

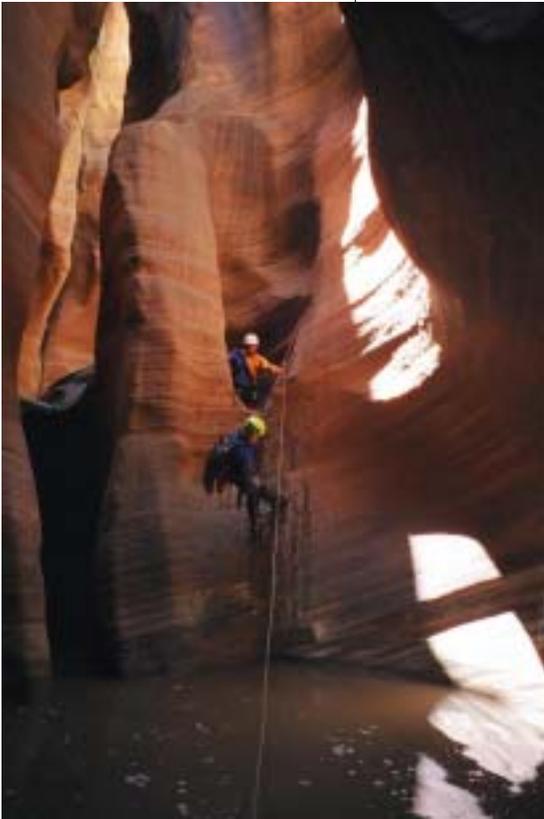


# THE TRACKER

Monthly Newsletter of the Inland Empire Search and Rescue Council

July 2004

Volume 13 Number 7



## Exploring Utah's Slot Canyons

Sonny Lawrence, Cave Rescue Team

In Psychiatry the concept of "illusion" is often discussed with the medical students I mentor. It is defined as the false interpretation of real sensory input. I never imagined it would become the topic of a SAR Tracker article. So goes life.

I have been rappelling since I was a teenager. I grew up with the Dulfersitz. It is a bizarre and rather painful way of rappelling wherein

the rope is wrapped around the body. I learned to wear heavy clothing in the heat of the summer to protect me from rope burn. Various other rappel methods were used and dropped off due to disfavor through the years. There was the carabiner wrap. Do it backwards and the rope opens the gate and pops off. I built chains of oval carabiners into what we now know as a rack. I used large chain links, heavier but cheaper than the Stitch link which in a sense lead to our current ATC type of rappel devices. One concern that has stuck with me is that of the rope making it to the ground. I am a believer in stopper knots and checking to see that the rope is long enough before rappelling.

This past Fourth of July weekend, I had the pleasure to explore slot canyons in the Colorado Plateau section of southern

Utah. One in particular is Imlay Canyon. The acuity of this adventure is further described at <http://www.climb-utah.com/Zion/imlay1.htm>. Suffice it to say, this is a very difficult canyon. It is strongly recommended that experienced canyoneers not take individuals who are new to the sport. Self-rescue is the rule. Sending in a rescue team would be a daunting task. There are two sets of "narrows" which are described creatively by: "lot's of swimming, potholes, logjams, downclimbing, swimming, potholes, floating disconnects, potholes and swimming." These potholes can be very easy or quite tough to deal with. When empty, one could descend into a 20 foot deep, finely polished bowel for which there is no easy escape without specialized big wall aid climbing gear. When full of water, one simply does a beached whale wiggle to get over the downstream lip. And of course there is everything in between. One strategy for rappelling into the pool is to have the end of the rope just touch the water. Usually I could hear the rope hit the water after I dropped it or watch the ripples in the pool as it touched down. I would then rappel, pull the rope through the device and swim away. In that way the floating disconnect from the rappel device is easy. This minimizes the possibility of losing the device. Also, there is less snarled rope to tie oneself up in. Having the rope just touch the water is the trick to making this efficient.

### In This Issue

Slot Canyons .....	1
Tragedy in Morongo .....	2
Cumulative Stress .....	3
TRBC .....	5
Calendar .....	7
Classifieds .....	8

See "Slot Canyons" on p. 4



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# Tragedy Strikes San Gorgonio SAR

**O**n Saturday July 17, enroute to a search for a missing teen in Joshua Tree National Park, five members of the San Gorgonio Search and Rescue Team were involved in a horrible traffic accident. A Ford Ranger pick-up truck heading west on highway 62 veered into oncoming traffic and struck the suburban carrying Phil Calvert, Scott Johnston, Bob Blanck, Shane Elliott, and David Atchley. Scott Johnston was killed, and Phil Calvert died later of his injuries..

