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Rescue

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Press on the calendar to see upcoming events

MISSING MAN IN GEM COUNTY – APRIL 18, 2016 --TAYLOR GRISHAM

The Gem County Sheriff asked IMSARU to search, especially using K-9 teams, to see if we could develop any leads in the case of a man “with mental issues” who had evaded family and police, and gone missing about eight days earlier. IMSARU deployed with full field set-up, met with deputies at about mid-day, and the team had the base station set up and functional within a few minutes. After meeting with the deputies and discussing options with the K-9 team leaders, it was decided that we would deploy the trailing bloodhound, Brody, at a tent that was known to have been used by the subject, while the area scent dogs worked ridgetops near the area to take advantage of the uphill winds at the time. [FINALLY! Nearly six months after being certified, it was time for me to deploy Sasha on a real search! I wasn’t nearly as nervous as I had expected to be; all of those hours of training served me well and carried me through.]

Each of the canine teams finished their assigned areas with some minor interest shown in a certain direction by a couple of the dogs. By this time, search conditions had deteriorated to a point that we decided it would be better to get a meal and start again when it got dark and scent started moving downhill. I have to add that a very kind stranger in Emmett anonymously made a large donation while we were at the restaurant. What a great community they have!

The night-time search conditions were about as good as they could be, and all of the dogs worked some drainages and low-lying trails with no significant alerts. At this point, we were fairly confident that the subject was no longer in the area, and it was decided that we would stand down until more clues could be uncovered. (continued on p. 2)



It’s a lot of area to search. —Photo by T. Grisham

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

This mission worked very well on several fronts: It was awesome to have our trained, dedicated flankers who knew exactly how to work with the dogs and handlers. The base camp did a very nice job of communications and keeping the search flowing smoothly. Our leadership did a great job of working with the Sheriff's Department and the canine teams to come up with a reasonable and expedient search strategy. Tragically, the subject was later found deceased several miles from the search area. He had apparently been dead for multiple days; preliminary report suggested hypothermia and snakebite.

IMSARU members participating were: Aaron Burdin, Ron Christensen, Jake Gillis, Taylor Grisham with K-9, Ann Moser with K-9, Steve Paris with K-9, Gregg Rettschlag, Mike Rowe, Jamie Simpson with K-9, Jen Skeldon with K-9, Ken Swickard, Vicki Swickard, Eddie-Dean Thomas, James Vandermaas, Tom Wheless and Jimmie Yorgensen. Rod Knopp and Charlotte Gunn were in-town coordinators.

TRACK AWARE CLASS FOR CUSTER COUNTY, APRIL 28-29, 2016 **--MIKE ROWE**

Traveling from the relatively warm and spring-like Boise through the still-snow-covered area of the Stanley Basin into Challis provided an IMSARU tracking team contingent the experience of several seasons and weather conditions. Upon our arrival, the weather also dictated that the novice sign we had planned to lay on Friday for Saturday would have to be laid on Saturday. Jimmie did an excellent job of presenting the classroom portion of the Track Aware class to the Custer County students. There were many good discussions and questions that emerged from the Friday evening presentation.

On Saturday the skies were overcast but the threat of rain didn't appear to be an issue. We got our sign laid and our students (three teams of three) arrived for the field training. Custer County SAR had some very good novice trackers among their group. The students worked through the stations and each individual went through a NASAR evaluation with Jimmie. Time permitted the students to finish on a "more than novice" line of sign that they worked pretty effectively. Levi Maydole (with the Custer County S.O.) indicated that he would be trying to send a couple of the members to a JHPTS course in the near future. Mother Nature seemed to know when our class was ending because the weather returned to conditions similar to when we arrived. Time to go home!

IMSARU members were Aaron Burdin, Mike Rowe, Ken Swickard and Jimmie Yorgensen.

One exercise with two challenges: Identify how many different footprints are on the canvas and draw one of them well enough that another student will recognize it.



