

# THE CALLOUT



October 2011

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**Cover Photo:** An MH-60S Seahawk helicopter sits on the grounds of SAREX 2011 at Hume Lake. For the full story, see Page 9.

*Photo courtesy of Chris Coelho*

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## CAPTAIN'S NOTE

### A Culture of Improvement

By Rick Kovar



This past month I have been contacted by two different SAR coordinators from the greater Bay Area. They each recently took over management of their agency's search and rescue programs. Their SAR programs are small, neglected, and working toward improve-

ment. These coordinators were researching other teams and inquiring how they did business. One coordinator was speaking with a team near him in the South Bay, and was told he should contact us at Contra Costa Search and Rescue to learn about our program, since we are the model of a very dynamic, professional organization.

One of the highest professional compliments we can receive as an organization is to be sought out by other programs for our knowledge and expertise. An even bigger compliment is to be referred by another team as the model to aspire to.

Our program is great. What sets it apart is the constant striving to improve the program. From the hiring of new volunteers, to the team's training, and all the way up through the staff, we are always looking for ways to improve, top to bottom. Our membership makes the team, but the constant drive to be better is the difference that makes this team so special.

We could be happy and comfortable with our abilities and capabilities, but the team has never been complacent. To a person, we have instilled a culture to improve every aspect of our organization.

As an example, we just finished a very successful academy. The member-hiring team is already working on improvements to the application and interview process. Likewise, the pool of instructors has barely finished teaching, and already they're tweaking the content to improve the academy for next year.

Another behavior I love to observe are the "hot

washes" following individual resource trainings. This involves getting immediate feedback from the participants for what they liked and what they didn't, what they thought went well, and what could be done better. This culture of improvement is also practiced at the front-line level. Even if we don't have time following the monthly team trainings, we often follow up these events with electronic Zoomerang surveys to ensure the process of obtaining feedback and implementing improvement is continuous. Does your company query as much feedback as this organization does—at all levels? If it does, let us know what they do and how they benefit from it. If it's relevant to our organization and there's something further we can implement, we will.

Finally, I have an example from our Logistics group. They have been so on-the-ball that our equipment is well maintained and ready for deployment at a moment's notice. Just last week was the regularly scheduled monthly logistics night. When they finished their planned work for the evening, I was asked if there was anything else they might address. Instead of calling it a night and enjoying some free time, they asked what else could be done.

It turns out our office has dozens of pieces of night vision and FLIR (Forward Looking InfraRed) equipment. It's been locked away and neglected for a variety of reasons. The Logistics group took this equipment, inventoried it, and checked its readiness. In a few months, because of their culture of improvement, we should have the ability to deploy 20+ night-vision devices into the field. This proactive, can-do attitude from Logistics is a great example of the drive to continually improve.

Each and every one of you help to make this team a huge asset to the citizens of Contra Costa County. You each bring your time and energy to our program. Your enthusiasm and hard work is second to none. Having other teams look to us as the model to strive for is a nice by-product of a group of people focused on the SAR mission. This is not the reason you all work so hard, but it is a compliment to you because you *do* work so hard. Thank you!

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SHERIFF  
SEARCH  
AND  
RESCUE

## COMMENDATIONS

### Monthly Recognition

By The Command Staff

Karyn Corcoran



Karyn is being acknowledged this month for her long, dedicated performance with the team. Over the course of her six-year membership, she has averaged more than 1,000 volunteer hours per year. If you Google “Energizer Bunny,” it’s her picture that appears onscreen.

Karyn recently stepped down from a Command Staff position to, “take a breather,” but still shows up for many different events. She has led several early morning Type II qualification hikes, and is an active ground pounder, USAR team member, tracker, and member of the MRG, specializing in both Tech Rock and Snow & Ice. During the past few years, Karyn had been serving as the Resource and Operations Support Group lieutenant, and she makes herself available to proctor just about any event. Her leadership and “can-do” attitude will be missed by the Command Staff, but if anyone deserves to spend some time relaxing and smelling the poison oak, it’s Karyn.

