

A HAPPY ISLAND CALLED CATALINA

By Marco Lopez

Hi Friends! We're off again so soon but this time it's but for a weeks location only, on a wonderful island called Catalina. The illusion the Island sometimes creates is somewhat interesting because it looks like a peninsula extending out across the ocean but in actuality it is about twenty miles away from the Southern California Coast! The Island is famous for several things among them the famous Avalon Ballroom which during the "forties" drew the biggest and best dancing bands. One thing in particular the Island was popular for was their "glass bottom boats" which, just by coincidence, is the title of this film that stars Doris Day and ROD!

The Island looks like a sleepy little village, BUT! during Easter vacation week and the Summer holidays which students look forward to, the Island becomes like Mardi Gras in New Orleans! Sun worshippers from far and near are there including tourists en masse! You just can't imagine the tremendous turnout the island has with all the high school and college kids. It's just one big shindig!! By Labor Day in September though, the height of the season has been completed due to back-to-school days but there still are a few tourists who manage to take the daily tour to the Island aboard the Catalina Steamer out of San Pedro Harbor. September 13th thru 19th, 1965 was when WE invaded the Island!

We, (meaning the GLASS BOTTOM BOAT Film Company) were so darn lucky weather-wise, as we had only one evening of good solid rain and then great sunshine throughout the remaining week!

It was interesting to note that the Island covers a twenty-seven mile area and if you go to the top of the Island (where there is an "island in the sky airport"), you'll find a totally new world... as if you were on safari in Africa. There are areas that have not been touched by man and is inhabited by wild boar, pigs, mountain goats, buffalo...just name it, it might just be there! Your friend and mine, ROD along with Fred Hakim, went on a "safari" jaunt. This Island was too tempting for them to let slip through the week!

So...off they went with one of the rangers from the Island, packing their loaded guns, camera, and jeep, into the 'ah wilderness' with its roaming green-mansioned hills. Not knowing what it would be like, both ROD and Fred, to their amazement, caught a spectacular view of the wild life in action. Their wishes came true; at long last they would be able to score a target or two, and bullseye... it was for ROD! He got himself an enormous trophy...a 275 lb. wild boar..and a rare one at that! He has now become known as our "great game hunter" of California Island. On his days off during shooting schedules, he and Fred take off to the Island and manage to bring back with them fat little pink pigs ready for a barbecue feast! This wild game hunting has become ROD's latest hobby. You can imagine what his new English pub at home will be like with all of his game trophies. Sometimes I picture him like an Ernest Hemingway character!

Most of our shooting for the film was aboard motor boats and several underwater shots were taken of DORIS and her stunt girl. Others in the cast include John McGiver, Paul Lynde, Edward Andrews, Eric Fleming and comedian Dick Martin (or Rowan & Martin). Most of the company crew were flown over by seaplane and if you've never been in one, that's one for the books! Landing on water is really "something else". Much of our equipment came by plane but for our larger items such as trucks, trailer, cars, etc., they traveled by barge. One week away from sound stages was welcomed by all of us especially when we had sun and water to comfort us!

Our Sunday departure was not a sad one but, instead, we had in mind that our Island in the sun was just a short distance away from the Los Angeles Harbor, that we felt welcomed to any time ...to this Happy Island called CATALINA!