

V F SC Pioneers

# Hot, dusty desert awaited

## 'hardy' pioneers of Sun City

NW-D Wed., Nov. 5, 1986 *The Phoenix Gazette*

By Karen Kirk

*Gazette Northwest Bureau*

SUN CITY — They didn't trek across the country in covered wagons. They came by plane and car.

They did not labor under the desert sun building a shelter from natural materials. They paid someone to custom build their luxury homes.

They might not have endured the physical hardships that Arizona's earlier settlers did, but the first Sun Citians were pioneers just the same.

These brave men and women were willing to leave their families and chance their savings and their retirement years on a community that was little more than a few houses, palm trees and promises.

Margaret Diggs was one of those who took the risk and has never regretted it.

"I had no idea we would move to Arizona. We thought we would go to North Carolina when my husband retired, but some friends moved here and invited us out for a visit. We turned in to this pretty place with all the palm trees, and it looked like Bermuda. Before we went to sleep that night, we knew we would retire here," Diggs said.

That was in 1961.

Sun City has changed a lot since then. It has grown from a community of a few hundred to one with

more than 46,000 residents. It has become so busy that people who once ran into each other on the street corner every day rarely see one another unless they schedule a visit.

But they haven't forgotten the friendship they shared while building one of the world's largest retirement communities.

Twice a year this group of adventurous men and women meet in the banquet room of one of Sun City's private clubs to discuss the time when there weren't any banquet facilities, restaurants or anything else but houses and desert to speak of for miles.

"This all started years ago when someone got the idea that people who came in 1960 and 1961, when Sun City was built, might enjoy being together," Diggs said.

That group evolved into the Sun City Pioneers.

The club originally was open only to those who came to Sun City during its first two years; however, it might soon be open to those who came here before 1965, Diggs said at the club's recent fall luncheon.

The event was attended by about 80 people. Diggs has no idea of the club's total membership.

"We don't keep track," she said.

See ■ Pioneer, NW-D



# 'hardy' pioneers of Sun City

NW-D Wed., Nov. 5, 1986 *The Phoenix Gazette*

## ■ Pioneer

From NW-A

The atmosphere at the group's meetings is much like its record-keeping system — informal. Most of their time is spent recalling the way Sun City used to be and bringing one another up to date on what has transpired since they parted ways.

"Back then we made our own fun. We didn't have anything out here. We started the dances. We organized a church. When we wanted to hear music we went to Gammage in Tempe. We had a recreation center, but the only thing it had was crafts," Diggs said.

"The Kings Inn was the only restaurant. We would get a carload together after church and go out for brunch in Scottsdale. It was all country between here and there," she said.

Although the community was small and sparse, the residents were so proud of it they volunteered to act as hosts for Del Webb to show potential residents around town, Diggs said.

"They did it for free because they were eager to show what Sun City had to offer. To me it is like a big playground," she said.

Diggs and many of the other Pioneers said their sales pitch might have been too inviting because Sun City has grown so large it has lost its small-town appeal.

"Sun City was a nice little place where you knew all the people. Not any more. But it's our own fault. We wrote enthusiastic letters to friends back home, and they moved out

here. I once heard Del Webb say he could build houses, but he couldn't create Sun City the way it is. The people did that," she said.

Walter Witt was a minister "getting on in years" in a California church when he first heard about Sun City. The idea of building a church in a new retirement community excited him, so he applied for the job along with 25 other ministers.

When he came here in September 1960, Sun City had 400 residents and little else. He began holding services in the Oakmont Community Center. The people who attended later formed the United Church of Sun City.

The name was appropriate, as the first congregation was composed of members from 61 different denominations.

Since that time, the church has grown to nearly 1,600 members who meet in a large building on North 107th Avenue. Despite the church's growth, it has not changed its philosophy.

"We still consider ourselves as the community church," Witt, who has since retired, said.

It is a good thing the church has accumulated more members, as the population is not the only thing in Sun City that has increased over the years.

"When I first came here, the congregation bought the most expensive type of home in Sun City for the parsonage. It cost \$15,600.

You couldn't buy anything for that now," Witt said.

Dorese and Rand Waites were charter members of the church and just about every other organization in Sun City.

They taught ballroom dancing and started the first dance and exercise clubs in the community. Rand Waites claims responsibility for holding Sun City's first meeting.

"Everyone was always saying, 'Why don't we do this and why don't we do that.' So we held a 'Why don't we' meeting," he said.

It led to the formation of the Home Owners Association.

The Waites moved to Sun City from Panama in 1960 in search of a dryer climate.

"We toured all over for six months looking for a place. We heard there was a new settlement starting on the outskirts of Phoenix. We decided we had lived out of the country 14 years and we should start a new life in a new town," Rand Waites said.

But they agree with Diggs that too many people might have had the same idea.

"There's too much traffic and we have a lot of smog we didn't have before," Dorese Waites said.

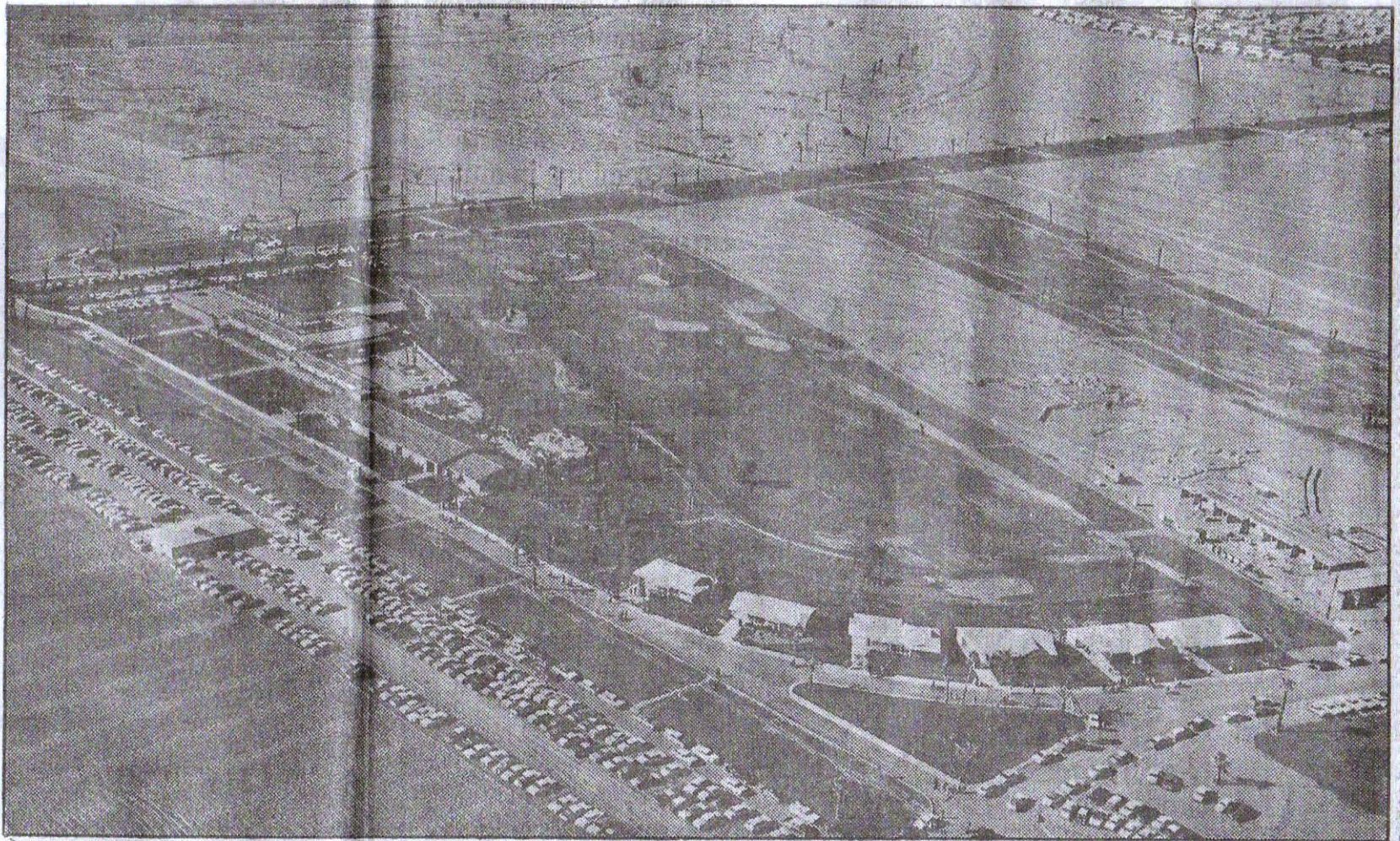
"We don't have the closeness we had before. Everybody back then was friendly," her husband said.

But most all the Pioneers also agree there is no other place they would rather call home.



507

# Hot, dusty desert awaited



The Associated Press

Twenty-six years ago, Sun City was only a dream, with six model homes surrounded by farm fields.



# First resident stays at home

By BRENT FINE  
Total Editor

There have been many changes in Sun City in the past quarter-century.

But for the retirement community's first resident, if Sun

*'I came here  
to have peace'*

City were like it was when she and her husband moved here in April 1960, it would be just fine.

In fact, since Emilie Fraser moved into a two-bedroom concrete block house on Augusta Drive, little has changed for her.

HER 1959 Studebaker station wagon still sits in its familiar spot in the carport; all the furniture is the same, except for a new television set; and she stays at home and reads as much as possible.

Almost 87, Emile says she never was one for socializing. Oh, she has several friends and is friendly with many of her neighbors, but for the most part, the native of Normandy,

France, prefers the quiet life.

Emilie has never used any of the recreation centers (only saw Lakeview once out of curiosity), she is against incorporation and would like, among other things, to see less fighting among Sun Citians.

"I have no way to go anywhere (she no longer drives). When I was able to go, I didn't go. I'm satisfied to sit here and read," Emilie said.

"WE SEEM now to have more trouble in the last five years trying to change everything around," she added. "Some of the people who came here before don't feel good about it. I came here to have peace ... We figure we came here to retire, peace was all we want."

Because of her arthritis, friends now help Emilie with chores—grocery-shopping, laundry, taking her to appointments—but she wants to remain in her home.

"I'm not ready to go to jail yet," Emilie quipped, referring to a nursing home. "I can do as I please. If I want to scrub the

\* 'I'm not, C13

# \* First resident relaxes in peace

—From C13

bathroom floor I will. If I want to do it tomorrow, I do it tomorrow."

Emilie says that the only businesses in Sun City when she and her late husband, William, moved from Phoenix to lot No. 8 on Augusta Drive were a Safeway supermarket and the Kings Inn on Grand Avenue.

ORIGINALLY, the Frasers put \$500 on two different lots because they weren't sure which home plan they wanted. Eventually, however, they decided on the Augusta house because it was finished earlier and only had one bathroom, compared with an Oakmont Drive house which had two. Ironically, Emilie's real name is Augustine.

Once moved in, residents used to think that the Fraser's house was the model home and always would be asking to take a peek.

"They thought this was the model house. I had to close it down and tell them this wasn't the model house," joked Emilie, who is a charter member of the Sun City Pioneers.

The first year the Frasers lived here, Emilie was appointed with four others to serve on the forerunner of the Home Owners Association.

THE MAIN problem to be ironed out: Whether mail should be delivered to the house or street. Some things never change.

A sad note to Emilie's time in Sun City is that her husband died two years after they moved here and he never had a chance to do what he came to the retirement community to do.

"My husband wanted to play golf, but he found out he couldn't play golf. Illness kept him from playing golf," Emilie said.

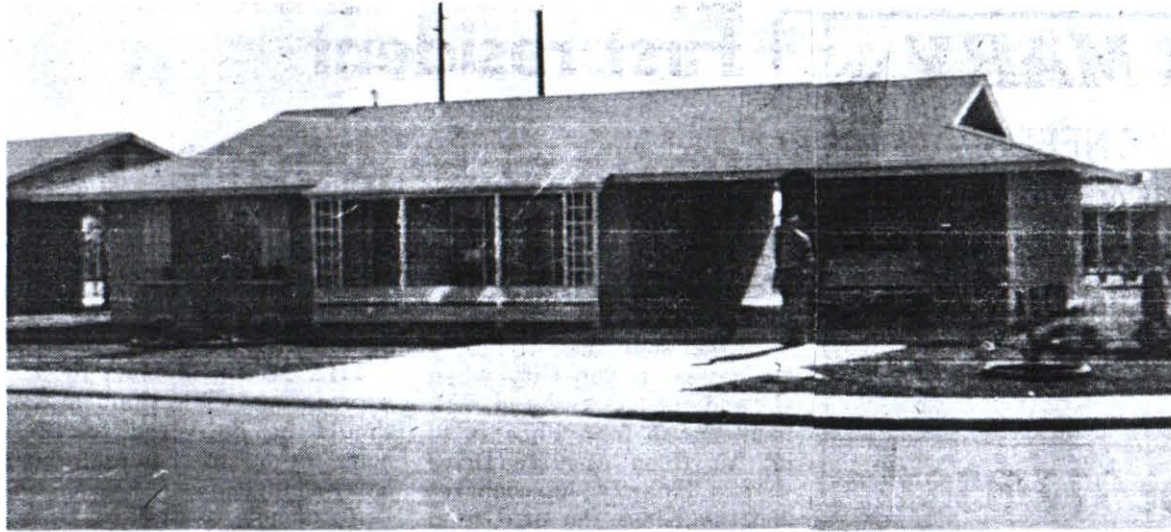
Despite the loss of her husband—then, as the years went by, most of her neighbors—Emilie made the best of her existence.

AND, SHE says, she has enjoyed her time in Sun City, made many friends and wouldn't trade it for anything.

"The Good Lord has been good to me, given me good friends everywhere I went," she said.

OPEP





Picture taken of the Fraser home shows Emilie's late husband, William, standing in the carport by the family Studebaker. The photo was taken in 1960.

—From C12

'I'm not ready to go to jail,' quips Emilie



Photo taken this year shows Mrs. Fraser, now in her 80s, standing in the same carport—with the same Studebaker at right. (News-Sun photo)

\* First, C14



Normandie-born Emilie Fraser, Sun City's first resident, recalls more peaceful days of Sun City's growth. (News-Sun photo)



# Longtime resident recalls Sun City living 30 years ago

By Carol Sowers  
The Arizona Republic

Mildred Toldrian is an uplifting, jubilant woman who talks about her 30 years in Sun City and Sun City West with the glee of a \$1 million lottery winner.

"I have had so much fun," said Toldrian, a spirited 82-year-old who was among the first residents of Sun City when it opened 30 years ago.

