

WEB EDITION

Vol. 45 May-June 2012 No.3

RESCUE

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

FOUNDING MEMBER:
**MOUNTAIN RESCUE
ASSOCIATION**



Hoist from ground to Guard helo. —Photo by J. Simpson

PLANE CRASH ON TURNTABLE MOUNTAIN – MAY 27, 2012 --JAKE GILLIS AND ALISA RETTSCHLAG

The pagers and text messages sent a callout at around 7 a.m. on Sunday. You know it's going to be an exciting mission when Rod sends a second callout and it scrolls by as "URGENT." It was for response to a downed aircraft in the Owyhee Mountains with, surprisingly, all three occupants alive and in somewhat stable condition even though it turned out the crash had occurred at around 9 p.m. and they had not realized they had cell phone coverage for several hours. The location of the crash, on the backside of Turntable Mountain near Silver City, made it very difficult for anyone to reach the site. Reports said that an Air St. Luke's helicopter had located the plane and landed but was unable to extract the survivors due to the rugged location and the weather (snowing with low clouds.) That crew had hiked down to the plane, removed the survivors, a couple and their daughter, from the aircraft, started a fire for warmth, and stayed with them.

At the Compound, it was a flurry of action. Three litters went into 901; 902 would also go. Unit mem-



Transport between helicopters was done the old-fashioned way.

—Photo by A. Rettschlag

At the Compound, it was a flurry of action. Three litters went into 901; 902 would also go. Unit members arrived and quietly, almost silently, went about gathering, doing, packing. Rod briefed us while we packed. Mike was designated Operations Leader and we were to head to the Owyhee County Sheriff's Office in Murphy for further instructions.

Gregg, Judd and Alisa rode in 901. A couple of miles from the Melba turnoff on Highway 45, we heard a sudden loud banging in the rear of the vehicle. Gregg pulled 901 to the side of the road. The right rear tire was not flat but had completely lost its tread; one of our members suggests it was because the driver was over 25 years old [inside joke]. To our dismay, the spare was flat. Gregg called the Compound. Sunday of the Memorial Day weekend is not the ideal time to lose a tire, but Rod, Danny and Charlotte coordinated to arrange for emergency roadside assistance via Commercial Tire. Luckily, Dan, Kris, Mark and Steve were not far behind. They all stopped and we transferred gear from 901 into their private vehicles. Gregg volunteered to stay with 901 while everyone else continued on to Murphy...until directed instead to the New York Corrals along the Silver City Road.

When we arrived at the corrals, Mike and Owen went to see how we would be coordinating with everyone else. A line of vehicles, including ATVs, UTVs and a couple of rock crawlers driven by spontaneous volunteers, were ready to caravan up to the base camp, about three miles farther up at the base of War Eagle Mountain and above the Afterthought Mine. We joined the caravan up the road covered with snow, lots of mud and a few exposed rocks here and there. In addition, there were lots of spur roads and those drivers not in sight of the preceding vehicles made a few wrong choices; we tried to mark every junction with orange flagging.

At the upper staging area, we were able to see a saddle a few miles away with two helicopters on it; this area, about a mile from the wreckage, was to be the Landing Zone (LZ) for the extraction and transfer to medical helicopters. Mike and Owen again collaborated with the other agencies for a final game plan. Brad and Owen headed in with Nampa Fire Department personnel (Team 1); Tom, Mike (who had handed off the O.L. responsibilities to Dan), Francisco and Jake jumped into a UTV and became Team 2. The "road" over to the LZ was very muddy and slick, with snowdrifts 5-6 feet high.

Word went back to personnel at the upper staging area that more help might be needed at the LZ, so we loaded a bunch of tech ropes and gear onto Mark's ATV and Alisa jumped on the back. Dan realized the litters were still in Mark's truck and sent Danny back to the corrals to retrieve them. Mark and Alisa met Team 2 at a giant, impassable snowdrift, about a quarter of a mile short of the LZ; he turned around to search for a route to the crash site. Jake and Francisco jumped onto the back of the ATV but soon learned they couldn't both ride on the back together with all the tech gear, so Jake moved up to sit on the front. [This photo will be an IMSARU classic.] Mike, Tom and Alisa walked on to the LZ, where they found an Air St. Luke's crew and helicopter, a National Guard crew and helicopter, and a couple of Nampa firemen. They expected to need help carrying patients from the Guard Helicopter to the St. Luke's craft, so our three people remained there.

