

## How I Became a Lakewood Resident

I was born and raised in Texas and at a young age, tragedy struck my family, taking my parents and a sister from me within two years. I was devastated. Being all alone, I decided to move to California and stay with relatives until I could find a job.

A short time later, after arriving in California, I got a job and a place to stay of my own. This was in the spring of 1950.

Then something wonderful happened. Through a friend, I met this wonderful man. We dated for a short time and married December 15, 1951.

Soon after, we wanted to buy our own home because apartments were hard to find. At the time, we were living in a three room apartment, with a small living room and bathroom, kitchen, and a wall bed in the living room.

Our friends knew we wanted to buy a house, so one day, a friend of my husband's called and informed us that homes were being built by Lakewood Blvd. at South St. and were selling like hot cakes. Well gee whiz, that news put us on cloud nine. So we high tailed it out to the sales office that evening and much to our surprise, all of the homes had been sold but one, and it had been spoken for by a young couple, but they weren't sure; they could swing the deal.

The salesman told us he had given the couple a deadline of six o' clock PM the next day to make up their minds.

The salesman told us to call the next day at six o' clock and if the couple hadn't called by then, we could have the house. I called at exactly six, and the people had not called, so we came out to the sales office, signed papers, and paid our down payment and went home. About a half hour later the salesman called and said, "Boy, are you the lucky ones- five minutes after you left, the people called and said they wanted the house." I said, "Sorry, it was just sold."

How elated we were to know we had become a home owner in a city which would soon be known as Lakewood. We moved into our home October 21<sup>st</sup>, 1952. We were the first couple to move in on our street. In the evenings, we would sit on our front porch and watch the jack rabbits run and play in the yards; This was such a happy time for us.

A short time passed and some of our most memorable times began to happen. People in our area wanted a city of our own, so in 1954, Lakewood city was born. Soon after that, Lakewood was safely secured by the skyknight project, and we were ever thankful for that. The first day flight for skyknight, I was gardening in my front yard, and the pilot flew over, circled our house, waved to me, I waved back, and off he went. It really gave me a good feeling of security.

Four years later, I found out my husband and I had planted a garden we would never forget; we were going to have a baby. Yep, that baby was a little girl, born January 8, 1957. An angel sent from heaven after about five and a half years of marriage. She grew up in Lakewood, married, and had two little girls, who also grew up in Lakewood.

One day we received a letter from the city of Lakewood, saying our home had been entered into the Lakewood Beautiful home project. We soon received a second letter telling us we had won first and grand prize, and would be honored on June 11, 1989, with an award. It blew my husband and I away.

We have watched Lakewood Center grow from the first department store to a beautiful place of many shops.

If anyone outside of Lakewood has a taste for food, then the city of Lakewood's, Restaurant Lane, is the place for you.

We have lived in Lakewood for fifty one years and have been married fifty two. My husband, Kenneth, and I are greatly blessed and so proud to be residents of the beautiful city of Lakewood and we want to keep it that way.

The Old Timers,

Ken and Dorothy Anderson

DOROTHY ANDERSON

## Our Backyard "Treasure"

August 29, 1954, the family of Ray & Barbara Strong was finally moving into our new home at 5806 Hazelbrook! We moved that morning, because Dad had to be to work at Richfield Oil Refinery that afternoon. It took five carloads to bring our worldly possessions down Clark Street from the railroad tracks at Rendalia, above Alondra in Bellflower. I was 21 months old and my brother, Steve, was just three months old. Dad had recently been honorably discharged from the Navy after serving a four year hitch. He was 23½ and Mom was all of 19.

We had looked at a two-story home out in Norwalk, but at \$75.00 a month, this house was priced way beyond our means. Dad's take-home pay was about \$130.00 every two weeks! This was BIG money to us now because while he was in the Navy, we got \$130.10 every month! We did qualify for the house in Lakewood as it was priced at \$10,500 and the monthly payment was \$52.50. Imagine that today!

During her pregnancy with Steve, Mom had tried to get a "charge-a- plate" (they were metal!) to buy some maternity clothes at the May Company in the newly constructed Lakewood Center. Since they had no prior credit, and Navy pay being what it was, they were denied a card.

The real reason for writing this story is the "treasure" in our backyard that runs along the north side of the garage. It's a beautiful, old tiled walkway that used to lead to the incinerator that has long since been removed from behind the garage. This was always a favorite place of ours, and we loved to play on it! Mom had cana lilies growing beside it and they were so tall and beautiful. Sometimes after it rained, the walkway would be covered with mud, but we would go around the side of the garage, spit on our favorite colored tiles, and use our clean shirts and jackets to wipe off the dirt. It was a great place to play with our old Tonka trucks, or bring my favorite doll outside and play "house". By this time, a new baby brother named Mike had joined us playing on the walkway. In the coming years, this pathway would also be enjoyed by the grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Here it is, 2003, and we are still here in the "old family home", and the pathway, although a little weathered and tattered, is still here, too! We often wonder how many of our neighbors had these pathways, or were we the lucky ones? We'd heard the man who lived here before us did it. We also heard it was done by the tile crew that worked on this tract using left over tiles from the construction of these homes. Since the colors matched the tiles that were in the kitchens and the bathrooms of these homes, we prefer to think that's the real story. Who knows the true story, but we still enjoy our "treasure" to this day!

