

Sun Cities Animal Rescue finds a home

By Lori Baker
Staff writer

GLENDALE — Sun Cities Animal Rescue finally has a place to call home.

A two-year search for a permanent home ended Thursday when the Glendale Planning and Zoning Commission unanimously approved a use permit for a shelter at 7150 N. 110th Ave. No opposition was voiced at the meeting.

The 2.75-acre site, owned by Del Webb

Corp., is in the Glen-Harbor Business Park near the Glendale Municipal Airport and the Glendale Municipal Landfill. The nearest residence is more than a quarter of a mile away.

Since 1991, the volunteer group has been looking for property on which to build a no-kill shelter to house abandoned dogs and cats until they are adopted.

In February, group President Al Britten thought he'd found the answer — a parcel

of state land near 111th Avenue and Union Hills Drive. But nearby Peoria residents opposed the site, prompting the county Board of Supervisors to grant a use permit only until August 1994.

The 550-member group decided to look elsewhere.

In addition to its difficulties in finding land for a permanent home, the group suffered another setback this year.

A county Superior Court judge ordered

a temporary home for 35 cats in Youngtown shut down by Aug. 1. The Youngtown Town Council sued the animal group, saying the shelter violated the town's residential zoning. Foster homes for the cats were arranged.

Until the Glendale shelter opens, the animal group will be limiting the number of dogs and cats it takes in.

"We're only taking emergencies like cats hit by a car or a puppy dumped in the

desert," said Karin Britten, executive director of Sun Cities Animal Rescue. "We are caring for animals in foster homes and we just don't have the space to take care of many animals."

But when the Glendale shelter opens in about a year, there will be room for 50 dogs and 200 cats, she said.

The animal welfare group needs about \$350,000 to pay for the 19,232-square-foot
See ANIMAL, Page 3

ANIMAL

From Page 1

shelter it plans. The group is paying \$73,500 to Del Webb Corp. for the land.

Volunteers will operate the shelter around the clock. The shelter will be enclosed, but will have dog runs.

Many of the dogs and cats being cared for belonged to Sun Cities residents who died or moved into nursing homes. All pets are spayed or neutered before they are placed

in adoptive homes.

The animal group holds adoptions from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sundays at PetSmart, 67th and Peoria avenues.

Besides placing animals in new homes, the volunteers also take abandoned dogs and cats to nursing homes to cheer residents.

"These animals immediately bring out smiles and laughter," said LeAnn Auza of Camelot

Campus of Care. "Residents begin to touch and hold the pets, and soon stories are being told about their pets of long ago."

Auza was one of six people who wrote letters to Glendale city officials supporting the proposed animal shelter.

Donations for the shelter may be sent to Sun Cities Animal Rescue, Box 1, Sun City 85372-0001.

Shelter's building continues

No-kill animal center slated to open this fall

By J.J. McCORMACK
Staff writer

The only animals hanging around during these hot summer days are ants and other assorted desert fauna.

But possibly by September, as many as 200 cats and 50 dogs will make their homes in a no-kill animal shelter rising up in the sand in Glen Harbor Business Park, directly south of Sun City in Glendale.

The first phase of the U-shaped, 17,000 square-foot, brown-block building is about 50 percent complete.

"Every time I come, it's bigger and bigger," said a smiling Jack Fullmer during a visit to the construction site Tuesday.

Fullmer, a Sun City resident and real estate agent, is president of Sun Cities Animal Rescue. The non-profit animal welfare organization is building the \$1.25 million shelter to house dogs and cats rescued from the streets of the West Valley.

"Does that look desperate?" he asked, pointing to the shelter. He was referring to an erroneous report that the animal rescue group is desperate for funds.

The shelter represents a dream come true for Fullmer and the nearly 800 other members of the animal rescue group and generous supporters. The organization has raised in excess of \$400,000 and secured long-term financing from Sun City Bank to complete the building.

But Fullmer said the organization

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SUN CITY

DAILY NEWS SUN

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J.J. McCormack/Daily News-Sun

Jack Fullmer, president of Sun Cities Animal Rescue, visits the Glen Harbor Business Park, future site of the animal welfare group's shelter. The \$1.2 million shelter for dogs and cats is nearly 50 percent complete.

has no intention of being in debt for long.

"We've used our money to get to this point," he said, adding that members are willing to hold off construction of the second phase, consisting of volunteer quarters and a medical area until more money is raised.

"We don't mind waiting. ... In fact, it's good business."

The first phase of the shelter consists of separate boarding areas for dogs and cats.

Financing will kick in to finish the phase and construct dog runs that are part of the second phase.

"We felt they (the dog runs) were something we couldn't wait for."

Animal rescue bought the nearly 3-acre shelter site for \$70,000 each

cut-rate price offered by the Del Webb Corp., developer of the business park.

Fullmer said he's been pleased with what animal rescue has been able to accomplish with the financial support of the community.

"Everyone wants to give us a hand," he said. "I can't stress enough that this is being done with the help of everyone in the community."

He said the financial support must not wane, because the group will incur operating expenses once the shelter opens.

Sun Cities Animal Rescue supplements private and corporate contributions with proceeds from regular fund-raising activities and a

Bowl Plaza in Sun City.

Money donated for the shelter is placed in a construction fund. A separate operating fund is used to board, feed and provide medical care to the 17 dogs and estimated 150 cats currently in the animal group's welfare system.

The organization is short of volunteers to work in the thrift shop and fulfill other duties during the summer months. Donations also drop off sharply during the summer.

Despite the anticipated drop in contributions and a lack of volunteers, Fullmer predicted the shelter could be open by September. "If not, maybe November. But it's going to be this year," he said.

ABANDONED ANIMALS

Welcome home

MAYBE we should call this one "What Worked." We wrote about the Sun Cities Animal Rescue Inc. back in March when the group broke ground on a "no-kill" animal shelter. Now it's time to dedicate the building.

"We'd love to have everybody come," says the group's spokeswoman Hazel Steepleton.

That's quite a guest list. But the list would be formidable even if it were limited to those who turned the dream into reality.

Founded in 1991 by two ladies in Sun City, the animal rescue group began as a way to find new homes for companion animals whose owners went into nursing homes or passed away. Expanded by need, the animal rescuers soon began taking in abused, abandoned and stray animals.

So far, the group that was begun by Karin Britten and Virginia Hall has taken in 2,000 animals. The critters went to "foster families" or kennels until new homes were found. Almost none of them proved unadoptable, says Steepleton. Sun Cities Animal Rescue will find an animal a home if it takes six months.

Which is why the group needed a shelter.

Here's a short list of those who made it work:

There's The Sun City Bank, which gave a line of credit toward the \$1.2 million construction cost. There's Del Webb, which made land for the shelter available at a reduced cost. There's PetsMart, which has donated food and the space to show off adoptable animals.

There are veterinarians who have helped heal sick and injured animals. There are a couple of hundred dues-paying members of the group, and a core of about 100 who do the grunt work.

