



CHINA LAKE MOUNTAIN RESCUE GROUP
 P.O. BOX 2037
 RIDGECREST, CA 93556

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Sept 20-22	Bradley/Center Pk	Rockwell
Sept 21 Sa	CRMRA	Myers
Sept 24 Tu	Dynamic Belay Practice	Green
Sept 27-29	Zion	Mitchell
Sept 25-Oct 23	First Aid Topic B (Wednesdays)	Westbrook
Oct 4-6	Tahquitz	Hueber
Oct 11-14	Yosemite	Finco/Hinman
Oct 21	Meeting	Westbrook/Renta/Runkle
Oct 24 Th	Stretcher Hut Night	Ganger
Oct 26 Sa	Stretcher Practice	Ganger
Nov 1-3	Picacho Del Diablo	Hinman
Nov 5-6	CPR	Green
Nov 9-11	Mt. Tom/ Basin	Rindt
Nov 16	South Sierra Day Hike	Schafhauser
Nov 18	Meeting	Breitenstein/Roseman/Schafhauser
Nov 20	Equipment Hut Night	Equipment Committee
Nov 23	Lamont Peak	Schafhauser
Nov 24	A Coso Range peak	Ganger
Dec 3-4	CPR	Buffum



Operation Reports

**96 – 01 2/4- 6/96 Search
White Mountains Hinman**

At 2000 on Sunday, February 4, the Mono County Sheriff's Office contacted CLMRG concerning 19-year-old Scott LeFever who was missing after attempting a cross-country backpack trip through the White Mountains from Chalfant Valley, California to Dyer, Nevada. This trip is about 20 miles through rugged, snow-covered terrain and requires a 7000 ft ascent up the west side to the crest of the range at over 12,000 ft elevation, followed by a 7000 ft descent down the east side. Although the subject was reasonably equipped for the solo journey, he had very little previous experience. He was traveling through an unfamiliar area using a compass and non-topographical USFS map. He had started on Thursday and was to be finished on Saturday. A storm had hit the area on Saturday and was just beginning to clear.

Four CLMRG members mobilized at the CLMRG hut at 0200 Monday morning and arrived in a steady rain at base camp at the Bishop Airport at 0600. Base camp was operated by Mono County Sheriff personnel at the Inyo County SAR hut. Sunday's search efforts had located tracks high on a west side ridge leading to the crest of the range out of Sacramento Canyon. Monday's search was concentrated to the crest of the range and the east side canyons. Organized in two three-person teams. CLMRG and two members of Mono County SAR were flown to the crest in two flights by the Navy SAR helo from Lemoore NAS. Our assignment was to search the crest from Barcroft Laboratory to White Mountain four miles to the north. Barcroft Laboratory is a research facility located at 12,400 ft elevation. It is normally unmanned in the winter, but is left unlocked for emergency use. It was along the direction of travel of the subject. At 14,246 ft, White Mountain has the distinction of being the only mountain on the West Coast greater than 14,000 ft elevation and outside of the Sierra Nevada or Cascade Ranges. The subject had stated that he might climb this mountain.

The crest of the range in this area is generally a broad flat ridge with very steep sides to both the east and west. The first team landed at 13,200 ft and searched south along the meandering eastern edge of the crest to Barcroft Laboratory three miles away where they eventually spent the night. The second team landed at 13,700 ft just south of the summit and searched the summit area and the crest back to the south where they were eventually air-lifted back to base camp. Both teams experienced harsh weather conditions with temperatures in the low twenties, winds gusting to 40 MPH, and visibility at times limited to 100 ft. Neither team found any sign of the subject. However, conditions were not favorable to locating tracks, due to the hard, wind-packed snow and blowing fresh snow. The small building on the summit was locked and plastered with ice and snow. The summit register had over a thousand entries in several books and on at least a hundred loose pieces of paper. Because of the harsh conditions, the entire register was taken back to base camp where it was later checked to no avail. While we were searching the crest, other teams, including dogs, were searching the east side canyons. Some definite snowshoe prints heading down were found at the top of one canyon late in the day. A second CLMRG callout Monday evening yielded two more field members who arrived at base camp late that night.