By: Kathlyn J. (Strong) Bird

Oct, 2003

When we first moved into our house on N. Hersholt Ave. 53 years ago it was in County Territory. Our first mailing address was Bellflower, Our second mailing address was Long Beach, Zone 11. Our third mailing address was Lakewood, Zone 11. Now we have a zip code. We were established in our home on Hersholt Ave when Lakewood became an incorporated city 50 years ago. Though the neighborhood has changed many times in these 50 years, we have always had good neighbors. One other couple who are senior citizens like ourselves have been here as long as we have. We raised two daughters in Lakewood. We have been close to schools and shopping and our church, St Timothy Lutheran. We love living in Lakewood.

Me & Mrs Martin (Betty) Brandhaug

## LIFE IN LAKEWOOD

1950

### MOVING DAY!

Such excitement! I've never since experienced so much friendliness and comraderie. We were all about the same age, most, if not all, had young children and we were all financially challenged! But we had faith in our future and looked forward to making a good life for our children and ourselves.

No fences, no lawns, just wide open spaces and lots of dirt. It didn't take long to get acquainted with our neighbors, help each other with child care, weekends spent sharing cost and labor to put up fences, plant lawns, gardens and flowers. We formed friendships and our children formed friendships, some to last a lifetime.

When we became a City, it was a proud moment.

We still live in our Lakewood home. We are now Senior Citizens and still find Lakewood a great place to live. Thanks for the memories.

*Bob and Barbara Brent*

Bob and Barbara Brent

## **My Town - Lakewood**

by Rosemarie Coleman

Of course Lakewood, CA does not really belong to me and it's not a town; it's a city. However on April 26, 1951 our family of four, my husband, Vince, our two boys, picked up the keys to the new house in the hinterland of Long Beach. Lakewood was county territory. While my husband was at work, I took the two boys, Pat (almost 3 years) and toddler Michael (15 months) to the new house to wax and polish all those hardwood floors. In those days it was paste wax, so on my hands and knees I applied the wax and the boys skated around on old towels to "help" me polish. We were to move in the next day.

We moved the next day, but I didn't help. I was in St. Mary's hospital delivering our new baby girl. Kathy frowns when we remind her that she is the same age as our Lakewood house.

Those first weeks were busy. We needed to plant a lawn, meet new neighbors, and keep track of the boys, since there were no fences yet. The field at the end of our street had tall grass then; later Gompers Elementary school was built on that land. One day both boys disappeared. I called the sheriff's department. The neighbors, the police and I looked every where. Suddenly the two heads appeared in the overgrown field, "We were exploring," the boys said.

After the school was built, our tract was out of the district for our children to attend Gompers. All neighborhood children must cross two main streets to go to a school in Bellflower. Our neighbor, Mrs. Lynn Welch, submitted a petition (signed by every parent in the area) to the Long Beach and Bellflower school districts to have the boundaries changed. As I understand it, from then on this area had a choice of which schools to attend. Naturally when our children started kindergarten we appreciated efforts of Mary Welch.

The other natural phenomenon for a new housing development was the sales people. The fence folk, the water softener demonstrators, insulation showmen, and the proverbial stone barbeque merchants all were ringing the doorbell several times a day. Running after children and going to the door constantly did tend to keep my weight down then. Our budget was tight so we avoided most of the "great promotions."

The trees in the new subdivision were very small, so the children were not accustomed to old established trees. They had seen forests only in books, so on a trip to Bellflower one day, Michael, about age 2, stepped out of the car where we parked under a huge oak, looking up and UP he exclaimed, "What 's that?"

The trees grew and so did we. The residents voted to incorporate Lakewood, now it *was* a city. Nevertheless, there is a home *town* feel to the place. The years raced by. We raised eight children here and stayed in the same house (remodeled a few times). I have often thanked God for Lakewood. My town!

In this short story, I have related a few interesting incidents, which occurred during his service in WW II. I hope our readers find them as interesting as I did when Jim told them to me.

I have tried to retell the stories Jim has told me as accurately as I could, and any errors are mine.

Mrs. James (Jean) Carder



## Our Wonderful Fifty Years Living in Lakewood

In May of 1952 we came out to visit family, but after driving home to Missouri we packed up and in April 1953 we moved out to Lakewood. We bought a two and a half year old home for a mere \$13,500, where we still live. At that time Lakewood was not incorporated as a city. My husband worked for North American, then at McCoy's Market as a butcher, and later retired from Fedco's meat department in 1977. We have been married for 66 years!

Our two sons attended nearby Gompers Elementary and then Lakewood Junior High, now Bancroft Middle School, for seventh through ninth grade. Since Lakewood High was not built until 1957, our older son attended Millikan High and then transferred to Lakewood High where both of our sons graduated from. There were lots of sports opportunities at our parks that both my husband and our sons were involved in. Our older son worked part-time in the park system and they both delivered the Herald American newspaper for several years. Our sons were married, had families and moved out of town. Our older son is a retired high school teacher and coach. While our younger son is a Vietnam veteran and specializes in stained glass and worked for many summers at the Sawdust Festival.

Years ago, Lakewood sponsored the Pan American Festival. A different country was chosen each year and Bellflower, then Del Amo Boulevard was filled with wonderful parades and festivals. Lakewood also entered a float in the Rose Parade for many years and won some awards.

We had numerous dairies in Lakewood and were reminded of them when rain came. The smell could travel for miles! At the corner of South and Woodruff was Dutch Village, a collection of stores, which later turned into Coles Market. We also had a small Fedco store, the first of the large chain, where the Sears repair is now. Hiram's Market, later becoming Lucky's, was located where Joann's is now. Butler Brothers, a retail store, was where the Target is now and Sav-on was once in the mall.

We had many unusual stores as well. There was Sunset House where they had bins of inexpensive items. My aunt bought a bird leash on a whim and took her small bird for a walk to her neighbor's house on the leash. The neighbor was quite astonished by what she found when she opened the door!

