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RESCUE

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M.R.A. REGIONAL WINTER TRAINING IN BONNEVILLE COUNTY --BY ADAM CHITWOOD, AIMEE HASTRITER AND DAVID HAY

It was a bright, shiny morning on March 10 when the fourteen of us loaded up lots of gear and headed east. The group included Adam Chitwood, Richard Clements, Jim Cooper, Robert Gilley, Aimee Hastriter, David Hay, Tim Henning, Bill Lindenau, Bob Meredith, Jeff Munn, Jerry Newland, Mick Riffie, Tony Rockwell and Tom Wheless. The drive was long but not too bad, and the guys rewarded themselves with a shopping stop at a HUGE army-navy store in Idaho Falls. After this detour, we continued to the camp where we would spend the weekend. The lodge turned out to be nestled between two mountains with a creek running through the grounds. It was absolutely beautiful. There was a lot of snow and, because the bridge had collapsed, the only way to reach the lodge was on foot or by snowcat.



Amy decoding anchors in the snow.

We unloaded our gear, had a bite to eat, and settled down for a regional meeting. Rod Knopp and Leslie Robertson made the special effort to be there for the meeting even though they were not able to spend the rest of the

weekend with us. We discussed the recertification coming up in July (to be hosted by Davis County) and reiterated the previously-made decision to work toward better unification and communication among the teams in our region. There was an additional meeting to discuss the recertification plans for Saturday, with each team

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providing two evaluators for the various events. Bob and Jeff were selected to represent IM-SARU, and while they were inside getting their instructions most of the rest of us were outside enjoying the calm, clear night.

Saturday morning began the day of re-certification. It had been decided to use this day as a training tool among the units instead of just testing as in years past. We chose Tim to be our team leader for the events of the day. The first skill we had



Probing an avalanche site is hard work.

to demonstrate was a technical rescue. We split into three teams. One team performed the medical assessment and patient packaging of the victim. The second and third teams climbed up the mountain to set up a vertical raise and lower system for the litter. To accomplish this, one group worked on the raise/lower system which included several anchors with a three-to-one mechanical advantage on the haul line. The other group set up a three-point anchor system for the belay line with a backup dead-man anchor. The patient was successfully transported up and down the hill with relative ease.



Hope you never need this mode of transportation.

The next phase of recertification was self-arrest while descending a rather steep hillside. Technically, there were five people in our group “tested” on this skill but a majority of us made at least one trip down the slope. This is definitely one of those skills that are fun until you have to use them for real.

Our team was also tested on its ability to respond to medical emergencies, and since we had a large team we got three patients instead of the standard two. Mick, Jim and Bill each took control of one patient and helped triage their injuries.

The rest of the members split up among these patients to help with packaging onto a litter or backboard, then lowering the patient safely to the ground where they could be properly evacuated. Richard remained at the bottom of the hill, heating water bottles for rewarming the patients.

Two of the five recertification sections were based on avalanche rescue. Both sections involved searching for a dummy under the snow, one with a probe line and the other with avalanche transceivers. We were successful on both accounts. Tim did a fine job of belting out commands to the probe line, who struggled with a very stubborn layer of ice. The group did one sweep of the area in a coarse probe; on the second sweep we used a fine probe and Tom hit the jackpot.



Jerry controls the line.

Our team was split in half for the beacon search, with each half being responsible for finding two beacons. The first team found both beacons in about five minutes, the second team in about four minutes. It was generally observed that the new digital receivers with two antenna (the ones that point you in the right direction and tell you how far away you are from the transceiver you are looking for) were especially beneficial for searchers with less experience. Searchers with extensive experience using traditional beacons proved to be pretty effective as well. There comes a time when all the transceivers in the world, old and new, are deemed useless in finding another...

such as when one is buried without being turned on! IMSARU was chosen for our amazing digging skills (although the evaluators claimed it was the size of our group) to find a beacon that was not transmitting. With pure luck, Aimee found the beacon after only a couple of shovelfuls of snow.

Once the testing was done, it was time for some fun. There was a wonderful 100-foot slide with a pretty good incline to play on. Several members took turns enjoying the few seconds of speed before sliding on the snow/ice at the bottom. Those who felt the need for more acceleration tried using tarps and human trains for the ride down. Some of the guys decided it would be real fun to try this in the dark, after the snow on the slide had turned to ice. The rest of us watched as they tore down the slide and skimmed even further across the snow at the bottom. We made them use headlamps and glow sticks so we could see them more easily—boy, did that look cool!

