

RMRU NEWSLETTER

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MEMBER OF THE MOUNTAIN RESCUE ASSOCIATION

Volume X, Issue 7, July 1974

Walt Walker, Editor

THIS IS WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT!!



PHOTO BY HANK SCHMEL

Coming Events - - -

14 August, Board of Directors Meeting.
21 August, Regular Meeting.
24-25 August, Training
11 September, Board of Directors Meeting
25 September, Regular Meeting.
28-29 September, Training.

Search and Rescue

1 JUNE, SAT. - RESCUE - No. 7424M
Tahquitz Rock, San Jacinto Mountains
By Gary Gillispie

For some as yet unknown reason, most technical rescues on Tahquitz Rock begin on Sunday night and follow this now classic format. Sometime Sunday several climbers, usually unexperienced, begin one of the easier Tahquitz routes - usually the White Maiden's Walkaway. Somewhere near the top of the climb they lose their way, darkness falls, and they decide to bivouac. Time passes slowly on a bivouac but the cold comes quickly. The unfortunate climbers reconsider and call for help. And for RMRU another 'Sunday Night Classic' has begun.

The Sunday Night Classic. The late night phone call catching you just as you dropped off to sleep. The sense of urgency in Al Andrews' voice as he tells you that several climbers are stranded on Tahquitz Rock. The nagging suspicion in the back of your mind that maybe, just maybe, this time someone's hurt.

The seemingly endless drive through the night to Idylwild. Those last few maddeningly slow turns up to Humber Park. Then the wait for the rescue van. The quick rummage through your technical pack just to make sure that it's all there.

The arrival of the van and the quick organization into teams. The reconnaissance team with the light packs - mostly rock climbing gear and a radio - for the quick trip to the top to find out what's going on. The "mule" team following quickly behind with the

"tons" of climbing gear, food, water, and first aid equipment that the team may seldom use but must always have ready.

The long, hot climb to Lunch Rock. Memories of summer days past when the hike was both longer and hotter. The full moon illuminating the scramble around the South Face to the top of the rock - and tonight's variation of the now classic Sunday night rescue opens up before you.

In tonight's variation, the day is Saturday; the climbers - John Biemer and Terry Price - are more experienced; and the climb they have begun - the Sahara Terror - more difficult. But the classic overtones are still the same. They have lost their way, bivouaced, become cold, and called for help. And tonight, the help has come not only from RMRU. Four Southern California climbers staying at Humber Park, notably Guy Keesee and Matt Cox, have heard their calls and reached the top of Tahquitz Rock well ahead of the team. Matt has completed an exhilarating 300 foot rappel by moonlight down to the stranded climbers. As Sonny Lawrence and I reach the top of the rock, Terry and John are only one hundred feet below us and climbing, slowly but surely, to the top with the assistance of the rope Matt has left for them.

Sonny and I set up a belay and bring them safely the remaining distance to the summit. Then it's down to Lunch Rock, the rest of the team, hot soup, and the comradery of men who care for their fellow man.

NOTE: Other members of the team who participated on this mission and who were situated at Lunch Rock or at the rescue van were: Bob Claybrook, John Dew, Rick Pohlers, Rich Morris, Hank Schmell, Bernie McIlvoy, Pete Carlson, Art Bridge, Jack Schnurr, and Ed Hill.

3-4 JUNE, MON. - TUES. - SEARCH - No. 7425M
Tahquitz Canyon, San Jacinto Mountains
By Rick Pohlers

The call came early Tuesday evening to go for an evening stroll in Tahquitz Canyon. Seems that Doug McMillan, a newsman who had done an article on us about a year ago, was overdue on a planned trip down the canyon with his dog.

The usual crew collected at Ann Dolly's to await the Riverside Police Department helicopter. When the bird arrived Bernie McIlvoy went up in it to survey the canyon before it became totally dark. He saw only what appeared to be an abandoned pack. Due to the police bird's lack of power, the darkness, hostile reptiles, broiling heat and treacherous terrain it was decided to retreat and plan an all out attack for early the next morning.

The next morning, after a restful night at the "Claybrook Hilton", all gathered again at Ann Dolly's. Teams were distributed up and down the canyon via a supercharged helicopter from Western Helicopters of Rialto and piloted by Pete Gillies. Jack "Caramba" Schnurr and Dan MacIntosh were sent to Caramba. Bernie McIlvoy and Jim Garvey landed at Dan's helispot. Gary Gillespie and Sonny Lawrence stepped into Grapevine. Pete Carlson and Steve Stephens stepped off at Tower helispot and Rich Quackenbush plus John Dew were dumped off half way down the south ridge. The plan was that the scattered teams might turn up something. It wasn't long when the big break came.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 3)

Rich and John soon reported they heard a dog barking in a side canyon. Walt Walker and I were on our way to the south ridge when this report came in and were diverted to check it out. The pilot flew over the canyon and Walt decided we should jump out on the ridge parallel to the side canyon. Since there was no helispot the pilot hovered over the brush and yours truly bailed out. The ground proved to be a long way down as Walt later found out as he stepped off the runner as if stepping off a curb. Next time he'll watch what he steps off of.

Anyway, while the pilot went to fetch Rich Quackenbush and John Dew we crushed down some of the brush amidst the excited barks clearly emanating from the narrow canyon. Soon the other two hopped out (at a much lower altitude) and Walt ordered the teams' chain saw to secure a workable helispot.

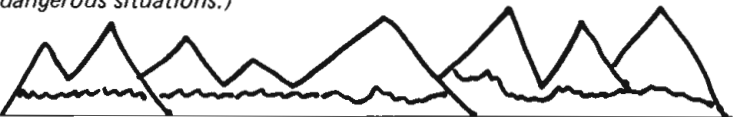
While we waited for Bob "Chainsaw" Claybrook and his tool, we made voice contact with Doug. However, we could not see him. When Bob came flying in, he and the pilot spotted Doug on a ridge above our position. In no time "Chainsaw" and company had cleared an opening in the tall brush. The bird landed and I climbed in and was flown up the ridge. While the pilot hovered the powerful machine I again jumped. After quickly instructing Doug on how to enter the helicopter, I motioned for the pilot to return. Doug and I climbed aboard and in a few minutes Doug was with his relieved parents, mission over, almost.

