

**WEB
EDITION**

RESCUE

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

FOUNDING MEMBER:
**MOUNTAIN RESCUE
ASSOCIATION**



WINTER SKILLS WEEKEND – JANUARY 16-17, 2010

--BRAD ACKER

The January training topic was winter skills; it worked a lot better this time than it did in July. However, in July my partner and I would have seen that large bush that ended up in our snow cave—more on that later. The classroom session was during our regular Tuesday meeting and we experienced the “freedom of the hills” the following Saturday. After a little hesitation in the raising of hands to the question “Who wants to go sleep in the snow?” a little help from Jacob got some hands to rise and we had a good group hanging out after the meeting, talking about the trip. We ended up with ten folks and three search dogs showing up Saturday morning. Another good thing was that our training location did not require an “alpine start,” so we were leaving the Compound at a comfortable 9:45 a.m. For me, this was a great chance to meet some new members I had not trained with, strengthen some existing friendships, and learn a lot in the process. I was supposed to be in charge, so of course I was going regardless.



—Photo by R. Shaver

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By noon we were geared up and performing our pre-tour avalanche transceiver check. We had three sleds hooked up and ready with a human-powered mix of snowshoes and touring skis. Gregg and Jeff helped perform the group transceiver range test while waiting a bit up the trail as we got under way one at a time. Jacob and I were pulling some pretty nice homemade pack sleds and Judd stepped up to pull the large group sled with a little help from a couple of extra haul lines. After our first break, Gregg took a turn on the big sled. We kept up a good pace and Ann soon took over the big sled and pulled it into the camp area.

Sunset Mountain, as with much of the Intermountain West, had been suffering from a below-average snowpack to date, and we found only 110 cm of snow. We spread out to find locations for our snow shelters and I began to pack down an area, thinking this snowpack would be good for a snow trench. As I started to cut my first blocks for the snow trench, it was obvious that a layer of surface hoar that was now buried 30 cm under the surface would not allow full blocks to be cut. This goes to show that faceted weak layers in the snowpack can be a problem on slopes of less than 30 degrees.

So with one shelter method discarded, Gregg and I started to pile snow, building up a mound to dig a cave out of. We piled and packed and piled and packed for about half an hour. We let the snow set up for about an hour and took that time to see how everyone else was getting along and get a bite to eat. Jacob had found a big enough drift to dig a cave without piling up any snow and was making good progress on that. The rest of us were all using the pile method and waiting for the snow to sinter together so it would be solid enough to hollow out. Gregg and I started to hollow out our shelter. As many of you know, it's a good idea to place marker sticks around the perimeter of your shelter so that when you are inside digging you don't dig through the ceiling or end up with a roof that's too thin. It wasn't long into the digging that I came to the first stick, then another, then another, then another! Ha, wait a minute. These aren't our



Unwelcome surprise in Brad & Gregg's snow shelter —Photo by R.Shaver

marker sticks. It's a darn bush! In the process of piling up snow, we dug a trench almost all the way around our shelter site. We did not find one bush, but right smack-dab in the middle of our shelter sat a big old bush. So far, we had run into two things back-country travelers don't want to see, buried surface hoar and brush! Not being easily deterred, we shoveled on, bent the branches down and got acquainted with our new roommate. After all, we were the ones visiting. That night we would have no shortage of places to hang things.

Everyone else got their shelters done with much less interference from nature. At one point I thought Ann and Kim would have a problem, as Ann's Giant Schnauzer enjoyed sitting on top of their shelter while they were inside digging, but the snow proved strong enough.

That evening, folks were trying out some new gear and learning a few new tricks. Colin and Jacob got a fire going. The difficulty did not prove to be the winter cold nor lack of fuel; rather, the large pile of sticks was great fun for the dogs. In time the dogs picked just one or two sticks and left the rest for the fire. I was able to test out a new stove and ran it, making dinner and tea and melting snow until the fuel canister was empty. I went early to bed, tired from a long day of pulling sleds and throwing snow.

