

Volume XV, Issue IV, April 1979 — Kevin Walker, Editor — Walt Walker, Publisher — Dona Towell, Artist

Avalanche....

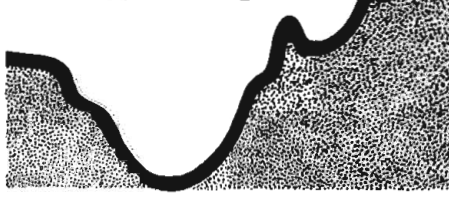
....a mass of loosened snow, earth, etc. suddenly and swiftly sliding down a mountain and often growing as it descends. - Webster's Dictionary

We sincerely agree with the above definition, but would hasten to add that standing closeby is considerably more exciting than words could ever describe.

RMRU PHOTOS BY JIM FAIRCHILD



TRAINING



**6-8 April, Fri.-Sun.
Snow Camping and Rescue Skills
Baldy Bowl, Mt. San Antonio**

By Jim Fairchild

RMRU's Training Chairman has historically had it rough. He seems to be looked at as the authority figure who

causes us hard work. Our present Trn. Chm., Larry Roland, perseveres and plans fine trainings, the stigma notwithstanding. Sometimes he even goes beyond what might be called his "duty," as you will see.

Friday evening, in various groups, we reached the roadhead by San Antonio Falls in the San Gabriel Mts. and hiked up the steep path toward the bowl, in elevation from about 7000' to 9000'. Weather clear, warm, bright moonlight. The groups camped at various points, depending upon route finding and states of exhaustion from hectic weeks of endeavor on the flatlands.

Saturday morning we eventually met at a flat place with a terrific view just below the bowl. The snow was soft and wet, but we at least could practice some self-

arrests with ice ax, some roped-team travel, and at least demonstrated anchors in the snow such as bollards, snow flukes, and seated belays. The old photographer (the author) and his dog were burning film and playing in the snow, respectively. It being so hot up there it seemed a good idea to leash Kody, the dog, to a shady tree below and easterly from the practice slope. As we headed in that direction the first of Roland's super-contrived training exercises came to pass . . .

"Whomp," then, "crack," and we all looked up. A thousand feet above us and a bit easterly a fracture line appeared below which several acres of two-foot deep snow slabs were sliding. Subsequent break-offs appeared edging westward, and soon we watched spellbound as a huge (for this mountain) avalanche approached and passed nearby. Fascinating. No rumble or roar, just a bewitching sort of swish. It all looked harmless and like fun. Because of going for the Shady Tree, Kody and I were only a few feet from the western edge of the mass, one of us burning more film, the other restlessly observing, probably understanding a lot more than the film burner. The mass went over a steeper area between our camp and the

Sierra Club Lodge, then stopped. We all carefully descended alongside, thankful the avalanche missed our campsite by thirty yards or so. We gathered in a discussion group to trade information and wonder at the size and force of the now stable slide. Before that, however, I asked Don Chambers to go far out into the broken slabs, cover himself, and wait to be a search victim for Kody. I kept Kody behind a tree some distance away, then after a while took him on leash toward our waiting group, loosed him with the familiar command of "Find 'em," and away he went on his first avalanche search. I still am well pleased with his effort - good pattern to find scent, staying on it through the five-foot depth of uneven blocks, then returning to get me after finding Don. It was a quiet and very thoughtful RMRU that de-briefed the various aspects of the avalanche, then retired to camp for setting up tents, digging snow caves, and building igloos.

Late that afternoon Walt and Kevin Walker, Brian Hixson, and Pete Carlson climbed up to a point above our practice area and found a fracture line the same as the one above the avalanche, but that portion of the face did not slide. Clearly and obviously, the Lord withheld that part of the snow. We all wondered if it would let go the next day. Of course, we would not be around to find out. Anyway, good going Larry, that part of the training weekend was a most instructive and memorable one!

Around dusk we were through with supper, standing about in the balmy evening talking, Kody and I were already snoozing in Hal's tent when . . .

"RMRU, you have a mission on the North Face of San Jacinto Peak . . ." the voice on the pager said. Really, Larry, this is . . . "OK, you guys, this is for real, get packed." In two hours and four minutes the entire group was back at the roadhead.

