



# THE TRACKER

Monthly Newsletter of the Inland Empire Search and Rescue Council

October 2004

Volume 13 Number 10

## A Letter of Thanks to SAR Volunteers

Erin Reboulet

To the members of the San Bernardino Sheriff's Department's search and rescue members that worked on the search for Eugene Kumm-

This letter has not been easy for me to write, but it is something I've needed to do for a long time.

Eight months ago on the 18<sup>th</sup>, my life, my future took a drastic turn. On January 18, 2004, Eugene Kumm went missing on Mt. San Gorgonio, your mountain. From the moment I called Eugene in as missing, and spoke with Deputy Kovich, I knew my life would never be the same. I prayed desperately that you would find Eugene alive and bring him back to me, but inside I knew what was coming.

I can honestly say that the amount of pain I have experienced, and still experience daily, is only surpassed by the amount of admiration and gratitude I have for each and every one of you. A simple "thank you" doesn't seem like enough to express how I truly feel. For days I sat on the sidelines. Waiting; watching each of you pour your hearts and energy into trying to find Eugene.

I know for many of you this was part of your job. I also know

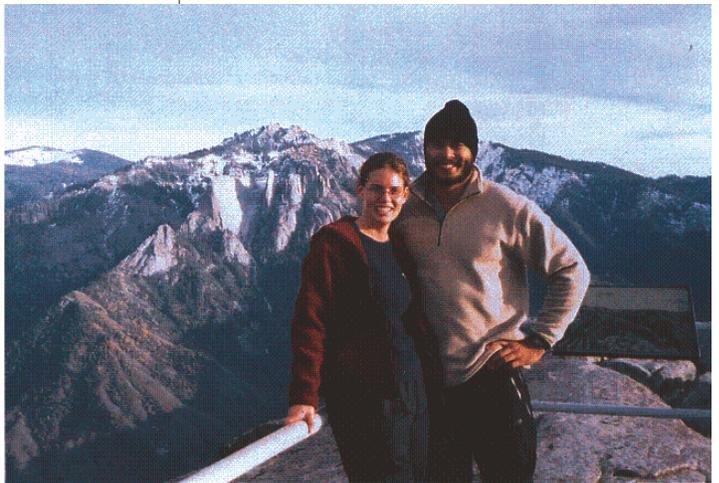
for others, this search was something you volunteered for. I want to thank you all for taking so much time out of your lives and putting so much heart and effort into the search. Each of you gave your time and many risked their lives to try to save that of a stranger's. In the end, it was not Eugene you were able to help, it was me.

I want you to know that the actions you took to find Eugene, and everything you did to help me, never went unappreciated, nor will they ever be forgotten. You will forever be in my thoughts and in my prayers.

Sincerely,

Erin Reboulet

Significant other of Eugene Kumm



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# What's New in Volunteer Forces?

Lt. Virgil Merrett, Volunteer Forces Unit

Just an update on wish lists. They are currently being reviewed and purchases will be made soon. VFU will update your teams on purchases as the information becomes available. ☺

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# Wildland Fire Safety for SAR Personnel

John Amrhein, Volunteer Forces

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Fire season is here and according to the experts the conditions are even worse than last year in the Southern California mountains. This means the chances are good that you may be involved in evacuations again this year. Please take time to review the following safety considerations and get your "fire bag" in order:

- Ensure that you know the established Escape Routes and Safety Zones for the areas that you have been assigned
- Always make sure that you are in constant communications with the Sheriff's Command Post in case a rapid pull out becomes necessary. Keep radio traffic brief and to the point.
- Wear or keep protective gear at the ready such as an approved mask, goggles, leather gloves, long sleeve shirts and a hat to protect from smoke, ash and flying embers. Avoid wearing fleece and other synthetic materials as they burn quit rapidly. In place of a mask (last resort only) use a dry handkerchief-do not wet.
- If you are trapped near your vehicle and no safety zone is nearby stay in your unit as you stand a better chance of survival in it than outside of it.
- If you are trapped away from your vehicle or a safety zone, take refuge in a structure-tile roof a plus. The main body of the fire should pass, leaving the area tenable, prior to being forced out of the burning building. This is a position of last resort.
- Watch for downed power lines-do not park under any power lines.
- Be aware of possible fleeing/panicked animals-both wild and domestic.
- Keep all your unit lights on, especially if it becomes smoky.
- Keep the doors and windows on your unit closed and turn off air-conditioning when in heavy smoke.
- Don't let your vehicle fuel level become low-top off vehicle before coming up the mountain.
- Carry plenty of extra water and keep hydrated.
- Park your unit facing in the direction of your Escape Route or Safety Zone. Back into long narrow driveways.
- Fire retardant/foam is extremely slippery, especially on cement or asphalt, be careful driving or walking through it.
- Because wildfire conditions can change in an instant keep your situational awareness at its highest. If you feel you are in eminent danger put your escape plan into effect immediately. Do not wait for an order to evacuate. Advise the CP of your actions and the change of conditions while enroute to a safe position.

