



Tidewater Search & Rescue

www.TSAR.org

Tracking Conference—Kevin Brewer

The ISPT (International Society of Professional Trackers) conference has come and gone. We were fortunate that it was held in Virginia this year, as this gave a number of persons who wouldn't be willing or able to travel to other parts of the country to attend. Once a year the group gets together somewhere in the lower 48 to educate or get educated on some aspect of tracking or the wilderness. This year there were people from AK, FL, CA, PA, NY and a nice little cross section of Virginians. **There are actually approximately 30 members in Virginia with about 20 of them members of different search teams.**

There were various field adventures one of which will produce a couple of articles for the newsletter on field usable plants. It is truly amazing on how cohesive this organization is when all of these people get together from as far away as they do and we all know what each other is talking about even though the terminology is sometimes a bit different. The ISPT is discussing the probability of creating national (as a start) tracking standards and standards of learning. Most of you know what that means on a Virginia SAR level. If you are an FTM or FTL, etc and you go to search in Wise county which is ~ 8 hours west like David Anzaldua just did and sign in as an FTM. Base knows what you should be capable of knowing because the body of knowledge is a statewide minimum for that level. If there are national standards for tracking and someone were to sign in at base as an ISPT Basic Tracker then management (with a little reeducation) will know what that resource should be capable of doing for them. There are standards out there now which some will sign off on like the Joel Hardin certifications. He has four lev-

els of Tracker education and certification and it takes many, many years to advance through them. It has to, otherwise he would not be able to recommend one of his journeymen trackers to a LE agency when requested, and they do get requested for throughout the world.

Anywho, enough about the highbrow stuff. Myself, Greg Fuller, Kim Willis and Carol Beard attended from TSAR. The conference began on Friday and ended mid day on Monday. I myself had to leave Sunday evening due to work commitments. The educational classroom opportunities at the conference which was held at the Holiday Lakes 4-H center near Appomattox, VA included "The value of Tracking in Law Enforcement" (LE) by Mike Hall of Virginia. "Drawing and Tracking" by David Collins also of Virginia. If you ever get to see a track drawing by David you will swear you are looking at a photograph. Kevin Porter who is a Journeyman tracker of Joel Hardin's gave two lectures. One on "How Tracking was introduced as a resource for SAR in New York state" and the other on "Professional Tracking as a Naturalist".

So you can get paid to do this, hmmmmmm.....

Dr. David Kowalewski spoke on something he has coined "T-Step". This is something he has noticed most animals do when they walk. He showed a video showing the actions as well as his own personal photographs which showed this posturing in their trails. Mark Eggeman whom many of you know from VDEM gave his "Abduction – Homicide Child Search" lecture, to a very captive audience. Although ISPT is a tracking organization it does not mean man tracker, there are a number of
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TRAINING CALENDAR

NOVEMBER

5-7		FTM Class in Greene County, VA
11	1830-2000	TSAR BOD mtg. @ TBA
12-14		Va. Beach FTM/FTL Class
18	1900-2100	TSAR Gen. Mem. Mtg. @ TEMS
19-21		MLSO Class hosted by SMRG
21		TSAR Training @ TBA

Folks, you really do need to call Kevin. If you intend to go to training, then please, please call. 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 Kevin Brewer **forty-eight** hours before training so we can decide whether to hold it or not. (757) 838-8907.

If your availability is "Full" then we would like you to have a pager. Please call Kevin about getting one.

Tracking Conference (con't)

animal trackers and naturalists whom are members and very good at what they do as well as being nationally known. Even the non SAR people were interested in his lecture. The next lecture given for all was by Vickie Shufer from Virginia Beach on "Edible and Medicinal Plants". This is the one where future articles will appear in the newsletter about. Just because it looks like a weed and it may taste like a weed, yea, it's still just a weed but many have properties which can help while out in the field for personal medicinal purposes. There were two additional lectures which I was unable to participate in so I cannot comment on. One of which was conducted by Ty Cunningham who is from SE Alaska and one of the founders of the ISPT. He also has a history as a Marine LRRP and currently works for the federal justice system. Last but certainly not least was Tina Smith from outside of Philadelphia, PA who spoke about sharing our tracking knowledge and the how to's.