Some of the aspects of the avalanche, referred to above, bear amplification. The slide was relatively slow, not the roaring, tumbling freight-train-powered onslaught usually thought of and seen. It was about 400 yds. wide, traveled about 1500' downward. No snow cloud. As I watched it pass ten feet away it seemed to be going about fifteen to twenty miles an hour. But that was deceptive. I thought a person could survive being caught in the midst of it. But (again), closer inspection showed sufficient depth, size of blocks, and churning of blocks to crush and suffocate fragile humans. Our intimacy with a real, live avalanche was tremendously effective in helping us understand such phenomena, and to know how to handle ourselves and help victims in the future.

• RMRU

From the Editor's desk—

In this month's issue of the Newsletter, you will probably notice the large number of search & rescue missions we have had, eight to be exact. The combined number of missions from January - March only came to six. So much for a quiet Spring.

We have always wondered why we have never had a Winter mission on the North Face of Mt. San Jacinto, that included injuries to the subject involved. Well this month our questions were answered. During the month of April we not only had one mission on the North Face, we had two. All in all a fairly busy month. • RMRU

Search and Rescue

SEARCH

Mission No. 7907A

**1 April, Sun.
Lake Cahuilla**

We received a call from the Indio station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, requesting our services to search for a 35 year old man missing from in the foothills west of Lake Cahuilla. The team was to meet at the Indio station. While enroute, the pagers went off, with a 10-22 (return to base) mission cancelled.

• RMRU

RESCUE

Mission No. 7908M

**7-8 April, Sat.-Sun.
North Face of Mt. San Jacinto**

By Walt Walker

For the second month in a row, the unit has been activated, for a mission on Saturday evening of a training weekend. Once again we were some distance from the roadhead. (Ed. note: *The Board of Directors is studying the problem of good training vs. good response time.*) In fact we were in another county. (See *Training write-up.*) We had made plans just in case a mission did occur while we were training. A number of the members had brought their pagers along, so we could rotate usage due to ni-cad

battery voltage live. We had also carried in a field antenna to use with the pagers.

When the pager 'beeeeped' Saturday evening, we disconnected it from the antenna and connected a team handietalkie in its place. RMRU co-ordinator, Al Andrews, had contacted the Sierra Madre Search & Rescue Team and asked them to broadcast a message to us. In just a few minutes after the pager call, our radio came to life. Sierra Madre has a transmitter on Mt. Wilson and by using it, they advised us that we were needed for a rescue. They also sent a mobile unit into the Ontario area and it remained in contact with us as we hiked out.

The message was passed to the rest of the team members and everyone started packing. In less than 20 minutes we were headed downwards toward the roadhead. I had started my wrist chronograph when we started packing and stopped it when we arrived at the cars, **two hours and four minutes** had elapsed. We drove to the nearest phone and called Al for more details. He related that a man had been injured Saturday morning at the 6,500 foot level of the North Face. We advised him that we would drive to the Snowcreek community and start the mission at five Sunday morning. (Ed. note: *It would have taken longer to climb up, than wait for the helicopter. Plus it would have been very hard to carry all the necessary equipment.*) He telephoned the information to the Banning station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department.

Shortly after 5:00 a.m. Sunday we gathered at the 'Snowcreek roadhead heliport'. Final plans were discussed and just after 6:00 a.m. Don Landells arrived in his Jet Ranger helicopter. Pete Carlson and I were ready to go and we climbed aboard. I briefed Don on the situation and we lifted off. In just a few minutes we were in the shadows and the mission would be almost completed before we were again to be in the sun.

Right at the 6,500 foot level we spotted a man waving and also another person in a sleeping bag. Don tried a one runner touch-down but the angle of the slope was too great for clearance of the main rotor blades. He flew up the canyon another 300 feet and found a spot where he could touch down. Pete and I carefully climbed out onto the hard snow. Don lifted off and we started down the slope with our ice axes in hand. We heard a familiar noise and looked back only to see a number of football sized rocks tumbling down the steep slope. The sun was already warming the rocks and snow above us. My hardhat, all of a sudden, felt good!

When we got to the two climbers they related what had happened. They had started climbing on Friday and had reached the area, where we now were, that evening. They had camped right at the canyon wall on a small flat area of the



