

# RESCUE HAS BEEN THE VOICE OF IMSARU SINCE JANUARY 1962

Founding Member: Mountain Rescue Association

Rescue



Web Edition

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## THORN CREEK SEARCH – OCTOBER 22, 2017

DARRYL BEEMER, JIM FINDLEY, KEN SWICKARD & CHRISTOPHER WELTNER

We were notified on the evening of October 21 that a man, his son and his nephew (ages 19 and 23) were missing in the Thorn Creek Butte area of Boise County. A team of 23 members, including 4 K9 handlers and 4 ATVs assembled at the Compound at 0600 hours the next morning and drove to the Boise County Sheriff's Office in Idaho City.

We learned that the older man had dropped off the two younger men, wearing jeans and sweatshirts, just below the Thorn Creek Butte lookout on the Bald Mountain Road. They planned to hunt around the mountain and meet him back at the truck on Saturday afternoon, but never showed up, and several inches of snow overnight would have meant a rough night for the two. (They had not checked the weather forecast, and a winter storm moved into the area in mid-afternoon at about the 5,000-foot level.) The older man may have been hunting also, had parked on the Bald Mountain Road at about 7,400 feet, waited into the night, and then realized he was not comfortable driving down the steep, narrow road that was now covered with snow and ice. He called 911 for help; a BCSO deputy attempted to locate the stranded man but was unable to push through the heavy snow.

When we arrived on Sunday morning, conditions up to the hunters' last known point were reported as very muddy and slick...and then we found out that the father/uncle was somewhere around Thorn Creek Butte area with exact location unknown. We stopped at a boggy section several miles short of the lookout and deployed ATV's at day-break, while the rest of us worked on the truck-trailer traffic snarl: The road was too narrow for vehicles with trailers to be turned around and backing was difficult. However, after an exciting bit of tow rope trickery, all vehicles and trailers were liberated by 0900 hours. Continued on Page 2

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The ATV's continued up to the Thorn Creek Butte lookout without locating the subject or his vehicle. While returning, they had radio contact with Base indicating that the missing man had been on an off-shoot of the Bald Mountain Road, heard the ATV's and would try to drive to the junction with the Lookout road. Our team headed back up and found the subject in his vehicle, very concerned at the condition of the road, the amount of snow on it, and his unfamiliarity with mountain snow driving...but after some discussion with the searchers, he realized that if he did not drive back down then, his vehicle might well be stuck up there until spring. The ATV's, one in back and one in front, escorted him slowly down to Base.

Meanwhile, we learned that the two younger men's approximate location had been determined from a recent cell phone call they had made, and they were closer to Arrow Rock Reservoir than expected. Reorganizing, we split into Groups A and B. Group B, led by Ron, headed southward around to the Cottonwood Creek area, where they planned to hike over a ridge to the subjects' coordinates. However, they discovered that their distance from the target was six miles rather than one mile, as what appeared on the map to be a road was instead a trail. They inserted part of their group (now designated Team 5) to hike up this trail and search to the coordinates provided by the subjects.

Group A, led by Gregg, headed northward and it became apparent that they were closest to the subjects' last known point, so the teams that had just delivered the older man back to Base geared up to search downward to the subjects. ATV drivers delivered the group (now designated Team 2) to their starting point for a two-mile hike down 1,500 feet from the Thorn Creek Butte Summit to the subjects, then endured the cold wind of the summit to provide radio communications for everyone.

By 1530 hours, Team 2 had arrived at the subjects' reported location but did not find them. Soon thereafter, Team 5 contacted the subjects by blowing a whistle and yelling, which brought a reply from the north; primary assessment found them in good condition. We provided them with the extra sets of clothing we had brought, as well as food and water. They preferred to travel three hours back down to the Cottonwood Trailhead rather than two hours back up to the Bald Mountain Road, and were in good spirits, arriving at the trailhead at around 1840 hours. When all of our searchers were gathered, we transported the subjects to Spring Shores Marina where they were reunited with their family.

