

SAR COORDINATES

July 2005

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

TRSAR Squad meets monthly

General Public Welcome

2nd Thursday @ 7:00 - 9:00 PM

Payson Public Library Meeting Room

328 N. McLane Road - Payson, Arizona

Commander's Corner

Fire season is upon us. If you haven't turned in your Packets for getting paid for Fire Duty, you'd better get it done. Don't forget to get it notarized and attach a copy of your driver's license and SSN card. If you don't have an application, ask Trudy at the Sheriffs office for one.

I'd like to thank all who volunteered to help with traffic control at the Strawberry festival. Those in charge of the event were very grateful for our presence and for making the event safer.

Those who helped with the 24 hour bike race should feel good about your effort in supporting this event. Dan Basinski thanked us for our help and gave us a check for \$400 dollars for our help. This event is scheduled for June 2nd and 3rd next year. I'd like to see them do this a little earlier next year. This year we were lucky and it was not scorching hot.

Roger had a very good Night-Rope training exercise the 25th of June at Pine Canyon Narrows. There were a lot of good questions asked and a lot learned. There are several who are interested in getting rope certified. We are looking at August for the certification class. Watch for it on the training schedule. We are doing very well with our mail out denotation request letters. Our Treasurer, Joanne Travis, has been very busy taking care of the money and mailing thank you letters. It only takes us a couple hours to make ready two thousand letters for mailing. It takes Joanne a lot longer than that to process the donations. Thank you, Joanne, for all of your hard work.

It is truly amazing the many different tasks that are performed to make this Squad what it is today. Many tasks go unnoticed by most of us. From Cliff Sage who takes it upon himself to cut the grass when needed at the Squad Building to Mike Taylor who generates Certificates of accomplishments, just to name two. Jim Martin who is still going through Chemo and Radiation continues to ramrod construction at the Squad building. I could not mention all the things that happen that most don't have a clue about.

What a group.

Thanks for everything you do.

Stay active and stay healthy.

Dave Pirtle 500

Commander

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

A Wonderful Team

Tonto Rim Search and Rescue has proven to be the best team I could ever have hoped to join - so many wonderful people and so much fun learning. Not a training or mission slips by without leaving me a bit more knowledgeable as a rescuer. I scan down the roster and cannot skip over one name that hasn't played a part in my training or enjoyment of this wonderful team. >From the beginning, I was fortunate to have been linked up with Vynette (Sage) as my mentor. She shared knowledge before I even knew I needed it - but eventually did. I thank her for the "heads - up" before it mattered. So many others followed Vynette in molding this adventurous spirit into a TRSAR team member. In the years to come I hope I am able to return to the organization as much as I've received.

Margaret Bullard 545

When Mountain Lions Meet People

Submitted by Ira Gibel 532

Generally, mountain lions are calm, quiet and elusive. They are most commonly found in areas with plentiful prey and adequate cover. Such conditions exist in mountain subdivisions, urban fringes and open spaces. Consequently, the number of mountain lion/human interactions has increased. This increase likely is due to a variety of reasons: more people moving into mountain lion habitat, an increase in prey populations, an increase in mountain lion numbers and expanded range, more people using hiking and running trails in mountain lion habitat, and a greater awareness of the presence of mountain lions.

Even so, the potential for being killed or injured by a mountain lion is quite low compared to many other natural hazards. There is a far greater risk, for example, of being struck by lightning than of being attacked by a mountain lion.

WHAT IF YOU LIVE IN LION COUNTRY?

Now that people and mountain lions occupy so much of the same geographical areas in the west, encounters are expected to increase. If you live in mountain lion habitat, here's what you can do to reduce your chances of encountering a mountain lion near your home:

- **DON'T FEED WILDLIFE:** By feeding deer, raccoons or other wildlife in your yard, you will inadvertently attract mountain lions, which prey upon them.
- **DEER-PROOF YOUR LANDSCAPE:** Avoid using plants that deer prefer to eat; if your landscaping attracts deer, mountain lions may be close by. The California Department of Fish and Game has a brochure entitled "Gardening To Discourage Deer Damage" available at most Department offices.
- **LANDSCAPE FOR SAFETY:** Remove dense and/or low-lying vegetation that would provide good hiding places for mountain lions, especially around children's play areas; make it difficult for mountain lions to approach your yard unseen.
- **INSTALL OUTDOOR LIGHTING:** Keep the perimeter of your house well lit at night--especially along walkways--to keep any approaching mountain lions visible.
- **KEEP PETS SECURE:** Roaming pets are easy prey for hungry mountain lions. Either bring pets inside or keep them in a kennel with a secure top. Don't feed pets outside; this can attract raccoons and other mountain lion prey.
- **KEEP LIVESTOCK SECURE:** Where practical, place livestock in enclosed sheds and barns at night, and be sure to secure all outbuildings.
- **KEEP CHILDREN SAFE:** Keep a close watch on children whenever they play outdoors. Make sure children are inside before dusk and not outside before dawn. Talk with children about mountain lions and teach them what to do if they encounter one. This website provides practical advice.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU ENCOUNTER A MOUNTAIN LION?

