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## The Coordinator's Desk

It's been a crazy long time since I've gotten one of these out to you and I apologize. However; it's been a crazy time in my life as well, so I appreciate everyone's cooperation.

The video sessions in August went very well, and I think everyone, including our guests, had a great time.

Everyone should have received emails from Billy Chrimes if they registered for the GSAR at Hungry Mother. The Field Team Member class is full, so I cannot stress how important it is, that you let us know if you **cannot** attend. I'll say it again... If you're signed up for FTM and **cannot** attend, please make it a top priority to let us know so that we can get someone else into the class. There is a long waiting list, and someone on that waiting list would be very appreciative.

We have had several call-outs recently - Feast or Famine, and they've been successful. It's exciting to me to watch BDSAR respond

We continuously get praise from those that have never worked with us before. We can always improve, and remember that improvement can be sought at SAR Simulations like the one recently held at Camp Bethel by Southwest Va Mountain Rescue Group.

Those that haven't been responding to training or missions, please consider how you are going to get better at what you do. Practice makes better. I don't want to say

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perfect, because there's no one in the Virginia SAR system that knows it all. There are some that will tell you they do, but those that are responding to missions and training will tell you they learn something every time. That's how we get better.

A ton of thanks goes to those that represented BDSAR at the following missions or simulations:

- Bland-Wythe Incident
- Grayson Highlands SP Incident
- SwVaMRG SAREx
- Botetourt Co. Incident

See you at the October Meeting!!!

**Did you order magnets? I'm supposed to have them ready for the meeting Oct. 14<sup>th</sup>.**

## Upcoming Training Events

Mike Maggard - Training Officer

- October 14, 2011 - BDSAR meeting - 1800 hrs Southwest VA Higher Ed Center
- October 21 - 23 - First Weekend Hungry Mother GSAR
- November 4 - 6 - Second Weekend Hungry Mother GSAR
- December 3 - 4 - Hungry Mother - Dogwood Room - SOLO Wilderness First Aid
- Black Diamond Invitational - March 31, 2012



## SWVaMRG SAREx - Should have been there!!!

Wow - what another great training!!!

SWVaMRG put on one heck of a show at Camp Bethel. There were several BDSAR members there as Lisa Laughlin, Ryan Tipps, Mac Debusk, (soon to be a member) Rick Christ and his son were there, to name a few.

The scenario incorporated several different scenarios running Friday night and Saturday day with several different missing persons. It's amazing how much you can learn as I am still learning every time I go.

Items like pack refinement, work on Land Nav skills, and how long you can work out of your pack for one day. Some of us were in our packs for at least 9 hours. Those of you who are not hikers first, may need to do a couple more of these to learn a little more about whether their packs are functional or not.

Also, I don't need to reiterate things that we'll forget if we don't continue to use them. Maryland SAR was there as well, and even though I've worked with them in the past, it would have been good to meet some of those folks in case you ever have to work with them in the future.

The SAREx is very difficult to put on, and everyone should try to take advantage of these trainings. Remember Simulations will count towards your recertification just like a real mission will.

## *Black Diamond's October Quarterly Meeting*

I have sent out several emails and this is another way to alert you of our meeting in October. Please plan on attending our meeting on October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at the Southwest Virginia Higher Ed Center in Abingdon. Room 240... The meeting will start at 1800 hrs, and we will discuss recent call-outs, the command bus, and many other important items.

If you are ordering magnets from me, remember that I will have these available to hand out at the meeting.



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](mailto:aloutfitters@comcast.net).

## SOLO Wilderness First Aid Course Opportunities

### COURSE INFORMATION:

Wilderness First Aid (WFA) is SOLO's <http://www.soloschools.com/> most popular course and it creates a solid foundation in the basics of backcountry medical care. Started as the "Mountain/Woods First Aid" course in 1975, this was the first course of its kind in the United States, and it is the curriculum upon which all other backcountry medicine courses are based. Since that time tens of thousands of trip leaders and outdoor enthusiasts have been certified at this level. Many organizations (e.g., SAR, Boy Scouts, rafting, outdoor leadership, etc.) use this course to introduce first aid and long-term patient care to their staff or members. The SOLO WFA is recognized by the American Camping Association, US Coast Guard, and various guides licensing boards as meeting their first aid requirement.

The SOLO WFA addresses issues of basic rescuer safety. The patient assessment system, the foundation of the course, trains students to determine what is going on with backcountry patients. Other sessions provide instruction in traumatic situations. Environmental emergencies such as hypothermia and heat injuries are dealt with in great detail. Practical simulations and scenarios provide practice in backcountry leadership and rescue skills.

