

Vol. 33 June 2000 No.4

RESCUE

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

MEMBER:
**MOUNTAIN RESCUE
ASSOCIATION**
SINCE 1960



ROPE RESCUE OPERATIONS COURSE, MAY 5-7 --BY STEVE ARGYLE



This was an intensive thirty-hour course that meets NFPA Standard 1670. Steve Pack, Eric Mundell and Steve Argyle attended it in conjunction with the St. Alphonsus 2000 Trauma Conference. The Rope Rescue Operations course was entirely fieldwork, and was held at Table Rock.

The course material included one-person rescue pick-offs, low-angle (scree) evacuations, patient packaging, and high-angle raising and lowering and mechanical systems. Due to weather conditions, the sessions stressed the handling of wet and muddy ropes as well as wet rock.

On Sunday, a final rescue scenario incorporated all the aspects of rope rescue, including team management and command. IMSARU members participated in the exercise as part of a team with members from Gooding SAR and North Ada County Rescue.

RESCUE is published monthly by the IDAHO MOUNTAIN SEARCH AND RESCUE UNIT, INC., P.O. Box 741, Boise ID 83701. Editor: Charlotte Gunn, Phone (208)466-8345 or e-mail cgunn@execu.net

CADAVER SEARCH UNDER IMPOSSIBLE CONDITIONS GOODING COUNTY, APRIL 27 AND MAY 4, 2000

--BY CHARLOTTE GUNN

As widely reported in the media, a prisoner in Texas confessed to killing several women and told authorities that he had buried one of them near Bliss, Idaho, in 1988 or 1989. He was brought to the state and showed law officers where he had buried her. The complication, in addition to the time lapsed, is that a major earthslide in 1993 changed the terrain completely. Locals report that the slide could have buried the designated site under many feet of earth or pushed the original grave into the river. (It actually blocked the Snake at the time, until the river could cut a new channel.) There is now a creek where none existed before, etc.



Inca alerts very near the spot that we later learned was the reported grave.

It is our assumption that dogs have a miniscule chance of finding anything in these circumstances. However, we drove over on the morning of April 27 to try. Pam Green and Inca, and Leslie Robertson and Mingo, were spectacular! They worked carefully and independently, then switched areas and did it again. Jerry Newland, George and I helped with strategy and served as spotters. We found it very helpful to have the same spotter observe each dog in the same area, enabling us to know when the alerts coincided without the handler being influenced by prior knowledge. And yes, both dogs did alert in four spots within a small area, very close to where the man said he had buried the body.

On May 4, Jerry, Leslie and Mingo returned and law officers brought in a backhoe. We were all hoping that the bones would miraculously appear and the story be neatly ended, but it did not happen. Does this mean that the two dogs were mistaken the first time? Had I not been there to watch them work, common sense would say "yes." Having seen them do it, I believe the dogs. Now the questions are more along the lines of: Did the digging before our first visit



Pam and Jerry discuss Inca's work on this section.

disturb the grave? Is it still in the original area but simply deeper than the excavation? Is it actually uphill in one direction or the other but the scent being carried down by underground seepage? Why can't we teach our dogs to speak English or learn to understand Dog so they won't get so frustrated when they tell us something and we don't follow through?

We regret that we weren't able to help Sheriff Gough and his colleagues, and we assume there is still a family that does not know what happened to their daughter; it is impossible to imagine how heavy is that burden.

Footnote: Some of us are currently pondering our recent involvement in probable homicide cases. What we had not really recognized is the emotional cost to the searchers: In the incident described above, there were no secrets that hadn't been on TV, but in on-going investigations we cannot discuss our missions—not even with family members and not even revealing location. The information given to us in order for us to do a good search may tell us more about the way some people live and act than we really want to deal with. And in cases where the suspect is not in custody, one even has to ask whether there is some risk to the searcher and his/her family. It is not just disaster search training that needs real consideration of the individual's mental readiness. Also, we are now searching for information on how scent travels underground under various conditions, as we want to be knowledgeable and competent if we are really going to do this.

WATER SEARCH—JUNE 6

--BY CHARLOTTE GUNN

As dark was falling on the evening of June 5, local fishermen were approached by a man who told them to go read a note he had left. A short time after, they heard a large splash, and then could find no trace of the man. They notified local law enforcement. Using names and phone numbers left by the subject, officers learned that he had not returned home that night and that he was suicidal.