Thank you, Karyn! Congratulations for all you have done, and continue to do.



Photo by Andy Csepely

### Captain’s Commendation

#### The Double Searchers

On September 10<sup>th</sup>, the team responded to two callouts at once. The first was for a missing, at-risk Alzheimer’s patient in Fairfield, and the second was for the evidence-collection detail on Mount Diablo. Four team members made it to both searches that day, deciding to keep going instead of returning home after the first search for a well-deserved rest. The Captain congratulates **Wilma Murray, Jennifer Wright, John Banelos, and Chris Nichols** for demonstrating the team spirit and determination to make both missions successful.

## MISSION SUMMARY

### September to October

#### **Friday, September 9<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, September 10<sup>th</sup>: Evidence Search in Mount Diablo State Park**



Team members chop up the plants and tie them in bundles.



The bundles are passed uphill in the heat of the afternoon.

Multiple Type II callouts, and eventually a full-team callout, were made over two days to assist State Park Rangers and the Sheriff's Office Narcotics Unit with the eradication of a large pot grow in a remote area of Mount Diablo. Thirteen team members responded Friday afternoon, and 51 searchers participated on Saturday. Park Rangers and Sheriff's Reserves were present throughout both days to provide security.

Access to the grow required a four-wheel drive trip several miles into the back country, followed by a descent on foot down a steep, brush-covered slope with minimal trail. The team assisted in cutting and gathering plants on Friday, followed by bundling and then carrying out the evidence Saturday. Hot weather, dense brush, and steep hillsides made for challenging work conditions. Searchers on Saturday participated in a four-hour bucket brigade to remove the plants out of the ravine, transporting several tons of material out of the area. Three truckloads of evidence, with an estimated street value of \$3M–\$5M, was safely removed as part of this mission.

#### **Saturday, September 10<sup>th</sup>: Missing Woman in Fairfield**

Concurrent with the Saturday Mount Diablo callout was a full-team callout for a missing, at-risk 75-year old in Fairfield. The woman had last been seen at 0900 hours Friday morning. Thirty-five searchers reported to OES at 0530 Saturday for transport to the Fairfield command post. Solano County SAR ran the initial search, then turned over the Command Post operations to a multi-agency team of CoCo SAR and Marin SAR. The likely area was searched several times by law enforcement and SAR teams. Reverse 911 calls were made to the surrounding area. A neighbor responded to the reverse 911 call, checked his back yard, and found the woman on his back porch. The woman was found in fair condition a short distance from where she had last been seen.

#### **Friday, September 14<sup>th</sup>: Evidence Search in East County**

A full-team callout went out to assist an evidence search in eastern Contra Costa County. Human skeletal remains were discovered Thursday. Fifteen searchers responded to the callout. Partial remains had been found as a canal had been drained. Deep mud represented a major challenge. Sleeping pads and other platforms were used to cover the muddy areas and keep searchers from sinking too deep. The team searched in and along the canal for additional evidence, but none was found.

## SAR NEWS

### Snow & Ice Recertification

The Mountain Rescue Group (MRG) is putting together its training plans for the annual recertification process. This year's review focuses on a test of snow and ice rescue skills. Tom Magee will be leading the efforts, including a series of warm-weather trainings on Mount Diablo, then multiple trips to snow country for hands-on practice in the real environment. The test will be in March 2012 at June Lake in Mono County.

This is a demanding recertification process. Only trained Type I searchers with additional avalanche training will be on the recertification team.

### Medical Support Events

The medical team continues to do a great job providing medical support to a wide variety of county events. Recently the team staffed the Mount Diablo Challenge bicycle race, and the El Sobrante stroll. Coming up Sunday October 9<sup>th</sup>, the group will support Primo's Run for Education in Danville. Other upcoming events include the Lafayette Reservoir Run on October 30<sup>th</sup>, and the Diablo Trail Adventure on November 6<sup>th</sup>. See the medical area of the website calendar for details on how to sign up. Any active team member may participate in these events.

