

RMRU NEWSLETTER

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE RIVERSIDE MOUNTAIN RESCUE UNIT, INC.
A VOLUNTEER NON-PROFIT CORPORATION
P. O. BOX 5444, RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA 92507
MEMBER OF THE MOUNTAIN RESCUE ASSOCIATION

Volume VII, Issue 4, April 1970
Editor, Jim Fairchild
Photographer, Bill Speck

COMING EVENTS ---

- 8 April, 1900, Board Meeting at Al Andrew's.
- 11 & 12 April, Ice Ax instruction for Sierra Club's Basic Mountaineering Course. RMRU is supplying instructors for this important training.
- 17 & 18 April, Rummage Sale (see article).
- 22 April, 1930, Highland Outfitters, Regular Meeting. An important meeting for every member: annual elections; details on training session; late report on imminent ordering of the new truck.
- 24-26 April, Martinez Mountain desert training session.
- 2-3 May, California Region-Mountain Rescue Association Seminar at Idyllwild.

SEARCH AND RESCUE ACTIVITY ---

17 March, search in Sedco Hills. Our Riverside County Sheriff's Dept. called at 1815 requesting that we meet at the Elsinore Sub Station. Mrs. Cheryl Reichert, age 74, had wandered away from her home in the rolling hills about five miles southeast of Elsinore. Following a lengthy search by her husband and friends she was reported missing. Detective Clark Kane went out to ascertain the problem and do some tracking. RMRU was soon called, we rolled, we soon were in the field. A scent article was used to fire Sugar, our veteran Bloodhound, and the search was on. Sugar went along a dirt road while several parties of searchers deployed at logical points. Some visual tracking was done in connection with tracks said to be hers, but turned out to only be very similar after we saw the shoes she was wearing. After a few hours of scaring up deer, owls, and quail, we re-grouped for new assignments. Just then a report came via radio that Cheryl was seen at the intersection of Cottonwood Canyon Road and Bundy Canyon Road. We were soon there (about three airline miles southeast of the original search area) scanning for tracks. Nothing at first, then Bill Briggs and Jake Johnson found faint sign on the southerly road. It was a bit humorous to see four orange-shirted RMRU men and Lt. Russ Hawk huddled close, shining lights on the track, slowly disappearing over the hill in moonlight, with a Sheriff's patrol car close behind. They continued for a couple miles until entering a canyon where the tracks disappeared in the leaves of a trail. They bivouaced for an hour until dawn. Another party of us were searching a bit west of them. At dawn Sugar was re-fired and really pulled down the trail with most of us in pursuit, spread out to detect tracks, or, "There she is!" Ed Hill was with Walk Walker as he was following Sugar, looked back past a bluff above the small creek, and spotted Cheryl lying in the water. She was on her back, her skin pale white. "Is she alive," Jack Schnurr asked. In the few seconds it took us to gather we all wondered. Then Jack jumped down to her level and saw her staring back at him. We quickly and gently lifted her out of the water, Phil Moedt and I stripped to "T" shirts and provided body heat while Jack and Ed massaged hands and feet, Walt and others piled on parkas. Leon Barris ran down to a bulldozed road to find the shortest point of pick-up for the ambulance, Bill, Art and Jake ran back to the truck for the rescue sleeping bag and litter. Cheryl's color came back into her face as she warmed. We had slipped off her sog-

gy slacks (she had already removed her other clothes, as people of any age so often do in their final moments of life), then placed her in the bag, and began the carry to the road. During the litter carry Cheryl began to lose color and stopped breathing twice. Each time Walt tilted her head back and opened her jaw to restore breathing. Just as Leon had approached Bundy Can. Road, a patrol car passed, he radioed on the MRA frequency that this happened, Ron Harris radioed the patrol car via Sheriff's frequency to "turn around and get back down there." We heard the ambulance would be quite a while, but John Merrifield, an old Boy Scouting friend, got there very quickly. Cheryl was immediately on her way to the hospital with Walt in attendance.

