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

Search and Rescue

CALL

Mission No. 8510C

8 March, Fri.
North Face
Mt. San Jacinto

Just after lunch we received a call from the Banning station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department that two men were a day overdue in completing an ascent of the North Face. We quickly started the call out, but during the calling the pair made it out in good shape. • RMRU

SEARCH

Mission No. 8511M

10 March, Sun.
North of Murrieta Hot Springs,
Riverside County

By Rick "Major Disaster" Pohlers



Well folks, you got it, the old editor needed yours truly to help out. Sunday at my house the troops were gathered to work on the two team vehicles. Some of the troops waxed while others cleaned inside. Joe "Lieutenant Ludicrous" was put underneath to change the oil and then clean the undercarriage, as Joe spends a lot of time on his back. Kevin "Colonel Clutz" was trying to get rid of a hangover or something from the previous night's escapades.

At lunch Al "Interruptus" Andrews called, seems that a good ol' boy in Rancho area was missing. The general (Walt) got the whip out and gear was put back in the vans and we were off for the land down under. Upon arriving on the scene, the

first thing we saw had to have been the ladies amazon team practicing for the next olympics. There were more people on horseback looking around than at a rodeo. So out we went looking for a guy missing for over a week. The only clue to even begin, was that his cowboy cadillac was left in a field (where base was) in the middle of nowhere. Searching was difficult as one had to be careful where to step. We searched into the night and found nothing but more road apples. The sheriff called off the search and the troopies marched back in. Somehow we found our way back to the highway, and then headed in to Hemet for dinner. • RMRU

CALL

Mission No. 8512C

13 March, Wed.
San Jacinto Mountains

During the afternoon we received a call from Banning station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department that a man and his son were a day overdue in completing a hike from Idyllwild to the tram. As members were being contacted the two walked in to the tram in good condition. • RMRU

SEARCH

Mission No. 8513M

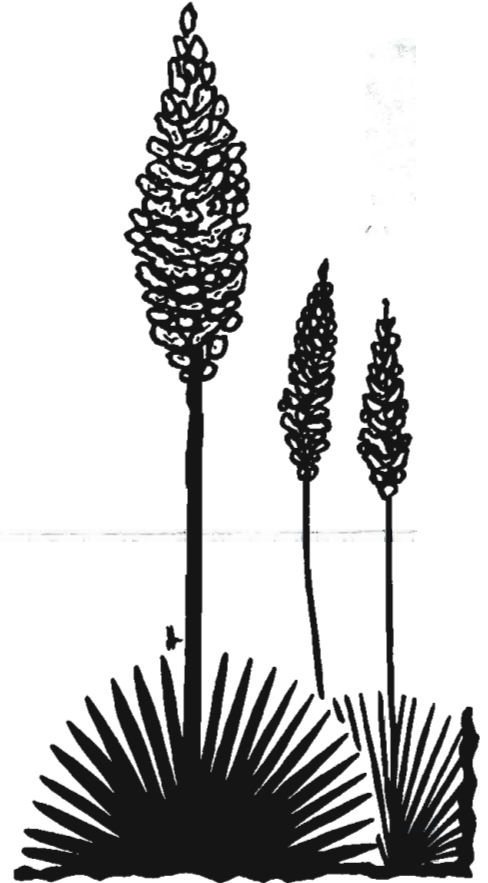
17 March, Sun.
Northern Slope,
San Jacinto Mountains

By Mel Krug



The call came very early in the morning to meet at first light to search for three men overdue on the PCT. The three started from Snowcreek the day before and were supposed to have gone up the Pacific Crest Trail and over the top to the Tram and down the Tram by the same afternoon. Sounds pretty unlikely to me — even for people familiar with the mountain and in good shape.

It seemed likely we would search by air for a while on this one so I figured if I got



there early maybe I'd get to fly. Sure enough, Ray Hussey and I went up with Mike Donovan from Landells Aviation and searched the PCT up until we hit the road heading toward Twin Pines Boys Ranch and picked up their tracks. While we were searching by air and occasionally landing to check prints we got the call that they had indeed walked out to Twin Pines.

