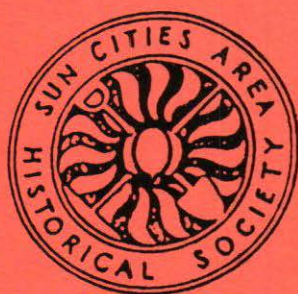


# MEMORIES OF THE SUN CITIES



## LAKES CLUB HAD FIERY BEGINNING

One of a series on the history of  
Sun City and Sun City West, Arizona

Sun Cities Area Historical Society  
10801 Oakmont Dr., Sun City, Arizona  
(623) 974-2568

## LAKES CLUB HAD FIERY BEGINNING

On the afternoon of February 17, 1972, a month before the scheduled opening and with the building 90 percent completed, a spectacular fire consumed The Lakes Club. Although it burned to the ground, there were no injuries to construction workers or firefighters.

The fire, which broke out about 3:50 p.m., was touched off by a plumber's torch that ignited a roll of tar paper. Rural firemen received the call about 10 minutes after it started, but lost priceless minutes when they misunderstood the caller and went first to Lakeview Lanes bowling alley.

Even with the lost time, firemen still thought they could control the blaze when they arrived, and started working on it. Smoke was pouring out of one wing of the building, but no flames were visible.

At 4:30 p.m., however, flames exploded through the roof, spreading from one end of the building to the other with the aid of a stiff wind.

The ruins burned for several hours, and the firemen were on the scene until 2:00 a.m. hosing down the charred remains.

The Del Webb Development Co. started rebuilding the club as soon as the debris was cleared. Seven months after the fire, The Lakes Club was dedicated.

Participating in the two day festivities were Robert Johnson, president of Del E. Webb Corp, John Meeker, DEVCO president, and a club coordinating committee consisting of William Chapman, John (Jim) Mead, Robert Scott, Mrs. William Fielder and Frank B. Wilson.

© Sun Cities Area Historical Society  
1996 Prepared by Albert B. Foster



Submitted Photo/Janet Klann

## Flower show blooms this weekend

Dozens of beautiful floral arrangements will be on display when the Sun Cities chapter of Ikebana International hosts its annual exhibit Friday and Saturday, Feb. 24 and 25 at Spirit of Grace Lutheran church in Sun City Grand, 15820 W. Clearview Blvd. Admission is free. Exhibit hours are 10 a.m.-4 p.m., with demonstrations by master teachers at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. both days. Ikebana is an ancient art that began about the sixth century, when temple priests in Japan arranged flowers and plant material as offerings to Buddha. Over time, strict rules were developed for the form and shape of these arrangements. Ikebana came to the United States via the wives of military men who were stationed in Japan after World War II, and now there are chapters in every state. The Sun Cities Chapter 167 was formed in 1971. Meetings are at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 17540 N. Avenue of the Arts, the third Wednesday of the month, October through May. Guests are welcome and the club offers classes and workshops at all levels. An Ikebana exhibit is not a competition. No ribbons or trophies are awarded. Instead, visitors are encouraged to view each arrangement as "nature in miniature," a serene and ordered glimpse of the universe as seen by the creator/artist. As an example, Alice Bradshaw, above, displays her arrangement for the Ikebana exhibit. Call 546-3897.

**NW VALLEY NEWS**

Z20 WEEKEND » MARCH 6, 2010

**Boomer club launches in Sun City**

A new club in Sun City has been formed to address the needs of a growing, younger population in the community: Baby Boomers. The club is scheduled to hold its first meeting 7 p.m. Thursday at Talisman Hall, 10433 W. Talisman Road.

— *Sherry Anne Rubiano, The Republic/azcentral.com*

**About the club**

The purpose of the club is to allow Sun City Boomers to meet and participate in organized, fun activities with other Boomers in the community. Paul Herrmann, executive director of the Sun City Visitors Center, said the club is a way to convey new, younger Sun City residents into meeting other people their own age and to form groups based on their interests. Herrmann spearheaded the club, which has a core group of about 16 people. The structure of the club will be determined by its members. "This is why we're looking to the people to form this and direct it," he said.

**Membership**

The club is open to Sun City residents who are not on Medicare. Membership dues for the year are \$10 per couple or \$5 for a single membership.

**Goal**

The intent is for the club to be long lasting and cater to the next generation of Sun City residents, Herrmann said. Now, the club is aimed at Baby Boomers. Years down the line, it will be for Gen Xers, he said.

**More info**

Call the Sun City Visitors Center at 623-977-5000 or visit [www.sun-cityaz.org](http://www.sun-cityaz.org). A club registration form is available on the Web site.

# DIVE RIGHT IN ...

July 26 - August 1, 1995

## The water's always fine for Sun City Aquatic Club

By LLOYD D. BROWN  
Sun Cities Independent

If the pounding caused by normal exercise is becoming too much for your body, about 1,100 members of the Sun City Aquatic Club have a suggestion: Try water aerobics.

"Water is so much easier on the body and it helps support the (body's) weight," says Club President Florence Jerousek.

Ms. Jerousek says exercise on land exerts about three times one's weight on his or her body. But in waist-deep water the body loses about 30 percent of that jarring force.

The club offers 50-minute water workouts at the Marinette, Fairway, Mountain View, Oakmont and Sundial pools.

Ms. Jerousek describes classes as moving and stretching to a musical soundtrack. There are two different class levels, Series A and Series B.

The "A" level is a bit more strenuous and includes some exercises using the pool wall. The "B" level is done free-standing. Both classes work mostly in waist-deep



Photo by TYSON KUHRT/Sun Cities Independent

Norma Norcross, at right, instructs a Sun City Aquatic Club water aerobics class at Fairway Recreation Center. The club offers 50-minute water workouts not only at the Fairway pool but also at the pools at Marinette, Mountain View, Oakmont and Sundial centers.

water.

"We are not therapists so we ask people to work at their own pace," Ms. Jerousek says.

With eight instructors, classes are offered at a variety of times in the

mornings, either on a pool.

Monday/Thursday, or Tuesday/Friday schedule. The only evening classes are offered at the Oakmont pool, and the only indoor classes are offered at the Sundial

pool.

Ms. Jerousek says she started participating in water aerobics in 1985 after moving to Sun City.

