

# 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 - - -*

- 8 - December, Regular Meeting at County Hall of Records, 1930. We'll have two Medical Training topics: "Field Examinations and Diagnosis," Dr. Mellor; "Hypothermia," Dr. Bell; plus interesting reports, plans, other business.
  - 11 - December, Helitac Training, Miro Field, Rialto. Come fully prepared with full call-out gear, especially hard hat, goggles, boots, gloves. In the afternoon we'll review winter call-out packs and the gear in the 'super pumpkin'.
  - 6 - January, 1900-2200, and for the next nine Thursdays, The First Aid Course. Annually we instruct a first aid course that emphasizes the techniques for caring for people who have been injured in the wilderness. We spend lots of time practicing skills and going through complete problems replete with realistically made-up victims. Most people finish the course with a feeling that they can actually handle the real thing. We are often contacted by former pupils who report saving lives by means of what they learned in the courses.
  - 12 - January, Board Meeting, 1900 at Fairchilds.
  - 26 - January, Regular Meeting.
  - 29 - January, Snow Training, Round Valley.
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## PASSING COMMENTS - - -

All the bills are paid, all the proponents of the Tenth Anniversary dinner have settled to a relaxed mood as memories of this fine evening fade into the past forever.

No words can express the feeling of satisfaction the unit has for those who have done so much to keep us going. The committee had placed 120 dinner reservations plus 5 extra for a cushion. We had 124 dinners served and the food was excellent.

The festivities started at 7 p.m. with cocktails and we began eating promptly at 8 p.m. Dr. Mellor, our M. C., started the program at 8:30 p.m.

Everyone did an exceptional job when you consider we had an hour and a half span of attention.

The committee again wishes to thank everyone who played a part in it's success.

-- Hank Schmel

## **TRAINING**

### NOTICE - - -

Your training chairman suggests the following reading in preparation for our heavy winter training schedule:

Freedom of the Hills (1st Ed.)

Chapters 12, 13, 15 & 21

Recommended: 5, 17 & 19

Basic Mountaineering (3rd Ed.)

Chapters: 8 & 11

Recommended: 9

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### 30-31 OCTOBER - FAMILIARIZATION Upper Tahquitz Drainage

The purpose of the October training weekend was to allow the team members to familiarize themselves with the rugged areas around Red Tahquitz and the ridge of the desert divide leading to the Garner Valley.

Ten members of the team began the hike at 0900 from Humber Park and ascended the trail to Saddle Junction from which they hiked over to Red Tahquitz. The ground was covered with a few inches of light, fluffy snow, which combined with the perfect weather made the day most enjoyable. At Red Tahquitz we stopped to eat lunch and examine the terrain ahead. After a good look around the two elder statesmen of the team, Jim Fairchild and Art Bridge, decided that the snow and brush made the hike originally planned impractical.

After a short conference the members of the team decided that the best thing to do would be to head north to the Caramba Camp area so that the new members of the team could become familiar with this frequently visited area. We started hiking and crossed several ridges. At this point we became separated into small groups. Steve Bryant, Ed Hill, Dave Hadley and myself went in one group and promptly found ourselves at the bottom of a steep gully which we climbed out of with only minor difficulty. A short time later we arrived at a clearing near the Caramba Palisades where we made camp. A sumptuous meal was prepared, a few stories were told, and then we went to sleep under the star filled skies.

We awoke to a second beautiful day. After preparing a light breakfast and a little bouldering, where Bernie McIlvoy and Jack Schnurr showed their skill, we hiked down to Caramba Camp. At the camp we stopped for a bit to eat and discussed rescue contingencies from the area. We then proceeded back to Humber Park via Tahquitz Valley where we checked the Stokes Litter and Saddle Junction.

Although we did not hike to Garner Valley as planned the weekend was highly successful because we got to see a good deal of terrain which was either sketchy in our minds or completely unfamiliar. This combined with the excellent weather and snow made the whole weekend both informative and enjoyable. Besides those already mentioned, Pete Carlson and Al Korber were with us. -- Richard Morris

## 20 & 21 NOVEMBER - TECHNICAL Joshua Tree National Monument

Wind, rain, sleet, hail and snow.....none of these elements stopped the monthly training out at Joshua Tree. A few hearty families arrived Friday night, Dr. Bell and Bernie McIlvoy being among the first.

