

# RMRU NEWSLETTER

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A VOLUNTEER NON-PROFIT CORPORATION  
P. O. BOX 5444, RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA 92507  
MEMBER OF THE MOUNTAIN RESCUE ASSOCIATION

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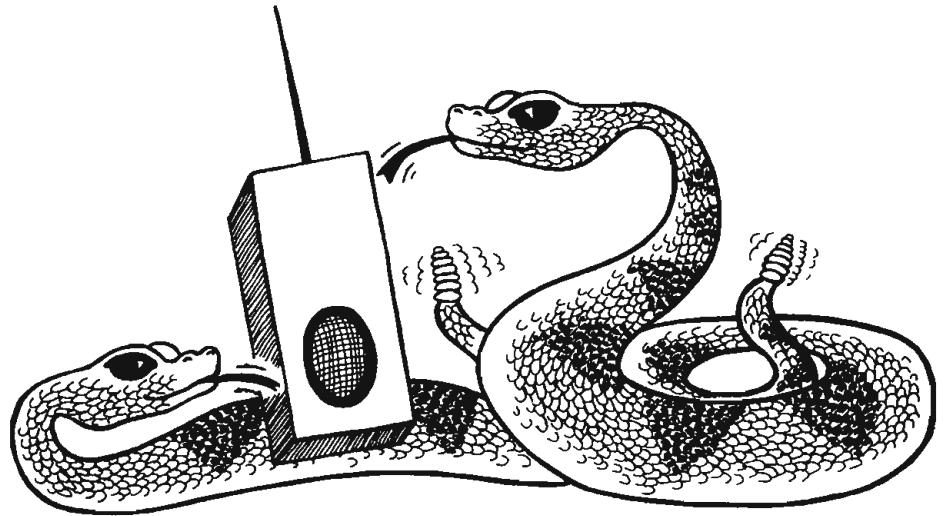
## COMING EVENTS

### JUNE

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

### JULY

- 6 - Board Meeting
- 13 - Regular Meeting
- 16 - Training
- 27 - Board Meeting



## TRAINING



## TRAINING

**21 & 22 May, Sat. & Sun.  
San Jacinto Mountains**

*By Steve Jensen*

The RMRU training for the month of May was held on the 21st and 22nd and consisted of two parts, the first of which was concerned with eliminating a potential source of future call outs while the second focused on familiarization with an area that several members had seen before only at night during a rescue.

The first half of the May training involved locating and marking the Pacific Crest "Trail" between Twin Pines Ranch and Boulder Basin. About half of this 5 mile stretch of trail was wiped out by the Black Mountain fire a few years ago. This has since been a contributing factor in one hiker fatality and three RMRU call outs for lost hikers. The problem in the area is that the PCT disappears where there are a number of faint

game trails which would lead a hiker traveling north on the route of the PCT off to the east over a small ridge into Jensen Canyon and trouble. In the spring of 1976 the skeleton of a hiker was found in Jensen Canyon by another hiker who had lost his way while traveling on the PCT. Early that summer there was a call out for a 60 year old woman who had also strayed into Jensen Canyon. The Forest Service has no plans for the restoration of the trail because the eventual permanent route of the PCT will be via a trail yet to be built down the west fork of Snow Creek. This fact, coupled with the number of call outs which this small area has caused, prompted the team to set out in the unusual role of trail markers.

There were thirteen team members present for this phase of the May training. The team split into two groups while Jim Fairchild remained with the RMRU van to coordinate efforts. One group consisting of Walt Walker, John Dew, Bernie McIlvoy, and Hal Fulkman descended from Boulder Basin while the second group comprised of Rich Quackenbush, John Muratet, Rick Pohlers, Tom Aldrich, Ed Hill, Ron Berry, Steve Jensen and Pete Carlson climbed up from Twin Pines Ranch. The route established by the team through the burn area was marked by clearing brush, building ducks and cairns, and using trail tape. Walt Walker's group managed to wake up two Pacific Diamondback

rattlesnakes and the buzz of one was clearly audible over the team radios. The two groups met in the middle of the burn area in time for a late lunch. Ed Hill, Tom Aldrich, and Steve Jensen continued up the route established by Walt's group while the rest of the team continued down to Twin Pines Ranch.

