



CHINA LAKE MOUNTAIN RESCUE GROUP

P.O. BOX 2037

RIDGECREST, CALIFORNIA 93555

August 1981 #49

CALENDAR OF EVENTS (Subject to change)

Aug 17	Annual Backyard Party	607 Randall, R/C	Rockwell
Sep 5-7	Minarets (3-day weekend)		
14	Meeting	236 E Church	Westbrook
21	Stretcher Rigging Practice (Important training)		B. Westbrook
	Stretcher Practice - Owens Ridge		Heller

THANKS TO OUR DONORS

Virginia and Terry Stirling
(two of our "regular" donors) Thanks, again

OPERATION REPORTS

81-06 17 May TRANSIT INDEPENDENCE PEAK AL GREEN

Initial call came from Sierra Madre (Dick Sale). Asked us to call Inyo and assist. Bob Karras put us on alert. I called S.M. back (as I had promised). Harkness asked me to expedite helo, and said they were reasonably sure that the victim was one of their members. A S.M. group was climbing Independence. At 1325 I called our O.D. He had the Duty SAR Officer call me back. Chip Lancaster called me and I told him the story. He said he would call Scott (AFB) and see if we were getting the SAR. At 1350 he called and said we were to go. However before we took off we learned that Lemoore was going in. Apparently Scott thought Lancaster was from Lemoore. Anyway we (Green, Adams, Jones) got a consolation ride - up around Whitney and back.

81-07 Barb Slates

Here are the statistics concerning the search standby of June 30.
I received a phone call from Bob Karras of the Inyo County S&R at about 12:00 noon. He said that he wanted us to have some people on standby to assist in a possible search in the Mt Whitney region, probably the East Face or Mountaineer's Route. A party of four was not yet officially missing but was nearly 24 hours overdue. The seven CLMRG members who agreed to be on standby were Bill Stronge, Dennis Burge, Mike Renta, Dave Brown, Mike Mason, Bob Adams, and Greg Vernon. Bob Karras called back about 2:30 PM to call off the standby as the climbers had returned.

81-08 30 June/3 July SEARCH & EVACUATION

PEAR LAKE

TOM STOGSDILL

Tuesday evening, 30 June 81, Bob Rockwell was contacted by Dick Sale of Sierra Madre Rescue Team, with a request for assistance in a search for a lost hiker. The hiker had been reported overdue by several companion hikers on Sunday afternoon, 28 June.

Jim Stokes of Santa Monica had been hiking between Pear Lake and Moose Lake with three friends. Jim was 23, 6'2", 170 lbs, and reported to be in good physical condition. He was considered to be a responsible person, but with little background in backpacking in the Sierra, and a dislike of heights. When Jim's companions elected to climb Alta Peak near the Alta trail, Jim indicated that he didn't feel well. He would continue on toward Little Moose Lake, find the trail and return to their campsite. He was unfamiliar with the area and had neither map nor compass.

Twenty-four hours later, the Ranger office of Sequoia National Park requested 15 people from Sierra Madre, China Lake and Bay Area Mountain Rescue Unit to help their search for the missing hiker. A callout resulted in 6 CLMRG people responding: one team. (Stogsdill, Brown and Woodward) leaving at 0300 Wednesday 1 July, to meet with and transport the second team (Camphausen, Lloyd and Renta) who would fly into Woodlake airport. Base Camp was at Pine Lodge.

The man-in-charge was Chief Ranger Bob Smith, with Arnie Gafferey of Sierra Madre for MRA coordination. The CLMRG teams were in the field on 2 July, Camphausen, Brown, Woodward working the Tokopah Falls drainage up toward Pear Lake. Stogsdill, Renta and Lloyd were helicoptered to the ridge above Table Meadows to work down a gully toward Pear Lake. The intention: all teams to assemble at Pear Lake that night to receive assignment for the next day. During the afternoon, a Sierra Madre team cut tracks that were believed to be the victim's. Step-by-step tracking was started. All teams were called in, to assemble at Pear Lake for debriefing by 1730.

