

# Letters Home

Two campers recall long summer camp days and memories that will last a lifetime. **BY CALIN VAN PARIS**

**K**IDS SAY THE darndest things — especially when they're miles away at summer camp. And while that letter about the old toothless alligator that lives in the lake may be funny in retrospect, it was likely disconcerting to the parents reading back at home. Here are two collections of letters from local campers who made it home safe and sound.



**M** Dear Mom-Dad-Scott-Ego-  
 am really having fun here  
 my counselor is very nice when  
 in my cabin I can't wait  
 until I can't wait to see you!  
 Dinky, Ego, Scott, Mom, Dad, Scott, Ego  
 Barry

NAME Barry Murray cabin Roundup  
 Unpacked and settled Julie Murray  
 Visit the nurse Judy Kuhn  
 Goodbye to parents Judy Kuhn  
 Faced a flood Judy Kuhn  
 Riding test Judy Kuhn  
 Swimming test Judy Kuhn  
 Got T shirt & Crafts shop Judy Kuhn  
 Promptness Prize Martha Wilman

Dear Mom and Dad,  
 I found a friend -  
 her name is Anne.  
 I have been to the  
 Nurse.  
 I went on a horse  
 for the first time.  
 I had a swimming  
 test. And  
 I went to get  
 a new shirt.  
 Love,  
 Barry

7/24/77  
 Dear Mom, Dad, Ego, Beachhouse and Tr,  
 (Scott is his home)  
 Got ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~letter~~ <sup>letter</sup> of your letter today.  
 Sorry to hear your shoulder  
 is sore, but so am I from  
 riding skater (very bumpy gates)  
 A girl in my cabin, not too seriously,  
 hurt riding him (not too seriously)  
 The horse fell, tried to get up and  
 when landed on her.  
 My counselor's birthday was  
 today, so she is sharing the  
 cake with us (sorry this is  
 messy, but I'm writing on my  
 bed. Please send me "Tales of the City"  
 if you have time. I also received  
 your package. Thank you!  
 I'll write ~~later~~ later  
 Love,  
 Barry

DEAR Mom and Dad  
 Scott and I are  
 having lots of fun  
 I would like to  
 stay another week  
 Scott ~~would~~ not.  
 I Love it here.  
 Love,  
 Barry

Barry Murray (now Kuhn) is seated on the bottom row, second from the right. She addressed her letters to her parents and her dog Ego as well as to the television set and the family beach house.

## BARRY KUHN

### What was the name of the camp attended?

Shady Lawn Farm Camp, Oakdale, California

### How old were you when you attended camp?

I attended from age 6 to 14; this letter is from age 9, I believe.

### What's your best camp memory?

Singing competitions between the cabins at dinner. We sang songs from commercials. I also enjoyed the campfires and skits. Working in the kitchen or nurse's office to earn "merits" was interesting, as was swimming in the irrigation canals and lake.

### Worst camp memory?

It was soooooo hot there — about 100 degrees most days. On the hottest days they gave us salt tablets to take. Also, the schedule was exhausting; there was so much to do. I slept for two days when I got home.

### What are you doing now?

I'm a semiretired maternity nurse and a stay-at-home mom. That's probably why I liked the nurse's office and the kitchen.

