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Founding Member: Mountain Rescue Association

Rescue



Web Edition

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Press on the calendar to see upcoming events

PAYETTE RIVER SEARCH – MAY 3, 2014 --KEN SWICKARD AND CHARLOTTE GUNN

On Friday, May 2, Boise County Sheriff's Office received a call that a man had disappeared and was believed to have fallen into the South Fork of the Payette River at Milepost 4 on Highway 17. The river was running very high. The Garden Valley and Horseshoe Bend swiftwater teams conducted a search that afternoon, and an air medical helicopter flew the river, but no one found any trace of the missing man. The Boise County S.O. requested a river search by IMSARU on Saturday and our callout was initiated at 2000 hours on Friday.



The river was running high. —Photo by A. Reece

Further information on Saturday indicated that a 43-year-old male had told his friend that he was going down to the river to fill his canteen; a few minutes later, when the friend realized the first man had failed to return, he looked over the edge and saw no sign of him. With our Coordinator Rod on duty as B.C.S.O. deputy and I.C., thirteen IMSARU members left the Compound at 0705 and met our fourteenth member at the Highway Department parking lot at Banks, where the North Fork and South Fork meet. Charlotte and Don worked as search base, moving down the river during the day; Everett was shuttle driver for foot teams; the other eleven members worked in teams of two or three. Radio communications were challenging, as the river canyon twists frequently and radio waves don't penetrate rocky walls, but the teams handled the necessary radio relays professionally.

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Four teams started a mile apart, beginning at Milepost 4, with instructions to check as much of the river and its banks as they could safely see. Eddies with reverse flow were especially scrutinized. The water was high, rapid, and cloudy due to recent rains and snowmelt. After all arrived at the parking lot, teams re-deployed on downriver at approximately two-mile intervals. In early afternoon, local residents reported seeing a body in the river. Gregg, with his kayak, and Mike moved downstream; Gregg donned his drysuit to be ready to go into the water if the report led to a find. The remaining foot teams worked their way down to the diversion dam just above Horseshoe Bend, and two teams then drove around to check the fish ladders outside of town. [We did see a dead deer floating down the river, which could easily have been mistaken for a human body when seen from some angles.] After a conversation with members of the Horseshoe Bend swiftwater team, the group reassembled and traveled back to the Compound, arriving at 1830 hours.

IMSARU members participating included Nathan Channer, Paul Connell, Don Fridrich, Charlotte Gunn, Mike Johnson, Ted Marx, Adrian Reece, Gregg Rettschlag, Jacob Robinson, Liz Swan, Ken Swickard, Ian Turner, Tom Wheless and Everett Wood.

THE RACE TO ROBIE CREEK – APRIL 19, 2014 VIEWED FROM A FIRST AID STATION – by RON CHRISTENSEN

The day was full of sunshine and warming temperatures, a great day for a race—or so I have been told by those who are runners. My team of three IMSARU members and a Boise County EMT was placed at Mile 11, which made us the first aid station closest to the finish line. As the racers began to reach our station, it was fascinating to see the leaders run past and appear to be under no strain at all, as though it was a stroll. As the middle of the pack began to draw near, we started to see an increase in need for first aid care. Abrasions, chafing and cramping were the most common issues of runners stopping for aid.

With the largest group of runners passing our station, a number of them informed us that a runner had gone down approximately half a mile to a mile up the course. Dan H. and Scott left our station and ran up to assist this individual until an ATV could arrive with additional resources,



A typical aid station along the race route.

—Photo by R. Christensen

then returned to our station. During their absence, a runner collapsed on the course right in front of our station. We got to him as he was trying to get himself up from the ground. He told us he was diabetic; once we got him into a chair, the EMT was able to do a prick and blood sample which showed his blood sugar had fallen very low. This runner rested and elevated his sugar count with fruit and fluids, then left under his own power to the finish line.

While not administering first aid, it was fun to interact with and cheer the runners as they passed. We especially enjoyed one who embraced the

“Queen” theme of the race and was dressed as the Queen of England complete with tiara, floral bouquet and a teacup and saucer.

As the race was winding down, we had word that a mother and her teenage daughter remained on the course when the husband/father came to us and asked about their location. Dell, who had been manning an ATV throughout the race, loaded up this gentleman and drove him up the course to meet his wife and daughter so that the three of them could run the last leg of the race and cross the finish line together.

