



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

Spring 2016 | Volume 25 | Number 1



Did you see Queen Victoria when she came to town?

How about Amelia Earhart?
 Maria Callas? Sacajawea?
 Ida McKinley or Eleanor Roosevelt?

Over the past 40 years, Tanya Griffith has portrayed the lives of more than 100 famous women locally, as well as throughout the nation. The museum pays special tribute to Tanya during two “meet and greet” events planned this month at the museum. Meet the actress and see some of the costumes and hats she wore during her performances! See story, Page 3.



Inside our spring newsletter ...

Spring Meeting



The Del Webb Sun Cities Museum will hold its spring meeting March 15 in Youngtown.

See Page 2

Jubilee Gala Celebration



The museum thanks all those who attended our first Gala -- and we're already making plans for the 2016 event..

See Pages 4

Welcome New Trustees!



New Board of Trustees take office.

See Page 6



Above left, the Youngtown Historical Museum located between the Youngtown Library and Youngtown Clubhouse. Above, Youngtown as it appeared around the time of its incorporation in 1954. At left, Francis Greer, owner of the Greer Ranch that eventually became Youngtown.

Historical Society travels to Youngtown for March 15 event

The Youngtown Public Library and Historical Museum will be hosting the Sun Cities Area Historical Society spring meeting on March 15, 2016 at 1 p.m. in the Youngtown Clubhouse, 12030 N. Clubhouse Square, Youngtown.

A presentation and tour of the Youngtown Historical Museum are on the agenda.

The public is welcome to attend, and we hope you will join us in learning more about the histories of these two retirement communities.

A history of Youngtown

In 1942, Gilbert and Frances Greer purchased a long, narrow strip of land that ran south from the old "Vulture Road" (now Grand Avenue), down to what is now Peoria Avenue, and they leased additional land south to Olive Avenue.

The Agua Fria River was the west boundary of the Greer Ranch, and the eastern edge was a dirt road that is now 111th Avenue (the western border



A display board in the Youngtown Museum showing the early beginnings of Youngtown.

of the original Sun City Phase I).

The Greer Ranch consisted of 320 acres for their beef cattle and dairy cows, which they purchased from the Southwest Land & Cattle Company, and they leased another 320 acres from Col. James G. Boswell, who owned a good part of the land that Sun City now occupies.

After Gilbert's death in 1949, an old friend, Elmer Johns, moved to Mari-

nette, the tiny farming community east of where Youngtown came to be, to help Frances manage the ranch.

Mr. Johns had experience working with geriatrics. Meanwhile, Benjamin "Big Ben" Schleifer, a Phoenix real estate developer, was anxious to fulfill his long-time dream of building a community designed solely for older, retired, but active people.

Youngtown was founded November 4, 1954, and became the nation's first retirement community.

By 1959, the community included 700 homes and 1,400 people.

In an interview, Mrs. Greer said, "Big Ben had a dream of what it would be like to have a community like this; I had the ranch. And with Elmer Johns' advice, we put the dream and property together."

It was the development of Youngtown that captured the attention of officials from the Del Webb Corporation in the late 1950s, which led ultimately to the company's plan to purchase the land east of Youngtown and develop Sun City.



Susan B. Anthony



Sacajawea



Amelia Earhart



Queen Victoria

Greet Tanya Griffith, portrayor of more than 100 famous women

As part of the museum's salute to the Performing Arts and to the residents who have entertained us over the years, we will be honoring Tanya Griffith on Feb. 23-25.

While she no longer performs, she is known to many throughout the Sun Cities for her popular portrayals of famous women. We wanted to provide her, and you, an opportunity to greet one another and be reminded of the great programs of the past.

Tanya will greet visitors in the living room at the museum. Before and afterward, you will have a chance to view a few of her favorite costumes, along with some of the hats she wore.

You'll find a display of fashionable hatboxes and hat stands, each bearing a distinctive hat from a famous woman of the past.