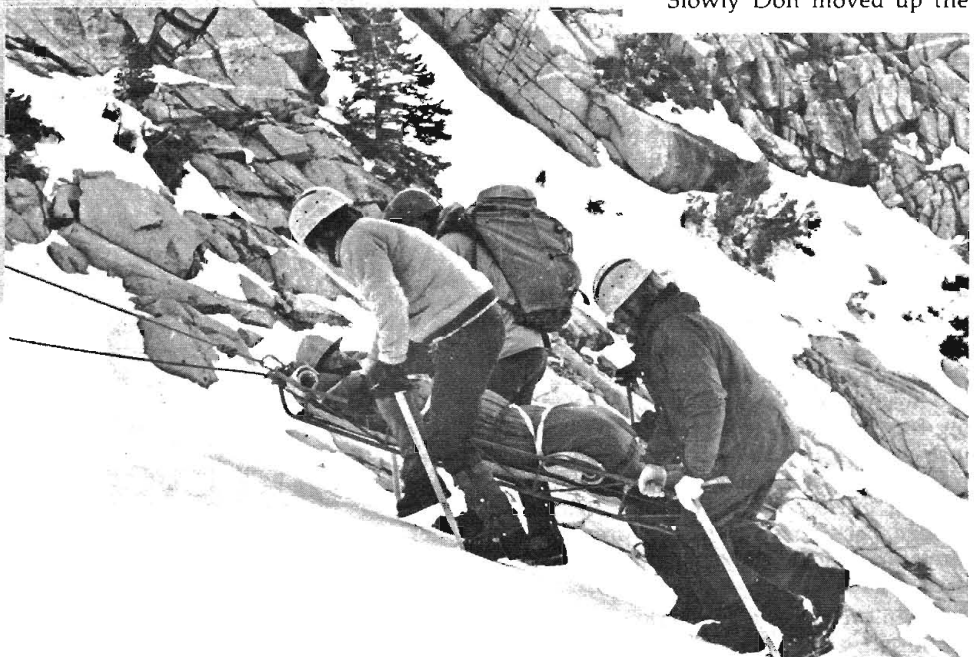
hours of training and working together really showed. We were now almost ready to move the injured climber up the steep slope. While we had been talking back and forth on the radio about what equipment was needed, Don had made a suggestion as to how we could move the litter up the slope.

What was decided upon and used that day was a first for RMRU, and quite possibly a first in mountain rescue. Don had suggested, that instead of using our normal mechanical advantage system, that he use the helicopter to pull the litter up the slope. Two 300 foot ropes were tied to the litter, one would be used as a safety belay and the other would be attached to the helicopter. The team members who had set up the anchors, attached the belay rope to their system and we radioed Don that we were ready.

We picked up the litter, and slowly moved the litter towards the center of the slope, all the time thinking about the rocks that occasionally came thundering down. Ed Hill moved even further out as Don neared our location. Don hovered and Ed attached the second 300 foot rope to the sling hanging down from the bird. Slowly Don moved up the



RMRU
PHOTOS
BY
JIM
FAIRCHILD



snow. At about 4:00 a.m. Saturday morning they were awakened by a muffled sound and looked up just in time to see blocks of snow tumbling down at them. The injured man had been struck by a large block and then literally buried. His partner had dug him out and gave what aid he could. At about 11:00 a.m. two other climbers happened upon them and said they would continue on up the face and go for help.

The injured man was in good spirits considering what he had gone through. My examination of him led me to believe that he had fractured a number of ribs and possibly his right hip. I was also concerned that he might have some internal injuries as well. Using the handietalkie, I had brought in, base was advised of the situation and the equipment that would be needed for the evacuation.

In four more trips back up the canyon, Don flew in the necessary equipment,

a Stokes litter, snow pickets and flukes (to be used as anchors), numerous ropes and the following team members: Tom Aldrich, Don Chambers, Jim Fairchild, Hal Fulkman, Jim Garvey, Ed Hill, Rick Pohlers and Larry Roland.

While some of us carefully put the injured man into the litter, others were setting up the anchors. The teamwork demonstrated was tremendous, our long

slope and the slack in the rope was gradually taken up.

To a casual observer, and there weren't any around, I'm sure what happened next would have appeared rather easy. Don Chambers and I were at the head of the litter, Tom Aldrich and Hal Fulkman were at the foot. We carried the litter, while Don's helicopter pulled. Sounds simple, however helicopter's don't run out of ox-



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

ONE RUNNER PICKUP — Don Landells balanced his Jet Ranger, on the right front half of the runner, while RMRU members quickly but smoothly slid the litter (with the injured man) into the hovering helicopter.

xygen as fast as us frail humans do. The four of us were **gasping** for air as we completed the 300 feet non-stop! (After the mission we all agreed that we could not have gone another 20 feet.) We moved the litter over to a platform that had been cut into the snow slope and waited a few seconds for Don to fly back downhill.

