

# 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

Volume VIII, Issue 5, May 1972  
Editor & Publisher, Walt Walker  
Photography the members

## *Coming Events ---*

- 17 May, Regular Meeting at Riverside County Hall of Records, 1930.
- 19-21 May, Training, descent of Tahquitz Canyon - Idyllwild to Palm Springs.
- 24 May, Training, Rubidoux-on-the-Rocks, 1900 at the gate.
- 14 June, Board Meeting, 1900.
- 21 June, Regular meeting.
- 24-25 June, Training, Boulder Basin--Tracking Technical, Location Filming.

## *Sustaining Members*

This month we want to re-emphasize the need of support by our sustaining members for our additional radio equipment. This equipment will save many manhours of team member's time by making it possible for them to be contacted while at work, on the road, or on their way to or from a S & R mission. We hope each of you will find it possible to renew your membership in the near future.

— Al Andrews

Thank you to the following new members:

Mrs. Belle Schwartz  
Idyllwild Jr. Women's Club  
Dr. Thomas E. Gillen

and thank you to the renewing members:

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Hewitt  
Mr. & Mrs. A.P. Crist  
Dr. Robert Bingham  
Camille S. Ware

## *Search and Rescue*

2 APRIL, SUN. — RESCUE — No. 7228M  
Rancho Mirage

Once again while I was painting on a Sunday afternoon RMRU received a phone call from the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, Indio substation. An elderly gentleman was reported down from heat exhaustion somewhere in the fills above Rancho Mirage.

We rolled to the roadhead and met the deputy. After a brief discussion it was decided to ask for the California Highway Patrol helicopter to help us search for the missing man. Within fifteen minutes the C.H.P. bird arrived and we were quickly airborne.

Very quickly a small group was spotted hiking down canyon towards the roadhead. A RMRU ground party hiked up the canyon and met the group and discovered, unknown to us that a group of friends had hiked in with water earlier. The man was with them, and although obviously suffering from the heat, was walking.

We thanked the C.H.P. pilot and loaded equipment back into the van and started the long drive home. -- Walt Walker.

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8 APRIL, SAT. -- RESCUE -- No. 7229M  
Falls Creek

Saturday morning around 1115 we received a call saying a girl with a broken leg needed help in Falls Creek. This is at the bottom of the north face of San Jacinto. Bernie and I got the truck and were off by 1130.

We reach the road end about 1220 and talk to the sheriff deputy. The girl is about ¼ mile up the canyon with some friends. John Murdock, Dave Cook, and I start up with a radio, two full leg splints, two first aid belts, and all the rest of our usual gear, about 35 lbs. worth per person. Bernie and Rick start assembling our new wheeled litter and Steve Bryant is base camp operator.

We reached the girl at 1230 after a quick pace up the canyon. But as we went up we realized the wheeled litter would not work, the canyon bottom was too rough. So Bernie and Rick came in with just the litter and rescue sleeping bag.

The girl, Daina Harrison, age 18, weight over 200 lbs, was in some pain and quite scared. We tried to calm her down and reassure her that she would be all right. John did an examination and I took the pulse. We then stood back and talked together away from Daina. The diagnoses were a possible broken left ankle, right femur, right knee cap, and ribs on left side.

We got back to Daina and with Dave helping also we applied an air splint to each leg. As more team members arrived, we got Daina into the litter with the rescue bag around her for warmth. Then the sling was used and Daina tied into the litter. As Art, Jack, Al, and Dave arrived we got set to start the carry out.

Also during this time as the wind was gusting, a pack blew over and dumped a \$900.00 radio into the creek. Quickly pulling it out we turned it off and then dumped out water. We took it apart to

help dry and carried it out hoping the damage was not too bad.



(RMRU PHOTO BY PETE CARLSON)

At 1300 we start the carry out and it is rough. Soon some feet get wet, then up to our knees at times, and through poison oak and over boulders we go. Then a problem, only 100 yards from the road the canyon narrows and only a narrow trail 10 feet up on the side of the hill and the creek. So into the water, first knee deep, then to the thighs, and then up over our belts as our feet sink in the muddy bottom. With the litter over our heads we reach the dry land at last, and 75 yards to the road.

Time 1400, only 3½ hours since the accident, not bad time. We pack our gear away, take off boots and pour out water and mud. Then it's off to eat, somehow we all missed lunch and had built up quite an appetite by now. -- Pete Carlson

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9 APRIL, SUN. -- EVACUATION -- No. 7230M  
Gully Below Tahquitz Notches

When the phone rang at 8:15 Sunday evening, I didn't think too much about it, thinking it was too early for a rescue call. However, that thought was soon shot down, as my wife called me to the phone. A seventeen year old boy was laying somewhere in the back country with a probable broken ankle.

