

Interview with

**Barbie Baron**

September 21, 2004

by Marge Howard-Jones

for the

Highway 101 Association

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**Interview with Barbie Baron (owner of Offshore Surf Shop) on September 21, 2004 at her home, 1621 South Nevada Street, Oceanside CA 92054. Interviewer: Marge Howard-Jones  
Transcribed by Kristi Hawthorne**

Marge: So, I'm here with Barbara Baron on September 21, 2004. So we'll begin now. Let's have your name and address.

Barbie: My name is Barbara Lee Baron. My address is 1621 South Nevada Street in Oceanside.

Marge: When and where were you born?

Barbie: I was born in Bethesda, Maryland. I moved out here when I was three. I was born July 20, 1952.

Marge: What were your parents' names?

Barbie: My parents' names were Clara Lynn Baron and Harvey W. Baron.

Marge: How did you or your family come to Southern California?

Barbie: My father was stationed here in the Marine Corps. He was back east and they stationed him in Camp Pendleton so we moved out here.

Marge: During the war?

Barbie: I believe so. I just know I was three.

Marge: And you were born when?

Barbie: 1952.

Marge: So it was 1955, so it was after the war. What period of time did you live on or near Highway 101 or when your business was there?

Barbie: I lived on the Strand for fifteen years. My parents owned a motel. Then Highway 101 or Carlsbad Boulevard, I have worked on for basically the last 32 years in Carlsbad.

Marge: Describe your business.

Barbie: It is a surf shop.

Marge: Called?

Barbie: Offshore Surf Shop.

Marge: And where is it?

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Barbie: It's now at 3179 Carlsbad Boulevard.

Marge: Where was it originally?

Barbie: Originally it was on Cleveland Street, right off Wisconsin Street, in Oceanside.

Marge: And when did you move it to Carlsbad?

Barbie: I moved it to Carlsbad in roughly 1970.

Marge: At the present address?

Barbie: No. I moved it to Carlsbad at the corner of Tamarack and Carlsbad Boulevard from 1970 to roughly about 1975.

Marge: And that was at Novak's?

Barbie: Correct.

Marge: Did you have any outstanding events during the time you've been there?

Barbie: The most outstanding event was just being part of the Novak's era. That was an era. Everyone of that time knows how special it was.

Marge: Do you want to describe what Novak's was?

Barbie: Novak's was the best hamburger place on the whole coast. It was right across the street from Tamarack State Beach. Mr. and Mrs. Novak were the proprietors. They were there probably 50 years. They were there when Interstate Five was built. They told me stories how bad business was during the time when Interstate 5 went into effect and people quit using Highway 101 so much.

Marge: Do you want to talk a little bit about how you came to have a surf shop?

Barbie: Sure. I went to Oceanside High School. I professionally surfed right out of high school. I got to roughly Number Five in the United States. Then I decided that I would try to make some money at it. Because there was no money in women's surfing, so I decided I would open a surf shop. I already had the following and friends in Oceanside. It started out on Cleveland Street because I had no idea what a location meant. Basically I knew all the surfers in town so they would just follow me to the store.

Marge: How old were you when you rode on 101?

Barbie: Nine years old going surfing.

Marge: Where did you go surfing?

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Barbie: I believe we got to go to Swami's that day. That was a big adventure.

Marge: When was the first time you drove yourself on the 101?

Barbie: 16 years old, going surfing to Tamarack.

Marge: From Oceanside?

Barbie: Yes.

Marge: Do you remember any of the buildings or the businesses that were along the road?

Barbie: I remember, of course, Novak's building. I remember the big hotel on the corner of Pine Street where there were all kind of the illegal aliens in these little apartments in the back and there was a little house that was a yogurt store on the left hand side. That's kind of what I remember at that time.

Marge: Nothing much else on the 101?

Barbie: No, nothing much. Not like there was the 7-11 or anything like that. I think Surf Board Hugo was there where Café Elyssa is now. Surf Board Hugo was there.

Marge: On that little triangle?

Barbie: In the triangle. Back at that time Royal Palms was on the right hand side.

Marge: Do you want to talk about the Royal Palms?

Barbie: It was really exclusive. I didn't really go there much. I know they had beautiful tennis courts and you could play tennis. There was a great restaurant, kind of old school, but a great restaurant. They had rooms there and stuff. I remember seeing lots of great tennis players play there.

Marge: Once it was kind of a resort but it had its day. Do you remember any landmarks or unusual structures?

