

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 - - -

- 8 September, Board Meeting, Mike Daugherty's, 1900.
- 15 September, Technical Training Session, Mt. Rubidoux, 1900.
- 16 September, Second session of First Aid Revidw, Gas Company Auditorium.
- 22 September, Regular Meeting, County Hall of Records, 1930.
- 23 September, Third session of First Aid Review, Tom Dadson's.
- 25 September, Training session and last session of F. A. review, Strawberry Canyon.
- 13 October, Board Meeting
- 23 October, Anniversary Dinner, information enclosed.
- 27 October, Regular meeting.
- 29-30 October, Training Session.

REMINDER, 'TENTH ANNIVERSARY DINNER'

We remind you again, in case you forgot, to mark your calendar now, October 23, for the date of RMRU's Tenth Anniversary Dinner. The Chairman of the event, Tom Dadson, promises a gala time for all, enhanced by a menu that will satisfy the palate of the most fastidious gourmet.

If you have not yet received your invitation, worry not. You may now consider yourself invited. The affair is open to all Sustaining Members, active members, past members, other MRA Unit members and their wives, and all our friends and relatives. In fact, anyone who desires to honour us with his presence is more than welcome. All information necessary, along with reservation card is enclosed. Make checks payable to RMRU.



Better Big Dome than no Dome at all. Your editor promises not to talk to any more reporters when on a mission. Although I thought I was acting in good faith when I told him (the reporter) the story of Jack Schnurr mastering "BIG DOME". I can't help that Jack is a good climber.

Jim Fairchild is only one show away from getting his pyrotechnic operators license. Jim is our official flare tester.

Hear Ye! Hear Ye! Know ye all that one Tom Dadson has had extensive high altitude snow training while living in Montana.



Help us
cut it
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PHOTO BY DR. JOE BELL

RMRU's most senior member by age, but our youngest in heart, Art Bridge.

makes it easier to read. We hope that you like the process, because we do. It was made possible by the addition of new equipment at Arrow Printing, in San Jacinto, where the newsletter is printed.

Everyone, including the 'past president' is very happy with the quiet summer that RMRU has had. We are all at a loss as to why it has been quiet. Personally, I have met many hikers this summer while out with my Scout troop. They don't seem to be any better informed than in past years. There have been many weekends with large crowds in the mountains, and I sort of subscribe to the theory, they are just bouncing off each other instead of becoming stranded, lost or injured. -- Walt Walker

TRAINING

As dictated by hoary old tradition, August is San Jacinto familiarization month. But why, you are already asking, is that necessary? If, after all those searches, RMRU isn't familiar with San Jacinto, who is? Close study reveals two answers to this seemingly impenetrable paradox. To wit: (1) Some members haven't seen the terrain in the daylight since they joined the unit and there is always the remote possibility of a daylight search or rescue. (2) There is no end to Bud White's ability to devise ever more improbable circuits which we are then obliged to navigate because they are there.

Given two such compelling motivations, the evident enthusiasm and high spirits of 11/12 of the dozen RMRU men who met at the Fuller Ridge trail head Saturday morning was easy to understand, the misgivings of the single recalcitrant being ascribable to a mysterious but temporary dyspepsia. Our route, if I may be allowed the liberty of referring to it in that manner, forged directly up the Fuller Ridge, heedless of the trail, over seas of vaporous Chinquapin (*Castanopsis Sempervirens*) onto the summit of Folly Peak. The Roadrunner had ominously predicted a dry trip and, as a result, there were those among us who had depleted their municipal water reservoirs in filling their packs. This particular group did not take kindly to the arrival of rain on the summit of Folly.



Before you wonder anymore, let me try and explain the drawing above, if I can. Last month the 'Roadrunner', alias, the Prez, Chairman, President, Headman, or just Jim Fairchild, asked me to write a column once in a while. He said it could be called the Past President's Box or something like that. So, not being to smart, I said I would. However, I had no idea the RMRU Art Department would come up with such a drawing. It's true, that I'm over 30, but that doesn't mean they have to depict me as over the hill. Don't say it, because if you do, you'll probably wind up with an ice axe bent over your head! One of the new ones'.