Doug's doggie friend needed help so plans were made as the other teams were flown into "Doggie" helispot. A fly over of the canyon revealed that the woofer was in a very tight narrow section. It was going to be tough to get him out.

Bernie, Pete, Gary and Sonny were volunteered to go down and get him while the rest of the troops continued to work on the 'airport'. Meanwhile, way down in the canyon the gang reached the hound, fine, now to get him out. Seems he liked where he was and did not want to go up a couple of waterfalls and a very steep wash. So a harness was rigged up on him and he was lifted, dragged, hauled, pushed and carried over various obstacles, pools, rocks and trees.

After much sweat it was decided to enlist a little mechanical help. Since there was no way for the bird to land in the narrow confines it was decided to go for a sling. So the doggieport crew whipped one up and the pilot fired up his machine and took off in a cloud of dust. It was a tricky pick up and a real credit to the pilot when he came in with a very surprised canine slung on a forty foot sling. Once unslung the bird landed and Walt took our furry friend to his anxiously awaiting master. With that, all were flown out to end another fun mission in our favorite place.

(Editor's note: While the group that was rescuing the dog did their thing, the rest of the team waited at the helispot. During this time, we had a long talk with Western Helicopter's pilot Pete Gillies. We had never worked with Pete before and while we were sizing him up, I'm sure he was doing the same with us. Working with helicopters in rugged wilderness terrain requires a certain amount of skill and especially staying alert for anything unusual at all times. It was during the above mentioned 'bull session' that Pete paid RMRU a very nice compliment. He said it was a pleasure to work with a group of men who knew how to work around helicopters in dangerous situations.)



8 JUNE, SAT. - SEARCH - No. 7426M

Tahquitz Creek Drainage,

San Jacinto Mountains

By Walt Walker

With a telephone call Friday evening, RMRU's only unsuccessful search was again brought to mind. Al Andrews was on the other end of the line and we discussed the information that had been given to Al by the Banning Station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department. (On July 9, 1972, a 21 year old man, Mark Seils, was last seen by his hiking partner while on a weekend backpacking trip in the San Jacinto Mountains. RMRU, along with other CR-MRA teams, searched in vain for six days.)

Late Thursday afternoon, U. S. Forest Service Ranger Frank Smith, had found Mr. Seil's camp and equipment in a very remote area while he was marking the route for a new trail. Ranger Smith contacted the sheriff's department and advised them of this find. I called him Friday evening and he described the location of where the camp was situated.

Early Saturday morning RMRU members met at Norm Mellor's Sky Yacht. Norm and Maggie were rather surprised to find the rescue van backing down their mountain retreat driveway. Base was quickly set up, and while we passed out handietalkie radios, Maggie served coffee and hot chocolate. The plan was for everyone to hike up the Devil's Slide Trail while Norm manned the base radio.

It was one of those days that we so seldom see in Southern California anymore and we quickly hiked to the Saddle and down to Little Tahquitz Valley. From there we followed the trail tape and in less than a hour we had arrived at Mr. Seil's camp. The rest of the day was spent looking behind every rock and tree in the immediate area. Late in the afternoon we made a final sweep down towards Tahquitz Creek with negative results. Once again we hiked off the mountain with the thought, did Mark hike off the mountain and disappear, or did he perish in the wilderness??

12 JUNE, WED. - SEARCH - No. 7427M

Reed's Meadow, San Jacinto Mountains

By John Dew

As well as a person who is groggy from being sound asleep can tell, it was a few minutes after 2:00 a.m. when the phone rang. My wife answered and said, "It's your rescue team". I found the phone and said into it, "hello", and the spry voice on the other end said, "John, we've got a 12 year old boy lost out of Humber Park". In my unconscious tone I asked one of the most intelligent questions of my life, "When are we going?" I was quickly brought to life when this wide awake voice on the other end, (Walt Walker) said "We're going right now, how soon can you roll?" This worked wonders in waking me up and my next response was, "oh, O.K., what day is it?" He very patiently said, "it's Wednesday, John". To which I responded, "Humber Park, huh, I'll be right there".

This was the beginning of the mission searching for 13 year old Ray Miller who, at approximately 5:30 p.m. was lost from his party of ten other junior high students and two teachers from Escondido, who were camping at Laws Camp in the San Jacinto Mountains.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

The team had begun to gather. Base had been set up in Humber Park, manned by Jim Fairchild, and the first four into the hills left base at 0400. These were Bernie McIlvoy, Ed Hill, Jim Garvey and myself. Arriving at Saddle Junction (8050'), I was assigned relay and the others proceeded toward Caramba. A second relay was set up and manned by Ed Hill, while Bernie and Jim started the long trek down Tahquitz Canyon trying to pick up tracks. At about 5:30, Steve Stephens and Rich Quackenbush arrived at Saddle Junction with the assignment to proceed to Laws Camp. The Sierra Madre team was called about 0600 and they responded with eight men and a dog, arriving at our base about 0900.

Aircraft aid was unavailable because of ground fog in Riverside and Rialto until about 10:00 o'clock, at which time a fixed wing aircraft from the Riverside County Sheriff's Department with an outside speaker was used to try to talk to the victim in case he was within hearing range.

In Laws Camp Steve and Rich questioned everyone they could see, as well as anyone on the trail down to the camp. at Saddle Junction, I questioned everyone who passed, while Bernie and Jim continued making their way further and further down into the heat of Tahquitz Canyon. A few prints were picked up but nothing that looked extremely promising and they continued down.

At about 9:20, three girls about 20 years old came down from Wellman Cienega and sat down at Saddle Junction to rest. They heard the relay working and asked, "what are you people doing?" They were told there was a 12 year old boy lost up in the hills and their first question was, "was he wearing a white tee shirt?" I answered, "yes, he was wearing a white tee shirt, what do you know?" Their next question was, "was he wearing black high top tennis shoes?" At this question I really came alive and hopped up and said, "yes, where did you see him?" They said, "it was at the junction of Strawberry Cienega and this trail and he was headed toward Round Valley." I asked them if he was wearing either maroon or brown cords and when they replied that he had on maroon pants but they didn't know if they were cords, this information was immediately sent down to base. At this time the fixed wing aircraft was instructed to fly over that area near Round Valley, calling down, "Ray, if you hear us stop right where you are and wait, we'll be there."

