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RESCUE

IDAHO MOUNTAIN SEARCH
AND RESCUE UNIT, INC
BOISE, IDAHO

FOUNDING MEMBER:
MOUNTAIN RESCUE
ASSOCIATION



SEARCH FOR MISSING MAN - BLAINE COUNTY – SEPTEMBER 18-19 --CHARLOTTE GUNN

The call came that a man had fallen early Sunday morning (reportedly after some heavy drinking Saturday night) and been knocked unconscious, at least momentarily. He was apparently treated at a medical facility and received prescription medication. On Sunday evening, a neighbor reported a suspicious vehicle parked at an unoccupied house. Law enforcement traced the vehicle but did not reach the owner

until Monday evening because she was not at home but was house-sitting in the subdivision where the vehicle was found. She stated that the missing man had come home with her on Sunday, had then borrowed her vehicle to go buy cigarettes at about 3 p.m. and had not returned. Blaine County requested our assistance, especially any search dogs we could supply, as quickly as possible.



Skip, briefing us for the search.

Pam Green with Inca, George Gunn (O.L.), Charlotte Gunn, Leslie Robertson with Mingo,

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Martha Vandivort and Tom Wheless responded, arriving at the scene at about 6 p.m. The scene was a subdivision north of Hailey, along the Wood River—the kind of place that most of us glance at and perhaps try to imagine what it would be like to live in such a huge, elegant home with all that greenery. Blaine County had the I.C. organized at a wide spot in the road, with maps, flyers and organizational staff. We put two teams in the field, each with a dog, and searched some high-priority areas until dark. By then we had learned a lot about the mixture of elegant lawns and “natural” landscaping (translated as trees and thickets and lots of thorny stuff) surrounding them.

Pam drove home that night; Leslie and Mingo bivouacked in the command post RV; Tom went home with Skip DeHennis; Martha and Angie slept in their trucks and George and Charlotte cleared bed space in their RV. In the meantime, Rod had been recruiting more searchers; as we stumbled out into early dawn, Brandy Brian, Mark Crew, Kris Hoffman and Christy Karnes crawled out of their vehicle and joined us, having left the Compound at 4 a.m. Alex LaBeau joined us at around noon and searched for a few hours before returning to his real business—meeting a plane for a conference in Sun Valley.

On this second day of the search, the subdivision was divided into smaller areas and two-person teams were assigned sections to clear with 80% POD. High-priority areas (where the vehicle was found, where the house-sitter was working) were first, to be followed by riverbank searches and other areas spiraling out from the center.



Briefing on day two included family and friends of the missing man.

We were again impressed by the Blaine County organization—new flyers (with color photo of the subject), individual maps for each section, radio communications, transport for teams working farther out from Base. We did not, however, find the terrain any more welcoming. We felt a bit weird strolling across manicured lawns, knocking on doors of those mansions to talk to the residents or to check the grounds where no one was home. (We very much appreciated the friendliness and concern of those residents who did answer their doors.) We felt frustrated and intimidated by the downfall, impenetrable thickets and unfriendly plants that challenged our abilities to search thoroughly. Once in a while, a team would draw a section of grass or of riverbank where people actually could walk most of the shoreline; these were the mini-vacations in a day of hard labor. Most frustrating, of course, was that we did not find the missing man.

When the search closed down for the day at around 6 p.m. (with personnel pretty much exhausted

for the time being), perhaps 75-80% of the map had been covered. Blaine County planned to finish it off on Thursday, and of course were pursuing additional information as it came in.

We again thank Skip DeHennis and Sgt. Brad Gelsky of Blaine County for running such a well-organized search, with special recognition to Katherine Constable who kept track of resources and sectors. We enjoyed being part of the team. We also enjoyed the high-quality refreshments; it's not often that we get Starbucks coffee and deli sandwiches and biscotti! Even more popular was the arrival of "the blue room" (a portable toilet), as a luxury subdivision does not lend itself to impromptu sanitary stops.

