



LEISURE WORLD NEWS

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Kelly Barrett, the latest Leisure Worlder of the month, has been active at the Equestrian Center and as a supervisor in the sewing room.

News photo by Rod Veal

She keeps them in stitches

Barrett gets Society's nod for September

By Cheryl Walker
The News

Kelly Barrett says she was totally surprised when she got a call from the Historical Society asking her to accept Leisure Worlder of the Month honors for September.

"I don't deserve this!" was her initial reaction. But a friend told her that she needed to understand that people thought she was someone special, more explicitly: that she was "well loved."

Barrett said that comforting

thought brought her to accept the honor -- and her friends and co-workers are very happy she did.

Earl Donaldson, Saddle Club president in 1987, says she was his first vice president and a dynamo at arranging things, whether it was trips, events or whatever was asked. "She never said no and was the most competent person I've ever known, I can't say enough good about her."

Ida Mae Monroe, sewing room supervisor, credits Barrett with lobbying to keep the room open seven days a week for inveterate sewers like herself who love the craft for its practical as well as its ther-

apeutic value. "She was relentless; she always finds ways to make things happen."

Another supervisor, Larry

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Ceremony facts

Who: Kelly Barrett

What: Leisure Worlder of the Month for September

Where: Clubhouse 6

When: 10 a.m., Wednesday, Sept. 1

Sponsor: Leisure World Historical Society with funding by Renaissance at the Regency and at the Wellington.

STITCHES

FROM 1

Wisgerhof calls Barrett a "dear friend to all of us. She takes care of every problem and is really fair with everyone."

Both supervisors credit Barrett with coming up with the idea of turning contributions to the group, of materials, thread, fabrics, and so forth, into fundraisers allowing the sewing group to quarterly give between \$100 and \$200 each to local charities like the Leisure World Foundation, Human Options and Saddleback Community Outreach.

Says Wisgerhof: "She's the anchor of our whole bunch."

Background: Barrett, a native of Monterey, is no stranger to the kind of hardship that either crushes the spirit or builds character. She's definitely of the latter bent.

Having lost both parents by the time she was a junior in high school, there was no question what she would do when she graduated in the middle of the Great Depression: go straight into the workforce, if she could find a job.

And find a job she did. And it was a real plum: a position at the Hotel Del Monte, a destination for the rich and famous from politics, sports and especially the Silver Screen with its polo fields, race track and golf course.

From her perch in the gift shop she "saw all the stars" as the mortals they truly were.

Although she enjoyed working retail, she decided to try something a bit more daring as

her next venture into the workforce: flying.

The step was a good one since she got a private pilot's license, married her instructor, Larry Sweeney, and started not just a family but a flying school.

Their married bliss was cut short however, by the untimely death of her husband when her son was getting out of high school.

She once again went into retailing, even had her own toy shop, but, after 11 years of widowhood, she went on a cruise and met the second love of her life Steve Barrett, a police photographer.

They married in 1978 and, she says, she got him, a cat, dog, three grown children and seven grandchildren.

The couple moved to Leisure World four years later and became "very involved" with all things horses. She wrote the first Equestrian Center column for the Leisure World News, joined the Saddle Club, the drill team and helped coordinate events.

She also became very involved with the lapidary workshops and events at the Sewing Room where she's been a supervisor for the past 15 years.

She credits her husband with giving her an organ and a sewing machine, which she's put to very good use over the years making clothes, gift bags, quilts and a variety of other items.

One could say the sewing room is her home away from home at Leisure World. But Barrett admits that's not strictly the case. "I'm on the go all the time."