

RMRU NEWSLETTER

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

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COMING EVENTS ---

- 9 September, Board Meeting, 7:00 pm at
- 16 September, Mt. Rubidoux practice, 7:00 pm at the top with gear.
- 15 September, first session of The First Aid Course, 7:00 pm at the Gas Company Auditorium. See July Newsletter for details, or call Editor.
- 23 September, Regular Meeting, Hall of Records Conference Room, 4080 Lime Street, Riverside. We want to thank Mr. Horrigan of the County Office of Disaster Preparedness for setting up the August meeting place, it worked out fine.
- 26 September, Training Session, Idyllwild. Meet at Lunch Rock (Tahquitz) at 0700. We'll have a tour around the rock to see where the routes begin for familiarity, then return to Dr. Mellor's cabin for first aid problems staged at rotating stations. There will be a whopper of a surprise problem to wind up the first aid. Then we will gather around the van for display of contents and instruction on their use, and some words of wisdom on how to drive and care for the vehicle itself. Then, in our spare time after the training....
- 14 October, Board Meeting 7:00 pm, at
- 21 October, Regular Meeting, 7:30 pm, at County Hall of Records.
- 24-25 October, Training Session, Joshua Tree National Monument.
- 28 October, Mt. Rubidoux practice.
- 20-22 November, San Jacinto Mountain Familiarization.
- 12 December, Helitac.

Note: The Nov. & Dec. training sessions are mentioned as a reminder. the 1971 training schedule is ready to print and has been for some time, but frequent missions make it tough for our publisher. However, the dates and destinations were recited at the August regular meeting.

SEARCH AND RESCUE ACTIVITY ---

(Ed. note: we should again state that RMRU does not consider a call-out a true mission and give it a number unless men have actually gone into the field. To just get a call and drive to a roadhead does not constitute a mission, that is an abort. A rough analogy would be to think of climbing a peak -- you are not climbing until you leave the roadhead and commence to hike or climb. Similarly, you are not searching or helping a victim until you leave base. In the future you will find that some of the aborts are mentioned, but only the missions will have a number.)

10 August, Search - San Jacinto Wild Area. - 7022

On Sunday, Gary Camp left Humber Park (6400') with three companions intending to hike to the upper Palm Springs Tramway Station (8515'). He hiked ahead of his friends and made the classic error in hiking toward Caramba Camp (6600'), at the head of Tahquitz Canyon instead of toward Willow Creek Crossing. On Monday afternoon, we got the call that a man was overdue from

his hike to the tram station. We were told that he was lost somewhere in the wild area. Walt Walker had obtained one of Western's helicopters for us, so Mike Daugherty and I were flown into our heliport above Caramba Camp. We hiked down to the camp and soon located one of Gary's tracks. While we were looking at it, two young boys, camping there, came over and told us that a man and his dog had started down canyon earlier that day. He was also wearing tennis shoes with a sole pattern similar to Gary's. On the strength of this, we decided to commit four men to the canyon.

Pete Carlson, Mike Orr and Steve Stephens were flown into Caramba. Pete was designated relay and climbed up on a knoll above the canyon. The rest of us started down the canyon, tracking Gary. Just as we started down, Pete located the man and his dog who had been in the canyon and radioed us a description of his tennis shoe. We were following two sets of tracks but were having trouble telling them apart. The canyon was steep and rugged, but we were able to climb down the stream bed, occasionally climbing out on the walls to bypass waterfalls. It was hot, slow work, and we only found an occasional track since Gary had jumped from rock to rock. An hour before dark, we found a really good print showing us that Gary was indeed hiking down canyon. At this point we were further down canyon than the man and his dog had gone. Just as we found the print, we heard from Pete that Gary had made it out to Palm Springs. We turned around and climbed back up a thousand feet or so to Caramba Camp where we had dinner with the two campers. After dinner we had a three hour hike back to Idyllwild, a distance that the helicopter had flown in seven minutes.

In this case the victim made it out. He had gone down the canyon in hopes of intercepting a trail. He now knows, as we do, that there are no trails on that side of the mountain. Even though we did not catch up to him, we were on his trail and had he been unable to hike, we would have found him. Talking with him later, we discovered that he had started down canyon almost twenty four hours ahead of us. - E. Hill.

