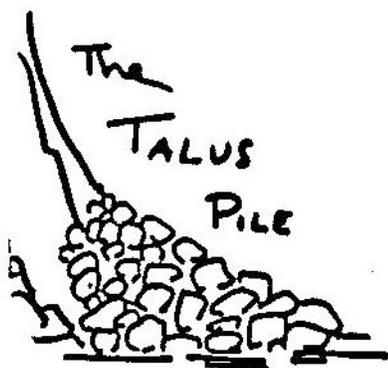


NUMBER 137

MARCH 2006



## CHINA LAKE MOUNTAIN RESCUE GROUP

P. O. BOX 2037  
RIDGECREST CA 93556

### TRAINING SCHEDULE

	1-2 Apr	Sat-Sun	Open	
	7-9 Apr	Fri-Sun	Charleston (Nevada—winter snowshoe)	Huey
T	10 Apr	Mon	Meeting	Sakai, Hueber, Reindeau
	12 Apr	Wed	Mojave Primitive Encampment	Sakai
T	15-16 Apr	Sat-Sun	Stretcher Practice	Training Committee
	21-23 Apr	Fri-Sun	Open	
	29-30 Apr	Sat-Sun	Open	
	5-7 May	Fri-Sun	White Mountain	
T	8 May	Mon	Meeting	_____
	13-14 May	Sat-Sun	Spanish Needle	____, _____
	19-21 May	Fri-Sun	Open	Huey
	27-28 May	Sat-Sun	Rock skills	Training Committee
	2-4 Jun	Fri-Sun	Open	
T	10-11 Jun	Sat-Sun	Search practice	Training Committee
T	12 Jun	Mon	Meeting	____, _____
T	13-14 Jun	Tue-Wed	Summer class	Summer Class Committee
	16-18 Jun	Fri-Sun	Lone Pine Creek North Fork (second choice)	
T	20-21 Jun	Tue-Wed	Summer class	Summer Class Committee
	24-25 Jun	Sat-Sun	Norman Clyde	Huey
T	27-28 Jun	Tue-Wed	Summer class	Summer Class Committee
	30 Jun-2 Jul	Fri-Sun	Lone Pine Creek North Fork (first choice)	_____
	3-4 Jul	Tue-Wed	No summer class	
	8-9 Jul	Sat-Sun	Morgan, Stanford (from Hilton Creek)	Rockwell
T	10 Jul	Mon	Meeting	____, _____
T	11-12 Jul	Tue-Wed	Summer class	Summer Class Committee
T	14-16 Jul	Fri-Sun	Summer class day trips	Leaders

T designates official training activities.

*wow—just look around  
buds, flowers, sunshine, and you  
glorious living*

—Nona Mock Wyman, Walnut Creek, California



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

## **GROUP BUSINESS**

### **QUALIFICATIONS COMMITTEE**

The members present at the 9 January 2006 meeting elected the following members of the Qualifications Committee for 2006:

Tom Sakai	Chair, operation reports
Tom Roseman	New members, roster
Linda Finco	Trips, training

### **OPERATION LEADERS**

Based on the votes of the membership, the Qualifications Committee named the following operation leaders for 2005: Tom Roseman, Linda Finco (20 years as a leader), Mike Myers, Tom Sakai, Dan Bishop, Debbie Breitenstein, and David Miles.

### **OFFICERS**

The members present at the 13 February 2006 meeting elected the following officers for 2006.

President	Linda Finco
Vice-President	Bud Gates
Secretary	Elaine Riendeau
Treasurer	Werner Hueber
MRA Representative	Dave Miles

### **NEW MEMBERS**

We welcomed Eileen Loughran as a new member in 2005.

### **TRANSITIONS**

Honorary Member Bryson van Gundy, Jr. died in August of last year. A former Operations Officer at the airfield, Bryson did much to establish good relations between the Naval Ordnance Test Station (NOTS)—the predecessor to the Naval Weapons Center (NWC)—and local SAR groups. He helped develop the Navy's willingness to call us on their mountain SAR missions.

Sgt. Mike Kirkland is leaving his SAR duties to be in charge of the Special Operations Group of the sheriff's new Special Operations Division.

