

Because of increased demands for space by computer clubs with a waiting list, plus dwindling membership, The Fairway Lapidary Club has been asked, by the Recreation Centers, to go out of business.

Pressure to close the club had been building for some time. In December, 1995, the Board of Directors of the Recreation Centers of Sun City passed a motion to revoke the charter of this first lapidary club to be organized in Sun City along with the charter of a second club that had organized later. Reasons given by the Rec Centers included the declining participation by members of the lapidary clubs over the years while the cost of maintaining the space had risen.

According to information provided by all the lapidary and art clubs in Sun City, average percentage use at both Fairway clubs was lower than many of the other clubs. The Rec ^{club} Center committee members ^{and Bd. - believed} felt that it would be better to have fewer - but stronger - clubs. At that time the computer club had 800 members and had a waiting list for entry.

Based on newspaper clippings in December 1995 and January 1996, considerable objections were raised by lapidary club members and the decision to close ^{one or more of} them was strongly protested. After several meetings, members of the Rec Center Board could not agree and the decision reached a stalemate.

The Fairway Lapidary Club was the first lapidary club organized in Sun City. In the fall of 1961, under the leadership of Howard Gillman as Chairman, Clark Hall as Vice-chairman and Lois Snell as Secretary and Treasurer, the club, known as the Town Hall Lapidary Club ^{was established} ~~at that time, got going.~~ Operating funds to get started came from members serving as demonstrators on Saturdays and Sundays, for which the Del Webb Development Company paid the club \$10 for each weekend during a period of five months.

Howard Gillman had moved to Sun City from Iowa, where he operated a dairy farm and owned a drug store. He had had no previous experience in lapidary, but was a leader ^{and had the ability} ~~accompanied by talent~~ to organize people. With the other charter members, he was able to get permission from the Webb company to sell jewelry made by the members. This was a vital move since it provided money to buy the first equipment and materials.

The original equipment consisted of four sets of grinders, four sets of sanders, one slab saw, polishing and buffing units, and the dopping wax arrangement.

After 18 months, the club had spent \$397.00 for supplies, replacements, and other expenses. There were twenty members at the time.

The death of Gillman in 1963 made it necessary to reorganize the club. A new constitution and by-laws included dues of one dollar per year per person. It was agreed that no lapidary products made by members could be sold except through the club sales program and that a commission of 10 percent (later raised to 25 and then 40) would be paid and all sales would be for cash. Placing the items in cases for club sales proved to be popular and increased sales.

In 1963 the club started correspondence with the Department of the Interior regarding the removal of petrified wood from public lands in Arizona. In 1964 the club looked into the need to pay taxes on sales since funds did not go to charity and began collecting and remitting a 10 percent Federal and three percent State sales tax. The Federal tax was repealed in 1966 but the State tax remained in effect.

In November 1964 the club took over the shop and equipment from DEVCO valued in 1961 at \$2674.75. By 1969 the equipment and fixtures were valued at \$5100.00. Also in 1964 the club gave two bola ties and one ladies bracelet to the Senior Womens League of Sun City to be used as door prizes at their fashion show.

Del Webb and Senator Goldwater proudly wore bola ties made in the shop and sold through the club sales program in 1968.

The first refreshment machine was set up in 1966. Telephone service was installed in the shop in January 1969.

At the end of 1968 the club had about 250 members with a low turnover in memberships. Members came from all walks of life, all sections of the Nation, having been engaged in most every type of vocations, trade or position.

On two occasions in 1969, members drove to Casa Grande to purchase Brazillian agate. The agate was then slabbed and offered for sale to mambers.

(By the end of 1972 membership reached 350.

Over the years the club has had several successful "Show and Tell" exhibits where members displayed and sold jewelry under club supervision. And the club exhibited lapidary items at the Maricopa County Gem and Mineral show where some membe rs won ribbons of distinction. There were also varied outside group activities such as trips to Las Vagas.

Donations to various charities and organizations such as Sunshine Service, Sun Health Foundation, Community Fund and others became regular functions beginning in the 1970s.

(From the files of the Sun Cities Area Historical Society)

Phil Weinmann and Laura Hegstad work in the Fairway Lapidary Club room. The two say that when their club moves, they may drive to Oakmont, but they wouldn't go as often as they do now.



MOLLIE J. HOPPES/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Sign of the times: Mice bump stones

ALLCAPS: SC Rec Centers Board ousts Fairway lapidarists to make room for computer club

KATE FLEITAS
DAILY NEWS-SUN

After more than 30 years of existence, the Fairway Lapidary Club is disbanding.

But not happily.

Members have been told they must give up their club room at the Fairway Rec-

reation Center to accommodate the growing space needs of their next-door neighbors. The Computer Club of Sun City.

The Recreation Centers of Sun

City Board of Directors voted 5 to 4 to de-charter the lapidary club at a Nov. 18 meeting. The measure will become effective Dec. 31, 1999.

Preliminary plans call for the expansion of the computer club into the lapidary club room. Members of the lapidary club have been told they can move in with some of the other lapidary clubs in Sun City.

Board members said the Fairway Lapidary Club did not have the daily membership to support the use of a club room. Director Dorothy Hirtzel estimated that between eight to 10 lapidary club members use the club room on a daily basis.

The Fairway Lapidary Club showed 144 members paying dues at the beginning of the year, said Patricia Bruyn, club and activities manager. Bruyn said her supervisor, General Manager Jim Warfield, would not allow her

SC lapidary club's membership drops

From A1

to give out information about the average daily membership of the club.

The expansion plans are good for the 2,354 members of the computer club, which must lock the door to its computer laboratory to avoid violating fire codes governing room capacity. But for some lapidarists such as Charlie Allen, who joined the Fairway Lapidary Club in 1979, it feels like his family is being broken apart.

"This is our common ground, our home away from home," he said.

Members of the lapidary club were warned about possible facility changes in May, when the Rec Centers board voted to merge the lapidary and silvercraft clubs at the Fairway Recreation Center. Board members said they made the space because the computer club has been requesting more

space for years.

Following the May meeting, board members and Warfield assured club members the transition would be smooth, said Doris Abate, secretary of the lapidary club.

