

TALUS PILE

CHINA LAKE MOUNTAIN RESCUE GROUP ■ RIDGECREST, CA
JULY 2009

In remembrance of the creator and first editor of the Talus Pile

Elizabeth "Liz" Anderson-Callaway
December 25, 1917 – May 1, 2009

Liz Anderson moved from Nebraska to China Lake in 1957 to begin her long career with the Navy as a Technical Illustrator. She promptly fell in love with the Sierra Nevada mountain range and joined the

China Lake Mountain Rescue Group (CLMRG) in 1960 as the 24th person to join. Liz was the first woman to belong to a California Region Mountain Rescue Team and a passionate and dedicated member for 26 years.

As well as being an active field member, she made two unique contributions in her quest to make the group known to the community. Liz felt strongly that the group should have an educational as well as a rescue function and created the Talus Pile in 1969 in hopes of educating the community as well as members. Liz also produced slide shows that gave CLMRG visibility and another unique slide show designed to keep children safe in the wilderness – a valuable precursor to our current array of programs.

Upon Liz's retirement from Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake, she moved back to Nebraska and enrolled in

writing classes at the University of Nebraska. At the age of 75, she earned a masters degree in creative writing which inspired her to write poetry. Many of her poems were fondly written about the Sierra Nevada mountain range and her passion for climbing.

Liz's travels then took her to Cortez, Colorado for a few years. Cortez captured the southwest landscape and culture that she loved.

Liz continued hiking in the mountains on visits to California well into her 80s.

The China Lake Mountain Rescue Group was privileged to have her as a featured guest speaker for the 50th Anniversary Celebration in October 2008. Unfortunately she was not physically able to attend, but had recorded a wonderful DVD, that for many, was the best presentation of the evening.

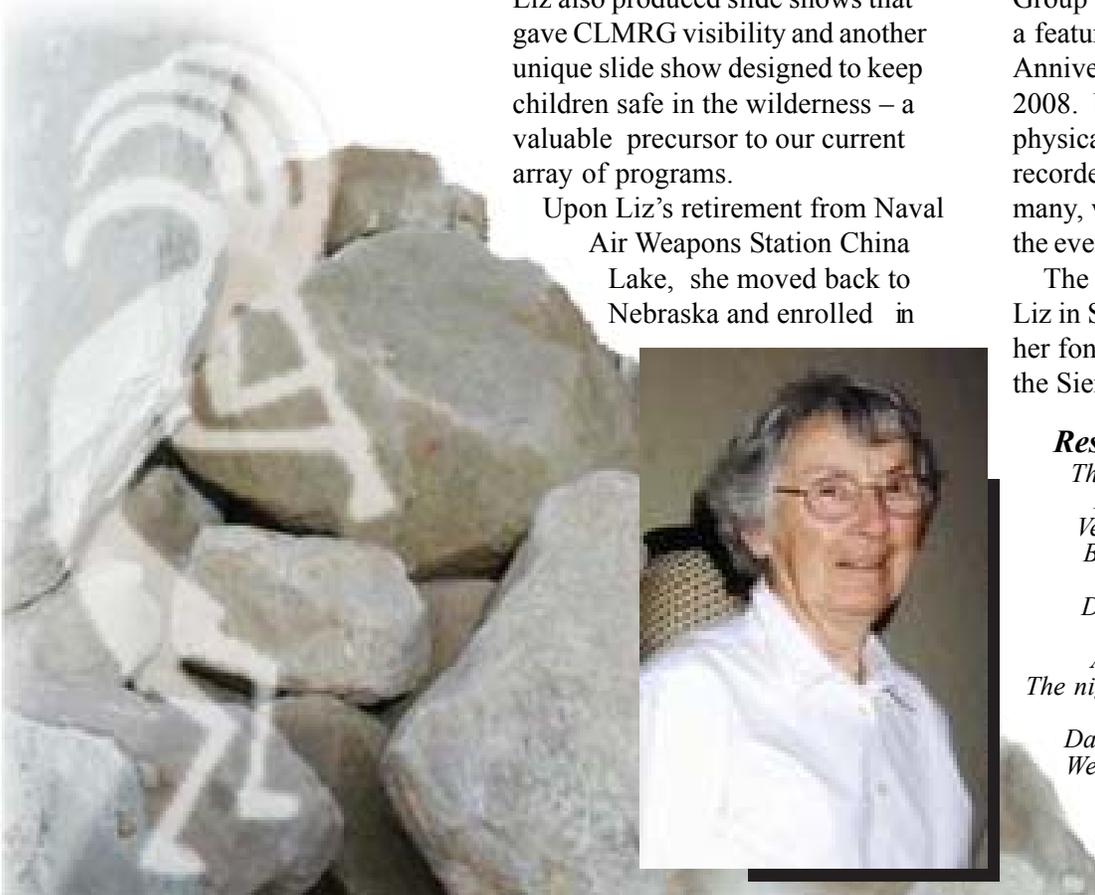
The poem below was written by Liz in September of 1988 expressing her fondness for the high desert and the Sierra Nevada mountain range.

