

# ADVENTURE GUIDE

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TODD A. HOVANEC/Daily Nexus



# Fishing on the Big Lake

By Todd A. Hovanec

Reveille! The horns blasted aplenty in my ears.

I woke up with some veritable gusto and got started right away. I confronted my brother, Erik, in the kitchen, on his way to the fridge.

"All right," I said, "Let's get started."

"Let's go," was the answer. He was already wearing his fishing vest.

And so began a day trip up to Lake Cachuma for some big-game fishing, followed by a hike in the mountains and a night in the great outdoors.

First stop was Lucky. If you're gonna spend all day on a boat out on the water, you need to be prepared. Beer, chips, chewing tobacco and sandwiches were all in order, as were mass quantities of water and sunscreen.

The drive to Lake Cachuma is nice. Getting out of I.V. is even better. We got up to the lake and met the friendly man at the boat rental and equipment booth. He recommended and sold to us night crawlers, and we jumped in the boat, ready to reel 'em in all day long.

Fishing is a sport of great technical skill and

patience, I soon remembered — it had been a while since I last fished. It also requires a certain sense of understanding submarine life — know thy prey.

We cruised all around the gorgeous lake, occasionally dropping anchor, occasionally drifting and occasionally trolling. We fished at different depths with different techniques,

It was a relaxing time, nonetheless. After all, that's what fishing's all about. We did have some consolation at the end of the day, though, when we returned the boat. The kid who checked us in told us that *no one* had boasted of any catches that day, so we felt a little better.

Which leads me to my next conclusion: After fishing four times over the

would surely take us deep into the rugged and uncharted wilderness.

We drove to the trailhead, packed up our gear and food, and tackled the uphill climb. It was not particularly difficult, but sunlight was becoming a valuable commodity, so we found a comfortable spot, marked our territory, pitched a tent and got started on dinner right

little valley. And it was good.

We cleaned the dishes and did what all campers should do at nightfall — hung food at least 10 feet in the air from a tree so bears and mountain lions don't come foraging for food at your tent's door in the middle of the night. Granted, bears are probably not much of a threat here in Santa Barbara, but it's a good precaution to take anyway, and it's good practice if you ever go to Yosemite or Yellowstone.

By that time I was exhausted. I read for about



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## "Adventure. Heh! Excitement. Heh! A Jedi craves not these things. ..."

— Master Yoda to Luke

but either Lake Cachuma is overfished and understocked, or my brother and I are terrible anglers, because after seven hours on the water, we came up empty-handed.

That's right, not a single doggone fish to string up, take a picture of, cut up and feast upon! Damn!

past three years at Lake Cachuma, the biggest thing I have ever caught there was a buzz.

The next stop was somewhere in the surrounding mountains of the Los Padres National Forest. Erik drove us to the ranger station, where we looked at a map and found a trail that

away. Erik, who is a fine chef, prepared the menu *du jour* on his little gas stove — beanies 'n' weenies. I was famished and hunger was definitely knocking on Erik's door, thus we feasted like there was no tomorrow, enjoying every mouthful while the sun set over our private

three minutes and went soundly to sleep. Erik shoved his head out of the tent and watched the stars for a long time. A damn fine idea, I thought to myself as I succumbed to slumber. I should take a look myself, but I'm too tired to even ...

What a great day.



