

# PORTAL RESCUE NEWS

January 2014

Portal Rescue, Inc., P.O. Box 16331, Portal, AZ 85632

Tel: (520) 558-2206; Emergency Calls Only: 911

www.Portalrescue.com

## President's Report

*Jerry Racicot*

"We saved someone's life today! We all did it. Congratulations!" This is a quote from a fellow Portal Rescue member that stood out for me in 2013.

Members spend a lot of time on training, continuing education, vehicle checks and fundraisers, but it all becomes worthwhile when we help our community members during quite possibly the worst day of their life. I have seen joy, anxiety, sadness, fatigue and satisfaction on the faces of my fellow members. In every case we did our very best to help. For this I am extremely proud of our membership and their respective performances during the many difficult situations we experienced in 2013.

Portal Rescue continues to meet its goal of providing high quality pre-hospital medical care, fire abatement, search and rescue (SAR) for our community and visitors. All of our members are volunteers who give up their precious time to serve. They make Portal Rescue operational. They are the backbone of this great organization. We are also privileged to have a community that meets our financial needs and for this we are grateful.

The above quote from my fellow EMT came after a Search and Rescue/EMS mission in which a hiker fell from a cliff onto a rock and became immobile. Portal Rescue members met the challenge by providing two rope rescuers, two EMT's and four fire/SAR members. We assisted the Cochise County Search and Rescue team. The patient was lowered down approximately 100 feet of cliff face, carried a quarter mile down difficult terrain and transported in a rescue vehicle. Then he was flown out via helicopter. I received this quote at 2 AM after more than 11 hours of work. Following this mission, Portal Rescue received a beautiful thank you letter from the patient and an anonymous grant based on this rescue.

I thank all the members of Portal Rescue and their families for their service. In addition, I want to thank all the donors and volunteers that provide for Portal Rescues' various needs.

We look forward to providing for our community in 2014. Our department continues to need more personnel. There have been retirements in both fire and EMS and these vacancies need to be filled. If you would like to join our team, or know someone who would, please contact any member.

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## Canyon Rescue

*Jeff Gee*

The call came in as "Woman in Stewart Campground, possible leg injury".

Past experience has taught us that sometimes there are more details than we get upon initial dispatch. No blame there, the info goes thru a few sources before we get it. This was about 4:30 pm and the forecast was cold and dark.

On the way to the scene I received a radio call from John Yerger acting as IC (Incident Commander). John requested I grab binoculars on the way so I stopped by the fire station. I had a funny feeling about this one, so I grabbed two of our four rope rescue mission bags.

When I arrived in the Portal Canyon, John was doing a good job as I.C. He was tasked with tracking those involved on scene and calling for additional resources. Joe already had Rescue Four available. E.T. was at the base of the cliff with two civilians looking at possible routes to reach the patients. It didn't look good and was not safe for them to attempt without ropes, so they headed down.

By this time, it was clear this was not as expected through dispatch - two patients high on a cliff, possible broken leg and arm, serious bleeding, cold and not dressed for the night.

At about 5:30, Sargent David Noland CCSO-SAR arrived on scene and relieved John as IC. This is one of David's specialties and he does it well. I was coming down the trail, searching for a possible route up. I exchanged intel with E.T. on patient injuries and looked at the cliff area. It was steep and would involve a technical rescue as the serious patient was not mobile.

My goal was to fix ropes up to the patients ASAP to enable us to bring up the additional personnel and gear we would need. Since I have worked with CCSO-SAR and David many times in the past, he gave me the approval to head out. We were quickly losing daylight. I put on a harness and rope and started up a crack system on the right side of the canyon cliff.

I was confident I could get close enough to better communicate with the patients and we would have a rope part way up before dark. It was a nasty crack climb, but not too far. The crack ended in a short cave carpeted with bat guano. From the high end of the cave opening I was able to talk to and assess the patients' injuries and offer advice.

I found a man and woman, both in their early 20's. She was in good shape and was able to relay info, not an easy task due to echoes. He was not in good shape. He had fallen perhaps 20 ft. and landed on a serious slope just above another steep slope that would

eventually end about 200 ft. below. If anyone fell, they would most likely stop tumbling when they hit the tree line - still a few hundred feet above the road.

