

The St. Nicholas Lead

Camp Cherry Valley Alumni Association Newsletter

Fall 2002

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

By Ron Wood

“. . . Red sky at night, sailor's delight." Memories.

As the red sky settles behind the gravestones of John Daly and Birdie Chester, I look in at camp and fond memories appear. It seems in the short time it takes for the red sky to turn dark, memories return—from the boats in the cove to camp program, the physical facility, the Isthmus, and the rest of the island, too.

As a boat person (our first camp ranger referred to those who traveled to "his cove" with some disdain) I naturally recall the weekly arrival of *Serenade*. Fridays during our water carnival at about 4pm this beautiful 55' double ended, rich golden brown in color, would drop sail outside Cherry, then pick up their mooring dead center in the cove. For many years this happened like clockwork. A beautiful sight. Other vessels too, like *Verve*, *Patrician* and *Keshba* bring memories of the past—and more recent boats with names like *Sante*, *Eden*, *Sky Wave*, *Georgetown*, *Scott Free* and *Deference* bring delight. And of course, *Helen* was there in the distant past and she's still here today—along side as I write this note.

I remember those oddities of preparing for program as memorable. The Advanced-Advanced Party 3 or 4 veteran staff men ventured into camp to turn on water, propane, and open vital spaces so when the rest of the Advanced Party arrived, (about 50 a couple days later) some semblance of preparation was begun. (These were the days before a camp ranger occupied the camp year round). Opening the Mine, which stored all kinds of "stuff", was also intriguing. A false door was made to fit and camouflaged to look as if the Mine was only 20' deep. Fun.

Some relations formed with "the Isthmus" hold even to this day. Do you remember when there were no inflatable boats at the dinghy dock? Do you remember when skill and finesse were the operative words of the day? (Not speed and power).

The Island, now mostly managed by the Catalina Island Conservancy, has such a unique beauty. Its interior with running water, Middle Ranch (with planting gardens and eagle "reclamation" program), Rancho Escondido (still with horse shows and still controlled by the Santa Catalina Island Company)—the spirited sights bring memories.

I think of all this and more only to realize it wasn't just these things, places and events—it was the people associated with the boats, the program, the Island, who truly made the memories. How often do we recall "the good old days" without people being associated? Why not drop a long-time friend a note. Recall a fond memory.

Though I visit the Island frequently, it never seems quite often enough. But, I'm a lot more aware now, that "it's the people" who are the reason for our participation in camp life—and our "red sky" memories.

Oh, one Boston Whaler did get my attention in 2002 and another awaits—maybe April, May, or June. Join me?
See you in Camp.

MESSAGE FROM CAMP

By Bill Hartley

We finished up our summer 2002 season and things have been going very well. Dave Minnihan ran his first Cub Resident Camp program this year and it looks like the kids had a great time. Dave Hopkins, the Summer Resident Camp Director, had a very good summer and is looking forward to returning next summer. Tina Renzullo had a great spring program, her official first season as Program Director, and she did a wonderful job. Buddy Renzullo will direct this Fall's weekend program, which began this Labor Day Weekend and will run programs on the weekends until the end of October. Andy Balindy is also beginning his second season at Cherry as the Program Director for Catalina Island Marine Institute (CIMI), Cherry Cove program.

I should also mention Karen Hartley's efforts as Food Service Director for both the SGVC Spring and Fall weekends and Summer Resident Camp. In my biased opinion and that of the Program Directors she works with, she

has done an incredible job. She and her staffs have provided excellent food, kept the Kitchen and Dining Hall as clean as possible, and smile at campers, while producing up to as many as 5,000 meals a week.

Mark (Bear) Serratt, our Camp Ranger for over six years, has been busy around camp. Following a very productive winter and spring building and development phase, he shifted his focus to program support, repairs and facility service. He is currently shifting back to improvement and development for the upcoming fall. He is one very talented man. He is also a very good friend to every program staff member who works here.

Speaking of what we are planning on doing this fall. We are very close to receiving L.A. County's approval for our water storage tank and will begin on it as soon as we do. We also have been working on the permit to replace one of our Commissioner Cabins and hope to start on that very soon. We are in the planning phase to start making some improvements on the waterfront. Decking, walkways, program equipment storage, boat racks, and more are being worked on. We also will need to spend some time on the regular camp maintenance needs like painting, landscaping, equipment maintenance, and on and on and on.

