

SEARCH AND RESCUE OPERATIONS

87-28	9/16/87	Recovery
Palisades		Huey

I received a call from Sgt. Dan Lucas of the Inyo County Sheriffs Office (ICSO) at 2100 on 15 September, asking for assistance with a body recovery. Ed Wallace had reportedly fallen when his anchor came loose while descending Starlight Peak.

Wallacer's partner, Al Johnson, reported that the two of them were climbing the northwest ridge of Starlight (the north summit of North Palisade) but retreated at 1430 without making the peak. Upon reaching the Thunderbolt/ Starlight couloir they elected to rappel rather than down-climb the loose chute. A sling anchor was already in place from a previous descent and they decided to use it, also backing it up with one of their own. They did not check the knot on the first sling.

Wallacer reportedly was bouncing as he rappelled. and when both slings gave way (one untied and the other was cut) he fell 200 feet to his death. Johnson climbed down the class 3 to 4 chute without a rope, and reported the incident.

Both men reportedly had been climbing for 15 years, with Johnson the more technically experienced. Both had accomplished several climbs this summer; Wallace had done several 14-thousanders in Colorado, and ascended Leonard Minaret in July.

They ate a good breakfast that morning and left at 0800 to climb Starlight. They had plenty of water which they consumed on the climb. Therefore, fatigue or dehydration seem not to be factors in the accident.

CLMRG fielded nine members who were transported into the Palisade Glacier and climbed approximately 200 feet above the bergschrund to retrieve the body. The climbers' rope was intact, which substantiated that the fall was due to anchor failure. We lowered the body about 80 feet to a ledge, where a Forest. Service helicopter was able to lift it away with a haul line.

CLMRG field members were Huey, Hinman, Mason, McDowell, Mitchell, R. Walker, Silverman, Rogers and Derrickson. Janet Westbrook coordinated. Two Inyo Posse members also participated.

87-29	9/30/87	Search
Palisades		Finco

At 1800 on Wednesday, 30 September, the pager went off with a message from Sgt. Dan Lucas of the ICSO. We were needed for a search, again in the Palisades area. Mark Groff, age 33, had left Glacier Lodge Monday morning for a solo climb of the U-Notch and North Palisade. He was reported overdue on Wednesday afternoon by his girlfriend.

Sgt. Lucas first verified that Mark's vehicle was still in the parking lot near Glacier Lodge, and then flew over the area in a helicopter. No one was seen either on the glacier or on the trail. Lucas requested that we be at base camp Thursday at 0800 to help with the search.

I contacted Carol Burge to see if she could coordinate. When I explained the incident to Carol, she said she thought she had talked to Mark Sunday afternoon in the backpacker's parking lot. She reported that he planned on leaving at 0200 Monday to climb North Palisade via the U-Notch. He was carrying a red day-and-a-half pack, and he had crampons and an ice axe but no rope. He said he had been up the route a few weeks ago with his girlfriend, but had to back off. She also mentioned that he was wearing a San Diego baseball cap. I thanked Carol for the extra information, and she then called Betty Meng to assist with the call out.

The plan was to helicopter Bob Rockwell and Tom Roseman to the glacier and have them climb towards the U-Notch, check the bergschrund there, and then continue up to North Pal. A second team of Andrew Mitchell and Steve Walker would be flown to the glacier to check the bergschrund below Thunderbolt Peak, and traverse around the glacier to Mt.

Bob Westbrook would be helicoptered into Sam Mack Meadow to hike down the trail, interviewing people he met. Bill Martin would set up a radio relay in the Black Lake area. Inyo would run base camp and I would help out with the planning; if nothing turned up today, a CRMRA callout would be initiated Friday. Roger Meng manned the HAM radio in base.

The Forest Service helo arrived at 1008 and Rockwell was flown into the area at 1035. He had the pilot fly around the glacier, up the U- Notch, and around the back side of the mountain. Nothing was seen and Rockwell was dropped off on the glacier. Roseman and Walker were flown in next, followed by Mitchell. Westbrook and Martin went in on the next flight.

