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RESCUE

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

FOUNDING MEMBER:
**MOUNTAIN RESCUE
ASSOCIATION**



IN TROUBLE IN THE FOOTHILLS—JUNE 30, 2003

--CHARLOTTE GUNN

When the pager went off at 4:30 Monday morning, my reaction was “No way can I go today; too much to do.” However, the message said a cell phone call reported a truck off the road, a handicapped person who had fallen and was unable to get up, and an infant in the party—all in some vague location up above Aldalpe Summit. Who could refuse such a call?

We would later learn that four adults plus a 15-month-old child (accompanying her grandmother) had gone up above Table Rock to view the River Festival fireworks, then decided to drive on up into the foothills “to the radio tower.” Unable to get that far, they had turned back



Bringing the subject up to the “road”



It wasn't a long distance, but it was a technical problem.

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and then turned right at some intersection and driven until that road ended; in trying to turn around their truck, they backed it off the road (one rear wheel in thin air, the other hardly on the road.) The passengers exited the truck but one, barely mobile as the result of a serious back injury at some previous time, lost her footing and slid down the hillside. She was unable to crawl back up and her companions were unable to pull her up. The driver then walked out some three to four miles until he could get a cell phone signal.



Had the front wheels not dug in, the whole truck would have gone.

Unfortunately, this area is crisscrossed with dozens of dirt roads, most of which are not on maps, so the first part of the mission was search. With five 4wd vehicles plus a motorcycle, we turned off on E road, just short of Aldalpe Summit, then at an intersection that maybe fit the description given by the RP. We left George with the motor home for communications and sent other vehicles along each road. As he has done before, it was Everett who soon radioed that he was picking up the RP and the rest of us fell in behind him for the trip to the site of the problem. Once on scene, we did a quick assessment and called for paramedics and emergency transportation. The preferred scenario, of course, would have been for a medical helicopter to come right in and pick up the injured woman; the catch was that terrain was either very steep or had trees in the way...or both. Rod was finally able to arrange for Northwest Paramedics to fly in as close as possible, and Leslie and Charlotte went back to transport them on in by road.



Kris's vehicle was a crowded "ambulance."

Meanwhile, Kris H. stepped in as family liaison to get information and explain who we were, while Jerry



Transfer from land vehicle to the helicopter. The litter wouldn't fit so the subject had to be transferred to the backboard at left.

listed equipment needed and then went down a rope to work directly with the injured subject. Everyone else pitched in to locate two of our trucks as anchors, bring in big rocks to chock the wheels, assemble a low-angle evacuation system with litter and mechanical advantage for raising, chop

down brush to make an access path, scout for possible LZ, etc. Once Jerry had determined that the only apparent new injuries were a few scrapes and the chill from having lain on the ground all night, four of our people were able to get the subject into the litter and help get it up the slope, with everyone else pulling from above. Everyone was back up on level ground when the paramedics arrived; they were able to administer morphine (the subject reported her pain level as 9 out of 10) and a relaxant to ease the trip.

Kris W. dismantled the back seat of his SUV in order to load the litter and the two medical attendants for the mile or so of slow drive back to where the helicopter had put down. There it was necessary to transfer the subject to the medical crew's folding backboard (fortunately, she had been loaded in the litter with a blanket under her) and then maneuver her into the helicopter. We did a quick debrief back at our communications vehicle, then delivered the remaining three adults and one child to their homes before returning to our own weekday lives.

IMSARU members in the field included Brad Acker, Charlotte Gunn, George Gunn, Kris Hoffman, John McKay (with motorcycle,) Jerry Newland, David Rizenhaler, Leslie Robertson, Kris Walker and Everett Wood. Rod Knopp was in-town coordinator.

Thoughts from the mission and the debriefing:

- This was a classic mission with search, medical problem, low-angle technical evacuation and improvisation. Everyone did multiple tasks and teamwork was responsible for

the successful outcome. It's a satisfying experience to be part of a group that just pitches in and makes a big difference in the lives of people in trouble.

