

LEISURE WORLD NEWS

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Mike Evans, Leisure Worlder of the Month for March has been a photography buff since childhood. He is the "unofficial" volunteer photographer for many city events.

News photo by Rod Veal

Evans snaps up Society's honor

The City's favorite photographer

BY CHERYL WALKER
THE NEWS

He started with a \$1 Brownie Box camera, eventually graduated to an Autographic (that lets you write a label on the slide before it's shot), then a 35 mm Argosy. Now he uses a top-of-the-line Kodak digital.

His subjects range from World War II combat bombers to portraits of Laguna Woods city council people.

He's a teacher, city and Leisure World volunteer and, thanks to the Historical Society, March's Leisure Worlder of the Month.

Mike Evans, Laguna Woods' roving photographer, says he was totally surprised when he

Ceremony facts

Who: Mike Evans

What: Leisure Worlder of the month for March

Where: Clubhouse 6

When: 10 a.m., Wednesday, March 2.

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

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EVANS

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got the call from the Society.

A lover of photography, Evans latest quest is exploring the possibilities in digital cameras.

"Digital cameras aren't as interesting," as traditional cameras he explains, adding, however, that there are many things you can do you with them that you can't do easily with a traditional camera.

"Ten years ago I went into digital, I knew it was the way to go." Now his manor dark room looks neglected while his computer digital processing area looks ready for use.

Evans says he's always ready to try new things, which is one of the reasons people are surprised to learn he's in his mid 80s. "I am very young at heart."

City Councilman Bob Ring labels Evans as a very special person. "He works quietly in the background, is very conscientious and has the unusual ability to catch the spirit of the scene that reflects the mood and sentiment of the people; he's an invaluable asset of the city and we appreciate his work ethic, you can always de-

pend on him."

"Mike Evans has been invaluable in taping our veteran interviews for the Library of Congress Program as he has been for photographing so much of Leisure World's history and sharing his talent . . . by teaching others," says John Fuller, Historical Society president. "The Historical Society is pleased to honor him as Leisure Worlder of the Month"

Background: Born in Slovakia, he was left with family when his parents came to the United States. Nine years later he joined them, settling in Pennsylvania where he fell in love with the camera and started the first Camera Club in his high school.

He joined the Army Air Corps as a Group Photographic Section Chief then changed assignments and went along on B-26 bombing missions over Southern Europe, 65 of them, in the process getting a purple heart and numerous battle ribbons and citations.

He finished his tour just before VE-Day and, back in Pennsylvania, worked in the steel mills, photographing parts -- including components of the atomic bomb.

He jumped at the opportunity for a change of scene and took his wife to Hollywood where he ran a camera shop at Sunset and Vine. Among his favorite customers were Ten-

nessee Ernie Ford, Jimmy Doolittle and Dana Andrews.

Evans changed focus after he was a victim of an armed robbery. He went to work for the police, from 1973-86, where he photographed crime scenes, and public relations events like golf tournaments where he met celebrities like Rodney ("I get no respect") Dangerfield and Dinah Shore.

He and his wife bought a manor in Leisure World four years before they moved here.

Evans taught photography at Saddleback College's Emeritus Institute, earning numerous citations from the school; served on the continuing education and Emeritus Council, was co-chair with his wife of Leisure World's Arts and Crafts Show and became Person of the Year at the Leisure World Camera Club.

He also is a member of the American Legion, Leisure Wheelers and Video Club, is a Clubhouse 4 woodshop supervisor, member of the Keyboard Club and has offered his services to residents who want to transfer old films, photos and slides to a DVD.

At 86, Evans sees no reason to slow down, in fact all the activities keep his mind sharp and in focus. "I can not join a club and say 'entertain me.' I have to do something; I am sure that these activities have added at least 10 years to my life."