

# Local & Regional EMS News

by Kathy Clayton

## Brazos Valley adventure race brings sweat, mud

The Brazos Valley Regional Advisory Council hosted the first Battle of the Brazos Valley Public Safety and Healthcare Personnel Adventure Race in February on U.S. Corps of Engineer property at Lake Somerville. The race was a cross between a “warrior dash” and a “tough mudder,” designed specifically to challenge public safety and health care personnel.

The organizers’ goal was to increase awareness and improve overall health and wellness in public safety and health care personnel, but the real reason for the event had to be to get dirty and have some fun! Three-person teams competed in three events—a trail run, a two-person sand-bag run and an obstacle course that included stairs, boating, ropes and swimming, for a combined six miles of obstacles and trails.

Sponsorship from more than 12 businesses and organizations allowed organizers to offer free registration, which quickly hit the participant limit. The race included 100 participants, 30 volunteers, at least 50 spectators and coverage from local media. Medals were given to overall 1st, 2nd and 3rd

place teams, plus medals for the first-place co-ed team. Local businesses donated additional prizes for winning teams. The Washington County EMS-Special Operations Division took top honors, followed by Austin-Travis County EMS, Bryan Fire Department and St. Joseph’s Hospital EMS.



The first Battle of Brazos Valley Public Safety and Healthcare Personnel Adventure Race was held in February on Lake Somerville. Three-person teams participated in a trail run, a two-person sandbag run, and an obstacle course. Photos by Debora Hamff.

## A Christmas miracle

November 28, 2011, began as a typical day for Arlington resident Cliff Pace. Late that afternoon Cliff decided to adjust the Christmas lighting display on the roof of his single-story home. Cliff's wife, Kimberly, decided she would go outside to keep an eye on

her husband, but shortly thereafter, 48-year-old Cliff collapsed in cardiac arrest on the roof. Kimberly screamed, attracting the attention of Cliff's 17-year-old daughter, Bayleigh. She ran to summon help from Cliff's brother, Michael who

lives across the street and happened to be at home.

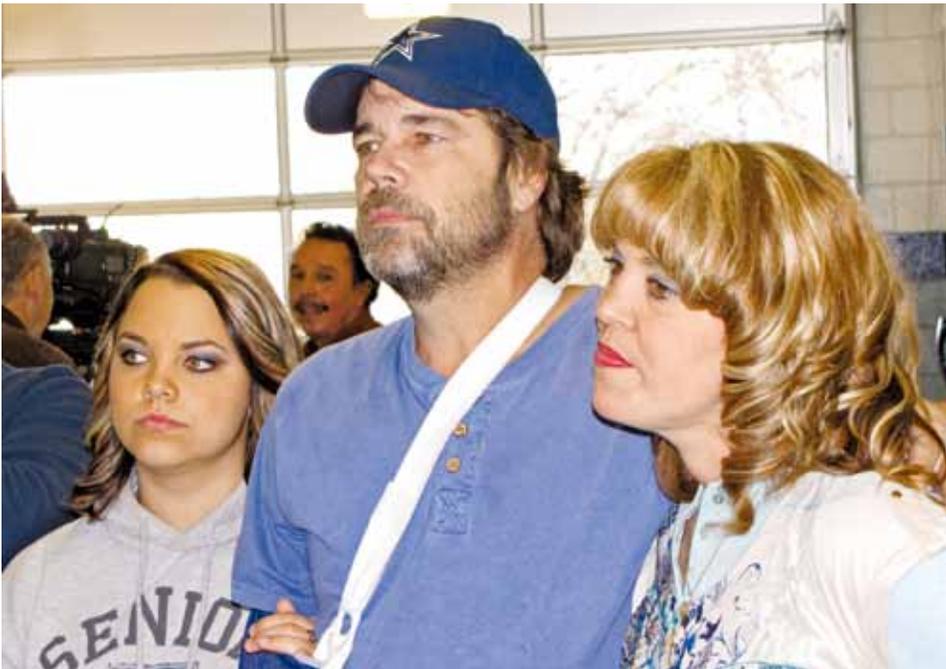
Michael climbed to the roof and secured Cliff while Bayleigh called 9-1-1. Bayleigh eventually passed the phone to her uncle and mother on the roof. Relying on years'-old CPR training, Michael began chest compressions and coached Kimberly, who had no prior CPR training, on administering rescue breaths.

