

Historical Hi-Lites

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LOSS OF DR. LELAND MOURNED IN COMMUNITY

The Leisure World Historical Society shares with all of Leisure World the tragic loss of Dr. Stanley J. Leland, and injuries to his wife, Isabella, in a car accident on Jan. 17th. As president of the Historical Society during the current year, Isabella has provided outstanding leadership. She was greatly missed during the period of recovery from her injuries, and the society is looking forward to her speedy recovery and return to active participation in her many interests.

The Board of Directors, on behalf of the membership of the Historical Society, extends its sincere and heartfelt sympathy to Isabella in her sorrowful loss.

ARCHIVES ACTIVITY

The Archives Committee has been busy with a number of activities since our last report. We put together exhibits concerning the 20th anniversary celebration in the exhibit case in the Library and also in the exhibit case in the Administration Building.

All issues of Leisure World News from Volume 1, number 1, 1965, to the current issue have been placed in acid-free boxes in our storage area. We are also in the process of cataloging our photograph collection and placing the photos in acid-free envelopes in our office.

Many gifts have been received during the past few months including a miscellaneous collection of clippings from relatives of Helen Miller, an early resident; various photos of manors, and the golf course from Mr. and Mrs. Earl McElroy and Mr. and Mrs. John Pas.

Claire Still, Archives Committee Chairman

TREASURER'S REPORT

Leisure World Historical Society had 397 members in 1984. Income totaled \$10,388, and came principally from membership dues, contributions from business establishments, and interest earned on savings accounts.

Expenses included several projects. Printing, and mailing of our quarterly newsletter "Historical Hi-Lites" cost \$947. Commemorative Plates, designed by George Rowley for the 20th anniversary of Leisure World, were presented to all former Leisure-Worlders-of-the-Month who participated in the recognition meeting in Clubhouse 6 in September at a cost of \$1,004.

Supplies and rental for classifying and storage of our growing Archives, and office rental, payroll and supplies cost \$6,448. Miscellaneous expenses, including insurance and costs in connection with our several membership meetings during the year, brought our total expenses to \$10,396. Our total cash reserves of \$23,700 are held in interest-bearing savings accounts.

Robert Dozier, Treasurer

REFLECTIONS

by Mary Drane

The Leisure World Historical Society continues into its fourth year to provide short articles weekly to the Leisure World News on local events that occurred fifteen years ago. A few of those which were published recently in the Leisure World News are reproduced here. HOW MANY DO YOU REMEMBER?

News of the start of construction of Lion Country Safari, a 500-acre African animal preserve just north of Laguna Hills was announced.

Leisure World News, Oct. 23, 1969

A group of 60 interested Leisure World residents met Tuesday, Nov. 4 to kick-off a \$21,000 fund raising campaign to assist YMCA Youth Programs in the Saddleback Valley area.

Leisure World News, Nov. 6, 1969

Doors were opened to the public for the first time Monday morning, Dec. 22, at Belmont Savings & Loan Association, Valencia and El Toro roads. (Ed. Now Great Western).

Leisure World News, Dec. 25, 1969

The Fifth Anniversary of Leisure World Laguna Hills will be commemorated at a formal dance at 8:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 11, in the Main Lounge, Clubhouse 2.

- Leisure World News, Oct. 9, 1969

THE EVOLUTION OF GOLDEN RAIN FOUNDATION of Laguna Hills, California

The first of two articles

by Robert L. Price, former Leisure World Administrator
and Dr. Tracy E. Strevey, former Golden Rain President

The year of 1964 was a year of beginning for the now established private community known as Leisure World at Laguna Hills. Being planned, developed and built by Ross Cortese through his Rossmoor Corporation, its ultimate success was to be in the structure and personnel of its many corporate organizations. One of these was to be the Golden Rain Foundation of Laguna Hills. Its conception and evolution, even unto today, is a story of patience, perseverance and determination on the part of a sizable number of persons, starting with those in Rossmoor Corporation itself, through the sponsoring and management company and ultimately to the owners of homes within Leisure World who were planned and destined to rule their own affairs.

The story starts with the nature of the communities themselves, both at Seal Beach and Laguna Hills, built under the legal and financial provisions of Section 213 of the then National Housing Act. This act provided for the construction of residential communities for senior citizens under a cooperative concept, wherein an established non-profit corporation could create and sponsor such a community. It would be owned totally by its members, each of whom would have bought into the plan to provide themselves housing, agreeing to govern themselves cooperatively through an elected board, representing the corporation with broad powers to act on all matters of common concern. The Leisure World concept was to build a large community, using a series of these type of corporations as the building blocks in a total community of many thousands of homes.

The concept included the provision of a broad array of recreation and support services, common to all, but far too large for any such mutual (housing) corporation to provide itself.

These were to include such facilities as clubhouse, streets, parks and such services as security and transportation. Provision of such a package of services on a large scale, to serve the members of many, mutual corporations, required the formation of another corporation. At Seal Beach, it was called the Golden Rain Foundation. At Laguna Hills, it was titled the Golden Rain Foundation of Laguna Hills. Though with similar names, each was established as an autonomous corporate unit in its own right.