[Editor's note: Rumor has it that Aimee won the freestyle award for her amazing flip at the bottom, while Robert slid to the distance championship.]

On Saturday night, we received a special treat: The guest speaker was Patrick Ament, a well-known rock climber who helped make climbing what it is today. He had incredible pictures of climbs he has done, and even more incredible stories. You couldn't help but shake your head at some of the stunts he actually pulled off. He also had his newest book available and autographed it for those interested.

Sunday morning involved a lot of cleaning and then loading up for the trip home. Everyone was ferried out to the vehicles in the snowcats, and Bob even talked someone into letting him drive one! With the weekend over, we had our recertification and a few great stories to tell. IMSARU did an excellent job of working as a team and proving our skills and expertise. Thank you to everyone who participated in this important event. And especially, thanks to all the Bonneville County SAR members and their friends and families for organizing the weekend. It was a great location, an outstanding example of organization, and wonderful food.

FISHING SEASON 2000 (MARCH 2-5) IS OVER --BY CHARLOTTE GUNN

Well, maybe not for everyone, but our annual splash of running the Trout Pond at the Spring Sports Show has come and gone. The weather was better than usual—no arctic blasts nor pouring rainstorms—and the fish bit according to fish logic, which meant that there seemed no rhyme nor reason to when they did or did not. It was an unpleasant surprise to find so many fish dead and dying when we arrived for the Saturday morning shift, but Spectra Productions and Idaho Fish and Game hustled to bring in a whole new load. (While waiting, at least three million people asked us “Why did they die?” and the best guess available was “some kind of water quality problem.” Try explaining that to a four-year-old!)

Again this year, Spectra Productions, Channel 7 and Intermountain Outdoor Sports provided all the equipment and set up the facility; Idaho Fish and Game supplied the fish, and IMSARU members and friends donned our orange shirts to try to keep the fun safe and orderly. Special thanks to Channel 7 for the great publicity, and to all the individuals who donated their time to help the kids have fun and us earn some money to support our work.



C'mon, fish, act hungry.

WINTER MISSIONS REPORTS

We have had three missions since the last newsletter, but none ended by our heroic actions. All were for snowboarders or snowmobilers who were overdue. Our participation ranged from standby to having team members setting up a base camp for search coordination when word arrived that the missing people were safe. (Some had spent a cold night out but none were reported to be suffering major injuries.) Two bits that caught media attention were:

- The snowboarders were reportedly to receive a bill for \$3,000 to cover the search costs, as they had gone out-of-bounds at our local ski resort. It may be true, but we did not submit the bill and will not be paid.
- Two of the snowmobilers had their machines lifted out by helicopter—but only because the father of one of the subjects works for a helicopter company. Again, we don't do this.

SPECIAL PULLOUT CALENDAR

April 29	SAR Training—Climbing Wall at the Nampa Rec. Center	4-8 p.m.
April 30	Canine Water Training at Lake Lowell Contact George Gunn at 466-8345	1 p.m.
May 2	General Meeting—Idaho Fish & Game and their connection with SAR	7:30 p.m. At the Compound
May 6	The Great Potato Race St. Al's Emergency Services Fair	Call Leslie Robertson to volunteer.
May 7	Work Day—Spring Cleaning	9 a.m. At the Compound
May 9	SAR Training—Navigation and Bivouac Jeff Munn, Instructor	7:30 p.m. At the Compound
May 13-14	SAR Field Training—Navigation and Bivouac Jeff Munn, Instructor	Time TBA--Meet at the Compound
May 16	Medical Training—Canine Emergencies (This training is for ALL members.)	7:30 p.m. At the Compound
May 21	Dog Training Contact Jerry Newland at 381-0667	10 a.m.
May 23	Business Meeting— NOTE THAT THIS IS A WEEK EARLIER THAN USUAL	7:30 p.m. At the Compound
May 27-29	Mountaineering Outing—Contact Bob Meredith (Must be signed up in advance.)	
May 27	Dog Training—Urban Contact George Gunn at 466-8345	10 a.m.
May 30	NO MEETING —Rest up from your holiday weekend.	
June 6	General Meeting	7:30 p.m. At the Compound
June 13	SAR Training	7:30 p.m. At the Compound

June 16-18	Water Workout Weekend at Palisades Reservoir (Bonneville County)	
June 19-21	MRA and Canadian Wildlands Rescue Workshop Alberta, Canada	
June 22-25	MRA Annual Meeting, hosted by Rocky Mountain House Alberta, Canada	
July 21-23	MRA Intermountain Region Recertification Testing Technical Climbing and Search Management	Hosted by Davis County, Utah

