

WEB EDITION

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RESCUE

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

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FOUNDING MEMBER:
**MOUNTAIN RESCUE
ASSOCIATION**



MISSING HUNTER AT SAGE HEN RESERVOIR – OCTOBER 27, 2009 --CHARLOTTE GUNN

As we discovered, the area around Sage Hen Reservoir is very popular with hunters. There were single vehicles, tents and major encampments with multiple RV's, and many hunters interrupted their search for big game in order to help hunt for the missing man.



Gem County's SAR Command Post trailer at base camp. —Photo by D. Cone

One group had arranged a rendezvous point for late Monday afternoon, but two of the party did not arrive. A third hunter then set out to sweep the area in search of the missing pair. Those two had indeed become disoriented and exited the area in a different place, hitching a ride back to their camp...but the third man did not return. He was described as an avid outdoorsman who hunted a lot but was not familiar with this (cont. on p.3)

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TRAINING – LITTER HANDLING – NOVEMBER 14, 2009 --CHARLOTTE GUNN

After the Tuesday evening training at the Compound on how to secure a subject into a litter for transport, how to attach the litter wheel, etc., we went out to the edge of the foothills on Saturday morning to practice outdoors where the surface was not smooth. VSAR member Alex was our volunteer subject; he “had fallen out of the tree swing and broken his leg.”

It’s impossible to simulate the adrenaline [panic?] that surges when the emergency is real, but we went through the assessment and discussed options for stabilizing the injured limb. Jake was the only one prepared, carrying a SAM splint in his daypack, so we were all happy to use that. Next discussion was padding and warmth for the litter—a space blanket and sleeping bags—and how best to make the transfer from the ground. It helped that our patient was conscious and cooperative. Having chosen to load the patient first, we then practiced steadying both wheel and loaded litter while attaching the two, made sure we had a tag line on the head end, and started back to the parking lot.

But no, that would have been too simple. This training session was not designed to include a scree-evac rope system, which would have been the only safe way to go up the frosty slope above the “accident” site, but we **could** follow the trail farther away from the parking area to practice traversing a small gulch and then experience the effect of gravity as the main trail went up a bit steeply and back down again. The final challenge of the return trip was lifting litter, wheel and patient over a low gate.

During the return trip to the parking lot, all participants who had not previously ridden in a litter were urged to try the experience so they would better understand how their patient might be feeling. Only one member admitted he had never done so, and took advantage of the opportunity to try it...but the rest of you know who you are. And yes, it was entertaining to watch the reactions of people and dogs out for their morning walks when they met our loaded litter.

Thanks to Training Director Owen Miller for teaching both the classroom and the field sessions. IMSARU participants included Jeff Ball, John Ferguson, Charlotte Gunn, Sherie Hoid, Mike Johnson, Nate Kenney, Brian Kerley, Owen Miller, Rebecca Shaver. VSAR participants were Jake Gillis and Alex Shaver.



The carry-out would have been a lot more work without the litter wheel. —Photo by C. Gunn

particular area. The description continued with generally good health, except that he was just recovering from a 24- or 48-hour flu; he had been pushing fluids but no one knew whether he'd been able to keep down solid food. That, and the deteriorated weather, caused concern. As a smoker, he would have a lighter, but was not known to be carrying any food or other gear except for the rifle and ammunition. Other hunters had driven the roads and trails via vehicles and ATV's, and had periodically fired shots through the night. Gem County Sheriff's Posse and law officers were on scene and organizing the search.

Gem County asked State Communications to call us early Tuesday morning, and we rounded up eight people who could take a day from work and other responsibilities. (Two more joined us later.) It's a beautiful drive from the Boise area, and the inch of snow on the high roads added an extra touch of beauty and slickness. On scene, George conferred with the Gem County management team, Charlotte kept the communications log, and Danny did everything from signing in various categories of searchers to finding the nearest location with cell phone service to taking photos. Since motorized and horse teams were covering all the trails, the remaining IMSARU members were assigned an area that needed to be searched on foot—uneven terrain with lots of brush waiting to throw snow down the searchers' necks whenever they touched the vegetation.

