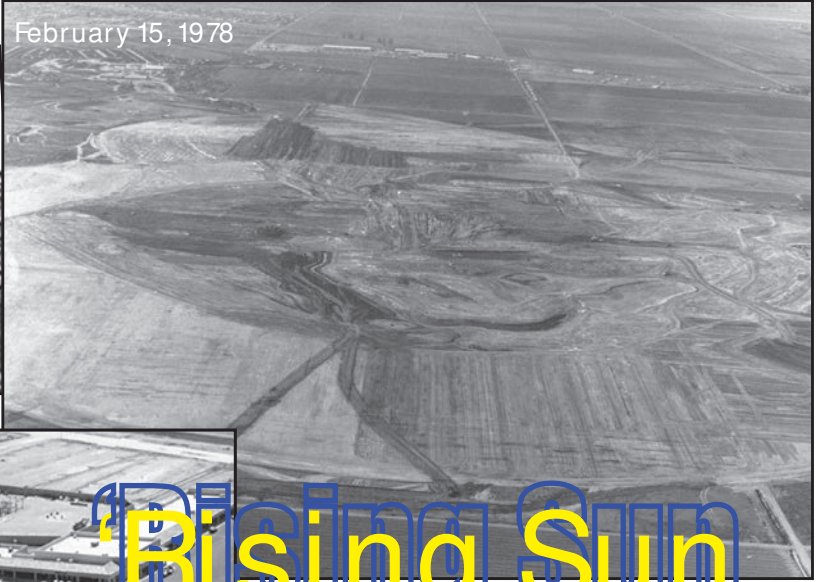




The Official Newsletter of the
**Sun Cities Area
 Historical Society**

Fall 2018 | Volume 27 | Number 2



**'Rising Sun
 in the West'**

Sun City West celebrates its 40th anniversary!

See More, Pages 8-9

Inside our fall newsletter ...



Annual Meeting

The Mother Road -- Route 66 -- is the topic of the annual meeting Nov. 12.

See Page 2



Gala Plans Set For 2019!

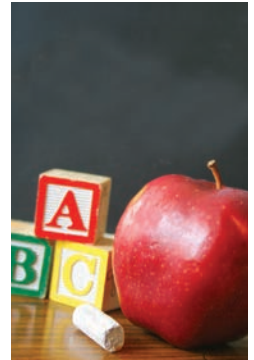
Del Webb Museum announces plans for Jubilee Gala IV!

See Page 3

The Great Escape

Historian Ben Rolloff looks back at the history of Sun City's departure from the Peoria Unified School District.

See Page 10-11





Get your Kicks on Route 66!

Arizona's Hip Historian
Marshall Shore to speak
at annual meeting Nov. 12

Prepare to travel this famous route from Chicago to the Pacific Ocean!

Known as the Will Rogers Highway, the Main Street of America, and the Mother Road, it was one of the original highways within the U.S. Highway System.

While most of its nearly 2,500-mile length has given way to newer interstate highways, some of the oldest and still-drivable stretches exist here in Arizona.

Our speaker, Marshall Shore, specializes in uncovering obscure treasures from our past: The semi-forgotten people, places and events that shaped our state and the City of Phoenix.

He uses storytelling magic, recovered film footage, old photographs, and artifacts to bring history to life. As a result, his presentations are as entertaining as they are educational.

PHOENIX Magazine cited him as "Best Bespectacled Phoenix Celebrity" in its 2017 "Best of the Valley" promotion.

A few lucky attendees will walk away with some unusual Route 66



Sun Cities Area Historical
Society Annual Meeting
When: 1 p.m. Nov. 12
Where: Oakmont Recreation
Center, 10725 W. Oakmont
Drive, Sun City
Admission: Free

souvenirs. You won't want to miss this -- so mark your calendars for 1 p.m., Monday, Nov. 12.

The meeting will be held in the auditorium of the Oakmont Recreation Center at 107th and Oakmont, a block south of Grand Avenue and just west of the Fry's shopping complex.

The Del Webb Sun Cities Museum is next door and will be open following the meeting.

Marshall Shore's presentation is made possible by a grant from Arizona Humanities.

Visit the museum ... online!

Fans of Sun Cities history can now visit the Del Webb Sun Cities simply by punching a few keys on their computer keyboard!

Visit the museum's website at www.delwebbsuncitiesmuseum.org to learn more about the community's history, to see a list of current exhibits, sign up for upcoming events, review past newsletters, view historic films and videos, purchase souvenirs and to become a museum sustaining member.

Plus, you can stay up to date on current activities by following the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum on Facebook.



Save the date: Gala Jubilee IV set for March 7, 2019 at Palmbrook

The Del Webb Sun Cities Museum has announced the date for its annual “Jubilee” gala fundraiser, with entertainment to be provided by one of the Valley’s most popular performers.

Jubilee Gala IV will be held March 7, 2019 at Palmbrook Country Club in Sun City. The first three events were held in the fall, but the gala moves to March beginning in 2019.

The popular program includes dinner and entertainment, and traditionally features the presentation of a community-service award to an individual or organization.

Pianist, keyboardist, composer and arranger Nicole Pesce will entertain the audience with her unique blend of virtuosity, humor and pizzazz.

Arizona Foothills Magazine honored Nicole with the “Best of 2014 Award” for Best Local Band/Musician. With a repertoire consisting of over 12,000 memorized songs; Nicole is often dubbed “the human iPod” and is recognized as one of the “Top 10 musicians to hear in Phoenix” by *The Arizona Republic*.

