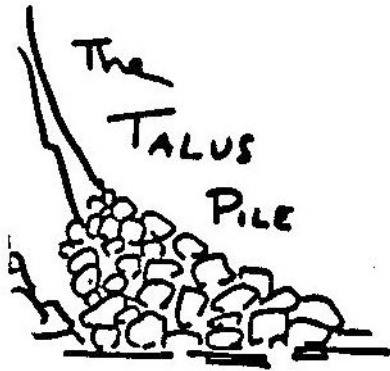


NUMBER 142

SEPTEMBER 2008



CHINA LAKE MOUNTAIN RESCUE GROUP

P. O. BOX 2037
RIDGECREST CA 93556

TRAINING SCHEDULE

Aug 30-Sep 1	Sat-Mon	Tuolumne Meadows	Franklin
Sep 5-7	Fri-Sun	Indian Rock	Rockwell
Sep 8	Mon	Meeting	Breitenstein, DeRuiter, Doerr
Sep 13-14	Sat-Sun	Norman Clyde	Huey
Sep 19-21	Fri-Sun	Open	
Sep 27-28	Sat-Sun	Open	
Oct 3-5	Fri-Sun	Open	
Oct 11-13	Sat-Mon	Yosemite	Franklin
Oct 17	Fri	Kennedy Meadows	Westbrook (Training)
Oct 18	Sat	CRMRA meeting	Bishop
Oct 18-19	Sat-Sun	Open	
Oct 20	Mon	Meeting	Hueber, C. Burge, Castro
Oct 25	Sat	CLMRG 50th Anniversary	Huey
Oct 26	Sun	Local hikes, petroglyph tour	Leaders
Oct 31-Nov 2	Fri-Sun	Open	

NON-TRAINING SCHEDULE (see SCREE on page 15)

Oct 25	Sat	K-O Half-marathon	Over the Hill Track Club (OTHTC)
Oct 25	Sat	Maturango Junction	Maturango Museum
Oct 25-26	Sat-Sun	Open Studio Tour	Maturango Museum

Remember not to have a fatal accident because the community will think climbing is a dangerous thing, your friends will be bummed—and you'll be dead.

—Kitty Calhoun



CLMRG is funded in part by United Way of Indian Wells Valley.

GROUP BUSINESS

OFFICERS

The members present at the 14 January 2008 meeting elected the following officers for 2008.

President	Bud Gates
Vice-President	Mike Franklin
Secretary	Eileen Loughran
Treasurer	Werner Hueber
MRA Representative	Dan Bishop

QUALIFICATIONS COMMITTEE

The members present at the 14 January 2008 meeting elected the following members of the Qualifications Committee for 2008:

Mike Myers	Chair, New members, Roster
Dan Bishop	Operation reports
Linda Finco	Trips, Training

OPERATION LEADERS

Based on the votes of the membership, the Qualifications Committee named the following operation leaders for 2008: Mike Myers, Tom Roseman, Tom Sakai, Linda Finco, Dan Bishop, and David Miles.

50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

We, the China Lake Mountain Rescue Group (CLMRG—also known as the Group and MRG), will celebrate our 50 years of search and rescue service from 1958 to 2008 with a 50th anniversary banquet on Saturday, 25 October 2008, at the Kerr McGee Center in Ridgecrest, California. Festivities will begin with a no-host cocktail hour followed by a buffet dinner. The cost per person will be \$40. We will have several speakers who will share their experiences with us and note the advances in search and rescue techniques and technology over the years. Please contact Elaine Riendeau at 760-446-9016 or elaine.riendeau@clmrg.org to reserve your place or for more information. Checks made out to CLMRG are due by 10 October.

This event marks 50 years of our providing on-call search and rescue services and mountaineering safety education and celebrates the far-reaching humanitarian contributions that our team and its members have made. Since 1958, nearly 300 persons have served as members of our team responding to more than 865 call outs. We are proud to have four active members with more than 40 years of service each, and we continue to introduce new members to our work.

As part of the festivities, on Sunday, 26 October, we are offering a guided hike of a local peak and a tour of the Coso Petroglyphs on the Naval Weapons Station. If you are interested in the tour, we will need your reservation as soon as possible because space is limited. The Navy requires the full name and social security number for each tour participant in order to place you on the reservation list. The Navy does not allow children under 10 on petroglyph tours.

A limited number of rooms will be available Saturday and Sunday nights at the Heritage Inn in Ridgecrest for the special rate of \$78 per night including breakfast for two. Make reservations by calling the hotel at 800-843-0693 or 760-446-6543 (group code: CLMR).

Please save the date and join us in celebrating our achievements and continuing commitment to provide search and rescue services and to introduce the community to mountaineering practices, today and for future generations. Invitations were sent out the first week of September.