Wallich's Music City was at the corner of Candlewood and Lakewood Boulevard. We could go in and pick out a 45 disk, go to a small booth to play it to see if we wanted to purchase it. The idea was ahead of its time and a big hit among kids and adults.

It is no wonder we often talk about our wonderful fifty years in Lakewood. The opportunities made it convenient and comfortable. We are so glad we made that great move back in 1953 and have never looked back, as we still love Lakewood!

ALLEN-COOPER

City of Lake <sup>woods</sup> Oct 25, 2003  
"50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

I was four years old in 1954, when my parents and brother and I moved into our first home in Lakewood, California. I had fond memories of always staying busy at Mayfair Park. My mom always enrolled us in swimming, dancing, or participating in the Easter Eggs hunts.

My passion was riding my bike to the Jacoboni library to check out books and reward myself for doing all of my chores ~~while~~ my mom was at work.

I went to Stephen Foster Elementary and enjoyed it a lot. Roosevelt Junior High was a big step. It helped me prepare for what it would be like in High School. I attended Mayfair High and am proud of it to this day.

My most fondest memory was the Pan American Parade. It was a once a year event. I was not around any other parade so it was very special to me. →

Growing up in Lakewood I always felt very safe. Maybe because every one was so trusting and just nice people.



Our neighborhood was a close knit group of families. To this day I can remember all of there names.

Since then we've lost alot of the neighbors due to Relocating or death.

When I got out on my own, I bought a home in Lakewood. I wanted to do the same things as my mom did.

I got my children involved in park activities, as well as the library and participate in Project Shepherd.

Sincerely

Margaret Cowles Age 53

## MY LIFE IN LAKEWOOD

### Part I

My name is Virginia Davila and I've lived in Lakewood since October 1950, before the incorporation of the city. I still have my original payment schedule. The original loan was for \$9,990.00 this price included a Norge refrigerator and an O'Keefe & Merit gas range. My future husband and I had come to Lakewood around April or May with some friends of ours who were looking at model homes at the Lakewood Center. We ended up choosing a home and signing papers that day. We got married in September and moved in the first week in October. I thought the house was beautiful, my parents never owned their own home. Besides our new stove and refrigerator all we had for furniture was a couch. A lounge chair and twin beds which were mine before marriage. We bought a Kay Halbert television and we were living in style. Lakewood was desolate there were no lawns or plants anywhere to be seen in tree city USA.

Where Lakewood High school is now located there was a big empty lot. I had five children in Lakewood. All my children went to MacArthur Elementary and Bancroft middle school. Four of the five attended Lakewood highschool and one went to Mayfair highschool. My granddaughter went to MacArthur and Bancroft and now is a Lakewood Lancerette. Her aunt, my daughter, was a Lakewood Lancerette and Junior princess in 1971. My son Rick played on the varsity football team for Coach Ford, for whom the stadium at Lakewood is now named. We went to all the Lakewood football games, which at that time were held at Vets stadium. What a family event. I go to my granddaughter's games now and Lakewood still has tons of school spirit. It brings back fond memories.

Our neighborhood was a great place to raise children. In just my end of the block of Briercrest Avenue within about 20 homes lived a total of 50 children that I can count; there could have been more. There was not a lot of traffic because most families owned only one car but we had children galore. We met neighbors through are children and the neighbors watched out for one another's children. The children played cowboys and Indians, hopscotch was big and street football and baseball was always going on. Oh and we cant forget hide and seek was played all over the block. The signal for the kids to come home was the streetlights. All the children knew to come home when the streetlights came on. You would often see the neighborhood moms out on the porch when the lights came on. As time went on and the children grew many of the boys joined the park leagues at Dal Valle for sports like flag football and baseball. Later on my boys joined Lakewood Pop Warner football and also played for East Lakewood little league. My youngest daughter cheered for Lakewood Pop Warner Cheer and its good to know that Lakewood Pop Warner is still going strong in Lakewood today.

## MY LIFE IN LAKEWOOD

### Part II

The triangle off of Bellflower and Carson was my favorite place to shop. At the triangle they had a Bank of America, a Thriftymart, Quiglys, Roses hardware, Roses 5 & 10, Mode O Day Dress shop, Bergmans T.V Repair and Whitley paints. We had the Adohr milk delivery and Helms bakery and Pauls Bakery trucks would come by every day. The Foster Freeze Ice cream truck would come around down our street and always included or dog Duchess in his doling out of cones, probably because with five kids in my household and 9 across the street we gave him good business. We would not even have to leave our home to take pictures, the Formost picture mobile would pull up right in front of your home and take pictures. I have to make mention of the Pan American parade because this event was huge everyone would walk down to Delamo and gather to watch the parade. The Lakewood high school band, cheer, and drill team was in the parade and they had floats and horses we had a great time.

The Canteen at Del Valle Park provided a place for my teenage children and their friends to go. Dances were often held there. It is now called the Lakewood youth center and still provides activities, dances and a place for teenagers and young adults to go, I know this because my granddaughter used to go there when she was in middle school. Holidays were great most of the families stayed home, Holloween was really fun. It would be great to guess who the children were underneath their costume and the costumes were usually home made. There were sure a lot of Hobos at Halloween. Forth of July in Lakewood was always an event. Everyone would come out on his or her front lawns and we had a lot of fireworks.

Even to this day I will have someone who drops by to inquire about one of my children. I often meet parents through my granddaughter who know my children or know of one of my children. I have been a Lakewood resident for 53 years. I could right so much more, I comprised notes and allowed my daughter to help me decide what to include however there is so much more to Lakewood then I could ever express in words. I guess what I find most interesting is it is still a great place to live and raise kids. I have made friends here and lost friends here both to geography and age. I have spent most of my life in Lakewood and now I see my grandchild growing up here and being a part of Lakewood and the community and I felt impulsed to write.

