

## Vertical Training at the Phoenix Rock Gym Oct. 15<sup>th</sup>

Ray Keeler – NSS 23245

We had a solid turnout at the Phoenix Rock Gym (PRG) on October 15<sup>th</sup> for the vertical training. There were 19 adults and 4 kids, two of which were on rope. Besides the CAG cavers there were several from the ASU Outdoors Club that joined us for the class. We used the lead climbing room so with the overhanging walls and strung three ropes through the fixed rigging at the top and down to rappel racks anchored to the floor. The 8 vertical training systems were all used as well as the Black Diamond harnesses and extra systems that were available. Rich Bohman and Paul Jorgenson helped man the ropes. With several “new-to-vertical” people and a good number with more experience we had close to a 2 to 1 student to instructor ratio. Dief, the PRG owner, provided an extra treat for us by allowing those that wanted, to climb for free after completing the vertical training. Several of the AOCers decided to do just that and Dief even provided the climbing shoes.



Alisa Hedz 1<sup>st</sup> time on rope



AOCers first vertical training

We had an incident with a Rhino rope binding during a lower that was very concerning and that is discussed below. Measures will be taken at future trainings so this does not happen again.

All in all it was a good afternoon. Now it's time to get into some vertical caves.

### Rhino Rope Issue – Rope Binds in Rappel Rack

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I am cutting up my Rhino ropes and giving them out at the November CAG meeting as tow ropes. Come to the meeting and I will get them out to those that want them. Here is why.

On Saturday, October 15<sup>th</sup> CAG had a vertical practice at the Phoenix Rock Gym (PRG). We used the PRG lead climbing room where the 32 foot walls are overhung with excellent rigging already in place. We ran each rope up through the rigging and then down to a rappel rack that was anchored to the floor. We hung three ropes and after the safety briefing started the training. After an early ascent on the Rhino rope I went to lower the climber and rope bound between the first two bars of the four bar rack. The 11 mm Rhino Rope I have is very stiff and hard to bend through the rappel rack. It bound badly. As I was trying free the rope to lower the climber, the bind suddenly released and the climber came down quickly. The five inch thick padding was very appreciated. The result was bruised caver (nothing broken) and nine rope burns on my hands. My error was that I was belaying without gloves as I had left them in the car while we were carrying in the training equipment. We changed out the four bar rack to a six bar rack, and the Rhino rope bound up on the very next climber when we started the lower. At this point it became obvious there was a problem and a safety issue, and two other instructors were called over to help. The second climber was successfully lowered, and the Rhino rope changed out with another rope (PMI, 200 foot, 9mm) and all went well for the rest of the training.

Soooo ... I think 40 foot tow ropes in an excellent use. See you at the next meeting.