Mark, Francisco and Jake arrived at the crash site just as the first subject (the daughter) was being packaged for the hoist out. Jake reported back to our crew that, having seen the wreckage and the terrain where it landed, he would fly with that pilot any day because of his skill in keeping the family alive. (The plane had landed on its belly; the separated left wing hung precariously in a tree.) On this first lift, the tagline on the litter didn't break off as it was supposed to and the radio call of "Stop forward!" brought the helicopter into a hover until one of the winch operators was able to manually undo the tagline.

After the first patient was airlifted safely, we carried the second patient up to the hoist staging area, set her down on somewhat level ground and made sure all the packaging was nice and tight. Staff Sgt. Colsen requested that Mark run the tagline to the litter and that Jake hover over the patient to prevent any objects dislodged by rotor wash from hitting her. This rotor wash was strong enough to toss Jake back and forth as he tried to shield the patient, but Jake and Brad from Nampa F.D. were able to clip the hook onto the litter and watch it rise up to the helicopter. Everything moved quickly and smoothly with the third and final patient; the extractions lasted only a couple of hours in total.

After all three subjects had been safely transported from the wreckage site to the LZ, all remaining personnel packed up their gear and headed back to the high staging area; Brad A. did a very important thing before leaving by turning off the ELT in the tail of the plane and unplugging the battery.

Meanwhile, back at the LZ, personnel from several agencies transported each patient from the Guard helicopter to an Air St. Luke's helicopter, with another St. Luke's craft then being sent out for the next patient. Once all the patients had been hoisted, transferred and transported to the hospital, all personnel at the LZ packed up and headed out except for Mike, Jake and Francisco, who waited to be sure the helicopter returned to pick up the last Air St. Luke's medical crew. Jamie sends special thanks to John, Nick and Sequoia Andregg from Emmett for transporting our people beyond where ordinary trucks could go and then for waiting hours in order to give us transportation back to base.

Back at the New York Corrals, we debriefed with other agencies, then headed toward home with a stop for pizza on the way.

This was a real multi-agency rescue; agencies cooperating included Owyhee County Sheriff's Office, Silver City Fire Department, Nampa Fire Department, Air National Guard, Air St. Luke's and IMSARU.

IMSARU personnel participating were Brad Acker, Judd Ballard, Francisco Castellon, Danny Cone, Jake Gillis, Steve Huffman, Mike Johnson, Linda Kearney, Tom Kearney, Owen Miller, Alisa Rettschlag, Gregg Rettschlag, Dan Scovel, Kris Scovel, Jamie Simpson, Mark Westerdoll, Tom Wheless and Everett Wood. In-Town Coordinator was Rod Knopp, assisted by Charlotte Gunn.

YES!! ANOTHER CORN BOOTH IS A-COMIN'!!

The Western Idaho Fair runs from Friday, August 17, through Sunday, August 26, this year, and we need all the help we can get. This issue's calendar includes several important dates for work parties; please help as much as you can. The big ones, of course, are setting up the booth at the Fairgrounds on Saturday, August 11, working during the Fair itself, and taking down the booth on Monday, August 27.

Arrangements have been under way for months—paper work, orders, etc.—and will continue right through the Fair. We hope we are going to have a brand new roof on our booth. Danny Cone and/or Tom Kearney will supervise putting up and taking down the booth. Carolyn Lyon will handle scheduling and ticket distribution, with Diane Mathews as coach. Gregg Rettschlag and Charlotte Gunn will handle nightly closing and other details.

Please sign up for as many shifts as you can handle. Include your neighbors, friends, spouse, teenage children (those under 18 can work only in the back tent); you would be amazed how many of your friends would love to join this adventure. There is no monetary pay, but there is lots of camaraderie, and several hours to visit the Fair either before or after one's shift...not to mention the great entertainment of people-watching.

P.S. – If you wondering why this is such a big deal, the answer is that the Corn Booth earns about half of our annual budget.