Following the water tank project completion, we can really begin to make the bigger improvements. Beginning with getting the "new" Camp Store on line, then relocating the Warehouse and housing improvements. I would like to make a point at this point in the story. The costs of these improvements are way off the charts. Fire suppression alone will cost us close to one million dollars to complete. The anticipated cost to replace the Dining Hall was \$350,000 in 1993. Today, the proposed Dining Hall is around two and a half million, and I'm confident that when it is completed, we will have spent over three million, assuming we are able to start within the next couple years. My point is that by the time you have a plan, raise the money, get permits, and begin the construction, the project will already cost you more than you planned.

On August 1, 2002, we had the dedication ceremony for the new Lighthouse. Thomson's Light has become a great asset to the camp and everyone is most grateful for it.

The Alumni visited CCV twice this year and each time the staff waddled out of the Dining Hall. Thanks everyone.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

By Rick Scobey

This year has gone by fast and many of you have not sent in your dues. Please remember that it's never too late. Help us support Camp Cherry Valley by sending in your dues now. Each and every membership counts! For those of you who have sent in your dues, we want you to know that your membership and contributions are appreciated!

Why not become a CCVAA Life Member? Your membership will go a long way to help the Camp Cherry Valley Alumni Association. Our records currently show the following Life Members: Hudson Bair, Scott Bice, Bruce Davis, Dennis Dayne, Dominic Femino, Dave Hagen, Bill Hartley, Larry Hooper, Carol Hopping, Gary Kief, Mike Kilbride, Bob Lundquist, Ed McArthur, Jim McClung, Jr., Keith Mikas, Dave Minnihan, Morgan Morgan, Phil Piet, Ian Pinkham, Bob Shafer, Sherwood "Woody" Simpson, and Ron Wood. We apologize if your name wasn't included and should have been. Please contact us so that we can update our records.

Have you seen the CCVAA web site lately? Be sure to check out the recent changes to the site at www.ccvaa.org. New pictures from Bill Hartley's "vast" collection have been recently added and there will be many more. Check the "Projects" link and the "Photo Pages" link for some new additions. This site will always be "under construction", so check out the site and check back often.

We're looking for staff photos for the CCVAA web site, especially group staff photos. If you have any old staff photos, or any other photos that you want to share on the web site, please contact us.

And once again, please send in your dues if you haven't already and help us support the Scouting program at Camp Cherry Valley.

CHERRY VALLEY THEN AND NOW: FORTY PLUS YEARS OF CHANGE AND UNCHANGE

By Bob Burtness

Catalina has long been touted as the "magical isle", so close to the Southern California mainland, yet at the same time, so far away and so different.

This became a truism in my reality when I first attended YMCA Camp for a week at White's Landing in 1948. Owned by the Pasadena YMCA at the time, it was called Camp Orizaba and boasted the only naturally sandy beach on the island.

The spell of the mountainous terrain, the clear blue water with its myriad of marine organisms, plus camp life in general impressed my ten year old mind so much that I continued going to camp for the next four summers, even forsaking a unique chance to visit Yellowstone National Park on an extended family outing.

The next opportunity to spend time at Catalina "in residence" occurred nearly a decade later when I was hired by the San Gabriel Valley Council to be Waterfront Director at Camp Cherry Valley during the summers of 1960-61.

The enchantment of the "magical isle" continued, and most of the experiences at CCV ultimately proved to be among the highlights of my life.

But the inevitable changes of life, in this case military service, further schooling, marriage and family, and a teaching career which continues to this day, didn't include another visit to Catalina until the mid-nineties when the "Lane Victory", a restored World War II Victory ship on its maiden voyage, ventured to a point where I could identify Lion's head. This was followed by attending the Camp Cherry Valley 75th Anniversary celebration in 1998.

And now Cub Camp at "Treasure Island", 2002, where I believe, some seeds of inspiration were planted among the over 200 campers and leaders there. I expect at least some of their camp experiences to be on their memory tapes for the rest of their lives.

So after being "in residence" once again, what's different about the camp and environs and what's the same as it was over four decades ago? Admitting to remembering everything whether it happened or not, this is what I recall.

THEN

Cherry Cove, which can harbor more than 125 yachts, had more vessels built with beautifully varnished wood. One of my favorites was "*The Southern Seas*". It seemed to be a great party boat.

