

Great World

By Ross W. Cortese
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Ross Cortese's guest columnist today is former Leisure Worlder of the Month, Dr. Glenn Giddings. Dr. Giddings was a member of the MIT Radiation Laboratory staff that perfected radar during World War II and an executive with General Electric in addition to an illustrious career as a professor of physics.

What is Leisure World to me? That is a very searching question for each of the 20,000 of us who live here. And there are many many answers. I think a good one is: Leisure World to me is what I make it. But wait a moment, I can't make Leisure World; it is already here!

Yes, in a physical sense it is, but that is just the beginning. There are many ways to go on from there. I can retreat into my own shell and vegetate, either contentedly or sadly. Some do. But I don't think I can make a meaningful life all by myself. I need others, for I have found that a group whose members join together in pursuing common interests accomplish much more than could be done by its members working individually.

Where can I find such a group? It is likely that we have it among the nearly 200 clubs and organizations which are active in Leisure World. The spectrum of interests is as broad as a rainbow. If I wish, I can participate in sports and games, for example golf, shuffleboard, bocce, bowling, and billiards, to name some.

And our various clubs, valuable as they are, do not provide all of the group activities in which I can participate. Let me speak of just one community-wide program that serves thousands of people in Leisure world: the Emeritus Institute of Saddleback College.

What are the classes about? Well, what am I interested in: improving my body; improving my skills; improving my mind? There are many classes in physical conditioning. And as for skills, classes run the gamut from learning to work with needles and brushes to potter's wheels, machines for cutting rocks, photographic equipment, and more. And with a focus on the mind: languages and literature, art appreciation and music and creative writing, to mention a few.

But how can I do all that at my age? Of course I can't, any more than I can eat a whole smorgasbord. But I can select what I want, and try to keep my body healthy and my mind active and growing. As one of our Leisure World neighbors aptly put it: "No one grows old; one becomes old by not growing."

What is Leisure World to me? It is what I make it!