Leslie Robertson responded with Mingo and I with Hobo. (Pam Green got on the road with Inca but was still en route when our mission concluded.) After looking at the site and talking with the deputies, we decided to do a shoreline search first to see what the dogs might tell us from currents drifting in. It was a logical approach, but of course the shore was so brush-choked that even the dogs had to worm their way through. Leslie and I are much larger and less agile worms, but we managed to crawl over, under and around the obstacles. We then put Hobo in the boat for a couple of sweeps upstream, and were on the second sweep when word came through that the man had phoned his family. It was a staged suicide. The family did not know where he was, and said he still sounded suicidal, but they did know he was not dead in the river at our site. We shared the lunch provided by the Sheriff's Department and headed home.

HELP US SOLVE THE MYSTERY

A month or more ago, Bob Meredith loaned to Tom Wheless some information on river rescue. Since they were both involved in a project at the Compound, one of them set the books/notebooks on the stand-up desk in the garage and then forgot to pick them up at the end of the evening. When next sought, the materials were no longer there. The assumption is that someone, not knowing why they were there, picked the books up to read. Please, please, PLEASE return these. They contain a lot of training information which Bob wants and needs.

YOU, TOO, COULD BE AN IMPORTANT PERSON
--BY CHARLOTTE GUNN

Many of us are already tired of the national elections that won't happen for another few months, but this might be a good season to think about IMSARU elections scheduled for about the same time. We need a combination of experience and new blood, so give some thought to what you might be willing to do next year. How about, for example, running for Public Relations Director? If such a busy person as Leslie Robertson can do it, so can you.

All you have to do is:

- Respond to miscellaneous phone messages daily, track down what the people actually want and forward that to the appropriate members if it's not really in your department. Check with these people a couple of days later to be sure that action was taken.
- Organize all the public service events such as health fairs, race support, Trout Pond, speeches to various groups, media interviews, etc. This means you coordinate between our members and the outside agencies, nag our people to sign up, plus do yourself what you can't find other volunteers to do.
- Remain cheerful and tactful when others complain or fail to follow through with their tasks, and when unpleasant surprises happen.
- Be fully involved in other unit activities—meetings, training, missions, and perhaps a specialty like canine team as well.

Would you like an example? For the Trout Pond, Leslie talked to representatives of Spectra Productions and other organizations supporting the activity. She signed up volunteers and assigned shifts, checked the equipment and arranged starting change. On the opening Thursday, she was interviewed at 5:30 a.m. for the morning show, spent much of the day making sure everything started out O.K., and ended with a meeting on a different subject at the Ada County Sheriff's Office until 9 p.m. That Saturday morning, Leslie stopped by to see that everything was set up, and had to go find people to deal with the dead fish problem. On Sunday, she was in charge of the work shift, including calling someone to fill in when two people did not show up. And afterward, she hand-wrote thank-you notes to some of the people who did a lot less work than she.

Now doesn't that sound simple? The line forms on the right....

P.S. Thank you, Leslie Robertson, for giving so much to Idaho Mountain Search and Rescue!

**A VIEW FROM THE CHEAP SEATS
THE GREAT POTATO RACE, MAY 6, 2000
--BY DEBORAH RALPH**

What, exactly, comes over people and tells them to run 26 miles, without a major carnivore chasing them? Personally I don't know, but I cannot help admiring those who take on this endeavor.

It was a beautiful Saturday morning as volunteers from IMSARU took their places on the course. We were there to provide communications for the Great Potato Race, and to make sure that if one of the 2000 runners or 300+ walkers fell down that they could get back up. Members on bicycles were Leslie Robertson and Craig Jones. I believe they rode at least 100 miles that day. Craig actually walked the last 10 miles with a wonderful competitor from Maryland. This gentleman is 77 years old and took only 7 hours to complete the marathon. If honest, some of us would admit that this would take us (at half his age) at least 2 days and a hotel stay.

Jerry Newland was our central communications champion and also a wonderful medical provider. Those of us who know Jerry assume that he always wears a Western-style hat. But when a young woman was feeling the effects of a half marathon and needed some medical intervention, Jerry actually took off his hat. He then exhibited a professional and caring bedside manner, instantly putting the patient at ease.

Jerry wasn't the only one at the finish line to care for those who finished the race with gleeful euphoria. (It's something akin to a wide-eyed animal that just made it across the railroad tracks ahead of the train. There is a certain joy on the faces of the runners as they realize that yet again they have cheated death and finished the race. Actually, it's kind of frightening.) Also working at the finish line were Charlotte Gunn and David Hay. They attended to those with heat exhaustion and the ever-present blisters, as well as the "Hey, some guy is laying down by his car. I think he needs help" request.

