



# THE TRACKER

Monthly Newsletter of the Inland Empire Search and Rescue Council

February 2005

Volume 14 Number 2

## Overdue on Baldy

Derek Rice, West Valley SAR

On Monday, December 27<sup>th</sup>, twin brothers (40 years old), began their hike via Ice House canyon, towards Kelly's Camp. That evening around 1730 hours, they used a cell phone to call one of their wives to say they had traveled approximately 3.6 miles up canyon and were going to stay the night. They said they were in snow, and were planning to return home



in the morning. When Tuesday afternoon arrived and they had not returned or phoned home, a search was initiated.

At approximately 1530 hours on December 28, West Valley SAR received a page for a search in the Mt. Baldy area for two overdue hikers. The weather was not good. It had been raining since the previous evening and predicted to continue through Thursday. Since this call began in the early afternoon on a work-day, manpower was going to be light at first.

Once at Baldy fire station (our usual command post for this area), it was quickly decided to send a three man hasty team up Ice House Canyon trail towards

the saddle. This is where it was assumed the subjects had phoned from the previous day. The hasty team consisted of myself, Eric Spaeth and Mervin Tapsfield. The three of us packed our gear, inventoried what each had, including WMT( wilderness medical technician) gear for two subjects and headed up trail by 1730 hours. It rained, heavy at times, until we were nearly 1 ½ miles up canyon, when it turned to snow. Snowshoes were needed for the upper parts of the canyon. By the time we reached Columbine Springs, 2 ½ miles in, we were soaked from the rain and snow fall. Even with our Gore-tex, we could not avoid the moisture. When we stopped to eat or rest, we would begin to shiver from the wind and wet clothing. Continuing towards the saddle was in question.

The three of us discussed whether to continue or turn around. Considering all the variables such as, weather, our personal conditions, the fact the brothers had tents and therefore shelter, we reluctantly informed the CP that we were returning. It was nearly 2030 hours, and we felt reaching the saddle would put ourselves at risk for possible hypothermia. We were back at our vehicles at 2230 hours. Our command post staff had assembled two other teams, one to hike an adjoining trail that eventually reached the saddle and another to resume our initial assignment. For the same reasons, both of these teams returned to the CP without finishing their assignments, as well.

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## OFFICERS

Council Director ..... Mike Ward  
rockywinds@aol.com

Assistant Director ..... Shirley Keebaugh  
skeebaugh@aol.com

Treasurer ..... Dave Northrop

Secretary ..... Tom Schneider  
tom\_kasey@eee.org

Member At Large ..... Don Welch  
ww26sar5@aol.com

### Standing Committees & Projects

Communications ..... Wes Podboy &  
Bill Maclay

Newsletter Editor ..... Jeff Lehman  
editor@thetracker.info

Volunteer Forces ..... Lt. Virgil Merrett

## www.thetracker.info

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San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department  
655 E. Third Street/Volunteer Forces Unit.  
San Bernardino, CA 92415-0061  
Attn: The Tracker

(909) 387-0686 / (909) 387-0667 FAX  
editor@thetracker.info

# SAR "Finds"

John Amrhein, Volunteer Forces

Thanks to all of you who responded to the first article. Got some more good tips on places to find SAR equipment and bargains and I will be sharing them with you over the next few issues.

First of all some further information on Cabela's and the Blaze Orange 4-in-1 parka mentioned in the last issue. Christine Stuehrmann from the SBSD Search Dog Team said that by asking for the government order desk and mentioning she was a member of the Sheriff's Volunteer Forces she was given a 10% discount. Please remember not to abuse any SAR discounts offered by suppliers; Cabela's may just wonder how you were going to use those 20 duck decoys on a SAR mission. I also heard from 3 SAR members who bought the parka and gave it "a thumbs up" even though one (to remain nameless-R.R. Oak Glen SAR) said his wife calls it his "pumpkin outfit"...how cute. Well Ray at least she didn't say you looked like a CAL TRANS worker. Cabela's web site is: [www.cabelas.com](http://www.cabelas.com)

Larry Winters from Victor Valley SAR sent me a whole list of his favorite sites. Two of my favorites in his list are Sportsman's Guide and Sierra Trading Post. Both are kind of hit and miss places. I check their websites every few days for new arrivals and web specials. Sizes for "real people" tend to disappear fast. Sportsman's Guide

An item appearing in this column does not constitute an endorsement by the SBCSD, the IESC, or the Staff of the Tracker. The content of this column is meant to be informational only and the reader should verify all claims, accuracy etc. for themselves.

[www.sportsmansguide.com](http://www.sportsmansguide.com) has some great deals on military surplus gear and at Sierra Trading Post [www.sierratradingpost.com](http://www.sierratradingpost.com) you will find some good deals on last year and discontinued brand name gear such as North Face, Mountain Hard Wear, and Kelty to name a few.

