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The Coordinator's Desk

It's been a crazy 2012 for me so far. BDSAR is off and running with one mission of which I did a soft callout for the cave incident in Marion. Nothing was found and we were clear of the scene very quickly.

The mission is the least of what has been going on within BDSAR. On Monday January 9th, I met with Rural Retreat Fire Department. These folks were the folks that so graciously stayed, and helped us at the Bland Wythe Incident. We worked very well with them and they have several people that want to join BDSAR.

Those folks have decided to wait until they have taken SAR First Responder in June before they join in order to take stress away from trying to find a Field Training Officer for all of them. They should have between 10 and 15 folks join us, and we welcome them with open arms.

Mike and I have been training some folks in Wise Co. Those folks in Wise Co will also be coming on board to join BDSAR. This will add another 10-15 persons to the membership roster.

Adding members to the roster is a great thing, and these new folks are bringing an energy that we haven't seen from some of our members in a long time.

Welcome them as you were welcomed and train them as you know you should be trained.

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I recently met with some Officers from the Russell Co Sheriff's Department and they haven't been calling BDSAR because they didn't know about us. You can expect to get called to Russell County in the future. Please afford them the same respect you give other Law Enforcement agencies and we'll grow our SAR Response in that county with the Sheriff's Department and the local Volunteer agencies.

Last, but not least, I hope that some of you will want to compete in the Black Diamond SAR competition. We don't have as much interest from other teams yet, and could very well be a competition between BDSAR and SWVaMRG.

Safe Training and Safe responses. Please let me know if I owe any of you anything and I'll take care of it!

**A well prepared searcher is
a well trained searcher. A
well trained searcher is
ready for a mission any
time, any where, any
weather.**

Upcoming Training Events

Mike Maggard - Training Officer

- Jan 28, 2012 Simulation Camp Bethel Wise, VA
- Feb 4-5 SAR 1 R – Grayson Co.
- March 9-11 & 23-25 – GSAR Halifax Co.
- March 31, 2012 – BDSAR Competition
- April 19-22 – VASARCo SAR Conference Holiday Lake
- May 19 – SAREx – Blue Ridge Music Center
- May ?? – Hike trails at Grayson Highlands State Park
- June 2-3 – SAR 1 R – Rural Retreat
- Third full weekend of June, July, August, & September - Backbone



Time for a Meeting?

Something that I've always disliked about Organizations is they have to have meetings. I wish we could just train and be done with it. However; these meetings are a good time for fellowship where we actually get some business completed. BDSAR has a lot going on and we will need to have some valuable discussion in the next couple of months concerning 2012 and 2013.

Please make every effort to attend these meetings. I plan to have a meeting in February on a Friday night. This has been the best time for most folks and we've always been very lenient on meeting attendance. No, none of us want to be there, but this is everyone's team. This isn't my team, Mike's team, etc. If you are a member of this team, then you are part owner in this.

Your lack of attendance at the meetings tells me you're satisfied with the direction of BDSAR and you're satisfied with decisions made by those at the meetings. Please participate in the meetings.

Proposed meeting date: February 10th, 2012 - important discussion about many things coming up which will involve many of BDSAR's members. Also, a nominating committee will be chosen for elections - to be held at the April meeting. We are discussing having a full day of training in February to be held at the 4H Center in Abingdon. We could do re-certs, litter handling, Land Nav, etc. If we have this day long event, then the meeting will be moved to the morning of that day.

Proposed meeting date: April 1, 2012 - Yes, it's a Sunday, but we can meet the Friday before the competition or the Sunday after. Your choice!! Elections, and clean up from the discussion of February 10th.

Dues Fee Schedule for 2012

All -

Before the Board of Directors, of which the Membership will have to vote on, will be the following increase in the Dues Fee Schedule. Please let me know your thoughts or concerns.

\$25 / 1 member

\$40 / family of 2

\$50 / family of 3

\$60 / family of 4



When you need gear... don't forget A&L Outfitters! In addition to being a fully authorized dealer for Petzl, PMI, True North, and Eagles Nest Outfitters... they can also get many other name brand products for your outdoor adventure and as a **BDSAR member, you'll get a discount!!** So give Rob a call today... 276-706-1150 or e-mail him at aloutfitters@comcast.net.

Understanding Alzheimer's disease as it pertains to SAR

By Ryan Tipps

Imagine a person who forgets about the fact that he is forgetful. Imagine someone who sees signs and interprets language in a manner completely foreign to you. Imagine, too, that there's very little doctors can do about it.

