

China Lake Mountain Rescue Group

Talus Pile Newsletter May 1999

No. 108

TRAINING SCHEDULE

May 14-16 Fri-Sun Mallory & Irvine Rockwell

May 18 Tue Mini-stretcher practice Breitenstein

May 19 Wed Stretcher hut night Hueber

May 20 Thu CPR Schafhauser

May 22 Sat Rock skills (self-rescue) Roseman

May 23 Sun Stretcher practice Hueber

May 26 Wed Dynamic belay practice McCormick

May 28-31 Fri-Mon Peak 13803 (Son of Split) Roseman

Jun 5-6 Sat-Sun Pilot Knob North, Senger Rockwell

Jun 8-9 Tue-Wed Summer class starts

Jun 11-13 Fri-Sun North Palisade Runkle

Jun 14 Mon Meeting (knots & group picture) Mitchell/Doerr/Breitenstein

Jun 15-16 Tue-Wed Summer class

Jun 19-20 Sat-Sun Dubois, Boundary, Montgomery Rockwell

Jun 22-23 Tue-Wed Summer class

Jun 24-29 Thu-Tue All Sierra 14000ers Hinman
Jun 25-27 Fri-Sun Summer class day trips
Jun 29-30 Tue-Wed Summer class
Jul 3-5 Sat-Mon Shepherd Pass peaks Sakai
Jul 3-11 Sat-Sun Smith Rocks, Oregon Roseman
Jul 7-11 Wed-Sun Pinchot, Wynne, et al Myers
Jul 12 Mon Meeting (no pre-meeting) Ferguson/Toler/Myers
Jul 13-14 Tue-Wed Summer class
Jul 17-18 Sat-Sun Summer class overnight trips
Jul 20-21 Tue-Wed Summer class
Jul 23-25 Fri-Sun Charlotte Dome Davis
Jul 29 Thu First Aid Schafhauser

CLMRG is funded by United Way of Indian Wells Valley.

OPERATION REPORTS

Tom Sakai

99-03 27 Feb 99 Search Yosemite National Park Mike Myers

(OES #: 99-OES-0089)

On Wednesday, 24 February at approximately 1500, I received a call from Sgt. Diederich informing me that OES was requesting assistance in a search in Yosemite National Park for three missing females. Carole Sund (43), Juli Sund (15), and Silvina Pelosso (16) were last seen in the valley on 16 February and had been missing for eight days. Sgt. Diederich gave me the phone numbers of search base to get more information.

I contacted Evan Jones of the National Park Service, the search incident commander (IC), who gave me a fairly good brief over the phone. The search was involving several agencies, including the Mariposa County Sheriff, the Tuolumne County Sheriff, the NPS, the U.S. Forest Service, the California Highway Patrol (CHP), and the FBI. This was going to be a unified command because of the many different agencies involved, and we could expect to see as many as four ICs in base camp.

The subjects were supposed to have turned in their rental car and caught a flight in Modesto on the same day they were last seen, but they never showed up. The rental car was a red 1999 Pontiac Grand Prix. There had been two feet of new snow since the trio were reported missing. Mr. Jones gave me the location of search base as being the Forest Service Station in Groveland on Highway 120, just outside of the park, and said he wanted us there to be briefed at 0800 the next morning. He also said they wanted us to be prepared to search areas 150 feet off the road on steep snow and possibly ice covered rock near the valley.

I called down the roster for a coordinator and found Terry Mitchell. Because of the anticipated terrain, I gave her the information and requested a selected callout of the front page and a couple of the people on the back who do winter trips. Terry found Al Green, Kevin McCormick, Steve Florian, Debbie Breitenstein, and Tom Roseman willing to go. We met at the hut at 1130 that night and were on the road by midnight.

After breakfast in Groveland, we arrived at the Forest Service Station right on time at 0800 and had the usual wait. It turned out that twice as many people showed up for the search than they expected. Following an all hands briefing, we received our first day's assignment. The Yosemite Search and Rescue (YOSAR) Team received the technical area to cover. We teamed together with Sierra Madre and divided into two teams, a ski team and a snowshoe team. The ski team, consisting of Tom Roseman and two members of Sierra Madre, were assigned to clear a six-mile section of Highway 120, an assignment that turned out to be about 7.5 miles. The snowshoe team consisted of Al Green, Steve Florian, Kevin McCormick, Debbie Breitenstein, me, and Arnold Gaffrey of Sierra Madre. Our assignment was to clear a three-mile section of Highway 120, from three to six miles inside the park. Both assignments meant clearing a minimum distance of 150 feet from the roadway on both sides of the road.