Don put the right runner down on the slope and I climbed into the back of the bird. The rest of the team slowly slid the litter into the bird and I secured it with the seat belts. Don lifted off and we were on our way to Desert Hospital in Palm Springs. Kevin Walker had been sent to the hospital previously and he was waiting for the bird as it landed on the lawn just outside the Emergency Room entrance. We off loaded the litter onto a waiting gurney and Don took off. He headed back towards the mountain to move the other members and equipment back to base.

When everyone had been flown off the mountain, and Kevin and I had returned to base, we held a critique of the mission.

As usual we discussed the things we would do differently the next time, but all in all, it had been a **good** mission. We learned the next day that the injured man had 14 fractured ribs and considerable internal tissue damage.

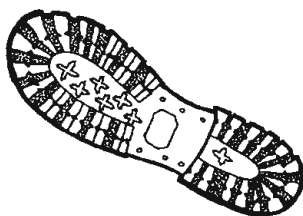
There were a number of RMRU members whose names have not been mentioned. And I regret I cannot recall all their names. They had all remained in

base, ready to go if more help had been needed on the mountain.

Guess what?

"I'm proud to be a member of RMRU".

• RMRU



Coming Events-

MAY

- 2 — Regular Meeting
- 4-6 — Training
- 18 — Board Meeting

JUNE

- 6 — Regular Meeting
- 8-10 — Training
- 27 — Board Meeting

JULY

- 11 — Regular Meeting
- 14 — Training
- 18 — Board Meeting

SEARCH

Mission No. 7909A

**9 April, Mon.
Upper North Fork
San Jacinto River**

We received a call from the Banning office of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department that two young men had failed to return to their vehicle Sunday afternoon. While enroute to the Pine Cove Fire Station, the pagers went off with news that the two men had hiked back to their vehicle safely. • RMRU

RESCUE

Mission No. 7910M

**11 April, Wed.
Base of Tahquitz Rock,
San Jacinto Mountains**

By Kevin Walker

Wouldn't you know it, every time you get a vacation, and during that vacation you are trying to paint your house there is a rescue call. Well, I suppose that it does not happen everytime, but that it just feels that way at the moment. It was a little after 11:00 a.m. when the call came with news of an injured climber at the base of Tahquitz Rock. While my dad was making calls to his people on the call list, I went ahead and loaded the gear and the teams rescue toboggan into the back of my truck. With that done, we made one more stop and picked up fellow team member Brian Hixson, and left the valley for Idyllwild.

Upon reaching Humber Park, we were met by the informant, and a Deputy from the Sheriff's Department. We were told by the informant that he and his climbing partner were almost to the base of the rock when the accident occurred. He also told us that his partner thought he had broken his ankle and was in pain and had started to become shocky when he left him for help.

So, with first aid gear, stove, and packages of soup and all the other miscellaneous equipment, we headed for the rock. Since the snow was hard, we made very good time in reaching the injured man. As we neared the man, he made the comment, "Well guys, I guess I'll never be accepted at this rate." Just then it hit me, Chris?? Sure enough it was Chris Noon, a RMRU applicant. Do surprises never cease to end.

While I made an examination of Chris' injuries, Brian started on a platform to place the toboggan on, and Walt started the stove to cook some hot soup to help warm up Chris. After getting Chris covered up and warm, we placed a full leg air

splint on his right leg, because after examining him everything pointed to a fracture of the right ankle. As Chris finished his third cup of soup, he told us that he and his partner were approaching the base of the rock, and were preparing to do an ice climb up the Larks (a climbing route) when Chris punched through the snow and lost his balance. And in doing so lost grip of his ice axe; needless to say with the hard snow, he took off like a bullet. Even though it may not seem that lucky, he was fortunate to have hit the pine tree that he did, because if he would not have struck it he would have went another 200 feet and into some very large rocks at the bottom. Off hand I'd say the tree was the best bet.

Just as Chris was finishing his soup, the rest of the team arrived with technical gear and the toboggan to make the multiple lowers down the snow covered slope. After placing Chris in the toboggan it was just a matter of making the lowers back to Humber Park.

Even though everything went well in bringing Chris down, and then transporting him to the Hemet Hospital, the X-ray report wasn't so neat. His ankle was indeed fractured, so severely that he had to be admitted and be scheduled for surgery to have two pins put in his ankle. Hey, Chris, get well soon so we can have you join the gang in orange shirts. • RMRU



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

TOBOGGAN RIDE — The sun was shining, it was early afternoon, the injured man Chris Noon was in good spirits, the belaying progressed smoothly and teamwork was the order of the day.

A message from the rescuee...

