

# CHINA LAKE MOUNTAIN RESCUE GROUP

## TALUS PILE

MAY 2004 NUMBER 131

### TRAINING SCHEDULE

May 10 Mon Meeting Huey, Finco, Bishop  
May 12 Wed Stretcher Hut night Training committee  
May 15-16 Sat-Sun Stretcher practice Training committee  
May 21-24 Fri-Mon Barnard and Heller Hinman  
May 29-31 Sat-Mon Morgan and Stanford Rockwell  
Jun 4-6 Fri-Sun Kern Peak C. Burge  
Jun 14 Mon Meeting Hinman, D. Burge, Runkle  
Jun 8-9 Tue-Wed Summer class  
Jun 12-13 Sat-Sun Goode, Peak 13040 Rockwell  
Jun 15-16 Tue-Wed Summer class  
Jun 18-20 Fri-Sun Whitney East Buttress Runkle  
Jun 22-23 Tue-Wed Summer class  
Jun 26-27 Sat-Sun Lone Pine Peak, NE Ridge Bishop  
Jun 29-30 Tue-Wed Summer class  
Jul 2-4 Fri-Sat Whitney Basin traverse Rockwell  
Jul 10-11 Sat-Sun Summer class day trips  
Jul 12 Mon Meeting Botham, Breitenstein, Green  
Jul 13-14 Tue-Wed Summer class  
Jul 16-18 Fri-Sun Whitney Trail 100th Celebration Rockwell  
Jul 20-21 Tue-Wed Summer class  
Jul 24-25 Sat-Sun Summer class overnights  
Jul 27 Tue Summer class  
Jul 28 Wed Summer class party  
Jul 30-Aug 1 Fri-Sun Open  
Aug 7-15 Sat-Sun Kaweahs Hinman  
Aug 13-15 Fri-Sun Merriam and Royce (Pine Creek Pass) C. Burge  
Aug 19-24 Thu-Tue Granite Peak, Montana Huey  
Aug 21-22 Sat-Sun Open  
Aug 23 Mon Summer party  
Aug 29-31 Sun-Tue Fishhook Arete Runkle  
Sep 4-6 Sat-Mon Tuolumne Meadows Finco

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## OPERATION REPORTS

### **2003-03 5-8 August 2003** Search Sawtooths, Mono County Daryl Hinman

On July 30, 2003, 46-year-old Fred Claasen of Livermore, California began a 6-day backpack trip from Mono Village at Twin Lakes in Mono County, California. His intention was to circumnavigate the Sawtooth Ridge or Sawtooths in a counter-clockwise direction. The Sawtooths run roughly in an east-west direction and divide the Hoover Wilderness in the Toiyabe National Forest on the north from Yosemite National Park (YNP) on the south. Much of the ridge is continuously steep on both sides and most of it requires technical climbing to cross. Its most notable summit is Matterhorn Peak.

Claasen planned to hike from Mono Village up the Robinson Creek drainage past Barney and Crown Lakes and over the west end of the Sawtooths into YNP at Mule Pass. He was to continue over Burro and Matterhorn Passes and back over the east end of the Sawtooths out of YNP at Horse Creek Pass. Then he was to hike down the Horse Creek drainage back to Mono Village. Except for the section over Matterhorn and Horse Creek Passes, this route is on good, well-marked trails. Horse Creek Pass is Class 2 with a use-trail and Matterhorn Pass is Class 3.

On August 4, Claasen's wife reported him missing to the Mono County Sheriff's Office when he did not show up for work that day. The Mono County Search and Rescue (MOSAR) and YNP Search and Rescue (YOSAR) teams initiated a search on August 5 that focused on Claasen's intended route and other trails that he might take mistakenly. Trail blocks were set up at numerous locations in the area to interview other hikers.