Critique. Cheryl is alive today because we have a willing Bloodhound, a lot of skillful human trackers, an effective radio system, and a most cooperative Sheriff's Dept. Lt. Hawk, with whom we've worked many times in the past, hiked, tracked and bivouaced with us. Capt. Crowell brought us hamburgers in the middle of the night. And then there was the exceedingly crucial informant, whom, I understand, is Lt. Hawk's wife. We figure Cheryl was in the 53 deg. water about two hours maximum, and would have perished within the next hour. If only she could have answered our calls earlier -- she suffers from deterioration (senility). Anyway, that afternoon she was able to talk to relatives.

23 March, search near Palm Springs Aerial Tramway. Monday was clear and balmy, a fine time for an outing at the tram. Mr. Seth Fessenden and his grandchildren, Christin Harley, age 7, and Jeffrey, age 5, arrived at the Mountain Station. They live in Placentia, California. Mr. Fessenden did not feel like hiking down the 200 yard path to Long Valley, so the children went alone, to play in the snow. After a while Christin returned without her brother. Mr. Fessenden notified tram people who notified the State Park Rangers. They looked around without success. The Sheriff's Dept. was notified and they in turn called RMRU. Jeffrey was last seen at about 4:20pm. Eight of us arrived at the Mountain Station just after 9:00pm. and went out in teams to search. Lt. Ed Brown manned base. Mike Daugherty and Dick Webster were assigned to go northerly from the valley and search the edges of the mountain where it drops off toward the desert, Jake Johnson, Jack Schnurr and I went westerly toward the water tank and ranger cabin, Walt Walker, Al Andrews and Leon Barris went into the valley. The night was clear, the moon was bright, we were reasonably sure Jeffrey had wandered over the edge in the Long Canyon area. We had to check all probabilities. About 10:00, "Base, 456." "Base, go ahead." "We have tracks." They were on the ridge overlooking Long Canyon about a quarter mile north of the stream. We started to converge. Soon Mike & Dick (radio #456) found Jeffrey's shoes. We all searched the ridge, following the wandering tracks, then lost them in a bouldery area above a cliffy face. Walt, Al, & Leon went to the tram station for Sugar. Bill Speck & Ed Hill had arrived then. Mike & Dick went over to search along the plunging stream. Jake and I stayed where we lost the tracks. We decided that to use Sugar would result in injury to dog and handler, and advised Walt. Then we looked for the umpteenth time down in the oaks and pines and snow -- there was a disturbance in the edge of the snow -- looks like a track. Jake came over, we descended fifty feet to the track and verified. By radio we advised Mike, Dick and Jack, who contoured around below. They came to the tracks 300' down. We followed the tracks making many detours and falling -- good old oak branches to hold on to! Joined the others, lost the tracks. Decided that Dick, Jake and Jack would descend left side of stream while Mike and I made a looping contour northerly. Used flares to keep oriented with each other. Getting hoarse from calling the boy's name. Mike and I circled back to ridge. The party



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Young five year old 'Jeffy' was loaded into the helicopter by members of RMRU and members of the San Diego Mountain Rescue Team. RMRU member Walt Walker adjusted the oxygen mask on the slowly breathing youngster just before the chopper departed Long Valley on its quick trip to the Desert Hospital at Palm Springs.



below decided Jeffrey was not below them and contoured north, ascending about two gullies over from our path, and 600' below. Mike and I built a fire for a one hour bivouac, the party below planned to do the same soon, waiting for dawn. "Base, 456." "Base, go ahead." "We have voice contact with Jeffrey, he's about 200 yds below us." Pow! Answer to prayer. This is why we're here, this is full payment for our efforts. It was 3:05am. Mike & I descend to help. Dick's jubilant voice comes in again when they reach Jeffrey to say he's in fine condition. They feel they can carry Jeffrey up, Mike & I find terrain rather more dangerous to descend than anticipated, so we stop. So does the party below. We decide a helicopter pick-up would be better. Jake and Jack look for a helispot while Dick carries Jeffrey on his back up the steep face through thick shrubbery and over class three pitches. Two hours later they find a "good" spot. It turned out to be a really scary place when dawn came. Earlier in the night a helicopter had been requested from Western Helicopters, Inc. in Rialto. We were told that Darrel Ellenberg would be piloting the Bell supercharged machine, a three-place helicopter that can hover and fly like a hummingbird. Elly has flown us on several previous missions and we work together well.