SAR Cdr. Rocky Lacertoso's retirement party was on 24 February. Cdr. Dave Nelson replaced him.

Christina Lee Jain was born 5:48 p.m. on Tuesday, January 10, 2006 at Hoag Hospital, Newport Beach, California to Chris and Michelle Jain. Baby, Mom, and Dad are in good health and doing well.

### **APPRECIATION DINNER**

Sheriff Mack Wimbish hosted his SAR teams at his annual appreciation dinner at Hodel's Restaurant in Bakersfield on 24 March. Group members Al Green, Linda Finco, Tom Roseman, Debbie Breitenstein, Dave Miles, Paul DeRuiter, Dan Bishop, and Mary Schmierer; Honorary Member Tom Stogsdill; and family and friends attended.

President Finco introduced Dan Bishop as our top contributor for 2005 for his work as lead instructor for the Basic Mountaineering and Mountaineering Safety Course and for his active participation in the Group's mountaineering and SAR activities.

The following members received longevity of service awards:

Mike Renta, 30 years	Paul DeRuiter, 20 years	Mike Franklin, 5 years
Mary Schmierer, 25 years	Tom Roseman, 20 years	Dave Miles, 5 years
Bob Huey, 25 years	Walter Runkle, 10 years	

## **SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS**

### **OPERATIONS IN 2005**

Operation	Talus Pile	Date	Type	Location	Leader
2005-01	135	6-7 Jan 05	Search	Kernville	Sakai
2005-02	136	22 Apr 05	Mobilization	Mariposa County	Breitenstein
2005-03	136	29-30 Apr 05	Search	Mariposa County	Bishop
2005-04	137	3 Jun 05	Search	Frazier Park	Gates
2005-05	136	26 Jun 05	Mobilization	Yosemite National Park	Sakai
2005-06	136	18-19 Jul 05	Search	China Lake	Finco
2005-07	136	11 Aug 05	Mobilization	Yosemite National Park	Roseman
2005-08	136	12-13 Aug 05	Search	Tulare County	Finco
2005-09	136	8 Sep 05	Search	Inyokern	Sakai
2005-10	136	12-13 Oct 05	Search	El Paso Mountains	Roseman
2005-11	137	10 Dec 05	Search	Kern River Canyon	Breitenstein

### **OPERATIONS BY TYPE**

Incidents	Alerts	Mobilizations	Transits	Searches	Rescues	Recoveries	Total
0	0	3	0	8	0	0	11

### **OPERATIONS BY MONTH**

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

### **REQUESTING AGENCIES**

Kern County	Mariposa County	Tulare County	Yosemite NP
6	2	1	2

### **SUBJECT OUTCOMES**

Found uninjured	Found dead	Not found	Total
2	4	6	12

### **GROUP DATA**

Callouts	Total hours expended	NAWC excused hours	Total vehicle miles	Average number of members per callout
11	795	0	2350	7

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

--David Drake

# COMMITTEE REPORTS

## PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Members: Terry Mitchell (Chair), Carol Burge, Mary Schmierer.

### Presentations and Activities

Event	Participants	Members	
Mojave Primitive Encampment	29 girls, 13 adult advisers	Tom Sakai Bud Gates Tom Roseman Dennis Burge	Dan Bishop Debbie Breitenstein Werner Hueber
Rappelling at Fossil Falls	Youth Group	David Miles Bud Gates	Al Green
Footprinters	15	Karen Botham	Karen Botham
Climbing safety Rappelling at Fossil Falls	Church group	Dave Miles Werner Hueber	Al Green Debbie Breitenstein
Cold weather tips Winter survival	VX-31: 200 sailors	Bob Rockwell	
Climbing and rappelling	30 Boy Scouts	Tom Roseman	Debbie Breitenstein

### Individual donors

Jeffrey Bennett	Dr. & Mrs. Robert Dow	Kennedy Meadow Committee	Jon/Melissa Bergh
Bryson Van Gundy	Clifton Chandler	Lois Adamson	Footprinters
Lyal & Marilyn Viers	Janet Hammond	John Olley	

