

Volume XVIII, Issue X, October 1982

Kevin Walker, Editor — Walt Walker, Publisher — Carolyn Parsons, Artist

Search and Rescue

SEARCH

Mission No. 8233M

3, Oct., Sun.
North Face,
Mt. San Jacinto

By Randy Iwaszuk

The previous month or so had been devoid of rescue activity so the last thing I expected was my pager to go off Sunday morning. I had uncharacteristically gone to school to do some work in the lab, and true to form just as I got my project and all my instruments spread out the call came; two climbers on San Jacinto's North Face, overdue almost three days.

The North Face being the awesome entity that it is precludes guessing what type of situation we can expect to encounter on any given mission. The vagaries of weather, season, and the subjects' location and or situation compound the problem presented by the precipitous terrain.

By 10:00 a.m. about a dozen RMRUers had assembled at the Snow Creek village. Little time was wasted before Vance Colvig arrived in a helicopter from Landells Aviation. Fortunately the two climbers, Ralph Glenn and Ken Rose, both experienced mountaineers with a good knowledge of San Jacinto had left a xeroxed map depicting their route. Armed with this map Walt Walker and Joe Erickson lifted off with Vance in an aerial search for the overdue pair. A systematic scouring of the labyrinthine maze of canyons on the East Fork of Snow Creek turned up Ken and Ralph in about 45 minutes. They were uninjured but indicated that they required assistance. RMRU's newly acquired bullhorn proved



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY — RMRU member Mel Krug leads Ralph Glenn away from the helicopter, as John Dew does the same with Kenneth Rose. The photo may look strange, but the reason that everyone is bent over is to stay away from the moving rotor blades. Both Ralph and Ken had just been flown out from a ledge on the North Face of Mt. San Jacinto.

to be the most vital piece of equipment on this mission. The subjects were sighted on a broken ledge about 400 feet from the top of a 2000 foot buttress. Vance the pilot was unable to find a place where he felt he could safely land and wisely elected not to endanger anyone by attempting one. After a short wait this problem was short circuited by the arrival of Don Landells. While Don was on his way we prepared for a major technical mission. At this point a difficult and tricky landing on top of the buttress and a 400 foot rappel for a technical evac team loomed probable.

Walt and I were the first team Don ferried up the mountain and as we climbed I was amazed at the size and steepness of the rock walls in this area, and was somewhat taken aback when Don maneuvered the helicopter into a one runner position on a large boulder at the edge of the ledge system where the two climbers were. Once again Don demonstrated

that the Bell Jet Ranger III is an extension of his body. Walt and I easily, but not without some trepidation at the formidable exposure stepped onto the boulder. It turned out to be a simple matter to assist the subjects in boarding the helicopter, slinging out the packs, and being whisked out ourselves on the third run. What could easily have been a long and dangerous mission, fortunately ended quickly and safely. • RMRU



RESCUE

Mission No. 8234M

**3 Oct., Sun.
Massacre Canyon,
near Gilman Hot Springs**

By Bruce Gahagan

After a hearty meal and a brief discussion about our morning North Face rescue, members headed home to try and have some what of a Sunday afternoon with family. Just as I was pulling into my driveway in Hemet, the pager went off saying to respond to Massacre Canyon for an injured woman.

Apparently the subject, Theresa Shepard fell an estimated 30 feet while hiking on the trail that bypasses the second falls. The CDF and paramedics had been notified first, and were already with Theresa when Hemet team members and RMRU arrived. Jim Fairchild, Kevin and Walt Walker and myself loaded our packs with technical gear and headed up the sandy wash back into the canyon. After we had bypassed the first falls (25 feet), and were approaching the second falls when we saw the group in question above us on the trail. We took the direct route up the steep hillside, and were soon on the trail with Theresa.

The paramedics had given first aid to Theresa, and the CDF personnel had placed her in the litter. Because of the trail being quite narrow and eroded in places, we set up belays on both ends of the litter, and then took over the evacuation part of the rescue. Once past the steep area, we met up with the rest of the team and put the wheel under the litter and then it was but a short trip out to the waiting ambulance. • RMRU

SEARCH

Mission No. 8235M

**18 Oct., Mon.
Lower Jensen Canyon,
San Jacinto Mountains**

By Kevin Walker

Mondays are hectic enough without having a mission, but nevertheless... we were contacted just before noon. Meeting point would be the end of the road at the mouth of Jensen Canyon in the community of Cabazon.

