

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 ===

- 21 April, Regular Meeting, 1930 at County Hall of Records. Another year has passed and the Annual Meeting with elections is here. Dr. Norman Mellor plans to be there to give further instruction on CPR (Cardio-pulmonary resuscitation). The coming months will see the upgrade of standards for skills and participation of regular members, the requirements for becoming a probationary member have already become much more stringent. We can all show our sincere interest by attending the meeting. Then, in whatever position of leadership and responsibility we are elected or requested to carry out, we can directly contribute to RMRU's continuous improvement.
- 24 April, Technical Training, Mt. Rubidoux. Here's the exciting day when we will "perfect" our new ideas about the horizontal lift for the litter; train new members on rappelling, prusiking, piton craft, anchors, first aid on the face, how to conduct and lead technical evacuations, and many other skills. We will have a much needed equipment show and check-off after lunch. And, as we are doing nearly every training now, a mock mission. Other pertinent details at 21 April meeting.
- 12 May, Board Meeting, 1900 at Fairchilds', 4855 Central.
- 19 May, Regular Meeting. *Note the earlier date because of Memorial Day Weekend.*
- 21-23 May, Training, Climb North Face of San Jacinto Mountain. There's a pretty strong resolution about doing it without fail this month. Only a prohibitive flurry of real missions will result in a postponement.

Incidentally, a number of present board members who hope to be re-elected have dedicated every future Wednesday to some phase of RMRU activity besides board and regular meetings: Rubidoux-on-the-rocks; special meetings on standards, etc.; committee meetings to develop procedures; and other crucial facets directly related to the administrative and operational life of the unit. If every member resolves to take on some task, the results will be amazing. We must remember the rationale for our efforts -- *to more effectively help the poor soul suffering out in the wilderness.*

RMRU PEOPLE ---

Mike Orr lost a \$200.00 wrist watch given to him by his wife. Where, how? During the recent nighttime scramble down Dark Canyon on the search for the three girls. An intensive search the next day by Mike and friends failed to recover the watch. Bill Briggs has resign-

ed. He served with RMRU for about seven or eight years as an excellent technical climber, tracker, and fine companion. Bob MacPherson will soon move to the San Francisco area. He has been on many operations with the unit until recently when he moved to Costa Mesa. Dick Webster plans to take a teaching position at the Univ. of Arizona in Tucson, so will be moving in August. Dick too, will be missed as

a tremendously capable SAR man. There are many great memories of real missions and sport climbing with these men.

Steve Stephens has been drafted into the U.S. Army and will report on 13 April. We wish Steve a safe service and assume he'll return to RMRU upon completion. Jim and Jo-Anne Fairchild's son John has completed Machinist Repairman School for the Navy at San Diego and reports soon to Hawaii where he will be based. As an avid birder, he can hardly wait! A belated congratulations to Bud and Sue White's son Mike upon reaching the rank of Eagle in the Boy Scouts. Mike is quite an outdoorsman and a marathon runner. Art and Cappy Bridge have a son, Dick, in Webb School where he is maintaining an "A" average. And this school is accredited tops for private schools west of the Mississippi. Art Bridge, Don Rick-er and Fairchild of RMRU, the two boys mentioned above, go with a Sierra Club group to climb Picacho del Diablo (10,154') in Baja, California the week of 3-9 April. If we goof in our leadership, you'll read about the rescue in the next newsletter. Walt Walker, was awakened at 2 a.m. on a Monday by the crash of a vehicle into a concrete standpipe. He jumped into his sweatsuit (ready for the morning run), grabbed his first aid belt and flashlight and ran. He found one victim in the pick-up with serious face and head injuries. He prevented the victim from moving about until the ambulance arrived and then tried to go back to sleep.

MAGAZINE REVIEW ---

Well, not a review really, but a note on "True's" Hiking and Camping Guide (True Magazine Sports Series No. 10). Here is an entire issue on most of the facets of wilderness climbing, hiking, and camping. Overwhelmingly accurate information, most of the pictures bring back fond memories; the art-

icles really give a fine picture of what the wilderness is like, and what it's like to backpack there. The shortcomings and ensuing criticisms would be of interest to rescue people only.

