



# THE TRACKER

Monthly Newsletter of the Inland Empire Search and Rescue Council

August 2004

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## Oh, The Weather Outside is Frightful

John Hayes, Central Mountain SAR

Many of you may recall Christmas as the day of countless rescues manned by multiple teams in Waterman Canyon and Devore's KOA. Two of the rescues performed on that fateful day, known only as rescue #030306064 and 65, occurred in Lytle Creek and yielded Central Station's Mountain SAR unexpected recognition from California Assembly member Robert D. Dutton, and a

Commander's award from Central Station's Captain

stream side. James struggled against the current until he made his way to an island. James was within view of Allen and was considering his options when he was washed further down stream by what could only be described as a wall of swift moving water. As James struggled against the water he saw/felt huge rocks flowing downstream with him. One of the rocks pinned his sweater against the bottom of the creek. James ripped his sweater off to free himself and obtain air. Eventually James made it to another island but found himself wet, shirtless, and out of sight/sound from Allen. To make matters worse James's ankle and back were injured and it was getting dark.

At approximately 1548 hours Fontana station received a report of the incident from Allen. Central SAR deviated from the Waterman Canyon rescue to assist Fontana at 1618 hours. Low visibility from heavy rain/mist and the loud noise of rushing water limited the search area.

Pat Burns and I searched the west bank of Lytle Creek from the West End Range access road to Glen Helen Parkway on foot. Rico Gallardo Patrolled up and down Sierra with lights and sirens in an effort to draw James towards him. John Evans and Dean Diagle checked the east bank of Lytle Creek for access points and also used lights and sirens to draw James towards them. During the west bank

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Howell. While I am very proud of my team's role in these two rescues I would like to use them to point out the dangers of rural swift water and the need for formal training in this area.

On Christmas afternoon James Roberts, and his Son, Allen Roberts, forded across Lytle Creek's moderate stream of water in their Ford King Ranch 4x4, to try out a new rifle at West End Range. At approximately 1500 hours the Roberts left the range for home and attempted to ford across the now swollen creek. The water rolled the pick up onto its side and threatened to pull it down stream. Allen exited the vehicle through the passenger side window and crossed the creek to safety. James attempted to follow but fell off the truck on the down-

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# What's New in Volunteer Forces?

Lt. Virgil Merrett, Volunteer Forces Unit

Volunteer Forces would like to thank all of the teams that worked so hard and spent so many hours on the David Gonzales Big Bear search. We have been continuing the search on weekends to cover some of the highest probability areas. **Again, Thank All of You.**

Below is the formal summary of the circumstances surrounding the disappearance of David Gonzales.

On Saturday, July 31, 2004, David Gonzales was camping at the Hanna Flat Campground in Fawnskin with his family and friends. David left the campsite around 8:00 a.m. to go to the family vehicle and get some cookies. Within minutes David could not be found and his family, friends and other campers began searching for him. After nearly an hour of searching, the Big Bear Sheriff's station was advised of the missing child and responded to Hanna Flat Campground.

Deputies began a search of the campground and stopped and searched each vehicle leaving or entering the area. They identified each occupant of nearly 300 vehicles.

Nearly 100 search and rescue volunteers and 1 search dog team responded to the area on Saturday and began searching the nearby forest. The search continued through the night with negative results.

The search expanded over the next 8 days using hundreds of ground search crews, expert trackers, helicopters, search dogs, horses and motorcycles/ATV's. Search personnel responded from all over California

with assistance from Border Patrol, Fish and Game and Civil Air Patrol.

In the early stages of the search, 3 campers (Marines) notified investigators that they saw David walking north on the camp road toward the forest. All of these witnesses were interviewed and each identified David from a photograph.

Two of the women who were camping with the Gonzales family said they saw a full size truck leaving the campground around the same time David was noticed missing. They said the truck was driving faster than the other vehicles and described the truck as tan/beige in color, lifted with big tires and carrying a motorcycle and quad runner in the bed.

Specialized Investigators have spoken with every person identified as being in the campground the weekend of the 31<sup>st</sup>, but no one has been able to provide any further information about David or the tan/beige full size truck.

David did not make entry to the family vehicle and the keys to the vehicle have not been located.

Using the information obtained from the family and the independent witnesses, all of our efforts concentrated on searching the forest for David. The possibility of an abduction or attack by an animal was considered and remains a possibility. There was no evidence of foul play.

