

**WEB
EDITION**

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RESCUE

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**IDAHO MOUNTAIN SEARCH
AND RESCUE UNIT, INC
BOISE, IDAHO**

FOUNDING MEMBER:
**MOUNTAIN RESCUE
ASSOCIATION**



**AVALANCHE AWARENESS TRAINING – JANUARY, 2012
--ALISA AND GREGG RETTSCHLAG**

Avalanche training consisted of two classroom sessions, held on January 10th and 17th, followed by a two-day field session to be held on January 21st and 22nd. (However, due to a mission on the night of the 21st, the second day of field training was postponed to February 5th.) Winston Cheyney and Mark Westerdoll were the instructors. [Winston’s history includes his having been buried by, and and rescued from, an avalanche.] (Cont. on page 3)



—Photo by J. Robinson

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2519 Federal Way, Boise ID 83705. Editor: Charlotte Gunn, Phone (208) 378-7787 or e-mail
cpgunn@cablone.net Visit our unit web site at www.imsaru.org

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

We greatly appreciate the financial support that we have received from the individuals and organizations listed below.

The Ada/Elmore Employee Community Fund, Idaho Power and IDACORP, Inc. This is a combination of employee donations and corporate matching funds that support a wide range of projects in this geographical area.



Owen and Patricia Miller

Alisa and Gregg Rettschlagg

Mr. James Greene

Al and Lee McGlinsky

Charles and Elaine Gill

Diane and Steve Fields

The HP Employee Giving Program and the HP Company Foundation which matches the individual donations. Individuals who gave via this program during 2011 included Kurt Ostwinkle "in memory of Duncan," Terry Jensen, Andy Rad, Barbara Poston and Carrie Tucker.

Idaho Mountain Search and Rescue Unit, Inc. is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. We have no paid staff. Our members not only pay dues to belong but also supply their own personal equipment and donate their time and skills for training, search, rescue, safety education, public service events and maintenance of the organization. Our main source of income is our sale of corn-on-the-cob at the Western Idaho Fair each August, but without the help of our generous donors we could not maintain our unit vehicles, specialty equipment and the property where we store unit equipment and hold our meetings. Thank you for helping us stay ready to respond when people are in trouble.

In the first classroom session on the 10th, Winston relayed general information about avalanches, including the main factors that contribute to avalanche activity: weather, snowpack, temperature, slope angle and slope orientation. He also emphasized the need to be prepared before even going out into the mountains by checking the avalanche center websites (avalanche.org) and sno-tel sites within the area of interest. We watched a video about avalanche awareness that urged the importance of continuous training for avalanche rescue.

In the second classroom session, Winston showed a personal slide show of avalanches, snowpack, rescues and, sadly, body recoveries. He relayed statistics on the likelihood of a buried victim coming out alive, based on the time it takes for a rescuer to dig him/her out (90% survival rate if victim is uncovered within 15 minutes, 30% after 90 minutes, and 10% after two hours). He showed and taught the tools that one needs to go safely within the backcountry in winter, and emphasized the importance of knowing how to use these tools efficiently in the event of an avalanche burial.

When planning this training during our winter of so little snow, we expected to have to travel a long distance to find the appropriate environment for outdoor practice. However, someone arranged a heavy storm at exactly the right time. So for the field session, we all met at the Compound by 8 a.m. on Saturday, January 21st, where we signed in, loaded gear into personal vehicles, and left Boise to go to the parking lot at Mores Creek Summit. It was snowing heavily when we arrived. In fact, the snow load was so heavy that a large tree next to the parking lot fell soon after our arrival, close to where a group of Boy Scouts were camping, and two more treetops crashed down during our time there. The parking lot had not recently been plowed. Mike used his truck, which was equipped with very good snow tires, to carve out an area where the other vehicles could park. He also drove around the parking lot in circles several times so that the Boy Scouts and their leaders could leave without too much problem.

