

China Lake Mountain Rescue Group

Talus Pile Sept. 1998

TRAINING SCHEDULE

Sep 12-13 Sat-Sun White Mountain Runkle

Sep 14 Mon Meeting (wound irrigation) Finco/Niesens/T. Mitchell

Sep 15-16 Tue-Wed CPR Green

Sep 18-20 Fri-Sun North Pal Hinman

Sep 19 Sat CRMRA meeting Finco

Sep 23, 30, Oct 7, 14, 21 Wed First Aid Topic A Class Committee- Ellen S.

Sep 26-27 Sat-Sun Tahquitz Hueber

Oct 2-4 Fri-Sun Haeckel, Wallace Myers

Oct 10-12 Sat-Mon Yosemite Valley O'Conner

Oct 16-18 Fri-Sun Matterhorn B. Niesen

Oct 19 Mon Meeting (tents) Huey/Roseman/Renta

Oct 24-25 Sat-Sun 40th Anniversary Celebration Green

Oct 30-Nov 1 Fri-Sun Red Rocks Davis

Nov 3-4 Tue-Wed CPR First Aid Committee

Nov 7-8 Sat-Sun Nelson Range traverse Finco

Nov 9 Mon Meeting (GPS)

Nov 11 Wed Night sign cutting Breitenstein

Nov 11-15 Wed-Sun Picacho Del Diablo Florian

Nov 13-15 Fri-Sun Joshua Tree Hinman

Nov 18 Wed Equipment Hut night Equipment Committee

Nov 21-22 Sat-Sun Rock skills Roseman

Nov 27-29 Fri-Sun Open

Dec 5-6 Sat-Sun Langley Rockwell

Dec 9 Wed Dynamic belay practice Hinman

Dec 13 Sun Owens Ridge climbing Green

CLMRG is funded by United Way of Indian Wells Valley.

40th ANNIVERSARY

The invitational 40th Anniversary of the China Lake Mountain Rescue Group is scheduled for Saturday evening, October 24, 1998. A committee of 11 members has worked hard to make this an informative and fun-filled evening. The location is the Carriage Inn on China Lake Boulevard. Ron Atkins has agreed to be the Master of Ceremonies. Our three speakers will be Kern County Sheriff Carl Sparks, former search and rescue helicopter pilot Chip Lancaster, and current long-time member Bob Rockwell. We also plan some surprise entertainment. We will have a no-host bar and several displays to entertain our guests before dinner. For those who want a very busy weekend, we are planning a petroglyph tour on the Naval Air Weapons Station on Saturday before the party. And on Sunday, for the hardy souls, we are scheduling a climb of one of the local peaks and rock climbing on some of the excellent granite that is just a short distance from Ridgecrest.

Send questions regarding this event to

Al Green

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(Editor: Charter and life member Russell O. Huse submitted the following "In memory of Dr. Carl Heller, the Founder, the Climber, and the Spirit.")

the Climber

Still may your spirit roam the mountain,

The summit emblazoned in your eye.

Though you have left the mountain,

Still let your heart be there.

Though your grip has lost its finger-hold,

Still let your soul be there,

In truth, you never left the mountain,

Though time your hard legs betrayed.

Climb on, O heart, O soul!

Climb on as of days of olden dreams

When winged boot was light,

And your heart beat granite strong.

The eagle's glance burned bright in yours,

And you sang a mountain song.

The Mountain was your prayer.

Still climb the mountain in your soul.

Stout climber, climb on-climb on-

Bedazzled in some miracle of youth renewed,

The summit, the summit as of old,

Skyborne in the cosmos of your searching eye.

OPERATION REPORTS

Tom Roseman

98-5 15 Jun 98 Evidence Search Ridgecrest Linda Finco

Sgt. John Diederich called around 1340 and asked if we could provide trackers to help the Ridgecrest police backtrack to a crime scene. Sgt. Diederich stated a female subject had been assaulted somewhere in the desert. The police had the tracks of the female subject and the suspect at a house where the two ended up after the assault, and they were looking for someone who could possibly backtrack to the crime scene. Sgt. Diederich asked me to page John Skaggs with the Ridgecrest Police Department for additional details.