Late Monday night and early Tuesday morning, an Army helo equipped with FLIR and Night Vision from Stead AFB in Nevada overflew the search area. At about 0130 they located the subject with the FLIR in Toler Canyon at 7800 ft which is near where the snowshoe prints were found. This canyon like most of the east side canyons is deep and steep-sided with numerous cliffs along the narrow canyon floor. The subject had become stranded on Saturday by cliffs below and snow covered slabs above. After establishing communication with the subject by lowering a radio, the Army helo was amazingly able to extract him, using Night Vision in the dark, from the three-foot-wide ledge he had been on for two days. He was returned to base camp at 0230 and reunited with his family. He was hungry, but otherwise in good condition.

By 0800 all searchers were out of the field and by 1130 CLMRG had returned to Ridgecrest. CLMRG field members were Hinman, Finco, B. Rockwell, Myers, Hueber and Jain. CLMRG coordinators were Westbrook, S. Rockwell and B. Meng.

Comments:

1. We had problems with the GPS units related to the cold. They were operating at the limits of their temperature range, but low batteries may have contributed. Batteries should be replaced after each operation regardless of how much time they have been used.
2. Don't look at a helo using Night Vision with your headlight on - it blinds them.

96 - 02 3/17/96 Incident
Owens River Gorge Roseman

While climbing at Owens River Gorge during a scheduled group outing, we heard a woman screaming in pain around a corner from where we were climbing in the vicinity of Gorgeous Towers. A number of other climbers were in the area and could observe what was going on. I was belaying Mike Dorey at the time, so I asked the climbers who I could see, if any of them knew first aid. Upon receiving a negative response, I lowered Mike to the ground and we went to see what was going on. Kim was on the ground after having been lowered about 50 ft from where she had taken a leader fall to a small ledge and apparently broken her ankle. She was in a great deal of pain. Her climbing partner was in the process of taking off her shoe. I helped to stabilize her right ankle to remove the shoe, and then with Mike's help, wrapped the ankle with 'horse' tape and a roller bandage, after checking for circulation in the toes. I had noticed a stretcher on the way to the climb, so I asked someone who knew where it was to get it. Kim was moved to the stretcher. Then a group of about 12 climbers helped carry the stretcher up to the North parking lot - a distance of about a mile. We placed Kim in the back of a pick-up truck and her climbing partners drove her to the hospital. CLMRG members were Tom Roseman and Mike Dorey with guest Cindy Goettig. We were assisted by climbers from Las Vegas and Vancouver, Canada. I was impressed by the willingness of everyone to stop climbing and help carry Kim out of the Gorge. The other climbers present were not trained in First Aid and they did not have First Aid kits. The climb was only Kim's fourth lead climb and was rated 5.10a with the ledges already mentioned.

96 - 03 (4/29-5/2)/96 Search
Pinyon Pines Myers

The pager went off at 1700 on Monday, 29 April 1996. Sgt. Marty Williamson was requesting assistance for a search in the Pinyon Pines area of Riverside Co. Daryl Hinman called me at about 1730 about taking this operation. After agreeing to take the operation, I called Kevin Walker in base camp to get as many details as possible

Subject Information: Robert (Bob) Evans, Age 68, White Male, 5'10", 145 lb., graying/brown hair, blue eyes. Last seen on Wednesday, April 24th, wearing light clothing, hiking boots, and possibly carrying a day pack and water. Bob was reported to be an experienced hiker in good condition, however considered easily confused, possibly pre-Alzheimer's, and had previously been lost. His tent was at the trailhead and his car was found in the cafe parking lot across the street from the Riverside Co. Fire Station in Pinyon Pines. These were the only clues available - no confirmed track was available. He was due home on the 24th following a day-hike up Mt. Martinez. The search had begun on Saturday April 27th.

Kevin wanted us to be in base camp by 0600 the next day (30 April) and said to bring light technical gear and lots of water. The operation was in the desert side of the mountains west of Pinyon Pines at an elevation of 2000 to 6000 feet. This is a very hot, dry and desolate area. Even the vegetation was unfriendly.

We departed the hut at 0200 stopping in Thousand Palms for breakfast and arrived in the Pinyon Pines base camp at 0630. By 0700 we had our assignment and by 0815 we had all been airlifted into the field by a Riverside Co. Sheriff's helicopter to an elevation of 3920'. Our assignment was to clear two one-way canyons, considered to be technical. Once into the canyons it was evident that nobody had been there in years. The temperature was about 100 degrees and dry as a bone.

