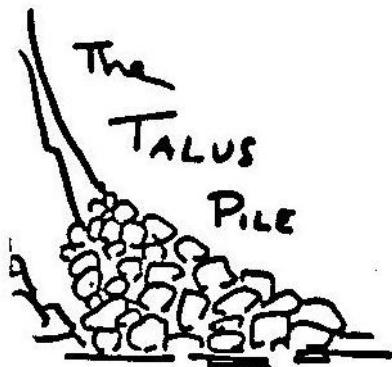


NUMBER 143

APRIL 2009



CHINA LAKE MOUNTAIN RESCUE GROUP

P. O. BOX 2037
RIDGECREST CA 93556

TRAINING SCHEDULE

| | | | |
|--------------|---------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| May 1-3 | Fri-Sun | Mary Austin, Black, Diamond (4) | Rockwell |
| May 9-10 | Sat-Sun | Lamarck (4) | |
| May 11 | Mon | Meeting (Pre-meeting: First Aid) | Miles, Dunn, J. Green |
| May 15-17 | Fri-Sun | Kuna, Koip (4) | |
| May 23-24 | Sat-Sun | Whitney Trail | |
| May 29-31 | Fri-Sun | Julius Caesar (4) | |
| Jun 6-7 | Sat-Sun | Indian Rock (4) | Rockwell |
| Jun 8 | Mon | Meeting | |
| Jun 9-10 | Tue-Wed | Summer class | |
| Jun 12-14 | Fri-Sun | Columbine, Isosceles (4) | |
| Jun 16-17 | Tue-Wed | Summer class | |
| Jun 20-21 | Sat-Sun | Lone Pine Peak (4) | Doerr |
| Jun 23-24 | Tue-Wed | Summer class | |
| Jun 26-28 | Fri-Sun | Pinchot, Peak 13259 (4) | |
| Jun 30-Jul 1 | Tue-Wed | Summer class | |
| Jul 3-5 | Fri-Sun | Whitney North Fork | |
| Jul 7-8 | Tue-Wed | Summer class | |
| Jul 11-12 | Sat-Sun | Summer class day hikes | |
| Jul 13 | Mon | Meeting | |
| Jul 14-15 | Tue-Wed | Summer class | |
| Jul 18-19 | Sat-Sun | Summer class overnights | |
| Jul 21 | Tue | Summer class final exams | |
| Jul 22 | Wed | Summer class party | |
| Jul 24-26 | Fri-Sun | Bear Creek Spire | |

*Cat on the back fence.
Silhouetted by the moon.
Ominous vision.*
—Lura Osgood, Pleasant Hill, CA



CLMRG is funded in part by United Way of Indian Wells Valley.

GROUP BUSINESS

OFFICERS

The members present at the 8 December 2008 meeting elected the following officers for 2009:

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| President | Mike Franklin |
| Vice-President | Dave Miles |
| Secretary | Eileen Loughran |
| Treasurer | Werner Hueber |
| MRA Representative | Dan Bishop |

QUALIFICATIONS COMMITTEE

The members present at the 12 January 2009 meeting elected the following members of the Qualifications Committee for 2009:

| | |
|-------------|--------------------------|
| Mike Myers | Chair, Operation reports |
| Dan Bishop | New members, Roster |
| Linda Finco | Trips, Training |

OPERATION LEADERS

Based on the votes of the membership, the Qualifications Committee named the following operation leaders for 2009: Mike Myers, Linda Finco, Tom Roseman, Dan Bishop, Tom Sakai, and David Miles.

HAIL AND FAREWELL

We welcomed Jeff Green, Martha Bodine, Nathan Simons, and Theresa Hess as new members in 2008 and said farewell to Curtis Davis and Walter Runkle.

OPERATION REPORTS

Operation 2008-14 (Search) OES 2008LAW0372

Mammoth Pools Resort (Madera County)

1 September 2008

By David Miles, Operation Leader

On Monday, 1 September 2008 (Labor Day) at 0645, Bud Gates called and asked me to lead a team for a search in Madera County. I called Sgt Jim Bernardi to get details and let him know when we would be there. Ruth Terry (71) had gone for a walk at 0900 on Sunday and disappeared. Bud Gates committed to the search with Carol Burge as Coordinator. After meeting at the Hut, Bud and I left at 0900. We arrived at the command post (CP) at Mammoth Pools Resort at 1645 after a 1.5-hour detour caused by the GPS coordinates for the CP being DDD°MM.MMM, not DDD°MM'SS.SS.