Rescue Base At Lone Pine

*The desert east of the airport
Lies hidden in the night,
Venus pierces the cold dark
Beyond the weedy runway.*

*Dogs bark fretful messages
Across the Reservation.
A coyote yaps to the west
The night shortens toward daybreak.*

*Dawn wind touches our faces.
We huddle between the trucks
Our boots crunching
on the gravel.
Flashlight glows
on a time-check.*



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President – Mike Franklin
Vice-President – Dave Miles
Secretary – Eileen Loughran
Treasurer – Werner Hueber
MRA Representative – Dan Bishop

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*= Chair
FIRST-AID, Linda Finco*

EQUIPMENT, Werner Hueber*

SHERIFF
Mike Franklin*, Mike Myers

QUALIFICATIONS
Dan Bishop, Mike Myers, Linda Finco

SUMMER CLASS
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Carol Burge, Al Green, Eileen Loughran, Bill Stratton,
Debbie Breitenstein

TRAINING
Eileen Loughran*, Debbie Breitenstein
Daryl Hinman, Dave Miles, Bill Stratton

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of the Indian Wells Valley.

*Talus Pile supporting editor,
layout and design,
Debra Gates*

China Lake Mountain Rescue Group helps with the 2009 Girl Scout Mojave Primitive Encampment



On Wed. April 8, 2009 the China Lake Mountain Rescue Group (CLMRG) set up a highline for the girls attending this year's Mojave Primitive Camp (MPE) in Indian Joe Canyon just north of Trona, CA. Over 50 Girl Scouts, and several of the adult advisors, were able to participate in taking this 150 foot ride over the desert terrain. The girls and advisors seemed to have a good time as evidenced by the big smiles and screams of joy as they went across the chasm.

The MPE is an annual event, taking place over 5 days during spring break, for Girl Scouts from the south bay area of southern California.

It is designed to teach young girls camping skills and inspire outdoor adventure such as hiking, rock climbing, rappelling and outdoor crafts.

CLMRG has been participating as a community service each year for at least twenty years to assist in the rock activities. For about the last fifteen years, we have setup this highline, more commonly referred to as a zipline, for the girls enjoyment and as a refresher in case we need to use one in the course of our rescue work.

This year eleven CLMRG members, most of them taking personal leave time, helped in setting up and operating the highline. They were: Al Green, Bill Stratton, Tom Sakai, Tom Roseman, Linda Finco, Bud Gates, Eileen Loughran, Theresa Hess, Nathan Simons, Martha Bodine and Jeff Green.

Two CLMRG members exchange vows



On July 2nd, 2009, Tom Roseman and Debbie Breitenstein exchanged wedding vows in a small ceremony in June Lake. The ceremony was administered by Jeannie McCamish, and was attended by Debbie's parents and a small group of friends. Congratulations to you both!

In Honor of those lost in the line of duty

This is Bob Rockwell's attempt at Youtube. The first one is a 3 plus minute video honoring some of those lost in the line of duty on MRA training or operations. It was taken by Dan Bishop at the annual conference near Mt. Hood late June 2009. The people placing the streamers are Jim Whittaker, Daryl Miller, Lynn Buchanan and Bob Rockwell.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7fwIuNcTGr4>

The two shorter ones:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hbIuduqRnNQ>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OM6vkxNDbo8>

A little humor

You might be a mountain climber if.....

- You own a \$75 dress suit and a \$1000 Gore-Tex suit.
- You have ever used an ice axe to chop weeds in the garden.
- You have more summit pictures than wedding pictures.
- You've ever had icicles hanging from any part of your face.
- You can pronounce Popocatepetl correctly more than once in a row.
- You say "Namaste" instead of "Hello".
- You like the smell of burning yak dung.
- When you hear the words 'nose', 'captain' or 'aid', your hands start hurting and swelling.

