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RESCUE

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TRAINING AT THE CITY OF ROCKS, JUNE 18-20

—BY TIM HENNING



Gary, Tom, Jerry and Mick give Rescue Randy a ride down the rock.

On Friday, June 18, members from Idaho Mountain SAR, Elmore County SAR, and Bonneville County SAR built a bonfire which set the stage for numerous stories about past trainings, searches, and rescues—including those from Smith's Crack, a popular cave in Elmore County. It seems like a likely spot for future rescue, and thus a great spot for a future training. Let's keep that in mind.

IMSARU had seven members at the training, Jeff Munn, Robert Gilley, Aimee Hastriter, Tom Wheless, Jerry Newland, Tim Henning, and Mick Riffie. Elmore County was represented by Luann Alvarez, Mick Berger, Robin Hicks, and Gary Whitman. Bonneville County (our other Idaho MRA team) had Stan Fenn, Leon Wolfram, Robin VanHorn, Doug Case, James Case and Rena and Dave Ferguson.

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Dummies on the rock:

Sometime during the night or early morning, two dummies, one reported as having “rocks for brains,” were climbing on a rock face, hurt themselves and needed evacuation. The two dummies were practice victims for our first exercise, a high-angle pickoff. (One was a Rescue Randy and the other was a duffel bag filled with rocks.) We established two mixed teams, and divided those into pickoff teams and ground teams. The pickoff teams scrambled up the side of the climb and began the task of establishing anchor systems for belay and load line direction change. The ground teams established two anchors for the belay and load



Bonneville County and IMSARU team up to rig the litter.

lines. (This method was chosen because of the lack of working space on top.) Both dummies, with litter attendant, were lowered to the bottom. Just for grins, one team switched to a raising system and raised the pair about twenty feet and then lowered them again.

Flying tents:

We had very calm winds during the exercise, which was fine since we were mostly on the shady side of the rock. However, around noon several people noticed a gust of wind blowing down the mountainside opposite the rock face that we were working on. When it hit Breadloaf Rocks, a major obstacle, it turned into a small tornado that caused a bit of ruckus. First, the free-standing shelter raised about five feet and flipped upside down. Cher Wheless tried to save the miscellaneous gear that was on the tables underneath the shelter by placing her head between the shelter’s frame and the picnic table. Luckily, this action caused no damage; her head was OK also. Next, Gary Whitman’s tent, even though it was staked down and had sleeping gear inside, soared about 75 feet straight up in the air, hovered for a while and landed with minor damage. We never found his groundcloth

We had very calm winds during the exercise,

Now, where is Jeff?

Jeff Munn, the subject for the evening’s search problem, went off by himself to do some bouldering just north of the Breadloaf Rocks. He was to return for lunch at noon and was overdue by five hours. Jerry Newland, the search Operations Leader (OL), created three

teams and began the task of organizing the search for Jeff. Since this was a practice search, Jerry selected the newest members, Aimee, Tom, and Robert, to be team leaders. Each of them was accompanied by an experienced mentor. I set up the problem to be difficult enough



OL Newland discusses strategy and assignments for “Jeff search”

to last several hours. However, eagle-eye Aimee spotted Jeff’s orange shorts from around five hundred yards while her team was conducting a hasty search to clear the likely trails. After several minutes they reached Jeff and reported that he was unconscious with a head wound and appeared to have a leg fracture.

Jerry redirected Robert’s team to the subject’s GPS coordinates and set Tom’s team in motion hauling the litter, litter wheel, backboard, and med equipment to the subject’s location from basecamp. Jeff was cared for, and then pack-

aged for transportation via the litter and wheel. Half an hour later he was feeling much better, walking around and joking. I’m glad he recovered so quickly; he was my driver home the next day.

Note the sequence of events: (1) Locate subject, (2) Call for assistance, (3) Care for and package the patient, and (4) Transport the patient to an evacuation site. This will prove to be great practice for a later event. (Read on!)

