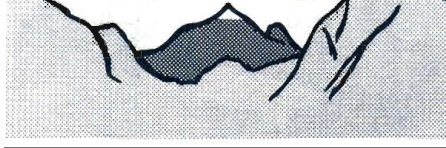


Volume XVII, Issue III, March 1981 — Kevin Walker, Editor — Walt Walker, Publisher

Training



Winter Skills

**6-8 March, Fri.-Sun.
San Jacinto Mountains**

By Jim Garvey

What was planned to be RMRU's annual Ice Axe Training became instead, the second winter shakedown of the season due to a recent snowfall in the San Jacinto High Country.

The objectives of this training, as envisioned by our training chairman, Hal Fulkman, were: conditioning, practice of winter mountaineering skills, familiarization, and search and rescue experience.

All of the planned objectives were met; beginning with conditioning as the team hiked up the Devils Slide Trail, Friday night. Pete Carlson, Bernie McIlvoy and his son Eugene, took up the lead with rest of the team following at a more moderate pace. We arrived about midnight at our campsite, located on a small ridge between Skunk Cabbage and Tahquitz Meadows.

Saturday morning after breakfast, RMRU set out on a familiarization hike. Leaving camp pitched, we snowshoed and skied across country towards Willow Creek crossing, dodging the bombardment of melting snow globs from the trees (Walt Walker, Pete Carlson and Bernie McIlvoy were using mountaineering skies with Ramer bindings), Jerry Niswonger, in particular, suffered a non-fatal direct hit.

After returning to camp for lunch, we broke camp and headed towards our next campsite, the ridge above the Palisades overlooking Tahquitz Rock.

Due to some interesting route-finding by Pete, we took a less than direct route to our camp. Pete did, however, redeem himself by being one of the first to reach camp and then skied back down to the main group and took Bob Attridge's pack.



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

MAJESTIC VIEW — This is the view that RMRU members saw as they started their descent from Chincapin Flats down to Humber Park. The chutes many times have long patches of ice.

Bob was feeling a little under the weather and had to make many unplanned and hasty stops during the afternoon.

Camp was set up late Saturday afternoon. Our intrepid President, Ed Hill, tried on Pete's skis and quickly found himself in an interface mode with the snow. (This perhaps was a portent of things to come, see the 'RMRU People' article in the March issue).

Everyone retired early to their tents to prepare dinner. I visited Bernie's tent and found Bernie, Pete, Craig Beasley, Craig Britton and Bob Attride replenishing the fluids they had lost during the day with some kind of concoction called a 'Snowshoe'; after sampling enough of this to be sure they weren't harming themselves, I returned to my tent, where later, Larry Roland and Karen Rutledge, my tentmates were kind enough to wake me for dinner.

Sunday morning dawned clear and beautiful. After breakfast, Ed Hill and Walt Walker wandered away from camp. Hal, always looking for a good training exercise, helped organize a search effort with Craig Beasley as Ops Leader. Newer members were made Field Team Leaders with Veteran members taking a secondary role.

Walt and Ed were tracked to a spot about 100 yards down the steep slope behind camp. As the first field team assessed their hypothetical injuries, except for hypothermia, which was really developing, other field teams brought additional equipment to the scene.

Everyone participated by giving first aid or helping to set up the evacuation rigging. Many different evacuation techniques were experimented with, and happily, the subjects did not become permanent victims. Many good points were brought up in the critique, particularly the importance of exposing new members to the important process of decision making.

