



The Official Newsletter of the

Sun Cities Area Historical Society

Spring 2010 | Volume 19 | Number 1



Newly christened
Del Webb Sun Cities Museum
attracts record crowds January
1, 2010 to mark community's
golden anniversary.

See more photos ... Pages 8-9

Spring meeting held in SC West

The Sun Cities Area Historical Society will conduct its Spring Membership Meeting 1-3 p.m. March 26.

The meeting will be held in the Acacia Room at Palm Ridge Recreation Center, Sun City West, 13800 W. Deer Valley Drive.



The meeting is open to all members and the general public. Admission is free.

Guest speaker is Gladys Ann Wells, director and state librarian of the Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records.

Ms. Wells is responsible for statewide collaboration of libraries, archives, public records and museums.

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Inside our spring newsletter ...

Happy Birthday Del Webb!



Museum plans to celebrate 111th birthday of Sun City's founder.
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Sun City's 1st church turns 50!



United Church of Sun City prepares to mark its golden anniversary in 2010.
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Play Ball!



Newest exhibit showcases history of baseball and softball in the Sun Cities.
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Happy Birthday Del Webb!

The Sun Cities Area Historical Society is celebrating Del Webb's birthday a day early on Sunday, May 16.

The public is invited to a free historical and dramatic program in the Oakmont Recreation Center, to enjoy birthday cake outdoors on the patio and to visit the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum next door at 10801 W. Oakmont Ave.

All those who attend will be given a valuable Sun City souvenir.

There will be similar programs, at 1 and at 2:30 p.m. Guests are invited to visit the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum next door either before or after attending the program in Oakmont.

The refurbished museum in a 50-year-old model home now features displays on Webb the man and the giant construction company he founded.

Historical Society President Bill Pearson will introduce guests present at 1 p.m. and then Sun City Players actor Jim Gatscher will present an illustrated program on Del Webb.

Next, actress Tanya Griffith will portray Maxine Newman, one of Webb's secretaries. This program will be repeated from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m.

Birthday cake, including a small replica of Sun City's 5th birthday cake in five layers, will be served on the Oakmont patio beginning at 12:30 p.m.

So plan your day either one of these ways:

Group A: Tour Museum noon to 1 p.m. Attend program at 1 p.m. in Oakmont.

(150 only).

Enjoy birthday cake 2:30 to 3 p.m. on the patio.

Or, tour the museum 3-4 p.m.

Group B: Tour museum 1-2 p.m.

Enjoy birthday cake 2-2:30 on Oakmont patio. Attend program at 2:30 to 3:30 in Oakmont. (150 only)

For those who have toured the museum this year and wish only cake it will be



served from 12:30 to 3:45 p.m. The Del Webb Sun Cities Museum will be open from noon to 4 p.m. Guests are urged to dress for both indoor and outdoor events and allow plenty of time for parking vehicles either at Oakmont Rec Center parking lots on Oakmont Drive.

By the way, Del E. Webb died of cancer at age 75 on July 4, 1974, just after he had completed Phase 2 and the "world's largest working" sundial; that was the year he opened Phase III and the year before Sun City's 15th anniversary.



The Sun Cities Area Historical Society will celebrate Del Webb's 111th birthday May 16 with a special cake designed to replicate the five-tier cake presented to Sun City residents on the community's fifth anniversary in 1965. Mr. Webb was on hand to help mark the event and was the first to cut the cake.

Sun Cities Area Historical Society archives

Resident donates 1960-era cart to museum

The Del E. Webb Sun Cities Museum recently received a fully-restored 1960-era three-wheel Cushman golf cart thanks to the generous donation of Sun City resident Marie Bartenhagen and her son, Forrest.

Marie and her late husband, Henry, purchased a winter home in Sun City in the summer of 1967. Henry bought the golf cart in anticipation of his winters in Sun City, although an injury prevented him from pursuing the hobby seriously. He eventually brought the cart back to use on his farm in Wapello, Iowa, where it was finally retired from service in 1990 -- and parked behind a barn.



Henry Bartenhagen

During a visit to Sun City in 2008, Forrest visited a golf cart display sponsored by the Historical Society. He noticed there were no three-wheelers on display.

After speaking with his mother, Forrest and his brother, Clarence, decided to restore the cart to its original condition, bring it back to Sun City -- and donate it to the museum. The cart was presented to the museum by Forrest and his mother on Feb. 2, 2010.



Marie Bartenhagen, a resident of Sun City since 1967, poses with her son, Forrest, and the golf cart her family restored and recently donated to the museum.