Me, I began at the 5K start and, for the most part, waved at my friends and colleagues as they passed by and took calls from the various water stations who let us know which participants seemed to be having difficulties. Towards the end of the race, I drove behind the last of the walkers/runners to ensure that they didn't get run over by the less than patient Boise drivers. (You would have thought it was Daytona.) My greatest learning that day was the intricacies of 903, including a call to Rod Knopp to see how to turn the radio on and a follow-up with Jerry to find out which radio to use.

Congratulations to all participants who ran or walked the race. It was again our pleasure to be part of your support crew. Good luck, and see you next year. As always, we were impressed by all the organization that goes into these community events. There were more water stations this year than last, maps distributed ahead of time, good food at the finish line (including potatoes that were still hot at the end of the afternoon), shuttle buses between parking areas and start/finish lines, not to mention all the registration and tracking of finishers crossing the line. The Boise Y and other sponsors are to be congratulated.

NAVIGATION AND BIVOUAC TRAINING, MAY 13-14 **--BY JEFF MUNN**

With partly cloudy skies looming for the day, Sam Barker, Adam Chitwood, Aimee Hastriter, David Hay, Chris Karnes, Jeff Munn, Stine Theede and Tom Wheless set out for a day and night of hands-on experience with map and compass. It was an hour and a half's drive to the training site in the Bruneau Canyon area.

The group eagerly set up the chain game. (For those unfamiliar with the chain game, a fifty-foot chain is stretched out with evenly-spaced starting points marked on the chain. The objective is to set out from a specific point, follow three sets of bearings and distances, and end up at the correct point—not the same as the starting point—back at the chain.)

After a few hours of play, the group decided it was time for the big cross-country exercise. We divided into two teams. Both teams were given GPS starting points and headed out for a nice afternoon hike, hoping to all end up at the same place. After several hours of pacing off foot-steps and following compass bearings, both teams did in fact end up at the right spot.

With nightfall just around the corner, we all thought a cold beverage, a nice campfire and dinner sounded very good. Tom practiced his fire-starting skills, using cotton balls and petroleum jelly. Once the fire was lit and a good bunch of hot coals going, the hot dogs came out. (Note: The hot dog cooking fork that I received at Christmas worked just fine.) After several hours of stories by the campfire, it was time to settle down for a good night's sleep, as some of us needed to be home early Sunday for Mothers' Day. For all those who did in fact do a bivouac, good job!

BOATING SAFETY COURSE, JUNE 3 **--BY LESLIE ROBERTSON**

Alan and Kathy Maclean, of U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 1105, took time away from great boating weather to teach a condensed class on Boating Safety for IMSARU members. Debbie Ralph, who had been driving to Ontario for the usual six-week course, made all the arrangements for this one to be given at the Compound, and even went so far as to provide fantastic snacks and lunch for everyone. Thank you, Deb!

This training is one of our requirements for all handlers who work dogs on water searches, and strongly recommended for everyone else who may participate. Considering the number of water search requests we receive, it is advisable for all our members. Participants at this session, in addition to Deb, were Pam Green, Charlotte Gunn, George Gunn, Aimee Hastriter, Leslie Robertson, Martha Vandivort and Tom Wheless. If you were unable to attend and would like to do so in the future, Debbie will be glad to give you more information and/or to arrange another class.

CALENDAR

June 13	SAR Training	7:30 p.m. At the Compound
June 17	Work Party to Paint the Exterior	9:00 a.m. At the Compound
June 16-18	Water Workout Weekend Sponsored by Bonneville Co. SAR	Palisades Reservoir
June 20	Medical Training	7:30 p.m. At the Compound
June 23-25	MRA annual meeting in Alberta	
June 27	Business Meeting	7:30 p.m. At the Compound
July 4	NO MEETING – Enjoy your holiday.	
July 7-9	Sell Corn at the Pow-wow	Emmett-Montour area
July 11	SAR Training	7:30 p.m. At the Compound
July 15	SAR Field Training	Time & Place TBA
July 21-23	MRA Regional Training & Recertification—hosted by Weber County, UT	
July 25	Business Meeting	7:30 p.m. At the Compound
August 1	General Meeting—Clean & Paint Corn Booth	7:30 p.m. At the Compound
August 8	Clean & Load Corn Booth Equipment	7:30 p.m. At the Compound
August 14-15	Set up Corn Booth at the Fairgrounds Come as soon as you can after work	5 p.m. til dark at the Fairgrounds
August 18-26	Corn Booth at the Western Idaho Fair	10 a.m. – midnight
August 29	Business Meeting	7:30 p.m.

