

# Freak Mishap Kills Lone Pine Youth

by SANDY HARRISON  
SDN Staff Writer

The body of an 11-year-old Lone Pine boy was discovered in the hills west of Lone Pine Sunday afternoon by Mammoth Search and Rescue members, who were in the area on a training mission.

The youngster was identified as Brian Edward Lenses.

Circumstances surrounding his death remained sketchy, although he had apparently been in a dirt bike accident shortly before his body was found at 1:15 p.m., the California Highway Patrol said.

The CHP said the boy might have died after a rope he was wearing around his body became entangled in a sprocket on the dirt bike and tightened around his neck.

Brian was a fifth-grader in Mike Prather's class at Lo-Inyo Elemen-

tary School in Lone Pine, where he had played on the school flag football team last fall.

"He was a very cheerful boy who was quite well-liked by his classmates," said Lone Pine Superintendent Don Remley.

"He was the type of boy that made the day more interesting, who was a nice boy to have around. This is a very, very sad thing," Remley added.

The Mammoth Search and Rescue member who made the sad discovery asked that his name not be used.

"At first, all I saw was a bike on top of a kid," he said. "When I got to him I first tried to lift the bike but he was kind of attached to it. I cut the rope and removed the bike and checked for vitals but we were too late."

The rescuer said the rope was

"kind of caught up in the rear sprocket of the bike where the chain is. It was around his neck and had pulled his head tight against the sprocket.

"It looked like the rope may have been across his shoulders and he was either swinging it or it was dangling at his side when it was caught in the chain and pulled him down." There weren't really any skid marks to speak of," he said.

He said he radioed Mono County, which in turn notified the CHP and Inyo Sheriff's Department.

While authorities were still on the scene, the boy's father drove by and discovered that his son had died, the rescuer said.

"Motorcycles are complicated, dangerous instruments," the rescuer added. "I see a lot of kids riding around on them who maybe shouldn't be. If you're not super careful, things like this can happen. But you usually just expect broken bones or something. This was a real freak accident that's hard to explain. It's very unfortunate and sad."

Young Lenses was riding on a dirt road near Movie Road, outside of Lone Pine when the tragedy occurred, the CHP said.

Deputy Coroner Ted Sullivan said that while a rope "was present," it was not necessarily the cause of death. He said more might be known after an autopsy today.

## Inyo Search And Rescue Praised For Helping Climbers

Editor:

We would like to thank the Inyo Search and Rescue Team for coming to our assistance last Thursday after our accident on Pratt Crack.

Their quick response and capability to handle the situation were invaluable to us in time of need.

Our special thanks go to Brian

Norris and Bob McCoy of the Rescue Team, and to Bob West from the Union Carbide Mine. For its concern and willing support, the climbing community in this area has our sincere gratitude.

Jane Gillam,  
Roy Gillam,  
Diane Shirley,  
Dave Woody,  
Bishop

## Injured Girl Airlifted

A 13-year-old girl with a broken ankle was airlifted from Blue Lake to Northern Inyo Hospital by Forest Service helicopter Monday.

The Inyo County Sheriff's department did not have the girl's identity available. Deputies said a Forest Service Ranger with the party hiked out for help after the youngster broke her ankle.





**DUSTY LANDING**—A Huey UH1 Helicopter from Fort Irwin lands at the operations center. Two helicopters provided medical evacuation during the seminar. Part of the

247th Medevac Detachment, this helicopter has a crew of four including pilot, co-pilot, crew chief and medic.

## Teamwork saves time, lives



**AIRBORNE**—Responding to the call for an air evacuation, members of the 247th Medevac Detachment from Fort Irwin flew about six missions during the Saline Valley

Training Seminar. Medic David Williams receives instruction by radio from the pilot as he prepares for the pick up.



**PLANNING THE RESCUE**—Even after a victim has been found, careful planning is required to extract a person from a vertical mine shaft. This search and rescue team,

with the assistance of an Army helicopter crew, prepares for the next move during a mine rescue.



**SLOW PULL**—Helicopter crew and rescue team slowly pull a victim out of a mine shaft as other members keep

a close watch on the progress of the basket litter containing the victim.

According to a report written by Lucas, the Inyo County Search and Rescue Team logged about 6,800 hours in 1982 completing 30 missions that involved 63 victims, which included two fatalities.

About 40 people from three rescue teams, the forest service, the park service, Inyo Sheriff's Department, Kern County Sheriff's Department, and two helicopter crews from Fort Irwin and China Lake Naval Station participated in the day-long operation.

Jim Randall, Inyo Team Captain, said the goal of the seminar was to give team members experience with multiple team rescue operations.

"The teams we sent out, the people interacting during the training show how each work. In a real emergency they will be prepared better," he said. "Using helicopters help teams to get to know the pilots better and what they (the pilots) expect from you (the teams). We have an extremely good safety record."

Sergeant Lucas explained that all search and rescue teams were required to pass a proficiency test given by the Mountain Rescue Association, a professional organization made up of qualified teams. The Saline Valley Training Seminar, he said, was designed to give each of the teams training to meet the MRA's proficiency requirements.

He said that the search and rescue team is put into action whenever the sheriff's department receives a call that someone is lost, trapped or injured in the wilderness.

"I have the privilege of being the middle-man between the department and the rescue team, which is great," he said. "I am told what the circumstances are, and I determine what action is to be taken."

A lot of variables determine what type of operation will be initiated and how many people will be involved in the actual search and rescue, he said.

If a small child is missing for an hour, he said, everybody available will be sent out immediately to conduct a search.

An old person with a serious medical problem reported lost will receive the same response as a lost child, he said. But, if someone reports two or three people over due from a five day backpack, "we give them 24 hours to return. Nine out of 10 times they do return," he said.



**UP FROM THE BOTTOM**—Connna Peterson, a member of the China Lake Search and Rescue Team, helps pull a "victim" out of a vertical mine shaft during a simulated rescue operation. Peterson, a member of the China Lake Team for about two years, helps guide the basket litter and "victim" as other team members guided them from the bottom of the shaft.



# Mammoth Man Dies In Whitney Climb

A member of the Mammoth Lakes Search and Rescue Team, Ray Ranger, 29, was found dead Sunday on the backside of Mt. Whitney, where he had fallen while climbing last week.

Sgt. Dan Lucas, Inyo County Sheriff's Department Search and Rescue Coordinator, said it was determined Ranger had fallen about 2,000 feet after he apparently slipped last Wednesday.

Lucas said Ranger and some friends, some of whom are also on the Search and Rescue team, had spent 12 to 14 days of vacation time in the backcountry, traveling from Mammoth to Mt. Whitney. On Wednesday, the group decided to hike out, but Ranger said he wanted to stay another day and make a solo ascent of Whitney.

However, on Thursday, Ranger had not returned. Mammoth Search and Rescue team members went back to the area but couldn't locate Ranger.

Sunday morning, five members of Inyo County Search and Rescue and six members from the Mammoth

team joined with 12 people from China Lake Naval Weapons Center to search. A China Lake helicopter spotted Ranger's body at the 1,200 foot level about 10:10 a.m. inside the boundaries of Kings Canyon National Park. Two men were dropped near the body while the Park Service arranged for a California Highway Patrol helicopter to land at

the site, said Lucas.

Ranger had lived in Mammoth for approximately the last five years, and was a member of the Search team for about three years. He was rated as an "experienced mountaineer" by fellow team members. He had apparently reached the summit and was killed making his descent.

## Dive Class Slated

The dates have been finalized for this year's dive class as June 20 through June 25. This will be the ninth certified scuba class to be held in Bishop, and is once again sponsored by Fred Henke, dive team leader of the Inyo County Search and Rescue team.

Class size is limited to 16 students, and interest is usually very high, so it is very important to register early. The ocean check-out dive will be to Anacapa in the Channel Islands on July 10.

Call now for registration and details on cost and requirements for students. Contact Fred Henke at 872-1720 or reach him at 363-D Academy Avenue in Bishop.

The course will include pool, textbooks, dive equipment, boat trip, and completion of the course will result in the awarding of a NAUI certification card which is recognized throughout the world.



Darkness hampered further searching, and it was not until Saturday morning that Lucas, his K-9 patrol dog Marmer (which is a certified tracking dog), Bruce Albert of the Bureau of Land Management, and other Inyo Search and Rescue team members and Inyo deputies began following the two sets of footprints they thought belonged to the suspect and victim.

That search went over some rough terrain that wore out the searchers and eventually led Lucas to take Marmer "off duty" when the rocky ground became too painful for the dog to track over. Roadblocks by the California Highway Patrol on the west side and the Esmeralda (Nevada) County Sheriff's Department on the east side, plus a helicopter on loan from the San Bernardino Sheriff's Department and a plane piloted by local State Fire Marshal Dave Walizer, had the area sealed off, Dorsey hoped, but there was still no sign of the pair other than footprints.

By Sunday morning the group was "grabbing at straws," Lucas said.

"We started to recheck places we'd already been, but we had no idea if they were still in the area," he told the Sierra Daily News Sunday night. "Bob Valet (Inyo undersheriff) and I went back to Toll House Springs — the only water source in the area — and checked some sand traps we'd set the night before (sand spread for the purpose

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## — Kidnap

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of showing footprints). We saw one set of tracks that we thought might be his (Shepherd's). I climbed farther up the hill and located tracks we thought were hers. I called for some help, and we started working our way into some dense willow and wild rose thickets.

"Bruce Albert and I could see where someone had gone through, trampling the branches, and we followed. We got in a ways and the girl said, 'We're down here.' The guy said something like, 'Get out of here,' or words to that effect, so we backed off and surrounded the area with our special enforcement team."

What followed were two hours of negotiations, led by Alpert, in which "deals" were made for food and drinks for the pair. Shepherd discussed committing suicide, Lucas said, and asked that his mother be contacted. "There were things he wanted her to know," Lucas said. The tone of his conversation was still suicidal, Lucas said, and he told Albert if someone brought him more soft drinks he'd let the girl go.

"I went in with the drinks and asked him if I could help her out through the thicket," Lucas said. "I had told Valet before leaving that if I had a chance to jump him I would, because we figured he would kill himself after letting her go. When I crawled in and she met me, he was a short ways behind. I held out the cans and he said, 'Throw it to me.' I said, 'No, come and take them.'"

Lucas said he could see the rifle Shepherd was known to have been carrying on the ground behind him and saw no weapons on him, "so I took a flying leap and wrestled him to the ground."

In talking to Mills later, Lucas said he and the others learned some background to the story. The two knew one another, and Shepherd apparently bothered Mills for quite some time to develop the relationship into more than a friendship. He had apparently been planning this for more than a year, she told the searchers, with the two supposedly going to end up in Idaho's wilderness to live.

The plans went awry, however, when the Fresno group spotted the two. According to Lucas, Shepherd figured he would be reported to local law enforcement agencies, but thought he could still get away before deputies could find the pair.

"He thought he was far enough out in the middle of nowhere that they could camp and still get out and on their way before we showed up," Lucas said.

Through it all, Mills apparently remained calm and was instrumental in the negotiations between Shepherd and Albert. Everyone connected with the search had high praise for her.

