

CHINA LAKE MOUNTAIN RESCUE GROUP

PO BOX 2037

RIDGECREST, CA 93555

FEBRUARY 1980

#44

CALENDAR,

MAR _3	Stretcher rigging 7:30 Hut	Stogsdill
MAR 8/9	Stretcher practice	Training Committee
MAR 10	Meeting - 525 S. Erin	Stogsdill/Robledo
MAR 15-16	Manley(from Ballarat)	Jones
MAR 28	Rock Climbing movies	Atkins
MAR 29-30	MRA Workshop at Fossil Falls	Heller, Green
APR 5/6	Rock Climbing - Owens Ridge	Mason
APR 14	Meeting - 1108 Krista Ct.	Lloyd
APR 15	Helitac Practice	L. Lucas
APR 19-20	Tahquitz	Stronge
APR 26-27	Telescope Peak Ski Trip	D. Lucas
May 10-11	Domeland	Heller
MAY 12	Meeting -945 Upjohn	Joy/Mason

DONORS

We would like to thank the following people who generously made donations to CLMRG in the last six months:

Greenhouse Nursery who gave a pyracantha bush for our latest landscaping efforts on B Mountain.

Robert and Sandra Nelson

Allan and Gloria Singer

Cliff Chandler



Nut Committee (Bob Rockwell, Chairman)

What five members of CLMRG ate breakfast in Ridgecrest, drove to Whitney Portals, climbed Mt. Whitney and got back to the Portals for lunch?

First person with the correct answer and a rational explanation for this venture wins a sweaty T-shirt and some worn out tennis shoes.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

This is just to add some additional information to the report of the rescue of Rollie Averitt on 19 July (#7910). I discussed the accident with Mark Smith while we were readying Rollie for lowering. Contrary to the report in the Talus Pile, Mark said they were both good climbers who had done 5.6 climbs. At the time of the accident, Mark told me, the weather was fair and that Rollie must have fallen due to a hold coming off. The snow and wet rock did not begin until hours later. - Dennis Burge

ANNUAL REPORTS

Summary of 1979 Operations

Dennis Burge

CLMRG was called 16 times by the authorities in 1979, and 10 field operations resulted. The number of field operations has been about 10-12 for the last four years, so this factor seems to be fairly stable. A trend which was noted in 1978 continued. That is, all the field operations and all but one of the calls were from our immediate area (Kern, Inyo and Tulare Co.), so that we have not had the wide ranging operations we remember from about 10 years ago.

Operations leaders should remember to always submit as complete a report as possible to the chairman of the qualifications committee within a few days of the operation or alert. The accuracy of our records and these summaries depends on it. Don't forget to give credit to your coordinator(s).

Operation Type	Location	Victim Type
Search	5 Inyo Co.	11 Hiker 15
Rescue/Recovery	5 Inyo/Tulare	2 Climber 8
Mobilization/Transit	5 Tulare	1 Field work 1
Alert	1 Santa Barbara Co.	1 24
Incident	1	
	17	

Total man hours 1467, NWC excused hours 386

List of 1979 CLMRG Operations Code: T=Transit M=obilization S=Search

		Res=Rescue Rec=Recovery	
#	Date	Operation	A=Alert
			Hours
			Total NWC Ex.
			Location
1	Apr 12	T. Lost hiker. Found by others	
			60 32
2	Apr 20	M. Overdue hiker. Walked out.	
			12
3	May 20	M. Lost Boy Scouts. Found by others.	
			15
			Inyo Co
			Kennedy Mdws.
			Tulare Co