It started out as a routine climb on Tahquitz. Two climbers made their way to the rock along the North face, and upon approaching the Larks, traversed to the left. The intent was upon a sloping de-headreal. We never made it that far; on the traverse there was an accident.

It's not important to know who, what happened, or why, but rather a mountaineer of good physical condition, and understanding of the area was injured.

The climbers had brought light provision. Nothing needed for that particular incident. No bag, or parka, nor a stove for warming soup.

The injured climber with only a light wool coat, a rope, four Karabiners, and a

stocking hat waited for three hours, knowing that help would come.

However, what happens to the person who doesn't know help is on the way? I'm sure that the injured person will deteriorate quickly if all hope is lost. I must now question the duration of time before this happens. Experienced, weather and severity of injury all have an important influence on the individual.

Those readers who are not members must be asking the point of this article. In short it was an evaluation of RMRU's response and procedure from an experienced observer, who was injured.

I, Chris Noon, was that climber. I experienced the ordeal first hand, and objectively viewed RMRU with a critical eye of both a prospective RMRU member and an injured person.

I'd like to say that I found no fault what

so ever on the behalf of RMRU. The lapse time between notification and arrival at the accident scene was, in fact surprisingly quick. Examination and evaluation of injury was complete, and correct. Handling and rigging was smooth and professional.

Now I would like not only to thank those who brought me down from the rock, but also request that this article be placed in the RMRU Newsletter. Again, thank you. • RMRU

SEARCH

Mission No. 7911A

**12 April, Thurs.
Santa Barbara County**

We received a request from the Los Padres Search and Rescue Team to search for a small child lost out of one of the campgrounds in back of the city. Due to our mission load that week, we were unable to respond. • RMRU

RESCUE

Mission No. 7912M

**12 April, Thurs.
Mt. San Jacinto**

By Walt Walker

Mid-morning, while at work, I received a telephone call from Capt. Ray Canova from the Banning office of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department. He told me that he had received a report that a young man, with his leg in a cast, had re-injured the leg. He was reported to be in the hut near the top of 10,831 foot Mt. San Jacinto.

We discussed a plan of action and Ray suggested that Don Landells pick up my son Kevin and I at the Hemet Airport, then fly to the summit and pick up the subject and fly him back to Hemet. It sounded like a good plan, so we started the wheels turning.

First, I telephoned our coordinator Jerry Muratet, and asked him to put the rest of the team on standby. Then RMRU members, who live in the Hemet - San Jacinto Valley, John Dew and Brian Hixson were called and asked to meet at the airport.

Just as Kevin and I arrived at the airport, so did Don Landells (in his Jet Ranger helicopter), followed by John and Brian. Some quick instructions were given to John and Brian, Kevin and I climbed into the bird and we started for the mountain. The Hemet Search and Rescue Team was contacted and asked to be on standby and also to send a couple of mem-

bers to be at the hospital to assist when the bird returned.

It was a beautiful clear, almost windless day, and it seemed to me that I would be back to work very quickly. However, it did not work out quite that fast.

The tremendous winter snowpack was very much still in evidence. As we flew over the summit hut, only the chimney and the west end of the roof were visible. With all the deep snow, about 10 feet, most of the boulders and small trees were covered and Don was able to land about fifty feet from the hut.

Kevin and I climbed out and hurried over to the hut. Standing in front of the door I yelled down into the partially opened door. There was no answer, so I slid down the snow and stepped into the hut. No one was inside and I quickly scanned the register. No mention of the party we were looking for. So Kevin and I returned to the bird.

We lifted off and started searching from the air. There were numerous sets of tracks leading towards Round Valley. We spotted two hikers ascending the slope and they pointed downhill. Continuing down, we quickly spotted two men pulling a third down the slope. Don circled around looking for a place to land. There was nowhere to land on the slope and Don found an opening about 300 feet from the bottom of the slope. He put the bird down and Kevin and I hiked towards the slope.

We met the trio just as they reached the level area and helped them pull the injured man over to the waiting helicopter. (They had made a sled out of a poncho and a pair of snow shoes. Pulling it down the steep slope had been easy, but it had become increasingly tougher as the terrain leveled out.)