"This group (water aerobics) is more upbeat than any other group



Photo by TYSON KUHRT/Sun Cities Independent

Kay Warne is one of about 1,000 members of the Sun City Aquatic Club who enjoys water aerobics classes offered through the Recreation Centers of Sun City. Club members say exercise in the water is easier on the body because exercise on land exerts about three times one's weight on the body.

### DIVE

From Page B6

to include the summer months as well.

Along with its success, the program also has earned its share of criticism from detractors. As organizers sought to become a chartered Rec Centers club, controversy arose over the use of paid instructors.

Charging Rec Centers members

to use Rec Centers facilities other than golf courses or bowling alleys was unheard of at that time. Club officials, however, contended the additional charge was needed to recruit well-qualified instructors.

The debate ended after hundreds of club members wrote in favor of continuing the use of paid instruc-

tors. The Aquatics Club eventually received its charter in 1985.

The club's current session runs through Sept. 15 and costs \$15. Non-club members are asked to pay an additional \$2 to become club members.

Call 972-6002 or 933-3651.

I've been with in the area," Ms. Jerousek says. "It's just a whole different attitude."

The first water exercise class in Sun City was started in 1975 at Oakmont Recreation Center. Taught by Verona Hiland, a water exercise instructor from Cedar Rapids, Iowa, that first class attracted 10 eager students.

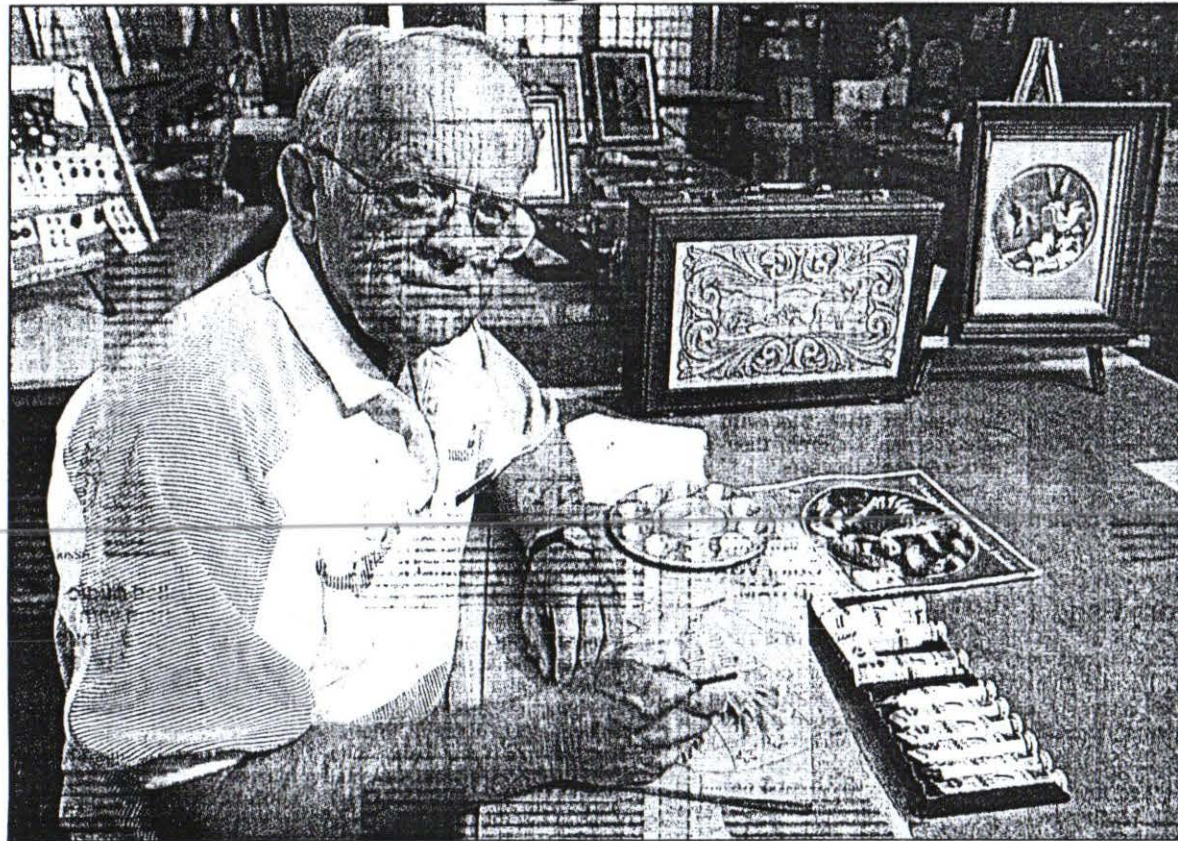
Exercising in the water to the

pulsating beat of the latest musical hits soon became the latest fitness craze, and the program's popularity grew quickly.

Additional classes and sites were added as class participation skyrocketed. Originally held only in the winter months, by the early 1980s the program had expanded

See ■ DIVE, Page B7

# Nothing to hide



Community  
Left, Lewis Kilpatrick paints one of his more recent leather crafts. Above, Lewis carved this hummingbird in leather, using a design from a plate.

"I supported our boys in college with leatherwork. We had belts, wallets, shoulder bags and key cases all over the house. It was nothing for me to produce 15 wallets a week, on top of a regular job and selling real estate part time."

Lewis Kilpatrick

Mark Henle / Staff photographer

## Leather worker learns new techniques upon coming to Sun City

By Betty Latty  
Special to Community

### Sun City

**B**ack in Bloomington, Ind., and Troy, Ohio, Lewis Kilpatrick considered himself a class A leather crafter.

Then, a year ago, he moved to Sun City and saw the three-dimensional leather crafts created by hobbyists at Marinette Recreation Center.

"When I saw all this," he said, motioning to the displays at the rec center, "I felt I had to go back and start all over."

But in fact, Kilpatrick took so quickly to the crafters'

added-dimension work that he has been judged a master leather crafter by peers in the Sun City Leathercraft Club.

For most of his life, leatherwork was an on-again, off-again thing, Kilpatrick said. With no formal art training, he took up the craft in the 1950s while serving in the U.S. Navy aboard an aircraft carrier.

"I was lonesome and needed something to do but gave it up after I was discharged," he said.

Twenty years later, when his wife, Dorothy, gave him some leather tools, he started what would become a profitable hobby in their Troy, Ohio, home.

