



Did someone fall here?

March 9, 1983
Palm Springs Tram
1983-009

By Kevin Walker

After having just finished lunch with the Hemet Noontimers Lions Club, I was just starting to give the RMRU slide show to the large group of men that had turned out. I was explaining how, over the past few months we had been extremely busy with rescues out of the Palm Springs Tram, and how due to the heavy use of our radios two of the lithium powered ones had ran down. Just then the manager of the restaurant walked up and handed me a portable phone. At the other end was Walt Walker, with news of a possible person down an ice chute at the tram. After quickly explaining the situation to the Lions Club, I turned the program over to my grandfather, Roy Walker and started to make my exit, when to my surprise the president of the club handed me a check for \$250 to purchase new batteries. A very big thank you and into the No. 1 van and off for P.S.

Once at the tram it was decided that a helicopter would be a great help in locating someone if they were indeed down the chute below the upper station. I say if because the only evidence was a set of snowshoe prints starting below the railing and then some slide marks for a short distance. Of course it would be better to be safe than sorry. while we waited for a bird, Walt had John Dew and Mark Hebert start up the tram to Check the evidence for themselves. Shortly thereafter Brian Novak arrived in a Jet Ranger from Landells Aviation. Walt and Jim Fairchild loaded packs and then were off with Brian for the upper chutes.

It always seems an eternity to the troops in base, but was actually only 45 minutes, when the chopper returned. Air search revealed nothing. Brian was then released as he had another job to fly. Because nothing had been found, and Mark radioed down that there was indeed slide marks below the upper station, we decided to go up with technical gear and send a couple men down the chute to make sure that no one was there.

With 12 RMRU members on the upper viewing area, we each went about our various assignments preparing for a lower At the end of RMRU's new PMI rescue rope was Bernie McIlvoy, and with everything checked out, we proceeded to lower Bernie down as an interested crowd of people watched from inside the warm station, eating their barbecue ribs. When the lowering was complete, Bernie had been lowered 1200 feet, which included a 70 foot overhanging face. Bernie then

radioed up that he had found nothing, but stated to be doubly sure, to send Cameron Robbins down. After getting into his harness, Cameron rappelled the 1200 feet down to Bernie. Again nothing. So with RMRU satisfied and the sheriff also, it was decided to wrap things up. One problem could use the entire viewing deck, our raise went quickly and smoothly. With work and changed the system over to a mechanical advantage. Because of our new edge rollers and the fact that we could use the entire viewing deck, our raise went quickly and smoothly. With Bernie and Cameron back up we loaded gear and stuffed ropes for the return trip down the mountain.

RMRU is a volunteer search and rescue team that covers Riverside County and assists other teams with search and rescue efforts in other counties. Each member purchases their own equipment and takes time off work, without compensation, to participate in search and rescue missions. Team equipment is purchased from contributions from the community. We are a non-profit organization and are funded by [donations](#) from people like you.