I watched as the DPS helicopter hovered and assessed the rescue. They were unable to do a long line "pick off" either due to the nature of the cliff, wind in the canyon or the fact that it was nearly dark.

By then Ursula was coming up my fixed rope. She is a CCSO deputy and accomplished climber with the sheriff's SAR team. Behind her was Walter, who has a past life as a mountaineer. The cave at the end of the crack system was now getting crowded. Good, because I needed Walter to belay me as I continued climbing out of the top of the cave to take rope up to the patients, about another 40 ft. Once I tied off the rope to a secure anchor, Ursula came over bringing more rope and gear.

It was dark and cold as predicted. I wished I had more than a t-shirt and long sleeve shirt, but the message was "a woman in Stewart Campground, possible leg injury". I figured I would be home in time for my crockpot full of hot turkey soup. Now I hoped we'd be done by 10pm.

As more people climbed up and brought more gear I spent my time assessing the patient, setting up rope anchors, preparing a haul/lowering system and shivering. It was very cold with constant wind. Sometime after midnight Ursula, Walter, John, another CCSO-SAR rescuer and I were in place. We secured the injured patient in a SKED (a hard plastic semi-flexible basket type litter). We traversed a steep ledge with everyone "clipped" into some part of the rope safety system most of the time.

We prepared to lower the patient down the rock slope. By then we had many more rescuers available for the additional long steep carry down to the road. At the top Walter, John and the other SAR rescuer lowered and belayed the load. The load consisted of the patient wrapped in the SKED, Ursula who was clipped in near the patient's head and yours truly on repel below the patient's feet to find a route in the dark. We started our lowering about 1:30 am. We were able to come down off the rock after about 120 ft.

There we met the rest of the team — Jerry & Jenifer, Jim & Donna, David Newton, Rick Beno, and a few others. We carried the patient down to the road and into our waiting, warm Rescue Four and passed patient care to the Lifeline helicopter crew, who had been waiting for hours. Also on scene were two medics from Douglas with their ambulance. Once the Lifeline crew arrived, the Douglas crew returned to their station.

All through the ordeal of cold and pain the patient was a real trooper. He was moved to the chopper and flown to Tucson. They lifted off from the FS helipad about 2:30 am.

(Canyon Rescue — continued from page 2)

Back at the top, the woman was able to climb down the rope in the crack system with a harness clipped in for safety. She was also a trooper and very helpful. She had to climb back up the trail to where the man fell, to get her jacket and car keys the next morning so she could break their camp and drive to Tucson.

Back at the rescue site all the safety anchors, gear, webbing, and ropes needed to be brought down in reverse order. At about 2:00am even more CCSO-SAR people were showing up. The fresh help was very welcome in hauling everything down.

There were also many people on the ground hauling needed items up the trail to the rock face - some were the usual reliable hands like Raul the "rope guru" of SAR. I'm sure I have neglected some details and names. Sorry, but it was a long night. Everyone performed well as they played their part in a real team effort. This is what "team building" is about.

Something to ponder – the scene was about one mile from Portal and lasted 12 hours. It was "Wilderness Medicine", which means being more than an hour from definitive hospital care for the critically wounded.

Luckily, this one had a good ending and our patients are doing well. No one was injured in the rescue. Many of us got home about 3:00 am. I'm sure the CCSO-SAR team didn't get home until sunrise.

I remember another helicopter rescue with a long line basket pick off on the Limestone Hill behind the Fire Station, involving, broken bones, many rescue personnel and many hours. That story is for another day.

Thanks to everyone involved. — Jeff

## Fire Chief's Report

*David Newton*

Portal Rescue had a quiet year for fires. There were two small fires started by lightning – one a single smoldering sycamore north of Paradise and the other the top of a power pole at about MP 409 on Hwy 80. A third fire near Enterprise road was human caused and is described elsewhere in this newsletter. All these fires occurred in July.

