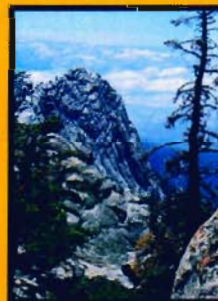




RMRU

Fresh Tracks



A publication of the Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit for Winter 2005



RMRU Base Camp Operations prepping to depart and search for the missing PCT hiker, John Donovan



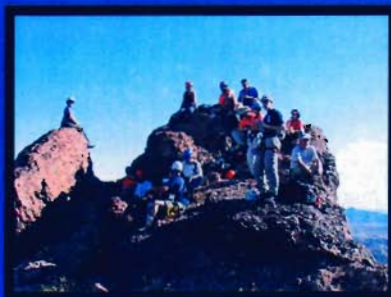
RMRU's August Helitac Training at Hemet-Ryan



(left to right) Grace & Jim Manues, and Pete Carlson admire the sights from the Tahquitz peak trail



Apr. Training: ...taking a break at Hidden Lake



Team on top! Picacho Peak Training, Nov. 2005



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Missing PCT Hiker John Donovan	4-5
RMRU Volunteers at 2005 Idyllwild Spring Challenge Bike Race	6-7
Annual Pancake Breakfast a	8
Helitac Training	11
A Special Farewell to Jim Fairchild	12
October Tracking Training	13-14
Picacho Peak Training and Team Camping Cook-Off	15-16
RMRU Member Brenda De Luna honored at MRA conference	17



...checking gear before heading out for April Training



Will Carlson looks on as the team crosses the gap at Picacho Peak

Mission 11

Desert Search at Lake Cahuilla for missing female

By: Brenda DeLuna (right) & Grace Manues (not pictured)



The mission for Susan R., 53, began when two hikers discovered her vehicle, high-centered just off a 4WD road, 2 miles from Lake Cahuilla. DSAR initiated the search on Thursday but was unavailable to continue the search on Friday.

RMRU members responding to the OES call-out included: Brenda DeLuna (OPS leader), Travis Henderson, Patrick McCurdy, Grace Manues and (late comer) Ray Hussey. Three members of Riverside County Search Dog Team and their dogs were also present.

On Friday morning, each RMRU member was paired with a dog team member. Collectively, the three teams covered miles of desert, drainages, canyons and even a waterfall, with no sign of Susan. Helicopter Star 90 also searched the area for most of the day.

While the field teams were doing their thing, Brenda came to the rescue of the Channel 2 news reporter. After having hiked over ¼ mile in heels, Brenda selflessly offered the grateful woman her boots to wear for the remaining ½ mile hike to the subject's vehicle (with the approval of the sheriff's deputy).

After lunch, Travis, Patrick, Grace, and Ray, continued the search sans dogs. After coming upon a rattlesnake, Grace alerted her fellow team members (with a scream that could have been heard in Hemet).

The search continued through the weekend with a large-scale call-out involving over 50 searchers on foot, ATVs, and horses. RMRU members responding on Saturday included Travis, Patrick, and Ray. Despite hours of searching, no sign of Susan was found and the active search was suspended several days later.

Postscript: Two months later, in early June, a field worker found the subject's skull in a vineyard two miles from her abandoned vehicle. While the discovery confirmed her family's worst fear, it also brought them some closure and peace of mind. May Susan rest in peace.

Mission 13

Three Boy Scouts at the Tram

By: Will Carlson



Oh how quickly a quiet evening at home can change to a quiet evening in the San Jacinto Mountains. We received a call to search for three fifteen-year-old boys who attempted San Jacinto Peak and did not return to camp. After talking my dad into joining me for the search we took off.

Two hours later we found ourselves leaving the upper station of the Palm Springs tramway. Our assignment was to head over to Hidden lake, hike through the divide, and down into Willow Creek to look for tracks. We were met with wonderful conditions. Hiking atop hard packed snow we made decent time. Around 2:00 A.M. we decided to hunker down for the night. We found a lovely site just above Willow Creek, and were anxious to begin the search the next morning.

Morning brought an unexpected surprise. My dad woke to an extremely swollen knee with severe pain. We discussed our options and decided that I would quickly search the Willow Creek drainage area and then we would head back. I searched for about an hour and returned back to our site. After taking another look at my dad's knee and talking about the hike out, we decided that he would not be able to hike. An airship from San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department assisting in the search came in and hoisted my dad, and took him back to the tram.

Cont. on page 3



Rob May and Will Carlson with the 3 missing Boy Scouts at the top of the tram

Mission 13: cont.

After discussing many different options with our team, it was decided that I would wait for another team to meet up with me and we would continue our assignment up the Willow Creek drainage. This left me with a large amount of down time. At first I was ok, but that quickly began to change. Anyone who knows me understands that sitting still is not something I do well, if I do it at all. I was yelling the three boys names every few minutes in case they were still moving and ended up near me. After a while I was bored beyond belief and the other team was still a ways out. I found some rocks to climb and goofed around until they were getting pretty close. All the time I was calling out to what seemed like nothingness.

"Team 2, team 1." "Go ahead." "Was that you?" "Negative." "Copy, break...Base, team 1, possible voice contact." Well, at this point the adrenaline was pumping and I was thinking all of this yelling paid off. However, above all other thoughts were the thought that I needed to get to these boys before anyone else.

Thinking that team 2 was in the drainage just below where the voice came from. I decided that running was the best option. I ran and ran and ran some more, with only one thought in mind.... must get there first. After running a fairly long distance (with a full winter search pack weighing roughly 35 lbs) and talking with team 2, I realized I was a long way ahead of them. This was a good thing because it meant I could walk and take a break. Well, that was not the case. Not more than a millisecond after the thought of taking a break, the trustworthy helicopter could be heard on both the horizon and the radio. "Team one, Air Rescue 6." "Go ahead." "Can you guide us into the area?" "Head to the east."

The race was on again, and this time the odds were not in my favor. I ran and ran and ran, gaining speed with every step. I was gaining speed until I ran into the steep part of the hill. But, the race was over. To my surprise I had a visual on three young boys. All I could think was, "I'd never raced a helicopter before...and won!"