At 1145 Rockwell reported that he had found Mark's body. It appeared that Mark had fallen at least a couple of hundred feet in the U- Notch chute before being stopped by the bergschrund. Rockwell requested a stretcher and two more people to augment those already in the vicinity. Martin was in place by this time, so he told Westbrook to go back to the meadow for a pickup. Since I was no longer needed in base camp, I got the stretcher and left with the helicopter to pick Westbrook up.

We exited the helicopter and met Mitchell and Walker on the glacier below the bergschrund. Rockwell and Roseman lowered the body to us.

We placed the victim in the stretcher, and the helicopter came back to do a long haul off the glacier about 1335. Everyone hiked down to an LZ and after some exciting helicopter rides, we were all back in base camp an hour later. Sgt. Lucas treated us to a lunch/dinner and we arrived home around 1830.

87-30 Idyllwild	10/8-9/87	Search Green
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A Thursday evening pager message to call the China Lake Police put my dinner on hold. After the prudent wait to see if someone else would take the call, I responded. The Police dispatcher relayed Riverside MRU's request (handled by the Sierra Madre SRT) for a CRMRA call out.

The situation: a 71 year old man *was* missing in the Idyllwild area. We were to meet behind the fire station at 0700 the next morning. My plea for another OL via the pager proved fruitless, and a series of calls for a coordinator then followed. Mary Wyatt accepted, and with Sheila Rockwell's help got Finco, Derrickson, S. Walker and Wilson to commit to a 0230 rendezvous at the rescue hut.

We arrived in Idyllwild at 0615 hoping to find a restaurant open for breakfast. Unfortunately, there was none, so we waited for base camp to get established and were briefed on the status and plans.

The search had started the previous day and was to *be* continued with helicopter support, inserting teams to extend the search area. At 0745 we had our assignment and prepared for a day in the field. At 0920 the first two of our team of five were dropped off at what proved to be the wrong spot. The next insertion put the other three at a more nearly correct spot and then moved the first two to join them.

We spent the next five hours sweeping trails, with one person on the trail itself and the others bushwacking. At 1500 - when we were farthest from the roadhead - the call came that the subject had been found. The subject's son had found him, apparently quite by accident, less than a mile from the roadhead.

Comments:

1. Map and compass skills proved to be essential and altimeters were extremely useful.
2. After the operation was over, we had trouble making sure that CLMRG (back home) was not sending more people. I should have simply called the pager number to make the announcement.

87-31 Palisade Glacier	10/11-12/87	Rescue Finco
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Al Green called me at 1515 on Sunday, 11 October, regarding a climber with serious back and neck injuries on the Palisade Glacier. Al could go later, but he needed someone to take an advance team.

Stogsdill, Atkins, Sakai and I were on our way at 1605. We arrived in Big Pine at 1800 and contacted Doug Wilson of the Inyo County Sheriff's Posse in Bishop for details. Earlier that day, Goraon and Ray (last names unknown) were attempting to climb North Palisade via the U-Notch with crampons but no ice axes. Gordon fell crossing the bergschrund, injured his arm and shoulder, and gashed his leg with a crampon.

As they were descending the glacier, they were encountered by another North Palisade-bound party which included an EMT. The EMT assessed the leg wound as not serious, but the arm was very painful and probably broken. Nevertheless, Gordon was mobile. The two parties descended together to the base of the glacier, and Bo Olson (RP) went for help.

In spite of the gathering storm, a CHP helicopter overflew the area at 1530. They could see nothing from the air, but were able to land and interview a pair of climbers who had earlier seen a group descending from the base of the glacier. (Bo felt that his partners would probably have attempted to reach their camp at Sam Mack Meadow, and await help there.)

While Wilson was arranging for a helicopter the following morning, we decided to send a team in at first light just in case, with Bo accompanying us. Green, Rogers, Derrickson, Ingle and Barbee arrived at 1700 and we all drove to Glacier Lodge.

