

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

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COMING EVENTS ---

11 November, Board Meeting, 1900, at Mike Daugherty's.

18 November, Regular Meeting, 1930, at Hall of Records, 4080 Lime.

20-22 November, Training, Joshua Tree National Monument.

Trng. Chm. Ed Hill is reserving a campsite for the unit. After breakfast Saturday we work on raise & lower systems. After lunch we practice on multi-pitch problems. Sunday is optional, most of the men plan to climb in the area. Try to make it out there for Friday night and thus cheat the smog two nights. Details at regular meet.

2 December, Board Meeting.

9 December, Regular Meeting.

12 December, Helitac training. Practice your PLF's, and splinting!

RMRU's VAN COMPLETED!



SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP ---

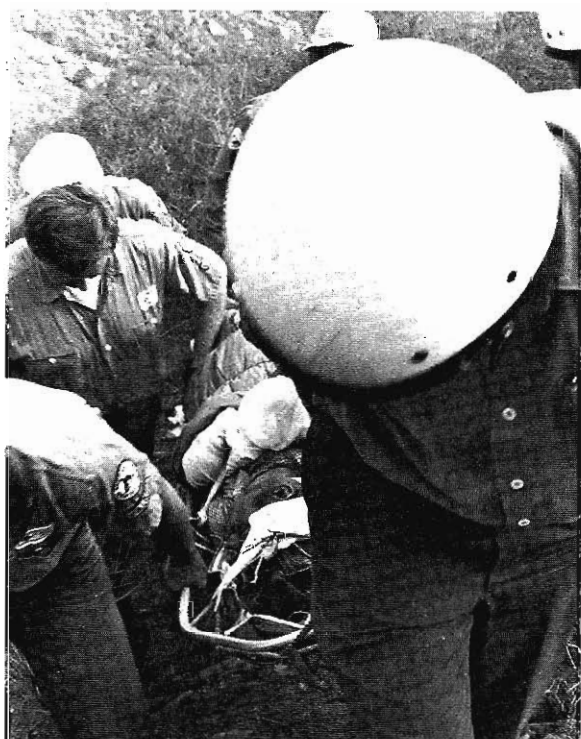


We are once again asking our Sustaining Members to provide financial support to increase the size of our radio network. The team has, in recent months, grown to 30 members which is twice the size that our radio network was designed to support. It is true that not all members go on each and every mission, and therefore, we do not need to double the present quantity of 5 handi-talkies to 10, but instead plan to add two HT's to the network. The wattage size of these units has not been selected as of this date, but should be settled at the next board meeting. Whatever be the results of the wattage selection, the price tag will be very close to \$1600 for the two units. We sincerely hope both

past and present sustaining members will be able to support this project; and speaking of new members we want again to thank the following people for their very generous donations: Mr. & Mrs. Harold E. Carlson, Mr. Jay W. Wiley, Robert Bingham, M.D., George Ruptier, and renewing memberships of Mr. & Mrs. Fred Camphausen, Miss Elsie Albrecht and Miss Louise Kempf. -Al

SEARCH AND RESCUE ACTIVITY ---

6 October - Evacuation - Rancho Capistrano - 7032



Gary Wright and Michael Cox of Huntington Beach were on a drive to look at land in the Santa Ana Mountains. They were on an exceptionally rough 4-wheel drive vehicle road a few miles south of Rancho Capistrano which is nearly five miles east of the Ortega Highway, along the crest of the mountains. The area is roughly south of Lake Elsinore. Gary was driving his red, four-wheel-drive Nissan Patrol vehicle down a very steep incline where other similar vehicles had gone. The hillside was made of dirt and loose rock and covered with brush. A thirty degree angle was about average. Mike, not liking the looks of the "road", got out at the top to walk. A couple hundred yards down Gary stopped while traversing, a rear wheel had started to slip over the edge. Mike was walking along near the vehicle. As Gary tried to maneuver back onto the road the little vehicle slid further and then rolled over. It probably rolled over at least ten times before Gary came out about 325 feet down. The machine con-

tinued on down, coming to rest another 200 feet below. Mike thinks the accident occurred about 1000 hours.