Before I paged John Skaggs, I made a few quick calls to CLMRG members with T4 ratings and higher. I was able to reach only Andrew Mitchell, who committed to the search. I was unable to reach any other tracker by phone, so I sent out a page. I received four additional responses, and Terry Mitchell called to volunteer to act as a coordinator. I decided to leave the number of trackers at six for this initial search, and if more people were required, we could try to get additional searchers for the next day. I paged John Skaggs, who put me in contact with Mike Scott from the Ridgecrest Police Department. We agreed to meet at the police station at 1430.

Mike Myers arrived at 1415 and received the initial briefing from Detective Mike Sword. The police were looking for the crime scene where a 9-year-old girl was raped

and sodomized. The suspect was a 24-year-old male who was babysitting the girl on Saturday, 13 June. The suspect was the boyfriend of the girl's mother. The suspect had been out of prison only two weeks and had no prior history of any violent or sex related crimes. The girl remembered leaving her residence at 1800 with the suspect to go lizard hunting. She remembered walking to the C&W Country Store on China Lake Blvd., where the suspect purchased a 12-pack of beer. The two then walked to an abandoned house about 300 yards north of the intersection of Dolphin and Brady. The girl said she was assaulted somewhere between the store and the house in the desert. The girl also remembered walking along a chain link fence trying to find a way into the house (there was a chain link fence on the east and north sides of the house). The two then spent the night in the house. Sunday morning, 14 June, the suspect reportedly walked the girl to the vicinity of Brady and Upjohn and pointed the way to Howard's mini-market and told the girl to go call her mother. The suspect then disappeared. The suspect was last seen wearing a blue shirt or sweater, long shorts (the type that come down below the knees), and a dark blue ball cap, and he had a buzz-top haircut. We were told that the suspect should be considered dangerous. The police had found both sets of prints around the house and had photographed the suspect's shoes and had a photocopy of the girl's shoe. The police wanted us to backtrack from the house to the store in hopes of finding where the assault took place.

We were taken out to the house and shown around. All the roads in the area are dirt, which would normally make for easy tracking, but the roads are also heavily traveled. Since the assault took place Saturday evening, most tracks on the roads had been erased by vehicles driving over the tracks. However, there was hope that tracks could be cut on the road edges, or tracks might be found in track traps crossing the desert. Once out at the abandoned house, it was apparent that the distance covered from the girl's home to the store and then to the house on Brady was an extremely long distance, especially for a 9-year-old. At that time we began discussing other potential paths of travel from her residence to the house, but we first wanted to follow up on the girl's original story. We broke into three teams of two and started searching at 1530.

Tom Roseman and Debbie Breitenstein searched in the vicinity of the house hoping to find where the tracks entered and exited the property. Andrew Mitchell and Steve Florian together and Mike Myers and I together cut for sign south along Brady and other streets off of Brady to try to find where in the desert the two might have crossed to get to the house.

By 1700, no team had found any significant sign. The next potential search area was an open area of desert bounded by Springer, Brady, and Mahan. This was a large open area of desert between the store and the house. We stayed in our three teams of two and cut along the roads. We also cut for sign across the area by tracking along motorcycle paths (potential track traps because of the soft sand). We regrouped at the

corner of Springer and Mahan around 1800. At this point we decided to continue to cut for sign between the corner where we were standing and the Country Store. Two teams continued on toward the store, one team cutting for sign along the roadways and the other team cutting for sign between the residential lots. The third team did another cut for sign back toward the corner of Springer and Brady where our vehicle was located. Once back at the corner of Springer and Brady, they picked up the vehicle and met the other teams at the store. No sign of either track was found to this point, so we decided to go back to the house and cut for sign north, northeast, and northwest of the house just in case the girl was confused on where they had actually traveled to and from the house.

At 1940, Tom radioed that he had cut both tracks in a wash northwest of the house. We all regrouped at the tracks and confirmed that the tracks were the girl's and the suspect's. The tracks were leading away from the house on a bearing of 310 degrees magnetic north. At the start of the search, the police said they wanted us to concentrate on the tracks coming into the house because according to the girl, the assault occurred prior to their arrival at the house. These tracks were leading away from the house, but the tracks were also leading away from all other structures into the open desert. We felt we should at least follow the tracks until they turned back into a residential area or it got too dark to track without using headlamps (which we could do, but there was no urgency to continue tracking into the night).

