

# SAR COORDINATES

November 2009

**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

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***Don't forget; the meetings this month are November 10th for the Board and  
November 12th for the General Meeting.***

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### Deb's Search & Rescue stories

<http://www.sarstories.com>

These are my stories as a volunteer member of a Search & Rescue team in  
Coconino County, Arizona.

#### Daylight Makes All The Difference

Posted: 25 Oct 2009 02:47 PM PDT

In the dark, something ... or someone ... 150 feet away may as well be 150  
miles away if you don't choose a path to the exact location or come close  
enough and happen to shine your light in the right direction. That is, if that  
someone can't respond.

It's hard not to beat yourself up over it--to keep rehashing it in your mind. Or, I  
should say, in my mind. I thought about suggesting to my teammate (my  
husband in this case) that he and I circle through the woods around the ATV  
while we waited for our third field team member to join us. Why didn't I?  
Because I thought that had already been done? Maybe.

But even if we had, that doesn't necessarily mean we would have seen him  
then, either. We wouldn't have gone very far in--just enough to try cutting for

sign--so we probably wouldn't have walked right to that spot. And even ten feet away, in the lights of our headlamps, it was difficult to make out shapes on that dark night. Is that a stump or a log? A bush or a big rock? A man? So many dark shapes could have been a man.

We did search for tracks while we waited, and there were many on the dirt road around the ATV. We looked at the deputies' boots and ruled out those two sets of prints. There was a third set of prints that were different. Maybe, we thought. But then we looked at a family member's shoes. No, that third set of tracks were his. We looked up and down the road, which had been driven on heavily since the ATV was found. We saw no other footprints or partials there, so we looked at the ground on either side of the road near the quad. It's really difficult to find tracks on pine needles. Is that animal or human? Is that even a depression at all? There are so many deer and elk in those woods.

Then our teammate arrived and we began our assignment.

We'd been so close--many of us that night--and then searched so far. I didn't think he'd walk all that far, though, given what we'd been told.

But you just can't know for sure. If he were conscious and anywhere near the quad (the last known point or LKP), he'd have seen the campfire and the lights of our vehicles. Or he'd have heard us calling or even just talking. In fact, the air was so clear, cold and still that night, field teams could hear each other's voices--not even a shout--maybe a half-mile away. And we did shout and blow our whistles as we searched. After the helicopter passed over, we shouted some more. And we looked. We shined our lights this way and that and walked closer to any "suspicious" shapes. There were many.

You want to believe the one you're searching for can hear you if you get close enough. You want to believe they can respond, but you look as hard as you can in case they can't. We covered a lot of ground that night. Just not the right piece of ground.

At about 4am, we rested back at our SAR vehicles, near the LKP. When it was light, we'd resume the search.

But we didn't have to. As soon as the sun came up, one of our team members, standing near where the ATV had been left, looked into the woods and saw "something that didn't look right." He walked into the trees, closer to that something, and saw it was indeed a man.

At least he'd died doing something he loved. And he'd gotten his buck, which lay maybe ten feet in front of where he took his own last step.

One hundred fifty feet away might as well have been 150 miles that dark night, because he couldn't respond.

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To this man's family and friends, my sincere condolences. I'm sorry this search didn't have a happy ending. <http://www.sarstories.com>

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## November 2009 Training & Events Schedule

12-Nov

Cold Weather Gear training. After the General squad meeting.

(Thurs)	
14- Nov (Sat)	Navigation Training - Place: Tonto Natural Bridge turn off - at the corral. Time: 0900
21- Nov (Sat)	Rope Training - Place: Pine Narrow canyon – Time: 0900 – Instructor: Roger Miotto

## Planned Training Sessions ( Coming this Year)

	Planned Navigation Training – Compass and GPS
	Planned Mock Mission
	Planned ATV over night ride 120 miles

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 Don Johnson at 928-474-5335. Jacket, gloves, boots, helmet, and eye protection required to operate Squad ATV

Active: Members wishing to remain on active status must attend at least three official Squad functions per quarter of the calendar year, as well as two training exercises per six months of the calendar year.

Reserve: Members who wish to remain on reserve status must attend at least one official Squad function per quarter of the calendar year as well as one training exercise per six months of the calendar year.

Laws that are still on the books

*At the Paiute Indian Reservation in California, a mother-in-law is prohibited from spending more than 30 days a year visiting her kids.*

*Kids in Kalispell, Montana, must have a note from the doctor in order to buy a lollipop or candy bar while church services are in session.*

*Although there are no R and X ratings for Ma Bell, in Blue Earth , Minnesota, it's against the law for children under 12 to talk on the telephone unless accompanied by a parent.*

# Business Cards for Active Members

All active members are permitted to have business cards with your SAR info on them. If you do not have them yet, or if you have used up the ones you had, contact Mike Taylor to place your order. They are nice to have when you are doing any Squad activities, and the best part is they are free. A common use for them is to hand out to family members of the search/rescue subject.