Mike hiked back to Rancho Capistrano and told the caretaker who called the U.S. Forest Service, who called the Highway Patrol. This sequence we just assume. Finally the Riverside County Sheriff's Department was called, they called RMRU at 1230. Lt. Russ Hawk and Detective Clark Kane rolled to the scene, taking the department's jeep to the top of the fateful grade. The

USFS men were all for bringing Gary up without a litter, to a nearby heli-spot. Hawk and Kane stopped this.

Just as I had started a bowl of soup the Elsinore sheriff's sub-station called and I immediately started the RMRU telephone call-out procedure. After a hurried trip to Elsinore I discussed the situation with the deputy on duty. I had no sooner finished and Ron Harris and Bernie McIlvoy rolled in. They both loaded gear into my station wagon and we departed. When we arrived at the turnoff just past the Ortega summit, Ron and I put the RMRU arrows up. When we got to the Rancho Capistrano main gate we repeated the arrow procedure. We expected to find a sheriff's car nearby. Since none were to be seen, we started driving the winding dirt roads of the new subdivision. Ron spotted a black and white parked quite a ways up a side canyon. We sped on over only to find a deserted and locked CHP car. We started back out to the main gate to set up more arrows. As we slid around one corner we spotted Jim Fairchild doing the same but coming towards us. Art Bridge and Tom Dadson were with him. As we related the situation to the newcomers, the chop, chop of a bird could be heard approaching. However, it passed us by and headed on towards the CHP car and then disappeared over a distant ridge. As we all muttered niceties, we drove over to the end of a graded road. We scouted around and found a perfect helispot and readied gear since we were sure the bird would return.



Ron Harris and Walt Walker examine Gary Wright, injured 4-WD driver. Monitoring a victim's blood pressure is one of the ways you can keep an eye on traumatic shock.



Walt, Tom Dadson, Ron and Jim Fairchild make a final check as the bird comes in to land. RMRU's new oxygen system is pictured in the foreground.

Ten minutes later the bird was back and the pilot asked Jim for "two jumpers." Ron and I piled in. After a short flight we rounded a ridge and got a good look at the accident. We were impressed, as there was debris scattered from the top down to the battered ball of metal. Ron and I jumped out and hurried down to the victim. Gary was unconscious and his neck was draped around a broken off branch. His breathing was very noisy and dried blood covered his nose and mouth. We suspected head, neck and possible internal injuries. Ron also got a reading of a fractured pelvis as he made the digital examination. While Ron was examining I worked at taking life signs. All this time the bird had been ferrying in men and equipment. When Art, Bernie, Tom, Steve Bryant, Bill Speck and Ed Hill were on hand we lifted Gary into the stokes litter. We zipped up the rescue sleeping bag, tied him into the litter and lugged him up to the helispot. The Western Helicopter's bird landed and Gary was secured to the outside and we were off. While we were flying towards the Circle City Hospital in Corona Gary vomited up blood into the oxygen mask and blew it off. With Gary loaded on the outside and myself riding next to him the bird's center of gravity was off. The pilot had very little control towards the right, and we needed to land so I could tend to Gary. The pilot found an open area and greased the bird in. As we slid to a stop I jumped out and aspirated the vomitus, cleaned out the oxygen mask and climbed back in. We were immediately airborne and shortly could see team physician, Dr. Norm Mellor, signaling us with a mirror. We landed in an open field and Gary was hurried to the emergency room. At this writing, four weeks have passed, and Gary has had two operations and continues to remain unconscious. -Walt Walker

13 October - Search - San Jacinto Mountains - 7033

We received the call at 9 p.m. from the Riverside County Sheriff's Office that Danikar Rajan "Denny" was missing on an overnight hike into the San Jacinto Mountain high country. At midnight we rendezvoused at the Idyllwild Sub-station, then went to Dr. Mellor's "Sky Yacht." At an early hour Saturday we dispatched teams to search Tahquitz Canyon below Caramba, Little Tahquitz Valley and the stream on down to Caramba, and the Willow Creek Crossing area on out to Hidden Lake and Desert View. As the relay on the Tahquitz Palisades above and to the west of the search area I was most pleased with the quick and efficient manner all parties covered their assignments. Only one problem, Denny had successfully descended Tahquitz Canyon and come into Palm Springs. Our team in the rugged area below Caramba had his tracks, but were not convinced because of the slight traces left in gravelly sand. We were about to search with the helicopter coming in from Western Helicopters, Inc. of Rialto, but a few minutes before the bird arrived we got word of the young man's appearance in Palm Springs.