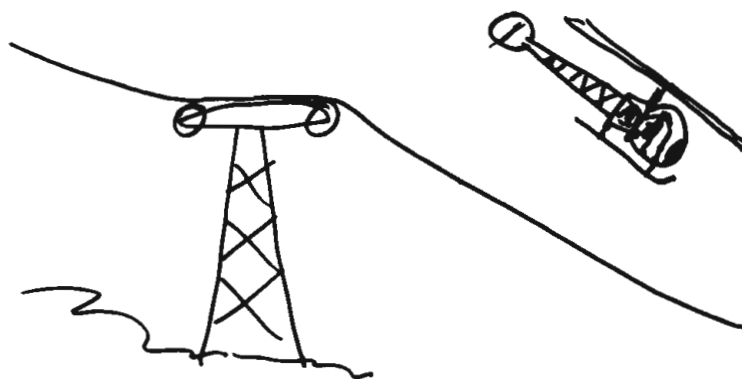
About 45 minutes after this conversation Ray Castilonia and Bill Coulter (the teacher who had been standing by at base) arrived at Saddle Junction. After Ray had practically sprinted up Devils Slide with a heavy pack on his back, and because I had been resting for about 5 hours, in order to achieve the fastest possible time, Ray became relay and I was sent on up the hill. The teacher, who was carrying only a canteen of water, continued on the trail with me.

After about 15 minutes up Angel Glide, hikers were spotted coming down the trail. The teacher was instructed, "when these men get down here stop, we need to question them." When they were just a little closer, we noticed there were four instead of three and one of them was a 13 year old boy with a white tee shirt, maroon colored pants and black high top tennis shoes. The teacher shouted, "there's my boy, there's my boy!" and ran up and threw himself all over the young man who was descending with the hikers.

Quite often we're asked, "why do you volunteer and spend your own money for equipment to do things like this?" One needs only to see a worried, distraught school teacher -- worried over one of his boys who has been missing for 18 hours overnight in the rugged mountains -- discover that that boy is safe and sound and the reunion answers all the questions of "why".

Ray was brought back down to Saddle Junction where Dr. Ray Castilonia examined him, observed him for an hour, pronounced him well enough to go back and continue his camping trip with the party, at about 11:30 a.m..

All that remained to be done was for the various team members to get back off the hill, which was accomplished by Western Helicopter's pilot Pete Gillis, picking up Bernie and Jim from far down into Tahquitz Canyon and the relay member from Caramba, while the team members at Laws Camp hiked up and met the relay at Saddle Junction who happily hiked out together because this mission was completely successful.



12 JUNE, WED. - EVACUATION - No. 7428M Long Valley, San Jacinto Mountains

By Walt Walker

While flying in the Western Helicopter, I landed with the pilot, Pete Gillies, in Long Valley (near the Palm Springs Aerial Tram). As I walked toward the State Park ranger cabin (to leave a note that the 12 year old boy from the previous mission had been found) a young man called to me.

Mark Conway asked if I could assist his friend Bob Main, both from Brawley, California, who was suffering abdominal pain. Main was very pale and appeared to be in the early stages of shock.

Conway related they had rode the tram up on the weekend and had been backpacking, planning to ride the tram down on Thursday. Main had lost his medication on Tuesday and early this morning had started feeling the pain.

I decided that since the tram was closed for the day, it would save everybody, RMRU and the sheriff's department, both time and money to have the pilot fly both men to the lower terminal of the tram. We loaded their packs on the bird and the pair got into the cockpit. The pilot then flew them down and returned to Long Valley to pick me up. Pete and I then returned to Idyllwild.

17 JUNE, MON. - SEARCH - No. 7429A Tahquitz Drainage, San Jacinto Mountains

Once again, Al Andrews woke all the call captains, who in turn woke all the rest of the members, to relate that a State Fish & Game Warden was overdue from a Sunday patrol in the back country.

While we were setting up base, the sun began to lighten the eastern sky. Just then the good word was received, the missing man was in Tahquitz Valley and O.K..



21 JUNE, FRI. - SEARCH - No. 7430M

Andres Canyon, San Jacinto Mountains

By Walt Walker

It was one of those "TGIF" afternoons just like when I was in college, except I was at work. The temperature was in the low 90's and I would like to have been beside a pool 'bikini watching' instead of working. Just about in the middle of the above daydream, Al Andrews called and said the Indio station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department had called for us to search for a missing couple, ages 22 and 20.

Well, I was getting away from work, but not exactly what I had had in mind. My son, Kevin, and I quickly loaded gear into my Wagoneer and headed towards Palm Springs with the air conditioner going full tilt. As we drove south on Palm Canyon in the middle of P.S. I turned off the air conditioner and rolled down the window, only to be greeted with a blast of 117 degree air.

Gary Gillespie was already at the designated meeting place and Sonny Lawrence was right behind me. In just a few minutes Pete Carlson and Bernie McIlvoy rolled up in the rescue van. Right behind them was a deputy with the missing young man's father. The father stated he had let the pair off, at 0730 Monday morning, at the beginning of Andres Canyon. They had planned to hike up the canyon and then hike to the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway by Wednesday evening, an almost impossible task. It was now Friday afternoon and they had only carried food for three days.

The Sheriff's Department had called Don Landells only to find out that he was out of town with his helicopter. Western Helicopters in Rialto was contacted and they were committed with all their machines. It seemed we were faced with an extremely hard task. We decided to call the Sierra Madre Search and Rescue Team to supplement our manpower. Just about that time we got word that the Forest Service had released one of the birds and it was on the way.

So we moved over to the 7th tee of a golf course and set up base, complete with sun shade, wind sock and a drinking fountain cooled by refrigeration. Along with the move came, Ed Hill, Steve Stephens, Rick Pohlers, John Dew and Doug Brewer. While the base was being set up a search plan was formulated. We would first search the canyon by air and if that did not work, we would then deploy teams at different places in the canyon by helicopter.