A social hour begins at 5 p.m., followed by dinner at 6 and a one-hour program beginning at 7 p.m.

Individual tickets are \$50. Guest have a choice of chicken cordon bleu, glazed salmon or petite filet mignon.

The event has traditionally been a sell-out so attendees are encouraged to purchase tickets early. Tickets are now on sale at the museum’s website, www.delwebbsuncitiesmuseum.org.

Sponsorship packages are also



Above, The OK Chorale Cowboy Trio entertained at Jubilee III held last November. At left, the late Jim Green, left, received the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum “Friend of the Sun Cities Award” from Emcee Paul Herrmann.

available at the following levels:

■ **Presenting sponsor, \$5,000**, which includes a table for 8-10 people, full-page complimentary advertising in the event program and museum spring and fall newsletter, one-year museum membership, one calendar-year museum web page listing and link to your web page, and several history books.

■ **Gala sponsorship, \$2,500**, which includes a table for 8-10, half-page advertisement in event program and museum spring and fall newsletter, one calendar-year museum web page listing and link to your web site, and one-year museum membership, and several history books

■ **Supporting sponsor, \$1,000**, which includes table for 8, recognition in gala program, 1/4-page advertisement in museum spring and fall newsletter, one calendar-year, museum web page listing and link to your web site and one-year museum membership, and several history books.

■ **Patron sponsor, \$500**, which includes four tickets to the gala, recognition in the gala program, one calendar-year museum web page listing and link to your web site and one-year museum membership.

Tickets may be ordered online or at the museum office. Call 623-974-2568.

Growing collection of scrapbooks poses challenge for museum team

Over the years, many organizations have given their scrapbooks to the Sun Cities Area Historical Society, and the closets in the building housing the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum are at capacity.

Tim Ericson is a trustee and heads the Society's Acquisition Committee. He retired from a position as head archivist for the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, where he was responsible for preserving and cataloging its collection of historical documents, photographs, and artifacts.

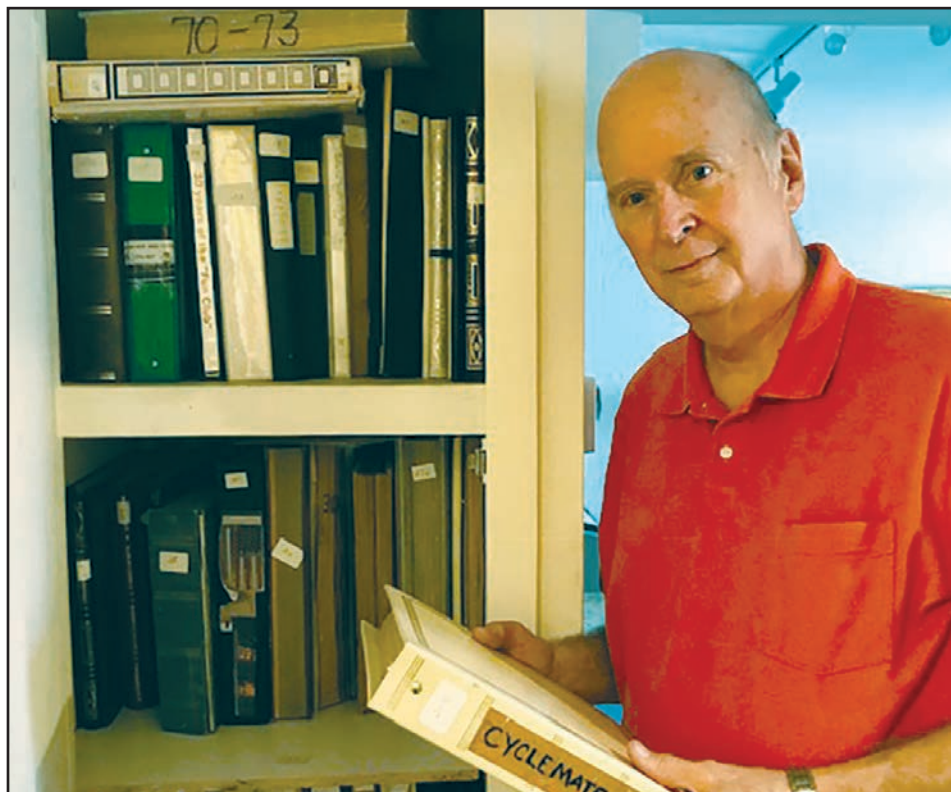
The Society has benefitted greatly from his expertise and expertise in this field.

While recovering from hip surgery this summer, Tim spent hours upon hours going through the boxes of scrapbooks to properly describe their contents.

The inventory he compiled became a 64-page catalog of past activities including long-gone clubs like:

- Scarlet Ladies of Sun Cities
- "Sun Grams" Grandmothers Club
- Sundial Stitches
- Wandering Wheelman Bicycle Club
- Katy Dids/Cady Dids singing group
- Ex-Press Club of the Sun Cities
- Sun Cities West chapter of NOW
- Pioneers of Sun City West

While these and the other scrapbooks document a history of a varied and active lifestyle, too often



The history of the Sun Cities can often be found in the scrapbooks and history books kept by the myriad clubs and organizations that have existed in the retirement community over the years. Many of those clubs -- a number of which no longer exist -- donated their records to the museum. Trustee Tim Ericson has taken on the responsibility of cataloging the items and is looking for a way to preserve and protect them for future use.

the catalogs contain pictures that are undated and the participants unnamed.

The acid in scrapbook paper, along with mounting of photos with ordinary glue has resulted in the yellowing of many pages.