The call from Mono County requesting assistance from CLMRG came through the OES and Kern County Sheriff's Office late on August 5. At 2030, Mike Myers phoned me and explained that none of the five current CLMRG operational leaders (OLs) were available. The Qualifications Committee (QC), having anticipated this problem, had approved several previous OLs, including me, to act as an OL as appropriate. Because of the current shortage of SAR operational opportunities for CLMRG members,

I accepted. Terry Mitchell called the roster, which ironically produced only one member, Mike Franklin, able to go. I called Mono County Sheriff Sergeant Rob Weber to tell him that we would be there at the requested time of 0700 the following morning.

Mike and I met at the hut and were on the road by 0230 to make the long drive to the search base at the Bridgeport airport. The search strategy for this day was to continue with the previous day's effort and add the extensive area encircled by his route, which included the Sawtooths and the drainages to the north. This assumed that, for some reason, Claasen would attempt to cross the difficult ridge rather than go around the

easy passes at either end as planned. Besides CLMRG, YOSAR, and MOSAR, there were search teams from Inyo County SAR and the U.S. Marine Corp Mountain Warfare Training Center near Bridgeport and helicopter support from the Army Air National Guard in Sacramento and YNP.

Mike and I were assigned to search down the Blacksmith drainage, which runs north from the Sawtooths to the Robinson Creek drainage. An Army Blackhawk helicopter flew us to Glacier Lake. After searching the area around the lake, we were fairly certain that no one had been there for some time. Descending from Glacier Lake, the route soon became a maze of boulders and thick vegetation, and most of our focus was on negotiating this difficult ground. We arrived at Mono Village and were driven back to the search base by late afternoon. That night we enjoyed a bar-b-cue dinner at the Mono County Jail.

The following day focused on the same areas as the previous day but added WOOF search dog teams. Mike and I were each assigned to accompany a dog and handler team. Unfortunately, because of a number of issues, the requested helicopter support did not arrive until after 1400, so much of the day, few teams were fielded.

Mike's team was assigned to search the area along the north base of Matterhorn Peak. They were flown in and out by the Blackhawk helicopter and completed their assignment within three hours. My team was assigned to search the possible campsites near Crown, Barney, and Peeler Lakes along with the accompanying drainages. We were inserted above Crown Lake by the YNP helicopter at 1500. After hiking 14 miles to complete our assignment, we reached Mono Village and were driven to search base at 2230.

Mike drove the entire way to Ridgecrest because I was so tired. We took two Inyo County SAR members to Bishop on the way and got back to the hut at 0400. The search was to continue for at least two more days, but because no OL was available, CLMRG did not send a second team when further assistance was requested.

### **2003-04 19 July 03 Search Kern County Deborah Breitenstein**

At about 0920 on Friday, 18 July, Sgt. Rutledge paged to request support for a follow-on search

for Ronald Rosepink (refer to Operation Report 2003-02 in *The Talus Pile* Number 129 (October 2003).

I accepted the call. Terry Mitchell agreed to coordinate. Al Green, Tom Sakai, Dennis Burge, Tom Roseman, Dan Bishop, and Ellen Schafhauser also committed.

Shafhauser could not field because of

a minor back injury but provided transportation and support at search base.

I picked up the vehicle and group gear, and we departed from the Von's parking lot at 0500 on Saturday, 19 July. We arrived at Bear Valley at 0700. By 0830, the teams were fielded along a ridgeline and proceeded west down to Bear Valley searching a

substantial area of underbrush that was not covered during the previous search efforts. After lunch, six teams (3 CLMRG teams) were re-fielded on the east side to search some of the drainages that dropped down into the housing areas bordering the ranch. We were debriefed and released from the search by 1600 and home by 1800. We found no sign of Rosepink in this search but managed to clear a substantial portion of the search area. Dan Bishop did locate a dead deer by scent. Other debris and clue sightings were inspected and rejected as evidence.

