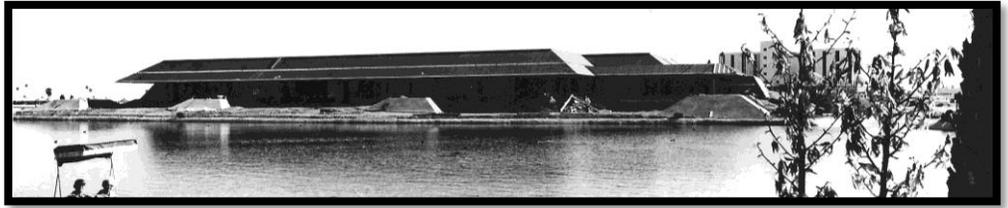

Signs of Sun City's Past by Ed Allen

Fine Dining at the Lakes Club

John Meeker wanted to give prospective purchasers a taste of the social life in Sun City that was more impressive than

entertaining them at the local coffee shop. That led to creation of a private dining facility and social club overlooking Viewpoint Lake. Completed in early 1972, the Lakes Club boasted a cocktail lounge, sunken bar, and a dining room seating 204 people with space for dancing. Additional rooms were available for private dining, and a 500-capacity ballroom served as a venue for major social events.



Expense seemed secondary as the building featured a copper façade, marble in the bathrooms, and many other luxurious design features. When the Webb Corp. board toured the completed building, then-president R. H. Johnson was incensed at the extravagance and fired John Meeker! Learning of this action, Del Webb stepped in and rescinded the order, saying simply, "We need Johnnie!"

A month before its scheduled grand opening, a spectacular fire consumed the facility. A plumber's torch had ignited a strip of tarpaper causing the fire. Damage was in excess of \$3,000,000. DEVCO commenced rebuilding as soon as the debris was cleared away – and it was rebuilt without any corners being cut!

Membership in the Lakes Club was limited to Sun City homeowners, plus local business and professional people. Initial membership fees were \$200 per family and membership was limited to 800. Later, this was expanded to 1,200. Emphasis was on elegance, quality food, and exceptional service.



The club's popularity among business people led to a major addition in 1995 known as the Metropolitan Club. Membership was open to business and professional people from the West Valley, and soon had 174 members. Demographic changes over the next decade led to dwindling membership of residents, and the building was sold to Roskamp/Sun Health at the end of 2002. They built the Lakes Medical Center on a portion of the property. The former Lakes Club building has become an extension of Grand Canyon University, offering education, nursing and health care courses leading to BS and Masters degrees.