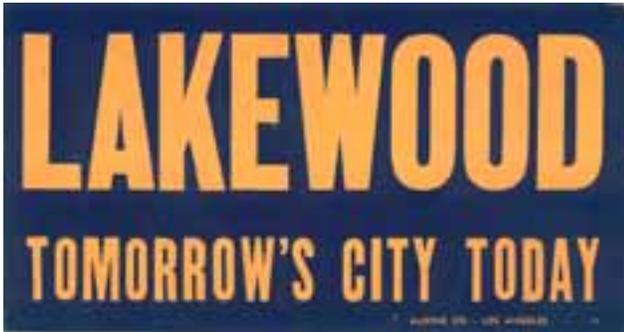


Take Your Place in History



Lakewood residents – new and old – have wonderful stories to tell about their life in our community. Stories about moving to Lakewood when the neighborhoods were new. ■ Stories about the achievements that came with a maturing city. Stories about the men and women, boys and girls, and grandparents who struggled to

make a new community without a guidebook. ■ With the generous help of the Macerich Company (owners of Lakewood Center), we collected many of these stories during the city’s “49 and Counting” pre-anniversary celebrations in 2003. The authors of these essays come from all walks of life. Some are original homeowners. Some only recently moved to Lakewood. ■ We hope that sharing their unedited, heartfelt stories will remind you of the reasons why Lakewood is your hometown.

Lakewood Memories

My family moved to Long Beach in 1970 when I was 5 years old, and I have memories of going to the Lakewood Mall with my mom and sisters when it was an outdoor mall. It had Montgomery Ward on one end, JC Penney on the other and May Co. in the middle. It also had several other little stores in between.

We used to go to Buffums and Bullocks too. If memory serves me right, they were located in the area where Home Depot and Albertsons are now. The mall has grown and expanded since then but it’s still customer friendly. It’s very easy to find what you’re looking for.

I do all of my family’s shopping there, holidays, back-to-school, etc. and we especially love the new food court! And with Home Depot, Albertsons, Best Buy, Circuit City, and the movie theater, we really don’t have to go anywhere else.

Having grown up in Long Beach, I always thought of Lakewood as a sleepy community, a real family oriented city. So, when my husband and I and our three children decided to buy a house, we looked at Lakewood. To say we bought a “fixer upper” would be an understatement. Our

Are you searching for your own essay or the essay of someone you know? ■ You can use the search function in your Acrobat Reader to find the name you are looking for. ■ The search tool can be found on your toolbar and in the drop-down menus. ■ The essays in this collection were submitted through Lakewood Online; they have been assembled in alphabetical order by last name.

house was literally unlivable. We spent every penny we made to make our house a home, and that we did! That was 5 years ago and we have done many upgrades since then and just last month, we were honored with winning the Lakewood Beautiful home award.

We had our fourth child 3 years ago and we can't imagine raising our kids anywhere but in Lakewood. All of our kids are involved in Lakewood sports and/or activities and we will continue to support our community any way we can. We look forward to many, many years of living in this beautiful City.

By Monique Amer

Monsignor Dan Kielty

In 1953, St. Pancratius Church was established in Lakewood. The first Pastor was at the time "Fr. Dan Kielty." He was very well known throughout the community and not only with the Catholic population but with everyone. I was born in 1963 and not only did he Baptize me, and give me my First Holy Communion, Sacrament of Penance and Confirmation, he also gave me my first job at age 14 in 1978.

I worked in the rectory where the priests live from 1978 until 1987. I answered doors, the phones, counted collections and for most of that time I was Monsignor Kielty's friend. Walking the church grounds with him and listening to how he communicated with people was the groundwork for who I am today. He could remember people's names even if they only visited our parish one time ten years ago. He could talk any subject and most importantly he listened.

Unfortunately, he died on a Monday morning in 1983. We watched the Ram game together Sunday afternoon and he wasn't feeling well so he went to lay down around 3pm. He had a series of heart attacks that night and the next morning.

To show you just how much he meant to the community, we had to have three separate funerals for him. If I remember correctly, one at 9am, 12pm and 6pm. St. Pancratius Church was standing room only for all three masses. Former Mayor Jackie Rynerson and present Mayor Joe Esquivel and numerous Police Officers were in attendance. Almost every leader from other religions in Lakewood was present. I also remember 10 complete rows were filled with Priests, Monsignors, Cardinals, Deacons from all over Los Angeles County.

Working at St. Pancratius was a great life experience for me and I can say this for everyone that came in contact with Fr. Kielty, we lost a great priest, and a great friend, however we gained an "Angel in Heaven!"

By Mark Abeyta

Lakewood Is Living

We arrived in Lakewood in late 1959 and were met by neighbors that soon would become our extended family. As we walked up the driveway of our first and only home, they approached us and asked, "Can we help you?" Their offering to us soon became our offering to them. It's been that way ever since.

Forty-four years later we are the beneficiaries of wonderful neighbors -- the Cogley's, the Dugas's, the Frances's, the Grasman's, the Holtzclaw's, the McFadden's, and the Spehar's. We struggled, raised families, argued, made-up, laughed, cried, said farewell to loved ones and grew old together.

Lakewood gave us a super family environment that made all this possible. From the Mall and all its shops to the Library with all its learning. What a gift to all who were fortunate to have lived in such a family based community. Our collective "Kids of Montair," all 26 of them, have all grown and are contributing to better our world.

The Lakewood parks, schools, and churches helped make their maturity a grand happening. How can they all be forty+ when we don't feel older? It truly seems like yesterday that we cheered them on in Park and Little League, attended Parents Night at school, dressed them out in their finest for Sunday Church and took great pride as they graduated from Stephen Foster Elementary, Roosevelt Junior High and then Mayfair High School.

