



NEWSLETTER of the Carpinteria Valley Historical Society

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January/February 2011

CALENDAR

Happy New Year!

January 26—Wednesday
Board of Trustees Meeting
6 P.M.



January 29—Saturday
MUSEUM MARKETPLACE
8 a.m. - 3 P.M.



February 23—Wednesday
Board of Trustees Meeting
6 P.M.



February 26—Saturday
MUSEUM MARKETPLACE
8 a.m. - 3 P.M.



March 26—Saturday
MUSEUM MARKETPLACE
8 a.m. - 3 P.M.



April 21—Thursday
FIELD TRIP to the
L.A. County Museum of Art
10:00 a.m. - 6:00 P.M.



VALLEY HISTORY

Reggie Reynolds and his Legendary Bait Shop

By Jon Washington

Jon Washington has “cast his net” wide to gather stories about Reggie Reynolds, whose Bait & Tackle Shop on Palm Ave. was a familiar haunt for local and visiting fisherman from 1941-1975. The tiny shop was also a magnet for the candy-loving scholars of Main School, who would sneak across the road during recess.

Reggie was a busy entrepreneur, and his activities included writing “Off the Surf,” a weekly a column for The Carpinteria Herald. So we are lucky to still hear his own voice, telling about fishing and other local lore with his hallmark enthusiasm, often signing his columns “Your Fishing Friend, Reg Reynolds.”

There’s no denying that Reggie was eccentric—people remember him wearing 2 wool sweaters and a Greek fisherman’s cap over his rickety glasses. And some of the suggestions put forward in his column seem wildly far-fetched, as we will see. But he also had a devoted following of fishermen of all ages, whose contributions here testify to his positive influence on their lives. Everyone remembers his Rod and Reel Club, with the special initiation handshake. And his jokes—always highly original! And, although most fish stories are about “the big one that got away,” Reggie’s tale includes the huge one the he managed to reel in. Read on!

Reggie Reynolds grew up in Janesville, Iowa, near the fish-rich Cedar River, where his grandfather taught him to fish. He was 20-year-old farm boy when he shipped overseas to serve in World War I, and his experiences there may explain some of his eccentricity. John McCafferty, Class of CUHS '53, who fished with Reggie in the 1940s, said, “I had heard that he was a gas attack victim in WW I, and that accounted for his sort of stuttering, chuckling way of talking, as well as his somewhat eccentric lifestyle in the little house, selling frozen mussels and anchovies and making funny-looking fishing rods.”

It was the Depression when 34-year-old Reggie and his mother, Ermina Shepard Reynolds arrived in Carpinteria, no doubt drawn here by the success that her older brothers Jim and (John) Henry Shepard had made of Shepard’s Inn and Stanley Park, respectively. The house that Reggie and his mother rented on Palm Ave. was small and run-down. It belonged to the Hardy family, who owned 5 acres stretching back along the extension of Sixth St., with several houses on it. At the time that Reggie retired and tried (unsuccessfully) to sell his business, monthly rent on the house was \$60.

Reggie recalled his early years in Carpinteria in his "Off the Surf" column in 1975, shortly before he retired:

When I first moved to Carpinteria in 1931 to a little country home at 586 Palm Avenue, the two Fish sisters and their brother managed the park below along the sand dunes at Palm Ave. up to Linden.... Our short pier, built by the County, extended over 100 feet into the ocean. As fishing was wonderful in those days, the pier was loaded on both sides. While fishing into the night, the pier was lit up like a Christmas tree with lanterns. Boy! It was a pleasure to go down fishing off the pier for perch and corbina that were in the surf by the thousands.

Those fish could be caught on fresh mussels and clams that the campers gathered from rocks, or sand crabs dug up in the wet sand. It was sure a paradise to come up to the Carpinteria Valley for a vacation...

It would be 10 years after arriving here that Reggie opened his bait and tackle business in the front room, which measured a modest 10' x 20'. What little we know of those 10 intervening years comes from later "Off the Surf" columns, which he wrote from 1968-1976. Reggie wrote, "In 1939, I was sick with anemia, and was in the General Hospital in Goleta until 1941, when the Japanese war broke out. In that time, as I was a cartoonist in my younger life, I drew up 30 large pictures of pen etchings. These I later hung in my shop, for my customers to view, little dreaming they were going to be famous in the years to come."

