

# 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 IX, Issue 7, July 1973

Walt Walker, Editor

## Coming Events - - -

- 12 July, Board meeting, 1900
- 25 July, Regular meeting, 1930
- 28 July, Training on Suicide Rock, Potluck at Sky Yacht
- 9 August, Board meeting
- 19 August, Annual Izzac Walton League Benefit Breakfast, Idyllwild.
- 22 August, Regular meeting
- 24-26 August, Training

## TRAINING



22-24 JUNE - 'SURVIVE THE HEAT'  
Descent of Tahquitz Canyon  
by Jim Fairchild

It was not at the lower Tram station, even after the sun had set in the steep-walled canyon at 1730. We really looked forward to going up the Tram, hiking in the coolness past Hidden Lake, Desert View, and down to Caramba (6600' el.) We really dreaded going down the canyon into our own version of Dante's "Inferno," infamous Tahquitz Canyon. All week I had been thinking of the old saying, "Only fools, mad dogs, and Englishmen go out into the midday sun." Well, I'm mostly English, but still hoped for a miraculous factor to change our plans. No luck.

At Long Valley, just below the upper Tram station, we met Gary Anderson, a summer ranger up there. Our hike to Caramba was warmer than expected, then the temp. fell as we prepared for bivouac. Seemed like only a few shivers later the sun was ready to rise, we weren't, but did anyway. As we began the descent apprehensions dissipated as we had to concentrate on route finding and every step we made. Lots of water, all the vegetation healthy and green, the sun warmed to its work.

The first two thousand feet of elevation loss is steady, featuring continuous cascades, intermittent waterfalls, climbing down on alternating boulder slopes and leaf-covered hillsides, never more than 100' from the stream. We came to the spot where Dan MacIntosh fell last year. Finally we reached easier terrain and then the confluence of Long Canyon and Tahquitz (3600' el.) followed by the fifth valley. We passed the spot where Ronald Gidcumb had died and was lifted out by bird, Tower Helispot, and then the final two waterfalls to bypass just above our intended campsite. About then Hank Schmel and Walt Walker flew over. We flashed the mirror and they zeroed in on our location to drop ice cream. Well, I wonder how bighorn sheep like ice cream? The drop didn't exactly whack us on the head.

Down at camp (2900' el.) we swam, relaxed, made a bed of coals for steaks, cooked, waited for a cooling trend after dark, but none came. Another bivouac, no shivers this time!

Sunday morning said hello. We got another early start for us, 0700. A hundred yards down this, the fourth valley, we encountered the second Speckled Rattlesnake of the trip, bypassed him, and continued on to the big bend above which is Grapevine Helispot. It was hot in the sun (103 deg.) but no hotter than yesterday. As usual, we "rested" our way along - we save hurrying for rescues. Now began the three tricky side-of-the-canyon bypasses that finally got us below the fourth falls, into the area where most of our rescues occur. We swam again, ate lunch. Now our trek was along the narrow trail down to the first falls. One-hundred degrees in the shade, one-O-six in the sun. Incipient heat exhaustion and heat stroke in some of the men - carrying heavy packs in the midday sun - remember the saying? At the shady mecca of the huge pool below the first falls we met a hundred or so bathers, water or sun, take your choice. Clothed or unclothed, take your choice. The shade and spray were most refreshing, as was the scenery.

Now for the one mile home stretch. Easy trail, 115 deg. temp. Crystal clear view of Palm Springs and the desert. The superb training for familiarity and conditioning ended as we met Dan MacIntosh and his generous gallons of fruit juices. Participants not previously mentioned were Rick Pohlers, Rich Quackenbush, Pete Carlson, Steve Stephens, and Gary Gillespie. We parted saying, "See you back here tonight." Little did we know it would be tomorrow night.



