

"...and SCHOA said, Maybe!!"

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When asked recently to occasionally share Sun City's wonderful forgotten or unknown stories, we at the Del Webb Sun Cities Area Museum jumped at the offer. A good starting place would be reviewing a story without an answer. What if SCHOA had accepted Del Webb's offer in 1966 to own and manage the Sun Bowl?

The Sun Bowl story began as an inexpensive compromise for Sun City residents clamoring for better entertainment options in the early 1960's. Residents demanded a large indoor auditorium capable of staging concerts and theatrical events for hundreds. John Meeker, new President of the Del E. Webb Development Co. determined the cost to be prohibitive and proposed a low-cost band shell with terraced seating for thousands instead. With scores of construction employees already on site, the entire project went from proposal to completion in a matter of weeks.

Del E. Webb traveled to Sun City to dedicate the Sun Bowl in November 1966. As part of the ceremony Webb called the SCHOA President to the stage to present him with a large American flag to fly over the Sun Bowl. The announced plan was to deed the Sun Bowl to SCHOA to both own and operate after partnering with Webb for a year or two to study both the costs and operational challenges.

During that first year, production of *entertainment events included a variety show, choral groups but also major attractions* like "The Guy Lombardo Orchestra," comedian Herb Schreiner, and pianist Liberace. In October 1967, SCHOA's new President announced a decision on ownership/management could not be determined without further study and bumped the final decision to later in 1968.

When Del E. Webb, Inc. presented the original offer, SCHOA was the only organization with members from every area of the community and thus the logical recipient. By May 1968, things had changed. The two Sun City rival recreation centers and boards merged into what is now the Recreation Centers of Sun City. (RCSC) and presented a second option. It then took thirteen years, but in 1981 Webb, Inc. at last deeded the Sun Bowl to the RCSC. But that is a story for another day.