

Local Pair Climb Erupting Central American Volcano



THE BIG BLOW . . . Hank Young is shown photographing Izalco, volcano in El Salvador which erupts almost continually, during a 15-month trip to Central America which he and Jack Pugsley made. The two men climbed half-way up the volcano to the spot indicated by the arrow, where

they spent the night and got the spectacular shot at the right. They were told they were crazy to climb the mountain, which constantly spews out huge boulders of varying sizes. The lines in the night photograph indicate the paths of the boulders which are thrown from the crater.

Men Tell About Adventure Trip

By TOM RISCHÉ

Does climbing an erupting volcano sound like fun?

Most people wouldn't think so, but two Torrance men recently returned from a 15-month excursion to Central America reported that climbing Izalco, a volcano in El Salvador which is constantly erupting, was only one of a series of adventures on their trip.

Jack Pugsley and Hank Young, 1607 Hickory Ave., engineers with Northrop Aircraft Corp., came back in December from a cruise with Pugsley's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Larry Pugsley, that they called "Expedition Scimitar."

Young, who is an amateur photographer, and Pugsley, a writer, hope to sell accounts of their journey to pay some of the expenses of their trip.

Steel Craft, "Scimitar" Aboard their craft, which they called the "Scimitar" because it was made entirely of Damascus steel, the quartet set out in October, 1955, on an adventure expedition to visit places where no one had ever been. Among their firsts were: Climbing half-way up Izalco.

Photographing an inaccessible lake in the wilds of Costa Rica.

Photographing giant manta rays leaping from the waters of Acapulco.

Photographing a fight between sea elephants on the uninhabited San Benito Islands off Mexico.

Spending Christmas Eve in a penal colony in Mexico.

Take Along Cameras

The "Scimitar" was completely outfitted, so that it could have stayed at sea for six months if necessary. It was termed one of the finest vessels of its type by veteran sailors. The adventurous group on the trip were armed with cameras of all types and explored much of the Central American area.

Viewing Izalco, Young and Pugsley decided to climb the forbidding mountain, which at varying intervals spews out huge boulders and lava. The climb had never been attempted before and all observers told the pair that they were crazy.

"When we reached the base, we almost turned back," Young said. "But we decided to go ahead anyhow. I'd never do it again."

Dangerous Ascent The ascent was made extremely dangerous because there is an almost constant stream of boulders rolling down the mountain, thrown out of the crater of the volcano by the eruptions.

"We stayed about 20 feet apart so that if one of us got hit, the other one would get back," Young said.

They climbed about half-way up the mountain, then built a wall of loose boulders to help protect them against the rolling stones on the mountain. They planned to spend the night on the mountainside, taking pictures of the spectacular colors at night.

They were foiled in this attempt, however, by a tropical gale and rainstorm which lasted for 11 hours that night,

soaking them and forcing them to hang on for dear life, literally. The spot they had chosen for their camp was protected somewhat from the constant stream of rocks which came from the volcano.

Get Pictures

When the storm subsided, they were able to get many spectacular pictures of the eruptions, which made a constant rumble that could be heard miles away. They made a safe descent of the rumbling mountain, but found from later pictures that their camp on the mountainside had been wiped out, apparently by a boulder from one of the eruptions. Shortly after they left, Izalco had one of its biggest eruptions in years.

The pair recently appeared on the "I Search for Adventure" program with their shots of the erupting volcano.

Although natives are deathly afraid of the volcano, many live within a mile or so of it because farming land is so scarce in El Salvador, Young said. Natives even farm in the crater of an inactive volcano in the area, he declared.

Lake Photographed

The group took pictures of inaccessible spots for tourist agencies in many of the countries, reaching a lake that had never been photographed before in Costa Rica. They traveled throughout the area by jeep, both on and off of traveled highways.

In native villages, the group generally received a warm reception, Young said. When they first arrived, they took a picture with a Polaroid camera, which furnishes a print immediately. This they gave to the amazed natives and their welcome was assured.

Manta Rays Leap

Young photographed giant manta rays leaping from the waters of Acapulco Bay early one morning, after receiving word that the sea animals, which weigh several tons, were putting on a rare display. He rowed out among the beats and got some shots of them in mid-air.

He also photographed a fight between bull sea elephants in the San Benito Islands. These animals are something like seals, only much larger, and have a trunk about a foot long. They are dangerous, but a man can outrun them, he said.