There's been very little research on how to avoid mountain lion attacks. But mountain lion attacks that have occurred are being analyzed in the hope that some crucial questions can be answered: Did the victim do something to inadvertently provoke an attack? What should a person who is approached by a mountain lion do--or not do? The following suggestions are based on studies of mountain lion behavior and analysis of attacks by mountain lions, tigers and leopards:

- **DO NOT HIKE ALONE:** Go in groups, with adults supervising children.
- **KEEP CHILDREN CLOSE TO YOU:** Observations of captured wild mountain lions reveal that the animals seem especially drawn to children. Keep children within your sight at all times.
- **DO NOT APPROACH A LION:** Most mountain lions will try to avoid a confrontation. Give them a way to escape.
- **DO NOT RUN FROM A LION:** Running may stimulate a mountain lion's instinct to chase. Instead, stand and face the animal. Make eye contact. If you have small children with you, pick them up if possible so they don't panic and run. Although it may be awkward, pick them up without bending over or turning away from the mountain lion.

- **DO NOT CROUCH DOWN OR BEND OVER:** In Nepal, a researcher studying tigers and leopards watched the big cats kill cattle and domestic water buffalo while ignoring humans standing nearby. He surmised that a human standing up is just not the right shape for a cat's prey. On the other hand, a person squatting or bending over looks a lot like a four-legged prey animal. If you're in mountain lion country, avoid squatting, crouching or bending over, even when picking up children.
- **DO ALL YOU CAN TO APPEAR LARGER:** Raise your arms. Open your jacket if you are wearing one. Again, pick up small children. Throw stones, branches, or whatever you can reach without crouching or turning your back. Wave your arms slowly and speak firmly in a loud voice. The idea is to convince the mountain lion that you are not prey and that you may be a danger to it.
- **FIGHT BACK IF ATTACKED:** A hiker in Southern California used a rock to fend off a mountain lion that was attacking his son. Others have fought back successfully with sticks, caps, jackets, garden tools and their bare hands. Since a mountain lion usually tries to bite the head or neck, try to remain standing and face the attacking animal.

Alaska Experience

This is story of three people who lived another day because of whatever you might choose; Blind luck -Guardian Angel -Devine intervention -Fate.

Most of you have never had to concern yourselves with being “man overboard”. When I wrote the story of the “Fisherman’s Hat” you saw just how a mere moment in that cold water of the Gulf of Alaska can shock the body of the victim to immobility. Even if the subject fell alongside the boat, it is almost beyond human endurance to get back on board without help of some sort. These three men were super lucky to get that help. Most of the time survival would have been impossible.

Bill was pretty much of a loner. He only ran with a very few other fishermen and always looked for pockets of fish that would have been bypassed by the fleet as being too small or too difficult to try for. It was not uncommon to see his trolling poles far out on the horizon or right up near rock piles near shore. Therefore, it might have been inevitable that he would end up in the water. For whatever reason on a trip north of Sitka, Bill lost his balance while working on the back deck and fell in. With his last grab at the side of the boat as it passed him by, he was able to catch the edge of a tire that he was using for a bumper at the dock in town. Why was that still hanging over the side after traveling for hours to get to the fishing grounds? Normally he would have had the boat in very tight shipshape for the run out. With care, he was able to get one foot into the tire, work his arm over the rail, and fall back on deck. Safe again, his heart must have been thumping like a drum.

Al was a super good fisherman and had many friends to keep him notified where the best bite was taking place. Al and a couple others had grouped together in a tight circle off “Icy Point” near the outer boundary of “Glacier Bay”. They were really loading up with Cohoes. Al’s wife usually was at the helm when he worked the gear in back. As they trolled along catching and circling, she received a call on the radio from a friend, to slow down so they could get Al back on the stern of his own boat. She never heard him go over the side. Somehow he had lost his footing while gaffing a salmon, and fell right into the shark filled water. Sharks are always abundant around schools of salmon. It’s easy pickings for a roving shark to snatch a hooked fish. Al had on a float coat and stayed on the surface long enough for his friend to pull him aboard to safety. He was very cold and wet but lucky to have a friend see him fall in and close enough to get him out before the shock took him.

