

Volume XXII, Issue VI, June 1986.

Rob Gardner, Editor — Kevin Walker, Publisher — Dona Halcrow, Artist

## 25 Year RMRU Veteran Walt Walker Elected MRA President

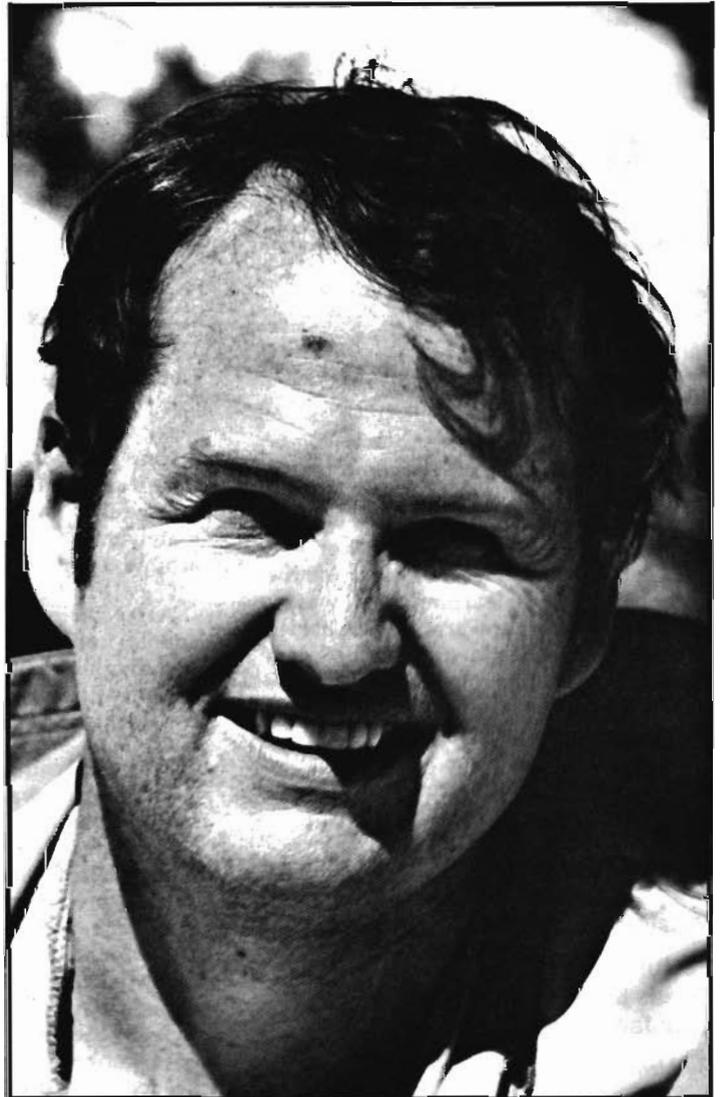
### What is MRA?

The Mountain Rescue Association (MRA) is a non-profit volunteer public service organization dedicated to the saving of lives through rescue and wilderness safety education. Although non-operational as far as rescues go, it does create a central organization through which the efforts and activities of the member units may be co-ordinated to promote more effective mountain safety and provide mountain rescue service. The capabilities of the individual units are increased by bringing teams together that will provide additional manpower and resources. Agencies responsible for search and rescue may turn to the Mountain Rescue Association as a source of mountain rescue knowledge and techniques to augment their local capabilities. When "mountain rescue service" is referred to here, it means a situation where alpine techniques are used regardless of terrain. An outstanding example of this was the use of mountain rescue techniques by the Alaska Rescue Group in downtown Anchorage after the earthquake in March, 1964, and by the California units at the 1971 Sylmar earthquake. Through publications like the association's newsletter, equipment information bulletins, seminars, conferences and training workshops, MRA promotes the free exchange of rescue techniques and procedures. It disseminates advances in equipment, when possible, promotes a standardization that will improve rescue operations.

In June 1961, the Federal Communications Commission granted the MRA a license to operate emergency radio equipment. The individual unit holds a license that is supplemental to the master license so they may operate in any state west of 100 degrees w. longitude. The radio frequency is 155.160 mhz. By special agreement, this applies in parts of Canada and Mexico.

The Mountain Rescue Association endeavors to work closely with all search and rescue groups, agencies, mountaineering clubs and outing groups in an effort to keep constantly informed of advancements. MRA encourages the exchange of ideas and inquiries from all groups even though they are not eligible or interested in membership.

