

China Lake Mountain Rescue Group

Talus Pile #115; September, 2000

TRAINING SCHEDULE

Sep 9 Sat Nameless Pyramid Runkle
Sep 11 Mon Meeting Rockwell/Rockwell/Rockwell
Sep 15-17 Fri-Sun North Guard, Brewer, South Guard Hinman
Sep 23-24 Sat-Sun Middle Palisade Rockwell
Sep 29-Oct 1 Fri-Sun Open
Oct 7-9 Sat-Mon Tahquitz Hueber
Oct 10 Tue First Aid Topic B Schafhauser
Oct 13-15 Fri-Sun Sill Toler
Oct 16 Meeting (Operations Etiquette-Myers) Westbrook/Runkle/Toler
Oct 17 Tue First Aid Topic B Schafhauser
Oct 18 Wed Stretcher practice hut night Training Committee
Oct 22 Sun Stretcher practice Training Committee
Oct 24 Tue First Aid Topic B Schafhauser
Oct 27-29 Fri-Sun Yosemite Valley Finco
Nov 4-5 Sat-Sun Map and Compass Gates
Nov 8 Wed CPR Schafhauser
Nov 10-13 Fri-Mon Jepson, Palisade Crest Rockwell
Nov 10-13 Fri-Mon Baja California Davis
Nov 15 Wed Avalanche transceiver practice Training Committee
Nov 18 Sat Whitney Rockwell
Nov 19 Sun Rock skills Hinman
Nov 13 Mon Meeting (Avalanche transceivers-Myers) Botham/Botham/Botham
Nov 23-26 Thu-Sun Ruskin, Vennacher Needle Rockwell
Nov 29 Wed Stretcher practice hut night Roseman

SUNDAY ROCK CLIMBING coordinated by W. Runkle

CLMRG is funded in part by United Way of Indian Wells Valley.

FROM OTHER SOURCES

Sponsored By Carl's Yaks Of Kathmandu

One uneducated Sherpa just climbed Mt. Everest faster than anyone has before .

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Associated Press

KATMANDU, Nepal (AP) -- Some people climb Mount Everest to fulfill a lifelong dream, to add their names to the venerated mountaineering list begun by Tenzing Norgay Sherpa and Sir Edmund Hillary in 1953. Others to test their endurance or search their souls. In the classic words of British mountaineer George Mallory, some climb Everest simply, "Because it's there."

Babu Chhiri Sherpa scales the mighty Himalayan peak for his six daughters and the children of the frosty foothills at the mountain he reveres as God. "I never got the chance to go to school," says Chhiri. "I want all my girls, all the children, to get the education that I never had." Chhiri is hoping his growing fame as the man who just set a new world record for the fastest climb up Everest -- in 16 hours and 56 minutes -- will result in funds for the first school in his village of Taksindo.

Chhiri, 34, belongs to the Nepalese ethnic group Sherpa. His father was a yak herder and potato farmer, but his short, stocky son with gentle nature and wide white grin saw his future at the top of the world.

Chhiri began inching up the 29,028-foot Everest when he was 13 as a base-camp porter for the experienced Sherpas who guide foreigners all the way up the forbidding summit. In 1989, he successfully led a Russian team up Mount Kanchenjunga, the world's third-highest peak. A year later, he conquered Mount Everest and has since reached the summit 10 times, in 1995 becoming the only man to reach the peak twice in 14 days.

On May 6, 1999, Chhiri became the first to remain on the summit without bottled oxygen for 21 hours. Most foreign summiteers stay just long enough to have their picture taken. Chhiri jabbered on a walkie-talkie throughout the night to prevent himself from falling asleep and never waking up.

This season, Chhiri practically sprinted up the mountain, breaking the previous speed record of 20 hours and 24 minutes set by a fellow Sherpa, Kaji, in 1998. While most climbers take two to four days to cover the distance from the base camp at 17,500 feet to the summit, Chhiri set off at 5 p.m. on May 21 and reached the summit at 9:56 the next morning.