### Bombs, Blasts, and Ballistics

**What:** Contra Costa Medical Reserve Corps will be hosting a free workshop on injuries from explosions. While not a typical SAR topic, in the event of a major industrial accident or terrorism incident occurring in the county, we may be asked to help with casualties. The workshop will be presented by J. Norris Childs, MD, FACS, Captain, Medical Corps, US Navy.

**When:** October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2011, 1800 to 2100 hours.

**Where:** John Muir Medical Center, Walnut Creek Campus, Ball Auditorium, 1601 Ygnacio Valley Rd., Walnut Creek, CA 94598.

**How:** Contact Mike McMillan to RSVP.

**Plus:** Two-and-a-half hours of CE credit for EMTs and RNs.



Photo by Andy Comly

The USAR Truck has been outfitted with new decals.

### Are you a Ham?

You may be funny, but in times of emergency that's not enough! Learn how to use a ham radio. The classes start Wednesday, November 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Sarge Littlehale Room of Orinda City Hall at 1900 hours. The course is free. At the end of five weeks you will be ready to take the exam (not quite free, but almost) and get your license. For more information, contact Mike McMillan.

## Promotions

### ***Wilma Murray, New Members Corporal***

Congratulations to Wilma Murray, who was recently promoted to the New Members Corporal. Wilma will be working closely with Diane Blue on recruiting the next batch of Academy students.

### ***Sean Larson, Member Development Sergeant***

Congratulations to Sean Larson for stepping up to be the Member Development Sergeant. Sean will support a wide variety of HR activities across the team, including maintaining the email lists and keeping the Honeywell callout system information current. Sean will also be working with team members to help us all keep improving CoCo SAR. Sean has been with the team for seven years, and is also currently our Transportation Sergeant. When not supporting SAR, Sean is also a member of the MAMFF support team and the Avoid the 25 DUI support team.

# TRAINING RECAP

## USAR Learns Ladders

*Photos and Text by Andy Comly*

The USAR Resource learned a wide variety of ladder skills at September's training. The team started with basic techniques for carrying and setting up a ladder, as well as safely entering and exiting the top of a ladder. Advanced methods of moving subjects were then practiced. Team members learned how to safely lower a person, as well as how to move a stokes litter in and out of a building from several stories up. One exercise also covered how to get the entire team and subject (tied into a stokes litter) up and over a barrier by hanging the litter upside down on the ladder as the team climbed over. When the "big one" hits, USAR will be well prepared to assist in urban search and rescue.



Above: Sgt. Jeremiah Dees gives introductory lessons on ladder use.



Above: Carrying a ladder safely.

Right: Preparing to climb up to the second floor, ... later rappelling down from a higher floor.



Below: Mark Moeller climbs over Casey Riggs, demonstrating how team and subject can move over an object as big as a shipping container.



Below: The team lowers Jamie Cole on a stokes.



# MEDICAL FORUM

## Blood Pressure Basics

**By: Laura Carmody, RN**

Blood Pressure (BP) is the measurement of force applied to the walls of the blood vessels as the heart pumps blood throughout the body. For each heartbeat, BP varies between systolic and diastolic pressures. Systolic pressure is peak pressure in the arteries when the ventricles are contracting. Diastolic pressure is the minimum pressure in the arteries when the ventricles are filled with blood.

Blood pressure readings are measured in millimeters of mercury (mmHg). The average normal blood pressure in the brachial artery (antecubital space, inside elbow) is 120mmHg/80mmHg. Classifications of BP readings are:

Category	Systolic, mmHg	Diastolic, mmHg
Hypotension	<90	<60
Desirable	90-119	60-79
Prehypertension	120-139	80-89
Stage 1 Hypertension	140-159	90-99
Stage 2 Hypertension	160-179	100-109
Hypertensive Crisis	>180	>120

Blood pressure varies with exercise, emotional reactions, sleep, digestion, and time of day. Some people have a baseline blood pressure that places them into the hypotensive category. Others have undiagnosed or poorly controlled hypertension every day. As First Responders, we are not looking at just a number. We are looking for signs and symptoms that indicate a problem, or, just as important, an impending problem.