### Following is a summary of our activities:

Local training: Initial attack exercises, radio communications quiz, yearly wildland fire refresher, guest speaker on fireline medical incidents, drafting practice on all vehicles, progressive hoselay and tandem pump & roll, vehicle extrication exercise, review of the Yarnell Hill burnover, engine and tender pumping exercise.

Two firefighters received training in Vehicle Stabilization and Extrication at the four-day Arizona State Fire School.

My emphasis as Chief will remain firefighter safety. Our firefighters train together once a month. We don't expect everyone to do everything. Give me a call if you would like details about joining us.

The search arm of Portal Rescue participated in four incidents. A couple lost on a local trail, an injured climber in Cave Creek, a local walkaway, and an injured hiker up Horseshoe Canyon. Our search volunteers had two trainings – one was on the Missing Person Questionnaire and the second consisted of exercises on hasty search, missing person flyer, grid search, and search urgency determination.

If you're interested in joining our Search Team, the Cochise County SAR team will be offering the required two-day academy February 22-23 in Sierra Vista. Call me for details – we'd like to have you on our crew.

I continue to appreciate the support this community has shown to me personally and toward Portal Rescue.

## Fire Fighter Roster

Rick Beno	David Johnson
Shane Burchfield	David Newton - Chief
Lee Dyal	Jerry Racicot
Jeff Gee	Larry Rivers
Chris Husband	Lance Shultz
Ken Joens	Bob Walton



### Portal Search & Rescue Team:

On left: Jennifer Racicot, Jerry Racicot, David Newton

On right: Joe Meenach, CC SAR member, Jeff Gee (helmet)

## Search & Rescue Report

Jennifer Racicot

As a "newbie" on the SAR (Search & Rescue) team, I have had many learning opportunities this year. There was plenty of action in the Portal area during the last several months.

As unfortunate as this may be, the hands-on experience has helped to solidify much of the classroom training and has brought our team together as a cohesive working unit. The more we go out on calls the more refined our skills become. I feel comfortable and confident answering calls with our team knowing all members will take care of one another while achieving the set goal.

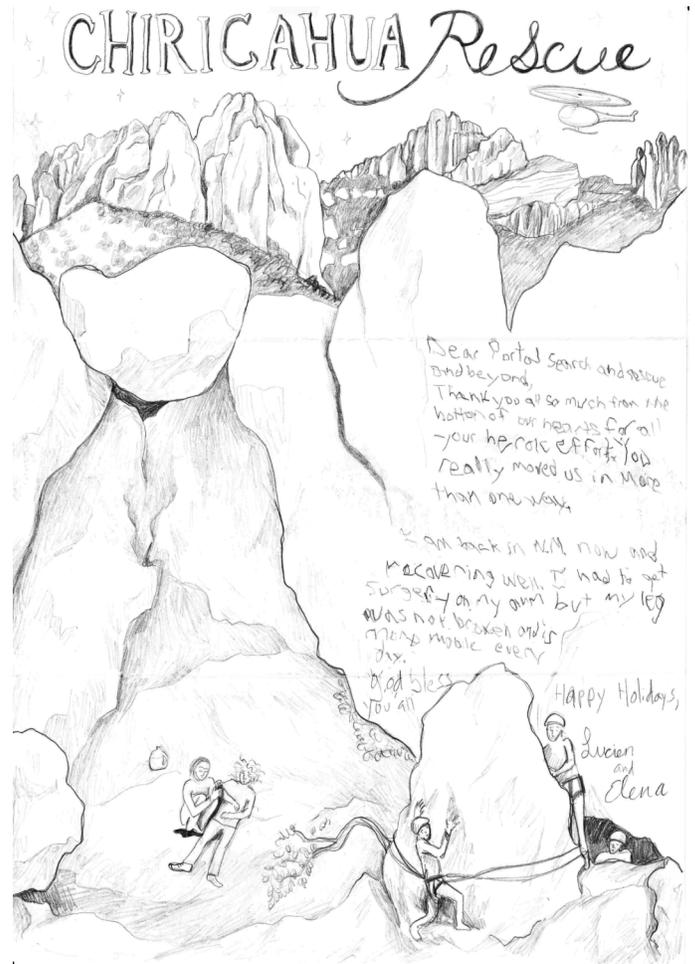
I joined the SAR team because I wanted to contribute in some capacity. As a mother of 3 young children in an extremely rural area, the benefits of local EMS, Fire and SAR are invaluable to my family. I felt SAR would be a good fit for my interests and skills. I enjoy training opportunities that further my skills and confidence out in the backcountry. In addition, I recently let David Newton know that I wish to join the fire department. He has already included me in monthly fire trainings.