REQUEST TO ALL MEMBERS AND OTHERS ON OUR MAILING LIST

If you move or change your phone number (landline or cell), PLEASE let Rod know as soon as possible. If we can't reach a member by phone, it causes delays. If the Post Office returns your newsletter because the old address is not longer correct, it costs us money.

MISSING MUSHROOM HUNTER – JUNE 3, 2012 FROM REPORT BY ANN MOSER

An 82-year-old man went mushroom hunting in the Lake Fork Creek area near McCall on Saturday and did not return to where his wife was waiting. He was reported to be an insulin-dependent diabetic and “probably couldn’t walk very far.” Valley County searched the area well into the night but could not find him, and feared they had missed him in the dark. Rushing streams on two sides of the area made hearing problematic. They called and asked for K9 teams to help on Sunday morning.

We sent three K9 teams plus four additional people. (We always send an additional person to accompany each K9 team into the field, and added one to track communications in base camp.) This group left the Compound at 4 a.m. after very little sleep. The I.C. requested our teams to re-search part of the area that had been covered during the dark hours. They worked the assigned area for about two hours before receiving word that the missing man had been found, alive and apparently in good shape, sitting beside the water and waiting to be found. McCall Fire Rescue Team used an inflatable kayak to ferry him back across the water to the relief of all concerned. The subject had originally crossed via bridge, turned left and walked at least a couple of miles, moved up away from the river and walked back, missing the bridge and continuing another mile or so; searchers estimated that this man who “probably couldn’t walk very far” had covered six to seven miles. The best guess afterward was that since the subject had continued moving after dark, he and searchers had crossed paths, perhaps multiple times, without hearing each other because of the water noise.

IMSARU responders were Linda Kearney with Cayenne, Ann Moser with Watson, Jamie Simpson with Yoki, Brad Acker, John Ferguson, Jake Gillis and Tom Wheless.

SAMURAI SAILTOAD – RACE TO ROBIE CREEK – APRIL 21, 2012 --CHARLOTTE GUNN

We all hope for nice weather for outdoor events...but maybe not this nice. Sunshine is great; temperature of around 80 degrees F. is not so great when racers have not had a chance to train in heat. And the sections down between rock faces trapped and intensified that heat.

The race committee was well prepared, with frequent water stations loaded with filled cups and reminders to participants to be aware of what this half-marathon would demand of body and spirit. IMSARU was also well prepared, with 32 members on duty. We staffed 6 first-aid and communication stations along the course in addition to our 2 rovers on ATVs, 2 members at the summit as Operations Leader and communications, 3 in our command trailer at the finish, and an additional 8 members at the finish line to check on people who might need medical aid as they crossed that line, in the park, or in the bus line. Staff of Mores Creek Ambulance and Ada County Paramedics were available along the racecourse, and finished up at the park, where they were kept very busy rehydrating people with IVs. Rumor has it that when all the cots in both tents were full, an additional patient was accommodated on the floor of the command center trailer.

If this sounds like a lot of work in a long day, it was, but it was just the big day after lots of preliminary work. I am writing this a week after the event, and suspect the race committee is already evaluating this year’s race and thinking forward to 2013. Before the race, there were planning meetings that involved the various agencies. A week before the big day, Dan S.,

Kris, Mike J., John and Tom W. spent most of Sunday testing potential locations for our new repeater and the various aid stations in order to have the best possible communications during the race. On race day morning, Tom W. and Bill placed that repeater high above the race summit (much higher than is possible in years of late snowmelt) and personnel for each aid station had an exact location for their work. In the meantime, we had spent multiple Tuesday-evening meetings on first aid refresher sessions and preparing supplies; on Friday evening a group took the equipment up to Robie Creek Park where they set up the command center trailer and the two aid tents; and yes, we had to dismantle all that stuff, return it to the Compound and put it away on Saturday evening.

Was it worth it? Yes. This is a major annual event that brings entrants from all across the country but mostly from the local area. There were apparently no major injuries. The various agencies worked smoothly together. And the tee-shirts are bright and clever.