Ruth had gone for her normal short morning walk with her dog at 0900 the day before and had not returned. At 2000, Gates and I started an assignment to search from a campground down the road to the boat launch. We searched the East side of the road on the way down and the West side on the way up. We photographed the tracks that we found for later reference, but none matched the New Balance shoes she was supposed to be wearing. After returning to our vehicle, we continued to look for tracks into the campground and confirmed that all the tracks we had found on our search to the lake belonged to the campers. We returned to the CP at 2330 and slept on the floor of the resort's general store.

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We were up at 0600 on Tuesday morning for breakfast at the store. The owners had handed the keys to the store to the Sheriff to use as part of the CP. At 0800, we had a briefing and were assigned to search both sides of the river down to the lake. This was an area of cliffs and difficult terrain along the river. We took minimal climbing gear, which we ended up not needing. We finished and were back at the CP by 1250. Around 1345, we took another short assignment to search the sides of the road for 2 miles above the CP. Completing our assignment, we drove home and arrived at the Hut around 2230.

On Wednesday, 3 September, Ruth's dog ran into the CP. Rescuers went back up the dirt road where the dog had come from and found Ruth a few minutes later about a half-mile from the CP. She said she had decided to take the dirt road instead of the paved road because of the holiday weekend traffic. She had tried to get the dog leave her to get help, but the dog had refused to leave her. She was in generally good shape for having endured three nights in the woods.

Total man-hours: 80
Total mileage: 654

Operation 2008-15 (Transit) OES 2008LAW0397

Mt. Whitney Trail (Inyo County)

20 September 2008

By Dan Bishop, Operation Leader

I received a request directly from Tim Winkler with the Inyo County SAR team at 1600 on Saturday, 20 September for a possible carry-out of a woman on the Whitney Trail. An OES request had been placed, but they wanted to give us as much notice as possible. I put out the call, and with the help of Linda Finco acting as Coordinator, Dave Miles, Nathan Simons, Mike Myers, and Tom Sakai committed to the operation. Both Lt. Barker and Sgt. Baldwin called me with more details and confirmation of the OES number (about 30 minutes after the initial call from Winkler). We met at the Hut at 1730.

A 59-year-old female had suffered a broken ankle while descending the trail above Mirror Lake. Inyo had arranged for a CHP helicopter to evacuate her, but because of high winds, it was uncertain whether the helicopter could perform the extraction. We proceeded with the mobilization and transit in case a ground carry-out became necessary.

At 1830, about 10 minutes south of Lone Pine, I received word that the helicopter had extracted the woman. We dined at Seasons in Lone Pine at Inyo's invitation and were back at the Hut at 2230.

CLMRG personnel:

| | | |
|-----------------|-------|---------------------|
| Bishop (Leader) | Miles | Myers |
| Simons | Sakai | Finco (Coordinator) |

Total man-hours: 33
Total mileage: 162

Operation 2008-16 (Rescue) OES 2008LAW0398

Mt. Whitney Trail (Inyo County)

22 September 2008

By David Miles, Operation Leader

At 0005 on 22 September 2008, Tim Winkler of the Inyo SAR team called asking CLMRG to help carry out Micah (last name unknown), a 30-year-old male who reportedly had fallen 300 feet, sustained head trauma, and was slipping in and out of consciousness. He gave me the OES number and told us to go to the Whitney Portal Store, pick up a few oxygen bottles that had been left there, and meet them on the trail above Lone Pine Lake. I called Sgt. Mark Baldwin at 0010 to let him know of the request and prepare him for the call from OES. Mary Schmierer was the Coordinator, and Carol Burge assisted in the callout to meet at the hut at 0100. Sgt. Baldwin called me back at 0020 with the official OES call for help. I led the operation with Dan Bishop, Linda Finco, Bud Gates, Dennis Burge, and Nathan Simons forming the team.

We met at the Hut at 0100 and left at 0120. We took my Suburban to keep it to one vehicle and driver. We arrived at the Command Post (CP) at the Whitney Portal Store at 0235. Corporal Terry Waterburry was waiting for us at the portal and told us that a 28-year-old male had fallen 20 to 30 feet on the Whitney Trail above Lone Pine Lake (switchbacks below Outpost Camp).

By 0245, we were on our way up the trail to meet Inyo SAR. Bishop was the first to arrive at the site at 0345. The rest of the team arrived over the next 20 minutes. Everyone had a radio, and it was easy to spot everyone by their headlamps and do radio checks if required. The Inyo SAR team consisted of Dave German, Tim Winkler, Dean Chavez, and Kavy Yang (Inyo County Sheriff's Office). Micah had fallen off the switchbacks while texting on his cell phone around 1830 on 21 September. He had received care by an EMT on the trail and was getting oxygen when we arrived. He was lying on the ground covered by a sleeping bag.

