

SAR COORDINATES

October 2004

TONTO RIM SEARCH AND RESCUE SQUAD, Inc.

**P.O. BOX 357
STRAWBERRY AZ 85544**

A self-supporting, not-for-profit group of volunteer citizens dedicated to improving safety in the Arizona wilderness.

**Operating under the authority of the Gila County Sheriff's Office
John Armer; Sheriff**

Commander's Corner

Our major fund raising effort for this year is over and I want to congratulate Randy Scott of Sedona for winning our **Starcraft camping trailer** grand prize. I can't say enough about the efforts of Tom Sander in making this year's fundraiser such a success. If you have never been involved in a fundraiser, you have no idea how much work is involved. Doug Conklin, Don and Pat Peters and many others put in a lot of hours and hard work. On behalf of all the Squad I want to thank those who worked so hard to make this a success.

I have recovered from my week in Kauai and my most recent week archery elk hunting. The elk are safe. Although the Elk did give me some exciting moments, I have no elk meat in the freezer.

Many THANKS to those who helped at the Phil White/Chapman Shootout fund raising effort. I would like to thank Bill Pitterle for being there during my absence and organizing our part in this event.

Rope training was conducted by Roger Miotto at Insurance Curve on the 18th of Sept. Pictures are posted on our website, www.trsar.org. Mostly new members to the rope team were sent over the edge. It looked like excellent rope training by Roger and the rest of the team.

There was an ATV overnight training exercise the 22nd. Sgt Hudgens, Don Johnson, Jack Logan and Jim Martin were present for the training and covered a lot of country in the Picture Mountain area. It was said that Sgt Hudgens makes a mean stew. Sounds like everyone had a great time.

On October 9th there will be a tracking class. Time and Place will be announced via page and email as this will take place before our next general meeting (Oct 14). Jim would like to train in Sign Cutting. Tracking is probably the single most important skill any professional searcher can have to help find clues. (And clues lead to the lost person.) A well trained tracking team can make the difference between a "well meaning" search team with good intentions, but few results, and a cohesive, effective search team that produces results.

Stay active and stay healthy. Dave Pirtle, Commander

Don't forget; the meetings this month are October 12th for the Board and October 14th for the General Meeting.

A Senior Moment By Jane Boyles-- *FEMA Disaster Reservist*

FLOODING AND SEARCH AND RESCUE

After the big Willow Burn, the experts were right out there surveying the damage to the hillsides. We all have seen the devastation from the burn and if you have traveled the highway lately you have seen where the water has run and sometimes not where it was supposed to go. At the August meeting, the Sheriff's Department spoke about flooding and rescue work especially from Rye to Roosevelt Lake. After being caught in two fierce storms on my commute, we decided to go survey the area for ourselves and see just how bad things could get in a very short time. This is a trip I strongly recommend that you all take the time to make. It is not "if" it will happen but a matter of when. Because Highway 87 was closed due to a mudslide on the morning of our adventure, we turned down 188 looking and surveying the scene. Water had gone over the bridge at the little creek at Jakes Corner. That was obvious by debris in the brush along the highway. A flash flood had occurred about two hours earlier going through a mobile home and filling a car up to the steering wheel. This is a place where rescues very well could be necessary. Going further on down 188 we stopped to look several times at where the water line was. Go take a look. You are in for a surprise. Going on down in to Punkin Center the creek was rising. It is easy to survey the high water lines and whose homes and outbuildings could be potential factors. It is a wise thing to survey this all ahead of time so that in times of dangerous flooding you will know where people live and where roads go. As we stood watching the creek rise, the water silently came through the trees and it was time to move on. How easy to be trapped. Down at the Bar X crossing we ran into Deputy Slider checking the crossing. The water had not gotten to that crossing yet, but an eight-foot wall of water was expected. Whether it was that high we do not know, but due to the rain we encountered it sure could have been that deep. As we returned to Highway 87 we joined a convoy to the top of Slate Creek Hill to survey what had caused my exciting ride the night before. Sometime in the night, enough water came off the steep hill going right over the ditch and using the southbound lane as a canal carrying trees, boulders and mud right down the road. This is where it all was beginning. Slate Creek had again run over its banks down at the bottom of the hill. If as you were told we get a two-inch per hour rain it will be a sight to behold and you can count on being busy. Go take a look. It is better to survey it all on a sunny day and know where high ground and the roads are, then to go down there on a rainy night having to perform a life saving rescue without knowing the terrain. One of the first things I learned on a Red Cross National flood disaster is that if the river ran there before it will run there again. It will somehow get behind the berm built to keep it out. Floodwater will go through a house and it will rise just as high inside as it is outside. If Search and Rescue is called upon to assist, don't take chances, be smart and watch when the water is on the rise so as not to get trapped. If you have a 4X4 put it in high four and slow down. You won't be one of the hydro planers that manage to get airborne. Tonto Creek is the final stream for very large drainage area and it will rise fast and furiously. There are a lot of residences along

that peaceful little creek. Moreover, there are kids. One young fellow we encountered rode his bike out in to the rising water until he decided he must not have look very bright to the rest of us. He did safely get out. And by the way, drop into Deer Creek Village on the way back and familiarize yourself with the roads. There are some low spots that you should be familiar with.

