

Memories from Michele Perussina

Hi. My name is Michele Perussina, and my brother, Bob, and I are third generation River rats. Our grandparents bought their home on Starrett Hill in 1915, after vacationing in Monte Rio several summers. They always attended the annual summer fundraiser show, which eventually became known as the Bohemian Show and then the Monte Rio Variety Show. In fact, my mom used to complain that the very first time she missed a Show was when I was born!

My first memories of the Show are when it still took place in the old Redwood Bowl, with Charley Valencia hosting the amateur entertainment hour and Judge Emmet Daly hosting the professional entertainers. We kids sat down in front, where we watched Ray Bolger sing and dance his "If I only had a brain" from Wizard of Oz, or Dan Rowan crack jokes, or Art Linkletter tell us the latest "Kids say the darndest things"!

When I was about 10 or 12 our dad, Bob Perussina, was approached by Charlie Valencia, who asked Dad to take over his hosting duties. Dad did it proudly for the next 24 years, while Mom and her friends would decorate the stage. During that time, the Show moved to the old, then new Monte Rio School, and finally over to the amphitheater where it's still held (except this year!). And we were blessed with performances by the Beach Boys, Kingston Trio, Jeff Dunham, Zac Brown, Kix Brooks, Jimmy Buffet, Billy Valentine, Carlos Reyes and numerous others.

And now, bringing everything full circle, it's my turn to help serve on the Show's Committee since being "requested " by Michele McDonell to help with the 99th Show ten years ago! It's been a lot of fun, and while this year the Show and its fundraising efforts take a different format, we look forward to future years when the Show once again brings a little bit of magic to Monte Rio and the River.

The Photos below are from a Show in the early 1980's depicting my Dad, Bob Perussina, on the left, hosting the amateur talent, and "Smokey" MacCrae hosting the professional entertainers.



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