Barbie: Yes, I thought about that and the one that I always remember is the little house that was on the corner of Novak's property. There was a great little house right on the corner. It had lattice on the front and a little wooden porch. Once in awhile Novak's would rent it to somebody for a \$150 bucks a month. It was just this cool, little two-bedroom old wooden house. Everybody would hide their surfboards underneath it. Mr. Novak kept saying, "Don't hide your surfboards under there. If I find them, I'm going to cut them all up." Well, one day, Mr. Novak found everybody's long surfboards and he cut everybody's surfboards up.

Marge: Why?

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Barbie: Because he didn't want us keeping them underneath there. People would park their bikes in the bushes, because there were little bushes, just pull over and park at this little house.

Marge: This was between Novak's and Ledgerwoods?

Barbie: This was between Novak's and Tamarack.

Marge: On that corner?

Barbie: Yes, on that corner. It was just a cool, little house.

Marge: It's a parking lot now.

Barbie: It's just a parking lot now.

Marge: Okay, Barbie, let us talk about people associated with that stretch of road.

Barbie: I would go back to Frank and Mabel Novak. The time, the era, it was just a great time, when everybody would go to the beach and you would all come to eat at Novak's. You would visit with everyone, whether it would be just your lunchtime or you'd be hanging the whole day there. People would come up from the beach and decide what they were going to do that evening at Novak's. Everybody would come together and decide on a summer's evening, they would all come down to Novak's with their evening clothes on.

Marge: Which were?

Barbie: Which were bell bottoms, probably, and cords and some kind of western shirt. And decide if they were going to go to the fair or what they were going to do that evening. Novak's was just a complete hangout. A nice place, family's, everyone.

Marge: Do you have a favorite trip or destination that you connect to the 101?

Barbie: Mainly, I would say for me, I was just so into surfing, I think it was probably just driving to all the different beaches that you could get to back then that were just dirt roads, in places called "Tomato Patch" that you could kind of hike to. Between Swami's and Pipes there was a place called "Swipes" and we all used to go down there and no one was down there. It was a huge adventure to go from Oceanside or Carlsbad down to Encinitas. It was just the biggest thing you could do, back in those times.

Marge: Do you remember any bad accidents on the road?

Barbie: No, I don't really remember any bad accidents.

Marge: What about storms or anything like that?

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Barbie: I remember storms growing up, down in Oceanside, on the Strand, and heading down south where roads would be washed out. I remember, gosh, it had to be about fifteen years ago, watching a car get--and I'm telling the truth--barreled on Highway 101, down between warm water and the south jetty. The waves were breaking on the highway right there and we watched a car, a guy drive into it. The wave broke over him and he came out the other side.

Marge: Like a surfer.

Barbie: Like a surfer in a car. We were just yelling and screaming like he just got the best barrel ride. He didn't know what he was doing; he was just going as fast as he could!

Marge: Do you remember any policemen on the scene?

Barbie: Back then, when I had my shop at Novak's, there were like two or three policemen in all of Carlsbad, so they were stretched pretty thin. They'd come to Novak's and have their burgers. But they knew everybody. That's what I do remember. Somebody would pull you over and go, "You know, you're driving wrong, so we're going to follow you home, but you just get home now." But it was a little, small—

Marge: --intimate place.

Barbie: Yes. I remember just ... like I was watching when they put in the light at Tamarack. The difference of, I believe it was like a four way stop, and then they put that light in and we were all like, "Wow, it looks like LA now with the big light."

Marge: A big city.

Barbie: A big city. I remember some stuff like that.

Marge: Do you remember if there was a speed limit on the 101?

Barbie: I want to say 35 miles an hour. Because you remember back then, you would just cut off the highway and get right on the bluff, to be at the top of Tamarack. So it had to be 25 or 35 miles, probably 35 miles an hour.

Marge: Do you remember when 101 came through?

Barbie: I never saw that.

Marge: That was before your time. Did you ever get a ticket?

Barbie: Yes, I have a great story. I remember getting a fix-it ticket. There used to be things called--and they were between Oceanside and Carlsbad, the lagoon on both sides, so there was no way of getting out of it--a "vehicle inspections check." Do you remember those?

Marge: No.

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Barbie: Put on by the Highway Patrol and what they would do is they would be right in the middle of the lagoon, so if you were coming down from Oceanside or if you were coming from Carlsbad, you were caught, there was no pulling back. They would have the cones out and they would funnel you in to a big sign that said "Vehicle Inspection Check". And of course back then all of our cars were old and rickety. And they would funnel you and they would check your turn signals, they'd check your lights, they'd check your high beams, your windshield. And the first time I pulled in, the surf wax flew off the car on to the front of the car, right when I stopped. And my turn signals, what surfer had turn signals that worked? That's when I got a fix-it ticket. It's funny because the kids nowadays don't remember vehicle inspection checks.

Marge: Why was it, to fix the cars?

