

WEB EDITION

RESCUE

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

FOUNDING MEMBER:
**MOUNTAIN RESCUE
ASSOCIATION**



FOOTHILL HIKERS—HOAX OR NOT? DECEMBER 7-8, 2002

--KRIS HOFFMAN

The call came in at approximately 10:30 on Friday night—two hikers lost in the fog up in the foothills—and the Ada Co. Sheriff’s personnel briefed us at the rendezvous point: A person across town near Gowen Field had reported picking up a call from a family service radio, saying that a man and his wife had been hiking in the foothills and had become separated in the fog. The subject didn’t know where he was nor where he had lost contact with his wife. The only reference point the RP was able to obtain was that they had traveled up Bogus Basin Road and had started on a trail across from a Volkswagon bus parked on the side of the road. The Sheriff’s Office located the bus at approximately mile marker two, and was able to contact the owners of the bus and confirm that they were not the reported lost party. Before our involvement, the Sheriff’s personnel had spent around



Planning in a cold, dark parking lot. Photo by G. Gunn

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P.O.Box741, Boise ID 83701. Editor: Charlotte Gunn, Phone (208) 378-7787 or e-mail cpgunn@cableone.net
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four hours driving up roads, trying to locate the hikers, and had had no luck. By this time, all radio contact with the subject had been lost.



Everett and Jerry in consultation.

Photo by G. Gunn

Jerry Newland set up base camp at the school, with Martha Vandivort as radio operator. George and Charlotte Gunn drove farther up Bogus Basin Road to help with radio contact. Suzanne Ventura with Schatz, Dan Scovel and I drove up to the trailhead where the bus was parked, hoping to pick up any tracks that potentially could be followed down the trailhead. Everett Wood drove to the reporting party's house, hoping to obtain additional information and to confirm on what frequency he had heard the radio call. Kris Walker and Chris Harry were dispatched to the Crane Creek Trailhead and searched that area.

At the trailhead, Dan and I found numerous footprints around the van. Local TV reporters had followed us up, and the cameraman confirmed that the Sheriff's officers had been around the van and had walked up the trail with the press following behind. In addition to that, it soon became obvious that we were on a well-traveled trail and it was virtually impossible to determine if the fresh tracks we were seeing were from our potential subjects. Our team proceeded up the trail in hopes of finding an area with only one or two sets of tracks, only to be met by a couple of officers driving back down the trail. They outlined on the Foothills map where they had already driven and searched. At that point, we made the decision to drive up the road on Trail 31 as far as the officers had been, and then to proceed on foot. (They had been able to get as far as a small creek and then had to turn around.) We three humans and Schatz then set off for a midnight stroll through the fog and mist and steep terrain, calling periodically and continuing to try and raise the hiker on a family service radio. The only answer we ever received was from one lone coyote at around 2 a.m. We eventually broke out of the fog, and were treated to a beautiful star-filled night. Dan and Suzanne spotted several falling stars during the trip, and presumably wished for a quick find. We did radio for a helicopter pickup at around 4 a.m., but our request was denied. We eventually made our way from Trail 31 to Trail 1, followed that over to 8th Street and were met by Everett and Kris W. By that time, with no further contact and no new leads, the Sheriff's Office had called off the search.

It still remains a mystery....Was it fact or fiction? [If it was "a joke," those of us who spent the whole night searching were not amused.]

**LOST SNOWMOBILER—PILOT'S PEAK AREA—DECEMBER 23, 2002
--KRIS HOFFMAN**

The Boise County Sheriff's Office requested our assistance in finding a snowmobiler who had failed to return the night before. So close to Christmas, only four of us responded—Jerry Newland (acting as O.L.), Leslie Robertson, Chris Harry and myself. The snowmobiler had set out on his own the day before, leaving his pickup at a friend's house in Idaho City. As far as the friend knew, the subject had headed up Elk Creek Road toward Pilot's Peak. (Some of you will recognize this area from a search a month earlier for a missing van full of people.) The subject also had another friend with a cabin in the Pioneerville area, and it was thought that if he had had problems with his machine, he might have tried to walk to this cabin. This friend was to meet us at the Sheriff's Office that morning, and Jerry was going to have him ride in to his cabin to see if the subject was there.

