

# The St. Nicholas Lead

## Camp Cherry Valley Alumni Association Newsletter

Summer 2004

### CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

By Ron Wood

#### A Memorial Day Memory

While at "the island" this past Memorial Day weekend (the weather was fantastic), memories of the hectic weekend in 1988 appeared.

It was my first summer back to the island to work since 1965. Though there were a lot of changes, much remained the same. The new pier had not yet been delivered but we decided to put the standing sections into place with the gangplank to an older float.....just temporarily. Winds from the East picked up

to the anxiousness of the owners of over 100 boats in Cherry Cove. Boats, small and large, rolled and pitched. Some boats in the overcrowded cove hit. Those at anchor in the greater Isthmus area even dragged their anchors and were forced to relocate.....but where? Some of the boats in Cherry tied together.....or rather apart; some left entirely. A few of the smaller vessels came into "our" area to anchor and/or to tie up to our temporary float. This was not good as our temporary float was clearly not secure.

There was clear fright in the eyes of a young family in their 24-foot sailboat as they grasped out for our float. We did what we could to accommodate them by tying numerous guy lines. Nobody felt secure, but there was no serious bodily harm or loss of equipment. The winds, seas and discomfort continued for 2 days. Needless to say, over the years, many boating and island people have relived the discomfort of the Memorial Day Weekend of 1988. (It seemed our role was to Be Prepared.....for others and for ourselves.)

In contrast, weather conditions this year: blue skies, little-to-no wind, temperature in the 80s, water temperature 68. With friends to enjoy the island, what a great weekend!

See you in camp!

### NEWS FROM CAMP

By: Bill Hartley

The Summer Resident Camp Staff will be here next week and starting camp the following Sunday. We are very excited to be starting our summer season even though it seems to be here so soon, but the whole year has been like that.

It's this time of year that I think back to my days as a Camp Staff member. Coming over as a member of the Council's work party (made up of 14 year old scouts from many different troops) and working with the Staff was exciting in itself. But, then being asked to stay on as a "real" Staff member is one of my fondest memories. At the time being accepted by the rest of the guys was what I thought was important to me. But, looking back to those days now I realize that what was really important and ultimately made me feel good about myself was that it was something I did on my own. No help from my family, friends or fellow scouts in my troop. I earned the right and

honor to be a part of the CCV Staff. In later years I realized that it was something I needed to do for myself, I wanted to answer that personal question, in many 14 year olds minds; was I good enough?

I'm sure all of you understand what I'm saying; you've been there. We were not looking for just a summer job. We were looking to challenge ourselves, ask those hard questions about who we are and how well do we measure up, test your mettle, if you will. Despite the reasons we spoke of at the time like, we were here to meet the girls in the cove or at Two Harbors, or it was a way to stay away from our home for the summer, or even wanting to live on Catalina for the summer. I feel for each of us that when all is said and done it was to meet the challenge of being a Staff member.

Time is short this time of year so my article will be as well. I hope all of you enjoy your summer and please visit CCV if you get the chance.

### C.O.R.E. STAFF REPORT

By Yolanda Hernandez

Mehiya-Yehiya. In the language of the people who lived here long ago, "Mehiya" means "Hello" and "Goodbye". "Yehiya" means "Friend". So that is my greeting to all of you.

Our season started great. On one Saturday, we even had a male sea lion on our beach. And of course, he had the right-of-way. But we worked around it. The days have been beautiful here with the evenings full of stars. Now it's the Summer Staff's turn and they're off to a good season. But we'll be back again on Labor Day. Hope to see some of you for the "Old Goats" Weekend. Until then it's Mehiya, Yehiya, Mehiya.

### MEMBERSHIP NEWS

By Rick Scobey

Your membership is necessary to keep the Camp Cherry Valley Alumni Association alive. The membership fee is currently only \$25 per year. Life Membership is available for \$250, and Junior Membership (ages 16-20) is \$10. If you were on Summer Staff, CORE Staff, or Cub Camp Staff last year, your dues are free for this year. Newsletter subscription only for our non-members is \$5 per year. If you are a current member, your subscription is free.

