

Volume XVI, Issue XI, November 1980 — Kevin Walker, Editor — Walt Walker, Publisher — Dona Towell, Artist

Search and Rescue

SEARCH

Mission No. 8049C

9 Nov., Sun.
Deep Canyon,
Santa Rosa Mountains

At 10:00 PM Sunday night we received a call from the Indio office of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department that a hiking group from the Desert Sun School was overdue in hiking out to Valerie Jean from the Deep Canyon area. While still in the gathering information stage, word relayed down from the Palms to Pines Highway that a large campfire could be seen in the canyon bottom. It was decided that it would be better to wait until morning and have the Sheriff's fixed wing aircraft fly the lower canyon and see if that was indeed the group.

The following morning the Indio office phoned with news of the groups' return to Valerie Jean. • RMRU

RESCUE

Mission No. 8050M

10-11 Nov., Mon.-Tues.
Tahquitz Rock,
San Jacinto Mountains

By Ed Hill

Three brothers, Dave, Jim and Bob Black attempted a route called Super-pooper on the west side of Tahquitz Rock in back of Idyllwild. They got a late start and darkness overtook them with Dave forty feet from the top. The other two were on a ledge below him. The night was absolutely pitch black. It was so dark that one could not make out the holds in the rock.

Two climbers on the White Maiden reported their problem to the Sheriff. The call came at 7:45 PM. I had Veteran's Day

off so was able to go. I called my people, assembled my technical gear and was on my way half an hour later.

I reached Humber Park to find that the first crews had already started up to the rock. Only Mary and Jack Bowman were in base. I checked in and decided to hike up to Lunch Rock where I would pick up a load of gear from a member who was carrying a double load.

The trail was in worse shape than I remembered it. I was confused once as to where it went but continued up hill and found it again. At Lunch Rock I found the rest of the group. Mary had told them I was coming and they had waited.

I was given a 300 foot rope, and we started around toward the south side of the rock. We decided to climb up the third class descent route rather than hike to the notches and go across the top of the rock. The route starts with a long friction traverse to an easy gully that leads up to a series of ledges. Then another gully leads to the top of the rock. In several places we had to pass packs and equipment and then mantle up to the ledge above us. It is much easier to descend this route than it is to climb it. We put in a fixed rope that we were able to use as a handline.

At about 1:00 AM we had everyone on top. We quickly found anchor points for the self equalizing anchors that would support the rigging. Bernie McIlvoy was elected to rappel down to the climbers. He carried sweaters and jackets for them.

Jim Fairchild took photos of the operations while Pete Carlson, Walt Walker, Chris Smith, Larry Roland and I set up pulleys for a mechanical advantage. Later on we decided to simply haul the climbers up especially since they could climb under tension from above.

The first climber up was Dave. He was just cold, hungry and thirsty. I fed him some peanuts, gave him some water and wrapped a sleeping bag around him. By the time Bernie was ready to have the second man come up, Dave was able to help us haul.

With the extra muscle on the haul line, raising Bob was straight forward. As soon as he was on top, he received the same treatment as his brother. Jim was brought up last, and we immediately started tearing apart the rigging, coiling ropes and packing gear for the trip back. Dave, Jim and Bob volunteered to help carry gear down which made it easier on everyone.



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

REACHING THE TOP — Jim Black reaches the top of "Super-pooper" (a climbing route on Tahquitz) followed by RMRU member Bernie McIlvoy. Jim and his two brothers spent six cold hours on the face of the rock, before being assisted to the top by RMRU.

We went down the same way, dropping down onto the ledges that we had had to mantle up going up. At Lunch Rock, we met Craig Beasley, Joe Erickson, and Kevin Walker who had hiked up to help carry gear down.

We reached the vans at four in the morning, held a brief critique, and most of the team went off to breakfast. The climbers were in very good shape when we reached them. I think that this was due to the mildness of the night. There was almost no wind. I was comfortable in a down vest and parka. In years past at this time of year, I have been cold on top of the rock with most of my winter clothing on. • RMRU

SEARCH

Mission No. 8051M

**11-12 Nov., Tues.-Wed.
Mt. San Jacinto
San Jacinto Mountains**

At 11:00 PM only 17 hours after having an all night technical mission (see No. 8050M), we received a call from the Banning office of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department for a Search and Rescue mission in the San Jacinto Mountains.

