

RMRU NEWSLETTER

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A VOLUNTEER NON-PROFIT CORPORATION
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MEMBER OF THE MOUNTAIN RESCUE ASSOCIATION

Volume X, Issue 3, March 1974
Walt Walker, Editor

RMRU - GRAM

ANNUAL MEETING

You are hereby notified that the Annual Meeting and election of officers will be held on April 24, 1974 at 7:30 p.m. in the regular meeting room in the basement of the Riverside County Hall of Records.

Coming Events - - -

March 27 - Regular Meeting
March 29-31 - Training
April 11 - Board Meeting
April 24 - Annual Meeting
April 26-28 - Training



The Road Runner

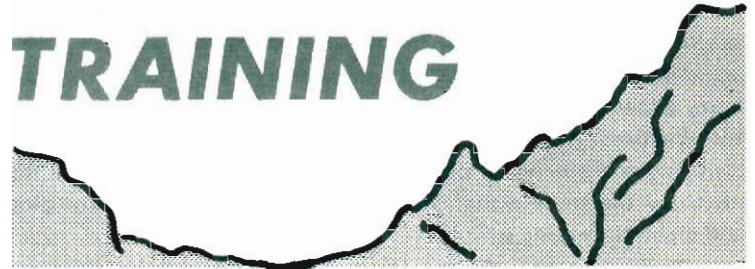
sez - by Pres. Jim Fairchild

It is exceedingly difficult to become enthusiastic about outdoor endeavor in the face of the so-called energy crisis. One's travel habits are severely curtailed. This has perhaps affected SAR in that many fewer people are in the wilderness and hence, many fewer are having problems and needing our help. Well, that's good, anyway.

While we can substitute other activities for hiking, climbing, and other wilderness pursuits, that won't last long. Just one weekend at home with only a short excursion to attend church has left the Roadrunner "stir crazy." Too primitive, I guess - need the sound of wind in pine needles and crying of Clarke's Nutcrackers to preserve sanity.

During our last search where two girls were found in good condition, the two fathers were in the van seeking refuge from the icy wind as was this Ops Ldr. When word came the girls were found, the men suddenly brightened and were overjoyed. I told them the men in the field were joyous too, but did not tell them that I always feel like jumping and shouting for joy each time the good news comes - may the good news always come.

TRAINING



22-24 FEB., FRI.-SUN.—ICE AXE San Gorgonio Wilderness by Raymond Castilonia

"You've got nineteen minutes to clear my driveway!" said Bud White in a semi-authoritarian, semi-jesting voice. The driveway was cluttered with vehicles, lightweight camping gear and men deciding who was going where with whom.

In fifteen minutes the driveway was clear and four minutes later, the small caravan was winding its way to its first destination: La Casa de Vikkis Restaurant. Seven of the team members feasted on guacamole, rellenos verdes, and enchiladas.

Finally, they were on their way. Three cars plodding through Mentone, up the Mill Creek, over the western face of San Bernardino Peak, through Camp Angeles, around the snake bends, by Jenks Lake and into Poop-out Hill Road. The first teaching experience was given by Dan MacIntosh on four-wheel-drive technique. After he and his student were dug and drug out of the snow, the vehicles were located below any difficult terrain.

"Let's go hiking," came loud and clear from up the road where white snow and black sky blended into an indistinguishable difference. Although he could not be seen, without a doubt the voice was that of Art Bridge. A few last minute scamperings, tying of loose ends and then the plodding pace of men steadily going uphill. The crunch of crusted snow followed every footstep until the white carpet would not hold man's weight. Slowly plunging through knee deep powder, the team would often lose a man to his waist, who then could not climb out of the hole that engulfed him, but merely pushed forward till he was in the knee deep position again.

After an hour, the convoy had pushed its way past Poop-out Hill and was at the base of Avalanche gulch working its way towards the cirque near the summit. Each man took his share of breaking trail through the highly unpredictable snow cover. A further hour put the party at a place where there were four small, almost flat areas in the snow. Camp was arranged and all was quiet by midnight except for the sudden appearance of two puffing latecomers, Sonny Lawrence and Pete Frickland. A small shuffle, then quietness again.

The next morning revealed that the team was still several hundred feet below the designated practice area. Camp was quickly

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moved to a more desirable place and a leisurely lunch was prepared. Soon appeared three more members; Ed Hill, Steve Stephens, and Rick Pohlers. They were greeted with the usual enthusiasm and soon were busy arranging a camp. Meanwhile, on the knoll to the east, Pete Frickland's head could be seen bobbing up and down through a hole in the top of a nearly completed igloo and Bud White could be seen scampering in and out of the entrance to another igloo as he put on the finishing touches.