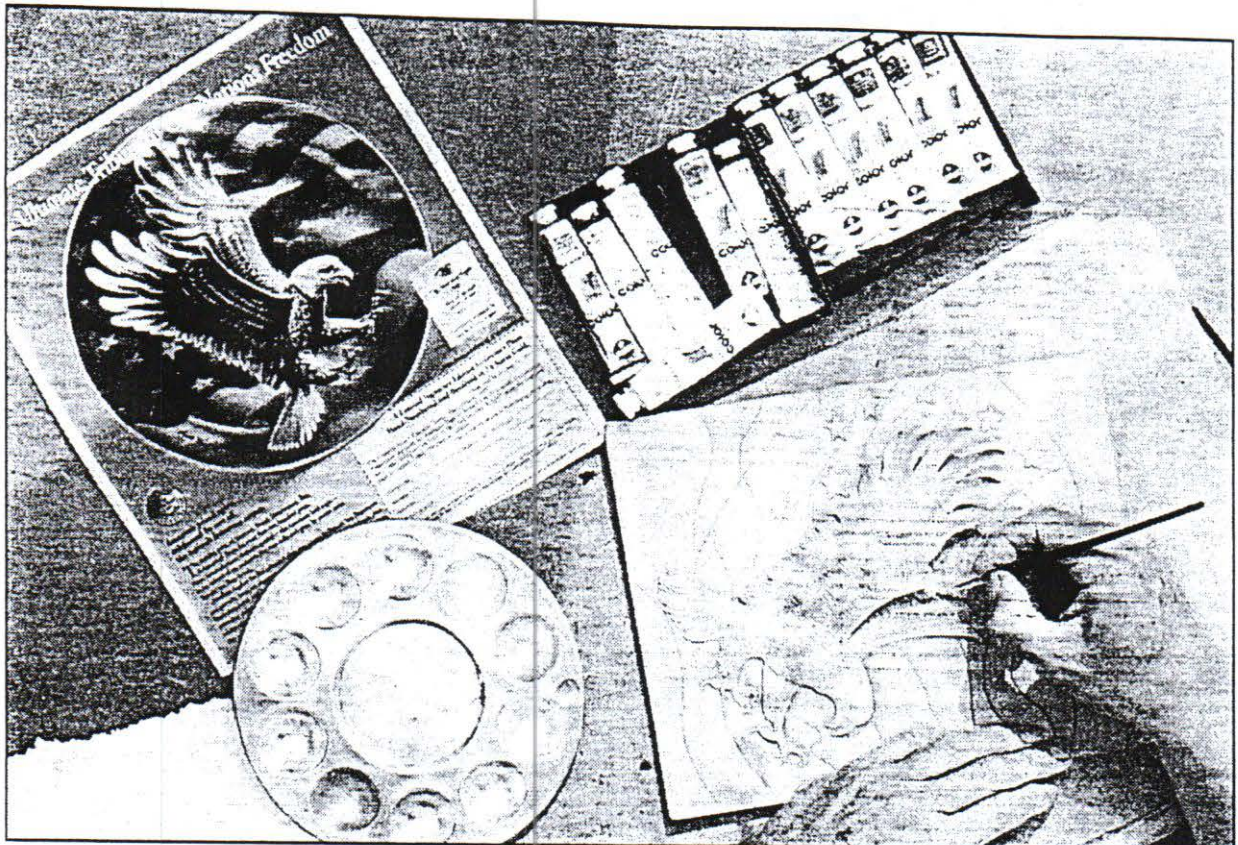
"I supported our boys in college with leatherwork," he

said. "We had belts, wallets, shoulder bags and key cases all over the house. It was nothing for me to produce 15 wallets a week, on top of a regular job and selling real estate part time."

A subsequent move to Indiana put leatherwork on hold again — for 11 years — until the couple moved to Sun City.

Kilpatrick said that the three-dimensional leatherworking technique requires surgical precision — in fact, surgical knives are among masters' tools — because a subject often is cut partially off a single piece of leather, and background objects are formed and filled for the

See LEATHER, Page 2



Lewis Kilpatrick paints an eagle in flight that he crafted onto leather. The design was copied from a collector's plate.

Mark Henle / Staff photographer

## LEATHER

From Page 1

appearance of depth.

To create the relief, or embossing, effect, those parts are fashioned after first steaming the back side of the leather piece with hot water, giving it elasticity. The leather then is pressed with a forming tool or spoon to a desired shape, such as a bird's body or background symbols.

To keep the shape raised, it is filled, usually with a silicon compound. Kilpatrick, however, prefers to fill with pieces of leather, which he grinds to fit the contours.

Kilpatrick is working on a

picture of an American eagle in flight. One wing, its feathers detailed, has been cut away almost entirely from the leather, while the bird's body and background motifs are embossed to complete the dimensional effect. The picture then will be painted.

Although some crafters use acrylics, he has settled on a water-based paint, which he feels is easier to blend and shade.

Kilpatrick estimated that it will take about 40 hours to complete the eagle, and he hopes to be done

in time to enter it in the upcoming Arizona State Fair. He also plans to enter a delicate picture of a hummingbird, another three-dimensional work.

Kilpatrick and other members of both the Sun City Leathercraft Club and the Sun City West Leather Carvers will demonstrate their craft during the State Fair, Oct. 15-Nov. 1. The crafters will join members of the Valley of the Sun Leather Guild in presenting demonstrations from noon to 4 p.m. in the Arizona Plaza Building (No. 5).

# Kaffee Klatch corners konversation

By JACQUE PAPPAS

Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Ida Mae Schwartz has sipped coffee and chatted with friends once a month for the past 32 years at Oakmont Recreation Center.

Schwartz, 85, is an original member of the Kaffee Klatch — a group of residents who have met every month since February 1960.

"We are old-timers who still try to meet once a month and have a little chat. It's a time to get acquainted and meet new people," said Schwartz, who is the only charter member who still attends the meetings.

"This group has held up through the years and we hope to have more people become a part of it. It's hard to get new people these days though, because the new residents in Sun City seem to be working more than retired."

The Kaffee Klatch is a unique



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun

Dorothy Sovereign, left, Ida Mae Schwartz and Amy Chase, right, socialize at a monthly meeting of the Kaffee Klatch.

group in that it does not collect dues, said Lillian Church, who has been a member of the group since 1964.

