



# SARA

**SOUTHERN ARIZONA  
RESCUE ASSOCIATION**

**SAVING LIVES**



*Sabino Canyon flooding, December 12, 2007  
Photograph courtesy of Sean Fawcett*

*Annual Report 2007*

# Southern Arizona Rescue Association

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## Mission statement

*The Southern Arizona Rescue Association, SARA, is a professional unpaid organization providing desert and mountain search and rescue services to all of Pima County and Southern Arizona, at no direct cost to the taxpayer. SARA is dedicated to saving lives through search, rescue, and outdoor safety education in Southern Arizona.*

## SARA activities

SARA is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that provides professional ground-based search and rescue operations throughout Southern Arizona. SARA is one of the busiest search and rescue groups in the country, and the largest accredited member of the Mountain Rescue Association (MRA). SARA is also a member of the National Cave Rescue Commission, and the National Association for Search & Rescue.

**SARCI.** SARA is one of five search and rescue groups that make up the Search and Rescue Council, Inc. (SARCI). Other SARCI organizations include the Pima County Search and Recovery Divers, Southwest Rescue Dogs, Inc., the Civil Air Patrol Neotoma Squadron, and the Pima County Sheriff's Posse. Together, SARCI organizations provide comprehensive search and rescue capabilities in Pima County. SARCI publishes a monthly newsletter that can be viewed at <http://www.sarci.org>.

**Search and Rescue services.** For more than 40 years, residents and visitors to Southern Arizona have benefited from SARA's highly skilled

members who serve as a vital link to safe recreational land use. SARA's services are offered free of charge, 24 hours per day, seven days per week, 365 days per year. Our members are proficient in all aspects of search and rescue, including advanced medical care, wilderness search, high-angle and technical rescue, cave rescue, swift water rescue, and mine rescue. Occasionally, our services are requested for urban searches and even animal rescues.



In an average year, SARA responds to an average of 85 search and rescue missions and logs approximately 4,500 volunteer hours in the field. From technical cliff rescues to multi-day searches, SARA provides its services at no expense to the taxpayer or to those individuals we rescue. The vast majority of these missions take place within Southern Arizona, but SARA personnel have traveled to central and northern Arizona and to Mexico in order to support other agencies in search and rescue operations. In the past forty-seven years, SARA's success rate, as measured by individuals successfully rescued, has been greater than 99%.

**Outdoor education.** SARA promotes outdoor safety through public education and provides speakers and demonstrations to any interested group or organization. SARA's members participate in the nationally acclaimed "Lost but Found, Safe and Sound" program for teaching young children the essentials of outdoor safety and survival. Other educational programs are available for scouting groups, hiking clubs, parents' groups, hunters, and off-road enthusiasts, at no charge. SARA also provides first aid services to various community activities.



## SARA's volunteers

All members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, from the president to recently recruited trainees, are volunteers from the Tucson community who give freely of their time and expertise. SARA members undergo extensive medical and technical training before they are qualified to participate in field operations. Each member must hold current certifications in Outdoor Emergency Care (National Ski Patrol; Emergency Medical Technician-Basic

equivalent) and CPR for the professional rescuer.

Field qualified members also participate in extensive courses and field-based trainings in all aspects of search and rescue techniques including vertical mountain rescue techniques, desert and mountain search, flood and river rescue, cave rescue, and mine rescue. Members continually upgrade their medical and technical qualifications through regular monthly trainings and additional classes.

SARA is the closest thing to a "self-sufficient" volunteer organization as you will find anywhere. Our unpaid professional volunteers provide their own personal equipment (at their personal expense). Group assets such as rescue vehicles, radios, ropes, and technical equipment are obtained through annual member dues and donations from individuals and businesses in our local community. The Pima County Sheriff's Department also provides funds for equipment maintenance. Donations from members, employer-giving programs, corporations, foundations, and individuals help to fund SARA's annual operating budget of approximately \$30,000.

## A brief history of SARA

**Three boy scouts and a storm.** In 1958, the only search and rescue resource in Southern Arizona was a list, kept by the Pima County Sheriff's Office, of individuals and organizations who had indicated their willingness to help when needed. The list included residents and ranchers who were familiar with the local area, as well as

organizations such as the Boy Scouts and local hiking clubs. In late November, 1958, an unprecedented heavy snowstorm dropped over 2 feet of snow across the Santa Catalina, Rincon, and Santa Rita mountains. The day of the storm, a troop of boy scouts had gone hiking in the Santa Rita's with the intent of staying overnight somewhere on Mt. Wrightson. The next day, Sunday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, three of the scouts were missing. With little equipment that would prepare them for such a storm, the boys were presumed to be lost or stranded, and the Sheriff's Department called on local volunteers to begin searching the trails.

As the search extended over days, volunteers were joined by military personnel, Sheriff's deputies, forest rangers, and boy scouts. Having never worked together before on such a large scale search, the teams from various agencies found themselves fragmented and disorganized; problems in logistics, coordination, assignment of duties, and communications were obvious. Sadly, the search ended 19 days later when volunteers found and recovered the bodies of the three boys, who had died of exposure.

