



LEISURE WORLD NEWS

Thursday
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Not a moment to waste



The first Leisure Worlder of the Month for 2002, Ira Joss, in a rare moment of relaxation.

News Photo by Rod Veal

Society's pick a real go getter

By Cheryl Walker
The News

His mother-in-law's pet name for her beloved son-in-law was "Said and Done."

That's because the Historical Society's first Leisure Worlder of the Month for 2002 never wastes a minute.

And that's the way Ira Joss likes to live his days - with a series of attaché cases for each of his varied activities in Leisure World and Laguna Woods.

He co-chairs the Society's community survey committee; chairs its University of California, Irvine lecture series; is vice president and secretary of the Reform Temple of Leisure World. He is an associate instructor in digital imaging at the PC Computer Club and is active in many Leisure World clubs and organizations (Hik-

ers, Nifty 50-60s, Film, Travlogue, Community Civic Association, Square Dance, Golf).

He worked on the Laguna Woods Cityhood Campaign; served on the city's community relations committee; consulted in founding of the UCI Academy of Lifelong Learning and medical lecture series; served on Third Mutual's nominating committee; and helped run the campaign of a Laguna Woods city council hopeful.

Sound exhausting? Not for Joss, says his wife of 54 years, Carol. "He's very scheduled, very organized, has a lot of energy; he never does one thing at a time and he never wastes time between activities."

And she means it. When he's not involved in making a difference in the community he's making an art of his social life: designing cards, tickets, fliers and signs for various occa-

sions; putting on magic shows; going on Elderhostels; maintaining close ties with his extended family; and making life better for those who are privileged to know him.

Explains Carol, "He really is a man of the people, by the people and for the people: he really likes people."

Ida Kaufman of the Reform Temple says one can "always count on Ira" to come through. "He's a perfectionist; in fact, he only has one problem: he

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Ceremony facts

Who: Ira Joss

What: Leisure Worlder of the Month for January

When: 10 a.m., Wednesday, Jan. 9

Where: Clubhouse 6

Sponsor: Leisure World Historical Society

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doesn't know how to say no."

"He attacks a project with determination, humor and enthusiasm and really gives without asking," says Third Mutual Director and fellow Hiker Marty Rhodes. "He's absolutely a joy to be with, if you're down he'll bring you up."

Background Joss, a New Yorker, earned degrees in chemistry and business administration from City College and Brooklyn College.

Early in his career he discovered a flair for sales and became vice president of sales at Kolmar Laboratories, Inc., the world's largest international contract manufacturer for the cosmetic industry.

Kolmar's clients were the Who's Who of the cosmetic industry (Dior, Elizabeth Arden, Merle Norman, and others). Joss traveled, not just to the firms four United States plants but 17 others around the world.

After 20 years, he left the firm and became president of a cosmetic industry supplier before finally deciding to retire.

Was it hard? No, says Joss, because he studied other new retirees to avoid the pitfalls they experienced like trying to retain ties in the industry.

Joss steered his life by a new tack: learning.

His first project was researching dinosaurs teaching children about the pre-historic reptiles and animals.

He also volunteered at a local hospital, went on Elderhostels, became a docent at Old Bethpage Village and founded and became the first president

of the Institute for Learning in Retirement at the State University of New York at Farmingdale.

The latter experience served him well when working with UCI to help found the university's own Academy of Lifelong Learning which now has more than 400 members.

Always looking for new learning experiences and challenges, once he moved to Leisure World, he leapt at the opportunity to plan his new community's future by signing onto the executive, outreach and communications committees of Project 21, seeking to create a long-range plan for Leisure World with resident, rather than board, expertise.

Although the effort didn't live up to its participant's expectations, Joss took away from the experience new friendships and the idea of having a professional, on-going survey of residents to detail benefits of Leisure World's experiment in senior living.

With Project 21 co-worker Syd Aronson, he achieved that aim and with the help of the Historical Society and UCI coordinated a lifelong learning enterprise and lecture series with the university.

Aronson says Joss has been able to achieve so much in his because of his desire to share unselfishly of himself and do whatever he does with great competency and elan. "He's a great person to work with, one of those rare individuals that get things done and does everything well.

"He's one of Leisure World's jewels."