The pulse pressure is the difference between the systolic and diastolic blood pressures. For example, a blood pressure of 120 over 80 has a pulse pressure of 40 mmHg (120 - 80 = 40). A high systolic BP and high pulse pressure (over 60 mmHg) is considered an important precursor or indicator of health problems. It is associated with a two- to four-times increased risk of a heart attack, stroke, and death from heart disease or stroke.

Sequential readings of blood pressure and pulse



Photo by Jon Kalan

Alvin Lubrino takes a subject's BP.

can indicate impending problems. In the setting of a head injury, a widening pulse pressure along with bradycardia and low irregular respirations often indicates increasing intracranial pressure. In the setting of a fever, a widening pulse pressure along with hypotension and tachycardia can indicate septic shock. Narrowing pulse pressure, hypotension and tachycardia can indicate hypovolemic or cardiogenic shock.

This may sound overwhelmingly complex, so let's get back to the basics. Look at your overall patient assessment. This includes the patient's history as well as the incident history, BP, pulse and respirations. This initial assessment is a baseline. From there, monitor for vital signs and patient changes that could indicate a problem.

Problematic signs and symptoms of hypotension include:

- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Syncope (fainting)
- History of dehydration: fever, vomiting, diarrhea or strenuous exercise
- Altered Mental Status, lack of concentration, or fatigue
- Blurred vision
- Cold, clammy, pale skin
- Rapid, shallow breathing



Problematic signs and symptoms of hypertension include:

- Severe headache
- Shortness of breath
- Nosebleeds
- Severe anxiety
- Loss of consciousness
- Memory loss
- Chest pain, jaw pain, or left arm pain
- Stroke symptoms

## WHAT'S IN YOUR PACK?

**Antoine Snijders**—In the wet season, I carry a lightweight rain jacket and rain pants in my 24-hour pack. The rain pants are Marmot, fully zippered on the sides. Without taking off my boots, I can put the pants on and vent the sides for moisture control. My Marmot rain jacket uses a waterproof breathable fabric called Membrain. I like the pit zips, soft comfortable collar lining, decent number of pockets, and a brimmed, adjustable hood. For warmth, I wear a soft-shell wind-stopper underneath that does not limit movement.

**Chris Poppett**—My jacket is Mountain Hardware Gore-Tex with pit zips, forearm zippered vents, elastic waistband, adjustable Velcro cuffs, and a hood that rolls into the neck for storage. It has two large pockets outside, one smaller inside, and one on the shoulder I use for flagging tape. These zip up—no snaps, as snaps tend to leave gaps when it's raining hard. My pants are the same brand with an elastic waistband for comfort and room for something thicker underneath if it gets cold. From knees to feet they zipper and snap; this makes it much easier to get on and off in a hurry.

**Claudia Langley**—My favorite rain gear is Marmot. It's a little more expensive, but holds up in rough terrain where other brands have torn or allowed moisture in through the seams. The model I prefer offers amenities such as full-zip legs and an elastic/adjustable tab waist. Zippered legs make it easy to put on and off over boots, and if it gets too hot, a portion of the leg can be unzipped to vent. I prefer my jacket to have a hood and pit zips, with tabs at the wrists. The hood is one piece with the jacket, so I don't have to carry an extra item (hat). I've had my rain gear through four seasons and have stayed warm and dry in the wet weather.

