

CHINA LAKE MOUNTAIN RESCUE GROUP

P. O. BOX 5773

CHINA LAKE, CALIFORNIA 93555

Editor: Dianne Lucas

OCTOBER 1972

#19

CALENDAR

- October 2            Talk by Carl Heller on operation procedure. NWC Safety Building at 7:00 p.m.
- October 7-9        Trip to Havasu Canyon. For more information call Carol Burge, 446-5359.
- October 15        Rock Climbing at Fossil Falls. Nick Bottka is in charge, (375-9166). Meet at the hut at 7:00 a.m.
- October 16        Meeting, John Wick's, 625 S. Norma, Ridgecrest -- 7:30 p.m.
- October 21-23     Yosemite, for rock climbing or whatever. The organizer is Bill Stronge (375-9239).
- October 28        California Region, MRA meeting, at Sierra Madre. Call Nick Bottka for details.
- November 4        Stretcher practice, at Owens Ridge or Whitney Portal. Bill Sweatt is in charge (446-2891).
- November 6        Lecture on Search Techniques, by Al Green.
- November 13       Meeting
- November 18       Mt. Inyo (11,107) and Keynot Pk. (11,101), in the Inyo Range.
- December 2        Meeting, Lee and Dianne Lucas', 305-A McIntire, C/L -- 7:30 p.m.

ARE YOU A BOTTLENECK?

Recently we've heard rumors of unrest among some members of the Search team, and others, concerning the slow progress of items of information that are routed among the members on the call roster. People on the upper half of the roster may not realize this is a problem, but there have been instances in which the end of the list has not been reached until a year or more after the material started circulating.

## OPERATIONS

#7209 Transit, Lightning fatalities near Bishop Pass ..... Bill Stronge

We received a report of 2 overdue climbers on Monday evening, July 17, from John Castel, a former member. His friends had left L.A. for a weekend climb of Mt. Agassiz with a possible alternative objective of Mts. Haekel and Wallace (a different roadhead). Unfortunately two searches on Monday had missed their car. The car was found Tuesday morning, parked 2.5 miles down the road at the new hikers parking area on the South Fork of Bishop Creek. We sent 10 men toward Bishop.

Meanwhile, two Eastern Sierra MRG members left the roadhead immediately to look for the climbers' camp and check the summit register. Jim Herlihy and Bill Miller were found dead in their tent near Saddlerock Lake. They had been struck by lightning while resting against metal framed backpacks. When we checked with the Inyo County Sheriff in Independence, we got the word and headed for home.

#7211 Rescue Injured climber on Mt. Whitney ..... Dennis Burge

A call from the U.S. Forest Service in Lone Pine at 5:45 p.m. on Sunday, August 6, set the group in motion. The word was that a climber had fallen on the East Buttress Route on Mt. Whitney, and that he had sustained broken ribs and was having difficulty breathing.

Five of us, Nick Bottka, Don Peterson, Bill Sweatt, Dave Brown and myself, assembled at the hut, gathered equipment and headed for NAF and the waiting helicopter. Our pilot, Lt. Col. Jack Pipa, USMC, said he could only take four, so Don agreed to drive.

On arriving at Lone Pine there was no new information, so Col. Pipa took Nick and I to East Face Lake. We landed at 7:50, just as it was growing dark. There we learned from members of his party that the injured man, Jim Whitcomb, had fallen about 20 feet and had hit a rock ledge before the belay could stop him. One person stayed with him while the others went down to get help. Three other rock climbers who were at East Face Lake, preparing to climb the face of Keeler Needle, quickly went up to Jim to see what they could do. They took sleeping bags and water, got him down to a fairly comfortable spot and determined that his injuries were not critical.

Upon hearing this, we decided that the helicopter should go back out and that we could wait until morning to get Jim down. I also decided that with the aid of the three rock climbers and the other members of Jim's party, we could get him down without sending anyone else up.

Monday morning the three rock climbers, Nick and I climbed the first pitch or two of the Buttress Route to Jim and his companions' location. (These three climbers had climbed the buttress without ever roping up the day before.) We wrapped Jim's broken ribs, and he said they felt much better. An anchor was rigged and Jim was lowered in a seat and chest sling to the Mountaineer's Route. It was fortunate that we had 200' ropes since we had to lower him down about

Mt. Whitney, continued . . . .

