



Vol. 32 April-May 1999 No.4

RESCUE

**IDAHO MOUNTAIN SEARCH
AND RESCUE UNIT, INC
BOISE, IDAHO**

MEMBER:
**MOUNTAIN RESCUE
ASSOCIATION**
SINCE 1960



MISSION AT SWAN FALLS—APRIL 3, 1999

--BY CHARLOTTE GUNN

On the day before Easter, one thinks of sunshine and daffodils, children hunting colored eggs hidden in green grass. Let us hope the eggs were brightly colored this year, so they were visible in the snow. Stiff winds drove the precipitation, and it felt more like blizzard than like spring.

A young man had tried to swim across the Snake River a week earlier; three eye-witnesses put the PLS as approximately two miles downstream of the Swan Falls dam. Family and friends, understandably wanting to “do something,” were determined to do a shoreline search on this Saturday, and the Ada County Sheriff asked IMSARU to help provide safety and communication for the participants.



There were an estimated fifty searchers who were relatives,

Mission briefing in the lee of the rescue trucks. Note the bundled up searchers—layering works!

RESCUE is published monthly by the IDAHO MOUNTAIN SEARCH AND RESCUE UNIT, INC., P.O.Box741, Boise ID 83701. Editor: Charlotte Gunn, Phone (208)466-8345 or e-mail cgunn@execu.net
Deadline of the 20th of the month is required for material to be included in the next month's issue.

Printed courtesy of Hewlett-Packard Company on an HP Color LaserJet 8500DN

friends, members of the young man's church or from his high school. They had established windbreaks and barbecues on both banks, a bit downstream of the PLS, and searchers spread out everywhere; rumor had it that some were starting from Walter's Ferry and traveling upstream from there. There were also assorted boats and at least one personal watercraft (with the operator clad in bluejeans). Ada County officers, led by Lt. Rany, set up their command post in a dirt lot overlooking the river near the PLS, and Rod Knopp soon joined them to coordinate IMSARU's work.



The scene at one of the shelters set up by the family to feed friends who showed up to help.

George Gunn was stationed downstream on a boat, ready to go after anyone who slipped into the water. Jeff Munn and Jerry Newland were ferried to the far side, to hike the south bank within contact of as many searchers as possible. Derek Bohan, Rick Cudd, Robert Gilley, Pam Green, Troy Green, Diana Mathews, Liana Pope and Leslie Robertson split into pairs and set out to locate and keep track of searchers along the south bank, and Charlotte Gunn remained at the main parking lot to keep an eye on vehicles and dogs, drive searchers to drop-off points, and be available to move higher if a radio relay became necessary.

By early afternoon, searchers had covered all walkable areas and were headed home. As the wind had also dropped from fierce to stiff, we agreed to use our dogs to try to narrow the water search area. Leslie took Mingo, who alerted eight times (including three in a tight triangle.) Charlotte then took Hobo, who alerted six times in the same flow line. Since the boat owner and operator, Gene Ralston, was using a differential GPS and computer that allowed him to mark each of the alerts, he then took Sgt. Roberson out to the site of the alerts—and sonar showed a human-sized object in the trough at the base of a boulder in about 15 feet of water. It was a close call with limited daylight remaining, but a series of phone calls brought Ada County officers scurrying with cans of boat gas, grappling hooks and personnel to use them, and 12-volt lights. We were all disappointed when the grapnels came up empty in multiple sweeps and a motor failure then left the boat crew to paddle across the powerful current to where Jeff Munn's improvised throw-line could reach them and pull them to shore.

Note: Anyone who has participated in such an operation on a powerful river like the Snake will understand how difficult it is—even with all modern technology—to pinpoint an underwater location, position the boat upstream of it, toss the grapnels and drag them over a point that is perhaps two feet wide at the bottom of the river.

OVER-SNOW TRAVEL AND SNOW CAMPING
SAR TRAINING, MARCH 13-14, 1999
--BY GEORGE SHAFFER

Well, it was another Saturday morning off and no cartoons. I finished up on the trap line and hurried up to the Compound, as we were leaving at 9-ish. So I was a little early—by an hour or so. That meant time for vital Amoco nourishment (orange juice and a box of donuts.)