It may have been while Reggie was in the hospital that his mother's brother Lee Shepard came to Carpinteria. It's not clear whether he actually lived in the Reynolds' house on Palm Ave., but once Reggie opened his shop, his uncle spent a lot of time there. Russ Salzgeber, who lived nearby in the State Beach Park where his dad was head ranger, recalled that in the 1950s, "For many years when you walked in the front door, to your left, sitting in an overstuffed chair was a white-haired guy in an overcoat, no matter what time of year. I was told it was Reggie's uncle, Lee Shepard, a retired dentist from Chicago. A man of few words as I remember."

Maverick Entrepreneur

In 1941, upon his discharge from the hospital, Reggie launched his business:

I made bamboo Calcutta rods by the dozens each week, and I bought a small flat top freezer for bait, and tied thousands of hooks and leaders. It sure was hard sledding, trying to get the trade to come to my home where I had a little tackle shop in my large front room. Then I hit upon a brilliant plan of my own, a free Rod and Reel Club. I

printed up hundreds of cards by hand with a rubber stamp, and went around town signing up the merchants. Key Mullen managed a cleaning parlor on Linden Ave., and he was the first member I had. I filled several pages of my book with other merchants. Then I started sending out cards to movie actors, like Dennis Day, Phil Harris, Arthur Godfrey, Art Linkletter, Bing Crosby, Harry Carey Jr., Fred MacMurray, and Hopalong Cassidy.

Then I had another idea. I sent [membership cards] to President Eisenhower, President Jon Kennedy, President Lyndon Johnson, Governor Goodwin Knight, and in return I received personally autographed pictures from each of them. It thrilled me to get all of them in my Club, and I placed them in frames and hung them in my shop for my friends to see.

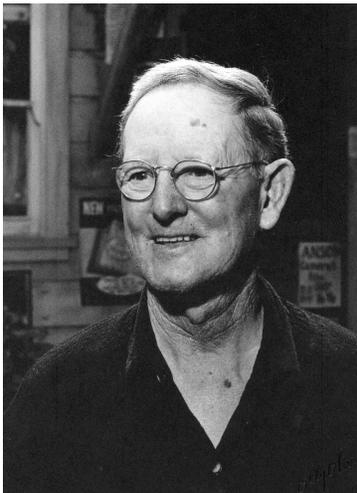
From 1941 until now, my club expanded, until last Thursday, Nov. 30,[1971] my club went over the 50,000 mark. The largest FREE FISHING CLUB in the WORLD. At 75 years, I have reached this huge goal, and my heart beats with pride, to accomplish such a feat, without any help from anyone. I have put in 10 hours a day (7a.m.-5 p.m.) every day in the year.

One person who recalls Reggie's entrepreneurial skills is businessman and former beach camper Kevin Liebl, who gave me permission to quote from his website, where he describes his meeting with Reggie:

When I was about 8 years old, we spent most summer weekends camping in Carpinteria, CA—a sleepy

beach community known for having "the world's safest beach." Surprisingly, my parents let me explore the small town on my own. I remember leaving the campground one morning in the summer of 1971, riding my bike up Palm Ave. and noticing a small bait-and-tackle shop. It was covered with signs selling fishing gear, soda, beer and artwork by the proprietor—Reggie Reynolds. The sign that caught my eye said "JOIN MY FREE FISHING CLUB." I parked my bike, walked up and opened the door.

Having a larger-than-life grandfather who told non-stop stories about fishing in Minnesota, I couldn't help but taking a liking to the owner. Reggie was a crusty old fisherman who sold more stories than he did product. As I entered the store, I couldn't decide whether to take in the overwhelming clutter of fishing paraphernalia, beer/soda signs, candy, and general junk, or to keep my eyes on Reggie, who was introducing himself. He immediately asked if I wanted to join his Rod and Reel Club, and began explaining that I would have to pass his "initiation." Somewhat intimidated, I agreed, and he shook my hand, and as he did, he tugged on it as if I had a fish on the



Reg Reynolds, photo by Carpinteria Herald photographer Olly Olivas, March, 1958. Museum archives photo.



Reg's Bait & Tackle Shop on Palm Avenue. Photo by Tom Moore. Museum archives photo.

line, and said, "Hey lad, you have a big one on the line!" He laughed and said "you have just been initiated." Then I signed his membership book while he filled out an official membership card. We both signed, and it was official. I carried that card in my wallet for years. Reggie claimed to have over 50,000 members in his club. I didn't doubt it for a minute.

Each time we visited Carpinteria I would go visit Reggie and we became good friends. He would tell me stories of fishing, running a business, and general life's lessons.

Kevin Liebl writes on his motivational website, "It doesn't matter if you are the CEO of a large company.... or the proprietor of a bait and tackle shop. Be amazing at what you do. Do it with style, authenticity and sincerity. People may remember you much longer than you ever thought they would."