• RMRU

CALL

Mission No. 8514C

24 March, Sun.
Rancho California

In the early afternoon we received a call for a group of stranded children in the Rancho California area. Only minutes after the first call a second came stating that the group had been helped to safety.

• RMRU

SEARCH

Mission No. 8515M

**28-29 March, Thurs.-Fri.
Pacific Crest Trail,
San Jacinto Mountains**

By Kevin Walker



In the pre-dawn hours we were contacted by the S.O. to respond to a search for a missing woman. We met at Snow Creek at first light. The mountain was not a pretty sight for one who was going to have to go

out. A large storm had blown in two days earlier and had stalled over the San Jacinto's. Somewhere out there was Lisa Carlson, 24, from Waterbury, Vermont out here doing the Pacific Crest Trail solo from the Mexican border to Canada. Lisa left Idyllwild on Saturday the 23rd, and was to meet a friend, Fred Bingham at the Whitewater post office on Tuesday the 26th. Fred waited until Wednesday and then called the authorities. So, somewhere between Saddle Junction and Snow Creek, in deep snow with more falling, was Lisa, if she was on the trail. If not there would be a lot of mountain to look over. The winds were of gale force, but there was some thought that we might get a peak under the clouds, so Bernie McIlvoy and Rob Gardner went down to Landells Aviation. They joined pilot Brian Novak in one of the Jet Ranger III's. They flew for about one hour trying to get in close for a look, but the storm proved to be too strong for the helicopter. Plan B was put into effect. We moved around to the Western side of the mountain where the storm was coming in from. As we drove up the mountain it was raining heavily and as we reached the timber country, it turned to snow. Base was set up at the Alandale Fire Station. First into the field was a team made up of Bud White, Randy Iwasiuk and Curtis Pontynen. They were taken in by snow cat (courtesy of the Southern California Edison Company) to the Fuller Ridge Trail head. They were to follow the route as close as possible to Deer Springs. Another large team that would split into two teams on Friday would go in the Marion Mountain Trail to Deer Springs. That was my group. With me would be Mel Krug and Rob Gardner. Under Rick Pohler's leadership was Mark Rhoads and Bill George. As we headed up the trail it was snowing lightly. After we were into the trip for about an hour the snowfall rate increased dramatically. Soon we could only see 20 feet out, which made route finding nearly impossible. We pressed on for some time, but as the light began to fail, snowfall still increasing, and



RMRU PHOTO BY KEVIN WALKER

CARING ENOUGH TO CONTINUE — RMRU members are seen here pushing on up the Marion Mountain trail in snowfall that soon became so heavy, one could see only several feet ahead. Knowing that Lisa Carlson was up above somewhere, was enough to continue.

our own people getting cold, we decided to stop. Rick and I know the mountain pretty well, but in white-out conditions, it is easy to trip up, and we had done just that. The two of us felt that we were still a little below Deer Springs, but we were unsure of the ridge that we were on. Randy's team had stopped somewhere on the Fuller Ridge for the same reasons as our group. As the last of the light faded into darkness, we finished setting up my North Face VE-24 tent and Jim Fairchild's old Alpsport. Everyone climbed into my tent (spacious for three, but for six?) for hot soup and food. As the snow slowly built up on our tents we talked of previous epic type missions, and what Lisa must have been thinking about also if she was still able to. It was a somber time for all. At about 9:00 pm the snow stopped and then not long after, it cleared. The mountain was calm. And fortunately it stayed that way.

