

## WEB EDITION

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# RESCUE

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

FOUNDING MEMBER:  
**MOUNTAIN RESCUE  
ASSOCIATION**



## SEARCH FOR DROWNED TEENAGER – JUNE 1, 2004 --CHARLOTTE GUNN

On Monday, June 28, four people swam out to the middle of the Payette River between Horseshoe Bend and Montour, then floated downstream with the current before swimming back to shore. Three made it; a 19-year-old male did not. Witnesses said he threw up his hands and disappeared while still out in the main current.

On Thursday, July 1, we responded to Gem County with our resources for water search: Gene and Sandy Ralston with their side-scan sonar, Pam Green and Leslie Robertson with their search dogs Inca and Mingo, Kris Walker with his boat, Dominick Merrell with dive gear. George and Charlotte Gunn accompanied them for support and Dave Henry remained on call if diving was needed.



Kris pilots his search boat for Pam with Inca and Leslie with Mingo.

The water was swift with strong undertows; depth varied from two-foot shallows in wide areas to over twenty feet in some pools. We worked the area from PLS to about a mile downstream, using dogs on both boats, side-scan where the water was deep enough, and visually searching an island. Dominick went into the water to

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where family members indicated the PLS, then drifted to find the current... and drifted a whole lot farther before finding a shore that would let him exit and walk up to the road through a farmer's pastures. We had no hits from dogs nor from side-scan.

Water temperature at the surface was about 70°F; air temperatures were in the 90's all week; side-scan images showed indications of strong current at the bottom. The body was found the following morning approximately five miles downstream.



Note the bow platform that Kris added to this boat to let the dogs to work close to the water.

### **SAR TRAINING—MOCK SEARCH, JULY 17, 2004 --CHARLOTTE GUNN**

After a Tuesday classroom session on the mind-boggling vocabulary of the Incident Command System, we went up to the Shafer Picnic Area group site to practice a scaled-down version of the procedures. (Most of our searches are limited enough that we couldn't and wouldn't want to use the full-blown version.) Searchers learned that "Randy" had been partying with friends, using recreational drugs, and announced that he was going skiing—then disappeared. Since temperatures had been in the 90's and triple digits all week, we had to assume his mind was a bit fogged.

Most of the group had never set up the white shelter, so that was an early activity. Todd agreed to try the role of Operations Leader, and at the end of the exercise announced that he now knew why he wanted to be a field searcher. Chris worked with Todd in base camp and George was the Incident Commander, switching from "deputy" to mentor to whatever other role needed filling. Todd sent out two



Jeff and Randy return to Base.



Todd and Chris look comfortable in the shade with the SAR manager toys.

teams on trails and faint roads, in the direction of the ski area. Both teams were able to walk by Randy without seeing him in the dense brush beside the road; one team had the excuse of being distracted at that exact spot by seeing a bright red object across the valley on the opposite slope. Eventually, with clues from the person who had helped place Randy in his barely-

visible-if-one-looked-at-the-right-angle-at-the-right-moment site, both teams were able to spot him and Jeff toted him back to base.

After debriefing, we did some dog search training; we had not used dogs in the mock search because there was no human subject and the only tracking/trailing dog is a bare beginner. Most of the group then went home but Linda decided to stay and fulfill her bivouac experience with Bruff as company; George and Charlotte also spent the night camped in their motor home. Linda had more fun: It rained off and on all night long, and Bruff, accustomed to coming and going freely through the dog door at home, took down her shelter the first time he decided to go out during the night. At least it was not cold. [Editor's Note: Any dog handler who has never camped with his/her dog ought to try the experience before being forced to do it.]

IMSARU participants included Jeff Munn, Karen Limani, Tom Kearney, Linda Kearney, Chris Harry, George Gunn, Charlotte Gunn and Todd Culley.

