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Founding Member: Mountain Rescue Association

Rescue



Web Edition

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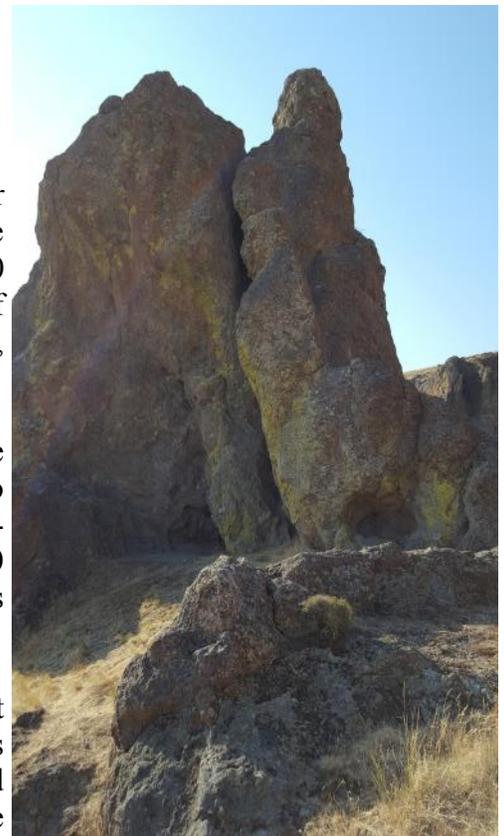
Press on the calendar to see upcoming events

JUMP CREEK RESCUE AND METEOR SHOWER AUGUST 11-12, 2016 --CHRIS BROOKMAN

Note: Every year from mid-July to mid-August the Perseid Meteor Shower is visible on clear nights from the northern hemisphere. It is the most active meteor shower of the year with a two-day peak during which more than 80 Perseids may be visible. The peak period for 2016 landed on the night of August 11-12. The Perseids can usually be seen starting around 10 p.m., with the best viewing time closer to 1:00 a.m., after moonset.

At 10:28 p.m. on Thursday, August 11, we received a request from the Owyhee County Sheriff to respond to Jump Creek Canyon for a subject who was reportedly uninjured but stranded on a cliff on the west side of the canyon. Eleven IMSARU members responded, leaving the Compound at 11:30 p.m. with Ron Christensen as operations lead and Francisco Castellon as tech team lead.

Arriving at the lower parking lot just after 12:30 a.m., we received a short briefing from the Owyhee County S.O.'s sergeant on scene. He informed us that there were three subjects, one female and two males, who had climbed to the top of a rock spire above Jump Creek Falls. Both males had been able to climb back down but the female had become very anxious and was not comfortable climbing down on her own. A family member had been able to



Daylight photo of rescue site. Imagine it in the middle of the night. —Photo by

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2519 Federal Way, Boise ID 83705. Editor: Charlotte Gunn, Phone (208) 378-7787 or e-mail
cpgunn@cableone.net Visit our web site at www.imsaru.org

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contact the subjects via cellphone, and lights from the subjects' phones could be seen sporadically from the lower parking lot. The sergeant had positioned his vehicle's spotlight on the location, giving us a good reference to locate the scene.

A two-member team carrying portable spotlights was first to be deployed into the field. The second team, including tech team members carrying climbing and rescue gear, left base shortly after. Both teams initially hiked down the main Jump Creek trail to the lower falls, but encountered cliffs and impassable terrain and were unable to access the subjects' location. After backtracking a short way, the team was able to hike to the top of the canyon and make contact with the subjects.

When we arrived at the subjects' location, we found a female and a male sitting on top of a rock spire approximately thirty feet tall. Both subjects were calm and reported they were cold and hungry but uninjured. The male told us that he, his sister and several other friends had climbed up the spire to watch the meteor shower. He said he had climbed up and down several times, but remained on top of the rock to stay with his sister.

We requested that both subjects stay put, quickly set up a lead-climbing belay, and one tech member climbed the spire to the top where the subjects were located, carrying additional rope, rock protection to build anchors, and harnesses and helmets for both subjects.

After confirming they were uninjured, both subjects were secured in harnesses and helmets, and attached to an anchor system, followed by discussion of different options as to how to lower them and who would go first. Both subjects agreed that the brother would go first, and the tech team decided to use a climbing belay lowering system, in which each subject would be tied in to the end of a rope and lowered individually, similar to how a rock climber is lowered from the top of a route.

