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RESCUE

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

MEMBER:
**MOUNTAIN RESCUE
ASSOCIATION**
SINCE 1960



CHRISTMAS PARTY – DECEMBER 5, 1999

--BY CHARLOTTE GUNN

Our annual Christmas party is a multi-purpose event. It's a scheduled time to retell stories of past events, to publicly acknowledge some of our members who have made outstanding contributions to the unit during the past year, to laugh at memories of some of our lighter moments, and to spend some unpressured time with people whom we normally see only in the course of our "business." As always, it was a team effort to make the party happen. We thank everyone who pitched in to set up at the start and to clean up at the end. In addition, special thanks go to: Harry Kindelberger for arranging our use of the Police Clubhouse. Aimee Hastriter for coordinating the arrangements, supplies, set-up. Pam Green and Rod Knopp for handling the serious awards. Pam's mother for cooking the turkey. Diane Mathews for producing so many humorous awards even though she was also dealing with her dog's surgery.



Pam Green receives "The Rock" award for 1999 from Coordinator Rod Knopp.

SERIOUS AWARDS

Rick Cudd presented a special award to *Aimee Hastriter* for her exhibition of the qualities a rescuer needs while dealing with some major stress during the cave rescue training.

Pam Green presented membership patches and the new rockers to all members present. She also presented the following service awards:

(see Christmas Party page 3)

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WORK PARTY AT THE COMPOUND, NOVEMBER 13 --BY CHARLOTTE GUNN

Mid-November is way too late to be raking leaves and installing new sod in Idaho, but we had temperatures in the 70's and beautiful sunshine. Property Manager Jeff Munn ordered the sod



Bob Meredith moves the sod while Jeff places it.

and organized the troops, and the rest of us pitched in at various places. We accomplished, on one Saturday morning: Sod (donated in memory of Olive Gunn) covers the IMSARU garden at the end of the garage. Leaves and dead weeds (thanks, Troy Green, for having sprayed them earlier) were raked and made to disappear. Many bags of trash left the premises.

Robert Gilley and Jerry Newland pulled wires from the garage through to the office, for our eventual electronic hook-ups. We treated ourselves to home-made lentil soup for

lunch, then went home to do things like rake our own leaves.

In addition to Jeff, Robert and Jerry, workers included Rick Cudd, George Gunn, Charlotte Gunn, Aimee Has-triter and Bob Meredith.



Jerry Newland and Robert Gilley get our computer server wired.

FIELD CERTIFICATION COMPLETED --BY PAM GREEN, NEW MEMBER COORDINATOR

Tuesday, December 21, found us gathered at the Compound to do the last field certification of 1999. In attendance were Adam Chitwood, Michael Forrester, Leni Sue Halle, Tony Rockwell, Shayne VanDyke, Chris Karnes, and Kris Walker. Adam, Tony and Shayne also had their packs checks.

IMSARU extends a warm welcome to these new folks and thanks them for being willing to become volunteers. As all of you in Readerland know, it takes a great deal of time and commitment.

Thank you, also, to the people who helped make this happen. Tim Henning, Rick Cudd and Jerry Newland did the presentations and pack checks. Paula McCollum put together the manuals and acted as the photographer.

CHRISTMAS PARTY CONT.

Flowers to *Jennifer Newland* for sending *Jerry* off into the field with Pam on a whole series of rough missions.

Special thanks to *Debbie Ralph* for printing this newsletter (and thus making it possible) month after month after month.

Pen sets in engraved wooden cases to:

Jeff Munn for another year of unceasing work as Property Manager.

Charlotte Gunn for continuing to edit the newsletter.

Tom Wheless for his work in scheduling the Corn Booth workers and on technology for the unit.

A plaque to *Gene Ralston* in appreciation of his technical contributions to the water searches this past year.

A plaque to *Daniel and Jean Iverson* (non-members) for coming down from their cabin to work almost every day at the Corn Booth, again.

A plaque to *Terry and Susan Reid* (non-members) who not only used their vacation time to work at the Corn Booth but also volunteer to wrap gifts at REI.