Midafternoon, the missing man walked out to a road and was picked up by the truck that had been making regular sweeps along it. Back in camp, he reported that the early-evening storm had shortened the daylight hours and brought horizontal rain, but he had built a big fire with a large rock as reflector and spent a comfortable night. After hot drinks and thanks all around, we packed up and drove back in time for our regular Tuesday-night meeting.

IMSARU members participating included Winston Cheyney with Skadi, Danny Cone, John Ferguson, Charlotte Gunn, George Gunn, Tim Henning, Nate Kenney, Daniel Moore, Ann Moser with Watson and Rebecca Shaver. Pilot Jerry Terlisner and observer Kim Juda tried to add an aerial perspective, but the weather did not cooperate. Dan Scovel got things started at the Compound in the morning and Rod Knopp continued as in-town coordinator throughout the day. Gem County's on-scene Incident Commander was Lt. Dave Timony.

DUES ARE DUE

Yes, we “pay to play.” Your dues basically cover our unit dues to MRA, NASAR and ISSAR, plus some of the costs of your newsletter. According to our policy as of two years ago, you must pay your 2010 dues by January 1 if you want to be included on our membership lists to the above organizations—because they want their lists early in the new year.

Following is the list of members who have paid their 2010 dues as of press date. If there is an error, please contact Charlotte ASAP. If you haven't paid your dues, also contact Charlotte... with cash or a check for \$30 made out to IMSARU. (New members pay \$75 for their first year's dues, to cover additional expenses such as shirt and first patch.) You will not be dropped from our roster as long as you pay your dues by mid-February, but you can't wait that late and still be included on the state and national lists.

Acker, Brad
 Barsness, Amanda
 Ball, Jeff
 Cone, Danny
 Engleman, Tony (life)
 Ferguson, John
 Finley, Ann
 Garner, Collin
 Gunn, Charlotte (life)
 Gunn, George (life)
 Johnson, Michael
 Juda, Kim
 Kahn, Paul Andrew
 Kearney, Linda

Kearney, Tom
 Kenney, Nathan
 Kerley, Brian
 Kidwell, Carl
 Kimball, Irene
 Kimball, Wade
 Kline, Bob (life)
 Knopp, Rod (life)
 Mancuso, Michael
 Meredith, Bob (life)
 Miller, Owen
 Miller, Patti
 Moser, Ann
 Newland, Jerry
 Nichols, Josh

Noland, Jim
 Noland, Toni
 Oren, David
 Rae, Edgar
 Rettschlag, Gregg
 Scovel, Dan
 Scovel, Kris
 Sesek, Colin
 Shaver, Rebecca
 Strasser, Ted (life)
 Thiry, Heather
 Thompson, Lori
 Wood, Everett (life)
 Yorgensen, Jimmie

Also, those who have pagers with discrete numbers need to pay their fee of \$36 for the year. (Those whose pagers have only the group number do not pay for that.) Tom and Linda Kearney have paid their fee.

BASE CAMP TRAINING – OCTOBER 13 &17, 2009 --CHARLOTTE GUNN

Since almost every mission has a base camp of some sort, we try to include each year some training on what base camp does and how members can help it run more smoothly. Our Tuesday evening classroom session focused on some basic functions (staging area, search management, equipment depot, rehab) and some tasks associated with each. We also suggested priorities, and some adaptations for winter missions, and handed out a page of suggestions for inexperienced members who want to start off on the right foot.

The Saturday hands-on session offered five stations: Radios, Pop-Up Shelter, Propane Appliances, Pole Shelter, and Generator and Lights. Experienced members served as instructors at each station; less experienced members were divided into small groups with instructions to get physically involved at each station so that a real mission will not be the first time one has to do a task. An interesting sidelight was the number of experienced members who chose to also be students at one or more stations, with the muttered explanation “I’ve never actually done that myself.”



