

TSAR TIMES and TOPICS

Tidewater Search & Rescue

www.TSAR.org

WINTER FSE, First timer—Alfredo A. Hay Jr.

My first experience being a Search and Rescue volunteer was awesome! I was so eager to go on this trip that I packed my car with food, drinks, flash lights, etc. and I forgot some of the essential things like a sleeping bag, blankets, and dinner for that night. That's right - I stayed all night in a cabin, by myself, with no blankets or dinner. However, one redeeming part of the night was when I discovered that my laptop, my cell phone, and my new ham radio worked. These proved to be three essential items when you have nothing else to do!

The next morning was a little rough because I didn't sleep well under the conditions I mentioned earlier – but I managed to survive. I woke up early thinking that I would have a head start on the others that would just be arriving for the exercise that day. But to my surprise, people had already arrived and were ready to go. The morning was already buzzing with staff and vol-

unteers gearing up for the day's winter exercise. We registered into the event and signed injury waivers (there was still snow and ice on the ground at Hem Lock Park).

During one of the tasks, I worked with Peter McClintock and his hound dog. We drove to a victim's car where Peter grabbed some of their items and got their scent for the hound dog to follow. Once he had the scent, he made us run all over the place for about 3.5 hours! Each person in the group performed a specific function while we were searching for our victim. One person was in charge of navigation while I used my FRS radio to call in coordinates and time check.

I am inspired by the motivation of people to search for people who are lost – whether it's on accident or on purpose. Their time and training saves lives and I am excited to become part of a team that has that kind of an impact on others! See y'all in the woods!!!

Congratulations of the highest order!

TSAR is proud to announce that one of its members William (Bill) Schmelling has been selected as COMNAVSURFLANT Sailor of the Year.

There are many different sailors nominated for this honor and our very own Bill is one of them.

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This newsletter is an internal publication of the Tidewater Search and Rescue Group Incorporated for the use of its members. The views expressed here reflect the views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of TSAR, Inc.

APRIL TRAINING CALENDAR

12	TSAR BOD Meeting
19	1900-2100 TSAR Gen. Membership Mtg. @ TEMS
17	TSAR Training (Base Set-up and equipment) @ TBA

People, if you intend on going to training, then please, please call Bill Schmelling . We decide IF we will have training based on the phone calls. If we decide to cancel the training then we can call those who called and make sure they know it is cancelled. If you don't call but decide to go, you can find yourself the only person in the parking lot. You need to call Bill Schmelling forty-eight hours before the scheduled training so we can decide whether or not it will be held.

VDEM TRAINING

FTL

Apr. 13-15 (in Scottsburg).

FTS

June 1-3 and June 29-July 1. Providence Forge

Registration Deadline: May. 16, 2007

ICS 300

Jul. 17, 2007 - Jul. 18, 2007—Hampton Roads

Registration Deadline: Jun. 26, 2007

For more info and registration, log on to the website http://www.vaemergency.com/train/calendar_course.cfm?id=60

FEMA TRAINING

A link for the mandated FEMA training can be found on TSAR's website just click on training and news tab from the home page. All operational personnel must complete these courses.

For any additional information on the listed training's contact Bill Schmelling at tsar39@verizon.net.

QUESTIONS AT NIGHT—Mark Gleason

I looked across the water as the boat's search light illuminated the mist. The rain drummed against my hood as I wiped the mud and water from my face. Shifting on my hands and knees, I looked around the lake and surrounding woods for other signs of life. My occasional breaths would cloud my vision, but it was clear. The law enforcement officer and the only other searcher were long gone. I was alone. The footsteps of the missing subject were compressed into the grass before me, their shadows caught in the beam of my flashlight. I reached for my waterproof writing pad. It fell open to the drawing I made that morning, a seashell. I remembered waking up to the sunrise and the walk on a warm Florida beach just 12 hours before. It seemed like so long ago. I looked again through the rain and mist, at my knees sinking into the mud, the raindrops bouncing off the drawing, and wondered to myself, "How did I get here?" It was a surreal moment!

I tracked in my memory the course of the day's events. After leaving the beach in Florida, getting on a plane and landing in Baltimore, I was nearing my home when my pager went off. The search was in a nearby, but very rural, area. Other searchers would not arrive for quite a while. The subject had been missing for two hours in hypothermia-inducing weather conditions. I did not have to think very long before detouring to the search.

The search base was easy to spot. The police lights were illuminating the mist surrounding the lake's boat landing.

The dog team, law enforcement officer, and I were dispatched into the woods within several minutes. We would stay together only long enough for the search dog to establish the missing subject's scent, and I would then sign out alone along the lake's edge for the missing subject's trail. We separated fairly quickly.

