

Texas EquiSearch Quarterly Newsletter

November 2009

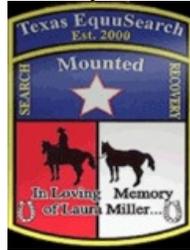
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Each of our newsletters contains information that might be of interest to our members ... such as a Search Tip, case summary of a few of our recent cases, special announcements, training schedules and a "Final Thought". The purpose of our newsletter is to keep you better informed on what's happening in our organization. Whether your resource is searching on foot, ATV, horse, boat or "Special Operations" ... you are a very important part of this organization. And we gratefully thank you for your tremendous efforts, and what you do to bring missing persons home to their worried families and friends.

Newsletter Search Tip: Always be very cautious of your surroundings and try to look carefully before you enter any strange areas. Familiarize yourself with directional headings and landmarks.

Our newsletter contains brief summaries of some of our recent case searches we have worked. Many details can not be revealed because some of the cases are still under investigation and we do not want to jeopardize any part of any law enforcement investigation. But we will attempt to keep you informed on what we can.

Evidence Search: On May 29th 2009, an unknown person fired some type of rocket at a Continental Airlines jet ... traveling under the jet's belly - and missing it by only 100 feet. The jet was flying at 13,000 feet and was near the town of Mont Belvieu, Texas. The rocket was described by pilots as being between 5 – 7 feet long, approximately four inches in diameter, and it had Delta Fins near its exhaust. Coincidentally, about a year earlier, someone had fired another rocket at another Continental jet near Lake Houston. It was later learned that this particular rocket had probably been fired from the eastern part of Chambers

County. One of several witnesses came forward and said she saw the rocket falling from the sky in the Highlands, Texas area. On October 5th 2009 ... with the full cooperation and support of several law enforcement agencies (including the F.B.I.), Texas EquuSearch started an extensive, detailed and comprehensive search of the area where the female had seen it come down in the Highlands, Texas area. RP Flight Systems brought in special photographic drones, and their mobile technology center ... shooting several hundred photographs of the area. Dennis Watters and his wife Tammy searched for several days using special, underwater side-scan sonar. The Montgomery County Constable's Department used sonar and had divers on-board to check out images of interest. Dozens of searchers on foot, ATVs and horses scoured the area, fighting briar thickets, mosquitoes, alligators and snakes to find the rocket. Roy Moffitt, owner of Moffitt Custom Fueling, dispatched fuel trucks to the Command Post to ensure that boats and ATVs were fueled and ready to go. He also fueled the searcher's vehicles so they wouldn't risk running low on fuel while traveling to the search sites. Searchers came from as far away as California, Florida & Missouri to help us find the rocket. They were a tremendous help. Overall, the searchers cleared about 2,125 acres of land & water during the search for the rouge rocket. But, unfortunately it wasn't found. It is strongly believed that the rocket had already been retrieved by some unknown person before our search ever began. We would like to say a big "Thank You" to Harris County Sheriff Adrian Garcia and Special Agent Cynthia Brawley of the F.B.I. for their tremendous help and cooperation during this search. And thank you to all of the searchers that came and did so much. You can all be proud of yourselves for the fine job you did.

Recent Case Summaries:

Maureen Fitzgerald Fields (Pahrump, Nevada): Forty one year-old Maureen Fitzgerald Fields was last seen leaving her job at Wells Fargo Bank in Pahrump, Nevada on February 14th 2006. Maureen's car was found 12 miles away from her home the next day. The area the car was found in is the start of the Death Valley dessert. Several of Maureen's personal possessions were still in the vehicle, including her purse and some medication. Law enforcement quickly searched a wide area of the dessert, but they never found any indications that Maureen had actually been there. Then in 2009, astonishingly, her husband Paul was somehow able to have Maureen declared dead. During the summer of 2009, Texas EquuSearch was contacted by Maureen's friends and family members, who asked for our help to find Maureen. Tim Miller agreed to help the desperate family that was seeking their loved one ... and answers. But strangely, Tim didn't receive too warm of a reception when he finally met Maureen's husband, Paul. Regardless, Tim brought in a drone and specialist from RP Flight Systems, an ATV team from Las Vegas ... and experience in these types of

searches. Tim was there almost a week and obtained a lot of very important information as to what might have happen to Maureen ... and where she might be. Because of a prior scheduled appointment, Tim had to come back to Texas early. He's been evaluating the information and images taken during his visit to Pahrump – and is currently making plans for a large scale search in the near future -- using some of America's highest technology to find Maureen. We're confident that our next trip to Pahrump will answer a lot questions about where Maureen is ... and exactly what happened to her.

