

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 ---

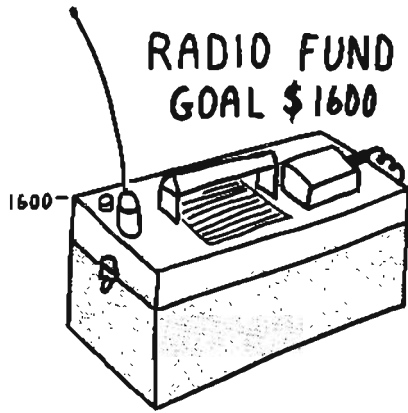
- 25 August, Regular Meeting, County Hall of Records, 1930.
- 27-29 August, Training Session, San Jacinto Mountains.
- 8 September, Board Meeting, Mike Daugherty's, 1900.
- 9 September, Begin First Aid Review, Red Cross Chapter House, 1900.
- 15 September, Technical Training Session, Mt. Rubidoux, 1900.
- 16 September, Second Session of First Aid Review, Gas Company Auditorium.
- 22 September, Regular Meeting.
- 23 September, Third Session of First Aid Review, Tom Dadson's.
- 25 September, Training Session and last session of first aid review, Strawberry Canyon.
- 13 October, Board Meeting.
- 23 October, Anniversary Dinner, see details below.
- 27 October, Regular Meeting.
- 29-30 October, Training Session.

MARK THIS DATE ON YOUR CALENDAR, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 23, 1971. THIS IS THE DATE FOR OUR TENTH ANNIVERSARY DINNER WHICH WILL BE HELD AT THE HOLIDAY INN OF RIVERSIDE. THIS PROMISES TO BE A GALA OCCASION AND WE'LL BE LOOKING FOR ALL OF THE SUSTAINING MEMBERS AS WELL AS TEAM MEMBERS, PAST AND PRESENT. WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO INVITE ALL OUR FRIENDS AND RELATIVES WHO BELIEVE IN RMRU.

THE ACTIVITIES START AT 7:00 P.M. WITH A NO HOST COCKTAIL HOUR, FOLLOWED BY A BUFFET DINNER AT 8:00 P.M. THE REST OF THE EVENING WILL BE A SPECIAL PROGRAM BY THE MEMBERS OF RMRU.

ANYONE HAVING ANY OLD PHOTOS OR SOME OTHER NOSTALGIC ITEM, CALL TOM DADSON OR HANK SCHMEL. SEE THE ENCLOSED BROCHURE FOR ALL THE DETAILS ON THE DINNER.

Sustaining Members



The radio fund has continued to grow over the past few months as a result of our sustaining members efforts, and we hope that in the near future we can purchase the second radio of this drive. We want to again thank the following people for financially supporting RMRU this month:

Mr. & Mrs. Richard Card
 Mr. Bob Schlamal
 Mr. & Mrs. Bob MacPherson

A special thanks to the following for their continued support:

Mr. & Mrs. Carl F. Tennant
 The Hemet Jeep Club
 Mrs. M. A. Johnston
 Mr. John Lase

-- Al Andrews

Search and Rescue

9 JUNE - PLANE CRASH - #7115
 San Timoteo Canyon

It was approximately 9 p. m. when I received a call from Don Ricker. The Riverside County Sheriff's Department had received reports of a possible plane crash near El Casco, which is located a few miles southwest of Calimesa in San Timoteo Canyon. The visibility in the Riverside and Banning Pass area that evening was very poor with low ceiling, fog and drizzle.

RMRU assembled on the highway outside the community of El Casco, where teams of searchers were sent into the hilly countryside north of town. The weather was just wet enough to make a thick paste out of the clay-like dirt and with visibilities near zero RMRU was not making great headway toward locating the downed aircraft. While my group was following the ridgelines around the area, other search teams were working their way up the small canyon tributaries opening into San Timoteo Canyon. Mike Daugherty and Walt Walker were making an assault on some 5.9 dirt (climbing talk for hard), when it was decided that teams would return to base camp and regroup for penetration into an area further west of our present location.

With visibility improving slightly during the early morning hours the wreckage of the plane was located directly across a canyon from where Bernie McIlvoy first spotted a reflection of white from the suspected aircraft.

The wreckage was that of a small single engine plane occupied by two persons. The plane had impacted near the top of a ridge and appeared as if someone had shredded the plane and rolled the pulped mass of metal into a ball and placed it on the hillside. The Navion was sighted at approximately 3 a. m. at an elevation of 2200 feet and northwest of El Casco. The Coroner was notified and was directed to the crash site at first light.

Being a general aviation pilot myself, it's difficult for me to comprehend why a few of my fellow pilots have so little regard for their lives and the lives of their passengers by the needless flying into situations with which they cannot cope. This was not the first air crash I have been asked to search for, or recover personal effects from or will it be the last. As long as Riverside County has a Banning Pass and pilots live with such a sense of urgency that they will risk human life to do battle with Mother Nature, we will have accidents in our mountains. So like MRA teams from other counties, RMRU will patiently wait for the next time a flyer thinks he can do battle with the Elements and win.