Males Fight

He had a few anxious moments one day, as Pugsley agreed to chase a male sea elephant toward Young, who was standing on the beach with his camera. As the animal approached, he heard a roar behind him and discovered he was between two males ready to do battle. He moved out of the way and took shots of the battle which followed.

"I only had 100 feet of film and I had already taken 70 of them, before the fight started," Young noted sadly.

After 15 months of adventure, the group decided to return to the United States. En route home, they visited a Mexican penal colony which is such a pleasant place that many of the convicts refuse to leave after their terms are up. Located offshore, the island

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ADVENTURER . . . Hank Young, 1607 Hickory, who with Jack Pugsley, Torrance resident, and Mr. and Mrs. Larry Pugsley, Hermosa Beach, looks over a boat which he made. The quartet sailed to Central America in a steel boat, the "Scimitar" and explored, taking many pictures.

houses not only the convicts, but their wives and families. There is no death penalty in Mexico, and the island houses offenders ranging from murderers down to lesser offenders.

Rare Colony

It is one of two such penal colonies in the world, Young said.

The two men, who like to go places where people have never gone before, are considering a trip to South America sometime in the future.

"We're trying to find four places there that have never been explored before," Young said, to make the trip worth while.

If they've discovered any such places, they aren't talking. They want to be there first.

Big Families Indicated by Gas Meters

Torrance seems to have bigger than average families, according to figures of the Southern California Gas Co.

Latest figures show that there were 23,456 gas meters in Torrance on Dec. 31, 1956, an increase of 3562 during the year, according to Division Manager C. W. Shupp.

The city has an average of about 3.55 persons for every gas meter, compared to an average throughout the area of about 3.3 per meter. This suggests that Torrance's families might be a little bigger than average.

Biggest Increase

Torrance showed the biggest increase in the division, which included Inglewood, the three Beach cities, and the entire Centinela Valley. In the division, some 9328 meters were added, bringing the total in this area to 140,364.

The net increase in independent active meters was at the rate of more than 25 customers per day, nine of whom were in Torrance.

50,000 Added

The Southwest Division report was part of the overall company summary for the year which showed that for the tenth consecutive year, more than 50,000 new customers were added systemwide.

The total for last year was 58,994 new meters, bringing the total as of year-end to 1,562,930 and strengthening the utility's position as the largest natural gas distributing company in the nation.

In revealing the 140,364 total number of customers in the Southwest Division at the end of 1956, Shupp pointed out that this compares with 131,038 at the close of 1955, and 120,799 at the close of 1954.

Local Families Getting Bigger, Educators Find

Kids, kids, and more kids.

That's the picture facing the Torrance Unified School District, as chagrined school officials discovered that Torrance families are getting bigger and bigger, especially in the Hollywood Riviera section.

In planning for new schools, officials have found that, on the average, they can plan on between 15 and 65 children per home. However, in some of the newer parts of Hollywood Riviera, they discovered that the average number of children per home is running as high as 1.3 children per home.

More Children

What this means in terms of school planning is that, on the average, 100 new homes will mean an additional 50 to 65 children for the local schools. In the Hollywood Riviera district in question, 100 new homes means 130 school children, nearly double the average.

"This is the highest average that Torrance has ever had," declared Warren Hamilton, director of special services. "The average has been rising for several years, but not like this."

Schools Open

Schools are being built at a record pace in Torrance, with Edison School opening last Monday and Flavian School the previous week. Parkway School is slated to open later this spring. South High School is scheduled to open its doors this fall.

Already staggered by the task facing them, officials were considerably taken aback by the higher figures indicated in the Riviera survey.

What does it mean?

Schools, schools, and more schools.



"PRESENT LAUGHTER" . . . His secretary and ex-wife stand by as a famed actor says goodbye to his latest love in "Present Laughter," Hampton Players production which will start a three week run Friday, March 22, at 129 S. Pacific Ave., Redondo Beach. Shown are Torrance residents Dorothy Tunis, Jim Reeves, Jean Maniger, and Pat Rogers.

Local Residents Featured In Hampton Players' Show

Torrance residents comprise the major part of the cast for the Hampton Players' production of "Present Laughter," by Noel Coward, opening at 8:30 p.m. on Friday, March 22, at 129 S. Pacific Ave., Redondo Beach, for three week ends.

