

Volume XX, Issue XII, December 1984

John Dew, Editor — Kevin Walker, Publisher — Dona Halcrow, Artist

Search and Rescue

CALL

Mission No. 8429C

**2 Dec., Sun.
Tahquitz Canyon,
San Jacinto Mountains**

We received a call in the mid morning from the Palm Springs Police Department, that a man had been brought out of Tahquitz Canyon, and stated that he and three other people had been ambushed by someone with a cross-bow, and that his companions were still up in the canyon. We immediately contacted the Banning Station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department and apprised them of the situation. We were then put into a standby mode as the sheriff gathered information. After approximately two hours we were recontacted and taken off of standby as the authorities had learned that the man in question was from a mental institution and was quite disturbed. • RMRU

EVACUATION

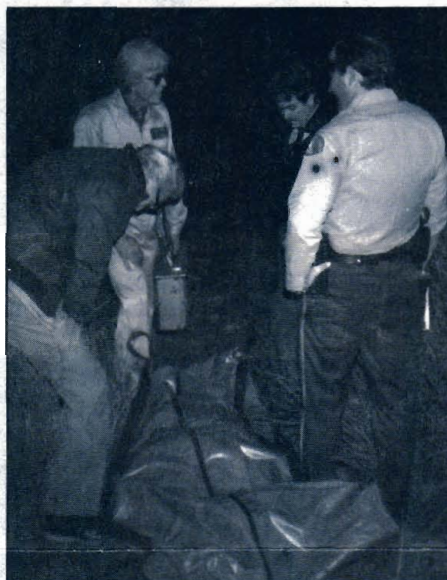
Mission No. 8430M

**12 Dec., Wed.
Hills north of Temescal Canyon**

By Jim Fairchild



The weather on this particular Wednesday presented huge cloud formations over and near all the mountains in sight. In the morning I was driving about the vicinity of Riverside observing the clouds and wind patterns, thinking of past missions to locate and pick up after plane crashes; the present conditions seemed ominous.



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

A SAD END — Sheriff's personnel stand by the body of a man killed when he and his Ultra-light aircraft crashed in the foothills near Lake Mathews.

At about 4 p.m. I was about to finish my day's work when the pager sounded and said to call Al Andrews, our Coordinator. He gave directions to the scene of an airplane crash, which had been mentioned in the pager alert. By sundown I was at the scene, talking to Sgt. Shoemaker of the Sheriff's Office and Duane Twomley, of California Department of Forestry. They pointed out the crash site, only a third of a mile east of the road in rolling hills. The deputy and coroner on the scene had radioed to say they needed bolt cutters to remove the pilot, Barry Zielinski, age 39, of Huntington Beach, from his crushed ultralight, propeller-driven craft. Since I just happen to carry a nice bolt cutter in my truck, I was soon hiking along. First, I came to a wing that had separated from the plane, then a parachute with sling strung out from it, then the craft. But by now the men on the scene had removed the pilot, put him in a bag, and were carrying him down the hill to the two official cars at the bottom. Bernie McIlvoy and Mel Krug came along and went to inspect the wreckage. Kevin Walker and Ray Hussey arrived in Kevin's jeep, primarily because the cars were not going to be able to ascend the very steep "road" they

had descended. Kevin and the rest of us assisted in the "rescue" of the cars, and triumphantly returned to base on the paved road.

The cause of the crash is unknown to us, and we are saddened to see a young life so abruptly terminated by falling out of the sky. • RMRU

SEARCH

Mission No. 8431M

**20 Dec., Thurs.
Mt. Waterman,
San Gabriel Mountains**

By Jim Fairchild



RMRU received a call for assistance from Sierra Madre Mountain Rescue Team regarding a skier from Mammoth Lakes missing from the Mt. Waterman Ski Lift area. Four of us were able to respond, Ray Hussey,

Cameron Robbins, Craig Beasley, and the writer.



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

PROBE SEARCH — RMRU members search for a missing skier from the Mt. Waterman Ski Area, using avalanche probes.

After a slow drive along icy roads north of Los Angeles, in Ray's roomy Suburban, we arrived at base camp, at the bottom of the ski lift. The scenario was that the skier had been descending with his partner near the lift, and simply disappeared into the storm clouds. The ski patrol had criss-crossed the area during the night and found no trace.

