

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

Volume XII, Issue 1, January 1976

Jim Fairchild, Editor
Walt Walker, Publisher
Dona Towell, Artist

Search and Rescue

SEARCH

Mission No. 7601M

**1 January, Thursday
Pine Cove area,
San Jacinto Mountains**

By Larry Roland

The call came in at 4 p.m.; a five year-old and a seven year-old missing at Pine Cove. I stopped by to pick up Jim Garvey, another member of RMRU, and we were on our way. Arriving an hour later we were filled in on the details.

The children were last seen at approximately 12:30 when their parents had let them go down to look at the ice, not realizing it was an iced over pond they were referring to. The five year-old's hat was discovered beside a hole in the ice. Many of the visitors to Wilderness Pines were standing around the pond while rescue officials from the Pine Cove Fire Department and Riverside County Sheriff's Deputies were breaking the ice up preparing to drag the pool.

Although the children were most likely in the pond from the evidence we had, we didn't know that for sure. In mountain rescue we try never to make assumptions, consequently, our job was to search the land. An early team consisting of Pete Carlson, John Dew and Bernie McIlvoy had responded to a report that someone had heard calls for help below the entrance to the recreation area. After investigating that without discovering anyone they re-

turned to base just as the rest of the teams departed.

There were 10 of us, in four teams, sent to cut perimeters around the entire area. We first stopped by the family's campsite to inspect the children's footprints and then set off up the various roads to our assignments. Five minutes later we heard 10-19 on the radio; return to base.

Back in base we saw the mother hopefully standing by the outdoor heater and learned that one of the children had been pulled from the pond. Moments later the camp was cut by the mother's cries of anguish; she had been informed.

Having had some counseling experience in a crisis intervention clinic, my assignment was to stay with the mother and do whatever I could. She was taken inside a home where two friends of hers and myself tried to comfort her. Gradually she began to talk and calm down. Later Doctor Ray from Idyllwild arrived and evaluated her condition.

All in all it was a very unhappy beginning to a new year for the family and very solemn experience for those of us involved in the search operation. ■ RMRU

RESCUE

Mission No. 7602M

**2 & 3 Jan., Fri. & Sat.
Skunk Cabbage Meadow
San Jacinto Mountains**

By Bud White

Our new year was punctuated by a call for help for a reportedly very sick solo hiker near Willow Creek. Being a long week-end available team members were few, so they reached on the back page of the call sheet for associate members and found me.

The call was for us to meet at the Palm Springs Aerial Tram, which we

did, only to find that the informants, after some thought and further questioning, were now sure that the victim was near the top of the Devil's Slide Trail; so we all abandoned the tram and headed for Idyllwild and Humber Park. Gary Gillespie and Bernie McIlvoy were sent ahead in Gary's Alfa Romeo so they could bomb (like fast) to the victim.

We all arrived just before Gary and Bernie left so I joined them since I had a stove and we hurried to where the victim was last reported only to find he wasn't there. We walked through the cold, icy woods calling his name until near the upper end of Skunk Cabbage Meadow we heard a call. We found the victim had been befriended by two campers and they had taken him to their camp and fed and cared for him. He was in perfect condition.

It turned out that he had hiked to San Jacinto Peak and upon his return got very ill with severe breathing difficulty. He got scared and called for help and two other campers heard his cry. They remembered the ranger at Long Valley, near the tram, and hiked that way to report the sick man. They apparently were not familiar with the area and thus the conflicting reports. As it turned out, even if they had pinpointed his exact location, he wouldn't have been there because the two campers who took him in moved him to their camp.

We bivouaced for the night and hiked the now well hiker out after daylight. What started out to be a potential nightmare of evacuation by litter down an icy trail turned out to be a rather pleasant night on the mountain. Many thanks to the back-up crew that wrestled the litter two thirds of the way up the trail before being told to turn back.

We reaffirmed that making your presence known by shouting the victim's name pays off. Also, unfortunately, we once again learned that a thorough, in depth interrogation of

the informants can save a lot of extra effort.

