

What I like most about Living in Lakewood

It's a crisp autumn day and I look out my front window, standing before me tall and majestic is one of Lakewood's original residents.

It's our fifty-year-old Maple tree, which in many ways represents the city of Lakewood and the people who live here. With its deep roots growing strong, like the residents of our great city, our homes are pristine and our lawns are well manicured. You can really see the pride we have for where we live and play. It's big city living with that small town feeling.

With branches stretched out, we are always there to help each other in times of need. Whether it's checking on an elderly neighbor when the power goes out or helping a neighbor move some furniture.

Like it's beautiful fall leaves of many colors, the people of Lakewood are so diverse, so many nationalities living side by side. We celebrate Birthdays, Weddings, and the births of new Lakewoodians. I love experiencing the new tastes and learning the different cultures of my neighbors. We are sharing milestones and memories that will last a lifetime. This is Lakewood living.

The soil my tree is planted in is rich, I also feel rich. I'm rich in neighbors who are like family and having the opportunity to raise my children in such a great city.

I look out at the Maple tree and wonder, what will it be like in fifty years from now? As families come and go, one thing I know will stay the same is how great our city is and how wonderful the people are.

These are the things I like most about living in Lakewood.

By Gina Marie Juarez

Lakewood Soaring to New Heights

My first thoughts of Lakewood, was one of a child's fantasy. As a five year old in 1962, I was looking up to see a big airplane on a pole in a Lakewood park. I wanted to be the pilot of that plane. At the time, I didn't know how to pronounce the name of that park. I lived with my parents in Long Beach and when asked "What park would you like to go play today"? The answer was always "The Airplane Park"! Del Valle Park as I learned the name later was the best, rolling hills, dirt infield to practice ground balls with my dad, the swings went higher than any other park and the ROCKET SHIP. I can't count the number of missions to the moon my friends and I took while playing on the rocket ship.

My first summer job in the 70's was working for the City of Lakewood's Maintenance Dept. I remember working at Palms Park in the early developments. There was a big hole in the park that I was told to be a future pond/lake and later in life converted to a ball field. In the afternoons, while working for the city, I watered well site. I had the best job working in the hot weather and getting wet setting up all the sprinkler systems.

In 1981, Nancy and I bought our first home in the City of Lakewood. The pride of ownership and living in a wonderful city with beautiful parks, great services, excellent sheriff station and a mall that is now enclosed so you won't get wet. We lived on a street that had purple blooming flowers in the spring time. Beautiful, but don't park your car under the parkway trees.

The City of Lakewood is a place for raising a family. We are the proud parents of two wonderful daughters who also have enjoyed the pleasure of playing in the Lakewood parks. I have tried to give back to this city by volunteering my time in the 1990's to help coach softball and basketball at my neighborhood park. Volunteering on the Lakewood Beautiful committee was one way to help promote a city soaring to new heights. We hope future generations will be able to experience neighborhood togetherness and raising families in a safe environment.

Happy 50th Anniversary
The Johnson's
Rob, Nancy, Dawn & Liz

What Lakewood Means To Me by Marilou W. Koenig

Some people say that a clean place is a sign of a sick mind. But it doesn't bother me. A clean place keeps me psychologically healthy and happy.

My boyfriend and I now live in a one-bedroom at Olive-wood Apartments off of Woodruff and South. We were lucky to find the rent to be within our budgets. It has beautiful landscaping and amenities which include security gates. We started occupancy in June of this year. We stayed at Driftwood Pines off of Candlewood and Clark near the best restaurants I've ever been to in my life for 6 years and 11 months.

It's wonderful to see a bus bench without graffiti. Clean and airconditioned buses to take you wherever you want to go at bus stops right by your doorsteps. Courteous bus drivers who are willing to give directions.

Every morning of the 7 years and 2 months we've been here, my boyfriend and I would walk around the lusciously green and shady Mayfair Park and now the rolling terrain of San Martin Park. We've seen polite park attendants and crossing guards. Sometimes we see squirrels which just love peanuts. A walk at the Lakewood Mall at 7:00 am is also exhilarating. It's a treat especially when we stop for a Jamba juice or a caramel frappuccino at Starbucks.

