

Leisure Worlder

OF THE MONTH

THOMAS E. HINES

On a desk in the den of Thomas Emory Hines is a telegrapher's key and sounder, a symbol of his lifetime in communications.

In these days when people talk about such things as satellites, microwaves, coaxial cables and now a new sound transmission carrier called "optical fibers," the telegraph system Samuel F. B. Morse invented in 1837 seems as out-moded as the pony express it replaced.

The Indians called the telegraph lines that did much to bind the nation together in those pioneer days "talking wires". Hines, at an early age while living in his home town of Alvord, Texas, learned the art of making them talk.

In the intervening years Tom has had a part in the changing scene of sound transmission. "But I still know my Morse code," said Tom with a smile as he walked over to the instrument and started "pounding the brass" as telegraph operators used to call the long-lost art of transmitting messages.

Communications have been the entire business life of this tall Texan and retired Pacific Telephone Company executive who learned the art of telegraphy early. However, it is Tom Hines' ability to communicate with people in Leisure World through 15 years of tireless activity in clubs and church work, along with a term as a Director and Community Relations Committee Chairman of the Golden Rain Foundation that has earned him the high honor of being selected Rossmoor's Leisure Worlder of the Month for January.

A 32nd degree Mason, Shriner, Past Master, Past Commander of Knights Templars and Past President of the downtown Los Angeles High Twelve club, much of Hines' activity since he moved into Leisure World in October of 1964 has been fraternal. He helped organize both the Laguna Hills and Saddleback High Twelveasonic luncheon clubs. Tom served as the second President of the Laguna Hills club and is Past President of the Saddleback Scottish Rite club of Laguna Hills. Recently, he was honored by the Grand Lodge of California as a 50-year Mason.

Occupying a conspicuous place on the wall of his den is a plaque signed by none other than Gov. John Connolly in 1966 proclaiming Tom an admiral in the Texas Navy.

Busy as Hines keeps himself he doesn't let many activities interfere with his golf in which he indulges as often as possible. Helen, his lovely wife of 49 years, joins him in active participation in the affairs of the First Baptist Church. He was its first Treasurer and for the last five years has been its Moderator. Dr. Ivan Bell, the senior pastor, speaks in glowing terms of Hines' work. "Incisive, unusually dependable and reliable," says Dr. Bell. "Tom Hines is a very thorough person who constantly moves ahead." In the foyer of the church is a bronze plaque denoting a contribution to the church by Thomas E. Hines in memory of his father, Rev. John C. Hines, a Presbyterian minister and evangelist.

After working for various railroads throughout the West Tom finally came to California where he secured employment with the Santa Fe Railway Co. "By that time telegraphy was on its way out," says Tom. The long-distance telephone was a success and teletype printers were coming in. "I could see the handwriting on the wall." So, when the Pacific Telephone Company offered him a job in Los Angeles in 1929 Hines accepted and remained with that company for 40 years until retirement.

During World War II Tom was stationed with Gen. George Patton's army in training at Camp Young near Indio in charge of telephone and teletype communications. He was assigned to the Democratic Convention in 1960 at the Sports Arena when John Kennedy was nominated to run for President, as chairman of the telephone toll committee handling press, radio and television coverage facilities.

Although Tom and Helen moved to Leisure World in 1964, Hines did not retire from Pacific Telephone until five years later. Much of this time was spent in customer relations involving newspaper, news services, stockbroker and other electronic media in their ever-increasing demand for communication facilities.

"Like Gene Autry, another telegrapher, my ability to pound a telegraph key got me started on the road to California," quipped Hines, "but the difference is plain. I can't carry a tune and never could play the guitar."