

Q & A with Don Davis, president of The Towers

Towers President Don Davis has been a Leisure Worlder for eight years, and has served on one committee or another almost all that time. He served on the Golden Rain Foundation Board of Directors for three years, and was treasurer for one, before being elected Towers president two years ago.

Davis and his wife, Florence, lived in San Marino, Ca., before moving to Leisure World. Davis worked for many years in finance, as a member of the New York Stock Exchange, and an advisor to numerous counties and cities. He's known in Leisure World for his marvelous ballroom dancing ability, which he used to work his way through college. The Davises have one child, and eight grandchildren.

Q: How would you describe your term as Towers president so far? Is it what you expected?

A: We think we've had a very good year. As a matter of fact, when I got on the Board as president, I had five objectives. The first was to have open meetings. The second, to put out a brochure for the Towers—a very fine brochure, which has really helped the real estate people a lot—because we were at the lowest vacancy factor in years, as much as 25 percent at one time. It's now about 5 percent.

The third goal was to establish an Information Committee for newcomers, not with the idea of keeping them out, but to let them know the amenities we do have, and also what we don't have. We want people who come in to be very happy, and know what's there for them. Years ago, when I was first here, one lady came in who thought we had full nursing service, and she wanted a bath. She hadn't been completely informed.

Fourth, we had a deficit, just like Golden Rain, and my objective was to clean that up. It'll be cleaned up after this year, by adding it to the carrying charge.

The fifth thing was we wanted to change our CC&R's. As they were written, every owner had a vote. If several family members owned one apartment together, they all had a vote, even though the children might be living back on the east coast. One no vote among the owners meant a no for the apartment, and you had to get 75 percent to change the CC&R's. We changed it to one vote per manor, so the people living there get what they want. Those are the five things I wanted, and I'm glad to say, they've all been accomplished.

Q: Do you plan to run for another term on the Towers, or on GRF?

A: Well, I've had eight years on the boards now, ever since I've been here. I'm not sure yet whether I'll run for the Towers again. I won't run for GRF, but I've been requested time and again to run for the Towers

This is the last in a series of question and answer interviews with the presidents of the four homeowner associations in Leisure World.

again. But that's up in the air, still.

Q: Before your term, Towers meetings were traditionally closed to the press and to Towers residents. Why?

A: Past Boards, years ago, would look up and say, "What are you doing here." but now, as Russ Disbro says, we have more people attending our meetings in Lortscher Hall than they have for GRF, Third, and United. Not all committee meetings are open, but those that residents should be interested in, like the Recreation Committee, are open.

Q: What's your philosophy about open meetings? When and why should a meeting be closed?

A: The only reason a Board meeting should be



closed is if you had some disciplinary action to take, or some personal matter with a resident were being discussed. We have no objections to any of our residents attending committee meetings. But our committees are pretty small. It's an open situation. It's your home, you're entitled to attend, we want your input. With 311 apartments, and about 350 residents, there are always rumors. Opening the meetings dispels a lot of rumors, because if residents have any questions, it's their chance to ask.

Q: A lot of the discussion about the 1990 budget centered around the shared concept, in which all residents pay, through their monthly carrying charges, for the cost of maintaining and operating the community's recreational facilities, versus user-pay, where residents who use the facilities pay for their upkeep. Is Leisure World moving away from the shared concept, toward user-pay?

A: I think in some cases, we almost have to, if we're going to control costs. I've always supported user-pay for certain things that are very costly, such as the pools, where you have to have a lifeguard. I don't see why they couldn't have a punch card, where you get so many swims for such and such a price, to defray the expenses. Towers residents pay the same GRF fees as the rest of the community, and on the whole, Towers residents don't use the facilities, although some play tennis or golf or use the workrooms at the clubhouses. But when you consider the types of things that are there for us, such as the good things down at Clubhouse 3, you should give credit to the community. It's a great thing.

Q: Another topic of much discussion has been owners versus lessees. Do you foresee a change in the Towers bylaws preventing lessees from using all or part of Leisure World's facilities?

A: Well, that hasn't affected us too much. We have lessees. So far, our leases are not controlled for the number of months they can lease. I think that maybe sometime we should change that, and limit the leases to maybe six months. But it really hasn't been much of a problem, as far as we're concerned.

Q: There's also been quite a bit of discussion about the lack of "teeth" behind Leisure World's traffic, parking and leash rules. Do you anticipate forming a committee or using an already existing one as a "court" to enforce the homeowners' association rules?

A: Pets are not allowed at the Towers. I think traffic rules, on the streets, certainly should be enforced. We have no parking problem, really. I don't see a need for a committee, as far as the Towers is concerned.

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Q: Does Leisure World, in your opinion, have a realistic chance of keeping the Rossmoor Business Park from being built? Is the recent offer by the Rossmoor Liquidating Trust to locate a senior center on the site going to have an impact on Leisure World's support?

A: I don't know why the senior center would be there. I think the business center would be a big mistake, right in the middle of a residential area. If you study the types of things they could do if they get the zone change, it would change the complexion of the area. I don't want to guess on the politics of getting it stopped. I know everything is being done, and our

people will unanimously oppose the business park. But I never try to outguess what the politicians will do.

Q: Cityhood. Do you think incorporation will rear its head again?

A: Well, that's something I happen to know a lot about, mainly because of my background. As a businessman, I was very much involved in the financial feasibility of the formation of cities. I think down the road, as Aliso Viejo is formed, and maybe El Toro will become a city, I think that even if it costs a little more, Leisure World may decide to incorporate itself, although we have no industrial base, and be willing to pay the extra charges. I don't see Leisure World incorporating with another community. If it incorporates, it'll be on its own.

Q: Leisure World just celebrated its 25th Anniversary. Will there be a Leisure World in another 25 years? How do you envision it?

A: Sure, I think there'll be a Leisure World. It won't be quite like it is today. I think we'll see transportation greatly improved around the community, because this area is growing, whether we like it or not. With the change in Towers CC&R's, the residents could vote to start a medical facility there. But I don't know if it's practical, since the ones who want to do it, also want to confine it to the Towers, and it would be very expensive. I think as time goes on, unless they want to drive a lot of people on a fixed income out of Leisure World, there may be some type of subsidy. I think a community that has compassion for its residents might do that.