

# Charities can bet on men's club

By **CONNIE STEELE**  
Daily News-Sun staff

Early in the life of Sun City, a men's club was organized at Oakmont Recreation Center, just south of Grand Avenue.

It began informally in 1961 with 27 men who called themselves the "C Senores Club of Town Hall."

By 1963, the "Men's Club of



Sun City" had been formed as an official non-profit organization of Arizona with a constitution and bylaws.

As Sun City grew, its one Men's Club had to share the spotlight and changed its name to Oakmont Men's Club.

Members are reluctant to take the thunder. When asked which of them is top gun, they turn and point to the other guy.

One man they point to is Gordon Evans, who has lived in Sun City nearly from the beginning.

Evans was a prime mover in obtaining the Sportsman's Room, an addition built onto the southwest corner of the center that expanded the men's club to two large meeting rooms, said President Ken Hanna.

Hanna has been a member for 15 years and was president in 1983.

Except on his birthday, Evans, a frail 87, has been unable to drop by the club as he once did. But on his birthday, his comrades called Sun Cities Area Transit System and scheduled a ride to the club.

It's a club tradition for the birthday honoree to treat his

## Did you know?

friends to birthday cake.

Over the years, Evans has made a lot of friends and has left reminders of his service. For one, there's a large buffalo head from a 1983 kill by his grandson, Randy Evans. There's the Pepsi Cola clock that Evans treasured. But more than anything, Evans' legacy is the club's Wednesday bingo at 7 p.m. in Mountain View Recreation Center.

The games began when then-President Evans told the Oakmont group in 1970, "We need a bingo game."

Bingo generates around \$10,000 a year, which the club donates to organizations such as Sunshine Services, Meals on Wheels, Prides, Posse, the library and St. Vincent de Paul.

Players stand to win a \$1,000 prize but more importantly, they gain an evening of fun.

"We have a lot of widowers," Hanna said.

Card games are a big draw at the center.

"They're all learning the game so when they go to Vegas, they'll know how to win," Herb Amend said.

In addition to cards, club members can watch cable television and play pool.

"Entertainment, comradeship and fellowship" is what the club is all about, Hanna said.

Any man from Sun City is welcome.

"We know no boundaries," Hanna said.

Membership requires "three bucks and a rec card," he said.

Saturday activities include a hot lunch at noon, prepared by

Al Natale.

Occasionally there's a trip to Laughlin or the dog races.

On Sept. 3, league bowling resumes at Lakeview Recreation Center and golf at the North Course.

"We're making plans now for a fall picnic and a Christmas party Dec. 17," Hanna said.

In 16 years with the club, board member Ken Ostertag served as president three years, from 1988 through 1990.

One of the projects he piloted was the purchase of an 18-foot by 30-foot American flag, which flies over Sun City from the median of 107th Avenue on the south side of Grand Avenue. Oakmont Men forked out around \$400 to buy the flag, which was raised for the first time last year.

Ostertag has served 12 years on the board of his condominium group's board of directors as board chairman.