Dummy’s on the rock again:

Well, Rescue Randy isn’t so bright. On Sunday morning he decided to do a little climbing, hurt himself on a mid-grade rock slope and needed to be evacuated from the rock. Seven rescuers scrambled the rock with gear and again set up two independent systems for a belay and load line that would be manned from the top since there was a lot of working room. Assuming the worst with an unconscious subject, Jerry packaged the patient on a backboard and then in the litter for the hand-carried ride down the slope. Aimee manned the load line and Robert manned the belay line. Four litter attendants walked the litter down the slope, assisted by Aimee’s gentle lowering of the load line.

We were sorting gear from the scree evac when...

Is this part of the weekend exercise?

—by Jerry Newland

While we were giving directions to the couple that had stopped in the middle of the road, a



IMSARU and Elmore County members access and stabilize a fallen climber at City of Rocks, prior to helicopter evacuation.

jeep passed us, covering us with dust while doing what appeared to be 60 mph on a road that was less than 500 yards long. As I approached camp, all I could see was Tim running across camp with his camera in hand before 901 went screaming by me with the jeep leading the way, again covering us with dust. I realized that something serious had happened, grabbed my gear, and hitched a ride with an Elmore County team member to the accident scene.

Upon reaching the subject, I was briefed that he was a 29-year-old male climber who was in the process of clipping into his second piece of rock protection when he fell approximately 25 to 30 feet to the deck. He hit his head on the wall and landed on his left arm and shoulder. The patient was conscious but unresponsive with an obvious head wound and signs of shoulder/collarbone injury as well as a possible humerus fracture. Luann Alvarez, Elmore County EMT, was the primary medical provider on scene with IMSARU members Mick Riffie, Robert Gilley, and Jerry Newland assisting. Others, by no means less important than those mentioned by name, continued to provide support by transporting gear, doing a little crowd control, contacting State Communications for LifeFlight, obtaining GPS coordinates for the LZ, and other duties that helped handle this emergency smoothly.



Almo QRU, Elmore County and IMSARU team members transport injured climber to the LZ.

The patient was treated for his injuries, primarily stabilized, and was being prepared for packaging for transport when the park's Quick Response Unit arrived on scene in their Sunday-best dresses. (They apparently responded directly from church.) The park rangers and officials arrived soon after the QRU. Both the QRU and the Rangers had O2 which helped the patient's condition a great deal.

The QRU gals conducted a quick patient assessment and then we assisted with the packaging and transporting, via the litter and wheel, to the LZ that was prepared for LifeFlight. LifeFlight arrived about 10 minutes later, loaded the patient, and they were off to Ogden, UT because it was the nearest hospital that had a neurosurgeon on staff on Sunday.



Jeff waves goodbye to Life Flight, the last step in a training that was put to immediate use in a mission.

Familiar exercise?

When reviewing the events of that afternoon, we realized that our training the previous day had helped us with the real situation. The subject was (1) quickly found and treated by the team led by Luann Alvarez. (2) Jeff manned the radio, requested LifeFlight and called the Park Rangers to respond. (3) The subject was treated, packaged and

then (4) transported about 1/4 mile to the LZ. All of this happened without so much as a discussion on who was to do what. Training does pay off!!! And since so many missions involve more than one agency, multi-agency training especially pays off. Many thanks to Elmore County and Bonneville County for joining us this weekend, and we're sorry Bonneville had to leave early and miss the real one.

Once again, we learned that one of the most valuable resources we have is communication. Without radios, the evacuation would have taken much longer and the patient would have been without O2 for a longer time. Also, the radio and GPS together enabled us to call in location of an LZ closer than the standard spots used at City of Rocks. And that litter wheel is worth every penny it cost!