Students will learn the following WFA topics:

- Introduction                      What is Wilderness First Aid?                      Anatomy of a Wilderness Crisis
- Anatomy of the Musculoskeletal System                      Universal Precautions
- Patient Assessment System                      Patient Lifting & Moving
- Backcountry Essentials & Survival                      The Human Animal
- Cold-Related Injuries                      Lightning injuries
- Heat-Related Injuries                      Principles of Fracture Care
- Medical Emergencies                      Spinal Cord Injury Management
- Sprains & Strains                      Trauma-Musculoskeletal Injuries
- Trauma-Soft Tissue Injuries                      Use of Epinephrine pens
- Rescue Plan                      Response & Assessment

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- Certification is based on successful completion of the course. In order to do so, all certification candidates are required to participate in **100%** of the course, as that is the only way to assess mastery of the skills involved. SOLO instructors provide ongoing feedback and many opportunities for questions. Final assessment of each student's skills includes practical skills evaluation throughout the course and four written quizzes.

### CLASS FORMAT:

- The 16-hour curriculum takes place over two days. A typical day consists of a mixture of hands-on practical skill work and didactic lecture sessions. To optimize learning potential, SOLO complements these sessions with a variety of mock scenarios and simulations. Known for their "open-learning" environments, SOLO courses are taught to audiences with a variety of learning styles.

### COURSE FEE & CERTIFICATIONS:

- Payment is \$85 with checks made out to SOLO; payment in advance to reserve a seat. Last minute payment will be accepted only if there is room. Students who successfully meet the classroom criteria and pass the appropriate practical and written exams will be certified in: SOLO Wilderness First Aid (2-year certification)

## BY DON CIPRIANI

Wow, what a whirlwind! Our K9 final evaluations, our first official call-out as a K9 team and our first find-- all in such a short while!

A couple of years ago, when our training for the certs began in earnest, it was hard to picture that rioting little puppy \*Val \*as a finished SAR K9. The help we received from the established Virginia K9 teams was beyond price, but required a LOT of travel for joint trainings and conferences... it seemed like we never got to stay home!

Our first taste of a K9 task wasn't an ideal set up for dog work, as ironically most of the cardinal requirements we had had hammered into us in the previous years of training went right out the window in the opening seconds of real-world searching. "Mark your maps". Oh really? No map! "Formulate your search strategy based on conditions, scent theory and terrain features." See that part about no maps.

That really should be easy to formulate since there is only one feature here: straight up! The brisk, following upslope wind was exactly the opposite of what Val needed, so out goes scent theory. What is left?

Only the best, most cohesive SEARCH TEAM that I have ever had the luck to task with. My hat is off to Mac, who winnowed one single reliable particle of information from the roil of base ops and with his

new GPS unit, helped us generate a track that looks like we KNEW where the subjects were. And Nina who did a fair bit of air scenting herself and picked right up on the smell of wood smoke in a fog so dense it was totally invisible. And even Val did her part as she led us through the fog and brush, right to the source of the voices who had responded to Nina's call. This was a very effective TEAM and I feel privileged to have been a part of an effort which made a hard-won success out of the least amount of resources I have ever worked with.

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### Congratulations to the following K9 Team Members!!

Carla Spencer passed her written Wilderness Test

K9 Rilke passed his agility and behavior test

Cynthia Bales passed her written Wilderness test

K9 Nico passed her agility and behavior test

Doris Wheeler passed her written Wilderness and trailing test

K9 Auggie passed his agility and behavior test

Nina Cipriani passed her written Trailing test

K9 Shiloh passed his agility test

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## The mystery of the tick and the allergy

**Bedford's Emily Masters developed a sudden allergy to meat. So have many adults throughout the Southeast. Doctors set out to find the reason.**

By Sarah Bruyn Jones . Roanoke Times

During the past two years more than 200 people at a regional allergy practice have been diagnosed with a newly identified red meat allergy that is related to tick bites.

This allergy may be responsible for up to half of recurrent anaphylaxis cases without known causes, researchers say.

In many ways the allergy doesn't behave like traditional food allergies, but it is causing people to feel sick to their stomachs, break out in hives and in some cases go into anaphylactic shock.

For Emily Masters of Bedford, the allergy seemed to come on without warning.

"I'm curious why all of a sudden this happened," Masters said. "I'm 28, so why have I been OK eating meat for so many years and then this happened?"

Masters was diagnosed after she had a severe reaction following last year's July Fourth cookout at her father's house.

During the party she ate some couscous, potato salad, hummus, a hamburger and a sausage. With a known wheat allergy, she said she was careful to avoid wheat, eating the burger without a bun for instance.

Several hours later her stomach started to hurt.

"I thought I must have eaten wheat that was hidden in something," she said.

But the reaction began to get worse than any reaction she had ever had to wheat.

Soon her arm began to itch just inside her elbow. She asked her husband to run to a nearby gas station to pick up some Benadryl.

He suggested she come along so she could take the medicine faster. By the time they were leaving she had hives on her legs. In the car, she began to swell and it became hard for her to breathe.

They called 911.

"By the time I got to the ambulance, I was a red lobster and looked like a blimp," she said.

Masters spent the night at Bedford Memorial Hospital being treated for anaphylaxis.

After she was discharged, she made up her mind to find out what caused the reaction. She asked her friends for the list of ingredients in the foods she ate. And she made an appointment at the Asthma and Allergy Center in Roanoke, where she had previously been treated for her wheat allergy.

