

RMRU NEWSLETTER

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The Road Runner Sez- By Jim Fairchild

After reviewing write-ups in the RMRU Newsletter that describes successful searches for lost people, and remembering some others prior to our newsletter, and even others not connected with RMRU, we feel it's time to share a couple of concepts regarding the victim's reactions to being found. There's nothing scientific about them, nor have we found anything in literature of a similar nature, but they are very real and we've been aware of them for some time. The first concept demands very alert behavior on our part, the second demands tolerance and agreeable smiles.

First, Rescue Collapse.

This is when we rescue someone who has been rallying all of his mental and physical resources in his attempt to stay alive and somehow get himself found. He may seem OK when we reach him, but at a variable time after rescue he simply lets go. It

may result in total unconsciousness, semi-consciousness, or just a partial collapse of his mind and body. This has happened to people of both sexes, young and old. We plan to document it more carefully in the future.

Second, Rescue Bravado.

This is even more common and turns up about an hour after rescue. The now safe victim relates his plans to extricate himself from the wilderness. Little does he remember his condition when rescued: panicked, cold, hungry, disoriented, weak from exposure. Well, perhaps it's a bit of "save face" syndrome. Here again, any sex or age may exhibit this phenomenon. We don't care because we are jubilant that the person is alive and well -- hope there's never a time to prove him wrong!

We must make clear that not every victim rescued displays either the collapse or bravado, but it's common enough to be quite expected and prepared for. In the case of the bravado, however, casual observers could get the idea the victims did not need rescuing.

Finally, we must state emphatically that there's no need for any past victim or relative to be offended, for we can see that we would elicit one or the other should we be rescued sometime in the future, maybe **both!** ■ RMRU

Search and Rescue

RESCUE

Mission No. 7605M

5 Feb., Thurs.
Half Dome, Yosemite Valley

By Pete Carlson

We received a call about 1900 to go to Yosemite Valley to help 6 people from the top of Half Dome. The situation was heavy snow falling and no clearing for 3 days. After all the calling RMRU had Bernie and myself saying we could go.

Bernie and I left at 2400 hours for the drive to the Valley. We met up with Sierra Madre in Bakersfield and as a group reached the Valley at 1000 hours. Rick Smith the coordinator met us and told us there were two climbers almost up Half Dome. So we laid down for some sleep.

When we awoke at 1400, the sky was clear and a helicopter was taking the people from the top. The people in the field hiked back and we relaxed around the Valley with 18 inches of new snow. The MRA had 22 fully equipped winter mountaineers ready to go, but because of the lucky change in the weather we were not needed.

We spent Friday night in the Valley talking to the park service people and having a nice dinner and party with them. Saturday morning we drove home arriving in Riverside at 1530 hours. TOTAL 88 Man hours, 760 miles. ■ RMRU

Search and Rescue
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from Old'en Days



Five Years Ago

On 1 Jan. '71 we participated in the exceedingly tragic operation along the High Gear Highway in the San Bernardino Mts. looking for Martina Peterson, an 11 yr. old girl. She had been left when a very full car-

load of youngsters returned home to Fullerton without her. She had been turned down for help at a local cabin, then wandered about, just what happened we'll never know. She was found a month later near the road uphill from where the search ended. I still regret not following a hunch to search up there - we had been assigned the road downhill from the general point of disappearance.

Later in the month there were two serious injuries cared for in the Joshua Tree National Monument area, one on nearby Box Springs Mountain.

(See Ten Years Ago, Page 2)

RESCUE

Mission No. 7606A

9 Feb., Mon.
Elsinore Area

The Elsinore office of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department telephoned RMRU to request our help in rescuing people who had been injured in a four-wheel drive vehicle accident. While we were rolling the mission was cancelled for RMRU. ■ RMRU

SEARCH

Mission No. 7607M

12 Feb., Thurs.
Cherry Valley

By John Dew

The pagers went off on a Thursday night about 8:00 and we were told that three juveniles had run away from home in Cherry Valley.