It was a great day of interaction, not only with the runners but also with the Ada County and Boise County EMT personnel who were shuttled up and down the course via ATVs to locations where they were needed. And kudos to our medical director Colin Sesek for his organization of our medical supplies! An EMT from one of the other organizations looked at our first aid bag and commented that he was going to rethink the materials and quantities of items he carried, as he was very impressed with the way ours was outfitted.

AND VIEWED FROM THE COMMAND TRAILER – by CHARLOTTE GUNN

Those of us who have worked at Robie Creek for multiple years [my earliest Robie tee-shirt is from “Wild Thing,” in 1992, the 15th year] are constantly amazed at how their volunteers do this. The organization is truly spectacular: transportation, food, fruit and water stations along the route, portable toilets, tee-shirts, signs related to the theme, trash, music, emergency health care, communications, and a million other details. And this rural Idaho event is widely anticipated; rumor was that the quota of entrants was filled 13 minutes after registration opened!



This race is a BIG deal.

—Photo by P. Connell

IMSARU works on communications and first aid stations. We set up five stations along the route where our members could administer moleskin, Band-Aids, Vaseline and TLC, and could radio for more advanced treatment when needed. We had Bill, Craig, Dell and Ken on ATVs to transport medical personnel and others when necessary; Mike at the summit with our radio repeater; Kris at the finish to coordinate with the race committee and our members who patrolled the picnic area and bus line for people feeling the after-effects of exertion; Colin coordinating our assistants with medical personnel from Ada County and East Boise County in our medical tent; Dan S. as our O.L. in our Command Post trailer at the finish; myself handling communications with a radio microphone in one hand and a pen in the other; and Don looking for possible tweaks to the electronic records program to make it more applicable to this kind of event. [We did have some radio interference problems, but Don has probably solved them since.] Oh yes, we also had a crew that set up our finish-line work area on Friday, Gregg who slept there overnight as security, and almost all of our race workers helped pack everything up at the end.

I'm not going to list all 38 names of IMSARU workers, but do thank each and every one of them for donating their time, talents and energy to help with this great event. And thanks to the Robie Creek Race Committee for allowing us to be part of "The Toughest Race in the Northwest." I would much rather work for the race than even think about running it...and I can probably sing you a "Queen" song after listening to that sound track all day.

CORN BOOTH AT THE WESTERN IDAHO FAIR – AUGUST 15-24

We sell corn on the cob, pop and bottled water at the Fair, every year since before the Fair moved to the current Fairgrounds. The process has changed greatly since the first year of cooking the corn over campstoves in a makeshift booth, but the fact remains that this project raises about half of our annual budget. We need lots of help, including non-member friends and family (teenage children can work in the corn-shucking area but not in the cooking and selling areas), so mark your calendar now for multiple shifts. If you are new to this, here's a rough outline:

On Tuesday, July 29, we will pull out the booth structure and equipment, clean it and note any repairs or replacements needed. On Tuesday, August 5, we will load everything into vehicles; we need a couple of pickups and trailers. On Saturday, August 9, we will spend the day setting up the booth at the Fairgrounds. Jeff Munn has volunteered his experience to be in charge of the set-up, and all hands are needed. If we don't get everything done on the 9th, we return daily until the booth is ready and has passed the required inspections.

The Fair opens at noon on Friday, August 15 and we must be open for business noon-11 p.m. every day; we may sell later on busy nights. Day-shift leaders need to be on site by around 10 a.m. to light the stoves and check for any problems. All day-shift workers need to be there 11 a.m. to 5 or 6 p.m. (depending on when your replacements show up). Evening-shift workers are expected to get there as early as they can in the 5-6 p.m. time frame, understanding that their paid jobs and traffic must be considered. The evening shift finishes between 11 p.m. and midnight, again depending on how busy the shift is. The Fair closes early on the night of the 24th. IMSARU buys workers' entrance tickets, which may be used to visit the Fair before or after your working shift. Carolyn Lyon will again schedule our workers; Trish Luginbill and Amy Mart will be apprentices learning this job.

On Tuesday, August 26, we meet at the Fairgrounds to take down the booth. This may seem like an afterthought, but it is still a lot of work in a short time. PLEASE don't consider the project finished until you have helped with this part.

This is just the outline. There will be lots more info as we get closer, but don't wait to save the time on your calendar. Last year we had three missions during the first five days of the Fair, and we successfully handled everything...a great example of teamwork!