We would not change any of that for the world. Thank you Lakewood.

By Ed Beauchamp

A Memory in Lakewood

It was 1954 and my husband, a young doctor, had just joined a partnership in Paramount. Our family was growing and we needed more than the two-bedroom rental where we were living. My husband came home and said, "We need to buy a bigger house and the partnership will loan us the down payment." He said for me to find one I liked, and then he would look at it to see if he liked it also. He sent a realtor to help me.

Knowing my husband was a doctor, the realtor started suggesting what we should buy. She showed me the nice older homes in Bixby Knolls, and then she took me to Orange County to the new developments. I told her Orange County was too far. I used a map she had and drew a pencil circle in an area between Long Beach Community Hospital and Paramount and told her "I want a house in this area."

She said, "Oh, you don't want that area, they are cheap mutual homes," and I said "I'm going to look." The realtor never came back. On rainy days, I'd pile three kids in the car and drive around the circled area. I wanted to see if there was water standing, no standing water, it was running off.

I saw a sign in a yard, went up, and knocked on the door. I liked what I saw, but continued to look. My husband liked it when he saw it and the deal were made. The open field on Downey Avenue became Bolivar Park. The nearby schools were good schools. My four kids learned to swim for 35 cents a lesson in Pat McCormick's pool. We had all young neighbors with children and we all got along great.

After a few years, we added on two rooms and a bath. The kids went to nearby schools and the boys swam on the Lakewood Water Polo team when they got there. It's been nearly fifty years now; the young people moved away and my family has changed. The doctor passed away and I'm a grandmother. I'm still living here and enjoying the convenience and my life on Allred Street in Lakewood.

By Ruby Campbell

My Memories of Lakewood

Before Lakewood became a city, I held the title of Miss Artesia. I was part of the queen's court for the Los Angeles County Spring fair in 1951. This fair was held on the grounds of what is now known as Mayfair Park. My husband Sam and I were married in December of that same year.

While living west of Lakewood Blvd on Hayter Street, I can remember pulling my little children in a wagon on the boulevard, then pausing to watch the big crane go up as the builders placed the May Co. sign on top of the building which is known today as Robinson May.

Sam worked for Macco Construction Co. laying gas pipe for a housing tract west of Lakewood Blvd. In 1958, we purchased our home on Edgefield St. in, what was then known as "Dutch Village." As time moved on Dutch Village moved away, and so did many of our neighbors. However, there are several original owners still on our block.

We had a wonderful neighbor and friend who passed away in 2000. Yvonne was so special, she planned a welcome tea for me when I moved next door to her 45 years ago. She invited several neighbors so I could get acquainted very quickly. I will always treasure our friendship, and remember her sweet spirit. May I say, she too was a great fan, and a supporter of our city.

My family has participated in many of Lakewood's activities over the years. Our children were involved in the parks and recreational activities: baseball basketball volleyball gymnastics, the YMCA programs etc. Sam and I also enjoyed being involved in the adult programs. Our twin sons graduated from Mayfair high school in 1970. Lakewood has been, and continues to be a

fine, and reputable great city, one of which we are proud to call home. Happy birthday
Lakewood

By Wilma De Hoop

My Home in Lakewood

In 1962, my husband and I were searching in the Compton/Long Beach area for a home we could afford for ourselves and our two young sons, ages 3 and 4. We found a home at 2523 Hardwick St. for about \$11,000 and bought it. We were so proud of the home that we spent no time considering what type of community we were moving into. We quickly became enlightened that we had accidentally stumbled onto something quite nice, for matter of fact, magnificent.

In 1966, we welcomed a daughter into our family. By that time the boys were old enough to be involved in the sports programs offered at Biscailuz Park 3 or 4 blocks from our home. The boys loved playing at the park and loved the sports programs and swimming lessons offered at Bolivar Park. This city was filled with parks and offered every type of activity for all ages (from the very young to seniors) that anyone could imagine being interested in.

In addition to the sports programs, our daughter attended Tot Lot pre-school as soon as she turned 2 until she was 5 and entered kindergarten. Another surprise, while she was in Tot Lot, I joined a women's Volleyball League, Volley Tennis and Softball Leagues. How nice was that!

By the time the boys were 13 and 14, we had bought another house at 4231 Lomina (where I still live today). All three of my children went to Bancroft Jr. High and then graduated from Lakewood High School. One of my sons and my daughter live within a few blocks of me today, making Lakewood their homes. My oldest granddaughter has graduated from Lakewood High and the other 4 are on their way to graduation.

I am so thankful for the little ride we took to look at houses and the decision to buy the house at 2523 Hardwick and then onto 4231 Lomina. I feel safe here in Lakewood. We are blessed with a good fire department, police department and a city council and mayor who are also proud to be Lakewood citizens. That combination of factors makes a recipe for success for Lakewood. I am so proud to make Lakewood my home, to have raised my children here and for two of my children to be confident of Lakewood to make this their home when they became adults.

I love Lakewood. Lakewood is my home. I can't imagine living anywhere else.

By Shirley Desy

Coming Back Home

I don't remember the day I moved to Lakewood; it was 1950 and I was 2 years old. Mom and Dad bought it brand new. Paid a whopping \$8,600 for the house. I attended Mac Arthur Elementary, Bancroft Junior High and Lakewood Senior High. I had a wonderful childhood filled with many wonderful memories. My father passed away in 1983 and my mom passed away in 2002. The very thought of this house being sold to a stranger was horrifying! So, my husband and I sold our home in Orange County, and moved back here. I think this is my favorite memory, I moved back "home." I always loved this house but not nearly as much as my mom and dad. My mom's fervent wish was to die in her beloved Lakewood home and that is exactly what she did. She had lived here for 52 years.