- We faced a real dilemma when the professional medical personnel said they could not access the patient. We are not a transport unit, and have concerns about the liability in moving a patient under these circumstances. However, our other choices were (a) to abandon the subject—not a choice, (b) to transport her on a litter for a major distance—within our protocols but much more traumatic for her and for us, or (c) to just wait until some higher power decided how to handle the situation and sent us the professional help. Sometimes we just do what needs to be done despite any worries about policy.
- There are people who are really curious just what Kris carries in that heavy “SAR gear” box in his vehicle.



Debrief before returning to town. Note the popcicles to cool down.

JOINT TRAINING AT THE CITY OF ROCKS—JUNE 14-15, 2003 **--CHARLOTTE GUNN**

The City of Rocks is a world-class climbing area south of Burley; it's also reasonably close to the mid-point between Bonneville County and Boise, and it's a great place to camp for a weekend. As the only two MRA teams in Idaho, Bonneville County SAR and IMSARU enjoy any chance to work together and to practice the skills that we are required to maintain. This weekend was no exception. Bonneville County made all the arrangements, including great Dutch-oven meals (perhaps offered as a concession to the IMSARU vultures who hung around their cooking area the last time we did joint training.)



“Show-and-tell time” as the two teams discuss what each uses and how it is used.

On Saturday morning, IMSARU climbers placed two Rescue Randy mannequins as “fallen climbers,” which led to many stares from people who drove into the parking lot and must have wondered why we were cheerfully doing other activities rather than rushing to help those poor souls in need. Each group brought out its technical equipment and talked through how we use it to set up systems and why we have made certain choices. The technical people then moved up the rock to set up anchors and ropes for the first “rescue.”

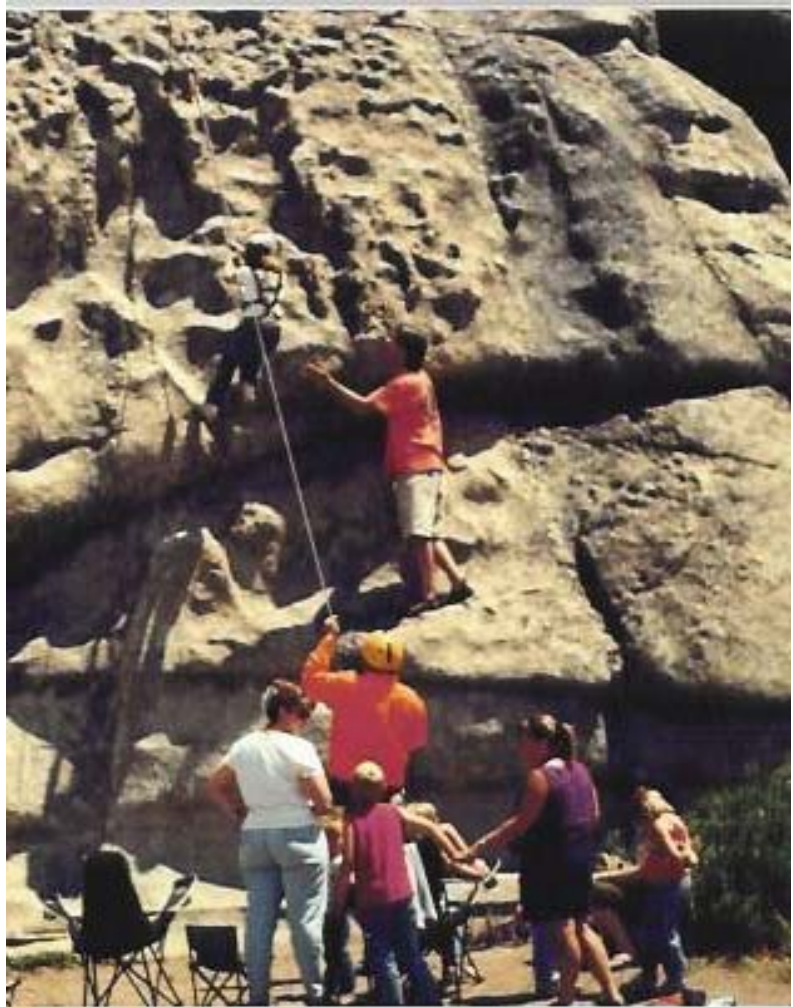
While this set-up was in progress, David Rizenthaler and Adam Chitwood taught some basic climbing skills to the children, ages 2-12, who wanted to do something more than just watch their parents from below. With harness, rope, vocabulary, safety rules, and some hands-on help when



