

Volume XV, Issue VII, July 1979 — Kevin Walker, Editor — Walt Walker, Publisher — Lisa Walker, Artist

RMRU Needs Your Help!

\$USTAINING MEMBERS

BY MIKE DAUGHERTY

"Eschew Obfuscation"

.... Bumper sticker observed in an El Segundo parking lot.

Drat! No sooner had I braved setting-off a ripple of "unjustified overconfidence" in the May newsletter than broke the tsunami of financial despair on my mail box. What can I say? The "unjustified overconfidence" was mine-own. Things-seemed-to-be-going-well from my perspective — but then, I don't keep the books. The treasurer, who does, was sharpening his red ballpoint pen, even as I was chisling the May column in stone. By his account — a great deal better informed than mine — we are on the threshold of issuing IOUs to pay RMRU's operating expenses . . . literally. I find myself wishing we could take the problem to OPEC or promote a federal tax credit. Alas, we must turn again to our much over-solicited Sustaining Members. It may yet work out for the best. Someday I can publish a collection of these columns under the title "1001 Ways to Call for Help".

Method #762: It would help all of us, team and Sustaining Members alike, if we could spread the burden. This could be accomplished if each of our Sustaining Members could lure an unsuspecting newcomer into the fold. You know that, if we can get them to contribute just once, they'll be hooked. No one can resist the dynamite newsletter, the scintillating prose, the personal thank-you letters six months late and, most of all, the chance to have a personal part in a genuinely noble enterprise. Surely you can think of someone you might catch off guard with a well-timed overture. "What? You don't know about RMRU; I thought everyone did. Just look at these newsletters." Or, how about a bumper sticker for your car?

Have you hugged your rescue team today?
Send security checks to:
PO Box 5444, Riverside, CA 92517

Well, that may be a bit too long for your Honda. How about one sure to warm the ledgers of a treasurer's heart . . .

"RMRU Does it in the Black"

Anything! But hurry, I hear them at the door and I think they've come to repossess my typewriter.

June

New—

*Herbert M. Key and Sons
Bob Snedecore

Renewing—

*Art Bridge
*M/M Earl Cannon
*Circle City Hospital
*Circle City Auxiliary
Helen Hadley
Claire Hughes
Hundred Peaks Section, Sierra Club
Mardon Jewelers

July

New—

In memory of Irma Edman
Howard Loy
Our Club

Renewing—

*Circle City Auxiliary
Betty Johnson
*Milton Levy
Jack and Grace Mihaylo
Marydoris Powers
*Rubidoux Grange No. 611

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

THE PRESIDENT'S BOX BY ED HILL

Inflation hurts RMRU in two ways. The costs of gasoline, ropes, radio batteries and other rescue supplies keep rising. Everyone's real income is reduced by inflation so it becomes harder and harder to donate to one's favorite charities. Consequently, these charities have less income to work with.

For several months donations have been about half of our operating expenses. The Board of Directors has been cutting back in all areas that do not directly affect the safety of our active members. Purchases of ropes and other equipment

have been postponed or cancelled.

We can escape from this trap by increasing our number of sustaining members. If you know anyone who would be interested in supporting RMRU's lifesaving work, please tell them about our sustaining members and the newsletter describing our activities that is sent to all sustaining members. — **Thank you.**



From the Editor's desk—

As you can see by the other two articles on this page, RMRU is in deep financial trouble. I think the headline across the top of the page says it all —

'RMRU Needs Your Help!'

If donations don't take a turn for the better in the next few months, I am afraid that the newsletter will be the first to have funding at least partially cut off. This will mean no photographs and short articles.

Please read the front page very carefully. This team's very existence may well depend on it!

TRAINING



Technical and Potluck Dinner

14 July, Sat. Suicide Rock and the Sky Yacht

By Jim Fairchild

Tradition can give the feeling of security, permanence, enjoyment, and satisfaction. Those who've been with RMRU for a number of years have come to look forward to the annual epic at Norm and Maggie's Sky Yacht, the wives' and girl friends' dinner preceded by six hours or so of intensive practice on Suicide Rock.

