



Newsletter

**Special points of interest:**

- VISAR Reps attend the international Maritime Rescue Conference in China
- Training is a key to VISAR's success

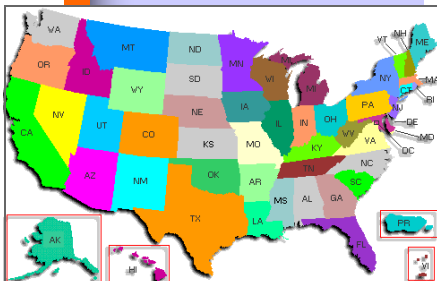
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# VISAR LIFELINE

## VIRGIN ISLANDS SEARCH AND RESCUE

2011 ISSUE

### A letter from VISAR Patron, Governor Boyd McCleary

#### FIRST IMPRESSIONS

When I agreed, shortly after arriving in the Territory last August, to be Patron of VISAR, I must admit that my knowledge of the organisation was pretty hazy. Six months on, having witnessed in particular the team effort during the tragic death of the Haitian refugees off Brandywine Point in December and personally going out with some of the VISAR crewmembers on 'Spirit', I have no doubt that VISAR is an organisation of which the people of the BVI should feel proud.

My own experience with VISAR has given me a greater sense of the risks that VISAR face in their important work. They are all volunteers and drop everything when they get a call, at any time of the day and

night, whatever the weather and whatever the sea state. These men and women take time away from their jobs, their private lives and their families to provide an essential service, making the waters around the BVI safer for locals and visitors alike. My wife, Jenny and I hosted a major fund-raising party for VISAR earlier this year, which was a huge success, raising over \$20,000 for the organisation. We will continue to play a role in helping VISAR with the challenge of raising funds and will take every opportunity to promote the organisation and its many qualities. It will be a privilege to serve as Patron during my time here in the BVI.

From its humble beginnings VISAR is now held in high international regard and I am proud to be associated with one of the most re-



Governor Boyd McCleary with VISAR Board member Andrew Waters at the 2011 Governor's Gourmet Gathering.

spected, professional and vital of the BVI's institutions. I encourage you to visit VISAR's website to check out how you can get involved, whether it's through a donation or volunteering your time [www.visar.org](http://www.visar.org). Their creative fundraising team hosts many events throughout the year. I look forward to seeing you there.

### Fundraising in the USA

In 2011 we have had two people who live in the USA volunteer for VISAR from overseas. Mike Curry and Bill Knowles.

Mike, from Nashville, Illinois comes to the BVI regularly and has been a VISAR contributor for a long while. He is helping VISAR to forge a

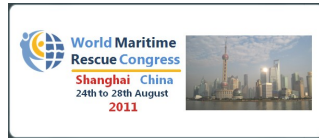
relationship with a company in the US to sell VISAR merchandise to US residents.

Bill Knowles, a member of the Caribbean 1500 hailing from Bristol, Rhode Island, approached VISAR and offered to contact marine distributors in the US on behalf of VISAR asking for in kind

donations. Bill has been successful in his task and Essential Trading Systems Corp from Marlborough, CT has donated two white lazur beam LED Lights to VISAR.

Thank you to these two men who have done and are doing great things for VISAR.

## VISAR Reps Attend World Maritime Rescue Conference by Katie LaDouceur



Two Representatives from VISAR, Phil Aspinall and Katie LaDouceur travelled to Shanghai, China for the World Maritime Rescue Congress. The International Maritime Rescue Federation, of which VISAR is a member, organizes this conference every four years. The goal of each conference is to bring together people in the search and rescue community from around the world to share ideas, best practices, information, and products.

The Congress was hosted by China Rescue and Salvage. The China Rescue and Salvage team were extremely hospitable hosts and ensured that the conference was one to be remembered.

The Conference opened with a gala dinner at the Shanghai Expo Hotel with spectacular performances in dance, drumming, song, and poetry. Captain Jiahui Song, the head of China Rescue and Salvage, remarked at the opening of the conference that this event coincided with their 60 year anni-

versary. 60 years has brought China to a great rescue and salvage operation with use of many boats and helicopters



China Rescue and Salvage Demonstration of a man overboard recovery

and 250 employees.

The second day of the conference our hosts put on a demonstration of their rescue capabilities including their fire fighting boats. Their actions were swift and calculated.

After the fanfare died down, attendees went to educational and information sharing sessions focused on mass casualty, educating our community about SAR and water safety, creating guidelines for SAR outfits, and successes and failures of SAR outfits from around the world.