### Combined Federal Campaign donors

Tamara Tucker	Susan Haynes	William Deemer
Linda Homer	Johnnie Maschhoff	Eugenia Schneider
Peter Lesniak	Renee Lesniak	Kimberly Johns

## SUMMER CLASS COMMITTEE

Chairman – Dan Bishop  
 Head Lecturer – Dan Bishop  
 Head Rock Instructor – Mike Franklin  
 Equipment Coordinator – Dave Miles  
 Publicity Coordinator – Karen Botham  
 Administrative Coordinator – Karen Botham

Class Party Coordinator – Debbie Breitenstein  
 Presentation Technical Coordinator – Al Green  
 Bud Gates  
 Carol Burge  
 Pete Waters

The Tuesday night presentations were great, and member participation for Wednesday nights and for the day and overnight climbs was good. The average student attendance throughout the duration of the class was 70 percent.

June 14	Lecture	5 members, 28 students
June 15	Conditioning hike	10 members, 28 students
June 21	Lecture	5 members, 29 students
June 22	Bouldering	10 members, 28 students
June 28	Lecture	4 members, 27 students
June 29	Belay & Navigation	10 members, 22 students
July 5	Lecture	5 members, 27 students
July 6	Climbing	9 members, 27 students
July 9, 10	Day trips:	
	Thor	3 members, 11 students
	Dragon	4 members, 8 students
	Trail	5 members, 4 students

July 12	Lecture	5 members, 23 students
July 13	Rappelling	9 members, 18 students
July 19	Lecture	3 members, 19 students
July 20	Climbing	10 members, 16 students
July 23-24	Overnight trips:	
	Morgan	5 members, 4 students
	University	5 members, 2 students
July 26	Lecture	3 members, 14 students
July 27	Graduation party	10 members, 17 students

**EQUIPMENT COMMITTEE**

David Doerr (Chair)

Committee members had the following equipment responsibilities for 2005:

Bob Rockwell	Tents and snow flukes
Linda Finco	Radios and GPS units
David Miles	Stretcher bag equipment
Al Green	Rock drill, winch, tripod, generator, computer, digital projector, and copier
Tom Roseman	Avalanche beacons, digital camera, night goggles, batteries
Dave Doerr	Hut coordinator; Rinos
Paul DeRuiter	Explorer
Mike Renta	Ropes
Bob Huey	Inventory

We performed the following actions during 2005:

- Purchased two HS95 voice activated radios.
- Received an HP 9670 wide format auto duplexing printer (purchased for the Group by the sheriff). This printer can print maps on 13x19 waterproof paper.
- Purchased a new Dell 700m laptop computer and a new Canon PC940 copier to replace the aging laptop and copier we had.
- Purchased a satellite telephone. It is a tri-mode phone that has capability for use as a regular cell phone, but the sheriff has not set up cell service for it yet.
- Purchased a new box for the omni antenna.
- Purchased the following new ropes:
  - One 300 feet paralock static rope. This type of rope is designed to be more cut and abrasion resistant than kern-mantle ropes. The assessment of this new rope so far is that it works fine for raising and lowering but does not work well in the 540-belay device.
  - Three 11-mm, 50-m length dynamic ropes to replace the oldest three of our current six tactical ropes. The three we are keeping are 9.9 mm.
  - One 11-mm, 60-m length dynamic rope that we will cut into 20-foot sections for anchors.
  - Two 9-mm half ropes to replace the current ones.

**FIRST AID COMMITTEE**

Gina Niesen

Committee members were Gina Niesen (Chair), Dr. Bill Ferguson, Karen Botham, Ellen Schafhauser, Linda Finco. Each member must be current in CPR and First Aid.

We had several classes in CPR, Standard First Aid, and Wilderness First Aid.

Hours: approximately 220.

**EMERGENCY SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Debbie Breitenstein (Chair)

CLMRG attended all the monthly meetings to support this community organization. The meetings this year focused on briefings from organizations within the community that could be called on to assist in an emergency. RACES, the American Red Cross, the Civil Air Patrol, Mercy Air, and others discussed their organizations and assets and how they could be used in an emergency or natural disaster in our area.

