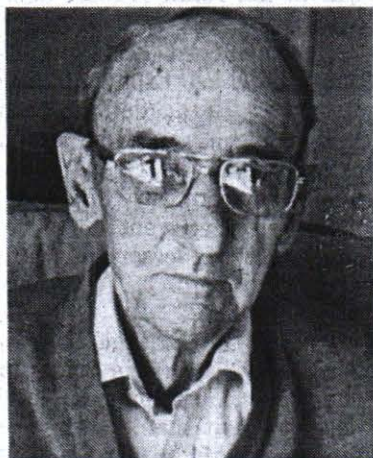


Years, area bring Sun Citian full circle



J.E. KRING

By P. ATWOOD WILLIAMS
Staff Writer

Sun Citian Jim Kring has come full circle.

Sixty-five years ago he sold groceries in The Marinette Store, a two-story building now buried under one of Boswell Hospital's parking lots.

It was on the north side of the tracks where 105th Avenue would have crossed Grand Avenue, had it been cut through at that time.

HIS COUSIN, C.L. Sparks, from the Corpus Christi area of Texas, had found a job with the people who operated the mer-

cantile store for the cotton company in Litchfield. Sparks was transferred to their Marinette store.

In 1920 pickers were getting 4 cents a pound for cotton and they shopped for Arbuckle Coffee—ground fresh in the store—green beans in bulk and Silver Leaf lard.

"C.L. could really speak Spanish well, and I learned enough to understand what their shopping needs were," said Kring in an interview.

Kring remembers the winter of 1920, when he first went to work there—there was snow on the Bradshaw Mountains all winter.

WHEN HE arrived by stage, the Agua Fria River bridge had been partially taken out by flooding. Kring had to take his luggage and walk across the bridge, where he was met by another stage.

The Marinette Store had a large main room with counters. It contained a postal station and housed drygoods, ready-made clothes and groceries.

Kring picked up meat in Litchfield and carried it in a 1920 Hudson to the Marinette store.

*** Years, A10**

* Years, area

—From A10

IT STOOD as a derelict for many years. Mrs. Byrne remembers passing it on her way to Prescott in the late 1920s.

Kring lived in Northern Arizona on the Navajo Indian Reservation at Page Springs, retiring to Phoenix. He moved to the Verde Valley.

However, when he and his wife were in poor health in 1976, they moved to Sun City

and now live only a few miles from Kring's original job site, The Marinette Store.

A group of Questers, a state-wide organization interested in preservation and restoration of old relics, artifacts and antiques, has announced plans to put up a marker this fall at the site of the second store, on the south side of Grand Avenue where Century Bank is.



Ethel Sparks, left, and her daughter, Ruth Sparks Byrne, remember the early days of life in Marinette and the surrounding desert. (Story, A9)

* Years, area

—From A9

To the left of the store was a pool hall, where a barber had his chair. There were gas pumps in front.

C.L. had moved his family into the upstairs apartment when he got the job managing the store.

"I HAD taken my baby daughter home to meet my folks and when I came back to Arizona we were living upstairs over the store," said Sparks' wife, the former Ethel Barnes, now of Glendale.

"We had a terrible time moving her piano up the stairs with its 90-degree turn and into that apartment," recalls Kring with a laugh.

Mrs. Sparks, who had lived in Litchfield as a bride, recalls that laundry was done behind the Marinette store. Water was heated outdoors in tubs and clothes were line-dried. There was never a shortage of water as there was a pumping station nearby and block ice was used to keep food cold.

"The men played card games downstairs at night, sometimes all night," she remembered.

THE SPARKS family had a garden and also raised produce. In the 1930s, her father and brother, Jack, rented land near the store's site and farmed it. Another brother,

Percy, managed the Boswell Farms in Marinette.

C.L. and Ethel Sparks moved to Glendale where C.L. was in the retail grocery business.

He developed handbills in Spanish which Ethel and her daughter, Ruth, delivered to the sometimes muddy cotton camps north of Grand Avenue—where Sun City now is.

Sparks later went on to become county assessor and councilman, dying in 1976 at age 82.

"I REMEMBER as a teenager, getting on the train in Glendale and stopping at Marinette to visit members of the family," said Ruth Sparks Byrne, also of Glendale. "It cost 15 cents for the train, which stopped at Peoria and Marinette. The conductor used to complain about the cost of stopping the train."

Then she walked to her grandmother's and stayed overnight with that family at the Southwest Cotton Co.

The cotton firm was sold in 1919 to Goodyear farms and later to Boswell Farms.

The Marinette Store, owned by three Phoenicians, was abandoned when cotton dropped from \$1 to 19 cents a pound in the early 1920s.

