

Lost in My Own Neighborhood

By Marilyn Reeves

During the late '60's and early '70's my son Tom and I lived in a little 2-bedroom house off Wadsworth and Florida in Lakewood. Occasionally I would drive over to the Bear Valley Shopping Center, which was just a straight shot down Sheridan – the first main boulevard east of Wadsworth – to Hampden.

If memory serves, I believe there was a May D&F store there in Bear Valley, and I must have stopped by to pick up something on my way home from work. But whichever store it was, when I came out, I couldn't remember where I had parked my car. It was starting to get dark, and it took a bit of walking up and down the parking lot before I finally found it.

Breathing a sigh of relief, I got in, started it up, and without giving it another thought, made my usual right turn onto Sheridan to head back home. Except nothing looked quite right. The buildings I was passing looked familiar, but completely out of place. Somehow I realized this couldn't be Sheridan, but I wasn't really sure where I was. Eventually I found a place to turn around and headed back in the other direction. Same problem. I passed building after building that I recognized but I simply couldn't get oriented. It was like a nightmare – I was so confused!

I drove and drove, and then up ahead on my left, I saw Cinderella City! I pulled into the parking lot and just sat there awhile, trying to unscramble my brain. I finally figured out that that first right turn I made out of Bear Valley wasn't onto Sheridan, it was onto Hampden! I had been trying to navigate at right angles to where I thought I was, and the whole world was turned around.

Once I finally got my HEAD turned around, I pulled back onto Hampden, drove back west to Sheridan, made a right turn past Bear Valley, and finally found my way back home – a little shakier but wiser for the experience.

Now whenever I park in a shopping center I make a mental note of where my car is and the landmarks around it. Unless I happen to be with a companion – then all bets are off! I pay no attention whatsoever to where we left the car, and it's up to the other guy to get it sorted out. Hopefully my friend is less directionally dyslexic than I am!