"They said they would perform renovation and reasonable expansion to accomplish this," she said.

Originally, the board was going to move the computer club into the silvercraft club room and move the silvercraft club into the space currently used by computer club.

Members from all three clubs helped the board work out the specifics of the consolidation.

"For several weeks, we inventoried everything in the lapidary and silvercraft shops, drew up floor plans and studied which equipment could be removed," Abate said.

SCW Lapidary Club thrives. Story, A2

See SC lapidary, A5

Recreation: Signs of the times?



Independent Newspapers/Matthew Roy

Members of the Lakeview Lapidary Club await the results of RCSC discussions, which might lead to consolidation of Sun City's lapidary clubs. Such a move could mean the end of some clubs that have met regularly for nearly 40 years. From left, Ken Larson, Dale Gentre, Bill Wainwright, Harland Burge, Don Bowley, Dan Connor, J.R. Means and Diana and Dave Meyers.

RCSC looks at club mergers as space dwindles

By Cecilia Chan

Independent Newspapers

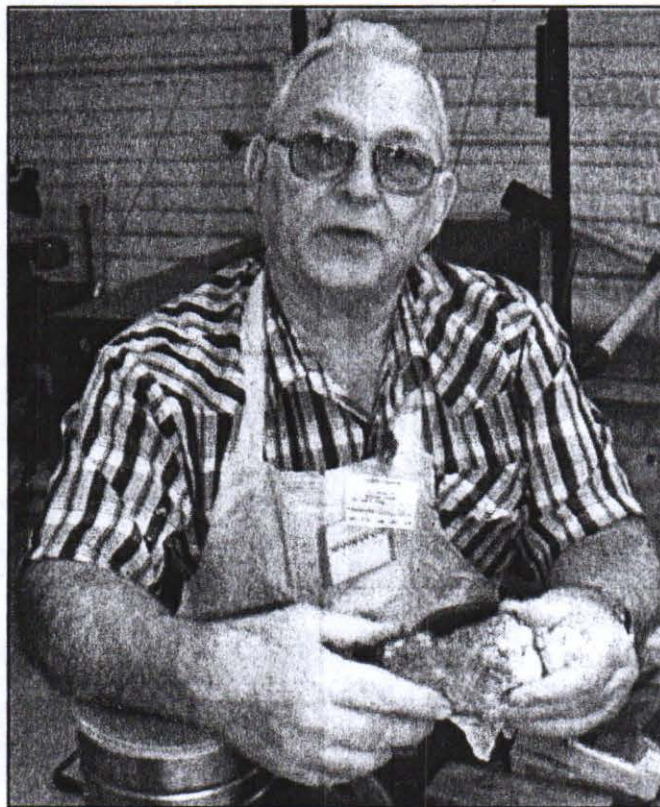
For 15 years, Bob Hager has cut and polished gemstones at the Lakeview Recreation Center.

Mr. Hager and fellow gemcutters now face the possibility of being uprooted from their Lapidary Club space as the Recreation Centers of Sun City decides what to do with too many clubs and not enough room.

"I would like to see one of the smaller clubs come in with us and we stay where we are," Mr. Hager said. "We went to the expense three years ago to put a new window in and new carpet."

The RCSC Clubs Organization Committee recently met with the presidents and members of lapidary and silver clubs to discuss how best to use the space available to accommodate all the rec center clubs. About 130 clubs exist.

"Some of the clubs have gone down in membership and



Sun City resident Dan Connor has been a lapidist since 1968 and has been a member of the Lakeview club for the last year. He worries that some members of the club will be less likely to attend if required to move to another facility.

OVER

Lapidary

Continued From Page 1

other clubs have gone up in membership," said Cecile "Babe" Dodson, RCSC director and committee co-chair-woman. "And there are clubs still looking for space and we don't have space and it was time to do a space utilization."

The ultimate decision would lay with the RCSC Board of Directors.

"We have to figure out what to do to make it fair for all Sun City clubs," Ms. Dodson said. "It's a hard situation to do."

"It is not just lapidary affected," Ms. Dodson said. "There are several different groups that are going to have to consolidate."

Lakeview lapidary and Oakmont lapidary/silver clubs' membership have dropped to the point, where it may be more feasible for consolidation with similar club, she said.

She said the club at Lakeview has seen its membership plummet over the years to 131 from 455, but it is still using the same size space. Oakmont's club has 53 members.

"They need to merge," Ms. Dodson said. "We want them to figure out how they want to go about merging and moving. Some of them belong to another club so it's not like it would be a strange rec center they are going to."

Mr. Hager and other club members, however, would have none of it.

"We got over 100 members," he said. "I am not up with the law what they can and can not do. I don't know if they can legally close us."

Merle McDonald, vice president of the Oakmont Lapidary/Silver Club, vowed to put up a fight.

"Since 1962 the club has been located in that building and that building was paid for by club members there and turned over to the rec centers for umbrella insurance," he said. "We are going to see what they will do. We will take legal action if we have to, to get a lawyer to fight this every way we can. I don't think they can close us with the membership we have."

Under the RCSC "Consolidation of Board Policies," the board has the authority.

"A club may be asked to relocate by the board of directors because of altered space requirements," Article XVI, Section 1. E reads. "If the club chooses not to do so, then the club's charter will be suspended pending such time, as an acceptable space may become available. The board of directors has the authority to ask one 'like' club to merge with another 'like' club (to) utilize the available space."

Harold Papineau, president of Lakeview lapidary, questioned why his club would have to move.

"We got 2,700 square feet, enough to take in Sundial and Oakmont," he said. "Our equipment is in good shape and

maintained well. If we are closed and moved to Sundial, they have to pay the expense of moving the equipment. Sundial doesn't have good lapidary equipment, not near what ours is."

Stan Milam, president of Silverstones at Sundial, favors the idea of consolidation.

"I understand what they are doing," he said, adding eight years ago RCSC consolidated the lapidary club and silver club to become the Silverstones.

He said he would gladly take in Oakmont club members.

"I would welcome them and give them new badges," he said. "I would have no problem. I have lot of members of Lakeview's and Oakmont's that come up anyway."