Training commenced Saturday morning at 8:30 with Steve Bryant, the training chairman, showing us the various knots we were to practice. Much of our knot tying was taken up trying to decide if "granny" could tie a square knot and something about a reef that slips, or was it some "square" trying to tie a granny - reef. This got sort of confusing so Dave Cook (a new member) and I started to tie each other in a bowline on a coil around the waist. Before we knew what was happening we were involved in a "daisy chain". It seems the other members got confused about granny and the reef and started to tie the same thing Dave and I were doing. The result being 14 men tied together in a 30' line with the Park Ranger in the middle.



Along about 11:00 a.m. we broke for the hills and began Phase II, (now where have I heard that term before). This part of the training consisted of various types of rappels and ascents on an S. E. A. (self-equalizing-anchor). This is an anchor set-up, using 3, or more, points or pins for its support with a controversial knot (a controversial knot is an indecision on our part on using either a french bowline or regular bowline). At the time of an actual rescue, rest assured there are no indecisions. When you think about it, isn't the training we have every month the time to question new and better methods?

After a wonderful lunch in a light snow, and some wind and rain thrown in for good measure, we went to the rocks for litter practice on S. E. A. and M. A. (mechanical advantage) set-ups. Before we got started. Dick Webster's wife called up and said that her father-in-law and Dick were one hour overdue on a hike they undertook. Dr. Bell was appointed operations leader by Steve Bryant and Jim Fairchild. I can't describe the look on Joe's face - one of concern of course, the other was a - you've got to be kidding. There was a moment of indecisiveness on Joe's part but when Dick's wife threatened to call Sierra Madre, Joe rolled into action. As it turned out. Mr. Webster was found with a "broken leg". All teams converged on the scene under the direction of Jim who was high on a windy hill threatening to use flares to guide us. (He still doesn't have his pyro license.) It was nice to see Dick and his wife enjoy the weekend training with us.

The wheeled litter had it's first use under conditions that we would actually meet in the field. We loaded Mr. Webster into the litter and started our journey out of the wash. It was a little difficult to get co-ordinated with each toher but it was a lot easier than a carry-out. It normally takes 6 to 8 people, around the litter on a regular carry, the wheel reduces this to 4 or 5 people. We were about finished with our mock mission when we heard a call from Bernie McIlvoy telling us of three Scouts stranded on a shelf about 300 yards from base camp. Remember it's raining and cold and plain miserable. We took care of the situation in short order. (The story is elsewhere in this issue).

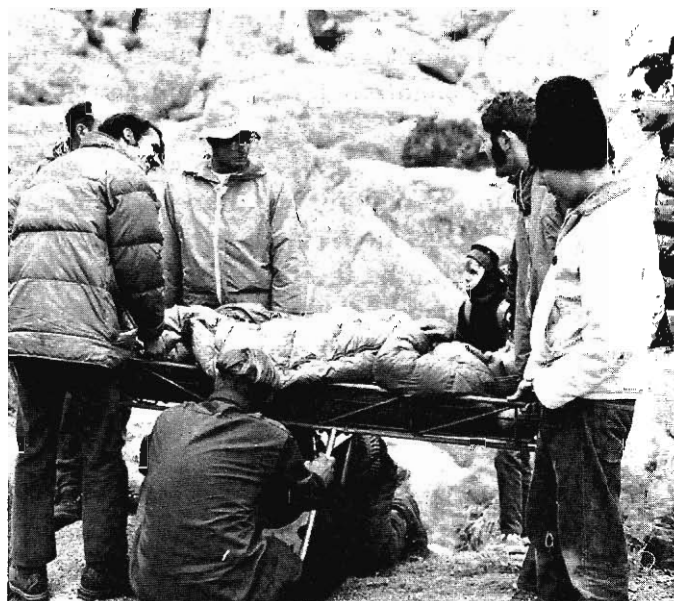


PHOTO BY PETE CARLSON

Adjustments being made on the wheeled litter.

It's now supper time, it's snowing, raining and blowing. I fixed dinner for Tom and Bill, my two boys, and then decided to turn in for the night. This was about 6 p.m. Saturday evening. I just got into a sound sleep when I was awakened by Ed Hill. Let me tell you, if you've never been awakened by Ed Hill your missing something. He has a quality in his voice that would send chills through the spine of a skeleton.

It seemed as though we were going to have a party in Joe Bell's tent. Spirits were high that night as we all enjoyed the hospitality of Dr. and Mrs. Bell.

