



RMRU Fresh Tracks

September 2002

The Newsletter of Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit

RMRU Gets A New Vehicle

By Darrell Bell

Our Isuzu Trooper was retired [cost too much to maintain it] and one of the Sheriff's Ford Expeditions was going "out of service" at 98,000+ miles so they have given it to us to use. The unit was delivered to us and Phil Thompson drove it up to Idyllwild to put some gear into it that he had taken out of the Trooper. It is larger, 4 wheel drive, and is outfitted for us.



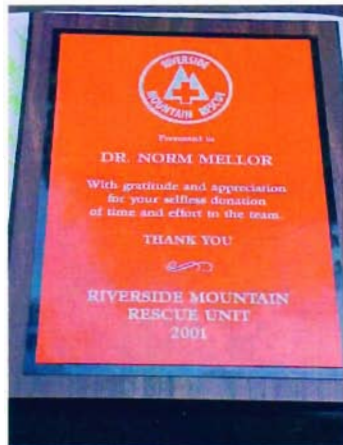
Pancake Breakfast [left] shows Dr. Ray Hussey and Michael George [board members] talking to people that supported us during our 30th **RMRU Annual Pancake** breakfast. This is a continuing event where we raise monies for our equipment needs. Picture by Jim Fairchild.



Mission 05: Don With Gene Baune



Dr. Norm has been hosting parties for a good number of years at his home in Idyllwild. This last July 2nd RMRU's Glenn Henderson is shown awarding Dr. Norm a plaque from the organization at another party. Dr. Norm has been a member of RMRU over 35 years joining shortly after the beginning.



Plaque that Dr. Norm received from RMRU 07/02/02

On July 02, 2002 RMRU met at Dr. Norm's home as usual and this year he was awarded a special plaque. On the **RIGHT** are some of the members and spouses that were present for this special occasion. Regular training was held and the group met after training as usual.



President's Letter

President's Corner, by Jim Fairchild

Interesting, the RMRU Board of Directors (the other four) wanted me to be the coming year's Chairman. This comes after a three-year stint as Chairman nearly thirty years ago.

My deep and sincere appreciation to Glenn Henderson as past president, having served for several years, and to the members who served in the past. Glenn still works for the unit in several capacities.

Our current challenges are to maintain enthusiasm in spite of a definite decline in the number of missions for which we are called, and about ten other agencies and groups on and around the mountains we serve, who aspire to do wilderness rescue.

We are only a few weeks away from moving our two vans into a new garage built for us by the Sheriff's Office at their facility in Valle Vista.

August 18th we conducted a successful benefit breakfast in Idyllwild. Many local and non—local folks came, most of them giving very encouraging support and appreciation.

More or less jokingly, I tell teammates that my nickname is "Dell E. Gate." Hence, most of RMRU's members are actively striving diligently to make the unit become more efficient, effective, safe ——— ready for our next opportunities to assist and save lives through a wilderness rescue.

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## Newly elected Board members & Rescue Committee

|                  |                           |                |               |                  |               |
|------------------|---------------------------|----------------|---------------|------------------|---------------|
| Board Members    | Jim Fairchild [President] | Michael George | Ray Hussey    | Terry Greenstein | Gene Baune    |
| Rescue Committee | Glenn Henderson           | Janet Hillard  | Debbiy Riegle | Steve Bryant     | Phil Thompson |

February 15, 2002

Oregon— Mt. Hood

2002-001

RMRU was contacted regarding a search in Oregon. Eight [8] members were ready to respond but all Southern California teams were re-contacted and requested to "stand down". The subject, a female snowboarder, had been found dead in a tree well on Mt. Hood.

## Family Spends Cold Evening in Outhouse

March 29, 2002

Palm Spring Upper Tram

2002-002

By Gene Baune

RMRU was contacted the evening of 29 March 2002 to search for a missing family that had been reported overdue by relatives. The family, father, son 12 and daughter 8 had intended to do a day hike from the tram and lost the trail. They were reported missing by relatives who had done a shorter hike in the area. The Riverside Sheriff's Department contacted RMRU and the team was dispatched just after 22:00. Other hikers had reported hearing someone calling for help in the vicinity of the Tamarack Valley campground but dismissed it as a prank. The first team dispatched headed up the Sid Davis drainage towards

Tamarack Valley. While approaching the campground, Team 1 made voice contact with the family and quickly made their way to where the very cold and worried family was waiting. The team provided the family with warm clothing, food and water and escorted them to the trailhead where they were met by additional team members who provided crampons for the icy trails, additional warm clothing, and food. The family was then escorted back to the tram station and reunited with their relatives.

