

# 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

Volume VII, Issue 2, February 1971  
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## COMING EVENTS ---

- 10 February, Board Meeting, 1900, at Don Ricker's.  
24 February, Regular Meeting, 1930, at County Hall of Records, Riverside.  
At this meeting we will make plans for the annual weekend on Mt. San Gorgonio where we intensively practice snow and ice techniques. Also, there will be discussion and decisions regarding a number of crucial policies in the life of RMRU.  
26-28 February, Training Session, Mt. San Gorgonio. We hope that this year snow conditions will be such that we can recapture the "magic" of several tremendously valuable and enjoyable trips in past years.  
10 March, Board Meeting, 1900, place to be announced.  
13 & 14 March, Sierra Club's Basic Mountaineering Course Ice Ax Practice, probably on Mt. Baldy. RMRU has again been asked to supply instructors, and we've said we will. The course is limited at 200 people, as many as seventy may be there each day. Hence, we'll need at least ten of us who are qualified to instruct each day.  
24 March, Regular Meeting, 1930, County Hall of Records, Riverside  
26-28 March, Training Session.

## SEARCH AND RESCUE ACTIVITY ---

January has been a very interesting and frustrating month. The first mission of the year, an out-of-county, is still unresolved because no trace of the subject has been found. Five aborts have caused considerable fuss. We get all charged up emotionally as we pack and drive off, then find the effort is all for naught. Don't misinterpret, we are much relieved to learn the "victims" are safe. We are grateful for early calls, because on the next one a life may be saved because there was no delay. How tragic if the subject's life were lost because the first people on the scene tried to effect the "do it yourself" routine when the problems were beyond their capabilities and knowledge. Accounts in past newsletters and some of those in this issue may illustrate to you what is meant by the preceding sentence.

1 January, Search, Twin Peaks, San Bernardino County - 7101

Late New Years Eve RMRU along with five other Southern California Mountain Rescue Association teams were asked by the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department to join the search for Martina Peterson, 11 years old, who had been missing since late afternoon on December 29.

Martina, with her father, eight brothers and sisters and two friends had gone to the mountains from their home in Long Beach for an outing in the snow at Twin Peaks near Crestline. When the family car left for home shortly before dark Martina was inadvertently left behind. Even more unbelievable is that she was not missed by until about 24 hours later at which time the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department was contacted.

It was learned that Martina was seen after the family car had left when she tried to make a phone call at a nearby cabin. She learned there was no

phone there and left. She was last seen walking down highway 189 towards highway 18 after telling another girl that she was going to walk home.

After a day and a half search by the sheriff's department the MRA teams started searching at 0600 on January 1. For two long days there were over 50 MRA men in the field on snowshoes searching the mountain slopes, canyon bottoms and the many cabins in the area. A large number of people who were occupying the cabins during the holiday season were alerted to the missing girl. The tremendous number of footprints in the snow made tracking almost impossible.

The formal search was called off the night of January 2 following six inches of new snow and after four nights of sub-freezing temperatures. Since that time there has been further investigation by the sheriff's department but to date it is not known what happened to Martina Peterson.

There is of course the possibility that Martina was picked up by a perverted motorist and the sheriff's department has looked into this extensively, but when you are searching for someone, especially a child, you just can't let this enter your mind too much. You have to assume they are lost and give them your best.

This unsuccessful search left an empty feeling in the stomachs of the fourteen RMRU members who participated as I am sure it did everyone. The only gratifying thing about it was to experience a harmonious effort with the other MRA teams and the San Bernardino Sheriff's Department. - Don Ricker

First Aid, Joshua Tree National Monument, Jan. 1.

On New Year's Eve I received a call to search for the lost girl in the San Bernardino Mountains but couldn't roll because friends from San Francisco were meeting our family in Joshua Tree National Monument and there was no way to get in touch with them.

As it turned out, an RMRU man was at the right place at the right time. Friday afternoon a woman came running into our camp asking for a ranger and saying a man had just fallen several hundred feet off a cliff. There we were with five recent graduates of Jim Fairchild's and Walt Walker's Advanced First Aid Course. (My son and daughter, Elaine Malis, a nurse and her daughter, and myself.) We grabbed four first-aid kits and scrambled over to where he had fallen.

This scramble was several hundred feet through ice and snow covered rocks. The victim, Bruce Gardner of La Jolla, was huddled at the base of an 80 foot climb called The Flue on the north side of Chimney Rock in Hidden Valley campground. At first glance, he appeared to be severely injured with a monstrous contusion over his right eye. Subsequent detailed examination revealed an almost miraculous condition for such a fall. His pulse was strong, his eyes normal, no pelvic or back injury indications. He was bleeding from multiple lacerations and his most serious injury was a badly broken right arm and a shattered elbow. If it hadn't been for the head injury, we could probably have walked him out to a car. As it was, Park Ranger Tom Mocilac (an RMRU candidate) responded with alacrity and had a Stokes standing by and the whole operation took 25 minutes from fall to the back end of a camper on the way to the hospital in Yucca Valley.