A /r	Date	Operation Total	Location	Man Hours	
				NWC	Ex.
4	Jun 10-11	T. Overdue hiker. Walked out.	Whitney Trail Inyo Co.	36	20
5	Jun 18	Res. Stranded, hypo- thermic climber.	Palisade Inyo Co.	32	14
6	Jun 19	Rec. Climber died of hypothermia, exhaustion	N. Palisade Inyo Co.	166	48
7	Jun 24-25	A. Missing Boy Scout. Walked out.	Mulkey Mdw. Inyo, Tulare Co.	14	
8	Jul 6-7	S. Lost archeologist. Walked out.	Scodie Mtns. Kern Co.	95	
9	July 8	Rec. Fallen hiker. Belo crew recovered.	Whitney Trail Inyo Co.	14	
10	July 19	Res. Injured climber.	Mtnrs. Rte, Mt Whitney Inyo Co.	54	24
11	Jul 23-24	Res. Injured climber.	Mt. Langley Inyo Co.	227	72
12	Jul 28-	S. Lost Boy Scouts. Found.	Mulkey Mdw. Inyo, Tulare Co.	84	
13	Sep 2-3	S. (helo) Overdue climbers (2) OK.	N. Palisade Area Inyo Co.	88	
14	Sep 2-3	S. Overdue hiker. Walked out.	Whitney Trail Inyo Co.		
15	Sep 10-15	S. Lost hiker. Body found by others.	Whitney Area Inyo Co.	559	176
16	Oct 11	M. Injured climber. Evac. by others	Kern Canyon Kern Co.	7	
17	Nov 18	Incident. Injured climber evacuated.	Fossil Falls	4	

 Public Education 1979 Annual RePort

Ron Atkins

The Public Education Committee arranged for 18 programs on outdoor safety during 1979, reaching 1295 residents of the Indian Wells Valley. Presentations were given to children and youths in Girl and Boy Scout troops, church and grammar school classes, adult groups, Sierra Clubbers and NWC Firemen.

Nineteen members of CLMRG helped give these programs. The Public Education Committee thanks each of you for giving your time and effort to make this years programs successful. A special thanks goes to Carol Burge for putting out the Talus Pile and to the Rockwells for doing the Christmas cards.

 Training Committee 1979 Annual RePort

Carl Heller

The record of participation in training activities may not be too accurate since I had to depend upon reports from the trip leaders. Most probably gave me all the names. You should be able to decide how your activities fit in with other peoples. The training activities were broken into SAR practices and courses, and mountaineering trips. The latter included rock climbs and familiarization trips.

1979 Individual Participation in Operations, Public Education and Training

Name	Operations			Pub. Ed.		Training		
	Total	Field	Hours	Pres.	Hours	Total	Trips	Other
Adams	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	1
Anderson, E.	0	0	0	1	8	0	0	0
Atkins	2	2	46	3	14	6	3	3
Blanchard	3	1	17	0	0	0	0	0
Brown	5	4	77	2	5	13	8	5
Buffum	1	0	1	0	0	2	1	1
Burge, C.	10	0	20	0	0	0	0	0
Burge, D.	5	3	69	3	25	8	3	5
Burton	2	2	36	0	0	3	3	0
Camphausen	2	1	47	6	23	7	3	4
Cote	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Fletcher	2	1	33	0	0	2	0	2
Gleeson	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Green	3	2	56	4	19	13	8	5
Harris	4	2	27	7	5	8	1	7
Heller	7	2	52	3	15	22	13	9
Hirman	5	3	71	0	0	8	3	5
Hunt	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0
Jones, A.	8	4	79	1	5	3	2	1
Jones, R.	1	0	1	0	0	3	2	1
Joy	5	1	34	1	4	9	5	4
Landau	2	0	15	0	0	6	4	2
Lloyd	4	2	53	1	2	6	1	5
Lucas, D.	2	1	12	2	21	4	0	4
Lucas, L.	5	4	83	0	0	17	7	10
Mason	4	2	39	0	0	14	5	9
Moore	6	5	108	1	8	0	0	0
Ostermann	4	2	17	1	1	1	1	1
Renta	5	3	70	0	0	14	5	9
Rockwell, R.	5	4	101	4	27	12	6	6
Rockwell, S.	5	0	11	0	0	0	0	0
Sires	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Slates	3	0	5	0	0	0	0	0
Snell	2	1	31	0	0	0	0	0
Stogsdill	5	1	13	0	0	3	1	2
Stronge	5	3	76	1	2	9	6	3
Swann	0	0	0	0	0	5	2	3
Swanson	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Walters	1	1	18	1	5	9	5	4
Westbrook, J.	8	1	29	2	8	0	0	0
Westbrook, R.	4	4	79	1	16	6	3	3
Woodworth	1	0	1	0	0	9	4	5
Vernon	0	0	0	0	0	8	2	6
Anderson, V.	1	0	1	0	0	6	3	3

