

*In response to a letter/press release from the Hermosa Beach City Clerk on November 9, 1967, the Daily Breeze sent a reporter/photographer to capture Evelyn Belasco's first Sister City Project. The story made the second front page and was written by Bernard Cole:*

### **HERMOSA BEACH CHILDREN MAKING FRIENDSHIP BID**

Fifth graders at Valley Vista School in Hermosa have some new friends—fifth graders at a school in Loreto, Mexico, the city's new sister city.

After they heard about a trip their teacher, Mrs. Jack T. Belasco, made recently to Loreto with the sister city committee, they decided to send their new friends a letter.

"The children talked about what they wanted to say and one of them, Lorna Grant, from Argentina, translated it for us into Spanish," Mrs. Belasco said.

This is what their letter said:

"Dear Friends:

Here are some pictures that will show you how our city looks. We hope that you will send us some pictures of your town so we can see how it looks. Mrs. Belasco told us you have a very pretty and very clean town. Someday perhaps it will be possible for some of us to come and visit with you and some of you can become friends and learn more about each other."

The children spent a busy two weeks deciding what to draw. "After they decided they signed up for a particular building, so we wouldn't have 24 drawings of the same building," said Mrs. Belasco.

"I sent a picture of the police department," said Charles Smith. Randy Landis sent a drawing of City Hall, and Celt Schira sent one of the school library.

Drawings of others sent included Valley Vista, Valley Park, the beach, the railroad tracks, the fire station and the post office.

Debbie Stull sent a picture of her house. Shelley Mellum's drawing was a little more ambitious. "I sent a picture of the ocean," she said.

All of them have a general idea of where Loreto is. "It's on the coast of Mexico," said Kathy Hazlett. "And it's in lower Baja California," said Tony Jucevic.

"It's down by the gulf of California," said Joe Risk. "And it's near the ocean," said Becky Green.

"It's a small town," said Kristin Busby, "And they always get excited if they get a Christmas card, because they don't get much mail.

"We have sister cities because we want to have peace in the world and be friends and love the other cities," said Nani Coptner.

"And so we can't get in wars," said Lisa Strotman. "Just in case one city gets in trouble we can help each other," said Mike DuVeret.

The fifth graders are all eagerly awaiting an answer to their letter. "They came in the day after we had mailed the drawings and wanted to know if an answer had come yet, said Mrs. Belasco.

"I want to see the town and the people," said Margie Balzar. "I mostly want to see what their homes look like," said Andre Le Chambre.

"I want to see the mission," said David Penn. "So do I," said Randy Landis, "but most of all I want to see the fishing lodge."

While they are waiting for an answer to their first letter, the students are working on Christmas cards to send to their new friends.

Why? Betsy Green seemed to sum up the class feelings best. "I don't have any friends from Mexico, but I would like to have one," she said.