"The view is beautiful from the top of the world," he says "I do get a nice feeling." When asked how he describes that feeling to his daughters, aged 5 to 14, he tells them: "Everest is like a friend; Everest is God; Everest is everything; Everest is alive." Chhiri hopes his mostly unheralded accomplishments will lead to greater respect and monetary returns for the Sherpas. His first goal is to raise \$11,000 to build and staff a primary school for Sherpa children back home. His daughters are all in school, he says proudly.

While foreign climbing teams of seven must pay the Nepal government \$50,000 for a permit to scale Mount Everest, most Western commercial guides charge their clients up to \$60,000 a head. The Sherpas, who carry most of the team's gear, oxygen, and provisions on their backs, also pave a safe path to the top. Yet the Sherpa team typically gets just \$1,500 per climb. To support his family, Chhiri runs Nomad Expeditions, a Himalayan adventures firm that puts together climbs.

"We don't get the recognition that we deserve," said Chhiri, noting that of the more than 180 people who have lost their lives attempting to climb Mount Everest, at least 40 have been Sherpas. Some 850 people have made it to the top, including 300 Sherpas, since Nepal opened the Himalayas to tourism in 1950. "The foreigners have endorsements and governments to back them. That's why they get all the glory," says Chhiri.

"Everybody must treat the world's tallest mountain with great respect," Chhiri says, performing the "pooja" before each climb. The Sherpas require their foreign followers to join the ceremony in which Tibetan monks chant scripture and string Buddhist flags on bamboo polls to flap in the winds that will blow their prayers to the highest Himalayan peaks. "It's to prevent us from accidents," Chhiri says.

With glory comes death. On May 10, 1996, eight climbers approaching the summit died during a single storm. Chhiri was with a South African team on that day but told them he saw the weather turning bad and would not take them farther. They learned the next day of the deaths that would be written about by Jon Krakauer, one of the mountaineers who survived, in his disputed book *Into Thin Air*.

"They should never have pushed them up the mountain like that," Chhiri said of the commercial guides who were leading teams on that day. "When you don't perform the pooja properly, or do unethical things, there's a possibility that the gods get angry."

Editor: The following item appeared in the July 30, 2000 edition of The Daily Independent.

Bear-resistant food storage required on Mt. Whitney trail

Due to increased bear activity, the Inyo National Forest is now requiring overnight backpackers on the main Mt. Whitney trail to carry and use bear-resistant food canisters.

Bears in the Whitney Portal area have been traveling up the trail day and night and obtaining human food at Outpost Camp and at Trail Camp. Recently, bears have ripped through backpacks, obtained counter-balanced food, and ruined the trips of many backpackers. In addition to personal property damage, these incidents have already led to the killing of one sow in the Whitney Portal area.

The counter-balance method of storing food over a branch or hanging it over a rock is no longer effective on this trail. Bears have learned to easily gain access to food stored this way. Historically, bears have not traveled as high as Trail Camp, which is located

above treeline at 12,300 feet in elevation, but now, bears are visiting this area in search of human food.

Bear-resistant food canisters can fit inside or outside of backpacks and can hold nine days worth of food for one person. Bears cannot open these canisters. Canisters are for rent or sale at many local backpacking and sporting goods stores.

Please call any Inyo National Forest Ranger Station or visitor center for more information.

Editor: The following item appeared in the August 13, 2000 edition of The Daily Independent.

Rescue helicopter crashes killing three

STOCKHOLM, Sweden (AP)--A helicopter trying to rescue two stranded climbers crashed into Sweden's highest mountain and burst into flames Friday, killing all three crew members, police said.

Rescuers found the three bodies at the crash site at an altitude of 6,000 feet on the steep northeastern side of Kebnekaise, which rises 6,966 feet in Sweden's arctic about 700 miles northwest of the capital Stockholm.

The climbers, ages 50 and 80, were rescued a few hours after the crash by a Norwegian helicopter and taken to a research station at the base of the mountain.

"It's difficult to say at this stage what caused the accident," police inspector Lennart Landstoem said of the crash. "Witnesses saw sparks, indicating that the helicopter's rotor blades hit the mountainside and crashed."

