



Leigh Lukawiecka

*by Robert Fulton Pfeiffer*

"At the time of Count Lukawiecki's escape from Vienna, I had been working for some months, as a civilian, in a 'covert' office of the U.S. Army G-2 (Intelligence) in the International Zone. This was several years after my service in the U.S. Navy in World War II.

"Although we were engaged, the future seemed to hold little promise as regulations prevented me from marrying and we saw no possibility of getting the count into the American Zone, encircled as we were by Russian occupation."

As I listened to this cloak-and-dagger story told by Countess Leigh Lukawiecka

(who prefers to be called just Leigh), she suddenly became tense, and continued, "Unexpectedly, one day I was told to go to a cafe a half block away from my office and to wait for the count. The presence of several Russian undercover agents, upon my arrival, was ample evidence that the phone conversation had been intercepted. Only a short time before, the Russians had asked the count to spy on me and thereafter we were shadowed continuously. After two hours of nerve-wracking, anxious waiting — it was pretty scary — I decided to walk back to my office. There I was met by the G-2 colonel with the words, 'He's safe, Leigh, in the American zone.' An American plane had made a hazardous landing on a city street, picked up my fiancé, and flown him to safety."

"We were later married in a castle in Salzburg by an Austrian official, by permission of the U.S. Army, and that colonel was our best man!"

"Although Lukawiecki was a descendant of King Wisniowiecki, who ruled Poland in the 1500's, he was one of the most democratic men you could meet, and loved to participate in all forms of athletics with his young friends. His record as a Polish cavalry officer, plus his survival through three years in the Nazi concentration camp at Auschwitz, speak for him far better than I could."

"How did I meet the count? Well, when I arrived in Vienna for a visit, friends introduced me to a local baron who was to be my guide. He took me to King's Cafe where we met his best friend, the count. As the count and I danced a Viennese waltz he invited me out to dine with him the next evening. At dinner the next night he proposed and I accepted. It was a real storybook romance and began a life of gay balls, operas and walks in the Vienna woods."

Leigh was born in Virginia, attended San Diego State College, and served as a Wave officer in New Orleans during World War II. Afterward, she traveled extensively and lived some years in Europe.

"While I have lived abroad and enjoyed it, and married a foreigner, I am and always will be a loyal American!" she said. "More every day, I appreciate our varied cultures and priceless freedoms, and will protect them with all my ability!"

After she was widowed the second time (her first husband had been Captain Dewey Walbridge, USN) she decided to "serve in some way, to be helpful to humanity." Leigh studied and became an ordained Unity minister, founding Unity-in-the-Desert Church in Palm Springs, where she served for ten years before moving to Leisure World.

Her philosophy is expressed in her inspirational article published in LEISURE LIVING last May: "What I have seen, I can see forever; what I have loved, lives always in my heart."

Leigh now writes for various publications, is a reporter for TV-6; attends concerts, lectures, and classes; is on the Board of Directors of the Unity Church and Opera 100; and belongs to the Amigos Nuevos Club and the National League of American Pen Women.

She is also in demand as a platform lecturer, speaking to various clubs and churches. For exercise she walks her Siamese cat, "Petunia", on a leash!

"Living here," reflects our Leisure World Countess, "is an added bonus to a full and fascinating life. There is so much of interest, and so many opportunities to learn and to enjoy in these amazingly rich, ripe years!"