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#### **2004-04 (2004-OES-0079) 18 February 2004 Transit Santa Barbara Tom Sakai**

On Wednesday, 18 February at 0800, Sgt. Mike Kirkland of the Kern County Sheriff's Office, called our pager to relay a request from Santa Barbara County to assist in the search for Brad Whittell, age 23, from San Jose, California. He had been visiting friends in San Diego for the weekend and was returning home to San Jose. He apparently decided to stay in the Santa Barbara area for a while and was last seen heading up the Rattlesnake Canyon Trail at 1500 on Monday, 16 February in search of two little boys. The boys were the sons of a woman at the trailhead who could not locate them and thought they might have gone up the trail. He gave her his cell phone before starting up the trail.

Linda Finco agreed to be the operations leader (OL) initially but had to back out when she remembered she had an important meeting at work the next morning. So I became the OL. Terry Mitchell and Sheila Rockwell did the call-out, which got three members: Bud Gates, Dave Miles, and Bob Rockwell.

We left the hut at 1145. After a detour to my house to pick up directions to the command post (CP) and the point of contact's phone number, we proceeded on our long drive. I notified the CP that we were on our way and gave them our estimated time of arrival. I, unfortunately, had not given them my cell phone number. When we got to Santa Barbara at 1550, I called the CP to get clarification on some of the directions. I learned that the victim had been found in good condition and that the Office of Emergency Services (OES) had been notified two hours before at about 1400. OES, however, had not notified our SAR coordinator in Kern County so that we could be turned around in transit.

We were redirected to their rescue hut, where we got more details of the search. It turns out the woman who had been given the cell phone found her sons nearby a short time after Whittell had left the trailhead. She could not make contact with him, but was able to give the phone to a couple who were starting to hike up the trail. They did not see Whittell, so they left a note on his vehicle. When Whittell had not called by that night, the man looked through the speed dialer on the cell phone and reached Whittell's father in San Jose. The father drove to Santa Barbara and, after talking to the man, reported his son missing some time Tuesday morning.

Whittell was "found" when he called his father to let him know where he was and discovered that his father had reported him missing. It seems that Whittell had come down a different trail Monday night, which put him in the Isla Vista area, and had spent most of Tuesday wandering around the Santa Barbara area looking for his car. After hearing this tale, we could only wonder as we drove back to Ridgecrest. We were back to the hut by 2040 and home before 2100. I was reminded that on long transits, it's a good idea to check in with the CP periodically to get updates.

### **2004-05 28 February 2004 Search and Recovery Frazier Park Linda Finco**

Saturday morning at 0200, CLMRG received a page from Sgt. Mike Kirkland to assist the Kern County Sheriff's Office (KCSO) in a search for a plane crash in the Frazier Park area of Kern County. The only additional information Sgt. Kirkland provided was that it was snowing and that the teams were encountering some steep terrain. Sheila Rockwell coordinated the callout with help from Carol Burge. Bob Rockwell, Al Green, Bud Gates, Dan Bishop, Dave Doerr, and I committed to the search. We met at the hut at 0300.

We loaded up our vehicles, left at 0320, and arrived in the Pine Mountain area around 0630. The snow was pretty steady on the drive from Frazier Park to Pine Mountain but was beginning to let up. In Pine Mountain, we met Sgt. John Diederich and a Frazier Park team member. Based on various eyewitness reports on where the plane crashed, Frazier Park had been searching the upper slopes since 2200 Friday night from a fire road accessible by SnoCats. Witnesses reported seeing the plane crash around 2100 Friday night. A few reports conflicted on the exact location, but most reports, including the report by one of the Frazier Park team members, put the location up the canyon around the 7000-foot level. While we were discussing what to do, another witness came to ask if we were looking for a plane crash. He had been caring for his sick dog Friday night when he saw the fire from his porch. He located the site based on two trees in front of his house. We went to the porch to have him point out the location. Based on this information, we told Sgt. Diederich we were willing to start hiking from the town heading in the approximate direction reported by this witness. A GPS location was also estimated based on the reporting party's (RP's) observation, which we would use as a guide.

