

RMRU NEWSLETTER

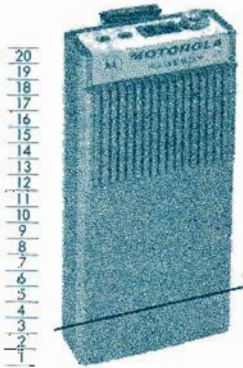
PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE RIVERSIDE MOUNTAIN RESCUE UNIT, INC.
A VOLUNTEER NON-PROFIT CORPORATION
P. O. BOX 5444, RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA 92507
MEMBER OF THE MOUNTAIN RESCUE ASSOCIATION

Coming Events ---

- 9 August, Board Meeting at Bridge's, 1900.
- 20 August, Pancake Breakfast, 0600, Town Hall, Idyllwild.
- 23 August, Regular Meeting, Hall of Records, 1930.
- 26-27 August, Training, sealed instructions.
- 13 September, Board Meeting
- 20 September, Regular Meeting
- 23-24 September, Training, first aid and technical.
- 27 September, Rubidoux-on-the-rocks technical basics, 1900 at the upper parking lot.

Sustaining Members

Pager Fund



Thanks to our sustaining members, both new and old, the pager fund has continued to grow. We now have sufficient funds to purchase two units. The first unit is in-hand and ready to be modified for use with the Sheriff Department's equipment.

Once again, thank you to each of the following people for their very much needed financial support:

- Mr. & Mrs. Ray F. Ross
- Mr. E. C. Folger
- Mrs. E. Marie Fowler
- Mr. H. H. Wentland
- Mr. & Mrs. John W. Murdock
- Mr. Jerry Brown

This month, as last month, we have a long list of past members who have renewed their memberships — thank you all.

- Dr. & Mrs. Noel E. Kirkby
- Mrs. James L. Chapman
- Mr. & Mrs. R. O. Ridenour
- Mr. Jay W. Wiley Jr.
- Mr. Robert H. O'Bier
- Dr. & Mrs. M. R. MacPherson
- Mr. & Mrs. Roy C. Adair
- Mr. & Mrs. L. A. Echols
- Mr. H. E. Divine
- Dr. & Mrs. Jay Wallis
- Dale O. Huseboe, D.D.S.
- Hemet-San Jacinto Grange
- Mr. & Mrs. Charles W. Ricker
- Mr. & Mrs. Wynlow L. Swick

---Al Andrews

TRAINING



Our annual wives' pot-luck at Dr. Norman Mellor's Sky Yacht just below Humber Park turned out to be quite a day. Our plan was to practice multi-

lowers on Suicide Rock and then do some rappel-jumar work. The mountains had been beastly hot for over two weeks and we went prepared for heat. Following some basic reviews and learning for some, we made our way to a point above the east face by the exit from the Surprise (5.8). Anchors we set, Bernie went over the side and down to the uppermost of a hanging belay position on the 400' high face. Joe Bell soon joined him as the new 3/8" bolt was installed to beef up the strength of the original two. Then Art Bridge and Walt Walker rappelled down to their positions, thus putting two men at each point to relay and transfer the litter and attendant we planned to lower. The lower began and thus initiated a magnificent amount of on-the-spot learn-by-doing training. The newer men got quite an eye-opener, the veterans were again refreshed on the techniques, and the whole thing was successful, notwithstanding wise-cracks from some ignorant observers elsewhere on the rock. Hank Schmel had (as usual) chosen to hike with his ailing knee to take movies of the operation. After the litter reached the ground, we all gathered at the base of the rock for a chance to watch Bernie Mellvoy and Dave Hadley climb a 5.7 route (The Breeze) to set an anchor or two for practice with ascending clamps. Just as the two men got fairly well up, the ominous clouds that had been building finally cut loose some strange ovoid drops of wet substance which we soon decided to enjoy, getting soaked with whatever it was. But then, the distant lightning came close enough to be disquieting, so we requested everyone to come down post haste (whatever that means). By the time they came down and we packed, the rain and lightning stopped, but time was short, and we proceeded back to the Sky Yacht.