Once again RMRU has improved our Newsletter. The new type style and columns sure

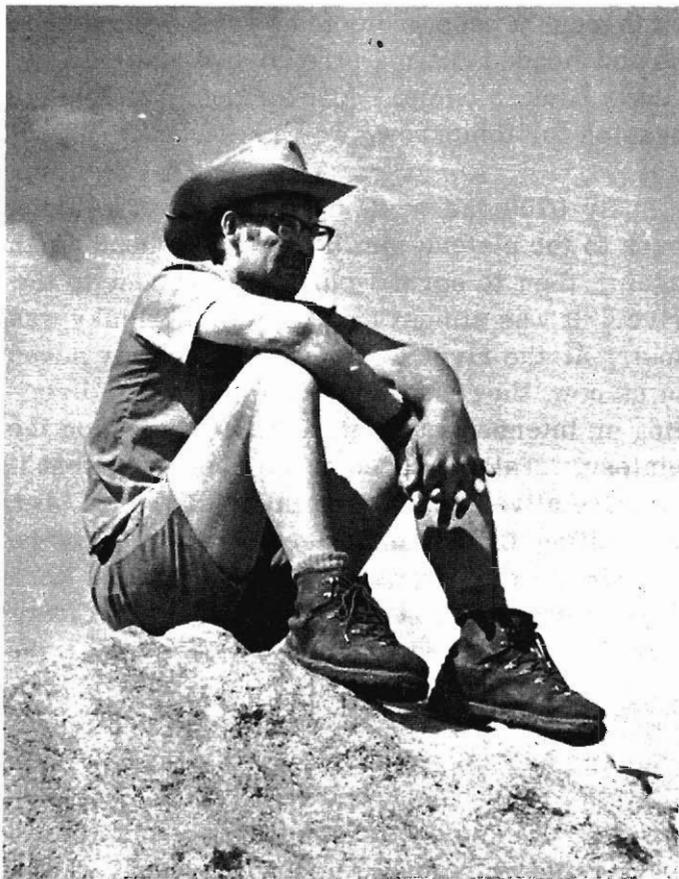


PHOTO BY PETE CARLSON

The Prez, Jim Fairchild, atop Mt. San Jacinto, during the recent training. It was Jim's '49th' time to climb the tallest mountain in the U. S.

From Folly it was a short hop over the summit of San Jacinto to the top of Jean peak. From there we started down the ridge towards Marion mountain, turning downhill to the east just above Wellman's Cienega. It was here that the part of the group wearing short pants came to see the error in their ways. After 45 minutes of slithering over and through wet, prickly Chinquapin, we arrived at the Cienega, where those who had had the good fortune to bring less than a gallon of water refilled their bottles. Another 1000 feet down Willow Creek and we encountered a compass exercise laid out the previous weekend by members of the training committee. By the time Dr. Bell had skillfully led us through that, the big moment had arrived --dinner time.

As those who have been around RMRU for some time are acutely aware, training session dinners are the most competitive activity of the unit. The wise training chairman allows fully four hours for the complete development of the

gastronomic art and woe be to the new member who tries to skimp by on a freeze-dried dinner he picked up at the last minute. By the time the last course has been consumed, even the heartiest member is gravely taxed to stagger off to his sleeping bag to read another chapter of Julia's Child by flashlight.

These excesses notwithstanding, Sunday arrived. Immediately after breakfast, John Murdock set the tone for the rest of the day by charging straight off uphill. That began what grew slowly in intensity, changed leaders several times and ended several hours later on the Fuller Ridge trail as a race. In the meantime, we had crossed the Strawberry Cienega trail, surely one of the most beautiful spots on the mountain, and turned north on the Deer Springs trail, joining the Fuller Ridge trail just above Deer Springs and thereby completing the loop.

We arrived back at the cars somewhat earlier than originally envisioned, pleasantly tired and sustanitally more familiar with the mountain, the blooming Chinquapin and one another's culinary abilities. -- Mike Daugherty

Search and Rescue

1-3 AUGUST - SEARCH - #7118
Kern River, Pyles Boys Camp

Sunday night at 2000 RMRU received a request to help in a search for a 14 year old boy south of Sequoia National Park. He had been missing since Friday night and many people had been in the area searching for him. The California Region, Mountain Rescue Association teams were being called to search the cliffs and other had to reach places.

Jim Fairchild and myself were the only two from RMRU who could go, we left at 2200. After driving until 0330 Monday morning we reached the rendezvous, Camp Nelson, and found only one other car. We assumed the rest were around someplace. We quickly threw our sleeping bags out under a huge cedar and were fast asleep. At 0400 Ray Smith of Sierra Madre

woke us up to say the meeting place had been changed. We were both tired so after getting instructions and Ray saying he would leave trail tape at the turn off, we went back to sleep. Six o'clock came all too early and we were driving again. After more than forty miles of narrow, very winding roads we came to Pyle's Boys' Camp, from which we would search. Breakfast was ready and we joined the group. We met members from China Lake, Sierra Madre, and later, San Diego units.

