

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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BUSY WEEK FOR RMRU ENDS IN SADNESS

Search and Rescue

SEARCH

Mission No. 7709M & 7710M

4-10 April, Mon.-Sun.

Tahquitz Canyon,
San Jacinto Mountains

By John Dew

The members of RMRU had gone for several months with just one mission and that one mission was completed in a matter of about two hours and then another month or two went by with no mission. Everyone had kept up on his physical fitness program, had attended all meetings and had made all trainings and yet the question persisted in their minds, "Why aren't we getting more missions - will there ever be another one?"

And then it happened - at 1140 hours on April 4, the team was activated because a nineteen year-old boy, Derick Bouma, had not returned home. His car had been located at Humber Park in Idyllwild which indicated that he was probably somewhere in the San Jacinto Mountains.

Upon arriving at the Sheriff's substation in Idyllwild and talking with them, we were told that some hikers coming down Devil's Slide Trail just below Saddle Junction had seen a boy fitting the subject's description (tall, slender, 19 years, blonde, shoulder-length hair) had been seen hiking up the trail with a small-sized German shepherd dog.

We were also informed that the forestry was checking out alleged human and dog prints together near Willow Creek crossing and we should stand by until they had ascertained the importance of those tracks.

This slowed the beginning of the mission by a large portion of time as we were doing nothing but standing by. It did give opportunity for the more distant team members to arrive and each member had time to get the equipment he needed for back country, snow-covered terrain.

At length we learned as is quite often the case, that our problems were somewhat compounded as we could not determine who had said, "Have RMRU stand by." Nor could we discover who had said there were human and dog tracks at Willow Creek crossing. This put us exactly no where except approximately two and one-half hours later in the already short afternoon.

Because of the late hour, we requested a helicopter to lift our teams to the top of the mountain, which saved several hours of hiking and gave us some daylight for searching. Charles Bujan and Jim Fairchild were sent to Skunk Cabbage Meadow to search for tracks on the trail to Willow Creek crossing. Rich Quackenbush was lifted to one of the higher ridges to act as relay while Bernie McIlvoy was to remain in the helicopter and fly observer for a while for any evidence of a person and a dog moving about below. Ed Hill and Steve Zappe arrived and were instructed to pack for Caramba Camp. To make things difficult, we had been advised that snowshoes were necessary at the higher elevations.

Just as these two men were ready to fly, we received radio word that Bernie and Don Landells, our helicopter pilot, had spotted human and dog tracks together in the snow in Tahquitz Canyon. With this inform-

ation, we instructed Charles and Jim to start searching for tracks in the direction toward Caramba. Ed Hill was placed as relay at the high point of Caramba heli-spot. Steve Zappe joined Bernie going down from the top of the canyon toward the tracks in the canyon, and towards a new orange pack seen apparently abandoned at the 5600' level.

The time was getting late, the men in the field had taken adequate gear to camp in the mountains and the decision was made that John Dew, who was serving as operations leader, and Kevin Walker, who was serving as base camp operator, would move base camp around to the mouth of the canyon in Palm Springs. After setting up base camp in Palm Springs, the chopper was released for the night as darkness had come.

Jensen and Fulkman had arrived and at 0520 the next morning were flown into the canyon to start the day's searching. Between 0520 on Tuesday morning and 0815, many items were found identified by the parent as belonging to the missing boy, but no trace of the subject himself or his dog. Other items were picked up through the day, tracks of the boy and the dog were followed until they totally disappeared with no success. Wednesday afternoon late, the dog was found (a six month-old German shepherd puppy) and was identified by and given to the subject's father.

Other rescue teams were called in to assist all day Wednesday and all day Thursday. Two more RMRU men arrived - Tom Aldrich and Larry Roland and at one time we had approximately thirty searchers in the canyon searching the canyon proper, the canyon walls, and every side drainage into the canyon. We had members from San Diego Mountain Rescue team, China Lake Mountain Rescue group, Sierra Madre Search

& Rescue Team, two officers from the U. S. Border Patrol, one man from No. 303rd Para-rescue, an air rescue team from March Air Force Base and members from the radio support group who assist us often. Another day we had nearly as many, yet in it all the subject's tracks had disappeared and it seemed that he would not be found.