Once the rope system was set up, rigged, and safety checked, the subjects were tied in and lowered one at a time, very slowly, to the ground. Both were back down to safety by just after 3:00 a.m. Once on the ground, the subjects were very grateful for our help and support; they remained a while at the base of the spire to watch the operation as the tech team deconstructed the rope system and a member rappelled back to the ground from the top of the spire.

While the tech team was working on lowering the subjects, other team members had identified a much easier route back down, so we escorted both subjects down to the upper parking area while the tech team finished removing and packing gear, and hiked out. All team members were out of the field by 4:30 a.m. Aside from the fact that this mission took place on an extremely clear evening with perfect temperatures, a special touch was added as we were able to catch glimpses of the ongoing meteor shower happening above us.

Once all team members were out of the field and back in the parking lot, we did a quick debrief before returning to the Compound in Boise just before 6:00 a.m., concluding a successful all-night mission. This would be the start of a very long day for some members who went straight to work in the morning, only to respond to another rescue page-out the next evening!

IMSARU members responding were Kevin Brizzi, Chris Brookman, William Burdge, Aaron Burdin, Francisco Castellon, Ron Christensen, Jim Findley, Mike Johnson, Eddie-Dean Thomas, Ken Swickard and Tom Wheless. In-town coordinators were Charlotte Gunn and Jimmie Yorgensen.

TECHNICAL RESCUE IN CUSTER COUNTY, AUGUST 12-13, 2016 TECH TEAM RESPONSE – AARON BURDIN

We received the mission callout at approximately 1900 hours, for a hiker stuck on a ledge between Sawtooth Lake and Alpine Lake. With confirmation that a National Guard Blackhawk would be available, we created two teams—a ground team that would drive up to the Iron Creek trailhead and hike to the location, and a four-person tech team going via the Blackhawk.

Coordinating with the Blackhawk crew, the plan was to utilize the GPS coordinates given for the subject's location and attempt to hoist him with the jungle penetrator. If that failed, the backup plan was to drop the tech team on the mountain above Alpine Lake. Over Sawtooth Lake at 2330 hours, the Blackhawk crew determined it was too dangerous to hoist the subject. Unable to land to drop off the tech team, the crew lowered them via the jungle penetrator.

At 0040 hours the team arrived at a location approximately 200 feet above the location of the GPS coordinates. We set up a system and one member rappelled down, attempting to make visual and verbal contact with the subject. After rappelling 150 feet, with zero contact with the subject and a clear line of sight to the approximate GPS coordinate, we determined that the subject was not at that location. We made radio contact with the Custer County SAR team, who had two members approximately 100 feet below the subject, about a third of a mile away from the original coordinates given to us. Our ground team had arrived at the Iron Creek trailhead and our tech team set up a full raise-lower system at the new location. Our tech team member over the edge was able to see the lights from the Custer County SAR team, but the system was still 200 lateral feet away from the subject.

We took down the system and arrived at the third location at 0400 hours; visual confirmation from the local team confirmed that we were finally at the correct location. For the third time, we set up the system and sent a member over the edge. We asked our ground team to head up the trail with a litter, to assist in transporting the subject as well as carry tech equipment. By 0600 hours, the subject was raised to safety, in good health, tired but in good spirits and requiring only water and food. He stated that he was OK to walk out; we met the Custer County SAR team and our ground team on the way, and reached the trailhead at approximately 0900, where the Custer County SAR had breakfast waiting.

IMSARU tech team responders were Gregg Rettschlag, Ron Christensen, Francisco Castellon and Aaron Burdin. Kevin Brizzi transported them to Gowen Field for their ride up.

GROUND TEAM RESPONSE – STEPH JENKINS

I was the OL for the ground team of eight members, driving up to access the stranded subject from the Iron Creek Trailhead. We left Boise as the air team arrived at Gowen Field for flight preparations. As the Banks-Lowman road was closed below Lowman due to the Pioneer Fire, we went up through Idaho City. Driving up Highway 21, it felt like all of Boise County was on fire that night, with the landscape lit by spot fires while trees burned right beside the road.