Sgt. Michael Nicholas, who also worked on the operation and later transported Shepherd to the jail in Independence, said of Mills: "I've got all the admiration in the world for her. She held up really good."

Early reports that Mills had been raped were apparently unfounded.

"We have no information leading us to believe that a rape had been committed at this time," said Dorsey.

## Lucas: 'Glad It Turned Out Okay'

by KAREN SMITH  
SON Staff Writer

"I admit, I was real pessimistic today. I couldn't believe it when I heard her voice and knew she was alive."

Those were the words Sgt. Dan Lucas of the Inyo Sheriff's Department used to describe his feelings

Sunday night after successfully searching for Diana Mills of Garden Grove and the man who apparently abducted her, Steven Shepherd.

It was Lucas who managed to subdue Shepherd after a lengthy negotiation session in which Shepherd agreed to let Mills go.

A very tired-sounding Lucas downplayed his effort in the capture, saying he "didn't exactly remember" what he had done to jump on Shepherd and wrestle him to the ground, but finally settled on the expression "flying leap."

"I'm sure glad it's over," he said. "Sheriff Dorsey treated all of us involved in the operation to a picnic after it was wrapped up, and she (Mills) and her family came. We all got a chance to talk to the victim, which is something we don't always get to do."

"I gave her a hug and told her I was glad she was okay. She is the sweetest person you'd ever want to

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SGT. DAN LUCAS

## — Lucas

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meet." Lucas' partner Marmer, his German shepherd patrol dog, also played a key role in the search, tracking the pair for the better part of Saturday until his feet gave out.

"The rocks are small up there and like razor blades, which was tough on his feet," Lucas said. "Poor

Marmer, he was shot after all that tracking Saturday. He wouldn't even come out of his doghouse this morning (Sunday)."

The dog made a speedy recovery, however, and was "running around and in a good mood" when his handler, came home Sunday night after the successful conclusion to the mission.



# Woman Kidnaped, Held 4 Days Is Rescued

By JOSH GETLIN and ISABEL WILKERSON, Times Staff Writers

A 23-year-old Irvine man, whose obsessive infatuation allegedly drove him to kidnap a woman he had unsuccessfully courted for 18 months, was captured Sunday in a remote eastern Sierra Nevada forest by deputies, who had tracked the pair through rugged terrain for two days, officials said. The woman was unharmed.

Stephen Bruce Shepherd was wrestled to the ground by deputies in a forest near Bishop as he reached for two cans of soda pop offered in return for his hostage, 26-year-old Diana Mills of Garden Grove, said Inyo County Sgt. M. P. Nicholas. Shepherd was armed with two rifles at the time of his arrest.

He was booked at the Inyo County Jail in Bishop for investigation of kidnaping. Mills suffered only minor scratches and bruises in the four-day ordeal, officials said. When she was freed, Mills was wearing camouflage clothing that Shepherd had forced her to put on, deputies said.

According to officials and relatives of Mills, the kidnaping was the culmination of a strange, 18-month pursuit by Shepherd of Mills, who had met the man while working in his mother's Costa Mesa furniture shop. Mills' relatives said Shepherd had mistaken her attempts to teach him about the Bible for romantic overtures. They said she repeatedly turned down his requests for dates, prompting him on several occasions to follow her and once detain her for hours in her car.

However, after his arrest, Shepherd's grandmother and sister said that while the young man was obsessively "in love" with Mills, she had given him reason to believe that the feeling was mutual.

Mills became fearful of Shepherd's advances and several times went to police and the Orange County district attorney seeking help, her relatives said. Mills was told, however, that she would have to obtain a restraining order that would cost \$300 in legal fees, they said.

On Thursday night, according to officials, her fears were realized. Mills was abducted as she prepared to park her car near her grandmother's home. Officials said Shepherd had broken into a neighbor's garage and was waiting for Mills when she arrived at 10 p.m.

Shepherd threw her over his shoulder "like a sack of potatoes," said her grandmother, Grace Neff, tossed her in his newly purchased pickup and sped away.

"Call the police, it's Steve," Mills screamed, according to Neff.

However, neighbors, believing it was only a lovers' spat, did not summon help, relatives said.

Hours after the kidnaping, witnesses spotted Shepherd's truck heading toward the Sierra Nevada. Inyo County deputies said they were called into the case and began an intensive search Friday night, after geology students from the University of California, Berkeley, spotted Shepherd forcing Mills into his truck in a forest 30 miles southeast of Bishop.



Diana Mills; a four-day ordeal finally ends.

Nicholas said deputies staked out Shepherd's truck, but he spotted them and fled into the woods with Mills.

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## KIDNAPED: Woman Rescued

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On Saturday, more than 20 deputies, aided by helicopters, combed the forest. Nicholas said officers followed a trail of footprints and other wilderness signs left by Mills and Shepherd.

Hours after she was freed, Mills was reunited with her parents at a relative's home in Bishop.

As Shepherd was led away, he seemed "extremely shaky . . . very troubled," Nicholas said. Orange County authorities were scheduled to arrive in Bishop today to bring Shepherd back to face charges.

Shepherd had met Mills 18 months ago when he was her supervisor at his mother's Costa Mesa

shop.

Shepherd could not understand why Mills, described by her grandmother as "a good Christian girl," resisted his advances, Neff said.

"The idea of a boyfriend didn't sway her," she said Sunday. "She was career-minded."

His relatives told a different version.

"He was only trying to explain how he loved her, and she took it the wrong way," said Kristin Miner, 19, his sister. "It was never a physical thing. . . ."

"All along, I knew he wouldn't hurt her. He would hurt himself before he hurt her. He's that much in love with her."



# Kidnap Suspect Hangs Himself

by SANDY HARRISON  
SDN Staff Writer

Steven Bruce Shepherd, the 23-year-old kidnap suspect who told authorities after his arrest Sunday that he wanted to kill himself, did so Monday afternoon, apparently hanging himself in his jail cell with a mattress cover.

It was a tragic ending to what had been a seemingly perfect operation by the Inyo County Sheriff's Department, which had rescued victim Diana Mills unharmed.

Shepherd, a computer programmer in Costa Mesa, was found dead in his cell at 2:40 p.m., the Sheriff's Department said.

Despite the fact that several Sheriff's Department spokesmen said Sunday that Shepherd had men-

tioned suicide, County Mental Health Director Leo Pisculli said Monday afternoon that his department was never asked to talk to the prisoner.

"We were never called in on this," Pisculli said. Would he expect to be called on a case such as Shepherd's? "Oh, yeah, it's pretty normal," he answered.

"If they have the least bit of concern for a prisoner, they'll usually call us to the jail, or bring him to the hospital. If it's a felony case they post a deputy at the door, but they usually call us," Dr. Pisculli said.

Tim Needham was the county's psychologist on duty over the weekend, and said he hadn't heard from the Sheriff's Department.

"If he was just depressed over the

kidnapping or losing the girl, then probably not, we wouldn't expect to be called. But if he'd ever mentioned suicide, or if there were any psychiatric evidence to indicate it, then we should have been called," Needham said.

The Sierra Daily News tried several times to reach Sheriff Don Dorsey Monday night, but he was not available for comment after Shepherd's death was discovered.

But on Sunday, after the arrest, Dorsey told the Sierra Daily News: "He was distraught. He made threats of taking his own life. He wanted to establish contact with his mom, and told her goodbye."

And Sgt. Dan Lucas, who had apprehended Shepherd, commented after the arrest: "He had said

before he was thinking about suicide; not harming the girl but himself. He said there were things he wanted her (his mother) to know. Those things were in the same tone; like he would never see her again."

Lucas said he jumped Shepherd at the first opportunity "because we figured he would kill himself after letting her go."

Deputy Leon Boyer worked the 4 p.m. to midnight shift at the jail Sunday. "On my shift he was quiet. He was despondent, but the way everybody is when they come to jail." Did he mention suicide, or appear suicidal, while in jail? "No," Boyer answered.

"We were told to check him at least every half hour," Boyer said. "When I was on I checked more, like

every 15 minutes." He was quiet. He slept most of the time.

Two Garden Grove Police officers were in Independence Monday afternoon to bring Shepherd back to Orange County to face charges, but they never got the chance.

Deputy Coroner Dwight Van De Walker said he pronounced Shepherd dead at the scene and that the next of kin had been notified. An autopsy is planned today, he said.

Relatives told deputies that Shepherd had fallen in love with Mills, a 26-year-old student at Orange Coast College, and had become despondent after she repeatedly rejected his requests to date her. The two met when Mills went to work at Shepherd's mother's furniture store.

He allegedly kidnaped Mills from her Garden Grove home Thursday night and drove to Inyo County, where a group of Fresno State University geology students spotted Shepherd carrying a screaming woman from a truck into a rugged area near Westgard Pass.

After three days of searching, deputies tracked footprints to a willow thicket near Toll House Springs, where Shepherd was arrested.

Mills had declined to comment on her ordeal Sunday, and could not be reached following Shepherd's death Monday.

The Sheriff's Department, District Attorney, and Coroner will conduct an investigation of the death; according to a Sheriff's Department press release.

## Uproar Continues Over Shepherd, Inyo Jail Facility

by CHRIS CAVANAUGH  
SDN Staff Writer

Controversy over the Monday suicide of kidnap suspect Steven Shepherd continued Thursday as an

official with the California Board of Corrections was quoted by the Associated Press as stating a majority of deputies working at the Inyo County Jail failed to meet state training rules for handling mentally troubled prisoners.

William French, assistant field representatives for the California Board of Corrections jail evaluation division said records indicated that five of nine deputies who work in the jail did not have the required 40-hour training course when an inspection was made last October, according to the AP story.

Sheriff Don Dorsey, meanwhile, said "to the best of my knowledge, they have been trained or scheduled to be trained."

French, in a telephone interview with the Sierra Daily News Thursday afternoon elaborated on his comments.

"Normally departments have six months to complete this training," he said. "There was no indication why they had not gotten the training done."

French said he had followed up the inspection with a letter in March, which noted the deficiencies. In the first part of June, he said, he talked to Undersheriff Bob Vaulet.

"The Undersheriff indicated the training had been done," said French. "I'm awaiting written confirmation."

However, Vaulet, reached Thursday evening, said of French's comments: "That's almost true, but not quite. I don't know if that story's correct. I told him we'd conform with the requirements. I didn't say we were in compliance."

Asked if the training was scheduled, Vaulet replied, "No, it's not scheduled." Asked if the training was planned for the future, he said, "certainly we're planning on it."

He was also asked if the AP story was correct in its reference to five out of nine deputies failing to meet requirements.

"I really don't know," he said.

Dorsey again stated that Shepherd was "screened like every other person. I have no problems with it (the screening.) It was an unfortunate accident, a sad thing that happened. But procedures were followed and the investigation is underway."

As for Southern California news coverage of the incident, Dorsey said "It's been unreal. I think they've gone way overboard."

Shepherd was arrested Sunday in the Westgard Pass area above Big Pine in connection with the kidnap of Diana Mills of Garden Grove, who had rejected his romantic overtures for a number of months. Deputies found he had hung himself with a twisted mattress cover in his cell Monday afternoon.