After a quick medical exam the helicopter was released to head home. The boys were very hungry and ate quite a bit of food. Team 2 (Rob and Kirk) arrived and we began our trek back to the tram. Along the way we ran into the many other teams that just happened to be racing into the same area. Talking to the boys, we learned that they had hiked down the Willow Creek drainage and ended up at the mouth of Tahquitz Canyon. A long hike for the boys! Back at the tram we had a reunion and packed up. Another great mission for RMRU!

Mission 15

Mother and Daughter Missing at South Ridge Trail

By: Erica Zastrow



Lee and the missing Mother/Daughter after the South Ridge Trail search.

Just before sunset on a lazy, Sunday afternoon, the pager went off. Two hikers, a mother and her daughter, who had been hiking the South Ridge Trail to Tahquitz Peak, became separated from their group on the way back down the trail.

As I read the call-out message, my heart began to thump a little faster; this was my first "real" mission now that I was a full-member of RMRU. I hurriedly grabbed my gear, ran to the car, and began to make my way to Mt. San Jacinto. Winding up the mountain roads, I suddenly broke above the cloud layer and it seemed the mountain was an island floating in a sea of clouds. The sun dipped below the horizon and I arrived just as the rescue van pulled up to the trail head.

Other members were already getting ready to head out: Kirk, Travis, Brad, John D., Dave, Patrick, and myself split up to become Teams 1 and 2. We began to hike up the trail as the darkness descended. Teams 3 and 4 were dispatched behind us and sent up the trail. We called and called as we hiked up the rocky switchbacks, but no one answered us but the wind. At Moon Rocks, Travis, Dave and I continued up the trail, making Team 1, while Patrick, John, Brad, and Kirk, as Team 2, shimmied through the portal of Moon Rocks to search down the drainage on the other side.

As we climber higher on South Ridge, calling out for the two lost females, I began to wonder if there were any living soul on the mountain besides RMRU.

Continued on page 4

Cont. from previous

It was dead quiet except for the surreptitious snapping of twigs, the thud of hiking boots, and the whoosh of our breath through our teeth. Amazingly, after we hiked about 10 more minutes, we heard over the radios that Team 4 had made voice contact. Team 4, a.k.a. Lee Arnson, was one of the fastest hikers on the team. He had powered up the trail and found the missing pair, who had made a small fire to keep warm. After hearing that they were going to hike out, we turned around to meet back with Team 2 as Lee helped them put out the fire. Once our Team 1 and Team 2 were back together, we started to descend back down to the trailhead we had left not an hour earlier!

When we made it back to base, everyone enjoyed some good-natured ribbing directed at Lee for trouncing us so thoroughly up the trail, 30 min. after we started. But the important thing was that the two women were alive and well. For my first mission, it was a bit of a whirlwind. Hiking in darkness is something I was not accustomed to, but it gave me a different perspective on what it must feel like to be lost on a mountain. In the end, we all were glad the mother and daughter were safe and sound, and I was happy my first mission was a success.

Mission 17

Missing PCT Hiker

By Patrick McCurdy



On May 3rd, John Donovan, a Pacific Crest Trail thru-hiker who had started at the Mexican border, picked up a cache of food near Anza on Highway 74. He intended to pick up his next food cache in Cabazon after having hiked north through the San Jacinto Mountains. He never made it to Cabazon. He was last seen May 4th south of Saddle Junction, having trouble with his footing in the snow and seeming somewhat ill-prepared for the cold conditions brought on by the late spring snow pack.

Riverside Sheriff's Office was not contacted until weeks later and immediately mobilized RMRU for a search. On Thursday, May 26th, eight RMRU members spent the first of what would turn into many days searching for John.

Jim Fairchild, Glenn Henderson, Dr. Ray Hussey, Jim & Grace Manues, Patrick McCurdy, Bruce Sanny, and Phil Thompson met at Keenwild Heliport to coordinate with the aircrew from the Sheriff's Star 92 Helicopter. The objective was to search the Fuller Ridge Trail, but access to it was limited due to snow. Glenn, Phil, and I were flown to about a mile below the Fuller Ridge trail head at Black Mountain road and hiked up (south) on the trail. Jim M., Bruce, and Ray were flown to near the upper end of the trail and hiked down (north) on it towards my team. Jim F. and Grace worked base to stay in touch with us via radio.

It was a beautiful day and the trail offered some magnificent views of the north face of San Jacinto to the east, as well as the valley to the west, but our main focus was to find John Donovan, or evidence that he had passed that way.

Neither team had any luck. The two teams hiked towards each other all day and met later in the afternoon near Castle Rocks, at about 8,400 feet, where we were winched out by the crew of Star 92 and flown, two at a time, back to Keenwild.

In spite of the length of time since John had last been seen, Riverside Sheriff's Office took this case very seriously and, over dinner that night in Idyllwild, planning took place for an extended search starting Saturday, with other search teams from out of county augmenting RMRU.

Mission 18

The Search for John Donovan, PCT Hiker

By Jeri Sanchez



RMRU was called to assist in the search for John Donovan. John is a 60 year old man who was hiking the Pacific Crest Trail in the San Jacinto Mountains. John started his hike in Mexico and reached the Saddle Junction area of the San Jacinto Mountains on May 3rd, 2005. He was last seen in this area by another hiker who had spoken to him. John said, "he was taking a long lunch break". John was hiking alone but he had friends who were expecting to see him in another 3-5 days and re-supply him at that time...

John never picked up his supplies in Cabazon and his friends never heard from him. Other hikers had noticed that John was traveling with an ultra light pack and minimal gear, especially for cold weather. We heard that he was using extra socks for his gloves and his tarp tent as a poncho.

Cont. from page 4

This year, the Idyllwild area has had its highest snow fall in 40 years, and the area John was last seen in had approximately 3 ft. of snow and the weather report, (which John knew about) for that night was that a storm was coming in. Other PCT hikers came into Idyllwild for shelter from the storm. Our search was 3 weeks after he was last seen, so there was a lot of melt off and snow was at higher elevations and patchy. OES had called for alpine teams but as it turned out, most teams did not run into any significant snow areas.

Teams came from San Bernardino SAR, San Bernardino cave team, Rim of the world SAR, San Diego SAR, and RMRU. RMRU coordinated the search for Riverside County Sheriff Department. We had over 30 searchers. We know the most frustrating part of SAR work is waiting to get an assignment and get into the field. In an effort to get teams into the field expeditiously Jim Fairchild, a senior member of the team with an in-depth knowledge of the mountain, had prepared maps and search areas the night before.