**The Southern Arizona Rescue Association.** The tragedy in the Santa Rita's left many people with the strong feeling that a more coordinated system for search and rescue was needed in Southern Arizona. The experience highlighted the importance of having an organized group of trained individuals ready for wilderness search and rescue, with proper equipment and training, who were capable of responding quickly in an emergency. In the fall of 1958, the Sheriff's Department called for a public

meeting for all interested people regarding search and rescue. The meeting was held in a first-floor classroom of the University of Arizona Liberal Arts Building. Two current members of SARA, Mr. Tom Harlan and Mr. Marvin Stafford, had participated in the Santa Rita search and were at that very first meeting. SARA was launched in 1958; SARA's first official mission occurred on June 15, 1959.



**The Mountain Rescue Association.** In 1958, the Mountain Rescue Association (MRA) was established at Timberline Lodge, near Mount Hood, Oregon. The purpose of the MRA was to bring together teams of volunteer mountain rescuers, to share information, training techniques, and resources, and to establish standards of practice in the field. The first member teams were from Washington, Oregon, and Northern California. SARA, as a young team, qualified for membership in 1969, and has been an active member of this most prestigious search and rescue organization ever since. SARA not only participates in conferences and joint

training events with other MRA teams, but has provided committee members, evaluators for team accreditations, and several National Chairpersons. SARA also hosts the annual three-day summer conference in Tucson every ten years.



**Moving the field ahead.** Over the years, SARA has developed into a highly skilled organization with extensive experience in search and rescue, and over 75 field-qualified members. Along the way, SARA has pioneered new techniques and equipment that have been adopted as standard procedures by search and rescue groups across the country. One example is the "wheeled Stokes litter". SARA originally carried injured patients out of the field in a metal basket litter called a "Stokes". The Stokes was carried by hand, usually with three individuals on either side of the basket. Moving a patient in this way for miles down narrow, steep trails lined with cactus and rocks was very difficult, to say the least.

To deal with the problem, SARA members fabricated a frame that attached a small motorcycle wheel to the middle of the underside of the

Stokes basket. They added handles that extended to the front and back of the Stokes in order to make it feasible for two people, one in front and one in back, to move a patient along a trail. The new Stokes made it easier, faster, and safer to move a patient through the steep and rocky trails of the Sonoran Desert. The model was field tested and then shown at the annual MRA meeting. Now, search and rescue teams across the country use some version of the wheeled Stokes litter to move patients in the field. And it all started right here in Pima County.

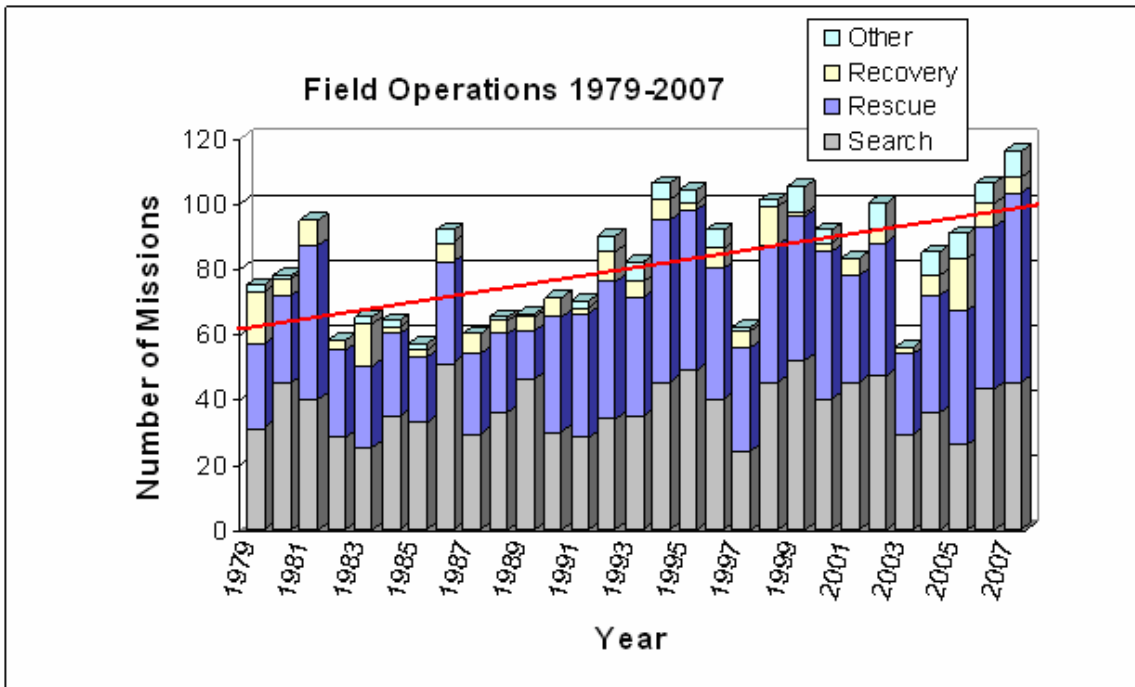
**SARA's busy schedule today.** Tucson is situated in the heart of the Sonoran Desert, with four mountain ranges in close proximity: the Tucson, Santa Catalina, Santa Rita, and Rincon Mountains. Three of these ranges have peaks that rise nearly 9,000 feet. The area is a mecca for day hiking, backpacking, rock climbing, and mountain biking. It is not surprising that SARA is one of the busiest search and rescue groups in the country.