I remember Lakewood High School as a vacant lot. My brother and I would go with the neighbor kids and dig deep holes that we would crawl into. At one time, there were 82 neighbor kids (all mostly elementary school age). Lakewood was initially offered as affordable housing for young couples. I watched the Lakewood Mall grow and change, grow some more and change again. It was a glorious outdoor mall where teenagers have hung out for eons!

Then there was the building of Vons, Quigley's, Burger Boy and across the street was a building that housed more stores than you could shake a stick at (it is now Sav-On and Alin Paper).

I love this city and always have. I have lived in many, many cities since I moved after graduation in 1966, but I have chosen Lakewood as the city I want to spend my retirement years. I am so happy to be home.

By Dorla Rogers Dorman

Lakewood

Back in 1942, Jim and I lived in North Long Beach. We were both attending Jordan High School. Our Church Youth group scheduled a Hay Ride. We rented a horse and buggy from Spiller's Ranch. Our route was west along Carson, which was a three-lane road to what is now Woodruff. North to what is now Harvey Way... ending near the San Gabriel River. We had a fun and happy time.

Jim joined the Marines and was over in the South Pacific until 1945. When he returned, we were married in his Aunt's home. He was stationed in Texas until discharged in 1946. Our first baby a girl, was born that year. Jim enrolled in LBCC. He worked nights at Pacific Valve. Our second child, a boy, was born in 1949.

In 1950, my sister and her husband bought a home on the GI Bill. It was on Montair. Spring Street. They persuaded Jim and I to look at some models on Carson and Faust. I wanted the model with the largest kitchen. It was \$10,000! Jim was making \$1.25 an hour.

To qualify for a home he needed a nickel raise.... \$1.30. The next night he talk to his boss and told him he wanted to buy a home and needed a nickel raise. His boss said if he could come in days for a week and train on another job, he could have the raise. He arranged with LBCC and worked days. The new job paid \$2.40 an hour. We paid \$90.00 down on our new home. Wow!! By the next April, we had saved \$1,000.00.

We picked up the key to our new home on 1 April 1951. We received the \$90.00 down payment back. What a deal! Our home was furnished with a new washer or a refrigerator. We chose the refrigerator. Our house was on the south side of Harvey Way, the forth house from the corner of Woodruff Avenue, at 5918. There was nothing but dirt from our back yard to Carson Street except a gas station on the northeast comer (Carson and Woodruff).

Private telephones were scarce. There was a phone booth on the corner of Harvey Way and Woodruff. Jim graduated from LBCC in 1952. He got a job with the Los Angeles County Fire Department. We were then eligible for our own phone.

Our “shopping mall” was at the triangle west of Bellflower and north of Carson. There was a Thriftymart Market, a Thrifty Drug store, Roses’ five and dime, Drew’ s Pharmacy and a People’s Bank.

We raised our five children here. We live in walking distance to all of the local schools. We’ve watched the city grow and change. It’s been a great area for our family and a happy place to live. We don’t plan on moving.

By Jim and Beverly Dunlap

Longing for the Past In The Future

Growing up in Lakewood I remember tree lined streets, the sounds of kids playing from Mayfair Park, swimming at the pool, The Pan American Fiesta and everyone gathering around South Street, Stephen Foster School and nearby roof tops to watch the spectacular fireworks show on the 4th of July!

On the weekends, you saw many people washing their cars, mowing their lawns, and taking pride in their homes. Almost everyone knew each other by first or last name around the neighborhood which many times included other streets other than their own. People genuinely looked out for each other because they cared.

That is why when I purchased my first home it was in Lakewood, just 2 streets over from where I grew up. The neighborhoods have changed a little. Some of the voices from the park are now from my children. I have carried on the tradition that my parents instilled in me when I was

growing up. Take pride in your home; be proud of where you live in hopes that others around you will follow.

I hope that the City keeps up its standards for its city. Takes pride in their parks and their streets and holds homeowners and renters accountable for their part in keeping the city for what it was known for in the past, a tree lined city with clean streets, safe parks for the children to play which makes for a great community to live in.

Longing for the past in the future!

By Stacy Dykstra

My Beloved Lakewood City

I came to this country with my parents in 1984, attended Lakewood High School, and graduated in 1986. I had nothing! I worked various menial jobs and did not seem to find a good job for me. In 1995, I decided to go back to college. So, I attended DeVry University and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Electronic Engineering Technology. This opened a whole new world for me. I worked in the Aerospace and Telecommunications industries, and now I work in the Medical Field as a Service Engineer. Because of the support and love of my parents and my great Lakewood Community, I was able to pay my entire student loan (\$44,000) within only three years. I was able to help my older brother, who was jobless and has five kids, find employment with an excellent telecommunication company. I also met my current fiancé, and I am planning on getting married in 2004. I am now very happy and successful. My life has turned around completely because of the love, motivation, and dedication that I learned from my parents and from my Great and Beloved Lakewood City!

By Nazih Elhayek

Early Lakewood Style

It was 1956 and we still weren't fully settled in our brand new house in West Lakewood. We had been in it since May 1955. I was putting in an hour or two each evening on a cinderblock fence and trying to get a flower garden going. Our son was a toddler and the fence was rapidly becoming a necessity.

The weather was threatening when I arrived home one afternoon, so I decided to let the work go until the storm had blown over. As we sat at the dinner table watching the rain pour down, I had the feeling that I wasn't going to get much work done the next few days. How right I was!