That work includes running the Sun Cities Animal Rescue Thrift Shop. It includes baking, cooking and selling the goodies at countless bake sales, pancake breakfasts and pizza dinners. It includes organizers and volunteers. It includes people who have named the group in their wills.

The fund-raising efforts gave the bank the confidence to underwrite part of the cost of the shelter. The mortgage gives Sun Cities members pause to hope more people will join a project that started when two women decided to make life a little gentler for some furry friends.

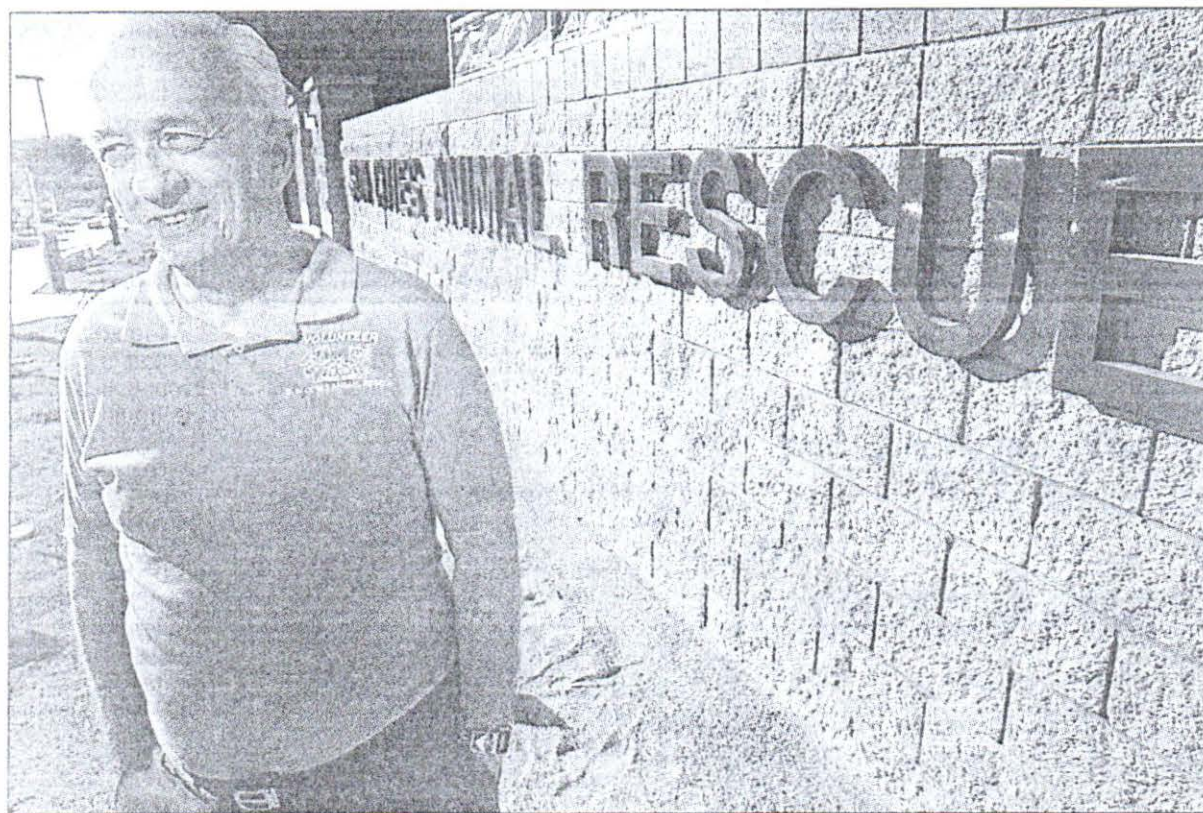
"We old fogies still aren't sitting on our duffs, but a little more help sure would be welcome," says Steepleton.

Want to celebrate of one sweet idea that's still working to make the Valley a better place to live? The dedication of the Sun Cities Animal Rescue shelter will be Nov. 29 at 1 p.m. at 7510 N. 110 Ave. in the Glen Harbor Business Park. There will be entertainment, refreshments and some "speechifying," says Steepleton.

Do you know someone who is doing something to improve the community? Or a group that is silently working for the betterment of Valley residents? Tell us about What Works. Along with your name and phone number, send your submissions to: What Works, The Arizona Republic, P.O. Box 2244, Phoenix, AZ 85002 or FAX: 602-271-8933 or E-mail: Opinions@aol.com

What Works

An occasional series



Jack Fullmer, president of Sun Cities Animal Rescue, is delighted about today's opening of the \$1.25 million no-kill shelter, which has room for 50 dogs and 200 cats.

Tom Tingle / Staff photographer

For our furry friends

No-kill animal shelter ready to open

By Robert Barrett
Staff writer

Glendale

When the dogs arrive, the Sun Cities Animal Rescue facility will have the guillotines ready.

Guillotine doors, that is.

The doors, named after the infamous method of execution because of their shape and operating principal, can be raised and lowered via a pulley system to give the animals access to the dog run.

"We've got 25 runs here," Jack Fullmer, president of Sun Cities Animal Rescue, said last week as he watched workers putting up the cages in the

"Half the cost for this building came out of our funds, which were donated by hundreds of people. The other half was paid by the Sun City Bank."

Jack Fullmer
Sun Cities Animal Rescue

no-kill shelter. "The cats go on the other side."

The 14,000-square-foot shelter, in the Glen Harbor Business Park, 7150 N. 110th Ave., Glendale, will have its grand opening from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. today.

There won't be any animals in the \$1.25 million building, which has room for 50 dogs and 200 cats. The approximately 25 dogs and 175 cats the organization currently has available for adoption will be moving into the new quarters starting Dec. 1, Fullmer said.

The Sun Cities Animal Rescue began about 4½ years ago when some residents of Sun City and Sun City West began caring for animals in the northwest Valley that were lost, abandoned or whose owners had died.

The organization decided upon a no-kill policy and has been placing the animals in a network of foster homes and

See SHELTER, Page 7



Tom Tingle / Staff photographer
Guillermo Contreras installs cages in the dog area. Animals that are brought here are put up for adoption, never destroyed.

SHELTER

From Page 1

kennels until they are adopted.

"For example, three years ago we got a poodle that was 5 pounds and just a bag of bones," Fullmer said. "Now it weighs 10 pounds and lives at my house."

The organization relies on donations to pay for food and care for the animals, and to pay for the new building, Fullmer said.

"Half the cost for this building came out of our funds, which were donated by hundreds of people," he said. "The other half was paid by the Sun City Bank."

The new building is H-shaped, with dogs on one side and cats on the other. Just as the dogs have an outdoor run, the cats also have an outdoor area that is covered so the felines will not be attacked by hawks. "We had six hawks circling the area the other day, so it seems as if the word is out," volunteer Hazel Steepleton said.

Adoption costs \$30 to \$65, depending on the kind of animal and its age, Steepleton said.