Our team met up with Sawtooth SAR in Stanley a little after midnight and made our way to the Iron Creek Trailhead. Able to communicate with the tech team after they were dropped off by the Blackhawk, we prepared the litter and waited until they made contact with the subject and set up the rappel system. We then

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started up the trail to help bring the subject out and to lighten the tech team's packs by carrying some of the ropes and technical gear. Upon hearing that the subject was able to walk out, we positioned three members with the litter a couple of miles up from the trailhead in case assistance would be needed, and five members continued up to meet the tech team and subject. All returned at approximately 0800 hours to the trailhead, where SAW SAR kindly brought us hot breakfast.

This was an all-night mission that followed a technical all-night mission some 24 hours prior, and our team was incredibly willing, patient and clear-headed despite fatigue. In Stanley we met up with Ken and Vicki Swickard, who picked up the tech team, and we all headed home.

Ground team participants were William Burdge, Jake Gillis, Steph Jenkins, Robert Lockhart, Dodi Newbill, Attila Sipiczki, Eddie Thomas and Tom Wheless.

MANTRACKING CLASS AT TRINITY PINES RETREAT SEPTEMBER 23-25, 2016 --KEN SWICKARD

IMSARU sponsored a Joel Hardin Professional Tracking Services class at Trinity Pines in Cascade. Accommodations were great, with very modern cabins, food was above average, and the main lodge provided ample dining room and a large meeting room with good AV equipment.

Friday morning was classroom instruction on basic concepts. After lunch, we went into the field. Novice students tracked lines of sign designed to allow beginners to see all aspects of a footfall and how to identify these aspects. More advanced trackers (or "the big kids," as they are called) had sign lines along the forest floor with little or no dirt. The leaves and thickly-layered pine needles made identification of sign very difficult but very rewarding. After a dinner break, we continued tracking in the dark until 2200 hours under a moonless sky.

Saturday found us back on the sign lines. All teams from all of the knowledge levels had difficulty at times, which was appropriate for a training class. After a hamburger and Idaho potato dinner, the group retired to the meeting room for a Rating Board to interview nine individuals wanting to qualify for certifications.

A brisk 28-degree Sunday morning had everyone bundled up as we continued on our sign lines until noon, at which time we picked up all of our biodegradable tape and marking sticks to leave the forest floor uncluttered. After lunch, the group met for debriefing of the two and a half days of tracking. Those who had interviewed for certifications—one new Apprentice Tracker and eight new Basic Trackers—received congratulations. These included IMSARU members Alicia Rettschlag (Apprentice) and Basic Trackers Aaron Burdin, Mike Rowe and Scott Walls.

Many thanks to the instructors for this course: Joel Hardin, Colin Stelma and Sharon Ward.



Photo by Ken Swickard

SheJumps:Wild Skills – August 13, 2016 --DELINDA CASTELLON AND ALISA RETTSCHLAG

SheJumps is a national organization that encourages women and girls of all ages to participate in outdoor activities. The Wild Skills activity began at 0800 at the Foothills Learning Center with approximately 38 girls, wearing colorful tutus and wildly patterned leggings and separated into age groups, rotating through five main skills: the Ten Essentials, Navigation, Shelter Building, First Aid and Leave No Trace. Our group was responsible for the basics of shelter building.

We focused on choosing a safe, protective, and relatively comfortable place for a shelter. Becky took the lead by giving the students an opportunity to look for natural shelter formations and what to stay away from (ravines) during our short hike. Back at our station, we showed the girls various shelters such as: Bivvy, a Burrito Wrap with tarp, Standard Tent, SOL, Space Blanket, and Tube Tent Shelter. Alisa also demonstrated how a simple garbage trash bag can be used to create an emergency shelter...stressing the importance of not placing bags over their heads at any other time, due to safety hazards. Each station had 50 minutes per group. We were interrupted a couple of times by a gopher and a bunny, both trying to show us their shelters.

Albertson's sponsored a sandwich lunch for all volunteers. IMSARU members for our station were Jamie Simpson, Alisa Rettschlag, Becky Louber, Jim Findley and Delinda Castellon.