JHPTS TRAINING AT CAMP SANDERS, MAY 30-JUNE 1, 2014 --ALISA RETTSCHLAG

Eight of us from the IMSARU tracking team made our way to Camp Sanders, north of Moscow, to continue our training with the Joel Hardin Professional Tracking Services. This is the program that teaches us how to follow evidence, including but not limited to footprints, left by a human as he or she passes through an area. It is also the program that certifies IMSARU trackers as they move from novice through the progressive levels of Basic, Apprentice, Journeyman and Sign Cutter. The students came from as far as Colorado and Canada and from many SAR groups.

As for me, this was the class where I attempted—and succeeded—to certify as a Basic tracker. Having been with the IMSARU tracker group for a couple of years now, learning from some of the best to “see sign,” I was even used as part of the tracking team on a mission search near the Boise Ridge Road. In order to certify for Basic, I submitted a letter requesting certification along with my training logs to my IMSARU trainers, who then wrote recommendations to Joel Hardin.

At Camp Sanders, although I knew my field exercises were most likely being scrutinized for certification readiness, I never felt too much pressure (except from myself). I always had an amazing team of other novice trackers working sign with me, and we even reached the end of our sign line by the end of the course. However, to certify at any level, one must go in front of a board of JHPTS trainers at a JHPTS course. This is what I sweated over! The board consisted of Joel himself, Dick Wilker (Sign Cutter), Gary Burgess (Apprentice), Dan Scovel and Kris Scovel (both Journeymen). At least I wasn't the only one on the hot seat: Alex, a military guy from Colorado, also was testing for Basic. We were each asked questions about tracking from each trainer. Oh, and did I mention that the rest of the people in attendance watched and listened as Alex eloquently answered his questions while I bumbled through and at one point make some jokes with Dick about levitating or something to that effect? In the end, it was all worth it, as Alex and I both certified as Basic trackers.

“The Big Kids,” as Marv Pillers referred to the certified trackers, worked on positives and negatives when drawing footprints and also practiced drawing the prints from a standing position, following sign as fast as the sign-layer walked, and cutting for sign—all way above my level at this point but interesting.

IMSARU members attending included: novices Dan Herring, Siw Lea, Tom Rand and Alisa Rettschlag; Apprentices Charlotte Gunn and Linda Kearney; and Journeymen Dan Scovel and Kris Scovel, who served as instructors.



Alisa is congratulated by Joel Hardin.
(More photos from the class on next page; all by Lynne Whisner.)



SEARCH FOR MISSING COUPLE – MAY 22, 2014

--CHARLOTTE GUNN

The report said that an 82-year-old male and a 91-year-old female, both on various medications and of limited mobility on foot, were in the habit of driving up to Idaho City for lunch and/or ice cream, then driving around the area to see the scenery, especially around the Centerville area. We received the call from the Boise County Sheriff on Thursday morning that family members had reported them missing. Pagers and text messages went off at 08:30 for a 09:15 departure from the Compound, with a few members driving directly to New Centerville where we would set up our Search Base.

With Rod handling the in-town coordination, Ada County Aerial Sheriffs' Jerry Terlisner ready to fly and Jake going as air observer, sixteen of us drove to the intersection of the Centerville Road and the Grimes Creek Road. From there, Gregg sent six teams via UTV, ATVs, cars and trucks to check the backcountry roads, especially looking for evidence of where a vehicle might have gone over the edge or turned off on a spur, and stopping to talk to locals in the small towns since the missing couple were reportedly known by sight. Those readers familiar with the area will know that maps are related to, but not necessarily accurate about, roads thereabouts. Oh yes, we were also told that the area had received a downpour and hail since the missing people left home. However, both Gregg and Chris are quite familiar with the terrain due to their work with volunteer ambulance services in Boise County, and many other members know it from recreational adventures in various seasons, so we didn't lose any search teams and we did get reasonable coverage. (Both previous experience in such areas and just looking at the terrain told us that there is no such possibility as 100% coverage.)

There were plenty of minor adventures with difficult radio communications, an inverter that went up in smoke when asked to help recharge a laptop, roads that matched the map in location but not in signage...and I wish we had a photo of Taylor surveying the road edges via the sunroof in Jamie's car. With the Memorial Day weekend approaching, traffic was heavy on these back roads and several people stopped to ask who we were searching for, and offered to keep their eyes open for the vehicle. However, after covering the area as thoroughly as possible on

land and from the air, we packed up at about 1730 and headed home, with at least half a dozen of us stopping in Idaho City for refreshing ice cream.

