



## Canoeist stranded by high water

**March 4, 1983**  
**San Jacinto River, Railroad Canyon**  
**1983-008**

By Mel Krug

After finishing dinner and sitting down to spend a quiet evening home with the family for a change, wouldn't you know it, the pager went off. Call Al, learn of a stranded canoeist in the San Jacinto River, grab the gear and roll.

When I arrived RMRU members Walt and Kevin Walker were already there, along with numerous CDF and ambulance personnel. Earlier in the evening the CDF had tried to wade out to the stranded person but turned back due to the strong current from recent rain storms. Apparently after RMRU was activated it had been decided to call for an El Toro Marine helicopter, at that point as more RMRU members arrived we just stood by.

After waiting nearly a hour with no arrival of a helicopter, and the fact that the subject was not talking as much as earlier, we decided to do something because of the fear that hypothermia would become a factor. A person was needed to wade out with a rope belay from up stream and one from the side. Being a whitewater rafter I guess I fit the bill.

With the ropes secured, I started out. The first two-thirds was no problem as the cold and muddy water was only waist deep, and not moving swiftly. Upon reaching a large clump of reeds, I found the water on the other side to be much deeper and quite swift. Making some what of a lunging motion, aided by the ropes I made it to the tree that the subject was hanging onto. After securing the subject into a sit harness and then hooking him up to me, I started to shout instructions across to the members on the bank, when just in time to make things difficult, the Marine helicopter arrived. For some reason they descended right over us making it impossible to communicate with the group. Everyone on the bank gave the wave off to the pilot, who finally saw them and complied. With the bird out of the way we started out. The fast current immediately pulled us down stream, but with the aid of the RMRU members on the bank, we were quickly pulled up to the shore.

And to make things short, the subject was transported to the local hospital to be checked out, I got into some dry clothes we were all commended for our quick and positive action (which was a nice thing to hear), and then headed home to get some sleep before training the following day.

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.