I immediately thought of teenagers and knew that three runaway teenagers would be hard to find. I wondered why RMRU was called because Cherry Valley is basically farmland.

Upon arriving at the scene around 2100 hours (9 p.m.), we discovered that the three juveniles were not teenagers at all, but rather two girls, aged 10 and 8, and a little boy 3½ years of age. They were dressed in T-shirt and pants with no jackets. Around 11 a.m. they had taken one sleeping bag, 8 or 9 sandwiches, three very large lollipops (like those from Disneyland) and, as far as we know, NO water, and left home. They left a note informing the parents they would be back Tuesday and not to call the police.

Several groups of people were utilized in the search in addition to RMRU. Four-wheel drive vehicles were deployed through Bogart Park and other obvious places where little children might go. Walking manpower drew the assignment of knocking on doors and waking residents to inquire if they had seen children fitting this description and would they again search their prem-

ises which they willingly did. The Riverside City helicopter with the hi-intensity searchlight responded to the call and after flying about 20 minutes, spotted a campfire in a small canyon above Bogart Park. Upon concentrating the searchlight on the campfire area, they could see three little children with one sleeping bag nearby. A jeep that was in the area was directed to the spot by the personnel in the helicopter.

When the children were picked up and brought back to Base Camp, Sheriff's Capt. Canova asked the 3½ year old boy, "Were you afraid?" His response was "No!" The Captain then said, "You wouldn't do this again would you?" to which the little boy replied, "Sure!"

I hope this is not looking forward prophetically to a repeat performance! ■ RMRU

SEARCH

Mission No. 7608A

16 Feb., Mon.
Palm Springs Aerial Tram
San Jacinto Mountains

RMRU was contacted concerning two overdue hikers, who were reported to be descending Chino Canyon. As the call-out was completed and some members had just started to roll, we were again contacted, this time being notified that they had shown up. The RMRU pagers were activated to relay the information that the mission had been cancelled.

■ RMRU

SEARCH

Mission No. 7609A

18 Feb., Wed.
Snowcreek Area
San Jacinto Mountains

The unit was contacted late in the afternoon that a repairman for a cable TV company was overdue from a hike to their mountain-top antenna. The telephone had hardly been put down when we were again contacted by the Banning office of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, this time to say that the overdue employee had just reported in. ■ RMRU

SEARCH

Mission No. 7610A

18 Feb., Wed.
San Jacinto Mountains

By Walt Walker

RMRU was contacted by both individuals and agencies concerning an airplane overdue and presumed down. There had been rain and cloudy conditions when the plane was reported missing.

A search plane had reported a signal stamped out in the snow. I talked to the pilot of the search plane, and from his description, it sounded like Tahquitz Valley.

After discussing it with Captain Ray Canova, of the Banning office of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, it was decided to try and do something that evening. He obtained the use of a Hughes 500c helicopter from the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department. He rode in the bird as an observer, but due to very strong winds they were not able to fly low enough for the search light on the bird to be very effective.

The following morning a Marine helicopter flew to Tahquitz Valley,

(See Tahquitz Valley, Page 3)

Ten Years Ago

(Continued from page 1)

It's hard to believe that a decade has passed since we had our usual January 1 callout and were struggling up the ridge north of Tahquitz Peak searching for three young boys who, wearing rubber-soled galoshes, were heading toward the lookout on the peak. Alternately plunging waist-deep into soft snow or slipping on stretches of "boiler plate" ice, we fully expected to find that they had slid down a gully to serious injury or death. Even then we expected the worst and hoped for the best. The best happened, for the youngsters were safe at the lookout cabin.

The last two days of Jan. '66 we had another struggle, this time through four feet of soft powder snow to the Ranger's cabin in Round Valley (9100' el.) to find and escort back to the tramway six teenage boys who were stranded.

Tahquitz Valley

(Continued from page 2)

only to find a pattern in the snow created by blocks having been cut from the snow to make an igloo by weekend skiers. Our part of the mission was cancelled. ■ RMRU

Rescue Evacuation

Mission No. 7611M

20 Feb., Thurs.

**Dark Canyon,
San Jacinto Mountains**

By Rich Quackenbush

The pagers went off at about 9 p.m. and Art Bridge and I left the Upland area and arrived at Lawler County Campground, near Idyllwild, a little later than some of the Riverside and Hemet people as usual.

