

MATTOLE MEANDERINGS

inspirations from your friendly folks at the Mattole Camp & Retreat Center Autumn 2020

No doubts remain about 2020 being a year that is unprecedented for everyone. For certain, most of us will remember it for a long time to come. Like every camp across America, we have struggled to stay functional and fiscally stable with the devastating impact of Covid-19. Despite the huge loss of income from our usual and anticipated visitors this season, we were able to have limited income and use of the camp for small groups. This was able to take place after working hard to put in place a plan submitted to and approved by the health department. Regardless of all the setbacks, we were able to accomplish a major goal this year, which was to replace the old deck near the open field area with a new covered deck complete with lighting. Thanks to a grant from the Arcata Rotary, a few donations from individuals and a team of volunteers who did all the labor, we were able to complete the project in HALF the cost!

I wish to express my sincere gratitude for all the council members and our caretaker for all their hard work and imagination this year. Together we have served well in difficult times. We look hopefully toward the future and expect to see old and new faces at the camp in 2021!
Blessings to all!!! David Goodman



Thank you to EVERYONE who worked on the New "Rotary Deck"! Gene Callahan, Pastor Dan Link, David Goodman, Lee Dedini, Dave Enos, Bill Combs, Valerie Sanford & Jennifer Callen

And about that deck... Pastor Dan speaks of it's glory!

This year we were able to complete a rebuild of what was affectionately called "The Tree Deck." This project was half paid for with money donated by the Arcata Rotary Club. Wanting to be good stewards of natural resources, we chose to cover the deck with a metal roof. The deck should last longer than any of us! We voted to name it "The Rotary Deck" and dedicate it to Dr. Andrew Montgomery, a long time pastor of Arcata Presbyterian Church, and big supporter of Mattole Camp. This new covered deck is a great asset to the Camp and will be enjoyed year round!!



Covid or no covid, the work still had to be done! And a heartfelt thank you to Valerie who jumped right into the fire (well, that's another story) and ensured the camp was safer, cleaner, more organized, greener, friendlier, mowed, sanitized, prepared, brighter, rodent freer ALL while being super-mom to Ranae and helping her with the 2020 Zoom-school AND welcoming guests from 6 feet apart! I'm exhausted just typing about it! Along with that we installed 5 new hot water heaters (thank you to Gene Lodes!), rearranged the lodge deck to integrate LOTS of beautiful veggies & flowers (thank you Callahans and Davie E)... But to me, the "Pièce de résistance" is Valerie's rebuilding of the path down to the swimming hole, especially after after last years mud-flow that took out the water system and everything in it's path, washing it all down to the river. She was able to widen it and line it with serenity sitting areas placed peacefully along the way!



I came to Camp Mattole twenty years ago and never left. Okay, my body did go back to the "Found" Coast after a week, but my soul remained. So my body has needed to return every year, and the Lost Coast Writers Retreat keeps getting extended by another day, making both body and soul pretty happy.

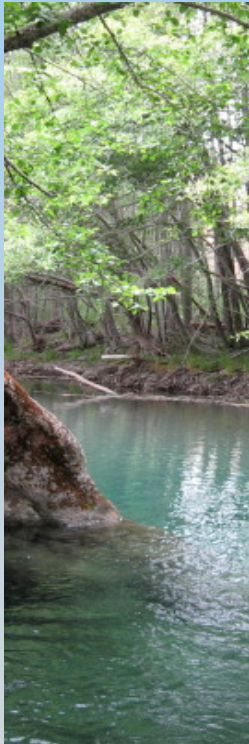
My fellow retreaters have become family. There is no better setting in which to spend days and nights together, making ridiculously delicious meals, playing music and games, lounging by the river, and of course writing and then sharing our work during an evening's author's chair. When we lost Guy Kuttner, we scattered his ashes in the sacred swimming hole at the river bend, further integrating ourselves with the landscape, the very molecules of the Mattole. And Guy then became the muse of my long poem which turned into my first published book, celebrating the Six Rivers region and revolving around Camp Mattole.

In the poem he seems to change shapes, turning into an elk, a salmon, and a kingfisher, this last being a bird we sometimes see and hear at Camp Mattole. Guy loved this bird and would try to imitate its call. We thought he kind of looked like a kingfisher with its bold stance.

So many species encountered here. So many spirits. We have lost other campers since Guy. But I expect we will all be here forever.