Arlington Fire Department Quint 7 arrived in just over four minutes, expecting a cardiac arrest patient in a bathroom (because of a minor miscommunication during the 9-1-1 call). Much to the crew's surprise, they saw their patient on the roof, with CPR in progress. They quickly laddered the roof and moved Cliff to the ground. American Medical Response Medic 1 arrived during patient removal. Within 90 seconds of the first unit's arrival, the patient was on the ground with both crews working together to administer CPR and ACLS. Engine 12 arrived with additional personnel to assist. Within 60 seconds of defibrillation, Cliff's heartbeat and respirations returned.

Cliff was released from the hospital a few days later with only a sore chest to remind him of his near-death experience.

In December, the Pace family met at Fire Station 7 to celebrate "Cliff's Christmas Miracle." Awards for life saving were presented to Cliff's family members along with the AFD and AMR crews who contributed to the rescue.

Increasing the number of Arlington citizens trained to administer CPR is the core mission of the CPArllington program, recipient of the DSHS 2011 Public Information/Injury Prevention award at the Texas EMS Conference 2011.



*Cliff Pace, center, with wife, Kimberly (R) and daughter, Bayleigh (L).*



*After recovering from cardiac arrest, Cliff Pace joins his wife and daughter and the Arlington Fire Department and American Medical Response crews who were honored for their life-saving actions in December when he suffered a heart attack while adjusting Christmas lights on his rooftop.*

## Five firefighters honored for 2011 cell tower rescue

One Crowley and four Burleson firefighters involved in the August 2011 rescue of a worker trapped on a cell tower about 700 feet in the air were presented the Valor Award by the Texas Fire Chiefs Association earlier this month. The award, which recognizes Texas firefighters who risk their own lives to save others, was given to Burleson firefighters Dallas Fowler, EMT-I; Bill Buchanan, EMT-P; Matt Moseley, EMT-P; and Lt. Jeremiah Lozier, EMT-I; and Crowley firefighter Gary Sansing, EMT-P, during the Southwest Fire Rescue Conference in Frisco in March.

The rescue effort began on the evening of August 3 when a worker who had been on the tower all day replacing equipment with two others was apparently overwhelmed by the heat and could not climb down. The rescuers overcame triple-digit heat, dehydration, cramping and a strong wind to assist the victim.

Lt. Lozier handled operations for the incident and coordinated the rescue. Firefighter Fowler was the first up the

tower with a medical bag (water, IV fluids and first aid supplies). The plan was to get the stranded worker hydrated, then help him climb down the tower.

It took Firefighter Fowler approximately one hour to get to the patient. When he reached him, the worker had undone his safety harness and was lying on a platform edge. The worker was in and out of consciousness. The platform the worker was on was approximately three-feet by three-feet and the sides were unprotected. Crews estimated the patient was approximately 6-foot-5-inches tall and 250 pounds.

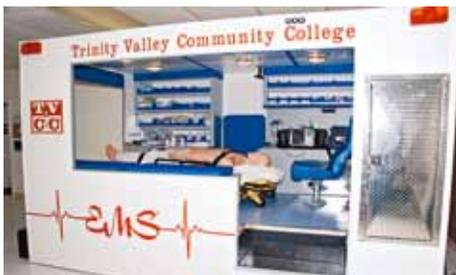
The incident changed from a simple rescue to a full rescue. Firefighters Buchanan and Moseley started the climb, towing a three-point anchor system and approximately 1,500 feet of rope. By the time they reached the patient, Firefighter Fowler had tossed the patient an IV bag and, on the advice of the medical director, the worker drank the IV fluids. After hydrating, the worker was able to put his safety harness back on and helped the firefighters get him back inside the tower.

The firefighters constructed a three-point anchor and pulley system inside the tower and lowered the rope to the bottom where firefighters constructed a belay system. The three firefighters and the worker were all inside the tower as they started the descent.

Crowley Firefighter Sansing climbed approximately one-third of the way up the tower to keep all of the equipment and rope from tangling as the three rescuers and the worker started down. The stranded worker's feet touched ground at 2:30 a.m., seven hours after the rescue began.

