

Historical Hi-lites

Published by the Leisure World Historical Society of Laguna Hills, California

Fall 1983

Volume 1 Number 1

FROM THE PRESIDENT

We hope you like this new format of our communications medium to members of the society. If you do, we will continue to mail this type of "Leisure World History" to you from time to time. It is planned to be a combination news of the society plus articles of historical interest. This issue included the society's Roster of Members and a recognition section for those organizations and persons that have made cash contributions in support of our activities. The board and its publication committee will appreciate your comments and suggestions.

Another recent decision of the society's board provided for an increase in the number of membership meetings. Six are already "in the mill" and are listed elsewhere in this bulletin. You will enjoy the opportunities to meet each other and to pursue your common interest in things historical — both inside and outside — the walls of Leisure World.

We have some most immediate needs for man/woman power to help implement our new plans. The program committee needs help with subjects, arrangements, and with mailing. Please express your willingness to be called on for such services and also for afternoon reception at the society office.

Merwin H. "Jim" Waterman

SOCIETY FINANCIAL REPORT

For the first eight months of 1983 the Historical Society has received income from these sources:

Annual and life memberships	\$ 4,440
Sale of historical journals	1,848
Contributions from banks, commercial establishments, clubs and individuals	2,755
Bank interest and miscellaneous	1,606
Total income to date	\$10,649
Expenses for the period	4,089
Net income to date	\$ 6,560

While expenses will probably exceed income for the remaining months of the year, we will certainly close the year with an increase in our reserve funds. These will enable us to expand our activities and our archives in future years.

Robert Dozier, Treasurer

MEMBERSHIP PROGRAMS FOR 1983-1984

The Historical Society has diversified its programs. In addition to the two general meetings and the Community Service program, tours of historical significance are being arranged. A special event will be the "Getting to Know You" dinner dance on January 31, 1984. Members and their guests are urged to join us for this occasion.

Historical Society general meetings and special event dates for 1983-1984:

Wednesday

Oct. 26, 1983 — General Meeting
Clubhouse 3, Dining Room 2
9:30 a.m.

Tuesday

Nov. 15, 1983 — Tour - Heritage Hills
11 a.m. after Orientation
Clubhouse 3, Dining Room 2
9:30 a.m.

Tuesday

Jan. 31, 1984 — Dinner Dance
Clubhouse 1, Lounge
6 p.m.

Tuesday

Feb. 21, 1984 — Community Service Meeting
Clubhouse 3, Auditorium
2 p.m.

Thursday

Mar. 22, 1984 — General Meeting
Clubhouse 3, Dining Room 3
9:30 a.m.

Wednesday

Oct. 24, 1984 — General Meeting
Clubhouse 3, Dining Room 2
9:30 a.m.

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

of the

LEISURE WORLD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Merwin H. (Jim) Waterman President
Frank LaClave 1st Vice President
Richard Hauptfleisch 2nd Vice President
Mary Drane Secretary
Robert Dozier Treasurer
Evan Baker Asst. Secretary
Vernon McGuire Asst. Treasurer

Carroll Drebert
Irma Franklin
Isabella Leland
Robert L. Price

Marian L. Fox
Cliff Johnson
Rex Perkins
Tracy E. Stevey

SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the society has now totalled 438 persons including 44 life members. The membership year is from January through December, but for members' convenience a \$10 renewal check or cash is acceptable at this time. Urge a friend to join at a society meeting and share in the change to win the Caribbean cruise that Paquet Cruises has again generously offered. Several other prizes will also be awarded at the meeting. Lucky numbers will be drawn at the general meeting on March 22, 1984. There is no limit on membership and everyone in the Saddleback area is eligible to join.

We are grateful for your support in the past and sincerely hope that the numerous interesting programs planned for the 1983-84 season will be both stimulating and rewarding.

Membership Committee

ECHOES OF YESTERDAY

From the Leisure World Historical Society archives on community activities and developments in 1968.

Breakdown of monthly carrying charge for residents for the year 1968:

Administration, \$6.02; Education and Recreation, \$6.95; Painting reserve, \$3; Utilities, \$5.34; Maintenance \$22.19; Bus Transportation, \$1.31; Security, \$3.17; Medical Building Leasing Fund, \$3; Medical Services, \$2.15. Total: \$53.13.

Rossmoor Corporation spokesmen said plans for a Beverly Manor Convalescent facility in Leisure World Laguna Hills are progressing rapidly. (*Leisure World News, May 2, 1968*)

One of the questions concerning our new condominium project which seems to be of prime importance to our Leisure World residents is: "What's the difference between condominiums and our co-operative mutuals?"