The team "car camped" in Boulder Basin Campground Saturday night. Bernie McIlvoy showed the team a number of bouldering "problems" including the Daugherty boulder while Hal Fulkman demonstrated how dogged determination can sometimes substitute for a lack of grace and finesse. The evening ended with a moonlight stroll led by Jim Fairchild up to Black Mountain Lookout.

On Sunday, the team journeyed over to Idyllwild and Tahquitz Rock. While Jim again manned the van a group of six (Hal Fulkman, Walt Walker, John Dew, Steve Jensen, Ed Hill, and Tom Aldrich) hiked up to lunch rock at the base of Tahquitz. From there the group traversed around the base of the north and northwest faces of Tahquitz with Tom Aldrich pointing out the named climbing routes. Possible litter evacuation routes from the base of Tahquitz were explored and discussed. The group returned to Humber Park just in time to meet a group of Hell's Angels who were in Idyllwild for the bluegrass festival held that weekend.

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# Search and Rescue

## EVACUATION

Mission No. 7714M

15 & 16 May, Sun. & Mon.  
North Face of  
Mt. San Jacinto

By Ed Hill

A solo climber on a non-standard route of the North face of Mt. San Jacinto found a human skeleton and a backpack at the 8000 foot level. He reported it to the Banning station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department.

RMRU member Al Andrews was contacted by Capt. Ray Canova of the Sheriff's Department. He requested a veteran RMRU member to meet with the informant that afternoon (Sunday). Al put out a pager call and Walt Walker responded. Al explained the situation and asked Walt to standby as the Sheriff's Department was trying to contact helicopter pilot Don Landells.

Walt was contacted by Capt. Canova and asked to meet at the Banning Airport with him, Don Landells and the informant. The four of them flew up the north face and the informant pointed out the skeleton and the pack. It was decided that RMRU would meet in the morning.

The team met Don Landell's helicopter at Snow Creek Village at 8 a. m. The wind was howling through the pass, pushing my Volkswagon beetle around as I drove up the road. Bernie, Walt and I were to be the first load of men to be flown up the mountain. Don wanted to try a one runner touchdown in the alcove near the body with only one man, so Bernie and I were let out at one of the heliports used in the 1973 fire on the North face. Don was able to let Walt out on a ledge just above a waterfall in the alcove. Fortunately there was no wind once you got well into the



RMRU PHOTO BY WALT WALKER

This photograph was taken as pilot Don Landells maneuvered his Bell Jet Ranger Helicopter towards the ledge where RMRU member Ed Hill (in doorway) would jump out on.

canyons. He then returned for Bernie and me. We hiked up into the alcove and found a skeleton lying face down about forty feet from the base of a 200 foot cliff. Nearby was a smashed Kelty pack. The frame itself had been bent and twisted; the forces on the pack must have been considerable.

We carefully searched in and around the pack and found clothing, a blanket, and a book but no identification. The next step was to bundle everything up and fly it out as a sling load beneath the bird. As we started to move the skeleton, a small rat peeped out of his hole directly underneath us. We scared him back into his hole, and continued making up the sling load.

Don flew back in to the alcove, this time with a hundred foot rope weighed down by a gallon water bottle tied on to his bomb hook. We clipped the load in and watched Don fly it down the mountain. Sometimes the helicopter appeared to be flying sideways as the wind caught it.

We searched the area again while waiting for Don to come back and get us. When he lifted us out, he flew up the peak a ways, so we could see



RMRU PHOTO BY WALT WALKER

The dotted line in the above photograph shows the probable route that Ray Blauhaus took in his fall. The total distance was approximately 200 feet from the top of the cliff to the ground.

where the small alcove was in relation to the whole face. We were in the next gully over from one of our climbing routes on the face.