*** End of Annual Reports ***

OPERATION REPORTS

17912 Search, 28-29 July Mulkey Meadows Lee Lucas

This operation began at 10 pm Saturday (7/28/79) with a call from Inyo County Deputy Clyde Goerge. Two scouts were missing from a party of 22 scouts (ages 11 to 17) and 7 adults, camped in Mulkey Meadows. Ralph Dilibero, Jr. (11) and Richard Singer (12), were last seen about 10 am Saturday near Mulkey Pass. Others in the scout group, including Ralph's father, searched the rest of the day. The three adults hiked out to get help.

In my view this was not an urgent situation. The missing scouts were known to be carrying a tent and sleeping bags, the weather was fair, and water was plentiful. But this was the boys' first back-packing trip- and the boys' fathers were quite concerned. Five of us (Dennis Burge, Allen Jones, Dave Brown, Terry Moore and me) left for Lone Pine about 11:20 pm. We met the three scout advisors in Lone Pine and talked over what to do. By the time we got to the road-head at Horseshoe Meadow it was 3 am. There we met Mary Babylon and Greg Elliot from the Inyo Co. Sheriff's Posse in Bishop. It seemed best to get 2 hours sleep and start searching at daybreak. By morning, Richard's father and mother were there.

Greg Elliot stayed at Horseshoe Meadow to run base camp. Dennis, Dave and Ralph Dilibero, Sr went to Mulkey Pass, then south on the Pacific Crest Trail, headed toward Dutch Meadow - a likely spot for the missing scouts. (We didn't want them to wander down the rugged Diaz Creek drainage) Allen and Terry and Dick went back to where the main group was camped at Mulkey Meadows. Mary and I and Bob and Allen Singer went to Mulkey Pass. From there I could talk to both field crews and base.

About 8 am, Dennis's crew found where the boys had camped in upper Mulkey Creek drainage. The fire was still smoldering. They had scratched their names on a rock with charcoal, with an arrow pointing down toward the Mulkey Meadows camp. Allen's crew started up the drainage and ran into the missing scouts -plus two escorts-15 minutes later. Ralph, Jr and Richard had wandered into the camp of Platt Green and Judy Yamamoto early that morning, gotten breakfast and were being guided down to where their main group was camped.

The whole situation would have worked itself out without our involvement. But it was reassuring to the boys' anxious parents to have us there. We got some very generous donations on the spot-a first as far as I know. I would summarize by saying "all's well that ends well."

Comments:

1. The whole thing could have been avoided by stopping everybody and re-grouping at trail junctions. The boys got to Mulkey Pass, found 3 trails taking off in different directions, asked a hiker which way to go, and got bad advice. They were in the middle of the group, but the ones ahead of them were out of sight.

2. I tried the new Pace radio to talk to Elliot on the Inyo Sheriff's frequency as well as the MRA frequency. It works fine.

3. We learned the Bishop team is short handed, so we may be getting more calls to assist them.

#7913-14 Twin Searches, 2-3 September

Carl Heller

This trip by us was unnecessary, but we could not in good conscience stay home. Two parties were reported overdue, both by third parties reporting in and then leaving. CLMRG got the word when Norm Milloran and Bob West phoned from Bishop and asked us to check out the problems as the Inyo team was busy.

The North Palisades party of Don Otis and Bob Pierce had not returned to Sam Mack Meadow by 1830, when the reporting party left there. 1830 is not very late, and if this call had been alone, we might have waited.