SEARCH & RESCUE ACTIVITY ---

14 March - Rescue - #7105
Cottonwood Canyon

About 2:15 p.m. Sunday afternoon we received a call from the sheriff's substation in Banning requesting help in the rescue of a young man who had become stranded in the hills above Cottonwood Canyon in the San Gorgonio Pass area. A significant portion of the team was on Mt. San Gorgonio giving ice axe instruction to the Sierra Club's Basic Mountaineering Class, and so it was with some difficulty that we assembled a group to respond to the call.

From the roadhead, we could see Steve Miller (20) through field glasses. He had become stranded near the top of a steep, rotten chute which wound its way out of the bottom of one of the side canyons east of the main drainage. Dick Caffroy had arrived on the scene quite early and had the situation sized up. A deputy was in voice contact with the victim who was known not to be injured, and so it wasn't long before five of us, armed with two 150 foot ropes and a number of aluminum pickets, were on our way up the canyon.

By climbing the hillside south of the chute in which the victim was located, we were soon in position on a small knob immediately above the top of the chute. The victim was located in the center of the steepest part of the chute, about 30 feet below the top. The terrain on his right and left was either vertical or overhanging and above him rose steep ribs of precariously balanced rotten rock which awaited only the smallest excuse to go flying down the chute. As a first step, Pete Carlson gingerly lowered a hel-

met and a parka to the victim, who had been standing in the sun since 1 p.m. without a shirt on. After the helmet was on, he was instructed to tie into the lowering rope which was secured to a multiple picket anchor constructed by our chief engineer John Murdock. The next problem was to decide how to reach him. The enormous quantities of loose rock above him made it clear that we could not simply lower a man to him from above. So, I climbed down along the right hand edge of the chute and decided that the best plan would be to traverse to his position, tie him into my rope, and have the two of us lowered onto less steep ground. By traversing instead of being lowered, I hoped that the tension in the rope could be kept to a minimum so as to bring down the least possible quantity of debris. In any event, by traversing, all of the rockfall would be to his right until I was in a position to secure him below me on the rope and thereby protect him from rockfall. At this point, Mike Orr and Bernie McIlvoy arrived just in time to provide some badly needed additional manpower.

With Phil Moedt relaying signals from the edge of the chute, I began the traverse. Everything worked as planned until I was about 10 feet from the victim. At this point the "ground" between us actually became overhanging and so I had to be lowered about 10 feet to a point where I could continue a climbing traverse. Having reached a position below and a few feet right of the victim, I was hauled bodily over a small overhanging bulge and arrived at his side. As soon as he was tied onto the tail of the rope and swung into position below me, the two of us were lowered to a point from which we easily traversed right onto easy ground. In the process of the traverse and lowering, my helmet mysteriously accrued a few new dents and scratches, but we were able to keep the brand new Joe Brown helmet, which the victim was wearing, in its original unscratched condition.

Soon we were all back at the cars, accepting a generous donation from Robert Stern, the owner of the property, and shaking small pieces of rotten rock from our clothing. This operation was a good example of the threat which membership in a rescue unit poses to the individual member's domestic tranquility. I arrived home just in time to make apologies and say goodbye to the 7 dinner guests at my daughter's first birthday party. -

Mike Daughterty

27 March - Search - #7106
Fuller Mill Creek Drainage

Walking past the Sheriff's office in Idyllwild, Bernie McIlvoy and myself were stopped by a deputy asking "Don't I know you from some where?" We identified ourselves as members of RMRU and prepared for the inevitable. The deputy explained that he had a report of three missing girl scouts in the Fuller Mill Creek area and was in the process of checking the report before calling the team.

Bernie went to the Village Market to get Mike Daughterty and Mike Orr who were busy buying provisions for the remainder of our climbing weekend. A quick check at the girls camp found them still missing. RMRU was notified by the deputy while we prepared ourselves for a quick sweep down the top area of the Fuller Mill Creek drainage.

Since we were to be without communications we outlined our search area with the deputy so that he could notify the operations leader once the team arrived at the scene. We also set a two hour search time limit on ourselves so that we could return and get a radio once the rescue van arrived.

At approximately 1900 hours we started down the canyon, two searchers on either side of the stream. At 2030 we stopped and decided to return to base for a radio. A team without communication is useless for relaying or receiving informat-

ion, asking for help or responding to a call of help. We planned to search the high side or the south side of the canyon on our way out.