We geared up and started up the ridge to the east of the canyon around 0730. The terrain was brushy, but hiking was not difficult. Bishop, Gates, and Green waited with Rockwell as Doerr and I brought up the rear. In a low spot, both Doerr and I could smell something like burnt fuel. The other members had noticed a similar smell in the general area. Base requested our GPS location, which we provided. We decided to split into two teams and continue up trying to locate the direction of the smell based on the shifting winds. A little farther up, we could smell burning wood, which got us excited until a Frazier Park team on the fire road stated that they had built a fire that

was putting out more smoke than heat. By that time, we had found the search team's tracks from the previous night and saw we were within a few hundred feet of the fire road and their fire. The KCSO's helicopter had been searching earlier, but the low cloud cover prevented it from searching the GPS coordinates based on the RP's accounts. Now with our GPS coordinates and a slight lift in the cloud cover, the helicopter flew over the area again and within a short period located the crash site. Bishop, Green, and Gates were just a short distance away from the site and found it with the help of the helicopter. Rockwell, Doerr, and I also hiked over to the crash site, which was in the canyon around the 6500-foot level. It was now around 1000. We were told not to disturb the crash site. There were conflicting reports about whether the plane had four people or just one person on board, and from what we could observe, there was only the pilot. We passed this information back to base. We sat off to the side to wait for the sheriff, NTSB, and FAA personnel to arrive and inspect the crash site before anything was moved. They arrived around 1130. By now, the weather was clearing. The helicopter had already returned to Bakersfield, so after NTSB inspected the site and the pilot was removed from the wreckage, we had to raise the pilot to the fire road about 500 feet above us for transportation. The sheriff and Frazier Park team members recovered the pilot and secured him in a stretcher. China Lake members started up the hill with the rope, slings, and pulleys to set up the raising system, a single pulley tied to a tree. We raised the stretcher and arrived at the fire road around 1300. We loaded into the SnoCats and got back to Pine Mountain around 1400. We had a late lunch or early dinner and were back in Ridgecrest by 1840.

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### **2003 summary of operations**

Operation	Talus	Pile	Date	Type	Location	Leader
2003-01	128	18	Apr 03	Transit	Red Rock Canyon	Breitenstein
2003-02	129	4-6	Jul 03	Search	Kern County	Finco
2003-03	131	5-8	Aug 03	Search	Sawtooths, Mono County	Hinman
2003-04	131	19	Jul 03	Search	Kern County	Breitenstein

### **2003 operations by type**

Incidents	Alerts	Mobilizations	Transits	Searches	Rescues	Recoveries	Total
0	0	0	1	3	0	0	4

\*One search became a recovery.

### **2003 operations by month**

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0

## **2003 requesting counties**

Kern Mono

3 1

## **2003 subject outcomes**

Found uninjured Found injured Found dead Not found Self-rescued Total

0 0 0 2 3 5

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## **TRIP REPORTS**

Palisades

4-6 July 2003

By Bob Huey

Jim Vijay and I tramped the west side of the Palisades on 4-6 July 2003.

July 4: We hiked over Bishop Pass (3 1/4 hours) and cross-country to Thunderbolt Pass at 12,300 feet (2 1/2 hours)-a 4,000-foot gain. We carried a 3-person tent we intend to use on the Wyoming trip, a 50-foot, 9-mm rope, and ice axes. We left our crampons in the car.

July 5: We climbed 2,440 feet to near the top of Polemonium and returned to camp (10 hours). We ascended the chute from the west to the top of the U Notch. The chute was loose rock and scree. When we first entered the chute, a large boulder came down from high up. None came down while we were in the chute until we knocked one loose from the top on our way down. At the U Notch, we met other climbers who said they knew the route to the top of Polemonium but took us up a 5.4 crack to a 5.7 face near the top, where Jim and I rappelled back down. We found the real route to the gendarme and turned back at the exposed 5.3 ridge because we carried only one rope, which didn't give us enough to rappel down.

July 6: We went up the third class chute 600 feet toward Thunderbolt. We didn't take crampons or a rope. We found ways around the hard snow patches early in the morning, but turned around on a sandy, sloping third class shelf because it felt prudent to use a rope to make one move above it and because coming down to the shelf would have been dangerous. We hiked out and considered doing Aggassiz or Goode but went out for Mexican food instead and got home at a decent hour.