# Let Probe Answer Questions —Dorsey

by SANDY HARRISON  
SDN Staff Writer

Inyo County Sheriff Don Dorsey said Tuesday he'd let a cooperative investigation among several County agencies answer questions about what happened Monday at the County jail in Independence.

Kidnap suspect Steven Shepherd, who had told authorities he wanted to take his life, hung himself with a mattress cover while in custody. That had led to questions from Mental Health Director Leo Pisculli, who wondered why his department wasn't called on the case.

"It's an unfortunate thing that Dr. Pisculli felt it necessary to make comments like that before he knew what was going on," Dorsey said Tuesday.

Pisculli made his comments after being asked by the Sierra Daily News what role the Mental Health Department had taken in the case. "We were never called in on this," he answered, adding that normally, potentially suicidal prisoners are hospitalized.

"The fact is that the suspect was screened by the Health Department, and questions were asked," Dorsey said. "What happened and the results of that, will all come out in the investigation. What was done, and why it was done, will all come out just as soon as all the facts are known," he said.

Dorsey said a jail nurse from the

Health Department had talked to Shepherd shortly after he was brought to the jail on Sunday.

Who was the nurse and what was said? "I don't know," said County Health Officer Dr. George Kibler. "But I intend to find out. We're still trying to get the story."

An autopsy on Shepherd was completed Tuesday night, Deputy Coroner Dwight Van De Walker said, and it confirmed that the death was caused by hanging.

"There were no extenuating circumstances found to indicate any abuse or anything of that nature," Van De Walker said. "The death was entirely self-inflicted."

He added that Shepherd was found "within minutes" of his death, which apparently came quickly.

"With that type of death, the victim becomes unconscious within 20 seconds and is dead within a minute and a half," Van De Walker said.

The deputy coroner said the autopsy concludes his office's role in the investigation.

Deputy District Attorney Phil McDowell said his office would also investigate Shepherd's death. "That's normal to have us involved, mainly to have an independent agency investigating it," he said.

"There's usually less tendency to point fingers when an agency not involved with the incident investigates," McDowell said.

"Basically, we'll be trying to learn

the facts of the case, to determine what happened."

Diana Mills, the 26-year-old Garden Grove woman who endured a three-day ordeal in the White Mountains after being abducted by Shepherd, told the Sierra Daily News Tuesday she would not comment further on the case.

"I have been informed of the occurrence of the past day," she said. "But I've already given all the press coverage I can and I really think it's been enough," she said politely when contacted at her home by telephone.

But she did talk to A.P. earlier, and said that while she worked with Shepherd, he told her repeatedly about coming from a broken home and his love for her while he taught her computer programming.

"I was a sympathetic listener. Obviously, more of a listener than I should have been," Mills said.

Of the kidnapping, she said, "He thought of himself as the old pioneer—steal yourself a wife and in time she will learn to love you."

She said that only minutes before Inyo County Sheriff's deputies discovered the couple Sunday, he had begun to disrobe her.

"He unbuttoned my top and pants and started to paw me," she recalled.

Shepherd's family was saying Tuesday that they were concerned about a possible suicide before it happened.

His stepsister, Kristin Miner, told Associated Press that their mother, Sherri Miner, was visiting Shepherd just two hours before his death and was concerned about his mental state.

"You're going to watch him really close, right?" the mother said to guards as she left, Shepherd's step-

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## —Suicide

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sister said. She said Shepherd had told his mother that he wanted to kill himself because of the publicity that would result from the kidnapping and because he now accepted that he could never make Mills love him.

"He hung himself because he didn't want everyone to read in the papers about another Christian. He didn't want it to be like another Christian went flipflo," the stepsister said.

She added, "his whole thing was that God sent this girl to him. He didn't want to put God on trial."

Miner said Shepherd had been "obsessed" since he met Mills 18 months ago when she was hired at his mother's Costa Mesa furniture and interior decorating business.

She said Shepherd probably "just wanted to explain how much he was

in love with her. He thought possibly she could grow to love him in the mountains, where she could be his provider."

Shepherd's death was the topic of Ron Hendren's commentary on KNBC-TV in Los Angeles Tuesday night. "If a person is hell-bent on killing himself there may be nothing we can do about it," Hendren said.

"But I don't think that was the case with Steven Shepherd. He cried out for help for a long time, but it just didn't come," Hendren said, saying that Mills and Sheriff's deputies both received ample warning that Shepherd was suicidal.

"I'm not criticizing the Inyo County Sheriff's Department," he continued. "Steven Shepherd is only one among many nameless, faceless victims sending out audible and visible warning signals, which we are repeatedly ignoring," Hendren concluded.



## Shepherd Checked 'Frequently'

# Kibler Agrees With Jail Nurse

by CHRIS CAVANAUGH  
SDN Staff Writer

Funeral services for alleged kidnaper Steven Shepherd are being handled by a Newport Beach mortuary, according to the Inyo coroner's office.

Meanwhile, an interdepartmental investigation into the death of the 23-year old man continues, as well as Southern California news coverage of the incident.

The Associated Press quoted Inyo County Health Officer Dr. George Kibler Wednesday as saying that the County's "four to five" psychiatric social workers "were busy" and did not get to Shepherd "in time" for a

psychiatric evaluation. An evaluation wouldn't necessarily have prevented the suicide, Kibler said, according to AP.

Kibler told the Sierra Daily News that what he meant by "in time" was that a psychiatric evaluation was not set for Shepherd until Monday evening. He said the AP report was an "interpretation of a bunch of things I said."

He added that had psychiatric workers evaluated Shepherd "their recommendations (for jail care) would have been no different from the Public Health Nurse's (those who examined Shepherd after his arrival at the jail) or what I would

have recommended."

He also said that he knew Shepherd had been checked more frequently during the night, when he appeared more "unstable" but less frequently in the daytime, when he was "less agitated" he said.

"I do know he was checked more frequently than required," Kibler said. "The Deputies on their own checked much more frequently."

Kibler was critical of the out-of-the-area media "for making a big thing out of nothing," regarding the scheduling of the psychiatric evaluation.

The coroner's office said after an autopsy Tuesday that Shepherd's death appeared entirely self-inflicted, and that he had not been abused in any way.

He was found dead from hanging Monday, a day after his arrest in the White Mountains. Sheriff's deputies tracked down Shepherd in a remote area and made the arrest while rescuing victim Diana Mills unharmed.

## Deputies cleared in county jail suicide

An investigation into the death of kidnap suspect Steven Shepard while in a cell in the Inyo County Jail showed that "Shepard received proper and routine medical screening by qualified medical staff and that jail procedures were followed by deputies on duty at the time of the incident," according to Inyo Sheriff Don Dorsey.

Dorsey, in the investigation report issued late last week, also said the "deputies were in compliance with Board of Corrections requirements for jail training."

Shepard, who was a 23-year-old man from Irvine, was the subject of a three-day manhunt in the White Mountains near Westgard Pass in mid-June after he allegedly kidnapped a Garden Grove woman, who survived the incident unharmed.

A day after Shepard was booked into the Inyo County Jail he was found dead in his cell.

"The investigation showed that Shepard took his own life by hanging himself with a portion of a mattress cover while in his jail cell," Dorsey said. "Although checks were made on Shepard, the autopsy showed Shepard's death could have occurred within a minute and a half," the sheriff stated.

The investigation was conducted by the Sheriff's department, the county coroner's office. "No further investigation into this matter is anticipated," said Dorsey.

Dorsey said Shepard's parents had not filed any complaints in the incident, and that no outside agency had been called into the investigation.

# Jail Probe Finds No Fault

by CHRIS CAVANAUGH  
SDN Staff Writer

Inyo County Sheriff Don Dorsey said Thursday an investigation into the jail suicide of kidnap suspect Steven Shepherd had concluded and

that the investigation showed that Shepherd "received proper and routine medical screening by qualified medical staff and that jail procedures were followed."

According to a press release is-

sued by the Sheriff's Department, the investigation revealed that while checks were made on Shepherd, the autopsy showed his death could have occurred within a minute-and-a-half. Shepard hung himself in a cell with a portion of a mattress cover June 13.

The press release concluded that in addition to proper procedures being followed, the Deputies on duty at the time of the incident "were in compliance with Board of Corrections requirements for jail training."

The Sheriff's Department anticipates no further investigation into the incident, the press release said.

Meanwhile, a separate investigation by Investigator Glenn Brewer of the District Attorney's office, who is working for the County Counsel in this matter, is continuing. Following the announcement by Dorsey Thursday, Brewer told the Sierra Daily News, "I have nothing that dis-

agrees with that."

Brewer wouldn't comment further, stating, "all my staff goes directly to the County Counsel."

Deputy County Counsel Alicia Jones confirmed that the County Counsel's office has not completed its investigation and said that there would be no announcement of the completion, noting that the County Counsel's office and the Sheriff's Department "are taking two different stances."

The County Counsel's office is just there in a defensive mode," she said. "We're preparing material for the County in case anything happens."

That means that the County Counsel's office will compile the exact details of the incident and keep it on file if there is any sort of legal action filed, Jones indicated.

"We've got to preserve the facts," she concluded. "It's a protective measure."



## Glider Pilot's 'Miracle'

A 30-year-old hang glider pilot from Switzerland miraculously received only minor injuries Tuesday evening after losing control of his hang glider near Laws and plummeting 44,000 feet.

According to Sgt. Dan Lucas of the Inyo County Sheriff's Department, Sergio Magistri spinning upside down after he apparently hit a thermal. He was unable to pull out of the spin and lapsed into unconsciousness, said Lucas.

Magistri hit a side of the hill and bounced several feet with the craft still attached to his body before coming to rest. He then regained consciousness and found he had only minor scratches, 3 face cuts and a bruised leg.

Lucas said when he and five members of the Inyo County Search and Rescue team arrived, Magistri and friends were already hiking back to the main road. Magistri refused medical treatment, added Lucas.

Magistri's dramatic descent was first sighted by another pilot who radioed the hang gliding center at the Bishop Airport.

—David Gaines

## Southland pilot killed in hang glider crash

An Orange County hang glider pilot, reported missing on Friday while participating in a hang gliding contest in Bishop was found dead Saturday night about two miles southeast of 14,246 foot White Mountain. He was apparently the victim of a crash.

Neil Hocknell, 42, had been participating in a contest being sponsored by the Bishop Hang Gliding Center, when, according to Tom Kreyche, one of the owners of the center, he may have run into strong winds while trying to land and was forced down in the rugged terrain. Kreyche speculated that winds may have been 30 or 40 miles per hour that day.

Once Hocknell was discovered missing, Kreyche said, the Mono County Sheriff's Department and the Bishop Civil Air Patrol were called to conduct a search of the contest area which extended as far as Benton.

After an initial attempt to remove the body on Saturday night, sheriff's deputies, using a forest service helicopter retrieved Hocknell's body early Sunday morning.

He said that other hang glider pilots had conducted an unsuccessful search when, on Saturday, Dan Partridge, a co-owner of the center, flew search of the suspected crash area and finally discovered the wreckage of Hocknell's smashed hang glider on the lofty slopes of White Mountain.

