



CHINA LAKE MOUNTAIN RESCUE GROUP

P.O. BOX 5773

CHINA LAKE, CALIFORNIA 93555

EDITOR: DIANNE LUCAS

DECEMBER 1973 #25

#### CALENDAR

- December 23 Owens Ridge rock climbing. Al Green (446-2491) will be the organizer.
- December 29- To Arizona, for Kofa Pk., (Class 4), Castle Dome and vicinity.  
January 1 For details, call Bob Westbrook (375-8371).
- January 5-6 Snowshoe trip and climb of Dragon Peak, Class 3. Dave Brown will arrange cook pools and transportation. (375-8744)
- January 7 Stretcher rigging practice, 7:00 p.m. at the equipment hut. Ron Atkins (446-7038) is in charge.
- January 12 Fremont Peak and Red Mtn., both Class 1 desert peaks. Elizabeth Anderson (446-2849) will organize.
- January 14 Meeting at Camphausen's, 45 A Stroop, 7:30 p.m. ELECTIONS
- January 19/20 Stretcher practice at Whitney Portal -- frozen waterfall. Carl Heller (446-6237) will be in charge.
- January 26/27 Tehachapi Mtn. area. Call Dennis Burge if you are interested, at 446-5359.
- February 2-3 Charleston Peak, Class 2, near Las Vegas. The coordinator is George Craig, 446-6005.
- February 9/10 Pilot Knob and Eagle Crag, Class 1. Fred Camphausen (446-5643) will organize this trip.
- February 11 Meeting at Brown's, 226 Segundo (Desert Park), 7:30 p.m.
- February 16-18 Snowshoe or ski trip to Pear Lake Cabin (we hope). This is still a tentative date, since we have not yet received a confirmation. (We asked for March 9-10 as second choice.) Let Janet Westbrook (375-8371) know if you are interested.
- February 23-24 White Mtn., probably on snowshoes. Dave Matthews (375-4932) is the person to contact.

Elections Coming Up . .

The nominating committee has presented the following slate for the 1974 elections, to be held at the January meeting:

President .....	Allen Jones	Treasurer . . . . .	Doug Warschauer
Vice President. ....	Bob Rockwell	Member-at-Large . .	Bob Westbrook
Secretary . . . . .	Sheila Rockwell		

Nominations will be taken from the floor at the meeting--you should obtain the nominee's permission in advance. In addition, his name will appear on the ballot if you inform the Secretary (Dianne Lucas, 446-2387) of your intention to nominate on or before January 11. Any other nominations made at the January meeting will be voted on as write-in candidates.

This year something new is being tried. In the interest of having as wide a representation as possible in the ranking of team leaders, a member may request an absentee ballot from Al Green if he is unable to attend the January meeting. You must be present at the meeting, however, to vote for officers and Qualifications Committee members.

OPERATIONS

#7322 Alert and Air Search for Fred Camphausen, 9-10 October . . . Carl Heller

On Tuesday afternoon Fred's wife, Martina, notified Al Green that Fred and two companions were almost a day overdue. We asked the Inyo County Sheriff to check for his car at the Onion Valley roadhead. At about 1400 the NAF helicopter with Lt. Col. Jack Pipa as pilot flew a search mission with Dennis Burge and Bill Stronge aboard. They could spot no one on any of the routes from Mt. Clarence King to Onion Valley. Dennis and Bill were left to spend the night just below the mountain.

We made plans for an early morning start to search Kearsarge, Glen, and both Dragon passes. Before sending people to Onion Valley we phoned the Inyo County Sheriff and learned that Fred and his party had come out about 2000. Later Fred said he had seen the helo from near Bullfrog Lake, and thought they saw him. The helo picked up the advance party on the 10th.

#7323 Rescue, Mt. Whitney East Buttress, 25 December Carl Heller

Six members of the Mountaineering Club of UC Irvine went in to climb Mt. Whitney via the buttress and mountaineer's routes. On 20 December two rope teams started up the buttress and one up the mountaineer's route. One team reached the top and spent the night on the rafters of the summit building. Another team bivouaced below the "Pee wee", a huge, precarious granite block located a little more than halfway up the buttress. They were last seen at 0900 on the 21st, still below the Pee wee, when a storm closed in. The other four members were all in high camp at East Face Lake on the night of the 21st and all of the 22nd with no evidence of the missing team. On the 23rd two men started down and on the 24th notified the Inyo County Sheriff's Department about the problem. They waited for a 'good news' flare from East Face Lake that night. Seeing none, they first called Joe Walters of the Sheriff's Posse, and then on his advice called China Lake at 2100.

We mobilized at 2200 and arranged for a four-man helo team at 0615 and a base camp team to leave by car at 0530. Sierra Madre promised a back-up team in Lone Pine although worried about gasoline. San Diego was alerted. Lt. Jack Macidul flew

Mt. Whitney Rescue, continued . .