Welcome and thank you to our new Life Members: Carl Cheadle, Clifford Thomson, and Ron Williamson. Other Life Members are: Hudson Bair, Scott Bice, Albert Cain, Bruce Davis, Dennis Dayne, Dominic Femino, Dave Hagen, Bill Hartley, Larry Hooper, Carol Hopping, Roy Johnson, Gary Kief, Mike Kilbride, Bob Lundquist, Ed McArthur, Jim McClung, Jr., Keith Mikas, Dave Minnihan, Morgan Morgan, Bill Norris, Phil Piet, Ian Pinkham, Bob Shafer, John Shaw, Sherwood "Woody" Simpson, Edward Wellman, and Ron Wood. And a special thanks to Keith Mikas and Clifford Thomson for their generous donations.

Let us know if your contact information has changed. It's expensive and difficult to keep track of our members. Too many newsletters have been returned because of incorrect addresses, and often, the Post Office charges us for address corrections. Be sure to send us your email address too. We'll notify you of changes to CCVAA web site and of upcoming special events.

We've recently posted 100 photographs from Albert Cain's photo album on our web site. Albert was on staff from 1937 through 1941. If you haven't been to our web site recently, please be sure to visit it to see the changes. We're at [www.ccvaa.org](http://www.ccvaa.org). If you have any pictures, documents, memories or anything else that you want posted on the CCVAA web site, please contact us. We'd also appreciate any ideas, suggestions or comments that you might have.

Again, your membership is necessary to help us keep the traditions, the programs, and the spirit of Camp Cherry Valley alive. Take a minute to remember how important they were to you when

you were at Camp Cherry Valley. If you haven't already, please send in your dues now. Every membership helps. You can make a difference!

See you soon!

## HISTORIAN'S CORNER

By Dave Minnihan

I've always been intrigued by the story of the Mine and the two Miners, John Daley and Birdie Chester. In looking over my staff handbook from 1971 and handbooks from the mid 1980's and early 1990's, I've noticed that each handbook told a different version of the story. I've also heard different versions of the story every time I've heard a staff man tell it.

Ping Bodine, who was a camper in 1923 and staff in 1927, told me that he, several members of his troop, and one of the staff spent part of one day cleaning and tending to the gravesite. According to Ping, one of the graves was for Samuel Prentice, and the other was for a dog. I'd be interested in hearing if anyone knows the details of how the story of John Daley and Birdie Chester came to be.

This is the story as I tell it during spring and Fall Program Weekends. It's a compilation of the versions I've heard or read and seems to be the most accurate.

Although all of you are familiar with the California Gold Rush of 1849, you may not know that Catalina Island was a hot bed of mining activity during that time, as well. In the 1840's, Samuel Prentice, a merchant seaman and whaler from New England, made his way to California in search of fame and fortune. His journey led him to the Mission San Gabriel where he became friends with one of the Pimna tribesmen who now resided at the Mission. (the Pimna were the native people of Catalina. They were forcibly removed from the Island by the Spanish, relocated to the Mission San Gabriel and intermingled with several other local tribes, to become known as the Gabrielinos). The Indian told Prentice that there was gold on Catalina Island and drew a map for him. Prentice traveled to Catalina and found gold. He returned to the mainland and told stories of finding gold, but then claimed he couldn't remember where he found it. Whether he did or didn't was never proven, but it started a gold rush on Catalina.

Catalina Island, from the Isthmus to the West End was covered with mines. Gold, silver and lead was mined in these mines. There was a "mining city" near Johnson's Landing (now known as Howland's Landing). There were several mines in Cherry Valley. The Mine we are in is known as the St. Nicholas Lead. In 1862-63 Martin Kimberly and Daniel Way opened and worked the mine, and discovered silver in it. Mining was a very painstaking process in those days. Miners would hack at the rock with their picks and shovels. If they were lucky enough to have gunpowder, they could use it to blast away the rock and hasten their progress. Our two miners worked the mine until they came to this enlarged area known as the "glory hole". This is where they found their large silver strike.

During this time, the Civil War was being fought. California was a Union state, but there were a number of Confederate sympathizers in the state. The Union army had barracks at the Isthmus at what is now the Isthmus Yacht Club. The army came up with a story that Confederate sympathizers were coming to the Island to infiltrate the gold and silver mines. They were going to confiscate the mines and turn the gold and silver over to the Confederacy. In order to circumvent this plan, the Union Army evacuated the Island of all miners and ranchers.

It was later discovered that it was a hoax, that there had been no Confederate sympathizers. The real sto

ry is that the Klamath Indians in Northern California/Oregon were having an uprising. The Union Army did not want to deal with the Indians, as well as protect California from the Confederates, so they planned on removing the Klamath from Northern California and relocating them to Catalina where they would be easier to control. Fortunately for the Klamath, this plan never became a reality.