RCSC Board President Norm Dickson said this is just the beginning of a long process and decisions would not be made arbitrarily.

"The number is one way to make a decision," he said. "And another way is to find out from the people directly involved in the club, the president and officers, other factors that are not on paper. There is lot of human factors involved in this."

"We have been short of space for a long time," he said. "We have new types of activities and some older ones like quilting and weaving that have been around for a long time increasing in membership."

Club membership fluctua-

tions are caused by a number of factors, he said.

Younger retirees, who are from a different generation, bring with them new interests and longtime, older residents find their tastes changing, Mr. Dickson said.

For instance, pickleball was nonexistent in Sun City two years ago, he said. But by last month, more than 900 people played the mini-tennis game with paddles on temporary courts, he added.

"Who could have predicted that five years ago?" he said.

The camera and computer clubs also are booming, Mr. Dickson noted.

He said each year club officers are urged to get out and sign up members.

"When you have an average age in Sun City of 74.5 and if you are not out actively recruiting, your club will eventually run out of members," he said. "People don't like change and people have favorite clubs they want to keep existing. The reality of the situation is we do need to take a serious look at it and see if we can something that is acceptable to everybody."

*Post your comments on this issue at newsblog.info/0302
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DAILY NEWS-SUN

SATURDAY, MARCH 26, AND SUNDAY, MARCH 27, 2005



Submitted photo

Bob Forbes, center, shows Gisele Brunet, left, and Sally Kirwin, members of the Lakeview Lapidary Club, the craft of wire wrapping.

Sun Citians get wrapped up in artistic hobby

ANNIE BOON
DAILY NEWS-SUN

The art of wire wrapping has arrived in Sun City and has debuted to rave reviews.

"I was looking for something of interest that I could do with all the stones I had cut and polished," said Sun City resident Bob Forbes, Lakeview Lapidary Club's wire-wrapping instructor.

"I chose wire-wrapping because it was unique and didn't involve a sander, glue, (acid), or a torch," Forbes said. "Wire wrapping requires only the wire and a previously polished stone. The product is very attractive and unusual."

Members of the Lakeview Lapidary Club have embraced the craft and now offer a wire wrapping class open to all Sun Citians.

Wire wrapping can transform any stone into an eye-catching piece of jewelry, a unique belt buckle or any one-of-a-kind showpiece. Using a variety of pliers and

small wire cutters, lapidary enthusiasts wrap gold-filled or sterling silver strands of wire around their stones until a ring, pendant, bracelet or other item is created.

Though wire wrapping is new to some, it is an ancient art. Today, wire wrapping is not only a hobby, it's also a high-priced feature at jewelry stores and the subject of national newsletters and artistry organizations.

Schmieder & Son Jewelers in Sun City's Promenade shopping center at 99th Avenue and Bell Road specializes in unique jewelry. The shop carries a line of wire-wrapped jewelry made by a premier designer in the island of Crete in Greece. The 18-carat white or yellow gold wire rings, pendants and bracelets aren't cheap — a small, square, wire-wrapped ring costs \$1,350.

Lakeview Lapidary Club members Gisele Brunet and Sally Kirwin learned to make their own wire wrapped

jewelry without spending a fortune.

For Brunet, a Sun City winter visitor hailing from Canada, wire wrapping has become a treasured hobby she is proud of.

"Once I learned a little about the various stones and gems, I became fascinated with the skills of wire wrapping," said Brunet, whose next project is a wire wrapped bracelet. "I find that it has really contributed to my self-worth. When I finish a project, I admire it and say to myself, 'Did I really make that?'"

Kirwin said wire wrapping strengthened her love for lapidary.

"I really enjoy making jewelry, and wire wrapping is a way I can do something different with my stones and glass (items)," Kirwin said. "And Bob Forbes is a great teacher."

Call the Lakeview Lapidary Club at 977-0863 for wire wrapping class times or enrollment information.

Club updates Lakeview look

KATY O'GRADY
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Lakeview Lapidary Club's handiwork just got a lot more visible.

The club's room at Lakeview Recreation Center underwent a three-month renovation to add a new display window to the front to show passersby some of the members' work, and additional wall space and shelves for displaying clocks and other handmade items.

An open house is slated for Jan. 17 to show off the renovations.

"Before, this was just a plain cement wall," said club President Louise Seeley, pointing to the window that opens the room to view from outside.

In addition, the wall separating display cases from the back of the room was raised, allowing for additional display space while still giving a glimpse behind the scenes.

Now, interested club members or jewelry-buyers can window shop or stop inside for a wider display of pieces, including a variety of bola ties and rings inlaid with stones or made through "glass-fusion" process, a new technique to meld two kinds of molten glass.

"I've been here eight years, and we haven't had any renovation in eight years," Seeley said.

Bob Hager, past president, has been with the club 12 years, and Vice President Dan Connor has been a member 20 years. Neither remembers such extensive renovations.

"We've had small stuff done, like this floor we had put in," Hager said. "We had the place painted one year."

The club chipped in \$5,000 for the work, and the Recreation Centers of Sun City paid the balance. Club members were unsure of the total cost of the project, which included upgraded sinks in back of the club's room.

The club has 111 members, each of whom pays \$10 per year to use all the club's equipment and take classes. Later this month, member Bob Forbes will lead a class on the glass-fusion technique, the first time nonlapidary work will be done at the club. Members just purchased an \$800 kiln for the venture.

Most lapidary work starts with a raw rock,



MOLLIE J. HOPPES/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Louise Seeley, Lakeview Lapidary Club president, assists Daniel Connor in the club's newly remodeled room at Lakeview.

which is sliced into quarter-inch slabs using a diamond-tipped saw. A pattern is etched on a slab, and the outline is followed using another diamond saw, Hager said. The piece is further shaped with sanding machines of varying degrees of coarseness, and when the stone is smooth, placed in the desired setting.

Member Richard Breyer said rocks come in different degrees of hardness, with softer ones like hematite being easier to shape than harder materials such as greenstone.

Seeley said new club members generally make items for themselves and their families. After they become accimated, they are asked to make some items for the club to sell to the public. The club

then keeps 20 percent of the proceeds to help maintain the club and buy equipment; the member who created it keeps the rest.

