



CHINA LAKE MOUNTAIN RESCUE GROUP

P.O. BOX 5773

CHINA LAKE, CALIFORNIA 93555

EDITOR: Dianne Lucas

SEPTEMBER 1974 #27

CALENDAR

- September 14-15 Tuolumne Meadows, for rock climbing, snow climbing (Dana Glacier), or whatever. Call Bill Stronge (375-9=39) or Allen Jones (446-3360)
- September 28-29 White Mountain (Class 1-2), organized by Dennis Burge (446-5359).
- October 5 &/ 6 Tracking problem. Arrangements by Lee Lucas (446-2387).
- October 7 Meeting-- 709 A Nimitz (Barb Slates')
- October 16-17 Evening tracking classes. See Don Harris (446-5074).
- October 19 Owens Ridge rock climbing, to get psyched up for Yosemite! Organized by Dave Brown (375-3744).
- October 26 Yosemite Valley, for rock climbing. Al Green is in charge, at 375-8012
- November 9-10 Mt. Powell, near Echo Pass. Call Fred Camphausen for details, 446-5643.
- November 11 Meeting -- at Westbrook's, 236 E. Church (new address). Bob Joy has volunteered to assist with refreshments.
- November 16-17 North Palisade, organized by Don Peterson (446-3159).
- November 23-24 National MRA Meeting, in Sacramento. See Bob Westbrook if you are interested in attending, as most CLMRG people who might otherwise attend will be climbing in Mexico at that time!
- November 23/24 A desert peak, to be announced--by Liz Anderson, 446-2849..

## OPERATIONS

#7406 Rescue, Thor Peak, 15-16 May .....

Carl Heller

Herb Rickert phoned about 1945 on Wednesday from Lone Pine with word of an injured climber above Lower Boy Scout Lake. I suggested that he and the climber's companion report the accident to the USFS while I get our group ready to roll. I also agreed that he and other climbers might help by going in immediately.

We mobilized and I phoned the Forest Service, to learn that the Sheriff's Department had asked us to effect the rescue. We left China Lake as fast as teams could collect gear and leave. The advance team took oxygen, and left the portals about 2200. The second team picked up Roger Wilde, the victim's companion. He had left Richard Meyers, age 20, comfortable in a sleeping bag, but with some trouble breathing.

The advance team reached Rick at 0100 and found him in good condition: alert, pulse strong, and blood pressure at 134/70. However moving him was difficult since the snow at 11,400' was steep and icy. It was 0514 before we reached the campfire by the lake. We had requested a helicopter and Jack Pipa was ready at 0530 at NAF. However, the wind gusts were strong and frequent, so I decided a carry was safer.

We started down at 0550 and reached the Portals (8400') at 0945, which gives a measure of the difficulty. We stayed on ledges rather than cross the stream three times. The wheel was a big help, except on the two vertical pitches where the wheel made the stretcher want to ride on its side. Rick was alert and cheerful all the way, even when Bill and I were debating whether or not the stretcher ropes would reach the ground! We left him on the x-ray table of the Lone Pine Hospital.

## Comments:

1. The advance team wants the oxygen pack cut to 15-20 pounds--just one cylinder.
2. Our stethoscope has two tubes which knock against each other in wind storms. We should convert to a single tube scope.
3. It would be convenient to have a quick connect wheel someone could build one.

#7407 Rescue, Kern River, 18-19 May . . . . . Dennis Burge

On the afternoon of May 18, Don Glynn of Thousand Oaks, his teenage daughter Patty, and her friends Ann Heiligman and Lisa O'Keefe were hiking on the east side of the Kern River northeast of Johnsondale. They couldn't find the trail they were looking for and attempted to hike along the steep shore of the river. They used a short piece of cotton rope to lower themselves to a twelve-inch wide ledge and found themselves stranded. They were about 10 feet above the fast-moving, icy waters. A fall into the river would almost certainly have been fatal.

