

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 XI, Issue 11, November 1975

Jim Fairchild, Editor
Walt Walker, Publisher
Rick Pohlers, Art

Coming Events

- 14 January 1976 Board Meeting at Fairchild's
28 January Regular Meeting at County Adm. Center
31 January Training in San Jacinto Mountains

We'll have the 1976 Activity Schedule with dates and tentative destinations and training subjects to you at the 28 January '76 Regular Meeting. The new Federal holiday scheduling has wrecked our formula for meetings and training sessions, but at least January is easy to figure out.



The Road Runner

sez— by Jim Fairchild

Referring back to the 1976 Activities Schedule, we would like to cite the truism that is at least 95% accurate: WE DO WHAT WE WANT TO DO. We believe that members who wish to participate in meetings and training sessions will.

Our sincere thanks to RMRU Board of Directors for sending us to the Mountain Medicine Symposium in Yosemite Valley, 29 Oct. to 1 Nov., the symposium was sponsored by the Yosemite Institute, an education organization. The affair was headed by Dr. Charles Houston, an internationally famous mountaineer and expert on high altitude illness. That does not mean he's been sick a lot at high altitude, but that he has been and is a leader in researching the relatively new field of high altitude illness. Many foreign and local authorities participated by giving topical lectures and leading smaller discussion groups on many subjects, e.g., first aid, clothing, nutrition, search and rescue, and high altitude pulmonary edema. All leaders did an outstanding job of relating to the minority of "students" who are laymen. Surely it was a thrill to listen to and talk with men we've admired through the years for their mountaineering accomplishments as well as their endeavors to find ways to prevent and alleviate mountain problems. We have cassette tapes of the proceedings as well as notes. The salient point we got from the four days of intensive presentations is that our unit physicians, Drs. Mellor and Castilonia, have kept us abreast of and usually ahead of the developments in medicine as they apply to our operation, and that RMRU is not behind in SAR techniques.



TRAINING

25 OCTOBER—SAT.—TECHNICAL—Big Rock
By Bud White

On 18 October six members of RMRU went to Fossil Falls north of China Lake for a Mountain Rescue Association workshop. It was comforting to see that even with two or three of our top technical men at home we still performed up to standard. Most importantly, the workshop provided an opportunity for much interchange of ideas on techniques and equipment. On Saturday the 25th of October, the team met at Big Rock for its regular monthly training where we tried out new ideas and new equipment obtained the week before.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)

Let me digress a moment about Big Rock. I hadn't been there since before the construction started on Lake Perris and was almost overwhelmed by the changes. Before, it was an isolated side canyon in the Bernasconi Hills that you reached by dirt roads.

You were careful to avoid an open pit well, poison oak and rattlesnakes. You had to climb up to the base of the rock. The area was wild and quiet. Today, dam construction has filled in the valley so you walk to the base of the rock on the level, chemical toilets sit close to the rock, the poison oak, open well and old Eucalyptus trees are gone under yards of dirt and the climbers must pay one dollar per head and hike over the hills to get to the area. We were fortunate because Bernie had obtained a key, so we met at the overlook turn-off and caravanned right to the area.

The morning was spent with Bernie and Pete showing us the many types of chocks (hexentrics, wedges, etc.) and how to place them in cracks for use as anchors when we raise or lower the litter with the victim. In the old days it was pitons or bolts. Today it is chocks with an occasional bolt. You always use a natural anchor if available. Where we used to practice at Big Rock, there were two modest sized boulders we used as anchors. Today we noticed they had moved so we passed them up. We couldn't be sure if they had moved from the vibrations of blasting or people weight.

Mid-morning we moved to a sloping ledge about 100' off the ground and set up self equalizing anchors using several techniques. Each man got to rappel with the new figure eight descending rings. The rappels had a wrinkle in them however. Pete had tied two ropes together on the vertical part of the cliff just above an overhang and you had to rappel to the knot and then tie off, clip in your jumars (ascending devices), unhook your rappel, bypass the knot, unhook, untie and continue down. One thing became apparent: it wasn't easy, but no one had to be rescued. I remembered years ago on the same overhang, I rappelled down and tied off but couldn't figure out how to untie without falling. So, thoroughly psyched out, I waited for Jim Fairchild to come down and help, as he has done with a generation of new men.

