



CCC AlumniSpirit

December 2011

THE CCC MARKS ITS 35TH YEAR



Students from Madrid Middle School in El Monte thank corpsmembers for their hard work.



A Pomona crew plants a tree at the El Monte school site for the 35th anniversary project.

The California Conservation Corps has now been around for 35 years, but we didn't celebrate the milestone with balloons or birthday hoopla. Instead, the CCC marked the anniversary with shovels, chain saws and chippers.

Our Southern California centers participated in a large-

scale cleanup and beautification effort at the Madrid Middle School in El Monte, sponsored by Amigos de los Rios. The project is part of a larger regional open space and trail project, the Emerald Necklace, that will connect urban core residents with the San Gabriel Mountains. Taking the lead in coordinating the project for the CCC was Los Angeles Conservation Supervisor Duane Wilson.

In Northern California, six CCC locations sent crews to a Region I flood training exercise -- Fortuna, Ukiah, Chico, Placer, Sacramento and Stockton. Preparing for winter storms and floods, corpsmembers gained valuable hands-on experience in filling and placing sandbags, sandbagging around a boil, securing visqueen on a hillside, and more. They were rewarded with anniversary cupcakes and reflections on the CCC's 35 years from Region I Deputy Virginia Clark and External Affairs Director Martha Diepenbrock.

Some Updated Statistics:

Since 1976, more than 115,000 young men and women have participated in the CCC, earning minimum wage for natural resource work and emergency response. Despite the low pay, there are more than 800 applicants curr

ently on the CCC's waiting list. And as some of you can personally attest, we now have a few sons and daughters of earlier corpsmembers now in the CCC.

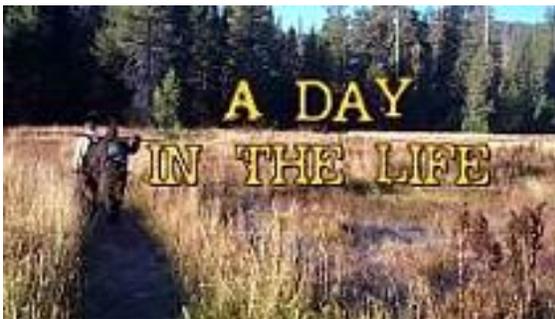
Corpsmembers have devoted more than 67 million hours to conservation work throughout California, planting 21 million trees, constructing or repairing 9,779 miles of backcountry trails, improving more than 1800 miles of salmon and steelhead habitat, and auditing and retrofitting more than 25 million square feet of public buildings to reduce energy use.

One out of five CCC hours is devoted to emergency response. Corpsmembers have provided more than 9.6 million emergency hours and assisted with recovery efforts following the Station Fire (2009), the Oakland Hills Fire (1991), the Loma Prieta (1989) and Northridge (1994) earthquakes and many other natural disasters.



A Ukiah crew passes sandbags at the Sacramento flood training.

Corpsmember video: In recognition of the CCC's anniversary, corpsmembers from throughout the state submitted more than 1,000 video clips to showcase "A Day in the Life" of the CCC. The footage was shot during a two-week period in October and also includes some vintage video of the late B.T. Collins (CCC director 1979-81) as well as reflections from CCC Director David Muraki. The video is posted on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHJ6AdZlplI> and also on the CCC's website: www.ccc.ca.gov. Please check it out!



ANOTHER ANNIVERSARY -- OAKLAND HILLS FIRE



Many of you will recall being a part of the CCC's Oakland Hills Fire recovery efforts, after the devastating fire of October 1989. The fire burned nearly 3,000 homes and killed 25 people.

The CCC responded right away, sending firefighting mop-up crews. A few days later, the CCC began calling out more than 250 corpsmembers from throughout the state, to help with soil stabilization, cleanup and other fire recovery efforts.



All in all, the CCC provided more than 58,000 work hours to the City of Oakland. With the threat of mudslides from winter rains, immediate efforts were made to begin revegetating the area and halt potential erosion.