The next morning went slowly. WOLF teams were in the field by 0930. Stogsdill and Renta went to a drainage east of Little Blue Dome; Woodward and Brown were just west of the Dome. (Camphausen, Lloyd had returned to CL). During the night BAMRU had arrived to be assigned the area east of CLMRG, in the Buck Creek draw. All 3 of these assigned areas were below the High Sierra Trail, a well-traveled route, that lies downhill from but parallel to the Alta Trail.

The body of Jim Stokes was located by BAMRU teams at 1145 in Buck Creek, about 1/4 mile north (uphill) of the Sierra Trail. Woodward and Brown climbed from their assigned area to assist in the body recovery. From all indications the victim had fallen 70 to 80 feet and had died several hours later, from results of injuries suffered in the fall.

All teams were helicoptered to Lodgepole Base Camp for debrief and critique. CLMRG teams were back home by 0100 Friday, 3 July.

COMMENTS:

It was unfortunate that Base pulled in all teams for the 1730 bivouac, since Sierra Madre trackers were on what turned out to be the victim's tracks. The tracking was delayed 15 to 17 hours.

Time spent tracking at night, with a team sent to cut sign, might have produced happier results.

Though the victim spread out his light blue sleeping bag and his red pack in full view, helicopter patrols from 300 ft had not spotted him.

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4. WOOF teams had worked the same drainage the day before; the high, steep walls of the canyon were too much for the dogs and handlers, and forced them up toward the ridges.

5. There still seems to be confusion as to the words a team should use on the radio to Base: the victim has been found and is definitely beyond help.

81-09 4 July INCIDENT

LARRY GLEASON

On 4 July, 2 members of a group at Wallace Lake made an early departure for Whitney Portals. While negotiating a snowfield on the west side of Tulainyo Lake, the girl twisted her knee in a suncup. Her male companion was having trouble traveling due to altitude sickness. They were overtaken by the four remaining members of their group. It appeared that the two would require a helo-evacuation. Three members of CLMRG (Bob Huey, Howard Derrickson, and myself) were nearly to the top of Russell Pass, and we volunteered to go for the helo. Before leaving, we told the latter 4 to remain with the 2 victims.

After requesting a Forest Service helo, we learned that the party of 4 had continued their descent (making certain the 2 victims had food and shelter, before they left). Unfortunately the helo developed problems and did not evacuate the 2 people until Sunday a.m. At that time the paramedic found the male companion was developing pulmonary edema, and the girl's "trick" knee was so uncomfortable that she felt she could not have walked out from the area.

(Moral: never put your faith in helicopters, and perhaps not in your "friends")

HIGH-ALTITUDE TRAVELERS

We have all seen these golden-brown and black butterflies fluttering along at 12,000 ft., on their way to Mexico.

Monarch butterfly faces unknown fate

The Monarch butterfly — source of summertime delight for thousands of Americans — is being threatened by logging of certain remaining primary — or original — jungles in Mexico, where they winter. WWF-US has recently begun supporting a research and conservation program on their behalf.

In winter, between 20 million and 200 million Monarch butterflies concentrate in one small area of Michoacan, Mexico. although they disperse in summer across thousands of miles of North America. This is the only butterfly species in the world that migrates in a regular back and forth, north-south pattern in the way that birds do.

Project personnel, both American and Mexican, believe the only realistic way to protect the Monarchs over time will be to develop a carefully controlled tourist economy. The area



is only one hour from a major Mexican highway.

Brower reports that maintaining constant warm temperatures and high humidity in the forest is essential to the butterflies' survival. Even selective cutting produces temperature shifts, causing them to use up too much energy and fat seeking safer ground. Monarchs eat and store fat on their way south in the fall, but do not eat after they arrive in Mexico, although they continue to drink. Anything that increases their activity, resulting in a loss of this stored fat, means they will not have the strength to return to the U.S. in the spring. Normally they return north to lay their eggs and then die. The next generation lays its eggs, and dies. It is the grandchildren of those that winter in Mexico one year that return the following year. If this cycle is broken, for whatever reason, the Monarchs will be doomed. However, Lovejoy believes growing Mexican government interest in their protection, and the continued cooperation of landowners gives cause for optimism.

From: WORLD WILDLIFE
Spring 1981

81-10 11-12 July SEARCH & EVACUATION

WILLIAMSON

AL GREEN

I proved that our call radios didn't work very well on my duty weekend. At about noon, 11 July, the police tried to get me, without success. I was out by Hockett's with the radio ON, didn't hear a thing.