Photos of Tanya will show her in some of the costumes she wore, along with a brief description of the person she depicted.

Did you know that Tanya began her career as a book reviewer in Canton, Ohio, back in the 1970s?

She became sought after as a reviewer and traveled extensively. As



Meet and greet Tanya Griffith at the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum
Tues. Feb. 23
or Thurs. Feb. 25.
1:00 – 4:00 PM

She had a chance to buy a trunk of old clothing, and learned it had been owned by a Cassie Chadwick.

Doing some research to learn more about this person, Tanya found her to be a con artist at the turn of the century. Among other things, she claimed to be the illegitimate daughter of Andrew Carnegie.

One or more of her cons caught up with her, and she ended up in prison where she died several years later. That caused Tanya to develop a story about her life, "Queen of the Cons," and began her career portraying the lives of famous women.

Over the next 40-some years, Tanya would go on to portray more than 100 women.

She was a popular performer in the Sun Cities after the Griffiths moved to Sun City in 1987. Her husband, Dr. Bill, was pastor of the Willowbrook United Methodist Church for 12 years. Tanya's performances raised tens of thousands of dollars for local organizations locally, as well as throughout the nation.

Now you have a chance to thank her for her artistry and generosity to our communities.

time went on, she began dressing as one of the characters in the book she was reviewing.



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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/Wednesday/Friday
 Or by appointment
 Office Manager: Julie Glass

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 Arlene Sampson
 Heidi Speed

Contributors:
 Edson Allen, Priscilla Fenner, Heidi Speed, Barbara Brozman
 Layout and composition courtesy of the Sun City Independent

Message from the President

One successful Gala leads to another!

I hope you had a chance to join us for the JUBILEE Gala in December. It was our first attempt at such an event, and it was a smashing success. (I can say that because I had nothing to do with it except attend!)

We had 128 attendees, all the room at Union Hills Country Club would allow. A good meal ... a talk by Jerry Svendsen, former Manager of Public Relations for the Webb Corp. ... three special awards ... entertainment by the talented and lithe POMs ... all added up to an evening to remember!

Comments of attendees were so positive, that we've decided to hold a second Gala in November 2016.



Edson Allen
 2016 President, Sun Cities Area Historical Society

Watch for news of the date and place, which we'll announce as soon as they are determined.

Successful events like this require a lot of work behind-the-scenes, and the participation of generous sponsors. Bret McKeand

chaired the event and was ably assisted by Yasmina Snider, Priscilla Fenner, and many others. Yasmina has agreed to chair the 2016 event, and Bret and Pris have already signed on to assist her. If you'd like to help out, call Julie at the office, 974-2568, and give her your name.

Volunteers are the lifeblood of the museum, as without them we couldn't keep the doors open. We'd like to add new docents so we can be open five afternoons a week, so please consider donating a couple of afternoons a month to greet visitors. You'll find it a fun and rewarding experience!

Thank you for attending our first Gala!



The Sun Cities Area Historical Society held its first-ever Jubilee Gala fundraiser Nov. 10 at Union Hills Country Club. Above, Past President Bret McKeand presents the "Spirit of the Sun Cities Award" to the Poms; at right, Bret presents the Presidents Award to Connie McMillin. Edson Allen received the Jane Freeman Award and Paul Herrmann the "Friend of the Sun Cities Award."



A very special thank you to our event sponsors

- ◆ D. Miller Charitable Trust
- ◆ Recreation Centers of Sun City
- ◆ Constance W. McMillin Trust
- ◆ Del Webb Corp. ◆ Sun City Sunshine Service
- ◆ Independent Newsmedia Inc. USA
- ◆ Tempus West Valley Realty



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!



Exhibits, Historical Artifacts and More!



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

Listed on the National Registry of Historic Places!

Become a Member!

