

Volume XVII, Issue IV, April 1981 — Kevin Walker, Editor — Walt Walker, Publisher — Lisa Walker, Artist

Search and Rescue

SEARCH

Mission No. 8182A

**6 April, Mon.
Deep Canyon,
Santa Rosa Mountains**

At approximately 1000 hrs we received a call from the Indio office of the Riverside County Sheriffs' Department that a group of hikers from a weekend descent of Deep Canyon, were overdue in reaching the bottom of the canyon near Palm Desert. It was decided that the rendezvous point would be at the Sugar Loaf cafe. While members were enroute, the group walked out, and the mission was aborted at 1100 hrs. • RMRU

SEARCH

Mission No. 8113M

**11 April, Sat.
Community of Winchester**

A little after 6:30 Saturday evening RMRU member Walt Walker received a call from Sgt. Jim Walsh of the Sheriffs' Department. Sgt. Walsh told Walt of two reports by residents that a small aircraft was seen descending, with a rough running engine, in a easterly direction over the community of Winchester. Walt was asked if RMRU could respond with its ELT (Emergency Locator Transmitter) direction finding equipment. He then phoned RMRU member Rick Pohlers and put him on standby. If needed, Rick would respond with the team's No. 2 ELT Locator. After doing that, Walt and Kevin Walker drove out to Winchester, where they met Sgt. Walsh. The locating device was set up and turned on. At the same time a small airplane was flying overhead

with its radio tuned to the emergency frequency (121.5) No signal was heard by either group, and at 8:30 the search was called off. Luckily no aircraft were reported overdue. • RMRU

RESCUE

Mission No. 8114M

**18 April, Sat.
Willow Creek Crossing,
San Jacinto Mountains**

By Jim Fairchild

Early this particular morning hardly any of us scheduled for a day's work in the garden and around the house expected to be saved by the bell! Nevertheless, about 0630 the telephone rang just as I was walking out the door to run. The ring did sort have the "rescue"

tone to it, and sure enough, Walt Walker told of a hiker with an injured knee.

After too many minutes in the throes of trying to contact a lot of members by phone, I rolled to Humber Park (6400' el.) above Idyllwild. The two vans were there, John Dew and Walt were putting the wheel and frame on a Stokes litter, Mary and Jack Bowman were working base, and Kevin Walker and Hal Fulkman had already left twenty minutes before as a "bash" team. We had heard that the subject was in a tent near the trail and up from it along the first drainage past Saddle Junction (8100' el.). Joe Erickson and John were ready to go, so I grabbed the litter and we started off with light packs. A few clouds were around, but Joe and I hiked in shorts, with long trousers in packs — how smart! The fresh air and coolness inspired us to really move along as we traded pushing the litter and its marvelous wheel. We kept



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

WILLOW CREEK CROSSING — RMRU members Hal Fulkman, John Dew, Joe Erickson (obscured) and Kevin Walker, guide the wheeled litter containing Charles Imbrecht across Willow Creek. Just minutes earlier mild spring conditions were experienced. Now though, a wet snow was falling.

hearing reports on our radio that maybe the subject was a bit farther, maybe as far as Skunk Cabbage Meadow (3 mile hike). Great, we'll be there shortly. Soon Steve Vaughn, Jim Snodgrass, and Jim Caldwell of Hemet Search and Rescue were hiking up behind a mile or so. As we neared the saddle we met folks who had been with the subject, saying he was above Willow Creek Crossing (5 mile hike) Fine, we'll be there shortly. Some snow patches encroached the trail, increasing as we neared the saddle, and nearly covered the ground once there. Past the saddle is nearly level ground, and we cruised quickly through the magnificent pines and past the meadow now awakening to spring. Clouds were sort of closing in, visibility down to a quarter mile. We rounded the last corner and heard Willow Creek almost roaring in its dash for the desert. Upon crossing the crossing we turned uphill and soon requested a yell from Kevin and Hal. OK, they were about two hundred yards or so above and away. Also OK, and spectacularly, it started to snow — big flakes and lots of them. Kevin helped with the litter the last fifty feet, and we were there. Hal wrapped an ace bandage around the injured knee as I took pictures. That knee belongs to Charles R. (Chuck) Imbrecht, an attorney and California State Assemblyman from the 36th. District, Ventura County. Very interesting! A backpacking politician whom we soon learned is a very nice fellow. He was appreciative of our efforts on his behalf and was soon doing well in RMRU's repartee and humor.

Chuck and his partner, Richard Lehman, also an assemblyman, from Fresno, were hiking down Willow Creek the day before (Friday). They were a bit off-route and slightly "confused" as to location. Repeated falls onto his knee resulted in the said knee telling Chuck, "that's it, no more." So, unable to move further, Chuck had to stay while his partner hiked out to get help. Lehman arrived in Idyllwild at 9:30 PM and notified the Sheriffs' Office. Meanwhile, some other hikers came along, saw Chuck, and helped him get downstream a quarter mile to a good tent-site where he spent the night. Of course, RMRU could not begin to gather for the evacuation until we were notified Saturday morning.

Following getting Chuck ready for transport, we put him in the litter amid heavy snowfall, and started down. The HSAR men arrived and were assigned to break the camp and carry out the gear. Despite "postholing" in the snow we made good time on the roll-out. Before long, over near Skunk Cabbage Meadow, Rick Pohlers, Bob Attridge, and Jim Garvey arrived and we made better time with less effort per person. Dr. Jerry Niswonger and Karen Rutledge met us a bit down

from the saddle, and before long we were out of the snow and storm and back to base.