**Zev Levinson
Lost Coast Writers
shares his thoughts**



Lee Dedini speaks of Enjoying Summer of Covid-19
My son's family stayed a couple times at the Camp doing what you do for a summertime experience. Jill and I joined them for a walk up the river for fun at the swimming hole. We had a nice lunch outside at the picnic table and enjoyed slices of watermelon. In the evening a sheet was turned into a projection screen to watch a movie on the new covered deck. Sleeping bags were gathered around on the deck for a nice sleep out.

Overall this summer allowed families to use the Camp by themselves which was different from any other year. There was an upside to all this in that it gave families this summer quality time together.



**The Dedini Family enjoyed the Camp's Fire Pit
& a private swimming hole**

FIRE! at Mattole

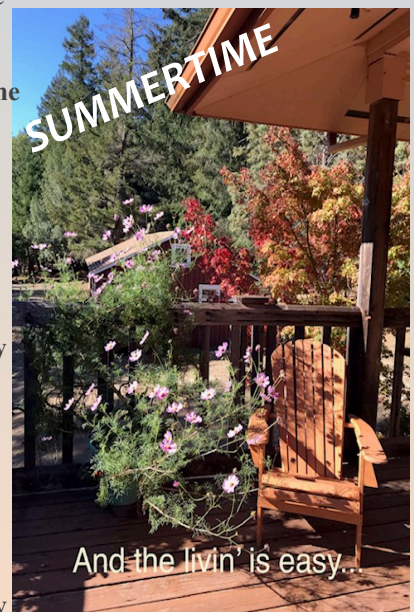
At 1:30pm on All Hallows Eve, a fire broke out in the Caretaker's Residence! With a stroke of luck it was contained in the Mudroom so we are grateful that the damage wasn't too extensive. We are MOST grateful that no one was injured! All are safe! Yay for insurance! The magic of Mattole Camp continues to amaze me!



THE DALY FAMILY HAS VISITED THE CAMP FOR SEVERAL YEARS NOW, BOTH AS VOLUNTEERS AND FRIENDS WHO JUST ENJOY THE PEACE & QUIET OF MATTOLE CAMP!!



Leaving behind the smoke of Sonoma County, we wound through the Redwood giants and up the driveway to Mattole Camp & Retreat Center, feeling an immediate sense of relief. Away from the world's great stresses, we enjoyed a small family gathering at the camp's pristine and well-maintained facilities. It was evident that steps were taken to ensure our safety from Covid, with hand sanitizer provided, and masks available if needed. The caretaker, Valerie, was attentive and kept her distance, while still ensuring that all our needs were met. There is simply no better remedy for stress than stargazing, river swimming, and family meals using the vegetables and herbs grown right on the Tan Oak Lodge deck. While the raucous days of musical gatherings are not currently possible, the sense of peace and togetherness we felt during our stay restored our souls. It's true what they say --- Oh Mattole, you're good for the soul! ~ Suz Daly



And the livin' is easy...



Luigi goose, Blue dog, Ranae, Pluma, Barn Kitty, Luigi & Sody!

Reflections from Valerie, our Caretaker!!

Since I was a kid I remember spending summers on the Mattole River with my Uncle Rich, and my red-headed cousin Crystal. My uncle was the "cool" guy but never paid us enough attention. Crystal, a year younger, could always beat me wrestling, which today, I attribute to her red hair only. As I got older my Uncle Rich took a job as the caretaker for Mattole Camp. I thought it was too much of a commitment for him at the time, but as fate would have it, he was perfect for the place and the place was perfect for him. Every year I would visit him at least once or twice and would fall in love with the camp's beauty and peacefulness. As I grew older, each time I came to visit it got harder to leave.

Finally, I couldn't take it no longer and returned with the intention of staying. I heard the camp had just lost their present caretaker so I asked for the job. It was just a little over a year ago that I was hired. I knew from the beginning as I know now, that I and my ten-year-old daughter Ranae belong at Mattole Camp and even though it has been a rocky Covid past year, we are more invested than ever. While the big groups turned into small family pods due to the pandemic, the charm and beauty of Mattole Camp still worked its magic on all those who visited. Camp has a way of doing that whether you are paying attention or not. Ranae and I are looking forward to the upcoming year and many years to follow.

