

THE RESCUER



Apr - Sept, 2003

Number 40

“We don’t go in the water--no matter what!”

by Jeff Gaines

In 1993, our family moved from Southern California to the Pacific Northwest. I had enjoyed working for the Los Angeles Fire Department for six years and also enjoyed working for Los Angeles County Lifeguards for fourteen years.

I was hired by Clark County Fire District 5 which is now part of the Vancouver, Washington Fire Department in Southwest Washington. The Vancouver Fire Department protects a population of about 200,000 people and 100 square miles. We currently have eight engines and two truck companies. About one third of the cities border the Columbia River. We have a port and water front, in addition to Vancouver Lake, a large body of water located on the western edge of the city. Water recreation is popular year round, but even more so when the weather gets warm.

When I was hired by VFD they had no water rescue program, and no water rescue training. Officially the department’s position was not to enter the water.



What actually happened on scene in the real world varied. Sometimes crews would try to stay out of the water. Other crews would enter the water and attempt rescues. Controlling the scene at a water rescue incident is crucial, not only in order to affect the rescue, but to keep the incident from growing. Most of the time, when you arrive at these scenes you have friends, relatives and bystanders entering the water to attempt rescues. This “free-

lancing” is always difficult to control. These are emotionally charged scenes. Controlling the scene becomes almost impossible if you aren’t going to attempt to rescue the victim. However, we know how important this control is. Staggeringly, in still water, 30% of drownings are attempted rescues. Still more amazing is that in swift water, 60% of drownings are attempted rescues.

When I was a rookie, we were dispatched to someone who was threatening to jump off a bridge into the Columbia River. While we were in route to the call, I asked the captain if I should get ready to go into the water. He said, “We don’t go in the water--no matter what!” I had years of training and experience in water rescue. Now I was being told I couldn’t enter the water. I pictured myself standing on the riverbank with a rescue I knew I could make and having an order not to do so. It was a terrible position to be in. If I made the rescue I could lose my job. If I didn’t, the man could die. Luckily, the police finally managed to talk the man out of jumping.

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Rescue 3 International and S.P.R.A.T.



Rescue 3 International has become a sustaining member of SPRAT, which is the Society of Professional Rope Access Technicians.

This organization works to develop safe practices and standards for rope access work in industrial settings and for those working at height. Rescue 3 is being asked more frequently to provide training for teams and individuals who are not only concerned about rope rescue, but also concerned in getting work accomplished at height or in confined areas.

For those interested in becoming members of SPRAT or have questions about issues regarding rope access, please contact Sody (Mike Soderstrom) at <sody@tscnet.com>.

Please Write to Us!

The editorial staff at *The Rescuer* would like to start a new column in the upcoming months. This column would be comprised of reader contributions and letters to the editor.

Also, we are always looking for articles that you have written (or would like to write) and would be willing to contribute.

If you have any comments on past issues discussed in this newsletter or suggestions for topics you would like to see published, please write to:

The Rescuer Newsletter

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We would appreciate hearing from you!

Meet Our Talented People - Kelly Ross

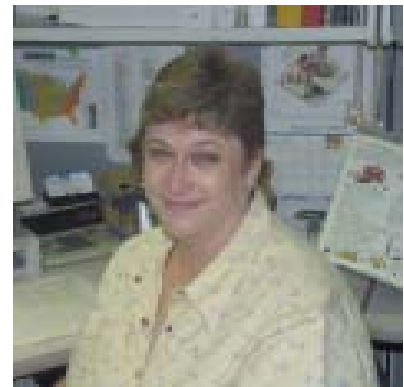
Kelly's name is a familiar one to most Rescue 3 International instructors since she was the Instructor Coordinator before moving over to *The Rescuer Source*.

Her Rescue 3 background familiarized her with many of the challenges, problems and needs that rescue professionals encounter in the "real world". It also gave her a bit of the working knowledge necessary to be able to answer questions regarding rescue equipment. Kelly has a hand in Accounts Receivable, taking orders, and shipping & receiving. With the many "hats" she wears, she has to be a very organized person which she is--in spades!

If you have a question or a problem with any of your invoices, please feel free to give her a call and she will be happy to help you put everything straight!

On a personal note, Kelly has been married for 20 years to her husband, Ed. They have two great kids in high school: Alex and Marie. They keep her busy since both are e x t r e m e l y

athletic. Alex is an 'all-star' in both football and baseball and Marie is a cheerleader and dancer. You can see that Kelly and Ed attend many high school sporting events which fortunately they both enjoy greatly!



