

# Leisure Worlder

OF THE MONTH

## JOE H. BROCK

A natural-born "tinkerer," he built his first radio at the age of 11.

Although Joe H. Brock went on to become a leading insurance broker, those early skills were utilized upon retirement when he began a lengthy volunteer career assisting the handicapped and visually impaired.

His first role was making, installing and servicing pillow radios for patients at Hollywood Presbyterian Hospital. The mishaps dealt with were numerous, according to Brock. "Those radios got dropped, run over and even immersed in buckets," he recalls.

He serviced 400 units before becoming a volunteer in 1968 for the Braille Institute's "Talking Books" program which provides free records and tapes of narrated book readings as well as the special phonographs and cassette tape players required.

Brock visits Southern Orange County handicapped in their homes to deliver, install, repair and service the machines. He also gives instructions to users and helps them with mail orders for records and tapes from the Braille Institute Library in Los Angeles. More than two-thirds of his current 300 customers reside within the walls of Leisure World.

Funds are provided by the Library of Congress and the Braille Institute for the equipment and supplies used by the visually impaired as well as paraplegics and victims of such diseases as multiple sclerosis.

Brock's time (2,234 hours to date) and driving (over 14,500 miles) are his own contribution.

He admits that he is rewarded by the satisfaction received in doing service for others — without remuneration and usually with little recognition.

A native of Anderson, Indiana, Brock moved to Los Angeles with his family as a teenager. He became a crewman on the first rowing team at Oregon State College (now Oregon State University) and also attended Southwestern Law School.

After college he joined the Hartford Accident and Indemnity Co. as special agent in fidelity and surety bonds. During the next 16 years he became recognized as one of the most knowledgeable men in his field in Los Angeles.

He left the Hartford in 1945 to start his own insurance brokerage business, Joe H. Brock & Co., which he expanded to include all types of insurance coverage.

His outside activities included serving as an officer and director of both the Surety Association of Southern California and the Los Angeles Insurance Association. He also is a past president of the Insurance Fieldmen's Association and has conducted insurance courses for the University of California Extension Division, among others.

A founding member and second president of the Crenshaw National Exchange Club, he later held many offices during his 14 years in Kiwanis and was heavily involved in Boy Scout affairs for a number of years. He also served the Los Angeles Junior Chamber of Commerce during wartime as chairman of its USO program and War Bonds sales committee.

Brock and his wife Marian are active in the Presbyterian Church for which he has been a trustee, deacon and ruling elder at several locations, including the First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood and currently at St. Andrew's in Newport Beach.

He is a 35-year member of Henry Knox Masonic Lodge and was in the Wilshire Blvd. Scottish Rite Temple's first class of candidates for the degrees leading to the 32nd Degree Mason ranking.

When Brock & Co. was sold to a national brokerage firm in 1962, Joe became an early retiree who soon was enmeshed in new activities. Church deacon work lead to his first involvement with Hollywood Presbyterian Hospital patients and eventually to his 13 years as a Braille Institute volunteer on the Palos Verdes peninsula and later in Orange County.

The 1970 Government Census provided a brief but interesting change in Brock's retirement lifestyle. He offered his services to the Census Bureau and was selected as office manager in charge of 175 employees at its Torrance Division.

After moving to Leisure World in 1973, he continued perfecting his trophy-winning abilities with both the Laguna Hills and Newport Harbor lawn bowling clubs. He also served as secretary on the 1980 Third Laguna Mutual nominating committee.

He and his wife enjoy a long-term rivalry with private games of backgammon, which he always wins, and gin rummy, where she is the clan champion. The couple has a son and daughter and seven grandchildren.

On one wall of their tastefully furnished home hangs a framed Resolution of Commendation awarded by the Orange County Board of Supervisors for Brock's volunteer work.

Glancing at it briefly, he softly comments, "I've made so many wonderful friends through this work."