Since its inception in 1959, SARA has completed over 4,000 search and rescue missions. Of those missions, over 1,000 occurred within the past ten years. Our mission numbers have grown significantly over the years, from 39 in 1968 to 80 in 1980. The number of calls to SARA has risen steadily since that time, with several notable exceptions. The Bullock Fire northeast of Tucson in 2002, and the larger Aspen Fire in the Santa Catalina Mountains north of Tucson in 2003, closed local wilderness areas during both summers. This cut our normal mission load by almost 50% for those years.

With the exception of 2002 and 2003, SARA responds to an average of 100 calls from the Pima County Sheriff's Department yearly. Approximately 80% of those calls develop into full-blown field operations, so that SARA puts in an average of over 4,500 volunteer hours in the field every year.

In a typical year, the majority of SARA's missions are searches, followed by rescues. In most years, however, SARA also participates in body recoveries, urban searches for missing children or Alzheimer's patients, swift water rescues, cave rescues, evidence searches, and the occasional animal rescue.

**The number of field operations for the past 28 years.** SARA's missions have increased steadily since 1979, with several notable exceptions due to fires in the Santa Catalina and surrounding mountains. The statistical trend (indicated by the red line on the graph below) suggests that, by the year 2025, SARA may be responding to as many as 110 full-scale search and rescue operations in a year.



## SARA's Activities for 2007

In 2007, SARA members logged nearly 10,000 volunteer hours in search and rescue operations, training, and public service. This number does not include the many hours spent in committees, meetings, and other work activities that are essential to SARA's operations and management.

The year 2007 will be memorable for SARA because of the major floods that happened in Sabino and Bear Canyons, where over 50 hikers were stranded and required evacuation by SARA personnel. Sadly, two people from Tucson lost their lives as they were swept downstream in the flash flood that occurred in Bear Canyon in late August. SARA rescuers searched the canyon for the two missing people and recovered their bodies the following day.

On a more positive note, SARA received a special recognition award from the Pima County Sheriff Department for outstanding support of the Sheriff's Department and commitment to public safety in Pima County on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2007. The award was presented at the annual Sheriff Department Awards Banquet by Sheriff Clarence Dupnik with ten SARA members in attendance.

In 2007, we continued our capital campaign to raise funds for a new headquarters and training facility. The campaign began in July, 2005. We are already nearly half way towards our total fundraising goal. The dedication and commitment of SARA volunteers has been matched by the generous spirit of the Tucson community. We are

grateful for the support of this community, and we look forward to the building of our new home over the next few years.

In the following sections, we describe the progress we have made in our capital campaign, followed by a description of the field operations, training, and community service that kept SARA busy during 2007.

### A Permanent Home for SARA: The Capital Campaign

Since 2003, SARA has leased a property from Pima County located at Craycroft and the Rillito River. The building, seen below, has provided SARA with a central location for training, meetings, and equipment storage.



However, the building was originally a private residence and is not adequate as a search and rescue facility given the number of trainings we offer each year and the size of our membership. It is also in need of significant structural repair. Two years ago, SARA began to search for a new and permanent home that will provide us with the facilities

required for SARA to fully accomplish its mission.

SARA has therefore begun its first-ever capital campaign in order to raise the funds needed to build a new facility and to provide an endowment that will help maintain the new building in the years to come.

A headquarters and training facility is an absolute necessity for SARA. Our members log thousands of training hours every year. New members complete an intensive 5 month medical training program, followed by at least one year of field training and missions before being considered fully field qualified. Members must then recertify their medical skills every year, and attend monthly training sessions along with field skills recertifications in order to remain field qualified. SARA's current facility is in use every week of the year.

**Current progress.** With the generous guidance of several prominent Tucson residents, including Mr. Mel Zuckerman, Mrs. Joan Kaye-Cauthorn, Ms. Renee Morton, and other members of the community, we are already nearly half-way towards our goal. We are particularly pleased to report that SARA members themselves have contributed \$100,000 toward the project. Already, we have obtained the financial support of an exceptional group of individuals and businesses in Tucson. These include:

- ◆ Mr. Mel Zuckerman (Canyon Ranch)
- ◆ Mr. and Mrs. Jim and Vicki Click (Jim Click Automotive Team)
- ◆ Ms. Renee Morton

- ◆ Mr. Don Bourn (Bourn Properties)
- ◆ Ms. Helaine Levy (Jewish Community Foundation)
- ◆ Long Realty
- ◆ Mr. Buck O'Rielly

Mr. Buck O'Rielly (O'Rielly Motor Company, Inc.) has provided us with our first challenge grant. Mr. O'Rielly will donate \$20,000 when we reach \$500,000 in pledges and donations. We look forward to meeting that challenge in the coming year.

Mr. O'Rielly knows first-hand about SARA's services. Over 20 years ago, Mr. O'Rielly and his son were horse-packing in the Rincon Mountains when his horse shied and fell on top of him, seriously injuring his leg. SARA responded, providing medical care and transporting Mr. O'Rielly by Stokes litter out of the mountains. We are delighted to add Mr. O'Rielly's name to our list of supporters.

**The next steps...** In 2007 we made significant progress towards our goal. Finding an appropriate site for the building was a significant challenge. SARA applied for a special uses permit with the US Forest Service to build a new headquarters and training facility as part of the refurbishment of the old Sabino Canyon Rod and Gun Club site in Sabino Canyon. The permit process took many months to complete, including environmental impact studies, reviews by Forest Service personnel, and a public comment period. As of the end of 2007, the process is continuing and we anticipate the final permit to be issued in the Spring of 2008.