- Tom Dadson

5 JULY - SEARCH? - #7117

Palm Springs Area

0120 - (Ed. note: 1:20 a. m.)

Phone A: "This is Al. Rescue call."

Phone B: "That I sort of figured."

Phone A: "Junction 111 and South Palm Canyon Drive."

Phone B: "OK. Bye."

"Let's see now.... Orange shirt, green pants, flashlight. All else already in car. Move."

Thinking that I might be able to get a little sleep on the way, I went over to Don Ricker's house and loaded my gear into the pumpkin. Jim Fairchild arrived and we were off.

I awoke in Palm Springs to see ahead of us, at the aforementioned junction, the yellow flashing light of the Deputy's unit. Pete Carlson, Bob Nelson, Dick Caffroy, Phil Moedt and Walt Walker were already there, and Bernie McIlvoy, Art Bridge and Tom Dadson arrived shortly. We signed in (no connection with "What's my Line") and learned that our informant, Jim Maynard, had received flashed "SOS" signals from below the Eagles Nest, a 2829' high peak southwest of the city. The informant, a gentleman who has worked in the hills behind Palm Springs for forty years, told us that it was impossible to hike up the canyon to the flashing lights, so he led us up a road (and saved us 1000 feet of elevation) on the north side of Andreas Canyon. We stopped by some cabins and, while we were getting our packs on, he gave us explicit directions to the lights.

We started walking toward the saddle west of the peak as instructed, keeping in radio contact with base. (Looking at our lights on the side of the hill, base was able to tell us if we got off route.) No reply was received to our shouting from the saddle, so we climbed the Nest to reconnoiter and watched a beautiful dawn over the desert. Explicit hiking instructions were received from base, and, shooting off a

flare in the direction we were hiking for the benefit of base, our small band of gentlemen and scholars started down north off the peak, keeping to the west (fortunately shady) side of some big white cliffs.

Tracks were cut about halfway down to the canyon below the peak, and were followed into the canyon with plentiful shouting which brought no response. We reached the canyon bottom in the full hot sun (even at 0630) and discovered tracks going up the canyon. Since we were assured that we had passed over the exact area of the SOS signals, and we had had no contact, we were somewhat ready to quit.

But being, hardy mountain men (fools?), we followed the tracks up canyon until we lost them. Wandering still further up canyon looking for a continuation of tracks, we were rewarded by the sight of a beautiful box canyon replete with pools of refreshing water and bird life. Hiking back out to the cars, we found footprints going down canyon as well as up. Finally, dry and sweaty, our intrepid band arrived at base and took a look at the tracks we had been following -- going out right at the edge of the road.

A superb breakfast with many glasses of orange juice was had before we headed home with hopes of catching up on our sleep.

It is not clear if the SOS was a game that the owners of the footprints had been playing, or if they really thought they were in trouble (until daylight, when they apparently hiked out ahead of us.) With 20/20 hindsight it is easy to see that we should have sent a team up the "impassable" canyon and also stationed a team at the mouth of the canyon. "No excuse", as they say in the Army.

The mutterings on an unsatisfying mission like this are always stilled by the question "What if there had been trouble?"

We would do it again. -- Steve Bryant





The Road

Runner sez-

It is always sad to lose a man from the unit who has served a long time and contributed much to the unit's development. Don Ricker has resigned from RMRU. He is one of the charter members. During most of the years he was Quartermaster, and kept up the old Helm's Bakery doughnut wagon that became our first truck, then worked many hours at developing the new van. We wish him well in his new endeavors.

We've been going through our most unusual summer regarding SAR activity. While the aborts (16) continue, real missions in our county have been absent since July 4. There have been numerous out-of-county calls, only one of which have we been able to answer with manpower. While we are incredulous, we are certainly not complaining. The tremendous increase in wilderness use has not resulted in a corresponding call out increase. Perhaps the throngs go out in a sort of cohesive mass and return the same way, or, as another RMRU member put it, "There are so many of them they can't get lost." We fail to see the logic, but it is working.

It will be interesting to hear from the U. S. Forest Service and State Park as to how well the new permit system has worked. While it's most annoying, it may be a good thing in causing a more intelligent and less destructive use of the wilderness. However, we are amazed to find the permits are required of rock climbers who use Suicide and Tahquitz Rocks, climbing meccas above Idyllwild. They are competing with no one for overnight accommodations between the trees at campsites, they don't erode anything but their skin, and if overcrowding occurs on the more popular routes, the climbers themselves will likely take care of the problem.

About our Tenth Anniversary Dinner, we most sincerely hope everyone who would like to will make plans to be with us. It will be a relaxed evening of getting better acquainted and sharing some experiences. Our past president Walt expressed the feeling when he said, "We sure want to meet everybody and let them know

what we've been doing." Our present president says, "Make a special effort to be there." - Jim

24 JULY - RESCUE, ALMOST SOLO Mount Shasta

As part of my vacation, I climbed Mt. Shasta on the 24 and 25th of July with my wife and two brothers. We left the roadhead at 6800 feet elevation at about 10 a.m. on Saturday, July 24. We hiked up past the Sierra Club hut at 7840 feet and thence up snow filled Avalanche Gulch to Helen Lake at 10,400 feet elevation. Saturday was planned as an easy day and we arrived at our camp at Helen Lake around 3 p.m., after a leisurely hike and a long lunch break.