Church, now president of the

group, said about 30 members come for a program and to socialize every second Monday of the month, except in June, July and August.

"They claim this was the first club in Sun City organized by a man (Fred Millard). There were 18 people at the first meeting and a few years later we had a fashion show that attracted 250 people including (former Sen. Barry) Goldwater and Del Webb himself," Church said.

Church said the first meeting was on Feb. 2, 1960.

Members are treated to coffee and sweets and then listen to a program on antiques, box collections, health care, fraud and crime prevention and a number of other topics.

Instead of dues, members and guests were charged a quarter to get in. About two years ago the fee was increased to 50 cents, Church said.

The money has been donated over the years to Recording for the Blind, Sun City Posse, Westside Food Bank and Recreation Centers of Sun City.



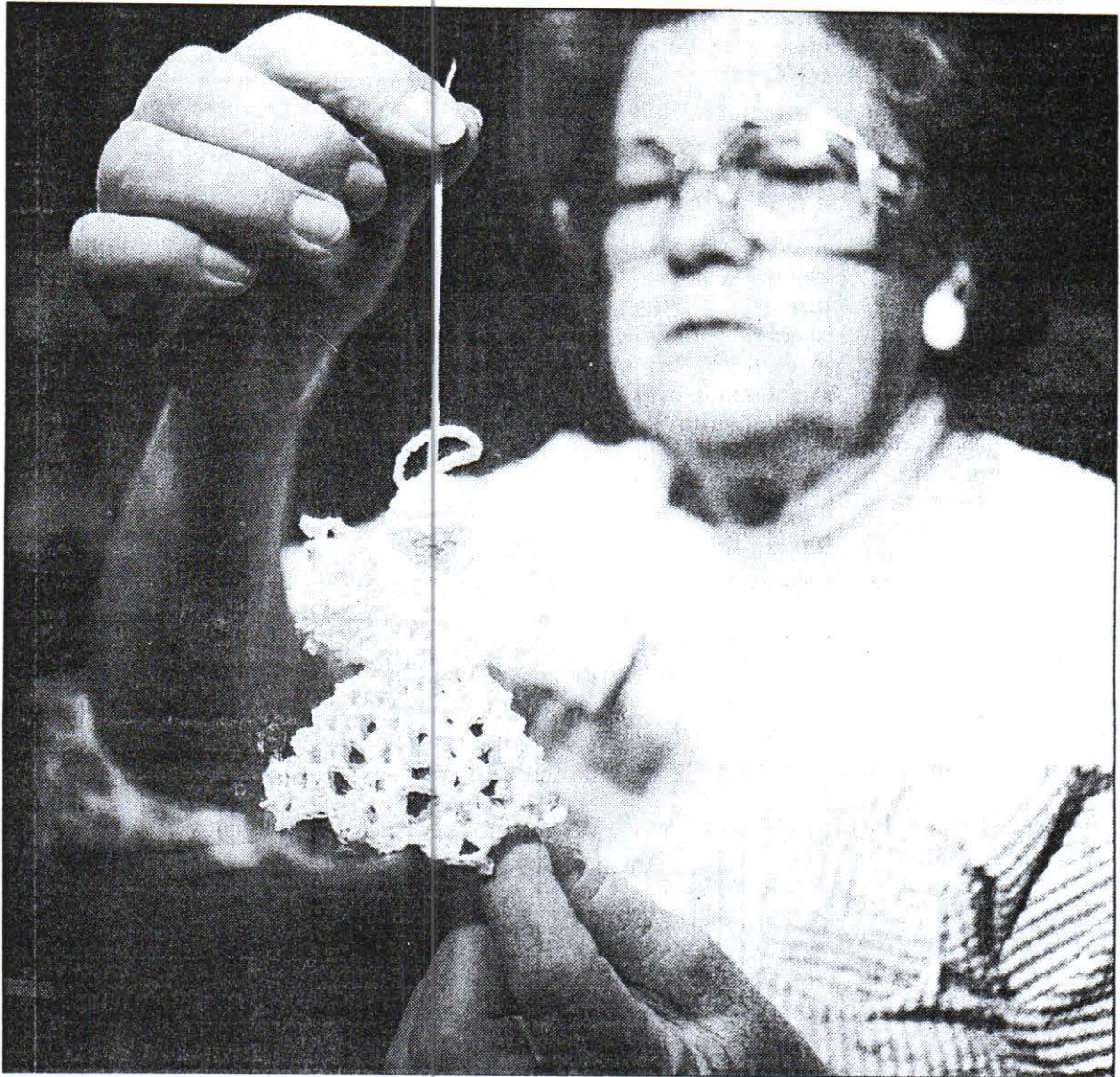
# Cherubs from the heart

Daily News-Sun



11-19-95

Elsie Dikeman holds a crocheted angel made by members of the Fairway Knitters.



Steve ČerneĀ/Daily News-Sun

## Club's knits remembrances of victims

By JEANNIE JOHNSON  
Staff writer

SUN CITY — Angels we will see on high if the Fairway Knitting, Crocheting and Tatting Club gets the nod from the White House.

The members of the club spent the summer crocheting 190 angel ornaments out of white cotton yarn to adorn a Christmas tree on the grounds of the White House. The tree is planned as a memorial to

the victims of the Oklahoma City bombing.

"I had heard about a memorial tree which had been planned," said Elsie Dikeman. "I wrote a letter to the first lady and offered to make angels for the memorial tree. I know that Mrs. Clinton loves angels because one year she had a Christmas tree all decorated in angels."

A sample of the angel ornaments

was sent to the first lady along with the letter. A reply from the first lady's correspondent secretary to the club informed them the sample had been forwarded to the woman in charge of decorating all the White House Christmas trees.

Members of the club knuckled down during the hot summer months to make the 190 angels for the memorial tree. It was a real team effort, Dikeman said.

LEATHERCRAFT

# Straps add safety, leathercrafters say

By J.J. McCORMACK  
Daily News-Sun staff

The Marinette Leathercraft Club aims to inform golf car owners that they don't have to drive strapless anymore.

Club members want to get the word out that passenger safety straps, the type that dangle in a loop from the roof of a golf car, are easy to make, inexpensive to buy and easy to install.