## ED CABALLERO

### What was the name of the camp attended?

CYO Camp Armstrong, Sonoma, 1989

### How old were you when you attended camp?

12 years old

### What's your best camp memory?

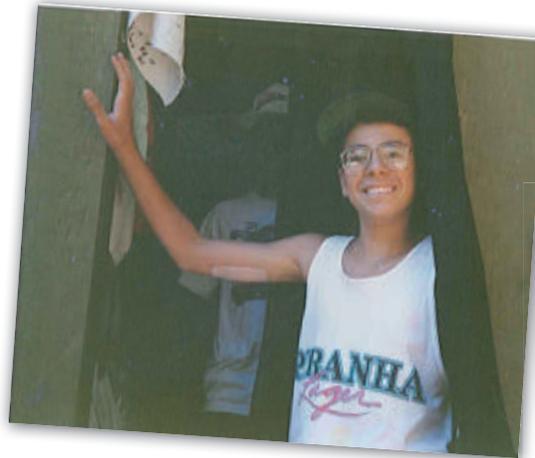
My best memory of sleepaway camp was being in nature all day. Growing up in San Francisco, I had never done anything like camping before, so to be able to row canoes, do archery, ride horses and play capture the flag in a quarter mile of forest was all new to me. I also remember there was a dance on the last night. I was particularly excited because my junior high didn't have a dance until eighth grade. I packed a special all-white outfit just for the event: white jeans, white high-tops, white turtle-neck and a gold chain. I looked pretty sharp — or so I thought in 1989.

### Worst camp memory?

We were served "beanie weenies" for lunch one day. During the mile-long hike from the cafeteria back to our cabins I suddenly had an emergency. Word to the wise: always go to the back of the hiking group if you suddenly need to go while on the trail — don't run ahead.



Dear Mami and Papi,  
I got your letter yesterday, I'm glad you wrote. Yesterday I went canoeing. We ~~was~~ tipped three times. That was fun. The food here is pretty good (except that time we ate macaroni and cheese). Over here at camp we have this game to see which unit is the cheapest. There are 4 units. Each day a unit is a winner. On the eleventh day the unit who has won the most days wins 2 pool parties. We get music and food. I forgot to tell you before there is an alligator in the lake where we went canoeing. The ~~the~~ priest who gives the masses here brought him here. The alligator's name is George. He doesn't have any teeth and is very old. Everybody in my canoe saw him. There is a bus that takes us to all the meals. If we miss it we have to walk a mile to the place where we eat. Also, if we have an activity right after lunch on something near the place where we eat we have to walk the mile



### What are you doing now?

In 2004, I cofounded Edventure More, a nonprofit enrichment company that operates Camp Edmo and Camp EdTech as well as In Class and After School programs during the school year. We partner with top Bay Area museums like the California Academy of Sciences, Children's Creativity Museum and the Museum of Children's Art to bring innovative science, art, technology and recreation programs to local communities. Five percent of camp proceeds and 100 percent of donations support camp scholarships and subsidize the cost of our hands-on science programs in schools. Our very first camp location in 2004 was at Marin Horizon School in Mill Valley. This year we will be hosted at Old Mill School in Mill Valley as well as Hal Brown Park at Creekside in Greenbrae for our nature camp, Edmo in the Park.

back to camp because the bus driver doesn't make special trips. So far I've walked the mile 4 times. There are a lot of hills. Believe me, it's tiring. There is no electricity in the cabin, so I couldn't write to you last night. I'll be looking forward to seeing you again. Not that I don't like here. Lots of hugs and kisses.

Abla español !!!

Love,  
Eduardo

P.S.,  
I got some good pictures!! Oh, yeah my medicine is done. I'm glad. They finished 2 days ago!!



Ed Caballero, shown here in a camp photo (middle) and as he looks today (bottom), now runs his own camps right here in Marin. Here are his letters home from the late 1980s.

Dear Mami + Papi, 10:10 AM Thursday 13/1989

My bronchitis is getting much better. The guys in my ~~own~~ cabin are OK. I've made friends with all of them. Lucas and Chris are in my cabin. Can you ask the doctor if I can drink milk? The milk they have here is Clover Milk. The food is good (not like Mami's) but good. There's this lady here that is black and looks like Whoopi Goldberg (the actor). Everybody calls her Mother T. We hug her or kiss her goodnight and pretend that we are kissing our mother. My cabin number is 9 and there are 9 kids in the cabin. What a coincidence!!! I haven't done any activities yet but I know we'll have fun. I haven't seen any really good looking girls yet. How is everybody down in San Francisco? Oh, by the way, did you win the lottery? I hope you guys are fine. Write soon!!!

Your loving son,  
Eduardo A. Tabalco

P.S.,  
I've been brushing my ~~the~~ teeth.