the holds were too big a stretch for smaller people—some future IMSARU members were happy to be on their way up the rock.

The first major exercise took longer than expected, so the second Randy had to wait until Sunday morning for rescue. (There was talk of a night mission to bring him down by moonlight, but enthusiasm waned as people settled comfortably into camp.) So, on Sunday morning, Randy was finally treated for his “injuries,” loaded into a litter, and lowered down to a carry-out spot. It took a bit of finagling to get the last rope loose from its knots and the rock’s crevices, but all made it to the ground in good shape.

There were sixteen IMSARU adults, plus seven children and assorted dogs in camp; Bonneville County had about the same number minus the children. IMSARU members attending were Brad Acker, Marc Buursink, Adam Chitwood and family, Charlotte Gunn, George Gunn, Tim Henning, Bob Meredith, Jeff Munn and family, Jerry Newland and family, David Rizenhaler, Tony Rockwell and family, and Martha Vandivort.



Climbing class for the kids.



MISSING ADOLESCENT AT GRANITE CREEK, JULY 13, 2003

--CHARLOTTE GUNN

The mid-afternoon call said a 14-year-old boy, on a group outing, was missing in the Granite Creek area above Idaho City, and requested immediate response to search before dark. Leslie handled the in-town coordination and dispatched vehicles as members arrived at the Compound. Dan started as O.L. and considered resources and possible team assignments on the way up. A quick stop at the Sheriff's Office in Idaho City brought more information, and we then met at base camp with Idaho City officer Scott Turner and the Forest Service's Annie Heltsley. They already had an inmate fire crew sweeping one section and two volunteers from Idaho City running roads on their ATV's.

Dan passed the O.L. title to Kris W., appointed Kit as radio person, and sent our first teams to the Point Last Seen while everyone else remained at Base until there would be more information to designate area assignments. At the PLS, Suzanne with Schatz and Bill used the missing boy's shoe as a scent article; Schatz checked out several areas and then headed up the road for perhaps half a mile, turned off at an intersection, and then headed toward a rock outcropping. Meanwhile, Dan and Kris H. sketched the tracks where the counselor had seen the missing boy, then moved on up to the PLS to sweep for direction of travel. Charlotte with Xena remained at the PLS for assignment as soon as an area might be indicated. When Charlotte and Xena got restless, they strolled up the road a bit and looked up to see, headed down toward them, a bedraggled young man wearing a gray teeshirt, black shorts and sandals—the exact description of the missing subject!

The young man said he had walked up the road, wandered off the road, and eventually found his way back and headed down, presumably coming back to the road where Schatz had already tracked past. Dan and Kris checked the soles of his sandals, and found a match for their sketches. Except for hunger, thirst and fatigue, the subject was apparently unharmed, and all the searchers were happy to head home without having to comb those steep wooded hills...and to stop for ice cream on the way.

We were impressed with the many things the counselor did right when the young man went missing: He had an exact description of clothing worn. He marked an area where this particular subject had been seen alone, to use for footprints. He obtained the small duffel bag with the missing boy's extra gear and let Suzanne extract an item to use as scent article.