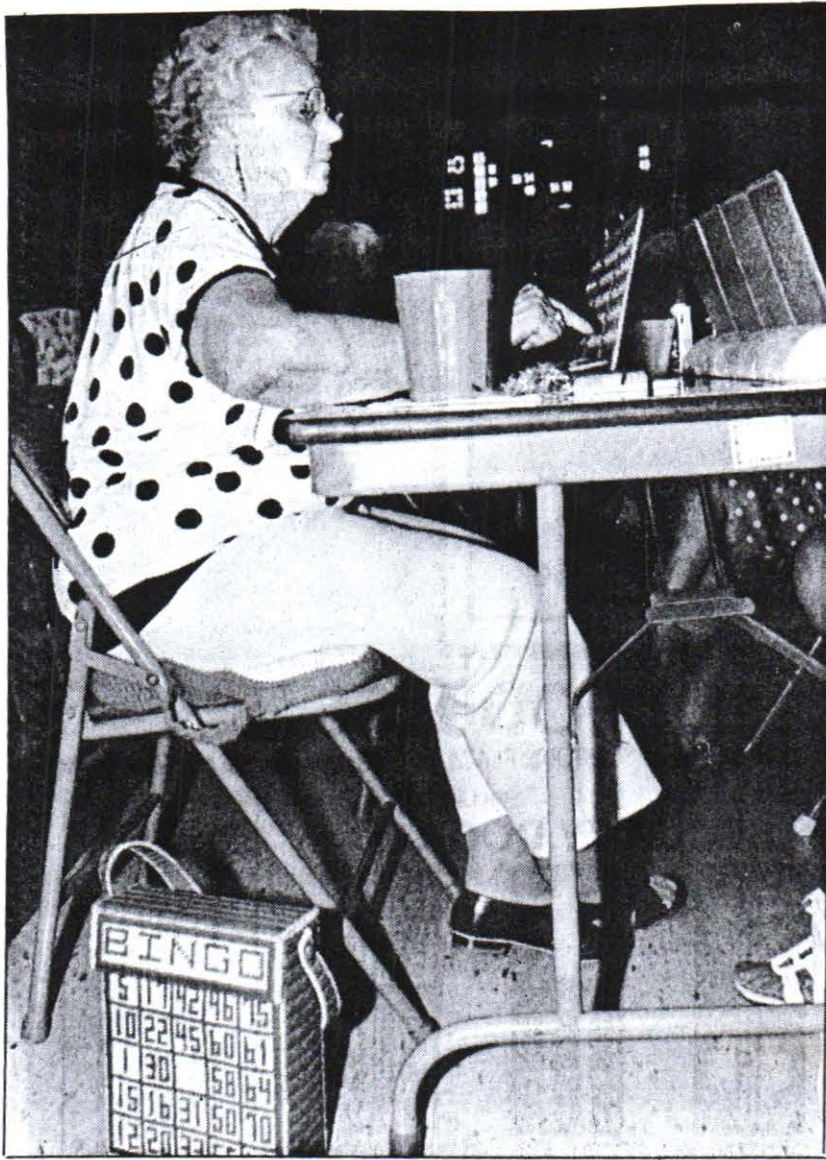
He's a charter member of the Sun City Elks' Lodge and just gave up the chairmanship of the lodge's Americanism Committee after 12 years of leadership. He's also president of the B-4-9 bowling league at Lakeview Recreation Center.

For information, call 977-3718.

