

CHINA LAKE MOUNTAIN RESCUE GROUP  
 P.O. BOX 2037  
 RIDGECREST, CALIFORNIA 93555

EDITOR: LIZ ANDERSON

MAY 1976 #33

CALENDAR

MAY 17	Training	Search Orientation
19	Training	Search Field Practice
22	Sheriff's Seminar	Desert Survival
22-23	Snow Climb	Williamson
29-31	3-day climbing	Minarets
JUNE 9	Training	Perimeter cutting
12-13	Training, Tech Team	The Cardinal
14	Meeting	2500 Felspar
14-15	Summer class begins	
26	Summer class day hike	Thor Peak
July 3-5	3-day climbing	Sawtooth Range
12	Meeting	555 South Fairview
17-18	Mt. Whitney bash	
24-25	Summer class overnight	Lone Pine Peak

EDITOR'S CUBBYHOLE

An interesting byproduct of rescue work is the chance to read the newsletters of the various volunteer groups. Often a unit's newsletter impresses me as an expression of that particular team's total character. But certainly the editor serves to distill the unique combination of abilities and personalities that comprise a volunteer rescue group onto typewritten pages of a newsletter.

If the aura of CLMRG has undergone a slight shift this month, it may be the change of editors. Dianne Lucas felt that a fulltime job + family + evening and weekend activities left too little time for the Talus Pile. Thanks, Dianne.



#76-01 Recovery, Baja California, 10 January Al Green

At 1900 on Saturday evening I had climbing gear spread all over my living room floor, sorting stuff out for the stretcher practice on Sunday. Dianne Lucas called to say there was an operation in Baja and she needed an Operation Leader to call Sierra Madre's Minor Harkness. I called him and got some information regarding a request to assist the San Diego team in a technical evacuation of a fatally injured Mexican hiker. Dianne called the roster and was successful in getting two other rock climber types interested in a trip to Mexico - Walters and Mason (\*\* these guys were 17, 18 at the most). It was 2125 before we got the confirming call from Sierra Madre. Thirteen hours later a very tired trio and a VW bus with a flat tire rolled (sort of) to a stop at the observatory about 50 km above the Meling Ranch (525 miles from Ridgecrest).

It's always nice to feel you're needed, especially after you've worked so hard to get someplace. We were not disappointed. Base Camp provided us with stew for breakfast and a very optimistic picture of the problem before us. The victim was considerably below a steep waterfall on the far side of a ridge, once removed from the ridge we could see. Will Tapp, Greg and Bob from San Diego, accompanied by several Mexican soldiers, were at the scene and progressing up toward the waterfall. We were to take a stretcher over (carried by more soldiers) set up a raising system to ascend the waterfall and continue on up to a saddle on the far ridge. From there it was supposed to be a carryout for the soldiers. As it turned out, the entire terrain between the two ridges was technical and required ropes nearly all the way. So, we had approximately 1 1/2 days of smoothly operated technical raises, traverses and lowerings (including one Tyrolean).

The evacuation was successful in every respect. Nine men from three different MRA teams worked efficiently and comfortably together. The rapport and mutual effort with the Mexican soldiers was nearly incredible.

Comments:

Pulleys, Gibbs ascenders, Jumars, figure-eight rings, long sling material and prusik loops, in about this order, are essential for fast, efficient, multipitch, multiproblem operations. I mention this because I quite frankly had never used them so many times in the same operation. We always bring lots of ropes, carabiners and standard climbing hardware; and for a single shot down or up a wall that's fine. But when you have to go up, down, sideways and over, you need this special gear to set things up quickly. Also, you need several sets of gear so teams can prepare for the next problem.

Not the least of the many lessons I learned during this experience was the fact that Tequila is heavy stuff on an empty stomach. "Salute" to our neighbors to the south.

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Erosion factor:

The world's population has reached four billion, having risen 50% since 1961 and doubled since 1930, according to calculations of the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago and the Population Reference Bureau.

#76-02 Transit, Yosemite, 5-7 February ..... Carl Heller

Six young adult residents of Yosemite climbed Half Dome Tuesday, 3 February, for an overnight camp. A snowstorm stretched their stay over Wednesday and Thursday nights. They were undoubtedly wise not to attempt the descent in sneakers and without snow or technical gear. They stayed in the tent and drank warm water, until Friday noon.