We started our field practice with a quick drill using the old Ortovox F2 transceivers (the ones with the ear-pieces). These transceivers use an analog signal to locate the transceiver of the subject. An analog signal is simply an alarm that grows louder as it gets closer to the signal transmitted from the subject's transceiver. Winston and Westy hid a transceiver in the snow in the parking lot and we each attempted to find it. We then switched to the unit's BCA Trackers or our personal transceivers. The Trackers use a digital readout to locate the transmitting signal. A digital system gives readout in meters or feet of the distance from the subject. This type of transceiver seemed much more accurate and efficient to use—even for the novice.

Winston then showed us how to assemble probes and shovels. He emphasized that the initial action of any avalanche search is to turn all transceivers from send to receive. Our group was then broken up into two groups of five each. Each group took a turn at organizing members, designating a leader, searching with transceivers, probing, locating a "victim" (a buried backpack with a transceiver inside), and digging the "victim" out. Both teams were very efficient and successful.

In the last exercise of the day, Westy buried a backpack and we formed up to do a line search, simulating how we might search for a victim who was not wearing a transceiver. This method proved to be very slow and tedious. It was very difficult to find the backpack in this fashion.

IMSARU members attending included: Jeff Ball, Delinda Castellon, Francisco Castellon, Winston Cheyney, John Ferguson, Mike Holloway, Steve Huffman, Mark Jones, Ross Mackintosh, Tory Murray, Alisa Rettschlag, Gregg Rettschlag, Jacob Robinson and Mark Westerdoll. Many thanks to Winston and Mark for teaching the class...and to those who got back to Boise only to turn around and head back out to where a camper was stranded.

**STRANDED AT THE WHISPERING PINES YURT
JANUARY 21, 2012
--MIKE JOHNSON**

It was Saturday and the day began early with Avalanche Search Training near Mores Creek Summit. Many of our members were there working on skills like avalanche transceiver location and proper search techniques. After this session was over and people were either going home or back at the Compound, a call came in. It was just before 5 p.m. and there was a stranded camper at the Whispering Pines Yurt near Mores Creek Summit.

Those who were still at the Compound began loading our winter gear into 901, while others streamed in. Once everyone had assembled we received our briefing. A husband and wife, and their dog, had trekked into the yurt on Tuesday. On Wednesday a storm hit that area, continuing through Saturday, dumping a tremendous amount of snow. They attempted to leave the yurt Thursday, then again Friday, but were unsuccessful due to the very deep, wet, heavy snow. Both were prepared, having plenty of food, water, and equipment including snowshoes...but the snow was just too deep and heavy. Even with snowshoes they sank up to their hips when trying to escape the quickly-changing winter wonderland.

Finally on Saturday, the husband was able to make it all the way out to the parking lot, where he made contact with the Boise County Sheriff's Office. His successful escape was due in part to being resourceful: He tied several pine boughs to the bottoms of his snowshoes, giving him just enough additional floatation to make it out. His wife remained at the yurt, not knowing the fate of her husband.

We arrived at the Gold Fork Park & Ski area at around 7:30 p.m., where we were met by Boise County Sheriff's Deputy Scott West and Todd Wernex, who works for Parks and Recreation. Tim Henning was acting Operations Leader and worked with Deputy West to formulate a plan. Todd had a fairly new, and very capable looking, long-track Polaris snowmobile on the back of his truck. He offered to ride in and pick up our subject, an offer which we very gladly accepted. Todd grabbed a spare Boise County radio and rode off. He was gone for quite a while, so to keep busy one of our members buried an avalanche transceiver and other members took turns locating it. It's always good to practice these skills; after all, they are perishable. We also prepared two teams in the event Todd wouldn't be able to make it. The first team was made up of Gregg, Alisa and Jeff, who were on skis. The second team was a group of four of us on snowshoes.