**TRAINING COMMITTEE**

Committee members were Eric Toler (Chair), Debbie Breitenstein, Daryl Hinman, and Dan Bishop. Training activities in 2005:

Date	Event	Leader
16 Feb	Tracking practice	Schafhauser
25-27 Feb	MRA rock certification practice	Roseman
5-6 Mar	MRA rock certification test	Roseman
15 Mar	Tracking practice	Finco

12 Apr	Tracking practice	Schafhauser
17 Apr	Rock skills—ascending & descending (Roseman, Bishop, Franklin, Waters)	Hinman
18 Apr	Hut night for OLs (Gates, Bishop, Myers, Sakai)	Finco
May	Big wall training—Red Rock Canyon (Nevada) with Las Vegas SAR	(1)
10 May	Tracking practice	Finco
14 May	Stretcher practice	Bishop (2)
13 Jun	GPS pre-meeting	Toler
14 Jun	Tracking practice	Runkle
3 Dec	Stretcher practice—Fossil Falls	Roseman

Notes:

- (1) Canceled because the training site was declared a wilderness area, which prohibited helicopters from flying in the area. Las Vegas SAR is seeking a waiver, but it could take up to 18 months to obtain. CLMRG members who registered were Dan Bishop, Dave Miles, and Mike Franklin.
- (2) Started as a mock operation, but two real operations happened. Ultimately canceled.

## ASTM COMMITTEE

Dennis Burge

The purpose of our American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) Committee is to be aware of, and participate in, the development of standards by ASTM's Search & Rescue Committee. I am a voting member, so I receive notices of ballots on proposed new standards. If needed, I then get inputs from other CLMRG members.

Occasionally, a standard is proposed that we feel would be detrimental to CLMRG or MRA. Nothing of concern came up in 2005.

**JUMBLE**® THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME  
by Henri Arnold and Mike Argiron

Unscramble these six Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form six ordinary words.

YEASUN  
UNEASY  
BOICED  
BODICE  
WHAREK  
HAWKER  
KLEACT  
TACKLE  
CLOTUC  
OCCLUT  
GRAYUS  
SUGARY



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

PRINT YOUR ANSWER IN THE CIRCLES BELOW

"STICKER" SHOCK

## OPERATION REPORTS

### Operation 2005-04 (Search)

Frazier Park

5 June 2005

By Bud Gates, Operation Leader

At 1515 on 4 June 2005, I received a page from Sgt. Kirkland requesting help in a search for a missing man, 61-year-old Michael Miller, in the Mt. Pinos area. The terrain was reported to be steep

with many pine trees. I accepted the leader position and asked Karen Botham to coordinate. She agreed and recruited Mary Schmierer to assist her. Tom Sakai, Dennis Burge, Eric Toler, and Mike Renta committed to the search.

Sgt. Kirkland asked us to be at base camp by 0730 the following day, June 5. We met at the hut at 0500 and were en route by 0515. We arrived at base camp at 0750. We were 20 minutes late, but that wasn't a problem because the briefing didn't start until 0800.

The following statements are from the official report:

"On 5-25-2005, Michael reported to his wife that he was in Bakersfield, CA and was en route home to Marina Del Rey. On 5-25-05, Michael was reported to the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department as a missing person. On 5-31-05, Lockwood deputies checked the Mt. Pinos parking lot on a routine patrol and did not see any vehicles in the lot. On 6-03-05, Michael's vehicle was located in the Mt. Pinos parking lot by family members. It is not known when Michael's vehicle arrived at Mt. Pinos."

"Michael . . . [was] characterized by friends and family as being an avid hiker, but typically only enjoys day hikes and is not very good with navigation."

We were assigned to grid search a semi-triangular area bordered by a stream on the north and east edges. The western boundary was merely a compass bearing from the point where an extrapolation of the stream would have reached the road and a small peak designated as 8292. The southern boundary of our search area was a true 90-degree compass bearing from the peak to the stream.

