

DEDICATION  
&  
INTRODUCTION



***Stories Too Special To Die!***

That's what this book is all about...the unfolding of a community. A family of uniting everyone with care and love of life! That was the Ronald McGregor Moore's family and his daughter, "Billee," who brought her family back to Hollywood to give once more. So here's the story...

Gertrude "Billee" Moore Herbruck, wife, mother, café owner-server; then later, a realtor, a Water Board Director of all three

beaches, the President of Oxnard Harbor Board of Realtors, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President of the Oxnard Chamber of Commerce Board, 3<sup>rd</sup> Year, Grand Marshall of The Channel Islands Christmas Parade, National Real Estate Board's Treasurer & President Women's Council, Founder of Ventura County's Camp Fire Girls...Yes, a love of her heritage and family.

She gave the freedom to explore, to grow, to experience, to learn, to fail and succeed with her community and family...

*...An amazing woman...my mother.*



1971

Mother, Gertrude "Billee" Herbruck,  
Myself, Suzy Herbruck Farrow  
Dad, Walter John Herbruck, Sr.



## CHAPTER ONE

### **The Story of Hollywood That Became A Beach! 1924-1984**

How did the word "Hollywood" become involved in *the name "Hollywood Beach?"* ***How did it all start?***

It was the famous movie, "*The Sheik*," with Rudolph Valentino in 1924! Paramount Studios director, George Melford, didn't want the expense of going all the way to India to film, so he asked his location staff

to find a lake and sand dunes somewhere in California for the movie set and filming.

His staff came back saying, "About 50 miles north of here, there is a small town called Oxnard. And 4 miles west is an incredible white sandy beach with huge sand dunes and a small lake. We think the site is perfect!"

"Let's go! I want to see it!" Melford responded.

The movie was filmed around the old duck pond, now the bend of the entrance to Channel Islands Harbor. The movie premiered in Manhattan, New York, and Rudolph Valentino became the new surging movie star of stars! He was young, handsome and invited to all the key parties in NYC. Returning to Los Angeles, and back in Hollywood, he entertained at the famous Cocoanut Grove Night Club of the new Ambassador Hotel. Palm Trees had been purchased from Paramount Studio's backlot of The Sheik movie set. Thus, The Cocoanut Grove décor theme of palms from the set created it as, "*The place to be seen!*"



But, you may ask, What's this got to do with Hollywood Beach? Well, Bill Lingenbrink, a developer, and Bill Dunn, a construction manager, were having lunch with their wives at the Cocoanut Grove shortly after it was opened, when Lingenbrink said, "You know, if we were smart we'd go up there to where they shot the film "The Sheik" and buy up some land to develop. Say 500 lots, and sell them for a fast sale of \$200. each. We'd make a quick fortune!" Immediately they all agreed it was a great idea!

He continued, "Well, we'll need to incorporate the four of us, and we'll need to think up a name for the corporation."

With that, his wife spoke up saying,  
"Look around at who we're surrounded by  
here at the Cocoanut Grove,...*Hollywood!*  
Why not call it...

*...The Hollywood Beach Corporation!"*

*And that's how the Beach got its  
name at the famous Cocoanut Grove!*

The Hollywood Beach Development  
got County approval for 502 lots @ \$200.  
sale price each. They made a quick, cool  
\$100,400. A sell-out! The word spread..."a  
sell-out!" Another developer appeared to  
buy up what he called Silver Strand Beach  
on land purchased from the Bard family.

1925: Silver Strand development was  
approved for 876 Lots. And in 1926 sales  
opened for lots that also sold out fast!



As it opens sales, Valentino died of appendicitis after making the silent "talkie" movie "Son of the Sheik," which at the time he was premiering in NYC. The shock throughout Manhattan and Hollywood in the movies industry was in total disbelief.

Another investor-developer had purchased the land from Mr. Bard and McGrath receiving approval for 967 Lots around Lake Shore Drive which was around the "duck pond." It was named Hollywood By The Sea, opening sales in 1928.

Up to that point, "talkies" movies and excitement of it carried the industry. The stars bought land instead of paper stock! 1928 MGM's, "The Crowd" movie, held sales volume, then in early 1929, it all stopped! The Great Depression had hit hard!

The three Beaches went quiet...life slowed to a major struggle. No activity! My mother's mother died of cancer on Catalina Island during a family trip. Three years after her father, Ronald McGregor Moore, the Honorary Mayor of all three Beaches, was found dead of a heart attack when his daughter, Billee, and son, Bud, came home from class at Oxnard Union High School.

Everyone knew Ron Moore since he owned the only gas station and café on the three Beaches at that time. He also was the “overseer” protector of their beach cottages.

With both parents gone, Mother and her brother, Bud, moved to Santa Monica, as teenagers to live with their Aunt and Uncle Cade. After graduation, while working in Santa Monica, my mother met and married my father, Walter John Herbruck, Sr. (who was 22 years older than she).

Time passed, and in 1945, WWII ended. Mother insisted with young kids that Dad needed to move us all to Hollywood Beach. It was time to get out of the big city and open the café and gas station that Grandfather had left at the corner of Ocean Drive and Los Altos.

Sand! Sand! And more sand! We dug out the café and station with shovels and wheelbarrows. We made it fresh and clean with new paint, opening both for business. Dad had the Texaco Gas Station & Garage, and Mom had Billee’s Chili Café.





1947

We lived next door to the station and café in a very small beach cottage with five rooms: a bedroom for Mom & Dad, a bedroom with two bunkbeds for five kids and two Boxer dogs, a bathroom, a kitchen, and a make-down couch in the front room for Aunt Mae and Uncle Bud. An old potbelly stove heated the front room. The kitchen had a white gas cooking stove with a real cube "ice box!"