"When you first start, they tell you you can make as much as you want for your family and friends," Seeley said. "Then, once you've been here, they ask that you leave some here."

The club room is open 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. weekdays and 8 a.m. to noon Saturdays. Residents are invited to stop by and browse through the items members have created. Most of the jewelry and other work is for sale.

For information about the club, call 977-0863.

Katy O'Grady can be reached at 876-2514 or kogrady@aztrib.com.

Rock hounds

KATE FLEITAS
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Rocks are more than an aesthetic perk of living in Arizona.

To the members of the R.H. Johnson Lapidary Club, rocks are a treasure trove of goodies to be ground, polished and transformed into art and jewelry.

The club works with a full range of materials that differ in color, quality and shape.

"From chalk to ruby," said George Benner, club president.

The members come from all professions and share their experiences as they work in the club room.

"It's always interesting to hear what a person's vocation was. We take breaks, drink coffee and tell lies," Benner joked.

In addition to storytelling, an internal well of creativity unifies club members. The fulfillment of creation keeps them hard at work.

"It's a creativity thing. You take a rough piece of rock and make something of beauty out of it. Everybody tries to do something different to make theirs unique," Benner explained.

One member created a long, rectangular shape out of more than 40 pieces of rock. The piece hangs by the door in the club room, lit from behind like a lightbox. Another member transformed a rock into an 18" high female figure.

Although it is not carved in stone, patience is an understood prerequisite for lapidary club craftsmen.

"You need lots of patience. Sometimes, you can get all the way through the process and the rock will crack. You're sick about it, but that's how it works," Benner explained.

After working with weak rocks, members eventually learn how to

identify cracks and flaws that could cause a rock to crack.

For the most part, club members can be found in the club room tinkering with jasper, turquoise and agate in various stages of development.

"They work up very nice and give you a nice finished product. They are pleasing to the eye and have a lot of variety and color," Benner explained.

Chartered in 1979, the lapidary club boasts more than 450 members on its roster. Not all of the members use the club's facilities, but they continue to pay dues, Benner said.

It doesn't take long to convince people to join the lapidary club.

"Most come by and look in the window, get a tour and join," Benner said.

Club members meet as a group five times a year, once in September, November, January, March and May.

Club dues are \$10 per year. The money goes, in part, to fund special events and machine upkeep. All club members have access to the more than \$150,000 worth of lapidary equipment in the club room. The equipment includes two facet machines, six large saws, trim saws, 40 grinders and polishers.

In the saw room, rocks are sliced into layers which, from a distance, resemble slices of bread. Sawing can take more than one hour and the saws must be constantly monitored by a club member.

The club offers courses in traditional lapidary work and decorative offshoots of the craft including facet, inlay and intarsia work.

The classes, which usually cost \$25, are scheduled on demand and taught by members with experience and teaching abilities.

The beginning lapidary class costs

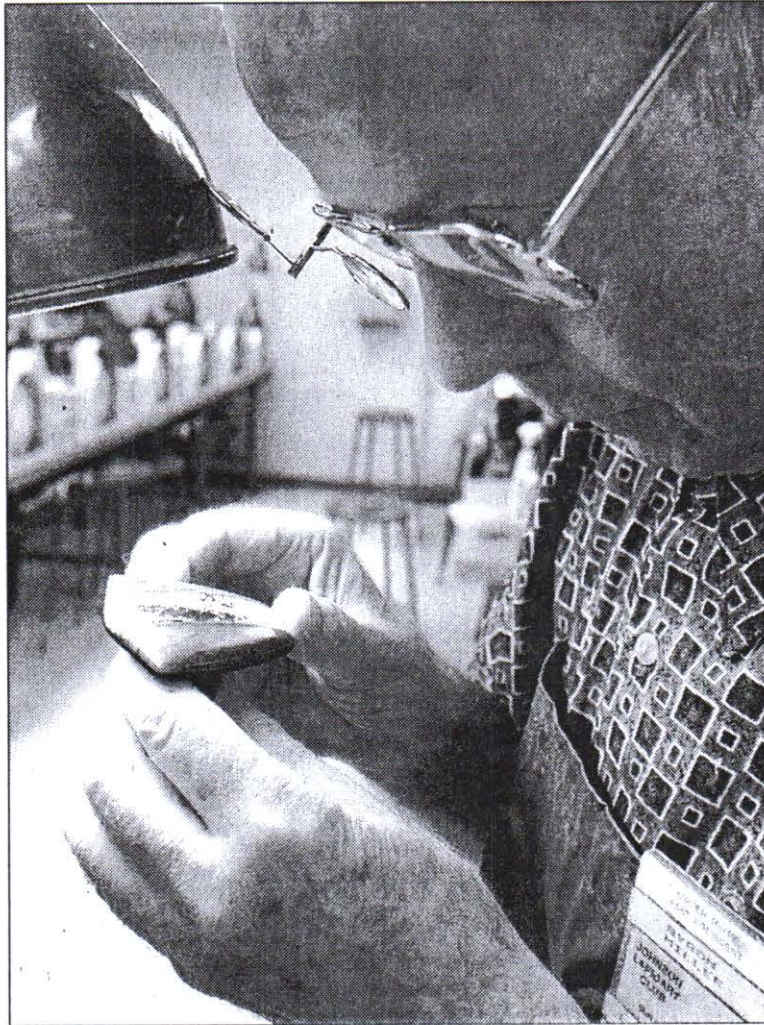
\$50. The cost includes instruction and equipment. Each beginner student is given a paper box containing sanding belts, cotton buffs, cerium polishing powder, scribe, marking pen. The box also contains an apron, mask, operation manual and safety glasses. Students are walked through every step of the lapidary process.

Board member Joe Pelizzoni remembers the days before his lapidary work. The rocks in his life were outside. Now, he has moved them indoors. Rocks decorate his home and garage. He also goes scouting for rocks with the Rock Hounds Club, a local group that looks for rocks.

"Arizona has quite a selection," he said.

over

SCW Lapidary Club smooths out rough edges



Byron Miller studies his handiwork, a bolo tie slide made from three pieces of stone inlaid with silver, at the R.H. Johnson Lapidary Club in Sun City West.