The team met and set up base camp at the base of the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway. Once there, we were informed by the deputy that a 41 year old man, his two sons, and a friend of the boys were overdue in returning from a day hike from the upper station of the tram to Mt. San Jacinto and back. The group was not equipped to stay out for a night, and with temperatures dipping down into the low 30's it could be tough for the group. With Jim Fairchild and Rick Pohlers not feeling well, it was decided that Jim would stay at the lower station with the rescue van, and Rick and Mary Bowman would run base and radio relay from the upper station. A team of four, consisting of Don Chambers, Tony Loro, Craig Beasley and Joe Erickson would hike for the peak and check the summit shelter and the surrounding area. Bernie McIlvoy and Kevin Walker were assigned to search to the Hidden Lake junction, and then around to Round Valley. Both teams started hiking a little after 1:00 AM and continued through the night. Just before dawn the Chambers team reached the summit with no major clues being found. While Don's team grabbed some snack food and rested, Joe Erickson now joined up with Bernie and Kevin, started for the Wellman divide to try and cut tracks at the junction. After resting, Don's group started up again carefully searching around the summit and the Mt. San Jacinto trail junction. Slightly after 8:00 AM they spotted what looked like the right type of tracks heading down the trail that leads west to

Little Round Valley. It wasn't long after that, when Don, Tony and Craig found the group hiking back towards the summit. Don's group immediately broke out the stoves and started heating water for hot chocolate and hot oatmeal. While the group stoked up on the food, they told of how they had reached the summit in the previous afternoon and when they started back, instead of going east to the tram, they went towards Little Round Valley. Well after dark they had reached Deer Springs. Since they did not have flash lights and there was no moon, they could not read the trail signs. They finally stopped and spent the night huddled up near a sign. When there was enough light to see in the morning they realized that they were going towards Idyllwild instead of the tram. With that they started back towards Mt. San Jacinto. It was just below the San Jacinto saddle when the two groups converged. So, after resting, Don's group started back for the tram. At about noon a very tired but happy group arrived at the upper station to be met by relatives. With all secured, a fairly tired group of rescuers headed for home. • RMRU



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

RESCUERS AND RESCUEES — The faces of the father, his two sons and a friend, do not really show just how tiring it was to spend a cold night out in the wilderness. Encircling the group are RMRU members Craig Beasley, Tony Loro and team leader Don Chambers. Don's team found the party below the summit of Mt. San Jacinto.

TRAINING

Technical & Family Campout

**8-9 November, Sat. & Sun.
Joshua Tree National Monument**

By Jim Fairchild

Joshua Tree National Monument — Wonderland of Rocks — Hidden Valley! Renowned natural features of bizarre Joshua trees, deceptively steep and high boulder and rock formations, and little seen animal life — constituting an exceptionally endowed region of fascination. Friday evening my wife, an old hand at enjoying JTNM, our daughter Carol, a young friend Becky, new to JTNM, and our two dogs, lumbered through the silhouetted forms of plants and rocks to a secluded campground near the Lost Horse Ranger Station. "Lurch," our venerable camper, made it again.

Saturday morning, after a night of clear, clean air and calm air waves, we gathered for training that would feature knots, anchors, rigging, litter lore, and easy discussion in the morning, and some litter raises and lowers on a high rock



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

SCHOOL IN SESSION — RMRU member Bernie McIlvoy (hand over head) instructs members on personal knot skills before the team would break up into groups to start other types of technical training.

formation a quarter-mile from camp in the afternoon. The afternoon session was particularly interesting as it was us overcoming the insistent reluctance of a new goldline rope (cable!) that steadfastly balked at every knot, pulley or clamp we installed in or on it. But, like a young horse, it needed breaking in. Further fun was had in bringing the litter, complete with patient and attendant, up over a nasty "lip" at the top of the cliff. Other members were learning or reviewing skills like rappelling or jumaring. Rappelling is sort of a controlled slide or even fall down an anchored rope, jumaring is sort of a muscle-up-struggle to ascend a rope using cammed-clamps on an anchored rope. Both are very useful, necessary skills.