IT'S SPRING CLEANING TIME, MAY 7

...at the Compound as well as at your house. We don't have spouses nor next-door neighbors to shame us into cleaning up the property, but we do know that Property Manager Jeff Munn can't possibly do it all himself—nor should he. So Jeff has written the list of most urgent projects and he asked us to choose between small groups volunteering for individual tasks or everyone getting together. Despite, or perhaps because of, our busy schedule for April and May, the group consensus at the March business meeting was to all get together on Sunday, May 7, and get it done. You will have a choice of where to contribute your talents, including some of the following:

Outside projects:

- Rake leaves.
- Clean out weeds in alleyway between neighbors and us.
- Pull out stump.
- Level space in front of office door and prepare for concrete sidewalk.
- Paint exterior of cinder block building.

Inside projects:

- Paint meeting room.
- Clean and wax meeting room floor.
- Clean and wax office room floor.
- Finish tiling floor in front of bathroom door.

Join us at 9 a.m. on May 7 and do your share. If you can't be there right at 9, come as soon as you can. This project will not be finished within the first hour.

AVALANCHE TRAINING

--BY AIMEE HASTRITER AND TONY ROCKWELL

The weekend training began at 7:30 a.m. on Saturday, February 19. We watched one last video on “Transceiver Location,” with Winston providing excellent insight and conversation about the content, and the seven of us piled into two vehicles for the trip to Pilot’s Peak. The group included Winston Cheyney, Adam Chitwood, Richard Clements, Aimee Hastriter, Jeff Munn with Mocha, Tony Rockwell and Chris Schneck. Bob Meredith had gone up the night before; when we arrived, he was being served breakfast by a Boy Scout troop he had befriended. The day promised to be beautiful: The sun was out with not too many clouds hanging around, and no wind.

Bob kindly hauled our full packs up to the campsite we had used for last month’s field training. We got our daypacks ready, put on snowshoes and skis, and prepared for the little hike up the mountain behind the parking lot to our training location. The spot was an opening on a gently sloping hill, perfect for those of us new to using transceivers (no major obstacles to stumble around.) Winston buried a couple of transceivers and the rest of us took turns using the grid method to locate these buried “victims.” We do like the new transceivers that, once you pick up a signal, tell you which direction to go and how far away you are from the buried transceiver, allowing you to walk right to it.



Winston teaches us to really see snow.

After working with the transceivers, we decided to head up to camp and set up for the evening. While the rest of the guys were setting up camp and visiting, Richard and Aimee decided to build a snow cave for him to sleep in. This was her first snow cave and, not being a fan of small places, it was an adventure. It was fun for a while, but they got real tired and real hungry and Aimee left Richard to do the finishing touches. Shortly after that, Richard decided that he was really too sick to spend the night outdoors. Jeff offered to drive him home and, since Aimee went with them, she got to spend the night in her nice soft bed with the down comforter. (Darn! I missed sleeping on the cold hard ground!—Aimee) Richard was not so lucky—the diagnosis was strep throat. In the meantime, the others had discovered that the previous month’s snow shelters were still standing but had reduced headroom due to the weather and the weight of new snow, so they set up tents for the night.

Jeff and Aimee drove back up on Sunday morning and hiked up to meet the rest of the gang at the training site. Winston and Jeff arranged for a mock search of an avalanche site. The search techniques included transceiver location (Tony and Adam) and a very short probe line (Chris and Aimee). This weekend was the first time some of us newer members had ever practiced an avalanche search and locating a buried beacon is not as easy as it sounds. We can’t imagine being in-

volved in a real one without having practiced the techniques.

Once the “victims” had been rescued, we decided to try a hike up Pilot’s Peak. We were very lucky that the good weather held over for most of the day; it is so much more fun to play in the snow when the wind isn’t blowing and you aren’t trying to maneuver in a blizzard. When we finally reached the top of a small mountain (no, we never made it to the lookout), we dug two big pits, approximately 6 feet wide by 5-1/2 feet deep by 5 feet long, and worked on determining the stability of the snowpack. We never knew that so much went into checking the safety of the place where you want to play. Winston did an excellent job of explaining everything and pointing out that, while it may seem like a lot of work at the time, it could be what saves your life. He demonstrated the “stratigraphy test” (note that a five-dollar paintbrush is recommended!), the “resistance test” (credit card) and the “hardness test” (finger). He then went on to describe and demonstrate how to test layer bonding with the “shovel shear test” and the “Rutschblock” test. Of course, the whole way up the mountain, Winston was looking around and pointing out places that could be danger zones. It gave a new meaning to the phrase “be aware of your surroundings.”