The details of Gardner's fall should be interesting to RMRU members and other climbers. He had NO hard hat and fell from a position where he had

placed no protection and was as far above his belayer as his belayer was above the ground. The best part of the operation to Elaine and myself was when neither a doctor at the scene nor the emergency ward could find anything we hadn't already treated or fault with any of our treatment.

- Bud White

20 January, Box Springs Mountain, Evacuation. - 7102

At about 1250 on Wednesday the Sheriff's Office called to report that nine-year-old Rhonda Sovers, Riverside, had fallen down the huge concrete "C" that reposes on the steep west slope of Box Springs Mountain. The rendezvous point was at the base of the mountain below the "C" at the end of Big Springs Road. Lee Mickelson and Mike Dougherty had walked up directly from their doctorate endeavors at the University of California at Riverside. Dick Webster, who had received the call and had the frustrating task of trying to call us out, met them. Lee went down to get the rescue van. Upon return Jack Schnurr had arrived, so he, Mike and Dick climbed to the scene. Two deputies, a nurse, and the girl's father were there. Examination revealed no fractures or other serious injuries, just some bad bruises on Rhonda's abdomen. The litter was put together, the girl tied in, and carried up to Walt Walker's new Jeep station wagon. Art Bridge was there to help also. Walt drove up to the ambulance that was waiting at the access road near the top of the hill. Rhonda was taken to the hospital where she was soon released to her parent's care.

- Dick Webster, as...well, sort of as....told to the Editor.

23 January - Joshua Tree - Search. - 7103

While camping in Joshua Tree National Monument, some friends and I decided to do some climbing in the Willow Hole area, about five miles from Hidden Valley. As we were walking up the wash we met a fellow, name of Gary, coming back down. It seemed that Gary and his sister, Cheryl, had become separated several hours before. Gary hoped that Cheryl had been able to find her way back to the car. Having just passed their car we were sure she wasn't back. Gary and I returned to the point where the two had last been in contact. The area was a jumble of large formations and countless washes, known as the Wonderland of Rocks. Even an experienced backpacker could easily become confused. Gary had gone down one wash and Cheryl down another with the intention of meeting at the bottom. Unfortunately the washes never met and Gary didn't backtrack. When Cheryl realized they were separated she followed her tracks back to the top of the wash and followed Gary's tracks from there. At this point it seemed like an easy task to follow the two sets of tracks. An hour later we were at a small spring, still following the tracks. By now Gary was sure Cheryl must be back at the car since she had been at this spring only the day before and knew the way back. One track pointed down a horrendous canyon put doubts in my mind and the empty car confirmed my doubts. It was almost dark and we were going to need help. We drove to the ranger's office and reported Cheryl missing. Luck had it that the ranger, Tom Mocilac had just joined RMRU and he knew that Bernie McIlvoy (RMRU) was in the park. We rounded up Bernie and returned to the roadhead just after dark. Bernie and I headed for the spring and the last footprint. Down from the spring we found more tracks. We proceeded down Rattlesnake canyon by climbing over boulders and skirting waterfalls. After about two hours we finally got a response on one of our calls. A few minutes later we had visual contact. She had had the good sense to stop at dusk and build a small fire. Since it was too risky to bring Cheryl back up the canyon at night we prepared to spend the night. Without sleeping bags we had to count on the fire to stave off the cold. (We were told that

the temperature went into the low twenties that night.) The following morning we hiked back up the canyon and to the cars. (Cheryl had planned to continue hiking, without water, in the morning. Her direction of travel would have taken her further into the desert.) - Dave Hadley

#### PAST TRAINING ---

Another breathtaking weekend of beautiful snow-covered terrain, exhilarating exercise, and good fellowship. Even got some training in: some firsts in sleeping on the snow; ascending San Jacinto Peak; showshoeing; ice ax arrest practice (a couple of the falls were unexpected). And the campsite! A balcony-type spot on the axis of the mountain at about 10,500' -- facing east away from the smog-bound west end of the county. This was our winter "shake-down" trip when we ascended the tram to Long Valley, climbed San Jacinto Peak (10,831' el.), camped as described, then returned, wishing everyone on the unit could have participated. Perhaps someday Ed and Bud will explain the mystery of the leaking water (?) bottles. On yes, the date was 30-31 Jan. '71.

#### RMRU PEOPLE ---

Al and Natalie Andrews' very recent addition to their family is Mark Allen. Both mother and son are doing just great.

Bill Briggs, one of RMRU's long time bachelors, married Sandy Wilson and thus left the ranks of the single. Sandy's two children make Bill a husband and father in one fell swoop. Sandy is an avid outdoorswoman.

Art Bridge's son, Art, went on an expedition to the Galapagos Islands and has written an excellent, illustrated article describing the trip, published in "Pacific Discovery," the journal of the California Academy of Sciences.

