



CROSS TRAXX

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The Voice of SAR Alberta

Alberta, Canada

Special points of interest:

- ◆ 6th Annual SAR Alberta Conference will be held in Edmonton, March 1 to 3, 2002 – it's coming up fast! Check SAR Alberta's website for updates at: <http://www.saralberta.org/>
- ◆ Does your group or region need equipment or have a pet project that needs funding? Check the "New Initiatives Fund" on the NSS website at: <http://www.nss.gc.ca>
- ◆ March 1st, 2002 is the deadline for applying for the new RCMP/Volunteer Observer/Aircrew Course – see page 2 for details.
- ◆ Need a VHF or UHF frequency to talk to municipal emergency services responders, disaster services or other SAR groups? Check the SAR Alberta website in the near future for information on the "Alberta Municipal Aid Frequencies", you'll be glad you did!
- ◆ Once again, don't forget to register for the SAR Alberta Conference!

For Information on SAR Alberta, or this publication, please contact:

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SAR Stars And Smucks! Brad Marshall, President SAR Alberta

Well its been a blur to say the least. With the AGM approaching and my term as President nearing its completion, its time to look back over the past 9 months and reflect on everything that's occurred. Instead of attempting to try and describe every event this term and its significance, I've decided to simply proclaim my "SAR STARS and SMUCKS" for this past year, and leave it to you to seek out the background behind each declaration if you so choose. So here it goes:

Stars – (These people deserve a round of applause)

- **Bylaws and Policies Committee** for being the busiest SAR Alberta committee this past term.
- **Fund Development Committee** for increasing merchandise sales by 80%.
- **Fred McFall** for stepping up when no one else would and taking on the challenging job of being Chair of the newly created Training Committee.
- **Foothills SAR's 2001 National Competition Winning Team** cause they beat everyone else.
- **Whitehorse SAR** for hosting a great National SAR Conference, despite considerable challenges.
- **Monica Ahlstrom** for her perseverance to build a national SAR association, despite limited resources and understanding.
- **RCMP** for thinking out-of-the-box and pursuing their Volunteer Observer/Aircrew Support & FLIR Operator Course.
- **Disaster Services Branch** for recommitting their financial support for the production of our quarterly newsletter, Cross Traxx.
- **Every SAR Team** that participated in 2001 SAR Day in May, enabling our provincial government and the public to develop a better understanding about SAR and why they should support us more.
- **All the Tasking Agencies** that responded to the Standards Committee's questionnaire.
- **National Search and Rescue Secretariat** for attempting to address the unfairness of NIF, with new guidelines.
- **Bruce Grey and the Calgary Fire Dept.** for coming onboard with the Training Committee and developing our Civil Emergency Response course.
- **Brett Wuth and Rod Dietrich** for completing their terms of office on the Board and having done their job well, SAR Alberta is a better organization for their efforts. Thanks Guys!

Smucks (These people have considerable room to improve)

- **Industry Canada** for charging SAR Teams annual radio licensing fees just for the privilege of providing an essential service to the public, on behalf of the government.
- **Customs and Revenue Agency** for providing a tax credit to volunteer emergency service workers to apply against the money they receive. Duh, what part of "volunteer" don't you people understand!
- **St. Paul Region** for having NO representation in attendance at SAR Alberta Board meetings this past term. Your Region had basically no input into all the important decisions that were made by the SAR Alberta Board this past year.
- **RCMP "K" Division** for consistently failing to realize that every other tasking agency in the province, and a considerable number of their own police officers believe that SARDAA is not only a creditable SAR resource in this province, but when it comes to WATER SEARCHING, they are the ONLY SAR dog resource. I didn't think that the RCMP was so overstaffed right now that they can't consider ALL viable SAR resources in this province, to augment their service delivery.

Well that the list folks and I called it the way I saw it. You're welcome to provide your feedback on SAR Alberta's website Message Board. See you all at the 2002 Provincial SAR Conference!



Calling All Scribes!

Take up your quill or keyboard and send us a short article on your operations, group, region, training, municipality – all of them! And send photos too!



What Region are You In? Prepared by the Bylaws and Policies Committee

Why Consultation?

Search and Rescue Alberta through its Bylaws and Policies Committee is considering changes to the policies that determine which organizations are a part of which Region. This is naturally going to have an impact on the local SAR groups and other member organizations. A policy development process has been created to allow you to participate.

The first stage of the policy development, performed by the Bylaws and Policies Committee, was scoping the policy alternatives.

This document is the second stage. It is intended to spur discussion in the SAR Alberta Membership. An accompanying questionnaire allows you to direct your comments back to the committee. For the third stage, the committee will host a workshop during the March 1-3, 2002 Provincial conference.

In the fourth stage, the committee will take all the comments and input it has been provided and make specific recommendations for the policies that will determine which organizations belong to which Region.

