



ABOVE: DAWN BREAKS AT MJSE#1 IN CODERRE, SK, MAY 2016.

# Search Me A SARSAV Quarterly

## Issue #3, Winter 2016

### IN THIS ISSUE

## President's Message

As winter has once again closed its grasp on us, it gives me cause to pause and reflect on the very busy year that has recently passed – my last full and year three as your President.

We have had the pleasure to witness the delivery of a state-of-the-art radio system, which will certainly add functionality to our responses. The training on these radios has also begun around the province. This has been a very exciting and challenging time for all.

We have hosted two successful multi-jurisdictional search exercises, which gave teams from around the province the opportunity to work together, problem solve together, and succeed together. It has also helped to strengthen our ties with our SAR partners provincially.

It was exciting to see so many SARSAV representatives at SARSCENE in Edmonton. No doubt, there will be more updates about the conference in upcoming issues! I especially enjoy seeing and being part of an event so dedicated to SAR at the national level.

If that wasn't enough, another SARVAC conference took place in Saskatoon in early December. It lived up to its promises

of another excellent learning and networking experience.

Nationally, we have a recently begun upgrading our training standards to align with the new CSA Training Curriculum, and with the recent meeting in Toronto, we will be at the forefront of rolling it out.

We also had a relatively busy 2016 on the search end. There have been callouts in areas where we are lacking chapters; perhaps this gets us visibility that will continue to grow our organization.

Our Board is still working with our partners at the RCMP and the SK Government on the issues around an MOU, sustainability funding, and insurance. I must always remind myself of the words of Napoleon Hill: "Patience, persistence, and perspiration make an unbeatable combination for success."

Lastly, to each and every one of you - THANK YOU for all that you do for Search and Rescue. Your efforts are far too numerous to list here (Tracey says that I can't be that long-winded! LOL), but know that they do not go unrecognized. It has been a true honor to work with all of you.  
~ Justin



### MJSEs #1 and 2

The population of Coderre, SK tripled during the weekend of May 13-15, 2016 when SARSAV members, joined by CASARA, RCMP SAR team, and dog handlers from SARDAA participated in our first Saskatchewan Communicates Multi-Jurisdictional Search Exercise.

Then in September, Canora played host to SARSAV chapters once again for MJSE2 – along with CASARA planes and STARS.

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### AdventureSmart heads east

April saw three SARSAV representatives head to St. John's, Newfoundland for an AdventureSmart Coordinators meeting. Photo by Dale Hintz, Parkland SAR

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# SAR mock exercise held in Coderre

Reprinted with permission - article by Paul Boisvert, Gravelbourg Tribune

On Saturday, May 14, 2016, SARSAV held a Multi-Jurisdictional Search Exercise in Coderre, located 31 kms north east of Gravelbourg. This was the first of four planned events across the province and a first for south central.

The 85 individuals signed in for the mock exercise were representing SARSAV chapters from Moose Jaw, Regina, Gravelbourg (Wood River SAR), Saskatoon, Yorkton (Parkland SAR), Dalmeny (North Corman Park SAR), Wadena, Search and Rescue Dog Association of Alberta (SARDA), Denare Beach, RCMP, Prince Albert, La Loche, and CAE / 15 Wing Moose Jaw. Unable to attend was the Civil Air Search and Rescue Association (CASARA), the volunteer non-profit aviation association dedicated to the promotion of search and rescue.

Provincial secretary for SARSAV is Tracey Lagasse of Gravelbourg who is also president of Wood River SAR.

"We are working with different chapters from around the province, members of SARSAV, plus working with the RCMP, CASARA, and SARDA to conduct a search exercise. This is designed around an individual who has gone missing. We are conducting it as if it is the real thing," said Lagasse.

Why do we need search and rescue?

Lagasse said even in areas such as the grain belt of the province you need trained professional volunteers to properly execute a search for missing persons.

"They (missing persons) can leave thousands of clues as



It's amazing," said Hawkins.

They have computers with pdf maps and for the first time ever communication radios that can signal GPS locations.

Would she encourage people to volunteer for search and rescue?

"Absolutely. The more people, then the sooner you would find someone," she said.

Hawkins said anyone could help because there are so many different tasks. You might not be able to walk outside and brave the elements but they need support staff for providing meals, registrations, phone calls, assigning teams and anything else required to make the operation run smoothly.