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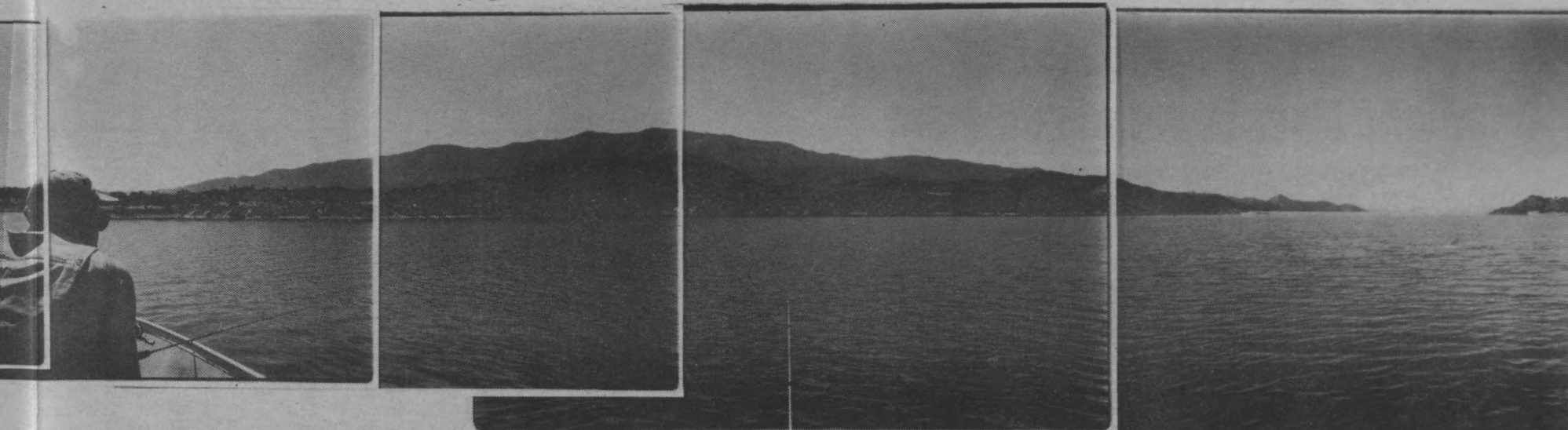
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# A Tale of Horror! Wup!

By J.E. Anderson

He could hear them following. The once-quiet valley air was now broken with the low wup-wup-wup-wup of the rotor blades and the distant barking of the tracking dogs. "And where in the hell is Camembert?" he thought. That cheeseball was always late when it mattered.

Escaping the compound had been easy — the blissed-out cultists never expected one of their own to break into their file room during the morning exodus out to work the hemp fields. Heck, they didn't even miss him 'til evening communion. But they knew now. What he would give to see the look on Father M's face when he figured out what happened ...

**WUP-WUP-WUP-WUP-WUP-WUP-WUP**

But whatever he would give, Thomas Harold Chesterton's newfound freedom wasn't one of them. They were getting closer. Must've found his trail. Those damned choppers!

When the thundering noise of violently chopped air thrown earthward to keep aloft a 2-ton metal and plastic insect sent straight from Satan's bunghole to bite him had passed overhead and swept back down into the valley, the fugitive raised his head above the rocks. He quickly scuffled up the outcropping to take a look around, but sweat got in his eyes and it stung, so he

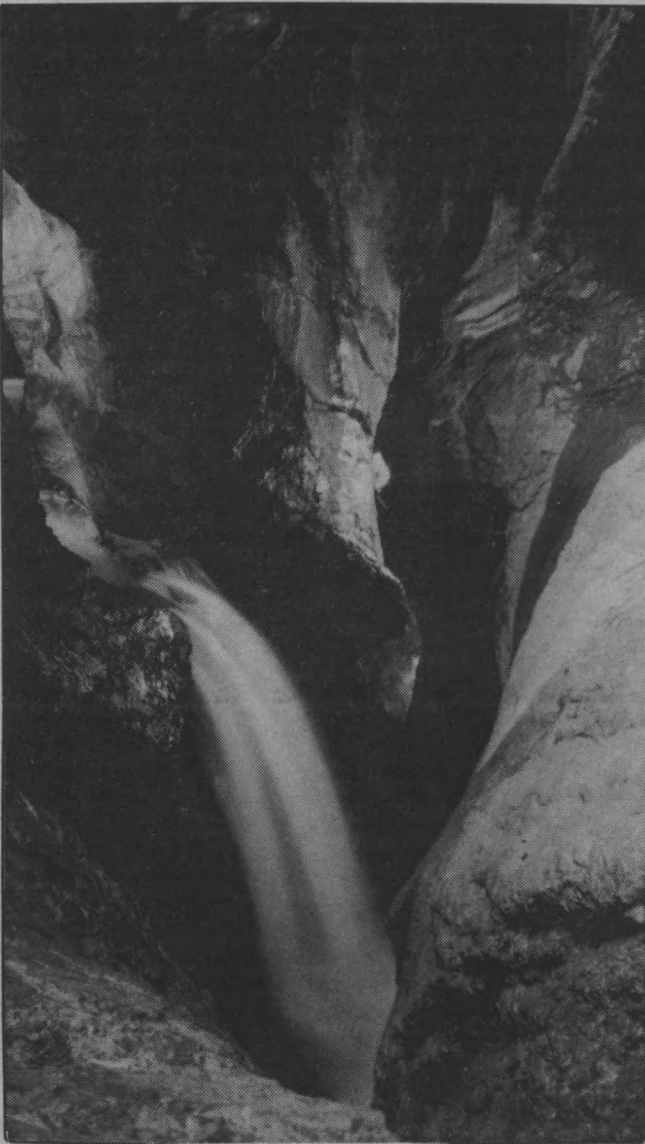
wiped them. Then he took his look.