22 August, Search at Stone Creek Campground - 7023

Late in the afternoon we received a call that a man was missing from the campground. We rolled to the scene and were given information by the man's (Jim Daniel, 25) girl friend that in the morning they were returning from a walk when he went back to camp (supposedly) via a steep hill while she via an old road. The girl showed the Roadrunner where her boy friend had taken the shortcut and at that moment we heard by radio that he had returned to camp just as we went out of sight. We mention this to encourage one and all that if you carry a radio, turn it on! Much time could have been saved had we done this upon leaving base. - Jim Fairchild.

23 August, Search in Tahquitz Valley - 7024

Another late afternoon call from the Sheriff's Dept. This time back to familiar country in Tahquitz Valley and Caramba (el. 6600', 3 miles east of and down canyon from the valley.) July Kamp, 16, had left her group when near a large pool of water below Caramba, hiked up 1½ miles to Law's Camp to get her pack, then hiked out to Idyllwild, then to Boy Scout Camp Emerson, then to a house where she spent the night. Well, all her group knew, and all we found out when questioning a counselor at the ranger's tent in Tahquitz Valley is that she was missing from near Caramba. So, we had to go down there and search for tracks. Jack Schnurr and I bivouacked at Law's Camp until dawn because there was some question whether Judy might have hiked out of the back country or was missing below Caramba. At dawn we did

a search of the canyon with negative results, naturally. And, in the middle of the morning received word via radio that she was back at Azalea Trails (a girl Scout camp on the west slope of San Jacinto Mt.). Clouds had formed and lightning flashed here and there, making the day a bit cooler, and during the hike out rain fell, heavy rain. No dust as we walked and ran down the trail toward Humber Park. Ron Harris and I were together and as we came into full view of that climbers' mecca, Tahquitz Rock, we wondered out loud if anyone was up there climbing in the rain. Yes, there were several groups. We even agreed that we heard a couple of cries for help, but then, SAR men get "buggy" after a while and hear cries for help from trees, streams and birds. But when we got to the rescue van --- Jack writes about the next one.....
- Jim Fairchild.

24 August, evacuation of stranded climbers on Tahquitz - 7025

(we thought Jack would write about this one, but he is now somewhere on the John Muir Trail in the High Sierra, we hear)

Confirmation of the call for help we achieved by Walt's deliberate, well-spaced wording, "Do--you--need--help?" Two groups called back with vigorous "no's," the last group a plaintive "yes." We quickly packed appropriate gear and headed up the steep trail to Lunch Rock. Fatigue from the previous mission took its toll on some of us, but not one of the men who sped on up to the top of the rock where we had originally thought to rappel down. But upon approach to the base of the Fingertip Traverse where the couple was stuck, we opted to climb. So, we dispatched a man with radio to try and apprehend our errant fast man who had the 300' rope. At Lunch Rock Phil Gleason and Don Hunter indicated a strong desire to help, and we were short-handed. Phil and Jack climbed up immediately over the wet, slippery rock (rain still fell, but not hard.) Their plan was for Phil to continue across the traverse to the leader, (Roger Peterson) and climb the rest of the route. Jack would help the belayer (Mrs. Peterson) rappel as she was at the top of the lay-back. Meanwhile, our solo rescuer was seen from Humber Park to ready the rope for descent. Walt asked him to return (using the loudhailer) to the base of the climb, which he did. He dropped off the rope and kept on going all the way home. He is no longer with us. Back to the plan for evacuation which worked very well as the rock dried when the rain quit. Mrs. Peterson roped down into the big oak tree and was assisted on down to base of the climb. Phil and Roger soon arrived and we hiked on down to the cars. We must mention that while it is necessary to pre-plan how to evacuate stranded climbers when we are still far from the rock, subsequent visual and verbal information can quickly change that plan. If we stick together we will be aware of these changes. Anyway, we went down to the Alpine Pantry in Fern Valley for supper. Then the phone rang and Lt. Ed Brown of the Riverside Sheriff's Dept. had some interesting information for us...

- Fairchild again.

24 August, Planned Evacuation, Tahquitz Canyon - 7026

About half way through the previous mission (Tahquitz Rock) the Riverside County Sheriff's Department was notified of a young man who needed help. The informant had made contact, while descending Tahquitz Canyon in one day, with a young man who had been on a fast. He was too weak to move and stated that his friend had gone for help on Saturday, but had not returned the next day. Since it was now Monday afternoon and we were in the middle of a evacuation Lt. Ed Brown suggested that we have another rescue group take care of the problem. So they were notified of the situation.