It was a roller coaster ride back down to Snow Creek. I was glad for my seat belt. Just before we landed, Don slowed down and almost stopped. I looked at the air speed indicator, and it read 60 knots. We were heading directly into a 60 knot head wind.

The Sheriff treated us to a mid-morning meal. Midway through the meal, he joined us and told us that the skeleton had been identified as Ray Blauhaus, whom we had unsuccessfully searched for in June 1976.

The identification of Blauhaus explained why our June search had been unsuccessful. We had been told that his plans were to climb Tahquitz peak and descend one of the 'Indian' canyons to Palm Springs. Tahquitz peak and the 'Indian' canyons are in the South Eastern portion of the range. Blauhaus was found in one of the canyons on the North side of the range about ten airline miles from the search area. This again points out how vital it is to accurately tell someone where you are going when you are hiking or climbing. •RMRU

## RESCUE

### Mission No. 7715M

#### 28 May, Sat. Tahquitz Canyon San Jacinto Mountains

By Hal Fulkman

A three day weekend is always something to look forward to and Memorial Day weekend is no exception. However, since joining RMRU weekends and holidays are anticipated with mixed emotions.

Saturday morning was about half gone, with some long overdue yard work well underway, when the pager went off with a call to arms. Upon calling Al Andrews I was given all available information on the mission. Al's information was that a hiker had fallen in Tahquitz, broken his arm, and was unable to move.

I immediately called John Dew and informed him of the situation. We decided to roll together. Upon arriving at base camp, (Ann Dolly's) we met Walt Walker who had arrived about 5 minutes before us. Walt had already called for a helicopter and was in the process of interrogating the informant, who was a companion of the subject.

The informant gave us an approximate location which turned out to be other than where the subject was, which made locating the subject from the air difficult. Also, the canyon was filled with hikers who all felt compelled to wave at the helicopter as we passed over.

We found a likely candidate but his clothing didn't match the informant's description. After radioing back to base camp, it was determined that the subject had most likely changed clothes.

Don Landells landed the helicopter close by, making a precarious one runner touch down. We evacuated the ship as quickly as possible.

Don was once again in the air and soon out of sight.

Hiking down to where we saw the subject, we determined he was the person we sought, and that his broken arm was actually a rebreak of a previous injury. His other injuries were minor and he had recovered from his fall and seemed in good spirits.

Calling Don back, we loaded the subject in the helicopter along with his wife and John Dew, and sent them back to base camp.

The next trip in Don flew us and their equipment out and brought to a conclusion a smooth and safe rescue.

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## SEARCH

### Mission No. 7716M

#### 3-5 June, Fri.-Sun. Monitor Mountains near Tonopah, Nevada

By Tom Aldrich

On Sunday, May 29, Kathy Simon left her family's camp in Cottonwood Creek, Monitor Range, Nevada. She was seen moving up Cottonwood Creek Sunday by her step-father, Ray Eden. Kathy was fifteen years of age, a strong girl and in good condition. Her family had come to this area north of Tonopah a few times before and one could assume she knew the way up the creek fairly well. She had only her fishing tackle and some matches to go with her light clothing, but the days were quite warm, even though the family's camp was at the 8,000 ft. elevation. All in all, it was a routine excursion for Kathy. It ceased to be routine when she did not return that evening.

That night, her father followed her tracks up to approximately the 10,000 ft. elevation at which point he lost them. Ray then went to the sheriff in Tonopah. The next day jeep teams, horseback riders and others were combing the hills around Cottonwood Creek. On Wednesday, the Mountain Rescue Association (MRA) was contacted for assistance and sent what members could be mustered. By Friday, no sign of Kathy had shown up and another call for assistance from other MRA members was sent out.

Saturday morning Jim Fairchild, Ed Hill, Rick Pohlers, Larry Roland, Hal Fulkman and I from RMRU drove to Van Nuys airport to join approximately 60 other members of the MRA from Sierra Madre, Altadena, Montrose and San Diego teams. As the darkness gave way to first rays of light, we boarded an Army Reserve

C-130. We found true an observation by a crew member that the C-130 had every noise you'd ever heard as well as some you hadn't! The sun was one hour over the horizon when we landed at China Lake to pick up members of the China Lake Rescue Group. From there into Nevada we were treated to the fine panorama of the East Flank of the Sierra Nevada as well as the White Mountains.