Thank you Portal Rescue members for being so helpful and encouraging to new recruits and to all who give their time, energy and passion to make Portal Rescue an asset to our community.

## Search & Rescue Roster

Debbie Anbinder  
Wynne Brown  
Dinah Davidson  
Tom Davidson  
Lee Dyal  
Harold Farmer  
David Johnson  
Rebekah Karsch  
Dennis McAvoy

Donna Meenach  
Joe Meenach  
David Newton  
Jennifer Racicot  
Jerry Racicot  
Bob Walton  
Greg Wayman  
Stevie Wayman  
John Yerger



## Dear Portal Search and Rescue and beyond,

Thank you so much from the bottom of our hearts for all your heroic efforts. You really moved us in more than one way.

I am back in NM now and recovering well. I had to get surgery on my arm, but my leg was not broken and is more mobile every day.

God bless you all.

Happy Holidays, Lucien and Elena

## Volunteers Needed!

Volunteers are needed in many different capacities to keep Portal Rescue operating. We could really use someone to help with grounds maintenance and classroom cleaning. More Radio Communications Operators are needed. We always need more EMTs and Fire Fighters (training required for both positions). The Search and Rescue team has been active this year and could use more able-bodied folks as well. Contact Jackie Lewis (558-2287) or David Newton (558-1155) if you are interested in volunteering for any positions.

## EMS Chief Report

*Jackie Lewis*

Portal Rescue EMTs responded to 22 emergencies in 2013 - ten were trauma and 12 were medical. Four patients were transferred to helicopter paramedics and thirteen to ground paramedics. There were five non-transports.

Portal Rescue purchased four Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) to place in outlying locations. They are at the homes of EMTs Donna & Joe Meenach (near Animas), Stevie Wayman (in Rodeo), Jerry Racicot (south of Rodeo) and Jackie Lewis (in Paradise). This will shorten the time to deliver care to patients since an EMT won't have to wait for the Rescue Vehicle to arrive. The chances of surviving a heart attack increase with early 911 access, early CPR (chest compressions only), early defibrillation and early advanced care.

Two EMTs have retired this year. Lee Dyal served seven years, joining Portal Rescue in 2006. He is continuing with Portal Rescue as a Fire Fighter and member of the Search Team. Dinah Davidson joined in 2011 and is continuing as a Radio Communications Operator and assisting with the Search Team. Lee and Dinah have both also served on the governing board as active members. We appreciate the time and energy that both gave to the organization and thank them for continuing to serve.

Through continuing education, practice scenarios and 911 responses Portal Rescue EMTs build knowledge, skills and confidence. They sacrifice hours, travel and often family time so they can be assets to our community. They are ready to assist in your time of need. Please let them know how much you appreciate them when you see them.

## Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs)

Susanne Apitz  
ET Collinsworth  
Jeff Gee  
Jackie Lewis – Chief  
Donna Meenach  
Joe Meenach

Pat Owens  
Jerry Racicot  
Stevie Wayman  
Chris Wilbur  
John Yerger

**“Volunteers are not paid —  
not because they are worthless,  
but because they are priceless.”**

## What's An RCO?

*JoAnn Julian*

Would you like to help your community by joining the Portal Rescue team but don't have time to devote to EMT training nor the physical requirements to be a fire fighter? Become an RCO (Radio Communications Operator). They serve a vital function in providing the radio and telephone links between EMTs on the scene, Douglas paramedics on the road, helicopter services and other emergency response agencies.

My husband, Doug, and I have been RCOs since 911 was initiated several years ago. Doug mans the radio and I answer phone calls taking notes as the call progresses from initial response to final transfer to paramedics.

