

Mother and son missing from day hike

**September 8, 1987
Angel's Glide Trail
1987-030**

By Ronnie Pierson

It was a cool night as Henry Negrete and I started up the Devil's Slide Trail from Humber Park.

Earlier we had been alerted that a mother and son, Louellen, were overdue from a hike to San Jacinto Peak (elevation 10,831 feet). They had started that morning from Humber Park (elevation 6,500 feet). Louellen's husband, who reported them missing, also added that his wife weighed about 250 pounds, but was an experienced hiker from her younger years, had good judgement, and was a real gutsy lady.

Considering Louellen's weight we doubted that she and her son would be able to make the peak and return trip in one day. So a decision was made to also have Eric Townsend and Bill Blaschko hike up the Seven Pines Trail (which starts near the Dark Canyon Campground on the other side of the south ridge) in case the overdue party had aborted the hike and were trying to take a short cut back to camp by another trail.

As we hiked on we stopped periodically to shout the subjects' names and listen for replies. Arriving at Saddle Junction (elevation 8,100 feet) we checked in with base operations by radio, then continued on up the Angel's Glide Trail. After we had hiked about another mile to the 9,000 foot level, we were quite pleased to hear a high pitched reply to our calls. Quickening our pace we soon met them coming down the trail.

They were in good spirits, but Louellen was quite weary and complained of having sore feet. She went on to tell us that they had gotten within about a mile of the peak, at about the 10,000 foot level, when she could go no further. She had sat down while her son had hiked to the peak and back. Louellen said they knew they could make it down on their own eventually, but they were still glad to see us since their only flashlight was starting to fade. They really didn't relish the thought of hiking all night in the darkness.

It turned out that Louellen needed considerable help and physical support to make it back down the trail. For the next two and one half hours, Henry and I worked shifts to support her. At one point we even considered radioing for the wheeled litter because we were fast becoming fatigued ourselves. But Louellen proved herself to be a gutsy lady through sheer determination. We finally arrived at Humber Park at 3 A.M.

RMRU members participating in this search were Henry Negrete, Ronnie Pierson, Jim Fairchild, Eric Townsend, Bill Blaschko, Bernie McIlvoy, Ray Hussey, Bob Sairs, Kevin Walker, Dona Halcrow, Bob Wintz, Cliff Benton.

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.