The Mountain Rescue Association was officially organized on June 7, 1959, at Timberline Lodge on the south side of Mt. Hood, Oregon, and was later incorporated as a non-profit corporation in the State of Washington. The Mountain Rescue Council of Washington was largely responsible for starting the ball rolling many years ago by just thinking big. They were holding large spring training conferences for a number of years when Oregon latched onto the idea. Then there was an exchange of meetings, which hit a real high with over 400 people registered. They were found sleeping on and under tables and beds at Timberline Lodge. This conference was attended by individuals from all over the western states.



At one of the meetings, the idea of an association was born. MRA's reality then came after two years of an ad-hock committee working on a basic bylaw format. It was on June 7, 1959, that the committee efforts were finally approved. With eleven rescue teams from Oregon and Washington signing the original bylaws of MRA. The enthusiasm for this organization was quickly picked up by the well-established and organized rescue teams in Southern California and Colorado. Shortly thereafter, MRA membership included units from California to Alaska. The major concentration of members lies in the western part of the north american continent, where a greater demand is made for mountain-alpine rescue service. Membership is open to units from Mexico, United States, and Canada. An ex-officio membership has been made available to governmental units.

See you at the  
**25th**  
Anniversary  
Celebration!

# Search and Rescue



## CALL

**Mission No. 8622C**

**14 June, Sat.  
Glen Avon**

We received a call from the communications center of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department that an elderly woman had walked away from her rest home in the Glen Avon area west of Riverside the night before. After learning that it was on the fringe of the rural area it was decided that the Hemet Search and Rescue Team would be best suited for the search as they have quite a few 4-wheel drive vehicles and could therefore search much faster than RMRU. It was a good decision as the missing woman was located several hours later by Hemet. • RMRU

## RECOVERY

**Mission No. 8623M**

**22 June, Sun.  
Reeds Meadow  
San Jacinto Mountains**

*By Henry Negrete*



Our first summer call into the San Jacinto wilderness came at 2:00 pm Sunday, June 22.

The call was a bit ambiguous, concerning an older hiker, a Mr. James Deemer, 64 years old, of Long Beach. Accord-

ing to the informant, Mr. Deemer had hiked into the wilderness on Saturday with a couple of young companions he had recently met at his local chapter of the Sierra Club. As they reached Saddle Junction, which is the first real pit stop after enduring the Devil's Slide Trail, Mr.

Deemer was experiencing some discomfort, with shortness of breath and dizziness. After a short rest Mr. Deemer was feeling up to continuing and the three hikers set out for their campsite destination which was Reeds Meadow, approximately one mile further at an elevation of around 8,000 feet.

After having their supper the younger couple noticed Mr. Deemer wheezing, and coughing a bit but not enough to raise anyone's concern. They all settled down for the night at about 9:00 pm.

In the morning at about 9:00 am the younger man was gathering some gear for another hike and noticed that Mr. Deemer was not up and about yet, but figured Mr. Deemer had burned himself out the day before and was just sleeping in. After returning from a morning hike, at 11:00 am, the young companions noticed that Mr. Deemer was still not up, and they became alarmed. They checked for some signs of life and after finding none they got spooked, grabbed their gear and headed down the trail to get assistance. They reached some forestry personnel who contacted the Riverside Sheriff's Office.

The investigating deputy was concerned about the certainty of Mr. Deemer's death, because at the young campers own admittance they had no practical training in emergency medical care.

The deputy wasted no time in calling out the RMRU and even went to the extent of personally calling Dr. Bill Blaschko, M.D., an RMRU team member living in Idyllwild, in the hopes of supplying the best medical care possible in the field, or officially confirming Mr. Deemer's death.

Dr. Blaschko was available to respond and was joined by other RMRU team members. Mary Bowman and I made a quick response to Humber Park, being residents of Idyllwild.

In the short time it took us to make our way up to Humber Park the deputy had made arrangements to utilize the helicopter contracted to the forestry and was ready to roll us, Code 3, to the heliport at Keenwild Ranger Station.

On our way to the heliport I thought about how timely it was that the RMRU Board of Directors had just recently decided to place a team radio at Idyllwild to enable the team members on the hill to be an effective first response team.

After a mildly hairy ride through town we arrived at the heliport and within minutes were in the air and quickly flew to Reeds Meadow.

We scrambled towards the campsite led by the informant and found Mr. Deemer still in his sleeping bag, just as last seen by the informant.

Dr. Blaschko was quick to begin his assessment for any signs of life, but unfortunately there were none to be found.