Joe was my kind of person. He came from the coal mining hills of West Virginia. He and I often found ourselves hanging out on the same fishing grounds. Joe fished alone and after the start of school in the fall, I would be alone too. Many times, we would tie up together to spin yarns and plan our next day’s efforts. Most of the time when traveling back and forth to town all the boats would have their trolling poles pulled up to the mast and tied off so travel through narrow channels was made easier without rigging sticking way out from the side of the rails. One trip out from town Joe was in a quiet channel so it was a good time to let the poles down to get ready to slip through the last pass and head offshore for the start of his trip. Now trolling poles have lots of lines and cables fastened to them for hauling them up and down, as well as the rigging used to hold the fishing gear. Joe had let down one pole and started to ease the other one down when he lost his balance and fell in. Joe had not slowed the boat down to do this work and was traveling on autopilot at almost eight knots. Just as the boat was moving away, he was able to catch a loose cable dangling along. He quickly wrapped several turns around his arm and prayed that the light cable (only 1/8” in diameter) didn’t break. About that time “Channel Flying Service” happened to be flying by and saw Joe’s boat going in very tight circles due to his weight and resistance on the end of a 40 ft. pole like a trout on a string. The pilot landed and maneuvered up to the boat and managed to shut down the engine. Then by throwing a hand line out to the rapidly weakening fisherman, was able to haul him aboard to safety.

I knew all of these people well. We talked every now and then and marveled at how fortunate they each had been. So what was it, Fate, Luck, Devine Intervention, Guardian Angel, or something far above us that gave the subjects the chance to fish another day?

John Boyles 510

Website Info

The Editor received an email from **Kathleen Bagley** this week with their new address and Bill’s new Web Site; <http://www.shadetreehardwoods.com/>
You might like to look it over, an outstanding example of his quality and professionalism.

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.

**We are promoted and you'll also find our newsletter on the
Rim Country Volunteer site;
<http://www.inpayson.com/TRSAR-Payson-Rim-Country-Area.htm>**

Tonto National Forest Maps

The latest Tonto NF maps are now available at the Payson Ranger Station. Price is \$6. The map border is brown instead of blue and the map is dated 2004. The wall displays still show the old map (blue border, dated 2001).

I picked up a few to use in modifying the mapping system and supplying the squad truck. Due to road construction, there will be some new maps made of Hwy 260 east of Payson and Hwy 188 south of Roosevelt. There will be some mileage changes, some interchange changes, and some Forest Road accesses will be removed to match the new roadway. The newest NF trails have been added and the ones slated for abandonment have been removed.

All of these changes will be made to the SAR Mapping System and new CDs will be prepared for everyone when the work is completed - in a few months.

If anyone stops by the Ranger station and gets the new 2004 map, please bring your old one (2001 model) to the next board or general meeting. I would like to collect about 6 of them to use in our navigation training session scheduled for 23-July.

thanx ... Les Hulse 527

July 2005 Training Schedule

9-July (Sat) Man Tracking Training – Time: 1930 – Location: FR198 at Bean Patch Tank – Instructor J. Martin

16-July (Sat) Traffic control class will be put on by the Sheriff office – Time: 0800 – Place: Posse Building
Instructor: Dep. Rod Cronk


16-July (Sat) Rope Training – Time: 1630 – Place: Pine Canyon Narrows – Roger Miotto and rope instructors in charge

20-July (Wed) *First Responder* – Place: Ira Gibel's Home – Time: 1800 – Instructor: Ira Gibel


23-July (Sat) Navigation Training – Where am I? – Basic Map and Compass Techniques (no GPS) – Place: Pine Community Center Ramada – Time: 0900 – Organizer: Les Hulse

Planned Training Sessions (after next general meeting)

17-Aug (Wed) *CPR* – Place: Ira Gibel's Home – Time: 1800 – Instructor: Ira Gibel


Planned ATV Rodeo – All squad members – Instructor: John Avery 

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 Don Johnson

Italics = 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

Navigation Route (self-practice) exercising GPS and magnetic bearing functions:
From the starting point at.

Victims of bear attack were wilderness vets

THE HUFFMANS: Longtime local lawyer and teacher had taken every precaution.