Upon being transported up the chairlift we donned snowshoes and were handed twelve-foot-long conduit rods. We were to probe the snow for a body. We show-shoed over and down to the fall-line in question, and proceeded, upon command at regular intervals, to "probe, lift, step, probe, lift, step." As we searched the word came over our HandiTalkie that the skier had returned to base camp, in good shape. Jubilant, we hurried down in a great sliding snowshoe romp.

He had indeed become disoriented and descended the canyon mentioned above, spent a cold night far below, then ascended back to base. Enough said. • RMRU

ABORT

Mission No. 8432A

**23 Dec., Sun.
Hills above Corona**

Shortly after midnight we received a call from the Riverside station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department that there was a car spotted off a dirt road in the hills southeast of Corona and that our technical expertise was needed to get to the vehicle to see if anyone was in it. As members arrived at the scene the CDF and Highway Patrol had found a way down to the vehicle and found no one inside. Members turned around and returned home. • RMRU

SEARCH

Mission No. 8433M

**26 Dec., Wed.
Santa Rosa Mountains**

By Kevin Walker



After a most enjoyable Christmas with my wife Patrice, daughter Bridgett and family too numerous to mention, we had indeed settled down for a long winters rest, when low and behold what was it? Why it's the tele-

phone. Kevin, call your people and have them meet at the Elks Lodge near Pinyon at 6:00 AM for a search for a family overdue since Sunday. After finishing my calls and getting gear set out, I was able to get a very short winters sleep and then get back up and drive to Pinyon.



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

HAPPY TO BE GOING HOME — An anxious and happy group of six wait to be flown out to Pinyon, and then go home for a late Christmas.



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

HOME IS THAT WAY — At least that is what the man thought. RMRU member Kevin Walker discusses the actual location of where the lost group of six was at. They thought that La Quinta was just over one ridge, when in actuality they were many miles from civilization.

When we arrived we learned that a man and his wife and four cousins ranging in age from 9 to 15, had been left at the Santa Rosa Peak turnoff on Saturday, and had planned to hike from there over Santa Rosa and ultimately reach La Quinta on Sunday. That would be a large undertaking even for our marathon hikers on the team. At 6:30 Don Landells arrived with helicopter 816. Fellow team member Jim Fairchild and I were assigned to fly with Don and try and at least cut tracks as the group had been overdue for three days, and had been out for a total of five. It was quite cold out, and the snow above on the Santa Rosas made it seem even worse.

Another problem we had to contend with was that a storm would be moving in to the area later in the day.

Jim and I loaded our packs, climbed in with Don and were off. First thing we did was pick up the dirt road that leaves the highway and follow it towards Santa Rosa. Soon we were into the snow following numerous four wheel drive tracks on the snow covered road. When we reached the Santa Rosa summit the only thing we saw was a Blazer still buried in the snow, that Don had been days earlier looking for. We moved on following the road towards Toro Peak. About halfway between the two peaks Don spotted tracks

leaving the road. It was a small group going in a very strange direction. This had to be our group. Tracking in the snow was fairly easy, as the tracks stayed in single file and seemed to be contouring around Toro Peak. Along the way we saw where the group had spent the night under a pine tree, and then moved on. We followed the tracks until they left the snow and then things got hard, as it was now desert tracking conditions; hard ground, rocks, etc. Occasionally we would find prints here and there, and be able to keep going. Then there was a period of time that we saw nothing. It was at this point that we were about to fly back to base and prepare for a ground search. As we were starting back Don said that there was an old indian site not far that had soft sand, and that it would be an excellent place to check for tracks. When we flew over wouldn't you know it — there were the tracks. Don landed and we all got out to check closely. After a little studying Jim was able to make out two adult sized tracks and four children. This was it, back in the bird and off down the large open valley which

heads in the direction of Borrego. We did a quick search hoping to catch up with the group, but this was to no avail as we got down to the edge of Borrego and found nothing. We started back up again planning to go back to the general area that we saw the last tracks, and then search slower again. As we flew back towards the open valley Don said he was going to fly along the northeast side of the valley since the group had seemed to be trying to go that direction generally. Both Jim and I thought that Don was crackers but in no time we spotted smoke from a small fire. There was the group. Don found a spot, let Jim and I out and then flew off to get high enough to contact base that we had found the group. Jim and I found them all to be in fair to good shape. One of the boys had lost his shoe the previous day and was now walking with many socks on. And one of the others had extremely sore feet. We helped them gather gear, and Don returned. Three of the boys and the woman went out in the first load, and after a short wait the man, last of the boys and Jim and I were on our way out.