When we landed in Tonopah a line of jeeps awaited us. Within minutes we were driving towards the Monitor Range. When we reached the bottom of Cottonwood Creek Canyon, we were greeted at a meadow by some of the MRA members already there. After a briefing that lived up to its name, we were whisked to the top of Table Mountain in a reserve chopper. Table Mountain was a 10,000 ft. plateau that bordered Cottonwood Creek. Teams of two and three were dropped off at intervals of a half mile along Table Mountain. Within an hour, Cottonwood Creek was ringed by MRA teams, each with an assignment to work towards base camp. Base camp here was at the confluence of Cottonwood Creek and Barley Creek, the site of the family's camp. So far, the operation seemed well timed, well orchestrated, well planned, well designed to yield results quickly.

As Larry Roland, Jim Fairchild and I moved down the ridge to carry out our assignments, we found ourselves in an area of difficult tracking. We had seen areas like this near Lake Peris in practice training; hard ground and springy turf. We shortly found tracks, but on a jeep road. We were later to discover that this jeep road rimmed Cottonwood Canyon. It was covered with jeep tracks, vibrum prints and prints from cowboy boots. The area had been covered, but we were only later able to discover how well. The prints we were told to look for were tennis shoe prints of 8½ inches in length. By midday, we had worked our way down to where a canyon dropped off to the right into Barley Creek. While we had lunch, Ed Hill, Rick Pohlers and Hal Fulkman were working down the ridge to our left, just above Cottonwood Creek, finding, as we did, many prints except Kathy's. They were one of many teams that ended up in Cottonwood Canyon by the end of the day.

Two hours later Jim, Larry and I were in Barley Creek and shortly thereafter, joined with a Sierra Madre team to follow many vibrum prints down Barley Canyon. The end of the day found us with one conclusion: the area we had been covering was already well covered. The other teams that reached base camp at the confluence of Barley and Cottonwood Creeks could also reach the same conclusion.

Although day brought disappointment, that evening brought encouragement. We were greeted at base camp by a wonderful meal of home cooking prepared in a fine group effort by the residents of Tonopah. We found that the search had brought people in Tonopah together who ordinarily didn't talk to each other.

That evening, Larry Roland, Jim Fairchild and Hal Fulkman sat down to interview the father and mother of Kathy. Three hours later, they were equipped with a wealth of information much of which should have been in our hands Saturday morning. The key piece of information was that their daughter's print was not 8½ inches long but 10" long. In addition they found that Kathy was a strong girl in good condition. Her parent's instruction had been for her not to follow the stream back when she wanted to return to camp, but to climb a ridge to regain her perspective if she was lost. It appeared from the interview that Kathy was somewhere between where she was last seen and base camp. The end of the interview did not bring an end to certain realizations, however. As the night progressed, one more bit of information that we were already aware of was re-enforced. It was quite cold here at the base of the canyon. We could imagine how cold it would be for Kathy if she were on top of Table Mountain, over 10,000 ft. high!

Sunday morning our assignments were a little more thought out, but we had only a morning of searching for we were due to be picked up shortly after noon to return to California. We seemed to be fighting time as we worked our assignments, hoping for any sign of Kathy. A storm moving in from the north increased the sense of urgency. Noon seemed to arrive very quickly and within a short period of time, we were back at base. Our debriefing would have

served as an excellent briefing.

All but 6 MRA members were flown back to California that evening. These 6, one of whom was Jim Fairchild, stayed to pursue the course of some prints discovered late Sunday. Their efforts did not turn any further signs.

