

**On the occasion of presenting the  
Second Annual Charles Rebel Greg WRMC Award  
to Tod Schimelpfenig**

**Remarks By Jed Williamson  
Retired Immediate Past President of Sterling College  
October 16, 2010**

This is the occasion of the second annual Charles Rebel Gregg Award.

I came up with the idea that we could make it the Jed Williamson Award this year and have Reb Gregg be the recipient. That we could just switch it back and forth each year and not have to bother with new plaques and tough decisions. Saner minds prevailed.

The Charles (Reb) Gregg Award is to recognize an individual who has demonstrated “Exceptional Leadership, Service and Innovation in Wilderness Risk Management.” It recognizes extraordinary contributions to the outdoor education community, to adventure and service organizations, and to programs and businesses that use wild places for their activities.

The award also recognizes extraordinary and significant contribution to the practice of wilderness risk management. It recognizes the highest standards and valued service to the mission and outcomes of an industry committed to connecting people to wilderness; to facilitating education and challenge in the out of doors; and to supporting the stewardship of our priceless wilderness.

Last week at Rotary Club, young member was speaking to us and began with a comment about the difference between her generation and us grey hairs. She said that her generation automatically gives respect to peers and elders. While you might not automatically give this year’s recipient respect, it can be said that he gains it rather quickly.

Here is what some of his coworkers have to say about him:

- (He) pushes me to slow down and examine all available information and evidence before moving forward and making a decision. I value this voice of reason on a daily basis.
- (He) always sets very high standards - for himself, for his peers, and for groups and organizations he works for and with. Those standards drive everyone around him to higher levels of performance – and sometimes a little crazy.
- He has made all parts of (our organization) and outdoor education around the world stronger and more professional.
- For me, (he) provides the clinical and rational foundation behind the art of teaching wilderness medicine.

Here is what I have to say about him: Whenever I need facts or a good opinion regarding an accident or a wilderness medical situation, he is the first one I call or email. And I’m never disappointed.

I have known the recipient since 1990 – when I and a few others did an investigation of a fatality for the organization he was working with. I came on BOD in 1993 as chair of Safety Committee. At that time, he was the Director of Safety. We agreed to change the name to the Risk Management Committee. In that same year, the Wilderness Risk Managers Committee was formed by way of a meeting he convened.

So if you Google the person being recognized tonight, you will find that he Tod Schimelpfenig went to the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology and that he is a Research Technologist II at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. He serves as field coordinator, carries out research and data management and reprocessing for soil moisture monitoring, and assists with equipment and data management and data reprocessing for eddy flux monitoring. They got the wrong guy, but he sounds interesting nevertheless!

Here are some highlights regarding OUR Tod. He graduated from St. Michael's College with a major in biology in 1976. He did a NOLS wilderness course in 1971 and then an instructor's course in 1973. He then became a NOLS field instructor. He has logged over 100 weeks in this capacity and has been an emergency medical care instructor since 1980. This sets him apart from most of his peers.

He was the Director of Risk Management at NOLS from 1988 to 1996 and still participates on the committee. Drew Leemon adds the following: As a member of the NOLS risk management team, Tod provides expertise in wilderness medicine and evacuation decisions to instructors and management – both in our emergency planning and often providing advise in real time situations. Tod contributes to the NOLS culture of risk management by balancing old school values of self-reliance, judgment and common sense with contemporary needs for curriculum precision and effective decision-making.

He was on the Wilderness Medical Society BOD from 1992-96. He was given their Warren Bowman Award for “Achievement in the Field of Wilderness Medicine by a Non-physician” in 2001 and 2008.

He was awarded the Wyoming EMT Instructor Coordinator of the Year for 1990.

His articles are many and his books include Risk Management and Small Group Leadership on Wilderness Expeditions and NOLS Wilderness Medicine. Melissa Gray, a WMI Director, adds this: Tod is like his wilderness medicine text, succinct and invaluable.

He currently serves as the Curriculum Director for NOLS' Wilderness Medicine Institute.

In his spare time, he volunteers weekly with the Fremont County Ambulance and SAR Team, he plays hockey, competes in biathlon, hunts for elk, and coaches for various youth teams (ages eight through high school) in Lander.

As for his family, his wife Betsy has put up with him for 33 years. Would you be surprised to learn that his oldest son Sam is a physician and that his

second son David has been a NOLS instructor? Number three son Mark and daughter Emily are still in school. Maybe they will surprise their parents by doing something totally unrelated.

It is an honor and with great pleasure that I have this opportunity to present the Second Annual Charles Rebel Greg Award to Tod Schimelpfenig.