



Walt Embertson in his garden.

Lakeview, Nuevo keep rural roots

By PAT O'BRIEN
The Press-Enterprise

Time does not march through Nuevo or Lakeview. It strolls. The farm valley has patches of green fields where alfalfa and potatoes still grow, some dairy farms that moved in a few years ago, a thoroughbred horse ranch, rows of long sheds housing multitudes of chickens on egg farms and, here and there, a backyard horse or wandering guinea hens or peacocks.

There are no traffic lights, street lights, curbs or gutters cluttering up downtown Nuevo or Lakeview, which amount to just a few stores.

There are lots of trees — olive, tamarack, pepper, pine, eucalyptus — lining the quiet streets where traffic is sparse unless road crews detour drivers speeding along the Ramona Expressway between Perris and San Jacinto.

A couple of good-size businesses operate in Lakeview. McNally Egg Enterprises Inc., has a gated and guarded egg farm there with headquarters in Yucaipa. Nutrilite Products Inc., a subsidiary of Amway Corp., has 700 acres where alfalfa, water-cress, parsley, lemons, guavas, carrots and spinach are grown for processing into food supplements.

The two tiny post offices — Lakeview with 400 square feet and Nuevo with 500 — will be replaced by one 5,000-square-foot office, scheduled for construction next year. There has been no discussion of what name will be on the postmark, according to Nuevo Postmaster Ernest Avila.

One possibility would be Nuvew, a name coined almost 40 years by a school student. The hybrid name was adopted by the

Nuvew Union School District, but it hasn't caught on much, otherwise. There is the Nuvew branch library and the Nuvew fire station.

Nuevo is Spanish for "new" and was part of the Mexican land grant, San Jacinto Nuevo y Potrero. Lakeview was named for its location near the seasonal flood area called Mystic Lake, according to Jane Davis Gunther's "Riverside County California Place Names."

"I think Lakeview got its name from real estate people advertising . . . I don't even know where Mystic Lake is at," said Walt Embertson, 76, whose father, a surveyor, came to Lakeview in 1886.

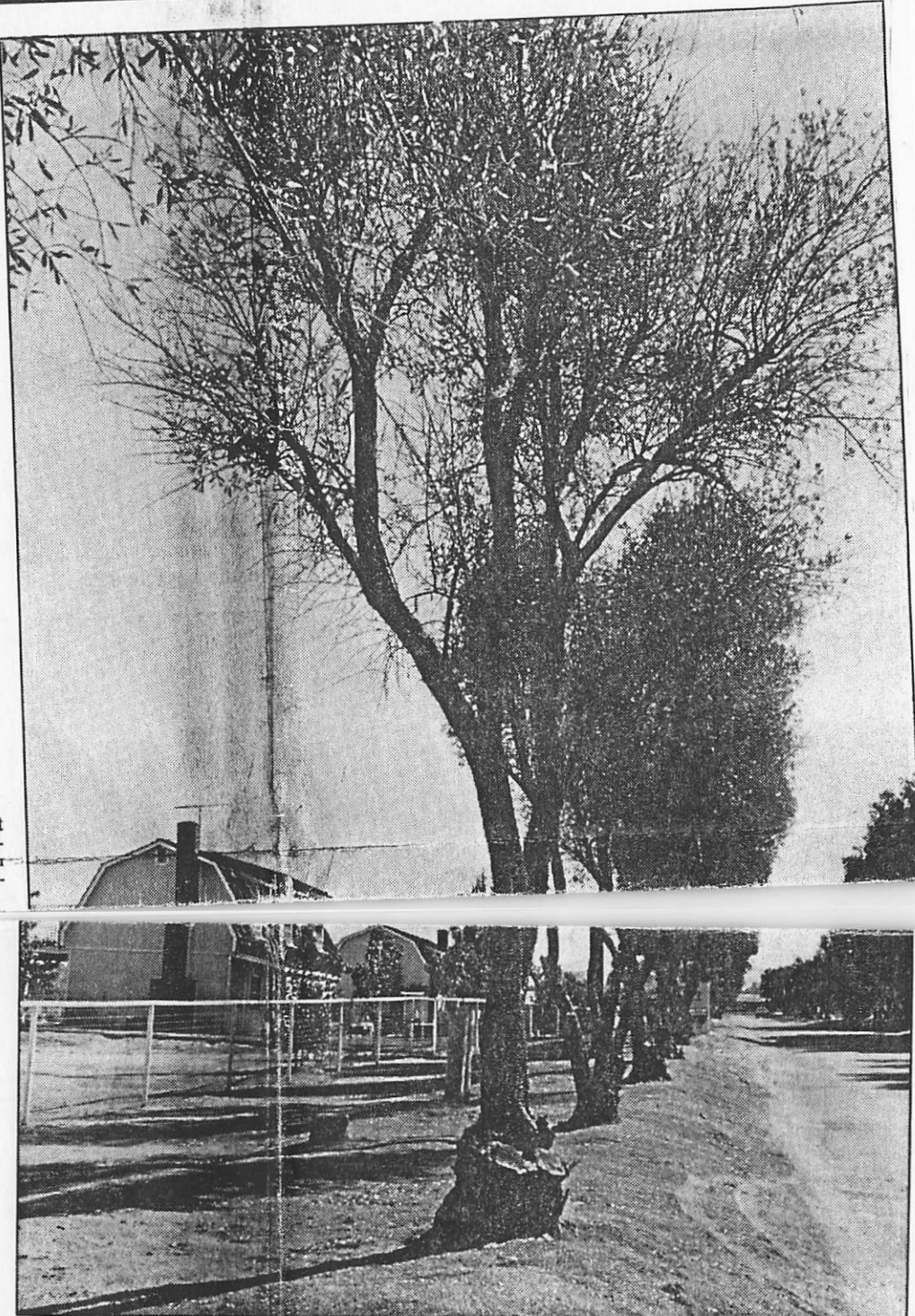
Embertson, who said he likes to stretch the truth a little, admits he has seen a lake form in wet winters and remain for several years. The irregular body of water has, at times, attracted large numbers of wild fowl and allowed him some good duck hunting.