Although it is called the Sun Cities Animal Rescue, the organi-

IF YOU GO

Grand opening of Sun Cities Animal Rescue shelter.

When: Today, 1 to 4 p.m.

Where: Glen Harbor Business Park, 7150 N. 110th Ave., Glendale.

Cost: Free.

Information: There will be tours, entertainment and refreshments.

zation is not restricted to retirees, Fullmer said. The animals come from throughout the northwest Valley and so do the members.

Membership is \$15 per person or \$25 per family. Many members help out by being foster families.

Although adoptions will be available at the shelter, the organization plans to continue to offer animals at the PETSMART store at 67th and Peoria avenues every Sunday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

SCAR opens long-awaited animal shelter

By CINDY TRACY
Sun Cities Independent

12-27-95 New facility located south of Sun City



In a quiet, spacious room at the new Sun Cities Animal Rescue shelter, five felines in assorted sizes, shapes and colors take their ease.

The little animals resting among the assortment of cat houses and scratching posts are the first inhabitants of the new 14,000-square-foot facility that opened last month in Glen Harbor Business Park, 7150 N. 110th Ave., Glendale.

The cats were brought to the shelter after their owner died. They appeared content in their new quarters, which is good because SCAR President Jack Fullmer said these cats were not ready for adoption.

"I don't know these cats — just met them," Mr. Fullmer said, picking up a

fat tabby who padded across the shelter's bright new floors.

The shelter is not intended to be a place for people to drop off unwanted pets, Mr. Fullmer says. SCAR's mission is to control stray animals within SCAR's area, which is Sun Cities and the surrounding areas.

Strays might be abandoned, injured or lost and SCAR might try to reunite the pets with their owners.

The \$1.25 million facility has room for up to 200 cats and 50 dogs.

SCAR public relations spokeswoman Hazel Steepleton said half of the funding for the shelter — about \$600,000 — was underwritten by mortgages with the Sun City Bank. The rest of the funds came from dona-

tions.

The facility is the culmination of years of efforts and fund-raising. When SCAR was first organized, members kept lost or abandoned pets in their own homes until a permanent home could be found for the animal. Initial plans to operate a no-kill shelter out of a home in Youngtown were abandoned after neighbors raised a stink over the proposal.

The organization eventually settled on the site in the Glen Harbor Business Park and have spent much of the past few years raising funds to construct the facility.

The new shelter has all the amenities to make life comfortable for the pets while they await adoption. The

H-shaped building includes facilities for housing cats and dogs separately, rooms for laundry, grooming, surgery and even a Dog Food Room.

Volunteers staff the shelter, show the animals and arrange for adoptions. SCAR will continue to offer pets for adoption between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. Sundays at PETSMART, 67th and Peoria avenues, Peoria. Call 872-7941.

Another way to help is to realize SCAR needs continued funding in cash donations, according to both Ms. Steepleton and Mr. Fullmer.

Ms. Steepleton says PETSMART donates pet food to SCAR and the organization receives pet items that have been donated to Westside Food Bank. But money is needed to pay the light bill, etc., she says.

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Bob Dunn/Daily News-Sun

Jack Fullmer, president of Sun Cities Animal Rescue, plays with Sandy in the Cat Community Room of SCAR's Glendale center. The \$1.25-million center, which opened four months ago, had an open house Sunday afternoon.

SCAR shows off Residents tour no-kill animal shelter

By DAN BURNETTE
Editorial page editor

At Sun Cities Animal Rescue, cats and dogs are in different wings of the shelter, separated by a courtyard.

What separates supporters and critics of the shelter, as President Jack Fullmer sees it, is involvement.

"I've seen the letters (to local newspapers). I've only recognized maybe three of them as former members or volunteers. We have 700 members, dozens of volunteers, the support of veterinarians from all over the area," Fullmer said Sunday as he ushered visitors through the animal shelter during an open house.

"This is the first time a lot of people have been here since we brought the animals in," Fullmer

said. "When we had our dedication here, the dogs and cats hadn't been moved in yet."

Sun Cities Animal Rescue has been running pet adoptions out of the \$1.25 million shelter for about four months. Besides the usual start-up glitches associated with any new facility, the animal shelter group has had to contend with the ouster of a founding board member and criticism that the organization dislikes — and even mistreats — cats.

"We have top-of-the-line caging systems, they're the best money can buy," Fullmer said. "They're attended to by volunteers who love cats; they're fed, given water. The cages are even open (covered with clear plastic) at the back so they can look out."

"True, they don't run around the

► See Tour gives, A5



Bob Dunn/Daily News-Sun

Hazel Steepleton, publicity director for Sun Cities Animal Rescue, gets a kiss from Patti, a 3-month-old collie/shepherd.

Tour gives public view of shelter

■ From A1

facility like they would run around in a house," Fullmer said. "You couldn't manage them that way. People wouldn't even be able to look at them and pick one out for adoption with them all running around, especially when we're at capacity of 200 cats. So it's not a home environment, but the whole point is to keep them healthy and get them adopted into a home environment."

Some critics have decried the use of dry, bagged cat food. Fullmer said the use of canned vs. dry cat food is a matter of choice for the pet owner, but he defended the use of dry food as nutritionally sound. "The animals eat the food."

SCAR leaders sponsored the

open house to showcase the shelter operation and help diffuse criticism leveled since the ouster of SCAR founder Karin Britten. Britten's supporters since have formed a separate animal welfare organization called Four Paws Rescue.

Visitors streamed through the animal shelter for two hours Sunday afternoon, inspecting the facilities, noting the fact that laundry was done on-site, and generally praising the appearance of the shelter.

Royce and Marion Beal of Sun City had been at the shelter to adopt a cat last week, but were back on Sunday to return the animal because it had shown a great deal of fear around Mr. Beal. So they found another cat, a white and orange short-hair named Peaches, that seemed to be more personable.

Local golf courses attract coyotes

By ANDY McINNIS
Staff writer

A chilling howl drifts into the hollow sky of early morning as a four-legged creature slips into the shadows, hidden from the eyes of the world.

The scraggly, light-colored coat of the coyote is coming out in clumps, shedding for the summer. These vagabond wild dogs have made a living for thousands of years prowling the desert Southwest, feeding off everything from small deer to the spoils of carrion left by larger predators, to prickly pear fruit and mesquite beans.

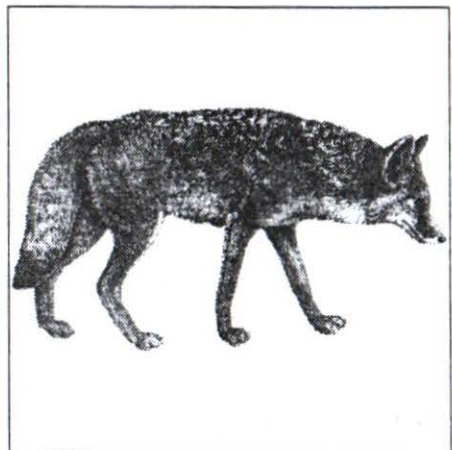
Today, coyotes sneak onto the golf courses and into the back yards of the Sun Cities. Adapted to urban life, they steal dog food, and munch the occasional small dog given a chance, said Joe Yarchin, an urban wildlife biologist with the Arizona Game and Fish Department.