As teams checked in they were given subject information and a flyer with John's picture and info we knew about him. They then moved on to assignments by Jim Fairchild and Glenn Henderson where they could explain details of the assigned areas. Pre-designated search areas greatly expedited getting teams in the field. After all the other teams were dispatched, there was plenty of time for Glenn Henderson and myself to take an assignment. We followed the Devil's Slide Trail to Saddle Junction. We headed North up Eagle's Glide Trail to the Strawberry Campground area.

This would have been a possible route that John could have taken to continue on the PCT. The trail contours the mountain and has steep drop-off's with many possibilities for a slipped step and mishaps. We continued down Deer Springs Trail to Hwy 243 and needed transportation back to base camp, covering more than 10 miles, but with no sign of John or any of his belongings. No teams found any sign of John Donovan.

As a SAR member I take all the info about the subject and try and figure out what they might have done. John Donovan knew there was a storm blowing into Idyllwild on the afternoon of May 3rd, 2005.

After his rest did he press on North, ill equipped for foul weather? Did he reevaluate after sometime and head for shelter? He had a history of a mild heart attack. Did heart disease contribute to his disappearance? At this point we don't know. The search continues as more hikers become aware of John's disappearance. We will continue looking and try and figure out what John might have done and where he may have ended up on "our Mountain".

Mission 19

Two Missing Hikers at the Palm Springs Tram

By: Patrick McCurdy



At ten after ten, just moments before going to bed on the last day of a three-day weekend, the dreaded pager went off. "Mission – two lost hikers, meet at the PST." RMRU had already been in the field twice in the previous four days, and none of us relished the idea of a nighttime search in the snow-covered high country, but we nonetheless had an excellent response and shortly thereafter had ten members packing their backpacks in the parking lot of the Palm Springs Tram.

Upon arrival at the top of the tram (whose operators once again were very accommodating in running extra tram cars for us after their normal closing time) it was discovered that the subjects had hiked to San Jacinto Peak and not returned. Jim Fairchild made cell phone contact with them to better determine their location and moments later a "bash team" comprised of some of our strongest hikers (Lee Arnson, Tony Sandrini, and Jim Manues) was out the door and on its way. I swear there were vapor trails behind them when those three blasted out the door and headed up the trail!

Jim Fairchild continued to gather as much information as possible in order to, with the help of Grace Manues, direct operations from the tram's Mountain Station. With more information and more RMRU members arriving at the base, the second team headed out to search. This team included Deano Esades, Travis Henderson, Bill Morris, Jeri Sanchez, and me.

We hiked up the Sid Davis drainage to Tamarack Valley, and then crossed over to the upper end of Round Valley meeting up at the ranger hut with the bash team who had been searching up on Wellman's Divide. By 4:30 AM Tony and Lee had to leave to make it to work (search by night and work by day!), so Jim M. hiked back with them to the tram, while my team hunkered down to get 60-90 minutes of rest waiting for the sun to come up.. With the first rays of light coming up over the desert, myself, Travis and Jeri started to ascend the trail to Wellman's Divide, while Deano and Bill waited at the bottom of that drainage in case the subjects hiked out on their own. We were constantly yelling for Andy or Amber and, about thirty minutes up the trail, we got a response. Though we couldn't understand what they were saying, they were definitely calling back when we yelled their names. From the direction of their voices, we determined they were on the steep slope above us, and below Jean Peak.

Cont. on page 6

Cont. from previous

We left the trail and headed due west, straight up the slope. Our methodical search pace from earlier was quickly replaced by the fastest pace we could muster, considering the slope. Shortly after crossing over the trail between Wellman's Divide and San Jacinto Peak, I was able to establish positive voice contact. I finally was able to see them and shortly thereafter was standing with them, huffing and puffing at 10,040 feet elevation.

They were uninjured, but tired, cold, hungry, and dehydrated. We at first considered a helicopter extraction, as there was a San Bernardino bird on order. Jeri and Travis arrived quickly, however, and the subject's attitudes improved dramatically with warm jackets, clean dry socks, snow pants, food and water. As we evaluated their condition, they related their story.

They had apparently made San Jacinto Peak the previous night about dark. On the way back down they missed the point where the trail tees east and west, instead following the ridge south towards Jean Peak. They bivvied just south of Jean, on the west side of the ridge, though they reported to Jim Fairchild on the cell phone that they were looking at the lights of Palm Springs (which was east of their location). They started a fire with anything they had that would burn. They burnt the pockets off their pants, the pockets off their jackets, their first aid kit, and, inadvertently, Amber's socks!

When the sun came up in the morning they realized their mistake, hiked up to the top of the ridge and began to slide down on their butts.

After pumping as much food and water into them as we could in an hour (Jeri's pack is a seemingly bottomless pit of energy food and Gatorade mix!), Andy and Amber felt good enough to walk out. With our crampons on their feet and Travis leading the way down, we took our time with a slow, careful descent.

Our own Riverside Sheriff's helicopter, Star 91, came overhead as we got down to Round Valley, and offered to land there and shuttle us off the mountain. We caucused and decided that all of us, particularly Amber and Andy, were feeling strong enough to walk out on our own. About an hour later we were walking up the long concrete ramp to the tram's Mountain Station.

It's always a pleasure when everyone, including the subjects, makes it back to base camp and can laugh and joke about the experience. It was pointed out that this was my first "find" (the first time I was the first team member to the subjects.) While there is a certain amount of pride (and bragging rights!) associated with that, it is also a bit of a misnomer. Every search is a team effort and no one member deserves more credit than the other team members present. Every RMRU member who participated in this search should take equal pride in the rescue of Andy and Amber.

Mission 20

Father's Day Search at Seven Pines Trail

By: Grace Manues



"We have voice contact." What a thrill to hear a response after five hours of calling and whistling for a missing father and his 5-year-old daughter. It was the first time Jim and I located a missing subject.

Nick and Jacqueline went hiking with several friends the day before. After carrying Jacqueline up much of Seven Pines Trail, the party separated at the PCT Junction. Nick was to return to his vehicle via the same route while his friends continued to San Jacinto Peak. However, upon their return at 1930, his friends found Nick's truck still parked at the trailhead.

Responding RMRU members included Jim Fairchild (ops leader), Lee Arnson (a one-man hasty team given his proximity to the area and the urgency of a missing 5-yr-old), Kirk Cloyd, Jim & Grace Manues, Bill Delo, and Rick Maschek. Two Riverside dog teams also responded.

