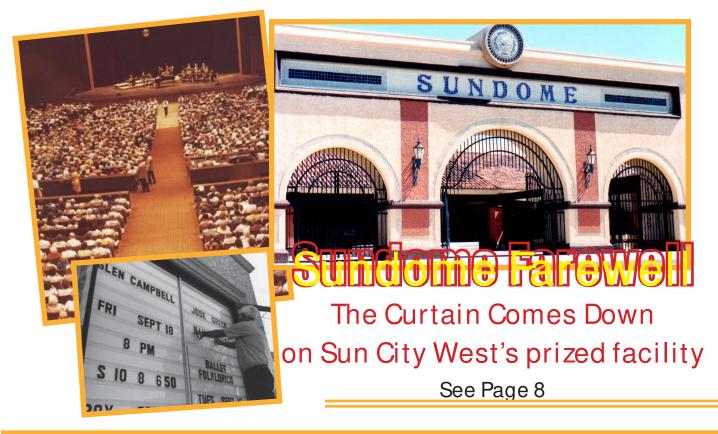


The Official Newsletter of the

Sun Cities Area Historical Society Spring 2012 | Volume 21 | Number 1



Inside our spring newsletter ...

Spring Membership Meeting



The Sun Cities Area Historical Society will hold its spring meeting in Sun City West. Page 2



Historic Recognition Del Webb Sun Cities Museum recognized by state historic commission; is now nominated for National Register of Historic Places.

Page 3

Happy Birthday, AZ



Residents celebrate the 100th anniversary of Arizona statehood with a parade in Sun City West. Page 14

Sun Cities Area Historical Society plans spring meeting April 20 in SC West

he Del Webb Sun Cities Museum and Historical Society come to Sun City West's Heritage Tradition, 19303 New Tradition Road at 1:30 p.m., Friday, April 20th.

Speakers and Museum trustees Ed Allen and Don Tuffs will be the guest speakers for the spring meeting. The two will present a free illustrated history of Sun City West entitled, "From Feed Lot to Sundome."

Ever wonder why streets and buildings boast the names R.H. Johnson, Meeker, Tom Ryan, Kuentz, Sundome and more? Interested in why the Sundome was built to be the largest single-level theater in the United States?

Ed and Don will provide the answers.

Ed Allen has been coming to Arizona ever since his parents retired to Sun City in 1974. He and



Ed Allen is the author of "Sun City West Silver Celebration," the first detailed history ever written of Sun City West.

his wife watched the new Sun City West begin and grow, and purchased a home here after he retired in 1996 from a career in advertising.

He soon became active in the Sun City West Visitors Center and in 2001, was enlisted by the Sun Cities Area Historical Society to write the history of Sun City West.



A look at the history of Sun City West, with special emphasis on the story of the Sundome Center for Performing Arts will highlight the spring membership meeting of the Sun Cities Area Historical Society.

Two years later, with the help of a committee of researchers, the book was published in time for the community's 25th anniversary.

Don Tuffs has spent his entire career in the Sun Cities. In 1978, as a member of the Del Webb Development Company's public relations department, he photographed the groundbreaking of Sun City West. He later started a number of clubs and organizations prior to the opening of the R.H. Johnson Recreation Center and became the first manager of the Sundome Center for the Performing Arts.



Don Tuffs was a member of the Del Webb Development Co. PR team at the time work began on Sun City West in 1978.



The 2012 Board of Trustees for the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum and Sun Cities Area Historical Society are, from left, front row, James McGreevy, Arlene Macy, Ed Cirillo and Priscilla Fenner. Back row, from left, Hal Lind, Ed Allen, Don Tuffs and Bret McKeand.

Historical Society elects 2012 Board of Trustees

The Sun Cities Area Historical Society, operators of the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum, has elected its 2012 Board of Trustees.

The new board took office in January.

Ed Cirillo of Sun City West will serve as president for 2012. He takes over from Bill Pearson who served as president in 2010-11.

Other officers include Don Tuffs of Carefree, vice president; Norm Dickson of Sun City, treasurer.

