

# GENERATION GAP?

## Club offers younger residents opportunity to socialize

By **TERI CARNICELLI**  
Sun Cities Independent

**D**espite restrictions prohibiting people under the age of 55 from permanently residing in the Sun Cities, there are, for one reason or another, a spattering of younger residents living within the communities.

And for these residents, it's not all that easy finding new friends or activities common to people of their own age group.

The Next Generation Club, an organization whose members must be between the ages of 20 and 50, is hoping to reach out to these younger residents and help make their stay in the retirement communities a much more pleasant experience.

The club was founded in 1990 by Sun City West resident Debbie

### ■ GAP

Lofthouse, a 35-year-old Mary Kay beauty consultant who resides with her parents. Ms. Lofthouse, originally from Wisconsin, moved to Sun City West in 1989.

She decided to form the club because "I wanted to see who else was younger, like me.

Right now we only have about 20 members, but we used to be around 45," she says.

While Ms. Lofthouse attributes the decrease in membership to people moving away, "there are a lot of (younger) people moving out here who don't know about us," she says.

She adds there is more of the younger generation in the Sun Cities than people realize. Club member Jeff Weissbuch, however, points out, "It's not like we're trying to invade Sun City West.

"We're here for some specific reason, be it financial or (otherwise)," says the 42-year-old Indiana native, who came to the community 14 years ago.

For club members, living in the Sun Cities generally "is not a permanent thing," he emphasized.

However, for the time these children and grandchildren of Sun Cities residents reside in the area, they will be able to find comfort and companionship with others in a similar situation.

"The primary function of the club is social," Mr. Weissbuch says.

Ms. Lofthouse explains one of the regular social events is a trip to the movie theater every Monday night. "It's pretty much the same people who go every week, so you get to talk and get to know each other better."

Other activities include bowling, miniature golf, dinner theater and occasional trips to Laughlin.

"We have a planning meeting the second Thursday of every month," Ms. Lofthouse says.

"I try to get ideas for what peo-

*Although each member of the Next Generation Club is living in the Sun Cities for a specific reason, whether financial or otherwise, all agree their residency in the retirement communities is not permanent.*

ple would like to do, because I don't want to have to come up with everything myself, so it helps me." The club also has an International Night the last Thursday of the month at various restaurants throughout the area. Dues are \$10 a year and the club occasionally holds fund-raisers. A portion of the money raised during a recent candy bar sale was donated to the local chapter of the Lutheran Brotherhood Insurance Company's disaster relief fund. The Next Generation Club's \$50 donation

will be matched 2-to-1 by the Lutheran Brotherhood and that \$150 will be sent to Lutheran Social Services in Oklahoma City to aid those who survived the recent bombing of the federal building. Donations can be sent to Lutheran Brotherhood, P.O. Box 5391, Sun City West, Ariz., 85376. "They (disaster relief funds) still need money, I'm sure," Ms. Lofthouse says. She says the club also occasionally donates money to the local

chapter of the Lions Club.

However, "our fund-raisers are primarily to pay for postage," explains Richard Lovera, a club member in his early 40s who moved to Sun City West from Chicago four years ago.

"We have a newsletter each month for the members that has all the different activities."

He adds that "if we're going to have a pool party or something, we use the money to buy sodas and plates and cups and food and stuff."

The club treasury also helps pay for gas for those who drive on trips and for other activities.

"We just get together and have fun," Mr. Lovera says.

For more information on the club, call 584-7982.

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# Living with parents can have its rewards

Second of two parts  
By BRITT KENNERLY  
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY WEST — Granted, when parents and adult children live together, it's not always a scene straight from "The Waltons."

After all, even Grandpa Walton and John Boy had their testy moments.

But with common goals and common courtesy, it can be a rewarding experience, say those who live in the situation and those who study it.

In the Sun Cities and Youngtown, where more than 1,500 people between 20 and 50 are living with a parent or relative of retirement age, financial and/or medical reasons are often the reason for the arrangement.

It's a trend becoming more and more popular across the nation, said Dr. Robert Pierce, associate professor of social work at Washington University in St. Louis.