This year, in anticipation of a hot climb with much gear up to the base of the rock, we started about 0700. Our plan was to train in two groups: one on the 350' high "Weeping Wall," for a multi-stage litter lower; the other to work on a lower portion of the rock doing both raises, lowers, as well as honing personal skills such as Jumaring (ascending the rope with clamps), and rapeling (descending the rope in a sliding mode). The Weeping Wall group, the more experienced, hiked to the top and set up rigging. Larry Roland's friend, Karen Inaba, "volunteered" to ride the litter down. Soon she was tied in, the three stations were ready, and she was lowered. The switching of riggings went efficiently and quickly, thanks to the pre-tied systems we keep ready in the van. Bernie McIlvoy stated afterward that it was a particularly smooth operation. Rapeling on a separate rope alongside to take pictures, I had a more objective point view, and was impressed as was Bernie. Recreational rock climbers on routes nearby joined in our conversations and were only delayed a short time while we finished the operation. At the bottom of the rock we found Jeannie Mills of the Idyllwild Town Crier taking pictures, and later saw them in that publication. When all were down we traversed over to the other group and had lunch.

The other group was hard at work giving everyone a chance to do the riggings, tie-in and lower a person, then raise. Individuals were Jumaring and rapeling. One of the officials in the company that Ron Barry works for was filming the activities with the intention of making a movie show of RMRU activities.

This northern wall of Suicide Rock is about 100' high, and two sugar pines grow so close that their long, swooping branches complete with sap-dripping cones added a little shade, and a whole lot of sticky pitch. Clothing, skin, ropes, and slings became rather well stuck with it. Again, watching the training as photographer, I noted a lot of individual and group instruction, the kind that results in seasoning and sharper skills.

Ah! 3 PM soon arrived and we packed for the hike down to the Sky Yacht for refreshment, showers, and dinner. Best of all, of course, was the continuing camaraderie and socializing friends and spouses. Linda Rohbacker, Steve Zappe's fiancée had planned a fine pot-luck, with all attending bringing their favorite steak. These last were soon sizzling and we began another great dinner, the ninth, I believe since Norm and Maggie started the tradition. The warm day finally cooled into evening as the quiet festivities continued. Then, some folks began the drive home, while others of us bedded down under the pines for another night of sound sleep. One of the wives told me she was already looking forward to next year -- we all are.

• RMRU

Search and Rescue

EVACUATION

Mission No. 7927M

4-5 July, Wed.-Thur.
Tahquitz Rock,
San Jacinto Mountains

By Ron Barry

My wife and I had just returned from a five day trip in the Sierra Nevada, and I was opening the windows to air out our house, when the phone rang. It was Al Andrews, and he had some bad news. I realized there would be no fireworks for me tonight, as he told me of a climbing accident on Tahquitz Rock with a badly injured climber to be evacuated. After talking to Al, I called Bernie McIlvoy to arrange driving up with him.

On the drive up to Idyllwild, Bernie and I ate fruit pies and milk — that was to be our dinner. Humber Park was enveloped in darkness when we rolled up to the tight knot of vehicles at base. At the RMRU van, we were informed that our operation status had changed from "rescue" to "re-

covery". The story was that a young man, on his first ever rock climb, had plunged several hundred feet to his death, his body coming to an abrupt stop on a ledge in a vertical chute 270 feet above the base of the rock. Walt and Kevin Walker were presently climbing up to the accident, as a large group of us below were pulling out several 300 and 150 foot ropes, assorted hardware, and the litter out of the van. After we had divided up the gear, we started the long, steep haul up to the base of Tahquitz Rock to the vicinity of the White Maiden Route.

Eons later, our "merry" crew arrived at the foot of the vertical granite monolith. Hundreds of pounds of gear was sorted out and set up at a point directly below where Walt and Kevin were above us. Walt and Kevin had gotten to a ledge fifty feet below the victim and had set up a fixed rope to the ground, Bernie McIlvoy Jumared up quickly to their position and the lead the final section up to the victim. After a fixed rope was set up, Walt and then Kevin followed up.

