



Missing 71-Year-Old Man

June 29, 1976
Skyline Trail, Palm Springs
1976-033

John Dew

At 0310, we were awakened by Al Andrews, the team co-ordinator, and advised of a 71 year-old man who had taken the Skyline Trail from Palm Springs with a destination of the mountain station of the Tram, at 0400 the day before.

This hike (an elevation gain of 8000 ft.) can be difficult even in cool weather, but in our minds, was more difficult in midsummer by a 71 yearold with just one quart of water and six small cans of grapefruit juice.

We were told this man had been hiking for 50 years and had done this trail five times previously and yet his quantity of carried fluids seemed very small to us, and this caused our concern. He was scheduled to ride the Tram down on Monday evening and at 2300 hours when he had not returned, his wife had alerted the authorities (the Palm Springs Mounted Police). They secured a helicopter to fly the trail for 1 1/2 hours with high intensity lights from 0100 until 0230 at which time they, having found nothing, alerted the Sheriff's Department, who alerted us.

A team of the Mounted Police started hiking in from the bottom of the trail at 0500 on Tuesday. Our RMRU was to take the tram car to the mountain station at 0700 (the only car going up on Tuesday) and we would start hiking down from the top.

With our packs readied, we had started walking towards the tram at 0655 from the parking lot below when, by police radio, we were informed that the subject had called from the Long Valley Ranger Station on top to his home informing his wife of his location.

After talking with the tram people and being assured that he would be brought down, we returned home relieved that another had been found in good condition.

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

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