Everything turned out fine, but because of the gear they had, and their condition if they would have had to stay out in the storm that shortly followed, things might not have turned out so well. At any rate everyone was happy to be out, and they looked forward to going home and having a late but joyous Christmas. • RMRU

CALL

Mission No. 8434C

**31 Dec., Mon.
Skyline Trail,
San Jacinto Mountains**

A little after noon we received a call from the Long Valley Ranger station that four adults were overdue in completing an ascent of the Skyline Trail from Palm Springs to Long Valley and the tram. As information was being gathered, the group walked in and all were OK. • RMRU

\$USTAINING MEMBERS

BY KEVIN WALKER

With all that has already been said about the possibility of RMRU being involved in a lawsuit, I will not go into details about it, but I do wish to say thank you all for not only the financial support that you, the Sustaining members have continued to give us, but also the letters of encouragement directly to us, and the letters to the editor. When one goes out on a mission, the personal risk factor is one thing. But to have to put additional pressure on an entire family makes a person wonder is it really worth while. Your continued support answers the question quite easily. On behalf of my family, and I am sure others on the team, thank you. When the call comes for help, I think that it is safe to say that there will be someone there to answer it.

JULY — DECEMBER

New—

- §C.P.L. Inc.
- M/M Ronald Krull
- Major and Mrs. Douglas Moynihan
- Dawn Hale
- *Alice Schneider
- M/M W.B. Hamilton
- Elva Bess Cook
- Canyon Lake Lioness Club
- M/M Sam Muzquiz
- *M/M A.P. Crist

Renewing—

- *Circle City Auxiliary
- M/M Howard Haering
- Marydoris Powers
- *Soroptimist Club of Banning
- M/M Malcomb Alexander
- M/M Harry Hein
- *M/M Kenneth Andrews
- M/M Chandler McMillan
- Richard W. Elliott
- §Circle City Hospital
- §Izaak Walton League
- *Bud Nelson
- M/M Freeman Bovard
- *Avis Anderson
- *Theodore Young
- Austin M. Hicks
- M/M Kelley R. Harrison
- M/M Robert Kowell
- Sylvia M. Broadbent
- John & Betty Moore
- The Nix Family
- *George Ruptier
- M/M Charles Ricker
- Mrs. Louis McGrath
- Mountain High LTD.
- Dr. and Mrs. Jay Wallis
- M/M Jerry Whitt
- M/M Richard Fleming
- M/M James Collins
- C. O. Barker, Jr.
- Martin Trudeau
- Beverly Laing
- Jack & Pat Bamberger
- M/M Howard Switzer
- *David Hadley
- Hemacinto Mobile Park
- *Norm & Maggie Mellor
- *David & Rita Harrah

- Cliff Lundquist
- *M/M John Gilbert
- *M/M John Kraft
- Everyone from RMRU's
- United Way Family

- * **Century Club**, \$100 or more
- § **Patron**, \$250 or more
- * **Summit Club**, \$500 or more



TRAINING

Helitac

15 Dec., Sat.
Landells Aviation
Desert Hot Springs

By Mel Krug



The team gathered early at Landells Aviation for our annual Helitac training. In years past the morning has been quiet around the hangar, but this year it was not that way as Don had left at first light on a job, Mike

Donovan was working at the tram, and Steve DeJesus would be leaving shortly. Don had left pilot Brian Novak's schedule clear so we could train. With the last available ship left, Brian went over safety points around the helicopter, such as proper approach to the bird — keeping eye contact with the pilot, staying clear of the tail rotor, watching it for the pilot when working in tight helispots. Then Walt Walker went over proper procedure entrance and exit of the helicopter. Veteran helicopter lover Kevin Walker demonstrated how to enter the machine slowly, move across and buckle up, then unhook, slide back out and then step off. Newer members and old alike practiced under the static conditions, before moving out to the practice area. Brian fired up the bird and using the official RMRU (manufactured) Rock, members working in twos (one new, one veteran) practiced giving hand signals, entering in a one runner pick up and then stepping out in hover. After all had done that several times, members then got in the machine in a full hover, trying to be careful not to upset the helicopter as they got in. We also practiced picking up a sling load and then with the help of Rob Gardner's son in the litter, did a full hover pick up of the litter containing a subject. With all members getting a good training session in, we concluded official helitac.

