

NEWSLETTER

12 ISSUES PER YEAR DISTRIBUTED BY THE RIVERSIDE MOUNTAIN RESCUE UNIT, INC. — POST OFFICE BOX 5444, RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA 92517
A VOLUNTEER NON-PROFIT TAX DEDUCTIBLE CORPORATION — MEMBER OF THE MOUNTAIN RESCUE ASSOCIATION



"25 years of caring for others"

The Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit will be twenty-five years young in September of this year. Young, first because it only seems like yesterday since we began, secondly because a younger group of men are leading the way for the start of our next quarter century.

It is both interesting and exciting to look back through the team records and realize that RMRU has saved over 450 lives in 24 plus years. The members have donated over 110,000 manhours since September 1961. By the time we get to this coming September I'm sure the numbers will be even larger.

In the past we have had an anniversary dinner at 10, 15 and 20 years to celebrate these milestones. We are again planning a celebration and would like your input so we may plan a most enjoyable 25th for everyone. There have been numerous suggestions as to what, where and when. We have enclosed a self-addressed survey postcard for your reply. Please mark off your preferences and mail it today.

Walt Walker,
25th Anniversary Chairman

Search and Rescue

RESCUE

Mission No. 8601M

4-5 Jan., Sat.-Sun.
Trail to Round Valley,
San Jacinto Mountains

By Kevin Walker



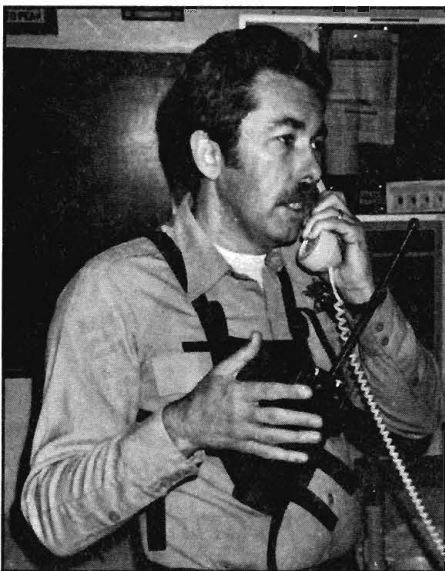
The Silver Anniversary year started off early with a call from the Banning Station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department to respond to the Palm Springs Tramway and be prepared for a winter type rescue. Twelve members met at the lower station and while preparing gear learned what we had been called out for. While hiking down the ridge that leads from Frank Miller Peak to Cornell Peak along with several friends, Brett Jones dropped a piece of clothing down one of the many steep northerly facing slopes. Brett attempted to descend and retrieve the item, and while doing so lost control and slid approximately 300 feet and was moderately injured. A companion went out and contacted the rangers at the Long Valley Ranger Station. Led by head ranger Bob Foster, a party responded to the accident scene and rendered aid. As part of our close relationship with the State Park, Bob contacted the Sheriff and requested that we respond also.

Packs were loaded for a light trip and everyone boarded the tram car. Soon we were up at the Mountain Station and on our way down the concrete walk that leads to Long Valley. After stopping in at the Long Valley Ranger Station we learned that the rescue party was enroute down the trail from Round Valley to Long Valley with Brett in the litter. We hiked up the trail and eventually met the group. Team physician Ray Hussey examined Brett and we were soon again under way. The rangers had done a fine job but had paid the price for their efforts and were wearing down. We helped by taking over the carry out to Long Valley. In a short time everyone was back to Long Valley, and Brett was taken up to the tram for a ride down to the waiting ambulance.

With all secure, members returned home

from a successful operation. To the state park, thanks for the call, and we were glad to be of assistance. • RMRU

Volunteer Man Hours — 98



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

COORDINATING — Head Ranger at Long Valley, Bob Foster talks with Tram personnel to coordinate transporting injured hiker Brett Jones from the Mountain Station to the valley floor and a waiting ambulance, after Brett had been evacuated from an ice chute near Cornell Peak.

SEARCH

Mission No. 8602M

11 Jan., Sat.
Long Valley
San Jacinto Mountains

By Rob Gardner



The RMRU was in the California State Park for training from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon. When the first group of team members entered the wilderness area they were put on alert by the State Park Ranger to watch for two fourteen year old boys that had entered the area, destined for Round Valley. Rangers were concerned because these boys, Ken Rivera and John Conrad of Palm Springs, were inexperienced hikers and poorly equipped for winter camping.

Ken and John had a parent consent letter to obtain a permit and enter the wilderness area. Unable to disallow the young hikers to proceed on, Ranger Robert Mendoza had cautioned the boys and advised them to stay in one spot if they were to get lost or into difficulties.