190' of nearly vertical rock. The Navy helicopter was flown back to East Face Lake at 10 a.m. and waited 1+ hours while Jim was slowly belayed down the loose chute. He was then taken to Lone Pine for treatment. Nick won the toss and I had to walk down.

We would like to thank the three skilled climbers for their valuable assistance. It certainly made our job easier. Unfortunately, I didn't get their last names. We would also like to thank Eastern Sierra Mountain Rescue for their back up support and assistance with communications, and Col. Pipa and NAF for their speedy and capable response.

#7212 Transit, Lost boy, Mammoth ..... Nick Bottka

We were called at 0145, August 14, by Sgt. Cory of the Mono County Sheriff's Office to assist in a search for a 3-year-old boy, Jason Fry. Jason had become lost the previous evening while playing in a housing area at Mammoth. Six members, Bill Stronge, Dave Brown, John Zenor, Allen Jones, Harry Garner and Doug Warschauer, responded to the early morning call out and met me at the hut about 0300. (Several of these people had just returned from a weekend climbing trip about midnight.)

Shortly after we arrived at Mammoth, Jason was found by his father, alive and well, about three quarters of a mile from where he had last been seen. Thankful that the search had a happy ending, we ate breakfast and headed for home.

Comment: A large number of searchers were summoned to the scene immediately after the boy was reported lost. This quick reaction time greatly increased the boy's chance of survival, even though Jason was ultimately found by his own father.

Other recent operational activity included two alerts, a mobilization for possible assistance in rescuing two hikers stranded near Trail Crest on Mt. Whitney, and an "incident" in which Tom Waugh assisted a Mono County Deputy Sheriff in extricating a woman who had fallen into an earthquake fault.

#### CALIFORNIA REGION NEWS

Dennis Burge and Nick Bottka represented China Lake at the September 9 snow test for Bay Area Mountain Rescue, held on Dana Glacier. This test was the final step for Bay Area in demonstrating competence in rescue skills, as required for membership in the Mountain Rescue Association and the California Region. By a unanimous vote of the examiners, the Bay Area team passed the test, which involved rescuing an injured "victim" lying just above a crevasse.

CLMRG has a special interest in this group. George Barnes, a leader of Bay Area Mountain Rescue, is a former member of our group. In addition, we have been the sponsor of the Bay Area unit since their application for membership in MRA. We look for speedy acceptance of Bay Area Mountain Rescue by the California Region and the MRA national organization, at their next respective meetings,

## MEMBERSHIP

A former "full-time" member of CLMRG, Ernst Bauer was in China Lake for the summer but has now returned to Germany. He should no longer be listed on Technical team.

Another summer member, William Adamson, should be deleted from the Search team.

Two of the people who completed our summer climbing course have qualified for the Search team. They are:

Ron Atkins	Code 6052	Phone 446-7033 (home); 939-2853 (work)
Bob O'Handly	Code 6018	Phone 446-2246 (home); 939-2771 (work)

And last but not least: Lee and Dianne Lucas have a new phone number, 446-2387. Same address, just got tired of getting calls for the local drive-in movie, as the numbers were almost identical!

## PUBLIC EDUCATION

Elizabeth Anderson

We are grateful to Beth Henry, for her thoughtfulness in designating the CLMRG as recipient of the Wally Henry Memorial Fund. This Fund's total receipts, \$452.00, was used to purchase the Creatron audio-visual unit, which will present the safety education and training taped slide shows from now on.

This new unit will simplify the business of setting-up for the taped shows and will lessen the mental strain on the operators. When the Public Education committee has finished re-taping the slide shows, the sound and slide-impulse and the projector will be coordinated in a fool-proof form.\*\*

The committee's thanks go also to Bob Rockwell, for the time and effort he spent in searching out the facts and fallacies of the types of equipment available on today's market. Bob's able research was responsible for the present availability of the Creatron unit to CLMRG.

