

Texas EquuSearch Quarterly Newsletter

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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: Whether you are searching or driving an area during reconnaissance, always look for tire tracks or any freshly traveled areas that lead off into a wood area, thickets, brush, creek or and area that could conceal a vehicle or person. Look for any tire tracks or other indications that a vehicle has run over or through a fence. The same applies for any watered areas such a bayous, creeks, lakes, canals, sand/gravel pits, etc. If these indications are found, notify your team leader immediately. They will then notify the assigned Search Coordinator for further directions on what you need to do.

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

Recent Case Summaries:

Cristina Fuentes: 89 year-old Cristina Fuentes disappeared about 4:30 p.m. on July 14, 2010 in Southeast Houston. Cristina had been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. Texas EquuSearch was contacted on the afternoon of July 16th and an immediate search was activated. There were a lot of concerns because of the duration of time she had been missing without any person spotting her. And the summer temperatures were very high. Searchers showed up quickly after the call-out was issued, and the first team was sent out within 15 minutes of arrival. Even though this area had been previously searched a couple different times already by other people, we wanted to search and clear it ourselves. The first search team of ATVs arrived at their assignment area about 10 minutes after receiving their assignment. They quickly deployed into a nearby field behind Cristina's home. Texas EquuSearch team members Cody Robertson and Alvin Tipps found Cristina's remains within four minutes of starting the search. She was partially covered with high weeds. Cristina's body

was about 150 yards from the rear fence of her own home and about 80 yards from the roadway. Cristina had escaped from Cuba several years ago and was spending her senior years with her son & his family in America.

Gerald Ellison: 43 year-old Gerald Ellison disappeared after jumping from a party boat into Lake Conroe on August 8, 2010. Law enforcement contacted Texas EquuSearch and requested our help in the search for Gerald. Tim Miller and several other searchers used side-scan sonar to search for Gerald. On August 10, 2010, the searchers located Gerald's body about 200 yards from where he had disappeared.

Irene Porrás: 54 year-old Irene Porrás disappeared from her home in the Northwestern part of Harris County on August 14, 2010. Her husband was home with her at the time she disappeared. Her cell phone and purse were also missing. However, her car was still found at her home. Her cell phone was found about 17 miles from where she had disappeared; 10 days after her disappearance. Investigators have worked very hard to find out what happened to Irene and locate her. Texas EquuSearch has activated several searches for Irene, but unfortunately -- she still hasn't been found. Crime Stoppers has offered a reward for information on her whereabouts -- and the investigators announced at the Crime Stoppers news conference that they do suspect foul play in Irene's disappearance. No person has been named as a suspect in her disappearance. Texas EquuSearch will continue to look for Irene if we receive any credible information that would lead us to her location.

Jodi Powers: 19 year-old Jodi Powers disappeared after last being seen with a man (believed to be a person of interest in connection with her disappearance) on August 30, 2010 in Madisonville, Kentucky. Tim Miller's assistance was requested and he went to Kentucky to start the search for Jodi. The search started the next morning, Jodi's remains were located by a hunter shortly after the search began. After the crime scene was secured and investigators completed their on-scene investigation, they requested Tim and the other volunteers to conduct an evidence search. The evidence search proved valuable, and a lot of evidence and information was found under the guidance of Tim and law enforcement investigators. The investigation is ongoing.

Don Kidd: 50 year-old Don Kidd was last seen by his family about 7:00 a.m. in Houston, Texas on September 26, 2010. Don was supposedly going to run some errands before he was to go watch a football at a nearby sports bar. But no one ever saw or heard from Don again. An immediate search began the next day to locate Don's vehicle. Late on the second day of searching for the vehicle, it was learned that Don's vehicle had already been located, after police found it abandoned on Surfside Beach, Texas. Some things left at Don's vehicle indicated the he might have attempted suicide, in part by walking off into the water's surf. Searchers set up a new command post on the beach and started continually searching the beach's shoreline. TES member, Ted Miller brought his helicopter in to assist in the search and flew the beach-line looking for Don. The Galveston Beach Patrol brought in an experienced wave runner team to effectively search among the rocks at the jetty. The currents and waves on the beach side of the jetty are very treacherous, so their experience was very valuable to us. After three days of searching and lots of calculating of the winds, current, tides, etc., it was determined that currents had probably taken Don's remains far into the Gulf waters, and that he most likely was down near the Texas/Mexico border ... and many miles offshore. The difficult decision to suspend the search was made after combing the beach areas for almost four days. There haven't been any reports of Don's remains being found.