Anyone preparing scrapbooks of current club activities should be aware of these dangers to their future records.

As a result of space constraints, Tim has approached Arizona State University, which already has a large collection of Del Webb docu-

ments.

ASU has expressed interest in preserving these records of active retirement in Arizona, and the museum staff is working on an arrangement with them.

ASU can offer better long-term protection for the scrapbook collection while allowing the museum access for research, newsletter articles, or future exhibits.

Details are yet to be finalized, but Tim's expertise and effort are solving a major storage problem for the Museum. Thank you, Tim!

Symphony Celebrates 50 Years!

Newest exhibit highlights the history of the symphony

The Del Webb Sun Cities Museum will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the West Valley Symphony in November with the opening of a new exhibit showcasing the musical organization's history.

Today's popular West Valley Symphony started in Sun City in 1968.

Jennings Butterfield, a conductor living in Cape Cod, heard

about a TV program where Barry Goldwater described the growing Sun City, Arizona. Intrigued, he found it had no symphony.

He and his wife were soon members of the active adult community, and with the help of others began searching for musicians.

To augment local talent, he solicited musicians from Luke Air Force Base, the Phoenix Symphony, ASU School of Music – even from Flagstaff.

The new Sun City Symphony Orchestra played its first concert Nov. 24, 1968. A crowd of nearly 1,000 residents and guests filled Town Hall South (now Mountain View Rec Center).

The Symphony moved to the 1800-seat Sundial when it opened in 1973. Despite reservations that the auditorium might be too large, the Symphony moved to the Sundome in 1980

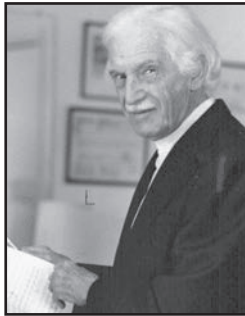
The new exhibit features the main three "chapters" in the life of the Symphony: The Early Years,

The Sundome Years, and A New Beginning after the Sundome closed in 2005.

Known today as the West Valley Symphony, it will begin its 50th year on Nov. 18. The first concert of the new season will begin at 2 p.m. in the Valley Vista Performing

Arts Center in Surprise.

The Symphony is under the direction of popular Maestro Kellogg. A duplicate of the museum's exhibit will be on display in the center's lobby for that event. The cost of the new exhibit is graciously underwritten by Anne Levig.



Jennings Butterfield, founder of the Sun City Symphony.



Welcome to Sunshine Service

People, meeting needs of people is what Sunshine Service is all about. Sunshine Service lends medical and children's equipment to residents of Sun City and we have been doing so for over 52 years. We are a charitable non-profit Arizona corporation and are funded by voluntary contributions and memorial gifts.

While the equipment is available for the use of all residents or visitors staying with residents, the equipment must not be taken out of Sun City on a permanent basis. As a matter of control, equipment is loaned only to Sun City residents.

Records show that as the population of Sun City grew, so did use of our medical equipment. Savings for Sun City residents have been calculated periodically; in 2015, it was estimated that residents saved over two million dollars in cost of equipment for that year alone.

Sunshine Service, Inc has received local, state and national recognition. Awards received include the George Washington Honor Medal for services to the sick and handicapped from the Freedoms Foundation of Valley Forge in Pennsylvania.

"The Cleanest and Most Sanitized Equipment Around"



New Knee Scooters Arrived!



Some Of The Many Items We Carry:

- Arm Exerciser • Bath Bench • Bed Rails • Bedside Commodes • Companion Chair Crutches • Foot Massager • High Chairs • Hospital Beds • Lift Chairs • Overbed Tables • Pack-N-Play • Ramp • Aluminum • Rollaway Beds • Strollers Trapeze Walkers • Weights • Wheel Chairs Translator Chairs • Knee

Monday-Friday • 9am-4pm
9980 W. Santa Fe Dr. • Sun City 85351-3197

623-974-2561



An official publication of the Sun Cities Area Historical Society © 2018 SCAHS 10801 Oakmont Drive Sun City, AZ 85351 (623) 974-2568 email: scahsm@gmail.com

www.delwebbsuncitiesmuseum.org

The Sun Cities Area Historical Society is certified by the Arizona Historical Society



The Sun Cities Area Historical Society is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the preservation and presentation of the records and artifacts for Sun City, Arizona, (the world's first Active Adult Retirement Community), and its sister city, Sun City West. The Society's headquarters are located in the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum, in one of the five original Sun City model homes.

Museum Hours: 1-4 p.m. Monday Wednesday & Friday Or for groups of six or more by appointment Office Manager: Julie Glass

Board of Trustees

- Gail Warmath President Edson Allen Vice President Tim Ericson Treasurer Doris Palmer Secretary

- A.J. Kovac Paul Herrmann Seve Held Toni Ashby Barb Wagers Don Tuffs Bret McKeand

Contributors:

Edson Allen, Ben Roloff, Bret McKeand Layout and composition by the Sun City Independent

Message from the President

A hidden gem: Museum may be Sun Cities' best-kept secret

There is a very special treasure that exists right here in Sun City that some folks still haven't discovered!

It always surprises me when people who have lived here for years are unaware of the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum.

The museum tells the fabulous history of how Sun City and Sun City West came to be, who created them, and how they developed into the unique communities we call home today.

If you've visited the museum, you may think it isn't necessary to come back; however, the exhibits change and there are more interesting facts to learn about our history!

We currently have two new exhibits under construction; one on the history of the West Valley Symphony and the other on the history of the famous dance group, the Poms!

We are always changing so check us out often ... we love having you visit.