Green, Stronge and Rockwell to Lone Pine and Green to East Face Lake by 0742. At this time calls were heard from the mountain--winds, snow and rain had prevented voice contact earlier. Macidul carried Stronge and Rockwell up at 0800 and said he couldn't go in again due to dangerous gusts. John Wick and I had a base camp set up at the airport in Lone Pine. Deputy Don Cron, Ranger Jim Arasim and others provided material and other help during the day. Lts. Macidul and Joe Killinger spent several hours at the outdoor pay phone arranging for H-53 helos via WRCC.

Green, Stronge and Rockwell, accompanied by Pete Frickland and Sonny Lawrence from the UC Irvine group, started up the Mountaineer's route about 0900. At 0936 they reported one dead and one injured man high on the buttress. They continued up with Bill Stronge reaching the summit at 1045. At 1100 he could see the survivor about 200 feet below him. They thought they might need help, so base camp requested a second team since Sierra Madre had not yet arrived. We had no idea how we could get additional men up the mountain in time to help unless the H-53's arrived.

Bill reached the survivor--Don Pfirmann--at 1130, and Eric Eichman's friends knew whose family they had to tell about a death. Pfirmann had frostbitten hands and feet which could not be treated on site, so an evacuation was started. He was belayed to the summit by 1345. A decision had to be made about waiting for an H-53 which "might" be able to land on top. At 1400 they started down the North face, reaching the Notch at 1445. An ETA at East Face Lake of 1600 was given. At 1555 Macidul decided to try a landing if the wind was better, and at 1610 he succeeded and evacuated both Pfirmann and Stronge. The two H-53's arrived minutes later and brought down the other four. Al Green commented that taking down a camp in the H-53's prop wash was quite a job! The victim was loaded onto a stretcher and taken to Lone Pine Hospital.

Meanwhile, our second team--Burge, Buffum and Jones--had arrived at 1310, and Sierra Madre about 1500. The coroner, Ted Sullivan, wanted help removing Eichman's body, and Larry Twedell of Sierra Madre said his crew was willing and hoped they could go in on an H-53. This was arranged and eight men went in to East Face Lake at 1629. We loaned our base radio to Sierra Madre and secured at 1700.

#### An Analysis of the Accident Al Green

Eichman and Pfirmann started to climb the buttress with an unusually large amount of equipment: two 1-man tents, hammock, hard hats, aid slings, 30 carabiners, numerous chocks and pitons, hammers, expedition jackets, one half bag and one full bag, heavy cameras and 3 days food. The buttress route is normally climbed in one easy day from East Face Lake. With all this gear it took them a day to get below the "Peewee". On the second day a storm hit, but they were still on route and continuing for the summit. Eichman fell while leading. It was a short fall (less than 10 feet) but severe because he hit his head. He was not wearing his helmet because it would not fit with the hood on his jacket. Technically the lead was not difficult, but the wind, snow and cold made it treacherous. There is also the possibility that hypothermia was a factor in the fall.

Eichman died about 8 hours after the fall. It was late on the 21st then, and Pfirmann bivouaced at the site. Pfirmann tried to climb out the next day but fell himself, slightly injuring his hand. He then returned to a ledge above the victim where he remained until help arrived. Several factors stand out in this accident. First, a reasonable balance between equipment essential for safety and ability to move quickly on the mountain is

Analysis, continued . .

necessary. This team clearly had too much equipment for this climb, some of it completely unnecessary. Second, hard hats should be worn, not just carried. Finally, a winter climb is a much more total commitment than a summer climb. The cold and often stormy weather makes the climb itself more difficult and multiplies the severity of any injury.

FINANCES Doug Warschauer

Since the last issue of the Talus Pile, donations have been received from the following people:

Clifton Chandler

Lee Lucas

Allen Jones

Tim and Janey Pearia

Joan Leipnick

Bob Rockwell

We appreciate the generosity of our members--both regular and sustaining.

## TRAINING

Stretcher Practice, 17 November Bill Stronge

Our training program is frequently routine, designed to teach and rehearse standard rescue techniques. Occasionally a very difficult problem is introduced that can bring out weaknesses in our preparation. A cold wintry day helped the training committee design a November stretcher practice of the latter type. Their report follows:

The call came before dawn: "A climber is injured on Owens Ridge." Hearing the wind outside I knew it would be worse up there with clouds whipping over the peak. "Hang on buddy, we're on the way."

As we neared the base of the rock the report was that Joe Rock-Climber had been solo climbing on the North side and cries for help had been heard from that area during the night. The North face is a series of steep slabs separated by 20' to 50' headwalls. Only one free route has been found in this area and it has 5 pitches of hard friction and cracks. We soon saw Joe swinging in the wind high above us and about 300' down from the top. His still form was hanging at the end of the rope, 10 feet below an overhang.

