



Car over the side, driver missing

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Apple Canyon
1980-039

By John Dew

One of the most uncertain things about search and rescue work is, "when is the call coming?" This question was answered for us one morning at just about daybreak.

We were informed that a car had gone over the side in Apple Canyon, (which is near Lake Hemet) and the driver was nowhere to be found. This didn't sound too strange because if there was no injury a driver might walk away. Then we were told that the driver was a woman, her husband had found the car, and her shoes were in the car. This caused us some concern. The brush was thick, the hills rocky and fairly steep, and when we arrived we were unable to find good tracks either in the brush or on the road.

Several other search units had been called in to work on the search. Some were closer and had arrived before most of RMRU. It was determined that the Hemet members would search the road edges for long distances each way. RMRU would take the brush both up hill and down to try to cut tracks. One Hemet Jeep would stay at a junction about a half mile down the road around the bend to interrogate persons who might be traveling that way.

Just as each assignment was being carried out and people were getting in their places a barefoot woman came walking towards the junction where the Hemet Jeep was stationed. It was quickly determined that indeed this was the one for whom we were searching. She had been somewhat dazed by the accident and had been wandering around most of the night. Upon seeing all the activity the next morning had walked toward it, thus completing another mission with the subject faring no worse than sore feet and a few scratches.

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.