SPECIAL NOTE: When Mitch yells YAHOO, it translates to mean SNAKE. I thought he was

warning me that he was going to turn loose of a big tree branch when I felt something ON MY FEET. It was a big long black snake doing a 5.4 traverse over the top of my feet.

After a long, hot day we were airlifted back to base camp by a San Diego Co. Sheriff's helicopter. Debriefed and fed, we drove to Hueber's cabin in Idyllwild for the night. A full day in that heat had really taken its toll on us and a good night's rest was much appreciated.

The next morning (1 May) our assignment was to clear two canyons coming off the south side of Martinez Mountain. We were broken into two teams and augmented by three members of the Riverside MRU. Everybody was instructed to carry a minimum of one gallon of water and to travel light. We were flown to an LZ near the summit of Martinez where we split up heading to our assigned canyons. Mitch's team found a lone set of tracks heading down the mountain and had been tracking for quite awhile. The subject's tracks crossed straight across Cactus Spring Trail and continued heading southeast toward Martinez Canyon. The direction of travel was away from any type of help. My team relieved Mitch's team on the tracks. Mitch and Runkle requested the helo fly low down the drainage toward Martinez Canyon. The pilot was reluctant to spend much time doing the aerial search because she still had twenty searchers to extract before nightfall. She did fly a couple of miles down the drainage, but Mitch didn't see any additional sign. Tracking until we lost the track in some thick brush, we reported our position to base who was organizing an overnight team to relieve us. We were eventually replaced by two RMRU members. We felt like we had a high probability track and that the person we were tracking had probably been traveling at night when these tracks were made. We based this on how the subject took such drastic measures to avoid minor obstacles, things that would have a totally different look at night. At night it would have been much easier to miss the trail that this person went right across. Our last member was flown out at 1940.

Following a short debrief, I called Terry with an update. We ate dinner and then headed home. We arrived back at the hut at 2430 on 2 May, and secured at 0100.

CLMRG members participating in operation: Steve Florian, Werner Hueber, Mike Myers, Andrew Mitchell, and Walter Runkle. Coordinator was Terry Mitchell.

ADDENDUM: Bob's body was found by Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit personnel on Sunday, 5 May at about 1430. The body was located just below the junction of Cactus Springs Trail and Martinez Canyon. They estimate he had been dead about a week. There was no confirmation that the tracks we were following were those of the victim. but they were headed in the right direction.

96 – 04 5/18 -19/9 6 Rescue Upper Boy Scout Lake Huey

A call came over the pager from the Kern County Sheriff at 2010 on Saturday, 18 May. Mitch took the call and started coordination. The mission was to carry a stretcher into Upper Boy Scout Lake in the North Fork area of Mt. Whitney in order to lower an injured hiker to a helo landing zone for an air evacuation.

Matt Smith and Jeff Johnson had left East Face Lake Saturday morning and were descending to Upper Boy Scout Lake when Matt injured his left leg while glissading down a snow chute. They then called the Inyo Sheriff on their cellular phone. Two climbers from Boston, Mass. who just happened to be EMTs provided assistance. They splinted Matt and remained with him until the Inyo team showed up around 2000. A China Lake helo attempted to fly in to extricate Matt, but was turned back by high winds.

I took over the CLMRG operation from Mitch, and left the hut at 2330 with Tom Sakai, Frank Buffum and Charley Cattell. Our field team left the trailhead at 0200 and reached the subject by 0630 that morning. Matt was lowered to the landing zone, and then flown to the Lone Pine Hospital by the China Lake helo. He appeared to have a spiral fracture of the left leg near the ankle. The field team members were out by 1030 and we arrived back at China Lake around 1330. Coordinator was Betty Meng, assisted by Terry Mitchell.

96 - 05 5/24/96 Mobilization

Mt Whitney Trail Finco

CLMRG was paged around 1020 on Friday, 24 May. Andrew Mitchell, (duty-weekend leader) called to say he could not answer the page, so I took the operation. The Inyo County Sheriff was requesting assistance in a search for five possible subjects in the Mt. Whitney vicinity. Betty Meng coordinated the callout, and Sheila Rockwell assisted with the telephoning.