Returning to camp after a snow-conditions exploratory hike, were Art Bridge and Dan MacIntosh. Their words were grim for ice-axe training. The snow was soft and deep all around and got softer and deeper higher on the mountain. Having no desire to give up yet, Larry Brown took a company of men to a slope which looked good for practice. There they attempted to consolidate the snow by tramping and sliding all over the area. Their hope was that by the next day the snow would be consolidated after a day of stomping and night of freezing.

That night brought the usual reminiscence of the old times with the lessons subtly taught to newer members while a wood fire perched on a large rock helped to thaw boots, warm hands and add a bit of light for the proper atmosphere. With the anticipation of a good day coming, sleep came early.

The next day broke in silence over the camp. Annoyed by the stillness on such a great day for training, Dan MacIntosh and Ed Hill concentrated their efforts on bombardment of tents by snow missiles. After receiving a gruff "You want to buy me a new tent?" from Jim Fairchild, the annoyance ceased and all became busy with the chores for the day.

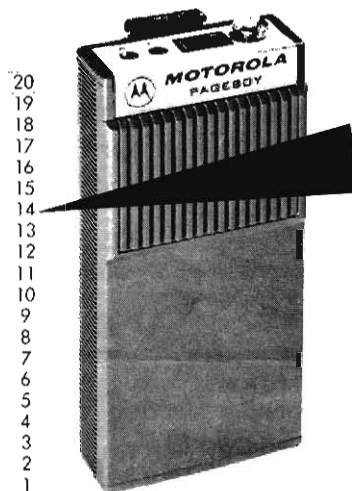
Finally, the hour for beginning ice axe training came. The party trudged up the slope to the practice area. The first attempt at an arrest was done by Ed Hill. He began his slide at the 50 foot mark on his back, feet first. As he flipped over, his knees dug in and he stopped before applying the axe to the slope. The snow was just too granular and loose. Each member took turns sliding, trying to get some speed before arresting, but none were very successful. A proposal of a postponement till the following Saturday and a new location at Baldy Bowl were made. Camp was broken and a very enjoyable, although quiet training ended.

Among those continuing the RMRU habit (in this rare case - a good habit) we number:

- *Dr. and Mrs. Norm Mellor
- Mr. and Mrs. Fred Camphausen
- Mr. Al Crist
- *Kennel Club of Riverside
- *San Jacinto Lions Club
- Mr. and Mrs. Merzals
- Harold E. Carlson

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

Pager Fund



Search and Rescue

Sustaining Members

by Mike Daugherty

This has been a busy month, both for the sustaining membership and for the chairman thereof. Our new sustaining members are:

- Donald W. Clark
- Saddleback Valley YMCA Trailblazers
- Cherry Liquor
- Mr. and Mrs. Bert Leithold
- Mr. and Mrs. Sid Buckman
- Mr. and Mrs. Harry Sugarman

(CONTINUED NEXT COLUMN)

**18-19 FEB., MON.-TUE.—SEARCH NO. 7405M
Strawberry Creek, San Jacinto Mts.
by Pete Frickland**

Late Monday night I received the call: 2 girls, 17 years old, overdue on a dayhike down Strawberry Creek. I threw everything in the car and arrived at Idylwild just after midnight. There I found Gary Gillespie, Bob Claybrook, and Sonny Lawrence. The van wasn't around, apparently due to some radio mixup, although it was on the way up. By this time Bob, Gary, and the Riverside County Sheriff's deputy had gone out to the sewage ponds and Inspiration Point, trying to locate the missing girls with the use of loudspeakers

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and spotlights. Turning nothing with that method we decided to drive down Highway 74, stopping every few miles to use the loud-speaker. Still nothing so we went back to Idyllwild and met Jim Fairchild who had arrived with the van. We decided to move the van down to the Elementary School and set up a temporary base there. It wasn't long before the rest of the team began to show up, and by 0100 field teams were decided upon; Bernie McIlvoy, Sonny, Gary, and myself were to go down the canyon from the top, Steve Stephens, Jack Schnurr, Art Bridge, and Larry Brown were to drop in from the middle and try to cut tracks going down the canyon, meanwhile Hank Schmel, Rick Polhers, and Steve Bryant began coming up the canyon from the highway. Jim and Bob stayed with the van. Just about everyone was in the field by 0130.