## The Road Runner

sez- by Pres. Jim Fairchild

One of the exceptionally useful, crucial, and almost indispensable items in SAR is the radio system. Without communications between Base and Field the operations would be quite different – quite difficult. There have been devised a number of code systems to shorten the length of transmissions. Instead of asking, “What is your location?,” we simply say, “10-20?” Another example, “ETA 1535, Humber Park,” means “We plan to arrive at Humber Park about 3:35 p.m.” Beautiful plan, right? Saves batteries and does not clutter up the air waves. **But**, in actual practice, what usually happens? It goes like this, “Er, ugh ahhh, what is your 10-20 at the present time?” Reply, “Well, (long pause) it looks like we are approaching the intersection of, uh, er, ah, it looks like Pacific Boulevard and, lemme see, oh yah, Strompeloff.” The last street is fictitious to protect the guilty. Anyway, consider this a plea, if you use radios on the MRA frequency, to either use the code alone, or say it like it is in concise language. The day is already here when we cannot quickly and efficiently transmit messages to and from Base when operating in areas reached by the powerful transmitters of ambulance services, doctor call services, and friendly forces – brother MRA units. The real joker is that our frequency is supposed to be used in life and death emergencies only, and for messages related only to those emergencies. We hear transmissions like, “Dr. \_\_\_\_\_, your wife wants you to stop by and pick up hamburger for the cat.” Or, “Hey Control, can I go to the \_\_\_\_\_ and pick up my name plate?” A classic some years ago was a southern voice agreeing with the transmission of his buddy, “That’s a ten-fo on your ten-fo!”

The heat’s on! Yesterday and today the actual temperature where I work, outdoors, has been 112 deg. f. But clear and dry, enjoyable, really.

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# Search and Rescue

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2 JUNE, SAT. – SEARCH – No. 7331A  
Boulder Basin Campground

The Banning office of the Riverside County Sheriff’s Department called and requested RMRU’s assistance to search for a missing camper. While we were on the way the missing subject was located.

8 JUNE, FRI. – SEARCH – No. 7332A  
Black Mountain Campground

Only six days after the last call from the Banning office of the Riverside County Sheriff’s Department we received another call to search for a missing person just a mile from the previous area. Once again the subject was found while we were driving.

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9 JUNE, SAT. – SEARCH – No. 7333A  
San Jacinto Mountains  
by Hank Schmel

Received phone call from Banning Sheriff at 2130. Two scouts ages 14 and 15 were overdue on a hike from Willow Creek Crossing. They turned up about a half hour after we received the call and the mission was aborted.

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10 JUNE, SUN. – SEARCH – No. 7334C  
Chino Canyon  
by Hank Schmel

The phone rang 30 minutes after midnight. It was the Indio Sheriff notifying us that four Marines were missing in Chino Canyon. I told the Deputy that there wasn’t much sense in calling out the team until daybreak. He agreed and told us to standby until about 10 am Sunday morning. 10 am went by and we were still on standby so I called Indio. I was told that they had been sighted and were due out at about 1400, which is just about how it happened.

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10 JUNE, SUN. – 2 SEARCHES – No. 7335C  
San Bernardino County  
by Hank Schmel

During our standby for the four Marines I received a call from San Diego S&R Team wanting our assistance to locate two scouts missing out of Camp Awahanee, San Bernardino County. I told Lois McCoy that we were on a standby status and would be unable to help at the moment.

Another call from Lois McCoy of San Diego team. The time was about 10 am. Again I had to beg off because of our situation with Indio. This time the San Bernardino Sheriff was trying to locate two adults missing out of Camp Angelus.

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DO NOT PASS GOAL,  
GO DIRECTLY TO PAGE 3

16 JUNE, SAT. — RESCUE — No. 7336M  
Tahquitz Canyon  
by Pete Carlson

Again this year it looks like Tahquitz Canyon will be our number one area of operation and the most dangerous. So when Al called Saturday morning at 1120 and said, "Tahquitz Canyon, a 17 year old took a 300 foot fall," it was no surprise. Jim and I arrived at the van about the same time and were off at 1135.

As we were driving to the roadhead we heard that Don Landells, who is stationed at Idyllwild with his helicopter for the fire season, would be coming down to the roadhead. We arrived at 1230 and Don was there and ready to go. Don had dropped off a forest service man with the victim and then came down. I quickly put on my boots as Jim put a radio in the bird. Don said he thinks the boy is dead because he was put in the forest service litter bag and was being carried across to a helispot.

At 1235 Don flew me up the canyon and in 4 minutes we were at the helispot. It is a 15 foot boulder, about 8 feet by 5 feet on top. I got off and climbed down to the boy. He was alive but in critical condition. He had a massive head wound which was still bleeding, both wrists broken, one arm broken, many abrasions, and broken ribs with an obviously deformed chest area.