For the Sheriff from Tonopah there was little left but a mystery. When we left he said he would spend that week riding in the hills around Cottonwood Creek, looking for any signs of the lost girl. For Kathy's mother and father, there was little left but memories or perhaps misunderstanding or disbelief. For some of the residents of Tonopah though, some of the jeep teams of Nevada and some of the members of the California Mountain Rescue Association, there remained newly made or recently strengthened friendships and a hope that the next call would bring happier results.

(Editor's Note: Since the writing of this article, it has been learned that Kathy has been found in dense foliage of the canyon. She had succumbed to exposure, possibly before the professional search and rescue teams were even called.) •RMRU



## SEARCH

### Mission No. 7716M (contd.)

#### 6 June, Sun. Monitor Mountains near Tonopah, Nevada

By Jim Fairchild

Six of us, representing three MRA teams, stayed over for another day's search. The reason being that another unit had supposedly been following Kathy's tracks (for sure) in an area they marked on a map and said they had left a great deal of highly visible trail tape.

Sunday evening we went to sleep following a cooling storm that blew through the Mizpah Hotel of Tono-

pah. Bright and early we started the 80 mile drive to the east side of the range. Switching to four-wheel drive, we climbed to the 9000' el. where we hiked up a steep ridge. At 9600' el. we found a fresh trail of vibrum prints. Mixed in and at a few places showing a complete print, were tracks the same as Kathy's shoes. Finally, with close inspection, we could see that the lable on the middle of the print was shorter than Kathy's. Having followed the trail of prints down to where a more level valley permitted a helicopter pick-up the day before, we concluded it was yet another MRA unit, one of the members was wearing similiar shoes.

As the middle of the day approached, we were told by radio that an airplane would probably come to the Tonopah Airport, so we'd better hike out. This plane failed to materialize, and we eventually wound up driving back to Van Nuys in Gene Thom's camper.

Well, a day wasted as far as finding Kathy was concerned. First, a search party had marked a map in the wrong location, second, a party had a member wearing shoes identical to Kathy's with only a small, very difficult to discern difference. The entire mission was frustrating because we never felt we could get the "handle" on it - that is, figure out what had been done and what was going on, and then too, the need to break off prematurely to make connections for transportation shot down two afternoons of potential search.

News came that Kathy had been found the Saturday following our last day of search. Both Gene Thom of Sierra Madre and Larry Roland of RMRU called the Tonopah Sheriff's Station for details. Gene was told Kathy was found in a snowbank a quarter-mile SW of High Base, Larry was told she was found in a snowbank north of a spring where her tracks were last seen, both locations well above 10,000' el. She was well covered with snow during the search days and was found by a special investigator from the Sheriff's Office, the snow having melted from around her. We've been told a full report will be sent to participating units when the case is resolved. There are many questions about this mission that we hope to have answered someday.

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**RMRU** . . . is still looking,  
for a few <sup>great</sup> mountaineers!

The Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit is a volunteer non-profit organization dedicated to saving lives through rescue and mountain safety education.

We are always looking for qualified new people (21 or over) to become members. Many of our members are also Sierra Club, San Gorgonio Chapter members. If you are interested in becoming a member of a lifesaving team, send a stamped self-addressed envelope, for a copy of our 'New Member Information' and a membership application.

Membership Chairman  
Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit  
Post Office Box 5444  
Riverside, California 92507

**RMRU IS LOOKING!**

Thanks to Crystal Kane, Editor of the San Gorgonio Chapter's *Palm and Pine* publication, the above advertisement was in one issue.

RMRU received a number of letters from interested people. We sent the information and applications out to all that had written. To date we have not received any of the applications back.

If you know of anyone who is interested in mountain rescue, in our area, please have them write us for more information and an application.

received word that two climbers were overdue from a climb on Tahquitz Rock. RMRU members who had arrived after the first group left to help the injured boy, were sent to look for the climbers. While they were searching around the base, and on the top, the two climbers walked in to Humber Park. They had not come down the regular trail.