Someone yelled, "listen, sounds like a turbine bird". They were right, a Hughes 500C, piloted by Gus Bliss of Western Helicopters was descending right towards our base camp. He landed and we quickly installed a team radio as I filled him in on the situation. In less than five minutes, Bernie and I were airborne with Gus pushing the powerful 500C up the canyon. We flew up a ridge and circled over the Caramba helispot (6700') and started a contour search pattern. Bernie quickly spotted tracks about a quarter mile below the helispot. Gus worked back up the ridge and we landed at the helispot. Bernie and I climbed out and jogged over to the edge and began to look for tracks that would be coming up the canyon. We found a few old boot tracks and numerous deer and/or sheep tracks. With nothing positive we returned to the bird and started searching again.

We had descended to about the 3500' level when Bernie shouted, "Swing around to the right!" He had spotted two sleeping bags laying out in the open. As we came around we could see a pair frantically waving. We circled around looking for a place to set down. Gus finally selected a ridge about 300' above the canyon bottom. As I watched the tail rotor Gus piloted the bird down amongst the brush. Bernie climbed out and started down to the couple and Gus and I started back to base. We were going to pick up two more members and some rope. As we left I could see that Bernie was going to be facing a drop off if he continued down the chute he was in. Gus circled back to the ridge and hovered as I Helitac jumped from the bird. While Gus went for fuel I started down towards Bernie. I finally made voice contact and told Bernie to go one more ridge down stream. We were quickly together with Bernie leading the way.

It was quickly established via shouts that indeed this was the couple we were searching for and they were fine except that they were very hungry. When we got to them in the canyon bottom Bernie opened up his pack and handed them a large sack of candies, for which they were very appreciative. Even though they had greatly underestimated the hike, they had stayed put when they ran out of food. There was a very good stream of water flowing where they had waited for help.

Taking their pack I started up the chute, with the couple following, and Bernie bringing up the rear. We stopped many times as they were both weak from lack of food. By the time we had made the ridge the helicopter had returned. As Bernie led the couple towards the ridge, I ran to the helispot.

With hand signals Gus landed his bird among the rocks and brush. We helped the couple into the bird, buckled their seat belts and gave the go signal to Gus. While Bernie and I waited the young couple were on their way to friends and loved ones. Shortly Gus returned, landed and we climbed in and departed Andres Canyon.

WATCH
THIS
SPOT
NEXT
MONTH



PHOTO BY HANK SCHMEL

23-24 JUNE, SUN. - MON. - SEARCH - No. 7431M

Ortega Mountains, West of Elsinore

By Dave Hadley

I was just lighting the charcoal when Al Andrews interrupted what had the makings for a comfortable evening - "... Search ... three kinds lost in Elsinore area ..." Arggg! Some of the most bazaar rescues the team has handled have been in the Elsinore area. Upon rolling into the San Juan campground, located on the south side of the Santa Ana mountains, I found the rescue van, some team members, Riverside and Orange county Sheriff deputies and a very worried mother.

The kids, ages 8, 10 and 14 had started on a two mile loop trail Sunday morning. By mid afternoon the uncle started searching for the kids. When the team arrived it was quite dark - a new moon - and neither the uncle nor the kids had returned. Gary Gillespie, Rick Pohlers, Art Bridge and myself talked with the mother for a few minutes and then started down the trail. We quickly found the sign for the loop trail, but to our amazement someone had apparently rotated the sign about 90 degrees. As the trail forked, we split into two groups. The trail that Art and I were following quickly deteriorated into a stream bed. Fortunately Rick and Gary found tracks on their trail and we opted to join them. In about half an hour Pete Carlson radioed for two of us to return to base. At the truck a ranger told us that he had followed the tracks we were on for about three miles and then lost them in the vicinity of the San Juan trail junction. A new plan was quickly conceived. Art and I would drive about five miles down the road, intersect the trail and hike to the junction. Meanwhile Ed Mill, Bob Claybrook and John Dew would start at Blue Jay and hike down to the junction. If the searchers hadn't strayed too far from whatever trail they were on, the search would be over by dawn. If they had it was clear we would need assistance. Our fellow MRA team, Sierra Madra, was alerted to this possibility.

About midnight, Art and I spotted two small lights several ridges away. It seemed unlikely that the uncle and kids had built fires a couple of hundred yards apart, however, this was Elsinore. Shortly after 1:00 o'clock we had voice contact with the uncle. It took us a solid hour of fast hiking to reach the uncle and his fire. It's amazing how far a good yell will carry at night. Sure enough, a couple of hundred yards away was a second fire and the kids. We asked Doyle, the uncle, to stay put and we would retrieve the kids. After crashing through the chaparral for half an hour we finally reached the kinds. Doyle had apparently found the kids at dusk, but the heavy brush and lack of a flashlight forced him to stop.

The kids, Don - 14, Dennis - 10, and Debbie - 8, were exhausted, thirsty and hungry. Dennis had acquired the worst blisters on his heels I've ever seen. After attending to these basic needs, we broke out extra clothing and a sleeping bag for the kids and all got some rest.

5:00 o'clock found us packing up. The helicopter would arrive at seven and somewhere in this incredibly heavy brush we had to find a helispot. Dennis and Debbie could hardly walk and had to be carried most of the way. At 6:30 Doyle joined us on a fairly level, sparse knoll.

Precisely on schedule a beautiful Marine chopper from El Toro settled on the knoll and carried us home.

29-30 JUNE, SAT. - SUN. - RESCUE - No. 7432M

Tahquitz Rock, above Idyllwild

By Walt Walker

While 10 RMRU members frolicked in Tahquitz Canyon on a regular training session, Al Andrews, Rick Pohlers, Hank Schmel and I had spent the day at the Riverside Municipal Airport. We had set up a display of team equipment and had given a Helitac demonstration with the Riverside Police Department helicopter.

Al and Natilie Andrews had invited my wife and family, and former RMRU member Ron Harris and his family along with Hank Schmel, to a hamburger fry after the air show. Just as I was pulling into the Andrews driveway the telephone rang. Once again friends and family would be disappointed as the call from the Banning station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department was for assistance in rescuing an injured climber.

With 10 members in Tahquitz Canyon and 5 more on vacation, it was going to be a slim crew at best. Al called the Sheriff's Department and had RMRU's pagers activated as we started calling. While this was going on Hank arrived at Al's. Through telephoning and the pagers we added, Art Bridge, Rick Pohlers, Rich Morris and his cousin and Gary Gillespie to Hank and myself. My son Kevin went along to run base as he has done so many times in the past.