The tram station is at an elevation of 8500', the ridge Jeffrey went over about the same. He was found at about 7000'. The terrain is steep, cliffy, has lots of pine and oak trees and faces Palm Springs. When asked what he was doing descending the mountain Jeffrey answered, "I'm going down to a service station to get a map." The lights on the desert look deceptively close to adults, to children they must appear even more so.

Well, Jeffrey first jabbered a streak while being fed water and candy bars, and dressed warmly. On Dick's back he nearly went to sleep, at the helispot he snored. When dawn came Mike and I went up to Long Valley. Then Elly arrived at the Valley Station, Walt installed the radio and they flew up to make the evacuation. It was "hairy" to say the least. Over the radio we could hear terse, crucial messages. Then the machine came into sight, we popped a smoke flare, and quickly Walt was carrying Jeffrey up the path to the tram. Elly returned to make three more pick-ups and we all went up to the tram for rolls, orange juice, and coffee. We could not go down for a few hours because of maintenance work on the cables and other mechanism. Jeffrey was not breathing too well, an oxygen mask was put on and seven litres flow did not help much. The boy was too exhausted to breathe properly. We called Elly back as he was flying home, and he took Walt & Jeffrey to the Desert Hospital in Palm Springs. Even landed on the front lawn because the usual open lot was full of equipment. Of course, the lower altitude (455') was what Jeffrey needed.

Critique. In retrospect there isn't much we would change, except for more men. San Diego MRT had been called, they arrived at dawn and came up for refreshments and a tremendous talk fest. If Jeffrey had not been found they sure would have been needed. What got us to the boy in a reasonably short time was past experience, hunches, coordination by radio, and probably, the fact that bright moonlight permitted us to negotiate the terrain at all. Three years earlier we had an April training session up there when we descended Long, Hidden Lake, and Tahquitz Canyons. We said we would not send teams down that terrain at night. But, when a little child needs us, what else can we do but try? Our sincere thanks to all who helped: Lt. Brown; tram manager O.L. McKenney; Western Helicopters and Darrel Ellenberg.

Thoughts. Two lives saved in six days. People 69 years apart. We think of our Sustaining Membership that provided funds to purchase our excellent radios that were so crucial. With about two more we'll really be on top of the communication situation. We think of the quick, unquestioning cooperation everyone gives us. We think of the relieved husband



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Letters to the Editor
Los Angeles Times
Times Mirror Square
Los Angeles, California 90053

Gentlemen:

My five year old grandson was lost in the rough and ice covered mountains above the Palm Springs Tramway for about ten hours Monday night. About three thirty in the morning the searching members of the Riverside Mountain Rescue Team found him on a ledge leading to a 150 foot drop. He had lost his shoes some miles back, and how this group of dedicated men could trace his tracks to find one small boy in that vast wilderness seems to me nothing less than a miracle.

From the top of the mountain he had seen the lights of Palm Springs some twenty miles away. In his words, "I was hunting for a filling station to get a map so I could find my way back." He could not have survived. About two in the morning the San Diego Rescue team and a helicopter was called to aid as soon as it would become light enough. Both came.

Jeffy's last tracks were found at the top of a steep ravine. Men from the Riverside Unit continued to search in crevices and behind rocks. Shortly after three voice contact was made, and the men worked their way to him. The character of the area was such that it would be best to try to keep him warm in that position and wait for helicopter rescue. One team stayed at the top of the ridge and another stayed with him. Even when the helicopted came, there was room for only one runner to settle on a boulder. From this position he was rescued and returned to the lodge. Two more trips were necessary to return the rescue team, while others could not be reached and had to return on foot. Jeffy's socks were in tack except for the feet, the bottoms of which were worn away.