Upon Todd's return we learned that he was not able to make it all the way to the yurt. Did I mention how deep, wet and heavy the snow was? He decided to try again and took a pair of snowshoes along with him for the last part of the trail where the snowmobile was unable to go. Just before 9 p.m. Dan and Kris arrived. Dan assumed OL duties with Tim assisting. Over the radio we learned that Todd was able to make contact with our subject and was bringing her out along with the couple's dog. Thirty to forty-five minutes later, they arrived at the parking lot. Our subject appeared to be in very good condition and a quick evaluation didn't dispute that. Oh, and the dog was just fine too.

With the couple reunited, Todd rode back to the yurt and picked up their remaining gear and equipment. When he returned we wrapped up the mission, putting our 24-hour packs, snowshoes, skis and other equipment back into our vehicles. Although we never made it out of the parking lot, we had a plan and were ready.

The entire time on-site it was snowing. Along with a few deer in the road, the new snow on the ground made our commute back to the Compound a little interesting but everyone made it back safely.

We would like to thank Todd Wernex from Parks and Recreation for going in on his snowmobile and making light work of what could have been a very long night's work for us. Thank you to Boise County Sheriff's Deputy Scott West for coordinating the mission and handling communications with the 'search' team. And finally, thank you to all who attended and were ready to go on a moment's notice.

Those who responded to this mission were Jeff Ball, Judd Ballard, Delinda Castellon, Francisco Castellon, Jake Gillis, Tim Henning, Dale Hyatt Jr., Mike Johnson, Ross 'Mac' Mackintosh, Ann Moser, Alisa Rettschlag, Gregg Rettschlag, Dan Scovel, Kris Scovel and Luke Sugden.

[Editor's Note: Special thanks to those members who had spent the whole day training in the slushy wet snow, but immediately turned around and went right back out when someone was in trouble.]

CALENDAR

Feb. 7	General Meeting – Training for new 700 MHz Radios	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 13	K9 Handlers’ Meeting	7:00 p.m.
Feb. 14	SAR Training - Winter Camping	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 16	Tracker Training, Class #1 – Beginners are welcome!	6:30 p.m.
Feb. 18-19	SAR Field Training - Winter Camping	Time & Place TBA
Feb. 21	Medical Training	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 25	Gear Swap at the Compound	10 a.m.—2 p.m.
Feb. 26	K9 Training – Contact Jamie Simpson at 384-1193	
Feb. 28	Business Meeting	7:30 p.m.
Mar. 1	Tracker Training, Class #2	6:30 p.m.
Mar. 1-4	Raffle Booth at the Sportsmen’s Show – Western Idaho Fairgrounds Expo Bldg.	
Mar. 6	General Meeting	7:30 p.m.
Mar. 10	K9 Training – Contact Linda Kearney at 371-1175	
Mar. 13	SAR Training	7:30 p.m.
Mar. 15	Tracker Training, Class #3	6:30 p.m.
Mar. 17-18	SAR Field Training	Time & Place TBA
Mar. 20	Medical Training	7:30 p.m.
Mar. 24	K9 Training – Contact Kim Juda at 866-3150	
Mar. 27	Business Meeting	7:30 p.m.
Apr. 3	General Meeting	7:30 p.m.
Apr. 5	Tracker Training, Class #4	6:30 p.m.
Apr. 10	Preparations for Race to Robie Creek	7:30 p.m.
Apr. 17	Preparations for Race to Robie Creek	7:30 p.m.

Apr. 19	Tracker Training, Class #5	6:30 p.m.
Apr. 21	The Race to Robie Creek	All Day
Apr. 24	Business Meeting	7:30 p.m.
May 2	CERT Class	Evening
May 3	Tracker Training, Class #6	6:30 p.m.
May 4	CERT Class	Evening
May 5	CERT Class	All Day

(NOTE that CERT Class dates are tentative.)

IMSARU MEMBERS: HAVE YOU PAID YOUR 2012 DUES?