And they could save a life.

The leathercraft club has been making and selling its own leather-belt brand of straps for more than a decade.

"It's foolish not to have them," said Ellaine Glesne, the club's treasurer. Glesne's golf car has been fitted with a passenger strap for about 10 years.

Glesne and club President Lewis Kilpatrick said the roof straps help passengers balance in a golf car better than the handlebar provided on the side of the passenger seat, especially if the driver makes a sudden turn or swerve.

"With the strap you have a chance of at least catching yourself if you're thrown out," Kilpatrick said.

The Marinette Leathercraft Club sells about 40 to 50 golf car straps a year, Kilpatrick said. Plain or decorated with stamps, the club's cowhide straps retail for about \$5. Club

members will instruct a buyer how to attach the strap to the car, but are not available to do the actual installation, Kilpatrick said.

Golf car straps also are available from area golf car dealers, Glesne said. "It doesn't matter where they get their straps ... we're trying to promote golf-car safety," she said.

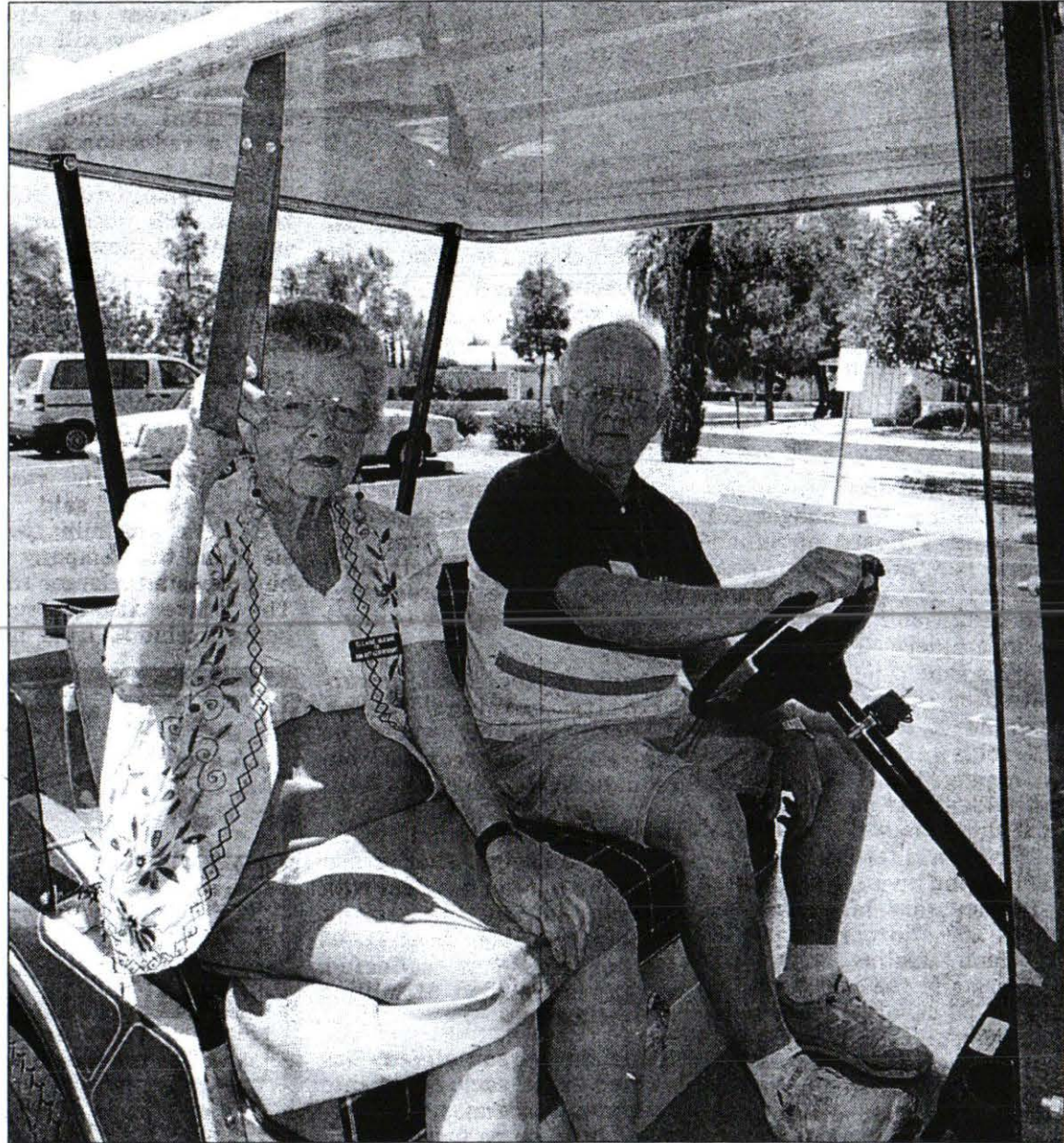
Ed Hegler, manager of Western Golf Car Sales in Surprise, said he doesn't get much call for the straps. The company installs maybe two a year.

"Golf cars as designed by manufacturers, are not designed to use on the streets like they are in Sun City," he said.

Since many area residents do use their cars for street travel, the passenger safety strap is a necessary safety feature, Glesne and Kilpatrick said.

"If nothing else, take an old belt and put it on," Kilpatrick said. Glesne asserted Marinette leathercrafters are not out to sell golf car straps. Rather, they want people to know the straps are available.

"I hope people will be aware. If they don't do anything more than tie a rope up there (golf car roof), it will help their rider," she said.



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun

Ellaine Glesne and Lewis Kilpatrick of the Marinette Leathercraft Club demonstrate a strap to help passengers stay in golf cars. Glesne and Kilpatrick said the straps help riders balance better than the handlebar beside the passenger seat.

Daily News-Sun • Thursday, Nov. 1, 2001

# 25 years of iron images

**BELL METAL CLUB:**  
Today marks  
anniversary of group's  
formation

JEANNE WINOGRAD  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

For the past 23 years, Walt Strane has been on hand almost every morning to open the doors of the Bell Metal Club, celebrating its 25th anniversary today.

When he arrives at 8 at the Bell Recreation Center, Strane welcomes half a dozen monitors who gather for a cordial cup of coffee as they wait to help newer members wandering in to work on projects. In a room full of finger-crushing equipment, having monitors on hand is a good idea.

