

China Lake Mountain Rescue Group

Talus Pile

Issue Number 101 July 1997

Summer and Fall SCHEDULE

Jul 28	Mon	Summer party	Green
Aug 2	Sat	Mt. Whitney (Mountaineer's Route)	Myers
Aug 2-3	Sat-Sun	Mt. Cloudripper	Sakai
Aug 8-10	Fri-Sun	Mt. Whitney (East Face) and Mt. Russell	Huey
Aug 9-17	Sat-Sun	The Kaweahs	Rockwell
Aug 16-17	Sat-Sun	Bear Creek Spire	Myers
Aug 22-24	Fri-Sun	Mt. Ritter (High Trail)	A. Mitchell
Aug 27, Sep, 3, 10, 17	Wed	Mini-stretcher practice	Training Committee
Aug 30 - Sep 1	Sat-Mon	Tuolumne Meadows	Myers
Sep 5-7	Fri-Sun	Mt. Carl Heller	Rockwell
Sep 8	Mon	Meeting (Group policy)	Huey/Florian/Myers
Sep 13-14	Sat-Sun	Mt. Humphreys	Dorey
Sep 15-16	Mon-Tue	CPR	Green
Sep 19-21	Fri-Sun	Zion	A. Mitchell
Sep 20	Sat	CRMRA meeting (Yosemite)	Finco

Sep 24, Oct 1, 8, 15, 22	Wed	First Aid Topic A	First Aid Committee
Sep 27- 28	Sat- Sun	Mt. Mendal and Mt. Darwin	Sakai
Oct 3-5	Fri- Sun	Mt. Conness	Hueber
Oct 12- 25	Sun- Sat	Utah (climbing and rafting)	Roseman
Oct 17- 19	Fri- Sun	Red Rocks, NV (climbing)	Lambert
Oct 20	Mon	Meeting (tents)	Runkle/Sakai/Lambert
Oct 22	Wed	Stretcher Hut Night	Myers
Oct 25- 26	Sat- Sun	Stretcher practice	Myers
Oct 31- Nov 2	Fri- Sun	Joshua Tree (climbing)	Roseman

CLMRG is funded by United Way of Indian Wells Valley.

OPERATION REPORTS

Tom Roseman

97-01 10 Jan 97 ...IncidentMt. Mary AustinLinda Finco

Sheila Rockwell called my house around 1515 on Friday, 10 January. Sheila stated that she had received a cellular phone call from Mike Myers. Mike reported that Walter Runkle had dislocated his shoulder while on the Mt. Mary Austin weekend trip. Mike was looking for assistance to help Walter down the mountain. Mike requested the stretcher, the wheel, and some ropes. Sheila was looking for a leader to organize people to go and assist Mike and the other members on the trip. (The CLMRG members on the trip were Walter Runkle, Tom Sakai, Mike Myers, Bob Rockwell, Mike Renta, Curtis Davis, and Mark Lambert.)

I told Sheila that I could lead the effort and gave her some additional names to call. Sheila also stated that she would tell Mike (when he called her back) to call me at home so that I could get any additional information from him directly. Mike called me around 1540 and said that they were located at approximately 9500 feet. Mike was concerned about a steep icy descent they would have to make with Walter. Mike said that the weather was cold, so they were going to attempt to descend to the mining road. I told Mike that we would try to get up there as soon as possible to assist.

Tom Roseman, Steve Florian, and I met at the hut at 1615. Tom and Steve loaded up the equipment and headed for the trailhead around 1640. I picked up Daryl Hinman at his house to give him a little more time to get his gear together. Dr. Bill Ferguson was called to see if he would be available to assist, especially since the members with Walter were unable to reduce the dislocated shoulder. Dr. Ferguson had planned to drive to Mammoth that evening, so he just threw in some additional gear and left for the trailhead around 1700. Daryl and I left Ridgecrest around 1715.

At Lone Pine, we checked in with Mike on his cellular phone and found out that they had descended the snow safely and were on the mining road. They estimated that they had a mile to go to the trailhead. Mike thought that the worst was over and that our assistance would not be needed. We said we would continue to the trailhead just in case. Tom, Steve, and Bill arrived just about the time Walter and the others made it back to the trailhead. Daryl and I arrived about 15 minutes later.

