



The Official Newsletter of the

**Sun Cities Area**

**Historical Society**

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Spring 2018 | Volume 27 | Number 1



# Happy Birthday!

Sun City West celebrates  
its 40th anniversary!

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## Inside our spring newsletter ...



**Spring Meeting**

The glory of the Sundome is recalled at museum spring meeting April 4.

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**Gala Fun!**

Jubilee Gala III celebrates Arizona's Western heritage.

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**Play Ball!**

A look back at when the "Boys of Summer" spent their springs in Sun City.

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The Sundome Center for Performing Arts, with a seating capacity of 7,000, was once billed as the largest single-level theater in the nation.

# Gone, But Not Forgotten

Museum's spring talk recalls history of Sundome Center for Performing Arts

By Edson Allen

**M**ention the "Sundome" and it brings a smile of recognition to the faces of long-time residents, and a questioning look to recent newcomers. It played a major role in the entertainment life of Sun City West for more than 30 years.

Don Tuffs served as the Sundome's general manager in its early years, and will share his experiences at the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum spring presentation on April 4.

The program will begin at 10 a.m. in the R.H. Johnson Lecture Hall, 19803 R.H. Johnson Blvd., Sun City West.

The presentation is open to the



"The Sundome -- Gone, But Not Forgotten"

Featuring: Don Tuffs,  
Former Sundome  
General Manager  
10 a.m. Wednesday, April 4  
Lecture Hall at  
R.H. Johnson Recreation Center  
Sun City West  
Admission: Free

public and admission is free.

As vice president of marketing for the Webb Corp., Don tried to convince John Meeker to build two, smaller auditoriums of different sizes, but Meeker's mind was made up.

The Sun Bowl that he had built in Sun City regularly played to crowds of upwards of 7,000 residents, and he wanted to put that number indoors in air-conditioned comfort in his new community of Sun City West.

Construction of a building of that size was an enormous challenge for the Webb Corp. as the interior was nearly the size of two football fields, side by side!

Don had booked performers for the Sun Bowl, and took over the role of managing the Sundome

## Sundome Center for Performing Arts



The Sundome Center for Performing Arts officially opened Sept. 13, 1980 with a concert featuring the Lawrence Welk Orchestra. Over the years, the theater -- which had a seating capacity of 7,169 -- hosted performances by the biggest names in show business, a popular speakers series, local organizations and fundraisers and high school graduations.



Don Tuffs, shown here escorting Wayne Newton into the Sundome, was the general manager of the Sundome when it was owned by the Webb Corporation. Mr. Tuffs will share his experiences during a talk April 4 in Sun City West.



The Sun City West Variety Show, a fundraiser for local health care, was held for years at the Sundome.



The Del Webb Sun Cities Museum is home to six seats that once were part of the Sundome Center for Performing Arts.

Center for the Performing Arts upon its completion.

He has many amusing, behind-the-scenes stories to share about his experiences with the entertainers. He made sure that show content was tailored to a senior audience and even got the Vienna Symphony Orchestra to change the music they played here from the rest of its 60-location U.S. tour.

Don also oversaw the transition of the Sundome to Arizona State University ownership in 1984, and will explain the reasons for it. ASU managed the facility for 20 years before stage limitations made

it difficult to book the latest Broadway shows.

The Sundome was torn down in 2013 and is now the site of a Fry's grocery store.

The Sundome may be gone from Sun City West, but it lives on in an exhibit at the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum.

It's a dual-purpose exhibit as the room displays the history of the facility, and serves as a theater. Nicknamed "Sundome Jr.," it is Arizona's smallest theater and seats six in seats saved from the Sundome before it was razed. Entertainment is the film "The

Beginning," which was shown to prospective Sun City buyers in the 1960s.

The exhibit was made possible by a generous donation from Don Tuffs who has been an active member of the Sun Cities Area Historical Society and currently serves on the Board of Trustees.

*Edson Allen is a long-time member and former president of the Sun Cities Area Historical Society. He is the editor "Sun City West: A Silver Celebration," available at the Del E Webb Sun Cities Museum.*



The OK Chorale Cowboy Trio at last year's "Jubilee Gala III."

## A Celebration of History

### Western-themed 'Jubilee Gala III' pays tribute to Jim Green

**T**he Del Webb Sun Cities Museum held its third annual Jubilee Gala fundraiser in November, with a theme that celebrated Arizona's Western heritage.

Held Nov. 9 at Palmbrook Country Club, "Jubilee Gala III" featured a rollicking performance by the popular OK Chorale Cowboy Trio and the presentation of the museum's annual "Friend of the Sun Cities Award."