"I was a boilermaker for Babcock & Wilcox in Ohio," Strane said. "I made steam boilers — big commercial ones. These days I keep my hands in my pockets."

"He was a welder, don't let him kid you," said Dick Marquardt, chuckling along with Strane as he teases him. Marquardt, a monitor for the club, helps oversee the place.

"He's the boss man," offered Paul Johnson, another long-term member of the friendly group.

Marquardt, who has lived in Sun

City 23 years and was a commercial pilot, said he now makes model steam engines at home because he has a shop there. Most mornings, he shows up at the club for cheerful banter after first having coffee at the Liberty Bell Cafe, a few doors to the east.

A sense of history is important to these fellows, who count themselves among 350 members, mostly men, with "two to three women," said George Schultz, who is unofficially the club's historian.

"A fellow by the name of Earl Cummings started the club," Schultz said. "We have 99.8 percent of the minutes since the club started. Paul Johnson was the first secretary of the club."

When it started, the club had little of which to boast.

"We only had a 6-inch lathe, a band saw, an arbor press and a hacksaw then," Marquardt said.

waving an arm to illustrate the huge shop filled with wall-to-wall heavy equipment.

Schultz, a former sheet-metal worker from southern Illinois, joined the club in December 1978, when dues were \$2.

"Now dues are \$10," Schultz said.

Other club members promptly ribbed him about not paying his own dues.

Bert Groenewold, president of the club, designs mailboxes that feature a slot that opens in the back, allowing more room for mail to accumulate.

"He's president because he can make mailboxes," said Fred Trompler, who makes wall geckos, among other objects. One of the newer members, he is the group's treasurer.

"It's a tough job — nobody wants it," Groenewold said dryly.

"I'm vice president because I'm

the pretty one," Marquardt said, eliciting laughter from his peers.

Along with Trompler's geckos and Groenewold's mailboxes, other popular projects include roadrunners, kokopeli and butterflies, along with pint-sized windmills and water towers that Fritz Kuester builds for the elaborate model-train layout that runs through his yard.

Now a metalworking institution, Bell Metal Club members will enjoy a club birthday luncheon at noon today prepared by Jack McManamon, a club member and former fireman from Cleveland.

The club is always seeking new members to join its goal of "using the equipment and having fun," Schultz said.

People interested should show up between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Friday, or call 974-8206.

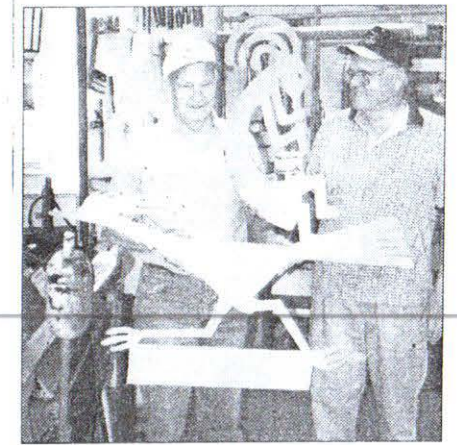
Jeanne Winograd can be reached at [jwinograd@aztrib.com](mailto:jwinograd@aztrib.com) or 876-2532.

OVER



JEANNE WINOGRAD/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Fritz Kuester, left, Paul Johnson and Dick Marquardt share a joke at the Recreation Centers of Sun City's Bell Metal Club, celebrating completion of its 25th year today.



JEANNE WINOGRAD/DAILY NEWS-SUN

George Schultz, left, and Fred Trompler hold some of the art they've created at the Bell Metal Club in Sun City, today celebrating 25 years of existence.



Janet DuBois, left, and Peg Schnellinger skate around the polished floor of Mountain View Auditorium. More than 100 persons are members of the Sun City Roller Skating Club.



Stephen Cherek/Daily News-Sun

Dorothy Sherman cleans her skates before taking to the floor of Mountain View Auditorium for an afternoon of skating. Sherman is president of the Sun City Roller Skating Club.

# Rolling thunder

## SC club needs new president to stay in existence

By JONATHAN DALTON  
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Every Friday and Saturday, a peculiar sound emanates from the Mountain View Recreation Center.

It is the sound of roller skates — urethane rolling across tile — creating a noise similar to that of a slot-car racer heading into a turn.

High above the gymnasium floor, the flags of the 50 states gently sway from the air currents created by the circling members of the Sun City Roller Skating Club.

The club, with more than 100 members, is in its eighth year. But soon the gymnasium could fall silent, the flags still.

On Feb. 1, club president Dorothy Sherman ends her second term. Rec-

reation Center Board rules state a president can hold no more than two terms.

Unless someone steps forward, the club will be no more.

"The recreation center sets up the rules and the schedule for us," Sherman said. "We could yell about it, but what good would it do?"

Ironically, Sherman's presidency began under similar circumstances.

"They were going to close it without a president, so I became the president," Sherman said.

A positive note for the club is that the membership has increased over the past year. This is due in part because not all of the group's functions are directly related to skating.

"We have an organist come in every Friday night, and from time to

time we'll have a potluck dinner because not all couples skate," Sherman said. "My husband won't skate, but he'll come to the potluck. It's a way for all of us to get together."

But make no mistake. The skating is the prime attraction, especially for those who have been skating since early childhood.

"I just like to skate," said Char-laine Stuhr. "I spend four days a week skating. I also go down to Great Skate for dance lessons. It's really a lot of fun."

Many club members can be found at The Great Skate, a Glendale roller rink, taking both skating and roller-dancing lessons. Among them is Olive Hosmer, who boasts several medals won for her roller dancing.

"I've been skating since I was a

little kid in Detroit," Hosmer said. "I went to all the arenas there."

One big advantage of the club is that the skating takes place indoors. The Sun Cities' other roller-skating club, located in Sun City West, skates outside.

"This club started because a lot of interested people wanted to skate inside," Sherman said. "We can skate year-round inside."

And staying out of the heat is an extra incentive for those who aren't looking to break a heavy sweat.

"I came in here one day and watched them and it looked like fun," said Peg Schnellinger. "I'm not good at sports, and this is one thing I can handle."

See Organist featured, B5

## Organist featured at club on Fridays

— From B1

Considering the diverse reasons members have for joining the club, it seems fitting that many kinds of skating can be seen at one sitting.

