

# 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

## Coming Events ---

- 9 February, Board Meeting at Schmel's, 1900.
- 23 February, Regular Meeting at County Hall of Records, 1930.
- 25-27 February, Winter Trip -- Snow & Ice Training, Mt. San Gorgonio
- 8 March, Board Meeting at Walker's, 1900.
- 22 March, Regular Meeting.
- 24-26 March, Training

## Search and Rescue

This year we will give every call a number, then denote whether it was a real mission or an abort. As of this writing we have had two real missions, #7201M and #7203M and one abort, #7202A. The M and A indicate what it was, A = abort, M = mission. This came about when looking back to 1970 when we had 36 missions and about 18 aborts, adding up to over fifty calls. Frequently most of us roll on aborts and it would seem reasonable to document them.

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2 JANUARY - RESCUE - #7201M  
Massacre Canyon - NE San Jacinto

RMRU started the new year one day late with a call at about 4 p. m. on Sunday, January 2nd. The anonymous female voice on the telephone informed me that two young men were stranded on a ledge in Massacre Canyon in the foothills northeast of the city of San Jacinto. (I later found out that the anonymous voice belonged to Mrs. Walt Walker.) Ray Ross and I arrived at the roadhead at about 5 p. m. We talked by radio to the other team members al-

ready in the field and they instructed us to hike up the canyon and join them. After a short brisk walk, we came to two companions of the two men on the ledge. At that point, we could see the lights of the RMRU members at work on the hillside. I climbed up the hill to join them. When I arrived, three pickets had been driven into the ground for anchors and Dave Cook and Bob Nelson were preparing to belay Walt Walker on two ropes, as he climbed over to the stranded hikers. Jim Fairchild relayed communications between Walt and the belayers and I tied in to the anchor system, adding my weight to the somewhat uncertain system. Walt reached the two young men at about the same time that Dave Hadley reached them via a different route. Thus, Walt and one of the hikers climbed back to the anchor on one rope and Dave and the other hiker on the second rope. Using a rope hand-line, the two Daves escorted the first hiker down to the canyon bottom and Walt and I did likewise for the second. Jim and Bob removed the anchor system and followed us down into the canyon. The walk out, by the four re-united hikers and the eleven RMRU members now on the scene, was uneventful. The Riverside County Sheriff's Department, Hemet Sub-station had previously arranged for dinner for all RMRU members, and we all enjoyed the meal we had missed earlier.

-- John Murdock

16 JANUARY - SEARCH - #7202A  
Ortega Mountains - (Elsinore)

At 2010 the Riverside County Sheriff's Department called and requested RMRU's help to search for two 15 year old boys. Just after many of us had rolled the mission was cancelled as the missing boys had walked in.

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23 JANUARY - RESCUE - #7203M  
Tahquitz Canyon - Palm Springs

There was a time, a year or two ago, when rescues of injured people from Tahquitz Canyon were the most frequent single type of rescue performed by RMRU. Fortunately, this situation has changed of late and calls to that incomparable spa have dwindled to near-extinction. In fact, it almost seemed that they had ceased altogether.

That blissful state was shattered by the ringing of the telephone early Sunday afternoon. It was Natalie Andrews calling to report that the Riverside County Sheriff's Department had just notified her that a young girl had fallen somewhere above the first falls in Tahquitz canyon and was seriously injured. Al Andrews, who usually handles the bulk of our telephone call-outs was in a corporation board meeting and both Jim and Walt were out of town. So, it fell to Natalie and my wife Kay to do all of the telephoning while I hurriedly loaded gear into my car. Bad News- many team members were not at home (a fairly common problem on a weekend afternoon) and it looked as if we might be short handed.

Before leaving home, I phoned Dr. Norm Mellor (one of the team's two physicians) at his cabin in Idyllwild and alerted him that it looked as if we might be phoning him later for advice in the event that Dr. Bell was not available to roll on the mission and the girl turned out to be as seriously injured as originally indicated. Then I drove down to the fire station to get the rescue van and then on to Palm Springs.

An hour later, after heavy traffic in downtown Palm Springs, I pulled to a stop at our oft-used base at the end of La Mirada road at the mouth of Tahquitz canyon. I was relieved to find Dr. Joe Bell already there and Don Landells enroute with helicopter. As I loaded additional gear into my pack, we discussed the situation. I would fly in first to locate the victim and a safe helispot. Then Pete Carlson would come in with Dr. Bell and, while he cared for the victim, Pete and I would determine the method to be used to evacuate her. As a general rule, it is necessary to move a victim several hundred feet in order to reach a point at which he can safely be loaded onto a hovering helicopter. Frequently, this requires the construction of anchors and mechanical advantages to lift the victim up the high angle canyon walls to the helispot. Before the helicopter arrived, John Murdock and Ray Ross were on the scene and, shortly thereafter, Jack Schnurr joined us. By the time Don Landells and I were airborne, it was clear that we had enough experienced men to handle the situation.

