

# LOG ENTRIES

ISSUE 009 | WINTER 2023





# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

By: HCol (Ret'd) Patrick S. Curtis

The past year of 2022 saw a tremendous increase for the services of Toronto Search and Rescue – Marine, Unit 535 of the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary. Taskings by the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre doubled year over year to 32 from 16, with action almost every weekend. We delivered a response time of 8.57 minutes and the average duration per rescue was 2.17 hours.

When I founded T-SAR on Canada Day of 2011 and lobbied in the face of fierce opposition for over three years to exist, I argued that more people would use the waterfront in the coming years and that more resources would be needed to support the community in the future. There can be no doubt anymore that this is true.

We were on the water every weekend and one weeknight most weeks, with our 18 members completing about 500 hours of training. We were also available 24/7 for emergency taskings and completed three missions with rotating crews throughout the night as we searched for missing persons. This, despite losing over a month in May and June due

to major repairs that required hundreds of hours restoring the rescue boat for operations.

The year 2023 will see an increase in crew from 18 to 32 members and we will strive to expand the number of shifts we complete each week. This challenge will require more Cox-

Unit Leader Ivan Simokovic is now fully trained to provide in-house training for CCGA Phase 1 & 2 certification. We succeeded in getting most of our crew trained in the fall of 2021 with most of the remainder being trained in the spring of 2022. We are very supportive of enhanced training, and we have seen more of our



swains, more trained crew, and enhanced technology solutions for scheduling and data tracking of personnel, exercises, and performance metrics. Winter training begins in January, and we expect to be on the water in April with the technology and resources in place to perform for our community.

crew complete or sign up for EMR training (Emergency Medical Responder). We also provide training such as Marine First Aid, Cold Water Boot Camp and we are working toward a specialized training for oxygen tank and backboard, so that we roll into 2023 with an even higher level of expertise.

**CONT.**



**CONT.** Throughout the year our administrative consultant Angela Tai has been the invisible glue that has held the organization together in so many ways and I would like to recognize her dedication and hard work. We couldn't have done it without her!

Director Paul Nash led the charge on Community Outreach most weekends. It's safe to say that most of the boaters at Outer Harbour Marina, our home base, now know who we are as do others across the GTA, not to mention those attending the Redpath Waterfront Festival. He has also been our liaison to the Marine Unit and Toronto Fire, visiting them regularly to help foster better relations with us.

Last year saw a refresh of the Board of Directors as we said farewell to some and welcome aboard to others. I am very pleased to announce that Colleen

McCourt is now Vice Chair Operations. All Directors will report to her, and with her background in strategic planning and public affairs, she will be a tremendous asset to the organization as we continue to grow.

In September, we held our first annual charity golf tournament, which was a tremendous amount of work with many hands. It was a great success, with thousands of dollars in prizes donated and over \$27,000 raised for next year's operating budget. We are please to report that we got sponsorships from every major sailing and power club from Scarborough through Toronto Harbour to Etobicoke, as well as Rotary Club Toronto – Forest Hill, Kathryn Langley Hope, CIBC Private Wealth Management, and me, as well as donations from many individuals. Thank you all and we look forward to your support in 2023!





# WHO IS T-SAR?

By: Becky Coles, Director of Social Media

**Toronto Search and Rescue - Marine**  
has 18 Crew Members with an additional  
14 new members joining in 2023.  
In every newsletter we want to introduce  
you to some of our crew who are out  
on the water keeping you safe.



## Christina Zanella - Crew. Medical Supply Officer & Unit Safety Officer

Crew Member since the 2021 Season

*Christina joined T-SAR to combine her love of fishing with her passion as a first responder in her community. After graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Waterloo, she is now a student at Humber College pursuing a diploma in Paramedicine with plans to become a paramedic.*

### ***“What’s your favourite part of being on the crew?”***

How dedicated the crew is to helping others in the community. No matter our background or age we all have this common goal. The crew is an amazing group of people, we always find a way to make the time on the boat go by with some fun during training or time together out of the water. We share a lot of our lives with the amount of time we spend together, and it always makes for a great time.

