

# RESCUE

IDAHO MOUNTAIN SEARCH  
AND RESCUE UNIT, INC  
BOISE, IDAHO



MEMBER:  
MOUNTAIN RESCUE  
ASSOCIATION  
SINCE 1960



## AVALANCHE FIELD TRAINING—JOINTLY WITH VALLEY CO. SAR JANUARY 20-21 – CASCADE/WEST MOUNTAIN --TONY ROCKWELL

Adam Chitwood, Aimee Hastriter and David Hay went up early and will meet us in Cascade. Brad Acker, Winston Cheyney, Joey Clements, Richard Clements, Carol Garcia, Tim Henning, Steve Pack, Tony Rockwell, Stine Theede, Suzanne Ventura and Kris Walker meet at the Compound at 7 a.m. for the drive through bad road conditions.



Richard does a rutschblock test while wearing snowshoes.

(photo by Tony Rockwell)

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Beautiful day in Cascade. We arrive around 10 a.m. at the Sheriff's Office and are directed to the "cabin" across from the high school. There is a short meeting on logistics; they have 12

RESCUE is published monthly by the IDAHO MOUNTAIN SEARCH AND RESCUE UNIT, INC.  
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Deadline of the 20th of the month is required for material to be included in the next month's issue.



Kris and Jeff doing a “stuff sack” test.  
(Photo by Tony Rockwell)

snow machines lined up to take us all to the top of West Mountain. We caravan out to parking area on west side of the lake, load up sleds with gear and people, and head up, getting everyone on top by shortly after noon.

Our training starts with Jeff Halligan from the Payette Avalanche Center. We are split into multiple groups for work in the snow pits--“stuff block” tests, Rutschblock tests with skis and with shoeshoes, shovel shear test—and practice with beacons. For some people, this includes their first

experience in sawing [snow] with a knotted rope.

Saturday night, Valley County SAR not only supplies us with a bunkhouse, they also put on the chili supper...made with bear meat.



On Sunday, we watch a demonstration of canine avalanche search by Nicki [sp?] and her dog Kaya from Brundage ski resort, hoping that dog is nearby if we are ever the victims. And we do a simulated avalanche search with probe lines.



IMSARU is not often called to assist in avalanche searches, because we are several hours away from most avalanche terrain. However, we routinely do searches where there is avalanche danger, so this training could save our own lives. We offer sincere thanks to Valley County SAR for working with us and hosting the field training.



Sawing with a knotted rope.  
(Photo by Tony Rockwell)

**MISSING SNOWMOBILER—MORES CREEK SUMMIT  
JANUARY 12-13, 2001  
--CHARLOTTE GUNN**

A 42-year-old male, snowmobiling alone, had met up with two acquaintances in the field, and the three of them had played together for a while. One machine got stuck; when the two friends got



O.L. Jerry Newland discusses strategy.

(Photo by Kris Walker)

it free, they realized the single snowmobiler had disappeared and they had no idea where he had gone. He did not return to his truck and trailer in the Mores Creek Summit parking lot that evening, and the Boise County S.O. called IMSARU. We arranged for a late-morning departure on Friday if the missing man did not show up. (He was reported to be an ex-marine, carrying food, water and a space blanket, and having said he was prepared to spend a night out if needed.) With seven to ten inches of fresh snow on top of up to four feet of old, the surface was assumed to be unstable and avalanche danger very high.

Responding were Pam Green with Inca, Charlotte Gunn, George Gunn with Hobo, David Hay, Jerry Newland (O.L.), Leslie Robertson with Mingo, Dan Scovel and Kris Walker. Rod Knopp continued the in-town coordination. A pilot with instrument rating was on standby to do aerial search if the local area should open up; Bill Lindenau and Everett Wood were on standby to fly as observers. IMSARU does not maintain snowmobile resources, but we provided base camp,

communications and safety equipment, maps, standby human and canine search teams, and experience in organizing searches. After consultation with Sgt. Larry Lampson and Cpl. Steve Dora, we talked with the pair of snowmobilers who had last seen the missing man. They had returned to the PLS on Friday morning, but did not locate him. We outfitted



them with radios, GPS programmed to record their position every two minutes, and avalanche transceivers; they agreed to retrace their route of the previous day so that we could map it if they

This is not a snow dance ritual. The team is practicing locating avalanche beacons.