Most all members stayed to visit with the staff and tell war stories from new and old experiences. To Don and Elaine Landells, Jim, Bill, Mike, Brian and Steve, thank you for your help, trust and friendship that you share with us, we of **RMRU** are truly fortunate. • **RMRU**

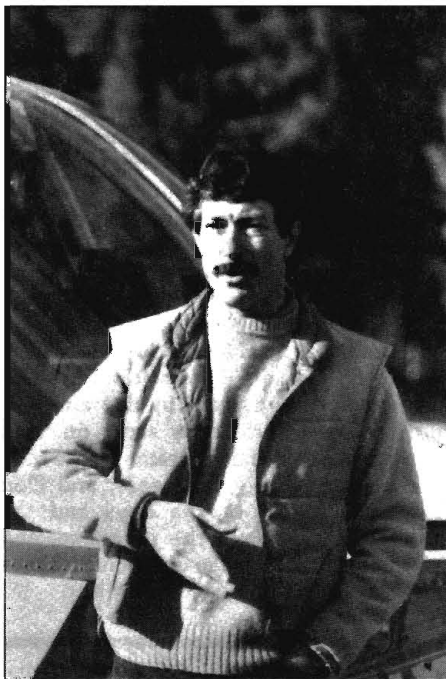


PHOTO BY KEVIN WALKER

PILOT — Brian Novak



PHOTO BY KEVIN WALKER

STEPPING OUT — Newer member Collin Chambers takes his turn at entering and exiting the helicopter during static practice.

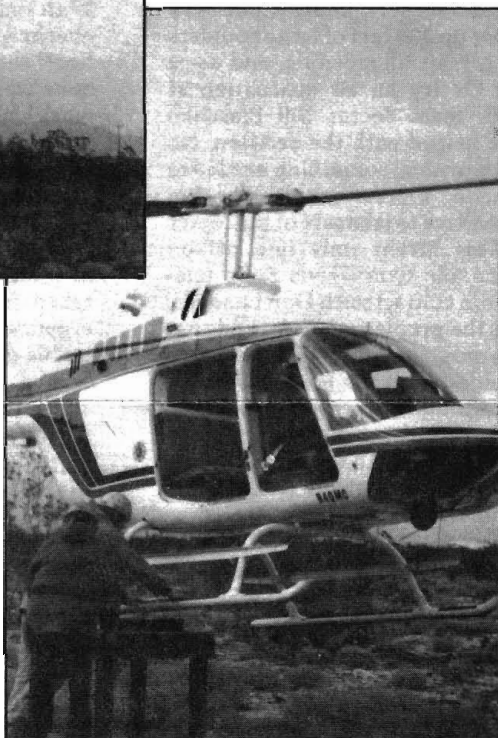


RMRU PHOTO BY KEVIN WALKER

AT FULL HOVER — This is what helitac is all about.



HELITAC — In this series of photos, veteran member Rick Pohlers and new member Gordon Lee (1) wait for the helicopter to be guided into position; (2) steady the bird as it makes contact with the RMRU rock; (3) enter the bird; (4) exit in a full hover.



PHOTOS BY KEVIN WALKER



Reprinted from the
October 1983
RMRU Newsletter

SEARCH

Mission No. 8334M

25-26 October, Tues.-Wed.
Box Springs Mountain,
Riverside

By Kevin Walker



The phone rang at 8:00 P.M. It was Al with news of a mission. The call was for a stranded man on the side of the Box Springs above Riverside. From the information given, it would be a simple operation, and we would be home in no time. Fellow member Bruce Gahagan picked me up and we headed to Sunnymead to rendezvous.

We did and caravanned in and up to the summit of the mountain. There waiting was the sheriff, paramedics, and a CDF fire truck. Somewhat to our surprise, the subject was not up, and why the paramedics? After inquiring we soon learned that the simple operation would turn into one of RMRU's riskiest missions in some time. It seems that a 23 year old went out with two other friends to hike and have fun in general on the Box Springs. Greg Fredborg and his two companions went up the mountain on Monday. I am not certain when the accident happened and how long it took Greg's friends to locate him, but while Greg was up on a view point he lost his footing and fell nearly 70 feet.