The search was halted on Thursday night, April 7, for lack of clues and the numerous man-hours already put into this general area. The determination was the search would be called temporarily unless further developments dictated our return.

The anxious father of the subject worked diligently to reinstate the search. Walt Walker and Jim Fairchild were contacted and told of the father's willingness to hire Landells' helicopter for a longer period of time and after consultation on this new development, RMRU members were again flown into the canyon at noon on Saturday. Larry Brown was able to roll this time and helped John Dew in base camp.

Saturday afternoon was uneventful in turning up new leads and again the call went out to all available team members of various teams in Southern California. This time Sierra Madre responded again as they always do with a number of searchers, Altadena team sent three, and San Diego sent one who arrived during Saturday night and Sunday morning.

About 1100 hours Sunday morning (which was Easter Sunday), Larry Roland and Rich Quackenbush called for either a wet suit and a face mask to dive into one of the deeper pools in the canyon which had not been checked or a diver to go in. Palm Springs Mounted Police have divers and one of them, Steve DeJesus, who had dived a pool in the canyon the previous Thursday, was called back to dive another pool higher up the canyon.

On his first dive, he discovered the sad sight of the young man for whom we had been searching approximately 15 feet under water, back under the turbulence caused by the icy water coming in from the waterfall above, which is a stark reminder that persons going into the mountains should have adequate gear, some knowledge of what they



PHOTO BY LARRY ROLAND

Senior veteran RMRU member Walt Walker, and younger but quickly becoming a veteran RMRU member Tom Aldrich, wait in saddened silence. They and other members had previously placed the body of young Derick Bouma in the helicopter cargo sling. They had sent the radio message back to base that they were ready for pilot Don Landells to fly in for the aerial pick-up. Shortly after this photograph was taken the helicopter descended into a narrow area of Tahquitz Canyon, hovered over the 'Helispot' while Walt secured the line. The body was then airlifted out of the canyon and flown to the RMRU base.

are doing and **never hike alone!** These three cardinal rules were violated by this unfortunate teenager.

•RMRU

SEARCH

Mission No. 7711M

**15 April, Friday
Pacific Crest Trail,
San Jacinto Mountains**

At 12:30 P.M. Captain Canova from the Banning Sheriff's station called John Dew, who works in Banning to inform him of two hikers on Pacific Crest Trail who were three days overdue. These hikers were seen in Tahquitz Valley on Tuesday, but had not arrived in Cabazon a-

bout eight miles away by Friday noon.

The Captain was asking John if he could fly for a while to attempt to observe the trail and see if they could be on it before calling out the team for a full search. The Sheriff's fixed-wing aircraft from Riverside was provided and the area between Tahquitz Valley and Cabazon (including Jensen Canyon and Snow Creek area) was searched for about an hour and a half. The only signs of human life observed were two teenaged boys on the road between Black Mountain and the YMCA Camp.

The plane landed at Banning airport and the Captain was advised of the fruitlessness of the search. While preparations were being made to call out RMRU, word was received that the overdue hikers had joined the rest of their party in Cabazon.

•RMRU

SEARCH

Mission No. 7712C

**23 April, Sat.
Pacific Crest Trail,
San Jacinto Mountains**

Saturday afternoon, Walt Walker received a call from the Banning office of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, that two hikers were overdue on a hike along the Pacific Crest Trail.

The two young hikers had told parents while in Idyllwild (who had brought them a fresh supply of food) that it would take them a week to hike to Big Bear Lake. Not an impossible task, but unlikely that they would make that good of time.

