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MISSING PERSON SEARCH IN TWIN FALLS COUNTY

--JIMMIE YORGENSEN

Early in May, Rod received a call from the Twin Falls County Sheriff's Office asking us to assist them in the search for a person missing in the very rural southern part of the county. The subject's vehicle was found last October blocking a road (or more like an ATV trail) with no sign of a driver. A number of personal items were found in and around the unlocked vehicle, which had the keys still in the ignition. This was at the height of hunting season and other people were in the general area, but no one ever reported having seen any activity around the vehicle. In hopes that someone might return, law enforcement left the vehicle for a couple more days before having it towed. They also attempted a search but winter snowfall was setting in and nothing more could be done until spring. It is a beautiful part of Idaho, with sagebrush and large pockets of aspen and lodgepole pine. The elevation is almost 7,000 feet and the southernmost search area was less than 5 miles from the Nevada/Idaho border.



Base Camp for search in Twin Falls County

IMSARU deployed 3 Human Remains Detection K-9 teams with support personnel to conduct a search in the area around the LKP; also joining our group was a K-9 team from Elko County, Nevada. On the morning of May 8, our team met with a large group of law enforcement and SAR folks from the local area. They supported the search effort with a number of ATVs, UTVs and their command trailer. Base operations were approximately 2 miles from the search area, so the ability to transport search teams was very helpful and efficient. Each search team included a K-9

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with handler, one other IMSARU member, a local law enforcement officer and a local SAR member. Search areas had been predetermined, assigned and loaded in the teams' GPSs for navigation. Team members and each of the dogs also had their own GPS to record tracks and areas searched for further analysis and study. Most teams were in their respective search areas by 1000 hours on a cool and dry Friday morning. The area had received some rain and snow the previous few days, so conditions were damp to muddy in much of the terrain.

Most teams completed their assigned search areas by early- to mid-afternoon, with no positive hits or detection by any of the dogs. After some rest and wonderful lunch (provided by the local Depot Grill in Twin Falls), 2 teams returned to a different search area for one more attempt to help solve the mystery of the missing subject. As the day ended we had no positive results from our efforts.

It was certainly a pleasure and enjoyable experience to work with the Twin Falls County folks. They were well organized, well equipped, well staffed and great hosts. It was tough leaving them without a resolution. IMSARU Dog Team members participating were Siw Lea with K9 Uki, Ann Moser with K9 Cricket and Jamie Simpson with K9 Yoki. Supporting them were Chris Brookman, Taylor Gresham, Mike Mancuso, Jen Skeldon, R.T. Thompson and Jimmie Yorgensen. The K9 team from Nevada was Cheryl Cuthbertson with K9s Kilo and Bravo.

**STRANDED FAMILY SPENT THE NIGHT ON COTTONWOOD
CREEK ROAD – APRIL 20, 2015
--JIMMIE YORGENSEN**

Rod called at 0700, looking for four members to travel up Cottonwood Creek Road (in Boise County) to rescue a family of six that were stuck in a snowdrift and had spent the night. We would take both trucks, 901 and 902, so as to have enough room to transport all family members. We learned that our subjects had cell phone service; Rod called the phone number given and, sure enough, our subject answered. Rod knew the area well and between himself and the subject describing his travels, they were able to pretty much pinpoint their location.

Our team left Boise at 0830 and arrived on scene at 1130. All subjects—husband, wife and four children ranging in age from five to fourteen—were doing fine and anxious to leave the mountain. The family's 4wd vehicle had become high-centered in some late-season snowdrifts. They had a few snacks and built a campfire close by. As we left the Compound, Rod had handed us a bag of goodies to share with the family after their ordeal. Most members picked out something from the bag of snacks, except the five-year-old. When Francisco offered a second time, the little boy again shook his head "No." Francisco then held the bag open and low enough for the little guy to see in. Once he spotted the Snickers bar he was all smiles and we had a new friend. The children reported being a little frightened during their night in the wilderness but also shared that the stargazing was spectacular. From their vantage point, the family had a panoramic view of some beautiful Idaho backcountry.

After contacting the Boise County Sheriff to get help with his family, the father had been able to also contact friends, and they were planning to come up to try to extricate the family vehicle. Our team loaded up the wife and children, and started our trip back to Boise; the father stayed behind with his

vehicle. We met his friends coming in as we were going out, so it looked like a plan was coming together. It was reported to us later in the day that they had been successful in getting the family vehicle out of the snowdrift.