Some slowly circle the floor, others turn small figure-eights,

still others practice their dance moves, balancing first on their left foot, then their right.

"It all depends on what everyone wants to do," Sherman said. "As long as they don't endanger anyone else, they can do what they want to do."

# RCSC scraps metal club's charitable work

## Insurance liability cited

ANNIE BOON  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

The Recreation Centers of Sun City's insurance provider is cracking down on clubs, restricting members from making certain repairs, even for charity, because they're not covered in the corporation's insurance policy and could be a liability.

For decades, the Bell Metal Club has been a hub for mostly retired metal-working professionals who donate their time and talents for charitable causes.

Sunshine Service of Sun City has benefited from the club's willingness to make free repairs to thousands of its beds, wheelchairs, walkers and other equipment that the organization loans to Sun Citizens at no cost.

Sunshine Service administrator Jim Sinclair estimates that for more than 20 years the Bell Metal Club has repaired thousands of items, saving the nonprofit organization tens of thousands of dollars. The organization, which operates entirely on donations, currently supplies

medical equipment and miscellaneous items such as cribs and high chairs to approximately 4,000 Sun City homes.

"It's saved us money, and the equipment comes back to us better than new," Sinclair said.

However, the metal club and other RCSC chartered clubs are not allowed to help any charity, organization or individual by making repairs to anything structural — including chairs, railings or gates — because the insurance provider will not cover the repairs in the RCSC policy, said Gayle Schmidt, RCSC director and co-chair of the club organizational committee.

About two months ago, the RCSC board of directors approved various amendments to Board Policy 12A, which deals with club guidelines. Although the RCSC's insurance provider limited the repairs clubs could provide about two years ago, the new version of RCSC Board Policy 12A brought club guidelines to the forefront.



STEVE CHERNEK/DAILY NEWS-SUN

"We're still doing repairs through the back door, but we shouldn't have to worry about this," said Dave Shiffman of Sun City, one of 325 members of the metal club. "These people deserve nothing but the best. Just because our hands are tied, Sunshine Service shouldn't have their hands tied from helping people."

"Maybe it's something that

Dave Shiffman of the Bell Metal Club holds one of dozens, maybe hundreds, of crank handles the club has made over the years for Sunshine Service, a lending agency in Sun City where residents may borrow everything from cribs to hospital beds.



STEVE CHERNEK/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Dave Shiffman, left, of the Bell Metal Club, and Jim Sinclair, administrator of Sunshine Service, examine one of the wheelchairs that members of the club repair.

See RCSC, A5

OVER

BELL METAL CLUB

CLUBS:

VF

**From A1**

member/director exchange meeting. He argued that railings and gates weren't structural, but primarily ornamental, and that to classify chairs as a structural component was incorrect.

After the meeting, Shiffman said that RCSC employees regularly bring the Metal Club railings, tables and other metal RCSC equipment in need of repair.

"It's hypocrisy at its best," he said.

Shiffman served as a welding instructor for the U.S. Coast Guard for 26 years, worked as a welder on the World Trade Center in New York from 1969-1971 and currently teaches welding. Many of the metal club members have had lifelong careers in metal work and should be considered experts in the field, Shiffman said.

To be restricted from helping Sunshine Service and needy Sun Citizens is a shame, he added.

"We do services for local

organizations, and you're tying our hands," Shiffman told the board. "This is why we have liability insurance. ... Challenge the insurance company. This has to be corrected."

Norm Dickson, RCSC president, didn't disagree with Shiffman, but emphasized that the RCSC board was simply following the insurance company's instructions.

"I'm not happy with this either, but our hands are tied by the insurance company," Dickson said.

Dickson suggested a meeting in the fall between a club representative, the insurance provider and Jim Frederick, RCSC director and chair of the insurance committee. Shiffman agreed it was a good idea. Until the meeting, Shiffman expects that his club will have to draft a liability release statement and ask anyone who uses their services to sign it.

*Annie Boon may be reached at 876-2532 or aboon@aztrib.com.*





PHOTOS BY STEVE CHERNEK/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Frank Oakes controls all the trains from his perch above the model train layout at the Sun City Model Railroad Club in Fairway Recreation Center Tuesday. "We're all big kids," Oakes said of the club members.

## Model train club keeps railroads chugging

MITCHELL VANTREASE  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Frank Oakes controls nine or more miniature trains as he stands on a platform overlooking a massive landscape of a scenic town.

If a piece needs some maintenance, then the 71-year-old Sun Citian will stop the entire 45-foot-by-20-foot model. Every week, Oakes is responsible for looking after the large set at the Sun City Model Railroad Club at Fairway Recreation Center.

"I have a lot of fun and enjoy this so much," he said. "It's brought back memories for me as a kid."

More than 50 members help control the model railroad that's made of tiny versions of buildings, trains, trees and shrubs.

"When people walk in here, they see the end effect and do not realize what it takes to keep this going all of the time," said Bob Batt, club president.

In 1971, the model railroad club chartered and opened in a space half the size of the current area. The

### Fyi

- **WHAT:** Sun City Model Railroad Club.
- **WHERE:** 1 to 3:30 p.m. Fairway Recreation Center, 107th and Peoria avenues.
- **INFO:** 815-0255.

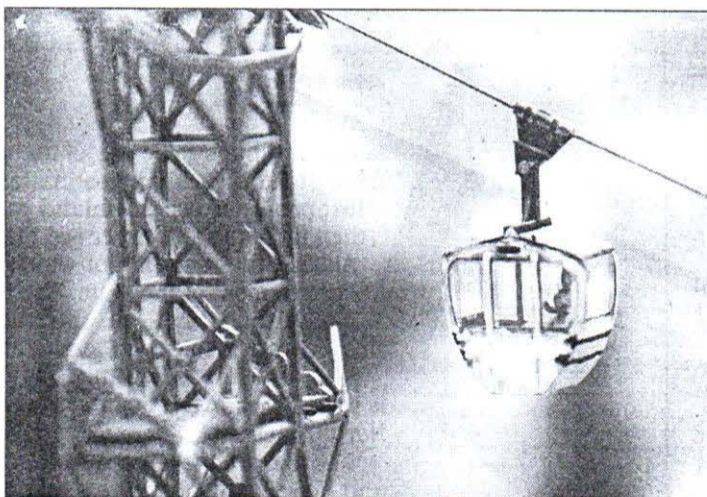
layout area began to double in size in 1984, and in 1999 the Recreation Centers of Sun City added a work room.