Bill tried but was unable to reduce the dislocation. We rigged up a bed in the back seat of one of the vehicles so Walter could lie with his dislocated shoulder hanging (the most comfortable position for him). We loaded up all the gear, and everyone headed back to Ridgecrest. We arrived back at the hut around 2100.

Participating CLMRG members: Linda Finco (leader), Daryl Hinman, Tom Roseman, Steve Florian, Dr. Bill Ferguson, and Sheila Rockwell (coordinator).

97-02 19 Feb 97... Incident.... Ostrander HutTom Roseman

While skiing and snowshoeing on the way into the Ostrander Hut, we split into a ski group and a snowshoe group. Scott Money Penny and I were going to ski ahead to the hut and then come back to assist so that we all would make it to the hut by dark. Annette Fournier was going to ski with us to the turnoff to the Horizon Trail and wait for the snowshoe folks to make sure they got on the correct trail. Annette stopped to take off her skis at an uphill section. She lost her balance and fell, lacerating her right eye with the metal edge of her ski. Now bleeding, she had the presence of mind to

blow her whistle to attract Scott and me. We were already far enough away not to hear the whistle. She used snow to stop the bleeding and asked a skier to tell us that she needed help. By the time the skier reached Scott and me at the Horizon turnoff and I had skied back to Annette, the snowshoe folks had already reached Annette. After putting NeoSporin on the wound, Debbie and I used 'proxi-strips' to close the wound, which was about an inch and a half long and very deep just above the eye. A Park Ranger on ski patrol radioed for help, and a snowmobile took Annette and then Scott back to the Ranger Hut at Badger Pass Ski Area. They eventually drove to the Valley where Annette received two internal stitches and eight external stitches. Annette had wanted to go on to the hut, but everyone agreed that the wound was too deep to ignore. Annette was a real stoic during the whole incident and a very calm victim!

Lessons Learned:

1. We had trouble getting the proxi-strips to adhere and had to remove the excess NeoSporin in order for them to work. They do work much better than the butterfly bandages. The clinic told Annette that we had done an excellent job in closing the wound.
2. I was once again reminded of the problems that can arise when a party splits up. How much more safe can you think you are than on what in the summer is a paved highway?

97-03 24 Mar 97... SearchEureka ValleyTom Sakai

Victim: James Laird (OES#97-OES-790)

Location: Eureka Valley (east side of Eureka Dunes)

The pager went off at 1530 on Monday, March 24. I didn't hear the message on the original call, so I waited. After about 15 minutes, Betty Meng called me and asked if I could take this operation-a search for a lost 30-year-old person of unknown gender. I said OK and called Sgt. John Diederich for more details. Apparently Mike Myers had answered the original page but could not take the operation, so he had asked Betty to call down the list to get a leader.

Sgt. Diederich was relaying a request from Sgt. Randy Nixon of Inyo County for our help in searching for a 30-year-old male, James Laird, in Eureka Valley. James had gone out on a short hike by himself early Sunday afternoon shortly before a severe windstorm swept through the valley. It lasted about an hour, and James did not return

to the camp where he and his family were spending the weekend. He had often camped in the valley with his family and was familiar with the area.

The family indicated that James suffered from schizophrenia and was on medication to control it. While medicated, he apparently behaved rationally. However, it was reported that he probably didn't have his medication with him when he left for the hike. Also, a traumatic event such as the wind storm could bring on the schizophrenia.

The CLMRG contingent of five (Steve Florian, Walter Runkle, Mark Lambert, Gina Najera-Niesen, and I) left Ridgecrest about 2130 and arrived in Eureka Valley at 0200. Sgt. Nixon had wanted us there by 0600, so we got several hours of sleep before our initial assignments. He wanted us to search the south end of the valley on either side of the road leading to Saline Valley, a distance of about 3 miles. We had only a vague idea of the track we were looking for. All tracks around the campsite were swept clean by the windstorm. James's family did not know what kind of shoes he was wearing but thought he wore a size 10. There were plenty of tracks but none that were assessed to be James's tracks. Meanwhile, the Inyo team members were searching small canyons to the east of the valley and the west side of the dunes area. Dog teams were also used.

