



LEISURE WORLD NEWS

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Globetrotting director finds home in LW

Historical Society names Curtis Leisure Worlder for March



Harry Curtis GRF director, is Leisure World of the Month for March.

David E. Cabellero/The News

By Cheryl Walker
The News

For close to 40 years, Harry Curtis traveled the globe helping to bring the news of the world into American homes.

Now, and for the past six years, this Golden Rain Board member searches for the facts covering a different but no less diverse beat in Leisure World.

The Historical Society has decided to recognize his active participation in community activities and the long hours spent on boards and committees researching and studying community problems to find appropriate and economic solutions, by naming Curtis March Leisure Worlder

of the Month, a decision hailed by those familiar with his dedication and expertise.

Former Third Mutual President Roger Noble says "Harry really deserves the honor - he was my mentor when I got on the board and I tried to follow in his footsteps but I could never match what he does or know as many people as he knows."

Golden Rain Director Cynthia Chyba adds that she couldn't imagine doing her job as vice chairman of the Golden Rain community activities committee without Curtis' "able assistance."

Says Chyba, "He is totally reliable, always gets the job done, anticipates problems before they occur and has

solutions ready on the spot."

Former Garden Villa Association President Harry Bloom and his wife Alice add too that for them the Society's recognition of their colleague is "well deserved - since he's done a lot for Leisure World."

"He's a very good worker, like a bulldog: he's quiet,

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Ceremony facts

Who: Harry Curtis
What: Leisure World of the month for March
When: 10 a.m., Wednesday, March 3
Where: Clubhouse 6
Sponsor: Leisure World Historical Society

CURTIS

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tenacious, efficient, gets the facts and does the job."

Recreation Director Debby Lamb says further that Curtis has done a yeoman's job on the active facilities, computer and golf advisory groups.

And Joe Samet, founder of Leisure World's earthquake and disaster preparedness task force adds that Curtis's efforts in support of his group were a case in point. "Harry put in an awful lot of time for disaster preparedness in Gates 7, 8, 9 and 10."

Background: Born in Hamburg, Germany, Curtis and his family left their native land in 1937 and came to New York City.

He became interested in a career in broadcasting through a family friend, who was also a field engineer for WOR radio.

Curtis attended Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, where he earned his bachelor of science degree, served in the United States Navy during World War II, then did post-graduate studies.

After VJ day he started working at radio stations in upstate New York then headed for the Big Apple where he got an entry level job at ABC in Rockefeller Center.

The network became his home for the next 37 years. Until he retired in 1985, his job put him in the front line of the major historical events of those decades.

Curtis was in charge of technical personnel and facilities in New York and throughout the world covering events such as the Olympics; political debates, conventions, elections and inaugurations; sports events of all sorts (like the Triple Crown races); trips to foreign lands with Presidents Jimmy Carter and Lyndon Johnson; and space launches (from Alan Shepard through the moon Landing).

The event which finally made him decide to call it a day was Princess Diana's wed-

ding when he found himself on a narrow median strip in the middle of traffic in Trafalgar Square checking equipment housed in a flimsy tent and thought there has to be something better.

That something proved to be Leisure World where he and his wife were snowbirds for three winters before moving here permanently in 1989.

He credits former Third Board Director Isabel Tashman for urging him to get involved with Leisure World governance.

He was elected to the Third Board in 1993 (eventually becoming the mutual's presidency) and the Golden Rain Board in 1998. His activities since becoming a director are legion including membership on numerous committees and study groups, the Garden Villa Association, disaster task force, and the New York, Nifty 50/60s, Tennis and Men's Golf Clubs.

In only one year of the last six did he not hold a board seat - but Curtis recalls that although he was initially happy to clear his closet of the stacks of papers a director accumulates and enjoy freelance committee work, he missed the fray. So, last year, he once again threw his hat in the ring and succeeded in gaining a seat on the Foundation Board.

"My kids were worried when I retired but I'm convinced that if I didn't retire there was such tension in the job I had that I'd be dead.

"I wanted to relax but I also wanted to be an active retiree and there is so much to do here, and I felt I wanted to give something back to the community," explains Curtis.

He says his greatest efforts right now are focused on boosting cityhood.

His "hanging" ceremony on March 3, the day after the cityhood election, could see smiles or frowns.

Curtis's "hanging" (when his portrait is formally displayed at Clubhouse 3), starts at 10 a.m.