The tracks led us on an almost perfectly straight line to the Bowman Road water tanks. The tanks are surrounded by a chain link fence topped with barbed wire. The suspect's tracks were found on both sides of the southern gate leading into the compound. Mike and Steve climbed the fence (the gate was locked) and tracked down to a location between the two tanks, where they found several almost perfect tracks matching both the suspect's and the girl's. The tracks then headed west around the southwest side of the western water tank. About half way around the tank, a pair of men's boxer shorts was found. We called the police to report the possible evidence and waited for Detective Mike Scott to arrive. The other trackers outside the compound found a possible set of tracks where they exited the compound at a locked gate on the north end of the compound, but darkness was approaching, and the tracking became more difficult. We decided to wait for the police and let them decide if they wanted us to continue. The police arrived around 2030, and the evidence was collected, photos were taken, and the place was secured by 2130.

The police thanked us for our effort, and we returned to the rescue hut by 2145.

We received word on 17 June that the evidence was positively identified as having been worn by the suspect. On Thursday, 18 June the suspect turned himself in. The suspect confessed to the crime and was cooperating with the police. The suspect

confirmed that he did walk with the girl from her residence to the C&W Country Store, where he bought a 12-pack of beer. They then walked along China Lake Blvd. toward the White Star Mine. Back in that area, he drank the beer and raped the girl. The two then walked to the house on Brady and spent the night. The next morning, they hiked to the water tanks, where the suspect washed up at a spigot and tossed his soiled boxers. He then walked the girl as reported toward the mini-market and told her to call her mom.

Members: Linda Finco (Leader), Tom Roseman, Mike Myers, Andrew Mitchell, Steve Florian, Debbie Breitenstein, and Terry Mitchell (Coordinator).

1. We had discussed earlier in the day the possibility that the girl may have confused times, locations, and such because of the stress of the whole situation. We "lucked" out in going back to the house and finding the tracks in the wash. Even though the tracks did not lead to the crime scene, they did lead to a piece of evidence that turned out to be very important. But it was not all luck as stated above; it was also the perseverance of everyone to keep cutting for sign as it kept getting later and later.

98-6 19 Jun 98 Search Devil's Punchbowl Tom Roseman

I had my weekend planned out to enjoy Father's Day with my family and was relaxing Friday evening when the pager announced a request from Arnold Gaffrey of Sierra Madre in need of fresh folks in the ongoing search for Jon Aujay, a missing Los Angeles County Deputy Sheriff. I had been following the effort a little bit in the news and was excited that we were finally being called in. Arnold wanted to know how many people we could get before they went through OES to request our help. Janet Westbrook had heard the page and had already called to volunteer to act as coordinator, so the callout started. She got Mary Schmierer to help with the callout and to take over as coordinator the next day at noon because Janet was leaving town.

We got eight people and another maybe, so I called back around 2230. At that time, I talked to Ron Jack from Altadena, who was running the operation at Barley Flats. We were to meet Air 5 at 0900 the next morning for helicopter transport to Barley Flats to get assignments. I informed Ron of our need for an OES number routed through Kern County. I called Kern dispatch, informed them that I was expecting OES to call them, and left my phone number. I also called Sgt. Diederich's pager because I didn't have the on-call duty list for Kern County. I spent some time getting ready and went to bed about 2330. I awoke to a phone call from Ron around 0100 with OES Number 98-0240. Mitch, the one maybe, called me at 0450 to commit, and I left home for the hut at 0545. I had not heard from Kern County to confirm the OES number but decided,