After lunch we broke camp and began our descent straight down the Tahquitz Notches to Humber Park. The skiers in the group all negotiated the steep slope and soft snow with techniques that ranged from sublime to sheer panic. In fact, many snowshoers, inspired by the bold skiers, attempted to ski, often with disastrous results, but great fun was had by all and the entire team hiked into Humber Park and then down to Mary Bowman's house in Idyllwild to relax before going home after an enjoyable weekend. • RMRU

Search and Rescue

SEARCH

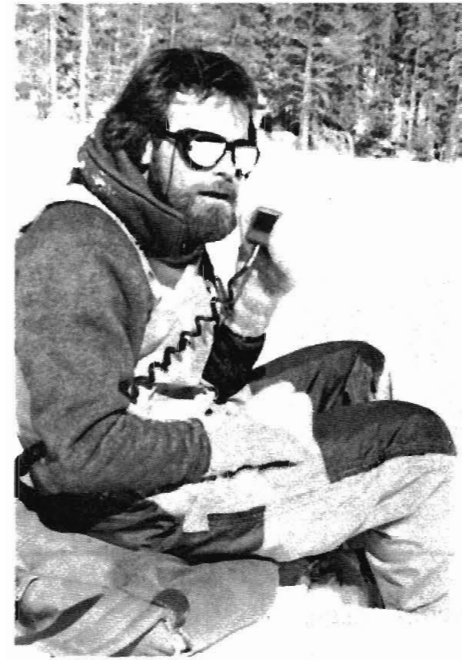
Mission No. 8109M

**2-3 March, Mon.-Tues.
High Country,
San Jacinto Mountains**

By Kevin Walker

Monday at 1400 hrs. we received a call from Sgt. Dave Duncan of the Banning office of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department. Sgt. Duncan told RMRU member Walt Walker that three men all in their mid twenties were overdue in returning to the tram from a ski touring trip of the San Jacinto high country, that had started on Thursday. The parents had told the sheriff that the three men were experienced backpackers, but this was their first major trip on nordic skis. Another factor was that on Friday afternoon a rather large snow storm had hit the mountain and continued through the night. All through the rest of the weekend it snowed on and off, sometimes quite strongly. With the information given to the sheriff, Sgt. Duncan decided not to have us start searching until the following morning.

We met at the lower tramway station at 0600 hrs. Tuesday morning. Walt made team assignments while we waited for Don Landells' 0630 arrival time. At 0629 we heard the familiar chop-chop of Don's Bell Jet Ranger. Walt and Bernie McIlvoy would make a recon run with Don to see if they could quickly locate the group or find some clue. After a very extensive air search they returned having found nothing. Joe Erickson, Rick Pohlers and myself were assigned to search the Tahquitz and Skunk Cabbage areas. The weather was beginning to deteriorate in the valley area, so we were flown in while it was still accessible by air. Good decision, because shortly after being let off in knee deep powder snow, at Little Tahquitz Valley, the clouds rolling over from the West descended on us and we were soon in a white out condition where we could only see about 25 feet. With that we put our snowshoes on and started calling and looking (as best as one can in a cloud). Meanwhile the rest of the team was being deployed at various locations on the mountain. Bernie, Walt and Pete Carlson



RMRU PHOTO BY WALT WALKER

CHECKING IN — RMRU member Bernie McIlvoy checks in with base camp, to report on the area between Mt. San Jacinto and Round Valley that had been covered by his skiing team.

were let off on Mt. San Jacinto. They had skis so they would be able to cover a large amount of territory. Jim Fairchild, Hal Fulkman and Bob Attride were let off in Round Valley to search that area and over to and above Tamarak Valley. And lastly, Ron Barry, Randy Iwasuik and Craig Britton were let off below Wellman's Cienega to search their way down Willow Creek. With all the ground teams out, Larry Roland joined Don in the bird for continued air search.

Since two days had went by since the main storm had went through, a fair amount of people had toured around the high country. Searching was slow because of finding tracks, and then having to determine whether or not they were the ones to follow. The soft powder snow also made travel slow. At approximately 1300 hrs. Ron Barry's team, in Willow Creek, picked up three sets of cross country ski tracks descending towards Willow Creek crossing. This did indeed sound promising, so they pursued them as quickly as possible.

At 1415 hrs. Carl Siechart, William Berg and Norman Switzer walked into the tram. These were the three gentlemen that we were looking for. With that, teams started walking back to the tram, and to places where the helicopter could pick teams up.