Robert Smith of Prince Albert, provincial treasurer of SARSAV, said the federal government provided funds to buy the radios needed at a cost of over \$500 000. The radios will be available for all chapters in the province.

Pat Casement of Wadena is a SARSAV member and design manager of the MJSE. He had to come up with the scenario and made it as challenging as possible.

He said SARSAV wanted to get as many of the provincial chapters working together as possible. They all take their individual training but rarely have the opportunity to test their knowledge and skills as a unit.

"This is the real life test," said Casement.

to where they are, so we have to be very vigilant and learn what it is we are looking for and the kind of clues that indicate that they were in an area. It can really mean the difference in survivability in a lot of cases, if the weather is poor or if the individual has health concerns," she said.

The exercise involved a young individual who suffers a concussion while riding a quad and begins to wander while in a confused state of mind. Ground teams are then organized into teams to try and find the individual.

Member of Wood River SAR, Betty Hawkins, helped with the planning and was an observer during the exercise. She was a part of the Incident Command centre and was in charge of logistics – finding resources for the volunteers. This centre includes EMO, RCMP, and

radio communication personnel and anyone who works in support roles such as a representative of CASARA if a plane was involved.

"I'm so glad that there are people out there that can do what these people do if I ever had a child lost or somebody that I needed found.





He said having diverse groups such as the RCMP, EMO personnel and 15 Wing Moose Jaw helps them better understand what each group can offer in a search and how they can work together.

"We use a system called the Incident Command System which sets out a certain protocol and a certain way of running an event. And it is generic so it doesn't matter who is in charge of the exercise, or what the event is, we have a way of organizing it and making sure everything runs smoothly. So everybody puts aside their 'my way of doing it' and revert to the Incident Command System," he said.

What was the biggest challenge in hosting an MJSE?

Casement said the months of planning and preparation by the organizing committee which in this case was Wood River SAR in Gravelbourg. He said Tracey Lagasse and her committee worked for months preparing for the event – all volunteer time.



"The communities in the area here have been tremendous in their support. It's just been phenomenal the support we've received in putting this on," he said.

The exercise is always important.

"The whole purpose of this exercise is to learn," he said. "Everyone here that I've talked to so far from the different organizations is saying we've learned a lot from this. Not just the search itself but the organization," he said.

*Ed. Note: Thanks to all who came for the MJSE. It was a great learning experience – complete with SCORPA review when dealing with power and water outage on Sunday morning! Glad everyone was so understanding and "rolled with the punches" with us.*

*Of note was the coincidental missing person in the Val Marie area on the night of the 14<sup>th</sup>. Due to lack of a defined search area, our members were not activated by the RCMP – but by a strange turn of fate, she was found the next morning by a landowner... **only 4 miles from Coderre.** Local first responders (who happened to be participating in the MJSE as SAR members) attended. Kudos to the very observant landowners who trusted their instincts when they saw something that just didn't look right!*



The second *Saskatchewan Communicates MJSE* was hosted by Parkland SAR at Canora, SK. This exercise involved ATV/UTV operations, CASARA spotters, STARS landing zone training, and near-water operations.

Below: A view from the window of a CASARA airplane shows how the pilots searched the area for signs of the missing hunters. Photo courtesy of the Canora Courier.



# Parkland SAR organizes training exercise for SAR volunteers

Reprinted with permission - article by Schayla Kirschman, Canora Courier

The Canora Curling Rink became the command centre for an organized group of search-and-rescue professionals September 16 to 18.

Parkland Search and Rescue held a multi-jurisdictional search exercise in order to hone the skills of a group of dedicated volunteers.

Though the search was held in Canora and the

surrounding area, the event brought in members from multiple areas across the province, including Yorkton, La Ronge, Prince Albert, Wadena, Gravelbourg, and Moose Jaw.

Heather Ritchie, the Parkland SAR local president, expected about 35 volunteers to attend the exercise, but in fact, discovered that 50 people attended training at different points.

While the command centre was based out of the Canora Curling Rink, the actual search was taking place up to 20 miles west of Canora. At that location, five separate teams conducted grid road searches in an attempt to find the locations of the two men playing the missing people for the exercise.

As the Parkland SARSAV branch is based out of Yorkton, the organization worked in conjunction with the Yorkton branch of the Civil Air Search and Rescue Association (CASARA) at the Yorkton airport. The organization had three planes searching from the air for the missing people, as well as navigators and spotters. Joining them were two members of the RCMP

specializing in search-and-rescue operations.