One of those who remembers Reggie well is Russ Salzgeber:

Reggie was the village unique, a one-of-a-kind citizen, a loner, known to everybody in town as the guy who ran the bait and tackle shop down by the railroad tracks on Palm Avenue. My dad ran the State Park and we lived a few hundred feet across the tracks from Reg's shop.

Reggie was always cheerful and people would greet him by name and ask him something about fishing when they saw him around town. He was seemingly a one-dimensional guy, but in reality he was an eccentric, eclectic, multi-talented being. He was always involved in something new when he wasn't fishing.

He did pen and ink drawings, he wrote articles for the paper, he taught himself to read music and learned to play the accordion in the 1950s, which was the decade I knew him in.

He'd have to walk past our front door to get to the beach so we saw him often. Many a time I'd walk with him a little, or go fishing with him if he was going to the pier. He gave my brother and me drop-lines and taught us how to rig the line and, over time, how to use fishing poles to cast, etc. Poor Reg would spend a lot of his time unraveling the backlashes I would cause in my reel when trying to cast long distances. He was patient and kind to us kids.

Reggie and the "Tom Sawyers"

Reggie was a great encourager of the young. "I liked to see all the 'Tom Sawyers' and their desire to become fishermen," he wrote. "I used to fix special drop-lines for kids to start fishing with. I used good green nylon line and attached appropriate leader, hooks, and sinkers." Tom Galvez '73 recalled those green nylon drop-lines. "My father José introduced me to Reggie, and I joined his club and bought sodas and candy there," he said. And Tom Colson '64 knew that if his line got tangled, he could always take it to Reggie, who would untangle it for him. Reggie was also an "official" mechanic for the Penn Fishing

Reel Co., whose metal sign was the only one on the front of the shop that was not hand-made.

I, Jon Washington, am another of the hundreds of young fisherman who remember Reggie. When I was about ten, Percy Houts (one-time Carp Lemon House manager) took me and his grandson Ricky Benedict into the Bait & Tackle shop, where we got some drop-lines and signed up for Reggie's Rod and Reel Club. And former Carpinteria Mayor Gregg Carty tells me that somewhere he still has his membership card from Reggie's club.

"Reggie's place was like walking into a tunnel," Jack Risdon '57 told the *Coastal View News* in 2002. "Poles hung from the ceiling. He made them from bamboo...and he kept the bait in the same cooler with the ice cream!"

Reggie's mother was rarely seen by customers of the bait shop, but his uncle Lee Shepard would mind the store during Reggie's daily trips to the pier. Mrs. Reynolds died in 1956, and is buried in the Carpinteria Cemetery.

From 1957-1969 the State Park Ranger was George Johnson, husband of local historian Sadie Hales Johnson. Their son Mark '71 recalls:

I knew Reg, and was even related to him on my mother's side of the family. My dad used to kid me about "you and your relative!" Reg's Tackle Shop had great bait and tackle, and very stale candy. The candy was kept in a glass case, and the sun shone in on it, so when you opened a chocolate bar it would be white instead of brown!

Reg also told the worst jokes around! Such as: "Did you ever hear about the crocheted galoshes? They didn't leak because they were crow-shade!" (black). He would also give you the "hydromatic hand-shake"--when your hands met there was no grip ("no clutch!"). (This joke dates back to when the first automatic transmissions were called "hydromatic.")

Russ Salzgeber also remembers Reggie's jokes:

One day while I was leaving Main school I ran into Reg and he asked me if they taught "goezinto"? I said I didn't know, and he said "You mean you haven't learned 2 goes into 4, 4 goes into 8?" Then he laughed. He was often good for a joke. Every Christmas he would give my brother and me a box of Snickers bars or something. Great guy. They don't make 'em like that anymore.

One "Tom Sawyer" upon whom Reggie had a lifelong influence is Thomas Cappiello '81, now an avid fly and salt-water fisherman and a fisheries biologist with the Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game. He writes:

Kitty-corner from Main School, at 586 Palm Ave., was Reg's Bait Shop. Most kids crossed the street for the candy, but I was there to drool over the photos of fish and learn everything I could about how to catch surf perch, halibut and the elusive corbina, and other piscatorial attractions on this rich part of the California coastline. At the time, Reg was cranking out his weekly fishing articles in *The Carpinteria Herald*. I could hardly wait--because the paper came out on Wednesday, it gave



One of Reg's "Tom Sawyers," Fran Gesswein (CUHS Class of '57) proudly displays an impressive stringer of fish in front of the bait & tackle shop circa 1949. Photo courtesy of Diana Rockwell Gesswein.

me just enough time to plan my weekend. I feel so fortunate to have been a kid growing up so close to the beach. All I had to do was grab my fishing rod and walk a few minutes.