An orange shirt for *Eric Mundell*, in appreciation of his work on the Safety Education program.

Books to *Jerry Newland* and *Rick Cudd* for their solid support in multiple ways—missions, training, public events, registration for the Mantracking class, etc., etc., etc.

Gift certificates to *Rod Knopp* and *Leslie Robertson*, with instructions to go out to dinner with their respective spouses who so often hold down the home front while Rod and Leslie are taking care of IMSARU's business.

Pam also announced that a plaque will be added to the IMSARU garden, noting that the two trees were donated in memory of Olive Gunn.

Rod Knopp then presented to a very surprised *Pam Green* (who thought she was in charge of arranging all the awards) "the Rock," which is our unit's annual award to the individual who has gone far beyond reasonable expectations of volunteer service. Pam's credits include service as New Member Coordinator, ready response to missions (many with her dog Inca), work projects, public events, and general willingness to step in and do what needs to be done.

Rod also presented a clock as a special award to *Tim Henning*, both for his work on keeping the unit vehicles functioning and for stepping in as de facto Training Director for much of the year.

NOT-SO-SERIOUS AWARDS

These were presented by Diane Mathews and Charlotte Gunn, who accept all responsibility for their warped sense of humor and are still protecting their sources:

To Debbie Ralph, who not only prints the newsletter each month but also delivers it and stays to fold and staple, we give her very own bright orange official printer's visor.

The traditional chocolate cigars for new "babies" in our group go to proud owners of young dogs in training—Jerry Newland, Paula McCollum and Diane Mathews.

In April we responded to a drowning at Swan Falls and not everyone was totally prepared for how we would spend the day. Jeff Munn and Jerry Newland actually spent most of their time at the picnic site set up by the victim's family and friends, so we give them barbecue forks to keep in their packs.

Leslie Robertson always seems to have some adventure at the Race to Robie Creek. This time it was an inadequate radio antenna, a problem she solved by holding the radio above her head à la Statue of Liberty. As memento, we give her a certificate of said statue, with the addition of a bumblebee to remind her of another mission in Baker County, Oregon.

Jim Cooper still runs the Race to Robie Creek in both directions and has enough energy left over to pass out big smiles and sweaty hugs as he comes back over the summit for the second time. He gets a Robie Creek teeshirt with the sweaty hug painted on.

There are those who claim to have heard Charlotte Gunn say that people sometimes ignore her good advice. She gets a picture of herself pointing to something obviously important while all the people in the background calmly continue to eat cake and ice cream.

One of IMSARU's required skills as a member of MRA is technical climbing, but Pam Green and Leslie Robertson have been known to focus more on their teammates' attire than on their technique. So, Tim Henning donates to them his much-criticized and wornout purple climbing pants.

Another fashion incident happened in May when Aaron Garrison, at that point a very new member, did not yet have all his permanent gear collected and so was seen to protect himself from the rain at the Fall Creek mission with a pink plastic poncho. He gets a "Wanted by the Fashion Police" poster to commemorate that event.

We also noticed at that same mission that Pam Green has a variety of ingenious excuses for avoiding cameras. If she is that quick to move away, Troy Green can use a camera as his own personal wife-repellent whenever he wants some peace and quiet and space to himself.

On Memorial Day weekend, Tim Henning, Winston Cheyney and Mick Riffie went to Mt. Hood for a recreational climb. However, they reportedly spent the good weather playing around at lower elevations and then scheduled their climb for a day of storm. Tim and Winston were present to receive posters that explain climbing weather to them.

In June, Tim Henning set up climbing training at the City of Rocks. The day and a half of training were followed immediately by a real mission on site that used exactly what they had been

practicing. Tim gets the “Radar O’Riley” award for knowing what was going to happen before it did.

One of the best photos from that City of Rocks excursion shows Jeff Munn at his breakfast; he gets that on a Wheaties box for his “Breakfast of Champions” gallery.