This year's award recipient was the late Jim Green, a long-time executive at Sun Valley Lodge and former Sun Cities Area Historical Society Trustee.

In addition, Mr. Green once served as president of the Sun City Community Fund, Northwest Valley Chamber of Commerce and a founding member of the Sun Cities Art Museum.

The meeting, emceed by Paul Herrmann, also included the election of the 2018 Sun Cities Area Historical Society Board of Trust-

ees. Jim Green, left, receives the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum "Friend of the Sun Cities Award" from Emcee Paul Herrmann. Mr. Green passed away March 17, 2018.



ees.

The gala for the first time featured musical entertainment. The OK Chorale Cowboy Trio from Fountain Hills provided an hour-long show of Western music sprinkled with bits of humor and audience sing-alongs.

At right, a member of the OK Chorale Cowboy Trio tells a joke during the trio's Western program.





## RCSC supports Webb Museum

The Recreation Centers of Sun City surprised the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum Board of Trustees at its first board meeting of 2018 by presenting the museum with a check for \$9,020.29.

Each year the Recreation Centers of Sun City, Inc. Management Team selects a community non-profit organization for its fundraising efforts.

Donations are collected throughout the year at several RCSC events, including the Ring That Bell Ceremony in July and the Fall Festival, culminating in December with the Winter Celebration Golf Tournament and the Sun City Holiday Celebration at Lakeview.

In the top left photo, Theresa Cirino, RCSC director of member services, presents the check to Gail Warmath, 2018 Board of Trustees president, and Bret McKeand, 2017 Board of Trustees president.

In the photo on the right, RCSC management team members pose with members of the Board of Trustees. From left: M. Cirino, Trustee Doris Palmer, Trustee Ed Allen, Trustee Steve Held, Board President Gail Warmath, Trustee Tim Erickson; Angie Nelson, RCSC comptroller; Chris Herring, RCSC assistant general manager; David McClain, RCSC building & infrastructure manager.



## 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:

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**623-974-2561**



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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 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Wed. & Friday Or for groups of six or more by appointment Office Manager: Julie Glass

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Contributors:

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

Message from the President

Play ball! Museum showcases Sun City's close ties to baseball

March in Arizona means spring training time and baseball is in the air! What could be better than a seat in the sunny stands, a fat hot dog in one hand and a cold beverage in the other?

Many of us have guests this month and the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum should be on the "must do list" for all visitors.

The museum has many stories about the history of baseball in Sun City. You can learn about Del Webb as a young player -- at 13 years old, 6 feet 3 inches and 130 pounds. His teammates said he was "the best first baseman in Fresno." He earned \$2.50 a game, and wanted to be a professional baseball player. But that would not work out for him.

Follow him through his ownership of the New York Yankees purchased in 1945 for \$2.8 million. He was proud of his "one contribution" to the Yankees — the hiring of Casey Stengel as coach. Casey led the Yankees to five consecutive World Series — a record that has never been equaled.

With his own history with baseball, Del Webb was more at home with his team than most owners! He and his partner,



Gail Warmath 2018 President Sun Cities Area Historical Society

Dan Topping, eventually sold the team to CBS for \$14 million.

Early Sun City residents wanted to play ball and, in 1962, a field was scraped from the brush along Grand Avenue near 107th. Fifteen men played the first game on that field.

In 1965, a new park, which could seat 1,000 fans, was built at 108th and Grand Avenues. Coors Brewery erected a large scoreboard for the field.

In 1971 a 12.5-acre park was built at 111th and Grand Avenues, which seated nearly 3,500 people. You could even watch the games from your golf cart!

That stadium eventually became the spring train-

ing site for the Milwaukee Brewers for a number of years. The Fountains at Sun City Apartments are in that location now (but look closely: the outer wall of the parking lot is the outfield wall of Sun City Stadium!)

Sun City became the home of the Saints in 1965. They were a fast-pitch women's softball team. Too young to live in the Sun City, but they really drew the crowds!

The Saints won the American Softball Association national championship in 1979. The Sun City Poms started out being the cheerleaders for the Saints. Visit the museum and see the Saints' scrapbook and other interesting memorabilia.

Each of these chapters in the history of Sun City baseball is told in greater detail in the museum. I'd encourage you to make it your first stop for you and your guests before heading out to see a spring training game.

We look forward to your seeing you at the museum. Also follow us on Facebook for short historical stories and pictures of the area.

Play ball!

See Page 13 for more photos of Sun City's baseball history!



# 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
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Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

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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 "Images of America: Sun City"  
(Limited offer; while supplies last.)



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



Photo courtesy Sun City West Independent

# Sun City West celebrates its 40th anniversary!

Feb. 15, 1978 marked the official groundbreaking for the new community.