Many thanks to the Riverside Radio Association and their ham radio system for the back up of our communications system by getting messages to our co-ordinator, families and employers. ■ RMRU

RESCUE

Mission No. 7603C

**10 January, Saturday
Sierra San Pedro de Partir,
Baja, California**

By Jim Fairchild

Sierra Madre Search & Rescue team called to say manpower was requested for the technical evacuation of a Mexican boy's body from near the Observatory north of Canyon del Diablo. Upon learning that 17 members of the San Diego team were already there, and that 4 Sierra Madre men were going, we opted to remain on standby. Well, as it turned out, it was quite an epic evacuation, and we should have gone. It was accomplished in good style without our assistance, but due to unknown factors and complications, was quite different from what preliminary information indicated. It's always that way in Baja. ■ RMRU

SEARCH

Mission No. 7604M

**24 Jan., Sat.
East Side of
San Jacinto High Country**

By Steve Zappe

At the January regular meeting Walt informed us that Chief John McCoy of the Riverside County Sheriff's office had requested RMRU to continue its search for Mike Self, missing on San Jacinto since Thanksgiving. It was decided that we could utilize our regular January training time for the search, so two separate teams were organized: one group was to approach the peak from the west side and search on Saturday and Sunday, and the second group was to

search the area between the Tram and the peak. The West side team consisted of Pete Carlson, Bud White, Ed Hill, Larry Roland, Gary Anderson and Hal Fulkman, while the Tram side team was composed of Rick Pohlers, Rich Quackenbush, Jim Fairchild, Tom Aldrich, John Dew, Walt and Kevin Walker, myself, and two members of the Hemet Valley Search and Rescue team.

The Tram team assembled Saturday morning at the lower station (elev. 2500) at 0630, and after riding up the first car at 0700 departed from the upper station (elev. 8500) by 0730. However, it became obvious the moment we left the top that the lingering snow pack would hamper the search. We had all assumed that the unseasonably warm weather experienced in Riverside during the month would have melted all the snow from the Thanksgiving storm, but the amazing amount still on the ground was the subject of conversation throughout the day. There were drifts up to 3 or 4 feet deep in places from that storm in which Self was reported lost, so his body could very easily still be buried under the snow.

The entire team traveled the icy trail to Round Valley (elev. 9100) where plans were made to split the team into two smaller groups. The one group, led by Jim, was to sweep up through the rocky outcrops on Bud White Ridge to the Wellman Divide trail and on over to the junction with Tamarack Valley trail, where we were to rendezvous with Walt's group, which was going to search around the trail through Tamarack Valley up to the junction.

We left Round Valley at 0915, and Jim's group decided to press up to the peak (elev. 10804) rather than wait for Walt, so we had lunch at the summit around 1145. There was less snow on the west face of the peak, so we swept down through the rocks to the saddle between San Jacinto and Jean peaks (elev. 10400) where we waited until Walt's group arrived at 1300 and ate their lunch. At this point we were in a good position to establish radio contact with the West side team. They verified that they too were encountering more snow and ice than anticipated, and their pace was pretty slow.

At 1400 the Tram team reassembled at the saddle and headed down

the trail toward Bud White Ridge. We decided to sweep down the relatively snow free section between the ridge and Wellman Divide to Round Valley. We spaced ourselves between 50 to 100 yards apart and beat through brush most of the way, but to no avail. We met at the ranger's hut in Round Valley at 1600 and set out for the Tram, prepared with crampons for the trail which had become even more treacherous during the day by thawing and freezing. We assisted several people hiking back to the Tram who were wearing street shoes and slipping on the ice, which ended up being the only concrete accomplishment of the day. We arrived back at the upper station at 1700 and caught the next car down. It was decided to delay any further searching for Self until later in the Spring when there isn't the problem of snow to deal with. ■ RMRU

\$USTAINING MEMBERS —

BY MIKE DAUGHERTY

This month we thank the following new and renewing Sustaining Members for their help:

New —

Baseline Sheet Metal, Inc.
M/M Jack Mihaylo
John Pohlers
M/M Elder Wester

Renewing —

M/M Jack Bamberger
Bruce Carlson
M/M H. E. Carlson
*Dave Crimi
Mr. H. E. Divine
M/M Dave Harrah
Mrs. John Kraft
*Dr. & Mrs. Norman Mellor
Weston Robinson
Joseph Slavik

*Century Club, member,
donation of \$100 or more.