The greatest difference is in individual ownership. The condominium buyer receives a grant deed and a title insurance policy to his manor as defined and bound by interior walls. Leisure World co-op residents are shareholders in a mutual corporation. (*Leisure World News, June 13, 1968*)

Members, friends and dignitaries will witness a milestone in the 77-year-old history of St. George's Episcopal Church when groundbreaking ceremonies get underway Sunday, August 4 for a new sanctuary. (*Leisure World News, August 1, 1968*)

The Laguna Hills Christian Science Church has moved from the drawing stages to the construction phase and work is underway on the \$400,000 structure on Moulton Parkway south of El Toro Road. (*Leisure World News, August 1, 1968*)

A 60-day escrow closed last week making the Golden Rain Foundation of Laguna Hills legal owner of the Leisure World Medical Center, land adjacent to the medical center, and land designated for Clubhouse 3. (*Leisure World News, September 19, 1968*)

LAGUNA HILLS ACADEMIANS

One of the successful and interesting societies to emerge from within Leisure World in recent years is the Laguna Hills Academians. As the name implies, it is a society of retired persons who had been associated with various colleges and universities as faculty members, administrators and certain other categories of employed personnel. These persons represent institutions of higher learning from across the United States and various foreign countries.

It all began when a small group of colleagues met with Dr. Tracy E. Stevey in early 1977 and determined to undertake a formal organization. A committee of 15 was organized and drawn up included Drs. Leon Bosch, Lee DuBridge, William G. Young, Glen Giddings, Elmer Wagner, Ray Perry, G. Herbert Smith, and Ronald Brown.

On May 4, 1977 a letter was sent to Golden Rain Foundation requesting permission to organize an Academician Club. Having met all requirements, including by-laws, etc. A preliminary meeting was held on June 7, 1977 to create a formal organization, and on August 25 permission to establish the club was granted.

The Academians were organized and running with 66 members at its first regular meeting in August 1977. Now over 200 members meet monthly. A Social hour precedes the formal meeting followed by the presentation of speakers and/or panels covering nearly every phase of higher learning, world politics, athletics, science and technology, medicine and health, contemporary problems affecting our nation as well as such topics as "The Baake Decision" and "The Laser Revolution."

The group, of which Dr. Norman W. Freestone is president, has more than lived up to one of its by-laws — namely, that "it bring together those persons having common interests and backgrounds and provide programs and meetings designed to stimulate consideration of current trends in various fields of knowledge and the broad area of educational activities."

The society owes much to a certain person who has devoted both time and energy to marking out new paths and building enthusiastic support: Dr. Malcolm Heslip.

Dr. Tracy E. Stevey



(Future issues of this publication will include background information about other Leisure World civic, professional and social clubs and societies).

THE TREES OF LEISURE WORLD

by Angela Kitzinger

IN THE BEGINNING there were bare rolling hills, golden during most of the year and emerald after the rains of spring. Farmers grew beans and barley on these hills and ranchers turned their cattle and sheep loose to graze upon their slopes.

Since this scene of almost 25 years ago, what changes have been wrought! Today these hills are home not only to more than 20,000 people, but also to more than 50,000 trees. And just as these people have migrated here to these "Laguna Hills" from many corners of the earth, so too have these trees found their way here from every continent, indeed, from almost every country, here to form a veritable paradise equalled by few areas on earth.

How many of us, traveling to far places, have marveled at the exotic flora and fauna along the way? In Australia, for instance, we look forward to seeing the kangaroo and the koala bear; in New Zealand, the kiwi bird. But how many of us realize that right here in Leisure World Australia is at our doorstep and New Zealand not far away — not in the form of kangaroos, koalas, and kiwis, to be sure, but in the form of many of our spectacular trees. Australia is represented here by over thirty species, including not only a dozen kinds of eucalyptus, but various flowering trees such as the bottlebrush with its brilliant red springtime blossoms and the Queensland Lacebark with its sturdy trunk and its spectacular-off-season blooms. New Zealand's most noteworthy contribution is the New Zealand Christmas tree which in this latitude blossoms in June or July.

Many Chinese Trees

How many Leisure Worlders have extolled the graceful landscape of China as seen first-hand on China tours or depicted in China landscape paintings? Look homeward, Leisure Worlders! A dozen species of Chinese trees are represented in your own community. Most common is the crape myrtle that colors our landscape in August with delicate pinks and reds and purples. Also common are various trees that droop with the delicacy of a Chinese print, notably the Chinese elm and the weeping willow. Uncommon in Leisure World, but one of our most valuable and interesting trees is the Maidenhair or Gingko tree, recognized by its fan-shaped leaves. When you look at this tree, you are looking not only far away in distance, but far back in time, for the Gingko tree is a living fossil whose form has not changed in millions of years. It is the only remaining species of a large order of trees that existed when dinosaurs roamed the earth. In the Orient it is planted near temples and revered as a sacred tree. Other interesting Chinese trees in Leisure World are the Twisted Hankow willow, the Windmill palm, and the Weeping Chinese Banyan tree.

The rest of Asia and Africa contribute a dozen trees, notably the golden rain tree, a native of Korea; the coral tree, a native of South Africa; and the orchid tree, a native of India. All told, approximately two-thirds of the species that inhabit Leisure World are immigrants from the eastern hemisphere that have adapted themselves to the Southern California climate. Surely these exotic trees lend interest to the community for those whose eyes are open to their presence.