She remembers those first days, when developer Del Webb opened the nation's first "active adult" retirement community, and would-be residents lined up in front of a sales office to put \$100 down on a \$10,000 house.

Toldrian, who moved with her late husband, Clarence, to Sun City in June 1960, will be among other longtime residents to page through their memories when Sun City marks its 30th anniversary during a week of events beginning Jan. 14.

The anniversary will commemorate the dream of developer Webb, who envisioned a community where retirees didn't have to retire from life, Toldrian said.

"There is always so much to do," said Toldrian, who moved to Sun City West 11 years ago.

She said she and her husband settled in Maryvale in 1958 after he retired from the U.S. Postal Service in Wisconsin. They were drawn to Sun City by a story about the innovative community that appeared in *The Arizona Republic* on Jan. 2, 1960. Wooed by the swimming pool, nine-hole golf course and recreation center, the Toldrians moved in six months later.

"We came out here and just couldn't believe it," Toldrian said. "It was so elegant-looking. People were standing in line to get a salesman."

The Sun City of 1960 was a hamlet compared with today's community of 45,000 that includes a hospital, wide streets, shopping centers, clubhouses and an art museum.

"When we moved here there was one Laundromat, barber shop, beauty shop, Safeway, TG&Y (a variety store) and drugstore," Toldrian said. "There was no bank or savings and loan."

The grocery store was a natural gathering place, "and you never went to the store unless you had a lot of time to talk because you knew everyone in there," she said.

The community's first club was formed on July 4, 1960, by women who did needlepoint. Dozens of other groups followed.

Toldrian moved to Sun City West after her husband died because, she said, her home in Sun City was too crowded with memories.

"I picked up all my good memories and came out here, walked across the threshold and decided this was going to be a happy house," she said with the perky rhythm that punctuates her speech.

More memories will be revived in the next few months as the Sun City Anniversary Committee continues planning for the January celebration. The committee includes members of the Sun City Ambassadors, a civic group; the Sun Cities Area Historical Society; and representatives of the Del Webb Corp.

The tentative schedule of events includes a kickoff celebration at the Sun Bowl with a headline entertainer on Jan. 14, and a parade Jan. 20.

The week also may include competition among sporting associations, an arts-and-crafts fair and performances by community entertainment groups.

P. Myers  
THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC  
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 18, 1989



Jeff Hevir/The Arizona Republic

Mildred Toldrian remembers moving to Sun City 30 years ago.



# Sun City Pioneers meet to reminisce

By JACQUE PAPPAS  
Daily News-Sun staff

10-6-89

SUN CITY — Robie Chambers remembers Jan. 10, 1960, as if it were yesterday.

It was her 37th wedding anniversary. And it was the day she and her husband, George, bought one of the first homes in Sun City.

"We were just passing through Mesa and we heard about Sun City, so we decided to take a look," Chambers said. "That same day we were one of those couples standing in line with our check waiting to buy a home in Sun City from Del Webb."

Chambers said there were five model homes from which to choose and soon-to-be residents also got to pick where they wanted their home built.

Chambers and her husband, now deceased, selected a two-bedroom home near the North Golf Course off the 6th green.

"This area originally was a cotton field and the land was

just plowed up to fit in the houses. Sun City offered so many promises. It was just an entire different way of life," Chambers said.

Now, these Sun City originals meet twice a year to talk about old times and share the nostalgia of the community's roots.

The group, made up of residents who moved to Sun City more than 23 years ago, was established in 1973, said member Margaret Diggs.

Diggs, who moved to Sun City in October 1961, said the club was originally open to residents who moved to the retirement community in 1960 and 1961.

As membership decreased, the club opened to associate members who moved to Sun City from 1962 to 1965.

The group gets together twice a year for a luncheon and breakfast coffee.

"We have no dues or no formal business, but all the same, meeting is important to us,"



Daily News-Sun

**EARLY SETTLERS** — Evelyn Parry, left, and Margaret Diggs review the membership list of the Sun City Pioneers. The group is made up of residents who moved to Sun City more than 23 years ago.

Diggs said.

This month, the group will meet for the annual luncheon and members are encouraged to bring their Sun City friends,

Diggs said.

The luncheon is at noon, Saturday, Oct. 28 in the Lakeside Banquet Center. For more information call 933-2698.





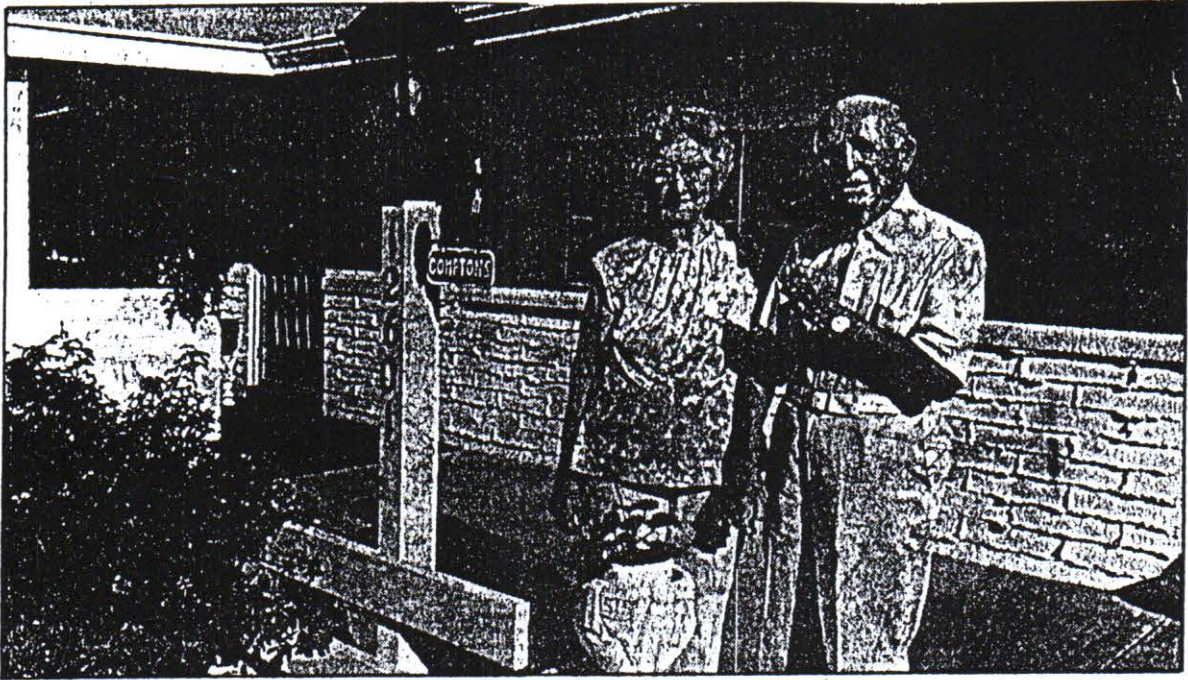
*Jerry Svendsen  
& Harold Burham*



*Phil Compton &  
Mary Garretson*



# SC Pioneers recall early years



News-Sun photo by Mollie J. Hoppes

**TRUE PIONEERS** — Ruth and Phil Compton were one of the first 75 couples to buy a home in Sun City and are members of the Sun City Pioneers. Compton stand in front of the house they have lived in for the past 28 years. The members of the Sun City Pioneers.

## By JACQUE PAPPAS

News-Sun staff

**SUN CITY** — Phil and Ruth Compton moved to Sun City in 1960 with hundreds of other pioneers who helped establish the retirement community.

They selected a model home and had it built on a vacant lot for \$9,300.

Today, the Comptons still live in the same white brick home trimmed in green that they bought 28 years ago.

"It was wonderful when Sun City was first new. All the people were full of pep and having so much fun," Ruth Compton said. "People kept coming and coming. We never expected it to be as big as it is now. We enjoyed it and still enjoy it."

Mr. Compton, who worked in a post office for 40 years in Hastings, Neb., shared his talents of the trade to help Sun City grow.

Shortly after moving to Sun City, he started working for Del Webb as one of the community's first postmasters.

After a post office was built nearly two years later, he went to Sun City, Calif., to help the community start a post office there.

"We are still content here. This is a great place to live," Compton said. "We are one of the pioneers and that makes us proud."

As two of hundreds of people who moved to Sun City in the early 1960s, the Comptons are eligible to be part of one of the more distinctive groups in the community — the Sun City Pioneers.

The group, which is made up of pioneers who moved to Sun City more than 23 years ago, was just established in 1973, said Margaret Diggs, club publicity chairwoman.

"Nobody thought to get the club started right away because

OVER



we were too busy having fun. But then we woke up to the fact that after all, we really were unique. We are the pioneers," Diggs said. "These people were part of my beginning here. We all knew that Sun City was a good investment and that it was going to succeed. The club is important to us."

Diggs, who moved to Sun City in October 1961, said the club was originally open to residents who moved to Sun City in 1960 and 1961.

As membership decreased, the club opened to associate members who moved to the retirement community from 1962 to 1965.

The group gets together twice a year for a luncheon and a breakfast coffee.

"We just get together and reminisce. We contributed to the

beginning of Sun City by starting craft clubs and other activities like square dancing and choirs," Diggs said. "Some people may take what we have here for granted, but it's the talents and interests of the pioneers who made Sun City much of what it is."

Walter Witt, president of the club, is an example of one of those talents.

After he moved to Sun City in September 1960, he helped a group of residents build the first church in Sun City.

"I think many pioneers have laid down tracks for us here in Sun City. Of course our membership can do nothing but decrease, but we always welcome all those eligible to come to our meetings," Witt said.

The annual luncheon will begin at noon Saturday in the

Lakeside Banquet Center and will celebrate the club's 15th anniversary. For reservations, call 933-2698.

Although many of the club's original members are now deceased or have moved out of town, some still remember those who were a big part of Sun City's growth.

Evelyn Perry, who moved to Sun City in 1960, recalls life with her late husband — who most people called the "key man."

"I just have the memories now. My husband was the inspection counselor for Del Webb and was affectionately known by many as the key man. After a home was built he met the new family and among other things, gave them their key," Perry said.



## LIFE ENRICHMENT -- REACH FOR IT!

### *Sun City's Pioneers*

by Jerry Svendsen



*Jerry Svendsen*

On Valentine's Day, Sun City's Pioneers met for coffee, donuts, socializing, and reminiscing. Though the donuts came in a close second, the reminiscing was voted the most pleasant reason for the 90-minute gathering at Oakmont Recreation center.

There were 50-plus people present. There easily could have been double that figure. "Like other residents, Sun City's Pioneers must pick and choose among activities," said the group's lively secretary, Evelyn Parry.

We visited with Evelyn, who is one of the Pioneer Club's spark plugs. Without a doubt, the entire Pioneer group, if they could, would publicly pay tribute to the few, who, twice annually bring members together for this coffee social and to a Lakes Club fall luncheon.

Club president is Walter W. Witt, retired senior pastor of the United Church of Sun City (and charter pastor, as well). "As always, the involvement of Pastor Witt and his wife, Gladys, means a great deal to all of us," said Evelyn. Other officers include Vice President Sarah Butts and Treasurer Mildred Jones. Comprising the active committee with the officers are Rose Butler, Margaret Diggs and John and Ina Dodt.

Realize that most Sun City Pioneers were in their late 50s or early 60s when they moved here. So with every year now the club's numbers are diminishing. "We are looking for greater participation by associate members," said Evelyn. Qualifying associates are those who moved to Sun City between January 1, 1962 and December 31, 1965.

Those wishing to discuss associate membership may call Evelyn at 933-2698.

With this year's luncheon scheduled on Halloween, there's talk of attending in costume. "That would be fun," said Evelyn. And why not? The Pioneers started all the fun 27 years ago.

We here salute Sun City's Pioneers, who -- with the Del Webb firm in 1960 -- introduced America to an active new way of life. These early residents, by their example, have certainly helped reshape attitudes about retirement. It's now a phase of life more people look forward to entering earlier.

3-4-87

Send correspondence to Jerry Svendsen, Sun Cities  
Life Magazine, 9192 W. Cactus, Suite C, Peoria, AZ  
85345.



# Homeowners tell why they moved to Sun City

By P. ATWOOD WILLIAMS  
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — The reasons they bought homes here and why they sold those first homes are varied, say several of the Sun City Pioneers.

The group discussed the reasons at the Pioneers' monthly meeting Saturday in the Lakeside Banquet Center.

Ralph and Corinne White, former residents of Peoria, Ill., and Cincinnati, Ohio, explained that their daughter had come to

Arizona on business and insisted her folks come to visit.

When the Whites finally did visit in 1960, it took them only an hour to buy their Sun City home. They liked the climate and felt the home was worth the money.

From that home on Cherry Hill they moved to Balboa because it had an Arizona Room. Today they live in an apartment at Sun Valley Lodge, which they helped to organize years ago.

Like several other early resi-

dents, they left Sun City after the first 17 years, moved to Ohio to be closer to family but returned in 1984 to live at the Lodge. Their daughter and her husband, Janice and Gene Edlen, now live in Sun City West.

Mildred M. Jones moved to Sun City in 1961 from Phoenix (she was from Kansas). She and her husband, Paul, came out on a Sunday and he loved the home in which she has lived 25 years.

Her sister, Pearl Leidy, moved to Phoenix in 1965 from Topeka, Kansas. She couldn't live in Sun City because she had a 10-year-old son to raise. About 10 years ago she moved here to live with her sister, Mildred.

Tina Grimshaw, from Deerfield, Ill., was visiting friends in Tucson. After her husband had returned to Illinois, she visited Sun City with friends enroute to Las Vegas. When she got her husband to come back to Arizona, she first showed him El Mirage, insisting that was where she wanted to live. She has been in the same Sun City home all these years.

Another person who has lived in her original 26-year-old Sun City home is Ruth Darrah. She was born in Indiana, but moved to Sun City in 1960 from Oregon. It was her husband's emphysema

that brought them to sunny Arizona.

Johnie Lou Hallonquist, from Oregon, bought one of the first homes in Sun City but moved once to be nearer to friends.

Ske and Fred Turner from California and Missouri, also live in their original home. They discovered Sun City while on a fishing trip to Mexico.

"We bought our house and then went home and retired," said Turner.

Alex Smith moved into his Sun City home in 1961. He lived in Florida and was planning to visit Sun City, Calif., when a friend sent him Del E. Webb Corp. literature on the retirement community.

The Smiths lived first on Cherry Hills, then on the South fairway at 109th Avenue and now live near Palmbrook Country Club.