Editorial

Summer Class Report, 2009

Summer Class Committee Chairman, Dave Doer

The China Lake Mountain Rescue Group (CLMRG) has taught the summer Mountaineering and Mountaineering Safety class for the last fifty years. The three most important reasons for doing so are: (1) to help others discover the joys of mountain experience - where the mountains are so available to us; (2) help those who enjoy the mountains to do so safely, bolstered by staff with over fifty years of “lessons learned” doing search and rescue in these mountains; and (3) to find people who may be interested in joining the CLMRG. The course consists of seven evenings of lectures (on Tuesdays) and seven evenings of practical applications of the lecture material (on Wednesdays), and two Sierra mountain climbing trips (one day trip and one overnight). The Wednesday sessions include conditioning hike up one of the summits below Five Fingers, bouldering at Wagon Wheel, navigation and belaying practice also at Wagon Wheel, three sessions of rock climbing (top rope) at Robber’s Roost, and rappelling at Fossil Falls. The Wednesday sessions are followed by food, drink and recaps of the days events at Nickoletti’s restaurant. After the last Wednesday session at Robber’s Roost, a party is put on for the instructors, students and guests.

This year’s class, due to the excellent work of the publicity team, started with forty-five students on the roster and twelve on the waiting list. The roster is currently at forty-one, with up to thirty-five expected to complete the course. This year’s day climbs were Owen’s Point (eight students and four group members), Cirque Peak (six students and four members), and Dragon Peak (ten students and five members). The overnight trips are University Peak and Mount Morrison. It has been an honor and a pleasure for me to work with such an outstanding summer class committee, superb instructors and awesome group of students.



Operation Reports

Operation 2009-01 (MRA Training)

6-8 March 2009, Squaw Valley

By Mike Myers (Operation Leader)

Summary: The 2009 MRA Snow and Ice Recertification took place on Saturday, 7 March at the Squaw Valley Ski Resort. The following 16 Group members committed to the test: Dan Bishop, Dave Doerr, Linda Finco, Bill Stratton, Dave Miles, Nathan Simons, Tom Roseman, Bud Gates, Tom Sakai, Mike Franklin, Paul DeRuiter, Martha Bodine, Al Green, Mike Derkey, Jeff Green, and I. We completed our problem in about four hours. Our evaluators debriefed us an hour later and declared no major issues. (We passed.) We returned to Ridgcrest on Sunday at 1600.

Primary Agency: Placer County SAR

CP Location: Squaw Valley

Total Man-hours: 480

Personal Vehicles: A. Green, D. Miles

Personal Vehicle Miles: 1442

Sheriff’s Vehicle Miles: 721

Editor: As of 25 Jul 2009, the following link was still valid:

<http://www.news10.net/news/local/>

[story.aspx?storyid=55943](http://www.news10.net/news/local/story.aspx?storyid=55943)

Narrative: The 2009 MRA Snow and Ice Recertification took place on Saturday, 7 March at the Squaw Valley Ski Resort. The following 16 Group members committed to the three days demanded by the test: Dan Bishop, Dave Doerr, Linda Finco, Bill Stratton, Dave Miles, Nathan Simons, Tom Roseman, Bud Gates, Tom Sakai, Mike Franklin, Paul DeRuiter, Martha Bodine, Al Green, Mike Derkey, Jeff Green, and I. Because of space limitations in the three vehicles and at the house we had rented, however, only 14 could go. (Derkey and J. Green had to stay home.)

We left the Hut shortly after 0800 on Friday, 6 March. Our drive ended at 1600 when we arrived at our rented house in Tahoe City, about 15 minutes south of Squaw Valley. We

registered our team at 1800 at the Command Post (CP) and had dinner at the Olympic Village in Squaw Valley.

Each team had to supply two evaluators and a victim for other teams. Our two designated evaluators (Finco and DeRuiter), our designated victim (Simons), and I had to be at the CP at 0700 on Saturday. The rest of the team followed at 0800. We received our assignment, two evaluators (Mike from Riverside and Juanita from Santa Barbara), and victim (Stephanie from Inyo) and headed into the field around 1000. We went to the avalanche scenario first. The Tahoe area had received about 6 feet of fresh snow in the week before this test. The snow was powdery and unconsolidated, which made progress slow and tedious.

Our Placer County hosts presented us with a good avalanche beacon test on a nearby steep slope. Two beacons were buried, and a third un-beaconed phantom victim was also present. Bishop, Gates, and Roseman completed the problem and discovered all three victims in about 10 minutes. (The time limit was 15 minutes.)

We then snowshoed about a half-mile to the rescue portion of the test. We had coordinates where the evaluators would place the victim. The location was 200 feet above a moderately sloped ski run in deep powder. The victim had skied into a tree, suffered internal injuries, and spent the night outside.