By 9-ish “almost everyone” showed up. We started loading equipment for winter survival—avalanche beacons, snowshoes, skis, packs and snow saws. I say “snow saws for everybody?” We’ll just leave them in the closet so we know where they are and they don’t get wet, then we’re off. “We” included our fearless leader Tim Henning, Mick Riffie, Chuck Bricker, Chris Schneck, Brad Deteau, Eric Mundell, Tom Wheless, George Shaffer, Liana Pope, Jeff Munn and Mocha, Steve Argyle, with Rocky Raccoon showing up later that night.

We had a leisurely stroll up the hill with our packs and snoeshoes, and watched our leader demonstrate how to remove your body from the snow while keeping your skis and sense of humor. We proceeded to learn how to build shelters without snow saws. (Remember? We wanted to keep them dry and not lose them, so we left them at the Compound.) We also divided into two groups: “Those who snore go over there and those who don’t stay right here.” Some made snow caves and others made trenches; Steve and George made a castle

with a porch and sleeping chambers, room for two packs and standing room with a spiral staircase--well, stairs at least--not to mention the ski light.



Tim Henning lectures about the dangers of smoking in a bough bed.

After construction, we ate, sang songs and danced. O.K., we just ate, then did some avalanche beacon search. It was difficult to listen, crawl and dig while keeping the ear-piece in place, but we’re good. We then sat around the sinking firepit, counting stars and talking about how rough this winter camping was. Most of us slept soundly, except those who drank too much before bed. It was an average of 40 degrees inside; with a clear sky and lots of stars, who knows what the outside temperature was?

Like I said, most of us slept pretty well except one camper, Rocky Raccoon, who spent most of the night scurrying from shelter to shelter, swiping scraps and food. Liana says, “Make sure you have enough

food and keep your Slim Jims and sunflower seeds zipped up. Who knows what evil lurks in the dark?" In the morning, camp looked like the killing fields (or at least Oprah off her diet) with the snow covered by cocoa, oatmeal and trash. Tim was hollering "I've been robbed!" and most of us had food missing (except the toothless biker who keeps his food in plastic jars with screw-on lids.)

Steve and I were up early and Tim said, "Why don't you two get lost?" Fine! "And take a radio, too." So Steve and I went hiking and soon found Rocky's camp or at least the oatmeal and Slim Jims packages. Guess we were lucky it was Rocky Raccoon instead of Yogi the Bear looking for our picnic basket. Base camp soon got a mission call: Steve and George were lost or at least misplaced. George had tried to moon-walk in snowshoes and hurt his right ankle; his EMT partner had immediately assessed his condition and administered an adequate dose of whiskey. George was feeling no pain.



Is this the group that snores or the group that doesn't snore?

Help arrived...another assessment....patient was unresponsive until shaken, then when asked how he was he replied "Bears!" They tied the patient's feet together to stabilize the injury, placed padding and a space blanket in the litter and strapped me in. I was advised that bathroom stops would not be an option, and we were off. Did you ever sit in one of those pulsing, pinching, kicking, beat-you-into-peaceful-submission chairs? Well, the sled felt just like that. Now mush! On through the snow pulled the brave rescuers until I was safely back in base camp and miraculously healed just in time to kill myself dragging my pack back down that gentle slope while Tim was tumbling down.

Jeff, Mocha and Mick had to leave the night before and missed the major fun, as did those of you who did not come at all. It was a great time, so do try to make the next one. Our final highlight was that when we stopped for gas we did not have to push 901 to restart it!

WARM THOUGHTS ON A WINTER WEEKEND

--BY LIANA POPE

Once again, IMSARU thanks Emil Hutton and The Benchmark for the thoughtfulness and generosity in donating a training space on their sponsored Winter Survival Weekend.

Who would have thought that a sturdy snow house could be made from only a foot and a half of loose powder? Not I. At least not until I attended the Northwest School of Survival's Winter Survival Weekend. With some borrowed unit equipment, a very heavy pack and some *really* expensive long underwear, I prepared to spend my first night out in the snow.