Fortunately, their plight was observed by CLMRG member Daryl Hinman, who was camping across the river with his wife and friends. He hurried up the trail to his car, drove to Johnsondale and called CLMRG at 1620. I asked him to notify the Tulare County Sheriff's Office and told him I would get the group together and request a helicopter. The group met at the hut while we awaited clearance for use of the helicopter. Two carloads of rescuers set off for Johnsondale at 1745 and shortly thereafter we got word that the helicopter crew was on the way to NAF. Bob Rockwell, Nick Bottka and I met our pilot, Lt. Col. Jack Pipa, USMC, and crew chief, ADJ-3 Charles Cass, USN, and lifted off in the Huey at 1820. Flying between rain and snow showers around the higher peaks, we headed for Johnsondale, where we picked up Daryl to show us the location. A couple of flights through the canyon, past the

Kern River Rescue, continued .

stranded party, convinced us there was no place to land near river level, so Col. Pipa flew us to the ridge 900' above the river. While he hovered above the brush, we jumped off the skid to the ground 6 feet below. It was then 1915 and we knew we'd have to hurry a bit to beat the coming darkness.

We worked our way down a steep, loose chute until we were about 100' above the party and 50' to their right. Nick rappelled from a large bush down to the trapped hikers. With the use of Jumars, Nick's assistance, and a belay from an intermediate anchor we were able to get the last rescuee up to a safer ledge as the darkness became total. By the time we had coiled all the ropes, it was nearly 2100 and it had begun to snow. The snow surprised us, since it was mid-May and the elevation was only 4400'. There was no reasonable way to continue upstream, since there was another steep section similar to the one on which the hikers had gotten stuck. This meant we had to go back up the chute. At 2300 we finally reached a narrow trail near the top and thought we had it made. But after two hours of finding and losing this obscure, snow-covered path, compass checks showed we were going about 90° from the direction we should be going to reach the main Rincon Trail. So we decided to stop and wait for light, even though we were on a slope of about 30°. The hikers had their sleeping bags, and we did the best we could to keep warm with the aid of a fire.

By this time the group that had driven over had set up a base camp on the west side of the river, where they were in good radio contact with the advance party. We had told base we were a bit short of warm gear, so they sent Russ Huse and Don Peterson hiking in with most of the warm gear off all their backs. About 0230 we finally saw Russ' and Don's lights, which made us feel quite good. They reached us and told us we were only about 200 yards from the trail, but that we were separated by a steep little canyon, which we could better negotiate in daylight. At 0545 we set off, just as it began to snow heavily. However, once we reached the main trail there was no problem in hiking out the **six** miles to the roadhead, which we reached at 0810.

Tulare County deputies Barry Aubrey and Alan Montgomery were efficient and helpful in making necessary arrangements, and we would like to thank them. Other team members who spent a chilly night at base camp and the roadhead without sleeping bags were Lucas, Westbrook, Anderson, Jones and Harris.

In retrospect, these hikers were extremely fortunate that Daryl saw their plight so soon and that a helicopter was available. A snowy night on that narrow ledge would most likely have been disastrous. They showed rather poor judgment in getting into such a predicament.

#7409 Search, Calaveras County, 1-2 June ..... Dennis Burge

This search was a fairly typical CRMRA joint operation, with the call coming via Bay Area MRU and Sierra Madre S & R. A 48 year old Castro Valley fisherman, Scott Foster, and his 11 year old son, Kenneth, had disappeared the previous Sunday afternoon, 26 May, while fishing the North Fork of the Stanislaus River in Calaveras Big Trees State Park.

Telephoners Marlene Green, Janet Westbrook and Barb Slates called around Friday afternoon, 31 May, and found 12 people willing to go. We met at the hut at 10 p.m. and decided to send only 8 because of the long drive and the amount of time that had elapsed since the disappearance. Also, we felt we should leave some reserve

Calaveras Search, continued

for a possible mission in our own area. We drew straws and at 10:45 set off on what was to be a nearly 8 hour drive.

