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**RESCUE**

**IDAHO MOUNTAIN SEARCH  
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FOUNDING MEMBER:  
**MOUNTAIN RESCUE  
ASSOCIATION**



**TOUR DE VOLCANOS—JULY 23-25, 2004  
--BRAD ACKER**

It was a beautiful April morning when Bob Meredith, Kris Walker and I set out for a 370-mile road trip and a possible attempt at the summit of Mt. Hood, the tallest mountain in Oregon at 11,237 feet. After we packed all the ropes, ice axes, ice screws (and don't forget pillows) into Kris's van I was ready for a little time travel. Time travel, you ask? If you must ask, you have never traveled with me, because as soon as I'm in that back seat I'm out cold. Time travel—it's a great skill for a SAR volunteer. The next thing I hear is "Brad, wake up! We're in Hood River."



OK, I'll cut right to the chase. We never made it to the summit of Mt. Hood; heck, we didn't even make a serious attempt. Kris got the closest, just about 1,200 feet below the summit on the snowfields above Coopers Spur. That does not mean we did not have a good time, see a lot of country, set a few ice screws, talk to a lot of people, and eat at several good cafes. Following is the account of what turned out to be more of a tour of eastern Oregon and Washington volcanos.

As I wiped the sleep from my eyes, we swaggered into Egg Harbor Café in downtown Hood River. The food was good and the view even better. We were looking north across the Columbia River at the slopes of Mt. Adams. (At the time we did not even know it was Mt.

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Adams; we had to ask our waitress.) We also did not know we would be sleeping on the slope of that mountain the next night. We left Hood River behind and headed up to Mt. Hood.

We drove up the Cooper Spur Road and made it to the Cloud Cap campground at 5,900 feet. This is the preferred campground for climbing from this side of the mountain, and this is very evident between the hours of one and three a.m. From under my tarp, I counted three bands of gypsies and two herds of elephants heading up the mountain. Unfortunately, we did not have ear plugs. I've gotten a better night's sleep on a gym floor surrounded by 100 snoring SAR volunteers.



Morning came later for us but still early enough for me. Soon we were high on the slopes of Mt. Hood and looking down on the Eliot Glacier. Bob noted the drastic retreat of the glacier since his last visit. Bob told us how the path once crossed the ice-covered toe of the glacier; a new footbridge has since been built to cross the river flowing out of the glacier. Bob is no spring chicken, and he is in great shape, but when a person can spot glacial change it means he has spent lots of time in the mountains. We were on the Cooper Spur when we finally

decided that ice climbing on the Eliot Glacier would be the event of the day rather than a summit attempt.

Bob and I headed toward the ice falls and Kris continued up the Cooper Spur for a better view. After a short lunch, Bob and I put on our crampons, roped up and got out our ice tools. I was so excited to be ice climbing in July! We did not have an epic climb in mind or any huge vertical walls, but we did have a nice route with some large ice blocks to climb, a fun traverse and a descent threading and crossing a few crevasses. We made a couple of pitches up our route, found a good location to take a few photos for our technical training manual, and were able to test out some new ice protection.

It was at about this point that we were reminded that glaciers are dynamic, always shifting and moving. In this process, they make a lot of noise. We could hear what sounded like a huge block of ice falling and breaking up. We scanned our surroundings but could not see any movement. After a few more rumbles, we concluded this was all subsurface activity. I was glad that at this time we would not have to dodge large blocks of icefall, but I still was not very excited about the possibility of being present for the birth of a new crevasse. All was well; we continued our traverse and started our descent. It was at this point, about 1 p.m., that we got the op-

portunity to dodge large ice blocks. It started the same way these things most often do, with noise from above, followed by a wide-eyed scream of "ICE!" I was below when the large block came into view on the horizon above Bob. After one bounce, entropy took full effect and the large block exploded into several pieces--still something to worry about but not the full-on climber-squishing power it once was. We each made a few steps to the side and the danger passed us.