The team searched the trail and nearby drainage areas from the wee hours of the morning until 0700 when Jim and I located the pair east of the San Jacinto River.

Upon nightfall, Nick had hunkered down with Jacqueline, building a fire to keep them warm. Little Jacqueline was a little dirty and a little cold, but otherwise no worse for the wear from her big adventure. Dad did a good job of keeping her calm (hope he had as much luck with Jacqueline's mother...).

RMRU members volunteer at 2005 Idyllwild Spring Challenge Bike Race

By: Erica Zastrow



Patrick and Jeff practice their knots while volunteering as medics for the 2005 Idyllwild Spring Challenge Bike Race.

Cont. from page 6.

Organizers for the 2005 Idyllwild Spring Challenge needed help! They desperately needed volunteers to be medics along the race route for this years bike race and some of our RMRU members answered the call!

We made a weekend of it after going over some familiarization training up Devil's Slide to Angel's Glide, and while continuing to look for any signs of missing PCT hiker, John Donovan. Pete Carlson, Patrick McCurdy, Jim & Grace Manues, and myself hiked through the surrounding areas with no sign of Mr. Donovan.

After a break for lunch, Patrick left us but promised to arrive bright and early at Hurkey Creek the next morning with the new truck, and Jeff Sutch in tow to help out at the race. We then hiked from Saddle Junction to Tahquitz Peak, because it was such a beautiful day, and because I had never been there. :o)

Upon arriving back at Humber Park, we bid Pete goodbye, and Jim, Grace and I left for Hurkey Creek to set up camp and make ourselves some dinner!

The next morning, the campground was a-buzz with mountain bikers prepping for the race. Patrick and Jeff soon arrived, followed by Jennifer Raschko, followed by an earthquake! Yikes!

We split up into teams of 3: Jennifer, Jim and Grace positioning themselves at the highest point of the race along the South Ridge Trailhead, while Patrick, Jeff and I drove the new truck to the Sport class cut off loop at the midpoint of the race.

As the race began, mountain-bikers began to labor up the mountain, most of them stopping for a drink at the water station where we were located. None of the riders needed medical assistance, so we busied ourselves with practicing our knots, swatting the seemingly endless swarm of black flies, and trying to stay in the shade.

After noon, we positioned ourselves for a better view of the pros coming down the downhill. Although we received word of one rider with a possible broken nose, whoever he was, he never stopped long enough to let us know about it! The entire day passed without us needing to delve into our medical supplies.

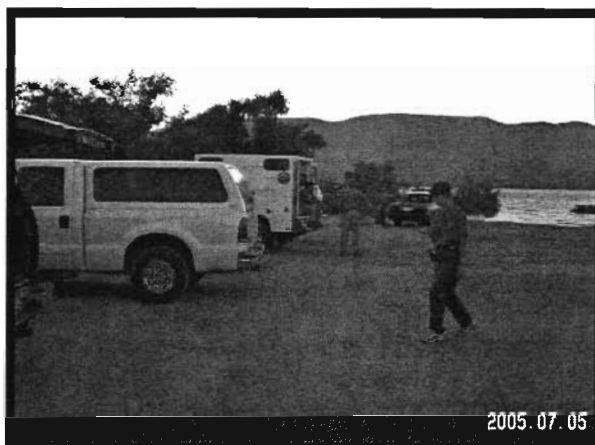
We met some nice folks who were part of the race staff, got to eat some yummy sub sandwiches, and got to see some amazing athletes.

All in all, it was a great event for RMRU to volunteer at, and show our support for the local outdoor community. It was some great PR for us, and a good chance to do some community service. Many thanks to everyone who gave their time so willingly that weekend! You guys are great!

Mission 23

Search for a Missing 54 yr Old Man at Vail Lake

By: Phil Thompson



The team prepping at the Vail Lake search

At 5 PM on July 5, 2005, RMRU was called out to search for a missing man at Vail Lake. The man had been missing for more than 41 hours, and the family had not reported the man as missing for more than 36 hours. After an initial search by helicopter and boat returned negative results, RMRU was called in to search the area.

At 18:30, eight RMRU members were deployed by boat to the area where the man was last seen. The team was to establish a perimeter where no one had been and then sweep that whole area back to the water. The team was able to do this in about two and a half hours.

While the RMRU team was doing their search, two specially trained dogs were doing a search on the water. Both dogs had a good hit right below a very steep cliff area. Having completed our search sweep, we put the search on standby until the next day, July 6th, when divers were scheduled to search the bottom of the lake where the dogs got a hit.

On the morning of July 6th, the, the body of a man was found floating in the area identified by the dogs. The man was identified as Sammy Cooper from Homeland, CA.

RMRU's Breakfast in the Forest— Annual Pancake Breakfast Draws a Crowd

By: Glenn Henderson



The early morning crowd at the Annual Pancake Breakfast enjoys their meal while Bill DeLo assisted our guests.

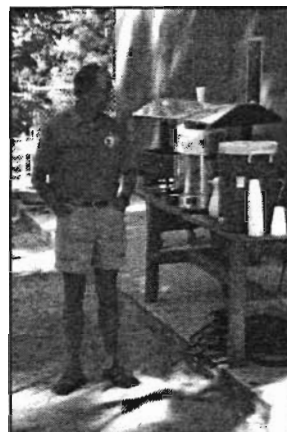
We held our annual pancake breakfast on August 14 in Idyllwild. Almost all team members were on hand to help prepare, cook, serve, and clean up for a great cause. It was nice to see old friends and make new ones at our breakfast fundraiser. Team member Phil Thompson did the pre breakfast for us again ordering the food, securing the facilities and advertising. He almost didn't get to be there as he was out to sea on a job until the day before the breakfast. Thanks Phil. Also thanks go to Gordon Austerman for his help and direction. He turned his job over to Phil but he was still there helping out. Thanks Gordon and thanks to all that bought tickets again this year. It was another successful fundraiser.



Expert pancake flippers Kirk Cloyd and Terry Greenstein show us how its done...



This lovely lady was the lucky winner of our grand prize raffle drawing



Hard at work or Hardly working? Jim Manues mans the watering hole.



John "the sausage king" Dempsey checks the temperature of his perfectly cooked breakfast sausages.