National Weather Service Launches Flood Safety Awareness Campaign

Each year, more deaths occur due to flooding than from any other storm related hazard. Why? The main reason is that people underestimate the force and power of water. Many of the deaths occur in automobiles, as they are swept downstream.

Of these drownings, many are preventable, but too many people continue to drive around the barriers that warn you the road is flooded.

The Southern Region of the National Weather Service is trying to do something about this. Bill Proenza, director of the National Weather Service Southern Region understands the problem. "It only takes two feet of moving water to float most vehicles and as little as six inches to knock someone off their feet." Hector Guerrero, a

meteorologist in San Angelo came up with a concept modeled after the fire services' extremely successful "Stop, Drop and Roll" campaign. In May 2003 "Turn Around, Don't Drown" was launched.



"If we can reach people with the simple message 'Turn Around, Don't Drown,' we'll save lives.", says Proenza. The campaign has been distributed to 32 Weather Forecast Offices across the Southern and Southeastern portion of the United States.

If "barricade-runners" are a problem in your area, consider using this campaign. NWS offers support materials free of charge to communities if they want to start a TADD program in their area. All of their outreach materials can be downloaded from the NWS website at www.srh.weather.gov/tadd.

Rope Care - Part 4 Cleaning Your Rope



In the first three portions of "Rope Care", we have discussed rope logs, storage, and inspections. In this last installment we will address proper cleaning of lifeline.

But why should you clean it? Because contaminants on the rope sheath tend to work their way inside to the kern, or load-bearing center fibers. Once there, this foreign matter can cut and/or degrade the individual fibers, thus reducing the strength of the rope.

Remember to take good care of your ropes as someone's life may depend on it!

ROPE CLEANING PROCEDURES:

- First remove all knots.
- If very dirty or muddy, rinse the rope in clear water. Stubborn spots can be scrubbed with a nylon bristle brush or an SMC or Bokar rope washer.
- Next soak the rope in a container filled with clean water and a small amount of MILD detergent or Life Line Cleaner. Woolite also works well.
- A very dirty rope may be washed in a commercial washing machine. Daisy-chain the rope or place it in a mesh bag. Take great care that the agitator does not cause abrasions on the rope. A small amount of liquid fabric softener such as Downey may be added to the final rinse, if desired.
- Thoroughly air-dry the rope in a cool area away from the sun.
- Finally make a note of the cleaning on the rope log.

Higgins and Langley Award Winners Honored



On May 30th, a number of fine individuals and organizations were honored at the annual National Association for Search and Rescue conference held in Reno, NV.

These awards were established in 1993 by members of the Swiftwater Rescue Committee of the NASAR in honor of Earl Higgins, a writer and filmmaker who lost his life in 1980 while attempting to rescue a child being swept down the flood-swollen Los Angeles River, and Jeffrey Langley, a firefighter-paramedic with the Los Angeles County Fire Department, who lost his life in a helicopter incident in 1993.

HIGGINS AND LANGLEY INTERNATIONAL AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN SWIFTWATER RESCUE

The top honors go to the **INTERNATIONAL LIFE SAVING FEDERATION, AMERICAS REGION**, in honor of the extraordinary volunteer mission in the country of Bolivia to train local rescue personnel in flood and swiftwater rescue and provide them with donated swiftwater rescue equipment provided by generous sponsors.

The following agencies, rescue equipment companies, and individuals were included in this prestigious commendation:

International Life Saving Federation- Americas Region
 San Diego Lifeguard Service
 Salvataje y Rescate del Sur
 Grupo de Apoyo Civil a la Policia

B. Chris Brewster, President, Americas Region, International Life Saving Federation; Assistant Organizer: Lisa Mitchell; Team Coordinator: Lt. Brant Bass, San Diego Lifeguard Service; Team Leader: Sgt. Bob Albers, San Diego Lifeguard Service; Team Member: Marc Brown, San Diego Lifeguard Service; Team Member: Darrell Esparza: San Diego Lifeguard Service; Team Member: Lt. Marshall Parks (ret.): San Diego Lifeguard Service; Team Member: Mark Korch: San Diego Lifeguard Service; Lt. Jim McCrady, Ft. Lauderdale Beach Patrol; Colonel Sergio Lema, Salvataje y Rescate del Sur; John Donaldson; Kawasaki Motor Corp., U.S.A.; CMC Rescue, Inc.; Casey Garland, DownStream Products, Inc.

HIGGINS AND LANGLEY PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AWARD

The Higgins and Langley Program Development Award honors outstanding efforts to develop and promote flood and swiftwater

rescue. The top honor this year went to the **CHESTERFIELD FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**, including these individuals who were recognized for their vision, dedication, professionalism and leadership.