It was decided not to start a search, but wait a day or so. The two young men telephoned home, two days later. •RMRU

RESCUE

Mission No. 7713M

**4 & 5 May, Wed. & Thur.
Tahquitz Rock
San Jacinto Mountains**

By Steve Zappe

I was driving home after visiting my folks Wednesday night when my pager triggered around 2230. The word was three climbers on Tahquitz Rock had gotten hung out, so I zipped home and grabbed a bag of cookies, several oranges and a can of fruit cocktail for my midnight snack (I managed to gulp down the fruit cocktail while driving to Idyllwild). When I reached Humber Park the other men knew that the climbers weren't injured but we weren't sure if they required technical evacuation - ropes, anchors, hard hats - the whole works, so we divided up a large portion of the team's climbing gear among Jim, Walt, John Dew, Pete, Bernie, Rick and myself. We hit the trail at 0020 and hadn't been out more than twenty minutes when we heard the first cries for help. Unfortunately, they weren't from our three climbers, but instead seemed to be coming from behind me. Sure enough, Jim had brought along his usual excess bag-

TRAINING



**21-23 April, Fri.-Sun.
North Face
Mt. San Jacinto**

By Jim Fairchild

The North Face of Mt. San Jacinto! The place has been the scene of many outings for me in the past, beginning in the middle 'thirties' with visits to the now extinct fish hatchery, continuing with four frustrating attempts to climb the face before ten successes, many picnics, Boy Scout overnights, day hikes for birding and backpacking class, and SAR operations. Perhaps my earliest memory was looking up the then permanent snowfields that filled all the canyons and gullies from the 5000' el. upward, and asking my parents if I could run my sled down . . .

The occasion at hand was to climb the face for training. Five of us met at Walt Walker's home at 1700 Fri-

day and he drove us out to the locked gate at the Snowcreek community (el. 1100'). We (Pete Carlson, Steve Zappe, Steve Jensen, Tom Aldrich and myself) were to wait for John Muratet who was arriving separately. While the others drove to look for John, I stayed at the gate and was soon greeted by two men who allowed as how they planned to climb the face via the East Fork of Snowcreek, the most direct route. I asked if they knew about the plateau and its path leading to the isthmus to avoid very delaying waterfalls . . . certainly they did not, for they wished to meet and conquer all obstacles. Needless to say, we saw no sign of them the rest of the weekend - no telltale tracks in the snow on any route.

George Keeton, the sheriff's deputy who lives up at the end of the road came by and said hello, John showed up, and we again piled into Walt's Dodge for the mile-and-a-half ride to Keeton's place (el. almost 2000'). Once past the threatening guard dog we went to the water company's intake and filled canteens. Then across the swaying suspension bridge supporting the pipe, and onto the trail. Of course, it was quite dark, and I blundered on and off the trail until we crested out near the 3000' el. opposite the 300' high lower falls of Falls Creek. As we rested and slowed our perspiration rate I

down to them with extra clothing and helped them up to the top where we fed them with all sorts of old food we needed to get rid of before it turned bad - which is nothing terrible since we do it to each other on the team all the time. The story then came out how they had gotten a late start that afternoon and had reached the top of the Trough (the easiest climb on Tahquitz) at sunset with little energy to get back down. When they were re-energized and warm, we assisted them in the walk back down to Humber Park and our cars. I think this was the first time I declined a free breakfast from the Sheriff since it was 0445 by the time he made the offer, and all I could think of was SLEEP. The next thing I remember was melting into my bed sheets at 6 AM just as the sky was beginning to lighten. I never slept so well on an empty stomach before in my life! •RMRU

thought back to the day hike (Feb. 19) with my backpacking class when I had further reminisced about the 1951 tragedy in my Scout Troup wherein a 14 yr. old Scout of mine fell from the top of the falls. Funny thing, I've never had a bit of trouble with anyone, young or old, cavorting carelessly on or near a falls or cliff since having that story to tell them.

It was a perfect evening for hiking as a breeze came up and we climbed toward the isthmus (4000' el.). This year, in contrast to two years ago, there were only a few foxtails to foul up our socks, the drought prevented lush growth. At a point a few hundred feet below the isthmus we decided to camp on a level spot with a great view. We went to sleep as a poorwill called off to the west. Don't know how late it was and don't care - remembered the admonition by an early member of RMRU - "Never ask how late it is, never ask how far it is!"