Funny thing happened at the Alpine Pantry in Idyllwild during breakfast. A waitress asked what the occasion was for all of us being there, and we said we rescued him . . . meaning Chuck. She asked, amazed, "Did it take all of you to rescue him?" • RMRU

RESCUE

Mission No. 8115M

**26 April, Sun.
Massacre Canyon,
San Jacinto Foothills**

By Kevin Walker

At approximately 2:00 p.m. while doing my monthly servicing of the No. 1 van, my dad, Walt Walker, told me to close the van back up because we had a rescue mission in Massacre Canyon. I quickly buttoned things back up, and then went back to my home for gear and then returned to Walt's house to pick him up.

At the Massacre Canyon bridge we met members from the Hemet team already at the scene. They told of how a man in his twenties had fallen above the first falls in a side chute. He had severely injured himself. We were also told that Hemet Valley Ambulance paramedics were already with the man giving him medical aid. There was plenty of personnel up at the first falls to lend a hand in the evacuation. We quickly gathered the necessary technical equipment to perform a lower down the falls, and then hiked in to the base of the falls. The first falls are approximately 30 feet high and quite easy to climb up, but being near vertical it requires technical gear to evacuate someone.

The patient was already in a litter, so while Bob Elliot (HSAR) and Walt prepared the anchors for a lower, I tied the man in with one inch webbing. Next Walt came over to the litter and hand tied a horizontal rigging to the litter, and I put my sit harness on as I would be the attendant. Once everything was completed and checked, the litter was carried to the edge, and with the assistance of other people the litter and I were eased over the side. With all of the falls' outcroppings of rocks and small ledges it made the lower fairly difficult as I had to be careful not to bang the litter against the wall because the patient had possible neck injuries. Soon though my feet touched down, and RMRU member Hal Fulkman and another HSAR member to the litter, while I unclipped. Then it was a careful 15 minute carry out back to the road and the waiting ambulance. • RMRU



Wintertrip

**3-5 April, Fri.-Sun.
Christmas Tree Hill,
San Geronio Mountains**

By Hal Fulkman

"To be or not to be?" That was the question concerning ice axe practice. For two months the ice axe training was planned and then postponed due to uncooperative snow conditions. Once again, we decided to try, and hoped for the best. As time got closer and closer to training weekend, the conditions changed alright, but it was for the worse. The weather had gotten hot and the powdery snow that we had was melting fast and turning to mush. The Baldy Bowl area that we had planned on using was out of the question; for the snow had melted to the point that rocks were



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

THE TALLEST IGLOO — New member Karen Rutledge looks on as Kevin Walker slides an ice block up to Larry Roland (on snow shoe stilts), while Bob Attridge heads over to the quarry for another block for the tallest igloo that RMRU has ever constructed.

already starting to show through the surface.

With the idea of a possible alternate location, Larry Roland and Karen Rutlage had hiked into the San Geronio Wilderness the weekend before training; and immediately after getting the bad news about Baldy I called Larry. He said the snow was far from being good—but it might do. So, with a wing and a prayer, the training was set for the following weekend. Our training location was Christmas Tree Hill and the team members started hiking at various times with the last four members, including me, staggering in about 1:00 a.m. Saturday morning.

The snow conditions were disappointing but workable. The snow was fast enough to get up a good head of steam but when you planted in your ice axe, you just kept going and going. It was just too soft for the axe to bite into. Still, we were able to teach fundamentals like learning how to roll into the arrest position (see photos), and just give a certain amount of confidence to some of the newer members. But due to the warming conditions it was decided to stop the ice axe training until the following morning, so that we would not chew up the slope any more with the axes. An alternative to arresting was thought up by some of our more outgoing members. **Sliding!** At first members would slide down the slope hoping to gain as much speed as possible and see how far up the side of the other slope you could go. The next bright idea to come along was to get a group to join ankles and see how muck speed could be gathered. This did not last for long as the conditions con-



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

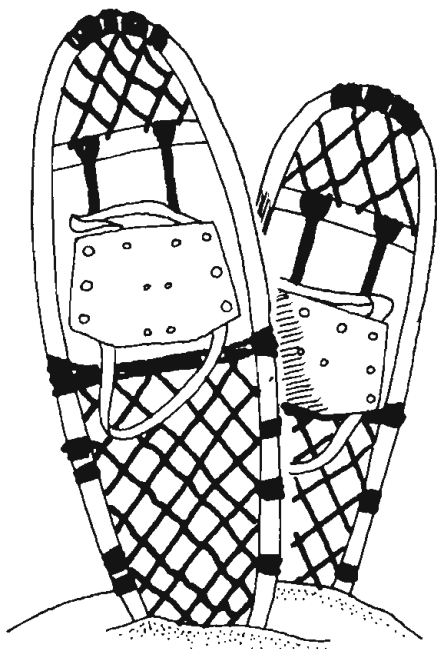
SOFT SNOW ARREST — RMRU member Kevin Walker in the arrest position attempts to come to a stop. But due to soft snow, it was nearly impossible.

tinued to get warmer. After lunch, the entire afternoon was spent building one of the all time giant igloos. This was not only recreation, but also an important part of training. A smaller version of what we built could be used as a shelter in an emergency situation.

Sunday morning before breakfast, we gave the slope one more try in hopes

that the cold night had hardened the surface. There was not much difference in the conditions but everyone got a chance to practice having the ice axe handed to them while sliding and also practicing tripping and falling, and then going into the arrest position. After a late breakfast, we broke camp and liesurely hiked out from Christmas Tree Hill.

• RMRU



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

RMRU TOBAGGAN — After having to stop ice axe practice because of soft snow conditions, ingenious members tried something new. Here Walt Walker, Kevin Walker, Hal Fulkman, Randy Iwasuik, Jerry Niswonger and Larry Roland take a shot at human tobogganing.