* Years, A13

1960 MOVE-INS

The following information was taken from records kept by
The Del E. Webb Development Corporation (DEVCO):

States represented

Number of men & women

Occupations reported by men

Occupations reported by women

It should be noted not every move-in reported the above information.

*5,050 move in
1st 4/8/60
Last 12/30/60*

1960 MOVE-INS

STATES REPRESENTED

158	ARIZONA	11	NEBRASKA
2	ARKANSAS	10	NEVADA
136	CALIFORNIA	9	NEW JERSEY
75	COLORADO	7	NEW MEXICO
2	CONNECTICUT	3	NORTH DAKOTA
3	DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	17	NEW YORK
6	FLORIDA	35	OHIO
1	GEORGIA	7	OKLAHOMA
2	Hawaii	15	OREGON
8	IDAHO	12	PENNSYLVANIA
80	ILLINOIS	7	SOUTH DAKOTA
13	INDIANA	11	TEXAS
30	IOWA	6	UTAH
16	KANSAS	1	VERMONT
1	LOUISIANA	26	WASHINGTON
1	MARYLAND	30	WISCONSIN
26	MICHIGAN	10	WYOMING
45	MINNESOTA		
29	MISSOURI	1	CANAL ZONE
19	MONTANA		

The majority of move-in were couples however, records show there were 91 single men and 93 single women

1960 MOVE-INS

OCCUPATIONS REPORTED BY WOMEN

30 Teacher
14 Secretary
14 Nurse
9 Office work
6 Sales
5 Cashier
5 Telephone operator
5 Bookkeeping
3 Federal employee
2 Beautician
2 Manager
2 Insurance clerk
Drafting
Singer
Social worker
Sewing
Veterans Admin.
Resort owner
Tax consultant
Receptionist
School supervisor
Hardware retailer
Stage hand
Dental assistant
Librarian
Food inspector
Organist

1960 MOVE-INS

OCCUPATIONS REPORTED BY MEN

PROFESSIONAL

38 Engineer
7 Lawyer
5 Certified Public Accountant
3 President/CEO
2 Clergy
~~Geologist~~
Chemist
Scientist

HEALTH RELATED

12 Physicians
6 Dentists
5 Pharmacists
2 Chiropractors
~~2 Hearing aids~~
Public health
~~Physio therapist~~
V.A. Hospital
Veternarian

POSTAL SERVICE - 20

Supervisor, carrier, clerk, driver

MILITARY - 23

HOUSING

8 Hotel/Motel
7 Home builer
3 Resort
Trailer Park

1960 MOVE-INS
OCCUPATIONS REPORTED BY MEN

FINANCE

17 Banking
12 Insurance
8 Accounting
4 Credit
3 Tax examiner
2 Stock broker
1 Financial planner
1 Title & Guarantee trust

CONTRACTOR

7 General contractor
2 Painting
Plumbing/heating
Electrical
Sheet metal
Rock

SUPERVISORY - 52

RAILROAD - 28

Conductor, engineer, dining car, general agent
mail car, yard master, brake inspector

PROTECTION - SAFETY

5 Policeman
3 Detective
2 Fireman

1960 MOVE-INS

OCCUPATIONS REPORTED BY MEN

FARMING/RANCHING

16 Farmer
13 Rancher
3 Dairy
3 Cattle
Avacado orchard
Roses
Hog buyer

MANUFACTURING - 4

Auto accessories
Caskets
Washing machines
Ornamental iron work

OIL COMPANIES - 7

Shell Oil
Saudi Arabia
Oil Company
Pusher Oil
Standard Oil
Tidewater Oil
Oil driller

1960 MOVE- INS

OCCUPATIONS REPORTED BY MEN

SALES

47	Sales	Lumber
16	Merchant	Appliances
5	New car dealer	Agri-phosphate
5	Hardware	Trader (Indian art)
4	Grocer	Jeweler
5	Furniture	Shoes
2	Men's clothing	Foods
2	Feed & Seed	Beveridges
2	Lumber	Building supplies
2	Auto supply	X-ray equipment
2	Restaurant supply	Medical supplies
2	Floor covering	
2	Electrical supply	

TRADES

111	Machinist	Crane operator
9	Printer	Baker
9	Electrician	Mill wright
8	Mechanic	Linotype operator
5	Carpenter	Sheet metal worker
4	Garage man	Welder
3	Butcher	Laundry/dry cleaning
3	Painter	Electric lineman
3	Cabinet maker	Metal draftsman
2	Maintenance	Lock & Gunsmith
2	Barber	Telephone service
2	Rubber worker	Watch repair
2	Sheetmetal worker	Tailor
2	Book binding	

1960 MOVE-INS

OCCUPATIONS REPORTED BY MEN

MISCELLANEOUS

Artist
Hair stylist
Musician
Clerk
Designer
Photographer
Electronics
Sea Captain
Horse breeder/trainer
Mining
Publisher
Advertising
Journalist
Purchasing agent
Food chain buyer
Moving & storage
Goodyear aircraft
Air research
Public relations
Utility company
Civil service
Public service

Sun City history

SUN CITY PIONEERS RECALL EARLY DAYS

By LORA BERRY
Independent Newspapers

The lifestyle that drew retirees to Sun City in 1960 is still a major attraction to those over 55 years of age.

