

## **OVERVIEW of CLMRG's Basic Mountaineering & Mountaineering Safety Course**

### **What To Expect:**

The **Tuesday evening sessions** will begin promptly at 6:30 pm. The lecture portion of the class will end at approximately 8 pm, but we will sometimes follow the lecture portion with a 20-30 minute slide show presentation related to the evening's lectures and mountaineering. You can stay and enjoy the slides or leave if your time is limited. There will be a 10-minute break around 7:15 pm. Sessions will involve lectures, slides, view graphs, show and tell, and hands on activities.

The **Wednesday evening sessions** will start at 5 pm. We will carpool to all activities to save on the wear and tear of the areas we will be traveling to and to cut down on the parking congestion. If you are a passenger, help pay for the gas.

The first Wednesday evening session will be a practical demonstration of physical conditioning. Class members will hike to one of the summits below Five Fingers via a 1-mile cross-country trail that gains 1700 feet in elevation. Seasoned climbers, carrying packs, would take about an hour and a half for the ascent, so you can gauge your performance against this standard. The reasons for doing this hike are for your benefit and ours: (1) it is a reasonable introduction to climbing up a gentle mountain slope, so it will be educational for you to have this experience, and (2) day and overnight climbs are offered as part of this class, we want some assurance that everyone is physically capable of participating in these activities. Wear hiking boots, or sturdy, comfortable tennis shoes. Wear comfortable, loose clothing, sunglasses, a hat with visor, and carry at least one quart of water. If you have gaiters, bring them along to keep the sand out of your shoes.

Other Wednesday sessions will be held in different locations, depending on the particular skill to be taught. The locations will be announced at the prior Tuesday evening lecture session. We will always meet at 5:00 pm.

We understand that you may not be able to attend all the classes and weekend trips due to family vacations, travel, etc, but for the weeks you are able to attend the class, it is important to attend both the Tuesday and Wednesday sessions if possible. The Tuesday session covers topics and hands on practice that will be applicable to the Wednesday session. If you must miss a class, please try to let the head instructor know the days you will be missing.

There will be no alcohol consumption during the Wednesday sessions. On the last Wednesday of the class (the class party) there will be no alcohol consumption until all climbers are off the rock. Only students and instructors 21 years of age and older will be allowed alcoholic beverages.

## **Expenses & Equipment:**

The course fee pays for the classroom rental fee, equipment replacement and other class related costs.

All students **must have access to the text *Mountaineering: Freedom of the Hills*, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition.** The paperback version sells for ~\$20. It is also available as a downloadable book.

All students are required to wear a climbing helmet for the rock climbing and repelling practice sessions. Only UIAA approved rock climbing helmets can be used. Motorcycle helmets, bicycle, kayak, hockey helmets, etc. are NOT acceptable. UIAA helmets can be purchased from Todds' Outdoor Supply in Ridgecrest, REI and other outdoor supply mail order or internet sites. Previous class members may have helmets to sell at reduced prices. **CLMRG has a limited number of helmets to loan.**

A climbing harness and climbing shoes may be used on more difficult rock climbs. These two items are not required, and unless you already climb or intend to get serious about climbing you do not need them. We will provide a harness when needed. Rock shoes are not provided and are not required. If you have any questions about buying anything, wait until the class starts and ask your questions then.

For the two weekend trips: daypacks, overnight packs and other equipment will be needed. Depending on which trips you choose, the leader of that trip will suggest the proper equipment. You should be able to get by with minimal expense.

## **What This Class Does and Does Not Do**

You need to be aware that seven weeks of lectures, practices and field trips **DO NOT** make mountaineers. The lectures will provide the basic knowledge you will need, but it can be only very basic and cursory due to the time limitations and the breadth and depth of topics to cover. The fundamentals of rock climbing are taught because a large number of routes and peaks cannot be attained without the use of ropes and special equipment, and if you do not learn this skill a large portion of what is called mountaineering will be denied to you. However, mature rock climbing skills and techniques cannot be attained in a few evenings. Finally, the day climbs and overnight climbs merely give you a chance to sample, in the field, those basic things that you have learned in class.

So how does one become a mountaineer? A class like this is only the first step. The second step is to climb, climb often, climb high, climb different routes, but most importantly climb with those who are more skilled, experienced and knowledgeable. This class provides the fundamentals and for many of you that is all you are interested in. But for those who want to go on, the adage is that you will learn best by doing, and by doing it with people from whom you can continue to learn.

CLMRG has taught this class to the general public annually since the late 1950's. There are many reasons for us wanting to continue to do so, of which three are paramount:

1. We have found that mountaineering can be an immensely rewarding activity, and we are anxious to help others discover the joys of the mountain experience and the satisfaction of physical fitness.
2. Many of the problems that people get into in the wilderness (that result in CLMRG being called) are due to ignorance, error, lack of experience, inadequate preparation or equipment. This class is meant to be a start toward building a sufficient foundation so that you can begin enjoying the mountains *safely*.
3. A few of you will become sufficiently motivated to apply to the CLMRG for membership to assist in mountain search and rescue. This class is the source of most of our new members.

CLMRG has an extremely active and varied year round climbing schedule. While put together for our members to maintain skills, familiarization, and conditioning, anyone who is deemed capable is welcome to participate as a guest.

*The China Lake Mountain Rescue Group (CLMRG) has been chartered since 1958 and is under the auspice of the Kern County Sheriffs' Department. For more information see our web page at: <http://www.clmrg.org/>*