Sun City had filled up faster than expected, and John Meeker's "New Sun Rising in the West" began to take shape three miles to the west of Sun City.

Fast forward to February 2018 and a month of celebration.

Among the activities were:

- "Memory Lane," an exhibit spanning Sun City West's 40 years was prepared by the museum for display at the Sun City West Library during the month of February – and has proved very popular.

- A 40th Year Anniversary Dinner at Palm Ridge attended by

some 300 residents and guests.

Twelve "Pioneers" – people who moved in between October 1978 and December 1979 – were honored. Several still live in their original homes. The evening's speaker was Ed Allen who recounted the history of Sun City West: "Lizard Acres to Lush Oasis."

- A sold-out 5K Run/Walk was held Saturday, Feb. 17 at Stardust Golf Course, with proceeds benefiting the American Heart Association.

- Sat. Feb 17 also saw the Sports Pavillion offer a 40-cent special from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.. Everything cost 40 cents -- games, snacks, soda, and hot dogs.

- Residents relaxed Saturday evening listening to the Southwest Surfers, Arizona's premiere Beach Boys tribute band, perform at Beardsley Park.

- Forty colorful, three-foot long lizards were spread out through the Sun City West golf courses, recreation centers, walking trails, club windows, and facilities as part of a Lizard Scavenger Hunt. Residents had from January 15 to February 15 to track them down with prizes going to those who found the most. A total of 118 participants found all 40!

- The parade on Monday, Feb. 15, began at R.H. Johnson Recreation Center and moved along





Resident Don Middleton (left), an attorney for the Del Webb Corp. in the 1970s, pointed out the land parcels he acquired for the building of Sun City West. The exhibit covers both sides of the two panels and spans the 40-year history of the community. Don also shared experiences working with Mr. Webb at the Feb. 15 banquet.

Meeker Boulevard and Beardsley Road to the Beardsley Park Recreation Center. The hour-long extravaganza featured 97 entries with nearly 1,000 people participating.

■ Big-band entertainment closed out the festivities on Monday, Feb. 19, at Palm Ridge with the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra and the Flyboys playing the music of the 1930s and '40s.

## SCW ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL!!

The history of Sun City West's first 25 years is described in this 290-page book available at the Museum.

Regularly \$15

Anniversary Special just \$10!



Purchase at the museum or online at [delwebbsuncitiesmuseum.org](http://delwebbsuncitiesmuseum.org)

# Sun City West 40th Anniversary Parade

While the day of the parade dawned dark with some early sprinkles, they didn't affect the enthusiasm of the participants nor the cheering on-lookers along the three-mile route.



Photos: Sun Cities Area Historical Society/  
Del Webb Sun Cities Museum

History Tidbits

# One small step for man: Sun City citizens share thoughts on historic moon landing

By Ben Rolloff

Six hundred million TV viewers around the globe collectively held their breath Sunday July 20, 1969, as Neil Armstrong slowly emerged from a small opening in the Lunar Lander to proclaim, "One small step for man. ..."

Virtually all Sun City residents were glued to their TV screens. There were the usual reasons, but Sun City residents had a special interest.

Local newspapers alerted the area that several Sun City residents would likely be interviewed by Walter Cronkite's team at CBS and asked their viewpoints on the mission during the network's pre-landing programming. Additionally, it was possible that several more Sun City residents would be selected to express viewpoints on Cronkite's continuous coverage to follow the landing if successful.

There was great confidence among scientists at NASA prior to the mission, and the world news media prepared.

CBS shared that confidence and announced long prior to the launch that residents from six USA cities from around the country would be interviewed with Sun City being one of the lucky six.

Representatives of each of the chosen communities would be chosen at random and given an opportunity to express their hopes or concerns as the mission developed.

KOOL-TV, the local CBS affiliate, sent a newsroom anchor to



Sun City to conduct interviews for the pre-landing airing. Interviews were conducted on the patio of Fairway's swimming pool.

Almost all residents interviewed expressed great national pride in the scientific achievements in meeting the giant challenge to NASA issued by President Kennedy to put a man on the moon and to overwhelm the space effort of the USSR and their "Sputnik" program.

Those from Sun City lucky enough to be chosen enjoyed their "30 minutes of fame."

While packing up their equipment after the pre-landing shots, KOOL-TV crew members announced they would return again on Monday morning for post-lunar

landing interviews. Over 100 residents were lined up and waiting for the TV crew at Fairway when they arrived.

Fifteen were interviewed from the queue, and by sheer luck were the first from around the country to have their comments aired by CBS.