# SDN's Dan Mankin Missing On River

by SANDY HARRISON  
SDN Staff Writer

Dan Mankin, the Sierra Daily News Mono County correspondent for the past year, was presumed dead Sunday night after falling from an inflatable mattress on the Owens River near Warm Springs Friday afternoon. He was 30.

After three days, Inyo Search and Rescue coordinator Dan Lucas reluctantly called off the underwater search for Mankin late Sunday. However, Lucas indicated a limited shoreline search would continue.

"It's a hard thing to do," said the sad, weary Lucas. "You give it everything, and it's tough when you have to give up."

Mankin, who was "floating the

river" for the first time, was riding on a small air mattress which developed a leak and lost its air, Lucas said. His companion, a friend from Southern California, told authorities the mattress flipped when it struck a logjam which had formed where a tree had fallen across the river.

"He hit it in the middle where the water was flowing very swiftly underneath," Lucas said. "It swept him under and he just never came up."

Lucas said Mankin probably drowned almost immediately, adding that his body may have become dislodged later. "We tore that area completely apart. We checked everything over and over. But we couldn't find him," Lucas said.



DAN MANKIN

He added that rescuers and divers from Inyo and Mammoth and June

continued on page 3

Lake Search and Rescue teams combed the entire river from the spot where Mankin fell, about a mile north of Warm Springs, to just north of Tinnemaha Reservoir — a linear distance of about 15 miles, but an actual length of many times that because of the continuous curves in the river.

Lucas believes the body is still hidden in that area. "There is no visibility whatsoever underneath the water," he said. "You go in and just grasp around. That's what we were doing, really, just grasping at a one-in-a-million chance."

The shore along the entire length of that area was also searched thoroughly but with no success, Lucas said.

"The river is the highest I've ever seen it, and it's definitely not safe," Lucas said. "I've never seen it like this, and I've lived here all my life. The river is real turbulent. There are currents everywhere, in every direction, on the surface and underneath."

Estimates placed the river at about four feet higher than normal.

Even the expert divers on the search teams were having problems, Lucas said. "We had some fairly close calls. One of the divers got caught in a current and had to hit his inflatable vest to get up."

Searchers said about 50 people floated past the divers over the weekend on various devices, and pointed out that any of them could easily have gotten into trouble.

Three people fell from a canoe, in fact, when it hit a snag in the river. The divers who were there looking for Mankin, however, helped them safely from the water. There were 26 searchers involved at the peak of the effort Saturday.

Meanwhile, the Sierra Daily News office in Bishop, normally empty on Saturday, was filled with saddened employees huddled around a police scanner, hoping for miraculous news that their friend might somehow be found alive. It never came.

The full staff was at work Sunday, preparing today's edition despite the lingering shock and grief which filled the office.

"We at SDN are all deeply touched by the events of Friday," said publisher Bob Wellman. "Our thoughts and prayers are with Dan's wife, young daughter and his relatives. They are obviously going through a very difficult time."

"We are grateful to the rescuers and divers, who put themselves in dangerous positions in the very treacherous water," Wellman added. "Those men are heroes."

"Somehow it all seems so unfair. Dan was a young man who loved life, adored his wife, idolized his young daughter, and was finally finding time to enjoy the wonders of this beautiful area," Wellman said.

"As a reporter, he was fair and honest and was dedicated to presenting news in Mono County with the highest integrity."

"Really, I don't know anyone who could ever say anything bad about Dan Mankin," Wellman concluded.

Mankin, whose prematurely gray hair atop his tall, lanky frame made him look older than his 30 years, was a gentle, soft-spoken native of the Pasadena area. He was an accomplished poet whose work was scheduled to be published in the next issue of Sierra Life Magazine.

## River Search Unsuccessful

A scaled-down search for missing news reporter Dan Mankin proved unproductive Monday, Inyo Search and Rescue Coordinator Dan Lucas said.

Lucas and Dave Walizer of the Civil Air Patrol flew over the Owens River area between Warm Springs Road and Tinnemaha Reservoir Monday morning, and then Lucas and Bud Clayton of the Search and Rescue Department hiked the length of the river in the afternoon.

Neither search produced any sign of Mankin, who was last seen Friday afternoon when he fell from the small air mattress he was riding and disappeared into the river, apparently drowning. An intensive three-day search of the river which included dive teams failed to find Mankin over the weekend.

No further search of the river is immediately planned, Lucas said, although authorities will begin checking the reservoir later this week.

Mankin, 30, had been in charge of the Sierra Daily News' Mono County bureau for the past year. Plans are currently underway to establish a memorial fund in Mankin's name to assist his wife and children.

He graduated from Los Angeles City College, where he was editor of the campus newspaper, and interned at the Los Angeles Herald Examiner.

Mankin was hired to run SDN's Mono County bureau on June 6, 1982. His last stories, in Friday's paper, covered a hearing on affordable housing in Mammoth, and the Mono Sheriff's deputies' labor contract negotiations.

His wife Betty, who is three months pregnant with their second child, and his 14-month-old daughter Natasha reside in Mammoth, his sister Jenny Roberts lives in Bishop, and his parents reside in Pasadena.



## Memorial services set tonight for Dan Mankin

The family of Dan Mankin has announced a brief outdoor memorial service will be held tonight at 5 at Bulpitt Park west of Bishop on Highway 168.

Mankin, 30, apparently died Friday afternoon in a rafting accident on the Owens River. His body had not been recovered as of Wednesday. He had been the Sierra Daily News Mono County bureau chief the past year.

"All friends, colleagues and acquaintances of Dan are invited" to the memorial, the family said. The Rev. Ron Roberts of the First United Methodist Church will officiate.

In lieu of flowers the family requests that donations be made to the Natasha Mankin trust fund in Dan Mankin's memory. Donations can be sent to Security Pacific National Bank, Box 1177, Bishop, Ca., 93514, in care of Alice Stever.

Mankin was last seen Friday afternoon riding a plastic raft on the Owens River near Warm Springs. The raft apparently deflated and Mankin slipped into the river and drowned, said Inyo Sheriff's Sergeant Dan Lucas.

A three-day search for the body proved unsuccessful. Investigators planned no further search of the river this week, but said they would check Tinemaha Reservoir later in the week.

Mankin is survived by his wife Betty, who is three months pregnant, and a 14-month-old daughter Natasha. The family lives in Mammoth. He also is survived by a sister, Jenny Roberts, who lives in Bishop.

## Mankin Fund C/O SDN

The Sierra Daily News is accepting contributions to the Natasha Mankin trust fund, in memory of reporter Dan Mankin, who died in a river rafting accident last Friday.

Contributions should be sent to the Natasha Mankin Trust fund, Sierra Daily News, Box 1783, Bishop 93514. The account is open at Security Pacific Bank in Bishop.

A brief outdoor memorial service has been scheduled for Mankin today at 5 p.m. at Bulpitt Park.

## Supervisors' Tribute

# Mankin Services Set; Memorial Fund Open

While the family of Sierra Daily News reporter Dan Mankin announced a brief outdoor memorial service to be held Thursday, people in Mono County government Tuesday paid tribute to the man who had reported their actions for the past year.

"Dan was very diligent in his duties reporting Board business," said Mono's Third District Supervisor Paul Johnson. "He always reported County affairs as fairly as possible, and we appreciate that. He will definitely be missed around here."

His colleagues on the Board and throughout the courthouse in Bridgeport agreed, and several made immediate donations to a trust fund established for Mankin's one-year-old daughter.

The memorial service for Mankin

is scheduled for Thursday, June 23, at 5 p.m. at Bulpitt Park, on Highway 168 west of Bishop.

All friends, colleagues and acquaintances of Dan are invited. The Rev. Ron Roberts of the First United Methodist Church will officiate.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to the Natasha Mankin trust fund in Dan's memory. Send donations to Security Pacific National Bank, Box 1177, Bishop, CA 93514.

Mankin, 30, died Friday afternoon in a rafting accident on the Owens River. After a thorough three-day search of the river and surrounding areas and a scaled-down operation Monday, authorities reluctantly called the search off.

The Tinemaha Reservoir will be searched later this week, however.

## Mankin's Body Found

The body of Dan Mankin was found Sunday in the Owens River, nine days after the 30-year-old reporter for the Sierra Daily News died after falling from a raft.

Mankin's body was discovered by a group of people floating by on inner tubes, about 1.1 miles south of Warm Springs Road.

That's just over two linear miles from the spot where Mankin fell June 17, but his body had actually traveled several times that distance along the river's winding course. It

had apparently become entangled in a subsurface logjam at that point, authorities said.

Mankin vanished under the water after his small air mattress struck a logjam and tipped over. Divers scoured the murky river for three days without success before the search was called off.

Contributions to the Natasha Mankin trust fund, established for his baby daughter, are being accepted at the Sierra Daily News office, Box 1783, Bishop, 93514.

## Reporter Remembers Mankin

Editor:

Dan Mankin's untimely death is a great personal tragedy for his family and friends. And it also is a loss for those concerned with the quality of life in Mono County.

As the only daily newspaper reporter based in the area, Dan Mankin was in many respects the eyes and ears of Mono County. His prolific and well-written reports provided citizens with the essential information that is so basic to orderly life in our society. He went about his duties with diligence, good humor and a devotion to fairness that is too often lacking in smaller

newspapers.

I first met Dan a year ago while covering science issues in the Mammoth Lakes area. I was immediately impressed with his knowledge and ability. But most impressive was his commitment to informing the public — giving people the basic information from which intelligent conclusions can be drawn.

That's the finest legacy any reporter can leave for those who come after him.

Stephen Green,  
Staff Writer,  
Sacramento Bee

## Mankin's body recovered

The body of Dan Mankin was found in the Owens River a mile south of Warm Springs Road Sunday by a group of people floating in the river on inner tubes.

Mankin, who was 30, drowned June 17 after his plastic raft deflated. Searchers had been unable to recover his body. Mankin was the Mono County bureau chief for the Sierra Daily News.

A memorial service for Mankin was held last Thursday in Bishop. No additional services are planned.

Contributions to the Natasha Mankin trust fund, set up for Mankin's 14-month-old daughter, are being accepted at the Sierra Daily News office, or they can be sent to Security Pacific Bank in Bishop.



# A Death In The Family

by SANDY HARRISON  
SDN Staff Writer

I chose this line of work, and most of the time, I truly love it. There's really nothing I'd rather be doing than tracking down and writing news here in the Eastern Sierra.

That's most of the time, but not every minute.

"Wasn't it hard to write that?" I was asked over and over, after I wrote about my friend Dan Mankin's death last week.

In one sense, no. I knew what had to be said, and the words came quickly. The whole thing was banged out in about 20 minutes—but they were 20 of the worst minutes of my life.

I'd been around death before, and even written about the deaths of people I'd known and liked—Don Swenson, Norm Paulson, Chuck Murdock, and Faye Clearwater come to mind.

This time, though, something snapped inside. As I referred to my friend as a "body" stuck somewhere in the river, the emotions turned to a crippling physical pain. I couldn't talk, or move, or even answer the phone. My heart and lungs pounded as if they would crash through my ribs; and my throat felt about to crumble from dryness.

