
NZLSAR News

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KOPAC Chicks triumph in Taranaki SAR Competition

The girls from Kahui Outdoor Pursuits and Alpine Club showed that consistency beats flashes of brilliance when they won the Craig Rookes Memorial Shield at the Taranaki Search and Rescue Competition. The event is

in it's 12th year and the shield was renamed this year in honour of Craig who invested much of his enthusiasm and free time ensuring Taranaki SAR is one of the best in New Zealand.



KOPAC Chicks (L – R): Nola Higgins (Team Leader), Hilary Frewin, Leanne O'Donnell, Helen White, Sharon Adamson, Jacqui Sinclair

It is perhaps fitting that the girls will be the first team named on the new shield. There had always been a lot of healthy

banter with Craig about what girls could and couldn't achieve in SAR. It was also fitting that the Police SAR squad, who

organised the event, ran it in the modular round robin style that Craig and Neil Sinclair designed a number of years ago to test the volunteers in a range of skills.

The Chicks started with an impressive lead in the map and compass exercise, even though they omitted to read all the questions and were left with some running to do at the end to relay a particular result through in time.

They were soundly beaten in the first aid module by the Central SAR Oldies team. This team was determined to put in a good showing to ensure that this years Team Leader received one of the coveted miniature shields to display on his wall. This gent had been coach, manager, supporter, adviser for other winning Central teams, but he wanted his own personal trophy – it was his turn, he deserved it, he had to have it. The challenge had been issued.

Central Oldies and Central Youngsters were equally as good at the helicopter and radio procedures, which was a surprise since one of the KOPAC 300+ team has spent many hours working with helicopters and should have had a strong showing here. Perhaps it was the lack of a real helicopter with all its attendant noise and adrenalin that made the difference.

The Central Youngsters outdid everyone by achieving 100% in the observation skills. This module places 25 everyday items in a bush setting and competitors had 15 minutes to spot as many as possible from a short section of track. The hairclip and cutlery were particularly difficult to spot in the dappled bush, as was the black tent fly on the other side

of the river. In a spirited challenge, Egmont Alpine Club and KOPAC 300+ found 23 items each.

The GPS module was tough for most Teams, who needed to be proficient with both the old and new GPS units. Most Teams had good skills with one or other, but only the New Plymouth Tramping Club had superior skills with both units, taking out this module by a well deserved 4 points.

Tracking was the high point for the KOPAC chicks who took a five point advantage by following the footprints set many hours earlier by the organiser. The organiser had played the role of a hunter walking through the bush. He set a separate trail for each team and from the designated start point the teams had to find part footprints, broken sticks, misplaced dirt and bruised foliage to follow the trail to the end.

So, the final results gave the win to the Chicks by 12 points over Central Oldies, with New Plymouth Tramping Club, Central Youngsters, KOPAC 300+ and Egmont Alpine Club taking out the minor placings.

Search and Rescue is a group of volunteers with a passion for the outdoors and for helping those in difficulty. Training takes many forms, but is directed towards working as a team, looking for clues, interpreting information and building up a portrait of the missing party. This years competition was attended by six teams, most of which had at least one person who was fairly new to the organisation.

Jacqui Sinclair
Taranaki SAR

Emergency Locator Beacon Search in Marlborough

Around 2200 after our April 15 club meeting, section leader Paul ZL2RE was contacted by the local SAR sergeant informing him that the national search and rescue centre in Wellington had been activated by the satellite detection of a 121.5 MHz distress beacon. After several satellite passes

the beacon location was estimated to be in the hilly Taylor Pass area about 10km south of Blenheim. Could AREC help track this beacon down?

No aircraft were reported missing at the time and there were no known tramping

parties in the area with beacons so the source was a bit of a mystery.

Paul soon rounded up assistance from Ian ZL3TDM, Ron ZL2BDD and Stuart ZL2TW. Stuart scaled a three element 2m yagi from the ARRL handbook to 121.5 and constructed a two-element yagi (driven element and reflector) from old TV rabbits ears and portable radio telescopic whips bolted to a short wooden boom, fed with some RG-174. This contraption seemed to DF OK via a switched attenuator using a hand-held with air band receive. The local tower air traffic information service channel provided a useful test source.

