

Volume XIV, Issue 6, June 1978 — Jim Garvey, Editor — Walt Walker, Publisher — Dona Towell, Artist

## Search and Rescue

### RESCUE

Mission No. 7826M

8-9 June, Thurs. & Fri.  
Los Alamos Canyon  
Santa Ana Mts.

By Jim Fairchild

The spring semester at Riverside City College is about over. This evening my Backpacking Class took its final exam. One of the questions I asked the students is, "What are the major factors in causing problems to backpackers in the wilderness?" The answer I looked for, and got, was "splitting the party." This is the primary cause, among others.

About 1015 I was relaxing in bed, cramming for my own exam to be taken for a Photography class. Apertures, speeds, ASA's . . . the phone rings and Jerry Muratet tells of a potential search in the Elsinore area. Yes, I'll drive the van. Get dressed, drive to the fire station, transfer gear to van, drive. Meet at the Elsinore Sheriff's Station, await arrival of nine RMRU men and six HSAR men.

It seemed that Tony Brown, 14, was last seen by his father at about 1500 on a ridge across a gully. Tony said he thought he saw a road and was going to head for it. Well, they had started their hike at 0630, carried no gear, food, or water. They had split up in order to find a way back to their car, having become lost. The terrain was moderately steep hill-sides sloping southward. The comp-

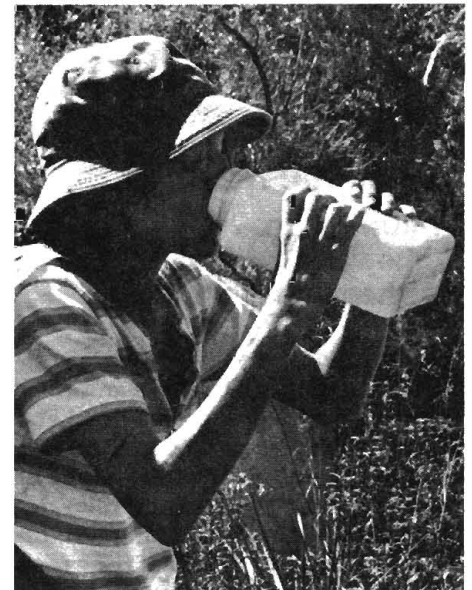
licating factor there is the very high, thick brush (chaparral). The daytime temperature had reached 105 deg. F. Tony's father made it out to the Main Divide Truck Trail, went to El Cariso Ranger Station, reported Tony lost. Hence our callout.

With our manpower present, we rolled up the Ortega Highway to El Cariso R.S., thence along the truck trail to Wildomar Station where we made base. With more information from the father, we deployed five RMRU men to start a search from where the Browns had started their hike. Two 4WD vehicles driven by HSAR men were to patrol the surrounding roads, calling and looking for tracks in the sand and loose dirt along the berm and center. I asked Sgt. Prado of the Sheriff's Office to put a helicopter on standby, to arrive at 0700 if we did not find Tony.

Since the hours had slipped by til it was about an hour before dawn, we dozed off, those of us at base and in the field, until dawn. John Dew with the HSAR jeep covering the lower portion of the dirt road reports they kept moving and calling full time. During the quiet time I mulled over plans for the coming day. Hmm, let's see if the time between dawn and the helicopter's arrival sees discovery of any evidence of Tony. If not, I'll make a ten to fifteen minute reconnoiter of the four-by-six-mile-square area Tony's in, in the bird, of course. Then we'll put two observers in and they will conduct a close search along prescribed routes. The Jensen, Zappe, Garvey, Barry, Hanson group will cut for tracks where the hike began, and be deployed by bird to likely spots to yell and look for tracks. The 4WD vehicles will continue their patrols.

Just before the bird was to arrive Jensen reported hearing an answer to their calls, but nearly ten minutes after a call. Then the bird was heard and then seen, but went zooming easterly along the divide and out of sight! We stood dejectedly at the helispot near

the station for forty minutes, then heard by radio that he had landed at Skylark Field, had a deputy aboard to show the location. Soon all was back to plan. I directed Bill Barrett, the pilot of the Hughes 500C from Western Helicopters, to fly over Jensen's group. They pointed where they heard the voice. We circled, high and low, found nothing. We then completed the reconnoiter and were on the way back to let me off and take on two good observers. Suddenly Bill said, "I think we got him." He banked the ship hard left ninety degrees and headed into the face of the steep, brush-choked hill. I did not see Tony, just brush rushing by fast. Then we popped over the top of a knoll and faced a boulder covered peaklet. There I saw a head between two 12 foot high boulders, and a jacket swinging overhead. Tony, obviously. We flew near, the frantic waving continued. At about twenty feet I used my hands to indicate "take it easy,



