



Remembering Sarah Bishop

In the words of four hikers she met on the trail – and among the last to see her alive

Brian

I was one of the six hikers Tuesday morning who passed Sarah on the trail. I first heard that she was missing when I returned to work Thursday morning and a coworker mentioned it to me. When he brought up the KATU web page and I saw her picture, I know right away we had passed her on the trail. I instantly called Clackamas Sheriff's department.

I remember her mentioning the hot coca at Timberline, and kept thinking of that all the way back to the lodge. My impression of her from our brief encounter was of someone comfortable in these elements and happy to be there. I am sorry for your loss. It has touched me too.

Karl

I had the privilege to meet Sarah in Zig Zag Canyon while hiking back to Timberline Lodge from Paradise Meadows as part of the first group from our party of six. Sarah was bundled up in her raincoat with just her face peeking out. As we talked briefly about which direction each of us was heading, the weather and hot cocoa at the lodge, it was her face that gave me a hint of the type of person Sarah was.

She was all smiles, happy and content to be outdoors and hiking, even in the rain. Her eyes were very bright and friendly, paying attention to our conversation, leaving me feeling she truly cared and listened to other people. Sarah was calm and collected that day as we talked and said our goodbyes, mature beyond her years. It was clear Sarah was someone who cared, someone who gave and someone who loved her life.

Please accept my sympathy for the loss of such a special loved one. I had a feeling of emptiness that could only be explained by the impression Sarah left with me in just a few short minutes of conversation. It was that face, peeking out of her raincoat that said so much about who she was without a single word having to be spoken.

Steve

Our party of six was split into two groups of three. I was in the second group, and Ken was in the first. Sarah was hiking clockwise, and we were bailing out of our trip, hiking counterclockwise to return to Timberline. Although we started only 20 or 30 minutes behind Ken's group of three, we

were moving slower. I suspect we were about an hour behind Ken by the time we reached Zig Zag Canyon.

In our group of three, the crossing of Zig Zag Creek wasn't as easy as for Ken's group. One of our hikers spent about 5 minutes deciding where to cross, even after we shuttled her pack across. Maybe the water had risen since Ken came through. I don't know. The crossing was not as simple as it had been the day before, but it was still far from difficult. The water was probably no more than a foot deep, and we found rocks enabled us to jump across without wading. We met Sarah as we were hiking uphill out of Zig Zag Canyon, probably between 11:30am and 12:30pm Tuesday. She was two switchbacks below the lip of the canyon. In the tradition of experienced hikers, Sarah stepped out of the way to let the folks headed uphill have the right of way. As I passed, I cracked a joke about the weather and trudged on.

If one backpacks a lot, one develops the ability to discriminate between hikers who are comfortable and those who are miserable. Sarah looked comfortable. As she stepped out of our way, she stepped to the outside of the trail, near the edge. She appeared to have good balance and confidence near the edge even though the slope would not have been a good one to slide down. Her clothing was right for the weather, and she carried her pack well. Given that she had run into our first three hikers earlier, I'm not surprised that she didn't ask about conditions ahead.

If I could play that moment over again, I'd talk with her about the Sandy River. Unless one finds a log spanning the creek, it's a wading exercise in cold, fast water. I've hiked around Mt Hood twice, and both times, I've found the Sandy the most disturbing crossing even though both of my trips were in sunny weather. This trip, we turned around at Paradise Park, before even seeing the Sandy River.

Until this trip, I'd not met Sarah. Even so, news coverage and the obituary left me feeling that the community of Portland lost strong contributor that day. How I wish I'd discussed the Sandy River with her rather than just continuing up the hill.

Ken

First let me express my sympathy to all of Sarah's family. I only met Sarah once, and only talked to her for two minutes, but I think our hiking party may have been the last to visit with her.

Our hiking party of six left Timberline Lodge for Paradise Meadows Monday morning, August 27. We planned to spend six days hiking the Timberline Trail around the mountain. It rained all day Monday, but it was pleasant hiking in the cool weather, and crossing Zigzag posed no problems with high water. We hiked up to Paradise Meadows and camped for the night. It rained all night. The next morning it was still raining.

Considering the fact that the weather forecast called for rain for two or three more days, we decided to hike out. We discussed the possibility of splitting up and some of us hiking to Ramona

Falls while at least two hiked back to pick up the cars and drive to the Ramona Falls Trailhead. We weren't concerned about crossing the Sandy River, but we hadn't heard that the bridge was washed out at the lower crossing. However, no one wanted to make the longer hike, so everyone decided to hike back to Timberline.

A light rain was still falling as our first group of three started to hike out. The others followed about 20 minutes later. When we crossed the Zigzag River, the water wasn't noticeably higher than the day before, and still easy to cross without getting our feet wet.

Near Little Zigzag Canyon, we met Sarah. It was nearly 11:00. We stopped to talk for a couple minutes. She didn't appear to be tired and was very upbeat. She said that she didn't actually mind hiking in the rain and was happy to be returning to her car at the trailhead. She told us there was good hot cocoa at Timberline Lodge. With that in mind, we continued on to Timberline Lodge. Sarah later passed the other three hikers in our group, but they didn't stop to talk.

I didn't hear that Sarah was missing until noon Thursday. I called the search and rescue number, but they had already talked to other people in our party who had identified her. I hope this information helped narrow the search.

Again, I share your loss. I will never forget this chance meeting. It has been an inspiration to read about the influence Sarah has had on so many people. It is a challenge to me to attempt to make that kind of difference.