



RMRU Fresh Tracks

April 2003

The Newsletter of Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit

Annual Meeting Election Results



Kirk Cloyd
President



Terry Greenstein
1st VP



Ray Hussey
2nd VP



**Travis
Henderson**



David Webb

RESCUE COMMITTEE WITH FIVE MEMBERS



Michael George

Danna Potts



Ralph Hoetger

Rick Maschek



Rob May



All pictures above were taken by team members and are of various missions or training situations. The picture on the far right bottom is a measurement of snow pack for mountain water districts. ▲

2003-001

Overdue Hiker

Monday, January 6, 2003. The team was paged out by the Sheriff's department to search for an overdue hiker out of the upper tram station. A 45 year old male had gone hiking to Round Valley and had not returned. The team responded with six team members to the tram. Just as the first team members arrived they were told that the park rangers had located the subject about 20 minutes from their station. The subject had gone to Round Valley but darkness fell as he returned and could not see the trail, so he sat down beside the trail and waited. The park rangers found him there. Team members responding were Jim Fairchild, Dave Webb, Travis Henderson, Glenn Henderson, Rick Maschek, and Dave Webb.

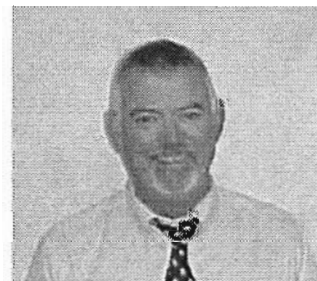
2003-002

Two Stranded Hikers on Skyline Trail

January 11, 2003

Skyline Trail

By Glenn Henderson



Saturday and Sunday, January 11-12, was our annual winter shakedown training. I attended the California Region Mountain Rescue Association meeting in Sierra Madre so I didn't get to the training until 16:00. I met the team practicing a raise near the upper Palm Springs Tramway. We finished the raise and went to have dinner at the upper tram restaurant. At about 19:30 a Forest Service ranger approached us and said that we may have a mission. The wife of one of two men hiking up the Skyline Trail from Palm Springs to the Upper tram reported that they were overdue. While we were talking with the ranger the wife approached us and said that they had just called via cell phone and were stuck in snow just below the tram. They said that they could hear the tram. Steve Bryant called the sheriff's department and got the authorization to do the mission. We returned to the chute below the tram where we had just been practicing. Max Brummett, Rob May and I packed up to descend the chute. We kept the rest of the team at the top of the chute as reserves until we found the two hikers. We hoped that they were indeed as close to the tram as they thought but from previous missions knew that you can hear the tram from a long ways down the trail. We took extra food, water, clothing, and two sets of instep crampons in addition to ropes, and technical gear if needed. We just started to descend the chute when we got a radio call that the men had called again and told the wife that they were hanging onto a tree and were concerned that if they let go that they would be seriously injured or worse. This lent a greater urgency to our mission.

We kept going down the chute through a mixture of thigh deep snow and hard ice. Crampons were a necessity. I kept saying to Max and Rob that we should turn to the right after a while on the trail but Max kept saying not yet. Good thing I listened to Max because he hit the trail perfectly. We started following the trail south shouting as we went. We quickly made voice contact but were unable to pinpoint their location.

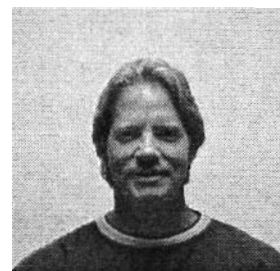
While we had been descending base camp had been busy. They called the sheriff 's aviation unit and they launched their helicopter. We knew our two hikers had a flashlight with a little life left in it so we radioed base camp and had the wife call them with instructions to save the battery until they heard the helicopter. When Star 95 arrived they immediately saw us using their night vision goggles. They then spotted the two stranded hikers, put their spotlight on them and hovered above them until we were able to climb up to them. They were about 1/4 of a mile further down the trail but quite a ways up above the trail. Our two subjects were in good shape but starting to get cold. We thanked Star 95 and they returned to Hemet Ryan Airbase. The helicopter saved us countless time searching because shouting voices echoes all around the canyons making it difficult to pinpoint where they come from. Our two hikers, Josh Lovingfoss and Akin Hammond were indeed in a precarious spot sitting on a tree in an area just able to support two people. We got clothes on them and then decided how to get them out. The two had been hiking for some time in snow when it started to get icy. They looked up and thought that they could hike straight up to the top and cut off the last mile of trail. Instead they realized that the top was nowhere near and to go down could be fatal. Wisely they stayed put and called for help. We decided to lower them back to the trail and hike them back to Palm Springs rather than go back to the top since they were not dressed to go through the deep snow and patches of ice that would be waiting for us. We quickly rigged up sit harnesses on them and set up a belay system to lower them to the trail. I took 4 lowers using a 150-foot rope each time to get them back to the trail, 500 feet! We were impressed with their climbing ability given their lack of proper equipment to climb what they did.