Dr. Blaschko and the informant flew back to report his findings. I stayed behind to preserve the scene for the coroner.

Fortunately, for me it was not a long wait until they flew back in with the deputy coroner, and Dr. Ray Hussey, M.D., another outstanding team member. After escorting Mr. Deemer's body back to the helicopter, we hiked out of the wilderness. We later learned that Mr. Deemer had died in his sleep from a heart attack. • RMRU

## SEARCH

Mission No. 8624M

29 June, Sun.

### Black Mountain Campground San Jacinto Mountains

By Walt Walker



It was very early on a Sunday morning (in fact it was the middle of the night) when my telephone woke me up. Of course, it was a call for a mission. The Riverside County Sheriff's Department had been notified that a 21 year old woman was missing from the Black Mountain Group Campground, which is on the western slope of the San Jacinto Mountains at the 7380 foot level.

A church college career group of young adults were spending the weekend together enjoying the mountains. Saturday morning around 10 a.m. Julie Gang told another camper that she was going for a day hike and would be back in the afternoon. As far as anyone knew she was carrying a small day pack with possibly two cans of soda and a compass. When she had not returned by early evening the group searched the immediate area and drove up and down the Black Mountain dirt road. Their search was fruitless and two people drove off the mountain to call for help.

RMRU members were contacted via the telephone and our paging system. They were given the basic information and advised to respond to the Black Mountain Campground. Shortly after 7 a.m. RMRU members began arriving at the campground. They were met by Sgt. Dave Duncan from the Banning station. The first RMRU search team into the field was Bud White and Henry Negrete. They headed in the direction that our missing subject was last seen (basically eastward). We requested the sheriff's department to contact Landells Aviation for a helicopter to fly search teams to back country locations. Steve Bryant and Jim Fairchild were assigned the dirt road that heads easterly towards Camp Lackey. Rob Gardner and I were assigned to cut a line west to east below the campground. The next two teams were to be flown in by helicopter. Glenn Henderson and Kevin Walker were assigned to hike down the Fuller Ridge trail from the Linda Stoner helispot which is located at the top of the Fuller Ridge. Rick Pohlars and Ray Hussey were given the assignment of hiking from the Deer Springs Junction up towards the Fuller Ridge. They were to be flown in to a small meadow below the junction. Mel Krug and Gil Carr had just arrived when Steve radioed that he and Jim had found tracks

cutting across the berm and heading west toward the edge of the mountain that drops off in the direction of the Twin Pines Boys Ranch.

The base of operations that had been set up at the Black Mountain Campground was moved to the Boulder Basin Campground which is right on the edge of the mountain facing west. This was done to improve radio communications to the field teams since it appeared that our missing subject had dropped over the edge and was heading down slope. Since there are some fire roads and jeep trails on the lower slopes below Black Mountain we requested the Hemet Search and Rescue Team to respond with some four wheel drive vehicles. With Bob Sairs manning the radios at base the rest of us drove down to the U.S. Forest Service station at Vista Grande, which has a helispot behind the station. Ray and Rick were assigned to join up with Jim and Steve. Shortly the four of them were following tracks downhill to the west.

Just before 10 a.m. Don Landells arrived at Vista Grande with one of his Bell Jet Ranger helicopters. Glenn Henderson and Kevin Walker quickly climbed aboard and were on their way to the prime search area. For about 30 minutes the helicopter flew a contour search pattern below where the tracks were located. Don spotted some tracks and Glenn and Kevin were let off on a boulder on the ridge near the tracks. Steve hiked down to Kevin and Glenn and confirmed that the tracks were the same as the ones above. Don returned to Vista Grande and picked up Mel and Gil and flew back to the search area and expanded



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

SLOW GOING — RMRU members move slowly through brush that varied from waste deep to over your head while trying to stay on the tracks.

the aerial search to the west and east. Once again the air search did not find the subject. Mel and Gil were let off on the ridge below where Glenn and Kevin had been put off. Don returned to Vista Grande and picked up another crew consisting of Rob and myself. We again flew contour search in the prime area. We have learned from prior searches that many times a second flight over the same area finds the missing subject. With fuel getting low Rob and I were dropped off on an old road. We hiked cross country to the drainage below where the tracks were heading. We started up the canyon with the usual problems of finding your way through the dense brush and around and over boulders. The teams above us continued to look for more tracks.