Chesterfield Fire Protection District: Assistant Chief Les Crews, Battalion Chief Mike Davis, Captain Larry Beauchamp, Captain Bob Temm

HIGGINS AND LANGLEY SWIFTWATER RESCUE TEAM AWARDS

The Higgins and Langley Swiftwater Rescue Team Awards honor agencies whose teams have demonstrated a high standard of training and preparedness that has paid off in lives saved over a number of years or as a result of persistent, steady training and preparedness that is finally tested under extreme conditions.

Two team awards were presented this year:

SALEM FIRE & EMS SWIFTWATER RESCUE TEAM - VIRGINIA : Steve Forren, Tracy Coe, Kevin Totten, Tim Graham, Eddie Hite, Rex Taylor, Scott Jones, Mike Christley, Jason Loving, Mike Elston, Mark Shaw, Rob Johnson, Joey Avila, Scott Gibson, John Prillaman, Jimmy Poindexter, Gary Franklin, Shawn Stanley, Matt Clark, Brian Simmons, Charles Adkins, Craig Bryant, John Morris, Charles Wilkins, Doug Moore

THE UNITED STATES PARK POLICE, WASHINGTON DC - AVIATION SECTION: Lt. Philip Cholak, Sgt. Kathy Harasek, Sgt. Jeffrey Hertel, Sgt. Craig Davis, Sgt. Michael Boehm, Sgt. Christopher Perkins, Ofc. John Dillon, Sgt. Ronald Galey, Sgt. Keith Bohn, Sgt. Kevin Duckworth, Sgt. Kenneth Burchell, Sgt. Kevin Chittick, Ofc. Laura Johnson, Ofc. Keaton Wright, Thomas Greer, Mechanic

HIGGINS AND LANGLEY RESCUE INCIDENT COMMENDATIONS

Higgins and Langley Special Commendations are presented in honor of a particular incident or series of rescues performed under extreme conditions.

Two commendations were presented this year.

GREENVILLE COUNTY SOUTH CAROLINA SWIFTWATER RESCUE TEAM

In honor of the rescues of 16 victims during torrential floods spawned by Tropical Storm Hanna on September 15, 2002.

Greenville County EMS: Lt. Eric Lutz, Sgt. Tyge Watts, Sgt. John T. James, Sgt. Mike Mitchell, Sgt. Tom R. Hearon,

Rescue Specialist Scott R. Krein, Rescue Specialist Brett Neill, Rescue Specialist Jeffrey B. Cantrell, Rescue Specialist Ben E. Waller, EMT-I Danny S. Dobbs, Wade Hampton Fire Department, Chief Gary Downey, Battalion Chief John O. Crawford, Lieutenant Scott M. Fowler, Engineer Thomas M. Isbell, Engineer James S. Rice, Firefighter Scott E. Yearwood, Firefighter Travis A. DeHart, Firefighter Gilman O. Davenport

Greenville County Emergency Response Team: Assistant Chief Bobby Van Pelt, Captain Bobby Smith, Engineer Robby Brannon, Rescue Specialist Bruce Blakely, Rescue Specialist Mark Smith, Rescue Specialist Brian Jones, Rescue Specialist Andy Buckhout, Rescue Specialist Mike Panighetti, Rescue Specialist Shea Loftis, Rescue Specialist Kevin Taylor

Mauldin Fire Department: Senior Firefighter Jason R. Schuler, Firefighter Chad A. Leopard

Boiling Springs Fire Department: Captain James Thomason, Firefighter Lester Anderson

East Simpsonville Fire Department: Chief Gregory K. Merritt, Engineer Timothy W. Smith, Firefighter Shane S. Bukacek, Firefighter David W. Abbott, Firefighter Nathan E. Murtaugh, Firefighter Raymond R. Gregory, Firefighter Kevin A. Turner, Firefighter Donald W. Miller, Firefighter Russell S. Alexander, Firefighter J. Scott Blume, Firefighter Charles A. Richter, Firefighter Ashley L. Tumlin, Firefighter Jason A. Wood, Firefighter R. Seth Vaughn, Firefighter John Piedrahita, Firefighter Glenn R. Howard

Belmont Fire Department: Chief Tony Segars, Assistant Chief Darren Kukendall, Captain Marty Reynolds, Lieutenant James Clardy, Firefighter Steven Manley, Firefighter Glenn Ingerman, Firefighter Curtis Williams, Firefighter Vance Wimpey, Firefighter David Owens, Firefighter Michael Van Horn, Firefighter Charlie Chambers, Firefighter Kevin Suddeth, Firefighter John Dominick

SAN MARCOS FIRE AND RESCUE

In honor of the November 15, 2001 rescues of two young motorists who got trapped in low water crossings, had to abandon their vehicles, and ended up clinging to trees in the middle of the river with floodwaters continuing to rapidly rise.