No more thought was given to the problem until we received a call while eating dinner (the first regular meal in 24 hours) that the victim was not in the other team's area. So we all started for Palm Springs, after sending a call out for more RMRU members. When we arrived at the Ramon Road roadhead it was about 8:30 p.m. and 105 degrees. We quickly sorted gear and loaded extra water into our packs. Nine weary RMRU members started up the Tahquitz Canyon trail. Once again we were in litter filled canyon and its unmistakable odor of human mess. We spoke briefly with a couple who thought that the victim was o.k. and out of the canyon. Not knowing if the information was right I led the group up the side of the canyon and got off route and we spent some extra time groping around. Once again we were back on the trail above the canyon bottom. We spotted a couple of campfires and called down and asked if they knew of the victim. The reply was the same as before, they said the victim was out of the canyon. We yelled down and asked for them to stand by as we wanted to talk to them.

When we arrived in the canyon bottom 20 minutes later the fires were out and nobody was to be seen. After repeated calls, with no results, we started down the canyon searching for our victim. After much boulder hopping and ascending an upside down chimney, that Jack Schnurr found around a waterfall we were at the top of the first falls and no victim. So we climbed up out of the canyon and hiked back to the cars and drove wearily home.

- Walt Walker.

THE ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN STRAIGHT IN FANTASYLAND * An original tragi-farce, complete in one act and one scene to be repeated without significant variation until the performers and the audience depart in disgust.

NOTE: Any similarity between the following fictional account and the real or imagined activities of any mountain rescue team is certainly unfortunate.

As you will doubtless remember from our last episode, Capt. Straight and his band of orange-clad straightmen have been assigned the dangerous task of rescuing the victims of the twin dragons High and Fly who inhabit the remote depths of Tahquitz Vail in Fantasyland.

As the curtain rises we see an almost entirely dark stage lit only by the dull red glow from the superheated rocks which are placed about the stage amid heaps of tin cans, discarded clothing and empty wine bottles. Strange yellow-green vapors are seen emanating from obscure sources on the floor of the stage and waft an unmistakable foul odor into the audience. Offstage left a chorus of Tahquitz Maidens can just be heard humming The Age of Aquarius while offstage right someone is playing a badly scratched record of Sousa marches.

As their eyes become accustomed to the darkness, the audience is aware of the presence of nine struggling forms which enter downstage right carrying enormous packs and dragging a solid Lead Stokes litter. As their headlamps illuminate the gloom, Capt. Ernest B. Straight can be seen to be leading the group (polite applause).

--Music fades

--Capt. Straight: Drat! I know the trail is somewhere around here, if I could just get my boots to hold.

--1st Straightman: (breathing heavily and perspiring) Do you want to use the boot scraper again, chief?

--Capt. Straight: No, it won't do any good, it's gotten into my lugs and besides, it's time for another water break.

Several of the straightmen can be seen removing five gallon glass bottles of distilled water from their packs, apparently preferring to carry them rather than risk the unknown pleasures of the pale green water seen oozing over a large rock upstage left. As they quaff great quantities of water from the jugs, it becomes apparent that most of them have been several days without sleep. Their once crisp orange shirts are soaked with sweat and rimmed with salt and their hands, arms and faces have been scratched by encounters with the vicious Catclaw which the Tahquitz Maidens have planted at the mouth of the canyon to prevent the unworthy from entering the sacred place. As they replace the water in their packs, a faint orange flickering appears offstage left.

--Voice from Offstage: Whadda you guys want?

--Capt. Straight: (shouting) We are the mountain rescue team and we have come to save the life of a holy man who has been fasting here for four days.

--Voice: I think he went home or something.

--Capt. Straight: (slightly skeptical) Wait a minute, we'll be right down. The derisive laughter of the Tahquitz Maidens is heard.

There is no reply but the orange flickering is extinguished as Capt. Straight and his men prepare to move. They proceed upstage and begin searching diligently among the rocks, laboring up and over each boulder and calling out every so often. They work across stage noisily, their radios crackling with terse messages transmitted in the clipped language of the 10 code.