Some lessons from the Operations crew:

- Take ALL of the mission laptops when you leave town, in case you have to split resources.
- Carry GPS connection cables and remember that you have them.
- Map important coordinates on as many laptops as you can, as soon as you can.
- Utilize State Comm to provide radio relays, and utilize the active repeaters.
- Know that in a dynamic search, things will change; leave flexibility in your plans.
- When possible, have available an ATV with a strong radio, in case transportation is difficult.  
(Thanks, Eddie.)
- Take time to smile, joke, and get blood flowing to your whole brain.
- Finally, Darryl's personal favorite: Have M&M's and Dutch Stroopwafels ready for when the field teams return.

IMSARU members participating were Darryl Beemer, Chris Brookman, Aaron Burdin, Juan Burzaco, Francisco Castellon, Ron Christensen, Nick Dawson, Jim Findley, Lindsay Glick, Taylor Grisham, Stephanie Jenkins, Christi Kelley, David Kelley, Brandon Mart, Ted Marx, Dodi Newbill, Gregg Rettschlag (O.L.), Jamie Simpson, Attila Sipiczki, Alicia Swanson, Ken Swickard, Eddie-Dean Thomas and Christopher Weltner. In-town coordinators were Rod Knopp and Charlotte Gunn.

## **BOISE HOLIDAY PARADE 2017** **--KEN SWICKARD**

This annual parade was scheduled for November 18, but preparation started months before. Entries were accepted as of mid-September and we came up with number 23 (which included the whole unit—trucks, our communications trailer, plus any individual bikes, ATVs and K-9s that could attend) in the parade of over 90 entries.

Our representative attended the pre-parade meeting on November 8 to receive instructions on checking in, rules and regulations, with emphasis on “no throwing candy.” For the safety of children, candy could be handed out but not thrown. At an IMSARU meeting, members decided to hand out lollipops this year instead of the traditional candy canes. The Overland Road Walmart in Meridian and the Cash & Carry in Nampa enabled us to offset the additional expense of the lollipops...and we handed out 4,800 of them.

On November 17, our Logistics Director, Tom Wheless, inspected both trucks and took them out to be washed and cleaned up. On Saturday morning, nine members met at the Compound to load lollipops into sacks provided by REI, hook up the trailer and head to the parade check-in. Eight more members met us at the parade route. In addition to our unit equipment, three bike riders, three K-9s with their handlers and two ATVs participated in the parade, while five members walked the route and were the principal lollipop giver-outers.

It takes only about an hour to complete the parade route, but we get to see so many happy faces and smiling children! When it ended much faster than we wanted, we all headed home or back to the Compound to get the equipment mission-ready for the next call-out.

IMSARU participants were Tim Agenbroad, Mike Buckingham, Juan Burzaco, Alex Graves, Lindsay Glick, Taylor Grisham with K9 Sasha, Tom Kearney with K9 Terrabyte, Christi Kelley with K9 Hank, Jeff Munn, Dodi Newbill, Mike Rowe, Attila Sipiczki, Liz Swan, Ken Swickard, Vicki Swickard, Scott Walls and Jimmie Yorgensen.



## MISSION ON DEADWOOD ROAD – OCTOBER 29, 2017 --KEN SWICKARD

Late in the afternoon of October 28, a mother and two young sons left in the family truck for their hunting camp and never arrived there. It appeared that they may have gone the wrong way on Deadwood Road from the summit. The Boise County Sheriff's Office requested our help and callout was initiated at 0530 hours on the 29<sup>th</sup>. Both of our rescue vehicles left the Compound at 0645 hours, and met three additional members, pulling two ATV's, at the State Street/Highway 55 intersection. The IMSARU caravan rendezvoused with the I.C. (B.C.S.O. deputy) at the Deadwood Road turnoff on the Banks/Lowman Highway (Hwy 17).



A U.S. Forest Service Law Enforcement Officer joined our group and we traveled up the mountain toward the summit, stopping at the 10-mile point to off-load the ATV's because we had no idea what road conditions were ahead and did not know if there would be room to turn the long ATV trailer around. All five vehicles and the ATV's traveled another 8.5 miles and through a few hard/icy drifts, to the Summit where the road split—one branch going west toward the Lookout and one heading north, down the shady side toward Deadwood Reservoir. The O.L. sent truck 902 (Team 2) up the lookout road and two ATV's with an additional spotter (Team 1) down the snow-and-ice-covered road toward Deadwood Reservoir.

