

The Story of the Leisure World Globe

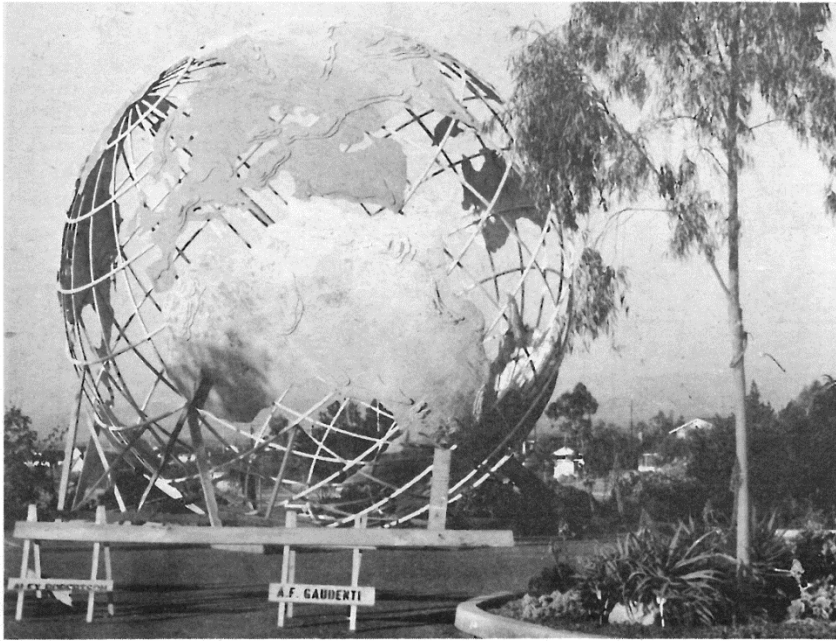
1960s – Ross Cortese, the visionary builder of Leisure World, sees and admires the 120-foot diameter stainless steel *Unisphere*, the official symbol of the 1964-65 New York World's Fair. The *Unisphere* is a space-age update of the 180-foot diameter *Perisphere* from the 1939-1940 New York World's Fair on the same location. Cortese's Rossmoor Corp. adapts the *Unisphere* concept as a corporate symbol. Rossmoor Corp. contracts with Q.R.S. Corp. in Los Angeles to build seven, 32-foot diameter carbon steel-and-fiberglass versions to promote each of its Leisure World developments, including the one in Laguna Hills. Commonly called *The Globe*, Laguna Hills' version was first situated on a parcel of land facing El Toro Road in what is now the parking lot of the Laguna Hills Civic Center.



Complete with colored lights and a fountain, it revolved slowly on El Toro Road near El Camino Real (later San Diego Freeway or Interstate 5) and was lit at night. For seven years, *The Globe* was usually the first site early residents saw when they entered the community.



1973 – Some years later, it was decided to move *The Globe*. The original location was now surrounded with model homes and the area was considered too cramped to adequately display the majestic symbol. The construction of a new regional shopping center (later known as Laguna Woods Mall) also affected the location of *The Globe*. It was decided that the underpass which circled *The Globe* needed to be removed and a wider El Toro Road be constructed to facilitate the expected traffic growth. *The Globe* was removed from its axis by crane and stored, awaiting plans and funds to refurbish, relocate and landscape it nearby on Avenida de la Carlota, behind St. George's Episcopal Church.



WHAT A WORLD— The majestic Rossmoor theme globe which has faced El Toro Road since 1964, was lifted off its axis recently. It now lies in the parking lot behind St. George's Episcopal Church

awaiting a complete refurbishing of its metal latitude and longitude bars and a repainting of Africa, Australia, North and South America, Europe and Asia.

After being refurbished and landscaped, *The Globe* was an impressive sight as seen from Interstate 5 and the El Toro Road exit. Unfortunately, the gears that caused the globe to rotate stopped working after only one day.



1980s – When Leisure World was nearly built out in the early 80s, Rossmoor offered *The Globe* to the Historical Society. The president at the time thought it should be a state monument. The state, however, didn't think it was old enough to qualify for historical-site status, so *The Globe* was donated to the County of Orange and was designated a "Point of Interest".

1996 – Ownership and maintenance of *The Globe* and underlying land is transferred from Orange County to the City of Laguna Hills.

1999 – In 1999, Leisure World Laguna Hills became the City of Laguna Woods and the gated community became known as "Laguna Woods Village". The city was incorporated as Orange County's 32nd municipality.

2001 – The City of Laguna Hills was no longer interested in maintaining *The Globe* and offered to give it away to get it relocated; otherwise the city would scrap it.

2002 – The Leisure World Historical Society of Laguna Hills (now Laguna Woods History Center) assumes ownership and puts up \$50,000 and raises another \$21,000 from corporate and individual donations. Some residents gave as little as \$1, \$5, or \$10, the best that some of the more elderly people in Laguna Woods could afford. *The Globe* is then moved adjacent to Clubhouse 7 off Moulton Parkway.



2005 – After Ross Cortese died, Laguna Woods Village was in litigation with his heirs (RRLH) since 1999 over trademark infringement of the name Leisure World and its corporate symbol, *The Globe*. A lawsuit between the Rossmoor Corporation and Laguna Woods Village required that Laguna Woods remove *The Globe* and any reference to Rossmoor Leisure World.

2007 – Protracted legal disputes over copyrights and royalties are finally settled in court. As a result, *The Globe* is dismantled and turned into scrap in May 2007. Residents were both sad and angry to see this beloved symbol removed.

Note: A small section of the original *Globe* was saved by a resident and donated to the Leisure World History Center.

Leisure World