Both assignments were completed by about 1715, and we headed back to base. The terrain was physically demanding and, when coupled with little sleep from the night before, took its toll in fatigue.

We were assigned a Summer Fire Team's house at the Forest Service Station to sleep in. We pulled the mattresses from the beds to make wall-to-wall sleeping

accommodations and easily fit in members from both CLMRG and Sierra Madre. Then we headed to the makeshift mess hall for a hot meal. Once back in our quarters, sleep came very quickly.

The following day, we were separated into our own teams and given two assignments. One was to clear Highway 41 from Strawberry Creek to Bishop Creek, and the other was to clear Bishop Creek to Alder Creek. Green, McCormick, and I started the first assignment, and Roseman, Breitenstein, and Florian started the second.

The first assignment was short, so we completed it early. We then moved up the road and split the difference between Florian's group's position and Alder Creek. When the assignment was completed, we headed down to Wowona Lodge to debrief with the sheriff. He told us we could use the shower facilities at the Lodge Golf Course to cleanup before heading home. He also complimented our thoroughness in our assignments. Apparently, not all the teams were getting off the road as they were instructed.

After hot showers and dinner on the way home, we arrived back at the Hut by 2200. We secured shortly thereafter.

Problems:

1. Radio programming: We were assigned a frequency to communicate with base. It was T - 170.5 and R - 168.75, with Tone - 123. Two questions came up. Is the offset negative or positive? In order to convert the tone to an ICOM, we had to research the radio section of my Leader's Notebook. We may want to consider adding the Tone Table to the crib sheets with the radios.

2. Fatigue: All of us were tired the first day. It would have been better to leave Ridgecrest shortly after the call first came in. We could have then gotten a little rest before beginning our first day's assignment.

Follow-up: The burned out hulk of the rental car was eventually found about 40 miles north of Yosemite Valley about a month following the disappearance. Investigators found the remains of two of the victims, Carole and Silvina, in the trunk of the car. The third victim, Juli, was found near the intersection of Highways 120 and 108.

Participating members: Kevin McCormick, Al Green, Tom Roseman, Debbie Breitenstein, Steve Florian,

Mike Myers (Leader), Terry Mitchell (Coordinator)

Total miles traveled: 1619

Road miles searched: Approximately 16.5 miles

ACTIVITIES

Telescope Peak 17-18 April 1999 Bob Rockwell

Telescope Peak, at 11,049 feet, is the high point of the Panamint Range. It was so named by the first ascent party who claimed that they couldn't have seen farther "if they'd had a telescope." From the summit, the lowest spot in the country-Badwater (-284 feet)-is visible to the east; and the highest in the lower 48-Mt. Whitney (14,497 feet)-can be seen to the west.

The most popular way to climb Telescope is a short hike from Mahogany Flat to the north and CLMRGers do it several times a year. A couple of times, we've done it from Badwater in Death Valley. Once, we did it from the south starting at Panamint City near Sentinel Peak.

The only compass point left for us was from Panamint Valley to the west, and so Ellen Schafhauser, Elaine Reindeau, and I made plans for the weekend of April 17.

Hall Canyon looks like the best route from the map, but an Indian reservation (locked gate) blocks starting at its entrance. So we parked about 2 miles east of the canyon on the valley floor at 1200 feet.

We violated the Indian rights by trespassing on their land as we hiked up the lower part of Hall Canyon to 1800 feet. Then we left a nice stream and ascended straight up steep slopes and at 4800 feet found . . . a graded road! This road was a big surprise because it is not on the topo map. The road gained elevation to 5200 feet then descended to the spring in Hall Canyon (4400 feet), which was a very important objective for us because it was the first water since early in the trip.

The key to making Telescope Peak by this route is the ability to camp about 3 miles above this spring at around 7000 feet. But we discovered that, contrary to the map, there was no water anywhere above the spring. So we camped there. Certainly, Telescope can be climbed from there, but the added length would necessitate a second

night's stay before heading home the next morning. None of us had made arrangements to be that late.