And we must acknowledge the committee's debt to John Ohl, without whose expertise (and equipment) there might never have been any safety slide shows. John loaned us his tape recorder, tapes, projector, and speakers for 5 years, and helped us tape the first 5 shows (CLMRG, Camping, Safety, Survival, Lost Child). For the first few years, he helped with the presentation of the shows, both during working hours and in the evenings. We are returning his equipment, not immediately but as soon as the re-taping is completed!

The newest show is evolving, slowly as always...to be short (3 minutes?), on the child's level, telling him about Safety in the mountains. All suggestions, particularly from parents, are welcome.

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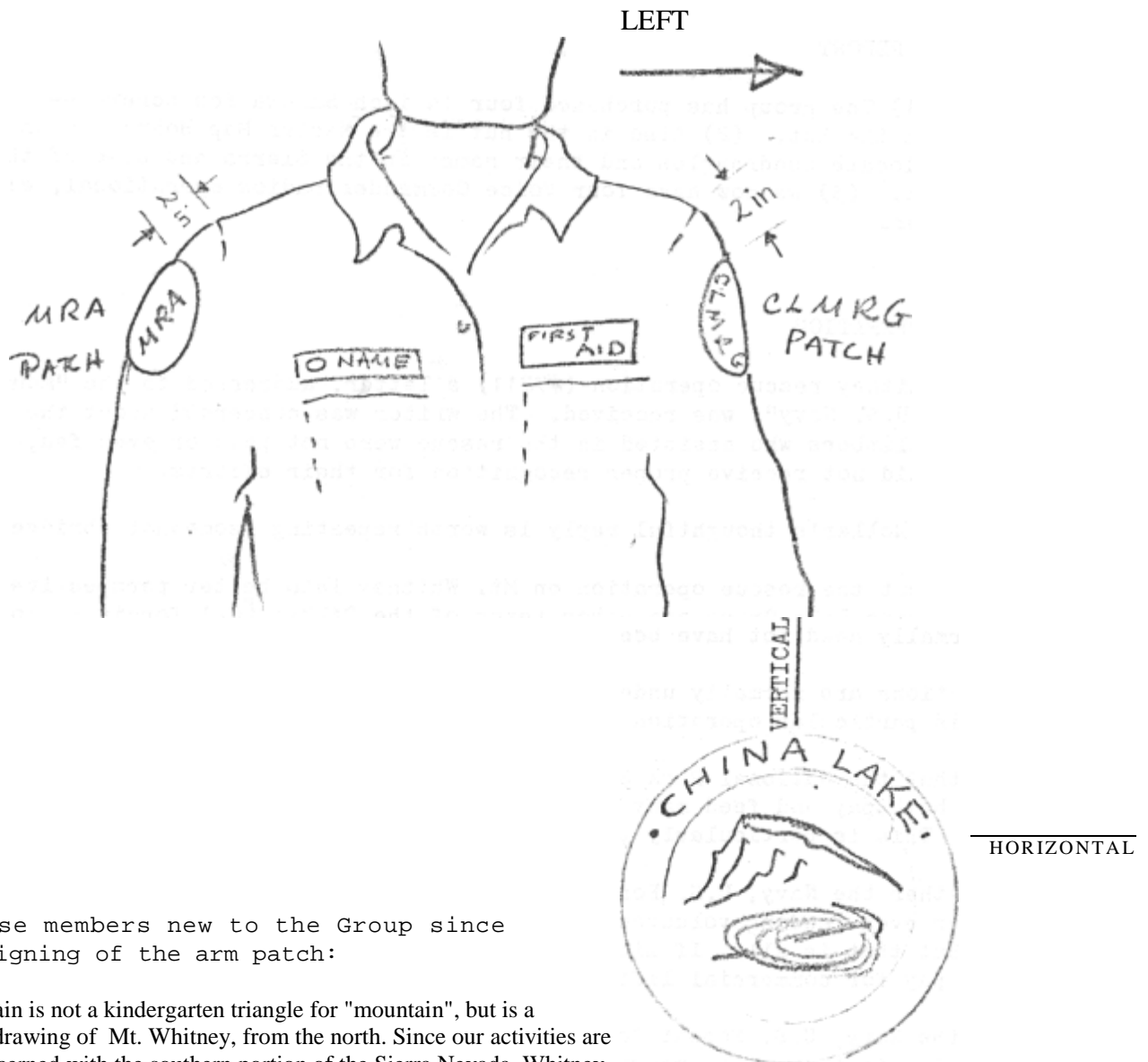
\*\* June 1971-June 1972: 1,200 persons reached by some form of safety education. And that's a lot of fool-proof.