The play revolves around some of the interesting uses which a distinguished actor, portrayed by Jim Reeves, a Riviera resident, finds for his spare room. Reeves previously has been seen in "The Moon Is Blue" and as the father in "Papa Is All."

Cast Named Pat Rogers, who portrays his ex-wife, was in "Love From a Stranger" and "Affairs of State," while Dorothy Tunis, his secretary, was in "Sabrina Fair" and played the title role in "Country Girl." Both are Riviera residents.

A Seaside resident, Jean Maniger, portrays one of the actor's conquests, and has previously appeared in "Egad,

What a Cad!" The actor's eccentric housekeeper is played by Miriam Wilson, who has been seen previously in "Season in the Sun." An outraged husband is played by Jim Wilson, who has appeared in "Time of the Cuckoo" and "Chapel Players' "Dark of the Moon."

Newcomers to the list of cast members are Diana Mitchell, George Hocutt, Ronald W. Hellwell, and Patricia Coates, while Duane Ryan who appeared in the first Player's production, "The Silver Cord," returns to the cast.

Director Returns Director Bob Farnsworth, director of the Players for their first four years, returns after a brief absence to direct the horseshoe staging, assisted by Thelma Ledgward.

The first Saturday performance, on March 23, is sold out, but seats for the other five Friday and Saturday performances still are available from members or at FR 5-2985.

County Ups Play Program - Aid to City

Increased help for the Torrance recreation program has been received from the county, according to Recreation Director Hary Van Belehem, who said that the allotment has been tripled here.

The county Department of Parks and Recreation will give the city \$13,125 for its year-round play program, instead of the \$4822 it has received since 1951. The program is sponsored by the Torrance Recreation Department and the Torrance Unified School District.

Recreation programs at Arlington, Anza, Steele, Casimir, Crenshaw, Fern-Greenwood, Carr, Hillside, Madrona, Perry, Meadow Park, Riviera, Seaside, Sepulveda, and Waverly Elementary Schools will be possible as a result of the aid, Van Belehem said. North and Torrance High Schools also will be included.

Torrance and Los Angeles were the only cities to receive more money for recreation in Los Angeles County. Other cities received cuts.

Schools Plan Something New in Library Facilities

Something new in modern library facilities will go into use in about eight months when the new Education Material Center for the Torrance Unified School District is completed, according to Dr. J. H. Hull, superintendent.

The central structure of some 18,000 square feet will house some 200,000 text books, films, tape recordings, charts, audio visual equipment, and other teaching aids adequate for the use of the 40 schools expected in the local school district. There are now 24 schools here.

Central Library Instead of maintaining libraries at all elementary schools, the local district has a central library through which teachers can check out the necessary equipment. School officials say that this enables the district to buy less books and to circulate those in stock more widely. It also requires less expense and less personnel to man it.

The new structure will be located directly across the street from the present board offices at 2335 Plaza del Amo. Under the plan now used, teachers can browse through the material available in supermarket shopping fashion. Deliveries of materials they choose are made regularly to all schools.

Special Features One feature which will cut down operating costs is mechanical checking equipment. A conference room has also been included for teachers in specialized fields. A library for general use by instructors also is an added feature.

The building was designed by Architect Roy Donley, who also designed Edison and Sepulveda Elementary Schools, South High School, and the recently-enlarged central administrative office for the schools. He is a member of the Southern California Chapter, American Institute of Architects and served on the civic development committee of that organization for a year. He is a graduate of the University of Southern California.

Record Hop For Teenage Dancers Set

The favorite music of the teen agers as indicated by a recent survey among Torrance hepats filled the Civic Auditorium Friday evening.

The first in a series of record hops sponsored by the Torrance Recreation Dept. was the occasion for boys and girls who are in the seventh through 12th grades. There is a 25 cent admission fee for each person, which includes a chance on the door prizes and free refreshments.

The second in the series of square dance round-ups will be held in the Civic Auditorium on Friday, Mar. 15. The round-ups are open to boys and girls who are in the fifth grade and up. There is a 25-cent admission fee for each person, which will also cover refreshments and a chance at the door prizes.

NEW SCHOOL BUILDING . . . This building, to be located across the street from the Board of Education offices at 2335 Plaza del Amo, will house books, films, and many other materials used by the Torrance Unified School District. It is expected to be ready in about eight months

Most school districts have libraries in each elementary school, but the Torrance district uses this plan, in which teachers can order books to be used by their classes. This way, officials say, fewer copies of one book can be bought, with greater variety of books.