Once we got back to the trail we radioed base that we were on the trail and headed back to Palm Springs. If you have ever hiked the Skyline Trail you know that the trail is ALL up going up and ALL down going down. Palm Springs is about 400 feet above sea level while the upper tram is about 8500 feet. Needless to say it was a very long night. We finally arrived in Palm Springs at 07:00 with knees that had turned to jelly. Akin and Josh were great hiking companions. They never complained and helped carry some of the gear out. Remember that while Max, Rob, and I hiked 11 miles down the mountain they hiked 9 1/2 miles up and 9 1/2 miles down, all in less than 24 hours! Since we had been up all night and most of the team that camped near the upper tram did not get much if any sleep listening to our progress down the mountain, Sunday's training was called off. We gathered in Palm Springs for breakfast, sorted gear in the parking lot, and headed home for some sleep.

ad been

2003-003

White Water Mission
Sunday Feb. 9, 2003
By David Webb



R.M.R.U. was asked to meet on the north side of the 10 freeway off the White Water exit at 09:00. At that time we were informed that a 52 yr. Old Latino male had been reported missing for 11 day's, he was also H.I.V. positive and diabetic. His car had just been located the day before high centered on a rock in the river bed a little over 1 mile north of the freeway.

Upon arriving at the scene it was decided to begin with a grid search in the area where the car had been found. Before long the search line started to fall apart and everyone began searching their own areas while spreading out. It was about this time that Jeri Sanchez showed up at base and heard about a known gathering spot 2 miles up the canyon from a supporting Deputy. Being fairly close to base I radioed in that I would return to the command center and go with Jeri to that location. We would begin a search there and work our way back south. We went about a mile down stream as another unit was working their way up. At this time I started coming into an area that had a lot of little party spots. And by the painting's on the trees and other evidence quickly lead me to believe that there had been a lot of private activity going on around there. Unfortunately our team and the team working their way up the canyon never got a chance to meet up before we were called in for a lunch / reorganization break. This left a gap between the north search area and the south. At 12:30 two helicopters were now on the scene to assist in the search. As we discussed our next plan of attack I realized that a number of people were coming up with all kinds of very valid scenario of what this guy might have done and where we should search.

About 13:30 as different teams organized and set out to explore their different theories. I was remembering what I had found earlier. The party spots, the gap between the north and south search area's, and the fact that even though we now had two helicopters in the air they wouldn't be able to effectively search this place because of the trees. I went into the command center and received permission to go on my own to continue the search of that area. At 14:15 as I was working my way north through the trees I found a little path heading west to a clearing on the other side. I almost continued on but at the last second decided to take the path. I felt that if I progressed through and into the clearing I would be able to see the road again and get my bearings on how far north I had moved. As I worked my way through to the

clearing I began to spot something up ahead and to my left. In about 4 or 5 steps I went from wondering to confirmation that I had found our subject. It also became quickly apparent that the subject had been deceased for a number of days and that the indigenous wildlife had also been aware of this fact.

After gathering my thoughts for a moment I radioed into base that the subject had been located. I then began giving my location to one of the aviation units so that they could pin point my spot and assist other ground units to my location. Soon several unit members were with me and they then returned to the road to assist deputies to the scene. About 15:00 Phil Thompson arrived with two deputies who then took over the scene and upon getting the necessary information they needed thankfully and graciously dismissed R.M.R.U.

2003-04

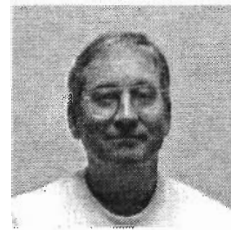
02/10/2003

Rancho California. Alzheimer's patient walked away from home Found just as many RMRU units and personnel arrived on the scene.

2003-05

02/11/2003

La Quinta Mission
By Phil Thompson



Four young boys, two 13 year olds and two 14 year olds had started a hiking trip originating at the top of La Quinta canyon and coming out near the restaurant in Pinyon Crest 18 miles later. They had started hiking on Saturday morning and had made arrangements with one of the parents to be picked up in the late afternoon at Pinyon Crest. When the boys had not shown up and darkness had fallen, the parent called 911 to report the boys missing.