Also serving on the board in 2012: Edson Allen of Sun City West, Priscilla Fenner of Sun City, Bret McKeand of Peoria, Hal Lind of Sun City West, Arlene Macy of Sun City West and newly elected trustee James McGreevy of Sun City.

Museum earns Arizona historic designation

The Del Webb Sun Cities Museum -- or more precisely the building that is home to the museum -- has been accepted for the Arizona Historic Register and is now being recommended for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

A proposal to be included on the Arizona register was submitted by the Sun Cities Area Historical Society and unanimously approved by the Arizona Historic Sites Review Committee.

The museum, located at 10801 W. Oakmont Drive, was constructed in 1959 and was one of five model homes initially built and open to the public when the community first opened on Jan. 1, 1960.

The home is the headquarters to the SCAHS but also a museum showcasing the history of Sun City and Sun City West.

The National Register of Historic

Places is the nation's official listing of prehistoric and historic properties worthy of preservation. It affords recognition and protection for districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering and culture.

Properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places are often eligible for reduced property taxes and state and federal grants.



An official publication of the Sun Cities Area Historical Society © 2012 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

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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: 1-3 p.m. Monday - Friday Or by appointment Office Manager: Julie Glass

Board of Trustees

Edward Cirillo President Don Tuffs Vice President Norm Dickson Treasurer Bill Pearson Past President

Edson Allen Priscilla Fenner Arlene Macy Bret McKeand Hal Lind James McGreevy

Newsletter Editor: Bret McKeand

Contributors: Edson Allen, Priscilla Fenner, Katy O'Grady Layout and composition courtesy of the Sun City Independent

Message from the President

Let's all spread the word: The museum is a great place!

Thank you for being members and supporters of our Sun Cities Area Historical Society/ Del Webb Sun Cities Museum.

I want to update you on our progress toward two of our main goals:

1. To make all residents know we are here. To achieve this goal, we:

• Opened the museum during numerous Sun City 50th anniversary events;

Contributed funds to get the 50th anniversary committee established;

Created a new, more robust website that contains information on almost 3,000 photos, archives and objects that are housed in the museum;

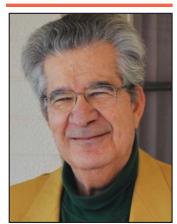
Attend the newcomers orientations/ coffees in both Sun City and Sun City West;

 Participated in the Arizona Centennial Parade in Sun City West;

Are hosting a writer's lecture on the societal impact of retirement communities

■ Have been recognized as an Arizona Historical Site (hopefully national recognition will follow);

Have contributed



Ed Cirillo 2012 President, Sun Cities Area Historical Society

an online collection to the Arizona Memory Project (http://azmemory. lib.az.us/) and will soon contribute a second;

■ Joined the Surprise Regional Chamber of Commerce;

Have established an endowment fund through the Arizona Community Foundation;

• Have contributed a collection to the National Portal to Historic



Collections;

Participated in community events such as the SCHOA Vendors Fair and Oakmont Fun Day.

2. Counteract the opinion that "I have already been to the museum once" and don't need to go again.

• We have added a lovely patio which is available for events;

• We have converted many exhibits to the latest technology;

• We continue to develop new exhibits, e.g. "Entertainment in the Sun Cities;"

• We continue to make the museum more exciting to our visitors.

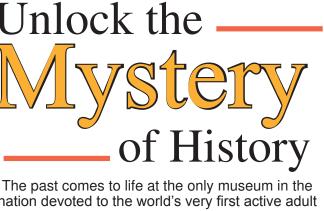
If you would like to volunteer some of your expertise to help us achieve these two objectives, please drop in and see us.

All the best.

President Ed Cirillo, accompanied by his wife Regina, drove the museum's fully restored 1960's-era golf car in the Arizona Centennial Celebration Parade held in February in Sun City West.