What I really like about Reg's articles is their enthusiasm, and appreciative mystique about the various fish species, their life history, feeding habitats, and how to catch them. They were also a quick introduction to the rhythms of nature, and how to apply one's self, accordingly: Get up in the morning when the tide is low to get the bait, fish during the flood tide. Simple concepts indeed, but as I look back on those early years they were poignant, mentoring, and character-developing. I was born a fancier of fish; as soon as I could hold a fishing rod my grandfather guided me to the angling art. But my encounter with Reg came at a time that truly initiated my life's direction. With Reg, there was just so much more to baiting the hook and reeling in a fish. (Most of the Reg's columns quoted here come from Tom Cappiello's collection. He plans to compile them into a book in the near future. Read more at his website, offthesurf.com)

Another of Reggie's promotional brainstorms was to type up and reproduce one-page tide charts, with an ad for his bait and tackle shop. As Russ Salzgeber describes,

One of my summer jobs was hand delivering the *Carp Herald* newspaper to every campsite in the park. Reg paid me 75 cents a week to stuff a weekly tide chart with his address on it into every paper. (The local movie theater gave me a buck twenty-five to stuff their monthly flyer in!) Reg was a savvy businessman behind his simple manner. His fishing club was famous and huge. Many people would come to Carp just to fish with Reg. I know Jay Silverheels (Tonto in the Lone Ranger movies) would come and camp in the park and fish with Reg.

Reggie's neighbor on Palm Ave. was Lester Koehler, longtime custodian at Main School. Lester still lives there, and recalls Reggie with affection: "He was something of a loner, I guess, but we were friends for a long time, even though I was not a fisherman. He was an environmentalist, fretting about bottles and other items not being recycled."

Another Palm Ave. neighbor was young Mike Millett '68, who recalls:

What stands out in my mind are the pictures on his wall and the "fishy" smell. There were pictures of locals, but mostly of tourists, who had purchased bait or gear from the shop and then proceeded to catch a halibut or a shark, most likely from the pier. The photos were all black-and-white, some Polaroids, but most came from someone's Brownie.

If I went fishing during daylight hours I would go down and pry my own mussels off the rocks, but if it were late in the day or I needed some hooks or sinkers then I would stop in and buy a frozen tray of squid or clams. Reggie's shop was permeated with the smell of squid or anchovies—even the candy and ice creams seemed to have a faint smell of fish. The floors always had a film of beach sand and the shop itself was so small that sometimes you would have to stand outside and wait your turn. When I hear the term "small business," I think

of Reggie—that was about as basic as it gets, the American Dream in its purest form.

Another longtime friend was Dr. Warren Sears, now aged 91. "I met Reggie the day I moved to Carpinteria, in 1946," he told me. "I bought one of his hand-made, colorful fishing poles. But disaster struck almost immediately—I got my line, my tackle and ultimately my pole caught on some sort of barricade off the end of the pier. The next day I went back to Reggie's and bought a second pole. It worked out better!"

John McCafferty '53 recalled his "fishing phase" in about 7th grade:

I spent hour after hour on the pier after school. Bought a lot of bait from Reg Reynolds, in the pleasantly smelly front room of his house....Reg was amusing to be with. He seemed like a happy, funny guy who loved his life. He would tell me how great the fishing was and sometimes showed me piles of cleaned surf perch and corbina from his fridge. "Boy," he'd say, winking and smacking his lips, "that makes a fine platter of fish for dinner."

Reg made funny-looking, thick wooden rods, bright-colored and looking like big toys to me. I couldn't afford to buy one.

He would always say "the perch are really bitin'," and for him this was true. He was one of those people who just seem to have constant good luck as well as skill, and he knew how to fish in the surf, always on the west side of the pier. I watched him cast hooks with big clumps of mussel well out into the surf, where the waves begin to break.

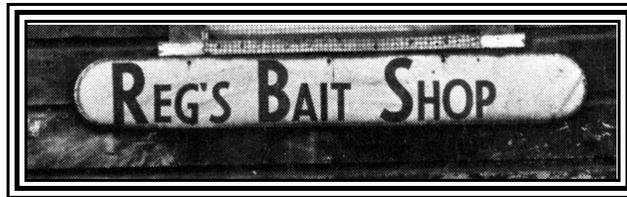
The fish kept biting for him, but never for me. I reasoned that deeper water would result in bigger fish. Also, drop lines were hard to use in the surf, and so day after day I caught nothing from the end of the pier but big sand sharks, mostly shovel-nosed variety, and people I knew weren't eating shark in those days. So I got "skunked" time after time, while Reg fished on and on, taking home lots of delicious perch and corbina.