We are extremely fortunate that we have been approved for a grant by the Del Webb Foundation for an addition to the original building. We hope to break ground in early 2019. We will have



Gail Warmath 2018 President Sun Cities Area Historical Society

room for more exhibits, presentations and meetings. Watch our progress over 2019!

The museum archives are online and accessed by researchers worldwide who are interested in the development of the active adult lifestyle.

We also communicate

via Facebook, posting many interesting tidbits about history, as well as what is happening at the museum. Look for periodic news releases as well when there is an interesting event, or new exhibits at the museum.

The museum's Speakers Bureau also helps get the word out about the museum.

Do you belong to an organization that uses outside speakers? If so, we offer talks on a variety of subjects. And, if you have a group who would like to meet at the museum for a private tour, just give us a call: 623-974-2568. Help us help others discover this gem hidden in their midst - the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum! See you soon!

New sign points the way to the museum

President of the Board for the Del E. Webb Sun Cities Museum, Gail Warmath accepts the donation of a new directional sign by Keller Williams Realtor and Sun City Museum Trustee Steve Held at the corners of 107th and Oakmont. The museum is open 1-4 p.m. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.





Unlock the _____ Mystery _____ of History

The past comes to life at the only museum in the nation devoted to the world's very first active adult retirement communities! Located in the first of five model homes built in Sun City, the museum offers a living tribute to the history of Sun City and Sun City West, and to the enduring spirit of those who pioneered an exciting new lifestyle!

Become a Member!

Show your support for the museum and its efforts to preserve our community's unique heritage!

- Gold Circle \$100
- Silver Circle \$50
- Clubs/Organizations \$50
- Turquoise \$25
- Businesses \$100

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

email: _____

Make checks payable to Sun Cities Area Historical Society, and mail to 10801 Oakmont Drive, Sun City, AZ 85351. SCAHS is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization.

Special offer

Join at the Gold Level (\$100) and receive a FREE copy of "Images of America: Sun City"
(Limited offer; while supplies last.)



Exhibits, Historical Artifacts and More!



Tours, Volunteer Opportunities

Speakers Bureau

Much more!



Call or Stop By Today!

10801 Oakmont Drive, Sun City, Arizona
(623) 974-2568 * delwebbsuncitiesmuseum.org
Museum Hours: 1-4 p.m. Monday
Wednesday & Friday



Sun City West was constructed on land originally known as Lizard Acres. The unofficial boundaries for Lizard Acres, which included a large cattle ranch, encompassed much of the what is today the southwest portion of Sun City West. Construction on Sun City West's first shopping center -- Sundome Shopping Center -- began in 1979.

SC West celebrates 40 years!

Despite a rocky start, SCW still “shines” four decades later

By Bret McKeand

Residents living in Sun City Grand, Arizona Traditions and most of Surprise may not realize that had it not been for a major recession and economic downturn in the early 1980s, they would today be living in Sun City West.

That's right. And if they're under the age of 55, they wouldn't be living there at all.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of Sun City West, the Del Webb Corporation's second Arizona active-adult community. The first, of course, was Sun City, which introduced the world to the concept of active-adult retirement living.

Sun City officially opened its doors on Jan. 1, 1960 and was resounding success -- selling 237 homes valued at over \$2.5 million during the first three days. By the end of the first year, the Webb company had sold over 1,700 homes in Sun City.

The active-adult community concept prompted the company to build

similar communities in Florida and California, but Sun City would continue to be Webb's shining star throughout the next two decades.

Company officials added to its Northwest Valley land holdings in the early 1970s by purchasing an additional 13,000 acres of land just a few miles west of Sun City. In 1975 plans were launched for a new, but separate, retirement community -- Sun City West.

John Meeker Jr., president of the Del E. Webb Development Company at the time, had a grand vision for this new community -- a “new sun rising in the west.” Sun City was already known throughout the world for its first-class amenities and recreation, and Mr. Meeker intended Sun City West to be bigger, better -- and grander -- on every level.

The original size of the community itself was to dwarf Sun City. Sun City West's 13,000 acres were to straddle Grand Avenue -- both north and south. Phase 1 would be north of Grand Avenue (Sun City West as it exists today), and Phase 2 would ex-

tend south of Grand all the way to Greenway Avenue and southwest to the Beardsley Canal.

Phase 2 would have included all of what is now Sun City Grand, Arizona Traditions and a big chunk of what we have come to know as Surprise.

In all, original plans predicted a population of 70,000.

But size alone wasn't enough to satisfy Mr. Meeker's grand vision. He wanted everything bigger and better, and among the amenities intended for the new community:

■ Hillcrest Golf Course, with its 20-acre lake, vast collection of palm trees and Saguaro cacti and expansive views of the Bradshaw Mountains, opened in 1979. At the time, it was considered by many golf enthusiasts as one of the three most challenging courses in Arizona. In the 1980s, it would host several LPGA and Senior PGA tournaments.

■ The outdoor Sun Bowl had proven immensely popular in Sun City, and the new community would include the Sundome Center for Performing Arts -- a 7,000-seat indoor,

air-condition auditorium. When it opened in 1980, it was billed as the largest, single-level amphitheater in the nation and considered by many to be an engineering marvel.

■ Mr. Meeker was determined Sun City West would have the largest recreational complex of any retirement community in the southwest. That complex -- R.H. Johnson Recreation Center -- when completed in 1979 lived up to its billing. Spread out over 48 acres, the 118,000-square-foot facility would feature a bowling alley, shuffleboard courts, fitness center, social hall, lecture hall, ballroom dance hall and numerous arts and crafts rooms. And those were all indoors! Step outside and one would find tennis courts, an Olympic-size swimming pool, bocce, a walking track and more.