Because of servicing, both vans were in Hemet over the weekend, and that allowed Walt and I to respond quickly. As we arrived at the roadhead where the sheriff's personnel were waiting, so was Don Landells with 40MC (four-zero-mike-charlie). We quickly loaded call-out packs into the bird and were off. It seems we were looking for two local hunters



RMRU PHOTO BY WALT WALKER

CLIMB IN — The first of the two men located by helicopter in the lower end of Jensen Canyon, climbs into the bird under the guidance of Kevin Walker. After both men were secured, pilot Don Landells flew the men out to base camp in the community of Cabazon. Don then returned for Walt and Kevin and the remainder of the gear

that were overdue in completing a hiking hunting trip from Black Mountain to Cabazon via Jensen Canyon. Locals said that they thought voices could be heard from the end of the dirt road where the canyon opens up.

With that we concentrated our search in the lower canyon. It did not take long. As we were working our way back down the main canyon, I spotted both of the men sitting in the bottom of the canyon by the stream. There was a helispot near their location that allowed Don to put both skids down. Once out, Don pulled up and away so that Walt and I could scamper off the boulder. Five minutes later, we had the tired but uninjured men back on the helispot. A quick call for Don, and he was back to the large boulder. We sent the two hunters out first and then Don returned for us. This particular mission went so fast that only Craig Britton, Jim Fairchild, and Bernie McIlvoy had arrived. • RMRU

SEARCH

Mission No. 8236M

**26 Oct., Tues.
South Fork,
San Jacinto River**

Just after midnight, RMRU received a call from the Hemet station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department requesting our services in locating two men overdue

in completing a hike from Lake Hemet down the South Fork to the Cranston Ranger Station. Members met at the Hemet station for details and assignments, and then went on their way. Bruce Gahagan and Kevin Walker were the first into the field. Their assignment was to drive to the end of a dirt road that goes into the South Fork about one mile, and then start hiking up the canyon and either cut footprints or locate the missing pair. The Hemet team had one foot team available, so they were assigned to hike in the Rouse Trail to the bottom of the South Fork to try and cut prints in the bottom. On the top of Rouse Hill was the Hemet van. It would relay for teams in the bottom. Coming in from Highway 74 on the South Fork Trail was a double team consisting of Jim Fairchild, Craig Britton, Mark Hebert and Mike Deden. They would hike into the canyon and attempt to also cut tracks or locate the men on the trail.

As the dark early morning hours progressed it began to rain, and continued on for the remainder of the mission. Kevin's team had not found anything in the lower end. The Hemet team did indeed find two sets of tracks when they reached the bottom. That put the two somewhere from the middle of the canyon down. Jim's team had found two sets of prints wandering on the South Fork Trail, so his team stayed with questionable prints.

At first light, Bernie McIlvoy and Dave

Ezell started in from the big horse-shoe curve on Highway 74 and went cross country to what they thought would be somewhere in the middle of two teams already in the bottom. The ridge went further down stream than first thought, as Bernie and Dave met up with Kevin and Bruce as they came into the canyon. The group of four continued up stream in the light rain, and within 30 minutes came across two very wet hikers slowly making their way down canyon. After radioing out the good news to base, relay and the other two field teams, the group headed on down canyon and eventually back to Kevin's Jeep CJ5. Just after noon, better than twelve hours later the last of the teams were out and the mission was completed. • RMRU



Familiarization

**8-10 Oct., Fri.-Sun.
Desert Divide,
San Jacinto Mountains**

By Jim Fairchild

While numerous missions, trainings, and recreational outings had taken us into the Desert Divide area, we had never hiked the entire trail continuously on one occasion.

Seven of us departed from Humber Park just five minutes after 8:00 p.m. almost making our appointed time. Clear, windy, star-lit skies made the climb most pleasant as Bud White, Glenn Henderson, Bruce Gahagan, Pete Carlson, Bob Attride, Mel Krug and the writer chatted happily in anticipation of a delightful thirty miles. We weren't disappointed. Markedly cooler temperatures along with the strong wind got our attentions at Saddle Junction (8100ft.), and we stopped to don wind parkas. At a hidden spring at the head of Tahquitz Valley we filled our water containers with six or more quarts. A half-mile farther and we camped near Little Tahquitz Valley. I reminisced about the first slide show RMRU produced from slides we took of a child who disappeared from his group. That was done during a similar October weekend in the same area about sixteen years ago.