George Coshow '56 adds, "I saved my allowance money and the little I made sweeping out Mills Drug Store before school (8th grade) and bought a clunky, hand-made bamboo rod from Reggie which I still have. I can still feel the sense of anticipation of catching fish as I left Reggie's store. I never was, and am still not, a lucky fisherman, but fishing is 95% anticipation, to this day."

John Baker '61 echoes this:

My first question to Reg was always "What are they biting on?" He would give me his "fish story" for the day and recommend some kind of bait. I would leave with high expectation of catching something that would feed four that evening. Never caught anything of size—only smelt, which I fed to the cat.

Reg would usually show up on the pier at some time during the day. With his huge pole, he would cast half way to the islands, and many times catch something of size. It would make one want to go buy a new fishing rig from Reg. This is what today we call "direct sales!" He would throw his fish in a bucket and return to the store—he was not one to linger on the pier.



One of many hand-lettered signs from Reg's storefront.

The Big One that Didn't Get Away

No one who was there will forget the day around 1952 when Reggie hooked a 49-lb. halibut off the pier. He played it for 2-1/2 hours before landing it on the beach, in front of



Reggie with his whopping 49-lb. halibut. Photo courtesy Thomas Cappiello.

numerous witnesses. "My dad, Olen Branscom, was there," said Ron Branscom '57. So was classmate Bob Westfall, who "witnessed the halibut, and heard Reggie say that he had just caught 'the barn door'!" And instead of putting it "in the dinner pot," Reggie hung the trophy fish outside his shop. Mark Johnson is too young to have seen that halibut, but either heard of it or remembers another of Reggie's catches that "was very large, and he hung it outside his shop! The fish was left hanging out there until it gradually dropped by itself."

Bob Westfall recalls meeting Reg when he was about 12:

I was new to the area, and living on Maple St., so it was a short walk to Reg's to buy bait. My grandfather Kenline gave me a trout pole, and I would walk to the old Carp pier for anything I could catch. Reg would almost always show up sometime during the day. He was one of my idols because he could cast almost to the kelp beds, which was quite a distance from the pier. He always caught bigger fish than anybody else, and if not bigger, he caught more. Most of the fish off the pier were sand sharks, leopards and puffers. One day he caught a large lobster that ended up in the pot for dinner!

I occasionally worked for Reg hoeing weeds and other odd jobs. I once won a reel in a fishing contest, and Reg gave me a pole and some line to go with it. I still have the pole and reel. And one of Reg's favorite sayings still rings in my head: "Yep, you bet yah!"

Several generations of school children knew Reggie not through fishing, but through the lure of candy. "We would sneak out the gate of the schoolyard at Palm and 6th and run across the street with our nickels and dimes for candy," recalled Gwyn Sturmer (Colson), '63. "The idea was to get your contraband and back into the schoolyard before recess ended or the yard monitor caught you! And I remember Reg's favorite joke: 'What is the biggest race in the world? The human race!'" Sandy Granaroli (Pierce)'62 says, "Recently I was telling my granddaughter how I would sneak off the school grounds and go to the bait shop and buy candy. Never got caught! I can remember the smells in there—ocean air and the smell of bait." Lori Shaw writes, "He was the resource for penny candy for all the kids of Carp. I also remember his art that was hanging all over the shop." And John Baker recalls "the wax teeth and the small wax bottles containing sugar water. Also the small droplets of candy anchored to a roll of paper. Not today's choice, I'm sure!" Tom Colson says he quit buying candy at Reggie's when it was rumored that someone had found a worm in a candy bar!

Artist, Self-Publisher and Dreamer

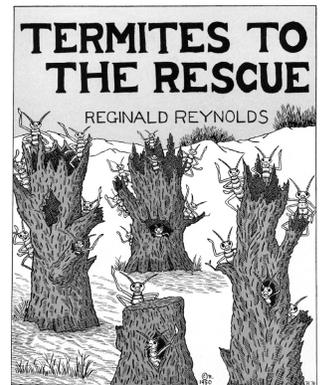
Reggie tells us "I was a cartoonist in my younger life," and many people remember his pen and ink drawings on the walls of the shop. Raymond Lane, former Carp fireman, recalls Reg's "nice pencil drawings," and Mark Johnson adds, "Reg was an artist, doing many pen & ink drawings for local postcards, and illustrating his original book, *Termites to the Rescue*." According to one of Reggie's columns, "in 1966 some printers came up from Los Angeles, and they suggested that I have my work made into place-setting mats. I had a number of them off-set printed, 9 x 12 inches, which I sold in my shop." He also printed up postcards from his drawings.