The funeral service for Scott Johnston is on Friday July 23 at 15:00 Trinity Church 1551 Reservoir Rd, Redlands, CA.

Phil Calvert's funeral will be on Saturday July 24 at 10:00 at the First Congregational Church 2 W. Olive Ave. Redlands, CA

More detailed information on these services can be found at:

[www.thetracker.info/accident](http://www.thetracker.info/accident).

Our thoughts and prayers are with these rescuers' families.

# Cumulative Stress and the SAR Worker

Shirley Keebaugh, West Valley Search and Rescue

Stress is often viewed negatively but actually it enables us to cope and still function when faced with change or a challenge by enhancing our mental and physical responses. The adrenaline pumps and we are more aware and focused allowing us to perform well during an incident. Obviously, being in a stressful situation is both mentally and physically exhausting. So after an incident, people need time to rest and recover.

Now this is where we as SAR workers get into trouble. We are such dedicated individuals, that we respond to help others even when we are still recovering from a previous incident. In fact, according to Marilyn Neudeck-Dicken in her book *Cumulative Stress Management for Search and Rescue*, the typical SAR personality is a person who is highly dedicated, has a strong need to be needed, has difficulty saying “no” to a request for help, is highly self-motivated, is action oriented, has a high need for stimulation and self-gratification, is obsessive, a perfectionist, a risk taker, easily bored, and compulsive, and needs to be in control.

The SAR community in San Bernardino County performed fantastically well for extended periods during the wildfires last fall, during the floods in December, and during the first two weeks in January to search for hikers who had slipped off icy trails. In addition, between those incidents, we had to deal with our normal SAR events such as climbers stuck on cliffs and injured hikers, team business, trainings and recertifications, our paid jobs, and our family lives.

Being so busy can lead to cumulative stress, which may develop when a person might not be fully recovered from stress from one incident before another incident occurs and triggers stress again. Cumulative stress builds up slowly and imperceptibly. Often stress reactions are difficult to recognize in us but are usually noticeable to our close co-workers. Ms. Neudeck-Dicken developed the following Cumulative Stress Test to measure our own stress levels and it contains warning signs of cumulative stress that might be recognized by co-workers.

- YES NO I feel tired most of the time.
- YES NO I do increasingly dislike my job.
- YES NO I work harder and harder and accomplish less and less.
- YES NO I am increasingly cynical and disenchanted.
- YES NO I feel sad for no reason.
- YES NO I forget appointments, deadlines, and personal objectives.
- YES NO I am irritable and short tempered for little reason.
- YES NO I see friends and family less frequently.
- YES NO I am too busy to return phone calls or read reports.
- YES NO I am suffering from physical complaints such as aches, pains, headaches, and colds.
- YES NO I feel out of control most of the day.
- YES NO Joy is elusive.
- YES NO It is hard to laugh and joke around.
- YES NO Sex seems more trouble than it is worth.

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*“...the typical SAR personality is a person who is highly dedicated...self-motivated...action oriented...”*

