



From the Editor's desk—

The first thing that I need to do is apologize for being so late in getting the newsletter to you. I am going to use the standard excuse of not pushing members hard enough for articles, and not getting a few done myself. Again, I will say that I will try and do a better job of staying caught up with the various activities. If you have any suggestions or comments, please feel free to drop me a note at the team post office box (address is on your mailing envelope).

As 1981 draws to a close, I think that we can look back on the year and feel proud of what we have done. Probably one of the most dangerous missions of the year came early with the rescue of young Eric Nelson from the ice chutes below Tahquitz Peak. Along the way we rescued a California Assemblyman, something we had not done before. Sadly enough, with the good has to be some bad. That being the crash of the Loma Linda Medical Helicopter. The year brought a group of urban rescues closely bunched together. We look back and smile at some of them, but never the less a job was done. We also celebrated 20 years of helping others. We are already looking ahead to 25. And of course something that makes a person really feel like he did some good, that being able to reunite a young child with his parents, several times I might add. All things considered, I say 1981 wasn't such a bad year at all.



Search and Rescue

RE-SEARCH

Mission No. 8137M

**6-8 Nov., Fri.-Sun.
Western Slope,
San Jacinto Mountains**

By Walt Walker

RMRU was first contacted at 11:45 a.m. on December 23, 1979 that Gregory Tanner was missing and might be in the San Jacinto Mountains. He had last been seen three days earlier and the family car had been found in the Riverside County Visitor's Center parking lot.

The search was started on the 23rd by RMRU members and it was continued through the 24th with the assistance of teams from the California Region of the Mountain Rescue Association. The following spring the Region teams and along with RMRU again searched for a day and a half.

A hiker had recently found a gun in the backcountry that was the same make and caliber as the gun missing from the family car. In addition, the serial numbers that could be made out, were identical to that of the missing gun.

This re-search began as groups of RMRU members hiked into the general area, Friday evening, of where the gun had been located and bedded down for the night. Saturday morning additional members hiked in along with the missing man's father Carl Tanner. We searched all Saturday and till noon on Sunday. Some shreds of clothing and a few bone fragments were located. It would appear that this case will be the second one in 20 years that RMRU has not been able to completely close the book on. • RMRU



PHOTO BY WALT WALKER

SEARCHING FOR CLUES — RMRU member Rick Pohlers (using hand tool) looks for any additional items where the gun was found.

SEARCH

Mission No. 8138M

**22-23 Nov., Sun.-Mon.
Pine Cove,
San Jacinto Mountains**

By Mary Bowman

On Sunday about 4:30 p.m., the phone rang. When I answered it was my friend Barbara who lives in Pine Cove and she said, "Where are you? You were supposed to be here at 4:00." My first thought was, oh no, were we supposed to be there for dinner and I forgot? Before I could answer she said, "The Sheriff's Deputy said the rescue team would be here about 4:00 or 4:30." With a sigh of relief I told her I didn't know what she was talking about.

Barbara informed me that about 11:00 that morning a lady who was spending the weekend at a neighbor's house had gone into the back yard to get some pine cones and disappeared.

The call came shortly after that, and I was rolling from my home in Idyllwild to Pine Cove. After making my way down

the winding road to the Garthwaite's home, I started gathering information about the missing woman. Marie Maloney had been spending several days at the Garthwaite residence. It was her last day there, so she decided to gather a few pine cones behind the house before she went back to her home in Palm Desert. She never returned though. She only had slacks, blouse and a light sweater on. And for shoes she had on narrow healed sandals. At 7:30 pm Kevin Walker arrived with the the No. 1 rescue van closely followed by John Dew and son Roy, final RMRU total would be 12.

Since there were a lot of dirt roads and fuelbreaks the Hemet Search and Rescue Team brought three 4-wheel drive vehicles. The Jeeps' were very useful ferrying people up and down the fuelbreaks and dirt roads. Also, it was a good situation for bloodhounds so Sierra Madre Search and Rescue was called. They responded with 10 people and 3 dogs.