The importance of our role in the scheme of things was dramatically illustrated in a recent call when a climber was seriously injured while free climbing in the Chiricahuas. After the 911 call came in from the Portal Store, our team went into action. Doug and I arrived at the station as the Rescue Four vehicle was leaving with an EMT on board. Five other EMTs soon joined him in their private vehicles. After they assessed the situation, the difficult terrain and the challenge of reaching the injured climber, they requested we call the Sheriff's Extrication Team.

Over the next several hours, we received and sent information via radio and telephone to Sheriff's personnel (including a Black-Hawk helicopter), Douglas paramedics, Lifeline Helicopter Service, a hospital, and our EMTs. The flow of information was vital in coordinating all of these rescue services.

Doug and I find great satisfaction in providing the communication link between the scene of the emergency and the personnel that meet the challenge of providing needed care and in some cases life-saving services. We need more RCO's. Won't you consider joining the team and serving your community?

## Radio Communications Operators

Susanne Apitz  
Rick Beno  
Dinah Davidson  
Maya Decker  
Gerry Hernbrode

Doug Julian  
JoAnn Julian  
Jackie Lewis  
Don Wadsworth  
Bill Wilbur

## **Treasurer's Report**

***Rick Beno***

At the beginning of 2013 the Portal Rescue Board set up a budget allowing for expected expenses of \$62,275 and expected revenues of \$45,850. This would have given us a deficit of \$16,925 for the year. This deficit would have required the Board to raid its rainy day funds to keep our budget balanced. Fortunately expenses came to only \$40,713 and revenues came in at \$50,480. This put Portal Rescue \$9,767 in the black.

How did we manage to be so frugal? First, we had no major expenses on vehicle repairs, which saved us about \$6,200. No major radio expenses saved another \$4,000. Training expenses came in at \$4,000 under budget and office expenses were \$1,350 below expectations. By negotiating with our Workmen's Comp insurance carrier we saved another \$3,500.

On the revenue side of the equation, we received more than \$37,400 in donations - \$7400 over our expectation of \$30,000. Thank you Portal, Rodeo and beyond! Our fundraising efforts were great, but they were under expectations by about \$2,500. We also had \$1,625 in fire income from the Enterprise fire along Highway 80.

Portal Rescue has \$125,500 in its long-term investment accounts and just over \$40,000 in our checking account.

If anyone is interested in the details of Portal Rescue's budget, please attend the March 2014 meeting.

## **Board of Directors**

Jerry Racicot - President  
Bill Wilbur - Vice President  
Rick Beno - Treasurer  
Harold Farmer - Secretary  
David Newton - Fire Chief  
Jackie Lewis - EMS Chief  
Reed Peters

## **The Enterprise Fire: July 2, 2013**

***Bob Walton, Portal Rescue***

The phone rang just before dinnertime. Lee Dyal asked if I knew anything about a fire in my neighborhood. I told Lee I'd get my gear, investigate and report back. I shoved a fresh-made salad into the refrigerator and laced up my boots. The phone rang again. It was Kim Perry telling me she could see smoke and flames to the west of her location (New Mexico east

of Highway 80), which she estimated was north of the Lapin farm. I called Lee back and Suzanne answered, asking if the fire was in Arizona or New Mexico. I went out on my deck and looked south - definitely Arizona. I could see the smoke and flame and they were spread out with the wind blowing from east to west.

It was nearly dark when I went forth all decked out in green "nomex" (fire resistant) pants and yellow shirt with helmet, shroud, goggles, lamp, gloves, radio and fire shelter with harness. I fired up my POV (personally operated vehicle - Dodge Ram 4x4 pickup) and punched on mobile radio to the Portal repeater channel. Knowing the back roads as far as the Massey yard I decided to head cross-country driving towards the smoke. Pulling around the big center pivot cornfield I came upon a group of farmers gathered at the Massey equipment yard on Enterprise Road. The group included my neighbor Jason Barnard. Jason was not sure of the best way to get to the flames so I pressed on, following my nose. Soon I was on the bank of a huge storm ditch, which protects the cropland from the floodwaters coming out of Cave Creek Canyon. This ditch formed the north perimeter break line of the fire. Across the ditch in the distance I could see a fire truck from Rodeo working the left flank of the fire.