The pot-luck was a combination social event including renewing acquaintances with past RMRU members who returned to imbibe, with wives too often left behind, and trading "war stories". We commiserated with Mike Daugherty who is recovering from a seriously injured knee. We speculated whether the climber we had seen on Tahquitz Rock hanging in slings on a steep climb for five or six hours would ever get off. Our thanks to Bill and Mary Speck for arranging the pot-luck and preparing the excellent beef roast.

Search and Rescue

1 JULY, THUR. — SEARCH — No. 7239C
High Sierra

RMRU received a call from the Sierra Madre Search and Rescue Team requesting help. After a quick check of available manpower, it was decided

that we could not send any men as it would leave us without enough men for a mission in our own area.

4-5 JULY, TUE. & WED. — SEARCH — No. 7240M
Logan Creek, San Jacinto Mountains

On the morning of 4 July, young Douglas Rogers, age three years and eleven months and another three year old decided that the children's play area at the Lia Hona Lodge at Pine Cove had lost its appeal and they decided to explore further afield. Some time later the parents started looking for them and eventually found the companion down the dusty dirt road about a half mile away. What had become of Dougie was not very clear, in fact it was decidedly garbled. A search was instigated by people of the camp and the Pine Cove Fire Department, all to no avail. At approximately two o'clock, the Riverside County Sheriff's Department was notified and our team was called.

When we started arriving we got organized with a team member working with the Pine Cove people and the obvious areas were searched again and we spread out into new areas. With the very high temperatures of the day and the age of the child, it became obvious that all stops had to be pulled and Jim decided to call on the Mountain Rescue Association teams in Southern California for help. The Montrose, San Diego and Sierra Madre teams were soon rolling and the Idyllwild Fire Department made all of their available man-power available to help along with the Pine Cove force. Also, the C.H.P. helicopter from Indio and a tracking Bloodhound belonging to the Sierra Madre team was flown in.

This made a very strong search party with good communications and it was possible to literally look behind every tree. The search continued through the night, the Bloodhound was not working well, probably because the extreme dryness and heat had dissipated any scent and no reliable tracks were found.

With daylight forty-nine men from the California Division of Forestry joined the M.R.A. teams and the search was expanded. By this time a very wide area had been covered and recovered and one must admit that we were becoming increasingly concerned for the welfare of the child and the parents no doubt were beginning to despair. A pair of trackers from the Border Patrol were brought in and taken to a place where it was thought that tracks had been found.

About noon on the fifth, the teams were reassembled at the Base of Operations and Jim Fairchild of RMRU, who was directing the overall operation, assigned small groups to again cover the likely areas. Four men were sent down into the Logan Creek drainage which had been searched by two

groups already. Before long, tiny barefoot tracks were spotted by sharp eyed Dave Hadley and soon these were found on top of the Vibram foot prints of the previous searchers. Some ten minutes later there was a reply to the calls of the searchers and unless one has experienced the sensation himself, it is hard to appreciate the feeling one has at that moment. It's a mixture of relief and happiness and a huge surge of adrenalin. Bernie and Dave who were ahead of me and my son, Art Jr., made an ascent up the side of the brush-choked canyon in incredible time to find the boy in good shape. He was badly scratched, having been barefoot and shirtless the whole time. He was thirsty and very glad to see Dave and Bernie. He got ahold of Bernie's neck and wasn't about to let go.

Eventually Art Jr. and I got there and after a drink and a minute's rest, left Dave and Bernie to clean up scratches and to ration out water and juice to the boy, while we proceeded to try to break a path the half mile through the very dense brush to where the C.H.P. helicopter was sitting.

This was one of those searches that makes the whole activity so very worth while and satisfying to people in rescue work. It makes up for the long drives which end up as aborts and the frustrating, sometimes week-long searches when the person may not even be on the mountain. The cooperation between the teams of the Mountain Rescue Association, the fire department volunteers, the Sheriff's office and the local people was outstanding. Without all of their efforts the story might not have had such a happy ending. -- Art Bridge

10-15 JULY - SEARCH No. 7241 Tahquitz Valley & Vicinity

In the middle of the morning on Monday the Sheriff's Office called for us to begin a search for Mark Seils, 21 years of age. He and a companion, Steve Pesis, had been hiking and camping around Reed's Meadow, just below Tahquitz Meadow, at the 8000' level in the San Jacinto Mountains east of Idyllwild. Steve had left Mark at their camp Sunday about noon with the understanding that Mark would follow and meet Steve at Humber Park. This is the last Mark was seen.