We retreated off the glacier and met up with Kris after his ascent to the 10,000 foot level on the Cooper Spur. We soon made it back to Cloud Cap camp and decided that another night of listening to climbers departing at 3 a.m. was not our idea of a good night's sleep. Boy, did we have another think coming! Our trail food had worn out its welcome, so we headed toward Government Camp in search of a hot meal. On the way, Bob mentioned a climbing club with a lodge in the area. The Mazamas, a club dedicated to exploration of the mountains, was formed on the summit of

Mt. Hood in 1894. Our intentions were to rub some elbows, drop an MRA name or two and get some dinner; we were even ready to pay for it if we had to. As luck would have it, it was the club's workday. We were met by a large pile of firewood being stacked for winter supply. So after a short tour we left the wood stacking behind and parted with a quick "Nesika Klatawa Salahe." You will just have to check out the Mazama web page for the meaning of that one.

After a great dinner in Government Camp, we headed toward Trout Lake, the south gateway to Mt. Adams. Our goal was to check out the area and get some good info about routes. After a quick stop at the Trout Lake Gas Station and Café, we found a great little campsite on the side of a side road. Well, this was all too good to be true. Just as Arlo Guthrie found trouble on the side of a side road, so did we. It was about 1 a.m. when I heard the ringing of the bells. Sheep bells, that is. We had heard a few over dinner, but it seemed that they just passed by. Well, guess what: They and all their friends returned. So now it's 1 a.m. and I'm in my underwear, chasing sheep down the road and through the woods to make sure they do not return again. I guess it's all in a night's work. We still had a pretty good night's sleep.

Not making it to the summit of Hood did not take the wind out of our sails, but we were missing some air out of one of the van's tires. We jumped into action and had that tire changed in no time. It was back to the Trout Lake Gas Station and Café for our one-stop shopping, tire plugging and country fried steak. Once more the local food did not disappoint. With our bellies full, we gathered climbing information and maps from the local Forest Service office then started back to Boise, our minds already on the next trip.

## **LOOK FORWARD TO THESE EVENTS**

### **CHRISTMAS PARTY—DECEMBER 11**

Our annual Christmas Party will again be held at the social center of Western Village, the mobile home unit at 9390 Ustick Avenue, and hosted by Judy and Woody Hart. Exact time is to be set, but it will be early evening, starting with a potluck supper. The unit will supply coffee, tea, soft drinks and table settings; participants will bring food to share. We hope there will be another great media presentation by the Newlands (hint, hint).

Whisper your suggestions for non-serious awards (remembering funny or embarrassing moments of the year) to Diane Mathews or Charlotte Gunn. They promise not to reveal who “told.”

Please take a few minutes to consider which IMSARU members have contributed more than their share to make things happen during 2004. Write a short note nominating one or more of these people to receive serious recognition, include a few words about why, and give the note to Charlotte Gunn by November 23 so there will be time to prepare the awards. (Yes, Rod will make the presentations, as usual, but he expects to be out of town for a large part of November—and there is quite a bit of lead time for such a project.)

### **PREPARING FOR M.R.A. RECERTIFICATION IN 2005**

As members of the Mountain Rescue Association, we must recertify our team skills every five years in three areas: Ice and Snow Rescue, Search Management, Technical Rock Rescue. This recertification testing will be done as a regional activity. Ice and Snow testing will be hosted by the Salt Lake County team on the weekend of March 4-6. Search Management and Technical Rock Rescue will be hosted by us on the weekend of July 15-17. Needless to say, our unit’s training program for the first half of 2005 will be aimed toward these recertification tests.

Bob Meredith, Technical Director, will be coordinating much of this training, and it will probably include additional sessions besides the routine monthly training dates. IMSARU is obligated to send a team of at least five rescue members plus two qualified examiners for each skill. Those who are not yet technically qualified need to pitch in and help with support, logistics, etc., as well as to cover other unit obligations so the specialists are more free to train.

## **CORN BOOTH 2004 --TOM KEARNEY**

Thanks to the many volunteers who shucked, trimmed, rinsed, cooked, skewered, buttered, wrapped and sold the corn, this year’s event was very successful. Even the weather cooperated nicely by cooling off halfway through the first Saturday, and remaining that way for the rest of the week.