At that point I tried to make radio contact with Rodeo but with no success. This is embarrassing - I was trying to key the wrong microphone (the following day I would remove from my truck a seldom-used CB radio to avoid future confusion). The active flame (1 ft. to 5 ft. flame lengths) was spread out in front of me for maybe 1/2 mile and moving west with the wind towards denser dry fuels. Then the wind suddenly shifted 180 degrees and was blowing out of the west. Good news! The fire was burning back on itself. There was still active flame over a broad expanse but things were looking up. Through the smoke I could see in the distance a Massey Enterprises tractor roaring around the flames pulling a disk to encircle the burn zone.

Lee was on his way in Portal's Brush Six (our compressed-air foam unit) and looking for access to the fire. I got Lee and Ramon Escobar (Rodeo fire chief) on the radio and we decided that access to the fire might be by way of Isis Road, off Highway 80 south of Enterprise. I turned north to Enterprise, east to 80 and south to Isis where I parked. Lee arrived shortly in Brush Six with Jerry Racicot and Jeff Gee manning Portal's newly painted Brush Five 1,000 gallon deuce-and-a-half. In spite of our best efforts, the fire seemed to be totally inaccessible and we were forced to backtrack.

(Continued on page 7)

## **(Enterprise Fire — continued from page 6)**

We roared back to Enterprise Road and finally, with the guidance of one of the farmers, we found our way a considerable distance to the west along the big ditch swinging first north and then hooking back around to the south where there was a treacherous but passable mound of rock and dirt that served to get us across the big ditch. Then we headed up into the burn area. Did I mention it was dark?

Lee had assumed the role of IC (incident commander) and together we sized-up the fire while driving cross-country through rough and rocky terrain. Getting stuck was a constant possibility. I held the spotlight as we bounced along. With considerable effort we determined the extent of the burn and most importantly the extent and width of the fire line created by the Massey disk. The flames had reached across the approximately half-mile north-south dimension of the burn area where irrigation pipe lay melted along the fence line.

Fortunately the fire was contained at that point. The east perimeter was accessible only from a gate at the southeast corner so we dropped down the steep embankment below the gate and then north to what we thought was the point where the fire started. Circling back we encountered the Massey tractor and Lee flagged him down. As it turned out the fire had started as a result of a weed burning operation blown up by a very nasty windstorm coming out of the northeast. Fortunately, the tractor and disk had been at the ready.

It would be the disk, together with a 180-degree shift in wind direction that saved the day. Larry Rivers showed up with Portal's water tender on standby and was the last to leave. Ramon and crew had done what they could. Jerry and Jeff assisted with handwork and also with the size-up so by the time Lee had done a careful analysis it was possible to release Ramon along with Brush Five. The fire was down but lots of hot ground and smoke remained.

Of course other resources had been called and during the course of the activities all had been turned back except a BLM five-man wildland engine crew. The real question was one of mop up. This final phase of firefighting often requires one or more hand crews and plenty of water to cool the perimeter. The one thing we did not want was to have the wind shift again creating the possibility of a flare-up.

We knew there was quite a bit of very dry fuel to the west but we also had a wide break created by the disk. The BLM crew arrived and followed Brush Six back out onto and around the burn. The BLM Engine Boss was impressed with the situation and informed Lee that the disk line was sufficient and cold trailing would

not be necessary. At something like midnight, this was welcome news to both Lee and myself not to mention Larry Rivers.

The Enterprise fire was a close call. There are many ways to lose valuable time including fumbling with your equipment. Finding access to fight the fire can be quite challenging and time consuming.

Most importantly, everybody went home safe. The major factor was wind, causing the outbreak but also stopping the fire in its tracks just in time to prevent a much larger incident.

Lee dropped me at my truck and I drove home. After a shower my salad tasted even better for the delay. The next day I met our State Forestry fire officer Phillip Elliott at the burn location. Mr. Elliott walked the entire perimeter and computed the burn area to be 24.5 acres. He was satisfied with our efforts and decisions regarding firefighting and mop up.