Food is difficult. So, I think of what to eat by the day according to a nutrition book I got out of my nutrition class at Long Beach City College just a few blocks away. Sometimes I'll settle for a Carl's Jr. spicy chicken or Church's chicken on Tuesdays. Pavilin's give a variety of choice and the market attendants are just more than willing to help me find the things I need. Once I was looking for a laundry bar soap which removes stains and the market attendant asked me its name and a week later it was available. I keep a rag in the kitchen to wipe the counters with and this bar soap helps a lot to keep the rag clean. The cashiers are very professional and I don't have to hurry to pay. The convenience of the card machine saves me the trouble of going to my bank. I don't want to change my bank of 15 years to anearby one. My credit is too good to start over.

Clothes make a man. It's wonderful to have Ross Dress for Less and Marshall's just across the street. If you want more variety the Long Beach bus #192 takes you to the Crritos Mall in 10 minutes and you can get down at the door of Sears.

For the sake of ecology, you have to take care of animals. My boyfriend has a gold fish and he gets his supplies at Petco.

I believe in continuous education and the Angelo Iacoboni library helps me make my time useful. From movies to philosophy, mathematics, arts and crafts, psychology and health...there's plenty to occupy me with.

God is generous to me so I worship Him through St. Cyprian Church and now through St. Pancratius Church. I feel that the people you meet in church are good and trustworthy.

This is what Lakewood means to me: physical, mental, social, emotional and financial well-being.

MY EARLY MEMORIES OF LAKEWOOD

After living in two rentals in Wilmington, CA for the first 4 3/4 years of our marriage, we eagerly looked forward to the completion of the first home of our own. The address on Greentop Street at the time was still Long Beach, 90808. This was February 10, 1951 and we were the first on our street to receive the keys to our house.

It was a cold Saturday the day we moved in. Water and electricity were on, but the gas for the kitchen stove and furnace were not to be turned on until Monday. Our daughter was almost 3 years old, so there were the three of us moving into a very COLD house with no heat. We all went to bed fairly early just to get warm.

Our street was paved, with curbs and driveways all completed, but Woodruff Avenue was still a dirt road, and not paved until a while later. There were no phones available in houses at first, but a pay telephone had been installed on the Woodruff Avenue service road median at the end of our street. When lines to houses became available we were first given a two-party line with a HARRISON prefix. GARFIELD prefixes were for numbers closer to downtown Long Beach. I don't remember just how long after that it was before we were given a private line. Except for much later changes, when HA was dropped in favor of area code numbers, our telephone number has remained the same for all these 52½ years.

We had become acquainted with the neighbors directly in back of our house first because they moved in just a few days after we did. The husband was a bricklayer by trade, so it was not long before a gray stone wall went up between us. We remained friends for several months after that, but it was a bit difficult to visit over a high wall, and we eventually lost contact. In the meantime we put up a wall on one side of our back yard, and new owners constructed theirs on the other side.

Von's market opened a few weeks later, followed by adjacent other businesses two blocks away.

I am now widowed, but plan to stay in this house forever -- if possible. I am one of only four original owners on this entire two-block street.

Lakewood is a great place to live

Lakewood has so much going for it. My family and I enjoy the mall, the libraries and the schools. My daughter attends Palms Elementary and loves it. The teachers are doing such a great job. We're also not far from great attractions like the aquarium, the beach and the Queen Mary. And don't forget we're just little over an hour away from natural beauties like the mountains, the lakes or the desert.

But it is our neighborhood that first attracted us to Lakewood over 14 years ago. The people on my street are real friendly and often take the time to chat. My next door neighbors introduced themselves the first day we moved in and have been our best friends since.

I've made other friends too here because everyone is friendly. We know most everyone by name and try to look out for each other.

I feel very lucky to have such great neighbors. I know who I can count on to watch my house if I'm going on vacation or who to run to if I'm suddenly out of something just before dinner.

I also feel very safe here because of my street's involvement in Neighborhood Watch.