To extract the victim, we would have to raise her 75 feet, redirect 45 degrees, and then lower her in two 200-foot pitches. We set three types of snow anchors: a bollard, pickets, and flukes. The unconsolidated snow made the work difficult.

We planned to use the bollard and one set of anchors for the raising, rotate about the bollard, and use the third anchor set for the first lowering. In this problem, one person for each of the Petzl ID main belays was sufficient for the raising. This allowed the others to head down to prepare an additional bollard for the second lowering pitch 200 feet below.

Meanwhile, Gates and Roseman tended to the victim and got her packaged. She had suffered possible neck and back injuries, a laceration on the back, and a broken tibia and fibula and was having severe abdominal cramps. Monitoring her vitals indicated that she was going into volume shock. We raised her and two attendants up the 45-degree slope fairly quickly. After a little time transitioning to the other anchor, the lowering to the second pitch went smoothly. At the end of the 200-foot lowering, we transitioned to a single rope, anchored by a bollard, for an additional belay. The second lowering was down a low-angle gully. An evaluator asked for a simulated knot-pass on the second pitch, which we demonstrated quickly. We completed the problem in about 4 hours. The evaluators de-briefed us an hour later and declared no major issues, which means that we passed.

After a celebration dinner at the Olympic Village, we returned to our rented house. After a pleasant drive on Sunday, we arrived back in Ridgecrest at 1600.

Lessons learned:

The Petzl ID belay devices worked well.

Equipment needed, replaced, or repaired:

Three-foot pickets.

Replacement pulleys for hardware bags.

Additional anchor plate.

Operation 2009-02

(Incident)

11 April 2009

Joshua Tree National Park
(San Bernardino County)

By Daryl Hinman (Leader)

Summary: CLMRG members Tom Roseman, Bill Stratton, Martha Bodine, Mike Derkey, Jeff Green, and I along with guest Eric Abernethy were rock climbing at the Atlantis Area in Joshua Tree National Park, when Roseman took a 25-foot leader fall. Bodine, who was belaying him, lowered him to the ground. At the hospital in Joshua Tree, Roseman's injury was diagnosed as a serious break of the talus bone. His surgery at the UCLA Medical Center went well, but he will have a long recovery period.

Total Man-hours: 32

Narrative: Roseman fell from near the top of 60-foot Vorpall Sword (5.9) and pulled his highest piece of protection (a small Black Diamond Camalot). His pain made it clear that he had sustained a serious injury to his left foot. J. Green carried him a quarter-mile to the parking area using a coiled-rope backpack. Bodine and Stratton accompanied them with their packs, moving bushes as necessary to protect Roseman's foot. Stratton drove Roseman to the Hi-Desert Medical Center in Joshua Tree.

The diagnosis was a serious break of the talus bone, which would require surgery to repair. Roseman's options were to be transferred by ambulance to Loma Linda University Medical Center or to be released and seek orthopedic surgery elsewhere. He chose the latter option.

Meanwhile Abernethy, Derkey, and I cleaned the gear from Roseman's climb. Green and Bodine rejoined us, and we resumed our climbing. When we returned to camp in the late afternoon, Roseman and Stratton had just arrived from the hospital.

CLMRG members Debbie Breitenstein and Eileen Loughran were driving from Ridgecrest to take Roseman back home. We packed up his gear, nourished him with beer and dinner, and kept him comfortable until their arrival. The three arrived in Ridgecrest around midnight.

Lessons Learned:

Roseman's helmet may have saved him from a head injury as he inverted during his fall.

Green's carry of Roseman to the car without stopping to rest was impressive.

Operation 2009-03 (Search)

14-15 April 2009

Red Rock-Inyokern Road (Kern County)

By Mike Myers (Operation Leader)

Summary: A call from Sgt. Gary Rhoades at 2210 on 14 April asked us to search for Cleve Warren, a 58-year-old male, who had walked away from his friends near the junction of Highway 14 and the south end of Red Rock-Inyokern Road. Ten members responded to the callout: Dan Bishop, Dave Miles, Bob Rockwell, Tom Sakai, Bob Huey, Al Green, Bill Stratton, Eileen Loughran, Nathan Simons, and I. Sheila Rockwell was the Coordinator. After an all-night search in extreme weather conditions, one of the RPs found Warren asleep in his own bed in Inyokern the next morning.

Primary Agency: Kern County Sheriff.
Officer in Charge: Sgt. Rhoades.
Total Man-hours: 90.
Total Sheriff's Vehicle Miles: 141.
Personal Vehicle Miles:
M. Myers: 140.
B. Huey: 140.