It was at that moment, I guess, as the words appeared on the paper in the typewriter, that what happened really hit me. Dan was gone—I'd never see him again. For two days it had been a crisis that demanded calm, responsible thought and action. But now, it was a hideous tragedy—a kind young man snatched away from his picturebook family and his friends, and deprived of another 40 or 50 years of life.

In this line of work, we depend upon each other constantly, and if we don't all do our jobs, the paper never reaches your porch. When you work long hours with people day in and day out under those conditions, those people become your family.

They're the ones you fight with, argue with, irritate, annoy, get sick of, enjoy, respect and ultimately, love.

So when we lost Dan, it was in a very real sense a death in the family; a moment so painful you wonder, for an instant, if there's anything in life that makes going through this worth it.

Of course there is. I've never experienced anything, for example, like what happened here last Sunday in any workplace. The remarkable people who put out this newspaper, all of them overworked already, somehow reached back for more. Everyone hurting badly, yet each supporting the others emotionally, and getting their work, and more, done.

And the list goes on—the heroic ef-

forts of the divers and searchers, going into the deadly waters to help someone they didn't know.

And the special combination of tenderness, perseverance, and bravery that is Sgt. Dan Lucas, as good a cop—and man—as you'll find anywhere. After three frustrating days of searching, Lucas, exhausted and himself near tears, told us there was no realistic hope of finding Dan alive; for the safety of everyone he was calling off the search. Then he searched another day on his own anyway.

Finally, Dan Mankin's brave family. I met his mother for the first time last week, a lovely person who, having just lost her son, took the time to come to the office to talk to me and thank me for being Dan's friend. She was cheering ME up!

That moment of grace and courage will stay with me forever, Mrs. Mankin. No wonder Dan was such a nice guy.

The whole bittersweet experience reminded me of an exchange between John Adams and Thomas Jefferson in 1825, when both ex-presidents were in their 80's, a remarkable age for the era.

Adams, having suffered through the deaths of his parents, wife, children, and friends, wrote to Jefferson that he wanted no more of this life's sorrow; that in fact if he could have chosen, he would not have lived at all. His grief, he wrote, left him wanting only to die and meet his God quickly.

Jefferson, who had none of Adams' deep religious faith, felt differently. He, too, had lived so long that his parents, wife, and children were dead. Yet Jefferson wanted to start over and live the whole thing again.

"And why not?" he wrote Adams. "I have enjoyed a greater share of health than falls to the lot of most men; my spirits have never failed me except under those paroxysms of grief which you, as well as myself, have experienced in every form. But with good health and good spirits the pleasures surely outweigh the pains of life. Why not taste them again, fat and lean together? Were I indeed permitted, the balance would much be in favor of treading the ground over again."

The events of the past week convinced me that Jefferson was the wiser man. Surely, we've all had more grief in our lives than we would have chosen. But is that a reason to miss out on the good things—the Mrs. Mankins, the Dan Lucases, my SDN colleagues, and Dan Mankin himself?

It's been a difficult time. But it has left no doubt that "treading the ground over again" would be the right thing to do.

## More Water Makes River Unsafe

Prompted by the Department of Water and Power's plan to release more water from its facilities into the Owens River this week, Inyo County Sheriff Don Dorsey is advising would-be swimmers and rafters to stay out of the river until further notice.

"We're issuing a warning to the public — do not use the river for any kind of recreation," Dorsey said Friday afternoon.

Over the weekend, the river's flow was expected to increase from 500 cubic feet per second to 750 cfs, according to Dorsey's information from the DWP. By midweek; however, that flow could be as great as 1,100 cfs, added Dorsey.

DWP is releasing water from Crowley Lake, Pleasant Valley Reservoir and facilities above Big Pine due to the increasing pressure from melting snowpack.

## Climber Dies In Fall

A hiking vacation ended tragically for a 56-year-old North Hollywood man, when he slipped on an ice field at the 12,000-foot level of Mt. Johnson, above Treasure Lakes in the Bishop Creek canyon, and fell 300 feet to his death Sunday morning.

County Coroner Leon Brune confirmed Sunday night that Robert McClure died from multiple traumatic injuries suffered during the fall.

Bob McCoy of the Inyo Search and Rescue team said McClure's body showed signs of "massive injuries" and said he apparently died "well before his body came to rest."

McCoy said the body was removed from a crevasse where it had become lodged after the fall by a

line attached to a rescue helicopter. "We landed at the base of the snow field and it took us 15 to 20 minutes to hike up the slope to his position. We were able to hook the body onto a long line, and lift it onto the helicopter."

McClure, one of 11 people on a Sierra Club outing, lost his footing at about 8:30 a.m., and was unable to stop his fall on the slick ice. There were EMTs on the scene who confirmed that he died instantly.

McCoy said rescuers reached the scene at about 4:30 p.m., and had the hiker's body out of the area by 6:30. He added that while the conditions complicated the operation, "as technical rescues go, it was a relatively easy one."



MOUNTAIN MISHAP—Search and Rescue Team members load the body of Robert McClure into an awaiting car. McClure, who was 56, was climbing at about 12,000 feet on Mount Johnson above Treasure Lakes

in the Bishop Creek Canyon when he apparently lost his footing on an ice patch and slid approximately 300 feet onto some rocks below. McClure was a resident of North Hollywood.





READY TO FLY—Some of the 33 sail planes that participated in the Region 12 North Sail Plane Championships July 10 to July 16 at the Bishop

Airport. According to the pilots, the White Mountains offer the best soaring conditions in the world. (Don Calkins photo)

## Sail Plane pilot killed in 'freak' crash

by Michael Cadicamo

A "freak accident" marred the Region 12 North Sail Plane Championships in Bishop when the former president of the Southern California Sail Plane Association was killed when the sail plane he was flying crashed in the White Mountains.

Tom Maddigan, 43, of San Diego was killed last Thursday while flying at the 6,200 foot level near Silver Canyon in the White Mountains. A downburst of air forced his sail plane into the ground at the top of a ridge.

Maddigan, a sail plane pilot for 21 years, ranked sixth in the nation, was known by friends and fellow pilots as a "safe, experienced and cautious" pilot.

"That's not the type of accident you see Tom Maddigan in," Chuck Fisher, a friend of Maddigan's and one of the pilots who witnessed the crash said.

"Things like that happen so quick," Fisher said. "I was just pulling up and turning when I saw him go in."

He said another sail plane pilot, flying nearby, radioed that he thought Maddigan was flying unusually low then said, "My God, he hit."

"That's when I saw it hit and the dust go up," Fisher said.

Fisher said that immediately following the crash he flew at high speed back to the airport and reported the location of the crash to the Inyo County Sheriff's Department. The Inyo County Search and Rescue Team located the crash site and removed Maddigan's body. An autopsy was performed, and doctors found nothing to indicate illness during Maddigan's flight.

Fisher said after reporting the incident to the Sheriff's Department, he told Maddigan's wife and four children, who were in Bishop for the competition, about the accident.

Al Dickinson, an investigator for the National Transportation Safety Board, said that there was no sign of any kind of structural or mechanical failure.

He said that the plane was in relatively good

condition although he found that the force of the impact had torn the cockpit away from the rest of the sail plane's fuselage.

Gary Kamp, competition director, said that Maddigan was flying unusually low when he turned to go over the ridge, and apparently ran into a sudden down draft, which forced the sail plane into the ground. When a plane is as low as Maddigan's was, turning into a mountain is never done, he said.

Kamp said that sail plane fatalities were unusual but added, "unfortunately, it's happening more often than it should. In my first 10 years of flying, it was rare."

Attributing a rise in the death toll to an increase in the number of people sail planing, he said the rise in fatalities, including the three deaths this year, has "really concerned us."

Kamp said three pilots, friends of Maddigan's, left immediately after the accident. "Psychologically," he said, "it's very difficult for them to handle that (the accident)."

Pilots feel that they have control over their situation, Kamp said, but their families and support crews suffer the greatest hardship as they wait for sail planes and pilots to return safely.

### Pilot Killed

A sailplane pilot was killed Wednesday afternoon when his glider slammed into the White Mountains just north of Silver Canyon. The dead man was later identified as Thomas Madigan, 44, of La Mesa.

Witnesses told rescuers that there was no apparent reason for the 1 p.m. crash. Conditions were clear and calm, and the sailplane just struck the mountain at the 6,000-foot level, leading authorities to term the accident a case of possible pilot error.

Madigan was apparently killed instantly, rescuers said, and his aircraft was demolished.

The coroner's office said Madigan's family had been notified of the tragedy Wednesday.



7-18-83

# Search For Hiker Ongoing

Search and rescue teams from all over the state have scoured the Bishop Creek area on foot and in the air since Friday, searching for a Camarillo man who is a week overdue returning from a solo hiking trip into the area.

According to Inyo Search and Rescue Captain Jim Randall, Richard Williams, 48, entered the backcountry on July 6 and, according to his wilderness permit, was due out four days later after a two-day hike over Bishop Pass to Duzy Basin and back.

Williams' car has been located at the South Lake trailhead, but no other sign of the missing camper has been located.

"We started Friday afternoon, and we're still looking. So far, we've been unable to come up with a single thing. Nobody has seen him, and we haven't found a tent, backpack, article of clothing — anything."

The search involves 55 people from search and rescue teams from Inyo, Mammoth, San Diego, the Bay Area, China Lake and Sierra Madre.

Helicopters and dog teams are also being used along with the ground searchers.

The Civil Air Patrol, National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management have assisted, Randall said.

7-20-83

# No Luck Hiker Search Ended

by SANDY HARRISON  
SDN Staff Writer

After a fifth day of searching proved unproductive, the Inyo Search and Rescue team gave up its attempt to locate missing hiker Richard Williams Tuesday, search coordinator Dan Lucas said.

The National Park Service will continue to look for Williams in the John Muir Trail area, however.

Williams, 48, of Camarillo, is now 10 days overdue from a four-day trip over Bishop pass. "After that much time, if he's still alive, he could be a long way away," said Lucas.

The lengthy search has produced no real leads except footprints, which could belong to Williams. But they haven't led rescuers to him. "We've seen similar-sized tracks in funny areas where they shouldn't be," said Lucas. "But we have nothing in the way of evidence."

More than 50 rescuers from agencies throughout the state have returned safely from the backcountry, where conditions have frequently resembled winter more than July.

Conditions improved Tuesday, allowing helicopter crews to search closely for the first time, but without success.

7-19-83

# Search Continues

The massive cooperative search for missing hiker Richard Williams continued Monday with no sign of the 48-year-old Camarillo man, although rescuers hope they've found a clue.

"We picked up a set of tracks today," Inyo Search and Rescue Captain Jim Randall said. "But we're not even sure they're his. It's maybe a 50-50 chance, but it's the only thing we've got to work on."

Randall said searchers will concentrate today on the area southwest of Sierra Crest, near LeConte Canyon in Kings Canyon National Park, where the headwaters of the Kings River meet Palisade Creek.