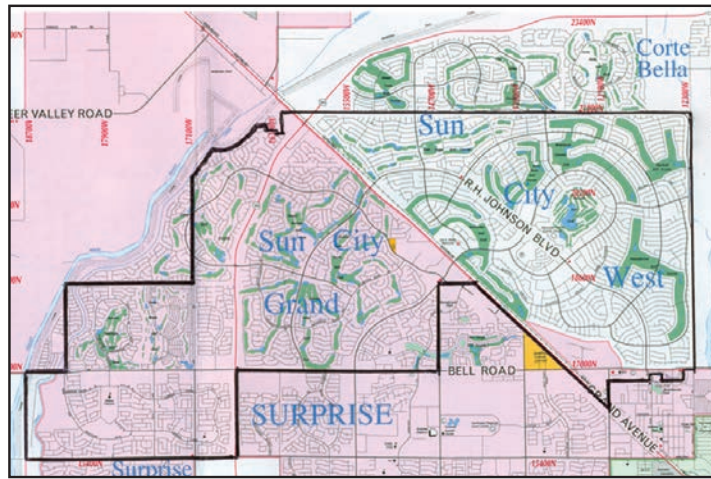
■ The heart of Sun City West -- the commercial core -- would not only include a grocery store and banks, but it was also intended as the site of a community hospital, cemetery and indoor mall. That's right, an indoor mall. The Valley's largest mall at the time -- MetroCenter -- had just opened in Phoenix and Mr. Meeker had visions of building a similar facility in downtown Sun City West!

Groundbreaking ceremonies were held in February 1978, and work began shortly thereafter on homes. The first residents took ownership of their homes in October that same year.

But unlike Sun City, the initial launch of Sun City West didn't go as planned. A number of buyers purchased homes as investments or winter residences, and many of those homes inevitably sat empty for some time. The golf course and recreation center were constructed first and a shopping center was completed in 1979.

And then the bubble burst.

Rising interest rates and an economic downturn in the early 1980s stifled interest and home sales slowed dramatically. To add to the challenge, the Webb company had expanded over the years and accumulated a large amount of debt. In order to gain



Original plans for Sun City West featured a community straddling both sides of Grand Avenue. A downturn in the economy forced the Del Webb Corporation to sell its land south of Grand Avenue, land that today sits within Surprise. The original boundaries are outlined here on a map showing the area as it exists today.

control over that debt, it was forced to sell a number of its assets -- including the aforementioned land included in what was to be Phase 2 -- the land south of Grand Avenue.

The air had gone out of the Sun City West balloon. Mr. Meeker's grand vision was in serious jeopardy of falling apart before it even had a chance to get off the ground.

The Sundome, Hillcrest Golf Course and the R.H. Johnson Recreation Center survived -- but plans for a downtown hospital, indoor shopping mall and cemetery were scrapped, destined to become footnotes to history. The Sundome, too, eventually disappeared to make way for a grocery store.

A smaller Sun City West would survive, and indeed rebound to full strength by the mid-1980s. Ironically, when a similar recession hit in the 1990s, it was the Webb Company that took full advantage of the financial struggles then suffered by other land owners. In 1992 the company purchased 885 acres north of the community and used that land to expand Sun City West (and later to build Corte Bella).

And in a strange twist of fate, the company would re-purchase much of that land they sold during those tough days back in the 1980s -- land since incorporated into Surprise -- and use it to build Sun City Grand.

But all's well that ends well. Sun City Grand is yet another success story in the company's long list of popular active-adult communities. And Surprise, too, has used that land wisely and today is one of the Valley's most popular and successful communities -- home to people and families of all ages.

But the next time you attend a spring training game at Surprise Stadium, just think for a moment that had history taken a different turn, you may have been watching the Sun Cities Softball League.

Note: This column was originally published in the Daily News-Sun. Bret McKeand is the senior executive editor for Independent Newsmedia Inc. USA. He is the former editor and publisher of the Sun City and Sun City West Independents, and a member of the Sun Cities Area Historical Society Board of Trustees.

Special thanks to Edson Allen, author of "Sun City West Silver Celebration: The First 25 Years," for his research into the history of the community. The book, the most authoritative history of Sun City West, may be purchased at www.delwebbsuncitiesmuseum.org.

History Tidbits

The Great Escape: The story behind Sun City's separation from Peoria schools

By Ben Rolloff

Telling the story of building Sun City (1960-1978) has taken many titles --“Miracle in the Desert” being typical, but journalists from national magazines like *Esquire* and *Look* and area newspapers pointed out a flaw or two.

Descriptors like: skinflints, tight-wads, uncaring, self-indulgent and socially isolated, abounded when from day one our “Pioneers” near unanimously dug in their heels and said “NO! We have raised and educated our children. We have no interest in raising or paying for educating the children of others.”

Sun City and Youngtown were not childless, as the age requirement for both communities then was 50 and not 55, and the communities counted 75-100 school-age residents.

Those children were near invisible, as local rules made them unwelcome at recreation centers and community events. But children had to be educated by law, and both communities were part of the Peoria School District along with a fast-growing area of Glendale.

By 1974 schools in the Peoria District were bursting at the seams that required double shifts with plans for triple shifts if new schools were not approved. Bonds to fund three new elementary schools and a new high school would be on the ballot in 1974.

There was little hope of approval based on a decade of prior experience. Retired voters did just that – vote! And they voted as a block to



defeat bonding proposals—over a dozen times in the past decade.