Those are some of the effects Alzheimer's disease has on people as it slowly erodes brain cells and becomes fatal.

On Saturday, Jan. 14, Kimberly Kelly -- a former sheriff's deputy, longtime SAR member, and founder of Project Far From Home -- spoke to a few dozen SAR personnel in a daylong workshop at the Blacksburg Fire and Rescue Station. People came from as far away as South Carolina to hear the nationally renowned speaker talk about the "Silver Tsunami" of older persons, who are at high risk for Alzheimer's, that's about to hit the nation.

While the medical field may not be able to cure Alzheimer's, SAR personnel can help these patients when they're at their most vulnerable.

Kelly said about one in eight people over the age of 65 have Alzheimer's, though she also described cases of the disease hitting people in their early 40s. And as the number of senior citizens increases with the aging of the Baby Boomer generation, also increasing will be the number of SAR call-outs related to Alzheimer's.

The disease impairs cognitive function and can manifest itself in one or more ways: Agnosia, Aphasia, and Apraxia. All of these can vary by subject.

- Agnosia is the loss or reduction in the brain's ability to interpret visual images.
 - Street signs don't register with the patient properly.
 - Driving decisions can become affected.
 - Visual cliffing, in which patients lose their depth perception, can occur.
- Aphasia is the loss or reduction in the brain's ability to interpret language.
 - Patients may not be able to ask for exactly what they want, even if that item is right in front of them.
 - Searchers need to understand how a subject speaks as well as how they interpret language.
 - Good language skills can help a missing person get farther.
- Apraxia is the loss or reduction of coordination of motor skills.
 - This affects a person's balance and navigation.
 - A subject's internal GPS may no longer work.

Kelly said much of a search involving Alzheimer's patients has to do with the interview and investigation phase. Be clue aware--was repeated often during the presentation. Keep an eye out in a home for medications, reminder post-it notes, and even suicide notes. This is especially important because many families can be in denial that a loved one has the disease. For this reason, be skeptical about the reported functioning level of an Alzheimer's patient. Some families may want to believe that their loved one's cognitive level is higher than it really is. After all, who wants to admit that Mom doesn't remember some of the basic things about her life or the lives of her children?

Families also may hide details because they believe that only bad caregivers would let their family member wander off. Families don't want to think of themselves or have others think of them as inadequate. However, the truth is that Alzheimer's patients can wander off at any moment from even the most caring and watchful families.

Alzheimer's manifests itself in three stages: early, mid, and late. Of course, as the disease progresses, Agnosia, Aphasia, and Apraxia can worsen significantly and make preparing and executing a search mission for such a subject all that more difficult. Teams should recognize that Alzheimer's patients are prone to taking things, so clues that may not normally be found on a subject may actually be linked to the search. And, in a state where populations are shifting and development is occurring, an increasing blurring of the lines between urban, suburban, and wilderness environments can complicate things for SAR personnel.

With missing Alzheimer's patients, dehydration, stress, temperature, and environment are working against SAR teams more than those factors would in a typical search. Such subjects often leave their homes and nursing facilities for reasons that include food, fear, frustration, pain, or obligation. Conflict with family members or a sense that they need to go to church even though they haven't been there in years are some of the ways these five reasons can play out.

Looking for a person with Alzheimer's can upend a search in a multitude of ways. A searcher, whether in the field or at base, needs to be flexible and to be thinking outside the box in order to yield a successful mission. As Kelly showed the class during her presentation, far too often, missing Alzheimer's patients are never even found and families don't get the answers they deserve.

GRAYSON HIGHLANDS STATE PARK SUMMER SAR ROTATION

We are currently working on the Standard Operating Procedure for our response to Grayson Highlands State Park. This should be finalized soon after the SAR First Responder which will be held at Mt. Rogers Fire Rescue on the first weekend in February.

Black Diamond SAR Council will begin playing an instrumental role in the SAR response to Grayson Highlands and the surrounding Mt. Rogers Recreational Area.

We have begun speaking about the possibility of folks camping on-site through the summer in the off chance that GHSP has a response request. Those folks will be first on scene until other resources can arrive.

We will be keeping an online calendar which you will be able to sign up for a specific weekend. Please do not get upset if we ask that you camp alongside someone else. Remember, you will be requested to handle the first couple of hours of a mission until other resources arrive.

Trisha Fitzgerald from Shenandoah Mountain Rescue Group has been a huge help with the SOPs, possibly donating radios for use for the summer, and trying to acquire a camper to be put in the park for the summer. If you see her at any trainings, please pat her on the back and thank her for her hard work.



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