Meanwhile, down below, Don Chambers, Rick Pohlers, and myself slipped into harnesses, and proceeded to Jumar up to the intermediate ledge directly fifty feet below Bernie, Walt, and Kevin, I went up last, trailing along one end of a 300 foot line that would be attached to the litter eventually. I continued on up past Rick and Don, into the darkness above and soon was with Bernie and the Walkers. Bernie installed anchors and pulleys quickly, as the Walkers and I hauled up the litter (which sent off several rocks down onto our guys below), and eventually placed the deceased into a body bag.

This unfortunate fellow had fallen for quite a ways after stumbling off a ledge in the blackness far above us. The most obvious injury was a radical femur fracture, though the cause of death appeared to be a broken neck. With our cargo lashed away Kevin and Bernie lowered me and the litter over the ledge and down. Rick Pohlers helped me get by the intermediate ledge, and in no time I was down onto horizontal again, at the base of a rock.

But now, the really **hard** work began. Attaching the wheel back to the litter, we proceeded to thrash our way through the thick stands of pines, shrubs, and other assorted obstacles, back down to Humber Park. It was just like going to war, with several casualties: Kevin tangled several times with thorns of buck brush; Walt had a large rock dislodged onto his shin; Don took a flying branch in the eyes — and then another one; John Dew received a puncture wound from some unknown assailant, and all of us were bathed in sweat, and a thick layer of dust from that cursed trail (if you want to call that a trail!)

It was a quiet group that ate breakfast in Hemet at dawn, and by 7:00 Bernie and I were heading home as I dozed off. • RMRU

SEARCH

Mission No. 7928M

29 July, Sun.

**Pallisades area,
San Jacinto Mountains**

By Kevin Walker

It was a little after midnight when I was awakened with news of a Search in the San Jacinto Mountains. A man in his mid fifties had been missing since about six o'clock in the evening. It was decided that it would be a good idea to send in one team and check out the immediate area before daylight. And then if nothing was turned up, the whole team would be activated for a full scale search.

Walt Walker, Hal Fulkman, Brian Hixson and myself rode up to the Sheriff's office in Idyllwild where we were met by the informants. The story was quite simple, the man in question just wandered away from the group, and . . . you know the rest. With that we headed for Humber Park. We decided that it would be good to check out the group's camp first to see if the missing man had made his way back to camp. Together with the informants, we hiked the Devil Slide Trail to the saddle. From there the informants lead us to the group's camp. As we neared the camp, the first signs of daylight were beginning to show out from the East. Hal and I were the first into the camp. Guess who was sleeping in a warm bag? Yes, with the help of some hikers in the area, the missing man had found his way back to camp. With that, we headed back towards the saddle. Along the way we stopped to catch a little sleep. After about two hours of rest, we headed back down to Idyllwild and breakfast. • RMRU

and shortly after first light the missing young man showed up.

Mt. Whitney was the locale for the next mission. Word had been received that a young man was near East Face Lake with all the symptoms of High Altitude Pulmonary Edema. Bill Briggs, Jim Fairchild and Mike Daugherty were the RMRU members who responded along with members of other CR-MRA teams. A high speed 3½ hour ascent brought them to the seriously ill victim. Shortly a helicopter arrived and he was placed aboard and flown out. Without a very strong hiking group and the helicopter, the young man would have surely died.

Back in our own area we were called to the Soboba Hills to rescue a young man who had become stranded while descending from the ridge near the big 'S'. We put our snow pickets (aluminum stakes) to use as anchors and rescued the man from his dilemma.

Two days later, Tahquitz Canyon, was the scene for our next rescue. We had received a call that a girl had gone over one of the large falls and a second girl was dangerously stranded. We responded to the canyon and hiked in, only to find that the girl had been rescued from her perch. However, we also received word that a young man had gone down three different falls and was badly injured. We hurried up the canyon and found the injured man. We called for a helicopter and when it arrived from Western Helicopters, Tom Mason flew in our Stokes litter and the needed ropes. We had given the needed first aid and placed him into the litter. Using ropes we moved him up to a very tight helispot. The bird came in and flew him to the hospital. We descended the canyon to look for the body of the girl who had gone over the falls. Walt Walker stripped down to his shorts, tied a rope around his waist and was belayed into the swollen waters of the canyon. Due to conditions we were not able to safely cover the entire area. (The girl's body was found two months later.)