This group had gone out on a warm day with only shorts, tee shirts, and tennis shoes. This incident shows how quickly conditions can change in the mountains and all hikers should carry the "ten essentials" in case it becomes necessary to spend the night in the woods.

The following members responded and participated in this search:

Team 1: Travis Henderson, Gene Baune, Dana Potts

Team 2: Lee Arnson, Ralph Hoetcher

Team 3: Debbiy Riegle, Glenn Henderson, Rick Maschek,

Operations: Jim Fairchild

## **Leader Fall at Joshua Tree**

**April 11, 2002**

**Split Rock**

**2002-003**

**By Janet Hillard**

While climbing with my daughter and son-in-law at the formation known as Future Games Rock at Split Rock, we were joined by a couple who began climbing on the route Invisibility Lessons, a 5.9 rated route. The female who was leading had a piece of protection pop out and she took a short fall, twisting her ankle severely on the way down. Thankfully, she was wearing a helmet, so her other injuries consisted of minor scrapes and bruises. My son-in-law had already helped the lady with Tylenol and propping her bruised and swollen ankle. When I got down from the top, I wrapped her ankle and we carried out their gear while her climbing partner gave her a fireman's carry out the rather long trail to the road. They left for the local hospital with her foot elevated and packed in ice.

In talking to her friends the following day, it was found that she had suffered only a severe sprain to her ankle.

## **Woman with fractured leg**

**April 13**

**Jumbo Rocks-Joshua Tree**

**2002-004**

**By Glenn Henderson**

While RMRU was training at Joshua Tree, we got word that a woman had fallen and broken her leg nearby. We stopped what we were doing and packaged her up and carried her out about 200 yards. After the very short mission, we resumed training.



## **Man Lost on Cornell Peak**

**April 13, 2002**

### **Palm Spring Upper Tram**

**2002-005**

By Gene Baune

[note picture front page](#)

RMRU was contacted the evening of 13 April 2002 to search for a missing Illinois man, Don, who had called in on his cell phone from the San Jacinto area. The man had hiked from the tram to San Jacinto Peak and had become disoriented while photographing the area. He contacted a friend who notified the Riverside Sheriff's Department and the team was dispatched just after 22:00.

Since this was a training weekend and most members were at the Joshua Tree National Monument, a few team members responded from Joshua Tree and the remainder of the responders were members who had commitments or planned to join the training on Sunday morning.

From the description of what he reported being able to see, it was determined that Don was probably on Miller or Cornell Peak. The first team dispatched headed up the Sid Davis drainage towards the peak intending to head up to Tamarack Valley towards Miller Peak and give a yell near Cornell. Upon arrival at Cornell, the team shouted for Don and got a response, however he was almost 700 feet up so the team had it's work cut out for it to reach him. After a strenuous climb the team made contact, got the victim warmed up, put him in a climbing harness and headed down.

The following members responded and participated in this search:

Team 1: Gene Baune, Max Brummett

Team 2: Ray Hussey, Brenda DeLuna, Bill Delo, Rick Maschek

Operations: Jim Fairchild

Communications: Darrell Bell

## **Whitewater Extraction**

**April 22, 2002**

### **Whitewater Canyon**

**2002-006**

By Ray Hussey

RMRU was called at 09:30 by the Sheriff's Banning Station for a two-man RMRU team to assist on a winch extraction of a 38-year-old woman who was possibly injured in Whitewater Canyon.

The reporting party was available for guidance to the location of the subject. Jim Fairchild was base operations while the reporting party and myself were airlifted up to Whitewater Canyon approximately 12 miles and then 1.5 miles up an east canyon where the subject was readily found. The reporting party was brought back to base and then we easily relocated the subject using the helicopter's GPS. The subject was located in a tree-infested area so I was lowered onto an adjacent slope, unfortunately into a manzanita bush.

The subject was located and she was in relatively good shape, just sore and tired. We preceded upslope to a clear area where I put a full body harness on her and gave her my helmet for protection

as she came up under the helicopter skids. I asked her if she was scared and she said "yes." I said "Good, because I want you to listen very carefully." Then I gave her the usual helicopter instructions. The subject was extracted without incident and returned to base. Star-80, the Sheriff's helicopter, returned for me with my helmet and I was extracted with the cable hoist. I was back in base at the Whitewater Fish Hatchery by 14:00.

Members preset: Jim Fairchild, Ray Hussey

## **Two men overdue**

**April 26, 2002**

### **Kitching Peak, Cabazon**

**2002-007**

RMRU was called to search for two men who were overdue from a hike near Kitching Peak. Four members were en route when they received a page canceling the mission. The men had walked out on their own.

## **SWAT Team Assist**

**May 2, 2002**

### **Shelter, San Jacinto Peak**

**2002-008**

By Ray Hussey

RMRU was called at 02:30 by the Banning Sheriff Station asking for a two-man RMRU team to meet at the lower tram parking lot at 08:00.