Page 5 | Sun Cities Area Historical Society | Spring 2012

Del Webb	Unlock
Sun Cities MUSEUM	The past comes to lift nation devoted to the retirement communiti model homes built in S living tribute to the his West, and to the en pioeneered an
Become a Memberi Show your support for the museum and its efforts to preserve our community's unique heritage! Individual \$10 Family \$15 Clubs/Organizations \$25 Business/Patron \$50	the second
Name:	Tours, Volunteer Opportunities
email: Make checks payable to Sun Cities Area Historical So- ciety, and mail to 10801 Oakmont Drive, Sun City, AZ 85351. SCAHS is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization. - Special introductory offer	
Join at the Business or Patron Level (\$50) and receive a FREE copy of "Sun City: Images of America" pictorial his- tory book. (Limited offer; while supplies last.	Call or S 10801 Oakmont (623) 974-2568 * de This advertisement m
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es! Located in the first of five Sun City, the museum offers a story of Sun City and Sun City nduring spirit of those who exciting new lifestyle!



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Newly created Acquisitions Committee busy assessing donations to museum

By P. Atwood Fenner Sun Cities Area Historical Society

he stack of assorted items grows each month in the corner of the museum office, hidden from visitors by the vertical file cabinet. Strangers would wonder what it could be – a slightly messy touch to a neat, orderly office. It is the reason for the necessity of the Acquisitions Committee.

Some of the materials are items stored in the museum for years, such as the Christmas cards given to early residents by the Del Webb Corp. so residents could send their out-of-town friends cards depicting the beautiful, sunny life in Arizona's first active, retirement community.

Others are old items brought to the museum by Sun Cities' residents, and scrapbooks of many early clubs and organizations.

And some are things recently acquired by a volunteer or resident and donated to the museum because they seemed appropriate, such as a pink plastic-handled soup ladle or milk glass snack set decorated in pink for the pink-tiled museum kitchen.

The Estrella Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution donated two place settings of Desert Rose pattern Franciscan Ware. A neighbor on 108th Avenue donated a restored three-wheeled golf cart originally owned by his



Members of the Acquisition Committee review items recently submitted to the museum. From left, Committee Chair Jane Quincy, Betsy Harris, Loretta and Edson Allen.

father.

"Today the computer is keeping track of items in the permanent museum collection, but the Acquisitions Committee is responsible for what is done and how and where it is stored, and the items we don't want," said new Chairman Jane Quitney, who recently replaced Dorothy Rucker, who left the post because of her health.

"Times and methods change, and we are trying to keep up with the times and not be overwhelmed," Jane added.

Members of her committee include Edson and Loretta Allen, Julie Glass, Betsy Harris and David Verble. They meet monthly or as needed to assess items from the "messy" corner in the office.

At the moment the current

"Custody Form" is being reviewed by new Trustee James McGreevy, who is a lawyer with previous experience in this area. At issue is the wording of the form title and whether items may or may not be donated permanently with no restrictions and what the museum may do if they do not wish to include them in the collection for display permanently or temporarily. Can they dispose of unwanted items by taking to thrift stores, selling them (rummage sales, e-bay) or throwing away?

Jane feels that items should fit with the Historical Society's mission statement that says it is "dedicated to the acquisition, preservation and presentation of records and artifacts for Sun City, Arizona ... and its sister city, Sun City West." She and her husband Paul moved to Sun City in 2006, and she has been a museum guide for two years. She is active in the Artistic Weavers and Fiber Artists at Oakmont Center and plays golf. The couple returns to Grand Rapids, Minn. in the summertime.

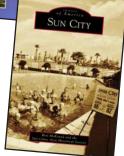
Chairman Jane brings some expertise to her new job. For the Itasca County Historical Society, which runs a museum featuring items from prehistoric to modern days with many changing exhibits, she volunteered in a similar position.

One such exhibit featured a Depression-era girls' camp on an island and included bathing suits, photos and dishes and uniforms bought by campers from Dayton's Department Store (based in Minneapolis). The girls lived in a large dormitory building and enjoyed water sports.

Also for five years after her retirement as a sixth-grade teacher, Jane was a costumed interpreter at the Forest History Center in a reconstructed 1900s logging camp. She wore a plain long skirt with long-sleeved blouse and a shawl or borrowed man's jacket when she gave tours of the six buildings including the blacksmith's shed and the clerk's office.