We assisted Inyo in applying a neck collar, transferring him to a full body vacuum splint, and packaging him in the litter. We then attached a mountain bike wheel to the litter. By 0420, we were on our way down the trail, rotating positions every 10 minutes. After about 30 minutes, I suggested that we were expending too much energy and that there might be an easier way. I had noticed that most of the effort was on keeping the litter balanced on the single wheel. I tried taking the back of the litter to steer and balance. I had two others on each side for safety and to lift over obstacles. With one person controlling the steering, it was also easier to maneuver around small obstacles. I found that I spent less energy doing the bulk of the steering and balancing than as one of six. We rotated positions every 10 minutes and were able to move faster and more efficiently. The Inyo team had been considering an alternate litter with two in-line wheels and handlebars for better control. From our experience on this rescue, it seems like a good alternative although the technique is probably more effective only on a good trail. We covered 3 miles and about 1,800 vertical feet in about 2.5 hours. We arrived at the trailhead at 0700.

The Lone Pine Fire Department ambulance arrived at 0730, and we assisted in transferring Micah from the litter to the ambulance for transportation to the Lone Pine Hospital. After we all had a good breakfast at the Whitney Portal Store, we drove home and arrived at the hut at about 1000.

Hospital MRI and X-ray tests showed that Micah had no fractures and no permanent injuries.

Total man-hours: 54

Total mileage: 180

Operation 2008-17 (Search) OES 2008LAW0413

Madera County

2-3 October 2008

By Dan Bishop, Operation Leader

We received a request from Kern County Deputy Sheriff Sgt. Rhoades to assist in a search in Madera County on Wednesday, 1 October at 1730. I had heard about the operation from Dave Miles via the Call-'em-All system. The system worked well for me, but other leaders had problems receiving the message. I agreed to lead the operation and got the pertinent information from Sgt. Rhoades. Terry Mitchell was the Coordinator and began the call-out. Daryl Hinman and Bob Rockwell committed to the operation, and we met at the Hut at 0300 on Thursday, 2 October in order to arrive at the Command Post (CP) at Mammoth Lakes Airport at 0600.

The famous adventurer Steve Fossett had gone missing during a flight in his small aircraft in September of 2007. Recent evidence—Fossett's personal effects found by a hiker and wreckage of his airplane discovered later on 1 October—had led Madera County to initiate a regional call-out in order to conduct a thorough search of the crash site for evidence of human remains.

Our team of three arrived at the CP in 3 hours and saw at least 10 news agencies covering the story. Quickly briefed, we were to follow the caravan of SAR vehicles to Devils Postpile, the trailhead closest to the crash site. We three were among approximately 40 others representing SAR teams from Inyo County, Mono County, Madera County, San Diego, Bakersfield, and Lyon County, Nevada. From the trailhead, all were to hike the 6 miles and 2500 feet of elevation gain to the site, west of Emily Lake, at the 10,100-foot elevation level. A light rain had begun to fall, but by the time we were on the trail, at 0845, the rain had stopped. We maintained our steady pace and got to the site at 1245 along with five other searchers. The other searchers that had started either were unable to make it to the site or were turned around by the CP because of time constraints. Members of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) and Madera County and Mono County deputy sheriffs, flown in by helicopter, were conducting their investigation when we arrived.

For the next 3 hours, the eight of us SAR members performed a grid search of the area looking for human remains. The impact point was obvious. The engine, the largest of the debris, was about 100 yards uphill from the impact. In between, we found small pieces of airplane, a significant area of scorched and dead trees from ignited fuel, and a few samples of possible bone fragments smaller than 2 inches in diameter. We reported the possible bone fragments to the deputies, who photographed and collected the samples. One deputy thought that a possible skull fragment would yield sufficient DNA data to confirm its identity.

The CP had concerns about the threatening weather, which had turned colder and windier, so they arranged for a helicopter to extract all the field teams from the crash site. We ascended 400 feet to the landing zone (LZ), where we boarded a Black Hawk helicopter and flew to the CP at 1600.

A Mono County deputy shuttled me back to our vehicle at Devils Postpile. I drove back to the airport to pick up Hinman and Rockwell, and we were en route to Ridgecrest by 1800. We stopped for dinner in Bishop and were back at the Hut by 2130.