Nancy Coburn, who lives on a golf course in Sun City's Phase I, says she often sees coyotes wandering by.

"They're more common in summer," she said. "I think they're looking for water."

"Sometimes it's just one or maybe two, but we've also seen a whole family. I saw a pair of adults once with a pup about a foot long trotting

BACKYARD wildlife



C O Y O T E

at the back. By the time I got my husband over to the window to look, why there came another pup, so there were four altogether."

Pups are born in spring, with an average litter of four or five young. But like dogs, there can occasionally be 10 or even a dozen.

Coyotes go to great lengths in search of food. Ask Dave Patterson, who heard their yipping in the

courtyard of his North 105th Avenue condo.

Patterson didn't pay the sounds much heed, but the 3 a.m. noises continued, and soon were followed by bangings and rattlings.

So he got up and looked out the window, and saw three coyotes in the courtyard, hauling the drainpipe away from the house. They took it across the yard — about 50 feet — and were chewing on one end, pushing it around.

Patterson said he thought the coyotes were looking for water. More likely is the possibility that the coyotes had chased some unfortunate beast into the drain pipe, and collectively had succeeded in its apprehension. Their pack-type behavior had paid dividends in dismantling the drainpipe.

But coyotes frequently lose out to man.

A coyote caught in the headlights stands no chance against a speeding vehicle. Ranchers for years have blamed the creatures for loss of livestock and have taken what some would call questionable measures to eradicate them.

Coyotes, though, have adapted well to the arid Southwestern environment and are thriving, despite the odds presented by a growing human population.



They have expanded their traditional range until now almost every state can claim at least a small population. Two hundred years ago, there were none east of the Mississippi.

Desert coyotes weigh about only half as much as other coyotes, with

shorter, thinner and lighter-colored fur, which allows them to get rid of heat more efficiently.

A typical desert coyote's diet includes up to 40 percent plant material; the remainder is mainly rabbits, carrion, insects and anything else the wild dog can get its teeth on. They aren't finicky eaters.

The coyote can sprint as fast as 40 mph and can lope long distances at speeds of 25 to 30 mph. They travel as far as 100 miles a night.

Coyotes find golf courses particularly suitable because they provide easy moving, an abundance of ducks and rabbits, hollow spots for dens in culverts and under dry bridges, and plenty of water in ponds and artificial streams, Yarchin said.

That means that homeowners near golf courses may see more coyotes than other Sun Cities-area residents.

Coyotes mate for life and maintain family territories. A pup will stay with parents for as long as a year, many times providing food for the next year's litter, before moving on, sometimes hundreds of miles, to find its own territory.

The coyote's existence has paralleled mankind's for centuries. Southwestern Indian legends portrayed "Old Man Coyote" as a charming trickster that sometimes let its greed get in the way of good sense.

Animal rescue group seeing influx of pets

By JULIA DE SIMONE
Independent Newspapers

It's raining cats and dogs at the Sun Cities Four Paws Animal Rescue (4 PAWS).

According to Karin Britten, 4 PAWS president, the organization currently has 119 cats and eight dogs available for adoption.

In July and August, 30 animals were taken to the shelter because their owners died or moved to care centers where pets are not allowed.

"I talk to people who refuse to go to (care) centers because there's no one to take care of their animals," Ms. Britten said. "It's the saddest thing you have ever run into."

Currently rescue animals are housed in temporary homes or at the veterinarian's kennel, Ms. Britten said. Fees to keep pets there vary. The non-profit organization covers these costs through membership fees and donations.

Ms. Britten said 4 PAWS' members plan to eventually build

Looking to adopt?

Sun Cities 4 PAWS RESCUE
P.O. BOX 40
Sun City, Ariz., 85372-0040
876-8778

their own shelter, but are in need of donations.

In the meantime, members are seeking residents to adopt the cats and dogs they have rescued or received within the last three months.

"It's nice adopting the animals to people in Sun City because they are responsible and really take care of the animals," Ms. Britten said.

She said the animals also make good companions. "Mariah" is one such example.

Maurie Rein of Sun City said he recently adopted the calico cat that was abandoned.

"I primarily (adopted) her for my mother ... I like her markings.

She's friendly and she's a sweet kitty," he said.

Pets can be adopted 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Wednesday and Friday at the 4 PAWS Bargain Boutique, 11129 Michigan Ave., Youngtown. Costs are \$40 for cats and \$65 for dogs. Fees include the necessary shots.

4 PAWS also has incentives for residents over 65-years-old on a fixed income.

"We'll give them an animal free, provided they don't have the funds (to cover the pet cost)," Ms. Britten said. "Not everyone here is rich. You run into a lot of people who run into a financial situation, and they'll feed their pet before they feed themselves."

Ms. Britten said residents whom can't adopt an animal can temporarily house or sponsor one.

"If they can do it (foster a pet) for a week, month, fantastic," she said. "All they have to do is give it love."

All animals placed in foster homes have been checked and have the necessary shots from veterinarians. Food and litter for the animal is provided to foster parents.

Residents wishing to sponsor an animal are asked to donate \$15 a month to the organization to help cover costs.

In October, members from the non-profit organization will begin its 4 PAWS Helping Hands program, Ms. Britten said.

Helping Hands will aid residents who are homebound or ill and unable to care for their animals, but do not want to place them up for adoption.

"These activities will include exercising the pet, transportation to vet for routine checkups, shopping for food supplies, pet sitting, brushing and combing, etc.," Ms. Britten explained.

She said the program will match the needs of the resident to a particular volunteer.

Ms. Britten stressed that residents also must prepare for their pet's future. A pet owner should discuss with family members or friends whether they are willing to take the animal in case of the owner's death or illness. This discussion should be followed up with a statement in writing.

Ms. Britten said if an owner fails to make arrangements for their pet, it could end up with animal control.