Somer Renee' Thompson: Little 7 year-old Somer Rene Thompson disappeared in Orange Park, Florida on Monday – October 19th 2009 while walking home from school. She was last seen about 2:45 p.m. walking home with her sister and some friends. She had a little spat with them and took off towards her home. When Somer's sister got home, she was not there. Her mother became worried and flagged down a passing deputy. An “Amber Alert” was issued and more than 100 officers from various law enforcement agencies pulled together and started an intense search for Somer. Officers searched on foot and in helicopters. Divers and search dogs were quickly deployed. They quickly learned that fifty-eight registered sex offenders live within a 5 mile diameter of Somer's home. They searched everywhere for Somer, but she wasn't found. Coincidentally, there was a report of an attempted abduction about 10 days before Somer disappeared, but they weren't sure if **that** particular case was somehow related to Somer's case. Detectives watched several garbage trucks leaving town to empty their loads, so the decided follow them. The trucks went just across the Florida state line to a landfill in Georgia. Several officers quickly descended onto the landfill and started sifting through garbage looking for Somer. Tim Miller arrived in Florida to help search on October 21st 2009. Shortly after he arrived, it was announced that detectives located Somer's remains in a landfill ... thrown away like common garbage. Her remains were positively identified by her father after he saw a birthmark on her body.

This is a sad end to a very vicious crime that words just can't explain. No dictionary contains the words strong enough to describe the kind of homicidal savage that could kill Somer, and dispose of her body in such a despicable way.

Bobby, Sherilynn & Madyson Jamison: Forty-four year-old Bobby, forty year-old Sherilynn and six year-old Madyson Jamison all disappeared from Red Oak, Oklahoma on October 8th 2009. The Jamison family's pick-up truck was found abandoned about 30 miles from their home, and it contained the family's cell phones, coats, I.D.s and a large of money. Strangely, the family dog was locked in the vehicle, but in very bad shape. It apparently had been in the vehicle for quite a while because it was dehydrated and extremely hungry. A

large search followed the truck's discovery, but nothing was found. The O.S.B.I. and the F.B.I. joined local law enforcement in the search for the Jamison family. Tim Miller and a team of TES members went to Red Oak at the request of O.S.B.I. They searched for several days, but were unable to locate the family. The investigation is still fully active. Tim Miller said he expects that Texas EquuSearch will be returning to Oklahoma and search for the Jamison family very soon.

Sean Thomas: On October 7th 2009, Texas EquuSearch was contacted by the family of thirty-seven year-old Sean Thomas, after he disappeared from his southwest Houston home about a week earlier. TES was already actively searching for the rocket that was fired at a Continental Airlines jet. But Sean became a high priority because he suffers from brain aneurysms, seizures and memory loss. When he was last seen, he had no money, cell phone and he was new to the neighborhood. All of these circumstances were considered, and Tim Miller knew that all of the information clearly indicated that Sean was in "great danger." So on October 8th 2009, an urgent search alert was activated -- and the search for Sean began. Then on October 9th good news came when a viewer of FOX 26 news in Houston recognized Sean as being the man he had recently been giving food & water to -- over a period of several days. The citizen works at a restaurant on Broadway near the Gulf Freeway in southeast Houston. That's several miles from where Sean was last seen. The alert restaurant worker said he had been seeing Sean sleeping at the bus stop for several days and just wanted to help the man. After seeing on Fox 26, that Sean was an actual missing person, he contacted TES, and Sean was quickly re-united with his family. "Thank You" to **FOX 26 in Houston** ... and the observant citizen that provided such kind compassion to a person in need.