The training exercise began on September 16, with the volunteers receiving training regarding searching near water. The following day, the official exercise began with a debriefing at the Sylvia Fedoruk Centre.

"Our volunteers got all the information they needed for the search," said Patrick Casement, one of the

communications officers with SARSAV. "They got pictures, physical descriptions of the two men, a description of the truck, and the location and time the missing people were last seen."

For the exercise, two hunters were said to have gone out hunting on the afternoon of September 16. They were hunting in the Whitesand River area, and had not returned. CASARA began with an air search of the area, but it had not located the truck, so five ground teams were sent out to locate the truck.

Once the truck was found, a group of hunters hypothesized where the hunters would have travelled to from that location.

"Hunters don't stray any farther than two kilometres from their vehicle in normal circumstances, so we started with a search in that two-kilometre radius," Casement said.

Ritchie said the exercise went extremely smoothly, with the searchers only taking four and a half hours to locate the truck and half an hour more to locate the hunters. One of the missing people was said to be injured, so the team also provided first aid and helped him onto a stretcher.

The five teams were able to communicate with the rest of the volunteers through the command centre, where communications officers were able to communicate with mobile stations around the search area.

"It's sort of a game of telephone," Casement said. "We contact the mobile stations since they're in range, and they contact the teams searching."

The command centre relayed all calls from the mobile station, mobilized the teams, mapped out locations, and recorded all information necessary for the search. Paperwork needed to be done so it could be given to the RCMP during and after the search. Every minute of the search was tracked through first notice sheets, missing person profiles, incident history, team debriefing notes, resource lists, and communication logs. Media releases were also written by communications officers and RCMP members to notify the public of the search's progress.

Part of the reason the training exercise was organized, Casement said, is in order to become familiar with the search-and-rescue equipment. Due to a federal grant known as the [New SAR]





Initiatives Fund, SARSAV was able to purchase new radio equipment in May. The objective was to deal with radio glitches and also discover the area that each radio can reach.

The other reason, of course, was to provide training for the valuable volunteers in the SARSAV program. SARSAV covers 17 chapters with over 500 trained volunteers.

“Volunteers give up a lot of time and don’t get paid, but their work is necessary. It’s a partnership of a lot of different people who need to cover a lot of different areas.

“On a small search, I need to wear a lot of different hats and cover different roles,” Casement said.

Ritchie agreed, adding that for every three volunteers searching the area, there is at least one supporting volunteer who handles debriefing, communications, cooking, and so on. All of those volunteers need organization, which is why SARSAV was created to ensure search-and-rescue volunteers were professionally trained.

SARSAV was created due to a missing persons case in 1994. A girl named Ashley Krestianson went missing south of Tisdale, which summoned a huge group of volunteers who wished to search for her. Over 600 people were involved in the search, but it was disorganized and difficult to mobilize such a large group.

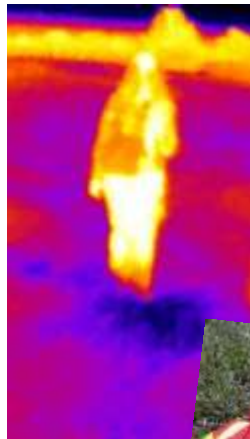
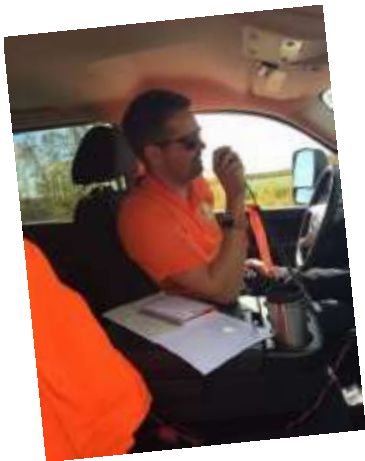
“The massive search spawned the development activity in communities

with the goal of providing volunteers to assist the RCMP should such an incident happen again. The RCMP in turn realized they would need to have trained people to help with such a search. The RCMP and representatives from the communities met and SARSAV became an entity,” said information from the SARSAV website.

The organized event in Canora was meant to ensure the training SARSAV is known for would continue, and one SARSAV member, Ian McNeil of La Loche, says over the next 18 months, several training exercises will take place.

“We’re moving up to a CSA standard,” he said.

The training event also featured a night search exercise and landing zone training for Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society (STARS).