with nine people ready to go and a real search to take part in, to leave anyway. I felt our team was getting stale from lack of action and didn't want to pass up this opportunity. I called Janet and asked her to call Kern County and let them know that we were leaving. Al Green, Andrew Mitchell, Steve Florian, Walter Runkle, Debbie Breitenstein, Cindy Goettig, Eric Toler, Mark Tranchemontagne, and I left the hut and arrived at Devil's Punchbowl around 0915. We flew in two groups to Barley Flats and had three teams inserted into the field by 1130. In addition, Al Green went with an Altadena team on another assignment. All three of our assignments involved following creek drainages near trails. Team one, lead by Mitch and assisted by Debbie and Marc, searched from Islip Saddle toward South Fork campground. Team two, lead by Walter and assisted by Steve and Cindy, searched from Burkhardt Notch down to Little Rock Creek. I lead team three, assisted by Eric Toler, and searched Little Rock Creek down Rattlesnake Gulch, where we joined up with team two. The assignments took the rest of the day. We were hoisted out by Air 5 and deposited back at Barley Flats around 1800. Around 1900, I learned of a problem with our OES number and was requested by Sgt. Diederich to return home. I asked John whether he would reconsider and try get OES to let us stay and search on Sunday. John said he felt he could not do that based on the information he had. We could not leave that evening as the helicopter was needed to return to Long Beach. However, they would return in the morning and fly us back to our cars at Devil's Punchbowl. The helicopter was delayed en route because they had to respond to a medical emergency that morning. They picked us up around 1230 and flew us back to the Punchbowl. We headed home and arrived around 1600. I got home in time for Father's Day dinner with my family.

98-7 21 Jun 98 Mobilization McIvers Spring Tom Sakai

At 1320 on Sunday, 21 Jun, Deputy Jeff Fahsbender, SAR duty officer for the Kern County Sheriff's Office, called to ask for help in finding and transporting a man and his son from McIvers Spring on the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) between Horse Canyon and Walker Pass.

The man had driven his vehicle up the Horse Canyon road and turned north on the PCT, which at that point is an old jeep road. He got as far as McIvers Springs, or at least in the vicinity, when his vehicle became stuck. He could not extricate his vehicle, so he called for help, presumably with a cellular phone. Deputy Fahsbender wanted our help in getting the father and son to safety.

I felt that I needed one other person to help me, so I had Mary Schmierer start a call out. Chuck Creusere agreed to go. We were to meet Deputy Fahsbender at the

intersection of highways 14 and 395 at 1500. (He was driving from Bakersfield). By 1400, Deputy Fahsbender called back and said he had gotten John Paull of the Kern Valley team to help also. Since John is very familiar with the area and I am not, we agreed that Chuck and I would stand down until further notice.

Question: Are motor vehicles even allowed on the PCT?

98-8 5 Jul 98 Search Tuolumne Meadows Werner Hueber

On Sunday, 5 July 1998 at 2300, Sgt. Craig Porter called me on my duty weekend and asked CLMRG to send two trackers to Yosemite Valley to support the Yosemite National Park Service Search and Rescue (YOSAR) Team. Frank "Cisco" Hernandez, was last seen on Saturday, 4 July near Return Creek in the Upper Virginia Canyon at the north end of the park and was reported missing on Sunday,

5 July at 1730. Sgt. Porter asked that we contact Mike Guran from OES. He gave us the name of the YOSAR Resources Unit Leader, Billie Patrick, and her phone number.

The T4 and T5 trackers of the team were called first, but they were not able to respond. Terry Mitchell as the coordinator called the entire roster. I wanted to make sure that everybody would receive a call around midnight. Tom Sakai, Eric Toler, and I-all T3 trackers-were able and willing to go on this search. We informed Sgt. Porter and YOSAR that three CLMRG members would leave around 0100 on Monday, 6 July. YOSAR said they could use as many searchers and trackers as we could find and agreed that we could report to the ranger station at Tuolumne Meadows instead of driving to the valley, where the base camp was.

We arrived at Tuolumne Meadows Ranger Station on Sunday at 0430 and were allowed to use one of the ranger's cabin until the briefing at 0700. He was very generous and offered us his food to prepare our breakfast. After an hour's nap, Tom fixed us scrambled eggs with cheese and a bagel and coffee. Not bad for a CLMRG president (Sakai)!

The briefing was excellent! We received a whole package with ICS forms consisting of a detailed Lost Person Description, Incident Objectives, Organization Assignment List, Medical Plan, Incident Radio Communication Plan, Air Operations Summary, and a Task Assignment Form for each team.

Our instructions were to perform a hasty search, cut for signs, and check all possible routes in

Section C-Virginia Canyon Creek drainage to the SW, Spiller Creek, PCT to the NW. We were asked to be prepared for winter travel with overnight equipment. We brought ice axes, two of us had crampons, and all of us were prepared to stay overnight.