On Friday evening, instructors Jim and Kate held a class on equipment and cold weather survival basics. One highlight of the evening was having carte blanche to paw through all the goodies contained within the instructor's packs. I was not alone in this gleeful pursuit. Along with this "equipment fix," students acquired the following gems of wisdom for dealing with an unplanned overnight stay in the winter wilderness:

1. Maintain attitude. A positive attitude is essential in a survival situation, as is the realization that in many cases you are surrounded with everything you need to survive an overnight stay in even the harshest conditions. (Snow is a wonderful insulator and building material.)
2. Evaluate your surroundings. Since your primary concern is shelter, look for natural shelters such as tree wells and rock overhangs which would minimize your effort and conserve precious energy. If available, choose a location with lots of dead hanging branches (which tend to be dry wood) for fuel.
3. Stay dry. This is especially crucial if you lack a change of clothing. Your most essential line of defense in a winter survival situation is the clothing on your back. Preventing wetness means not only protecting from snow and rain but also regulating your pace and clothing to avoid sweating.
4. Inventory your possessions. The long-forgotten stuff which collects in coat pockets could be the key to an easier experience. That tiny bag of airline peanuts or the long-lost disposable lighter which somehow worked its way into your jacket liner could mean the difference between comfort and misery.
5. Protect yourself from ANY injury. Things which would normally be minor inconveniences, such as a sprained ankle, sunburn or diarrhea, can become life-threatening in the wilderness.



Liana Pope displaying a positive attitude in difficult conditions.

Sounds great on paper and in the comfort of a warm classroom, right? Well, for the next two days we put textbook theory into practice. The weather was beautiful, a sunny crisp

mid-thirties day, as we made our way to the training location near Bogus Basin (above Boise). Day one had us practicing the finer points of staying dry (no small feat when dressed in winter gear and schlepping a 45+lb pack a couple of miles into the snowy wilderness), evaluating surroundings, choosing shelter sites and constructing snow houses from sparse powder. Our resulting four-person, centrally lit and heated (via three plumber's candles) snow condo with dual annexes, provided an amazingly comfortable night of sleep.

Day two began with the dismantling of our snow houses. What started as a mound of fine powder the day before had magically transformed into a concrete structure. It took four adults several heavy jumps on our domed home before it began to collapse. A shovel brigade was necessary to truly demolish the snow palace.

The first formal lesson of the second day was winter fire building, where we tried out every imaginable fire-starting implement on the market short of a blowtorch. The purpose was not only to give us fire-starting experience, but to also give us the opportunity to decide what worked best for each individual. Although the blastmatch was really cool, and various chemical starters burned neat colors, I still prefer the low-tech, versatile and highly dependable candle/lighter combination. (Never forget to build a platform of logs and snow below your fire or it will follow the Johnny Cash song *Down, down, down in a burning ring of fire* and will end up well below the surface.)

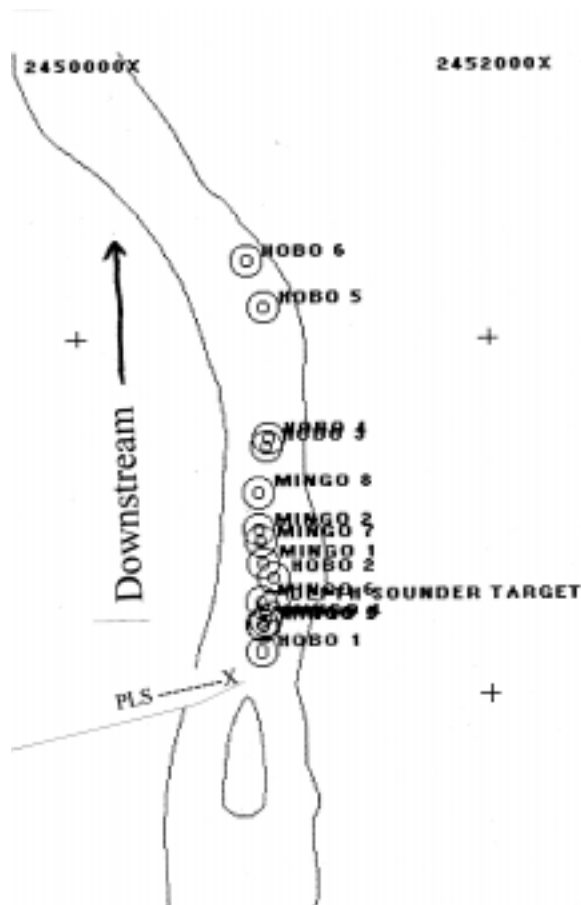
The next lesson consisted of building a Ten-Minute Emergency Tarp Shelter (or tall snow coffin, as I like to describe it) in the side of a hill. This down-and-dirty shelter is one of the most practical when you must escape the wind and elements immediately. We finished our afternoon with a refresher in basic compass navigation and basic emergency signaling. Donning our excessively heavy packs, we trudged back to our vehicles, confident that we could survive another night in the snow, should the need ever arise.