SCAHS welcomes two to board

Two new trustees have joined the Sun Cities Area Historical Society Board, one each from Sun City and Sun City West.

Norm Dickson is the new treasurer, replacing Marsha McIntosh. He was born in England and lived in Michigan where for 37 years he was a coach, teacher, counselor and administrator in public secondary schools.

He served as president of his teacher union, administrators' and homeowners' groups

The Dicksons moved to Sun City in 1998 where Norm continued in service, this time with the Recreation Centers of Sun City as treasurer, vice-president, president and six years as director.

Norm also organized the digitizing of the Historical Society's photo collection and assisted in the publication of *Reshaping Retirement in Arizona*.

Noel Willis, a 17-year resident of Sun City West, has taken on the job of building and grounds management for the society.

He is from Iowa City, and is a retired structural engineer who built bridges. Noel was president of PORA for 1997 and 1998 and served as chairman of the building committee for the Sun

Board of Trustees elects officers for 2010



Sun Cities Area Historical Society 2010 Board of Trustees

Front row, from left: Arlene Macy, President Bill Pearson, Secretary Nancy Donielson, Vice President Ed Cirillo. Standing, from left, Treasurer Norm Dickson, Edson Allen, Don Tufts, Priscilla Fenner, Bret McKeand. Pictured at right, Noel Willis. Not pictured: Past President David Verble.

Health Corp. for seven years.

"I hope I can help keep the museum in good shape so that people and their guests coming to visit will enjoy the building," Noel says.

Other officers are as follows: **President Bill Pearson; Vice-President Edward Cirillo; and Secretary Nancy Donielson.**

Trustees and their assignments are as follows: **Ed Cirillo** – financial planning, **Edson Allen** – exhibits, **Priscilla Fenner** – 50th Anniversary events, **Bret McKeand** – publicity, fundraising, membership, **Arlene Macy** – landscaping and **Don Tufts** – membership and public relations.

Museum hires Judy Baerg as office manager

The Sun Cities Area Historical Society Board of Trustees has hired Sun City resident Judy Baerg to serve as office manager of the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum.



Judy Baerg

A Realtor with Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage in Sun City, Judy will work part time for the museum.

The majority of her career was spent in a variety of roles at the Panama Canal Commission in Panama,

retiring in the early 1990s as director of employee and management development.

She has since managed two national medical associations and worked with the Surprise Regional Chamber of Commerce. She volunteers with numerous local nonprofit organizations.

"I look forward to working with the museum and helping it grow," said Judy.

As office manager, Judy will oversee administrative duties, coordinate docent activities and assist with fundraising, membership and promotions.



Bill Pearson was installed as president for 2010 during the Sun Cities Area Historical Society's annual meeting held in November. The new name of the SCAHS headquarters was unveiled during the meeting.



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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 - Friday Or by appointment Office Manager: Judy Baerg

2010 Board of Trustees

- Bill Pearson President Edward Cirillo Vice President Nancy Donielson Secretary Norm Dickson Treasurer David Verble Past President

- Edson Allen Priscilla Fenner Arlene Macy Bret McKeand Don Tuffs Noel Willis

Newsletter Editor:

Bret McKeand Contributors:

Edson Allen, Priscilla Fenner, Bill Pearson Layout and composition courtesy of the Sun City Independent

Message from the President

A new era begins ...

Some folks see the word new and immediately think better. In the case of the Sun Cities Area Historical Society becoming the Del Webb Museum, better isn't necessarily the case.

But before I head off in that direction, let me clear the air on what has happened to this remarkable little gem in the desert located at 10801 Oakmont Drive.

In 1986 the State of Arizona accepted our Articles of Incorporation and the Sun Cities Area Historical Society was born. We were (and still are) a nonprofit corporation; if you don't believe that, just look at our financial statement. The model home was finally opened in 1989.

With the 50th anniversary looming and knowing we had an opportunity to raise the bar a bit, we renamed the house the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum. Our goal was to increase the museum's presence in the community. We are still legally the Sun Cities Area Historical Society.

With that bit of history out of the way, let's take a little more forward look. We kicked off the name change at our annual meeting on November 2, 2009. We muddled through with hours changes, docent shortages and board transitions during the holidays.

Our goal was to get to January 1, 2010 where



Bill Pearson 2010 President, Sun Cities Area Historical Society

we would begin anew the quest to shine a light on the museum and all of the treasures we held.