The color coding on the pipes helps, but there are still a few tricks to setting up this shelter. —Photo by G. Gunn

Participants included John Ferguson, Tim Henning, Kim Juda, Linda Kearney, Tom Kearney, Nate Kenney, Brian Kerley, Bill Lindenau, Mike Mancuso, Ann Moser, Jennifer Newland, Jerry Newland, Gregg Rettschlag, Alex Shaver (VSAR), Rebecca Shaver and Rick Thompson. George Gunn and Charlotte Gunn organized these sessions.

INEXPERIENCED ON SAR MISSIONS?

SOME GUIDELINES FOR MAKING A GOOD IMPRESSION:

1. Get as much info as is available before leaving the Compound, but realize that it's often not much...and may be wrong. Be sure you know where you are supposed to go. Carpool if at all possible, as parking space at Base Camp may be limited. Arrange communication for en route—radio? Cell phone numbers? Pager?
2. One of the first tasks at Base Camp is to arrange use of area. Command Post vehicles (901? Trailer? The Gunns' RV?) get priority parking. We may also need to save space for other agencies expected to respond. Vehicles carrying search dogs get first dibs on shade in hot weather. Cooperate, even if it's inconvenient for you.
3. Make yourself available to help set up Base Camp. Ask one of the experienced members (NOT the Search Manager—he/she has a million things to get organized) what you can do to help; if you don't know how to do what is requested, say so and/or find another member who does know—and then help so you will know next time.
4. Once Base Camp is set up and you have seen the terrain and weather, get your personal gear ready to go—knowing there may be some changes once you get a team briefing.
5. When Base Camp and your personal gear are as ready as you can make them, get out your reading material or other pastime and wait quietly until assignments are ready. Remember: “Never pass up the chance to eat, sleep or go to the bathroom.”
6. If you are assigned to a team for a task you do not feel competent to do (too technical, you aren't feeling well, you know it's too strenuous, you have to leave at a certain time, etc.) tell your team leader immediately.
7. Watch your mouth! Criticisms and disagreements must be dealt with later in private. You never know who on scene is law enforcement (no, they aren't always in uniform), family member, friend of subject, member of another SAR group, etc. If you have to speculate about what may have happened, be sure no one is within hearing range besides the individuals you know. “Better to keep your mouth shut and be thought a fool than to open it and remove all doubt.” Be aware that loud laughter may seem inappropriate to family members on scene.
8. The one exception to #7 is danger. If you see a dangerous situation at any time or place during a mission, you are obligated to point it out. If you find yourself going into a place or task where you are not trained and competent to perform safely, you are obligated to say so.

Vocabulary: **IC=Incident Commander**; may be law officer, member of another SAR group, or our OL. This person is the head honcho; may or may not make the hands-on decisions.

OL=Operations Leader; often interchangeable with **SAR Manager**. This person makes the hands-on decisions, usually in consultation with other experienced SAR members.

CALENDAR

- Nov. 27 – Dec. 24 Gift Wrapping at Cabela’s – Call Jimmie Yorgensen at 850-3610 to volunteer.
- Dec. 8 SAR Training – Winter Clothing & Equipment 7:30 p.m.
Owen Miller & Josh Nichols at the Compound
[No field training in December.]
- Dec. 15 Medical Training 7:30 p.m.
At the Compound
- Dec. 22 Business Meeting 7:30 p.m.
At the Compound
- Dec. 29 NO MEETING SCHEDULED AT THIS TIME
- Jan. 5 General Meeting 7:30 p.m.
At the Compound
- Jan. 12 SAR Training – Winter Skills 7:30 p.m.
At the Compound
- Jan. 16-17 SAR Field Training – Winter Skills Time & Place TBA
- Jan. 19 Medical Training 7:30 p.m.
At the Compound
- Jan. 26 Business Meeting 7:30 p.m.
At the Compound
- Feb. 2 General Meeting 7:30 p.m.
At the Compound
- Feb. 9 SAR Training – Avalanche Awareness & Safety 7:30 p.m.
At the Compound
- Feb. 13-14 SAR Field Training – Avalanche Awareness & Safety Time & Place TBA
[NOTE: EXACT DATES FOR AVALANCHE TRAINING MAY CHANGE, DEPENDING
ON INSTRUCTORS’ SCHEDULES. STAY TUNED.]
- Feb. 16 Medical Training 7:30 p.m.
At the Compound
- Feb. 23 Business Meeting 7:30 p.m.
At the Compound

