



# *Celebrating History!*

## 1953 BOY SCOUT JAMBOREE

*65th Anniversary Reunion*

THURSDAY, JULY 19, 2018

3-5 PM

3:00 PM

GATHERING

3:40 PM

WELCOME AND FLAG  
CEREMONY BY TROOP 36

3:45 PM

COMMEMORATIVE PHOTO

4:45 PM

CONCLUSION



**FASHION  
ISLAND®**

NEWPORT BEACH, CALIFORNIA



**Prepared. For Life.®**

**PLEASE TAKE TIME TO PROVIDE YOUR  
MEMORIES ON CAMERA.**

Want to see or relive the experience? Watch the  
"1953 Jamboree movie" on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fMzcjp7dzJU>

# 65th anniversary of the National Boy Scout Jamboree on The Irvine Ranch

Welcome to the 65th anniversary of the third National Boy Scout Jamboree that took place on The Irvine Ranch in 1953 where Newport Center now sits.

From July 17-23, more than 50,000 Scouts and their families descended on the ranch, arriving by planes, trains, automobiles, buses and even on foot - a troop from Van Nuys hiked more than 80 miles to participate.

All told, 1,500 troops attended, representing all 48 states at the time, the former territories of Alaska and Hawaii, and 26 foreign countries.

In preparation for the 1953 Boy Scout Jamboree, The Irvine Company built an eight-mile gravel road. It connected Irvine Boy Scout Troop 36's meeting house to the Jamboree site, and made it easy for visiting troops to also reach the site, which became known as "Jamboree Town," thanks to the 35,000 tents that sprang up. Today, Jamboree Road serves as a reminder of the event 65 years ago.

For more information, visit: [www.ocbsa.org/1953-jamboree/](http://www.ocbsa.org/1953-jamboree/)

## BY THE NUMBERS: BOY SCOUT JAMBOREE

**51,000**

attendees at the 1953 Jamboree on the Irvine Ranch

**10**

days the Jamboree lasted

**80,000**

Scouts and visitors at arena show (where Corona Del Mar High School now sits)

**8**

miles of road graded for the 1953 Jamboree and now known as Jamboree Road

**35,000**

tents pitched at the 1953 Jamboree

**92,000**

safe swims in the ocean

**2021**

will be the next Jamboree at The Summit Bechtel Family National Scout Reserve in West Virginia, now the permanent Jamboree site

## Special thanks to the following for helping to make today special:

The Irvine Company  
Fashion Island

Cucina Enoteca  
Brendan Collins

Bill McCroskey  
Roger Miller

Nelda Stone  
Tracy Childs

The 50,000 Scouts who made this the largest Jamboree ever.  
Myford Irvine, William H. Spurgeon III and Skip Fife for their vision.

[www.ocbsa.kintera.org/jamboreecampership](http://www.ocbsa.kintera.org/jamboreecampership)

Please consider a gift to the 1953 Jamboree Memorial Campership Fund to send more Scouts on their outdoor adventure. Gifts of \$1,000 or more are recognized with a commemorative neckerchief and listed on the honor wall at the Orange County Council, Boy Scouts of America William Lyon Homes Center for Scouting headquarters.

**Stephen Chazen**  
Atlanta Area Council

Bob Hope addressed the Scouts "It looks like the United Nations in short pants!"

---

**Brendan Collins**

I attended the 1953 Jamboree from Troop 4, Montclair, NJ., coming across the country in one of those special Jamboree trains (with stops at Yellowstone, Grand Canyon, Salt Lake City, including a swim in the Great Salt Lake). It was a life-changing experience and one of the reasons I moved to California.

---

**Richard Crum, Oklahoma**  
Hometown Scout reporter during Jamboree

It was a special time in my life. It added depth to my writing skills. These skills would later aid me as a writer/editor for National Geographic for more than 20 years.

---

**Douglas D. Hoff, Troop 37, Bellingham, Washington**

I was one of the Scouts from Troop 37, Bellingham, Washington. We had two troops from the Northwest, and traveled by train from Bellingham, (Great Northern) to Portland where we boarded a Southern Pacific antique train from the turn of the century for the trip to a location close to the Jamboree site. The train was really special, with Pullman, dining and coach cars. Since I am an HO train buff, this is a special memory for me in many ways.

