

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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Walt Walker, Editor

Coming Events ---

- 14 June, Board Meeting at Southern California Gas Co.
 - 20 June, Regular Meeting at County Hall of Records.
 - 23-24 June, Training.
 - 12 July, Board Meeting.
 - 25 July, Regular Meeting.
 - 28 July, Training, Technical on Suicide or Tahquitz Rock, and Wives' Potluck.
- Note: The Board of Directors now meets on Thursdays.



The Road Runner

sez- by Pres. Jim Fairchild

You may have noticed that during searches that go through the night we usually bivouac for a couple hours' rest just before dawn when no hot leads are being followed. This renews strength and alertness with the hope of preventing poor judgement. If we are searching for a small child and believe that omitting the rest will enhance the search, we will keep on going. It's a bit grim, but bearable, but just try doing this the second night!

Our Pageboy system is getting good results. With two batteries each Pageboy can operate around the clock. This enables quick contact and cuts out the "blank" times when a man may be away from the phones and otherwise unavailable. We have been very happy with the response of our Sustaining Members in providing us with funds - We have seven Pageboys in operation and five more ordered. For the system to function, we call the Sheriff Office Radio Room and ask the dispatcher to push the encoder button marked "RMRU" and "Give the following message . . ." In the field we hear a "beep" and the request to call a certain phone number. We are also told of aborts this way.

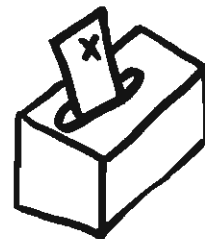
HELP!

WE NEED A NEW

SUSTAINING
MEMBERSHIP
CHAIRMAN!

Ever since our Sustaining Membership was begun years ago Al and Natalie Andrews have worked hard to do the necessary paperwork and answer donors with personal letters. The work load is a bit much, particularly since Al is also our Personnel Coordinator for callouts and other unit business. Hence, we need someone or a couple, not necessarily directly connected with RMRU, to handle the already well set-up system. Here's a genuine opportunity to do a lot for RMRU.

FLASH-
ELECTION
RESULTS-



We've finally elected and assigned officers and committee chairmen for 1973-1974.

President, Jim Fairchild; Vice-president, Pete Carlson; Secretary, Ed Hill; Treasurer, also Pete; Quartermaster, Hank Schmel.

Chairmen: Financial, Pete Carlson; Sustaining Membership, Al Andrews (until replaced); Membership, Art Bridge; Training, Dan MacIntosh; Medical, Norm Mellor, M.D.; Rescue, Ed Hill; PR-Education, Hank Schmel; Van & Gear, also Hank; Equipment Development, Bernie McIlvoy; Communication, Al Andrews; Newsletter, Walt Walker; MRA Representatives, Dan MacIntosh and Walt Walker. The extraordinary talents and capabilities of these men make RMRU function. Only one problem, too many others want the services of these men in order to benefit from their talents and capabilities.

TRAINING



18-20 MAY -- BRUSH, WATER AND SNOW
North Face of San Jacinto
By Ed Hill

The training write up read: Climb the north face of San Jacinto. In my mind, this climb consists of three parts. First is the desert up to the Istmas where we camp. It is called that since it is only fifty feet wide with stream carved canyons dropping steeply off on both sides. The second part consists of brush, waterfalls and cliffs. The main problem is finding a route around or through them. Then comes the final kicker; five thousand vertical feet of snow in about three miles. It is a long climb and you know that you have done something by the time you have finished.

Friday evening found six of us hiking through the desert. Just at dark I lost the trail and tangled with a manzanita bush. Pete Carlson had to reroute me and then lead the way up to the Istmas to bivouac.

Early the next morning we were climbing through the brush and the rocks. It had been a wet spring so the brush had really put on new growth making our progress more difficult. At the mouth of Coldwater Canyon we found a stream running down over the route so Gary Gillespie pioneered a new one. Climbing out of the canyon we decided that we preferred the rocks to the brush so we dropped back into Snow Creek canyon below the last waterfall, and we had to climb it using a route that Bernie McIlvoy used when he solo climbed the route several years ago.

Finally came the snow. It was perfect for step kicking. Gary Gillespie and Rich Quackenbush toiled relentlessly away. Each step carried us higher, but it seemed to be a fiendishly long way to go. We ran into an old friend. This was a large chock stone with a torrent of water running over it. A snow tongue carried us to within six feet of the chockstone, but it was impossible to surmount directly. Bernie and Gary climbed down between the snow and the rock and then climbed up past the chockstone. The rest of us preferred a brushy gully on the western wall of the canyon.

