

Founding Member: Mountain Rescue Association

Rescue



Web Edition

IDAHO MOUNTAIN SEARCH AND RESCUE UNIT, INC. Boise, Idaho

Vol. 51 Nov-Dec 2018 No.6

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Press on the calendar to see upcoming events

WHAT A SWELL PARTY WE HAD! DECEMBER 1, 2018

--CHARLOTTE GUNN

IMSARU knows how to train members, how to search for lost people and rescue people who need help in the back-country, how to teach safety rules for going out into Idaho's beautiful outdoors, how to set up a booth and sell corn-on-the-cob at the Fair, and yes, how to throw a party...especially if Amanda Leader is in charge. Move the vehicles out into the parking lot, set up tables and folding chairs, add decorations and a huge screen for showing slides of our year's events, a sound system (thank you, Eddie!) and encourage people to bring their families and favorite foods for a potluck supper...and watch outside as our first real snow of the year arrives! (O.K., Amanda didn't command the snow.)

I can't begin to name all who helped set up and decorate, nor all the events and people who were recognized by our president, Gregg Rettschlag, in his month-by-month summaries, but a few highlights included: missions (32 "named" callouts as of December first, with about 20 of them leading to field searches and/or recoveries—including a new record of 8 subjects together); safety education presentations; at least monthly training for general skills plus special sessions for trackers, K-9 handlers, tech team members, and RPT team; 45 attendees of "SAR Academy" with 33 of those field certified so far. And special recognition went to Tom Wheless, Amanda Leader, about a dozen flankers trained to work with K9 teams, corn booth workers and Board members.

"Rookies of the Year" are Daniel Roberts and Brian Marinelli for the way they jumped in with both feet to learn and contribute to teamwork. And coffee mugs went to Darryl Beemer, Eddie-Dean Thomas, Dave Kelley, Jim Findley and Christopher Weltner for high numbers of mission responses as well as special skills in printing our newsletter, logistics, K-9 team, training, and fabricating equipment.

Also, special vests were awarded to: Mike Rowe, Becky Allison, Aaron Burdin, Jim Findley (in absentia), Christi Kelley and Brandon Mart for their skills, time, and extraordinary participation in

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RESCUE is published bi-monthly by the IDAHO MOUNTAIN SEARCH AND RESCUE UNIT, INC.
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tracking, the mentor program, training, PR, tech team, K9 team leader and establishment of an RPT [drone] team. If we had 20 pages to fill, I could begin to tell you how much various members contributed to our team of unpaid volunteers!

And yes, after all of the serious awards, Amanda had more “just for fun” events: There was an “ugly Christmas sweater” contest that Colin Sesek won hands-down with his full suit, and a “mystery gift” where those participating formed a circle and passed the wrapped gifts either left or right every time those words appeared in the version of “The Night Before Christmas” poem that Amanda had altered. T’was indeed a merry Christmas party, as everyone pitched in to restore the party room to a garage and then stepped out to brush snow off our vehicles.

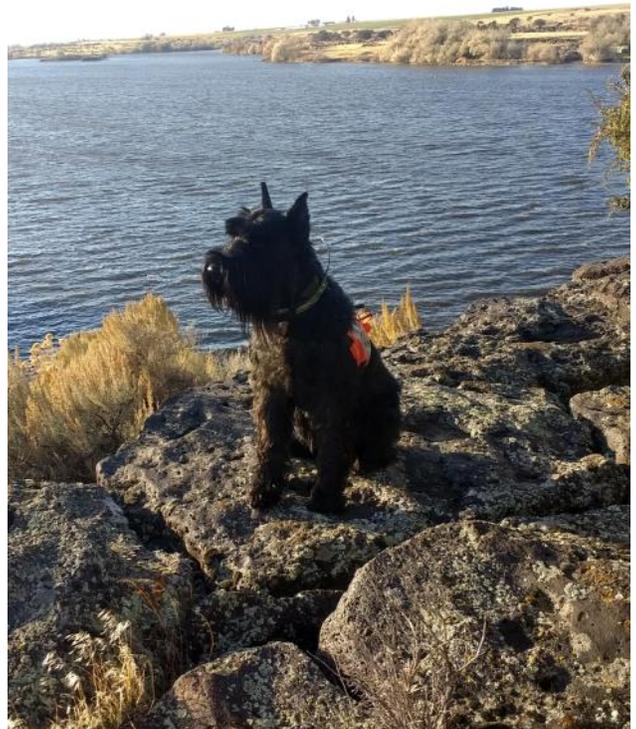
K-9 ADVANCED CADAVER SEMINAR --JAMIE SIMPSON

In October, Ann Moser and I attended a three-day Advanced Cadaver Seminar with our dogs Oscar and Yoki. The seminar was in Driggs, ID, instructed by Joe and Deb Hurlburt, owners of “Dog Training in the Tetons.” Both Deb and Joe are expert K-9 handlers with excellent coaching skills for both people and dogs. They set up multiple creative, complex problems each day, challenging the skills of both the K-9s and the handlers.

I look forward to attending this seminar again, and we hope to bring Deb and Joe to our side of the state in the future, to work with our entire K-9 team.



