

The 70's Golden Years of Huntington Beach

Reflections by Dan Rice

I started surfing in the mid-sixties in San Clemente, lived right at the top of Riviera Street my home break a fast hollow shore break wave just north of cottons point. I would get out of school, put my Katins on, grab my board and skateboard and never pushing off down the steep hill to the break, which was kind of crazy considering the kind of wheels we had on our skateboards in the sixties.

As we got older and braver we started walking into Trestles, that is when Nixon wasn't in town. It's still crazy to me how we use to walk in, eyes constantly scouring the bushes, waiting for marines to pop out any minute, while scanning the beach for any jeeps. If you did see a jeep coming you would run in the water and paddle out. I can remember holding our boards like machine guns firing at them before paddling out, and then sitting in the lineup giving them the finger. Yes we were punks but after having to have your parents take you to the guard shack to retrieve your board a few times and listen to their lectures, you really considered them the enemy.

My dad was in construction, lots of building going on in the Huntington Beach area in the seventies, so off we went to surf city. I started surfing the pier regularly and was one of the shore break crew, along with Paul and Dwight Dunn, Steve Murray, Jeff Smith, Greg Clemmons, Rod Treece, and Bud Llamas. Everyone use to call Bud 'tadpole' because he was so small and dark and he looked like he was born in the water.

On big south swells we would surf the reform wave on the north side; it would shoot you right under the pier. I used to meet Jeff Smith at his house on Main Street in the dark before school and we would surf under the lights of the pier, then again after school for the hopeful glass off. It was such a great time to surf with the likes of Nuuhiiwa, Chapman, the Hawk brothers, Lonnie Buhn, Guy Grundy, Randy Lewis, Steve Wurster, Leroy Dennis, Brad Bayles , Dan flecky and the inspirational Chuck Linen, and ironman George Farquhar out daily. My first job was at George's HB newspaper cleaning typeset.

While competing in surf contests got to know Des Whelan and Vince Cole, who turned me on to the great wave at Brookhurst Street. We were all going to Edison high school. Des was a smooth powerful surfer; it seemed no wave could knock him down. I can still see him nose riding a short

board across a Brookhurst wall. Vince was also smooth with long graceful cutbacks. They were both riding for Wave Trek and told me to come meet Bruce Gabrielson. They said that he was doing some real innovative shaping. I still remember the first board he made for me in the shack off Slater and Gothard, which was still there until a couple of years back.

Brought back great memories every time I used to drive by the place. The board was fast and maneuverable, with a concave deck, loved that board. Bruce started the surf club at Edison and was also mainly responsible for getting high school surfing organized and recognized as a sport. Then, with the tireless and mostly overlooked efforts of the next coach, Denny Moulton, Edison surfing gained respect and won one of the first high school competitions after the district finally recognized surfing as a sport. We had a pretty stacked team. Besides the before mentioned we also had Carl Hayward, Gary Wurster, Marty Miller, and one of our all-time best Edison surfers and Wave Trek rider, David VanDruff. Anyone who watched him surf was in awe of his smooth elegant style.

I still remember a few years later we were both surfing for Chuck Dent surfboards we were out on the south side of the Pier, along with David's sister Dianne, and I guess she took off on a grumpy old local, who proceeded to punch her. Finding out, David waits till grumpy is paddling out and takes off on a wave and runs right over him. Then, while David is swimming in, grumpy is smashing David's board nose first into the pier piling about ten times then heads in to find David. As he crosses coast highway, who is waiting for grumpy but big Chuck Dent, who then convinces grumpy with a couple right hooks not to mess with his team riders.

I remember the old HB US surfing contest that was so cool to be invited to. I remember about 1972, I attended the luau at the old HB inn with Jeff Smith. We sat across from the Hawaiian team of Ho, Bertlemann, Kerbox, and the Carvalho brothers.

At night, the surf theater was our own little ticket to the best surfers and perfect waves around the world. The Surf showed **every** new surf movie and it seemed every local was there hooting for every great ride. I remember being so stoked at night after a movie and then being so bummed the next morning, usually waking up to no surf. How was I going to practice my Bertlemann cutbacks and my Lopez tube riding?

Ah yes, HB in the seventies at the Golden Bear, George's Surf Shop smoothies and avocado and sprouts sandwiches, black light posters, Hell's Angels, Kanvas by Katin, Harley Krisnas, all the surf shops, strips and tar on your feet. I can hardly stand to go downtown anymore as it has turned into such a zoo. But my fond memories of Huntington and all the people I knew and surfed with will always be from the seventies. I ran into Chuck Linnen a while ago and we began talking about the old days like old people do, the great stories that man has, and as he left he simply said those were our times we lived them.



I have two grandsons now and they are so much fun. I retired from the grocery business after 38 years, and now watch dogs for a part time job. So with more time on my hands, I sat down and wrote something.