Little did we know just what kind of impact we were to have. We were open for a scant three hours and nearly 400 people came through the Museum on January 1. The tiny house was bulging at the seams, the excitement level was high as visitors vowed to come back and get a better look. We had a great time but more important, people knew we existed and that we would be open Monday - Friday, 1-4 p.m.

Success breeds success, and the board was thrilled to the point where they said let's push even harder. They authorized us to hire a part-time manager, rebuild display areas and begin a marketing of the museum like we have never done before. They understood, this was the year we needed to turn the corner and play a

significant role in the future of the Sun Cities.

We closed out the month of January with the single biggest attendance in our history, over 600 visitors. We know it will only get better.

Virtually everyone that tours the museum comes away delighted. We are simply taking the hard work of our predecessors and shining a light on what they have gathered. Kudos to Jane Freeman and the countless others who over the years have worked their tails off.

Contained in this newsletter is a schedule of events for the year. You won't want to miss any of them. That said, let me close with a very simple thought: We need your help and financial support.

Membership is as little as \$10 a year for a single and \$15 for a couple. With that you get a free copy of Reshaping Retirement in America, a special journal celebrating the 50th anniversary of Sun City.

For years, a small handful of Sun City residents have kept us going. They have given their time, money and energy, and if we can increase the numbers who belong, we can do even more. Donations are welcome and significant, but memberships, bequests and sponsorships are our lifeblood.

Stop by and see us... to know us is to love us!

Support Your Sun Cities Museum!

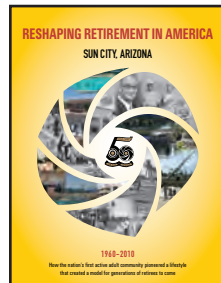
Join the Sun Cities Area Historical Society and help us preserve, protect and showcase the history of Sun City and Sun City West!

Your generous donation goes a long way:

- Supports the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum -- the "official" headquarters of the Sun Cities Area Historical Society, housed in one of the first five model homes built in Sun City!
- Funds educational programs that share the history of the world's best-known active-adult retirement communities.
- Underwrites a number of special activities planned in 2010 to celebrate Sun City's 50th anniversary!
- Continues the effort to collect, archive and preserve Sun Cities artifacts.



Join today and receive a FREE gift!!



While supplies last. New members can pick up their gift at the museum.

Join the Sun Cities Area Historical Society, and we'll send you this special 50th anniversary commemorative publication: *Reshaping Retirement in America*, absolutely free as our show of appreciation for your support.

Return the application below!

Sun Cities Area Historical Society Annual Membership



Yes, please accept my membership application! My annual contribution is enclosed!

Check one:

- Individual (\$10)
- Family (\$15)
- Supporting (\$25)
- Clubs/ Organizations (\$25)
- Business (\$50)
- Patron (\$50)
- Other _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Apt. #: _____ City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone Number: _____

email: _____

New Renewal

Return check, payable to:
Sun Cities Area Historical Society (SCAHS)
10801 Oakmont Drive, Sun City, AZ 85351



United Church of Sun City celebrated its silver anniversary in 1985. Sun City's first church will mark its 50th anniversary this October. *Photo courtesy Sun City Independent.*

Sun City's first house of worship

United Church of Sun City celebrates its golden anniversary

There were only 30 families living in the new retirement community in the desert when Pastor Dr. Walter Witt and his wife, Gladys, began inviting people to punch and cookies (made by Gladys) at the Highway House.

He conducted the first worship service in the auditorium of the Community Center (now called Oakmont) in October, 1960 after only six months of house completions. By November more than 100, representing 61 denominations, had joined the United Church of Sun City as charter members, and Dr. Witt took an option on the land at the corner of 107th Avenue

and Sun City Boulevard.

Sun City's first church building was ready by June, 1961. It was built from plans of the Fairway Rec Center donated by Del Webb. The 20,200 square feet building cost \$8,500. Worship services were held there until 1965 when the present sanctuary was built.

Members met new people from their home states while standing on a giant U.S. map painted in the courtyard, and early potlucks were set on the patio. The social hall, now named Witt Hall, hosted many activities until two years ago when the church leased it to the Banner Olive Branch Senior Center.

Today church social events are held in the Friendship Center at the back of the sanctuary; food is kept warm or cold in the Beehive, a state of the art potluck serving area carved from the Narthex where there is also a library nook, room for meetings and screen for movies or videos.