Nyx being shown off by human partner Michael Rock.
Credit: Jamie Simpson



Oscar looking majestic on the bank of the Snake River.
Credit: Jamie Simpson

TRACK AWARE TRAINING – NOVEMBER 3, 2018
--MIKE ROWE

Members of the IMSARU Tracking Team conducted a Track Aware class where new members of the unit learned the basics, such as how tracking can reduce the overall search area and determine the direction of our subject's travel. Of course, we "kept it real" and let the new students know that trackers rarely are the ones to find the subject, but can make a mission more effective by steering efforts in the right direction. We provided the JHPTS/VTATI background material, techniques and terminology in the classroom. Students were dazzled by the secret language of trackers, especially describing shoe-sole impressions such as Stars and Bars, Bobs, and Charlie Brown.

After the classroom introduction at the IMSARU Compound, Ken Swickard, Vickie Swickard and I took the students to the field on Highway 21 near the Oregon Trail Reserve. The students were given "track traps" to discover and describe sign-maker characteristics and different shoe impressions, as well as learning how to draw prints. We then divided the students into two teams and had them work two lines of sign that the weather had added plenty of challenges to.

Students in attendance were Ed Leckert, Rory Olsen, Daniel Roberts and Michael Rock.

EAGLE FIRE DEPARTMENT OPEN HOUSE – OCTOBER 13, 2018
--KEN AND VICKI SWICKARD

The Eagle Fire Department invited IMSARU to attend their Annual Public Open House, as we have done several times in the past. The Open House consists of fire and police static displays as well as demonstrations of getting victims out of vehicles by cutting apart the vehicles. Free hot dogs, cookies, soft drinks, water and coffee were available to all during the four-hour open house.

IMSARU had two tables for paperwork and handouts, and the contents of our Ten Essentials display. Many folks became really interested in what we do and the make-up of our unit 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 candy, Hug-A-Tree coloring books and crayons, IMSARU stickers for the youth (even many adults wanted stickers), and handouts like the Rules of 3, Hug-a-Tree, and "Why Cotton Kills" for the adults. Our small supply of whistles didn't last long at all. As usual, most people did not know that we are an independent unit, unaffiliated with any specific government department. We had many worthwhile conversations with attendees, and we felt it was a public relations success.

It was a really fun morning and afternoon, with over 250 parents and 400+ children attending this year's program. Even the Fire Department personnel praised our display.

IMSARU members with the display were Vicki and Ken Swickard.

SKI AND MOUNTAIN TRAUMA CONFERENCE, NOVEMBER 1-3, 2018 --BECKY ALLISON

Four members of IMSARU attended this conference in Sun Valley, Idaho. The majority of conference attendees were EMTs, Paramedics, Fire, Ski Patrol, and Search and Rescue from around Idaho. Sessions included classroom and hands-on simulations. While IMSARU does not employ EMT/Paramedic level of care (i.e. providing meds), the information at the conference was well taught and educational. I attended simulation sessions on Buddy Care and Self Care, and Field Management of Hypothermia and Frostbite Injuries (which can be part of what our members do need to supply.) It was helpful to have the opportunity to actually practice hands-on the things I have learned many times in a book or classroom.

For example: One take-away that stood out to me was from the Field Management of Hypothermia session, where our subject was lying wet, outside in 40°F temperatures. In a classroom, we can quote you the basic steps: Remove their clothing, move them to shelter if possible, build a hypowrap (sleeping bag, sleeping pad and tarp), etc. but the additional need of having to communicate with patients throughout, decide with them what is comfortable and check in with them frequently on their status is the take-away that stood out to me as most helpful, especially when that patient is the one giving you feedback at the end of the session.

Other conference topics included hemorrhage, the opioid crisis, K9 wilderness first aid, childbirth outside of the hospital, stroke and cardiac resuscitation updates, closed head injuries, and National Guard resources for SAR, among others.

IMSARU members in attendance were Colin Seseck, Lindsay Glick, Chase Christopher and Becky Allison.

JEFFERSON MIDDLE SCHOOL SAFETY EDUCATION --JIM FINDLEY

Rory Olsen and I spoke with seventh and eighth graders at Jefferson Middle School in Caldwell about back-country safety and the Ten Essentials. The students had read the book The Hatchet about a 13-year-old who is the sole survivor of a plane crash in the Canadian woods and has only a hatchet as survival gear. Based on the book, the students had been working on what they would put into a survival pack. We hope they came away from the IMSARU presentation with some good ideas on how to complete their assignment.

Rory and Jim after their presentation to the Jefferson Middle school class.



NOVEMBER FIELD TRAINING – COMMUNICATIONS --SCOTTY PERKINS

Chris Brookman led a fantastic field training on communications. The field training on November 10 started at the Compound with an overview of the unit's radios, how they're programmed, how to change batteries, how to use basic functions such as channels, scanning and channel groups. Chris discussed the two most common portables as well as the radios in the unit trucks 901 and 902. Each participant received printouts of the channel listings and of unit members' individual call-signs, and we went through an overview of how we might use the different channels to communicate with different agencies when we're on a mission

We also viewed the unit's broader set of communications gear that the unit deploys, including the air-band radio for communication with aircraft and how it differs from the other unit radios. We watched the assembly of the repeater unit, which is deployed on a high point when distance or uneven terrain makes it impossible to communicate through line-of-sight means. We also walked through the command trailer and discussed the radio communications options there, and talked about procedures to keep the radio gear properly accounted for, charged, and organized.