Pearls of wisdom learned on my winter weekend:

- With patience, any wood will burn.
- Keep a small bag of dry dog kibble in your emergency pack and you will never be tempted to rifle your emergency rations before you REALLY need to. (Rumor has it that Kibble n' Bits tastes the best...Fortunately, I cannot verify this rumor.)
- Never leave home without at least a tarp, candle and fire starter (great to keep in your vehicle, too.)
- Immodium AD can be a lifesaver. The runs are no funs in the wilderness. Dehydration in any form can kill when water is scarce.
- Candles are not only wonderful for heat, light and fire starting, but the small flame also serves as an amazing psychological morale booster.
- Nature provides most of what you need to survive; you just need to provide a little common sense.

TALENTED NOSE MEETS DGPS - - GEORGE GUNN

Beginning on the first page of this issue is the account of the Swan Falls mission. Thanks to Gene Ralston, we were able to work from a jet boat that had a differential GPS system on board. Where the recreational GPS has the ability to return the user to an area the size of a soccer field, DGPS has the ability to return the antenna to within **one square meter**. That is the size of a card table.



The plot of the alerts of Mingo and Hobo using a Differential Global Positioning System and computer mapping. Blurring of overlapping plots caused by repeated alerts in the same area. 04/03/99

Remember we are talking about a plot that is within a few meters of accuracy. Consider the ability to accurately return to a clue in an area with few landmarks. Bob Meredith has been pushing us about the potential of this technology for years. As the price of the hardware continues to fall, Bob and Gene may drag us kicking and screaming into the next generation of SAR tools.

But it gets better. The GPS was linked to a laptop mapping system that had the hydrographic survey map of the river in memory. The result was the ability to plot the dogs' alerts with great accuracy. For the one handler, it was wonderful to know that her dog's alerts were within a 3 meter circle after repeated passes. The second dog's alerts were superimposed on the downstream track.

We were working in 4 to 5 MPH current and 5 to 15 MPH wind yet looking at the paper printout, one can lay a straight edge along the alerts of the two dogs as the boat zigged across the river. It was a wonderful boost to the confidence these handlers have in the dogs and their ability to read the dogs' alerts. The following weekend we returned to the same scene and expanded on the technology. This time Gene added the plot of the boat to the data collected.

This is not just a SAR-dog tool. This experiment has application to SAR management. Think what it could mean if we can develop the capacity to collect real time or stored data about the path taken by a team, and compile it on the debrief.

L.A.S.T. CONFERENCE, APRIL 16-18, 1999

--BY CHARLOTTE GUNN

If you have ever attended a NASAR conference, you already know that it offers far more than any one individual can take in, and that any “report” from an attendee will be only a glimpse. This conference was sponsored by the State of Nevada DMV & Public Safety-Division of Emergency Management, Washoe Co. Sheriff’s Office, Lyon Co. Sheriff’s Dept., California Office of Emergency and the National Association for Search and Rescue, and they did a great job. My only complaint was that it was a ten-hour drive each way.

