

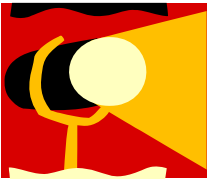
# *Volunteer Connection*

## *El Paso County Sheriff's Office*



Volume I Issue 4

Summer 2009



### **In the Spotlight: Reserve Deputy Don Hoffmann 2008 Volunteer of the Year**

You will never find Reserve Deputy Don Hoffmann without a smile, unmatched sense of humor or positive attitude. Joining the Reserve Unit in 2004, he obtained his Level A status within two years. He quickly earned the role of Cadet Advisor overseeing the Cadet program and mentoring young people considering a career in law enforcement. What's truly amazing is that in just four years he has provided over 4,600 volunteer hours while maintaining an active duty status with the Army National Guard.



As a Team Leader, Don thoroughly prepares and trains his members. Mentoring the deputies under his charge with confidence and professionalism, he provides annual evaluations that encourage and motivate. Don has also been assigned the task of Administrative Team Leader. This position is responsible for roster maintenance, certification level tracking, and the management

of personnel files. Deputy Hoffmann excels in both positions while continuing to avail himself to his job as a patrol officer, responding to any call regardless of location.

Under the watchful eye of Deputy Hoffmann, the Cadet program continues to grow and excel. In fact, over the last two years the program has increased from six cadets to 30. Additionally, Don oversees recruitment, training, role development, and event scheduling. He has proven to be an excellent role model with the cadets while encouraging and guiding them toward a positive future. Acting as liaison between the Cadet Program, the Sheriff's Office and the public, Deputy Hoffmann has proven himself to be an excellent representative of the mission and values of this office.

**2008 Volunteer of the Year Nominees:** Greg Maxwell ~ Patrol Chaplain and Reserve Deputy, Margo Humes ~ Fire Investigator, and Mike Waters ~ Reserve Deputy

---

## Lost and Found

You just arrived on vacation from out of town and decided to take a hike on Pikes Peak, but now a severe thunderstorm has blown in and you are lost. Who is going to search for you and bring you to safety? Answer: the El Paso County Search and Rescue team. El Paso County Search and Rescue (EPCSAR) has about 70 volunteers who provide a vital service in rescuing lost campers and hikers, climbers who can't get down from steep places or are injured in falls, and drivers whose vehicles are stranded in remote areas.

J. R. Betts, a member of the team since its inception, is the group coordinator for Colorado Springs and the state coordinator for the Colorado Search and Rescue Board. Skee Hipszky is the operations director for EPCSAR. The El Paso County team is the only accredited Mountain Rescue Association in the Rocky Mountain region and has various specialty teams within it. Among them are avalanche and rock rescue, search, trail carries, the mounted patrol, high angle rescue (technical climbers who rescue climbers stuck on cliffs or steep mountains), and winter rescue teams.

The team uses three certified search dogs on some missions. It takes 2 years to train and certify a search dog. If more dogs are needed, the Colorado Search and Rescue Board in Denver arranges to send them from other areas. This board will also send climbers or other resources to help with an El Paso County rescue effort.

Many people who need rescuing get in trouble through lack of foresight or ignorance of conditions. Often people try technical climbing without training or equipment, a dangerous thing to do. Most EPCSAR rescues are on Pikes Peak.

Pikes Peak has so many draws, canyons, and drainages where trees and brush impede passage that a person can easily get lost and become confused, especially when night falls. Being unprepared for climate change, without the proper clothing, and without food and water can lead a person down the path to being lost and needing to be rescued. The high country is subject to sudden storms, which not only pose a danger for hikers and climbers, but if a snowstorm blows in, drivers on Rampart Range Road or Gold Camp Road can find themselves in treacherous situations.



EPCSAR was formally chartered as a non-profit organization on April 8, 1973. Originally it was a combination of the Mountaineer Radio Club, a CB group; and Wilderness Wanderers, a 4-wheel-drive group. Present members must complete an intense 11-week training course. All receive instruction in climbing, search, and navigation (map and compass). Once a person is found, a team member has to give the location so others can come to help. There are

different core specialties, such as dog handlers, man trackers (searching for people), technical climbers, horse handlers, etc. Border Patrol Agents conduct classes for Search and Rescue to help members find people.

Members of the team have taken on a demanding commitment. Mr. Betts, as the state coordinator, is on 24-hour call one week at a time every 7 weeks. When asked if his family minds, he said his wife, Ginger, works with the weather service to provide weather forecasting for the group, a vital aid. Why would anyone take on such a demanding and time-consuming responsibility for no pay? Mr. Betts answered by saying he works at Hewlett Packard to finance his Search and Rescue work.

It is reassuring to know that should we find ourselves in a desperate situation in some remote area, these brave men and women will get us out of our mess. Imagine all the lives they have saved, and how much it would cost if the county had to keep all 70 volunteers on the payroll. Bless them all.