"A lot of people are moving back home, because it's economically feasible — the divorce rate has pushed a lot of young people, particularly women who haven't been in the work force, back home," he said.

Whether it's a temporary arrangement or a long-term agreement, it shouldn't be looked at as a situation fraught with potential for disaster, he said.

Parents should remember that their children need their privacy at



Frances Guarino/Daily News-Sun

Jeff Weissbuch, 40, holds Weasel and Debbie Lofthouse, 33, cradles Cactus while visiting a friend in Sun City. Weissbuch and Lofthouse, who each live with their parents in Sun City West, are among the growing numbers of adult American children adjusting to living with their parents.

any age, he said — and children should remember the same.

"For those who can accommodate the situation, it will work out," he said. "For those who can't, it won't. Everybody is much happier when people have their own space — we can relate to the situation better by looking at it that way, rather than in terms of the situation being healthy

or not healthy."

Finding her own space, and friends who share the same interests, has helped Emilie Chrisemer, 49, adjust to 20 years of life in Sun City.

Chrisemer moved to Sun City with her mother, Irma, now 86, after her mother visited relatives in the area.

After coming to take her mother

home, Chrisemer said, the two decided to stay on and buy a home in the pioneer retirement community.

For 19 years, she said, her job at Western Savings kept her too busy to get involved in the community as much as she would have liked.

"There were a lot of things going on over those years that I would have loved to participate in, but I couldn't because of work," she said.

Although she never anticipated spending her 30s and 40s living near retired folks, there were actually occasions when Chrisemer got to enjoy outings she'd missed out on in her 20s in Pennsylvania.

"I never got to see the Philadelphia Orchestra until we moved here," she said. "When we lived in Pennsylvania, I was afraid to drive in to the city, and the last train would have left at night before the program was over. Once we moved here, the orchestra came to Gammage Auditorium in Tempe, and I finally got to see them."

Even though she remembers the "funny" looks she got when she was younger, the "What-are-you-doing-here?" glances so common to many younger Sun Citians, Chrisemer has met many more "wonderful" people.

Remembering that, and leading her own life while respecting her life with her mother — "you have to remember to come in on time," she said — has helped her through the

See Children find, A3

# Children find local niche

—From A1 years.

"I was in Smitty's one day, looking at a plant and holding it, and a woman came up and put her arm around my shoulder," she said. "She said, 'You must love plants, the way you're smiling at that one.' These people are mostly sweethearts, and the older I get and see how active a person can still be, the less age bothers me. Now I can't wait until I retire."

Regardless of the fact that ideally, they'd be living on their own, Debbie Lofthouse, 33, and Jeff Weissbuch, 40, members of the Next Generation Club, don't think in terms of when they'll move away.

Rather, Lofthouse said, members of the social group for the Sun Cities' 20- to 50-year-old residents make the most of the area in which they live.

It's a fact that many senior citizens don't accept younger people living in their community, Weissbuch said, but understanding that is key to living with it.

"You're going to meet people you can't get along with," Weissbuch said. "But that would happen anywhere you lived."

For financial reasons, Deborah, who has medical problems, has no choice but to share her parents' home.

Lofthouse's husband, an engineer, gave up his job and moved the family to Sun City West because of his wife's health problems.

"That's why financially, we can't help her out, and this way, she can live in a much nicer home than what she could afford with her small income," she said.

Dave Mitchell, 40, has lived with his parents, now in their 70s, for 10 years in Sun City West.

Living one's own life while respecting parents' natural instincts to parent is the key to a smooth relationship, he said.

"Be positive, and try to get involved with things that lift you up," he said. "Many times, I think we younger people tend to get embarrassed, or sheepish, about living with our families. But it can be wonderful."

# Adult children band together in Sun Cities

First in a series

By BRITT KENNERLY  
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY WEST — The Next Generation has taken up residence in the Sun Cities.

But even though most members of the club are at least a decade or two away from their golden years, they're making the most of living in a retirement community.

Founded by 33-year-old Sun City West resident Debbie Lofthouse, who lives with parents Robert and Beverly, Next Generation is a social organization designed for 20- to 50-year-olds.