When we went to Bonneville County’s Water Workout Weekend in June, Jane Foreman worked harder than the handlers with dogs as she ran the pickup shuttle between meeting center and boat dock. She gets an official “Taxi” cap as thanks.

For the Fourth of July parade, members wheeled the litter with a bandaged “victim” behind truck 903 but had trouble keeping up because the driver felt it necessary to stay right behind the preceding vehicle—which carried some scantily-clad females. Rick Cudd gets a set of binoculars so that he will be able to see while waiting for his teammates on foot.

At one point during the summer, Rod Knopp got to deal with flooding at the Compound caused by a neighbor's irrigation. The neighbor quoted some higher authority for how he was handling his water, so Rod gets a phone with a direct line to God for any future encounters.

On the Clear Creek mission in August, Tom Wheless experienced one of the many adventures in driving truck 901; the brakes did not work. He gets an anchor to hold him back next time.

Everett and Rose Wood were back again this summer for the Corn Booth, after spending 1997 and 1998 running off to Alaska and British Columbia, so we give them a ball and chain to try to keep them in town...and some candy corn to remind them that it’s not all drudgery.

Everyone knows George Gunn believes the saying that one man’s junk is another man’s treasure, but the Corn Booth setup was the first time our members actually saw him dumpster diving. (He says those clamps and electrical connections were brand new.) He gets a snorkel for future use.

We had this past year a series of missions to search for drowning victims, and learned the luxury of working with Gene and Sandy Ralston and their boat with differential GPS. Gene is now talking about how he’d like to have side-scan sonar, an underwater camera and such, but Sandy can’t ignore how expensive such toys are. So, we give them a new boat—the correct bright orange color and with its own underwater eyes.

Our other frequent partner to search dogs on water is Rod Knopp, who doesn’t really like wet muddy dogs but puts up with them for IMSARU. This past year, he came up with the idea of using hand-held search chihuahuas like Geiger counters to tell us which way to move. So, we give Rod his very own search chihuahua.

The Elmore County search early in September provided good memories of truck 901, as those who crammed into it for the return trip cruised home at 75 mph. Others have seen the negative side of 901, when it wouldn’t start or the brakes didn’t work or the windshield wiper fell off. Chuck Bricker, who spends a lot of time keeping our old vehicles running, gets a two-sided award for the good truck and the bad truck days.

Not everyone went to the mission via truck; CAP provided transportation for the first teams and the dogs. Not everyone, however, considers airplane transport a luxury. The Pam Green Award for White-knuckled Flying goes this year to Paula McCollum.

People were hardly back from Elmore County when we had another work party at the Compound to set the ties around the garden area and prepare for sod. The chain gang award for heavy lifting, sledge and chainsaw goes to Eric Mundell, George Gunn, Dave McDermitt, Aimee Hastriter and Jeff Munn; each gets a link of the chain.

We went over to Bonneville County again for MRA regional meeting and training, and Aimee Hastriter noted that she needed radio experience. She got it, with a few hours out on a knoll as radio relay, where she forwarded messages between base and several field teams. We think she has earned her own communications equipment. (Two tin cans and a string, but at least the batteries won't run down.)

Jerry Newland got stuck with driving both to and from Bonneville County while his passengers slept. He gets a package of No-Doze for such occasions.

Late October was one of the few times that Leone and Rod Knopp actually left town for a vacation. We missed them but think we owe Leone a scrapbook for all the vacations she's been able to take with Rod since he started working with IMSARU many years ago. (one page)

One of our members has been doing a wide variety of tasks that are not always glamorous. She trains a novice search dog, drives trucks where she can hardly reach the pedals, steps in as secretary when Liana leaves us.... She gets a real record that sings the praises of "Little Diane" Mathews.

And of course everyone has been talking about Y2K possibilities, but we assume one event will simply be a continuation of the past—Leslie Robertson will continue to spend hours and days doing missions and training and public events for IMSARU. So, we present Y2K survival kits to Leslie's children and husband.