Plans for the new building have been drawn up by Mr. Evan Eglin, of Eglin-Cohen Architects. The 5,000 sq ft building, sketched above, will be built using environmentally friendly materials wherever possible, and will be situated in the heart of Sabino Canyon. SARA also plans to provide volunteers to the Forest Service to remediate the old shooting range site by planting natural vegetation and restoring the area to its original Sonoran desert environment.

Having a site for the new facility and plans for the house drawn up, SARA will now turn it's attention to completing the capital campaign in 2008 and securing the remainder of the necessary building funds. We hope to begin breaking ground for site preparation in the fall of 2008.

## Field Operations in 2007

In 2007, SARA's assistance was requested by Pima County Sheriff's Department a total of 116 times. Of those calls, 90 resulted in full scale field operations, meaning that a significant number of SARA rescue personnel were deployed. On other occasions, the situation may have been resolved by one or two rescue personnel only, or was resolved before SARA could send personnel into the field.

The year 2007 will be remembered for the floods in Bear and Sabino Canyons that trapped over a hundred hikers, and took the lives of two young people. It was a reminder to us all of how unpredictable and dangerous our wilderness areas can be. SARA's operations in 2007 included wilderness searches, rescues of injured hikers, climbers, and mountain bikers, high angle cliff rescue and technical evacuations, body recoveries, urban searches for missing children and mentally disabled individuals, and swift water rescues and evacuations. Descriptions of selected missions throughout the year are provided below.

## Summary Data for 2007

Field qualified members: 58

Other members: 33

Candidates: 36

Requests for assistance: 116

Full scale field operations: 90

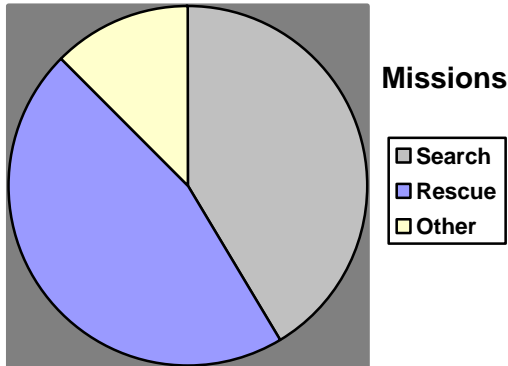
Average members per call: 10.5

Average duration of call: 3.6 hrs

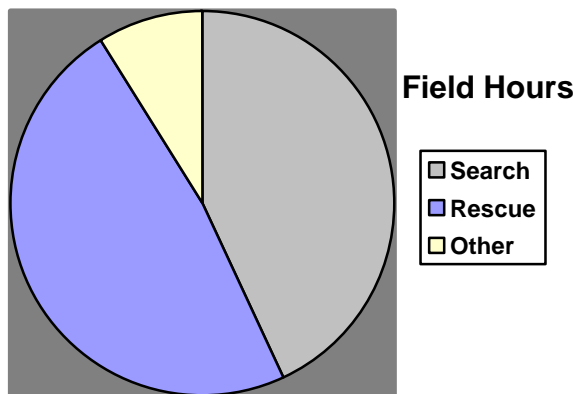
Average calls per week: 2.23

Total hours in field: 4,365 hrs

**Number and type of missions in 2007.** Of the total 90 full field missions in 2007, 39% were wilderness searches, 49% were rescues, and the remaining 12% included other types of missions such as body recoveries, swift water rescues, and urban searches.



**Number of rescuer hours in the field for 2007.** Rescuers logged 4,365 hours in the field in 2007. Field hours mirrored the distribution of missions; 43% were logged during searches, 48% during rescues, and 9% during other types of calls.



**Working with other agencies.**

All SARA field operations are overseen by the Pima County Sheriff's Department. Additionally, SARA works closely with the Tucson Police Department, Rural Metro Fire Department, Tucson Fire Department, Mount Lemmon Fire Department, the Arizona Department of Public Safety, the United States Border Patrol, the US Forest Service, and many other agencies. In the past ten years, SARA has been assisted by or provided assistance to over 35 public safety organizations throughout Southern Arizona, Northern Arizona, and Mexico.



During 2007, SARA worked with 38 other agencies throughout Southern Arizona, including private, municipal, county, state, and federal services. Each of the agencies listed below (in alphabetical order), either assisted SARA with search and rescue operations, or SARA was requested to assist the agency.

- 305<sup>th</sup> Air Rescue Squadron, Davis Monthan Airbase
- Avra Valley Fire Department
- Catalina State Park Rangers
- Cochise County Search & Rescue
- Cochise County Sheriff's Office

- Corona de Tucson Fire Department
- Dept. of Public Safety Air Rescue (Tucson) Ranger Helicopter
- Dept. of Public Safety Air Rescue (Phoenix) Ranger Helicopter
- Drexel Heights Fire Department
- Golder Ranch Fire Department
- Green Valley Fire Department
- Lifenet Arizona (Tucson) Helicopter
- Lifeline Arizona (Tucson) Helicopter
- Marana Police Department
- Mount Lemmon Fire Department
- National Park Service Saguaro East
- National Park Service Saguaro West
- New Mexico Search and Rescue
- Northwest Fire Department
- Oro Valley Police Department
- Pima County Sheriff's Department Search and Rescue Division
- Pima County Sheriff's Department Detectives
- Pima County Sheriff's Dept. Fixed Wing Aircraft (Survey 1)
- Pima County Sheriff's Auxiliary Volunteers (Tucson, Green Valley)
- Picture Rocks Fire Department
- Pinal County Sheriff's Office
- Rural Metro Fire Department
- Santa Cruz County Search and Rescue
- Tohono O'Odham Police Department
- Tohono O'Odham Fire Department
- Tucson Fire Department
- Tucson Police Department
- United States Border Patrol
- United States Border Patrol Search, Trauma, and Rescue Teams (BORSTAR)
- United States ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) Black Hawk Helicopter
- United States ICE Omaha010 Fixed Wing Aircraft