At that point, Jerry turned over the O.L. hat to Leslie, and he and I proceeded to drive up Elk Creek Road as far as we could. Idaho Snowmobile Association had been contacted, and a team with snowmobiles were on their way up to assist us in the search. Ada County Aerial Sheriff Bill Miller was in the air with Suzanne Ventura as observer. Upon reaching the junction of Elk Creek and Deer Creek roads, we made the decision to head up Forest Service Road 319 and to let the snowmobiles come in down below and around, and meet us at the top where the two roads came together again. We were pretty sure we were following the trail of a single snowmobile by then, so Jerry chained up his vehicle so we could continue on up. We eventually had to abandon the truck, as the snow was deep enough that we were getting too close to the drop-off to feel comfortable in continuing. Jerry and I continued on foot up the road, meeting up with the snowmobile team after a couple of hours. We were still pretty confident that we were on the trail of a lone snowmobile, so Jerry sent the snowmobile team on up to a little spur on the map to see if they spotted anyone. When they did not find anyone, they came back and picked up Jerry and me to transport us back to his truck. Jerry asked the snowmobilers to go back up the road and continue on toward Pilot's Peak, as he felt sure this was our subject's snowmobile track. We would return to base camp to regroup with Leslie and Chris. Jerry and I lost radio contact for a while; when we were able to contact base, Chris informed us that the snowmobilers had indeed located the missing subject up the road where Jerry had sent them, and were on their way out with him to meet us.

The subject was in relatively good condition upon arrival. He complained that he couldn't feel his hands or feet any more, and was extremely tired. He had wrecked his machine going over some cliffs, so was unable to ride out. Fortunately, the engine still ran, so he was able to run it on and off throughout the night to help him keep warm. He stated that around 2 a.m. or so, he was so cold he finally dumped some gas out and lit a tree on fire.... He was quite surprised at how quickly the tree went up in flames! He stated that he finally gave up on anyone finding him, so at daybreak he began walking out. Again, he was fortunate in that he had a pair of snowshoes with him so he was able to make fairly good time. The snow off-road was two to three feet deep; without the shoes he would have had a difficult time getting out of the bowl where he was stranded. Jerry checked the subject when we got back to the Sheriff's Office, and found no frostbite. We got him some towels soaked in warm water and wrapped those around his feet while we tried to warm up the rest of him with blankets. After about an hour, we sent him home with instructions to get into a *warm*, not hot, tub of water and let it finish warming him up.

LOST SNOWMOBILER ON WILSON PEAK – JANUARY 13, 2003 **--MARK WESTERDOLL**

After spending the previous day doing avalanche training at Pilot's Peak, I was startled by my pager going off at 4:30 a.m.: "Lost snowmobiler near Idaho City; meet at the Compound at 0700." My snowmobile was broken and my gear was scattered all over, soaking wet from yesterday. My first mission with IMSARU and I wasn't ready! I grabbed my gear and the parts for my sled, and headed to the Compound.

When I arrived, Brad Acker, Jerry Newland and Everett Wood were there. Brad and I rushed to replace a few broken snowmobile parts, and we were off. Upon arrival in Idaho City, Jerry immediately started making calls while I sorted out my wet gear. The missing snowmobiler was in contact with his family and thought he was in the Wilson Peak area because he had cell phone service. His wife was distraught, so Jerry decided to start the search while waiting for other rescuers to respond. We knew where the subject started the day before and his basic route, so I took my snowmobile and, with Brad on the back, headed up from Idaho City.

About a mile into it, we decided to drop Brad off as a communications relay and I headed toward Wilson Peak, roughly 12 miles away. I used my GPS with a rough map to navigate, climbing every hill on the way, yelling, looking and listening for clues. Finally, when I got to about 8,000 feet of elevation, I heard another snowmobile and a person yelling behind me. After some confusion, I realized this was probably our guy so, searching a little farther, found his footprints. I followed these down the mountain as far as I dared and stopped my sled in a safe spot where it would be visible to others. On foot, I finally found the subject; he was walking around and in excellent condition—no medical problems nor injuries. He said he had tried to dig a snowcave with his Leatherman but finally gave up and slept in the snow.

The subject's snowmobile was stuck and not running properly. I helped him unbury it and was ready for him to ride out when a friend of his showed up to help. The subject tried to ride it out a couple of times but was able to get only a few feet. He changed a spark plug and I tried to ride it out; I got only a few feet farther. The hill was very steep and the snow very deep. Finally, we managed to get his sled about three-quarters of the way up the hill and were regrouping when six other rescuers and another friend of his arrived. Now there were ten of us and we were able to push the snowmobile to the top of the hill. The subject rode his own snowmobile back to Idaho City, taking a horrific crash on the way. Jerry and Everett evaluated him at Base and he reunited with his family.