Several Relatives of a distraught 62-year-old man received a letter notifying them he planned to commit suicide on top of San Jacinto Mountain and that he was bringing two handguns. This scenario triggered the Riverside Sheriff's Office to respond with SWAT team personnel with assistance from RMRU for route finding. The subject was seen on the trams video surveillance cameras, and indeed he was carrying a case consistent with a weapons case.

Logistics were discussed. Jim Fairchild was to be the Operations Leader and I was to accompany the three-man SWAT team. I was issued a Kevlar vest and I took minimal gear - water, jacket, sit harness; helmet, webbing, and a first-aid kit.

We were airlifted in two at a time to Little Round valley, bypassing the peak so as not to give away our presence or location. It was an interesting hike up to the peak from little round valley. There were still patches of snow under the trees and the day was cool and clear with the temperature in the mid 30's.

Near the peak we all became acutely aware of our possibly vulnerable position. We hiked with 10 yard spacing so as to not offer an easy target. Several times we hit the deck and took cover only to realize that the noise and or motion was only a stray bird or ground squirrel.

As we approached the shelter hut near the peak we again detected motion and the SWAT team immediately deployed and I took cover. Fortunately, the 62-year-old man was taken without gunfire. He was actually suffering from a drug overdose and 6 different medications were found in his pack. It was imperative that we got the subject to definitive medical care soon.

Star-80, the Sheriff's helicopter, preferred to land in Round Valley so we proceeded to walk the subject down. However, he was extremely ataxic and difficult to hold, so I put my sit harness on him so I could grab something substantial and made him wear my helmet to protect his head in case he fell.

Star-80 meanwhile had gone back to Hemet-Ryan field and put on the cable hoist. Approximately half way down to. Round Valley Star-80 hoisted the subject up with my sit harness and helmet and flew him to Desert Hospital Psychiatric Unit.

Star-80 then returned to pick up all field members in Round Valley. We all returned to the base by 15:00.

Members present: Jim Fairchild, Ray Hussey

## **Three overdue hikers**

### **Tenaja Campground**

**June 1-2, 2002**

**2002-009**

**By Bruce D. Sanny**

The Riverside Sheriff contacted RMRU at 20:00 the evening of June 1, 2002 to search for a missing man and woman in their late 60's and their grandchild, the Rood family. Relatives reported that the trio had failed to return by nightfall. The area is rampant with poison oak, ticks, vertical drops along portions of the trail and an occasional mountain lion.

By 22:00 search teams were sign cutting two separate trails. The teams later met at a junction of the trails and they decided to combine efforts and follow a set of three prints.

The teams followed the tracks until 08:00 and 14 miles later when the Riverside Sheriffs Office Helicopter arrived. It was directed ahead of the search team. The family was still traveling away from the campground about 2 miles ahead of our search team. Due to the rough terrain and numerous trails in the area, the perseverance of the search teams helped to assure that minimal time was used by the sheriff's helicopter. The hikers were picked up and flown back to the campground. After the hikers were flown out the helicopter then proceeded to assist the teams by flying them out. This was accomplished by 10:00. Our thanks to the pilot.

The following team members participated in the search: Steve Bryant, Glenn Henderson. Rich Maschek, Dana Potts, Rob May, Bill Delo, Brian D Sanny with Jim Fairchild as Operations

## **Two stranded climbers**

### **Tahquitz Rock**

**June 9-10, 2002**

**2002-010**

**By Glenn Henderson**

The team was paged out at midnight, June 9, 2002. Dispatch told us that there were two climbers, a male and a female, stuck on a rock. Of course that meant Tahquitz rock. When we arrived we were told that the climbers were all right and would climb up at sun-up. The Sheriff was going to cancel the

mission but we hiked up to the base of the rock to talk directly to the climbers. When we got there they said that they were fine. We still didn't feel good about leaving them there so we hiked up to the top of Tahquitz. When we arrived we had minimal gear. We used a 100 ft rope to get to the edge and shouted down to the climbers. They were elated to see us. We again asked if they still wanted to climb out on their own at sun up? "NO!" was the reply. She told us that her partner was shivering uncontrollably and that they were both hypoglycemic. We got more rope out and lowered Debbiy down to the subjects. When she got to the subjects they were about 600 ft up the rock huddled together and anchored to a hanging belay. Debbiy gave them some warmer clothes and some food. After eating, the subjects felt much better and wanted to climb up with our help. Here we had to improvise. We had 2 – 200 ft ropes, not enough to do a raise, so Debbiy climbed up 75 ft to a good belay position and belayed each climber up to her. Team members on top then belayed them up. When Debbiy was belayed up, at about 07:00 Monday morning, the team packed up for the hike back to Humber Park. The group finally arrived at Humber around 08:00. Some members went to breakfast in Idyllwild while Debbiy got to go directly to her fifth grade class for end of school activities. Members on the rock were Debbiy Riegle, Rick Maschek, Max Brummett and Rick Floquet. Others late arrivals were Glenn Henderson, Dana Potts and Rob May.