- United States Forest Service
- Ventana Resort Security Service

## Search and rescue missions 2007

The following are selected summaries of typical (and a few atypical) search and rescue operations in 2007. At the end of each summary, the number of personnel and the total number of man hours are shown. The monthly newsletter documents all SARA activities, and provides a brief summary of field operations, trainings, and community service events that occurred during the previous month. Current and archived newsletters are available on the internet at: <http://www.sarci.org>. Note that all missions are overseen by search and rescue Deputies from the Pima County Sheriff's Department.



### **Tuesday, January 2, 2007 Hikers stranded by dark, Finger Rock Canyon**

#### **Assisted by Tucson Ranger**

Two teenage boys and a teenage girl were stranded by darkness while hiking along the Finger Rock Canyon cliffs.

Trapped by the cliffs below The Finger and unprepared to hike in the dark, the group made a fire. While rescue teams entered the canyon on foot, DPS Tucson Ranger Helicopter flew over the area and spotted the fire, providing GPS coordinates to SARA rescuers. Rescue teams ascended the lower cliffs to get to the teens, and walked them out of the canyon without complications.  
*Personnel: 13 Field hours: 69*



**Thursday, January 11, 2007 Search for Alzheimer's patient, McDonald Park**

An elderly male with Alzheimer's disease wandered away from his family while on a picnic at McDonald Park. SARA search teams were requested to search the fencelines and washes near the park while Pima County Sheriff's patrol cars covered the neighborhood. A SARA rescuer spotted an individual matching the description walking along a nearby road. The man was returned to his family in good condition.  
*Personnel: 17 Field hours: 27*

**Saturday, February 3 Hikers stranded by dark, Bear Canyon**

Three hikers contacted 911 by cell phone and reported themselves lost and

stranded by dark. They were hiking from the Prison Camp on Mt. Lemmon and down Bear Canyon to their vehicle at the Sabino Visitor's Center. Because the poor trail conditions in Sycamore Basin delayed them, the hikers only made it to crossing 6 by the time it became dark. Based on their cell phone GPS coordinates, SARA search teams were directed to Bear Canyon. The hikers were found in good condition downstream of the trail crossing. All walked out without problems.  
*Personnel: 8 Field hours: 18*

**Sunday, March 11, 2007 Male hiker with fractured ankle, Romero Canyon Assisted by LifeNet helicopter**

A 64 year old male tripped while hiking downhill on the Romero Canyon Trail, a short distance from Romero Pools, fracturing his ankle. SARA personnel arrived on scene and splinted the leg, while other rescuers secured a landing zone for LifeNet helicopter to land on a near-by ridge. Teams carried the 260 lb patient by stokes basket a quarter mile up to the helicopter, which airlifted the individual to hospital.  
*Personnel: 10 Field hours: 44*

**Tuesday, March 13, 2007 74 yr male hiker ill, Baldy Saddle, Santa Rita Mountains**

A group of hikers had hiked up Mt. Wrightson in the Santa Rita Mountains and started back down the Old Baldy Trail. Just below Baldy Saddle one of the hikers, a 74 year old male, became ill possibly from complications related to diabetes. SARA was called to assist because the Santa Cruz SAR team had been searching all day for an off-trail hiker in Temporal Canyon, and did not have rescue personnel to respond to the Wrightson scene. Two Green Valley

Fire medics hiked to the scene, arriving soon after Tucson Ranger helicopter landed several paramedics at the scene. SARA teams started up the trail with the stokes litter and other equipment. Because the patient's condition was deteriorating quickly, a rescue helicopter from the 305<sup>th</sup> Air Rescue Squadron, Davis Monthan Airbase, was called in to fly the patient directly to University Medical Center. SARA teams arrived as the evacuation was taking place. DPS Ranger helicopter flew the firefighters out, leaving one DPS medic to walk back down the trail with SARA teams.  
*Personnel: 10 Field hours: 66*

**Wednesday, March 28, 2007 Two teenagers injured by rock fall, Soldier's Canyon, Mt. Lemmon**

Three members of the Sabino High School wrestling team, ages 16 – 18, scrambled about a mile up Soldier's Canyon, then continued to climb a steep slope on the south-east side of the canyon. As they approached the top of several steep chutes about 85 ft up, a large rock fell and struck two of the boys. The first patient was struck on the head, shoulder, and upper leg, resulting in head injuries and a broken femur. The second boy was knocked down the chute, sustaining a lower leg injury. One SARA team descended from the top of the cliff to reach one of the boys, while another SARA team climbed up the chute to reach the second boy. Tucson Ranger inserted a paramedic on the scene, but high winds and darkness limited their ability to assist further. A United States 305<sup>th</sup> Air Squadron rescue Pavehawk helicopter hoisted one patient out and flew him directly to UMC, then returned and hoisted the second boy out and flew him to UMC.  
*Personnel: 16 Field hours: 115*



**Saturday, April 28, 2007 75 yr male hiker with heat exhaustion, Esperero Trail, Mt. Lemmon**

A 76 year old male hiker with a group from Canyon Ranch was not prepared for one of the first very hot days of the year. He collapsed on the Esperero Trail about a mile from the trailhead and was unresponsive for a short time. When SARA rescue teams arrived on scene, the man was revived and responded appropriately. After cooling him down and providing food and water, SARA teams escorted him down the trail.