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OVER

OAKMONT MEN'S CLUB

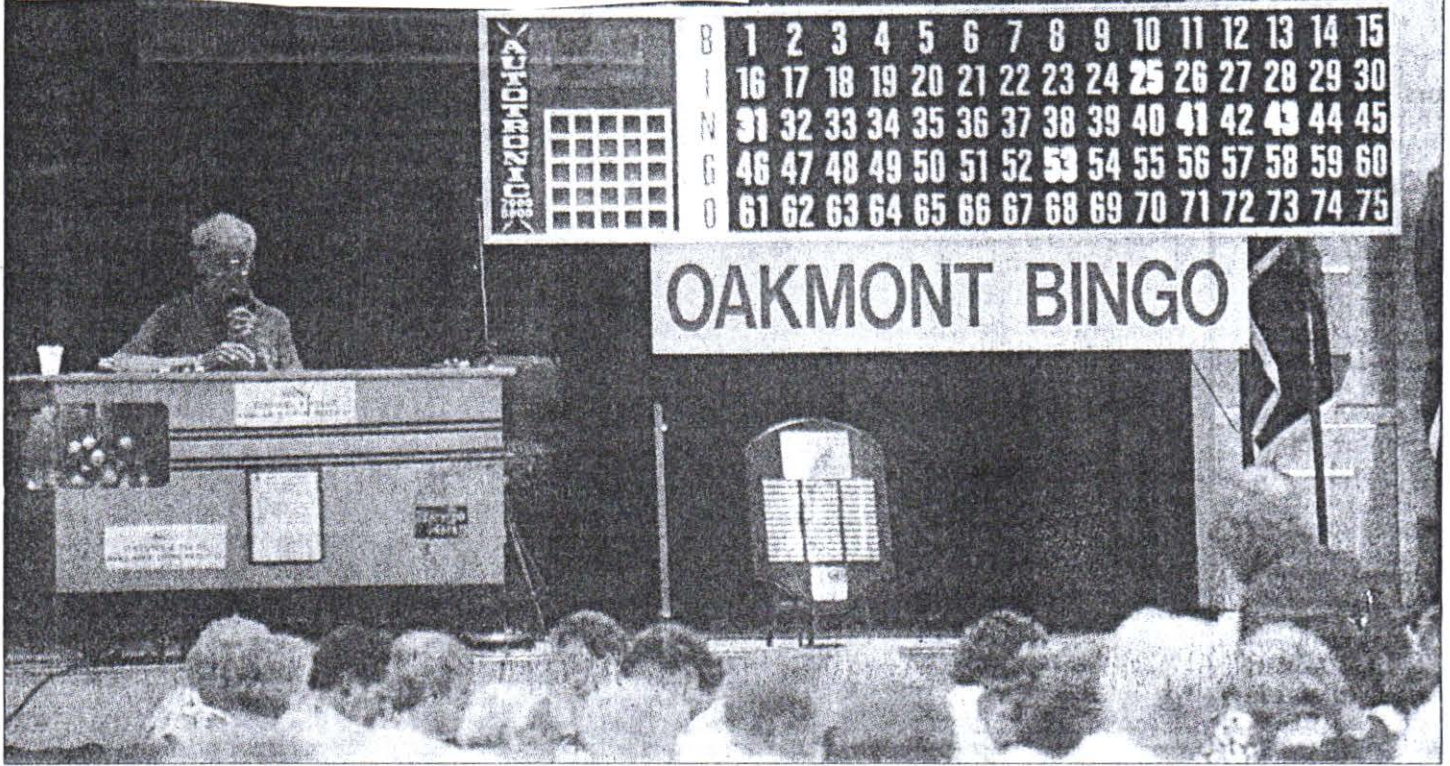




Daily News-Sun photo by Mollie J. Hoppes

**IN THE BAG** — Jeanette Wagner of Sun City watches her cards as numbers are called at the Wednesday night Oakmont Men's Club bingo game in Mountain View Auditorium. Wagner is such a fan of the game that she made a bag to tote to bingo.





Steve Chermek/Daily News-Sun

John Kroll, above, calls the numbers at the Oakmont Men's Club's bingo games at Mountain View Recreation Center. At right, Mabel Brunner and Myron A. Everett pore over their cards Wednesday night. Both said they are longtime players of the Oakmont games. The Men's Club has been sponsoring the games for 27 years, long before the state lottery bingo games.



Steve Chermek/Daily News-Sun

## MEN of LETTERS

### Oakmont club hits jackpot with bingo games

By DAVID MILLER  
Staff writer

While Arizona gamblers line up for a crack at the new Arizona Bingo game, a Sun City bingo session is in its 27th year calling out winners, losers and a few high rollers.

Every Wednesday evening, the Oakmont Men's Club hosts a bingo game at Mountain View Auditorium, featuring a jackpot prize of \$1,000.

Besides the major purse, other prizes are also awarded, including a minimum of \$120 for every regular game, said Robert Starkel of Sun City, the men's club president.

Prizes for other games go as high as \$450, with the \$1,000 grand prize handed out at least four times a year, Starkel said.

And hundreds of folks are taking a chance at those prizes.

"We had 324 people last Wednesday night," Starkel said recently. "We usually get around 300, which is really good for summer."

Despite the club's name, the

crowds consist of longtime players, including quite a few women.

"Three-fourths of them are women," Starkel said. "Some of these women are hooked on bingo."

As are other community members. According to Vice President Roy Johnson, the Oakmont Men's Club sponsors the longest-running bingo game in Sun City.

And while players can reap generous rewards, they're not the only ones making money through the games.

Every few months, the club donates cash to about 10 local charities and service groups, Johnson said.

The rest is funneled back to bingo players, after the state revenue department takes its 1.5 percent gaming cut, Johnson said.

"Usually 85 to 90 percent is paid back to the players," he said.