The first RMRU team hiked to Round Valley, via the high trail, in the dark on Friday night. They did not see any sign of Ken or John. The second team hiked to Round Valley via the lower trail in the early daylight hours of Saturday morning. It was the second team that found Ken and John.

A voice was heard calling out. Initially, the direction the voice came from could not be established. However, as the team of eight quickly switched from the alert mode to the search mode the direction was pinpointed and voice contact was established. Direct contact quickly followed.

Ken had slipped on the icy ground and gashed his head on Friday night. Ken and John had holed up under a large boulder, not too far from the lower cross-country ski trail to Round Valley. They were less than a mile out of Long Valley, however, they did not know their way back to Long Valley.

Cameron Robbins of RMRU checked John's head injury which appeared to be superficial. Ron Pierson and Cameron escorted Ken and John to the Long Valley State Park Ranger Station and released them to Ranger Robert Mendoza.

Proper experience and equipment may have prevented John's slip on the ice and the boys' feeling of being lost. However, having followed Ranger Mendoza's advice to stay in one place after they decided they were lost, and John had become injured, may have prevented more serious injury to these young men. • RMRU

Volunteer Man Hours — Same as
January Training

CALL

Mission No. 8603C

13, Jan., Mon.
Bradshaw Trail
North Shore, SE Riverside County

The Indio station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Office (RSO) called the RMRU out to join in a search for a man missing in the vicinity of the Bradshaw Trail section that runs from North Shore to Desert Center. Three people had gone out in a four wheel drive vehicle which broke down. Two of the people stayed with the vehicle and the third began to walk in search of help. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) personnel came to the aid of the two people at the vehicle and the third could not be found. A BLM ranger and RSO airplane (ARGUS) had initiated search for the third person as sufficient time was believed to have passed for that person to have reached civilization. The RMRU was called out and response was under way when the missing man tele-

phoned authorities and advised he was safe at Niland City. The RSO and BLM reunited the people involved and the RMRU call-out was cancelled. • RMRU

SEARCH

Mission No. 8604M

**22-23 Jan., Wed.-Thurs.
Thousand Trails Campground
Aguanga, S. Riverside County**

By Walt Walker



During a RMRU Board of Directors meeting held at my residence, we received a call from the Elsinore station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department that a 69 year old man with Alzheimers disease, was missing from the Thousand Trails Campground. We activated the RMRU paging system and backed that up with telephone calls to the RMRU members.

When we arrived at the campground the ranger informed us of the details concerning the missing man and what had been done to try and locate him. Staff from the campground, local people, and guests at the campground had searched all the surrounding area. The area was about equally divided between rural, urban, and rolling hills covered with brush. The highway was also a factor to consider. On missions with circumstances like these, it is always hard to try and figure out where to start searching. With all the prior searching there was not going to be a solo set of footprints close in.

RMRU members were assigned in groups of two, to search local hazard areas, a dirt road leading into the mountains, areas around the lake and a canyon that contained a small waterfall. All this did not produce any positive results. Shortly after 8:00 a.m. we were informed by the ranger that an employee of the campground was sure she had seen the missing man as she was leaving the campground the evening before. She had seen him near the entrance road and the highway. We requested the sheriff to contact the Marine Base at El Toro and ask for a helicopter.

A search team was sent out to the highway and they radioed back that they had a solo set of tracks along the edge of the roadway. They were instructed to continue searching along the road. A Marine twin turbined Huey search and rescue helicopter arrived and we told the crew the details and where we wanted them to search. While the helicopter flew search, RMRU grabbed a bite to eat and discussed what to do next. The sheriff's department had put out a missing persons report on the state computer. We had just



RMRU PHOTO BY WALT WALKER

LIFT OFF — The powerful Bell 212 helicopter is seen here leaving base camp for air search. The Thousand Trails trailer camp can be seen in the back.



RMRU PHOTO BY WALT WALKER

BIG MACHINE — RMRU member Rob Gardner looks over the controls of the Marine rescue helicopter between flights during the search for Earl Rice missing from the Thousand Trails Camp near Aguanga. Fellow member Cameron Robbins (with back to camera) was the RMRU observer who flew with the Marine crew during the search.

finished eating when we were informed that the missing man had been located by the San Diego Police department and that he was O.K. • RMRU



Winter Shake-Down

11-12 Jan., Sat.-Sun.
 Round Valley
 San Jacinto Mountains

By Major Disaster, alias Rick Pohlers



Our annual winter shake down is one of the more popular training weekends with the rescue troops. Gives us a chance to play in the snow and work out the bugs in our winter gear, to be ready for the most dangerous part of the year.

This year started off with a great series of storms that claimed the life of an ill-prepared hiker. This made a big impression of the seriousness of winter training, on all team members.