IMSARU members responding included Angela Bateman, Kit Brown, Marc Buursink, Winston Cheyney, Pam Green with Inca, Charlotte Gunn with Xena, Chris Harry, Kris Hoffman, Bill Lindenau, John McKay with motorcycle, David Rizenhalter, Dan Scovel, Suzanne Ventura with Schatz, and Kris Walker. Leslie Robertson remained at the Compound for the in-town coordination.

P.S. – Don't take it personally if you did not get called or got called late—we had some problems with the paging system, with some people receiving half a dozen messages and others none.

SEARCH FOR MISSING MAN—JUNE 28, 2003 --CHARLOTTE GUNN

About 13 months ago, a 24-year-old man left his car near Arrowrock Dam and disappeared. After some local searching, information was received that a motorist had picked him up as a hitchhiker and dropped him off on the Middle Fork Road, some 17 miles short of Atlanta. Other people who had been in the same pull-out area confirmed that they had seen the missing man there—but no one seemed to know where he had gone. Elmore County SAR searched the rough terrain, followed up on possible leads that developed, but never found any trace of the person nor his belongings. They requested IM-SARU's help for one more search of the area near the PLS.



Renee finally got to use her cycle.

Elmore County SAR searched the rough terrain, followed up on possible leads that developed, but never found any trace of the person nor his belongings. They requested IM-SARU's help for one more search of the area near the PLS.

If you are familiar with this area, you know the terrain varies from steeply up to steeply down and the vegetation from sparse on the cliffs and scree to thickets in the bottoms. There is a hot spring in the river at this point; a rough road takes off from the pull-out and climbs for over three miles but is blocked to vehicles within the first mile. There are some walk-in campsites in the few open flats along the creek and it is a hunting area.

Three of us IMSARU members went up and camped beside the road Friday evening, wanting to work the dogs before the day heated up. Three ECSAR members joined us early Saturday morning; Jim, Toni and Mike transported Martha with Angie and Charlotte with Xena to the base of a knoll that needed to be searched, while George remained at Base to organize incoming resources. (Neither Angie nor Xena has had formal training for cadaver search except in water training, but both have active noses and high curiosity.) By the time that area

was covered, people, motorcycles and an ATV were being sorted at Base; two people and a dog from Treasure Valley Search Dogs had been dispatched to check a creek bottom.

Motorcycle teams took the rough road, stopping frequently to check on foot some areas that might be hiding evidence. Foot teams and dogs fought their way up the valley of the main creek, rejoicing when we hit occasional open and flat spaces but muttering unkind words at most of the hazards. We found deer and elk bones plus lots of human litter (mostly cans), but nothing that could be associated with the missing man. And it was very hot work.

Back at Base, we downloaded GPS tracks from the various teams and printed them on the map to verify that teams really had covered the areas they thought they had. We also flopped in the awning shade and slurped popsicles for refreshment.

It is impossible to search this area thoroughly. However, this repeat search did cover the likely areas for someone on a casual visit. Elmore County is still hoping for additional information at some future time, but assuming the search will be suspended until such information becomes available.



John downloading GPS tracks.

IMSARU members participating included Marc Buursink, Wendy Campbell, Charlotte Gunn with Xena, George Gunn, Chris Harry, Renee Johanson (motorcycle), John McKay, Leni Sue Puckett, Martha Vandivort with Angie, Everett Wood (ATV), and Trent Ivey from VSAR.

P.S. If you want to hear the rest of the story, ask the ECSAR guys about their motorcycle adventures, ask Leni Sue how many little green burrs can stick to one pair of gaiters, or ask Chris how much fun it is to drive 903 home when it is making strange noises. And if you fear you've lost your marbles, maybe Toni will share the collection she made at base camp.