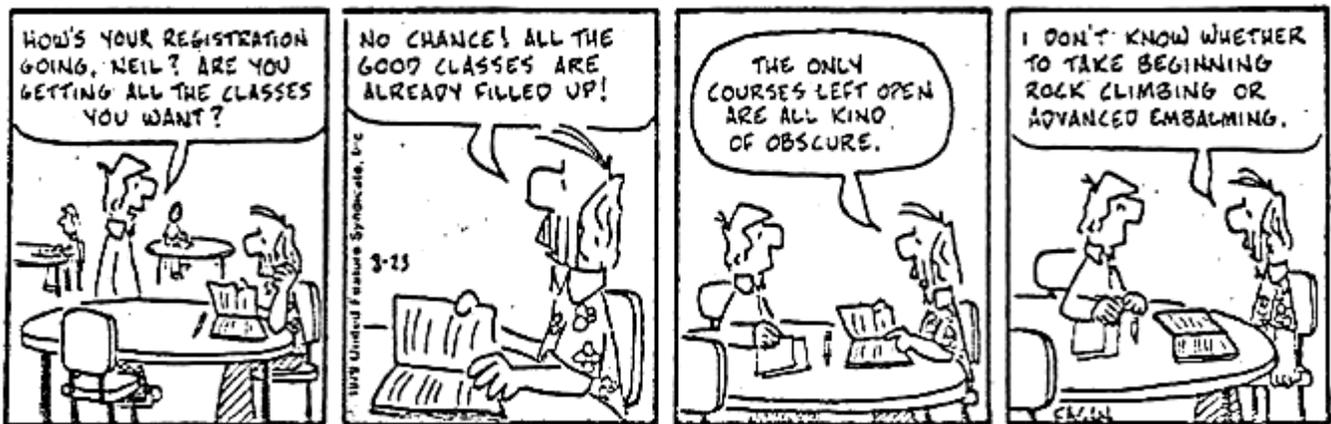
The Whitney party was Robert Wagner, who had failed to rejoin his wife at Bighorn Meadow after sundown. Again, another party brought the word out.

The NWC helo was available, so we decided to fly one team to the Palisades first, to check that problem. Another team would drive to Lone Pine to set up a radio base and to send some foot searchers up the Whitney Trail, looking for the Wagners.

Larry Crume flew at 0729 and by dropping notes into Sam Mack Meadow, we got waved off early and landed at the Lone Pine airport by 0900.

The Whitney operation had an element of humour. Our teams went along the trail asking every hiker if they were, or knew, the Wagners or anyone in trouble. Finally, Rockwell and Hinman found Robert Wagner, who wasn't very anxious to talk to them. He had made a late summit push and then was benighted in the confused trail system below Trail Camp (not an uncommon occurrence, as we know). Finally he followed a hiker with a flashlight and reached his wife around midnight.

We now have a different kind of search to practice for—how to find a "victim" amongst a few hundred hikers. Most of the SAR manuals don't cover this eventuality.



#7915 Search, 10-15 September Whitney Area

Al Green
& Bob Rockwell

CLMRG was put on alert at 2320, 9/9/79, (Sunday) by the Inyo Co. Sheriff's Office. The initial report was that a young man (James Wolter) was missing below Trail Camp. Carol Burge got a team of 5 on standby (Green, Rockwell, Stronge, Westbrook and D. Burge). At 0730 we were told that we were needed. We drove to the Lone Pine Airport and were met by Inyo Deputy Chuck Hazelton and the Inyo base radio operator. At this time we learned that Wolter was last seen at about 1430 on Sunday near the summit of Whitney, headed down in the right direction to cut the trail. Apparently he never reached Trail Crest. The Forest Service contract helicopter had already searched the most obvious terrain.

A back-up team from CLMRG was called (Camphausen, Moore, Renta, Hinman, Lloyd and Fletcher responded) to help cover the now much larger area.

