

# RMRU NEWSLETTER

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

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## COMING EVENTS ---

14 Board Meeting, 1900, at Bill Speck's.

21 October, Regular Meeting, Hall of Records, 1930.

This meeting will feature displays and discussion related to preparing for the winter season of wilderness activities, including SAR, naturally.

23-25 October, Training, San Jacinto Mountains Familiarization.

You'll note this session was switched from November, the Joshua Tree National Monument session will be held 20-22 November. It is our custom to conduct this familiarization weekend by starting small teams up all the trails Friday night and meeting on San Jacinto Peak from which we hike a ways to a high camp on Saturday night. Sunday we go out via different trails to the roadheads, pick up vehicles and rendezvous for supper and go home, or on the mission, whichever comes first.

11 November, Board Meeting.

18 November, Regular Meeting.

20-22 November, Training. (See above)

2 December, Board Meeting and Newsletter Mailing.

9 December, Regular Meeting

12 December, Helitac

We list the November-December dates because they must be earlier during the holidays.

Further, we really print these dates for the benefit of the members' participation in RMRU activities, assuming that all of us share the newsletter and annual activities sheet with our immediate and not so immediate relatives so they won't plan something for us to do during those dates. (Ed., how naive can you get?) (Very, Ed.)



Normally in September the mission load decreases rather sharply. However, that did not occur and RMRU participated in five more missions and rolled on a couple of aborts. It does appear though that we will be able to get this issue of the newsletter published on time.

We note with sadness the death of Ed Henderson, a pilot employed for the summer by Western Helicopters, Inc. of Rialto. He was flying Western's new turbine powered Alouette II during the recent rash of brush fires. The cause of the crash was not known as we went to press.

As you will find out by reading the rest of this newsletter one of our newer but most active members was injured while driving to a mission. Pete Carlson will be out of action for awhile. Let's all make a point of visiting Pete in the hospital. Details are in the 'Roadrunner Sez'.

## SEARCH AND RESCUE ACTIVITY ---

3 September Search, Hurkey Creek - 7027

Thursday, September 3 was only 15 minutes old when we got a call from the sheriffs' Dept. Two 16 year old boys were overdue on a hike from Hurkey

Creek camp ground. I drove over to Jim Fairchild's and put my gear in his truck. Then we picked up Steve Bryant and Mike Daugherty and left for the camp. We arrived at the camp ground at 0145. It is on the Palms to Pines Highway just North of Lake Hemet in the San Jacinto Mountains. Walt was there with the Rescue Truck and some other members of the team.

Walt and Mike went to talk to the two boys' friend who had reported them missing. It turned out they had gone on a hike two days before and had seen a peak they wanted to climb the next day. So on Wednesday, September 2, two of the boys went off to climb the peak. The boy left in camp could not tell us for sure which peak, just that it was North of the camp. We got to the point where they had left and found tracks. There was one set of tracks going out and one set coming back. The one coming back was from two days earlier when they took the first hike. The one going out seemed to be what we wanted to follow. There were also other sets of prints of other people which did not make tracking easy.

Seven of us went out in the field while Walt stayed as Base Camp Operator. After about 15 minutes we came to a place where we were not sure which way the tracks went. We then advised base that we were splitting into two groups. Jim, Steve and John Murdock in one group. Mike, Ed Hill, Steve Stephens and myself in the other. Jim's group went almost North, while we went northwest. After a while we were not sure if we still had tracks. We came upon a trail and decided to follow it and look for tracks. We stopped to look around and someone saw a dim light miles away. We immediately called base and asked if the boys had a flashlight or matches. It came back that they did not, but that there were cabins in the area and the light could be from one of them. We continued on till 0430 when we lost the trail and all tracks at a stream bed. So we bivouacked till dawn. During this time Jim's group was not doing much better and also stopped.