But his most ambitious project was the illustrated picture book, *Termites to the Rescue*, published in 1958 by the Speedo Sales Card Co., Hemet, CA. Roxie Grant Lapidus '62 read the museum's copy, and reports:

It's something of a moral tale, profusely illustrated with pen-and-ink drawings. In it Reggie returns to the landscape of his Iowa youth—"Pleasant Valley" is set in the "wheat growing belt," and when we read the exchanges between the young boy Jim and his dad, we can almost imagine we are hearing young Reggie and his father:

"Dad, I think I will take the day off and go down to Boulder Creek and catch a nice mess of trout. Is it all right with you?"

"Sure, son. The work is kind of slack, and a nice mess of trout wouldn't go so bad."



Reg's children's book cover.



The book's hero, Jim, goin' fishin'.

The tale involves Jim helping a crippled termite, who promises to return the favor. When an evil money-lender comes to the valley and starts lending to farmers and then secretly burning their crops and barns so that

he can foreclose, the termites come "to the rescue," chewing his house down as he sleeps and carrying away the deeds to the farms, which are restored to their rightful owners.

We can't help wondering if this fanciful tale has some grains of truth in the Depression-era farm country that Reggie and his mother left behind them in 1931. And we can imagine Reggie, pen in hand, sitting at his kitchen table in the evenings after putting in 10



The evil Nicholas Pincher's home is destroyed by fast-working "Termites to the Rescue."

hours at the shop, slowly developing his tale. He spent at least 8 years on it, for the cover art is dated 1950, while the copyright date is 1958. But as a fisherman, Reggie had learned the art of patience.

Lou Panizzon '59 recalls some far-fetched schemes that Reggie put forward:

I recall two Reggie stories, which were probably in his column for the old *Carpinteria Herald*. Reggie thought that giant fans should be built on the mountains behind Carp so that when the fog came in, the fans could be turned on and the fog blown away! Also, he suggested that the canyons behind Carp could be dammed and salt water piped up to them, so we could have salt water fishing in the mountains!

These may have been far-fetched, but are just more evidence that Reggie's brain was always in high gear—imagining, inventing, problem-solving, dreaming up jokes to entertain his customers, building his colorful rods, drawing pictures, and ever-optimistic. He never gave up. Even as his health began to fail, he continued to write his cheerful columns.

The hand-typed letter that Reggie tapped out in 1974 and sent to “prospective buyers” of his business is a poignant document. It begins, “*Due to not being well, after 43 years of work in my shop, I am obliged to sell my Bait and Tackle Shop, for \$3,000 cash, as is.*” He goes on to describe the shop's assets, which include 2 refrigerators, which “*held a big stock of ice cold pop, and close to 600 pounds of frozen bait.*” He also has “*over two thousand dollars of hand-tied hooks, and hooks and surf leaders. Over a thousand dollars worth of sinkers. And a thousand and one other leaders, lures, reels, all kinds of lines, of clear nylon, and monofil green lines. A large box of my original postal cards.*” He goes on to list the furniture and kitchen fixtures, which includes a “*four burner flat top Edgewood gas stove.*” There is “*a large zenith tv, that plays good. This tv cost me five hundred dollars when I bought it. On roof is a high antenna, that brings in most stations.*” Then there is “*a large candy counter, that holds several hundred dollars of candy. Potato ships and fritoes in two boxes. All kinds of reel parts for Penn reels. I am selling as is, take it or leave it, as I am not able to count all my stock. I have enough stock to run for several years.*”

Then Reggie added the special, sure-fire lure to his hook:

My huge FREE Rod and Reel Club of over 49 thousand members goes with the shop. This club draws thousands of fishermen into my shop each year, and is a big drawing card, if kept free.

I am taking my own articles, such as my famous drawing's out, and my personal effects, such as clothing, and some dishes and pots and pans.

If anyone is interested and wishes to see my shop, and home, they can call on me. I have been paying rent of \$60 a month for the past 25 years, of the 43 years I have been in my home. My landlady, Mrs. Hardie lives in back of me, and is very nice to get along with. If you do not want to live in the home, you can just use it as a store, and open each morning.

I am open from 7 a.m., until 5 p.m. daily. If I hadn't took sick this year, my shop would have been worth lots more to buy.