COMING SOON! OUR NEWLY IMPROVED & UPDATED WEBSITE: WWW.MATTOLECAMP.COM AND "LIKE US" ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGE: [MATTOLE CAMP & RETREAT CENTER](https://www.facebook.com/mattolecamp)

\$\$\$\$ Jen speaks of \$\$\$\$\$

SEVEN years ago I volunteered to be the Treasurer/Bookkeeper for Mattole Camp & up until now, it was all even keeled. Last year at this time, camp fee revenue was \$45k. This year we're ending on the low note of \$9k. My job just became MUCH more challenging! So we put our heads together and brainstorm ways to cut expenses or increase income or BOTH! I mean ultimately we will survive, but those sweet dreams of building a Caretaker's residence will sadly remain dreams for probably a long long time. Add this to the fire, Covid, the unsettled election... Dare I use the word "HELP"!!!! ????. Soon we will be sending out our annual solicitation letter where we will, once again, ask for your prayers & your support! We would love nothing more than to welcome all our campers back with open arms next year and hear their laughter & watch them splashing in the river AND KNOWING they are wallowing in the wonders of Mattole Camp. The good news? We made some GIANT strides this year! The newly built Rotary Deck is truly amazing! I can't wait to play music in there! That metal roof will make for some lovely acoustics! We also installed 5 new hot-water heaters finally replacing those from the 80's. We fixed some electrical, we worked on the water system and on and on. I am honored to be an officer for the Mattole Council! Volunteering never felt so good and we do it all for our love of the camp! I wish you all warm & joyful holidays, celebrated with each other's health & well-being in mind... CHEERS ALWAYS!!!!

Jennifer Callen



Jennifer Karimol offers a Covid Campers review...
 I came to stay at the Mattole Camp twice this past September, first with a friend, and next time with my son and some friends. Because of the Covid pandemic, we had the entire place to ourselves. We stayed in the lodge, which was perfectly clean. I am embarrassed to say how many of the incredible tomatoes growing on the front deck that I ate. We swam in the river, only seeing the wonderful caretaker Valerie and her family in the days we were there. We spent hours playing ping-pong. It was a true Paradise and refuge from a very stressful time in our lives.

The Harmony Makers have been coming to Mattole Camp since 2008. We are many families of musicians who loved to watch our children play in the river & frolic beneath the trees, only to enjoy them now preparing dinners for their elders! We reignited the annual volunteer week from 2009 til 2016 and loved every year of it! THIS year we scaled down to meet the Covid requirements. We were 2 families and me. We missed the rest of the group, and missed the music but we managed to have an excellent time in the river, on the deck and sleeping under the stars! We look forward to reuniting with the whole group next year! (We can only dream!) Jennifer Callen



MATTOLE CAMP & RETREAT CENTER has many openings for future dates! Our special Covid winter rates are \$35/person/night! Enjoy lounging by the fire in the main lodge while the cookies bake, or the songs are played. BE UNPLUGGED and thrive in the wonders of Mattole Camp & Retreat Center!



MATTOLE CAMP AND RETREAT CENTER
36841 MATTOLE ROAD, PETROLIA, CA 95558

The Mattole Camp Council created this newsletter to inform the community of current events, projects and future plans for Mattole Camp. The Mattole Meanderings is published annually and is available free of charge.

Mattole Camp & Retreat Center is a non-profit organization owned by the Presbytery of the Redwoods and managed by the Mattole Council in Bayside, CA. Please check out our website!
www.mattolecamp.com



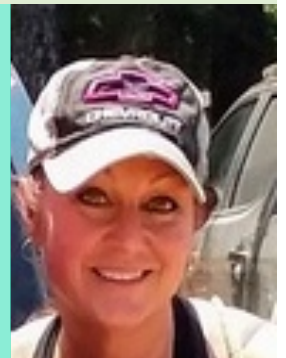
If you have any questions or would like information about the camp, or would like to contribute to the newsletter, please feel free to call:
 707 629-3308
 or e-mail:
info@mattolecamp.com



The Mattole Camp Council
 (and newly elected
 Christie McLain)



and the
**T
 CARE
 K
 E
 R**



Gene Callahan (member), Jennifer Callen (Treasurer/Bookkeeper/Marketing), Lee Dedini (Vice Chair), David Goodman (Chair), Kathy Schmidt (member), Pastor Dan Link (Member), Carrie O'Neill (Secretary), Christie McLain (Member) & Valerie (Caretaker)