I checked his breathing, he was making a gragling sound and blood was coming from his mouth. His pulse was irregular, over 160/min. I called base and asked for two more people fast and also to call the hospital and tell them we were coming in with a critically injured boy by helicopter. In came Steve Bryant and Bernie McIlvoy. They came down and we put a dressing on the head wound. We turned his head to the side and tilted it back so he could breath easier and the blood run out so he would not choke.

Don came in as we perched atop the boulder holding the litter. Don put one runner down and we placed the litter into a permanent litter on the bird. All this time we were working in a 8 foot by 4 foot area with 15 foot drops on all sides. I got in and fastened only the seat belt not the shoulder harness. As Don lifted up, I leaned outside and put two fingers on the boys neck to feel his pulse and check his breathing.

As we came in to the hospital we saw two attendents outside with a gurney waiting for us. I got out as we landed and undid the straps over the boy. He was lifted out and rushed to the emergency room. The doctor started his examination as pulse, blood pressure, and respiration rate were taken. His broken arm was splinted, blood taken for blood tests and an I.V. started. Two more doctors came in and an E.K.G. was ordered as a portable X-ray machine was brought in the room. Tubes into his nose and suction started as they put on an oxygen mask to help him breath. All of this took about 15 minutes and as someone came to pick me up he was scheduled for immediate brain surgery.

Back at the van we talked of his chances and hoped he would make it. After eating we stopped by the hospital and the boy, George Lee Bennett of Long Beach was in surgery. We talked to the parents a minute and left for home. As of Sunday George had not regained consciousness and is still in the I.C.U. in critical condition.

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25 JUNE, MONDAY — RESCUE — No. 7337M  
Lower Tahquitz Canyon, San Jacinto Mtns.  
by Jim Fairchild

Walt Walker and I were discussing unit business when the operator cut in with an emergency call. It was from Al Andrews informing about a man, Mike Donovan, 23, who was between the first and second falls, sick, unable to move. So, we rendezvoused at our most used roadhead near the mouth of the canyon, elevation 500 feet, in the shade of Mt. San Jacinto, but still over 100 deg. at 1800. Pete Carlson was Ops Ldr. He said Don Landell was expected with his bird at 1830. Bernie McIlvoy and I were assigned to go in together but Don took me to find the victim and render any necessary first aid, then bring in more men as needed. We flew in the area indicated by Mike's girl friend, but found no Mike. I was put out on a boulder and canvassed the numerous 'al fresco' sun bathers, no luck. Don flew in with the girl friend who quickly spotted Mike two hundred yards downstream from where he should have been. I hiked down and found him quite weak and sick, but with some carbohydrate he was able to clamber fifty feet up to another boulder for one of Don's "hairy" hovers that look so easy to the uninitiated. The mission was over in less than an hour instead of the exceedingly hot, dangerous five hours a carry-out would have required.

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30 JUNE, SAT. — SEARCH — No. 7338M  
Santa Ana Riverbottom  
by Walt Walker

Guess, old father time is catching up with me? When the alarm went off at five I had to pry myself out of bed. Could be though that I wasn't looking forward to searching the riverbottom area (near the sewer treatment plant) and watching out for the wild packs of dogs that were roaming the area. Also, the missing older woman had not been seen for six days and results of this type of search are usually negative.

We met at 0745 with two policemen from the Riverside Police Department and they filled us in on the details. After some discussion and warning about the dogs we split up into two man groups. Rich Morris and I were partners and we headed to where the missing woman's car had been found. With hundreds of footprints there, we

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

started up the river. Shortly, we found tracks, large dog prints in the wet sand. Next came bouts with swarms of small flying insects. After that, avoiding the Poison Oak and Nettles. Missed the Poison Oak, but I wasn't so lucky with the Nettles.

Rich and I crossed the river, via a railroad bridge, and headed back down the river. While we were battling our way through the dense underbrush, vines and trees we heard voices. In a few minutes we met up with Jim Fairchild and Dave Hadley. Now as a four man team we searched our way down river until reaching where another group had started earlier that morning. Our four man group crossed the river again and by passed the treatment plant.

When all the teams had returned we went over the days search. The main problem being, we had not found one thing. To date the woman has not been located. There is a good chance that she is not in the river bottom area as she has hitch-hiked out of the Riverside area in the past, twice.