Members responding included Bob Blurton, Chris Brookman, Ron Christensen, Don Fridrich with UTV, Jake Gillis (air observer), Taylor Grisham, Charlotte Gunn (Base recorder), Tim Henning on borrowed ATV, Linda Kearney, Tom Kearney, Gregg Rettschlag (O.L.), Jamie Simpson, Ken Swickard on ATV, Vicki Swickard, Bryan Walker, Tom Wheless (Logistics), Everett Wood. Rod Knopp was in-town coordinator. Special thanks for responding go to Linda Kearney who had knee surgery less than a week previously; and to Tom Kearney and Jamie Simpson, both of whom had planned to spend the day driving to West Yellowstone where they were scheduled to test with their K9s for SAR certification. When I overheard them casually discussing whether to go ahead and drive that evening after searching all day, I felt really old.

After returning home, we received a message that the couple had been picked up by passersby on the Ridge Road...which is not where one would expect to find a vehicle headed from Boise to the Idaho City and Centerville area.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Former member *Martha Vandivort* left us a very generous bequest in her will. In addition, the following people have honored Martha with memorial donations to IMSARU:

Susan Norton and Joel Stark

Martin C. V. Johnson

The Vandivort Family

Ross C. and Mary Lee Burleman

Paul M. and Linda M. Vandivort

Paul and Marjorie Stein

Dee H. Dillman

Gifts from the following two are designated for the use and support of our K-9 Team:

Idaho Capital City Kennel Club, Inc.

Marie Ginman

We have also received donations from the following:

Bill & Jackie Clark Memorial Foundation

Anser Charter School

David Butler

United Way of Northern Utah (for Intermountain Combined Federal Campaign

Barbara Poston and Kurt Ostwinkle and matching funds from *Hewlett-Packard*

Thank you for your help in keeping us ready to respond whenever and wherever we are requested by official agencies.

PLAN AHEAD FOR THE IMSARU CORN BOOTH AT THE WESTERN IDAHO FAIR, AUGUST 15-24! (SEE PAGE 4.)

**MISSING HIKER IN BOGUS BASIN AREA – MAY 24, 2014
--GREGG RETTSCHLAG AND AMANDA LEADER**

A 20-year-old male, hiking with friends on the Eastside Trail (toward Stack Rock), was reported missing. The missing man was said to be wearing a tee-shirt and shorts, carrying no food or water, and unprepared to spend a night out with overnight temperature in the mid-40's. He also was reported to have made a cell phone call saying he was lost and needed help but the phone seemed to be non-functioning after that. Unable to find him, the friends/family called the Boise County Sheriff's Office and they called us for a 6 a.m. search.

The area has thick timber and brush, with many developed trails as well as game trails and abandoned logging roads. We dispatched two members of our mountain bike team as the rapid response team, with four foot teams also assigned to search trails. Although they have participated in other events, this was the first official mission for our mountain bike team, and team leader Amanda's account follows:

“Our team was tasked with a corridor search along trails 120 and 125 to Stack Rock. We rode approximately a nine-mile loop, stopping several times along the way to shout and listen for any response. At times, the echoing through the canyon was misleading and the many birds chirping added to the challenge. We knew we were on the right track and felt re-energized after finding the message ‘[---], go to car’ which the subject's friends had scrawled in the dirt the night before. Arriving at Stack Rock, we interviewed a few backpackers who had camped out the night before but they had not seen anyone. Shortly after our arrival, we received the radio message that the subject had walked out, and we started our journey back to base camp. Strangely, the trail seemed much longer on the way back!”

The missing man said he had taken a wrong fork in the trail, tried to continue after dark but kept falling and running into obstacles [and he had the cuts and bruises as souvenirs], so he slept until daylight and was then able to see which way to go to Bogus Basin Road. He flagged down a passing motorist, who took him to the bottom of the hill, where he called his family to pick him up and also talked to Deputy Rod Knopp.

Deployment of the bike team worked very well to clear that particular trail and get searchers to the target area quickly. The bike team is able to cover many miles of non-motor trails in a short time and can provide a quick response with medical resources and supplies, act as a radio relay, or help with crowd control. We expect to see them in action many times in the future.

IMSARU members responding included Chris Brookman, Francisco Castellon, Ron Christensen, Paul Connell, Taylor Grisham (mountain bike), Dan Herring, Amanda Leader (mountain bike), Sage Lee, Brandon Mart, Owen Miller, Gregg Rettschlag (O.L.), Liz Swan, Ken Swickard, Scott Walls, Greg Weber, Tom Wheless and Everett Wood. Rod Knopp and Charlotte Gunn handled in-town coordination and Rod then went to the scene.