The camp at the spring was great! Running water (but plentifully laced with Burro vitamins), firewood for everyone to cook hot dogs, and grassy meadows for sleeping. Fortunately, Elaine had brought a water filter. Otherwise, we would have had to boil all water, and boiling-while making it safe to drink-would not have changed its look or smell.

The temperature got down to only 50 degrees that night. There is an old cabin there with plenty of evidence that it is (or at least was before the Desert Protection Closures) a popular destination for 4WD clubs. We did notice fresh motorcycle tracks coming in.

Next morning, we decided to hike up a ways to see what we would find. We managed to get to the 7200-foot level, helped by faint mining exploratory roads (put in when gold was \$800 an ounce?), and could see that the way to the summit was straightforward from there.

Back at camp, we cooled off with a dip in the stream and began our hike out at 1400. We got back to our vehicle at 1930, just after sunset, with the able assistance of my GPS (the vehicle would have been difficult to find otherwise).

The temperature had been in the high 80s all the way in on Saturday and in the mid 90s for the trip out, but we managed to stay well hydrated.

What with the considerable ups and downs, it was an 8300-foot gain for the weekend and about 16 miles.

The next day, I talked to Dave Walsh at the Ridgecrest BLM office. He showed me on a BLM map that the road we discovered starts in Jail Canyon to the north. He had hiked it. It is undoubtedly a better way in than the way we went. But he said that the area is now wilderness, and the road is closed down low.

Next time, we plan to hike in on this road to camp again at the spring. We'll go for the summit on day 2 and hike out on day 3. The elevation gain will a respectable 12,000 feet for the weekend.

Or, if the party is feeling energetic, we could do a traverse of the Panamint Range: up Hall Canyon as above to the summit of Telescope then descend via Hanaupah Canyon to the Death Valley floor. Hopefully, we can find a friend willing to pick us up on that

side; otherwise, it will be necessary to traverse all the way back over to Jail Canyon again!

A man loses his illusions first, his teeth second, and his follies last.

æHelen Rowland

FROM OTHER SOURCES

(Editor: From Mountain Zone-see <http://www.mountainzone.com/climbing/>)

Mallory's Body Found On Everest

Expedition Leader Eric Simonson has reported his 1999 Mallory & Irvine Research Expedition has "conclusively identified" the body of British climber George Mallory. The five climbers who discovered the body each tell their story.

(Editor: These excerpts from the Contra Costa Sunday Times of February 7, 1999 update the information that appeared in Talus Pile Number 107.)

Friends recollect climber's last fall

By David Foster

ASSOCIATED PRESS

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK It was already dark in Yosemite Valley, but Dan Osman danced about the rock, as sure-footed as always. Perched high atop a granite spire called Leaning Tower, he was preparing to push the limit once again.

Osman had leapt off this cliff a month earlier, plunging 1,050 feet before his rope stopped him just 90 feet from the ground. That jump was for the cameras and the record books. This one, attended only by his friend Miles Daisher, would be for the sheer joy of it.

Earlier leaps had taken him west. Now he'd turn north, aiming for where the tree-studded boulder field below Leaning Tower sloped down toward the valley floor. He figured that would allow a jump of more than 1,100 feet or, as he preferred to calculate it, 11 seconds of glorious, terrifying free fall.

This was Dan Osman, the Master of Gravity, at age 35 one of the planet's finest rock climbers and the pioneer of a radical new sport called rope jumping.

Osman stepped to the launch spot, a headlamp guiding his way. He inspected his harness once more then grabbed the cell phone strapped to his chest and called Jimbo Fritsch and Frank Gambalie, buddies who had wanted to be there but couldn't make it. They could listen as he jumped.

* * *

Osman took two steps and launched himself off the rock. Daisher tossed the rope after his friend then watched as the light from Osman's headlamp plunged down, down, and out of sight.

* * *

Using climbing ropes, harnesses, and anchors, Osman had devised a plunge bearing faint resemblance to the accidental falls taken by mountaineers.