Our afternoon assignment was to sweep an alluvial fan to the north and east of the place last seen (PLS). We found no sign of James's passage. The following morning, we searched into each of the canyons and drainages to the south and east of the PLS to give a higher probability of coverage to an area the Inyo team had covered the day before. This was done because all sectors within the large search area had already been covered once, and Sgt. Nixon wanted as high a probability of coverage in the likely sectors as he could get. The mounted unit from Kern County, which had arrived early Wednesday morning, did a grid search of the valley floor in a wide area around the PLS.

In addition to the ground searchers, a helicopter from Lemoore Naval Air Station did a thorough air search of the area for several hours each day, and another helicopter (home base unknown) with a forward looking infra-red radar (FLIR) searched for several hours early Wednesday morning.

After three days of searching with no sign of James, Sgt. Nixon called off the search and released us to go home. We returned to Ridgecrest in time for dinner.

97-04 18 April 97 Incident ...Idyllwild... Debbie Breitenstein

A personal viewpoint:

On April 18, 1997 (Friday), seven CLMRG members headed up to Lily Rock for some climbing. There were three teams going to this area: Tom Roseman and Daryl Hinman, Mike Dorey and John O'Conner, and Werner Hueber with Cindy Goettig and me, Debbie Breitenstein. (Notice who goes with the ladies?) Al Green, Tom Sakai, and Arun Jain were expected around noon, and we thought they would probably climb at Suicide Rock because of the shorter approach and less time available.

Werner, Cindy, and I tackled White Maiden's Walk Away, and Cindy got some practice leading. It was a fun climb even if it was a bit chilly. On the descent, we met briefly with Tom and Daryl, who were debating another short climb. Our group had decided to get out before it cooled too much, so we stopped at lunch rock to change and collect gear and headed down shortly after 3:30. We were moving along at a pretty fast but comfortable pace. At a point just over half-way down, I slipped on a patch of pea gravel and slid sideways into a root. I felt my left foot turn out, and I heard and felt a loud pop. Next thing I knew, I was on my right side with my feet up hill and aware of immediate pain from my left ankle.

I reached up and grabbed the injured foot and said, "I broke my ankle." Werner and Cindy had both stopped when I fell and were moving toward me to help. Werner asked if I was kidding. When I said, "No," and he saw my face, he commented, "Oh, s---" and went into action.

The two helped me get comfortable and upright. Cindy helped me remove my boot and sock, and Werner unpacked his first aid materials. Since I was able to assist, we agreed that Cindy and I could splint the ankle while Werner returned uphill to locate the other four team members.

The injury seemed to be on the outer part of my ankle or extreme lower leg. We used a whole roll of Werner's vet wrap to stabilize it. Then Cindy shaped a SAM splint, and we used my sock along the inside of it for padding, securing it with a second roll of wrap.

Werner found Tom and Daryl at the base of Finger Trip. Tom started down immediately. Daryl wanted to leave a note for the other two. Unable to locate any writing materials, he left their first aid kits on the tops of their packs as a indicator of a probable medical emergency. Mike and John were near the top of a climb, and Werner managed to communicate that there was an accident on the trail.

Tom, Daryl, and Werner decided to try a carry method that Werner had just reviewed involving a rescue seat made from a coiled rope. While this was set up, Cindy headed

to the vehicles with a heavy pack. Her task was to find Al's car at the Suicide Rock parking area and leave a note or, if it wasn't there, to find a phone and call Werner's cabin to mobilize the three climbers to come assist. We were joined by another climber (name unknown to me), who continued down to the cars to leave his pack and returned to offer assistance.

Tom carried me piggyback down about nine pitches with Daryl guiding below us and Werner belaying with a Muentert hitch off tree anchors. At the end of each pitch, Daryl and Tom selected a reasonable rock or log to sit with minimum effort. I managed to assist a little with my uninjured leg. Additional members assisted by removing hazards from the trail below Tom or by guiding the rope to prevent it from snagging and popping off rocks or branches.

After two pitches, I noticed my toes turning blue and was going to suggest adjusting the splint. As Daryl passed beside me to help move a belay, I automatically turned the foot in and felt a pop. The pain diminished noticeably, and the color returned to normal in minutes. At first, we all hoped that maybe I had merely dislocated my ankle, but an experimental wiggle suggested to me that there were other problems.

Cindy made several circuits of the lower section of trail, porting packs to the vehicles and helping get the Suicide Rock group to the correct trail head.