Randy and Dorese Waites moved to Sun City from the Canal Zone in 1960 and were instrumental in starting many activities such as ballroom dancing. They are still in the same home.

"The traffic is terrific and we can't see the mountains because of the smog," said Waites.

"The town is too big. We don't



Pearl Leidy, left, moved to Sun City 10 years ago to live with her sister Mildred M. Jones, a Sun City pioneer since 1961. The women were among Sun City Pioneers who met to chat and eat lunch Saturday in Lakeside Banquet Center. (News-Sun photos)

know anybody. I liked it when we went to Saturday night dances at Oakmont and everybody was there," said Smith.

Waites, however, is pleased with the improvement in health facilities and all the restaurants with buffet lines, similar to what was once called smorgasbord.

Turner likes the golf courses,

the climate and the people, all of which he says are "high caliber." He feels the changes are good.

"Look at all the churches and activities, the Sun City Prides and Posse."

"But there are some poor drivers. That happens to us as we get older," he said.



Two Pioneers among those at the Lakeside Banquet Center Saturday included Tina Grimshaw, left, from Deerfield, Ill., and Johnie Lou Hallonquist from Arkansas and Oregon.



# Sun City pioneers: They took gamble on new community

By JAN MITTELSTADT  
Daily News-Sun editor

SUN CITY — A very special group of people will meet for lunch and memories later this month.

The group is the local pioneers — those who moved to Sun City in 1960 and 1961. The lunch will be Oct. 25 at the Lakes Club.

"Now that our community has celebrated its 26th anniversary and is around 45,000 population, those who were the first to come to this 'oasis' are largely forgotten," Margaret Diggs of Sun



## SIDESTEPS

City said in a letter to me about the reunion.

"It was a daring group who responded to Del Webb's dream in 1960 and 1961. Retirement communities were unknown, and to leave family and friends all over the U.S. and come to little known Arizona in those days appealed to only a venturesome spirit.

"They came, they wrote glowingly of what they were helping to create here, and Sun City grew to be a model for all the retirement developments that sprang up everywhere.

"Now those pioneers meet

twice a year to share fellowship and to reminisce. Their number diminishes every year. ... Throughout Sun City, dance groups meet, clubs continue to carry on, and few stop to wonder how such activities came into being," Margaret wrote.

These people were certainly pioneers, in my opinion. If we think about founders of any community, these early Sun Citians qualify completely.

I think it's just wonderful that organizers plan for these get-togethers and I applaud their efforts. There aren't many communities that can have founders day celebrations and actually have the founders celebrating.

—o—

The Community Fund annual

drives have started in Sun City, Sun City West and Youngtown.

The money raised from your contributions helps to fund many essential health and welfare services for your friends and neighbors.

This is truly a case of people helping people and deserves all of our support.

I think it's remarkable that so little of the charitable contributions go for administrative costs.

For the Sun City Community Fund, for example, only 3 percent of the money contributed is used for operating expenses. That means that 97 cents of every dollar is used for good works.

I used to be involved with United Way back in Minnesota.

We used to proudly proclaim that 89 cents of every dollar was used for good works.

An 11 percent operating expense fund is pretty good, compared to many organizational rates. For some groups, if 20 percent is given to the actual charity it's a lot.

A donation to the Community Fund of your community is a good investment.

—o—

I spent part of an afternoon a couple of weeks ago learning about Sun City Area Interfaith Services and its now forming auxiliary.

Individuals will be able to join the support group, which is as yet unnamed. The name of the

organization will be determined by the group.

According to the organizers the auxiliary's purpose will be to cooperate with and further the aims of Sun City Area Interfaith Services Inc. in maintaining its program and extending its services to the community.

Dues for the year are only \$5. Membership is open to all men and women who are interested in supporting, promoting or giving service. Those who wish to join may send name, address, telephone number and check to Box 1795, Sun City 85372.

—o—

Our community is really blessed with lovely people, isn't it?



# Pioneer recalls local group's beginnings

By LAURIE HURD

Statues are often erected of famous leaders who directed their men to victory. Their courage and determination earned them a permanent place in history books and on cement pedestals in parks.

One leader who has yet to be immortalized in bronze, but has waged a battle of her own, is Sun Citian Ruth Fitzpatrick.

In 1963, Fitzpatrick founded the Sun City branch of The

American Cancer Society.

To get the crusade and educational programs underway, she enlisted the aid of several churches and individuals like Dorothy Ball, Lt. Gen. Frank Fraser, Evalyn McRae and Clyde P. Wells.

She was a member of the Women's Field Army of Arizona Division, American Cancer Society Inc. After the group incorporated in 1945, she served as a delegate to the National body

in New York and was appointed to the National Education Committee in 1947. By 1953, Fitzpatrick was elected an honorary lifetime member of the Board of Trustees, Arizona Division of the American Cancer Society. After this, she organized the Sun City Branch.

"I did public relations for the Cancer Society and I was a doctor's wife, so that is how I got involved in the first place. I've

done a little bit of everything," she says.

Besides being a part of a society that provides emotional support for cancer patients and their families, Fitzpatrick and McRae organized the Reach for Recovery program in Sun City.

"Reach for Recovery was a rehabilitation service for women who had undergone breast surgery. We gathered materials from different people to make prostheses for these individuals. We made thousands for the county," she says.

Sun City Pioneers like Mrs.

Nathan Hale, Mrs. Russell Warren, Elsie C. Meinhardt and Mrs. Wirt Acker donated their time to the project.

Through all the volunteers, projects, speeches, and fund raisers, Fitzpatrick has spent 36 years doing what she loves best, serving others.

Fitzpatrick served nine years as Branch Chairman and on May 20, 1972, she retired from all active participation in the society's activities. But she still finds time to assist in the society's cause when she is able.

One of her most prized

souvenirs of her time spent with the society is a wooden gavel presented to her and all those who assisted her since the branch's formation. State and national awards and citations adorn Fitzpatrick's home.

"I was a success because I gave credit to everyone for what they did," she says.

Relieving the suffering of cancer patients, educating the public and garnering support for the group's programs is all part of the job for a Cancer Society volunteer and a way of life for people like Fitzpatrick.



TOM GLYNN, 1975 chairman of the American Cancer Society's Sun City educational and fund-raising crusade, address local society volunteers. Founder Ruth B. Fitzpatrick is seated just to the right of the podium. Hoping to help take cancer out of the medical books, Fitzpatrick and other Sun City volunteers were continuously working to raise money for the American Cancer Society.



# SC MEDICAL PIONEERS

## First practitioner downplays many accomplishments

By CHERYL SWEET  
Medical Writer

Dr. Robert Mac Stump doesn't like to brag.

If you want to discover the achievements of Sun City's first physician, ask his wife, Lucille.

It isn't until she begins rattling off her husband's accomplishments that the 82-year-old family practitioner modestly interjects comments.

**FOR INSTANCE**, he relates in a gruff voice, "I delivered the second baby in Glendale Hospital in 1960."

And, "I've helped start partially every hospital in Phoenix. The only one I didn't was St. Luke's."

Still, Stump insists on downplaying his 55-year medical career, the last quarter of a century which was spent in Sun City.

"**I JUST WAS** an old family doctor," he says matter-of-factly, in his characteristically scratchy voice.

Stump would have you believe good doctoring is no big deal, requiring no great skill.

"I didn't worry about proudness or high times. I brought 'em (patients) in the world and signed them out."

**THE DOCTOR** moved to Arizona in 1908 and practiced in Winslow and Phoenix before setting up practice here nearly 25 years ago when Sun City was born.

For almost a year—before other doctors moved into the community—many of Sun City's 500 residents depended on Stump for all their medical needs.

In those days, relates the white-haired Stump, there were no hospital emergency rooms or handy outpatient centers.

**GRAY-BLUE EYES** staring behind tinted, wire-rimmed glasses show signs of fatigue as Stump recalls early morning house calls.

"If a kid fell down and broke his leg, I fixed it. Or I'd get up in the middle of the night to stop a nose bleed. I made house calls when I was in Winslow 100 miles on a

dirt road. There were no emergency rooms in those days."

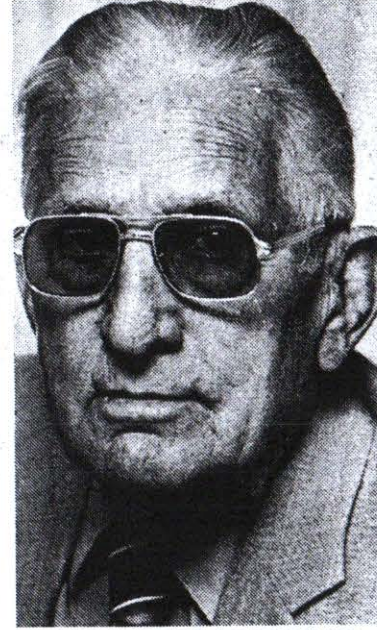
Stump charged \$7 for house calls in those early days of practice—a bit more than the \$2 he charged during the earlier Depression era and markedly less than the \$55 fee assessed by most doctors today.

**THE DOCTOR** holds the oldest medical license in the state, which he refuses to let expire. Although Stump officially retired last year, he maintains a current license by attending continuing medical education classes.

"After 55 years, the doctor would begin to feel a little undressed without a license in his pocket," explains his wife, Lucille.

Reflecting on changing medical practices, Stump sadly shakes his head while speaking about the deteriorating patient-doctor and doctor-nurse relationships.

\* First, C8



ROBERT MAC STUMP

—From C7

"**YEARS AGO**, you had a following and it stayed with you," he remarks. "today, there's not the rapport you developed with patients. Doctors nowadays don't treat the patient, they treat the sickness."

The working relationship between physicians and nurses isn't what it used to be either, he contends.

In Stump's day, nurses were an invaluable help in treating patients. They could be depended upon to provide detailed accounts of the patient's condition.

"I think the doctor and nurse should be a team. When I came in a nurses station, they stood up and gave me the charts. When I wanted to see a patient, the nurse came with me. Doctors don't depend on nurses at all now."

As Stump sees it, multiple factors contributed to physicians' decreased dependence on nurses' expertise.

"There are too many doctors and they're in too big of a hurry," he complains. "They all make rounds at the same time and there aren't enough nurses."

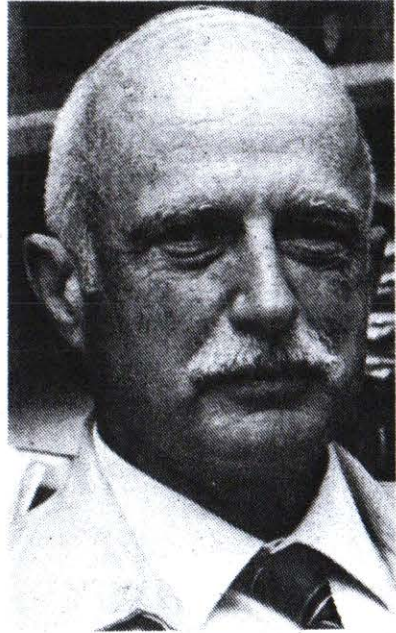
Stump's career left little leisure time. Sitting in an easy chair in his Sun City home, with feet propped comfortably on the living room coffee table, it's apparent he's now catching up on some rest and relaxation.

According to his wife, that isn't all Stump is catching up on.

"He's got a new hobby—his wife," grins Lucille.

"I think all doctors feel this way—that they now have a chance to catch up on their home lives."





WILLIAM MINTURN

## Specialist's gamble on geriatric-only patients pays off

Sun City's first specialist doctor and longest practicing physician didn't realize his lifelong medical practice would be limited to a geriatric population.

Don't ask Dr. William Minturn to compare treating youngsters with oldsters because this is where the general surgeon has thus far spent his 25-year medical career.

"Sun City is the only place I've ever practiced," proudly reports the 58-year-old still-active doctor.

"I FEEL that Sun City has been a unique experience I wouldn't have gotten anywhere else," he adds.

When Minturn and his wife moved to Sun City in 1960, there were 2,200 residents. He admits he was taking a gamble since he nor anyone else in those early days could predict the area would balloon to Sun City and Sun City West's present population of about 60,000.

"When I came to Sun City, they (Del Webb) couldn't get anyone to come here. It takes a little pioneer spirit to come to a community that's new."

MINTURN developed the Sun City Medical Clinic, the community's first and still existing group practice of specialists—which consisted of a radiol-

ogist, dermatologist, internist, urologist and podiatrist.

Because of uncertainty over Sun City's future and the absence of a local hospital, Minturn says he had difficulty convincing other specialists to join his practice.

The doctor suddenly becomes nostalgic as he remembers his pioneer days.

"IN THE early days, you knew all the doctors out there. Now they have so many there's quite a few you don't know," he recalls.

Minturn made house calls for the first 10 years of his practice and still treats some of his first

patients. One of those patients is 100 years old.

Today, he blames a breakdown in patient-doctor relationships to the multitude of specialists visited by a patient during a lifetime.

ONE DISADVANTAGE to this, he points out, is the physician doesn't have the opportunity to become familiar with patients.

"After you've been taking care of someone for 25 years, you know all about them," he says.

Minturn said patient expectations of doctors can also add to problems.

"SOME OF the expectations

of what a doctor can do are too great, so the patients get dissatisfied and go to someone else.

"I think there's a need to go back to the general approach to patients."

Besides trust and complete confidence placed in the family doctors years ago, many patients viewed the physician as a friend to shoot the breeze with, said Minturn.

"IN THE community, patients wanted to establish a personal relationship with their doctor. They'd want to come in and just talk. I did that for awhile, but then I didn't have time."

—CHERYL SWEET



# SC pioneers honored

By P. ATWOOD WILLIAMS  
Staff Writer

There were two kinds of "bold pioneers."

First, there were the ones who dared to plan a retirement community for grandparents without their families, in which they would live an active life full of structured recreation and sports.

Then, there were the pioneers who chose to live this new type of life and bought homes built in the former cotton community of Marinette.

**TUESDAY**, both sets of pioneers held a reunion and sang songs and chatted during the jubilee celebration of the Sun City Silver Anniversary at Sundial Center.

Glenn Sanberg and Jane Freeman, who also spearheaded the 280-page history book, "Jubilee," coordinated the event, which included an earlier luncheon for the first set of bold pioneers at the Lakes Club. It was hosted by Daily News-Sun publisher Ed Somers.

Thirty-one guests—the pioneer Del E. Webb Development Co. (Devco) men and those responsible for running the recreation centers, collecting the history and communicating the life being lived here—chatted and shared feelings on life in Sun City today.

**TOM BREEN**, who researched and developed the concept that makes Sun City (and her sister, Sun City West) unique, drove in for the luncheon and 2 p.m. event, only to be called back to California before the Sundial program.

