



Founding Member: **Mountain Rescue Association**

Rescue



Web Edition

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Press on the calendar to see upcoming events



Jeff and Carolyn are over the edge..
—Photo by J. Munn

**IMSARU TECH ACADEMY, MAY-JUNE 2013
--OWEN MILLER**

IMSARU has completed its first Tech Academy taught by a guest instructor. The course was two evening sessions plus six full weekend days, totaling about 65 hours of instruction. Twenty IMSARU members completed the entire course and are well on their way to qualifying (or requalifying) as Rescue Technicians.

The classroom portion of the Academy covered topics such as safety factors, command and communications, scene size-up, systems planning, and basic rope work physics and vectors.

The field portion of the Academy was held at several locations around the Boise area, including Table Rock and along Lucky Peak Reservoir near the Highway 21 high bridge. These field locations allowed the participants to practice a number of skills, including equipment terminology and usage, steep and high-angle evacuations, pulley systems, belay setup and operation, anchor building, pre-tensioned front and back ties, patient packaging and litter rigging, edge transitions with and without a high directional and knot-passing techniques.

The Academy was led by our guest instructor Scott MacColman, who is lead instructor and director of technical rescue programs for King County ESAR

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(Seattle, WA). Scott is well respected in the rigging community and a very competent instructor. He was able to impart a great deal of knowledge and practical application of techniques in a short period of time with IMSARU.

IMSARU funded this first-ever Academy through a generous grant from the Grainger Foundation. This was an amazing opportunity for our unit to train together in preparation for our re-accreditation tests with the Mountain Rescue Association, coming up in September.

Participants from IMSARU included: Owen Miller (co-instructor), Alexandria Baldwin, Jeff Ball, Francisco Castellon, Moises Chavez, Wayne Courtain, John Ferguson, Dan Herring, Mike Johnson, Bill Lindenau, Carolyn Lyon, Anthony Mascola, Liesel Nelson, David Oren, Mitch Pelham, Tom Rand, Gregg Rettschlag, Stephen Ritter, Dodi Swift and Tom Wheless.

REGIONAL SAR K9 CAMPOUT

--ANN MOSER

Several members of the K9 team spent the weekend of July 20-21 at a regional SAR K9 camp-out. That means we got to do several of our favorite things – working our dogs, camping with our dogs, and hanging out with some of our best K9 friends from Idaho, Nevada, and Wyoming! Participants included seven of us from IMSARU, three from Snake River Search, three from Elko County SAR, one from Wyoming K9, one from Blaine County SAR, and one from Custer County SAR.

Marlies Stroes of Custer County SAR arranged an excellent campsite for us. Marlies lives near the Smiley Creek Lodge and she obtained permission for us to camp at a private campground associated with the Smiley Creek Airport. The campground included bathrooms and SHOWERS, which we so appreciated after training out in the heat and dust all day!

We spent most of the weekend working our dogs in Pole Creek, which had a mix of open sagebrush and forest adjacent to a nice flowing stream. On Saturday, we split into three groups: trailing, beginner area, and advanced area. By early afternoon, however, many of us ended up at the creek in the guise of working water cadaver.

We took a break for an early dinner of grilled hamburgers, provided by Guus Stroes. After a long siesta, most of us went back out at about 8:00 p.m. to do more dog training. We worked with the novice dogs first, then waited till dark to do some nice nighttime training. Even though we didn't get back to camp until midnight, it was worth it to do some practice in the dark. We trained some more on Sunday morning, but broke camp and headed home before it got too hot.

This is the fourth year that this regional group has gotten together to train. It is a wonderful group of dedicated SAR K9 handlers, who enjoy sharing training ideas and search experiences. We look forward to seeing them all next year.

IMSARU participants were: Barb Clark and Raffey; Tom Kearney and Ginger; Dell McNees and Jessie; Ann Moser with Watson and Cricket; Jamie Simpson and Yoki; Jen Skeldon and Kato;

and Kimber Smith and Marcie. Linda Kearney stayed home to take care of horses and to be available for a quick K9 response, should we have gotten a mission call that weekend.

MISSING HIKER ABOVE REDFISH LAKE – JULY 13-15, 2013
FROM REPORT BY GARY GADWA, CO-COMMANDER OF SAWTOOTH S.A.R.
(EDITED FOR PUBLICATION BY CHARLOTTE GUNN)

At 1930 hours on Saturday, a woman called 911 to report that a 55-year-old male hiking companion had not returned to the head of Redfish Lake Boat Transfer Camp for the last shuttle at 1900 hours. The witness reported that after a long and beautiful day at Saddleback Lakes, the missing man had refused to cross on the boulders at the Saddleback Creek Crossing and started down the left side of the creek. She stated that she waited 15 minutes, then started on down the trail, thinking the subject would cross the brushy creek below that location and probably beat her to the Saddleback/Redfish Creek crossing. The witness described the missing man as having multiple medical issues and medications. A hasty search team conducted a preliminary search in the lower Redfish Lake Creek drainage area on Saturday night, with no results.