GROUP ORGANIZATION

2008 OFFICERS

President	Bud Gates	793-4671
Vice-president	Mike Franklin	375-3777
Secretary	Eileen Loughran	446-1325
Treasurer	Werner Hueber	375-2165
MRA Representative	Dan Bishop	375-1469

2008 COMMITTEES

QUALIFICATIONS

Mike Myers (Chair)
Dan Bishop
Linda Finco

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Elaine Riendeau (Chair)
Carol Burge
Mary Schmierer

TRAINING

Dave Miles (Chair)
Dave Doerr
Eileen Loughran
Daryl Hinman
Tom Sakai

THE TALUS PILE

Loren Castro (Editor)
Sheila Rockwell (Cub Reporter)

2008 CONTACTS

Qualifications
Qualifications
Qualifications
Public Education
Training
Summer Class
Equipment
First Aid
Sheriff Committee
ASTM Representative
Emergency Services Council
Archives
Stores
Web Page
The Talus Pile

EQUIPMENT

Werner Hueber (Quartermaster)
Al Green Bob Rockwell
Tom Roseman Linda Finco
Paul DeRuiter Eileen Loughran
Dave Doerr Mike Myers
Mike Renta

SUMMER CLASS

Bill Stratton (Chair) Al Green
Eileen Loughran Mike Franklin
Carol Burge Deb Breitenstein
Bob Huey

EMERGENCY SERVICES COUNCIL

Janet Westbrook (Chair)
Deb Breitenstein

FIRST AID

Linda Finco (Chair)
Debbie Breitenstein
Eric Toler

ASTM

Dennis Burge (Chair)

ARCHIVES

Al Green (Chair)

WEB PAGE

Janet Westbrook (Chair)
Mike Franklin

SHERIFF COMMITTEE

Bud Gates (Chair)
Al Green
Tom Sakai
Mike Myers

Mike Myers	499-9266
Dan Bishop	375-1469
Linda Finco	375-7951
Elaine Reindeau	446-9016
Dave Miles	384-4508
Bill Stratton	375-4898
Werner Hueber	375-2165
Linda Finco	375-7951
Bud Gates	793-4671
Dennis Burge	375-7967
Debbie Breitenstein	375-8371
Al Green	375-9189
Carol Burge	446-7038
Janet Westbrook	375-8371
Loren Castro	375-3279

MOUNTAIN RESCUE ASSOCIATION

By Dan Bishop

At the Mountain Rescue Association (MRA) Spring Conference (June 2008), CLMRG received recognition both for our 50 years of service to Search and Rescue and for our outstanding work in Mountain Safety Education. The Mountain Safety Education award resulted specifically from our annual Basic Mountaineering Class.

OPERATION REPORTS

Operation 2008-01 (Rescue & Search)

OES 2008LAW0041

Palm Springs Tram

3-4 February 2008

By Tom Sakai, Operation Leader

At 0700 on Sunday, 3 February, I was awakened by my pager's shrill cry. There was a regional call-out for help rescuing two Marines who had slipped on ice while hiking the Skyline Trail to the top of the Palm Springs Tramway. Soon, Bud Gates called looking for an Operation Leader (OL). Sheila Rockwell had agreed to coordinate. She and Terry Mitchell got commitments from five other members: Dave Miles, Gates, Bob Rockwell, Dave Doerr, and Bill Stratton. We met at the Hut, got our group gear together, and were on the road by 0915.

The weather was very windy in the desert and rainy when we got to Cajon Pass and almost all the way to Palm Springs. We passed numerous cars that either had slid off the road or were involved in collisions because of the heavy rain and slick road. All were being assisted.

We got to the rescue base at 1300 and checked in. I was told to get my team ready to assist in the rescue, and then we would get our assignment and be transported to the top by the Tram. When I checked in again, instead of helping with the rescue of the Marines, our assignment was to help in the newly organized search for an overdue hiker from the day before. I had the team quickly adjust gear for a search in blizzard conditions at the top of the Tram.

We were looking for Ellen Coleman, a 53-year-old female, who had started hiking toward Mt. San Jacinto on Saturday and hadn't yet returned. She was reported to be a strong, experienced hiker who was very familiar with the area. We went up the Tram and started our assignment at 1500. We were to head south to the Hidden Lake area (about 3/4 of a mile) and return checking out the eastern boundary of the search area. Other teams were heading west toward Mt. San Jacinto. The wind was strong (gusts of 70-80 mph), and visibility was limited.

At 1640, the weather was deemed too severe for the safety of the searchers, so all teams were called back to the Tram station. We were able to complete about two-thirds of our original assignment. We were back at the top station at 1740 and back to rescue base by 1830.

Four of us needed or wanted to return that night, so only Miles and Stratton stayed to search on Monday with Miles taking over as OL. The four that returned were back in Ridgecrest and heading home by 2300. A second team of Bob Huey and Eric Toler were to drive up on Monday by 0830.

On Monday, the weather had cleared, so a helicopter could fly at 0800 and take the first team of searchers to the shelter near the summit. They were greeted by Ellen from the doorway of the shelter. Ellen had broken her lower leg while hiking and managed to crawl some distance to the shelter. She had spent both Saturday and Sunday nights there and was doing okay, considering her injury.

CLMRG searchers returned to Ridgecrest by 1200.

Operation 2008-02 (Incident)

Mt. Baldy, San Bernardino County

9 February 2008

By Dave Miles, Operation Leader

During San Bernardino Cave Team's Snow and Ice Certification, two sledders flipped their sled and landed on a rock. Both were hauled out on stretchers (one in serious condition).

Operation 2008-03 (Alert)

Mt. Pinos, Kern Country

31 March 2008

By Linda Finco, Operation Leader

I received a call from Bud Gates around 0900 on Monday, 31 March. Gates was looking for an Operation Leader for a search in the Mt. Pinos area near Frazier Park. Sgt. Baldwin of the Kern County Sheriff's Office (KCSO) was the deputy in charge. Two hikers, aged 42 and 28, had gone hiking on Sunday and had not returned.