The weather was cold and raining that afternoon with the rain continuing most of the night and the temperature dropping even further as the sun set. Desert Search and Rescue sent in one team to start going up the trail and another team coming down the

trail about 21:00 that night. When the Sheriff's Dept had heard nothing from Desert Search and Rescue all-night RMRU was called out Sunday morning to take over the operation.

Shortly after arriving on site RMRU procured two helicopters one CHP and one Sheriff's. Although we could not raise the Desert Search and Rescue teams on the radio, we knew that they had dispatched the two teams the night before and should have reached the boys already. We assumed that the boys must have gotten off trail. With this information we started putting numerous teams on local peaks using the helicopters to quickly get them there.

We found out later the reason that Desert Search and Rescue had missed the boys is that the boys during the night had gotten totally soaking wet from the rain and with the strong winds, they knew they were in big trouble and had to find shelter. They found a cave to huddle in out of the rain until morning. When the morning finally came they started hiking up the trail again. Although it had stopped raining it was still cold and windy.

Because of the huge area that the boys could have been had they gone off trail and the time involved I ordered 100 additional rescue people to come to our site. We did not want those boys to spend another night out there. I also requested the assistance of the Idyllwild community patrol to assist with the logistics of handling all those people. We had the Red Cross onsite to help with food and other personal needs of the Rescue workers.

We received a call from the Pinyon fire station of a report of an illegal campfire and asked for one of our helicopters to check it out for them. We sent the CHP ship to investigate the fire and on the way to the fire they spotted the four boys. They were picked up and flown back to base, where we had one of our team members, Dr. Hussey, check the boys out. Three of the boys were very wet and very cold but we were able to get them warmed up with blankets and warm drinks. The fourth boy was transported to the hospital for additional treatment but was later released and doing well.

2003-006

February 18, 2003

Missing 80 Year Old Male

Perris Area

By Glenn Henderson as told to Gwenda Yates

Well, so much for another good nights sleep as the pager goes off at 01:15 checking the number I see that it's Sheriff's Dispatch. We have a search in the Perris area for a missing 80-year-old man. I wrote the information down and paged out the team. I arrived at the house where Nelson Friedt was last seen in front of the house at 18:00. The Riverside County Search Dog team is already there and had been searching since 22:00. Jim Fairchild directed me where to park our white van. Soon after I arrive Steve Bryant, Travis Henderson, Darrell Bell, Phil Thompson, Angie James, Rick Maschek, and Michael George arrive to help search. As we start getting topo maps printed and putting paper work together to decide on how to deploy teams, Phil notices a lot of people standing around. He asks them who wants to help and all raise their hands. Phil then got three radios from the van and sent them out to search roads and houses. Fifteen minutes later as our first teams are just leaving the area an excited call comes over the radio. It's Volunteer team 1 and she says "We've found him!!" As it turns out it's Mr. Friedt's great nephew and niece, Christina and Raymond Espinoza, that found him. Mr. Friedt was down at the end of a short paved road near his home, very cold and could not get up. We sent a sleeping bag down to help get him warmed up while an ambulance was called.

After the ambulance transported Mr. Friedt to the hospital for a check up we packed up the van and went to Denny's in Perris for breakfast. I got home at 06:30 and slept until 07:30, got up and went to work.

2003-007

02/27-28/2003

Three sixteen year old boys six hours overdue.

By Phil Thompson



Three boys from the Hemet area had made arrangements with their parents to spend the night at another friends parents house Saturday night. They had told their parents that they would be driving up to Pine Cove together in the early afternoon and would call when they got there. By 22:00 they had still not called. The weather conditions although clear, was in the thirties with lots of fresh snow on the ground. As the parents of the teens became more and more worried, one of the brothers disclosed to one of the parents that the missing teens did not plan on driving up to Pine Cove by the road but up one of the two dirt, non-maintained control roads that come up to Idyllwild area. Glen Henderson got a Sheriff's helicopter dispatched about 22:00. I met Glen at the start of

the control road that ends up at the lower end of The Idyllwild Arts campus with our Black & white 4-wheel drive. We found fresh car tracks once we hit the snow on the steep dirt road and thought that it must be them. We had about 1.5 Ft of snow on the road by the time we got to the school campus. We keep in communication with one of the parents just in case the boys showed up. The helicopter had followed the other road (Bee canyon) to about the four thousand-foot level where they ran into thick fog, they returned to base.