**Acute asthmatic attack**  
**Skunk Cabbage Meadow**  
**June 23, 2002**

**2002-011**

By Ralph Hoetger

At approximately 06:45 I received a call that a mission was under way to give aid to a hiker in Skunk Cabbage Meadow on Sunday Morning June 23, 2002. I arrived at Humber park at about 07:30 shortly after Lee Arnson and Mike Wimbrow. Mike Norris from Idyllwild Fire protection District (IFPD) was already there in the parking lot. Mike informed us he had already dispatched several people into the field approximately 60 minutes before to perform medical aid. The subject in Skunk Cabbage Meadow was allegedly suffering from an acute asthmatic attack. Mike Norris was acting as the Incident Commander and stated that the team he sent up was made up of several CDF firefighters and a paramedic from the IFPD and they had the situation under control. Mike also called out Mercy Air (helicopter ambulance) requesting that they evaluate and evacuate the subject from Skunk Cabbage Meadow if necessary.

Lee and Mike waited for about 20 minutes and decided that as long as they were there they might just as well hike up and see if they could be of any help. I waited in the parking lot for more team members and in about 10 minutes Glenn Henderson and Travis Henderson showed up to Humber Park with the RMRU van and radios. Glenn said that we should go up as well, so Travis and I made up Team 2 for RMRU.

Travis and I carried light packs and reached the CDF team and IFPD paramedic (Mike Yant) with in 30 minutes of hiking. Lee and Mike were discussing options with the IFPD Paramedic when we arrived at about the half way point up Devils Slide Trail. Mike Wimbrow made some suggestions to the CDF team how to more efficiently carry the wheeled litter and gear. Travis and I took the litter wheel and carried it up the trail for the CDF team (mutual aid). Lee Arnson assisted the IFPD paramedic by carrying his medical pack because of a broken buckle.

The Mercy Air Paramedic team, who was on site with the subject, determined that they could not fly her out because the gear that their helicopter carried, the size of the patient and the thinner air at 8,000 ft. Mike Norris via radio then ordered up the CDF helicopter out of Hemet Ryan airport and RMRU team Doctor Ray Hussey jumped the flight and was airlifted to the scene.

When Travis and I arrived Lee Arnson, Mike Wimbrow, Mike Yant (IFPD Paramedic), Ray Hussey and the Mercy Air crew were walking the subject across the meadow to the CDF helicopter. The subject did not appear to be in any medical distress at that time.

As the mission was wrapping up in the high country, Mercy Air took off and RMRU team members headed off to the Saddle and then onto Devils Slide for the return hike to Humber Park we all wondered what ever happened to the CDF litter team. We had been up at the meadow in excess for 45 minutes and still had not seen them.

We found out later the CDF helicopter took the subject and her husband down and then made a return trip for the litter and the beleaguered CDF team.

PS the moral of this story it does not pay to be a gelatinous hiker or an out of shape rescuer.... What would we do with out helicopters?

## **Alzheimer's man lost**

**June 30, 2002**

**Hemet**

**2002-012**

RMRU was paged out on this mission and the sheriffs office located the man. The mission was aborted.

## **14 year old girl**

**July 27, 2002**

**Tahquitz Lookout**

**2002-013**

**By Glenn Henderson**

The team was paged out that a 14 year old girl was missing from the Devil's Slide Trail. As I was paging the team out I got another call that the girl had called from the Tahquitz fire lookout tower. She had become lost but knew how to get back to the tower having been there earlier in the day. She used the Forestry radio to call out for help. She said that she was fine, just lost. I then held back the rest of the team except for Lee Arnson and Rick Floquet. I sent them in to find the girl and escort hr back to Humber Park. They called me at midnight to tell me that they were out with our subject and no problems.

## **17 year old overdue woman**

**August 16, 2002**

**Humber Park**

**2002-014**



RMRU was paged out and shortly thereafter the Sheriff's Department reported that they had found her. Dispatch paged all members to call off the search.

## **RMRU Winter Shakedown, San Jacinto Mountains**

**January 12-13, 2002 By Rick Marscheck**

It's 0630 and everyone is assembled in the parking lot of the Palm Springs Aerial Tram. The big debate raging is to take snowshoes or not as the snow conditions were looking mighty sparse. No time for last minute back to the car to get or leave something as you either ride up on the first tram car or ...? Up on top, our group first headed off for "Shangri-La", a relatively flat area 8,500' in elevation just northwest of the tram with a side trip out to "the Edge" to get a view down to the desert below.