After a short briefing at the Blenheim police station Ian and Stuart departed to the Taylor Pass area in Ian's 4WD along with a SAR police member to attempt to narrow down the search area. An AREC member's vehicle was used as the nearest police 4WD was in Havelock. Paul remained behind with a two-metre base set, as the only reliable VHF comms in the area would be from the Blenheim 695 repeater.

The first stop detected no signal but a little further along we heard the unmistakable siren sound of an EPIRB. After several fixes we had enough information to head along a four-wheel drive track to the south, which turned out to be a good decision because soon the signal was booming in, even with the antenna inside the vehicle. About 500m along the track we found a clearing with a parked Robinson R-22 helicopter. The flashing red LED on the EPIRB remote panel in the cockpit confirmed that we had found the source.

The unattended aircraft had obviously not crashed having been tied down for the night. When we called base with an informative message, including the registration number of the helicopter Ron, who had been monitoring from

home was able from his vast library of Marlborough information to pass on to base the owner of the machine.

There was no obvious easy way to disable the beacon so we returned to base while the police contacted the aircraft operator. The whole operation was over by 0200. The Police SAR personnel were amazed that some old aerials and a bit of stick found the EPIRB in less than two hours including the time taken to manufacture the antenna.

Paul had raised the question of how we would DF EPIRBS quite recently, as is often the case, events force the issue!

The beacon detection system will cease monitoring 121.5 past 2009, using the newer 406 Mhz system alone. The '406' beacons still transmit a several hundred milliwatt 121.5 Mhz AM continuous signal for local search party DF purposes when activated. They cannot easily be DF'd on 406 MHz as these devices only transmit for about 0.5 second every 50 seconds. The half-second burst is around the 5 watt level and encoded with registration information specific to the particular owner/aircraft/vessel. False alarms (over 90% of beacon activations) can be sorted out much more rapidly as a result with the newer beacons. For a modest price these beacons are available with GPS receivers, the position of the beacon is then transmitted as well, making the SAR teams job much easier!

Even with the older beacons being phased out, a 121.5 DF capability will still be required for final location of an activated beacon. We are now looking at options for portable 121.5 DF antennae and receivers.

Stuart Watchman ZL2TW
AREC Marlborough Section

A sign seen in the Tauranga Civil Defence Emergency Management Rooms

The benefit of not planning is that failure comes as a complete surprise and is not preceded by a lengthy period of worry and depressions.

Thames and "Health and Safety SAR Workwear"

Thames SAR have been working with SWAZI to develop a "Health & Safety SAR Workwear Range". The idea behind this is so that any Search Manager can deploy their searchers into the field knowing full well that there will be no liabilities coming from anyone having substandard personal clothing. Its also a way of giving something back to the volunteer that have worked well for you over the years. This gear helps set a good professional image that has already been set with the development of the wet weather gear for Turangi SAR. We believe a searchers attire should reflect the high standard of skills they have obtained through training (as in all other emergency services).



Funding has been sort through pub charities to carry this project out and around \$250 + gst has been allowed for each member to have up to six garments. These consist of a



long sleeve fleece shirt, zip micro top, panel BMT shirt, beanie, micro driback longs and moley shorts. Most garments use either blaze or olive or both. The gear looks smart with your area name and the team SWAZI logos on them. We have had nothing but positive feed back on the gear from the searchers and from the critical eye of the public. More information or order forms can be obtained from Swazi janine@swazi.co.nz or contact the writer at sar@amcom.co.nz

Brian Connors
SAR Adviser Thames.

Waikato SAR Competition

The Waikato SAR competitions got off to a good start in light drizzle. Management modified the tasks to take teams away from having to cross the main Kauaeranga River as the strong weather warnings issued were for 150 mm of rain over Saturday. This was the period of the big floods in southern Bay of Plenty so Whakatane must have got our share as well.

After the briefing, Teams were taken to a simulated "Landing Zone" for their helicopter competency component. As the machine organised was unable to fly due to being clouded in we improvised with a police van and Senior Constable Keith Bunting acted as our trusty pilot. There were significant variation in teams working around a machine which SAR organisations may need to address this in their future training.