We all rushed towards Idyllwild as the report stated that the climber had chest injuries. Hank, Kevin, and I arrived at Humber Park just as the sun was setting. As we were taking equipment out of the van the rest of the contacted members arrived and quickly loaded packs. We asked for help from climbers who were in the parking area. They were used to help carry the tremendous amount of equipment needed on technical rescues.

Gary, Rich and I started up the trail as the advance crew to reach the injured climber as quickly as possible. When the rest of the equipment was ready it was loaded into the wheeled litter and brought up by the rest of the members and volunteers. As we hiked up we spoke to climbers coming down from the rock. We finally found out that some climbers had ascended the route, the East Lark, and set up fixed ropes. We radioed to the group behind us and asked our chief sherpa, Art Bridge, to hurry on up with a 300' coil of climbing rope.

The three of us reached the bottom of the climbing route just in time to break out headlamps. After a quick discussion with the climbers assembled, I hooked onto the fixed line with my Jumars (a set of mechanical clamps to climb up rope) and started Jumaring up. If we had had to climb to the victim, Gary would have gone first as he was the top climber on the mission. But since the fixed lines were in place, I got the nod as I was the most experienced first aider. After three different lines and 275', I arrived at the scene of the accident.

Robert Speakman, climbing with fellow Sierra Club Rock Climbing Section members, had fallen earlier in the afternoon. When other climbers first arrived he refused help as he was worried that if improperly moved he might sever an artery in his injured shoulder. As the day wore on, an experienced climber who shall have to go by his first name Rick, as I cannot remember his last name, convinced him that he could help. With only climbing slings and jackets, Rick constructed a splint for the injured climber and with help from other climbers, got Mr. Speakman into the litter.

After surveying the scene I called down to Gary and told him to start up and drag an end of the 300' rope with him. Unless you're a climber, you cannot really appreciate all the problems, i.e.; darkness, no ledges to stand upon, an almost complete lack of safe anchors, climbing ropes everywhere (7 in all), but none you could use, and an injured climber. When Gary first arrived we decided that four of the climbers should descend to give us more room to work. While they prepared to descend I started rigging the litter for a horizontal lower, which gives the most gentle ride to an injured person. Meanwhile, Gary was searching for good anchors. It was all taking too long, only one climber gone. We changed our minds. Gary had found a good anchor for the litter lowering system. We tied the litter onto it and Rick and I manhandled the litter from a vertical to a horizontal position. With this done Rick manned a belay on the litter, while Gary manned the lowering system, with me attached to the litter. We were finally on our way. It had taken two and a half hours to accomplish getting the litter ready to go. We had never encountered so many handicaps all at one time, and believe we could now do it faster, hindsight is 20/20.

In less than 10 minutes Gary had lowered the injured climber, litter and I to the bottom and waiting RMRU members. Mr. Speakman wanted to try and walk out. So I broke out my first aid kit, and with my new bandage scissors quickly cut off two shirts. Art, Rich and I examined the man and were sure that the collar bone was fractured. (X-rays showed that it was fractured in three places). As he was in much pain it was very hard to secure his right arm in place. With many triangular and elastic bandages we made him as comfortable as possible. We then put my parka on him and secured a climbing rope about his waist. With a member on each side and a friend belaying we started down, leaving Gary, Rich and climbers to clean the route of gear and ropes.

It was about 0130 Sunday morning when we arrived back at the parking lot. We took off our packs, and Mr. Speakman was put into a friends car and left for the hospital, the boots were next off and then a long cool drink of water. The night was not over however. Rich radioed down that there wasn't enough manpower to bring all the gear down to base.

You guessed it, first to volunteer was our most senior member and best sherpa, Art Bridge. With that, my son, Kevin and I donned our boots, and along with Art trudged up towards Lunch Rock. We met the group coming down just below Lunch Rock and took part of their burden. We then turned around and headed back towards base camp. After we secured the gear into the van we all drove down to Banning for an early morning breakfast.

I can't speak for the rest of the members present, but I was so tired that the waffle I ordered didn't really taste all that good and I wasn't able to finish it. As the sky in the east was brightening at 5 a.m. Sunday morning, I walked into my house.



TRAINING



TRAINING

28-30 JUNE, FRI. - SUN.

Tahquitz Canyon

By Bud White

Once a year the training is planned for a trip down Tahquitz Canyon for two primary reasons: 1) familiarization for new members and 2) exposure to heat under reasonably controlled conditions. The trip presents some real decisions based on experience. Friday night is spent at 6500' at Carumba and Saturday night at 2800' near Grapevine in the heart of the canyon. If you travel light, you shiver all night at Carumba. If you plan for cold, you're stuck with the weight the rest of the way. This becomes compounded in the lower canyon as you lead up on water as high as is deemed safe. Last year several of the members became ill because of water contamination.

The plan was to meet at the tramway at 6:30 Friday night and hike to Carumba. Exactly five showed at 6:30 and since everyone thought everyone else had the list we waited until the last up tram before taking off at 8:00 p.m. By this time, our ranks had grown to seven. We hurried cross country to Hidden Lake divide so we could catch a quick look at the terrain for cross country travel. One look and we decided to hike down the trail toward Willow Creek cutting cross country to Laws and taking the trail to Carumba. For some obscure reason, this writer had avoided Carumba and the total trip down the canyon for over ten years. As I found out, the trail to Carumba has steep up hill climbs - the reason I hadn't been there before was no longer obscure - it was just good judgement and luck.

After shivering all night (wherein I caught cold and am writing this from bed), our ranks grew to nine as Steve Stephens and Larry Brown hiked in from Humber with word that Bernie would catch up with us in the canyon. It turns out being in super shape has its rewards. Bernie slept like a baby at Dr. Mellor's Sky Yacht and bombed after us, catching us at the 5600' level.

The trip down the canyon was uneventful solely because the pace Pete set was geared to all of us and the route has been worked out to be as safe as possible. We all found the heat excessive because of the humidity in the bottom of this very steep canyon. This was partially relieved by frequent water breaks and soaking your shirt in the creek and putting it on wet.