While teams were being flown out, the three men told of how they had sat out the storm after one of them had broken his ski binding. This had delayed them an

extra day. Once on their way they became lost somewhere out of Little Round Valley. Instead of going over the summit saddle, they apparently crossed back onto the eastern slope between Jean Peak and Marion Mountain. From there they descended down into the Willow Creek drainage where they spent Monday night. Their pride was apparently damaged because they had seen the helicopter in

the morning flying nearby, but had made no effort to signal it. Their comment to us was, "we hoped you were looking for someone else." So the tracks that Ron's team was following was the right ones, so much for helping the searchers. The important thing was that they were in good shape and if they ever got into that kind of a situation again, they would accept help, rather than dodge it. • RMRU

Continental Craig found no bodies, having peering into the passenger compartment and probed the trunk with a stick. The sheriff satisfied, we re-coiled the rope, Craig ascended with Jumar clamps. Then it was back to pruning fruit trees, baking bread and doing research in physics, you can guess which of us did what. • RMRU



RMRU PHOTO BY WALT WALKER

BACK AT BASE CAMP — The trio of young men describe their epic journey through the San Jacinto Mountains. But by keeping their wits about them, they turned what could have been tragedy, into an 'extremely long' and somewhat uncomfortable weekend

SEARCH

Mission No. 8110C

**2 March, Mon.
San Jacinto Mountains**

At 2115 hrs. Monday evening we received a call from the Hemet office of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, that a pair of cross country skiers were overdue in arriving at Humber Park from the tram. The relatives and stated that the two did not have equipment to spend the night out in the snow. It was decided to activate the team immediately, and also while looking for the pair, we would also be looking for the three skiers (see Mission No. 8109M). While members were being notified the pair made it out to Humber unharmed. • RMRU



SEARCH

Mission No. 8111M

**14 March, Sat.
Kelly's Quarry,
West Riverside**

By Jim Fairchild

Craig Beasley's incredulous voice told me on the phone that he'd been contacted by a representative of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department requesting our aid in looking at a vehicle partially submerged in a pond at the base of a 200 foot cliff. Upon the call-back to the sheriff we learned that the car had been pushed over the cliff the previous night and that we were to take a look for possible bodies inside.

Craig came over to my house, then daughter Carol and I accompanied him to the quarry. Using the No. 2 Van's front axle for an anchor, we set up a 300 foot rope in a lowering mode while Craig put on his harness. Then he was lowered to the car. At the now smashed Lincoln

RMRU people

**14 March, Sun.
San Jacinto Mountains**

By Pete Carlson

March 14, 1981 had been one of the best days of skiing this winter. Fellow skiers and RMRU members Bernie McIlvoy, Ed Hill, Tom Aldrich and I had skied to the summit of Mt. San Jacinto via the tramway. There we spent two hours basking in the warm sun. The run down was incredible as we linked together turn after turn down to Tamarack Valley. Just above the valley Ed took a fall and injured his knee. He could walk, but not ski. Tom had some snowshoes that Ed put on so he could get over to the trail at Round Valley. Tom went with him. Bernie and I traversed across the south face of Cornell Peak to a saddle leading back to the tramway. We again dropped down and stopped to catch our breath. Bernie said, "Pete, you go first, I'll follow."

So this is what it's like. I was no longer skiing but laying in the snow and my ankle was in a good deal of pain. Bernie stopped about 50 feet away. I lay still trying to figure out the seriousness of my injury. As I sat up and undid my skis Bernie came over. (Note: For the last three years Bernie and I each have carried packs weighing about 20 pounds when we ski. We each carry ensolite, half-bags, bivouac sacks and parkas. People have often said we were carrying too much for a day ski trip.)

It was now very clear why we carried our packs. First, Bernie got his ensolite under me. Next, we took my boot off and looked at the ankle. It was tender and already swollen. So out with the bivouac sack, more ensolite and the half-bag. When everything was ready I got into the half-bag, put on our two parkas, a wool hat and gloves. My pack was moved so I could lean against it and I was set. All this took about 20 minutes.