Lessons learned: (1) The wisdom of experience is not always right. We always take a field pack, but after one section of thicket-bashing, many of us carried only a belt pack or what would fit in our multiple pockets; the pack was too much of a handicap for wriggling through the branches. (2) Be sure you understand instructions, even when they seem to be in plain English. (Does "Check whether a house is open" mean unlocked or that a door is physically standing open?) (3) Again, be aware that family and friends may be wherever you are, and be careful what you say. Sometimes a seemingly innocent phrase can cause emotional reactions in stressed relatives. (4) And the classic story for IMSARU will be the saga of "Who has Martha's keys?"

Note: Skip tells us that as of Thursday (the day after we left), the search had included over 1100 hours of searcher time, from professionals through non-trained volunteers. There had been five dog teams, two horse teams and one plane, and the area searched was approximately two square miles, with an average POD of 80%. We are still awaiting the end of the story.

OFFICERS FOR 2002

New officers, elected at the General Meeting on October 2, are listed below. An asterisk indicates the same person remaining in the same office.

President – Jeff Munn	Vice-President – Aimee Hastriter *
Secretary – Kris Hoffman	Treasurer – Dave Sorenson *
Coordinator – Rod Knopp *	Logistics Equipment– Brad Acker
Rescue Equipment – Bob Meredith *	Public Relations – Leslie Robertson *
Medical Director – Steve Pack *	Training Director – Jerry Newland
Facilities Manager– Chris Harry	

New officers begin their duties on December first. Please remember that it is not the officers' responsibility to *do* everything, only to organize and supervise. Every member of IMSARU is obligated to pitch in with the non-glamorous work and the routine tasks that are necessary to keep this organization running. We are assuming, judging by recent discussions, that there will be even more appointed positions this year; some will be continuing and some for one event. Please volunteer and please say yes when asked. (We already have two appointed positions, New Member Coordinator and Newsletter Editor, and assume that Pam and Charlotte will continue in those. They haven't said no.)

FAMILY CAMPOUT WEEKEND, SEPTEMBER 22-23 --JOEY CLEMENTS

The family campout weekend, a time to relax and recoup after the stress of the Corn Booth—that is, until the activities started early Saturday afternoon!

It seems that IMSARU would have a great football team, judging by some of the tackles and displays of physical agility we saw in the Water Boiling and the Pack Scavenger Hunt games. And one of the winning throws in the Rope Toss competition was the football spiral.

A great time was had by all, and it was a perfect weekend to relax and get to know people. We enjoyed many games and activities throughout the weekend, along with a nice soak in the hot springs.



Scavenger hunt competition was intense.



Rick teaches future members the compass game.

After drooling over Rick's food, we all settled around the campfire to make s'mores and listen to the songs of Jeb. There was a great turnout (especially by our eight K-9 friends.) IMSARU members participating were: Martha Vandivort, Tom Wheless and son, Paula McCollum and her "little sister," George Gunn, Charlotte Gunn, Jane Foreman, Rick Cudd and daughter, Ann Crew, Mark Crew, Jim Cooper and friends, Richard Clements and Joey Clements. Longtime members Bob Kline and June Lee stopped in on Saturday

WHAT DOES THE IMSARU COORDINATOR DO? --CHARLOTTE GUNN

If you missed Rod Knopp's presentation on September 29, you missed a lot. He gave us a bit of the early history of the unit (Rod joined in 1964), including equipment and procedures used many years ago, then shared his feelings about goal-oriented vs. process-oriented methods of operation. He included a brief review of the I.C.S. and of some of the mathematical formulas for making search decisions before talking us through the Coordinator's typical tasks when a mission call comes in.

The greatest number of questions seemed to deal with the call-out procedure, so I agreed to summarize that for any other members who may be asking "Why didn't I get called on that?" or "Why don't I get the call sooner?" There are, of course, many more details than you will read here.

Mission calls may be initiated by a law enforcement agency—most often, the Sheriff's Office, as the Sheriff is legally responsible for search and rescue in Idaho; by an individual who is concerned about a relative or friend—in which case the request must go through the appropriate law enforcement agency before we can respond; or occasionally by Rod's offering our help to the agency for a situation.