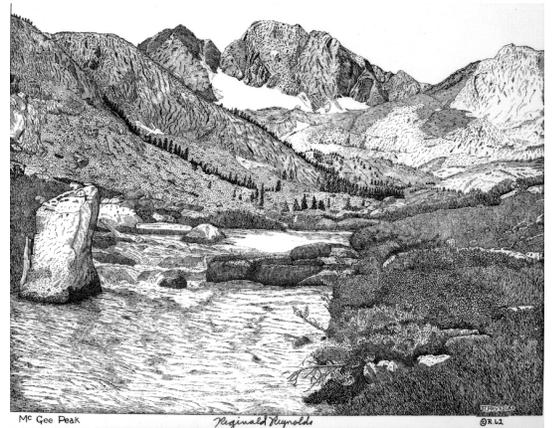
*Yours respectfully,
Reg Reynolds*

Unfortunately, this time Reggie could not reel anything in. He kept the shop going for another year or two, but around 1976 he closed his doors and moved south to Fullerton. When local historian Jayne Caldwell published her *Carpinteria As It Was*, she sent Reggie a copy, and he wrote back to her from a convalescent hospital, on Jan. 2, 1980, just a few days before his 83rd birthday:

All the Shepards and my family had a lot to do with the building of the valley. My grandfather was a stone mason and when they landed in Santa Barbara...all the way from Janesville, Iowa, in the early days, they spread out in Santa Barbara, clear down to Carpinteria Valley, taking up land for farms and later opening two tourist Inns, that were famous all over the country.

My grandfather, being a stone mason, built all the walls around the old Santa Barbara Mission, when it was 100 years old. Those were the days! I just love Carpinteria Valley and I wish now I had bought some property when I was in business there, for 44 years in the bait and tackle business. And the largest Rod and Reel Club in the world. Fifty-two thousand members from all parts of the world. It was fun signing my customers up and giving them my famous hand-shake, “A fish takes hold, and takes off,” and I gave them a quick pull. Then I would take time off and go with a bunch of fishermen to my famous place of fish, off the shores, from Sandy Cove down to Ventura pier. Oh, it was sure fun, and I wish I could live it all over again.

The old house on Palm Ave. remained unoccupied after Reggie left, and we can't help wondering what happened to all that stuff—the hundreds of hooks, lures,



“McGee Peak” ink drawing print by Reg Reynolds.

and leaders, the handmade poles—even the candy sitting in the glass case. Had he managed to get rid of most of it before leaving, or did it just sit there for years, gathering dust? Reggie died in Fullerton around 1981, and his kinsman Mark Johnson recalls, “My father told me that after Reg died, he went into the back of Reg's shop, where he lived. Dad found all of Reg's savings tucked away in his mattress, in the form of cash. We never heard the amount of Reg's savings, or what became of them.” One more tale in the legend of Reggie Reynolds!

The house at 586 Palm Ave. remains empty to this day. Bob Westfall reports that “a few years back I walked into a bait shop on Carpinteria Ave. and Reg's old Bait Shop sign was on the wall. The owner told me he found it in back of the old house (shop), which still exists on Palm Ave. That sign would be one treasure I would love to possess. Those days I will always treasure, and I feel privileged to have known him!”

Mark Johnson adds, "Reg Reynolds was quite a character, and is remembered by many a young man whom he instructed and encouraged in the art of fishing."

And former beach camper Kevin Liebl recently wrote on his website, (link to his blog: <http://ow.ly/3Bxci>)

As we planned our family vacation this year, we decided to rent a beach house in Carpinteria. As I sit writing this (with my feet in the sand), I am realizing that I haven't been here for 35 years. While purchasing candy at Robitaille's today, I met Lorenzo Martinez, who remembered Reggie, and we shared a moment laughing about his "initiation handshake." At the Historical Museum, I purchased a postcard showing the front of Reggie's Bait and Tackle Shop. I had been told that the building was long gone, but I decided to walk down Palm Ave. to see if I could find the location where I remembered the bait shop. Amazingly, I found the building exactly where I remembered it—40 years after meeting Reggie. It had been repainted, but was unmistakably the same. Even the address—586—was still over the doorway. I walked up to the front door, and saw something that made the hair on the back of my neck stand on end. Someone had written with their finger in the dust on the front window,

"REGGIE'S GONE FISHING!"