We were scheduled to be transported by helicopter from Tuolumne Meadows to Virginia Canyon by 0800. As it often happens, the helicopter flights were delayed, and our turn came around 1000, when Cisco was located by a helicopter crew near Waterwheel Falls NW of Glen Aulin. Apparently, Cisco walked down Cold Canyon instead of meeting his group at the campsite near Virginia Lake on Saturday. When he did not show up on Sunday at the trail head at Tuolumne Meadows, the Park Service was notified on Sunday at 1730. A trail block at Glen Aulin did not see Cisco, who may have passed this location before the trail block was in place.

The CLMRG team was released on Monday, 6 July at 1100, and we were home by 1500, disappointed that we did not get into the field but glad that Cisco was found apparently unharmed.

98-9 16 Jul 98 Search Mammoth Lakes Werner Hueber

Deputy Sheriff Fahsbender, Kern County Sheriff's Office, called Linda Finco on Thursday, 16 July at 0530. The Mono County Sheriff had requested, through OES, CLMRG's support to search for two missing hikers, a man and a women, in the Mammoth Lakes area. They were last seen near Minaret Vista. Linda had work commitments and therefore used the pager to find another Operations Leader.

I responded and called Linda at 0549. Mary Schmierer agreed to be the coordinator. Five members in addition to me committed to be at the hut by 0700: Daryl Hinman, Dennis Burge, Chuck Creusere, Dianne Rindt, and Eric Toler. Seven more members committed to leave around noon if needed: Linda Finco, Tom Sakai, Andrew Mitchell, Debbie Breitenstein, Gina Najera-Niesen, Kevin McCormick, and Elaine Samson. Terry Mitchell agreed to continue as coordinator when Mary left on vacation on Friday.

I called the Operations Leader, Jim Gilbreth, and informed him that six CLMRG members would leave China lake at 0730 and that a second CLMRG team of seven members was ready to leave around noon. He agreed that we would call the second team when the first team arrived at base camp at the Main Lodge in Mammoth. We

arranged that Jim would call me on the cellular phone if the subjects were found while we were in transit. At 0800, I received a call on the cellular phone from Jim, who informed him that the subjects had been located by a helicopter crew. I called the second car on the cellular phone and asked them to come back home. We were at the hut at 0900. It is impressive that 13 CLMRG members and two coordinators committed to support this search in Mono County.

98-10 1-2 Aug 98 Search Mt. Tom Tom Roseman

I received a page from Sgt. Keith Hardcastle of Inyo County on Saturday, 1 Aug around 1400 requesting that we call him. He wanted us to be on alert for the next morning to search for Byron Wilson, a 42-year-old male diabetic who was overdue from a climb of Mt. Tom, if Inyo did not find him. Unable to find a coordinator right away, I made the callout myself. I developed even more respect than I already had for the job the coordinators do all the time. I was able to get six people and called Inyo back. Meanwhile, Terry Mitchell returned home and took over as coordinator, much to my joy! Around 1930 Cdr. Moe called me with an OES number and the go ahead. I then called back to Keith to get details. They wanted us in Bishop at the Inyo Posse Hut at 0700 the next morning for helicopter insertion on Mt. Tom. Seven of us left the hut a little after 0500: Debbie Breitenstein, Dennis Burge, Daryl Hinman, Mark Lambert, Gina Najera-Niesen, Mike Renta, and me. We arrived at the hut around 0730 and got an update from Keith. Keith asked for help in base camp, so lacking any volunteers from our team, I took that job. Daryl and Mark were put with Greg Corlis to work the steep areas around the summit. Mike and Gina were assigned a northwest drainage down to Gable Creek, and Dennis and Debbie another drainage north of that one. Inyo teams of 3 and 4 people had larger areas to cover. The news of the Blackhawk being diverted for a live injury recovery in the Thousand Lakes area left us "all dressed up and no where to go." Keith was able to get 525 on short notice to help till the Blackhawk arrived. The first team was inserted at 1030. By 1100, the Blackhawk arrived, and a total of 17 people were in the field by 1300. After the Blackhawk crew ate and rested, Keith and I went to air search a "blue object" that Debbie had seen when they flew up the canyon they were to search during insertion. After flying for awhile and getting into the right canyon, we were able to find the blue object again, and on closer look, we able to determine that it was the subject's sleeping bag, his pack, and the subject himself. Byron was located in a very bad rockfall area, and several large boulders were dislodged by the rotor wash from the Blackhawk. From the air, it appeared that Byron was dead, but because he was a diabetic, there was some chance he might be alive but in a diabetic coma. The medic and Keith were lowered to a ridge above Byron because the helicopter could not land. This was around 1500. By 1800, in a flurry of activity, Byron, unfortunately dead, was