With the help of the jeeps, search teams were put out in various locations. Fortunately for Marie it was a warm night. The search teams worked on into the night, but did not turn any substantial leads. The same went for the Bloodhounds and their handlers.

About 4:00 the next morning the tired searchers went to bed for a couple of hours and at 6:30 Monday morning just as they were leaving base camp to resume the search word came via the Sheriff's radio that Marie had been found near Alvin Meadows about five miles away by an early morning quail hunter.

Once back at base, Marie told us that while she was gathering pine cones, a pack of dogs came along and started to fight with a dog that was walking with her. To get away from the fight, she left the trail and went down hill. She quickly became lost and wandered into the night. She got on top of some large boulders and spent a nervous night listening to the coyotes howl. When morning came she spotted a dirt road below her and headed to it. That was when she came across the quail hunter. So, other than two very sore feet, she was in good condition. • RMRU

CALL

Mission No. 8139C

**27 Nov., Fri.
San Jacinto Mountains**

Friday evening at approximately 1830 hrs. we received a call from the Hemet office of the Riverside County Sheriffs' Department that a man and his three children had left Humber Park in the mid day and had planned to hike to Skunk

Cabbage and meet with other members of the family who were to hike in from the tram. But with a major snow storm in the making the other family members returned to the tram, and reported the information to the sheriff.

As the call out was just beginning the sheriff called back stating that the group had just walked back to Humber and all were in fair condition. • RMRU

SEARCH

Mission No. 8140M

**27-28 Nov., Fri.-Sat.
Skyline Trail,
Above Palm Springs**

By Randy Iwasziuk

Alex Heckert who was vacationing in Palm Springs with his family, had decided to go for a day hike Friday. He picked the Skyline trail for his hike, destination the upper station of the Palm Springs aerial tram. Alex started at 8:45 am from Palm Springs, and planned to reach the top by mid afternoon. But by night fall he had not completed his hike. By mid evening the family became quite concerned, so they called the Sheriff's Department, who after gathering the necessary information activated RMRU.

The team and members from Alex's family met at the end of Ramon Road. Operations Leader Walter Walker spoke with the family members and filled out a Search and Circumstance Sheet on Alex, as the rest of us loaded our packs for a night search operation.

Walt called everyone together to give out necessary info about Alex. He was 28, slender build and in good condition. The plan was to start teams in from the bottom of the Skyline Trail, to try and find foot prints. And to also send a team down from the top of the tram in the event that Alex was near the top.

A group of us started out from the road head and headed up the old trail. We had gained several hundred feet and were beginning to get away from the noises of the city, so we started calling out, and to our surprise, we got a reply. We continued up and kept calling, the voice was approximately 500 feet above us and off to the South of the trail. Bernie McIlvoy was carrying our portable high intensity light, and soon had Alex's location pinned down. We climbed up the steep hillside while Bernie and Rick Pohlrs gave us directions, and after about eight minutes we had reached Alex. Joe Erickson was the first to his location followed by myself, Brian Hixon and Kevin Walker. We gave him water and food, while we rested, ourselves. Alex explained that he had hiked a good portion of the day when he

reached the snow line. Because of not having the proper gear for snow, he wisely turned back and started down. Night fall overtook Alex and sometime after dark he lost the trail. He made another smart move, and decided to stop and seek shelter before he injured himself. He spent a couple of hours under a overhanging boulder when we came along.

After some food and rest, we guided Alex back down to the trail and then out to his waiting family, who were nothing short of overjoyed as we walked into base. It was the first time I ever saw the team receive a standing ovation.

With gear loaded back into our cars, we headed over to a quick meal (compliments of Alex Heckert) and then home to bed. • RMRU

SEARCH

Mission No. 8141M

**30 Nov., Mon.
Mt. San Jacinto,
San Jacinto Mountains**

By Joe Erickson

Thanksgiving day came none to soon for Roger and Cathy Caldwell. Young and healthy these two were going to have a wonderful four day weekend backpacking in the San Jacinto Wilderness. They were also looking forward to a future seven day trip through the High Sierra next year. This was a preparatory trip, so they carried everything they thought they would use.