Being a “corn booth newbie,” I wasn’t quite sure what everyone was talking about. It all started on a Tuesday night when we loaded the trailers (graciously supplied by Jeff and Tim) with the assorted, heavy, and awkward pieces that were required. I didn’t think the storage room could hold that much! With plenty of willing, able-bodied people the loading went very quickly. “That wasn’t too bad,” I thought as we left the compound, blissfully unaware what lay ahead.

Saturday morning we met again, and began assembling the pieces. Nowhere did I see any instructions, but everyone except yours truly seemed to know what piece went where, and what the next step was. Before long, the structure was up, the floor was in, and the other odds and ends were in their proper place.

I was lucky enough to work the first Friday night, just before the cooler weather. Right. I worked with a great team; we even had a guest appearance of a hawk, and Sponge Bob and his main squeeze Barbara (ask Jeanine about them). I learned the finer art of trimming the corn (watch your fingers!), cooking the corn (watch the hot water) and skewering the corn (watch your fingers). The time flew by, and before long it was time to shut down for the night.



I worked the last Saturday and was able to put my new-found talents to use. Again, I worked with a really great team, and the time passed very quickly.

(Un)fortunately, I missed the disassembly and packing up on Sunday, but I did get to the Compound in time to help with the unloading and putting away of the equipment. Once again, thanks to everyone’s help, the task was completed in no time.

I enjoyed working with everyone – and am looking forward to next year.

Special thanks to some people who did way beyond their share to make this project successful: Martha Vandivort (despite travel and illness) and Linda Kearney filled the schedule shifts with volunteers. Everett and Rose Wood, Dan and Jeannie Iverson, Terry and Susan Read worked all of the weekday daytime shifts; Terry and Susan also worked on Sunday and regularly took the aprons home to wash them—then showed up with brand new replacement aprons. Jeff Munn organized the set-up and take-down of the booth (setting new speed records for both events, thanks to all the members who pitched in); he also picked up the money every night, ran the register tapes for reports, and adjusted the next day’s corn order when necessary.

## **K9 WATER TRAINING IN OREGON, SEPTEMBER 10-12, 2004 --CHARLOTTE GUNN**

K9 Search Teams of Oregon sponsored a water training weekend near McMinnville, and the first challenge was to get there. We out-of-staters found the passage through the Portland area a bit intimidating, but finally made it. (A friend confesses that she and her mother, trying to make their way out of the Portland area to I-84, once resorted to following a big truck with a Canyon County, Idaho license plate, figuring it was probably headed where they wanted to go. It was.)



Friday's training was with divers at Henry Hagg Lake, where we had two boats and several volunteer divers, as well as a land cadaver course and a picnic shelter with electrical power for the PowerPoint presentation. Vickie King, from Salt Lake City, was the instructor, and she sent the fifteen dog teams right to work. Beginning dogs could do familiarization exercises in shallow water; more advanced teams could ask for the kind of problem they wanted.

On Saturday and Sunday, we were at Rainbow Lake, which is part of an educational center in the woods. There were again

two boats, but now we worked only on cadaver material. On both days, there were land cadaver areas as well, and on Sunday, a challenging cadaver-in-a-stream problem. (Much of the challenge involved trying to keep one's footing and avoid hitting one's head on the low bridge.)

Participants included some of the dog teams that had worked on the search for two military pilots missing after their jets collided at the Columbia River Gorge, and we all appreciated the firsthand report on that mission. And we had a PowerPoint presentation on use of side-scan sonar, which was another tool on that same search. This time was also a good opportunity to share ideas and techniques. I have already bought a set of wide clay flowerpots like Deb Walker used over cadaver sources. It is likely that several people will try out various ways to use environmentally safe dye to trace patterns of water movement where they are working.

Many thanks to Nancy Walker and all the others who did so much work to set up this seminar. It was a privilege to work with you. IMSARU participants included Tom Kearney with Breeze, and George and Charlotte Gunn with Xena.

## THANK YOU FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT!

The Race to Robie Creek Committee gave us a generous donation for our support at their annual event in April.

The Gannett Foundation gave us a grant to buy a satellite phone for use in those backcountry areas where no other communication is operable.

The United Way of Treasure Valley has forwarded more donations from individuals who designated us as recipient.