We were definitely not "poor!" We were creatively resourceful, innovative, energetically productive, fun-loving, caring and helpful with community-mindedness. We were the Spirit of hard-working American entrepreneurs! Everyone in the family worked, every day. I helped my father at the gas station. It became the hang-out for the sheriffs. And of course, everyone knew The Herbruck's and The Herbruck's knew... everyone on the Beach!



In 1945, if you walked along Hollywood By The Sea business block on Ocean Drive (where the entrance of Channel Islands Harbor now is), you would be walking on fun colorful sidewalks with curbs on both sides of the street - in that block only! There were only two stores. One was Mr. Berry's Real Estate office, and at that time, this was the only business area of Hollywood By The Sea.

On Hollywood Beach, there was Dad's Texaco Gas Station & Service Garage, Mom's Billee's Chili Café, The Cole Brother's Market, Lane's Café, the famous Dunes Dance Hall & Bar, Mr. Marsh's Motel, and The Blue Hotel - all located in the block between Los Altos and La Brea.



The Dunes Dance Hall & Saloon was a rip-roaring place on Friday and Saturday nights. Families could bring their children for dinner to enjoy Roy Roger & Shirley Temple drinks! They were also permitted on the dance floor with all the adults. Then at 8 pm, all children were taken home and it was adult fun from there on! (I must say, on weekends, Marsh's Motel was a busy place!)

On Silver Strand, at the end of Ocean Drive there was Lucy's Café & Bar and the Water Dept. office. That was it! Ocean Drive ended at the Navy Base fence, the entrance of Port Hueneme Harbor which at that time was very busy!

You see, World War II had ended and with Port Hueneme Naval Base being a Seabee Supply Base, all the ships were bringing back supplies from the war. Jeeps and PT Boats were being auctioned off and the base dump was busy burning supplies every Wednesday.

Being the adventurous child, I organized The Roy Roger's Riders Club. Our club built a fenced-in fort in the back pasture for our horses with rope swings, a small log cabin and garden in the back pasture.

We decided if they were going to burn supplies at the Navy Base dump, we might as well take an advantage of suppling ourselves with camping gear for our fort.

It was around 11 am when we tied up our horses in the willow trees, crawling up the sand bank to peer into the dump. We knew they had a guard with gun in the Guard Shack. So as not to scare up the seagulls to tip off the guard, we crawled under the barbwire fence slowly, down into the supplies.

Wow! We scarfed up belts that had a canteen, shovel, first aid kit and knife attached, all wrapped in army ponchos for rain capes. We slid out of there as “the best out-fitted campers of Ventura County!” Our Fort was now complete! Well, that is, until we decided we needed to go back one more time!

“Ok, crawl slow, no talking everyone, just pull one more canteen belt, poncho and shovel. Don’t do anything to scare up the seagulls,” I said as we left our horses.

“*Ouchhhh!*” yelled Billy Gillium, with his t-shirt caught in the barbwire fence! We were down in the supply pile as the seagulls all flew up in mass! The guard ran out of his hut, firing his rifle in the air! We practically had heart attacks running for the fence to get to our horses to gallop away!

Never again! Lesson learned around the campfire! “When you have enough, accept it and don’t get greedy! Just enjoy the hotdogs, S’mores, rope swings, garden and horses along with all the freedom our parents give us to play!”

Often times on the shore, we would find wooden ship hatch doors after a storm in the Channel. We'd power up our horses to drag them to the swamp in the back pasture (now the Harbor). We would roll up our pant legs, kick off our tennis shoes and take a bamboo pole to push ourselves around exploring through the swamp cattails. The water snakes didn't bother us at all. Where we stood, on the back of the raft, was always half under water and up to our calves. Then, as we would come back into shore, black leeches would decorate our feet and legs! *Salt to the rescue!*

One time riding my horse, Paint (a pinto quarter horse), as I rode over a sand dune on our usual trail, there before us was a 6 ft. snake all stretched out sunning! Immediately, Paint reared up, came down with a buck, and I went flying over her head straight for the snake! I couldn't fall short and I couldn't fall long---no, I had to fall right into the snake, and we went tumbling and rolling down the sand dune both trying to get rid of each other. Talk about a nightmare! I never had trouble around snakes until that happened, and ever since, I avoid being around snakes!

As kids, Dad trained us in the safety of knives and guns while Mom shared the different fires you could build for cooking, light, warmth, etc. My first gun was a 22 short rum runner's rifle, taken from a boat that came ashore back in 1929 when the beach development first started. Ron Moore, my grandfather, had retrieved it and Mom saw that I received it as a birthday present the summer I turned 12 years old.

As kids, we had a lot of respect for our parents. We felt the responsibility of being trusted, and we worked in our family businesses to help.



"Living Off The Land!" was our big idea as we announced to our parents we were going to camp at our Fort for three days, living off the land. Thus, I shot a mud hen in the back drainage ditch. We plucked it, putting it on a skewer over the fire. It got black on the outside roasting too close to

the fire, but with hunger setting in, we decided it was done! Well, it was like rubber! And that night we changed the menu to peanut butter and jam sandwiches!



My horse Paint & Me in 1949

To make money to help buy hay for my horse and some for school clothes, I took on newspaper route of *The Oxnard Press Courier* by horseback. With blonde pigtailed flying, Paint and I covered the beaches. Sitting high in the saddle, I could easily put the paper right on my customer's doorstep. It also made it easy to cut through sand lots for short cuts to the next block for delivery. Wind, rain, heat and sand blasting wind...the paper was delivered! I learned about discipline, billing and collections, public relations and built my route from 32 customers to 126 customers



which won me the Award of Outstanding Paperboy of The Year!" (Girls weren't recognized in titles yet!)