SEARCH FOR MISSING HUNTER – OCTOBER 15, 2009 **--PAUL KAHN AND REBECCA SHAVER**

Messages went out a few minutes before 7 a.m. that a 27-year-old hunter was overdue from the previous day and a team needed to meet at the Compound at 8 a.m. to head to the top of 8th Street (which is access to the foothills). Four of the six initial responders were going out in the field for the first time. Vehicles 901 and 902 left the Compound in the rain. Four-wheel drive was required, thanks to slick mud and rutted roads on the 13-mile drive. 902, pulling the command post trailer, overheated and died, taking with it the power brakes and steering, and created an urgent need for a safe pullout. Jerry won the battle of wills and got the trailer rolled back to a more level pullout where it could cool down and get a drink from bottles poured into the radiator. Carl and Rebecca went on ahead and found a spot for base camp, taking a quick look around while waiting at the top.

Once all the vehicles made it to the top, the trailer and a rough base camp were quickly set up. In an effort to be efficient and helpful, the new members promptly set up each thing Jerry tossed out of the trailer until he asked them if they were planning on taking a nap on the newly-assembled cots.... After that, everything went in a pile until they were told it was needed. Jerry asked for someone to help him “for a minute” in the trailer. (For future reference, this means it’s a good idea to bring snacks and water!) He put Rebecca to work entering data in the computer and monitoring radio communications. Rumor has it that everything went well, but this was due in large part to unending patience on the part of the teacher while the student struggled to figure out that THIS radio was the aircraft, THAT radio was the Compound and THE OTHER radio was Boise County. Oh yes, and log those communications, too. It was an invaluable experience and highly recommended for anyone who wants a better idea of what is involved in the unenviable task of managing a search.

Friends and family of the subject arrived shortly after IMSARU began setting up base camp. The girlfriend showed pictures of him on her cell phone and his brother provided more information about the dirt bike, possible provisions he would have, and the subject’s level of expertise. The media showed up to interview Jerry, friends and family.

When base camp setup was complete, we dispatched two search teams. Brian and Gregg took 901 northwest. David took the subject’s brother north on their dirt bikes. Linda and Jerry T. were already conducting an aerial search.

At 12:45 p.m., the girlfriend received a voicemail that indicated her boyfriend was okay. He said he had spent the night under a tarp in Idaho City and was already on his way home. IMSARU teams continued operations until a Boise County deputy was able to lay eyes on the subject. Jerry N. then recalled the field teams and cancelled the air search. We broke down base camp and conducted a truck-side debriefing.

Tom Kearney met the team back at the Compound and helped get everything cleaned and reset. George put on his best smile and gave a statement to a reporter.

Thank you to all who responded: Paul Kahn, Linda Kearney (air observer), Brian Kerley, Carl Kidwell, Ann Moser with Watson, Jerry Newland (O.L.), David Oren, Gregg Rettschlag, Rebecca Shaver, Jerry Terlisner (pilot), Mark Westerdoll. George Gunn and Charlotte Gunn handled in-town coordination. Extra kudos to the old hands who were so patient with all the new members!

TRACKING MISSION IN JAPAN

--DAN SCOVEL

On Friday, May 1st I received an email from Joel Hardin Professional Tracking Service (JHPTS) that made me look 3 times to see that I was reading it correctly, asking if I would be available for a tracking mission in Japan leaving Sunday. Thoughts raced about how can I possibly make this happen with all that is going on (the same thoughts we all have whenever we get a callout for a mission). After calling and getting details, a team of 4 trackers would leave Sunday and return the following Sunday.