## Lakewood Turns 50!

Our family has lived in the City of Lakewood since December 15, 1965, for 37 years. I am a second generation Californian. My mother's parents came in 1890 when downtown Los Angeles was countryside. My father's parents came in 1910 when the area of Lakewood was open-country.

In the 1950's and 1960's my dad would take my mom and me out to Joshua Tree National Monument and on the way I saw all the different cities. One day I saw the perfect community with homes inside islands, trees, parks, all neatly organized. My dad said, "You'll never find another one like that one". After I was married, my husband and I went looking for our home. We stopped for gas off the 605 Freeway and Del Amo and there it was—"Lakewood". There were canals for floods, parks for play, large and small shopping areas, colleges in the area, schools in the neighborhood and everything looked neat, clean and cared for.

Through the years our children participated in the activities that were offered at the Lakewood Parks, the YMCA, the Lakewood Libraries, attended school, enjoyed shopping in the Lakewood Mall and other small shopping centers through out the city. We have felt safe with a Lakewood Sheriff's Station, Sky Knight and Fire Departments in our city. All of us have grown from the many opportunities offered in the Lakewood community.

Our oldest daughter earned the U. S. Gold Congressional Award for giving service to the community. She also served an eighteen month Mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Our second daughter was chosen 3<sup>rd</sup> runner up for Miss Lakewood, earned the U. S. Silver Congressional Award for service to the community, and Graduated from CSULB.

This year our third daughter graduated from High School with honors and earned the Camp Fire USA, WoHeLo Award. The City of Lakewood honored her by giving her a plaque for her WoHeLo achievement. She applied for the U.S. Silver Congressional Award this past summer and has received a letter notifying her that she will be receiving the award from our Congressman.

Our youngest daughter is active in Girl Scouts, Venturing and Camp Fire USA. When she was 15 she was awarded the Lois Richardson Award by the Soroptimist Club of Lakewood/Long Beach for community service. This year she was awarded the Girl Scout Silver Award. In the future she will be applying for the U. S. Silver Congressional Award.

My husband is now retired from RCA and General Electric. During the last 5 years that he worked for General Electric he was one of the top 10 salesmen in the nation in the Television Service Division.

As for my self, I have worked for the Long Beach Unified School District for the past 18 years. In 1996 I received an Associate in Arts Degree from Long Beach City College.

The City of Lakewood has been there for the enrichment and growth of our family.  
Thank You.

Sincerely,

Word Count: 499

Faye D. Deister



## Showers Please!

It was April 1976. Lakewood had just completed all their exciting and culturally enriched activities included in their Pan American Festival week. The Festival would end with the 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Pan American Saludas Amigos Parade. You would be treated to an outstanding array of great bands, beautiful floats, clowns, cars, and smart looking marching units. The Grand Marshall would be the Honorable Mark Hannaford, Congressman 34<sup>th</sup> District representing Lakewood. Thousands of neighbors would line the streets of Del Amo and Lakewood Blvd. to cheer and clap.

For the parade, Lakewood families were asked to host students from the Hector A. Migoni high school drum and bugle corps from Ensenada, Mexico. The students would arrive Saturday, be in the parade Sunday and then return home.

Two young boys, Juan and Luis, were assigned to our family. We showed them around our house and yard to try to have them feel comfortable and welcomed. They had their own bedroom and bath. We showed them the cookie jar, the candy drawer and cold drinks in the refrigerator. In the yard we showed them the fish pond, our 75 year old turtle, and the ping pong table.

After settling into their bedroom and looking at their bathroom, they asked if they could take a shower before dinner. "Of course you may." From the bathroom can singing, laughter and talking. They joined us in the family room with a greeting, "It was great!" They watched television for about an hour and then asked again if they had time for another shower. We looked at the clock and found we had about 26 minutes until the chicken casserole came out of the oven. "Is that enough time?" I asked. Oh Yes! Off they went for a second shower. Two smiling happy boys joined us for dinner.

After dinner we played games, watched television and popped popcorn. It was early to bed because tomorrow was going to be a very busy day. Once again I heard the shower then all was quiet.

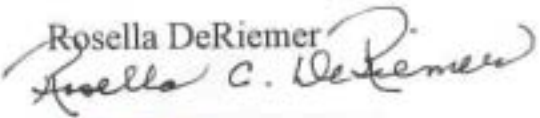
Their morning shower had to be a very quick one. With breakfast I prepared nice box lunches for them to have for the long ride home on the bus.

In the parade they were cheered as they marched proudly down our streets.

After the parade we joined other families at their bus to say good-bye. There were smiles and waves and we heard "Thank you for the showers."

Several years later we visited Juan's home in Ensenada. We met his mother and several relatives but Juan was in Tijuana studying to be a policeman.

The Pan American Festival brought together our community organizations, schools, businesses, the city council, and families to weave a beautiful cultural experience for all of Lakewood.

Rosella DeRiemer  


## Lakewood Bridges the World

From 1962 to 1990, Mayfair high school students had an AFS Club, American Field Service International Intercultural programs. Each year one or more students from countries around the world were hosted for the school year by one of our Lakewood families. Students from 18 different countries shared their lives with Lakewood --- Argentina, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Chile, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Kenya, Norway, Philippines, South Africa, Switzerland, Turkey, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

Mayfair also had an adult AFS chapter that sponsored Mayfair students to have a cultural experience abroad for a year or a summer. Our students went to Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Canada, Iceland, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Philippines, Portugal, and South Africa.

