

RMRU NEWSLETTER

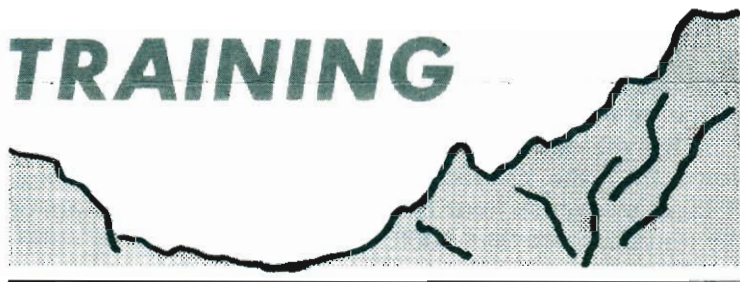
PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE RIVERSIDE MOUNTAIN RESCUE UNIT, INC.
A VOLUNTEER NON-PROFIT CORPORATION
P. O. BOX 5444, RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA 92507
MEMBER OF THE MOUNTAIN RESCUE ASSOCIATION

Issue 12, December 1973

Coming Events - - -

- 25-27 January 1974, Full-scale Mock Mission, Commence shooting new slide show.
- 10 January 1974, Board Meeting.
- 23 January 1974, Regular Meeting.
- 14 February 1974, Board Meeting.
- 20 February 1974, Regular Meeting.
- 22-24 February 1974, Annual Winter Training on Mt. San Gorgonio.

TRAINING



The Road Runner

sez - by Pres. Jim Fairchild

17 NOV., SAT.
Training in Snowcreek Area

The north face of San Jacinot Mountain has given the Old Roadrunner a great number of memories. The first one involves an abortive attempt to climb the peak via Falls Creek. We returned to the desert after reaching 7000' el., clothing torn off by brush, our egos crushed from having chosen too tough a route. That was in 1946. A series of further reconnoiters and successful ascents followed. Then, in April 1951, we led 23 Boy Scouts to a campsite just above the lower falls, a 300' drop in a spectacular setting. We were practicing for a Camporee. One of the 14 yr. olds went swimming in a large pool about thirty feet upstream from the falls' abrupt lip. He fell over in sight of three terrified companions. The

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ensuing scenes of getting a couple of us down to the base of the falls to verify instant death, my brother-in-law's frantic attempts to get word back to Riverside, and the exciting nighttime body recovery are even now quite clear in my mind. Pleasanter memories include a picnic with my fiancee at the brink of the same falls, three years earlier; three ascents of Snowcreek to the summit with the Scout Troop, my eleven year old son was with us in '63. There have been other excursions up there, and, in recent years, several SAR missions.

So, as we stood at the edge of the lower falls this Saturday, I was rather inclined to regale my five RMRU companions (Steve Bryant, Rick Pohlers, Dan MacIntosh, Pete Frickland, and Ed Hill) with "war stories" of the past. Then they recounted the rescue of the butterfly collector, badly injured and hard to find, only two-hundred yards away from where my Scout went over the edge (see Issue 5, May 1973). We were hiking this area for familiarization, with an eye for where and how to search for someone if reported lost or hurt in the vicinity, and how to evacuate them. When we arrived at the upper falls (200' drop) we hoped no one needed recovery from there! We ate lunch while admiring the big fall and its several subsidiaries below. Our setting was a bit contrasty - healthy trees and shrubs near the falls and canyon - a bleak, burned out chaparral forest to the west. A 10,000 acre fire swept across the north face country last summer. But even now the sycamores, oaks, chamise, nolinias, and many other plants, including poison oak, are vigorously sending up ground shoots.

While we basked in sunshine, thousands of feet above the abundant clouds of a storm were being blown rapidly easterly, dissipating in the heat above the desert. Our descent took us along the East Fork of Snowcreek where we observed and will try to remember nine obstructing waterfalls and how to arrive above or below them in case of need. We were happy to find that the rumor about the "nature freaks" of Tahquitz Canyon coming over to the north face country is untrue, the area remains fascinating and challenging.