"There is a sense of community ... a sense of pride here, which I have found in only one other area which I helped to build," he commented in an interview.

"If the quality of life inside is good, it shows up outside in the way the streets, medians, lawns and homes are kept ... the one reflects the other," he added.

**DISCUSSING** the active way of life, he said that his company had to uphold the promises because you couldn't encourage people to stay active without providing the facilities

that had been promised.

"John (Meeker), Owen (Childress) and I, we only did the planning, the brick and mortar work. The great sense of community was done by the people," he added.

The big band music of Benny Bentfield and his Rhythm Ramblers put about a thousand people in the mood for a 2 p.m. party at Sundial Auditorium. Many were pioneer residents of Sun City.

**THE AUDIENCE** gave the Devco "pioneers" seated on the stage a standing ovation. Among them were Wes Matthews, Graham Smith, Jerry Svendsen, John Meeker, Wally Britton, Owen Childress and Jim Handley. Also on stage were Devco President Paul Tatz, Devco board Chairman Fred Kuentz and Senior Vice President Don Tufts.

Later most of those on the stage spoke briefly, teasing each other and joking good-naturedly with the audience, to whom they also gave a standing ovation.

What made the program unique was the small-town fellowship evident when John Bell sang several of the special songs written through the years about Sun City. He was accompanied on the piano by his wife, Roma Dean. The audience and platform guests sang

\* Builders, A2

*O, sing me a song of the bold pioneers*

*Who had dared to leave old haunts behind*

*To challenge a plan well designed for their years*

*And new opportunities find!*

Lillian Steele Munson

—From A1

along using song sheets.

**THE PIONEERS** in the audience were introduced, including Amanda Monreal Durand, who had lived here and worked for the Boswell Cotton Co. before the land was sold to Webb.

When it was over, the audience chatted with platform guests, bought copies of "Jubilee" and had them autographed, selected anniversary logo T-shirts and strolled among the antique cars on exhibit in the courtyard.

**THE WORDS** of Dutch Schultz, sung earlier on the platform by the Sun City composer, were being acted out by both sets of pioneers:

*A city of beauty was built in the desert*

*By a great man with vision and dreams.*

*He gave it the charm, so gentle and warm*

*With nature as part of the scheme*

*With the touch of a master he added a feeling*

*Of love and things that are fine And right from the start, he gave it a heart*

*To withstand the passing of time.*





Sun City pioneers stand for applause.

(News-Sun photo by Jim Painter)



Mr. and Mrs. Sun City—Etta and Mel Phelps.

(News-Sun photo by P. Atwood Williams)



# SC pioneers honored

1985

*O, sing me a song of the bold pioneers*

*Who had dared to leave old haunts behind*

*To challenge a plan well designed for their years*

*And new opportunities find!*

Lillian Steele Munson

By P. ATWOOD WILLIAMS  
Staff Writer

There were two kinds of "bold pioneers."

First, there were the ones who dared to plan a retirement community for grandparents without their families, in which they would live an active life full of structured recreation and sports.

Then, there were the pioneers who chose to live this new type of life and bought homes built in the former cotton community of Marinette.

TUESDAY, both sets of pioneers held a reunion and sang songs and chatted during the jubilee celebration of the Sun City Silver Anniversary at Sundial Center.

Glenn Sanberg and Jane Freeman, who also spearheaded the 280-page history book, "Jubilee," coordinated the event, which included an earlier luncheon for the first set of bold pioneers at the Lakes Club. It was hosted by Daily News-Sun publisher Ed Somers.

Thirty-one guests—the pioneer Del E. Webb Development Co. (Devco) men and those responsible for running the recreation centers, collecting the history and communicating the life being lived here—chatted and shared feelings on life in Sun City today.

TOM BREEN, who researched and developed the concept that makes Sun City (and her sister, Sun City West) unique, drove in for the luncheon and 2 p.m. event, only to be called back to California before the Sundial program.

"There is a sense of community ... a sense of pride here, which I have found in only one other area which I helped to build," he commented in an interview.

"If the quality of life inside is good, it shows up outside in the way the streets, medians, lawns and homes are kept ... the one reflects the other," he added.

DISCUSSING the active way of life, he said that his company had to uphold the promises because you couldn't encourage people to stay active without providing the facilities



Sun City pioneers stand for applause.

(News-Sun photo by Jim Painter)

that had been promised.

"John (Meeker), Owen (Childress) and I, we only did the planning, the brick and mortar work. The great sense of community was done by the people," he added.

The big band music of Benny Bentfield and his Rhythm Ramblers put about a thousand people in the mood for a 2 p.m. party at Sundial Auditorium. Many were pioneer residents of Sun City.

THE AUDIENCE gave the Devco "pioneers" seated on the stage a standing ovation. Among them were Wes Matthews, Graham Smith, Jerry Svendsen, John Meeker, Wally Britton, Owen Childress and Jim Handley. Also on stage were Devco President Paul Tatz, Devco board Chairman Fred Kuentz and Senior Vice President Don Tuffs.

Later most of those on the stage spoke briefly, teasing each other and joking good-naturedly with the audience, to whom they also gave a standing ovation.

What made the program unique was the small-town fellowship evident when John Bell sang several of the special songs written through the years about Sun City. He was accompanied on the piano by his wife, Roma Dean. The audience and platform guests sang

\* Builders, A2



Mr. and Mrs. Sun City—Etta and Mel Phelps.

(News-Sun photo by P. Atwood Williams)



## **\*Builders, pioneers honored**

—From A1

along using song sheets.

**THE PIONEERS** in the audience were introduced, including Amanda Monreal Durand, who had lived here and worked for the Boswell Cotton Co. before the land was sold to Webb.

When it was over, the audience chatted with platform guests, bought copies of "Jubilee" and had them autographed, selected anniversary logo T-shirts and strolled among the antique cars on exhibit in the courtyard.

**THE WORDS** of Dutch Schultz, sung earlier on the platform by the Sun City composer, were being acted out by both sets of pioneers:

*A city of beauty was built in  
the desert*

*By a great man with vision and  
dreams.*

*He gave it the charm, so gentle  
and warm*

*With nature as part of the  
scheme*

*With the touch of a master he  
added a feeling*

*Of love and things that are fine  
And right from the start, he*

*gave it a heart  
To withstand the passing of  
time.*



By THELMA HEATWOLE  
Special for The Republic

**SUN CITY** — The planned 25th anniversary celebration of Sun City in January will have more than a special meaning for at least one couple here.

That's because Mel and Etta Phelps, who have garnered the title of "Mr and Mrs. Sun City," were among the first 50 couples to relocate to the northwest Valley retirement community when it opened in 1960.

Mel and Etta were active in the budding community, and in December 1964, they were given the title of "Mr. and Mrs. Sun City" by a group of "first residents" of the retirement community.

"In the early days, we all belonged to everything because it took all of us to make a club," Etta said.

Today, Mel, 94, and Etta, 81, still are Sun City boosters, although, understandably, they are less active.

Etta talked about those earlier times. She said 20 couples moved into Sun City at about the same time, and on May 31, 1960, when they moved in, the population stood at about 40. Today, there are approximately 46,000 residents.

"I put the pin on our lot on a sales chart in October 1959," Etta said. "I had read an article in *The Arizona Republic*, when we were renting in Phoenix, about Sun City starting across the street from Youngtown."

The model homes were not even complete then, she said.

Etta had previous knowledge of Del E. Webb, the founder of Sun City. She worked on a war project during World War II in Oregon when he was the prime contractor. Later, she was attracted to Sun City because Webb was the developer.

"I felt confident that he could do what he said he was going to do," she said. "I had faith in his work."

After the couple moved here, Etta said, she became the first secretary and receptionist of the first bank in Sun City, which then was called First National Bank. She retired in 1967.

Mel, who had retired as owner-manager of a Seattle restaurant, became interested in forming a bowling team here. So, one day in 1961, he posted a sign at the Safeway store, listing his phone number and asking that people interested in bowling contact him.

Forty players signed up, and Mel also obtained eight sponsors for a bowling league. Mel won the first alley bowling trophy during the 1961-62 league competition. He also won several lawn-bowling trophies.

The couple appeared on the Jack Douglas *See America* television show in 1964 when television crews came to Sun City.

The film was shown throughout the United States and in Europe, Australia and New Zealand. In fact, they received a letter from New

Zealand addressed simply to "The Phelps, Sun City."

In 1965, when residents celebrated the fifth anniversary of Sun City, the Phelps headed the parade. The oxen-drawn covered wagon was bannered "Mel and Etta Phelps, Sun City Pioneers."

When the community observed its 15th anniversary in 1975, Etta still was a booster.

"You have everything here you want in a controlled area," she said then. "If you

can't be happy here, I don't know where you would be."

Today, the couple travel in their 1962 Pontiac, which they purchased for a trip to Seattle.

Mel drives about Sun City to the market, doctor, dentist and restaurants.

For three years, Etta, because of a disability, has used a walker and wheelchair to get about. She belongs to the Sun City Handicapables.

"We have outlived a lot of our friends. Many have died,

some are in rest homes, some disabled," she said. "We don't expect it to be like it used to be."

The Phelps sold their original home on West Augusta and moved into their current condominium.

"There is no place like Sun City," she said. "Where else could I live and have all the amenities, especially for senior citizens, that I have?"

Mel, agreeing with her appraisal, said, "Definitely so."

## 'Mr. and Mrs. Sun City':

### Couple are pioneers





Morris Berman

### ***'Mr. and Mrs. Sun City'***

Mel Phelps, 94, and his wife, Etta, 81, were among the first to settle in Sun City when it

opened in 1960. They will help celebrate Sun City's 25th anniversary. Story, Extra E.



NEWS SUN - TUESDAY - NOV. 1 - 1983 -



Les Parry, left, and Louise Byrne, Sun City history committee member, share memories. Parry handed over keys to more than "16,000 homes in 15 years with Del Webb," he said. (Photo by Loraine Towne)

## Pioneers celebrate SC memories

"Grow old with me, the best is yet to be ..." could have been the theme song again of the meeting of the Sun City Pioneers annual Lakes Club luncheon.

There was plenty to sing about, talk about and reminisce about around the tables seating 132 Sun Cityans whose pioneering goes back to 1960 and '61, the first two years of Sun City's life.

Rev. Walter Witt, president, started the memories by reading a letter to the group from Lue Leisy, a former resident and long-time columnist for the News-Sun. Gail Lancaster played the piano for Denny Sach's rendition of some nostalgic toe-tappers. Burt Freireich,

publisher of the News-Sun, peeked into the pages of his paper which he took over in July 1960.

"THERE were only 300 people in Sun City then," Freireich said. "The first house was occupied on April 10 when Les Parry handed over the keys ..."

Looking over headlines of that year, Freireich said that Sun City planned an expansion to 10,000 residents, lower rates for electricity were expected, the first Lions Club was formed.

An August rainstorm with winds of 70 miles an hour scattered patio furniture a quarter-mile over the golf course. The first physician, Doctor Stump, set up practice in Sun

City, and the Randy Waites formed the first Sun City dance club.

THE FIRST mail delivery to homes started in October of that year and the first AARP chapter in the United States was chartered.

Freireich said the News-Sun scooped the sports world that fall with the announcement of the formation of two divisions in each of baseball's major leagues as the result of a long-distance telephone call to Del Webb in New York.

Sun City established a record in November 1960 with a 93 percent voter turnout. "There were 1,580 registered and 1,450 voted," Freireich said.

Members of the Sun City History Project interviewed pioneers and got them to identify pictures for the history being prepared for the 25th anniversary of Sun City to be celebrated in 1985.

The next meeting of the group will be a coffee and doughnut hour Feb. 18 at Oakmont Center, Witt announced.

Officers for the coming year were elected Saturday with a unanimous vote of confidence going to the officers who were returned to office: Witt, president; Lester Parry, vice president; Mary Garritsen, secretary; and Evelyn Parry, treasurer.



# Many remember the early days in Sun City

By Glenn B. Sanberg  
Special for The Republic

SUN CITY — Jerry Svendson, former director of public relations for the Del Webb Development Co., said Sun City was a neat place when it had 4,000 residents.

Les Parry, Webb's official "key man" — the company executive who delivered keys to new homeowners at the final inspection — said the Webb company intended to build 1,680 homes in 1960, the company's first year here. Parry said he delivered 1,050 keys that year.

With 157 original homeowners, Parry and Svendson attended a recent luncheon meeting of the Sun City Pioneer Club.

I had been invited to the luncheon to compile background information for a history of this retirement community that a group of us is planning to write.

Many of those attending recalled Sun City in its early days and how they wound up moving here.

Ruth Olinger said she got the urge to visit Sun City after reading an article in the *Saturday Evening Post*.

"We came out here for a look from our home in Iowa with no real intention to buy a home," Olinger said. "We arrived at 8 a.m., and by 10 a.m. we had bought and paid for a house."

## Retired in style

Rose Butler said she organized the first bicycle club here. She said she was elected to Peoria Unified School District board — a district that included Sun City at the time.

"You could write a whole book about that period," Butler said.

Parry said he delivered more than 15,000 keys during those early years.

"Bill Compton was the first postmaster," he said. "Mr. Cook was the first mailman working out of Youngtown. When he started, he had only nine stops on his route in Sun City."

Charlotte Ehrns said she had the distinction of owning the 100th home inspected in July 1960.

"We got our pictures in the Sun City (Youngtown) paper," Ehrns said.

John Zilien and his wife, Ruth, beamed when they told about the first producing grapefruit tree in their yard.

"We peeled that first grapefruit, and sold segments at a dollar apiece," Zilien said.

In the neighborly spirit, he said he built a table straddling the fence, so other families could use it.

"We also had a gate in the fence with a container for the tolls," he said.

When asked how much money he collected, Zilien shook his head and said, "Not a penny."

Historians writing about Sun City have compiled a list of 350 members of the Pioneer Club, which provides the basis for their interviews for the project.

One has to listen to these people to realize that the foundations of this retirement community are solid and enduring.

Lasting friendships fostered by a common bond of a new life, a community spirit kindled by the will to make the experiment work and the rapid growth that assured continuance, all are marks of progress that these pioneers of a new way of life established.

The eagerness with which they shared their early experiences and the enthusiasm with which they recalled them, portend great things in the year ahead as volunteer historians attempt to catch the spirit of the early days.

The task is a genuine challenge, one that calls for the best talent the community can offer.





Emilie Frazer, the first to own a home in Sun City, stands outside the 12201 Augusta Blvd. residence with Lester Parry, who delivered keys to her.