Total Personal Vehicle Miles: 280.

Narrative: I received a request from Sgt. Gary Rhoades at 2210 on 14 April to search for a missing person, Cleve Warren, a 58-year-old male, near the junction of Highway 14 and the south end of Red Rock-Inyokern Road. Warren had walked away from his friends—the two reporting parties (RPs)—and their vehicle at about 1800 that evening. Ten members responded to the callout: Dan Bishop, Dave Miles, Bob Rockwell, Tom Sakai, Bob Huey, Al Green, Bill Stratton, Eileen Loughran, Nathan Simons, and I. Sheila Rockwell was the Coordinator. Because of the high winds and very low temperatures in the area, we deemed this an emergency and began an immediate callout. Responding members began arriving at the Hut within 30 minutes of receiving the call.

Because of the extreme weather, an advance team of four (Bishop, Miles, Green, and Rockwell) left the Hut at 2300 to meet with the on-scene deputy to contain the place last seen (PLS), establish a direction of travel, and start the search. The advance team got the Sheriff's Explorer, which has the East Kern Dispatch radio frequency, so that they could contact the on-scene deputy (Deputy Clodt on Ridge-3) when they got close enough. The rest of the team continued to pack gear and print maps until they left at 2325.

The advance team made radio contact with Deputy Clodt while southbound on Highway 14. The deputy met them on the Red Rock-Inyokern Road and gave them a quick briefing. The deputy informed them that he had attempted to track the victim and that his footprints were interspersed with Warren's. They proceeded to the probable PLS, conducted a quick interview of the two RPs, and noted their and the deputy's footwear. Deputy Clodt did a good job of securing the scene and was "track aware." We were able to identify the tracks of the deputy, Warren, and both RPs easily.

The rest of the team arrived at the probable PLS to learn that the advance team thought they had a good track leading north. I assigned Bishop, Rockwell, and Green (Track Team 1) to follow Warren's and the deputy's tracks north from the PLS and Miles and Loughran (Track Team 2) to cut for sign along a dirt road that also led north.

Because of the large number of dirt roads in the search area, I established two driving teams. I assigned Sakai and Stratton to the roads in the northeast quadrant of the area and Huey and Simons to the roads in the northwest quadrant.

When Sgt. Rhoades arrived on scene; he sent Deputy Clodt to search the entire length of the Red Rock-Inyokern Road. Sgt. Rhoades and I debriefed the RPs again and learned that one of them was from Lancaster and that the other was Warren's roommate in Inyokern. With this information, we decided that Warren was most likely headed toward Inyokern. I asked Sgt. Rhoades to start a second extra search, which he did. I also asked him for more mobile resources to check the roads. He contacted the Desert SAR Team. They said they would respond. The weather was bitter cold with high winds and blowing snow.

Radio communication with the field teams was limited, so Sgt. Rhoades drove north to reestablish radio contact. Track Team 1 continued north following occasional tracks that led northeast before eventually disappearing. They continued north by northeast checking obvious track traps until intersecting with the Red Rock-Inyokern Road.

Track Team 2 picked up tracks crossing the road well north of Track Team 1. I asked Sgt. Rhoades to pick up Track Team 1 and move them more to the north to cut for sign. Track Team 1 continued on the intersecting road to rendezvous with Track Team 2, who were on-track. The tracking teams called Sgt. Rhoades to transport Miles, Loughran, and Rockwell to the next intersecting road to jump-track while Bishop and Green continued on the existing tracks.

We packed up the CP and moved it well to the north to reestablish radio contact with the field teams. While we moved the CP, Sakai and Stratton discovered Warren's tracks crossing Road EP-15 and heading on a direct path toward Inyokern. Track Team 2 took up this position and headed away on-track while the Sakai-Stratton team headed more northerly. The Desert SAR Team arrived with a large enclosed trailer, which we moved to the intersection of Red Rock-Inyokern Road and EP-15 to set up a new CP. They also brought two quads for dirt road search assignments.

I drove back and located Track Team 1, which now comprised only Bishop and Green. We returned to the new CP and saw that all but the Sakai-Stratton team were in the trailer warming up and snacking. About 0530, Sgt. Rhoades came in and said that the RP from Inyokern had just arrived home and found Warren asleep in his bed. He had apparently slept through the deputies' searches.

We waited for Sakai and Stratton to come in from the cold and then secured the search. We arrived back at the Hut about 0600 and secured shortly afterwards.

Lessons Learned:

Radio communication was horrendous in this area. The base radio with the portable antenna would have been a big help.