At the age of 11, all kids who worked on their family farm or beach kids who worked with their family businesses were granted the privilege of driving a tractor, small truck or car by the County Sheriffs. The unwritten rule was..."As long as there was no accident, person or animal hurt, the rule would stand. Any accident would end all privileges for all kids. *No one wanted to be the one to lose the privilege* so we were all very careful with the responsibility.

I used to bicycle down to customer's homes and drive their car back to Dad's station. Dad would service the car, I would wash and fill it with gas, driving it back to the customer's home. They would pay next time they came into the station.

At the age of 13, Dad gave me and my brother, an old Model A Ford. We painted a cartoon character on the back and labelled it "Old Fashion Annie." One day, as I pulled out onto Ocean Drive, immediately I saw in the rearview mirror, a flashing red light of the sheriff's car! Pulling over, the

new sheriff we didn't know, walked up to ask if we were being careful as he looked inside to see two Boxer dogs nobly sitting straight up on the back seat. Then he glanced forward to see my brother and me sitting on buckets turned upside down. He waved us on with a nod. Years later, as the sheriffs would stop at our home each night for a cup of coffee and visit around 8 pm, that the new sheriff on the beat was Al Jalaty, who laughed all the way back to the patrol car. They all had a good laugh when he shared what he had seen!

Oftentimes, when the sheriffs would sit and visit at our dining room table, they would take hold of our hand and quickly handcuff my brother or me to their chairs, reaching back to tickle us as they enjoyed their coffee visit. We loved Al Jalaty. He became one of our favorite Sheriffs. Later, he became Head of Ventura County Sheriff's Department, retiring as Head of Port Hueneme's Police Department.

There were many movies filmed on or near Hollywood Beach. John Wayne was in the movie, "Sons of Iwo Jima," and most of that movie was filmed in Del Mar, El Toro and Camp Pendleton Bases. Many scenes

were also filmed at the end of 5th Street in the still empty lot across from the mobile home park at Oxnard Shores! When they finished filming, the set was just left in place. So we kids hooked up our horses to the wooden jeep and towed it to our Fort.

Also, the movie, "Blood and Sand" with Gary Cooper was filmed on the Hollywood Beach area.

"Hole In The Head" was filmed on New Year's Day with Edgar G. Robinson and Eleanor Parker at the end of what was Oxnard Road; now known as Channel Islands Boulevard and Ocean Drive. The lead star was an hour and a half late! The Director had to keep calming everyone down. We kids just sat waiting for Frank Sinatra with a pen and our record albums in hand.

Sure enough, up pulled a shiny silver light blue Maserati, and out stepped Frank! He looked over and saw the Director with hands on hips and started walking straight over to us kids with a big smile. Mr. Frank Sinatra signed our albums, gave us a big hug and turned to the Director saying, "These kids can stay on the set to watch,

okay?" The Director shook his head and smiled, "Okay, but stay back of the cameras and be quiet!" What a day! The Islands were so clear that day that the camera man had to sit way up high to shoot downward on the set to show the surfer, but not the Islands! We went to see the film, did see in one quick shot, the Islands snuck into the background!

Clark Gable and Carole Lombard enjoyed vacationing at 3353 Ocean Drive, and he would always come into the gas station to ask Dad if he would take him duck hunting at Mugu Slough...now Mugu Estuary! My nephews, Frank and Steve, were always taken along to wade out and get the ducks!

Famous Director, Robert Wise's mother lived on the oceanfront at the end of Los Altos, and he would come to visit often and sit in my mother's real estate office to talk. Wise was the Director of the movie, "The Sound of Music."

Famous actor, John Carradine, lived on Ocean Drive and his sons, Keith and David Carradine, used to come for a visit,

sharing coffee and pie in the Old Mud Hen Restaurant in 1978.

Thus, you can see Hollywood Beach truly was the correct name for such a special, beautiful broad sandy beach with the Channel Islands as a backdrop!

Speaking of The Old Mud Hen Restaurant, I was the creator-owner of it on Los Altos, now the Hollywood Beach Café. When I started putting up all the old photos on the walls, farmers began bringing me their photo of old times. It became a small museum of sorts. I named it The Mud Hen because of the fun we kids had in the swamp chasing the Mud Hens. The name also honored of the Mud Hen I shot when we wanted to "live off the land!"

In 1970, an unlicensed teenage driver ran into my Jag Roadster at 50 miles an hour as I was stopped at a red light on the corner of Channel Islands and Ventura Road. A cracked kneecap and head bump put me on crutches. I sold the café to my head waitress, Mrs. Olsen. She immediately took down all the photos, gave them back to me, decorating Olsen's Café with a theme for Vietnam Veterans. That ended The Mud

Hen Restaurant! Mrs. Olsen's Café moved to the Harbor's edge, but I've heard she doesn't own it anymore.

To backup, in 1952, the first TV arrived on the Beach! Every afternoon at 3 pm, Mrs. Dering would open her front door, and anyone who wanted to come watch TV was welcome. We kids filled the front room floor! She always had cookies and sometimes popcorn! The big show was Corella Panda at the organ and wrestling! Such was the friendliness of Hollywood Beach in those years. Mr. Dering was a CPA in Oxnard, and their daughter Carol, was a member of our Roy Rogers Rider Club. Their horse barn was right behind where now sits Hollywood Beach Café on Sunset Lane. Our horse barn was at 3637 Sunset Lane. The back pasture was all along the East side of Sunset Lane all the way to Hollywood By The Sea.

