



May 1994  
# 93

**CHINA LAKE MOUNTAIN RESCUE GROUP**  
**P.O. BOX 2037**  
**RIDGECREST, CA 93555**

**SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

May 9	Meeting/ELT Theory-TerHeun	Finco/Gray/D.Burge
May 14	Helo Practice	Matheson
May 15	Nichols Peak	C. Burge
May 20	Hut Day/ELT/Stretcher	Roseman
May 21	CRMRA Meeting	Wisecarver
May 21/22	Mock Operation	Roseman
May 28-30	Abbot/Dade	B. Rockwell
May 31	Policy and Procedures	Hine
Jun 3-5	Mt. Sill	Dow
June 11/12	Mt. Langley	Ganger
June 13	Meeting/Knots-Kong	Stogsdill/Myers/Wisecarver
June 14/15	Summer Class	Ostermann
June 17-19	Mt. San Jacinto/NMRA	Finco
June 25/26	Mt. Julius Caesar	B. Rockwell
June 28/29	Summer Class	Ostermann
July 2-4	Minarets	Lum
July 9/10	Summer Class Day Trips	Ostermann



## OPERATION REPORTS

### **93-11 8/24/93 Transit Lone Pine Peak Huey**

On August 24, four men from the LaCanada/Pasadena area set out to climb Lone Pine Peak via the NE ridge. At or near the beginning of the climb, one member turned back. All members agreed they would meet at their car that night. When they had not arrived the next morning, Inyo County and CLMRG were asked to respond.

The reporting party reported that they were only prepared for a day hike. They had only enough water for the day and only some ropes and climbing gear. We received the call at 1140 and agreed to depart the hut at 1400. I asked Steve Walker to be the advance person and drive immediately to the parking area and interview the reporting party so we could determine more about their equipment, destination, experience, etc. Meanwhile I called Sierra Madre who agreed to begin a transit with technical people based on the possibility that it would be a technical rescue. We left the hut at 1430 and were turned around when the climbers walked out at 1500. As it turned out, the men were equipped with bivouac gear, extra water and food, and adequate clothing. They had come within 300 vertical feet of the top by dark. They bivouaced on a ledge and completed the climb the next day.

Ten CLMRG members responded to the call: Huey, Walker, Stogsdill, DeRuiter, Dow, Myers, Kong, Florian, M. Buffum, and L. Lucas. Janet Westbrook coordinated.

### **93-12 9/27/93 Search Ridgecrest Finco**

Sgt. Garry Davis, from the Kern County Sheriff's Office called me around 1530 needing searchers to look for Walter Sulek, 66 years old, who had wandered off from his Ridgecrest residence. Mr. Sulek had just been released from the hospital on 26 September following major surgery for cancer. His wife left him at home for less than an hour while she went out to run some errands. When she returned, Mr. Sulek was not there. She checked around the residence and with the neighbors. No one had seen him and none of the Sulek's vehicles were missing. Mrs. Sulek contacted the Ridgecrest police who together with numerous neighbors searched the neighborhood and desert east of the residence. (During this time no tracks were being protected.) Kern County was contacted shortly after 1500. CLMRG requested that Indian Wells Valley SAR be asked to standby for the search, which they agreed to do.

A lead tracking team from CLMRG was sent immediately to the Sulek's residence to speak with the Ridgecrest police and try to establish a track and direction of travel for Mr. Sulek. At 1630, the lead team reported that they had a good print, which the police took Polaroid pictures of for all the tracking teams, and that they were in the process of determining a direction of travel. The original report said Mr. Sulek was wearing a pink smock and Reebok tennis shoes. The lead tracking team established that the shoes were British Knights.

Base was first established at the Rescue Hut, then moved to the BLM parking lot on Richmond Road. Groups and numbers of personnel participating in the search were CLMRG (20), IWVSAR (15), BLM (6), Ridgecrest police (10), Ridgecrest police explorer scouts (10) and Liberty Ambulance (2). The Kern County Sheriff's helicopter arrived at 1720 to assist in the search.

