

John Landers: One Citizen's Contribution to Fremont

(Written by Joanne Landers, July 2015)



John Landers, born in 1930, and raised in Kansas City, Missouri, was stationed at Treasure Island in 1953 for four months, when he served in the Navy, during the Korean War. He loved San Francisco and the wonderful California weather, so when he was discharged in 1956, he moved to California.



He had completed his Bachelor of Science at Rockhurst College in Kansas City and one year of graduate work at Saint Louis University in Saint Louis, Missouri. However, life in California by

he decided to begin his earning his master's degree in Engineering at the University of California in Berkeley.

At U.C. Berkeley, he joined the Graduate Club at the Newman Club, an organization that created a bit of a religious home for Catholic Students who attended the University. John took a volunteer position arranging speakers from the University and elsewhere for the Graduate Students. He sang in the choir at Newman Club, and he also joined the University Hiking Club and spent many a weekend hiking, skiing, and trying a relatively new sport at that time: rock climbing.

About this time, a Sophomore, Joanne Carlsen was a student at the University and was also a member of the Newman Club and she sang in the choir. The Choir Director urged everyone to go to the Newman Club's Annual Semi-Formal Dance and John invited Joanne. The Dance was in 1958. John Graduated with his master's degree in 1959 and moved to Sacramento to work at Aerojet General Corporation. Most weekends he drove to Berkeley to stay in his old place on College Avenue in Berkeley. In 1960, when Joanne received her Bachelors'

Degree, they were married at Joanne's Parish Church, Saint David's in Richmond, California.

Joanne got a job at Sacramento State University in the Financial Aid Office and John continued to work at Aerojet for one more year. In June 1961, they each quit their jobs and traveled to Europe for three months, using Eric Frommer's then famous book, "Europe on \$5 a Day".



When they came back from their travels, John began working at Varian Associates in Palo Alto. They rented apartments, had their first child in Richmond and then began looking for a home. From a work associate, John heard about the Morrison Meadows development in Fremont and when John, Joanne and Baby, Paula, came to look at them, they decided immediately to buy a home that was available because the first sale did not go through. So, in the first of September 1962, the Landers' moved in to 4797 Stratford Avenue in Fremont. At the end of December, they had their second

child, Frederick, at Washington Township Hospital.

In 1964, their son, Russell was born and in 1966 their youngest son, Wayne was born, both at Washington Township Hospital.

John always had an interest in recycling or fixing things that were broken, rather than throwing them out. In fact, Joanne says he seems to enjoy the challenge of seeing how something works and creating a part

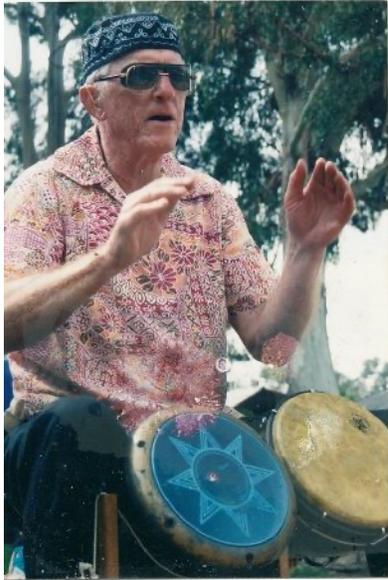


or just finding a way to repair it. He also loves hiking and the out-of-doors. Their children were taken camping and hiking many times through their growing-up years

In 1962 or so, Varian Associates had a big layoff. After that, John took a job at the Stanford Linear Accelerator in Palo Alto. However, in the summer of 1964, he was not

happy with the kind of work that Industrial Engineers usually got, and he decided that he would like to try teaching.

He was able to get into an Internship Program at the University of California because he would be a science teacher which the schools needed at that time. He became a Physical Science Teacher in the Castro Valley Schools and taught for 24 years, until his retirement in 1989.



John began playing the clarinet and flute while he was in grade school.

In High School he played in the school band. He also enjoyed singing, so he began singing in the Oakland Symphony Chorus in 1969 and continued until the Oakland Symphony was disbanded. After singing for a number of years, he dusted off his clarinet and began playing in the Ohlone College Band. Then he and Joanne sang in the Ohlone Community Chorus for a number of years and toured England and Scotland in 1989 with the group.

In the 1970's John took guitar lessons, so he could play with the Folk Music Group at Santa Paula Church (now Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish). He was the leader of the Folk Music Group for about eight years. Since about 1995, he has been studying Doumbek, Frame Drum or Tar and Tambourine and playing Middle Eastern Music.

John and Joanne have been members of Tri-City Ecology Center since it



began in 1971. The first goal of the Ecology group was to set up a recycling Center, which it did at the Corner of Blacow and Grimmer Boulevards. The Recycling Center took bottles, cans, and newspapers, which were brought to the center by car and truck by community members.

The Recycling Center was run by members and families of the Ecology Center for 18 years. John and Joanne's family worked one Saturday a month for many years. Additionally, since the Landers' family lived very close to the Center, they were often the ones who cleaned the site up when unwanted trash was left there.

The Tri-City Ecology Center has been an important organization in Fremont for many years. Members have reviewed the Environmental Impact Studies of many projects and have written letters to council and have testified when the Board felt that the project should be improved or denied altogether. When it seemed that building on the hills in Fremont was a bad idea, they campaigned to "Save The Hills." They have donated about \$40,000 worth of Environmental and Ecological Books to the Public Library. For the past few years, they have been giving small grants to individuals, clubs and schools that need funding for an Environmental project. John has been on the Tri-City Ecology Board as Treasurer since 2002.

In 1989, John was appointed to "The Integrated Waste Management". He served on that Committee until 2003. The Committee listened to proposals and visited facilities in several cities to decide who to choose for the garbage pickup and curbside recycling program.

In 2007 and 2008, John was appointed to serve on "The Green Task Force to study Sustainable Practices, Climate Change Strategies and Emission of Green-House Gases for a new section of the General Plan for the State.



John has also been a member of the League of Women Voters in Fremont for many years. He served on the Board as facilities Chairman.

After John's retirement from the Castro Valley School District, he did handyman work for friends and neighbors. As of this date: June 10, 2015, John and Joanne

Landers have lived in their home for 54 years. Both retain an interest in community affairs.