Managing a CP properly out in the open at night in high winds and freezing temperatures was next to impossible. We really need some sort of an enclosure for a CP that gets us out of the weather and has lights and radios.

Equipment Needed, Replaced, or Repaired:

We need better tracking lights for night tracking.

Operation 2009-04

(Recovery)

20-21 April 2009

San Emigdio Mountain (Kern County)

By Tom Sakai (Operation Leader)

Summary: Mike Myers called me at 2115 on 20 April looking for a leader for Sgt. M. Baldwin's request for help in recovering the body of a 16-year-old male. I took the operation and called Sgt. Baldwin for details. Then I called Sheila Rockwell to coordinate a call-out. Dan Bishop, Bill Stratton, and Nathan Simons committed. Elaine Riendeau helped Sheila with the telephoning. The recovery went smoothly, and coordination among the different teams was very good.

Primary Agency:
Kern County Sheriff.
Total Man-hours: 80

Officer in Charge:
Sgt. M. Baldwin.

Other Agencies:

Kern Bakersfield Team, Kern Valley Team,
Kern Fire Department, South Kern Team.

Narrative: Mike Myers called me at 2115 on 20 April looking for a leader to respond to Sgt. M. Baldwin's request for assistance in recovering the body of a 16-year-old male. When I hung up from Mike's call, I called Sgt. Baldwin immediately to get details. Then I called Sheila Rockwell to coordinate a call-out. Dan Bishop, Bill Stratton, and Nathan Simons committed. Elaine Riendeau helped Sheila with the telephoning.

A local youth was on San Emigdio Mountain with some friends at a view area near the top of the mountain. Somehow, the youth fell over the unprotected edge and slid and tumbled almost 900 feet down a steep, loose gully. Kern Fire Department paramedics were the first to arrive on scene, and one of them managed to make his way down to the boy, who apparently had weak vital signs when the paramedic arrived but died shortly after.

We met at the Hut at 2300 and were on the road by 2310. At 2330, when we were a little bit west of Inyokern, a call from Kern dispatch said we were no longer needed, so we returned to the Hut, unpacked our gear, and went home.

We had been cancelled because a helicopter (Air-5) had arrived to do a long-line evacuation of the body. Because of strong winds and the steep, narrow gully, however, this proved to be impossible. Consequently, we were called again at 0130 on 21 April to assist. We were repacked and on the road by 0240; we arrived at the Command Post (CP) on San Emigdio about 0530.

Anticipating a long raising, we had brought our winch and almost 2000 feet of rope. The rope was not necessary because the Bakersfield team, who was coordinating the recovery, had more than 4000 feet of rope, and the Fire Department had left some of their ropes from the night before for us to use.

We started to move gear down the mountain shortly after 0600, and the first rescuer was at the body before 0900. Some of this delay was caused by not knowing the exact location. The body was packaged and the raising started shortly thereafter with three rescuers as stretcher attendants. The first 600 feet of raising on a slope that averaged 45-50 degrees was accomplished using the winch and a 600-foot rope in a single haul. The next portion (about 250 feet) was done with a pulley and counterbalance technique. The final portion (about 200-300 feet) was done by five rescuers hand carrying the body on much lower angle and firmer terrain. The boy's body was at the top about noon. His family was there waiting, and they had a short service before putting him in a hearse for transport.

The recovery went smoothly, and coordination among the different teams was very good.

Lessons Learned:

The winch was very important for the first several hundred feet of the raising because the terrain was so loose and steep and the rescuers with the body were in the rock-fall line. A Z-system would have required much more personnel movement greatly increasing the amount of rock fall on the rescuers below.

Equipment Needed, Replaced, or Repaired:

The screw holding the handle onto the winch's crank worked loose during the operation. It takes a 5-mm wrench to tighten. A 5-mm wrench will soon be with the winch.

Operation 2009-05

(Transit)

25 April 2009

Red Rock Canyon (Kern County)

By Linda Finco (Operation Leader)

Summary: Shortly after 1700 on 25 April, Tom Roseman called me with a request from Sgt. Baldwin for help with three stranded youths in Red Rock Canyon. I accepted the operation. Sheila Rockwell coordinated the callout with telephone assistance from Gina Niesen. Dan Bishop, Dave Miles, Bob Huey, Nathan Simons, Bill Stratton, Al Green, Bud Gates, Eileen Loughran, and Daryl Hinman were the other members who committed. The full Sheriff's vehicle left the Hut at 1735. We were about to leave the Hut in Green's vehicle at 1740 when we got word that all the stranded youths were down.