Barbie: Basically it was a fix-it ticket. They would go through and check everyone's car and they'd be sporadic so you would never know when they were. They would stop you and have you go through all these motions to see how your car was working.

Marge: How would they know if you fixed it or not?

Barbie: It would be like a fix-it ticket that you would have to get it fixed and you'd go to the Highway Patrol office and they would sign it off.

Marge: Was there ever a celebrity in your midst?

Barbie: Never a celebrity. The most kind of rad thing I remember, one 4<sup>th</sup> of July when the hippies and the Hell's Angels were going to come down to the Strand and destroy everything, and the Marines came with tanks on the Strand, this is honest truth, Marge. Of course, I lived on the Strand with my parents and I was frightened. I was a young girl thinking, "are the bikers going to come down here?" So they brought the Marines in from the north side on the Strand with their big tank and the hippies with their love and peace signs. That was the most radical thing I saw!

Marge: When was that?

Barbie: It was the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and I had to have been 8 or 10.

Marge: So early 60s.

Barbie: Yeah, so that time. That was the most radical thing I saw.

Marge: That's pretty radical.

Barbie: It was.

Marge: And the first traffic light was the one at Novak's?

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Barbie: Well, I saw two go up. I saw the one at Novak's at Tamarack and Carlsbad Village Drive. And then recently, a little more recently, I saw the one at Pine street go up. When the road no longer went through. We all thought, "wow, this is going to be huge change", and it was.

Marge: In what way?

Barbie: Well, we kind of missed the road going through.

Marge: To Ocean Avenue.

Barbie: To Ocean Avenue, it was nice when that went through. Of course, it gave that whole area down where my shop was a different feel. There was always a flushing of cars coming back and forth. Now it's all one way going out. Just a lot more activity back there then. And you remember then it was just a triangle so you could park anyway you wanted. It was actually probably a dangerous corner. But people would pull in and eat and leave, you know. It was a pretty busy corner down there. I suppose they had to straighten out eventually. But that's kind of what I remember about that era.

Marge: Do you want to talk a little about "The Bars", since you were right there?

Barbie: Sure. See if I can do it in a real general way. Well, the bars, when did the bars go up, Marge?

Marge: It was in the late 80s, early 90s.

Barbie: So late 80s or early 90s.

Marge: Say what The Bars were.

Barbie: "The Bars" was a piece of art. They were metal bars, like in a jail, and they were five inches apart and they just went the whole stretch of Highway 101 on the left side, all the way from where my shop is to Pine Street and around the peninsula. And they were 8 feet tall and they were sometimes double barred in places. And it was a piece of art, and the artist had this sculpture out there, benches and the water pond thing there.

Marge: On the west side:

Barbie: On the west side. And it was built and it just seemed to not fit in with the area very well. People complained, that it blocked--they just couldn't see the ocean. When you come by the shop on Carlsbad Boulevard, it's the first place your eye can hit the ocean. So it's very important. People love to see that beautiful blue ocean and all of a sudden it was obstructed and you couldn't see it. And people got frustrated over it with the bars and the double bars. So it ended up being kind of a big tussle with the city and the people. There's art involved, so there's more. You know, you can't stomp on art, but is it art? And people had so many questions and we sat behind those bars for seven years. Then eventually what happened they had, I believe, a general election and they left it up to the people and the people said by a seventy percent margin

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they believed they wanted The Bars down. I basically think they just wanted to be able to see the ocean again. So they came down and we were all happy.

Marge: They became famous.

Barbie: They became very famous.

Marge: Do you remember the gas stations along the road?

Barbie: I tried to bring a picture of the gas station where my shop was. I don't remember it, but did you know that was a gas station.

Marge: No.

Barbie: Yes, on that corner. I have a picture of it and it's got two cool old cars that were up in the air, because remember they had the big hydraulic lifts. Actually when we remodeled I found the bay where those hydraulic lifts were and it was all filled in, where you walked down and then worked on the car. Yes, it's a cool old gas station. I met the grandson of the man that owned it. He said, "My grandfather owned this." I said, "You know, I've got a picture of it." And he goes, "So do I." Our shop used to be an old gas station right across from the beach.

Marge: Is there anything else you remember about the 101 that you'd like share?

Barbie: Just that it was, way back then, when my shop started up, it just all seemed so much more simple. There was just a south and a north, you know, and you just went whatever way you wanted and there was never too many people around. You had to look for people. Carlsbad was just this quiet little--I thought I came from the big city--Oceanside and you'd come into Carlsbad and they had dirt cliffs and it was quiet and the train was a big deal. It really was just a quiet little town then. I was just very fortunate to be around.

Marge: Thank you.

Barbie: Thank you.