Trash washing ashore was a serious problem, especially on weekends. Watermelon rinds, bottles and paper plates were the most common discards. I hate to think of the trash that sunk, such as the beer cans, which at the time, were mostly made of steel.

The original Lighthouse was another landmark at CCV since 1937, and it was a functioning one, too, at least until World War II. With an oil lamp at the top, it was a point of reference for passing boats. Later, it became a lookout position for waterfront activities until a winter storm in 1998 swept it away.

Another prominent structure on the Waterfront was the "ship", probably erected at about the same time as the Lighthouse. Also made of corrugated metal panels and wood framing, it stood three stories high, had a point bow, a mast, and a "wheelhouse" complete with wheel. The Waterfront Staff primarily occupied the "Ship". My home for two summers was on the second floor or "deck".

Behind the beach toward the Dining Hall were the salt ponds, which would fill with seawater during high tides. Appearing like shallow clear lakes, they were picturesque.

The Dining Hall appears to be the only remaining structure that existed in camp forty years ago. At that time, it had no wall panels and no windows, just screens that were blocked by sheets of corrugated steel if the wind kicked up the dust. The kitchen and adjacent areas were also smaller.

Outside of Camp, at the Isthmus, also known as Two Harbors, was a large Victorian building with a steeply gabled roof that was used, if I remember correctly, as a restaurant and bar. It was surrounded by a number of palm trees, supposedly planted there by filmmakers for use in movies many years ago.

Another story from the Isthmus is about the abalone, which were freely available in the bay on the channel side during the 1920's and 1930's. While no longer there by the 1960's, they were available in only about six feet of water on the ocean side of the bay. Staff members then transported our harvest back to camp, tenderized it with hammers and enjoyed a sumptuous delicacy of the sea that was not to be around for too many more years.

Another form of transportation no longer seen around Catalina is the H-10 water taxis built of teak, I believe. Probably built during the 1930's, they were around in the 1940's, '50's and '60's. Slower than the Catalina Express vessels of today, they were a memorable way of crossing the channel, especially in rough water.

And there were the "great white steamers" the *S.S. Avalon* and the *S.S. Catalina*. These charismatic vessels transported passengers to and from Avalon for many years before being retired. One of them is in Ensenada, Mexico, half underwater and half above water. There is talk about restoring it for passenger use again. I would like to see that.

NOW

I spotted only one, which seemed to be a true "woodie" from the '20's and '30's. It is named and is from San Diego. Most of the other pleasure boats appear to be made of fiberglass or resins. I am sure they are easier to maintain, but they lack character.

During my latest week at CCV, I spotted three items, including a plastic bottle and a beach thong, the latter of which had been lost, rather than thrown away. It appears that the yachting community no longer uses the cove as a garbage dump. It's good to see a greater awareness of keeping our environment clean.

The new Lighthouse, christened "Thomson's Light", was dedicated in August, 2002. It is a fine structure, made mostly of resins, and it will probably outlast its predecessor. The entire project is the result of a lot of hard work by a lot of people who endured a long quest to raise the money and acquire permission to build it. My only disappointment is that there is no light. An old donated clear beacon from an airport would be the perfect accent. Then it could be a real lighthouse.

The Ship was torn down some years ago and a marine lab now occupies the site where visitors may view various sea organisms in holding tanks. Water is constantly circulated between these tanks and the cove.

The salt ponds are still there, but now the area is called a “salina” which means pretty much the same thing. We are now told that some of the vegetation bordering the upper portion of the salina is very unique because it is nourished by brackish water, a combination of the seawater from the cove and fresh water descending the canyon underground.

Today the Dining Hall mentioned above is the only remaining structure that existed in camp forty years ago and is scheduled for replacement in a few years.

OFFICERS

Chairman:	Ron Wood
Secretary/Treasurer:	Morgan Morgan
Membership Chairman:	Rick Scobey
Membership Coordinators:	
1950s:	Bill Gold
1960s:	Mark Bevan
1980s:	Frank Brundige
1990s:	Al Garcia, Jr
Work Parties Chairman:	John Morales
CCV Camp Liaison:	Bill Hartley
Editor and Historian:	Dave Minnihan

CCVAA Web Site: www.ccvaa.org