United Church members are accustomed to change and innovation. In keeping with their purpose of community outreach they:

- * Helped establish Sun Valley Lodge, the area's first retirement home
- * Started Dysart Community Center in El Mirage
- * Helped establish Interfaith Ser-

United Church of Sun City: Sun City's first church

VICES

* Share their campus with the Banner Olive Branch Senior Center

* Support the Valley View Community Food Bank

Grace Havlik, a second generation resident who retired as a primary school principal in Oak Forest, Ill and moved to the family home in 1987, keeps busy at the church and volunteering as a literacy teacher or at the Sun Cities Area Historical Society.

As chair of the United Church Diaconate, she is active with household duties, memorial services, setting up for Communion and as Care Minister. She is also chairman of the 2010 Committee and planning the church's 10-

10-10 celebration as the first church founded in Sun City.

"After 50 years we still see our place in the community as proclaiming that God is still speaking to each of us..." she says describing the programs listed above and the Salute to Vets program which began in 2008 and includes a wall of photos of members then and now who served in WWII, Korea and Vietnam.

To accommodate the needs of the senior center, the church restructured the Narthex and sanctuary, adding two beautiful and moveable altars and a new sound and light system. Restrooms were updated and redecorated.

The library was moved to the Friend-

ship Center so the old space could become the new chapel. Seniors from the Banner Olive Branch Center attend a Monday morning service there.

"Finding new ways to be in service to the community has always been the focus of this church," says Susan Aurich, director of Care Ministries.

Recently the church featured a WWII movie series followed by discussions. Currently the contemporary series is titled "Faith and Films."

And hand cleaner is available in each pew in the Sanctuary as well as to those who do the meeting and greeting at services.



Grace Havlik explains the Veteran's Wall of United Church of Sun City members of WWII, Korea and Vietnam wars. Only a portion is shown here; others are included on the back side.



Director of Care Ministries Susan Aurich shows off The Beehive, the potluck serving area carved from the Narthex. Diners then carry their plates into the Friendship Center at the back of the Sanctuary, only a few yards away.



Seniors enter the Banner Olive Branch Senior Center through the main entrance on the south side of the building, the former Witt Hall of the United Church of Sun City. The original entrance on 107th Avenue is now the back door to the kitchen. The church rents the building to the BOBSC and has remodeled the main church building to accommodate the social events of church members.

*Story and photos by
by P. Atwood Fenner*

Happy Birthday Sun City!

Crowds visit museum to mark community's 50th anniversary

The Del Webb Sun Cities Museum open house on Jan. 1, 2010 attracted the largest crowd ever to visit the facility in one day. Visitors were treated to music, refreshments and new exhibits (including a new display of personal artifacts once owned by Sun City founder Del E. Webb). The museum is located in one of the first five model homes built in Sun City -- and one of the first homes viewed by curious visitors the day Sun City first opened to the public, Jan. 1, 1960.



Fifty years to the day after it first opened, the home that now houses the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum once again drew a crowd of curious onlookers. The month of January saw the most visitors ever to the museum -- over 610!



Bill Pearson, right, president of the Sun Cities Area Historical Society, welcomes a guest to the open house and points out a special exhibit featuring the voice of Sun City Founder Del Webb.



Then ... 1960



Now ... 2010

Oakmont Avenue as it appeared Jan. 1, 1960 (top photo), and as it appeared Jan. 1, 2010 (bottom).

Del Webb Sun Cities Museum Open House Jan. 1, 2010

Photos by Bret McKeand

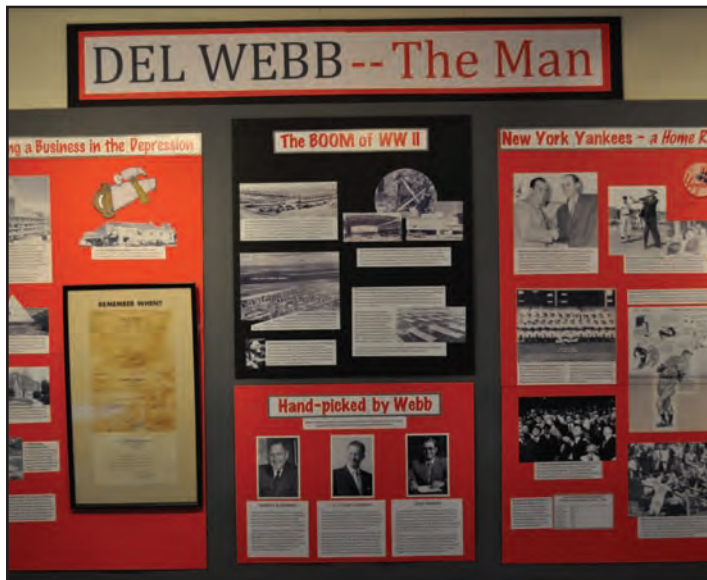


The Vintage Voices, a quartet from the Desert Aires Barbershop Chorus, entertained those who attended the open house. The appearance was a homecoming for Joe Salz, second from left, Mr. Salz also performed with a different quartet at the community's original first-day opening ceremony 50 years ago!