(Photo by George Gunn)

still did not find the subject. The avalanche forecast precluded fielding multiple search teams at this time.

As recreationists (skiers, snowboarders and snowmobilers) returned to the parking lot, they offered widely varying estimates of snow stability, but the consensus seemed to be that it was more stable than forecast. One rider reported seeing a single snowmobile track leading down into an area, but it was not definite enough to be a strong lead. When the missing man was not located by dark, Boise County officers and IMSARU agreed to start snowmobile teams into the search area in the morning from four different points—the Whoop-em-Up trail, Bear Run trail, Pioneerville and Mores Creek Summit (to search the bowls.)

We packed up and headed home but noticed a pedestrian who looked distressed above Idaho City. He was walking into town to call a tow truck for his vehicle, which was stuck in Steamboat Gulch with wife and three children waiting. 903 transported the pedestrian to the Sheriff's Office to make his call, while our other two vehicles returned to locate the Steamboat turnoff (which no longer shows that name on the road sign) and make sure the family was all right. Leslie met the "stuck" vehicle driving out; the wife reported that someone had come along with a winch and freed them. We radioed the S.O. to cancel the tow truck and inform the husband, then finished our drive to Boise, debriefed with Rod at the Compound and went home for a short night's sleep.

Everyone on Friday's team except Pam got up early to go again on Saturday. Rod had done an additional call-out, adding Aimee Hastriter, John Kuhn, Suzanne Ventura and Tom Wheless to our team. John Haseltine, who has worked with IMSARU before, joined us with his snowmobile. Perhaps the day's most difficult task was to secure and maintain space in the Mores Creek parking lot, as it was the start of a three-day weekend with lots of fresh snow and *everyone* was coming to play. Jerry and David managed their task without violence and had base camp mostly set up before the rest of the team arrived.

IMSARU's job was again to coordinate, equip, communicate, and be ready if needed to send in foot soldiers on snowshoes or canine teams if evidence so indicated. The snowmobile teams (Boise County officers plus volunteers they recruited plus Haseltine and his friends) went in from the four points as planned; we asked all recreational skiers and snowmobilers who came through to be alert for the missing man. Mostly we walked around, checked out equipment (how to convert ski poles to probe poles, etc.), took the dogs to romp in deep snow, boiled water and kept checking the sky for blue spots that would indicate enough clearing to allow an aerial search. There were occasional thin spots in the cloud cover, but it was mainly light snow or heavy snow.

It was late morning when the call came that the missing man had been picked up by recreational snowmobilers, a mile or so ahead of the search team from Pioneerville. He reported that he had dropped down into one of the bowls, got his machine stuck and spent Thursday night there. He was unable to keep a fire going, but started his machine from time to time and warmed himself by it. He did not have food and water. On Friday morning, he made his way on foot back up toward where he had last seen the other two snowmobilers, figuring they would return to look for him; he apparently was in the area after their morning trip and left before they returned in the afternoon. Subject then decided he would not wait; he reported that he walked all night, finally coming across an obvious trail which he followed until being found on Saturday. Hungry and tired, he was quoted as saying he didn't care whether he ever found his machine again.

IMSARU members waited to retrieve equipment carried by various teams in the field, then headed down to the valley to resume our other lives.

Notes: (1) Operations Leader Jerry Newland did a great job of keeping track of what was happening and planning for contingencies. His only negative note was when George informed him that the TV interview is part of the O.L.'s job description. (2) Our members would have preferred to be actively searching, but the conditions were not appropriate for foot searchers. On the other hand, we know from experience that the area includes some gravity traps which could be explored only on skis or snowshoes, and a trail leading into an avalanche site would have called for trained dogs. So, yes we did need trained people standing by. "They also serve who only stand and wait." (3) There is a limit to how much you can teach a non-user about a GPS in the five minutes before he heads out, but pre-setting units to record position every two minutes enabled us on Friday evening to download that information together with a topo mapping program and verify where the snowmobilers had been. On the other hand, our radio and cell phone technology did not work as well. (4) IMSARU members used "down time" on Friday to practice with the avalanche beacons, burying them in the snow and trying out various walking patterns to hone in on the beeps. Being on a search where avalanche danger was real, and being in the middle of the month's training on avalanche safety, we were motivated to do a bit more hands-on practice. (5) We felt bad that Pam came down sick and couldn't continue the mission on Saturday; we also felt bad that she did not send along the rest of her Mrs. Field's chocolate chip cookies