I stood up and began following the subject's tracks along the lake's edge. The question, "How did I get here?", still echoed in my thoughts. The recounting of the day's journey did not satisfy my mind. Rather, it seemed to desire something else. Was there another way to make sense of this?

I found another place where the subject stopped, and appeared to have looked across the water. The rain intensified as my eyes followed the direction of travel. The search boat had moved further off, and the radio was silent. I realized how tired I was.

A searcher is occasionally pulled out of the intensity of the moment. It is usually just long enough to notice something like the sunrise, the fog moving through the ridges, or ice crystals forming from the forest floor. This time was different only in that I was noticing the train of my own fatigue-induced thoughts instead. I was reminded how life can appear random and ever changing. I quietly laughed. Neither I nor the search subject could have predicted such a day when it started. It was not a brilliant insight. It did, however, reconnect me with the search subject. I continued to the next footstep.

PLANS SECTION—Theresa Crossland

As all of you should be aware, there are certain requirements that each member of TSAR has to meet in regards to meeting and training attendance. We do this for the subject we search for and to safeguard the safety of everyone out there searching. With this in mind, we are keeping a much closer eye on these requirements to ensure that each active member is in compliance. Some of you may have received or will shortly receive notices that you are no longer in an active status. This does not mean we don't want you in TSAR. We want you safe in TSAR. We are trying to encourage people to meet the minimum requirements in training and meeting attendance for everyone's

benefit. So please take this in the spirit it is meant and plan on attending if you plan on responding to searches! Also, to help everyone meet training requirements and not get lost in the woods, we will be adding an additional training day each month devoted solely to land nav. We will be making every effort to get the dates set up and on the calendar ASAP, but we may have to resort to email notification in the beginning as we get this off and running. Just be patient with us please. We sincerely hope that everyone takes advantage of this opportunity to build on one of our core competencies!

Time to Reorganize Your Pack—Nathan Brown

As time has flown by here in 2007, the clocks have been set ahead by one hour giving us more light per day, which means warmer weather will soon be coming to stay. This week as I am writing this it has turned out to be 70°F during the day and looking to move up to the 80's. Yes spring is upon us and the temperature of the Tidewater region is like the stock market, up during the day and then down at night but slowly climbing and gaining on the higher temperature.

If you are like me, you have redundancy in gear as over the year(s) you try to find the right mix. Also if you're a real SAR junkie you have already reorganized your pack three times since the new year began, as we have been spooled up to go but haven't gotten very far in our quest to find the missing. Now you are given another opportunity to reorganize your pack, with the warmer weather coming, you won't need that heavy down, polyfilled coat stashed in your car and your pack can be relieved of the thick winter gloves and can be replaced with the thinner working leather gloves and bug / Tick Juice. Oh yes believe me when I say just because the rest of the country was buried in snow this year we didn't see enough nor did we have the cold tem-

peratures long enough to kill off any of the flying / creepy crawlies in the woods. We will be prime food for our pesky little friends that carry such debilitating diseases as lymes, rocky mountain spotted, Eastern Equines Encephalitis, West Nile Virus, just to name a few, so be prepared this year. Since it's been a fairly mild winter the bug population will be two fold this year and the thick briar patches will be even thicker.

Some tips to reorganize your pack. (Now remember), I'm no expert on this and everyone has their own preference on what they take and how much for the conditions and type of searching you will be encountering, so you really need to adjust your gear for your preference. You know you the best and if not, then you need to spend a few nights in the woods to test your skills and get out to a SAR Sim. A real search is too late to find out which gadget or piece of gear you really missed and which parts of your pack you could do without. Lessons learned on previous searches will apply today. If you suffer from "CRS" using note cards helps or you will be reminded quick as we get into the active search time of year.

Article in Pack or Car	Out	In
Windshell jacket with hood.	Take out the extra Lining if attached	Lighter jacket for the cooler summer nights
Waterproof jacket or parka with hood-A Gore-Tex type or similar	Take out the extra Lining if attached	Lighter jacket for the cooler summer nights
Rain chaps or rain pants - Add gaiters for winter.	Lined rain pants / ski pants if you use these (Yikes)	Gaiters are great for all year not just wintertime. Also, add breathable rain pants.
Heavy wool shirts or sweaters, as required.	Wool is still good but out. With the new technical fabrics on the market today Wool is becoming the past anyway but still functions great in the cold	Under armor type of material to wick away the body moisture and the TSAR uniform policy for the outer garments

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Time to Reorganize Your Pack (cont from page 3)—Nathan Brown