### **A Nice Climb of Mt. Russell**

29 June 2003

By Bob Rockwell

On 29 June, Tom Sakai and I, with guests Daniel Krasner, Richard Piotrowski, and Len and Sarah Lochmiller, climbed Mt. Russell by a way I have been thinking about for years. If it isn't the most direct and minimum-energy route from the North Fork of

Lone Pine Creek, it's close.

We left camp at Upper Boy Scout Lake and ascended the drainage to the northwest that heads directly for the Southeast Face of Mt. Russell. The first half of this pretty valley has grassy meadows, waterfalls, and a small lake that dries up in late summer. Getting to within a couple of hundred feet of the headwall at its end, we climbed up and right until above the headwall, then headed left across the base of the Southeast Face for the Sierra Crest. As I had thought would be the case, this was pretty much all class 2 and on good terrain.

Crossing the Sierra Crest into the Arctic Lake drainage at almost precisely 13,000 feet quickly placed us in the broad couloir next to the Fishhook Arete that leads up to Russell's South Face. We ascended the nice class 3 right side described in R. J. Secor's guidebook, gained the summit ridge, and walked over to the true summit.

This route has three "pieces": Piece 1 is the drainage ascent to the Southeast Face. Piece 2 is the traverse under the Southeast Face, over the Sierra Crest, and into the broad couloir. Piece 3 is the climb from there to the summit. Piece 1 has been traveled by many people on their way to Russell-Carillon Pass, and Piece 3 is a very popular finish route to the summit. Piece 2 is an obvious connection between them, but Secor told me he hadn't heard of anyone doing it. That's surprising.

Of course, once crossing the Crest, access to the Fishhook Arete and other Russell South Face routes is immediate, and this way avoids the roundabout way to East Face Lake and up and down Whitney-Russell Col. We traveled leisurely and took 10 hours from the time we started up from camp until we got down to Whitney Portal.

### **Taboose Pass**

17-20 July 2003

By Bob Rockwell

Thursday, 17 July: Bob Huey, John Ellsworth, Jim Vijay, and I started in.

Friday, 18 July: We all climbed Mt. Ickes.

Saturday, 19 July: We parted company with John, who climbed Arrow. Bob, Jim, and I climbed Vennacher Needle.

Sunday, 20 July: We came out, climbing Peak 12851 at Taboose Pass on the way. We came out a day early because of the spotty weather. We lucked out for most of the trip, with the poorer weather pretty much happening all around us but not on us. Most of the trail on the east side of Taboose was uncomfortably hot. On the west side, the temperature was nice, but the mosquitoes made up for it.

Check <http://members12.clubphoto.com/robert634908/1471382> for pictures of this trip.

### **SUMMARY OF PAST TRIPS**

## Date Location Participants Notes

Jan 19 Snowshoe to Lone Pine Lake Toler, Rockwell, Sakai, and guest

Jan 24-25 Thimble To Corkscrew Peak Huey, Rockwell, Hinman, Myers Left Saturday after dinner. Started hike Sunday 0700. Back to cars 1700-1800.

Jan 30-Feb 1 Piute Pass Peaks Rockwell, Runkle, and guest Fought winds for an hour and then turned around and came home. Next morning, Runkle & Rockwell hiked to Lower Boy Scout lake.

Feb 8 Wildrose Sakai, Rockwell, and guest

Feb 13-15 Mt. Russell Rockwell, Runkle, and guest Richard Piotrowski Hiked to Lower Boy Scout Lake on Friday, to Upper Boy Scout Lake on Saturday. Made it to about 12,500' on Sunday before snow turned us back.

Feb 16-20 Pear Lake Hut Hueber, et al 4 members, 3 guests. One day it snowed, next day clear skies, great for skiing.

Feb 22 Whitney Trail Rockwell, Huey, Bishop, Franklin Day snowshoe hike up the Whitney trail to about 9700' from the road closed sign at 6600'.