I had a list of things to cancel and reschedule for the week if I committed, and Gates was at the start of his honeymoon, so I told him that I would coordinate the operation and find a leader if I couldn't take it as the leader. I used the new call-out phone number to send out an alert of the search, and after I got off the phone, I realized Gates had sent out a similar message. (We need to coordinate using the new call-out system the same way we use our paging process so that we don't have multiple broadcasts). I also started to call down the roster for a coordinator. Al Green called and committed, and I set 1200 as the time to meet at the Hut. As I continued to call for a coordinator, Gates called back to say the hikers had been found and the search was finished.

Janet Westbrook volunteered to be the coordinator. Mike Renta and Dan Bishop also committed.

Operation 2008-04 (Transit)

Poso, San Luis Obispo County

2 April 2008

By Mike Myers, Operation Leader

At the end of our First Aid class in the Hut, we received a pager message from Sgt. Baldwin, Kern County Deputy Sheriff, announcing a search in the mountains east of San Luis Obispo for a missing man. I called the pager and said that I would call the sheriff. After calling Bakersfield, I agreed to lead the operation and then contacted Janet Westbrook to ask her to begin a callout. Dave Miles, Bill Stratton, and Joe Dunn committed.

The missing man was Dalton Neal (69), who had driven into the mountains near Poso, California, to photograph wildflowers. It had been raining most of the day in the search area. The San Luis Obispo County Sheriff had set up a command post in Poso and was asking trackers and searchers to be ready to be fielded at 0800, the next morning. Poso is approximately 20 miles southeast of Santa Margarita, and it took a bit of effort to actually find it on a map.

We met at the Hut at 0300 the next morning, ready to depart shortly thereafter. The Explorer was loaded, and just as Miles drove clear of the concrete pad behind the Hut, Sgt. Baldwin called to stand us down; Neal had been found. We unloaded our gear and then had a discussion about what kind of equipment members should bring to the Hut when responding to an operation.

Post-operation details:

Search teams had found Neal shortly before Sgt. Baldwin's phone message. A miscommunication had said that he was dead when found, but although suffering from hypothermia, he was alive.

Operation 2008-05 (Alert)

Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) south of Tehachapi (Kern County)

27 May 2008

By Tom Sakai, Operation Leader

I received a call from Carol Burge at 1820 on Tuesday, 27 May looking for a leader for a search in the Tehachapi area. I agreed to take the operation. At about 1800, Sgt. Rhoades had called Bud Gates, who had called Carol, who tried the new call-out phone number system with no success at getting a leader. Carol, with Janet Westbrook's help, started the call-out via telephone. About 5 minutes after Carol's call, I called Sgt. Rhoades for more details. He told me that the missing person had been found and that our services were not needed. Then I called Carol to cancel the call-out and have her call back the members who had committed.

The missing person, a 20-year-old woman, had been hiking with her husband on the PCT about 10 miles south of Tehachapi. She had decided to go ahead on the trail and had agreed on a rendezvous point before separating. When the husband got to that point, the woman was not there. After a while, he reported her missing, and Sgt. Rhoades initiated the search effort. The Sheriff's helicopter was dispatched, and we were to meet with Sgt. Rhoades as soon as possible. Meanwhile, the woman had apparently met another party who escorted her to where she could contact her husband. Then the search was terminated.

Carol was the coordinator; Janet helped as a telephoner. Dave Miles and Bill Stratton committed to the operation.

Operation 2008-06 (Search)

SAR #08-059

Yosemite Valley

10-11 June 2008

By Tom Roseman, Operation Leader

I received a call from Terry Mitchell on the afternoon of Tuesday, 10 June, looking for an operation leader. I took the operation and decided to delay leaving so that I could teach the classes I had signed up for the opening night of the summer class. When I called Sgt. Gary Rhodes, he asked me if we would take a member (Susan) of the new Kern dog team because she wanted to go on a field operation. I got Susan's phone number from Rhodes and called her to check her skills and to verify that she would not take her dog. She was willing to drive to Ridgecrest to meet up with us.

Mike Franklin was the only other CLMRG member who could go, and the three of us left just after 2130 for Yosemite. We arrived about 0300 the next day and slept for a few hours before the morning briefing at 0700. Esmine Garmendia, a 24-year-old native of Honduras living in Fresno, was missing from a day trip to Washburn/Glacier Point. Along with about 80 other searchers, we received our assignment and were driving to Glacier Point by 0800 and walking to our assignment by 0930. As always, the Park Service was well-organized in getting teams into the field.

Our assignment was to search sector B02 with a three-person team from Sierra Madre. The sector started at Taft Point, bisected by a trail, and ran northwest along the cliff face above the valley. We finished our assignment about 1530 and were returning to field operations near Glacier Point when we learned that a search helicopter had found Esmine near Mt. Starr King. He was sunburned and tired but otherwise OK. Esmine had been reading his bible and was inspired to search out the highest point, so he had attempted to reach Starr King. He was found in sector C08, which was scheduled to be searched on Saturday, three days later.

We debriefed, started back to Ridgecrest, and arrived home about 2030.

Operation 2008-07 (Incident)

Mt Mansfield, Vermont

21 June 2008

By Debbie Breitenstein, Incident Reporter

While attending the Mountain Rescue Association spring conference at Stowe, Vermont and during the MRA-sponsored Adventure Climb of Mt. Mansfield, I was involved in an incident. An elderly English woman, Agnes, slipped on the rugged, slippery, and scenic trails leading up to the summit ridge. Agnes knocked out a front tooth and cut through her upper lip.