Editor's Note: Our museum has developed a Reg Reynolds archive through the years, partly as a result of the many folks visiting the museum and asking about Reg and the bait shop. Besides the copy of his children's book, "Termites to the Rescue" mentioned in this article, we have his letters to Jayne Caldwell, his letter of inventory when trying to sell his shop, and several prints of his pen & ink drawings. The shop sign has been promised to the museum several times through the years, but has yet to be donated. We would love to be able to add to this important special collection; so, if any of you readers have a Rod & Reel Club membership card, or any other Reggie artifacts (a colorful bamboo fishing rod would be very nice!) to donate to the museum, please don't hesitate to call or e-mail David here at the museum. ☺

MUSEUM NEWS

MUSEUM RECEIVES THREE GRANTS

The Museum has been awarded a **\$5,000 grant from the Wood-Claeyssens Foundation** of Santa Barbara to be used for general operating expenses to supplement revenue from membership dues, endowment fund earnings, and our fund-raising events. Another grant of **\$5,000 has been received from the Smith-Walker Foundation**, also to be used for general museum operations. We thank historical society member and Smith-Walker Foundation trustee, Jean Goodrich, for her generous support of our work. Additionally, a grant of **\$500 has been received from the Agnes B. Kline Memorial Foundation** in support of our free educational programs for children. We truly appreciate the sustained support shown the Society by the above noted foundations.

On another note, we also wish to recognize the **generous contributions made by our board of trustees** which provides most of the refreshments enjoyed by the those who attended the annual Holiday Open House. Thanks, also, to **Trader Joe's**, which donates a wonderful variety of fare, and an extra special thanks to **Case Van Wingerden** and **Westland Floral** for donating the beautiful poinsettias to dress up the museum for this beloved traditional community event. ☺

GREAT TREASURE-HUNTING

The popular benefit **Museum Marketplace** will resume its *last-Saturday-of-the-month* schedule on **January 29 from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 P.M.** The market features over 70 vendors of vintage goods, antiques, collectibles, handcrafted gifts and jewelry, plants, books, furniture, clothing, household items and much more!! As always, we appreciate your tax-deductible donations of items to the museum's used treasures booth. Donations may be dropped off at the museum's back patio at any time. Future marketplace dates are **February 26** and **March 26.** ☺

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

We wish to extend a warm welcome to our newest members:

*Stephen & Gale Abram
Barbara Howell
Adrienne Kaplan
John Kuizenga
Dennis Hanson & Kris Rehler
Matt & Katie Roberts
Brian Tappeiner*

And a very special welcome to our newest Life Members:

Robert & Joan Hollman

Just a reminder to send in your membership dues for the 2010-2011 membership year which began on October 1st. Please save us the expense of mailing out reminder notices, and save resources, too! Your dues are critical in helping us to meet our operating expenses. For any questions regarding your membership status, call David at the museum. **Many thanks** to those of you who have already renewed. ☺

TRIP TO L.A. COUNTY MUSEUM OF ART

A bus trip to visit the "Transformation" of the **Los Angeles County Museum of Art** is planned for **Thursday, April 21.** If you haven't visited in the last two years, you haven't seen the **LACMA.** In the course of this ten year expansion, major exhibits of permanent collections have been revamped, and many new galleries have opened. The *Broad Contemporary Art Museum at LACMA* opened in 2008 and features 60,000 square feet of exhibition space on three floors. Just opened in October of 2010, the *Resnick Pavilion*, a single-story, 45,000 square foot structure, is the largest purpose-built, naturally lit, open-plan museum space in the world. We will publish more about this trip in the March newsletter, or you may visit the LACMA website at <http://lacma.org> to learn more of its exhibitions and additions. Cost for historical society members only \$39. See reservation form on back of newsletter or call David at 684-3112 for more info or to reserve. ☺

MEMORIALS

DOUG BAILARD: Thomas Bailard.

WEBSTER BECKSTEAD: The Bailey Family.

ROSAMOND UPSON HALL: Claire T. Roberts.

GLEN HICKEY: Thelma Todd.

THELMA HICKEY MARVIN: Thelma Todd.

VIRGINIA ROCKWELL: Phyllis Hansen.

DON TRELOAR: Doug & Donna Treloar; Phyllis Hansen; Dan & Marie Spiegle. ☺

CARPINTERIA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

956 Maple Avenue • Carpinteria, California 93013 • (805) 684-3112

Address Service Requested

Non Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Santa Barbara, CA



The Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Trip Date: Thursday, April 21, 2011

Depart Carpinteria Museum 10:00 a.m. Return 6:00 P.M.

FIELD TRIP RESERVATION FORM

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Zip _____

Phone _____

Number of reservations:

Members @ \$39 _____ Non-members @ \$49 _____ TOTAL: _____

**Return this form with check payable to: Carpinteria Valley Historical Society or (C.V.H.S.)
956 Maple Avenue, Carpinteria, CA 93013**