The western sky glowed the dull red of an infidel's exposed tummy during the Hamsterfest. Chesterton shuddered at the memory, pushing on with increased intensity beneath the full moon pouring yellow-orange over the broken purple landscape before him. They'd do that to *him* if they caught up! He turned to other thoughts to suppress the fear. Memories of better days, of a better time ... before the Order.

Before Sasha. Sasha! The name alone was still an ice pick in his aorta. The smell of the pine trees brought back memories of that night ... the gentle swell of her hips ... the passionate press of her lips on his ...

But it was those deep, soulful eyes that haunted him. Those eyes that knew lifetimes of love and endured eons of pain. Those eyes that he still felt watching him, as if they saw the very truth of his existence. ... How could he just leave her behind like that?

Chesterton winced as the memories assailed him. "What was I thinking! Of course I had to leave her behind! That witch is in deep. And how can she devote herself to Father M like that?" He shook his head, as if by shaking it he could somehow dislodge everything so many people had put so much effort into implanting there. He was thankful for the brainwash-resistance training. Still, Chesterton carried doubts, lingering in dark



J.E. ANDERSON/Daily Nexus

mental corners, as to how effective that training really was ...

\* \* \*

Camembert was dead, not that Chesterton actually cared. The dead man was a stinky hunk o' cheese anyway. And now he wouldn't have to share

the loot.

But there was something weird here. Camembert didn't even show a scratch. It was tempting to call it a heart attack, except the body was so ... dry. Whatever had killed him, it wasn't the cultists. His eyes stung. More hot, fearful sweat running into them, despite the cool air.

So he wiped them. He'd had problems with this ever since they made him shave his eyebrows. But it was still dark, and he couldn't see shit.

Bidding adieu to the corpse, he shined the light around the cavern, reassuring himself that whatever had desiccated his partner wasn't still here waiting for him. But he had to go on. **This** was the cave in the file, the one Warren had told them about. And there was the pond, trickling off to the left. He followed.

The still air of the cave seemed to be moving now, drawing him further down the passage, toward the moist roar of what must be the falls. Warren hadn't lied. The information they'd gleaned from the ruins of that man's mind was now proving more accurate than any of them had anticipated six months earlier. Of course, Chesterton was the only one left alive who knew ...

The passage opened up into a wider cavern through which the molten glacier gushed, from heights beyond the reach of the halogen lamp, to depths lost in mist and shadow. This was the end of the line, the place Warren, Camembert, Green and Manion died trying to get to. The Falls of Doofus!

The light sparked and went out in his hand. Chesterton was about to mutter an expletive and start searching for the spare when a voice he knew all too intimately leapt out at him in the darkness:

"I'll just burn that one out, too, *dear*."

It was Sasha! But how did she ...?

"It's too bad you chose to ignore your mind studies during your time with us. ... But then, I trust your

distractions were rewarding? Hahahahahahaha!"

Chesterton almost yelled the B-word at her, but then thought he might try to come up with something a bit more clever as a comeback. Either way, it wouldn't make any difference. Sasha already knew every one of his thoughts, even before he thought them. There would be no escape this time.

"I've known where you were and what you've been doing from the moment you left my chambers. Now why don't you just give it up and make it easier on all of us?" The cavern came alive with a chorus of "oms." "I promise ..." she said.

Chesterton wondered if he wet his drawers in fear. The total dark of the cave was crushing his nerve. And the way she said "dear."

"You promise ... no Hamsterfest?" he asked, terrified.

"I swear by the Codex, *Thomas*."

His knees were about to buckle.

"Uh ... OK, then." Chesterton knew only too well what resistance would bring. And besides, once you reached the third circle, they let you grow your eyebrows back.



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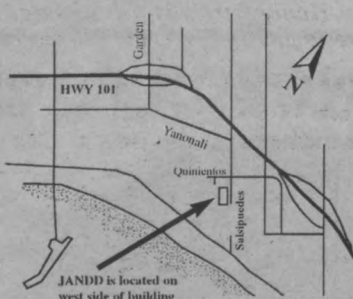
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