Instead of falling straight down from an anchor point, which yields a body-jerking snap as the rope stretches taut, Osman discovered he could soften the impact by moving the rope's anchor far to the left or right of his launch spot then letting the rope hang in a big U. When he jumped, he would fall freely until the rope straightened out. Then he would become a human pendulum, his downward plunge diverted into a soaring, horizontal swing.

* * *

Osman's climbing prowess was respected in mountaineering circles, but it was falling that made him a star on "Real TV" and other programs that feature extreme sports and outrageous stunts. Footage of Osman helped sell Reebok shoes, Casio watches- wherever a wild, no-fear image was sought.

* * *

His apprentices called him "the lemming master," but they found reassurance in Osman's attention to safety. He insisted, for example, that all gear be triple-checked by two people before every jump.

* * *

They strung a 1,200-foot rope from Leaning Tower to a nearby outcrop called Fifi Buttress. More than 300 feet out along this fixed rope, they attached one end of the jump line, which consisted of four 200-foot ropes knotted together.

During the next few days, Osman and friends made 13 jumps, including his first to top 1,000 feet. They leapt from near the summit of Leaning Tower, blurring down along its face and then rocketing out sideways as the jump line stretched tight and pulled them toward Fifi Buttress. Once the jump line recoiled and stopped swinging, the jumper would dangle high above the ground then pull a coil of thin line out of a fanny pack to rappel the rest of the way down.

* * *

By then, the ropes had endured 13 jumps and a month of rain, snow, and sun. But Osman was confident the system would hold. He and Daisher each jumped once on Nov. 22, and everything seemed to work fine.

The next day, Daisher says, Osman inspected the jump line and found the knots so tight that he had to hammer them apart and retie them more loosely. Daisher was alarmed, but Osman reassured him. A loose knot is a good knot, he said.

So Daisher jumped again. Then it was Osman's turn. He measured out another 75 feet of rope preparing for the biggest jump of his life. Far below in the darkness, the headlights of cars flickered on the valley road. It was 6 p.m.

Osman leapt, and Daisher listened for the telltale whip of the rope.

"It seemed like 20 minutes," Daisher says. "I was waiting, waiting, waiting, waiting. Then the rope made that F-S-S-H-E-WW-W sound cutting through the air. Then I heard Dano let out a yell-'AAUGGH!'-and then it sounded like tree branches. It sounded like a whole massive tree just broke in half. It's echoing across the valley, and I start freaking."

* * *

[Osman's sister, Andrea Osman-Brown,] wants it noted that Osman did not misjudge how far the rope would stretch, a mistake that has killed two other jumpers trying to copy his techniques.

The rope broke. Park rangers say it appears that as Osman neared the bottom of his fall, the tightening jump line snapped nearly 200 feet up from his harness deep in the last knot. He fell the rest of the way into the trees then tumbled to the ground.

(Editor: These excerpts are from the Contra Costa Sunday Times of April 25, 1999.)

Climbers, officials agree on bolt plan

By Martha Bellisle

ASSOCIATED PRESS

JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK . . . when Park superintendent Ernest Quintana proposed a ban on bolts, citing environmental concerns, climbers across the country revolted.

But after a year of often bitter and emotional debates, park officials, climbers, and environmentalists agreed this month on a plan that provides permits for new bolts and eliminates restrictions on replacing old ones.

The deal could set a precedent for other parks as they balance conservation needs with increased demands for recreation.

Joshua Tree is the first national park to draw up a plan to supervise climbers, said Carol Anthony, a spokeswoman for the National Park Service in Washington. Other parks-Yosemite, for instance-watched the negotiations for guidance on how to handle their own climbers.

Quintana's moratorium came in December 1997, a time when the mood in the country was anti-bolting. The next year, the U.S. Forest Service prohibited all bolts in its wilderness areas, arguing that the fixtures violated the 1964 Wilderness Act's ban on permanent improvements. But after an outcry, James Lyons, undersecretary of agriculture, rescinded the ban and said a task force would be formed to "clarify the issue."

For Quintana, the debates that followed the Joshua Tree ban changed his approach to managing the land.

"They asked us to look at their climbing routes as vertical trails, so we did," Quintana said. "It was an eye opener for me."

Some climbers had argued that park officials place sign posts, walking bridges, and other permanent fixtures along hiking trails through wilderness areas, he said, so why the fuss over a 2_-inch piece of metal that often can't be seen from the ground?

Under