Five miles down the reservoir road, Team 1 came upon a Good Samaritan who had found the family stuck in a snowdrift. They had gotten the truck out of the snowdrift and he was breaking a track for them to get back to the summit. We could not raise Base to inform them; however, Team 2 on the lookout road could hear us and relayed the information, including our UTM coordinates to Base. When the subjects' vehicle lost traction on the steep grade, the Good Samaritan put two of his tire chains on the subjects' vehicle to get them moving on the ice-covered and packed snow. The chains were super-large because he had a one-ton flatbed dually Dodge and she had grocery-getter tires on her 2500 Dodge. We got the subjects to Base at the summit, and supplied food and warm drinks.

The subjects' vehicle was extremely low on fuel because they had kept the engine running all night for warmth. After giving them 10 gallons of fuel, we escorted them down the mountain, loaded our ATV's back on the trailer, hooked everything up and headed back toward the Compound, with a stop in Garden Valley for some fried chicken and Subway sandwiches.

IMSARU members responding were Aaron Burdin, Ron Christensen (O.L.), Jim Findley, Alisa Rettschlag, Liz Swan, Ken Swickard and Christopher Weltner. In-town coordinators were Rod Knopp and Charlotte Gunn.

## K-9 CERTIFICATIONS --JAMIE SIMPSON

Thank you, Layne and Phil, for getting us access to an excellent testing site, to everyone who came out and helped by being subjects, and to Andy Stehling and Tom Wheless for a whole weekend of support. We had a great weekend of testing!

We added four new certifications: Hank certified with each of his handlers (Dave and Christi Kelley) in Wilderness Live Find. (This is locating two subjects in 160 acres in three hours.) Cayenne with Linda Kearney, and Oscar with Ann Moser certified in Land Human Remains Detection. (This is a five-component test, including buildings, cars, areas, and a roadway where the K9s have to locate an unknown number of sources consisting of blood, bone, and buried sources.)

In addition, both teams due for recertification (Sasha with Taylor Grisham, and Yoki with Jamie Simpson) passed their tests.

We currently have four wilderness live-find teams, four cadaver teams and two trailing teams, plus two more K9s coming along very quickly: Amber with John Mras for live find, and Brewster with Dave and Christi Kelley for live find and cadaver. And Terabyte, the newest K9, is getting started in wilderness live-find with her handler Tom Kearney.



THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

We greatly appreciate donations from the following:

Individuals and organizations who gave us cash gifts via:

Combined Federal Campaign of Greater SoCal, and

United Way of Northern Utah, for Intermountain Combined Federal Campaign

Mr. Ron Christensen

Mr. Kris Walker

Diane Mathews and Timothy Henning

REI in Boise

Mr. Arthur K. Carlson

The Cracker Barrel Restaurant in Nampa donated 500 boxes of crayons to accompany our coloring books for the Hug-A-Tree safety education presentations.

Cash 'n Carry Store #584 in Nampa, Walmart Store #3093 in Meridian, and REI in Boise donated materials for our participation in the 2017 Boise Holiday Parade.

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## **GIRL SCOUT TROOP 93 PROGRAM – OCTOBER 10, 2017** **--VICKI & KEN SWICKARD**

Jen Grush-Dale invited IMSARU to present the Hug-A-Tree and Wilderness Safety programs to Girl Scout Troop 93 students and their parents at an evening social presentation. Ken began the program by introducing IMSARU to the audience with the history of the unit and an explanation of our individual teams. We answered questions about our range of deployment and explained that we directly serve any city, county, state or federal agency within Idaho, and those of surrounding states when they request any of our specialized services.

Vicki then explained, and discussed with the audience, the “Rules of 3,” which were new to the listeners. She gave a verbal presentation of the Hug-A-Tree program’s origin by Border Patrol Agent Ab Taylor. A young volunteer served as model in learning how to utilize a plastic garbage bag as an emergency shelter if she got lost in the Idaho mountains or desert.

Ken and Vicki together explained the Ten Essentials and encouraged the audience to ask questions, which brought up “SPOT” devices, GPS’s and cell phones. Ken then gave a brief lesson on why cotton clothing can be so dangerous to wear in the Idaho wilderness.