Sunday morning was beautiful, the sun shine and fresh clear air was just more than you could ask for. Following breakfast we picked up where we left off Saturday before the mock mission. Raising and lowering of a litter. We broke away about 1:00 p.m. Some of us went rock climbing while others went home.

-- Hank Schmel



## Search and Rescue

4 NOVEMBER - SEARCH - #7125  
San Jacinto Mountains

The call came at 2115 Thursday night. I hurried to Art's house, late, having been at the library. With gear quickly loaded we were soon on our way to Idyllwild. The friendly, familiar face of the Banning sub-station dispatcher: keep going, the rescue call is still current. Up the winding road, chewing an Abazaba candy bar for the energy we would soon need. 2230 hours ushered us to the Sky Yacht; only one car in the driveway, the field teams must have gone hiking already. Drat!! It will take some fast hiking for Art and myself to catch up with the teams, what a way to start a rescue!! Surprise, no one had left yet; the problem was only five people had shown for the mission, so far.

Briefing, detailed the situation: a 54 year old man, name David Westheimer was overdue from the Tramway to Humber Park. He hadn't any gear but was carrying a small amount of "munching food". He had leather soled boots, size 7 1/2 D with an oval design on the ball of the foot.

By 2300 two field teams were on their way up the Devil Slide trail; Mike Daughtery and Art Bridge were headed toward the Willow Creek crossing with Pete Carlson and myself hiking in the direction of Laws Camp via Skunk Cabbage Meadow, Tahquitz Valley and Little Tahquitz Valley. Jim Fairchild, operations leader, would wait for expected additional manpower and join us in the field later.

Even on a search mission, it was a beautiful night to be hiking. A warm night, we went about our assignments in short sleeved shirts. The trail was patchy with crisp snow and slippery ice. Even though occasionally slipping behind the clouds, the bright full moon lit the mountain enough to eliminate the need for headlamps. Flashlights were used for tracking.

Dick Caffroy, base camp operator, had just given us a 0200 greeting, Bernie McIlvoy

was relay radio at the saddle, Jim with Rich Morris was on the way to Wellman's Divide, Art and Mike were still searching the Willow Creek crossing area when Pete and I heard an answer to our shouts. Within two minutes we found Dave comfortably seated by a small fire in the Laws campground area. Dave reported he had lost the trail in the early afternoon, spent some time looking for it and finally decided to stop to wait for help. If only more people were smart enough to use good judgement like Dave, how much easier our job would be!

All field units converged at Laws Camp; we rested awhile and started towards Humber Park. Despite Dave's "long day" he was ready and able to make the hike out that night. Without further problem, we made Humber by 0600 and adjourned to breakfast. -- Jack Schnurr

11 NOVEMBER - SEARCH - #7126  
San Jacinto Mountains

Detective David Duncan and Lt. Ed Brown of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department and Ranger Murray Taylor of the U. S. Forest Service met with Ed Hill, Bernie McIlvoy, Jack Schnurr and I at the Keenwild USFS station at 0830 11 November. The Forest Service was being helicoptered in to Skunk Cabbage Meadow to finish mopping up a fire started by a careless camper. (The fire burned most of the meadow -- what an ugly scar on the mountain.)

Detective Duncan and Murray Taylor filled us in on the situation: a 39 year old Michigan man, wanted for questioning in regard to an embezzlement, had left home after a fight with his wife and found his way to Idyllwild. He had been driven to Humber Park on 22 October, presumably to go camping. His deserted camp had been found in Skunk Cabbage Meadow and we had been called to do a search.

We were fortunate to have Don Landell as our pilot, for we were to search by air in Tahquitz Canyon, among other places. Ed Hill, Bernie McIlvoy and I were taken to the Caramba helispot to search upper Tahquitz Canyon by

foot for tracks while Jack Schnurr flew with Don on an aerial search of the eastern part of the mountain. The three of us on foot had an enjoyable hike down the canyon, but we did not find any evidence that our victim had been there. (We did find and pack out evidence from several other persons, and noticed that the trail down the canyon is much better now than it was in the spring. The canyon was well used this summer.)

Jack found no traces of the victim from the air, so we hiked out to the helispot and were lifted back to Keenwild by Don.