At 0600 as the sun rose Jim's group was up and going and had found tracks again near the Fleming Ranch. But they went in a circle and came right back where they found them. We had nothing and decided to join Jim's group again. Over hills and down gullies through tall brush most of the way we finally met Jim by a road. We were just deciding on which canyon or ridge of brush to go up when we got a call from base. The boys just walked into camp. What a relief! It was now 0830, and a beautiful day in the mountains was going to be 100% better for us. We sat down to wait for Walt in the big orange truck to come get us and take us to breakfast. After breakfast in Idyllwild we all looked up at the clear blue sky and wished we could stay the rest of the day. But no, back to hot smoggy Riverside. - Pete Carlson

4 September, Search, Idyllwild - 7028

About 4:30 pm. we received a call from the Idyllwild Sheriff's Substation requesting assistance in finding a young woman who had disappeared from the environs of Idyllwild about midday. As it developed, the circumstances surrounding her disappearance were a little unusual and suggested the possibility that drug usage might be involved.

As soon as Walt and Jim arrived they began working Sugar (Walt's tracking Bloodhound) and as other team members made their appearance they were put to work searching the area between town and the South Ridge trail of Tahquitz Peak. By nightfall, almost 20 RMRU men were involved in the search, the bulk of them forming a long sweep line which was proceeding north along the eastern boundary of town towards Humber Park. Shortly after 8 pm., men working on the sweep search heard faint calls for help originating from a point

north of the line. Hurrying uphill we soon found our 'victim', entirely dishabille and therefore quite cold. She had been wandering about the woods east and north of town since about noon and was, by her own account, still lost when we found her, although only about 200 yds. from the nearest residence. We provided her with vast quantities of down clothing and promptly delivered her to Sheriff's deputies. - Mike Daugherty

11 September, Technical Evacuation, Tahquitz Rock - 7029

On Friday, September eleventh, four Cal Tech graduate students were climbing the Fingertip Traverse on Tahquitz rock near Idyllwild. When they had reached the bushes at the bottom of the lieback pitch, they noticed that the thunderheads were starting to pile up and move toward the rock. Consequently they decided to retreat. Jay Wiley set up a belay so that the rest of the party could rappel down to the top of the third class pitch. As Peggy Dyer started her rappel there was a loud crash as a lightning bolt struck the rock about fifteen feet above Jay. The ground current from the bolt flung Jay face down into a pile of rocks. The bolt also started a small rockslide; one of the rocks struck Jay on his helmet. George Rossman and Bob Smithson, who were climbing with Jay, climbed back up and found him with a possible skull fracture and broken collar bone

The three of them climbed back down to the base of the rock. Peggy notified the sheriff, while George and Bob enlisted the help of the other climbers to bring Jay down in the litter stored at Litter Ledge.

Walt received the call at three thirty in the afternoon and notified the rest of the team. We started rolling toward Humber Park with all of our technical gear expecting the worst. Walt reached Humber Park first and went up to the rock right away with our collapsable litter and the rescue sleeping bag. A group of climbers at this point had succeeded in lowering Jay to the base of the rock. He had a laceration that later required 15 stitches to close. Walt gave him the necessary first aid and transferred him to the rescue sleeping bag. By then the rest of the team had arrived, and we started to evacuate him to Humber Park. When it became my turn to help carry the litter, I was very surprised to recognize Jay. I had climbed with him on a number of Sierra Club trips to the high Sierra. The trail is steep and slippery in places so we had to belay the litter at times and also pass it from group to group. By five fifteen we had reached Humber Park from which May was taken to the Hemet Hospital by ambulance.

The team enjoyed another good dinner at the Alpine Pantry restaurant provided by the Sheriff's Department. After dinner, I went to the hospital to see how Jay was doing. Fortunately there were no fractures, and he was able to return to Pasadena that evening.

This was one of those freak accidents that can occur whenever climbers and thunderstorms meet. The lightning bolt struck not more than two hundred feet up from the bottom of the rock. I would guess that the rock is about four hundred feet high at this point. The accident might have been prevented if the climbing party had noticed the thunderheads earlier and had started down. Fortunately Jay had been wearing his hard hat when he was hit by the rock. It made quite a dent in his helmet. Once again this shows the value of wearing a hard hat during technical climbs. - Ed Hill

15 September, Search, San Bernardino Mountains - 7030

On Saturday, 12 September, a group of mentally retarded people were enjoying an outing in the mountains. A young 10 year old boy, who was very retarded, became lost from the campground. The San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department conducted the search for the young lad. On the evening of the 14th they requested assistance from the California Region MRA teams. Teams responded from Altadena, China Lake, Montrose, Sierra Madre and RMRU. The entire area around the campground was searched in ever widening circles and finally on Thursday the 17th the boy was found. He was very dehydrated but otherwise in good condition. - Walt Walker

25 September, Search, Elsinore Area - 7031

On Friday afternoon, the team was called by the Elsinore sheriff's department to search for a lost sixty two year old woman. We were to meet at the sheriff's substation in downtown Elsinore. She had last been seen at home on Wednesday, and the informant told us that she had been carrying a long bamboo fishing pole.

