

- Retired
- Has lived in Lakeview for 3 years
- Started Master Gardeners Program

Peter Little: What do you like about living in Lakeview?

Maxine Meyers: I think the climate here is really nice. We have over 300 days of sunshine. It is high and dry, and you don't feel the heat. It is easy to live here, but it is not easy to grow things here. There is no shopping mall. If you need a shopping mall to keep your life balanced, this is not a place for you. If you want to do your shopping you have to go to Medford or Bend with a friend to do your big shopping. You usually get a list from people of things they need if they don't go. We usually come back with a whole car load of everything. We do a lot of catalogue shopping here to get our supplies. That is ok. It works. People are very basic. There is not a Silicon Valley type of competition with everybody climbing on top of each other to get ahead in their careers. The careers are what they are. There isn't any step up, because that kind of thing doesn't happen here. Most people here wear two or three different hats. For example, a real estate salesman may run a bed and breakfast and a pheasant raising farm. People do not usually do just one thing here.

MM: I like it here mostly because I can trust the people here. This is not to say that we don't have our bad apples here, but by and large I feel at ease here.

PL: Is Lakeview a smaller town than the one you moved here from?

MM: No, no. It is much smaller. We are a hundred miles from Klamath Falls. We are remote. We have like 9/10ths of a person per square mile. We have a small community. You see the same people at church in the morning, who you see at the grocery store, and you might see them at the BBQ, and then maybe have dinner with the same people that evening.

PL: So everyone knows pretty much everything about everyone?

MM: Yes, there is a lot of gossip that goes around.

PL: Can you talk about the Master Gardener Program?

MM: I started it in about 2004, but really classes began in 2005. We had 21 people show up to the first class and since then it has been less. The motto of the program is education, not weed pulling. We teach classes on soils, irrigation, pruning, and thing like that. The program sort stays afloat with the help of about 15 people who are volunteers. The OSU extension office is really involved.

PL: Is the program made up of a mix of men and women?

MM: The majority of the people are women. I wish a lot more men would get involved. A lot of men have shown up to the classes, but few have gotten involved with the volunteer projects. That is too bad. Over on the coast there was more men involved. At least that is what I observed.

PL: What are your favorite foods that exist in town?

MM: Well, of course, the beef here in Lake County is really good, because we raise our own. If you to Adel on a Saturday there is a beer bar and restaurant that has some of the best burgers around. I have never seen anyone finish even half of one. The beef that is raised here is just soo good you can even cut it with a fork. It is raised mostly on alfalfa. Most of the vegetables are brought in from California. I am going to start my own green house in my sun room, and another people grow there own vegetables. But, mostly the community survives on vegetables from California. The prison garden, on the other hand, grows all their own vegetables only for

the prisoners and the staff. The BBQ that we are going to today is great growing country. Pine Creek is great for growing stuff. It is deep soil and flat. It has been a good growing area for a long time. It is a whole different climate there, they have warmer weather, whereas here it freezes a lot. They are a Zone 4 and they are a Zone 5 or 6. They don't get the cold freezes so they can grow more. They don't have to worry about trying to grow cold, hearty plants.

PL: Do you have a farmer's market here?

MM: Yes it runs from the end of June until Labor Day. It is mostly produce and some baked goods. The growing season here has a profound effect on the types of vegetables we can grow. If you are lucky it is 90 days. 90 days if you are lucky. Usually you will get 60. Cold season crops, like broccoli, are really not grown much here because it is too cold too late. It is not uncommon to have snow in late June here. The freeze at night can really knock the plans out.

PL: To address the problem of such a contrived growing season, is there talk about setting up green houses?

MM: There is talk about it, but nothing has been accomplished. I am not sure what happens to make it get stymied. We have not had anybody start it up. Other places in Oregon with cold climates seem to have them.

PL: Do you think that people in the community would like to see more ethnic food options in town?

MM: I think most people would like that. Mario's is always a favorite of locals. The Chinese restaurant is good, but they are away right now so it is closed. In Alturas, there is a Basque restaurant. Tiny town but incredible restaurant.

MM: One off the things that is important about Lakeview in terms of food is that every social event has tons and tons of food. If you are a social butterfly, you can just about eat out every day. This is the most social town I have ever lived in.

PL: Would you say that this is a big retirement community?

MM: I would say so that the population is definitely aging. I think the lack of jobs here for kids is why this is. They seem to come back though. The BLM seems to transfer people in and out of here. BLM and NFS are the biggest employers here. Fish and Wildlife is a pretty big employer. Education is a big employer.

PL: So I hear there are a lot of churches in Lakeview?

MM: Oh yes. There is a lot of sin in this town, so there are a lot of churches [LAUGH... LAUGH]. This was Irish Catholic country for a long time and many other denominations have come in over the years. We have Mass everyday at my church, St. Patrick's.

PL: Does your church have any programs to get food to the poor and needy?

MM: We have a food share and that has been canned and baked goods. Now the Rotary has started a community garden. Last year the deer ate everything that they tried to grow. They were pretty busy. This year they put up a fence so it should be better.

PL: How have the youth been brought into the master gardeners program or in other growing projects?

MM: There was an instructor who had students learning how to raise food and to teach them about growing crops that feed livestock. There was some attempt to reclaim some swampy land to grow grass for livestock.

PL: Are there many vegetarian options in the community?

MM: No, there is hardly any vegetarian option here in Lakeview. You see that maybe in Corvallis and on campus at OSU, but you don't see that here.

PL: So, would you say people are pretty set in their ways?

MM: I would call it a red neck community. Yeah, this is a ranching community and they are pretty much set in their ways. Set in their ways politically too.

PL: What are your favorite foods to eat?

MM: I love fresh corn on the cob. You don't get the kind of corn that I like here. My mouth could water for a spinach soufflé. When you see focaccia bread in the supermarket you buy it and freeze it because you might never see it again. We got a Subway that has become very popular.