There were three different difficulty levels of tracks laid out for the man trackers present as well as an animal track adventure which I was told was very cool since they were able to come across Bobcat tracks as one of the lines which were in a good clay substrate. Also a very interesting foraging for medicinal and edible plant life walk was conducted on a small part of the grounds. I can tell you that without a doubt Virginia is looked at as a very enthusiastic state as well as being very tracker friendly **as well as tracking knowledgeable**. This is two years in a row that we have dominated the whose from where category in attendance. There were 15 different persons from various Virginia SAR groups as well as four non-SAR Virginians in attendance. I will certainly let you all know when and where the next one will be in case you become interested but I doubt it will be East of the Mississippi.

There was a round table discussion Saturday night with myself and Greg being asked to sit at the head of the table with the founders and charter members present. We missed being Charter members by only a couple of months but are considered..... something, I'm not sure what. We all were tasked with answering all the sealed questions posed by everyone else who attended. Damn, if people from Virginia don't ask a lot of questions about Tracking both it's past, future and uses. We didn't think that we would ever get out of there to partake of some lets say adult beverages, both in bottles and even a mason jar @8 -) I tried to not be long winded with my answers, really I did! **Yes, it is hard (8 - D**

p.s. I don't know how many of you got a chance to watch the show on Court TV a number of months ago called "The Chase – Trackdown" where a group of Tom Brown Jr Trackers including Tom Jr himself were tasked with tracking down a pair of make believe escaped convicts over a 25 mile tract in the desert. If the convicts got to the end without being caught (a satchel filled with \$25 thousand) they would get to keep it. The convicts lost. Well they've done another one last week, this one in Eastern PA and this time they used ISPT member trackers, two of which are from Virginia and are members of SAR groups. The original was filmed somewhere in the southwestern US. Unfortunately they were contractually forbidden to tell us the outcome but said watch the show which will air in 5 or 6 months, it will be entertaining **as well as informative** which by the way was lacking in the first show. Hence, the change in trackers for the most recent production.

LEADERS VIEW—KEVIN BREWER

Congratulations to TSAR member, Greg Fuller

Greg whom some of you have met, been trained by or maybe even have been lucky (coerced) enough to have been out on task with was the recipient of two different awards at the Virginia SAR Council meeting and conference on October 30 this year. Unfortunately the meeting conflicts with the fund raising event at Chippokes SP so I wasn't promoting it to the masses. The group was represented by Butch. Greg received the team recognition award as nominated by members of SARTI (the Search and Rescue Tracking Institute) which he is also a member of as well as the founder. This award can be given to any individual in

any SAR group as nominated by its members or by members of another group. He also received the Lisa Hannon award which is the highest honor given to one individual in the state each year as nominated by the members of the SAR council. The Lisa Hannon award is named after an ASRC IC (Incident Commander) who perished in an auto accident back in the early 90's shortly after leaving a search mission. The award is given to those who consistently demonstrate selflessness in the aid of others through teaching and leadership, the promotion of Search and Rescue and an unbridled passion towards the aid of the lost person.

Tracking Experience—Kevin Brewer

I thought that it might be interesting if I were to relay to you a recent learning experience I had in the wilds of Wheeling, WV. Some of you knew that I was going to be out of town for several days, well here's one of my recent trips. My self and two other individuals from VA went to Wheeling a couple of weeks ago in October for an intensive 3-day man tracking training with other students from different parts of NY, eastern PA, WV and one individual from Atlanta, GA. Actually intensive might not be a strong enough word. Joel Hardin, who was one of the original Border Patrol officers back in the late 60's to begin teaching man tracking to Search and Rescue personnel was convening a class in Wheeling and I jumped at the opportunity to take it. Joel has been teaching man tracking ever since to LE, DOD special operations personnel and most importantly search and rescue persons. Most of that time under the guise of either the US Border Patrol then through the company UTS (Universal Tracking Services) out of Washington state which he was one of the original founders. I had no idea what I was getting myself into, Yea, I've heard things from time to time, been to websites and what not. I know two persons who had taken his class last year when he was still under the UTS label. I for whatever reason decided not to ever discuss with them the content of the class, and I'm glad that I didn't. This enabled me to go into this with a wonderment that I may not have had, had I known what to expect and already developed my own preconceived ideas.