*Personnel: 12 Field hours: 15*

**Saturday, May 12, 2007 Hikers tired and stranded by darkness, Pima Canyon**

Six hikers were heading up Pima Canyon. Two of the more experienced hikers continued ahead of the group to Mt. Kimball, then down Finger Rock Trail. Eventually, both groups called 911 after running low on water. One of the hikers in the second group had a chronic knee injury that became very painful and stopped them from continuing. The first pair was met by a SARA team a short distance from the trailhead and was escorted out of the

canyon. Other SARA teams continued up the trail. Tucson Ranger spotted the second group on the Finger Rock trail just below Linda Vista Saddle, and landed on the flat spot on the trail in order to fly the injured hiker with the knee problem off the mountain. It was then too dark for the helicopter to return to the scene. SARA personnel continued up the trail with more lights and water to meet up with the remainder of the hikers. They were given water and food, and walked down the trail to the parking lot without further problems.  
*Personnel: 7 Field hours: 31*

**Monday, May 28, 2007 Two teens lost in Marshall Gulch area**

During Memorial Day celebration at the Marshall Gulch area, two teens went for a walk down Sabino Creek and were separated from their parents. When the boys did not return after several hours and darkness was falling, SARA teams were called in to search for the boys. Tucson Ranger searched from the air and spotted the boys downstream near the Wilderness Fork junction. Two SARA personnel were dropped by helicopter near the scene and made their way to the boys with warm clothes and food. The SARA rescuers moved the boys back to a safe location where Range could pick them up, and the teens were reunited with their parents.  
*Personnel: 11 Field hours: 49*

**Sunday, June 24, 2007 Female hiker with heat exhaustion, Gates Pass**

Two middle-aged people were hiking north of Gates Pass on a very hot afternoon. The female hiker became exhausted and overheated, collapsed on the trail and became briefly unresponsive. While SARA teams began searching for the pair, Tucson

Ranger flew over the area, locating them in a canyon below Bushmaster Peak and directing rescue teams to the scene. Medical personnel provided IV fluids. SARA rescuers carried her cross-country to the parking lot in a Stokes litter, where she was transferred to a waiting ambulance.

*Personnel: 14 Field hours: 44*

**Saturday, June 30, 2007 Hiking group lost, Palisades Trail to Upper Sycamore Saddle**

A church group consisting of 3 adults and 6 teenagers hiked down Palisades Trail for an overnight trip, intending to continue down to Sabino Canyon. By the second day, the group had lost the trail. They were unprepared for the trip, without sufficient water, and several of the hikers had improper shoes so they were moving very slowly. The group split up, with five people hiking ahead, intending to return with more water. The five then split again into two groups when some of the people could not continue. When they found a location with cellphone coverage, they called 911. SARA sent search teams in from several directions, while Tucson Ranger helicopter searched from the air. Ranger spotted the first group of three moving up hill towards Upper Sycamore Saddle, and encouraged them to wait in shade for SARA teams to arrive. The second group of two was located by SARA teams just below Lower Sycamore Saddle, and were able to continue up and meet the SARA teams near the saddle. The third group of four was located a half-mile away from Pine Creek. Ranger flew one SARA rescuer to the scene, and then flew the group to the Prison Camp while the other groups were accompanied on foot by SARA personnel to the trailhead. All the hikers

were assessed and given food and water by SARA on trail.

*Personnel: 21 Field hours: 143*

**Sunday, July 8, 2008 Female hiker with ankle injury, Palisades Trail**

A brother and sister were hiking down the Palisades Trail, finding the trail difficult to follow and losing it in several places. The female hiker injured her ankle and knee, but was able to continue slowly. They made it to Crossing 7 in Bear Canyon before her injuries stopped her from continuing shortly before sunset. A SARA team hiked in to meet them, providing medical care and food and water. Her ankle was splinted, and she enjoyed a ride out on mule back courtesy of the Search and Rescue Posse. SARA teams escorted the other hiker to the trailhead.

*Personnel: 16 Field hours: 43*

**Sunday, July 29, 2007 Fall victim, Manqué Verde Falls**

A 37 year old male hiker was reportedly injured after falling down a steep slope into the creek at Tanque Verde Falls, just upstream of the Main Falls, with serious injuries. Because his location was unclear, SARA teams began searching initially down the SARA Trail, then down the Main Trail. To complicate things, another hiker reported that the injured man was walking out on his own. Instead, SARA teams found him with multiple serious injuries to the face and head, provided medical treatment and packaged the patient for evacuation on a backboard. Several teams rigged technical systems to bring the patient up the steep slopes. Tucson Ranger evaluated the situation and determined it was safe to short-haul the patient to a waiting ambulance.