**David Ryan**—My coat is a Rab Drillum: a lightweight, breathable jacket that is waterproof, with a hood suitable for wearing a helmet. Downside: it's costly. When layered with a micro-vest for colder weather, I would recommend this style coat for most of our daytime or cooler

### Rule #1: Stay Dry

*These team members were kind enough to share their experience staying dry (or reasonably dry) while searching in the rain.*



night searches. My pants are DryJoys golf pants. Why golf pants? It's easy to put on and take off (full-length zippers on both legs), the zipper is not exposed to the elements, it's wind resistant, waterproof, has three pockets, and an adjustable waist to fit over uniform pants. Golfers do not like cold weather.

**Laishan Yee**—Because I work near the North Face outlet in Berkeley, I am heavily outfitted in their clothing and gear. I wear their Gore-Tex Paclite shell and pants. The fabric is breathable and waterproof, yet very lightweight. The Paclite series isn't cheap, but worth it when searching

in miserable conditions (although I love the rain!). Pant legs are zippered so I can get in and out of them without taking my boots off. Members should consider buying jacket/pants one size larger than normal since rain gear has to cover up the bulky SAR uniform.

**Mike Taft**—I'm a fan of Gore-Tex so my main jacket for bad weather is a Mountain Hardware Gore-Tex soft-shell. Things I like about this jacket: plenty of room for layering, breathes well, removable hood (I don't like integrated hoods because they often get in the way—especially if you wear a hat—and reduce peripheral vision), removable stretch powder skirt, taped seams and sealed zippers, pit zips, and multiple interior and exterior pockets. The light-duty jacket I like for backpacking is a Solomon Gore-Tex Paclite. It's lightweight (8 oz.), provides good weather resistance, and hardly takes up any room.

**Todd Rogers**—I really like a strong but light and breathable shell like the ones at Mountain Hardware, North Face, or REI. I like them loose so I can put them over a fleece or thicker jacket with a breathable lightweight long-sleeve shirt underneath. I use the lightweight jacket for all weather, including snow, adjusting the middle layer or removing it completely for warmer weather. As for rain pants, I like a strong, breathable, lightweight pant that has zippers so you can put them on over your boots and pants. Bibs are nice for cold weather but can get too warm for summer use.

## SPECIAL EVENTS

### SAREX 2011

By Chris Coelho

SAREX 2011 was a phenomenal experience, and Hume Lake, nestled in the middle of Kings Canyon, was an ideal spot. The most difficult thing—other than the long drive—was deciding which classes to take.

Among the many classes offered were Identifying Booby Traps, Underwater CSI, Searching and Social Networks, Confined Space Rescue, etc. Even before I arrived, I knew I was going to take the eight-hour man-tracking class—a big gamble, considering all the other classes offered. The class turned out to be excellent, and while John Banuelos puts on a fantastic CoCo SAR tracking academy (I recommend it for every CoCo SAR member), it's hard to beat the combined 80 years of tracking experience from the instructors of Pacific Man-tracking.

The keynote speaker, after Saturday night's delicious dinner, was Rainer F. Streib. He talked about the Naval Air Station (NAS) Lemoore and its success with the Lemoore Angels SAR team, its 900-plus helicopter rescues and its reactivation in 2012 after eight years of absence.

Sunday morning, Sept. 11, had the most memorable, humble, and moving speakers of the event. It started with Mike Anthony, president of Hume Lake Ministries. He shared his experience as a chaplain at Ground Zero. He talked about the atmosphere, and how he saw what it means to be a true hero—not like those some hold up as “heroes” like Tiger Woods or Britney Spears—but those whose heroic actions save lives, such as the first responders who entered the buildings on 9/11 because that's what they were trained to do. Mike's presentation left everyone speechless, yet proud of the SAR work we do and its significance.



This was followed by the breakfast keynote speaker, Nancy Rigg. She talked about one of the biggest silent killers, and an often-ignored problem in the world of SAR: the dangers of swift water. Nancy lost her fiancé in a drowning accident when he tried to rescue a boy who fell into a river. She described several incidents of people who lost their lives in swift-water accidents, and she has now dedicated her life to standardizing and promoting swift-water training throughout the country.