Don Tracy, assistant civil engineer for the Riverside County Flood Control District, said he believes the mysterious Mystic Lake is "the sump area of the San Jacinto River by Bridge Street and Davis Road."

Although the sump causes no particular problems, inhabited portions of Lakeview suffer when flood waters arrive. In 1981, homes along Hansen Avenue flooded when a wall of water rushed along the street.

The county recently extended a flood control channel in the area and is planning to construct a retention basin at 5th Street and the appropriately named Water Avenue, according to Tracy.

While huge housing tracts are



A. J. KMIECIK/The Press-Enterprise

Some Nuevo and Lakeview neighborhoods boast farm-style homes on tree-lined streets.

popping up across the rest of western Riverside County, there are none in Lakeview or Nuevo. Most of the area is zoned for half-acre parcels or larger.

Modest ranch- and barn-style houses are favorites, but everything from mobile homes to custom-built, quarter-million-dollar houses can be found. There is one mobile home park, Penasco Village.

The community uses septic tanks, rather than a municipal sewer service, and, therefore, high-density developments are not likely to be built in the near future.

"We have a community that gets together and talks about

these things," said Vivian Mansfield, a real estate broker for Century 21 in Nuevo. "We're a growing area, but we like to grow in a healthy manner . . . We want to keep this rural atmosphere."

Mansfield is a member of the Nuvew Valley Community Action Committee, which is working with the county on a community land-use plan.

Co-chairman of the committee, Judy Westbrook, said the committee was formed two years ago to successfully oppose annexation by Perris. Residents here see Perris as a city that could encroach upon their rural lifestyle.