The SAR Alberta Board will review the recommendations in the fifth stage and decide whether to endorse them for presentation at the 2003 Annual General Meeting.

Any change to the policies will require a bylaw change. Each Member Organization will receive notice of the proposed changes. At the 2003 AGM, during the final stage it will be the Member SAR Groups who will decide whether to change the bylaws.

So What Is It About?

A few Member Groups and SAR individuals have raised the concern that different regional boundaries would be better. The motivation for doing so are:

- The current boundaries don't follow natural groupings.
- Most Regions radiate from Edmonton, but Edmonton may not be a natural focus for SAR.
- Some outlying Regions have consistently had difficulty sending the Region's Director (or Deputy) to Board meetings because of the travel distance.
- Some Regions have many more groups than other Regions, but they have just one Region's Director on the Board.

When SAR Alberta was founded the Regions were based on the RCMP subdivisions in Alberta. The RCMP subdivisions have since been eliminated however SAR Alberta chose to keep the old boundaries as they were.

As Member Groups grow and working relationships between groups develop and change, there will be a need to change boundaries or allow groups to switch which Region they are in.

There are several different ways that the policies that determine which Member Organization belongs to which Region affects the Member Organizations and SAR Alberta as a whole.

- Each of the current 9 Region has a single vote on the SAR Alberta Board. Increasing or decreasing the number of regions changes the size of the Board. (There are also 5 officers on the Board).
- When different Regions represent different numbers of SAR volunteers the Region still has only 1 vote on the Board.
- When different Regions represent different numbers of Member Organizations the Region still has only 1 vote on the Board.
- Member Organizations in the same region necessarily must meet together regularly. They build better relationships. But relationships with other Member Organizations outside the Region may not be given the same amount of time.
- The Region's Director must balance the concerns of the Member Organizations in the Region. When the Member Organizations don't have much in common, it may be difficult to represent each organization fairly.

RCMP/SAR Volunteer Observer/Aircrew Support & FLIR Operator Course

SAR Alberta is partnering with RCMP "K" Division to provide wide distribution of the following course overview and application to ensure that all interested civilian SAR volunteers have an opportunity to evaluate the training opportunity and apply if they choose to. The candidate application process is self explanatory and may be accessed for printing purposes through the link below. Because this is a RCMP program, all questions regarding the program should be directed to:

Sgt. Derek Simmonds, RCMP "K" Division SAR Coordinator, not SAR Alberta

NOTE: APPLICATION DEADLINE IS MARCH 1, 2002

A .pdf file can be found on the SAR Alberta web site (www.saralberta.org) under RCMP News containing an overview of the course and registration details.

“A Policy Discussion Paper on Membership in SAR Alberta Regions”

Spirit Of Cooperation - Roger Tetreault, President , Sundre SAR Society

On Sunday November 25, 2001 Sundre Search and Rescue were approached by the Sundre RCMP to assist in the recovery of a hunter who had died of natural causes while hunting west of Caroline on Corkscrew Mountain. The terrain is very rugged (hence the name) in this area and about 20 cm of fresh snow had recently fallen. The RCMP had attended the site around midnight with local EMS personnel and felt it was much too difficult to attempt an extrication with their existing resources and the darkness. The RCMP believed it would be a fairly technical recovery and suggested we bring rope and slope gear as well as a chainsaw. Since Sundre does not have a high angle rescue team we called upon Rocky Mountain House Search & Rescue for the assistance of their Mountain Rescue Team. Being somewhat familiar with this area we knew that ATVs would be of little help to access the site. The RCMP had said the hunter was on a fairly well defined game trail along a very steep side slope at the lower part of the mountain about one to two kilometers from his vehicle. With this information we decided to also enlist the help of our newly formed Mounted Search & Rescue group.

The Mounted SAR team is comprised of members from Sundre, Didsbury and Rocky who share an interest in horses. All members must be fundamentally trained and belong to a regular SAR group. They get together to train and share information on how

missions, strategies & tactics and to promote the use of horses in many aspects of SAR work.

On this particular mission we felt that a horse may be beneficial in towing out the rescue toboggan or packing gear. Anyone who has packed a 70 lb rope bag and carried a chainsaw for two kilometers through dense bush can appreciate the opportunity to have a horse bear some of the burden.

With our resources in place we set out to meet the RCMP at the scene. There were members from Sundre ground SAR, Rocky MRT, and Glenda Schneidmiller and "Cruise" from the Mounted SAR team. When the three teams met together with the RCMP there were no strangers. Through joint training exercises, mutual assistance on searches and attendance at meetings and conferences, everyone knew the members of the teams that we would be working with. We were so comfortable with each other and the functions that each person would perform that we never bothered to assign a search manager or even a team leader. There was no bickering over jurisdiction, who was in charge or how we should do things. We geared up and headed down the trail to do a job that had to be done. We did the job for the victim, the victim's family and for whatever personal reason each of us decides to do what we do, in a snowstorm on Grey Cup Sunday.