STEVE CHERNEK/DAILY NEWS-SUN

- SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT — FEBRUARY 25-MARCH 3, 1998

New device opens lapidary art to disabled

By CHRIS RASMUSSEN
Independent Newspapers

For many handicapped seniors in wheelchairs, participating in area clubs can be quite limiting.

One Sun City lapidary club, however, has installed a new work station that now allows people to do things they were previously unable to do.

With the purchase of the Genie by Lakeview Lapidary Club, the

for so long throughout time," Mr. Bley said. "Then you open it and you see God's work."

The new equipment has been placed in a convenient area of the Lakeview Lapidary Club's shop and will be dedicated to residents in

Lakeview Lapidary installs equipment to make clubroom more accessible to all

handicapped in Sun City can now train in the art of lapidary, a craft that transforms ordinary rocks into beautiful, intricate jewelry.

"It looks like a pretty good deal for a disabled person," said Jim Bley, a member of Fairway Lapidary.

Confined to a wheelchair, Mr.

wheelchairs. The Genie is composed of seven separate wheels and discs which can be used to shape, grind, sand and polish the rocks.

"We are happy to be able to add this new machine to the existing complement of machinery so the

Bley, a self-proclaimed activist for the disabled, said the new equipment at Lakeview will open doors for many who were previously excluded from participating in Sun City clubs.

"When it comes to lawn bowling, they don't want the ruts from our wheelchairs on the green," he said.

handicapped can experience the joy and practice of the art of lapidary in Sun City," said Curt Adams, club president.

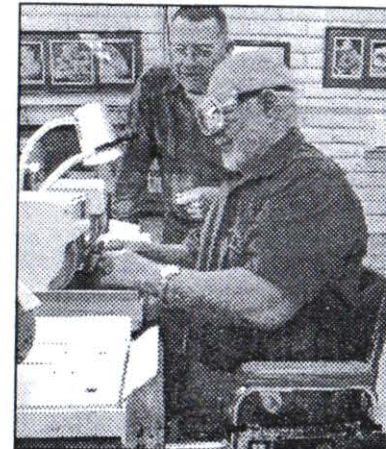
The Fairway Lapidary Club also is set up to serve handicapped club members.

Just because you may suffer from a disability, Mr. Bley that shouldn't stop you from enjoying yourself and doing what you want to do.

"Disabled people need to get more active instead of just sitting around and watching TV. I would like to see all of the clubs available to everybody," Mr. Bley said.

He enjoys turning rocks into pieces of art. "The rock sits there

See ■ LAPIDARY, Page 9



Jim Bley, sitting, and Curt Adams demonstrate the Genie.

Bell Lapidary Club rocks with fun

By PAUL JUTZI
Daily News-Sun

SUN CITY — The Bell Lapidary Club is looking to polish up its image by adding some new members and getting out the word about how much fun its members have.

Of the 495 club members only about 200 are active, said club President James Sullivan.

"We have a fantastic club. Everyone pays their dues but most don't get involved with the group. I want to know why the 300 (non-active members) aren't coming in to see us," he said.

In an attempt to get everyone back in the fold and gain some new members, Sullivan and his fellow club officers are spreading the word that the Bell Lapidary Club is a great place to be.

To renew interest among non-active members, the 10-year-old club is having a potluck lunch May 11 at Bell Recreation Center, 99th Avenue and Bell Road.

"If anyone has complaints or suggestions for the club, that will be the time to talk about them," Sullivan said.

"Our club is about more than making jewelry," he said. "It's about fellowship. Most people in Sun City are looking for that, and we want more of it in our club."

"At the potluck we want to talk about plans for another one around Christmas. Maybe we'll have a great big Christmas tree and turn it into a party."

Ken Lehde, first vice president

of Bell Lapidary Club, said active members get a lot of satisfaction from the club.

"The jewelry we make is second to none," he said. "We turn rocks into something beautiful, something that will last the rest of our lives and give us enjoyment."

"It's a fine hobby and it's a great social affair. A lot of us go out for coffee and to just talk," said Frank Sladek, a club member.

"In Sun City we have a lot of physical activities available to us, but this one uses more of our creative capacity," he said.

One of the better things about Bell Lapidary Club is the closeness of active members — a closeness that should be shared among all members, Sullivan said.

"I'm just trying to rekindle the members' interest," he said. "Everybody at our club smiles, and the more, the merrier."

Sullivan said he knows some members don't participate in jewelry making because of their age.

"Our club is getting older, but members don't have to use the machines. If for some other reason they don't want to make jewelry, fine. But I don't want them missing out on the camaraderie just because of that," he said.

For more information about the club or the potluck, call Sullivan at 972-3234.

OVER



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun

Bob Campbell polishes one of several stones for the bola ties he is making for golf tournament prizes. He is a member of the Bell Lapidary Club.



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun

Jim Sullivan, president of the Bell Lapidary Club, is hoping to bring former members back to the club. The group is planning a potluck for May 11 to give new, and prospective members an opportunity to get together.

RAINBOW'S END FOR THE LAPIDARY

LLOYD CAU

By Fred R. Jolly

716 Bittersweet Lane, Peoria, Illinois 61614

There is almost a heaven on earth for the lapidary in these United States. At least, there's the next thing to it. Would you believe that in a city of forty thousand, only a dozen or so years old, there are lapidary and silversmith shops equipped with everything from diamond saws and grinding wheels to electronic bead drills and iron needle files and bench anvils to lost wax equipment and burn-out furnaces? And if you're a citizen there, it's yours to use.

This place is Sun City, Arizona, one of the country's great adult retirement communities, where almost every long-cherished hobby can be pursued. Before one can understand specifics about "our favorite hobby," a paragraph or so are needed to explain how all this and its operations came about.

Sun City's recreation facilities, all of them, were constructed and equipped by the developer, a real visionary named Del Webb, now deceased. The corporation continues the same philosophy. Recreational facilities are constructed as a part of residents' purchase agreement, but once established are turned over to these same homeowners. These folks have their own organization, Recreation Centers of Sun City, Inc. which operates through its elected board. The board employs a professional manager and staff. A modest annual assessment fee, also a part of the purchase agreement, operates and maintains these genuinely fine facilities.

