

Weekend Retreat with fellow artists, or Camp Artaban, where

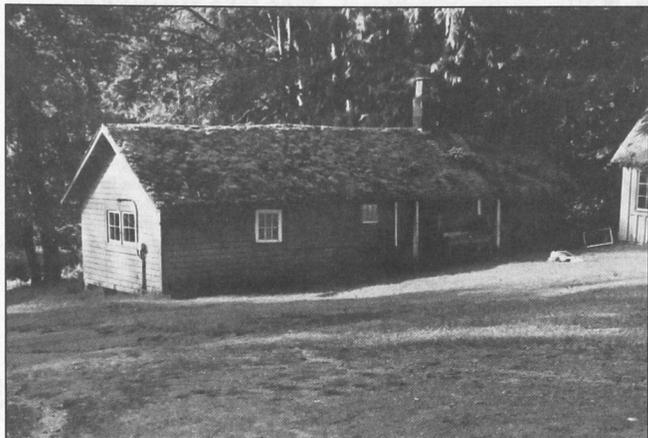
"O, Dear" may mean you weren't watching where you stepped.

by Marius I. Soska

Working on the North Shore Arts News means that I get to read every article that goes into our beloved newsletter. This is how I ran across an announcement by West Vancouver Sketch Club's Ursula Vondette that an artists' retreat will be conducted by Win Seaton at Camp Artaban. Since I have heard about the camp at one time, I persuaded my wife that we need a weekend away from the civilization. I packed up my watercolours and she took her camera equipment. To give the weekend a romantic start we dined at the Boathouse at Horseshoe Bay where we could watch our fellow artists gather and board the water-taxi in the September rain while we were enjoying a simply delicious feast.

Despite the rain we were in very good spirits and I didn't even get upset when the strap on my brand new travel bag broke, making it a rather difficult task to carry it. We were the last ones to get on board making it very easy for Win to guess our names. The trip took only about half an hour and we arrived at Camp Artaban just before dusk.

The camp is located on a most beautiful spot surrounded by forest on three sides and the sea on fourth. Wherever one looks there is a perfect setting for a painting. The peacefulness of the place is for us city-dwellers almost disturbing at times, it is so quiet. All this we didn't experience though until next morning. Right now we were busy finding the cottage we were assigned to in the gathering darkness with our pathetically small flashlights. (I never realized before how dark places can be without streetlights and car-headlights.) I was almost ready to panic when my wife called to me that she had found our



The old Craft Shed at Camp Artaban; photo by Agnes Soska

cabin. We hauled our belongings in and started to look for a light switch. To our horror we found a small square hole in the wall where a lightswitch would fit had there been a purpose for one. The place had no electricity!

I unpacked our portable camping lamp to investigate what other fiendish surprises lurked in the dark to leap at us when we are not looking. Well, there was no hot water, no shower, no bathroom, not even a sink, for heaven's sake. Oh, oh, we have to find the toilet, and soon! We did. It was only a few steps behind our cabin, and there was a sink too, although the hot water was only available at the main washroom. No showers though.

The next morning we realized what a marvelous place it is. The weather was cooperating and I got to sketch the most beautiful scenes. Win Seaton turned out to be a very friendly fellow, his best feature being that he encouraged everybody in their work, and put everyone at ease, so

that we felt at ease with each other and with our efforts.

One of the features of the camp is the orchard situated just a few yards from the campground. The place is favorite with a family of deer that come there to eat the apples that fall to the ground. They are very tame and we had the good fortune to gather a few of the fruit and feed the animals. They would not eat them from our hands, but we needed only to toss the apples a few feet and the deer would come and eat them. The animals would wander throughout the campground on a frequent basis as we found out in the middle of the night, when we had to go to use the facilities, and also by their calling cards, as already suggested in the title of this article. The two days went by quicker than we would have liked.

Did we enjoy ourselves? Yes, we did.

Was it worth the effort and the cost? (Only \$65 for everything, including food.) Most certainly. Will we go next year, if we have the chance? You betcha!



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November airdates:

Thursday Nov. 22nd 1:30 pm
Thursday Nov. 22nd 8:30 pm
Friday Nov. 23rd 7:00 pm
Sunday Nov. 25th 9:00 pm
Wednesday Nov. 28th 4:30 pm

Tune in to find out what is happening on the art scene on the North Shore!