All members received a radio and tested it before leaving base. We began our search at 0905 by hiking up the road to the northern-most point of our search area. We spread out in a search grid and followed our compass until we reached peak 8292. From that point, we spread out again and searched in a true east bearing until we reached the stream thus outlining and familiarizing everyone on the team with our search area. By then, we had essentially completed our search assignment, so I had everyone regroup at the stream for a lunch break before requesting a new assignment. Mike Renta's radio was no longer working, so he did not hear the call to regroup. Mike had not joined us after 20 minutes, so Dan Bishop and I set out to find him while the others waited at our lunch spot. Mike had stopped and sat down when he reached the stream, which made him easy to find.

Mike, Dan, and I rejoined the team at the lunch spot at 1220. As we got our packs on to return to base, we heard the announcement on the radio that Miller's body had been located by another team at UTM 11 305468E 3856216N (WGS84/NAD83). The cause of death was not known at the time of this report. After a short debrief, we headed home and were back in Ridgecrest by 1630.

## **Operation 2005-11 (Search)**

Kern River Canyon

10 December 2005

By Debbie Breitenstein, Operation Leader

On November 21, Linda Finco received a call from Sgt. Mike Kirkland that a search of the Kern River had been scheduled for Saturday, 10 December 2005. The search was for five persons who, over the course of 2005, were believed to have drowned in the lower Kern River and whose bodies had not been found.

I agreed to be operations leader. Nine CLMRG field members—Al Green, Bob Rockwell, Tom Roseman, Tom Sakai, Mike Franklin, Dave Miles, Ellen Schafhauser, Eileen Loughran (her first operation!), and I—participated. Karen Botham was our coordinator—her first long distance coordinating effort since her recent relocation.

At Kirkland's suggestion, I went to Home Depot and bought four extendable rake-hoes, which we used to break up drifts of flotsam. I also bought tough washable gloves to reduce contact with the poison oak that infested the area.

On 8 December, Sgt. Kirkland informed us that the flow rate below the power plant would be running at only 70 CFS through the day of the search versus 600-800 CFS of the previous week. This would make the search safer and expose deeper levels of the river and banks.

Our team left Ridgecrest at 0600, which gave us time to stop at McDonalds for breakfast and get to the Operations Base along Highway 178 at the Borel Road turnoff by 0730. Ellen Schafhauser, who has

moved to the Kernville area, met us at the base along with about 90 members of other Kern Count SAR teams. Briefing began at 0800.

Participating SAR members were assigned to 10 six- to eight-person search teams, each covering 1- to 3-mile sections of the river. Each search team was divided into "A" (river right) and "B" (river left) sub-teams.

CLMRG members were assigned to three teams to work with other SAR members who were better acquainted with the river and to provide technical rock skills and hardware while searching the slick vertical rocks that border the river. Tom Sakai joined Team One. Dave Miles, Mike Franklin, Bob Rockwell, and Eileen Loughran joined Team Six. The remaining team members—Al Green, Tom Roseman, Ellen Schafhauser, and I—joined Team Seven. The teams were driven to the upriver start of their sections and dropped off at the easiest access points.

The search area for Teams Six and Seven started just below the Borel power plant and continued down canyon to the Delonegha launch area. We worked down the river searching shallow water and several feet up the banks. Team members on opposite river banks were generally able to scan visually the less accessible sections. At one point, while examining the base of a cliff on the opposite bank, my team saw a shoe protruding from a pile of sticks and mud. The shoe was about two-thirds exposed with the sole facing us and the toe pointing straight up, which suggested that it was held there against normal water currents. Roseman rappelled to the debris pile and confirmed that the shoe contained only mud.

We pulled or dug apart many piles of driftwood and found such diverse items as paddles, rafts, shoes, clothing, toys (K-Mart kiddy pool tubes—scary!), lots of trash, and a few cow bones. Despite the well-attended and coordinated effort, we found no human remains.

The teams climbed from the canyon to the nearest roads and to be extracted by vehicles starting at 1530. We reconvened at the search base where the cooks had prepared hot soup, drinks, and other fuel for tired searchers. When our team was all accounted for, we departed the base and headed home to wash the poison oak from our cloths and bodies. We were home at approximately 1730.

**Note:** The new 9-mm ropes are slick; 8-mm Prusiks don't grip it well, which made Roseman's rappel a little more tense than usual. Perhaps smaller diameter Prusiks should be used.