*Personnel: 20 Field hours: 60*



**Saturday, August 23, 2007 Flash Flood, Bear Canyon**

Sudden heavy rains in Rose and Willow Canyons near the summit of Mt. Lemmon created a flash flood in Bear Canyon. Thirty people were caught in the canyon, most getting out of the water, but stranded on the slopes of the canyon between trail crossings. SARA rescue teams headed up either side of the canyon above the raging water, while Tucson Ranger flew in, extracting a couple who were still trapped in the stream on a rock, and then flying through the canyon counting the number of stranded hikers between each crossing. SARA rescuers were flown in to each group and checked for people who were reported missing. Some hikers were escorted by SARA rescuers along the west bank down to the first crossing. Most of the other hikers were ferried by helicopter to the trailhead. One man was situated on the far side of the canyon and could not be reached by helicopter. He was assisted across the creek by three SARA rescuers after the water level had dropped somewhat. Two people remained missing. The body of a young man was spotted on the east bank near the first crossing as water levels dropped. Several hours

later the water had not dropped enough to safely recover the body, so the operation was suspended until morning.

*Personnel: 23 Field hours: 157*



**Sunday, August 24, 2007 Day 2, Flooding in Bear Canyon continued**

The body spotted near the first crossing was recovered by teams in the early morning of Day 2 without difficulty because the water had dropped significantly. A search began for the remaining missing person, a young woman, covering from the northernmost end of Bear Canyon and continuing upstream to Seven Falls. As teams forged through the river searching under rocks and through debris piles, Tucson Ranger spotted the person and directed SARA teams to the location just below the last crossing. SARA teams brought in equipment, documented the scene, and packaged the body which was then short-hauled by Ranger to waiting family members at the trailhead.

*Personnel: 26 Field hours: 166*

**Saturday, October 6, 2007 Fall victim, Pusch Ridge**

A solo hiker, 69 year old male, was heading down from the top of the Pusch

Peak Ridge above the waterfall, lost his footing and tumbled down trail. He sustained head injuries with significant scalp lacerations, and had broken his glasses, so that he was unable to continue by himself. SARA teams hiked in to the scene, assessed the patient and provided medical care. He was able to walk without assistance, and was escorted back up to the top of the ridge where the helicopter picked him up and flew him to the trailhead where he was transferred to an ambulance.

*Personnel: 10 Field hours: 31*

**Sunday, October 7, 2007 Family lost on Mt. Lemmon**

A family of three visited Oktoberfest on Mt Lemmon, then went for a short hike on the Aspen Trail but did not return. Other family members reported them missing, and SARA teams began searching the Aspen-Marshall Gulch loop and down Sabino Creek. At dawn the search was expanded into the Wilderness of Rocks region, where the group was found a short distance from Marshall Saddle. They were cold, but were able to hike out with support. SARA personnel provided warm clothing, food, and warm liquids before hiking the group out.

*Personnel: 9 Field hours: 39*

**Sunday, October 21, 2007 Hikers lost near Box Camp Springs junction**

Two military personnel were hiking and camping on the Box Camp Trail. In the morning they continued down the trail towards Sabino Canyon, but lost the trail near the Box Camp Spring junction. They called for help on their cell phone after darkness had fallen. GPS coordinates from the cell phone call located them near the confluence of Palisades and Spencer Canyons. SARA

Teams hiked down trail from the Girl Scout Camp, dropped into Palisades Canyon, walked downstream, then down the north ridge until they could see the hikers below. SARA teams located the hikers and helped carry the now-exhausted hiker's packs. It took a while for teams to find a route through the cliffs, but all personnel and the hikers were out of the field by dawn.

*Personnel: 8 Field hours: 79*

#### **Thursday, December 13, 2007**

##### **Frostbite injury in Esperero Canyon**

A hiker on a backpacking trip high in Esperero Canyon called 911 on his cell phone and reported that he was unable to find the trail, and that his feet were very wet and cold. Ranger located the man in Esperero Saddle and dropped a SARA rescuer nearby to retrieve the hiker. The hiker had been walking the trail in several inches of snow and had sustained frostbite on several toes by the time SARA reached him. Ranger flew both the SARA member and the hiker out of the field.

*Personnel: 6 Field hours: 6*

## **Training in 2007**

SARA has three major goals for training:

**1. Ongoing trainings for field qualified members.** These trainings occur at least once a month, and are designed to refresh or update skills and techniques. Trainings during a one-year cycle include all the major areas of service that SARA members are expected to provide in the field, including medical care, technical rescue, helicopter operations, wilderness navigation and search, equipment operations, tracking, swift water

evacuations, winter and desert survival skills, cave rescue, and mine rescue.

### **2. New member medical training.**

SARA trains a new group of members each year, beginning in early February. The major portion of their training in the first year is medical training, which is comprised of the Outdoor Emergency Care (OEC) Technician certification. The course curriculum is organized and certified by the National Ski Patrol Association, and is taught by members of SARA and other component groups who are certified OEC instructors.

### **3. New member field training.**

Each year, SARA trains new members in field skills in a series of four day-long courses (referred to as Basic I through IV). The Basic series covers all aspects of SARA field operations, use of equipment, introductions to map and compass skills, technical skills (knots, working with rope, anchors, haul and lower systems), as well as other SARA-relevant skills (moving a stokes, radio operations, search techniques, etc).