## More memories from MJSE 1&2

# AdventureSmart Report

by Linda Mushanski, Regional AdventureSmart coordinator  
skcoordinator@adventuresmart.ca

Tracey Lagasse, Tracy VanBrabant and Dale Hintz attended the coordinator's workshop in Newfoundland at the beginning of April. They discussed a number of issues and brought back some ideas on how to make AdventureSmart more effective for SARSAV.

Tracey, Tracy and Dale will be designated as assistant coordinators and will be responsible for encouraging and mentoring specific chapters in the province in the delivering of the program. I have drafted roles and responsibilities, using my terms of reference as a basis. I will also prepare one of them to become my replacement when the time arises.

We had a wide variety of presentations this year including schools, trade shows, provincial parks, and an international Girl Guide camp. We had a number of requests brought to us by word-of-mouth, but also through the website. Congratulations to all the presenters and doing a great job of getting the program out to the population in this province!

I also started the process of forming a new partnership with Mission Zero program of the Workers' Compensation Board. They have a youth safety program and after seeing the presentation at a community event, approached me. Two of the school presentations were through that partnership and the local team is recommending it to teams across the province.

I was also asked to be one of the Master Trainers at SARSCENE this year in Edmonton, which focused on training National Parks Staff. I also took part in a SAR Prevention Canada Stakeholder workshop while in Edmonton.

Five chapters have received the stipend for presentations, 2 chapters receiving \$250 and 3 receiving \$500. These will be paid out by 31 Mar to the chapters. It is interesting to note that, in the last year, we had a slight increase in presentations and a significant increase in participants – but we are spending less volunteer hours. We are either too stingy when we report our time, or more effective!

There are a couple of events before the end of March and a number until the start of summer. My committee will be putting together an action plan to present at the AdventureSmart Coordinators workshop at the end of March. Tracy Van Brabant, Tracey Lagasse, Dale Hintz, and I will be in Toronto March 25/26.

We have some new display materials arriving – a tent, banner, table cloth, and a pop up banner that I know of for sure. Once I receive them, I will be doing another inventory of materials and put together some information on how chapters can request to use them for tradeshow etc.

I ask that chapters forward their plans to me or to one of the assistant coordinators so we can ensure that we have the materials available or can get them ordered in time for directly delivery. Please remember, it is critical to be accountable for the outreach material you request. The rule to go by is if you are asking for material but not logging any presentations, you won't get any materials. Once again, may I add, PLEASE log your presentations! Stats equals funding!

Current goals:

1. Continue establishing new partnerships with various groups across the province.
2. Continue to support SARSAV chapters as required directly and through Assistant Coordinators.
3. Development of action plan for 2017/2018.

A new AdventureSmart e-newsletter has been launched; it will be coming out 4x / year to keep presenters in the loop.

If you are planning to get your feet wet with Hug-a-Tree and Survive this spring, consider joining our friendly competition (mostly with Manitoba!) – provincially, we want to do a school blitz ("Mass HAT") in May/June.

We now have a Twitter account: @AS\_Saskatchewan

*Ed. Note ~ Thank you to the multi-talented Linda Mushanski for doing such a great job as our provincial AdventureSmart coordinator. She works SO hard behind the scenes, not only organizing preventative SAR in this province, but also being a very active presenter herself! If you attend this year's Regina Outdoor Show on March 18/19, be sure to stop by the AdventureSmart booth and say hello and thank you!*

Photo at right: Signal Hill National Historic Site, NL. Photo courtesy of Dale Hintz



# Meet the Chapters: Saskatoon SAR (SSAR)

Q. How and when did you get started?

After a large snow storm and blizzard in January 2007 that essentially brought the City of Saskatoon to a standstill, the Saskatoon Emergency Measures Organization (EMO) identified the need for a volunteer group who were trained and available to assist in a variety of circumstances and pursued the formation of a search and rescue group. A recruitment day was held in October 2007 and Saskatoon Search and Rescue (SSAR) was officially formed and incorporated as a non-profit organization on January 17, 2008

Q. How many members do you currently have? Do you have any special teams?

We have 32 members in total. Some are trained in Bike SAR but need to expand our training and incorporate into search exercises before deploying during an activation.

Q. How many searches did you participate in last year?

In 2015 we had seven activations and three standby requests for missing persons. Four of our members assisted with the northern fire deployment. In 2016, as of July 13, we had eight activations and one standby request. Four of these occurred in a one-week period!