With the usual rush, I loaded equipment into the wagon with the help of my family and was on my way. Upon arriving at the Idyllwild Fire Station I was introduced to the informant, another seventeen year old and the hiking partner of the injured. He related that the two of them, both from the Desert Sun School, had hiked the South Ridge Trail to Tahquitz Peak and started the descent to the Saddle. It had become late and upon looking down at Humber Park, decided to go cross country down the chute. On the way down the injury occurred and the informant had hiked out for help.

It was cold, and after talking with the informant about the lack of warm clothing of the injured, I radioed Jim Fairchild who was enroute in the rescue van, that I was going to hike in with the informant if it was agreeable with him. He concurred and we started hiking in from Humber Park.

About thirty minutes out I thought I heard a voice. Stopping and calling we received a strained answer. Hurrying even faster, we were soon with the injured. He said that he had become cold and had crawled part of the way down. By this time the van had arrived and I radioed down for the rescue sleeping bag, a full leg air splint and the wheeled litter.

While examining the victim (the right ankle was quite swollen and very tender), Jim radioed that the gear would be on the way along with Pete Carlson, Dave Cook, Bernie McIlvoy, Rich Morris and himself. He also stated that two climbers were overdue from a climb of Tahquitz Rock and that four other members (see next write-up) were going to start up the trail towards Lunch Rock.

In what seemed like a very short time the above mentioned group arrived with the gear. The air splint was put on and inflated, although not as tight as we would have liked. The victim, because of the tenderness, could not stand to have it fully inflated. The next problem was to move him down about ten feet of nearly vertical terrain. Dave Cook was volunteered to be tied into a rope and carried the boy on his back while being belayed. After more of a job than we had anticipated, we had the victim down. He was put into the rescue sleeping bag and tied into the litter.

The wheeled litter had been tested on training, but never had it been used on an actual mission. It took us a little while to catch on to the best way to handle it, but when we did, it worked extremely well. With only six men, a normal carry-out would have been almost impossible. Although it was still work, we were able to get the job done in very good time. When we rolled into the parking lot at Humber Park, Sgt. Bill Herring, of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, greeted us with a well done and said the coffee was on. --Walt Walker

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9 APRIL, SUN. - SEARCH - No. 7231M  
Tahquitz Rock

We arrived at Humber Park at 2100 hrs. to help carry out a victim with a bad ankle. Our West End group rolling from La Verne (Dave Nehen), Claremont (Al Korber), Alta Loma (Art Bridge) and myself from Upland, usually arrives fifteen to thirty minutes late, just in time to supply the manpower for the carryout.

Sgt. Bill Herring, of the Riverside County Sheriff's Dept., informed us that six RMRU with the wheeled litter had the carryout well in control. He then mentioned there were two climbers overdue from their day on Tahquitz Rock. Upon questioning the informants (girl friends of the climbers) we determined that two Riverside men aged 19 and 20 years, had been last seen near the top of the White Maiden Route about 1600 hours. The most experienced of the two had started climbing about eight months prior and this was the duo's first trip to Tahquitz Rock.

Using the loud speaker on the Van we were unable to contact the men. Knowing the hazards of the Friction Route (standard descent route) especially if it's dark and you've never used it before, we consulted with Jim Fairchild (on the carryout) and decided the West End Boys should hike in for a look-see.

Thirty minutes of continuous hiking brought our foursome to Lunch Rock, still without contact with the missing climbers. Another twenty minutes found our group at the base of the Friction Route: still no contact. At this point we split into two teams: Al

and Dave proceeded up the south-east side of the rock to the Tahquitz notches while Art and myself climbed the Friction Route. Al and Dave got to the notches; no contact. We got to the top of the White Maiden Route: no contact. (Note: Daugherty's tour on training two weeks ago sure helped!!)

Jim now at Base, the carry-out group having completed their victim evacuation, suggested Art and I travel north-east along the top of the Rock and join with the group at the Notches. We popped a flare over the north face and continued to vocalize the area, all without success. Just as Art and I reached the top of Tahquitz Rock, Jim announced the two climbers had walked into Humber Park. They had not taken the standard descent route but traveled instead to the top of the rock, dropped into the notches and descended under the North face.