The search was for a 41-year-old male from the University of Wyoming, a professor who was researching volcanoes, and his last stop was at Kuchino-erabu-jima, Japan. He arrived there on Monday afternoon, April 27th, and began his hike to the top of the volcano. This information was confirmed by a local resident who drove the subject to the trailhead, and was the last person to see him. When he did not return to the village as planned, the villagers searched until late that night. The next day police officials arrived, and a total of 40-50 people and search dogs continued the search. The search continued with varied amounts of people and resources until Monday, May 4th, when officials suspended the search to give all searchers some much-needed rest. Japan is required by law to search for 3 days; they went far beyond their requirements. The subject's brother and others close to him had also arrived on scene to help with the search.

The JHPTS trackers able to respond included Sharon Ward (Team Leader and Sign Cutter), Kathy Decker (Sign Cutter), Steve Reddington (Journeyman), and me (Journeyman). We all left our home destinations to meet in San Francisco on Sunday, with connections in Tokyo, Kagoshima, Yakushima, then a ferry to Kuchino-erabu-jima. Nothing can go wrong with this plan, right? I now know that San Francisco has common fog issues that delay flights from landing on a regular basis. Sharon and Steve made the connection with no problem from Portland, Kathy barely made it from Seattle, and I did not make the connection due to fog delay-- but I now know how long it takes to run through the airport as fast as you can with a pack and heavy carryon from domestic to International flights only to find out you are too late. As big as was this disappointment, fate and someone watching over us was going to make this pay off.

The ferry that was to take us to the final island, we discovered, runs one time per day, alternating morning and afternoon schedules. The rest of the team was one day ahead, so they were able to take the afternoon trip; I was too late to catch the morning ferry so was planning to lose yet another day before reaching the search site. The hotel I was going to stay at had

absolutely wonderful hosts, even though I speak no Japanese and they speak little to no English. The manager there had a book that he was using to translate, and after a period of time loaned me one of the hotel laptops that gave me access to home and information on what the search status was. It was great to be able to communicate with base camp!

Joel Hardin, Kris Scovel and Mary Bebee were running logistics and communication for the mission. We can never appreciate or thank enough those who support us while we are on missions no matter how far from home! It turned out our subject had posted a picture of his footprint stepping into the dusty surface of another volcano he climbed and posted it on his Facebook page. Again the hotel manager helped by printing the photo so I could show the rest of the team when I arrived the next day, but things again changed quickly when the call came in that another boat had been arranged for me to make the final leg of the trip and I arrived on the island within a few hours of getting this information.

Quick recap of my response time one way to the search site: From the time I left Boise, it included 4 planes, 2 taxis, 1 limo (bus), 1 boat in 63 hours!

The rest of the team had been tracking all day when I arrived, and had already had success in sorting out searcher tracks to find what they believed to be our subject. The notes and drawings they had started matched the photo I had with me. The team had tracked from the trailhead to the top of the “new” volcano, then to the “old” volcano, then calling it a day. After debriefing, plans were made for the next day which included hiking up from another direction where the subject was likely to come down. This area had not been searched because search officials felt it would be too dangerous an area to cover. Due to the volcanic nature of the island, there are holes that you can fall in, ledges that cannot be seen due to thick vegetation, etc. (Safety issues were discussed and continuously reviewed during the tracking operation, and since we were going step by step in a slow steady manner it was within reasonable limits in our opinion).

Police officials, two guides and our interpreter hiked up the trail, and during a stop where Sharon was explaining to the officials what we would be doing for the day, that we were looking for sign where it left the trail and was age-appropriate, the scuffs, color of dust and dirt caught her eye. Within a short period of time, measurements of footprint and stride were confirmed, ageing checked, and we followed the sign down the trail. Not long after we started, a signature print was found (about the size of a quarter) and we knew we were following our subject! The sign line continued, showing that our subject was walking with purpose in the direction he was going, never wandering or lost.

It is important to note that when coming down the trail from the volcano, our subject took the old trail to the left, which looked as good as or better than the trail he was supposed to take to the right. The thick vegetation and rocky surface made it difficult to stay on the trail (Our guides had to stop and check a few times to make sure they picked the correct trail.)