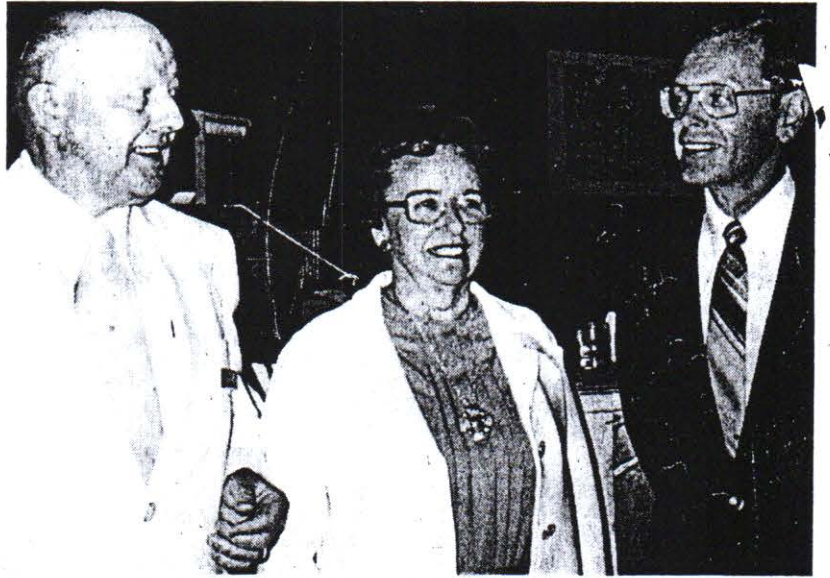
Roy Cosway/Republic



# Sun City Pioneers rally



Emilie Fraser was the first pioneer to receive the key to her home from Les Parry, "Keeper of the Keys."  
(News-Sun Photos by Loraine Towne)



Pioneer president Walter Witt, left, and wife Gladys chat with Jerry Svendsen during the Sun City Pioneers luncheon Saturday in the Lakes Club.

By LORAIN TOWNE  
Staff Writer

Sun City Pioneers welcomed their favorite son, Jerry Svendsen, with open arms and hearts to their annual luncheon Saturday in the Lakes Club.

"I am a Sun City Pioneer myself," said Jerry, who began his career with Del E. Webb Development Co. in 1960.

"JERRY USED to come to the Sun City Players meetings when we first organized," added Gertrude Pryor. "We were lucky if we had twenty people then. Now we have a membership of hundreds. I used to give Jerry some of my home-baked cookies. We all knew and loved him. I remember when his son was born. They put up a notice on that big sign at the Sun Bowl. It read, 'It's a boy!'"

Chairman Walter Witt and Wife, Gladys, chatted with Jerry.

Margaret Diggs said of the Witts, "Walter was the first minister to come here and organize our first church. It was the United Church of Sun City. His wife, Gladys, baked hundreds and hundreds of dozens of cookies to bring everybody together to get the church started.

"He has done a great deal for Sun City. He started the Sun Valley Lodge, helped establish the Dysart Community Center and has been interim minister in Sun City West."

GARNET Burnham greeted Jerry as a former fellow employee. "I have been with DEVCO ever since 1960. I became host-

ess-coordinator in 1968. We took people on the bus tours of Sun City. We welcomed them all and many of them bought. I worked with Jerry all of that time. He called me his Sun City mama."

Les Parry and his wife, Evelyn, talked with friends. Evelyn is the club's treasurer. Les said, "I worked for DEVCO for 15 years giving out keys to these people. It is the people here who really made Sun City." He gestured around him. "Sales dwindled in the second year, but these people wrote to their friends and relatives and said, 'This is the place to be.' That was the start of Sun City. Homes that then cost \$8,500 now sell for more than \$35,000."

Les later took a microphone from table to table and talked to some of the Pioneers. Helen Stevens said, "I had the first beauty shop in Sun City."

"Buzz" Ellis, Sun City's first barber, asked, "Who can remember when 107th Ave. was a one-way street to the golf course?"

Les stopped at the table of Emilie Fraser and said, "At 10 a.m., April 8, '60, I gave this lady the first key to Sun City."

RUTH PAINTER, Jo Gerig and Florence Thompson were interested in the memorabilia on one of three such tables. Ruth said, "I was in the first square dance group in Sun City." She and Jo recalled a particular fun time the square dance club used to have. "It was called

'Idiots.' We would go to the caller's home at 12:30 midnight; get him out of bed and square dance on his patio. At 2:30 a.m. we had coffee and doughnuts."

Jo added, "I organized the women's chorus and the first hand bell ringers. I even took them to the fair to perform."

Phil Compton and Mary Garretson recalled Sun City's first post office. Mary is secretary of the Sun City Pioneers. "I was the first clerk in the post office. It was a contract station. We didn't have any boxes, so it was general delivery and everybody had to come and pick up their mail. The electricity supply was such that we couldn't have air conditioning or lights at the same time. It was very difficult to sort mail in the dark or the heat."

PHIL ADDED, "I recall the first postman we had. He had nine stops. His name was Bill Cook. He is now postmaster at Youngtown Post Office."

H. Wirt and Rebecca Acker told about their early days in Sun City. "I worked in the first clinic on Oakmont Drive," Rebecca said. "We only had two doctors for all of Sun City. I was a medical technician."

Chairman Witt introduced Jane Freeman and Glenn Sanberg in the audience. He explained, "Jane and Glenn represent the committee that is planning the 25th anniversary of Sun City. For that occasion they are compiling a history of Sun City and request that any of you who have something interesting to contribute please contact them."

## TOWNE TALK



1980

Copes, George and Loise

## Daily News-Sun

# Early days in Sun City West often lonesome

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** In the summer of 1978, George and Loise Copes of Baltimore were planning to attend a convention in Phoenix. Loise had just retired as postmaster of Brooklandville, a Baltimore suburb, and George was retired. Following is Loise Copes' narration as told to Phyllis Street, president of the Sun Cities Historical Society. Mrs. Copes, a charter member, was the only resident of Sun City West on the first board of trustees.

DOWN

MEMORY  
LANE

We had seen an ad in the AARP magazine that told about apartments in Sun City, rented by the Del Webb Development Co. A week in one of these apartments cost the same as a day in a Phoenix hotel, so we decided to stay in Sun City and commute to the convention.

The first time we drove out to Sun City, we were shocked at how far it was from the convention center — way out in the country. But we en-

joyed the apartment very much and were especially impressed with the program Webb laid out for us. We spent more time in Sun City than attending convention meetings and banquets.

We were looking for a retirement home and with three couples had visions of buying a piece of land and arranging houses in such a way that there would be a caretaker's home in the center of our little community.

But there was so much here we couldn't resist buying. We told the salesman that we wanted our house on the highest point in Webb's new community, Sun City West. He said there was no high point — it was all level.

After buying the house and before going back to Baltimore, we had to pick tiles, wallpaper, decide on colors and make decisions for the builder. It was in July and 120 degrees. I had no idea it had been that hot.

It took us five days to drive to Arizona from Baltimore. We quickly found as we approached Arizona that the sun seemed brighter and there was no pollution.

The first day we entered Sun City West, the road in — R.H. Johnson Boulevard — had no walls. It was two lanes and there were so many trucks hauling materials in that the road was covered with debris.

There were a lot of houses but no people living in them. There wasn't a blade of grass, not a bird, tree or landscaping of any kind.

We were lonesome people at first. On the cul-de-sac where we lived, two couples moved in. They had lived in Sun City and knew what it was like.

We learned that there were about 60 families at that time. Many of them were from Sun City and had purchased homes — some as many as five for investments.

In the early days, I wrote newspaper articles about what was happening in Sun City West. Next, we started a newsletter to let residents know what was going on. Our group of newcomers organized Property Owners and Residents Association. The people most influential were former Sun City residents, and they knew from experience what the problems were.

One thing they were very clear about was that there should be just one organization, not two like the Sun City Home Owners and Tax-payers. We felt that with just one organization, we could handle the tax questions along with other problems.

We met at the Fountain Bell Restaurant in Sun City. From eight to 15 of us would sit at a round table, listen and contribute to what was going on.

In Sun City, DEVCO built recreation centers before the houses. But here, all we had at first was the golf course. As I recall, DEVCO gave \$35,000 to the rec centers in Sun City to permit Westers to use the facilities. We were given cards that allowed us to go over there.

But some Sun City people objected.

In order to pacify us, DEVCO began promoting trips. We went to the Capitol, a showing of Erma Bombeck's TV show, the zoo, Mountain Shadows, a DEVCO enterprise, where we had tea and superb baked goods, and to the Suns basketball

games. We became very strong Suns fans.

But this all stopped when the recreation centers opened. By that time, new people were pouring into the community.

We had our first PORA meeting in the first part of 1979. It was after the Crestview restaurant opened. There were probably 200 people or more by that time and the Crestview was the gathering place every evening. We would have square dancing, round-dancing, bingo and ballroom dancing. Everything was free.

People began organizing clubs. Silver club and bridge club were first. I was still writing items for the local newspapers but it soon became unnecessary because they sent reporters to events.

With all these activities during the first year, we had not taken time to really settle into our home. I heard one person say, "Have you been in Loise's second bedroom?" Well, it was full of boxes. But I wanted to see what Arizona was all about. I decided I could unpack later.



# 'Key man' aided Sun City pioneers

By THELMA HEATWOLE

SUN CITY — As this retirement community celebrates its 18th anniversary this month, Les Parry is proud he came to work here before the first house was occupied.

As "key man" for the Del E. Webb Development Co., he opened the doors and presented the keys while new arrivals settled in for a new life here.

"I can easily say I opened the doors for residents of 14,000 homes," said Parry, who retired in 1975 after 15 years as inspection counselor with Webb.

A Sun City resident since July 1960, Parry likely has more stories to tell about the early community than most members of the Sun City Pioneer Club. He is former club president.

"I opened the door for the first residents on April 8, 1960. By the end of 1960, keys had been extended to owners of 1,650 homes," he said.

Parry encountered the gamut of personalities.

"One day I put a couple in their house and they just kept nudging each other. I thought they were on their honeymoon, they were so happy and close. I found out they had been

married 50 years," Parry said.

"One of the first families, the Williamson couple, moved to Alabama Avenue. They had been married 50 years the day they moved in and he carried her over the threshold. A Webb official later presented them with a gold-plated key," Parry remembered.

Once a couple came here and bought two apartments on their honeymoon. Parry wondered aloud why they bought two places. The home buyers explained that one apartment was for the visiting members of their two families.

"When I put a doctor in his home here, I said people would be glad to learn about this. The wife disagreed, and when I asked why, she said her husband was an obstetrician," Parry said.

Parry, Lydia Fulkerson and Dr. Harry P. Lee, all former presidents of the Pioneers Club, were talking at the Oakmont Recreation Center. As usual when members of the Pioneers Club get together, they talked about the old days here. The old days in Sun City aren't all that old.

The 18th anniversary celebration will include one event open to the general public. That is

the arts and crafts fair in the Sun Bowl Saturday and Sunday, with 200 clubs, organizations and individuals participating. Hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday.

Mrs. Fulkerson, a registered nurse, and her husband, Harley, moved here from Cleveland in 1961. They came to look at Youngtown, but bought a Sun City house close to a lettuce field. The lettuce field long since gave way to houses.

"One of the first things we did was put up a big flagpole. My husband flew the flag every day. We were very impressed with the people here," she said.

"The community was small and more friendly than it is today. People were more willing to cooperate. There was a togetherness."

Today's Sun City has a population of 42,000 and still is growing. Parry, who knows the pros and cons of the community, agrees that people were friendlier in the early days.

"You knew everybody. Now you know very few. The community has lost some of its closeness. But I'm still in love with the community," he said.

Parry remembered a

Sun Citian, a former drummer in Rudy Vallee's band.

"He moved away because he thought people here were too old. He was gone a year, then came back and bought another house. He said he never wanted to leave the place," Parry said.

Lee, a urologist, and his wife, formerly of Spokane, Wash., were on a cross-country trip to Disneyland in September 1960 when a Phoenix friend suggested they see Sun City. When the doctor returned home, he asked his wife if she would like him to retire so they could move here.

They settled down in March 1961, when the population was about 1,800. One of the first persons Lee met was Irwin Cook, who for 18 years had lived two houses from Lee in Spokane. It was a surprise to both that the other had moved to Sun City.

"It was simpler here then, less traffic. But for many things you had to go to Glendale or Phoenix to get it. There were hardly any stores here. There were two doctors. People wanted me to get a license and start practice," Lee said.



Republic photo by Thelma Heatwole

Former presidents of the Sun City Pioneer Club get together to reminisce about the

"old" days. They are, from left, Les Parry, Lydia Fulkerson and Dr. Harry Lee.





## **Memories**

Ruth Zilien, at left, John Zilien, Luella Leisy and Tom Austin look over scrapbook of stories from Sun City's early years at Saturday's Pioneer Club fall luncheon at Lakes Club. Group gathers annually.

(News-Sun Photo)



**NEWS-SUN**

Friday, November 12, 1976

1C

**Recollect  
when...****SC Pioneers  
talk of past**By LYNN PYNE  
Staff Writer

Remember when John Zilien returned home from vacation, rushed to check his tiny grapefruit tree, and found that his neighbors had tied oranges, peaches, and apples to the spindly branches?

Sun City Pioneers do. They moved to Sun City when it was little more than cotton fields and a dream. Everybody knew everybody then.

The old gang got together Saturday in the Lakes Club and retold stories about everything from the first Sun City Swimming Pool Club, headed by Lew Gobble, to the first Catholic parish here, founded by Rev. Palmer Flourde.

In the thick of the reminiscing was News-Sun publisher Burt Freireich, who spoke of milestones that were recorded in his then-weekly newspaper in 1960 and '61.

HE AND HIS wife, Ursula, associate publisher, printed their first issue July 22, 1960. Sun City had about 300 residents then.

Freireich recalled that at least three people were known by all: Les Parry, the man who gave newcomers the keys to their homes and was "truly interested in all the people;" Tom Austin, who

was involved in just about everything, and Irene McAnerny, Sun City's "complaint department."

"She was a crusty old gal, but she was efficient and I loved her," Freireich said.

One landmark event was the first Sun City potluck, complete with a cake baked by Mrs. Charles Slatten. Icing decorations were a facsimile of the swimming pool area, including diving board and umbrellas, Freireich recalled.

HE ALSO mentioned the formation of the first Lions Club in the Hiway House (now the Kings Inn,) the monthly Chow Nights, a community songfest which featured pianist Mrs. Norma Millard, and the coming of the first local physician, Dr. Robert Stump.