Just after closing the eyelids for sleep the light of dawn came around. New constellations had replaced the evening ones, but they grew dim as we stirred. A quick breakfast fueled our start. White-throated swifts twittered about the upper falls, and we soon arrived at the isthmus. Now, it's some trick to find a really efficient route from here to the East Fork of Snowcreek, first climbing, then contouring, then descending a bit. Voila! We made it better this time than any. Our only recourse to the protection of a rope came at a falls just up from our point of encountering the stream, then up some more to what I call the "Double Falls." Here we turn left (east) up the marvelous bypass of a series of steep waterfalls into Cold Canyon. It is normal to go up this for several hundred feet, then thrash up a steep, oak tree covered slope, then contour back into Snowcreek. Well, this great new route discovered by Mike Daugherty and Chuck Helfer in 1970 goes up the slope almost to its crest, then turns east, contouring over slippery stuff and back into Cold Canyon above its waterfalls. Sort of a sneaky bypass that keeps one breathless while hoping to start down at the right point. We did. This canyon ascends steeply and straightly east-south-east from about 4800' el. to 6500' el., then one must find a narrow slot-like gully leading south-

easterly up the face of a pyramidal formation thousands of feet high that culminates in Kristin Peak (9160' el.) named for Mike's oldest daughter. The canyon is plentifully supplied with many huge boulders that jumble together and require all sorts of fun moves to get over, or around, or under. This sport ends when the canyon turns up the gully just short of the ridge between the Falls and Snow creeks. The gully is a bit messy, but a lot easier this time because the soil and rocks had consolidated a bit more. This time we turned west into the main canyon a little lower than in 1975, thus avoiding some exposed traversing on a cliff. We had to bypass another series of waterfalls in this canyon and hence the aforementioned gully grunch. About our rate of ascent. Rather slow overall, but not bad when you consider that we rest half the elapsed time are up and about hiking. You know - munching many 'lunches,' oogling the wonderful and always changing views, postulating rescues at various points, and general lollygagging. That way we get there in good time without really puffing too hard. Don't worry, on a real mission, we move faster. At about 7000' el. we met snow - miserable, soft, treacherous, wet, tantalizing snow. Pete was wise and stayed on the left side of the gully on rock, some of us floundered along hoping the snow would get harder so we could climb light heartedly - no luck! Our ice axes and crampons were as useless as . . .

We could tell we were getting higher because the plateau was getting smaller, the hum of the locomotive diesels in the pass area grew fainter, and we were getting hungry. Time for an official lunch break. I climbed up and east a hundred feet and looked over the ridge and down into Falls Creek. Hmm, looked like a possible new route variation from down there to up here - must ask Mike about that (He later agreed that would be worth a try). Well, back at the grind. Same old story, take a few steps on firm snow, then woosh, down to hips in a hole. But now we could keep to the rocks more. All good things must come to an end, and in the middle of the afternoon we stood on Kristin Peak. Our vantage point sits a quarter mile out from the majestic North Face of the mountain. We could see a myriad of

snow-filled canyons and gullies from the ridge separating Falls Creek from Chino Canyon to the truly spectacular ridge separating East Fork of Snowcreek from its East Branch. Above soared Cornell, Frank Miller, and San Jacinto Peaks. No sight or sounds from other humans than ourselves.

San Jacinto Peak was still 1800' above. That can wait 'til morning. We hunted up a place to camp - easy to do, there's only one area for six to eight individual level slots in the brush and rocks. Soon ensconced therein, we thought of steaks roasting on the coals. Before dark this was an accomplished fact, and we settled in for the night. More stars, some wind, sound sleep, satisfaction.

Rats, morning found us stumping on the snow again, it was a bit harder, but we still stayed on rock as much as possible to avoid the thrilling (?) postholing in the snow. As the angle of the climb eased off below Frank Miller peak the snow hardened and we gleefully gained the shoulder of Mt. San Jacinto and took a quick run over to Miller Peak, thence to San Jacinto Peak, but not without more, and deeper, postholing. Our radios began to pick up western stations on the same frequency, and we even talked to Miner Harkness, a longtime member of the Sierra Madre team. Walt rang us up and we made arrangements for John Dew to meet us about 1500 back at Humber Park. We looked straight down the east fork about 2500' but saw no climbers or tracks.