IMSARU participants included: Brad Acker, Ron Anderson (Rover 2 on ATV), Judd Ballard, Delinda Castellon, Danny Cone, John Ferguson, Ann Finley, Jake Gillis, Charlotte Gunn, Aimee Hastriter, Dale Hyatt Jr., Steve Huffman, Mike Johnson, Kim Juda, Linda Kearney, Tom Kearney, Carl Kidwell (lead for our first aid), Amanda Leader, Mike Mancuso, Kris Scovel (lead at finish line command trailer), Bill Lindenau (Rover 1 on ATV), Ann Moser, Alisa Rettschlag, Gregg Rettschlag, Dan Scovel (O.L. at summit), Colin Sesek, Jamie Simpson, Luke Sugden, Tom Wheless, Everett Wood, Rose Wood, Jimmie Yorgensen.

[Final Note: Ron Anderson was about to leave us for a new job in Washington State, so perhaps we should have allowed him to use his chosen designation as “Red Rover.” On the other hand, he settled for Rover 2 in preference to Tom K’s suggestion of “Rollover Rover.” We miss you, Ron.]

A PERSONAL THANK-YOU NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Producing a newsletter even six times a year is more than one person can do alone, and I would like to thank all those who have helped me get it done. The last issue (March-April) would never have happened without Diane Mathews helping me with the computer and printer plus folding and applying the stickers, Linda Kearney collating that huge stack of pages, David Oren folding for several hours and Susan Norton folding and applying stickers. As always, Rod Knopp updated the mailing list and printed the mailing labels.

Many thanks to all of you who have done similar tasks in the past and will be doing them in the future.

--Charlotte Gunn

AND NOW A REQUEST TO ALL MEMBERS AND OTHERS ON OUR MAILING LIST:

If you move or change your phone number (landline or cell), PLEASE let Rod know as soon as possible. If we can’t reach a member by phone, it can cause frustrating delays. And if the Post Office returns your newsletter because the old address is no longer correct, it costs us about half a dollar each time.

CALENDAR

IF YOU ARE AN APPLICANT WHO NEEDS TO TAKE THE FIELD CERTIFICATION CLASS, contact Tom Kearney ASAP at 921-9454 or Kearney@cableone.net to get scheduled.

June 16	SAR Field Training – ELT	Time & Place TBA
June 19	Medical Training	7:30 p.m.
June 26	Business Meeting	7:30 p.m.
July 3	General Meeting	7:30 p.m.
July 10	SAR Training – Mock Mission	7:30 p.m.
July 14-15	SAR Field Training – Mock Mission	Time & Place TBA
July 17	Medical Training	7:30 p.m.
July 24	Business Meeting	7:30 p.m.
July 27-29	JHPTS Tracking Class in Fairfield	
July 31	Clean & Inventory Corn Booth Equipment & Supplies	7:30 p.m.
Aug. 7	Load Corn Booth Equipment & Supplies	7:30 p.m.
Aug. 11	Set up Corn Booth at Fairgrounds	9:00 a.m.
Aug. 14	NO MEETING at Compound; may still need help with Corn Booth prep	
Aug. 17-26	Corn Booth at the Western Idaho Fair – Sign up for shifts!	
Aug. 27	Take down Corn Booth – Starting at 1 p.m.; come as soon as you can.	
Aug. 28	Finish putting away Corn Booth; Business Meeting	7:30 p.m.
Sept. 4	General Meeting	7:30 p.m.
Sept. 11	SAR Training	7:30 p.m.
Sept. 14-16	In-House Tracker Training at Grayback Gulch Campground	
Sept. 18	Medical Training	7:30 p.m.
Sept. 25	Business Meeting	7:30 p.m.

“MEETING OF THE MINDS” MEETS IMSARU – TWICE --ANN FINLEY

During the winter I was invited to speak about IMSARU at Meeting of the Minds, a gathering of 55-and-over folks held weekly at Boise’s downtown Senior Center. The talk went well. The audience was enthusiastic about IMSARU; in fact, after hearing of the various specialty teams within the Unit, some people requested a repeat of the talk...and this time, perhaps, could a search dog be brought along? One person went so far as to obtain permission for a dog to visit the heretofore dogless sanctuary of the Senior Center.

Enter Cai. Cai (short for Cayenne) may be the smallest dog on the K9 Team, but she trains with the big kids virtually every week somewhere in the foothills, forests and sagebrush deserts that make up much of southwestern Idaho. Her handler, Linda Kearney, has made sure that Cai excels at a variety of tasks, from “Go find” on searches to “meet and greet” at big-box stores during holiday rush hours. Shoppers almost invariably break out in smiles at sight of the friendly little dog at the IMSARU stand.

