

Park Pool

The Park Pool was a completely unique and wonderful set up. Lifeguard Peggy Kirby had been there forever. It was a big pool with easy slide-in entry all around.

The El Toyonal crowd was an eccentric bunch of Berkeley professors and independent contractors that added color.

Some kids like me and my brother and sister spent the whole summer there. Our Mom would drop us off early for swim team practice and pick us up later in the afternoon. I fondly remember many of the other kids and still enjoy seeing them today.

Swim Team

Because we spent all day every summer day at the Park Pool we were pretty good swimmers all the way into high school. Lots of blue ribbons from the swim meets. It was good for our competitive spirits, and probably overall health.

Regularly interacting with both sexes and age groups was helpful, and normal. Sometimes there were kissing contests behind the clubhouse. Mostly nobody even knew what sexual activity was, but there were mutual attractions recognized.

Creeks and Hills

Orinda was really pretty idyllic back in the day, wherever you were. The weather between the bay and the central valley was usually just right. Nobody had air conditioners. Once in a while in the winter the creeks would flood and the storm drains would ice up. In the summer the fog would roll in over the Berkeley hills and hold back the valley heat.

Phairs

Phair's Market was kind of an upscale grocery store for the more well-to-do. Owned by the Phair family, Country Clubbers. My Mom had a charge account and I could go in any time and get whatever I wanted. Steaks, cigarettes, and soft drinks.

Because I was well known, when I was 16 I got the job of driving their VW van for deliveries to the locals. Lots of booze and cartons of cigarettes right to your door. The Kaiser family would order a full van of goods every couple of weeks.

The Phair's got tired of managing it and the very nice building in the Orinda Village has sat empty for 40 years. They don't need the money.