



# LEISURE WORLD NEWS

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## Tickling the ivories to chase the blues



David E. Caballero/The News

Sidney Krasno, a master at the keyboard, uses his talent to entertain anyone he can in the Leisure World area.

## Historical Society picks music man as June honoree

By Cheryl Walker  
The News

The magical music of George and Ira Gershwin, Jerome Kern, Cole Porter, Irving Berlin and other popular songwriters is alive and well in Leisure World thanks to a nimble-fingered keyboardist who uses his considerable talents to bring joy not just to his neighbors, friends and colleagues but, to the members of the community who are sick, lonely and down-at-heart.

The music man and ambassador of good will is nine-year resident Sydney Krasno whose generosity has earned him the June slot in the Historical Society's pantheon of Leisure Worlders of the Month.

"He's a man without faults, a very giving person" says Saddleback Kiwanis President Mary Arine-Beer of one of the most active members of her group and holder of the its Distinguished Service Award.

His credits include serving on the local Kiwanis club's and its Foundation's boards and committees and helping out with a variety of its special philanthropies and events.

These include hawking cakes at the Kiwanis' holiday cake sales and playing the Great American Songbook at the service organization's pancake breakfast, Aktion Club for developmentally disabled adults and the Stroke Club (which is co-sponsored by the Kiwanis and Saddleback

Hospital).

"People love him, he's so friendly and outgoing - and, if people want him to keep playing, he's more than willing to oblige," says Vern Gibson, Stroke Club

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### Ceremony facts

**Who:** Sydney Krasno  
**What:** Leisure Worlder of the Month  
**Where:** Clubhouse 6  
**When:** 10 a.m., Wednesday, June 3  
**Sponsor:** Leisure World Historical Society

## HONOREE

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president, of Krasno's bi-monthly visits with his synthesizer piano and organ keyboards.

"I love to play," says Krasno who notes, though, that his career was spent in clothing manufacturing not Tin Pan Alley.

The native of Milwaukee, and an alum of the University of Wisconsin, said he followed his father into the manufacturing business where his factories over the years turned out gloves, fake furs, wartime uniform gear, suede and leather jackets and women's sportswear and dresses.

He decided to move to California after watching a University of Wisconsin/USC Rose Bowl Game.

"I saw people in the stands in shirt sleeves while outside my house there was snow," recalls Krasno who by July 1966 sold his midwest firm and relocated to Los Angeles where he segued

into ladies sportswear.

While in Los Angeles he became a major supporter of Los Angeles's Save-a-Life charity which benefitted hospitals, gateways and the City of the Angels' Children's Hospital.

In 1977, ill health forced him to retire, which he did to Palm Springs, but after nearly a decade in the desert, usually visiting Leisure World as a sunbird during the summer months, he and his wife Marian decided to make the retirement community in Laguna Hills home.

The avid gardener and rose culturist, who also is president of Leisure World's World on Film Club and a member of City of Hope, Brandeis, the Saddleback Hospital Associates, the Orange County World Affairs Council, Mended Hearts and the California Club, says, though, that even while he worked, music making was always high on his extra-curricular activities list.

Although he calls himself a sa-loon player, since he plays by ear

and did eventually get to entertain in beer halls, he first became hooked on piano and organ at age 8 and his proficiency grew with each passing year.

As did his legion of fans who flocked around him at parties as well as sporting and charity events - which he always did (and has continued to do) at no charge. Krasno takes time, though, to tailor his program (which includes, besides solos, patter, jokes, vocals and sing-a-long) to his audiences be they the mixed crowd scarfing flapjacks at the Kiwanis pancake feast or the frail elderly in nursing facilities and senior centers.

Krasno modestly brushes aside praise for his efforts. "I have more fun playing," he explains and points to the fact that he practices nearly every day, whether rehearsing for an engagement or not, and is always on the lookout for new songs to add to his repertoire.

"What can I say, I just enjoy it!"