The CCC's work included soil stabilization on steep terrain, 20 acres of hand-seeding, placement of nearly 1,000 protective straw mats over 11 acres, installation of more than three miles of silt fencing and placement of more than 10,000 hay bales for check dams and barriers.

The following spring (1990), corpsmembers returned to the area to help with additional revegetation work.

FIRE AFTERMATH



CALIFORNIA CONSERVATION CORPS members Carla Page, left, and Wilbur Jones have left the streets to help the fire recovery. Times/Mark DuFrene

Corps members plant seeds of fire recovery

By Willy Morris
 Staff writer

OAKLAND — Dwarfed by fire-blackened hillsides and charred trees, Wilbur Jones and Carla Page knelt in the ashes and picked up stones to pound U-shaped staples through a straw pad into the bare soil.

A week after the next rains, grass seeds buried in the straw should sprout, giving new life to the hillsides above the Claremont Hotel that were stripped of vegetation by fires that swept through the area 12 days ago.

Jones and Page, both young people from the streets of Richmond, are members of a 200-person California Conservation Corps detachment that has worked since Saturday to clear debris and complete erosion-control projects to pre-

vent another disaster winter rains could bring to the scarred hills — mudslides.

"I really feel sympathy for these people because once when I was small, our house burned down, and we had to start over with nothing," said Page, who joined the corps three weeks ago and has spent 11 days straight on fire-related projects.

"It means a lot to me because they need a lot of help and stuff, and we're here to help them," she added.

Hillside residents, who sometimes bring them doughnuts, sandwiches and sodas, are thankful for the work they know could save homes already spared once.

Dewey Crumpler, whose house on Siler Place stands across the street from the rubble

of what were once his neighbors' homes, remembers landslides in 1978 and '81 that came despite green trees and grassy hillsides.

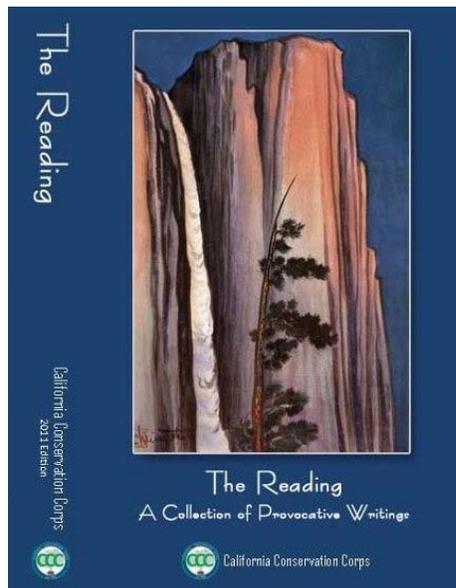
"These people don't have a great deal, but they are giving a great deal to us," he said. "And I want to give thanks to them and to God for saving my home."

But as they scamper across the hillsides like two-legged mountain goats, corps members in tan work shirts and blue hard hats also are helping themselves escape crime, welfare and the temptations of just hanging out, according to corps spokesman Tom Miller.

The Conservation Corps employs about 2,000 men and women ages 18-23 to fight fires,

Please see PLANT, back page

"THE READING," UPDATED, HONORS BRAD DUNCAN



You may recall discussing an interesting quotation, or a short piece on leadership, racism or life with members of your crew, perhaps while on the way to the project or during a break in the work day. It likely could have been something from "The Reading," a collection of essays and quotations designed to promote literacy, learning and thinking among corpsmembers.

A new version has just been published, dedicated to the late Brad Duncan, who devoted much of his time in the CCC to enhancing Corpsmember Development. "The Reading" includes several submissions -- reflections and art work -- from CCC alumni.

"The Reading" was printed with generous support from the CCC Foundation, and additional copies are available at a cost of \$10 plus shipping. For details, contact the CCC's Patrick Couch at patrick.couch@ccc.ca.gov.

CCC FOUNDATION GOING STRONG

Thinking about how you might give back to the CCC? Consider the CCC Foundation, dedicated to assisting corpsmembers by sponsoring educational and entrepreneurial opportunities.