Phones work better and there was a message when I arrived home. Inyo was requesting us to search for an overdue climber who had gone off by himself on Williamson. The Inyo team was already involved with an operation on Whitney. We got together a team of 7 people: Heller, Atkins, and Fletcher to drive to Independence; myself, Mason, Harris and Hinman to go with the helicopter.

Lt. Denny Wilcox was the pilot, PR-1 Szydowski the crew chief and HM-2 Graham the corpsman. The helo landed at Independence where we picked up the reporting party and flew in to have him show us the location of the chute that John Conner had started to climb. The R.P. was certain of the location on the west face of Williamson. Denny landed to leave me as close as possible, and then went back for Mason, Harris and Hinman. Three of us started up Williamson, while Harris manned a relay at the landing site at approximately 12,000'. Heller, Atkins and Fletcher had arrived in the meantime and established a base camp.

Heller and Atkins were landed on the summit to check the register - confusion reigned for a few minutes when it was claimed that Conner's name was in the register. However, Hinman spotted the victim at about that same time. He was in the chute that we were climbing and had fallen a considerable distance receiving fatal injuries. It was now 1800.

A plan evolved which saved us an uncomfortable bivy. All of us were retrieved from the mountain, to be brought back in the morning. We would need 8 climbers to accomplish the lowering and evacuation. Sierra Madre was enroute and could help us. Inyo County provided food and lodging at the Winneduma Hotel for five of us. Heller and Atkins went back to C.L. for some more gear with the helo.



Inyo Independent
16 July 1981

Search team returns

SEARCH AND RESCUE team members leave their helicopter on Sunday after recovering the body of John Conner of Hun

ington Beach, victim of a fatal fall while climbing in the Mt. Williamson area. S & R members were transported by

helicopters from China Lake Naval Weapons Center.

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Continued...WILLIAMSON

The next morning went as planned with one exception. [This was a call that claimed three climbers were stranded on the NE ridge of Lone Pine Peak. We diverted the helo to check this out. Turned out they were on the S.E. side and obviously not in trouble. They were doing a fine-looking route on a beautiful rib. Their lights at night had convinced someone that they were in trouble.] Back to our recovery operation: I, Mason and Hinman with Frickland, Reinhardt, Anderson, Lane and Paulson from Sierra Madre were ferried to below the West face of Williamson by 0900. We climbed to the victim. Made about six lowerings and carried the stretcher to the pick-up site. It was over and we were back in Independence by 1630.

COMMENTS:

The helicopter and the skillful crew made this a reasonably easy operation. Lt. Wilcox and Ski were super. Don Harris at the mountain radio relay together with Bob Fletcher at Base camp and Nancy Loundagin at Ridgecrest made a very effective communications system.

81-11 12 July	TRANSIT LONE PINE PEAK	GREEN
Mentioned above, in Williamson Operation		
81-12 14 July	ALERT LONE PINE PEAK	GREEN

Overdue climbers, same group as above; walked out OK

SAFETY MEASURE

Courtesy of Forest Service

Boil all untreated water in backcountry

The clean, clear and cold water of the high Sierra is expected by most people to be pure and safe to drink. "That's not necessarily so," agree Inyo County Health Officer Dr. George Kibler and Inyo National Forest Supervisor Robert Rice. "There are some unseen hazards in drinking untreated water from streams and lakes."

The principal concern is not from man-caused pollution. A microscopic organism known as Giardia lamblia is sometimes found in water. It causes an intestinal disorder called giardiasis (gee-ar-dye-a-sis). The symptoms often do not appear for several days or weeks after drinking untreated water, when that mountain vacation has become a memory. Many people might not associate the disease with their backpacking adventure if the symptoms are delayed.

The giardia, when taken internally, normally attaches itself to the small intestine. This leads to symptoms that include diarrhea, nausea, loss of appetite, abdominal cramps, gas and bloating. The symptoms may disappear in a few days only to recur from time to time for many months.