By TOM KIZZIA
Anchorage Daily News
Published: June 28th, 2005

An Anchorage attorney and his retired schoolteacher wife, both cautious veterans of the Alaska wilderness, were identified Monday as the victims of a rare, unprovoked attack by a predatory grizzly bear in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, state and local officials said.

Richard and Katherine Huffman were killed over the weekend in their tent while camping along the Hulahula River near the end of a two-week wilderness float trip by inflatable kayak. Alaska Department of Fish and Game officials who investigated the scene said the Huffmans appeared to have set up camp carefully, storing their food in bear-proof containers far from their tent.

"All the indications now are it was a predatory attack. It just hardly ever happens," Fish and Game spokesman Bruce Bartley said. "Even more baffling is that these people had taken all the precautions."

A gun was found in the camp, troopers said. It had not been fired.

The 300-pound bear attacked the campers in their sleeping bags and tore at their bodies but did not devour them, officials said. The grizzly was tracked and killed by North Slope Borough Search and Rescue officials who flew by helicopter to the scene from Barrow.

The bear's body is being taken to Fairbanks for a necropsy but showed no obvious signs of illness, injury or starvation that might account for the attack, Bartley said. "It was apparently a healthy male, 5 to 7 years old, which adds to the mystery and improbability," he said.

The ransacked campsite was first spotted Saturday afternoon by someone passing in a river raft, according to North Slope police. The passer-by, a resident of Kaktovik, 12 miles downstream from the site, tried to approach the camp but was chased away by the bear. He reported the scene to police in Kaktovik.

The attack occurred in the heart of the refuge's coastal plain, a tundra region coveted by the oil industry for its oil potential and by environmentalists for its wilderness values. The Hulahularuns from the Romanzof Mountains north across the coastal plain to the Beaufort Sea. Kaktovik, an Inupiat village of about 300 residents, is the only community in the area.

With Congress poised to make a decision about oil drilling in the area, the refuge has seen an increase in visitor inquiries, said Richard Voss, the refuge manager for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. He couldn't say whether there was an increase in wilderness travel because independent travelers like the Huffmans are not required to get permits. Last year, 60 to 100 people, including hunters, floated the Hulahula, he said.

In Alaska, about six people a year are injured by bear attacks, Bartley said. Two-thirds of them are hunters who surprise bears in the wilderness. Every other year, on average, somebody is killed, usually by a brown bear, he said. Usually the bear is defending itself after being surprised or is protecting its young or a fresh kill.

That's really not much, Bartley said, considering there are people all over Alaska's bear habitat, along with 35,000 brown bears and three times as many black bears.

"If bears wanted to eat you, they would. We'd lose one a day," he said.

On the other hand, hundreds of bears are killed every year by people defending life or property, Bartley said. Such killings always increase after a widely publicized killing by a bear, he said.

"Quite frankly, there'll be a spike after this," he said.

Bartley could remember very few unprovoked fatal attacks by bears in Alaska -- one on a camper in Hyder in Southeast in the 1990s, another on a solo kayaker in Glacier Bay in the 1980s. A child was killed by a brown bear in King Cove a decade ago, though in that case people fleeing into nearby brush may have triggered a chase response, he said.

A special case could be made for bear advocate Timothy Treadwell, whose body was devoured along with that of his girlfriend after they camped extensively in the midst of brown bears and heavily used game trails on the Alaska Peninsula.

Treadwell's unconventional approach was often criticized by biologists.

"Everything that he did wrong, these folks did right," Bartley said.

A Fish and Game wildlife biologist, Cathie Harms, said the campsite was "a model of how to do it right." She said the ultra-cautious biologist who investigated the ravaged camp concluded "this one is as clear-cut as he's seen of a predacious attack."

The Huffmans were so careful with bears that they customarily stopped one place to cook and eat dinner, then floated on to a different site to camp, said Veronica Galvan, whose sister is married to one of three Huffman children. The Huffmans went on a three-week wilderness float trip last summer, Galvan said.

Richard Huffman, 61, was a lawyer who has worked in Anchorage for electric and telephone utilities since 1975. He served as a captain in the U.S. Army Judge Advocate General Corps and worked two years for the Anchorage municipality before going into private practice.

According to his law firm, Kemppel, Huffman and Ellis, Huffman received his bachelor's and law degrees at the University of Kansas.

A partner, Don Ellis, said Huffman had been making long camping trips for several years. He declined to say more Monday.