We then headed up Sid Davis drainage to upper Tamarack Valley to make camp. It was going up this shaded drainage that we encountered a fair amount of snow. Once we had camp set up (some electing to camp on snow, others on patches of ground) some of us went on a scramble up 9,758' Cornell Peak. Though free of snow, the peak was blasted by high winds and only a few of us climbed the last 10 feet or so to the rocky summit.

In an interesting display of his determination, Glenn Henderson tested his navigational skills by coming up solo during the night. Some members just seem to want to do things the hard way! In the morning we split up with most of us going back out to ride the tram back down while a few hardy members hiked out to Idyllwild. Most everyone easily survived the rather mild winter weather, not really the kind of challenge you look for in a winter shakedown of one's gear. I did however bust out most of my improvised nylon wire-ties for snowshoe lacing Sunday morning when I went out running through the trees. They work good for emergency repairs but just don't seem to hold up for heavy duty work.

Those present for the shakedown included: Jim Fairchild, Lee Arnson, Ray Hussey, Steve Bryant, Bill Delo, Michael George, Dana Potts, Rick Floquet, Debbiy Riegle, Glenn and Travis Henderson, Dave Webb, Tim Wescott, Pete Carlson, and me, Rick Maschek.

## **Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit Training**

**Ice training at Glacier Lodge**

**February 8-9-10 By Glenn Henderson**

February training was a snow and ice training at Glacier Lodge in the Sierras. This was to get the team some practice for the California Region's Recertification in winter rescue. Each year RMRU must recertify in technical rock rescue, search and tracking, or winter rescue to keep us in good standing with the National Mountain Rescue Association. This is done on a rotating basis and winter is up this year. Each Recertification is good for 5 years.

Friday night we drove up to Big Pine and camped in a campground just outside of town. Saturday morning we drove up to Glacier Lodge, gathered our gear, and hiked about ½ mile to the slopes above the lodge. We talked about and demonstrated different snow anchors, snow flukes, bollards, dead men, and ice axe belays. After discussing when and where to use each type of anchor we proceeded to do several raises and lowers in the snow. This proved to be a little difficult due to the sparse snow

conditions. There were a few large boulders sticking out that are usually covered. We finished training late in the afternoon and went back to Big Pine for dinner. Some members left for home while the rest of us camped out another night. On Sunday Dana Potts, Michael George, Rick Maschek, and I went back to Glacier Lodge and snow-shoed up the canyon for a few miles before returning to our cars and the drive home.

It was fairly warm when we were there and since it never snowed again before the re-certification was to take place in March, the host team, San Diego Mountain Rescue, canceled the re-certification. A wise call.

### **Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit Training Technical Snow Skill Training Lytle Creek Saturday, March 2, 2002 By Rick Marscheck**

After having gone up to Glacier Lodge in the Sierras only to find dismal snow conditions the previous month, we held our ice axe training on the north side of Devil's Backbone just east of Mt. San Antonio. Over the years, Rick has found it to be one of the best places in the spring locally that usually has good snow. The group met at the Lytle Creek off ramp of I-15 and proceeded to drive up to Stockton Flats in the Lytle Creek drainage. The last few miles of dirt road got progressively worse till it was better to just park and start hiking.

The south facing side was totally denuded of snow but as we ascended the long sinuous gully toward the northeast face of Mt. Harwood the snow underfoot began to deepen until the shaft of even the longest ice axe could no longer hit rock.

Before reaching our training site the snow began to firm up and the decision to put on the crampons became universal. Once we found a suitable location, we began by putting in snow anchors for two separate safety ropes that were utilized in case someone should lose control of their ice axe self-arrest. Anchors used during the day included pickets, flukes, bollards, and even ice screws were tried in one location with 10-12" water ice that proved to be bomb proof as did the other anchors used. Everyone must have had at least 10 to 20 "rides" down the slope before calling it a day. RMRU members on this training were Glenn and Travis Henderson, Dana Potts, Michael George (who wanted to climb the backbone when we finished training), Rob May, Bruce Sanny, Jim Fairchild running Stockton Flat command post, and me, Rick Maschek. Oh yea, we also had that Will guy along that we tried to keep up with.

Side note: I had gone up the previous Wednesday evening to check on conditions and flashed my headlamp in the direction of my home in Hesperia where my wife was able to see it from approximately 12 miles away during a cell phone safety check.