We received a message that our subjects had contacted relatives who would meet them at the Albertson's Store at Highway 21 and Federal Way. We stayed with the subjects until other family members arrived and then returned to the Compound at 1400. IMSARU members responding were Francisco Castellon, Gregg Rettschlag, Tom Wheless and Jimmie Yorgensen. Rod Knopp handled the in-town coordination.

STUCK IN A SNOWDRIFT ON PILOT PEAK – JUNE 7, 2015 --KEN SWICKARD

The Boise County Sheriff's Office asked us to extract a family of four, including a special needs child, from where their vehicle was stuck in a snowdrift in the Pine Valley Road area. Texts from the family indicated they had food and water but were unable to get their vehicle out of the snowdrift it had sunk into. Since this was a comparatively simple problem in a known location, the first six members to arrive at the Compound became the team, leaving at 2020 hours.

Two Sheriff's deputies met our crew at the Mores Creek Summit parking lot. Chris moved to Gregg's vehicle to help with communications and make more space in trucks 901 and 902 for potential transport of the subjects. 902 then led the drive on in, followed by 901, with the thought that in case 902 also got stuck in a snowdrift, 901 could pull it out with its brand new winch. With twilight fading and darkness closing fast, the two vehicles started up the Pilot Peak road; there had been no maintenance since the warm spring snowmelt and runoff, so the road was rocky, rutted and pitted. After a bone-jarring uphill drive of 4.5 to 5 miles, the trucks made it past Four Corners and started down the back side of Pilot Peak. Within a quarter of a mile down, they encountered two large snowdrifts. Both trucks made it through the first one; when 902 stopped to survey the second one, a set of headlights came on from a third drift about 100 feet ahead.

The family in the stuck vehicle were all in good health and spirits, but really glad to see the Idaho Mountain Search and Rescue Unit. Their vehicle was buried to the frame in the drift. Twenty feet forward or backward would free the vehicle, so we were able to manually push it back out of the drift. The subjects related that they had driven all the way from Horseshoe Bend and this was the first snowdrift they had encountered. The driver chose to go back via the same route rather than risk the three drifts ahead of him. His wife looked at us with a sigh of relief and asked what this was going to cost them. When we told them we never charge for our services, we could see the astonishment and gratitude in their faces. We got them turned around and on their way back to Horseshoe Bend, then turned our vehicles and returned to base camp, and on home to the Compound. The mission was completed at 0013 hours.

Members responding were Chris Brookman, Taylor Grisham, Ted Marx, Brian Mitchell, Gregg Rettschlag (O.L.) and Ken Swickard. Rod Knopp was in-town coordinator, with help from Charlotte Gunn.

THE RACE TO ROBIE CREEK – APRIL 18, 2015 --TOM RAND

In 1975, some running friends called themselves the Rocky Canyon Sail Toads and had an outrageous idea: a half-marathon crossing the Boise Front from Fort Boise Park, through Rocky Canyon, over the 4,797-foot-elevation Aldape Summit, to Robie Creek Beach at the confluence with the Mores Creek end of Lucky Peak Lake. The course for the race was goofy, including remarkably inaccessible location, a 2,000-foot elevation gain, downhill much steeper than uphill, and finish line elevation higher than starting line. Annually since 1979, The Race to Robie Creek continues as an enormously popular affair known as “Toughest Half-Marathon in the Northwest.”

IMSARU volunteers have become an integral part of this annual affair. IMSARU provides five first-aid stations on the course, a medical tent at the finish line, radio communications over the course coordinated by the command trailer at the finish line with a temporary relay tower above the track summit, and “rovers” on ATVs over the course and on foot at the finish line, in the park where runners and their friends celebrated, and along the lines of people awaiting bus transport to parking areas. Ada County paramedics and East Boise County EMS staff worked closely with IMSARU to address emergencies arising during the race day.

This year 35 IMSARU members participated on race day. Kris Scovel and Dan Scovel were the coordinators, including hours of meetings and preparations beforehand. Charlotte Gunn and Don Fridrich maintained communications in the command trailer, with Mike Johnson and Tom Wheless in charge of the summit relay tower. Over 100 race participants needed help at the first-aid stations, and



Photo by V. Swickard BEFORE it got busy.