Four jeeps with two members each responded from the Hemet Search and Rescue Team. They were quickly assigned, by radio, the different dirt roads that we wanted to be covered. With the bird refueled Don returned to the search and picked up Rob and I off of a large boulder. We decided to greatly expand the search area. We then flew the entire trail from the Fuller Ridge trailhead (elev. approx. 7800 feet) to the top of Mt. San Jacinto (elev. 10,804 feet). On the way back we flew aerial search on both sides of the Fuller Ridge and the area above Jensen Canyon. Returning to the area where tracks had last been seen by a ground party we began another contour search. While flying to the west I spotted Julie amongst the dense brush. Years of flying as an aerial observer and a little luck helped, as she was wearing a light blue shirt and faded blue jeans, which are not easy to spot from the air. We circled over Julie and we motioned by hand signals for her to stay where she was. Don spotted a large boulder and brought the bird down onto the top of the rock. By putting one foot on the runner I helped Don a little to hold the bird in position as Rob passed me his pack. Rob then slid out of the bird and I gave Don the lift off hand signal. As he flew off to fly other teams off the mountain Rob and I fought our way upward through the brush toward Julie. She was doing the same thing downhill toward us. She was generally in good condition except for some dirt and scratches. However, she was very thirsty and slightly hungry. So we sat her down and gave her some food and water.

Rob and I helped Julie over to and up onto our one runner boulder. We told her what to expect and what to do around the helicopter. Don had flown out one field team while we were getting ready. On his return we radioed that we were ready for a pickup. He brought the bird in for another one runner touchdown with the aid of our hand signals. I climbed into the back seat and slid across. Rob helped Julie into the back and we buckled her in and I

gave Don the signal to lift off. In a very short time we were at Vista Grande. Bernie McIlvoy came out to meet us and assisted Julie away from the bird. Julie was reunited with her mother with a big hug. In a series of quick flights the rest of the field teams were flown off the mountain.

We quickly asked Julie about her night out and how she had become lost. We use this information to assist us in future searches. During our own critique we discussed her information and talked about what we had done, both right and wrong.

• RMRU

Volunteer man hours — 176



RMRU PHOTO BY KEVIN WALKER

ONE RUNNER IN A SEA OF BRUSH — RMRU member Jim Fairchild guides helicopter "816" into position on a large boulder that seemed like an island in a sea of brush. Fellow members Gil Carr (left) and Steve Bryant (right) stand ready to help guide the skid into position. Pilot Don Landells did his usual job of flying members in and out of the search area with speed and safety.



## Familiarization

6 June, Sat.  
Saddle Junction  
San Jacinto Mountains

A large portion of the RMRU team attended and participated in the California Region MRA Conference on the June training week-end. Of the remaining team members only a few participated in local training. Training was a leisurely hike on the primary higher trails of the San Jacinto Mountains. • RMRU

## California MRA Region Seminar

6-8 June, Fri.-Sun.  
Yosemite, California

By Bill Blaschko, M.D.



What do you get when you combine rescue teams from all over California? Something between an educational experience and tribal combat. On June sixth through eighth, lots of dedicated rescue folks put on their orange shirts and drove to Sugar Pine Camp, just south of Yosemite National Park. In addition to all of the California MRA teams there were representatives of the Sheriff's departments of El Dorado, Placer, Tuolumne, Los Angeles, and San Diego Counties. Also present were members of the WOOF dog team, Joshua Tree Search and Rescue, and the teams from Yosemite and Sequoia National Parks.

RMRU team members gave a large number of the presentations at this conference. Walt Walker spoke on leadership and motivation as well as legal aspects of search and rescue. Bernie McIlvoy and Mel Krug combined efforts to provide a live demonstration of a technical evacua-

tion. Bernie McIlvoy's girl friend, Donna, served as the subject in the litter. Kevin Walker made a presentation on helicopter procedures. Last and certainly not least, Bill Blaschko and Joe Erickson demonstrated improvised medical procedures.