On August 8, 2004, the search was scaled back to a very limited operation. On August 15<sup>th</sup> and again on the 21<sup>st</sup>, the search continued with

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# BIONX

Mike Ward, IESARC Director

Last summer, after one of the SAR Council meetings, I found myself standing outside Sheriff's Headquarters. As usual there was a few of us in deep philosophical discussion on how to save the world. You all know what I'm talking about. The parking lot meeting that every team has. Anyway, one of the participants of that nights "Save The Entire World" meeting (STEW for short) was Jim McDougald of our Big Bear team. Somewhere along the way we were discussing ideas on how to help every team to be at their best. Now this particular

topic, which receives considerable attention from SAR Council and Volunteer Forces, was once again being hashed over by the finest minds of "STEW." It usually takes on the direction of equipment, training, or sometimes both. On this evening it took an unexpected turn due to Mr. McDougald.

He asked if anyone had ever approached things from a health and performance direction. I was quick to point out that my predecessor, Don Welch, on many occasions expounded on the benefits of staying in shape. Jim explained that wasn't exactly what he meant. That he was referring to a performance supplement. Oh great; I could see it now, a bunch of our guys and gals running around on some sort of steroid, able to shred their ropes with their bare teeth. Jim assured me that wasn't even close to what he was talking about. He went on to tell me of the personal success he had with a performance product called BIONX. (you can read his story further on in the Tracker) Well I'm a pretty skeptical kind of guy, but Jim's story of success was hard to ignore considering his medical background. He asked if I would like to

meet and speak with the creator and owner of BIONX. I thought for a moment; most of us burn the candle at both end and sometimes in the middle. Between family, work, sheriff's department and friends we all could use a little help. So of course taking the "what have I got to lose stance" I said sure why not. Jim set things up and I met with a man named Jim Autio.

I had set aside two hours on that afternoon to meet with Mr. Autio. Surely that would be enough time; giving myself a full hour before I had to be at my next meeting. Without going into great detail; I spent the next two hours and beyond fascinated by the knowledge, experience, expertise, and compassion demonstrated by Mr. Autio. He spoke of how BIONX came to be and how it works in the human body and mind. But what I found most interesting was some of the incredible and almost unbelievable things people were able to accomplish while using BIONX. Mr. Autio never asked me to take his word for anything. He brought with him credible proof of every success story he told, inviting me to verify the stories myself supplying me with names, dates, and places of all those involved, some of which are very high profile people. Even with everything Jim Autio was able to lay before me, there was still some skepticism within me I just couldn't shake.

I had to know for myself. I threw down a challenge. I asked "if you're so sure of your product, how about a trial for three of our SAR people for one month?" Without hesitation he agreed. But he did add a request. He asked me to pick the most beat up, banged up, sore in the morning people I could find. Three SAR team members meeting that criteria were picked, a forth

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# Weather

Continued from page 1



search I heard what I believed to be two weak yells from the east bank.

At 1712 hours Evans and Deagle discovered an unrelated occupied vehicle overcome by Lytle Creek's rushing water on Glen Helen Parkway while looking for James. Sgt. Wirz, from Fontana station, drove the Central SAR vehicle backwards through the rushing water up to the stranded vehicle while Evans and Diagle pulled the stranded vehicle occupants onto the SAR vehicle's tailgate. Sgt. Wirz then drove the SAR vehicle forward to safety (030306065).

The west side of Lytle creek was cleared at approximately 1940 hours and my team re-grouped on Glen Helen Parkway to begin a

search of the east bank of Lytle Creek. Burns and I searched the east bank on foot while Gallardo, Evans, and Diagle patrolled a dirt road that paralleled the east bank with lights and sirens to draw James towards them. Gallardo, Evans, and Diagle heard yelling in the creek but could not enter the creek because the access road was elevated approximately 70 feet above the creek with a steep grade. Gallardo, Evans, and Diagle placed their vehicle spotlight in the general direction of the noise and notified Burns and I via radio. Burns and I headed in the direction of the spotlight but despite being closer could not hear the yelling because of the excessive noise of the creek. At approximately 2018 hours Burns and I found James standing on an island hugging a tree with no shirt and wet trousers. James was too weak to walk and had reached the stage of hypothermia in which his body had given up shaking. Burns and I used wool blankets and body heat to stabilize James while Gallardo, Evans, Diagle, and Fontana Deputies, Rosenbaum and Nickles formed a litter team. The litter team delivered James to AMR at approximately 2124 hours. James recovered from the incident at Fontana Kaiser.



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# Slip and Fall at the Falls

Shannon Kovich, Coordinator Valley of the Falls SAR & San Gorgonio SAR

**T**yrrie Schmidt, a 22 yr old female from Idaho Falls was just visiting the beautiful waterfalls of Forest Falls when tragedy hit. While Tyrrie was

climbing a rock face just above the Observation Deck at Big Falls in Forest Falls, she slipped and fell about 6 feet to a large rock base near the stream.