Email [miket@trsar.org](mailto:miket@trsar.org) or call 978-8009.

## Website

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

## Greg's Musings

Sorry! I don't know what's wrong with me... I just had to do it again.

Greg 521

Click on the link below...

<http://sendables.jibjab.com/view/CuLH0TMhXXOmBOpa>

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## Other SAR News

Rangers at the Grand Canyon perform more rescues than at any other park. Hikers who come prepared with snacks and water and who pace themselves fare the best.

By Felicia Fonseca, Associated Press Writer GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK, Ariz. -

Frank Poole worked out at a gym and hiked around his Mississippi home carrying a weighted pack for months in preparation for his trip to the Grand Canyon.

But it wasn't long after Poole started hiking on a popular Grand Canyon trail that he was struggling to breathe. Several hours later, he was in a northern Arizona hospital, where doctors determined the 75-year-old Poole had suffered a heart attack.

"I never suspected I was having a heart attack," Poole said recently from his home in Oxford, Miss. "I just thought it was the heat and extra exertion, the altitude and things like that. I was just so naive."

At the Flagstaff Medical Center - northern Arizona's only Level I trauma center, and the place where Poole was treated - officials have a name for the spring and summer months when many tourists travel to the canyon. They call it

"Grand Canyon Season."

Emergency workers at the park and hospital officials know they'll start seeing more people with injuries or those who, like Poole, didn't know they had underlying health conditions that surfaced during the strenuous hikes at the canyon.

The canyon lures millions of people each year with its colorful landscape, immense size, and awe-inspiring geology. But it presents obstacles that can leave even experienced hikers emerging sore and fatigued, including scorching heat during summer months, an altitude of 7,000 feet, and steep, rocky, winding trails.

"There's a million ways you can hurt yourself down there," said Lon Ayers, who works in the park's backcountry office.

The last few weeks have illustrated that.

In late April, an Ohio man fell 60 feet when he was peering over the edge of the canyon and lost his balance. Two days later, two teenagers and a young man who were swimming in the Colorado River at the bottom of the canyon were swept away and drowned. Another injury occurred when a mule lost its footing on a trail, fell and rolled over the passenger it was carrying.

Falls, fatigue, extreme temperatures and horseplay at national parks around the country lead to nearly 3,600 search and rescue operations each year, according to 2007 figures. The park service also responds to 16,000 emergency medical calls a year for anything from abrasions to twisted ankles, heat stroke and cardiac arrest, said Dean Ross, NPS branch chief of emergency services in Washington, D.C.

Rangers at the Grand Canyon perform more rescues than at any other park, including 300 helicopter rescues a year, said Ross.

People who come prepared, bringing plenty of snacks and water, and who pace themselves and listen to their bodies fare the best.

"Don't be afraid to try it, (but) take it easy," said Dave Florence of Green Bay, Wis., who recently completed a 40-mile, five-day hike at the canyon.

But hikers don't always heed warnings from rangers and on signs posted around the canyon.

Allan Widener of Louisville, recently took the Bright Angel trail just off the canyon's South Rim. After a park staff member strongly recommended that Widener not head down without water, the hiker quipped that, "I don't drink water, I drink Coke."

On the way back from his 1 1/2 mile hike, leaning against the canyon wall in a shady spot, the 48-year-old said he wished he'd had something to drink.

Park rangers say they generally encounter three types of people hiking in the canyon. There are the strong-headed ones, usually in their teens and 20s who have an invincibility complex and will go against recommendations. Others are excited and unprepared but willing to change plans if needed.

Then there are people like Albert Shank, who are prepared and generally stick to plans they've made, but sometimes get in trouble because of circumstance or because they made a bad decision, said Marc Yeston, deputy chief ranger.

Shank was about 28 miles into what was supposed to be a 42-mile rim-to-rim run in April when his legs started cramping and his body refused to keep down any food or water. He nearly collapsed on a park bench and spent several hours having saline pumped into his body before he was able to walk out of the canyon.

The Arizona State University faculty associate, who often runs distances longer than marathons, had plenty of water, energy bars and peanut butter and jelly sandwiches but not enough electrolytes or salty food.

"That was a rookie mistake, and I'm not a rookie," he said. "I learned that no matter how good of shape you're in, the canyon is something you need to respect, and dehydration will take you down."

What can be deceiving at the Grand Canyon is that the temperature at the South Rim, where 90% of all visitors go, is about 20 degrees cooler than at the bottom. And while most trails lead hikers up a mountain before the downward descent, it's the opposite at the Grand Canyon.