**Pat Krieger ... CJC Programs/Newsletter Committee**

---

## An Arresting Situation

“You are being placed under arrest for suspicion of driving under the influence.” Who, me? Now that I’ve volunteered to be a role player for some of the training exercises for the new recruits, I’ve heard this line more than a few times. Being a role player for some of the training exercises has offered me a unique opportunity to assist in training the new recruits.

Each training exercise starts with a briefing where the role players learn what their roles are and what is expected of them. For example, at the last briefing for the DUI traffic stop training, the volunteers watched a video that is shown to the recruits representing the vehicle they are stopping. The video provided several scenarios for the recruits to use after they make the stop and explain why they stopped the vehicle.

The actual exercise uses both the patrol car and role players’ vehicles. Neither vehicle ever moves but everything else is pretty accurate. In the scenario in which I took part, the recruit walked up to my car, told me why I had been stopped, and collected my information. He returned to the patrol car to call the information in, just as he would in a real traffic stop.

He returned to my car to tell me he would like me to take a roadside test based on observations made while following me and after I’d been stopped. To digress, during the briefing we’d been instructed to be mildly non-compliant during the stop. This was a bit of a challenge for me, as my nature during a traffic stop is to be compliant. But I’ve learned that being mildly non-compliant can be fun! To stir the pot a little, I thought a subtle proposition was in order. It was interesting watching the recruit’s reaction.



As part of the exercise, recruits are also expected to practice officer safety. Imagine the recruit’s surprise when I got completely out of the vehicle, walked back, and opened the passenger door of the patrol car.

I had learned what the different roadside tests are, as well as Colorado’s informed consent law. This gave me a chance to make sure the recruit also knew what my choices and options were at the conclusion of the roadside tests after I was

appearing to be under the influence. It was a challenge for me to turn around and walk away from the recruit when he couldn't answer my question after I said I didn't want to take either a breath or blood test.

I've also role played for the traffic accident training exercise. This exercise is set up using two actual wrecked vehicles in the middle of the street. The recruits have to interview the different parties involved in the accident, as well as take measurements and everything else they would need to do in a real accident investigation. It was fun to start arguing with the other party and see that the recruits knew to keep the two parties separate. Then when my "husband" and I started arguing, the recruits were a bit more confused over how to separate us and keep us apart.

Role playing in a training exercise is truly a unique experience that is educational and entertaining, as well as very helpful to the recruits going through the Training Academy.

**Katherine Oakey ... Citizens Advisory Council/Sheriff's Citizen Patrol**

---

### **A Different Kind of Board Game**

Although there are many ways to volunteer with the El Paso County Sheriff's Office (EPSO), I believe one of the most rewarding is to serve on a new hire oral board which provides the second step of hiring new deputies. New hire oral boards are usually conducted twice a year and can take up to three weeks depending on the number of applicants that pass the written exams.

This oral board is composed of three officers and one civilian volunteer. Local people serve on the hiring board. The applicants for the position of deputy are judged on their speaking ability, demeanor, dress, and ability to organize their thoughts and present them in a logical, professional manner. There is a numerical score for each category, which is averaged at the end of the presentations and then added to the applicant's written test score.

It is a rather intense process but very rewarding for those on the board. During the board examinations for the deputies, board members can interview twenty candidates per day. Each candidate is evaluated on a one-to-one basis, as well as in a group setting. One of my favorite responses was given by an applicant who had recently graduated from college and was young and very enthusiastic about working for the county. When asked why this individual wanted to become a deputy, the applicant replied, "Because it is an honorable profession." I am always amazed at the quality of people that we have to choose from in El Paso

County, and I enjoy watching those that are hired, knowing that I may have had a small part in their success.

In addition to the new-hire boards, there are also promotion oral boards to sergeant and lieutenant. The promotional boards are conducted by officers from out-of-town and even out-of-state agencies. The promotional boards allow one hour per candidate, so there are never more than eight evaluated in one day. The promotion boards are held once a year. While I was recently sitting on a promotion board, the tables were turned, and I actually had to evaluate one of the sergeants whom I had previously sat with on a hiring board. He had left the EPSO while a sergeant but returned to work and was seeking reinstatement.

**Martha Laye ... Citizens Advisory Council**

---

### **What is RACES?**

We have become so used to instant communication devices that we don't realize how fragile these systems are. When a blizzard, flood, fire, or other catastrophe knocks out power and telephone lines, cell towers, and the 800 MHz system used to communicate with the patrol division, dispatch, fire stations, and other emergency service providers, the county is in a fine mess. That's when the Emergency Manager activates a group of highly skilled and community-minded volunteer amateur radio operators (hams) known as RACES (Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service—pronounced ray-cees) to come to the rescue.