Mission 24:

Saddle Junction-Body Recovery

By: Ray Hussey



RMRU was in the middle of technical rock training at Pine Cove County Park when teammate Henry Negrete came running up to us at approximately 0900 hours with a report from IFD (Idyllwild Fire Department), that a middle-aged male hiker had collapsed after climbing up devil's slide trail to saddle junction, and had no pulse or respiratory activity with fellow hikers performing CPR.

We immediately called the Valle Vista RSO and the RSO aerosquadron to meet me at Keenwild Heliport with the medical pack. We were immediately on our way and within 5 minutes, I was winched down in the immediate vicinity of the subject.

In the meantime, several RMRU team members hiked up devil's slide trail and met me at the saddle junction 20 minutes of my arrival by helicopter. The subject was a 45 year old male with no pulse, no spontaneous respiration, and a negative corneal reflex—CPR was continued for another 15 minutes with the same findings, and the subject was pronounced dead at approximately 1015 hours.

Jim Manues, myself, and fellow hikers then bagged the subject and transported him to a clear area for helicopter winch extraction—this became a bit exciting because the winch cable has a very large hook on its end and it swung towards us like a pendulum. On the immediate command of Jim Manues, we all "hit the deck!" The winch was promptly controlled and straightened out and the subject was extracted to Keenwild. Fellow team members and I then hiked through skunk cabbage where we met USFS personnel who directed us to Reeds meadow where the RSO helicopter had found a clear landing zone and then promptly evacuated us to Keenwild heliport near Mountain Center.

Mission 26:

Tramway Race

By: Will Carlson



The mid afternoon sun was upon me and sweat was pouring off my face like a waterfall. My legs were screaming out in pain as I quickly traversed upward to the overdue hiker. With voice contact this one (the rescue) was as good as in the bag.

Tramway race cont.

The call went out to meet at the lower parking lot of the Palm Springs Tramway to search for an overdue hiker. The hiker was said to have started hiking the day before, and hadn't returned. Team members Ray Hussey and Patrick McCurdy were already in the field and in voice contact with the hiker, so my dad and I headed up to assist with a large group of members right behind us. We flew out of the Tramway and reached the area where voice contact had been made.

From the top of the Skyline Trail we realized that because of an echoing voice, Ray and Patrick were not in the correct drainage. With a helicopter inbound we knew we would be hard pressed to make the rescue, but we went for it anyway. Knowing the area really well, my dad and I headed down just below the rock bands to traverse over and up to the missing man's location.

This was the second time this year I found myself racing a helicopter by foot. Remembering my success back in April helped me push harder and harder. Within minutes, however, the helicopter was hovering above the missing hiker. The find was lost, but there was still a chance for us to reach the man. Teams headed in the direction of the hovering helicopter and missing hiker. I was within 100 feet of the man when the helicopter performed a hovering pick-off. With the man safely down to the tramway parking lot we returned to the upper tram, and possibly to another mission.

Mission 27:

PCT Anza Assist

By: Lee Armon



After wrapping up mission no. 26, we were heading down the tram when we were called out to respond to the Terwilliger area of Anza to assist in the rescue of a man with broken leg on the Pacific Crest Trail.

Base was roughly 70 miles from the tram, so we jumped in our cars and headed out. Approximately an hour and a half, and several bad directions later, we arrived at the trailhead, which just happened to be right smack in the middle of nowhere.

Cont. on page 10

Cont. from previous

On scene was Anza C.D.F.. They were in the field with the subject, and had been for a better part of the day. By radio contact, they were requesting we bring in our wheeled litter and LOTS of water.

We only had about a one mile hike down the trail before we got to the subject. One of our team doctors did an assessment, and it turned out that our man had injured his knee as opposed to an actual broken leg. Either way, he could not walk. He had already been packaged by C.D.F., so we loaded him onto our litter and we brought him out to an awaiting ambulance.

Mock Mission, Seven Pines Trail

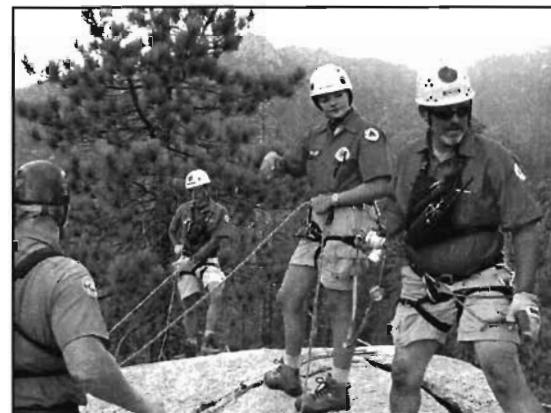
By: Erica Zastrow



The morning sky on San Jacinto dawned clear and blue for our mock mission at the Seven Pines Trail. A friend of RMRU and his son offered to act as our subjects so we could practice a full scale technical SAR.

The team searched just as if it were a real mission and us newbies got to earn a little more experience with tracking and search techniques as well as observe and help with a technical raise and haul system. Once our 9 yr old male guinea pig was found, the litter attendants went down, cared for and packaged his wounds, and prepared the young man to be hauled up the rock face. As the litter neared the top, ominous black clouds appeared on the horizon as an early fall thunderstorm approached with amazing speed. No sooner had we pulled the litter to safety on the exposed rock face when the rain began in earnest. We all felt like giant lighting rods amid all of our technical gear and metallic bits and pieces, so we hurriedly broke down our gear and packed out. Then it began to POUR! Great sheets of water deluged from the sky as we scurried back towards the van as fast as we could. Somehow in the melee, our beloved Gwenda took quite a tumble, breaking her ankle, thus necessitating a real rescue!

Somehow we all made it back in one piece, although we were all soaked and a little worse for the wear. However, lunch at the pizza joint in Idyllwild cured all our ills and we were glad for the learning experience and a very successful training.



Helitac Training

By: Jeff Sutch



If you are in an airframe where the wings are moving faster than the fuselage, you are in a helicopter, which is inherently unsafe.

We joined up with the Riv. Co. Sheriff's Department Air Wing at Hemet-Ryan field in the early morning hours to try and beat some of the summer heat. We practiced personal skills including helicopter ingress and egress, crew communications, basic procedures, and emergency procedures when operating with the Air Wing. We all took turns approaching, boarding, exiting, and leaving the parked helicopter. We concluded the training by practicing lowering and raising using the winch. Everyone had a memorable and safe experience.