The helicopter, equipped for mountain rescues, crashed as it approached the two climbers, who had been stuck on the snowy mountain since Tuesday because of bad weather.

Editor: The following item appeared in the August 3, 2000 edition of The Daily Independent.

Downey man drowns after trying to swim in Kern River

Kern County Search and Rescue personnel recovered the body of Jesus Antonio Lopez from a spot in the Kern River on July 30 at 11 a.m. Lopez apparently attempted to swim in a section of the Kern River and drowned in the attempt. The death occurred approximately three miles outside a rural section of Bakersfield. He was 39 years old.

Lopez, a resident of Downey, had traveled to the Kern River area with two companions to look for future camping and fishing spots. The three men had stopped for a short break along the river, and Lopez's companions decided to wade into a shallow pool, which was only ankle-deep where they stood. Lopez decided to swim

out a short distance to a nearby rock in the river and was immediately swept away by the deceptive current.

One of his companions, who remains unnamed, walked to a roadside call box two miles east of the spot of the accident and summoned help.

Lopez was carried through two small rapids before becoming lodged under a boulder at the outlet of the second rapids.

Editor: The following item appeared in the August 3, 2000 edition of The Daily Independent.

Inyo deputies help man who takes ill on Mount Whitney trail

Mike Gallagher, 45 years old, required assistance from Inyo County sheriffs while hiking in the Whitney Portal area of the Sequoia National Forest. A hiker coming off the Mount Whitney Trail contacted the Inyo County Sheriff's Department to request medical aid for a sick man at Lone Pine Lake at approximately 4 p.m. Monday, July 31.

The initial report to the Inyo Sheriff's Office was that the caller believed a person was suffering from dehydration at the lake. As Inyo County Search and Rescue arrived on scene, the sick man collapsed.

Editor: At the risk of lowering the average level of quality of mountaineering newsletters, I'm including the following from a recent issue of People magazine (that I found quite by accident).

By Stef McDonald

August 07, 2000

Harrison Ford: Hero

When a hiker was felled on a climb of Table Mountain in Idaho last week, Harrison Ford came to her rescue. The Associated Press reports that Sarah George, 20, was hiking with Megan Freeman, 22, on July 31 when George became ill. When Freeman called for help on a cell phone, Ford, who has a home in nearby Wyoming, flew in with a paramedic on his Bell 407 helicopter to pick up George and bring her to St. John's Hospital in Jackson. Ford, an avid flier, is said to volunteer his services to the local sheriffs' departments. "I can't believe I barfed in Harrison Ford's helicopter," said George, who has recovered.

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THE ONGOING WHITNEY CHALLENGE

Bob Rockwell

Member Time Adjusted Time* T/MR**

Current

Tom Roseman 3:38 3:09 T
Walter Runkle 3:51 3:27 T
Curtis Davis 4:02 4:02 T
Mike Myers 4:11 3:45 T
Tom Sakai 4:50 4:12 T
Bob Rockwell 5:20 4:09 T
John O'Conner 6:22 6:09 T
Bud Gates 6:37 6:24 T
Jeanette Rudy 7:30 6:44 MR
Dave Doerr 7:40 7:38 T

Historical

Terry Moore (1979) 3:11 3:10 T
Bob Rockwell (1979) 4:05 3:57 T

*Times are adjusted for age and sex using the Age Equalizer™ interactive calculator at Peak Running Performance's web site www.peakrunning.com. The standard used here is a 34-year-old male's time for running a marathon (26.2 miles).

**T=Trail; MR=Mountaineer's Route. (Sorry, the calculator doesn't provide adjusted times.)

Sunday clears away the rust of the whole week.

--Joseph Addison

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DONATIONS

Terry Mitchell

CLMRG gratefully acknowledges recent gifts from the following friends:

Lyal D. Viers Ridgecrest, CA

Tim Brecht/Lucia Dow Waterloo, Ontario "In memory of Robby Dow"

SCREE

Check these URLs:

<http://www.hypothermia.org/>

<http://www.hypothermia.org/awards.htm>

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

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

All chocolate is a necessity. I eat M&Ms as vitamins.

--Mary Beth Gardner