"As a newly reformed Acquisitions Committee here we are trying to establish acquisition procedures and guidelines within the storage and budget restraints that apply in all groups such as genealogy, community theater and other historical societies," said Jane. Store Celebration

Take history home with you! Those who attend the spring meeting can purchase autographed copies of



Edson Allen, a trustee for the

Sun Cities Area

Historical Soci-

ety, accepts a \$2,500 gift from

Mr. Robert H.

Johnson.

books focusing on the history of Sun City West and Sun City. All sales benefit the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum.

Gift to help preserve the Del E. Webb legacy

rs. Robert H. Johnson recently presented a check for \$2,500 to the Sun Cities Area Historical Society to accelerate the conversion of paper records to digital computer files.

Accepting the gift from the Robert H. Johnson Trust was Edson Allen, trustee for the Historical Society.

As Sun City and Sun City West were completed, the Del E. Webb Corporation gave the Society thousands of pages of documents having to do with the development of the two communities. All of this one-of-a-kind information is paperbased, and subject to deterioration, fire, and other damage.



Digitizing the data will not only protect it, but make it more readily available to scholars, authors, reporters, and researchers through the organization's website. The gift of these funds will allow the Society to use an outside source that specializes in large-volume scanning and digital conversion, helping speed the preservation of these documents.



So Long to the Sundome Center

Future of famed performing arts facility remains up in the air

By Edson Allen Sun Cities Area Historical Society

ews of the impending sale of the Sundome Performing Arts Center means that soon we'll be left with only the memories of three decades of wonderful entertainment. Lawrence Welk, who opened the giant theater in 1989, George Burns, Dolly Parton, Johnny Cash, Walter Cronkite, John Denver, Bob Hope, Willie Nelson, Red Skelton, Andy Williams, and many others walked the Sundome stage.

Attendees in the 7,000-seat auditorium sat in comfortable chairs usually found only in the higherpriced sections of major theaters. Spacing between rows was extra generous, making it easy for people to move to their seats without discomfort to those already seated.

A highly sophisticated sound system provided a "front row, center seat" listening experience for everyone in the theater. Years after it was built, the Sundome was still being recognized as having the finest acoustics of any large theater in the world.

The Sundome was a result of John Meeker's vision. Years before, he had built the Sun Bowl in Sun City, and thousands of people would bring their lawn chairs to sit on the terraced lawn to listen to the likes of Bob Hope, Rosemary Clooney, and more. When Meeker began planning his new city to the west, he wanted to accommodate crowds of up to 7,000 indoors in an environment that controlled heat, sound, and comfort for maximum enjoyment.

Construction on the Sundome began in late 1978, and provided a major challenge for the Del E. Webb Construction Company. The hall would have a single floor seating 7,000. It would stretch 225 feet from the rear to the stage. The 108,000 square feet under the roof was nearly the size of two football fields laid side by side. Four huge fabricated trusses, including two that were 250-feet in length, 19feet thick at the center, and weighing 115,000 pounds each were



At left, construction on the Sundome Center for the Performing Arts begins in November 1978. Work would take over a year to complete and the facility -- the largest single-level theater in the nation at the time of its opening -- saw its first performance in 1980. (Photos: Sun Cities Area Historical Society)

lifted into place to support the giant roof. With the ceiling nearly four stories in height, a record amount of scaffolding was required. When completed in September 1980, the Sundome was the largest, singlefloor theater in the nation.

As Sun City West filled up, DEVCO management became concerned with the future of the Sundome once the company withdrew from the community. Ownership was transferred to Arizona State University as it had a proven record managing the Gammage Auditorium in Tempe. It was reasoned that if the Sundome belonged to ASU, they could reduce celebrity booking fees by allowing performers to appear at two locations - east valley and west valley -- in one Phoenix area trip. For \$1, ASU acquired title to the Sundome in 1984.

With the transfer of ownership came the responsibility of reducing the center's average annual operating deficit of \$200,000. A Sundome Performing Arts Association (SPAA) was formed to conduct annual fund drives to offset the deficits

Not all went according to plan. Many performers did not like the double-booking provision due to the Sundome's location. The facility was so strongly identified with Sun City West that many outside the area weren't sure they were welcome. And it soon became apparent that theater interests of the West Valley were different from those drawing people to shows on the ASU campus in Tempe.

