Leisure Worlder

OF THE MONTH

DR. LEE A. DU BRIDGE

Perhaps the best way to introduce the Leisure Worlder for the month of December is to quote from a cover story in ***TIME*** magazine's May 16, 1955 issue:

> "At 7:30 one morning two men who had just met for the first time sat eating breakfast in Pasadena's Huntington Sheraton Hotel. One of them was a U.S. Senator who had come to town to see the Jet Propulsion Laboratory at the California Institute of Technology. The Senator seemed to have only the foggiest notion of who the other man was. 'What department are you in at Caltech?' asked the Senator. Replied his companion, 'Physics.'"

Modesty always has been one of the charming hallmarks of the illustrious career of Dr. Lee Alvin DuBridge. At the breakfast that morning he didn't feel the necessity to volunteer the information that he was actually the president of Caltech; that, at the time, he also headed one of the nation's most powerful advisory boards and that he had been the wartime director of the fabulous Radiation Laboratory at Massachusetts Institute of Technology that developed microwave radar and other scientific breakthroughs in World War II that helped bring the enemy to his knees.

Dr. DuBridge's more than a half century in the field of science terminated in 1970 after the conclusion of a special tour of duty as scientific advisor to President Richard M. Nixon. That was the year the DuBridges moved into Leisure World into a Garden Villa overlooking the golf course, after convincing himself that they were well constructed. In 1974, Dr. Lawrence Williams, the DuBridge's family physician in Pasadena induced the famed physicist and his wife, Arrola, to move to 5309 Cantante, their present home, near the Williams. "On a clear day we can see Mount Baldy and there are cattle in the field back of the house."

The son of a YMCA physical education instructor, Dr. DuBridge was born in Terre Haute, Indiana and earned his bachelor's degree at Cornell College, Mount Vernon, Iowa, where he first met his wife, Arrola.

Dr. DuBridge was Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science at University of Rochester when, in 1940, he received a secret and mysterious summons to take over a special job at MIT. There, as Director of the Radiation Laboratory, his team of 4000 scientists accomplished many things, the breakthrough on radar for airplanes, microwave early warning radar; ground control approach for landing aircraft, and many others. Of those war years H. Rowan Gaither, Jr., then president of the Ford Foundation, said this: "He exercised not authority, but leadership, over his group of scientists and the military as well."

"We were very excited about our work," says Dr. DuBridge, "because of what radar meant in war at that time. Now its value in peace is seen on every side, in the planes you ride, at the airports and ships at sea, everywhere . . . even in communication satellites.

"We developed more than a hundred different kinds of radar sets; $2 billion dollars worth of equipment was ordered by the military services."

The 77-year old physicist recalls with equal fervor his quarter of a century as president of Caltech. The 200-inch mirror for Palomar was at Caltech waiting for war to end so it could be polished and installed. It was his first major project in 1948, and it still excites him. "It is responsible for most of our knowledge of the Cosmos. The Russians built a larger one, but I've read little to indicate it has accomplished as much as our scientists at Palomar."

The establishment of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in 1938 that made possible the launch of Explorer I in 1958 and led to the moon landings and now the Jupiter probes are as exciting to him as they are to the rest of us. "Imagine making adjustments of malfunctions of flying laboratories millions of miles away, by earth command!

Dr. DuBridge's first job, in 1946 when he took over as Caltech's second president, was to move the university out of its war-oriented program of secret military projects and return the school to its normal purpose. How carefully he selected his faculty is revealed in the fact that several won Nobel Prizes.

The walls of Dr. DuBridge's study are covered with plaques, citations, and pictures depicting the course of his illustrious years and his numberless accomplishments. It was his wife who insisted that they be thus displayed.

A daughter, Barbara MacLeod, her history and art teaching husband, David, and three children, live in Canoga Park. Son, Richard Alvin, is with the Santa Clara facility of Memorex, and lives in Saratoga. He and his wife have a son in university and a daughter in high school.

Intentionally, Lee DuBridge has kept a low profile in Leisure World. He and his wife, Arrola, are into lawn bowling and golf. "She's the golfer in the family and I tag along." Arrola also keeps up her interest in P.E.O. and is an officer of the ARCS Foundation of L.A. Dr. DuBridge has joined one local organization, The Acadamian Club.

Somehow, during his busy Caltech years, Dr. DuBridge found time to serve on 32 boards and 31 committees in addition to making literally hundreds of speeches. Among his awards are the King's Medal for Service in the Cause of Freedom (British) in 1946, the United States Medal for Merit in 1948 and the Golden Plate Award, American Academy of Achievement in 1973. Twenty-eight honorary degrees have been bestowed on him.

In 1968, when President Nixon named Dr. DuBridge his science advisor, the *New York Times* described the Caltech president as "the most noted scientific administrator in the country."

"It is a tragedy," Dr. DuBridge has said, "that the goals of science are so little understood . . . that it is regarded as a mysterious category. Science is merely one path to greater understanding."