Primary Agency: KCSO

Officer in Charge: Sgt. Baldwin

Total Man-hours: 12.

Total Sheriff's Vehicle Miles: 20

Personal Vehicles: A. Green

Total Personal Vehicle Miles: 0

Narrative: Tom Roseman had received a call from Sgt. Baldwin on 25 April 2009 requesting CLMRG assistance with three stranded youths in Red Rock Canyon. Shortly after 1700, Roseman reached me, and I accepted the operation. Sheila Rockwell coordinated the callout with assistance from Gina Niesen. Dan Bishop, Dave Miles, Bob Huey, Nathan Simons, Bill Stratton, Al Green, Bud Gates, Eileen Loughran, and Daryl Hinman were the other members who committed to the operation. Bishop was the first to arrive at the Hut and had nearly all the required equipment loaded in the Explorer. The first full vehicle with Bishop, Miles, Huey, and Simons left the hut at 1735. By then, we had learned that one youth was down and that the other two were still stranded. When the rest of the team arrived, we finished loading the vehicles and were about to leave the Hut at 1740 when we received a call from the first vehicle that all the youths were down. Back at the Hut, we unloaded the gear and secured at 1800.

Later, we learned that a BLM ranger and a ranger from Red Rock had shimmied out to the youths and helped get them down. Although all ended well, the deputy on site was concerned that the rescue was taking place with no ropes or anchors, which put everyone on the rock at risk.

Operation 2009-06 (Rescue)

16-17 May 2009

Great Falls Basin (Inyo County)

By Mike Myers (Operation Leader)

Summary: On Saturday, 16 May at 1800, Sgt. Gary Rhoades called to say that the San Bernardino County Sheriff was requesting our help in rescuing a 14-year-old boy who had fallen in Great Falls Basin.

I took the operation. Terry Mitchell began a callout with Sheila Rockwell's help, and Dave Miles, Al Green, Bob Huey, Bob Rockwell, Debbie Breitenstein, Nathan Simons, and Jeff Green responded. When the uninjured boy arrived at the top, his anxiously waiting family was there to greet him.

Primary Agency: San Bernardino County Sheriff
Officer in Charge: Cpl. D. Garrison
Total Man-hours: 57

Other Agencies:

San Bernardino Fire, Inyo Sheriff, & Inyo SAR
Total Sheriff's Vehicle Miles: 72
Personal Vehicles: Myers
Total Personal Vehicle Miles: 72

Narrative: On Saturday, 16 May at 1800, we were notified by Sgt. Gary Rhoades that the San Bernardino County Sheriff was requesting our assistance in the rescue of a 14-year-old boy who had slipped and fallen in Great Falls Basin. He had no other details regarding location or possible injuries.

I asked Terry Mitchell to begin a callout, requesting an immediate response of 30 minutes. She and Sheila Rockwell performed the callout, and Dave Miles, Al Green, Bob Huey, Bob Rockwell, Debbie Breitenstein, Nathan Simons, and Jeff Green committed to the operation.

Miles, A. Green, and Huey were the first to arrive at the Hut, so I sent them out as an advance team at 1840. They took enough gear to get to the boy and stabilize any injuries he might have. The rest of the team left the Hut at 1900 with the rest of the gear.

The advance team, led by Miles, reached the upper falls area and was able to make voice and eye contact with the boy just before dark. The rest of this rescue took place in the dark using headlamps for light. They set up rappel anchors, and Miles and Huey rappelled down the cliff with A. Green monitoring the anchors. The rest of our team arrived at the Command Post (CP) just before the advance team reached the boy. Because the boy's condition would drive our decisions on medical and rescue equipment we would need, we waited at the CP for a report on his physical condition.

When we learned that the boy was uninjured and would be able to climb on his own, we were able to reduce the amount of equipment that we had to haul up. When the rest of the team arrived at the top of the falls, Miles was at the bottom with the boy. We discussed and agreed on an extraction plan.

We beefed up the anchors, then set up a Petzl ID belay device on one anchor system to control the belay line and used the second anchor system for our rescue hoist and the main line. The raising team (A. Green, Rockwell, Breitenstein, J. Green, and Simons) was on a small rock-shelf with limited room to maneuver, so only one person at a time could crank on the hoist. After all systems were in place and double-checked for safety, we began the raising. We raised Huey with the hoist first. Then we connected an additional static line bag to the belay line that went all the way to the bottom. Holding one end of the rope, we let the rope bag slide down to where Miles was.

Miles tied the boy and himself into the belay and load lines. We raised them about halfway up the steep cliff—at times in the vertical position. Miles opted to keep himself and the boy on belay, but decided to climb a diagonal crack

system to a point where we could lower them an additional belay line to get them over some easier terrain to our exit position.