The Road Runner Sez- By Jim Fairchild

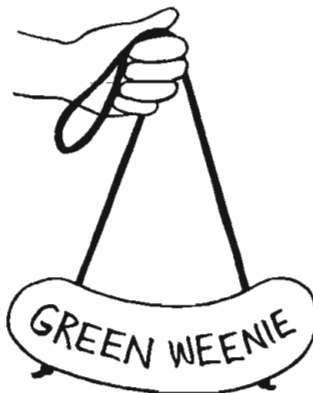
We are now, finally, soaking up the wonderful snow and rain after many dry, warm weeks of drought. We anticipate no call-outs this weekend because the storm arrived in time to prevent potential "backpacking disasters" from entering the mountains. This is an untenable, unjustified attitude, but usually works out. We cite the sudden storm that arrived during the middle of the Thanksgiving Holiday and resulted, in the long run, of our assisting 37 people off the mountain. We assume that one is still there, either hidden under remaining snow or by a truly obscure location (Mike Self).

Bewildering as this may sound, there are those individuals about the area who harbor a great deal of animosity and resentment toward our unit. They dish out quite a number of negative criticisms and rumors that sound authoritative and convincing, unless, listening with practiced ear, subjecting the information to logic and reason, we find it to be just so much imagined, distorted, even malicious gossip. Should you encounter this sort of thing, take it all in, then check with a member of RMRU. We mention this only because it's become of more than insignificant occurrence.

Probably it's time to once again warn our readers that there are people floating about who pretend to be members of RMRU but are not, and never have been. They try, through imposture, to get discounts at mountaineering supply shops, and to obtain information from relatives and others. It is a great idea to request display of membership card or call a known member for verification. Using two terms from the above paragraph, these imposters sound "authoritative and convincing."

Department of "Ain't It Ridiculous!" Last Saturday (31 January) Larry Roland and the old Roadrun-

ner, miffed at having missed the originally planned 24 January training down the South Fork of the San Jacinto River, did the hike ourselves. It was a beautiful warm day as we hiked along the edge of Lake Hemet, past the dam and down into the canyon. We encountered no difficulties, but plenty of mud, rosebush, and (sob), dormant poison oak. We probably stepped past its leafless stems two or three times. At least once, bare-armed, we touched a stem. Monday, after running, we noticed (how could we miss it!) a pustule on the right elbow. Today, a week after the hike, it's a six by two inch supporting rash. This caused us, on advice from Dr. Ray Castilonia, to miss the rescue in Yosemite. Yes, Art, we should have worn a long-sleeved shirt with cuffs buttoned. This puts us back in line for the "Green Weenie" award. Fortunately,



we're way back in line. We did not miss the training, but it had been changed to a re-re-search for Mike Self, which we did not miss.

If any of our newsletter readers (besides members) are truly interested in wilderness first aid in depth, they can do no better than to obtain a copy of the Second Edition (1975) of *Medicine For Mountaineering*, published by the Seattle Mountaineers and edited by Dr. James A. Wilkerson. It is a thorough, definitive exposition of procedures required to assist victims of disease and injury in the backcountry. While aimed at expeditionary mountaineers, it hits all of us who aspire to help through SAR. If any text could be termed "required reading," this would be it. ■ RMRU



FIVE YEARS AGO —

Our January 1971 issue reported a motorbike accident for which RMRU had been called, at Vail Lake. Mike Daugherty and Pete Carlson got there and found an 11 year old boy lying on the ground with 50-75 people standing around. Mike cut off the boy's jacket from an arm that hurt a bit and found a compound (open) fracture of the left humerus (upper arm bone). The ambulance soon arrived and the mission was over.



Ten Years Ago —

Quoting the write-up printed in the January, 1966 Newsletter: "We started the new year off with a mission that started on the evening of January 1st. The Riverside County Sheriff's Department called at 2230 and requested assistance in locating three boys missing in the Idyllwild area. The three boys had hiked up the Devil's Slide Trail to the 'Saddle'. The boys' tracks led from there and most of the time it was easy to track them in the virgin snow. They went out the ridge to Tahquitz Peak and crossed over areas that were icy and dangerous. They made it to the fire lookout tower just after dark and broke in. Just before sunrise, the Idyllwild-Banning team found the boys and we arrived about 45 minutes later. After a short rest we roped the boys up with us and began the descent. Each of the boys fell more than once and if they had not been roped they would have suffered quite a fall down the steep slopes."

We had assigned the Banning-Idyllwild team the Southridge Trail, ourselves the ridge from the Saddle to Tahquitz Peak. We saw several places where the boys' tracks led to the brink of steep gullies on near-ice. After seeing their rubber-soled galoshes we knew it was a miracle they did not slip to their deaths at the first gully. Our own progress, carrying heavy winter packs, was made miserable by alternating (without warning) very hard ice and very deep, soft snow.