THE 21ST CENTURY IS COMING SOON **--BY JEFF MUNN**

With the new millenium just around the corner, and the computer technology expanding, it seems the day of the postman is on the way out and the e-mail address is here. Most of us probably have e-mail addresses and IMSARU is putting together an e-mail address list. If you would like your address included on the list (for personal and unit use only—NOT for sale!) please send your name and e-mail address to Jeff Munn. If you would be willing to receive your newsletter via e-mail rather than hard copy, please also include that information. We are currently spending about \$100 per month to mail the newsletter, and some have suggested this as a way to save paper and money. Send to: rjmunn@micron.net

FALL CREEK-ANDERSON RANCH RESERVOIR

MAY 30, 1999

--BY CHARLOTTE GUNN

Elmore County requested search dogs for a subject who had gone into the water the previous day. Two men were in a vehicle that went into Fall Creek, approximately three-quarters of a mile above where it empties into the reservoir. The passenger reported that the two of them discussed how they would get out of the vehicle; the driver exited first through the window on his side, followed by the passenger through the same window. The driver apparently did not make it to shore. The creek here is extremely steep and fast; the vehicle was washed about 500 feet

downstream from point of entry, ending up 100 feet below where the passenger made it to shore.



Inca is not trying to imitate a ship's figurehead; she is working very hard to follow the scent while ignoring Pam's grip on her tail that keeps her from exiting the boat again.

It was impossible to thoroughly search the creek; the banks are intermittently approachable for visual search but are often vertical and/or choked with brush. Weather was strong winds upstream, sun, rain, hail, hot, cold.... Visibility in the water was very limited. We worked the three dogs from a jetboat in the comparatively quiet pool just below where the creek reaches the reservoir, plus some limited areas of shoreline. All three dogs indicated scent in the debris-covered eddy; in

fact, all three dogs jumped out of the boat into this eddy. Divers were unable to find the body on Sunday but located it Monday morning, under the edge of the eddy and almost completely covered by silt. Their comment was that he had been there all along; they simply hadn't found him the first time.

Lesson of the day: **TRUST YOUR DOG!** Many humans at the site had trouble believing the victim could have washed that far down Fall Creek, both because victims are so often found near where they went into the water and because there were several strainers that looked like they would catch any large object moving down the creek. When three trained and experienced water search dogs say "He's in this area," you need to take them seriously.

IMSARU members responding included: Steve Argyle, Aaron Garrison, Pam Green with Inca, George and Charlotte Gunn with Hobo, Diane Mathews, Leslie Robertson with Mingo, and Tom Wheless. We were on our way back up out of the canyon when State Communications radioed us with the news that we might be needed in Oregon the next day. (See article on Wolfe Creek Reservoir.)

WOLFE CREEK RESERVOIR (OREGON)
MAY 31, 1999
--BY CHARLOTTE GUNN

We arrived home dirty and tired from our search in Elmore County on May 30 to be met by Coordinator Rod Knopp with a request to respond to Union County, Oregon the following morning for another drowning victim. Since they wanted to start as early in the morning as possible (and we also wanted to work before the wind came up), we agreed on a 3 a.m. departure time. The responding team was many of the same people as for the Elmore County search: Rick Cudd, Aaron Garrison, Pam Green with Inca, George and Charlotte Gunn with Hobo, Rod Knopp with his Boston whaler, Gene Ralston with his boat (differential GPS), Leslie Robertson with Mingo, and Tom Wheless.

We drove through the dark to Baker, where we stoked up with a restaurant breakfast before continuing on up to the reservoir. The scenario was that a 14-year-old boy had been seen to set out in a small rowboat, apparently intending to cross the water to where he and a friend were camped. Witnesses reported that he seemed to be having trouble controlling the boat in the strong wind. The empty boat later drifted to shore at the boat ramp; it contained the boy's shoes, one oar, a life jacket. The other oar also drifted to shore separately. Estimates of PLS varied greatly. Water depth in the reservoir ranges up to 100 feet or more. Water temperature was 47 degrees on the surface and 42 degrees on the bottom.



The view was breath taking—so was the wind. Gene Ralston with his DGPS equipped boat, shown here, confirmed the consistency of the alerts of three dogs.

really hard. Neither sonar nor camera were able to pick up anything there. Reluctantly, we agreed that we were not going to accomplish a miracle this time, paid our condolences to the grieving family, and headed back home.

As on our trip to Union County in January for an avalanche, we were impressed by the organization and conduct of this search. We don't expect people to feed us at the mission site, but that Union County SAR base camp bus is a most welcome sight.