When I first looked out our front window the next morning, it looked like the shores of Lake Ellsinore. The water level was at the bottom step of our front porch and extended across the

street to the bottom step of the house there. It was too deep for my car, so I called my boss and told him of my troubles. He advised me not to worry -- the construction job was flooded too.

We were again at the table, this time for breakfast. The downpour eased up a bit, but the water level remained the same. There were no signs of human life outside and we wondered if all services were shut down.

Not so! Wading through the water, with his pants rolled up, came our milkman. He was soaked despite a light raincoat. He had parked on Paramount Boulevard and walked the long block carrying milk for us and for our neighbor. Seeing us watching through the window, he gave a smile and a cheery wave, before setting our two bottles on the porch and plunging off to deliver more next door.

That made me think – this town is really the place for me. 48 years later, I still have the same opinion.

By Sam Fryefield

Memories and Lessons

In 1982-1984, my dad enrolled me in piano lessons at the Lakewood Mall. I remember going downstairs (two flights) to the basement to meet my teacher, Vince. I never will forget him. I wonder whatever happened to him. He is/was a GREAT teacher. I miss him.

On those late Monday evenings, traveling to the Lakewood Mall for my piano lessons was adventurous. Most of the time, my dad drove the service streets. Rarely did he use the freeway. I anticipated the scenic drive more than concentrating on my lessons. As a child, the drive to the Lakewood Mall was like going through the wealthiest neighborhoods of Beverly Hills, to me. Staring out the car window at how well kept the lawns were and just the greenery of the trees, seem like the ideal place to live. I used to count the trees as we got closer to the mall on Lakewood Blvd. Lakewood is a family oriented city. My son Yorel has been involved with Lakewood recreation department with dance instructor Dennis Martinez Roura. I am a single mom and Dennis is such a positive and great role model for my son. He's always encouraging him, pat on the back, thumbs – up. I've even seen him (Dennis) take special attention to children with special needs.

By Brenda Lee Gertman

Lakewood

In the town where I was born and raised, the sea breeze blew and the neighborhood kids played. This is my town, green trees swaying in the wind, green grass tickling my bare feet, blue sky

above carrying clouds that can disguise themselves as anything my mind asks of them. This is my town, my childhood, my memories, and my life. This is my town, Lakewood, California, the city of tomorrow, today, the city that has made me who I am. Where I spent my summer days lounging by the sparkling pool, at Mayfair Park, listening to the laughter, screams, and squeals of my peers, enjoying their childhood. I loved those hot summer days, and after a long day of swimming and splashing around, my grandpa and I would enjoy an ice-cream cone from the corner hamburger stand, Pacific Star. When I became a teenager the pool wasn't as cool as it used to be, so I'd walk a little further to the Lakewood Center mall and window shop for hours. Now I work and go to college and reminisce about the innocence of my youth, and how great it was to live here, in my town.

Where I grew up with the same friends by my side, we grew up together, we went from being "tiny tots" at Craig Williams's elementary school, to grads at Mayfair high school, and we made it together. Yeah, this is my town. I can't imagine living anywhere else in the world; I have lived here for all of my 22 years now, and next month I will be the proud owner of my very own home, in Lakewood. I plan on starting my family in the house across the street from which I grew up in. I want my children to experience the same feeling of pride that I felt growing up in this town. I want them to go to the same small schools that I went to, where you're not intimidated by the enormity of the classes. I want them to feel the security that I felt growing up

By Kerri Green

Moving In

We moved into our brand new home on Monogram Avenue in 1952, I was 12 years old. Those were truly exciting times in Lakewood. New homes were being built all around us. Soon construction began on the new Lakewood Shopping Center.

We would ride our bikes down and watch as the buildings went up. After it opened one of our favorite hangouts was the record department at The May Company where we would go and listen to all the latest tunes on 78 rpm records and once in a while even purchase one. At night spotlights seemed to fill the air all around announcing new markets, gas stations, etc.

I recall the Good Humor Ice Cream trucks that used to come around and there was even a Grocery bus that would come around selling groceries. As kids, we used to hop on and ride with the bus throughout the area until the owner decided to kick us off.

I attended Grover Cleveland Elementary and later Lakewood Junior High School (now Bancroft). When I see the youngsters today with their Jeans slung low on their hips I kind of smile and remember that we too would wear our Levis slung about as low as we could get them way back then. Sorry kids if you think that is a fad that your generation started; we were dressing like that some 50 years ago.

Lakewood has come a long way over the past 50 years or so and though I no longer live there, I have many fond memories of growing up in Lakewood.

By Bob Hennessey

A Very Special Person

I want to tell you about a very special person. She is the crossing guard and her name is Bobby. I like her because on Wednesday if someone at my home forgets to pick us up, we walk home and Bobby takes us across the street. Whenever we don't walk home for a long time and then we walk home, she always misses us.

She is very nice when we walk home. Bobby always asks us questions about our cousins and all. She is very very special.

I walk home with my brother and he is in first grade and he is six. I even walk home with my cousin. She is in third grade like me but she is nine and I am eight. My brother's name is Jeffrey. My cousin's name is Colina.

By Melissa Heng, Gompers Elementary School, Grade 3

What I like about Living in Lakewood

Lakewood has only been our Home for only a year and a half now, but I have to admit, we may be here for the long term. When choosing a place to purchase our first home, we saw that Lakewood had many charming streets, truly grand old trees, close freeway access (but not too close) and very kind people who cared for their children and homes.

