



Hagan Newsletter July 2015 [Visit CampHagan.com](http://CampHagan.com)

"SEE YOU IN SEPTEMBER"

Click on the link above, "See You in September," to listen to the song. Do you remember it blasting on transistor radios (WABC NY) in 1966? In June, members of the Reunion Committee met with Shawnee Inn staff to plan the details of the September reunion. One great thing to look forward to is that each of our event venues overlooks the river.



Relax by the river with your Hagan friends



The campfire takes place here



The River Sanctuary is where the Hagan Tea, the Bar-B-Q, and the Hagan Time Capsule Ceremony will take place.



Inside the River Sanctuary/Gazebo

New Photo Gallery of Old Hagan

Photos from **Rosie Hallman Steen's** (Hagan 1943-1955) Hagan scrapbook are now in a Photo Gallery on the CampHagan.com website. The photo here is a 1940's car with the dolly attached, which provided the transportation for campers' trunks to their cabins. Because of WWII, shortages in materials (aluminum, zinc and copper) forced car-makers to go back to cast-iron and steel.



**Karen East Taylor by
Hagan's Totem Pole - 1963**

Lighting the Hagan Council Fire

Do you remember how it was done? We will recreate it at the Council Fire on the evening of September 23.

(The following is excerpted from the Hagan Memoir, "Make the Rafters Ring! Remembering Camp Hagan," due out September 2015)

An aerial view of Camp Hagan during earlier years would portray a large circle of young pine trees whose bulls eye was a smaller circular dirt pit surrounded by grass. It took years for tree branches to reach out and touch each other. But as the spirit of camp grew, so grew the trees until the

only access to the area within the ring of towering pines was the gap that marked the entrance to the Camp Hagan council fire.

An all-camp council fire took place on the last Friday of every session. The initial success of this event, the lighting of logs layered log cabin style and stuffed with crumpled newspaper and kindling, fell upon the shoulders of the Head of Pioneering. She prepared four six-foot torches that campers carried into the council fire to ignite the contents of the fire pit. It may come as a surprise that among her supply of pioneering gear that included axes, rope, a hand saw and pen knives was a box of sanitary napkins, Kotex to be precise. The Head of Pioneering used her lashing skills and tied a couple of those super absorbent pads to each

torch. Right before the council fire ceremony began, she gave the torches a heavy dose of kerosene. Keep in mind that the pure bulk of sanitary napkins in the 60s made them quite flammable. Sleeker models available today might absorb nicely, but their flammability rating does not meet Hagan campfire standards.

The fine art of torch crafting was not immune to changing traditions at Camp Hagan. A former practice involved poking the end of a slim tree branch into a roll of toilet paper and then wrapping it in burlap. The absorbent tissue paper soaked up kerosene like a sponge. (Squeezably soft Charmin worked particularly well.)

Campers and counselors lined up behind the Senior Unit and filed into the council fire where a totem pole with a stern expression reminded them to enter this place of respect in silence. The totem pole, a gift from Camp Miller, had been guarding the council fire for years. Department heads helped seat older campers next to the trees and younger campers closer to the fire, while leaving plenty of space around the fire pit for the evening's activities. Katydid and crickets conversed in loud voices, but campers knew to keep silent and wait for the appearance of lit torches at the council fire entrance.

Four torch bearing campers who represented the Junior, Intermediate, Senior and CIT Units approached the fire pit and encircled it as campers and counselors sang the campfire song, "Kneel Always When You Light a Fire." (Though a Hagan council fire was not the same without that cherished song, no one knelt to light the fire.) At the song's conclusion, the first torchbearer stepped forward and stated, "I light the fire of friendship." She touched the flaming torch to the logs and WHOOOSH!---the campfire exploded into flames sending crackling embers into the sky. The youngest campers' eyes grew enormous as they observed what they thought must be a grand magic trick. The other three torchbearers added their torches one by one to the fire and recited: "I light the fire of cooperation; I light the fire of spiritual growth; I light the fire of reverence for nature."



Camper Profile

Karen East Taylor, Hagan 1952-1964

The little one, who had just turned 7-years-old (1952) a week before was being brought to Camp Hagan to be deposited and settled in Junior One. She sobbed inconsolably for hours after her parents left. Yes, I was too young to be placed so far from my family for two

weeks. My poor counselor!

But God! He had a plan that would help me grow, learn, and mature in spite of having such a gruesome start and, in subsequent years, I became the dreaded camper on every counselor's "bunk list." By my 9th summer at Hagan, I had plodded my way through the Junior, Intermediate, and Senior units and was placed in Senior Eight.

Something special happened. My cabin mates were wonderful, and I had finally learned, thanks a lot to Hagan, to be a not so mixed up kid. At the final campfire that summer, a department head in front of where our bunk was seated called out my name. I was floored-as was she. With candles in hand, we took our place with the others who had been tapped. The kind lady leading me, one who had known (tolerated) me for several summers, said, "I never ever thought I'd be calling your name for the Citizenship Award." What a momentous moment.

The next year I was a CIT, the next a JC, and then I returned one more year as a counselor. The following Camp season my Hagan CIT/JC/Counselor friends went on to be department heads. I too was offered to be Head of Entertainment. That did it for me. I clutched and was too scared to take on that job. Therefore 1963, my 13th season at Hagan was my very last.

Now, many decades later, I look back and gather all that Hagan fed into my life. At the "Singing Camp," I learned the art of harmonization and eventually graduated from West Chester University (then West Chester State) in 1963, to become a Music teacher.

I learned swimming skills at Hagan and at 45 years of age was competing on a Master's Swimming team in California. Now, I adore just swimming laps.