1. Trustee Arlene Macy. 2. A new Del E. Webb exhibit highlights the history of the company that constructed the Sun Cities. 3. Trustee Edson Allen supervised the development of the new Del Webb exhibit. 4. Trustee Priscilla Fenner, right, greets visitors. 5. Trustee Norm Dickson with his wife, Jean. 6. Trustee Ed Cirillo serves up hot cider. 7. A 1960's-era Cushman golf cart is on display at the museum.

Exhibit depicts life and times of Sun City founder



The new Del Webb Sun Cities Museum opened Dec. 9 with a major exhibit, "Del Webb – The Man. The Company." Mrs. Robert H. Johnson has loaned the museum many items that originally belonged to Del Webb, and came to preview the items displayed. She also brought the museum a Bible given to the young Del Webb by his parents, and two signed baseballs, which will be added to the items on display. Joining her from left to right were, Ed Allen, past president; Bill Pearson, 2010 president; and David Verble, 2009 president.



The exhibit is divided into two major sections. The part dealing with Webb -- the man, features his youth, building a business in the 1930s, the war years, the New York Yankees, and his involvement in Las Vegas. The second part features the company Webb built, and the many different types of construction projects. A large map shows the 25 states where there is evidence of the Webb company's involvement. There no doubt are many more projects, but no complete list exists.

New sales theater opens at museum

The 10' x 10' building that served as the original Sun City sales office now showcases the advertising and promotional tools used to attract America's attention in the early 1960s.

The centerpiece of the Sales Theater is the movie shown to prospective purchasers nearly 50 years ago. It's a heartwarming and entertaining look at a stereotypical retiree who after getting his gold watch, tackles his list of projects around the house and runs out of things to do just as cold weather sets in.

His wife comes to his rescue, suggesting they visit friends who recently moved to a place in Arizona (guess where?).

The building housing the sales theater is the oldest existing structure in Sun City. It was built in the fall of 1959 to house a salesperson to answer questions of those passing by who wondered what all the construction was about.

Too small for sales use once the community opened, the building served as a refreshment stand for the second series of model houses.

In 1965, it was moved to the new ballpark to serve as a dressing room for the Saints – a women's fast-pitch softball team sponsored by the Sun City merchants. It served other uses over the years, and in 1990 was offered to the Historical Society.



The Sales Theater exhibit is entitled, "CREATING THE PERFECT RETIREMENT – How America was Sold on Sun City." Beneath the header are displays of the first sales brochure, magazine and newspaper ads, and the popular "Vacation Special" that allowed visitors to sample Sun City. It was estimated that 50% of all purchasers took advantage of this special.

Play Ball!! Museum exhibit offers look at baseball presence in the Sun Cities

It's time for spring training, and thoughts of baseball. Make sure you stop at the museum to view the exhibit on the history of the sport in the Sun Cities. Titled "Fields of Dreams," the exhibit shows the progression of playing fields from weed-strewn lots with a handmade backstop to a major league park, and eventually to today's attractive softball fields in Sun City and Sun City West.

The exhibit highlights the history of Sun City Stadium, a professional baseball complex once located on the northwest corner of 111th and Grand avenues. The stadium once served as the spring training home to the Milwaukee Brewers.

You'll also meet the Saints – a young women's fast-pitch softball team that made its home in Sun City in 1965.



The team went on to win a national championship in 1979 and enjoyed strong local support all along the way. (Their most popular fund-raiser was



A major league park was built on the northwest corner of 111th and Grand avenues – the site of today's Fountains of Sun City apartments. The Brewers were a big draw during spring training for the 13 years they spent at this park.



One of the early fields was located along Grand Avenue (behind the white fence). Note the backstop built by the players.



The Sun City Saints, a professional women's softball team, were a popular draw for many years at Sun City Stadium. The team won the national championship in 1979. A popular fundraiser: Selling kisses for \$1,

selling kisses for \$1!