At 7:30 Saturday morning we met the other teams and were briefed by Sgt. Stevens of the Calaveras County Sheriff's Office and discussed team assignments with MRA operation leader Phil Umholtz of BAMRU. A long day of searching downstream on the far side of the river thru some very tough terrain turned up no trace of the Fosters. It did convince us that the river, at the peak of the spring runoff, with its white water rapids and many rocks, was a most likely location for the missing persons. Sunday we did a line search for about 2 miles downstream from where the Fosters were last seen, again with no leads. This, in combination with the areas covered by other teams, made us feel we had done all we reasonably could in this case. We then set off for home, arriving back at China Lake about 11 p.m.

The people of the area were very hospitable and made us feel most welcome. We would particularly like to thank Fire Chief Dan Masters in this regard. The ladies of the Ebbets Pass Volunteer Fire Dept. Auxiliary provided a great meal Saturday night which was appreciated by the searchers.

As on the earlier Cabazon search we gained data on the sensitivity of various individuals to poison oak. We should vote Ron Atkins a permanent exemption from searching through the vile weed. He has had a real uncomfortable time since.

Those taking part from CLMRG were: Heller, Sweatt, Jones, Harris, Brown, Moore, Atkins and Burge.

Postscript: Scott's body was recovered from the river on June 15th; no trace of Kenneth has yet been found.

#7410 Recovery, Clyde's Couloir (North Palisade), 20 June . . . Carl Heller

On June 18, Tim Edwards (17), David Blankenship (17) and Dale Snyder (16), all from Lancaster, had climbed North Palisade via the U-notch and chimney. After reaching the summit about noon, they began a class 3 traverse on the east side toward the North Summit and Thunderbolt Saddle. Above Clyde's Couloir they decided to rappel to reach the couloir and easier climbing.

Tim was above the others and set up the rappel anchor alone. He used a 1" webbing sling tied with a ringbend (waterknot) around a "boulder". There was 3" of rock above the sling. He rappelled past the others and into the couloir. Dave followed safely. Then Dale got into the rope. He was 15-20 feet below the anchor and noticed that the rope was in a crack above him. He flipped the rope clear of the crack and began his rappel. Immediately he fell, becoming wrapped in the rope. The new perlon 11 mm rope was torn nearly through in two places during the 1500' fall. The sling was not found, so that it either was torn off or had untied.

Two men camped on the glacier below saw the fall and reached the victim within 15 minutes. He was half buried in the snow with his helmet still on. They uncovered him, but he was already dead. Dale's companions made a hasty, unroped descent of the class 4 couloir. These four, with assistance of rescuers from the Inyo County Sheriff's Posse, succeeded in moving Dale's body down to a point above Sam Mack Lake by the next evening.

Clyde's Couloir recovery, continued . .

CLMRG received a call from the Inyo County Sheriff's Department at 2325 on the 19th to assist in the evacuation. The next morning seven of us -- Heller, Lucas, Peterson, Joy, Harris, Moore and Hinman -- along with Rush Kittel of the Inyo County Sheriff's Posse, evacuated the body from Sam Mack Lake to the main trail, where horses were to take over.

Analysis of the Accident (From AAC Accident Report submitted by Carl Heller): The most likely cause of the accident was that Dale flipped the sling off the boulder while he was flipping the rope out of the crack. From 15-20 feet below the anchor, this would be easy to do. Two other possibilities are that the ringbend on the sling untied or that the boulder moved. The fact that the two heaviest climbers had rappelled first and safely makes these possibilities unlikely.

The anchor presumably was usable but only with caution. All members of the party should have been warned that caution was required not to move the boulder or to flip the sling. After Tim got down, he saw Dale flipping the rope but apparently had forgotten the anchor's small margin of safety.

Another way to look at such situations is to reason that people who don't see an anchor should ask about it. This writer likes to have two people check any anchor, particularly at high altitudes where mistakes are more frequent.