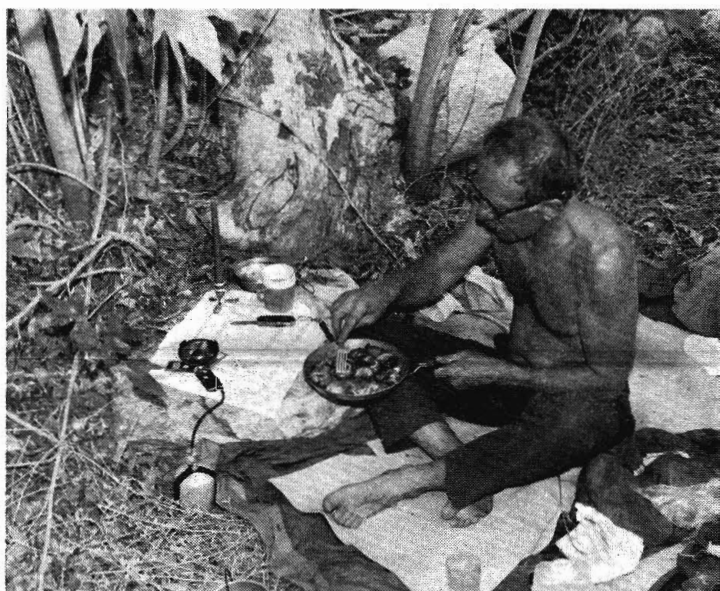
The late afternoon and night were spent in a sylvan paradise reminiscent of early Tarzan films. High cliffs, water falls, deep pools, trees. RMRU's answer to Tarzan and his friend Cheetah is Bernie and Larry doing 5.0 climbs of the canyon walls in their altogether to leap 15' into the deep pool. Your choice on which one was Tarzan. Steve

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Sooo Good !!!



Stephens answered a comment Bernie had made earlier about Steve stumbling several times when he, to our astonishment, produced a 17 pound watermelon. That evening, for the benefit of the new fellows, I prepared a gourmet meal for myself as they ate their gorp and hardtack.



First, I laid out on a flat rock an Irish linen placemat, a tall candle in a silver candle holder. I served myself Hungarian Green wine in a long stemmed crystal wine glass. Dinner was salad, soup, sheepherder's bread, loin lamb chops, sauteed mushrooms with cookies for dessert. The other old timers broiled stead and corn.

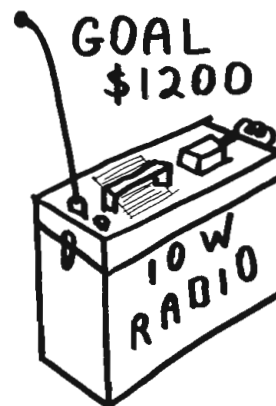
It was so hot that most of us spent the night on top of our bivouac sacks. On Sunday the hike down canyon was a pure pleasure as the weather had broken. We were amazed to find only two people in the entire canyon. The pollution scare of last year and the strict policing by the Palm Springs authorities has really cut down on the population. I think several of the fellows were disappointed to find so few people because on previous occasions the "bird watching" had been unexcelled. We weren't disappointed entirely as Pete led us past the last pool wherein were several desert nymphs.

The hike was an eye opener to those who hadn't gone before and pleasant renewal of memories for those who had. We ranged in age from 21 to 52 and we all concluded our new members Jim Garvey, Doug Brewer and John Dew had most successfully passed a rigid training session with flying colors.

Once again our thanks to Mrs. Ann Dolly and her well stocked refrigerator. Also, to everyone's favorite Mobile dealer, Larry Paul for filling Jim Garvey up so he could get us home.

Sustaining Members

by Mike Daugherty



Well, I'm afraid the cat is out of the bag. As Walt reported in his column in the May Newsletter, the radio pager system is finally complete. Soon RMRU will have 21 Motorola pagers in operation. A check of back newsletters reveals that we began the pager drive with the April 1972 newsletter, over 26 months ago. Thanks to our loyal sustaining membership no active RMRU member can now hope to avoid a search or rescue call no matter how hard he tries.

For those of you not familiar with it, the procedure goes like this. Each member carries a radio pager which can be activated by a special signal sent out over the Riverside County Sheriff's frequency. All requests for search or rescue assistance are funneled to RMRU's tireless personnel coordinator, Al Andrews. On receiving such a call, Al contacts the Sheriff's radio room and they activate the system, giving the members instructions to phone the personnel coordinator. Thus, everyone on the team who is in the area (roughly all of southern California) is immediately aware that he is needed and the personnel coordinator is soon in a position to tell the requesting agency and RMRU's operations leader just how many men will be available. I'm sure everyone can appreciate what a vast improvement this makes in the extent and speed of the team's response to a call for help. I can recall arriving home from the "lab" on a Saturday afternoon to learn that there was a three hour old rescue call which had not reached me because I wasn't near a phone and all of us have had the frustrating experience of making an extended series of phone calls trying to track down another member for a rescue. Well, that's all gone now. There is no sanctuary, however, isolated or remote which will stay the arrow of mercy in its sure flight to its prey. Even that most extreme of evasive maneuvers, the Saturday afternoon trip to the hardware store, is reduced to futile by those ubiquitous and all-penetrating waves.

The compleiton of the pager system is in fact a major landmark in the history of RMRU's sustaining membership, comparable to the

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acquisition of our radio system or the rescue van. So this seems a particularly appropriate time to convey the sincere thanks of the team to the entire sustaining membership. We think that ours is a uniquely successful partnership. It is particularly gratifying that there is a growing group of regular sustaining members who renew their membership every year and who can be relied upon to provide the financial foundation necessary for the continued operation of the unit.

As you may have already suspected, this round of congratulations is *not* a prelude to an announcement that the sustaining membership is going out of business. Were we to do that, we probably wouldn't be able to pay our rather substantial phone bill within several months. No, the pager system is only a milestone on the journey. The goal is to build the most effective and professional rescue unit possible. To reach that goal we will continue to need *your* help. In addition to providing the team's operating expenses and replacing worn-out equipment, the board of directors somehow always finds it possible to perceive another goal ahead. We can all imagine that the board was thrown into near panic by the discovery that the pager drive had been completed. After all, the drive was over two years old and the new member could have been forgiven the belief that it was a permanent institution. But, being resourceful men, accustomed to making decisions under fantastic pressure, they came up with a solution -- a 10 watt radio. The rest of our radio system (exclusive of the radio in the van) is comprised of 5 watt units. The 10 watt advanced base radio will provide the field leader or radio relay with an improved communications capability. Since so much of our effectiveness is based on rapid and reliable communication, this will be an important addition to RMRU's equipment.