First light we started to move around a little, my fellow team mates and I putting on the many layers of clothing; Patagonia polypro underwear already on, wool or Patagonia Pile Pants, shirts, pile jackets, Gortex Parkas. Mark and I were first out. As Mark started his MSR stove, I checked out the condition of our camp. Gear was all where it should be, my tent was fine. The only casualty of the storm was Jim's tent which Rick and Bill had used. Some of the seams had ripped in the snow and wind. At any rate, we all got going and started to break camp. At about 6:30 we heard the comforting sound of a Bell Jet Ranger approaching. On board was Walt Walker with Brian. They over flew our location. I asked them to hover over the

Marion Meadow, they did and to Rick's and my satisfaction we were only about a half mile down ridge, which meant we were within several hundred feet of the trail. We finished breaking camp and headed on up. As we moved up the ridge Bernie McIlvoy came on the air, (a team I forgot to mention earlier) that he and Colin Chambers had spent the night in the Mt. San Jacinto shelter after hiking from the tram. They were now approaching Little Round Valley on our side. Randy's team was up and going also. During the night Ops Leader Walt had called in Sierra Madre. They had responded in the night to help us at first light. It was good to have fellow MRA members as the mountain had been covered with a thick blanket of snow, and if Lisa was not up and about, it would be nearly impossible to find her. The helicopter put more teams out at Skunk Cabbage meadow (near where Lisa was last seen), and then another on the large Fuller Ridge. Our plan was to close off all sections of the PCT from the Saddle to the Fuller Ridge. At about 9:00 while returning from letting out the last of the teams, Walt and Brian spotted a small figure waving in a little clearing and a quarter of a mile below the PCT trail, between the Fuller Ridge and Deer Springs. Brian carefully maneuvered the powerful machine down into the little clearing, and soon Lisa Carlson was on board with Walt's help, and with Brian's skill they were out of there, on their way back to base. As Brian flew us out in loads of two or three, Lisa told of how she had taken a fall early Tuesday and banged up her knee. Later in the day the storm hit, and hit hard. She set up her tent and climbed



RMRU PHOTO BY KEVIN WALKER

SOMETHING FROM A FAIRY TALE — RMRU members awoke to a strange and beautiful world, after spending a long night of being concerned over missing Lisa Carlson. Darkness and heavy snowfall forced searchers to stop.



RMRU PHOTO BY KEVIN WALKER

TIME TO GO HOME — RMRU member Mel Krug heads away from the helicopter to get gear to be flown out along with members after pilot Brian Novak and Walt Walker located Lisa between the Fuller Ridge and Deer Springs.

in. There she stayed. She was in pretty good shape, as she had rationed food and melted snow. Never the less, we fell she was glad to see us. • RMRU

Publisher's Note: Some missions stand out more than others, this one was the second (see Mission No. 8502M for the first one) time in my opinion. Lisa was fortunate. She did take care of herself, but she was also fortunate to have a group of volunteers looking for her. Fortunate to have a skilled pilot in the air. Fortunate to have the Riverside County Sheriff's Department handling financial aspects of a search. Fortunate indeed.

The following may sound like a commercial. Well, it is, and for good reason. To companies like Patagonia, Gregory, North Face, etc., all the way down to the Mini-Mag Lights that we carry, and to the distributors in our area; Mountain High Recreation, Sports Country LTD, Riverside Ski and Sport and The Sports Chalet, it is because of your quality equipment and support in the way of discounts that in it's own way helped to bring Lisa home safe. Thank you, we do indeed need you also.

TRAINING

Search and Rescue Skills

9-10 March, Sat.-Sun.

North Mountain
North of San Jacinto

By Rescue Man

This months training was to be a mock mission on Saturday and a van work party at Rick Pohlers house on Sunday. The troops met at the base of North Mountain along Soboba Road at would you believe 4:30 in the morning. Our mock mission was to be a search. Upon arriving members who may have not functioned in a leadership role many times were assigned the senior jobs. Mel Krug was Operations Leader. Mel went over the circumstances sheet which was for a missing woman in her twenties. The only information that we had was she was last seen along the road. Teams of two consisting of a newer member in charge and a more senior member as a grunt searcher type were made, people were soon in the field. The