Katherine Huffman was a long-time teacher for the Anchorage School District. She had a long history of camping and backpacking and was married for a time to wildlife photographer and Mount McKinley climber Johnny Johnson.

"She was real savvy, a real smart woods-person," said a friend, Steve Hagedorn, who accompanied her on a 55-mile backpack trip in Denali National Park in the 1970s.

She brought that love of nature to the classroom, said Carol Comeau, Anchorage schools superintendent, who co-taught second grade with Huffman at Ocean View Elementary in the mid-1970s.

"She had high expectations for discipline and respect. But the kids had a great time," Comeau said Monday. "They spent a lot of time outdoors doing winter activities. She just loved the outdoors."

Huffman later taught at Birchwood and Lake Otis elementary schools. She retired in 2002 but continued to substitute.

The Huffmans were married in 1989. Richard Huffman had three children by a previous marriage. The children were on their way to Alaska on Monday.

"It's just sad," Comeau said. "I've been thinking about her all day, remembering. It's just an absolute Alaskan tragedy."

Body found near Marine's abandoned vehicle

By <mailto:ngevock@dailychronicle.com> NICK GEVOCK Chronicle Staff Writer

Bozeman MT Daily Chronicle

Published June 28, 2005

Searchers using cadaver-sniffing dogs found an adult corpse Saturday near the place in the Gravelly Mountains where a missing U.S. Marine's abandoned vehicle was found last fall.

A team of 21 Madison County sheriff's deputies, search-and-rescue volunteers and six search dogs and their handlers set out Saturday morning, Sheriff Dave Schenk said.

In less than an hour, they found a body within a couple hundred yards of where the SUV owned by Marine Sgt. James Wheeler was found abandoned last September.

The body has been sent to the Montana Division of Forensics lab in Missoula for positive identification, Schenk said.

"It's pretty clear that it's him," Wheeler's mother, Ellen Wrede, said Monday in a telephone interview from her home in Spokane, Wash. She was in Madison County for the weekend search.

The 38-year-old Wheeler disappeared in late August after he checked into his new Marine Reserve base in Charleston, W. Va. He was seen a few days later at a shooting range in Ohio.

Eventually, his vehicle was noticed parked in late September near Crockett Lake in the Gravellys. Sheriff's deputies and U.S. Forest Service officers opted not to search the vehicle or the area for a month because no one had been reported missing.

But after the Geo Tracker remained in the same spot for more than a month, officials searched it and ran an identification check. They found food, camping gear and an expensive shotgun.

At that point, the area was searched using a dog, but snow had already blanketed the mountains and nothing was found, Schenk said.

"For some reason, he didn't pick up the scent," Schenk said. "It's pretty hard for one search dog to search a whole area."

Schenk was determined to conduct a thorough search this spring once the area dried up and before the public was allowed in -- the roads reopen Fourth of July weekend.

This time, searchers were able to do a more systematic search and found the body and some tattered clothing almost right away.

The department expressed its condolences to Wheeler's family.

"Our heart goes out to them," Schenk said. "They've waited a long time for some answers."

In the months since Wheeler's car was discovered, Sheriff's Deputy Dan Birdsill's investigation revealed that Wheeler had fallen into a deep depression.

His mother said he was not trying to get out of going to Iraq -- in fact he wanted to go. She also said her son had previously been to the Gravellys with his grandfather, who died in 1990.

She said her son, whom she called "Jamie," was a kind, quiet man, even though he also had the tough-guy Marine side to him. He had a great sense of humor and was often quick with a witty saying.

"I am more liberal than he was and one day we were discussing things, and he said, 'I tell you what Mom, I promise I love you more than I love Donald Rumsfeld,'" Wrede said. "He would meet people and know how to touch them."

She said she intends to spread her son's ashes in the Gravellys.

<mailto:ngevoock@dailychronicle.com> Nick Gevoock is at ngevoock@dailychronicle.com

This newsletter will be issued once a month and will be posted on the website about the 1st of each month. Therefore, contributions must be sent in by midnight, 3 days prior to the last day of the month.

In order for this to work, everyone needs to be involved, and contribute. Contributions are not limited to Tonto Rim SAR members. The more we communicate, the more we learn, the more effective SAR people we become.

Surprise me - Send in something!

Forward your contributions to editor@trsar.org.

Please send contributions as soon as possible.

Please feel free to forward this letter to any interested persons.

People can subscribe by sending their email address to

editor@trsar.org

To unsubscribe, contact the above email address.

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

Mike 502, editor@trsar.org