Remember as in any SAR operation **YOUR** safety comes first.

Other considerations or procedures:

**NOTE**-Major change in evacuation procedure—Yellow barrier tape will only be used to mark structures where contact could not be made or where occupants refused to leave.

- Make sure each SAR unit has an adequate supply of yellow barrier tape.

Be sure you are disseminating the correct information to the public. Be sure to know:

- What type of evacuation-Voluntary or Mandatory
- What the evacuation routes are.
- The locations of the human and animal shelters.

Watch the video *Entrapment Avoidance Through Situational Awareness* available at your station. 

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# Rope Rescue Equipment & Practices

Rope Rescue Oversight Committee

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The Rope Rescue Oversight Committee has been reviewing the equipment and practice standards. The committee is asking for your input. Please visit the RROC website at [rroc.sbsar.org](http://rroc.sbsar.org) and click on the "Rope Rescue Standards" link. There you will be able to respond to each of the sections of the document. You can download a print version of the document at the same location.

Please help the Rope Rescue Oversight Committee in their review of these standards.



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# Chu Search

Shannon Kovich

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The San Gorgonio and Valley of the Falls Search and Rescue Teams were called out about 8pm on Sunday 092604 for a report of a hiker on the Fish Creek Trail in the San Gorgonio Wilderness. The initial report came from a HAM radio operator in the Salton Sea area. But the Salton Sea is hours away, you say? Well, the missing hiker was a HAM radio operator and had his radio on his that night, and because of the hikers altitude (10,000+FT), and the fact that he was on the south side of San G Summit, he

was able to get a signal with several HAM radio operators. One was in the Salton Sea area and the other in Palm Desert.

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*...the SAR team carried the missing hiker back to the Command Post.*

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Both RP's contacted the Sheriff's Department to report the information.

A total of five teams were placed into the field to search for the missing hiker. Several teams were placed as trail blocker to get a semi containment of the search area. The other teams searched for the subject, hiking through the night. What a wonderful night for a search, the moon was full, and headlamps were hardly used to see their way. Team four, the team working their way to the Mineshaft Saddle area was finally able to locate the hiker, still in good shape, near the switchbacks on the north side of the Mineshaft Saddle area.

The SAR team carried the missing hikers pack back to the Command Post, because of a slight injury to his knee. We think the hiker was thankful, but we had a slight language barrier. He seemed real concerned with the payment for our services. Little does he know, he will not be paying, his county will. 



# 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.

## August

### 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. 2-3 & 16-17—BSAR

Contact Darren Goodman in VFU ([dgoodman@sbcscd.org](mailto:dgoodman@sbcscd.org)) for more information.

### Oct. 9-11—SAR City

For more information visit [www.sarcity.org](http://www.sarcity.org)

### 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.

### Oct. 30—Personal Vertical Skills Check-off

Rialto Airport. Contact Mark Kinsey ([mkinsey@caverescue.net](mailto:mkinsey@caverescue.net)) for details, and to let him know you are coming. The checkoff will begin at 09:00.

## November

### Nov. 6—West Valley SAR Fall Classic Charity Softball Tournament.

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

### 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.

## December

## 2005

## January

### Jan 19—IESARC Meeting

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

## February

## March

### Mar 5-6 & 19-20—BSAR

Contact VFU for more information.

### Mar 16—IESARC Meeting

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

## April

## May

### May 18—IESARC Meeting

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

## June

## July

### Jul 20—IESARC Meeting

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

## August

## September

### Sep 21—IESARC Meeting

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

### \*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/)  
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[flhester@aol.com](mailto:flhester@aol.com)  
[boobali@gte.net](mailto:boobali@gte.net)

## Classifieds

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!

**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).

## Articles Wanted!

*The Tracker* needs you! Please send articles to share with your colleagues. Send in a mission report or a trip report. Write an article about a team training. *The Tracker* has a wide national audience. Anything related to search and rescue is worthy of publication. Please send submissions to:

**editor@thetracker.info**

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