We arose for breakfast at 0500. Shortly, Bo discovered the splinting material used for Gordon's arm hanging on the doorknob of the Glacier Lodge entrance. There was no note or other evidence. We notified *the* Sheriff, who in turn contacted the local hospitals to see if an injured climber had checked in. Results were negative.

To be safe, at 0700 the team of Stogsdill, Rogers and Derrickson started up the trail. At 0920 they met Bo's companions. Gordon and Ray had indeed descended by themselves from Sam Mack Meadow the previous evening. Apparently, they had reached their vehicle and quietly departed - presumably fearful of "being charged" for the incident. The only information we had regarding their identity was that Gordon's *wife* was said to work for the Great Pacific Iron Works in Ventura. Stogsdill radioed that information to base, and the team

was out by 1100. We packed our gear for the return to Ridgecrest.

Another team of B. Rockwell, D. Burge and Ostermann had been on alert back home to assist if needed. Cheryl Braun coordinated.

87-32 Mt. Whitney	10/24/87	Transit Huey
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Mike Renta received a call from the ICSO at approximately 1130 on 24 October. Scott Driscoll, age 47, had attempted to climb Mt. Whitney via the trail on the 22nd. He had planned to stay at Trail Camp that night, climb to the summit, and return by 1600 on the 23rd. Scott was reported to be experienced, in excellent condition, and well equipped.

It had snowed on the 22nd and the temperatures were low. The conditions currently were rain at lower elevations with snow above 9000 *feet*.

Four members responded. In transit I gave base camp to Tom Sakai, who was not able to go into the field. Bart Hine, Randy Walker and I prepared our gear for the hike to Trail Camp and an overnight stay. We interviewed the RP at the Portals and were ready to start up the trail when the subject walked out.

He had stayed at Trail Camp as planned. There were a few inches to two feet of snow on the switchbacks, and one to two feet on the back side. He had lost the trail in the fog, but found his way to the summit by 1700, *where* he decided to spend the night rather than descend. He hiked out the next day.

Coordinator *was* Sheila Rockwell assisted by Carol Burge. Tom Roseman and Ron Leiser committed. Sierra Madre SRT had been placed on alert.

*Time is not measured by
the passing of the years, but by
what one does, what one feels
and what one achieves "*

-Nehru

Free to Flow

Los Angeles Times
Sunday, November 29, 1987

The region around Forester Pass, north of Mt. Whitney, is among the most stupendous in the Sierra Nevada. This is the Kings-Kern Divide country. To the north, the snowfields and remnant glaciers feed the vast stream system that becomes the Kings River, ultimately flowing through Kings Canyon and the national park that bears its name. On the other side of the divide, the snowmelt gathers to form the Kern. Flanked by the Great Western Divide, the Kern cuts an incredible trench from the Whitney area straight south through Sequoia National Park and the Golden Trout Wilderness.

Further north, the Merced River rises amid the very highest peaks of Yosemite National Park, ultimately coursing through Yosemite Valley and out into the San Joaquin Valley through magnificent gorges and its own impressive canyon.

Today, all three rivers are formally part of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers system, culminating an impressive drive in Congress over the past three years. The Kern River bill became law upon President Reagan's signature last Tuesday. He signed the Kings and Merced bills barely a month ago. For all the divisiveness in Washington the past year, both Republicans and Democrats, Congress and the Executive branch

came together on the wild rivers legislation.