A disappointing search, like so many this past year, for adults that probably were not on the mountain at all. Was the camp a decoy in this case? -- Steve Bryant

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#### 15 NOVEMBER - RESCUE - #7127 Whitewater Canyon

Shortly after 8 p.m. Monday evening four of us were in the middle of a Membership Committee meeting at my house. We had just finished interviewing prospective member Dave Cook and were awaiting the arrival of Dennis Simpson when the telephone rang. The phone had been ringing steadily all evening but this time it had that distinctive sound. It is well known among mountain rescue people that rescue calls sound different; its the same way your phone sounds when it rings between midnight and 6 a.m. Suspicions confirmed -- "This is Mrs. Carson at the Riverside County Sheriff's Department Banning substation, we have two men stranded on the side of Whitewater canyon near the fish hatchery. Deputy Raymond is on the scene and Sgt. Herring is enroute."

The first of us arrived at the roadhead in the RMRU van at about 9:20. The Sheriff's deputies had a spotlight trained on our two "victims", Roy Kelly and William Thomas who were "hung-out" about 80 feet above the canyon bottom on vertical conglomerate.

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For the benefit of the irregular readers of this newsletter I will include a lexicon of rescue venacular.

"victim" - Those individuals out after whom we are. An unfortunate designation since it is never made clear what these people are the victims of and this might lead the uninitiated to speculate (heavens forbid) that they are the victim of our rescue operation.

"hung-out" - That condition of being unable to move either up, down or sideways. Left in this predicament for long enough, the "victim" is said to be "hung-out to dry", presumably in hot weather, in cold weather the victim is "hung-out to freeze dry".

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A short conference with a resident of the area convinced us that the best tactic would be to go south from their position about 100 yards, gain the ridge above and to the east of them and descend to their position. Accordingly, Jack Schnurr, Ed Hill, Rich Morris and I were soon eroding the fragile hillside under our boots. Soon after we started upward, Walt Walker, John Murdock, Ray Ross and Bernie McIlvoy were close behind us. Using the spotlight to guide us to their position, we were soon above the "victims" (that's terrible, how about "subjects", no.....maybe "unfortunates") and on our way down a rapidly steepening watercourse. Since we were expecting what Jack described as vertical sewage, we were pleasantly surprised to find the terrain fairly well consolidated conglomerate, consisting of fist sized rocks protruding from a cement-like matrix. When used most of them held, but there were a few, potentially important, exceptions. A hundred or so feet above the men the angle increased and Jack graciously agreed to give me an "upper belay" as I climbed down into the little pocket in which they were stranded.

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"upper belay" - Not really rescue venacular. It means that Jack assumed a secure position and paid out the rope as I climbed downward. Since it was impossible to anchor Jack to the conglomerate (no cracks for pitons and pickets wouldn't go in), this meant that, if I fell, Jack would either let the rope slide thereby burning

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his hands or he would be pulled from position. In either event it would be Jack's fault.

After giving the "unfortunates" some water and warm clothing, I tied them into the end of the rope and Rich belayed each of them in turn back up and over the small overhang which had imprisoned them. After which Ed Hill belayed them up one more almost vertical pitch. Meanwhile, back at "base", Jim Fairchild, Art Bridge and Al Korber had arrived.

"base" - The place where the rescue van, and therefore the base radio, are located, usually the roadhead. This term is not intended to characterize the motives of those who remain there on tough "missions".

"missions" - Any search or rescue operation. An inaccurate usage as it implies a purpose, because a few of our missions turn out to be utterly pointless.

By 11:30 the "unfortunates" were down and the twelve of us were on our way to a hearty breakfast at Denny's. -- Mike Daugherty

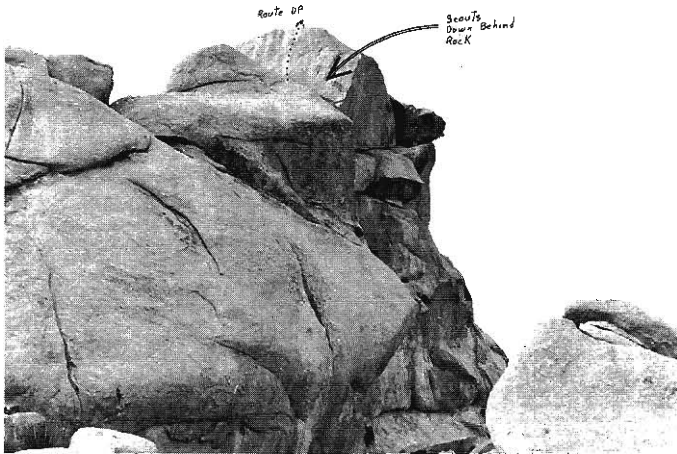


PHOTO BY PETE CARLSON

JUMBO ROCKS RESCUE - as seen through the eye of Pete Carlson's telephoto lens. This shot was taken before the team reached the top. Approach was from the rear.

