



Nicholas Blair

Helen Mencher's charitable personality has made her the Historical Society's choice for Leisure Worlder of the Month of July.

Resident finds joy in involvement

Helen Mencher sees herself as advocate for the people

By Cheryl Walker

The News

To know Helen Mencher's background is to understand why she was the Historical Society's candidate for Leisure Worlder of the Month of July.

Even as a child, Mencher knew what she wanted to do with her life.

"I always have loved people and wanted to help them," says Mencher, who did clinical nursing while living in her native New York, then, after she moved to California in 1952, she moved into county government in Los Angeles and disaster services nationwide.

After retiring in 1979, she gave her time and attention to

a variety of public services until finally, after moving to Leisure World five years ago, she devoted herself to community governance.

"She's always on the lookout for ways to help people," says fellow United Board Director Cynthia Chyba.

"When I think of Helen Mencher, I think of a people person, someone very fair and concerned for all people," adds Tom Jorde, Golden Rain director and chairman of the community relations/health and social services committee, of which Mencher is a member.

United President Bob Miller agrees, adding that Mencher brings to the United Board of Directors a wealth of professional public-service experience.

"Her knowledge and bulldog determination to see that things are done right greatly benefit our community," Miller says.

As a member of the United

disaster preparedness task force about the programs offered by the American Red Cross, of which she was a disaster reserve member from 1970-89 and a national instructor.

And she's even written two disaster books for seniors and people with disabilities.

Mencher says she's always enjoyed involvement and politics, but became even more committed after retiring from her job as executive secretary for the Los Angeles County Public Library System, a position she held for 26 years.

Prior to moving to Leisure World, she was a board member of the San Fernando Valley Senior Center, an elected assemblyperson to the California Senior Legislature and a member of the Area Agencies on Aging Council of California.

The latter singled her out with a plaque, which noted that she "served with honor, with distinction and with commitment to improve the quality of life for the elderly in the City of Los Angeles."

"When you're interested in something, you have to get involved," explains Mencher, who adds that getting involved for her means doing something meaningful.

"I do really care," she says, and points out that she takes her duties as a director very seriously. "There is always room for improvements in governance."

Mencher says her role as a Leisure World mutual director means awareness of both problems that impact one's housing corporation and the community at large.

"What I see myself as is not a visionary for Leisure World . . . but an advocate: I try to take a stand and fight so the voice of the people can be heard."

Ceremony facts

Who: Helen Mencher

What: Leisure Worlder for July

Where: Clubhouse 6

When: Wednesday, July 3, 10 a.m.

Sponsor: Leisure World Historical Society

Board, Mencher has served as vice president and chairman or member of numerous Golden Rain and United Mutual committees dealing with community relations, landscaping, finance, health and social services, security and capital improvements.

She also has contributed her time and talents to the community's People for a National Health Program, the League of Women Voters, the Historical Society and the London Club.

She has further advised the Golden Rain earthquake and