

Way to Be

Spotlight on our members



Paige Ishii, KI7REQ

On Saturday, May 5th, I was in my kitchen monitoring 147.120 MHz (the Intermountain Intertie) on my HT, a Yaesu VX-8R with a Signal Stick antenna. As I was listening, I heard a very faint call for help. I heard it twice, but I didn't hear anyone respond. Being a new ham, I wasn't entirely sure I would be able to transmit, but I gave it a try. I called out to the guy in distress and asked him to verify his call sign, since it was very faint. It was remarkable that I could hear him, because there were others on that frequency, but apparently they weren't hearing him.

A few seconds later he replied that he and his wife were stuck in a snow drift, and needed assistance getting pulled out. Could I contact the Uintah County Sheriff's office and have them send someone out? He had the GPS coordinates, and read them to me. Well, he didn't clarify which Uintah County he wanted, and it never occurred to me he might be in Wyoming! I spent the next 40 minutes calling four different sheriff's offices trying to determine where his coordinates landed them on the map.

I finally identified it as Summit County, Utah. The sheriff's offices coordinated together to determine whose area it was and who would ultimately be responsible if a rescue was called for. After calling the four different sheriff's offices, they told me that they couldn't offer a tow, but that they could call a tow company and have a truck go pull them out.

Well, when I relayed this to my stranded ham friend, he declined the help. It was a good thing he was in a truck and had gotten himself out of the snow by that time, and was working on getting out of the mud, ha-ha.

This ordeal started at a little after 3 pm, and concluded at about 6 pm. The entire time I was a little stressed, but I felt responsible for this poor couple stuck up in the Uintahs. It was a Saturday, and it was getting late. The only help the sheriff's department offered was when they called to say they could do a rescue, if my ham friend wanted to declare that he needed to be rescued, which he also declined. All he needed was help getting out of a snow bank!

While I waited for information from the sheriff's departments, I looked up my new ham friend on QRZ, found his email address, and emailed him and also to verify his identity, since, when I called the sheriff's department, they asked a lot of questions, like who they were, their condition, etc. I didn't want to leave them stranded, and it gave me some peace of mind knowing I had done my due diligence in making sure I did everything I could to help out.

I was rewarded with a return email later that night. My new ham friend also radioed to say they had successfully made their way out of the snow bank and were on their way home. A week later, I received a very nice thank you note in the mail from my ham friend's wife. All in all, I felt very gratified that I could help out someone in need.

From the rest of us in UVARC, thank you, Paige, for your quick thinking!