CORN AND MORE CORN

POW-WOW, JULY 7-9

A new venture for us will be preparing and selling corn at the Pow-wow in the Emmett-Montour area. We are still working on the details, and expect we will not need as large crews as we do for the Fair, but we definitely will need help. The estimate given to us by an organizer is 5,000 to 10,000 people attending, and that's a lot of corn. Please do help with set-up, selling (Friday evening, all day Saturday and one shift on Sunday) and tear-down.

WESTERN IDAHO FAIR, AUGUST 18-26

You can't not know how important this is! It is our major fundraiser for the year's activities, and it takes a lot of work from a lot of people. Before the fair opens, we need to scrub the booth and do some touch-up painting, order supplies, fill out paperwork, and check a thousand details.

The week preceding opening day, we need about 20 people to set up the booth; it's one of those projects that goes quickly with lots of help but is impossible for only half a dozen people. We then need members and their families, friends and co-workers to cover shifts from 10 a.m. to midnight every day of the fair, plus another 20 people to take the whole thing down on the Sunday after closing day.

Is this a lot a work? Absolutely. Is it also an enjoyable chance to watch people, work together, laugh and know you have contributed a valuable service? Positively. Tony Rockwell has volunteered to schedule the workers this year and Aimee Hastriter will work with him; Diane Mathews and Tom Wheless are glad to share their experience from previous years while Tony and Aimee learn. So, when Tony or Aimee asks you which times you will work, we need each person to sign up for two or three shifts. Please do your share so that others don't have to carry your part of the load.

P.S. As always, workers get all the hot buttered corn they want to eat, for free. It's good!

SPRING CLEANING AT THE COMPOUND--MAY 7, 2000 --BY DEBBIE RALPH

Isn't it amazing that, after all the effort to select from our busy spring schedule a Sunday for much-needed cleanup of the Compound, Mother Nature would pick that day for rain. Ugh! But as we all know, IMSARU members do not melt in the rain. (That would be messy and more to clean up.) Led by Property Manager Jeff Munn, members Sam Barker, Jim Cooper, Charlotte Gunn, Deb Ralph, Tony Rockwell and Stine Theede began the weeding, raking, sweeping, mopping and dusting. While not able to get the entire checklist completed, we did make a dent in it. We will be scheduling a new date for the interior to be reorganized and painted, and the exterior painting is set for **June 17**.

FIELD CERTIFICATION CLASS, APRIL 11 --BY PAM GREEN, NEW MEMBER COORDINATOR

At the completion of this class, we welcomed aboard new members Samuel Barker, Richard Clements, David Hay, Stine Theede and Martha Vandivort. Tim Henning and Jerry Newland were the instructors and Aimee Hastriter was photographer. Manuals were signed, activities lists distributed, ID badges made up, orange shirts handed out, etc. Samuel, Richard, David and Martha had their packs checked.

Thank you to everyone who gave of their time to make this happen. It is very important to keep this process moving along, and I couldn't do it without your help.

GENERAL MEETING – MAY 2

Rob Brazie, Senior Conservation Officer with Idaho Fish and Game, talked to us about what Fish and Game officers do, and how their knowledge and skills may be tapped to aid us in search work. Although they don't have enough personnel to actively participate in most missions, they do have extensive knowledge of the back country, a wide range of radio contacts, and keys to locked gates which can be opened for emergencies. And "if we don't [have the knowledge] we know someone in local area who does."

Thank you, Officer Brazie, for fitting us into your busy schedule and telling us how to connect with this valuable information.

THIRD TUESDAY INSTRUCTION

Medical Director Tom Wheless has called on two of our expert members to be instructors in back-country medical care. If you don't know these two, get acquainted with Steve Pack and Steve Argye. They bring a wealth of knowledge and experience, and have been generous in sharing with us.

WARNING FROM THE EDITOR

Since George and I both took early retirement as of last week, we have done what any logical old people would do—get a new puppy. Contrary to popular beliefs about wisdom coming with age, we are determined to repeat the miseries of Hobo's early years. Out of a litter bred for search dogs, we picked the one whose owners called it "the feisty one" and "Scrappy." She doesn't have a name yet, but I probably won't be able to resist sharing some of her adventures. Please be assured that you are under no obligation to read them.

