



LEISURE WORLD NEWS

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Emeritus director singled out by society

Can-do spirit hallmark
of September honoree

By Cheryl Walker
The News

Let George do it.

That catch phrase is no idle remark when it comes to Leisure Worlder George McInnis whom the Historical Society has named as its honoree for September and the Laguna Woods City Council recognized by proclamation for his unparalleled service to the community.

"I like being my own boss and I have a reputation for getting things done," explains the honoree candidly.

And the tougher the job, the more he enjoys the challenge.

McInnis taught directors the finer points of Robert's Rules of Order. He chaired a series of seminars on cityhood giving voters the pros and cons on the issue. He instructed the real estate community on the finer points of life in the gated community, rewrote all the corporations bylaws and articles of incorporation; served on community boards, study groups and committees; and shared with all his expertise on senior, homeowners association and mutual-benefit law.

"George McInnis is one of the ablest, hardest working fellows I've ever seen in my life," says Mutual 50 President Tom Sullivan.

Golden Rain President Bob Ring agrees. "He has such a knowledge of history joined with a forward-looking vision, attention to detail, a wide



Rod Veal/The News

George McInnis, Leisure Worlder of the Month for September, is a sailing enthusiast when not involved in governance.

breadth of expertise on all sorts of things -- but he's always willing to share and help ordinary people."

Neighbor Anne Russell points out that McInnis works untold hours behind the scenes to stay on top of every situation and is sought out by many for

Ceremony facts

Who: George McInnis
What: Leisure Worlder of the Month for September
When: 10 a.m., Wednesday, Sept. 6
Where: Clubhouse 6
Sponsor: Leisure World Historical Society.

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DIRECTOR

his expertise which he generously shares. "He's one of our real unsung heroes and I'm so pleased with the (Historical Society's) choice."

Attorney Beth Grimm, who writes a legal review in Northern California, adds that he's the "single most active participant for staying up on homeowners association law and I'm really impressed with that."

PCM Executive Assistant Judie Zoerhof, who collaborated with McInnis on the governing documents, says that in the four years she worked with him she was astounded by his ability to hold multiple documents and references of law in his mind, even while conducting a meeting. "I learned a lot from George and I miss working with him."

Background:

McInnis, who is of Scots heritage and can trace his genealogy back to the Mayflower, comes from a family of self-reliant, strong-minded doers and pioneers. His grandfather and father were influential in the early iron mining industry in Minnesota, McInnis's native state.

McInnis says he always "craved knowledge" so much so that when he went to college he took double the allotted course work each quarter (30 credits instead of 15 credits) – even when classes fell on the same days of the week.

He received his bachelor's degree in industrial engineering from the University of Minnesota, his master's in meteorology from New York University and pursued vari-

ous post graduate studies in subtropical horticulture, insurance, real estate and law.

When an explosion during World War II military service left him deaf, he decided on a career in farming, which he pursued with great success in Vista, where, at one time, he was managing, both for himself and several absentee gentleman farmers, 25 percent of the available acreage in the town.

The invention of a practical, portable hearing aid permitted him to leave farming and broaden his horizons in fields where his manifold expertise was both put to better use and much in demand.

So much so that, for the next 35 years, he was able to pursue on his own terms a career in industrial engineering and management consulting for firms such as Northrup, Convair, North American Aviation, Rockwell International, Arcadia Metal Products Co. and American Electronics.

On his various trouble-shooting assignments, he handled a wide range of consulting and management tasks including operational analysis, financial controls, material and production control, policies and procedures as well as pioneering work in computerizing production and material control.

"I could have a job any time I wanted," explains McInnis who pointed out that consulting allowed him the freedom to pick and choose projects that interested him, to master a wide range of studies and skills and to spend time with wife of 60 years (come Sept. 7), Eleanor, and their family of four, indulging in his life-long love of sailing, particularly competitive racing at which he excelled (and has the trophies to

prove it).

Even before coming to Leisure World in 1993, he was active in community governance with the Mission Vista Homeowners Association in Oceanside (where he helped coordinate an effort to force the developer to complete the project per specifications); with the Oceanside Manor Homeowners Association (where, as part of a legal committee, he helped investigate a problem at the project which had been built on an ancient landslide and developed facts which led to a \$22 million settlement); and with the Chateau Lake San Marcos Homeowners Association (where, as member of a special committee he helped investigate and correct inappropriate investment of reserves and helped revise by-laws and covenants, conventions and restrictions).

McInnis says when he bought his first condominium he didn't know what a condo or a CC&R was – but when he encountered opposition from his homeowners association for trying to put up shelving in his garage he not only became an expert on homeowners association law he helped write California's landmark legislation on the topic, the Davis-Stirling Act.

According to friend and colleague Grimm, he continues to be an authority on the topic and a legislative watchdog – even maintaining a website to help those with questions, concerns or complaints.

He also taught sailing for the Balboa Power Squadron, created a weather manual for the U. S. Power Squadron, was a director and officer of the Seal Beach Yacht Club, was a Toastmaster and was a founding member of the South Orange

County California Genealogical Society.

After coming to Leisure World, besides his board and committee work, he served as an advisor to various groups and as a member of the PC Users Group and won blue ribbon honors for his gardening skills as well as the admiration of the 36 households in his neighborhood with whom he generously shares his gardens' bounty: peas, beans, tomatoes and flowers.

"He works untold hours behind the scenes, he can't let anything go that he thinks can be better," explains neighbor Russell.

She points out by way of examples that at one point recently he was doing so much for the boards that he bought a second car and, when she lost her beloved pet, he even found an exquisite Abyssinian cat to replace it. "He's just wonderful!"