

**Once upon a time**, about 1972, I got the chance to be a leader in a Jefferson county Colorado schools experiential education program. What exactly this would be was ill defined, but the basics were to model it on Outward Bound. OB was the Englishman, Kurt Hahn's baby. OB put young British seamen through the rigors of wilderness survival, to help them survive the later horrors of Nazi Uboat torpedo bombardment in the early days of WW 2.

OB had experienced success in the years after WW 2 and had schools all over the world, including Colorado. The new 1970's twist would be extension of the OB experience into the city and farming communities, or wherever the adventure challenge might be, and do this via the public schools. This was the challenge of the Jeffco experiential school effort about 1972. All this designed around the idea that "adventure" is very important...and "shared adventure" is even more important. I was in the right place at the right time and got the job to run ALTEX (Alternative Education Experience). About this time I met Dale Verhoeven.

As ALTEX got under way my "leader" Jeffco job task was to involve other schools. One afternoon about two weeks into the reality of my new job, I was sitting in my office at Lakewood High school. It was in the cafeteria area and a former school store space. The new concept of vending machines had freed up my new office.

While sitting there that afternoon I felt lucky to have the space. I was a little over 30 years old. I had just gotten settled, or almost settled, when I got a call from Dale at Pomona High School.

Dale wanted to become a part of ALTEX. It was a great conversation. I knew from the first that Dale was a good man and he would make it happen. That was the day we became partners. But the true test of our friendship was forged over many days and nights in the field. We had many good times watching the stars in the Big Bend Texas sky and on the river. We drove students to the farm and supervised their city excursions. We did some emergency stuff, but it was rare because we were prepared.

Once Dale and I evacuated a student from Mesa de Anguila. He had a back problem and we decided to walk him out together and be back to our patrols by the next morning. We walked up the steep trail to the top of the mesa at 2 in the morning. That was a challenging day and night. I fell asleep knowing Dale was a good man to have by your side and this made me feel good. I know he felt the same.

I have always thought the concept of "field" is very important, especially to youngsters because they are ready for excitement in their environment. Field

is the same as saying environment. The field is the environment beyond your front door (and inside it). Consider that a youngster leaves the house and heads for school and its classrooms....the field...Dale and I had the opportunity to extend the field into the Texas desert, the offices and other haunts of the city, the rural homes of farmers and ranchers. And we capped the field experience with a white water river trip.... What a great opportunity! I have always been glad I was able to share it with Dale.

In the beginning, Dale would bring Pomona High School students to ALTEX. I had to do the same at Lakewood. This was no small feat. When I got the Jeffco job and met Dale, the first semester start date was about a year away. This was the early 1970's. All kinds of equipment, from rafts and paddles to back packs and water bottles, had to be found and purchased...There was no REI...to say nothing about how we would coordinate Jeffco buses and vans (what vans?) to accommodate a "mobile, experiential classroom broken into teams of about 9 students each". Say what? But we had a green light and about \$30 K per year to spend, serious money in those days. Both Dale and I knew from our first conversations that we could do it and in the process entice other schools to join up, or at least we would have a good time trying.

After a few years we changed the course name to SENIOR FIELD STUDIES because it was more descriptive on transcripts and did a better job of describing our course to the public.

In the beginning Dale said "Let Pomona be the first school to hook up with Lakewood"

I said "Good idea", and after an hour's conversation, hung up the phone and breathed a sigh of relief. One school plus another equals two. Hook up schools. That was the goal. Dale Verhoeven was a savior. But best of all, we were about to become great friends in adventure.

And so it went. At one point Lakewood, Pomona, Bear Creek and Evergreen high schools had students on the move together...The Lodge, Big Bend Texas, the City, Rural Colorado, and the River...Graduation!

Once Dale and I were turning out of the parking lot of Lakewood High School about 6 in the morning, heading for southern Texas and the Big Bend desert...a night away from Denver, with a camp in New Mexico...with about 60 students and teachers in tow. The morning sun was shining on Dale's face as I made the turn. He said "tough job, but somebody has to do it." I agreed, laughed, said "you and me buddy" and kept on driving. Only we, and a few other key people knew what we were about to do to coordinate various patrols over Mesa de Angula. There was great joy in this because we had it down

and had figured the angles, except for an act of God. Most of the time, God smiled upon us and let us do our thing.

About 1980 Dale left to become a dairy man in the Verhoeven family business in Yakima, Washington. I was devastated the night he told me he was leaving. But Dale had to go his way. Later I saw his business in Yakima. He was raising dairy cattle from birth to about 18 months. When I saw Dale at his Yakima dairy ranch we ran the Snake River that summer.

We were powerful friends. I could only say "good luck Compadre" when we parted our professional teaching ways. That was both a sad and happy day in my book...because I hated to see Dale go, but knew he needed to do something else.

We found time, in the 1980's to run the Grand Canyon and other rivers together. We did this through nine GC trips in the 1980s and a trip here and there on the San Juan, Ladore, the Yampa, Deso-Grey...It was October on Ladore that I remember the most in our later years...

In the start up ALTEX scenario, Rick Penner and Mike Christner became participants (they were Dale's kids from Pomona High in the early 1970s). Rick and Mike became patrol leaders in the "field" of Big Bend, Texas. They were on Mesa de Anguila and the climb at Tinaja Lujan. Dale and I also had a few other friends to help us...Jerry Strauss was a big player. Jerry helped us with the river over many years. Like Jerry, Rick and Mike were there in the early days.

After Dale left Denver for Yakima he and I were able to run the Grand Canyon together for almost ten years, from the early 1980's until the early 1990's. Challenging, big water runs in the 35 K range. Big water and big tides. We ran in June or July. We had a good time.

The really big water no longer happens unless you are lucky to catch a flow. I remember the really big water with Dale. We knew so much from our Field Studies journeys and personal journeys down Ladore, the Yampa, Desolation-Grey, the San Juan...Mesa de Anguila...that the only thing we had to overcome was the size of the waves in the Grand Canyon, and most of the time that was easy. What a great time that was. I remember Dale saving me after my flip in Sockdolager. I will never forget his boat coming round the bend when I was almost helpless. And there was Dale!

Every now and then, in our Grand Canyon adventures a lady or two came along. And on one of those trips Dale and Patsy met. They became lovers and eventually married.

As I watched Dale live his life outside Field Studies and the teaching experience, I reconfirmed that he was as much in love with the concept of "field" as I was. With Patsy he sailed a boat down to Costa Rica and back. Adventure was always a part of Dale's life.

Even in his last job, he was teaching men in prison. I know, in speaking with Dale, that this was an adventure.

Dale was a warm hearted, adventure loving person. I knew this from the beginning and in the process came to love him. We were partners for most of our lives.

An outstanding memory I have is looking for Dale and his patrol one night before we were to climb Mesa de Anguila, with students, sometime in the 1970s. We had teams separated into camps. We were ready for launch. Look fifty yards away and you could see flashlights like fireflies. I found Dale, headlight on, reading a poem to his patrol. I waited. I listened. It was a great starry night, and I will always remember it.

John Donne

"All mankind is of one author, and is one volume; when one man dies, one chapter is not torn out of the book, but translated into a better language; and every chapter must be so translated...As therefore the bell that rings to a sermon, calls not upon the preacher only, but upon the congregation to come: so this bell calls us all: ....No man is an island, entire of itself...any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee."

Fondest of memories and love to my friend Dale

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