## Social Note:

From 164° N: Sue Anderson reports that on September 16 she went backpacking in Mount McKinley National Park, with fresh snow on the ground.

WHAT THE WELL-DRESSED MEMBER IS (OR SHOULD BE) WEARING

In the past we have worn the MRA patch on the left arm and the CLMRG patch on the right arm. In order to conform with other teams in the California Region, we are exchanging the positions of these two patches.



For those members new to the Group since the designing of the arm patch:

The mountain is not a kindergarten triangle for "mountain", but is a simplified drawing of Mt. Whitney, from the north. Since our activities are mainly concerned with the southern portion of the Sierra Nevada, Whitney seemed appropriate. The Buttress and the mountaineer's Route are shown.

Don't try to center the patch by the shape of the mountain, but rather by the lettering. Use the "A" in CHINA for the top center point. Use the initial "C" and the last "E" in CHINA LAKE to line up horizontally.

## FINANCES

Barbara Slates

In September we received the remainder of our United Fund allocation. We are grateful to those who designated a portion of their contribution for CLMRG - we appreciate your support.

We have also received a donation from our own Doug Warschauer. Thank you Doug!

## QUARTERMASTER'S REPORT

Bob Joy

Three items: (1) The group has purchased four 14 inch Salewa ice screws -- these are now in the hut. (2) Also in the hut is the Master Map Board, which can be used to locate quadrangles and their names in the Sierra and some of the surrounding area. (3) We now have four Voice Commander radios operational, with automatic charger.

## EPILOGUE TO AN OPERATION

After the Mt. Whitney rescue operation (#7211) a letter, addressed to the "Mountain Rescue Section, U.S. Navy", was received. The writer was concerned about the fact that the young climbers who assisted in the rescue were not paid or even fed, and felt that they did not receive proper recognition for their efforts.

We believe Carl Heller's thoughtful reply is worth repeating (somewhat abridged):

"Perhaps I can put the rescue operation on Mt. Whitney into better perspective for you. The China Lake Group and other teams of the CALMRA (California Region, Mountain Rescue Association) are all volunteer groups. We purchase our own climbing gear and obtain community help to purchase stretchers, radios, etc. We practice many days a year on our own time in order to better perform mountain rescues and searches. Operations also involve much of our time, particularly searches for lost children.

"The Navy involvement was to loan a helicopter to bring in two men and to fly the victim out. The pilot and crew flew late at night and early in the morning when they normally need not have been working - in other words, as volunteers.

"Rescue operations are normally under cognizance of the County Sheriff's Department, but this particular operation was run by the U.S. Forest Service.

"It is true that the National Park Service has funds for professional rescue teams. They both pay and feed many of the sport climbers who are available for rescues. This is particularly true in Yosemite where there are many operations.

"However, neither the Navy, U.S. Forest Service nor the small California counties have funds for even feeding volunteers. The military can transport teams for SAR operations, but that is all. If military helicopters are unavailable, the victims must pay for commercial lift which could easily cost a few hundred dollars.

"At present the Navy, U.S. Forest Service or Sheriff's Department could be breaking the law if they misappropriated funds for other purposes to rescue operations. If this appears wrong to you, I can only say that our opinions agree.

"As to publicity, our group generally makes no press releases, leaving that to the government agency in charge. I do not know what undesirable bit of publicity about the young men involved was brought to your attention. I do know that Dennis Burge, the team leader involved, considered their help most important. We have learned within our group to accept occasional errors and criticisms from the news media. In fact, if we worked for the publicity alone, we would have long ago quit.

"This is essentially the message I would give to the young men involved. Hold on to the satisfaction of having done a useful bit of work. Just because the world doesn't always seem to appreciate your efforts, don't give up on the world. The individual rescued undoubtedly appreciated your efforts even though he may have had trouble expressing himself and not enough money to reward you financially."