Did you know that Del Webb tried to persuade the Kansas City Royals to move their training camp to Sun City in 1968? He offered to build them a training facility south of Grand Avenue between 99th and the New River – the area now known as Quail Run. But, they decided on Florida, and it wouldn't be until 1973 that a big league team would find a spring home in Sun City – the Milwaukee Brewers.

You'll also learn about a league for retired major league players 35 and over. It had a short run, but for one season, the Sun City Rays brought the likes of Rollie Fingers, Fergie Jenkins, and Pete LaCock to the local ballpark.



History of Rancho Estates

Sun City ranchos offer wide-open spaces to buyers

By P. Atwood Fenner

In the early 60s, secretary Lucy Krug complained to her boss that she was tired of boarding her horse and wished she could build a home and have her horse there, too.

Lucy's boss was John Meeker, president of DEVCO, since 1960 builder of modest homes, recreation centers and golf courses for retirees interested in an active lifestyle on former cotton fields just south of Grand Avenue.

By 1965, says John Meeker in his memoirs, the concept was approved for one-acre or larger lots with horse privileges and bridle paths instead of alleys. Soon land south of Peoria Avenue on 111th Avenue was purchased for Rancho Estates.

The utilities were put underground, and the builder would build any single residence home of the buyer's choice from the Sun City model homes. An acre lot here cost \$10,990.

By 1970 Lucy and her husband Richard Shields had moved onto an acre lot and built a modest ranch home and a small half-story building for her horse and feed storage.

Later, she moved to a larger lot on the same street, built the same ranch style home again and another small building for her horse.

They named this property Rancho Ventura, and along the back of her lot, Lucy built a cat cemetery for herself. She continued to work for DEVCO and ride



Rancho Estates is home to acre lots, sprawling homes and horse property. The area was the brainchild of Lucy Krug, secretary to DEVCO president John Meeker. She was the original owner of Rancho Ventura, a property now up for sale.

her horse.

Meanwhile other Rancho Estates residents occupied sprawling homes with

large garages; some added hipped roof barns for horses and sheds for antique cars, dog runs and antique farm

equipment, recreational vehicles and boats.

After the Shields were gone, a two-story workshop and office were built on their lot, and her small building was converted to a nine-vehicle outbuilding. The house was remodeled to include 1,728 square feet with two bedrooms, two baths and a two-car garage.

The next owner of Rancho Ventura wanted to repair, display and sell recreational vehicles, but the neighbors fought this project successfully.

Today a sign "Ranch for sale" can be found on 111th Avenue at Rancho Estates.

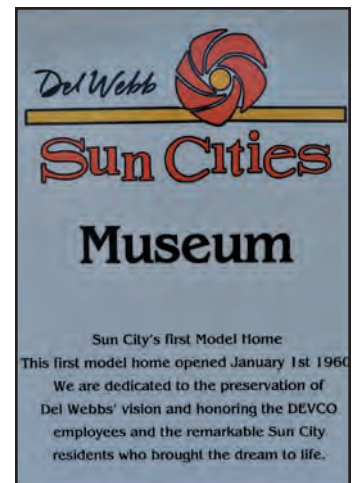
A short drive brings you to Rancho Ventura's arched entrance and a grouping of cactus, a horse and an Indian.

The asking price for the 5.635 acre parcel and its buildings is \$890, 000.



Sign of the times

The Del Webb Sun Cities Museum continues to see improvements and enhancements. Following an official name change in November, the museum saw a new sign erected earlier this year. Visitors to the museum are also greeted at the entrance by a new placard, right, that explains the historical significance of the house.





“Did Del Webb import rabbits to help Midwesterners feel more at home?”

That’s one example of the kinds of questions asked of speakers from the museum. In this case, before the question could be answered, the man continued, “And then did he bring in coyotes to control the rabbits?”

Our speakers never know what bit of folklore they may encounter in giving a talk.

Last year, our Speakers Bureau gave talks to 32 different clubs and organizations – Lions, Kiwanis, and Rotary Clubs; church groups; PEO and Quester chapters; state clubs; and others. More than 2,365 individuals learned something new about the history of Sun City, Sun City West, or Del Webb. These talks are provided at no charge as a service to the community

Questions about Sun Cities history? Speakers Bureau available to help



The museum was represented at the Dec. 9 kick-off of Sun City’s 50th anniversary activities by Ed Allen who gave a PowerPoint presentation at Sundial about the life of the remarkable Del Webb.

and as a means of publicizing the museum. We do suggest that the organization make a donation or take out a membership in the Society.