The evening suddenly lost urgency and we enjoyed a pleasant night hike culminating in a 0300 hrs. breakfast in Beaumont. --Jack Schnurr

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#### 10 APRIL, MON. - RESCUE - No. 7232M Tahquitz Canyon

Just before lunch this time, the Indio sub-station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department called and said a young girl was reported stranded in Tahquitz Canyon because of fasting and a foot she could not walk on. So on the first call, Joe Bell, Pete Carlson, Jim Fairchild, Ed Hill, Bernie McIlvoy, John Murdock, Dennis Simpson and I responded.

As happens many times, I was the first to the roadhead, because of living closer to the mountain. The deputy introduced me to two young men who were the informants. They had been hiking out and met Martha Babbe as she was trying to hike out. They said she had not eaten food for six days and was having trouble walking on one foot. They told her they would seek help and that she should stay put. They described the area she was in and because it was so far back in, it was decided to call Don Landell and have him fly us in by his supercharged helicopter.

When Don arrived we briefed him on the situation and I loaded my pack on the outside litter,

climbed in and we were soon flying up the familiar canyon. Generally Don's sharp eye spots our victims, but this time I was the first to see Martha in the canyon bottom. Don flew around looking for a helispot close to where she was sitting. But none was to be had, so he eased in to the steep hillside, watching the main rotor. There was just enough clearance for a one runner touch down. Don gave me the nod and I slipped out of the bird and off loaded my pack. While he flew back for another load, I climbed down into the canyon bottom and hiked downstream to where Martha sat.

After a brief questioning as to how she was (weak), I took a look at the bottom of her heel. She had a wart that had become infected and could not walk on that heel. With foam moleskin and tape I put together a padded bandage to make her walking easier. Using the ten watt handitalkie, I radioed out that only one more man was needed. The helicopter arrived, and Joe Bell climbed out. He hiked down to where we were and we discussed the situation, deciding that with help she could make it to the helispot. Upon arriving at the helispot, we radioed to base that we were ready to have the helicopter return. They replied that the helicopter was not there. About that time, Don called down from the top of the ridge. (He had parked his bird on the ridge top and walked over to the edge.) We yelled back that we were ready.

When the bird arrived, Martha and Joe climbed in and were on their way. Shortly Don returned, I loaded Joe's and my pack onto the bird, and off we went down the canyon and back to base. With everything secured we drove to a restaurant and ate. During dinner we critiqued the mission and then drove home. --Walt Walker

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#### 29-30 APRIL, SAT. - EVACUATION - No. 7233M San Jacinto Mountains

It had been quite awhile since my family and I had spent a quiet Saturday evening together. The quiet was interrupted by the ringing of the telephone. My wife called to me, "There is a conference call for you." Of course, this meant that one of the other captains had started the ball rolling. While waiting for the call to be completed, I thought, this could be

tough as the majority of the team was on training (climbing the North Face). As the call was connected, I learned that a nineteen year old man was at Willow Creek crossing with severe abdominal pain, quite possibly appendicitus.

Arriving at the lower terminal of the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, I put on my hiking boots and checked my pack. Shortly, Sgt. Bill Herring, of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department arrived. He was quickly followed by Hank Schmel and Jim Fairchild in the rescue van. While we were putting the wheeled litter together, Bernie McIlvoy, Dave Nehen and Art Bridge arrived. This was the extent of the manpower we were to have. We talked of calling other teams, but decided that with the wheeled litter, we could handle it.

Soon, Art, Bernie, Dave, Jim and I boarded the tram car along with our packs and the wheeled litter. Hank, still with an ailing knee, would drive back around to Humber Park in Idyllwild and be the base camp operator. In this way, we would have a communications link with the outside. The tram car quietly glided up the steel cables, and we were at the upper terminal. With no delay, we met the informant, who was to hike along with us, unloaded the litter, put on our packs and were on our way. With a full moon to hike by, we didn't even have to turn on a flashlight.

In very good time (12:30 a.m.) we arrived at Willow Creek, with the informant then leading us downstream to where the stricken may lay. We took all the life signs, temperature, pulse, respiration and blood pressure. The man's temperature was up one degree above normal, pulse was slightly elevated, respiration was almost normal and blood pressure was up quite a bit. Upon palpating his abdominal area, we found both upper quadrants moderately tender, but very little tenderness in the lower right. With some help from two Scoutmasters, who had stayed with the ill man, we loaded him into the wheeled litter. On went our packs and with Bernie leading the way, we started up the slope towards the trail. Once upon the trail we started the long haul to Humber Park. For the second time in less than a month the wheeled litter was doing a great job. In fact so great, that when we stopped at Saddle Junction for a quick snack, our passenger was fast asleep.