At the main trail, the entire group was together and the rope coil seat was turned into a litter with multiple sling handles. Five men carried me until the trail narrowed and I hopped down the last hill and across the stream with Arun holding my leg and ankle stable and two or three assisting my hopping as space allowed. For the last steep uphill, I was literally swept off my feet and carried to the roadside, where Werner had already moved his vehicle.

When I was comfortable in the back seat, Werner and Arun drove to the local fire station to confirm the nearest emergency care location. At Hemet, we discovered that cash payment reduces a 4- to 5-hour wait down to about 15 minutes—a disgusting concept that we didn't hesitate to take advantage of. X-rays showed a single fracture of my left, distal fibula. I was splinted and given crutches and pain killers with instructions to ice, elevate, and see an orthopedic surgeon on the following Monday.

The fracture required pinning, which was done six days after the accident (and was MUCH MORE painful than the original break!), followed by one week in a splint and four weeks in a walking cast.

All in all, I couldn't have broken my leg or recuperated in better company. Thanks to everyone who was there for me at Idyllwild and since. The support is deeply appreciated.

Lessons Learned:

1. The biggest contributing factor to the accident that I can see, other than the steepness and general condition of the trail, was my boots. The tread on my boots was worn very thin, which contributed to the slip, and the boots are soft canvas, which didn't prevent my ankle from rolling. Better boots might have helped me avoid the accident.

97-05 26 May 97... Search... Lower Lamarck Lake ...Tom Sakai

Victim: 17-year-old male, Edgar Esquivel (OES#97-0886)

Location: Lower Lamarck Lake

At 2145 on Monday, May 26, just as I began to think I got through my duty weekend without a call-out, my phone rang. It was Andrew Mitchell with a heads up. He had been called by Pat Elliot of the Inyo Posse telling him they had just requested our help through the Office of Emergency Services (OES). A 17-year-old boy scout had left a group campsite that afternoon for the latrine and had not returned.

After waiting for the call from the Kern County Sheriff's Office (KCSO) for 20 minutes, I decided to start a callout in advance and have everyone meet at the hut at 2330. I had Betty Meng start the callout at 2215. Tom Roseman called me shortly after that to report that Sgt. Porter of KCSO (Sgt. Diederich was not available) had called him because he didn't have our summer duty roster and didn't know who had the duty. I returned Sgt. Porter's call to get the OES number and more information, but he didn't know any more about the situation.

We had eight people respond to the callout: Roseman, Bob Huey, Bob Rockwell, Mike Renta, Curtis Davis, Cindy Goettig, Gwen Parris, and I. Shortly before our scheduled departure at 2400, Sgt. Randy Nixon of the Inyo County Sheriff's Office (ICSO) called me to fill me in. It turned out that he had had searchers in the field all night and wanted us there as soon as possible. We left the hut at 2400. Twenty minutes later, I got a call on the cell phone from Kern dispatch telling me that the victim had been found in good condition and that our services were no longer needed.

I called Inyo dispatch to verify our release, and they confirmed it. So we returned to the hut, put things away, and went home.

Note: Not knowing that the search effort was going through the night and that our services were desired ASAP resulted in a delayed departure of 30-60 minutes.

Comments:

1. I talked to Sgt. Nixon a while back. The name of the 17-year-old male we mobilized for on Memorial Day is Edgar Esquivel, born on 3 Nov 1979. He was a member of an Explorer Post sponsored by Woodrow Wilson High School (city unknown). They were on an officially sanctioned Explorer Post outing that they had prepared for for about a year. He walked back into camp by himself about 2330 that night. He was fine and did not have a clear consistent story of his missing time.

2. Edgar was doing something (going off alone) that was against the rules, and his explanation for his absence was apparently not consistent. His infraction was considered serious enough so that he was kicked out of the Post and suspended from school for one day.

97-06 22 Jun 97 Search... Jawbone Canyon..... Mike Myers

I received a call from Kern County Deputy Sheriff Jeff Fahsbender at 0910 on 22 June. He requested assistance locating a man (Bill Hurdle) and two boys who had gotten their truck stuck while off-roading in the Dove Springs/Jawbone Canyon/Kelso Valley area. The subject was in touch with the deputy via a cellular phone and had provided some latitude-longitude coordinates.