TRAINING—RADIO PROCEDURES—DECEMBER 14

Ed Emmel, the man behind the scenes who keeps our radios and pagers operating, brought years of experience and knowledge to the training class. He covered everything from the basic procedures for radio traffic to the mechanics of operating our equipment to how to take care of radios in the field and what happens to a vehicle battery when the radios are left on for hours. Experienced people got reminders of things we should have known as well as information about newer equipment, and newer members should now feel more confident when they need to use those expensive tools.

If you missed the class, try to at least get possession of one of the informative hand-outs.

DO YOUR DUTY—DUES ARE DUE

IMSARU's dues are for the calendar year, so it's time to reenroll for the year 2000. The Board of Directors recommended, and the general membership accepted, an increase in annual dues to \$25 per person. (As most know, members' dues are intended to cover the per-member fees which our unit in turn pays to MRA and to NASAR, as well as the cost of the newsletter.) Concern was also expressed that the increase should not squeeze out anyone who would otherwise be an active member; any member for whom the dues are a financial hardship is encouraged to talk to Coordinator Rod Knopp or President George Gunn.

Also, if you have one of the digital pagers, your annual payment of \$24 is due at this time. (There is no fee for those who carry the tone pagers.)

Write your check now and either mail it or bring it to the next meeting. You can give it to any officer or leave it in the Treasurer's mailbox at the Compound.

IMSARU SAYS THANK YOU TO:

R.E.I. Boise Store

The Boise R.E.I. store again this year made their generous offer to let us do the gift-wrapping, using topographical maps that have been retired (outdated, edges worn from handling, etc.) Pam Green said we could handle the entire project, December 15-24, and she was right. Members, family and friends volunteered to work shifts, even though it meant driving into The Mall at a time of year when some of us would prefer to remain miles away. If any of our readers would like to know how to wrap a pair of skis or snowshoes, we have experienced people who can answer; I was just thankful that no one brought a snowboard.

We thank all who helped, including Liana Pope who made and mailed raffia bows from her new home in Baltimore, and especially Pam for organizing our part of the project, store manager Tom Chelstrom and Jeanie Thomas who arranged the details. The donations we received for our services will just about cover our share of a matching-funds grant to buy avalanche transceivers for our search dogs, collapsible probe poles, and replacement climbing ropes.

The Solman & Libe Friedman Foundation

Thank you, Ephraim Friedman, President, and Bea Kopp, for the \$1000 grant to IMSARU. We will use the funds toward maintaining our training and operations for the coming year.

The Turf Company, Meridian

We recently covered one of our former weed patches with sod from The Turf Company, which donated about half the cost. Not only do we appreciate the support, but the entire neighborhood enjoys the upgrade in property appearance.

DOG DAYS OF WINTER **--BY CHARLOTTE GUNN**

It may be less tempting to play outdoors when mud season and cold winds arrive, but search dog handlers don't just settle in by the fireplace. Dave and Rena Ferguson (of Bonneville County) were visiting in the area over the Thanksgiving break, so we scheduled an impromptu field training on Saturday, November 27. Eight handlers and seven dogs responded to the desert near the BLM wild horse corrals, and we set up the situations that each handler requested. We are encouraged by how well some of the novice dogs are progressing, and hope to soon have more field-ready canine teams.

On Sunday, November 28, we met at the Compound for a report from Leslie Robertson and Pam Green on First Responder Dogs for disaster search (the seminar they attended in Montana.) Their report included temperament considerations for both canines and handlers, agility requirements, bark box training and rubble pile scenarios; the videos of dog teams actually doing the exercises were enlightening. Pam's and Leslie's recommendations, based on what they learned, reinforced what many of us already felt:

- A real disaster search dog is a highly-trained specialist that may never get a chance to work an actual mission, but cross-training for other uses is probably detrimental.
- There are a lot of serious questions to be answered before a canine team ever approaches a disaster site. Most of us don't want to do this work.
- Nonetheless, if we had a local disaster and professional disaster dog teams were not going to arrive for 24-48 hours, we would respond in the meantime. Our dogs are trained to find people in strange places, and that early time frame is when victims are most likely to still be alive.