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

Tony Brown eagerly drank the water given to him by RMRU member Jim Fairchild shortly after he had been located.

we'll get you." Bill popped the bird straight up 200 feet, we looked for a spot to land - none. I suggested the flatish boulders about twenty feet from Tony, and in a few moments I slid out of the bird, canteen in hand. Tony reached vigorously and was soon thankfully swallowing. I gleefully recorded the scene on film. Bill came back around to the flatish boulder and Tony was carefully placed in the front seat. I clambered aboard the back deck where seats and doors had been removed, and hung on to a strap for the three mile flight back to base.

We were jubilant to have Tony safe, his father happy and relieved, the inexorable onslaught and consequences of dehydration thwarted.

• RMRU

## SEARCH

### Mission No. 7827A

9 June, Fri.

#### San Jacinto Mountains

It happened again, we had been up all night on the previous search, and we were called again to search for another young man. This time in the San Jacinto Mountains. We had no sooner started rolling when the pagers 'beeped' and we got the good news, the boy had been found.

• RMRU

## SEARCH

### Mission No. 7828C

11 June, Sun.

#### Whitewater river area, Northeast of Banning

Late Sunday evening we were notified that a group of Scouts and their leaders were overdue on a weekend hike. With information, as to their departure time, planned route, age of the Scouts and good weather, we decided to wait until morning. About 9 a.m. we were advised that the group had hiked out and that everyone was fine. They had just taken longer to complete the route than they had planned, just as we had thought.

• RMRU

## SEARCH

### Mission No. 7829M

19 June, Mon.

#### Tahquitz Canyon, San Jacinto Mountains

By Walt Walker

RMRU members met at the Banning station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department (shortly before dawn) to plan the search operation for a trio of adult overdue hikers.

It was finally decided to start one group of searchers at the mouth of Tahquitz Canyon. Another group would ride the first morning tram and hike to Caramba and then descend the canyon. A third group was held back in hopes that a military helicopter would soon arrive.

The good news came that a twin turbined Huey was on the way from Edwards Air Force Base. The third group drove over to the Banning Airport and dropped me off to meet the bird. They then drove to the Palm Springs Airport.

When the bird arrived I mounted an exterior antenna for the RMRU radio I had and we were quickly airborne. On the way I briefed the pilots on the situation. We started searching from Caramba and in about 15 minutes we located the missing men at the 4,500 foot level.

We descended to Palm Springs to off load extra equipment. When we arrived back again to the stranded hikers, the pilot hovered the big bird, while the paramedic descended to the ledge via a winch and cable. Using the winch and cable, and two trips, the mission was completed. *Many thanks from RMRU to the Air Force crew and their powerful machine!* • RMRU

## SEARCH

### Mission No. 7830M

20 June, Tue.

#### San Jacinto Mountains

By Hal Fulkman

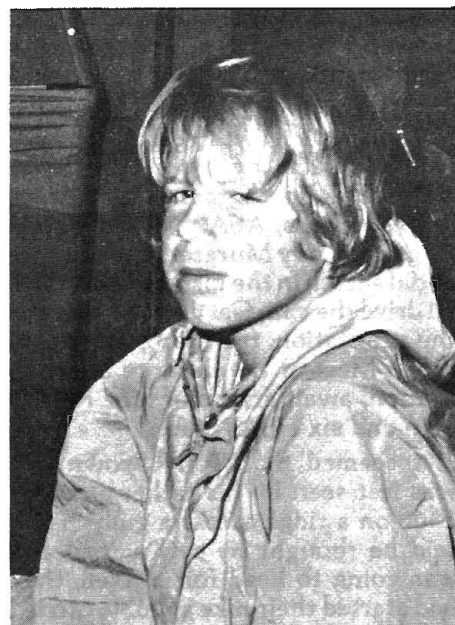
After receiving a somewhat confusing pager call, I contacted Walt Walker for clarification and location of the team's rendezvous point. The

information Walt had was sketchy and puzzling. All he had was that an 18 year old boy had called the sheriff from the Long Valley ranger station and said that his 11 year old companion was lost somewhere near Round Valley.