As you are well aware, the jamboree was super. Meeting thousands of Scouts from around the nation, Hollywood stars, the VP all on a dusty hillside environment was life adjusting. I have not visited the site over the years, but have been in the Huntington Beach area, and have seen the Jamboree highway that took us by bus to the beach. I also remember Palomar observatory as my first venture in space. Being from the cloudy northwest, seeing a clear night sky, much less real planets and galaxies left a positive impression on me.

Be prepared, and do a good deed daily!

---

**Phil Inglee**

While there will be numerous stories about the Jamboree itself, mine would be about the trip from Deposit, NY by a surplus Army troop train (via the NY Central RR) that took Boy Scouts across the country to LA. As I was a last-minute replacement for a friend who was unable attend, my parents had to scramble to get me aboard and off on a great adventure for a fifteen-year-old.

---

## **Dale Johnson**

30 scouts from Liberty, Texas east of Houston made the 1953 trip.

We distinguished ourselves by having the most number of Scouts in the hospital at the Jamboree of any troop as we all got exposed to mumps a few weeks before our trip.

The Jamboree was great. Most of us had seldom been outside of the state of Texas before the trip.

---

## **Charles Taylor Kerchner**

Troop 72, Central Indiana Council

Professor Emeritus, Claremont Graduate University

I was 13, a shy, skinny kid dropped off at the Monon Railway station a few blocks from our house in Indianapolis, Indiana, to board what I remember as a repurposed troop train for a three-day trip to a magical place called California.

As I stepped off the train in Santa Ana, I saw a palm tree for the first time. A flood of happy recollections: I learned camp cooking. The quartermaster provided ingredients and what the jamboree brochure called "proven" recipes. It took us only a couple days to figure out the ingredients could be combined in other ways, and we had some widely inventive meals. I remember realizing that it was much easier to cut heads of lettuce into pieces than to peel and tear them. And the dressing was better when some hot dog relish was added. We may have invented the iceberg wedge.

Trading became an obsession. Everyone brought stuff. The Indianapolis scouts had large arm patches depicting our famous Motor Speedway. Much in demand. An Associated Press photographer took my picture pretending to trade one for a grass skirt with a scout from Hawaii.

We visited Knotts Berry Farm, Catalina, the Grand Canyon, and Salt Lake City, and we were taken to Hollywood for a radio performance of the Great Gildersleeve and dinner in what seemed an impossibly posh restaurant. Could have been Musso & Frank. The whole trip cost \$250, which my mother noted in a scrapbook I had paid for with savings from my paper route and renting my bedroom to visitors to Indiana state fair and the 500-mile race.

A quarter century later, my family and I largely drove the route of that old troop train as we moved to California. It's still magical.

---

## **Bob Ludekens**

The Boy Scouts approached the Irvine Co for the possibility of the 1953 Jamboree. The company needed 2 major roads in their plan. The Boy Scouts arranged for the Marine Corps, Camp Pendleton, to level the large area and construct the gravel roads which are now McArthur Blvd and Jamboree Road. The Marines also prepared our camping areas and the very large bowl for our Opening, Evening, and Closing programs. I do not know who constructed the very large stand and its covering. The bowl was similar to Hollywood Bowl but not as fancy. I attended programs and on the stage and remember how large it was.

The opening and Closing were magnificent with a very large world globe and 50,000+ marching together. Yes dusty. Thanks to the work by the Marines, the area was leveled, shrubs gone, roads constructed and graveled - a beautiful site overlooking the ocean. Balboa Island and Newport Beach had residences and commercial activities, but very little else. Huntington Beach was all open and where many of the Scouts

went.

---

## Newport Beach's Centennial Mayor Don Webb Remembers the 1953 Jamboree

I grew up in Tucson, Arizona and traveled with other scouts from our Catalina Council. My 14<sup>th</sup> birthday was on the day before we left Tucson. What a birthday present! I was a member of Troop 6 from the First Methodist Church.

In 1953 airplanes still had propellers, were very expensive and the trip was only about 500 miles so busses were the only real option for travel from Tucson to the Irvine Ranch in California. In July, going through the Yuma desert is very hot particularly if the only air conditioning is an open window. Our solution was night travel to take advantage of slightly cooler temperatures. We probably left around midnight and arrived at the San Diego Marine Corps Recruit Depot before lunch on a Monday morning. Our tour there included the zoo and Balboa Park and a bay cruise. We arrived at the Jamboree site Tuesday afternoon and were one of the first troops to arrive.