After Greg's friends did locate him, they moved him a short distance and then just waited.

First order of business was to get down to him. Bernie McIlvoy and Cameron Robbins started first, followed by Craig Britton who laid out a rope for the operation. Bernie's group had gone down about 500 feet when they radioed up that they were with the subject. Not long after Bernie radioed back up some very bad news. After doing a survey of the subject, it was learned that Greg probably had neck injuries. With that, Rick Pohlers guided one of the paramedics down to Greg. A very important decision had to then be made. How to get a person with serious head and neck injuries out. Try and do a raise up 500 feet of large boulders and ravines, wait till morning, and use a helicopter. Or try an air evacuation at night. Well, team doctor Bill Blaschko arrived and helped with the decision. No waiting till morning, something needed to be done soon. Operations Leader Jim Fairchild asked me to take care of helicopter support. This meant only one person could do the job. Quickly via radio telephone I was in contact with Don Landells. I explained the problem to Don, and that we felt the only way to get Greg out was to airlift underneath the bird as we have done several times before. And to add to the obvious difficulties of night and steep terrain, was a Santa Ana wind condition. Don still agreed, and said he would be on the way shortly.

Bruce, Glenn and Bill took the litter and rigging down, everyone at the subject worked together to place Greg, who was already on a back board and immobilized, into the litter. As this went on Mel Krug and I prepared the helispot. Nothing was

easy. The landing site was a short distance from one of the many 50 foot radio towers on the top of the mountain. We finished preparations at both ends, and waited only a short time when Don made contact with us. Soon he was on the ground. We helped him remove his door, hook up the 30 foot rescue sling and then all agreed on the plan of attack.

Once ready, Don lifted the machine up, and with the sling below the bird, he disappeared from our site up on top. It was only a short wait, but it seemed an eternity. At the site, Don positioned himself above, maneuvered the machine down, the litter was attached, and very slowly Don raised up, and soon was back on top. With radio and hand signals I guided him overhead and then down so we could unhook the litter. Don then set down, his door was reattached, and one back door was removed. The litter was then placed in the back, secured and one paramedic and I climbed in also to keep Greg still. Once secure, Don lifted off and in a short matter of minutes we sat down on the helipad at Loma Linda Hospital. Greg, still in the litter was placed on a gurney and taken in by nurses to the waiting emergency room. Don flew us back, picked up his door and headed for home. A successful, but sad mission drew to a close a 1:30 A.M.

To date of publishing Greg Fredborg is still in the hospital, and is paralyzed from the neck down. We send our heart felt sympathy to Greg and his family. We also want to thank the Riverside Sheriff's station personnel, C.D.F., two very professional paramedics, and to Don Landells for helping us in a major way, to save a life. • RMRU



The President's Box

By Walt Walker

RMRU is approaching 25 years of service, all of which has been volunteered freely by its members over the years — time spent in training with the most up-to-date equipment in search and rescue. Many standard pieces of equipment, many standard principles of rigging, of new applications of tried and true methods our own members have invented. Why? To make the processes

used — safer, faster, and more thorough in the care of those we volunteer to help. All of us are out-doors people, most are mountaineers, all of us have busy demanding lives other than the time we still find for service through RMRU. I see in my son a reflection me, I see in me a reflection of my father, I see in my father a reflection of my grandfather. My father was taught, so I was taught, so I taught my son — when you see people in need of help you can give — you help! No one would join our unit if this desire to serve was foreign to their make-up. All of us in a search or rescue situation are there to help — help find, help solve, help save — to help!

In October of 1983 RMRU was called to help in the rescue of a man from terrain too difficult for the general laity to maneuver safely. He had fallen some 30 hours earlier, been moved to a different position by companions and there he stayed. Using the proper equipment and

the proper methods the rescue was carried out as quickly as safety for the injured and rescuers would allow.

Now — in October of 1984 RMRU finds itself as one of many individuals and organizations on the receiving end (or, in the midst of) a twelve million dollar lawsuit, filed by the young man we rescued. My son, Kevin, and I are two of the specifically named individuals. I was not even physically there on that specific rescue — however, I surmise, as chairman of the unit I should have been in control! We are all individuals with common capabilities, we work as a team — each doing at a specific time what we are called upon to do.