My husband, Ryan, and I both grew up in the South Bay and frankly were searching for a less expensive alternative that was not too far from work. Lakewood was that city and so much more. Once we purchased our home, we realized that the traffic is so non-existent here in comparison because home tracts divide the concentrations of retail. Lack of traffic is one reason we believe we will not leave. Imagine coming home from work in crowded Manhattan Beach and driving through so much traffic on the freeways, only to get off of the freeway at Bellflower Boulevard to a short zip home past the wonderful large 50 year old Ficus trees that line the street. The quiet is truly a blessing. We hear no traffic noise on our street, only the sounds of nature birds during the day and a few crickets at night.

I am a Property Manager for a large international real estate firm and realize that it takes much coordination and care to maintain a city. It is easy to pull the budget from the landscaping and maintenance areas when the economy is struggling. The Lakewood City Maintenance Services are second to none, every park and green space in Lakewood is well taken care of and the streets

are clean – all of which leads to a quality of life that we both love. The parks and the West San Gabriel River Parkway are amazing, and our dog, Akai, loves them as much as we do.

The Lakewood Center has added a Mimi's Café and we can't wait for the new Target in October. Home Depot is very close to our home, which is so convenient for those "umm, I think we need another can of paint" incidents. Also, many strip mall owners are renovating and becoming "new again" thanks to their owners – they see that young families are coming to Lakewood and want the convenience of shopping and eating at nice places that are close to home. So much has changed in only a year and a half since we moved here. The quality of life in Lakewood improves every day.

With every weekly update from the Lakewood e-magazine, I know we chose the right place to start a family and make a home. Both Ryan and I would like to thank all of the Citizens, Lakewood City Officials, City Service Personnel, and Businesses for making this City of Lakewood a place we are proud to call our home.

By Amy Higuchi

Our First Home

In the year 1999, my husband and I were living in Long Beach renting a small house. Our son, Jack was born in February. We began thinking about buying a home. Our friend, Karla, lived in Lakewood and told us about how happy she was here. We had never been to Lakewood other than visiting its mall.

It just so happened that Karla's next door neighbor was selling her home. Karla urged us to go see it. We drove over and spoke to the seller, Janet who grew up in Lakewood and in this home. Her parents bought this house in 1952. She had wonderful memories. We bought the house that day and could not be happier with it and with Lakewood.

Although we have not lived here for very long, we think of this as HOME. Lakewood's parks/recreation and family feel are out of this world. We are now raising our two sons, Jack and Nick here.

Thank you to all the residents of Lakewood that make this city such a wonderful place to live!

By Lisa Hill

Memories

Fifty-two years ago, my husband and I moved into our Lakewood Mutual Home. We have watched the city grow and the Mall expand. My children spent their early years at Bolivar Park. I

was President of the TOT LOT. It was a great experience. My children took swimming lessons at the park pool. My son has become a great swimmer and diver as a result.

We have been patrons of the Iacoboni Library since its inception. My children and I have spent many hours there.

There are many more good memories but, no more space. WE intend to remain in the city as long as we are able to take care of our home.

By Jeanette Kull

Memories of the Sierra Room

I remember the first time I lay on my back in the Sierra room at the newly rebuilt Mayfair Park in 1990. There were festive banners attached to the ceiling to look at and I could watch the clouds go by through the little windows near the top of the high ceiling. I was so impressed. Before that my Abs, Thighs, and Buns classes were held at Bolivar Park and I spent the hour trying to imagine the water stains on the ceiling were in the shapes of bunnies and dogs. Over ten years later the banners are still hanging, making Mayfair the best location to work out those abs!

By Teresa Leatherby

The Voice I Married

"Shuddup and get to work!" Those were the first words I heard my husband say. That was 34 years ago. I'd never laid eyes on him, and judging from his voice, I decided I never wanted to.

We were teaching in adjoining classrooms in a bungalow at Lakewood High School. The day his voice boomed through the thin wall separating our rooms, my students were reading a play aloud. He must have had the rowdiest class of his career. It was so loud that my students couldn't hear each other's dialogue in the play.

Frustrated and angry, I sent a student to his classroom with a polite note asking him to quiet down his charges. By the time my student returned, the noise level had lowered enough for us to at least hear one another.

As I was locking my classroom door that afternoon on my way to the teachers' mailroom, I sensed this presence approaching me. Looming over me stood a mustached, dark-haired man about a foot taller than I. He was wearing a white shirt, still showing its laundry folds, and a freshly pressed dark pinstriped suit with a very proper necktie. "Who is this man?" I asked myself. "Could he be the principal? I'd better flash a little smile and say hello," I thought.

But the moment he spoke, I knew he was the owner of the booming voice. I walked as quickly as I could to the mailroom, sensing his presence coming closer. By the time I got there, he'd arrived

and stood by his mailbox. It was just below mine--his name began with "M," mine with "L." Was there no way I could escape him?

He tried striking up a conversation. I just looked at him and mumbled, "Excuse me. I'm in kind of a hurry. Bye."

The next morning during my conference period, I bought myself a coffee and an old-fashioned buttermilk donut in the faculty lounge and sat down with a stack of student essays to read. Before I'd reached the end of the first paragraph, I heard someone plop down in the chair across the table from me. Looking up, I recognized my loud-voiced neighbor, this time wearing a big grin.

"Top of the mornin' to ya, Ms. Libby. I'm Bill. I hope that donut's as sweet as you look today." I looked at the donut and suddenly it felt like it weighed at least half a pound. I broke it in half.

"Here. Why don't you take this?" I said to Bill, proffering a donut half.

"Wow! Looks delicious. You bet I will. Thanks."