### **Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit Training Joshua Tree National Park April 13-14 By Janet Hillard**

A technical training was held April 12-14 at Jumbo Rocks Campground in Joshua Tree. The training focused on ascending, rappelling, and anchors in the Jumbo Rocks Corridor, a vertical system that was excellent for practicing these skills. While in the corridor, we responded to an injury within a short walking distance. All in all, it was a valuable training with many team members present.

### **Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit Training Fobes Ranch Saturday May 4 By Brenda DeLuna**

Members present were, Terry Greenstein, Dana Potts, Brenda DeLuna, Max Brummett, Bill Delo,

Travis Henderson, Bruce Sanny, Will Carlson with Jim Fairchild as the leader.. During the first part of the training Jim showed us some of the basics in tracking. We learned how to make the best use of the sunlight, how to make use of mirrors to light up a track and how to use flashlights for shadowed areas. We were shown how to use a tracking stick and we paired off with a partner and attempted to follow each others tracks through a highly contaminated area, i.e. lots of other peoples tracks not a toxic waste site. After lunch and a cadaver dog training session with Brenda's dog Jesse, we went to a different location and did a mock search. This is where it really got fun. When you do a mock search like this you really get an idea of how important teamwork is. Everyone plays a part and we all had a feeling of pride when the subject was found because each person made some contribution to the search. I also found this a valuable training because man tracking is a skill that you will lose if you don't exercise it. The more the better. Thank you Jim for a terrific training.

## **Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit Training**

### **Saddle Junction**

### **June 2002 By Dana Potts**

In June, the team was tasked with familiarizing itself with the Saddle Junction area. In all, the count was not great but a strong and determined eight showed. The trailblazer as usual was Jim Fairchild who headed up the trail on Friday June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2002. Jim found himself a nice spot behind a fallen tree and under the shade of a grand old tree. Saturday June 8<sup>th</sup>, Mona, Dave, Max, Jeri, Bruce and I met up at Humber Park at approximately 0700 hours. After checking our gear, we were on our way. After we were approximately ¼ of a mile from the Saddle Junction, we stumbled across what looked like a lost tourist from a cruise liner. As we began to tell the subject that he missed the boat and he was quite a ways from Long Beach Harbor, we realized that it was just Jim in his shorts and Hawaiian style shirt. Jim then guided us up the trail to his hideout in paradise.

After resting and filling ourselves with water, we decided as a team to make our way around the "Laws Camp" loop and back to camp via Saddle Junction a 5 mile loop in all. During the trek, Jim educated us all in the flora and fauna. On our way to Laws Camp, Jim stopped to show us the water stash location that the Forest service uses in the summer along with the water tap. We rested at Laws Camp for Lunch. During which time, some of us hiked down and located Laws Cabin or what's left of it.

After lunch we continued on around the loop spotting the only visible water near the trail that was located at the Willow Creek Crossing. The amount visible looked as if it will last maybe a few more hot days and then it will be just a memory. On our way from the crossing to Saddle Junction, we all saw the fire damage from past fires. Such a horrible thing to happen to probably the most beautiful sections of the hike.

After finishing the hike, we all rested our tired dogs (feet) and filled ourselves with nourishment like Jim's trademark fried salami and my peanut butter to name a few. Bruce whipped out his fancy ripcord pulling meal and showed us all how to cook a meal without having to do a thing. "Show off."

After filling up on carbs, water and not so good for you food, Dave, Mona, Jerri, Bruce and I hiked up to the Tahquitz Peak lookout tower. Dave of course wanted to explore and go cross-country. Me being new and not so smart said to myself, "Yeah that sounds great" and followed. As Dave and I hiked on following a deer trail I realized something. What I realized was that deer have a tendency to hike straight through bushes an across large slick rocky areas.

By the time that Dave I were at the junction, prior to the tower, I looked over and saw that Mona and her group were arriving also. *WITHOUT THE BUSHES!!*

So we all grouped up and finished the hike together. What a beautiful view from the top. We enjoyed a great view of

Diamond Valley Lake and surrounding areas.

After dinner there was some talk of finishing up the Skunk Cabbage Meadow portion of the trail in the morning. After that, we were all pretty tired and called it a night. Prior to going to bed, Jim and Max had told everyone that they would be heading out around 0630 in the morning because of prior plans.

Now there must have been some other planning that went on while Dave, Rick and I were sleeping. Because when I woke up, it was Rick, Dave and myself standing there in the looking around saying to ourselves did we miss reveille, because we were the only ones left. The rest thought it would be nice to let the tired ones sleep and sneak out. O.K. you got us... So the hardcore members stuck behind and completed the Skunk Cabbage Loop and then down the hill and out we went. Dave and I took the conventional trail and Rick decided to be adventurous and take the mountain man trail, straight down... FROM CAMP!!!! And in just over an hour he was down.