Tyrrie was knocked unconscious, and sustained major head trauma along with unknown internal injuries. The San

Bernardino County Fire Department from Forest Falls arrived on scene and started to stabilize the victim for transport. Air Rescue 7 from the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Aviation Division responded to the location per fire's request and landed about 50 yards from the base of the falls.

The Valley of the Falls Search and Rescue Team also responded to the location and assisted the

other agencies in carrying the victim to the helicopter for medical transport. Outstanding mutual aid was shown during this incident, showing that resources are very limited no matter which agency you work or volunteer for. Working together gets things done quick and efficiently.

The Big Falls is a very popular area for people from the Redlands and San Bernardino areas to visit to have quick access to the National Forest. Visitors forget how dangerous this area can become when the posted rules are not followed. We all hope that Tyrrie Schmidt recovers fully from her injuries.



## Weather

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It has been over 7 months since the carnage of Christmas, and yet I find myself often thinking about the dangers of swift water in a rural environment. Listening to Jame's and Allen's account of the incident I am amazed on how quickly a creek can change into a river and am chilled to think of all the dangerous debris that river can carry with it. It is no wonder that the

body of a male juvenile washed away from St. Sophia was found in Colton. Swift water in any environment is a lose lose situation, but the danger can be managed through risk assessment and formal training. My team has identified a training lead in this area through San Bernardino County Fire's swift water team. I encourage the SAR council to consider creating a rural swift water certification.

## Urgent Blood Donation Request

Art McQueen is a retired member of the Desert Rescue Squad. He is one of the founding members of the Unit and was a member for 19 years, with two of those years as Unit Commander.

Art is critically ill. He is a patient at Desert Valley Hospital in Victorville. He is suffering from acute Leukemia and requires a large amount of blood for transfusions.

Art's family has contacted Desert Rescue Squad member Don Widdows (dwiddows@rocketmail.com), and has

asked for assistance in seeking the necessary blood donations for Art.

**Art McQueen is registered with the San Bernardino County Blood Bank of San Bernardino & Riverside Counties.** Anyone wishing to donate in Art's name, can do so at any of the County Blood Bank facilities.

On behalf of the family, the Desert Rescue Squad would like to thank all those who could donate, in Art's behalf.

## What's New

Continued from p. 2

search dogs and their handlers. Those search efforts ended with negative results.

On August 18, 2004, the Carole Sund/Carrington Memorial Reward Foundation offered a \$5,000. reward for the safe return of David.

Sheriff's Specialized Investigators continue to investigate this case. If anyone has any information that may help locate

David, please contact Sheriff's Homicide Detail (909) 387-3589 or call WE TIP and remain anonymous (800) 78-CRIME.

*Take Care,  
Virgil Merrett*

# 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. 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.

## 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

### Contact Name

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Reed & JayneThorne  
Don Welch  
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(909) 980-8820

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[www.cmcrescue.com](http://www.cmcrescue.com)  
[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)

# BIONX

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regular Deputy was added, and I was added as well. In short all five of us had favorable results from just one month of BIONX use.

The end result of all this you ask? BIONX has become the newest manufacturer to offer all those within the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department, teams and family, and the search and rescue community at large a Pro Deal discount on BIONX, with a special introductory offer at a considerable savings over the normal price as well as an ongoing discount price. All the contact information to order BIONX can be found below.

I have found Jim Autio to be a unique individual to say the least. Not only is he willing to make BIONX available to us at a rock bottom price, he has also expressed his wishes to be an ongoing contributor to Inland Empire Search and Rescue Council in support of ALL the teams.

We often hear the NASAR motto... "That others may live." Jim Autio's passion is "That others may live, and perform well."

I must add one note of caution. As with ANYTHING you put in or on your body, I encourage you to only do so after making sure it is right for you. Educate yourself and discuss the use of supplements with your doctor and health care professional.

The BIONIX web site:  
[www.bionetworth.com](http://www.bionetworth.com)

The BIONX special order form can be found at:  
[www.bionetworth.com/docs/tools/1700orderform.pdf](http://www.bionetworth.com/docs/tools/1700orderform.pdf)

Jim Autio can be reached at:  
800-800-9461

Additional user reviews can be downloaded at:  
[www.thetracker.info](http://www.thetracker.info)

## Editor's Note:

Neither the Inland Empire Search and Rescue Council or the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department make any claims as to the efficacy of the above mentioned product. Publication in *The Tracker* does not constitute an endorsement of this product. As with all dietary supplements, please consult your physician prior to your use of the product.

# 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).

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

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