Four days later we were called back to Tahquitz Canyon. This time two 16 year olds were overdue from a hike down the canyon. As Western Helicopter's bird was putting search teams out in the canyon, pilot Pat Patterson spotted the missing pair as he was returning to base. They were at the Grapevine helispot and he landed and picked them up.

A week passed and RMRU along with other CR-MRA teams arrived in the San Bernardino Mountains to assist in the search for six year old Matty Zimmerman. He had been missing for four days. We along with many others searched through the night. He was found at 8:30 a.m. face down on top of a snow bank. Walt Walker met the group carrying the boy out and quickly examined him as they were driven to a heliport. Walt went

along in the big Marine helicopter. Shortly after take-off the small body went limp. The boy had stopped breathing, and Walt could not open his mouth. He started mouth to nose respiration, the pupils remained dilated. Then he started CPR and continued giving it, even though he thought the boy was dead. When the helicopter landed at Norton Air Force Base the boy made a faint sound and his pupils had slightly contracted. Just seven days after RMRU started in the search, 'Matty' was wheeled from the hospital by his father with a big smile on his face and a teddy bear on his lap.

Four days after the previous mission we were called to Tahquitz Canyon again. The word was that a 18 year old girl had fallen and broken both legs. We were flown in by Tom Mason of Western Helicopters. It was determined that only one leg was fractured. While an air splint was applied and the girl was secured in the litter, other team members set up a lifting system. We moved her up the 40 foot cliff and carried her over to the helispot. The bird came back in and flew her to the hospital.

Two days later we were called back to the east side of the mountain. A young man had fallen near Hidden Lake. We rode the tram up and hiked over to Hidden Lake. We were advised that the victim was probably dead. We set up ropes and rappelled down. Death had been instantaneous, but you know how reports are — we had hoped for another chance to save a life.

One day later! This time the west side of the mountain. A 12 year old boy was missing in the Strawberry Creek area. Using our tracking Bloodhound 'Sugar', we started tracking. The scent led us down the canyon. We found the boy hanging onto a small bush. He had slid down a 45° decomposed granite slope and grabbed the bush. Ropes were set up and Bill Speck descended to the boy, then Ed Hill went down and the two of them helped the boy back up the slope and led him back to the road and his parents.

Just as we finished up the above mission we were advised that a 53 year old man was missing in the Santa Rosa Mountains. At first light the next morning a helicopter search was started after search teams had been dropped off. The missing man was spotted and Jim Fairchild was put out on a boulder and he scrambled down to the man and helped him back to the bird for the ride out to base.

That same afternoon we were called again. A four year old boy was missing below Pine Cove. We started the Bloodhound again. In a very short time we found the boy's socks and then his footprints. He had headed downstream, then cut across a meadow and across a dirt road. He went over a small ridge and then

from
Old'en Days

by Walt Walker

JULY

Ten years ago—

The July issue was a whopping eight pages and seven of those pages were filled by **Search Rescue**. The first mission wrote up, was a search in the Dark Canyon area for a missing 18 year old boy. We had searched all night



down a ravine and onto another dirt road. The dog had been tracking all along. We radioed out to base and a sheriff's jeep was sent up the road. Deputy Hollis, driving along, spotted the boy as he wandered down the road in the darkness.

Five years ago —

The 1974 issue contained 12 pages and many photographs. Once again **Search and Rescue** was the section that filled most of the issue.

Tahquitz Rock — We had been called to help two stranded climbers. In the darkness we hiked up and around the backside of the rock. Reaching the top we found that two excellent climbers had already started the rescue. They had rappelled down and had started climbing back up with the stranded pair. We belayed them up the last 100 feet and everyone hiked back to Humber Park.

Tahquitz Canyon — A man and his dog were overdue from a descent of Tahquitz Canyon. Search teams were dropped off at different spots in the canyon. As the last group was being flown in, a previous group heard a dog barking. Sure enough, dog and master were in a side canyon, stranded. Using our Helitac, bushwacking, climbing and a lot of hard work, we rescued man and dog.

Tahquitz Creek Drainage — We had been notified that the equipment of Mark Seils had been located. (Mark Seils is the only person RMRU has never been able to locate.) We hiked into the area and collected the gear. We spent the rest of the day searching in the area.