Every February the club would have an "AFS Weekend" inviting AFS students attending schools from Los Angeles to Huntington Beach to visit with us. Students would arrive Thursday evening to be hosted by Lakewood families. Friday they experienced a day at Mayfair high school going to classes with their host brothers and sisters. Saturday evening was a dance, attending a theatre production, a party or some other different activities.

One particular year, I believe it was 1979, we decided to take the students to visit Movieland Wax Museum in Buena Park. We had 24 visiting students. Many Mayfair students wanted to go because they had never been there. Even parents were interested because the cost had kept them away.

I visited the museum manager and told him what we hoped to do for these students from many countries. He was interested in the idea and agreed to give me tickets for all students at the cost of \$1.32 each. And for each ten students, one adult would be admitted free.

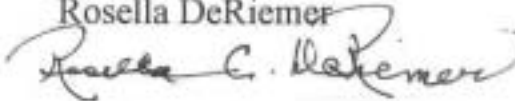
The museum was enjoyed by everyone. Not all movies were familiar to our foreign students but you could hear cheers for ones they did recognize. As we left the museum the manager came to shake hands with the students. There were smiles and happy faces everywhere.

From the museum everyone returned to our home where all flavors of ice cream and every topping possible was available for ice cream sundaes. The back yard had lights, tables and chairs for everyone to visit and talk. A student from Peru sat on our indoor stairs with his hand held harp and entertained us. Others played the piano and sang. They enjoyed most of all the opportunity to talk to other students. They were all having different experiences at their schools. It was exciting to greet another student from your own country. We had 87 students and parents in our home that evening.

As each visiting student came to say "good night", he or she was given a stand containing four flags; the American flag, the California flag, the AFS flag and the flag of their native country.

Many of these students have returned to visit their host families. Some have returned as representatives of their government or corporations.

Lakewood was richly blessed by these students who left us with an enlightened understanding of their cultures and the world in which we live.

Rosella DeRiener  




## WHAT LAKEWOOD MEANS TO ME

We purchased our home in Lakewood in March 1959 because the church we were attending was just a mile from the area to which we moved. We loved the look of Lakewood and all it's conveniences – the lovely Lakewood Mall and all the beautiful parks.

I had gone to several schools in my primary grades and I had determined that my children would attend just one school. At our youngest daughter's graduation they stated that 32 students of her class had gone to school from K – 12 together. I was very pleased with the fact that Lakewood is a very stable community.

The Pan-American Festivals of the past were always fun for us and then in 1974 one of our daughters was chosen "Pan-Am Queen". She was invited to the honored country of Ecuador by the representative. What a thrill that was for her and it began a life filled with travel and interesting experiences. The City of Lakewood made that possible.

When we moved into our home we were the 'kids on the block'. Since then all of our dear neighbors have passed on and the homes have been purchased by a new generation of young families. Now we are the oldest ones on the block!! I am not sure that I really like that honor(?).

We have loved the 44 years that we have lived in Lakewood. And since our two daughters live in nearby cities along with 4 grandchildren we do not have any plans to move in the near future. Lakewood has maintained it's well-run city government and the feeling of belonging to some place special.

Joanne Echevarria

# Lakewood Memories Bring Joy!

In our twenties the opportunity arose and we took it. With sons aged five and three we moved into our Lakewood home on Denmead St. which later was referred to by the press as a "bedroom community." Useless words and nondescriptive. We are speaking of an enormous change in one small family's life as we entered a community unknown to us.

Looking back and reflecting on the best part of our lives, we have to speak up with gratitude for the fantastic park program offered in the area of sports.

Memories come easily when they include seven years of both sons playing baseball, touch football and basketball. Not all boys were cut out to play Babe Ruth ball, but nearly all were happy to play at least two innings as the rules allowed. The boys had a camaraderie and not all coaches were serious. I recall one yelling out "hit it, son, or I'll give you twenty lashes with a wet noodle."

Each of our sons played two games a week plus practices. This was entertainment at its best. Their Dad would stop by the park on his way home from work to catch the latest competition.

One year our eleven year old joined a basketball team at Bolivar Park. They played a final game competing for City Champions, went all the way and won. No parent of Magic or Shaq could have been more thrilled.

Swimming sign ups were Mom's social events, the reason being we brought chairs, coffee, younger siblings and waited in line for hours for sign ups. The reward came as our boys became "minnows and graduated to porpoise." They weren't olympic swimmers, some never made the college swim team but these were years that cannot be erased in memory. Many proud parents saaved each ribbon earned and would gladly share those moments with any interested party.

Baseball summary:  
These kids were not yet ready for splitters, sinkers, change ups and fast balls, but if you count heart, they had it pounding in each eight and nine year old chest.

Many thanks of gratitude for all the fine Dads that gave their time and talent and most of all love to enhance the art of team work and help growing boys in a positive way.

Patricia J. Edwards

## Addendum:

We bought our home in 1957.

In 1964 a third son was born who also engaged in park league ball, swimming and touch football. He is currently teaching at Longfellow Elementary in Long Beach.

Thanks for the enjoyment of sharing these memories

My Lakewood Story  
By: Mildred J. Francis

I grew up in Bellflower. Bellflower Blvd. was a two-lane road leading to farmland, cabbage, etc. I remember driving with my Dad to pick mushrooms and mustard greens about where our home is now, Montair and Michaelson. That was the late 1920's to the early 1930's - never dreaming the area would grow to what it is today - Lakewood!