To play, participants buy a \$5 "master pack" of bingo sheets, good for 15 regular games.

Players can win between \$25 and \$120 in regular games, depending on how many people score a bingo.

After that, larger-stakes games are played, culminating with a "cover all" game, and the potential to win \$1,000.

A bigger draw than the lure of money, however, is the desire for camaraderie, Starkel said.

"A lot of people like to win, but there's a fellowship, too. It's a fun evening out for a lot of these people," he said. "Sixty percent of the people who come to bingo come every week."

People can play whether or not they live in Sun City, Johnson added, since state rules prohibit games of chance closed to the general public.

Johnson, who has been working the games for 17 years, agrees that the games are important to Sun City.

"It's a community venture," he said. "Some of these people have been attending since it started."

Games start at 6:45 p.m. Wednesdays in Mountain View Auditorium, on the corner of Mountain View Road and 107th Avenue in Sun City.



# Lucky numbers

## Area residents seek fun, excitement, riches at local bingo games

By JULIA DE SIMONE  
Independent Newspapers

**M**ary Juhl discovered bingo at Sundial Auditorium three months after she moved to Sun City.

A devout player since July 1978, Ms. Juhl has had her share of winnings.

"Way back when, I won \$900," she said. "Lately, my luck has run out."

The 93-year-old widow, however, isn't fretting about never having the opportunity to call BINGO again.

Instead, Ms. Juhl said she finds pleasure in being among fellow bingo pals.

"I've been coming here (the Sundial Men's Club Bingo games) once a week and enjoying it," she said. "It's a night out."

She isn't alone.

According to John Gunner, president of the Sundial Men's Club, more than 400 people a week from the Sun Cities, El Mirage, Peoria, Youngtown and other adjoining areas regularly come to play bingo.

"These are good people; a special breed — they're a bingo player," Mr. Gunner said.

The players huddle in crowds, 20 and 30 minutes before the games begin, eager to locate their lucky spot.

"They like to sit in the same place with the same people," Mr. Gunner said.

Immediately, a shrine of such



John Gunner, president of the Sundial Men's Club, prepares for another calling of BINGO. The club holds the games 7 p.m. Thursdays at Sundial Auditorium. Cost is \$7 per 18 games. Open to the public. Call 977-5116.

good luck charms as Beanie Babies™ and a miniature statue of a Buddha are aligning tables.

Bowls are filled with snacks while hands flex and voices prepare to call those five magic letters — BINGO.

Although Mr. Gunner admits that gambling has become more popular over the years — from bingo games at local churches to other card games at area casinos

— the manner in which they lure a crowd remains unique.

He said if their attendance consists of 400 players or more, the \$1,000 prize will be paid regardless of the number of balls called.

"We give \$1,000 no matter how many numbers it takes to win it," he said. "We guarantee \$1,000 if there are 400 people in attendance."

If less than 400 players are in

attendance at the Sundial bingo games, winnings fall under a progressive coverall where:

- 51 numbers or less called produces \$1,000
- 52 numbers called produces \$750
- 53 numbers called produces \$500
- 54 numbers called produces \$400
- 55 numbers called produces \$300
- 56 numbers called produces \$200

But the giving doesn't stop there.

The operation of the weekly games also benefits charitable and civic organizations in the area.

"We've tried to act as a service for the community first," Mr. Gunner said.

In 1997, \$4,100 was donated to 12 different non-profit organizations ranging from Sunshine Services of Sun City to the West Side Food Bank.

He said they first pay expenses associated with the game such as the card sheets and rent to the Recreation Center of Sun Cities before donating.

Volunteers, who are all Sundial

Men's Club members, are not paid. As per the organization's bylaws, they must work the bingo games to join the club.

Raymond Gryga of Youngtown said the club's philanthropic effort is one of the main reasons why he continues to play.

"We make donations," he said. "We enjoy it."

Mr. Gunner said he hopes that dedication will have a domino effect.