As we circled above the second waterfall, we sighted the victim on the canyon floor about 30 feet below the trail which traverses the southeast wall of the canyon. We were in luck; she wasn't more than 40 feet from the best helispot in the area. Don put the right hand runner on top of a boulder and I was with the victim inside of a minute.

As the helicopter went out for Joe and Pete, I made a preliminary examination of the victim. In spite of the severity of her fall, 16 year old Candy Bland was in reasonably good condition. She had sustained a deep laceration of the forehead, abrasions along her back with possible spinal fractures and a large contusion, possibly associated with a fracture, on the inside of her left elbow. The initial bleeding had been stopped effectively by some companions and she had been reached some time before by officer Dave Smith of the Palm Springs Police Department.

Before long, Joe, Pete, John and Jack were on the scene and, as soon as the doctor had finished, we placed her in the rescue sleeping bag and tied her into the litter. We then

used the radio to inform Ray back at base that we were ready for the bird.

As Don hovered with one runner on the rock, we mounted the litter on the helicopter, I climbed into the right hand seat and we were on our way to a landing on the lawn of the Palm Springs hospital. With Candy safely in the emergency room, I looked at my watch. It was 3:50 p. m. It had taken about 2 1/2 hours from the original telephone call until the victim reached the hospital. As the schedule below demonstrates, a large part of this time was consumed by transporattion. On an average mission, an even larger time is generally required to reach the base of operations.

- 12:15 p. m. Accident occurs
- 1:10 p. m. Telephone call starts team
- 1:25 p. m. Rescue van leaves Riverside
- 2:30 p. m. Van arrives at base
- 2:50 p. m. First RMRU member reaches  
victim
- 3:35 p. m. Victim reaches hospital

-- Mike Daugherty

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30 JANUARY - SEARCH - #7204M  
Kitching Sink - North of Cabazon

I had been home one hour, long enough to clean up and sit down with the Sunday paper. The phone rang, 1620 hours. "This is Al, you are the first one I have reached." (I am number seven on the call list.) The rest of the team was still up in the San Jacinto high country on training, I had come out early. There were three Boy Scouts missing in the Sink area near Kitching Peak. I quickly got my gear and went to get the Rescue Van.

On the way to the roadhead (Mallard Canyon) I tried to radio the team on training, no luck. Then I saw Jim driving home, he saw the van and turned around and followed me. Al had

telephoned the Palm Springs Aerial Tram and had caught Dave Hadley, Steve Bryant, Rich Morris and Dennis Simpson. Soon Hank Schmel and Jack Schnurr fell in behind Jim and I.

As we all reached the roadhead within five minutes of each other, we met the Riverside County Deputy Sheriff and the informants. Just about that time a man came hiking out to say the boys had been found and were all right. We found out that a patrol had gone for a short hike to some snow and on the way back three boys decided to take a short cut. The leaders, two who have been through Jim Fairchild's first aid class for the wilderness, started a quick search of the area. After two hours and no luck, the leaders sent out all the boys with leaders, except for three adults and three older scouts who continued to search. (This is a good thing for leaders to do, never have everyone leave the area, because if the lost persons return and no one is at camp, they may really panic.) The three scouts were found by a good search by the leaders, just as we were about to start hiking.

Jim and I decided to hike in and make sure of things. After about 1/2 mile we met the group coming out. Everything was fine and by 2000 hours we were heading for dinner and the scouts for home. If all people in the wilderness would stop, think, and act logically when they had a problem, like was done in this case, our job of SAR would be much more enjoyable and easier. -- Pete Carlson

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31 JANUARY - SEARCH - #7205A  
San Gabriel Mountains

When the telephone rings at 4 a.m., it takes a little time to wake up and respond. But since this is part of being a RMRU member, you shape up in a hurry. The Sierra Madre Search and Rescue Team was calling for assistance in searching for two 13 year old girls missing in the mountains. Just as the calling was completed, they phoned that the girls had been located. Luckily no one had rolled when we phoned everyone back for the cancellation.



## The Road

### Runner sez-

Occasionally I back myself into a corner. Such as when fellow members of RMRU absent themselves from training sessions because "something came up," and I counter with, "training is planned as to dates a year in advance." My average absence from training is less than one per year, but it would be twelve a year if "come ups" were accommodated, they always occur on training weekends. For instance, in April a wedding looms. To miss it for RMRU training would result either in becoming single again or a perpetual outcast. Consequently, I'll absent myself for enough hours on Saturday night to observe the "I do's," then back to the hill. That's if the wedding's still on.

For each mission an Operations Leader is appointed. He must cause everything to happen that results in the successful completion of the operation. He delegates other positions of responsibility and makes decisions. A particular aspect of his own responsibility is to know every man's capabilities and how he may best be used. Is the man in good health; does he have all the necessary equipment with him; will he carry extra unit gear; is he good with a radio; is he technically qualified and if so to what extent; is he a good tracker; does he have problems with very cold or very hot temperatures; has he had experience on hard snow and ice with crampons, ice axe, and so forth; is he the long-range type or short-range type endurance-wise; does he follow directions of the Team Leader well or wander off on his own; is he safe on a cliff or too nonchalant; is he Heli-tac trained; is he an experienced first aider; does he have any big worries or phobias?