## **Medical Helicopter Transport Membership**

*Jackie Lewis*

Quite often we hear the statement "I can't afford to fly." when a patient is in need of advanced medical care. It is expensive and insurance doesn't cover much of the bill but we have good news for you!

Three different medical helicopter companies respond to the Portal area. Each has a membership plan to help with costs that your insurance may not cover. The memberships will cover even if you don't have insurance although your membership rate might be slightly higher.

Each plan has coverage outside of Arizona that may or may not include your travel areas or second home. I have listed them in the order of the most frequently available and responding company. Portal Rescue cannot request a specific carrier but memberships are so reasonable that you it may be possible to join two or more each year.

**Arizona Lifeline can be reached at**

**<http://www.mtcmembership.com>**

**or 1-866-751-4515**

**LifeNet at**

**<http://www.airmethods.com/omniadvantage>**

**or 1-855-877-2518**

**PhiCare at**

**<http://www.phicare.com/states/arizona/join.shtml>**

**or 1-888-435-9744**



## 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Soup Kitchen

Location: Portal Rescue Classroom

Time: 11:30am to 1:30 pm

Dates: Monday, February 17

Tuesday, February 18

Wednesday, February 19

### For \$7 you receive :

- Two delicious bowls of homemade soup.
- Two choices of bread.
- One dessert and beverages.

**Join the FUN in this Portal Rescue FUNdraiser!!!**

**Soup Kitchen Raffle tickets will be on sale starting January 27th at the following locations:**

**Rodeo Grocery**

**Rodeo Tavern**

**Portal Post Office M-F 10:30am – 12:30pm**

## Thoughts from the Treasurer

*Rick Beno*

Another year has come and gone and Portal Rescue's balance sheet is looking good. The Board, with much restraint from the chiefs and a hugely successful donation drive, has kept Portal Rescue in the black for 2013. Now that 2014 is upon us, how should we meet the challenges that lie ahead? How should we use some of our hard "earned" savings?

First, our EMTs, some of whom are fairly new to this endeavor, and others more senior, are clamoring for more training - training that will help them serve the community with better and more definitive care!

Second, our fire fighters have been mostly on stand-by since the horrendous Horseshoe II fire. We've had a few small incidents, but nothing that has required a continued, major fight. If we could count on this as being the norm, then we could all sit idly by and relax. But this kind of complacency is extremely dangerous, making training the necessary focus for our fire fighters.

The year 2014 will be one of finding the best and most productive training we can get. This will require loosening our financial belts more than we're used to, but it's definitely for a very good cause.

Finally, our Search and Rescue activities have been keeping us busy on this new front. I believe it would be in our best interest to form a new integrated branch to Portal Rescue's tree of responsibilities. After all, in geometry there is no stronger structure than the triangle.



## Portal Rescue Annual Meeting and Potluck

Wednesday, March 19

Potluck begins at 5:00 pm

Meeting begins at 6:00 pm

**All community members and active members are encouraged to attend.**

What happens at the Annual Meeting?

- Nominations for Board members will be accepted.
- The new Board will be voted in.
- Review 2013 budget and highlights.
- Preview 2014 budget.
- Recognize recent retirees.

## Rescue in Horseshoe Canyon

*Harriet Shultis*

It's December 19th, about 8pm, I'm lying flat on my back, not comfortable, listing to the right and downhill. Hard sticks are pressing up from under me. I try not to move to avoid the pain in my leg and arm. It's dark, the stars are out, a satellite moves through them. I am almost sure I see Cassiopeia, high in the sky, but the direction seems wrong so I call out, "which way is north?" Al confirms I am looking north to my constellation.

I think to myself that my situation is critical. I know for sure I can't walk. Pain and weakness, when I tried to stand with Al's help had convinced me of that. At this moment we are four - Al, Sheila, myself, and Jonathan. We had just returned from trail marking three or four miles of ragged country off Horseshoe Canyon to aid in any overland rescue attempt. My fellow hikers and I admit that I cannot be carried out. Craig, our fifth comrade, went for help four or five hours ago, seeking and making cellphone contact with the outside world. We knew no motorized vehicle could traverse the terrain we covered that morning.