The Foundation has a new executive director, Kerri Warner. She has a long background in nonprofit organizations, coming to the CCC from Hands On Sacramento, where she was director of the local affiliate connecting volunteers with service projects. Prior to her Hands On work, Kerri served as executive director of the Sacramento Ballet.



Kerri Warner

Since she began at the Foundation, Kerri has met most of the board members. She's also had a chance to join Foundation member and retired CCC staff member Paul Carrillo in a visit to the Greenwood Center.

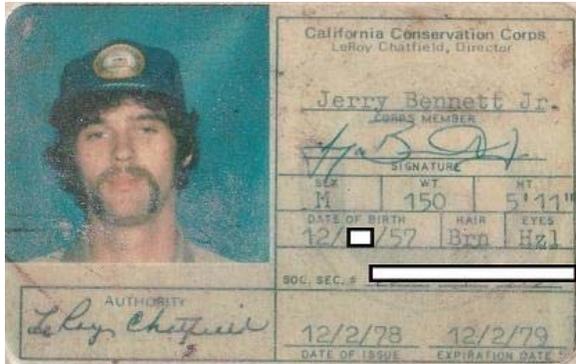
"It just reinforced how dedicated the staff are and how much hard work the corpsmember do in 'miserable conditions.' I also learned a lot about the after-hours education program and how hard the corpsmembers work on that as well."

Her focus for the Foundation is increasing the number of supporters and growing the list of donors. Contributions are easy to make on the Foundation's website: <http://www.cccfoundation.net/index.html>. Funds you donate will be used to enhance a corpsmember's time in the CCC.

"Our aim is to help make the corpsmember experience even better," she says.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT -- JERRY BENNETT, JR.

Former corpsmember Jerry Bennett shares some reflections below on his time in the CCC, which began in 1977. Perhaps you encountered Jerry at one of his many CCC locations: Agnesws, Azusa Canyon, Placer, Escondido, Treasure Island, Delta, Richmond, the Academy, and headquarters.



Jerry's 1978 CCC ID card.

These days, Jerry is a published author writing under the name Spencer Allen. Check out his website: www.authorspencerallen.com.

"It's been all most 34 years since I first showed up at the downtown bus depot in Sacramento and took the long ride into the foothills to Bret Harte. March 2th, 1978, Session 9. The fact that I remember the exact date, says something. It was an SEE (Significant

Emotional Event) for me, ironically, a term I learned during my 15 years at the CCC. The first of many that my experiences with the CCC would give me. It was the era of sex, drugs and rock-n-roll.

My story probably wasn't that much different than the other 50 young men and women on that quiet bus ride through the rolling hills, then oak lands and finally into the beginning of the pine forests that are the heartland of California.

I'd just spent the last two weeks sleeping on the floor of my friend's downstairs apartment in Vallejo, Ca., that was infested with fleas. I could hardly wait to start my new experience as I counted down the days each night in between the torment of flea bites and the bitter early spring chill in his unheated apartment.

Even though I knew no one and started alone on this adventure, it was obvious to me that all 50 of us on that bus were, in some ways, already kindred spirits. We all had just joined a youth program whose motto was, "Hard work, Low pay and Miserable conditions!"

[Director] B.T. Collins was an enigma. A womanizing, hard-drinking, hot head who had just the right amount of straightforwardness, honesty and grit. He demanded a best effort without excuses from everyone around him; from directors to corpsmembers. He was exactly what the Corps needed -- A leader with a vision!

Jerry Brown had the vision and B.T. had the grit and determination to make the vision a reality, while adding his own brand of personal responsibility to the already winning equation of teaming youth with the environment. A Democrat and a Republican joining together, being the ying and yang for a generation of California youth who needed something bigger than themselves to be a part of. A lesson that our current politicians could really learn from.

"Get off the bus and get in a straight line," were the words yelled by the 'Yellow Hats' at everyone the minute we stepped off the bus. Scruffy, bearded, gaunt and weak from an unstructured and meandering life, I got behind the guy in front of me and for the first time in my life I felt that not only could I make a difference in my life, maybe, I could make a difference in the world!