"Diagnosis and treatment by a medical doctor is essential," according to Dr. Kibler. "It is important, too, to inform the doctor of any suspicions of giardia. A doctor may not suspect giardia in this country, since virtually all drinking water is purified. The symptoms may seem to be those of other disorders. A clue of giardia will enable the doctor to prescribe the right treatment from the start," Dr. Kibler emphasized. "The best treatment is always prevention," Forest Supervisor Rice emphasized. According to State and Federal experts in water quality, boiling of drinking water is the simplest and best way to be sure that the water is safe. One minute of boiling is sufficient, but three to five minutes of boiling, even at very high altitudes, will provide an additional margin of safety by destroying other water-borne organisms.

EDITOR'S CUBBYHOLE

LIZ ANDERSON

Your Editor received half-a-dozen critical comments, all second-hand, on the use of 'bureaucrats' in the last TALUS PILE. I looked it up in Webster's Third, Random House Unabridged, and Oxford American Dictionary. It's an OK use of the word, really it is. There may have been a better choice..but I do only light editing on operation reports. Make it firsthand, next time: call 2951, EXT 316. Guard Mail reaches me at Code 3463.

81-13 18 July

MT WHITNEY RESCUE

DARYL HINMAN

Late Saturday morning China Lake Mountain Rescue Group received a call from the Inyo County Sheriff, to rescue an injured climber from Mt Whitney. The climber was 5 pitches up a very difficult route on the East face called "Open Book" - 5.9, Grade V. Five CLMRG members including Mike Mason, Vern Anderson, Don Harris, Dennis Burge, and myself left China Lake in a Navy Helo piloted by Lt CMDR Chip Lancaster with crew members AD-1 Gordy Draper, ADAN Larry Clark and SAR corpsman Stephanie Moore.

After a stop at Lone Pine Airport to transfer personnel, the helo proceeded into the Whitney region to assess the situation. The injured climber, John Wilkens, 27, of Lyle, Washington, was spotted about halfway up the vertical face. With Wilkens were his climbing partner Dan Krabacher, 28, of Hood River, Oregon, and four other climbers from the nearby "East Face" and "Buttress" routes who had joined the stranded pair. Wilkens had already been placed in a stokes litter (the litter had been left at the base of the face by CLMRG members several years earlier for just such an emergency) and lowered some 50 feet to the ledge by the climbers.

The helo personnel determined that it was possible to remove the injured climber directly from the ledge with the helo. After dropping the CLMRG team of Mason, Anderson, and Hinman at Iceberg Lake below the face and returning to Lone Pine to transport in more rescue personnel and "burn off" excess fuel, the lightened helo was ready to make the attempt which would require maximum power at the 13,000 foot elevation. What followed was very spectacular, as the helo, hovering with rotors whirling within a few feet of the near vertical face, swung a 100-foot long hoist line into the ledge. The line was hooked to the litter, which pendulumed out from the face as the helo pulled up and away. CLMRG personnel evacuated Krabacher, who had minor injuries, from the face to Iceberg Lake where he was later transferred by helo to Lone Pine.

Krabacher related that the injuries had occurred in an accident while he was climbing above Wilkens who was belaying from the ledge below. A large granite block about the size of a hay bale dislodged and both he and the block fell to the ledge. Unfortunately the block landed on Wilkens.

Others assisting in the operation included SAR personnel from the Inyo Sheriff's Posse and Sierra Madre and CLMRG Coordinator Nancy Hinman.

NOTES:

John was a very lucky person to have sustained such serious injuries in such a precariously remote location, to find himself in the Hospital only 7 hours later. Several factors were important in the quick evacuation including the timely notification, the presence of other climbers and the evacuation litter, and of course, the skillful and daring flying of Lt CMDR Lancaster. Normal evacuation techniques would have involved either a 600-foot continuous lowering down the face or a 200-foot traversal right across the series of ledges with a 150-foot raising to the edge of the face. This would have been dangerous to all considering the extreme rockfall hazard and dangerous to the victim considering the impact of movement and estimated time delay of 6 to 8 hours.