Walt and I decided to ride together to the rendezvous, which was the lower station of the Palm Springs Aerial Tram. Upon arriving at the tram's lower parking lot, we were met by Capt. Ray Canova. Jim Fairchild had also arrived and was at that time in the helicopter, with Don Landells, taking advantage of what little daylight was left. As darkness closed in the bird returned with no sign of the 11 year old boy.

Several more RMRU members arrived, as well as Hemet Search & Rescue Team members and members of the March Air Force Base 303rd Rescue Unit. With teams and assignments designated, we moved the operation to the top of the tram.

Steve Zappe and I were assigned to search Willow Creek Crossing by way of Hidden Lake divide. We decided to check Long Valley ranger station as we passed it, in case the boy had found his way back. On the door of the station (no rangers were on duty) was a note that said, "We have a lost 11 year old boy and are camped in the vicinity." After radioing the



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

The wayward 11 year old, bundled in a RMRU parka, waited to be reunited with his hiking companion.

message back, the teams in the area, spread out into Long Valley and within a short time we had located the camp and the 11 year old boy.

The boy was accompanied by a man and woman who had found the boy as he had wandered into their camp at Willow Creek Crossing. They had then moved their camp to Long Valley and put the note up.

After reuniting the separated hikers, we returned to the lower tram station and concluded another successful mission. • RMRU

## SEARCH

### Mission No. 7831M

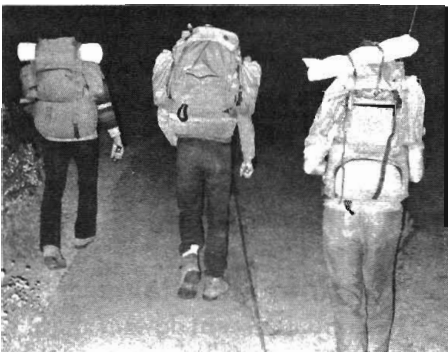
**25-26 June, Sun. & Mon.  
Deep Creek,  
Santa Rosa Mountains**

*By Ed Hill*

Deep Creek runs from behind the Sugarloaf Cafe on Highway 74 in Nightengale down to the Desert Research Center near Palm Desert. The upper part of the canyon is a pleasant walk; the lower is a slot cut deep into the rock filled with boulders and small waterfalls. There are two large waterfalls near the upper end of the lower part. The canyon is a favorite haunt of Desert Bighorns who roam the steep rocky walls.

On Sunday, June 25th, a young couple was dropped off at the Sugarloaf Cafe. They planned to hike down the canyon to the Research Center. When they failed to appear that evening, RMRU was called.

I rolled up to the cafe in the wee hours of the morning and was told



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

RMRU members Bernie McIlvoy, Ed Hill and Steve Jensen left base camp with fully loaded call-out packs.

that Bernie McIlvoy, Steve Jensen and I would go down Deep Creek looking for tracks. Jim Fairchild and John Dew would act as relays for us as we got deeper into the canyon. We had no trouble finding tracks in the sandy parts of the creek bed. We found quite a bit of water in the creek. We hiked until 4:00 am and bivouacked in the sand until dawn.

At first light, we were up and tracking. We hit the first big waterfall and could see tracks at the bottom of it. At this time a helicopter was searching the canyon. So we asked if we could be leapfrogged down the canyon. We were flown to the lower end, and we started hiking up the canyon looking for tracks. We found nothing that looked like what we had seen in the upper part. In this part of

the canyon we had to swim pools and swarm up small waterfalls to make progress upstream.

Meanwhile a team from the Hemet Search and Rescue Unit had been sent to the Desert Research Station to see if they could find any sign of them. While they were looking, Ted and Dianne walked up and asked for a ride.

It turned out that Ted and Dianne had walked down the canyon to the first waterfall and then hiked south over the ridge into Coyote Canyon which is easier going. At the mouth of Coyote Canyon, they had gone north to the Research Station.

We were flown out from the south rim of the canyon, and enjoyed a good lunch at the Sugarloaf Cafe. • RMRU

## SEARCH

### Mission No. 7832M

**27-28 June, Tue.-Wed.  
North Fork,  
Whitewater River**

*By Kevin Walker*

At 3:30 Tuesday afternoon, the phone rang with news of a rescue

mission in the Whitewater area.