We don’t have to tell you that the trip down the mountain was much more fun than the hike up, or at least that it was nice not to exert so much energy. We speak for everyone there when we say it was a great weekend. Thank you, Bob, for hauling the heavy stuff to and from the campsite with your snowmobile—you saved us a lot of work. And thank you, Winston, for taking the time to train the rest of us and for “being in charge” of the weekend.

SECOND CALL FOR USING TECHNOLOGY

(1) For IMSARU members: There have been requests by members for a list of our members and their phone numbers. (Some say they would find such a list a convenience when trying to put a last name to that person they trained with a few weeks ago, or to contact a few kindred spirits for a climb, etc.) Tony Rockwell is willing to maintain such a list connected to our website; it would be protected by a password given to members only. However, we all know that passwords are not foolproof, and some people guard their privacy more than others. So, if you are an IMSARU member and do NOT want your name and phone number on such a list, please let Tony know at tony_rockwell@hp.com.

Or you can tell:

Charlotte Gunn or write her at
P.O. Box 741
Boise, ID 83701

(2) And for anyone reading this, another reminder that if you are willing to read your copy of the newsletter on the Internet instead of on paper, you can save us paper, postage and people-hours. If you have not already done so, check out how it looks at <http://www.imsaru.org/newsletter.html> and then let us know that we can take your name off our mailing list. Write to:

Idaho Mountain Search and Rescue Unit
P.O. Box 741
Boise, ID 83701

Or send your message to cgunn@execu.net

23RD ANNUAL RACE TO ROBIE CREEK, APRIL 15 --BY CHARLOTTE GUNN

How crazy do you have to be, to choose to run a half-marathon over Idaho back roads, through Rocky Canyon and over Aldape Summit? Would anyone really do it for the fun of reading the signs? In honor of the date, this year's theme was the Tax Toad, and signs on the uphill side included "Death, Taxes and Robie," "Run Now, Pay Later," "Slow Runners Get Audited" and even "Robie: Not a Bright Deduction." Maybe it's the free cups of TCBY frozen yogurt at the summit, the picnic at the end, the original tee-shirt or the free school bus ride out to the Spring Shores parking lot. Whatever the reason, a few hundred serious runners and a couple of thousand joggers and walkers counted themselves lucky to have registered in time. And most of those people still thought at the end that it had been a good idea.



If you saw this, you were at the summit.

The weather was too warm for the serious runners but pretty comfortable for the rest, and the rain held off until we were driving home. The road was in amazingly good shape. Most of our aid stations handed out some Vaseline, Band-Aids and moleskin; the paramedics started four or five IV's for rehydration at the finish and one seriously dehydrated runner was evacuated by helicopter; the ham radio operators filled communication gaps and the usual groups set up water/refreshment stations along the route.

For the first time this year, we used a U-Haul truck as our finish-line aid station. Those who had only to roll up the door and pull down the ramp instead of spending hours fussing with temporary shelters, said it was a great idea.

We especially appreciate how many IMSARU people turned out so that we had full teams for all of our stations. Rod Knopp and Leslie Robertson organized people and equipment incredibly well; Tom Wheless made sure medical supplies were available; all three then worked at the finish line station to coordinate our efforts. In addition, our teams included Chuck Bricker, Richard Clements, Jane Foreman, Robert Gilley, Pam Green, Charlotte Gunn, Aimee Hastriter, David Hay, Tim Henning, Bill Lindenau on his ATV, Diane Mathews, Jeff Munn, Eric Mundell as our communications central on the summit, Travis

Mundell, Debbie Ralph, Chris Schneck, Stine Theede, Martha Vandivort and Keith Whittaker.

Leslie sends her special thanks to: Tony for spending the extra time to pick up and return the truck. David and Martha, who scurried up the racecourse to look for a reported runner in distress and instead found the one who ended up being flown to the hospital. Robert, who volunteered to escort one shaky participant from Station 5 to the finish, and came in panting himself. Everyone who was having so much fun at the finish line that they refused offers of “You can go on home early if you want.”

P.S. Here’s one answer to my opening question. On our way up to the summit for our work station, we stopped to talk with Jim Cooper, one of the half-dozen or so who annually run the race both ways. Jim said he’s been having trouble with a knee (which sounds like a good reason for not running at all this year!) so he was doing a slow run. He was upset with himself for arriving at the summit 35 minutes ahead of schedule, and was trying to really slow down. And yes, he did come back over the summit with the other racers later in the day, including another one of our own IMSARU members, Paula McCollum.

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