As a sideline to this formal development, people have asked why the name Golden Rain. The answer seems to have come from the sheer beauty of the name itself. This was amplified also by knowledge of the Golden Rain Tree, with its mythical lore. Word also came that there are trees in Florida or Georgia called Golden Rain trees, very beautiful in their native habitat. It is reported that several of these

trees were actually transplanted to Seal Beach by Mr. Cortese, in the very beginning (1962), but that they were not able to survive in the chilliness of California winters.

The name proved to have its own sales value, giving potential buyers a feeling of beauty and harmony, both parts of the Leisure World design plan. Combined with such sales adages as "A New Way of Life" and "There are no strangers in Leisure World, only many friends whom you have not yet met." The glamour of the name offset the dullness of the names of the mutuals, each of which was identified as Laguna Hills mutual No. One, and Two, etc. Coincidentally, each mutual did have a name, but they were never used beyond the sales period. For example, the name of Number One was actually Laguna Hills, whence came the name of the whole area, identified as a postal area.

Further complicating the development pattern was the requirement of FHA that the communities had to be managed by an independent management company, the likes of which hardly existed in those beginning years of 1962-64. The community corporations would govern themselves, but they were required to employ a FHA approved company to manage the individual affairs of each of them, and thereby the total community. At Seal Beach, rather than making this the responsibility of each and all of the mutuals, the legal structure was so set up that coordination agreements were entered into by each mutual with the Golden Rain Foundation (Seal Beach), the board of which would thereupon contract with the management company. This plan was simplistic, but caused a total distortion of Golden Rain's role of serving the mutuals to one of having the appearance of being the governing body of the community. After the harrowing experience of this plan, it was not used in setting up Leisure World at Laguna Hills. However, its recollection might well be maintained even to the present, to combat the natural tendency to construe Golden Rain to be more than it is, even at Laguna Hills.

The name of the first such sponsoring and management corporation was the National Golden Rain Foundation. It contracted with Seal Beach's Golden Rain and was actually the sponsor of mutual Number One at Laguna Hills. Misunderstanding and confusion caused it to change its name to the Leisure World Foundation, which thereupon continued to manage at Laguna Hills, and sponsor all new mutuals at both communities.

The subtle thread that was being woven was that leadership of the community and its implication of ego and power. This at a time when everyone was new to each other and no civic structure supportive of leadership had evolved. Golden Rain at Seal Beach, under a strong mind-

ed president, endeavored to take away from the mutual boards their individual governing roles, placing them in a so-called second class position. More could be said on this than the scope of this article can provide.

Correcting this mistake at Laguna Hills, the managing company Leisure World Foundation (LWF) entered into individual contracts with each and every new mutual. Concurrently, Golden Rain (GRF) did the same. These contracts were signed necessarily even before residents bought and moved in. Officers of both contractees were employees of LWF. The first families moved in in September, 1964. The first resident board of Mutual No. One was formed in 1965 and the first Golden Rain board was formed in 1966. The agreement between the mutuals and GRF was and is called the Trust Agreement.

This agreement defined the responsibility and authority roles of both GRF and each mutual. All responsibility for the properties within the boundaries of the Mutuals and any local unique services belonged to the Mutuals. Community oriented properties and services, outside the Mutuals or commonly shared by agreement among all Mutuals belonged to GRF. An example of the latter is Security. Most all of the properties, such as clubhouses, were built from funds generated by the mutual members and were held in trust by GRF for the mutuals. This, contrary to the plan and practice that developed at Seal Beach, GRF at Laguna Hills was set up to serve the mutuals, not to dominate or govern them. The mutual corporations, by virtue of their ownership in the Cooperatives and by their governing responsibilities in the condominiums, "own the community". The major responsibility, is clearly that of the mutual boards. This major change at Laguna Hills totally avoided any false sense of importance or responsibility developing in GRF.

At this point, the story would not be complete without spelling out the responsibility that fell upon the managing company which holds separate contracts with each and every corporation, thereby being the only corporation with a legal responsibility for the total community. This fact still exists, but is treated lightly, so as to not cause any misunderstanding, inasmuch as such responsibility was and is restricted to management, not governing or policy making. However, in the beginning, before the election of residents on their respective boards, both governing and managing had to be done by management, primarily through the office of the Administrator who simultaneously served as President of each new mutual, a member and President of GRF and executive officer for LWF. This whole pattern had to be related to each newly elected board, as the process of transition in policy making was gradually shifted to duly elected resident directors.

The incorporating and early directors of GRFLH were employees of LWF. It was mandatory on management to convene a resident board as early as feasible and possible. Thus, in January, 1966, the first resident board was convened and all the members of the previous board resigned. The elective structure of the board, at that time, was that each mutual board would appoint a member on the board. At that point in time, there were only four resident

mutual boards, mutuals One, Two, Three and Four. In addition, another dozen corporations had been formed, each in its individual stage of being sold or moving in. The Administrator served as President of each one. These Boards were entitled to representation on the new board.