Gene Roberts: Gene disappeared on November 1st 2009 while he and three other horseback riders were trying to round-up loose cattle. The cattle had strayed following heavy rains that flooded a portion of his land in Dayton, Texas. Gene went to recover one calf, but didn't respond when his fellow horseback riders yelled-out for him about three minutes later. They found his horse a short distance away, but there was no sign of Gene. His horse was soaking wet up to its head when found. Sadly, Gene couldn't swim. His buddies kept calling his name and looking for him, but because of high water, they couldn't find anything leading to his whereabouts. But his horse's tail was wet and visible marks tended to indicate that Gene might have had a hold on his horse's tail at one point. Gene's family contacted TES that evening and asked for our help in finding Gene. Search Coordinator Ken DeFoor, who only lives a few miles away, quickly sprang into action by getting our resources together and our searchers into the area. Horse searchers were discouraged from searching because law enforcement knew the environmental dangers, and they did not want to take a chance of a searcher's horse falling off into a deep hole, creek or having an

disastrous encounter with one of the many very large alligators. The search went on for several days while searches waited for the floodwaters to recede. Law enforcement scheduled a special search for November 7th 2009, in which searchers were going to wade in the floodwaters to search for Gene. But, before searchers were able to get started, Gene's remains were found in floodwaters about 35 feet from where his horse had been located. The Dayton Police Department performed a fantastic job of coordinating the search, and made sure that searcher safety was a high priority in their assignments. Searchers included the F.B.I., U.S. Coast Guard, Texas Game Wardens, guards and dogs from TDCJ, several police agencies and fire departments and the owners of private boats and aircraft.

Navy Pilot, Lt. John J. Houston: About 11:00 a.m. on Sunday - November 15th 2009, TES members Ralph Baird and Dennis & Tammy Water located the missing U.S. Navy T-34c trainer plane that had crashed into the Gulf of Mexico about 2 ½ weeks earlier. The trainer plane lost contact with the Naval Air Station control tower about 3:20 p.m. on October 28th 2009. Using side-scan sonar and their special expertise in these types of searches, the Texas EquuSearch members searched for several days, until they received images of the missing aircraft submerged in about 48 feet of water, and 1.5 miles off-shore of the Matagorda, Texas shoreline. The water conditions are very poor, making any kind of recovery very difficult at that point. But the Navy does plan to start their recovery operations very soon. It's still unknown if the body of Navy Lt. John J. Houston is on-board the aircraft. The remains of 30 year-old Lt., Bret T. Miller were found about 11 miles north of Port Aransas, Texas on October 30th.

David Risinger: Forty-eight year-old David Risinger disappeared in Silsbee, Texas on November 4th 2009. Concerns quickly grew because David had been depressed over the recent loss of his wife in June. There were some specific indications that David might have harmed himself. A search was started the next morning and searchers started combing through woods and fields looking for David. Some of David's personal property was found in one particular densely wooded area. Searchers kept going deeper and deeper into the thick woods. Then at 11:23 a.m., a searcher with the fire department located David lying on his back and gurgling. His condition required immediate medical attention and an ambulance was dispatched to the scene. He was transported to the hospital and stabilized. The Search Coordinator described some of David's wounds caused by the dense wooded thicket area as those resembling someone that had been beaten with barbed wire.

Gloria Walker: Tim Miller is awaiting word from law enforcement and family members of Gloria Walker to determine whether 46 year-old Gloria Walker is one of the victim's of Cleveland, Ohio serial killer Anthony Sowell. Gloria disappeared

on May 20th 2007. The car Gloria was last seen driving; was found about 2 ½ weeks later, and three miles from her home. She hasn't been seen since. Shortly after Gloria disappeared, Tim traveled to Cleveland and organized a search, and scoured the area thoroughly, but unfortunately, Gloria wasn't found. But just recently, the remains of at least 11 women have been found at Anthony Sowell's home, in the same section of Cleveland that Gloria disappeared from. Fifty year-old Sowell, a registered sex offender, had just moved back into his family home in 2005 after serving 15 years for "Attempted Rape." That is about the same time that several females from Cleveland started going missing. Gloria might just be one of the victims that fell into the homicidal grip of Anthony Sowell. We have to wait to the victims are positively identified to know for sure.