**GOOD SAMs GET-TOGETHER AT MOUNTAIN HOME—JUNE 13,
2003
--CHARLOTTE GUNN**

Friday the 13th was a good-luck day for all the people associated with the Good Sams, as they gathered at Mountain Home High School. There were classroom sessions, vendors' booths, a tour of the Air Force Base, and an array of social events. As requested, we set up a display of some of our activities, and talked to anyone who stopped by. We had lots of interesting conversations, but Christy and I were a bit startled by the lady who came to look at A.J. and Xena in their kennels, saying she had heard we had a couple of dogs for adoption. We immediately adorned the kennels with SAR shabrachs!

We are always ready to talk about SAR with the public, and we greatly appreciate the financial support some of the Good Sams chapters give us. IMSARU members participating were Marc Buursink, Jane Foreman, Charlotte Gunn with Xena, George Gunn, Christy Karnes with A.J., Diane Mathews, Dan Scovel and Marc Buursink.

FOURTH OF JULY PARADE

--SUZANNE VENTURA

I'd like to thank the following people who gave up a few hours of their 4th of July holiday and endured the heat to participate in the "We The People" parade in downtown Boise: Wendy Campbell, Joey Clements and Heidi, Richard Clements, Chris Harry, Kris Hoffman, Trenton Ivey (VSAR), Terry Ivey (Trenton's Dad), Jeff Munn, Dan Scovel, Sarah Scovel (Dan's daughter and newly named "SAR Princess"), Chris Witham (VSAR) and myself with Schatz. We decorated 901 and 903 in red, white and blue bunting and streamers and felt very patriotic. At one point in the parade, Trenton was "ambushed" by a "gang" of gigantic watergun-toting adolescents, and while I'm sure it felt great to be soaked, Trenton's response was "get them" as he was pointing to Wendy, Richard, Dan and Sarah riding in the back of 901.

There's nothing like a parade and cheering crowds waving American flags to make one proud to be an American. It was well worth the heat and the wait for the parade to start!

LAST CALL FOR CORN BOOTH

You've heard it before; here it is again: The Corn Booth at the Western Idaho Fair is where we raise at least half of the money for our year's work. It's a major effort for a couple of weeks—set up the booth, arrange supplies, get volunteers to cover two shifts a day, take down the booth—but then we will be solvent again for at least a few months. Please do your share.

Set-up (Aug. 9-10) and take-down (Aug. 24) are both dependent on large numbers of people. If we have twenty workers, it goes fast; if we have only half a dozen, it takes forever. Each day of the Fair, we are obligated by contract to sell from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m., so day shift starts at 10 a.m. and night shift may go to midnight if things are busy. (Busy is good; we make money only when we sell.) Teenage children, other relatives, friends, neighbors—all are welcome to volunteer for shifts, and most will thoroughly enjoy the experience. IMSARU members are expected to work at least a couple of shifts each; call Martha at 338-0284 to tell her when to schedule you and your recruits. IMSARU has already bought admission tickets for our workers, so Martha needs to know ahead of time how many tickets to give to each volunteer.

See you at the Fair!

THANK YOU!

Many thanks to those who support our work, including the following:

The Rollin' Eagles Chapter of the Good Sams, who gave us a donation of \$200

The Weyerhaeuser Company Foundation, who gave us a grant of \$1,000 to purchase a laptop computer for use in the field (to print maps, track search teams, aid in strategy planning, etc.)

Chuck Bricker, who continues his wonderful service as our auto mechanic. When 903 had to be towed home after a mission in early June, Chuck was there and fixed the problem before half our members even knew we'd had one.

TECHNICAL TRAINING WITH CUSTER COUNTY—MAY 31, 2003

--BRAD ACKER

As we all know, training is the key to honing our SAR skills. Whether it be working with your search dog, practicing your mantracking skills or setting up base camp, training and practice are the keys to making it all go smoothly and successfully. Training with your own unit is the key to building teamwork, getting to know everyone's skills, comfort levels and how "we" do things—better known as unit protocols and often defined in the unit's bylaws. However, as important as it is to know how "we" do things, it is just as important to know how "they" do things. Unless, of course, your agency is the only one that is ever on site for missions. On one recent mission, we had five different agencies involved. I think some of the groups did not even know some of the others existed, not to mention how they do things or what their capabilities are.