## **AVALANCHE SAFETY CLASSROOM TRAINING, JANUARY 9, 16 --CHARLOTTE GUNN**

Winston Cheyney, himself an avalanche survivor, instructed during two evening sessions before taking our group up to Valley County for a joint session of field practice with the Valley County SAR. Using



Winston Cheyney explains how avalanche transceivers differ.

(photo by G. Gunn)

videos, slides, his own equipment and years of training and experience, Winston introduced and explained the importance of such factors as knowledge and awareness, snow conditions (both as it fell and metamorphosis since), temperature, slope, terrain traps and stress. The video showed us avalanches, big and small, soft snow and slabs, and shared advice from a dozen or so experts.

Some of the advice is so obvious as to seem simplistic, but is ignored by far too many back-country users: Look around at the terrain and pick the safest path. Be aware of snow conditions, both by the feel under you and by stopping frequently to dig down a bit and look closely. Wear an avalanche transceiver—turned on to transmit!—whenever you are out in avalanche season, and know how to use your transceiver to locate a buried companion. In addition to the transceiver, carry a shovel and a probe pole. If you must cross a questionable slope, go one person at a time with the others watching the one. If avalanche danger is high in the area you want to enter, **DON'T GO THERE.**

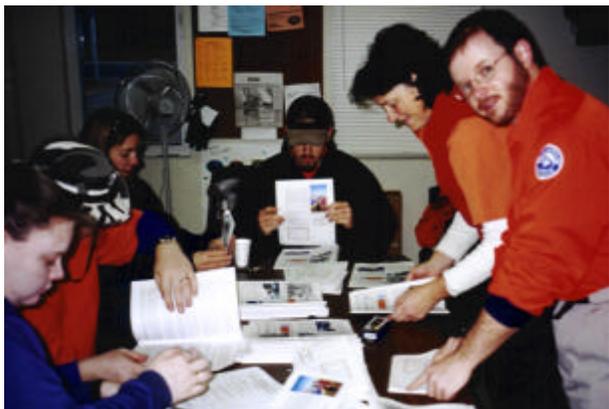
Since developed ski areas now control likely slides by deliberately setting off the avalanche before the public is allowed in, very few avalanche deaths occur in these places. In the back-country, it has traditionally been skiers and hikers who died most often, but snowboarders and snowmobilers are fast catching up. [IMSARU has responded to only two avalanche searches in recent years; one was for a snowboarder and one for a snowmobiler.] Fatal avalanches are almost always set off by the victim or at least by someone in his/her party. Victims who survive avalanches are almost always saved by other members of their party. Unless you have been on an avalanched site, it is difficult to realize how solidly that deposition sets up—leaving very little air for the victim to breathe. The first 15-30 minutes are the best chance for finding someone alive. We always hope for miracles, but if you have to go for help, you are almost certainly going for a body recovery crew, not for a rescue crew.

The really difficult decision is to not search when the danger is too high. If there are other snow loads ready to slide in the same area, you cannot put the searchers at risk.

