Tug Hill Plateau), was cut off from all highway access. (The contrast was somewhat moderated when Northfield Mountain finally opened a few days later.)

The following weekend, Jonathan assisted at Chuck Boyd's Ski Sundown CT Avalanche Fundamentals and Rescue course. (Back in December, he and Chuck had attended a three-day instructor training course from the American Institute for Avalanche Research and Education, held at the base of an almost entirely snow-less Mount Washington.) His presentations included decision making (which included scenarios in which participants had to either request additional information or make a decision) and rescue gear and searching (i.e., what comes after making the *wrong* decision!). The field exercises culminated in the search for a dummy that the *(continued on page two)*

YELLOW MERIT STAR AWARD PRESENTED AT PATROL AWARDS BANQUET

No other occasion seemed more appropriate than our annual Awards Banquet on May 5th for Fred Leukroth, our outgoing Western Massachusetts Region Director, to present the NSP Yellow Merit Star to Northfield Mountain's Assistant Patrol Representative, Bob Duris.

Scott Rockefeller, Eastern Division OEC Supervisor, nominated Bob for this award, citing Bob's dedication to Northfield Nordic, Western Mass. and the success of the Region's OEC Program. He noted Bob has been teaching WEC/OEC courses for more years than he would care to remember. Due to Northfield's remote location within the Region, these courses have been critical to recruiting new candidates and Patrollers to Northfield.

Thanks to Bob's efforts, Northfield Mountain and the Western Mass. Region now have military grade moulage kits. These kits enable realistic presentations of OEC scenarios and make the learning experience far more effective.

Congratulations, Bob. This award is richly deserved. You have the gratitude of both the Western Mass. Region and Northfield Mountain for your generosity and unwavering devotion of time and energy.

DIVISION AMN MEETING

The Eastern Division of the National Ski Patrol has chosen Northfield Mountain as the 2007 site for its annual meeting of Avalanche, Mountain Travel & Rescue, and Nordic (AMN) Instructors. Our patrol will host this meeting on the weekend of September 7th – 9th, the weekend after Labor Day.

We hope you will be able to put this event on your calendar and can help us welcome patrollers from the northeast who will gather here for a business meeting and training in outdoor skills. We need help setting up a continental breakfast and a buffet lunch on Saturday. Volunteers are also needed to participate in a simulated search and rescue mission Sunday morning.

You can visit the event website at <http://amn07.nmns.org>. If you are able to help out, contact Bill Schweikert at: 413-498-5742 or wvschweik@yahoo.com.

CHOCOLATE POT CHAT

by Tom Deam

Well, we get back from Florida and it's warm. A photo of what we did in FL is included. Snow, a bit of it was hoped for! The trip back was uneventful, though snow banks were finally seen in Frackerville, PA. I would not recommend stopping there just to view snow banks. Why we even stopped there is not worth telling except a gazillion "Snow Birds" were migrating north at the same time, staying at their biologically/genetically imprinted roosts. As I prepare this, the sound of hammers, saws, and oh s@#\$ is being heard as our home is under modification by builders. Enough about me.

The Eastern Division Avalanche, MTR, and Nordic Instructors meeting will be at Northfield Mountain the 7th, 8th, and 9th of September. As Bill Schweikert pointed out in his email, help is needed to help host the meeting. Ralph Rossi has stepped forward, any others? We'll be providing a continental breakfast Saturday and Sunday, and "crowds" are needed for a Search and Rescue session on Sunday. Bo, Bill, and Jonathan are also heavily involved in preparations. Here is a great opportunity for the Patrol to support Nordic Patrolling!

Ah yes, Camp Wiyaka Weekend. The "Y" owning the camp will be taking tents down the week of Sep 10th and closing the place up for "overnight extravaganzas". We had scheduled our patrol getaway for the same weekend as the Eastern Division Instructors Meeting. Since many patrollers will be helping out or participating in this meeting, it made sense to cancel this year's plans for the Camp. Anyone have thoughts or desires for an earlier or later Fall Patrol function?

Refresher is the third full weekend in October; the 20th and 21st. Yes, it will be at the Mountain! A planning meeting or two will be held and we're looking for help in making it a worthwhile event. Meeting date and time will be announced soon.

All have a great summer and hope to see you sometime soon. Stay in touch!



Proof that Tom and Charlene were not on vacation in Florida: Sean telling Nate, "Soon you'll get to change Grandpa's diapers!"

WWW.NMNSP.ORG

Don't forget to check our website for the latest patrol news and dates of upcoming courses and events.

If you don't remember the user name and password for entering the 'patrol room', contact Bill Schweikert at: webmaster@nmnsp.org

...**MOUNTAINEERING** (*continued from page one*) venerable Dick Gardiner had created, complete with the face of the recently disgraced astronaut who was in the news at the time.

Finally, Jonathan also assisted at the two days of field sessions for Chuck's four-day, mid-March Level 2 Avalanche course. The goal was to utilize the in-bounds controlled-access avalanche terrain, but a classic thaw-refreeze pattern followed by fresh snowfall made the terrain unsuitable for any kind of use. Jonathan ran the beacon practice session on Saturday, taking 30 students through a total of 60 beacon searches. On Sunday, all the instructors set up a simulated avalanche site, and the students had to organize a full search, culminating in the rescue once again of Dick's astronaut dummy. (If only she had such assistance in the real world!)

Those interested in learning more about MTR and avalanche courses should contact Bob, who is an MTR instructor trainer as well as an instructor in both programs. Also of note is the MTR course tentatively planned in early November at Yawgoo Valley in Rhode Island (yes, Rhode Island apparently has a ski area), at which Jonathan will be assisting. Chuck and Dick usually teach a combined MTR and avalanche course at Sundown in February. And those interested in becoming instructors in any program should plan to take the one-day Instructor Development course, which is now alternatively available in CD form from the NSP website.

FLOUNDER FLOUNDERS

Fourteen patrollers and guests enjoyed a feast at the Countree Living restaurant on May 5th for our annual Awards Banquet. Discussion about Northfield sending a team to the Patrol Competition led to Bill Gabriel sharing stories about his own experience, when Northfield won the Backend-of-the-Horse Award. This was a perfect lead-in for Bill to pass on the infamous Flaming Flounder Award.

Bill had everyone shaking in their ski boots as he slowly walked around the banquet table several times, threatening to stop behind the new recipient of the Flounder, and pausing behind several patrollers to ponder their klutzy moments. However, due to our unusual snow season and the trails only being open 28 days, Bill felt he didn't have enough flounderish material to pass on the award. The new recipient of the Flaming Flounder Award will be named at next year's banquet. So Patrollers beware!

The next issue of the Rattlebone will be published in September. Please get all articles, information, dates, etc. to Joannie Duris by September 15th. 36 Lombard Road, Hubbardston, MA 01452 (978) 928-5587 or jvduris@charter.net.