Teams were given their tasks in a lucky draw type fashion. To address the given problem they did their own planning then were transported to wherever they came with up as their start point. Some had side creeks and a shorter distance to the LKP of the lost party, others had some form of track and bigger distances to cover.

The patients were cadets and NCO'S from No 37 Thames ATC Squadron and all had minders with radios to base (other SAR staff).

Marking was kept at a constant by using the Hamilton SAR Squad members with one Constable with a

very detailed marking sheet assigned to each Team. Areas covered that were broken down further were Pre-departure, Navigation, Track and Clue Awareness. Patient Assessment by a first aider and then Patient Management. It was decided the Overnight Patient Management section would not be included due to the weather forecast. However the marking included leadership, search phase, teamwork, river crossing, overall performance as a Team, field radio work, and extraction of patient and base arrival.

Teams were not kept out overnight (as we were still expecting the 150mls of rain) but had to provide their patient with a hot meal and hot drink to assist their recovery with hypothermia and a sprained ankle.

A decent BBQ awaited teams and patients with steak, sausages, potato salad, coleslaw and bread was provided by Thames SAR before prize giving.

So Thames took out first and second places with Hamilton third, Tairua/Pauanui fourth and Rotorua fifth.

There was only 10% between first and fifth places and I have received mostly positive feed back on the whole event so far.

Brian Connors
SAR Adviser Thames

Tai Poutini Polytechnic Sponsored Courses

The following are the courses and the Regions they will be held in for the next two to three month period. If you have an interest in attending one of these courses please feel free to contact one of the Regional Training Coordinators. **JPT**

Region	Coordinator/s	Hm phone	Email
One	John Walsh	09-811-8875	timmy@paradise.net.nz
Two	Bruce Sandford	07-577-0350	absandford@xtra.co.nz
Three			
Four	Jean Garman	06 354 3536.	Jean.Garman@fonterra.com
Five	Ian Watts	03-547-4592	all.watts@clear.net.nz
Six	Steve Davis	03-348-0360	steve@zl2ucx.gen.nz
Seven	Tric Moller Dunedin	03-453-0459	tric@ihug.co.nz
Seven	Bruce Smart Invercargill	03-216-9140 027-4474-386.	bruces@woosh.co.nz.
Seven	Caroline Houghton-Brown		caroline@paradise.net.nz

Region	Course	Where	Date
One	Nil		
Two	TUMONZ Vert Rope TCA Refresher TCA Refresher	Turangi Tauranga Hamilton Turangi	7/8 Aug 21/22 Aug 18/19 Sept 25/26 Sept
Three	Nil		
Four	TCA1 SM Refresher Team Leader Heli Rescue SM	Well Masterton Taranaki Taranaki Palm/Nth	21/22 Aug 04/05 Sept 04/05 Sept 02/03 Oct 09/10 Oct
Five	Tracking Foundation Rope Team Leader Team Leader	Pine V Pine V Reefton Pine V	07/08 Aug 14/15 Aug 04/05 Sept 18/19 Sept
Six	Suburban Search Team Leader TUMONZ Search Methods	Canterbury Canterbury Canterbury Canterbury	07/08 Aug 11/12 Sept 25/26 Sept 02/03 Oct
Seven	TCA1 TCA1	Dunedin Dunedin	07/08 Aug 04/05 Sept

Editors Comments. A very big thank you to **Jacqui, Stuart and Brian** for your articles and photos. Copy for the **October News** is most welcome and the close-off date is **Friday 30 September**. I will be on leave until mid October when I will edit and print the articles received so please send them in. Articles on gear, SAR training or operations are most welcome. Please either mail as neatly hand-written, printed hard copy or on a disc to **NZLSAR, PO Box 12081, Thorndon, Wellington**. Alternatively email it to **tristram.nzlsar@xtra.co.nz** Even if you have some thoughts on an article but are diffident in putting pen to paper, feel free to give me a ring on **04-470-7247** and we can talk it through.

John P Tristram, National Field Officer