

Three boys missing from counselors

**October 13, 1981
Tahquitz Drainage
1981-032**

By Craig Britton

Through with work, through with school, do the evening workout, and get ready for bed.

Then the phone rings, it's the right time late; it's that familiar voice on the other end, Larry Roland, my call captain; informing me that we have another night hike beneath the stars to look forward to.

All he knows is that it is for three boys who are missing from their camp out of Skunk Cabbage Meadow.

Fill up the water bottles and start rolling, ten miles down the road and the pager goes off just as I am passing two tractor trailers and cannot hear a thing. Hmm, wonder if it's the call out or a cancellation. Better stop and call. It's a real drag driving to Idyllwild and discovering you should be back in bed doing something better. It's not a cancellation. Onward and upward.

The turn out was slim, so Bernie McIlvoy and I would be a team, our assignment was to hike to the saddle and then on to search the valley system down to Caramba. Apparently, I would soon find out what going to Caramba was all about. Team 2 consisted of Kevin Walker and Craig Beasley. Their assignment was to hike in to the group's camp some where near Skunk Cabbage, and gather more information, and then search outward. As we were hiking in, more information was passed up by radio. Our three missing youths did not have jackets, and they were wearing Nike running shoes. Also the three boys 14, 15, and 16 years old were from an Optimists Boys home for youths who are wards of the court.

Sounds like a real fun bunch. just before reaching the saddle, we met one of the counselors who was hiking out. After asking some questions, we found that one boys had a jacket, other wise, no good news.

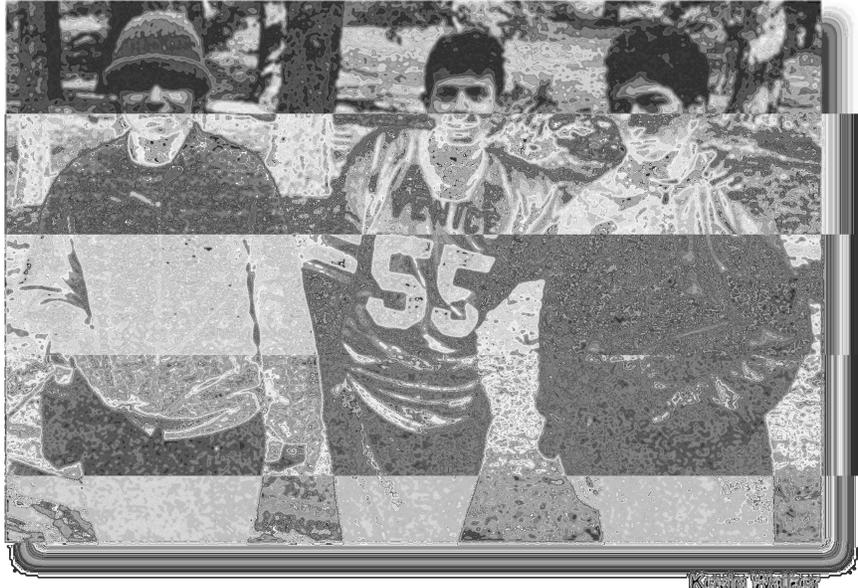
We continued on to the saddle, and then to Tahquitz Valley. From there we searched down the drainage. At 3:00 a.m. Kevin and Craig had located the group's camp. There they reported that the group had not heard or seen anything, and that they were going to get a little sleep before continuing on. Bernie and I decided to go on a

little further before stopping for a little shut-eye.

We had been calling out while searching but had got no response to our yells. As we reached Laws Camp, we stopped and gave a shout. A response?? We thought so. A second shout, and again an answer. We hiked towards the calls and whistles. Sure enough, at 4:30 we located Carlos Millan, Fred Miranda, and Daniel Kelly. Funny thing about it was they all had jackets, and none were wearing Nike running shoes (good info?). We then started a fire to warm them, and also placed them in sleeping bags. With the fire going, I went for water and Bernie just turned his back to them for a minute, but with his back turned they scooted closer to the fire. When I returned I found my bag burnt in one section and Bernie's insolite burnt at one end. Nice kids, huh? No apologies, just a lot of cursing and stories of people they had beaten up or stolen from.

Once daylight finally arrived, we packed up, and marched the tough kids (huffing and puffing) back to saddle junction. Soon after,

Kevin, Craig and one of the counselors walked up to take control of the lovely kiddies. Then down to Idyllwild and a big breakfast.



TOUGH BUT RELIEVED - Carlos Millan, Fred Miranda and Daniel Kelly posed in a rather tough manner, but were very glad to have been found by RMRU members Bernie McIlvoy and Craig Britton. The three youths are from a boys home in the Los Angeles area.

RMRU is a volunteer search and rescue team that covers Riverside County and assists other teams with search and rescue efforts in other counties. Each member purchases their own equipment and takes time off work, without compensation, to participate in search and rescue missions. Team equipment is purchased from contributions from the community. We are a non-profit organization and are funded by [donations](#) from people like you.