From that morning on, we saw each other at least three times a day, at least five days a week. Today we see each other nearly 24/7. Bill doesn't have a mustache anymore and he has a lot less hair, silver-colored now. But he's got that same booming voice, the one I've grown to love--along with its owner.

By Judy Mednick

Welcome to Lakewood

I moved to Lakewood in 1974. That was the year I married my husband. He had bought a home in Lakewood and we have been living in this home for almost 30 years.

I like the convenience of shopping. Grocery stores, banks, malls, and medical facilities are close. Churches of all denominations are available. Schools are all close by and are constantly improving. Busses are ready to help you arrive wherever you want to go.

Our city departments are ready to help at their earliest convenience if not sooner. They listen to the citizen's suggestions and follow them when they can. They are trying to keep Lakewood beautiful.

Our police force is doing the best they can to keep our city safe. I commend them deeply. Our firemen are ready whenever needed and are doing an excellent job. Our paramedics are so very knowledgeable.

Lakewood has wonderful activities for the elderly and the young. They sponsor baseball, football, soccer, holiday programs, parades and more for the young and old. There are trips, dances, and safety programs for seniors and busses to transport one to a doctor when needed. As for myself, I like walking in the parks. They are safe and well kept.

Some neighbors have come and gone but a few have stayed around us. As for my special neighbor, well they are great. They have lived across from me for as long as I have been here in Lakewood. I've gone to their children's baseball, football, and basketball games with them. I've gone to their son's wedding. I am continuing going to the baseball and football games for their grandchildren. We've shared yard sales together.

As for me, I am glad that I have lived in Lakewood for 30 years. I plan on living the rest of my days her in Lakewood but I also follow what ever the Lord has planned for me.

Let's keep Lakewood beautiful and safe.

By Rose Mino

Growing up in Lakewood

I grew up on the boundary of the city of Lakewood. After graduating from Marshall Junior High School, the 15 of us that lived in the Lakewood boundary with a Long Beach address stepped onto the mammoth campus. For the last 9 years we had been wearing blue and gold and now our school colors were red and white. The Ram was no longer our mascot but something called a Lancer. The kids I attended high school with were very friendly and lived close to the school so school spirit and neighborhood pride was abundant. I wanted that when I grew up. I wanted the Lakewood spirit and pride in the city where I lived. I wanted to be a part of a close-knit community.

In 1995, my family bought our dream home in Lakewood, and immediately was welcomed into the community by our neighbors. We joined Lakewood Little League and "got involved." By doing so, we knew many people in just a short amount of time. It made the city of Lakewood feel even more like a small close-knit community in the mist of the sprawling urban development in Southern California.

Now eight years later as I sit in the stands at Lakewood High School and hear my son play the school fight song I think back to my years and my pride in the school and the community and am thankful for living and raising my son in Lakewood. My dream of living here came true and there are many more happy occasions on the horizon in such a great city and community. I am proud to say, my family lives in Lakewood.

By Cyndee Monts

Lakewood

She was **H**Arrison—I was **T**Orrey. She was Jewish—I was Christian, and we were best friends. Gale and I had met the first day of school in September 1961 when we started 7th grade at Bancroft Junior High. Right from the start, in Mr. Dunfee’s Social Studies class, we had become soul mates. I had turned twelve in July, and Gale was preparing for her Bat Mitzvah at the Lakewood Jewish Community Center. Her celebration was set for Friday, September 29. Now, the best part of the Bat Mitzvah were the gifts. Besides gifts, Gale got over \$160 in cold cash, and we couldn’t wait to spend it! The next morning, we walked to the Lakewood Center. This was before there was such a thing as a mall. Lakewood Center was known as the biggest shopping center in the United States—and we were going to hit it with a vengeance. We started our shopping spree down by Butlers. Our first stop was at Sav-On where Gale bought Mabelline mascara and Bonnie Bell lipstick. Next, we went into Leed’s shoe store, and she found Ked’s tennies in powder blue. Our next destination was Chic’s—the only place to find the cutest purses, belts, and fun jewelry. Gale bought a round, gold circle pin. We were on a roll, and decided to hit May Co. next. No basement shopping for us—we were serious shoppers and went right up the escalator to the 2nd floor to the pre-teen area, where Miss Gale preceded to try on everything and ended up with a pleated wool skirt and the coveted black hooded sweater that was so necessary to own. By now we were starving, so went through the line at Clifton’s Cafeteria. Feeling fairly confident for two twelve year olds, we headed off for Judy’s—beautiful Judy’s with the palo verde stone exterior. Judy’s with the absolute cutest clothes to be found anywhere. Gale bought a winter white angora sweater with a peter pan collar. With only a few dollars left, we knew exactly where our last stop would be. We crossed Lakewood Blvd. at Candlewood and walked into Wallich’s Music City to listen to a few records before buying one. We just had to buy the Shirelles *Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow*. Gale bought a 45 for herself and one for me. It was getting dark, so we started the walk home with all our loot. It was a windy, cool evening and we walked through the open field (where Bullocks and Buffums would eventually be built) with the tumbleweeds blowing around us. It was an absolutely perfect moment.

Fondly recalled,
Robin Tweedy Nordee

Lakewood Center Experiences

I am a person who needs and likes to walk. The only problem is that the heat outside makes me very sick so I try to go to the Lakewood mall. One of my daughter's gave me and her two sons a ride to the mall one day. Unfortunately, I did not have any money. I was looking around at the people, most of them had bags filled with merchandise, and I thought to myself how I wish I could be like them. I was sitting on a bench waiting for my daughter when I heard a noise. My grandchild was kicking something so I stood up to look. With my surprise there were two bills folded up, twenty dollars each. With that money we all had dinner and I also was able to buy some groceries. I am sad for the person who lost the money but I am very thankful because that

person was the ANGEL for us that day. I am very happy for having that experience at the Lakewood Mall.

