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# Leisure Worlder of the Month

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## John Stransky, Jr.

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LAGUNA HILLS—Because the first two companies that John Stransky worked for failed, he used to worry that he was “bad luck.” But having John around has proved to be great luck to those who know him, since John’s leisure time is mostly taken up in helping others.

To recognize John for his efforts, he will be named Leisure Worlder of the Month on Wednesday, Sept. 2, at 10:00 a.m., in Clubhouse Six. The public is invited to attend this special program, which is sponsored by Home Federal Savings and the Leisure World Historical Society.

John Stransky Jr. was born June 19, 1904 in the small town of Pukwana, South Dakota.

His dad owned the local telephone company, and when the United States entered World War I, John’s brother joined the signal corps, leaving John at 13, to maintain and install new phones for the company.

The family moved to Chicago in 1919 and to Los Angeles in 1923, where John attended USC, receiving a degree in electrical engineering.

John’s first two jobs were with companies which went broke, and he began to worry about his luck. One of these was Qualiton, who made sound equipment for theaters. John said he would work all day getting the equipment ready, then he and his helper would drive to the theater, sometimes out of town. They would do what they could while the silent show was running. Then work all night and the next day to get ready for the first sound show. They would stay until the first sound show was on, and then go home and back to work the next morning. John said thank goodness it didn’t happen too often.

His next job was with Tiffany Stahl Studios. While there, John took flying lessons and obtained his license. He stayed at Tiffany for about three years, until they closed. It was during this period that he met and married his wife of fifty-five years, Ruth Emerson.

His next position was with Monogram Pictures. John says that the main problem here was rushing to the bank with your pay check hoping there was enough money to cash it. Sometimes there was not. Monogram later merged with another company to form Republic Studios. By this time the Stranskys had two children, Jane and John. John joined the Cub Scouts and his dad became Cub Scout committee chairman. John, the elder, later became chairman of the troop committee and after his son left scouting John was scout institutional representative for St. James Episcopal Church for six years.

During this period he was awarded the Cub Scout Master’s Trophy and the “Order of Merit” from the Los Angeles area council of the Boy Scouts of America. John also served nine years on the vestry of St. James Episcopal Church.

While at Republic, John served two terms as president of the studio Employees Club. Republic built a new recording studio where John did the music recording. For several years RCA records recorded their classical records there with such artists as Vlodimir Horwitz, Igor Stravinsky, Leopold Stakowski, Arron Copland, Mario Lanza, Jascha Heifitz, and Arthur Rubenstein.

He moved to Universal Studios in 1960. While there he was one of the organizers and first treasurer of the Cinema Audio Society.

John received a nomination for “Outstanding Achievement in Sound Mixing” from the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences and an award from the Cinema Audio Society for “Outstanding Achievement in the World of Sound.”

John’s hobby was photography. He and Ruth have received thirteen trophies, which represent first, second, and third places in contests for slide shows produced and shown at the Los Angeles Cinema Club.

John retired in 1970 and shortly became the volunteer photographer for seven years to the La Brea Tar Pits, photographing the diggings and what was discovered. John produced a slide show of these activities and the Los Angeles County Museum asked and received a copy of it to be used in their school program.

Two years before moving to Leisure World, John started working as a volunteer at Recording for the Blind. College text books are recorded here and the tapes given free to blind college students.

In the spring of 1978, Ruth and John moved to Leisure World and John had to give up his work at the Tar Pits and Recording for the Blind.

Since moving to Leisure World the Stranskys have produced several more slide shows, which along with the others they show to churches, clubs, and schools. They enjoy very much the presentations to elementary schools, which they do frequently. The gratification for the letters they receive is most rewarding.

John gives live presentations on electricity, simple machines, and matters which the teachers used to reinforce the text books. He also has given programs for the Stroke Club and the rehab unit at Saddleback Hospital.

John works as projectionist and shows programs at the Camera Club’s annual “Film Festival.” He produced and donated a slide show for the South Coast Youth Shelter. He also taught a class in sound recording for three years in Leisure World for Saddleback College.

He joined the Saddleback Kiwanis Club in 1980 and was shortly taken up to the Joplin Youth Center, which is a minimum security jail for high-school-aged boys. He has been going up there for seven years, the last three as chairman. The men teach the boys how to conduct meeting, keep secretarial notes, and give prepared and impromptu speeches. John arranges for an adult speaker to go with them to Joplin each week. These speeches are given to help the boys.

The men help the boys give a car wash each year to raise money for the boys’ charities which they choose. They give a hundred dollars to each of the following: Conevant House in New York for runaway children, Orangewood Home in Orange for abused and abandoned children, South Coast Youth Shelter, and for the last five years they have been supporting a girl’s high school education in Kenya, Africa. They also supply Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets for needy Orange County families. John received an award from Joplin for “Outstanding Service in Helping the Boys.”

He also received a plaque from the Orange County Probation Department for “Outstanding Volunteer Service to the Orange County Probation Department.” Kiwanis International Division 41 also gave John a plaque for “Performing Dedicated Service as Joplin Service Gents Chairman.” John recently provided a public address system for Laguna Hills Senior Center.

As you may have noted, John’s leisure time is mostly taken up in helping others.