IT'S NOT JUST THE DOGS --BY CHARLOTTE GUNN

Dog teams are one of the special tools for IMSARU. When they are needed on a search, the dog team includes more than one person per dog, often up to three or four persons per dog. People are important. We, the dog handlers, who often feel like we're trying to do twenty-nine things at once, cherish the other unit members and friends who work and train with us. As we continue our schedule of wilderness training, tracking/trailing, water search and cadaver search, we want to thank those of you who are working with us up to as much as four times per month.

In addition to our beloved boat handlers Rod Knopp (preferably known as Captain) and Gene and Sandy Ralston, the following members have recently worked with us at Bonneville Point, above Idaho City, at Swan Falls Reservoir, at Lucky Peak, at Lake Lowell, at a bus company lot and/or in the desert, or wherever our training takes us: Jim Cooper, Rick Cudd, Aimee Hastriter, David Hay, Chris Karnes, Tony Rockwell, Tom Wheless, Craig Jones and Martha Vandivort.

We would like to invite any member wanting to practice their skills with the radios, GPS, new technology, or just see how the search dog teams work, to come out and practice with the us. We often practice up to four times a month and could really utilize the skills of the members in making the dog team even better. It's only fair to warn you that even training can include some challenges. Since we don't always have the skills or technology, such as how to fix sites on the water via shooting bearings, estimating distances, etc. (No, you can't just draw an X on the water nor tie a piece of flagging.) this is an opportunity to learn new skills. An example of this was our last water training where Gene challenged us each—in writing, without consultation—to estimate the distances to two buoys from our shore location at Lake Lowell. Our estimates of the closer one ranged from 73 feet to 393 feet; for the farther, 109 feet to 696 feet. Gene very kindly did not make fun of our abysmal lack of skill, but did suggest that we might want to practice some more.

Talk to any of the dog handlers about your interest and availability. For those of you who have already taken to opportunity to work with the dog team, we have your number and we know where you live. You can hide, but we will find you.

CLIMBING WALL AT NAMPA RECREATION CENTER TRAINING, APRIL 29, 2000 --BY CHARLOTTE GUNN

The only thing missing was bad weather to make it realistic, or at least to remind us what a luxury it is to use this great indoor facility. Jeff Munn loaded all the gear and transported it to Nampa. Jeff and Tim then supervised the setting up of systems and simulated problems.



Did anyone lock the wheels on that boulder before tying it in to the haul system?

In addition, Debbie Ralph, Paula, Eric, George and I tested our dogs' trust again as we pushed them over the ledge to be lowered to the floor. Jeb, Huey and Hobo practiced their "Poor me—Look what I have to put up with" looks; Keats made it obvious in the preliminary lifts that he did not like the idea and so will get his first rappel at a later time. It seemed for a while that we were about to be reported to the Humane Society, as



Jeb gives Paula a "hangdog" look.

No one had to be dragooned into serving as "victim" because we now have two Rescue Randy mannequins who can't protest. So, everyone who wanted technical practice could take turns at climbing, belaying, set-up and safety check in varying scenarios.

Climbers included Winston Cheyney, Adam Chitwood, Richard Clements, Rick Cudd, Aimee Hastriter, David Hay, Tim Henning, Craig Jones, Paula McCollum, Jeff Munn, Eric Mundell, Daryl Sauerwald, Martha Vandivort and Tom Wheless.



Jeff checks the integrity of the attendant's system.

an unknown teenage onlooker kept telling me sharply that "She doesn't want to do that" and asking "Why are you doing that to your dog?" After Hobo went over the edge and I could afford the distraction of talking, I explained briefly what search dogs do and why they might need this experience; I hope he was convinced that we aren't really sadists. At any rate, no one showed up to arrest us for animal cruelty.

GENERAL MEETING – JUNE 6

Our Coordinator, Rod Knopp, led a discussion of some of the factors involved when IMSARU missions interface with crime scenes and/or evidence searches. We are not a law enforcement agency and do not do things like felony pursuits. However, we do have a pool of trained personnel who can do large or small area searches with the degree of thoroughness required; we do know that what seems to be an ordinary mission can turn out to be a crime scene; we do have some special resources, such as our search dogs, that have been requested several times recently.

So, Rod reminded us of the precautions and procedures we need to follow whenever there is any possibility that we are dealing with a crime scene. We also continued the discussion of psychological effects on searchers and the need to take care of ourselves and each other.



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