I was following Stowe Team 2, who were in a competitive hike around Mansfield. They had encountered Agnes and were assisting her and her husband, William, down a difficult section of the trail. I took the information about Agnes and ran (carefully because the trail is rugged, slippery, and scenic) to one of the Stowe team members who was manning a timed stretcher problem. Advanced medical aid was called in, and two Stowe members ran back up the trail to intercept Team 2 and the couple. The two Stowe members helped Agnes down a climb and hustled her off.

I wanted to go on up to the summit, but William slipped and nearly fell as he was coming down. I helped him the rest of the way down and accompanied him to the lodge where we caught up with his wife and the Stowe team. When they were together again, I headed back up the trail to the summit.

No heroics; William was very nice to chat with, and he did need watching on that trail. Both had regular walking shoes and were sliding everywhere, which contributed to Agnes's accident.

Operation 2008-08 (Incident)

Cirque Peak, Inyo County

28 June 2008

By Al Green, Incident Reporter

Five of us—Tom Sakai, Eileen Loughran, Dennis Burge, guest Jim Nichols, and I—left the donut shop in Ridgecrest at 0710 in Jim's new Grand Cherokee to climb Cirque Peak. We started hiking about 0910 from Horse Shoe Meadows and all were on the summit by about 1515.

Sakai left first when we all had agreed it was time to start down. He looked back occasionally while descending and saw Eileen, Dennis, and me descending as well. Sakai continued on because he wanted to climb Shelter Peak on the way out and look for the cave that Jim had talked about. This side trip took about 30 minutes, and he waited another 30 minutes on that peak, watching for somebody to appear on the plateau. He left the saddle about 1750 and took about 1.5 hours to return to Jim's car.

The rest of us had left the summit of Cirque a little bit before 1600. Eileen, Dennis, and I were off the peak proper by about 1615, and we waited for Jim. We could see him descending slowly. We thought he was going unusually slow and suspected that his knee was giving him trouble. When he got within shouting distance, he said that he had broken his arm. The three of us went up to him immediately. He had put an ace bandage around the break, which was on his left arm between the wrist and the elbow. He was not experiencing a lot of pain except when he tried to use the arm. The injury kept him from using his left hiking pole, which was a serious problem for him. He depends on the poles a lot because of his knee problem.

We made sure that he could move his fingers and that the circulation to the fingers was not impaired; then we put his arm in a sling. We took most of the weight out of his pack, but he wanted to keep the pack on because it contained his water.

(cont'd on next page)

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We then started down the remaining part of Cirque before the traverse across to the plateau. This section and the traverse went slowly. Jim had a lot of trouble with any significant step. Careful route selection was essential. Going across the plateau and the drop from the plateau down to Elizabeth Meadow was easier than we had expected. Our progress from there down to the trail was slow, but we moved continuously. Darkness fell before we got to the car.

Jim was uncertain of the medical treatment he would pursue. He thought he might wait until morning to make some inquiries, but his wife insisted on going to the hospital that night. Smart move.

Some lessons:

I tend to leave my first aid stuff at home. Bad idea. We really needed a splint. If the break had been more severe, Jim would have suffered unnecessary pain.

There are different sizes of triangular bandages. The one Dennis had was larger and much more comfortable than most.

We should have documented the pain medication that Jim took.

We should have had him remove the ring on his finger before swelling started.

It is very important to keep most of the party together. If we had all gone out at our individual paces, it would have made Jim's descent much more difficult for him.

By Jim Nichols, Mountaineer with broken arm

I was descending between two large rocks when I slipped. My wrist strap was on, and although I'm unclear on the exact sequence of events, I remember feeling a lot of twisting from the strap before the bone snapped. I would probably have been OK had it not been for the strap. But the other 99.9 percent of the route required the straps because of the large loads I put on the poles. I'll consider de-strapping in future situations like this.

The break was a mid-radius fracture (see Figure 1). The emergency room took X-rays and applied a good, comfortable splint. The osteopathic specialist said on Monday, 30 June that he could cast it but suggested that Dr. Antebi in Lancaster might prefer to stabilize it with a plate or rod.

The surgery was Thursday, 3 July. A plate stabilized the break. The new splint came off two weeks later, and I resumed normal activities then.

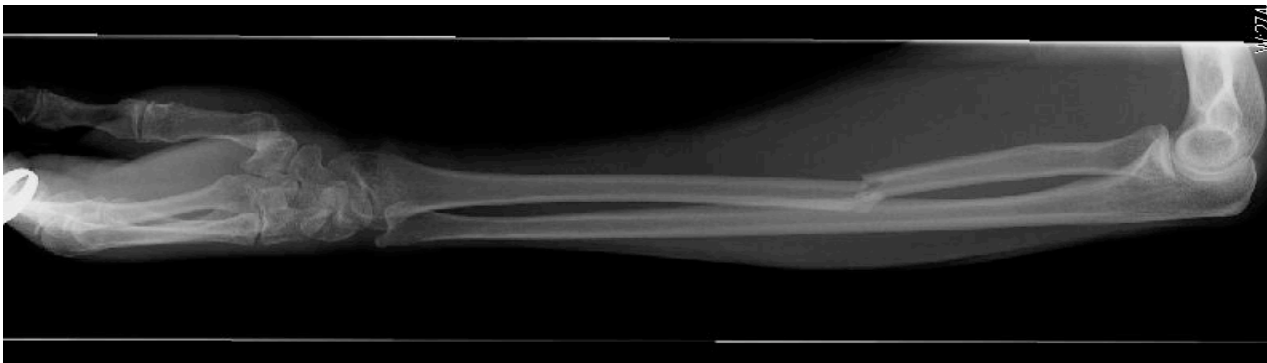


Figure 1. A Mountaineer's broken arm

I was really unstable coming down without both poles, but Eileen walked behind me all the way out and gave me a hand on the shoulder at the hundreds of big steps down. Dennis was out ahead coarse-tuning the route, and Al was immediately ahead fine-tuning the route by removing rocks and making all those important immediate route decisions, which relieved me of that chore so that I could concentrate on remaining vertical. All did a fine job, and I think I have never felt so well "mothered."