Scouting is all about getting along with others and experiencing new adventures. What is a better way to do this than joining your friends and new acquaintances on a journey to another state for a week-long camp-out with 50,000 other scouts just like you from other faraway places? All 48 states (this was before Alaska and Hawaii became states) and many foreign countries sent Scouts to join the fun.

My parents had prepared me well for this experience through their cross-country trips to the East coast to visit various family members and friends. I was used to getting to know people from other places and enjoyed learning the varying ways of accomplishing our daily tasks. I was looking forward to the unknown and to doing something I had not done before. It was going to be a great adventure.

Imagine rolling hills sloping toward the Upper Newport Bay, crisscrossed by gullies, washes and a canyon. MacArthur Blvd. was a nice paved two-lane road but between the road and the Bay there was not a single building or residence northerly of Coast Highway. Brush had been cleared from the most level areas. This area was about 2 miles long and 1.4 miles wide. Gravel and oiled dirt roads provided access to the 1250 troop camp sites which were adorned with shower and latrine tents. Each campsite had a water spigot. There were five large canvas tents for the trading posts around the area and staff tents nearby.

We arrived early on Tuesday for the event which started on Friday, so we were able to watch the "Tent City" grow. Our camp site was on the bluff above Corona del Mar High School just north of where Jamboree Road now intersects Eastbluff Drive. It was near the largest of the arenas which was on the slope above the school. There was a great view of the Jamboree site where Fashion Island now sits and the bay with the ocean beyond. Wow, what a place to camp!

There were many highlights. The beach trip with huge waves at Huntington State Beach, heavily supervised by the Army amphibious vehicles (Ducks). A visit to Knott's Berry Farm where I developed a taste for cinnamon jelly beans. The newly formed Blue Angels performance with their Korean War tested Sabre Jets. The great variety of items the scouts brought to trade. Try to imagine the story a coal miner's son might come up with to make a piece coal more valuable than a splinter of wood made from Paul Bunyan's axe from Wisconsin. Our special item was horned toads. You may even see a few still in the area. Contests to lash together bridges and structures. Events that tested your skills against other Scouts. The major evening show featuring over 6,000 participants including many Hollywood actors. It was a salute to America's history and Scouting. The experience I remember most vividly was the candle-lighting ceremony during the closing ceremony. Imagine 50,000 flickering flames on a hill side above the bay and

below the expanse of the star lit sky. I often sit across the bay trying to envision what that might have looked like.

Upon leaving the Army in 1964, I moved to Orange County and then to Newport Beach in 1965. My career with the Newport Beach Public Works Department began in 1969. Over the years as our 1953 camp site was gradually covered by tall and short buildings, residences, parks, shopping centers, schools and a golf course, I experienced how complicated it was to build a community that is well planned and a very desirable place to live. My surprise is how a few hundred over a seven-month period created a well-planned, very functional city for 50,000 residents to use for less than two weeks out of a cattle grazing field. As far as I know, all that I knew had a great time with wonderful experiences. As I stand back and remember the experience, we all owe many thanks to those who worked so hard to create the largest Jamboree to be held in the U.S. The Irvine Ranch was a perfect place at the right time. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

---

### **Dean Whinery**

I was an Assistant Patrol Leader in Troop 26, Section 12 (LAAC) at that Jamboree, and was invited to be a sort of "Aide" for the National Council's PR effort, where I met newspaper people that in future years were my colleagues. Also met Green Bar Bill, and a number of Hollywood types who visited. For me, maybe it was "type casting" because I was asked to be a part of the National PR effort for the '69 Jamboree in Idaho--the one greeted by Scouts from the moon.

Through the years, I've encountered men across the US who, noticing my uniform, told me they'd been at the "California Jamboree." I'd look at them and we'd laugh together when I said, "That's strange, I don't remember seeing you there."

---

### **Irvine's "Jamboree" Scout troop still going strong since encampment**

By Tracy Childs

Bill White was one of Troop 36's original members, citing the Scout Oath for the first time as a 12-year-old in 1952. His father, the late Myford Irvine and at the time Irvine Company's president, founded the troop - Irvine's first.

Bill, who grew up in the Irvine family home where the Katie Wheeler Library (a replica of the former home) now stands, attended the Jamboree - the first one held on the West Coast - with the seven other original members of Troop 36.

"One of the things I enjoyed most about the Jamboree was trading with other Scouts," White said. "Jamborees are really big about trading with boys from other states and countries."

White recalled trading cockleburs - spiky pods from native California plants that bloom during the summer. Chuckling at the memory, he said, "We convinced the other kids they were porcupine eggs."