We loaded the injured man into the bird, climbed in ourselves, and Don applied the power to the bird and we lifted off. It was a quick flight back to Hemet and we landed in the street near the hospital. We were met by John and Brian of our team, Bob Elliot and Steve Vaughn of the Hemet team and a deputy from the Hemet station. We helped the subject into the patrol car, briefly discussed the mission and headed back to work. • RMRU



SEARCH

Mission No. 7913A

**14 April, Sat.
Lake Hemet,
San Jacinto Mountains**

At 2:30 AM we received a call from the Banning sub-station that two girls had walked away from camp in the early evening and had not returned by their promised time. Before reaching the rendezvous point, the pagers went off with a 10-22 (cancel mission). After checking with the Sheriff's Department the following day we were told that two girls had found their way back to camp while we were still enroute. • RMRU

RESCUE

Mission No. 7914M

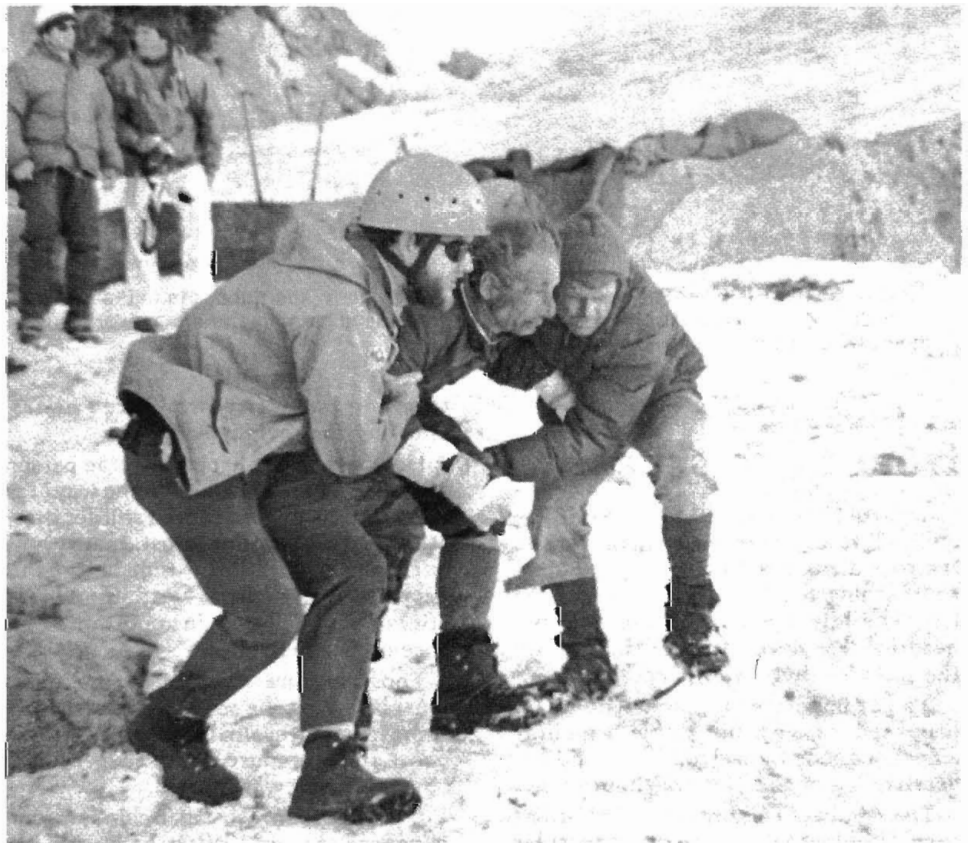
**29 April, Sun.
North Face,
San Jacinto Mountains**

By Jim Fairchild

This Sunday morning Guenther Zaeschmas, 57, of San Diego, planned to finish a big event - climbing the North

Face of San Jacinto Peak via the East Fork of Snowcreek. He and his party of 13 had camped Saturday night high on the face. They started up early, but Guenther soon found himself far behind staying with a straggler. He also found a crampon was loose, stopped to adjust it, slipped, and slid down the snow gully. His friends ahead, already on the peak, saw the slide and assumed his demise. They proceeded down eastward to the Long Valley Ranger Station and reported the accident. Meanwhile, Guenther had finally managed to dig in his heels and stop, having descended 2000'. No major injury, just badly lacerated and abraded face, hands, and calves, perhaps a broken finger, he surmised. Fortunately, both his crampons came off the boots during the slide, thus no doubt preventing leg fractures. Guenther tried descending and soon was met by three men ascending who convinced him he was in no condition to continue. He slipped at about the 8500' elevation, slid down to about 6500' el., and got down to 5000' el. where the angle was much less steep and a handy, large, flat boulder protruded from the snow.