At Helen Lake we met a hiker, Alan Hempl of San Diego, who had camped there the previous night and tried the peak that day. At an elevation of about 13,000 feet, Alan had had a severe attack of gout. He had returned to his camp with some aid from other climbers and, when we arrived, was planning to start on down by himself. He was obviously suffering a great deal of pain--in fact he tried unsuccessfully to find some with some codeine. In addition, one he was taking medication to combat the gout which he said would cause him to have convulsions and diarrhea within four hours. It didn't seem to me that Alan should go down the hill by himself, so I identified myself as a member of RMRU and volunteered to go with him. He quickly accepted my offer.

I was somewhat surprised that none of the hikers who were going down had offered to accompany Alan. However, I didn't give it too much thought as I hastily repacked my pack. I did conclude that none of the other members of my party was strong enough to climb back to Helen Lake a second time that day, so only I started down with Alan. We walked over to the edge of the snow and I noted then that Alan was having considerable difficulty walking. Fortunately, the snow was steep enough to glissade, at least initially, and we started down in a sitting glissade, roped together for safety. Down about 500 feet the snow leveled off somewhat and we could no longer glissade. As I watched Alan struggle to walk, I began to real-

ize that despite his statements to the contrary, he was probably not capable of walking to the roadhead at all and certainly he could not do it in four hours. Since the snow was still fairly steep, I suggested that I pull him with the rope, with him in a sitting position. In this way we were able to make much better time than with Alan walking, without too much effort on my part and with considerably less pain for Alan.

As we descended the 2000 feet in Avalanche Gulch, I looked for someone to send for help since I was now positive that a litter would be required as soon as the snow ended. I managed to hail a day hiker to take a message ahead to the Sierra Club hut. The note described the situation and requested help.

Soon after Alan and I left the snow, the caretaker of the hut arrived with a litter and some other hikers he had recruited to help with the carry. We put Alan in the litter and had him at the nearest roadhead within an hour.

Since it was nearly 6 p. m., I hurried back up to Helen Lake in order not to have to hike after dark. I arrived at about 8:45 and was too tired to eat the dinner which had been saved for me.

The ascent of Mt. Shasta (elevation 14,162 feet) on Sunday was uneventful. On the way down, the caretaker of the hut informed me that Alan had been treated and released by the hospital soon after their arrival the night before.

-- John Murdock

TRAINING

24 JULY - TECHNICAL EVACUATION SESSION
Suicide Rock, above Idyllwild

We forgot who was assigned to write this one, and he forgot to write it. So, as the deadline approaches, one who arrived on the scene just in time for dinner will try to piece it together. As Ernie Maxwell says about his weekly Idyllwild Town Crier, "Almost All The News Part of the Time," I say, "Some of the facts,



PHOTO BY DR. JOE BELL

Art Bridge, Mike Daugherty and Dave Crimi all appear to be intently looking down Suicide Rock. The photo on the next page shows what they are peering at.

partially correct." Before the training session Ed Hill and Steve Bryant climbed the rock and placed two "victims" so we could have two teams which would assure everyone having an important role--it sure worked out that way. Everyone concerned had quite a workout being responsible for several tasks at once in raising the victims from their ledges below the rim of the rock. Even in the organizing phase down at base, using newer men who had not been Operations Leaders before, we began a session that was tremendously useful in developing team and individual skills, and giving everyone a great appreciation of what it's like to be responsible for doing it right. Some technical gear was forgotten and improvisation was necessary, it was very hot and water ran short, the raising processes were annoyingly difficult and taxed innovative prowess, everyone worked hard and made a success of the problems, thus, we felt jubilant for the training gained. Back at "base," Norm and Maggie Mellor's Sky Yacht, a fine dinner was enjoyed with the usual lively conversations with friends and wives. Oh yes,

the whole session began on a surprising note, because everyone was dead sure the victims would be across Strawberry Valley on Tahquitz Rock instead of Suicide Rock. -- Jim Fairchild



PHOTO BY DR. JOE BELL

Dr. Bell's camera was held at arm's length out over the edge and caught the two RMRU members hard at work on the problem. The problem was to rescue a 'victim' off one of the popular climbing routes of Suicide Rock.



PHOTO BY HANK SCHMEL

Again, for the fourth year, Idyllwild Izaak Walton members put on a money raising pancake breakfast with help from RMRU members and their wives.



PHOTO BY DR. JOE BELL

Somehow, RMRU's own Doctor of Physics Mike Daugherty, is always caught by the camera at the most unguarded moments. Actually Mike was in the midst of eating lunch and telling war stories at the same time atop Suicide Rock.



PHOTO BY HANK SCHMEL

RMRU's big orange van, the 'Super Pumpkin', was opened up to the breakfast guests so they could view its' contents, most of which has been purchased by the donations from our most generous supporters, the Sustaining Members.