CLMRG met at the hut at 1200, and departed at 1230 for the base camp at Lone Pine airport. We arrived at the airport at 1345 and were informed that the three main subjects had been found. Jim Fox (46), his son (18), and a friend Dave Lambert (15) were part of a larger group camped just above Lone Pine Lake around the 10000 ft level. Thursday morning at 0900, Jim, his son and Dave started for the summit of Mt. Whitney. Jim and his son were lightly dressed (shorts and T-shirts), but it was reported Dave had a little better gear. None of the three were prepared to spend the night out. Their plan was to be back in camp by 1700. The three never showed up and that afternoon a storm blew in with high winds, snow, and below freezing temperatures. The next morning Dave's father, Jeff, hiked down to the Portal to report the missing climbing party. Two 19 year olds from the group packed extra gear and headed up the mountain to look for the three overdue hikers. As it turned out Jim, his son and Dave made the summit late in the afternoon on Thursday. Coming down in the poor weather, and just before dark, they made a decision to bivvy. The three dug a snow shelter, off the trail, and settled in for the night. Sometime the next morning, the two hikers looking for them passed the bivvy site without noticing, and proceeded on up the mountain. The three overdue hikers got out of their snow shelter and headed back down to their base camp. Four Inyo County searchers found them back in their base camp, a little cold and tired, but in good shape. Two Inyo County members stayed with the group to hike with them down to the Portal. The other two Inyo members continued to hike up the mountain to try to catch up with the two hiker/searchers.

After it was determined that no extra help would be required CLMRG was released by the Inyo County Sheriff.

The sheriff treated us to lunch and CLMRG arrived back in Ridgecrest at 1630. Participants were: Linda Finco, Tom Sakai, Werner Hueber, Arun Jain, Steve Florian, and Walter Runkle.

96 – 06 6/2/96 Incident

Tahquitz Rock Hueber

On 2 June I was rock climbing on Tahquitz Rock in Idyllwild with a member of the Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit (Debbie Riegle). When we returned to the start of one of our climbs, around 11 am, we met a man, about fifty years old who was obviously in pain. He told us that he had been climbing the Fingertrip (5.7) with his two teenage children. He had taken a fall while following his son and thought he had broken his wrist. He accepted our offer to help him, so we splinted his wrist by just wrapping a stick to his under arm and wrist and providing him a triangular bandage around his neck for immobilizing his arm and wrist. We then offered to help him down to the parking lot since he obviously was in considerable pain and showed the early signs of shock. He said his children could help him and he would not need our help. We recommended that he stop at the Idyllwild Fire Station to get a better, more comfortable splint.

96 – 07 7/4/96 Incident

Ridgecrest Myers

During a family BBQ on the afternoon of July 4th, my daughter Natasha came into our backyard and told me the baby at the end of the street (one house away) was choking and thought I should go help. As we left the house she told me that she had heard a woman scream from the backyard to call 911

As I approached their back gate, which was open, their dog came at me like he was going to attack, but didn't. I saw a baby lying on the above-ground pool deck and the owner of the house, Ben Valentine, standing in the pool next to the baby. The baby had been under water five, and possibly as long as ten minutes, and was found by Mr. Valentine lying on the pool bottom. The baby's mother was

kneeling over the child in hysterics.

I climbed up onto the platform and saw what was obvious- the child had drowned, or nearly drowned in the pool. His lips were purple, face was blue, and he was not breathing. His face was covered with vomit, his mouth was full, and he was lying on his back. There was no sign of life in the child. I picked the baby up, inverted him, gave him some back blows, rolled him over, cleared his mouth, then gave him a couple of breaths of air. I checked for a pulse and I thought I felt a very faint one. I honestly don't know if it was his pulse or mine that I felt. I continued this process because vomit kept oozing from his mouth and I had to keep clearing it. (The totally lifeless body of an infant is a lot different from our baby mannequin.)

After a couple of minutes I laid the baby on his back and again rechecked his pulse. Again I thought I picked up a very faint pulse, so I continued rescue breathing. Officer Mike Brown, Ridgecrest PD arrived and I asked him to check for a pulse, and he too felt a faint pulse. I continued rescue breathing for about two more minutes and asked Officer Brown to check the pulse again. This time the report was negative - no pulse!

Officer Brown was standing on the ground next to the platform which was about chest high giving him real good access to the baby. We immediately began two-man CPR, with officer Brown doing chest compressions with two fingers and me doing the breathing. The fire department arrived, but did not intervene with the process. After what seemed like an eternity, the ambulance arrived, but they did not intervene either. At some point there appeared to be a very slight gurgle sound from the baby, but he still was not breathing. At that point the ambulance crew stepped in and took the baby out to the ambulance, where they continued working on the child. When the ambulance crew took him, I didn't think he had much of a chance of surviving. There was just no sign of life.

