

LaNell & Jerry Roy: Texas Carnival People to Know

By Carol Cinclair



In February, at the thirtieth anniversary celebration of the Texas Carnival Glass Club, LaNell and Jerry Roy had an open house for all to come and view their various antique collections. Everyone was impressed! Where did all those hatpins come from and who are LaNell and Jerry Roy? Well this is the **"rest of the story"** as Paul Harvey used to say.

LaNell was born in Houston to Nell and William Laurence Wiser. Her parents took the first two letters of her father's middle name and combined them with her mother's first name to get La+nell = LaNell. LaNell has lived all of her life within a tiny radius of eleven city blocks, except for the time spent away at college. She attended the University of Texas in Austin and got a B.S. in Education. Later she received her M.Ed in Education Administration from the University of Houston.

LaNell has always lived in one of her father's two homes. She lived with her parents in the 32nd Street house until it burned in a fire when she was just eleven years old. Her father built a new house for the family on 34th Street but held onto the old one. He had the old one rebuilt and rented it out. When LaNell came back from college she moved into the old house and there she stayed. She shared it with a roommate for a time and after her 1990 marriage to Jerry, they both lived there. Two years ago, she and Jerry moved over to the new and improved 34th street house. Jerry oversaw all of the remodeling. The 34th street home has given them lots of room to spread out and to display all of LaNell's precious antiques in a better manner.

LaNell has always been in education. She first taught elementary school for eleven years. She then became principal at Field Elementary when Cecil Whitley, the previous principal, moved on to a new school. LaNell then became an Associate Superintendent for fourteen years. Her job was to supervise elementary, middle school and high school principals all over Houston. Of course she and Cecil became great friends during that time.

Jerry Roy grew up in Galveston. He went away to U.C.L.A. where he received a B.A. in engineering. He worked for Gulf Oil before forming his own company: JERO Oil Field Consulting International Inc. Jerry traveled all over the world trouble shooting oil drilling problems, and he has spent lots of time on ocean oilrigs. LaNell says that when Jerry is on the rig "...he is the boss." Jerry, also, spent time in Kuwait after the first Iraqi war, helping to cap those burning oil wells we all watched with awe on TV. Jerry is a first class handyman. He knows how to refinish furniture, put the silver back on old mirrors, repair porcelain figurines, etc. He also loves to golf and fish.

LaNell and Jerry met at the Swiss Chalet, a nice restaurant in Houston. LaNell had gone out for a drink with a friend after an educational training program. She was leaving when this good-looking gentleman sitting near the door asked her if he could buy her a drink. LaNell decided that she would take him up on the offer, and that is how it all started. She says that Jerry proceeded to "sweep me off my feet." He called every day and each night took her out to some place new and wonderful. She learned that he was from Galveston, had a boat, a beach place and a pickup truck. She thought that was just fine. Six weeks later when Jerry asked her to marry him, she said "okay" but he would have to wait six months. They were married later that year in Las Vegas.

LaNell and her good friend, Cecil Whitley, argue over which one of them had the first piece of Carnival glass. LaNell's first piece was a marigold-ruffled bowl that was given to her mother by their babysitter. Her mother gave it to LaNell and she used it to float pansies in until she learned that it was worth about \$60.00. Cecil's first piece was a tumbler that her mother had. Cecil used to take water to an elderly man in the glass. Cecil's mother eventually gave the glass to her. So it's pretty hard to decide who had the first piece, but this is LaNell's story so I guess she did.



LaNell & Jerry Roy: Texas Carnival People to Know, cont.

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LaNell and Cecil both started collecting Carnival Glass in the 1970s. They along with seven other couples in 1979 were the founding members of Texas Club with Floyd Whitley becoming the first president.

LaNell is the primary collector in her family. She got started by collecting cups and saucers when she was only eleven years old. Her favorite Carnival Glass pieces are mugs, plates and hatpins. She has, far and away, the most impressive Carnival Glass hatpin collection in the world. She also collects cranberry glass, Shirley Temple dolls, Madame Alexander dolls, Patti Playpal dolls, Effanbee dolls, and a whole array of other dolls. She has an extensive Hand Vase collection and attends the Florida Hand Vase Show. She says she just loves the elegance of the Victorian period.