Dawn comes later this time of year, and we arose just after first light, had a quick breakfast, and walked over to the trail and

around the meadow, on the Pacific Crest Trail, which we hoped to follow to Santa Rosa Summit, our ending point. The wind still blew enthusiastically, but that was to be a blessing to keep the low-angled sun from burning our hides. Soon fine views of the desert were had as we headed east, then south, then on around Red Tahquitz Peak. We were now on the Coachella Desert side of our divide. We passed where Kady Joost had been rescued after being injured when her pack horse slid far down the slope and had to be destroyed. A little farther was where we spotted Andy Smatko ascending towards Red Tahquitz following a bivouac down Andeas Canyon. Still farther along we encountered a pile of various sized boulders, and pushed them off the trail. Shortly, we came alongside and three-hundred feet below Southwell Peak. The others climbed it while I re-fitted a new pack for Bob. I had been up Southwell before. After some serious hiking southeastward past Antsell Rock we had lunch at Apple Canyon saddle. Bruce had aggravated a long time ankle problem with twists at two or three points on the rocky trail, and rather than punish it further, opted to descend Apple Canyon to Pine Springs Ranch and get a ride back to Humber Park. So, we were now six.

Our excitement over the views of both sides of the Desert Divide never diminished. The Santa Ana winds cleared most of Southern California, and we could see all the geography visible in all directions.

Earlier, the sun had reflected brightly off the Salton Sea. Views through firs and pines and cedars were crystal clear: Wonderland of Rocks in Joshua Tree; Chuck-walla Mountains; Rabbit Peak; San Ysidro Mountains; Palomar and the 200 inch telescope dome; Santiago and Mojeska Peaks with the ominous smoke cloud rising from the Orange County fire; and sparkling Lake Hemet were but a few of the sights. We had passed the headwaters of Tahquitz, Andreas, Murray, and Hurkey Creeks.

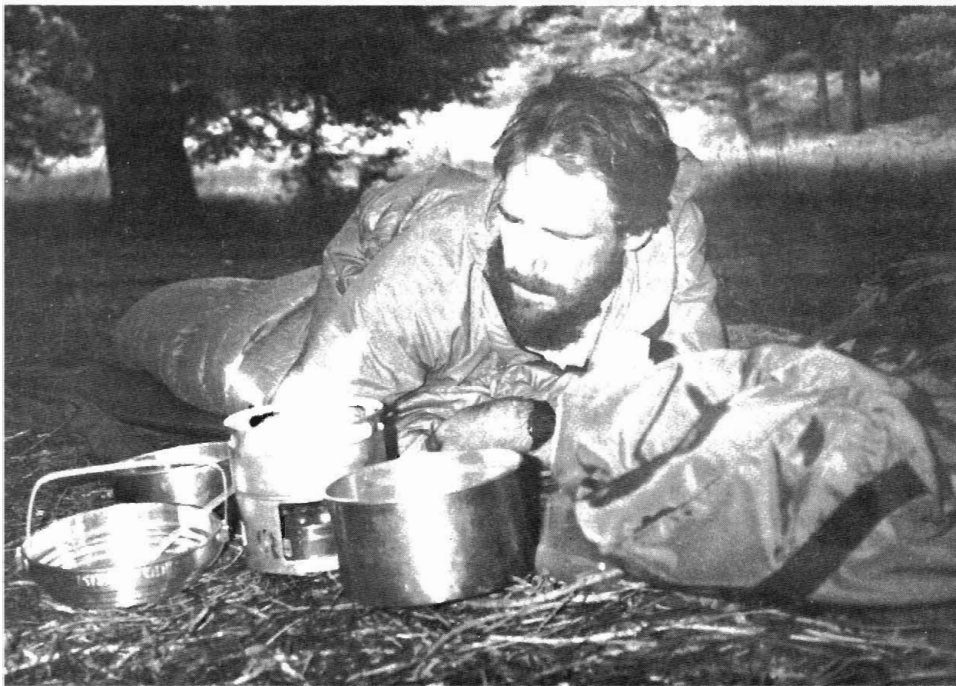
Following lunch at the saddle we headed along East of Apache Peak to a barren saddle to its south. We climbed said peak and found wind velocity increasing. Forty m.p.h. and forty degrees fah...we might have to put on a jacket yet! The wind chill factor was -2 deg. F. Heavily wooded Spitter Peak loomed ahead, but we passed it by anticipating the thousand foot climb to the nearly flat summit of Palm View Peak (7100ft.). At the saddle just north of said peak Bob removed his boot and revealed a heel whose bottom was fully involved with a puffy, white blister. No question about it, he must hobble out the lateral trail for a ride back to Idyllwild. Now we were five.