As we climbed up the hill, shouting the names of the girls, we received a faint response on the opposite side of the canyon below the spot where we decided to turn around. About 20 minutes of fighting heavy brush brought us to the girls position about half way up the north wall of the canyon. Some warm clothing, food and lemonade prepared them for the walk out.

As we traveled up the canyon towards basecamp, we met another crew led by Bud White coming down the canyon to hook up with us. An hours' hike got us back to the girl's camp.

Unfortunately during the search Mike Orr lost a \$200.00 watch, probably during our struggle in the heavy scrub oak area. We spent most of the next day looking in our search area to no avail. -

Jack Schnurr

28-29 March - Search - #7107 San Jacinto Mountains

The call came on Sunday night at about 9:45. An adult male was missing in the San Jacinto Mountains, possibly near Caramba Camp. Upon arrival at the Idyllwild Sheriff's Substation the team was informed that one John Mount had been hiking with three friends and that they had last seen him at the Saddle walking towards Caramba. When Mount failed to return to Humber Park that evening his friends reported him missing. The informants stated that their missing friend liked to hike cross country and had expressed an interest in going to Caramba Camp.

With this information, it was decided to put three teams in the field. One team was dispatched directly to Caramba to see if Mount was there or possibly had been there and had gone on down long and treacherous

Tahquitz Canyon. A second team headed by Jack Schnurr went up the trail leading to the tram, to Willow Creek crossing and then started down Willow Creek. The third unit was stationed on the ridge between Saddle Junction and Tahquitz Peak to check that trail and relay radio communication between base in Idyllwild and the other teams in the field.

Jim Fairchild's team found a group camped at Caramba when they arrived there. The campers had not seen Mount. In the meantime, Schnurr's team had found tracks made by shoes of the type Mount was wearing, going up Willow Creek. At this point everyone bedded down for a few hours sleep (2:30 to 5:30 a.m.).

At first light, Schnurr's team went back up Willow Creek following the tracks while Fairchild's team carefully checked out the Caramba area. The tracks were lost in the vicinity of the Willow Creek Trail Crossing and therefore the trail was followed to the tram station and that area checked. The other team in the meantime went cross country from Caramba to the Desert Vicw area.

By this time, a helicopter with Mike Daugherty in it had joined the search. The area between Saddle Junction and Caramba was checked from the air and then a careful search of Tahquitz Canyon down to the desert was made. On the return Little Tahquitz Valley was checked and two people were spotted. The helicopter landed and Mike talked to the two hikers, who turned out to be two of Mount's hiking companions of the previous day. They had good news--the three people who had been camped at Caramba had heard Mount yelling above Willow Creek crossing as they were hiking out cross country. He had joined them and was at that time going down the Devil's Slide Trail.

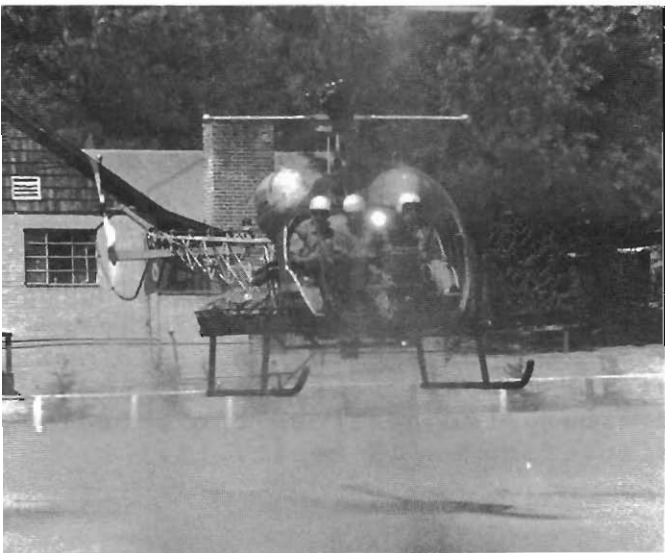
Daugherty flew out and met Mount at Humber Park. Mount had indeed gone up Willow Creek the previous day but had missed seeing the trail at

Willow Creek crossing and had gone on up and spent the night in a little known shack below Wellman's Cienega. He was going back down hill on Monday when he was intercepted by the hikers. Later he related that he was indeed lost and was trying to head towards Tahquitz Canyon for Palm Springs.