MISSION SKILLS TRAINING – MAY 17, 2014 --CHARLOTTE GUNN

We have a lot of new members who are still learning basic SAR skills, as well as many who have been here for multiple years and worked on multiple missions but still can benefit from a refresher session and/or catching up with changes in our equipment. Training Director Gregg Rettschlag drew up lists of basic topics for each of six stations, recruited experienced and capable members as instructors, and divided participants into six teams to rotate through thirty-minute, mostly hands-on, classes. The instructors took Gregg's suggestions and ran with them; all the comments I heard were complimentary and enthusiastic. The following is just a brief summary that can't begin to explain what you missed if you weren't there:

Jake Gillis was First Aid instructor, dealing with scene safety, BSI, the ABC's of first aid, SAMPLE, AVPU, what each member should have in a first-aid kit, and some real-life scenarios.

Mike Johnson had members practice immobilizing "Rescue Randy" with the full-body air splint, assembling the litter, loading Randy into the litter, and attaching the litter wheel for moving to a location where mechanized transport would be available.

Ann Moser led a discussion on the basics of pack food and water, and items that need to be easy to reach while on the trail. She then had the members practice loading litter parts on their packs for foot transport to an injured subject, and use the contents of their packs to improvise shelters.

Dan Scovel dealt with the structure of a field team and role of a team leader, with responsibilities to the overall mission, to the team, and to the subject.



Rescue Randy is ready to roll. —Photo by G. Rettschlag

Jeff Munn provided maps, asked members to identify kinds of terrain shown, and challenged them to use both compass and GPS in finding routes for theoretical problems. (No, the straight line isn't always the shortest way to go.)

Tom Wheless and Don Fridrich gave teams a quick run-through of where equipment is stored on Truck 901, the steps for starting the trucks, and the radio systems therein. They also introduced us to the command post trailer, emphasizing the first things that need to be done when setting it up at a mission site.

Many thanks to all who gave their time and expertise to help others learn. One day's class does not make us experts, but it is a step toward being better prepared when the call comes.

In addition to Gregg and the instructors listed, members participating were T.J. Barr, Ron Christensen, Taylor Grisham, Scott Hecker, Steve Hunt, Amanda Leader, Ted Marx, Brian Mitchell, Mitch Pelham, Tom Rand, Jamie Simpson, Jen Skeldon, Andy Stehling, Ken Swickard, Vicki Swichard, Bryan Walker, Scott Walls and Greg Weber.



Ann led the session on packs. —Photo by G. Rettschlag



Jeff Munn challenged members to plot routes.
—Photo by G. Rettschlag

WILDERNESS SAFETY CLASS FOR BOY SCOUTS --KEN SWICKARD

IMSARU responded to a request that we present a program for the Boy Scout Troup 701 that meets in Kuna. Ron started the program with an explanation of who, why and what IMSARU is, as well as the Rules of 3. The Scouts were very engaged and the questions started right away. Craig, Ken and Vicki then explained the ten essentials, as the Scouts continued to ask very good questions and seemed to know the answers to a vast majority of the questions we asked them.

Ron and Vicki then presented the Hug-A-Tree program with a variation that made it more appropriate for this age group. The program concluded with the Scouts going over the contents of one of our 24-hour packs and asking about the items presented. We completed the presentation by passing out the Wilderness Safety books, supplied by the Idaho Parks and Recreation Department, to each of the 23 Scouts and leaders in attendance.

IMSARU presenters were Ron Christensen, Craig Swan, Ken Swickard and Vicki Swickard.



IMSARU members received Blackhawk training from the National Guard.

—Photo by J. Ahlin

TRAINING WITH NATIONAL GUARD --GREGG RETTSCHLAG

It is not uncommon for IMSARU and the National Guard Blackhawks from Gowen Field to cross paths on SAR missions, so we were delighted when the Guard offered us a training opportunity at the end of May. Twenty-seven IMSARU members spent part of a Saturday being introduced to many aspects of Blackhawk operations, including how it feels to fly in one of those big birds. The occasion was perhaps even more important for our K-9 team to learn how their dogs reacted to boarding a helicopter with motor and rotors running. This was a special training opportunity for our group, and we are grateful to the Blackhawk crews for giving their time on a Saturday to ensure that we are familiar with safe and effective work in and around helicopters. Additional thanks go to all those in the National Guard chain of command who helped make this training possible.

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CONGRATULATIONS to Jen Skeldon and Kato, newly certified as air-scent K9 team.