The boy, Mike Pickering, known as "Pinky" at camp, was on a hike and swim along the Kern River Friday afternoon and had fallen behind as the group ascended the plateau back to camp. He started to take a short cut and the others yelled at him he was wrong, but he said he was right. No trace of him was seen from then, at 1900, until he was found later.

The MRA men hiked the two miles out to the edge of the plateau overlooking the river and discussed search plans. The camp director, Bob "Smokey" McAdams had organized ground and helicopter search the previous days, and told where they had looked. In three groups we headed down the steep, very hot slope, intending to contour the area where Mike could have gotten off course in trying to find camp. Jim and I were the lower group and finally reached the river, which we checked along for tracks and also the swim-ability of the water. Air temperatures must exceed 100 degrees had to be near water to be alive. After regrouping and going up river to the place Mike was reportedly last seen we had lunch. We split into groups and ascended the plateau cross country and along the trail. Our group spotted a "flag" 500 feet above, just below a forty foot cliff. We thought it was Pinky's towel, a signal. We struggled madly up to the spot and found a map left anchored on the rock by a previous searcher. Geographically, we were probably only a hundred yards from where Pinky had taken his short-cut. Well, we continued on up to the plateau and searched northward away from camp, frequently being "faked-out" by prints from searchers on previous days. Light rain showers had messed up tracks. At 1600 clouds came over and a heavy thunder shower drenched us and wiped out tracks completely. We climb-

ed through a pass protected by rain soaked brush and headed down a stream bed that led directly back to camp. After supper, a planning session for tomorrow, we went to bed.

By 0700 the next morning we were hiking back to the plateau rim, this time to head north again, then to spread out for a descent to the river. It was almost four days since Pinky was lost. At the river we re-grouped. Only seven of us now, the rest of the MRA men were directing an intense search with Navy men up on the plateau. Talking together we concluded that if he were alive, Pinky must be by the river. Jim was ailing from the ravages of allergy, so he remained behind as we headed up the Little Kern River for a look at the half-mile or so of easy terrain, then up a ways into the narrows.

We met at the narrows, it looked like one could go another half-mile up the canyon. Nick Bottka of China Lake, and Will Hirst of San Diego (second mission) said they would go on up a ways while we decided where to look next. Suddenly, the radio came alive, "We found him, he's alive, we found him..." For some time we tried to figure out which group it was. It was Nick and Will, just a hundred yards above us. Nick speaks Hungarian, Spanish, and German as well as English. All four were excitedly confused until Jim got the story straight. Nick said he was up the canyon and bring food. We quickly grabbed the packs (Nick and Will had left theirs behind, anticipating swims) and joined the finders. We just waded up the river, sloshing out to see a happy boy in apparently good shape. He quickly finished my can of pears and drank all the juice. Pinky had climbed the plateau on Friday evening and Saturday morning, got thirsty and descended to the spot where we found him--and stayed put, near water and under an overhanging rock. That's why he survived.

We then started down the river and in five minutes were back at easy terrain. As we stopped to rest Mike became very tired because all he had been doing was sitting and the sudden movement and excitement got to him. Jim opened up some honey and a can of pineapple juice, others brought out candy and energy tablets, I made up a quart of Lemonaid -- he just sort of

inhaled it all. We called for assistance in the evacuation and base, having heard the transmission from Jim that Pinky was found and OK, sent in the Forest Service bird. It landed right on some rocks in the river, the signal man stood in water to bring it in. A very happy Smokey was in the bird as they flew Pinky back to camp. We were left with a three-mile hike out, but we all felt jubilant. The bird returned and took the lucky Jim and the Tulare County Sheriff back to camp too. Hiking up we all talked about how great it was that Pinky was found alive and well.

In my one year with RMRU I have been on many missions and felt we really did well. Also, on some missions where it seemed we do little, and on fifteen aborts this year, this one had the best ending. The night before at camp (the phone is in the chow hall) the mother was on the phone with her husband, crying as she said, "no, they haven't found anything yet." I am sure the next day when the word came over the base radio she was crying for another reason, a happy reason. This is what makes me feel proud to be a part of mountain rescue, it makes it all worth the time and effort put forth by everyone. (Jim's note: A letter from Mrs. Pickering, dated 7 August, says, "Mike was checked by the doctor and is fine, he hasn't stopped eating yet." -- Pete Carlson

31 AUGUST - RESCUE - #7119
Little Maria Mountains - Blythe Area

It's about 7:00 p.m. and I've just settled down to watch the Monday night Pro Football exhibition game.... The phone rings, a man is hung-up in the Little Maria Mountains.

