



# WINTER 2016

## **New BCTA Board of Directors**

It's been too long! We haven't had a BCTA newsletter for a couple of years – but now we're back. And we're here to bring you up to date on what's been happening...

Firstly, several of our serving executives have announced their resignations. Kelly Carnochan, President; Dwaine Brooke, VP; Jerome Liboiron, Director SE; and Arnie Powell, Director SW, have stepped down. We thank them for their service.

So, that left Darlene Berry, Secretary/ Memberships; Alison Rose, Treasurer; Mike Neeland, NE Director; Jon Coutts, NW Director; and Kathryn Farr, VI Director. Also, Win Koch as Chair, Training Committee and John Semenech as the Webmaster.

An Extraordinary Board of Directors' teleconference meeting was convened on 12 January and a number of members have stepped up to fill Acting BOD positions. This included:

Mike Neeland – A/President  
Jenni Christi – A/VP  
Rebecca Turner – A/Director SW  
Randy Rorvick – A/Director Central

Darlene Berry will continue in Membership Committee; Win Koch was appointed to the Communications Committee and will be the Newsletter Editor, and John Semenech will continue as Webmaster.

As this Extraordinary BOD Meeting was a temporary step to fill the vacant positions, there is now a need to hold a General Meeting. This has been scheduled for Comox Valley on Saturday 14 May at 18:00. An agenda will be posted on the website 30 days in advance and current members will be sent a teleconference number so that they can join in. We are in need of Regional Directors for the SW and NE Regions. Any BCTA member willing to volunteer for a two-year term in these positions is welcome to contact the secretary in advance of the meeting.

## **BCTA Memberships**

The new membership year begins 1 May. You can apply for or renew your membership using the 2016 application form available on the website, or when you sign in for a course.

The new BOD voted that membership fees will remain the same for the 5<sup>th</sup> year in a row: \$15.00 for 1-year and \$40.00 for 3-year memberships. Saves you a bundle on course tuition, be the first to know about upcoming courses, and you have a say in the Association by being able to attend and vote at the Annual General Meeting.

On the membership form you can also apply to have your name included on the Mutual Aid Tracker Call-Out list.

Questions? Contact Darlene Berry at: [secretary@bctracking.org](mailto:secretary@bctracking.org)

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## **BCTA Training**

In 2015, the BCTA conducted six Basic and Advanced courses for a total of 173 students:

- VI: Comox 23, Saanich 33
- Central: Princeton 40
- SE: Creston 22
- SW: Sechelt 35
- NW: Terrace 20

Check out the pictures on the website and congratulations to all those who achieved Track Aware and Advanced GSAR Tracker certification!

At the 12 January BOD meeting, it was approved that the course tuition fees would remain at \$100 for current BCTA members. As in past years, tuition fees are waived for those attending the BCTA Instructor Course. Non-BCTA members still pay \$200 tuition.

## **2016 Spring Courses coming up:**

*Pencil in these dates on your calendar!*

**Salt Spring Island - Track Aware/Basic**  
**15-17 April** Coordinator: Judy Burch

**Princeton – Track Aware/Basic & TK1**  
**Advanced 29-31 April**  
Coordinator: Rand Rorvick

*Remember: 1 May - new membership year begins...*

**Comox Valley – Advanced GSAR Tracker**  
**6-8 May** Coordinator: Karla Blain

**Comox Valley – BCTA Instructor Course**  
**13-15 May** Coordinator: Darlene Berry

*Details will be posted on the BCTA website as they become available.*

At the BOD Meeting, it was agreed that all certified BCTA Instructors would be listed on the Training Committee in order to receive and discuss information and proposals related to the Training Program. A draft of the revised

definitions for BCTA GSAR Trackers has been sent to the Training Committee and BOD for review and approval, and will be incorporated into the 2016 Training Program. This includes some proposed changes to the assessment criteria. The details will be rolled out at the Instructor Course in May.

The BCTA Booklets will be updated for 2016 and a budget of \$1000 was approved to cover printing costs.

Questions? Contact Win Koch at:  
[training@bctracking.org](mailto:training@bctracking.org)  
or your Regional Director

## **BCTA Communications Committee**

John Semenech has revamped the Website – check it out at:

<http://www.bctracking.org/Index.html>

*Remember to refresh your browser!*

One change includes a new Protected Membership Only link. The old Yahoo private membership link has been replaced. Current BCTA Members will be sent a single group user name and a single group password to enable them to access files and documents not open to the general public. This includes all minutes of meetings, financial statements and official correspondence. The aim is to be as transparent as possible so that current BCTA Members have access to all the Association's documents. It will save sending large e-mail files by acting as the go-to location for BCTA documents, meeting agendas minutes and attachments, etc... The group password will be changes at the beginning of the new membership year.

For comments or questions about the website, contact John Semenech at

[webmaster@bctracking.org](mailto:webmaster@bctracking.org)

**Newsletter.** For those that prefer the Reader's Digest version, this BCTA Newsletter will summarize the results of meetings and goings-on in the Association.