"I freaked out and I'm assuming its some mystery food and I've never had this before," she said. "The last thing I imagined was it was beef."

While being examined, Dr. Luis Matos was brought in to consult. Matos has been among the chief specialists diagnosing patients with this new allergy. Matos and his partners in Roanoke and Lynchburg have diagnosed more than 200 cases since a researcher at the University of Virginia first discovered the allergy. In many cases, the patients don't have any other allergies, Matos said.

"It's so new that we don't know exactly the full story of how people develop this reaction and the history of the allergy," Matos said.

But as Matos has learned the symptoms of the allergy, he has quickly been able to identify patients.

"Just because we are looking for it, it is giving us an option that we didn't have before," Matos said. "It's similar to other new allergies -- once you know it is there, you find it."

The Asthma and Allergy Center also has identified patients who have had milder symptoms, such as chronic itching or vague intestinal problems, who test positive for the allergy. In some instances patients had gone decades without knowing the cause of their discomfort.

"They thought they were crazy," Matos said. "In some cases, they were told they were crazy." Dr. Scott Commins of UVa is credited with discovering the allergy.

"In the world of food allergy, the notion that an adult could have a new onset food allergy is unheard of," Commins said during a recent interview.

Last week he was in Roanoke presenting his research to physicians at Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital. The hope is to alert more doctors to the research and the new diagnosis and how patients can be helped.

"I think you are seeing these patients and you may not know it," he told the doctors gathered for the presentation.

A study about it was published in 2008 in the New England Journal of Medicine. Ultimately the drug manufacture changed the way Erbritux was made to stop the problem.

Since publishing his research in 2009, Commins said he has heard from patients and allergists throughout the Southeast. He gets multiple e-mails a day from patients looking for help.

### Making the discovery

The home economics queen Martha Stewart has a small role in this story.

Researchers discovered some patients had a bad reaction after taking Erbitux, the anti-cancer drug at the center of the insider trading allegations against Stewart. Some of these patients would have anaphylaxis.

Researchers, who included Commins' boss Dr. Thomas Platts-Mills, ultimately showed the negative reactions to the drug were associated with an allergic reaction to a sugar called galactose-alpha-1,3-galactose, or alpha-gal for short.

But because nearly all common allergies are reactions to proteins, not sugars, Commins said he was extremely interested in the discovery.

Areas in the Southeast appeared to be unusually hard-hit by the severe reactions to Erbitux, so Commins decided to investigate how common the alpha-gal reaction was among anaphylaxis patients where the cause was unknown. About 20 percent of anaphylaxis patients don't know the cause.

Alpha-gal is a sugar that is found in all mammals, such as pigs, deer and cows. Those who have an allergy to alpha-gal produce an antibody that binds to the alpha-gal sugar causing the body to produce hives or go into anaphylaxis, Commins explained.

A simple blood test will show if a person produces the antibody to alpha-gal.

Masters' blood test, which Matos sent to be tested by Commins, came back positive.

### The connection to ticks

Figuring out why patients had suddenly developed a severe allergy to meats in which alpha-gal was present was the next step.

Commins quickly realized that the geographic range of the Lone Star tick matched the geographic location of people who had developed this allergy. Both were in the Southeast.

"It just fits perfectly," he said.

Commins started asking his patients about their exposure to tick bites and chiggers.

"A lot of science can be serendipity," he said. "My boss [Platts-Mills] goes out in the woods a lot. He got chigger bites or seed ticks. He developed this allergy. So we started to make the connection."

Masters too has had a lot of tick bites and chigger bites. Last year, prior to her July 4, 2009, reaction, she said she was bitten by about a dozen ticks and hundreds of chiggers.

Commins said outdoor enthusiasts, including hunters and hikers, are often the type of people diagnosed with the allergy. He strongly believes it is related to the seed tick bites that people get by the hundreds. These are the bites from the newly hatched tick larva, as opposed to a mature adult tick. Often, he said, people in this area call these tiny ticks chiggers.

It's unclear what in the seed ticks is causing people to develop the allergy.

"My honest gut feeling is it is something in the saliva," Commins said.

He said that unlike Lyme disease and Rocky Mountain spotted fever, he doesn't think it is an infectious disease carried by the seed tick. Instead he thinks something in the saliva triggers the antigens in the alpha-gal sugar.

He is developing new research to focus on the relationship to the insect.

#### Finding a cure

Masters said she misses eating a hamburger on occasion. Others, especially hunters, are more adamant about their desire to eat meat again, Commins said.

But for now, the only solution to treating the allergy is avoiding meat products. For Masters and many others, this includes avoiding foods made with beef broth.

"It's the hidden stuff that I worry about," Masters said.

Commins is planning a study to try to create a tolerance in patients. He's waiting on approval from an institutional review board that monitors studies involving people.

"Even though I don't really miss a big steak, a cure would be great, that way I wouldn't have to always worry when I get a twinge in my stomach or a little itch," Masters said. "I am always on edge wondering, 'What if it had beef or pork in it?'"

She always carries an epi-pen -- containing a dose of epinephrine to counter anaphylaxis -- just in case.