Noise created by the earlier search made it very difficult to track in the vicinity behind the residence. A catheter was found near a hole in a chain link fence behind the Sulek residence. The tracks from the backyard matched those going through the hole in the fence. At 1740 a definite direction of travel was established so teams were sent out to cut perimeters and establish a containment area. Within the first hour, Mr. Sulek was tracked outside the original containment area. Around 1800 a Ridgecrest police officer relayed the information obtained from Mr. Sulek's daughter that when Mr. Sulek died, he wanted to be cremated and his ashes spread over the "Haystack". About the same time, the tracking field team independently reported that it appeared Mr. Sulek was heading towards the Haystack which is approximately 5 miles southeast of the Sulek residence. The containment area was opened up and a

search team was sent to search the Haystack area. The helicopter flew grid patterns from the Haystack toward Mr. Sulek's residence. Nothing was spotted from the air. At 1900, with darkness approaching, the helicopter had to leave the search.

Three teams were jump tracking Mr. Sulek's tracks. He had been maintaining a 30 inch stride, and a constant line of travel, for most of the search. At 1959 the lead tracking team reported that the stride had decreased to 22 inches. At 2009 the lead tracking team located Mr. Sulek curled up under a creosote bush, approximately 2 miles from his residence. He was wearing a white T-shirt and tan pants - no pink smock. Mr. Sulek was breathing and had a strong pulse. The next searchers to reach him had an EMT and oxygen. Oxygen was administered, and blankets were put over him. Mr. Sulek was semi-responsive. The BLM escorted the ambulance to the location and Mr. Sulek was taken to Ridgecrest Hospital. All field teams were back to base by 2100 and enjoyed a late pizza dinner provided by Sgt Davis.

CLMRG field members participating: Finco, Stogsdill, A. Mitchell, Roseman, S. Walker, Huey, Rindt, F. Buffum, Antonsen, Wilson, Dow, A. Jain, Schafhauser, Kong, Breitenstein, Gray, Florian, Davis, Cox, Martin. Coordinator was B. Meng assisted by telephoner C. Pappas.

Comments:

All 63 searchers should be commended for standing back from base for the 40 minutes it took to get things organized.

Base critique: I should have assigned someone to brief the teams on the subject and the search plan, versus doing it myself. I do not think all the teams got a complete brief before going into the field. Communications could possibly have used a person to assist with the log. At times the radio got busy and it was difficult for the radio person to keep the log and handle the communications. The IWVSAR person in base could have been used more effectively. When it got dark, IWVSAR came through with some lights.

The Polaroid pictures of Mr. Sulek's track worked well. CLMRG should purchase a Polaroid camera just for this purpose. Maps were once again a problem for our local area. The geological maps do not have all the roads and a majority of the roads are not named on the maps. BLM maps do not show enough detail. Chamber of Commerce maps show most of the roads to the county line and just beyond, but the scale on the maps is small. We should perhaps copy the roads from the Chamber maps onto our geological maps. Also we did not have enough maps for all 14 field teams. BLM helped out with some additional maps.

BLM was very helpful in the search and Walt Sakvbowski stated that the BLM is always willing to help in searches in the area (on or off BLM land). They volunteered their parking lot for our base which gave us access to bathrooms, phones, and maps. BLM is an asset to remember for future operations.

The Ridgecrest police department and explorer scouts searched the residential and business areas in the subject's line of travel. These were important areas to contain, but the searchers did not need to be completely track aware, which the police and explorers were not. This allowed us to use all our trackers in either containment or tracking. 8. When the teams began converging, our main radio frequency became bogged down. It was important for the teams to communicate in the field and establish how they might help the other field teams in their vicinity. However, a lot of communications to base were unintentionally walked over by the infield communications. It would have been better to put the field teams on an alternate frequency leaving one free for base communications.