"I nominated these firefighters for this award because they demonstrated valor, determination and unmatched courage during this incident," Burleson Fire Chief Gary Wisdom stated in a press release. "They used the training that they had learned and dealt with a very difficult situation and saw it to a successful end. They were all well deserving of this award and they are all heroes."

## Trinity Valley Community College introduces ambulance simulator



*The new ambulance simulator at Trinity Valley Community College's Palestine campus is dedicated to helping EMT students learn how to work inside an emergency vehicle. The recently completed simulator precisely mimics the specifications of a real ambulance.*

Many northeast Texas paramedics and emergency medical technicians are trained by the EMT program at Trinity Valley Community College. Before this semester, however, many of the

students in the program had limited experience in an actual ambulance. In order to get a little real experience in the vehicle, local EMTs would visit the college to help train the students. But that presented logistical problems, according to Scott Walker, who has overseen the EMT training program at the college's Palestine campus for 13 years. Specifically, paramedics on duty are often called away, which made getting the students their needed training very difficult.

Thanks to a grant from the Texas Department of State Health Services, that's less of a problem these days. The grant, awarded to the college last fall, has paved the way for the installation of a full ambulance simulator at the Palestine campus. The replica, said

Walker, is an exact model of the back of an ambulance. The simulator is equipped with a variety of medical supplies, a state-of-the-art heart monitor and even a "patient."

"It really helps us concentrate on the task at hand . . . they spend enough time sitting behind a desk. This helps get them into the real world," said Walker. An actual ambulance would have been nice, said Walker, but the simulator has some real advantages. There are no weather concerns during training, he noted. Also, the simulator will soon be fitted with cameras and a monitoring system that will allow an instructor to monitor the students from another room. Not having an instructor present just adds another real-world aspect to the training, said Walker.

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Dr. Jennifer Arnold, left, trains Houston Fire Department crews in Texas Children's Simulation Center. Photo by Paul Vincent Kuntz.

## Texas Children's Hospital to provide simulation training to Houston Fire Department medics

The Simulation Center at Texas Children's Hospital has begun providing pediatric simulation training for emergency prehospital providers (the program is called Pedi-STEPPs) to members of the Houston Fire Department EMS. A grant from the Cullen Trust for Healthcare, as well as a community benefit donation from Texas Children's Hospital will allow this training to be offered free of charge to the city for 500 firefighters over the next two years.

The training course is part of a comprehensive, yearly curriculum incorporating didactic study, technical skills training and communication/team skills training through participation in high-fidelity simulation scenarios. Each high-fidelity simulation is followed by a facilitated video-reviewed debriefing session where participants can learn from their performance. The program organizers and participants, Texas Children's Hospital, Baylor College of Medicine (BCM) and HFD, have been working together for more than 20 years.

"In addition to training hospital staff, it has always been a larger goal of ours to reach further into the

community by working with first responders," said Dr. Jennifer Arnold, medical director of the Simulation Center and assistant professor of pediatrics at BCM. "By providing this type of training to the Houston Fire Department, we're making sure pediatric patients and their families receive the best possible care, from the moment help arrives."

Each eight-hour course provides hands-on skills and scenario-based training. The simulations depict rare and high risk scenarios, offering the ability to practice life saving skills for neonatal and pediatric patients not normally practiced. The course will offer the opportunity to work through complicated procedures without the concerns or risks associated with learning on real patients.

"We are excited to be a part of the Simulation Center program at Texas Children's Hospital," said Dr. David Persse, physician director of EMS and professor of surgery at BCM. "This access to world-renown training will give us access and hone our skills to tackle high-risk and complicated pediatric emergency situations in the field. We hope this will be a model that other cities can adopt."



Stride4Stroke is a 5-kilometer run/walk dedicated to promoting education and awareness of stroke symptoms, treatment, prevention and research, held each year in March. This year's sixth annual Stride4Stroke, held at the Rice University football stadium on March 3, attracted more than 3,700 walkers and runners and raised more than \$500,000. Funds raised from participation benefited the Methodist Neurological Institute and its stroke outreach education programs at all Methodist system hospitals.

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