

# RMRU NEWSLETTER

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE RIVERSIDE MOUNTAIN RESCUE UNIT, INC.  
A VOLUNTEER NON-PROFIT CORPORATION

MEMBER OF THE MOUNTAIN RESCUE ASSOCIATION

Volume V, Issue 4, April 1969  
Editor, Jim Fairchild

18-19 April	Rummage Sale
23 "	Regular Meeting
26 "	Helitac Training
7 May	Board Meeting
17 May	CR-MRA Meeting

## COMING EVENTS ---

18-19 April, Rummage Sale (See Al's write-up)

23 April, Regular Meeting. 1930, Highland Outfitters. Since RMRU's fiscal year runs from May 1 to April 30 this is the meeting at which the new Board of Directors will be elected. Last month the By-Laws were amended to change the number of directors from five to seven. This election is a very important one and all RMRU members are urged to carefully consider who they want to represent them for the coming year.

26 April, Helitac Training. We've had a lot of time to practice PLF's and read the Helitac section in the manual, have we not? The winter floods caused the cancellation in March, but this time we are more confident of success.

7 May, Board Meeting, 1900, Highland Outfitters. Everyone is welcome!

Mt. Rubidoux, April 16 and 30, 1900 to ? Three recent sessions up there have been very beneficial to the four people who have participated. Come along and use this informal opportunity to learn and develop technical skills.

North Face San Jacinto climb. At the April 23 Regular Meeting we must discuss when to hold this training session because the Riverside Downtown Outdoor Show conflicts with the May date. This is truly an exceptional climb with its 9000' elevation gain, cross-country over waterfalls, through brush, up thousands of feet of snow, spectacular scenery, and another chance to bivouac on 45 deg. hard snow. Our itinerary makes this almost a leisurely effort, yet tough enough to test one's conditioning. The East Fork of Snow Creek, our proposed route, still holds a great fascination and elicits great respect from one member who has climbed it five times.

## CHINO CANYON SEARCH - Night of March 6, 7 1969

Late on the afternoon of Thursday March 6th, RMRU received a call from the Riverside Co. Sheriff's office concerning a man overdue on a descent from the upper station to the lower station of the Palm Springs Tram. When nine team members assembled at the lower station, it was learned that the man, William Fink, was a relatively new employee of the tram who had begun a descent of the first canyon north of Chino canyon about 8:30 AM that morning. Since he had expected to be down by early afternoon and since he was poorly equipped both for climbing on steep snow or ice and for spending the night out, there was considerable concern for his welfare.

Owing to the fact that tram employees had definitely located his tracks entering a steep, icy chute near the upper station and since a mishap on the steep snow high in the chute was feared, it was decided to send a six man team down this chute immediately while holding three men in reserve at the upper station for communications and emergency back-up.

Accordingly, 9:30 PM found Bridge, Briggs, Fairchild, Harris, Daugherty and Walker rappelling into the icy darkness below the water tower adjacent to the upper station while Capt. Crowell and Lt. Brown of the Sheriff's office and Percy, Ricker and Rush of RMRU waited by the radios in the upper station.

The tracks, by now frozen into the no longer soft snow, were easily followed directly downward for three 150 ft. rappels whereupon they were lost in a region of steep ice. There followed 30 or 40 agonizing minutes of intense searching before the tracks were again located and the descent painstakingly continued. Presently the tracks led into a wider chute and the moon rose allowing the headlamps to be turned off for the first time. About 1000 ft. lower, the couloir was filled with a jumble of small ice blocks, collected from several avalanches. Tracking through this maze of debris was slow but easy compared to the problem of racking over the series of frozen waterfalls which followed. Each waterfall was a new and more difficult problem to be puzzled over and worried at until the key was found unlocking the door to the next problem, another, larger, waterfall. At the top of each waterfall the track would be followed as it probed the unknown edge, venturing first down the right wall then, finding that too steep, back, up, across and down the left wall.

So it continued, 1 AM, 3 AM, 5 AM and finally the sky in the east blushed and six rather tired orange clad men pulled on their bivouac gear and sat down on the ice at the top of yet

another waterfall to await the coming warmth of the sun. Too soon everyone was up stretching in the warm, new light and preparing to continue. At this juncture, it was decided to start searching up the canyon from the point where it enters Chino canyon just above the valley station. Having an excellent link to the upper station via our new radios, Larry and Don were soon at the lower station boarding Don Landell's new jet ranger helicopter to search the lower reaches of the canyon. After a quick check of the waterfall just below the high team, the bird began searching down the canyon where they soon found the missing man only about 1000 ft. above the lower station. Having safely, if somewhat miraculously, negotiated the waterfalls and spent the night below the snow line, he was in good shape and soon back at the lower station. The high team was then lifted from its icy perch back to the lower station and, as the morning broadened into midday, nine tired men logged another long, cold night into memory over innumerable cups of coffee. If nothing else, this mission demonstrates that it really is impossible to be too well trained or too well equipped for our job. Anyone who thinks that a night search on steep, icy terrain is easy hasn't tried one lately. Helmets, extensive first aid gear, ice axes, 900 ft. of rope, ice pitons, rock pitons, brake bars, pulleys, jumars, rescue sleeping bag, headlamps, bivouac gear, extra food and water, survival tents....a lot of gear to be carrying when you're rappelling a frozen waterfall. This would have been interesting enough as a climbing experience but its another matter when one considers that the job will really start getting tough if we find an injured victim. - Mike

#### SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP

We would like to welcome the following people and organizations to our sustaining membership: Mr. & Mrs. Harry Monson, Mr. & Mrs. John B. Morgan, The Riverside Exchange Club, and Boy Scout Troop 1 of Riverside. Thanks to each and every one of you. We would like to add a special thank you to the following people for renewing their 1968 membership: Mr. & Mrs. William F. Zauche, Mr. & Mrs. Carl F. Tennant, and Mr. & Mrs. Milton M. Levy. This continuing support is deeply appreciated. - Al

#### RUMMAGE SALE

The time is drawing near for our sale...April 18, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. and April 19, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. (Be sure and note time changes from previously indicated.) For those of you who are new readers of our newsletter, this rummage sale is being put on by the wives of RMRU members with all proceeds being donated to the Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit. Our sale is being held at Shamel House (adjacent to Shamel Park Pool), 3650 Arlington Avenue, Riverside. Team members and their wives are also selling tickets for a drawing to be held at 1 p.m. on April 19 at Shamel Park. Winners need not be present. There are some excellent prizes which have been donated by Highland Outfitters, Pratt Bros., Stewart's and Thresher's Sporting Goods Stores. Chances are selling for 25¢ each. How about buying several!!! Tickets are also available by calling 687-0448 or mailing your donation to the Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit, 5947 Green Valley Street, Riverside, California 92504. We hope you let all your friends know of our rummage sale and can try to attend one of the two days. Remember, the more people, the merrier! Team members and wives are urged to meet at Speck Engineering on 17 April at 4 p.m. to assist in the setting up of the rummage sale. Contact Mary Speck.



#### ANSWER TO WHERE & WHEN

(From the March Issue)

WHERE: The lower part of the North Fork of the San Jacinto.  
WHEN: Sunday, May 19, 1968. Team member King Dalton shot this candid photo of RMRU members Al Andrews, Ron Harris, Mike Daughtery, Walt Walker, Jim Dodson and Bob McPherson taking a break. The team was on a training mission in the canyon and had started from the Banning-Idyllwild road on Saturday morning. This break was taken to wash off after traveling most of Sunday morning through Poison Oak.



The Road

Runner sez-

Summit Magazine has frequently carried "Letters" that vigorously espouse one side or the other of a controversy. The latest was started by Royal Robbins who 3 issues ago wrote an article, "Time For a Change," in which he complains about the increasingly strict and limiting rules imposed upon climbers by the Park Service. Of

course, the two succeeding issues are full of letters that either agree or disagree with Robbins. Those disagreeing seem weak, officious and unconvincing. Those agreeing lament the waning of individual freedom within activities "administered" by governmental agencies. This

writer agrees almost 100% with Robbins, hoping that soon he will write an article outlining mountaineers' and climbers' responsibilities that must accompany our desired freedom. Why this subject is brought up is that several letters have included some back-handed slaps at Search & Rescue Units. Gregg Blomberg says rescue people really "love their work. They enjoy megaphones, the field kitchens, the walkie-talkies, the jeeps, the helicopters, the urgency, the army-like chain of command." Well sure, we of RMRU have seen plenty of the base camp champs -- lots of fuss and feathers and very little SAR. Blomberg should be happy to know there are rescue units around that are well trained, equipped and competent. Their bread and butter is hard work: tracking and hacking through brush; rappelling icy canyons; setting up technical rescue rigging and going over the edge; giving first aid for fractures and wounds; long strenuous litter carries. Most of this in the middle of the night, all of it quite urgent because we hope to reach the subject in time. About the walkie-talkies and helicopters, man, don't ever dream of doing without them when they are needed. Most missions are successfully shortened by their use. Finally, we are not a bunch of vultures waiting for the experts or anyone else to get hung out, we're fellow mountaineers organized and ready to help when the need arises.

NOTE? "The Roadrunner Sez" is the opinionizing of one man and may or may not reflect the unit's official view. - Jim



Once again the Road Runner and I have been thinking alike. I had started my column off with a comment on the goings on in 'Summit Magazine'. After reading the 'Road Runner Sez' I decided Jim had said it better than I and deleted my first paragraph.

The San Diego Mountain Rescue Team turned out in force for their test on snow and ice. They did a tremendous job, as per usual. Mother McCoy served another of her outstanding roadhead meals. RMRU member Bill Speck was one of the members of the testing committee and shot the following photos of San Diego at work. - Walt



*A volunteer organization dedicated to saving lives through rescue and mountain safety education.*



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