

## The Long Story

By Barry Waite

Okay, here it is...

Born only a few miles from Lomita in Lynwood, I lived in Los Angeles County until I was 10 and my family moved to Ventura County. I graduated from Camarillo High School in 1979, moving back to Los Angeles to attend USC. Starting off in the sciences and engineering, I finally decided I'd had enough math and became a French major. It was quite a change most certainly, and I was the only French major who had taken organic chemistry. A friend had taken a general education class in public administration that sounded interesting. It was an urban simulation with students taking the roles of industrialists, environmental regulators, developers, city council members and the news media. I took it and enjoyed it so much that I became a teaching assistant in the class the next year and stayed with it for seven years. Not wanting to change my major, I added public administration as a second degree. Now I was a French and public administration major who'd taken lots of science courses. In retrospect, I'm very glad to have done it. Immediately after my bachelors degrees, I completed my masters degree. That meant seven straight years of college, which was plenty. Luckily, I had some scholarships. My parents helped with rent. Loans were also a big help, and those are now just a memory I am happy to say (thanks to my wife helping me pay them off!).

During graduate school, I worked for Los Angeles County in the productivity management program. I was assigned to the probation department and the social services department and learned a lot with those projects. It was at a time that the county's financial resources were in terrible shape, and it was impressive to see the ways people came up with to cope with the situation. Some of the ideas were great and some were not. A poor idea was setting youth probation facility director pay based on cost savings instead of results. All in all, it was a great learning experience. After graduating, I started a company making classroom games with two associates. We were not successful in the least, which was again a good learning experience. We had very little to start with, so we had nothing to lose.

At one point or other, I've taken classes at UCLA, Cal State LA, Cal State Long Beach and Cal State Fullerton. I've lectured at most every other university in the LA Basin at some point other than Loyola and Cal Tech. I'll work on that. In addition, I've done a number of projects with Cal State Dominguez Hills. The result has been to make me much less of a school partisan one way or another, although I do participate in more programs at USC where I have been teaching since 2007. The quality of current college students is very impressive. Plus, they are nice people.

In 1987, I started with the city of Carson. It was supposed to be a temporary job of 30-90 days in the city manager's office. That temporary job lasted until I retired in 2016 after 29 years on the job. During that time, I've worked as the city manager's assistant, a city planner, a public safety analyst, engineering analyst, geographic services manager, business development manager (including employment development and housing), and finally as acting director during much of my last two years with the city.

Since retirement from Carson, I have done all sorts of consulting projects in planning, economic development, geographic information systems and combinations thereof. I continue to enjoy teaching at USC and CSUDH.

In 1990, I married Margie Hayes in the faraway town of Redondo Beach. She is clearly a very patient person to have tolerated me for these years. She recently retired as the VP of Accounting for Bristol Farms grocery company and is still adjusting to working less than 70 hours a week.

My sons Alex (27) and David (26) are successful products of the LAUSD school system. I credit much of their success to participating in band -- especially the LA All-City Band that marches in the Rose Parade. I was fortunate to be able to volunteer at school a day a week when they were younger. Alex is a civil engineer designing water treatment systems in the Los Angeles area. David is finishing up his master's degree in architecture at the Rhode Island School of Design in addition to being an artist. They are good people, and we are very proud of them.

We moved from Harbor City, where we had great neighbors, to Lomita just after Alex was born in 1992. Luckily, we got more great neighbors. We live behind the post office on a quiet street. We've never regretted buying our house in Lomita. It's a nice house, nice location, nice neighbors, and lots of trees. Indeed, we are very fortunate.

As a church fund raiser, Margie and I produced our first murder-mystery play in 1995. Since then, we have done five more. I acted in most of them and directed three. It's a lot of work, and we think of it more as a FUN raiser than a fund raiser. Here's a [link](#) to the web site of the group that put together the scripts. It can work for any charity group. The most recent play was "Murder, Music and Mayhem" that we performed at our church, Torrance First United Methodist Church, across from Torrance High School.

In 2012, I joined the South Bay [Coastliners](#) barbershop chorus. My dad had been a barbershop singer, and I have always loved singing harmony. I mentioned at a singing workshop a friend was holding that I wanted to sing with a barbershop chorus someday. Another gentleman in the class, held out a Coastliner card and said, "We meet at the Salvation Army on Wednesday nights." My sons had just both left for college, so it was good timing. I have greatly enjoyed singing with this bunch. If churches were as welcoming and encouraging as the Coastliners, the pews would be full every week. I am part of a barbershop quartet called "The Pacific Highwaymen." We have performed for civic groups, senior clubs, and even a bridal shower. That was a fun gig.

Some years ago, we purchased an old cabin in the Lake Arrowhead area. That is our place to get away for some quiet time. No regular television, limited radio, no mail. Lots of quiet. We do have Wi-Fi though! My grandparents built a cabin near there in the '40s, where we went as kids, so it feels very familiar to me.

I think that's about enough. If you made it this far down the page, I am impressed!