In 1954, we had the sheriff drive up and down Ocean Drive warning with a loud speaker that tidal waves were on their way, and to evacuate the beach for safety. Instead, everyone walked out and stood on the sand bank watching it come in!

We could see one long wave coming towards us across the channel. It was a 10 foot wave when it hit the shore. Because most of us who lived on the beaches knew that the Islands would break any 100 foot tidal wave heading our way down to 10 feet, we felt it safe to stand and watch.

Although, we have had high tides that have come up across Ocean Drive, no real damage happened on our three beaches since the water was never more than a foot deep by the time it reached some homes on Ocean Drive, and only 4 to 6 inches across the road in some areas.





## CHAPTER TWO

### **Good Old Beach Stories**

There are so many fun stories of our beaches that friends thought it would be fun for me to share. So I started writing monthly newsletters as a realtor at Hollywood Beach for a year, and these to follow are some. Hope you find them fun!

Here's the real story of "Windy Gables" back in the late forties. I was a kid. Windy Gables (3851 Ocean Dr.) was built and owned by Mr. McNeil, who owned McNeil Construction Company that built many of the huge buildings along Wilshire Blvd. in Los Angeles-West L. A. He and his family knew many of the movies stars of that time, and often came to their beach

house for fun vacations...movies came with them!



By 1927, my Grandfather, Ronald McGregor Moore, was the unofficial Mayor of all three beaches. He and McNeil were best of friends and they invested in the beach!

My mother, "Billee" Moore Herbruck, had grown up on Hollywood Beach and moved our family back to the beach in 1945. We often enjoyed dinner parties and movies in the McNeil front room. Stories seemed to follow! Clark Gable, though, never stayed at Windy Gables (as some

people have thought). Mr. McNeil also built the home next door (3853 Ocean Dr.) and his guests always stayed there.

The fun part for all of us kids was that Mr. McNeil built a swimming pool on the lot to the south adjacent to Windy Gables, and we had our parties at the pool!



On the set of The Sheik! 1925

My mother was a kid when the movie "The Sheik" with Rudolph Valentino was made on the sand dunes that became Channel Islands Harbor. The McNeil kids and my mother and her brother, got to pretend making movies on the sand dunes with Paramount Studio's associate Director, Melford, as a favor to Mr. McNeil. As kids,

we got to see the movie our parents had made, which brought lots of laughter!

Dena Biesel owned Windy Gables for years. We all enjoyed the pool until the 1952 Earthquake that sent groceries on the shelves of Cole Brothers Market at 111 Los Altos onto the floor, made houses on the sand sway, and broke the pool pipes that couldn't be fixed!

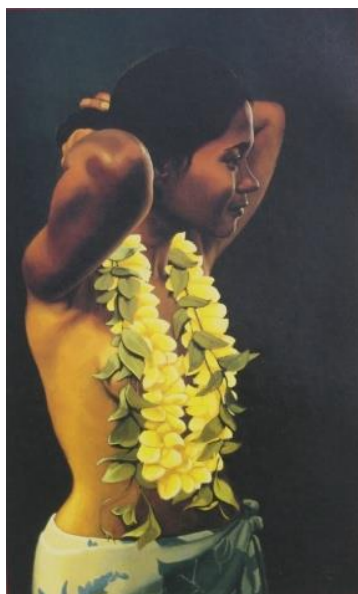
## CHAPTER THREE

### ***He Was The Moving Force!***

Martin V. "Bud" Smith returned from WWII to have his mother and sister offer him \$10,000. they had saved during the War while operating a hot dog stand at Oxnard Square if Bud would take care of them the rest of their lives. He did!

That start helped to buy land out on Saviors Road to build McMillian Manor homes, and to buy up riverbed at Wagon Wheel Junction which came next. With two dimes to rub together, Bud and his best military friend, Bob McMillan, rented an

ocean front beach shack located near 4023 Ocean Drive. It had a wonderful Hawaiian Bar with grass thatching and a picture of a Hawaiian Girl wearing a Plumeria Lei.



Kona Girl

During Bud's development on Saviors Road, money got tight and my dad allowed all their trucks to gas up on signature at his station to help them get to sales. In those days people gave "hand up's" to help each other based on "your word," a hand-shake or signature. The account was never paid off to the gas station.

In 1980, I had created Channel Islands Sportswear, Inc. and was selling nationwide to Saks, Broadway, May Co. and a second line to Mervyn's. The deep recession was taking its toll on all the clothing industry due to Allied and Federated Department Stores "running" over to Taiwan to "knock off" (copy) our designs at 1/3 the cost! Bud walked into my office, sat down and said, "Suzy, I hear you're struggling to hold on to your company due to major accounts cancelling orders at the last minute. So I want to share a story with you that I don't believe you are aware of."

He continued, "Back when McMillian and I were developing McMillian Manor, your Mom and Dad saved us by supplying the gas for our trucks when we were hanging on by a thread! I never cleared the bill, and your parents never brought up the subject no matter how many times we were together. I'm here today to write a check to help you that you never have to pay back! I want you to somehow survive, Suzy."

With that Bud wrote out a sizeable check, handing it to me. Yes, tears were in

my eyes and we got up to hug. I always thought of Bud like a second father.

The one thing about Bud was he had integrity and honor. He took care of his staff...even years after they no longer worked for him.

He owned the famous Colonial House and whether dining on the Patio or sitting around the famous Piano Bar, it was a very special place to be...at least Marilyn Monroe, Clark Gable and Bing Crosby thought so. Bing came many a time to sing and socialize with friends. As kids, we always loved waving to the man with the handkerchief as our parents drove by.