On Saturday, December 4, boat handlers and canine handlers who have been doing water search work met at the Compound to look back over missions of the past year or two, evaluate what we have learned, and try to devise strategies for improved performance in the future. We still have a lot more questions than answers, but we will be working on the following:

- Whenever possible, set up our canine base camp away from the main base camp. We need to give our dogs a chance to stretch after several hours in vehicles, and to work in to the "starting point." (We have responded to more than one drowning where the base camp/embarkation point was very close to the body. This made it unlikely that the correct area would be thoroughly searched or that a dog's expression of interest would be correctly interpreted.)
- Try very hard to separate information from speculation. Even "information" often turns out to be inaccurate; speculation can focus the search on the wrong area.
- Even when people "know" where the subject went down, work wide patterns first, then narrow down in response to what the dogs have told us.
- Use every means short of sabotage to have all vehicle engines shut off at the site. It has been obvious that others who are not dog handlers often do not understand what exhaust does to

the nose.

- Obtain a printer that can be used in the field to print where the dogs alerted, as marked by differential GPS.
- Obtain a differential GPS that can be used when Gene Ralston is not available and/or the search site is not suitable for his boat. Train additional people to use the equipment.

We also committed ourselves to making a determined effort to educate others about how canine search teams work, by writing our Standard Operating Procedure. And, as soon as winter wanes, we want to do some controlled experiments with scent pumps and marine dye to improve our ability to interpret the location of the subject in relation to the locations of dogs' alerts.

P.S. – Dear Santa, we would still love to have an underwater camera and a side-scan sonar!

On Sunday, December 12, three handlers and two novice dogs went out to work in the cold mud of BLM land beyond Eagle.

On Sunday, December 26, six handlers and five dogs trained in the cold foggy desert south of Boise, working both tracking and air-scent problems.

On Sunday, January 2, dog handlers met at the Compound to get organized for the first quarter of 2000. The Canine Review Committee for the year 2000 will be Pam Green, Charlotte Gunn and Leslie Robertson; Diane Mathews has volunteered to help with the recording and communications tasks.

Leslie announced that the following people met the training sessions attendance requirement for 1999: Jane Foreman, Pam Green, Charlotte Gunn, George Gunn, Paula McCollum, Eric Mundell and Leslie Robertson. We then discussed what is reasonable and what is desirable; the requirement for 2000 is that each handler attend at least 50% of the year's group training sessions.

Pam volunteered to see that novice handlers get any needed help in agility training. We also discussed some advanced agility equipment (ladders, wobble boards, etc.) in terms of where we might establish them, and resolved to be alert to opportunities for agility work on "natural" obstacles during our field training. We all agreed to a goal of doing the CGC obedience and the agility work off-lead.

And, last but not least, we scheduled and assigned individuals to coordinate field training sessions for the first three months of the year. Jane Foreman is setting up the first one for Sunday, January 9, north of Eagle.

I can hardly wait for the weather to improve so we can get busy again....

WE AIN'T GOT A BARREL OF MONEY....

At a special budget meeting on November 23, IMSARU Board members and other interested individuals faced the usual problems: As an all-volunteer organization with no official ties to any funding agency, we have trouble raising enough money to maintain equipment and training for best response to a wide variety of missions. Our major annual fundraiser is the Corn Booth at the Western Idaho Fair, and income from that is dropping as Fair attendance was down and expenses keep rising. We *really* need a new (or at least newer) vehicle; it's frustrating to be delayed in responding by the truck's failure to start, and downright dangerous when the brakes fail or the windshield wiper falls off. However, we cannot ask our volunteers—who are already providing their time, equipment and supplies for the first 48 hours (not to mention private vehicle expenses, costs of search dogs, etc.)—to pay fees that would buy major equipment.

