

## KIRK

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ever, Monday morning after a long day of patrolling can be very difficult.”

A day on patrol starts early, with an “all-hands meeting before the sun comes up with (Mt. Hood Meadow’s) pro patrol to get briefed on the day ahead,” he said. Briefing includes weather and snow conditions, groups on the mountain that day, and “anything else the patrol leads feel the group should be aware of,” he said. Next, patrollers are given an opening assignment and spend the next couple of hours preparing for the day’s guests.

“The rest of the day is spent actively engaged with whatever the mountain can throw at us,” he said. “Weekends can be very busy, with a steady stream of patients in need of on-mountain medical assistance, skiers or snowboarders to be found, rope lines to be fixed, and a wide assortment of related activity.”

“The last hour or so is spent closing the resort, with the primary responsibility being to make sure everyone has made it safely off the slopes.”

He finds ski patrol “an interesting and unique blend of being part of a team dynamic, yet you are out there on your own, to a large extent, and it’s up to you how that case is going to go,” Miller explained. “Perhaps the analogy is a tennis team, but the cause can be dead serious at times.”

When a call for help comes over the radio, “as a first responder to a case, your focus begins by taking an immediate assessment of the situation at hand and determining how to safely secure the patient, as well as yourself,” Miller said. After an initial evaluation to determine the seriousness of the injury, the patroller “takes a more detailed assessment of the patient’s condition, determines what equipment and/or assistance is needed, and then works to get the patient to a higher level of care as quickly and safely as possible.”

The most common injuries Miller sees are lower leg injuries (such as sprained



Submitted photo

**VOLUNTEER MEMBERS** of the Mt. Hood Ski Patrol participate in an avalanche training. Volunteers are required to spend six months in training before becoming part of the squad — both in the classroom and on the mountain — with additional hours in training afterwards.

knees) for skiers and sprained or broken wrists for snowboarders. Concussions are on the rise, too — “The park contains large ramps and other obstacles, and hard landings are not uncommon,” he said.

Ski patrollers are stationed at various locations around the resort, with at least one, but usually several, in an area. If a patroller is not at the station, “they are likely skiing around the resort providing a visible and active presence. Many cases are responded to by a patroller out on the hill who happens to be close to the scene,” he said.

He trained for the position five seasons ago, an intense process that took six months, “which is done in both the classroom as well as on the mountain at each of the resorts located on Mount Hood (Timberline, Ski Bowl and Mt. Hood Meadows),” he said. The weekly four-hour classroom sessions involved medical first-responder training geared towards an alpine setting; another full day each week was spent on the mountain, “learning how to deal with the equipment and patients, in all snow conditions, and in any type of weather,” he said.

His first case on the mountain involved a young boy who had fallen 37 feet from a chair lift, and he remembers it well.

“My radio cracked to life detailing where this happened and I gulped, and took

a deep breath as it dawned on me that the location was around the next bend and it was me who would be responding first,” he said. “As I skied up to the scene, not only was the child laying on the snow with obvious broken bones, but a half dozen onlookers, with camera phones out and taking it all in, were waiting as well. Thankfully, the boy’s injuries were not life threatening.”

His interest in the Mt. Hood Ski Patrol took shape, in part, thanks to his oldest son, Hayden, now 19. (He and wife, Jocelyn, also have son Nate, 16.)

“(The year before training), I had found myself at Mt. Hood Meadows every weekend, playing taxi driver for my (then) 14-year-old son, who had landed his first job at the resort,” Miller said. “Spending all of that time up there, I found myself watching the ski patrol more closely, and it struck me as a challenging way to take my love of skiing to the next level, and a great way to be part of something bigger than the somewhat selfish pursuit of endless skiing.”

“What keeps me coming back is that sense of being part of something very real and meaningful, but at the same time, very loose and fun, with a band of brothers and sisters enduring the same challenges together,” Miller said. “In the end, ski patrol gets in to your DNA.”