Their itinerary would be numerous points in the high country. After leaving the Palm Springs Tram around 11:30 they obtained the necessary permit from the Long Valley ranger station. Not wanting to quit so soon the couple ignored the rangers warning about an incoming storm, and shouldered their heavy packs and trudged on.

It was snowing by the time the Caldwells made camp Thursday. The heavy packs exhausted them, the altitude made them nauseous, the cold and exertion dehydrated them, Cathy pulled a muscle in her thigh and they didn't have the energy (or desire) to eat. So they crawled into their bags and tried to sleep. In spite of their misery the two pushed on Friday. Roger had taken part of his wives load, but this helped little in their cold and weakened condition. It took two trips that day to get all the gear up to the stone cabin just below the summit. After another grueling day they found the door to the cabin would not close more than half way. The wind and snow whipped around the cabin so much that they pitched the tent inside.

There they stayed for two more days until Sunday when they were up and

preparing to hike out on Monday. They were slow to start Monday am, with melting snow and all so they were going to stay until Tuesday.

A foot of snow fell over the weekend, and these two only had summer boots and no snowshoes, so it was good they did not try and make it to the tram or they would have been hurting.

Monday morning a little after 10:00 my pager went off telling me of the search. I called in to say I was going and would meet at the Palm Springs Tram (my gear is always in the car, so there is little delay). My promptness paid off because as I pulled up I saw Walt and Kevin putting on their boots, and Kevin said the chopper was on the way. As Mike Donovan landed with one of Landells Bell Jet Rangers, Walt, Kevin and I were ready to go. And off we went.

It is always nice to fly the high country after new snow fall, but with the doors off (for observation and loading ease) it was chilly. Flying over the fresh snow is most advantagous, because if someone has travelled over the snow, you can follow the track quickly.

We followed a few tracks until they went down to some steep canyons. Hoping those were not Roger's or Cathy's, we looked up higher and found that they had made it to the hut where Roger was

standing by the door waving. The pilot came in close enough for Kevin to motion 'Stay there!' Kevin and I were dropped off at Round Valley to lighten the load so Mike could manuever the bird and drop Walt behind the cabin. Walt had them pack up and get in the chopper. On the way down they picked me up and continued to base. Mike flew back up to pick up Walt and Kevin, and the rest of the Caldwell's gear. Bernie McIlvoy, Craig Beasley Rick Pohlers, Mark Rhoads and the sheriff deputies were there to help.

I'll say from experience that it is most

disappointing to get off work (without pay) rush to base to find that the helicopter has taken the first crew up, searched, and found the subjects. All the while you standing at base hoping to get to go into the field. Sure, we are all very happy that they are found quickly and relatively unhurt, but I am no good in base camp, and I don't like to be there long.

The mountain is beautiful and we are looking forward to the purity and asthetics of a fine Winter season, 'Slap them boards on and slide downhill.' • RMRU



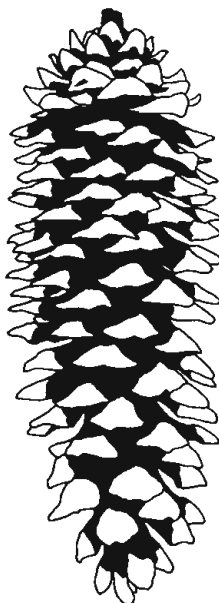
PHOTO BY KEVIN WALKER

BACK AT BASE — RMRU member Walt Walker listens as newlywed couple Roger and Cathy Caldwell tell of their cold stay in the summit shelter on Mt. San Jacinto. Enjoying the story (from middle) an unidentified sheriffs deputy, Capt Ray Canova and Joe Erickson.



PHOTO BY WALT WALKER

ON THEIR WAY OUT — Roger and Cathy Caldwell are flown out from the Mt. San Jacinto summit shelter by pilot Mike Donovan. Mike returned and picked up RMRU member Walt Walker.



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.

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