IMSARU members working included Justin Ahlin, Aaron Burdin, Steve Caldwell, Delinda Castellon, Francisco Castellon, John Ferguson, Don Fridrich, Charlotte Gunn, Dale Hyatt, Steph Jenkins, Mike Johnson, Kyle Kahm, Brandon Mart, Ted Marx, Dell McNees, Tom Rand, Alisa Rettschlag, Gregg Rettschlag, Dan Scovel, Kris Scovel, Jamie Simpson, Jen Skeldon, Craig Swan, Liz Swan, Ken Swickard, Vicki Swickard, Carolyn Sukkha, R.T. Thompson, Scott Walls, Kacy Watkins, Greg Weber, Carol Wellman, Tom Wheless, Everett Wood and Jimmie Yorgensen.

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

We are grateful for cash donations from:

The Bill & Jackie Clark Memorial Foundation

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Idaho Capital City Kennel Club

David Butler

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Griff Herren

We also thank all those who gave to IMSARU via the Idaho Gives program.

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COMPOUND CLEANUP – MAY 9, 2015 --RON CHRISTENSEN

The Saturday morning broke clear, sunny and warm—all lending itself to a “perfect” cleanup day...that is, if you can use the words perfect and cleanup in the same sentence. (In reality, the cleanup had started a few weeks in advance of this date, as Brad had sold used materials, equipment and miscellaneous items via Craig’s List and other contacts.)

We had a great turnout by our members and exceeded what we had hoped to accomplish during the day. The primary goal was to remove the concrete pad and foundation which were remnants of an old motel that had been on the site. Justin brought in a backhoe and trailer, and during the day we were able to break up and remove this foundation, old drain pipe in the ground, and overgrown shrubs around the old building in the front of our property, and to spread gravel, adding to our parking capacity.

Jeff brought in a flatbed trailer to use in removing a large amount of steel items from within and along the north side of the old building; these were sold to a recycling company. We also made numerous trips to Tree Top recycling with yard waste, where they helped us in reducing the cost on our last couple of loads. (Thanks, Tree Top!) In addition to removing the steel, yard waste and concrete, we made a trip to the dump and one to a local tire store that helped dispose of some old tires.

Many of us got to practice our prowess in swinging a sledgehammer, raking gravel, manipulating a pry bar, operating a chain saw, and in general reminding ourselves of why we actually do other things in our regular day jobs. So for a day that started at 0900, we concluded at 1715 with much accomplished plus a few blisters and tender backs! It also must be noted, with gratitude, that Charlotte delivered some home-baked chocolate bars to the Compound on her way out of town to set up a track for K-9 testing.

Members participating included Brad Acker, Justin Ahlin, Mike Buckingham, Ron Christensen, Joe Florko, Dan Herring, Steve Hunt, Siw Lea, Michael Mancuso, Ted Marx, Jeff Munn, Tom Rand, Jen Skeldon, Greg Weber, Tom Wheless and Jimmie Yorgensen.



Photos by Siw Lea

MISSION AT GRANDJEAN – MAY 22, 2015
--GREGG RETTSCHLAG

On Friday afternoon I was in the homestretch of coordinating the repair of a broken water line discovered very late Thursday night—perfect timing for a mission. Handing a check to the plumber, I exchanged muddy clothes for search gear and headed for the Compound, concerned that Friday afternoon before Memorial Day might mean low turnout for a mission. Those fears were unwarranted, as we had 17 people, including tracking, K9 and ground-pounder resources. We would search for a despondent subject who had left word that he was headed for Grandjean.

Assigned OL duties, my first decision was to pick a route to take to Lowman. I gambled that traffic headed north on Hwy 55 for the long weekend would not be so bad as to justify taking the slower route on Hwy 21 through Idaho City. My roll of the dice came up snake eyes as we hit the opposite end of town and Rod radioed that Boise County deputies were reporting bumper-to-bumper traffic on Hwy 55. Back through town we went, rerouting through Idaho City. It's a long drive from Boise to the Grandjean Lodge, so I had plenty of time to prep while Chris and Aaron manned the driving and radio duties from the front seats. With some knowledge of the area, and knowing we'd be arriving at dusk, I expected we would be able to accomplish little more than combing the flats near the subject's vehicle until daybreak on Saturday.