His exposure and his probable let down resulted in such shallow breathing at the lodge elevation that even oxygen administered wasnot effective. The helicopter was called again to take him to the hospital in Palm Springs. By the time he reached there he was doing fine with a primary interest in food. Now, two days later, he is back to "normal" except that he is walking a bit gingerly on two pretty sore feet.

Kids can apparently stand a lot, but I know were it not for such Mountain Rescue Units, neither Jeff nor many others would live to prove it. There was no charge, but frankly I have never spent monay with greater pleasure than to donate enough to become a patron and a life member of these rescue teams. Where my faith in human nature was beginning to dwindle, I now have an unswerving conviction of the goodness of man.

Sincerely yours

Seth A. Fessenden
Professor of Speech

and grandfather. But that's all past now. We'll use the additional experience, hopefully, to find and care for the next subjects of our search. A parting shot -- when someone's lost or hurt, don't wait, call us now.

EQUIPMENT NOTES ---

We now have eleven of the superb first aid belts we sold out some time ago. They hold four to six pounds of first aid necessities and/or gear for hiking or climbing. Every unit member has one, but anyone may purchase one or more. Contact Fairchild.

During the Jeffrey Harley mission we used six flares fired from our pencil flare guns. They were crucial in coordinating the search. A good item for SAR members.

PAST TRAINING ---

At the 18 March meeting Dr. Norman Mellor finally was able to give us the perforation practice, hypodermic syringe stabbing, whatever. We anticipate this will be a most valuable skill. But, haha!, the Old Roadrunner was lecturing on Desert Travel & Survival at the Sierra Club's Basic Mountaineering Course, hence, missed the fun. All to no avail, because Walt sez he'll conduct another session for those of us who missed.

Our winter training session apparently came at a bad time for most members, because only five made it at all. Speck, Mickelson, and Fairchild hiked in to camp at the top of Christmas Tree Hill on Friday night. This is several hundred feet above South Fork Meadow on the north slope of Mt. San Geronio. Camp was at about 8600' el. The next morning during breakfast Dick Webster and his father, along with Steve Bryant, came puffing briskly up the snowslope. We climbed together into the Big Draw at about 10000' el. We dropped packs and climbed up a steep face of snow, but it was too soft for really good ice ax arrest practice -- the purpose of the training. We packed on up and climbed the third coulior left from the Big Draw, then went over to the peak (11500') for Saturday night's camp. The temperature never went below 25 deg. F., the wind abated to just a breeze, the moon was full, we spent a most enjoyable night. In the morning we had a leisurely descent through spectacular scenery, talking to quite a number of skiers going up to use the Big Draw.



The Road

Runner sez-

While we never make mistakes, we occasionally err. Like last month the newsletter was listed as Issue 3, Feb. 1970. Should have been March. It is an ever present problem to get the newsletter ready to print. A whole month between issues seems like plenty of time, but events like rescues, lectures, educational programs, emergencies at work, and other unplanned occurrences cause us to be madly typing at deadline time.

We should recognize and sincerely thank the various employers who make rescue operations possible during work hours. A few of our members can take off from work most of the time, the rest vary on down to none of the time. But if there were no employers who would let us off, people would die in the wilderness. It's that simple. Some men will search all night, then go to work. Others are in business for themselves or in partnership and must make up for time lost, as must a number of men employed by firms. When others of us leave the job, our fellow workers split our tasks. Many past rescue efforts, as well as the two reported in this issue were successful because enough of us could get off work. We are sure our readers now realize how many people must cooperate in order that those of us who

actually reach the victims may get there at all.