He said the club's goal is to

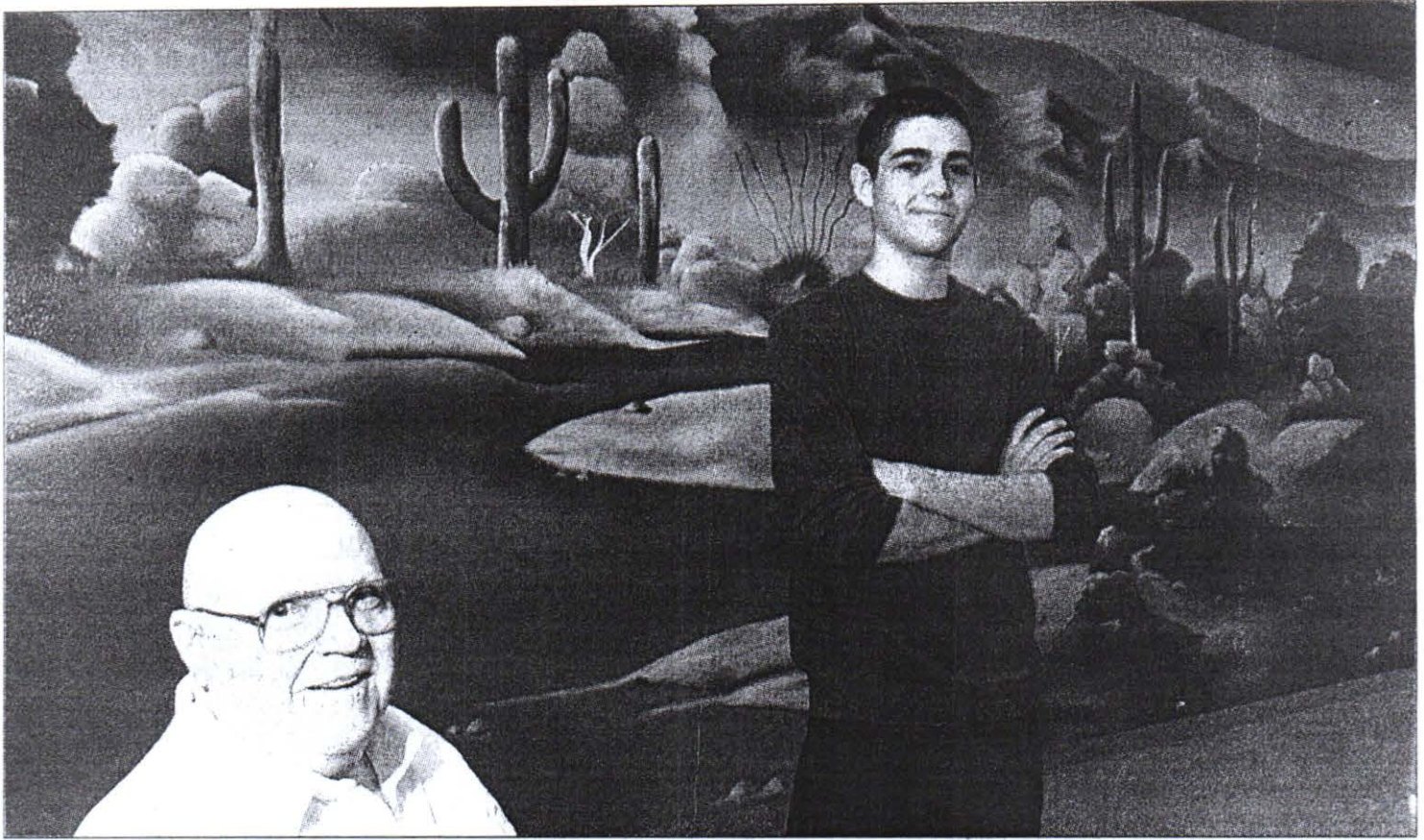
increase the attendance at its games so, in turn, more charities can be supported.

"You may have 300 diehards here, but you need 100 more people," Mr. Gunner said. "We would do really well if we had 500 people."

In mid-April, club members will assess whether they will continue bingo during the summer season. Last year, games were discontinued from June to August.



# Scene at Sundial



MOLLIE J. HOPPES/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Kevin Birch stands in front of the mural he painted in the Sundial Men's Club at the behest of President Hal Adams, left. Birch is a graduate of Peoria High School and earned the half-point credit he needed to do so by painting the mural.