"The lifestyle — the activities, amenities and excellent health care are still the same as they were 40 years ago," said Jane Freeman, founder of the Sun Cities Area Historical Society.

Along with the excellent health care available in the area, "the weather is still a big draw," agrees Phyllis Street, current president of the Historical Society.

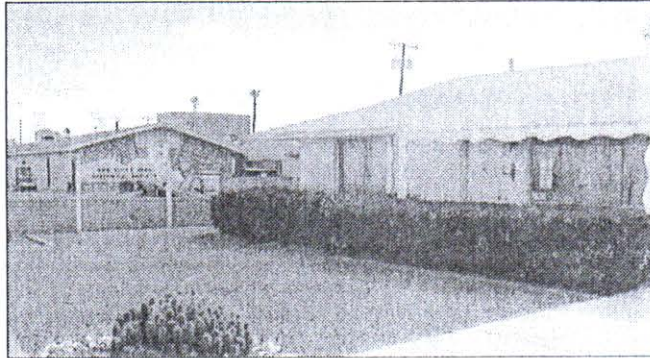
The job market in the Valley is also appealing for those 55 years of age who are still working, and like the community of Sun City.

"Our Old House," at 10801 Oakmont Ave. was Del Webb's first model home and it was furnished and ready to show on opening day, Jan. 1, 1960. It now houses The Sun Cities Area Historical Society.

Early Sun Citians are proud of their pioneer spirits, and the Historical Society has documented the milestones, and saved information about the retirees who moved to a new area of the country and a new, active lifestyle — Del Webb's Sun City.

Mrs. Street and Mrs. Freeman remember the days when the Sun Bowl drew big name acts, such as Lawrence Welk and Roger Williams.

"We had wonderful, free concerts," said Mrs. Freeman. But now most of the big names go to the



The Sun Cities Historical Society is located in the very first model home ever built in Sun City — 10801 Oakmont Drive.

Sundome, which is owned by Arizona State University.

A poll was taken in 1960, and of the 1,050 residents it was found that 108 of them were in sales, 21 were military retirees and the remainder were of various other occupations.

Perhaps many of those salesmen worked for Del Webb as did John W. Dodt. "My husband was one of Del Webb's first salesmen. The Historical Society has a brochure with my husband's card still in it," said Ina Dodt, a Sun City pioneer.

Mrs. Dodt and her husband moved to Sun City in 1960 and were married for 63 years. "I still live in the same house and I love it!" she said. Mrs. Dodt was a hostess for Del Webb, waiting for prospects to arrive.

Mrs. Dodt finds it a little harder to get around now than when she first moved to Sun City.

"There's lots more traffic, because of the growth," she noted. Mrs. Dodt doesn't let traffic stand in her way. She has friends in Sun City, and friends from her church, and she gets out to attend parties and special

events.

During Sun City's 35th Anniversary Grand Old West Fest Parade, Marshal Ina Dodt was joined by fellow parade Marshal's Naomi and Bill Langdon. The Langdons are also Sun City pioneers, with family ties in Youngtown, where Mr. Langdon's parents lived. Forty years after Sun City's origination, the Langdons still reside here.

Mr. Langdon, a former schoolteacher for 30 years and part-time cowboy, taught fifth grade in the Peoria School District and worked on ranches in the west Valley during summer

breaks. Mrs. Langdon was a manicurist at a hair salon in Youngtown.

The Langdons live in their original Sun City home, purchased in September 1960. Now they have an addition, a fireplace, gardens, and cowboy art that Mr. Langdon collects.

Sun City has "grown real, real, fast. They started building Sun City across the tracks and it's grown since then and didn't stop," said Mrs. Langdon.

Sun Citian Evelyn Grace Havlik's parents moved to Sun City in 1965. "If you had told me when my mom and dad moved out here that I would want to move here and not live anywhere else, I would have said that you were crazy," said Mrs. Havlik. She has three sons and she thinks they might eventually like to live here, too.

Mrs. Havlik's father, Alfred Kabica, painted the mural that graces the Sundome's lobby. The mural is his depiction of how the earth began and how it will end if we don't take care of it.



Naomi and Bill Langdon, residents of Sun City since 1960.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2000 © THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

Promises of 1960 fulfilled in Sun City

By Connie Cone Sexton
The Arizona Republic

A year before Sun City opened, developer Del Webb blitzed America's cold, snowy regions with a national publicity campaign.