I see a helicopter high overhead but it moves on to the west. It couldn't land in this canyon even if it were searching for us. A few minutes later it appears again, this time closer. Al and Sheila had built a watch fire earlier despite persistent winds. If the chopper were ours it would surely spot the fire. Our waving flashlights help illuminate our location. Over the next hour or so two helicopters circle above us. It is clear they've found their target.

New arrivals walk in - two young men, presumably U. S. Air Force, on foot carrying evacuation equipment. They had been deposited at a friendlier site. They set about assessing my condition, then installed me onto their stretcher and strapped me down. James, obviously in command, radios the pilot above, "Four minutes," was all he uttered. Then in a torrent of wind and noise, James and I rise to the hovering helicopter.

In just thirty minutes we arrived at Tucson's University Medical Center and then to surgery for a broken radius and femur.

I must acknowledge that some 25 local residents, hikers and rescuers marched some 7 to 8 hours in the dark to carry me out, I did not see them that night but their unquestioning service was felt.

## The Cincinnati Prehospital Stroke Scale

This is a system used to diagnose the presence of a stroke in a patient. It tests **three signs** for abnormal findings, which may indicate that the patient is having a stroke. If any one of the tests shows abnormal findings, the patient may be having a stroke and should be transported to a hospital as soon as possible.

**1. Facial droop:** Have the person smile or show his or her teeth. If one side doesn't move as well as the other so it seems to droop, that could be sign of a stroke.

-Normal: Both sides of face move equally

-Abnormal: One side of face does not move as well as the other (or at all)

**2. Arm drift:** Have the person close his or her eyes and hold his or her arms straight out in front for about 10 seconds. If one arm does not move, or one arm winds up drifting down more than the other, that could be a sign of a stroke.

-Normal: Both arms move equally or not at all

-Abnormal: One arm does not move, or one arm drifts down compared with the other side

**3. Speech:** Have the person say, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks," or some other simple, familiar saying. If the person slurs the words, gets some words wrong, or is unable to speak, that could be sign of stroke.

-Normal: Patient uses correct words with no slurring

-Abnormal: Slurred or inappropriate words or mute

**Patients with 1 of these 3 findings as a new event have a 72% probability of an ischemic stroke. If all 3 findings are present the probability of an acute stroke is more than 85%**

**“You have never really lived until you have done something for someone who can never repay you.”**

Newsletter compiled and edited by Patricia Espenak with IT support by Fred Espenak  
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If your name is not on the list and you have made a donation to Portal Rescue PLEASE let me know. I go through the records several times before printing the donor list but there can be errors. I apologize in advance.

— Rick Beno, Treasurer, 558-0096

### **How to prevent the spread of the flu virus**

If you or your children have symptoms, you should stay home.  
Wash hands regularly or use sanitizing gel when soap and water are not available.  
Cover your cough or sneeze. Don't forget to wash your hands.

### **What to do if you get the flu**

Stay home, rest and get plenty of fluids.  
Most people get better in a few days, and in some cases up to two weeks with rest and fluids.

### **Contact your primary care provider if:**

you have a fever over 101 degrees F that lasts more than 3-4 days,  
you are extremely dizzy  
you cannot consume fluids for more than 24 hours

### **Call 9-1-1 if an ill person has trouble breathing, act confused or incoherent or has a seizure.**

— Information from the Pima County Health Department

### **A Few Words from the New Editor**

I want to thank Jackie Lewis for all her years as editor and for her continuing contributions to Portal Rescue in so many ways. I only hope I can do half as good a job with the newsletter as she has done.

I had to laugh when I read my introduction last year as a "part-time resident." We actually live here now — really! Portal is our home. But as anyone who knows me is aware, we do travel a lot.

I hope the newsletter is at least satisfactory this time around and that I haven't made any glaring errors or omissions. I would appreciate any input that might improve the newsletter in coming years. I must admit that I breathed a sigh of relief when it was done. Whew! Fred was relieved, too!

I'm thankful we live in a community of such wonderful and interesting people.

— Patricia Espenak

VOLUNTEERS  
don't necessarily  
have the time;  
they just have  
the heart!



**Portal Rescue**  
**P.O. Box 16331**  
**Portal, AZ 85632**



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