Activity has been strong this year as a result of Sun City’s

50th anniversary. Already, the Speakers Bureau has given two-hour programs on Sun City history and the life of Del Webb at Rio Salado Institute for Senior Education (RISE), and the Sun City Lifelong

Learning Club.

Among the most popular talks are:

“Cotton Bolls to Golf Balls” – the events leading up to Sun City, the nation’s first active adult community.

“From Lizard Acres to Lush Oasis” – the sequel to Sun City, Sun City West

“Del Webb – The Man and the Company He Built” – the remarkable story of a wannabe baseball player who went on to build one of America’s largest construction firms.

“Fields of Dreams” – the history of baseball in the Sun Cities.

If you belong to a group that uses outside speakers, suggest the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum to the person in charge of programs. Have him or her call the museum at 974-2568, or Ed Allen at 975-1815.

Historical books, DVDs available at Del Webb Sun Cities Museum

A soon to be out-of-print book is among those for sale in the Museum. *Along the Old Vulture Road*, by Albert F. “Al” Tudor will no longer be published since his recent death.

It includes cattle tales and trails from Wickenburg to Phoenix along Grand Avenue, aka U.S. 60. Cost is \$10.

Two years ago the Historical Society, thanks to a grant from the Constance W. McMillin trust, was able to reprint *Del Webb: A Man/A Company*, by Margaret Finnerty.

It was written in 1991 and revised for the second time by Tara Blanc and Jessica McCann in 1999. A second

printing came in 2000, and Pulte Homes gave the Society permission to reprint in a dark blue soft cover in 2008. Cost is \$20.

The fledgling Sun Cities Area Historical Society entered the publishing world the year after it was formed in 1987 with *Churches of the Sun Cities*, by Emil C. Fisher, who carefully penned ink drawings to go with short stories about all the area churches built up to that time. Cost is \$1.

The first major history of Sun City was the bright red soft covered *Jubilee, the 25th Anniversary of Sun City, Arizona*, written in 1984 by Jane

Freeman and Glenn Sanberg. The book is available for \$20.

In 2003 the Society sponsored Edson Allen’s soft cover *Sun City West Silver Celebration*. The book covers the journey from Lizard Acres to lush oasis in its 289 pages. Cost is \$5.

And the most recent publishing effort is *Reshaping Retirement in America, Sun City, Arizona*. It was published this year with Society members Edson Allen, Jo Ruck and David Verble as consulting editors. It summarizes how the nation’s first active adult community pioneered a lifestyle that created a model for generations of

retirees to come.

The salient events of history are capsulized in a journal format. (Cost \$5, or free with Museum membership).

The Society also sells the DVD, *The Beginnings*, a film shown in potential retiree communities touting the lifestyle of the Sun City pioneers enjoying life in the Arizona desert.

It is shown to visitors of the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum in what may be the smallest theater in the U.S.A. – the former sales building/refreshment shack/Sun City Saints dressing room. Cost is \$10.

Sun City anniversary attracts worldwide attention

Fifty-year follow-up printed in the Milwaukee newspaper

A week after Sun City's grand opening on Jan. 1, 1960, the Webb Corporation partnered with TWA on a special promotion to fly newspaper reporters in for a "Quickie Vacation" and a tour of America's first active adult community.

The *Milwaukee Journal* was one of the early newspapers to cover this story in 1960. Fifty years later, they sent Bill Glauber to report on how the community has fared.

Bill's starting point was the Sun Cities Area Historical Society, and he got an enthusiastic appraisal from Society President, Bill Pearson! The two Bills (Glauber left, Pearson, right, in the photo above) couldn't help but involve Del Webb in their discussion! Arrangements were made for Glauber to meet Paul Herrmann at the Visitors Center, the president of the Wisconsin



SCAHS President Bill Pearson introduces Milwaukee reporter Bill Glauber to Mr. Webb.

Club, and other Wisconsinites during his two-day visit.

The end result was front-page treatment in the Jan. 1, 2010 edition of the *Milwaukee Journal/Sentinel*, which continued over to a full page inside.

The headline reads, "Seniors still having fun in the sun." A slide show of the article is available at www.jsonline.com/photos.



BBC salutes Sun City

The Washington correspondent for the BBC and a senior broadcast journalist for BBC Radio visits the museum and interviews Edson Allen of the Historical Society and Paul Herrmann (shown above) of the Sun City Visitors Center. The interviews will be used for a special 50th anniversary salute to Sun City prepared by the BBC and broadcast in Britain as well as on National Public Radio here in the United States.