When summoned, some RACES members deploy to an event while others come to the "radio shack" in the sheriff's building at 101 West Costilla Street where they man the 6 radios plus the ATV (Amateur Radio Television) equipment to maintain communication with the deployed operators. With this equipment they can talk to people in the whole state or around the country if need be. In an emergency situation a runner relays messages from the radio room to the mission coordinator in the building. The radio operators also accept messages to send to the Red Cross, Salvation Army, and fire stations. The dispatcher can get in touch with any patrol and group who has a ham operator with them.

RACES has been activated many times. During the 1997 blizzard, telephone service was impaired and RACES communicated with Search and Rescue. In 1999 a water pipe broke and flooded the Qwest offices downtown, which knocked out the 911 service. In such situations, the media tells citizens to go to a fire station where hams are there to relay messages to the Sheriff, other fire stations, the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), and Red Cross shelters. RACES is also activated when contractors cut phone cables. The Hayman fire disaster was such a large event that not only local but state-wide RACES and the Amateur Radio

Emergency Service (ARES) were called upon, because of poor cell phone coverage in mountain locations. The 1990 Limon tornado damaged all communications, and ham radio maintained communications with the Colorado State Patrol, the weather service, and the Red Cross.



RACES members train constantly. They meet every Tuesday night for a net to practice their skills and ensure the equipment is working. On Wednesday nights they have a statewide net. On these occasions they use VHF (Very High Frequency). On Sundays highly qualified operators use HF (High Frequency) to communicate. During all these sessions they exchange information with other groups, observe protocols set up

by net control (the dispatcher), and maintain other needed skills. When dealing with fires they take humidity and dew point readings and wind direction and speed, and send this information every 30 minutes to the ham operator with the fire marshal. Fires create their own weather, and the Weather Service cannot provide the information needed. Also, the ATV may be used to send pictures of the smoke. These pictures and the weather information help the fire marshal determine his strategy. Twice a year RACES members have formal training exercises with large groups, some from out of state, with medical teams and the military involved. Twice a year also they have exercises on procedures used during wildland fires.

The 800 MHz system used in the county has 8 repeaters connected by the Internet. This system works like cell phones in that it needs the same infrastructure, and its range is limited. Most remote areas in big western states have no cell phone access, as the large cell phone providers generally limit service to large populated areas and areas along major interstate highways. In El Paso County, amateur radio has 12 repeaters, and they are on higher locations than those of the 800 MHz system. Any area within line-of-sight is within range. They do make use of the Internet in some applications, but the Internet itself can go down. HF does not rely on repeaters—the ionosphere is the repeater.

RACES groups exist nationwide. In Colorado, the El Paso County group is part of the South Central Region, which comprises Lake, Park, Chaffee, Teller, and El Paso

Counties. Not all cities and counties have RACES groups. The City of Colorado Springs relies on ARES.

Nationwide, ham radio operators have played vital roles during disasters. During Katrina, many emergency workers depended on amateur radio. In New York City on 9/11 the police department used UHF, and the fire department radio used 6 analog channels. They had no 800 MHz equipment to share channels among different jurisdictions. Firemen on the higher floors couldn't even communicate with those on the ground. Cell phones wouldn't work because the needed infrastructure was on top the World Trade Center and thus was lost. Since the occurrence of many large scale disasters, amateur radio has been written into many emergency plans.

Most people are unaware of the tremendous service amateur radio operators provide to the community. Emergencies occur so seldom that most people forget about them until one hits. It is then that the value of these dedicated and highly skilled individuals becomes clear. And remember, they don't get paid for their service. They deserve our recognition and gratitude.

A special thank you is extended to RACES members Henry Russell, Rob Roller, and Doug Moloney for providing information for this article.

**Pat Krieger ... CJC Programs/Newsletter Committee**

---

### **With a Knock and a Prayer**

Imagine what it would be like to answer the door in the middle of the night to be told a family member has been killed in an accident, murdered, committed suicide, or has been badly hurt. Most of us would dread breaking such awful news, but the Patrol Chaplains say they feel privileged God allows them to be with people at these difficult times. During a recent meeting of the Patrol Chaplains, Chaplain Lucero said, "When I put my key in the car, God takes over," and the other chaplains nodded in agreement.

Patrol Chaplains are the volunteers the patrol officers call when a family has to be notified of a tragedy. The chaplains are Greg Maxwell, Dennis Lucero, Dennis Whalen, Robert Swales, Mike Steczo, Dick Yost, and Richard Livingston. These dedicated and compassionate men are always on call to offer comfort and help to people on what may be the worst day of their lives.