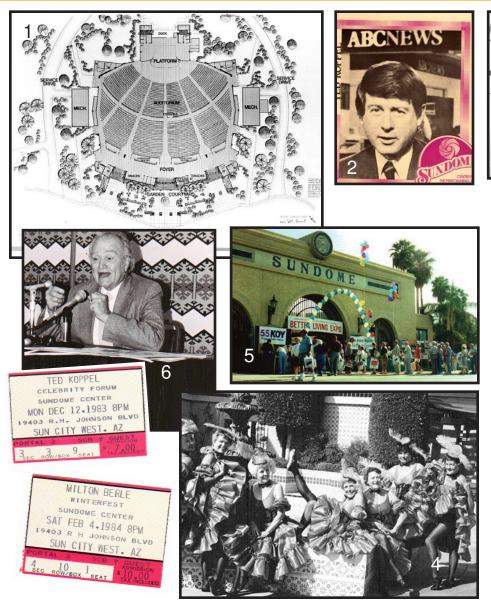
By 1995, it became apparent the Sundome needed a facelift. As Broadway shows had gotten more elaborate, the stage area was no longer adequate, lacking the height needed for the sets of many shows. Additional dressing rooms and restrooms were needed as well.

It was estimated that the needed changes would cost \$5-million. SPAA, under the co-direction of Birt Kellam and Don Heyl, set out to raise the money. It took nearly three years to do it but by December 1999, pledges and gifts totaling \$5.4 million were in hand. The community was excited about the potential for new shows, and accepted the fact the Sundome would be dark for all the 2001 season.

Then shock hit! As professional theater design firms looked at the plans, cost estimates rose to \$20 million or more. After much pruning, the lowest bid was \$13.5-million, and the project was cancelled.

Donors were asked to redirect their gifts to an endowment fund. A portion of this would be used for needed improvements like more restrooms and new carpeting, and the remainder would help fund gate guarantees for touring companies.

Continued on Page 10





Through the years ... Clockwise, starting in the upper left: 1.) The Sundome held a capacity crowd of 7,000. 2.) Former "Nightline" host Ted Koppel participated in a popular "Speakers Series" in the mid-1980s. 3.) The lobby of the Sundome was always a showcase for local artists to display their works. 4.) The annual Sun City West Variety Show, featuring the talents of local residents, was always one of the most popular performances held yearly at the Sundome; 5.) The Northwest Valley Chamber of Commerce (now the Surprise Regional Chamber of Commerce) would always kick off the fall season with its annual Better Living Expo; 6.) Popular comedian Red Skelton performed many times at the Sundome Center for Performing Arts. (Photos: Sun Cities Area Historical Society and Independent Newspapers.)

Costs of operating the giant facility continued to exceed income, and in 2005 ASU turned the facility over to Maricopa County. A professional booking agent was hired, and a limited number of shows were scheduled. While many shows had audiences of 2-3,000, that was less than half the hall's capacity. Attendance continued to decline, and finally the county gave up on the Sundome.

The county had agreed that if they ever discontinued shows at

the Sundome, the property would revert back to ASU. ASU took back the center in 2009 and it has remained dark since.

The future of the Sundome is unknown. It's enormous size and related operating costs preclude its ever returning to its former glory. All that's known is that the property is for sale, and that ASU has received one offer that will result in razing the building.

As the Sundome fades into the past -- along with many who per-

formed there – it, and they will live on in the memories of those lucky enough to have attended during its glory years.

Note: Edson Allen is a member of the Sun Cities Area Historical Society Board of Trustees and author of "Sun City West Silver Celebration: The First 25 Years," a history of Sun City West and available at the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum. The Maricopa County Library District and the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum present:



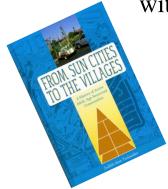
University of Minnesota, Duluth, History Professor Judith Ann Trolander

Author of From Sun Cities to the Villages, University Press of Florida

Speaking on:

"Age 55 or Better: A History of Active Adult Communities

with Emphasis on Sun City, Arizona"



1 TO 3 P.M. WEDNESDAY APRIL 18 IN THE FAIRWAY ARIZONA ROOM

Trolander's text book looks at the challenges age-restricted communities face, the expectations of them, and how they will change as the boomer population ages. It also details how these communities have redefined the sense of self-identity among the senior population, which has changed the popular opinion of retirees.

