

HONOREE

Touchy TV controversy can't rattle Bob Payne

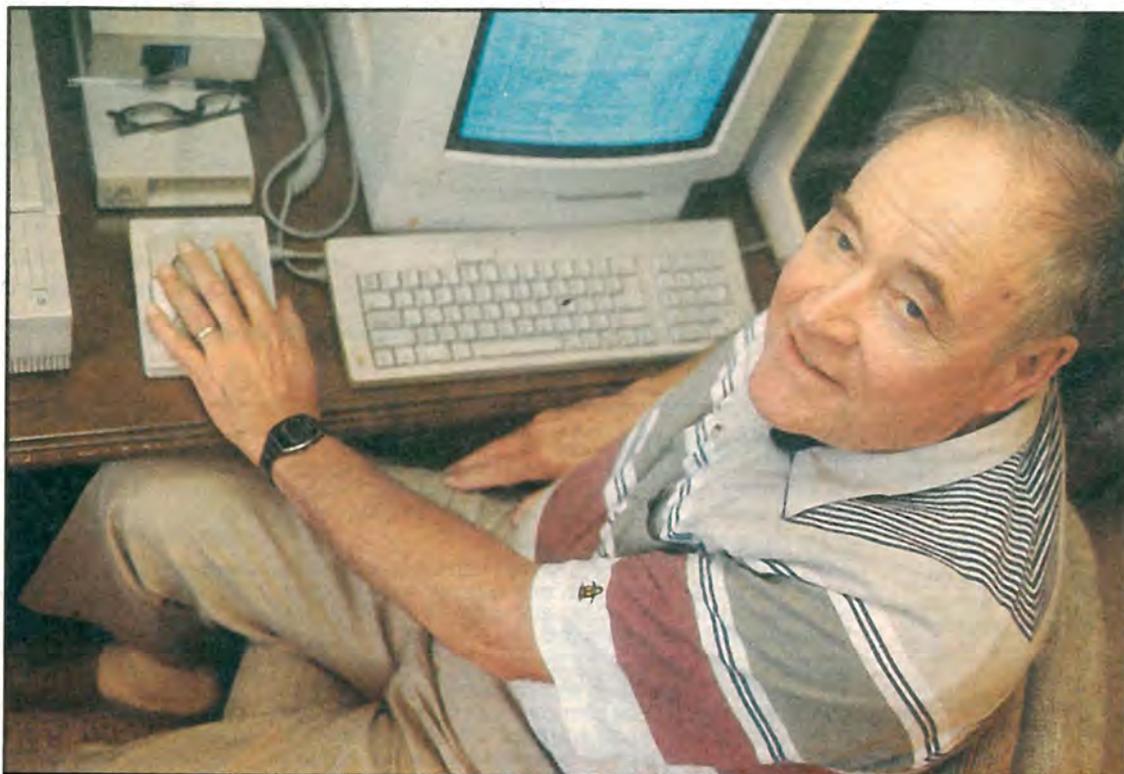
By Cheryl Walker
The News

Although Third Mutual Director Robert Payne says he was "very surprised" when he learned of his selection as Leisure Worlder of the Month for November, his co-workers are quick to say the Leisure World Historical Society made a very wise choice.

The native of the Land of Lincoln, career electrical engineer and seven-year Leisure World resident has an impressive record of service to the community as a member of his own mutual and the Golden Rain boards and their committees and special study groups.

Payne has volunteered his expertise to the finance, maintenance and construction, management information systems and landscaping committees but his finest hours were spent on the television committee.

There, as chairman, he spearheaded the investigation and, later as a committee member, working closely with his successor Golden Rain Director Jim



David E. Caballero/The News

November's honoree Robert Payne spends many hours working on his computer preparing position papers and doing research for the many activities he is involved in.

Etter, helped to resolve the problem of upgrading Leisure World's television system to meet county franchise requirements.

The path to the solution — the community constructing a \$12 million state-of-the-art fiber optic cable system — was fraught with detours, setbacks, disappointments and often bitter criticism, but Payne maintained his characteristic composure.

Co-worker and former

Golden Rain Director Doyle Selden says Payne's contributions, technical input, careful research, organizational skills, were "tremendously important in the most crucial period of the TV services committee's history."

"He was a pleasure to work with, very thorough," adds Etter. "He's truly interested in Leisure World and what is best for this community."

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Ceremony fact

Who: Robert Payne
What: Leisure Worlder of the Month for November
Where: Clubhouse 6
When: 10 a.m., Wednesday, Nov. 2
Sponsor: Leisure World Historical Society

PAYNE

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Getting involved: Paynes ties to Leisure World go back to 1973, when he'd visit his aunt who was already a resident of the community.

When he decided to move in, in 1987, running for the boards was the last thing he had in mind since he'd recently completed a stint as president of a condominium association in Mammoth Lakes.

"My mistake was writing a letter to the editor or sounding off at a board meeting and my name became known to Gene Conser," says Payne.

The Golden Rain director recalls he was impressed with the newcomer from the start.

"I thought that he was so able; I heard him comment on issues and his thinking and judgment were so intelligent and connected — and he was so well founded in business issues — that I said we should have him in the Golden Rain Foundation."

Conser adds his assessment was more than justified when Payne took office. "He always does his homework, checks the facts and doesn't speak until he knows what he's talking about."

Community Association Board

Member Dave Blodgett says when Payne later wanted to run for the Third Board, and was rejected by the Nominating Committee, his drive to get him the 100 signatures needed to become a candidate took less than two days. "The guy's the best, the most highly qualified — there's no problem he can't tackle."

Payne shrugs off praise saying simply that he finds it very interesting to learn about Leisure World, a community, he says, he's dedicated to keeping "as great as it has been."

Background: Taking on challenges is nothing new to Payne who maintains a rigorous fitness schedule (golf and 30-50 mile bike rides and three jogging sessions a week), is a self-taught master of computer skills, an avid bridge player and, accompanied by his wife of 49 years, Virginia, a world traveller, chiefly on cruise ships and trains.

A child of the Depression whose father worked in the railroad industry, he grew up with a love of trains which led him at an early age to decide on a career in engineering.

After serving in the Navy during World War II as an electronics officer, the recipient of a bachelor's and master's

degree in electrical engineering from Purdue, taught at his alma mater for four years before moving on to managerial positions at North American Aviation and Hughes Aircraft.

He also set up and operated a training program for NATO in Germany and worked as a private consultant and property manager and used his computer knowledge to design unique accounting programs for a variety of different needs from estate planning to businesses.

On the home front, his spouse says there is no aspect of building he can't do.

In their LA home, for example Payne did the plumbing, wiring, carpentry, landscaping, concrete finishing and brick laying and built a lighted tennis court.

Even their current manor is really two manors with the dividing walls removed to create approximately 2,300 square feet of living space — complete with four bedrooms, four bathrooms and two kitchens. Yes, the Paynes do have to pay two carrying charges each month.

Payne says that although his schedule is hectic, he's glad to give the time he can to his community. "We love it down here, there's so much to do—the only thing I wish is we'd have come here earlier.