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See “Stress” on p. 8

## Slot Canyons

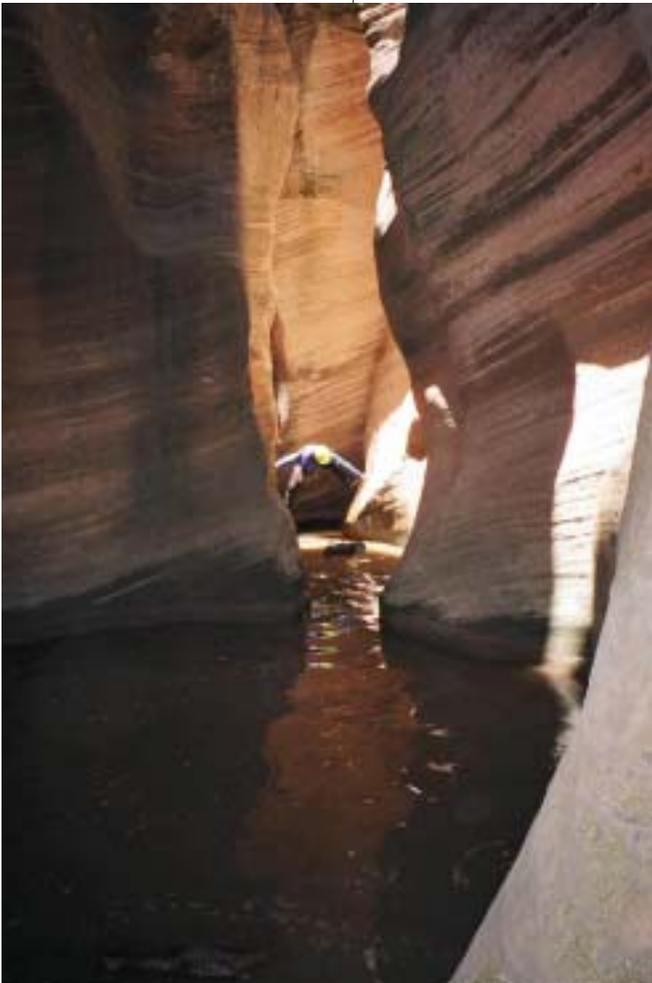
Continued from page 1

These are long wet, dark canyons. The temperature on the plateau above may be 110 degrees. The air temp in the canyon, rarely seeing the sun, is in the 70s. The water runs less than 50 degrees. Hypothermia becomes a serious probability. The less time in the water, the better. Hence the need for a quick floating rappel disconnect.

So there I was, deep in the huge string of connected cavernous slot chambers which seemed more like a cave than a canyon. Specialized cameras with flash attachments are needed to take good pictures. There were "holes" in the ceiling

allowing the mid-day light to dance in. The carved out shapes of the sandstone walls and still pools which were water choked with logs, frogs and dead floating things all caused a disorienting visual and olfactory effect; an illusion. I lowered the end of the rope into the pool below. I kept looking at the water, it appeared the pool was split in half with the downstream portion at a different level. It was as though there were two pools connected by an invisible wall but one was

five feet higher than the other. I was mesmerized! This was a very odd experience, just looking at a pool. I was sure my rope touched the water.



Off I went, gently rappelling due to the fear of anchor failure if I should suddenly load the system. Ten feet down I stopped. My rope was a tad short, by 15 feet! Most likely I could have rappelled off the end and dropped into the pool. Most likely it would have been very deep. Most likely I would have had a great laugh and war story. But even more likely, it would have been one of my more stupid moments! If I had done so, I surely risked forcing the most horrific water on the planet into every uncovered orifice of my body. The most potent intravenous antibiotics could not have assuaged my paranoia of all sorts of creepy crawly germs doing who knows what damage to my body. And of course the real threat was if there were hidden solid objects just under the water. The summer conditions were extreme. I wore a dry suit with fleece in order to prevent hypothermia. This was no place to sustain an injury. The illusion of rope upon water had tricked me. But no worry. I just stopped rappelling!

It is a lovely experience to do challenging trips with my best friend. I called up to Pete Frickland, formerly on the Sierra Madre SAR team, that I had misjudged the length and I was on the short end of a long rappel. No other words passed. One hundred twenty seconds later a rope descended to me with a figure eight on a bight tied in it. Sixty more seconds found me lowered on the second rope down to a floating disconnect. All was well. My Purcell prusiks were never called into action. The invisible wall between the two uneven pools of water disappeared as they merged into one undrinkable watery expanse.

Continued on p. 6

# Technical Rescue Basics Course

Jeff Lehman, Cave Rescue Team

For the past seven years the Sheriff's Office has offered the Technical Rescue Basics Course (TRBC). This 50 hour course is designed to provide

advanced level of training. There are additional team-level requirements that must also be met for a team to initiate a technical rescue.

Prior to attending TRBC, the student must complete the Personal Vertical Skills Course (PVS). In order to successfully complete PVS the student must be able to ascend and descend a rope as well as tie a number of useful knots. In addition, each student must perform a "pick-off" maneuver to aid a stuck climber. The TRBC format includes 2 weekends of instruction. The first weekend is spent in the classroom for lecture and in practical application in small groups. The second Saturday is spent in the field practicing what was learned, with the following day devoted to testing on the material. Each student must pass a written exam as well as a series of practical examinations. The rope certification gained upon successful completion of the course is valid for two years. Re-certifying SAR personnel can attend the testing session



students with an introduction to technical rescue. Once a SAR team member completes this course, they are able to participate in a technical rescue.

