

Two Missing Hikers

**October 18th, 2005
Palm Springs Tram
2005-032**

by Kirk Cloyd

It was the typical fall evening with 3 to 4 inches of snow at the upper tram and I was half asleep on the couch with my 9 year old watching TV. The pager went off to the familiar William Tell Overture and I began gathering my gear as I called in to find out that a husband and wife that started hiking a "Three Mile Loop Trail" at 1:00 that afternoon had called in via cell phone to report that they were lost just before the battery went dead.

A hasty team was sent out to check the Round Valley area with no luck. By 10:00, Grace & Jim Manues and I were on the move. We quickly picked up their trail near the ranger station and began the trek. We trekked over Hidden Divide toward Idyllwild.

During the wee hours of the morning some where west of the Laws Camp turn off, the three of us let out a yell as we had been periodically through the night and to our surprise, we got a response. We told the individuals calling for help to stay put and we would come to them. Moments later, they stopped responding to our calls. We continued on to Saddle Junction and followed the prints up Angles Glide, across Strawberry Cienega and up Deer Springs Trail.

By this time Will Carlson was hiking up Marion Mt. Trail. He made it to Deer Springs Trail so fast it was hard to believe. He then picked up the trail of our missing hikers as we described the prints over the radio. Will followed the prints to... you might of guessed it, Fuller Ridge Trail.

Jim, Grace & I had had enough and hiked out on Marian Mt. Trail! I don't know how far this was but it took us until 10:20 the next morning (12 hours & 20 min. of non-stop hiking). Two young deputies used a shoe horn to fit the three of us in the back seat of a patrol car, yes behind the cage with no leg room, and drove us back to the lower tram at an amazing speed. I slept for most of the 20 minute ride but woke up enough to notice that the driver had passed the Hwy. 111 off ramp twice.

By this time, Will heard the helicopter coming to the seen, and yes, if you know Will, once again he raced the helicopter! He made it to the trail head about the same time a couple of hunters found the missing couple wandering around on

Black Mt. Rd. heading in the wrong direction... again. (Helicopter 0, Will 1, this one was a draw) RMRU personnel stopped the hunters and relieved them of their weary cargo and returned them to the lower tram.

Once at the lower tram, I cornered the shoeless man and asked to see the bottom of his shoes. I then politely requested to see the bottom of his wife's shoes and confirmed that we followed the right couple for over twelve hours straight and almost twenty miles. I asked the couple why they didn't stop when we made voice contact and they stated that they didn't hear anyone calling for them. I still wonder why they answered us when we asked if they needed help. I informed them that from that point forward, we could have taken them out on four different trails hours earlier. Others asked why they didn't stay in one spot and follow the number one rule when lost; they said that they hiked to keep warm. (Walking in circles and jumping jacks achieve the same results.)

Tired and hungry, RMRU enjoyed a meal on the Sheriff Department and many needed hours sleep.

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.