### **Operation 2006-01 (Search)**

OES #2006 LAW 0005

Pine Creek (Inyo County)

5-6 January 2006

By Mike Myers, Operation Leader

**Known information.** Mother (Stacy Stotko) and daughter (Brittany Marie Stotko) left either Bishop or Crowley (Stacy's story changed often) on Sunday, 1 January 2006 to drive to Lower Rock Creek. They took a wrong turn onto Pine Creek Road. They drove about six miles past Rovana and about 200 feet up the first switchback past the gated entrance to the Tungsten Mine and the stables before spinning off the road and disabling the car. They spent two nights in the car during the New Year snowstorm. On the third day, Tuesday (3 January), Brittany decided to walk out for help. Stacy last saw her on that day leaving the stranded vehicle in four feet of new snow. Stacy watched her through binoculars go back down the road but lost track of her near the stables. Brittany, a 19-year-old white female, 5'1" tall, and 100 pounds, was not dressed for the cold and snow. She wore only brown leather dress boots, a brown leather jacket, blue Levis, a black beanie, and a green bandana with white polka dots. The bandana was supposedly wrapped around her face for protection from the cold wind. She carried a black umbrella.

Brittany told her mother that she planned to follow the roadside snow stakes. On the day she left the car, the wind was blowing snow like a blizzard down the Pine Creek Canyon. The snow looked like an ocean and revealed no sign that anyone had left the car and walked down the road. Brittany was said to be a stubborn and determined young lady.

**The search.** The Mono County Sheriff started a search on Monday (2 January) in the Lower Rock Creek area. When they found nothing, they expanded their air search area. The car was spotted by helicopter Wednesday morning (4 January) near the mine at the west end of Pine Creek Road, and

snowmobiles went in to rescue Stacy and transport her to the hospital. After interviewing the mother, the Inyo County Sheriff began a full search near the vehicle. CLMRG was asked to join the search on Thursday morning (5 January).

Sgt. Kirkland paged us about 2100 on Wednesday night. I contacted Janet Westbrook, who agreed to coordinate and initiate a callout. Only two members responded: Dave Miles and Bud Gates. We were asked to be in base at 0600 Thursday morning. We met at the Hut at 0300 and departed at 0315. Following a short stop for breakfast in Bishop, we arrived at base at 0555.

During the morning brief, we learned that Brittany's umbrella was found Wednesday about a half-mile down canyon from the car. The general belief by Inyo personnel was that Brittany could not have made it more than 150-200 yards from the car in the deep snow, so that area remained their priority search area. They thought the wind blew the umbrella down the canyon earlier in the week.

Because Brittany was a local, a large number of local volunteers came out to help with the search. Nobody was allowed past the Command Post (CP) without an avalanche beacon. We were split up into different teams with Bud and Dave assigned to lead volunteer teams—all with beacons. According to Bud and Dave, they were never put in a place where an avalanche could occur.

Dave's and Bud's teams were assigned areas below or near the umbrella, and I was assigned to a team of Inyo and Mono SAR members in their high probability area near the car. The snow at the upper end of the canyon was deep and unconsolidated. Searching was physically demanding on everyone, especially those on snowshoes. Snowshoes sank about three feet with every step, so it was like breaking trail for ten hours straight. Skis with skins had a lot more flotation.

On day two, we were joined by CLMRG members Mike Franklin, Bob Huey, and Curtis Davis. Inyo search leaders had decided to expand the priority search area. They decided that Brittany might have made it all the way down the road, past the trees and brush that would have snared the umbrella, before losing the umbrella to the wind. They decided that she would have seen how far she had to go and turned back up canyon to the car. Our assignment was to probe only tree wells, rocks, bushes, and anything else bulging from or protruding through the snow.

The Ventura team was inserted at the umbrella site and told to work their way up canyon with the same probing instructions we had received. The Ventura team, as well as other searchers from the day before, walked mere steps away from Brittany's body without knowing it. Friends of the family were walking on the plowed road next to the Ventura team. As they walked past a power pole at about 1000 on Friday (6 January), one of them jerked on a piece of cable attached to the pole, which was just a few feet from the road. That action exposed Brittany's jacket. She was covered by about 10 inches of snow. The snow was flat with no bulge and only two feet deep with snowshoe tracks all around where she lay. The discovery brought the search to a halt. We were transported back to the CP and released.