In light of the above comments one can consider how much the youth and relative inexperience of the climbers can be blamed for the accident. This can be a controversial subject. Furthermore, the climbers did have 2-3 years experience and had made some difficult climbs. However there is considerable reason to believe that the best learning process for those in the first years of climbing is to climb with veterans, to learn by other people's experience. Hopefully after several years a person will have ingrained safety habits which he can pass on to others. Perhaps the action of the party after the accident is the most telling point in favor of my argument. The hasty dash down the mountain endangered the climbers and, by rockfall, the people below.

#7414 Search, Balch Park

This was a successful operation in which we joined other California Region MRA teams in searching for two girls, ages 6 and 6. Participating from China Lake were Westbrook (CLMRG Team Leader), Lucas, Harris, Atkins, Garner, Zenor, Hinman and Rohret.

Qualifications Committee

Al Green

A general revision of our qualification requirements was approved at the June meeting. The latest call roster reflects this revision. The philosophy behind this change is to bring our requirements more in line with Mountain Rescue Association policy. Support requirements for our team have been much too difficult in comparison with other MRA teams. This has resulted in some of our very active and competent people being viewed as "trainees" on joint operations, because they wore no MRA patch.

We will continue to require and maintain the same high standards of mountain rescue skill. Only the dividing point for wearing the MRA Support or Rescue patches has

Qualifications, continued. . .

been shifted. The new requirements also reflect an increased emphasis on search and rescue skills such as tracking, in addition to technical skills used in high angle rock and snow rescue.

We appreciate the participation for the summer of Bill Sweatt, Peter Woodman, Jeff Warschauer and Scott Charlton. We welcome Bob Adams, who has qualified for trainee status, and the following new applicants:

Eric Adams	140-B Langley	446-3082	Code 5525	939-3115
Tom Stogsdill	525 S. Erin, R/C	375-7776	Code 3113	939-2075/2579
Mike Walters	38-B Sellars Circle	446-3325	BHS	
Michael Mason	530 Sunset, R/C	375-8951	BHS	

A special farewell to Lt. Col. John Pipa, who joined us briefly as a regular member this summer before his retirement. Lt. Col. Pipa worked with us on many occasions during his stay at China Lake, as pilot of the NAF rescue helicopter. His expertise and bravery will be missed by CLMRG.

#### FINANCES

We are grateful for donations received from Donald C. Glynn, Robert B. Cates, Roger Wilde, and Dennis Burge.

#### Public Education

Elizabeth Anderson

The brochure which the Automobile Club of Southern California has been preparing, based on our Lost Child slide show, is now "in print". CLMRG is grateful to John Hammontree of the Auto Club and to Billie Hise, of the NWC Safety Department, for their energy and support on producing this brochure. The brochure is to be included in literature passed out to all members of the Auto Club who request information on vehicle camping, so it should reach many people who can use the suggestions listed in the brochure.

Some interesting statistics on litter:

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#### Old litter never dies

Long after all time capsules are open man's trash will live on, perhaps giving an even better idea of what life in the 20th century was like.

Scientists at *Pennsylvania State University* worked up a timetable for the decomposition rates of common items of litter.

For example, a common aluminum soft drink can dropped in the woods will have completely succumbed to the elements by 2474. Dr. Edwin L. Dwen, a metallurgist, says that any steel components in it will have disintegrated a little earlier, around 2074.

By the estimate of polymer scientist Dr. R. F. Kamereck, an ordinary plastic wrapper will hang around until about 2200. But the real king of the trash hill, according to chemist Evelyn C. Marboe, is the glass bottle.

"Glass," Professor Marboe remarked, "is one of the most durable materials known. We have glass beads from Egypt that are 4000 years old and, of course, there are many examples of glass-like rock—such as obsidian—that may be as old as the earth."

And so Professor Marhoe guesses that a beer bottle dropped in a forest today *might* be gone by the year 1,001,973, give or take a few centuries.

**Science Digest March, 1974**