Snow conditions, however, had deteriorated by the time our hearty band sallied forth into the wilderness. The snow was melting like crazy during the day and freezing at night. So, as the intrepid

adventurers in my little group (Pete Carlson, "Col. Klutz" Kevin Walker, "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes" Glenn Henderson, and yours truly) started off, we were forced to wear crampons instead of snow shoes. It was Friday night, about as dark as the inside of a cow. We stumbled around in the dark, walking in circles, cursing loose crampons for an hour before we got some bearings and headed for camp above the ranger cabin in Round Valley.

We joined "Dr. Bill" Blaschko and Bud "O.F." White in camp that night, the rest of the troops to arrive very early the next morning. Late the next morning the rest of the crew stumbled into camp in small groups.

Once we got organized (sort of), the group divided up, one spirited party heading for the awesome summit of Mt. San Jacinto, the others seeking thrills, spills, and lots of chills in ice axe practice.

Finding a place for self-arrest with an ice axe isn't easy. Slopes with rocks and trees were avoided. The snow was turning into a wet mess as the sun climbed in a cloudless sky. We were sweating in our woolies and "Patatunas."

Despite the poor conditions, a slope was found to give new people some remote idea of how to stop a slide by use of an ice axe. An ice axe wasn't really necessary that day, but we tried to get up speed to show 'em how it's done anyway. There have been times when we've had to do it for real on hard frozen snow, going like gang-busters.

We all met back at camp late that afternoon for a delightful gourmet dinner provided by the "KGB and Co." Leftovers

were fed to the blood-thirsty coyotes surrounding camp, along with the surly team members.

Next morning some small groups went directly home while the main horde followed the scenic route along the Wellman divide, back to the upper Tramway station. So ended another action packed training.

• RMRU

Volunteer Man Hours — 522



RMRU PHOTO BY GLENN HENDERSON

KEVIN EATS THE BIG ONE — RMRU members Henry Negrete and Gil Carr attempt to move mock injured member Kevin Walker away from a tree during training. Such surprise accidents are planned to help new members learn to plan and execute a rescue, evacuation, search, etc.



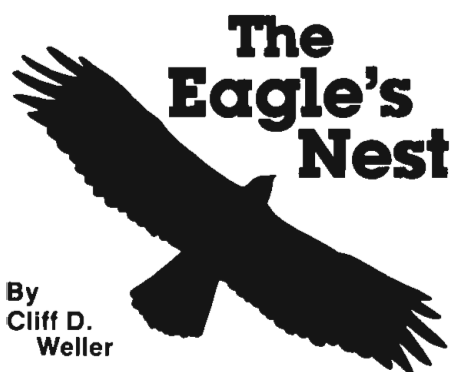
'Our Editor-in-Chief'

This tough guy who we know and love as the "Old Banana Man," alias Rob Gardner, has taken over as editor of the newsletter. We feel, and think you will too, that Rob has done an excellent job of getting the newsletter back on track, also. You will notice some new additions to our publication, which Rob has planned, and we hope that you will enjoy reading.

Best Wishes to an Old Friend

On the first of January **RMRU** said good-bye to an old friend. Captain Ray Canova of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, a thirty year veteran with the county and commander of the Banning Station for better than ten years, retired. The Captain and **RMRU** had become extremely close over the years. Not only on a professional basis, but also there were lasting friendships built. The Captain did not have to, but frequently came out to search and rescue operations, if for nothing else than just to be of help in some way. We could go on and on, but will not. The Captain and **RMRU** remember. To Ray, the best of luck, and a wish to keep in touch.

Sincerely,
All your friends from **RMRU**



Over the eons that my family has lived high up in the canyons and mountains I have seen many a visitor to the wilderness. Most visitors have a pleasant stay and enjoy nature without mishap. Some of these folks have a good trip by luck, having entered the wilderness ill-prepared. Others are prepared and have a good trip by planning and preparation. Sadly, there is the smaller percentage of visitors that meet with unnecessary distress or tragedy that may have been preventable with a little better preparation.

From my vantage point I have noted some things that may increase the likelihood of folks having good visits and I will pass some of these thoughts on to you here.

Be prepared when you enter the wilderness.

- Have proper experience for the task at hand.
- Be in good physical and emotional condition.
- Have proper permits.
- Leave your itinerary with a responsible adult.
- Leave a description of clothing, gear and footwear you are taking with you.
- Be sure you have essential items: Map, fire-starter, pocket knife, compass, sunglasses, extra clothing, flashlight, extra food, signaling device (mirror and/or whistle), any medications you may need, first aid supplies, and water.

In snow conditions you may need to include sunblock cream, snow shoes, cross-country skis, or crampons, and an ice axe.

Be prepared for the unexpected storm or mishap. Have sufficient clothing and equipment to survive through the night, even on a day trip.

Be prepared and have a good time.

REMEMBER — Carry it in — carry it out.