Prof. Trolander researched the role of the Del Webb Sun Cities Communities (Chapter Four) using the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum archives.





Enjoying the festivities during the third annual volunteer recognition lunch March 22 at the Museum are, from left, Beverly Thome, Julie Glass, Barbara Bozman, Pat Mochnick and Judy Baerg.

Luncheon on the Terrace Guides, trustees are guests at lunch on McMillin Terrace

By P. Atwood Fenner Sun Cities Area Historical Society

B ight guides and five others lunched on the McMillin Terrace facing the North Golf Course March 22 for the third annual volunteer recognition event. Among the invited guests was Constance McMillin, whose generosity resulted in the recent construction of the terrace itself.

President Ed Cirillo welcomed the diners and urged them to go the extra mile during May and September, which are challenging months for the Museum to staff adequately. He also announced the designation of the Museum in the 1960 model home as an Arizona historic site.

The menu featured wraps, slaw, tomato and mozzarella slices, pickles, olives, chips, iced tea, pink lemonade and an orange sponge cake with whipped cream. The cake was prepared from a recipe in a 1953 edition of "The Joy of Cooking" by Trustee Pris Fenner, who coordinated the event. The oranges came from the museum tree planted by the MacDonald family in the 1960s.

Museum Office Manager Judy Baerg announced her plans to leave the museum and Sun City and introduced her replacement, Julie Glass, a frequent office volunteer here. Julie will begin her new job May 1.

Guides and office volunteers were invited to take home one of the colorful carnations used as decorations on the bright pink tables, punctuated with green and yellow paper plates and flatware. The new sand-colored stacking resin chairs were used outdoors for the first time since they were purchased in December for the Terrace.

Longtime Docent Marcia Case won the \$25 Red Lobster gift card. All recently active guides, even those not present, had their names included in the drawing.

Julie Glass named museum office manager

Julie Glass of Sun City has been named the new office manager for the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum, replacing Judy Baerg who has served in the position the past two years.

The Board of Trustees accepted Judy's resignation and approved the hiring of Julie at its March meeting. Judy has resigned and is relocating to California to be nearer to family.

Julie has been a loyal volunteer at the

Museum closed this summer; but one can book tours & volunteer

Beginning June 1, the Museum will be closed to the public except by reservation.

During the summer, the interior will be thoroughly cleaned and any necessary updates will be undertaken.

Groups of six or more may make reservations for morning tours.

Summertime gives the guides a well-deserved vacation until September when hours return to 1-3 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Meanwhile there may be some bored residents who would like to learn about being a Del Webb Sun Cities Museum guide or office volunteer.

Weather permitting, clubs may use the McMillin Terrace to hold meetings. The museum can provide table seating for 24 or theater-style seating for 26. The Terrace has ceiling fans and faces the North Golf Course.

Call 623-974-2568 for information.

museum since 2010.

Julie is the third generation in her family to live in Sun City. Before moving to Sun City she worked for 20 years as a bookkeeper and controller for a Phoenix homebuilder, and 10 years as controller and office manager for a custom homebuilder in Scottsdale.

She attended the University of Oregon and Oregon State University.



Julie Glass



National company - local focus

Buying?

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Happy Birthday



Sun City West was the site of an official Arizona Centennial Celebration event this past February, with a parade sponsored by the Recreation Centers of Sun City West. Clubs, organizations, marching bands and more took part in the festivities. Popular singer Tony Orlando served as the parade's Grand Marshal.



Photos by Katy O'Grady Courtesy Recreation Centers of Sun City West, Inc.











Grand Marshal: Singer Tony Orlando.



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:

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Support Your Local Museum!

Become a member and help us preserve and promote the history of the Sun Cities!



See Page 5 for membership information





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