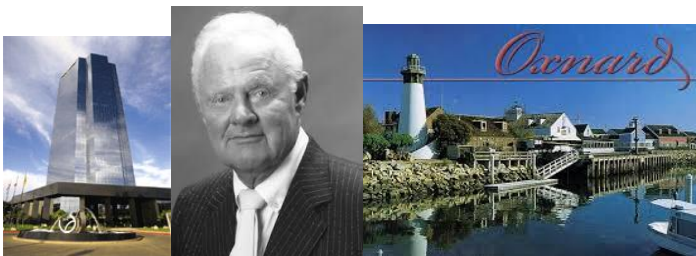




Bud loved people...all races, all economic levels and he created jobs...one project after another!

When Channel Islands Harbor was on the drawing board, he reached out in developing Peninsula with The Lobster Trap, The Casa Serena Hotel, apartments and the entire Fisherman Wharf Village. All this development really helped Channel Islands Harbor to become well known, very busy and successful in the 1970-80's. He used to stand leaning on a broom wearing a white apron at Fisherman Wharf Patio just watching people have fun and visiting with them. They had no idea he was "The" developer of it all!

Bud developed Wagon Wheel Junction first with Wagon Wheel Restaurant Row, then the Trade Winds Restaurant was added and later both financial towers followed at 300 and 500 E. Esplanade Drive in Oxnard.



His fun was the "Dry Martini" yacht, a converted PT boat he bought after WWII, and made it the yacht of the Harbor to lead all of the parades! Many a trip to Mexico and many a fun party!

Bud became the first billionaire of Ventura County and his old army buddy, McMillan, ended up owning the 6<sup>th</sup> floor of one of the buildings of Rockefeller Center! What a pair they were!

The last time I saw Bud, he was 93 years old, walking his dog over by the Lobster Trap. He greeted me with, "Suzy, remember, once you get on the business merry-go-round...you can't get off! I still only have two dimes to rub together!" We both laughed and hugged with memories of love.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### **Climate Change...It Snowed!**

It was January 11, 1949 and Aileen invited our family for dinner. Now, Aileen Haney owned The Hollywood Beach Hair Salon for both women and men, located at 3453 Ocean Drive. Since we all knew everyone on the beach, and it took all of us kids to make up a football or softball game, families were all close friends.

The adults were talking just prior to sitting down to enjoy dinner when Dad said, "I wouldn't be a bit surprised if it doesn't snow tonight!" Mom and Aileen laughed and pooh-poohed it while all of us kids looked at him with big eyes of excitement..."Could it possibly be?" Dad laughed saying, "Growing up in Ohio, I'd say it's going to snow!" Never seeing snow

before, we kids were excited with the thought!

While visiting after dinner, Mom asked Dad to go down to her café, Billee's Chili, at the corner of Los Altos & Ocean Drive to bring back some ice cream for dessert. All of us kids jumped up to go with Dad.

Driving down Ocean Drive, Dad said, "It's snowing! Look at the windshield!" By the time Dad picked up the ice cream and we drove back to Aileen's home, snow was coming down heavy. We gathered up two BIG SNOWBALLS, went in the house and placed them in Mom and Aileen's laps yelling, "It's snowing!"

The next day, school was cancelled due to snowy roads. Most people living here at that time didn't know how to drive on snow. "YEA!" We kids had a free day to take inner tubes and slide down the big snow-covered sand dunes in the back pasture, now Channel Islands Harbor.



Me with our busty "Snow Woman!"

In the afternoon across from Mrs. Lane's Café & Bar on Ocean Drive, we built a "snow woman" with button eyes, curly snow hair and big boobs! As the heavy drinkers came out of the café, their reaction was priceless looking at "The Lady with Big Boobs!" Laughter was everywhere, along with snow at the water's edge and even covering all of the Channel Islands!



## CHAPTER FIVE

### **Kids To Row To Anacapa!**

As kids, we were always fascinated by the thought of “going to the islands.” Thus, we organized ourselves, drew a picture of the rowboat size we wanted to build and set out to rummage the scrap piles of builders on Hollywood Beach to find wood and tar for the bottom.

We figured if Old Bay Webster could row from Anacapa Island to Port Hueneme Harbor for provisions once a month, we certainly could row to **Frenchy’s Cove** to set foot on the Islands and explore! After all, we wanted to meet Frenchy!

We loaded the first boat we built on our wagon. Then pulled it to The Old Duck Pond that now is in the bend of the entrance of the Harbor across from the old Chinese-style Dunn House, still at the corner of Santa Ana & Harbor.



We always had Mike Stewart be the one to test the boat. Our first three boats seemed to spring a leak, sink right in the middle of the pond, and Mike would have to wade back. His mom took one look at him, forbidding him to play with us for two weeks! By the fourth boat, we were getting real good at building and using better tar. My mom got worried we were going to launch into the waves and start rowing!

She immediately got hold of the cook on the Old Verna F Fishing Boat and paid for tickets to put us on the boat to the Islands so we would give up the idea of rowing there. It worked! We even got to meet Frenchy, but that's another story of the



three Kings of Anacapa! (By the way, the Verna F was the Island Packer's 1st boat when their kids were small, and they started their business. Now the kids are running the business.



Kids love the water, they think anything is possible...but safety is important, and I do hope you & your family check out the wonderful Summer Program provided by **CSU Channel Islands Boating Center**...it's really special in teaching safety and responsibility on the water which is valuable.