teams searched into first daylight. Being along a well traveled road made things difficult. But after some time team Leader Ray Hussey radioed in that he had a set of two separate prints going away from the road and up the mountain. Ops Leader Mel told Ray that he and his grunt member Kevin should follow the prints on up. They did, and after some more time Ray called back in and said that he felt quite strongly that they were on the track as both sets of prints were small enough to be a woman's. And even though there were two sets, stranger things have happened in the past. Ray and Kevin were about one thousand vertical feet above the road when they called in that they had found an abandoned camp. Ray looked the camp over and decided that it had not been left long. By now Mel had pulled the other teams off of their assignments and was having people move over and prepare to start in to where Ray was. Ray and Kevin searched on up and not long after found the missing girl hiding in the tall spring grass. She was quite scared and depressed and wanted Ray and Kevin to leave her alone. Ray tried to get some info out of the girl but got no help what so ever. Not far behind Ray and Kevin was Kathy Davis and Bill Blaschko. They swept to the side of Ray and found another young woman who was injured (only pretend). While Ray and Kevin stayed with the first subject, Bill and Kathy started to give aid to the second. As this went on the rest of the team brought in the litter, ropes, technical gear, first aid, etc. First aid was given, and discussed by Dr. Bill with others present, and then the two women were evacuated off the very steep hillside, using ropes and the wheeled litter. We want to thank the two young women for helping make the morning's training a success, their names escape the writer but we do appreciate your help.

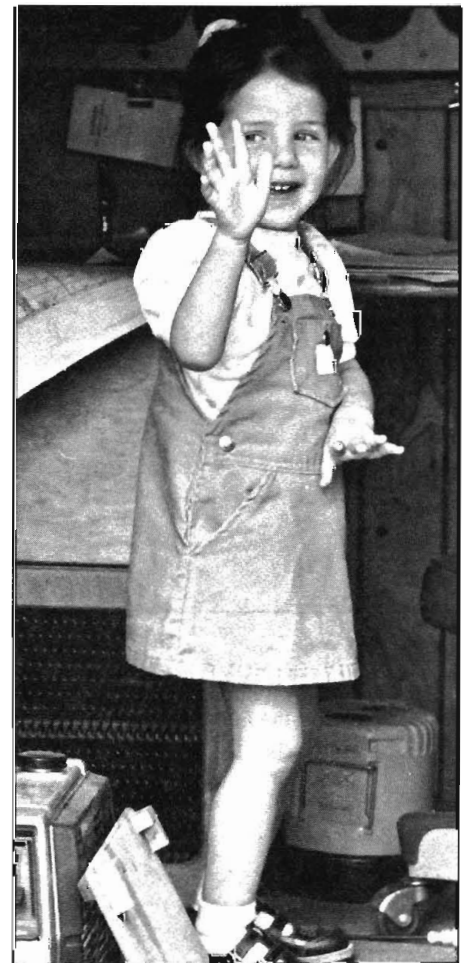
In the afternoon we worked on technical riggings up on the slopes and cliffs of North Mountain. This gave newer members a chance to work closely and relaxed with senior members. Most of the team stayed at Kevin's home that night, and after dinner and some libation, Kevin's wife Patrice watched on in horror as Kevin and Glenn entertained the troops with their 4-wheel drives in Kevin's dirt field.

Sunday morning everyone met at Rick's house in Rialto. There the vans were emptied, gear sorted by some as others repaired and cleaned the two vehicles. At noon as everyone present was preparing to have some lunch we got a call from Al Andrews, for a search in Murrieta (see 8511M). Gear was quickly loaded back in and the troops started out for the Rancho California area. • RMRU



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

STEEP GRASS — A large herd of RMRU members guides the litter across the steep hillside of North Mountain, as Kevin Walker tends to the lowering rope in the evacuation of a mock injured patient.



RMRU PHOTO BY GLENN HENDERSON

RMRU PEOPLE — Here future RMRU member Bridgett Walker, daughter of Kevin and Patrice Walker, waves to fans while helping daddy with clean-up chores after a rescue mission. RMRU is most definitely a family affair.