

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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Editor & Publisher, Walt Walker
Photographers, Pete Carlson
Hank Schmel

Coming Events - - -

- 12 January, Board Meeting, 1900 at Fairchilds'.
- 26 January, Regular Meeting, 1930 at County Hall of Records, 4080 Lime Street.
- 29 January, Basic Winter Training, Round Valley.
- 9 February, Board Meeting, 1900 at Walkers'.
- 23 February, Regular Meeting.
- 25-27 February, Snow & Ice Training, Mt. San Geronio.



The Road

Runner sez-

When we consider the operations of 1971 we cannot but feel a wave of gratitude that all went so well. We are continuously blessed by all the positive factors of SAR: quick, successful missions; generous donors who enable us to increase our material inventory; excellent rapport with agencies that call us for missions, in particular our Riverside County Sheriff's Department; dedicated and capable members who respond and perform so as to effect the successful missions. We look forward to 1972 as another year when we will provide the kind of aid people need and expect when they have a problem in the wilderness. With the Help and Grace of God we can accomplish this as we have in the past.

My seven months as RMRU's President have been especially rewarding because of the tremendous effort every member with any kind of responsibility has shown in getting things done. My first love in SAR is field operation, but I've come to enjoy working with the cooperative and self-starter type of men on the Board of Directors and Committees. We have eleven areas of

administrative endeavor, sometimes more when new situations arise. The whole operation goes quite smoothly, we just tell the need and make assignments, then await the results. Isn't that called "delegation.....?" Vice-Pres. Mike Daugherty jokingly says, "We have as many committees as we have members." Mike also has built the Membership Committee into an effective means of informing, screening, and starting off new members. Secretary Ed Hill, also Rescue Com. Chr., is recording and printing our minutes, and working hard on improving rescue techniques. Treasurer Pete Carlson keeps our financial situation well documented and pays bills with quickness. He also works on the van and committees. Training Chr. Steve Bryant has sparked us to lively and effective training. You've seen Hank Schmel's fine work in the Newsletter, he also is Quartermaster and works hard on the van. If we let him, he would try to do three times as much. Tom Dadson coordinates Public Relations and Education, races sports cars, does most of the work at a local, enormous steel mill, and even hears wedding bells tinkling in the future. Walt Walker, ex-Pres., was re-elected to the Board in November. His interest in all aspects of RMRU's life continues at a high level. He personally puts the Newsletter together from copy the rest of us submit, then gets the printing process going. Of the men mentioned above,

only Hank is not on the Board. We hope to tell you about more of the men in future columns. Incidentally, I am pleased about having men on the Board who are in their early twenties to balance the "thirties". Then there's the forty-five..... -- Pres. Jim

Sustaining Members

May we thank each sustaining member for making the purchase of our latest 5-watt Motorola radio possible. It was received early in December and will be well used by springtime. Thank you again for making it possible for RMRU to have the very best in team equipment available today.

We want to welcome Mr. George Dessaux to the sustaining membership and thank again the following people for renewing their memberships:

Kennel Club of Riverside
Mr. & Mrs. John A. Revie
Mr. & Mrs. Wynlow L. Swicks
Mr. Howard M. Loy
Mr. & Mrs. E. J. Fischer
Mr. & Mrs. Fred Camphausen
Mr. & Mrs. Ronald E. Harris
Mrs. M. A. Johnston
Mr. David Harrah

-- Al Andrews

Search and Rescue

29 NOVEMBER - SEARCH - #7130
North Face, Mt. San Jacinto

(Ed. note: RMRU thought that this mission, needed to be told from both the top and the bottom. So, the following articles resulted.)

I had just returned from a weekend of climbing, cleaned up, and was almost asleep on Sunday night. Then came the inevitable phone call. We have a mission on the North Face of Mt. San Jacinto. Two 17 year old boys are

overdue on a climb up the North Face, we are to meet at 6:30 a.m. at the Banning Airport to meet with Lt. Ed Brown, of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, and then do a quick search by helicopter.

We arrive at 6:15 a.m. and find clouds, fog, and strong winds. No bird. A quick conference finds Mike, Art and Bernie going up the tram and then hiking in from Humber Park where the boys were supposed to come out. Jim, Walt and I go to Snow Creek and wait for a break in the weather, and the possibility of a bird.

Arriving at Snow Creek we find winds up to 50 mph and looking up at the face we begin to worry. San Jacinto Peak is in and out of the clouds, in a condition known as, 'high winds on the mountain'. (Ed. note: The expression was from a mission long ago. RMRU was told there were high winds on the mountain and that it was too dangerous for us to go.) Jim set up his 25 power scope and Walt his 10 power binoculars. We take turns looking at the face for some movement, nothing.



PHOTO BY PETE CARLSON

UNUSAL BASE CAMP DUTIES - Walt Walker takes a turn scanning the North Face in search of the two missing boys.