Monday was spent cutting perimeters and covering logical areas. On Tuesday, the chutes from the crest were carefully searched from the helicopter and most were descended. Two teams were searching the Crabtree Meadow area. The base of the crest from Whitney south to Pinnacle Ridge and on to Trail Camp was also searched.

All but Camphausen had to return home Tuesday night. Atkins, Jones and Mason came up to help continue the search on Wednesday. At this point other MRA teams were also called to assist, beginning Wednesday morning.

continued. . . . by Rockwell

As days passed without sign of James Wolter in any of the logical - or illogical- places, we thought more and more of the couloir between Mt. Whitney and Keeler Needle to the south. After all, the last sight anyone had of James was as he ran toward this couloir in search of the trail back to his camp. The 2000-foot couloir had been thoroughly scanned from above and below, and helicopters had flown its length more than once. But we had not downclimbed it like the others because of its notorious rock fall dangers: the route has already claimed enough victims. So there still remained a possibility that James might be in some rock crevice or behind an ice scab.

The negative results of the first five days of the search finally forced the conclusion that the Whitney/Keeler couloir just had to be descended. It was the only possibility left. Finding even some small article like his hat or daypack would obviously be useful information.

Rappelling down the couloir itself was out of the question. However if a party could descend that part of the southeast face of Whitney nearest the couloir, they might be able to view it in relative safety.

I called Pat Elliot at base camp Friday night and outlined the concept. He welcomed our offer to do the descent. Thus early Saturday morning five of us (Atkins, Moore, Mason, Walters and me) arrived at base camp for the helicopter transit to Trail Crest. In spite of some delays, Mike Walters and I were over the side at 1045. We took 18 pitons, several chocks and a 300 ft rope. If

we experienced problems of any sort, the others were ready to follow for support. The entire south side of the Whitney summit plateau, and Keeler Needle, were cordoned off to minimize rockfall caused by casual observers (200 people would sign the summit register that day!).

For the next seven hours, Mike and I descended the face. Whenever we could not view the bottom of the couloir, we traversed on ledges into it, sometimes continuing downward from there, sometimes moving back onto the face. We were subjected to rock-fall, most of it caused by ourselves and our rope retrievals. The closest call was a football-sized chunk of granite that just missed Mike's head. We were hit by several small pieces which did not do serious damage.

After ten full 150 ft rappels including several difficult rope retrievals, interspersed with about 650 ft of class 3 down-climbing, we finally emerged from the couloir at 6 pm. The support party on the summit could now relax. Although we had not located any sign of James, we had verified conclusively that no clues existed in this highly significant area. We were back at Whitney Portals by 7:45 and the others, descending by the trail, arrived shortly thereafter.

The day's efforts concluded the long operation. After six days of searching, no trace of James had been found. Teams had searched every area he could be in, and had cut for tracks every area he could have passed through. This has been an utterly frustrating experience for all the SAR people involved, and of course is a tragic and sad experience for James Wolter's family and his friends.

Comments and Postscript (Green):

I convinced myself too easily, and wrongly that this would be a non-technical, quick and easy search for a hiker who had simply missed the trail. As a result, we were not prepared and didn't come equipped to help run an efficient and organized base camp. The logical areas were covered quickly and if the victim had been alive we would have found him the first day. However we should have found him the second day in any case. This would have saved considerable risk and effort, not to mention the anguish of the victim's family. James' body's location was reported on Sunday by a French climbing group after the search had been called off. He was near the bottom of the single chute that had not been completely descended. Obviously he was in a spot covered by searchers from top and bottom, but nevertheless he was not found. We must consider this a failure.

# 7916	Mobilization, 11 October Kern Canyon	Carl Heller
# 7917	Incident, 18 November Fossil Falls	Carl Heller

CMG member, Bob Adams, dislocated his shoulder while on a group training trip to Fossil Falls. He was helped to the top of the Falls and driven to the Ridgecrest Hospital emergency room.