Membership fees to join 4 PAWS

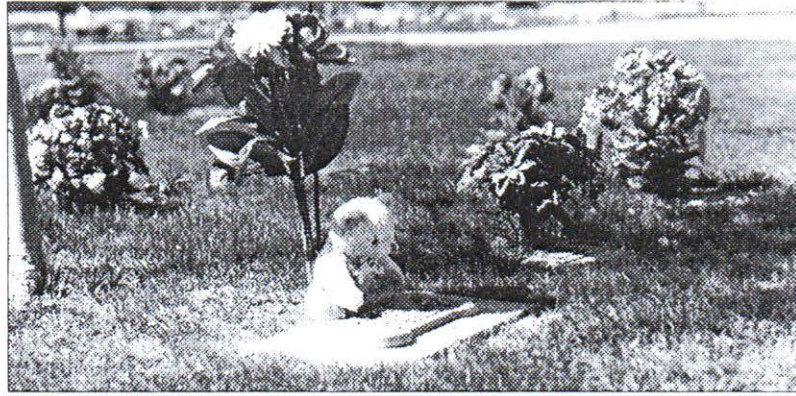


Photo by JULIA DE SIMONE/Independent Newspapers

Relocated owners leave pets behind

Karin Britten is purrrfectly content with Tortie, one of the many cats that are available for adoption at the Four Paws Animal Rescue Boutique. Ms. Britten, 4 PAWS president, said cats and dogs can be adopted 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Wednesday and Friday at the non-profit organization's boutique, 11129 Michigan Ave., Youngtown. Adoption fees are \$40 for

See ■ 4 PAWS, Page 3



Pet cemetery provides resting place for animals

By **JULIA DE SIMONE**
Independent Newspapers

3/19/97

Since 1990, Sunland Pet Rest Cemetery has helped Valley residents ease the pain associated with the loss of a pet. It is the sole pub-

LeeAnne Herr believes even the tiniest creatures deserve a final resting place.

See ■ CEMETERY, Page 3

lic pet cemetery in the Valley and opened to all residents.

"It's very essential — extremely," said Ms. Herr, manager. "These folks need to go visit their pets. It helps them to grieve."

An open lot leads residents to a statue of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of animals. Green blades of grass, pinwheels and flower vases pressed in the earth encircle the statue.

A lone American flag with faded stripes and stars is almost unnoticed among fireworks of flowers and Easter decorations.

"I try to put flowers on the graves," Ms. Herr said. "I try to make sure everyone has flowers there."

A stranger tilts a recycled plastic bottle of water in her hands. She whispers to the earth as drops of water fall from the green bottle and gently pat the thirsty flowers surrounding the gravestone.

Her hands brush away loose earth, revealing the name of a loved one — her pet.

"You asked for so little and gave so much in return," the gravestone

reads.

According to Ms. Herr, about 1,000 pets from Scottsdale to Sun City have been put to rest in the cemetery's earth or in niches, which are cubby holes located in a small marble building on the cemetery grounds.

She said the majority of animals she buries have died from old age, but there are exceptions.

The youngest animal to find a resting place on the cemetery grounds was a three-week old puppy; a few dogs, 20-22-years-old, also remain part of the earth.

There's even a retired police dog and families of pets buried.

Although mainly dogs and cats sit in the cemetery, it is not exclusive to these common pets.

The pet manager has buried ferrets as well as any animals that claimed the hearts of their owners.

Caskets range in size to fit a kitten's body up to a 30-40 pound dog. Costs range from approximately \$650 to \$760. It includes a prior viewing of the body, depending on the shape of the animal.

"If I get an animal in too bad of a

shape, I won't have an open casket," Ms. Herr said.

She said residents can also choose to cremate a pet, which includes an urn for the ashes. It costs about \$125 to cremate a pet.

Ms. Herr, proud mother of six dogs and five felines, believes it's tougher bidding farewell to a pet than a blood-related family member.

"I personally think it's harder ... with a human you know they're going to die, but with a pet you think they're going to be here forever," she said.

Another stranger finds herself in the echoes of Ms. Herr.

She looks down at the earth, finding solace from words carved in stone and memorized two decades ago.

"After 20 years of unconditional love, you've gone home, where we shall meet again," it reads.

Sunland Pet Rest Cemetery is located behind Sunland Memorial Park Mortuary and Cremation Center, 15826 Del Webb Blvd.

Office hours are 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Pigeons driving officials coo-coo



By MIKE RUSSO
Independent Newspapers

Health and economic issues were at the forefront of discussions held during the second meeting of the group studying the feral pigeon problem in the northwest Valley.

Representatives from Youngtown, Sun City, Sun City West, Litchfield Park and the Master Gardeners Club heard presentations from Kevin Grant and Jim West, agents

See ■ PIGEONS, Page 8

from the USDA Wildlife Services, and Larry Sullivan, extension specialist of Biological Sciences of the University of Arizona.

Participating from the Sun Cites were James Warfield, general manager, Recreation Centers of Sun City Inc.; James Collingsworth, RCSC grounds maintenance supervisor; Hy Goldberg, Property Owners and Residents Association, Deed Restriction Committee chairman; and Dorothy Schrage, Master Gardeners.

Mr. Grant explained that the use of chemicals to control the burgeoning pigeon population must be approved by the state, and only a specialist trained in pesticides can use them.

The group also heard a report from Mohave County regarding that northwest Arizona county's attempt to eradicate pesky pigeons.

The county passed an ordinance in 1998 prohibiting the feeding of pigeons on the ground, but the county's Environmental Health Division has encountered difficulties in enforcing the law, noted June Miller, Youngtown Council-woman and pigeon group organizer.

"They have had to make several visits to violators' homes and it has put a strain on their work force," Mrs. Miller said. "Their success rate is difficult to judge, but they are seeing some results."

Mrs. Miller said there is no way to estimate the number of pigeons plaguing Youngtown, but the problem does seem to be escalating.

"We are concerned about pigeons all over town," Mrs. Miller

explained. "We have several people feeding them, and that is a problem.

"At present, there is no known control but we are still searching," she continued.

"We are trying to devise a plan to rid the town of the pigeons. We don't want our citizens to get sick."

Youngtown is not alone in suffering a pigeon infestation, Mrs. Miller noted.

"The other communities need help, too," she said.

It is that need that led to last fall's formation of the group studying the problem.

"All the surrounding communities are interested and are willing to work with us," Mrs. Miller said.

Mrs. Miller has previously discovered that neighboring communities — Sun City, Sun City West, Surprise, El Mirage, Peoria, Glendale and Litchfield Park — are also afflicted with the same problem.

"This is a regional problem," she said.

Educational pamphlets were furnished to the group by Mr. Sullivan, and they will be distributed soon to interested communities. The pamphlets detail the potential health risk associated with a large pigeon population.

Pigeon droppings are known to carry or transmit such diseases as pigeon ornithosis, encephalitis, Newcastle disease, cryptococcosis, toxoplasmosis, salmonella and histoplasmosis.

The latter is a systemic fungal disease that can infect humans, through airborne spores resulting

from pigeon fecal matter. Infections from histoplasmosis may occur in the lungs, liver, spleen and the central nervous system.

"We need to get people to stop feeding the pigeons," Mrs. Miller said succinctly.

In addition to the potential toll on human health, there is an economic consideration, Mrs. Miller noted.

"We need to consider the cost of damage they do to our roofs and buildings," she said.

"Droppings clog drains and render surfaces, such as stairways and fire escapes, hazardous and contaminate large quantities of human and animal food," Mr. Sullivan wrote in the pamphlet.

"We have hopes that people will recognize the very real problems they are causing for themselves as well as their neighbors," Mrs. Miller added.