That evening, after supper, a group of eager scramblers went over to Hidden Valley to explore such places as Atomic Mine No. 1, Space Walk, and something described later by a wide-eyed participant as the "Death Leap." A few even got a preliminary look at the mile-high, wildly overhanging, wind-swept, cloud-shrouded "roof," a forbidding obstacle slated for litter lowers and rappelling and jumaring in the morning.

By the time we re-arrived at this fabled formation in the middle of Hidden Valley on Sunday morning, it was more tractable. The height shrank to something over two hundred feet, the roof cut back in about twenty feet, but its "lip" didn't overhang too much above the cliff where it recommenced seventy-five feet below, the winds were gentle breezes (except when I rappelled attempting to photograph

things) and the clouds were miles above. Once we gathered at the top anchors were made ready, riggings rigged, and over we went. I innocently intended to rapel alongside Walt as he attended the litter containing Cindy Smith, wife of new member Chris Smith. All went well and we arrived at the lip of the roof. "Hmm, it sure does cut in a long way, and the cliff below hardly makes it back to a vertical point below us! Neat! a good exer-

cise." Walt negotiated the lip in fine style as I tied-off at the edge and clicked away. Then I backed off and started a maddening descent of spinning on the un-twisting goldline and getting blown away from the cliff below by the suddenly "pushy" breeze. Well, we arrived at the bottom OK, the litter was hauled up, and another lower prepared, this containing Kevin Walker's bride, Patrice. All went well until Kevin (who else would be in attendance?) pushed out into space and the litter swung under the roof. Patrice's immortalized words, "You didn't tell me it would be like this," came wafting down the wall. The capricious breeze gave them a special session of spinning before they arrived at the cliff again, and Kevin then "un-spun" them before the lower was completed. Once on the ground, we said, "Welcome to RMRU, Patrice," and another lower was initiated. Meanwhile, Bernie and Tony actually jumared up the rapel line, negotiating the lip by unclipping their top jumar and re-clipping it above. A strenuous ascent demanding strength and agility. The final lowers went well with Jerry Niswonger attending Scott McCauley, and Craig Beasley attending Terri McCauley. I always marvel at the eagerness or at least cooperativeness shown by those who go in the litter — trust is a wonderful quality.

Training ended with a note of jubilation because of the value and enjoyment. My own feelings were intense because daughter Carol had rappelled the roof with me just before we wrapped up the operation. Training at JTNM has always been a great highlight for the team and attending families. • RMRU



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

THE FAMILY THAT HANGS TOGETHER — RMRU member Kevin Walker and his bride Patrice are lowered over a 20 foot over-hang on the way down the better than 200 foot vertical wall.

\$USTAINING MEMBERS

BY KEVIN WALKER

How many ways can you say thanks to friends? In looking back over many years of old issues of the RMRU Newsletter, I find it very difficult to find new ways to say thank you.

In being close to the team over the past 19 years I have seen many changes, all for the better. How about the early 60's? Remember the team's first rescue truck? Every one lovingly called it the "Donut Wagon," being that it was donated by Helms Bakeries, the name was fitting. Sometime later, RMRU received its first two pieces of radio equipment. Two CB handtalkies were donated to the team by the San Jacinto Lions Club, which, by the way, are still active supporters of the team. Some time after that a CB unit was donated by the Riverside Exchange Club to be put in the rescue truck. At the time, that was a big advance.

In the first part of 1968 RMRU started a fund raising program called Sustaining Membership. Soon after that RMRU was able to purchase two Motorola 5-watt radios. Not long after that, a 100 watt base radio was purchased along with more 5-watts. The Sustaining Membership program was a success. The now, old Donut Wagon was bulging at the seams, it had a terrible time making it up the mountain to rescues. Something had to be done. Again we turned to the Sustaining members, and in June of 1970, RMRU purchased a new Ford Econoline Van. Through the mid 70's as search and rescue activity increased, so did the support of the Sustaining Members. More equipment was purchased.

