

COLLEEN HENDRICK: LA SELVA BEACH MEMORIES

I am Colleen Hendrick and was born on March 1, 1927, to Ruskin and Emma Aughinbaugh in Crockett, CA. I married a war hero, Earl (Dick) Hix Hendrick, in 1945 at the age of 18. We had two children, Neal and Gayle. Earl was employed by PG&E for 35 years. He was offered a top job as engineer at the Moss Landing Power Plant. The management brought us to La Selva in April of 1975. Our family was very impressed with this sleepy village in the Santa Cruz area.

One day as my son Neal and I walked the beach he said, "Mom this is a beautiful town, but its inhabitants are old, retired people and the town is 'dead'! You have to make it come alive." Well, being raised in Crockett was my blessing. I worked at the Benicia Arsenal during the war from 1940-1945. One year my job was a messenger for Colonel Bowerman. Eventually, he and his wife, Thora, became neighbors of mine here on Playa Boulevard. Col. Roy Johnston and his wife, Major Bertha Johnston, lived across the street from me. Col. French and his wife, Harriet, our town librarian for many years, lived on Arbolado. The Derrick Family who lived on Vista were the first family to move here, and they encouraged their friends to join them. Rick and Bobbie Shugart remember the LSB church hosting their meetings in the Clubhouse.

In my hometown, the C&H Sugar refinery hosted many activities throughout the year: Fourth of July, Halloween, Christmas parties and a Columbus Day celebration. All of these events included a parade through town. Christmas was celebrated in the large John Sweat High School auditorium. Most of the town residents came to see Santa and a stage performance. Ladies passed out expensive gifts to all the children in town. Halloween was celebrated with all of the children in costume parading across town. A contest for the best costume was held in the auditorium. I remember winning the money prize, \$5-\$10, quite often. One year my mother dressed me as the doctor in our town, and I was again a winner.

So these were my thoughts of how to bring friendship and activity to La Selva Beach. The first person I met was Judy Leguillon and her husband Bob and their four children: Dagmar, Renee, Vanessa and Ben. The second person I met was Antonette (Toni) Connell and her husband Bill, brother Ray Banchemo and daughter Valerie. These two ladies, Judy and Toni, helped me organize events and make my wishes for the community come true.

When I moved to La Selva, I donated my time as a Recreation Director along with Bev Warren, Dottie Howder and Crissy Gruel. We held our activities in the little room behind the clubhouse stage. It was in 1975 when I organized a little parade of 10 children. They paraded around the few blocks that surrounded the Playa business stores. I remember Dagmar Leguillon pushing her little doll buggy with her dog Snooky peering out. Everyone in town loved Snooky. It was the next

year, 1976, when Sue O'Neil came to me to express her wishes to put on a Fourth of July Bicentennial parade. We had a small committee: Sue, Roy and Bertha Johnston and myself. Sue did an outstanding job that year. From that year on, Judy, Toni and I planned all of the activities. The Fourth of July celebration always started at 7:30 A.M. with Toni playing the Shriner's calliope.

Mr. Attics was a Shriner, and he always made arrangements to get the machine and pull it all over town while Toni pounded out patriotic songs. This was the hit of the day. We held an early pet show in Triangle Park, a fun run, a bike race, Solano Park games, food and a barbecue. We had horseshoes, a sand castle contest, a surf contest and nighttime fires on the beach with fireworks.

Mike Wilson, El Patio Grocery owner, helped me get the first Jr. Lifeguards started here on our beach approximately 30 years ago. Jeremy and Pat Gilbert were our first leaders. Jeremy has been a town fireman for many years. Toni Connell was one of the most talented pianists I have ever known. She played for all of our town events. Toni organized and hosted the Valentine Dinner and Dance party on her own. She invited her musically talented friends from San Jose and Santa Cruz. There is a tape in our LSB library which shows the party.

The Christmas Boutique was organized by Joe Smith, Judy and myself. We put up all of the tables in the clubhouse and bought bright red tablecloths for the Christmas effect. We filled the clubhouse with Christmas booths. I remember making Christmas wreaths. I made 20 wreaths and cleared \$200.00. At that time, Santa joined us in the afternoon. The first elf costumes were sewn by Arlene Houses. My daughter's white velvet, fur trimmed wedding dress was cut for the costumes.

Halloween parties were enjoyed by all family members dressing in costumes and coming to the Clubhouse to enjoy games, food and best costume prizes. My husband Dick always stuffed a body, and then he carved out a large pumpkin and placed it on top for a head. Byron Shugart made a light glow in the face and a hidden wire went to a side room. A man was there to speak to the children as they came up on stage; the light blinked as he spoke. There was always someone there to take pictures. After the party, all of the crowd hit the homes on Playa Blvd. for treats. In those days, we could buy 50 treats. Today, I have 500 small and big kids to treat and I still love it! I have friends who come with 100 candies. I have tables, chairs and a fire pit in my driveway. By 8:30 P.M., I'm beat!