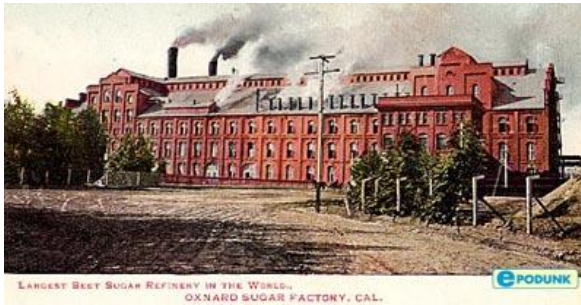


## CHAPTER SIX

### **Boat Races On McGrath... ..Lake!**

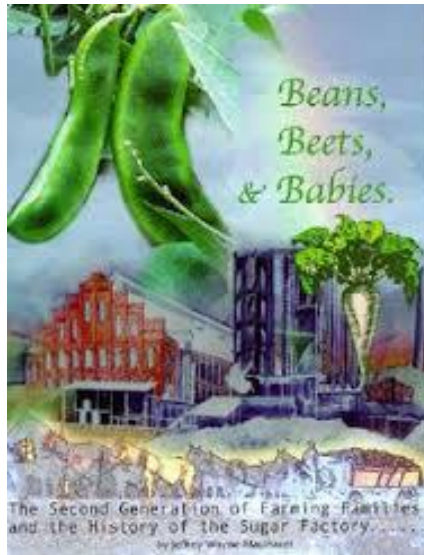


Loran Peacock on McGrath Lake, that's right! When I was a kid, Dad would take us down to what is known today as McGrath State Park. In 1948, it was a lake, and we would watch speed boat racing in the summer. As you can see, it was no small lake! And if you drive Harbor past McGrath State Park today, at times, you will see the water is up to the edge of Harbor Blvd.



**How Oxnard got its name!** That was when Oxnard was known as producing “Beans, Beets & Babies.” Sugar King Pin, Henry T. Oxnard, had made an offer to build a \$2-million sugar factory with a capacity to process 2,000 tons of beets daily. In exchange, local farmers dedicated 20,000 acres to beets over five years.

Almost 100 years later, Oxnard owes its “Birth” to sugar, although sugar stopped



being a viable crop here decades ago. However in the beginning, it was a beet boom town! Between its opening in 1899 and its closing in 1959, the factory sent out close to 40 million 100-pound bags of granulated sugar.

The name refers to the brothers Oxnard for whom sugar was in the blood. Robert, Benjamin, Henry T. and James Oxnard were the offspring of French-born 19th-Century sugar magnate Thomas Oxnard. And there you have it...OXNARD!

The Sugar Beet Factory was going full steam when I was a kid. To sample sugar beet candy while on tour of the Sugar Beet

Factory was a memorable treat for any kid.  
The Factory was shipped brick by brick to  
South America when it closed.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### **Every Community Has Its ...Characters!**

In the 1940 and 50's, Old Man Beneke from Germany, built scrap pile homes on the beach, and he ran his van on water! He would pull into my dad's Texaco gas station at the corner of Ocean Drive and Los Altos and buy 1 gallon of white gas for .26 cents. Then walk out, pour it into his gas tank and fill the rest of the tank up with water! He'd get in his little delivery van, a 1938 Ford, turn the key and it would start right up with a choking sputter. As he would pull out of the station, the van would back-fire with a cough a couple of times as it chugged away down Ocean Drive.



Dad and I would always shake our heads and laugh like heck! It cost him .26 cents to fill his tank!

Old Man Beneke built three homes that are still standing on Ocean Drive! The first one at 3861 Ocean Drive (old wood house at the corner of La Brea & Ocean); then the one he lived in at 3549 Ocean Drive on the ocean front (it's painted blue today); and finally, he built 3559 Ocean Drive (on the corner of Ocean Drive and La Granada). All the builders of those years knew him because he would rummage through their scrap piles for wood, tar and anything else he could use.

In the house at 3549 Ocean, he built a wall made of wine bottles he collected from the Dunes Dance Hall. The house at 3860 Ocean Drive was his 1st house!





He was a real loner as a person, but loved the fun of creating houses out of other people's discards!



At the corner of Ocean Drive & La Granada was his last house.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

### **The Witch of Hollywood... ...Beach!**

It was Halloween night. Four of us kids were all dressed up like cowboys and Indians! We had been all along Ocean Drive Trick-or-Treating when on the way home we were passing Old Lady Fox's home at 3843 Ocean Drive. With one more block to walk home, we laughed at what a weird person she was with her wiry hair piled on her head, always frowning. She looked just like the Old Wicked Witch of the West from "The Wizard of Oz" and acted like her too! She didn't like kids. We had been good kids, but for some reason, we decided her attitude deserved to have the tree and front door of her house toilet-papered!

We ran home and each got a roll of toilet paper and snuck back to her house. Busily, we papered everything...her mailbox, tree, bushes and front door. Then, as we

stood back laughing, the door OPENED AND THERE STOOD OLD LADY FOX!!!



We ran like the wind down the center of Ocean Drive for home at 3637, locked the front door, turned out the lights, hid under the kitchen table with hearts pounding! We were glad our parents were at their party down the street!

POUNDING ON THE FRONT DOOR OLD LADY FOX SHOUTED AT US..."**I know you're in there! I'll get even with you kids!**" Then...silence. We ate some of our chocolate bars and cookies from our bags and whispered for about a half hour...then ended the night!

Old Lady Fox had a restaurant in her house. One day a huge shark and whale had a major fight in the surf out in front of the 3800 block, and lots of us watched the fight all morning long.