Dianne Rutkowski: 49 year-old Dainne Rutkowski disappeared on October 12, 2010 in Ellisville, Mississippi. Dainne disappeared after suffering a brain aneurysm. She became confused and disoriented after the sudden illness. Law enforcement was desperately trying to find Dainne when her family contacted Texas EquuSearch. Board member Ralph Baird became involved and used his expertise in the field of technology. He quickly

conferred with a federal agent, local law enforcement and the telephone company to obtain needed information. A very short time later, Ralph was able to triangulate the location of Dainne's cell phone. Within thirty minutes of receiving the results of the triangulation location, police found Dainne alive in the area Ralph specified to them -- but Dainne was in need of immediate medical attention. She was found about in Satsuma, Alabama -- about 120 miles from where she was last seen in Ellisville, Mississippi. Dainne was quickly transported to an area hospital and is now recuperating for her ordeal. A brain aneurysm is a condition that can kill very quickly if you don't get immediate medical attention. But because of the unhastened help and advanced technical knowledge of Ralph Baird, along with the combined efforts of the federal agent, local law enforcement agencies and the cell phone company ... Dainne is alive and better today. Good work guys -- you did a fantastic job.

Joshua Wilkerson: 18 year-old Joshua Wilkerson was last seen by his classmates about 12:00 p.m. on November 16, 2010 in Pearland, Texas. Pearland Police called Texas EquuSearch at 5:00 a.m. on November 17, 2010 and asked for our immediate help to search for Joshua. After speaking with a suspect involved in Joshua's disappearance, police first thought that Joshua might be badly injured and lying in a field in the Pearland area. Tim Miller had undergone surgery only one day before, but he did travel to the command post. Search Coordinator Jan Tipps quickly met with police, while her husband and a few other searchers began searching a specific field that police were interested in. Within a few hours, hope dimmed when it was determined that Joshua was not in the field where the suspect first told police that he'd left Joshua. The decision was made by police to expand the search areas. 300+ searchers were assigned to search surrounding areas while police continued their investigation and questioning of the suspect. Late that night, the suspect led police investigators to a wooded area about 10.5 miles away in Ft. Bend County. There ... investigators found the burned and beaten body of Joshua. At one point, the suspect tried to grab the gun of one officer, but he was quickly subdued and secured. The suspect has since been charged with murder. The suspect claims that Joshua made sexual advances towards him, but that has not been substantiated or confirmed. Joshua's family and friends firmly state that Joshua was not gay, and there has not been anything to indicate he was.

Demerius Garriett: 2 year-old Demerius Garriett was last seen on December 2, 2010 about 10:00 a.m. with a non-biological male (Cecil Hopkins) that is in a relationship with one of the child's grandmothers. The adult male allegedly took the child with him to a pain management clinic for an appointment in the Houston area. Demerius and the adult never came back home. Family members contacted us two days later and pleaded for our help in finding little Demerius. A search was activated after speaking with law enforcement. About three hours after the search started, Demerius' grandfather announced that Demerius had been found at a local hospital. According to information we've received, Cecil Hopkins left Demerius with an old friend for safe-keeping. The family caring for Demerius recognized his picture on news reports and called the police. Investigators had Demerius taken to the hospital for an evaluation -- as a precaution only. Cecil Hopkins has since been arrested.

At this writing, TES Sonar Specialists Dennis & Tammy Waters have just completed a water search in Springfield, Ohio for **56 year-old Faith Willison**. Information led them to a certain area after Faith's vehicle was found wrecked and abandoned on a roadway. Dennis & Tammy searched the area, but nothing was found. Dennis & Tammy are now on the way to Columbus, Ohio to work with law enforcement in hopes of locating **25 year-old Tony Luzio** who disappeared on July 4, 2005. If anyone can find Tony; Dennis & Tammy can.

Reminders

- Never post any information concerning one of our cases on any social network website such as Facebook, MySpace, etc. This includes any sleuth websites or any website that is not approved through our office. Information regarding any case is to be released through our office, Tim Miller or the assigned Search Coordinator only. Do not notify any person or post on any website that a missing person or remains have been located or found. Do not release any information to anyone concerning the locations of a planned search assignment or ANY other information that is associated with one of our cases. This could jeopardize the recovery of a missing person. The above reminder includes any notification by phone calls or texting of information to any person. Violations could result in your suspension or termination from Texas EquuSearch.
- Absolutely no pictures are to be taken on any active search -- unless you have been given explicit verbal permission by the assigned Search Coordinator to do so.
- Any searcher that brings a horse to an active search or event -- must show the Search Coordinator proof of updated and current proof of "Negative Coggins." No horse will be permitted on a search or at an event without this paperwork.
- If you have any concerns, questions or a complaint about any search assignment, person, occurrence or incidents that happen during a search, you are to notify your Search Coordinator ... not Tim Miller. That is the proper "Chain of Command" and Tim is far too busy. The assigned Search Coordinator will then notify Tim of the matter if necessary.

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.