### **SAR TRAINING – MOCK MISSION, DECEMBER 16, 2000** --CHARLOTTE GUNN

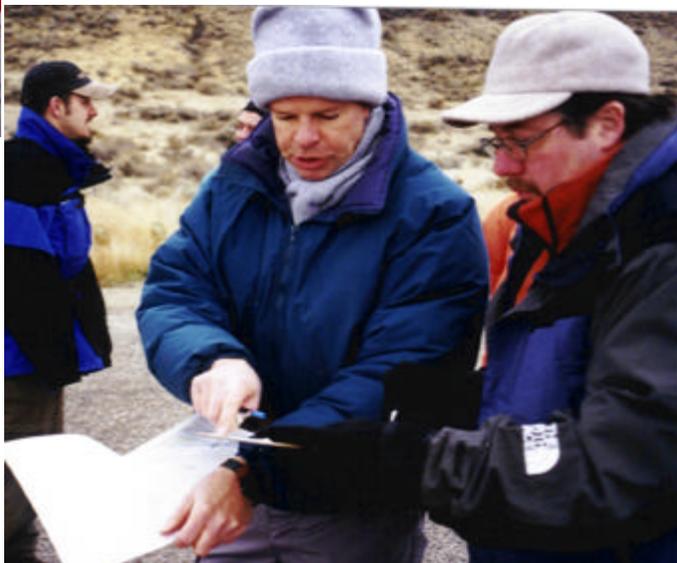
It was cold, gray and windy; it was only a week before Christmas; people had shopping to do and social events to attend; it had been a very busy two months of missions. So nobody was going to show up for field training, right? Wrong. Fifteen people met at the Compound, where they helped finish folding

and stapling the December newsletter before settling into the training task. Participants included Brad Acker, Steve Argyle, Joey Clements, Richard Clements, Charlotte Gunn, Aimee Hastriter, Dave Hay, Eric Mundell, Jerry Newland, Steve Pack, Leslie Robertson, Tony Rockwell, Suzanne Ventura and Tom Wheless.



Many hands make quick work of putting the newsletter together.  
(Photo by G. Gunn)

Training Director George Gunn divided the group into two teams and presented a scenario of a 23-year-old male whose abandoned car had been found in a parking lot just outside of Boise. Each team planned a search strategy and made a list of needed equipment before comparing results with the other team. The first—but not the last—handicap was that the topo map of the area is about 30 years old and shows none of the new highway and other developments.



Tom and Tony compare notes.

(Photo by G. Gunn)



O.L.'s for the day, Tony Rockwell and Tom Wheless, joined forces at the site and sent out four search teams that eventually found our mannequin Randy, who was "breathing but unresponsive" with a "gunshot wound" and cartridge shells on the ground. First priority is to save a life, so evidence preservation was in people's minds but not always possible. Paramedic Steve P. and EMT Aimee took charge of the medical treatment while Eric, Steve A. and Jerry su-

pervised the setup of anchors and ropes for a short vertical drop followed by a long scree evacuation. As the angle decreased, the wheel went under the litter and it was trundled back to the parking lot.

Since the wind chill factor was increasing, we agreed to transport gear back to the Compound for sorting and our debriefing session, but a radio transmission reported a vehicle accident on Horseshoe Bend hill with the car off the road about 150 feet and needing extrication. Rod contacted Boise County dispatch and we made a quick turnaround for ten of us to head up to help. Upon arrival, however, we learned that the 150 feet were beside the road (not vertical), and that the extrication had already been completed.

Back we went to the Compound to unload gear, discuss what we had learned (it was amazing how willing people were to stay and share what they had done well/poorly) and have a snack. The consensus was that it was a great way to spend the day. We had a lot of experienced members refreshing their skills and sharing them with newer members, including Joey Clements who just joined on Tuesday and did a great job as radio person for the field teams.

## **ANNUAL STATISTICS FOR IMSARU 2000** **--ROD KNOPP, COORDINATOR**

Number of SAR missions, excluding standbys and cancellations – 19  
EMS standbys at races, contests, etc. – 4  
Number of SAR standbys or cancellations – 9  
Number of victims for SAR missions – 45  
Person-hours on all above operations – 3224  
Total person-hours spent training – 4896

In addition, 903.5 person-hours were spent on 30 canine group training events. These do not include the informal small-group practices nor the professional seminars attended by canine teams.

As you are probably aware, all of the above were volunteer services. In addition, volunteers spent uncounted hours keeping the organization running, doing fund-raisers, presenting safety education programs, maintaining equipment. How would *you* calculate IMSARU's value to the community?

## REI GIFT WRAP—HUGE SUCCESS

--PAM GREEN

Thanks to each and every one of the volunteers who participated in the REI Gift Wrap this year. You



Process...

helped to make this the most successful year of all. Two shifts, four people per day, ten days and evenings—this is teamwork at its best. Santa's elves couldn't have done better.