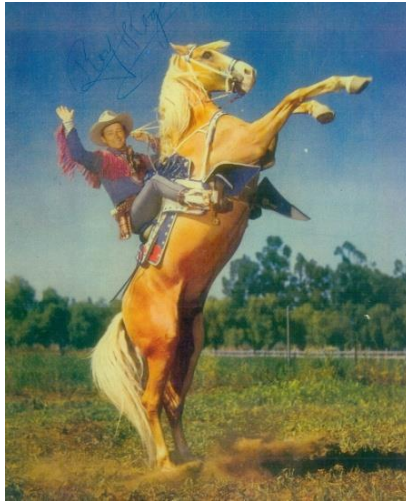
That afternoon both washed ashore dead. As kids we jumped on the whale's belly (no one had heard of trampolines at that time). Old Lady Fox got her butcher knife and cut shark steaks to serve in her restaurant! Yuk!

Dad buried all dead seals for the County with shovel (sometimes we helped), but a whale and huge shark was another problem! There weren't tractors with big scoops then so Mr. Laubacher's worker, Abraham, with the help of his work horses, pulled a scoop to dig a trench large enough to bury each of them separately!



## CHAPTER NINE

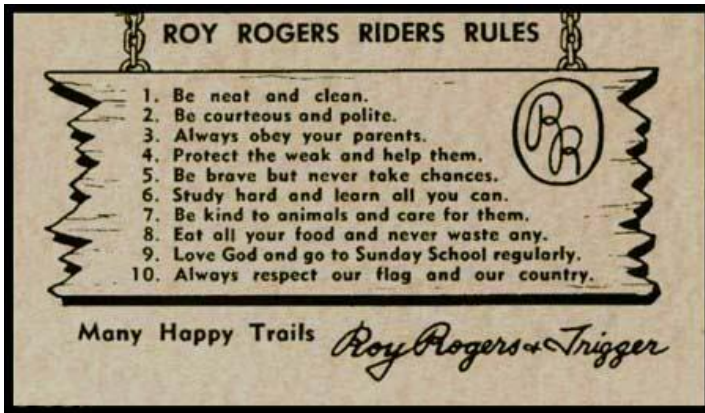
### **Happy Trails To You!**



### **The Roy Rogers Riders Club Of Hollywood Beach 1947**

At the age of 10, I had my greatest wish come true for my birthday...a Pinto horse named Paint. Our barn was at 3637 Sunset Lane, and we had two Pinto horses. Carol Dering's barn was just behind where the Hollywood Beach Café is and reached to Sunset Lane. The east side of Sunset Lane had a barbwire fence, and from there it was

all sand dunes, willow trees, an artesian lake and meadows with wild strawberries. Cattle, bobcats, ducks, rabbits, squirrels, leeches in the lake, snakes and mud hens were present in our adventures.



I decided to form ***The Roy Rogers Riders Club*** for seven of us kids that played together. So I wrote a letter to Roy Rogers telling him the name of the Club and that we were going to build a fort in the back pasture. To our surprise, he responded with Club membership cards with our Club name, signed and dated by him! We carried those cards every day to school until they disintegrated in our pockets! Roy was our hero! We built the fort and fenced it off with a cow's skull on each gate post. It had a garden, tree swings and we camped there often with our parent's permission.



In the spring of 1953, my Aunt and Uncle Cade lived across the street from Axel Gruenberg who produced the TV series "This Is Your Life!" He asked if my Aunt would find out if I could meet either Gene Autry or Roy Rogers which one would I pick.

Of course I said, "I love Gene Autry a whole lot, but Roy Rogers is my hero!"

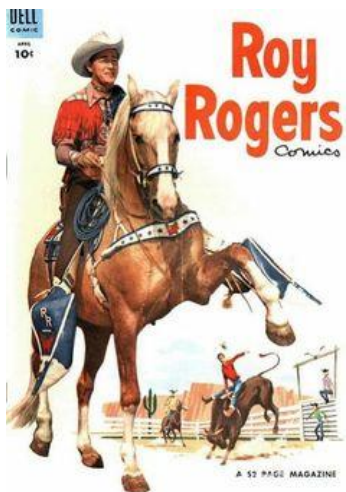
That fall, Auntie Jean and Uncle King took our whole family to the TV Show. As we sat in front row center, excited, you can only imagine how thrilled I was when Ralph Edwards said, "Roy Rogers, this is your life!"



It was all I could do to sit in my seat! What an experience to share with the Club members! Trigger, Roy and all the family

and friends were on stage right in front of me! So here are a few pictures, I share just for the memories of my childhood hero and maybe yours!







## CHAPTER TEN

### **The Old Verna F Boat Started It & Today It Roars!**



Bill Connally, founder of Island Packers, with rugged tenacity, and passion behind the vision, created his dream that still lives with his family today!

It was 1968, and I had just created The Mud Hen Restaurant at 101 Los Altos Hollywood Beach that catered to boaters. Bill purchased The Old Verna F fishing boat known by everyone at Channel Islands Harbor.

**MAY 1968**



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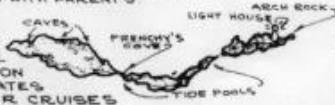
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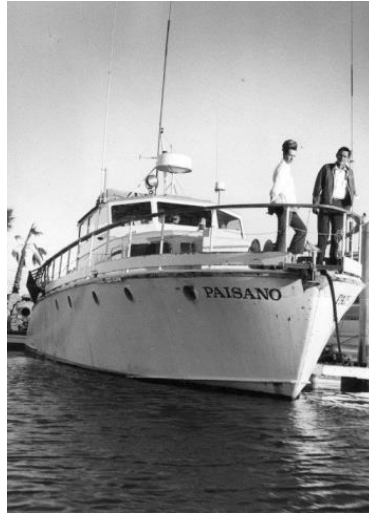
ASK ABOUT HITCH-A-RIDE

ISLAND CAMPING AT FARES THE KIDS CAN AFFORD



There are *NO "start-up" business* that don't have their "ups & downs"...to say the least! It wasn't just buying The Verna F, involving the family, but organizing the day to day functioning and promoting to potential customers...all the while hoping there would be funds left to care for his family!