My wife did some fast calculating of my volunteer time over the past 24 years — approaching 10,000 hours — *minimum* and at least one half that time without even a thank you. Reader, please don't misunderstand, I do not do this for acclamation. I give because I want to.

But, to have the organization I have watched grow into one of the most highly respected mountain rescue units in the United States, be sued by someone we voluntarily risked our own safety for is difficult, to say the least, to deal with. Our society is fast becoming entrenched in the thinking that no man is responsible for his own choice of action. An individual can do anything to himself and then expect someone else to pay the price. RMRU is on the waiting end now — the people we volunteer to serve will decide. The law suit has done much to shake our faith in the "goodness" (?) of mankind. It's interesting — since the suit has been filed we have responded to ten calls for search and rescue — eight people are alive because we came. We, as RMRU, are deeply grateful for all the positive response — both verbal and written — from the people who know us and the service we give freely to man. We wish to continue — we shall have to wait to see if we can. • RMRU

Reprinted from
The Press-Enterprise
Sunday, Dec. 30, 1984

NO GRATITUDE

Editor, the Press-Enterprise:

Brian Ludwig on Oct. 2, 1967, playing football for his college became injured and suffered a broken neck and shattered his fourth and fifth cervicals of his spine which paralyzed him — see Parade, November 3.

Isn't it possible that Mr. Craig Fredborg was paralyzed at the time that volunteers risked their lives to save this selfish and unappreciative person?

It is a sorry situation to see such action taken by this ungrateful person and his . . . attorney against such wonderful people who assisted the volunteers and never think about their safety while performing their duty.

WM. E. LEVINSON

Banning

Reprinted from
The Press-Enterprise
Sunday, Dec. 30, 1984

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Editor, the Press-Enterprise:

I was deeply disturbed and dismayed when I read about the contemplated law suit against the Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit.

Many lives will be lost every year if this unit was to be disbanded as a result of this legal action. Two years ago our 24-year-old son lost his life when he accidentally fell in one of the canyons of the San Jacinto Mountains. The rescue effort conducted by the Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit was absolutely heroic. The search, which lasted for nearly 16 hours, was conducted mostly during the night in freezing weather and under extremely hazardous conditions.

I spent hours at the command post where the rescue operation was being monitored and directed. I was witness to the unbelievable dedication and valor of this group of young men who risked their lives trying to rescue our son. During that rescue effort one of the rescuers was seriously injured and nearly fell to his own death. These men volunteered to carry out this incredibly difficult task to save the life of a total stranger!

. . . Not knowing any of the facts associated with the case, I cannot comment on the contemplated legal action. Being a physician myself, I know of many malpractice suits which are announced but never make it to the courtroom for lack of merit. Nevertheless, the harm done by the publicity is immense and is never fully repaired. I hope this will not happen in the case of the Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit.

In a society which decries the lack of heroes, these men are indeed true heroes and deserve the support of the community which knows of their extremely valuable efforts.

Col. ANTONIO RIVERA, M.C.
USAF Regional Hospital
March AFB

Reprinted from
The Press-Enterprise
Saturday, Dec. 29, 1984

SELFLESS RESCUERS

Editor, the Press-Enterprise:

When I read this article about the law suit filed by (Craig) Fredborg, it almost made me sick. I am surprised that I am not being sued also, after all Mr. Fredborg is going after everyone else.

For many years the Mountain Rescue Unit has been saving lives, on their own time, and for no pay except for the feeling they were there to help someone. I'm sure that when the rescue team arrived to save Mr. Fredborg he must have thought, "Thank God, someone is here to rescue me."

No one told Mr. Fredborg to go hiking or mountain climbing that day, but he did. . .

Speaking I'm sure for a lot of people that have been rescued out there in those mountains: My hat is off to the Mountain Rescue Team, and all the other people involved in such matters.

If Mr. Fredborg wins this suit, what will happen the next time someone else needs these selfless people? Where would Mr. Fredborg be today had these people not been there when he needed them? I feel sorry for anyone who has had their life saved, and then turns on the very people who saved it. They must wonder if it was really worth saving.

JIM SNODGRASS

Moreno Valley