Hats off to my bowmakers! Without your help, those packages wouldn't have been complete and I sure couldn't have kept up by myself. Making hundreds of bows from "casual" materials is a big project. Special ad-



Product.

admiration goes to Rose Wood for her artistic productions and to Leslie Robertson who says she can't do crafts things—but did get her daughter Taylor to make a whole bunch of bows.

**We offer a very special "Thank you" to REI and their staff for the opportunity to do this great fund-raiser.**

## REPORT FROM M.R.A. MEETING IN SALT LAKE CITY, JAN. 19-21

--ROD KNOPP, COORDINATOR

Delegates held a discussion about who or what MRA is. A look at the original charter revealed that the original goals of MRA are still appropriate today. The following outline was developed to frame those goals a little more graphically:

1. Improve mountain rescue service.
  - A. Promote the free exchange of rescue techniques and procedures.
  - B. Disseminate advances in equipment.
  - C. Standardize.
2. Promote more effective mountain safety education.

This outline will be used to focus the resources, time and money of MRA as we move into the future. Part of the discussion concerning the 2001 budget was focused on these goals.

We debated and voted upon four proposals from the Membership Chair to delete policy statements that were confusing or in conflict with other policy statements. Delegates voted to delete policies 702.C1, 702.C3 and 702.C5. The proposal to delete 101.A8 (a requirement for teams to have a minimum of 25 Rescue and Support members) was withdrawn after heated debate. A subsequent motion to increase the minimum dues per team to \$250 was tabled for further action at the June meeting.

Arguments for keeping the 25-member requirement seemed to focus on the belief that teams need that many members in order to effectively operate; countering arguments were that team size is a local issue and not dependent upon an arbitrary number. The central issue of the minimum dues per team seemed to be that perhaps some teams are under-reporting their membership; the opposing view was that minimum dues may well be a hardship on smaller teams and that these teams need to be heard before taking action. Monty Bell reported that 44% of the full member teams report less than 25 members.

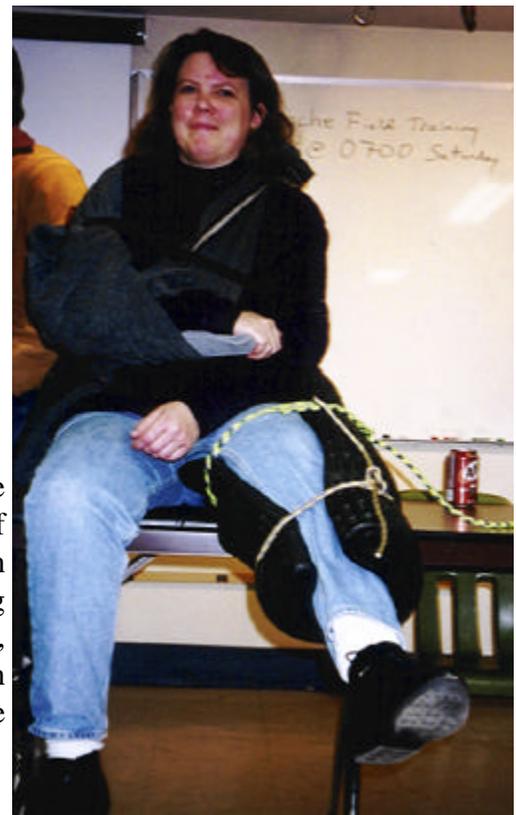
As a personal opinion, I would ask people to look for answers to the two above issues within the context of: Does an arbitrary requirement for a minimum of 25 members and/or minimum dues of \$250 per team improve Mountain Rescue services by promoting the free exchange of rescue techniques and procedures and/or improving the dissemination of advances in equipment?

A thank-you should go to the current officers for presenting a balanced budget for 2001. Not only is this budget within the amount expected in revenue, but MRA has over \$48,000 in the bank!