As I write this, I'm still having trouble keeping my eyes open, not because I'm tired from the trip which I am but because of the fact that my eyes still look like large red hot coals. Those are due to the hours and hours of looking for tracks which had the best of all conditions. Rain and a tumultuous amount of hardwood leaves continuously falling and being blown on, over and into the tracks. Oh, and did I mention that the tracks on the first day of tracking were 24 hours old which then became 36 when we went out later on the first day on the same set. When you think of someone tracking or hear the word tracker, you envision a person who's walking down a road or a trail following obvious signs that someone had walked there. Also somewhere in that same vision (which probably came from some tv show or

movie) you see the tracks that are being followed. Sure, why not if you couldn't see them right off yourself you would be yelling BS or foul, there's nothing there. And if they were to go cross country and not be walking on a trail you would really be squawking.

Believe me when I tell you that They Are There. And when you finally get your eyes and brain calibrated you have just expanded your means of how to see the world around you. I've been training and practicing for a short while now relatively speaking and thanks to my friend and mentor Greg Fuller I was introduced to a world which I previously didn't really take the time to look at and generally took for granted. I continuously learn where to look, what to look for and how to see sign through him and many others.

Would I recommend others to take a Joel Hardin class, Absolutely. BUT you will want to have a baseline in which to draw from first or you may be absolutely overwhelmed and be calling BS or timeout on almost everything like the gentleman from Atlanta who was in the same class. He had not been exposed to even a basic tracking course so he didn't know what to look for, how to look or where except for when his team mates were helping him. I spoke to him at one point in private to get his opinion of the class. His frustration level was exceeding his ability to learn, we talked a bit about what we've been doing and what may help him if he chooses to pursue a tracking career. For his sake I hope he sticks with it.

I would speculate that we may have had a glimpse of how Joel was originally trained back in the day. We were shown a very small sample of obvious tracks. Ours were through a projector, the tracks were the kind that you would see on a TV show or in a movie. Does everyone see them, sure! Obvious sign, who couldn't. Is that what we were given as a tracking task, even as a first one. Thankfully, NO. O sure, the LKP (Last Known Place) was marked with a single flag, then it was Holy Cra....(COW) when you looked up to see the daunting forest stretched out in front of you as far as you could see. The first thoughts that all of us had was "Someone actually walked through

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Tracking Experience (cont)

here.....yesterday?” It turned out to not be an impossible task but a challenging one.

The conditions in which we were working were in most ways very different from those in our immediate callout or response area. Acres and acres of hardwoods is absurdly different from what we have in Tidewater. Those of you who have ventured into or beyond the Blue Ridge mountain corridor through VA can relate to what I’m about to describe. The woods had the appearance of a very large box of crayolla crayons (Price Club sized) that had exploded, and we were in the midst of a full fall color change. Some of the leaves were even large enough to singularly cover my size 13 boot track. Amplify that by about an octillion of varying sizes being blown, swirled and tossed in just about every direction when it wasn’t raining and you have a nice breezy fall weekend somewhere in the middle of nowhere. The task, find and follow each and every track in the line of sign which was made yesterday. Damn, if it wasn’t an adventure.

Will I do it again? I’ve already looked at his training calendar

and compared it to mine for next year and I’ve been back home for less than 12 hours.

You know how when you go somewhere and you look into the woods and think to yourself or vocalize openly, gee it sure would be nice to be able to search in woods like that instead of the dense underbrush and briars or thick vegetation which we usually get called into. **BE CAREFULL WHAT YOU WISH FOR.** You may be in for an experience which you hadn’t counted on because remember we are looking for clues, and the subject is nothing more than the ultimate clue.

p.s. Several of us took a little 5 mile trip Saturday evening to a brand new Cabelas Sporting Goods that just opened up the previous month in Wheeling. Picture a two story building approximately the size of three Bass Pro Shops. We were told that to see everything would take approximately four hours. Unfortunately we didn’t have that much time to peruse through such a fine establishment. Maybe next time.

Stresses associated with SAR—Ann Muir

Stress has a cumulative effect on our bodies. An example might be someone who has responded to numerous call-outs, without any stress related complications, may suddenly develop signs and symptoms of a stress reaction. Still another example of cumulative stress might be someone who is experiencing other stressors such as trouble in their relationship, problems with their children, problems at work, or the death of a friend or relative, and who then is called out on a SAR incident. He/she may develop signs and symptoms of a stress reaction in what may seem a particularly uneventful incident.