Christmas was always my favorite time in La Selva. Candle Cane Lane was among the big trees on Playa Blvd. and were lit with many lights. The red candles were placed and lit on the Playa strip. The Children's Christmas Party was planned. Our first Santa and Mrs. Claus, Walter Johnson and his wife Grace, would oftentimes arrive by fire truck. A children's musical program was planned with Santa leading the singing. Every child was overjoyed to sit on Santa's knee. There were always elves dressed in costume to help Santa. There were also

tables of food and drink for everyone. After the party, everyone walked to Triangle Park to enjoy a bonfire and singing. On the hour, there was a countdown, and Santa threw the switch which made all of the lights on the boulevard glow in the darkness. Bob Zotterelli was our second Santa and also the Easter bunny.

Easter was started in Triangle Park. Hiko Ropple was the lifesize Easter bunny. The Easter Egg Hunt was moved to Robin's Park where there was a lot more space and longer grass. The Easter bunny, Bob Zotterelli, and now Kariana Crowder, greeted the children on the bench in the woods. It's a sight to see all of the children coming with their Easter baskets to collect their eggs in their own age groups. I have met a couple who come from Oregon each year just to enjoy the Easter egg hunt. My own family drives down from Sacramento. Kristen Farmer and Lori Hood have organized this activity for the past five years.

Movie Night was started by Kristen Farmer and myself. A very large screen was set up in Triangle Park, and a fun children's movie was selected. Families came with their chairs and blankets. A bonfire was made by Ben Leguillon. Hot chocolate and snacks were sold. What a nice evening experience!

I planned the La Selva Beach Community Yard Sale with Kristen Farmer. This was a yard and art sale. I made maps to direct the buyers to 45 homes and two parks: Triangle and Florido. Each participant paid \$5 to cover my costs for advertising. The town was jammed full of buyers. The attendance was outstanding, but the parking on Playa Blvd. was dangerous. When the sale was over, many low income people from Watsonville picked through the leftover merchandise. I was happy to see them get a free bargain. I had phoned the Salvation Army in San Jose to be ready to take away all of the leftovers that were piled next to Triangle Park. They were very happy to haul two big truck loads away. Although the yard sale was a huge success, I would not advise another one. The crowd was too big for our little quiet village, and I could not control the Playa Blvd. parking.

The Saint Patrick's Day party was started by Byron and Mary Beth Shugart, Toni Connell, Icy young and Dan White. A raffle, a dinner of corned beef and cabbage and always a great, lively dance band are enjoyed by a full house. Bob Bowles always showed up with his kilts and bagpipes.

Craft Fairs were held in July and November. Cindy Passaro started these. Everyone loves the many interesting booths each year.

The Robin's Park Committee was started by Howard Wage. The neighbors of Robin's Park and concerned La Selvans oversee Robin Batchelor Park's land and trees. The neighbors on Asta and Arbolado have also formed their own private road committee.

Jim Fairbanks has been a generous donor to La Selva Beach. One particular day my friend Jim Fairbanks stopped me and he said, "I have some extra money that I would like to donate to our town. Can you come up with an idea to spend my money?" Well, I gave it some thought, and I called him a few days later. I said, "Jim, would you like to donate some benches to Robin's Park?" He said "yes". Well, he proceeded to find a bench builder who built three stone, thick wood-topped benches. The benches have metal name plates on them. One bench has Jim Fairbanks' name, one has Robin Batchelor's name and the third has my name: a gift from my friend. Little did I know that today I would be resting on the benches as I walk through the wooded park at the age of 86. I also suggested that Jim Fairbanks make a donation to install a cement walk to build a bus shelter for all of us to enjoy. He was glad to furnish the money for the project. Jim Ross and his friend George donated their time to build our bus shelter.

Jim Morley was a proud American veteran. He always took pride in organizing the Fourth of July Parade flag carriers. He would always stand out himself because each year he was able to squeeze himself into the uniform he was discharged in. Jim donated a lot of time taking pictures of our town activities. When he passed away, it was his wish to make a donation to our community. A sun dial was installed on the bluffs in his memory. Jim made his mark in La Selva Beach.

Now in 2013, I continue to write my Colleen's Corner column in the Beachcomber News with Kristen Farmer. For 15 years, with the help of Judy Leguillon and Toni Connell, I have organized many activities in La Selva Beach. Judy Leguillon was an organizer for 30 years! Currently, La Selva Beach events are supervised by Lori Hood and Kristen Farmer.

Addendum

My note of appreciation - I was always grateful for the support of the Recreation and Improvement Association Directors. I could have never accomplished what I did if I didn't have their full support.

Jim Morley interviewed Tom and Evelyn Wurzback who live on Playa Blvd. I think he taped the interview.

1. Tom Wurzback will recall the first Volunteer Firemen: Pat deSimone, Ron Hiles, Chuck Howder and Ron Crooks as well as Fire Chiefs: Bill Connell, Al Kinslow and Tom Wurzback
2. Rick and Bobbie Shugart on Vista Drive
3. Mrs. Dan McCluney(Lucy) - Walking Man
4. Sue Struck on Estrella - wife of Recreation District President

5. _____ Robak, filling station owner on La Selva Drive
6. Jane Grady - Minister since about 1980 - church history
7. Mike and Diane Wilson - El Patio owners
8. Improvement Association - LSB history
9. Recreation Board – history
10. Robin Batchelor, Jr. - history of first owner of LSB
11. Arlene Houses - Estrella - 50 years
12. Sylvia Gerbl - Secret Garden Pre-School owner/Director - Carlos Ave.