What did I learn? Tons! Ask me about it sometime.

WESTERN STATES SEARCH & RESCUE TRAINING CONFERENCE

at Stead AFB (Reno), April 24-27. Cost of \$40 per person if paid by April 11; \$50 after April 11; \$75 at the door. Includes meals!

<http://www.dem.state.nv.us> and go to "SARCON 2003"

IMSARU TO HOST SAR MANTRACKING CLASS IN APRIL --TONY ROCKWELL

The use of mantracking in search and rescue has gained popularity in the past few years for several reasons. One is because SAR tracking has proven to be a valuable resource that may help shorten the search. SAR Trackers are trained in search techniques as well as in mantracking; they are members of SAR units who have taken on a specialty just as other members have become dog handlers or members of a technical climbing team. Search Managers can make use of SAR Trackers to identify the direction of travel and narrow the search area significantly. In some cases, SAR Trackers can follow a subject through areas or in conditions where search dogs cannot function effectively.

Universal Tracking Services provides training to Law Enforcement, Search and Rescue, Military, Industrial Security and other governmental and lawful organizations throughout the U.S. and

Canada. UTS has an accredited program, providing certification of training level achievement that is recognized worldwide. More information about UTS and their programs can be found at <http://www.utstrackingservices.com>

IMSARU will be hosting the UTS Track Aware, Tracker 1 and/or Tracker 2 training courses April 4-6, 2003. The classroom and field training will take place at the Boise National Forest's Lucky Peak Nursery, a few miles north of Boise on Idaho Highway 21. Meals and on-site camping are included in the course fees. Fees are: Track Aware \$175 (minimum of 10); Tracker 1 \$190 (minimum of 8); Tracker 2 \$190 (minimum of 8.) The three-day event will include plenty of hands-on practice for students to gain the valuable skills necessary to become useful members of a tracking team. For more details, send an e-mail to trackingclass@imsaru.org, go to the IMSARU website at <http://www.imsaru.org> or call Tony Rockwell at 208-938-0190.

Many thanks in advance to the Lucky Peak Nursery Manager for making possible our use of their facilities!

Note: If you can't make this class or want to attend additional classes for faster progress, UTS is also scheduled to present the following Track Aware/Tracker 1 classes:

May 16-18 Wallowa County SAR, Enterprise, OR
May 30-June 1 Latah County SAR, Moscow, ID

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

IMSARU thanks the following organizations and individuals for their recent financial support:

R.E.I. – a grant of \$2,000 to be used in safety education aimed at youth.

--the opportunity to again wrap Christmas presents in their store, and to accept donations

Life Flight and St. Alphonsus Hospital – a portion of Life Flight membership fees, designated for our unit by the individuals buying memberships.

Carmen Halstead – donation in thanks for our search for her husband.

Anonymous donation of \$1,000.

Ten Thousand Villages – a percentage of receipts on “IMSARU shopping night.”

Diane Fields – direct donation.

Individual donors who designated IMSARU for their donations through United Way and World Reach, Inc., The Charity Giving Station.

We are an all-volunteer, non-profit, 501(c)(3) corporation. Our training, equipment and operational expenses are paid by many volunteer hours spent on fund-raising activities, donations, grants and some reimbursement of direct mission expenses through the state Search and Rescue Fund. We greatly appreciate all support.

IT WAS ANOTHER GREAT CHRISTMAS PARTY—DECEMBER 14, 2002 --CHARLOTTE GUNN

Judy and Woody Hart hosted the party at the community hall in Western Village, and the crowd of around sixty people brought food and good cheer. After we all had stuffed ourselves, Diane Mathews and I presented our traditional “awards” for memorable moments during the year. (No, you don’t want to read the whole 5-page script.) We then turned more serious for recognition of members who have contributed more than their fair share throughout the year:

To Rod Knopp, who spends countless hours following up on distress calls, organizing searches, pulling in resources that allow the field teams to do their work—much of this through the dark hours when he’d rather be sleeping—George Gunn presented a gift certificate for Rod to take Leone out to dinner and let them spend some time together.

Rod then presented the other awards:

--Acknowledgement and appreciation to family members who pick up the slack when IMSARU members take off on short notice to help someone who needs us.

--to Jerry Newland, extra cigarettes to help him handle all that stress. (This was particularly a reference to the multi-day Twin Springs mission, where Jerry volunteered to take over as SAR Manager when most of our team was exhausted, and supplies were running low.)