### **IT'S CORN BOOTH TIME AGAIN – AUGUST 20-28, 2004**

You can't yet have had your fill of corn-on-the-cob, but here's your chance. The Corn Booth at the Western Idaho Fair is our main revenue source for the year, and we need everyone's help. See the calendar page of this issue for dates and events, but they include: Start setting up the booth at the Fairgrounds on Saturday, August 14; continue on Sunday, August 15, and any evenings thereafter until it's done. This is a task that needs at least 15-20 workers. If only half



Everett trains future Corn Booth workers while they're young. Join him and the rest of the crew at the Western Idaho Fair, August 20-28.

a dozen show up, it will never happen. Work shifts (10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and 5 p.m. to midnight) from Friday the 20<sup>th</sup> through Saturday the 28<sup>th</sup>. Then show up one more time on Sunday the 29<sup>th</sup> to take down the booth; again we need many hands for this job.

Jeff Munn will be overseeing the booth set-up and take-down, as well as collecting the money daily. Volcanic Farms is again providing our corn, freshly picked each morning. And the background preparations, from contracts to servicing fire extinguisher, have been underway for weeks. So talk to your family (including teenage children), friends, neighbors and co-workers and offer them the chance to volunteer a shift or two in the Corn Booth. You'd be amazed how many people will be delighted to do so—and we need them all. Contact Martha Vandivort at 338-0284 to volunteer yourself and your recruits.

**See you at the Fair!**

**THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!**

Many thanks to the following supporters for their cash donations:

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## **K9 WATER AND CADASTER TRAINING IN BONNEVILLE COUNTY JUNE 18-20, 2004--CHARLOTTE GUNN**

It's always a privilege and a pleasure to train with the Bonneville County Sheriff's SAR, and this was no exception. Nancy Hachmeister, a member of Rocky Mountain Rescue Dogs and a FEMA dog handler and instructor, was our trainer on Friday. We did agility work with our dogs, classroom sessions on what is involved in disaster search, and introduction to the bark box before heading off-site for the rubble pile and the simulated collapsed building in a hangar. There were plenty of challenges for all: The rubble pile had not only two live "victims" but also cadaver material and distractions. (Xena slurped the peanut butter.) The collapsed structure was dark and twisty, hands-and-knees crawling through dust and smoke; again there were both live people and cadaver scents.

On Saturday, we went to Gem Lake and the Snake River to work water problems and cadaver discrimination. There were the usual sets of buckets of water—plain and with scent, shore problems that included dead animal distraction, diver runaways, live divers and cadaver scent to be found from inflatables and jet boats. Buddy fulfilled expectations by his performance on the diver runaway, eager to retrieve not only "his" diver but also the other two who were in the water nearby.

Sunday was the day for mock searches: Teams of three or four dogs and handlers rotated through the rubble pile, the tire dump (that's a challenging terrain!) and the collapsed building, until a fierce storm with lightning and hail closed us down a bit early.

As always, we ate well. Some of us absolutely pigged out on Saturday evening's barbecued ribs and chicken; all of us appreciated the meals and snacks and drinks provided. We are also a bit envious of the shiny new kitchen—much fancier than mine at home—which is now part of the SAR building. Thank you, Bonneville County SAR: Karen Hiatt for overall organization, Dave Forker for the collapsed structure simulation, Dave and Rena, Faye, Leon and Robin for feeding us so well, and all the others who gave so much time and effort to this project.

IMSARU members attending were Winston Cheyney with Skadi, George Gunn and Charlotte Gunn with Xena, Linda Kearney with Bruff, Martha Vandivort with Angie.

### **TRAINING IN MANTRACKING – JUNE 26, 2004 --CHARLOTTE GUNN**

Dan Scovel and Kris Scovel, two of our Mantracker 1 members, gave members an introduction to the art of mantracking. The Tuesday evening class included slides of what has been seen on the ground, descriptions of how one looks for sign and equipment used by mantrackers. On Saturday morning we went out to Bonneville Point, where Dan and Kris had placed some tracks for aging comparisons as well as laid lines of tracks to be followed. Eight of us divided into three teams, while George Gunn (also a Mantracker 1) helped with instruction.