## Backcountry Film Festival in HR Jan. 14

The Winter Wildlands Alliance Backcountry Film Festival comes to Hood River Jan. 14, with a free showing of the festival’s nine video pieces starting at 7 p.m. at Double Mountain Brewery. In its 10th year running, the festival celebrates the human powered winter experience through film. It aims to entertain while helping to raise funds and awareness for Winter Wildlands and their like-minded partners. The festival premieres in Boise, then travels to more than 100 locations worldwide. Along the way it raises money for local organizations working on advocacy, snow safety, outdoor education and SnowSchool programs.

Films start at 7 p.m. but pa-

trons are encouraged to come early to get seats and participate in the raffle.

This year’s lineup:

■ From the Road (21:00): Fischer Creative; Join the Dynafit team on a journey to Alaska.

Afterglow (11:35): Sweet-grass Production; This visually spectacular film lights up the backcountry like never before

■ Backcountry Baker (5:15): Jeremy Lurgio; The story of Labrador retriever, Baker, and his owner as they pursue their love of mountains through backcountry skiing in Montana’s Bitter-root Mountains.

■ Out on a Limb (6:44): T-bar Films; The story of Vasu, whose love for skiing and the backcountry overcomes all

obstacles.

■ 95 to Infinity (3:30): Doglotion Media; Follow brothers Andy and Mike Traslín as keep the torch lit for 95 months of winter turns.

■ IRS Traverse (8:00): Luc Mehl; A fun and corky adventure through the Alaska Wilderness

■ Powder Pilgrimage (20:00): Joey Howell; Two friends ventures of ski bumming it to Valdez, a trip we should all take just once.

■ Sundog (5:15): Sturge Films; Capturing the dog days of skiing in Patagonia.

■ Higher (20:00): Teton Gravity Research; Continuing the journey of athlete Jeremy Jones as he reaches new heights.

### LOOSE CHANGE, NO DAMAGE

## Police report at least six car prowls Friday morning in Heights neighborhood

By **KIRBY NEUMANN-REA**  
News editor

Hood River Police spent an hour combing a Heights neighborhood early Friday morning following reports of car prowls along June and Pine streets between Fifth and Seventh.

Officers Andy Frasier, Jake Ferrer and Erin Mason responded at about 6:30 a.m. to two reports of unlawful entering of vehicles, and found indications of four more once they started investigating.

In all cases, the cars had been unlocked and had likely been entered sometime between 4 a.m. and 6 a.m., according to Frasier. He said the main items taken were

loose change and in one case a coin purse, according to Frasier.

Police had no suspects at press time, and in none of the cases was anyone seen in or around the vehicles.

One homeowner reported a set of golf clubs taken from a car, and the bag and clubs were found in bushes nearby, apparently shaken down for change.

“This person isn’t into breaking car windows, but is going for loose change and rummaging through unlocked cars,” Frasier said.

“Once we got up there we found doors open and dome lights on,” he said. There was no apparent damage to any of the vehicles.

Frasier offered this advice to prevent a similar crime: lock your car and take out any valuables.

“Park your car as close to the house as possible,” Frasier said. “If you have a porch light, park the car under it or near it — light is a discouragement.”

The Dec. 3 Hood River News reported 10 car prowls in a two-week period, primarily in a west Hood River neighborhood. Police chief Neal Holste had described these as crimes of “the walking alongside” variety, in which rather than breaking in, the car burglars check for unlocked doors and then slip inside to see what they can find.

## Bicyclist hits pedestrian at 12th and May

On Jan. 8, 2015, at about 1:24 p.m., Hood River Police Officers and Hood River Fire/EMS responded to a crash involving a bicyclist versus a pedestrian at the intersection of 12th and May streets. The investigation concluded that the bicyclist, Richard Christie, 23, of Hood River, was riding north-

bound on the sidewalk of 12th Street. Christie struck the pedestrian, Susan Massart, 68, of Hood River. Massart was waiting to cross the street at the intersection of May and 12th.

Both Massart and Christie were transported to Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital by Hood River EMS.

Massart sustained head injuries and a large laceration to her right lower leg. Christie was not wearing a helmet and sustained head and face injuries.

Christie was issued a citation for Unsafe Operation of a Bicycle, which is a Class D violation. The maximum penalty is \$110.

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