After my debrief with Madera's officer in charge, he informed me that the next day would be the final day of the recovery effort and that all the wreckage would be removed. He asked us to return to continue searching for evidence from the crash site to where the personal effects had been found. He also stated that he wanted only experienced Type 1 searchers to be part of this effort.

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I asked Mitchell to continue as the Coordinator. She agreed and initiated another call-out. Bob Rockwell, Jeff Green, and Martha Bodine committed, and because no other OL could commit, I stayed on to lead the second day of searching.

The four of us left Ridgecrest at 0500 on Friday, 3 October and arrived at the airport at 0800. A Yosemite Park service helicopter was to insert teams at the LZ above the crash site. Our assignment was to conduct a line-search from the crash site to where one of Fossett's personal effects, a sweatshirt, had been found. The distance was approximately 2/3 of a mile across and was mostly easy, forested terrain. A combined Inyo-Madera team was to search a line parallel to ours from the crash site to additional evidence, Fossett's identification papers. While we were conducting our search, a team from Yosemite would be gathering and airlifting the aircraft wreckage. All that afternoon, we could see the helicopter make multiple trips from the crash site hauling a long-line attached to a cargo net.

Yosemite's helicopter policy is for all occupants to wear flight suits, gloves, boots, and helmets. We had brought CLMRG flight suits for three of us, and J. Green had brought his own. This saved significant time by not having to wait for Yosemite's equipment to become available. We were the second team to be inserted, Yosemite's debris team was first, and Inyo-Madera's search team was third.

We were at the LZ by 0930, and we descended to the crash site to begin our search. Heading east-southeast, we made it to our destination waypoint at the eastern edge of our assignment by 1115 without finding any pertinent evidence. We then conducted a sweep of the immediate area, shifted our line south, and proceeded back to the crash site. We could see the Inyo-Madera team to our south as we walked back to the west. Back at the crash site, I informed the deputy in charge that we would be willing to make another pass and then hike out the 6 miles to the trailhead. The CP, however, was again concerned about the approaching weather and asked us to sweep south of the crash site and then return to the LZ for extraction. We found no pertinent evidence and returned to the LZ, where the Black Hawk picked us up and returned us to the airport by 1500. After de-briefing, we got back to the Hut at 1800.

Notes:

1. Yosemite's helicopter policy is to require passengers to have flight suits, boots that cover the ankles, leather or Nomex gloves, and flight helmets.
2. Air National Guard Black Hawks have minimal requirements for passenger gear.
3. Our recent work in Madera County has given us a good reputation.
4. We specifically asked the Madera and Mono deputy sheriffs what could be disclosed about the incident (e.g., photos, press releases) during our de-briefing, and we followed their instructions.
5. We should encourage more interaction with the local papers in the form of short press releases after all of our operations. In this case, I contacted both local papers. The News-Review printed an article; the Daily Independent did not.

CLMRG personnel:

2 October

D. Bishop (Leader)
B. Rockwell
D. Hinman
T. Mitchell (Coordinator)
E. Riendeau (Telephoner)

3 October

D. Bishop (Leader)
B. Rockwell
J. Green
M. Bodine
T. Mitchell (Coordinator)
S. Rockwell (Telephoner)

| | |
|-----------------|-----|
| Total man-hours | 139 |
| Total mileage | 733 |

Operation 2008-18 (Search) OES 2008LAW0429

Horse Corral Meadow Pack Station (Fresno County)

13 October 2008

By David Miles, Operation Leader

At 1830 on Sunday, 12 October 2008, I received a call from Sgt. Gary Rhoades to assist with a search in Sequoia National Forest. Salvador Chavez (31) had gone missing at 2030 on 11 October while hunting deer. Fresno County personnel had searched through Sunday, 12 October and were requesting aid. After an unsuccessful page and a failed attempt to use Call-'em-All, I called Carol Burge. She agreed to be the Coordinator with Elaine Riendeau assisting with the calls. In order to meet the requested 0700 briefing, we would need to meet at the hut at 0200. I led the operation with Bob Rockwell, Tom Sakai, and Mike Myers forming the team.

We met at the Hut at 0200 and left at 0215. We arrived at the Horse Corral Meadow Pack Station (the Command Post) at 0645. Gregg Collins briefed us that Salvador had been hunting with two others and had not been seen since they split up at the car. A few inches of snow had fallen Saturday during a brief blizzard, and the last two nights had low temperatures of 6 and 9 degrees. Salvador was wearing blue jeans, a jacket, and an orange vest. He had a 30-30 rifle and five rounds of ammunition. The sheriff had ruled out any shots heard as being fired by Salvador. Gregg also said that he was wearing a work boot with almost smooth soles. Searchers had been in the area all day Saturday but had found no tracks. Salvador and his friends had FRS radios but had lost contact with each other. On Sunday, they took one of the FRS radios up in the helicopter but were unable to make contact with Salvador.