Enroute to the Whitewater Fish Hatchery my dad informed me that a scout troop from the Pacific Palisades area was overdue in coming out to the Fish Hatchery. Overdue is right - considering they should have been out on Sunday.

We arrived at the Fish Hatchery at about 6:15 p.m. We were soon joined by the rest of the team members roll-



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

While most of the hungry Scouts consumed the food, given to them by RMRU members, a fellow Scout gave his approval with the 'thumbs-up' signal. Scoutmaster Ed Dillingham is on the right side of the photograph.

ing on the mission, and soon after a Hughes 500C helicopter from the San Bernardino Sheriff's Department set down in the meadow where base camp was being set up. While Walt asked the necessary questions of two of the older scouts, the chopper went up the canyon to check out wind conditions.

Upon his return we were told by the pilot that he had spotted a small fire in the middle of the north fork. With that Walt loaded his pack equipped with RMRU's new field antenna into the chopper, and left for a ridge above where the scouts were camped. After about 15 minutes Walt radioed out instructions of what gear would be needed (which mainly consisted of food), and to have the bird bring in all available team members. I was flown in next, followed by Jim Fairchild, Bernie McIlvoy, Tom Aldrich and Steve Zappe. With all that completed, base camp operator Steve Jensen radioed back that the helicopter would return at 6:00 the following morning for air evacuation.

Descending the steep slope into the scouts camp we were greeted by 12 hungry boys and one very relieved Scoutmaster. As the scouts waited impatiently for the food we had brought in to finish cooking, the Scoutmaster, Ed Dillingham told us



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

With half the Scouts loaded aboard the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department helicopter, RMRU members started loading packs. (L to R) Bernie McIlvoy with two packs, Walt Walker stood-by with another, Steve Zappe and Tom Aldrich gathered up more packs, while Kevin Walker (who was giving Helitac signals) held up one finger, for one more pack.



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

The Scouts who needed first aid on their feet, lined up, and RMRU member Steve Zappe gave the required first aid.

that they had started at Poopout Hill and just didn't realize that it would be such a hard hike as it was, and it being a high water year didn't help matters any.

After the scouts had their fill of food and were finally bedded down for the night, Walt and Jim, knowing the canyon well from trips of their own, decided it would be best to hike out to the middle fork, and be airlifted out from there. So at 5:00 a.m. we woke up the scouts and helped them load their gear into the packs. At 5:30 we were finally ready to move.

Moving down the canyon was slow going due to the steep canyon sides, and high water in the bottom. All went well even though we had to wade through knee deep snow water a few times. And once we could finally climb out of the canyon to the ridge, it became an easy walk out to the extremely large middle fork.

At 7:45 the chopper (Bell 204) arrived at our location for the first load of five scouts. Two more flights in for kids and one after that for RMRU

members, and we secured the mission at 8:20 Wednesday morning.

With many "Thank yous" and "Boy was that a fun ride out" RMRU bid Troop 85 of the Pacific Palisades a farewell. • RMRU

## TRAINING



### 9-11 June, Fri.-Sun. Tahquitz Canyon, San Jacinto Mountains

The annual descent down Tahquitz Canyon was cancelled since most of the members had been out all night, Thursday into Friday morning, on the search for Tony Brown in the Santa Ana Mountains. • RMRU

# \$USTAINING MEMBERS —

BY MIKE DAUGHERTY

We've often pointed out before that RMRU relies almost exclusively on Sustaining Members who regularly renew their membership. The donations this month are a case in point - 12 renewing members and 0 new members. We need to keep the 12 renewing members and add 12 new members each month. Perhaps, if you were to show this, or other RMRU newsletters to a friend, we might just increase the number of names in that "new" category.

## Renewing—

- \*M/M Kenneth Andrews  
Freeman Borand
- M/M Bruce Carlson  
John R. Kolenick  
James Larson
- \*Richard Morris  
M/M Robert J. Peterson  
M/M R. O. Ridenour  
Rubidoux Grange No. 611  
Wayne Steinmetz  
David Westheimer  
M/M Jerry Whitt

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

from  
**Old'en Days**

by Walt Walker

JUNE

## Ten years ago—

After the **Coming Events** section, which was very long, came the half page section on the individual part of "What does RMRU have to offer." (The first part was in the May issue.) It was explained how a person could apply for membership, the probationary period and finally "Rescue Member" status. At that time the age span was 26 to 51 years and

the average member owned about \$500 worth of personal equipment.