Conditions, he said, are incredible for mid-July. Searchers are on cross-country skis moving over drifts 20 feet deep. In the morning, temperatures were below freezing, and rescuers were hindered by 40-knot winds and snow flurries Monday. And rivers are solid whitewater

from the crest to the west edge of the Sierra, Randall said.

Randall said that leaves "dozens of possibilities" which could account for Williams' disappearance — deep snow with large, treacherous sun pockets; dangerous, fast-moving creeks and rivers; icy, unstable lakes.

The conditions, in fact, are taking their toll on the rescuers, Randall said. "We've got expert outdoorsmen with a complete sun block suffering from severe sunburn and windburn now," he said. Additionally, helicopters attempting to cross the crest from the east are being blown back by the strong westerly winds, he said.

Dog teams, helicopter crews, and ground searchers — over 50 people in all from throughout the state — continue the operation today. Williams entered the backcountry July 6 and was due out July 10.

"It's been a really tough search," Randall concluded.

# Search called off for lost Sierra hiker

The search for a Camarillo man overdue from a hiking trip in the Duzy Basin area of the Sierra Nevada west of Bishop has been called off, according to Jim Randall, captain of the Inyo County Search and Rescue Team.

Richard Williams, 48, an experienced backpacker began his trip July 6 and was due back July 10. Efforts to find the man, who reportedly had a leg infirmity, were called off after the hiker was nine days overdue.

"We have completely saturated the area he was last seen in, and we have absolutely no additional clues to his location," Randall said.

The victim was well equipped, Randall said, but was reported to have purchased only \$9 worth of food. He said Williams probably ran out of food eight days ago.

The search included about 55 people from several search and rescue teams including the National Park Service as well as two helicopters.

Calling the efforts made by team members to find Williams "extremely tough and frustrating," Randall said there is "very slight chance he got out of the search area."

Randall said the park service is continuing the search within the boundaries of Kings Canyon National Park.

# Search Ends

Calling a search for a missing hiker "like looking for a needle in a haystack," Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Park officials called off efforts to locate a Camarillo man Thursday afternoon.

The search for Richard Williams, 48, began last weekend in Inyo County after family members notified the Sheriff's Department that Williams was five days overdue from a solo trip into the backcountry. A massive search this week involving local search and rescue personnel, plus those from other parts of the state, failed to turn up anything.

Sequoia-Kings Canyon rangers searched one more time Thursday from a helicopter to see if Williams

had dropped over to the other side of the Sierra in an attempt to hike out, but three hours scouring a large amount of territory drew another blank, Marvin Jensen, public information officer for the park told the Sierra Daily News.

"At this point, we have nothing left—no leads, no possibilities," Jensen said. "Its like looking for a needle in a haystack."

The flyover, by Sierra District Ranger Paul Fodor and Chief Ranger Bob Smith, involved looking at the South and Middle forks of the Kings River and their tributaries, and the Palisades Basin. Several hikers were spotted and interviewed by the rangers, but no one had seen Williams.

Scanned with CamScanner



## Search Abandoned

# Hiker Survives Foodless Ordeal

by CHRIS CAVANAUGH  
SDN Staff Writer

After the conclusion of an unsuccessful search last week, missing hiker Richard Williams, 48, of Camarillo arrived at the Le Conte Ranger Station in Kings Canyon National Park Friday aided by a Huntington Beach man who was hiking in the Simpson Meadows area of the park.

The search for Williams began July 16, five days after family members reported to local authorities that he was five days overdue from a solo hiking trip over Bishop Pass. His car was found by searchers, but there was no sign of Williams after a five-day search.

According to a National Park Service report related to the Sierra Daily News by Park Service dispatcher Darlene Mandel, Williams was found by David Siracuse of Huntington Beach, who had hiked into Kings Canyon from Yosemite. Upon meeting Williams, Siracuse determined that he was lost and without food. After learning that Williams had been hiking in the Dusy Basin area, the two attempted to return there to find people who might be searching for Williams. Finding no searchers, the pair returned to the other side and arrived at the Le Conte Ranger Station Friday.

According to Mandel, Williams had told Park Service officials that he had known he was lost and had decided to follow the river. He was without food for three to four days before meeting Siracuse, and lived on flower petals, pine nuts and wild raspberries.

Mandel added that Williams had

been forced to cross numerous streams and rivers during his wanderings and ended up losing his glasses and sprained his ankle. That injury forced him to rest for two days.

Mandel added that Williams indicated he'd heard helicopters overhead several times, but the craft never came close enough for him to see them.

Following his arrival at Le Conte, Williams was flown to the Ash Mountain Ranger Station, the park's headquarters.

## Backpackers Are Urged to Be Cautious in Sierra

By EARL GUSTKEY, Times Staff Writer

Just as snow-clogged passes from a record Sierra Nevada winter quickly melt away under warm summer skies, a possible tragedy occurs reminding mountain visitors the Sierra back country is no place for the inexperienced.

Richard Williams, 48, from Camarillo, was reported missing July 15 when he failed to return from a four-day backtrip from South Lake trailhead to the Dusy Basin area. A six-day search by an Inyo County search and rescue unit involving helicopters, dog teams, ground search and 55 people failed to turn up any sign of Williams.

"Our only hope now is that he wound up hiking with some other people on the John Muir or Pacific Crest Trail," said Jim Randall, captain of the Inyo County search and rescue team.

"We were told he'd suffered a head injury some years ago and suffered from occasional memory lapses. It's possible he could have become lost and wound up joining other hikers.

"The unhappy possibilities are several. There's still a lot of snow where he was. He could have fallen into an air pocket under some snow. And he could have been standing on thin ice over a lake, not known that, and fallen in."

Three other backpackers in the Dusy Basin area positively identified Williams, according to Randall.

"They told us they talked to him when they found him fishing July 8 at Lower Dusy Basin Lake. He seemed to them to be slightly disoriented, that he didn't know which direction to go to get back to the trailhead."

## Lost hiker alive, well after two-week ordeal

After a week-long search had virtually been abandoned, a lost hiker walked into a ranger station in Kings Canyon National Park Friday night under his own power.

Richard Williams, a 48-year-old welder from Camarillo, had been missing since starting a backpacking trip in the Bishop Creek area July 6. He had been due back July 10.

A search involving about 55 people from several search and rescue teams began July 15. By the middle of last week hopes of finding the lost man alive had faded and local teams called off the search, although the Park Service continued looking for Williams in Kings Canyon National Park.

According to District Ranger Paul Fodor, Williams met another backpacker, David Siracuse of Huntington Beach, last Tuesday at a location about 25 miles from where Williams was last seen. "He was 180 degrees from the direction he suppose to be headed," said Fodor.

Siracuse led Williams back towards the Dusy Basin area where the search had been the heaviest. The two hikers, though, stopped at the Le Conte Ranger Station and Ranger Judy Zucker radioed out the news that Williams was alive and well.

Williams was a few pounds lighter than when he began the trip and hungry, but not seriously injured, according to the rangers.

Williams said he ran out of food July 15, but managed to survive by eating flowers and berries. A sprained ankle forced him to rest for two days. He also had lost his glasses which left him unable to read a map.

Randall said his Inyo County search and rescue unit was involved in 71 Sierra back country "accidents" last year, seven of which were fatalities.

Randall said two lessons can be learned from the Williams case.

"First, don't go into the back country alone, particularly if you're not an experienced hiker or backpacker. Second, make sure someone knows what day you're due out and to report you missing if you're one day overdue.

"We learned of this case (Williams) five days after he was due out."

Sierra Nevada packers report most high passes are opening up, providing pack trippers with entry into many back country areas.

Herb London, owner of Rock Creek Pack Station near Rock Creek Lake, said his first trip was scheduled Thursday over 12,000-foot Mono Pass.

"Our rule of thumb is if we can get stock over Mono Pass, we can go just about anywhere," he said.

Said Lou Roeser, owner of the Mammoth Lakes Pack Outfit: "Things are lookin' a lot better. We're back in the packin' business. We're getting a late start, so it's going to be a busy summer.

"Our first trout fishing trip over Mammoth Pass is scheduled Sunday."

Said Bob Tanner, owner of Red's Meadow Pack Station near Mammoth Lakes.

"Not all the trails are open, but they're clearing fast. A couple of back-to-back hot days and Thousand Island and Ediza lakes might open up. Shadow, Gem and

Waugh lakes are open."

Deer-tag applications are running behind the normal pace and numerous hunting opportunities remain for virtually all zones in California, according to Department of Fish and Game license chief Mac Foster.

Southern California's newest saltwater fishing barge is the 150-foot, all-steel "Annie B," anchored in Long Beach Harbor and reached by Belmont Pier, Long Beach, and Ports O Call, San Pedro.

The DFG will conduct a free public program on Tube elk at 8:30 a.m. Aug 13 at the Wildlife Viewpoint in Owens Valley, 13 miles south of Big Pine.

**Briefly**  
Over 25,000 visited the in-the-water boat show at the Shoreline Village Marina in Long Beach last weekend. . . . DFG warden report increased attacks on deer by dogs in Mendocino, Sonoma, Lake and Napa counties and remind dog owners state law grants authority to wardens to capture or kill dogs seen chasing deer. . . . Over 20,000 shotgunners are expected at the 94th annual Grand American Trapshooting Tournament at Vanhook, Ohio, Aug. 11-20. . . . The California Hunter Safety Instructor Fair will be held at the Corona Municipal Shooting Range Saturday at Lake County Bass Club hosts a charity bass tournament Saturday at Lake Casitas, with 100 teams expected. . . . Charles Stela, Williamsport, N.J., landed a 501-pound great white shark off the New Jersey coast recently after a two-hour battle and two blasts from a 12-gauge shotgun. . . . Gov. Deukmejian has signed into law a bill raising the maximum fine for trafficking in illegally caught sturgeon from \$500 to \$5,000. . . . Aeromexico has begun daily flights from Tijuana to Los Mochis, on the Mexican mainland's Sea of Cortez coast.



# Backpackers Are Urged to Be Cautious in Sierra

By EARL GUSTKEY, Times Staff Writer

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"We learned of this case (Williams) five days after he was due out."

## Searches End Happily

Inyo Search and Rescue personnel, with the assistance of China Lake rescuers and the Forest Service rescued a 26-year old Lakeside man who became trapped overnight after falling about 20 feet in a steep area near Mr. Langley above Lone Pine.

According to the Sheriff's Department, David Keese had been camping with others at Cottonwood lake Tuesday when he decided to set out on a day hike in the Mt. Langley area. He hiked into a steep area, slid down about 20 feet and ended up spending the night on a ledge. However when rescuers found him Wednesday, he had suffered only minor scrapes.

Also Wednesday, search and rescue was called out to the south fork of Big Pine canyon after a group of hikers became separated. James Patterson, and hikers with him, "lost," Mike Weiss, who was hiking with his son and others when the two groups somehow passed one another on the trail. The story had a happy ending, however, shortly after search and rescue was called out. Weiss and his party walked into the Glacier Lodge above Big Pine, where they met up with Patterson. All the hikers were from the Chula Vista area, said the Sheriff's Department.