I have lived in other California cities; Long Beach, Alameda and Concord, and other states: Michigan, Texas and Vermont, but I feel most at home here and want to raise my daughter here. My husband and I hope to live here many more years.

Alana Luchtman

Lakewood – The Land of Opportunity

There is a picture on our fridge of our daughter and myself sitting on the front steps of our house. It was taken four years ago on July 7, 1999. It was the day our escrow closed. We had picked up our keys, and were at our home for the first time as its proud owners. Barry carried me over the threshold; we sipped champagne, and danced to Etta James' "At Last". I will never forget that day.

With Barry having siblings living here in Lakewood, we were already familiar with it. We had heard so many positive things about it, with it being family oriented, and neighbors truly being "neighborly", much like you might have found during the era that Lakewood was first developed. We moved in on July 11th, on what felt like it must have been the hottest day of the year. Sharon, who lives across the street from us, was waiting with a friendly greeting. And three of the four kids who lived next-door, Kristle, Daniel and Jessica, came over. They helped pick up the many plums from what was now our tree that had been left to ripen and fall to the ground. Friendships have been forged that will certainly outlast the convenience of being able to walk next door or across the street to see one another.

We started what may be referred to as a sporadic tradition called "First Friday", where we neighbors meet on of course, the first Friday of the month, with each of us taking a turn hosting it. Some of my favorite memories of living here in Lakewood are from these gatherings. What better way to end the week than to spend it with your friends and neighbors catching up on events while all of your children are playing together?

All the wonderful things we had heard about this city proved to be true; Lakewood offers so many opportunities for so many people – beginning with being a great area for first time homebuyers, to consistently providing through all of its resources, a sense of caring for the community and its residents that is timeless.

Where else can you find...a city that boasts a resident author and a video providing its rich history...such a fine example of suburbia in existence, from its creation – to present day...so many well maintained parks with events for the entire family...the broad appeal of the quantity and variety of classes offered by this city...this sense of neighborliness thought only to exist on TV or in the movies...such an impressive number of residents who grew up, and chose to raise their own families, in the same city...such a workable blend of neighborhoods, and flourishing, conveniently located commerce?

Instead of "Tomorrow's City Today" – perhaps Lakewood should be called "The Land of Opportunity". It certainly has afforded us some – and we're thankful for every one.

Our picture is on our fridge for a reason – to remind us of just how lucky we are.

I was born and raised in Los Angeles California.
My parents, sister and I moved to Lakewood, April 15,
1952 on Centralia. We watched our new home being
built from the ground up. We would have to park on
Lakewood Blvd. and walk in (5 houses from Jewelside).
It was so exciting.

Hiram's market was the only store at the (then open air)
Lakewood center mall property.

We became charter members of St. Timothy Lutheran
Church with Pastor Alfred Stovick. My Dad was a
Deacon. I was confirmed there and was the First
Bride to walk down the aisle of the New Church, June 10,
1960. Everyone else had gotten married in the Chapel
or just stood in front. My 2 boys were also
baptized there.

I was among the kids that had moved into Lakewood
with no schools, etc. so we were all shuffled around
from school to school. I went to Franklin Junior High,
Long Beach, for 7th grade then transferred to Lakewood
Junior High for 8th and 9th. In the 9th they
changed the name to Bancroft Junior High.
Going to High School was the same thing. I went to
Jordan High School, Long Beach, for 10th grade then
Millikan was built so for 11th grade I went there.
Then Lakewood was built. We then had our choir &
stay at Millikan or transfer to Lakewood for our
senior year. As a senior, I chose to be transferred
along with 265 other seniors (starting September 1957)
Vernon Henze was our Principal. Our class was the "First
Graduating Class" June 1958.

I have been the "Reunion Chairperson" from day one and
we just had our 45th Class Reunion, June 14, 2003.

It was really exciting, growing up in a new community.
My very first job was at the May Company at Lake-
wood Center. I have alot of wonderful memories of
Lakewood as well as many friends and fellow
graduates that are still living there. Life was good.
Thank you so much for allowing me to share this.
Congratulations to Lakewood City.