### **93-13 11/25/94 Mobilization Palm Springs Tram Roseman**

Mary Schmierer called around 2130 Thanksgiving Day looking for an operation leader. Linda Finco had received a call from Sgt. Garry Davis, but could not take the operation. A call to Sgt. David Dillan of the Riverside Sheriff led to a brief discussion with Kevin Walker of Riverside MRA. A 17 year-old, deaf-mute woman was missing since 1400 from the upper tram station out of Palm Springs. Due to the subject's inability to respond, Riverside had quickly escalated the callout. We were to meet Sgt. Garry Davis at the lower tram station. A call to the base camp before departing ended our participation at 2310. The subject had been found down a chute with hypothermia and a sprained ankle and Riverside could

handle the evacuation. Huey, B. Rockwell, Hueber, F. Buffum, M. Buffum, and Ganger gave up Turkey Day evening to participate. Mary Schmierer coordinated with Betty Meng on standby for part of Friday, if necessary. I watched the morning news the next day and found out that the evacuation was to occur after first light, by helicopter.

**94-1 2/20/94 Alert  
Kennedy Meadows Finco**

On 20 February, at approximately 1300, we received a page from Grumpy Bear's in Kennedy Meadows stating that they were concerned about a vehicle with Colorado license plates that had been abandoned on someone's property in Kennedy Meadows. The car was first noticed two days earlier. A recent storm had dumped 1.5 feet of new snow, and the whereabouts of the person or people who owned the vehicle was unknown. The page left a phone number, but the prefix was blanked out.

I called the CLMRG pager and requested assistance in finding the phone number for Grumpy Bear's. At 1330, Tom Stogsdill got the number through Tortoise Communications. (Grumpy Bear's is on a mobile phone serviced by Tortoise.) I tried calling the number, but no one answered. Since the search area would be in Tulare County, I had contacted the Tulare County Sheriff. The dispatcher was unfamiliar with the Kennedy Meadow's area, but took the information. While we were trying to find the phone number, Kern County Sheriff was contacted about the incident. Tulare County said they would try to locate the owner of the vehicle. I told them that if they needed SAR personnel, they could contact our group through the Kern County Sheriff. Tulare County did not call us back.

On the next day, I called Grumpy Bear's and explained the problem we had in locating their phone number. When we didn't respond, she had contacted Jerry Young from the IWVSAR, who had contacted the Kern County Sheriff. I told her to page us anytime they felt they needed SAR support in the Kennedy Meadows area.

**94-2 3/5/94 Incident  
El Paso Mountains Stogsdill**

This was the first of two incidents that happened during the annual California Region Mountain Rescue Association Workshop.

West Valley SAR arrived at the workshop base at 2100 on March 4, with 19 members ready for the spectacular weekend of search practice. After sign-in and situation briefing, the team was making ready for search deployment when one of their members became ill with cramps and nausea along with a short span of unconsciousness. This was slightly after midnight. Base was notified of this emergency and was asked to call an ambulance to transport team member Shannon Mueller to the Ridgecrest Hospital. After talking with Shannon and team coordinator Bob Gattas, it was decided that the most expeditious procedure was to transport Shannon to the hospital in one of their vehicles accompanied by two EMT's, Bob Gattas and Cory Timms. The relay operator stationed on top of Laurel Peak notified the hospital via our cellular phone of her impending arrival and symptoms. At that time the symptoms indicated a variety of possible illnesses from a suspected spider bite, acute appendicitis, or stomach flu. Shannon had been experiencing nausea for several days. Upon arrival at the hospital, she was treated for dehydration and given medications for her cramps and nausea. She was released from the hospital at 0345 feeling weak, but much better.

CLMRG members assisting were Stogsdill, Mitchell and Myers.