It was a tough half hour walk



tougher two hours packing out the hunter. The horse was used several times where the ground was level enough that the toboggan did not slide away. Not any old horse will do for this task, Cruise is a well-conditioned, manageable mountain horse that did not panic on the several occasions that he lost his footing and slid onto his side. He also did not spook having two hundred pounds tied to his saddle and eight people huffing, puffing and crashing all around him. Although we got no complaints from our victim I would not recommend this method of extrication of a live subject.

As far as I know this was the first successful SAR mission in which a horse was used. I strongly suggest that all search managers consider any and all resources available to them to get the job done and to become familiar with the various specialty teams available. Invite these teams to train with you and become an extension of your own group.

I have heard rumors that some groups wish to limit the number of SAR teams in the Province. I see no merit in this and truly believe it would be detrimental to search and rescue in Alberta to turn away prospective groups or members. Every person who is willing to give of their time and ability is an asset to all of us.

The success of this mission was credited to the ability of three SAR groups being able to work together and be willing to recognize the strengths of each other and to draw from them. To have the arrogance to state that we don't need any more SAR teams is truly a dangerous thing.

"The success of this mission was credited to the ability of three SAR groups being able to work together and be willing to recognize the strengths of each other and to draw from them"



Photographs By Roger Tetreault

Call for Candidates, 2002 AGM – Brett Wuth, Past President

At the 6th annual SAR Alberta Provincial Conference in Edmonton, Alberta March 1 to 3, 2002, the SAR Alberta Annual General Meeting (AGM) is being held Saturday March 2. During the AGM, the by-laws call for the election of a Treasurer and Vice-President. The Vice-President will automatically become President in the following year.

Nominations may be made prior to the AGM, or at the AGM by the representative of a Voting SAR Alberta Member Group in good standing. Nominations made prior to the AGM must be in writing and be received by the Nominations and Elections Committee by February 15.

If the nominated person is not in attendance at the AGM, it is desirable to have a document from that person confirming their intention to run for the nominated position.

Any person who wishes to run for one of these positions may forward a one page information sheet outlining their background, platform, etc., which will then in turn be distributed to the SAR Alberta membership via the web page and other means. This is not mandatory, but designed to assist any candidates in the sharing of information. Please forward any such one page documents to Brett Wuth at: email sara-elect@castrov.cuug.ab.ca, or fax 403 627-4332, or mail to Box 1251-S, Pincher Creek, Ab, T0K 1W0.

All voting member organizations are strongly encouraged to have a delegate attend the AGM to determine the future direction of SAR Alberta.

For detailed job descriptions, and related material please see <http://www.saralberta.org/Committee/nominations/index.html> Contact: Brett Wuth, Nominations and Elections Committee sara-elect@castrov.cuug.ab.ca, 403 627-2460.

“Support the democratic process . . . Run for office . . . Let your voice be heard”

SAR Day 2002 - John Rotheisler, Vice President

With SAR Day seemingly just around the corner (May 4th), we here at SAR Alberta are beginning to get excited.

This year, Craig Goddard from Calgary Region has graciously thrown his hat into the ring and volunteered to be the SAR Day Coordinator. His job will include gathering information from all the different SAR Alberta Member groups on what activities are being planned for that day, and ensuring this information gets to the Minister in charge of SAR Day for the official declaration.

This is an exciting day for the members of SAR Alberta as it gives us a chance to work together around the Province and show the populace what it is that we do. It is a great opportunity to foster community relationships and to drum up new members for our teams.

I hope you take advantage of this wonderful day and help Craig in his duties by assisting him with his information gathering. The more we can make the public aware of what we do, the better off we will be in the future. The previous two years' declarations can be found on the SAR Alberta web site (www.saralberta.org) under Government News.

Pssst! Wanna Hear a Secret???

 Brad Marshall, President SAR Alberta

Would it surprise you to know that the SAR Alberta Board and Executive takes direct input from certain powerful entities that have considerable influence over many of the SAR activities that you take a direct interest in? Furthermore would it surprise you even more to find out that you too could become a member of one of these powerful entities and therefore have meaningful input into what SAR Alberta does? Shhh, be careful who you tell this to, but the secret is..... *SAR Alberta's committees!*

SAR Alberta is currently looking for some good men and women to serve as members on many of its committees for the 2002-2003 term, starting March 3rd. These committees include: Bylaws and Policies, Nominations and Elections, Standards, Training, Communications, Telecommunications, Fund Development, Preventive Education and Awards. Also for those that REALLY want to a personal impact on the decision-making within SAR Alberta, we are looking for some Chairs for the following committees: Bylaws and Policies, Telecommunications, Fund Development. To express an interest and find out more about these unique opportunities to better serve your local SAR Team, please contact President Brad Marshall.