New sustaining members for June

The Mundy family
Ms. Virginia Black
Mr. James Whitener
Ms. Hope Marsh
M/M Bailey Mitchell
M/M C. B. McMillan
Sierra Peaks Section; Sierra Club
*M/M Harrison R. Toenjes

Renewing members

*Dr./Mrs. Gidcumb
M/M Harold M. Loy
*Mr. Robert Stern
Dr. David Randel
Ms. Penny Lowell
M/M C. Corbin Devalon
Mr. E. C. Folger
*M/M Kenneth L. Andrews

* Century Club - Donation of \$100 or more

Ding Bat of the month

by HANK SCHMEL



Rich Quackenbush gets the honors this month for sticking his hand into a Cholla cactus while on training in Tahquitz Canyon.

from Old'en Days



5 YEARS AGO IN THE 'RMRU NEWSLETTER' July 1969

SEARCH & RESCUE ACTIVITY

30 May - An 18 year old boy had been missing from the Dark Canyon Campground for eight hours when RMRU started searching. We searched all night and had just begun a research from his last seen footprints when the young man walked into camp.

1 June - RMRU had received a call from the China Lake Mountain Rescue Group for Assistance in evacuating a young climber from East Face Lake just below Mr. Whitney. Three RMRU members and two China Lake members hiked at full speed from Whitney Portal. When they arrived on the scene the young man was seriously ill from High Altitude Pulmonary Edema. Examining the stricken man they found his pulse racing, 170, fever and considerable difficulty in breathing due to fluid in his lungs. Shortly a

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helicopter arrived and the victim was placed aboard and sent to the hospital. He survived his illness and is back hiking today.

2 June - RMRU was called in the middle of the night to rescue a young man stranded in the hills east of the city of San Jacinto. In the dark we hiked up a canyon and onto a ridge when stopped by a dry waterfall. We then looked down into the canyon and the subject of our call. Aluminum pickets were driven into the dirt, ropes secured and Mike Daugherty rappelled down. The man was secured to Mike's rope and we hauled the two of them back up and everyone hiked out to the road.

5 June - With another telephone call from the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, RMRU was on its way to Tahquitz Canyon. It had been reported that a girl had fallen into the swollen waters of Tahquitz Canyon and another girl was hanging on by her fingers. When we arrived Mike Daugherty and Jim Fairchild were sent into the area, hiking as fast as possible, to start the rescue. Others quickly followed with mounds of equipment. While hiking in, Mike and Jim, learned of a 20 year old man who had gone over a waterfall and was badly injured. On the way to him, they learned that the girl hanging by her fingers had been saved by friends. Upon arriving at the injured man, they found very serious injuries, compound fractures of the hip and forehead and X-rays later revealed compression fractures of the vertebra. We had to use all our skills in rescuing this young man: First aid, technical evacuation up a steep hillside and Helitac procedures to load him onto a hovering helicopter from Western Helicopters of Rialto. Later, Walt Walker, was tied onto a rope, and swam and was banged around in the stream and pools in a fruitless search for the missing girl's body.

9 June - Back to Tahquitz Canyon, two 16 year old boys were overdue from a descent of the canyon. RMRU assembled at the mouth of the canyon. Shortly a Western Helicopter arrived and a team was sent up to Caramba. On the way back for another load, pilot Pat Patterson spotted the boys near the Grapevine Helispot. He landed and picked them up. This mission was over quickly thanks to the Riverside County Sheriff's Department's prompt calling of a helicopter, to our operation leader's (Jim Fairchild) knowledge and the pilots keen observation.

17 June - Early Tuesday morning Jim Fairchild phoned me and asked if I had read the morning paper. There was an article concerning the disappearance of Matthew Zimmerman, age 6. The newspaper article stated that he had become lost about noon on Saturday, 14 June. It went on to state that Bloodhounds, helicopters, horsemen, San Bernardino County Sheriff Search and Rescue Teams and large numbers of volunteers were looking for the boy. Jim suggested that he drive up to the base camp and volunteer RMRU's services. In the afternoon Jim called me and said that our services would be appreciated and those of any other MRA teams. I then asked my wife, Sondra, to start calling the RMRU members and I started calling the California Region teams.

RMRU members began arriving at basecamp at 1830 and by dark we sent two teams out into the field. After searching half the night the teams returned to basecamp for a couple hours rest. By morning members from the China Lake Mountain Rescue Group and the San Diego Mountain Rescue team had arrived. After a short briefing on China Lake, San Diego, RMRU and San Bernardino team members went into the field and I remained at basecamp as Operations Leader. With our new special antenna and FM radios we had a tremendous communications system and remained in contact

at all times.

At 0830 word rang through basecamp that 'Matty' had been found by a pair of 18 year old boys who had volunteered to help and were searching on their own. They had found the boy laying face down on top of a six inch deep patch of snow. Although he had visible life signs he was definitely in very poor condition. One of the boys ran for help while the other remained with the victim. A sheriff's team led by Deputy Sgt. Ollie Gray reached him rapidly and removed his wet clothes and wrapped him in jackets and proceeded down with him in a make shift litter. They were met by another team bringing in a Stokes litter. He was transferred into the Stokes and the journey out to road continued. While this was taking place I advised the MRA teams by radio to return to base and drove to where the boy was to be brought out too. When the litter arrived at the road, I entered the vehicle with the boy. His skin was icy cold and I could not hear an audible heart beat with a stethoscope, but I could feel respirations with my hand. Occasionally, he would make faint moaning sounds and I could also hear expelled air as I placed my ear to his mouth. After a short trip we arrived at a heliport where a Marine helicopter was waiting, with engine running, from the El Toro Marine Base.