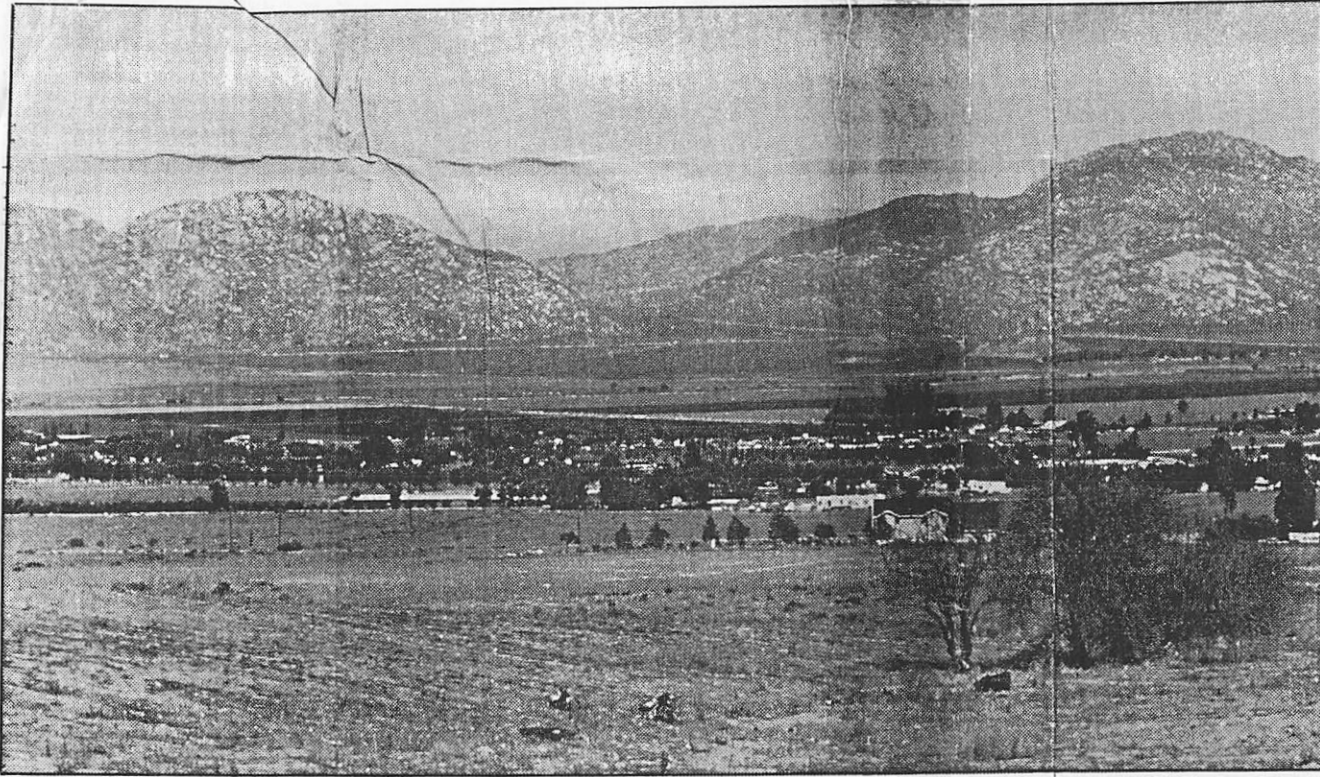
"We're a group of amateur

volunteers, but we have been successful, and we certainly have been united," Westbrook said.

According to Westbrook, the community plan will help them have a say in the rate and type of growth that occurs.

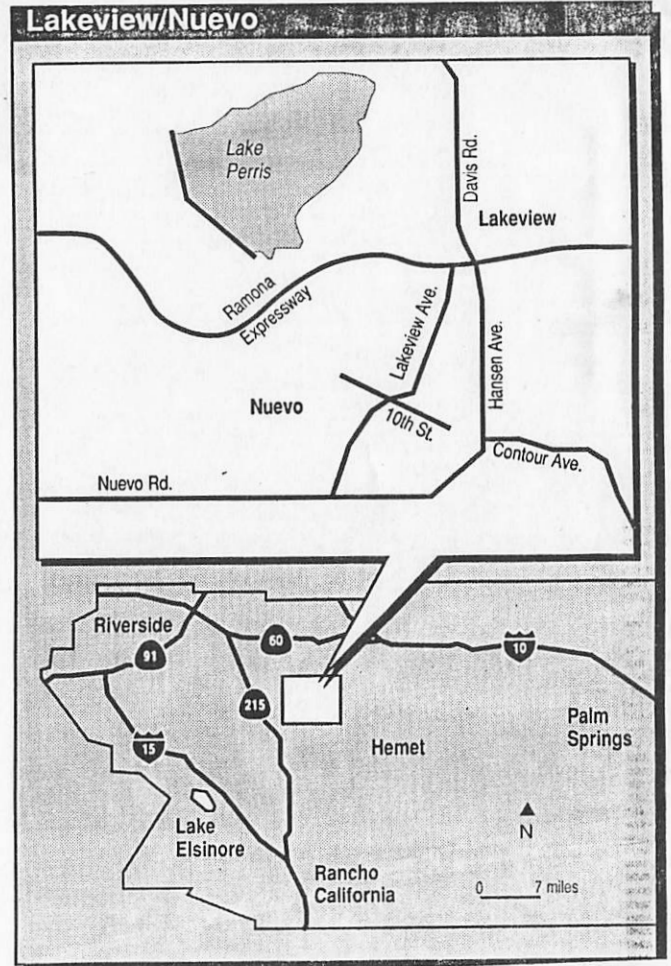
"They (the committee) are not a no-growth group," Westbrook said. "They are interested in maintaining a certain lifestyle . . . If we have chicken ranches, then we want something compatible. Nobody's trying to get out chicken ranches."