I offered our assistance in the form of locating the coordinates on a map and taking that information to the Sheriff's Ridgecrest Substation. I contacted Linda Finco and asked her to meet me at the Hut in five minutes. We attempted to locate the subjects' position, but the information provided covered an entire topo map. At that point, I contacted Betty Meng to do a call-out to put folks on alert just in case the information coming in got worse.

I contacted Deputy Fahsbender to clarify the location coordinates and received some new information. The location was only an estimate given by Hurdle using a Gazette Topo Atlas. One of the boys was on crutches with a previously broken leg and was not very mobile. The group had already spent one night out in the cold. I discussed this with the deputy, and we decided to get people moving toward the subjects general

location and to begin a search. An advance group of Finco and Tom Sakai left at 1100 and met the deputy at the junction of Highway 14 and Jawbone Canyon Road. After meeting with the deputy, Sakai suggested that the deputy contact Hurdle and ask him to walk back to the Kelso Valley road.

I called Hurdle from the Hut and discussed his situation briefly. He had pulled the battery out of his truck to provide plenty of power for his cell phone. He said he could see what appeared to be a good dirt road running east and west about two miles north of his position and that he was on the north side of a very rocky peak. He thought the rocky peak was Sorrell Peak. From the map we could see a good dirt road running east and west named Piute Mountain Road a couple of miles north of that location. He also said he had been driving south on Kelso Valley Road and remembered passing Piute Mountain Road. Somewhere near where the pavement ended, he had turned right (west) onto what looked like a challenging trail. He said he had driven west about five miles before getting stuck.

The advance party and the deputy drove out to Kelso Valley Road and found a jeep trail, believed to be the St. John Ridge jeep trail, at 1330 near where the pavement ended. The rest of us met them there. We took a GPS reading to verify our position on the map and were reasonably sure that it was the right trail. We were putting together our plans when, at 1400, Hurdle came walking over the hill on the trail where we had stopped. He said that it had taken him close to two hours to walk out and that the trail was very narrow and very difficult four-wheel driving.

We decided to take the Group's Jeep and the deputy's truck back in for the boys and hopefully assist in retrieving the stranded vehicle. The deputy asked for an experienced four-wheel driver to drive his vehicle, and Walter Runkle stepped up to the challenge. We sent three members around to the north on Piute Mountain Road to try to find an easier approach to their location. We located the vehicle at 1500 about 2.5 trail miles back in on what was actually a motorcycle trail at an elevation of 6100 feet. It was off the trail, down in a gully, and wedged between a boulder and a tree-maybe permanently. The three subjects had plenty of water and food but did get cold at night.

We made one attempt to get the deputy's truck close enough to get his winch attached, but the ground was just too soft off the trail. We refocused our attention on the three subjects and decided to get them out with as much of their gear as we could. The group on Piute Mountain Road found another access road, but it too was extremely difficult, and they soon gave up on that approach.

We all returned to the junction and reviewed some options for Hurdle. We returned to the Hut and secured at 1745. (When I originally called Linda, I asked for her assistance for about 10 minutes. Nine hours later, she managed to get home.)

GPS Positions:

St. John Ridge Jeep Trail Junction with Kelso Valley Road: 38898 - 392351

Truck Location: 38549 - 392380

Total Miles Traveled: 415

Participating CLMRG members: Mike Myers (leader), Linda Finco, Tom Sakai, Kevin McCormick, Walter Runkle, Ellen Shafhauser, and Betty Meng (coordinator).