As you would expect, many of the sessions were aimed at law enforcement and fire professionals, but we volunteers found lots to interest us. Aimee Hastriter was excited about her introduction to mantracking, map and compass, search techniques. Steve Argyle was headed for the wilderness medicine track; when that was cancelled, Steve stepped forward to teach a session on prolonged pre-hospital care. (From the couple of people we overheard, he got rave reviews.) Steve then spent the second day learning to be a terrorist—well, actually it was Emergency Response to Terrorism. George of course chose the Investigative Mantracking course. And I attended mostly search dog sessions, from whence come these miscellaneous observations:

- We need to carry with us Hobo’s medical records and a good photo. Search dogs do get separated from their handlers!
- We took Hobo to beginning bark box training at the rubble pile, and were fascinated by how well the trainers handled various dogs. Having a good “victim” is a huge advantage.
- Those who choose to concentrate on FEMA disaster training need an excess of patience. One experienced handler was asked “When were you last deployed?” Answer: “In 1996.”
- The discussion on pro’s and con’s of the multi-disciplined dog was enlightening. There’s a fine line between doing too many things and not doing them well, and developing enough skills to be more useful and work more missions.
- Most of the dog handlers are members of dog units, and look askance at those of us who consider dogs to be one of the many tools we need. Since I consider IMSARU’s multi-purpose and multi-talent organization such an obvious advantage, I have trouble understanding the narrower perspective. “To each his own....”

SWAN FALLS MISSION, PART 2 – APRIL 11, 1999

We started the day full of optimism: The weather was sunny and warming, the wind was much less than a week earlier, and we knew where to look...if nothing had changed. There were boats from Ada County, Owyhee County (with side-scanning sonar) and Phil Bates (a friend of Gene Ralston); that boat was fitted with Gene’s technology. A helicopter crew continued aerial search.

Pam Green with Inca, Charlotte Gunn with Hobo, George Gunn, Tim Henning, Diane Mathews, Jeff Munn with Mocha, Jerry Newland and Leslie Robertson with Mingo were the IMSARU crew who met with Ada County’s Sgt. Roberson and his staff. We started by working three

dogs; all three showed mild alerts along the previous week's scent line (allowing for a major difference in wind) but none were as strong as before. Several hours of dragging with grapnels, scanning with sonar, and visual searching yielded nothing, though we all had our hopes up when the helicopter reported "something" below the surface in a specific location. A final sweep farther down-river, with three dogs in separate boats, also gave no results, and everyone pulled off the river.

This was a major effort by multiple agencies to help a grieving family, and we were all frustrated and disappointed at not being able to bring closure. It is hard to accept how much more powerful are natural forces (like rivers, mountains, deserts) than our best human efforts. Many thanks to the IMSARU members who participated and to those who were willing but not included this time. [Ada County had asked us to bring only a small crew, essentially for a dog search, and we also had a mix-up on the phone tree that meant some people never got the call. We apologize to those people, and think we have the phone tree problem solved.]

NOW HEAR THIS!

May 15—9 a.m. Clean up the Compound. We need to mow and trim and dig and carry off rubble from the deconstruction project. If lots of people show up, it won't be too much for any few. Bring work gloves, yard tools and good cheer. Rumor has it that a gourmet lunch will be provided for all workers.

May 22—9 a.m. Field Certification Class. This is for all applicants who want to become eligible for mission calls. The class will briefly cover some of the basics that can prevent people from getting into trouble in the field. You can also get your pack checked on the same day if you wish. You can expect to be finished by mid-afternoon. Questions? Call Jeff Munn at 344-9917.

May 29-31—The legendary Bob Meredith is willing to lead a mountaineering trip if enough people want to go. Call him at 385-0861.

Check your gear. Do you have a radio chest harness that's not yours? A probe pole? A pack shovel (probably used on one of our snow training exercises)? A radio battery? It's so easy to forget to pull out all the unit gear when the mission or training is finished, but it's so expensive for the unit to have to replace all this. Please check your stuff and return as soon as possible anything that belongs to IMSARU.

Liana and Jack Pope are on their way to hike the Appalachian Trail. We wish them happy hiking, but will miss the ready volunteer for so many projects. Fortunately, Diane Mathews has agreed to take over as Secretary during Liana's absence.