We began by deploying men into the area to check for tracks and, of course, to try for actual contact with Mark. The CHP helicopter was called and Walt searched the hiker trap of Tahquitz Canyon. Nothing was found by Monday night so we called for other MRA teams. Tuesday morning we had men from Sierra Madre and San Diego. The helicopter from the Los Angeles Fire Department came and hauled men quickly to Caramba helispot (3 mi. east of Reed's Mdw.) and Tahquitz Meadow. The search

was expanded in the near vicinity and a four man team started down Tahquitz Canyon to come out Wednesday, having found nothing conclusive. So many people use this entire area that anything we might have found could have been left by someone besides Mark.

Wednesday ended with a report that Mark had been seen by a group of young YWCA girls at Skunk Cabbage Mdw., only a half mile from Reed's Mdw. They indicated that he said he was not ready to be found yet. We had moved base camp down to the Palm Springs Airport, but went back to Idyllwild. Dave Crimi, a former member of RMRU had most graciously permitted us to camp and eat at Camp Maranatha, a church and other group-type camp at Idyllwild. His baseball field makes an excellent helispot and place for radio contact with units in the search areas.

Our plan for Thursday was to go there sort of sneaky like -- no orange shirts and insignia, no radios apparent. We swept the area repeatedly, staked out men to watch the exceedingly limited water points, and mingled with the campers informally in case Mark showed up for water or food. No luck. Tried about the same thing on Thursday with more sweeps in different places. All this time the maximum day-time temperatures were setting records, we knew that Mark should be running low on food and medication for his problem of convulsive epilepsy. Well, what to do?

Saturday we went for the full-scale ground and air search routine. More hours of meticulous flying right on tree tops and along faces and ridges by CHP pilots Trask, Harris, and Carbaugh - those men really did a fine job. Our intrepid friend from many previous missions, Don Landells, flew several times for search and pick up men at hover points. Several of us now had a rock-by-rock, pool-by-pool knowledge of the high country. Our efforts ended that evening with "nothing".

This account is a brief description of our first real failure. I guess it's a failure, it has not absolutely been proven just where Mark is (was) - on the mountain or off.

We wish to commend Lt. Ray Campbell, Sgt. Bill Herring, Deputies Renner & Grutzmacher, Sgt. Dave Duncan, for their exceptional efforts in aiding the MRA teams during the operation. We are further pleased with the aid and cooperation given by San Diego and Sierra Madre. They really put themselves into an operation that became more discouraging as time elapsed.

We truly commiserate with Mr. and Mrs. Seils, and when Mark's fate is finally learned, we hope lessons arise from it that will help us if we ever get a similar case. -- Jim Fairchild

15 JULY, SAT. - RESCUE - No. 7242M
Devils Slide Trail, San Jacinto Mountains

The search for Mark Seils was grinding into its sixth day and I was just starting a search run with C.H.P. pilot Bill Carbaugh. He was new to the mountain area and I was going to point out the different areas as we searched. We were almost to Saddle Junction when a team from the San Diego group, hiking up, radioed that Boy Scouts hiking down had reported to them a probable cardiac victim. They began hiking up as fast as possible while Bill and I flew around trying to locate where the victim was. During this time I radioed to base to call team physician Norm Mellor (he was at his mountain cabin) and have RMRU's oxygen system ready. Shortly, the San Diego group radioed they were with the victim.

The victim, a forty year old father of two Scouts was hiking with his sons' troop when he complained of being tired and not feeling well. At the next switchback, he sat down and suddenly pitched forward. Scout leaders immediately recognized the problem and began mouth to mouth and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation. The San Diego team took over when they arrived and continued with the same procedures. Meanwhile, Bill and I had flown back to Camp Maranatha. Bill climbed out and pilot Art Trask, with more mountain experience, took over, while the oxygen system was loaded aboard. In less than ninety seconds we were in the air again.