Q. What are some of your group's biggest accomplishments?

In March, 2015, we obtained registered charitable status. This was instrumental to the success of a fundraising campaign in May 2015 called "31 Days of SSAR." Our goal was a crazy one . . . to raise \$31,000 in 31 days. In the end, we raised just over \$40,000 between hosting various events and seeking out both personal and corporate donations. The funds raised from this and other initiatives allowed us to complete our Emergency Communications Project, order team jackets (which will arrive sometime this fall) and has put us in a reasonably stable financial position.

Over the past 3-4 years we have worked diligently to foster relationships with our agencies of jurisdiction. This has resulted in more activations, joint training sessions and many coffee meetings just to sit down and talk about our agencies and how we can help each other.

Despite the significant financial commitment, we have purchased our own insurance which covers our members, equipment, and directors and officers. While maintaining the hope that this burden will soon be taken over by the Province, we strongly believe we owe it to our members and our organization to manage risk by providing this protection.

We have been very fortunate to recruit some very strong volunteers in the past few years. People with relevant skills, connections and leadership ability. For example, one such member's connections resulted in a fantastic and extremely professional video being done by staff at CTV and it is now airing regularly in the Saskatoon area. Both 30 and 60-second versions can be found on our website.

In addition, moving to a 4-month training schedule for the Basic Searcher Course has resulted in improved retention and dedication of volunteers and has made them immediately field capable once they complete this training.

Q. What are some of your chapter's biggest challenges?

It is a huge challenge to not overwhelm our members with the combined commitment for training, fundraising, PSAR, other public education, activations, etc. There is so much we want to do but we have to be mindful that people have a life outside of Search and Rescue.

In addition to being an accomplishment, recruiting is also a challenge. We are constantly on the lookout for volunteers who already come with a large skill set and can quickly develop into being leaders in the organization. We have to be careful not to burn out our most active members with fundraising events and other activities and to not overwhelm our instructors with ongoing training demands.

Q. What are your goals for the immediate future?

It's repetitive but . . . Recruiting! We're putting processes in place for a targeted recruiting strategy, not only for members who are interested in being search-capable but for those who may be interested in support roles.

We believe we have done a good job in training and putting into practice the first three phases of search and rescue. *Search, Access and Medical*. Now we need to concentrate more on *Evacuate* while still maintaining our skills in the other areas. We will also be fundraising for additional equipment that will help us to expand our expertise and services in this area.

We are rapidly outgrowing the storage space we have in our command trailer and two storage cabinets. We recently purchased a small cargo trailer which has provided some relief but, long term, finding a permanent home for SSAR to store the command post, cargo trailer and other equipment is a high priority.

# My SAR Life... as I contemplate retirement

by Aussie, (now retired) member of Wood River SAR and SAR Dogs Association of Alberta

Reprinted with permission from Scent Dog News, August 2016

I think there is likely a point in every dog's life, where he takes a few moments to reflect. I had that opportunity this spring, and my conclusion: Wow, that was quite a ride!

I've been on mountain sides; I've been in river valleys; I've been wet; I've been cold; and I've been way too hot. I've seen the sun rise while on a search and I've seen the sun set while on a search. I've been in trucks; I've been on quads; I've been on snowmobiles, I've even been in a helicopter. I've climbed over, under, and through piles of rubble. I've cross-crossed down alleys; and I've slogged through bush. And I have loved every minute of it!



I wouldn't change a thing – other than the whole bath thing --- I'd try harder to avoid that. Oh, and maybe the underwear that I found under a bush that one time. I might leave that alone next time. Even for a dog, that was nasty.

I've made some great friends. But I often wonder about you humans who faithfully come to training. Now, don't get me wrong, you guys are the best! But you do get lost a lot. Every Sunday, the same people wind up missing. Now, I love that, and it's a good thing I've been there to save you, but I wonder if that is a good example for my mom? She has managed ok when I'm with her, but keep an eye on her when I'm not there. She might wander off.

I want to thank each of you --- some present still, some long gone – everyone who has played a part in my search career. You made getting out of bed on Sunday so worthwhile! You've followed me down alleys, and through forests. You've battled mosquitoes, torrential down pours, freezing temperatures, and wet feet. And most importantly, you have thrown many a ball for me to bring back so you can do it again, and again, and again. Thank you, I really appreciate your time and efforts.

I'll likely show up at a few practices here and there. I'll stop by for a game of fetch and I'll still look for you if you stray from the pack. But from here on out, I will leave the official searching to the young dogs.