But this was different: There was no scent cone to be sniffed through the sagebrush steppe, no hiding place to be checked out and either dismissed or investigated further. No hustle and bustle of shoppers. Just a bare room with more than a dozen strangers sitting around a rectangle of tables, more or less quietly focused on the little black dog. Different, certainly, from anything Cai was used to. But it was okay. With Linda coaching her in a mock search, Cai got into the spirit of the thing and it was business as usual...just another IMSARU dog, doing her job.

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

For cash donations:

Members of Mountain West Outdoor Club

April Baker via The Wells Fargo Community Support Campaign

Idaho Capital City Kennel Club in support of IMSARU’s K9 teams

Thomas and Carol Partain in memory of Kevin Clemens

Thyne Murdoch

Sojourners

Additional donations in memory of George Gunn since the last issue:

Donna Ehrenreich

James C. Stark

Helen Norton

Phil and Melinda Sander

Sharon Ward

Kris Walker

Craig Estell

Diane and Steve Fields

Sandra Capri

Ray and Shirley Burggraf

Mrs. Charles Scovel

Elizabeth Scott

Many thanks also to the Mountain Rescue Association Honor Guard who came to Boise to honor George at the April 14 celebration of his life: Tim Kovacs from Glendale AZ, Roy West from South Ogden UT and Mike Voracheck from Idaho Falls ID. They were joined by local bagpiper Eddie Hart and drummer Dennis McLaughlin for a very impressive ceremony.

**IMSARU MEMBERS ATTEND WASARCON, MAY 14-20, 2012
--JIMMIE YORGENSEN**

The 43rd annual Washington State Search and Rescue Conference was held at the Klickitat County Fairgrounds in Goldendale, WA. It was the first time Klickitat County had hosted the conference. Sheriff Rick McComas, SAR Coordinator Jeff King and the many volunteers from the local search and rescue unit did a great job with their organization, hard work and game plan. Close to 600 people attended from numerous states and provinces and from as far away as New Zealand.

The conference provided over 80 different class titles, with many taught more than once. With the help of many sponsors and vendors, the conference was made very affordable with free dry camping and eight meals included. It was an excellent experience for all.

Members attending from IMSARU were Danny Cone, Amanda Leader and Jimmie Yorgensen. Next year's conference will be May 6-12, 2013, at Ellensburg, WA. Put it on your calendar!

**MAP AND COMPASS FIELD TRAINING – MAY 12, 2012
--CHARLOTTE GUNN**

In these days of electronic navigation, it's easy to ignore the old map and compass, but there are several reasons to keep our skills polished, including the fact that one's GPS can fail due to tired batteries, inability to pick up satellites in some locations, inexplicable machine rebellion, etc. and that the map can provide a wider area view to orient the user to what the GPS shows. And since it's true that there are areas where a compass is unreliable (we had a search in Oregon in such a place a few years ago, but fortunately the locals knew and warned us) the wise searcher is happy to carry and use both methods.

So how well do you handle declination, triangulation, orienting a map, locating your position on that map, matching what you see on the map with what you see around you, estimating how far you have traveled? After a quick review on Tuesday evening, seven of us went out to Bonneville Point on Saturday morning to work with a compass course Mike and Gregg had previously laid out, and those who had strong skills helped those who either had never learned or had forgotten via disuse. Most of us improved our measurement of distance by pacing, after starting out way long or way short. And declination got easier as we practiced, though the ones with compasses that could dial in the declination and keep it were the objects of envy. (Anyone planning to upgrade in the compass department now knows a few details to look for.)

Members participating in the field session were: Delinda Castillon, John Ferguson, Charlotte Gunn, Steve Huffman, Mike Johnson, Linda Kearney and Gregg Rettschlag. As the rest of us headed for home, John was taking off on his mountain bike to ride what might be a trail into the hills. Since he returned safely, his navigation skills must have been adequate.