In 1950 my husband and I went to the "big tent" on Lakewood Blvd. and Candlewood to see about buying one of the new homes going up where the cabbage patch used to be. Along with many WWII veterans we qualified for a 2 bedroom house on Hersholt, for a payment of \$45.50 per month. My husband had been on the Los Angeles Police department a few months and was earning \$290 a month and we also had recently had a baby.

In order to move into our new house in November 1950, we had to pay \$1.00 for the key and the dough board. We had to borrow the \$1.00 from my cousin. She and her husband had bought a house down the street. We had no refrigerator. Our new neighbor would leave her back door open so we could keep the baby's formula in her refrigerator. She remained our long time friend until her death a few years ago. We made many new friends in Lakewood. Many of them the four-legged kind! Field mice! I think we moved into their house!

The homes were so neat and shiny, although there was lots of dust until everyone started putting in their lawns.

Three years later, 1953, my husband was called back to the USMC for Korea. When he returned home our family grew and we moved a few blocks over to a three bedroom home on Montair where we still reside today.

I remember taking our oldest son to Lakewood Center to see Santa Claus land in a helicopter, but when it landed it blew dust and gravel all over everyone and scared all of the children!

Our oldest son was also in the first swim class at Lakewood pool. Our three children went through school from Stephen Foster to Mayfair High. Back then, we didn't have to walk them to school - it was perfectly safe!

We're still in Lakewood. Not too many "originals" left. Even our house is an "original." The kids are grown up and gone now and the house is just the right size for us, again!



-MEMORIES-OF-LAKEWOOD---

Lakewood is 50 years old! WOW! My memories go back to 1936, 69 years ago. My parents , Paul and Beau Porier, brought us four kids from Detroit to Long Beach and discovered this little village being started on part of the huge Bixby land grant which was mostly farm land. I remember the tent behind the Montana Land Co. real estate office on a street called Ceritos Diagonal. The Villagers Club met in this tent to discuss the needs of the village.

I was 8 years old, the oldest of four, when our family moved in at 4501 Harvey Way and my brother, Paul, and I entered Lakewood Elementary. He was the only second grader and I was the only third grader. There were three classrooms. Over the years I have bragged about that wonderful school. As the village grew it was enlarged and teachers were hired who had graduated from Pepperdine University. As a kid I was impressed with them. They gave us wonderful experiences in drama, music, sports and the basics. I don't know who wrote the song, but we were the proud LAKEWOOD LANCERS and I still sing that song when I driving down Centralia.

I wish there was room to tell all the memories of living in a real village. Those who moved in after the 1950s may not know that the Village was less than a mile square. It started between Bellflower Blvd. on the East and Lakewood Blvd. on the west and stretched all the way from Carson to a little bit north of Centralia. Lakewood Jr. College was already in place at Faculty Dr. and Harvey way. There was no stop sign anywhere and the L.A. County didn't seem to think it was necessary. As a kid I saw how the mothers were very concerned. So some of them "camped on the doorstep" of some county office until they got their attention and low and behold the first stop sign was installed. Guess where? Harvey Way and Faculty Dr.

The Villagers Club put on an annual picnic in Irvine Park and all the kids began practicing for the games and funny contests in the springtime. It was just so much fun!

I remember the Lakewood Garden Club, & St. Cyprian Church, both of which started in our home. Lakewood has continued to grow, and the original village was absorbed by the City of Long Beach, but the spirit of brotherhood is as strong as ever. Congratulations on your 50th anniversary as a city.

Joan Porier Furtsch



\*\*\*\*\*MY STORY OF THE EARLY DAYS OF LAKEWOOD\*\*\*\*\*

WE WERE RENTING A SMALL 1 BEDROOM APT. WHEN WE HAD OUR FIRST BABY. THEY DID NOT ALLOW CHILDREN, SO WHEN WE READ ABOUT A NEW SECTION OF HOMES BEING BUILT IN LAKEWOOD WE DECIDED TO GO SEE ABOUT THEM/. THEY HAD TAKEN OUT THE BEAN FIELDS TO BUILD THIS SECTION OF HOMES. WE WENT TO THE RENTAL OFFICE AND DECIDED ON A PLACE ON ARBOR ROAD, OFF PARAMOUNT BLVD.. A FRIEND HAD A TRUCK AND HELPED US MOVE WE SET UP OUR BED, AND THE CRIB. LEFT THE NEXT MORNING FOR ILLINOIS TO VISIT MY RELATIVES AND MY HUSBANDS FOR 2 WEEKS. WELL, WHEN WE CAME BACK, COULD NOT FIND THE COFFEE POT OR EVEN THE COFFEE/ THE CAN OPENER WAS HIDDEN SO WELL, WE DID NOT FIND IT FOR SEVERAL DAYS///. AFTER GETTING ALL SETTLED, WE LIVED THERE FOR 14 VERY HAPPY YEARS. WE EVEN HAD ANOTHER DEAR BABY GIRL///. THERE WERE ABOUT 42 HOMES IN OUR BLOCK, WE KNEW 41 OF THEM, AS THE 42nd. LADY WORKED/.2 OF MY NEIGHBORS AND MYSELF TOOK TURNS BUYING "GOODIES" EACH MORNING FROM THE HELMES BAKERY MAN, AND WE ENJOYED OUR TIME TOGETHER.///. I COULD YELL OUT THE FRONT DOOR FOR MY TERRI SUE AND SOMEONE WOULD YELL BACK "SHE IS DOWN HERE/" I WOULD SAY AND HER HOME FOR LUNCH. WE WERE SO VERY HAPPY THERE MY GIRLS WENT TO GRADE SCHOOL AND PART OF HIGH SCHOOL.