The coordinator must get enough information to launch the mission, put a new message on our answering phone, and then start contacting members. There are three basic methods of contact: (1) Some of our members carry digital pagers, which can be set off individually or as a group. These pagers are bought by the individuals who carry them (current price not known, but something over \$100) and who also pay \$3 per month for the service. These pagers can be used privately, as well as for the unit; you can give your number to anyone you want to be able to reach you. However, their range is pretty much limited to the Boise valley. When you finish your service with IMSARU, you can probably sell this pager to another member—but that is not guaranteed. (2) Tone pagers, which are set off as a group by State Communications. The unit owns these pagers, which are used only for IMSARU, and there is no fee for carrying one. Obviously, however, anyone who carries one is obligated to respond regularly to missions or to give up the pager. (3) A telephone tree, which can be activated through a series of automated menus, and which will typically deliver a message to "Call Mailbox Three." This tree can be activated for various groups—everyone on the membership list, everyone who is field certified, those who are field certified but do not carry pagers, even an individually modified list for a particular need. The phone tree goes alphabetically by last name, which is why some people receive the message later than others. If your line is busy, your name goes to the end of the line, with a minimum of 15 minutes before callback. If you get a phone call with "no one there," trying pressing any number on your phone; if the phone tree got your answering machine the last time it called, it is now waiting for a tone. And yes, there are some phone services that are not compatible with our system.

But, you ask, “Why wasn’t *I* called for the last mission?” First of all, there are some missions that are not for everyone. Evidence searches for law enforcement, using our cadaver-trained dogs, are an example of missions that involve only a few people and that are totally confidential. Even Rod does not know where these missions are nor their results. Another example would be the call a couple of months ago to help with the technical rescue in a cave. They needed three technically-competent people with equipment immediately; it would have made no sense to do a general call-out. There have been many other missions where it was urgent to get a team on the road, so the first round may have been personal calls to those most likely to be available. If your phone was tied up for an extended period, the phone tree machine gave up on you. If your pager was turned off or the battery was dead or it was in the house while you were elsewhere, then of course you did not hear it. If you haven’t responded to any calls in the past several months, it is possible that you have been removed from the active list; after all, why should valuable time be spent on someone who never says “Yes”? If none of the above explain why not, then you need to contact Rod to be sure that you are listed correctly. Maybe he never received your name as being field-certified (blame Pam) or maybe Rod listed you in the wrong group (blame Rod) or maybe your name somehow evaporated into the ether (blame the computer) or maybe you need to give Rod a different number, such as your cell phone or personal pager (blame yourself.)

A reminder: When you do get that page or phone call, you need to consider whether you can respond. If you need more information for the decision, call Mailbox Three and listen. Then leave a message stating your name, your phone number, whether you can participate. If you can’t go at the stated time, can you go at a later hour or the next day? If you can’t go at all, can you do something else to help—go to the Compound to start the truck and gather equipment, help with in-town coordination, etc.? If you know when you get the page that you can’t go this time, wait half an hour before calling Mailbox Three and leaving your message, so that you don’t tie up the phone during a critical period. (If you don’t respond at all, you may get additional calls when Rod tries to round up more resources for the next stage of the mission—a waste of everyone’s time.)

All of this was much more interesting when Rod talked about it than when I try to put it in writing, so you can again be sorry you missed the session. You also missed the “hot dogs” (really bratwurst and kielbasa) that Rod grilled for our lunch. The lucky members who attended were Ann Crew, Mark Crew, Pam Green, Charlotte Gunn, George Gunn, Chris Harry, Diane Mathews, Debbie Ralph, Leslie Robertson, Dan Scovel, Suzanne Ventura and Martha Vandivort.

WORK PARTY ON NOVEMBER 3 AT 8 A.M.

We need to clean out the garage and do some other fall cleaning. There will be a garage sale of the stuff that needs to go elsewhere. Come do your share of the work!