Operation 2008-09 (Search)

OES 2008LAW0325

6 July 2008

Mt. Goode, Inyo County
By David Miles (Operation Leader)

On 5 July 2008 at 2200, I received a call from Tim Winkler of the Inyo SAR team. He called to let us know that they had called OES to request CLMRG's help in a search for a missing hiker on Mt. Goode. He was requesting us to meet at the Inyo SAR hut at the Bishop airport at 0700. I called Kern County Deputy Sheriff Sgt. Gary Rhoades to let him know of the request and prepare him for the call from OES. I then called Terry Mitchell to start a callout to meet at the hut at 0430. Sgt. Rhoades called back at 2330 with the OES number. I asked him if he really wanted me to call him at 0430 when we leave the Hut. He said it isn't necessary. Tom Roseman, Dan Bishop, and Mike Franklin committed to the search. I called Winkler to tell him that we had two technical teams of two rescuers each as he had requested to search the ridges. Because several of us could commit for only one day, I also told him that we could probably field other members for Monday.

We met at the Hut at 0430 and arrived at the Inyo hut (base camp) at 0700. Winkler told us that 44-year-old San Diego resident Rick DeVan, his wife, and his daughter had set out toward Bishop Pass on Thursday, 3 July. The plan was to spend that night by himself, hike up Mt. Goode, traverse the ridge to Mt. Johnson, and then head down to meet his wife and daughter at Treasure Lakes the next day. When DeVan failed to show up at Treasure Lakes on Friday, his family reported him missing.

Forest Service and CHP helicopters transported all teams to the search area. Bishop and Franklin (Team 2) were inserted one at a time to a location 600-800 feet below Johnson. Their assignment was to check the summit register to see if Rick had signed it. They found no entry for DeVan, so they began searching the ridge back to Trapezoid Peak. Roseman and I (Team 3) were inserted one at a time on Trapezoid. We found no entry for DeVan in Trapezoid's summit register. Inyo SAR (Team 1) had found a register entry for DeVan on Goode. We began searching Trapezoid for tracks and found two sets. On the older set, we found a small plastic bag with a few "fun size" Snickers. We judged these tracks not to belong to DeVan. We marked the other set of tracks with tape and left them for Team 2 to follow north down a ridge.

We (Team 3) started to traverse the ridge toward Goode as Team 1 traversed from Goode to Trapezoid. After a short traverse, we descended 150 feet on the north side to check out what appeared to be a track. We continued to descend, check for tracks, and scan the north side of the ridge with binoculars. The CHP helicopter picked us up and returned us to base at 1700.

Team 2 traversed from Johnson to Trapezoid, found the tracks we had marked, and followed them down the north ridge of Trapezoid. The tracks disappeared, and after reaching a saddle with no tracks to follow, Team 2 were directed to descend to the snowfield north of the Goode ridgeline. They scanned the ridge between Goode and Trapezoid with binoculars before descending to the landing zone above Saddlerock Lake. The Forest Service helicopter airlifted them back to Bishop by 1830.

We met the second team from CLMRG in Bishop and told them we had left some gear for them at the Inyo hut. After a good dinner, we drove home and arrived at our Hut around 2330.

Operation 2008-10 (Search)

OES 2008LAW0325

Mt. Goode

6-7 July 2008

By Linda Finco, Operation Leader

Dave Miles led the first day (Sunday, 6 July) of the search for San Diego resident Rick DeVan (44), and I volunteered to lead if the search continued the next day. I had called Tim Winkler of the Inyo team to tell him we could send more members on Monday, and at 1600, he requested us. Terry Mitchell continued as coordinator; Tom Sakai and Bill Stratton committed to the search.

As the first CLMRG members were wrapping up their search, we headed for Bishop. We met with our folks in Bishop, and they told us they had left a stash of gear for us at Inyo's SAR hut. We arrived at the Inyo hut (base camp) at 2100. Greg Corliss and Tim Winkler summarized what had been going on, and we discussed assignments for the next day. We learned that DeVan, his wife, and his daughter had set out toward Bishop Pass on Thursday, 3 July. His plan was to spend that night alone, hike up Mt. Goode, traverse the ridge to Mt. Johnson, and then head down to meet his wife and daughter at Treasure Lakes the next day. When DeVan failed to show up at Treasure Lakes, his family reported him missing. He had signed the summit register on Goode and wrote that he would traverse the ridge to Johnson. Previous teams had searched the ridge from Johnson to Trapezoid Peak and a portion of the ridge between Goode and Trapezoid. Other teams had searched in the Saddlerock Lake area. Because these peaks are also on the NPS boundary, others had searched into the park below the ridge.