And finally for those of you who are wanna be SAR helicopter pilots check out this fun site sent to me a while ago by Steve Tooley of the Central Team: [www.bbc.co.uk/drama/rockface/game/main.swf](http://www.bbc.co.uk/drama/rockface/game/main.swf)

Please keep sending your "FINDS" to: [jamrhein@sbcscd.org](mailto:jamrhein@sbcscd.org) ☺

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# Canyon Runner Injured

Bob Gattas, West Valley SAR

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On Dec. 23, 2004 about 2300 hrs. we were paged out for an overdue canyon runner at the top of Beryl in Rancho Cucamonga. I met Dep. Whitten, our coordinator, at the location with the Rancho Deputy, who, while checking on the abandoned car, found out our hiker was overdue by the family. Our coordinator had cell phone contact with him, and he said he was up the trail with an injured ankle. We only had 8 members responding so I started driving the powerline roads to find

access in. When the other members arrived we sent them in on the two trails we found that went into the canyons. The

subject told us he did not go past the powerline roads so we figured it would be very easy.

As the teams hiked up I was sounding my vehicle horn. The subject stated he could not hear my horn but that the ground teams all could hear me honking. We lost cell phone contact with our subject at this point. We figured he must be farther up the canyon than he thought he was so the ground teams followed the canyons up well past the roads. I drove the roads some more and found some well above the powerlines at the head of these canyons. Team 2 could not go any further in their canyon due to a wall so they headed back to the CP to get the suburban and assist me with driving the roads. Team 1 had a set of tracks in their canyon that only went up and did not return, so they kept going.

While I was driving the roads making noise, I heard our subject whistling. I found the canyon that he was in and directed Team 1, who was not far away at this time from the subject. It was about 0200 at this time. Team 1 made contact and in their evaluation the subject had a possible broken ankle and a back injury, so we had a carry out and technical rescue due

to the steep canyon. Team 2 drove up to our location and they found the quickest way into the canyon and to the subject. All our manpower was at the subject and we had no one for the rope rescue to get our subject out of the canyon. If we called the next team in it would take hours to get them there and finally do the rescue, so we called Rancho Cucamonga Fire Dept. to assist with their Technical Rescue Team. Also we requested aviation but they could not fly due to the Santa Ana winds at Rialto.

Rancho Cucamonga Fire got there quickly and made good time getting up to our spot. It was about 0400 now. The roads were tricky finding the best way around due to many washouts that were impassable. I assigned RCFD in charge of the rope operation and they set up and ran the operation. I had to leave to go to work and felt good leaving the operation in the hands of RCFD. The subject was raised in a very timely manner to the road above and was transported to the waiting ambulance at the CP by 0630 hrs. The operation went very well for the search segment of it and the following rescue for the small turn out of manpower we had. We have a very good working relation with RCFD and that paid off, since we know that their technical rescue team is very capable in canyon rescues and with working with them in the past in the front country.

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*“...I heard our subject whistling...”*

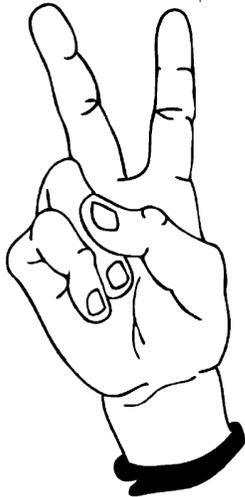
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# Rescued "Twice"!

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

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*You must never feel badly about making mistakes," explained Reason quietly, "as long as you take the trouble to learn from them. For you often learn more by being wrong for the right reasons than you do by being right for the wrong reasons."*

*-Norton Juster, The Phantom Tollbooth*

Well, as you may be able to tell by the title of this article, this one was interesting. It started on Saturday Feb 5th. A simple SAR call-out, three juvenile mountain bikers

stranded in the Seven Oaks Canyon behind the Seven Oaks Dam. Real quick in and out operation, 40k2 swooped in and picked up the three then delivered them to us at the Redlands Airport. We thought this would be the end of this one, until I received a call for help from the parents of the same three juveniles, then next day.

The juveniles, and one adult decided to go back to the location behind the dam to retrieve their bikes. This would have been fine and dandy, except the storm, which moved into the area bringing snow and rain.

The three juveniles, resident of Mentone, and the one adult parent, hiked from the Bear Creek and 1N09 crossing. They had been dropped off her at 1100 hrs on Feb 6th. The plan was to have the one parent stay with the vehicle and wait for the other parent and three kids to get the bikes and return. Well come 7pm, Ruben Rocha, the parent at the vehicle became concerned; the group still had not shown up.

The San Gorgonio and Valley of the Falls SAR Teams were paged out and deployed into the area on foot and 4x4's. After searching all night, and tracking the

subjects to the area of 1N13 and 1N09, we still had not made contact with the group.