Then there were the camping skills that served our family well as we spent many years setting up camp outside of Yosemite. When we didn't have something to cook on, I just got an empty one gallon tomato can, turned it upside down, punched holes in the side and voilà - a stove.

And those knots in pioneering? Who would ever have thought I'd ever need them? Until my husband and I sold all our possessions in 1976, bought a 32" sailboat, and sailed (with our then 2-year-old son) across the Pacific from California to Hawaii. We used all those knots, especially the one where the rabbit goes around and down the hole. Also important was first aid, water wisdom, and how to think out of the box whenever strange situations happened-Murphy's Law made sure that was often.

Yes, Camp Hagan informed my life in more ways than I could ever think of or imagine. Above all, it awakened a part of me to Christ. Oh, I didn't immediately follow the Lord. In fact, on our rotation through the departments as a CIT, I begged to not have to do anything in the Religion department. Still, the little kernels grew.

One mustard seed that was planted was after taps when cabin talk trumped going to sleep. Someone briefly mentioned-I think after we had just talked about someone being buried alive and leaving scratch marks on the inside of his coffin-that they heard that people were speaking in tongues like had happened in New Testament days. That little gem got tucked away into my subconscious until 1976. In a God-ordained chain of events and two days before we set sail to Hawaii, I attended a Catholic Charismatic Mass just to hear people "singing in the Spirit." When the music started-any music-I started to weep uncontrollably. When the strains stopped, so did my tears only to start up again when hymns and choruses began anew. Didn't know what was happening then, but do now. That night I accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Lord and Savior. And I was filled with the Holy Spirit of God and spoke in tongues-only then did I remember what I had heard after taps so many decades before.

My husband was a dear and handsome man that I met in 1968 just after he graduated, as a Marine, from the Naval Academy. We dated while I was teaching in Alexandria, Virginia, and he doing his grunt training at Quantico before he went to Vietnam. Shortly after Mick returned from his tour of duty, he and I were married and lived in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

A little over a year after our wedding, Mick's leg had to be amputated because of a freak infection that set in after a severe break of the bones in his lower leg. (Yes, he sailed us across the ocean with his only having one leg.) He was medically retired from the USMC. On the other hand, the subsequent corporate climbing (after our Transpacific sail) had us moving around the country as much as if he were still in the service. We lived 5 years in Hawaii, a couple of years in Missouri, some years in both Connecticut and Virginia, 7 years in Ohio, and probably over 15 cumulative years in California. During all that time we also spawned 2 sons and a daughter who have created 5 marvelous grandchildren. Some of them live in Denver, where I now live, and others live in Carlsbad, California, where I will snowbird from this coming winter forward.

Mick was forced to retire while he was at the top of his game as President/CEO of a major insurance company. His mind succumbed to the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) from his Vietnam service. That combined with the stress of being an insurance executive, Mick was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease while still in his 50's. For over 16 years we journeyed through the prison of dementia. Finally, in 2009, we had to place Mick in a

nursing home. Although his mind was gone (thank the Lord that at least he didn't know anything anymore) he survived 5 more years. This past December, Mick died as a result of complications of Alzheimer's.

Yes, AD is a terrible voyage. But like everything else that has happened to me and to us, God had His way. After Mick got ill, I turned to academia as my drug-of-choice and earned a Master's in Biblical Studies and a Doctor in Ministry (pretty good for someone who hated being a part of the Religion Department at Hagan). All those Vespers, all the morning devotions, and all the caring that was shown me at Hagan did take root.

While Mick was in the nursing home, I had the opportunity to do short termed missions trips to South Africa (where I also taught at a Bible College) and to the Congo working with Rape Warfare victims. I did compassion work amongst Muslims in Jericho, West Palestine, and brought teaching to Aeta pastors in the Philippines. Most recently I had the honor of speaking at conferences in Puerto Rico.

As a result of the challenges of Alzheimer's, I wrote and published a book called *Astonishing Treasures in a Dark Forest* that is meant to increase the awareness of God's presence to those who are caregiver's to ones who have long-term chronic illnesses.

And (this is a hoot) in 2011, I was crowned Ms. Colorado Senior America. And then I came in 1st runner-up to Ms. Senior America in Atlantic City. My Hagan pals, Mitzi and Lori came to that pageant. From the stage at Harrah's, I was so amazed to see them that I called out, "You're here?" Mitzi yelled back, "'We're Hagan born and Hagan bred.' Of course we're here."

Now that my husband is with the Lord, I expect that there are even more adventures ahead as I can now give away all I've been given-especially spiritually. Even now I am completing a Masters degree in Counseling. But as a widow in the babyhood of her grieving, I'm not welcoming that future with the enthusiasm that I know I will in a few months.

What I do embrace are my Lutheran roots and the vision that the Lord gave Peter Paul Hagan so many years ago. I am a recipient the dream he set in motion-the fruit of the seeds of God's love that Peter Paul planted and prayed would bless and grow in the girls that came to Camp Hagan. Now I cry out, not in abandonment, but rather with gratefulness. I'm no longer too young, or too old, to appreciate all that God has done for that little one who grew up to be who I am today.

Hmm! That would be a Hagan Hag. What an honor.



**Working in the Congo
on behalf of women
and children**



The Taylor Family

News and Updates

- Check out the reunion AGENDA on the CampHagan.com website.
- We have started the "What to Bring" list for the reunion. It's on the Hagan website.
- Have you registered at the Shawnee Inn? Make sure you call them directly and say you are part of the Hagan event.
- There is still time to have your memories sealed in the Hagan Time Capsule? Send your story to HaganGathering@gmail.com
- It's never too late to add your "Then & Now" photo to the Hagan website. Send your photos to HaganGathering@gmail.com

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