Seven searchers came from the Bakersfield team, and one of them (Nick Goodman) joined us as team 1. The other six Bakersfield members formed team 2. Both teams drove the 2 miles to the place last seen (PLS) at NAD27 UTM 11S 342537mE 4069484mN. The trail headed north to Deer Meadow. Team 1 was to search the west side, and team 2 was to search the east side. On reaching the PLS, we noticed a plastic bag with Salvador's prescription (IB800) and other items. We called CP and asked about it. They told us the contents of the bag were scent items for the dog teams.

We (team 1) started our search at about 0915. (After the sun had come up, we were comfortably warm.) After 15 minutes of working our way through some dense brush, we found footprints (see Figure 1) that matched the description of Salvador's boots at UTM 11S 342400mE 4069043mN. We reported our find to CP and insisted that this was our man. We had seen search tracks crossing these, but these were both smooth and solo boots. We tracked him for almost 3 hours. Around 1230, we lost his track heading downhill on some game trails at UTM 11S 341995mE 4068918mN. Another team had found a white shirt tied to a stick like a signal flag less than a mile and 800 feet down from us.

We asked CP whether they wanted us to continue downhill looking for tracks or to resume our assigned search area. CP told us to resume searching our assigned area, so we continued searching and cutting for tracks with the five of us spread out over 150-200 feet. After we reached a ridge at 1400, a radio call said that Salvador had walked down Boulder Creek to Boyden Cave in Kings Canyon (at least 8 miles). We then went over the ridge to the PLS and drove back to the CP. After a short time, Salvador arrived and reunited with his family. He was in good condition after suffering two very cold nights. We checked his boot and found it to be a perfect match to the footprints we had found.



Figure 1. Salvador Chavez's boot print

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Salvador had walked day and night with naps Sunday and Monday afternoon. He got water from Boulder Creek. The shirt on a stick turned out not to be his.

Around 1530, we left for the drive home. Having arrived early in the morning for the search, we were unable to get gasoline and were quite low. We used the GPS to find the nearest gasoline station, which was a mistake. GPS chose a course to a gasoline station, and after more than an hour of slow winding road, we got to it. I put a few maps in the Explorer for a sanity check next time. We had dinner in Tehachapi and were back at the Hut at 2100.

| | |
|------------------|-----|
| Total man-hours: | 88 |
| Total mileage: | 520 |

Operation 2008-19 (Search)

Owens Peak (Kern County)

19-20 October 2008

By Tom Roseman, Operation Leader

I had just fallen asleep around 2200 on Sunday, 19 October when Janet Westbrook called looking for an Operation Leader (OL) for a search for 68-year-old Frank Moore. Before I was awake enough to think about it, I committed to leading the operation. I called Bud Gates to get the details and then called Janet back to start the callout assisted by Sheila Rockwell. Tom Sakai, Dave Miles, Al Green, Mike Franklin, Debbie Breitenstein, Daryl Hinman, and Paul DeRuiter signed on for the operation, and we met at the Hut at 2300.

Frank, who had moved recently to Ridgecrest, was overdue from a hike on Owens Peak. Remembering the "Carol Burge Search" a few years ago, I phoned Bill Ferguson, who lives in Grapevine Canyon, and alerted him to the situation and then sent Hinman and Green to meet Ferguson at his house to search the lower regions of Grapevine Canyon. Sakai, Breitenstein, Miles, and Franklin headed out to meet the reporting party, Dave Daily, and local Sheriff's Deputy Baldwin at the road head at Wedding Rock (the end of the Owens Peak road). DeRuiter and I went to the start of the Owens Peak road to meet Sgt. Gary Rhoades, who was driving over from Bakersfield. The Kern County Sheriff's helicopter was doing an air search of the area around Owens Peak, and we could see its spotlight from Highway 14.