Current county standards do not allow a team member who has passed TRBC to initiate a technical rescue, but they can participate under the direction of a leader that has achieved an intermediate or



Continued on p. 6

# TRBC

Continued from p. 4



with prior reservation. The curriculum includes: The Incident Command System, Ropes and Devices, Introduction to Forces, Anchors, Belay, Lowering Systems, Raising Systems, Mechanical Advantage, and Litter Rigging. It is a full 4 days of instruction.

The following attendees earned certificates:

Lisa Carter (Barstow SAR)

Dave Chamlee (Rim SAR)



Scott Crosier

Charles Debruyne (Rim SAR)

Shane Elliott (San Gorgonio SAR)

Rico Gallardo (Central SAR)

Clint Hiett (Barstow SAR)

Steven Kesler (Cave Rescue)

Sonny Lawrence (Cave Rescue)

Kevin Newland (San Gorgonio)

Jim Riley (Barstow SAR)

Matthew Sheasby (Cave Rescue)

The following attendees challenged the test in order to receive basic rope certification:

Hector Morales (Barstow SAR)

Daryl Schendel (Barstow SAR)

Don Widdows (Barstow SAR)

The following attendees recertified:

Dave Atchley (San Gorgonio)

Steve Bates (Central SAR)

Bob Blanck (San Gorgonio)

Tim Bristol (Central SAR)

Paul Butler (San Gorgonio)

Phil Calvert (San Gorgonio)

Julie Haggerty (San Gorgonio)

Scott Johnston (San Gorgonio)

Ken Kenaga (Rim SAR)

Bill Loenhorst (San Gorgonio)

Jim Morrell (Rim SAR)

Donna Newlin (Rim SAR)

Ehren Ngo (San Gorgonio)

Fred Palmer (Rim SAR)

# Calendar

For information or to submit an event, contact the editor at [editor@thetracker.info](mailto:editor@thetracker.info). Appearance of items in this section does not necessarily imply endorsement by the SAR Council or the County of San Bernardino. Call if you have any questions about a particular listing. To save space, persons to contact and numbers for multiple listings of *Department-approved training providers* are consolidated in one place at the bottom of this page.

## July

### July 21—Inland Empire SAR Council

19:00 in the Main Conference Room at SBSB HQ

### July 25—Personal Vertical Skills Check-off

Hosted by West Valley SAR at Rialto Airport. Contact Bob Gattas ([rgattas@earthlink.net](mailto:rgattas@earthlink.net)) for more information.

## August

### Aug. 16-20—Direction and Control of the Search Function

Shasta County. See [www.thetracker.info/calendar](http://www.thetracker.info/calendar) for a flyer.

### Aug. 21—Rope Training

Contact Bob Gattas ([rgattas@earthlink.net](mailto:rgattas@earthlink.net)) for more information.

### Aug. 25—Central SAR Fundraiser

An evening at the Improv. See [www.thetracker.info/calendar](http://www.thetracker.info/calendar) for flyer.

## September

### Sep. 15—Inland Empire SAR Council

19:00 in the main conference room at SBSB HQ.

### Sep. 18—West Valley SAR Search Scenario

Contact Bob Gattas ([rgattas@earthlink.net](mailto:rgattas@earthlink.net)) for more information.

### Sep. 22-26—Direction and Control of the Search Function

Hosted in Yosemite. See [www.thetracker.info/calendar](http://www.thetracker.info/calendar) for a flyer.

## October

### Oct. 1-3—Morongo Basin Search and Rescue Desert Run

For more information call 760-369-9999, or visit [www.desertrun.org](http://www.desertrun.org)

### Oct. 4—San Gorgonio Search and Rescue Golf Tournament

12:00-19:00. Download the flyer at [www.thetracker.info/calendar](http://www.thetracker.info/calendar) for more information.

### Oct. 9-11—SAR City

### Oct. 16-23—National Cave Rescue Commission (NCRC) Level I and Level II Cave Rescue Seminar

Week-long NCRC seminar at California Caverns, CA. Contact Mark Kinsey ([mkinsey@caverescue.net](mailto:mkinsey@caverescue.net)) for more information.

### Oct. 16-17—West Valley SAR Map & Compass Training

Contact Bob Gattas ([rgattas@earthlink.net](mailto:rgattas@earthlink.net)) for more information.

## November

### Nov. 17—Inland Empire SAR Council

19:00 in the main conference room at SBSB HQ.

### Nov. 20—West Valley SAR Night Scenario

Contact Bob Gattas ([rgattas@earthlink.net](mailto:rgattas@earthlink.net)) for more information.