The team followed the sign line for a total of 3 days, often on our hands and knees to find every step (very happy times when we would get signature confirmation along the way) and eventually led to where the sign line went over a ledge. We did not have a technical team or



Tracking team at end of mission

Photo courtesy of Dan Scovel

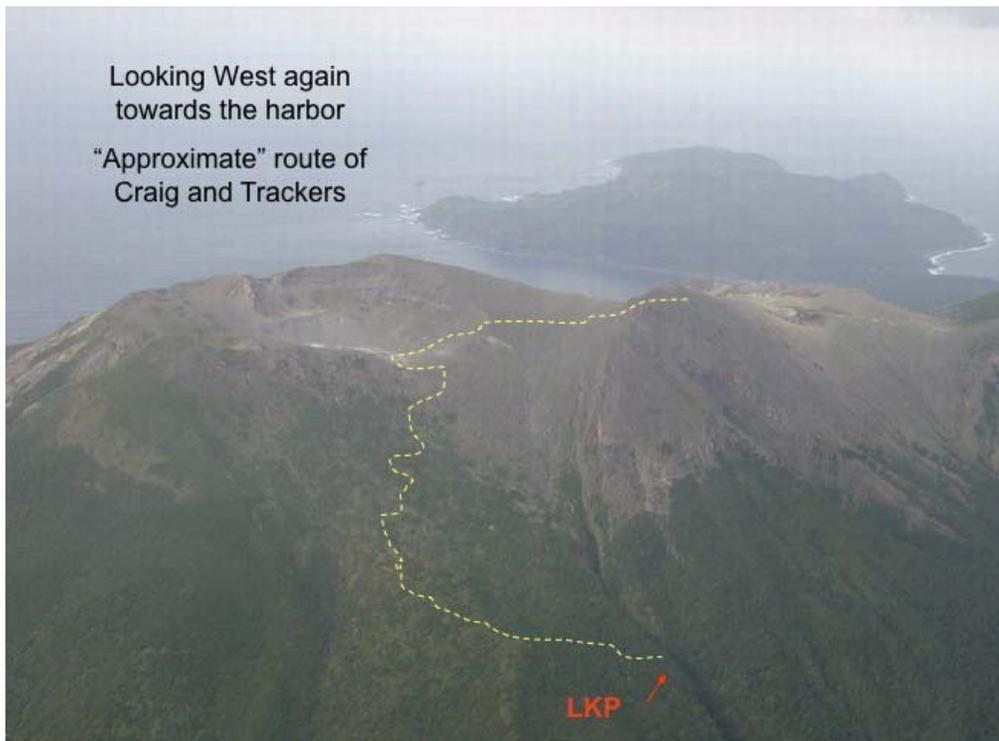
equipment to rappel over the edge (determined that the elevation change was 236 feet) and there was no way to determine what happened from the last evidence discovered at the ledge. We were able to come up a narrow steep stream bed to the bottom of the ledge, but again we found no sign of anyone walking out at the bottom.

After the police officials examined the evidence and we completed our debrief and discussions, they made it clear that our mission was complete and thanked us for our services, also pointing out that they had no previous experience with tracking on searches and might invite us back to instruct a class.

Sadness, disappointment, excitement and satisfaction are some of the emotions experienced during this mission. We all wished we could have been able to bring him home. We are hopeful that the evidence and information shared with the family brings them some level of comfort.

I want to take the opportunity to again thank all of those in the IMSARU and JHPTS family who have helped me with my training and experience to be able to help with this and other missions we are called for. The professionalism and dedication these groups have shown, whether across the street or around the globe, is fantastic! Another thank you to my boss/ employer who whenever possible supports adjusting work schedules to help with these efforts.

Tim shares some pointers at the lighting station during the Base Camp training. Article is on page 4.



Looking West again towards the harbor
"Approximate" route of Craig and Trackers

Kuchino-erabu-jima Island in Japan, where an American professor disappeared in late April while studying volcanos. See article on page 8.