When Freireich asked the audience if it remembered the "Welcome Home Harvey and Lue" sign made for former News-Sun columnist Lue Leisy, John Zilien stood and announced, "Do I remember it? I did it!"

Everyone in town signed the huge welcome.

In the audience, Lue heard Freireich tell another story about the Leisys and the Ziliens. The neighbors had a fence which they cut down to a bench in one spot to facilitate long chats.





From left, Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Anderson and Mrs. Emilie Fraser enjoy chance to get together and talk about things that happened during Sun City pioneer

days. Mrs. Fraser was member of Sun City Civic Association board.

(News-Sun Photos)

**THIS WAS** representative of the "small-town comradely flavor that existed," the publisher said.

He recalled Adm. Dennis Ryan, who heard that another Ryan, Col. Joseph Ryan, had moved to Sun City. In a friendly gesture, the admiral stopped by to see the other military man who turned out to be his brother.

"They were living in the same town and didn't even know it," Freireich said.

Other anecdotes included the start of home mail delivery and office box decoration, the launching of the first duplicate bridge class by Harley Lanman, and the building of United Church of Sun City with minister Rev. Walter Witt.

**FREIREICH** chuckled about the newspaper article which said Mr. and Mrs. Hyman Gelfand had lost their parakeet on the golf course en route to the home of Mrs. Gelfand's sister, Mrs. Bertha Beller.

"If any of you golfers spot that parakeet, I want you to know it belongs to Mrs. Gelfand," he said.

"She's been looking for it for 16 years."

Freireich said there were many tales of "impulse buying." For example, one person told him, "I bought (my home) in three hours. I would've bought sooner, but by the time I got around to buying, the salesman was out to lunch!"

When the second Sun City recreation facility, the Fairway Center, was built, residents were asked to use the facility on their own side of Sun City Boulevard, dubbed the "Berlin Wall." This was the first heated community issue, Freireich recalled.

**IN CLOSING**, he echoed what many pioneers were made was to plant trees

which had been favorites back home, but which wouldn't grow here. This prompted many rock lawns.

Parry said he began working for Webb's Sun City home sales in February 1960, before the first home was turned over April 8.

He said even salesmen were surprised by the initial growth of Sun City. At the sales office's first anniversary party, one man observed that they previously had hoped to sell 200 homes the first year.

**THEY HAD** only fantasized about 600 homes. In reality, 1,050 families were moved in and 1,200 homes had been sold.

Parry recalled Del Webb as a wonderful person who was admired by the pioneers because of his concept for Sun City. "I'd be sitting in a restaurant having a cup of coffee and he'd come up and put his arm around me and say, 'Hi, how's the key business?'" Parry recalled.

Parry recalled Del Webb as a wonderful person who was admired by the pioneers because of his concept for Sun City. "I'd be sitting in a restaurant having a cup of coffee and he'd come up and put his arm around me and say, 'Hi, how's the key business?'" Parry recalled.

HE GOT AN inkling of Webb's business side, too. "He never spoke above a soft voice, but when he spoke, people jumped to do what he wanted."

Parry, too, has sensed a change in Sun City because of its growth. "They have fights on the golf courses now. Men swing at each other." He said they never used to do that.

But in spite of this, he said, "Never in my life have I enjoyed people as much as I've enjoyed the people here."

Mrs. Anderson said the first mistake many people made was to plant trees

which had been favorites back home, but which wouldn't grow here. This prompted many rock lawns.

Parry said he began working for Webb's Sun City home sales in February 1960, before the first home was turned over April 8.

He said even salesmen were surprised by the initial growth of Sun City. At the sales office's first anniversary party, one man observed that they previously had hoped to sell 200 homes the first year.

**THEY HAD** only fantasized about 600 homes. In reality, 1,050 families were moved in and 1,200 homes had been sold.

Parry recalled Del Webb as a wonderful person who was admired by the pioneers because of his concept for Sun City. "I'd be sitting in a restaurant having a cup of coffee and he'd come up and put his arm around me and say, 'Hi, how's the key business?'" Parry recalled.

HE GOT AN inkling of Webb's business side, too. "He never spoke above a soft voice, but when he spoke, people jumped to do what he wanted."

Parry, too, has sensed a change in Sun City because of its growth. "They have fights on the golf courses now. Men swing at each other." He said they never used to do that.

But in spite of this, he said, "Never in my life have I enjoyed people as much as I've enjoyed the people here."



Ten years ago during Sun City's fifth birthday, Mel and Etta Phelps were called "Mr. and Mrs. Sun City." They moved here when the population was 40. Today it hovers at 34,000.

"I put the pin on our lot on a sales chart here in October 1959," explained Mrs. Phelps. "I had read an article in The Arizona Republic, when we were wintering in Phoenix, about Sun City starting across from Youngtown.

The models were not completed yet and there was only a skeleton of the Safeway building."

Mrs. Phelps worked on a war project during World War II in Oregon when the late Del Webb was the prime contractor. She was attracted to the Sun City development, she said, because Webb was the contractor-developer.

"I felt confident that he could do what he said he was going to do," she said. "I had faith in his work."

Soon Mrs. Phelps had a job with the First National Bank here. Her husband, who was retired, organized the first alley bowling club and won the first lawn bowling trophy here. Mrs. Phelps was a charter member of the Woman's Club of Sun City.

The couple were in pictures in the first brochure published in Sun City, and also appeared on the Jack Douglas "See America" show when his television crews came to Sun City.

"You have everything here you want to do in a controlled area," Mrs. Phelps said. "If you can't be happy here I don't know where you would be."

The Phelpses favor incorporation of the community now that it has reached its present size and tax base. Incorporation is being studied by community leaders.



Mel and Etta Phelps have been called "Mr. and Mrs. Sun City." They selected their lot before Sun City opened Jan. 1, 1960 and moved in when the population in the retirement city was only 40.



Arizona Republic January 10, 1975



Sun City "pioneer" Mary Garretson remembers the early days of the retirement community. She

worked in the first post office there. She says postal receipts the first day were \$168.

Mary Garretson had the distinction of working as clerk in charge when the first post office opened here April 4, 1960. The first cacheted cover bearing the Sun City postmark was presented to then-Gov. Paul Fannin. Receipts that first day were \$168.

"Some people did not realize it took time to change their Social Security and annuities over to new addresses when they moved here," she said. "They thought they had been forgotten. They would come to the post office for their checks and I would console and try to comfort them."

The Garretsons bought a house on Jan. 2, 1960, Sun City's second day of opening.

"We came out to buy the first day," she said. "But, there was such a crowd we couldn't get anyone to take our money."



# Pioneers helped mold new clay

By SUE CHILDRESS  
Staff Writer

The idea of beginning a whole, new life in a brand new city has to be thrilling. Like a fresh hunk of clay, its future can be molded into whatever its inhabitants see as good and profitable.

John and Ruth Zilien and Harvey (now deceased) and Luella Leisy were two such couples who helped to shape the newly forming adult retirement community that blossomed in the desert southwest.

Both couples saw some 12,000 acres of cotton and alfalfa fields bloom into a beautifully planned community with fine homes, recreation facilities, and friendly people from every circle of the globe.

"Sun City's first years were exciting because we all came from different places. We all became friends and we still are friends," Lue said with a smile.

THE LEISYS had wintered in the Phoenix area for three years when they accepted a friend's invitation to move to Sun City. The Ziliens had lived in Phoenix for a year before their move.

Cotton fields surrounded the model homes at 107th Avenue and Oakmont Drive in January 1960, when more than 10,000 visitors attended the opening ceremonies.

A few months later the Leisys moved into their home at 10808 Alabama Ave., and the Ziliens took possession of their home at 2231 Augusta Dr. on April 8. "We had the 11th key, the 13th house, and were the

sixth family to move in," John reminisced. They also were the first couple to install a flagpole in their backyard.

"The houses, one interjected, "were built in 90 days from the time the foundation was laid, and you could set your watch on that."

WITHIN a month, Sun City claimed 100 residents, "so Webb put on a party for us, and we celebrated the 50th anniversary of a couple here at the same time," Lue said. The population was 2,500 at the end of the first year.

It was during the first year that John instigated the formation of a Sun City Fruit Growers Association. He planted a five gallon grapefruit tree which bore its first fruit early the next year.

When friends began to tease him about the prolific harvest, John, keeping the faith, decided to sell stock in his association.

"They were a great bunch of neighbors," he said. "At night they would sneak over to our yard and hang lemons, plums, oranges, cherries, and bananas on our tree. It was something different every night."

"I THINK the last thing to go on the tree was a green pepper," Ruth said with a chuckle.

During those early days neighborhood friendliness was tops. However, when the Ziliens and Leisys met, it was never more than halfway.

Actually, an umbrella table had been given to Lue by some friends, and when she said there was no use

for it, John and Harvey cut an opening in the fence that separated their back yards and straddled the property line with the table.

A "friendship table" coffee each morning for neighbors and newcomers was the talk of the town for quite some time. It was a living symbol of Sun City's lifestyle.

THUS, WHAT began with the wave of a hand through the kitchen window one day developed into an everlasting friendship for two families.

Lue, who wrote for the News-Sun for five years, vividly remembers the time she and her husband returned to Sun City from their summer vacation in Oregon and a poster, "Welcome Home Harv and Lu," covered the front side of their home. "All the neighbors had signed it," she said.

Another gregarious episode occurred after a neighbor complained that no one came to visit him. A group gathered and invaded his home with their empty coffee cups just to prove there was no such thing in Sun City as neglect.

"The people here today just don't have the same thing we had then," said Lue. "Sure they're thrilled to be here, but it was such a challenge—such an adventure before."

THE THREE pioneers agreed that maybe time, progress, and growth have changed the old Sun City. "Despite the change, I would never leave this place unless something drastic happened," John said. "I'm still as enthused as I was in the beginning."

There's still a deep ap-

preciation for friends and the knowledge that they are always here to help whenever needed, Lue added. "We're just 14 years older now."

During the early times, the only way to enter Phoenix was via Grand Avenue; there were no bridges across the river. Grocery shopping was done at Grand Center, but residents had to go elsewhere for other goods.

The land was rich and fertile, and produced an abundance of crops. John recalls a cantaloupe farm just south of Olive Avenue near Sun City where the melons sold for five cents apiece; watermelons were three for 50 cents. He had planned to ship some melons back to Wisconsin when he discovered they were about 10 times more expensive to mail than to buy.

LUE TOOK advantage of the fertile land and grew prize chrysanthemums for several years. She has the original poinsettias in her front yard that were given to her by the Webb company.

The Ziliens also have the lilies given them by the Webb company from the first Easter sunrise service at the Town Hall. Ruth replants the bulbs each year in their new Sun City home at 10424 Deanne Dr., and the crop seems to grow larger every time.

"We even had our own Sears and Robuck in town once," John said. "Harry Sears and Ralph Robuck—they were members of the first civic association."

over





John Zillen happily recalls early days in retirement community. He served as chairman of Sun City Swimming Pool Club, first organization to form here in May 1960.



Ruth Zillen shuffles through old notes and mementos from early days in Sun City. She and husband, John, were sixth family to move here.



Remembering those first years in Del Webb's famous retirement community is Luella Leisy, longtime resident and former writer for News-Sun.



Rules Committee:  
Ray Goetze, Roy Lutz, Jess Conner

May 1973

SUN CITY PIONEERS CLUB  
Sun City, Arizona

PROPOSED RULES AND REGULATIONS

ARTICLE I

Club will be known as the Sun City Pioneers Club and the purpose for social activity.

ARTICLE II

Officers to be elected by the membership - President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer.

ARTICLE III

The above officers will be members of the Executive Committee of the Club, also all Committee Chairmen appointed by the President.

ARTICLE IV

The Executive Committee will meet at the pleasure of the President, with date, time and place to be announced by the President.

ARTICLE V.

The Club will meet a minimum of four (4) times yearly with the date, place and time to be announced.

ARTICLE VI

Dues will be fifty cents (50¢) per person yearly, due January 1st of each year to defray expenses accrued during the year.

ARTICLE VII

Eligibility for Club Membership will be any person or persons who received "Key Inspection" to their house or apartment during the year of 1960 and up to December 31, 1961, or purchase of a resale within the specified date and is presently a resident of Sun City.

ARTICLE VIII

The President will appoint a Nominating Committee next to the last meeting of the year for the purpose of recommending Officers for the coming year to be elected at the last meeting of the year by the membership, to take office the first meeting of the following year.

ARTICLE IX

All monies left in the Treasurer's account after all expenses for the preceding year have been paid, may be used for some social activity by a vote of the membership.

*Handwritten:* Sun City Pioneers



4/3/73 N/S

## Sun City Pioneers organizing

A Sun City Pioneers Club is being organized, with its first meeting set for 10 a.m. Monday at Oakmont Center auditorium.

Club membership will be limited to persons who moved into their Sun City homes in 1960 and 1961, organization committee chairman Mary Garretson announced.

In order to establish eligibility, alphabetical and numerical check lists have been compiled from Del E. Webb Development Co. records.

A slate of temporary officers and committees will be presented at the meeting, with procedures for future meetings and activities to be discussed.

Those attending are asked to wear their name tags for easier recognition.

*Sun Citizen May 9-1973.*  
PIONEERS CLUB OF SUN CITY  
FIRST OFFICERS



PIONEER OFFICERS—New officers of the Sun City Pioneers Club are Mrs. Mary Garretson, president, Bernice Wallace, treasurer, Esther Hill, secretary and Etta Phelps, assistant treasurer. Arch Woodlief, vice-president is not pictured.

## Pioneers Form Group

The newly formed Pioneers Club of Sun City elected officers Monday at Oakmont Center.

Mary Garretson, Sun City's first postmistress, was chosen president.

Other officers are Arch Woodlief, vice president; Esther Hill, secretary; Bernice Wallace, treasurer; Etta Phelps, assistant treasurer.

Chairmen named are Sen. Ray Goetze, parliamentarian; Luella Leisy, publicity; Emily Frazier, historian, and Bertha Cox, hospitality.

Following a program of slides on the activities, growth and beauty of Sun City

Following a program of slides on the activities, growth and beauty of Sun City, Sen. Goetze presented the by-laws to members.

There will be a minimum of four Pioneer Club meetings each year.



Rhythm  
Ramblers

Open with "Wagon Wheels"

Al Pote

HI PIONEERS! MIGHTY YOUNG LOOKING GROUP OF KIDS TO BE CALLED PIONEERS!

HOW MANY OF YOU ATTENDED THE GET-TOGETHER WE HELD AT THE SUN BOWL BACK IN JANUARY?