Throughout this entire ordeal, the baby's mother was hanging on to my shoulder screaming at me not to let her baby die. This hysteria continued after they took the baby to the ambulance. At the request of the ambulance crew, I drove the mother to the hospital in my car to get her away from the scene. I stayed with her until a hospital staff person took her into the emergency room. I went home, took a shower, and tried to get the stench of the vomit out of my mouth and nose, which was a futile effort. It stayed with me for a couple of days.

Conclusion:

The baby's name is Teejay and he is 18 months old. I don't know what his last name is. He was airlifted to Loma Linda Hospital where he was put on life support in intensive care for several days. From what I learned from the mother, he eventually came completely out of it. regained all his faculties suffered no brain damage that they could find, and was released. The mother brought him over to my house about a week later for a little reunion, and he looked like nothing had even happened to him.

Mrs. Valentine stated that her husband Ben had begun CPR as soon as he pulled Teejay from the water. Nobody was doing anything when I entered the back yard. but given the fact that the baby's face was covered with vomit, it is very likely that they had been pushing air into his stomach.

**96 - 08 7/26-29/96 Search
Kings Canyon Roseman**

I switched duty weekends with Linda earlier in the week, and had a strange feeling that something would happen. The pager went off around 1830 Friday evening with a request from the Park Service for assistance in looking for Randy Morganson, a 54 year old back country ranger with 30 years of experience. Randy had failed to make his scheduled radio check on the 23rd of July. Terry Mitchell coordinated the callout, assisted by Randy Barker. A team of five left the hut at 0030 Saturday morning for the six hour drive to Cedar Grove. We arrived just after dawn, were briefed and flown in to the remote base camp at Bench Lake. Our initial assignment was changed when one of the helicopters was called away on a medivac, so we hiked over Pinchot Pass to search a large sector around Twin Lakes and Woods Lake. For the next two days, often out of radio contact with everyone but the occasional helicopter, we operated in two teams searching the area. Like everyone else, we found nothing. Sunday

evening we were flown back to a remote base camp for food and a new assignment. The next day we searched an area from the remote base down to the Kings River, under the charge of George, a back country ranger. We were out in heavy rains, accompanied by hail, thunder and lightening. Treated to a beautiful flight down the Kings River canyon in stormy weather as we returned to Cedar Grove, we learned first hand the effects of wind shear on a helicopter. After a short out briefing, we repeated the six hour drive arriving home just after midnight. Arun Jain did an excellent job as Field Team Leader, assisted by Walter Runkle. Debbie Breitenstein and Ellen Schafhauser were stuck with me, but kept me straight and worked well in the field under difficult search conditions.

Lessons Learned:

1. The radios need to have the correct frequencies for the Park. This became interesting as each day of three we were given different and conflicting information. The last day everything finally came together.
2. We took our own flight suits. This worked well as the contract helicopters in the Park and the National Forest require them.

96 - 09 8/5/96 Incident
Gates of the Arctic, Alaska Buffum

My wife, Debby, and I were members of a group of eight that was going down the Noatak River in the Gates of the Arctic National Park through the Brooks Range in Alaska. The Brooks are the highest latitude mountain range in the world. The Gates of the Arctic is our largest national park. four times the size of the state Massachusetts, and established -to preserve a pristine wilderness area- no roads, no lodges, no cabins, virtually no trails. It is one of the emptiest, least charted mountain wilderness areas on the continent. It is accessible only by foot or air. On Sunday, our group had flown in by float plane to Pingo Lake, made camp there, and taken an evening hike to the Pingo (a hill- like formation left by glaciers). The next day, Monday, we portaged our gear and boats over to the river for an early start the next day. Some climbed a nearby mountain and had seen many dall sheep. At dinner, we noticed that one of our members (Jacq Brown, 62) was missing. We thought we should find out where she was before bed. We checked her tent, the other tents, and the immediate area with no success.

We then did a series of hasty searches - along the banks of the lake, and to another camp. All to no avail. Tracking on the tundra through pools of knee-deep water did not seem like the thing to attempt though many bear, caribou, and wolf tracks were found along the sandy river banks.

We reconvened. We set-up line searches to the river and along the river banks. Possibly she was lost in the tall vegetation or perhaps had lost consciousness for some reason and was down. To no avail.

