

March 27, 1950

The following is for your files on the history and background of the Lakewood Taxpayer's Association and its officers, and what it is doing. I have prepared this article in collaboration with Alton Parker, a charter member and the present secretary of the Association. Much of the information contained herein has been taken from the minutes of previous meetings.

Two years and a few months is the age of the Lakewood Taxpayer's Association. It was at that time the residents wholly agreed Lakewood was indeed a wonderful place in which to live, but they also agreed there had been a lack of united concern with its problems and encroachments from the outside, and so it was in 1947 that Lakewood's first civic group was organized. Residents agreed that this civic group would study local problems and take action to remedy them.

With this in mind, Commander George Little called a meeting on the evening of October 6, 1947, at the Student Union Hall of Long Beach City College with the announced purpose of forming an active civic body for the Lakewood area in which all members would have an active part. At this first meeting a constitution and by-law committee was formed with Dr. Christie as chairman. At the next meeting on October 13, Bruce Daily suggested this civic group be called the "Lakewood Citizens Organization", however, those present preferred the name "Lakewood Taxpayer's Association". The constitution and by-laws in effect today were made, amended and corrected at this and subsequent meetings. It is also interesting to note that during the early development of the Association, due to a low attendance the subject was discussed as to whether to continue or cease. At the third meeting on November 17, 1947, however, the attendance was 78 and at that meeting the members voted that the organization should be all means continue. The November 17th meeting was also of great importance in the history of the Lakewood Taxpayer's Association in that at that meeting the by-laws were adopted upon a motion made by Sam Woods. The charter was later signed by 78 members, and among those signing were following: Fred Krach, Richard Butzbach, Dr. and Mrs. Leftwich,

Berl S. and Lody Thompson, Mr. And Mrs. Orme, Dr. and Mrs. Wainright, Mr. And Mrs. Sam E. Woods, Dr. King, Mr. And Mrs. Sharsmith, Mr. And Mrs. LeCain, Mr. And Mrs. J.P. Geisler, Maj. Harry A. Ellsworth, Francis V. Vestal, Dr. Taylor, Mr. and Mrs. Philip McCutchen, Mr. And Mrs. T. Tanner, Mr. And Mrs. Bob Bollinger, Mr. And Mrs. Frank Di Salvo, and Mr. And Mrs. Alton Parker.

Up to and until this time all meetings were conducted by temporary officers. On December 1, 1947, the first regular meeting of the Lakewood Taxpayer's Association was held and at that time Ray Casady was elected president; Bruce Daily, vice president; Mrs. Ruth Hall, secretary; Gordon Redfeldt, treasurer; and Maj. Ellsworth, managing director.

At this meeting it was decided that the district representatives and officers would meet together to consider local problems and suggest methods to remedy those problems, and in turn present their findings to the Taxpayer's Association. Thus the policy committee of the Lakewood Taxpayer's Association was formed.

During 1948 four quarterly meetings were held – mainly to work out the organization.

By 1949 the membership had increased to 180 at election time. Sam Woods was elected president, Philip McCutchen, vice president; Alton Parker, secretary; Bob Bollinger, treasurer; and L.B. (Bud) Jones, managing director.

During this year a group of citizens and residents in the southern part of Lakewood met at the home of Frank Di Salvo and decided to vitalize the Lakewood Taxpayers Association. They were Ed Walker, Mr. and Mrs. Bill Morrow, Mr. and Mrs. Safalko and the Di Salvos. As a result of this meeting the Lakewood Taxpayer's Association under the able direction and management of Sam Woods and Bud Jones, started with renewed interest and increased vigor the study of the hog farm problem, light rate reductions, telephone service, the Heather Ditch menace, and other local problems.

With these vital-to-everyone problems on the floor the membership increased overnight. During this period and the first part of 1950, as a result of the work of this group from southern Lakewood and the officers a great deal was accomplished.

The Southern California Edison Company and the Utilities Commission agreed to reduce light rates in the area of Lakewood on December 5, 1949. As a result of this

reduction consumers have been saved approximately \$2500 per month, John Todd, present managing director has safely estimated.

Again the Lakewood Taxpayer's Association spearheaded a determined drive by the residents of this area to rid Lakewood of the nuisance caused by the hog farms northeast of us. This drive culminated in a hearing before the Regional Planning Commission on February 1, 1950, at which about 150 Lakewood residents attended to voice their protests over the fetid air abounding in Lakewood. The Planning Commission unconditionally revoked the licenses of the hog farm operators who have until March 1, 1951, to cease all operations. The decision of the planning commission was recently upheld by the board of supervisors. Again, it can be safely estimated that the residents of Lakewood have been saved about 2.5 to 3 million dollars in property values due to this ruling on the hog farms.

Renumbering of Lakewood is unconditionally out as far as the Lakewood Taxpayer's Association is concerned. Vigorous protests have been filed with the Regional Planning Commission against presenting greater Lakewood with large street numbers.

The Association has lent its support to the P.T.A., Mrs. Charles Peterson and Mrs. J.K. McCall for the procurement of a crossing guard at the intersection of Clark and Centralia, and in obtaining a traffic signal at Carson and Clark.

Many unsung heroes are in our midst who should receive credit for their stimulation to the Lakewood Taxpayer's Association as well as their untiring efforts in aiding the successful completion of the projects undertaken. They are George Schnurl, Ed Walker, Bud Jones and Alton Parker, to name a few. Mr. Schnuel has taken a considerable part in the growth of this organization with suggestions and ideas of organization of management.

Starting the year 1950 with a greatly increased membership and with many problems to be undertaken and solved, the Taxpayer's Association elected a group of new officers of which it should be proud.

The new president is Rear Adm. George J. McMillin, U.S. Navy retired. The Association is very fortunate in having the Admiral as president; he was the Naval Governor of Guam when the Japanese landed there in 1941 and was taken prisoner,

spending the remainder of the war in prison camps. After the war the Admiral served as Chief of Staff of the U.S. Naval Base on Terminal Island until his retirement in 1949.

The Association has two practicing attorneys as officers: John Pares, the vice president, is an attorney in Long Beach, and John Todd, the managing director, is an attorney in Lakewood.

Alton Parker, the present secretary, and Bob Bollinger, the present treasurer, were original charter members of the Lakewood Taxpayer's Association and had a considerable hand in the formation of the organization. Bob Bollinger is well qualified as treasurer for he served in the same capacity last year. Alton Parker is the perennially popular secretary, well known, and the one who puts the spark in every meeting.

John Todd, managing director, yesterday pointed out that everyone in Lakewood benefits from the Lakewood Taxpayer's Association, everyone in Lakewood is welcome at the meetings to advance suggestions for the improvement of Lakewood; and the only qualification for membership is that one reside in greater Lakewood, - one does not have to be a property owner; dues are only \$1.00 per year.