The operation by Yosemite NP was strong and well run. Based on reports that the hikers had only sleeping bags, a two-man advance team left Thursday, turned back from the climb that night, but climbed up Friday to report everyone in good condition. A helo from Lemoore, punched through snow clouds to the Valley before noon. We arrived in time to watch them take the party off in two flights, about 1200.

Our team of Rockwell, Green, Stronge, Brown and myself had left Ridgecrest at 2400 Thursday, driven over Tehachapi Pass in a snowstorm, had a new starter put in my car in Fresno, to arrive in time to have helped if the storm had not broken. We enjoyed sightseeing in the Valley - beautiful with the snow - and drove home by 0100 Saturday.

The CALMRA people had an interesting talk with Rick Smith of the NPS. Smith explained their need to run the overall operation and their desire to help our teams by supplying guides. We explained our need to act as a CALMRA group, responsible to our elected leaders and our preference for an assigned sector of the search area. We discussed ways of getting airlift into Mariposa or Lee Vining for our teams. I came away with the feeling that CALMRA will be better able to assist the Park in the future due to such a frank discussion.

It is worth noting that the California Office of Emergency Services wouldn't get involved in a National Park rescue. One wonders about Workmen's Compensation for the CALMRA teams.

#76-03 Alert, Long Valley, 8-9 February (2 4-wheel-drives missing).

#76-04 Search, San Jacinto, 3-4 March Bill Stronge

Eric Peterson (17) and Rodger Newman (18) were last seen in Idyllwild Friday night, obtaining a wilderness permit for a weekend trip to the vicinity of San Joaquin Peak. A storm caught them Saturday afternoon. They got wet and became disoriented, so they decided to set up their tent and wait it out. The storm continued through Wednesday night, dropping several feet of new snow.

The parents alerted the sheriff on Monday evening, and Tuesday Riverside MRU sent teams up the trails from Humber Park. That night, Fairchild requested assistance of other MRA units. CLMRG sent Bob Joy, Dave Brown and Terry Moore, with me on a wintry drive to Idyllwild.

..continued- next page...

San Jacinto...continued...

Cold temperatures, blowing snow and closed roads gave us a foretaste of conditions on the search. Wednesday morning we drove around to the Palm Springs Tram and were lifted into the storm. Outside the tram building the snow was hip-deep and still coming down - driven by a strong wind. That day we followed a phone wire to the Round Valley Ranger hut - which was locked. From there we attempted to follow a compass heading and contour into Tamarisk Meadows, Eric and Rodger's stated destination. It was only supposed to be a mile but how far is a mile when you're blindly struggling across steep slopes and through timber? Just before dark a brief clearing of the clouds allowed us to see enough landmarks to know we had missed the Meadows. So we found an almost level, though small, spot for the tent. Dinner that night was stew, something from everyone's pack. We hoped that Eric and Rodger were doing as well as us; it was 7°F outside at 7 p.m. and still blowing.

Thursday morning was clear and by 6:30 as we were strapping on our snowshoes, the helo flew over. We continued our search of the Meadows and high country trails until noon when word was received that the helo had spotted the boys' tent down in Little Tahquitz Valley. They were in good shape and anxious to be found. Shortly after they were lifted out, the clouds rolled in to obscure the area once again. We made our way to the nearest exit, stopping at Sambo's on the way home for a meal as guests of the Riverside Sheriff.

#76-05 Search, Rand Mountains, 20 March

. Carl Heller

An eight-year-old from Lawndale, Los Angeles County, went motor-biking from his family's campground late Friday afternoon, 19 March. Driving back south through the Rand Mountains he became disoriented. He dismounted to climb a summit for a view. He then wandered or slept during the night, being reasonably warm in a corduroy jacket & helmet. He said he heard voices during the night but saw no one. He also said he returned to his bike to find it gone. He was found at 0718 about 1/3 mile south of his bike's original location.

Charles Churchill's family had reported him lost after dark Friday. An unaffiliated 4-WD driver found his bike and brought it out. Indian Wells Valley SAR and CLMRG were called by Deputy Sgt Glennon around 2330, and rendezvoused with Deputy Grimes, in Randsburg at about 0100 hours, 20 March. The teams reached the area north of the Rand Mountains at 0230 Saturday. While the 4-WD teams made hasty searches of all the roads south of the mountains, the tracking teams began perimeter sign cuts around the last known location (LKL).