**94-3 3/5/94 Incident  
El Paso Mountains Stogsdill**

Incident #2 during the Search Workshop happened at 0954 on March 5 when a search team being deployed discovered an injured motorcycle rider near the junction of Highway 395 and the Searles Station road. Jeffrey Hargrove, age 36, of China Lake, was thrown from his motorcycle when it went into a deep wash while he was solo cross-country riding. Jeffrey thought he had a broken leg and with no one to help him, was crawling and dragging himself toward the road when the search team

discovered him. When the team called search base, base first thought it was another simulated emergency that I had been springing to test their reactions to different situations. I assured base that this event was not on my agenda. Once again our relay operator on Laurel Peak called 911 on our cellular phone and reported the incident. EMT's were dispatched from base to assist with splinting and first aid for the injuries while an ambulance was enroute from Ridgecrest. Mr. Hargrove was taken to Ridgecrest Hospital where his injuries were reported as a severe dislocation of the right knee, but no broken bones.

CLMRG field team members assisting were: Stogsdill, A. Mitchell, Hine, Lum, and Myers.

T. Mitchell kept a radio log of communications with the teams supplying first aid to Mr. Hargrove.

**94-4      4/2/94              Search**  
**San Gabriel Mountains      Green**

The call came at 2100 on 4/1/94 from Al Garcia of the San Dimas MRA team. They had been searching for several days for a 44year-old man - Donald Joseph Rohrenbacher. His car was near a trail head and he had been missing in the San Gabriel Mountains since 3/20/94. They wanted assistance to continue the search this weekend.

I accepted the Operation Leader role and contacted Sheila Rockwell to telephone the roster. She and Annette Fournier were able to get three other members (Sakai, Cox and Moneypenny). We met at the hut at 0330. Because of a delay in getting approval from OES to request Kern County resources, we could not leave until 0455.

We arrived at base camp at 0800 and were immediately given search assignments. The area presented us with extreme challenges in bush-whacking. After exhausting the initial assignments, we were flown back to base for new orders. We completed the new area at about 1600 and were told that they were shutting the search down. After all teams were safely in base camp we started the drive home at about 1700 and arrived home at 2000.

Comments: I dropped the ball in forgetting to contact Kern County right after the initial call. And, because Los Angeles County had not officially requested Kern County resources, this resulted in a 1.5 hour delay in our departure.

**94-5      4/16/94              Search**  
**Ridgecrest              Stogsdill**

Phelps TerHeun (Capt in the Civil Air Patrol and member of CLMRG) received a call from CAP coordinator Bob Comperini from Lancaster, CA at 0710 with the information that Search and Rescue Satellites (SARSAT) were receiving Emergence Locator

Transmitter (ELT) signals from the Ridgecrest area. Phelps paged CLMRG, asking if we would assist and use our direction finding (DF) equipment, L-PERS, to locate and verify the source of the signals. At the time it was assumed to be a possible downed aircraft, worst case. Finco, Renta, Pappas and Myers responded to calls from Sheila Rockwell and me. Renta and Myers were to run the base and plot DF vectors while TerHeun and Pappas on team one, and Stogsdill and Finco on team two went out to locate the ELT source. Team one started DFing near Norma and Downs, while team two went farther south to higher ground near the college. Both teams could detect very weak signals in the direction finding mode and very little, if any, in the receive mode. The strongest signal seemed to be near the reported SARSAT locations of 35 deg 37.3'N, 117deg 42.7'W and 35deg 37.3'N, 117deg 42.6'W. As both teams were DFing towards these locations, it was found that the signal was just as strong on 121.6 MHz as it was in 121.5 MHz. These phenomena indicated that the source could not be emitted from an ELT. The teams found that the strongest signals were being emitted from an electrical power transformer on Horseshoe Lane, about one block east of Jack Ranch Road. There is a history of arcing transformers that have caused similar problems. Having found the source, the ELT search was secured at 1103 and both Southern California Edison and Lancaster CAP were advised of our findings. The solution was beyond the CLMRG's charter or interest and the Rescue Coordination Center Langley, VA would have to fight this one out with SCE.