When we were all together, we broke down our anchor systems and packed up our gear, but we were still about 60 feet down from the south rim. We had left a hand line anchored above, so I decided to send Rockwell up that last 60 feet to belay everyone else. When he was in position, Rockwell lowered the rope; we tied into his belay and climbed one person at a time until we were almost to the rim. Gaining the actual rim required a little more third class scrambling.

After everyone was safely on top, we descended the normal route on the south side of the falls. We arrived back at the CP at about 2300. The rescued boy's parents were anxiously waiting for him.

We debriefed with San Bernardino Deputy Sheriff Garrison, an Inyo County Deputy, and two members of the Inyo County SAR Team before securing. We arrived back at the Hut just after midnight, put most of our gear away, and secured at 0030.

Lessons Learned:

We need to do a better job of documenting the equipment taken by advance teams so that we are all clear on what gear follow-up teams need to transport.

**Addendum to Report for Operation 2008-10
(see Page 10 of Talus Pile 142)**

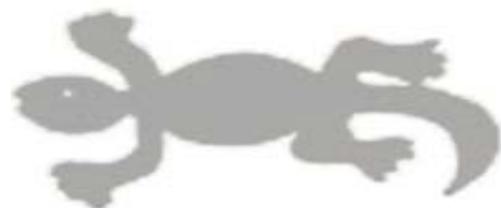
By Ric DeVan (Ric's Dad)

16 July 2008

The official Sheriff's SAR operation was suspended last Friday, 11 July, for lack of new clues.

A search team, composed of family and friends and of friends of friends, continued the search through the evening of Tuesday, 15 July, when Ric's backpack was discovered east of Mt. Goode near the base of a no-name peak identified as 12,689. Brant Diddon, a climbing guide and instructor from Los Angeles, located the backpack about 1700 Tuesday. Brant, a friend of a friend of the family, had volunteered to help in the search.

The Sheriff was notified, and he sent his recovery team to the mountain on Wednesday, 16 July to locate and recover Ric's body. Ric was located several hundred feet up the mountain from the backpack and will be returned to Bishop as soon as the weather permits.



2009 Training Schedule



June	8	Mon..	Meeting, C. Burge, Simons, DeRuiter
June	9-10	Tue.-Wed.	Summer Class
June	12-14	Fri.-Sat.	Columbine, Isosceles (4) Rockwell
June	16-17	Tue-Wed.	Summer Class
June	20-21	Sat-Sun.	Lone Pine Peak (4) Doerr
June	23-24	Tue. and Wed.	Summer Class
June	26-28	Fri.-Sun.	Pinchot, Peak 13259 (4) Huey
June	30-July1	Tue.-Wed.	Summer Class
July	3-5	Fri.-Sun.	Whitney NF
July	7-8	Tue. & Wed.	Summer Class
July	11-12	Sat. & Sun.	Summer Class Day Hikes
July	13	Mon.	Meeting
July	14-15	Tue. & Wed.	Summer Class
July	18-19	Sat. & Sun.	Summer Class Overnights
July	21	Tue.	Summer Class Final
July	22	Wed.	Summer Class Party
July	24-26	Fri.-Sun.	Bear Creek Spire (4) Rockwell
Aug.	1-2	Sat.-Sun.	Perkins, Simons
Aug.	7-9	Fri.-Sun.	Whitney NF (6)
Aug.	10	Mon.	Meeting
Aug.	15-16	Sat.-Sun.	Lone Pine Peak - NE Ridge (4) Miles
Aug.	21-23	Fri.-Sat.	Humphreys, Peak 13400+ (6)
Aug.	29-30	Sat.-Mon.	Whitney Trail
Sept.	4-6	Fri.-Sun.	Tuolumne Meadows, Finco
Sept.	12-13	Sat.-Sun.	Open
Sept.	14	Mon.	Meeting, Westbrook, Hueber
Sept.	18-20	Fri.-Sun.	Sill(4)
Sept.	26-27	Sat.-Sun.	Open
Oct.	2-4	Fri.-Sun.	Open
Oct.	9-12	Fri.-Mon.	Yosemite Valley - Lower Pine Derkey
Oct.	12	Mon.	Meeting, Gates, Gates, Gates
Oct.	16-18	Fri.-Sun.	Open
Oct.	24-25	Sat.-Sun.	Search Training at Warm Springs Inyo, Sierra Madre
Oct.	30-1 Nov.	Fri.-Sun.	Manly Peak