All in all it was a great weekend of training, area familiarization, team bonding and great exercise.  
P.S. SEE YOU AT THE NEXT ONE, Dana

### **Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit Training Technical rock training on Suicide Rock July 14-15, 2002 By Glenn Henderson**

July training was our usual technical rock training on Suicide Rock in Idyllwild. This training was a little different because Werner Hueber from the China Lake Mountain Rescue Group was on hand to show us the French Paillardet rescue hoist and the 540 belay device. I also told Werner that he was invited to our annual party at Norm Mellor's house after training and that there would probably be some beverages to his liking. That sealed the deal.

We met in Norm's driveway at 08:00. Werner showed us how the hoist and the 540 worked. The hoist is a device that is gear driven and can be manned by one or two rescue personnel. On some of our high angle rock rescues we have been short of personnel to do the job efficiently and safely. With the Paillardet we can do a raise or lower with much less help. After our ground training we left Norm's and hiked up to Suicide Rock to try the Paillardet out. It worked just like Werner said it would. Two people could raise up a victim and a rescuer by themselves, stop midway up the rock face and change over to a lower immediately whenever necessary. It is a great tool. Unfortunately the cost is \$3500. Time for us to do more fundraisers as this would be a great asset to the team and the people we serve. The team and myself personally want to thank Werner and the China Lake team for showing us these two devices

### **Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit Training Allendale Fire Station August 10, 2002 By Jim Fairchild and Brenda DeLuna**

Saturday morning, August 10, six members of the unit gathered at a forested location about 300 yards west of Allendale Fire Station. It turned out that everyone's enthusiasm for a day of intensive learning and reviewing was as warm as temperature generated by an unobscured sun.

Our first exercise was a mock search for an "elderly couple" (one wearing moccasins). We were required to follow a trail of footprints and disturbances over ground mostly covered with deep oak leaves and pine needles. The track, faint as it was two days earlier when Jim and his wife put it in, was now less distinct. We were provided with foil shoe prints of the subject's shoes, which proved very helpful in locating the tracks. Ray Hussey, Brenda DeLuna, Lew Kingman, Michael George, Rick Maschek, focusing well, completed the circuit. This exercise proved to be so enjoyable that Jim had to call us away from it to continue on with the next item on the agenda.

Next, we stretched nylon webbing and rope to many hundreds of pounds of tension, then applied slight cutting pressure with a knife and abrading rock to illustrate how vulnerable they are when improperly "treated."

Following that we set up anchors on a handy pine tree, illustrating the tree wrap, to serve as a temporary anchor for lowering a litter with attendants. We were all discovered what our pull strength was and then a scientific experiment was conducted using pulleys of different sizes to determine the efficiency of the set up. Talk to Rick about the outcome of that one. The same tree served for demonstrating and trying innovative ways to use the rope for lowering oneself (rappelling) without modern gear, or, the use of different knots and harnesses. This is the way we did it during sport climbing in the 1940s and Jim was able to show and teach this to the group.

Ah! the Stokes litter, the device in which we have evacuated so many subjects and patients. We worked on various ways to inescapably tie people in so they will not slip out. After a bit of a test of observation skills and display of various kinds of blades we might carry on missions, Ray, Lew and Brenda improvised a litter out of rope (Lew and Brenda's side was done better) climbing rope. Brenda was then chosen as the "victim" and was successfully carried in the litter (much to Ray's dismay). Turns out it was long enough for a subject nine feet tall. All in all it was a great training and the participants learned a lot.

## **Search and Rescue America (S.A.R.A.), Blitz 2002**

### **May 5-8, 2002 By Glenn Henderson**

Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit was invited to participate in Search and Rescue America (S.A.R.A.), Blitz 2002. Blitz 2002 is a new national rescue competition that was held in Sonora, California, May 5 to 8, 2002. The intensive three day event was designed to test the mettle of 5 of the best technical rescue teams in the U.S. while acting as a "test bed" for the latest developments in both rescue equipment and techniques.

Sonora based Search and Rescue America, which is operated by Barry Edwards and Arnie Brockmire, both of whom are members of the Tuolumne County Sheriff's Search and Rescue Team, put out invitations to a limited number of teams across the U.S. and Canada, picking 6 finalists from among those responding. The competing teams were:

R.M.R.U.  
San Miguel, Colorado, Search and Rescue  
Austin/Travis County EMS, Special Operations  
Ventura County Sheriff's Search and Rescue  
Contra Costa County Fire Department USAR  
Las Vegas Metro Police Department Search and Rescue

The teams competed in a series of rope rescue events against each other and against the extreme terrain. Unlike actual rescues, the scenarios called for the teams to not only rescue victims in a variety of difficult situations, including raises and lowers, but also complete cross-terrain courses with not only the victim, but also all of their equipment and personnel.