The HP Employee Charitable Giving Program, managed by WorldReach, Inc., continues to forward individual donations, matched by the company.

Cornelia Sprung made a cash donation to our Technical Team.

Jim and Toni Noland, who work with us regularly, also added cash.

Terry and Susan Read donated four dozen new aprons for our Corn Booth workers. (Yes, we are discarding the old worn and stained ones.)

Idaho Mountain Search and Rescue Unit, Inc. is an all-volunteer, non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation that responds to requests from law enforcement officers for aid in search and/or rescue, and also does safety education presentations to a wide variety of groups. We NEVER charge for our services, and we will use these donations to help maintain our readiness to “go wherever, whenever we are needed.”

## OFFICERS ELECTED FOR 2005

As specified in our by-laws, we elected officers for the coming year at our first meeting in October. Kris Scovel and Martha Vandivort had done their job of securing at least one candidate for each office; in most cases, the 2004 officers consented to continue for another year if elected. Anyone present could also nominate from the floor or volunteer to run. In the following list, asterisks indicate people who did not hold office this past year.

President – Jerry Newland

Vice President – Dan Scovel

Coordinator – Rod Knopp

Secretary – Kris Scovel

Treasurer – Phil O’Bryan

Logistics Director – Chris Harry

Rescue Director – Bob Meredith

Public Relations Director – Leslie Robertson\*

Medical Director – Mick Brunson\*

Training Director – George Gunn

Facilities Manager – Marc Buursink

Congratulations to our officers, and many thanks for being willing to do the extra work that keeps us going. Also, this is a reminder to everyone that it is not the officers’ job to *do* everything, only to see that it gets done. All members are obligated to pitch in and help whenever and wherever possible.

## K9 TRAINING IN CODY, WYOMING—AUGUST 19-21, 2004 --CHARLOTTE GUNN

Northwest K9, in the person of K.T. Irwin, announced a group training opportunity for tracking, cadaver and water dogs. It was very clearly stated that this was not a seminar with an outside expert as instructor but a mutual learning occasion, and it was a pleasure to work with a dozen K9 handlers who pitched in to load and unload equipment, lay tracks for each other's dogs, coach the novices...whatever needed to be done.



The Northwest College Research Center is a gorgeous camp above Cody; at about 8,000 feet, it's high enough to make us flatlanders puff but well worth the effort. Actual training was at Newton Lakes, just outside Cody, where teams could work from boats for multiple divers and/or a cadaver scenario, or train on cadaver samples on land, or run tracks. The last day's outdoor activities ended a bit earlier than planned when big black clouds threatened those on the water and a large rattlesnake informed K.T. that *he* claimed the area being used for tracking. We also had classroom sessions at the SAR center (a presentation on "the Yosemite murders" that was a great example of how varied resources—from mantracking to search dogs to putting to-



Don't worry. Yeti will find you.

gether clues—worked in solving some highly-publicized murders.) and at the camp (Stress Management for SAR personnel).

Many thanks to all the people who made this training possible, including the volunteer divers and boat handlers, the camp staff who fed us so well, and K.T. and friends who organized this whole event. Special thanks go to the diver who used his waterproof camera to take pictures of the working dogs as they loomed over him in the boats, and then made those pictures available to all of us handlers.

**PRIEST LAKE SEARCH**  
**AUGUST 25–SEPTEMBER 2 AND SEPTEMBER 13-17, 2004**  
**--GENE RALSTON**

**NOTE:** Specific details regarding relative locations (North, East, South and West) have been disguised to protect location information from public dissemination.

On July 30, 2004, a report was made to the Bonner County Sheriff's Office that a sailboat was found aground on Eight Mile Island on Priest Lake. The boat was owned and piloted by a fireman from Kennewick, Washington. An extensive ground, air and water search was unsuccessful.

We learned of the incident while working on a project in the Tri-cities area and called the Kennewick Fire Department (KFD) to discuss the use of side scan sonar in the search. Following several phone calls and exchange of information with the Bonner County Sheriff's Office, the KFD requested our assistance. We suggested using water-trained search dogs to assist and gave the Bonner County Sheriff's Office and the KFD the names of several individuals to contact.