POLICY REGARDING UNAUTHORIZED SEARCHES AND/OR DUAL MEMBERSHIP

Texas EquuSearch ("TES") is a nationally recognized and respected, search and recovery organization. Membership in TES is an honor and a privilege.

TES may authorize "mutual aid" to assist law enforcement, governmental agencies or other search organizations upon request by such agencies or families. Individual TES members are prohibited from acting on behalf of TES, or as an independent searcher on an unauthorized search. **DO NOT SEARCH, OR ORGANIZE A SEARCH - UNLESS YOU HAVE EXPLICIT VERBAL PERMISSION FROM TIM MILLER AND THE ASSIGNED SEARCH COORDINATOR ON THE CASE. NO EXCEPTIONS.**

TES members are not allowed to hold dual memberships in other search and recovery organizations. This does not include CERT or fire departments, etc.

An unauthorized search constitutes a liability due to unauthorized use of the TES logo, as well as potential litigation brought against participating teams. Additionally, unauthorized searches tie up valuable resources.

We are proud of the dedication of TES members and ask for your continued support.

Special Announcements:

95 year-old Laco Boggess, father of TES Search Coordinator Jack Bogges, passed away on November 2, 2010 in W. Virginia. Laco Boggess had been ill for several months. Laco retired as a respected retailer. Our thoughts and prayers are with Jack and his family during this very difficult time.

Tim Miller underwent surgery on his elbow in mid-November. It has limited Tim's ability to complete some physical tasks, but he is recovering very quickly.

We're sorry to announce that **Tim Miller's horse, Trojan** ... was found dead in Tim's pasture on the 15th of November. Trojan led the way on many searches and was there in front when several missing persons were recovered. Tests are being done to determine the exact cause of death.

Carol Moyers officially announced her retirement to Tim Miller in mid-November so she can keep family commitments and take control of some health issues. Carol started out as a foot searcher about five years ago and rose through the ranks ... retiring as Director of Training and serving on the Board of Directors. We wish Carol good luck.

Ken DeFoor is now wearing a few different hats in Texas EquuSearch. Besides being a Search Coordinator, he is also the new the law enforcement liaison. Ken is retired from the Houston Police Department with 30 years of service. Starting out as a patrolman, he worked as a homicide investigator and retired as Captain over the Helicopter Division. He currently holds his reserve commission with the Dayton Police Department. Ken also serves on the Board of Directors for Texas EquuSearch and has assumed Carol Moyers position as Director of Training. Congratulations, Ken.

Three of our Texas EquuSearch members recently underwent the required training and became fully authorized Search Coordinators with Texas EquuSearch. We congratulate Joseph Hopkins, Beth McClanahan and Ron Overman on their promotions into the Search Coordinator positions. Our other authorized TES Search Coordinators are:

Frank Black
Eddie & Nova Arguijo
Jack Boggess
Ken DeFoor
Phillip Yates
Jan & Alvin Tipps
John White
Carolyn Keene
Lee Robertson
Beverly Ramos
David Unger

You Asked: *Why does it sometimes take a day or two to activate an active search?* Unless law enforcement officials request our immediate assistance, or the case is an emergency situation, the Search Coordinator must complete several requirements before activating a call-out. They must take a full and detailed report, research the circumstances, evaluate the case, confer with Tim Miller and confer with law enforcement. If law enforcement approves of the search, the Search Coordinator must recon the target area for areas that need to be searched. They must then find a command post/staging area – which sometimes can be very difficult. They are also in constant phone contact with family members and arranging resources that need to be brought into the search. Other times the Search Coordinator is also on the phone with Tim, law enforcement – and sometimes the media. So it may occasionally take a couple of days to activate a full search.

Fundraisers: Over the last several months, there has been strong efforts to fight the undertow of a drowning economy and raise enough funds to keep our doors open; thus making it possible for us to continue searching for missing persons. Thankfully, we've had some dedicated supported step up to the plate and have fundraisers to help us through these horrible financial times.

- Space City Corvettes & Parkway Chevrolet of Pearland, Texas raised funds at the Las Rosas Mexican Restaurant on October 9th 2010. Partial proceeds from restaurant sales went to benefit Texas EquuSearch. Tim Miller was presented with a much-needed \$5,000.00 check during the fundraiser.
- Ron & Debbie Overman had a poker tournament and auctioned items to raise money for Texas EquuSearch on October 16, 2010. The fundraiser was held at their home in Conroe, Texas. Ron & Debbie's efforts generated more than \$3,200.00 for Texas EquuSearch. WOW!
- Ronnie's Ice House in Dickinson, Texas sold Bar-B-Que plates and had an auction on November 16, 2010. Many guest made spontaneous donations and bought whole briskets to help Texas EquuSearch. After paying for the fundraising expenses, a whopping \$6,000.00 was raised to keep our doors open.

