

Leisure Worlder

OF THE MONTH

Ed LeRoy

"Ed LeRoy is highly creative and talented and is never too busy to stop whatever he may be doing to assist a resident in the problems he brings to the Leisure World woodshop." These enthusiastic comments are those of Richard Way of the Leisure World Recreation Department. According to him and countless others, part of the credit for the "good life" at Leisure World is due to Ed LeRoy.

Ed will be honored as the Leisure Worlder of the Month by Home Federal Savings and the Leisure World Historical Society. A special ceremony to mark the event will be held Wednesday, January 4, 1984 at 10 a.m. in clubhouse six.

Ed's experience and patience were cultivated long before he moved to Leisure World. The North Dakota native and his wife, Vi, came to California in 1940. Ed found work with the Douglass Aircraft Company. World War II sent him for a short hitch with the Navy. At war's end, he took his machinist talents to the Hollywood motion picture industry. Ed became an expert in the prop-miniature and special effects arena. Some of his work that you may remember includes: building and flying the miniature model "Spirit" in "The Spirit of St. Louis," and the fox running scene and the one-and-one-half over-scale furniture for "Auntie Mame." Ed helped with the designing and building of the chariots used in "Helen of Troy," and is responsible for a spectrum of duties associated with making "The Old Man and the Sea." He helped build the 24-foot marlin, the sharks used in the film and manipulated the marlin and the sharks under water.

"'The Old Man and the Sea' was one of the most precarious projects I was ever involved with," remembers Ed. "We were filming in Cuba, just as Fidel Castro was coming into power," he said. "Quickly, we had to pack up and finish filming in Hawaii." Even if you aren't an ardent movie-goer, you may have seen some of Ed's handiwork. He has spent countless hours creating and operating models for TV, both for some of your best-loved series and your favorite commercials.

One particularly challenging TV advertisement was for the Tuborg Beer Company. "We build a working miniature Norseman's boat, with 28 oarsmen," he said. "The boat used five-inch moving dolls as the crew."

Ed's Hollywood days weren't only limited from nine to five. For 12 years he served as secretary-treasurer for the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees of the United States and Canada. At that time, the union numbered some 4,000 members. Ed is credited with designing and implementing the California State Approved Apprenticeship Training Program for the Motion Picture and Television Country Home and Hospital and is a former chairman of the Home's Case Committee. He is still active with the Home's annual talent show, which consistently plays to a "standing room only" audience. In addition, he has served as a board member for the Hollywood Permanent Charities Committee.

Since coming to Leisure World in 1978, Ed has been a constant contributor to the community, both "inside the walls" and out. He has served a vice president and is now president of the Saddleback Kiwanis Club. Additionally, he has served on the Leisure World Grounds Committee, as director for Mutual Four and on the Tax and Legislation Committee.

One of Ed's main Leisure World interests is in the clubhouse four woodshop. There, as maintenance supervisor, Ed is in charge of maintenance and the repairing of all the shop's equipment. He also recommends the purchasing of tool replacements. That's a heavy task, but only a part of Ed's job.

Ed himself is more concerned about the safety of the residents who use the shop. He's never too busy to lend a hand to residents. According to Ed's woodshop co-workers, comments from residents frequently run along the lines of, "Get Ed to help you," or "Ask Eddie how to do that."

Ed finds time for building some of his own creations, too. He recently designed and finished a grandfather's clock, which was on display in the Leisure World Arts and Crafts Show and now stands in the LeRoy's living room. The clock keeps pace for Ed and Vi, who are now in their 44th year of marriage. Their two children and four grandchildren all live within an hour's drive from Leisure World.

Ed's "working" family is close-knit, too. Although Ed spends most of his time in the woodshop, supervisors from both the lapidary and jewelry workshops are always wanting Ed to spend more time in their respective workshops. According to them, Ed's presence is a real asset to the atmosphere. His mechanical ability and generous nature are always a welcomed addition to the day.