Upon arriving at the sheriff's substation, I was shocked to learn that Pete Carlson, a new member in our unit, had collided with a Riverside County truck at a blind intersection and was in the Lakeview Hospital. I drove out to base camp which was about two miles out of town and relayed the news to Jim Fairchild and Mike Daugherty. Jim immediately left for the hospital to check up on Pete's condition. He subsequently told us that Pete had broken his pelvis and was resting comfortably. Having been in the hospital last December, I can sympathize with Pete's plight.

Near basecamp, there were a number of water filled sumps and a quarry half full of water. The quarry walls were vertical clay, and there were a number of ramps where you could hike down to the water. We immediately noticed that the water was quite deep close inshore, and if you fell in you would have quite a time getting out. Mike sent Ray Ross and John Murdock to search the small sumps while Bud White, Bernie McIlvoy, Ken Crowder and I search around the edge of the quarry. There were many places that would be much easier to search with a boat, so we asked the sheriff's department to get one.

When the sheriffs arrived with the boat, Bud, Bernie and two deputies began to search the lake. The rest of us began searching near a grove of eucalyptus trees just behind the quarry. We were in the grove when we heard over the radio that the victim had been found. Over on the northeast side, they had found the fishing pole floating butt end up with the body on the other end. Looking over at the north shoreline, they could see the skid marks where she had slipped into the water.

This was a grim end to a particularly grim rescue operation. First, we had had a team member get hurt, and we always hope to find our victims alive. Searching for bodies is an unpleasant task at best, but there is always the hope that if we can find them soon enough, they will still be alive.

Pete's accident has convinced me and I hope the rest of the team that we must drive with extra caution on the way to and from a mission. It is very easy to step on it and we all want to arrive at our destination quickly so as to commence our operation. We must realize that it is extremely foolish of us to take chances while driving to a mission. Also on the way home, we must not hesitate to pull over and take a nap if we feel sleepy. -Ed Hill

26 September - Training

September's training mission was held at Dr. Mellor's cabin at Idyllwild. Some members went up the night before to avoid the heat and the smoke from the numerous fires in the lowlands. The training was broken up into three parts. Dr. Mellor ran the team through mouth to mouth resuscitation and heart massage; Mike Daugherty discussed the team's oxygen system, and Don Ricker described the truck's interior and proper radio procedure.

We found that most of us were pretty rusty on mouth to mouth resuscitation and heart massage. Most of us had a tendency to work too quickly, thusly wearing ourselves out. The rhythms of one breath to twelve heartbeats if alone and one breath to five heartbeats if with a buddy should stay with us for a while.

Each team member had a chance to try out the various oxygen masks. We all became pure oxygen freaks even though I did not notice any change. Perhaps it was my stuffed up nose.

By the time we had finished going over the truck, each of us knew where most items of team equipment were stored. I am still amazed by the total amount of equipment that it takes for a rescue team to function effectively.

After a lunch break, we set out for our tour around Tahquitz rock. I decided to lead the team up the seldom used north side route. Shortly after leaving Humber Park, four of us in the lead were dumfounded to notice that the rest of the team was running downhill and back along the trail. Then the last man in our group yelled 'run'. We ran pell mell up the trail. It's not easy to run with a full call out pack on and a one fifty foot rope slung over your shoulder. When we finally stopped, John Murdock told me that we had been attacked by yellow jackets. I had inadvertently led the entire team directly over their nest.

Bud White was stung the worst. He was wearing a black turtleneck, and most of the yellow jackets went for him. He was stung about thirty five times.