There are elaborate quarters, tools



A few of the many thousand pieces turned out every year by enthusiastic Sun City lapidaries.

and furnishings for lapidary and silversmith, as well as painting, ceramics, woodworking, leathercraft, sewing and outdoor activities like tennis, lawn bowling, shuffleboard and golf (the only activity operated by the developer). Just in passing there are seven 18 hole public courses and three private country clubs.

In addition to the resident's board and

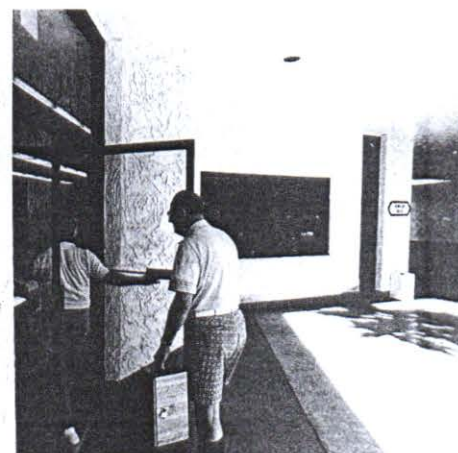
staff, there are literally hundreds of volunteers who happily watch, guard and teach beginners. Safety is a first concern, of course, and there are some hazards connected with our lapidary hobby, such as whizzing grinding wheels, diamond saws and electronic bead drills. Instruction is high on the list because, on the average, less than one percent in Sun City lapidary have ever had previ-

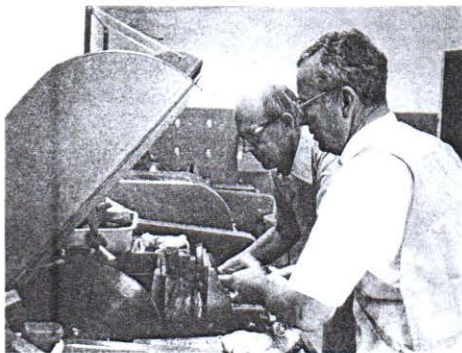


Running for first place as a lapidary "heaven" is the Bell Recreation Center in Sun City, Arizona.



Even the entrance is a tip off of great things ahead.





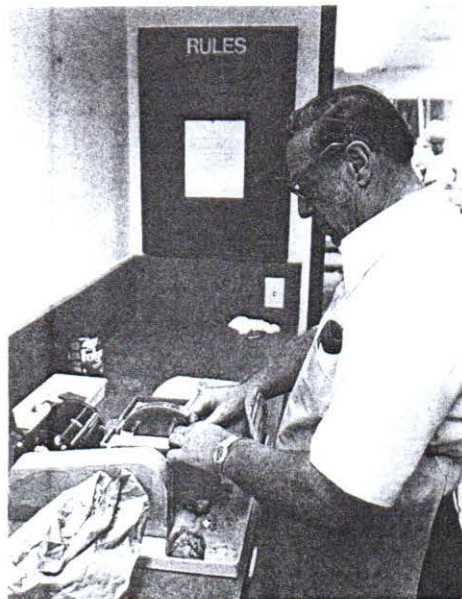
With a monitor to check for absolute tightness in the vise, this member (background) knows he won't have the stone come loose or a big saw blade ruined.

ous experience. It is interesting to note, however, that many become so proficient that in some clubs as many as 50% attain "professional" rating (awarded by committees of Sun City's best).

Volunteer maintenance people are always on hand, too. And there are plenty of well-qualified people available. After all, these thousands of residents come with hundreds of varied backgrounds and this experience is a great factor in keeping shops and tools in excellent condition. This is the story of the "happy lapidary," of course, and while it takes some words for the story, photographs should do it even better and we've included pictures to back up all these enthusiastic words.

Some of the statistics are simply mind-boggling. As Sun City grew, original facilities became overcrowded, so new ones were built. Today there are six lapidary centers in operation and as of this time there are over 500 active members in lapidary and silvercraft clubs. In addition, any resident who wishes can work at any shop. Membership in a club

(Continued on Page 2294)



There are all sizes of diamond saws and, as you can see on the bulletin board, the important rules are posted in plain view.

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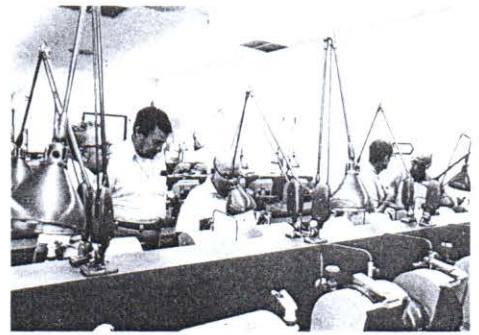
Some of Sun City's artists are women and their skills and artistic capabilities match those of the men.

isn't mandatory, though there are some real advantages. For example, clubs keep a stock of tools, supplies and even rough cutting material on hand for sale to members. Too, some members wish to sell some of what they make and this is done through the clubs. The club has a committee which, with the member, determine about what he had invested in his piece, set a price which just about returns cost to the maker and a little profit to the club which uses it for maintenance and a substantial percentage goes to various Sun City charitable organizations. Sun City lapidaries are not commercial manufacturers. They are in it for the fun of it . . . like you and me.

Sun City's first lapidary club got its start at a swimming pool — back in

1963. An attorney, a rancher and an amateur lapidary while sitting at the edge of the pool discovered that they had a common interest in rockhounding. They decided to start a club, primarily to search for good stone, to learn more about the mineral kingdom and, later, to teach others what they'd learned.

Several meetings and some time later the club was formed, named "Sun City Rockhound Club" and dues were set at \$2.50 per year. Within a month 84



A general view of one corner of one shop. There are literally scores of arbors, actually 82 double grinding wheels and 128 sanding units available all the time. Each unit has its own adjustable lamp.