On Sunday, Gary Gadwa (Field Operations Lead) and Jake Gillis (an IMSARU member working in the area for the summer) ran the Redfish Trail, interviewing all hikers. Following one hiker's statement, Gary and Jake went up to Flat Rock Junction and interviewed campers there. Gary then returned to the upstream rope crossing of Redfish Creek to search up Saddleback Creek toward the last-seen point while Jake began searching along Redfish Creek. Gary also contacted via radio two Sawtooth Mountain Guides who were in the area, and requested Marlies Stroes and her certified trailing dog Alex. Marlies and Alex worked both sides of Redfish Creek with no success. Additional resources were also called in from IMSARU (especially asking for K9 teams), Custer County SAR and USFS Fire Crew members.

Gary asked the Fire Crew if they were willing to search down Saddleback Creek from the PLS, stressing safety very heavily. They started down the left side of the creek. At approximately 1630 hours they reported finding the subject deceased at the bottom of Saddleback Falls. These Falls are approximately 150 yards long and shoot down a long, very smooth and very steep granite slab. After a definitive report of no life, Gary reported out to Saddleback ICP and set in motion the request for a helicopter and for permission to use both it and a wheeled litter in the



Location of body to be recovered. (Red coloring is reflection of helicopter.) Photo by T. Wheless



Tom crosses backcountry "bridge." Photo by G. Gadwa

Wilderness Area. (From the Redfish Creek Camp to the head of Saddleback Falls by foot is some 3.5 miles with 2,000 feet of elevation gain, so a manual carry-out would take at least a full day and likely more. There is no possible landing zone near the body's location, leaving a helicopter hoist as the obvious desired means of recovery.) All personnel hiked out to Redfish Creek and were transported by boat back to Sandy Beach. Gary notified the RP and the sister of the deceased man. He also requested that IMSARU stand by until it would be certain that they were not needed for a manual carry-out. Four IMSARU members had to return home on Sunday night for their paid jobs and other commitments; eight went to Elk Mountain RV Park where the gracious owners let them camp without charge and even take showers!

Monday morning report was at 0800 hours. The helicopter and wheeled litter options were both approved. At 1000 hours a Reeder Flying Service helicopter was released from USFS contract; it picked up Gary and Tom Wheless at the USFS Stanley Zone Office LZ and transported them to Lake #2. From there, Gary and Tom made the arduous hike to the base of the Falls; Gary (Deputy Coroner) investigated and photographed the scene; the two of them packaged the body and radioed the pilot, who returned and long-lined the body back to the Stanley LZ. Gary and Tom then hiked out to the Redfish Lake Upper Transfer Camp boat dock, and all breathed a huge sigh of relief at not having to do a manual litter recovery.

IMSARU members participating included Justin Ahlin, Delinda Castellon, Linda Kearney with K9 Cayenne, Don Fridrich, Jake Gillis, Dell McNeas, Ann Moser with K9 Watson, Jamie Simpson with K9 Yoki, Dodi Swift, Jonathan Wheless, Tom Wheless, Everett Wood and Jimmie Yorgensen.

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

For cash donations:

J. Todd Tracy in honor of the wedding of Scott Chapman and Jill Morris.

The Intermountain Combined Federal Campaign and its donors.

Danny Cone built the new flooring for the shucking tent at the Corn Booth.

Don Fridrich took care of the tire problem on our command post trailer.

Brad Acker and **Justin Ahlin** cooperated in taking care of the water line leak across the parking lot at the Compound.

Dell McNeas and **The Xerox Corporation** again printed our newsletter.

Search and Rescue may sound exciting, but there is a whole lot of behind-the-scenes routine and special-project work that has to be done in order to be ready to respond when the calls come. All our members are unpaid volunteers and we value our people who do these less than glamorous tasks.

AND ONCE A YEAR, THE CORN BOOTH COMETH!

As always, we need lots of extra people to work at the Corn Booth during the Western Idaho Fair, August 16-25. This is about half our budget for the year, and it is very intensive. We depend on our members, families (including teenage children) and friends to make this happen. See the calendar for more information, including how to contact Carolyn Lyon to schedule some shifts.

RECENT SAFETY EDUCATION OUTREACH CLASSES --CHRIS BROOKMAN

The unit has had several opportunities recently to conduct safety education classes throughout the valley.

On June 29th we held a map and compass field training session for interested members of the Mountain West Outdoor Group. Training was conducted at Bonneville Point southeast of Boise. The field session followed a classroom presentation that the group had attended earlier this spring. (The field portion of the training had been attempted earlier in the year but had to be cancelled due to strong winds.) The second attempt proved to be more successful. Gregg Rettschlag took the lead with Chris Brookman and Tom Wheless assisting.