My last Active Certification is valid until July of 2017. So I will plan to participate in Public Relation events and any other events that may be appropriate. If anyone would like some Field Tech practice, I'd love to join you. This way, I get my 10 years of service. Pretty sure somebody mentioned something about a gold watch --- I think I'd like to be a "watch dog". Besides, I am still very handsome in my uniform. I've been told that grey hair is distinguished.

Wishing you safe searching, - **Aussie**

*Aussie, thank you to your dedicated service for so many years – and we wish you a long and healthy retirement filled with all of the best dog toys and many games of fetch! Stop in when you are at your Summer Home; I will play with you anytime. -Ed.*



# BASIC SEARCH DOG



**FRIDAY (Evening) June 9, 2017**  
to  
**SUNDAY June 11, 2017**  
Regina, Saskatchewan

International Instructor  
Mary-Ann Warren

This weekend is a combination of search dog theory with lots of practical work for you and your dog.

**Weekend will include**

- Person Search
- Evidence Search
- Alert Training
- Theory

**TUITION**

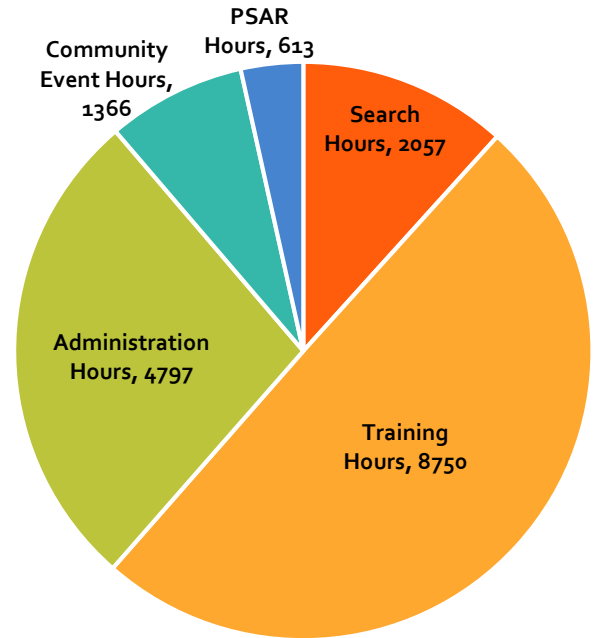
\$250.00 per K9 team  
\$175.00 per registered SAR members with K9  
\$75.00 per Observer



For more information on this seminar contact: Precision Search Dog

mwtracks@telus.net  
780) 939-2675  
www.precisionsearchdog.com

## SARSAV by the Numbers, 2016



**FAST FACTS**

# 17,583

The number of person-hours reported to SARVAC in the above categories for 2016. (Does not include time spent for fundraising, logistics, etc.)

**IN MEMORIAM...**

On December 26, Gerald Noble from NFTC GSAR (at 15 Wing Moose Jaw) died suddenly at home.

In January, Wood River SAR lost a former member, Rod Sexsmith, to his battle with cancer.

Many of our members who have been involved nationally also felt the loss of Horace Webb, a long-time member of OSARVA who also served SARVAC for a number of years. He had also fought a valiant battle against cancer.

Most recently, the untimely accident that claimed a member of the Canadian Forces SAR team, MCpl Alfred Barr, reminds us all of the potential dangers of this work.

Our deepest sympathies to their families and colleagues.

**SEARCHER'S COST**

MISSED WORK \$\$\$

SEARCHER'S EQUIPMENT \$1000+

SEARCHER'S TIME \$0

THE LOOK ON THE FAMILY'S FACE WHEN WE BRING THEIR LOVED ONE HOME... PRICELESS

# On the lighter side...



## SARSAV 2016 Executive

**President** – Justin Capp, NFTC GSAR  
**Vice President** – Bobbi Buchanan, Porcupine Plain SAR  
**Secretary** – Tracey Lagasse, Wood River SAR  
**Treasurer** – Robert Smith, Prince Albert North SAR

## SARSAV 2016 Directors

Pat Casement, Wadena SAR  
 Kelly Giles, Buckland Fire and Rescue  
 Ian McNeil, La Loche Dene Trackers  
 Kent Orosz, Saskatoon SAR  
 Curt Schroeder, SAR Regina  
 Scott Wright, North Corman Park SAR & Saskatoon SAR

Many thanks to all who contributed articles and pictures for this issue!



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