After lunch we left the peak and began the descent via trail. We all commented on how fast the scenery went by as we made three or four miles an hour instead of the creep, hobble, hitch, struggle, puff sort of pace we had before. Our conversation level rose dramatically as we now had wind for that. We got down to Wellman's Cienega (9400' el.) and had an official lunch and unofficial nap. By now we were on alternate snow and dirt trail, then lower down it was mostly dirt, even dusty.

The last couple miles or so down from Saddle Junction (8100' el.) was frequently punctuated by meeting various groups hiking up or down the trail. While going down is less of a puff, it is harder on one than going up - even up the North Face - unless

one can swing along with a long, relaxed stride.

Humber Park and John Dew with our wheels. Another great training, preparing us more for another mission up the North Face, but sort of hoping it wouldn't happen tonight.

•RMRU

COMING EVENTS

MAY

- 11 - Board Meeting
- 18 - Regular Meeting
- 20-22 - Training

JUNE

- 8 - Board Meeting
- 22 - Regular Meeting
- 24-26 - Training

RMRUELECTION RESULTS!.....

Pete Carlson, President
Ed Hill, Vice-President
Larry Brown, Secretary
Walt Walker, Treasurer
John Dew, Director
Bernie McIlvoy, Director
Larry Roland, Director

COMMITTEECHAIRMEN APPOINTMENTS!

Al Andrews, Communications
John Dew, Blood Bank
Bernie McIlvoy, Equipment Development
Walt Walker, Finance
Bernie McIlvoy, MRA Representative
Ray Castilonia, M.D.
and Norm Mellor, M.D., Medical
Ed Hill, Membership
John Dew, Newsletter
John Dew, Public Relations
Jim Fairchild, Rescue
Mike Daugherty, Sustaining Membership
Larry Roland, Training
Rick Pohlers, Vehicles & Equipment

•RMRU

from Old'en Days

by Walt Walker

APRIL

Ten years ago -

As was so often with early newsletters, the April 1967 issue had information of coming events only. It noted the coming Southern California Region — Mountain Rescue Association meeting being hosted by the Montrose Search & Rescue Team; the RMRU Board meeting and the annual meeting with elections; a training session at the end of the month to descend Long, Hidden Lake and Tahquitz Canyons.

Five years ago —

The April 1972 newsletter contained 10 full pages - pages 2 through 7 were devoted to search and rescue. We will try to recap them briefly.

No. 7219M - Search for two 17 year old boys, believed to possibly be in the Soboba Hills. As we were searching it was relayed to

us that the boys had been located by the CHP in Riverside.

No. 7220A - Search for a 2½ year old boy in the Elsinore area. While we were driving towards Elsinore the child was found.

No. 7221M - Search for a young man in the mountains above Elsinore. Bob Nelson, who wrote up the article, noted the coining of a new word by Jim Fairchild, "weirdy" - meaning groups in the field battling brush, bluffs, cliffs, etc., then receiving a radio call that the victim has been found; at home, in a local bar, asleep in his car or in hiding with a paramour. Sure enough, while we were searching the missing young man was located in a store.

No. 7222A - Search for a 17 year old boy missing in the Snow Creek area at the foot of Mt. San Jacinto. We had just returned home from the above mission when we received this call. While we were rolling to the roadhead the missing young man was located.

No. 7223M - Rescue in Tahquitz Canyon. Three hikers were stranded on a steep hillside. They were exhausted, dehydrated and unsure of how to proceed. A small band of RMRU members climbed up the ridge and descended to them. After giving them food and water, they were helped off the steep slope with flashlights held by our members.