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

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- Turquoise Circle \$25
- Silver Circle \$50
- Gold Circle \$100
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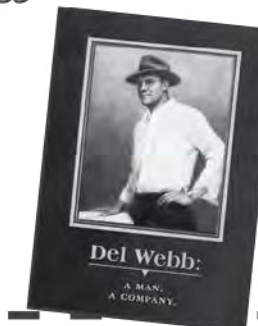
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Make checks payable to Sun Cities Area Historical Society, and mail to 10801 Oakmont Drive, Sun City, AZ 85351. SCAHS is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization.

Special offer

Join at the Gold Level (\$100) and receive a FREE copy of "Del Webb: A Man. A Company."
 (Limited offer; while supplies last.)



New trustees elected

A special meeting of members was called for Jan. 19 to officially elect five new members to the Board of Trustees.

Usually this is done at the annual meeting in the fall, but the JUBILEE Gala replaced the 2015 annual meeting, and we did not conduct any business at that entertaining event.

The new trustees are:

* Edson Allen, a previous trustee, member of the Speakers Bureau, and head of the Exhibits Committee;

* Toni Ashby, docent and chair of the Grounds Committee;

* A. J. Kovac, docent and member of the Speakers Bureau;

* Arlene Sampson, former president of the West Valley Genealogical Society;

* Heidi Speed, manager of the Youngtown Public Library and museum.

The first action of the 2016 board was to elect Ed Allen as president, Gail Warmath as vice president; Yasmina Snider as secretary and Tim Ericson, treasurer.

Welcome to our newest members to join the board:

■ TONI ASHBY refers to herself as a "history freak." She's been active at the museum for a couple of years and since this past summer has been filling in for a trustee who resigned. She will oversee management of the museum's grounds.

Three years ago she was at the Heritage Palmeras one day, listening to a talk by ED ALLEN (past and now current museum president). His talk was titled, "The Boswell Connection." Toni liked Ed's talk so much, that when he said the museum was currently open for tours, she came right down to the museum "to check it out."

She was ready to volunteer on the spot, but was in the midst of remodeling her house. As soon as it was finished, Toni signed on as a volunteer museum guide, soon to become a docent.

Now an experienced museum docent, Toni volunteers most Wednes-



The Sun Cities Area Historical Society Board of Trustees for 2016. From left, standing, Yasmina Snider, secretary; Tim Ericson, treasurer; Edson Allen, president; Gail Warmath, vice president; A.J. Kovac. Sitting, Toni Ashby, Heidi Speed, Arlene Sampson and Priscilla Fenner.

days with JOYCE KIRKHAM. She calls the two of them the "dynamic duo" because they work so well together.

■ ARLENE SAMPSON is past president of the West Valley Genealogical Society on 111th Avenue in Youngtown. The group has 700 members and an all-volunteer staff to operate the research center with an extensive library for those interested in genealogy.

Arlene became interested in genealogy because she wanted to learn more about her maternal grandmother. Her family never talked about her and Arlene never talked to her grandmother or even met her.

No longer Genealogical Society president but still part of its all-volunteer staff, Arlene serves as a library aide, chairs a committee to update the society's policies and procedures and the committee for the society's on-line store.

As a new Del Webb Museum Board Member, Arlene has already set her sights on helping with the museum's 2016 Gala and hopes to serve in the museum's Speakers Bureau," after she

learns a lot more about the Del Webb Museum."

■ HEIDI SPEED is Youngtown's Library Manager as well as its museum manager.

She's been in the job four-and-one-half years and confesses "I love my job. I would volunteer here if I didn't already work here."

As library manager her responsibilities are varied, making her job very interesting. On a typical day she might be ordering new materials, filling out state reports, attending city council meetings, accepting donations, writing articles for the Youngtown Village Reporter, signing up new patrons or planning library events.

Heidi oversees a dedicated staff which includes two part-time clerks, one whom also serves as a Youngtown museum docent, and 17 volunteers, one with 30 years' service, .