WE MOVED TO OUR PRESENT HOME, WHEN MY PARENTS DECIDED TO LEAVE HOLLYWOOD MY MOTHER FOUND US OUR PRESENT HOME, WITH AN APT. ON THE REAR FOR THEM. WE STILL RECALL OUR HAPPY DAYS IN LAKEWOOD.

I HAVE BEEN A MEMBER OF THE LKWD. WOMEN,S CLUB FOR 45 YEARS. BEEN VICE PRESIDENT, PRESIDENT, AND AM NOW CORRESPONDENCE CH., GARDEN GROOMERS LEADER, CHAIRPERSON OF PAST PRESIDENTS( CALLED EX\_OFFICIOS),

JEAN L. GILKISON.

## Tidbits of Memories

When my six siblings and I were very young our Grandmother would come to visit and take us out to lunch at the Cliftons Cafeteria in the Lakewood mall. I can still smell the roast beef simmering under the heat lamps. I remember very carefully placing a glass pudding dish onto my food tray knowing I could only eat the dessert if I finished my green beans.

As I grew older and more independent a \$0.25 bus ride would take my friends and I to the Lakewood mall and drop us off at the bus benches right in front of Sees Candies. I remember the anticipation as the bus would weave its way through the parking lot, past the Sixpence restaurant, and around the old Montgomery Wards. While school clothes shopping we always took the opportunity to try on some formal gowns.. never knowing that I would return and purchase my wedding dress at the same Judy's store, 15 years later.

Outside the mall on Candlewood St. is home to my first job. I worked as a hostess and assistant manager at the old Seafood Broiler restaurant. It was really fun meeting all the business people from McDonald Douglas and the residents from the surrounding area.

Inside the mall is a beautiful carousel of horses painted in a plethora of colors. This is where I would take all of the day care children I cared for in my "home day care center", also in the Lakewood area. To see their eyes light up as I wheeled the stroller closer and closer to the carousel is a vision I will never forget.

Cliftons, Judys, and the Seafood Broiler have changed hands and are now Bed Bath & Beyond, The Disney Store, and the Red Lobster, all great new places. One of the two Mare Calendar's on Candlewood St. is now an East Side Marios, a New York style

Italian eatery where I am working now. Meeting and greeting all the business people from the new Boeing and getting to know all of the nice people who now live in Lakewood.

Every holiday I still visit the Sees Candies store that is still right where I remember it. The carousel is still inside the mall, where I hope to bring my grandchildren. The Lakewood Center Mall holds many special memories that I hope to pass on to my children and future grandchildren.

Evelyn Grauten

## Lakewood Sports Memories

By  
Glenn Haas

My most treasured Lakewood memories come from the inauguration of the Little League Challenger program for handicap children at Plaza Little League during the 1990s. As President of Plaza Little League in 1990, I was successful in recruiting dozens of volunteers in the Greater Lakewood area to start up a baseball program for youngsters ages 5 through 19 with physical and mental disabilities.

This program is called the Little League Challenger Division. A special group of children, who shun the description "special," who were denied the opportunity to compete in Little League Baseball can now enjoy all the benefits Little Baseball has been offering youngsters worldwide since 1939. I'm proud to have been able to be part of several Lakewood area community volunteers who were the first to offer this program for handicap children in California. Today, Plaza Little League is the only league that offers the Challenger baseball program in the Greater Lakewood area.

Although the rules for the Challenger Division differ significantly from those for conventional Little League play, the fundamental philosophy and goals for both programs are identical: to enable every child in the community an opportunity to develop the disciplines of teamwork, citizenship, and fair play that are the hallmarks of Little League Baseball. Challenger players play baseball at their own level of play. No child is turned away no matter how severe the disability is.

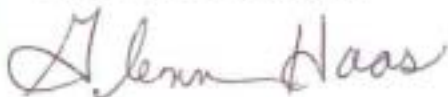
I have been involved in Little League Baseball for over 30 years. In all the years I've been in Little League, there is nothing that I'm prouder of than giving children in the Greater Lakewood area an opportunity to play baseball, the American game. Since we started a Challenger Division at Plaza Little League, whenever I walk on to the field or a classroom of special needs children, the reaction of the children gives me goose bumps. Their excitement about Little League tells me that we make a difference in their lives. Some of these kids even sleep in their uniforms. They use their uniforms for pajamas.

Challenger parents have told me that they have noticed a marked improvement in their children's self-esteem, confidence, attention span, learning ability, and physical skills.

Since 1990, hundreds of Challenger players from the Greater Lakewood area have given me memories that will last a life time. I look forward to even more memories in the up coming years. Plaza Little League will be celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the City of Lakewood during the 2004 season. Any Greater Lakewood child who is interested in playing in the Challenger program can contact me at 562 420-1060.

As Bob Hope would say, "Thanks for the Memories."

Respectfully submitted,



Glenn Haas  
Phone Number 562 420-1060



Oct 3 - 2003

### Living in Lakewood Gardens

Remembering the way it was and is now. WOW! Clyde and Margie put \$5.00 down on a house in Lakewood Gardens in 1947, fifty-six years ago, on November 9 (Margie's birthday) and moved in. There were no phones and the pipes froze once in January 1948.

It was all bean fields and cow pastures. We shopped in Bellflower for a long time and watched the people from Holland shop in their wooden shoes. They lived on the dairy farms in Cerritos.

Our children, Lewis, Larry and Laura all learned to swim where we lived in Lakewood Gardens. Lewis delivered the Press Telegram forty-seven years ago. Lewis and Larry worked at Domonico's Pizza on Lakewood Boulevard.