The rest of the group continued up the snow. I preferred the rock with an occasional trickle of water. At one of our hourly stops for water and rest, we

heard Jim Fairchild and 'Stony' Stevens call us over the radio from the summit. They had waded up through soft snow from the other side of the mountain. They told us that the snow had turned very soft high up. With a thousand feet to go we found ourselves sinking up to mid-thigh. We decided to rotate the lead. Each man would kick one hundred steps and then drop back. I kicked one hundred and ten steps and then let Tom Mortensen, Gary and Rich stomp the rest of the way up. At the top of the peak we found a little boulder hopping, and then we had climbed the north face again. It was seven in the evening and the sun was sinking in the smoggy west.

Down to the summit hut where we squeezed in with three other hikers for a dinner of soup, steak, strawberries and corn on the cob, all of which was carried up the north face.

Search and Rescue

28 APR., SAT. -- SEARCH -- No. 7324A
San Jacinto Mountains

The Saturday quiet was broken by a call from the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, Banning station, that three doctors were overdue from a hike. Just as we started to roll they showed up at Humber Park and the mission was cancelled.

8-10 MAY, TUE.-THUR. -- SEARCH -- No. 7325M
Ice House Canyon, Mt. Baldy area

RMRU was one of the many California Region - Mountain Rescue Association teams that responded to a call from the San Bernardino Sheriff's Department. The mission was a search for a nineteen year old man many days overdue. The mission ended when the young hiker was found dead from a fall.

20 & 21 MAY, SUN.-MON. -- SEARCH -- No. 7326M
Whitewater Canyon
By Dave Hadley

Ah, such comfort: a large bowl of homemade ice cream, good companionship, and a soft chair. They say all good things end and this situation terminated with the ominous Sunday night callout. "Hello . . . Hmmm . . . two boys overdue at Whitewater? . . . ages

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 3)

12 and 15 . . . sure . . . pick you up in about 15 minutes. See Ya."

Steve Bryant and I joined the rest of the team at the fish hatchery at about 10:30. The boys parents were on hand to describe the intended route. The two boys, Jim and Dave Marple, started at Vivian Creek Saturday morning. They intended to climb Grayback and camp that night in the vicinity of Fish Creek Meadows. Sunday would finish the hike via the California Riding and hiking Trail. We were astounded, the described route was approximately 30 miles, much of it in deep snow. By Bernie's calculations even a good hiker would be pressed to make it five to ten miles out of Fish Creek by Sunday night. Whitewater was out of the question. We talked with the parents again. They were sure the route was as described. No they didn't think the boys intended to descend the North Fork of Whitewater, a long but not impossible two day hike.

Our calculations placed them well into San Bernardino county. RMRU cannot just enter any other county and initiate a search without permission from that counties sheriff. A long phone call with San Bernardino established the search plan. They would use their bird to search the high country and we would contact Don Landell and fly the lower section of the trail. As most of the team were tired from the ascent of the North Face of San Jacinto that same weekend, we opted to get some sleep.

Monday morning found me strapped into Don's helicopter as we slowly flew up the California Riding and Hiking Trail. Within ten minutes Pete Carlson radioed that the boys had just walked into base camp. Incredible, there were only horse prints in the soft ground fifteen feet below me. How did they get off the mountain. Back at base we learned that the boys intended from the start to descend the North Fork. The deep snow and heavy brush had unexpectedly delayed them. The entire team was impressed with the ability of these two youths. Over steak and eggs we discussed age requirements for membership in RMRU. 12 and 15 HMMMM.

21 MAY, MON. — RESCUE — No. 7327M

Tahquitz Canyon

By Pete Carlson

I had not been home fifteen minutes from the last mission when the phone rang. "This is Al, Jim will be back to pick you up in a few minutes, we have a S.O.S. mirror flash from Tahquitz Canyon." I grabbed my gear, put on my shirt, and stepped out to wait for Jim.

In fifty minutes we were coming into Palm Springs and learned that the mirror flash was spotted from the airport. We meet a deputy there and saw the flash way up in the canyon. As we left the

airport to drive to the canyon roadhead, Bob Watkins of SMMRU came running up to the truck. He got in and rode with us to the canyon mouth.

It seems a group of 303rd Air Force Rescue Squad men were on a training in the canyon and should have been out the night before. Bob felt the flashes were from his group and offered to help. At the canyon mouth we grouped together and waited for Don Landells and his helicopter. When Don arrived we had fourteen people ready to go if needed. I put my pack on the bird as a radio was installed, then I got in and Don and I were off for a first look.