There is a demand for the area's rural atmosphere. Since 1980, one-acre parcels have doubled in price, going from about (See RURAL, Page B-2)



A. J. KMIECIK/The Press-Enterprise

The view from Nuevo Road looking across to the Lakeview area, with the Bernasconi Hills in the background.



Rural . . .

(From Page B-1)

\$15,000 to \$30,000, according to Mansfield.

"This area, with supply and demand, will go higher. It's getting harder to find good one- or two-acre parcels," she said.

Enrollment in the 43-square-mile elementary school district which includes Juniper Flats to

Walt Embertson remembers another parade of sorts when the road to Perris was finally paved after years of dust and ruts and mud. He and a few other boys rode their bicycles to Perris along with other celebrants and consumed huge quantities of free dried apricots and milk.

"The apricots began to swell up," Embertson said. He can well recall the resulting discomfort.

the east) reflects the slow but steady growth in the neighborhood. In 10 years the number of students has grown from 230 to 645, according to school board member Jack Miles.

"We feel fortunate that we haven't had the tremendous problems places like Moreno Valley are having," Miles said.

Two new classrooms are under construction at the single elementary school on Lakeview Avenue. A second school is being planned, Miles said.

"We're getting them (new residents) from metropolitan areas — people who want a little more space and room," said Miles. "They don't want a tract house. Most want to try their hand at a horse or raising a pig or something."

When he moved here 11 years ago — he still feels like a newcomer — he joined the local Grange, even though he was not a farmer.

The Grange still exists in old farm communities like this, but, more and more, it has become a community service group rather than a farm organization.

"If a child wants to buy a hog to enter in a fair, we loan them money, free of interest," Vern Andre said. He lived in Lakeview from 1954 to 1975 and, while he now lives in Hemet, he still belongs to the Grange.

The Grange raised money to help the fire department buy land for a station and to paint markers locating fire hydrants, Andre said.

But he is disappointed that meetings are not better attended. "People think too much of television," he said.

There are other clubs in town, such as the Nuevo Woman's Club, which was started 60 years ago, and the new Lions Club, which has gained a lot of community support for its annual Fourth of July parade. One or two thousand people turn out, either marching or watching from lawn chairs.

tatoes, onions, grain, watermelons, carrots and sugar beets were all farmed here at one time or another.

"Personally, I liked alfalfa best," said Clarence Walker, 70, who has farmed up to 2,500 acres. He sold his last farmland in 1978.

"The area has had its day because the land value has gone up so high," he said. "It's hard to farm now. You have to turn to something else, and that is planting houses in the ground."

Walker used to drive his Shetland pony to Nuevo school and, sometimes, he went to the Bernasconi Hot Springs in Lakeview.

"My mother used to take us kids over there, and give us our weekly bath at the hot springs . . . People came out of Los Angeles to go to that hot springs," Walker said.

When Embertson was 17, he bought 165 acres at \$17.50 an acre to start his own farm. He does not gripe about the newcomers. "Young people have to have a place to live."

Embertson still lives next to the crumbling barn built by his father with lumber he hauled from Idyllwild in the 1880s.

For about a half hour each day he and four or five friends tend a small garden of corn, tomatoes, squash, cucumbers and onions over in Nuevo.

"It's not very big, about 100 feet by 100 feet. It's just exactly enough. It gives us something to talk about," he said.

What does the community mean to people here?

Frieda Steen, whose family owned the Lakeview Store for 20 years, said her daughters, now grown and moved to Oregon, told her to keep her roots. "They always say, 'Don't ever leave Lakeview,'" she said.

"The one word to me is home," school board member Miles said.



Nuevo Postmaster Ernest Avila and assistant Maryann Valdez.

Lakeview/Nuevo

Area: The boundaries of the 43.5-square-mile Nuview Union School District, which encompasses Lakeview and Nuevo, run from north of the Ramona Expressway, east past Bridge Street, south almost to Highway 74 and west to Dunlap Road.

Population: 2,065 (1986).

Number of dwellings: 865 (1986).

Schools: One elementary school in the Nuview district. Junior and senior high school students attend school in the Perris Union High School District.

Registered voters: Democrats, 1,029. Republicans, 1,062. Republicans. Other, 226.

Assessed valuation: \$194 million.

Utilities: Nuevo Water Co., Eastern Municipal Water District, General Telephone, Southern California Edison Co., Southern California Gas Co.

Annual event: Fourth of July parade sponsored by the Lions Club.

Sources: Riverside County Registrar of Voters, Nuview Union School District, Riverside County Assessor's Office, Riverside County Planning Department.