## **MEDICAL TRAINING, JANUARY 23, 2001**

**--CHARLOTTE GUNN**

Medical director Steve Pack presented the first half of the classroom instruction for wilderness first aid. Starting with what we should know



before going into the back-country, Steve took us through the seven steps of first aid response, followed by brief discussions of first aid for specific conditions. This is obviously not an in-depth medical instruction, but we went through major points of dealing with wounds in general, and with injuries to eye, head, spine, chest, abdomen and extremities. Emphasis throughout was on what we can do in the field with supplies we reasonably would be carrying.

Steve also had us work as groups to discuss a scenario, and we did hands-on practice in splinting, using traction splints for the femur, SAM splints, and lots of improvisation. Not all the results were glamorous, but there are many ways to immobilize a broken limb.

Homework is to read the first aid book before the second session on February 20. If you did not yet get your book, contact Aimee Hastriter. (She won't deliver your book until you pay for it.) The final session of the class will be an outdoor scenario, probably on Saturday, February 24. Anyone who thinks seriously about what IMSARU does and where we do it will want this training.

## **DUES ARE DUE—ALMOST OVERDUE**

Dues for the calendar year are \$25. (First-time dues for new members are different. If you paid those recently, check with Pam Green about whether you are covered for 2001.) Since we are already in the second month of the calendar year, it's not too hard to figure out that you need to write a check to IMSARU and either bring it to the next meeting or mail it to Treasurer Dave Sorensen at the unit address, which is P.O. Box 741, Boise, ID 83701. According to IMSARU by-laws, those who don't pay their annual dues are no longer members.

## **GPS CLASS TO BE OFFERED FEBRUARY 17 OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Eric Mundell and Steve Argyle will be teaching a GPS class on Saturday, February 17, at the Compound (at the corner of Malad and Federal Way). Registration will be from 8:30-9 a.m., with the class ending at 3:30 p.m.

This class offers an easy approach to using the GPS unit. Class size is limited. Class subjects include: waypoint position management and route management, bearing and magnetic declination hints, how to use the GPS system, navigating in whiteout conditions, practical field work and map management. GPS units will be available for use during the class and field work.

Are you thinking about buying a GPS receiver? This is the class for you!

Call Eric at 362-1824 to reserve your place in the class. There is a \$50 fee.

## **DOGGIE DOINGS --LESLIE ROBERTSON**

The IMSARU canine team has had some accomplishments lately, that we would like to share with everyone.

Paula McCollum and Jeb (pictured at right) successfully completed their trailing requirements and are now a fully operational SAR dog team. **Congratulations!**

Our newest members to start candidate search dogs are Craig Jones with Hannah (golden retriever--airscent), Martha Vandoort with Angie (GSD—trailing) and Suzanne Ventura with Schatz (GSD—tracking).



Martha and Angie have had a busy winter. Besides starting to train for SAR trailing, they have also passed the obedience portion of the requirements.

A reminder, especially to our newer members: Missions and unit events supercede dog training and meetings. As folks have already figured out, when a mission is in progress, we assume people will be responding to that and will be unavailable for a scheduled canine event. The canine event is cancelled and may be rescheduled. You may not get a call to that effect, but just assume that when Rod is asking for responders, training is cancelled.

At our handlers' meeting on January 28, we re-elected Pam Green, Charlotte Gunn and Leslie Robertson as the Canine Review Committee for 2001. We also agreed upon revisions and consolidations of our operating procedures and guidelines; these will be presented to IMSARU general membership at a business meeting. We scheduled our group training sessions through the month of July. These will appear on the regular IMSARU calendar in each issue of the newsletter. And yes, we ate well.

## COMING ATTRACTIONS

When February arrives, can spring be far behind? Spring activities, at least, are fast approaching, so get out your calendar and mark it for:

The **Trout Pond** at the Spring Sports Show is a major fund-raiser for us. It will run Thursday evening through Sunday afternoon, **March 1-4**. Spectra Productions takes care of all the set-up, but we need to have full crews there for all shifts, to collect the money and help the kids have fun without anyone getting hurt. This is an outdoor activity, so dress for the lion or the lamb that Mother Nature will send us, and schedule a couple of shifts with Suzanne Ventura. You do not need to have any fishing skills nor experience to help with this.