Mar 7 Pinto Peak Rockwell, Sakai, Huey, Hinman, guests: Sue Faris and Bill Chapman Day hike. 3400' gain, 9 miles round trip.

*I was too shy to socialize, and I didn't know how to drink, so I went camping.*

--David Drake

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## TRANSITIONS

Adrian Kai Riendeau

Birth date: 4/3/2004

Birth time: 4:13 a.m.

Birthplace: Ridgecrest Regional Hospital

Weight: 6 lbs. 14 oz.

Length: 19 inches

*Based on Linda Homer's report:*

Elaine, our secretary, went into labor on Friday, April 2 about 9:30 p.m. She and Larry arrived at Ridgecrest Regional Hospital about 2:30 a.m. The doctor got to Elaine just in time to catch Adrian Kai as it took her only three minutes to push him out. He weighed 6 lbs. 14 oz. and was 19 inches long.

All seemed well for a few hours, but the doctor noticed that he was having breathing difficulties, and his blood didn't appear right. Fortunately, the doctor didn't waste any time to have Adrian flown to Loma Linda. After the helicopter left the hospital, Elaine and Larry drove down. Elaine had 11 hours to recover from delivery before this ordeal began.

The short version of the story is that Adrian is progressing very well. He was on oxygen at Loma Linda, and when he didn't need that anymore, he got to go home. Fortunately, Elaine's parents arrived Wednesday to help with Adrian's older brother Noah.

*Mom Elaine reports:*

Thanks to all for the prayers. Adrian Kai Riendeau was able to return to Ridgecrest on April 19/20. He is now one month old, weighs 9 lbs. 2 oz., and is 21 inches tall.

### **Michael Franklin and Alisha Caster**

CLMRG member Mike Franklin and Alisha Caster met two years ago at our summer mountaineering class and married Saturday, May 8 at St. Ann's Church in Ridgecrest. Mike is the son of Sally Franklin and the late Tom Franklin. He graduated from Burroughs High School in 1987 and from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo in 2001 with a bachelor of science degree in computer science with magna cum laude honors. He is an engineer at the Naval Air Warfare Center, China Lake.

Alisha is the daughter of Sam and Paula Caster. She graduated from Burroughs High School in 1997 and from CSU Stanislaus in 2002 with a bachelor of arts degree in psychology with magna cum laude honors. She is a case manager at Desert Area Resources and Training.

### **Russ Huse**

*Al Green reports:*

To those of you who knew Russ Huse:

I received a message today from Barbara Auld that Russ died yesterday morning (5/1/04). He was 96. Russ was a charter member of CLMRG and was one of our Honorary (Life) Members. He was active with us up to his retirement from China Lake in 1975. He and his wife Edith moved to Westlake Village soon after retiring. Edith's address:

2076 Hillsbury Road  
Westlake Village CA 91361

### **Ali Aminian**

*Patty Kline, Chair of the Sierra Peaks Section of the Sierra Club, reports:*

The year started with a tragic loss of our friend and fellow climber Ali Aminian. I remember the fun and cross-country climbs I did with Ali last summer. I was able to join the SPS group of six on a strenuous and successful climb of the U-Notch on North Palisade (an SPS Emblem Peak). Ali was very strong and enjoyable to have on the trip. Two weeks later, Ali led a California Mountaineering Club trip to Banner Peak and Mount Ritter, another SPS Emblem Peak trip that I joined. With wonderful snow conditions, Ali was really enjoying the climb and descent. Ali . . . kept the pace and did [his] usual powering in the mountains. We hiked in, climbed both peaks, and

hiked out in two days!

I think of his family often. If you would drop them a line and let them know how Ali came into your lives, they would be comforted.

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Go to <http://www.simpsoncity.com/hiking/news/LAtimes011504.html> for a Los Angeles Times article about Ali. Refer to Operation Report 2004-02 in *The Talus Pile* Number 130 (February 2004) for the CLMRG report.