The fathers of the boys arrived and we explained what we were doing and what problems existed. We talked to the teams up on the mountain, the conditions sounded bad and the hiking was going slowly. By 11:00 the first

team from the tram was at the peak and what they reported was bad. Everything on the peak was covered with ice, and the wind was blowing 30 to 50 mph. Mike and Art said it looks three times as bad as Chino Canyon North, a mission several winters ago, considered by many as the worst conditions ever encountered by RMRU on a rescue. To go down the face means rappelling over ice and rock, it can not be climbed. The second team is near the peak, we advise they group together in the summit shelter and wait for more information.

During this time Lt. Brown has been trying to get a helicopter. He comes back with Capt. R. S. Martin of the California Highway Patrol. We talk together and decide to give the C. H. P. bird a try. At 11:30 the C. H. P. helicopter arrives and flies up the face to look. At 11:45 they see the boys and ask them to wave if they are all right. They wave and point down canyon as they walk. We tell the fathers, who are suddenly much happier.

We tell the teams on top, they breathe a sigh of relief. Jim and I decide to hike up to the boys by way of a short cut and help them get out quicker. As we start hiking at 1800 feet we begin to sweat and take off jackets and go down to short sleeves. After 2 hours we are with the boys, Chip Hoffman and Lyn Dessaux. They are fine and still have a little food left.

They tell us they tried to follow the creek bottom all the way and it had taken more time than they thought. They had turned back late Sunday but could not get all the way out. It had taken 3 days to get up there by the bottom and Jim and I were to them in 2 hours. It's all in knowing the route. There are stories that RMRU members in earlier years have tried this same route at age 17 and with the same results, failure to make the top.

We all four hiked back to the road having an enjoyable conversation about climbing and the North Face. Chip and Lyn said they would like to try again under better conditions, and using the route we showed them they should make it.

It is ironic that as Jim and I sweat in short

sleeves at the bottom, the teams on top wore full winter gear and were walking on ice, all this in one mission. We of RMRU must remember this when we get a call. What do we bring? EVERYTHING! -- Pete Carlson

Monday morning, the 29th of November was a time both of anticipation and of apprehension for the members of RMRU. All call-outs affect us much this same way; but on this occasion, our concern was high. There were two young men, age seventeen, with only moderate climbing experience, fourteen hours overdue on an attempt to climb San Jacinto peak from Snow Creek, in the Banning Pass. Those of us who had climbed this route to the peak several times under varying conditions, both summer and winter, knew that the light rain in the valley could mean something very different high on the mountain.

As the team members gathered at our 0630 rendezvous in Banning, the leaders made the day's assignments. John Murdock and Ed Hill left for Humber Park to hike the route that the missing boys had planned to descend. Mike Daugherty, Bernie McIlvoy and I were directed to take a special tram run, scheduled for us from Palm Springs.

At the top of the tram, our expectations were fulfilled, with a chill 36 degrees and a strong wind blowing. We set a quick pace up through Tamerack Valley and on up toward San Jacinto Peak. About a quarter of a mile from the top, we really began to "understand the problem". Every boulder, every needle on the pine trees and every leaf on the chincapin was coated with clear hard ice that gave no evidence of wanting to melt off.

At the summit, we checked an empty hut, and then on up to an unproductive register. Mike and I left Bernie to man the radio while we crept over the side to check down the fifty degree slope. In all our years of hiking the hills, we had never seen anything quite so forbidding. The north side, as far down as we could see, was solidly coated with thin but very hard ice from the brief storm of the night be-

fore. The temperature was well below freezing and the wind was in the fifty knot range, giving an unbelievable chill factor. The thought uppermost in our minds was the hope that the boys were not there, hurt, in that top several thousand feet of the peak. Again, we got on the radio and stressed the need for a helicopter to search the huge area where they could possibly be. The understanding operations leaders down at the Supervan advised us that a "bird" was on the way and for us to stand by in the hut.

Our next radio transmission from Base brought us the good news that a C.H.P. helicopter was flying the north face, and for us to stay put. About fifteen minutes later, we were advised that the two boys had been spotted at about the 5000 foot level, and that they were descending. As of that moment, what had been an extremely grim affair became a glorious hike. At least for us, the team dissolved into the "finest hiking club in the world". We enjoyed a sumptuous lunch in the shelter of the hut and then made a quick descent to the tram. We had a pleasant ride to the valley, again as guests of the most cooperative Palm Springs Aerial Tramway and on around to the Snow Creek Base where we awaited the arrival of Pete, Jim and the two boys. -- Art Bridge



PHOTO BY PETE CARLSON

THE WATERFALL - Chip and Lyn pause a moment, on the way down, before the falls that slowed them down in their try for San Jac.

26 DECEMBER - SEARCH - #7131 Ortega Mountains above Elsinore

"Bob, this Al Andrews".