Pete Carlson continues his recovery from the pelvic fracture, he's up to more than a mile of running per day.

Ed Hill is still wondering how Tom Dadson got into Ed's VW after the keys were locked therein--Ed found the situation pleasantly resolved when he got down off the hill from the weekend training session--Tom had returned earlier and performed the magic.

Lee Mickelson is now ready for action following knee surgery that was precipitated by his fall at Tahquitz during our September training.

Bob MacPherson's knee, also a recipient of surgery, is stubbornly submitting to exercise, and improving.

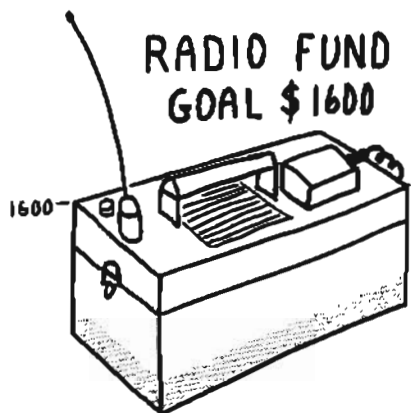
Bernie McIlvoy designed and manufactured a pair of snowshoes and tried them on the training. He invented a means of attaching the crampons to the snowshoes so that they pivot downward as one steps forward. Works fine, but needs strengthening.

How would you like Dick Webster's work/school schedule? Roughly, he goes 13½ hours on Monday, then works days and goes to school nights the other days, thirty miles from home. He participates in rescues too!

Walt Walker and family are enjoying their new Jeep FWD Station Wagon. Walt reports that the machine performs very well on the highway and cross-country.

We'll try to keep our eyes and ears open for items of interest about our members for future issues. If any particularly noteworthy events or situations involving RMRU people are omitted it's because of poor memory or ignorance, or both, take your choice.

SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP ---



Again this month as in past months our sustaining members have continued to provide the financial support which is so necessary to the life of RMRU. A most hardy thank you to the following renewing members: Mr. & Mrs. Alfred W. King, Kennel Club of Riverside, Mr. & Mrs. Philip Modica, Mr. & Mrs. Albin Merzals, Rotary Club of Hemet, Dr. & Mrs. John A. Murphy, Mr. & Mrs. Harry T. Penn, Dr. & Mrs. Norman H. Mellor, and Mr. & Mrs. E. J. Fischer. We also want to welcome the following to our sustaining membership: Mr. P. L. Peters, Mr. Charles H. Carter, Mr. & Mrs. Joe Engers, and Mr. & Mrs. Jack Bamberger. - Al Andrews



The Road

Runner sez-

It appears that this year will see the beginning of truly stringent restrictions on the use of wilderness areas, particularly those here in Southern California that are greatly overused in the snow-free season. The negative impact upon the fragile "undeveloped" areas has no doubt been the prime reason. This negative impact would probably have been held at a negligible or at least manageable level had all of us: a) carried out all our trash; b) not disturbed the flora and fauna; c) disturbed the terrain only by making tracks; d) had not polluted the soil and water by stupid disposal of human and other wastes. Sure, we can think of more reasons, but the point is, it's not so much the number of people using the wilderness, it's how they've used it. Just one nut can wreck an area that has been used by hundreds who were careful. Individual responsibility is the virtue that disappears when mobs appear. The two preceding sentences seem to make a contradiction, but, individuals can have a tendency to believe their irresponsible acts will be cloaked or overlooked because of the confusion and impunity brought on by the mass.

RMRU members, a plea for the use of common sense regarding call-out procedures! We could have more men at the rendezvous per call if we do these two simple things: 1) inform our Call Captains when we're not contactable through our listed phones; 2) when making calls, use all the numbers listed for each member. On the first point, we tell the CC what other number to call or how else to reach us, or, if we are just plain unavailable. On the second point, the phones listed after each name are there because they are the means by which we reach each other. Failure to inform the CC you're away from listed phones is to say, "I don't want to be bothered by a call-out," Failure to call one of the numbers is to say, "We don't need him anyway."

HELITAC TRAINING

At 0800 on 9 January RMRU members met at Miro Field in Rialto for the annual Helitac Training. Alec Ferguson, owner of Western Helicopters, Inc., was there to meet us and provided coffee and donuts. We were introduced to Western's staff and briefed on their operation. We adjourned to the helicopter tie-down area and were briefed on the machines and discussed safety procedures and prior accidents.

Everyone then drove over to the training area where we were met by two of Western's super-charged Bell helicopters. New and old members went through the same training. Training started with entering a hovering bird and progressed through jumping and loading a litter with patient onto a hovering machine.

All of us of RMRU extend our thanks to Alex Ferfueson and all of his staff of Western Helicopters for again providing two machines and pilots so that we may stay proficient. Mr. Ferguson believes in RMRU and not only provides the machines at his expense, he also is a sustaining member. THANK YOU!



Bill Speck, RMRU photographer, caught a fellow team member as he begins to leave the helicopter in a practice jump.