Union County Sheriff's Office, Union County Sheriff's SAR, and Baker County Sheriff's Office had search personnel, boats and a base camp established. They were using sonar and a remote video camera to search an area that might be near the PLS. We had the luxury of working with the two very best boat handlers—our own Rod and Gene—who have boats equipped specifically for canine work and who understand how the dogs work.

By mid-afternoon, with heavy weather closing in, we had an area near shore where all three dogs had hit but none

WOLFE CREEK RESERVOIR, JUNE 6, 1999

The situation above apparently drew lots of attention. We were told that a psychic, a water witch and a local resident with sonar all had answers to where to find the victim, and that the local media was announcing that search dogs would be returning this weekend. At Union County's request we returned for a Sunday search. Gene and Sandy Ralston took the boat up Saturday afternoon, followed by Jerry Newland and George and Charlotte Gunn with Hobo. A very early start Sunday morning brought Chuck Bricker, Pam Green with Inca, Aimee Hastriter and Leslie Robertson with Mingo. Our plan to search "before the wind comes up" was foiled by the wind's arriving before daylight; it was another day for multiple layers of insulation under the flotation gear.

All three dogs worked from Gene's boat and from a local bass boat, often accompanied by one of the divers seeking first-hand information about any alerts. Inca showed some interest in an area near the buoy marking one possible PLS; Hobo's interest was much closer to the shore where the subject was seen to row his boat out of the cove; neither dog confirmed the other's scent.

It was frustrating to not be able to help the grieving family, though not unexpected if the subject is in the deep water. The only positive parts of the day were the professionalism of those organizing the search (including Union County SAR's amazing hospitality again) and the way local people kept dropping off supplies—sandwiches, fried chicken, bottled water—for the searchers.



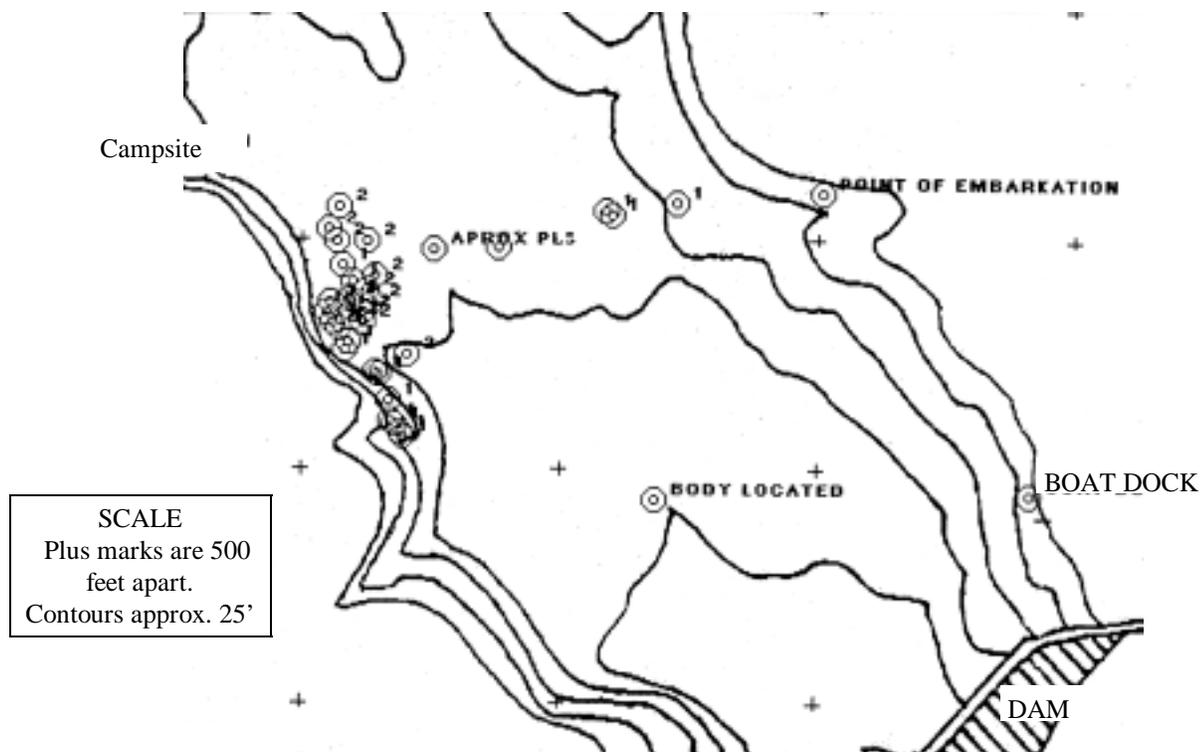
Union County's well equipped command center. If you go home hungry from a search in Union County, it is your own fault!