About ten people from the Mountain West Outdoor Group attended. The class started with everyone measuring their stride, then covered various types of maps and how to orient a map with one's surroundings. Participants then moved on to the compass portion, starting with an explanation of declination, then practice working with bearings. Finally, everyone got to try navigating a course using a bearing and distance to get to specific locations (usually sagebrush marked with a piece of flagging). There was a short time afterward for discussion before the class ended.

On July 12th we were invited to present a wilderness survival class for a group of thirteen to seventeen-year-olds attending the Eagle Summer Program at the Eagle Public Library. Gail Long took the lead with Everett Wood, Chris Brookman, and Tom Wheless assisting. Gail chose to do an abbreviated presentation of the Ten Essentials. The class started with a brief whole-group discussion then broke into two skills sessions focusing on Navigation and Emergency Shelter. Chris and Everett presented the navigation session with Chris leading, and Tom and Gail presented the emergency shelter session with Tom leading.

The navigation session started with a "what if" scenario of being lost while on a camping trip. The teens, along with several parents who participated, got a glimpse of the skills required to navigate using a map and compass. The session included orienting a map, working with bearings, identifying visible features on a map, measuring distances, and making a plan for navigating around obstacles. In the emergency shelter session students got hands-on practice with several methods for building a shelter, layered clothing systems, and even practiced starting a campfire (with adult supervision of course!)

After each skill session there was time for questions about the individual skills as well as general questions and discussion about IMSARU and how to avoid finding yourself in a survival situation in the first place.

**2013 MOUNTAIN RESCUE ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE
CAREFREE, ARIZONA
--JIMMIE YORGENSEN**

Our Idaho Mountain Search and Rescue Unit (IMSARU) is listed as a charter member of the Mountain Rescue Association (MRA) and has continued that membership for over 50 years. MRA meets twice a year, with the summer meeting being sponsored by a different member/location each year. The winter meeting is usually held in the Salt Lake City area. This year Maricopa County Arizona SAR sponsored an excellent conference. June in Arizona can be a touch warm and this year was no exception. I was IMSARU's delegate to this year's summer conference.

Approximately 90 people registered for the summer conference, which was a few less than hoped for. The sponsoring SAR unit put together a number of quality courses and programs with instruction and exercises on a variety of SAR subjects and interest. The banquet was held on Saturday evening, June 8, and the business meeting on Sunday. Attendees represented a number of different MRA organizations from the United States, Canada and even a group from China. Official minutes of the business had not been published as of this writing, but some of the actions taken and discussions offered at the business meeting included the induction of three new associate team memberships: SAR teams from Tennessee, Utah and North Carolina. Developing an MRA Facebook Page was discussed with plans for more discussion at the winter meeting. MRA sees social media as a great communication and marketing tool. At the winter meeting there will also be more discussion about a program called Decisions for Heroes. The statistics software package is designed to allow electronic reporting by MRA member teams on various stats such as mission reports, members and trainings. Previously only 50% of MRA member teams reported their yearly activity on a regular basis.

Future summer conferences include New Jersey in 2014 (45 minutes from New York City and 30 minutes from the Appalachian Trail), Montana in 2015, Washington State in 2016 and Alaska in 2017. Many of the future conferences will partner with NASAR and the National Park Service. MRA staff reports conference attendance of both members and vendors have been on the decline in the past few years.

The Mountain Rescue Association is supported with quality leadership, strong dedicated members and is financially sound.

Editor's Note: This June visit to Arizona helped Jimmie understand the local teams' challenges. Idaho is having a record-breaking heat wave, but hasn't yet hit 117 degrees...and Idaho SAR members don't have to carry headnets as protection from Africanized bees!

SAFETY EDUCATION CLASS – JULY 11, 2013
--GAIL LONG

IMSARU gave a special safety education course to a class at Answer Charter School in Garden City, presenting a variation of “the ten essentials” to a class of students 9-12 years old. This presentation related good outdoors practices to the book Hatchet by Gary Paulsen that the students were reading for their class. There were lots of exercises, ranging from what path to pick through obstacles to a fun round of “How loud can you yell or whistle to get attention and help?” The students also brainstormed some ways that the 13-year-old lead character applied the ten essentials to his situation and what ones he left out.

The students were enthusiastic, polite and most eager to participate. The focused approach to the standard training was challenging but fun, as all were familiar with the wilderness adventures in the book. The students also discussed how it might feel to be lost and some talked about how they had been lost or had been separated from their parents.

MOCK MISSION--JULY 13, 2013
--LINDA KEARNEY

What we started with: An ultra-light went down with two middle-aged men in it. Location was off Cottonwood Creek and that was the place we were to meet with Deputy Johnson (Mike).

