

RMRU NEWSLETTER

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

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Jim Fairchild, Editor
Walt Walker, Publisher

Coming Events

13 August, Board Meeting
20 August, Regular Meeting
23-24 August, Training
10 September, Board Meeting
24 September, Regular Meeting
27-28 September, Training

TRAINING

27-29 June, Fri. - Sun.
By Larry Roland



The Road Runner

sez— by Jim Fairchild

Climatic change is probably a well-known phenomenon throughout the world, but when it occurs strikingly in one's own corner of the world, it is dismaying. During my first two-week backpacking trip to the High Sierra in 1942, we had at least half-an-inch of ice on open water containers every night. Even before that, in 1939, we had the same thing in the San Jacinto Mts. in Round Valley at 9,000' el. In the higher mountains you simply expected and prepared for sub-freezing temperatures all summer. Only four years later in the same area of the High Sierra we had much higher temperatures, hardly freezing. Then in 1951 when I led my Scout Troop up Mt. Whitney, we had no freezing temperatures at all, even at 11,600' el. In these same mountain areas today I still carry quite warm clothing out of habit, but it is not needed. We keep our short trousers and short sleeved shirts on with few exceptions. I was reminded of that during both our recent trainings (North Face of San Jacinto and Tahquitz Canyon) where we bivouacked with minimum gear—it maybe got down as low as 50 deg. F. at 9,000' el. We wonder what future years have in store for us along this line? We do not imply that winter temperatures are that much higher because we've had some pretty cold outings during storms, but even at that, the nights seem much warmer during good weather. Our thermometers substantiate this.

Now it's time to proceed out to the Blood Bank and donate for good old RMRU's account. We've given time, money, sweat, tears, anxiety, thrills, satisfaction, and now blood. Ah! But we will have a fine credit of blood on hand in case one of us is lying severely injured and in desperate need, clinging to life by the skin of our teeth. This has not yet occurred, and probably won't (God willing) if we're prepared.

Another new experience. Having recently joined RMRU and not knowing what all was involved in mountain rescue, I listened with suspicious interest and skepticism to many of the recollections and tales that were related to me. I figured these guys were exaggerating just a little bit and, of course, I took it with a grain of salt. After the introduction, however, the initiation must follow—and it did.

After ascending the north face of San Jacinto last month, I thought I was prepared for most any difficulty one might encounter while searching in steep terrain. I obviously hadn't been down Tahquitz Canyon which was this month's RMRU training exercise.

The purpose of descending Tahquitz Canyon was primarily to familiarize ourselves with the area since we conduct numerous searches and rescues each year throughout the canyon. The canyon is very long and very steep, characterized by many waterfalls, rugged boulders and heavy brush in places. Consequently, it is often necessary to detour around precarious rock formations which make route-finding difficult.

It all began Friday evening when Fairchild, Walt Walker, Kevin Walker and I began hiking from Humber Park (6,800' el.) to Law's Camp (1,400' el.) where we were joined later by the rest of the party. It was quite a treat when Fairchild displayed a boysenberry pie he had brought to counteract the trail dust and inaugurate another annual Tahquitz training session. We quickly ate the pie and sacked out as we wanted to get an early start on the canyon.

Dawn found us cooking breakfast and in no time at all we were on our way. There were many impressive sights along the way but it was mostly one boulder after another constantly stepping down. Larry Brown and Ed Hill did most of the trail blazing, probably because they wanted to be the first ones to locate the legendary Tahquitz maidens! But that's another story.

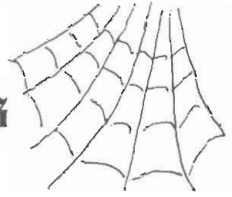
The first day we descended to the 3000 foot level, camped beside the stream and took a very cold dip in the pool before preparing supper. We had passed several historic spots including Tower helispot where the Bobby Sitz mission was terminated, and Mac's Slide where a past RMRU member was injured. Gradually, the

canyon began to take shape as we encountered various portions of the descent, and I was able to associate many of the places with stories I had heard earlier. That evening we met one of the canyon residents, who called himself Spirit, and were able to clarify some of the names of locations in the canyon. Spirit and other residents have been helpful on occasion by directing rescuers to the stranded victim, so hopefully, we were able to foster better and more efficient cooperation between us. Nevertheless, we had a relaxed visit which Spirit obviously enjoyed since it's not often that he gets visitors that far into the canyon.

The next morning was hot even before we began hiking. Spirit and his dog Akuba decided to accompany us on down the trail as he wanted to get better acquainted and show us some of the alternate routes out of the canyon. Of course, I spent a good deal of my time asking questions about locations, names, hypothetical procedures and trying to keep it all straight in my mind. I was amazed at how many helispots, waterfalls, caves, etc. there are that are known landmarks to other team members. It also became apparent to me how treacherous the canyon can be and how grim our job might become as each rescue location was pointed out and the story retold. It seemed like every marker had some morbid memory behind it and a lesson to be learned. Yet beside the power and death of the mountain lies the majesty, beauty, and life all wrapped up together for those strong enough to endure the hardship in order that they might experience the joy.

At last we were almost down. Ed Hill gave us the keep quiet sign as we approached the lookout for the Tahquitz maidens. Sure enough, far below us in the pool of the first falls, Ed spotted one female skinny-dipper! Lingering, however, is not one of RMRU's attributes since we have Walt Walker's campaign slogan, "100 feet at a time" so we were quickly on our way to the shuttle cars, friends, cold drinks and the memory of another successful Tahquitz Canyon adventure.

from Old'en Days



A couple of interesting missions ten years ago: first, we were called to Elsinore to search for an 80-year old man in the Santa Ana Mts. south of the lake. We did just this only to have Capt. Crowell of the Sheriff's Office locate the man in downtown Elsinore; second, a dune-buggy driver overturned his bug in the badlands north of Moreno, sustaining a badly fractured left hip. He fought and cussed valiantly against care until Dr. John Lanier, shortly associated with our unit, and Walt managed to hit him with painkiller. Following that he was transported to the ambulance in a very happy condition. As I recall, Bob Minter and I arrived just as the transportation phase began.

Five years ago we were called to Boulder Basin Campground to search for four missing youngsters, ages 14 and three 12's, plus a dog. The area where they had gone to look for a swimming spot was awfully steep and cliffy. Our men spent several hours combing the terrain when word came the children had arrived at Twin Pines Ranch.

Well, it hardly seems five years ago now that Walt had his famous helicopter crash. We are still thankful that he and Reed Jaroch, the pilot, were not injured seriously. Last month, after the North Face of San Jacinto ascent, we re-visited the spot and re-lived the event.

Sustaining Members

by Mike Daugherty

MIKE'S ON VACATION THIS MONTH

The *RMRU Newsletter* is published monthly by the Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit, Inc. It is intended primarily to inform the regular and sustaining members.

If you would like to receive the newsletter on a regular basis, and at the same time become a sustaining member, send your tax deductible donation of \$10 or more to:

Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit, Inc.
P. O. Box 5444
Riverside, Calif. 92507