Speaking of getting there, we followed the old rescue truck down to the tram on the last rescue. It struggled up Box Springs Grade at 40 mph., and through the Badlands at 35 mph. Downhill it may reach the posted speed limit. If we can obtain the new truck soon we can haul more equipment faster and more dependably. It's a plain fact that this will make our efforts more efficient and effective, especially faster.

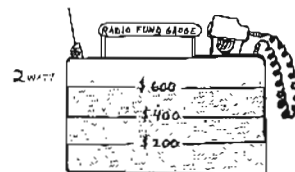
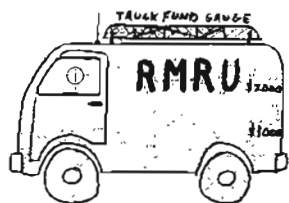
HURRY! HURRY! HURRY! Your last chance to get rid of anything you wish to donate to our Rummage Sale. It will be held at Shamel Park, 3650 Arlington Ave., Riverside, Friday, April 17 -- 9am. to 6pm. and Saturday, April 18 -- 9am. to 1pm. Tell all your friends. Tickets to help supplement rummage sale proceeds are being sold for a chance at a free dinner... .25¢ a ticket or 5 tickets for a \$1.00. The following restaurants in Riverside have been kind enough to donate dinners:

The Holiday Inn	Gay & Larrys Mexican Restaurant
Gerards French Restaurant	Petruzzello's Continental Cuisine
Selectors Epicurean Dining	

If you are interested in purchasing a chance and do not know any team member to contact, please write to RMRU, P.O. Box 5444, Riverside 92507. Next month at this time we hope to be able to say "RUMMAGE SALE BIG SUCCESS".

SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP

For those of you who are new readers of our newsletter, here are a few notes about our sustaining membership. RMRU's financial support is acquired entirely from our regular and sustaining members. Our regular members are those who have the time to get out and do the actual search and rescue work. Our sustaining members are best described as people who have an interest in the service of our organization, but for one or more reasons are unable to actively participate. They are, however, a very important group within RMRU, as their financial support is very essential to the life of our unit. As a sustaining member you have an opportunity to play a supporting role in a genuine life-saving enterprise. Your annual donation, 100% of it, goes to pay for unit radios, vehicle, ropes and other technical gear, their maintenance and repair and for other unit operational costs. This month we want to welcome Dr. & Mrs. Jay Wallis, Mr. & Mrs. Bruno Reichert, and Summit Magazine as new sustaining members. We also want to thank Mr. & Mrs. Hefferlin and Mr. & Mrs. Devalon for renewing their memberships. -- Al



The month of March has been most rewarding for members of RMRU in that we were trained and ready when we were needed. Two human beings are alive today because we the regular members believe in what we do and train together as a team. One or both of them might not be alive if you the Sustaining members did not have the faith you do by supporting us with the funds to purchase the equipment, especially the radios we use each mission. I only hope that you too feel the same reward we do each time a life is saved.

One of America's astronauts stated that each time the U.S. flag passed before him he got goose bumps and was proud of it. I'm also proud to say

the same thing happen to me. This past month I felt goose bumps all over and it wasn't because of old glory. It happened because I was proud to be among the members of a very great bunch of guys and what they did. When Cheryl was found lying in the water, the men of RMRU exploded into action, and each and everyone of them did his job as a professional. I believe that's doubly great because we are all only volunteers.



The photograph to the right was taken by team photographer Bill Speck who has that great talent for catching the mood and feeling of what is happening. Once again he had done it.

The girl is Christin, sister of five year old Jeffy who had just spent a night out in the wilderness of the San Jacinto Mountains. She was watching her younger brother sip a cup of hot chocolate after being reunited at the top of the tram.

The night before she had walked back down the long walk to Long Valley with us and showed us where her brother and she had played in the snow before being separated. At that time she seemed much older than her years of seven and wanted very much to help.

As can be seen in the photograph, she is seven, and very happy to see her brother alive and well. We too, of RMRU, although more than seven were most happy to see 'Jeffy' alive and well. - Pres. Walt