After lunch we went back to the ledge and demonstrated why we could send a group to the workshop the week before that knew what it was doing. Each new man, and not so new man, had to rig the litter, belay the litter, go over the side with the litter, etc. No one stands around and watches. Between Pete Carlson making sure everyone had something to do and Jim taking notes for the training manual, we had a very productive afternoon.

It was really strange to be working up on the ledge with the now completed Lake Perris in the background and the sights and noises of the water skiers, sailboats and fishermen. I view the changes with mixed emotions, much the same as Tahquitz Canyon revisited after a five year absence.

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

Ding Bat of the month

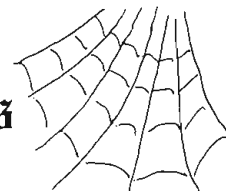
by HANK SCHMEL



RMRU PHOTO BY PETE CARLSON

On the recent mission in Tahquitz Canyon, Rich Morris upon clamoring out of the chopper, instantly earned the coveted 'Ding Bat of the Month' by picking Cholla cactus with the back of his hand. Doesn't That smart Rich?

from Old'en Days



TEN YEARS AGO —

Nothing spectacular to reminisce about rescues, but we did commemorate our 1966 edition of the RMRU Training Manual then. Interesting, because we're now hotly working on what will probably be the 1976 Edition. The problem becomes that of trying to condense an encyclopedia's worth of material into a practical tome of a few hundred pages.

FIVE YEARS AGO —

It hardly seems that long ago "we" got a call regarding a young man who sustained very serious injuries to both lower extremities in a fall from the trail in lower Tahquitz Canyon. An all-night evacuation ensued. The young man died two weeks later from a thrombosis. I said "we" because I was not on the mission. Whenever we miss a SAR mission we hear so much about it from our friends on the unit whom we relate to so deeply that it later seems quite as though we were there along with them. Incidentally, the thrombosis was not related to the first aid process.

Come to Breakfast and HELP RMRU!

ON SUNDAY FEBRUARY 15th THE SOROPTIMIST CLUB OF SAN JACINTO-HEMET ARE ONCE AGAIN SPONSORING A BREAKFAST TO BENEFIT RMRU.

THE BREAKFAST WILL BE HELD AT THE HEMET ELK'S CLUBHOUSE ON WEST FLORIDA AVENUE. BREAKFAST WILL BE SERVED FROM 8 A. M. TO 11 A. M.

RMRU'S BIG ORANGE VAN AND ALL THE EQUIPMENT INSIDE WILL BE ON DISPLAY.

Search and Rescue

13-14 OCT., MON.-TUE.—RESCUE—No. 7522M
Tahquitz Canyon, near Palm Springs
By Larry Brown

Well I see that after two years of zero write-up participation I finally got caught. I was in the process of buying some new running shoes when the clerk inquired about my pager; I told him about it and he asked if Palm Springs was in our area . . . Beeeeeeeep! I said yes, paid for the shoes (leaving a pair) got my callout pack and proceeded to the Tahquitz Canyon roadhead, Ann Dolley's home.

At about 2045 (8:45 p.m.) the team of Carlson, Walker, Pohlers, Borges, Hill, Roland, Gordon (the informant) and I started up the canyon. It was clear, calm with a slight breeze, the moon was 3/4 full, great hiking and surviving weather. But this being late in the season, Tahquitz Creek was just damp ground or sun baked granite, no water at all. The subject of this rescue was believed to have an injured leg from a fall and no water for two days.

After hiking for two hours, we once again tried calling, and made voice contact near the second falls area. So, we knew he was alive and responsive, but we still couldn't determine injuries or how he got where he was. At 0130 we determined that he was able to make it till dawn. It was decided that we still needed to get water down to him, so a rappel line was rigged and I volunteered to go down with food and water. Now let me tell you something. I've rappelled many times before, but never at night and never where I couldn't at least see the end of the rope! Now to have both condi-

tions at the same time along with overhangs and not knowing where the next ledge was, Wow! With plenty of inches to spare I "offed" rappel on a ledge still 30 feet above the stream bottom and 90 feet above the victim.

