

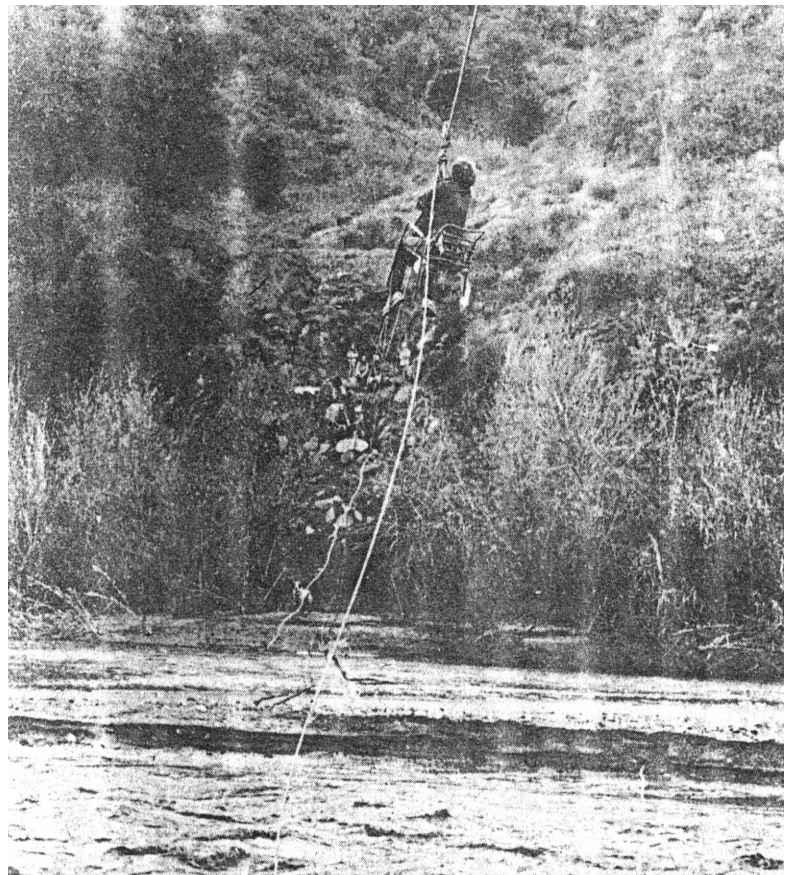
Hardy De Luz People Weather Storms

The Enterprise Thursday, February 28, 1980



You can get there from here! Steve Raley (left) and Greg (?) help ferry an unidentified visitor to De Luz across the Santa Margarita River. Raley would like to see the cable car restored to a reliable transportation.

The Enterprise Thursday, February 28, 1980



Hardy De Luz People Weather Storms

The Enterprise Thursday, February 28, 1980

continued

By BARBARA BARNHILL

The rains came, the river aged and men battled the elements. To the marooned of the DeLuz back country helicopters and fire trucks brought in medical supplies. A patio chair was rigged to a cable across the Santa Margarita, 600 feet wide at the time, to ferry men and supplies.

A grocery brigade went like this: Somebody in hip boots carried a detailed grocery list compiled from isolated residents to someone stationed in a four-wheel-drive vehicle, which took the message to the fire truck which forded the creeks which took the message to someone else in hip boots who hiked to another four-wheel-drive vehi-

cle and drove into town to buy mostly meat, cigarettes and a lot of dog food. Then, it was back out to the back country where the process went into reverse and groceries delivered.

Bulldozers, tractors and firetrucks ferried lawyers to court and asthmatic and poison oak victims to the hospital. This was during the

middle of the night.

Now that the creeks and rivers have receded somewhat, the task at hand is to rearrange the landscape back to its original condition.

The roads are all wrong and don't go where they should anymore. They are being patched, rerouted. Creeks have changed course and boulders and debris are in the way. A kiwi farm is somewhere down river; avocados and oranges may be bobbing in the Pacific by now; Camp Pendleton is the most likely recipient of nursery stock; and, this spring, alfalfa sprouts or oats may be pushing their way up through cracks in Oceanside sidewalks.

Heights residents have

sidewalks.

Heights residents have decided the new long tall waterfall is rather pretty despite the fact they lost the side of a mountain and several groves to get it. Displaced boulders loomed near several homes.

Despite untold property damage, DeLuz residents have weathered the storm, and this storm struck DeLuz hard. One resident, Lionel Meeker, a retired merchant marine officer, remarked he'd seen a lot of storms in his day, but this one was "torrential."