Jo Leopold Collins

Oct. 30th 2003

My husband and I were married in July of 1949. At that time apartments for rent were very hard to find. We settled in the Hollywood area. We spent many week-ends traveling Lakewood Blvd headed for the beach, passing by the models of the Lakewood homes. We chose our model & signed papers in just three trips. How fortunate we were! We are still in our original home (since Feb. 1951)

Our two sons grew up, with many children in the neighborhood, with established parks, schools, churches and organized sports & activities nearby. We had sidewalks, park-ways with trees in front of every home giving Lakewood a very "homey" atmosphere.

We were all young couples & have many, many memories of the Incorporation of our City & the development of police & fire protection, grocery stores & malls. Our city is always moving forward & up to date. We have many people to thank! Mayors & Councilmembers guided the city thru the years. Their leadership was great in making the right decisions for developing and keeping on top of problems that arise.

Many thanks also, to the men whose idea it was to buy the land & plan & develop it. We have always been proud of being a citizen of Lakewood & plan to remain here the rest of our lives

Sincerely

Tony & Jean Marquez

Thankful is the word I feel for Lakewood - as a senior citizen to be living at Candlewood Park where I feel safe, secure and happy.

Thankful When I hear the helicopter overhead protecting this great city - for the paramedics at the station across the street vigilance and quick response to emergencies here - for the fine police watching for cars make illegal left-turns from the alley in front of the driveway entrance-exit here.

Thankful when visitors see the beautiful manicured neighborhoods and the roads paved so smooth and clean - for the new additions to the fabulous mall, the restaurants, grocery stores and theaters close by.

Thankful for our city government and the excellent way they govern and keep residents informed with all the publications and E Mail. I am not longing for something past or far away because I feel as thankful today as my first days here 14 years ago.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Nassar

Mary Nassar

In 1951 Glen and Helen Clatanoff moved to Lakewood, along with their children; Frank and Shirley (myself). Previous to that they lived in Kansas City, MO and Los Angeles. My father had been in the Navy and was able to buy a house through the GI Bill. We moved into a brand new home on Elsa St. The street had not yet been paved and the street lights weren't in operation. Though I hated to leave my friends and the school I attended, I loved our new place. I had NEVER had a room of my own, and now I had one. It was wonderful to decorate it in a very feminine way. There weren't alot of places to shop or dine, but I do remember the Dutch Village and Manno's restaurant. There were still afew bean fields in the area. My brother was a senior at Fremont High School (L.A.), and I had a year to go. He drove us to school every morning so that he could finish out his senior year. After that I transferred to Jordan High in Long Beach, where I graduated in 1952.

As a teenager I had some interesting jobs. I worked at the grand openings of Woolworths and May Co. at the new Lakewood Center. Being young and enthusiastic, I was given the job of "greeter", and handed out flowers to the lady shoppers. Eventually I worked at May Co. at Christmastime wrapping packages at the accomodation desk. My family and I spent many happy years shopping at Lakewood Center. We remember Butler Brothers, which changed to Montgomery Ward, and currently Target. My parents favorite place was Clifton's Cafeteria, where they made many friends.

Pinally I obtained a real job at Douglas Aircraft. At that time I made my first large purchase as a single woman. I bought a lovely cherry wood bedroom set at May Co. (As a matter of fact, my husband and I are still using that furniture, almost fifty years later. Double bed and all).

Del Valle park was eventually built at the end of our street. When we first moved in it was just a vacant lot. We had many family picnics and lots of fun there. In 1959 I married a soldier, Jack Oglesby, and we moved away. When we returned to Elsa St. to visit my parents, my children, Mike and Therese, played at Del Valle park. To them, however, it was called "Grandma's Park". To this day that is what they call it.

My wonderful parents lived happily in Lakewood until they died in the late 70's. My heart remains there, along with many fond memories.