THAT OTHERS MAY LIVE

Out and About

GPS Receiver: Only as Good as its Owner

Ben Delaney
April 29, 2004

As a remote sensing specialist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Cameron Tongier can find his way around the woods. A former employee of the National Forest Service, Tongier has spent hundreds of hours in the field and holds a graduate degree in geography. Yet, like an increasing number of outdoor enthusiasts, he has nearly stranded himself by relying on a Global Positioning System receiver, or GPS.

"I was in a work situation in a forest where I was relying heavily on GPS. The batteries started to die, and I got nervous," Tongier said. "I realized that if the batteries died I'd be spending the night in the woods."

Although battery failure renders the device useless, many people get lost by simply not understanding the tool before they set out into the backcountry. And like any information or tool, it's only as helpful as its user can make it.

As GPS receivers become more popular, more people are getting lost using them, said Robert Koester, president of dbS Productions, a publishing company that specializes in search-and-rescue information. Koester is also a search-and-rescue instructor with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management and incident commander of the Appalachian Search & Rescue Conference.

Neither New Mexico nor any other state's search-and-rescue department tracks incidents of people lost because of GPS as a separate category in their databases, Koester said. "In all cases, the person appears to be listed as a hiker or other. So that information is lost," he said.

"Now from a statistical point, the number of people getting lost due to dependence upon a GPS is certainly increasing. Once upon a time there were a few GPS units only in the hands of surveyors or hard-core SAR users. Now they are a fairly common item," he said.

Some GPS users have gotten lost and called in their location to rescue personnel with their cell phones, Koester said.

"This of course changes the SAR mission from a search to a 'simple' rescue," Koester said.

"I know GPS are helping people to get lost, but to what extent it is difficult to say. Also, are these some of the same people that would have gotten lost anyhow? Difficult to answer," he added.

Today the Global Positioning System consists of 24 satellites that broadcast signals that GPS receivers use to compute their location. Consumer GPS receivers are accurate to about 20 feet. Military GPS, however, can provide location within a few centimeters.

The U.S. government created GPS in 1973 for military navigation. The U.S. Department of Defense controls the system. Ronald Reagan gave the go-ahead for consumer use of the system during his tenure in the White House. Electronics maker Magellan introduced the first consumer handheld GPS device in 1989. Bill Clinton eased restrictions on the accuracy of civilian GPS frequencies in 2000.

Koester gave a few tips on safe GPS navigation. They are:

- * Become familiar with and practice using your GPS before you head off into the woods.
- * When departing on your hike, set your car or starting point as a waypoint.
- * Know how to navigate to a waypoint. However, realize that the shortest way is not always the best or quickest way. To determine the best way you need a map and the ability to read it.
- * Bring a map. One that has the UTM grid coordinate system is the easiest to use with a GPS.

- * Make sure the GPS datum matches the datum used on the map. This is often not the case with GPS default settings.
- * Bring spare batteries.
- * Turn off WAAS and switch to battery-saver mode if your batteries become low.
- * Do not rely upon the combination of a GPS and cell phone to get you out of the woods. There are a million reasons they may fail.

"A GPS is a wonderful and powerful tool that truly makes navigation a lot easier and more accurate than ever before," Koester said. "However, you must know how to use it and be totally prepared for a GPS failure."

[Editor's note; The preceding was borrowed from www.santafenewmexican.com]

Website

Tonto Rim SAR Members can now have your very own email address through our site. Just contact our Webmaster at jack@jackswebs.com to arrange for it, no cost to you or us.

Did You Know?

- ~ If you see a star before the serial number on US paper money, it means that bill replaces a mutilated one.
- ~ A whip cracks because the tip moves faster than the speed of sound - it breaks the sound barrier.
- ~ A sneeze can travel up to 100 miles per hour.
- ~ On a clear moonless night, the human eye can see a match struck from fifty miles away.
- ~ A wild animal is more likely to attack if you're afraid of it.

October Training Schedule

9 Oct. Sat Man Tracking-Sign Cutting - Time: 0800 –Location: TBA (This is for all levels of experience).- Instructor J. Martin

16 Oct .Sat Rope Training – Time: 0800 – Place: Box Canyon– Roger Miotto and rope instructors in charge

20 Oct. Wed. ATV Exercise – Time: 0800- Place: TBA- John Avery in charge

29 Oct. Sat Map & Compass, GPS, Navigation Training – Time: 0800 Place TBA (All levels of experience should attend) Jim Oelerich & Les Hulse Instructors

Planned Training Sessions (after next general meeting)

April 2005 Medical Type Classes- Place: Ira Gibel's home - Time:TBA - Instructor Ira Gibel

13 Nov. Sat Mantracking- Time: 0800- Place :TBA- Instructor: Jim Martin

20 Nov Sat Rope Training- Time: 0800- Place: TBA- Roger Miotto and rope instructors in charge

Thanksgiving is the 25th of this month.

Requested Training Sessions

- 👤 If you would like to volunteer to run a training session, or if you have a training session request contact
Any Board Member or John Boyles

Sign-up required to attend this training

* See following notes:

- 👤 To reserve use of squad ATV, contact John Avery at 928-476-2106 or 480-892-4424
Jacket, gloves, boots, helmet, and eye protection required to operate Squad ATV

Thanks to those who contributed to this issue of the newsletter.

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