All attendees were given IMSARU brochures, “Hug-A-Tree,” “Cotton Kills” and the Wilderness Handbook to take home and read as a family. IMSARU presenters were Vicki Swickard and Ken Swickard.

## **IMSARU 2017 CHRISTMAS PARTY**

**--JIM FINDLEY**

More than 70 IMSARU members and guests, along with three festively-dressed members of the Rescue Randy family, gathered at the Compound on December 2<sup>nd</sup> to celebrate the season and reflect on 2017 at the annual Christmas party. The compound was cheerily decorated, as were many of the guests in their very attractive Christmas sweaters. However, none were more stunningly attired than Topher in his mission-orange shirt and matching orange trousers, orange vest, and orange bowtie (you can find anything on the internet).

After sharing Christmas greetings, everyone enjoyed a delicious pot-luck dinner, followed by remarks from our guest, motivational speaker Dr. Vincent Kituku. In his rich “Wyoming” accent, Dr. Kituku discussed service to community and his work supporting education for young girls in his native Kenya.

Dr. Kituku’s remarks were followed by a slideshow put together by Eddie, highlighting IMSARU activities throughout 2017, and a raffle of SAR-related gifts. The evening was capped off with presentation of IMSARU’s highest annual award, “The Rock,” to Amanda Leader for her many contributions to the unit, including service on the board as Facilities Manager and taking the lead role in organizing the successful national MRA Conference in Boise in June of this year.

Thanks to the party organizers: Christi Kelley, Amanda Leader, Dodi Newbill, Ken Swickard, Eddie-Dean Thomas and Rose Wood.

## **EAGLE FIRE DEPARTMENT OPEN HOUSE – OCTOBER 7, 2017**

**--KEN SWICKARD**

For a third time, the Eagle Fire Department invited IMSARU to attend their annual Public Open House. This Open House consists of fire and police static displays as well as demonstrations of getting victims out of vehicles by cutting the vehicles apart. Free hotdogs, soft drinks, water and coffee were offered during the four-hour event.

IMSARU decided this year to not just have a table, but to take some static displays of our own in the form of SAR ATV’s. We had two tables for paperwork and handouts, and placed an ATV at either end of the tables. With their blinkie lights, etc., they attracted both young and old. Many folks expressed interest in what we do and the make-up of IMSARU in general. We even had a number of potential future members make verbal commitments to come by the Compound on a meeting night in order to get a better view of who and what we are.

Our table had Hug-A-Tree coloring books and crayons for the children as well as flyers and handouts like the “Rules of 3,” “Hug-a-Tree” and “Why Cotton Kills.” We also had a small supply of whistles, and handed out Survival Books courtesy of the Idaho Parks and Recreation Department. Mike and I had worthwhile conversations with members of the public. Thanks to Mike’s interest, we did not miss this year’s really enjoyable day.

IMSARU presenters were Mike Buckingham and Ken Swickard.

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## **NOVEMBER FIELD TRAINING—LEADERSHIP AND LIAISON ROLES --GREGG RETTSCHLAG**

I bent the definition of “field training” a bit, enlisting ten specialists and setting up four stations around the Compound where small teams could have an interactive experience. Topics included mission prep/coordination, IMSARU group lead, field assignment prep, and family liaison. For all but the family liaison station, we asked each group of four to pick a leader. I hoped this training session would expose members to leadership and liaison challenges they might face in real SAR scenarios, so at each station the specialists acted out the scenarios and mentored the students in devising a plan for handling these challenges. Oh, did I mention that attendees were lured to the training with the promise of lunch? Training is always better when pizza arrives!

**Mission Prep:** This scenario had the group arriving at the Compound for a mission before the assigned ops leader was there, so they were expected to kick off the process of getting ready for the mission response: the sign-in, quick interfacing with the search coordinator without distracting him/her, get computers up and running, start vehicle assignments, and assess equipment needs. This session ended with Rod [IMSARU Coordinator] covering his view of what occurs from the time a mission call comes in through the group leaving the Compound.