After the 1973 bond defeats, a large “Advisory Committee,” from the district formed to proffer advice to the school board and concluded there again was no chance to get funding approval in 1974. School taxes were a non-issue, as the Peoria District tax rate was the lowest in the county and less than half that of the second lowest district.

A large percentage of the enrollment growth came from a small area of Glendale—also part of the Peoria District. State law stymied a local idea to sever Glendale, so focus was transferred to a never used loophole in state law to allow portions of a district to withdraw by agreement among registered voters.

Reaching consensus by signed petitions gained immediate traction with a diverse collection of organizations. The downside to withdrawal by majority petition would require Sun City and Youngtown to form their own district and to provide at least one school. Tax impact estimates favored the retirement area, as their incredibly low rate would be reduced immediately by additional 75 percent.

Peoria and Glendale parents would face an estimated \$65 annual increase on their tax bill to fund the needed schools. Their response was buying ads in local newspapers begging, “Let us go!”

There was no shortage of volunteers to carry petitions door to door and to man posts at commercial centers, banks and church lobbies. Maricopa County’s list of registered voters suggested more than 14,000 signatures would be needed to meet the 50% threshold. Response to signing petitions was far from unanimous.

A new and vocal group titled the Retirement Community Association Sun City (RCASC) vehemently opposed the petitions. They contended forming a school district and having a school would attract more families with children, stress the community and lower property values.

The race was on to gather signatures because of a looming July 1 deadline, when all school districts needed an approved budget—even one newly formed. On June 14, 1974 the Peoria School Board received petitions with 18,145 signatures asking for separation.

Four days later the board voted unanimously to accept the petitions and to end the relationship between Sun City and Youngtown with the district and reluctantly notified the County Superintendent, who in turn notified the Maricopa County Supervisors to gain their consent. Planning began.

July 2, 1974 the Sun City/Youngtown School District became

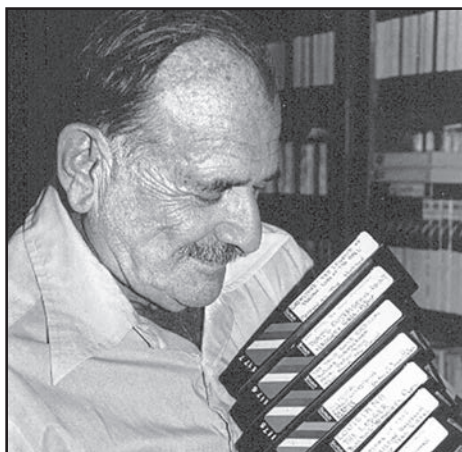
official; the County School Superintendent appointed three Sun City residents with education backgrounds as the school board until November elections, and work began to approve a budget, set a tax rate, acquire land, lease one or two portable classrooms for younger children, and arrange to pay tuition for junior and senior high residents in another school district. The race was on!

RCASC filed a suit to invalidate the petitions the same day the district formed and posted the requisite bond required for filing and obtained petition copies for verification purposes. Maricopa County employees would verify signatures at a cost of \$4,500. That cost was thought prohibitive and RCASC members and volunteers began the verification process themselves.

Meanwhile, one week after formation, the new school board passed a budget for \$703,000 for 1974-75 with \$100,000 for land purchase and \$155,000 for lease/purchase of portable classrooms to house students and teachers.

Law required a public hearing on the budget, which was held July 10 at Mountain View. An overflow crowd alternately cheered and hooted for over two hours and several times had to be gaveled back to order. One board critic was so strident he was challenged to step outside and settle it like a man. In the end, \$7,000 had been pared from the budget.

Counting of signatures by school district employees and RCASC volunteers continued, and already several hundred had been tossed because the signers were not registered voters or for voters signing more than once or for a spouse. The new required signer total was 15,685, and a court hearing to learn the verification results was scheduled for July 15. That got delayed



Sun City resident Lew Singer, a community activist who played a key role in getting Sun City removed from the Peoria Unified School District.

until July 24 at the request of the board's attorney because of the slow verification process.

Maricopa County determined that new voter registrations bumped the requisite number of petition signers to 16,358, and after further purging of signatures it looked close. The Sun City-Youngtown School Board met and determined that if petitions stood on Aug. 8, they would acquire land from Webb Corp. near 99th Avenue and Sun City Boulevard for the school site.

Five days later attorneys for the Peoria School Board and RCASC informed the judge they agreed that valid signatures fell short and the counting stopped. The judge ruled the petitions insufficient and sent the retirement communities back to the Peoria School District effective immediately. That ended the new school district 42 days after its creation.

Sun City-Youngtown School Board members had one final meeting with several items on the agenda including returning the property at 99th and Sun City Boulevard to Del Webb, who they had convinced to donate the land. School furniture had been purchased and was donated to the Peoria District. The

Sun City education tax set at 79 cents/\$1,000 of assessed valuation went back to \$4.29 which would raise \$3,000,000 for Peoria schools.

The story is far from over, but the end came swiftly with a touch of the anticlimactic. In a desperate state of needed classroom space, the Peoria School Board came back with an October referendum asking approval to sell over \$13 million in bonds for a new high school and three elementary schools.

Somewhat weary of the fight, Sun City and Youngtown didn't approve either proposal but didn't vote against in such overwhelming percentages. The final tally showed 43% approval for a new high school, but district voters approved the three elementary schools with 52% supporting the proposal and plans began immediately for construction.