The turbine powered Fairchild helicopter we were flying in was not designed for tight area rescue work. We flew around the Saddle Junction area looking for a place to set down. I was sure we would not find a spot as we had looked before on previous missions. Finally Art said he would try a one runner on the ledges to the west of the saddle. He spotted a ledge and began to set down over it while I watched the tail rotor. The right runner was about two feet from the ground when I yelled, "No go." The tail rotor was almost in the brush. He lifted the big bird up about three feet and held it there and said, "Jump." I grabbed the oxygen pack and started to swing it out the open right door. It wouldn't move as one of the pack cover cords was caught in the door. Art flew the bird out from the rocks and held the stick between his knees as he got his pocket knife out of his pocket. I quickly cut the cord and we approached the helispot again. Art once again, with some outstanding flying, hovered the big machine over the sandy ledge and I dropped the oxygen pack out and quickly jumped after it. While I ran down the trail with the pack, Art returned to pick up Norm.

When I arrived at the victim's side, I quickly assembled the Elder valve to the oxygen bottle and

began positive pressure breathing for the victim. All this time the San Diego team members were continuing with the closed-chest heart massage. The helicopter returned to the ledge and it was Norm's turn to jump from the hovering machine. (How many doctors you know with married children jump out of choppers?) In a very short time, Norm had hiked down to us and gave the victim an injection of Xylocaine. We continued our efforts while Norm examined the victim. He finally told us we could stop.

When you believe in search and rescue as much as we do, and are able to help save lives each year, it is painfully hard to have to accept that a person you tried to save is pronounced dead, even when the autopsy later reveals that the man probably died as he hit the ground due to an emense heart attack.

With the help of Explorer Scouts, U.S. Forestry Ranger Chuck Murray and his crew, we put the victim into the wheeled litter. We moved him to Skunk Cabbage Meadow where he was flown out by Art in the C.H.P. helicopter.

Everyone involved tried their best, and quoting Norm, "We're not God and you don't have to feel bad when a victim dies when you know he had the best care possible from the very first moment."

---Walt Walker

25 JULY, MON. - RESCUE - No. 7243C
Tahquitz Rock

At 2230 I received a call from a worried wife that her husband, who had promised to be home early to go shopping, and another young man were overdue from a climbing trip. I called the Banning Sheriff's sub-station with instructions to notify the resident deputy at Idyllwild to go to Humber Park and try to make voice contact with the climbers. He did, the men were below the rock on the trail back. The wife was understandably relieved, and so were we. --- Jim Fairchild

31 JULY, MON. - SEARCH - No. 7244A
Temecula, southern Riverside County

About 2100 the Elsinore sub-station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department called Al. They reported to him that a two year old was missing. He got the gang rolling, the abort call came about 2120, too late to stop some of the men - the child was found safe.



The Road

Runner sez-

The deadly seriousness of Search and Rescue looms never clearer than in a narrative of a recent operation in Baja, California, by the San Diego and DeAnza units. They were called to assist evacuation of a teenage girl in Canyon Tajo on the steep eastern scarp of the Sierra Juarez. Upon arrival that night at base above the canyon, they learned the girl was dead, per three other exhausted hikers with the "Y" group. They went down three miles, descending 2000' elevation. It was hot, humid, no shade or water for the coming heat of the next day.

The summer conditions had already taken their toll on an unprepared, unwise party – now the rescue units had to carry a body back up. They made it at 0715 the same morning, but not without a number of heat exhaustion cases in their own ranks. These were not serious enough to stop them from continuing to hike out, but eliminated their effectiveness on the carry. Seven plus gallons of water were carried down to the group from above, arriving just as their original, and copious, water supply terminated. These units knew the problems ahead of time, but had a job to do. They knew also, that they could not accomplish it during the daytime with its sun. It is interesting to me to read of their decision not to operate there during daytime, for during the Mark Seils search as Operations Leader, I had opted not to deploy men into areas of greater distance and difficulty where they would have had to carry their own water and experience temperatures of about 100 deg. F. You simply do not take chances in extreme heat unless you have absolutely reliable and adequate support for the men in the field.

It was great to see Dan MacIntosh taking full part in the Suicide Rock Training. His fall seems to have only intensified his dedication to SAR, maybe because he now has a personal, very clear understanding of what it's all about. -- Pres. Jim