The author was up in Mill Creek shooting a class assignment and testing filters and other paraphernalia when (0830) the pager went "beeeep." Breakfast was cooking as well, so it was quite a scramble to



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

ASSIST — Walt Walker and a unidentified climber assisted Guenther Zaeschmas to the waiting helicopter. They were all bending down because of the steepness of the slope and the nearness of the helicopter's main rotor blades.

bag up the camera gear and stove, unleash the dogs, and head for the Snowcreek roadhead. The Sheriff's Office at Banning had received the call at 0800, just minutes after the informants did their informing, then our coordinator was called, then the pagers were activated.

Upon arrival at the roadhead only a Sheriff's Deputy was there, Sgt. Weakly and Don Landells were flying the face. Soon Walt, Kevin, and Brian arrived, then we heard that the victim had been spotted. By 0945 Walt, Don, and the author were heading up. It was an easy spot to hover at and we stepped out on the snow, walked over to the smiling Guenther, took pictures, bundled him into the bird, and flew back. Everything was so much easier than preliminary information indicated. After some de-briefing at the roadhead Guenther was convinced he should be checked at the San Geronio Pass Memorial Hospital. RMRU then rolled up to Sambo's for a meal.

As we think back on past and recent North Face missions, we are truly amazed that the victims have not been much more injured, that conditions for the rescue have been so easy, and that the accidents have been reported so quickly. The weather has always been good, a helicopter available at the outset, access quick and easy, and no trouble finding the site of the problem. Nevertheless, this environment remains high, steep, puzzling as to route for first timers, and holds a terrific potential for disaster. Our next mission could be as easy as in the past, or it could manifest all the factors for a difficult rescue. • RMRU

Election Results!

This year, let us take a light hearted look at our seven newly elected Board of Directors.

President — Ed Hill

"He who shines,"

Ed only bothers with growing hair on his face.

Vice-President — Larry Roland

"The Slave Driver"

Larry is known for his non-strenuous training sessions.

Treasurer — Walt Walker

"The Lone Ranger"

Walt and Don Landells ('Tonto') have been known to pull off missions by themselves.

Secretary — Jim Garvey

"He who makes Good Deals"

If you need a new car, Jim is the man to see.

Thank you for caring



Left to Right Board of Directors President Bill Myers, Circle City Hospital Administrator Henry Gothelf, and Auxiliary Vice-President Linda Pearson present the first monthly Sustaining Membership contributions to RMRU team physician Norman Mellor, M.D.

In January a new category of Sustaining Membership was inaugurated by the Circle City Hospital Auxillary, and the Hospital Board of Directors, for the Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit. Each group started a program of donating \$50.00 on a monthly basis to RMRU. Auxillary President, Doris Collins and Board of Directors President, William Meyers, presented the first checks to Dr. Norm Mellor, team physician.

"This mountain rescue unit supplies the first line of medical care in the wildest areas and in the worst weather in Riverside County. As health-caring people we are proud to feel that we belong in that effort," said Mr. Meyers.

Mr. Henry Gothelf, Administrator of Circle City Hospital added that the hospital wants to help RMRU to carry out its life-saving mission of search and rescue in Riverside county. "Not only do we participate with a Monthly Membership but we also offer our new health plan to its members. This plan allows RMRU members to use any in or out patient facility of the hospital at no cost to the patient as long as he has a health insurance policy that will pay 80% of his bill. To help him we will cancel his 20% of the bill. In this way we hope to be of some financial help to these hard working men. We want to adopt them," he said. • RMRU

Director — John Dew

"Wise One"

John is best known for his quick and learned comments.

Director — Jim Fairchild

"He who Photographs"

Jim is our official un-official RMRU Staff Photographer.

Director — Bernie McIlvoy

"The Hanging One"

Bernie is President of the 'Batman' wall climbing fan club.

Committee Chairman

Communications — Al Andrews

Blood Bank — John Dew

Equipment Development —

Bernie McIlvoy

Finance — Walt Walker

Grant Funding — Don Chambers

MRA Representative —

Bernie McIlvoy

Medical — Norm Mellor, M.D.

