



Civic Association of West Lake Brantley

HAROLD TORREY and his wife, Barbara, moved to Brantley Isles in 1961. Having two children Patricia and James, they chose this neighborhood of about 30 homes in a quiet and undeveloped area to raise their family. There were a total of three houses on Westwood Drive when they moved here. That same year Ellis & Purvis platted the 300 lots which now make up our community. Harold had a treasure chest of memories that he shared with me from his lifelong residency of our community.

The dirt roads and orange groves from Sand Lake Road to the Lake Brantley Nursery gradually became developed through the years. Harold recalls that the Boat Ramp was simply chained off and the Beach Park area was opened and finally a rope was put in place to quadrant off the association's area. The annual association dues were \$10.00. Harold says fishing was great from the pristine sand bottomed canal and lake which the levels of each were controlled by a "weir" where the culvert in the canal presently exists. There was little runoff from the dirt roads, no yard waste or fertilizer pollutants until there was more home development. This was nature at its best making the waters crystal clear. Unfortunately controlling the water levels presented many problems.

A developer, Everett Huskey, began developing the Sweetwater area during a drought and placed industrial pumps off Wekiva Springs Road near Lake Rena and began pumping the water out of Lake Brantley into ponds and retention areas in the Sweetwater development. Water levels in Lake Brantley dropped 6 inches per day from the pumps running 24 hours a day. Our association along with other communities fought the pumping to no avail. Commissioner, Al Davis, failed to take a stance to protect the lake and our communities. Finally, the sheriff was called into the picture when sugar was found to have clogged the pumps and the pumping never started up again.

Harold recalls the wildlife abounding in this rural area of woods and crystal clear water. One Saturday morning the milk man while making his deliveries got Harold to go over to Oak Drive where a pair of panthers rolled around on the dirt road. Black bears, deer and quail were hunted in our area because they flourished. Even today we experience bear and deer roaming into our neighborhoods. A piece of the past preserved.

Back in the early days of our neighborhood Harold remembers an opportunity to purchase a lakefront lot for \$5,000.00 but opted to purchase a lot across the street from his home for \$250.00.

Harold served as a board member for our association from 1965 to 1972. Three of those years he was the secretary and for 2 more years he served as the president. A proud union electrician he worked for Johnson Electric until his retirement. Harold was involved with the Boy Scouts of America for 33 years as a leader and mentor for many boys in our area. To this day he still gets calls from former scouts thanking him for the values, education and life skills he taught them as young men. Their gratitude surprises him as some of these boys he thought never got anything out of it are the very ones he hears from today. He is pleased to know that he helped shaped the lives of many young men. It goes to show that when you take on a role of responsibility good things come out of it!

Harold and Barbara love to travel in their camper and take an extended trip at least once a year. They enjoy many short trips but Barbara, Harold says, always loves to come home.

Harold speaks fondly of our neighborhood, "A wonderful place to bring up kids!! There has been much change since the days when you had to come through Forest City (on a county easement) before LBHS, Forest City Elementary and Teague were built during which time Sand Lake Road was impassable and only with 4 wheel drive vehicles!! After 43 years living here with road improvements and steady growth Harold still sees the

positive in our tucked away neighborhood. We have wonderful neighbors and friends, lake access and community spirit. A great place to raise a family and retire.”

Harold and Barbara celebrated their 50 th wedding anniversary with a get together dinner with friends and family at their home in August, 2004. Harold puts up a beautiful display of Christmas lights each year, he can be seen regularly gardening and pruning in his yard, talking to neighbors, helping out at the beach park and cooking burgers for our annual association meeting.

A salute to you, Harold, for your fine example of community spirit and dedication!!!!

Submitted by:
Lynn Davis 3/1/2005