We reconvened. We did line searches up and down along the river for a mile both ways. No tracks or sign of Jacq. There was much calling and whistling as we went especially as there are many grizzly bears in this area (we saw three during our trip). No response.

We reconvened. We were beginning to be concerned that she might have gone to the river and fallen in. The river was quite cold - 40 degrees. She would have had a problem getting out. The trip leader divided us into several groups. I was sent up river for several miles to see if I could find her or any signs. Two others were to go around the lake to the north. Two others were to go around the lake to the south. The leader loaded a kayak with survival gear and was preparing to go down river to see if she could find her along the banks. If so, she would make camp. The remaining two would go along the shore until they met-up with the leader down river. They would help if Jacq was found. They would come back with the leader and leave the kayak if not.

About 0200 (dark twilight above the arctic circle in August), a group going around the lake heard a yell in the darkness. It turned out to be Jacq across the lake in the opposite direction from the Pingo. A boat was sent across the lake to pick her up. She had apparently planned to go back to the Pingo we had climbed on our first night (to our east) but had ended up on the west side of the lake. All parties eventually got back to camp. No one understood how she could have gotten around the essentially blocked north end of the lake. But we were all greatly relieved and glad that our friend had been found. We slept in, found ice on the standing water when we awoke (at home in Ridgecrest the temperatures were in the 110-to-120s), and got a late start the next day.

96- 10 8/11/96 Mobilization
Big Pine Creek Hueber

On Sunday, 11 August at 0300, I received a call from Sgt. Marty Williamson. Sgt. Randy Nixon had requested eight CLMRG members to support the Inyo County Sheriff in the search for a 72 -year- old male who became separated from the rest of his family on the way down the South Fork of Big Pine Creek late Saturday afternoon. There were two groups on the hike down Big Pine Creek, the children were ahead of their parents. Each group thought the grandfather was with the other group. At dinner time the family noticed that grandpa was missing and notified the Inyo Sheriff. Inyo started the search during the night but could not locate the missing grandfather. At 0200 on Sunday morning Sgt. Nixon requested support from CLMRG.

Seven members left the hut at 0500 and arrived at the base camp, the trailhead near Glacier Lodge, at 0730. When we arrived, we were informed that the victim had been located by the helicopter and had been airlifted to the Bishop Hospital. He had spent a cool night in a T-shirt at about 9000 ft. He was okay. The CLMRG team did not get into the field.

During breakfast at Big Pine, Sgt. Nixon received a new request for the rescue of a hiker with a broken leg near Upper Lamarck Lake. We volunteered to standby in case our support for this operation was needed. The Forest Service contract helicopter flew to Upper Lamarck Lake with one member from the Inyo team, picked up the injured hiker and brought him to the Bishop airport. An ambulance then transported him to the Bishop Hospital. We left when the helicopter had picked up the victim, arriving back at the hut at 1300.

Field Team members were: Tom Roseman, Linda Finco, Bob Huey, Dennis Burge, Kevin McCormick, Cindy Goettig and Werner Hueber. Sheila Rockwell and Janet Westbrook were the coordinators.

96 - 11 9/3/96 Search
Pacific Crest Trail Mitchell

We are waiting for more information to complete this report. It will be in the next Talus Pile.

96 – 12 9/5/96 Incident
N. Fork Lone Pine Creek McCormick

On 9/5/96 at 0615, I started from Whitney Portal up the north fork of Lone Pine Creek to the Mountaineer's Route on Mt. Whitney.

At approximately 0700, I was at the start of the Ebersbacher Ledges. I scrambled a short way up and discovered a small pepper spray bottle in a snap closure case. A few feet away, I discovered the body of a man on the trail. The victim was on his back, and his jacket had flipped over his back and covered his face. His lower left leg had a severe compound fracture. Both arms were raised above his head, and his backpack slung over one arm only. I removed the backpack and lifted his jacket to check for a pulse. No pulse and rigormortis had begun. I was on the right side of his body. I looked around the head area and found what appeared to be a severe head injury on the back of the head. I did not move his head to see the extent of damage. I moved away from the body and made mental notes of his approximate age, weight, clothing, and backpack. I did not look inside the backpack. The victim was a 55-65 year old man with gray hair, weighed approximately 185 lb., and was just under six feet tall. He was wearing a white T-shirt, shorts, and a black REI gore-tex jacket. His pack was a black Jansport internal frame pack.

