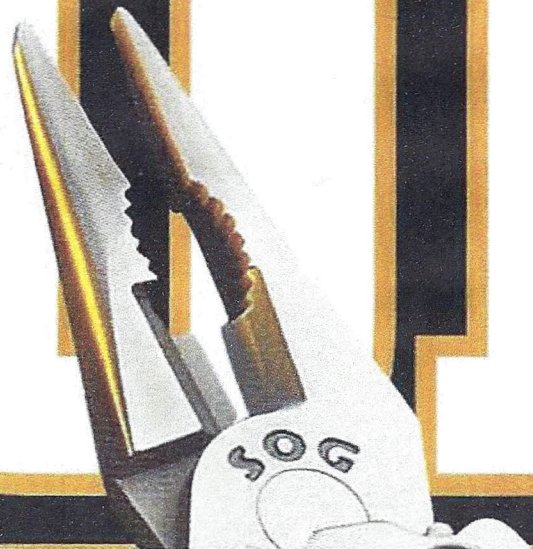


**AMERICAN**

**FOOP**



TM

**JULY/AUGUST 2010**

# HIDE & SEEK

**T**hey're inevitable, calls for service we hate; the ones that make us wish we were tied up on something, anything else. The dispatcher grabs your attention on the radio and says she needs you to go to the report of a missing autistic 8-year-old boy. Where I work in South Florida, I'm more apt to hear it's an 80-year-old — with Alzheimer's.

I remember one situation in particular. It was a balmy summer evening, near dusk, when I got the call. A child had been missing for more than two hours so every available unit was sent and we were there for the duration. The child's home situation was awful and the single mother was useless in providing any meaningful information to help us to find the wayward youngster. I resigned myself to the realization *this* was going to be a long night.

Street cops hate these kinds of incidents. So do their supervisors. Incidents like these consume every available resource — equipment, manpower, overtime and volunteers. And don't forget, it's inevitable you'll have citizens complaining it took too long for you to respond to the situation. If the missing person isn't found quickly, the media will show up and the mayor will want a full report.

## Good GOT BETTER

**F**irst there was the LoJack SafetyNet system I wrote about almost a year ago (*Future Tech: Making Your Job Easier*, *American COP*, Sep/Oct 2009). Using GPS and locator devices, LoJack made it easier for law enforcement to find an at-risk person who'd wandered away. Well, good just got better thanks to EmFinders.

Here's how it works. A caregiver purchases a wrist watch-like gizmo, called an EmSeeQ, and has the at-risk "patient" wear it. Inside the wristband is a transponder that can be activated by EmFinders should the person wander away; it can only be activated *after* a caregiver has notified a 911 dispatcher, who'll collect the necessary information to create a missing person file and assign a case number.

Once activated, the tracking device triangulates its location using cell phone towers and "calls" the nearest 911-dispatch center to report the wearer's emergency and location. The dispatcher can then send officers to the location reported

by the EmSeeQ. The device will maintain contact with the dispatcher until the person is found — meaning it will give updated locations should the victim still be wandering. When officers have found the missing person, they can safely return them, and the EmSeeQ is shut off.

This locating system is a win-win for all involved. There are no equipment or training costs for municipalities and the

manpower previously invested in a traditional search is significantly reduced. Still better, caregivers have peace of mind their loved ones can be found quicker and easier.

## OUR CHANGING WORLD

**T**echnology has re-shaped almost every aspect of cop work. Our cars and gear bags are full of tools not imagined 15 years ago. We can learn everything about anyone in just a couple of seconds. The improvements to weaponry, both lethal and less-lethal, have fundamentally changed the use of force conundrum, I mean, continuum.

Cell phones, text messaging, digital radios, GPS tracking and mobile computers keep us *connected* in a way the last generation of cops couldn't fathom and probably, wouldn't want. And technology is changing the way we look for lost people.

## PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

**P**eople expect us to protect them, but part of our job is to educate citizens how to better protect themselves. Educating them is also self-serving because it reduces the drain and strain on manpower and calls for service. How many times have you heard someone say, "What can I do to prevent this from happening again?"

When it comes to finding the mentally challenged who've wandered off, you now have an answer. EmFinders can provide you with a handout you can give to citizens or have available at your station's front counter. You owe it to them and yourself to help make life easier.

In the performance of our duties, it's vital we separate the good from the gizmos. Good stuff will make us safer, more efficient and contribute to saving lives. A very wise man said, "The technology bus is rolling — you can choose to be on it or under it."



For more info: EmFinders, [www.emfinders.com](http://www.emfinders.com); LoJack SafetyNet, [www.lojack.com](http://www.lojack.com)