Photo by Alisa Rettschlag

IMSARU CHRISTMAS PARTY – DECEMBER 3, 2016

As usual, we will hold our annual Christmas Party on the first Saturday of December, starting at 6 p.m. and hoping that members' holiday calendars won't yet be full. We have a potluck dinner (no need to sign up for kind of food, as there is always plenty) with IMSARU supplying paper plates, plastic silverware, coffee and tea. This is a social occasion but it is also time to present various awards, serious and perhaps not-so-serious. Spouses and dates are welcome to come meet the people you have been talking about and hear about some of the year's happenings. Arrangements are not yet finalized for location, but there will be plenty of notice as soon as we know for sure.

We will need a committee to set up tables and chairs, arrange the service area and utensils, and make sure all is cleaned up afterward...with lots of help on the latter. If you want to recommend someone for a serious award, tell Jimmie. If you know of a funny (maybe even a bit embarrassing) event during 2016, please tell Charlotte Gunn or Diane Mathews so they can share the remembrance with everyone. They do not reveal their sources.

SWIFT WATER SAFETY AND AWARENESS, SEPTEMBER 17, 2016 --MIKE ROWE

Field training for September almost didn't happen...Swift water safety and awareness was scheduled for Saturday, September 17th at 1000 hours on the Boise River near Eagle Road. As Gregg began the training, he abruptly stopped talking about water crossing locations and announced that we had a mission. (Most of us had left our phones in our vehicles because we had planned to get wet.) Training was cancelled, for the moment.

The mission was resolved quickly and training was resumed at 1145 hours. The unit worked along the north channel of the Boise River in several locations discussing safe crossing points, hazards (water and plant/wildlife), and equipment considerations. With the water considerably lower, the training was reasonably safe and allowed for us to practice crossing at points. Gregg demonstrated how walking at particular angles to the current could make the crossings easier and safer.



The unit then worked with throw ropes on volunteer "rescue" subjects in the river. Gregg demonstrated how the ropes could be thrown to successfully reach a subject. Then several members took short floats down the river as their teammates made attempts to reach them with the ropes. Several of the volunteer floaters had several ropes in their hands after passing by the rescuers. Luckily for the wet volunteers, the afternoon had warmed up and the water was refreshing.

Participants were Darryl Beemer, Aaron Burdin, Steve Camkin, Jim Findley, Taylor Grisham, Mike Johnson, Christi Kelley, David Kelley, Brian Mitchell, Alisa Rettschlag, Mike Rowe, Jamie Simpson and Attila Sipiczki. The instructor and photographer was Gregg Rettschlag.

SUPER WEEKEND ON THE SUPER SLABS – SEPTEMBER 24-25, 2016 **--BRAD ACKER**

Over the past year, IMSARU has been called into the Sawtooth Mountains several times, so the Technical Team decided to do their September training in the Sawtooths at the Super Slabs, not far from the famous Elephant's Perch climbing area. Besides being in a generally beautiful place to climb and hike, the weekend weather was perfect—sunny and in the 60's during the day and around freezing at night, making sitting around the campfire more enjoyable. We camped right on the shore of Redfish Lake, and Mike and Brian provided their personal boats to take everyone from the boat landing to the "Transfer Camp" campsite on the south end of the lake.

From camp, the Super Slabs are about an hour's hike and 600 vertical feet up the trail. The two days' training was focused on personal pick-offs. With eight members, we broke into two teams of four and chose two areas of the slab, with teams working through several pick-off scenarios. The "lots of personnel" version of the system employed one person working the belay, one on the main line, and a rescuer; we worked both raising and lowering of the subject/rescuer package after the subject was transferred onto the system. On the



second day we ran the "less personnel" version, sometimes called the Panorama Pick-Off. In this version, the rescuer controls his/her own descent with one person on the system switching between belay and main line (on the belay during lowering and on the main line raise during the subject transfer). This system is most effective when the subject/rescuer will be lowered to the ground after the transfer onto the system. I state "most effective" when, in my mind, this system would be used only when the subject/rescuer continue to the ground. However, I have been in this technical rescue world long enough to know that if you state something as an absolute, someone will come back with another way or another scenario! Anyway, during all this we also worked on some other skills and techniques such as the use of quad anchors, simultaneous rappelling, and tandem rappelling. I even had time to work on mid-face lunch skills because sometimes it takes a bit for the rescuer to arrive.