- Jim Fairchild

17 October - Big Rock First Aid

Several miles south of March Air Force Base at the site of the Perris Dam development is a popular practice rock climbing area named Big Rock. Big Rock's proximity to Riverside makes it an ideal day adventure for the local climbers not wishing to make the long drive (hike??) to Tahquitz Rock. The one hundred and seventy foot rock wall faces west to capture the sun's rays during the prime climbing time of the day between twelve noon and four o'clock. Because of varied difficulties of the climbs at Big Rock, the area attracts many climbers of numerous degrees of proficiency. Although generally crowded, Big Rock is a nice place to spend a day honing skills needed for the challenges of the greater climbing areas.

Saturday afternoon, while bouldering with some of the Big Rock Boys, Bernie McIllovy and myself became interested in a climber that was approximately seventy-five feet up a moderate climb called "Overs." The climber had run out a thirty foot lead with his last protection a bolt about forty-five feet above the ground. The leader had fifteen feet of easy to moderate climbing to do before he reached a large ledge. The leader could have placed a piton at his present position if he had one. As the leader moved off a fairly secure foothold we all watched him negotiate the crux difficulty and move towards easier climbing. Suddenly he appeared to slip and down he came sliding feet first. He slid about sixty feet ending up about ten feet from the bottom of the rock. Examining the climber we found severe hand, arm, elbow, leg and knee abrasions with deep rope burns in the palms of his hands where he slowed his fall by gripping the rope. I cleaned and dressed the injuries while Phil Haney climbed up the rock to retrieve the gear left by the unfortunate climber. Soon both climbers were on their way home.

The climber had taken no pitons to protect this climb although there is an excellent place to protect the crux difficulty with a two inch bong-bong piton. Had he placed a piton before tackling the last fifteen feet his fall would have been very minor, instead he sustained painful, slow healing injuries. Big Rock might not be as gigantic as Tahquitz Rock but it can still be dangerous and good judgment is in order. - Jack Schnurr

25 October - Search - Whitewater Canyon - 7034

Sunday evening Jim Fairchild received a call that a scoutmaster and three boys were overdue from a planned descent of the North Fork of the Whitewater. After a number of calls between many different parties it was decided to meet at the Whitewater Fish Hatchery at 0500 Monday morning. A small group met in the early morning darkness and discussed the situation, formulated a plan and all but myself started up the canyon.

As the morning wore on and communications went downhill it was decided air support was needed. Since we were not working with any agency we rented a plane and started searching from the air and re-established communications with our ground parties. Shortly thereafter, our ground parties met up with the group descending the canyon. Everyone was fine, they just underestimated the difficulty of the canyon. RMRU hiked out with the group and everyone was back to the cars by 1130. -Walt

(Ed. Note: This call came as the result of the overdue group's leader having made arrangements with a friend exactly when and how to report them missing. The informant, Jack Nelson, is our Boy Scout Council's backpacking training man and a good friend of ours. Hence, he educates scout leaders to leave their itinerary and expected time of return. Although we were sure that everyone was fine, we felt morally obligated to hike in just in case someone was sick or injured. This is also why we rented the plane. If you have never rented a medium sized light aircraft, then you have no idea how expensive they are. Price 'em sometime.)

24 - 25 October, Training Mission - San Jacinto Wild Area

Seven thirty Saturday morning, thirteen of us met at Dr. Mellor's cabin in Idyllwild. We broke into teams to hike into Round Valley by various routes. Our route was up the Seven Pines Trail to Deer Springs and then over Marion Mountain to Round Valley.