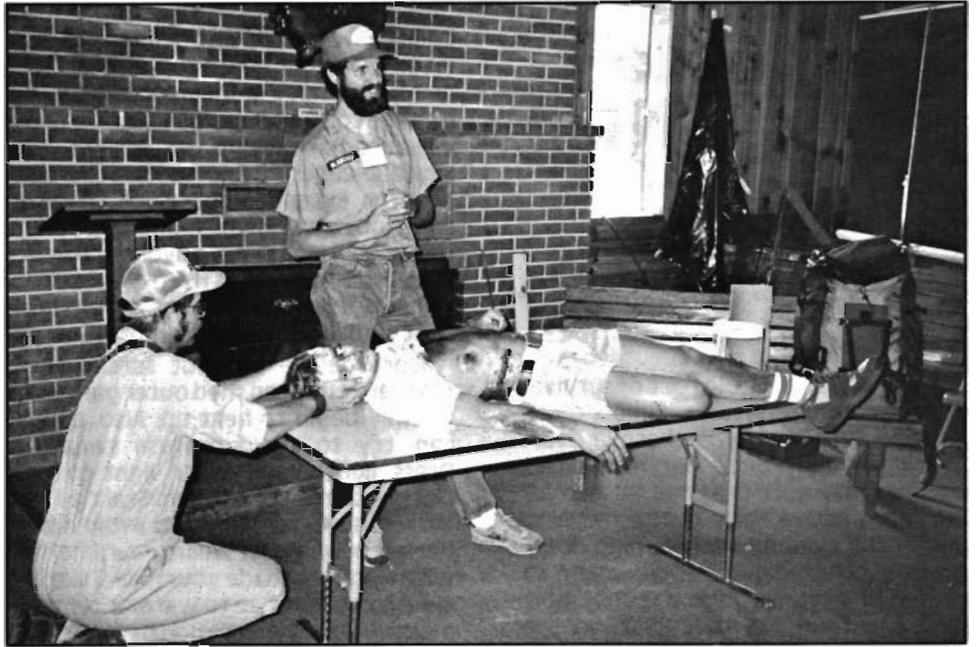
Throughout the conference I couldn't help but feel proud to be involved in search and rescue in general and to be a member of RMRU in particular. One of the great things about the conference was the sharing of ideas between the attendees, and RMRU had plenty of innovations to share. However, when techniques were discussed between different teams, there were sometimes heated although good natured debates about who really had the best system.

The emotional high point of the conference was a presentation by Anna Conrad. Anna had been trapped by an avalanche for five days prior to being dug out by search and rescue personnel. Her recounting of the ordeal and the genuine gratitude she expressed brought tears to the eyes of many a macho rescue team member. When she finished speaking everyone in the audience felt a sense of rededication and renewal. A very topical presentation was given by Barry Wright who came down from Oregon to recount his role as the leader of the recent Mount Hood rescue effort where eight teenagers and one adult died.



Hands-on field presentations were also available at the conference. Participants were able to track each other under expert instruction. Electronic equipment was used to locate an Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT) such as would be found on a downed aircraft. There was also a demonstration on working with search dogs. Rather than list all the other talks, suffice it to say that virtually all areas of search and rescue were touched on.

So far I have covered the serious aspects, but let's not forget that conferences can also be fun. Evenings were spent around the mess hall or campfire exchanging war stories and bad jokes. Friendly rivalry found an outlet in various sports such as volleyball, basketball and table tennis. Fireplace chimneys were checked out for potential climbing routes. We were also able to forge or renew friendships with fellow search and rescue volunteers from across the state. • RMRU



RMRU PHOTO BY KEVIN WALKER

SAD OLE JOE — RMRU team physician Dr. Bill Blaschko speaks to seminar participants about wilderness first aid treatment of injured subjects, as an unidentified participant holds traction to the head of RMRU sickie Joe Erickson.

## MRA National Convention

20-21-22 June, Fri.-Sat.-Sun.  
Sahalie Ski Lodge  
Snoqualmie Pass, Washington

By Rob Gardner



On June 20, 21, 22, 1986 the Mountain Rescue Association (MRA) National Convention was held at the Sahalie Ski Lodge in Snoqualmie Pass, Washington. Volunteer search and rescue (SAR) personnel representing twenty-nine teams were in attendance, coming from all over the United States. RMRU members Walt Walker, Mel Krug, and Rob Gardner attended. The function was hosted by the Seattle, Washington Mountain Rescue Council Unit.

The three day agenda included a talus evacuation field problem and a technical raise and lower system field problem. Representatives participating in the field problems shared methods of technical rescue, use of litter rigging, and use of different descending devices. There was also a field problem in searching.

On Friday night there was an Executive Committee meeting and on Saturday night there was a general meeting. The general meeting included election of National MRA officers for the new term. RMRU team member Walt Walker was elected National MRA President. Hunter Holloway was elected vice-president and Tim Cochrane was elected as secretary. There was an awards presentation following the meeting, and a slide presentation of mountain climbing in Peru.