The Corn Booth will be happening before you know it. This year's Western Idaho Fair will be August 20-28, so plan ahead to help set up, work several shifts, and then take everything down on the 29th. We run two shifts, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and 5 p.m. to midnight, each day of the fair. It's especially hard to find people for the day shifts. Start recruiting your family members, friends and neighbors to join you for this very important event.

Why haven't you paid your 1999 dues? We're almost halfway through the year! The latest available list shows the following people as paid:

Argyle, Steve	Deteau, Brad	Kline, Bob	Robertson, Leslie
Bohan, David	Engleman, Tony	Knopp, Leone	Schroeder, Valdean
Bohan, Dereck	Flores, Jeanette	Knopp, Rod	Shaffer, Deborah
Bricker, Charles	Foreman, Jane	Levesque, Robyn	Shaffer, George
Casson, Katya	Fuller, Ed	Lindenau, Bill	Ventura, Suzanne
Casson, Mark	Garrison, Aaron	Lindenau, Marty	Waldeck, Jeff
Cheyney, Winston	Green, Pam	Mathews, Diane	Wheless, Thomas Jr.
Christiansen, Steve	Gunn, Charlotte	McDermott, David	Whittaker, Keith
Compton, Kari	Gunn, George	Meredith, Bob	Wood, Everett
Cooper, Jim	Henning, Tim	Pope, Liana	Cudd, Richard
Cooper, Nance	Jaramillo, Lisa	Ralph, Deborah	

There are undoubtedly a couple of applicants who have paid since this list was printed, but that still leaves a bunch of people who need to bring their checks to the next meeting.

WEATHER IN THE SAR FIELD—GENERAL MEETING, APRIL 6

Rod Larum brought with him a wealth of information as a fire behavior specialist when he came to talk to us about how and why air moves. (In the words of a folk song, “Where in the world does the wind come from?”) With pictures and diagrams and basic-level vocabulary, Rod answered that question for us. Most of us vaguely knew that air rises as it warms and sinks as it cools. We are now more likely to notice the difference between that eastern slope which will warm earliest in the day and that western slope which will warm later.

The most obvious application for SAR is placement of teams using dogs—along the ridges when air is rising and in the drainages when it's falling. Air movement also affects where and how well sound carries, and perhaps where the subject would be most likely to seek shelter. Thank you, Rod, for sharing your expertise and making us more aware.



Rod Larum, retired Fire Behavior Specialist, helped us understand how to predict and use the local microclimate.

CALENDAR

May 4	General Meeting	7:30 p.m. At the Compound
May 8	Emmett EMS Fair	
May 11	SAR Training	7:30 p.m. At the Compound
May 15	Compound Cleanup	9 a.m. At the Compound
May 18	Medical Training	7:30 p.m. At the Compound
May 22	Field Certification Class Call Jeff Munn at 344-9917.	9 a.m. At the Compound
May 25	Business Meeting	7:30 p.m. At the Compound
May 29-31	Mountaineering Weekend Call Bob Meredith at 385-0861.	
May 29	Search Dog Training	
June 1	General Meeting	7:30 p.m. At the Compound
June 4-6	IDAHO SAR meeting at Bear Lake	
June 5	Dog Handlers' Meeting	
June 8	SAR Training	7:30 p.m. At the Compound
June 18-20	MRA national conference at Tucson	
June 25-27	Water Weekend Workout at Bonneville County	
July 16-18	Mantracking Class with Joel Hardin	McCall
Aug. 20-28	Western Idaho Fair—the CORN BOOTH	

WE ARE DOING IT AGAIN!!



MANTRACKING CLASS
WITH JOEL HARDIN.
16-18 JULY 1999

in McCall, Idaho

Contact Rick Cudd
(208) 928-0285

or
recudd@micronpc.com

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IN THIS ISSUE:

Swan Falls Mission	P 1 & 8
Snow Camping Training	P 3
Winter Survival	P 5
Differential GPS and SAR	P 7
NASAR-L.A.S.T. Conference	P 8
Paid Your Dues?	P 10