The first load of RMRU members lifts up at the upper end of Tahquitz Valley and Western Helicopter pilot Darrel Ellenberg gives the supercharged Bell full throttle to make it out of the high altitude clearing. - - - - -

The last load of RMRU members lands at the ballpark in Idyllwild. in the usual cloud of dust stirred up by the birds huge rotor blades.



The relay team of Murdock and Mickelson walked out while Schnurr's and Fairchild's teams hiked to Tahquitz Valley to be flown out by helicopter. - John Murdock

(Ed. note: the tracks Mount's shoes made were extremely indistinct, he walked mostly on pine needle duff or rock, so tracking was at best, very indefinite.)

MARCH TRAINING Technical - Strawberry Creek

This month's training session was a simulated climbing accident in Strawberry Canyon. Early Saturday morning, Steve Bryant and I called the rescue team and hiked into the canyon to set up our accident. Steve was to be an 'unconscious belayer' on a tiny ledge, and I was a 'fallen leader' with a head injury at the base of the cliff. A cold two and one half hour wait followed.

Eventually the team found us, and various members checked our 'injuries'. The first problem was how to move Steve off of his ledge. There was no room for his rescuers to stand on his ledge. A number of approaches were tried, but none were really satisfactory. At Walt's suggestion the problem was set aside to that afternoon.

The next part of the practice session involed tying me into a stokes litter and carrying me out over rough terrain. For me it was quite

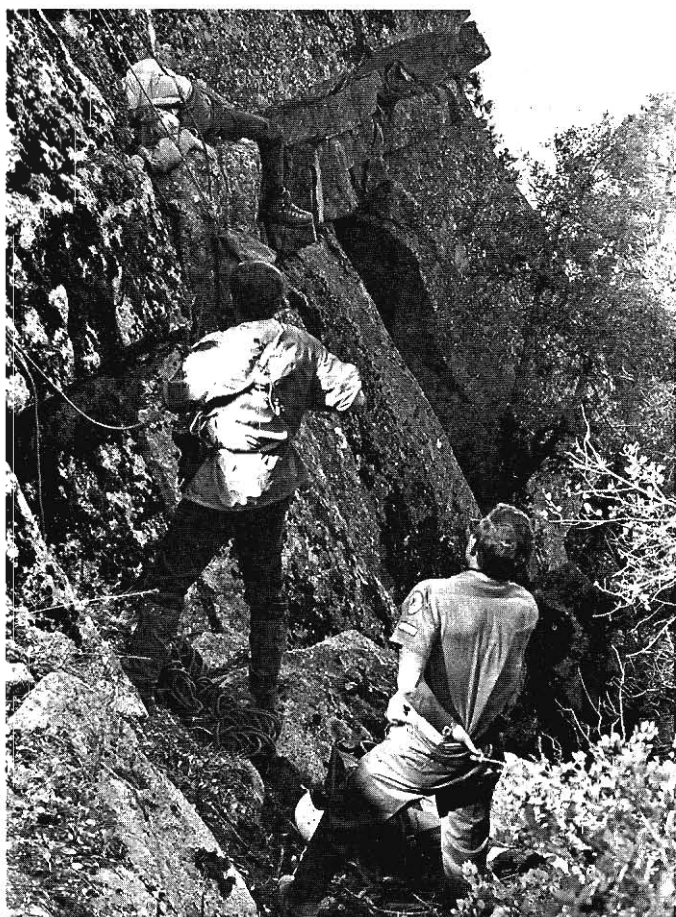


an experience. Every time I peaked over the side of the litter, it appeared as if I was looking right down into the bottom of the canyon. At the same time, it was good to know that these guys were professionals at this sort of thing.

After lunch, we worked on our small ledge problem and came up with a number of solutions. We also gave our new members some practice in using mechanical ascenders and prusik loops in climbing up a fixed rope.

The session was very instructive. The newer members had a chance to try their hands at being base camp operator, operations leader, and field team leaders. We all had the chance to work at our proficiency in technical rescue, an area where we never can get enough practice.