"I'm glad we have the work space because if anything tears up, then we can take it in the back and work on it," Batt said.

The layout contains about 800 feet of track equipped with industrial, freight and passenger yards. There are lighted buildings as well as mechanical trolley lines, an aerial tramway and a drawbridge.

There's also an operating amusement park with a roller coaster that took members at least two years to complete before the public could see it.

"We had to try to get (the roller coaster) to stay on the track, and it finally happened," Oakes said. "Kids get



A miniature tram car takes its tiny passenger on an endless ride up and down the mountain on the model train layout at Fairway Recreation Center.

a real kick out of the whole thing."

Batt said the club performs a lot of behind-the-scenes maintenance. They're split into three committees, which include electrical, scenery and repairs.

The scenery crew is responsible for keeping the set pieces clean. Members of the committee also design some of the landscapes on

the layout.

Electrical committee members make sure the block control system stays in order. The maintenance crew repairs the railroad and any other problems.

"People call these trains toys, but they're way beyond that," Batt said.

If you have a special interest story, call Mitchell Vantrease at 876-2526 or e-mail [mvantrease@aztrib.com](mailto:mvantrease@aztrib.com).

# Senior FOCUS

Serving the Young at Heart on the Kitsap & Olympic Peninsulas

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## Feature

### Sun Cities Model Railroad Club is Creative Activity

*Special to Senior Focus*

Model railroading is for those who remember operating a Lionel Marx or American Flyer in days gone by, as well as the neophyte wanting to live out a fantasy of being a train engineer.

Model railroading in Sun Cities

isn't merely playing with toys — it involves miniatures of the REAL thing. It involves working with wood, metal, electricity, and tools of all kinds, and it is limited only by one's imagination.

It is an exciting social activity, as well as a creative activity. Sun Citian I. H. Lundgren, an active

model railroader, explains it this way: "I've been in love with trains all my life...from my first wind-up engine to trains for my three boys, and now participation in almost the real thing."

If you were to ask your local train agent for a ticket on the New River and Western Line, he might have

trouble finding it on the timetable. This is the local Sun City model railroad operation.

The layout has thousands of feet of track. There are 53 electrically operated turnouts or switches. Four electric control panels permit simultaneous operation of equipment on the main lines, the industrial area, and yard tracks. Club rolling stock consists of 32 locomotives, 26 passenger cars, and 74 freight cars. The hand-painted backdrop consists of 96 square feet of Arizona type scenery.

For those retired railroaders and

for those who never outgrew the nostalgia of the train under the Christmas tree, this is the place for you. These "Casey Joneses" in Sun City and Sun City West build much of their own equipment and scenery and just to hear the whistle blow, starts the heart to beat faster. The clickety-clack down the railroad track has a way of taking you back.

"The nice thing about model railroading," according to one of the members, "is trains don't have to be watered, cultivated, fed, combed, or exercised."

OVER

SENIOR FOCUS (CONTINUED)  
December 11, 1991

SCM



*The Sun Cities Model Railroad Club is the place for retired railroaders and for those who never outgrew the nostalgia of the train under the Christmas tree.*

# AT THE THROTTLE



## A good hobby for retirees too

A RECENT trip to the Phoenix area got me thinking about retirement, particularly as it relates to our hobby. Model railroading and other hobbies and leisure-time activities are the center of many retirees' lives today. The old idea of retirement as a time to take it easy as a reward for years of hard work has given way to the concept of an *active* retirement. Our retirement years can be the best years of our lives. As the average life-span increases towards its theoretical limit, we'll have some people spending as many years at leisure as they did working. Just think of the layout you could build!

Many retirement communities today offer an active life for residents. These include the two my wife and I visited in the Phoenix area. Most of you have probably heard of Sun City, Ariz., founded in 1960, and its newer neighbor Sun City West. The central theme of these retirement communities is an active life-style that includes the creative use of leisure time. I don't know if the idea originated with Del Webb, the developer, or someone else, but in these two communities they've taken leisure choices almost to the extreme.

Take Sun City West for example. There are seven 18-hole golf courses. And you can drive your golf cart on city streets, which is convenient and looks like fun. (These cities are private corporations and can make many of their own rules.) Recreation centers that are scattered throughout the community offer an amazing array of activities that includes swimming, bowling, tennis, shuffleboard, miniature golf, weaving, leatherwork, metal and woodworking, and model railroading.

Model railroading? Yes. Among the more than 200 clubs and organizations residents can join is the Sun City West Model Railroad Club. There's also a model railroad club in Sun City. (If you're both a golfer and a model railroader, living here could be as close to heaven on earth as you'll get.) The inclusion of model railroading in the activities offered by both of these retirement communities testifies to the popularity of this hobby.

The Sun City West Club has a beautiful new clubroom in one of the recreation centers. The club has 65 primary members (128 counting family members). I understand that for several model railroaders the availability of the club is what clinched their decision to buy property in the city.

The Monday morning in January when we visited the club there were about a dozen members busily working on the large HO layout. This club is different in several ways from your typical model railroad club. The clubroom is provided free by the community center, the dues are incredibly low, and the club is open to visitors every day. The club also has a remarkable depth of talent to draw upon because most of the people living here were successful in their careers. And all the members have their days free to work on the layout, if they so choose. I was told that a few members do come and work on the club layout every day, all day. As a consequence, they've made remarkable progress on the layout in only one year.

I'm not advocating spending 40-hour weeks on your hobby when you retire. I suspect that for most people a mix of more serious pursuits along with hobbies and games would be the most satisfying. The retired people I know seem to find a lot of things to do: classes, volunteer work, and travel, in addition to hobbies. And being a member of a model railroad club isn't for everyone either. But the prospect of retirement should be exciting for a model railroader. Finally you'll have the *time* to build that dream empire, whether as a group effort or individually.

I'd like to hear from you retirees in our audience. Please let us know how your model railroading activities have changed since you retired. And I hope you'll share any advice you have for fellow model railroaders planning their retirement.

Russ Larson  
Editor