MAP AND COMPASS TRAINING – APRIL 30, 2016 --DARRYL BEEMER

A GPS is a wonderful tool for navigation, but a solid understanding of how to use a map and compass combined with a level head (and surface) for navigation are the best tools for getting around here in the west--well, anywhere, for that matter. That essentially sums up what was taught and trained on at the Navigation training. Mike started with a stellar classroom session to wake everyone up. He covered features on maps; the UTM coordinate system compared to other systems; how to use declination to account for the difference between true and magnetic North (always changing, is at $+13^{\circ} 33'$ in the Boise area); and how to account for declination on a compass as well as how to set it if your compass has that option. With this intimate familiarity with compasses in the bag, Mike then took everyone through a triangulation exercise to make us try to not screw up straight lines. We also were able to come relatively close to finding his “position on the map.” Note that you do not actually need a compass for triangulation, and many folks carry a protractor for this purpose.

We then blasted out to Bonneville Point for a field session. I was nursing a bum big toe, which is no fun, so got to practice my base skills by taking a seat and overlooking the pretty Idaho foothills. This ended up being quite nice, with everyone standing around me while we used our compass skills to sight bearings and practice triangulation to determine our actual location. No one was exactly right, although a few claimed to have gotten within 50 meters when compared to the GPS coordinates. This is where the “use your head” portion of navigation comes into play. All the maps and coordinates are only as good as the logic that puts them to use, was the gist of what I got. We then plotted a given coordinate on the map, using the compass, and discussed the best routes we might take for retrieving teammates with a hypothetical subject. Everyone agreed it would be best not to go straight across the ravine. This was probably a good choice, although from my perch it would have been somewhat entertaining to watch.

We did use modern technology as well, with everyone becoming familiar with how to set up and use different kinds of GPS units for clearing then creating waypoints and tracks, and using them to navigate. I have gone to a few K-9 training events, so agree with those who said that if you really want to practice navigation you should go with the dogs. We then went back to our worlds; for me, that was sitting and icing my toe. [Note: My toe has since sucked it up and decided to stop hurting; thankfully, it was not broken!]

Thank you to all who attended and helped with the critical training. It was noted that there is an orienteering club here in Boise, useful for anyone wanting to get into more advanced navigational techniques. Also, special thanks to Mike Johnson for preparing and executing the training!

IMSARU members attending were Tom Wheless, Greg Weber, Scott Walls, Jim Vandermaas, Gregg Rettschlag, Jen Skeldon, Jeff Munn, Guy McKean, Ted Marx, Brandon Mart, Mike Johnson, Steph Jenkins, Kevin Gaskell, John Ferguson, Ron Christensen, Steve Camkin and Darryl Beemer.

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ROBIE CREEK HALF-MARATHON FROM A NEWBIE'S PERSPECTIVE **--STEPH JENKINS**

The Race to Robie Creek is quite possibly the most enjoyable volunteer opportunity in which IMSARU participates...aside, of course, from opportunities such as the Corn Booth, the Idaho Sportsman Show, or teaching a class at REI. Actually, given that all IMSARU activities are strictly volunteer, this “aside” list can get quite long. But for me, the thing that really sets Robie apart is the guarantee that you will need to put your skills into practice in an environment where you have almost every resource immediately available.

So, back to the story. We were ready. All was set up and organized well before the first runner came across the finish line—everything from the command trailer and communications to transport and aid stations. Before the runners began to stream in, I curiously popped my head into the command trailer where Dan, Charlotte, Tom and Gregg generously gave me a quick run-through of what is involved in handling comm and safety logistics for an event as big as this one. Then I headed to my post, the med tent.

Last year and this, I have been based at the medical tent at the finish line. The first year I observed, rather wide-eyed, the whole situation and focused on chatting with runners who were not fully cognizant while I bandaged their badly blistered feet. This year, Ben did an excellent job at the blister station and administered care not just to blistered feet and rolled ankles, but also to scraped appendages of teary-eyed children who seemed to appear out of nowhere. Back in the med tent, Chris, Carolyn and I were kept busy with patients, but the delightfully cool weather this year kept activity to a sane level. Ada County Paramedics and Mores Creek Ambulance did an amazingly professional job in the med tent. I was the scribe for a particularly difficult case, and their degree of professionalism and care was second to none.

At any moment, the med tent can be barraged by an influx of patients, making things tight in the tent, especially if the majority of them need IVs. This year, the Friday set-up crew added a beautiful wing to the med tent, filling it with light and adding needed airflow and space to care for each patient. This kept the environment calm and, in the process, helped the patients to feel calm as well.