On Monday, Sakai would team with an Inyo member to complete the search on the ridge between Trapezoid and Goode looking for signs that DeVan had been in the area. Stratton and I would team with other folks to search the bowl between Trapezoid and Goode and to scan the walls and chutes with binoculars. Other teams would search below the ridge on the NPS side and check the summit registers of nearby peaks. Inyo provided lodging and told us to be back in base at 0700.

We arrived in base at 0630. The prime transport helicopter (a CH-47) had a mechanical problem, would be delayed, and eventually would cancel. All teams would now be flown to the search area by the smaller Forest Service helicopter. A CHP helicopter would perform the air search.

The first team (Sakai with Inyo) was fielded by 0930. Stratton and I (the fifth team fielded) were in the field by 1100. The helicopter landed us in the snowfield in the bowl right below the ridge. Our pick-up point would be at a lower elevation. The three teams in the bowl area split up with one team searching the "moat" at the base of the ridge, one team searching toward Trapezoid, and one team searching toward Goode. Our orders were to be thorough in scanning with binoculars, so for the next four hours, we moved to different locations and spent 30 to 45 minutes at each spot scoping the walls and chutes. At the end of the day, no team had found any additional clues.

We were out of the field by 1800. The search would continue on Tuesday with the focus around Mt. Hurd and the Treasure Lakes area. We had dinner in Bishop and got back to the Hut at 2230.

Operation 2008-11 (Incident)

Independence Peak, Inyo County

19 July 2008

This Incident occurred during the summer class overnight trip. Group members involved were Tom Sakai (Trip Leader), Bob Huey, Jeff Green, Martha Bodine, Dennis Burge, and Mike Renta.

By Tom Sakai

I was leading the class down from Independence Peak at about 1530-1600 when I stepped on a rock that turned awkwardly and threw me off balance. The next thing I remember is hitting my head very hard on a rock. When I looked down, I saw blood dripping profusely on the ground, and I realized I had a severe gash in my forehead in an arc over my right eye. TJ Dobson, one of the students, was near and came quickly to my side to start my rescue. I could hear him organizing the others.

Meanwhile, one of our newest members, Martha Bodine, started bandaging my head. When she had the bleeding on my head under control, she moved on to my right hand, which was also gashed and in need of cleaning and bandaging. After TJ, Martha, and I went through a joint assessment of the rest of my body, I sat up for a few moments. My left eye was glued shut by dried blood, and not being able to see bothered me a lot. I asked for wet gauze pads to clean off the blood and open my left eye, which made me feel a lot better. TJ's idea was to scoot me down the mountain on my butt, but I said I could probably walk down with substantial support. So he sent Jeff down to our camp at Robinson Lake to get the half 9-mm rope we had brought for climbing University the next day.

Two students, Matt and Greg, were my side supports, and Martha grabbed my belt as the belay until the rope came up. TJ was in front finding a route and talking me down step by step. We went on like this until Bob Huey and the other weekend trippers arrived with the rope. Bob took over the rescue at this point. He and I discussed how to proceed and established a plan. Jeff put me on belay with the rope. Martha stayed directly behind me holding my belt or the rope near me. I had a trekking pole in my left hand, and TJ was below and to the right to act as guide and support for my right hand. Bob and Dennis scouted out the best route down. We proceeded like this for many pitches (8? 10?) until we got to the trail below Robinson Lake.

By Bob Huey

I had joined the summer class trip to Independence and University late. Tom Sakai and I had climbed Stemwinder the day before, and rather than leave with the class at 0700, I had slept in Saturday morning. I left Ridgecrest at 1200 and was hiking from Onion Valley toward Robinson Lake by 1430. I arrived at camp around 1545 and met Mike Renta and Dennis Burge, who had stayed at camp while Tom led the class to Independence Peak (with members Martha Bodine and Jeff Green).

I was in camp about 5 minutes when Jeff Green came in and said that Tom had fallen in the scree and talus about 500 feet above camp around 1530. He reported that Tom had suffered hand and serious head injuries and that Tom was lucid when he left and had not been unconscious. Dennis, Mike, Jeff, and I gathered additional first aid gear, rope, and other supplies that might be necessary and hiked back to Tom. As we approached, we saw that Tom was mobile and that four persons were helping him move down the rocky slope. Martha and TJ had bandaged his right hand and head. Tom could see with his left eye (his right eye was swollen shut). His skin was bruised, and although he had some tenderness in the side of his neck, he had none in his spine.

I had Mike debrief TJ about Tom's fall, symptoms, and treatment. We placed Tom on belay to help him move down through the rocks. I asked class member Terry Millet to hike down to Onion Valley and ask for an ambulance to meet us at the trailhead.

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Jeff and Mike belayed Tom. Martha and TJ continued to guide him down the slope, and Dennis led a few steps ahead to show the way. I asked the other students to carry packs and gear for Tom, TJ, and Martha. I had them stay close ahead and out of the line of rockfall so that they could provide assistance or relief and food, water, and clothing as needed.

Tom was lucid during this ordeal and communicated clearly. He gave us feedback and could walk with support on the unstable surface. He reported no headache and little loss of vision. After a dozen or more pitch equivalents, we got to the trail, where Tom could walk on his own (with minor support from front and back, even on and over rocks and logs), and he reported no worsening of symptoms. I had all the students except TJ go back and collect the gear from camp. Mike led that task while TJ and I walked Tom to the trailhead. We arrived there at 1930 (4 hours after the fall). The Independence Fire Department was there with an ambulance. They took Tom to the Lone Pine Hospital for evaluation and treatment.