No. 7224M - Search for 2 fishermen overdue from a trip into the South Fork of the San Jacinto River. We searched for the men during the night. In the morning pilot Jack Smith arrived with a helicopter from Western Helicopters. With Jim Fairchild

\$USTAINING MEMBERS—

BY MIKE DAUGHERTY

This month we welcome the following new and renewing sustaining members.

New —

M/M Jerry Henderson
 M/M Francis Johnston in
 memory of John Johnston

Contributions were received from the following people in the memory of Derrick Bouma.

Inez Philo
 M/M Paul Meckna Jr.

M/M Frank Weber
 Paul Busher
 George Sinclair
 The Griffith Family
 The John Keulen Family
 Roy Tuner
 The Bill Fraser Family
 James Collins
 M/M Bashore
 M/M Homer
 Paul Leung
 M/M Christian
 M/M Aley
 R. B. Zagurski

Renewing —

Rubidoux Grange No. 611
 M/M J. L. Dooly
 M/M H. E. Carlson
 M/M A. Merzals
 Dr./Mrs. Paul Trotta
 Hundred Peaks Section, Angeles
 Chapter, Sierra Club

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



Once in awhile one of our photos shows the action so well we feel that it shouldn't be reduced. Don Landells had returned from the Palm Springs Hospital (after delivering the injured Dr. Gillen and RMRU member Walt Walker) to pick up the four remaining RMRU members. This is one of the best shots we have seen showing a one runner type of pick up. Thanks go to RMRU team member Pete Carlson for being so alert and catching the action. Note the left runner, nothing but clear air underneath it.

aboard, the missing men were spotted, picked up and returned to the roadhead.

No. 7225M - Rescue in Tahquitz Canyon. When we arrived at the roadhead we were told a Dr. Thomas Gillen had fallen about 50 feet sometime in the morning (it was now mid-afternoon) and had probably broken a leg. Don Landells arrived with his supercharged Bell helicopter and Walt Walker climbed in and the bird was off. The victim was located just above the first falls. Don made a one-runner touch down within 20 feet of the injured man and Walt climbed out. In succeeding flights, Pete Carlson, Dave Cook, Jack Schnurr, and Art Bridge were flown in. The main rotor blades of the chopper were clipping some of the tree limbs close by, so Dave Cook used one of our brush hooks on them and eliminated them as potential dangers to the evacuation. Walt, Art, Jack and Pete put an air splint, on the fractured ankle. Dr. Gillen was placed in the rescue sleeping bag and then into a Stokes litter. When Don came in again he did

another one-runner touch down while we loaded the litter onto the outside of the bird. Walt climbed in and they were all on their way to the front lawn of the Palm Springs Hospital.

No. 7226C - Search in San Diego County. A child was missing and our help had been requested. While telephoning our members the child was found.

N. 7227M - Search in the San Jacinto Mountains. A 28 year old man was missing from a day hike. We started searching in the early afternoon and shortly after dark we were notified that the man had walked out into Palm Springs.

For years RMRU members had tried pack after pack. We never quite found what we were looking for. So Jim Fairchild put a whole bunch of ideas together and gave them to John Boyd. He made a pack, Jim tried it, more suggestions, and after about three prototypes, the RMRU pack was born. There were three photos and an article by Jim that

told of the pack's virtues.

A drive was started to raise funds, to purchase electronic pagers for RMRU members. The article described how the pagers would make RMRU even more efficient in its response time than it already was.

The Sustaining Members were asked by Al Andrews to help in the drive for funds for the pagers. Al also thanked the following new members: Mr. & Mrs. L. W. Simon, Jr., Mr. & Mrs. Dan R. Reaser, Mr. Vincent J. Contreras and Mr. Frank Hensius. Thanks was also given to renewing members: Mr. & Mrs. Jack Nelson and *The Rubidoux Grange. — *Century Club Members

Jack Schnurr wrote an inspired article on a joint training session with the San Diego Mountain Rescue Team. They climbed up the back way to the top of Lily Rock (now Tahquitz Rock), then up the ridge to Tahquitz Peak, a bivouac near Chiquapin Flats and on Sunday a descent from the Tahquitz Palisades directly to Humber Park. •RMRU