In the morning we practiced our oatmeal-making skills, soon followed by avalanche transceiver practice. We buried a couple of transceivers and took turns locating, pinpointing and probing. It should be noted that I hid the transceivers and, while digging the holes to put them in, did not find one bush! We were soon joined by a nice family of cotton-clad snowmobilers, asking if we knew where the road was. I'm pretty sure they were asking about the road they were sitting on but the question left us a little confused. At any rate, Jeff was able to talk one of them into pulling him a little bit up the road so he could ski back down. Before heading back to the parking lot, we dug a snow test pit and demonstrated some stability testing. We were able to make it back to the cars without getting run over by the sleds we were pulling. Jacob rode on top of his part of the way. Soon the cars were in sight and another winter skills weekend in the training records. Thanks, everyone, for coming out and making this another enjoyable weekend.

IMSARU members participating were Brad Acker, Jeff Ball, Judd Ballard with Zora, Jacob Gillis, Mike Johnson, Kim Juda with Kiwi, Ann Moser with Watson, Gregg Rettschlag, Colin Seseck and Rebecca Shaver.

INFO DISPLAY AT SIERRA TRADING POST – JANUARY 30, 2010 --DANNY CONE

Sierra Trading Post had invited us to set up displays at their winter sales event, so Judd and I met at the Compound at 8 a.m. to sort out everything we thought we would need and headed out. We set up a table for the interior display; in the parking lot, we set up our Command Post trailer and truck 901, along with some equipment and packs. Several visitors said they could see the strobes on the trailer from almost a mile down the freeway.

Rebecca, Ann and I brought training photos, which we displayed on a laptop in the store and on the rear computer in the trailer. Kim and Judd had their search dogs inside the store to greet visitors there, and we all talked with the people who stopped by our exhibits.

Many thanks to those who helped with the event: Everett Wood, Lori Thompson, Rebecca Shaver, Ann Moser, Owen Miller (with his I-Phone full of new baby photos), Kim Juda with Kiwi, Jake Gillis, Danny Cone and Judd Ballard with Zora.

CALENDAR

Feb. 20	Tracking Training – Contact Dan or Kris Scovel at 376-7573	
Feb. 20	K9 Training – Contact Ann Moser at 514-9265	
Feb. 23	Business Meeting	7:30 p.m.
Mar. 2	General Meeting	7:30 p.m.
Mar. 3	Tracking Training – Contact George or Charlotte Gunn at 378-7787	
Mar. 5-7	Mountain Rescue Association Regional Recertification Testing in Bonneville Co.	
Mar. 9	SAR Training – Prep for Mock Mission – George & Charlotte	7:30 p.m.
Mar. 13	SAR Field Training – Mock Mission	Time & Place TBA
Mar. 14	Idaho State Trackers’ Association – Teleconference Meeting	
Mar. 16	Medical Training	7:30 p.m.
Mar. 20-21	IMSARU Strategic Planning Session	Time & Place TBA
Mar. 21	K9 Training – Contact Linda Kearney at 371-1175	
Mar. 23	Business Meeting	7:30 p.m.
Mar. 29	K9 Handlers’ Meeting	6:30 p.m.
Mar. 31	Tracking Training + Planning	6:00 p.m.- Place TBA
Apr. 4	K9 Training – Contact Ann Finley at 336-1485	
Apr. 5	Technical Class – 4 th and 5 th Class Climbing	7:00 p.m.
Apr. 6	General Meeting – Prep for Robie Creek	7:30 p.m.
Apr. 13	Medical Training - Prep for Robie Creek	7:30 p.m.
Apr. 17	Assist at Race to Robie Creek	All Day
Apr. 18	K9 Training – Contact Kim Juda at 866-3150	
Apr. 19	Technical Class – 4 th and 5 th Class Climbing	7:00 p.m.
Apr. 20	Meeting – Topic to be announced	7:30 p.m.
Apr. 24	Technical Class – 4 th and 5 th Class Climbing	Time & Place TBA
Apr. 27	Business Meeting	7:30 p.m.