Ralstons' work boat at Eight Mile Island, near where the sailboat was found.

We traveled to Kennewick and met with KFD personnel and the victim's family to discuss search strategy. Using all the information provided, it was decided to search an area approximately one mile long and one-half mile wide along the VZ side of the island.

We began search operations on August 25. Water depths in the area were approximately 350 feet and the bottom appeared to be very clean of rocks and debris. We were able to scan at a range of 164 feet and clearly see fish as small as 18 inches. During the midafternoon, we imaged an object in approximately 347 feet of water which drew our attention. It was not particularly convincing as being our subject, but needed further investigating. We scanned the object multiple times at a range of 66 feet, and some of the images were more convincing than others. Although we could not positively identify it as our subject, we could not rule it out. One deputy suggested it could be a bear, since bears are known to swim across the lake to islands, looking for food.

The following day, Deb Tirmenstein, a search dog handler from Missoula, Montana, arrived with two water-trained search dogs to assist. A Priest Lake Search and Rescue person and his Zodiac boat assisted her. She and her dogs covered most of the planned search area and had several very strong alerts to the Z side of the island. During this time a fairly strong wind was blowing consistently from the VX. Late in the AM and again in the PM with a second dog, they briefly worked in the area of the sonar-identified target. Neither dog showed much interest in the area of the sonar-identified object, which was some distance upwind from their area of earlier interest. However, winds were strong and shifting from out of the V, to the X and finally out of the YZ during this time. The side scan sonar search was extended into the area of the strong dog alerts, with nothing of interest being discovered.

The next day, the winds were light and consistently out of the V. Deb took her dog, Ruby, back into the search area and Ruby showed mild interest in the area of her strong alerts the previous day. However, when Ruby was taken into the area closer to the object discovered by side scan sonar, she absolutely went wild with alerts. Ruby had to be taken out of the area to get her to calm down. She reacted similarly on a subsequent trip into the search area.

Efforts were made to locate a technical diver willing to dive to the suspicious object in 350 feet of water. It was decided to first try to obtain underwater video of the object before risking a dive to that depth. The Kootenai County dive team was contacted and agreed to assist with their underwater drop camera on August 27. High winds complicated getting the underwater camera positioned over the object and the dive team agreed to return the following day. Again, winds complicated the search effort for the second day and it was decided to try to locate a remote operated vehicle (ROV) to inspect the object.

After exhausting several possibilities of ROV support, including one from the Navy submarine testing facility on Lake Pend Oreille, the use of a small ROV was organized. While the ROV was in transit, side scan operations continued but identified no new targets.

The ROV arrived mid-day on September 1. By the time the ROV could be set up and deployed, the winds had increased, eventually bringing heavy rain and high wind gusts which caused the vessel deploying the ROV to drag its two anchors and the ROV away from the target area.

The following morning an acoustic target was placed near the object of interest and the ROV deployment vessel was again anchored – this time with three anchors. Although the winds were substantial and threatening weather was again imminent, the anchors held while the ROV was deployed.

The ROV was equipped with scanning sonar, much like aircraft radar, to help guide it to intended targets. With Gene at the helm of the ROV and a quickly trained KFD fireman, Rusty Bachman, providing guidance using the scanning sonar, the ROV was flown to the object of interest.

None of the people on board the ROV deployment vessel were prepared for what was about to be discovered. Indeed the object was a human body, not a bear, but it was readily evident that it was not a recent drowning victim. Although it retained all of the form of a human body, it was in an advanced stage of deterioration. Estimates of the length of time underwater ranged from 15 to more than 20 years.

Following observation and video recording of most of the form and substance, an attempt was made to recover the body. It was quickly discovered that the body was incredibly fragile and broke apart much like caked salt would if it were disturbed. Eventually a small piece of material was recovered using the manipulator arm and jaws and brought to the surface.

No record of another missing person at this location is known. Although five or six persons are known to remain missing in Priest Lake, none are known to be in this area. The hull of what appears to be a 16-foot-long boat was found about 250 feet away from this person. It may be reasonable to assume it is related to this person. Bonner County authorities are searching all available records to assist in discovering the identity of this person. It has been learned that a man went missing in this general area sometime before 1910.