We met at the compound at 8 a.m. Beautiful day, blue sky with no cloud cover. (Hot and dry). We loaded up and headed out, up Highway 21 (which had a lane closed due to the Ironman race) and turned off at Arrowrock Dam. I haven't met anyone who likes this narrow, washboard road. It was so bad that Jamie lost her front license plate. (I don't think she's going back to look for it). We arrived at base at about 10:00 and set up base camp. (The command trailer was there.)

After we were set up and ready to head out we received the briefing from Deputy Johnson. I want you to know Mike really looked the part. He had his badge on, his uniform looked good, he was clean-shaven, and he really acted the part...not even mentioning the scramble he and the “missing men” had when the road to the chosen site was suddenly closed.

We were told to look for two middle-aged men who were supposed to meet their wives by the air strip out that way. Hikers had told the Deputy they had seen the ultra-light flying low but didn't know it had gone down. They mentioned that it was bright blue. The Deputy drove the roads the night before. When asked if he had gone down the trail, he answered “No, I'm the Deputy. I don't do that.”

We were broken up into teams, and the hasty team left base camp at 10:45. We had one team dropped off at the far end of the trail and the rest went up the trail from base camp.

The hasty team went first and they were looking for sign of anyone leaving the trail. Next were Dog Team 1 (with camera crew). They had about 15-20 minutes before Dog teams 2 and 3 left. As we were climbing the trail up it turned into a goat trail that didn't seem right. Dog teams 2 and 3 turned around and found the correct trail. Now we were in front of the hasty team and Dog team 1. We told

the other two teams to turn around, and they came up behind us. They had seen a baby black bear, who ran for the nearest tree. (I'm just glad mommy bear didn't find us.) It was nice walking in the trees with shade for the first part of our search. Then came the open areas with the rocks and hot sun. The dogs that were working are all black, and you could see they were getting hot (to say nothing about the humans). We had all walked about 2.5 miles into the search area. Base camp was having trouble reaching anybody on the radio. Finally, we were all called back to base camp as we had new information. (Doesn't this sound like a real search?). A sheepherder had seen the aircraft the previous night just prior to a wind burst.

When we arrived back at base camp, we re-located to a new area. The Deputy had a surprise for us. At the new area, we again broke into teams. We sent out three members (two of whom were track aware). They followed the sign into our subject (Tom K). He was in thick brush and lots of "green meanies," plants with sticky little pods that stuck to everyone who came their way. The searchers used their tracking skills to locate him and were only ten feet away when they finally saw him.

Due to the subject's 'injuries', they asked for him to be air-lifted out. Just at that moment we found out what the surprise was. Here came Air St. Luke's, which landed in the big field we were in. They gave us a thorough briefing on landing zones, how to approach the helicopter, what we can do medically, and showed us the equipment they have.

We have a big thank you for the pilot Tim, the flight nurse Tanya, and the flight paramedic Brad. Do you know where your money goes when you buy the air service from Air St. Luke's? It goes to help teach the smaller clinics.

Some of the K9 teams then used Rescue Randy, the "deceased" subject (and cadaver material) for training.



Once everyone was out of the field, it was time to go home. I looked on a map to see if there was a quicker way to get to Idaho City rather than go back on the rutted road. Sure enough, we could. We left the ending spot at 9:15 and were in Idaho City at 9:45.

Thank you, Mike, for making this like a real search. You worked hard to make it as realistic as possible. I believe everyone learned something.

IMSARU members who attended were: Francisco Castellon, Don Fridrich, Dan Herring, Mike Johnson (deputy), Linda Kearney with Cayenne, Tom Kearney (missing subject), Gail Long, Dell McNees with Jessie, Ann Moser with Watson and Cricket, Mitch Pelham, Tom Rand, Jen Skeldon, Jamie Simpson with Yoki, Dodi Swift, Tom Wheless, Everett Wood and Jimmie Yorgensen (OL).

"Deputy" Mike is filmed in action. Photo by A. Moser



IMSARU Technical Academy participants
—Photo by J. Munn



Mock Mission Subject Location
— Photo by Don Fridrich

Idaho Mountain Search and Rescue Unit, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. All our members are unpaid volunteers. We respond whenever and wherever we are requested by law enforcement agencies, including out of state, and we never charge the people we are called to help.

Some very specific mission expenses are reimbursed by the Idaho State Search and Rescue Fund, but we depend heavily upon donations, grants, and fund-raising projects such as our sale of corn-on-the-cob at the Western Idaho Fair (August 16-25 this year).

IMSARU was a founding member of the international Mountain Rescue Association, and we maintain certification by testing to the MRA standards.

Visit our website at www.imsaru.org

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