I was asked to write an article for this newsletter about our joint technical rescue training with our friends to the north in Challis, ID, better known as Custer County Search and Rescue. In the morning we all gathered in the campground and demonstrated our main line and belay line systems for raising and lowering. We reviewed the most common knots we use and why we use them. We set up anchor systems, showed how to make them self-equalizing and how to keep the load drop within limits if an anchor should fail. We did all this in the morning, had lunch, and then got ready to head to the field to put it all together.

You may have noticed, and I hope you did, that I have left out a very important part of our morning session. So what was it? Was it that when we say "bear paw" we really mean "collection plate"? No. Was it that when we say "z-rig" we really mean a "3:1 mechanical advantage system"? No, that was not it either. Oh, I remember—it's the fact that we no longer have a "scree kit"; we now have a "low angle" kit. Well, sorry, but that's not it either. What it was, was the first thing. The first thing we did is also the thing we don't have time for on a real mission—introductions! Our unit getting to know their unit is the only way we can work as a team in the future. It's also the only way we can exchange ideas of how the systems should work, so we can make our practices even better.

Our afternoon session was a good example of this. The Challis area has plenty of big trees for natural anchors. The problem was, we needed to do a low-angle lower on a hillside with no large trees, just sage and bushes. When our people suggested using the sage, they thought we were crazy. We soon constructed a large self-equalizing anchor system using just sage and bushes. The belay line was placed on one of the few large trees in the area. We performed the lower, switched to a raise, brought it all back up and lowered one more time. People took turns working the system and being litter attendants. With the system loaded, we also looked at each leg of our large anchor system to see how the load was being transferred to the ten or so sage plants and bushes. After we took down the systems, we discussed everything we learned during the day's training. We learned a lot about technical systems but, more importantly, we learned how to work with each other. We went up to work with Custer County SAR and returned having worked with our teammates from Custer County.

WATER SEARCH TRAINING—JUNE 21-22 --CHARLOTTE GUNN

Thanks to Bonneville County SAR for hosting this training at Big Elk Creek and Palisades Reservoir. We started with introductory stations (buckets of water with and without various scents, and diver run-aways—thank you, Carl!), then moved on to diver and scent tube in the water, with transport via inflatable boats. At the same time, boats and divers were working the Blowout area of Palisades, with shuttle



Dave and Buddy at “exit” point.

service available between sites. Since there were only about fifteen handlers and their dogs, everyone had ample access to the problems and could repeat/modify as desired for maximum learning.

Most of the Wyoming handlers packed up and headed home at the end of the afternoon’s training, as a young woman was reported missing near their home area and search dogs were in demand. The rest of us stuffed ourselves at a potluck supper, then spent some time sharing ideas and experiences.

On Sunday morning, we worked only at the Big Elk Creek site, with additional cadaver scent problems beside and in the water, and Greg paddling a canoe for those who wanted their dogs to try that form of transport. Sure enough, Dave Ferguson and Buddy provided the star spectacle: One problem had a scent tube with a toy crab above it, the whole fixture being rigged so that an aide on shore could bob it up as a visual reward for the dog’s alert on scent. Well, Buddy is a retriever—he launched himself from the canoe, dove for the crab which had been pulled back under the surface, grabbed it and swam proudly to shore with his catch. Great show, guys!

It takes a lot of work to set up such training, and we want to express our appreciation to all the Bonneville County people who made it happen.



Xena takes her first canoe ride.

We would add that you can't entirely trust Bonneville County: (1) Big Elk Creek swallowed two of Xena's *floating* Kongs in rapid succession. (2) The information plainly stated "You are on your own for all breakfasts" but on Sunday morning the crew set out fruit, ham, sausage and buckwheat pancakes; what do you suppose they serve when they offer to supply the meal? (IMSARU participants were Martha Vandivort with Angie, Joey and Richard Clements with Heidi, and Charlotte and George Gunn with Xena.)