We arrived to find steady rain, Boise County Sheriff Roeber, and what appeared to be a large contingent of family and friends. Sheriff Roeber briefed Jimmie and me while the rest of the crew set up the command trailer. Before the Sheriff had finished the briefing, we noticed a lone figure emerging from a nearby trail. He immediately grabbed our attention because he carried nothing and his ground-length coat was more suited to a horseman than to a day-hiker. Sheriff Roeber quickly confirmed that this was our subject and our mission was over just as it was starting. Base camp operations proceeded in reverse, and we were soon ready to head back to Boise with the best of all possible outcomes—our subject was safely out of the backcountry.

It was a long trip, but there was a benefit: There is no substitute for this kind of practice in the art of prepping to lead a mission. Our crew also got some practice in setting up the command trailer, which we have not done very often on recent missions. Word afterward was that the setup went very well, with everyone lending a hand.

Members participating were Chris Brookman, Aaron Burdin, Ron Christensen, Don Fridrich, Tim Henning, Dan Herring, Tom Kearney, Amanda Leader, Becky Louber, Brandon Mart, Brian Mitchell, Ann Moser with K9 Watson, Gregg Rettschlag, Eric Rust, Dan Scovel, Everett Wood and Jimmie Yorgensen. In-town coordination was handled by Rod Knopp and Charlotte Gunn.

JHPTS TRACKING CLASS – MAY 29-31, 2015
--CHARLOTTE GUNN

It's a long drive from Boise to Camp Sanders in north Idaho, but well worth it for the training, the vegetation unlike ours at home, and the pleasure of working with people we seldom see but whom we enjoy and respect.

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This class was unusual in that only four of the students were novices. Instructor Pres Funkhouser worked with them on beginning-level tracks, and the rest of us were sent one or two at a time to observe and then to practice writing an evaluation of one of the novices. The certified students had classroom instruction on forms, record-keeping and changes in the organization, plus field exercises on aging of tracks both through the grass and on the side of the gravel road.

The main activity for the certified students was a scenario: A group of adults and children (unknown number of each) were reportedly seen heading down the long driveway across the road from our camp. Our task was to figure out how many there were, where they went, and what they did. Instructors Dick Wilker and Marv Pillers had set it up through a large field, a small wooded area, down the hill to a grassy flat with a pond, and back up the hill through the far side of the field. We worked in teams of two or three, with frequent rearrangement of the teams and change of TOC (Tracking Operation Coordinator). And yes, they threw in a few tricks. How many people? Three or four or five...depending on when all were walking or when one of the adults was carrying one of the children...and sometimes one of the children deliberately walked in the footsteps of an adult. I don't remember which tracker first voiced the idea of a child being carried, but that person deserves a gold star on his/her chart!

Beginning trackers spend a lot of time kneeling on the ground. Certified trackers do plenty of close examination also, but there were multiple opportunities to look ahead at a sign line and follow it at regular walking speed, to do perimeter cuts in order to make sure our sign lines were in the area we were working, and to communicate with other teams as our sign lines veered toward each other. We felt real satisfaction when we followed the tracks all the way to their point of exit back onto the driveway. Thank you, JHPTS instructors, for making this an educational, challenging and motivational weekend.

IMSARU members attending were Jimmie Yorgensen, Scott Walls, Ken Swickard, Alisa Rettschlag, Linda Kearney, Dan Herring and Charlotte Gunn.

Congratulations to Ken Swickard, who received his Basic certification at this course! IMSARU now has ten JHPTS-certified trackers at Basic, Apprentice and Journeyman levels.

K9 CERTIFICATION TESTING BY TRI-STATE K9 AND NATIONAL SEARCH DOG ALLIANCE

--JAMIE SIMPSON

The founding members of Tri-State K9—Janet Wilts, Bonnie Whitman, Ladean McKittrick, Sam Heigh, Larry Heigh, Chris Goodhue and Kris Brock—set out to improve K9 teams by creating opportunities for teams from across the mountain states to work together and learn from each other. The organization has grown to include twenty-three different K9 groups and independent handlers from five states (UT, MT, WY, ID and NV). Tri-State has developed standardized certifications for each discipline, thus enabling a group to call in other K9 groups to help on searches with confidence in each team's capabilities.