Swinging on the packs again, we started the downhill roll to Humber. When about thirty minutes from the bottom, we advised Hank of our E.T.A. (estimated time of arrival), whereupon Sgt. Herring radioed to have the Idyllwild Fire Department ambulance come up to Humber. At 5:30 a.m. we arrived and the sick man was transferred to the ambulance gurney and was on his way to the Hemet Hospital. We adjourned to the Alpine Pantry for a big breakfast. After breakfast, Sgt. Herring drove us back around to our cars at the bottom of the tram. Then we started the long drive home and into bed to try to catch a few hours of needed sleep. —Walt Walker

## TRAINING



### 28 - 30 APRIL - "THE NORTH FACE"

The North Face of San Jacinto cannot be described as a training weekend or a trip. It is a grunt, i.e. a hard climb, a beautiful climb, etc. as are many other climbs, but in toto there is no comparison between the north face and any other group endeavor. It is at once a ceremony, i.e. like a Barmizvah, a ritual performed in some understood yet unwritten code for at no other time is there a stronger bond between the members.

Jim Fairchild was unable to go with us this year because of a previous engagement and it is the closest I have ever seen him to crying, and he has been up the north face eight or nine times before. Art Bridge, who also missed the trip, was just as upset which may give some of you an estimate, at least, to the quantitative degree of meaning to each member. Dick Webster came all the way back from Arizona just to climb the north face, not alone, not with someone else, but with us. Mike Daugherty, Ray Ross and John Murdock, who conceivably could miss such a strenuous exercise because they are retiring from the team because of work commitments, could not think of missing the north face.

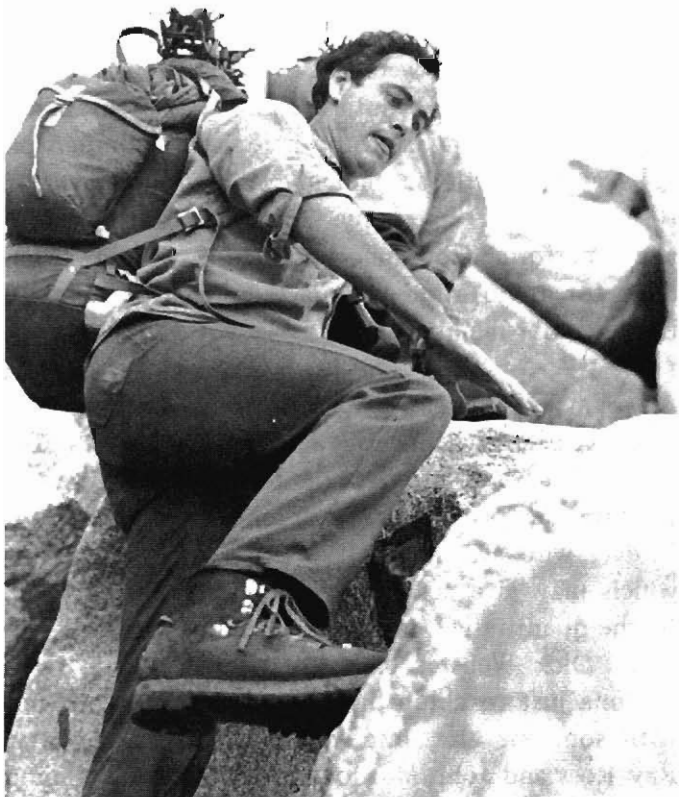
I do not know how the north face is special but perhaps these examples will convey some of the specialness.

Rich Quackenbush and Bill Hunt got their rescue careers off to a great start by being with the rescue team when it is truly a whole.

Rich Morris had his first chance to do the magic climb and in his enjoyment got a new prospective of the team.

Pete Carlson, Steve Bryant, Dave Hadley and myself rounded out the crew. We met at the caretaker's house and hiked into the isthmus between Falls Creek and Snow Creek (East Fork). A landmark accomplished because there was not one single old guard present to lead (Mike Daugherty came up later with Dick Webster).

We got an early start next morning. To climb around the water falls we went into the bushes. The bushes are hard to describe, it is hot, the bushy terrain is very steep, everyone has ice axes to catch in the trees. Perhaps it is enough to say that no one ever forgets the bushes, but everyone is willing to pay,



(RMRU PHOTO BY PETE CARLSON)

Daugherty hard at work on the task of uphill.

like a price of admission.

Finally! Finally the snow. A sort of unanimous feeling settles over the group. The snow is perfect. The pace seems slower yet the elapsed time is less than last year. The group stays much closer together with no mishaps.

