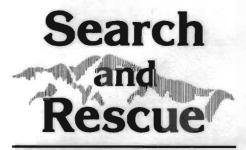
## RIVERSIDE MOUNTAIN RESCUE UNIT

## **NEWSLETTER**

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## SEARCH

Mission No. 8725M

4 July, Sat. San Jacinto Mountains

By Dona Halcrow



The phone rang at 2:00 am, 4th of July morning. At first I thought it was one of those computer generated messages, and then I realized it was Walt Walker, who has evidently mastered the ability to make

his calls without waking up. He advised me that we would be meeting at the Idyllwild Fire Station to search for a missing hiker.

The subject had been reported missing by his friend, Don, when he had failed to show up at Humber Park. The subject had been dropped off at the desert station of the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, planning to go up the Tramway, hike to Humber Park, be picked up by Don, and then they would both have dinner at the Chart House in Idyllwild. Don drove from Palm Springs, arrived at Humber Park in the afternoon and waited until midnight. With no sign of the subject, either at Humber Park or at the Chart House, he notified the Riverside County Sheriff's Office at Idyllwild, and RMRU was then called out.

At 6:00 in the morning we gathered at the Idyllwild Fire Station and Operations Leader Walt Walker started making field assignments. Bud White and Larry Carter were to search as far as Caramba and the start of Tahquitz Canyon. Ronnie Pierson and Eric Townsend covered the area from Saddle Junction to the peak of Mt. San Jacinto, while Joe Erickson and Mark Rhodes went up the Tramway to cover Round Valley and the trails back to Humber Park. Steve Bryant acted as radio relay on the palisade area above Devil Slide Trail. Bob Sairs, Dona Halcrow, Henry Negrete, and Walt remained in base. After checking in, Mary Bowman reported to work at the Forestry, which needed extra help on a holiday.

The weather was clear and warm perfect for hiking. The field teams made progress, checking their assigned areas, calling out, and talking to hikers and campers they met along the way. As the day led on, no sign of the subject was found and no one answering his description had been seen by anyone. Walt and Henry started a thorough search of the town - searching the area of the Chart House, Humber Park, and finally a check was started of the local motels.

At about noon, the Deputy advised us that they had received a call from Don at the Bluebird Motel in Idyllwild, reporting his friend and his car missing. A stop at the motel gave us the information that the subject had left the motel, hitch-hiked to Hemet and was now at a rental car agency. At this time we turned it over to the Deputy, and his friend, and called off

It seems that the subject completed his hike a lot quicker than anticipated, and unable to find his friend, checked into the hotel. As we waited for all of our field teams to return to base, we reflected that in the future we might check the motels first!

Another two hours of hot work hiking out (our field teams had covered nearly all their assignments), and we adjourned for lunch at the Chef in the Forest, then home to spend what was left of the holiday with our families. • RMRU









## A DAY OFF

11 July, Sat. Sky Yacht, San Jacinto Mountains

By Bill Blaschko



Each year RMRU has a training at Norm Mellor's beautiful Fern Valley chalet near Tahquitz and Suicide rocks. The typical agenda is to have technical training in the morning and a potluck for team mem-

bers and spouses in the evening. Since the team had just completed a series of technical trainings, it was decided to devote the entire day to our spouses. The morning was set aside for couples to take a short hike, rock climb, or just relax. That evening a gourmet meal was provided by Henry Negrete, freeing wives from the chore of bringing any food.

There were 22 team members and associates along with their spouses or significant others that enjoyed the get together. The menu included succulent bar-be-cued ribs, deep pit baked beans, buttered corn on the cob and all the munchies and drinks your heart could desire. As excellent as the food was, the company was even better. We shared "war stories" of past mountaineering experiences along with some jokes (some funnier tha others).

Henry Negrete really deserves special praise for his efforts. He is the one who came up with the idea and then did almost all the work. All of RMRU thanks Henry. We also all thank our spouses for putting up with our going out on missions at all hours of the night and devoting weekends to training. • RMRU