The evolution of this first board, thereupon, was the setting of a nine-person board, five of whom would be residents. The fifth resident was informally chosen and thereupon duly appointed to the board by the Administrator in behalf of mutual No. Fifteen. GRF by-laws then mandated that the Administrator must be a member of the board. The other three directors were Leisure World Foundation employees, appointed to the board by the Administrator acting as president of each new mutual. At the first meeting of the board the officers of the board were elected.

For the record, the directors and officers of this board were:

Robert L. Price - Administrator, President
 Sylvester Hall, resident - (Mutual Four) Vice President
 Elsie Parker, resident - (Mutual Three) Secretary
 Bernard Ingram, resident - (Mutual One)
 Harry Manor, resident - (Mutual Two)
 Clair Ditto, resident - (Mutual Three)
 Douglas Krauter, LWF staff
 John Bramhall, LWF staff
 Donald Pelton, LWF staff

Each new resident mutual board routinely appointed a member on GRF board. It was early apparent that if this pattern were to continue, anticipating at least sixty mutuals to be built, such would be the size of the GRF board. In addition, it was early foreseen that a plan for consolidation of mutuals was necessary and inevitable. Accordingly, a study was early implemented to make appropriate changes in the GRF by-laws. The result was the pattern of a fifteen-person board elected proportionally by all mutual directors which plan is still in existence.

In May, 1971, Dr. Tracy E. Strey became the first elected president of the Golden Rain Foundation. The concluding segment of this article is in preparation by Dr. Strey, and will be published in the next issue of Hi-Lites.

HISTORICAL HERITAGE

by Evan Baker

Prior to the eighteenth century the facial features and physical make-up of a person could only be shown through the medium of painting. Accuracy of detail depended wholly upon the skill of the artist. Then photography came along; not as the invention of a single person, but as a result of the work of skilled scientists to make use of the effects of light upon a sensitized surface. From crude black and whites through the beauty of sepia tones, advancement continued. Then came color photography. True skin and clothing colors made the photos more lively and interesting.

At last, and within recent years, came video tape technology. This medium permits the showing of exact movements, voice and colors upon a television screen. The spoken word, along with characteristic gestures, brings to life the words of the one who is speaking. Posterity no longer needs to guess as to the appearance and sound of the subject. It is there before one in living color and accurate sound.

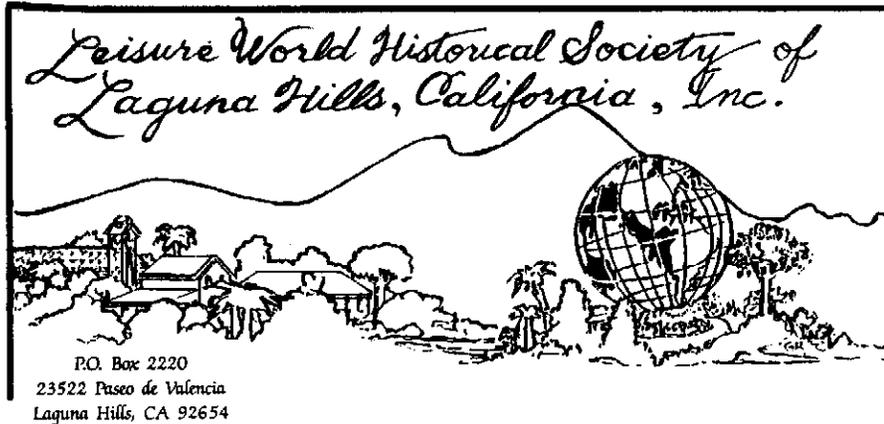
The Leisure World Historical Society has made use of these modern developments. In its "Oral History Program" it has made video tape recordings of such lectures as Dr. Tracy E. Strevey's "Meaning of History." Robert L. Price, retired Leisure World administrator, has provided complete recordings of the early-day problems and successes of the development of our unusual community. And recorded on

video tapes are the words of the Society's late president, Merwin H. "Jim" Waterman, as he tells of the purposes, facilities and aims of the Society. These priceless records will be an important part of the archives collection administered by Claire Still, former librarian at Lane Medical Library, Stanford University.

In addition to the video tapes, thirty-five audio tape interviews have been recorded. These deal with important personages in Leisure World. Some are of the interviews held by Carma Lee Brunner, while others, recorded by Robert L. Price, Evan Baker and Cliff Johnson, were made specifically for the Leisure World Historical records.

All tapes, both video and audio, are available in the Room 25 Office of the Administration Building. The audio tape cassettes can be played back on any tape recorder, while the video tapes are restricted to showings on one-half-inch equipment in two different rooms in the Administration Building. The full-size tapes can only be run on Channel 6, or similar equipment. Rob Merritt, news director for Channel 6, can advise upon the use of the one-half inch tapes.

There is a strict "sign-out" procedure for those wanting to use Historical Society materials. This is to assure their return, because in some cases only one recording, photo or other item is available for the archives.



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