recovered and all 17 field team members were extracted from the field. We had dinner with the Inyo team and the Blackhawk crew and drove home. The operation was secured shortly after midnight. Inyo ran the operation from their hut and did an excellent job. They mentioned that this was the first major operation for them this summer. The Blackhawk crew was very good and were able to carry up to eight people at a time at high altitudes.

FROM OTHER SOURCES

[Editor: The following item appeared in the Contra Costa Times.]

Mount Shasta

Climber tops summit six times in 24 hours

A 40-year-old climber reached the summit of Mount Shasta for the sixth time in a 24-hour period Tuesday, braving darkness, high winds and nausea along the way.

Robert Webb climbed 6,000 feet from a staging area at Horse Camp to the summit six times beginning at 1:30 p.m. Monday. In all, Webb ascended 36,000 feet, the equivalent of climbing from sea level to the summit of Mount Everest, plus nearly 7,000 feet.

Webb was a bit weak-kneed but in good spirits when he arrived at his base camp after his final descent just after 3 p.m. Tuesday.

MRA NEWS

(Editor: The following items of possible interest to CLMRG members are extracted from Tim Kovacs's recent inaugural message as the new President of the Mountain Rescue Association (MRA).)

New officers of the MRA:

President-Tim Kovacs

CAMRA/MCSO MR, AZ

tkovacs@goodnet.com

Vice President-Rocky Henderson

PMR, OR

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Secretary-Tom Frazer

El Paso County SAR, CO

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Treasurer-Jon Inskeep

Sierra Madre SAR, CA

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Member At Large-Jon Inskeep

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Member At Large-Rod Knopp

Idaho Mtn SAR Unit, ID

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Future events:

January 1999 Small winter business meeting. (Location to be determined.)

June 1999 MRA 41st annual meeting in Tucson (Mt. Lemmon, 9600 feet).

January 2000 Small winter business meeting. (Location to be determined.)

June 2000 MRA 42nd annual meeting near Alberta, Canada.

NATRS Liaison:

Werner Hueber (China Lake MRG, CA) has done a great job here in helping the MRA to keep its co-hosting commitment, and he has agreed to remain. The membership supported an addition to the budget of \$1,000 to support a (or some) chosen MRA presenter(s) to NATRS. This year, NATRS will be in North Carolina. Werner is looking for MRA presenters as we speak! (hueber@ridgecrest.ca.us)

Rescue Technology:

Rod Willard has been climbing in Alaska. I will ask him to chair a new MRA RESEARCH GRANT committee, perhaps under this one, which was supported by the membership at Hood. Its purpose will be to establish grant money to MRA units for research in the areas of technology, testing, analyses, accidents, statistics, and mountain rescue EMS. Once a chair has been identified, members will be chosen and will draft their purpose, goals, the criteria for applications, and the amount they feel is appropriate. This will be reviewed before the end of December and presented for the new budget of 1999 in January. I have asked Werner Hueber to serve.

MRA Statistician

Linda Finco (China Lake MRG, CA) has taken over as the MRA Statistician to receive your annual mission statistics, provide an annual report to the membership, and provide liaison with the AAC-ANAM (via George Sainsbury) and the IKAR stats guy (Gebhardt Barbisch). (linda_finco@imdgw.chinalake.navy.mil)

1998 OFFICERS

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DONATIONS

Gina Najera-Niesen

CLMRG gratefully acknowledges recent gifts from the following friends:

Jeanine Hoffman Torrance, California "In memory of Robbie Dow"

SCREE

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

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

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) is responsible for setting new standards for equipment and procedures for mountain search and rescue. Check their web page at <http://www.nfpa.org>

They say they climb mountains because they "are there."

I wonder if it would astound them

To know that the very same reason is why

The rest of us go around them.

-S. Omar Barker