But we are not entirely surrounded by trees from the Far East. Approximately one-third of the species in Leisure World have their origin in the western hemisphere. Notable from Brazil are the Brazilian Pepper that grows prolifically in this climate; the jacaranda or fern tree that is known for its delicate lavender flowers in the spring; and the amazing floss silk tree that has spikes on its sturdy light green trunk and phenomenal off-season pink flowers at its crown. Of special interest to Leisure Worlders, of course, are our fine specimens of two California trees: the 400 year old California sycamore in Aliso Park and the rapidly-growing California redwood in front of Clubhouse 1.

135 Species of Trees

In all, Leisure World, with its 1,600 acres of landscaping, gives home to over 135 species of trees, approximately the same number for which the 800 square miles of the Great Smokies are celebrated and spectacularly more than 85 species said to exist in all of western Europe! The tree lover of Leisure World has an arboretum at his doorstep. But, unlike the Great Smokies and western Europe, the native habitat of Leisure World is devoid of rain during most of the year. Our tree population is thus heavily dependent upon our irrigation system which is the largest electronically-controlled sprinkler system in the world. Irrigation spells the difference between our Leisure World arboretum and those bar rolling hills where only beans and barley grew.

To these hills in the early 60s came the man whose task it was to visualize and develop the landscape of Leisure World. This was landscape architect Reynold W. Forsum. Before him lay the barren land; his to populate with trees and shrubs; these to become the companions of people and the homes of birds down through the decades. Obviously, this was no flatland to be laid out in squares and rectangles and planted in row after row of conventional trees. These were rolling hills that lent themselves to artistic development and it was with artistry in mind that Mr. Forsum formulated his concepts. Different areas would be treated in different ways and planted with different trees so that each area would have a distinctive identity. There would be variety in color, texture, contour, and character so that perceptive people would find interest, excitement, and beauty in their environment. Contrast would be provided, for instance, between deciduous trees and evergreens; there would be accents in the form of flowering trees and emphasis on trees of special interest. Today these concepts are still evident in the landscape and the community is indebted to Mr. Forsum for his vision.

Tree Population Not Static

Meanwhile, time has passed. Many trees have adapted themselves to their environment and have flourished. Some have succumbed to the forces of wind and rain or have been attacked by disease. Others have impinged upon various community installations or created hazards for residents and have had to be removed. The tree population is thus never static. It requires constant surveillance, maintenance, and replacement.

These tasks are performed by the 235-member corps of the Landscape Maintenance Division of Professional Community Management under the able leadership of Mr. Fred Ridge. Working directly under Mr. Ridge are eight supervisors, each of whom brings to Leisure World a unique background in some aspect of landscape gardening. Most closely concerned with the tree program is Area Supervisor Ismael Saenz who, during the 16 years of his employment at Leisure World, has risen from the ranks of the gardeners to his present position of responsibility for tree maintenance, becoming in the meantime a citizen of the United States and an active and involved member of his community.

But the Leisure World tree program does not function in isolation. There is continual and close cooperation between our Landscape Maintenance Division and outside agencies concerned with tree management. Horticultural students and farm advisors visit Leisure World to study the operation of the tree program. The division conducts various experiments in cooperation with university horticultural departments. Tree problems are referred to the University of California at Riverside or Davis. There is close contact between our community and the state and county agricultural services. Our tree program is thus a giant laboratory to which others turn to test their theories and practices in relation to trees and through which our own personnel are enabled to profit from the experience of others.

The Role of the Resident

The story of the Leisure World trees does not end here. In some ways the work of the professionals is merely the beginning, the setting of the stage upon which residents act or interact in relation to their environment. The trees

create the ambience within which each resident lives; they surround his manor, they line his streets, and they populate his community. Some residents may indeed be oblivious to the pervasive presence of trees, but every resident is dependent on the trees for the values — some recognized, some denied, some ignored — that immeasurably enhance life in Leisure World.

Take, for instance, the value of property in the community. Remove the trees — or, in some cases, even *one* tree — and a building once attractive stands forth like a barrack, bare and barn-like when stripped of the subtle grace of limbs and branches, stark and naked when devoid of the soft screen of leaves. For this reason developers hasten to surround new buildings with trees. Trees enhance the value of property as much as ten percent, as well as facilitating its rapid sale. From the standpoint of the purchaser trees provide shelter, privacy, and the identity sought by Mr. Forsum which distinguishes one residence from all others. Trees increase the oxygen content of the air and provide a screen against smog and noise; witness the effect of tree plantings along heavily traveled highways. And, finally, for those who are sensitive to their environment, trees uplift the spirit as they soar toward the sky, carrying the thoughts upward beyond the mundane level of life.

Thus the trees, silently, unostentatiously, and with grace, contribute to the quality of life in the community. But this is not a one-way street. Many residents, singly or in groups, take a special interest in the trees and make significant contributions to the community through their efforts in behalf of the trees.

(Ms. Kitzinger's history of Leisure World trees will be continued in a future issue.)



11/22/82
Called Mary Gage
O.C. Hist. Soc. - she
gave me:

President of Bre
Carl Fanning

1-529-2993

*Remove
from B. County
mailing list*

Brea Historical Society
401 S. Brea Blvd.
Brea, CA 92621