

## Signs of Sun City's Past by Ed Allen

### How did Sun City get its name?

With \$1.3-million committed by partners Del Webb and Jim Boswell and more than enough land, the stage was set for the birth of a new city – one that had to be built from scratch. The first earth was moved in August 1959 and over the next five hectic months, a complete model community would emerge. But, what would its name be?

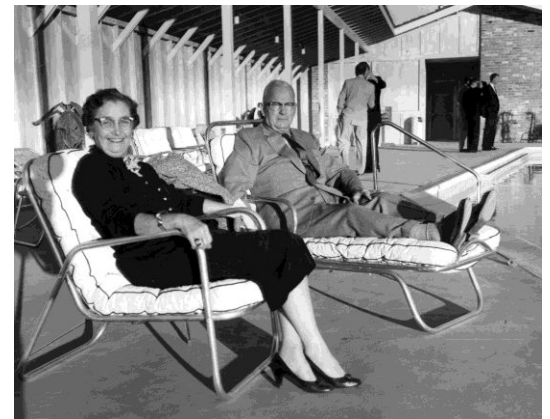
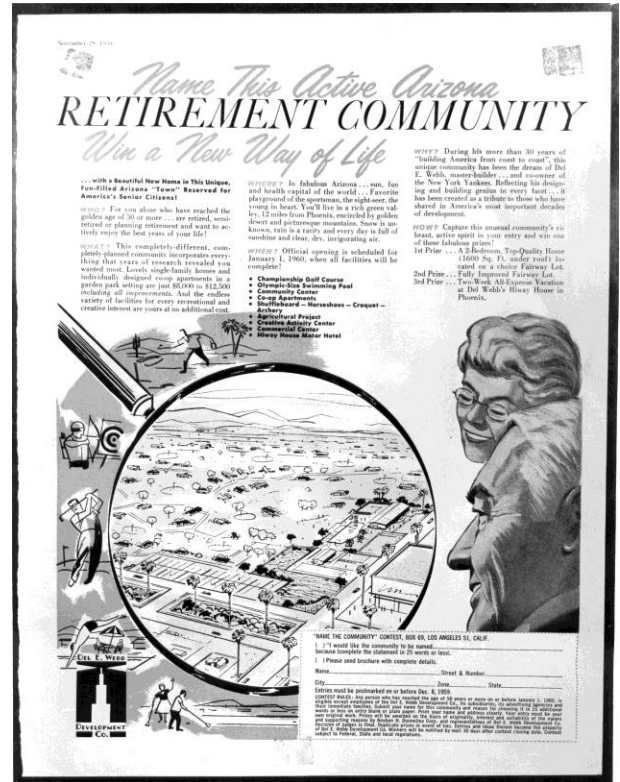
The Reuben Donnelly firm was hired to conduct a national contest, and this ad appeared in 27 of the largest Sunday newspapers plus LIFE and the SATURDAY EVENING POST. Prizes for the winning name were:

- A 2-bedroom, top quality home on a golf course lot
- A fully improved, golf course lot
- 2-week vacation at Del Webb's HiWay House in Phoenix

Dec. 8, less than a month before the grand opening, Donnelly execs brought their recommendations to the Webb Corp. They were in the midst of presenting the best candidates when the door opened and in came Del Webb. Looking at the names on display around the room, he pointed to "Sun City," said, "I like that one," and left. Webb execs began picking up their papers, but the Donnelly people protested. They' claimed they'd been hired to not only run the contest, but also recommend the winning name. "You don't understand," they were told, "Mr. Webb has made the selection.

The winners of first prize were the E. A. Brittons of Eugene, Oregon. But they weren't home. It seems they were RVers, and gone for the winter. Neighbors weren't sure where, but reported they did like to spend time in Palm Springs. The sheriff there was offered \$1000 for the county's Benevolent Fund, and his men searched local RV parks – finally finding the Brittons.

They came to Sun City in March 1960 (right) to accept the deed to their house, which would be completed in September. The house sits on the North Golf Course at 12801 Augusta Drive. While the ad for the contest promised a "top quality, 2-bedroom home with 1600 sq. ft. under roof, the house is a "Meadowgrove" and the same size as the model that houses the museum. Evidently, the square footage included roof overhangs, carport and storage areas!



The Brittons moved in in October and put the house up for sale the following March. The sale brought criticism to the Brittons, and they wrote a letter to the newspaper confirming that Sun City was a wonderful location – but they preferred the mobility of an RV for winter months, and their many friends in Eugene the rest of the year!

Today, "Sun City" is part of the names of some 60 active adult communities nationwide.