A number of local folks had been on the peak that day, and information about Frank continued to filter in over the course of the search. He was last seen around 1400 by a party of three near the summit of Owens Peak, and he had called Daily by cell phone at 1730, but the reception was poor. The team at the road head identified two possible tracks, and with Daily joining the team, they headed for the summit. Major Toby Moore, Frank's son and a pilot on the China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station, decided to hike the PCT south to Walker Pass, meet his friend Brandon, and drive back to the road head. DeRuiter and I met Sgt. Rhoades a little after 2400 and drove to the road head to run the search. We asked the China Lake SAR helicopter to assist in the search at first light. After searching the lower area of Grapevine Canyon with Ferguson, Hinman and Green went home for a few hours of sleep, with the possibility of being inserted by the China Lake helicopter in the morning. Around 0400, Sakai, Breitenstein, Miles, and Franklin reached the area of the short cut from the summit and took a short nap while waiting for first light to search for tracks.

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At dawn, they quickly found a single set of tracks leading down Grapevine Canyon that matched one of the possible sets. I asked Sakai and Breitenstein to stay high and act as radio relay. The China Lake helicopter was onsite about 0830 with Green and Hinman on board. The helicopter lowered its two passengers in a big basket to the summit of Owens Peak with a Navy radio because we were having trouble making radio contact with the helicopter. After tracking down the canyon, Miles, Daily, and Franklin found a pair of hiking poles, and we confirmed that Frank hiked with poles. Soon after, the team made verbal contact with Frank. After about another 15 minutes, they made actual contact and found Frank thirsty but otherwise in good condition. Toby and Brandon hiked up from the bottom of Grapevine Canyon to meet us, and everyone hiked out.

Dennis Burge had committed to the operation when he became available in the morning, and he brought some welcome early morning coffee and food for the base camp crew. Linda Finco went to the Hut from work to find a frequency on our radios that would work with the helicopter's radio.

Everyone met in Inyokern for lunch and then returned to unload gear at the Hut. We were finished by 1530, less than 18 hours from the initial callout. This was a good effort from everyone in our own backyard, and working with the China Lake helicopter crew was perhaps the start of a new era of cooperation between our two groups.

CLMRG personnel:

| | | |
|-----------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| T. Roseman—OL | A. Green | D. Burge |
| T. Sakai | P. DeRuiter | J. Westbrook—Coordinator |
| D. Breitenstein | B. Ferguson | S. Rockwell—Telephoner |
| D. Hinman | L. Finco | C. Burge—Trailblazer |

Operation 2008-20 (Search) OES 2008LAW0460

Dinkey Creek Area (Fresno County)

5-7 November 2008

By Mike Myers, Operation Leader

At approximately 1700 on 5 November, Lt. Barker, of the Kern County Sheriff's Office, phoned our pager requesting support for a search in Fresno County. I called Lt. Baker, got some details, and called the Fresno County Sheriff's Incident Commander on Scene for further details. I learned that the weather was cold and wet, with up to 6 inches of snow and ice on the ground. Robert Willis, a 37-year-old male, had gone deer hunting by himself on Thursday, 30 October and was supposed to be home on Saturday, 1 November. It had snowed and then rained in the area while Willis was out, and night-time temperatures had been around 18-20 degrees. When he failed to return home, his family contacted the Sheriff on Monday, 3 November. Fresno had begun searching on Monday and was now seeking help in a search for a deer hunter missing near Dinkey Creek, an isolated area near Shaver Lake.

Carol Burge agreed to coordinate and began a callout. Dan Bishop, Bob Rockwell, and Nathan Simons committed to at least two days, so we met at the Hut at 0200 and departed at 0215. We arrived on-scene at the Command Post (CP) at 0725, just 5 minutes before the morning brief.

A Fresno Deputy Sheriff who was assigned to work with our team delivered our assignment to us. He had maps and the only radio that worked with base camp. Sensing an issue, I dropped by the CP, left them one of our radios, and explained that it was tuned to MRA-1. The drive to our starting point took almost an hour on mud- and snow-covered 4x4 roads. We stopped during the drive to check Willis's truck, which was parked on the road. His day-pack and knife were on the seat, and his ice chest and firewood were in the back. It didn't appear that he planned to be away very long.

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Our assignment was several miles from the search area, and we were to conduct a line search of a drainage. The CP told us they expected an 80 percent Probability of Detection (POD) for a responsive subject. With the subject now 7 days in the wilderness, we could not disregard the need to search for a non-responsive person, which meant visually checking every place that a person might try to find shelter during a storm. We set up the line placing three of us on one side of the creek and two on the other side. We needed to cover about 3 miles of the drainage. Our spread changed repeatedly because of the challenging terrain. Our drainage went through a grove of giant redwoods, and the main obstacles we encountered were fallen trees.