Not just anybody can live in DeLuz. It's home to the stout of heart. Most people who live there say the advantages far outweigh the minor inconveniences like being stranded a few days out of the year or having to repair property damage. And, most people are prepared for the heavy rains.

The women get on the telephone, forming an informal grapevine to discover who needs what and in general they keep a pulse on the community. Men and older boys gather to form committees and prepare a plan of attack on road repair.

Even illegal aliens pick up shovels and join in the road crews. Anybody with a tractor or other heavy equipment goes out on patrol, looking for those who need assistance.

None of the 20 or so surveyed particularly wanted their names mentioned in the newspaper; and certainly did not care to be called heroic. "There's a lot of team spirit out here," one long-time resi-

ding to neighbors. And Raley rigged a patio chair to a cable across the Santa Margarita River, running about 600 feet wide at the time, to transport about four people across. "One guy had to get to Hemet for some reason or another, and some other people had to feed their animals," Raley said. "It's not a trip for women or children," he said.

Jenny Wilcox, who with her husband Glen operate the Kamp Retreat, was worried about her neighbor Rose Towne, who will be 80 in June.

Mrs. Wilcox said they called back and forth across the river to each other and that she informed Mrs. Towne emergency evacuation by helicopter was available if she wanted it. "She said no, she didn't want to go. She had two dogs to take care of," Mrs. Wilcox said. "That's just the way we are out here.

Mrs. Wilcox received a number of phone calls from out-of-town landowners who were worried about their workers having enough food. Supplies were brought into their small grocery store by the volunteer fire department and Mrs. Wilcox said some workers hiked in five or six miles to get food.

Wilbur Wagner, a La Mirada engineer, is one weekender. "This is our retirement dream," he said pointing to his grove atop a hill. "We heard water had gone through our barns down below, but they're still standing. We have no intention of giving up. We don't expect rain like this again for 30 or 40 years," Wagner said.

Those who have lived in

DeLuz for awhile prepare for the winter rains. Women get together to can fruit and vegetables, bake and freeze bread, and the freezers are usually full of beef and pork, even rabbits. They also try to keep a good supply of staples. And when roads were washed out, they would hike to each other's homes to trade a loaf of bread for a carton of eggs, for example. Kerosene lanterns and candles are kept in good supply should the power go out.

Probably one of the biggest drawbacks to living in a remote area is that the children may have a difficult time reaching school. High school students were worried about missing more than 10 days during a semester and not getting credit.

But Doug Welburn's wife Sue explained: "It's our choice to live out here. We know what to expect. If we could just get the cable car working again, we'd have the means to get them to school no matter what."

She pointed out that some

students stay in motels or with relatives or friends in town until the roads are once again passable. And it's only for a few days.

She said the values children learn in the country are an important part of education. Her two children, girls aged 13 and 8, for example, learn to raise animals, and study conservation. Since television reception isn't that good they read much more than they would otherwise.

Most residents feel the peacefulness and stunning scenery, the closeness to nature are worth a few days' inconvenience. And most rise to the challenge of repairing the "mess" the floods leave.

"You meet people during an emergency and get to know them like you never would otherwise," one woman remarked.

Most of those surveyed appeared satisfied at response from the utility crews, the telephone crews, and the county road department.

They also appreciated help from Fallbrook Fire Depart-

Referred to road department petition of DeLuz residents for aerial crossing over Santa Margarita river. for emergency use in flood periods. Referred to bridge commission petition.

Aerial cablecar
San Diego Union 1938 06-21

and.

Filed letter relative to constructing a suspension bridge or cable crossing on De Luz rd. on Santa Margarita river.

Ordered survey made for widening.

Suspension bridge
San Diego Union 1939 12-06-15

Supervisors to Scan De Luz Road Areas

Residents of DeLuz, whose road problems often have been before the board of supervisors, will be visited by board members Sept. 8.

At that time board members will make an inspection of the various roads in the vicinity of the town, nestled in the northeasterly corner of Rancho Santa Margarita.

For several years residents in hill country near DeLuz have been unable to get their children to school for weeks at a time because of flood waters of Santa Margarita river. One remedy planned by the road department is installation of an overhead tramway for transportation of children and supplies when high water makes present crossing unavailable.

DeLuz residents ask that a bridge be built soon. Cole said that before

Aerial tramway
San Diego Union 1938 08-30