Palm Ridge on site of 1911 homestead

Almost 100 years ago, Orval Robertson filed for a homestead permit for 160 acres in the vicinity of what is now Tom Ryan Drive Road and Deer Valley Drive. The land had a market value of \$1.24 per acre, and could be obtained free provided the homesteader occupied and cultivated the land over a five-year period.

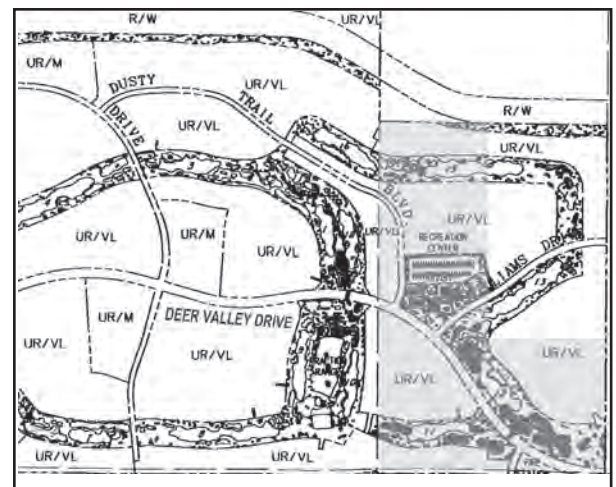
Robertson and his wife lived in a tent until they completed a home that October. Without the benefit of a tractor or other machinery, Orval and his wife had to rely on horsepower and their own strong backs to break and cultivate the soil.

Within a year, they had 20 acres under cultivation. By 1915, they had 80 acres of maize, sorghum, millet, pumpkins and more. Robertson created an irrigation system that used well water, along with runoff from the Bradshaw Mountains to the north. In 1917, the Robertsons fulfilled the pro-

Join us for our
spring meeting!
When: 1-3 p.m. March 26
Where: Palm Ridge Rec Ctr.
13800 W. Deer Valley Drive
Sun City West

visions of the homestead law and were granted title to the land.

As the area under cultivation grew, so did the demand for water. Unfortunately for the Robertsons, the Agua Fria Water and Land Company dammed the water of the Agua Fria River in order to divert it to canals that would deliver the water to farmers. But no water was planned for section 15, the location of the Robertson homestead. The Robertson's dream dried up before their eyes.



They abandoned the property sometime before 1930, and it reverted to the state in 1939. Archeologists hired by the Del Webb Corporation found several artifacts left by the Robertsons: a small pot-bellied stove, a 1913 penny, coffeepot lid, mule shoe, and more.



Volunteer docents vital to museum's success

The first docent training of the year was led by Ruby Wells with the help of Pris Fenner and Ed Allen. The museum welcomes the four new docents. From left to right: Shirley Humphrey, Gail Warmath, Ruby Wells, Pris Fenner, Jane Quitney, and Peg Elhard. Docents receive a handbook explaining the important role they play, the basic procedures, and background material to help them understand the history of the house and the communities whose histories we preserve. At the conclusion, Ruby gave the new docents a sample tour of the house (below). During open hours, new docents are paired with experienced partners to help with their continuing education. The museum can always use additional docents, especially since expanding its hours to include Mondays. To inquire about the next training class, call the museum at 974-2568, and leave your name and phone number. If you like greeting visitors and sharing stories of our past with them, you'll love being a docent!

SCAHS slates history 'jaunt' in fall

Historical Society members will be invited to join a History Jaunt to the Verde Valley early this fall.

Trustee Pris Fenner is working with Society member Ruth Van Epps, author and southwestern tour leader, to plan an interesting day in pursuit of Arizona history.

Ruth, a resident of Sun City West, was raised in Sedona on an apple farm which today is open to the public with tours of the barn and ranch house museum. Lunch can be served in the barn.

The tour would also include visits to a couple of other regional museums in Camp Verde and Cottonwood.

Watch for full details in the next newsletter.



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 45 years. We are a 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 2009, 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

Some Of The Many Items We Carry:

Arm Exerciser • Bath Bench • Bed Rails • Bedside Commodes • Companion Chair • Crutches
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we play here
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we help people buy
and sell their homes here

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Pat (Summers) Burden
Associate Broker
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Marcie Theokas
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Sun Cities Area Historical Society/
Del Webb Sun Cities Museum
10801 Oakmont Drive
Sun City, AZ 85351