

Leisure World News www.lwmc.com OF MARYLAND

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A Natural Celebration



Photo by Leisure World News Staff

The Garden & Environmental Club gathered on Dec. 14 for its annual holiday workshop in Clubhouse I. The club's last program meeting of the year is always dedicated to celebrating the season by getting creative. From left, Mary Ann Steele, Vivienne Burke, Carolyn McShane, and Carolyn Oakford were among the members who made holiday decorations and natural gifts with greenery provided by the Leisure World grounds staff.

Security & Transportation Advisory Committee

Governor Honors Keeping Seniors Safe Program

by Paul Eisenhour

Each year, the Maryland Community Crime Prevention Institute solicits nominations for the Annual Governor's Crime Prevention Awards. The purpose of this year's awards is to recognize those groups, organizations, and individual citizens who have made an outstanding effort in working with the law enforcement agency in their community to further the cause of proactive crime

prevention during the period from July 1, 2014-June 30, 2015.

Individuals and groups are nominated by law enforcement and criminal justice agencies around the state. The Montgomery County Police Department's Keeping Seniors Safe (KSS) Program, was nominated in Category C, Community Groups, Organizations and Individual Citizens and received the award.

Leisure World resident Morton A. Davis teamed up

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Technology Committee

Cell Phone Service Gaps Mar Resident Safety and Convenience

by Arthur N. Popper and Jim Leong

Recently, Jim Robertson, a member of the Technology Committee, had a problem that will sound frustratingly familiar to many Leisure World residents. While rushing out in the rain, he discovered he had left his keys in his apartment. Since Robertson had a spare house key hidden in his car, he decided to use his cell phone to call and enable the car company to remotely

open his door. However, Robertson's call failed to go through because of the poor cell phone coverage outside his home in The Greens.

After walking around in the rain (undoubtedly muttering to himself at this point), Robertson finally managed to find a spot where his cell phone worked. However, the car company had great difficulty communicating with Robertson's car — located just outside The

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Vision for Leisure World

Resident David Kipping is looking back at the historic founding of the community in a series of 13 episodes. The fourth installment, "Disaster at Mutual 5," starts on page 13.

Glamorous Gala



Photo by Suburban Video

The Leisure World LGBT Alliance hosted a glamorous and festive holiday gala on Dec. 4. More than 200 residents attended, indulging in appetizers, an open bar, and tearing up the dance floor. It was a true community gathering. From left, resident Mitch Harvey (co-host and organizer), Heidi Cortese (co-host and sponsor), with Rossmoor Camera Club members Larry and Joanne Mars. See more coverage starting on page 16.

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Glamour, Glitter, and Good Company Combine to Rock the Ballroom at Holiday Gala

by Mitch Harvey

Leisure World of Maryland had a party like no other on Friday evening, Dec. 4. Lines began forming early in the lobby of Clubhouse I, and by the time the doors to the Crystal Ballroom opened, the line stretched down the red carpet, reaching the valet parking attendants on the sidewalk.

The ballroom was transformed into what could have been a scene from the Broadway musical “La Cage aux Folles,” with huge crystal vases, white plumage, LED lighting, and a four-foot-high floral globe positioned near a draped rainbow wall.

The music queued up, the bars opened, servers circulated carrying silver trays, and chefs were plating culinary delights from multiple stations. It was truly breathtaking, an almost magical looking fantasy.

Heidi Cortese, the CEO of leisureworld.com, whose father founded Leisure World, sponsored the event. As an officer of the Leisure World LGBT Alliance and director of Rainbow Over the Globe, a division of leisureworld.com, I organized the gala. Together, we were quite a team and showed the community how to celebrate.

Within minutes, the entire ballroom was brimming with guests, but there were only a few brave souls on the dance floor, as slow tunes emanated from AJDJ’s large speakers surrounded by strobe lighting.

Moments later, the beat cranked with Pharrell’s popular song, “Happy,” a toe tapper, followed by the 1970s hit, “Funkytown.” The entire room came to life. The dance floor filled up and remained that way for nearly four hours.