FOLLOWING THAT, JERRY SVENDSEN AND I, ( WITH A LITTLE PRODDING FROM MARY GARRETSON) GOT TO THINKING, SUN CITY SHOULD HAVE A PIONEER CLUB!

SO THAT'S PART OF THE REASON FOR TODAY'S GATHERING. WE'RE HOPING MARY AND SOME OF THE REST OF YOU, WILL GET TOGETHER BEFORE YOU LEAVE TODAY AND FORM AN ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITTEE. I KNOW RILL ABRISCH OF THE RECREATION CENTERS OF SUN CITY WILL HELP ADVISE YOU ON THE RULES GOVERNING CLUBS, THE NEWS-PAPERS WILL BE GLAD TO HELP PUBLICIZE YOUR ORIGINAL ORGANIZING MEETING, AND I KNOW THE PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT WILL HELP!

IN FACT, ONCE EACH YEAR, THE WEBB COMPANY WILL PROVIDE THE BAND, THE DOOR PRIZES AND REFRESHMENTS FOR A SPECIAL PARTY LIKE THIS ONE.

HOW MANY OF YOU THINK THIS IS A GOOD IDEA? HOW MANY WOULD LIKE TO HELP START IT. LET'S SEE A SHOW OF HANDS. MARY-THERE'S YOUR ANSWER - YOU MAY GET YOUR COMMITTEE GOING TODAY BEFORE YOU LEAVE HERE.

AND NOW-HERE'S THE BAND WITH A WONDERFUL NUMBER - THE ELENA POLKA FEATURING A TRUMPET TRIO.



Page Two

Elena Polka

Rhythm  
Ramblers

Al Pote  
ALL OF YOU BECAME SUN CITIANS DURING 1960 AND 1961, AND I  
THINK YOU DESERVE A ROUND OF APPLAUSE! SO LETS GIVE EACH  
OTHER A REAL ROUND OF APPLAUSE. YOU ALL HELPED IN THE  
EARLY BUILDING OF THIS BEAUTIFUL COMMUNITY AND SET THE STAGE  
FOR THE HIGH STANDARDS MAINTAINED THROUGHOUT SUN CITY TODAY.  
WE THANK YOU.

AND THAT BRINGS ME TO A SUN CITY PIONEER, WHO IS A RATHER  
YOUNG PIONEER. HE WAS EVEN YOUNGER WHEN HE SOLD THE FIRST  
HOUSE IN SUN CITY ALMOST THIRTEEN YEARS AGO. HE'S BEEN A  
DYNAMIC FORCE IN THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF SUN CITY EVER  
SINCE. MOST OF YOU KNOW HIM AS ONE OF THE NICEST GUYS IN  
SUN CITY. MAY I PRESENT THAT PIONEER EXECUTIVE AND THE  
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE DEL E. WEBB DEVELOPMENT CO.,  
OWEN CHILDRESS.

Owen  
Childress

A GUY COULD GET JUST A BIT NOSTOLGIC THINKING BACK OVER THOSE  
EARLY DAYS. BUT AS THE GREAT BASEBALL PITCHER SACHEL PAIGE  
USED TO SAY, "NEVER LOOK BACK-----SOMETHIN' MAY BE GAININ'  
ON YA'!"

IT'S GOOD TO SEE ALL OF YOU AGAIN AND I HOPE YOU WILL START  
A PIONEER CLUB AND MAKE ME AT LEAST AN ASSOCIATE MEMBER.

I DON'T NEED TO TELL YOU THAT SUN CITY IS CONTINUING TO GROW.



Page Three

YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN KNOWING SOME OF THE THINGS THAT ARE HAPPENING OR ARE IN THE PLANNING STAGE. CONSTRUCTION IS MOVING RIGHT ALONG ON THE NEW SUNDIAL RECREATION CENTER AT BOSWELL BLVD. AND 103RD AVENUE. WHEN COMPLETED IT WILL HAVE SUN CITY'S FIRST COMPLETELY ENCLOSED AND AIR-CONDITIONED SWIMMING POOL AS WELL AS INDOOR, ALL-WEATHER SHUFFLEBOARD COURTS, THE FIRST IN THE STATE. THERE WILL ALSO BE A LARGE AUDITORIUM, MINIATURE GOLF COURSE, LAWN BOWLING, POOL AND BILLIARDS AND ADDITIONAL HOBBY STUDIOS. AND I MIGHT ADD, A SMALL PARK LIKE AREA ON THE CORNER TO ACCENT THE WORLD'S LARGEST SUNDIAL.

WE ARE ALSO STARTING CONSTRUCTION ON TRAP AND SKEET RANGE ABOUT SIX MILES NORTH OF BELL ROAD ON THE DESERT. THIS GUN CLUB WILL ALSO HAVE A SMALL BORE RIFLE AND PISTOL RANGE AND AN AREA FOR ARCHERY TARGET SHOOTING. EVENTUALLY WE HOPE TO HAVE A COWBOY TYPE RESTAURANT ON A HILL THAT OVERLOOKS THE PROPERTY.

FOR YOU GOLFERS, OUR SEVENTH GOLF COURSE JUST SOUTH OF BELL ROAD IS ABOUT COMPLETED AND THE CLUB HOUSE IS UNDER CONSTRUCTION. IT WILL BE CALLED RIVERVIEW. AND WE ARE PRESENTLY SCRATCHING OUT TWO MORE COURSES NORTH OF BELL ROAD. SEE WHAT YOU STARTED?

YES--YOU PIONEERS CERTAINLY HAVE PLAYED A MOST IMPORTANT PART IN THE STEP BY STEP PROGRESS OF SUN CITY, FOR YOUR HOMES HAVE BEEN THE SHOWCASE AND YOU HAVE BEEN THE GRACIOUS HOSTS AND HOSTESSES TO THE THOUSANDS WHO FOLLOWED YOU AND WE THANK YOU!

AND NOW BACK TO AL POTE!

Al Pote RIGHT NOW THE BAND IS ALL TUNED UP--BUT ALONG WITH THEM--WE HAVE A SPECIAL TREAT--LU ERB AND HER MUSICAL SAW--PLAYING "I SAWED YOU LAST NIGHT AND GOT THAT OLD FEELING"!



u Erb "When Your Smiling"

l Pote EARLIER THIS YEAR, A YOUNG MAN DUCKED UNDER THE DOOR JAM OF OUR OFFICE, FOLDED UP IN A CHAIR IN JERRY'S OFFICE AND TALKED HIS WAY INTO THE PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT. HE HAS ADDED BOTH HEIGHTH AND DEPTH TO THE DEPARTMENT. HE CAN TAKE PICTURES WITHOUT A LADDER--AND THAT DESCRIPTION CAN FIT ONLY ONE GUY. I WANT YOU ALL TO MEET DON TUFFS. HE'S GOING TO TELL YOU ABOUT A SURVEY WE WANT YOU TO FILL OUT WHILE HAVING YOUR DONUTS AND COFFEE. DON TUFFS.

on Tuffs Explains the survey, then tells them he will put the survey sheets on the tables while they go through the coffee line.

hythm  
amblers Band plays background music during survey -- donuts and coffee break. Don - picks up survey forms toward end of this period if possible.

l Pote THERE'S NOTHING TO SETTLE YOUR STOMACH LIKE A LITTLE HARMONY, AND WE WANT ALL OF YOU TO FURNISH THE HARMONY. I DON'T KNOW A BETTER SONG FOR A COFFEE GET-TOGETHER THAN THE BAND'S FAMOUS ARRANGEMENT OF "WHEN THEY CALL THAT ROLL UP YONDER -- WHAT WILL WE DUNK IN OUR COFFEE!"--WHAT--NOBODY KNOWS THAT ONE? THEN LET'S TRY "YOU'RE NOBODY'S SWEETHEART NOW"! NUMBER 22 ON YOUR SONG SHEETS.

hythm  
amblers "Nobody's Sweetheart Now."

l Pote JUST BY CHANCE, I BROUGHT A FEW DOOR PRIZES ALONG TODAY. DID ALL OF YOU GET A DOOR PRIZE TICKET WHEN YOU ARRIVED AND GOT YOUR



Page Five

NAME TAGS? GOOD! NOW LET'S SEE HOW LUCKY YOU ARE.

on Tuffs  
1 Pote Door Prizes!

1 Pote NOW I'M GOING TO GET OFF THIS MIKE AND GIVE YOU A CHANCE  
TO TALK TO EACH OTHER. I HOPE YOU WILL GET TOGETHER AND  
FORM A REGULAR PIONEER'S CLUB! SO NOW THE BAND WILL PLAY  
A VERY APPROPRIATE NUMBER AS I SAY "SO LONG" - IT'S CALLED  
"GETTING TO KNOW YOU!"

Rhythm  
Ramblers "Getting To Know You."



# Reminiscing:

## 'Why, we didn't even have mail delivery back then'

By VAL BEMBENEK  
 Jan. 1, 1960—opening day for a decade and for a new community . . . a community that would become known around the world and whose concept, more than 13 years later, has not yet seen the last of its imitators.

"We came on Jan. 1, but the lines were so long at the salesmen's desks that we were told to come back the next day," remembered Mrs. Mary Garretson, who now resides in West Fairway Court.

"In fact, the traffic on Grand Avenue, which was only two lanes, was so blocked up because of making left-hand turns, they had to call in another deputy to direct traffic.

"THE NEXT day, we selected from the five model homes and moved in that May when the home was completed."

For those who can't visualize what Sun City must have been like, some

of the "old-timers" share their recollections.

"It looked terrible," said Mrs. Carl W. Johnson. "All you could see was a bunch of stakes in the ground. I remember wondering to myself, 'Who would want to live out here?'"

That was before the official opening. Her husband was a construction engineer working on the telephone company building on 111th Avenue and became interested in what was going on.

"What was going on" was a shopping area, a town hall community center, a golf course, and lots of plat maps and plans coming forth from the Del E. Webb Development Co. office.

THE JOHNSONS came back, too; she lives in their original home at 12230 Pebble Beach Dr.

Homes in those days sold for from \$9,150 to \$14,550 and from \$8,500 to \$15,000 for apartments. Statistics from

1960 reveal the most popular home was the two-bedroom, one-bath model. Options such as refrigeration instead of "swamp cooling" or a golf course location naturally upped the base price.

"The models were very nicely decorated," recalls Mrs. Garretson. "I think they used small-scale furniture to make the rooms seem larger," she laughed.

Mr. and Mrs. Golden Barger, 11104 Mirandy Ct., also bought their home during the first week.

"When we moved in that July into the area near 107th and Alabama avenues, there were big, empty cottonfields in the backyard."

ALTHOUGH they came from every state in the union (there were 49 states then) and even foreign countries, early residents found a kinship.

"Everybody knew everybody, and everybody

was happy," commented Forrest McGlynn, who now resides at 10132 Sun City Blvd. He was the 20th to occupy a home in Sun City.

"There was a quiet, friendly atmosphere," Mrs. Barger summarized.

Most people agree that the friendliness still exists, although on a larger scale. "Instead of one big group, there are many smaller groups," said one observer.

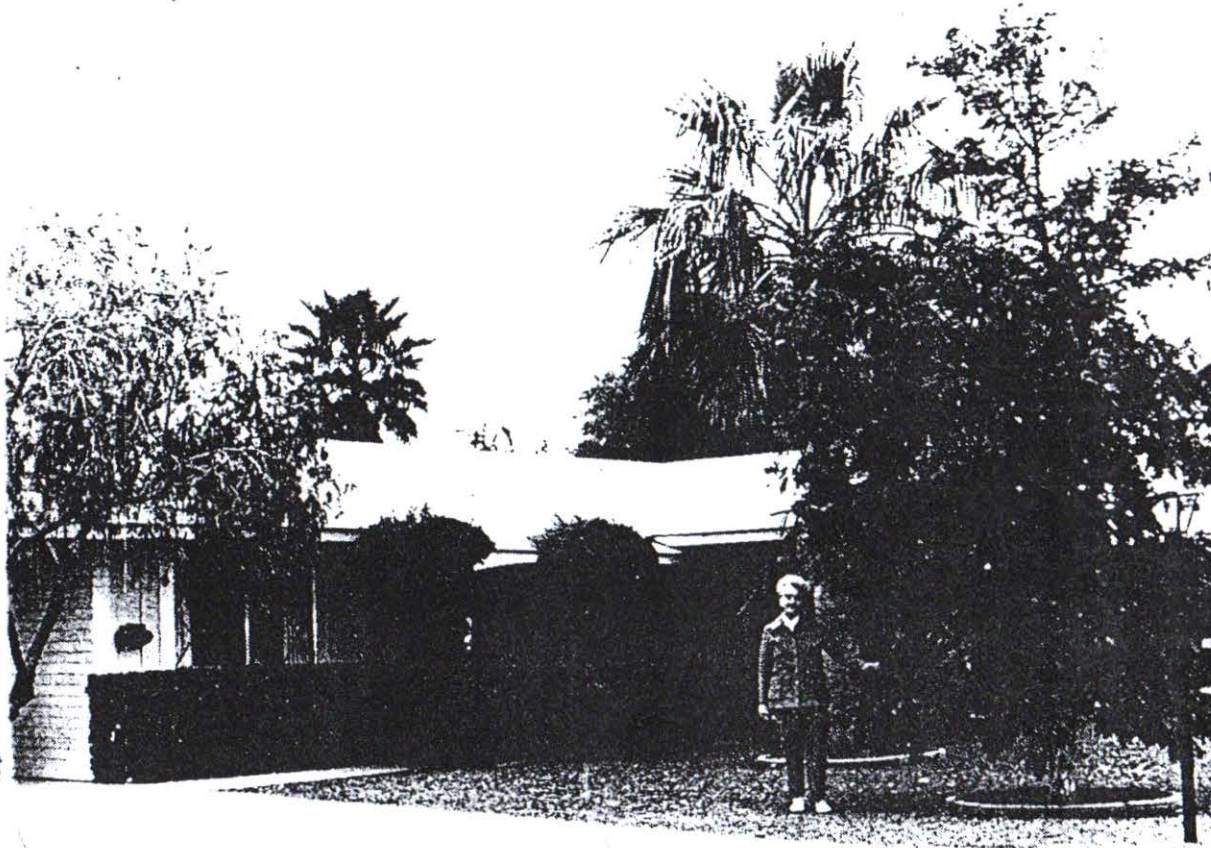
Many viewed Sun City as an investment, taking their time to decide whether or not they would actually live here.

Others sold everything back east "lock, stock, and barrel" and came out nearly on a shoestring to the place "where retirement means active living," according to widely circulated Webb material.

