



The Official Newsletter of GPSAR
RESCUE ME
Greater Philadelphia Search & Rescue
Proudly and professionally serving PA, NJ, DE & MD since 1977.
WINTER 2008 ISSUE - www.gpsar.org

When a person is lost or endangered, seconds can mean the difference between life and death. Fortunately, there is available, a dedicated search and rescue group - Greater Philadelphia Search And Rescue (GPSAR).

Founded in 1979, GPSAR has a primary response area within the States of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware, however, GPSAR has been requested by, and responds to missions in other States as well.

OUTREACH

Summer ended lazily but GPSAR was busy doing outreach in local communities throughout the region. We eased through July by contributing to the East Norriton Parks Program doing presentation with some of our K-9 partners on the 16th. We also attended the Plymouth Community Day on July 26th. The hot summer months ended with our contribution to Abington Night Out. There was a great turnout as usual for the team and the community with lots of smiles and doggie kisses for the kids. We enjoyed the local community event at the Springtown Rod and Gun Club and ended the month at the Jenkintown Fire Department Community Event.

The leaves began to change and we started to ramp up the events beginning with the East Norriton Community Day. On September 12th the West Chester chapter of the F.O.P. sponsored a Police Cruise Night at a local car dealership. Although it rained significantly the night was a success ending with GPSAR being awarded a plaque for the Most Interactive Display thanks to our K-9 partners. The next day was spent at the Riegelsville Fire Company's Blue Grass Festival. It was a foot stomping good time! Jumping up to the 21st, we visited with Best Friends in Willow Grove and helped make their Responsible Pet Ownership Day a success. The month was ended with our participation at the Fort Washington Fire Expo on the 22nd.

October was fire Prevention Month. Many departments requested our help in this outreach endeavor. Our volunteers were able to attend six different days during three of the four weekends. We started off with the Center Square Fire Prevention Night on the 3rd followed by the Edgehill Fire Co. Community Day in collaboration with Mr. Jim Kane a member of the Dept. At the same time we had members at the Pottstown Home Depot which sponsored a Community Day. The 11th of October was tough as we covered two events. One was in Huntingdon Valley sponsored by the HV Fire Dept and the other was in Willow Grove sponsored by the WG Fire Dept. The month of October faded with the leaves as we spent the day at Eastern Mountain Sports in Warrington on the 18th.

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This was a year that we saw our resources tapped to the limits and tested. We never failed to deliver despite even having multiple calls in one day 4 or 5 hours away. Our performance and response is a testament to the dedication of our membership.

In a year when we've seen other teams fold and the ones that are left drop in size we've actually managed to grow. Our membership is in the low 30's and it's a real #. This means that we can deliver 2/3 of that # at a given time. While many teams are barely able to get 3 or 4 to a scene we're showing up with 13 to start and adding another 10 shortly after typically.

It's with great pride that we provide these services to our respective communities.

Our current structure is as follows:

Chairperson

Holly Clouse

President

Lisa Herbst

Vice President:

Linda Swenson

Secretary:

Rachel McKay Laskowski

Chief:

Mark G. Hopkins

Asst. Chief:

T.J. Wallace

Sergeant:

Jen Christian

Sergeant:

Andy Hull



TRAINING NEVER STOPS



The team continues to train twice a week even though we fill our other days with community events and active searches. Not to mention our daily lives and responsibilities. Sometimes we get to do something a little different. That was the case on Labor Day weekend. We all met at the Outward Bound facility in Fairmount Park and started the day off with some simple team building exercises and games. We were tied in knots: human and in laughter.

After learning and reviewing some harness basics we learned the ropes. Course that is.

Team members had a good time climbing the pole and spinning on top. The challenge was standing and turning then making a giant leap out to touch the knot hanging high above the crowd. Flying and falling through the air was fun. The trust level on the ropes proved that the pole was not the only thing that was high that day.

Watching everyone climb the net was informative as everyone has a unique technique on how to get up the tube. Hanging in the tree house as everyone took turns climbing out and rappelling down made us all wish we “had one of these” in our own back yards. After we all finished our turns, we were like anyone after a thrill ride, we all wanted to do it again. It was fun to do something different and learn a little bit more about your team members in the process. We look forward to repeating this training in the future. Several members are looking for alternate sites to don our helmets and “learn the ropes”. This was a good experience to reinforce knowledge in a fun and relaxed manner

Several of the new K-9 partners were certified with their AKC Canine Good Citizen in October. First –Aid and CPR certifications and recertifications are being pursued by team members as well. In addition to these

certifications new members are getting up to speed completing their requirements for NIMS by taking the ICS 100, 200, 700 and 800 on line.

All of this is a testament to the dedication of our members and the professional expectations of the organization.

What did GPSAR do this year?

GPSAR was everywhere. Below is a rough breakdown of our #'s. They reflect events up to the 3rd weekend in December 2008.

These #'s do not reflect office time, and individual time.

Type	#	Hours	Avg #
Searches	27	776	16
Training - W	50	2348	12
Training - S	35	1896	14
Details	31	1096	9
Special	20	520	7
Meetings	11	636	13
Totals	174	7272	12



Haycock Mountain Search



Nescopek State Forest.



Missing Alzheimer's patient in Northeast Philadelphia is found.

The summer was quiet for us on the active search front and September was minimal with only one active search in Jim Thorpe, Pa for a lost hunter which was precipitated by the hunter searching for his lost phone. October proved to be a very challenging month with seven active callouts starting with a woman stranded through out the night on Haycock Mountain near Nockamixon State Park. We were called in and began arriving on scene as the sun came up. She turned up alive and well. The next week we were in Leesport, Pa (10/9) looking for another woman who went missing. She was also located alive and well.

On October 16th GPSAR was challenged by doing two searches in one day. First we went to Barnesville, Pa to look for a missing hunter. He was located as he managed to walk out mid-morning. We immediately were dispatched by PSARC to aid in the search for a mentally challenged man in Richfield, Pa. That search was eventually suspended when it was determined that the young man was evading the search effort. He was located a few days later at a shelter over 30 miles away in Lebanon, Pa. The following week we assisted DCNR in a search for another lost hunter in Nescopek State Forest. Unfortunately the family and search personnel had a sad outcome when the man was found deceased.

Sadness touched the team again as they helped Bensalem PD locate an elderly woman who had walked away from her home. She was located alive but later died in the hospital. In the unfortunate event that an individual becomes lost or missing and is found deceased or nearly so, the one thing that satisfies our members is that the family has some closure to a traumatic event in their lives.