We completed our assignment at 1600, at which time we discovered that Fresno's radio batteries were virtually dead. I attempted to contact the CP via a CLMRC radio on the MRA frequency but was unsuccessful. The deputy then tried another frequency and was able to reach the sheriff's dispatcher in Fresno via repeaters, but we were not sure if the message was received. Walking out would take 12-18 hours, but we started out down the road. About 30 minutes later, our transportation met us on the road, and they explained that our message did get out and that Fresno Dispatch relayed it to the CP.

Our PODs for the assignment:

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Responsive subject | 75-80 percent |
| Non-responsive subject | 30-60 percent depending on terrain |
| Creek coverage (eyes on water) | 90 percent |

A driver was assigned to take Bishop back to get our Explorer, which took almost two hours. Before leaving, I talked to the CP Commander and explained to him that we were highly skilled trackers and sign cutters and suggested he might want to assign our team to cutting a quarter-circle around Willis's vehicle to try to determine a direction of travel.

The next day's briefing began at 0730, and again, a deputy sheriff who would be working with us delivered our assignment to us. This deputy explained exactly what our assignment was and asked for ideas on how to carry it out. We developed a search plan collectively and headed out.

We had two areas to search in the main search area: one south of the road and one north. We circumnavigated Peak 7632. On the south side, we found several old tracks that could be Willis's. After a week of snow and rain, clear tracks were not possible. But we determined that someone had passed through the area heading south, and that person had a size 8 or 9 boot. Willis wore a size 8.

After completing our first area, we drove one vehicle up to the high end of our second area and spread out to search downhill. This time we really focused on finding a down subject, but the terrain went from very clear to very brushy, hampering POD for a non-responsive subject. About a quarter-mile from the end of our assignment, we found some very weathered tracks leading up toward Bear Mountain. The tracks were 11 1/4 inches long (size 8) and heading 30 degrees magnetic. We were told that a team had found similar tracks much closer to Bear Mountain, and when we plotted the coordinates, our tracks were heading directly to the tracks found the day before higher up on the southern side of the mountain.

After dinner, we loaded up and drove home, arriving back at the Hut at 2400 on Friday.

Our PODs:

Responsive subject: 80 percent within the confines of our assigned search area.

Non-responsive subject: 40 percent depending on terrain.

Total man hours: 184

Total miles: 630

ANNUAL SHERIFF'S APPRECIATION DINNER

Top Contributor – 2008

20 March 2009

By Sgt. Gary Rhoades

Eileen Loughran (See Figure 2) was selected as the top contributor of the China Lake Mountain Rescue Group for 2008.

In the short time Eileen has been with the team, just 3½ years, she has consistently stepped up to help whenever help was needed regardless of the task. This was never more evident than in preparing for their team's 50th anniversary celebration last October. While taking on task after task of preparing for the celebration, she also worked as the team's secretary. In her spare time, she inventoried all of the thousands of USGS topographical maps stored in their Hut.

Eileen volunteers for anything and everything, including some things she thinks just need to be done, and she does it all with a cheery and positive attitude.



Figure 2. Eileen of the mountains

Recognition of Bob Huey

20 March 2009

By Undersheriff Marty Williamson

This evening, the Kern County Sheriff and the members of the China Lake Mountain Rescue Group (CLMRG) recognize Bob Huey (See Figure 3) for his dedicated work in coordinating his team's 50th anniversary celebration last September.

Bob is a 28-year veteran of the CLMRG and of the California Region Mountain Rescue Association (CRMRA). He is an avid mountaineer having climbed more than 500 mountains during his career and taking part in more than 90 missions.

Last year, Bob accepted the high-paying volunteer job of Chairman of CLMRG's 50th Anniversary Committee and worked hard planning, preparing, organizing, and setting up for the event. The celebration took a full year to plan and required Bob's full and complete attention so that nothing fell through the cracks—and literally hundreds of details required his attention.

As a result of Bob's hard work, focus, and occasional prodding of his committee members, and with Sheriff Donny Youngblood as the keynote speaker, the 50th anniversary celebration was a huge success.

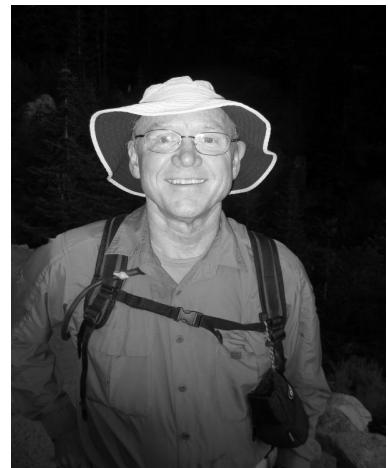


Figure 3. "Rescue" Robert

CLMRG attendees and time-in-service awards

20 March 2009

By Loren Castro

Bob Huey and guest Kathy Huey, Nathan Simons and guest Heather Simons, Mike Myers and guest Cindy Myers, Janet Westbrook, and Loren Castro and guest Carol Clark enjoyed the dinner this year.