## 20 NOVEMBER - RESCUE - #7128 Jumbo Rocks Campground

We were just finishing a mock mission while training at Jumbo Rocks in Joshua Tree National Monumnet when the park ranger informed us that two Scouts were hung up on a shelf and could neither go up or down. The members assembled immediately went into action. The team in the field was composed of Mike Daugherty, Bernie McIlvoy, Jim Fairchild, Ed Hill, Joe Bell, John Murdock, Pete Carlson and Rich Morris. I stayed with the truck as base camp operator. It turned out to be a rather simple assist. Mike Daugherty went down to the boys and tied them in for a belayed climb to the top. The boys were returned to their unit and the team returned to base for supper in the rain. -- Hank Schmel

## 26 NOVEMBER - RESCUE - #7129 Tahquitz Rock - Idyllwild

"Sure sorry to spoil your evening". These words greeted me as I arrived at Lunch Ledge where Bob Shuppe stood awaiting help because of a dislocated shoulder. He and his wife Barbara had climbed the Angel's Fright Route, Bob's problem occurring as he reached high with his left hand for a hold. He had managed to scramble up on the ledge and anchor himself to a dead shrub. Word was sent to the Riverside County Sheriff's Department by a climber nearby.

The steep hike up to Lunch Rock and around behind Tahquitz Rock (1300' elevation gain) went rather quickly, notwithstanding the fifty pound packs, 300' coils of ropes slung over our shoulders, and trading off hauling the litter. On the way we discussed our plan. Mike Daugherty would be Ops Leader, seeing to it that anchors and rigging went right; Rich Morris would attend lines. All but the first man over would work on the anchors and set up the mechanical advantage needed to haul up Bob and the man who went over first. I had not been over the side for some number of technicals, so I selected the easiest assignment. Barbara was

at the top when we arrived and was of considerable assistance.

We had not noticed even the slightest breeze until we were ready to rappel. Of course, radio communication became necessary when just 80' down. By then I could see and talk to Bob, he was 70' directly below. On the third to last ledge before reaching his position I had to un-snarl the twisted rope. On the second to last ledge my knee lost an argument with an unseen snag, so I floundered around getting ensconced on the ledge near Bob. He was in good spirits and was able to assist in getting over to my position on the other side of the dead shrub. A down sweater was soon placed on his cold upper body and the warmth helped a lot. A can of diet drink seemed to hit the spot, and by the time the anchor-bend around his waist slings was tied, the men above were ready to haul. Bob's free ride to safety went fast as I continued my struggle to un-snarl the triple Gorian Knot. When it was my turn, I declined an invitation to Jumar (ascend with clamps) and enjoyed the effortless (on my part) lift to the top.

Just as I arrived back at the top Art Bridge and Bob Nelson arrived, hesitating only shortly and then escorted Bob and Barbara down the Friction Route. Leo Caron of the San Diego Mountain Rescue Team hiked up to Lunch Rock, as did Norm and Maggie's new son-in-law Jim Abrams, and Art's son Dick. Had it been necessary to evacuate Bob in the litter we had sufficient manpower.

All this time Maggi Mellor was Base Camp Operator, handling radio communication with skill while her husband, Dr. Norm, ascended to Lunch Rock where he would reduce the dislocation if then necessary. Bob did very well in descending first the class three Friction Route off the south side of the rock, then down the talus scramble to Lunch Rock. There Norm said the problem could be handled nicely in the living room of his cabin.

Down at the Mellor's cabin we witnessed our second shoulder dislocation reduction of the year. Then we were treated to a wonderful roast beef dinner their daughters had prepared.

The Mellors have an amazingly unique position with the unit. Norm is one of our physicians, his cabin is located where on a still day climbers can be heard talking on both Tahquitz and Suicide Rocks, and the hospitality and generosity we receive there is unexcelled.

On this evac we were most fortunate. What if Bob had been writhing in pain from the dislocation, unable to cooperate and needing litter evacuation? We had the answers, it just would have been tough. -- Jim Fairchild



PHOTO BY PETE CARLSON

Mike Daugherty demonstrates and explains to assembled team members the correct way to coil a rope!!!



