

# Serving together

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**PROFILE:** Joe and Ellie Schwarz are committed to a variety of Leisure World groups.

By **CHERYL WALKER**  
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The phone rings. An e-mail crisis at Leisure World's Computer Center launches Joe Schwarz into action. He dons his signature captain's cap, a remnant of nearly 15 years aboard his 65-foot cruiser, The Lady Ellie, along the California coast and in the Caribbean and Mexican Riviera.

His wife, for whom the boat was named, knows there's no sense arguing because her spouse is committed to the organization — the PC Users Group. He has ferried the crew from 40 members to more than 1,800 in seven years.

Ellie can't really complain, anyway. She, too, leads a busy life, serving on neighborhood association boards and committees within Leisure World. She also belongs to Women's American Organization for Rehabilitation and Training, the National Council of Jewish Women and the support group for Heritage Pointe, a residential community in Mission Viejo.

Still, the Schwarzes were surprised to be chosen the Historical Society's March Leisure Worlders of the Month.

"We just care a great deal about people and we're both outgoing," Ellie says.

Colleagues agree that the Schwarzes use their talents in special ways.

Joe is "a salesman at heart and a man of great vision," says Sybil Barzilay, PC Users Group instructor and Web site creator. "He never misses an opportunity to promote our facility and is always ready and willing to extend a helping hand to new users and new members."

Ellie is "always bright, always ebullient, always willing to serve as well as being a fit companion to the aggressive, forceful advocate of the 21st century — Joe," Irving Goldberg says of his past board member. Goldberg is former president of the United Mutual home-



**HELPING OTHERS:** Joe and Ellie Schwarz are the Historical Society's March Leisure Worlders of the Month.

owners group.

Joe, a native of Hungary with a degree in electronics, and Ellie, a New Yorker who majored in accounting, met through family matchmakers. The couple married in 1946. They had three children, but Ellie says she was never a stay-at-home mom.

The couple worked together in Joe's various entrepreneurial ventures: liquor stores, electronics/hi-fi installations, meat/grocery enterprises.

When Joe retired, the two took to the seas and lived aboard their boat for 15 years. Through the years, the couple balanced all that togetherness with service to the community. She worked

with Hadassah and helped to organize the Marina del Rey B'nai B'rith Women. He raised money for B'nai B'rith and helped organize the American Youth Soccer Organization. He managed and coached the Macabbees from first place in division league to a National Open Cup Championship.

The Schwarzes decided to move back to dry land in 1990 and make Leisure World their home.

Joe says he took one look at the amenities — especially the table tennis and computer facilities — and was hooked.

Although no longer on the association board, Ellie works with the equestrian

stables advisory group and is Joe's No.1 supporter in his quest to increase the size and decrease the problems of the computer facilities.

"We are always very much together on what we've done," Ellie says. But she says she is not as proficient on the computer as her spouse.

"When you've been behind a desk, doing what I have done all these years, it seems too much like work."

Meanwhile, Joe phones barely 10 minutes after leaving their home. E-mail crisis solved. The problem wasn't a systems crash, but a software problem: an upgrade hadn't been installed.