

Journal

October 14, 2007

Hello All!

First off, if you have not been to my blog, please visit it!

www.andrill.org/iceberg

I am a proud survivor of Survival School (otherwise known as HappyCamper School.) This is a two day intensive training for 20 people

about how to survive in Antarctica in an emergency, or in remote field conditions. Weather can change so quickly here that people are often caught out on the ice or in the middle of a glacier or on a mountain

top, and wind blows in so that there is absolutely no visibility at all. We ALWAYS travel with survival bags - which include a tent for 2, 2 sleepingbags, a stove and pot for cooking, and some emergency rations of food. We need to be trained about how to set up an emergency camp in that situation, how to operate the stove, set up the tent, build a snow shelter (in case it is too windy for the tent), and how to deal with the cold and wind and stay warm. Well, we had beautiful weather. It was calm and sunny - but it was -20F. Even in these ideal conditions, it was very, very cold. We learned how to secure a tent to hold up to extreme winds, how to use a saw to build an ice wall, how to dig trenches and snow domes to sleep in, how to keep



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a stove running in these extreme temperatures, the importance of drinking water, how to keep water thawed, and so forth. We also learned how to operate 3 different types of radios: HF, VHF, UHF up, and we were stranded. We had nothing but our survival bag and a radio. We had half an hour to get up our survival camp and contact either the South Pole or McMurdo Station by radio. Working together, we did it! The other scenario was that one of our teammates got lost in whiteout conditions and we had to rescue that person. We figured out that the best way to look for that person, who may be unconscious, was to have one person tethered to a building, and the rest of us to spread out on a rope - with a bucket over our heads to simulate whiteout - to locate our lost teammate. Good training, as these scenarios are very realistic!

So I was thrilled to experience Happy Camper School, and delighted to come home to a warm bed when it was all over.

My departure for the deep field has been delayed - and we do not know when we will be taking off. I will keep you all posted!

Mrs. Gleason