In 1973 the board of directors came up with an idea to help the team respond to missions faster. A pager system was needed . . . the rest, most of you already know. RMRU now boasts two rescue vans, both equipped with extensive radio gear. Nine 5-

watt radios, and a pager system of 30 operating pagers. And of course let us not forget all the technical gear, winter equipment, and everything else that allows us to help those in need.

So, just how does one say it? I guess just the simple way . . . **thank you!**

OCTOBER

New—

M/M Carnahan
Jeffrey & DistLinde CAO
Lois J. Smart
Ione & Guy M. Hunt, M.D.
Howard Rose Company
‡M/M Harold Dooley
*Ron Bottorff

Renewing—

Our Club c/o John McCurdy
Charles & Maie Ricker
*Circle City Auxiliary
*Circle City Hospital
‡John & Marcella Porter
Clifford Rose Sr.
*Chester F. Dolley
David Westheimer

NOVEMBER

New—

Susan E. Kabot
R. D. Harris, M.D.
*Norman Berman
Cabazon Chamber of Commerce

Renewing—

Keldon Paper Company, Inc.
M/M Oscar Holtberg
Loyd & Karin Allen
Malcome F. Alexander
Jane Wickmans
James M. Collins

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

‡**Summit Club**, donation of \$500 or more.

were searching the two boys walked out, many miles down canyon below us.

Ten years ago—

On the front page of the newsletter was a large photograph and a bold headline, "RMRU'S VAN COMPLETED". The first van was finally completely finished and ready to go to work. It was a busy month for **Search & Rescue**. We were called to the Ortega Mountains to evacuate a man injured in a jeeping accident. We were flown in by a Western Helicopter's bird. A severely injured man was given first aid and flown out to the Circle City Hospital. We were next called for an overdue hiker in the Tahquitz drainage area. At midnight we met in Idyllwild and made plans for the search. Teams were deployed to search the drainage and start down Tahquitz Canyon. The next morning, while we were searching, the young man hiked out into Palm Springs. The next mission was also in a canyon, only this time it was the Whitewater Canyon. Before first light we started up the canyon, searching for a Scoutmaster and three Scouts who were overdue, from a hike down the Northfork of the Whitewater. About mid-morning we ran into the group hiking downstream. They had underestimated the difficulties involved in the descent of the Northfork.

Five years ago—

There was only one mission listed in the **Search & Rescue** column. A man was reported injured and stranded in Tahquitz Canyon, somewhere above the second falls. At 8:45 p.m., a team composed of Pete Carlson, Walt Walker, Rick Pohlers, Keith Borges, Ed Hill, Larry Roland and an informant, started hiking up the canyon. Around 11 p.m. we made voice contact with the subject of our mission. He was not injured, but he was sick, out of water and indeed stranded. At 1:30 a.m. we set up a rappel and started down to the man. He was given food and water and at about 3:30 a.m. we bedded down for a short night. The morning found Bernie McIlvoy and Rich Quackenbush sorting gear to be flown in. Don Landells arrived, with his supercharged Bell helicopter, at Ann Dolley's heliport. Bernie and Rich, along with the gear, were flown up the canyon by Don. More ropes were set up and in a very short time a lift was started, bringing the stranded hiker, up almost 300 feet. Don returned and started flying, the subject, members and equipment out. By 9:30 a.m. the mission was completed and we were off to breakfast. • RMRU

Notice!

The **RMRU Newsletter** is published 12 times per year by the Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit, Inc. It is intended primarily to inform the Regular and Sustaining Members.

If you would like to receive the newsletter on a regular basis, and at the same time become a Sustaining member, send your tax deductible donation of \$25 or more to:

Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit
Post Office Box 5444
Riverside, California 92517

from

Old'en Days

by Walt Walker

NOVEMBER

Fifteen years ago—

The **Search & Rescue** column told of a search in the Ortega Mountains west of Elsinore. Two boys were missing and we responded complete with our Tracking Bloodhound. The dog, 'Sugar', picked up the scent and started tracking down canyon. While we