Glen and I drove back down to Hemet and started driving up the Bee Canyon control road. About half way up and about 02:00 in the morning we got a call from the parents that the missing boys had walked out after leaving their truck stuck in the snow. The boys, although very tired and just a little embarrassed, were fine.

MRA Spring Conference June 12-13-14 in Idyllwild

Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit is pleased to be your host for the MRA Spring Conference June 12-15, 2003 at Buckhorn Camp in Idyllwild, CA.

As a part of the many events we are please to announce two great speakers that will be available for registrants to listen to and learn from. Friday night's speaker is Jim Donini. Jim in 1999 was awarded the prestigious Underhill Award for outstanding mountaineering achievement by the American Alpine Club. Currently, Jim is a driving force in product testing and development at Montrall.

Saturday night's speaker is well known because he lived when many died. Beck Weathers was one of the climbers in 1996 descending Mt. Everest in a freak storm hit the mountain. It was the worst single-day loss of lives on the mountain with nine climbers dying. He did live and will be our speaker for the Saturday night Banquet.

You can register for this event by going to www.RMRU.org and from there follow the links to the MRA Spring Conference. This will be a great opportunity to hear two great speakers and learn from so great instructors that will be mentoring and teaching at this Spring event. Register now! It will be great!

A special "THANKS" to the Red Cross for their assistance on two missions. It is unusual for RMRU to have three separate missions in three days and the RED CROSS did provide us assistance on Missions #3 in Whitewater Canyon and Mission #5 in LaQuinta. We also called the Idyllwild Mountain Community Patrol and they were on their way to provide assistance for the La Quinta Mission .

Cell Phones and Safety

by Darrell Bell

For many of those who elect to climb or just do a day hike, the cell phone is looked upon as a safety device. While it can assist one, this is far from the truth and many times those persons do not know the limitations of the device.

There are some things that will assist one in securing assistance.

1. Put a full charge into the unit prior to any climb or hike.
2. Keep it turned off until such time that you really need assistance.
3. When you do need assistance, before you call know the following:
 - A. Your own Cell Phone number.
 - B. Where you left from, what the plans were.
 - C. Look around and to the best of your ability, be able to describe what you did and where you are or where you think you are. Know how you got where you are.
4. When you place a call to 911, you don't know who you will reach. Have a paper and pencil ready so you can get the numbers you should call for direct assistance.
5. DO NOT call anyone, mother, wife, sister, anyone that can not provide you with direct assistance.
6. Turn the phone OFF, until 5 minutes prior to the hour and 5 minutes prior to the half hour. Then and only then be ready for calls back to you.
7. Know how to get your voice mail [if you have that feature] or pager type messages.
8. Follow any of the safety tips that you might know. Stay put, conserve resources and any other of the many items you may have been taught.
9. Know that if you move just 10 feet higher, you may get a much better signal. When you do need help, watch the signal strength meter on the phone for a good signal. When you find that, stay put.

2003 MRA

Snow and Ice Recertification

By: William Carlson

Sweet! That was all we could say driving up highway 395 toward Mammoth. It was snowing and we weren't even there yet. We were going to be in for an awesome weekend!

It was once again time for our recertification in snow and ice rescue and this year it was to be held in Mammoth California. We were all excited seeing as we didn't see much snow this year and the recert had been canceled last year due to a lack of snow. We were to spend the night in a condo that the team rented and wake up bright and early for the start of the recert. However, I remember it being dark and early when we got up.

After a few hours of good sleep we got up and loaded into the team van and some personal vehicles and headed for the ski resort parking lot where we were to begin. After some last minute preparations we walked to the start line and were ready to go. Now all we had to do was wait for the 08:00 start time. As 08:00 rolled by all of our watches we took off looking back to see the other teams still waiting. After a very quick 300 ft we were stopped by the people running the show and told that we couldn't go yet because they were not ready. Once again we were too fast!

After a few extra minutes of waiting we were on the move and headed up to rescue our subject. A quick 2-mile hike leads us to the start of our problem and the start of some snow. We all bundled up and began to do what we train to do. We sent Max down to assess our subject and then soon after we sent Glen down with the toboggan. After a short amount of time Glen and Max had our subject packaged and ready to be raised. Through a ton of teamwork we completed a multi-pitch raise and got our subject to safety. Now it was time for the avalanche scenario.

After a quick break we headed over to our next test. We were to find an avalanche beacon buried somewhere in the snow within a certain amount of time. We went straight to our task and once again with an awesome amount of teamwork we found the beacon in about 6 minutes. Our tests were complete and there was only one thing left to do. Eat!