The bird in flight



Lee Amson hovering 80 feet above Hemet-Ryan Airfield



Team Sanchez just hangin' around



Grace Manues showing us how it is done



Patrick McCurdy, Ray Hussey, and Jim Manues doing their best "Top Gun" impression



For Erica, this was just too much excitement for one day

Jim Fairchild Retirement Party: Celebrating the Service of One of Our Founders

By: Gwenda Yates



It was with true sadness that Riverside Mountain Rescue said a fond farewell to one of its founding members. On September 24, 2005 Jim Fairchild retired so we had an excuse to have yet another party. This was truly not the time to celebrate. But RMRU, being who we are, made a sad situation fun. As usual when planning a party we thought where? The answer was Rob May's place. For those of you who don't know him, team member Rob has gone far and above the call of duty and bought a great house to have parties.

As the day begins, we are gathering and preparing food for this great feast. Grace Manues, being the angel that she is, was great help. (*New girl she'll never do that again.*). We contacted as many former team members as we could find. This was a great day for old and new members alike to share stories. Everyone was given a chance to tell his or her favorite "Jim" story. (*We all have them.*) It was great to see Bernie, Kevin Joe, Bill, Don, J.R. Mike as well as all the others. The team presented Jim with a lifetime achievement award as a reminder of all the great work he has done for RMRU. As the evening events started to settle down we said our **see ya tonight's**. All had a good time.

Knowing that Jim will not physically go with us on future missions and trainings will not stop him from being there. He will always be in our thoughts and prayers. I know that as I start up a trail Jim is only a phone call away from helping me planning my next trip



Dave Webb and Jim



Jim shaking hands at the award presentation



Glenn presents Jim with a Lifetime Achievement Award for 44 years of dedicated service



RMRU members young and old gather with Jim and his wife to celebrate his many memories and achievements with mountain rescue

RSO Picnic, Beaumont

By: Brenda De Luna



The annual Sheriff's Picnic is an opportunity for Sheriff's deputies and their family to socialize and to see all those agencies affiliated with the Sheriff's Dept. Besides RMRU there was Sheriff's posse present, Sheriff's canine, bomb squad, civil air patrol, Sheriff's helicopter etc.

Everyone was showing off their stuff, but we had the biggest hit of all. We created a high line attached to a telephone pole and set up a pulley system so that we could haul children in a harness up the line. We had a ring (rescue plate), attached to the top that they tried to touch. If they did, they received a survival card as a reward.

We literally had a line up of kids all day and gave out over 50 survival cards. Glen, John and Patrick were quite worn out by the end of the day. I personally could hardly walk the next day after all the deep knee squats I did all day putting all those kids into harnesses. I am the harness queen! All in all it was an enjoyable day and I believe we made a good impression, especially with the kids.

Members present: Patrick McCurdy, Gwenda Yates, John Dempsey, Michael George, Brenda DeLuna, Glen Henderson and Terry Greenstein.



Children enjoying the high line system set up by RMRU

October Tracking Training

By: Patrick McCurdy



We arrived at the Candy Store (trailhead off Ortega Hwy) about 8AM ready for an overnight familiarization trip into the Tenaja area of the Santa Ana Mountains. As more vehicles arrived we were suddenly confronted with an RP (reporting party) who looked surprisingly like our own Kirk Cloyd with his son Michael. The "RP" reported that his father, Jim, had wandered off the previous night and got lost.

Erica Zastrow quickly volunteered to be operations leader. RMRU-style volunteerism equates to someone pointing at you and saying "Hey, you just volunteered!" Seriously, RMRU has lately been trying to appoint a variety of people to various roles in training, challenging them to assume roles they might not usually perform on real missions.

Erica rose to the occasion and quickly assigned three field teams and we proceeded up the trail following a unique print we found near the subject's truck. To be honest, we all now knew that the subject was our own good friend and recently retired RMRU member Jim Fairchild. Jim left us very clear tracks along the trail, but his path was not without distractions. He wandered back and forth at trail junctions, planted various clues along the way, and made things just challenging and quite interesting.

Rob May took the role of mentor and had the rest of us practicing our best tracking skills, rotating trackers and teams of trackers, and practicing good radio procedure. After trailing "Grandpa Jim" for several hours past numerous false leads we finally caught up to him and found that he was, miraculously, quite safe! We all had a good laugh comparing Jim's actual path versus the path we imagined from his tracks.

As the day was yet young, Rob led us on a five mile familiarization loop and improvised some land navigation, GPS, and map reading training along the way. We had a good hike, learned some valuable skills, and ended up back with Jim by late afternoon.

Cont. on next page

Cont. from page 13

Never one to let a training opportunity pass, Jim engaged in a little of what the Army calls "Hip Pocket Training" and first gave us a dose of his voluminous knowledge of ethnobotany, then quizzed us on what we might do in various hypothetical rescue scenarios.

Dinner that night was the usual RMRU swap-and-feed with everyone sharing a bit of what they brought. We camped under some huge oaks and had a great time sharing the camaraderie of fellow mountain rescue members, even if the tinder-dry environment didn't allow for the coveted huge RMRU bonfire.

Sunday we had an early rise, a fine breakfast, and a hike out that included a considerable amount of Jim's wealth of knowledge of ethnobotany. Hardly ten minutes of trail would go by without Jim stopping to tell us of the many uses of a particular plant. Would that most of us could remember half of the knowledge Jim gave to us that day.



Grandpa Jim blazes a trail



RMRU members review compass techniques

Mission 30

Search for a Missing Hiker at Apple Canyon

By: Grace Manues



"WAKE UP, *this is not a dream!*" came one of many messages. Steve Bryant, the duty call captain, was right about that.

At approximately 2100, Chris reported that his friend, Doug, was overdue and probably injured. From his boss's cabin, Chris could see Doug sitting on a rock for several hours (raising the concern that Doug was injured). When Doug did not return by nightfall, Chris queried his friend (via flashlight) as to whether he should call 911. Doug's response was one flash for yes.

RMRU fielded Team 1 (Will Carlson/Jim Manues) at 0230. They headed for the peak, the overdue hiker's original destination. Cold winds, steep terrain, and brushy off-trail hiking made for a long night. That, combined with the unusually low turnout, prompted helicopter-snubbing Will Carlson to request...wait a minute, what was that... air support??! Alas, gusty winds made that impossible.