Horses: It is the responsibility of any person that brings a horse to a search, or any other Texas EquuSearch event where other horses might be, to provide up-dated paperwork indicating that your horse(s) are negative for Coggins disease. This will be enforced to protect all horses that come onto a search scene.

Dogs: Any searcher that brings a dog to participate in the search for a missing person or brings a dog into any Texas EquuSearch "Command Post" or "Staging Area" must now provide the Search Coordinator with documents verifying proof of the following:

- **Verifiable documents proving that the dog and handler are currently certified, and they both have successfully undergone ... and completed scent or cadaver dog training.**
- **At least two (2) years of experience working as a scent dog & handler.**
- **A letter from a law enforcement agency stating that the dog (not the handler) directly led searchers to the detection, or finding of a missing person or human remains.**
- **All search dogs must be kept on a leash at all times and in full physical control of the handler. Dogs are not allowed inside of any building where a "Command Post" has been established.**
- **No pets of any kind will be allowed in the "Command Post/Staging Area" or carried onto any search.**

Reminders:

If you should get a call-out on your phone and didn't understand or receive the complete message, you can call **1-877-698-3261** ... and press 1 to hear the latest call-out message. You will be prompted to enter the phone number you currently have listed on our call-out roster. The message will then be played back to you. When a search call-out is activated, the call-out information will also be posted on the website as soon as possible.

Special Announcements:

Texas EquuSearch member, 48 year-old Charles Wayne Neilsen passed away in Webster, Texas on September 9th 2009. Charles was a longtime member of Texas EquuSearch and a strong supporter of B.A.C.A. (Bikers Against Child Abuse). Charles loved to cook for his family & friends, and frequently volunteered to cook for many charity fundraising events. Holding on to his memories are his wife Stephanie Ketchum; mother Anne Nielsen; daughter Samantha Nielsen; son Johnathan Ketchum; brothers Keith Nielsen and wife Tammy, Brian Nielsen and his wife; and numerous other family members.

TES Search Coordinator Phillip Yates and his devoted TES member wife, Lori, became proud grandparents on the evening of November 4th 2009. Kasey Gerngross presented to this world, a beautiful 8 lb., 20 inches baby girl named Alyssa Grace Gerngross. The mother and baby are both doing fine. Congratulations Phillip & Lori.

The father of TES Search Coordinator Jack Boggess fell and broke his hip in the bathroom of his home. Ninety-five year-old Laco Boggess, was badly injured and had to have surgery to implant a steel plate and pins to repair his injuries. Jack said his father also received another injury during an accident not too long ago. Though it has been very painful for his dad, Jack says his father is doing pretty well ... considering. Jack's dad is currently undergoing extensive and very painful rehabilitation.

Long-time TES member & supporter, Betty Craker died on October 24th 2009 in Pittsburg, Texas. Betty and her husband Powell were in the trucking industry for several years. Betty and Powell's grand-daughter, Tina Flood was raped and beaten by a man she had met in a Seabrook bar in 1998. Tina died about 1 ½ days later from massive head injuries. The suspect was quickly apprehended and is now currently serving a life sentence in the Texas Prison System. Betty and Powell joined Texas EquuSearch shortly after it was founded by Tim Miller in 2000. They wanted to help out worried families that had someone missing. Powell Craker had died as recently as May of this year. Betty is survived by 2 sons and one daughter. She was buried October 29th 2009 at the Omaha Cemetery in Omaha, Texas.

Since January of 2009, Alvin Tipps has been battling a devastating disease called throat cancer. Alvin and his wife Jan asked for everyone's prayers, that Alvin makes a full recovery from the deadly illness. On November 9th 2009, Alvin was informed by his doctors that recent tests indicate that the cancer has been killed ... and he is free & clear of the deadly disease. The disease kills several thousands of people each year. Alvin still has to speak with another doctor, but things look good for him right now. Months ago when the cancer was discovered, Alvin and Jan Tipps had asked that everyone pray for Alvin's full recovery. Our prayers were answered. It's good to have you back at full throttle, Alvin.

