

Lifelong Leucadia resident a pioneer of 'green' living

by [Lillian Cox](#) April 4, 2012 238

LEUCADIA — A photo of the old Hungate homestead on Hymettus Avenue in Leucadia remains on Google Maps, but despite the valiant efforts to save it, the log house was leveled a few months ago by the current owners to make way for a new structure.

The home was built around 1925 by Miles Minor Kellogg, who is better known for the Encinitas boathouses on Third Street, which are protected by the Encinitas Preservation Association that purchased the property.

Time marches on, and so has Elma "Jo" Hungate Maus, who was born and raised in the log house on Hymettus Avenue 73 years ago.

Maus has redirected her sights on educating local residents about the importance of preserving the environment by adopting sustainable practices.

"The region is filled with natural resources, but is also a great place to take advantage of renewable energy," she said.

"I see growth in the renewal energy industry and sustainable living practices all around me," she said. "The Batiquitos Lagoon Foundation and other local groups are working hard to keep the environment clean. I think local homeowners can also contribute by learning how to live sustainably." ^[1]_{SEP} Maus has become a partner with Clean Green Nation, educating people about sustainable lifestyles and how to reduce their carbon footprint through energy conservation. Her areas of expertise include ways to protect Encinitas coastline ecosystems, exploring organizations focused on sustainable living and adopting green household products.

She represents a line of energy-efficient products that include showerheads, tankless water heaters, solar ovens, light bulbs, rechargeable batteries, electric bikes, attic fans and wind turbines.

Maus is no stranger to green living. The family home in which she was raised was built with recycled cedar telephone poles. In 1930, her grandfather, Frank Hungate, acquired the residence by trading a house he owned in San Diego, and adding little cash, for a total price of \$4,000.

The following year he and his son, Ward (Maus' father), replaced more than 30 eucalyptus trees with avocado trees, which continue to produce fruit today. In

1949, Frank and Ward Hungate rebuilt the fireplace after it was loosened by an earthquake.

“It was rebuilt with concrete and large rocks, stands 27 feet high and looks as if it will stand forever,” wrote Maus’ late sister, Ardell Hungate Hartman, who raised her own family in the home.

“The house has gas but we prefer to use the wood-burning stove.”

Back then even public facilities were “green.” One of Maus’ favorite memories was going to Beacon’s Beach with her grandmother as a child.

“They had individual, fenced picnic areas,” she said. “Each one had a thatched roof made of palm branches.”

Maus graduated from San Dieguito High School in 1957. “It was the last year it provided instruction for grades seven to 12,” she said. She went on to earn a certificate from Kelsey-Jenney College in office skills.

In 1960, Maus was hired as an insurance agent at Tiger Financial in Encinitas and remained there until 1994. During that time, she developed lifelong friendships with clients Connielou Caldwell and Louise Wetzell, who support her new venture in promoting sustainable living practices today.

“Jo handled all of our insurance for our car and house, and was always accurate and punctual and had time for you,” Caldwell said.

“When I need advice, I go to her,” added Wetzell. “She’s always up on everything.”

The friendship extended through their association with the San Dieguito American Legion

California Post 416, where Maus served as president and parliamentarian.

“Jo’s in charge of the bylaws and if someone says something that isn’t kosher, she knows every detail,” said Caldwell. “She reads everything.”

Maus still lives in Leucadia, about two blocks from her childhood home on Hymettus Avenue. She hopes her efforts to convince other locals to reduce their carbon footprint will catch on.

“I’d like to keep Leucadia as it has been,” she said. “It has a distinctive ambience that people like when they come here.”

For more information, call Maus at (760) 436-1526 or visit elmam.cleangreenation.com.

NOTE: Jo Maus passed away in November of 2014