It is well known that critical incidents can arouse strong emotional reactions in the emergency personnel who encounter them, and that such reactions can have long-term detrimental effects upon responders. Discussions of critical incident stress (CIS) often describe the pressures facing fire fighters, ambulance attendants, and police officers, but rarely is reference made to the stress experienced by wilderness search and rescue personnel during and after the lost person incident. Wilderness search and rescue responders, including trackers, dog handlers, and other ground searchers, experience many of the same stresses as other rescue workers. In the lost person incident, searchers often have to cope with a combination of physical and psychological stressors endured over an extended period of time. However, many stressors affecting wilderness searchers tend to be relatively subtle. For example:

The Sense of Isolation.

As most searching is done in fairly remote or isolated forested areas, often in the middle of the night, team members may sometimes have only voice contact with each other, at best. The feeling of isolation, even for experienced searchers, can sometimes become extreme. While searchers can usually adjust to the sense of feeling isolated, the presence of additional stressors, such as fatigue, may make coping especially difficult.

Spatial Orientation.

In wilderness search and rescue, where environments tend to be unfamiliar, and visibility may be poor (due to vegetation, terrain, weather, and/or darkness), requirements for accurate spatial orientation may pose a tremendous challenge. Additionally, the mental resources required for maintaining continuous spatial orientation may compete with the demanding perceptual task of searching for clues. Various psychological studies have demonstrated that temporary states of spatial disorientation can be quite stressful.

Extremes in Temperature.

Because most of us have air conditioning in our homes, offices, and automobiles, it is likely that few ground searchers are well prepared for extended exposure to heat. This is why searchers need to take steps to prevent dehydration, cramps, and heat stroke.

Cold environments present both primary and secondary stressors for the searcher. That is, cold temperatures can be directly stressing, especially if the searcher is not adequately prepared, and it can have indirect effects as well. For example, searchers will have to wear more clothing and carry more equipment than usual, thereby consuming more energy. Frequently associated with cold environments are additional factors that inhibit movement, such as snow and ice, which may further deplete energy and lead to early fatigue. Finally, an indirect stressor often resulting from cold, wet weather is a heightened concern for the safety of the lost person.

Death of the Victim.

All emergency responders have to cope with the reality that sometimes victims die. Ironically, the same emotion that drives responders to do their jobs well, an empathic concern for the

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Stresses associated with SAR (cont)

safety of others, also makes them vulnerable to critical incident stress when the victim fails to survive.

When a lost person is found dead, especially if they die during rescue, searchers are just as inclined as other emergency personnel toward second-guessing or criticizing themselves regarding what they *could have* or *should have* done that would have saved the victim. The effects of isolation, inclement weather, and fatigue can lessen the searcher's ability to cope with exposure to a deceased victim. Frequently, it is standard operating procedure for the team that finds a dead subject to secure the area and remain with the body until police and/or forensic units arrive. This often results in a lengthy period in which exhausted, cold, and psychologically vulnerable searchers have to cope with the proximity of death. Unlike many other emergency workers, such as firefighters or emergency medical technicians, few ground searchers acquire sufficient exposure to dead victim incidents to develop adequate coping mechanisms for such situations.

When the dead victim is a child, the possibilities for stress are increased dramatically.

The Stress of Command.

Stressors for the team managing the search are present both during and after the search incident. When the search begins, information must be gathered and critical decisions must be made during high emotional arousal, as well as the presence of searchers anxious to get into the woods, the panicky expressions of the missing person's family and friends, and a multitude of additional pressures to "hurry up and find the lost subject." Once the teams are tasked and resources are in the field, the only communications link with them is the radio, which is quasi-reliable at the best of times, considering garbled communications, dead radio batteries, malfunctioning equipment, and fading signals. As new information is communicated to the command post, critical decisions must frequently be made under conditions of extremely high uncertainty.

Prolonged Incidents.

Although many SAR incidents are resolved within a few hours, searches commonly last a full day or longer. Indeed, the sheer

length of the search incident can be a source of stress to search personnel at all levels, from command to field personnel.

If critical incident stress is left untreated, an individual may have unresolved conflicts and feelings that remain long after the incident. These side effects range from headache, fatigue, and sexual dysfunction, to terrifying dreams, hallucinations, severe withdrawal and apathy.

