

# Isolation Of De Luz Worsens As Floods Wash Out Roads

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DE LUZ — Even if you make it over a washed-out road, a temporary bridge and a dangerous De Luz Creek ford, the community of De Luz, about 12 miles north of Fallbrook, is difficult to find.

There is no wide road spot. No post office. No library. No drugstore. No newspaper. No coffee shop. Not even a gas station.

All there is here is a campground with a tiny market, some of the finest scenery in America, 331 people and many more avocado trees, and a one-room school.

Because floodwaters from the Santa Margarita River and its tributaries have torn up the countryside, the school is open again for 25 students.

That is five times as many as it had when De Luz School District closed it June 30, 1968, and merged the district — by default, because there were not a legal number of students — into Fallbrook Union School District.

Twenty-two of them, youngsters in kindergarten through sixth grade, were in school yesterday.

## 'Seem To Like It'

"They all seem to like it here," said their teacher, Gail Raser.

Raser normally operates the schoolhouse here as an ecology center for the school district which buses children from Fallbrook for the special classes. Now the buses have trouble getting here and the students who live in this area can't get to Fallbrook for school.

"We asked the trustees to open it up," said Lois Cunningham, a De Luz parent. "Some children couldn't get across the road. You can get around now. They've put dirt in the holes. But the roads are so narrow and there are construction trucks all over. I don't even like to drive around here now."

Cunningham said her 10-year-old son Danny was upset upon learning he would have to attend school here until De Luz Road is repaired and the bus could again take him safely to Maie Ellis School in Fallbrook. "He came screaming and fighting and insisted on calling his teacher to make sure they saved his desk," she said. "Now he loves it here."

## Scenery, Season Help

Raser said it's partly the scenery — a valley ringed by mountains that look like the Grand Tetons — and partly the season — the purple periwinkles are blooming and the pyrocantira are filled with red ber-



— Staff Photos by Roger Wretn

Children from isolated De Luz, a far North County community hit hard by recent flooding, are having classes in the former De Luz School, now an ecology center. The school bus route into Fallbrook is too rough to travel.

# Taxpayer Group Calls For Prop. 13 Approval

Passage of Proposition 13 — the controversial Jarvis-Gann tax initiative — need not result in lost jobs or the fiscal chaos predicted by opponents of the proposal, Bruce Henderson, president of the Association of Concerned Taxpayers (ACT), said yesterday.

"Revenues generated by Proposition 13 will cover only such property-related services as police and fire protection, street maintenance and garbage collection," Henderson said.

"While the measure will force the state to finance mandated programs, it also might force the federal government to do the same."

Speaking in a press conference at the San Diego Press Club, Henderson said that ACT believes the state can make up the predicted \$8.2 bil-

lion dip in property tax revenues should voters approve Proposition 13 on June 6.

The brainchild of tax reform advocates Howard Jarvis and Paul Gann, Proposition 13 would limit property taxes to 1 percent of market value and bar the state Legislature from raising other taxes without a two-thirds vote of both houses. Also under the measure, increases in local property taxes would require approval of two-thirds of all registered voters.

Most elected officials and management-level public service employees predict massive layoffs of public service workers and teachers and disruption of some services now financed in part by property tax revenues if the measure were approved.



De Luz Creek, usually a trickle, roars across De Luz-Murrieta Road near De Luz School. It is fordable in

trucks but usable road soon ends in more washouts in San Diego and Riverside counties.

ries — and partly just the one-room school.

The pleasant tan building, which looks like a Spanish mission, seemed to bask in the sunshine. Outside, there are white garages, a play area, picnic tables, basketball courts and a fountain surrounded by water lillies.

Three smiling girls came out the school door, down the steps, and headed for the picnic tables to share their sack lunches.

"There's no coffee shop 'around here,'" Raser said.

But there is a garden of native plants behind the school where even native Californians can learn something.

Carolyn Fox, who lives next to the school, sat down in her car, which she parks on the school grounds, and put on her socks and shoes.

"I have to wade across School Creek to get here from my house," she explained. "Anyhow, it's a creek and I call it School Creek now. It runs into De Luz Creek down below."

Fox said she first came to the area 40 years ago and that the road

northeast to Murrieta never was very good.

It's washed out now, first at the creek below the "Dip" sign 200 yards from the school, and at many other places farther along.

A few miles north of the school are a campground and the De Luz Market. To get there now, one has to cross a temporary bridge of oil cans, corrugated steel and metal grids.

"Not too many people go there now," said Cunningham, "but you should see the campers on a Friday night in the summer."

## Was Stagecoach Stop

South of the school off De Luz Road is an attractive colonial-style building, a former hotel and stagecoach stop built in 1881. It is owned by Barbara McManus who, residents say, holds religious retreats there.

Next to it is an old shed that once was the De Luz Post Office, which Ripley billed as "The World's Smallest Post Office" in a Believe It or Not newspaper column 35 years ago.

"I heard about that before I ever

heard of De Luz, or even Fallbrook," said Robert Murphy, superintendent of Fallbrook Union School District. "I was serving in the Marines on Guadalcanal when my parents wrote me they came to this area and saw it. They also said they were trapped across the river eight hours by a flood."

"We have one driver, Ollie Crabtree, who wades a creek from her home on Daily Road to get to the bus and take some children to De Luz School and some into Fallbrook," Murphy said. "Her husband, Otis, is the De Luz School maintenance man. We're getting the junior high students into town — but we may let the De Luz School keep operating until after spring vacation."

## Painting Taken At Gallery

A Leroy Neiman painting titled "Smash" and valued at \$1,060, was reported taken some time Sunday from the Old Town Circle Gallery, 2501 San Diego Ave., police said. The painting pictured a man playing tennis.

# Death Penalty Ban

# PLO Victims