Frank Arredondo, Karl Kuhlman, Jay Horton, Casey Moore, Forest Ritchie, Eric Charleswell, James Frye

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF THE RECIPIENTS OF THIS YEAR’S HIGGINS AND LANGLEY MEMORIAL AWARDS!

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“No Matter What” cont from page 1

However, with the amount of water we had around our service area it was obvious this was going to be a problem again in the future. I talked to the guys about

how they had dealt with water rescues in the past. They told me sometimes they entered the water and sometimes they didn’t. It was a decision made by the company officer at the incident. We had lifejackets on the engines on the river, but that was it for equipment. I approached one of the chiefs and asked if I could research options for water rescue training. It didn’t happen overnight but we eventually got the go ahead to start water rescue training. We looked at several programs and decided to go with Rescue 3 because it’s a nationally recognized program with a fine track record while working with professional rescue organizations like the fire service.

In 1995 we had 3 people certified as SRT 1 instructors. We then trained our Technical Rescue Team to SRT 1 level. Our Technical Rescue Team is based on our two truck companies. Our down town truck is in a good position for a majority of our water rescue calls, but this still leaves a lot of area uncovered.

So to deal with the rest of our response we trained the balance of the department to First Responder level. We also put life jackets and throw bags on all apparatus. In addition to the First Responder training, we provided everyone with lifeguard training. This allowed them to enter the water using their low to high-risk options if it was still water or the Columbia River which moves at 3-6mph.

When NFPA 1670 came out, our department wanted to follow the standard. NFPA 1670 states firefighters need to be trained to “technician” level to enter the water. This was a problem because we didn’t have the money to train all of our First Responders to technician standards. In order to deal with NFPA 1670 compliance issues, our water rescue instructors have been training our people when we have downtime while on duty. When someone gets enough hours and they are competent, we certify them as SRT 1s. This has improved our coverage of rescuers capable of water entry. We are continuing to improve our program.

We have improved our service to the citizens and the safety and effectiveness of our rescues. It’s a horrible thing to stand by when there’s a rescue to be made. We now average over one water rescue a week during warm weather and we’ve made some saves. Next month we are having an off duty water rescue campout, providing the SRT 1 course for anyone in our department and combining it with a family campout. It should be great.

Professional Driver on a Closed Course

By Judy Turnbull

A disturbing trend in automobile advertising has recently been brought to my attention. Of late, the automotive industry has been using increasingly more unrealistic images of outdoor “adventures,” promising fun and excitement to the consumer and sending dangerous messages that have dire consequences for both consumers and the environment.

If you have watched television, surfed the net, or picked up a car brochure you have undoubtedly seen some of these ads. Just picture it: a shiny new SUV bounding recklessly through the forest, climbing steep sand dunes, or 4-wheeling through a mud bog, all things that normally would seem quite dangerous. However, these images are always justified by the fleeting caption “Professional Driver on a Closed Course”. Perhaps you missed that? Well, you were supposed to! This disclaimer is only supposed to relieve the manufacturer of all legal responsibility when some impressionable driver decides to try it anyway.

Sadly, these commercials are often the only orientation that people have prior to purchasing a new SUV. The consumer is led to expect fun, freedom and backcountry adventure. Of course, many of the advertised activities are not safe, or even legal in most areas. Off road accidents frequently involve new vehicles with inexperienced drivers. Not only do these accidents lead to both property damage and personal injury, but they can also have the added consequence of causing significant damage to the environment.

While many automotive manufacturers are engaging in



this dangerous advertising practice, it was the campaign for the new Touareg by Volkswagen that really brought the issue into focus for me. On VW’s website there are images of their SUV climbing over snow-covered logs in a deserted winter forest. Another image is of the Touareg fording through a stream while a banner states “Thanks to sealed electrical connections and door seams, the Touareg will ford up to 23” of water.” Of course, those of us familiar with water rescue realize the absurdity of that

statement. Yes, if the water has no current and you really KNOW how deep it is, then maybe. But does the average consumer understand the remarkable difference between still water and a stream with 23” of flowing water. I don’t think so!