Jim Fairchild was at the van waiting for us and one team had already been deployed down Fuller Mill Creek, taking the wheeled litter with them.

The report was that nine mentally retarded people from the Foundation of the Retarded of the Desert, in Indio, and their counselors were approximately two miles down Fuller Mill Creek. We were told Dave Wemple, the camp ranger, and members of the Pine Cove Fire Dept. were already at the scene.

Jim, Art and I then started down the creek bed, hopping boulders and criss-crossing the creek as we went. We overtook the other team just as they got to the subjects.

Dave and the firemen had done a good job keeping them together but could no longer keep them moving. We immediately got warm clothing on them and fired up the stoves and made soup and hot drinks for everyone.

Dave Wemple, John Dew and the firemen got the group moving again, except for a girl with an ankle injury, with Dave in the lead the party hiked out with no major problems.

After Art and Walt Walker administered first aid to the girl, we put her in the litter and tried to wheel her out. I say tried because

after about an hour we gave up our futile attempts to find a route in the dark good enough for the litter in the boulders and the thick brush.

We bedded down for the night and when more team members hiked in the next morning, we wheeled out the litter with no further incident.

■ RMRU

SEARCH

Mission No. 7612A

21 Feb., Sat.

**Palm Springs Aerial Tram
San Jacinto Mountains**

Saturday evening we received a call from the Riverside County Sheriff's Department regarding a 23 year old woman overdue from the mountain station of the tramway. We had the pagers activated, scrambled in anticipation of a search in the high, cold, precipitous, snow-sheathed Mt. San Jacinto area. Our complete and heavy winter packs aboard the tram car, we began the ascent. Halfway up the car stopped, the phone rang, the search was off. The gal had slipped away during the day from her frolic in the snow and returned to her apartment in Whittier. ■ RMRU

RESCUE

Mission 7613M

22 Feb., Sun.

**Devil's Slide Trail
above Idyllwild**

By Pete Carlson

At 1310 we received a call that a young girl (17) was injured when she slipped hiking down the Devil's Slide Trail. The first group of RMRU men reached Humber Park in Idyllwild at 1445. We all took light packs plus the team equipment: the wheeled litter, an air splint, a Hare traction splint, a big first aid belt, our rescue sleeping bag, and 2 radios.

About 1530 we met a doctor hiking down who had examined the in-

jured girl. Her only injuries were a bruised hip and a broken collar bone. She was in a lot of pain so he administered a dose of demoral for her pain. As we continued up the trail it got icier and icier and we were glad we had our crampons with us.

We reached the girl at 1600 and she was much relieved to see us. We made her a little more comfortable with extra ensolite. Her pulse was 90 and she appeared to be doing alright. As more men came up we did a six-man lift and put her in the wheeled litter. We got our packs ready and started down. With 11 RMRU men the trip down took only 1¼ hours.

At Humber Park was an ambulance to take the girl to the hospital. Thanks to our big wheel the trip down took only 15 minutes longer than our hike up. Then off to dinner at the Chart House thanks to Capt. Canova from the Banning Sheriff's office. ■ RMRU

SEARCH

Mission No. 7614A

22 Feb., Sun.

Quail Valley area

During our sumptuous dinner at the Chart House following the last rescue, we received a call from the Elsinore office of the Riverside Co. Sheriff's Department that a 2 year old child was missing in the Quail Valley area. We suggested that the Hemet Valley Search & Rescue team be called. They were, but the child showed up, probably before they arrived at the scene. ■ RMRU

SEARCH

Mission No. 7615A

22 Feb., Sun.

A few minutes later, also during our dinner, a call came regarding three women who were overdue in the Pinyon Flats area. While wolfing down the last tasty bites of dinner a call came to report that the three women were accounted for. ■ RMRU