



CARINE NADEL, FOR THE LAGUNA WOODS GLOBE

Richard Blatman, treasurer of the Sculptors Club and president of the Film Club, will be honored in a ceremony on Nov. 2.

NOVEMBER HONOREE

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Historical Society honors Richard Blatman

BY CARINE NADEL
FOR THE LAGUNA WOODS GLOBE

Richard Blatman has been chosen by the Laguna Woods Historical Society as November's honoree. A ceremony will be held to honor him on Nov. 2 at Clubhouse 7. The reception will start at 9:30 a.m. and the ceremony at 10 a.m.

Preferring to be called Dick, he and his wife Caroline Epstein moved to the Village in March 2000. Originally a pharmacist in his home state of New York, Blatman came to California in 1977 to change careers. For more than a decade he was vice president of marketing for an electronics and lighting firm, then returning to his pharmacy roots in 1989, he remained until his retirement in 1999.

Upon moving to the Village, Blatman became involved in the Potters and Sculptors Club in 2005, where he had stints as the director, recording secretary, and president. He is now the club's treasurer. He is also serving as the supervisor, and supplies the Globe with the photos. He sculpts in various media and his work is on display in the Art Room.

His involvement with this group led to his being invited by Sandy Marzelli, the director of the Saddleback College Emeritus Program, to join the Emeritus Institute Advisory Board representing Laguna Woods.

"I saw some disturbances in the residents about the non-residents taking classes through our program, which in turn took up space in not only the classes, but in the parking. It made it tough to get into the various programs that were long worked on to get for us. It had essentially turned into a 'them vs. us' situation. One of the main reasons we moved here was because of the continuing education pro-



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Artist Dick Blatman, sculptor, with one of his creations. He will be honored by the Historical Society on Nov. 2 at Clubhouse 7.

gram. Turned out that 60 percent of those in the classes didn't live here," Blatman said.

"Through my contributions in the Sculptors' Club, I was seen as a peacemaker. I took the job to help make things better. All of us in the Village pay a package fee for all parts of the continuing education program, which includes the parking. I suggested that we charge the non-residents a parking fee. It would help the Village financially – after all we are always in need of funds to pay for the teachers and needed items for the various classes and it would ease the tension.

"It took 3 years to get the approval. It's

difficult to please everyone and it had to pass through PCM along with giving those who were going to have to pay the fee enough notice," Blatman said.

He sees one of the most significant changes through his years here as the "unhappy fact that because of the economy that it is no longer as affordable for people to live here and enjoy an actual retirement."

"When people get together and socialize, no matter what group or where, we all discuss the amount we pay on a monthly basis," said the father of two and a grandfather.

What he and his wife love about the Vil-

lage are the many opportunities it provides for everyone. "If you want to be left alone and have your privacy you can have as much as you'd like. However, through the various social clubs and the Emeritus program, you can be busy all time of the day and night. It took us a while to get acclimated and find our group of friends and activities, but once we did, we're having a blast."

Besides his membership in the Potters and Sculptors Club and the Emeritus program, Blatman has been the president of The Film Club for the past year, which offers 10 films a year to almost 1,500 members. He also worked on the Veterans History Project for the Historical Society years ago as an interviewer of World War II veterans.

When he heard about being the November honoree his first reaction was, "Oh my, it was quite a shock. There are so many people who do so much for our community. It was wonderful to find out that people appreciated my efforts."

Blatman immediately phoned his family who were very excited for him and knew he deserved the recognition. "This honor has inspired me to do even more for our community! My kids we'll be coming to the ceremony."

After living here for over a decade, Blatman wanted to let everyone know that "living here has brought us the most outstanding opportunities and the greatest group of friends."

"We never anticipated the kind of awakening we would feel about all the wonderful people and experiences we'd be able to enjoy," he said.

For more information, call the Historical Society at 206-0150.