Over the next 15 years, that's exactly what I did. As far as I'm concerned, I'm a better person and I left positive footprints throughout the entire State of California because of my CCC experiences. Caring for and respecting myself, others and the environment we all live in, was the lesson of a lifetime. Thank you, CCC.

-- Jerry Bennett, Jr.



Jerry Bennett more recently.

CORPSMEMBERS MEET THE GOVERNOR



Corpsmembers from the CCC's Tahoe Center had a chance to meet the founder of the CCC in August. Governor Jerry Brown was attending the 15th annual Tahoe Summit and the corpsmembers were assisting with logistical support.

At the meeting, Governor Brown and Nevada Governor Brian Sandoval announced a renewed commitment to work together on issues affecting Lake Tahoe. This year's theme was "Stewardship and Sustainability in Challenging Fiscal Times."

The Tahoe corpsmembers were also able to greet Senator Dianne Feinstein during the summit.

1991 BACKCOUNTRY CREW REUNION



From left, Brian Simmons, Erich Huebner, Nancy Fish Martin, Jian Huang, Dan Martin, Diane Brown, Christopher Frith, Tin Nguy and Gordon Stark. Missing: "Karen, Dave, Robert V., Robert R., Adrian, Jimmie, John."

Members of Diane Brown's 1991 Stanislaus Backcountry crew got together in September at the Pinecrest Lake area in the Stanislaus National Forest. Crew member Jian "Jimmy" Huang said many of the members had not been in contact for 20 years. "We left the Corps as young men and women and are now elderly and some of us even hit the midlife crisis."

Jimmy says the group includes alumni from all walks of life. "The CCC had changed each of us," Jimmy says, "and continues to shape our future. One of the crew members told me there wasn't a day he didn't think of the backcountry experience ..."

The crew's slogan is "The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow. Do good anyway." They plan to meet again before long, not wanting to wait another 20 years.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: BENJAMIN LUNA



Ben Luna in Vermont, 2011.

Ben Luna's connection to the CCC goes back to 1983. He was a corpsmember in Session 67; today's he a Deputy State's Attorney for the State of Vermont.

He joined the CCC just a few weeks after his high school graduation -- "the beginning of a journey I'll never forget." He recalls many Corps mentors, including the late Dan Waters, former Placer center director - "my first father figure after my dad died when I was 12." Others Ben cited include then-C Is Rod Thornhill and Rick Burnett, Projects' Mavis Perry, the late Peter Lewis, and center directors Domenic Santangelo and Larry Hand.

Ben was one of the participants in the CCC's 1985 Great Britain Exchange and is still in touch with his host family in England.

While working for the CCC as a C I in San Luis Obispo, Ben was elected to the city council in Morro Bay and served as Mayor Pro Tem -- not bad at the age of 25. He earned a B.A. degree in Public Service from UC Davis and a J.D., with a focus on environmental law, from Vermont Law School.

This past June, Ben was invited to address graduates at Caledonia High School in St. Johnsbury, Vermont -- his commencement remarks were written up in the local paper. He told the students that "Hard work, low pay and miserable conditions got me here."

He also stressed the importance of service and continues to look to his CCC roots. "One of the greatest lessons learned from the CCC was the importance of giving back to the community," he says. "To this day, I continue to reach out to youth; volunteer for community events; serve on community boards; pick up trash on Days of Service; and much more. Why? Because the CCC taught me this."

While in California, Ben also worked for what was then the Governor's Office on Service and Volunteerism (now California Volunteers), where he headed up the Cesar Chavez Day of Service and Learning. In Vermont, he also served three years on the Vermont Commission on National and Community Service.

Ben would be pleased to hear from CCC friends; you can e-mail him at bluna65@gmail.com.



Ben Luna in red hat, middle right, along with other British exchange participants, including Kurt Delfino, liaison Mavis Perry, and, bottom right, Sharon Hazel. Ben, Kurt and Sharon all became C Is.

ALUMNI FROM POMONA AND INLAND AREA SOUGHT

The Pomona and Inland Empire sites hope to schedule several career fairs during 2012 and are looking for nearby CCC alumni willing to speak to corpsmembers about their career paths.