A few of the responses were a little surprising. Almost all Sun Citizens showed immense national pride, but one lady was additionally hoping for some personal life improvement from the scientific triumph as well.

Her announced hope was that space research and scientific progress would translate into better products to help with cleaning the house.

One resident professed concern that returning astronauts would bring a form of virus or bacteria back with them for which there was no known protection.

Yet another local held the rather extreme view that the whole production was an illusion cleverly orchestrated by NASA by combining radar with radio photography.

Those were the extremes. Most proclaimed their national pride and patriotism.

Do you remember that historical evening when Armstrong and Aldrin cavorted on the moon's surface and the tension that followed the next day in their attempt to return to the Command Module?

History experts continue to list the first moon landing and return among the top historical triumphs when reviewing the story of the USA.

# Meet our Business Members: Associated Appliance Sales

Have you met Al and Leona Callender of Associated Appliance Sales?

Al and Leona Callender own Associated Appliance Sales in Sun City. They are also valued business members of the Sun City Historical Society.

The Callenders moved to Arizona from Chicago about 20 years ago. They took over ownership of Associated Appliance Sales (previously known as Associated Sales) 18 years ago when it was located at 43rd Avenue and Bell Road.

Al worked at the store at that time and Leona worked for Lund Cadillac in the service department. Al has been in the appliance business for 30-plus years.

About eight years ago, they moved the business to Sun City as the area where they were located was becoming somewhat depressed. They were concerned that moving so far out they might lose their contractors, but with the lower tax base in Sun City, the contractors were thrilled.

The Callenders love being in Sun City, stating that residents are very loyal, good customers and happily spread the word that Al and Leona have great prices and great customer service.



Leona Callender of Associated Appliance Sales.

Leona states good customer service is a priority for she and Al. This week, Leona says she went to a resident's home (90 years old) to show her how to use her microwave and Al has gone to several customers' home to change their air filters if they are unable do it themselves.

The Sun City Historical Society has other business members and very much appreciates their support.

If you think it is important to help preserve the Sun City history, we would really enjoy talking with you about partnering with us. Please call the museum at 623-974-2568 for more information.

## Thank you to our Business Members

- Adultcare Assistance Homecare
- Associated Appliance Sales
- Edward Jones Investments/ William Freeman
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Newsletter Printing Courtesy Sunshine Service ... Thank You!

# 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.

## Meet Museum Docent Tom McGhee

Tom McGhee was born in Moline, Ill. and lived his adult life in Moline. He is married to Sarah and they have two children and a "bonus son" who Tom and Sarah took into their home when he was 15 years old. He is 20 years old now and in U.S. Army.

Tom and Sarah had friends from Moline who relocated to Sun City and they came to visit one winter. They also visited Florida that same year. The weather in Sun City convinced them they needed to be in Arizona in the wintertime!

For a couple of years, they came only for a month at a time as Tom



Tom McGhee

was still working full time as a government contract attorney.

Five years ago, Tom and Sarah bought a home in Sun City and have been snow birds for those years, staying in Sun City about three months in the winter. Tom is

retired now and in December 2017 they sold their home in Moline and moved into an apartment in Moline. They will reside there when not in Sun City.

Tom has volunteered at the museum for four years now and says it appealed to him because he loves history and is curious about historical events.

He enjoys the visitors and appreciates learning where they are from and why they came to Arizona. He is very encouraged when the visitors show interest in all the museum has to offer and finds it is very gratifying when they enjoy the tour. Besides his duties at the museum, he loves to ride his bicycle, play pickleball, volunteers for the Prides and is a member of a local book club.

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.

# Love history? Questers offer exciting opportunity

The Arizona Questers State President Daphne Davis gave a presentation at the museum Feb. 21 to introduce several Sun City residents to the Questers organization.

Ms. Davis explained the history and mission of the Questers. Its members enjoy the excitement of searching for that perfect treasure to add to their collections and to learn more about their significance.

The Questers take special pride in working with preservationists like the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum, and have made significant contributions to the museum over the years.

The Questers was started in 1944 by Bess Bardens in Philadelphia as "show and tell" club. Today, it has 1,600 chapters in the United States and Canada, 29 chapters in Arizona and five in Sun City.

If you share the Questers motto that "It's Fun to Search and a Joy to Find," contact Vicki Metcalf at 928-707-3643 to learn about joining their organization.