We quickly loaded the litter into the waiting bird. Deputy Gray, the boy's father and I boarded for the flight to Norton Air Force Base. As we took off I yelled to the crewman to ask the pilot to radio ahead and make sure a doctor would be waiting. Deputy Gray and I unbuttoned our shirts as we were going to place the boy between us for warmth. As I lifted the boy he went limp and I noted his pupils were dilated. I immediately tried to open his mouth with no success. Feverishly I removed dried mucous and dirt from the boy's nostrils and tried mouth to nose respiration. After three quick breaths I could see there was no response as the pupils remained dilated. Then training, that the team had received the month before from team member Dr. Norman Mellor, in closed chest heart compression, flashed to my mind. Again, I yelled over the roar of the helicopter, for Ollie to take over the respiration while I started the heart massage. The small lifeless form before me had died, in my mind I knew it, and that there was nothing more I could do. However, we had been instructed to continue until a doctor says stop. It seemed like hours were passing and muscle spasms racked by forearm. (The helicopter pilot later told me it had taken only nine minutes for the flight.) As the huge machine shuddered to a stop at Norton I heard a sound and my eyes flashed to the small blue eyes before me. I detected a very slight contraction of the pupils. I couldn't believe my eyes and I found it hard to breathe. The door slowly opened and shortly an air force doctor and medic entered. The doctor listened for a heartbeat and heard none. He then took over the heart massage and the medic tried a manual resuscitator. A tight seal was difficult to maintain on the small face and I could see that the boy was not receiving air. I thought, my God, don't let him slip away again and asked for something to pry his mouth open. As if from nowhere a tongue depressor appeared. I worked it between his teeth and pried his mouth open. With an open airway the small form began to breathe again. He was then quickly loaded into the waiting ambulance and was on his way to the hospital. Although breathing, he was still in serious condition. Doctors told us that he would probably remain in a coma for 24 to 48 hours and quite likely have some brain damage. That night he opened his eyes and spoke to his parents and when I was phoned the news I couldn't hold back the moisture that collected in my eyes. Just seven days after RMRU

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started in the search, 'Matty' was wheeled from the hospital by his father with a big smile on his face and a teddy bear on his lap.

21 June - Tahquitz Canyon AGAIN. Around one o'clock RMRU received word that a girl had broken both legs. We once again rushed to the cul-de-sac off Ramon Road in Palm Springs. This time the bird from Western Helicopters met us there. Jim Fairchild and Walt Walker were sent in on the first load. They found a 18 year old girl and a serious laceration of the lower leg with a possible fracture of the tibia. They dressed the wound and applied an air splint while other members were flown in. In no time a system to raise the litter up a 40 foot wall was set up. The girl was placed in the litter, secured in it, and then carried across the stream. The litter was tied to the hauling system and started its way up. Mike Daugherty went along for the ride, actually he guided the litter as it was raised. The helicopter was requested, by radio, to come in while we carried the litter over to the helispot. The pilot came in and placed one runner on the edge of the cliff and hovered as we loaded the litter and secured it. The bird was then on its way to the hospital.

23 June - About 1430 we received the call that a boy had fallen and was seriously injured. Everyone actively connected with SAR operations will understand our terribly negative feelings when we finally were convinced that this boy, 17 year old Chris Upgood, was beyond earthly help. We had made another fast trip to the tram Monday afternoon. At the upper station we were told he was "probably" dead. Once down in Long Valley, Rangers who were on the scene verified this. It's tough to accept when every mental and physical facet of our personalities yearns to reach the victim, give first aid, evacuate from dangerous terrain, *anything* necessary to bring him out in condition to survive. Sure, we went in to recover the body. He had tumbled 300' down the 65-70 degree cliffs just southeast of Hidden Lake. Death had been instantaneous, but you know how reports are -- we had hoped for another chance to save a life.

24 June - Late in the afternoon RMRU was notified by the Riverside County Sheriff's Department that a 12 year old boy was missing. When we arrived at the Idyllwild station Capt. Gib Crowell advised us that a man was also lost in the Santa Rosa Mountains. It was decided that Jim Fairchild would be Operations Leader for the Santa Rosa search and he began to contact other region teams for assistance. Walt Walker, obtained a scent article to be used with his Bloodhound, Sugar, and in no time he and the dog along with Ron Harris were heading down Strawberry Creek. They were followed by Bill Speck, Fred Camphausen and Ed Hill. Other members were assigned to start at the highway and head up the creek. The three men heard the boy calling for help and found him hanging onto a small bush at the edge of a long dropoff. They went down to him by rope and brought him back up and everyone hiked out. Once again a life had been saved because RMRU was ready with all of its skills and equipment.

24 June - The search for man missing in the Santa Rosa Mountains had continued through the night and in the morning Pilot Darrel Ellenburg arrived with a bird from Western Helicopters. The bird was used to deploy teams at obvious points. Then Jim Fairchild went with the pilot to fly search. The man was spotted frantically waving his shirt deep in a narrow canyon. The pilot found a spot for a one runner set down and Jim climbed out and went down into the canyon. He helped the stranded man out and they both got into the helicopter and were flown back to base.

25 June - No rest for the weary as once again RMRU heard the cry, 'A Child is Lost'. We all hurried towards the Pine Cove area in the San Jacinto Mountains as a 4 year old boy was lost. Again we used "Sugar" to track and very quickly were headed down a canyon into a stream bed complete with running water. The Bloodhound faltered for a short time in a meadow area and then we were off again. This time into dense brush and down onto a fire road where we found small barefoot prints going downhill. We radioed out this information and Deputy Hollis started up the dirt road. As he came around a bend his headlights picked up a small boy. With the boy on his way back to his parents we knew that our job had been completed.

SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP

Al Andrews reported that the 110 watt base radio had been received and installed in the truck. A big welcome was given to the following new sustaining members: Miss Louise Kemp, Miss Elsie Albrecht, Mr. & Mrs. Charles W. Ricker, Mr. & Mrs. J. L. Daugherty, Mrs. Ramona B. Flinchbaugh, Mr. & Mrs. Danny I. Herrera, Mr. & Mrs. L. N. Duryea, Mr. & Mrs. K. N. Robertson, Mr. & Mrs. Jack Carlow, Mr. Cecile R. S. Timms and Mr. & Mrs. Richard Grenzow.
