

Former GRF president gets July LWer honor

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Last month, ABC television aired the network premier of "The Right Stuff," a movie based on the lives of America's first seven astronauts and the beginnings of the space program. A Leisure Worlder played an integral role in those early days of space exploration. As an engineer on the Mercury rocket project, Wally Bjornson met regularly with the seven astronauts, all of whom he called "good and capable

people...It was fascinating to be involved with the program."

Wally has been chosen "Leisure Worlder of the Month" by the Leisure World Historical Society, sponsored by Home Federal Savings. The ceremony will be held Wednesday, July 2, at 10 a.m., in Clubhouse 6. The public is invited.

The Wally Bjornson story begins 69 years ago in Devil's Lake, North Dakota. Upon graduating from North Dakota State University as an electrical engineer, Wally moved to Cincinnati. He joined the Crosley Radio Company as a radio engineer. Two years later, in 1941, he was called to active duty as second lieutenant in the Signal Corps. He ended his military career 20 years later, retiring as a lieutenant colonel in the Air Force. During this period he also received a master's degree from Johns Hopkins University.

On military duty, he served two and a half years in India and China and two years as a liaison to the Canadian Defense Research Board. His field of expertise was guided

missile development. Other experience included four years as chief project officer of the Falcon air-to-air missile family.

After the military, Wally began working at Rockwell International. He served in several capacities, including project supervisor, manager and director on the Apollo and space shuttle programs.

Wally and his wife of 38 years, Betty, moved to Leisure World in 1981. He has no trouble keeping busy. Following his just-completed year as president of the Golden Rain Foundation, he will soon become president of the Saddleback Kiwanis and Leisure World Travel Club 1. He will travel to the Kiwanis International Convention in Houston this summer.

Travel is natural for the Bjornsons. Throughout Wally's career, he has lived in 10 states and two foreign countries. "But my roots are finally down," Wally said. "And I can't think of a better place to settle."



Wally Bjornson

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