We sincerely thank all of you for your long hours of hard work, devotion and generosity to the Texas EquuSearch organization. We are very grateful for your help and appreciate all you have done. You've all made it possible for us to find another missing person and bring them home to their worried family. However, it's still a struggle to pay all of our bills and conduct searches for missing persons too. If it were not for the searchers being so self-sufficient by paying for much of their own gas, food, water and other necessities on local searches; we would probably be closed by now. It's a blessing that we have so many dedicated volunteers that are willing to do whatever needed to keep our organization in full operation.

Training: Texas EquuSearch held an "Advanced Training" class on Saturday - November 6th & Sunday – November 7, 2010. The two-day training class began Saturday at the V.F.W. hall in League City, Texas. Tim Miller started off the class and was followed by Frank Black on "Reconnaissance Training", followed by Gene Robinson of RP Flight Systems. Gene is a well-known expert in drone photography. Gene was followed by Dennis Watters that has a highly successful record of reading underwater sonar images to locate submerged missing persons. Teams then split up and went into different groups to learn more about reconnaissance, air drone photography & sonar imaging. On Sunday – November 7, 2010, our members got to conduct simulated field searches and work hands-on with Gene and Dennis to discover if they have the desire to learn more about drone photography or working with sonar imaging. After attending the class, many of our searchers have found that they now have a yearning to learn more about reconnaissance, drone photography or sonar imaging. Some of those searchers are currently making

plans for more training. This was a very successful training class and we look forward to continuing to work with these ambitious individuals.

***New member orientation & field training will be held Saturday – January 15, 2011 at the Deer Park Fire Station #2, located at 711 East Pasadena Blvd. in Deer Park, Texas 77536. The training will be in the recreation room located at the far rear portion of the fire department property. You MUST park your vehicle on the grass in the horseshoe-shaped area in front of the recreation room. But do not park on any driveways, block any fire department equipment or block any entrances. Our guest speaker is Dr. Alvin Richard and he will be giving instructions on bone identification. The orientation and training will start at 9:00 a.m. and last until 4:00 p.m. The afternoon portion of the training will be a field exercise, so please wear appropriate search clothing and shoes.

Please bring a sack lunch & water if you plan to stay for the afternoon field exercise. You must register to attend the training – so please contact sherry.mckinney@texasequusearch.org to register. Visit our website at www.texasequusearch.org to view a map to the fire station.

Thanks TO SOME VERY SPECIAL PEOPLE: There is a group of people in Texas EquuSearch that many people hear little of. They do many things for Texas EquuSearch that our members and other people just don't hear about. They work long hard hours at their regular jobs before going home and thinking of ways that the organization can progress. They work out of the limelight and mostly unnoticed, but they are a very effective tool in the survival of Texas EquuSearch. They work on special projects, development, public relations, fundraising and procurement of needed items for the organization. They are the people that make up the Board of Directors. We are fortunate to have such an intelligent, respected, hard-working team of individuals. We can all be very thankful for the work they've done. Just so you know who this great group of people are, these are their names: **Tim Miller, Debbie Drury, Randy Stine, Dat Tran, Ralph Baird, Don Clark, Ken DeFoor, Barbara Collins, Andy Kahan and Bonnie Lem.**

Final Thought: Well, the Christmas holidays are here and the stores are full of people buying gifts to give to their family and friends. People are going to parties, singing Christmas songs, enjoying the beautiful decorations and some are having a little Christmas cheer. But let's not forget what the actual meaning of Christmas is all about. It's intended to celebrate the birth of the baby Jesus. But the exchanging of gifts has become a big part of the season's tradition. People spend a lot of money on gifts during this time of year. But, have you been giving gifts to people all year long, because when the family and friends of a missing person are at the highest point of desperation, you have shown up to search for their loved ones. The families and friends are worried, fearful and they feel completely helpless until you show-up and start to search for their mother, father, brother, sister, daughter, son, husband or wife. You give these nervous families hope. If you have found one of the 118 deceased remains, you gave the families the gift of having some type of "closure." If you were able to find one of the several hundred missing persons that were recovered alive and safe, then you gave their family

and friends the gift of being able to have a joyous reunion. You are all a special gifts to the families of a missing person. Your selfless act to help to find their loved ones is a gift that can't be measured, weighed or boxed. There isn't any store in the world that can put a price on that kind of gift you give. Each person that helps or is associated with Texas EquuSearch - is a special gift weather you are a corporate sponsor, independent contributor, searcher, board member, office staff or supporter. You all play a vital part in the recovery of missing persons. The families & friends of missing persons appreciate your gift to them. A lot of families will probably be thinking of you during the Christmas holidays, remembering & thinking ... what a wonderful gift they've received in you.

Tim Miller, the Board of Directors & the staff of Texas EquuSearch wish you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.