Clyde is our most memorable character. He remembers a lot about Lakewood and it has really changed a lot. Clyde has been retired twenty-seven years from Western Electric Co. and has kept up his home in Lakewood for fifty-six years.

We hope to enjoy many more years in Lakewood.

Sincerely,  
Mr. And Mrs. Clyde Hall, married for sixty-one years.

## MY PLACE IN LAKEWOOD'S HISTORY

Shortly before our great city of Lakewood was incorporated, my husband, our 10 month old son and I moved into our home. It was one of the last to be built in East Lakewood. We travelled every weekend from LA - Glendale border to watch it being built. We even met our new neighbors on these trips. There were no trees, parks or great shopping malls at that time. I was the happiest housewife and so proud of my home. My husband travelled to Los Angeles each day and our son had a big back yard to play in and his own bedroom. Del Amo was not a thru street, Mae Boyer Park had not even been started, there was no 605 Freeway and just a few markets and stores but I was thrilled to live here. Now that was nearly 50 years ago and there have been many changes. I had another baby boy in 1960, as my family was growing I kept my home pretty much the same because I loved it then and still do. My neighbors have changed over the years, some remain my best friends. In fact my block is full of young couples and small children, which at 77 years old makes me the matriarch of our block. We have many places of worship, we are surrounded by large shopping malls, beautiful parks and there are special events for all ages. So much goes on for the little ones, and there are concerts, craft classes, travelling etc. for the adults. We even have our own TV station. Our crime rate is low, the leaders of our city do a marvelous job. Lakewood is the best little city in the world. It is the friendliest, cleanest and most of all the best place for a widow to live. This is my first home and I feel exactly the same today as I did 50 years ago. I have watched and seen the many changes, I miss the Dutch Village shopping center, the bowling alleys, the Fosberg cleaners no longer come to our home, the Fuller Brush man is no longer. Time does change things. Our city is a beautiful one, trees were just planted on the center divider on Del Amo. I feel so lucky to have settled in Lakewood and raised my family here. I lost my husband in March 1990 and I feel so fortunate to have my home in a safe and wonderful city.

Groucho Marx had a TV show in the early 50's. One of the contestants was Phyllis Diller before she was well known. Her home was in Lakewood. He asked her what Lakewood was noted for or what it produced, she replied making babies.

Many of these babies now live in Lakewood with their families. In fact a young lady who was my good friend and neighbor's fifth daughter is one of those living across the street from me. That says so much for this city.

Congratulations,  
Mrs. Julia J. Hanna

Marcia Harris

## LAKEWOOD MEMORY

5 years ago I asked my third grade class, "What do you know about Lakewood?" SADLY, their response was "NOTHING" so I realized there was a need to have a child friendly resource on Lakewood.

We began a year of research and exploration culminating in a book titled A LOOK AT LAKEWOOD - *From Bean fields to Boulevards and Cows to Community*. It was a year of interviews, historical experts, traveling to Lakewood stores, sporting ventures, (*We were the first to interview the manager of the new ICE Rink*) business establishments, restaurants, (*We discovered how Joe Manno was helped by Mr. Icaboni to open his restaurant*), City Hall, public service locations and we even discovered hidden treasures of Lakewood. (*like the Tree lot that brings Christmas trees down from Oregon to be distributed to local markets.*) We had guest speakers from Lakewood organizations, religious institutions, and schools. We met people from the early days of Lakewood. We heard so many memories about Lakewood. We met Mrs. Roselle DeRiemer and participated with her at the Pan American Festival. We learned about the Lakewood logo and took a special visit to the Lakewood Mall going in the under ground tunnel. We visited and researched the parks. (*I never realized that the playgrounds all had different themes*) and the McDonalds. We shared time with Mr. Waldie the Public Information official. We met with mayors and John Todd the original city attorney. We even learned how the streets got their names. Including a street named FRECKLES after a dog that died on the street.

We revisited my 1951 birth home. (*Something I had not done in over 40 years.*) We got a copy of what my father paid for the home and compared today's price. We met with the original real estate salesman for the Lakewood GI funded homes.

My class and I lived, talked and breathed Lakewood. We became *a community within a community*.

The book was printed and went to the California State Sesquicentennial Anniversary. It became part of the City Treasures state project. It was taken overseas to our sister city. My students had a treasure from that year and continue to return to tell me how wonderful that experience was for them and how it impacted their lives.

My very first childhood memory is of my grandfather taking me to the May Company and buying me a coat at the Lakewood Center grand opening (*He also told me that the big M on the May Company wall was for my name*) and I have many pleasant memories while volunteering, seeing my students participate and win in contests in Lakewood, as well as coaching and umpiring in Lakewood but the book project made it a great year of teaching "Hands on" living history. It made me feel like I made a difference and it became the most memorable Lakewood memory for my students, their families, the school and *me!* It was a true treasure worth more than GOLD!

## Lakewood: 49 and Counting

As relatively a new resident of Lakewood, arriving in 1975, I am pleased to say my family and I have been very happy here.

We were a young couple with 3 children, 2 in grammar school and 1 infant, 6 months old. We were so proud to be Lakewood residents, able to buy our first home in a beautiful little city that we had admired for quite sometime.

Each of our children had the same 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, Miss Harada. They have come back to visit her through the years.

Our children enjoyed the park programs and our youngest was in the park baseball league for several years. Through the years, we've made many lifelong friends. We feel this city has been very good to us.

Our oldest daughter married and she and her family lived in Lakewood for fifteen years. Two of our grandchildren were born here. We feel blessed to have been part of Lakewood history.

Also, I'm very happy to see the residents of Lakewood are still taking care of their homes, making Lakewood a safe and beautiful place to live.

Mrs. Melodie Henderson