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Short in stature but long on personality, Minna Liebman loves giving her views on any number of subjects, whether asked for or not, as evidenced by her autobiography, "Everyone's Entitled to My Opinion."

Opinionated and proud of it Autobiography reflects life as activist

By Cheryl Walker
The News

Call her DAFT. Leisure World resident Minna Liebman does so herself to describe, in shorthand, that she's a Dancer, Activist, Friend and Talker ("I never stop"). And now you can add author to the list.

Liebman, who'll turn 80 on March 31, penned and published her autobiography, "Everyone's Entitled to My Opinion," and is making it available upon request, provided the recipient make a generous donation to a favorite charity.

The provision is typical of the tireless social activist who has championed the underprivileged

and fought for causes all her life.

"I always was a radical person, and ready to speak what was on my mind," she frankly admits. "That's why I felt I had to make a statement at this time in my life.

"I come from a family of survivors. I don't despair. I do what I consider my best and if I please myself, that's good enough for me: I'm just myself."

Being Minna, though, means non-stop activism, crusading for everything from women's rights to national health

At one time the 1979 Leisure Worlder of the Month belonged to more than 20 community organizations as well as the National Organization for Women, Public Citizen, Common Cause, the American Civil Liberties Union,

Grey Panthers, Concerned Citizens for Peace, Fund for the Feminist Majority and outreach programs for the needy in the Saddleback Valley.

Born in Troy, N.Y. and left fatherless before she was two, Liebman grew up in a household of strong women—her mother, grandmother and aunt—whose hard work in hard times, selfless devotion and unconditional love gave the youngster riches she now treasures more than gold.

"When living is a struggle, you learn what the important things are," Liebman explains.

"We had nothing, but I didn't and still don't need much to make me happy; my friends and family have always been my greatest assets.

Unable to attend college because of the Depression, Liebman decided to change the world instead and joined social rights groups.

When she decided it was time to wed, she pursued and won a husband who shared her political views, Aaron Liebman, who wasn't adverse to doing women's work like cleaning and cooking so his wife could maintain her hectic activist calendar and supplement the family income working as a real estate agent.

Three years after her husband of 51 years died, Liebman's new friend Arnold Jacobs happily took over the chores so she can continue her political work and a variety of activities including doll collecting, Scrabble, reading, poetry writing, attending Elderhostels, thrift shop browsing, aerobics, watching her favorite detective shows and social and folk dancing.

"I'd like to die in a moment of ecstasy while dancing," confides Liebman.

But she knows moments of ecstasy are few and far between, that's why she continues to make strides to improve the social condition of all—and not get discouraged in the process.

"I am an optimist. The reason we are living a better life now is because our ancestors sacrificed to give us a better life. It didn't happen over night.

"I think it's very hard to get people to pull together, but we can't let hate effect us--there'll be differences of opinion no matter what"

Liebman says she often ponders her vast international doll collection and wonders why people can't live in peace the way they can.

"That's what I like about my book, I've given my friends a place in the sun--told all the things that other people did that are important. I think it's good to remember."