There are many more items to think about for one man, but that gives the idea. Multiply this by ten more men and you can see the problem. Now, here's another complication: a man has been with us for a year or two and we would expect him to have had considerable experience, but he's had many "come ups" both for training

and real missions, hence, is missing most of the seasoning we might expect. Operations Leaders can err by assuming that because he's been around a while he's capable. -- Pres. Jim

## Sustaining Members

WHAT A MONTH! What else can I say -- Welcome aboard:

\*Mr. & Mrs. Loyd R. Rathbun  
Mr. John W. Chappell, II  
Mr. Wayne A. Ford  
Mr. Russell L. Gausin  
Mr. Bernie R. McIlvoy  
Mr. Chris W. Pope  
Mr. James Shockley  
Mr. Loren E. Wand  
Mr. C. Clifford Wright  
Mr. & Mrs. David L. Morris  
The Wednesday Club

Thanks once again to the following for renewing their memberships:

Mr. & Mrs. W. Paul Matthews  
\*Mr. & Mrs. Peter F. Rathbun  
Mr. W. P. Danforth  
Mr. & Mrs. James Fairchild  
Mr. John F. Gilbert  
Mr. Frederick McNally  
Mr. Theodore W. Morgan  
Mr. Clifford E. Smith  
Mr. & Mrs. Alfred W. King  
\*Mr. & Mrs. Jack L. Bamberger  
Rotary Club of Rubidoux  
\*Dr. & Mrs. Norman H. Mellor  
\*Kennel Club of Riverside

### \*Century Club Members

The 'Century Club' are Sustaining Members who have contributed \$100.00 or more in one year and they receive a certificate suitable for framing.

RMRU is now richer by ten shares of stock, Standard Oil of California, thanks to three Sustaining Members. THANK YOU. -- Al Andrews

## 29-30 JANUARY - WINTER SHAKEDOWN San Jacinto Mountains

Moments of melancholy overtook me as we scrambled to assemble our packs preparatory to boarding the tram car. I remembered scenes from fifteen to twenty years ago when we camped and climbed in Chino Canyon. A lovely stream; hidden campsites; abundant wildlife; steep slopes with treacherous loose rock; all in all, true wilderness to challenge us. A series of asphalt parking lots cover the old camps, smoke-filled buildings ensconce on shrub gardens of the past, and strands of cable supported by silver towers ascend in a finger of accessibility to the heights.

"Hurry up, the car is ready," we lugged our burdens up the steps, into the car, and were hoisted effortlessly 5800' to Long Valley. Down to the Ranger Cabin, only thousands of footprints in the snow to remind of the crowds to follow us that far. But we were there to train, and train we did. Up our old snowshoe trail towards Round Valley, almost left our snowshoes behind, what a laugh, we would have been wallowing. Newer members had a rough time because bindings came loose, packs were too heavy, not enough aerobic points earned for optimum physical conditioning. It's always half funny, half serious to watch, suggest, encourage when new members struggle to develop skills we struggled for in the past. We were blessed with lovely weather that featured a deep blue sky above the fir and pine forest. A small contre temps when we caught up with the advance group that had already pitched tents in a populated area and we insisted upon going over to our much remembered camp that has nicely spaced level places between boulders and huge trees, overlooking a tremendous extent of our mountain past the Santa Rosas, the Salton Sea, and "on a clear day," into Mexico.

Some of us got twelve hours sleep that night. A wonderful respite from the dash at home. Some of us slept through the full eclipse, others watched it a bit in the twenty degree cold. Morning dawned with a return of exhilarating colors and fresh breezes. After breakfast we

headed for San Jacinto Peak. This commenced another interesting struggle for altitude. Snowshoes were "stashed" at 10,000', we either cramponed or just used bare boots on up to the peak. Pretty good view that enhanced our orientation. Following a lunch we scampered down to camp. I daresay that climb convinced a number of men to look into more running, obtaining snowshoes or ice axe, and the like. That's what the trip was for -- getting ready for real missions under similar or much tougher circumstances.

Almost forgot the two huge pans of positively delicious Lasagna that Rich Morris prepared for Saturday supper. Rich has proved himself an excellent cook as well as an eager new SAR man.

The list of skills we either instructed or learned would be endless, but in the subtle atmosphere of an enjoyable outing they don't seem as numerous.

Our hike out featured a spectacular "header" by one of the men doing his first snowshoeing. He caught the point of one snowshoe under the crust and pitched forward onto his face, then his pack held him down until two others helped him up.

Back at the Mountain Station of the tram we got a real break when we just walked in and the attendant motioned for us to get aboard the car ready to descend. That saved a couple of hours of waiting. Little did we know that a mission awaited us as we drove off to return home.

-- Jim Fairchild