We returned to Priest Lake and continued the search September 13 through 17. We expanded the search area, but did not locate the missing fireman. The search for the missing fireman will continue as time allows.

A report from the search dog handler, Deb Tirmenstein, follows:

**PRIEST LAKE SEARCH: SEARCH DOG DETAILS**  
**--DEB TIRMENSTEIN**

**THURSDAY, August 26**

Thursday was a miserable day to work a dog. Reports from a nearby RAWS at Priest Lake, ID indicated that the area received 0.72 inch of precipitation on the 26<sup>th</sup>. Much of this was received while we were attempting to work the dogs. Reports indicate that winds were consistent out of the V in the early AM hours but had shifted to out of the X by late AM. By the afternoon, winds were out of the YZ and windspeeds had also increased. On Thursday, Ruby began working at about 11:30 AM – noon (MST). She alerted to the “Z” of the island early on as described. At that time the wind appeared to be out of the “V”. Sometime later, after we had finished with the “Z” side of the island, we took Ruby into the area that contained the target Gene had located. After lunch (after 3:30 - 4:00 PM or so) we began working Fergus in this general area too. Neither dog alerted. The boat operator made several short passes to the “Y” of the target area or perhaps very near the target area.

On Thursday I was not able to grid very effectively at times. The boat operator was not familiar with water dogs and tended to run parallel to the wind, with the wind often at our backs. The boat's speed was too high at many times for us to feel comfortable with our coverage (up to 35 mph!) I believe our coverage could have been much better. At times the weather conditions were not favorable and shifting winds may have prevented us from adequately covering the target area.

### **FRIDAY, August 27**

On Friday, I was not able to get started until almost 2:30 PM due to mechanical problems with the boat and associated logistical difficulties. Jamie joined us on Friday. We began working in the "YX" part of Cavanaugh Bay and, with Jamie's help, were able to grid effectively with benefit of the wind. She was able to direct the boat operator and keep the speed to less than 5 mph while searching. Our coverage was very much improved and the weather conditions were also quite good. The winds seemed to be consistently out of the "V" at an estimated 0-6 mph. Ruby alerted in the vicinity of the target as Gene described.

### **SATURDAY, August 28**

A member of the local SAR team wanted Ruby to revisit the area of the previous day's alert to demonstrate "an alert" to his teammates. Various people were arriving at different times and he originally wanted us to return to that area several times on Saturday. I explained that it was hard on Ruby and hard on me too! I agreed to take Ruby back to the target area once so the local team could view our work. We worked Ruby from about 11:30 AM to ~12:30 PM. Winds were again consistent from the "V" at approximately 3-6 mph. Conditions were again very favorable.

During this return trip, I did everything I could to avoid cueing Ruby in any way. I did not give her any specific commands and Vince, the boat operator, took us into this area from a completely different direction. Vince was able to grid slowly and carefully. Ruby again alerted in the vicinity of the target Gene had observed on his sonar. This alert was even stronger than her alert on Friday. Ruby's main focus was just to the "Y" (downwind) of the target area. In addition to barking and clawing at the water, Ruby also grabbed a rope in Vince's boat and began tugging as we went to the "V" of the target. I interpreted this as some type of "self-rewarding" behavior since I had not acknowledged her behavior in any way.

We switched boats after lunch and began to grid a bit farther to the "Z". The boat that we (Fergus, Deb, and Jamie) were in during the PM was quite high off of the water which made working much more difficult for the dog. We had no alerts or interest. Later in the day (around 2:30-3:00 PM), we worked slowly back into the target area with Fergus. At this time, the wind seemed to be out of the "V" or "VZ". Fergus alerted in the same area as Ruby had previously alerted. However, her alert here was very subtle.

Fergus reacts in a subtle way if the scent source is subtle or more faint. If it is stronger, her reaction is typically less subtle. Ruby reacts somewhat differently. If she "determines" that she has scent her reaction tends to be "full-blown" regardless of how faint or strong the scent source. Both dogs were trained in the same way but somehow react a little differently.