WOLFE CREEK RESERVOIR—FINAL REPORT

According to e-mail from the State SAR Coordinator in Oregon, the Trident Foundation team arrived late in the evening of June 9. [This is a private foundation which maintains personnel and high-tech equipment such as side-scan sonar, underwater camera, etc. The community raised funds, an estimated \$9,000, to bring them in.] This team searched all day June 10, 11 and 12, locating the body on side-scan sonar at approximately 1600 hours on that third day. It was recovered from 93 feet of water at about 2030 hours, by Trident divers.

In addition to everyone's relief that the family's two-week waiting ordeal is over, we have several unanswered questions as a search team and as dog handlers. The recovery site (if descriptions relayed to us are accurate) was far from any of the reported PLS's and does not seem to fit witnesses' descriptions of wind direction and force at the time of disappearance. Our experience has been that bodies seldom move far until they become buoyant. Could there have been enough current on the bottom and the right slope for the body to be rolled along? Had it started to develop buoyancy within two weeks? (Water temperatures were still reported to be in the 40's.) What were our dogs smelling—though not strongly—upwind of the recovery site, on the day following the drowning? What were the dogs alerting on in the same area, six days later and 800' from the recovery site?

Is 93 feet of cold water beyond the capability of a search dog? If any reader has relevant experience or suggestions, please help us to learn. (Respond to Charlotte Gunn at the U.S. Mail or e-mail addresses on the front page of this issue.)



Circles with numbers indicate alerts by dogs recorded by DGPS. 2 was six days after the 1's. The body location (recovered six days after 2) may have been taken with recreational GPS; if so, it may be +/- 150 feet.

COMING EVENTS:

Special Mailing: IMSARU members will be getting a mailing soon containing an updated copy of the By-laws. It should be added to your membership manual. There also will be a summary of the June MRA meeting by Rod and some suggestions of changes we may need to make to bring our By-laws into line with MRA policy. Also included will be a list of projects that are needed at the compound. If you could work on some of them, or better yet take charge of getting one or more done, contact Jeff Munn.

Bonneville County plans to host an **area training** the last weekend of September; this will include an opportunity for MRA teams to recertify in **search techniques**.

Idaho Mountain Search and Rescue Unit is not a listed agency for **United Way** campaigns, but we are eligible for **designated donations**. If you are a member whose employer participates in United Way, make yourself available as a speaker when the campaigns start this fall.

Still Want to Do It, Just Don't Want to "Thru" It **By Liana Pope**

Everything in moderation. That's my motto. Why I adopted a different (and completely bonkers) philosophy with the Appalachian Trail, I don't know. I blame the folly of youthful enthusiasm. The realities of cartilage and connective tissue brought me back to sanity quickly.

I am now an older, wiser converted "section hiker." This is one who hikes smaller portions of the trail over a longer period of time. (Thru-hiking means completing the 2,160 mile trail in one fell swoop.) My ankles and feet convinced me to convert.

It doesn't take many 10-18 mile days traveling over never-ending steep ups and steep downs with an additional 45 pounds strapped on before some body part cries uncle. For many (including my husband, Jack) it was the knees. For me, every piece of connective tissue from my ankles to the tips of my toes screamed for mercy. By the end of each day I was walking on numbed stumps. My boots were great but there was no escaping the relentless pounding. I actually looked forward to the uphill! How sick is that? Trekking poles helped enormously but there was no relief from the law of gravity.