If you'd be interested, please contact the Inland Empire VISTA volunteer. His name is Mohit Lama and he can be reached at (909) 708-8483, or e-mail him at mohit.lama@ccc.ca.gov.

Often hearing from a former corpsmember and how he or she ended up in a particular occupation can be very inspirational for current corpsmembers.

GOOD STUFF



CCC Friends Reunite Via Facebook: Back in 1979, Dee Dee Kotler Goldberg and Brian Williamson were both corpsmembers at the Siskiyou Center. When Brian got a promotion to the Bret Harte Academy, the two lost touch with each other.

Fast forward 32 years later to February 2011 when they

found each other on Facebook and reconnected. Brian plans to join Dee Dee in New Mexico where they hope to marry.

CCC STAFF RETIREMENTS

In the past few months, several longtime CCC staff members have retired from the Corps to undertake new chapters in their lives. They include **Bob Rabang**, from the Training Unit and formerly Recruitment, and **Buzz Breedlove**, head of the John Muir Charter School and former CCC deputy director. Former Camarillo Center Director **Nacho Piña** retired as a Lanterman Developmental Center (Pomona) administrator.

Sam Morrow retired as the Business Services manager at headquarters; **JT** (James) **Taylor** and **Sylvia Navarro-Miller** have retired from the Los Padres Center in San Luis Obispo. And former CCC staff member **Rico Rodriguez**, most recently at the California Emergency Management Agency, has also retired from state service.



Nacho Piña with Pomona's Jennifer Dulay.

FIND A FRIEND

Because of state privacy laws, the CCC's alumni registry/database, hosted by the State of California, does not have a searchable feature.

However, we can help link you up with other former corpsmembers through this newsletter, posting inquiries that include e-mail addresses. Send your inquiries to findafriend@ccc.ca.gov with your message and contact e-mail. By voluntarily e-mailing us, you are authorizing us to include your contact information in an upcoming newsletter.

Steve Conley would like to hear from **1979** members of the **La Honda** and **Placer** centers, also Boulder Creek during November-December 1978. Contact Steve at stevehiker@gmail.com.

Chazerae Richard is looking for corpsmembers based at the **Pomona** Center in early **2000** to late summer of that year. Contact Chazerae at chazerae@yahoo.com.

John Sweeney is looking for the Korean girl who was a corpsmember at the **Santa**

Clara Center around 1982. John can be reached at mojavecowboy@yahoo.com.

Karen Le Blanc tells us 13 members from the **Del Norte Center's 1978** graduates recently got together, but they're still looking for a few Session 5 people: Ann Ryan, Debbie Ferry, Denise Messier and Lee Dilley. Karen hopes they'll contact her at (310) 779-2234 or e-mail: mskarenmarieleb@yahoo.com.

Bill Cox was at **Pomona** in **1983-84**, also part of the **1984 Sequoia Backcountry** crew under Peter Lewis. He's interested in locating anybody from those locations and times. He can be reached at bill_cox@mentor.com.

Steve Gustafson was at **Owens Valley** from July to December **1981**, "then Mike Cuevas and I transferred to the Fricot Academy for the Energy Conservation program, then to the **Stockton Energy Center**." Steve's hoping to reconnect with Mike Cuevas and can be reached at starnson@hotmail.com.

David Dayton is looking for people who were at **San Gabriel Canyon** between **1982-83**. Contact David at nogard_dragon@yahoo.com.

William Deatherage was on Justin LaMarsh's **Fresno** crew in **2000-01**, and on the **2001 Inyo Backcountry** crew. He's looking for people who might have been on one of the Fresno crews during that time. E-mail him at WillFest559@aol.com.

Former specialist **Jay Ghazaleh** is looking for any **Hayfork** corpsmembers from **1990-92**. He can be reached at eyelucky711@me.com.

Jeff Shelton was at the **Central Coast** center on the **Construction Crew** in the early **1990s**. He'd like to find a friend, Mark Rose, from that time. E-mail Jeff at shelton72000@yahoo.com.