The business started to roll when in a storm, The Verna F went down off Anacapa Island which divers enjoy today. Everyone at the Harbor heard of it, and felt the devastation, but not as much as Bill and family! But with the Spirit of "Never give up your dreams!"...



...Bill found an investor, bought the Paisano, and the family business was up and running again!

Bill's wife, Mrs. Connally, kept the books for years, his daughter, Cherryl still oversees the staff as Office Manager and son, Michael, is President of the Company.



The Island Packers owns three safe, incredibly beautiful boats along with the Channel Islands National Parks Lease Franchise.

A friendly staff revealed, some of the best time of the year to visit the Channel Islands is September and October during Indian Summer weather! Also, on Mondays and Tuesdays there's just a nice small group to really enjoy getting out on the boat! It's an unforgettable journey to experience, and so are the Connally family and staff who provide it! **HAVE FUN!**



## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### **The Dedication Of Channel Islands Harbor**



#### ***...A Big Surprise Opening Day!***

Many events were scheduled. Locals had watched the entrance dredged, and slowly The Harbor began to appear. No slips yet, but the Dedication of Channel Islands Harbor had become a reality that took over 20 years to create! Jack Ward, who owned Capt. Jacks, gave all the fish for the fish fry event.



Richard Bard gave all the land as a gift to bring the dream to a reality! The U.S. Government, needed sand due to the erosion at their missile test pad, at Point Mugu. They agreed to dredge the Harbor every other year for the sand, and to hold the harbor depth. Some 30,000 people came to join in on the celebration and Bard kicked it off with a humble opening.

Vic Marzorati, Martin V. "Bud" Smith's "Number One" restaurant & hotel manager, was in charge of the celebration. He had everything planned except...*for the surprise of the day!*

Quietly, the 115 ft. "Wild Goose" yacht floated into the Harbor, and upon docking, off stepped none other than "The Duke," John Wayne, himself! Marzorati was flabbergasted! "Where's Bud? It's The Duke!"



"Well, I was in the area and just thought I'd pop in to check my latest investment in the fuel dock," was the opening statement by The Duke. "I also heard...there was a celebration going on!"



Bud Smith, who built The Sirena Hotel, Lobster Trap and all the apartments on Peninsula's East bank, owned the Dry Martini yacht so famous in our harbor. The rest of the afternoon was one big celebration party on both yachts!

Those present to bring Channel Islands Harbor into reality will never forget the fun day...***"The Duke" was the BIG surprise!***

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### **The 1984 Olympic Venue In Ventura County**

In 1982, as I sat in the Lobster Trap listening to the Olympic Rowing Venue Director, Patty Stose Wyatt, I was mesmerized by her sharing of the event that was to take place at Lake Casitas.

Afterwards, I went up to thank her for such an interesting presentation. She reached out and took my hand and didn't let it go until I said, "I would be privileged to be on your team."

We became the best of friends and Co-Founded The Oxnard All-American Regatta to train the staff for the 1984 Olympic Rowing Venue at Lake Casitas. She was the first woman ever to be assigned Directorship of an Olympic Event! She was Co-Founder of the most famous rowing event on the West Coast, the San Diego Crew Classic!

O.A.R. (Oxnard All-American Regatta) involved 14 West Coast University Women's Varsity Rowing Teams to compete for the Wyatt Cup! The starting line and assembly area was in Peninsula Park, and the Finish Line was in front of the Whale's Tail Restaurant.

That's why the rowing shell ended up over the bar with rowing oars at the entrance of the restaurant! The winning team was hosted by the owner!

Patty and I ran the O.A.R. Event for seven years with Olympic flags flying from the Channel Islands Bridge each year. It was recognized by Maggie Erickson Kildee, Chairman of Ventura County Board of Directors and Oxnard's Mayor Takatsuki. Everyone from all the colleges and universities loved the event!

To see the enjoyment of the students each year in support of the Rowing Event was well worth the energy and time to me. I loved supporting the Harbor businesses, the college kids and the community. Although the last three years I lived in Kona, Hawaii, and it was challenging to continue. It was time to hand it over to someone at the



Harbor area. Two women volunteered to take it over with Wyatt and I quietly bowed out.

That next year, UCLA Varsity Team was the winner of O.A.R. and after eight years, the O.A.R Regatta ended with the cup retiring at U.C.L.A.



## EPILOGUE

Really, there are so many stories to tell, and maybe someday I'll tell more. Each of the 12 stories I shared seem to bring up others; remember when we...? summer when he and Carol Lombard would enjoy Hollywood Beach.

Just know that my love for Hollywood Beach, Hollywood By The Sea and Silver Strand never left me in my heart of the wonderful memories as a child and still now as a well-seasoned adult!

I hope by reading these stories I have piqued your interest to know more about this Channel Islands Harbor area that many in Southern California don't even know exists as they cruise on the 101! And for those of us who found our way here...and appreciate its uniqueness...

**...*IT ALL BEGAN* in the famous  
Cocoanut Grove Nightclub with  
movie stars of Hollywood!**

***What our back pasture looks  
like...Today!***