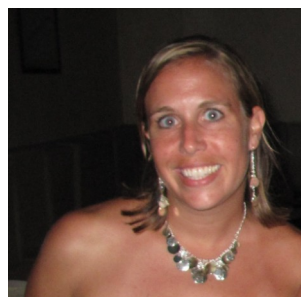
Tim De Wet from Uganda spoke passionately about the SAR program he began 12 years

ago. The lessons learned from that start up were to talk to the community about their needs, get community involvement in the program, and to change direction when needed. Tim is leaving the program and sees the legacy he is leaving as people there now wear lifejackets that are made by the women in Uganda. These lifejackets, now worn by so many, are saving thousands of lives.

It is easy living on Tortola to forget that there are a million people dying each year from drowning. This fact is staggering and heart wrenching when we see photos of children paddling on make shift rafts on their way to school, and then hearing the statistics of how many children are dying each year. The IMRF is bringing SAR organizations together to help change these numbers. To bring water safety education and search and rescue to places that don't have it and are in dire need.

This conference was eye opening in many ways. Not only did I return to Tortola with new ideas for our own SAR operation, I also think now, what can we do to help others around the world.

## Meet the Crew— Carrie Hubbard - VISAR Deputy Coordinator, Tortola Base



**Where are you from?** London, Ontario, Canada

**How did you come to live in the BVI?** My wonderful husband Paul!

**How long have you been here?** 8 years

**How did you hear about VISAR?** A few co-workers and friends around mentioned it.

**What made you join VISAR?** Wanted to help out so decided

to join as a Coordinator.

**Has it been what you expected?** Yes, have a close knit family - if it weren't for VISAR we wouldn't still be here!

**What have you gained from your time with VISAR?** Confidence, friendship and a love for the BVI!

CRS Computer Monitoring of the East Coast of China

**“The IMRF is bringing SAR organizations together to help change these numbers.”**



## Meet the Crew—Katie LaDouceur—VISAR Executive Administrator



Where are you from? Massachusetts, USA

How did you come to live in the BVI? Not to copy Carrie, but it was my husband who brought me here.

How long have you been here? 3 years

How did you hear about VISAR?

Before I moved I had heard about VISAR, a friend who lived here had talked about joining.

What made you join VISAR? I have been a Lifeguard and Lifeguard Instructor for many years so water safety and rescue are very important to me.

Has it been what you expected? Absolutely. I enjoy planning the events, meeting people, fundraising, and making sure things run smoothly.

## The Lighter Side of Fun(d)raising by Mike Rowe

**The key to eternal happiness...give away all your money (to a worthy cause).** New research reveals that when individuals dole out money for **charitable donations**, they get a boost in happiness while those who spend on themselves get no such cheerful lift. Statistical analyses revealed personal spending had no link with a person's happiness, **while spending on others and charity** was significantly related to a **boost in happiness and self worth.**

"We wanted to test our theory that how people spend their money is at least as important as how much money they earn," said G. Kraakman a research analyst at the University of Vi.sar.

The findings, to be detailed in the next issue of "Lifeline", come as no surprise to our research team. "It doesn't surprise me at all that people find giving money away very rewarding," said P. Hubbard, associate analyst, who was not aware he was involved in the study at all. He added, "What you're really trying to buy is meaning to life – Giving money to a cause you believe in is a more effective

purchase than buying a T-shirt that says "Save a Whale." A very profound statement considering the source.

The research was sponsored by the H. E. Ineken Research Foundation.

On a more serious note: Hopefully you found the prose above amusing however the intended message is designed to trigger a "giving" response. Bear with me...

At current levels of activity, VISAR needs about \$100,000 per annum to adequately meet the needs of the community and those who find themselves in distress. As most of you are well aware VISAR is funded almost entirely by charitable donations, and relies very heavily on the financial support of the local community, visitors to the British Virgin Islands and people like you. Funding for VISAR comes through five distinct sources: Membership Subscriptions, Donations, Company Sponsorship, the Dollar per Person Campaign and Fundraising events.

One of our primary goals for 2012 is to raise awareness of VISAR in the community and encourage more indi-

viduals and businesses to become contributing sponsors of the organization. Membership VISAR greatly values the contribution that its members make to fundraising. In addition, all members receive a VISAR vehicle decal, and the right to attend and vote at general meetings of the Company. Members will also receive notice of fundraising events and drives. We offer five categories of Membership:

- Individual \$50
- Family \$80
- Friend \$150
- Benefactor \$300
- Company \$500

Take a moment... remember the "key to eternal happiness" and please consider becoming a valuable contributing member. Contact **Katie LaDouceur**, [visar@surfbvi.com](mailto:visar@surfbvi.com) 494-4357.