By Alicia Quiroz

A Good Place to Raise Children

We moved to Lakewood in 1973. Our daughters were 3 and 1½ years old. This is our first home (and we're still here). Our girls went to Madison Elementary School (where I volunteered), Hoover Jr. High (now a middle school), Jordan High School, and Long Beach City College.

We spent many summers in swimming lessons at Bolivar Park and when they were older, my husband coached them in girls softball. The park programs were wonderful.

Both girls were active in the City College Choir and one year our eldest went with her class to New York to sing in Carnegie Hall with other College choirs across the country. An experience that she won't soon forget.

Both girls had their first jobs at McDonald's, where many of our young people learn to deal with the public and become adults. Thanks Ron! Our youngest went on to become a manager of bookings and sales event planning for the Marriott Corporation and our eldest daughter went into banking and insurance. Both were able to get a good education from the Lakewood Schools and become productive citizens wherever they may go. They are both married and we are having our first grandchild this year.

There have been many changes over the years in the Lakewood Center and other areas. The streets are kept in good repair, the landscape lends itself to an attractive surrounding, and our own restaurant row (Candlewood) has many choices for dining out. There are more than enough choices for the consumer to be totally comfortable in the city. The entertainment choices run a full range, from the many theatres, The Lakewood Country Club for golf etc. and many activities in our various parks.

The City of Lakewood has been instrumental in the safety and welfare of our two daughters. I believe the City Council has had the best interest and well-being of our city and it's citizens at heart through the years. Our church has been instrumental in starting the Mayor's prayer breakfast and the honorary luncheon for our fire fighters, police, and neighborhood watch. It's also one of the only places where there is still good housing that is affordable. We plan to stay in our home through retirement.

By Joan Redwine

Packing Away Memories

This poem was written 17 years ago, in October of 1987. This shows how important our homes, family, and city become and what divorce does to us.

Time approaches for memories and keepsakes to be locked away in your hearts. These cement walls and foundations somehow have controlled our lives. Its walls have been ears that have heard two babies cry, heard the laughter of holidays, and heard the joy of excitement on the first day of school and tears of the last day. It's heard the madness of Mom and Dad at a loss of a Little League game or the jumping up and down of a great hit or a Grand Slam of a Bobby Sox game.

The windows were eyes that have seen a four-year-old little girl grow into a beautiful young lady and a one-year-old chubby little boy grow into a fine young man, who had to take over so much responsibility.

The foundation has been like a rock to me. It has kept me strong and independent when I thought I could not make it one more day.

You see, in a way I am leaving behind my heart, my eyes, my ears, and my security. I am so afraid to begin again; for now, we must learn to see and hear for ourselves and build a new foundation all over. The three of us have a new life ahead. Remember my two children:

Love comes in all forms,
Sometimes only in cement walls
That can crumble and fall.
But love makes memories, good, bad, and all.
We've learned to love our home;
As we empty each room, we will weep and cry
Because you see my two, a piece of our heart will die.
So please lock away all your memories your dad and I have given you,
And let's begin again anew,
For as long as I have you both I can live anywhere.

When you are grown unlock your memories once in awhile of your childhood; the good and the bad ones, which are in this house. For it is the sad times that make a person strong.

My memories remain and my heart breaks to leave this house. So, bare with me when I cry at the drop of a pin, pack away one baby shoe, keep a green Chicken Dish I got for my wedding, or sell your dad's homemade sprinklers; because a piece of my life is being packed away and sold. For my heart will never forget our house on Elsa or the city of Lakewood that helped me become strong and bold.

By Vicki Samples-Pritchett

Living in a New City

Isn't it a shame that everyone didn't have the opportunity to grow up in a loving family in a new city like Lakewood? The early focus of the city was on family: parks, schools, safety, shopping – and they succeeded – we had it ALL!

My family moved here in October 1952 - my Mom and Dad and four kids – all in a three bedroom with one bath. It was grand! Everything was new! All your neighbors were new – you made friends easily.

We were all young, naïve, and full of hope. Who could ask for anything more?

I must admit, I have only good memories of growing up in Lakewood - James A. Madison Elementary, Herbert Hoover Junior High School, and Lakewood High School (Class of 1961).

We had Lakewood Shopping Center: Butler Brothers, Zukor's, Judy's, May Company, Chic's, and Bullock's – anything you needed. Grocery stores: Boy's, Hiram's, Hughes, and Ralph's – something for everyone, and a great deli in the Faculty shops. We had movie theaters near by. Wasn't this "heaven" on earth? I know I thought so – and so did many others.

I can't single out "one" memory – they are all mixed together – and bring a smile to my face when I think of them. Maybe I was fortunate – I know others that were not. But I was proud to say I was from Lakewood – and still am. I made some great friends in school – and we continue to be friends still. I have eight girlfriends (all 1961 graduates of Lakewood High School) who still get together every month – the group was bigger, but we've lost some to heaven. We have gone on great trips together (New York, San Francisco, San Diego, Palm Springs, Lake Arrowhead) and just got back from a week at Mission Beach celebrating that we all turned 60 this year!

I still live in Lakewood – and will probably die in Lakewood – it's my home. Thank you, Lakewood, for the memories!