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The BCTA Newsletter will be e-mailed out on a quarterly basis and copies will be available on the website.

To contribute articles, information and pictures, especially for the "Tracker Tales" section of the newsletter, contact Win Koch at: [communications@bctracking.org](mailto:communications@bctracking.org)

## A 2010-16 Recap - Where we've been and where we're heading.

*By: Win Koch,  
Chair, BCTA Training Committee  
Advanced GSAR Tracker, Tracker 2, Instructor  
Past President & Past Secretary BCTAS*

*Someone has said that the membership of a club  
Is made up of four kinds of bones.....  
There are the **WISHBONES**, who spend their time  
Wishing someone else would do the work.....  
There are the **JAWBONES**, who do all the talking  
But very little of anything else.....  
Next come the **KNUCKLEBONES**, who knock  
everything that everybody else tries to do.....  
And finally, there are the **BACKBONES**, who get under  
The load and do the work.*

*Author Unknown.*

It has now been over five years since the BC Tracking Association was formally registered as a Society and took on the challenge of providing and conducting Ground Search and Rescue Tracker Specialist training in British Columbia..

During the first three years the Association accomplished much, as was summarized in the Summer 2013 issue of this newsletter.

The Association is formally recognized by Emergency Management BC (EMBC) and the BC Search and Rescue Association (BC SARA). EMBC supports us by providing the Training Task Number which covers instructors and students with WorkSafe BC and liability insurance during courses. BC SARA pays to include us in the SARVAC insurance program, which also covers other SAR Groups in BC.

The Association was recognized and supported financially by the National Search and Rescue Secretariat (NSS) through the Search and Rescue New Initiatives Fund (SAR NIF) to provide GSAR Tracker training and to develop Training Standards and Course materials. During the two years of the SAR New Initiatives Funding, BCTA developed the draft GSAR

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Tracker training standards and course materials, presented 21 courses to 449 students, certified 68 trackers and 23 instructors.

We owe thanks those dedicated Instructors, Committee members, Regional Directors and Executive who worked hard to develop and provide the BCTA GSAR Tracker Training program. Also, special thanks to the many SAR Group Course Coordinators who promoted, requested and organized GSAR Tracker training throughout the Province.

We've come a long way in five years, but much remains to be done if we want to see GSAR Tracker Specialist training and standards formally recognized, not only here in BC, but also at the National level. I believe that it is going to happen.

Work is already underway to set Provincial and National standards for Swiftwater and Rope Rescue specialties. This will allow GSAR specialists to transfer or provide specialist mutual aid to the same standards anywhere in the province, and eventually, the rest of Canada. Tracking will also be looked at in the near future.

The Association has developed and provided a first-rate, affordable GSAR Tracker Specialist training program, which can form the basis for the Provincial and National training and standards. But it needs you, the dedicated GSAR Searchers, Trackers and Instructors to carry on all this valuable work into the future.

### **"I'd Like To Help, But I'm Just One Person"**

*Author Unknown:*

Now I would like to pass on a few personal thoughts:

It is my strong belief that GSAR Volunteer Specialist training of any kind should be subsidized. GSAR Volunteers should not have to be out-of-pocket financially as well as providing their personal time and dedication in order to learn and practice the specialist skills.

That is not to say that courses should be entirely free. Experience has shown that some applicants do not bring with them the necessary motivation or interest when the training is provided to them at minimal or no financial cost.

I also believe that Instructors need to be adequately reimbursed at least for their out-of-pocket expenses, balanced with the need to keep training and administrative costs as low and reasonable as possible.

Without the BC Tracking Association, commercial, for-profit training providers are free to set their fees and

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expenses at whatever the market will bear. They are also free to set their own standards, training methods, philosophy and procedures, which may not fit with recognized and approved GSAR operations and procedures in BC and in Canada, or with other training providers.

## **THE WAYS AHEAD?**

We are at the end of the five-year initial plan. Moving ahead, there appears to be a couple of lines of sign that the Association could follow.

Some are of the opinion that tracker training should only be focussed purely on the science and art of tracking, Others believe that as a GSAR specialty, tracker training must be closely integrated with GSAR practices, policies and procedures.

In past discussions with EMBC and BC SARA leadership, and now, as a current member of the BC SARA Training Committee, and as a JIBC GSTL Instructor, I recognize and agree with the inevitable evolution towards establishing common standards for each of the GSAR specialties. In addition, a common standard is essential for all specialty leaders. The individual specialty standards must integrate seamlessly with GSAR policies and procedures – especially when it comes to leadership, safety and accountability.

In the end, as GSAR Trackers, we must perform our specialty tasks as part of the overall GSAR operations and procedures. We cannot simply do only the tracking specialty stand-alone, or we risk losing the support of the rest of the GSAR community.