#### \*Course / Provider

BSAR / Vol Forces  
CMC Rescue School  
On Rope1  
Rigging For Rescue  
Ropes That Rescue  
TRBC, PVSC, NCRC / Vol Forces  
Mountaineering / Vol Forces  
West Valley SAR Training

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[www.onrope1.com](http://www.onrope1.com)  
[www.riggingforrescue.com](http://www.riggingforrescue.com)  
[www.ropesthatrescue.com/](http://www.ropesthatrescue.com/)  
[ww26sar5@aol.com](mailto:ww26sar5@aol.com)  
[flhester@aol.com](mailto:flhester@aol.com)  
[boobali@gte.net](mailto:boobali@gte.net)

# Stress

Continued from p. 3

YES NO I have very little to say.

Count your total number of YES answers. If you counted 0-5, you are doing fine. If you counted 5-7, start watching stress levels. If you counted 7-10, you are a candidate for negative effects of cumulative stress. If you counted, 10-13, you are well into cumulative stress. If you counted 13-15, you are in danger of physical and mental burnout.

Additional warning signs of cumulative stress are hyperactivity, exaggerated humor, argumentativeness, social withdrawal, fear, anxiety, grief, memory problems, poor concentration, increased alcohol use, slow thinking, loss of perception, and fear of leaving home.

It is very important to be aware of our own stress level or recognize stress in a team member so that steps can be taken to prevent burnout. To prevent stress overload during an incident and to increase our ability to bounce back quicker after an incident, we should:

1. Get enough sleep.
2. Eat regularly, at least twice a day.
3. Control intake of alcohol, tobacco, and medicines.
4. Take time for rest and relaxation.
5. Exercise regularly. Do a 30-minute cardiovascular workout at least three times a week. Deep breathing and muscle relaxation exercises are also recommended.
6. Express your feelings by talking to a close friend or writing in a journal.
7. Make time to take care of yourself and take one day a week to do something enjoyable and relaxing.
8. Laugh.
9. Nurture your soul. Meditate or pray or get involved with spiritual community activities.
10. Keep in contact with family and friends.
11. Bond with team members.
12. Try to avoid overworking and or working excessively long hours.
13. Seek counseling or support when you need it.

Remember, the SAR member comes first; your teammate comes next. Let's all prepare for missions by taking these steps to take good care of ourselves to prevent cumulative stress, and we can support our teammates by being able to recognize the warning signs.

Neudeck-Dicken, Marilyn. *Cumulative Stress Management for Search and Rescue*. Palmer Lake, CO: Filter Press, 1997.

# Classified Section

Contact the Editor to place or remove any item.

**SBSD Commuter cups** with star and motto. \$16. Features generous 16 oz. capacity, stainless steel construction, double-walled insulation and fits virtually all auto cup or mug holders.



**SBSD Search and Rescue decals.** \$5. The decals are 3.5" X 3.5" and can be stuck on the outside of just about anything or on the inside of a window. The price is \$5.00 each and can be purchased by contacting SarDesertRun@aol.com or calling 760-369-9999.

**Earrings (1/2")** \$10 and **Lapel Pin/Tie Tacks (5/8")** \$8. Fund-raiser for Morongo Mounted SAR Team. For ordering info contact Kim Miller at millerkm@29palms.usmc.mil or call Kim at (760) 367-1148 or (760) 367-1148 evenings.



**SBSD Coffee cups** \$5. High-gloss ivory coffee cups with gold-colored SBSD star on the side is microwavable. Available at Volunteer Forces.

**SBSD SAR Pens** \$10. High-quality, refillable ink pens with SBSD star and "Search & Rescue" on side. Great gift idea! Available at Volunteer Forces.



**Custom SAR/Expedition Topo maps.** \$14.95. See the web site for full details!

**Granite Gear Nimbus Ozone Backpack.** Size regular. Highly adjustable, and brand new. Comes with large shoulder straps, but Granite Gear will swap them for one your size if they don't fit. \$105. Contact Jeff Lehman at jlehman@caverescue.net.

**Garmin Offers NASAR Members Discounts.** NASAR has an agreement with Garmin to distribute its entire line of consumer GPS products and a handful of its aviation products to the SAR community. Join NASAR at [www.nasar.org](http://www.nasar.org), and shop the store at [www.nasar.org/garmin/default.php](http://www.nasar.org/garmin/default.php).

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**[editor@thetracker.info](mailto:editor@thetracker.info)**

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