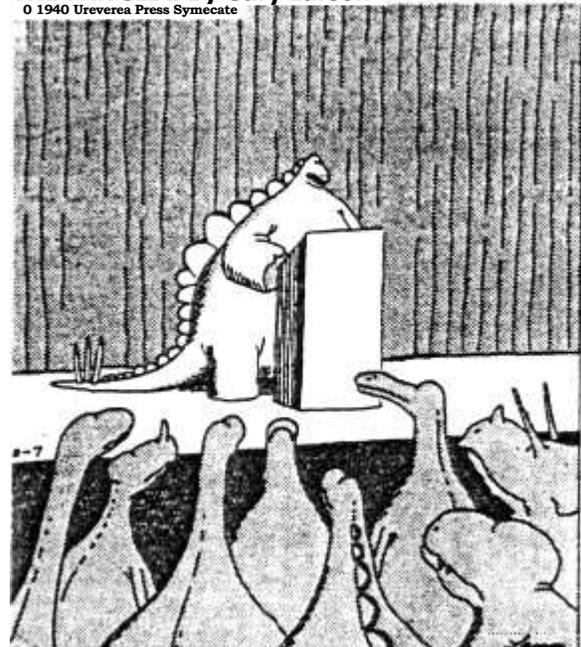
Practically speaking, the wild and scenic rivers designation has one major effect: the barring of any major new dam and reservoir projects on these streams after they have left their respective national parks. But there is significant symbolic meaning to the action as well. For years, the major streams from the Sierra have been dammed in the lowlands to catch their spring and summer snowmelt, providing the irrigation water that has turned the San Joaquin Valley into an agricultural wonderland. Now, the remaining natural portions of the streams have been preserved from their very sources above 13,000 feet down to the foothills so that Californians may marvel at their beauty and enjoy them as recreational resources.

Through their wildness, these rivers have helped carve the majestic Sierra peaks, sculpted their canyons and melded their mountain meadows. The rivers sustain the wildlife, the fisheries and riparian plant life. As passageways into the magic of the mountains, as direct links to the highest summits, they nurture the human spirit. Once man marveled at his ability to harness these rivers. Today, man stands at the river bank in awe of its wondrous, living power. And so it will be for future generations.

BERRY'S WORLD By Jim Berry



THE FAR SIDE By Gary Larson



"The picture's pretty bleak, gentlemen. . . . The world's climates are changing, the mammals are taking over, and we all have a brain about the size of a walnut"

GIARDIASIS: LETS BE RATIONAL ABOUT IT

There is an abundance of worrisome information about this disorder. Giardia lamblia parasites are widespread and if contracted they can produce odious consequences in the host's intestinal tract. They have been detected in the water supplies of many wilderness areas, including our own Sierra Nevada. Land managers persistently urge people to sterilize all water in the back country.

For convenient sterilization, a saturated iodine solution is hard to beat. Add half an ounce per quart of water and wait 15 minutes to an hour, depending on temperature. This is a safe method; the toxicity of iodine has been grossly overrated. Remember: don't add any flavoring until after the iodine has done its work because iodine would rather glom onto carbohydrates and acids than microbial organisms.

Nevertheless, the only place in the Sierra where I have ever bothered to sterilize drinking water is along the Mt. Whitney Trail below 12,000 feet. Yet in spite of approximately 20 climbing trips each year, I have never had a problem with Giardia-like symptoms. Furthermore, among my similarly-active friends there has been only one confirmed case of the disorder. So I have often wondered if all the concern is really warranted.

Two fairly recent reports contain relevant information:

1. (From "Wilderness Water Disinfection" by James A. Wilkerson, MD and Page W. Caulfield, DOS. In Appalachia, Winter 1985-86) Respected mountaineering physician Wilkerson points out that Giardia are ubiquitous and are probably present in the water supplies of every major city. However, fewer than half the people who drink water heavily contaminated with Giardia actually develop infestations. Of these, only about one fourth result in symptoms.

Symptoms are abdominal cramps and diarrhea after a two-week incubation period. The risks are minimal. If not treated, the problem usually goes

away within ten days. Rigorous therapy is necessary only in rare instances.

2. (From Open File Report No. 86-404-W, Dept. of the Interior, USGS, in cooperation with the Calif. Dept. of Health Services.) To determine the extent of Giardia in the Sierra, samples of water were taken from 69 stream sites in 1984. These sites were selected in consultation with National Park and National Forest managers. 42 were considered to be "high-use" sites (high probability of human fecal contamination), and 27 sites were "low-use".