"It's a unique set of circumstances," Ayers said. "People from all over the world need to at least hear it from somebody on what to expect. People who have never hiked the Grand Canyon before expect it to be a walk in the park."

Some hikers do undertake extraordinary preparations. But other times, rangers say they aren't sure what people were thinking. They've seen a man in a business suit carrying a briefcase full of water bottles, a man playing a tuba and people hiking without shoes or in flip-flops.

"It all stems from a lack of preplanning and knowledge of these trails," said Ian Buchanan, a seasonal park worker who advises people on smart hiking. "A lot of people get the sense that it's Disneyland when it's an environmental park."

This time of year, 30% of the heart patients at Flagstaff Medical Center are brought in from the canyon with conditions such as valve and rhythm problems, and heart disease and blockages.

Since the hospital started its open heart surgery program in 2004, there has been at least one month where all heart attack patients came from the Grand Canyon, said Gigi Sorenson, the hospital's cardiopulmonary services director.

"You just get used to it," she said. "And now when tourist season kicks in, you just start to expect when they call and say they're coming from the canyon."

Poole, who had three clogged arteries, was the hospital's first open heart surgery patient after his heart attack at the canyon in 2004. He said his general good health, the exercise he did in preparing for his trip and willingness to seek help spared him from a more serious problem.

He hasn't had any complications with his heart since the surgery. "My heart's in good shape now," he said.

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## Study: Park Service averages 11 searches per day

By MIKE STARK (AP)

SALT LAKE CITY — The ripest recipe for trouble in a national park? Young men hiking on a weekend who make a bad decision or two and end up hurt, exhausted or lost.

On average, 11 search-and-rescue operations are launched in national parks every day. While expenses average around \$900, the price can easily jump into the thousands of dollars, according to a new analysis of search-and-rescue operations over 15 years.

Travis Heggie, an assistant professor at the University of North Dakota who headed up the study, also found that roughly 20 percent of the people who called for help likely would have died if they had not been rescued.

Nearly half of the calls for help are for hikers, often for the day, who are caught unprepared, get hurt or sick, or underestimate the wild landscape.

"They're coming into what they perceive is a safe environment," said Heggie, a former ranger who once worked on a park service risk management program.

The results are similar to an analysis published earlier this year of national parks in Utah, which found young male day hikers were among those most likely to need rescuing.

In recent days, rescuers helped a father and son whose ultralight plane crashed in Utah's Zion National Park, pulled three teenagers and one of the boy's mother from a cliff face at Glen Canyon National Recreation Area on the Utah-Arizona border and launched four separate searches over two days for missing hunters and hikers in Arkansas' Buffalo National River area.

Heggie's study, published in the latest issue of the journal *Wilderness and Environmental Medicine*, was an attempt to quantify the "untold story" of national parks' search-and-rescue operations and see how much they cost. He found more than 65,000 operations in 1992-2007 with expenses exceeding \$58 million.

The study also said that in 2005, half of the operations were in just five spots: Arizona's Grand Canyon National Park, New York's Gateway National Recreation Area, California's Yosemite National Park, Colorado's Rocky Mountain National Park and Nevada's Lake Mead National Recreation Area.

The costs vary widely depending on the rescue's difficulty, the terrain and the equipment necessary, he said. In Yosemite, for instance, costs exceeded \$1.2 million in 2005 while Zion spent about \$139,000.

Individual parks pay for operations that cost \$500 or less, while regional or national offices pick up higher tabs.

"We can't really turn a rotor on an aircraft and not spend over \$500," said Dean Ross, branch chief of emergency services for the National Park Service.

In recent years, the park service has pushed more aggressively to educate visitors about safely traveling in the parks and the importance of understanding where they're going and bringing adequate water and gear.

More difficult, Ross said, is getting people to make the right judgment call when conditions change or they're going into an unfamiliar situation.

After someone is rescued, "you'd be surprised how many say, 'I knew that was going to be a bad idea,'" Ross said.

In a typical year, rescues include people stranded on cliffs, desert dunes, mountaintops and in the water of manmade reservoirs. Some parks have full-time rescue teams while others rely on park staff with other jobs who have rescue training.

In 2007, \$4.7 million was spent in national parks across the country looking for lost, stranded or injured visitors, according to Park Service figures. More than 97 percent of searches were successful within 24 hours.

Heggie said that, behind hikers, boaters are the most likely to need rescuing, with many of the cases involving alcohol.

After high-profile operations, there's often a debate over whether people should

be billed for being plucked from the wilderness. The park service doesn't seek reimbursement, partly because it might discourage people from calling for help when they need it.

The national park system has 391 sites around the country and attracted about 274 million visits last year.

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