Five IMSARU K9 teams participated in Tri-State K9 Certification over Memorial Day weekend in West Yellowstone, MT. There were 35 handlers participating, with 65 certification tests ad-

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ministered. The weekend was a resounding success, with all five IMSARU teams getting to work with, observe, and learn from experienced handlers from many other K9 groups. IMSARU K9s brought home two cadaver re-certifications (Linda and Cayenne, Jamie and Yoki), and one new cadaver certification (Jen and Kato).

Earlier in the month, Julie Gibson with K9 Libby re-certified in human remains detection, Ann Moser with K9 Watson passed a new test that combines live and cadaver in one large area, and Andy Stehling with K9 Riffle passed their area certification. All three of these tests were administered through the National Search Dog Alliance (NSDA).

IMSARU now has nine certified K9 teams, with some having multiple certifications. In all, seven have HRD, cadaver or both; five have Area (live find); and one has a trailing certification. Teams participating in the West Yellowstone event included Linda Kearney with K9 Cayenne, Dell McNeas with K9 Rainn, Jamie Simpson with K9 Yoki, Jen Skeldon with K9 Kato, and Andy Stehling with K9 Riffle.



Examiner Cam Daggett with Andy Stehling and Riffle after they won their first certification.

A SHORT INTRO TO TRACKING FOR CAP CADETS – APRIL 28, 2015 --CHARLOTTE GUNN

IMSARU member Dan Herring is an advisor to CAP cadets in Boise and Nampa, and requested an introduction to tracking skills for the Nampa group. Ken Swickard and I found our way to the facility at the Nampa Airport, where Dan and I laid a short demonstration line of sign, including a cross track, between the road and fence. The cadets were later able to stand on the edge of the road and clearly see what we were following.

Indoors, we talked briefly about how tracking skills can sometimes find the direction of travel, thus greatly reducing the area to be searched for missing persons, as well as about the training we do to learn and maintain these skills. Having posted on the meeting room walls a large selection of footprints that we had made on foil before coming to the class, we had the cadets each choose a print to draw, then try to match someone else's drawing with the appropriate print, and finally to find the actual shoe/boot that made the print.

All three of us who served as instructors for the session would again be students in a JHPTS tracking course at the end of May, as tracking is a perishable skill, but we reminded ourselves of the old adage that a good way to improve one's skill is to try to teach it to someone else.

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CORN BOOTH AT THE WESTERN IDAHO FAIR – AUGUST 21-30

Our sale of corn-on-the-cob, pop and bottled water at the Fair earns about half our annual budget, so it is a big deal. 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 this will be your first experience, here's a rough outline of our August activities which replace the regular meeting schedule:

On Tuesday, August 4, we will pull out the booth structure and equipment, clean it and note any repairs or replacements needed. On Tuesday, August 11, we will load everything into vehicles; we need a couple of pickups and trailers. On Saturday, August 15, we will spend the day setting up the booth at the Fairgrounds. Jeff Munn has been bribed to again supervise the set-up, and all hands are needed. Plan to bring ladders, power tools to deal with screws and bolts, work gloves, etc. If we don't get everything done on the 15th, we will return daily until the booth is ready and has passed the required inspections.

Our IMSARU meeting on August 18 will be at the booth for last-minute details, a quick run-through for new people, and handing out worker tickets and information.

The Fair opens on Friday, August 21, and we must be open for business noon to 11 p.m. every day except for earlier closing on August 30. We may be open as late as midnight on busy dates. Day-shift supervisors 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 from 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 paid jobs and traffic must be taken into account. The evening shift finishes between 11 p.m. and midnight, again depending on how busy we are and how long it takes to clean up. IMSARU buys our workers' entrance tickets, which may be used to visit the Fair before or after your working shift.

On Monday, August 31, we meet at the Fairgrounds as early as we can get there in the afternoon to take down the booth—not the exciting part of the project but a lot of work in a short time. PLEASE don't consider the Corn Booth finished until you have helped with this part.

P.S. – Yes, it's true we have had as many as three missions during the time of one Corn Booth and we handled them all, with people filling in where needed.

Layne Simmons is doing the scheduling this year. Email her at simmonslayne@yahoo.com or call her at 250-0211 to volunteer...and if she contacts you, say “Yes.”

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