The **Race to Robie Creek** is a long-standing tradition with IMSARU. We provide 20-25 people for basic first aid, communications, and general helping out at this non-profit community event. Our rewards, in addition to the satisfaction of public service, include the opportunity to cheer on the hardy souls who run this strenuous half-marathon, humorous signs, and free food for those of us who are at the right stations. This year's race will be on **Saturday, April 21**, and we need everyone's help. Those who are new to the event will be paired with someone more experienced, and the first aid you provide is mostly Band-Aids and moleskin.

## IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM THE PROPERTY MANAGER

--JEFF MUNN

With the rising cost of natural gas, we all need to make a great big effort to remember to turn down the temperature at the end of each meeting. The reason for this reminder is that there have been several times when I have been there to check the building and the heat was turned way up to high. The thermostat is on the wall beside the small refrigerator, and all you have to do is move the lever on the bottom.

Also, we need to remember when leaving the Compound to be sure that the gate is locked and

closed, with the combination set at 0000.

### **ANOTHER IMPORTANT NOTICE!**

Please, please, please **DO NOT** open the radio boxes unless the radios are needed for missions, training or public service events. In those cases, open only the appropriate box(es) and only as many as are needed. They are clearly marked—Box 1 and Box 2 are for missions only; the others are for training and public service. It may seem like a small thing to casually open a box and pull out a radio or two, but every time that seal is broken, Rod spends hours rechecking the inventory and making sure that everything is charged and ready to go for the next 2 a.m. callout. This is not intended to discourage appropriate use of radios. It is intended to remind you to think about what is appropriate.

### **AND WHILE YOU'RE AT IT....**

Please check your living space and see if you have some books and/or other training materials that you borrowed and just haven't got around to returning. Leslie Robertson is missing several books on dog training, and we are missing some videos from the check-out cabinet in the meeting room. Please return borrowed stuff so someone else can use it.

### **XENA CHRONICLES, CHAPTER 3**

We received as a Christmas gift a set of bed linens, and promptly washed them to remove the stiffness and sizing of new material—and hung them on the line to dry and air. We then visited friends for a few hours, coming home later than planned and after dark. As I headed out to the clothesline with my flashlight, I took about three steps off the deck before seeing the first scrap of fabric. The good news is that Xena had not touched the sheets, and pillowcases are cheaper to replace. P.S.—Please don't tell my sister and her husband, who gave us the linens. They are cat lovers.

### **GENERAL MEETING AT THE BENCHMARK, DECEMBER 5, 2000 --CHARLOTTE GUNN**

The season of Christmas shopping and wish lists seemed an appropriate time to talk about outdoor clothing and equipment, and The Benchmark hosted our group for a look at the classics and what's new. Emil, Jason and Morgan divided us into three groups for sessions on packs, shelters and clothing, including materials and suggestions on how to check the fit. We thank them for their expertise, patience and humor, and assume that Santa appreciated their help



Emil Hutton discusses what is new in boots.

## **THIS TRUCK IS TIRED!**

And it needs to be retired. Our workhorse 901 has multiple problems—unsafe tires, leaking vital fluids, doors that won't shut completely, to name a few—and it is too old and tired for us to invest a lot of money in it and expect it to continue our kind of work for more years.



Yes, that is transfer case fluid all over the floor.

We need a truck that is rugged and dependable, that can haul people and gear into the back-country safely and get them home again after the work is done. It obviously must have 4-wheel drive and reasonable capacity, but beauty and style don't matter. **Surely, some reader must have an idea where we can acquire an appropriate vehicle without spending a fortune.** We are an all-volunteer, 501(c)(3) corporation, and finances are always an issue.

## **FEDERAL FUNDS FOR LOCAL SAR TEAMS -GEORGE GUNN**

The new “Timber County Payments Law” that was passed by congress and signed into law in the closing days of last year contained a provision to allow the counties flexibility in how they spend up to 20% of the money paid “in lieu of taxes” for federal lands. The new legislation no longer ties the amount of these payments to timber harvest. While up to 85% must be spent on schools and roads, the remainder can be directed to a variety of enumerated uses including search and rescue. **Competition for these dollars will be fierce.** Local teams are encouraged to study the legislation and begin making their case with local county officials.