A second team (Grace Manues/Patrick McCurdy) started out at 0700. After a false start, we headed back to Base Camp to reconfirm our assignment. About that time, Doug (dressed in camouflage pants, not blue jeans as reported, and definitely not injured) approached us.

Doug had simply lost the trail and wisely hunkered down at nightfall. He had no flashlight. He never saw Chris's signal, let alone responded to it, and was nowhere near where Chris reported seeing him sitting on a rock. Apparently, the RP received the first ever signal from an extra-terrestrial, a passing airplane, or perhaps just his imagination run wild.



Grace and the subject enjoy a laugh after the search

Mission 32

Search for Two Missing Hikers at the Palm Springs Tramway

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.

Picacho Peak Training

By: Glenn Henderson



Every year the team tries to do one fun training that is different but still involves training for the team. This year we decided to climb Picacho Peak in Imperial County. Picacho Peak is in Picacho Peak State Recreation Area about 20 miles north of Yuma, Arizona but still on the California side of the Colorado River. Most of us arrived Friday afternoon with some getting in late Friday night and new member Steve Gonzales getting in at 8 AM Saturday morning. Cont. on page 16

Cont. from previous

While we were setting up our tents Park Ranger Leon Pearce drove up and welcomed us to the park. That was nice of him, we talked for a short while and he drove away. Just as we finished setting up the last tent Leon drove back up and asked if we could help. It seems that two high school boys had climbed up a vertical rock face and had gotten stuck. They couldn't go up or down. We immediately got our gear together and drove around to where the boys were.

They were indeed in a precarious place about 25 feet off the ground. A fall here would have at least broken some bones if not more serious injuries. Patrick McCurdy, Debbiy Riegle, Jeff Sutch, Jim Fairchild and myself were there to figure out how to get them down safely.

We knew there was no way to get to them from the ground so Pat, Jeff, Debbiy and I went around the hill and got on top of the rock. Jim guided us from the ground so we could have a fix on their position. We were lucky as there were two small trees growing out of the rock that made good anchors. We wrapped slings around them and threw two ropes down the rock face next to the boys. We sent Debbiy to rappel down to them on one rope and I used the other to belay her to them. She got to the first one, wrapped a sling around him, clipped him to her and then said "grab on to me like I was your mother".

I then lowered them both to the ground. We repeated the process and got the next one down. Darkness was just settling in as we broke our anchors down and got back to camp.

Saturday was a perfect day in the desert. No clouds, warm sun, not too hot, a great day to go climbing. We were just about to leave when Leon showed up again and told us that our group campsite was free due to our rescue the previous evening. That was great news. Thanks Leon!! Had we not been there he would have had to call the fire department in Winterhaven, which is 20 miles away of which 18 miles is a dirt road. The boys would not have been able to hang on that long.

We finally saddled up and headed out to the peak. It took about 40 minutes of rough dirt road driving to get to a point where we could not drive any closer. We put our packs on and started hiking to the peak. After a moderately strenuous hike we got to the base of the climb and stopped to don harnesses and helmets.

It was now about 10:30 AM. Picacho Peak is a fairly straightforward climb with a few ducks to show the route and two wooden ladders placed at points that would have been extremely difficult to climb. In fact, we still belayed each other up the ladders. Falling off the ladders was not an option. We came to a high point that everyone thought was the summit. Hooray!! Sorry, I knew it was a false summit. It required Will Carlson to lead a short 20 ft. climb and then belay everyone up. We then had to rappel down the other side. It was a short walk to the summit from there.

We ate a leisurely lunch and enjoyed the perfect day. The views were incredible. We could see the sand dunes to the southwest, the Colorado River to the east, and great expanses of desert all the way into Mexico. We ended lunch at 1:00 and started the climb and hike back out to the cars. It was pretty much uneventful except for new members learning to jummar up the short 20-foot rappel we had just completed. A few sore arms later and we were all back to camp.

Saturday's dinner was a cooking competition that got everyone's attention. There was Brie and cracker hors'doeuvres, shrimp Creole and rice, beef and chicken fajitas, spaghetti, Caesar salad, baked Salmon, shrimp and vegetable skewers, quesadillas, and Erica's Flaming Cherries Jubilee.

Since Will and his climbing partner Scott only brought an appetite, we made them the culinary judges. Debbiy won first place for best presentation with her red tablecloth, candle lights, and tastefully placed fake grapes. Gwenda won for her Baked Salmon. Erica and Jeff won first place for their Desert and I won overall for my (wife Robin's) Shrimp Creole. I think the real winner was everyone as we all got to try some of each entry.

Our only regret was that team member Lee Arnson couldn't attend. As soon as he heard about the cook-off he started trash talking about how he was going to win by bringing a piece of a dead deer and walk off with the grand prize. It was obvious by all the superb meals served that he wouldn't have had a chance. Too bad Lee, We missed you.

We had a small fire going late into the night telling stories and mostly lies and learning about our new members Liz, Steve, and Ethan. We got up the next morning, ate a leisurely breakfast and started the long drive home.

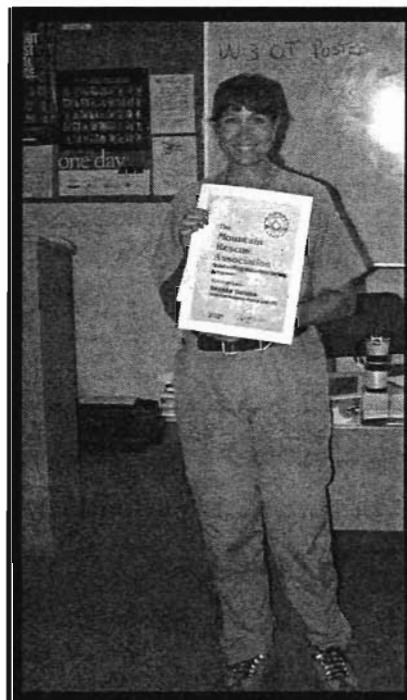
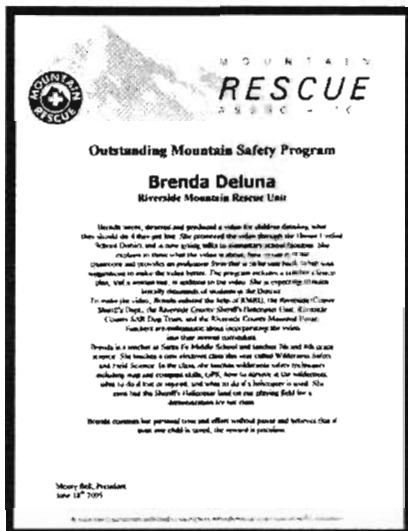
RMRU Member Brenda DeLuna Honored at MRA Conference

By: Erica Zastrow



This excellent program is expected to reach thousands of children in the Hemet Unified School District, all thanks to Brenda's dedication and hard work. We applaud her commitment to wilderness safety and rescue techniques, and are very proud of her for her implementation of this program!