In response to an outcry from the rescue community, Volkswagen announced on August 8th that they would remove the TV and print ads from rotation but they would reappear with a stronger disclaimer. The website ad remains unchanged as of this writing. Will more stern cautions outweigh the exciting visual images? Past experiences would indicate no.

“The Touareg will do a whole lot more than just dip its pinky toe into the water. Thanks to watertight doors, and sealed lighting and electrical systems, it’ll play boat in up to 22.8 inches of water.”

Volkswagen brochure

The job of dealing with weekend adventurers who don’t understand these dangers will fall upon you as rescuers. As such it would be my hope that your voice would also carry some authority. So speak out by writing/emailing manufacturers to remove these ads, not ad more unheeded disclaimers. Threaten to boycott companies that run misleading ads. If you are a NASAR member, NFPA member, or a member of other professional safety organizations, ask them to address this problem as a group. Professional drivers do not populate our

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Instructors

backcountry, and real driving does not take place on a closed course. It is time for all of us to insist that manufacturers, especially those selling products whose misuse can and will have deadly results, act responsibly and stop these dangerous advertising practices.

Contacts:

*Customer Relations
Volkswagen of America
Hills Corporate Center
3499 West Hamlin Rd.
Rochester Hills, MI 48309*

*www.vw.com/VwSFB/feedback
info@nasar.org
public_affairs@nfpa.org*



Rescue 3 Welcomes Sody Onboard

Rescue 3 International would like to welcome Mike Soderstrom (Sody) to their staff. Sody will be working as the new Technical Programs Coordinator. This position has been developed to ensure that the Rescue 3 International consistently delivers the highest standards in technical rope and water programs.

One of his first tasks was to put together a Technical Programs Committee. This committee will work to develop a core curriculum for Rescue 3 rope programs. They will also provide direction, assistance, and information for the development of technical rescue programs that include instructional manuals, instructional modalities, and course oversight/evaluation. Committee members are Mark Hogan, Mark Clippinger and Tim Rogers.

We welcome feedback from all Rescue 3 instructors on these issues. If you have comments, questions, or ideas, please contact Mike Soderstrom at sody@tscnet.com.

Changes in the Newsletter

The Rescuer will be making a few changes. Beginning with the next issue, the newsletter will be sent only to Active Rescue 3 Instructors and will be published two times a year, in mid-winter and late summer. If you are in doubt about your instructor status, call Debi at 1-800-457-3728.

Attention-Active Rescue 3 Instructors Do We Have a Great Deal For You!



Does your rope, webbing and Prusik cord look like something from World War II? Then have we got a deal for you. Sterling Rope, Rescue 3 and the Rescue Source have teamed up to offer all active Rescue 3 instructors 35% off retail on all Sterling products. This is a great time to replace or upgrade or add to your rescue cache. For pricing and ordering call 1-800-457-3728 for this limited time offer.

RESCUE 3 INTERNATIONAL

PO BOX 519

ELK GROVE, CA 95759-0519

Presorted
Standard
U.S. Postage
Paid
The Rescue
Source

Surfin' the Web



- www.floodsafety.com is a wonderful website that promotes flood safety to driver education programs, home-buyers, and those living in or near flood plains. It is a project of the Texas Environmental Center (TEC) and is beautifully done and full of valuable information.
- Phoenix (AZ) Fire Dept. is always a leader in water-related and other citizen safety issues. A visit to their website is well worth your time. Check out the drowning statistics on the home page and Arizona's "Stupid" Motorist Law (link is under Monsoon Safety on home page)

The Rescuer provides these links for your information only and by doing such implies no endorsement of these sites, the material they contain, or the organizations they are sponsored by.

Calendar

- August 22-25, 2003. *Fire Rescue International (ICHIEFS)* Dallas, TX. Call 703-273-0911 or visit fdsoa.org or www.iafc.org
- October 10-12, 2003. *Rescue 3 Instructor Trainer Meeting*, Las Vegas, NV. Call Debi at 1-800-457-3728 to register. (Open only to current RQ3 Instructor Trainers & Preceptors)
- October 26, 2003. *Rescue 3 Regional Instructor Meeting*, Tacoma, WA. Call Debi at 1-800-457-3728 to register. (Open only to current RQ3 Instructor Trainers & Preceptors)
- October 25, 2003. *Rescue 3 Regional Instructor Meeting*, Elk Grove, CA. Call Debi at 1-800-457-3728 to register. (Open only to current RQ3 Instructors)
- Nov TBA, 2003. *Rescue 3 Regional Instructor Meeting*, Wimberley TX. Call Debi at 1-800-457-3728 to register. (Open only to current RQ3 Instructor Trainers & Preceptors)