Pete again had what appeared to be high altitude sickness but refused to give one pound of gear or miss one step. Tough guy. Who should be kicking steps at the head of the line at 10,500 feet but the Doc. (A slight change from last year.)

Finally we hit the soft snow and steps were picked with great care. Then we hit something new, very hard crust at the highest angle which necessitated front pointing with 12 point crampons. Unfortunately, having followed the training instructions and brought instep crampons, I was unable to see the end of the climb, but I have my own interesting variation of the ending.

Anything after the peak is pretty anticlimactic. We had a comfortable camp in little Round Valley and met Art Bridge next morning at Marion Mountain Campground.

My apologies to all those who were forced to miss this climb because at no time is the team a more organic whole single unit. ---Joe Bell



The Road

Runner sez-

Buckhorn Ranch near Idyllwild was again the site for a seminar involving SAR units and governmental agencies, April 21-23. The California Region of the Mountain Rescue Association hosts these seminars bi-annually. We started from Riverside by driving up with four representatives from the State of Washington - exchanging information and varying points of view. That evening we renewed acquaintances then retired in anticipation of the early daily run. Saturday featured a station-type display, lecture, and demonstration process with great interest shown in all. Saturday night is still a blur, having been

fiendishly exposed to tobacco smoke. Sunday morning we conducted a mock mission with technical evacuations necessitating lowering and raising a litter, two Tyrolean traverses, and the Border Patrol Tracking along the far side of the canyon to find injured subjects. My strong impressions: the cooperation and increased cohesiveness between SAR units; the fine instruction given by the Border Patrol representatives; the really wonderful material inventory shown by most units; the gripes, problems, and concerns shared by all SAR units -- it's amazing to me how often we encounter similar difficulties -- undoubtedly because we encounter similar requests for help.

By now all RMRU members should have modified their callout gear to accommodate high temperatures during operations. Eliminate foods that melt or spoil; put at least two quarts of water in the pack and two gallons in the car; include a broad-rimmed well ventilated hat; extra changes of socks; teams should carry tents for desert operations when reptiles and insects bearing potential poison threats are met; wear gaiters in known buzz-tail country. Be sure to re-read "Hot Weather Hints" in the training manual. An elaboration on the water you take: if you carry about four two-quart containers in addition to the regular two quarts in the pack you can add containers according to expected need (the actual need is usually considerably in excess of that expected), so be prepared. Some of us have been on operations where the temperatures exceeded 100 deg. F., even 110 deg. F., and have seen the results of dehydration. It's a lot easier to prepare for and stay comfortable and effective in extreme cold temperatures than in extreme hot! The most critical point is this: in the cold your hiking and other exertion creates heat and adds to your comfort and prevents hypothermia, in the heat the exertion adds to the problem of too much heat. All this is complicated by the necessity to hike to the victim quickly. Excellent aerobic conditioning, long-term operations in the heat, and constant vigilance are required to prevent ourselves from becoming victims.

Those of us who are deeply rooted and rutted to a place are periodically pained by the departure of fellow RMRU members. We grow to like, trust, and enjoy our friends in the unit, then they go on to bigger and better endeavors -- distant endeavors, at least. Now, Mike Daugherty is busy with plans and activities leading to a position necessitating a move

to the San Pedro area. Our six-year association with Mike has been tremendous, we will sorely miss him. Dick Webster moved to Arizona, Bob Nelson resigned, John Murdock and Ray Ross, both employed at the same firm, will move to Palos Verdes next month. A host of memories surrounds all of these men -- they are friends, fine partners on searches and rescues. I'm sure they'll be helping people at their next stop.

Suddenly, it was election time for RMRU. The seven board members were chosen by the unit, then the board chose officers and appointed committee chairmen. My personal thanks to all for the vote of confidence in asking me to serve as President.

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#### SPECIAL THANKS!

RMRU is extremely grateful to the Board of Directors of the San Geronio Pass Memorial Hospital and the Hospital Administrator, Mr. Johnson, for the donation of two Hare Traction Splints. Many Thanks!

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## RMRU - GRAM

Regular members: 1972-73 Dues are now due.

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SORRY WE WERE LATE! The month of April kept all of us jumping. Before a member could finish his write-up of a mission, we were called for another one. The write-ups were slow to arrive in my hands and I was unable to process them as usual due to the missions and my work.

After we fell so far behind schedule, it was decided to combine the April and May newsletters in one mailing. Hope you didn't think we forgot you.