**IMSARU Group Lead:** The group walked through two scenarios of organizing IMSARU responders. The first was leading our members responding to another SAR group. In this, the group lead needs to provide leadership for the IMSARU members but also to act as a liaison between IMSARU and the unit managing the search. The second had the group arriving at an IMSARU-led search before the IMSARU Ops Leader. On arrival, they were immediately approached by the Incident Commander (law enforcement) and the reporting party. This is a difficult situation, requiring impromptu/unplanned leadership of the IMSARU searchers and also acting as family liaison and law enforcement liaison. In situations like this, information could be lost and the needs of the family member/friend of the subject might not be addressed. A bad start (poor/non-existent organization) can lead to a delayed or even poor resolution of a search.

**Field Assignment Prep:** The group was going to the field to assist in evacuating a deceased subject and needed to prep their team as well as a deputy sheriff who would be joining them for the hike in. We hope the ops leader will do a good job of briefing a field team but even in the best of cases, some points can be missed. The team lead should review individual and team gear, making sure that redundancies are addressed. Some redundant gear is needed (map, radio, GPS); some should be culled (stoves, first aid). The team lead should also assign roles (navigation, comms). The team needs to divide among team members and load onto packs the gear needed to evac the deceased subject (litter, litter wheel, etc.) Team leads should address comms, route finding, team name, check-in times, and knowing their exact assignment. Finally, someone must prep a non-IMSARU team member (deputy) for the field.

**Family Liaison:** This is a recent point of emphasis in the unit. A fictional but typical IMSARU search scenario was presented for the group to brainstorm. It was introduced as the family liaison to an on-scene family member. Participants described immediate needs to be addressed, and then reacted as the search developed. The role of family liaison might be the toughest job within a search but, done well, it is one component by which we judge a successful SAR event.

Proctors were: Chris Brookman, Aaron Burdin, Ron Christensen, Rod Knopp, Becky Louber, Brandon Mart, Jeff Munn, Alisa Rettschlag, Gregg Rettschlag, Tom Wheless and Jimmie Yorgensen.

Attendees were: Tim Agenbroad, Darryl Beemer, Mitchell Bliss, Mike Buckingham, Kristin Freeman, Lindsay Glick, Jerry Holmes, Christi Kelley, David Kelley, Dodi Newbill, Mike Rowe, Colin Sese, Attila Sipiczki, Sam Stone, Eddie-Dean Thomas and Christopher Weltner.

## CALENDAR

Dec. 19	Medical Training	7:00 p.m. at the Compound
Dec. 26	NO MEETING	
Jan. 2	General Meeting (includes debriefs of any Missions)	7:00 p.m. at the Compound
Jan. 9	SAR Training	7:00 p.m. at the Compound
Jan. 13	SAR Field Training	Time and Place TBA
Jan. 16	Medical Training	7:00 p.m. at the Compound
Jan. 23	Business Meeting	7:00 p.m. at the Compound
Jan. 30	??? (possible Board Meeting)	
Feb. 6	General Meeting (includes debriefs of any Missions)	7:00 p.m. at the Compound
Feb. 13	SAR Training	7:00 p.m. at the Compound
Feb. 17	SAR Field Training	Time and Place TBA
Feb. 20	Medical Training	7:00 p.m. at the Compound
Feb. 27	Business Meeting	7:00 p.m. at the Compound
March 6	General Meeting (includes debriefs of any Missions)	7:00 p.m. at the Compound
March 13	SAR Training	7:00 p.m. at the Compound
March 17	SAR Field Training	7:00 p.m. at the Compound
March 20	Medical Training	7:00 p.m. at the Compound

NOTE: Many activities are not listed on this calendar page. The specialty teams (Mantrackers, Mountain Bikers, K-9 Team and Technical Rescue Team) all do additional training, and various committees meet as needed, etc.

Many thanks to all who wrote articles for this issue, and my apologies for not being able to fit in the majority of photos supplied.

SPECIAL THANKS TO DELL McNEES FOR HANDLING THE PRINTING, ISSUE AFTER ISSUE!

Check the Web calendar for updates, changes and additions at [http://www.imsaru.org/?page\\_id=34](http://www.imsaru.org/?page_id=34)

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