Plan ahead for:

May 7-9 K9 Water Seminar in Bonneville County

May 21-23 Washington State SARCON – Pre-conference classes earlier that week.

NOTE: Unless stated otherwise, all regular meetings are held at the Compound. Specialty teams select their sites; contact the persons listed for information. All specialty teams welcome other members at their trainings, but there may be pre-requisites for technical field events.

CONTINUING MEMBERS: LAST CALL FOR 2010 DUES

As stated in our unit policies, and as has been posted on the meeting room board for the past several months, continuing members are expected to pay their dues by mid-February in order to remain members. By the time you are reading this, that deadline will have passed. Below is the list of paid members for 2010. If your name is not on it, you will be removed from the unit roll and the newsletter mailing list unless you pay your dues immediately--either by mail or at the next IMSARU meeting. If you think you already paid but your name is not on the list, call Charlotte at 378-7787 ASAP.

P.S. – If you have a pager with a discrete number, the annual fee is \$36. The Kearneys, the Gunns and Lee Pierce have paid those fees.

Acker, Brad	Kerley, Brian	Noland, Toni
Ball, Jeff	Kidwell, Carl	O'Bryan, Phil
Barsness, Amanda	Kimball, Irene	Oren, David
Castellon, Francisco (new)	Kimball, Wade	Paxton, Pauline (new)
Cheyney, Winston	Kline, Bob (life)	Pierce, Ashley
Cone, Danny	Knopp, Rod (life)	Pierce, Lee
Engleman, Tony (life)	Mackintosh, Ross	Rae, Edgar (new)
Ferguson, John	Mancuso, Michael	Rettschlag, Gregg (new)
Finley, Ann	Matsuoka, Jerry	Scovel, Dan
Garner, Collin	Meredith, Bob (life)	Scovel, Kris
Gunn, Charlotte (life)	Miller, Owen	Sesek, Colin
Gunn, George (life)	Miller, Patti	Shaver, Rebecca
Hoid, Sherie	Moomey, Ron	Strasser, Ted (life)
Johnson, Michael	Moore, Daniel	Thiry, Heather
Juda, Kim	Moser, Ann	Thompson, Lori
Kahn, Paul Andrew	Munn, Jeff	Webster, Rick
Kearney, Linda	Newland, Jerry	Wheless, Ron
Kearney, Tom	Nichols, Josh	Wood, Everett
Kenney, Nathan (new)	Noland, Jim	Yorgensen, Jimmie

THANK YOU FOR HELPING IDAHO MOUNTAIN SEARCH AND RESCUE

Cabela's for supplying the space in their Boise store for us to wrap gifts for donations during the holiday season. (This is our second-biggest fundraising project of the year.)

Randy Watts of Oregon Radiator Works in Ontario for repairing the radiator in our vehicle 902 without charge.

The following people made cash donations:

Marie Scovel
Tony Engleman

Steven Fields
Diane Fields

We also received cash donations **in memory of Mariette Foreman** from the following people, with the request from Mrs. Foreman's family that the money be used to help fund our K9 teams' activities:

Margean Robinson

Diane Goracke and Dean Crabbs

Manuel and Grace Sabala

Idaho Mountain Search and Rescue Unit, Inc. is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) corporation. We have no paid staff and our officers/board members are all unpaid volunteers. We never charge the people whom we find and/or rescue.

AVALANCHE TRAINING – FEBRUARY 2, 4, 6-7, 2010

--BRAD ACKER

Avalanche rescue was the subject for February training and it was none too soon, as our unit is up for recertification testing in March. Avalanche, being a vast subject, required two weeknight classes and two weekend days in the field just to cover our specialty area of rescue. Winston Cheyney was our teacher. We covered the basics in the classroom sessions, talked about past searches we have performed and introduced all new members to the snow dragon (snow talk for avalanche.) We spent both field days near and around Bogus Basin Ski Resort.