Group members received time-in-service awards as follows:

Carol Burge - 45 years

Loren Castro - 25 years

Dave Doerr - 10 years

Werner Hueber - 20 years

Bud Gates - 10 years

CELEBRATION OF 50 YEARS IN MOUNTAIN RESCUE

By Bob Huey

CLMRG celebrated its 50th anniversary on 25 October 2008. The celebration began on Saturday afternoon with *Old Timers Chronicles*, during which current (see Figure 4) and past members shared memories of rescues and incidents from the early years.

The main event was the banquet at the Kerr-McGee Center in Ridgecrest. Representatives from the Kern County Sheriff's Office and from our fellow MRA teams (Desert, Inyo, I WV, Riverside, Sierra Madre, and Ventura) attended. And adding current and past CLMRG members and their guests, more than 160 persons attended.

A static display of current equipment and items from the past preceded the banquet. Charter Member Doug Huse presented early gear and equipment that he and his father, Russ (also a Charter Member), used. National MRA banners decorated the hall, and a slide show highlighted pictures of members from all the years of our existence. Past members and some of Carl Heller's Explorer Scouts mingled with current members and supporters for an hour and exchanged stories.

Master of Ceremonies Mike Franklin (our president in 2008) provided succinct and humorous introductions for the speakers and skits and read a congratulatory letter from Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. Sheriff Donny Youngblood praised CLMRG for its accomplishments. Bob Rockwell provided histories of CLMRG and its founder Carl Heller. Ninety-year-old Liz Calloway (Anderson), who was the first female field member in mountain rescue, sent a video in which she discussed her experiences from the early years in CLMRG. Lee Lucas chronicled the innovations in tracking and organization pioneered by CLMRG. Bill Stronge discussed the evolution of technical climbing and mountaineering gear. LCDR (retired) "Chip" Lancaster reminisced about the use of helicopters in mountain rescue.

On Sunday, the Group sponsored a climb of Mt. Jenkins and a tour of the petroglyphs on base.

DVDs of the *Old Timers Chronicles* and the evening presentations are available. Please send a check for \$20 made out to CLMRG to Bob Huey at 330 S. Rancho, Ridgecrest CA 93555.



Figure 4. CLMRG members at their 50th anniversary celebration

O, let us always have a mountain within our soul, with a peak so high that we never quite reach the top . . . for then, we will always strive for greater things and will not be content with merely climbing hills.

--Ardath Rodale

DONATIONS

Werner Hueber

CLMRG gratefully acknowledges gifts from the following friends during 2008:

| | |
|---------------|--|
| January | UW CFC |
| February | Mojave CFC Saun Floyd (For rescue of Aaron Floyd and friend Jon) |
| March | CFC |
| April | UW |
| May | Sidney Busch (For summer class) |
| July & August | UW CFC |
| September | Mario & Yolanda González (In Memory of Dave Dykeman) Merre-Lyn Dow (In Memory of Robbie Dow) Lois Adamsen (In Memory of Carl Heller) |
| October | CFC UW |
| December | John & Marilyn Wick James & Kathryn Wilson |

SCREE

Check our web page at clmrg.org.

Check the California Region's web page at crmra.org.

Newsletters from other MRA groups, gear catalogs, etc. are available on their respective web sites.

All telephone numbers in *The Talus Pile* are area code 760 unless noted otherwise.

Haikus by Lura Osgood and Nona Mock Wyman appear originally in Gary Bogue's nature column in the *Contra Costa Times*.

*Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson were camping. After dinner, they lay side by side in their sleeping bags.
Holmes: "Watson, are you awake?"*

Watson: "Yes, I am."

H: "What do you see when you look up?"

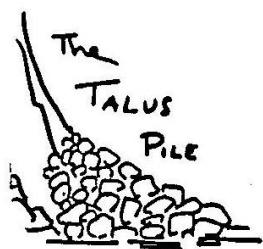
W: "I see thousands, nay millions and millions of stars in the heavens."

H: "And what does that tell you?"

W: "That our universe is a thing of indescribable beauty, thanks be to God the Almighty.

Pray tell, what does it say to you, Holmes?"

H: "Someone has stolen our @#\$%^& tent!"*



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Address Correction Requested