Thursday, October 21, 1999 THE WESTER

Open House at Sun Cities 4 Paws new shelter

Sun Cities 4 PAWS Rescue invites all to attend an open house at its new shelter on Saturday Oct. 23 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Directors and volunteers will be available to provide tours of the shelter which currently houses over 100 rescued cats and kittens available for adoption. Refreshments will be served. Location is two blocks North of Peoria Avenue at 10807 North 96th Avenue.

Pets are placed in the shelter or foster care homes until people adopt them. All animals are clean, well-fed and have necessary shots and veterinary care. Part of 4 PAWS mission is to

control over population, so all animals are spayed or neutered at the proper time.

Its policy is to provide no-kill shelter. Income is from memberships, donations, and sales of donated items at its thrift store in Youngtown. It is non-profit and tax-exempt. Call 623-876-8778 for further information.

Daily News-Sun • Tuesday, April 10, 2001

Honoring departed companions

SUNLAND PET REST:
More than 3,000 furry and feathered friends have been interred since 1990, with room for about 17,000 more

MICHAEL MARESH
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Losing a pet to some people can be almost as devastating as losing a family member; in fact, most pets have an enduring role in a family.

With that in mind, Sunland Memorial Park Mortuary and Cremation Center in 1990 opened up Sunland Pet Rest as a final resting place for pets.

More than 3,000 pets have been interred there, and the number is growing. More than 100 plots were sold in 2000. The 5-acre lot has the capacity for about 20,000 pet burials.

Sunland Pet Rest is one of two pet cemeteries in the state that are endowed with enough money to provide that the grounds are cared for on a daily basis — even after the lot reaches capacity.

Nancy Edwards, pet counselor, said the size of the lot and casket depends on the size of the pet. Pet owners, though, can purchase a larger burial site and casket at a higher price.

And pets are not just cats and dogs. The cemetery has buried and cremated rabbits, ferrets, a parakeet, a guinea pig, hamsters and prairie dogs. The center also has cremated a boa constrictor.

But preparing for the burial or cremation is hard work.

After the pet is picked up in an air-conditioned van or brought in by the owner, the real work begins.

"I wash and groom every pet," Edwards said.

After grooming the deceased animal, the pet is placed in a casket in the visitation room, where families can stay for 30 minutes. Immediately following the visitations are the burials.

To keep the body of the animal in good viewing condition, Edwards turns the air conditioner in her office down to 58 degrees.

Families, when paying their last respects in the visitation room, bring toys, collars and favorite foods. These keepsakes are placed into the pet's casket. Some people, she said, place pictures of the family in the casket.

And while there are no services for the deceased pet, Edwards said most people read a poem or story written for the occasion and pet. After the reading, the animal is immediately buried in the spot chosen by the customer.

"They have verification and peace of

mind of where the pet will go," said Scott Herrington, cemetery manager.

Herrington said burials of pets often bring out extended families of about a dozen people. One family, over the years, has buried 16 pets at the cemetery.

Herrington, who is in charge of the grounds, said owners and families come out on a daily basis to visit their pet graves. He said some spend hours on a daily basis replacing flowers and talking to the deceased.

"These people are very (hurt)," he said of the customers the cemetery serves. "(The pets) were thought of as part of their family, not their pet. A lot of people already lost their spouse, and this is all they have. They are devastated."

While the majority of their customers choose burial, some opt for cremations for monetary reasons.

"Cremations suit the financial needs better yet is still a service for the pet," Edwards said.

And two or more pets of the same type, like two cats, can share an urn

while being separated through niches.

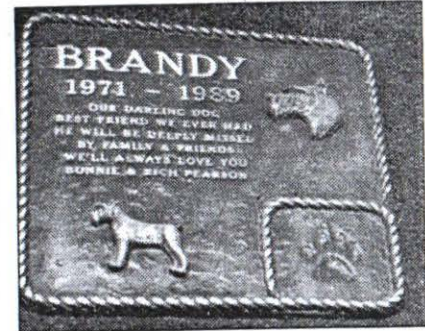
The bond people form with their pets is one reason some people will not hesitate to shell out in excess of \$1,000 for a final resting place for their valued furry friend. Edwards said the most expensive burial she has had was \$1,680.

Upkeep of the grounds of a pet cemetery is a lot more work than caring for the grounds of a people cemetery, Herrington said.

"Pet graves are so much closer," he said. "We can't get the bigger mowers in. It's a lot more hard work with push mowers."

Sunland Pet Rest can be contacted at 933-0560.

Michael Mares can be reached at mmares@aztrib.com or 876-2521.



JOY LAMBERT/DAILY NEWS-SUN

One of the grave markers on display that were available Monday at Sun City's Sunland Pet Rest.

(over)



JOY LAMBERT/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Cody and Nick Putnam, 11 and 8 respectively, of Knoxville, Ill., read markers at Sunland Pet Rest in Sun City on Monday. They were visiting grandfather Ernie Ornelius of Sun City, who said the boys enjoy reading the pet names and practicing math by figuring the ages of pets buried there.



JOY LAMBERT/DAILY NEWS-SUN

A statue of St. Francis of Assisi and a bench dedicated to service animals are part of the landscape at Sunland Pet Rest.

SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT September 11, 2002

Coyotes seek food in residential areas

By **Jeremy Pearlman**
Independent Newspapers

Angel Morrisey and Kay Hall recently had an unexpected visitor stop by their Sun City West residence hoping to get a meal.

Although the roommates are normally congenial to those seeking food, this individual was not welcomed.

The visitor was a coyote and it was going after the scores of rabbits and quail which live and feed off the plants in the backyard of the two women.

"This was our first coyote sighting," Ms. Morrisey said. "I always told her (Ms. Hall) that they were here before because I had heard rustling in the bushes."

Spotting the coyote, the two started yelling at the animal from the back door. It left quickly without incident, but shortly after it returned.

"It took us both screaming and yelling for him to stop digging in the bush," Ms. Morrisey said.

This time the coyote scaled nearly 10 feet over an incline and a wall to exit the property onto Deer Valley Drive.

"The wall is on a four-foot incline, then there was a six-foot wall on top of that," Ms. Morrisey said. "It just scaled it. We couldn't believe it."

The coyote has not returned since.

"We're watching now every time we go outside," Ms. Morrisey said.

Located near the Agua Fria and New rivers, the Sun Cities are a relatively popular spot for coyotes, according to Joe Yarchin, the Arizona Game and Fish Department's Urban Wildlife program manager.

The two rivers act as corridors for animals to go to and from wildlife areas to developed communities like the Sun Cities.

In addition to having access and travel routes nearby, the Sun Cities have ample quantities of prey, water from golf courses and shelter for the coyotes to prosper.

"When you think about what criteria it takes to sustain life, you're going to need food, water, shelter and space," Mr. Yarchin said. "Anytime you find this in the right arrangement you can find animals living, be it human, hawk or coyote."

"We provide plenty of food, water and shelter," Mr. Yarchin continued.

While coyotes are curious animals and are willing to come into developed areas, they are usually pretty timid creatures, according to Mr. Yarchin.