## The Road

### Runner sez-

When one has been connected with a particular activity for a decade or so it becomes obvious that trends and cycles phase in and out. RMRU's experience in SAR has its share. It used to be that the late Sunday evening callout was quite regular, now we have more calls during the week. We had lots of lost children until about a year ago, now it's mostly adults. In the early days of the unit we had almost no aborts (missions terminated prior to sending men into the field), now we have nearly twenty a year. That's because we are called much sooner than before so we can assist or find the subjects before their situations become desperate. Evacuations from technical terrain were common, then scarce, now common again. Until this year we had frequent situations where plenty of genuine first aid had to be administered, lately the people we help are not badly injured or suffering from exposure. These are just some of the trends, they can cycle around anytime. Some odd situations arise when new men come on the team. A few men had never seen the San Jacinto high country during five or six missions and were amazed at its beauty during a recent training session there. Two missions ago one man remarked he'd never seen us rescue anyone and had been on five missions. Then, two genuine life savers in a row. He was impressed when he found that given enough, though still scanty information, we can pretty well determine when and where a lost person will be found.

Perhaps the least provable but most disturbing feeling is when we must accept or give an assignment to search where we just don't think the subject is. We drag our feet, fiddle around, look for excuses to get over where we feel the "action is." Maybe it's like the old fire horse syndrome where the animal responds to the fire bells, but in our case it's an overpowering desire to zero in on the lost or injured person's predicament in order to help. After numerous operations we develop some kind of

sense that tells us when the circumstance is legitimate or not. For instance, none of us can generate enthusiasm when an adult is just allegedly "lost" in the wilderness, yet when sufficient factors indicate someone is indeed lost, we are almost overly eager to get moving. A true study in frustration is a SAR man being inhibited from participating in the mission. It is truly said, "It takes all kinds. ...." -- Jim

## Sustaining Members

This month we want to welcome a fine group of new Sustaining Members:

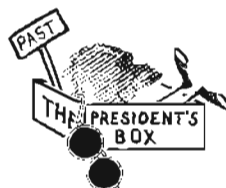
Mr. Steve Greer  
Mr. Don Swanson  
Mr. David Westheimer  
Mr. John Pollock  
Mr. & Mrs. Wynlow L. Swick

We also want to thank the following group for continuing their support by renewing their memberships:

Mr. & Mrs. G. W. Gardner  
Mr. & Mrs. R. A. Dewees  
Little Lake Parents Club  
Idyllwild Property Owners Association  
Dr. & Mrs. Paul Trotta  
Mr. & Mrs. B. E. Harris  
Keldon Paper Company  
Mr. & Mrs. M. Hefferlin

We want to wish every Sustaining Member A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

-- Al Andrews



The Thanksgiving season proved to be one that RMRU's Sustaining Members took to heart. They gave, as can be seen by the long list of names. We would like to do more than say,

"THANK YOU!", But if you will just remember each time you read of a life being saved by RMRU, then I'm sure you will be thanked many times by the person whose life was saved.

Speaking of thanks, I would like to thank Ernie Maxwell, Editor and Publisher, of the Idylwild Town Crier. If you do not subscribe to the Town Crier, you are truly missing a bright spot each week. However, I'm getting off the subject. Ernie is RMRU's 'Poet Laureate'. Twice in the past month RMRU received many good words and many column inches of type and pictures. Thank You, Ernie!

A few months ago we had a cartoon type photograph in the newsletter. Many comments

were received, mostly good, so the Editor, namely RMRU member Hank Schmel, decided to try it again. However, this time we are taking a swing at ourselves. Hank has got to be one of the busiest people I know. Besides his job, family (wife and eight children), being a Scoutmaster, he is RMRU's Quartermaster, Editor of the Newsletter, photographer and processes films shot by other members and then makes the prints. Keep up the good work Hank! Only one thing comes to mind, where do we find more like you?

Even though I believe our front page says it all -- The best of everything to you and yours this holiday season. (Hank also sketched the fine drawing in his spare time.) -- Walt



PHOTO BY PETE CARLSON

#### A DREAM BECOMES A REALITY.....

The wheeled litter, just a thought in the minds of Walt, Jim and other old timers became something tangible this November. Thanks to Bernie McIlvoy, Mike Daugherty and a few others, we have what is probably the only wheeled-litter of

it's kind in the world. (Patent Pending) It really makes a carryout with eight men, a thing of the past. Thanks also to Skip Fordyce for the discount on the wheel, which is the front wheel of a Hondo trail scooter. Bernie wasted no time in making some minor changes for his second model, which is now on the drawing board.