Reed's Meadow — A 13 year old boy was missing. Using skills learned through many years of experience, we located the young man safely.

Long Valley — While we were flying search on the previous mission we were contacted and advised that a young man was suffering from abdominal pain. We examined him, and since the tram was not in operation, we flew him out.

Andres Canyon — A young couple were two days overdue and it was 117°. They had been dropped off at the mouth of the canyon and left word that they were going to hike up the canyon, go cross country to the tram, and ride it down. After considerable effort on the part of the sheriff's department a helicopter located. We flew up the canyon, landed at the Caramba helispot, and checked for tracks. Slowly flying back down the canyon Bernie McIlvoy spotted two sleeping bags. We circled around and located the missing pair. Landing above them, we hiked down and helped them back up to the helicopter. In two loads everyone was flown out.

Ortega Mountains — Three children, ages 8, 10, and 14 were missing. We were

also advised that an uncle had not returned from his search for the trio. It was shortly after midnight when we located the uncle and the children. We made them as comfortable as possible and waited for first light. At 7 a.m. a Marine helicopter picked everybody up and flew back to base.

Tahquitz Rock — A climber had fallen and was injured. Our next problem was that 10 team members were in Tahquitz Canyon on a training session. With a slim crew we hiked up to the base of the rock. Gary Gillespie and Walt Walker jumped up to the injured man. It was a poor area for anchors and the man had a badly fractured collarbone. It took what seemed like an awfully long time to move the man back down to the base of the rock. Once down we helped him out to the parking lot at Humber Park. • RMRU

an open letter from founding member walt walker

18 years, and hundreds of missions ago, RMRU had very few problems. There was no team equipment, no money and no fund raising activities. The small group of founding members provided their own equipment and paid for any phone calls that were made. What printing was needed, my father and I donated to the unit. We also had only seven missions our first year as a rescue team. Those days are gone!

In recent years the team has averaged 50 missions a year. Due to the tremendous increase in the use of the backcountry, we have been involved in in not only more missions, but also in ones where people are severely injured. We have a very good communications network that needs to be maintained and occasionally updated. This includes a radio pager system that notifies members of rescue missions. Their is now more equipment than can be carried in one vehicle, thus we purchased a second van.

The unit planned a budget for 1978-79 (our fiscal year runs from May 1st to April 30th) that needed an income of about \$850.00 per month. The unit however did not receive the money needed and major (and minor) equipment purchases had to be cancelled. As the current unit treasurer I have seen two months go by where donations just barely covered month to month expenses (gasoline, insurance, telephone bills, etc.).

Our major fund raiser, the 'RMRU Newsletter', has been steadily costing the unit more each year as inflation has risen. The 1970-71 fiscal year saw a total income of \$7,921.73. Seven years later, 1977-78 saw an income of \$6,780.00. Yet the federal government says that inflation rose 53½% during those seven years. If RMRU was going to keep pace with inflation we should have seen an income of \$12,159.86 in 77-78.

Over a year ago I advised the RMRU Board of Directors that the unit's expenses were going up. I particularly noted that the newsletter (our number one fund raiser) was taking a very big bite out of our income. I also noted that our income over the last eight years has averaged only \$7,514.74 while our expenses have averaged \$7,496.40 during that same time.

At that time I made the suggestion we try to obtain more Sustaining Members and convince the present Sustaining Members to increase the amount they donate to the unit.

Some of the Sustaining Members did increase the amount of their donations through the urging of RMRU member Mike Daugherty in his write-ups in the newsletter. Very little else otherwise has been done.

At our most recent board meeting the directors discussed, for almost two hours, the unit's financial plight. We again discussed the newsletter and its costs. One comment made, was that over 50% of the newsletter was unnecessary. I personally feel otherwise and that cutting back on the newsletter will probably result in a decrease in our donations.

If you have thoughts on our problem, would you please write, using the address on our newsletter masthead, and let us know your ideas for solutions to our problem.

To kick off a drive to increase RMRU's yearly income, three generations of Walkers', Roy, Walt and Kevin, are donating this issue of the newsletter to RMRU.

Where do we go from here?

I sincerely hope we will be here to go — when the next 'Matty' needs **help!**