## Young artist livens Men's Club quarters

ERIN REEP  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Thanks to a young Peoria artist, the Sundial Men's Club is now a brighter place to pass the time.

A mural painted in Southwest hues of pink, brown, green and blue covers the wall at the entrance to the club's room.

Peoria High School graduate Kevin Birch, 17, spent 100 hours this spring painting the mural depicting a desert scene of mountains at sunset with palm trees, cactuses, sandy beaches and lakes.

Sundial Men's Club President Hal Adams said the colorful artwork is a great improvement over the

previously blank wall. Adams had seen a painting at a local hotel and liked it so much, he wanted to see a similar scene produced on the Men's Club wall.

Adams and John Gunner, former president, called Peoria High School seeking an art student willing to work on the mural. A teacher put Adams in touch with Birch.

Adams photographed the hotel painting and enlarged it through use of a scanner and his home computer. Birch used a charcoal pen to produce a four-part grid on the wall, and painted one section at a time.

"I started up at the top," he said, pointing to the sunset vista of oranges and pinks. "Then I came down

these mountains, then the trees and the cactus, then the front sand."

For his work on the project during his last semester of high school, Birch earned the half credit he needed to graduate in June. He painted on weekends and during the day, while the Men's Club members played cards and socialized.

Birch said he was intimidated at first, "because you really don't know who they are," he said.

But members frequently encouraged him, making him more at ease, he said.

Big K Ace Hardware of Sun City donated the latex paint for the work; local Wells Fargo banking branches and the Sundial Men's Club made

donations to the Peoria High School Art Club on Birch's behalf, Adams said. The Men's Club also contributed toward Birch's education.

Members of the club are pleased with the mural.

"Fantastic," said Doug Caravaggio.

"We love it," added member John Panazzo.

The club boasts 600 members during the height of the season, and supports charitable causes through Thursday-night bingo proceeds. Activities include billiards, card-playing and socializing.

Annual dues are \$5. For information, call 977-5116.

Erin Reep can be reached at 876-2532 or ereep@aztrib.com.



# Sundial Men's Club supports wall project

The Sun City Men's Club continued its support of the Sun City Home Owners Association by making a donation of \$1,000 to SCHOA's Residents Assistance and Maintenance Program.

This program is designed to provide assistance to a resident who may be experiencing extenuating financial or physically circumstances.

This year the Men's Club also made a generation contribution to the Sun City Residents Action Program, which works in conjunction with SCHOA. Larry Carr, president of the Sun City Men's Club, presented Lloyd Maple, SCHOA board member and Sun City Residents Action Program chairman, with these generous donations.

SCRAP was organized in 2013 with the purpose to provide charitable programs for Sun City citizens. Early in 2016, the SCRAP

board established the Sun City walls project, with the goal to maintain the appearance of the Sun City perimeter walls. A number of areas of the walls were in serious need of painting.

The SCRAP Committee personally inspected all the perimeter walls and are addressing those in the greatest need of repair first. The project will be ongoing to protect the beauty and values of Sun City today and for future generations. There is currently a long-range plan that is supported by donations.

The SCHOA board also approved a \$5,000 donation to SCRAP in support of this valuable Sun City initiative.

For further information or to make a donation, contact the SCHOA office at 623 974 4718.



Submitted photo  
Lloyd Maple, Sun City Home Owners Association board member, accepts a check for \$1,000 from Larry Carr of the Sundial Men's Club for use in SCHOA's RAMP efforts and another donation for the wall revitalization project.

UF SC Men's Clubs



V F SC Lions Clubs

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### Celebrating 100th anniversary

The Lions International is celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2017. Two members who have brought in new members for 2017 are Pat Rowe and Ray Kluth. They are now Centennial Sponsors for 2017 and are shown above receiving an award from Lion John Gilbert. The Sun City Early Bird Lions Club meets 7:30 a.m. the first and third Friday of the month at the Palmbrook Country Club, 9350 W. Greenway Road. [Submitted Photo]