The chaplains say each call is like the first day on the job. A deputy briefs the on-call chaplain on the nature of the emergency. When the chaplain goes to the family and breaks the bad news, the family members usually go into shock. The



chaplains say their task is to listen more than to talk. They refer to their calling as a Ministry of Presence. Chaplain Lucero said once a woman pounded him on his chest with her fists, screaming, "I don't want to hear this!" After a while she broke down and then sobbed an apology. Some people get mad at God for allowing this terrible thing to happen and won't allow prayers at first, but they do before the chaplain leaves. Some don't want any mention of God, and the chaplains never take this personally. In these cases they leave a card and tell the people to call if they want them to come back later, which the people invariably do. The chaplains may return still later to help the family with the paperwork involved in the situation.

Once the initial shock has passed, the chaplains say people need family and friends more than a chaplain. After assisting in contacting friends or family, the chaplains may stay until the family members or friends arrive. The chaplains say it is important to know when to leave. Often they attend the funerals of those whose lives have been lost, and sometimes they are even asked to perform the services.

The Patrol Chaplain Unit was officially started in 2000. Commander William Mistretta is Commander of their division; Lt. Athey and Sgt. Benjamin Dearmont oversee the group. Since the inception of this group, the chaplains have logged over 49,000 service hours. In addition to their patrol duties, Patrol Chaplains may be asked to give the invocation at graduation ceremonies for new deputies, the Citizens Academy, and the Teen Academy, also at promotion and retirement dinners. When asked, they will counsel patrolmen and employees of the Sheriff's Office, especially on the death of a family member.

As Patrol Chaplains they make hospital visits, sometimes ride along on a patrol shift, and they continue in training, such as counseling families of suicides. Some of the chaplains have lost close friends to suicide, and they know the devastation this brings to a family.

The value of the Patrol Chaplain Division cannot be overstated. Those who must cope with the sudden or violent death of a family member (or in one case, a child's horse) badly need the help of these gracious, kind, and compassionate men of God. As the chaplains say, "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care."

**Pat Krieger ... CJC Programs/Newsletter Committee**

**In Memory:** In 2008 and 2009 we experienced the passing of too many of our dear friends from the EPSO Corps of Volunteers. We honor those named below who gave so much of their lives to the service of others.

Kathy Verlo	Detention Chaplain	5 Years of Volunteer Service
Winnie Shows	CJC Programs	6 Years of Volunteer Service
Moe Pierce	RACES	6 Years of Volunteer Service
Paul Moraine	RACES	9 Years of Volunteer Service
Van Hart	Victim Advocate	8 Years of Volunteer Service

May we always remember these unique and special individuals and gratitude to those who were willing to share them with us.



Cat's Corner

**"Somewhere out there is a unique place for you to help others – a unique life role for you to fill that only you can fill." Thomas Kincaide**

Some stumble upon their unique role of service and others deliberately seek to find it. The act of discovery and realization – knowing that you have found your special niche in the world of service is an amazing experience. For Greg Mortenson, author of the book "Three Cups of Tea", lost in the shadow of K2 he stumbled upon his unique place of service in the wilderness of Pakistan which forever changed his life and those he continues to serve. If you want to read a wonderful story of a man's unique role in life, this is your book. Whether you are still in the process of finding that "unique place" or are resting in the realization that you are right where you are meant to be, you can be assured that those who are in receipt of your good service appreciate all you do.

In gratitude,

*Cathryn Richards*  
Volunteer Coordinator

---

2008 Update:

36 Areas in Which to Volunteer  
490 Average Number of Volunteers  
77,137 Total Service Hours Provided  
\$1.7 Million Dollar Value attached to Service Hours

2009 YTD Update:

37 Areas in Which to Volunteer  
500 Average Number of Volunteers  
53,000 Total Service Hours Provided  
\$1.2 Million Dollar Value attached to Service Hours

---

## Volunteer Engagement

The opportunities to engage in volunteerism within the El Paso County Sheriff's Office are both varied and distinctive. Should you know of anyone that might be interested in learning more about any of these opportunities, please have them contact our Volunteer Coordinator at 520-7216 or visit our website at [www.elpasoco.com/sheriff](http://www.elpasoco.com/sheriff).

Administrative/Clerical  
Al-Anon  
Alcoholics Anonymous  
Cadet/Explorer Program  
Chaplains - Detention  
Chaplains - Patrol  
Citizens Advisory Council  
C.E.R.T.  
Court Notification Call Center  
Emergency Rehab  
Events

Emergency Services  
Fire Investigations  
Haz Mat  
Inmate Classification  
Intake & Release  
Investigations  
Language Services Unit  
LEB Administrative Asst.  
Mailroom  
Programs - CJC  
Narcotics Anonymous

Newsletter Committee  
Range  
Reserve Deputy Unit  
Search and Rescue  
SORC Assistant  
Sheriff's Citizen Patrol  
Training  
Victim Advocate  
Wildland Fire

---



Reserves in Training 2004



Language Services Volunteer Unit