WHO ARE WE AND WHAT DO WE DO? --CHARLOTTE GUNN

“We’re having a state meeting—all the local club presidents will be there—at the Fairgrounds in New Plymouth. Come tell us and show us what you do.” This invitation from the Good Sam Clubs was a wonderful and scary opportunity. Sure, we have a brochure and official statements about who we are, and we include some of what we do in our newsletter and when we give safety education talks, but none of us could remember ever before trying to pull it all together. What kinds of demonstrations could we give in that time and place? What should we say and what should we hand out in printed form? Who should do each part of it?

Teamwork. That’s what we do and that’s how we pulled it together. Leslie Robertson was in charge and



Tom and Steve staffed the medical display.

she called planning meetings and recruited an ever-expanding group. Kris Hoffman typed up the list of SAR groups supplied by ISSAR, then sat down and phoned each one to try to track down a contact person. Debbie Ralph scanned photos selected by Aimee Hastriter into posters of various activities (Base Camp, Technical Rescue, Safety Education, etc.) A few of our technical climbers practiced a pick-off of Rescue Randy hanging from a beam. Martha Vandivort did wonderful organizing as well as supplying a list of personal equipment costs for a

technical rescue member. Chris Karnes put together the same list for a beginning searcher and Paula McCollum supplied the financial costs of becoming a search dog handler. Tom Wheless sorted medical equipment, Aimee put together a safety ed display, Rick Cudd wrote his “letter from the president” and made sure his field pack was ready for exhibition, Tony Rockwell got unit business cards printed in record time, and I kept the printers running to produce copies for our information packets. Pam Green, Paula and Leslie groomed their search dogs for public appearance and gathered canine equipment for display.

On September 15, we hauled truckloads of stuff to the fairgrounds, delighted to find shade and grass surrounding a new pavilion with bleachers on three sides. Everyone pitched in to set up a base camp (903 and the Gunn RV) and half a dozen display tables, as well as to rig the technical rescue display. Leslie, George Gunn and Charlotte Gunn took turns with the verbal presentation and Suzanne Ventura and Kris set up the packets for distribution. Active demonstrations were of course more interesting. Steve Pack was raised to the “injured subject” and lowered again by Aimee, David Hay, Everett Wood and Daryl Sauerwald; Brad Acker narrated this part and you would have admired his technique for doing safety checks. (A slap on the head, for example, confirmed that each participant was wearing a helmet.) There were a few giggles when the team, because of the angle of their anchor, had trouble reaching high enough

to gain working space in their raising system, and gasps of admiration when little Aimee easily held the entire load (through a braking system) for the descent.

Pam and Inca demonstrated the “runaway” training technique and everyone could hear the “party” at the end. Paula and Jeb tracked Debbie around a couple of barns and back to the pavilion where Deb was hiding in the crowd. During both of these, Leslie and Mingo explained what was happening. The last demonstration was on mantracking, with Rick showing use of tracking stick and Brad again as narrator. You could feel the audience shudder at the idea of spending all those hours on hands and knees.



David and Daryl show off the technical equipment.

After our formal presentation, we enjoyed informal show-and-tell and conversation with the individuals who visited our various displays.

Special thanks to Boots Otto, Assistant State Director for Area 7, for arranging the invitation to us. All of the IMSARU members listed above (except Martha, who was previously committed to climbing at the City of Rocks, and Tony, who was taking a mantracking class) helped on scene, and we had a great time doing it. And we all missed Jerry Newland, who was our original contact with the Good Sams and had planned to participate until the terrorist attacks a few days before stranded him in Cleveland.

About half of us stopped at a truck stop on the way home and were just getting seriously into eating when our pagers went off. (We had been rather conspicuous before—eight people in orange tee-shirts—but the pager chorus really invited stares.) The first page was “standby” and some of us managed to shovel in quite a bit of food before the second page that said NOW. When our mouths were not full of food, various members were bemoaning the fact that they did not have mission clothing and/or equipment with them, since this was supposed to be a civilized presentation in town, and were figuring out how quickly they could get to what they needed. The moral is obvious.

Rod was really pleased with the number of responses to his mission call...even as he notified us that the missing endurance rider had been located and our mission was cancelled.