On Saturday we worked on individual beacon skills, performed a quick group search, and practiced shoveling techniques. We have found that the snow pushed off the steep edges of the parking lots makes a pretty good representation of avalanched snow. Winston wanted to start everyone from scratch, so he demonstrated the pains that the "old-timers" had to go through and made sure everyone appreciated the new digital beacons. We started our individual beacon skills with the good old F1 and the always-fun ear bud. The bracketing search method provided a good understanding of beacon function for our new students and a nostalgic look into the past for our more seasoned members. We then broke out the new digital beacons and everyone could experience and enjoy the advancements in avalanche rescue technology.

I snuck away to bury a beacon for a quick group exercise. The group did great in response to our impromptu search exercise. A leader took charge and, being the disciplined group of volunteers that we are, others listened up and performed the requested functions. Our "subject" was found and uncovered in less than fifteen minutes. I was now feeling better about our planned trip into the backcountry the next day. We then had a quick intro to the old reliable—the organized probe line. We also demonstrated the V-conveyer group shoveling technique and all three of our groups were able to uncover a two-meter burial in less than five minutes. Good job, folks!

On Sunday we headed back up to Bogus, crossed the ski area before the lifts opened, and were on the flanks of Mores Mountain by nine a.m. This day's lessons were centered on group travel, route selection, stability testing, and group rescue. We made our way out of the backcountry gate of the ski area, performing our beacon tests as we went. Winston pointed out many fine examples of hoar frost and rime as we traveled toward the summit, keeping to slopes of less than thirty degrees and using one-at-a-time travel techniques in suspect areas. Soon we found a good slope to demonstrate some stability testing. We performed a column test, an extended column test and a Reuschblock test. After our stability testing, the group headed down the ridge for more route selection work, with Winston pointing out many alpine features in this terrain.

I slipped away to set up our group rescue scenario. On my way, I met up with another backcountry skier, whose partner had just left to ski the slope below us. On approach, I flipped my beacon to “receive” and noted that she was wearing a transceiver. (One point to skier.) She asked what we were up to, so I told her about IMSARU and the day’s rescue practice. Assuming she was avalanche savvy, I mentioned how the CT16Q1 failing at the faceted base layer gave me some concern for steeper slopes. My assumption quickly melted away as she stared blankly at me, asking, “What’s a CT?” (I would like that point back, please.) I politely suggested she go home tonight and check out www.avalanche.org to answer her own question, and moved on to set up the scenario.

Having already participated in several avalanche trainings this year, I felt seasoned in digging fake holes and obscure placement of surface clues. My proudest moment was the placement of an avalanche beacon one meter under the snow while leaving only a ski track behind. I would love to tell you all about it; as Click and Clack, the NPR car guys like to say, send your request on the back of a fifty dollar bill.

The group returned to my ridge-top position to find me frantically running around, shouting about my friends that were just caught in our faux-avalanche. The group gathered information from me (the witness) and began to plan their rescue. They had three victims, two with transceivers and one without. My random flailing about and wandering farther and farther away was soon caught by one of the group members and the witness was rounded back up and kept in the area. (Good job, folks.) Within

ten minutes both beacon “victims” were uncovered and a probe line was being formed for the third. Twenty meters into the probing effort, a strike was reported. The line moved on and the shovelers soon confirmed the strike and uncovered the “victim.”

Our egress was uneventful, with skiers being able to return to the ski area for a ride up the hill and the snowshoers hiking down the cross-country trail (on the side, of course.) This was another educational and fun training weekend. Thanks to Winston for instructing, and to everyone for coming out and participating.

Those who participated in both days of the field exercise were Rebecca Shaver, Alex Shaver, Gregg Rettschlag, Ann Moser, Nate Kenney, Mike Johnson, Jake Gillis, John Ferguson, Matt Chil-son, Winston Cheyney, Francisco Cas-tellon, Judd Ballard, Jeff Ball and Brad Acker.



—Photo by R. Shaver

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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Display at Sierra Trading Post

—Photo by D. Cone