Search and Rescue

10 NOV., SAT. — RESCUE — No. 7353M
Soboba Hills, North of San Jacinto
By Hank Schmel

Walt had called a conference with all the call captains and reported that we had a young man stranded in the Soboba Hills. We knew before we started that help was going to be a little thin because we had five of the team members in Mexico City. Anyway, with the help of my wife and her coffee, I went on to meet the group at the roadhead which was just south of the bridge over the San Jac river. It was extremely foggy and I drove I.F.R. all the way. What normally takes 30 minutes took almost an hour.

Upon arriving at the roadhead I found Pohlrs and Claybrook waiting for instructions while Walt was proceeding up to the victim along with members of the Hemet Valley Search and Rescue Team. Within minutes Fairchild and Morris rolled in with the van. Since Jim lost out in a tussle with a german sheppard (severe bite on the right hand), he became candidate for base ops leader. In the meantime Walt and a member from the Hemet team had positioned themselves about 300' above the victim. Ed Hill, Morris, Pohlrs, Claybrook and myself took all the technical equipment and started out. An hour later as the sun peeked through the clouds we arrived at Walt's position. Within a few minutes we had set an anchor and Ed Hill made ready for the descent. Since there were no injuries it was a matter of 45 minutes and the job was completed. We gathered at Joes Place, a restaurant in Hemet, for breakfast and headed back to Riverside where Hill, Claybrook, Pohlrs, Fairchild, Claybrook's lovely girlfriend, Marsha and myself, set up for a picture taking episode at Mt. Rubidoux.

25-26 NOV., SUN.-MON. — SEARCH — No. 7354M
South Fork of San Jacinto River
By Rich Quackenbush

The call comes at about 2215 Sunday evening. Soon Art Bridge, Dan MacIntosh, and I are rolling toward Lake Hemet, Art filling us in as we drive. It seems that Sunday morning Ralph Huntoon of Hemet, his wife Margie, and his 16 year old daughter Linda had started down the South Fork of the San Jacinto River from the dam at Lake Hemet, intending to come out at the bottom of the

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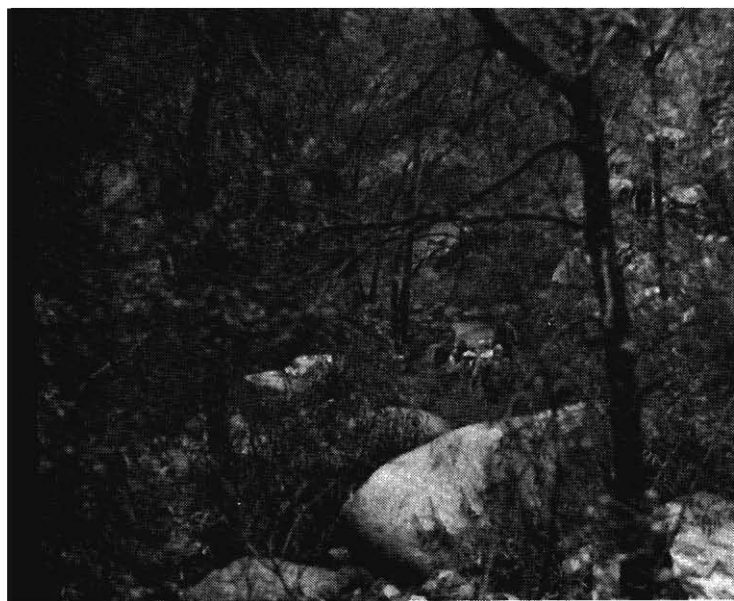
canyon several miles below. Ralph was scouting the canyon for a Sierra Club trip he was to lead the coming weekend. When it became dark and the Huntoons had not returned, another daughter reported them missing.

By the time the three of us arrived at the roadhead at the lower end of the canyon, eight more men are already there, six of them in the field. Steve Bryant with Gary Gillespie and Bob Claybrook have driven up to the lake to work the canyon down from there, while Jim Fairchild with Bob Latham and Rich Morris have started up from the lower end of the canyon. Pete Carlson and Walt Walker are running the operation from the van.