The next day, Monday, we were notified of a girl who was stranded in Tahquitz Canyon due to weakness and a sore foot. Walt Walker flew up the canyon with Don Landells in his supercharged helicopter. The girl was located and Walt climbed out while Don held the bird on a one runner touchdown. Walt put on his pack and hiked down to the girl. She was weak from a fast and had an infection in the heel of one foot. He bandaged the foot while Dr. Joe Bell was flown in. Walt and Joe decided they could help the girl to the helispot. Don came in again and flew Joe and the girl out, returned again for Walt and the mission was completed.

On the last Saturday of the month we got a call, a man was sick at the Willow Creek crossing. Being the unit's training weekend, manpower was going to be short. Hank Schmel, Jim Fairchild, Bernie McIlvoy, Dave Nehen, Art Bridge and Walt Walker were all that were available. They rode up the tram along with the wheeled litter. Upon arriving at the crossing, we indeed found a man with considerable pain in the abdominal area. He was put into our rescue sleeping bag, loaded into RMRU's wheeled litter. Bernie's invention was going to be used for the second time in less than a month. It worked so well that our subject was asleep when we arrived at Saddle Junction.

Training for the month of April was an ascent of the North Face of Mt. San Jacinto. The group met Friday evening at the Snowcreek roadhead and hiked to the isthmus between Falls Creek and Snow Creek (east fork). They started upwards early Saturday morning. After a long, long climb, they made the summit in mid-afternoon and hiked down to Little Round Valley. They camped there and Sunday morning hiked down to the Marion Mountain Campground.

Jim Fairchild, in his column 'The Road Runner sez-', reviewed the California Region-MRA Seminar that was held at Buckhorn Camp in Idyllwild. He reminded everyone on the unit that warm weather was on the way and that plans should be made so that we could function in the field when the temperature shoots up. He also thanked the members for their vote of confidence in electing him unit President. •RMRU



from  
**Old'en Days**

by Walt Walker

MAY

**Ten years ago —**

The results of the 1967 election were as follows: President, Walt Walker; Vice-President, Jim Fairchild; Secretary, Al Andrews; Treasurer, Larry Percy; Quartermaster, Don Ricker. Notice of a coming RMRU display and demonstration at the Riverside Downtown Mall told of manpower needs and that it would take the place of the regular training weekend.

**Five years ago —**

The Sustaining Members column by Al Andrews started the 1972 newsletter off on the front page. He noted that we had a drive going to raise money for buying pagers. Thanks went to new members: Mrs. Belle Schwartz, Idyllwild Jr. Women's Club and Dr. Thomas Gillen. The following were thanked for renewing: Mr. & Mrs. Robert Hewitt, Mr. & Mrs. A. P. Crist, Dr. Robert Bingham and Camille S. Ware.

On April 2nd, a Sunday, we received a call from the Indio station that a elderly gentlemen was reported down from heat exhaustion somewhere in the hills above Rancho Mirage. Arriving at the roadhead and discussing the problem, it was decided to request the CHP Helicopter. In 15 minutes the bird was there and the search was started. A small group was spotted hiking down canyon. A RMRU group started hiking up the canyon and met the group coming down. Unknown to us, friends had hiked in with water earlier. The man was with them and walking by himself.

On the 8th, a Saturday, we received a call that a 18 year old girl had fallen in Falls Creek. John Murdock, Dave Cook and Pete Carlson started hiking in with a great amount of first aid gear. They found the girl and examined her, results— probable fractured left ankle, right femur, right knee cap and ribs on the left side. While the litter was being brought in by Bernie McIlvoy and Rick Pohlers, the first aid was started. Art Bridge, Jack Schnurr and Al Korber quickly followed. With the first aid completed they placed the girl in the litter, secured her in, and started the long carry out. She weighed over 200 lbs. The canyon was too rough to use the wheeled litter. By the time they got out, they had waded pools that were waist deep.

The next evening, Sunday, the call came that a young man was injured and was somewhere below Tahquitz Peak. The boy was found with a badly swollen ankle, an air splint was applied, and he was placed in the wheeled litter. Other than on training, we had not used the wheeled litter. It took a little to catch on to the best way to handle it, but it sure did the job. While this was going on we