### ***“Do you have a favourite memory or story about a day on the water or a tasking?”***

We love the community we serve and try our best to visit Toronto’s shorelines when not on a tasking. I have lived in Toronto my entire life and while that may not be the longest time, the city skyline and shores are always going to be a favourite memory of mine. Never does the beauty of the city wear off, especially when you can get the best seats in the house on T-SAR 2.

### ***“What mistake do you see people make on the water that always baffles you no matter how often you see it happen?”***

Not wearing a personal flotation device. It is a crucial piece of PPE and many do not realize how important it is, until it is needed and it’s too late.

### ***Is there anything else you want people to know about T-SAR after reading the article?***

T-SAR is a very welcoming and humble organization. Not only were they confident in my abilities, but I was given responsibilities that allowed my skills to further develop and to share them with the crew. Being the youngest and one of the few female crew, I hope other women can have the same experiences with other organizations as I had when I joined T-SAR.

# UPPING OUR COMMUNITY OUTREACH

By: Paul Nash, Director of Community Outreach and Corporate Secretary

Community outreach and boating safety education have been at the center of T-SAR's mission from the very start. This season, we stepped up our community outreach by setting up our blue outreach tent on weekends at various popular marinas and sailing clubs across Toronto's waterfront to raise awareness of T-SAR and boating safety more generally. Children were especially happy to get their hands on the boating safety colouring books and rub-on tattoos we handed out, in addition to hundreds of T-SAR stickers.

Boaters of all ages expressed their gratitude for T-SAR's commitment to keeping people safe on the water. Even the most experienced boaters appreciated our boating safety tips. Many were unaware that distress calls can be made either on **channel 16** of their VHS marine radios or by dialing \* **16** on their cell phones.

Our volunteers enjoyed the opportunity to strengthen their ties with Toronto's vibrant boating community. We look forward to continuing our community outreach in the coming seasons, and to reconnecting with the many wonderful new friends we've made this year.

Distress calls can be made either on



**16** of your VHS  
marine radio

*or by dialing*



**16** on your  
cell phone

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# NEW RESCUE BOAT CAPITAL PROJECT AND OPERATING FUNDS UPDATE

By: HCol (Ret'd) Patrick S. Curtis, Founder and Chair, T-SAR

A volunteer marine SAR unit is extremely cost effective. The Canadian Coast Guard did an analysis of the cost saving of an all-volunteer group and found that:

***“...the degree of financial leverage is high. Cost-savings is defined as an action, which must be both identifiable and measurable, that will result in a smaller than projected amount of costs to achieve a specified objective. In this case, it is noted that for each dollar invested, the CCG has access to approximately \$37 of service. That is, for every dollar expended there is a cost-savings of \$37.”<sup>1</sup>***

In addition, they identified cost avoidance as another significant benefit of an all-volunteer marine SAR unit:

***“Cost Avoidance is defined as the reduction or elimination of a new cost that would have otherwise occurred. In other words, every dollar expended, results in a cost-avoidance of approximately \$43”<sup>2</sup>***

This report was published in 2003, so how much has our value increased in 20 years?

In simple terms, Toronto Search and Rescue - Marine has provided a vital service to the residents of the GTA at no cost to the City or Province since we launched on the water in 2015.

Our current rescue boat is a 1999 Pursuit 2870 Offshore with a deep V hull and two upgraded Honda 250 HP engines. It has an optimal life of 25 years, which brings us to 2024. We have raised \$100,000 towards a replacement boat, which will cost \$850,000.

Yes, they are expensive, but when one considers a 25-year lifespan, it equates to \$34,000 per year.

Our operating costs are estimated to be \$60,000 per year going forward. While we work hard to raise operating funds, two of our main sources of long-term donations will not last forever, as these individuals age out.

When one considers the approximate all-in cost of ~\$100,000 per year for millions of dollars in value from volunteer first responders, can there be any question about the benefit to the City and its residents?