**Lesson learned.** Never underestimate the abilities of a determined individual. Too much emphasis was placed on Brittany's physical size—she stood only 5'1" and weighed only 100 pounds—to give her credit for what was stated clearly in our original brief: that she was stubborn and determined. If nothing else, bring in some opposing views to ensure that you are close to making informed choices.

**Notes.**

1. The sheriff had so many of Brittany's family and friends who wanted to participate in the search that he allowed them to search an area with little potential of an avalanche. Gates and Miles assumed the risk of leading some of these local volunteers. The sheriff did this for only one day, and we believe he made this decision to satisfy the need of the locals to help. On the second day, he did not allow any volunteers without an endorsement from a qualified SAR person as to their abilities.

2. Be prepared when traveling in the mountains during the winter months. In addition to emergency items you would normally have in your vehicle, add a sleeping bag or blankets and a supply of wood and water. If you do not have the equipment or training necessary for the conditions, stay with your car if it becomes disabled.

## **THE CLINIC**

### **Poison Oak.**

By Debbie Breitenstein

We encountered a lot of poison oak on our search in Kern River Canyon on December 10 (refer to Operation 2005-11 in this issue). The foliage was gone, but it was fairly easy to recognize, very thick, and impossible to avoid. Most of us had used a pretreatment—Tecnu brand lotion or IvyX towlets—that create barriers against the oil. When we got out of the field, we washed with Tecnu soap or IvyX wipes. I believe this helped, but several members did end up with rashes. Here is some information from research I did (while trying NOT to scratch).

The oil—urushiol—is unbelievably potent. One ounce is enough to give every person in the world a rash. It retains this potency for up to five years, and archeologically retrieved samples up to 500 years old have caused contact dermatitis. All parts of the plant—leaves, roots, twigs—contain urushiol. The oil soaks into the skin, bonds with cells, and provokes an immune reaction. Some reports said bonding can occur within 3 minutes, but others say that it might take up to 2 hours. There is no real immunity; there are only people who get poison oak and people who will eventually get poison oak. After you have had a reaction to it, you will likely be more reactive with each exposure.

To avoid or reduce the rash, as soon as possible after contact, place all the clothes that were contacted, including shoes, in a separate bag and wash them before touching them again. Use Tecnu or other oil solvent (rubbing alcohol works, and gasoline works—if that’s all you have) to remove the oil from your skin. Then take a shower. A good detergent will remove the substance from clothes, and Tecnu or an oil-based solvent will remove it from your shoes. Also treat tools and anything else that might have had secondary contact with the oil (your car seat?), or plan on re-occurring dermatitis until the oil is removed or used up.

After you remove the surface residue from your skin, poison oak CANNOT be spread by scratching or contact with the rash. The urushiol has bonded permanently with your skin cells and will leave your body only when you slough those cells. However, lesions caused by scratching may result in secondary infections. For bad cases, or cases in bad places (Google “using poison oak as TP), see a doctor. If you can gut it out, several commercially available potions may help the itch and a quick Google will bring up reams of home remedies. Good luck. Whether you use Caladril or banana skins, plan on several weeks of gritting your teeth and trying to avoid scratching.

## **DONATIONS**

Terry Mitchell

CLMRG gratefully acknowledges recent gifts from the following friends:

Jeffrey Barrett, Edison International Employee Contribution Campaign, Tehachapi Office

Dr. And Mrs. Robert Dow

Jon and Melissa Bergh

Lois Adamsen

In memory of brother Carl Heller

Mario and Yolanda Gonzalez

Janet E. Hammond

Jeffrey Barrett, Edison International Employee Contribution Campaign, Ridgecrest Office

Mojave Valley CFC

United Way of Indian Wells Valley donors

Peter Lesniak

Maryann Hiser

Susan Haynes

Tamara Tucker

Majorie Vargas