Article in Pack or Car	Out	In
Wool pants.	Scratch scratch itch itch	TSAR uniform policy has us using BDU type of pants and if layered properly is sufficient in the cold as well.
Long underwear of wool, silk, polyprop or other suitable synthetic material. Cotton thermal underwear IS NOT acceptable.	Remove these bad boys unless you know you are heading to the mountains for a search. **See the note below	Gold Bond and Baby Powder is in. Heat and chaffing I say no more.
Wool stocking cap or balaclava. A scarf is recommended if a stocking cap is used.	For the spring and summer these are out	Uniform policy and a large brimmed rain hat. I also carry a tuuk with me to pull down over my neck to help keep the heat in. I have found this to work great this winter.
Heavy wool socks with lighter weight liner socks.	This is still a great combo as healthy feet make for a happy searcher.	Many great sock brands to choose from with self liners that wick the moisture away. Remember Healthy feet
Leather gloves with wool liners. Mittens required for extremely cold weather.	The wool liners can be removed	NEED LEATHER GLOVES!! Add a pair of “fisker” plant cutting shears as well in one hand. Away you go through the thickets.
Heavyweight backpacking or mountaineering boots with suitable lug sole recommended. Combat-type boots are acceptable.	MAIL _ ORDERING BOOTS ARE OUT!!!!!!	Fitted boots from a knowledgeable hiking store. Face it blisters suck!!!! They are your feet not mine, but I don't want to hear you whine about it.
Backpack, large enough for day-pack use.	I have two many for different purposes from a training pack to overnight high mountain searching with my K9 Partner.	What fits you the best and has room enough for more water then you think you need.
One-quart minimum canteen or water bottle.	Thermos	Camelback packs and nalgene bottles.
At least one day supply of quick energy food.		Tickle your taste buds with trail mix and high carb mixtures. Jerky works well too for something to keep your teeth busy for a few minutes per bite.
Pocket Knife.	Rambo	Leathermen “wave” or a good sturdy folding knife. A 3”-4” straight blade works
Whistle.	Metal whistles unless wrapped with tape	Plastic Train sounding whistles with dual pitch
Orienteering type Compass.	Compass found in Cracker Jacks	Having two compasses with the knowledge on how to use them.
Flashlight or headlamp with alkaline batteries, spare batteries, and spare bulb. Headlamp is recommended.	This is a personal finding: LED lamps are great for walking and to see up to five feet in front of you. After that, the light is too soft to burn the night for searching. I use a Surefire G2 \$36.00 version that burns up the night sky and has a long range for spotting at a distance. Down-fall is the more you use the surefire the longer it takes you to regain your night vision. But man do they tear into the night. Maglights 2 D Cell at a minimum are great two, they tend to be a little heavy with the batteries but well worth it.	

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To contribute through payroll deduction:
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MISSION STATEMENT

Tidesearch and Rescue Group, Inc. provides trained personnel who effectively manage, support and sustain search and rescue operations when requested. This is accomplished through specialized training, constancy of purpose and continuous improvement.

VISION STATEMENT

For the search subject, the Tidesearch and Rescue Group, Inc, will be recognized as the leader in training and management, providing the most professional and effective response to Ground Search and Rescue Incidents.

Quick Tip Corner—Dean Matty

1. **WATERPROOF MATCH CASE** – The following is a recipe for a match case that is waterproof and that floats. Get an expended 16 gauge shotgun shell and an expended 12 gauge shotgun shell. Put the matches in the 16 gauge shell and then slide it into the 12 gauge shell. This seal is tight enough that it will maintain the water tight integrity and nothing else is needed to seal it. The stamping on the brass part of the shotgun shells works as the striker for the matches.
 2. **PRUNING SHEARS** – It is our job is to go through the briars instead of around them to search for the subject. Having a pair of pruning shears makes getting through briars easier. Sometimes the briars are so thick that you do not have room to swing a machete so these come in handy for those situations and they are safer while working in groups.
 3. **OLD RUGS** – Sometimes when you get to a search you may have to work out of your vehicle as if it were a changing room. Bring along a small rug or welcome mat that you can use to stand on when changing you boots. Depending on where you are parked, this will keep the rocks or thorns or other debris off of your socks and out of your boots that would cause problems for your feet while out on task.
 4. **NIGHT VISION** - At night, if you close one eye when looking at white lights or when looking at maps, etc. will help you from losing your night vision. Using blue or red lights at night also help retain your night vision. There are some flashlights that have variable switches that have red LEDs for up close reading and white lights for searching.
 5. **FIRE STARTERS** – Dryer lint collected and placed in a cardboard egg carton with melted wax works wonders as a fire starter. It usually takes one egg section with the above ingredients to start a fire, but if it is wet it may take one or two more. Store them in a waterproof bag in your pack.
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