Lewis Singer, Sun City activist, was not satisfied with the results and shortly after the election asked the Maricopa County Supervisors to hold up certifying the results of the referendum until he had a chance to examine the ballots, and he also asked for a guarantee from state legislators that they would fix the law and require residents to cast ballots in the precincts in which they lived and that poll workers be given a list of all eligible voters.

If both demands were not satisfied, Singer claimed he had no recourse but to go to the courts to request blocking the school district from selling the bonds for the approved schools. Singer categorically stated no bond company in the world would sell bonds when their legality was before the courts.

Two weeks after the election Singer made good on his threat and filed suit claiming selling the bonds would cause an unfair tax hike to

See Schools, continued on P. 12

Meet a Docent ...

The Del Webb Museum simply could not exist without its dedicated volunteers. Whether it's a board trustee, a docent or those who pitch in to provide upkeep and repairs to the building, our volunteers are truly the lifeblood of the operation and the organization couldn't exist without them.

Tammy Ruocco

Tammy Ruocco started as a docent with the museum in January 2018. She had visited the museum the previous spring and Deb Koehn was her guide. The interesting history of the museum in addition to Deb's great enthusiasm persuaded her that she wanted to become a docent.

Tammy and her husband, Fred, are from Grand Island, New York and Tammy is a retired special education teacher. Asked why she and Fred chose Arizona to retire, she said she disliked humidity and one



Tammy Ruocco

visit to Arizona was all she needed to know she wanted to be here. They are snowbirds who are in Sun City about four months a year as Fred is still working as a dentist in Grand Island.

History and visiting museums have always been a passion for Tammy. She fell in love with the Del Webb/Sun City Museum and was particularly interested in Del Webb's personal history and influence.

She says her favorite area in the museum is the Del Webb room. Asked what she enjoys about the visitors touring the museum, she said the look of awe on their faces when they learn some interesting information about the history of Sun City and Del Webb.

Other interests of Tammy's are reading, wine tasting, travel, taking art classes, visiting estate sales, getting facials and massages and her dogs! She has three children.

Our volunteers are so valuable to the museum and we could not exist without them! If you like people and history, call the museum at 623-974-2568 and find out more about this fun experience.

■ Schools, from Page 11

him and others because the passage of bonds was in doubt. On the same day Singer announced organizing of yet another petition drive for separation of the retirement areas from the school district.

As the drive was being organized, a Superior Court judge issued an order to recount the ballots and hold up selling the bonds indefinitely. Singer and a representative of Maricopa County began the recount and estimated it to take two to three days. After that, the process would involve checking the validity of thousands of affidavits of voters swearing they were eligible to vote. Singer estimated that process would take up to an additional three months.

At its November meeting, the school board was advised by its attorney there was nothing to do but wait for the recount while also monitoring the status of the second petition drive reported to have over 7,000 signatures the first week.

On Nov. 26, 1974 the Maricopa County Supervisors called a special meeting, and in a great surprise removed Sun City and Youngtown from the Peoria District on a vote of 3-1 with one member absent.

The vote came after receiving a request from 10 residents from Sun City that the supervisors separate Youngtown and Sun City from Peoria and receiving a second request from 10 residents of Peoria asking for the same resolution.

Community leaders found a quirk in state law that allowed supervi-

sors to act on such a request. At last there was a resolution.

Lew Singer immediately dropped his lawsuit. The great escape was made through a loophole in law that was quickly closed by the legislature.

Maricopa County took responsibility for the students by paying their tuition so they could continue their education in Peoria schools. Sun City and Youngtown residents no longer paid any local school tax but were required to make annual token payments to the state general education fund. Property taxes, already low, were reduced significantly, and Peoria finally was able to build its greatly needed schools.

It took 14 years to escape -- the property tax benefits continue to this day.

Speakers Bureau brings local history to life

By Edson Allen

Thinking back to my school days, I didn't care much for history. How about you? Some loved it, but for me it was all seemingly needless memorization of names, dates and places that would only come up one more time – the exam.

Retirement brought me a new perspective on many things, and my curiosity about our new Arizona home led to an interest not only in its spectacular scenery, but in its colorful history as well. It started me on a new adventure – “The Mystery of History.”

As I looked about me, I saw names on buildings and streets that must have been people – Del Webb Boulevard, Meeker Boulevard, and more. I quickly learned they were no longer around, and discovered

a treasure trove of information in a little house on Oakmont Drive in Sun City – the home of the Sun Cities Area Historical Society and now the site of the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum.

I loved sharing tidbits of history with others, and often got an amazed, “I didn't know that!” in response. That led me to read more and spend more time with the archives in the Historical Society. The number of interesting snippets grew and grew, and finally became PowerPoint presentations on a variety of subjects.

I wasn't the only one who was eager to share what we'd learned, and we formed a Speakers Bureau that would provide interesting talks to local organizations at no charge. It became a community service of

the Society – and helps spread the word about the museum.

Three of the most popular subjects are:

■ “Cotton Bolls to Golf Balls” – the story of how the nation's first active adult community came to be.

■ “From Lizard Acres to Lush Oasis” extends the story to the development of Sun City West.

■ “The Remarkable Del Webb” tells how a high school dropout went on to build one of the nation's largest construction firms, own the New York Yankees, and conceive Sun City.

To schedule a talk, contact the Museum office at 623-974-2568. Help us share the entertaining and educational stories of our past -- and interest others in the Mystery of History.