TRAINING: WATER SAFETY AND RIVER CROSSING – JULY 27, 2003 --CHARLOTTE GUNN

Temperatures all month have been in the high 90's or triple digits; what a great time to go train in the cold Boise River! So Saturday morning was gray and drizzly, of course, but that didn't stop twenty of us from plunging in. Kris Walker, boat designer and very experienced river runner, had given us a Tuesday evening class on the dynamics of moving water, some of its hazards and how to deal with them, and now was encouraging us to hands-on practice.



Kris Walker, demonstrating use of a throw bag, led the training.

We started with inflating a couple of Kris's boats which would be used for safety, practice in paddling, and a demo of low-head dam hydraulics. Kris demonstrated his "floating stick" test for water speed, and reminded us that if we can't walk along the bank as fast as the stick is floating downstream, we need to reconsider plans to wade across. Then we practiced throwing rope bags of different sizes and weights—not just for distance and accuracy, but also learning where to aim and why; we did it first on land, then with chunks of wood floating by,

and finally to volunteers in the water. (If you ever need a rope thrown when you are in trouble, hope you have someone like Phil tossing it—not me.)



The safest and easiest way to wade the river, especially if you have these guys on your team.

Then it was time to get wet and cold. (That river has not traveled far since coming out of the bottom of Lucky Peak Dam.) We waded in and crossed back and forth between bank and island—singly with a walking stick, in pairs facing each other or side-by-side, in triangles and parallel lines of three or four people, and using “logs” to stabilize



A new dance? No, it's river crossing.

groups crossing together. And we practiced the technique for hoisting ourselves up and over a sweeper (in this case, a pole) rather than being trapped under it. All of us felt the power of the moving water; some of us decided tall people have an unfair advantage; Janine was literally swept off her feet by the experience. Jane and Joey took advantage of the chance to paddle the inflated boat, and took a longer ride than planned.



Kris demonstrates the danger of a sweeper.

Those who wished to do so then repeated some of the crossing techniques while transporting packs, either by one shoulder strap or floating on a tether. The last in-water exercise was use of a zip-line (a taut rope, along which one slides a carabiner while holding on to an attached sling) to cross with minimal effort. Kris then took us up to the low-head dam, where he tossed in a tennis ball and some chunks of large branches to demonstrate the incredible keeping power of such whitewater. If anyone had any doubts, we all now understand why falling into such water is usually a fatal error.



Aimee using a pack to cross the river.

Many thanks to the members who served as assistants and safety back-ups during our practice—including Jeff, Todd, John and Richard. We especially thank Kris and his friend Dave Evans, also a very experienced river runner, who spent the day with us and helped make the whole training a safe success.

MORE MANTRACKING CLASSES COMING UP

For those who want to advance to the next level, or just to maintain the skills they already have, there will be some UTS classes in the near future and within almost-reasonable driving distance.

Camp Cody, Oregon September 5, 6, 7
Track Aware, Tracker II and Train the Trainer
Contact Al Eastman at 503-728-3194 or e-mail aeastman@clatskanie.com

Fort Collins, Colorado September 12, 13, 14
Track Aware and Tracker II
Contact Dave Hake at dhake@frii.com or call 970-498-0664

Camp Cody, Oregon September 26, 27, 28
Tracker I and Tracker II
Contact Al Eastman as listed above.

NOTE OUR CHANGE OF MAILING ADDRESS!

After all these years of picking up our mail from P.O. Box 741 downtown, we are changing for more convenient access and to decrease our response time for information mailed to us. We have a brand-new mailbox installed at our physical address (the Larry Novak Compound) and ask that mail now be addressed to: **IMSARU, 2519 Federal Way, Boise, ID 83705.**

We will continue to pick up mail from the P.O. Box also during a transition period, but that address will soon disappear. **Thank you for noting this change in your records.**