You Asked: Many people have been asking, "Why hasn't Texas EquuSearch been conducting as many searches as it usually does?" There are two reasons. The first is that there are literally hundreds of missing persons that are reported each day around the United States. We just can't physically be everywhere. But, the main and major reason ... is that we simply can't afford it. Simply put; the economy has been in very poor shape over the last several months and that has caused a drastic decline in donations. Since Texas EquuSearch is a 501(c)(3) organization, we depend on donations to stay in operation. And unfortunately, people just are not donating the same way they had before the economy sank. There is a huge cost to conduct a comprehensive search for a missing person. Fuel, hotel and food are just a very few of the many expenses required to search for a missing person. And if our donations drop off ... so do our searches. We are part of the "domino effect." Hopefully, we can survive this, because we still have a lot of people to find, and bring home to their families.

Training: "Training & Orientation" is not for new members only. It's for all of our members. Whether you are a brand new member, or you been a member for five years and participated in 40 searches ... you should attend these training classes so you can be updated on policies, procedures, case briefings, special announcements, search techniques and much, much more. Training is needed so that we can successfully find missing persons.

2010 Training:

Texas EquuSearch Member Orientation Class

Feb. 27th

April 24th

June 26th

Sept 25th

9:30 AM - 3:30 PM

Bass Pro Shop, 713-770-5100, (upstairs conference room),

1000 Bass Pro Dr., Pearland, TX 77584

Class sizes are limited, to register Contact: David.Unger@TexasEquuSearch.org

HOLLY LAKE WILDLAND SEARCH AND RESCUE CONFERENCE

March 20 & 21

Life Saving First Aid

July 23rd

This hands-on seminar will give you confidence to respond in an emergency situation with skills that can save a life. It combines lecture, demonstration and video.

Participants learn to recognize and respond to a variety of emergencies.

College of the Mainland Main Campus Auditorium, LRC-131, 1200 Amburn Road,
Texas City, TX 77591

Register by telephone, 409-938-1211 ext. 365

When a child goes missing, it becomes our highest priority to find him or her. But sometimes searchers don't seem to consider it as serious when they receive a call-out when an Alzheimer's or Dementia patient, mentally challenged person or other "special needs" person goes missing. In most cases, these types of missing person cases are urgent because they are usually in dire need of required medication. In most case, they can't make rational decisions or use their better judgment like you can. Not trying to be derogatory, but a lot of times ... they are a child in an adult's body. They aren't responsible for their condition, disability or their actions. They didn't ask to be that way. But they are. They just can't help it. When we receive a request to help find a missing person that is mentally challenged, or has Dementia or Alzheimer's ... we need to take it just as seriously as any other missing person case. Let's say we have a 40 year-old person that is lost - and is mentally disabled with the mental equivalency of a six year-old ... then it's much like having a six year-old child missing. So there's a very urgent need to find that person - and bring them home safe. They have family members and friends that love and worry about them too. Let's all try to remember this when we get call-outs for these types of cases.

Final Thought: Thanksgiving is knocking at our door. It's the season for being with your families, eating a lot of food and being happy and thankful. But while you are celebrating, take a moment to say a special prayer for those that are not quite as fortunate as you. Whenever you feel like the whole world is on your shoulders and you are at your wit's end, just look around because there is always someone who has it much worse than you do. You can look around on any given day and see these people walking down the street or on the news that fit into that category. But please say a special prayer for the families who have been suffering the heartache of having a family member or friend missing. Until you go through this kind of anguish --- not knowing where your loved one is ... you can only imagine it. But you can't feel their pain.

Christmas is traditionally a festive-time of the year when people exchange presents, decorate a tree, admire the beautiful lights and decorations, take the kids to visit Santa Clause ... and some consume "Christmas Cheer." But let's not forget what Christmas is truly meant to celebrate. Christmas is to celebrate the birth of the baby Jesus. Try to remember this during the season.

Tim Miller and the staff of Texas EquuSearch hope you and your families have a happy Thanksgiving, a very Merry Christmas and a HAPPY, HEALTHY AND PROSPEROUS New Year.



Merry Christmas