"Oh, wonderful," I thought, hoping he had called to wish me a happy day after Christmas, or happy six days before New Years, or anything. But no such luck. This time it was a call from the Elsinore sub-station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department. Four teenagers were missing on a hike they had started five hours earlier, at three in the afternoon. Starting from the road near Ortega Oaks, high in the mountains above Elsinore, they planned to hike along the stream and into a rocky section of Morrell Canyon; the "falls" it was called. They didn't have food, warm clothes, or hiking shoes. In fact, one girl wore long, white "Granny" boots.

Bernie McIlvoy, Mike Daugherty, Pete Carlson, John Murdock, and Hank Schmel were talking with parents and local residents when Jim Fairchild and I arrived at Ortega Oaks at 9:30. It was a clear, moonlit night, and the temperature, already in the thirties, was dropping steadily.

Mike dispatched six of us to follow the creek into Morrell Canyon. We found tracks immediately, but some were going in and some led out. Further on, Bernie, Hank, John and I went up the left wall of the canyon to follow an abandoned road. Jim and Pete stayed in the bottom checking for tracks. But after a while they came to a steep area and, from high above, we saw their lights picking up the opposite wall.

Our road soon ended in a patch of brush. After trying several routes down the cliffs to the stream, we found a dirt-filled chute. With welcome belays from the brush we got down to the stream and found fresh tracks -- the print of a Granny boot is unmistakable.

Jim radioed from a high ridge. The kids had answered one of his calls. We listened too and heard a faint yelling above the sound of the stream.

After a half hour of hurrying along the creek, we found them sitting on a rock. Their feet and spirits were damp and they were chilled through. We gave them hats, down jackets, and food. While they stood on a foam pad, we squeezed the water from their socks, and searched our packs for dry ones. Soon, their shivering became less violent. The top of one Granny boot had been shredded. We taped it so that it wouldn't drag on the way out.

The best way out, radioed Mike and Walt Walker, was to continue down stream until the canyon met the road again. And we did just that -- as soon as John bandaged a finger Hank had smashed in an earlier fall.

Walking out was easy: probably only half a mile. When a flare shot up from the team starting up from the road, we were surprised at how close we were.

In a warm house at Ortega Oaks, the kids (Lynn and Harry Ingersoll and Howard and Dola Childress) sipped hot chocolate with their parents and basked in the warmth. It was past midnight, and they were tired. But they seemed amused by the laughing and kidding that accompany orange shirts and a completed mission.



PHOTO BY PETE CARLSON

The sheriff of 'Big Dome' (Jack Schnurr) and Steve Bryant volunteered irreverent comments as Dr. Joe Bell worked on Hank's crushed finger. Dave Hadley watched silently, looking splendid in his Florsheim Siege boots (loaf-

ers). Although Hank had crushed only the end of one finger, Joe was so enthralled with his new type of bandage that he fashioned a huge white monument that threatened to envelope poor Hank. Only because of our forcible intervention and continued insistence did he agree to leave an opening through which Hank could breathe.

The sheriff's department arranged for dinner in Elsinore. It was not until we had consumed many steaks, eggs and fried potatoes that we started for home somewhere around 2:00 a.m. -- Bob Nelson

TRAINING



11 DECEMBER - HELITAC
Western Helicopters, Inc. - Rialto

Once again we were blessed with one of those California liquid sunshine days to stage our annual Helitac training.

Our host, Alec Fergusson, owner of Western Helicopters, Inc. of Rialto, was more than ready for RMRU. When we arrived at 0745 the coffee was hot and there was a large box of donuts. Everyone traded 'war stories' while we consumed the coffee and donuts.

Then it was time to go to work. Alec and the pilots who fly us met with Jim, Mike, Steve and I for a planning session. We discussed the training plan and safety while around the birds.

Everyone then met on the back lot where the birds are parked. For over two hours we discussed, demonstrated and practiced without running up an engine. We covered safety, installing litters and radios and entering and exiting the bird.

It was then time to take to the air, so we moved over to the open training field about a half mile away. All RMRU personnel, new and old went through the complete training session.

We practiced bringing the bird into tight areas with the use of hand signals; entering and exiting the bird while on one runner and while in a hover; loading a litter onto the hovering bird (also everyone took their turn as the victim in the litter and received a ride on the outside, just to get the idea what a victim experiences); being out on the runner ready to jump and having to get back into the bird as it turned both ways.

Alec, provided two supercharged Bell helicopters and five pilots at his expense. He is not only a booster of RMRU by providing this fine training, but is also a Sustaining Member.

On behalf of all RMRU members I extend to you Alec the thanks for the finest Helitac session we have ever had. -- Walt Walker



PHOTO BY HANK SCHMEL

ONE RUNNER LITTER LOADING - Practicing loading a litter on open ground appears easy, but it really isn't. However, it is much easier than doing it in a narrow canyon off a boulder on a actual mission.



Bill Barrett



Roy Cox



Darrel Elenberg



Ron Hittle



Carl Wickman

"FLY US",

said five of

Western

Helicopters

top pilots.

PHOTOS BY HANK SCHMEL