Heidi grew up in West Phoenix and lived in Glendale and Peoria for many years. Her parents lived in Youngtown, where she also lived briefly. "I've always lived within a 10-mile radius of Youngtown," she observed.

Museum to host English tea April 12

A three-course English tea will be served to docents, board members and a few guests at noon Tuesday April 12 on the McMillin Terrace. The ladies are invited to wear hats for this special occasion; gentlemen might like to wear button down shirts.

Hot scones, tea sandwiches and pastries will be on the menu to be served on tables set with cloth table linens, fragile cups and saucers and elegant teapots. Of course there will be hot tea, lemon, cream, sugar and strawberry jam.

Board members Toni Ashby, Priscilla Fenner and Yasmina Snider will each set one of the three tea tables with their best china and tea pots. Six other Board members may be baking or serving for this annual docent appreciation event and will enjoy their tea at their own festive table in the Freeman Room.

"Tea on the Terrace is a dress rehearsal for a possible tea fundraiser next year," said Docent Coordinator Priscilla Fenner. "We had to find a place to bake the scones as the stove in the museum is not hooked up to the gas anymore," she added. "And of course 'every Susie and Sal' will be making scone batter or tea sandwiches."

Door prizes are given to several docents at this annual event on the McMillin Terrace. Docents need not be present to win, however.

After March 15, docents are invited to RSVP next to the calendar at the Docent Desk in the office; Board members at the March meeting or by phone at 623-974-2568.

On April 12, those attending should use the Terrace entrance outdoors, approachable from the Oakmont parking lot or on the west side past the rose garden next to the museum carport

The April Museum Board Meeting will follow at 2 p.m.

We're always looking for volunteers!

Who knew volunteering could be so good for a person?

A wise person once contemplated the benefits of volunteering. And the museum really needs more docents, those who give short museum tours between 1 and 4 p.m. on Monday Wednesday or Friday; OR office volunteers with computer skills to work mornings any weekday.

So here are the best reasons to volunteer already penned by a thoughtful person, now anonymous.

VOLUNTEERING CAN:

- make you forget your problems.
- give you a reason to get up and dressed and moving each day.
- be good for your self esteem.
- give you a sense of purpose in life.

- improve overall attitude and mental health.

- give you a greater overall satisfaction with life.

- cause you to live longer, if you volunteer on a regular basis.

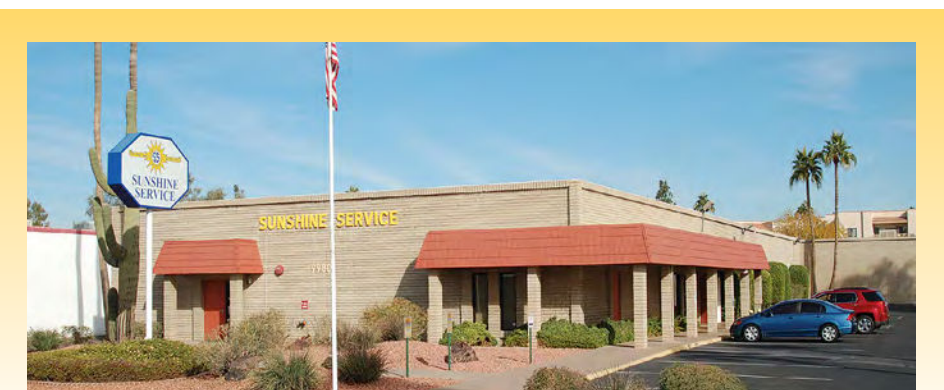
- improve your health.

- lower your stress level.

- be good for relationship building.

- increase the experience of compassion.

If you like people and history, and want to be a Docent, call Volunteer Coordinator Priscilla Fenner at 623-977-3305 ; if you love office work and have computer skills and would like to be an office volunteer, call Julie Glass weekday mornings at 623-974-2568.



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.

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