SAREX concluded with a demonstration by the VX-31 SAR team flight crew, flying the MH-60S Seahawk helicopter. The demonstration involved the rescue of a “subject” on the ground and a rescuer who dropped down from the helicopter to rescue him. The whole demonstration took about 45 seconds.

SAREX 2011 was an extremely memorable experience, but I can't end without recognizing a special individual who taught the most classes at SAREX. That would be our very own Chris Young. Chris taught four different classes, and I heard several very positive comments from people who took them. We should all be proud and honored to have Chris on our team.

Next year SAREX will be held in El Dorado County. I highly recommend it, and hope to see many other CoCo SAR members there.



## SEARCHER SPOTLIGHTS

### Tim Santos



He's charming and funny. (Just ask him.) But his charm and humor aren't all he's known for around the SAR camp; he also makes some mean chocolate-covered bacon.

Tim Santos brought this unique treat along on the Type I backpacking training. He said he didn't expect to win the prize for best backpacking fare (and

didn't), but he did expect to create some stories for others to tell into perpetuity. In that, he was successful.

For Tim, SAR is kind of an extended-family affair. He joined with his brother, Tony, in January 2010. Tony also enlisted his brother-in-law and father-in-law, Conor and Paul Healy.

Tim and Tony were raised in Chula Vista. "As kids, we were always outdoors and had the urge to explore different places," Tim says. SAR looked like the perfect venue for more adventure.

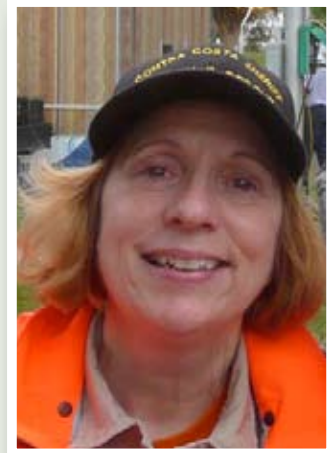
Not all of Tim's favorite activities involve the outdoors. Though he likes to fish, trap shoot, and boogie board, he also says he likes to eat, cook and go to the movies.

Tim has a degree in criminal justice administration from Cal State East Bay. He hopes to use some of the evidence-collecting techniques he learned in college during searches.

Currently he works as a classroom aid for special education at California High in San Ramon. Last year he was a staff member at San Ramon Valley High School when one of the students went missing. "Being involved in the search efforts made me feel valuable to the community, because I was able to see how many people were affected," he says.

Tim has one tip to offer the new academy: Become Type II. As a Type II member, "Many new opportunities become available," he says. "They have helped keep my interest in search and rescue."

### Kathy Gaughen



While participating in the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), Kathy Gaughen began attending CoCo SAR trainings as a mock subject. She didn't originally consider joining the team, assuming it would mean a career change, and she liked the corporate job she already had. But as soon as she learned there was no pay involved, she changed her mind and got down to work as a volunteer.

Chicago born, Kathy now lives in Pleasant Hill. She enjoys cooking, art, and music in her spare time, as well as hanging out with her brothers and their families. She also has a close relationship with her horse, Cooler, and her dog, Domino.

With a career in sales, Kathy feels she brings to SAR an ability to communicate well.

Kathy joined the SAR team in 2004 and her first search was for an elderly man who had gone missing in Briones Park. From all the in-county and out-of-county searches she attended since then, she says she has learned there is one necessity everyone should have with them: "Bring a big serving of patience when you go to a search," she says. "It comes in handy working with CP, being a team leader, and being a searcher."

She also offers this advice: "Every search is different, and there is always more to learn. Be proactive in your own training. Assess where you are strong and where there is room for improvement in your search technique. Actively pursue training opportunities that will support your improvement process."

Meanwhile, Kathy is happily training Domino (Domie) to acquire search skills of her own, including a certification in wilderness search.

"I am grateful to be able to pursue my passion for finding the missing through SAR," she says. "Every family needs closure; I am honored to be a part of that."