Although Tom had some minor discharge from his nose, laboratory tests, X-rays, and a CAT scan found no concussion or other internal injuries. A doctor stitched up his right hand after irrigating it and cleaning it up. His head wound was a 7½-inch gash from his upper-right nose to his right ear that required 125 stitches. He was released around 0300 Sunday morning. We arrived home at 0430.

Operation 2008-12 (Transit)

OES 2008LAW0320

San Luis Obispo County

27 July 2008

By Dan Bishop (Operation Leader)

I agreed to take the lead for a search in San Luis Obispo County after receiving a call from Bud Gates at 0830 on Sunday, 27 July. Carol Burge took Coordinator duties with Mary Schmierer helping with telephoning. Paul DeRuiter and Jeff Green committed to the search. The three of us met at the Hut at 1000 and departed soon after. Lance Leage (42) went missing while hiking with a friend the previous afternoon from the Cerro Alto campground near Atascadero. We were 20 miles east of Paso Robles when we received word that Leage had been found, dead, approximately 100 feet down a ravine a half-mile from the trailhead. We turned around and were back at the Hut at 1700.

Operation 2008-13 (Search)

OES 2008LAW0325

Iron Lake (Madera County)

30 July – 03 Aug 2008

By Dan Bishop, Operation Leader

We received a request from Kern County Deputy Sheriff Sgt. Baldwin on Wednesday, 30 July at 2030 for help in a search in Madera County. I agreed to lead the operation and got the pertinent information from Dave Miles, who had spoken to Sgt. Baldwin. Coordinator Mary Schmierer began the call-out. Joe Dunn and Nathan Simons committed, and we met at the Hut at 0300 the next morning.

James Arthur, a retired Air National Guard Lt. Col., had been missing since Monday, 28 July. He is a 67-year-old, 6-foot, 189-pound, white male with health concerns including diabetes (controlled by diet), high blood pressure, and dizzy spells. Arthur walks with a cane, and he could be carrying a .38-caliber handgun. His vehicle was at the start of a 4-wheel-drive road that climbs up to Iron Lake. Witnesses reported his place last seen (PLS) as being on this road a half-mile from his vehicle.

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Our team arrived at the command post (CP) at 0800. The CP was on the closest paved road to his vehicle, north of Bass Lake on Beasore Road at Cold Springs summit, but this was still 40 minutes to the vehicle on rough forest service and logging roads. Arthur's vehicle was the staging area where most of the search teams started their assignments.

After our briefing, we were assigned a search pattern south of the PLS. We started at 0930 and were above 8000 feet all day. The terrain sloped moderately with areas of significant underbrush. We swept the area for 3 hours in a line three across while keeping one another in sight. On completion, we searched an adjacent area for another 3 hours. At 1600, we started our third and final assignment of the day and ended at 1800. We saw tracks of previous searchers and trash clues with no relationship to Arthur. After de-briefing, the Madera Sheriff provided dinner and a hotel room in Oakhurst.

We were at the CP at 0655 on Friday and started our assignment at 0930. This time, we were searching the ridge above 8000 feet north and west of the PLS. A series of 150- to 200-foot cliffs bounded our area to the north. We finished at 1330 and did not take another assignment because Nathan and Joe had to return to Ridgecrest that evening. By this time, the CP was growing significantly with other teams, including Fresno's chuckwagon and OES with their command trailers and a satellite uplink dish.

On Friday, Carol Burge took over as coordinator. I had told her that a second MRG team could be used. By that afternoon, three members—Al Green, Paul DeRuiter, and Jeff Green—had committed. No leaders were available for the weekend, however, so rather than not having a team, I agreed to stay and continue with the search.

I drove with Joe and Nathan to Bakersfield, where we met the new team that had left Ridgecrest at 1745, and we shuffled gear into the Explorer. We four headed to Oakhurst while Joe and Nathan drove Al's vehicle back to Ridgecrest. Before leaving Oakhurst, I had reserved a hotel room, and our second team arrived there at 2200.

On Saturday, 2 August, we got to the CP at 0645 and were in the field at 0900. Our team of four was augmented by three from Contra Costa County. We were to sweep down a drainage downhill from Arthur's vehicle. While setting up our line, we noticed tracks that we spent some time following. We could see no distinctive cane marks.

We also heard that a boot, thought to be identical to Arthur's footwear was at the staging area. Madera deputies had found a recent receipt for a new pair of hiking boots in Arthur's vehicle and had purchased the same style and size as an example for the search effort. Al and I returned to take measurements and pictures of the boot, which was nothing like what we had been tracking. Back together and in the correct drainage, we set up a seven-across line search with the bottom of the drainage as one border and keeping visual contact with the man on both sides. We went down about 1200 vertical feet and returned uphill on the opposite side. We finished after 7½ hours and found only the tracks of previous searchers. After finishing at the CP, we drove about a mile down the road and bivied for the night at a nice flat spot 100 yards from the road.

On Sunday, 3 August, the overnight temperature was only 50 degrees. We returned to the CP at 0630. This time, our team was split up, each of us teaming with a dog team. Jeff and I had adjacent assignments, and both of us were finished in 3 hours and back at the staging area at 1200. Paul and Al had longer assignments and did not return until 1630.

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We got back to the CP at 1730, had a great meal courtesy of Fresno's chuckwagon, and then headed for Ridgecrest. We got back to the Hut at 2330.