97-07 30 Jun 97 Search ...Charlotte Dome ...Tom Roseman

I was getting ready to leave for work Monday morning, 30 June, after a quiet duty weekend when I received a call from Al Green. He had been called by Mary O'Neil, a friend of Roy Boswell. Roy and Damien Osborne were overdue from a climb of Charlotte Dome. Al had told Mary to call the Inyo County Sheriff's Office and then called to alert me. When I talked to Mary, she was waiting for a call back from Inyo, as the sheriff was going to send up a deputy after 0700 to see if Roy's car was still at Onion Valley. I called Inyo around 0800 when I had not heard anything. The dispatcher had not heard anything and did not know when someone would make it up to Onion Valley. Curtis Davis and Mark Lambert were ready and willing to go check out the car and, if the car was still there, to hike in to look for Roy "off the record." I had them stop by the Hut and get radios just in case anything developed. They left Ridgecrest around 0800. In the mean time, I called a core of rock climbers in the Group and put them on informal alert. I called Sequoia National Park, but they had no word of any problems. I decided to check back with them after Curtis and Mark called me from Onion Valley. Mark called around 1115 after they had driven back down the road a ways from Onion Valley to establish cell phone communications. Roy's car was still at the parking lot. I called Sequoia back and got in touch with Randy Coffman, the district ranger who is also a rock climber and had climbed Charlotte Dome before. He called Dave Gordon, the backcountry ranger at Charlotte Lake, to see what he knew. The ranger had talked to two climbers on Friday (which turned out to be maybe Saturday) who were going to climb the dome on Sunday. He also had seen two people leave around 0800 that morning headed for Kearsarge Pass. Perhaps our overdue climbers. I received a call around 1400 from Curtis at Kearsarge Pass. He

and Mark had met two climbers who had tried the climb on Sunday and backed off because of the weather and who had not seen any other climbers in the area. In the mean time, Randy had directed a couple of flyovers of the dome by helicopters already in the area with no sighting of climbers on the dome. I received another call from Curtis at about 1545. They had intercepted Roy on the western side of Kearsarge Pass. Roy and Damien had bivied on the climb Saturday night and finished the climb on Sunday, too tired to hike out. They were both fine. I called Randy to call off their efforts and thank him for his cooperation. Mike Dorey, Werner Hueber, Mike Myers, Walter Runkle, and Tom Sakai were standing by to fly in, and Finco had agreed to run the operation from Ridgecrest if I left for the park. I had called the local NAWC helicopter crew to affirm their availability, hoping to get them to fly us directly to the dome if the park needed and requested help.

Lessons Learned:

1. Inyo never called Mary back with any information. I did learn from the park that Inyo had called the park, but the people they talked to could not place Charlotte Dome in the park. It is important to get to the right folks.
2. In talking with Randy Coffman, I learned that the park has internal resources that handle most of their technical rescue work. I invited him to call us anytime they needed help, and he stated that we were on their list of resources.

1997 OFFICERS

Area codes all 760; e-mail links in blue (most of the team is available by e-mail)

President	Tom Sakai .	375-7404
Vice-president.	Mike Myers .	375-6801
Secretary	Walter Runkle	377-5931
Treasurer.	Werner Hueber	375-2165
MRA Representative	.Linda Finco	375-7951

1997 CONTACTS

Public Education	Mary Schmierer	377-5108
Training	Mike Renta	446-4947
Equipment	Bob Huey	375-1714

First Aid	Dianne Rindt	446-2380
	Andrew Mitchell	375-3368
Qualifications	Mike Myers	375-9189
	Tom Roseman	375-1030
Sheriff's Office	Al Green	375-9189
ASTM Representative	Dennis Burge	375-7967
Emergency Services	Linda Finco	375-7951
Summer Class-	Werner Hueber	375-2165
Training Wall	Larry Seibold	375-7162
Stores	Carol Burge	446-7038
Talus Pile	Loren Castro	375-3279
Web Page	Janet Westbrook	375-8371

DONATIONS

Werner Hueber

CLMRG gratefully acknowledges recent gifts from the following friends:

Mrs. Charles W. (Janet) Hammond San Marino, CA *In memory of son Steve Lester*

Bob Lohse Discovery Bay, CA

Dorothy E. Gould Inyokern, CA *In memory of Carol Venturi.*

SCREE

CLMRG has elected **Frank Buffum to life membership**. Frank, an active member since 1959, retired recently as an engineer and manager at the Naval Air Warfare Center. Now interested in the medical field, Frank is going to Philippi, West Virginia to train for three years as a physician's assistant at Alderson-Broadus College. His e-mail address will be buffum@ab.edu. Good luck, Frank and Debbie.

Check our web page at <http://www.clmrg.org>.

All telephone numbers in the Talus Pile are area code 760 unless noted otherwise.

On 22 March 1997, our area code changed from 619 to 760. Both 619 and 760 are valid until 22 September 1997.

It is morning.

The warm sun absorbs the chill and dampness.

My eyes open slowly.

Today I shall take a glass of wine and heap my tortilla full.

Today I shall be easy with myself and those who touch my life.

Anon

Talus Pile Editor - Loren Castro

On-Line edition - Janet Westbrook