## Bear alters hikers' trip

A La Canada man and his son were found in good shape below Kearsarge pass Sunday after they had been reported overdue. A friend waiting at a campsite had become worried when Kent Frewing, 45, and his 16-year-old son Scott failed to return on time Saturday night. The Inyo Search and Rescue team went in at first light Sunday and after climbing to the John Muir trail learned that both father and son were fine but had merely taken a longer but safer trail back. They had to change routes twice, however—once to avoid snow and ice and once to avoid a 400 pound bear. As one search and rescue team member put it, "They decided the bear needed the trail more than they did and decided to find another route back to camp."

## Hikers Rescued

Two hikers who failed to return on time from a climb up University Peak west of Independence Saturday were located in good condition Sunday by Inyo County Search and Rescue personnel.

Kent Frewing, 46, of La Canada and his son Scott, 16, were hiking near Kearsarge Lakes with a friend when they decided to scale the peak. The companion felt it was too dangerous, however, and declined. When the Frewings hadn't returned by the end of the day, he notified authorities.

Search and Rescue Coordinator Dan Lucas said the pair hiked up the mountain but found themselves unable to get down its icy slopes. Compounding the problem, the victims later told Lucas, was a large black bear roaming nearby, which left them afraid to detour along another trail.

The victims were finally able to hike to their campsite during the night, and were found by rescuers Sunday.

Lucas said the Frewings endangered themselves by hiking up an icy mountainside without the proper equipment. Fortunately, however, they escaped uninjured.



## Chopper Crash

Seven people were injured, two seriously, when a military helicopter on a search and rescue mission crashed for an unknown reason in Hortense Lake in the Cascade Valley area of Fresno County Sunday morning.

A spokesman for the Fresno County Sheriff's Department would not release the names of the seven people until relatives had been notified, however none of those aboard were from the Eastern Sierra, he confirmed.

Part III/Friday, August 5, 1983

# This Lost-Backpacker Story Has a Happy Ending

By EARL GUSTKEY, Times Staff Writer

There's a happy ending to the story of Richard Williams, the Camarillo welder who disappeared on a Sierra backpacking trip last month.

An Inyo County search-and-rescue team looked for Williams for five days in the Bishop Pass area before giving up July 20. The worst was feared.

However, Williams showed up at a Kings Canyon National Park ranger station July 26, more or less safe and sound. The search effort involved 71 people, 2,155 man and dog hours (dog teams were used) and a \$550-an-hour helicopter that spent 54 search hours in the air.

Williams had parked his pickup truck July 6 at the South Lake trailhead, near Bishop, and headed out on a solo five-day backpack-fishing trip to the Dusy Basin area.

It turned out to be a 17-day trip. Williams, an experienced backpacker who had hiked once before to Dusy Basin, became lost on his way out. In a phone interview, here's how he described it:

"After camping my first night at Long Lake, I went over Bishop Pass the following day and into the lower Dusy Basin area. On the morning of the ninth, I headed back out, back over Bishop Pass.

"I didn't realize it at the time, but I wasn't going back over Bishop Pass. The terrain there is rolling and rocky, and I walked up all day without realizing I was going in another direction. It was starting to get dark when I reached the top of what I thought was Bishop Pass. I learned later it was Knapsack Pass.

"I saw a row of trees I hadn't seen coming in and that

gave me pause, but I still didn't think I was lost. I camped there that night.

"The next morning, at the bottom of that ridge, I didn't see the footbridge I'd crossed before going up Bishop Pass, and I knew I was lost. But I wasn't worried because I figured the trail I was on would eventually get me out.

"Well, I was two days in there, in Palisade Basin, and out of food. I walked along what I later learned was the middle fork of the Kings River, looking for a spot to cross.

"I found a spot where sandbars had the stream split in four sections. I thought I could wade it. I got over two of them but the third was deeper and faster than I'd thought.

"In the middle of it, I started to fall and lose my glasses at the same time. There was a bush nearby and it was either lunge for the bush and let the glasses go or fall into the current. I lunged, grabbed the bush, and lost my glasses. After that, I couldn't read my map.

"When I hauled myself out, I found I'd also sprained my ankle. Within an hour, I not only couldn't stand, I couldn't even touch it. I lay there for two days, crawling around eating pine nuts and flower petals.

"By then, I was certain someone was looking for me. I laid out my yellow plastic tube tent in a clear area, figuring someone would surely see it from the air. I could see a helicopter on the horizon, but it never came over where I was.

"On the third day, I could walk on my ankle. I started following the stream and came to a trail where a sign

said it led to Simpson Meadow.

"Later, I came face to face with a guy (backpacker David Siracuse, Huntington Beach) on the trail. He said: 'Hey, another crazy person!'

"The first thing I said, was: 'Could you spare a granola bar? All I've eaten for three days is pine nuts and flower petals.'

"Well, we set up camp right there. He got out his little stove and cooked dinner for me. I ate it so fast I didn't see what it was.

"After that, he stayed with me for three days. I was limping so bad, I couldn't go fast.

"We headed for a ranger station that was on the map. The ranger was a young lady, Judy Zucker. She walked up to me and said: 'Richard Williams! You are quite a famous person!' She had a radio, and got out word I was OK.

"A helicopter came for me and took me to the park office. The first to greet me were my sons. It was a warm reunion, believe me."

Williams was asked what lessons he'd learned.

"My mistake was not concentrating after going over Bishop Pass," he said. "I should have been studying the terrain. I don't think I once looked behind me, coming down. When you're alone in the mountains, you should be looking at your topo map all the time, always being aware of exactly where you are.

"A lot of people say 'Never backpack alone.' But sometimes it just works out that way. My sons say they want to go on a trip with me, but if it works out at the last minute that they can't, I'll go alone.

"But I'll sure pay more attention to where I am next time."



## Search and Rescue teams locate two lost hikers

Two search and rescue operations ended successfully last week, one in the Mt. Langley area near Cottonwood south of Lone Pine and one in the Sierra above Big Pine.

Mike Wise, 40, of Southern California was reportedly lost in the Willow Lake area above Big Pine and the Inyo Search and Rescue team sent ground crews into the area. Lt. Dennis Bacoch said Wise was already on his way down the trail and that he and the rescue teams actually passed within 10 feet of one another on the trail but at first didn't see each other. Finally, however, word was relayed to the team that Wise had come out under his own power and the search was called off.

The other search and rescue took a bit more work, but a hiker was picked up by China Lake helicopter from the Mt. Langley area near Lake 5.

The hiker was identified as David Keefe of San Diego. Rod Willer of the China Lake Search and Rescue Team said Keefe became stranded on a ledge where he couldn't go up or down. He was forced to spend the night there with no food but did have a sleeping bag for warmth. Keefe was not injured other than some superficial cuts on his hands which he received in a 15-foot fall.

The China Lake helicopter flew the search team in. The team hiked down to the man and was then able to airlift him to Lone Pine. The rescue took most of the day, with the helicopter bringing Keefe into Lone Pine just after 7 p.m.

walked out from the rugged Marble Canyon area of the White Mountains.

Earlier in the day, six members of the Mammoth Lakes Search and Rescue team and a California Highway Patrol helicopter from Fresno had begun searching the area for Bernard Wexker, who had been reported missing on Saturday afternoon. Wexker, was reported in good condition.

## Search Ends

A search for a West German man ended Sunday morning after he

## Search Successful

A Bishop family, reported a day overdue from a hunting trip in the Coyote area Monday morning, was rescued a few hours later in good condition.

Mike Sigler, his wife, and six-year-old child became stranded when their car got stuck in a marshy area, according to the Inyo Sheriff's Department.

Rescuers spotted the three people and their vehicle at about noon, and brought them to safety, the Sheriff's

## Civil Air Patrol Praises Disaster Relief Exercise

Editor:

Civil Air Patrol recently had the opportunity to participate in the disaster relief exercise conducted at Bishop on the weekend of 21-23 October. Since we were operating from our headquarters at the airport, we did not have the opportunity to properly thank the personnel of the various agencies participating, for providing such a large scale, realistic-type exercise. On behalf of the California Wing, Civil Air Patrol, I want to express our sincere appreciation to all who participated. I can tell you that we have not experienced such enthusiastic cooperation anywhere else in the state.

Civil Air Patrol's participation included 125 personnel from various parts of the state, utilizing 40 aircraft and a number of ground teams. In addition to the valuable practice provided our field personnel, our operations staff will use the experience gained to update and refine

our operating procedures for disaster response.

The exercise was also utilized as our Wing's annual evaluation by the Air Force for effectiveness in disaster response. The team of Air Force officers present rated our operation as outstanding and also had high praise for the spirit of cooperation demonstrated by the many community agencies involved.

As evidence of the importance of this exercise our base was visited by Brigadier General Howard L. Brookfield, National Commander of CAP, Colonel Donald M. Biondich, California Wing Commander, and Colonel Bradford L. Sharp, Commander of Nevada Wing, who were all very much impressed by the scope of the drill.

Again, our many thanks to all who contributed so much to this valuable exercise.

Lloyd A. Goodale  
Lt. Col., CAP  
Commander, Bishop Squadron 86



DISASTER DRILL—Ann Lapodanno, health worker for Inyo County, treats earthquake "victim" Tamara Cohn at an Inyo County Health Department trauma Center set-up at Bishop Airport. About 300 people took part in Saturday's emergency

preparedness drill, which simulated the possible effects of a 6.5 earthquake centered six miles from Bishop in the White Mountains. Mono and Inyo County, city, state and federal agencies took part in the drill. (Photo by Mike Cadicamo)



# Practicing For A Local Disaster

by CHRIS CAVANAUGH  
SDN Staff Writer

Imagine the injuries and the damage that could result from an earthquake, registering 6.5 on the Richter scale, centered in the White Mountains.

Last Saturday, representatives of several local agencies did more than imagine the possibilities—they acted out the scenarios and their responses in a county-wide disaster drill.

"It went very well," remarked Inyo County Disaster Coordinator Jim Angelo. "We were able to identify the things that went right and

identify major problems.

Counting "victims," Angelo said the drill may have involved as many as 300 people from the Inyo County Sheriff's Department, Bishop Police and Fire Departments, California Department of Forestry, Forest Service, Health Department, Search and Rescue, Civil Air Patrol, Bishop Amateur Radio Club, the Department of Water and Power, the California Highway Patrol, ambulance and hospital personnel, and representatives from Mono County.

Some of the incidents deal with by the rescuers included a chemical spill at Schat's Bakery Warehouse on Mandich, assorted accidents, and

rescuing trapped people. Coordinating the drill were personnel at an emergency operations center at the Forest Service building.

"Sgt. Dan Lucas (of the Inyo Sheriff's Department) was effective as operations chief," noted Angelo. With the help of representatives from other agencies, Lucas "effectively held the group together," Angelo added.

Probably the biggest problem participants of the drill noticed was "a lack of good, solid communications" observed Angelo.

But overall, "everybody who participated should be commended," concluded Angelo. He added that special thanks were due Dan Schat for use of the warehouse on Mandich and Earl Brown for use of the dump.

So are local officials prepared if a 6.5 quake hit today?

"We'll be better prepared," said Angelo. "I don't know if you're ever 100 percent ready."