Congratulations Brenda! Your recognition is well-deserved. Bravo, and keep up the good work!



The MRA honored RMRU's own Brenda DeLuna with a certificate of merit for "Outstanding Mountain Safety Program," in recognition of her work on a video for children's wilderness safety. DeLuna produced the video along with a supplemental lesson plan and test designed for teaching the students common sense practices for wilderness safety.

Sustaining Membership Application

Your donation is deductible from both your state and federal tax:

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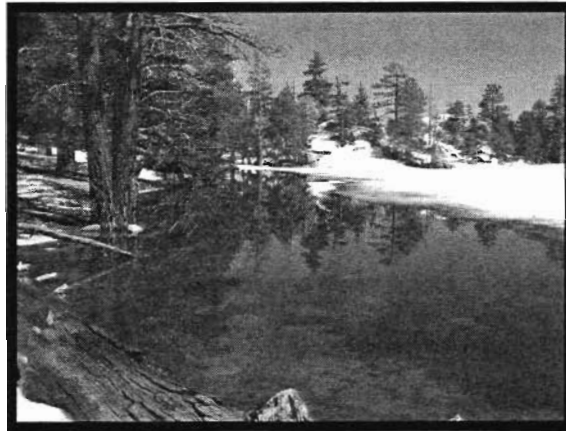
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Benefactor club	\$1,000
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Supporting Club	\$ 25

Please send your

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C/O Riverside Sheriffs Office
43950 Acacia Street
Hemet, California 92544



RMRU January

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 New Year's Day	2	3	4 <u>RMRU Regular Meeting</u>	5	6	7 <u>Winter Shakedown 1</u> Capt. Nichols Retires
8	9	10	11	12	13	14 <u>MRA California Regional Meeting</u>
15	16 Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday	17	18	19	20	21 <u>Winter Shakedown 2</u> MRA Natl. Win- ter Meeting
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Sustaining Members

Benefactor Club	\$1,000 +	Michael Chester Elaine Landells Palm Springs Aviation, Inc. Scott Brothers Dairy Farms	Max & Linda Gray [Memory: Don Landells]
Summit Club	\$ 500 +	Mike & Kay Daugherty Dr. & Mrs. Ray George Daren Koontz	[Memory of Norm Mellor] Steve & Rosemarie Johnson Hemet Lions Club
Patron Club	\$ 200 +	Gordon Austerman Dave Hadley Bob & Susan Krieger Marvin M. Oliver, Esq. Donna Purkey & Steve Fausset Ramona Valley Lions Club	Jon Goldman Danielle Hamlin James Larson James Oliver Theodore Young
Century Club	\$ 100 +	Al & Natalie Andrews Mary Carricaburu Roy Cheatwood John & Joanie Dew Garry & Dianne De Garmo Lucinda Harton Rosemary Kraft Carol J. Lovatt Betty C. Moore Jerome H. Niswonger Dr. & Mrs. Schnurr Les & Karen Venable T & D Young Memory of [John Willis]	Jennifer Anthony Larry & Nancy Carter James M. Collins Brett Faron David & R Harrah Terry and Sue Henderson J & T Larson Kathy Machir John & Sandy Murdock Alan Note Richard Smith Won Sok Yang Memory of [Joseph Lennox] Rotary Anns
Supporting Club	\$ 25 +	Mr. & Mrs. Rodney Anderson Bill & Melody Blaschko Elva Cook Joe Demers Rob & Carmen Gardner Heidi Henderson & Chris Hook Thomas & Karen Miceli Dana & Vince Olague Nancy and Allan Rabin Robert Schwenk Bill & Juanita Starmer Hai N. Tian Dr. & Mrs. Jay Wallis John Williams	Milana De Beauvoir Gordon Christiansen Jeanne Rodriguez Deitleff Walter & Linda Dockstader Stuart & Ann Glickman Brian Herold Loraine Nagy Leon Pearce Jan Beyers & George Riechers Steven Spronk Mary & Cloie Swain Mark & Sonya Vallejo Bud & Sue White

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Brenda showing a little leg at the April Training



Technical training demonstrations before meeting



We had a visitor in camp that night at Picacho Peak Training who caused quite a stir



The Henderson's tinkering with their GPS modules

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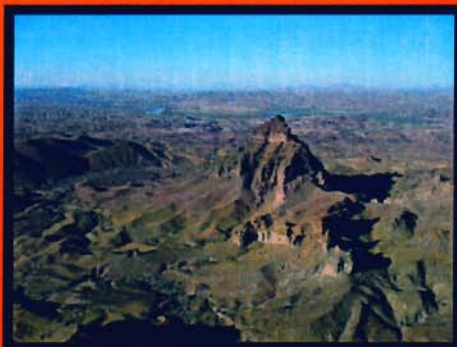


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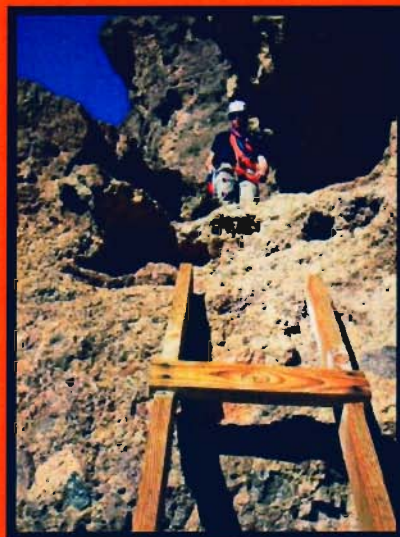
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Base Operations for the John Donovan Search



Another panorama from the top of Picacho Peak



Ladder Bridge, Picacho Peak...don't look down!

Coming Next Issue:

- Snow filled adventure from Winter Shakedown 1 and 2
- Pics from training, missions & more!