By Carole (Sandie) Taylor

Parading Through Time

We used to step outside early one morning in the Spring and hand out a few cups of coffee to the characters lined up on our street, including Ronald McDonald. This used to be part of the Pan Am Fiesta back in the early 1970's when a parade would line the floats up on Turnergrove Drive and spill out onto Del Amo for the start of the parade. It was always an exciting time, especially

for children to see the marching bands, horses, floats, and the Shriners on little bikes. I was one of those kids.

I am sorry kids today do not get the opportunity to experience that type of entertainment, although the concerts in the park is a nice alternative. It was just fun to see all my friends from the neighborhood and school in a different environment running around and laughing at the clowns and so excited to see the floats. It is not often now that we see the wide-eyed faces of children gathered in our own city sitting on the curb eating cotton candy.

Some things that are still the same in the City of Lakewood are its neighborhoods. They are still sleepy! As many young children as there are in the city again, one still will only find small pockets of children playing out front or a game of kickball in the street if allowed. Some of the parks are still the same; we have the airplane in one and pumpkins in another. But the robot is gone and so is all the wooden equipment. After 50 years time some things have to be updated and improved. Dutch Village was torn down along with the bowling alley and new strip malls replaced them. Lakewood Mall is unrecognizable from even when it was in the Guinness Book of Records as the largest mall.

As history repeats itself, Lakewood continues to strive for the betterment of its community using history as a guideline of what to repeat and not to repeat.

By Charlotte Testa

52 Years Ago

When my husband and I moved to Lakewood 52 years ago we were the third family in the neighborhood. We were all young couples. There was no mail service so we had to walk to Bellflower and Candlewood to pick up the mail as well as using a public telephone.

The closest grocery store was McCoup Market on South and Bellflower. Having only one car, which my husband used to go back and forth to work. I always walked to get groceries.

We almost did not get the house, as we were not married yet. The salesman would not let an unmarried couple buy. We assured him our wedding was a month away.

It was a country setting then, a lot of open fields and many times we had mice in the house. There was an open space between the door and floor for the mice to get in.

In the 50's and 60's, we had lots of fog and flooding in the main intersections. Especially at Lakewood Blvd and South Street.

It was mostly young couples in the neighborhood, starting families. We all were in the same income level and the children were in and out of our house and others. We all helped raise each other's children. I feel it is the same way now.

I remember the many dirt roads around, two lanes then.

The sports program has always been excellent. The coaches that my children had were fair and let all of the children play. The parks were and are full of children in all sports. I remember my son being hit by a baseball and he fell. The coach came right out and helped him, got him up and talked to him. He continued to play the remainder of the game. A lot of wonderful volunteers in all programs in the city.

By Gwen Travis

Gwen and Travis

I came to Lakewood to go to Plastic Industries Tech Institute because I did not know anything about plastics. I rented a room in Lakewood and got a job as janitor of all the hallways in a large apartment building. While there, I met Gwen Wheeler, and we both liked what we saw, so we got married in 1950.

We liked each other very much so in 1950, I asked her to marry me, and Gwen said she would so we did and we had five kids (all K's) Kathy, Karon, Kim, Kerrie, and Kurt. Gwen and I have lived happily together ever since.

By Warren Travis

I Remember

I remember arriving in Lakewood in 1956, at the age of 8, with my Mom and Dad, brother and sister, from Holland.

I remember attending the 4th grade at Betsy Ross School, not understanding or speaking a word of English at first, but becoming fluent within a few months.

I remember Lakewood Center when it was an open-air mall, with Butler Brothers on one end and W. T. Grant on the other.

I remember at Easter time, bringing home baby chicks from Grant's who gave them away free.

I remember taking swimming lessons at Mayfair Pool.

I remember walking through the dirt field which became Bullock's Department Store and sitting in the parking lot of that store on the 4th of July to watch the fireworks show at Mayfair Park. The vantage point was excellent because the store was built on a hill.

I remember sitting at the curb on Del Amo Blvd. to watch the Pan American Parade.

I remember riding bikes, walking to Sav-On for an ice cream cone that cost a quarter, playing Canasta on the front porch, summers that were carefree, and parents who did not need to be concerned about the safety of their children.

By Rosie Voorn-Bauman

Lakewood's First African American Letter Carrier

My name is Lacy Westbrook and I am the first African American Letter Carrier in the City Of Lakewood. I begin my career at the Lakewood Post Office in April 5, 1975.

I have seen many changes in the postal service from the style of the uniform we wear to way we process and deliver mail. I have seen this city's racial diversity change in my 28 years also. When I started delivering mail, many of the patrons would stare, and the little kids would ask in an amazing way, "are you the mailman?"

After being asked this question so many times, I would say, "No, I am an actor. See the camera down the street" and continue my route. After a few years in the city, some of the same little kids would follow me on the route as I delivered the mail and many of the patrons thought these kids were my helpers.

It's great to see people attitude change in a positive.

I hope this story is worthy of your historical event in the city of Lakewood.

By Lacy Westbrook

Buying Our First House

Lakewood has been my home since November 5, 1950 when we moved in on our First Wedding Anniversary.

My husband, Woody, was so happy and proud of our new home.

We signed up for our home in Quonset hut located on Lakewood Blvd. The sales area had a big map with the layout of the new homes. They were going fast.

Used my GI Bill to be able to buy our home.

After we signed up and went home we told Woody's family that we had just bought a home. They could not believe it.

Have so many good memories of the continued growth in our great city of Lakewood.

Many friends old and new are still our neighbors.

What is so great – everything is within walking distance. Schools, College, Church, Lakewood Mall, parks, grocery stores, City Hall and Library. Can't Beat It. Is Terrific.

By LaVonne Woodlock

A very satisfied homeowner, Neighborhood Watch Captain and volunteer