We quickly found that the Forest Service had closed the roadhead by simply

chaining off all access roads. So we decided to substitute the recently completed Fuller Ridge Trail for the Seven Pines Trail. Other teams had similar problems. Bill Speck and Dick Caffroy found themselves hiking an extra mile and five hundred feet of elevation gain because their road was washed out.

The Fuller Ridge Trail takes you through some spectacular country, but the trail switch backs down and around what seem to be every boulder on the ridge. When we reached Deer Springs, we decided to climb Marion Mountain.

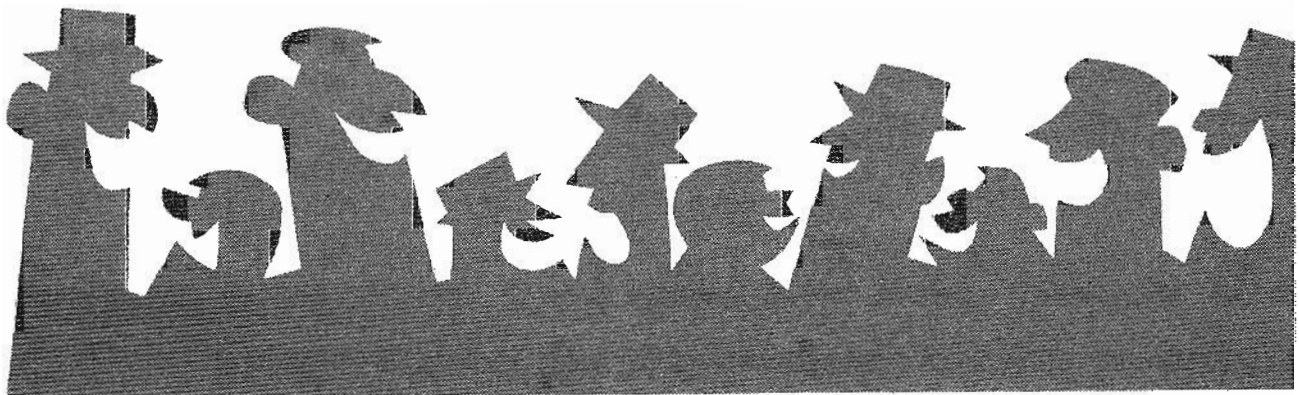
We soon found ourselves on a ridge with a great many false summits. Walt Walker in Little Round Valley wanted us to be a relay, and kept asking us if we were on top. We kept replying that we had the summit in sight and would be there shortly. Our next transmission was, 'Oops, we are not there yet, but we have the true summit in sight.....'

The true summit was cold and windy. Dick Webster, Steve Stevens, and I quickly signed the summit register and started down the other side toward Round Valley. We were the last team to arrive.

After supper, we met with the winter ranger, Phil Claud, and laid the basis for closer co-operation. We all benefitted from the exchange of viewpoints and ideas on how best to handle emergency cases on the mountain.

The team was supposed to bivouac Saturday night to try out bivvy gear. Most of us had either half bags or light weight sleeping bags. Bernie McIlvoy tried out his Royal Robbins hammock while Dick Caffroy experimented with a space blanket. The wind howled all night, and both Bernie and Dick discovered that they needed more insulation.

On Sunday, we traded car keys and hiked back to the various roadheads. We had to go cross country to Saddle Junction and out the South Ridge Trail. We had a long walk but were rewarded by the fantastically beautiful scenery. I have seldom seen the wild area so beautiful. We had two clear cold days, while the lowlands were covered with clouds. -Ed Hill



At a recent Board Meeting the following conversation was overheard:

Walt: "Our newsletter mailing has become so big compared to the number of Sustaining Members that we've got to cut it down."