After the operation, I left town and didn't return until Sunday afternoon. My telephone answering

machine had a message to call Steve Pappas regarding a request from Bob Comperini for more DF support. Steve Pappas was the only CLMRG contact left in town that had DFed at the site and Comperini asked him to direct SCE to the location of the errant transmitting transformer. SCE's plan was to turn off the transformers, one by one, to isolate the problem. They needed Pappas with an L-PER unit to verify when the correct transformer was turned off. As transformers in the vicinity were turned off, Steve could not detect any difference in the signal. The signal remained, regardless of how many transformers were turned off. According to Phelps TerHeun, the errant transformer could possibly be several miles away and just using the wire strain relief loops on this particular transformer as the antenna. Pappas stayed with them from 1930 to 2100, trying to isolate the transformer without success. SCE was reluctant to expend overtime effort to continue through the night until the Federal Communications Commission threatened to slap SCE with a fine unless less they found and turned off the signal source, which apparently they did sometime Saturday night or Sunday morning.

## DONORS

*The CLMRG extends warm thanks to the following friends who have recently made contributions to the group:*

Mojave Primitive Encampment

Mary Sulek

John and Marilyn Wick

Clifton Chandler

Janet Hammond

William and Frances Harris

T.M. and Virginia Stirling

Eileen Dietz

*In Memory of Ralph Dietz*

Judy Breitenstein

*In Memory of Evelyn Hunter*

*Dorothy Gould*

*Jim Roberts*

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### **Walkie Talk**

Can someone kindly tell me, please,  
Why we WALK the Pyrenees  
But CLIMB the Alps, if we like,  
But in the High Sierra HIKE.  
And while I'm asking, what the heck,  
Why, in Himalayas, TREK?

- Kate Kellogg

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# 1993 Annual Reports

## Summary of Operations AI Green

Total Operations: 13

Rescues	0	Transits	3
Recoveries	0	Incidents	3
Searches	6	Mobilizations	1
Alerts	0		

Operations by Month

January	1	July	0
February	0	August	1
March	2	September	1
April	1	October	0
May	3	November	1
June	3	December	0

Requesting Agencies

Inyo County	4	Joshua Tree Nat'l Mon	1
Kern County	1	Sequoia Nat'l Park	1
Riverside County	3		

Total Victims: 16

OK	13	Injured	3
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Average # CLMRG Members/Operation: 10.7

Total Vehicle Miles: 4,023

Total Person Hours: 995

NAWCWD Excused Hours: 363

## Equipment Committee Report Mike Renta

In 1993, CLMRG acquired a 1984 Jeep Cherokee at no charge, through the Kern County Sheriff's Office. The largest part of '93 equipment expenditures (\$1700) was used to outfit the Jeep with a roof rack, radios, snow chains, etc. and getting the vehicle into road worthy condition with a wheel alignment, air conditioning, oil change, etc. We expect these expenditures to greatly diminish in 1994.

Two Moss four season tents were purchased in 1993. We do not anticipate any additional tent purchases in 1994.

CLMRG policy is to replace about one third of the operations ropes every year. The 1993 rope expenditure is the result of that policy and will continue at about that level in 1994.

In 1994, CLMRG will purchase several GPS units at about \$700 each. These units will be of great value in assisting field teams with navigation and position locations and reporting.

1993 Total Expenditures: \$3662.94

Pagers (batteries & repairs)	208.42	Tents	836.55
Jeep Service	624.63	Ropes & Pulley	450.51
Jeep Equipment	1084.66	Other Equipment	458.17

**Training Committee Report**  
**Frank Buffum**

The Training Committee is responsible for providing training opportunities for the Group related to its various functions. Prior to the publication of each of the Group activity schedules, the Training Committee met to review the needs of the Group members and the type of operations that might be expected in the upcoming period. Inputs were prepared based on insuring that there would be multiple opportunities through the year to meet the matrix of Group training and advancement needs in the major skill areas of climbing, rescue, first aid, tracking, communications, winter operations, etc. Initially these inputs were passed to the Scheduling Committee. By the end of the year it was found that it was better to meet simultaneously with the President, the Qualifications Committee, and the Scheduling Committee to ensure that important activities were both recommended and that they got on the schedule.