Membership — Pete Carlson

Newsletter — Kevin Walker

Public Relations — John Dew

Rescue — Jim Fairchild

Sustaining Membership —

Mike Daugherty

Training — Larry Roland

Vehicle & Equipment — Rick Pohlers
Kevin Walker

\$USTAINING MEMBERS

BY MIKE DAUGHERTY

I've just finished reading Ed Hill's account of the Cottonwood Springs search in the March Newsletter. As it always does, the account of a successful search fills me with a sense of wonder. All the more so because of my own participation in searches conducted by the team in years past. It is really quite apparent to any reasonable person actually participating in a wilderness search that there isn't the slightest chance of finding the "subject." Even RMRU at "full complement," perhaps 20 people, probably fewer, is swallowed whole by the immensity of the task. Imagine the search area, perhaps ten miles on a side, cut by steep ridges and many hundreds of interconnected canyons, a terrain of which it could fairly be said that no one area can be seen, much less searched, from any other. Typically, though not always, it is dark; competing sounds render the voice a marginal signal at best. There is, thanks to the Sustaining Members, the radio; unfortunately, the lost person seldom has the foresight to take an RMRU radio with him. And so one proceeds. In my case the effort was usually sustained by the imposition of the force of will on an unbelieving self. I say to myself, "this has worked before, if we stick carefully to our plan, stay alert and really, genuinely try, we will eventually succeed . . . maybe." But I don't really believe. Then it comes, a team 1500 feet down on the other side of the ridge has tracks, then a voice, then a very cold and tired six year old. Against all reason it has worked again. Of course it doesn't always work and sometimes (not often) it works, but too late. I suspect that it works simply because the searchers believe it works, which would explain why I was seldom with the team that succeeded.

The equipment which the Sustaining Members provide does wonders. The pagers notify team members rapidly, the team's vehicles speed the needed equipment to the scene and provide a base of operations, the radios allow effective coordination of the groups in the field and insure that, when the subject is found, we can make the critical difference and save a life. Without these things (many of us can remember the day when we did searches without them) the chance of success would be nil. Still, none of it would avail but for the belief that animates the enterprise. So it is affirmed again . . . "it has worked before . . ."

February

New—

Roland Trietsch
M/M William Haddox
Martin Dowd

Renewing—

R. L. Haglund
Fred Camphausen
Albin and Katherine Merzals
* Circle City Hospital
* Circle City Auxiliary
M/M Milo Hefferlin
M/M Herwil Bryant

March

New—

Helen Brown
Marjorie LaBonde
Donald Pim
Elmer and Anna Bolton
Charles Porter
Robert Hunt, Jr.
M/M Joe Williams, Jr.
Edward and Betty Plattner
* Benjamin and Joan Trimm
B. W. Kuhn

Renewing—

M/M Harold Carlson
Gary Planter
* Circle City Hospital
* Circle City Auxiliary
* M/M Kenneth Andrews
* John Gilbert

April

New—

M/M Hudson Heiliger
Steve Heiliger
M/M Franklin Trimm
Palomar College, Backpacking Class
Dr. John G. Fast
Dr. Gary M. Levin

Renewing—

M/M Bert Leithold
John R. Kolenich
* Circle City Hospital
* Circle City Auxiliary
Mildred Chase
Nuvew Union School District

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

from Old'en Days

by Walt Walker

APRIL

Ten years ago —

On the front page was the usual notices, dates and information for the regular mem-

bers. Half way down the page was the **Search & Rescue** column with an article penned by Mike Daugherty.

A man was overdue from a descent from the upper station to the lower station of the Palm Springs Tramway. His intended route was the first canyon north of Chino Canyon. We gathered at the upper station and six of us, Art Bridge, Bill Briggs, Jim Fairchild, Ron Harris, Walt Walker and Mike started the long descent. Three 150 foot rappels got us going and we spent most of the night searching. Shortly before dawn we bivouaced at the top of a tall frozen waterfall. Not too long after first light, Larry Percy and Don Ricker were picked up by Don Landells in his first Jet Ranger. Only about 1,000 feet above the lower station they found the missing man. He had safely negotiated all the waterfalls and had gotten below the snow line before dark. They picked him up and they returned to base. The rest of us were picked up from a icy perch and returned to base. The following is a quote from Mike's article. "If nothing else, this mission demonstrates that it really is impossible to be too well trained or too well equipped for our job. Anyone who thinks that a night search on steep, icy terrain is easy hasn't tried one lately. Helmets, extensive first aid gear, ice axes, 900 feet of rope, ice pitons, rock pitons, brake bars, pulleys, jumars, rescue sleeping bag, headlamps, bivouac gear, extra food and water, survival tents . . . a lot of gear to be carrying when you're rappeling a frozen waterfall".

Five years ago —

The eight page April 1974 issue was almost completely devoted to the search for Allen Coggetti. His younger brother had seen him disappear over a steep cliff. The search spanned an eight day period and was one of the most frustrating missions we have ever participated in. It ended sadly on a Saturday morning when his body was discovered by a three man RMRU search team. • RMRU