"You make a living by what you get. You make a life by what you give"

**Winston Churchill**

**The key to eternal happiness... give away all your money (to a worthy cause).**



Mike Rowe accepting a donation check from Nigel Keegan on behalf of Proudly African for their 2010 Donation

## A Year of Training by Paul Hubbard

Any organization is only as good as its equipment and personnel. Knowing this, VISAR put a lot of time, research and resources into ensuring we have the best possible equipment to save lives on the water. Our personnel, the VISAR Crew Members, are all volunteers and although historically many have come from a marine background, some volunteer and may have little or no marine or medical experience. The one thing they all share is a passion for helping others and in order to do this effectively they need to learn all the skills necessary to become an effective crewmember. Each Crew Trainee is taught basic seamanship, boat handling, VHF procedures, medical skills, navigation, and Emergency First Response to name a few. All skills and courses are taught to a high level and only once trainees are deemed competent and confident they are signed off in that section of their training manual. VISAR has always maintained a high level of training and most of this is carried out 'in house' - that is to say the more qualified and experienced personnel within VISAR train the less experienced crewmembers and trainees. This is a great way of maintaining a skill level that is consistent for all crew and ensures local knowledge, which is extremely vital in carrying out a fast, efficient and safe rescue operation, is shared amongst all crew. It is however often beneficial to get an outsiders perspective, to bring in subject area experts who can ensure that what

we are doing are the most up to date and safe practices and procedures. It was because of this wanting to continually better ourselves and our organization, that we embarked upon what would turn out to be a 'Year of Training'...

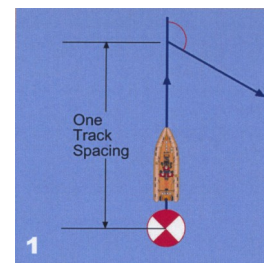
2010 began with Andreas and Jesper, two of the instructors from SPECTRE Marine, a Swedish company who specialize in training Military and Search and Rescue organizations in fast boat operations. The company also specializes in planning and conducting custom made training programs in maritime related topics and as such, VISAR saw a need for their expertise. SPECTRE have operated all over the world and were recommended to us by TP Marine, the Dutch Fast Rib Boat Building company that are currently supplying VISAR's Rescue Boats. They were hired by VISAR to assess and train the Helms and Number 2's. Over a two week training period, the instructors trained with all helms and number 2's covering such subjects as 'blue light' high speed driving, boarding and coming alongside techniques, navigation, night time driving and rough weather handling. We conducted exercises in daylight and darkness, and also discussed possible uses and benefits of radar - a possible option for future VISAR boats

After the highly specialized nature of the SPECTRE training, it was obvious that we needed all Crew Members and Trainees to be involved in a higher level of training.

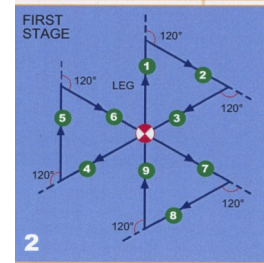


Jasper from SPECTRE supervising a helm aboard Spirit coming alongside a charter catamaran.

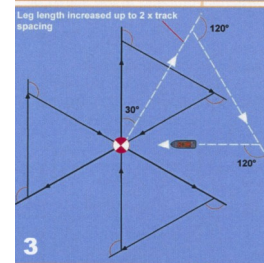
**"The one thing they all share is a passion for helping others and in order to do this effectively they need to learn all the skills necessary to become an effective crewmember. "**



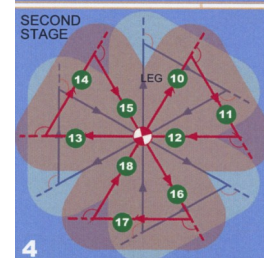
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SECTOR search pattern. Best used when datum information is very fresh, for example, in a man overboard or upon location of debris/wreckage.

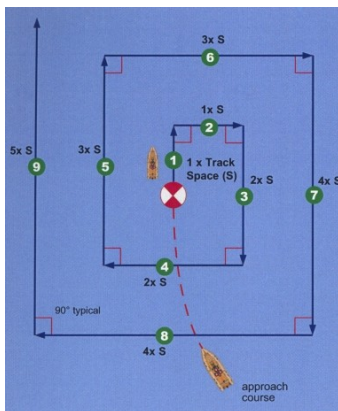
were very fortunate to have this come to fruition in July when Andy Clift, Divisional Inspector for the North of England from the UK's Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI), came to the BVI and delivered a two week training that was open to all VISAR volunteers. The RNLI has 4,500 volunteer crew members, operates an extensive fleet of a variety of

We

## A Year of Training Continued

rescue boats and is funded by charitable donations, so if anyone is well placed to pass on their experience and knowledge it's the experts from the RNLI!