One can certainly not argue with the successful outcome of this operation; however, Lancaster and I agreed afterwards that some serious judgement/safety errors were made that could have led to a disastrous outcome. The original intention was for crewman Draper to rappel to the ledge from the hovering helo, rig the litter, and attach the hoist line. On the aborted first attempt, a knot in the rappel rope

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continued, Whitney, helicopter rescue...

sent the helo back to Iceberg Lake to regroup. On the second successful attempt the hoist line was lowered to the ledge with a litter-rigging device attached to the end (i.e., the climbers on the ledge were expected to know how to safely rig the stretcher). Luckily for all, those climbers knew what to do. They had already rigged the litter and tied-in the victim. They had wisely elected not to anchor the litter directly to the ledge. Instead they had a belay on the litter which could also be used as a tag line to minimize penduluming as the litter was pulled up and away. Their only mistake was that the victim was not tied off to the rigging (i.e., had the stretcher broken-up the victim would have had a long fall).

The safety of the operation could have been better assured with CLMRG personnel at the lift-off point. I should have insisted on CLMRG presence on the ledge (1-1/2 hour delay) or at least voice contact with the victims (15 minute delay), but by the time we arrived at the edge of the face where we could have seen what was happening, the lift-off had been completed.

In summary I would make the following recommendations for future operations and training:

- (1) Trained rescue personnel should always be on the ground with the victim when a helicopter lift-off is performed.
- (2) Scheduling of a CLMRG/helo training exercise where a big wall rescue is simulated.
- (3) Scheduling of a joint training exercise between CLMRG and helo crew members to clarify safety requirements for litter-rigging and helo litter-raising.

81-14 25/26 July Search YOSEMITE/TUOLUMNE RON ATKINS

When 14-year-old Stacy Arras walked away from Sunrise High Sierra Camp in northern Yosemite, on Friday, 17 July, she planned to take pictures. She was never seen again. A search was set up for that weekend; CLMRG was unable to take part because of other commitments.

On Thursday, 23 July, Carl Heller received a request for a search team and transferred it to Ron Atkins, whose duty weekend it was. Nancy Hinman coordinated the callout. Eight people responded (Atkins, Lucas, Westbrook, Harris, Buffum and trainees Corinna Peterson, Bob Huey, and Larry Gleason).

Driving to Tenaya Lake, the team then hiked 5 miles, reaching the base camp at Sunrise High Sierra Camp at 9 a.m., Saturday the 25th. Base camp, on this weekend, was run by Park Ranger Durr and Joint Operation Leader Miner Harkness of Sierra Madre. Everything was very well organized.

CLMRG searched both days, covering high-priority areas. Although some 150 people participated (including 67 MRA personnel representing most of the Region teams) with the WOOF teams and the searching helos, not a shred of evidence of Stacy was discovered. CLMRG was home Sunday p.m.

NOTE:

National Guard air transport had been promised, but they were restricted to flying into and out of Bishop only during daylight. Since Bishop is still 2 hours drive from Tenaya, this imposed such severe time restrictions on search teams that CLMRG elected to drive up at night, and use the daylight hours for search. Air transport is useful only when it cuts travel time, and increases time in the field.

Inyo Posse called for Navy helo, for Boy Scout at Trail Camp with broken ankle. Sheila Rockwell got 2 CLMRG members, but no helo available. Cancelled.

CLIMBING REPORT YOSEMITE VALLEY

During 2 weeks of stormy May weather, Bill Stronge climbed two Grade VI walls with Mal Cameron from Wales. On the NW Face of Half-Dome-Direct they took a stove for tea but ended each day short of a bivy ledge. There was easy nailing and strenuous off-width cracks in an alpine setting. They topped out early the fourth day, winning their race with a multiday storm. A great line.

Looking for more thrills and longer spills, Bill and Mal fixed Zodiac on El Cap in the rain. Not much free climbing here, almost every pitch is A4 with two A5's. Long runouts of tied-off arrows and hook moves went up shallow, bottoming cracks. Believing that what you can't see won't hurt you, they climbed (fell) into the night searching for illusive bivy ledges. Heavy rain fell while they climbed the last pitch providing an epic finish to this difficult route.

Corinna Peterson joined Bill and Mal for some shorter routes: Sacharer's Cracker (5.10A) a classic jamcrack; Mother's Lament (5.10c) a friction route on the apron that keeps getting harder; and Left Side of Goodrich Pinnacle (5.9).

This is an appropriate spot to insert the Editor's apologies for leaving two names (Corinna, mentioned above, and Mary Wyatt) out of my superficial account in last Talus Pile, when I talked of CLMRG women in climbing. Sorry.