I then returned to Whitney Portal to report the body. The store was closed, so I checked with the campground host to see if they had a cell phone or radio. They did not, so I drove to Lone Pine and called 911. The Inyo county sheriff came and I gave him the information I had.

I was asked to meet the sheriff and Inyo search and rescue at the Whitney store at 1100. I met Inyo SAR, and assisted with the recovery.

At 12 noon, we left the Portal area with a stretcher, stretcher wheel, and lowering gear. We lowered the victim in the litter to the canyon floor by hand, and crossed the North Fork by the small waterfall just

below the start of the Ebersbacher Ledges. We went a short distance further and placed the wheel on the stretcher. From there, we wheeled the victim the rest of the way, only needing a rope belay twice. We were back at Whitney Portal at 1630, and I returned to Ridgecrest.

Notes:

1. An Inyo team member walked to the top ledge above the victim and discovered a ski pole (the other was near the body) and slide marks in the sand.
2. When we arrived at the body for the recovery, someone had covered him with a space blanket, had left their pack there, and presumably returned to report the body. We later discovered that this person was a guide. and he had looked in the man's pack and found a piece of ID that he took with him to report the accident.

Donors

CLMRG greatly appreciates recent gifts from the following friends:
Sam and Barbara Van Gundy - In memory of Al Brown, LCDR US Navy (Ret)
Dorothy E. Gould - In memory of Corey Yenning
David and Maxine Zinke
Rosemary McMahon
Randy Barker
Mario and Yolanda Gonzalez - In memory of Dave Dykeman

Letters

August 23, 1996

Dear Friends,

The David Zinke Family is very appreciative of your prompt response to our call for help on the night of August 10.

As you know I lost the path for the river crossing and the way back to Glacier Lodge when darkness abruptly ended my search. By this time I was higher up on the rocks, but not as high as the switch backs, looking for the trail. I was in my shirt sleeves with no jacket or flashlight.

I saw three moving lights in the void below, and thought perhaps it represented someone searching for me. I had a police whistle on me and I blew it at frequent intervals for about two hours. I heard a whistle sound from somewhere in the direction of the lights on three or four occasions, and thought that was in response to my whistle, but after about two hours I gave up, and made my bed on the rocks.

It was a long night, chilly and very dark, except for the stars. I prayed for warmth, and every now and then the constant breeze coming down the mountain had warmth to it for which I was grateful.

With daylight the next morning I headed for the path that led from the switch backs to the river at the foot of the waterfalls. As I climbed upward the trail seemed higher and the climb steeper, and I finally decided it was too much for me.

As I descended I saw a helicopter hover in the clearing near the river at the base of the falls, and I made my way in that direction. Fortunately it returned to that area three times, and on the third time I was in that area and the helicopter came down and picked me up. As it descended some of my grandchildren searching in that area came over and we told them that I was being taken to the hospital at Bishop.

I was a bit woosy, dehydrated, and fatigued. My heart beat was up to 140 beats per minute with any minimal rise in the terrain. I consented to a 24- hour observation in the hospital. I had no chest pain and my EKG was normal.

I have made a good recovery and appreciate all the care and concern of each of you. We are sending a sum of money to each person listed by the Glacier Lodge in hopes of covering expenses. If someone has needs for reimbursement over and above, please let us know.

Thank you, thank you, and may God bless every one of you. -Sincerely, Dave & Maxine Zinke

Scree

From the Wall Street Journal:

It may be safer, but campers who are carrying cellular phones into the wild are driving some purists crazy.

While the National Park service doesn't keep an official count, it says the cell phones are helping to ease rescue efforts. Yellowstone National Park has received several calls from people wanting to be rescued since the park installed equipment this summer. A Rocky Mountain camper carrying a cell phone was recently rescued after he ruptured an artery. A spokeswoman for the parks calls phone use there "a wave of the future."

But critics say the phones may dissuade panicky backpackers from learning basic survival skills, such as reading a map, when a call is so easy. Plus, the technology spoils the adventure for others says John Viehman, executive editor of Backpacker Magazine. "It's like someone whipping out a cell phone in church."

Did you know that the top of Half Dome in Yosemite is as big as seventeen football fields?

This is the last Talus Pile edited by Carol Burge. Loren Castro has agreed to serve as editor. Thank you for your support! – cgb