It is decided that the three of us drive up to the 4000' level at about midway and drop down into the canyon and then work up canyon to meet the first-group. At this point, Pete Frickland arrives to expand our number to twelve. He is directed to act as radio relay — that is, to relay communications from the groups in the field and the van and from one group to another by stationing himself in some ideal location in between. Radio communication in a canyon is chancy at best.

Several members of the team know Ralph Huntoon. I myself have been on three Sierra Club outings with him. It does not seem likely that he would be lost. He is experienced and has hiked the canyon before. We worry that one of the party may be hurt. The only other possibility is that darkness has overtaken them and they are bivouacked somewhere in the canyon. It is the former possibility that makes it important that we take up the search at night.

By the time we drive to the 4000' level and start down into the canyon, it is almost 0100 and raining. It takes us over an hour to work our way to the bottom of the canyon, more than 1000' below. We hear Jim by radio; he thinks he is not far behind us. We start working our way up the canyon, looking for tracks as we go. The going is extremely slow, lots of brush, boulders, and downed timber, divided by the stream. We find no tracks, so the



RMRU member Dan MacIntosh focused his camera on fellow team members as they slowly moved through the dense brush and downed trees.

subjects must be between us and Steve Bryant's team. After about an hour, Jim Fairchild and his team catch up with us, and we proceed together, shouting as we go. At about 0530, there is an answering shout, and in five minutes we come upon the subjects huddled around a small fire which Ralph has been able to keep burning in spite of the rain. Nobody is hurt, just cold and wet. Down jackets are broken out and hot soup and hot chocolate brewed; soon, everybody is warmed up.



The Huntoon family was belayed, with climbing ropes, up the steep canyon slopes. The only identified people in the above photograph, were, Art Bridge pointing downwards toward Rich Morris. Photo by Dan MacIntosh.



Rich Morris signaled, from the planned wilderness helispot, to pilot Don Landells as he flew in Walt Walker who lowered brush cutting tools to waiting team members. Photo by Dan MacIntosh.

It is decided to call in the helicopter for evacuation, if the weather permits. Jim and Art climb around looking for a helispot and soon find one up the side of the canyon that needs just a little clearing away of brush.

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At 0825 Don Landells arrives with his helicopter; Walt is flown up and drops us tools to cut away the brush. At 0900, Don lands on one runner and the two women are flown out. In a few minutes, he is back to get Ralph and Art Bridge. By 0945 all the team is back down at base. The mission is over.



As Don Landells held his helicopter in a one runner touch-down hover, Mrs. Huntoon and her daughter were helped aboard the carefully perched helicopter. Photo by Don MacIntosh.

If you are a recent new reader of the 'RMRU Newsletter', you probably do not know about one of RMRU's multi-talented members Hank Schmel. Besides being a regular rescue member, Hank is Public Relations chairman and also in charge of processing team film and photographs. When he had finished the photos from the previous mission he called the printer, time 4:05 p.m., and said he would deliver them. At 4:45 p.m., pilot Hank Schmel flew over the printers and dropped a small package that slowly descended, landing in a large open field next to the print shop.

Sustaining Members

by Mike Daugherty

Owing to an unforeseen conjunction of Jupiter, Mars and the Jack-In-The-Box sign at Central and Riverside Dr., all of the Sustaining Members this month are renewals. As is well known in mountain rescue circles, the probability of this very unlikely event is obtained by dividing the square of the modulus of the charitable distribution function by the product of the number of rescues factorial and the inverse cube of the frequency of aborts. Its vanishingly small probability notwithstanding, it has happened.

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All attempted levity aside, our particular thanks to those whose continuity of support really does **sustain** RMRU.

Renewing Members:

- Mr. and Mrs. J. L. Daugherty
- *Chester F. Dolley
- R. A. Dewees
- *Thomas E. Gillen, M.D.
- Mr. and Mrs. M. Hefferlin
- *Kelty Pack
- Mr. and Mrs. R. O. Ridenour
- George Ruptier
- *Theodore L. Young

**Century Club Member, donation of \$100 or more.*

Pager Fund