After the war, new hotspots for mining had developed and only a handful of miners returned to Catalina. Around the turn of the last century, two miners, John Daley and Birdie Chester came to the Island. They had heard stories of the gold and silver found in Cherry Valley and decided to mine the area. They settled on the St. Nicholas Lead and wanted to see if Kimberly and Way had left any silver there. They continued from the Glory Hole, but had no luck. They then decided that maybe the silver didn't travel in a straight horizontal path, but maybe angled off in another direction.

John and Birdie started digging down and at an angle. Now the technology for mining had improved in the last 30-40 years, and they now were able to use dynamite in their mining. They would set a charge and attach a fuse, making sure it was long enough so they could ignite it, then run to safety before it exploded. They would then go back to the blast area and clear out the rubble with their picks and shovels. They would then set another charge and repeat the procedure. Each time they blasted, they only removed a couple inches of rock. It was still a very slow, laborious method, but much faster than before dynamite.

They struck silver! It appeared to be a major vein! And now there was a problem. For you see, Birdie Chester was a greedy man, and did not want to share the silver with his partner, John Daley. Birdie then devised a dastardly plan. One day, he went to the blast area and set the charge, but he placed a very short fuse on the charge. He then climbed back up into the main shaft where we are standing, and asked John to go down and light the fuse. John lit the fuse, but before he could get to safety, the dynamite exploded, killing him.

Unfortunately for Birdie, the dynamite also collapsed that shaft of the mine, cutting him off from the silver. Birdie started digging out the shaft, but it was just too much work for him. He decided he would change course and go back to the original plan and work the horizontal shaft.

Birdie proceeded to work the shaft for the next year and a half. It was slow going without a partner, but Birdie didn't want another partner, he didn't want to share any of his silver. Birdie was working long hours in the mine. It was very dark, as he was working with just the light from a small lantern. As he had no partners and no friends, it was months since he had seen or talked with anyone. His mind started playing tricks on him. He started seeing things and hearing things, and the writings in his journal started getting stranger and stranger.

One night as he was working in the mine, something, or someone, knocked the lantern off the wall. He was in complete darkness, and as he fumbled around the floor, trying to find his lantern, he thought he saw something at the entrance to the mine. It was a shimmering light that began to come closer to him. As it came closer, it started to take on the appearance of a man. It started to look like John Daley. Birdie cried out "John?" but there was no response. The figure came closer and Birdie cried out again, "John, is that you?" Again there was no response.

The figure turned and started to leave the mine. In desperation, Birdie started to chase after it. He has no light, so he's stumbling, running into the walls, hitting his head on the ceiling, but running after this figure, calling out "John, John, please wait". Birdie gets out of the mine and sees that this figure is walking along side of the hill towards the beach. It goes up the trail out to Lions Head, with Birdie in hot pursuit. The figure is standing at the edge of Lions Head. Birdie rushes out and not seeing the edge falls to his death on the rocks below. And so ends the sad tale of our two miners. A memorial gravesite has been erected for them on top of Lion's Back.

## ACTIVITIES

### Staff Barbecue

We'll be going over to Camp on Saturday, July 17, for our annual steak barbecue for the Staff. This is a great chance to go over to camp for a weekend, get to know the Staff, and enjoy some great steaks. If you'd like to attend, please contact Dave Minnihan by July 11.

## Old Goats Weekend

September 10-12 is the Old Goats Weekend. Alumni and their significant other/family are invited to come over for a fun weekend. The CORE Staff will be running a full program weekend, so you'll be able to do snorkeling, kayaking, archery, hiking, BB guns, handicraft, and campfires.

Cost of the weekend is \$25, plus your transportation. Most people will be going over on the Friday evening boat and returning on Sunday afternoon. Please make your travel reservations with Catalina Express (310)519-1212. Please RSVP to Dave Minnihan by Sept 7. Note: This will be our last newsletter before the Old Goats Weekend.

## FROM THE ARCHIVES



This picture is from the summer of 1953. From left: Bill Streiber, Don Robison, Cliff Fremstad. If memory serves me correctly, Bill was Waterfront Director in 1953 and Don in 1954.

## CALENDAR

July 17-18      Staff Barbecue at CCV  
August 30      Newsletter article deadline  
Sept. 10-12    Old Goats Weekend at CCV

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