This was not a typical evening in Leisure World. It was a sight to behold. Smiles and laughter, clapping and dancing, same-sex couples dancing alongside opposite-sex couples.

Many local officials joined the celebration, including State Senator Roger Manno; State Delegate Bonnie Cullison; State



Leisure World LGBT Alliance officers Mitch Harvey (director of community relations) and Mary Twigger (vice president). Photo by Suburban Video

Delegate Benjamin Kramer; Patrick Wojahn, the mayor-elect of College Park (he took office Dec. 7, a few days after the party); a representative from Congressman Chris Van Hollen’s office; Kathleen Matthews, the former television anchor who is running for Congress; and Kevin Flannery, general manager of Leisure World.

Several politicians and VIPs could be heard commenting, “This isn’t the Leisure World I visited last year. This is really a revelation and will certainly make the history books as the turning of a new age.” Another said, “Wow.”

The exclamations continued as people described the evening and what they were witnessing. It was another first for Leisure World — not a magical moment, but a magical experience.

The gala honored the union of leisureworld.com and the Leisure World LGBT Alliance, the first LGBT senior group to join the website’s Rainbow Over the Globe division.

Independent of Leisure World of Maryland, leisureworld.com is an interactive social website designed specifically for a mature population offering personal interaction, games and contests, and the ability to communicate with other residents at Leisure World-affiliated properties nationwide.

The goal of the Rainbow division is to meet the needs of

the senior LGBT residents. The new online community provides a vehicle to meet friends, share hobbies and interests, find a travel buddy, or book a cruise or tour through a forthcoming travel platform. Currently in its early stages, leisureworld.com will evolve with new ideas, new departments, new contests, more community events, new topics of interest, and many more parties.

It was an evening of celebration, marking the

first anniversary of the LGBT Alliance and recognizing a new, diverse, and upbeat Leisure World. Residents witnessed a phenomenal transformation, embracing change in a positive way, confirming “no longer is this your grandparents’ Leisure World.”

Wondering if an encore event could be on the horizon to top this night? You can count on it!

Photos capturing all of the gala fun appear on the next pages.

A Special Message from LGBT Alliance President Pamela Galef

As president of the Leisure World Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Alliance, I want to share my excitement about the outcome of the gala. We decided to have a celebration honoring our first year successes in Leisure World and how warm and welcoming the community has been in creating a truly diverse Leisure World.

Heidi Cortese, CEO of leisureworld.com, sponsored the celebration, and Mitch Harvey, representing our group, teamed up with her to create an incredible event complete with elegant decorations, wonderful food and cocktails, and awesome DJs.

Mitch put in many hours, working with every vendor to make sure no detail was overlooked, and without his creativity, the event would not have been the memorable party it was. The evening was a mix of Leisure World residents and their guests. What a wonderful combination!

“This is how to throw a party!” people continued to comment. Lorraine and Allan, a couple that recently moved to the community, told me, “Thank you so much for hosting a wonderful party. We are new to Leisure World and are so pleased with the diversity and friendliness. Have a wonderful holiday season!”

I think that nicely sums up how we’re all feeling.

Party People

There was an incredible turnout for the holiday gala hosted by the Leisure World LGBT Alliance on Friday, Dec. 4 in the Clubhouse I Crystal Ballroom. With the DJ playing everything from Pharrell's "Happy" to the 1970s hit "Funkytown," residents partied the night away.

Photos by Suburban Video unless otherwise credited.



Enthusiastic group dancing dominated the evening.



Pairs enjoyed dancing to the music, too.



The festive decor included illuminated feather centerpieces. Photo by Bob Stromberg



Both novices and obvious veterans took to the dance floor for the Electric Slide.



Residents were partying hard, getting down and even leaning back.



From left, Residents Larry Pusey, Anna Smith, Joy Stromberg, and Marie Roe. Photo by Bob Stromberg



An amazing floral globe enhanced the decor.



Almost everyone got out of their seat to take a turn on the dance floor.



General manager Kevin Flannery with Foundation of Leisure World President Marian Altman.



From left, Residents Carl Dahlstrom and Ed Knowles, with Heidi Cortese.



By the end of the night, everyone had their hands in the air, waving them like they just didn't care.