

**Letter from Lorraine Knowles (sister in law to the victim, Allister Chalmers) to the local paper in Belledune, NB:**

Maine Search and Rescue Dogs

On July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2007, 64 year old Allister Chalmers went missing from his home in Belledune. An exhaustive 7 week search effort involving several New Brunswick search and rescues units, along with many local volunteers was unsuccessful.

On August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2007 the state of Maine Search and Rescue Dogs organization was contacted. This organization had previously been successful in Miramichi, N.B involving the recovery of a murder victim in 2003. This organization graciously accepted our invitation without hesitation. They only requested RCMP approval and support, which they promptly received.

On September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2007 the Mesard team made the 8 hour journey and arrived in Belledune at 5:30 where they were met by family, friends and Cst. Francois Gagnon of the R.C.M.P. After a detailed briefing, the team decided to do a preliminary orientation of the surrounding area that evening.

Proprietors Phil and Barb Thibideau of Toutes Les Saisons bed and breakfast of Point-Verte provided free accommodations and breakfast for the four team members and their search dogs. The veteran team members were from (left) Michelle Fleury and her dog Alli, Spencer Fuller (Gabe), Deb Palman (Alex), and Chip Wadsworth (Chile Peppa). These dogs were trained in several disciplines including cadaver detection.

The next morning at 7:00 a.m, they arrived at the search site where each dog handler and dog teamed with a local searcher who was very familiar with the area. After one and one half hours of searching the body was recovered.

In an emotional speech during supper that evening, Deb Palman acknowledged the tireless efforts of the local searchers during the previous 7 weeks. She stated that without their groundwork such a speedy recovery would not have been possible.

MESARD is a volunteer, non-profit organization. They do not charge for their services. Members pay for all required equipment for themselves and their dogs as well as all cost associated with training and responding to searches. If you would like to make a donation to MESARD so they may continue their wonderful work you can do so by sending it to:

Jennifer Rocheleau  
132 Pomeroy Rd.  
Hancock, ME 04640  
(Make cheques or money orders payable to MESARD) [www.mesard.org](http://www.mesard.org)

In conclusion words cannot express the sincere gratitude and respect that the family feel for these four amazing individuals and the tremendous support they received from friends, volunteers and local businesses. A special thank you to Cst. Francois Gagnon for his professionalism and for going above and beyond his call of duty and Royce MacDonnell for his dedication to the coordination of the volunteers.