"They normally run away when challenged," Mr. Yarchin said. "It is not normal for coyotes to attack humans, at least adults."

"Children any older than 5 or 6 are going to be large enough that a coyote is not going to pay attention to them," he added. "Younger kids should be supervised anyway, whether on street, near a pool or in an area where coyotes may be."

Only four coyote bites have been reported in the last 10 years, according to Mr. Yarchin.

Indifference by residents can make coyotes more comfortable around humans and make it more likely for them to be a persistent pest.

"You're going to need to frighten coyotes away and that

See **Coyotes** — Page 3



Submitted photo

As drought conditions worsen, coyotes have been spotted more frequently in residential areas, searching for food and water.

Coyotes

Continued From Page 1

is to make aggressive gestures to the animal," Mr. Yarchin said. "One real important thing from discouraging animals from backyards is that it needs

to be a community effort ... everyone in a neighborhood has to be on the same page."

To frighten and dissuade coyotes from an area, Mr. Yarchin suggests:

- Flail arms and legs and

shout when a coyote is spotted nearby.

- Throw rocks or other objects in the direction of the coyote.

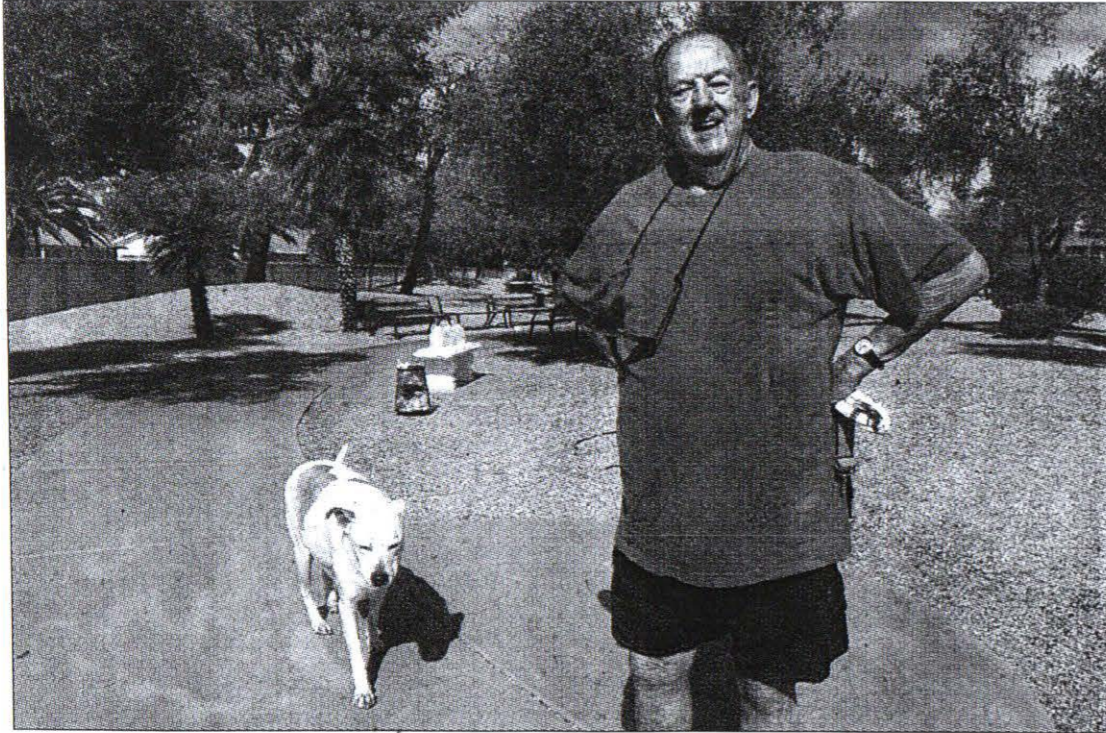
- If with a small pet, keep the pet on a tight leash and get

between the coyote and the pet to draw the coyote's attention.

- Don't feed prey animals or leave food out.

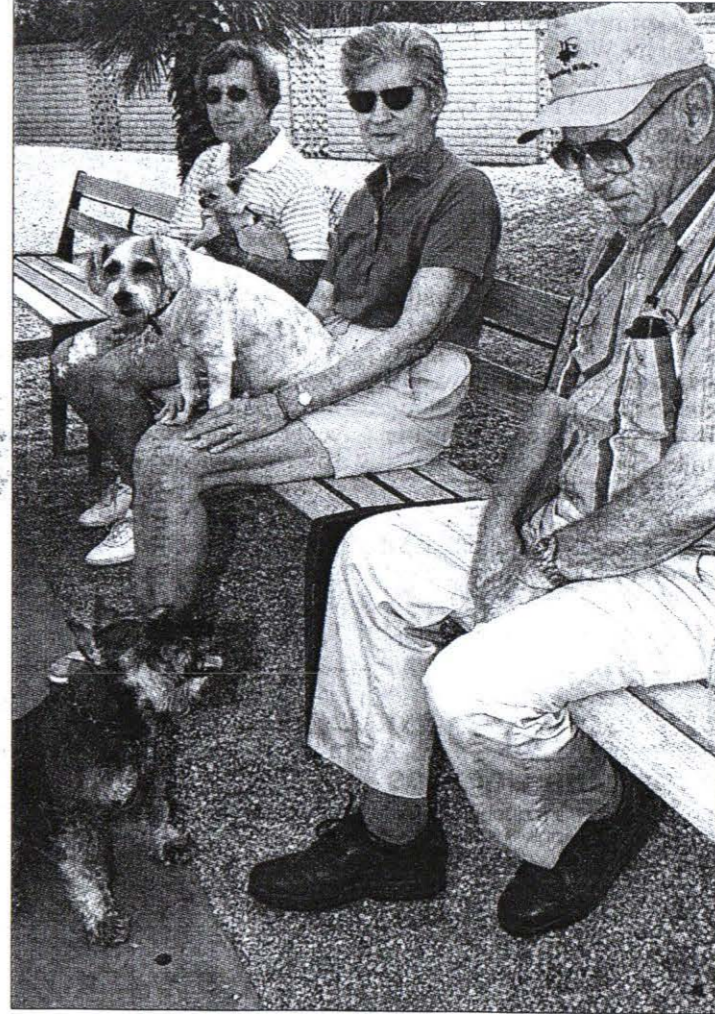
- Don't feed the coyotes.

Room for Rover



MOLLIE J. HOPPES/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Above, Earl Uecherman and Cholla frequent the psuedo-dog park at Thunderbird and Del Webb boulevards in Sun City. Right, dogs and owners take a break: Keela with Michelle Liddiard, left, Jake with Evelyn Little and Pepper with Jim Sterne.



PARK: Private property serves as community meeting place

KATY O'GRADY
DAILY NEWS-SUN

A dogleg-shaped parcel of Sun City land tucked behind a bank has become a place for pups to play and their masters to meet.