Of great interest was a presentation by Doug McClure about the recent Mt. Hood tragedy. Doug is with the Portland Mountain Rescue team. He was one of the three base camp leaders during the search at Mt. Hood. The overdue group was a party

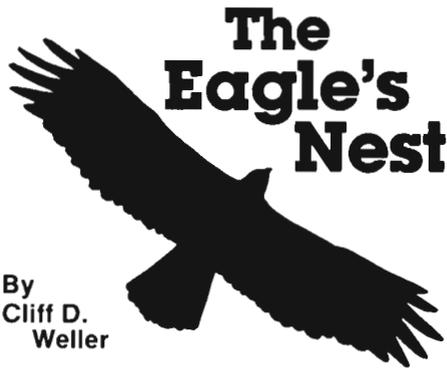


RMRU PHOTO BY KEVIN WALKER

TESTING EQUIPMENT — RMRU members had a chance to test ropes and hardware at the seminar along with going to various talks given over the weekend. Walt Walker, Joe Erickson, Bernie McIlvoy and Mel Krug look at a rope that failed in the California Region Testing Machine, which can be seen behind Mel. Bernie, who is our equipment development chairman, set up a dual Gibbs biting system which was tested on the machine. We learned that a dual system would withstand 3500 lbs of pull, before rope failure, as opposed to a single system which would hold only 2500 lbs. We also learned that our old 'Bi-color leader' ropes were still holding strong after having them for many years.

of thirteen. The outcome was four survivors and nine deceased. Doug's presentation included the showing of slides and a video tape of rescue of the survivors, as well as response to numerous questions.

• RMRU



Staying warm is a big part of survival in the mountains, but also of importance is the avoidance of hyperthermia, overheating. When you're out hiking this summer take note that diurnal animals are more active early in the morning and in the evening than at high noon. On the other hand, people seem to prefer to sleep through the cool morning and then tax their body in the heat.

The golden eagle is found in the open mountains, foothills, canyons, and plains of the northern hemisphere. In the west

he lives from Alaska to Mexico. To survive, any animal needs to adapt, acclimatize, and have a means to maintain climate control. A human being's body will automatically do this with physiological changes, to a point. With extreme heat or extended exposure to heat, conscious thought, planning, and action must come into play, to avoid overheating. Possible problems from overheating include dehydration, heat exhaustion, heat stroke, and heat cramps.

While people can not spread their feathers, they can shed outer garments as they begin to heat up. Also, people can: try to avoid profuse sweating. Dress lightly and wear light-colored clothes to reflect the sun. Start a little earlier in the morning and avoid hiking during noon heat. Wear a summerhat with a brim to shade your face. Take the time to acclimatize to warmer temperatures. Avoid dehydration by increasing water intake. Be sure to plan to carry sufficient amounts of water to do the job. And, keep in mind that food is of little value if you don't have water.

Hydration is the most important precaution. The best thing for hydration is straight water. Coffee and alcohol are dehydrators.

When it is hot, go slower, and perhaps plan to go a slightly shorter distance per day. Replace lost fluids, with water, while you are hiking. Don't wait until you feel dehydrated or weak. Drink small amounts of water, often.

Watch out for humidity. Humidity of over 50% impedes the process of evaporation of the sweat from your skin. That evaporation is the heart of the cooling process for your body.

Training in hot weather brings about adaptation. Start with short trips and increase slowly. Acclimatization may take a week or more. Remember, as your body loses water your physical efficiency decreases. Also, your body can only absorb liquids half as fast as it sweats liquids out on a hot day.

**Drink lots of water when active in the heat, before you are thirsty.**

---

# \$USTAINING MEMBERS

## RMRU Loves You!

For many, many years veteran RMRU member Ed Hill has served the team as the Sustaining Membership Chairman. This job required hours and hours of volunteer time, keeping records, entering information into a computer, running labels off for the newsletter and sending the thank you letters, etc. Ed was recently promoted to head up the Standard Oil Company computer department at its western operations center. The pressure of Ed's job was preventing him from the doing the job the way he wanted it to be done. So he asked to be relieved of the duties of the Sustaining Membership Chairman. *Until you are better thanked for doing a great job Ed, Thank You!*

Another veteran RMRU member has stepped into the position of team Treasurer and Sustaining Membership Chairman, Pete Carlson. Pete works for the University of California at Riverside in their computer department and is already in the process of putting the team records into his computer at home. (Pete produced the labels for the mailing of this newsletter.) There will be a slight delay completing all the Sustaining Memberhips receipts and letters. We plan to have in the July issue of the RMRU newsletter the list of May and June Sustaining Members. We believe that we will bring everything up to date with the Sustaining Membership. Thank you for your patience!