Personalized key-chains were presented to:

--Ken Murry, for his work in safety education, especially hunter safety.

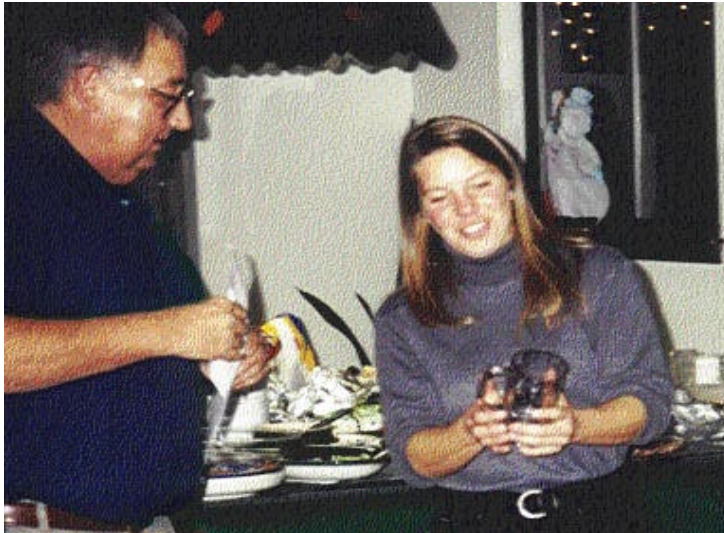
--Kris Hoffman, for her contributions as Secretary, in mantracking and in mission participation.

--Jeff Munn, for handling the responsibilities of the President and so much of the Corn Booth.

- George Gunn, for his work at SAR Manager, mission participation, as the Corn Booth's "tribal elder," and for his professional approach as Training Director.
- Charlotte Gunn, for mission participation, continuing devotion as Newsletter Editor, and for volunteering to be a Financial Officer in support of our Treasurer.
- Chris Harry, for mission participation and for outstanding work as Property Manager.

Mugs were presented to:

- Dan Scovel, for his involvement in safety education both before and since his election to the job, and for his participation as a field searcher.
- Aimee Hastriter, for her contributions as out-going Vice President, to safety education, with the technical and mantracking teams, and as representative to MRA conferences.



What will Aimee put in this mug?

—Photo by G. Gunn

Rod also presented plaques to:

- Pam Green, for her work as New Member Coordinator, in organizing our gift-wrap project, and in setting up the Field Certification classes for applicants.
- the Mantracking team, for their additional training commitments and for their work on missions.
- Renee Johanson, for her devotion to our Medical Training, including her efforts in gaining new certifications so she can teach skills we need.
- Leslie Robertson, for her work as a K9 handler and trainer, field searcher, SAR Manager, in fund-raising, and

dozens of other contributions.

- Suzanne Ventura, for organizing our Trout Pond project, and for her field participation, K9 training, and accepting the Public Relations job.
- Jerry Newland, for his superb participation in missions as field searcher, team leader and SAR Manager (often including multiple roles on the same mission), and his willingness to do the unpleasant jobs such as body recovery.

NASAR CONFERENCE at John Ascuaga's Nugget in Reno, May 28-31

MANTRACKING CLASS

APRIL 4-6, 2003

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TROUT POND AT THE SPORTSMENS' SHOW

FEBRUARY 27-MARCH 2

Spectra Productions is again giving us the opportunity to run the Trout Pond as a fund-raiser to help our sagging treasury. We need volunteers on Thursday evening, Friday evening, Saturday all day and evening, and Sunday day shift. No experience required. You get to keep an eye on the proceedings, help kids rebait hooks, remove fish from hooks, keep track of the rods and lines, etc., and IMSARU gets to keep all the money.

Call Suzanne Ventura at 383-4336 to volunteer!

TRAINING —GEORGE GUNN Training Director

“You perform the way you practice,” is said in many fields and it is true in search and rescue too.

The diagram at right shows the progression, from top toward the bottom, of skill levels in IMSARU. We are in the process of confirming with each member where he or she is on the chart. I hope you will want to work toward advancing one level during this next year.

If you looked at the training schedule in the last issue of **RESCUE**, you saw that we are embarking on an ambitious schedule of training. To maintain our unit’s professional quality we all must practice and practice hard. I invite everyone to attend as much of the training as you can. Idaho Mountain Search and Rescue will be stronger for it.