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## *Sustaining Members*

by Mike Daugherty

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I regret having to begin my tenure as the sustaining membership chairman by asking for help but the situation seems to call for it. During the past two months, the team has ordered and received 5 new pagers (bringing the total to twelve) and 2 small (2 watt) radios. This equipment was ordered to meet the expected heavy summer workload in anticipation of continued support from the sustaining membership. Unfortunately, these expenditures have coincided with a temporary slump in our income and we've run pretty low on operating funds. Thus, we are appealing to our sustaining members for help in the months ahead.

This month we welcome the following new sustaining members:

Mr. Larry Brown  
\*North Valley YMCA  
Guardian Construction Co.  
Mr. Bryan E. Gibson

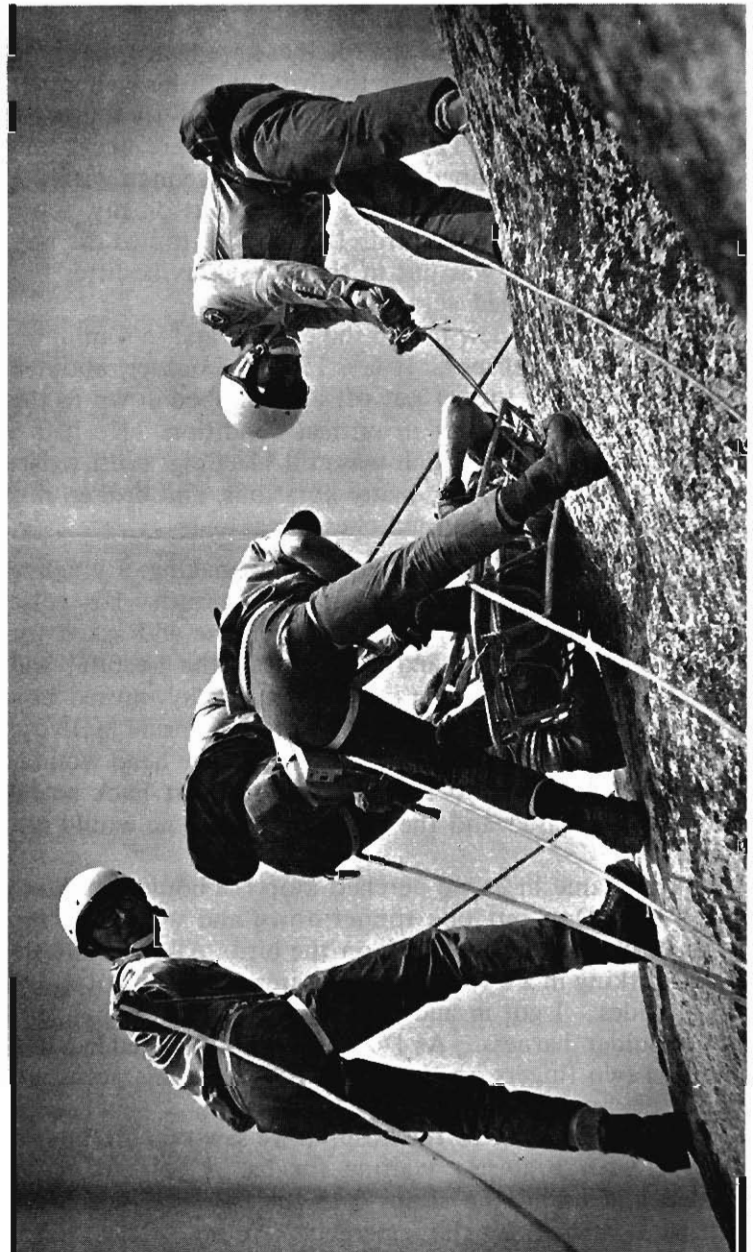
and thank the following renewing members for their continuing support.

Highland Outfitters, Inc.  
Mr. and Mrs. Theodore C. Pruess  
Mr. and Mrs. John W. Murdock  
Mr. Donald A. Jeffrey  
Keldon Paper Company

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



## from *Old'en Days*



Before the construction of the Perris Dam RMRU regularly had technical practice near there at 'Big Rock'. The above photograph by King Dalton was taken on April 27, 1968. The members in the photo are not really superhuman climbers, as the photo has been turned on its side. Members pictured: (l to r) Jim Dodson, Fred Camphausen, Steve Bryant (in the litter), Larry Pearcy and Bob MacPherson.

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# THANK YOU

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