

Leisure Worlder

OF THE MONTH

JOHN A. SICKENBERGER

For most golfers who move to Leisure World their handicaps drop perceptibly once they retire from business.

With John A. Sickenberger it was just the opposite after he and his pert wife Henrietta Marie turned their back on his highly successful business career and moved here fifteen years ago.

"I had a respectable handicap at Riviera Country Club," says John, and his boast is pardonable. "That was because I had plenty of time to play."

Where has all that spare time gone in retirement? Anyone who knows him will tell you Sickenberger's 15-year dedication to community affairs through offices and directorships in the several mutuals he has served, not to mention a long stewardship on the board of Saddleback Community Hospital, has made inroads on his golf.

Add this to an almost unbelievable list of responsibilities he has assumed outside Leisure World and you get the picture.

"Mr. Cortese came up with a brilliant idea and gambled his money to build Leisure World and we dare not let this heritage slip through our grasp due to careless management," he says. "Someone has to be involved. I have good health and time, so why not me?"

"Plus a remarkable business mind to cope with the community's problems," says one of his long-time associates in Leisure World activities.

Until his resignation from United in January, Sickenberger had been a mutual director for 15 years. He was elected to Mutual Eleven in 1966 when he moved to Leisure World and continued when it consolidated into what was then called Second Mutual, finally serving as an incorporating director of United Mutual.

That is not all.

For the second straight year Sickenberger is serving as Grand Treasurer of the California Masonic Lodge. In this post he serves as treasurer on the board of the California Masonic Homes which is responsible for the operation of a home in The Coto for approximately 375 elderly men and women and a home for orphaned children in Covina.

This marks the tenth straight year he is serving as treasurer of the Midnight Mission in Los Angeles that provides lodging and meals for down-and-out boys and men.

For the last five years he served as Recorder of the Saint Gabriel conclave, Red Cross of the Constantine, an order of great prestige in Masonry.

As a man with such unquestionably high credentials, the committee found it easy to select John A. Sickenberger for the honor of Leisure Worlder of the Month for May.

Born within a line drive of old Forbes Field in Pittsburgh, he acquired such Pirate heroes as Honus Wagner, Pie Traynor and Kiki Cuyler.

Forced to quit high school after two years to make a living, he rapidly progressed from office boy to ledger clerk and in a few short years became a senior public accountant. Eventually he became a CPA in the state of Pennsylvania.

Sickenberger went to work in the auditing department of Firestone in 1926. Three years later he was appointed treasurer at the new plant the tire company had opened in South Gate, Calif.

Young and adventuresome, he next took a position with a small and little known company named U.S. Electrical Motors. John organized its accounting department and financial program. As it grew and expanded into the national and international markets, Sickenberger went into marketing and soon found himself traveling to such faraway places as Pakistan, New Zealand, Japan, Australia and Mexico as well as Europe.

All the while he became increasingly involved in Masonry. In close association with Superior Court Judge Ellsworth Meyer he helped bring into existence the handsome Scottish Rite Masonic Temple on Wilshire Boulevard. He was coroneted a 33rd Degree Mason in 1961 and succeeded Judge Meyer as Venerable Master of the Los Angeles bodies in 1969.

His service with the Midnight Mission in Los Angeles includes 27 years as a director, the past 10 as treasurer.

Sickenberger's interest in Saddleback Hospital which started with his appointment to the board in 1974 has intensified as his second term as president indicates.