While coming down the canyon we decided it would be more efficient to have Gary and Sonny stay along the sides of the canyon, and Bernie and myself go along the stream bed. We expected Gary and Sonny to make better time than us, but the brush and rocks decided otherwise. To make things even finer for them, all of Gary's three flashlights were against the hike from the start. Bernie and I found the going pretty easy for a little while, but after only a half mile or so we too were held up by the brush and forced to go to the sides of the canyon. The brush was so thick we could rarely see beyond 15 feet, and if the rocks weren't water polished they were covered with moss or gravel or leaves. The going was pretty bad. Once when Bernie slipped his flashlight went 60 feet before hitting the ground, a well placed tree saved Bernie from the same fate. After thrashing for about another hour, gaining only about 200 yards, we realized we were going nowhere and wasting time doing it. By now it was 0500 and my flashlight was going. We could hear Steve Stephens on the other canyon wall yell to his group that he was going to bivouac due to the fact that he had lost his glasses and was going to wait for morning to look for them. The rest of his group was atop a 100 foot dropoff and opted to wait for morning to descend. About that time Gary radioed that he was going to bivouac and follow the very bottom of the streambed back up to the road in the morning. With everyone preparing to catch a few hours of sleep plans were made for the next morning. The group which had dropped into the center of the canyon (who were now directly across from Bernie and me) would go up the streambed until they had covered the area up to Gary and Sonny. Bernie and I would go down the streambed and meet the group coming up.

0700 found everyone up and hiking again. Bernie and I reached the stream by 0730 and it wasn't but a minute before we had found two small sets of tracks, one with a lug sole and the other smooth. It looked as though we were on their trail. Conflicting footprints were being found upstream by the other groups, but no footprints had been turned by the downstream group. We felt sure the girls were between the lower group and ourselves. We followed the tracks downstream as fast as possible. The terrain had opened up to mostly large boulder hopping. At 0830 we found a footprint on a dry rock which had wet sand in it. They couldn't be far ahead. Bernie took off and was about 100 yards ahead of me when he established voice contact with the lost girls. It was about 0900 when we got to them. They were in good shape, though hungry after a sleepless night huddled together. They were about a mile and a half or two miles down the canyon, just above a 150 foot cliff. We heated some soup and hot chocolate for them and gave them a tin of fruit. Apparently they had tried to hike back up the canyon the day before but couldn't make it past a hard section. They then tried to climb out

the canyon walls but the coming darkness forced them back. With the morning light they decided to hike downstream, but again were stopped, this time by the cliff. There they decided to wait, and there we found them.

The girls requested a helicopter, which the fathers generously provided. With Don Landells on the way we found a helispot and brought the girls up to it. By now the mid-canyon group had fought its way down to us, after a short mix-up in the directions given them concerning where we were.

Don flew in at 1100 and with a one-runner touchdown picked up Bernie and one of the girls. I left 15 minutes later with the other. Steve Stephens, Art, Larry and Jack were subsequently flown out.

Within 13 hours after the callout the team had organized, deployed, found the victims, and evacuated them. This wouldn't have been possible without the combined support of the deputy on hand, the victims' families, and the fine piloting of Don Landells.



PHOTO BY HANK SCHMEL

Pilot Don Landells landed his chopper atop Inspiration Point and the missing girls were helped out by waiting RMRU members.



PHOTO BY HANK SCHMEL

In the gusty wind the missing girls were reunited with their very happy parents. This is the kind of photograph that we really like to see.

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DING BAt

of the month

by HANK SCHMEL



We really don't believe our training chairman, Dan MacIntosh, when he says that he really wasn't sleeping, but planning future training sessions.



A local Palm Springs Mobil dealer, Larry Paul, has again performed another generous service to our unit. During the recent search in Deep Canyon when our van broke down, Larry Paul towed the van back to his garage and worked on it at no cost to RMRU.

This is the latest of many times that he has worked on our van when it has been in trouble. He also furnished gasoline, at no cost, to our team members.

He has also provided his own time on our rescue activities in the Palm Springs area. Currently Larry is in charge of search and rescue operations for the Palm Springs Mounted Police.

from Old'en Days

5 YEARS AGO IN THE "RMRU NEWSLETTER" –
March 1969

SEARCH & RESCUE ACTIVITY

With fourteen members, deep in the San Gorgonio Wilderness on winter training, it was a short crew who gathered to assist in the search for a three-year-old girl lost in Joshua Tree National Monument. Just before dawn the girl was found, but not in time, as the wind, rain, sleet and snow had claimed her young life.

SUSTAINING MEMBERS

Al Andrews reported four new members: Charles Reinhardt, John Lase, Jim Dodson, and Mr. & Mrs. A. Bud White; and renewing members Mr. & Mrs. Earl Cannon.

THE ROADRUNNER SEZ –

"Are you as prepared for SAR as you would want your rescuers to be?"

Just a
REMINDER!

California Region - MRA
Meeting
Saturday, April 6th
at
China Lake