## Disaster Drill Shows Need For More

by SANDY HARRISON  
SDN Staff Writer

Poor communication among medical personnel emerged as the greatest problem in a disaster response drill conducted last October in the Bishop area, said Disaster services coordinator Jim Angelo in a report on the exercise Tuesday.

Specifically, he said, it became apparent during the drill that medical personnel needed the ability to communicate directly with one another, rather than through third parties

without medical knowledge.

"We're looking at ways to purchase some backup communications equipment for the Health Department," Angelo said.

"Everybody had enough equipment to just get by, but it became apparent that the health services needed their own system," he said.

"In a disaster situation, a nurse will need to talk to a nurse, for example, and not somebody else," Angelo said. "With medical problems, it's necessary to be able to classify them outright, immediately," he said.

In a real emergency, would those communications problems have resulted in unnecessary loss of life?

"Well, yes and no," answered Angelo. "The problem lies in the initial two to four hours after a disaster: the initial response is most critical."

During that time, Angelo said, authorities would be attempting to distribute a cache of radio equipment stored by the Forest Service at Round Valley. "But that could take 15 minutes or it could be two or four hours. So better organization of existing communications capabilities must be a high planning priority," he said.

Angelo added that the drill proved the need for still more drills, to get authorities throughout the county more familiar with disaster procedures.

"It's a big county," he explained. "What you do in Bishop, you also have to do in the south county and Death Valley areas." The Independence, Lone Pine, and Carthage areas are the most likely site for the next drill, Angelo said.



Local firemen aid a "victim" of a chemical spill at Schat's Bakery Warehouse in Bishop Saturday. The "spill" was part of a disaster drill which required local agencies to respond to the aftermath of a 6.5 magnitude earthquake. Albert Maryman photo



## Miner Survives Fall Into Ravine

What authorities originally thought was a plane crash in Panamint Valley turned out to be a 65-year-old gold prospector who was injured when he tumbled down a 20-foot ravine.

Rescuers said Tuesday that Arther Luttig of Salt Lake City, Utah, survived for three days without food or water despite injuries and freezing nights.

Luttig was in fair condition at Ridgecrest Community Hospital after his ordeal Tuesday.

"He was in an extremely dangerous situation. He was pretty bad off when we got there Monday," said Louie Allen of the Indian Wells Valley search and rescue team. "Only one thing kept him alive. He drank his own urine."

Luttig had a fractured knee, frost-bitten feet, and a lower back injury, hospital nursing supervisor Sally Kennedy said. He was transferred Tuesday to Kern Community Hospital in Bakersfield.

Lee Kliman, the federal Bureau of Land Management ranger who reached Luttig first, said the retiree "covered himself pretty well" by giving Paul Jones, a caretaker in the

Ballarat ghost town, advance word of his plans.

Jones alerted the BLM when Luttig had been gone seven days from his camper, which he had parked three miles north of Ballarat and could be seen from the 9-foot-wide shelf where he lay after his fall.

Jones told Kliman he thought Luttig had been stranded a week, but Kliman said that when he reached the man, Luttig told him he had been there three days.

Luttig hurt his back while searching for gold at the top of a rocky canyon on the fourth day of prospecting, Kliman said.

On a gingerly descent, Luttig jumped into what he thought was a 5-foot ravine. It turned out to be 20 feet deep, Allen said.

Luttig pulled gravel over his body to keep himself warm during the below-freezing nights, Kliman said.

"It is remarkable that the guy is alive after what he went through," Allen said.

Authorities had no explanation for early reports which said a plane wreckage had been spotted in the area.

## Man survives crash, week in wilderness

A 65-year-old Salt Lake City man who crashed while flying a motorized glider, known as an ultra-light, apparently survived a week in the wilderness near Ballarat despite a number of serious injuries.

According to the Inyo Sheriff's Department, the Bureau of Land Management office in Riverside reported the mishap yesterday morning after a BLM ranger discovered the injured man in the mountains east of Ballarat near Death Valley.

The ranger hiked to the victim, Arthur Ludik, and determined the man was still alive and administered basic first aid while awaiting help from search and rescue teams.

The Indian Wells Search and Rescue Team was called, and then attempts were made to airlift the victim by helicopter. First an attempt was made for a military chopper out of Ft. Irwin Army Base, but that could not be arranged, and a helicopter from the CHP in Barstow was used.

The victim was finally picked up about 4 p.m. Monday and flown to Ridgecrest Hospital for treatment.



# Ultralight Crash Victim Found Seriously Injured

An ultralight aircraft pilot who crashed into Happy Canyon in the Panamint Mountains Monday, was "almost dead" when rescuers found him Thursday morning at the 6,500 foot level.

Sgt. Dan Lucas, Inyo Search and Rescue coordinator, said Hans Nilson, 44, of Los Altos, was immobilized by back injuries during the crash, and laid there, unable to move, for three days.

Nilson was dressed warmly in a down jacket and wind pants, Lucas said, or else he certainly would have died before rescuers reached him. Nilson would not have survived the day if he hadn't been located, Lucas added.

Nilson, reported in critical condition with chest, back, leg injuries,

and contusions and abrasions at Ridgecrest Hospital Thursday night, told his rescuers that his plane dived into the canyon when the propeller malfunctioned. He said he had built the craft himself.

Nilson was also suffering from severe frostbite, and hospital officials said he may never walk again.

The victim also told rescuers he now considered flying more dangerous than his "two solo sailings across the Atlantic."

It took rescuers 90 minutes to ex-

tricate Nilson from the wreckage, Lucas said. He was spotted by Search and Rescue crews in a leased helicopter, and then taken to the hospital by China Lake Naval Weapons Center helicopter.

Earlier reports that Nilson was searching for a missing prospector at the time were not confirmed, Lucas said.

The Bureau of Land Management and National Park Service also supplied essential personnel and facilities in the rescue, said Lucas.

## Sketchy Details On Ultralight Crash

Details remained sketchy Monday on a search for the victim of a plane crash in the Panamint Mountains east of Ballarat in southeastern Inyo County.

According to the Sheriff's Department, a BLM ranger spotted what appeared to be an aircraft wreckage in the area, and went to the location to investigate.

He found an elderly man, seriously

injured but alive, in the wreckage of an ultralight aircraft. The victim reportedly told authorities he had been there for a week.

According to deputies, a helicopter from the Barstow office of the California Highway Patrol transported the victim to Ridgecrest Hospital.

The identity of the victim was not immediately available.

## Injured pilot is found strapped in ultra light

A Palo Alto pilot, Hans Nilson, was found alive Thursday in the Panamint area still strapped into his ultra light plane that had crashed four days earlier, according to a spokesperson with the Inyo County Sheriff's Office.

The man was suffering from exposure, dehydration and leg and back injuries, but was stabilized at the scene and flown to a Ridgecrest hospital by a China Lake helicopter, a spokesperson from the Sheriff's Office said. Nilson was listed in guarded condition in the intensive care unit of the Ridgecrest hospital earlier this week.

The crash site was in Happy Canyon east of Ballarat at about the 6,500-foot level, according to the sheriff's department spokesperson, which was assisted in the rescue by Bureau of Land Management officers and the Inyo County Search and Rescue Team.

Nilson was the second man rescued in the area last week. Earlier a 65-year-old Salt Lake City man, Arthur Ludik, was hospitalized after spending eight days in the desert injured without food or water.

Originally, the Inyo Sheriff's Office said he was the victim of the ultra light plane crash, but the next day officers said Ludik was the victim of a mining accident, not an air crash.



## Missing nordic skier survives snow storm

BISHOP—A 30-year-old Bay Area man, Robert Courtemanche, missing for three days on a cross-country ski trip in the Piute Pass area, turned up safe and sound Tuesday.

The Inyo County Sheriff's office started an all out search for the man before he called in from Aspendell and reported he was safe, officials said. He had started out on his trip Dec. 17 and had planned to return last Friday, but ran into some extreme weather conditions.

He told Sgt. Dan Lucas, search coordinator, that he had started to return last Thursday when a severe storm hit and he had to "hole up" until it lifted. He bivouacked at the 12,000-foot level on the west side of the crest, Lucas said. He came down Echo Pass and on down to Lake Sabrina on what would have normally been a half-day trip. It took him three days, however, through drifts of snow up to eight feet deep, Lucas explained.

Lucas reported that a CHP helicopter attempted to fly into the area Tuesday morning from the west side but had to return because of the weather. A ground team from Mammoth had planned to take part in the search as well as the CAP.

The sheriff's department was alerted by his girlfriend from San Francisco when he failed to return as expected on Friday.

# Missing Skier Okay; Search Unnecessary

by SANDY HARRISON  
SDN Staff Writer

A cross country skier, four days overdue from a trip into the Sierra wilderness near North Lake, skied

out under his own power and in good condition Tuesday morning, after heavy snow left him stranded deep in the backcountry.

Robert Courtemanche, 30, of San

Francisco returned to his car at the trailhead at about 10 a.m., and found a note from Sgt. Dan Lucas of the Sheriff's Department asking him to contact authorities upon his return.

Courtemanche began his trip alone on December 16 and was due out on Friday, December 23. But on Thursday the 22nd, he was caught in a heavy snowfall and forced to camp for two days at the 12,000 foot level, until the weather broke.

Then, skiing through eight feet of fresh snow, he returned over Echo Pass to Lake Sabrina. Normally a four-hour trip, the last leg of the journey took Courtemanche three days because of the conditions.

He had taken plenty of food with him, and he told Lucas that he was fine and not in need of medical care.

Searchers had stood by helplessly for the last few days while severe avalanche danger and poor visibility made ground or aerial searches impossible.

Lucas said he didn't bother to lecture Courtemanche about the dangers of backcountry travel alone. "Frankly, I was glad he got out," Lucas said. "It's very frustrating to want to do something to help, but to not to be able to."

## Skier Is Missing

by SANDY HARRISON  
SDN Staff Writer

A 30-year-old San Francisco man is at least three days overdue from a cross country skiing trip in the wilderness east of the Piute Pass area near North Lake, according to the Inyo County Sheriff's Department.

The skier's name is being withheld, because there are relatives who have not yet been notified that

he is missing, said Sgt. Dan Lucas.

"He's real experienced, and it could be that he's just been held up because of the weather," said Lucas. "Or he may have found the passes to be impassable and headed out the west side."

The missing sportsman entered the wilderness on December 17 out of North Lake, and was due out December 23, Lucas said. Heavy snow fell in the interim.

"Avalanche conditions are too

severe for any kind of ground search, and the weather rules out flying in right now," Lucas said. "We are trying to line up a helicopter to have ready in case we get any kind of break in the weather."

Lucas said searchers had left a note on the victim's car, still at North Lake, asking him to notify authorities if he comes out.

Travellers should not enter the backcountry alone, Lucas added.



1984

Sunday, November 12, 1989

## Early morning detail



Inyo County's Volunteer Search and Rescue units were out in force yesterday to erect flags in Bishop in honor of Veterans' Day.  
This is the first year for the unit to provide

Inyo Photographer Dale L. Purns the service, which is done on each of eight national holidays. Here Ellen Siegal and Bob Sireel, "plant" one of the flags along Main



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