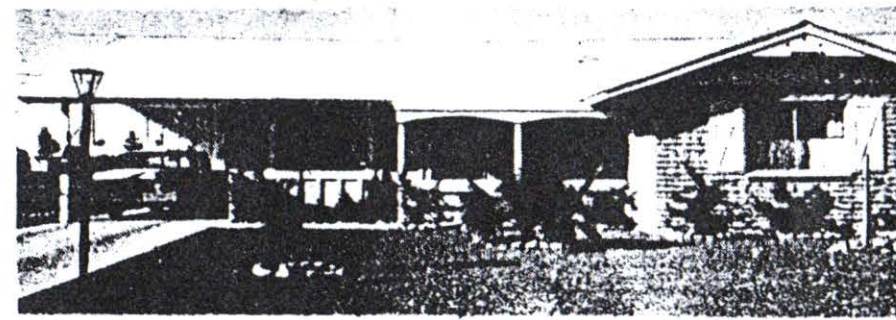
OTHERS REMEMBERED the spot as they were driving through to California and came back to buy.

(Continued on Page 14)

do not have



SIZE of Sun City is not only thing that's grown in past 13 years. Trees planted at home of Mrs. Carl W. Johnson were barely noticeable, in June, 1960, now dwarf house. Mrs. Johnson, other "old-timers" recall what community was like, make observations on changes. See Page 14, Sec. 1.



1973



# 'Cotton bugs were everywhere'

By SUE CHILDRESS  
Staff Writer

Just 10 years ago Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Phelps were honored as Mr. and Mrs. Sun City Pioneer in a parade that saw them ride in an oxen-pulled covered wagon from Grand Avenue to the Town Hall (now Fairway Center).

He wore tails and a top hat, and she was dressed in a ruffled skirt and blouse with frilly hat and parasol. They were an elegant sight at the Grand Ball that evening.

Today the Phelps look back on those early days and remember them with a sigh and a smile.

THE TWO had owned a restaurant in Seattle. When he retired, they bought a small trailer hoping to travel about the country in search of a permanent home.

"We watched other places grow but they didn't have what we wanted. We were looking for a place where he could retire, but where I could continue working," she said.

They had been living in a trailer in Phoenix during the winter months, and in October of 1959, jaunted out to Sun City to take a peek. "There was nothing, not even a model home, except the skeleton of a Safeway store, a laundromat, and Greenway Drugs (now Sun City Drugs)," she added.

MRS. PHELPS had worked for Del Webb in 1942

at the Contractors Medford Corp., and was fairly well acquainted with his work. So, after a bit of deliberation, they decided to plant their stakes and give the salesman \$100 down. "What did we have to lose?"

They put a pin on their chosen lot location, "and from that very day, we have watched this place grow from the grass roots," he said. "We were one of the first 20 families to move into the homes. We lived on Augusta Drive."

"The years were trying, but lots of fun," she continued. "During those days the dust was two feet deep every time the wind blew, and the cotton bugs were everywhere. If anything, I thought the cotton bugs were going to defeat Sun City."

WHILE Phelps adjusted to his new life in the leisure retirement town, his wife, Etta, became secretary of the only office of the First National Bank in Sun City.

He started the first alley bowling league here and became quite the avid lawn bowler, and under the leadership of Harry Lee, she served as secretary for Sun City's first Community Fund.

"It's like belonging to a huge country club, because we have access to all these fine recreation facilities," they agreed. "I think the golf courses really have made Sun City what it is

today," she added. "It attracted that certain type of executive that Sun City wouldn't otherwise have attracted, and still it was for the retiree with a moderate income."

THE SITUATION, they said, may be a bit different today. "We are happy for the growth up to Bell Road, but beyond that it's a bit superfluous. Just the same, a lot of blood, sweat, and tears went into this to make Sun City what we have now."

"This is the only place that has more banks and churches than service stations and bars," they said with a chuckle.

Few people realize that Sun City was a divided city in 1963, Mrs. Phelps explained. It literally was divided along Sun City Boulevard, and the people in Unit I, the first section built, were not allowed to use the new Town Hall facility.

As Sun City grew and plans were laid for new recreation centers, many citizens refused to support the efforts. "And if it hadn't been for Leo Wilson, we would be a political mess," she said.

A MEMBER of the Sun City Community Association (now the Recreation Centers), Wilson helped to introduce a facility agreement whereby the payment of a set fee entitled all Sun Citizens to use all facilities.

"They wanted cooperation from everyone.

"The rec centers and the fine facilities are the nucleus of Sun City, and we have Leo Wilson to thank for the unity.

"Another man we have to thank is George Meade. Sun City came into being without traffic lights, fire hydrants, and street lights, and Mr. Meade brought these things here. He's a fine man, and he's done a lot for us."

The Phelps feel these are two men among many who should be honored as Sun City celebrates its 15th birthday. Incidentally, Phelps himself turned 85 Friday on the eve of the celebration festivities.

HE GAVE up ~~bowling~~ bowling last year for health reasons, but still talks about his seven trophies, all won since 1961. He also served a vice chairman of the Lakeview Lawn Bowls Club one year.

"We were two busy people," she said. "I was chairman of our 36-unit condominium (their present home on Thunderbird Boulevard which they bought after the place on Augusta became a bit much to handle), and I am a member of the Women's American Legion Post and a charter member of the Federated Women's Club here."

But perhaps one of their most thrilling and fulfilling experiences was when they

were voted Sun City Pioneers in 1965. Jack Douglas came to Sun City to interview Del Webb and feature the town in his "America" television series. The Phelps also were featured in the travelogue, which was distributed to all parts of the world.

## Firsts...

June 8, 1961 ... Formation of a new group known as the Sun City Amateur Players took place last week. Elected officers include Julian Amelung, president; Albert Bartolain, vice president; Linnie Smith, secretary, and Betty Duerre, treasurer.

June 8, 1961 ... Rev. Walter Witt has been called by the congregation of the United Church of Sun City to be its pastor. He has been organizing pastor since inception of the church last October.

March 2, 1961 ... An agreement increasing garbage hauling rates for some Sun City residents and decreasing the rates for others has been reached between the Garbage Service Co. and the Civic Association board.

The new rate is \$2.50 per month for hauling all garbage, grass clippings, and trash. OZER

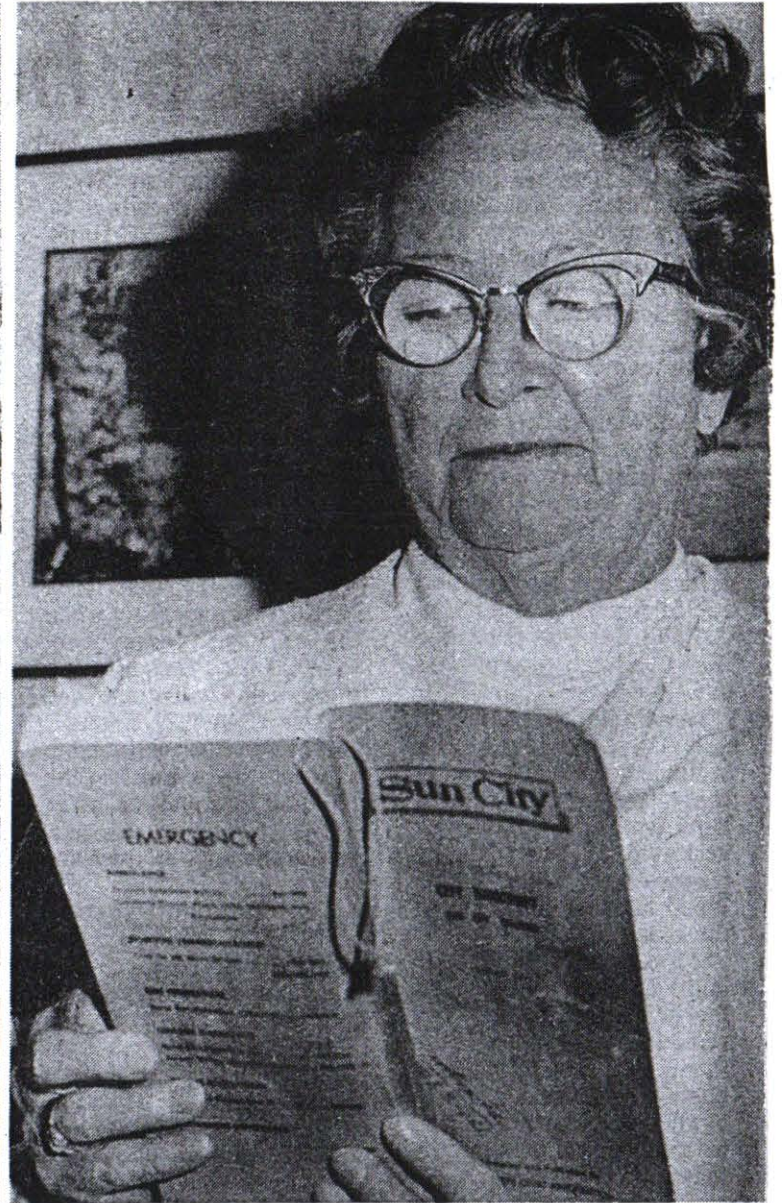




High falutin' festive Phelps prepare to celebrate for Sun City's 5th anniversary. Couple was named Mr. and Mrs. Sun City Pioneer by original 20 families.



Melvin Phelps, Sun City pioneer, celebrates his 85th birthday as Sun City celebrates its 15th.



Days of cotton bugs, dust, political turmoil, as well as growth, involvement, fond memories are recalled as Etta Phelps reviews old Sun City directory.



# SUN CITY SUN CITIZEN



Thursday, January 2, 1964 SUN CITY, ARIZONA Five Cents Volume 2 Number 38

## Sun City's Pioneers

"BY CASEY"

On January 1st, 1964, Sun City, Arizona will celebrate its Fourth Anniversary. We are happy to present a few of the first residents, known to all, as our "Sun City Pioneers".

Mr. and Mrs. H. L. (Pete) Whiting of 10672 Oakmont Dr., formerly of Montana, where Mr. Whiting was a rancher. Here on a homestead, located between Miles City and Broadus, they raised wheat and cattle and continued to buy land until they owned three sections.

After wintering in Mesa for 5 years, they sold their ranch in 1955 and purchased a home there. In January of 1960, the Whitings were beckoned to Sun City. They moved into the first finished apartment in June.

Here "Pete" enjoys the level rolling Golf Courses and can be found on the "Links" daily. Effie helped organize the "Women's Club of Sun City" and was the first president of the organization. She holds the office of Parliamentarian today. She is active in the "Northwest Hospital Auxiliary" and chairman of "Patient Service."

When I asked Effie how they appraised Sun City from its growth in 1960 to the growth of today in 1964, she thought it was a very beautiful little city, filled with wonderful people. She also added, they would like to see Sun City incorporated and a large department store in our immediate area."

Mr. and Mrs. Odie Denny and daughter Marion, of 12228 St. Anne's Dr., originally from Park Ridge, Ill., are among Sun City firsts.

Odie was a printer before his retirement and Marion was employed at "General Mills". They purchased their home in January of 1960 and took possession upon its completion on May 19th.

While Marion and her parents enjoy their many friends in the retirement community, Marion is employed at "The Valley Bank" - Youngtown-Sun City Branch. She has been with the bank for three years.

Odie and Anna are active in the Lutheran Church. Odie is Financial Secretary and Anna is on The Altar Guild. Marion pitches in when volunteer work is needed and be-

tween business, church work and friends, she keeps mighty busy.

When I asked the question, "of what they thought of Sun City and its growth," the quick reply of Marion, voicing the opinion of the Denny family, "We love Sun City, we have more wonderful friends and neighbors here, than ever before".

As for Incorporation, they feel it should come at a later date. When voted on, Sun City should be in Full Season, not during the Summer months when people are away on vacations. They would also like to see a Shoe Store and a large Department Store added to our business section.

Mr. and Mrs. John O. Zilien reside at 12231 Augusta Dr. W. They purchased their Sun City home on January 13th, 1960. Their home was the 13th home to be completed and they were the 11th occupants to move in. Moving day was on May 2nd, 1960.

Formerly of Fox Point, Wisc., John retired as a Meat Operator, National Food Stores of Milwaukee, Wisc.

The Ziliens activities are many and varied since becoming Sun Citizens. John organized the Community Center "Swim Club", he was a member of the Sun City Civic Association for one year and Chairman Sun City Co-ordinators. He is Secretary of The Lutheran Church Council, one of the original founders of The Republican Club and has served for the past two years as the 1st, Vice-president on the Executive Board. John is keenly interested with the development of Sun City and while his capacity is voluntary, he works in close association with Tom Austin of Del Webb Corporation.

Ruth Zilien is also a member of the Republican Club, Secretary of womens groups, active in church work, enjoys swimming and gardening.

The Ziliens love Sun City. When the usual question was asked regarding Sun City's progress and its future, John replied, "Where there are humans, there are errors: and as we grow older, we improve", also he added, "Incorporation must come". They are in agreement that

Sun City needs a large Department Store.

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Millard reside at 12609 Augusta Dr., living in Davenport, Iowa, where Fred formerly operated a "Truck Stop" until his retirement.

With their intent on retirement, "Dave Garroway's T. V. program of "Wide-Wide World" some years back featuring the retirement City of Youngtown, made their dream a possibility. They came to Arizona and lived in Youngtown for a period of time. However, with Sun City bursting forth on the horizon, the Millards decided to investigate the advantages of a new city. They purchased their home six months before the first Model Homes were complete.

Fred had other dreams aside from retirement, a finished carpenter, he knew just what he wanted in every detail in his new home, so after the Millard's home was completed, he made the necessary improvements and remodeled their house into a Custom Home. Also the setting was of great importance, so the site is on the 8th Tee, by a Lagoon, which Fred stocked with fish.

The Millards are a musical family. "The Merry-Makers", a prominent musical group throughout the valley, is Fred's pet interest. He is Committee Chairman of the group which has won 15 awards in raising funds for needy charity organizations.

Norma Millard is an accomplished musician. Several years ago, she as the musician and Fred as business manager, played a major role in a Minstrel Show which was a huge success, the funds netted were donated to the Kiwanis Club for charity.

The Millards would like to see Sun City Incorporated, they agree our community is fabulous, and would like a "Bowling Alley."





**Mr. and Mrs. Odis Denney and daughter, Marion.**



**Mr. and Mrs. John Zilien.**



**Mr. and Mrs. Fred Millard.**



**Mr. and Mrs. H. L. Whiting.**