After an excellent critique from our testers we headed down to town to eat. We were all totally happy and we couldn't have asked for better weather than the snow that we were getting. After a snow filled hike back to the cars we went to town and ate and then headed back to the condo for some sleep. We had a big day ahead of us for we were going skiing on the freshly fallen snow.

Members Present: Glenn Henderson, Travis Henderson, Joe Erickson, Steve Bryant, Rick Mascheck, Rob May, Will Carlson, Max Brummett, Dana Potts, Angie James, Dave Webb, Michael George, and Terry Greenstein.

NOTE

All donations listed on the next page are for 2002 tax year only. They do not reflect any donations that have been received for this Tax year [2003]. Use this tax number. 85-2497048 Tax ID Number for Nor for Profit Status for the RMRU. Thanks, we really need your HELP ! ! ! !

February 8, 2003 Training & Lytle Creek

By Rick Maschek

Our February training found us again at Lytle Creek because of poor local snow conditions. I hiked up last weekend to check on conditions and found adequate snow to practice for our MRA snow certification next month (the sun never shines this time of year here accounting for what little snow we've had to remain. It was very cold). We met at the Sierra off ramp of I-15 and proceeded up to the end of the road (some call it the Afgan highway because of the roughness). In just a week the snow had melted away at the parking area but we were soon on snow after hiking up carrying our litter, ropes and gear.

We began looking for the nearest available snow that would allow us to practice putting in snow anchors, safety lines, rigging raise and lowering systems, practicing changeovers and related activities we would need for next month's certification. For some of our newer members, this was their first experience with some of our setups. After we felt comfortable with our setups, we broke everything down and returned. I took the long way climbing up Mt. Harwood to check on other snow areas for future trainings, which we used when we returned 2 weeks later (Mt. Baldy Ski Area). Those attending the training included Ray Hussey, Steve Bryant, Michael George, Glenn Henderson, Travis Henderson, Dana Potts, Brenda DeLuna, Jeri Sanchez, Angie James, Will Carlson and Rick Maschek. I think (hope) that's everyone. Rick

Sustaining Members

Benefactor Club	\$1,000 +	Scott Brothers Dairy Farms Palm Springs Aviation, Inc. [Memory: Don Landells]		
Summit Club	\$ 500 +	Steve & Rosemarie Johnson		
Patron Club	\$ 200 +	Gordon Austerman Marvin M. Oliver, Esq. Dave Hadley	R & S Krieger Jon Goldman Bob & Susan Krieger	James Oliver
Century Club	\$ 100 +	J & T Larson Dr. & Mrs. Schnurr Larry & Nancy Carter Alan Note Jerome H. Niswonger Betty & John Moore	A & N Andrews J & S Murdock Rosemary Kraft Won Sok Yang Kathy Machir Lucinda Harton	D & R Harrah James Collins T & D Young Rotary Anns Brett Faron
Supporting Club	\$ 25 +	Bill & Juanita Starmer L & K Venable Stuart & Ann Glickman Jan Beyers & G Riechers [Memory: Joseph Lennox] Elva Bess Cook	Dr. & Mrs. Ray George Mary & Cloie Swain Dr. & Mrs. Jay Wallis	

ROOM FOR YOUR NAME ALSO

Sustaining Membership Application

Your donation is deductible from both your state and federal tax

Name(s) _____ Amount _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

A receipt of your tax deductible donation will be mailed to you.

Memberships

Benefactor club	\$1,000
Summit Club	\$ 500
Patron Club	\$ 200
Century Club	\$ 100
Supporting Club	\$ 25

Please send your
donation with application to:

Attn: RMRU Box
C/O Riverside Sheriffs Office
43950 Acacia Street
Hemet, California 92544



Mission #2 ▲ with Glenn Henderson, Max Brummett, Rob May spending their night walking down Skyline Trail. Josh Lovingfoss and Akin Hammond are provided with warmer gear. ▲



Mission # 5 LaQuinta Search.

Rick Maschek took pictures of the footprints in the LaQuinta search and also was able to take one of the boys [covered with a blanket provided to RMRU from Mountain Quilters] as he was entering the Sheriff's Command center. Rick checked the footprint and did verify that it belonged to one of the boys. The Red Cross provided assistance on this search as well as Mission # #3 in Whitewater Canyon.



Winter RECERTIFICATION by Mountain Rescue Association [MRA]

Pictures by Rick Maschek and story about Winter Recertification by Will Carlson.

A special thanks to **Magdy Farag** of Greybar Printing located in the Banning Correctional Facility, for his efforts in producing and printing this Newsletter.