Regardless of what they traded, every single Scout went home with a bona fide souvenir - a commemorative Jamboree coin produced by Irvine Company. And memories to last a lifetime.

---

## Dick

Our troop from Central Minnesota Council was made up of Scouts from throughout the Council. I attended with four fellow Scouts from my hometown. We gathered at St. Cloud, Minnesota a couple of days early to get everything organized for the Jamboree and boarded the train. During the night the main part of the train connected our car to the train and we were off.

I seem to remember more about the trip out to California and back than I do the Jamboree itself. We left St. Cloud, Minnesota by train on July 11 traveling through Omaha, Nebraska and arrived in Denver, Colorado. Traveling through the Royal Gorge, stopping to take pictures and continuing on to Salt Lake City arriving on July 14. We departed the train and went to the Great Salt Lake for sightseeing and a swim. We departed Salt Lake City, arriving in Los Angeles on July 15. We were transported from the rail road to the Jamboree site.

The entire train was made up of Boy Scouts in several train cars. Each Jamboree Troop was assigned a rail car with bunks. Most of our meals were box lunches provided at various stops along the way as there was no dining car.

We were in Troop 25, Section 29 and were located on the side of a hill looking out over the ocean. Some of the things I remember most about the Jamboree were the programs put on by Hollywood stars and the problems with food preparation, since we had to cook our own meals. Since our camp was on the side of the hill facing the ocean, several times during the night Scouts would find themselves outside their tents sliding down the hill in their sleeping bags. Our leader called us "Cousin Pink Knees" because the backs of our knees became sunburned between our long socks and short pants.

We departed the Jamboree on July 25 traveling to Centralia, Washington where the whole train of Scouts were provided lunch by the local town folks in a park near the railroad. We continued to Portland, Oregon where we departed the train and were given a bus tour. After re-boarding the train, we stopped in Seattle, Washington. and boarded a cruise boat to Victoria Falls, British Columbia. From Seattle we stopped at Glacier National Park for a short tour. From there we travelled straight through to Fargo, North Dakota before getting off the train in St. Cloud on July 30.

The cost for the entire time, travel and Jamboree was \$255.00. Everything went so well that after the trip was over we were refunded of \$13.50 by the National Office. Where can you go on a trip like that for about three weeks for \$241.50?

## THE MYFORD IRVINE 1953 JAMBOREE MEMORIAL CAMBERSHIP FUND

To celebrate the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this historical encampment a campership endowment fund has been established to help provide camping adventures to current and future Scouts. Named in honor of the host of the largest Jamboree and only one on the west coast, attendees and others can make a difference for youth and “pay it forward by giving back to Scouting.”



A lot has obviously changed since the Jamboree, but the spirit has not. In fact, when Bob Hope addressed the 50,000 Scouts during the event he said:

**“It looks like the United Nations in short pants!”**

Where else could you have so many youth, from diverse backgrounds, come together for the common good in service to self, others and the nation? Scouting made a difference then in those boys’ lives and it continues to make a difference in countless lives of young men and women. It is the prescription for what ails society today. Please consider how you can help Scouting continue to teach life-skills to future generations of young men and women. It is important for you to know that we all owe a great debt to this wonderful program that is desperately needed by our youth and country today. Sadly, however, just when it is needed most, we don’t receive the funding to run the program as we did in the past from United Way and other businesses. Only through grateful gifts back to Scouting made today or through your estate plans, can we make a difference in future lives.

Just as many Scouts who attended this Jamboree received camperships and sponsorships, Scouting needs a strong endowment to provide current and future Scouts experiences that will last a lifetime while teaching personal responsibility, leadership, character and teamwork.

You may make your gift easily online at whatever amount you choose with gifts of \$1,000 or more being recognized with a commemorative neckerchief and listed on the honor wall at the Orange County Council, Boy Scouts of America William Lyon Homes Center for Scouting headquarters.

You may also let your friends and associates know about the need and ask them to support too! Thanks for doing your part to make a difference in the life of a young Scout and honoring one of the greatest encampments ever along with those who sacrificed to make it possible!

[www.ocbsa.kintera.org/jamboreecampership](http://www.ocbsa.kintera.org/jamboreecampership)

For more information or to share your own Jamboree memory, please contact Devon Dougherty at 714-546-8558 ext. 145 or e-mail to [devond@ocbsa.org](mailto:devond@ocbsa.org).