Swiftwater, Rope, Avalanche, Cave Rescue, SAR Dogs - all of the GSAR Specialties will be concerned more and more with conforming and integrating common GSAR practices and procedures. Tracking needs to become more integrated if we are to retain the support of the GSAR Community.

For those members, and readers, who may not be aware, the BCTA Constitution states that the overarching purposes of the Association are to:

- a. Organize, direct, operate and over-see a non-profit volunteer organization that provides training and certification of trackers for search and rescue services in the province of British Columbia (BC);
- b. Establish, maintain and oversee proven and consistent tracker training standards;
- c. Facilitate recognized training opportunities;

d. Train and provide qualified and certified trackers as may be needed in carrying out search and rescue operations in the province;

e. Train, certify and monitor volunteer trackers and instructors in tracking techniques and skills;

f. Promote and encourage the utilization of trained trackers in search and rescue operations;

g. Inform user groups, government departments, police, BC Search and Rescue Association, individual Search and Rescue groups, and other related agencies as to the efficacy of tracking and how trained trackers can augment search and rescue operations, and evidence searches;

h. As a primary goal: to have every certified ground search and rescue volunteer in the province of BC trained at least to the "Track Aware" level (first level of tracking);

i. Assist and provide support services, as may be requested, for any other organizations involved in tracking for search and rescue operations and tracker training;

j. Cooperate with other organizations, whether incorporated or not, which have objectives similar in whole or in part of the objectives of the Society;

k. Solicit and raise funds for the purchase of training, course materials, equipment and tracking operations of the Society;

l. Obtain or facilitate contracted advanced training and instruction in tracking-related skills and techniques, otherwise not available through the membership;

m. Inform and educate the general public in the use of tracking as an essential search and rescue specialty; and

n. Carry out activities as may be incidental or conducive to the attainment of the purposes of the Society as stated herein.

This Association requires continued volunteer efforts. Primarily, we need a dedicated cadre of experienced instructors in the Training Committee to continue evolving standards, course materials and oversee the training. Secondly, an Executive to handle fund-raising, finances, policy, communications, and all the associated paperwork.

***"He has a right to criticize, who has a heart to help."***  
- Abraham Lincoln

In closing - I strongly believe in the purposes this Association was created to do for the GSAR Tracking specialty in BC and across Canada. I believe that the best way to influence change is by participating and contributing in a positive manner. I hope we can all continue to work together towards achieving those overarching purposes of this Association.

See you on the trail and at the BCTA meetings!!!

*Win Koch January 2016*

## Tracker Tales



*As always, Tracker Tales and pictures from your SAR or tracking experiences are welcome.*

## Pete Wise Celebrates 50 years in SAR!

*07/06/2014 by Colin Wiebe VP BC SARA*

The BC Search and Rescue Association wants to extend our heartfelt congratulations and thanks to Vernon SAR Member Pete Wise who is being recognized by his colleagues this weekend in Vernon for his long service.

Pete is an amazing person and if you have ever met him, you are sure to never forget him. At 50 years of SAR service, he is still an ACTIVE member with Vernon SAR.

Pete started in SAR at 16 years of age with the "First Port Hammond Alouette Rovers" based in what is now the Maple Ridge area, serving in and around Golden Ears Park under the direction of Bud DeWolfe.

In 1994, Pete was recognized with a Certificate of Commendation by then Governor General of Canada Ramon Hnatyshyn, "for an act of great merit providing assistance to others in a selfless

manner at Pinaus Lake Lodge, near Falkland British Columbia, on January 26, 1992."

Pete was a founding member of the predecessor of BCSARA, the British Columbia Search and Rescue Advisory Committee, serving as a provincially appointed Regional Representative on the committee. Pete served several terms on the committee and was a co-author of the SAR Strategic Plan in the late '90's. This was a comprehensive review and recommendation paper that formed the basis for much of the direction of the BC SAR program during that time period. Pete has also served as a Regional Director with BCSARA.

In 1998, Pete was recognized as the Provincial Emergency Program (PEP, now Emergency Management British Columbia, EMBC) as the "SAR Volunteer of the Year" and a second time that year by the National Search and Rescue Secretariat with a "Certificate of Achievement".

During two major Wildfire seasons in 1998 and 2003, Pete was assigned to the Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centre, tasked with oversight and coordination of up to 18 SAR Groups that had been tasked with assisting local authorities with evacuations during forest fire responses.

Pete is a certified SAR Manager and Ground SAR Instructor, formerly been a Swiftwater Rescue Instructor and one of the original Ground Search Team Leader Instructors in BC. In addition, Pete has trained both Canadian Forces and American Military in tracking.

Pete is married, has 2 children, 1 foster child and 7 grandchildren and is a professional Wildlife Control Specialist and Trapper.



**Ed Note:** Pete Wise is a current member and Instructor with the BC Tracking Association. He brings a tremendous amount of tracking and GSAR training experience to the Association. He has been called to testify as a subject matter expert on several criminal cases. His local area knowledge, flora and fauna is simply outstanding, - although I never did manage to bag that four-point buck near his trap line!