Our dues year is changing; 2013 dues will be due by October 1, 2012, and the deadline for “late payment” will presumably be changed by Board action. In the meantime, our policy states that if you have not paid your current dues by the first meeting in April, you will no longer be a member. It is unlikely that you will receive any additional reminders between now and then, so check the list below to be sure you really did pay. If you have any questions, contact Charlotte.

2012 Dues Paid by January 30:

Acker, Brad	Hyatt, Dale Jr.	Oren, David
Anderson, Andy	Johnson, Michael	Rettschlag, Alisa
Anderson, Ron	Jordan, Randy	Rettschlag, Gregg
Armstrong, Diane	Juda, Kim	Robbins, Lucy
Ball, Jeff	Kearney, Linda	Robinson, Jacob
Ballard, Judd	Kearney, Tom	Sander, Phil
Belsher, Jared	Kidwell, Carl	Scovel, Dan
Castellon, Delinda	Knopp, Rod (life)	Scovel, Kris
Castellon, Francisco	Kuecken, Kristy	Shaver, Rebecca
Cheyney, Winston	Leader, Amanda	Simpson, Jamie
Cone, Danny	Leader, Olen	Smith, Kimber
Courtain, Wayne	Lyon, Carolyn	Strasser, Ted (life)
Engleman, Tony (life)	Mackintosh, Ross	Sugden, Luke
Ferguson, John	Mancuso, Michael	Thompson, Lori
Finley, Ann	Mathews, Diane	Wachtler, Byron
Gillis, Jake	McLaughlin, Trevor	Webster, Rick
Gunn, Charlotte (life)	Meredith, Robert (life)	Wheless, Tom
Gunn, George (life)	Miller, Owen	Wood, Everett (life)
Henning, Tim	Miller, Patricia	Yorgensen, Jimmie
Holloway, Mike	Moser, Ann	
Huffman, Steven	Munn, Jeff	

NOTE: If you carry a digital pager with a discrete number, the fee for the year is \$36.00. If you carry a pager with only the group number, there is no fee.

IN-HOUSE TRACKER TRAINING, FREE TO ALL MEMBERS

This is your chance to learn some of the basics of tracking and decide whether you want to then further your training and become a member of the IMSARU Tracking Team. All sessions will start at 6:30 p.m. at the Compound and there will be a combination of presentations and hands-on practice. There are NO pre-requisites except your interest, but we do expect participants to register in advance (to help the instructors know how to set up the classes) and to attend all six sessions if at all possible. Each class will offer different information; it will not be the same activities repeated over and over.

Classes will meet the first and third Thursdays of the month, starting February 16 and continuing on March 1, March 15, April 5, April 19 and May 3. By then you will know something about what trackers do and whether you want to continue with more extensive courses for certification.

For more information, contact:
Jimmie Yorgensen at 850-3610
Kris Scovel at 863-3095

Lori Thompson at 867-9533
Dan Scovel at 869-9496

MEDICAL TRAINING – FIELD IMPROVISATION DECEMBER 20, 2011 --CHARLOTTE GUNN

Our affiliation with the Mountain Rescue Association requires that all members acquire and maintain training in basic first aid and CPR. However, our in-house training focuses on how to actually help someone who is injured away from any road or paid emergency services. Francisco Castellon shared with us some of the ideas he had seen demonstrated at a recent conference.

Those of us who have been around a while had already seen at some point the use of a climbing rope to make a carrying hammock; for others it was a new insight. Various members experimented with how wide to make the rope loops and how to lace them together, and were amazed at how comfortably the “victim” could be carried with a sleeping pad under him/her to distribute the weight.

Francisco also demonstrated the use of materials commonly carried in field packs to improvise splints. Those who carry inflatable sleeping pads can now claim that they aren’t just wimpy; they are carrying potential leg splints.

Thank you, Francisco, for helping us think about how to apply classroom knowledge to real-life backcountry problems.