Since no rich member stepped forward to write a large check, we made the following decisions, which were then approved by the general membership at the meeting on December 7: We will use the entire one-time payment from the Highway Department (for widening Federal Way along the front of our lot) to reduce our mortgage on the garage. This will save us about \$1,000 in interest payments during the coming year. We will maintain the same bare-bones budget that we have used for the past couple of years, counting on other fundraisers to make up the deficit from the Corn Booth. We will spend \$1,000 of our money, together with matching funds from the state SAR account, on most-needed equipment (avalanche transceivers, probe poles, replacement ropes, first-aid equipment.) We will continue to depend on members volunteering to use private vehicles whenever we send a large response team; those who turn in receipts will be reimbursed for actual expenses. We will raise annual dues to \$25, to cover increased costs of per-member fees we pay to regional and national organizations, and the newsletter. We will keep hoping that someone who wins the lottery will decide to donate to this very worthy cause.

PLAN AHEAD...THEN MONITOR AND ADJUST

Before your schedule for the year 2000 gets too full, put the following events on it:

The Trout Pond at the Spring Sports Show—Exact dates not yet confirmed, but we assume it will be Thursday evening, March 2, through Sunday, March 5. Plan to work a couple of shifts during this time. Our budget is really tight for the coming year, and this is a chance to help.

M.R.A. regional training and re-accreditation in Bonneville County, “in mid-March.” Again, the exact dates have not been confirmed, but this is a very important session for our unit. Get your winter mountaineering gear in order, and join the crew.

The Race to Robie Creek is scheduled for April 15, which is the same weekend when we scheduled our field training in Navigation and Bivouac. Since we have been working The Race for a million years, and this training session is one of our most important, expect an adjustment to our training schedule. Best guess would be that our field training will be a week earlier, but the powers-that-be have not yet decided for sure.

Water Workout Weekend in Bonneville County (for divers, search dogs and handlers, boat operators, and others interested in water search) is scheduled for June 16-18. There is a change in location—to Big Elk Creek YMCA Camp on Palisades Reservoir.

CALENDAR

Jan. 11	Medical Training (Note that Medical and SAR training have swapped dates this month.)	7:30 p.m. At the Compound
Jan. 18	SAR Training—Clothing and Equipment	7:30 p.m. At the Compound
Jan. 22-23	SAR Field Training—Snow Camping, Over-snow Travel, Avalanche Beacons	Time TBA – Meet At the Compound
Jan. 25	Business Meeting	7:30 p.m. At the Compound
Jan. 30	Canine Wilderness Training—Contact Jeff Munn At 562-1997 for details.	1:30 p.m.
Feb. 1	SAR Training—Avalanche Awareness and Safety—Winston Cheyney	7:30 p.m. At the Compound
Feb. 8	SAR Training—Avalanche Awareness and Safety—Winston Cheyney	7:30 p.m. At the Compound
Feb. 12	Canine Wilderness Training—Contact Eric Mundell At 362-1824 for details.	2:00 p.m.
Feb. 15	Medical Training	7:30 p.m. At the Compound
Feb. 19-20	SAR Field Training—Avalanche Awareness and Safety—Winston Cheyney	Time TBA Meet at Compound
Feb. 22	??? How often do we have 5 Tuesdays in February???	
Feb. 27	Canine Training—Building Search—Contact Charlotte Gunn at 466-8345 for details.	2:00 p.m.
Feb. 29	Business Meeting	7:30 p.m. At the Compound
Mar. 2-5	Trout Pond at the Sports Show	Western Idaho Fairgrounds
Mar. 7	General Meeting	7:30 p.m. At the Compound

Thanks to Tony Rockwell, IMSARU is now on-line.
Visit our website at www.imsaru.org



GIFT-WRAPPING AT R.E.I.

Everett Wood was one of the many IMSARU volunteers who wrapped gifts as a fund-raiser, December 15-24.

It's a great chance to practice fine motor skills, see what is popular for gifts this year, and make a list of "really need" stuff.

Thanks REI!

**IDAHO MOUNTAIN SEARCH AND RESCUE UNIT
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