SUN CITY
ARIZONA
RECREATION CENTERS
OF SUN CITY



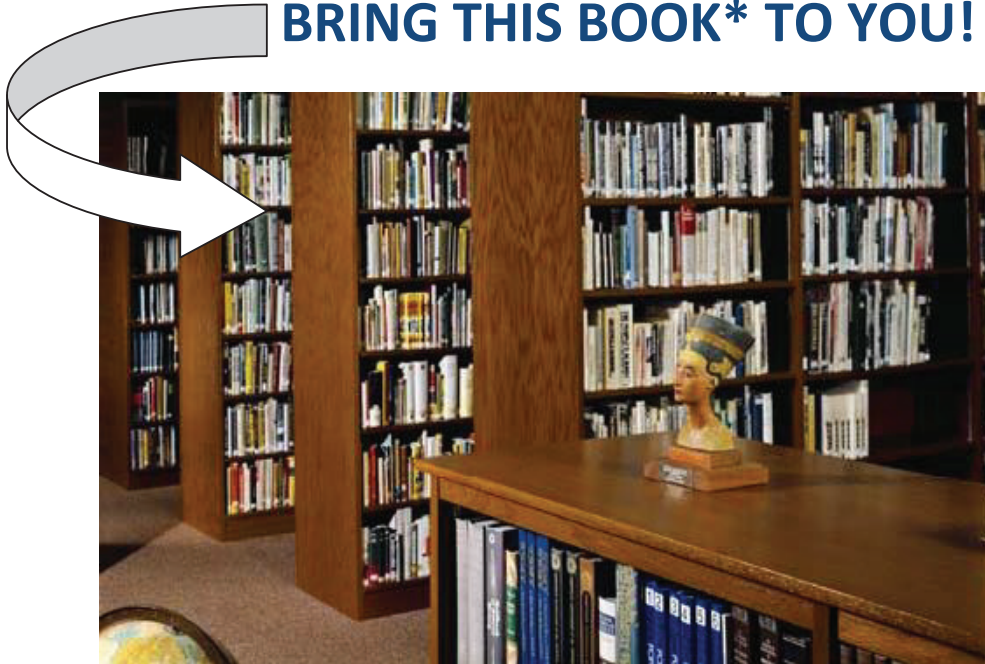
Fall is always full of fun times in the Original Fun City - Sun City AZ!

Toll Free 1-844-4 SUN CITY or visit suncityaz.org



**If you can no longer go to the library
LET THE LIBRARY COME TO YOU!**

**The Friends of the Sun City Libraries
BOOK BUDDY program will
BRING THIS BOOK* TO YOU!**



If you or someone you know is interested in the Book Buddy Program, please call Book Buddy Director Arlene at 623 974-5459.

Do you have 3 hours a month to earn extra stars in your crown?
Be the Buddy who delivers the book and make a real difference in
someone's life.

*or any other book, DVD, CD or Puzzle in the MCLD's circulation of over 405,000 items!

Julie Glass to retire as museum's office manager

The museum's officer manager, Julie Glass, has decided it is time to retire and will be leaving the museum at year-end.

She originally started in the office as a volunteer, working for her predecessor, Judy Baerg. Julie came at a time when we had a massive program underway to digitize all 3,000 photographs in our files, along with all the printed brochures, newsletters, and more.

When Judy moved to California six years ago, Julie was her natural replacement. She continued working on getting all the photos and literature into specialized museum software that

facilitates data retrieval. Those files were uploaded to the museum's website where they are available to writers, reporters and researchers worldwide.

Julie has done much, much more for us and her mornings are filled answering phone and e-mail requests, archival donations, inventories, assisting trustees and volunteers, membership, and more.

Most significantly, Julie has accounting skills that have enabled her to not only manage our finances, but prepare the monthly financial reports for the board as well.

Julie's maternal grandparents retired to Sun

City and she has lived in Sun City for the last 10 years. Before that, she had worked for years as a controller for several custom and tract home-builders. She was born, raised and went to college in Oregon. She has spent the majority of her life in Phoenix. In her spare time, Julie loves to exercise and genealogy.

We will miss Julie. She has promised to be available to help her replacement ease into the diverse workload the museum presents. Please join the Board, docents, and volunteers in wishing Julie a relaxing, well-deserved retirement. We'll miss you Julie!!

The museum is accepting applications from anyone interested in part-time office work, 20 hours a week. Familiarity with a computer is required, and training in the special museum software will be provided. Experience with financial record-keeping is desirable, although not required. For more information, contact Gail Warmath, president of the board, at 623-933-7069.

DEDICATED
PARTNERSHIPS.
STRONGER
COMMUNITIES.

We are proud to support organizations like Del Webb Sun Cities Museum that create a brighter future for Arizona.



50 Years of
Healthier Living



Sun Health provides West Valley residents with:

- The best in medical care and award-winning community wellness programs and services
- Three independent living Life Care communities and a Life Care at home program
- Exclusive philanthropic support of Banner Boswell and Banner Del E. Webb medical centers and the Banner Sun Health Research Center through Sun Health Foundation

To learn more about Sun Health or how you can make a charitable donation, call or click:
623-832-5350 | SunHealth.org

Sun Cities Area Historical Society/
Del Webb Sun Cities Museum
10801 Oakmont Drive
Sun City, AZ 85351



**Serving our Sun City residents
for over 50 years!**



Keep in mind, we're not all about illness and injury. We're also about the happy time when family comes for a visit. We can help with the needs of your grandchildren. High chair, stroller, Pack 'n Play ~ We're here to make your life easier.

9980 SANTA FE DRIVE * SUN CITY, ARIZONA 85351
(623) 974-2561 * (623) 974-2562 * (623) 972-5208
Fax: (623) 974-6514