Despite the physical discomfort, I would not trade the A.T. experience for anything. Hardship situations make you so thankful for EVERY LITTLE THING! Kind strangers extended their generosity in the form of food and transportation for weary hikers. Hikers (already a generous bunch) responded by further extending their own care to others. It was a domino effect of good will. "Trail magic" is the cheesy term used by some.

The shared experience fostered such a feeling of camaraderie and closeness. Each evening happy reunions occurred as hikers trudged into shelters and campsites:

"Did you lose the trail on that granite rock face?"

"Yeah, I climbed down a hundred yards of steep rock before I realized!"

"Me too! The trail was so poorly marked there."

"That's nothing! I climbed down TWICE looking for the trail!"

Those with rolls of duct tape shared generously with the less-equipped. These mountains laugh at moleskin and Band-Aids. Wise hikers duct-taped friction areas BEFORE any blisters formed. Six to nine hours of non-stop up and down produced rubbing in the best of boots and blisters were inevitable even UNDER duct taped areas. I was lucky. Aggressive preventative measures meant that I suffered few blisters. One fellow hiker had tennis-ball-sized blisters on the balls of his feet from the downhills. He quickly discovered the skin-saving properties of the magic silver tape.

After my husband gleefully left the trail, I continued on with other "solo" hikers. The term "solo" is relative considering that we had informally banded into a traveling group of six. We all had something in common: our mothers were freaking out at the concept of their beloved children all "alone" in the wilderness with bears and psychotic chainsaw murderers lurking behind every tree. This phenomena was the same for the 23-year-old female solo-hiker as it was for the strapping 36-year-old, 6'2", 185 lb., male ex-army pilot, Mike. Upon calling his parents his desperate father said, "Please, talk with your mother and calm her down. She's driving me crazy worrying about you."

When most of my hiking companions decided to leave the trail, I thought long and hard about continuing on. Weighing the pros and cons, I decided to return to New Hampshire and help my family with the strain of a newly hospitalized, 94-year-old grandmother. I made the right choice. (Plus, another solo hiker and her dad offered me a free ride from the middle of nowhere to the affluent outskirts of Washington, DC where my best friend picked me up for a visit. Who could turn down an opportunity like that?)

Since the pain in my feet has finally dissipated, I'll be day-hiking a 18.3 mile portion of the trail tomorrow in Vermont. Ahhhhh, youthful enthusiasm....

CALENDAR

July 6	General Meeting	7:30 p.m. At the Compound
July 13	SAR Training	7:30 p.m. At the Compound
July 16-18	Mantracking Class with Joel Hardin	McCall, Idaho

NOTE: Since the Mantracking Class falls on our standard training weekend, there is a possibility of additional training—field navigation—on the following weekend. This will be announced when arrangements are complete.

July 20	Medical Training	7:30 p.m. At the Compound
July 27	Business Meeting	7:30 p.m. at the Compound
July 31-Aug. 1	Water Training Weekend Sponsored by Idaho Search & Rescue Dogs, Inc.	Blackfoot Reservoir
Aug. 3	General Meeting	7:30 p.m. At the Compound
Aug. 10	Clean and load Corn Booth	7:30 p.m. At the Compound
Aug. 16, 17	Set up Corn Booth	5 p.m.- ?? At the Fairgrounds
Aug. 20-28	Western Idaho Fair—Corn Booth	
Aug. 29	Take down Corn Booth	at the Fairgrounds
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 Training	7:30 p.m. At the Compound

C'MON OVER HERE AND NIBBLE ON AN EAR!



Our Corn Booth at the Western Idaho Fair is our main fundraiser for the year—money to buy equipment and pay operating costs. It's very labor-intensive for a couple of weeks, so please plan now to do your share. Help set up the booth on August 16-17; work at least 2-3 shifts (10 a.m.-6 p.m. or 5 p.m.-midnight) during August 20-28; help take down the booth on August 29. Bring spouse, teenage children, relatives, friends to work with you. IMSARU pays the entrance fee and you get the unique experience of having a great time while performing critical service. **Call Tom Wheless at 939-6005 or Deborah Shaffer at 362-3795 to volunteer.**

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