The **Training** write-up told of a Saturday morning technical problem in Strawberry Creek below the USC campus. Then we drove over to Camp Lawler and started down the North Fork of the San Jacinto River. Saturday afternoon found us camped on a sandy bench. It was a great campsite until, we found at bedtime, enormous ants that wanted to share our sleeping area. Sunday was spent crossing and going around waterfalls, passing through Poison Oak and firmly resolving not to make that trip again when temperatures rose to the mid 90's.

The **President's Box**, by Walt Walker commented on the new slide program, how it was well accepted by the, then, Riverside Chapter of the Sierra Club. Also mentioned was the success of the Sustaining Membership program and the number of missions for the month.

The **Search and Rescue** section started off with the report of a technical rescue in the Mecca Mud Hills. A 17 year old boy had fallen and was stranded on a small ledge. Through regular rock technique and adapting a snow technique, snow pickets, the boy was rescued shortly before dawn.

The above mission had started on a Friday evening and on Sunday of that same weekend we received a call that two Scouts were missing from the Skunk Cabbage area of the San Jacinto Mountains. A search was started on the ground and in the air using a Marine helicopter. Shortly after 6 p.m. the helicopter landed in Tahquitz Valley so that the ground and air searchers could confer. About that time the two boys walked into the valley, 24 hours overdue.

The **Sustaining Members** column had one word underlined by Al Andrews - outstanding! The reason, 18 new members: Julie Allen, Mr. & Mrs. Wayne P. Brown, Mr. & Mrs. Herwil M. Bryant, Linda Crabtree, Mr. & Mrs. Donald G. Crafts, Col. C. H. Dingwell, Mr. & Mrs. Richard E. Fleming, Mr. & Mrs. David Harrah, Mr. & Mrs. John W. Harvey, Jr., Karin K. Linker, Norman H. Mellor, M.D., Mr. & Mrs. Albin Merzals, Mr. & Mrs. D. L. Miller, Mr. & Mrs. John A. Revie, Mr. & Mrs. Carl F. Tennant, Shirley Van Campen, Mr. & Mrs. Roland Wilhemy and William F. Zauche.

## Five years ago—

The front page had the **Coming Events** section, a plea for a new Sustaining Members Chairman, Election Results: President, Jim Fairchild; Vice-president, Pete Carlson; Secretary, Ed Hill; Treasurer, also Pete; Quartermaster, Hank Schmel and **The Road Runner sez** column, in which Jim told of how effective the pagers were.

The **Training** column, written by Ed Hill, related a tale of brush, water and snow — an ascent of the North Face of Mt. San Jacinto.

**Search and Rescue:** a search for three doctors that was aborted as we started to roll; a search for a 19 year old man in San Bernardino County who was found dead from a fall; a search for two overdue teenage boys in the Whitewater Canyon area. They walked into base shortly after the search had started; a rescue in Tahquitz Canyon. We had hardly got home from the previous mission when the call came that there was a mirror flash high up in Tahquitz Canyon. Five members of the March Air Force Base 303rd Air Rescue group were overdue on a training hike. Pete Carlson flew with Don Landells to check on the flash. They found three men and airlifted them back to base. While the search continued for the other two, they walked out of the canyon on their own.

Two more searches, both for missing children, and both aborted while we were enroute. Calls of help, from Tahquitz Rock, were reported and we rolled to Idyllwild. It was decided to use a helicopter and Don Landells was called. With Bernie McIlvoy flying with Don and finally being left off on the summit of the rock, then Pete Carlson flying with Don, Bernie hiking around to Lunch Rock, all with negative results, the mission was cancelled.

Al Andrews wrote in the **Sustaining Members** column that hopefully five more pagers would be in service by the time the newsletter was mailed. He also listed two new members: Mr. David E. Randel and Mr. & Mrs. Alan Woolfolk. Then 11 renewed memberships: Memsahibs - So. Calif. Gas Co., \*Mr. Theodore L. Young, \*Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth L. Andrews, \*Mr. & Mrs. Milton M. Levy, Mr. & Mrs. L. A. Echols, \*Soroptimist Club of San Jacinto - Hemet Valley, Boy Scout Troop 1, Mr. Russell L. Gauslin, Mr. & Mrs. James B. Fairchild and Highland Outfitters, Inc. \*Century Club Member - Donation of \$100 or more.

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