Brooms and rakes hanging

from trees or hidden behind bushes are available to anyone needing them to help keep the grounds as pristine as possible. Trash bins are full of plastic bags, revealing pet owners' diligence in depositing their animals'

business. Bowls are left out with jugs of water nearby to quench pets' thirst, and a message board has cropped up on a tree in the center of a grouping of benches.

Everyone seems to know the unwritten protocol in the community park next to the Washington Federal Savings at Del Webb and Thunderbird boulevards.

Three groups of regulars tend to congregate in the park, one in the morning, one at about 3 in the afternoon and one in the early evening.

"Sometimes you'll have up to 20 people, and that many dogs," said Michelle Liddiard, whose Chihuahua Keela manages to hold her own against the much larger retrievers, schnauzers and other breeds at the park.

"People know each other by the names of their dogs," said Bob Knight, who owns Marty, a long-haired dachshund. "Everybody kind of just does their own thing. There's no formal rules."

There's actually no formal park, although the Sun City Home Owners Association pays the water bill and is

See PETS, A5

OVER

considering spending \$3,000 to add new rock, and the Sun City PRIDES, acting as individuals, since the group cannot clean private property, maintain the trash barrels and other aspects of the park.

"It's been a combination — the PRIDES, HOA and the people who keep it up," said Chuck Chadbourne, who started visiting the park more than six years ago. "It originally was owned by the people that developed the Le Ronde shopping centers."

Most visitors know bits and pieces of the park's history — some say two sisters in Texas own the property, while others believe the Le Ronde Centre developers or their heirs own it — but the park's true owners probably can't fathom the degree of camaraderie that's sprouted on their land.

"This really provides a social outlet that goes well beyond the dogs," Knight said. "If somebody gets sick, it's this group that comes together."

According to the Maricopa County Assessor's Office, Marcia May and Paul Pilzer of Dallas own the land. A deed filed with the state shows Donna Casey Pilzer granted the property to her ex-husband, Paul, for \$10. A phone number given by Qwest for Paul Pilzer at the same address shown on the property-tax statement has been disconnected. No listing for Marcia May could be found.

But Knight said he communicated with Paul Pilzer and Marcia May about a year ago, asking whether dog-park visitors might be able to purchase the land, create a foundation to accept it as a tax deduction, or at least make improvements on the property such as adding fences so dogs could roam more freely.

"I tried to put together a little coalition to buy it, and it didn't go anywhere," said Knight, who once worked for the Federal Reserve and later operated a bank. "I thought it would be nice to turn it into a park we could control. I continue to think it's a good idea, and would still be willing to pursue it if there was interest."

"It was listed with the Realtor in the neighborhood of \$500,000 to \$600,000. I think they're holding it as an investment property."

Only one for-sale sign is on the property, and it bears the name of a man who hasn't been involved in marketing it for years.

"He had a showing for like 90 days, and the sign stayed up for seven years," Chadbourne said.

Pet owners say they'd be

willing to donate something to purchase the land — which is zoned residential, but at a price more along the lines of \$100,000, not half a million. The assessor lists its full cash value for 2003 at \$74,800, and for 2004 at \$141,000. Taxes for 2002 are just under \$1,000.

"It'd cost you \$50,000 to \$100,000 to clear this all off to do something with," said Jim Sterne, indicating the trees and gently sloping hills landscaped with rock and bushes.

On March 11, the HOA voted to request that the Sun City HOA Foundation help purchase rock to cover areas that have thinned over the years. It's unknown if users will be asked to donate to the project.

Daryl Wimer, an HOA information officer, said one bid has come in at about \$3,000 for 78 tons of rock and labor. That will cover just the thin areas, not renew the landscaping of the entire park: "I don't think we're going to be able to afford to do that. Probably just the hills where the plastic is showing."

HOA's vote also symbolized its connection with the park.

"It is a part of Sun City, and since we're paying the water bill, we have shown an interest in it," said Ione Boynton, executive secretary of HOA. "That is a nice little piece of property. If you've ever driven by there at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, there's a group of 20 people there, some with dogs, some without. It's a great little meeting place," centrally located in Sun City.

HOA Director Bob Kortright said he'd prefer the land be called a community park: "I'd like to see us get away from calling it a doggie park."

"It's a social park," said HOA President Floyd Brown.

Earl Ueckerman visits the park twice a day with Cholla, his Louisiana hound dog, and said he'd be willing to contribute to the park's maintenance or purchase if it were reasonably priced: "I'd contribute to it — a lot of people would."

Carole Hovey, who visits with her dog Pepper, said she'd help with maintenance at the park: "I'm sure everybody would, because we use the park every day. Gravel has kind of slid off (the hills). A lot of that, I think — if we get down there and have a work day, we could get it up there."

But she said she doubts the visitors could afford to buy the property.

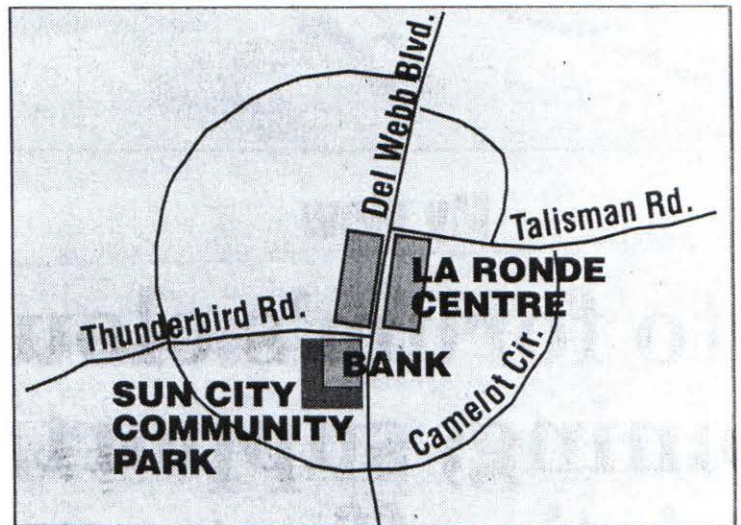
"I think they want an awful lot of money for it," Hovey said.

Chadbourne said he is content with the way things



MOLLIE J. HOPPES/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Golden retriever Nado and owner Marilyn Swanson, left, greet Eva Knight with her long-haired dachshund Marty at the psuedo-doggie park at Thunderbird and Del Webb boulevards in Sun City Thursday.



are.

"We, the dog-park people, hope it stays that way forever, because there is no other place here," he said. "These people (the owners) must be well-to-do, and we hope they forget about it."

In the end, it may be the dogs who rule the park, at least for now. Pet owners say a visit to the park is the highlight of their pets' days, and once they're among their buddies, the canines are kings. Visitors who happen by without a pet are frowned upon by the dogs.

"It's almost like, 'What are you doing here? You don't have a dog,'" said Liddiard. "It's their club."



MOLLIE J. HOPPES/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Meeting notices, brooms and plastic bags dot the landscape at Sun City's psuedo-doggie park.