Please call me, Patrick Curtis, directly at (416) 882-4234 if you would like to discuss supporting our long-term sustainability. All hands on deck!

1. Canadian Coast Guard, Project Report 60263, March 2004, p24.

2. Ibid, p23.

**HELP SAVE A  
LIFE BY DONATING  
TODAY.**

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# WHO IS T-SAR?

By: Becky Coles, Director of Social Media

**Toronto Search and Rescue - Marine** has 18 Crew Members with an additional 14 new members joining in 2023. In every newsletter we want to introduce you to some of our crew who are out on the water keeping you safe.



## Jack Price - Crew. *Coxswain & Shipwright*

Crew Member since 2019

*Jack grew up in southwest Ireland which means he spent a lot of time on the water. He joined T-SAR to share his experience and serve people in the GTA. When he's not on the boat, he's a machine operator with CP Rail and a construction worker with Blackrock Design. (Ed Note: He's also the proud Dad of T-SAR's youngest prospective crew member, little Darcie!)*

### ***"What's your favourite part of being on the crew?"***

The crew dynamic, the mixture of volunteers from all walks of life and places. The laughs we share when we can. The opportunity we have to serve the people of the GTA. But also, the learning environment we work in every day we go out on the water, no matter if you have been out on the water a week or 50 years, you always learn something new each time you go out.

### ***"Do you have a favourite memory or story about a day on the water or a tasking?"***

Although it was not successful search, we had a tasking where we searched for a PIW over a 24 hour period. What was great was the mobilization and working alongside of other auxiliary, municipal and Air Force units in the one search, with a total of 10 vessels and 2 aircraft. It was a single goal and it was inspiring to see that effort.

### ***"What mistake do you see people make on the water that always baffles you no matter how often you see it happen?"***

The elephant in the room has to be addressed .... lifejackets.... they will save your life if you end up in the water, they are useless when not being worn. The design in lifejackets and PFDs have come a long way, making them lighter, less cumbersome, and more ergonomic and aesthetically more "fashionable." Amongst many more things, boaters who either don't know the equipment on their own boat, where it is or what it does is another big issue we see on the water.

### ***Is there anything else you want people to know about T-SAR after reading the article?***

Just that we are always looking for crew, land-based volunteers, and sponsors. It is a significant time commitment over the boating season, but it's more blessed to serve than receive. Our goal is to provide search and rescue capabilities on the lake whilst educating the ever growing boating community.



# ROOF REPAIR PROJECT

By: Ivan Simokovic, Commanding Officer

This summer, our rescue boat TSAR-2 spent a lot of time off the water because of repairs and maintenance that had to be done immediately. While we have to outsource some work, most repairs are done by our crew who volunteer their time to get the boat up and running again.

The original roof design was a huge project (with a huge price tag - over \$18K) that needed to be done to ensure we could perform our duties. The 2022 roof repair was required to ensure safety as well as prevent damage to the boat, as there were major stress cracks from hard work on the water. Repairing the aluminum frame that supports the roof meant removing the roof itself as well as the equipment that usually is attached (1 Radar, 2 Front Spotlights, 2 Front Floodlights, 2 Side Floodlights, 2 VHF Antennas, 1 AIS Antenna, 2 GPS Antennas, 1 Blue Light, 1 Hailer and 1 Stern Navigation Light).

While the frame was sent to be welded and reinforced, the roof was taken to a crew member's house to be worked on. That's where we did a very thorough cleaning and power washing of the roof, then removed the rotten substructure and filled any holes, cracks and dents with an epoxy resin. After this was complete, we followed up with multiple coats of marine grade primer and paint.

Once everything was fixed? Yep, back to the boat where we had to put it all back together. We spent dozens of hours reassembling the roof, including the massive task of rewiring all of the components!

This costly project would have been even more expensive and taken even more time if we did not have the help of so many dedicated volunteers. Thanks to our team, we were back in service for the Canada Day long weekend!







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**HCol (Ret'd) PATRICK S. CURTIS**

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