- Ed Hill



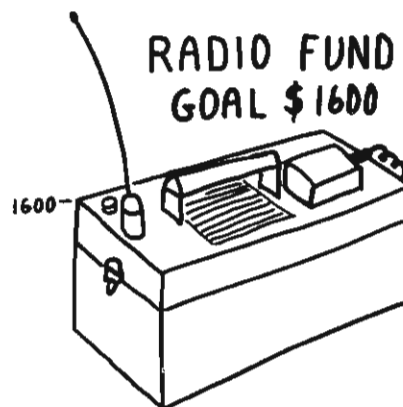
Simulated victim Steve Bryant can be seen in the upper right. Tom Dadson, center, prepares to climb up while Jack Schnurr looks on.

SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP

It is with great pleasure that we welcome eight new members to the sustaining membership: Mr. Frederick McNally, Mr. Theodore W. Morgan, Mrs. Camille S. Ware, Mr. Clifford E. Smith, Mr. & Mrs. Robert Stern, Sacred Heart Church School - Parent Teacher Group, Mr. & Mrs. Thomas A. Sater and Mr. W. P. Danforth. We sincerely appreciate your financial support. We also want to thank once again the following people for their continued support of RMRU:

Mr. John F. Gilbert, Mr. & Mrs. Peter Rathbun, Mr. & Mrs. J. LeRoy Dooly, Hemacinto Lions Club, Mr. & Mrs. George D. Shipway, Mr. James B. Fairchild, Mr. & Mrs. Theodore C. Pruess and Mr. G. W. Gardner. -

Al Andrews



(Ed. note: Please understand that Steve was evacuated from the ledge. It's just that the position he was in was worse than any we've encountered on past real operations, and we want to develop a really satisfactory method of getting a victim into the litter without causing undue pain or increasing injuries. Remember our premise on training stated in past newsletters, "make training tougher than the actual situations we'll meet....".)



The Road

Runner sez-

Changes are taking place in RMRU's requirements for membership. Already, under Mike Daugherty's leadership, the membership committee meets with applicants and thoroughly screens and informs them regarding expectations and obligations. This procedure has had quite an effect in recent months--fewer applications accepted, better informed applicants. Before long there will be a requirement that all new men prove a performance capability through backpacking and hiking. Then, during the probationary period, they must qualify within a broad and detailed scope of skills to become, let's say, "Search Members." For those desiring to operate on technical terrain there is another scope of skills, when satisfactorily achieved, will qualify men for "Rescue Member." A more formal and intensive training in first aid beyond the level now required will be available. An annual medical exam is another facet we're working on. Then, when this whole program is inaugurated, an annual review of the entire scope of skills will be required.

The above statement may be cause for concern, especially on how to get the training. Let's review how: unit training sessions will continue to be conducted at least monthly, with the Wednesdays between Board and Regular meetings reserved for Rubidoux-on-the-rocks and other endeavors; personal hiking and climbing trips, e.g. Every weekend a group of members go to Tahquitz or Suicide Rocks, the High Sierra, or local mountains for strenuous climbs.

Every newer member has a sponsor who will meet with the man to show him how to pack and prepare gear for call outs, what the best items are, how to use them. Home study of the Training Manual and material in the references is another unlimited opportunity, even obligation to learn about SAR. The finest

training for SAR is participation in the actual missions. The learning acquired when every act can determine whether a life is saved tends to stay with us.



LAST ISSUE!

Yes, this is the last issue of the RMRU Newsletter for some. Due to the increased cost of postage and printing we have been forced to look at our mailing list very carefully.

Sustaining members who contributed prior to January 1970 have been sent a letter advising them of the policy of only sending the newsletter to active sustaining members.

We will continue to send the newsletter to governmental agencies and MRA rescue teams at no cost to them. However, there are many other names that had been put into the list years ago to bring the amount to the 200 required by the post office and these names are going to be removed. If you happen to be one of these people and would like to continue to receive the newsletter, we would be most happy to welcome you as a Sustaining Member.

The photograph below of Bernie McIlvoy, Mike Orr and Jack Schnurr speaks for itself as one of the many side benefits of belonging to RMRU. - Pres. Walt