A few ways to prevent or alleviate the effects of critical incident stress are to:

Reduce Opportunities for Negative Imagery. Many of the symptoms associated with critical incident stress, such as nightmares and flashbacks, pertain to recurring images experienced during the incident. While such images are most frequently visual, they can actually be obtained through any of the sensory modalities, including hearing, smell, and touch. It is a good idea to minimize the number of people who will come into contact with a deceased subject, and those who do should protect themselves against any odors emanating from the body, no matter how slight or seemingly harmless (for example, a victim's cologne can be the source of recurring imagery).

Describe the "Big Picture." Once the incident is over, SAR responders should *never* leave the search site without a thorough operational debriefing. This will allow individual searchers to put some degree of closure on the incident, rather than having to take the search home with them in order to make sense of it. Everyone involved in a SAR incident should be alert for the signs and symptoms of a stress reaction in him/herself and in fellow searchers. Frequently, these simple steps will go far to prevent a full-blown stress reaction and reduce the number of responders who require additional help.

Mission Critical—Kevin Brewer

This is the next installment of what missions occurred during the past month.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Subject</u>
10/4/04	Spotsylvania Co, Va	Missing 3 y/o male
10/7/04	Albemarle Co, Va	Missing child
10/13/04	Roanoke, Va	Missing teenagers (x2) off Blue Ridge Pkwy
10/18/04	Chesterfield, Va	Missing 54 y/o male
10/23/04	Wise Co, Va	Missing 19 y/o hunter

These are the lost person emergencies in which we were spooled up for or at least put on alert and personnel availabilities were requested. We did have limited response(very limited) to a few of these. Year to date there have 70 search missions in Virginia and TSAR has been activated for 31 of them.



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MISSION STATEMENT

Tidewater Search 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 Tidewater Search 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. **BREAK IN BOOTS** – We spend almost all of our time on task on our feet you must make sure your boots fit properly and are well broken in. One tip to get leather boots broken in quickly is to soak them in water and then wear them until they dry out. Make sure you do this in a controlled environment as wearing wet boots is not good when you are out in the freezing weather and/or out in the middle of nowhere on a mission.
2. **DETERMINE DIRECTION** – Using a watch that has hands, in the Northern Hemisphere, point the Hour hand at the sun. South will be on a line that is half way between the hour hand and the 12. Example: if it is 1600 (4:00PM) point that hand at the sun and go halfway back to the 12 and South will be in the direction of the 2.
3. **WEATHER SAYING** – Red sky in the morning, Sailors take warning. Red sky at night sailors delight. Red sky at night indicates fair weather is approaching. The red sky in the morning indicates that rain or snow will occur within a day or two. This saying is based on actual meteorological science but I do not have enough room to explain.
4. **FIRE STARTER** - Another wonderment of manmade technology is the invention of Fire Paste. Fire paste will allow you to light even wet wood. It comes in a container similar to a tooth paste tube and is small enough to throw in your pack but BEWARE, if you do have or purchase a tube of fire paste make sure that you wrap it completely with duct tape. The reason for this is that it is an aluminumized tube and once it gets a crease or crack in it which will happen due to the stresses created inside your pack, it will begin to ooze out all of the petroleum, and guess where that all goes. With the duct tape covering it, it will create a waterproof/petroleum proof coating, which will last a heck of a lot longer.
5. **HYPOTHERMIA CHART** – Information to keep in mind when searching around water:

If the water temp (f) is:	Exhaustion or Unconsciousness	Expected Survival Time
32.5	Under 15 minutes	Between 15-45 minutes
32.5-40.0	15-30 minutes	30-90 minutes
40-50	30-60 minutes	1-3 hours
50-60	1-2 hours	1-6 hours
60-70	2-7 hours	2-40 hours
70-80	3-12 hours	3-indefinitely
Over 80	Indefinitely	

SUBMISSION: Please submit your tips to won2search@aol.com by the 25th of each month so I can get them into the newsletter. Or, send them anytime as I need to start building up a list to pick from and that way you won't forget to send them later.

DISCLAIMER: All of the tips I get I will put them in the newsletter because, they have all worked for at least on person. Use them at your own risk, effectiveness and preference.