We regrouped and continued up the north side route carefully avoiding the nest. We then hiked around the rock identifying the various routes. On the top, we pointed out the exits and looked around for good anchor points. It was five o'clock when we finally reached Lunch Rock. We went back to Dr. Mellor's where cold refreshments were waiting for us.

I would like to thank Dr. Mellor, Mike Daugherty, Don Ricker, Dick Webster, Mike Orr and Bernie McIlvoy for the help that they gave me in carrying out this training exercise. I would also like to apologize to those who were stung. I can only say that if I had seen the yellow jackets, I would have avoided that trail. Going back after Bud's hat, I almost stepped on the nest a second time, but at the last minute saw them flying in and out of a hole directly underneath the trail. - Ed Hill

NEW PARKAS ---

Because the September newsletter was mailed the same night as the regular meeting, it was impossible to announce to all members to bring \$30.00 for the parka, and to list their chest sizes, sleeve length, height, and weight. Nevertheless, we have seven firm requests, and anticipate that quite a number of additional men will wish to get in on this order. If only ten men wish to order, that's \$300.00, so don't forget the money because the person sending for them does not ordinarily carry that much loose change.



## The Road

Runner sez-

It was quite a shock when we were at the roadhead for the search where we found the lady drowned near Elsinore to have Ed Hill arrive and announce, "Pete Carlson won't be here for the search because he was in an automobile accident." It took a while

for it to sink in that he was struck by a truck at a blind intersection right in the town of Elsinore. Lt. Russ Hawk and I drove out to the Lakeview Hospital to see what really happened -- we had heard some odd reports. We walked into the emergency room and found Pete lying on a wheeled bed having just been X-rayed. He told us his pelvis was broken, he had bruises on a leg and arm, some minor cuts, but was in good spirits. I called his mother with the accurate report. Having driven past the wreck where both vehicles were still in place, we were impressed with Pete's having not been injured more extensively. The driver's door had been knocked off and while the vehicle was sliding and turning over Pete's left leg got out and under the VW van, but he got it out from under before coming to a halt, thus probably saving worse damage. Pete is an exceptionally capable and cooperative young addition to the team, he has not missed a mission this year except for one or two when he was climbing in the High Sierra. By the way, Pete was wearing his seat belt, now wishes he had more belts on. Because, at an extensive physical, he was found to be in the best condition of any RMRU member, we are confident of his full and speedy recovery. Pete will greatly appreciate visits! Parkview Hospital in Riverside, on Jackson St. just off Magnolia, visit 2-4 pm., 6:30-8 pm. Take Van Buren off-ramp from Riverside Freeway and follow signs.

In the department of "fact is stranger than fiction," we note that on a certain mission this last month more men turned out than for any previous. Would you hazard a guess as to which?

RMRU -- RU WINTERIZED? In the announcement of the October regular meeting we mentioned display & discussion on winter equipment. You might varnish the snowshoes, sharpen the crampons and check their bindings, and, do they fit that new pair of boots? Your ice ax could be sanded, linseed oiled, maybe sharpened, too. Would your down clothing and footgear keep you warm should be have a mission in near zero temperatures? During a blizzard? We missed that treatment on missions last year, so we could be caught off guard. How about your vehicle -- tires, battery, cooling system (anti-freeze), etc? These days, as we bake in 100 Deg. F. temperatures out in the sun, we tend to forget the sudden potential. Let's be ready.

### SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP

Our sustaining members can once again be proud of themselves for providing another piece of top quality equipment. The motorola AT-200 handi-talkie which we ordered in July arrived in time to be used on three missions during September. This 5-watt radio comes in a 28 ounce package and was specifically ordered for the technical rescues where weight and size is very important. It has and will continue to be used on search missions also. The following people can be just as proud for their part as those who have given in the past: D. C. Holmes Insurance Co.; Drs. Pitchford, Nelson & Mullen; Mr. & Mrs. Roger Peters; Mr. & Mrs. Robert Curnow; Advent Christian Conference of Southern California, and thanks again to the following for renewing their memberships this year: Dale O. Huseboe, D.D.S.; Mr. & Mrs. J. L. Daugherty; Izaak Walton League, Idyllwild Chapter; Mrs. M. A. Johnston and Mrs. Mary Pond Chapman. - Al Andrews