Shirley Oglesby

An Essay about Lakewood
by Miss Tamela R. Payne

The thing I always like about Lakewood, were how pretty the houses were. As a young girl, I always was fascinated about how the houses were made and design. It reminded me of a German village, the neighbors are clean and the streets about kept nice and pretty. Lakewood is the feel of a village in it, the houses across from the mall are gorgeous. The Lakewood Mall is magical, and puts a special feeling in me. I always like Lakewood, I love ^{how} the city is layout and the way the houses are made. 10/8/03

My fondest memories of the Old Lakewood Center are the ones I won't forget in the fifty two years I've lived here. My story begins in 1954 when Lakewood was incorporated into a city. The first store that we had anchor Lakewood Center was Butler Bros, followed by several small stores including F.W. Woolworth's W.T. Grants, Bonds. Other stores eventually would come in the later years of the fifties for instance May Co, Boy's Market HIRAMS Market. LAKEWOOD CENTER WAS ONE OF THE FEW WIDE OPEN CENTERS. ^{WHICH IN} IN THE ^{EARLY SIXTIES} LATE FIFTIES, WE HAD RALLIES (POLITICAL) IN WHICH I REMEMBER SEEING ADLAI STEVENSON ^{I STILL HAVE THAT PICTURE} AND GETTING KISSED BY HIMA. EVENTUALLY LAKEWOOD CENTER GOT PROPERTY OVER ON FACULTY AND WE INCORPORATED IT AND PUT IN SEVERAL STORES THUS CALLING IT THE FACULTY SHOPS AMONG THE SHOPS WERE AS FOLLOWS, THE 1ST LAKEWOOD CITY HALL, OUR FIRST LIBRARY, ORANGE JULIUS, FUN ORAMA (IT HAD TRAMPOLINES, CRAFTS, GAMES FOR US KIDS) LAKEWOOD CENTER BOWLING (WHERE THE CITY COUNCIL WOULD COMPETE IN BOWLING TOURNAMENTS WITH THE CITY OF LONG BEACH COUNCILMAN, KIRBY'S (BEST JEWISH DELI IN LKWD)

SAFEWAY GROCERY STORE. EVENTUALLY SAFEWAY GAVE WAY TO BULLOCKS DEPT STORE AS WELL TO BUFFUMS.

LAKWOOD CENTER ALSO HAD GREAT RESTAURANTS IN ITSELF, FOR INSTANCE WE HAD CLIFTON'S CAFETERIA L'S RESTAURANT AND LASTLY THERE WAS GOOD OLD HODY'S RESTAURANT THAT HAD DRIVE IN (OR UP) THE WAITRESSES WOULD ROLLER SKATE OUT TAKE YOUR ORDER ROLLER SKATE IT BACK OUT TO YOU.

LAKWOOD CENTER HAD A COUPLE OF REAL GOOD SPECIALTY STORES FOR INSTANCE WE HAD LAKWOOD CENTER MEATS (ORIGINALLY IN THE FACULTY SHOPS) HUGHES MARKET CHIC ACCESSORIES, HARRIS & FRANK, SAV-ON DRUG GALKENKAMP SHOES, THOM MCAM SHOES, GOLD FURNITURE, ALBERTS HOISERY, JUST TO NAME A FEW.

EVENTUALLY THEY CHANGED TO A MALL IN WHICH WE BID FAREWELL TO BUTLER BROS AND WE GOT NEW STORES LIKE MONTGOMERY WARDS, J.C. PENNEY'S.

THEN ACROSS LAKWOOD BLVD ON THE CANDLEWOOD SIDE WE GOT STORES, FOR INSTANCE WALLACH'S MUSIC CITY, GREAT WESTERN BANK THAT WAS LIKE A BALLOON TILL THEY GOT THEIR PERMANENT BUILDING WHICH NOW HOUSES KEIRO'S

THE COMINGS AND GOINGS OF LAKEWOOD
CENTER TO LAKEWOOD CENTER MAL.
BEEN REMARKABLE IN 50 yrs.

THE LAST BUT TOUCHING MEMOR
LAKEWOOD CENTER, WAS WHEN WE^W ^D
HOME FROM RIVERSIDE WE WOULD SEE
THE LIGHTED^M COMPLETE WITH THE FLAG
THE ATOP OF MAY CO AND I KNEW
WERE HEADING TO THE RIGHT DIRECT
OF HOME

Beverlee Nye Perez