A good idea developed here is the splashless water feed. Even if it is splashless, this gem cutter isn't going to let any spray get out of the water guard.

members were signed up. Guest speakers and field trips headlined the programs. Subjects of speakers included lapidary techniques, silversmithing and other items related to the mineral arts. Desert trips were popular, too. And they produced jasper, fire agate, obsidian, chalcedony and other local finds. Visits to mines (and there are a number near Sun City) were greatly favored by members. The club was on its way! While many rocks of gem quality are found in Arizona, many Sun City hobbyists buy their cutting material and would rather "cut and polish" than seek out their raw material on the desert floor, on mine tailings or in natural hiding places.

(Continued on Page 2314)

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Gauge	1 x 6 (in.)	2 x 6 (in.)	6 x 6 (in.)
12	\$15.03	\$30.06	\$90.18
14	11.71	23.42	70.26
16	9.40	18.80	56.40
18	7.49	14.98	44.94
20	5.80	11.60	34.80
22	4.68	9.36	28.08
24	3.71	7.42	22.26
26	2.98	5.96	17.88
28	2.36	4.72	14.16

STERLING WIRE (per foot)

ROUND		1/2 ROUND		SQUARE	
Gauge	Per ft.	Gauge	Per ft.	Gauge	Per ft.
6	\$7.60	4	\$6.48	12	\$2.51
8	4.80	8	2.48	14	1.58
12	1.91	10	1.32		
14	1.20	12	1.04	TRIANGULAR	
16	.76	14	.69	4	\$4.51
18	.48	16	.35	6 1/2	3.74
20	.30	DOUBLE HALF ROUND		8	3.18
22	.19	040x.157	\$2.41	12	.99
24	.12	080x.250	7.11	TUBING	
LOW DOME		BEZEL		3/32	\$1.41
062x.412	\$7.62	1/8x28 ga.	\$5.59	1/16	.88
180x.045	\$2.20				
EXTRA FANCY GALLERY BEZEL WIRE \$2.72/ft.		FANCY BEZEL STRIP EMBOSSED & STEPPED			
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HALF-BEAD WIRE		FULL BEAD WIRE			
Gauge	Per Foot	Gauge	Per Foot		
10	\$2.28	10	\$3.24		
12	1.12	12	2.04		
14	.96	14	1.32		

FINE SILVER BEZEL (per foot)

1/8 x 28 ga.	\$.74	Sawtooth 1/8 x 28 ga.	\$.94
3/16 x 26 ga.	1.28		

SOLDER

Soft Sheet 1"x2"	\$.61 ea.	Soft Wire	\$.29 ft.
Med Sheet 1"x2"	\$.64 ea.	Med Wire	\$.28 ft.
Hard Sheet 1"x2"	\$.70 ea.	Hard Wire	\$.33 ft.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

The prices shown are based on a \$4.00 per troy ounce price on the N.Y. silver market. Prices fluctuate daily and will be calculated on the day of shipment. If market is below \$4.00/oz refund will be sent. If above \$4.00/oz you will be billed for difference (parcel sent C.O.D. for substantial differences).

Please include sufficient postage for priority mail & insurance.

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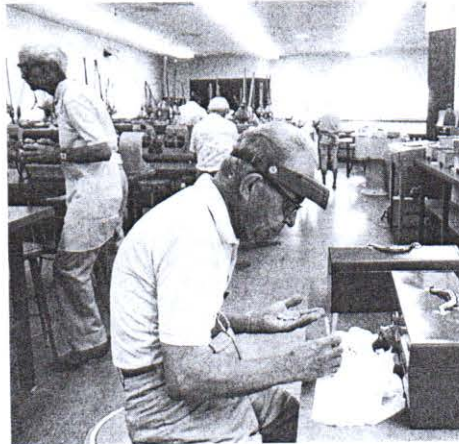


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RAINBOWS END FOR THE LAPIDARY

(Continued from Page 2294)



"Well, there are the rough stones. How'll I cut 'em and mount 'em?"



One place where the ladies far outmatch their male counterparts is at the display counter. Thousands of visitors see the jewelry made by Sun Citians and the gift buying provides for both maintenance and local charities.

Therefore, much material is bought from Africa's malachite and Australia's opal mines and, for that matter, from mines and dealers all over the world. Quite popular are turquoise, of course, and tigereye, jade, amethyst, petrified wood, azurite, chrysocolla (like turquoise), obsidian, agate, serpentine, aventurine and a host of other major precious and precious gemstones from all over the world. By the way, excellent Apache tears (obsidian) come from a mine not far away at Superior, Arizona.

At Sun City Rockhound Club, monthly meetings continue to this day, ever more popular. The latest in lapidary, mineralogy and geology books—as well as the last word in "tools of the trade" are on display at these monthly meetings and are available for purchase by club members.

Many well-known names grace the rolls of members and speakers for the club. Some quite well-known are: Prof. E. M. Hill of Cornell College in Iowa; Dr. William E. Powers of Northwestern University, expert lapidary and

gemologist; Volney Ray who was a Sweepstakes Ribbon winner at the American National Gem and Mineral Exposition; Mrs. Mary Schoonover, teacher of lapidary and gemology at the University of Alaska; Mr. Frank Jeckel, former president of New Jersey Mineralogical Society; Mr. & Mrs. Julius Riese, former Milwaukee rock shop owners and collectors . . . and a host of others.

That was the first "rockhound" club; but the first lapidary club was started at the Oakmont Center in 1964. Supplies were minimal at the kick-off, so Mr. Del Webb contributed two or three hundred pounds of cutting material to get that club on its way. Starting with eight grinding wheels, six sanding drums, a large lap and a buffing unit, the club has grown almost out of its own skin. But those above-named machines are still running and in good order.

Field trips to Burro Creek for agate and to Saddle Mountain for chalcedony have since boosted that initial Del Webb gift as have countless other acquisitions.

These are only the two early clubs or shops of course. In the dozen or so years since, Fairway, Lakeview, Sundial and the latest, Bell Road Center, have pushed out Sun City's lapidary horizons in a way you must see to believe.

(Continued on Page 2316)



Note the cleanliness, good lighting, myriads of tools, good workbenches and, of course, workers, lookers and talkers.



Dopping is done under an infrared lamp so the stone can be the right temperature.