After climbing over the top and doing two rappels, the advance team found Joe alive but cold and injured from a fall. It took several hours to set up an anchor above him and lower him 20' to the next slab. The angle here was too steep to stand on and ledgeless. Only a thin crack under the headwall marred this surface. Placing Joe in the stretcher was extremely awkward. Similar problems slowed work at the anchor site. Everyone there was continuously tied in and in a semihanging stance--it was 400-500 feet down to the ground. Communication between the stretcher team and an upper anchor was possible only by radio; the wind gusted to 30 knots and the temperature hovered near 40 F.

At this point the practice was abandoned and everyone rappelled off. We'll have to return with improved communication procedures and more confidence in exposed positions. While the conditions encountered on this practice were more difficult than any operation we have had, they can happen. Are you prepared?

Participants were Heller, Green, Stronge, Burge, Joy, Rockwell, Dixon and Tanner.

Tracking Practice, 18 November Don Harris

The turnout for this Sunday Morning tracking practice was sparse. The rain Saturday night probably kept many people home. Although it was raining and snowing in the Walker Pass area, the sun was shining all morning in the tracking area along the Walker Pass Road. I made five sets of tracks about 0700. Dave Brown, Harry Garner, Liz Anderson and Bob Westbrook arrived about 0730 to start tracking. The tracking area started in sand and gravel in the wash and then started up through grass and rocks to the paved road. Then across to more sand, grass and rocks. Loops and sudden changes in direction while in difficult conditions added to the challenge. One team lost the tennis shoe tracks through the gravel wash, but was able to find all tracks across the paved road. The other team lost their trail in the grassy area. Both teams were able to pick up tracks again and find the end by 1130. The variety of terrain made this practice more interesting than those we have been holding at the dry lake bed.

Roster Changes Al Green

Bob Rockwell has qualified for Technical Team, and Dave Brown and Don Harris have moved up to Support. Peter Woodman has been on 'inactive' status while attending Cal State Bakersfield; Scott Charlton and John McGinnis are also away at school.

Bob Westbrook is now working at NWC, in Code 4074, phone 939-2309/2923. Don Peterson's Code is now 4058, and Liz Anderson's is 5311. There have been two address changes:

Frank Buffum	509 B Lexington, China Lake
Don Harris	704 Alene, Ridgecrest

Slide Show Report Janet Westbrook

"Footprints in the Snow" is now past history--and it was quite a show! Many thanks to Alex Belen for reading those culture-filled quotations for us, and to Elizabeth Anderson, who spent an awful lot of time working on a bunch of slides which weren't even hers. The result was a really stunning program!

Tabulations show that approximately 115 people came Monday night and 140 on Tuesday. Sheila Rockwell's sorority, Beta Sigma Phi, came through again with great cookies. Our income so far stands at \$323 and costs ran \$28 (printed programs, etc.)--so our funds are in better shape for the effort.

That trip was so much fun, where can we go next summer? (How about a great big gasless hike or bike ride?) Many thanks to all the members of the expedition and others who helped make the show such a beautiful program!

President's Corner Bob Rockwell

This being the last issue of the Talus Pile for the year, it is the last chance for me to contribute via the "President's Corner". While this column should indeed have been a part of every issue, it would be a neglect of even higher order to fail to write one at all!

If there is one thing that has impressed me during this past year, it is the realization of how important to CLMRG are its various committees. We have five standing committees: the First Aid and Rescue Training committees; the Equipment Committee; the Qualifications Committee to see that each Rescue Team member is in the proper category (Search, Support, Technical or Senior) according to his (or her, Ed.) skills;  
continued...

President's Corner, continued . .

and a Public Education Committee to deal with and enlighten the outside world. In addition there are Schedule committees (three during the year) to plan our outings, a Nominating Committee to recommend the next year's slate of officers, and this year we had a committee to plan our 15th Anniversary Banquet. A Disadvantaged Youth Mountaineering Committee was formed to decide how CLMRG can help expose the less fortunate kids in our community to the joys of mountaineering. There is a committee to try to bring our Rescue Manual to fruition. And finally, we have a newly-formed Techniques Committee to recommend a single climbing, rescue or training technique where several options exist: like whether to use a safety prusik on rappels, what is the CLMRG way to rig a stretcher, and how can Lost Arrows and hammers be forged into chockstones and nuts, All this amounts to approximately one committee for every five regular CLMRG members, and since there are approximately five people per committee, you can see that almost everyone gets involved.

CLMRG is successful because of the excellent efforts of its many committees. In addition, the president's job this past year has been made much easier because of the fine response to requests for help. My sincere thanks to each and every one of you. I am sure that next year's president will experience the same level of support that I have received. I am equally sure that no organization, paid or volunteer, can give more than do the totally dedicated people with whom I am privileged to be associated. And my very sincere thanks for that.