The writer was out of blood sugar as we strode up the grind to Palm View Peak. But visions of the Spencer steak drew me on. More trail snacks and Gookinade tomorrow! We also found that the new, light, super comfortable 'approach type'



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

HEY BRUCE, WHAT'S THE MATTER — RMRU member Glenn Henderson (far right), watches on as Bruce Gahagan (back to camera) prepares to hike out early with a turned ankle. Showing their concern, Bud White, Pete Carlson, Mel Krug, and Bob Attride take a break before continuing on.



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

QUIET TIME — RMRU member Mel Krug starts his stove in preparation for his evening meal. Because of wind and cold, members climbed into their bags early, and spent a quiet night under the stars.

boot are not quite as supportive of a 205 pound hiker with fifty pound pack as might be desired, so some feet felt like their bottoms had been worked over with a club. Ah! But what ecstasy upon finding an ideal campsite with sheltered sleeping areas and fine cooking spot. Soon, supper was sizzling and bubbling, then guzzled, chewed, and swallowed. Bud, the elder statesman of backpacking (he's almost 13 months older than the writer) regaled us with glories of past outings, keeping pace with the Santa Ana gale. The rest of us tried to help. Sleeping bags, pads, and a final drink of water were resorted to quite early and never felt so good.

Sunday morning and only thirteen more miles. Miraculously, we started hiking before 8:00 a.m. We felt good and really poured it on into the even stronger wind. Down to three quarts of water apiece and minus a couple of meals, our packs were lighter. The peaks along the divide were less steep and more round now. The forest went from mostly timber to mostly manzanita, buckbrush, scrub oak, chamise, holly, cascara — but many patches of forest trees grow in ideal locations. The higher mountain Stellar's Jay was replaced by the Scrub Jay. The last Mountain Chickadee called as we passed Pyramid Peak. The trail led along the top of the divide a lot now, and we looked down on the beautiful Garner Valley on the right, and the multitude of drainages leading into Palm Canyon on out left.

At one water break an exceptionally intriguing tooth-shaped rock loomed on a peak about a quarter mile east. Bud just

had to climb the peak (Pine Mountain). So with Mel and his sore knee guarding the packs four of us skeptically headed over, hoping for an easy way through the super thick brush. A duck (stack of rocks usually indicating a pathway) appeared just at the edge of the thickest scrub-oak-buckbrush association. Bud sped toward it and soon we were on the peak, having followed ducks through where we thought no way existed. But, the big rock was higher than the portion of the peak where the Hundred Peaks Section of the Sierra Club had placed the register. We searched for a route, but concluded it was difficult roped climbing, especially in the fifty-mile-an-hour gusts. We returned to Mel and packs and pushed on. The writer was always getting behind while taking pictures. Then the wind diminished, and it was track shorts time. Much better! Before long we reached the Bull Canyon Road (dirt) and knew only six miles remained. We poured on the energy (crisis notwithstanding) and with some breaks, one of them for Mel to try Bud's orthotic inserts in running shoes which cured the knee problem, we headed down the last half mile of straight dirt road to intersect the Pines-to-Palms Highway. Kevin and Bruce arrived at the same time we did and 'refreshments' were consumed as though we were really dehydrated. We all had at least a quart of water left over-reserve.

We agreed it was an unexcelled experience and shared enthusiasm for doing it again next year. Better, next week! But then maybe two weeks from now would be more reasonable.

\$USTAINING MEMBERS

October

New—

Tom & Jan Aldrich
Paul Wright

Renewing—

*Les & Shirley Albertson
*Canyon Lake Lioness Club
Our Club
Steve Bryant
*M/M Glenn
*Circle City Hospital
Lloyd Allen & Ann Ahern

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