We had good response to the call. Ten of us met at the Blythe sub-station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department about 11 p.m. Monday evening. The sheriff's party, under direction of Capt. Ron Bickmore expected to drive to the mountains at daybreak, but Jim and Mike thought it would be better to start in the cool of the evening. We had to get in touch with Don Hodge, the informant, have him meet us at the sub-station, then lead us to the area

in the Little Marias' where the victim Dick Ingram had been laid up since Saturday. A jeep club had tried all day Sunday to reach Dick and met with little success. Monday, Capt. Bickmore, Don Hodge and a C.H.P. Helicopter again tried to reach Dick. Don Hodge had gotten within 150 feet of the ledge where Dick was marooned. Meanwhile the C.H.P. copter was having its' problems. High winds, winding and curling up, around and over the mountains rendered any attempt by the pilot useless. Another day had gone by and Dick was still up on the ledge. As an added note here, Dick had a C.B. radio, an empty canteen and most important a thunder storm, which was to save his life. The rains drained down and formed a pool three feet across and about one foot deep. This was to be his water supply. (I always did believe in God.)

It took us about an hour and a half to drive the thirty plus miles to the trail head. Big Dome Schnurr was the mission Operations Leader and I was the Base Camp Operator. We formed three teams and hit the trail at 1:30 a.m. Tuesday morning. It was a warm night and some of the fellows commented about humidity in the air. Jim Fairchild, Dr. Joe Bell, Ray Ross, John Murdock, Pete Carlson, Mike Daugherty, Bob Nelson and Dave Hadley under the direction of Jack Schnurr were having a real rough go of it. Don Hodge got them started up the side and then returned to base with me. Radio contact was held between the victim and the rescue team by a series of relays. Sgt. Lewis and Deputy Habgood used the C.B. unit in the victims car to contact Dick. They would relay via sheriff's radio to me at base and I would relay information to the teams.

Through this network we were able to conclude that the victim, although a little weak and hungry, was not injured. It was now getting to be around 2:30 and Jim pops a flare. Since most of the team members didn't expect such good results, Jim asked if he could pop another. (Figure that out - He loves those flares.) They did a beautiful job and we at base had our first good picture of what the terrain looked like.

Rough -

Rough -

Rough.

By this time the teams had split up, with the purpose of finding a safe route. Every way seemed impassable - the hour was 4 a. m. and the teams were still seeking a route. Then Bob Nelson and Dave Hadley thought they could make it around to the left and come up the side and then drop down to the victim. Don Hodge, the informant, did think this was wise at the time. As it turned out Dave and Bob reached the victim at exactly 5:38 Tuesday morning.

They gave him breakfast and assured us that everything was all right. In the meantime I had the sheriff call Don Landells for a bird. Don came in about 8:30 a. m. and we promptly sent Jack Schnurr, who had since returned to base, back up to the top with Landells.

It was obvious to see that Dick Ingram was a relieved man when he stepped from the bird.

Many thanks to Don Hodge for his fine reporting of details pertaining to the above mission in the Palo Verde Valley Times. We appreciate the fine breakfast and transportation costs absorbed by Gene Dezan and Don.

-- Hank Schmel

Sustaining Members

It is again time to thank our sustaining members, new and old, for their financial support. We hope to see each of you at our Tenth Anniversary Dinner in October. This month we want to welcome as new members:

Mr. John J. McCoy
Mrs. H. A. Hopkins
Miss Patti Patton
Mr. & Mrs. David Gill
John E. Fischback, M. D.

Also a special thank you to each of the following for renewing their memberships:

Mr. & Mrs. J. W. Hills
Mr. & Mrs. Echols
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph L. Merrick
Miss Elsie Albrect
Mr. & Mrs. David E. Hunt
Mr. & Mrs. Albert A. Grorud

-- Al Andrews



PHOTO COURTESY PALO VERDE TIMES

Bob Nelson unloads packs, while Hank Schmel helps the rescued Dick Ingram from Don Landells supercharged Bell helicopter.



WE'RE ALMOST THERE