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## ON THE MOUNTAIN

We climbed out of timber,  
bending on the steep meadow  
to look for berries,  
then still in the reddening sunlight  
went on up the windy shoulder.

A shadow followed us up the mountain  
like a black moon rising.  
Minute by minute the autumn lamps  
on the slope burned out.

Around us the air and the rocks  
whispered of night . . .

A great cloud blew from the north  
and the mountain vanished  
in the rain and stormlit darkness.

John Haines in Czeslaw Milosz's anthology  
*A Book of Luminous Things*

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## SHERIFF'S APPRECIATION DINNER

By Loren Castro

Sheriff Mack Wimbish welcomed members of 10 volunteer search and rescue groups to his annual appreciation dinner at Hodel's Restaurant in Bakersfield on 26 March 2004. The represented groups were Bakersfield, China Lake Mountain, Cooks, Desert, Divers, Indian Wells Valley, Kern Valley, Mounted, Southern Kern, and Tehachapi.

CLMRG members in attendance were Debbie Breitenstein and guests Gene and Judy Breitenstein, Tom Sakai and guest Carol Sakai, Ellen Schafhouser and guest Bob Lowe, and me

Our Contributor of the Year was Bud Gates.

Our members were recognized for longevity awards as follows:

5 years:

Dave Doerr

Bud Gates

15 years:

Werner Hueber

40 years:

Carol Burge

Tom Sakai had a winning ticket for a door prize, and I was sitting on the lucky chair that won our table's centerpiece.

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## **SERGEANT JOHN DIEDERICH RETIRES**

### **The new Honorary Member**

Sergeant John Diederich of the Kern County Sheriff's Office has been elected an Honorary Member of the China Lake Mountain Rescue Group. The only other time a person who was not a prior member of CLMRG was given this award since 1983 was Sheriff Carl Sparks, who retired in 2002. Sergeant Diederich's nomination reads as follows:

"Sgt. John Diederich has been one of the most supportive and helpful deputy sheriffs in the history of CLMRG and the Kern County Sheriff's Office. John was the sergeant in charge of SAR for Kern County from the middle of 1990 to 1992 and has been again since early 1997.

"He has worked in every way possible to provide us with needed equipment and support. John was the driving force that provided the insurance coverage now in place for our public education events. He also deserves credit for replacing our worn out vehicle with a new Ford Explorer.

"It has been obvious that this role was more than a job for John. He was deeply involved in making the SAR resources in Kern County as professional and effective as possible.

"CLMRG has benefited greatly from his tenure, and to list him as one of our Honorary Members is to honor us."

Refer to *The Talus Pile* Number 123 (April 2002) for the history of our Honorary Member category.

### **The retirement party**

Sgt. John Diederich retired from the Kern County Sheriff's Office on 19 March 2004. His retirement party was at Hodel's Restaurant in Bakersfield on 10 April 2004. Al Green, Tom Roseman, Debbie Breitenstein, and Janet Westbrook represented CLMRG at the party.

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### **2004 OFFICERS**

President Debbie Breitenstein 939-0716 deborah.breitenstein@navy.mil  
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MRA Representative Tom Sakai 375-7404 tsakai@ridgenet.net

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### **DONATIONS**

CLMRG gratefully acknowledges recent gifts from the following friends:  
Janet Hammond Bradbury, California To honor her son, Steve Lester  
Southern California Edison

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### **SCREE**

Check our web page at <http://www.clmrg.org>.  
All telephone numbers in *The Talus Pile* are area code 760 unless noted otherwise.  
Newsletters from other rescue groups are in the hut.

Excerpt from *In a Sunburned Country* by Bill Bryson

"Garland was a professional photographer in Sydney until his partner, Lisa Menke, was appointed chief warden of Kinchega National Park up the road. He took a job as the regional tourism and development officer. His territory covered 26,000 square miles, an area half the size of England, but with a population of just 2,500. His challenge was to persuade dubious locals that there are people in the world prepared to pay good money to vacation in a place that is vast, dry, empty, featureless, and ungodly hot. The other part of his challenge was to find such people."