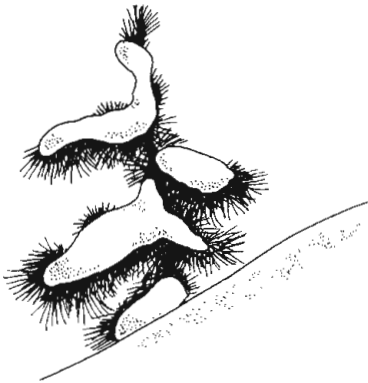
At 4:30 p.m. Bernie skied off for help, leaving me quite comfortable and warm. For the next 90 minutes I waited for Bernie's return. At 5:45 p.m. I heard a skier coming down from above. it was

Rick Brown a State Park Ranger. In 15 minutes Bernie and two more Park Rangers, Ken and Patricia showed up. It seems Bernie talked to the Rangers and decided that the five Rangers and he could get me out. Bernie had called Walt to let him know what was going on. Walt agreed with the plan.

About 6:40 p.m. two more Rangers came along with the rescue toboggan. I was placed into the toboggan and tied in. The ride out took about one hour. Then down the tramway and to the hospital for x-rays. My ankle was not fractured, but badly sprained. It will take 7-10 days on crutches and 4-6 weeks before I am back active. For me it will be a long 6-8 weeks because I am used to running 25-40 miles a week and going out on week ends.

Ed also had his knee examined at the hospital. He is using one crutch. He can bend his knee with no weight on it, but walks with a stiff leg. It will also be awhile till his recovered.

In closing I would again like to thank the Mt. San Jacinto State Park Rangers for giving up their evening plans and a chicken dinner in Round Valley. See you all in the high country soon. • RMRU



Coming Events-

APRIL

- 1 — Annual Meeting
- 3-5 — Training
- 22 — Board Meeting

MAY

- 6 — Regular Meeting
- 9-10 — Training
- 20 — Board Meeting

JUNE

- 3 — Regular Meeting
- 6-7 — Training
- Board Meeting

\$USTAINING MEMBERS

BY WALT WALKER

Last month saw RMRU pull off a very dramatic rescue that truly saved the life of a young man. This was made possible by a number of things. **First**, the regular members were there and trained to do the job. **Second**, we were greatly assisted by one of the finest helicopter pilots in the land, Don Landells. **Third**, we had the equipment to do the job with.

Who provides the equipment? **You**, of course, the Sustaining Members. I have been fortunate enough to see RMRU grow from a small group of mountaineers, with only their personal equipment, to a very competent group of mountaineers with two vans and a considerable amount of very fine equipment.

Each succeeding year seems to find RMRU being tested with a more difficult or demanding mission. The unit has been very fortunate to be able to grow with the need, both in skills and equipment. We continue to strive to be better trained and you provide us with the funds to purchase improved and new equipment.

It is a demanding task for each member to continue to strive to be sharper. Somehow we seem to find the strength to do it. I personally believe your support of what we are doing gives us part of the strength to accept the challenge,

'of helping others'.

New—

Helen F. Werner
 Carl T. Smiezchezrt
 †Howard & Florence Switzer
 †Mr. & Mrs. Ralph O. Nelson
 *Mr. & Mrs. Carl P. Siechert
 William H. Berg
 Dianna Roland

Renewing—

Mr. & Mrs. Jack Mihaylo
 Lloyd Allen
 Mr. & Mrs. Hagland
 Kathleen D. Murphy
 Ann Ahearn
 Mr. & Mrs. Harry Hein
 Karin Allen
 Nuvview Union School District
 Mr. & Mrs. H. E. Carlson
 *Jane & John Wiefels
 *Dr. & Mrs. Albert Kishaba

†Summit Club, donation of \$500 or more.

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

DING
 BaTs
 of the month



On training this month, RMRU members found out just how tough their president was. It was found that President Ed Hill had cold feet (poor baby), offering to carry Ed from one tent to another for morning inspection was (recently off probation) Craig Beasley.