After the overview, we carpooled to the first stop in our facility tour, State Communications in Meridian, which is a service run by the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, a state-wide radio and communications coordination service in operation for over 40 years. Their primary mission is to enable state-wide EMS coordination and dispatch for those agencies outside of the major metro areas of the state. There are more than 40 repeater towers across the state, through which State Comm can dispatch and coordinate public safety services.

At the facility, we watched some videos about the history and mission of State Comm. (The videos are available on YouTube via "Idaho StateCom.") We toured the dispatch facility, saw the large control screens that offer views such as current highway conditions via feeds from ITD traffic cameras, and talked to dispatch staff members to get a sense of "a day in the life of..."

From there, we headed over to the Ada County Dispatch facility which handles 911 traffic for law enforcement, fire, and ambulance for the county. We plugged in headsets and listened to incoming calls from across the county. We learned that dispatchers maintain contact with police officers to ensure officers' safety, and were able to observe dispatchers using the computerized process with EMS calls, to help EMTs and paramedics have the best available information when they arrive on the scene of a call.

We wrapped up the field training with a visit to the Ada County Paramedics facility nearby, where Chris walked us through the equipment on a typical ambulance and the communications devices. We were very careful not to disturb the EMTs and paramedics who were napping while waiting for the next call.

On Tuesday evening we met at the Compound and continued the training at another level of detail, with more information on types of radio technologies, including VHF and UHF frequencies. Many thanks to Chris for spending a lot of preparation time in pulling the content together and arranging the tours for us of those vital support facilities.



Above: Unit members learning about State Communications operations.

Left and Below: Chris Brookman explaining Ada County Paramedics equipment and com-



NAVIGATION FIELD TRAINING, OCTOBER 13, 2018 --MARIE GATTI

It was a sunny but cold and very windy day as we headed out to an area near Table Rock. Once we all arrived at the location, we checked out unit GPS gear, were taught how to clear previous tracks and set the base camp waypoint, and were handed maps of the local area. Topher (our instructor) broke the attendees into three groups and we rotated through three training stations.

The first group was assigned as base camp. They were taught how to log coordinates into the unit's mapping software and went over basic radio communication skills, such as using "decimal" when giving out coordinates (not "dot" or "period") and to use the word "Break" when going from the first set of numbers to the second set.

The team at base camp then gave the second group, the "search group," UTM coordinates to find the first clue out in the field. After a quick radio check and verification of coordinates, they started a modern-day Easter egg hunt: "Go find clue #1."

Once arrived at clue #1, they radioed back to base camp for the second clue. This time the coordinates were given out in latitude/longitude. Team two adjusted the GPS's and went out looking for clue #2. They were instructed to radio it in UTM coordinates...a challenge of converting coordinates from UTM to Lat/Long and vice versa.

Base camp then gave them their third and final instructions: a simple bearing and measurement in feet. They put away the GPS's, put the bearing into their compasses and tracked distance. Once they found the third clue and confirmed the coordinates, they got to hike back up the steep hill to base camp and everybody rotated to the next station.

The third station was a review of Basic Skills—Map, Compass, Bearings, GPS Training and set-up. It allowed the attendees to get familiar with their navigation gear and the unit's equipment, and to test their map-and-compass skills in a casual, friendly environment. The training was well thought-out, planned and well-run. Topher did an exceptional job of keeping track of the teams and the objectives, and ensuring that everybody got the most out their day.



Left: Some embarrassingly ugly Christmas sweaters that people should be ashamed of.

Right: White Elephant gifts of the theme "Things you cannot live without in the backcountry."

CALENDAR

Avalanche/Winter Rescue:	Classroom – Jan. 8	Field – Jan. 12
Tech Awareness		Jan. 14
Medical Training		Jan. 15
New Applicant Information Meeting		Jan. 17 at 6:30 p.m.
[SAR Academy will be scheduled after applicants have turned in applications.]		
Business Meeting		Jan. 22
????		Jan. 29
General Meeting		Feb. 5
CPR/First Aid Training		Feb. 9 (Saturday)
Winter Shelter Training	Classroom – Feb. 12	Field – Feb. 16
Medical Training		Feb. 19
Business Meeting		Feb. 26
General Meeting		March 5
Team Leadership Training	Classroom – March 12	Field – March 16
Medical Training		March 19
K-9 Awareness		March 21 (Thursday)
Business Meeting		March 26
General Meeting		April 2
Mission Preparation	(Classroom) – April 9	Three-Season Rescue (Field) – April 13
Medical Training		April 16
Business Meeting		April 23
RPT Awareness Training		April 27

NOTE: All sessions and times are subject to change. As a general rule, Tuesday events start at 7:00 p.m. Weekend training times vary; some are overnight. Specialty teams have additional schedules.