--Radio #1: 10-16 (whopps!), 10-24 (don't step there)

--Radio #2: 10-37 (I'll trade you two Tom Frosts and a Chouinard for one Robbins and that piece of clothesline)

--Radio #3: 10-16, 10-24

As they begin dragging themselves out of sight over a large triangular rock upstage right, several sets of glowing eyes appear in the bushes upstage left. As the stage grows dark, the flickering orange light reappears offstage.

--First Voice in the Brush: Wow! Those pigs get dumber every year.

--Second Voice: Yea! Mountain rescue team, far out. I stopped believing in Santa Claus when I was seven.

As the sounds of the retiring straightmen fade from our ears, we can smell the promise of rain. It will rain, but it will not rain nearly enough.

Moral: (For those who like that sort of thing) If it looks like a duck, and it waddles like a duck, and it quacks like a duck, it still might be a duck.



The Road

Runner sez-

Read a joke today, goes like this: a symphony director was desperate, he had no drummer. As a last resort he engaged a boy who looked like anything but a musician, even like a bum. But at rehearsals he dressed well, was clean, conducted himself very courteously. He was prompt and missed no rehearsals. And, he was an excellent drummer. The day of the big concert the conductor took the boy aside and complimented him profusely. The boy said, "Thanks, but that's the least I could do considering I can't make the concert tonight." Let's focus on us SAR men. We equip ourselves with the best, run, swim, and cycle to achieve excellent physical condition, train hard in SAR skills, and in all ways keep ready for missions. Then the phone rings, "There's a lost hiker thought to be below Caramba, can you make it?" "Uh, well, no, I can't go tonight....." As happens frequently we had a spirited discussion about participation in actual missions at the August regular meeting. Each man must consult his own conscience, his employer, and his family in this matter. What a shame we can't consult the victim.

SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP

We have a pleasingly long list of new and renewing sustaining members for the month of August. We want to welcome the following new members: Riverside County Pomona Grange No. 3; Mr. & Mrs. Robert Hewitt; Mr. Sam Johnson; Mr. & Mrs. L. A. Echols; Mr. Reynard Joseph; Camp Maranatha; Jack Hills; Gordon H. Johnson, D.D.S.; Mr. Bob Beggs; Melinda S. Swain and Mr. & Mrs. David E. Hunt. Two more new sustaining members are: Mr. & Mrs. Earl B. Nelson for painting the signs and logos on the new van; Gordon Hass for donation of trail tape and marking; Mr. & Mrs. Roy Adair for making duplicate keys for the van. Again, thank you to the following people for renewing their memberships: Mr. & Mrs. John B. Morgan; Mr. & Mrs. Charles W. Ricker; Mr. & Mrs. Ralph O. Ridenour; Mrs. Florence B. Batchelor; Mr. & Mrs. Joe Merrick; Mr. & Mrs. Earl N. Cannon; and Highland Outfitters. The unit sincerely hopes to hold your support in the years ahead. We wish there were more people who, like yourselves, understood the effort that goes into every search and rescue mission. -- Al.

Still wanted!!! A two or four drawer file cabinet for the team records. If anyone can help us, contact Al Andrews at 682-7207 or P. O. Box 5444, Riverside, California 92507.

IT IS YOURS? ---

Several men have mentioned not being able to locate certain items of gear after various of the recent missions. We should all carefully go through our SAR equipment and look for others' stuff, then bring it to the next meeting.

NEW PARKAS ---

At last meeting the membership decided to arrange a group order for the Holubar NP22 cloth parka @ \$30.00 each. This is an excellent garment. Old and new members alike have indicated desire to obtain a "copy." Bring your remittance for sure on 23 Sept, along with chest size, sleeve length, weight and height. Any questions? Call Fairchild.



Once again we are late in finishing the 'ole RMRU Newsletter'. I won't even go into all the reasons as we have stated them before. Something missing this issue? Yes, you're right, photographs. Since our regular photographer missed some of the missions and others were handled at night, no pictures. One of these days the team will get a camera of its own and it will stay in the truck and be sent out on every mission.

The new truck is almost completed inside and out. The lettering on the outside has been completed and the cabinets on the inside are almost finished. We will print some completed photos of the SuperVan next month. It has already rolled on several missions and all I can say is that it is "GREAT".

Now that we have the fine new truck packed with much valuable gear it is felt that we should both protect it from the elements and possibly theft of contents. We would like to find a spot to park it that is inside and available to us 24 hours a day. If anyone has any suggestions please contact Al Andrews (682-7207) or myself (654-9101). - Pres. Walt.