Patients came in on their own, on a UTV from one of the aid stations, or assisted by a finish-line rover. The rovers and aid station workers were quick to help and were keeping a sharp eye on the woozy ones. I often saw a rover immediately reach out a supporting hand when a finisher who was “just fine” suddenly couldn't remain standing.

As evening approached, most of the runners had finished and all patients in the med tent had recuperated to the point of leaving our care. Dan gathered the crew and explained the status of remaining racers on the course. It can be tempting after a long day in the sun to look forward to going home and eating some dinner on your back porch, but I was reminded of our purpose and of why we were at Robie at all. Our unit is dedicated to saving lives and helping people in remote situations. With that purpose in mind, there was great camaraderie as a large contingent of IMSARU stayed behind to wait patiently, even joyfully, for every last racer to finish Robie.



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RACE TO ROBIE CREEK – A RACE, AN EVENT OR AN INSPIRATION? APRIL 16, 2016 – DAN SCOVEL

In the 15+ years that I have had the opportunity to be part of the race, I believe the answer is yes to all of the above, and determined by the individual. I am not a runner, so my apologies for any phrase or comment used incorrectly; you runners all have my admiration and respect. I have never been at the starting line nor in the park and party at the end of the race, but I have had the opportunity as part of IMSARU to be on the course somewhere from before the race begins until the last person finishes each race. Take a 13+ mile race, add about 2,000 feet elevation gain and almost that much back downhill from the summit, use dirt road for most of it, then see what Mother Nature decides to add to the mix and you have a memorable experience for 2,000+ runners and those supporting the race. Thanks to the Robie Creek Race committee for continuing such a great Race and Event!

The Race! This year's fastest finish was 1:22.40 (about how fast it feels when I drive the course). I am always amazed at how quickly so many people finish the race, with countless stories of those who train for weeks, working to improve their time from previous years. Some have been part of the "over and back" runners, making it a full marathon. Those of you who ran the race, well done!

The Event! Through the years, the Race committee has created a different theme for each year, with music, signs along the course, and costumes. Some runners run the course in full costume, often ones that are not designed to "breathe" like most athletic clothing. The start, stations along the course, the party at the finish line...all add to the event. WOW! I have witnessed a wedding at the summit and, based on the hugs and screams of joy and support, I know there are more great stories of events from groups and individuals.

An inspiration! We never know what will inspire or drive us until we experience it. This year's inspiration story covers two years of the Robie Creek Race, 2015 and 2016. As I understand from friends and family, in 2015 this person was looking out of his hospital room window and was able to see the start of the race. At that time he was not able to walk, and only in the beginning stages of recovering from a severe health event. He said, "I am going to be in the race next year!" This was a turning point, and the physical therapy and work began. Not only did he get in the race, but he completed it along with friends and family. His challenge and personal determination created a team that will have this incredible success story to share for life! Congratulations, Greg's Team!

Thousands of people run the race; hundreds of people support the race. I want to thank all of those supporters (agencies, groups, sponsors, volunteers) on the course and behind the scene, working countless hours to make it another success. In addition to the Race committee, agencies involved included: ACSO, Ada County Paramedics, BCSO, EBCAD, Ham radio operators, IMSARU and Park Rangers. My apologies for any agencies or groups not listed.

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**WILDERNESS SAFETY EDUCATION CLASS AT
FOOD 2 STORE IN MERIDIAN – APRIL 26, 2016
--KEN SWICKARD**

IMSARU presented a Wilderness Safety Education class, for the general public, at a scheduled weekly information class. Our audience of 43 individuals had ages from the late teens to the early 80's, with wilderness experience spanning from the seasoned hunter/outdoors person to those who had never walked outside of the Boise Greenbelt.

Ken opened with the history of IMSARU and the expected content of the program. A very large percentage of attendees had not known that we are not part of any governmental organization; even more were impressed with the fact that we never charge for any of our services.