The SAR teams regrouped at the Mill Creek Ranger Station to plan our next operational period and efforts. Ground teams, along with the aviation division, hit the area once again to find these kids. 40k2 once again located the group stranded on a steep ridge overlooking the Santa Ana River, just south of the Bear Creek/1N09 crossing. Less than a ¼ mile from the vehicle. Air Rescue 7 swooped in and once again rescued the four from their predicament.

The group was tired, hungry, and cold, with some minor cuts and bruises from their endless climbing through the heavy brush. Once the group got to their bikes and started back to the vehicle, they decided to take a short cut on a flume line running from powerhouse #1 to the Bear Creek/1N09 crossing. This short cut would turn out to be a bad call. The group encountered steep terrain, and high water levels forcing them to climb the steep sides of the Santa Ana Canyon walls.

One last thing, the bikes were once again left in the canyon, hopefully never to be seen by their owners again. 

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# Scratch and Dent

John Hayes, Central Mountain Team

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I received notification of the first Rancho Cucamonga REI Scratch and Dent sale via e-mail from my team commander, Rico Gallardo. The e-mail promised two things: One ? gear could be picked up at a great discount and Two- there would be competition from others. Kind of an outdoorsmen version of the day after Thanksgiving sale with merchandise that could be used as weapons. Rico, himself a veteran of one of these sales, suggested that those who wanted to go show up one hour early, grab everything in sight, and sort out what to purchase later. ?Elbow?s up,? he suggested.

I decided to go. Heck, I could use a better pack. After swing shift I drove over to REI and found myself the only one in the lot; that was 3:00 in the morning. Good, I thought, I'll take a nap in the bed of my truck, get up at 0800 and be ready to go two hours before the store opens at 10:00. I rolled out my bag, watched an episode of Seinfeld on my laptop, and drifted off. I was so determined to be first in line that I woke up and almost jumped out of the truck when I heard the street sweeper drive by cleaning up the lot.

I woke up on time at 8:00 but by the time I got out of the truck I was already behind eight people. REI set up the sale on the front sidewalk and supplied those of us in line with free donuts and coffee. As I waited I noted the location of the packs and other items of interest. My attention then fell onto the competition (The guy in the black jacket looks like the type after snow gear. I don't think that couple knows what they want. Hey . . . she?s not eyeing the packs is she?!!!!)

REI laid down the ground rules of the sale and played music by Berry White; perhaps to keep the crowd calm. Then like a flood, the line surged forward into the sale area. The sale area was small, perhaps only a thousand square feet, and

was all at once filled with at least 300+ people. I made for the packs but was beat to the one I wanted by a lady in front of me. I caught a break when the lady momentarily dropped the pack I wanted to take a closer look at the other one in her hand. I grabbed the pack, beating another fella going after the same opportunity, and went to the snow area. The Cramp Ons and snow shoes were already gone so I grabbed the smallest/lightest stove I could find. I went to the next table over and grabbed a small light. The tables were getting bare and the crowd was getting bigger. Momentarily I stopped to examine what I had and to plan my next move. That was a mistake because I was pummeled by elbows and feet. (Note to self: keep moving.) I decided to score one more piece of equipment and then make my way to the register. At the clothes area I bumped against the lady whom I stole my pack from. I quickly grabbed a blue jacket off the rack and was out of there.

Soooooooo here is how I did:

- New Low Alpine Alpanayo 90 pack worth \$154.00 purchased for \$89.83. Problem listed on tag: none. My inspection: a small area of seam needs additional thread.
- Used MSR Super Fly Stove worth \$49.95 purchased for \$24.83. Problem listed on tag: Gas would leak after valve was closed. REI marked that stove tested ok. My inspection: It works great and does not leak gas while valve is closed. (No . . . I did not test for leak with a match!)
- Used pulsar II LED light worth \$10.95 purchased for \$3.83. Problem listed on tag: Battery bad. My inspection:

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See "REI" on p. 6

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## REI

Continued from p. 5

Battery all right but light works intermittently unless I squeeze the switch hard.

- New Sportif jacket worth \$59.93 purchased for \$19.93. Problem listed on tag: Dirty. My inspection: Perfect!

I picked up the above gear, worth \$274.83, for \$138.32! The downside is that the gear is sold as is with no warranty.

According to the employees of REI the merchandise for the Scratch and Dent sale comes from clearance and returned

items. REI will not sell climbing gear at this sale due to liability. Each item has a tag attached describing any problem that made it not appropriate for normal retail. REI Rancho Cucamonga plans to hold this sale every three months. To be participate in the sale you must possess a REI lifetime membership, which is \$15.00 and can be purchased at the time of the Sale. See you at the next one.