Club membership is small, about 30 members. But there's potential for a larger roster, as illustrated by 1990 census figures listing 1676 people ages 20 to 49 living in Sun City, Sun City West and Youngtown.

Lofthouse, who lives with her parents because of health problems, immediately sensed the need for an organized social outlet for younger people when she and her parents moved to Sun City West, she said.

"There's a lot of activities for younger people here, but when you first get here, you don't realize what you can get involved in," she said. "You start to think it's just you out here."

Next Generation lays the groundwork for fun during a planning meeting at 6:30 p.m. the second Tuesday of each month at Brothers Restaurant, 8466 W. Peoria Ave., Peoria.

During that meeting, club members



Frances Guarino/Daily News-Sun

Three of Sun City West's younger residents are from left, Debbie Lofthouse, 33; Dave Mitchell, 40; and Jeff Weissbuch, 40.

plan movie outings and other get-togethers.

"Some people join thinking this is more of a singles group, and they're looking for a member of the opposite sex," Lofthouse said. "Some people have been married after meeting in this club. Our emphasis, though, isn't on being single. It's on being a young resident of the Sun Cities."

Adult children in the Northwest Valley live with their parents for any of a number of reasons.

Medical or financial problems, for aging parents or the adult children,

top the list.

Some children of Sun Citians head to Arizona to care for an ailing parent and choose to stay on; others move in with parents after going through an emotionally or financially devastating divorce.

Lofthouse's mother Beverly said she and her husband would love to see their daughter live on her own, but it's just not feasible.

"Debbie's income is Supplemental Security Income, and that's not a lot of money," she said. "She has a boyfriend, and they'd like to get mar-

ried, but he's on disability. If they married, she'd lose the SSI. Debbie could handle living on her own if the finances were there, but they're not."

And yet others choose living with their parents simply because the arrangement is beneficial to everyone involved.

Safety is a big factor, especially for those with medical problems, Lofthouse said.

"There aren't that many places in the country where a person can feel this safe," she said. "You certainly wouldn't be this safe in New York or a larger city."

Enjoying the amenities of retirement living without being elderly — or a homeowner — also is possible for younger Sun Cities residents.

Recreation club cards are available to the younger set, making racquetball, golf and swimming favorite activities.

Many Next Generation members find yet other social outlets through church and enjoy outings in other parts of the Valley.

Still, there's the downside.

Being around older people on a daily basis could be depressing, but not if you face it with the right attitude, Lofthouse said.

"When I first moved here, I was in one of the women's clubs, and we were at the rec center playing cards," she said. "Someone said, 'What are you doing here? You're too young to be here,' and everyone stuck up for me."

See Making the, A3

# Making the most of life with family

—From A1

There's also getting used to being "parented" again after living away from home.

"Sometimes parents, after all those years, don't realize that life was different for them than it is for us," said Jeff Weissbuch, 40, of Sun City West. "There are things I might do that upset my parents — it's not that I don't want to help them, but there are times I need to do things I'd like to do, on my own."

But money talks, Jeff said.

"This is what I can afford," he said. "It's a beautiful place to be living in, and many of us who move back in with our parents have been at the bottom of the barrel. I have my own room, with TV and stereo, and a garage where I can work on my car. And there are things we can do for our parents as well."

Less-than-rosy financial straits also spurred Dave Mitchell to leave California in 1983 and take up residence with his parents in Sun City West.

Now 40, Dave is working in a TV shop in Glendale, and his reasons for staying with his parents remain the same.

"I thought once I got here, I'd find a good job, a place to live and move out," he said. "But that didn't happen — I still need to live here, and we've worked out a good arrangement."

Since Dave's parents are snowbirds, and are gone for four or five months each year, it's even easier, he said.

"It's a rest for all of us, and I can take care of things for them while they're gone," he said.

Give-and-take is crucial to a successful living arrangement for adult children and parents, the trio agreed.

"For the most part, they still expect us to live by their rules since we're still living under their roofs," Dave said. "And the best thing to do is cooperate, let them know where you'll be when you're out, and what time you expect to get home. That's what you'd want from anyone you lived with, isn't it?"

*Next: How parents and adult children can make the most of living together.*