At 0630 Green's team of Lucas and Robbins reported tracks leading west and up from the LKL. They asked for help on the class 5 tracking and another tracking team to cut for sign about 1/4 mile ahead, since the tracking was going so slow. We had one helo (Kern County) in the air and one (NAF) at Base. We sent a team out with the NAF helo. It passed south over the trackers, made a turn east where Rick Davis spotted a small figure. Mike Rij landed, picked up Charles, and our search was over. Lucas and Robbins were on the boy's tracks..  
continued ....

continued...Church search

and the sighting by the helo while bringing in another team of trackers was not just luck. They had been directed to the specific area.

Comments:

1. A better description of the boy's tracks could have been obtained if I had put one tracker on interviewing the family earlier. The uncle and cousin at Base gave descriptions; later the aunt sent another description. Finally Harry Garner was sent to interview the family in their campground. Time had been wasted on incorrect tracks.

2. The teams (CL, IWV, and Boron) worked well together. However, it took the radios, maps and a lighted camper to get a Base camp operating.

3. This was unknown terrain to us, and this made for difficulties. It would have helped to have a few people who had been on the ground in daylight. We know the Sierra Nevada better than these low desert hills of Kern County.

4. At least partly because of the unfamiliar terrain, perimeter cutting was not planned and executed as well as possible. In retrospect, the first team at the LKL should have asked for and been given responsibility for a close-in perimeter cut, from an advanced base. The first team actually got away from the LKL and out of contact with Base for some time, knowing little of the perimeter cuts. Base camp lacked information about the LKL until later.

5. If the people finding the bike had left it alone, reporting it, the search would have been shortened. If someone had stayed near the bike with lights on, the boy might have returned by himself.

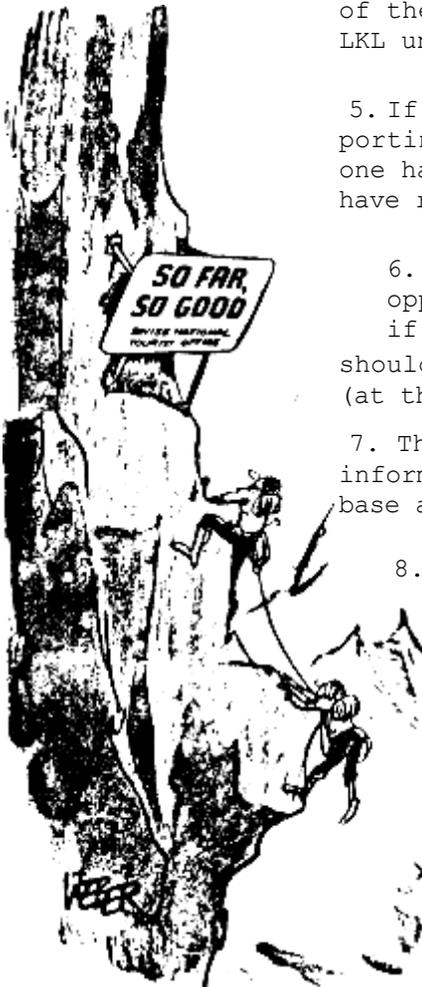
6. Comments from Rij: (a) he would like to be given the opportunity to consider flying at night - particularly if there is a bright moon, (b) he feels that he should be called directly by whoever wants him (at the same time that Scott is called?).

7. The Navy helo was 45 minutes delayed because the information relayed from Scott was incorrect as to search base and search area.

8. The above comments suggest that we should have brought another radio operator and gear to Base Camp for the direct link to NAF.

(By Carl A. Heller, Rick Davis, Lee W. Lucas)

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#76-06 Incident in Fish Canyon, 27 March

CLMRG members involved: Fred Camphausen, Don Harris.

#76-07 Alert, Cachuma Pass, Santa Barbara County, 16 April.

#76-08 Rollout, Meysan Canyon, 16 April

Carl Heller

On 13 April 8 Gardena youngsters started up Meysan Canyon to climb Mt Mallory. On the 16th, one came out with the word that 3 or 4 or his friends were sick, in particular three girls, at 9600'.