# 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.

## 2005

### February

#### Feb 5-6—BMC Field Practical

Camp Laurel Pines. Visit [www.thetracker.info/BMC](http://www.thetracker.info/BMC) for more information.

#### Feb 19—West Valley SAR Training

Snow Training. Contact Bob Gattas ([rgattas@earthlink.net](mailto:rgattas@earthlink.net))

#### Feb 20—Personal Vertical Skills Check-off

Hosted by the Wrightwood Team. Mojave Narrows. Contact Don Welch ([WW26sar5@aol.com](mailto:WW26sar5@aol.com) or 760-244-7340) for more information.

### March

#### Mar 5-6 & 19-20—BSAR

Contact VFU for more information.

#### Mar 12-13—BMC Field Practical

Cancelled

#### Mar 16—IESARC Meeting

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

### April

#### Apr 16—Personal Vertical Skills Check-off

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

#### Apr 30—West Valley SAR 9th Annual Run for Rescue & Safety Fair

Visit [www.thetracker.info/calendar/FlyerRun&Fair05.pdf](http://www.thetracker.info/calendar/FlyerRun&Fair05.pdf) for more information.

### May

#### May 14-15—West Valley SAR Training

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

#### May 18—IESARC Meeting

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

### June

#### Jun 4—West Valley SAR Training

Night ELT exercise. Contact Bob Gattas ([rgattas@earthlink.net](mailto:rgattas@earthlink.net)) for

more information.

#### Jun 11-12 & 25-26—Technical Rescue Basics Course

Contact Mike Schlax ([mschlax@sbcscd.org](mailto:mschlax@sbcscd.org)) at VFU for more information.

### July

#### Jul 16—West Valley SAR Training

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

#### Jul 20—IESARC Meeting

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

### August

#### Aug 20—West Valley SAR Training

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

### September

#### Sep 17—West Valley SAR Training

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

#### Sep 21—IESARC Meeting

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

### October

#### Oct 14-16—West Valley SAR Training

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

#### Oct 15—Personal Vertical Skills Check-off

Hosted by the Cave Rescue Team. Sheriff's Aviation in Rialto. Contact Mark Kinsey ([mkinsey@caverescue.net](mailto:mkinsey@caverescue.net)) for more information.

### November

#### Nov 19—West Valley SAR Training

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

### December

#### \*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

Mike Schlax  
John McKentley  
Bruce Smith  
Mike & Joanie Gibbs  
Reed & Jayne Thorne  
Don Welch  
Frank Hester  
Bob Gattas

#### Phone

(909) 387-0681  
(800) 235-5741  
(423) 344-4716  
(970) 325-4474  
(520) 282-7299  
(760) 244-7340  
(760) 242-0855  
(909) 980-8820

#### email/URL

[mschlax@sbcscd.org](mailto:mschlax@sbcscd.org)  
[www.cmcrecue.com](http://www.cmcrecue.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)

## Twins

There were teams in the field as trail blocks and up Lytle Creek throughout the night. On Wednesday morning, teams were again sent up Ice House canyon to the saddle. It was raining at lower elevations, with snow higher up. At approximately 1255 hours on Wednesday, Team One reached the saddle and our subjects. The two brothers had spent nearly 42 hours in their tents at the saddle. They were in good condition, but happy to see their rescuers. They quickly packed their gear and were led back down the canyon. Once at the CP, they were debriefed and reunited with their relatives.

The twin brothers had been well equipped with a 4-season tent, 5 days worth of food, light sources, foul weather gear, sleeping bags and a stove. They even had a map and compass! The two had known the weather forecasted rain and probable snow, but not until Tuesday. However, once they set camp, it began to snow continuously throughout the night. They said they dug their tent out several times. They felt they could survive two or three more days until the weather broke or until they were found. Luckily, they were found first.

As many of you know, we have been quite busy in the Baldy area this past year. This last mission will be logged as our final mission of 2004. West Valley SAR is extremely grateful for all the support we have received throughout the year by our county teams, as well as those MRA teams who have come to assist us. We hope all of our missions in 2005 end as this one did, on a good note.

Special thanks to the teams from San Geronimo, Central, Cave, Bear Valley, and Wrightwood, for sending members to help on this mission. We would also like to thank China Lake, San Dimas, and Sierra Madre for their assistance. As always, we appreciate Mt. Baldy Fire department for their help. Without the use of their "home", we would be out in the cold.

## 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 SBSB star on the side is microwavable. Available at Volunteer Forces.

**SBSD SAR Pens** \$10. High-quality, refillable ink pens with SBSB 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).

**Air Rescue Team.** The Air Rescue Team is selling T-shirts and baseball caps. To purchase them contact Diana at VFU (909-387-0641) or Helen at Aviation (909-356-3800). Go to [www.cafepress.com/helicopter2classifieds](http://www.cafepress.com/helicopter2classifieds) to purchase these items.

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