- Al: "You mean Sustaining Members who are current--have donated within the past year?"
- Walt: "Yes. I've noticed that for the last two or three months the newsletter printing and postage costs have taken a huge bite out of our income."
- Jim: "Let's put a separate insert into the next newsletter reminding our Sustaining Members that their membership is supposed to be on an annual basis...."
- Walt: "Well, I don't know, that sounds like 'dunning' -- they might not understand."
- Jim: "Sure they will. Most of them probably forgot exactly when they made their last donation and would appreciate the reminder. They undoubtedly still believe in our kind of operation and know that it's their money that got us where we are materially."
- Al: "O.K. That's fine by me, but I haven't time to write something...."
- Mike: "Sounds like time for a Roadrunner Sez, 'RMRU's effectiveness in the field has been greatly enhanced by the acquisition of a new van and radios made possible by our kind Sustaining Members,' for instance."
- Jim: "The old Roadrunner would also say, "Just this year our call-outs have increased substantially as has our income. Funny thing, though, our need for further material purchases increases too."



The Road

Runner sez-

Of late we've been tossing out various serious and humorous ideas on how to prevent errant solo hikers from going down the hazardous but alluring Tahquitz Canyon. The last two men who started down were overdue, we were called to search for them, then they came out OK at Palm Springs, were lucky (SSS = scrambled sentence structure). Anyway, we might put up a barbed wire fence; install signs that say, "Beware, mad hippies ahead," "Go back, lives are lost in this canyon," "RMRU says, 'Make us beneficiaries of your insurance,'" or, we might install a vibration activated tape amplifier that states the gross folly of attempting the descent; skulls placed on sticks might get the message across; or, a state highway sign with slight change in wording, "Not a through canyon." The two recent successful descents are no assurance that the next one won't be a case of exhaustion, injury, and stranding as has been the result in the past.

Suppose you are the Operations Leader for a difficult mission. Fifteen men arrive, ready for action. You must know each man's previous experience, strengths and weaknesses, abilities on technical terrain, in tracking, first aid, and so on. Assignments must be made in the light of what you know. Would it not be much easier for you if every RMRU member continuously and diligently sought to improve his present skills and develop new ones so you would have fewer negative considerations when making assignments?

An interesting contest between two schools of thought is in progress within the unit. One school believes that to add more men to the unit will increase the number of men who show up for missions, the other school maintains the belief increased numbers can reduce dedication to the cause and thus a static number of participants results. So far, the second school is right, unfortunately. This is not to say we ought not to add new men because we have a number of fine SAR people who joined just this year. Rather, it's just saying that there's a tendency to think (when the phone rings for a call-out) "Let George do it." There's no one in the unit by that name!

Finally, we state most sincerely that our Sustaining members are appreciated vividly every mission when we have dependable, quick delivery of SAR necessities by means of our new van. Our efforts are more efficient and effective

because of the excellent radio network bought purchased over a three-year period. We experience a profound need for at least one more radio on most missions because of the relay requirement. However, since the purchase of the van and small 5-Watt radio our income has nosedived spectacularly so we've not even met our budget for operations, much less made capitol acquisitions.



Once again RMRU, team photographer, Bill Speck has done his usual great job in bringing newsletter readers some of the action from a current rescue mission. We sincerely hope that you can feel some of the drama that occurs on the tougher missions through Bill's fine photography. You the Sustaining Member make our life saving missions possible and we want to communicate that to you.

At recent board meetings I have been on the side, more members on the roster, more men in the field. However, I'm now changing over to the other side. Let's have fewer but more active and dedicated members. I sincerely believe that some of you regular members are spoiled. If the mission doesn't sound exciting when you receive the call, it's easy to make excuses. Every mission RMRU is called on has the potential of saving life and if you're not ready to except the run of the mill searches along with the quick moving rescues then I don't believe you have the right spirit to call yourself a RMRU member. At the next meeting you will be handed a slip of paper and on it will be your percent of participation in meetings, training and missions. I sure hope you can be one of those that is proud to show it to your fellow member and say, "look at this!"

Recently some of the board members, including myself, have heard rumblings. If you the regular, however old or new, member don't like how the team is being run or want to suggest improvements, then come to the board meeting and get it off your chest. This is where the business of the team is transacted. I suggest that all members read their By-Laws and especially Article II, Section 1. As the team increases in size it becomes more important that we closely follow the By-Laws and policy decisions. -Pres. Walt