Rush Kittel of the Inyo Posse called us through the China Lake Police and asked for as many people as possible, in case there were indeed 3 non-ambulatory victims. Helo liftout seemed unlikely considering the winds in the Owens and Indian Wells Valleys at that time (1000). We collected 12 people with winter gear and left the hut before 1130, in three parties.

At Whitney Portals the Inyo Posse was about to leave and we started right after them, at 1330. The informant had already returned to his friends, 2 miles up the trail. The weather was clear, cool, with a 5-knot breeze, so I asked for a standby helo at China Lake. Snow was light and we made good time, reaching the party at 1445. The principal victim was Penny Reylo, 14 yrs, who couldn't walk steadily and had a pulse rate of 94. Another girl was weak but ambulatory, and one boy had a frostbitten hand.

Al Green started the main party down the trail after tending the bad hands and warning the boy about care. We sent two of our people down with the other girl who was cold but in good mental condition. Dennis Burge had set up a soup kitchen down the trail, to feed those who wanted something to eat.

Penny was given oxygen while the wheeled litter was assembled. The stretcher started down at 1600 and moved rapidly, reaching the roadhead at 1815. Penny's pulse rate was down to 74 by the time we reached Dennis' kitchen, whether due to the oxygen or to the relief from worry we don't know. As soon as we were sure Penny's condition was stable and improving we radioed to take the helo off standby. There is no good landing zone below 10,400' and the soft snow would have made hovering dangerous.

Penny had recovered everything but her appetite at Lone Pine. Dr. Wells of the Inyo Posse said she was ready to go home. The frostbite case was cared for at the hospital and released that evening. The two Rescue Groups had dinner together and headed home, North and South.

CLMRG members involved: Heller, Green, Snell, Davis, Brown, Burge, Joy, Hirschy, Westbrook, Moore, and Hunt. In-town: Carol Burge, Barbara Slates, Bob Rockwell.

Comments: continued....next page....

continued..Comments..Meysan Trail...

1. The hikers were good kids who got in over their heads and then showed sense and strength. They had actually carried Penny 1/2 mile before we arrived. They could have used some instruction in basic mountaineering.
2. We should have sent someone with a radio down with the group of hikers, in case trouble developed.
3. We should continue to improve the wheeled litter - perhaps one of the other MRA teams has a better version.
4. We had a 15-man search team alerted to help Los Padres at Cachuma Pass on Saturday. Because of the definite and urgent need for the Meysan rescue, we cut that team to four. Luckily Los Padres found their victim that same afternoon (16 April).
5. CDR Rij said he did not receive our information about the lack of wind in the canyon, but was ready to come up and look. A chain of communications presents obstructions to information passed along. I twice sent out the wind information because I felt it was important. Mike Rij also did not know who was in the canyon to direct his approach, and would have liked to have known it was CLMRG.

#76-09 Crashed plane, Bradley Pk, 28 April (See next issue Talus Pile).

\* TALUS PILE INFORMATION

Have you checked the CLMRG (Talus Pile) address change in your list?  
Change to: P.O.Box 2037 Ridgecrest, California 93555 (same)

Report on 1975 Public Education . Liz Anderson  
 Bob Rockwell, '76 Pub/Ed Chairman, asked for figures on 1975 efforts to educate the Public. Each of 23 CLMRG members made at least 1 presentation. Involvement ranged from escorting taped slide shows, to working up flipcharts, to giving demonstrations of rescue equipment. Groups exposed to Pub/Ed varied in size from 100 Girl Scouts to 12 PTA members. Usual audience size: between 20 and 40.

Total persons exposed: 1,340.  
 This number does not include the ones who checked out from the Safety Department the CLMRG-purchased films (By Nature's Rules, The Thermal Wilderness).

Westbrook, J.	5
Rockwell, B.	4
Lucas, D.	3
Burge, C.	3
Heller	2
Anderson	2
Lucas, L.	2
Green	1
Buffum	1
Jones	1
Peterson	1
Atkins	1
Dixon	1
Camphausen	1
Robbins	1
Hinman	1
Slates, B.	1
Walters	1
Westbrook, B.	1
Garner	1
Harris	1
Burge, D.	1
Botka	1