**K9 TEAM CERTIFICATION TESTING NEAR KETCHUM
MAY 18-20, 2012
--TOM WHELESS**

This weekend I volunteered to be a test subject for some canine certification testing with the National Search Dog Alliance. Tests were offered for area search and human remains detection (HRD). (I was not a suitable subject for the latter.)

The area testing took place about 16 miles north of Ketchum, near a beautiful undeveloped camping area along Highway 75, with a view of the mountains which were still snow-capped at this time of year. Cam Daggett, a resident of the area, was in charge of the weekend's testing.

The schedule was fairly busy because not only were some of our IMSARU members seeking certification or re-certification (which has to be done every two years) but also local SAR members and teams from Snake River Search in eastern Idaho.

The rule was that subjects could not be members of the same group as the team being tested, because the dogs might be too familiar with their scent or it might somehow introduce an unfair bias into the test. I served as a subject in the area scent tests for three teams from other groups. Each daylight test covered over one hundred acres, with two subjects concealed within that area and a time limit of three hours. To make it a more realistic scenario, the subjects were placed an hour before the test started, and were covered with a camo fabric.

The handler being tested was given a paper map with the search boundaries marked on it as well as GPS coordinates of the same boundaries so that he/she could keep track of whether the team was in the search area. The handler had to decide on the best search strategy, taking into account terrain (one area was mostly steep hills and the other included lots of boggy ground) and local weather conditions. The dog had to locate each subject, alert the handler to the find, and take the handler to the subject.

In addition to two daytime tests, I also volunteered to be the subject for a night area test of Dave Forker and his dog Loki. This test involved a single subject, forty acres, and a time limit of two hours. This was my first experience as subject for a night area test and, since I had at this point not been able to take a shower for almost three days, it was generally expected that the dog would not have too much trouble locating me in the darkness.

I found myself a comfortable seat among the rocks at the base of a small hill with an excellent view (in daylight) of most of the search area and was waiting for complete darkness and the start of the test when my imagination started to become active: cougars, bears, wolves, wolverines, badgers, skunks and porcupines...Oh my! Then I heard a small noise nearby, which was either a small rock dislodged from the hill or one of the aforementioned denizens of the dark. Looking about to try and determine which it was, I managed to convince myself for a brief uncomfortable minute that a nearby rock above me, with two projecting points, was actually the head of a rather large wolf who was trying to decide whether I would make a tasty snack. It took me several minutes to realize that a wolf surely would have moved by then and I was safe.

Finally I saw Dave, Loki and Cam drive up in the distance and park the truck, and the test began. All of the searchers were well equipped with lights, including Loki who had two large light sticks attached to his harness. I had a good view of them as they were working their way around the edge of the search area, when suddenly one of the dots of light took off rather quickly away from the others. Since I was certain that neither Dave nor Cam was capable of moving that fast, I surmised that Loki had decided to take a break from his searching duties to pursue a critter of some sort. Frantic cries of "Loki, Loki" from one of the other two dots of light suggested I was probably correct.

Loki finally tired of his little diversion, two dots of light became three again, and the search continued. The luminous trio started to cross the hill directly below me and Loki apparently picked up my scent on the ground from where I had walked to my hiding place two hours before. He made a false start toward the road, then turned and made a beeline directly toward me. Arriving at my location, he decided the snacks in my pack would be a good reward for his nighttime efforts. Then he remembered he was supposed to return to Dave and let him know that he had found me, led Dave back to me, and they successfully completed their nocturnal adventure.

NOTES: The HRD testing, conducted by Norma Snelling, ran at the same time as the area tests but in different locations. It included building, roadside, vehicle and two area tests. Heidi Woog of Blaine County and Rena Ferguson of Snake River Search, with their dogs, passed the HRD test. Linda Kearney of IMSARU and Patti Allen of Snake River Search, with their dogs, passed the daylight area test. Dave Forker of Snake River Search and his dog passed the night area test.

In addition to challenging terrain, the area scent teams got to deal with fickle winds and a porcupine. And those of us who were tent camping were reminded that May is not summer when you are at an elevation of 6,600 feet.



Linda Kearney and Cayenne, with evaluator Cam Daggett after successfully completing the test. — Photo by T. Wheless

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Transport to rescue scene after plane crash. (Don't try this at home, kids!)

—Photo by A. Rettschlag