Generally, 100 gallons of water were filtered and the number of Giardia cysts counted. Cysts were detected at 18 of the high-use sites and at 5 of the low-use sites. The largest number of cysts found was 41 (Susie Lake, S of Lake Tahoe). The next largest was 14 (Long Lake, SW of Bishop). Samples taken in the Mt. Whitney area ranged from 0 to a high of 5 (Trail Camp).

Now, 41 cysts in 400 quarts of water is not a very high concentration. To analyze such questions as the probability of finding "n" cysts in "m" quarts involves something called the Poisson distribution function*. For example: P(no cysts in one quart) - .903, P(no cysts in ten quarts) - .36, and P(two or more cysts in one quart) - .0049. Analogous figures for a 5 cysts per 400 quarts situation are: .988, .88, and .000077.

How many cysts does it take to have an infestation that might produce symptoms? Certainly at least one to have a basis for reproduction. But while there may be reasons to sterilize water in the Sierra Nevada, I don't think that Giardiasis is one of them. At least not yet.

- Bob Rockwell

*Set $r=41/400 \cdot m$; then $P(n \text{ cysts in } m \text{ quarts})=e^{-r} \cdot r^n/n!$

DONOR'S CORNER

Many thanks to Roger Meng for his recent donation to the Group. Roger and Betty joined CLMRG within the past year and are both very active in the communications end of search and rescue activities.

MOUNTAIN MOODS

*Speak of the mountain...
Of secret cloisters tendril-woven and sun-bediamonded among the
mountain's lavish vales—
Of scattered Alpine blooms of spring asway by waters purling—
Of the dignity of pines skyward soaring like nuns sweet-scented
Who drape the mountain with their shawls of green.
In the rain they weep, these stately sisters, and their tears they fall as
crystals on carpets incense-wafted,
And in the wind doth God direct the choreography of their sighs hard-blown
For those who pause and hearken down among their dappled shadows.*

*Look higher now.. .
Yon spiked ridge of this skyward mountain downward swoops
From granite heights, its dragon-back all bristling,
When lo, it turns translucent in the dawn, web-light,
And higher still, aloft and far, the mountain's granite face
Flushes in the selfsame kindling fire,
When bye and bye, by dawn's amour at length abandoned
And hard cloven by the flashing scimitars of day,
That vasty face impassive looms, and hard, and cruel;
If affrights the eye with its dimensions mind uncomprehending.*

*Yet anon, in the waning fever of the sun in deep extremis—the sinking star,
This unyielding visage mellows yet again, and blushes,
Its graven scars now healed, as though burning with yet another cosmic
passion, as for Aurora.
Then, shadow-haunted, this eon-battered face of moods nocturnal,
moods diurnal,
Turns leonine, turns saturnine, to face the night and glower at eternity.*

- Russell O Huse

It's hard to believe that it's been 13 years since Russ Huse left our area. Russ is a charter member of CLMRG, and was elected to the Life Member category upon his retirement. Now in his eighties, he devotes much of his time to studying and writing, but we understand that he still finds time to climb. Russ will be remembered as a big man and a strong hiker, and for the massive loads he was able to carry.

It was Russ who turned Lone Butte (or "B" Mountain) into an exercise area. He used to climb this hill by many routes, frequently starting before dawn from his Wasp Road home. By now most of us have followed his example, and certainly it has helped keep us physically ready to go on operations.

Japanese, 99, Climbs 12,395-Foot Mt. Fuji

From Reuters

FUJI YOSHIDA, Japan—A 99 year-old Japanese man reached the summit of Mt. Fuji on Sunday, retaining his own record of being the oldest person to climb Japan's highest mountain.

Fellow climbers clapped and cheered "Banzai!" (long life) as Teiichi Igarashi climbed to the top of the 12,395-foot mountain with a cane in one hand.



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