Charles Walker was at the **Academy** in San Andreas in **April 1986**, participated in a Sonoma Spike from the **Ukiah** Center (Redwood Valley) in 1986, then moved on to the **Butte** Fire Center until March 1987. He can be contacted at nubie71@hotmail.com.

Cosme Obeso worked in the kitchen in **San Luis Obispo** from **1992-94**, and was an Acting Crewleader as well as a Cook Specialist. He'd like to find his crew supervisor, Michael Bradford as well as Sumi Hubert, who supervised the kitchen. Cosme can be reached at cosme@chefcosme.com.

Salvador Estrada would like to link up with corpsmembers from the **Santa Clara** Center, 1991-93. He recalls his supervisors: Jerry Downs and Lisa Victor. Salvador can be contacted at salvador_estrada25@yahoo.com.

Christopher (formerly Walsh) Warrick (Candy) would like to connect with people from the **San Pedro** Center from the Cisco Hunter days. "Look me up, Daryl

Spencer, Jim Osgood, Tracy Cameron." Contact Christopher at chriscancook4u@yahoo.com.

Richard Wentz is looking for people who were at the **Agnews Center** in **1988-90**, especially Andrew Jackson. Richard can be reached at richard@wentz.com.

Deborah Starr is looking for Mike Mathewson (aka Nipper), David (aka Cavey), and Patsy. She is from **Session 101** at Fricot City and was at the **Del Norte Center** from **1985-86**. Both Deborah and Mike Anderson are currently in Crescent City. Contact Deborah at debinairedebb@yahoo.com.

Terrence O'Day (aka Professor, aka Doc) would like to contact those who served at **Woodlake** during **1982-83**. Terrence can be reached at o_day_terrence@hotmail.com.

Christa Watkins is looking for friends from the **La Cima Fire Center** from **2000-01**, especially Rachael, who was also in the Backcountry with Christa before working on the fire crew with her. Christa's e-mail is holyrollingstones@yahoo.com.

Chris Gray is looking for anyone who was at the **Fresno Center** from **2000-02**. He can be reached at c_baldeagle@lycos.com.

Raul Ochoa was based at **Camarillo** from **1995-97**. He'd like to get in touch with Jeff Cuevas and Justin Lawler. Raul's e-mail is ochoa95@yahoo.com.

And another **Camarillo** corpsmember: **Raymond Garcia** is looking for anyone at Camarillo from **1991-93**. You can reach him at raymondvgarcia@gmail.com.

Christine Dwyer is a former **Fresno** redhat, **1990-92**. She's looking for others who served at that time, including Keith Zimmerly, from Watsonville. Contact Christine at dwyergals2@yahoo.com.

Laurie Hall wants to do a shout-out to any **Placer Fire Center** members from **1979-80**. Laurie can be reached at labador1961@yahoo.com.

Eric Johnson was a **Pacific Bays** corpsmember at Mare Island from **2001-03**. His C Is were Dave Jaramillo and Merrold Young. Contact Eric at e2smoov@gmail.com.

Patti Lynch is seeking old friends and hopefully some photos from **San Luis Obispo (1978)** and any information about Tim Brown (SLO 1978-79, Placer 1979-?). Please contact Patti at pattiannelynch@gmail.com.

Seeking information on parents: Terri Richmond is looking for people who served in the CCC in the Escondido or San Diego County area in 1979-1980 and knew her

mother, **Cricket Whitney**, and/or **David Bailey**. Since her mother has now passed away, any information would be greatly appreciated. Please contact Terri at nativegoddess8161@hotmail.com.

SUGGESTIONS, PHOTOS

If you might make a good alumni profile, or you have a suggestion (and contact information) for someone who might, let us know. We're also looking for good photos from your CCC days that might be of general interest to others. E-mail CCC Public Information Officer Susanne Levitsky at susannel@ccc.ca.gov or call her at (916) 341-3145.

Don't forget to keep your e-mail address and other information up-to-date in our [CCC Alumni Registry](#). This is the basis for our newsletter list and also allows us to learn more about the wide variety of occupations and experiences of our alumni. We'll also be able to let you know if there are special events in your area.

Thanks very much!

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