Roy Rush of Maryland had fallen into a hole dug by a waterfall 60 feet down and with another 40 foot waterfall below. No way up, down or sideways without a rope. Meanwhile Ed Hill came down to my ledge with another rope to get us both to the stream bottom and a light weight rope to lower water and nectar juice down to Roy, which we had him drink very, very slowly, so slowly that it was 0330 before we got to bed down for the short night.

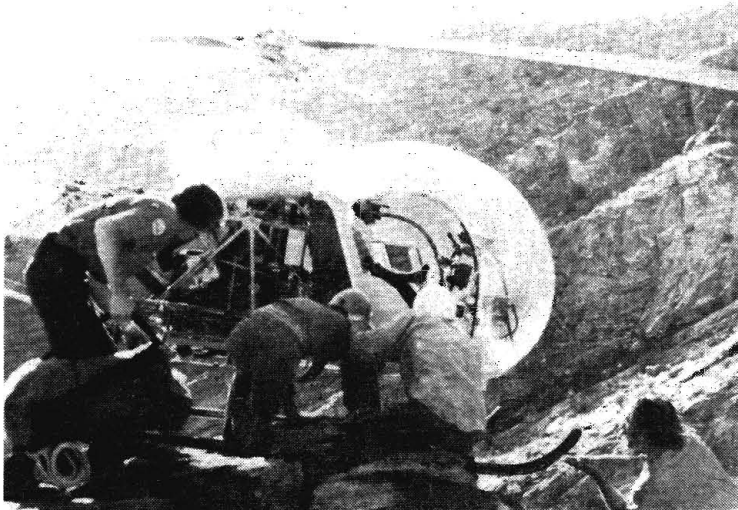
0615 found base sorting gear to be flown in with Bernie McIlvoy and Rich Quackenbush via Don Landell and his helicopter. Bernie then rappelled down, with a longer rope, to Ed and me, where we drew up two plans. One was to build an ark and float out, and the other was to have Walt (Mr. Bad) rappel down to Roy, (we still hadn't gotten down to him) rig a harness and have the rest of the members on top raise him out with a mechanical advantage pulley system — which is what we decided on due to lack of water for the ark.



With his camera pointed directly towards the canyon floor, RMRU member Pete Carlson, photographed the subject of the mission as he was rescued by being hauled from his trap.

0835 found Roy topside, but not without the muscle of Carlson, Pohlers, Burges, Roland, Morris and Quackenbush who for 20 minutes pulled an equivalent 900 feet of rope to lift Roy up 300 feet. Don Landell then flew Roy and the topside members out of the canyon. While Ed was looking for a helispot on the south side, Bernie and I watched Walt struggle up 30 feet of rope with his Jumars. The three of us joined Ed at the newly discovered helispot for our ride out.

At 0940 all RMRU members were out of the canyon and on the way to breakfast, tired, hungry, but happy. One additional comment I can't resist. I promised not to tell anybody that Ed threw a rope into a tree reppeling . . . if he wouldn't tell that he had to help me up a five foot boulder.

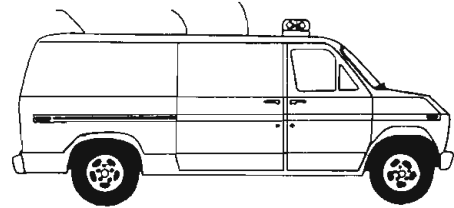


RMRU PHOTO BY PETE CARLSON

With pilot Don Landell's perching his helicopter on one runner, RMRU members assisted the rescued subject into the waiting machine while others gave hand signals and loaded equipment

Sustaining Members

by Mike Daugherty



Van Fund Gauge

Our thanks to the following new and renewing members for their support of RMRU.

New:

Allan E. Rau

Renewing:

- *George and Norma Ruptier
- M/M Charles Ricker
- Riverside County Pomona Grange No. 31
- David Westheimer
- *Kelty Pack, Inc.
- Bob and Barbara Schuppe

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

14 OCT., TUE.—SEARCH—No. 7523C Inyo County

In the evening Al Andrews received a call from the China Lake Mountain Rescue Group requesting assistance for a lost deer hunter. Due to the mission just completed we felt that we could not send any members for an out-of-county mission and its three day commitment agreed upon on region teams.