Andy's brief from the VISAR Training Committee was to tailor his training sessions to involve the whole crew and to steer away from Helm training, as this had been extensively covered by SPECTRE. One of the many subjects Andy covered in detail during his stay was that of conducting search operations. Whether searching for a missing vessel or a person in the water, it is essential that the whole crew work together as a team to ensure that all the water and coastline that is of interest to the search is covered as quickly as possible, whilst ensuring that people are keeping eyes on the water. Each member of the team has a job to do, navigation, communication and timing of the search pattern and passing instructions to the helm, whilst maintaining



**EXPANDING SQUARE**  
Search pattern. Best used for a relatively small search area.

updates and instructions to the VISAR coordinator and

any other vessels and assets involved in the search. Andy also spent a lot of time practicing 'backing down' with the crews – a technique used to bring a small boat safely to shore in rough seas and high winds. Where the boat is anchored offshore and uses the power of its engines whilst astern to maintain its position. Again, it's a team effort and to be done successfully communication between all crew members is paramount. After the helm training and the crew training, it was time to turn our attention to medical training. All members of VISAR Crew are trained as Emergency First Responders, an immediate care and first aid qualification, but as an increasing number of our shouts involve a medical situation, the need was identified for a higher level of training for some of the crew. To meet this need, 2 years ago we worked with Dave Watt, of Rocky Mountain Adventure Medicine, a company in Canada that offer an Advanced Adventure Medic course. The course is very similar in content and syllabus to a Basic EMT course, but concentrates on the more remote aspects of providing emergency care and the transportation of the injured persons. After the success of this course in 2008, Dave was once again asked to visit VISAR to re-certify the existing Medics and also to teach and certify a new group of medics. As a result of this, we now have 18 Advanced Adventure Medics as Crew Members. They are trained in areas including airway management, chest

trauma, wound management, heat injuries & dehydration, diabetes, allergies & anaphylaxis, drowning and Respiratory distress.

One of the best aspects of working with Dave is that he is able to tailor his course content to meet VISARs requirements, for example he replaced the part of the course that he would deliver in Canada that deals with bites and stings to dealing with Hazardous Marine life. Dave is also working remotely with us to establish a set of medical guidelines and is available anytime for us to contact him and offer us advice. We are also talking with him about the possibility of teaching some of our instructors to become CPR for the Healthcare Professional Instructors.

The year for VISAR ended with virtually all crew members and trainees having received at some point over the previous 12 months a level and intensity of training that we couldn't have achieved by ourselves. The philosophy of 'train one – save' had been carried out in fact was more like 'train many – save many more'!

As a direct result of the training, some trainees were elevated to crew status, Helms were training new crew with vigour and intensity and the medics were buzzing with new techniques and new equipment. Although it had for some been an incredibly busy year, it had definitely been a good year – and it had certainly been a year for training!

**“...Helms were training new crew with vigour and intensity and the medics were buzzing with new techniques and new equipment.”**



Spirit underway during high speed helm training.

## VIRGIN ISLANDS SEARCH AND RESCUE

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E-mail: visar@surfbvi.com

### Saving Lives at Sea



Virgin Islands Search and Rescue (VISAR) is a voluntary organization dedicated to saving life at sea. It is the officially recognized search and rescue service in the British Virgin Islands, where it provides 24-hour cover every day of the year in close co-operation with the Royal British Virgin Islands police, fire and ambulance services.

Our volunteers come from all walks of life, and undergo rigorous training in seamanship and small boat-handling skills, search and rescue techniques and first aid. They give up their own time to train and answer distress calls with nothing in return except the satisfaction of knowing that they are doing a vital job. If you would like more information about VISAR, how to volunteer, or how to become a member, please contact Katie LaDouceur at visar@surfbvi.com or (284)494-4357.

Visit Us Online!  
[www.visar.org](http://www.visar.org)

## Upcoming Events

Each year VISAR holds special events to raise funds for the operation. There are four events held annually, with other fun events filling up the calendar.



Virgin Gorda Crew Members  
at the Governors Gourmet

February brings with it not just the month of love with Valentines Day, but also the Governor's Gourmet Gathering. This black tie

event is woven with beautiful music, delicious food prepared by local top chefs, and an auction. Tickets are sold out for this event each year so reserve yours early.

March marches in with the Virgin Gorda Golf Classis. An evening of mini golf, dinner, games, and prizes all hosted at The Mine-shaft, Virgin Gorda.

In June we offer Swim the Sound and Waterworld. Swim the Sound is a 2 or 3 mile competitive open water swim at the North Sound. As the race ends,

Water World begins. This

is a family fun day with relay races, games of skill, water fun, food, and many smiles.

November is the time for Market Day. This event held in Road Town is where you will find that one person's trash is another person's treasure. There are people selling their wares, a white elephant tent, games for kids, food and drinks.

Please go to our website often to see the latest information on our upcoming events.



Limbo contest at Waterworld



Nagy Darwish and King  
Greenspon flipping burgers at  
Market Day