Polishing arbors are wisely mounted on a narrow bench so they can be handy to either side.

The great thing about the whole program is the almost total freedom to do what you wish in the lapidary arts but with shop facilities and programs so well organized, maintained and operated that it's like having *your own* complete shop.

Training and teaching are thorough. Usually the newcomer starts with the making of his first cabochon, from start to shiny finish. Along the way, from slab sawing, trim sawing, shaping, polishing and mounting, safety is emphasized and rules are explained. There have to be rules, of course, for time limits have to be set on slab saw time (lest one member spend the day with a hundred-pound agate monster!), clean-up and repair programs have to be observed, grinding wheels must be dressed and so forth.

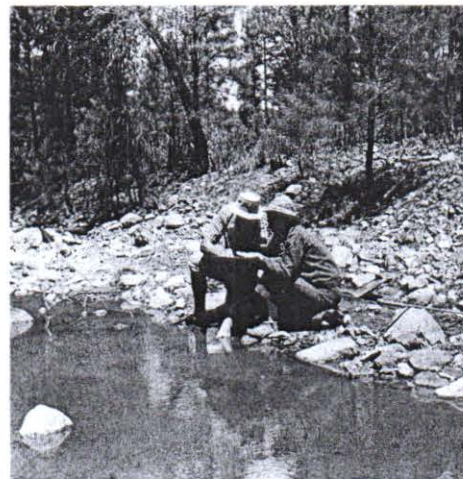
There are classes in silvercraft as well as lapidary. Members learn "tricks of the trade" in many ways other than at

the shops. One member, for example, learned sand casting from a Hopi Indian and then shared his learning by giving classes at Sun City.

Experience is a great teacher too, and members get a lot of it. The average time a lapidary spends at the shop on any day would be difficult to estimate, but at one club a figure of three and a half hours per visit is given and many members "work" everyday. Experience is a good teacher in another way too. One monitor said, "You haven't attained pro status until you've ground your fingernails down to the first knuckle." It didn't take me quite that long — after I'd sharpened a few fingernails pretty well, I got mighty watchful.

Speaking of monitors, they are genuinely unsung heroes. Generally speaking, each works a half-day each week and while one monitor may be enough for a small shop, it takes several for the larger shops and most of the shops are open six days a week, from eight in the morning until four in the afternoon.

This is not just a man's hobby either. Scores of skilled women lapidaries turn



Field trips have always intrigued Sun City lapidaries. In Arizona, the possible finds are almost limitless.



It must be good! He's got it in a safe (show-and-tell) container.

out quality jewelry. Some of them, as their "public service" responsibility handle the showcases and offices. One club reports that over six percent of their members are women. One, very proficient, is a polio victim and works from a wheelchair or stool. She can do almost anything but operate a slab saw. That brings to mind one of the best safety rules in the book. No slab saw can ever be started until a monitor has inspected the piece of cutting material in the vise. If there's even the slightest chance that the piece might move during cutting, the piece must be removed and put in again.

As to what members make, the sky's the limit. In addition to Arizona's state necktie, the bola, and the usual necklaces, brooches, earrings, belt buckles and so forth, book ends, wall plaques, table tops, clocks and, really, everything you can think of, are produced. One member made a map of the United States using the native rock of each state.

Silvercraft work has increased by
(Continued on Page 2318)

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As we stated in our ad in the Rockhound Buyer's Guide, we wish to explore that facet of the rockhound market dealing with rough and specimen material to supplement our stock of over 100,000 cut gems. Toward this end we have purchased for you genuine emerald crystals from South America. We have crystals from which excellent gems may be faceted, but some of these exceed \$100.00 per carat in the rough. Our latest purchase was made solely to supply the most valuable of all gemstones to you in a quality and color commensurate with any collection, or for those wishing to facet small emeralds, for much of the material is facetable. The color ranges from light to medium-dark green. We offer them, then, as follows:

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18x13 mm., oval, \$1.00 each; 25x18 mm., oval, \$2.00 each in the following choice materials: green moss agate, phantom amethyst, aventurine, cobra agate (18 x 13 only), goldstone, blue goldstone, fancy jasper, Apache tear obsidian, snowflake obsidian, rose quartz, rhodonite, blue tiger eye, and unakite.

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Squares 2 mm., 60c each; 2½ mm., 75c each

BURMESE JADEITE

Set of 5 oval 18x13 mm. cabochons. One each of black, green, mauve, orange and yellow \$40.00 set

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Blue Burmese jadeite, 25x18 mm., oval \$45.00 each
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This happy lapidary has a right to be pleased. He's zeroing in on gold from the Lynx Creek, near the old Bannie Gold Mine close to Prescott.

leaps and bounds in recent years. Classes for beginners are so greatly in demand that it's been impossible for teachers to keep up. Waiting lists for classes at some clubs are as long as (there are 80 on the list at Bell and they start 36 a month) 3 months. Silversmiths at Sun City turn out jewelry that will match top quality anywhere. Design is studied, and beautiful designs are executed. Many a lapidary wife is wearing handcrafted jewelry that couldn't be found elsewhere.

As mentioned earlier, more jewelry is made than one can give his family and friends and there are thousands of visitors to Sun City every year (and all of them visit the lapidary shops) so there's a showcase in each facility and members show off and sell jewelry. The finished jewelry is sold with the maker getting about what he has in the piece and the club gets the balance used, as stated before, for maintenance and charity. Local merchants at the several shopping malls in Sun City sponsor "Show and Sell" days and draw huge crowds of lookers and buyers. The products are good. Many pieces have won blue ribbons at rock and gem shows.

Proof of the popularity of jewelry making in Sun City lies in a few statistics. There are six shops and they have in them 82 double grinding wheels, 128 sanding units, 25 slab saws (up to 24" size) and 21 trim saws, including 6" thin saws. There are polishing units, dopping outfits, buffers and everything else the good shop needs. And there are some pretty sophisticated tools, too. Three of the shops have electronic bead drills.

So, if you ever happen to be near Sun City and want to see lapidary at its best, stop in. As the commercials say, "You'll be glad you did." And you'll be astonished, too. ☺