## Summary data for 2007

### Ongoing Trainings:

- Number of trainings: 23
- Total hours: 3,381
- Average members attending: 18
- Average hours per training: 7
- Trainee hours: 2,898
- Instructor hours: 483

### New candidate OEC and field training:

- Number of trainings: 40
- Number of candidates: 14
- Total hours: 3,900
- Average instructors per class: 5
- Trainee hours: 2,800
- Instructor hours: 1,000

## Total training hours: 7,281

In 2007, SARA held monthly trainings for members (see below) at various sites in the Catalinas and surrounding areas, such as desert survival training (conducted at Saguaro National Park East), and swift water rescue (Gila River, Winkelman AZ). In total, SARA held 23 ongoing trainings in 2007, with an average of 18 members attending each training. The total number of hours spent in these trainings was 3,381 hours, including 2,989 hours for trainees. Each training had at least three instructors, who put in an additional 483 hours on the trainings, not including preparation time. Specific trainings offered during 2007 are listed below.

## The Vertical Mile

**The tradition continues.** SARA resurrected an old training tradition in 2005, called the Vertical Mile, and the tradition continued in 2007. In October, SARA members hiked 15 miles, with 5,500 ft elevation gain, from Sabino Canyon to the top of Mt. Lemmon. The hikers carried their rescue field packs, which had to weigh at least 20% of their body weight (as much as 40 pounds for some rescuers). Everyone made it to the top, with the fastest hikers (Jim Holmes and Jane Larkindale, big surprise there...) arriving in about 6 hours. Hikers were rewarded with a barbecue at the summit.



## The 2007 Training Schedule

January 6<sup>th</sup> Map and Compass Techniques, Sara House, Santa Catalina Mountains

February 4<sup>th</sup> Winter/Snow Skills Orientation; Practice for MRA Re-accreditation, SARA House, Skill Valley, Santa Catalinas

March 3<sup>rd</sup> Tanque Verde Falls  
Orientation and technical rescue in the  
high angle environment

April 7<sup>th</sup> Mine Rescue and Shaft rescue  
techniques, confined spaces, SARA  
house

May 5<sup>th</sup> Swift Water Rescue,  
Gila River, Winkleman Arizona

June 2<sup>nd</sup> Sonoran Desert Introduction to  
survival skills, Saguaro National Park  
East

July 4<sup>th</sup> Summerhaven 4th of July  
Parade

July 8<sup>th</sup> Base Camp Operations, Truck  
and Equipment, Santa Catalinas

August 5<sup>th</sup> Basic rock and introduction  
to moving off trail, Milagrosa Canyon

September 2<sup>nd</sup> Personal Rope Skills,  
Pontatoc Ridge

October 7<sup>th</sup> Technical Rescue, Santa  
Catalina Mountains

October 21<sup>st</sup> The Vertical Mile, Sabino  
Canyon Visitor Center to Mt. Lemmon  
Summit

November 5<sup>th</sup> Field Exercise: High  
Angle Rescue Techniques, Santa  
Catalinas

December 8<sup>th</sup> Advanced technical and  
medical equipment and techniques,  
SARA house

## Community Service 2007

In 2007, SARA members were active in educational and community service programs. These included the “Lost and Found, Safe and Sound” program, where elementary school children are taught how to be safe while hiking in the desert. We provide first aid services for outdoor events in Tucson and Pima County, such as the Chili Festival, Rodeo Days, and several community mountain biking and trail running events.

SARA maintains a HAM radio repeater on Mount Lemmon, which greatly enhances our ability to communicate during field operations in the Catalina Mountains. The radio repeater station was severely damaged during the Aspen Fire in 2003. During 2004, SARA members rebuilt the repeater on Mt. Lemmon. The repeater is used by SARA during all search and rescue activities to communicate between agencies and with our teams in the field. All materials and manpower required to build and maintain the repeater is donated by SARA members.



## SARA Key Personnel for 2007

### Officers and Directors for 2007

In 2004, SARA adopted a policy that Officers and Directors will serve a two-year term, with half the Board positions being voted on each year.

Officers and Board members for 2007-2008 include:

Brian Duffy, President  
 Sean Fawcett, Vice-President  
 Bill Florence, Treasurer  
 Scott Clemens, Secretary  
 Cathy Wasmann, Member  
 Jim Holmes, Member  
 George Herget, Member  
 Frances Walker, Member  
 Rich Kunz, Member

### Committees and Chairs for 2007

All SARA functions are organized by committees, with a committee chair that is appointed by the current President of the Board of Directors. Committees organize activities and make recommendations to the Board for policy

in their area. The committees and Chairs for 2007 are:

Communications: Mykle Raymond  
 Trucks & Equipment: Gary Copus  
 Monthly Training: Brian Duffy  
 Basic Training: Henry Jacobs  
 Membership: Dirk Harris  
 Medical: Rich Giachetti  
 Technical: Scott Clemens  
 Fundraising: John Perchorowicz  
 Documents: Fran Kunz  
 Records: Joe Barr  
 Outdoor Emergency Care: John Gorski

### Meetings in 2007

SARA conducts several monthly meetings which are all held at SARA House, located at 3455 North Craycroft Road. Regular meetings include the Board Meetings (3rd Thursday of the month), General Membership Meetings (1<sup>st</sup> Friday of each month), and Monthly committee meetings (as required). Announcements for the meetings are posted in the monthly newsletter which is distributed to all members by mail and is available on the SARA website, <http://www.sarci.org/SARA.htm>.