Thanks again to Mike and Brian for the use of their boats so we could bring way more stuff than if we had to carry it seven miles around the lake. In attendance were Greg Weber, Gregg Rettschlag, Dodi Newbill, Brian Newbill, Mike Johnson, John Ferguson, Ron Christensen, Chris Brookman and Brad Acker. I should also wish Francisco Castellon a speedy recovery from a knee injury. Francisco was responsible for all the planning of this training, only to email us the day before that he had a climbing injury and could not participate in the training.

IMSARU CORN BOOTH AT THE 2016 WESTERN IDAHO FAIR --HAYLEY PERKINS

As a new member, I jumped at the opportunity to volunteer at the Corn Booth. I did so in large part to fulfill an obligation (the good kind) and get to know fellow members, but I also had to see for myself what the hype was all about. Despite having grown up in Boise and attended many a Western Idaho Fair, I had never heard of the seemingly renowned SAR Corn Booth. I attempted to discount my guilt by convincing myself I'd recognize the booth, effectually prompting countless memories I'd somehow managed to bury...or at least one! Surely, I told myself, that wasn't too much to ask or hope for. Unfortunately, no such "ah-ha" moment occurred. I forced myself to accept the fact that I just plain and simply missed out and that's all there is to it...and there's no shame in that. What's important is that now my familiarity with the SAR Corn Booth exists, and I've got memories and witnesses as corroboration.

It was no surprise to me that the Corn Booth ran like a well-oiled machine. I was impressed with the shift managers' ability to balance supply and demand while juggling other managerial tasks. Teamwork and communication were on point, making it possible to get through unexpected rushes and peak times. From time to time, we'd get a customer who expressed noteworthy gratitude or shared an experience they'd had with SAR, that made being there extra special.

Next year, I'll be providing a bushel of corn puns--similar to this year's crop, only cornier.

Editor's Note: According to the schedules I received (not guaranteed to include all last-minute changes) we had 42 individuals, mostly members but including some friends and family members, who worked at the booth and we appreciate every one of them. Special thanks to Jimmie Yorgensen, Everett Wood, Scott Walls and Jerry Holmes for each working five or more shifts; to Layne Simmons for scheduling workers and Diane Mathews for handling some late changes; to Gregg Rettschlag for taking charge of the nightly closing and to Alisa Rettschlag for handling the nightly accounting the first half of the Fair...until that mountain biking accident changed her plans. We also thank Jeff Munn for supervising the set-up and take-down of our booth! The Corn Booth supplies roughly half of our annual budget, and it requires a lot of people working together to make it happen. P.S.: As usual, the corn-on-the-cob was delicious.'

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

We appreciate the generous cash donations from: Mrs. Valerie Houser REI

Xerox Corporation (to support the K-9 Team) Mr. Ron Christensen Mr. Scott Walls
United Way of Northern Utah (for Intermountain Combined Federal Campaign)

OFFICERS ELECTED FOR 2017

** indicates same person held the office in 2016

Coordinator – Rod Knopp**
President – Mike Johnson
Vice President – Ron Christensen**
Secretary – Steph Jenkins
Treasurer – Phil O’Bryan **
Training Director – Jeff Munn

Medical Director – Colin Sesek
Facilities Director – Brad Acker**
Logistics Director – Tom Wheless
Rescue Director – Francisco Castellon
P.R. Director – Ken Swickard

Editor’s Note: Searches and rescues are the exciting part of IMSARU, but they are supported by a major organization that requires many hours of training and...yes, structure. Many of our offices carry heavy demands for time and planning. If you are not ready to run for office, you can offer to help with one or more of these responsibilities, which will not only lighten the burden for the officers but also get you ready to consider running at some future date. And there are many necessary tasks that don’t belong to a specific officer. (Retiring president Jimmie has mowed the grass regularly, but not because it was in his job description.) Almost everyone has work and/or family responsibilities or health issues that may limit the time and energy available for IMSARU at any particular time, but please help when you can. Talk to any officer and/or experienced member about helping with the IMSARU workload and when a call goes out for volunteers, be one who says, “I will.”



More water safety training on September 17—throw ropes to help people out of the water. The morning was chilly, but training was interrupted by a mission call. By the time the mission was cancelled (child was located unharmed), the sun had warmed the water a bit.
—Photo by G. Rettschlag