Notes:

Madera was using Forest Service administration radio frequencies that we didn't have programmed in our radios. I had the second team bring our laptop, and Jeff was successful in reprogramming our radios to work with the search frequencies.

The Rhinos worked well helping maintain the geometry of large line searches.

PASSAGES

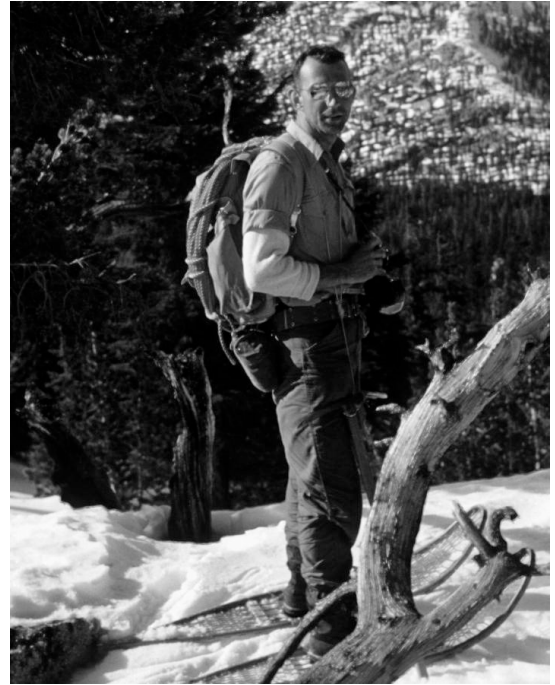
John Doane Ohl

October 2, 1931 to May 4, 2008

Beloved son, brother, uncle, friend, and hiking buddy. John was born in Dayton, Ohio and grew up all around the United States as his family moved. He graduated from high school in Dayton in 1949 and from Purdue University with a Bachelor of Science degree in mechanical engineering in 1953.

Immediately after graduating from Purdue, he started his career at China Lake, where he worked on a number of different missile programs and received a number of awards. He retired in 1986 to full-time hiking, reading, and photography. John was a friend to all animals, especially his cats.

John was a charter member of CLMRG. He joined in November of 1957 and was a very active member until 1974. He outfitted the military ambulance that was given to us for a center of communications. This vehicle had a huge array of radios to communicate with both ground teams and aircraft. John was an avid hiker and climber and especially enjoyed exploring new areas.



On Minaret Summit in 1960

*The soul's dark cottage,
batter'd and decay'd,
Lets in new light through chinks
that Time has made;
Stronger by weakness,
wiser, men become
As they draw near to
their eternal home.
Leaving the old, both worlds
at once they view,
That stand upon the threshold
of the new.*

—Edmund Waller

ADDENDA TO REPORT FOR OPERATION 2008-10 (see page 10)

By Al Green

This is from SummitPost.org (by bdidder, the man who found Ric's pack):

"I found Ric's backpack around 4:40 pm Tues afternoon below a summit southeast of Mt. Goode that many call Mt. No Goode. The pack was at the base of a steep and very loose gully that dropped directly from the summit blocks to the talus field below. Initially, I tried to climb up the gully to see if I could locate him, but poor weather and loose and falling rocks prevented me His body was located and recovered yesterday several hundred feet above where [I had found] his backpack It appears he fell from close to the summit or perhaps had tried to descend the gully and fell."

By Linda Finco

A helicopter found Mr. DeVan's body about one mile east of his last known location on 16 July, the day after a volunteer searcher from Los Angeles found his backpack near the bottom of a steep gully. The theory is that he was standing near the summit when the ground below him gave way and that he died instantly. He was hidden by the contours of the rocks, which formed ledges above and below him. Inyo SAR recovered the body. The autopsy showed he died of "multiple traumatic injuries," the Inyo County Coroner's Office said.

DONATIONS

Elaine Riendeau

CLMRG gratefully acknowledges recent gifts from the following friends:

Phyllis Simpson	2007 Fall United Way Campaign
Mario and Yolanda González	In memory of Dave Dykeman.
Saun Floyd	For rescuing her husband Aaron and friend Jon on Mt. Muir
Sidney Busch	For summer class materials
Combined Federal Campaign	In Mojave

SCREE

Local runners Erik Kajiwara and Joe Oliver moved their world famous K-O Half-marathon to Saturday, 25 October for our guests who crave some exercise before our Anniversary celebration. Call Eric at 375-1779 or Joe at 375-4108 for details.

Maturango Museum sponsors its annual Maturango Junction from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, 25 October at Ridgecrest's Olde Towne (Corner of W. Ridgecrest Blvd. and Balsam St.) Call Jan Bennett at 371-8331 or Peggy Breeden at 375-5400 for details.

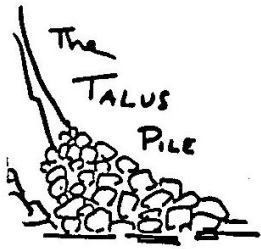
Local artists open their studios Saturday, 25 October and Sunday, 26 October for their Open Studio Tour. Purchase tickets for \$15 at Maturango Museum (Corner of N. China Lake Blvd. and Las Flores Ave.) daily from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Check our web page at www.clmrg.org.

Check the California Region's web page at www.crmra.org.

Newsletters from other MRA groups, gear catalogs, etc., are available in the Hut.

All telephone numbers in *The Talus Pile* are area code 760 unless noted otherwise.



China Lake Mountain Rescue Group
P. O. Box 2037
Ridgecrest CA 93556

Address Correction Requested