We flew up canyon towards the flashing mirror and I spotted a orange spot way ahead of us on the canyon side. We soon saw a orange smoke flare go off as we came in closer. Don flew in close and found a rock to let me off on, not more than thirty feet from the group. Don did his usual great flying as I got out with only one runner on the rock. I took off my pack and Don lifted off.

I talked to the men and found out that there were two groups. One had gone down Tahquitz Canyon and this group came down Long Canyon. They were to have met two nights ago in Tahquitz Canyon, but they were far behind schedule and had not made it till last night. Coming down Long Canyon they had done repel after repel and on the last one the rope got stuck and they had to leave it. So they had climbed the canyon side and flashed the mirror for help. It was decided to fly the three men and gear out and then Don and I would search for the other two men in Tahquitz Canyon.

After all were out Don picked me up and we began searching up to Cramaba and then a slow sweep down the canyon bottom. After twenty-five minutes of no luck we saw three persons camped below where the first group had been taken out. Don did another one runner touch down and I got out and went over to talk to the people. They said two men with packs came through one day before at 1430. Don picked me up and we called base, only to find out the two men had just walked out.

Don and I flew back to base and everyone gathered around and told war stories for awhile. Then off for the traditional after mission meal before the long drive home.

23 MAY, WED. — SEARCH — No. 7328A

Herkey Creek Campground

Once again the Banning station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department called for assistance in searching for a ten year old mentally retarded boy. The call was received at 1805 and at 1815 while our call-out was in progress the boy was reported found.

26 MAY, SAT. – SEARCH – No. 7329A
Boulder Basin Campground

Another Saturday afternoon was about to be shot down as we had been called by the Banning station to search for two young children missing for about three hours. While we were driving to the area in the San Jacinto Mountains the “beepers” were activated by the Riverside County Sheriff’s Department and we were saved the drive all the way into the mountains.

29 MAY, TUE. – SEARCH – No. 7330M
Tahquitz Rock
By Walt Walker

My mid-morning work day was interrupted when Al Andrews called and said that calls of help from Tahquitz Rock had been relayed to the Idyllwild Fire Department and they in turn had contacted the Riverside County Sheriff’s Department.

When I arrived at Humber Park I was met by Deputy Duncan and he said Fire Chief Bud Hunt had hiked up to the bottom of the rock and was calling.

After most of the team members had arrived we had a skull session and decided a helicopter was the best way to go. The sheriff’s department contacted Don Landells and in about an hour he arrived at our favorite Idyllwild heliport, the ballpark at Camp Maranatha.

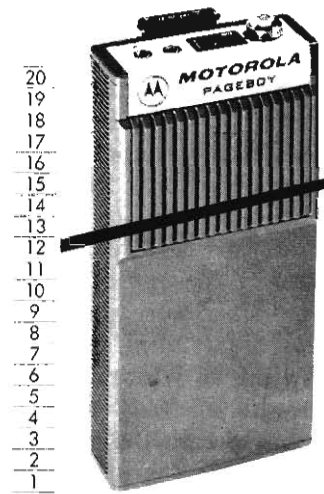
After the bird was outfitted with a RMRU radio, Bernie McIlvoy climbed aboard. Don flew him back and forth across the many faces of the huge climbing rock. Finally Don sat down on the summit and let Bernie off. Bernie proceeded to climb around the top of the rock, calling all the while. He then descended the back side and hiked around to lunch rock. Meanwhile Pete Carlson took to the air with Don and they searched the rock again. With no sightings and no responses to our calls, it was decided to call the mission off.

Sustaining Members

by Al Andrews

Hopefully by the time you read this issue of the newsletter, we will have five more pagers in service, ready for the busy summer months. We must give our sustaining members complete credit for providing the necessary funds for our pager system. We hope to add an additional six pagers throughout the summer months.

Pager Fund



We have two new members to welcome this month:

Mr. David E. Randel
Mr. & Mrs. Alan Woolfolk

and the following are renewing their memberships:

Memsahibs – Southern Calif. Gas Co.

*Mr. Theodore L. Young

*Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth L. Andrews

*Mr. & Mrs. Milton M. Levy

Mr. & Mrs. L. A. Echols

*Soroptimist Club of San Jacinto – Hemet Valley

Boy Scouts of America Troop No. 1

Mr. Russell L. Gauslin

Mr. & Mrs. James B. Fairchild

Highland Outfitters, Inc.

Thanks to you all for your financial support.

**Century Club Member – Donation of \$100 or more.*

SORRY WE'RE LATE AGAIN