Teams were picked to test different philosophies between mountain rescue units, police rescue units and urban teams, so the approaches to the problems varied from extremely simple to the very complex. Scoring was to be based on the basis of a mixture of times, SAFETY, and skills.



To get ready for the competition we needed 9 members that would be able to take time off from work and be able to train during the weeks and especially weekends leading up to the competition. The nine members were Rob May, Debbi Riegle, Robert Riegle, Michael George, Glenn Henderson, Ray Hussey, Joe Erickson, Janet Hillard, and Rick Maschek. We started training in January, two weekends a month. In February we started training twice a week in the evenings and two weekends a month. In March we trained Tuesday and Thursday evenings and EVERY weekend until we left for the competition.

We practiced personal skills including ascending and rappelling ropes, setting up anchors, setting up lowers, raises, and belaying. We also required each team member to work out on their own to be ready for the competition, so between January and the end of the competition; we didn't have a life except for work and working out, either together or on our own.

We drove up to Sonora on Saturday May 4<sup>th</sup>. Sunday was check in and testing personal skills for all teams, jumaring and rappelling. Monday arrived with much anticipation, as we didn't really know what we had gotten ourselves into. We were given directions to the competition site, which turned out to be an open pit gold mine. It was roughly in a circle with a beautiful lake about 250 ft down in the bottom. At the site we were told that the water was safe to swim in but NOT TO DRINK it because it was full of arsenic. Hey, no problem. We'll stay away from it.

Our first problem was to pick up our victim, ( a 165 lb manikin), do a 200 ft lower, then a traverse across an extremely loose talus slope, over a ridge to another 150 ft wall where we had to do a raise which included a roof about ½ way up. Once we did the raise we had to do an 800 yd carry to another 180 ft lower down an extremely broken rock wall with many ledges. Once down we had to do a carry along the side of the pit and up a dirt road to the finish line. No problem until we found out that the side of the pit ran out and forced us into the lake up to our waists. So much for staying out of the water! We were competing on the blue course while next to us was the Las Vegas team which was competing on the red course. Each course was a little different from the other with the same basic problems. On Tuesday we competed again against Las Vegas but we did the red course and they did the blue course. On Wednesday each team was to do a 160 ft lower, pick off a victim, which was secured to the side of the pit 140 ft above the lake. We then had to raise our people and the victim up, collect all our gear and traverse about ½ a mile over hilly terrain to the finish line. No lake this time.

At the end of the competition on Wednesday evening we attended a great banquet dinner to award the finishing places. RMRU was the first called to the front which didn't mean first place. The last team called was San Miguel, Colorado, yes they won. During the dinner we had a birthday celebration for our own Dr. Ray Hussey. He was 68 on May 4. We then got to figure out our ages and realized that our team's average age was 53. San Miguel's oldest member was 34. All other teams were younger than us by a pretty large margin. Yes that is the only salve for our wounds, (6<sup>th</sup> place).

All in all we had a great time. Yes it was an expense in vacation time and money spent as we had to pay for room and meals, but we learned a lot. We developed each of the nine of us as rescue personnel. We developed new techniques through our training and were able to watch other teams techniques too. We also discovered new gear that is much lighter and stronger than some of our older gear. We made many new friends on other teams. Especially Texas, thanks to Joe's verbal hassling them at every chance he got. They were in the same motel as us and were great sports, (5<sup>th</sup> place). At the banquet they gave each of our team members a can of Ensure and in return we stole their Lone Star flag that they flew over their rooms all week. We gave it back after we finished our Ensure..

Our only concern of the competition was that we felt safety was not a big enough issue.. To our way of doing rescue, patient safety is top priority and we saw some problems with that.

As a final note our team was given what I feel was the highest complement by three other teams and by the safety officers around the course. They all said at different times during the competition that if they ever needed to be rescued, they wanted RMRU to do the job!

The competition team would like to express our special thanks to 5-10 Shoes and Gregory Backpacks for their support of our efforts in this competition.

# Sustaining Members

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

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| <b>Supporting Club</b> | <b>\$ 25</b>   |

Please send your  
donation with application to:

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



## July Training Pictures *By Rick Maschek*



• Werner Hueber with China Lake Mountain Rescue Group's French Paillardet rescue hoist and the 540 belay device •

## Search and Rescue America (S.A.R.A.). Blitz 2002.

*Pictures by Team Member Joe Erickson*



Ready, set, go!



The water hazard. Is Ray swimming?



Hurry, hurry!



Glenn with #100 of wet rope, getting a little help.



Finish line, last day of competition

Another use for  
the device  
container