Dry desert is not ideal for following sign, especially when it is covered with tough vegetation rather than the smooth sand or dry dust many would assume accompanies the word “desert.” Some of the vegetation stays smashed for a while, but an amazing amount pops back up quickly; not much dirt sticks to soles for transfer; and Kris and Dan had to look hard for appropriate spots to leave us “signature” tracks. As the sun rose higher overhead, we experienced the lack of shadow that makes noon a bad time for tracking but also had the chance to try different angles and heights for looking at the same piece of ground. And before we finished, each team moved to a different line of sign

Searchers look for sign from various angles.

for the experience of taking over in mid-search.

At the end of our practice, all were invited to join the mantrackers for additional training sessions on a to-be-scheduled basis and/or to attend professional seminars, and we slurped frozen juice bars to rehydrate ourselves.



In addition to the instructors, participants included Janine Townsend, Kevin Schroder, Phil Sander, Ron Moomey, Karen Limani, Linda Kearney, Tom Kearney and Charlotte Gunn.

## NATIONAL AWARD FOR GENE AND SANDY RALSTON

Of the two 2004 Higgins and Langley Special Commendation awards presented at the NASAR Conference in June, one went to Gene and Sandy Ralston for their outstanding work in using side-scan sonar to locate drowned victims.

*The Higgins and Langley Memorial Awards for Outstanding Achievement in Swiftwater Rescue* were established in 1993 by members of the Swiftwater Rescue Committee of the National Association for Search and Rescue (NASAR). They honor Earl Higgins, a writer and filmmaker who lost his life in 1980 while attempting to rescue a child being swept down the flood-swollen Los Angeles River, and Jeffrey Langley, a firefighter-paramedic with the Los Angeles County Fire Department who lost his life in a helicopter incident in 1993.

Gene and Sandy travel all over the U.S. and into Canada to help families retrieve the bodies of their loved ones. In addition to searching for victims of accidental drowning, the Ralstons have searched for crime victims and evidence, missing planes, and such high-profile cases as pieces of the shuttle Columbia and the military jets that collided in the Columbia Gorge. This award celebrates not only the Ralstons' technical expertise but their devotion to helping grieving families. **Congratulations, Gene and Sandy!**

More information about the Ralston's side-scan and images from missions can be found on their web site: <http://galston1.home.mindspring.com/Sidescan.html>

## CONGRATULATIONS!

Dominick Merrell passed his tests for the Emergency Medical Technicians' National Registry. We applaud his hard work and determination in accomplishing this goal, and welcome this addition to our unit's skills.

**CALENDAR**

Aug. 10	Clean and load Corn Booth	7:30 p.m. At the Compound
Aug. 14-15	Set up Corn Booth at the Fairgrounds	8 a.m. - ???
Aug. 20-28	Corn Booth at the Western Idaho Fair Need LOTS of volunteers!	10 a.m.-Midnight Daily
Aug. 29	Take down Corn Booth at Fairgrounds	9 a.m. - ???
Aug. 31	Business Meeting	7:30 p.m. At the Compound
Sept. 7	General Meeting	7:30 p.m. At the Compound
Sept. 14	SAR Tactics Workshop (No Field Training this month)	7:30 p.m. At the Compound
Sept. 21	Medical Training	7:30 p.m. At the Compound
Sept. 28	Business Meeting	7:30 p.m. At the Compound
Oct. 5	General Meeting	7:30 p.m. At the Compound
Oct. 12	SAR Training – PLB/ELT – Jerry Newland	7:30 p.m. At the Compound
Oct. 16-17 T.B.A.	SAR Field Training – PLB/ELT – Jerry Newland	Time & Place
Oct. 19	Medical Training	7:30 p.m. At the Compound
Oct. 26	Business Meeting	7:30 p.m. At the Compound
November SAR Training:		
Nov. 9	SAR Equipment Update and Christmas List Planning	
Nov. 13	SAR Field Training – SAR Olympics – <b>Bring your field pack!</b>	
December SAR Training: Dec. 7 & 14 Winter Rescue      No Field Training		



### **901 HAS A NEW HAT**

After much discussion, and lots of research by Logistics Director Chris Harry, we purchased a topper for the bed of our “newer” truck 901. Chris and Tom Kearney did the modifications to fit it for carrying a litter on top, and we now have some protection from rain, snow, dust and low branches for the gear and/or people we transport in the back.



Dan Scovel does outdoor safety education with aeronautics campers.