**Public Education - Hug-A-Tree**  
**Terry Mitchell**

Hug-A-Tree is a slide show/activity presentation designed to prevent children from becoming lost in the wilderness and teaching them what to do if they should become lost. CLMRG provides Hug-A-Tree presentations as a public service to children in our area. In 1993, 4,455 children, grades pre-school through 6, saw them. These were made by 20 different CLMRG members with some members making several presentations.

Reports of the 1993 First Aid and Public Education Committees will appear in the next issue.





*"I'll quit when it stops being fun."*

CLMRG member Steve Walker left the group recently to take a job in Washington D.C. He wishes to have this letter published in the Talus Pile:

I am writing this letter as an open expression of my appreciation to all of my friends in CLMRG. My association with the group has been the highlight of my life for the last decade. The good friends that I have made during my time in the group are probably the closest I will ever have. Years ago, I had the realization that these "friends" are different than other friends that we make during our lifetime. These "friends" are people who you trust your life to and would risk your life for - no questions asked. It became clear to me that the bond which we share is a very special one indeed. On many operations I found myself in a situation where my life was in the hands of a distant voice on the radio or a tug on the end of a rope which disappeared into a whiteout and I knew that I was not alone in whatever predicament I happened to be in. The common thread in all of these experiences is the confidence that my safety was in the hands of people who I really trust, and that is a rare feeling in this world. The quality of the people in CLMRG is its most important attribute and it far outweighs the importance of their technical expertise or operational readiness at any particular time. We all have periods of intense training and the lulls which follow our more serious endeavors, but by and large, I think that CLMRG is the most prepared "mountain rescue" group in the state and I am proud to have been associated with it. My decision to leave China Lake has not been an easy one. There were many factors to consider and leaving CLMRG and the Sierras was certainly the toughest decision to make. The career possibilities and educational benefits that my new position at NRL provide are so enticing that I cannot pass up this opportunity. I will always regard mountain rescue as my second profession and CLMRG my second family. You are always welcome in our home when your travels take you near our neck of the woods.

Best regards,  
Steve

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**CLMRG 1994 Officers**

President - Linda Finco

Vice President - Andrew Mitchell

Secretary - Debbie Breitenstein

Treasurer - Robby Dow

MRA Representative - Mike Wisecarver

## Committees

First Aid	Dianne Rindt
Equipment	Werner Hueber
Training	Mike Renta
Public Education	Mary Schmierer
Qualifications	Al Green
	Tom Roseman
	Tom Stogsdill

The Talus Pile is edited by Carol Burge



*"I got four hugs today. How'd you do?"*

# Climbers live “life wish” to limit



Lynn Hill scales a sheer wall.

Do climbers have a death wish?

Author Nicholas O'Connell was often asked that question while researching his book, "Beyond Risk: Conversations with Climbers."

But after interviewing the world's leading mountaineers, he found that "what animates (them) ... is a life wish, a desire to live — fully, intensely, completely. I have never met a group of people more truly alive — physically, emotionally, intellectually, spiritually."

These qualities are illuminated in "Beyond Risk's" in-depth interviews with climbing pioneers Reinhold Messner, Riccardo Cassin, Sir Edmund Hillary, Kurt Diemberger, Walter Bonatti, Royal Robbins, Warren Harding, Chris Bonington, Doug Scott, Voytek Kurtyka, JeanClaude Droyer, Jeff Lowe, Wolfgang Bullich, Catherine Destivelle, Lynn Hill, Peter Croft and Tomo Cesen.

Their stories are not just for climbers; they're for anyone interested in the drama of human life. "They chart the mysterious topography of the human spirit," says the author, "demonstrating that climbing can serve as a powerful symbol for human aspiration in all its various forms."

When we read of Messner's desperate search for his brother amid avalanche debris, Kurtyka's and Schauer's mental telepathy on their harrowing ascent of Gasherbrum IV, or Diemberger's despair on K2 after partner Julie Tullis died, we appreciate climbing as "a microcosm for the rest of life," says O'Connell. "It requires courage in adversity, grace under pressure, and generosity and patience in exasperating circumstances."



Eskimo rescue units