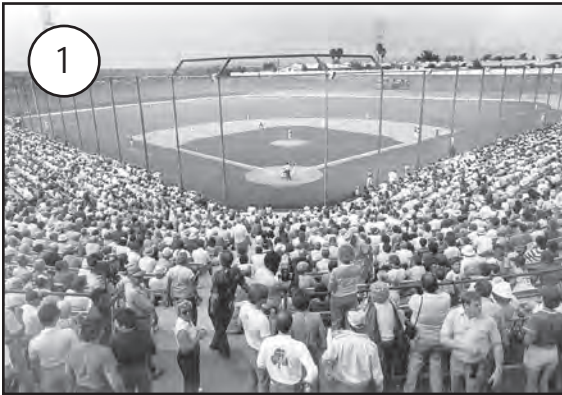
Does your club or organization need a place to hold an event? The McMillin Terrace accommodates groups of up to 20 individuals.

For scheduling, contact the museum at 623-974-2568.

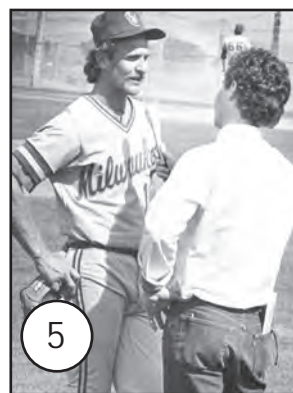


Daphne Davis

# A look back at spring training in Sun City



1 and 2.) Large crowds visited the old Sun City Stadium, located at 111th and Grand avenues, each spring to watch the Milwaukee Brewers. Some of the game's greatest players practiced each spring at the stadium, including 3.) Hank Aaron, 4.) Reggie Jackson and 5.) Robin Yount. The stadium was also home to the Sun City Saints, a national championship-winning women's softball team. The Del Webb Sun Cities is home to an exhibit detailing the history of Sun City Stadium.



Photos courtesy Independent Newsmedia Inc. USA



## Springtime in Sun City AZ

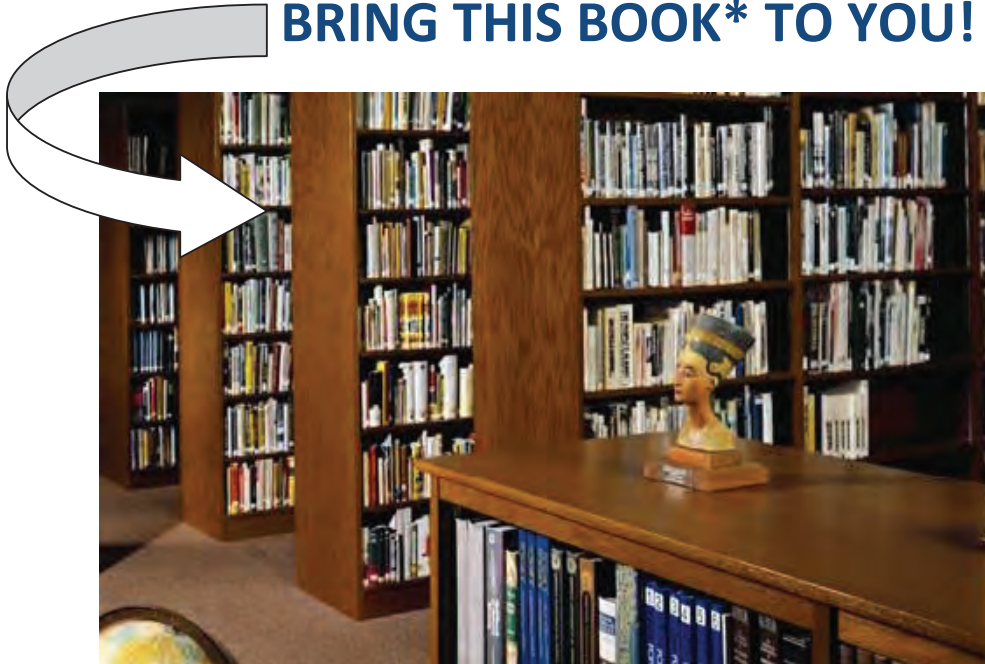
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[suncitylibraryfriends.org](http://suncitylibraryfriends.org)

## Looking for a speaker? Museum offers free talks on history of the Sun Cities

Does your civic, church or educational group have visiting speakers to talk about different topics? Did you know that the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum offers a number of talks on local history?

Some of the popular subjects are:

- How Sun City got started
- The remarkable Del Webb
- The role of the Boswell family in the development of the Sun Cities
- The visionary John Meeker
- The beginnings of Sun City West

There is Powerpoint available if desired and talks can range from 20 minutes to 45 minutes.

If interested, please give the museum a call at 623-974-2568 or go to our website [www.delwebbsuncitiesmuseum.org](http://www.delwebbsuncitiesmuseum.org) for more information or to schedule a speaker.

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*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.*

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