Vicki presented the “Rules of Three” outline with questions and discussion on why some of the rules are so important. She and Stephanie then handed out IMSARU brochures and wilderness safety flyers while Ken started the Ten Essentials portion of the program. Ken showed attendees different items they might think about utilizing, emptying his 24-hour bag with numerous samples of many of the essentials. Stephanie presented a short discussion on the “SPOT” ELB and reasons for perhaps purchasing one.

Vicki presented an adult version of the Hug-A-Tree program, explaining and demonstrating the use of a plastic bag as a life-saving shelter.

The presentation closed with a lecture on the problem of cotton in the backwoods and on longer hikes. The “Cotton Kills” information was thoroughly discussed. After the general program, there were discussions and hands-on inspection of the equipment we take into the field for general search-and-rescue work. Members presenting were Stephanie Jenkins, Ken Swickard and Vicki Swickard.

**“TRACK AWARE” CLASS FOR WASHINGTON COUNTY SAR
MAY 7, 2016—CHARLOTTE GUNN**

We don't often go to Washington County but have worked together on various occasions, including the find of a missing hunter in spectacularly rough terrain a few years ago. When Tony Buthman asked us to present a “Track Aware” session for their SAR members, six of us left Boise at 7 a.m. for the drive to Weiser (head west on I-84 to the Oregon border and turn north on Highway 95) and the elegant Vendome meeting hall.

After introductions, Kris and Alisa handled the basic presentation of the JHPTS program, including the PowerPoint, while the rest of us headed over to the rodeo grounds to lay tracks and set up the scenarios. The hosts had specifically asked for a demo of “how to approach the empty vehicle” and we gave them two in the arena—one on a smoothly raked surface to make the prints easier to see and the other on a rough surface that we deliberately trampled before bringing in the vehicle (much more realistic for the usual search conditions).

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SAFETY EDUCATION TO ST. ALPHONSUS STAFF VIA WEBINAR —RON CHRISTENSEN

On Wednesday evening, May 25, five IMSARU members were ushered into a small office on the St. Alphonsus campus in Boise. Unlike most safety ed presentations where we face a live audience, we came face to face with a computer and a microphone!

The corporate office of employee health and wellness had invited us, as their current health emphasis was focused on hiking. We presented a brief history and overview of IMSARU for 25 members of the St. Alphonsus staff who logged into the webinar from their homes and offices throughout the Treasure Valley and eastern Oregon. After a brief PowerPoint about IMSARU, we discussed the Ten Essentials, adapting our presentation without our usual visual aids but with the encouragement of our team members all in the room together.

After completion of the presentation, our host took the camera live in Boise so our audience could see us and they asked questions through a chat room forum. It proved to be a unique and enjoyable experience in presenting safety ed. IMSARU members participating were Francisco Castellon, Ron Christensen, Jim Findley, Ken Swickard and Vicki Swickard.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ANDY AND RIFFLE!

Andy Stehling's SAR K-9 Riffle is the first Field Spaniel to be nationally certified in SAR. He received a standing ovation upon receiving a National Field Spaniel Society of America's National Award.

CORN BOOTH TIME IS GETTING CLOSE

Please note the calendar dates for preparing and operating the booth. We earn close to half our operating budget by selling corn-on-the-cob at the Western Idaho Fair, and we need a lot of hours from a lot of people to do it. Morning shift has lots of prep and night shift does cleanup, so the shifts run 10 a.m. to roughly 5:30 p.m. (whenever evening people arrive to take over). Night shifts run 5 p.m. (or as soon as you can get there after work) to when the cleanup is done (usually around 11:30, maybe later on weekends). Volunteer for shifts by contacting Layne at simmonslyne@yahoo.com. Friends, neighbors and family members, including teenage children, are welcome. IMSARU supplies entry tickets.

MEMBERS VOTE ON JULY 5

Annual dues are to be paid by December 15 in order for you to be included on the MRA list for the coming year. (You can pay ahead of time, by the first meeting in October, to be eligible to vote for officers.) We have been waiting until April to remove from our various lists the members who neglect the December deadline, with the result that admin staff then spend hours adding people back on when they finally decide to pay their dues. The new policy proposed by the Board is: Anyone who has not paid dues for the coming year by December 15 will be removed from the membership lists. To get back on, a member must pay twice the amount of annual dues. If not paid by the following December 15, a lapsed member must start over with application process, SAR Academy, etc.

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