Full-page ads in newspapers and magazines invited visitors to the Jan. 1, 1960, grand opening and promised "An Active Way of Life."

Webb enticed retirees to put away their rocking chairs and bask in the glow of his retirement village.

Sun City was to be the place where you could be as young as you feel.

The lure proved to be good bait. More than 100,000 people from across the nation flocked to Sun City during its first weekend. Cars were nearly bumper to bumper as they drove Grand Avenue.

This wasn't simply a new home to buy. It was a new lifestyle to buy into. As visitors strolled through the five modest model homes, the brochure spoke to them: "In Sun City, you will enjoy complete individuality, privacy and happy, satisfying living, and most important, the right to do what you want . . . when you want . . . to live exactly as you wish."

Sun City held the promise of a Disneyland for the older set: Year-round golf and swimming, massive recreation centers where you could find unlimited bridge partners and pickup games of shuffleboard. There were dozens of hobby clubs to join and arts and crafts to learn.

During Sun City's first three days, 237 homes were sold. The tiny sales office got so crowded that salesmen had to sit on the floor, according to Jane Freeman, author of *Jubilee*, a history book of Sun City.

There was excitement among the buyers, Freeman said. "They had all come from somewhere else and they had that in common. They bonded."

Ina Dodt, 91, was one of the Sun City pioneers.

"It was just a thrill to be part of something entirely new. We were all just happy, just happy to be out here in the same place around people about the same age."

Her stories sound like a college girl's dorm days. Dodt said everyone was ready for a good time, always ready to party. She laughs when talking about dancing with other fellow "hula girls" around the recreation center pool.



Peter Schwepker/The Arizona Republic

Ina Dodt, 91, poses in front of an original model home in Sun City. Dodt's late husband, John, was one of Del Webb's first salesmen. "It was just a thrill to be part of something entirely new," she said.

Dodt's late husband, John, was one of Webb's first salesmen. He didn't retire until 1989.

"He loved his job and believed in the community," she said.

When John died in 1993 at 93, her relatives urged her to move back to Illinois. But she was firmly rooted.

"I would have just sat up there staring out the window. Here, I have things to do," she said.

Wally Britton also was there from the beginning of Sun City — not as a resident but as a cabinet installer.

"I thought it was the silliest thing to be out here 15 miles in the country," Britton said. "It was nothing but cotton fields and alfalfa."

But the new residents proved him wrong.

"There was a discussion at one time that they might build 650 houses total but it ended up at 1,200 and something the first year. And then it just mushroomed," he said.

Sun City eventually had 26,000 dwelling units.

Britton was in his 30s when Sun City opened. "Would I have considered living here? Never," he said, thinking back.

But something later clicked. He has lived there now 20 years.

Fellow Sun Citian Jim Hawks moved in 15 years ago. Like Freeman and Britton, he is a member of the Sun Cities Historical Society. Hawks, a former community planning consultant, links Sun City's success to its low property tax and its amenities.

"This was about the only place where you could buy a house and become a member of a golf club or tennis club," he said. "There were opportunities you never had all your life."

Even with its enticements, Sun City thrived because of its residents, Britton said.

"It's like a big happy neighborhood. I never could understand that when I was younger."

Sun City wasn't always Utopia. Over the years, residents grappled with paying school taxes into the Peoria Unified School District. They helped defeat several bond issues. Eventually, Sun City was cut out of the district.

The move scarred the community and was a public relations nightmare. Many Valley residents chastised Sun City for wanting to shuck responsibility for paying for schools.

A watchdog committee — the Sun Cities Taxpayers Association — also has been admonished over the years by the public for its lack of support for Valley projects, including those for recreation and transportation.

But thousands of Sun City residents each year spend many hours as volunteers. The streets are cleaned by the Sun City PRIDES, while the Sun City Posse helps patrol them. And despite their reputation about schools, many retirees devote countless hours in classrooms each year.

Community spirit is on the rise as residents celebrate Sun City's 40th anniversary. Activities are planned throughout the year, ending with a Dec. 17 celebration.

For Hawks, Sun City is worthy of study.

"It's been a social experiment," Hawks said. "There's one word that sums up what this place is about: activity. And that was a brave concept. But it worked."

Reach the reporter at
Connie.Sexton@ArizonaRepublic.com or
(602) 444-7118.

Pioneer spirit lives on

Sun Citians recall community's early days

By LORA BERRY
Independent Newspapers

The lifestyle that drew retirees to Sun City in 1960 is still a major attraction to those over 55 years of age.

"The lifestyle — the activities, amenities and excellent health care are still the same as they were 40 years ago," said Jane Freeman, founder of the Sun Cities Area Historical Society. Along with the excellent health care available in the area, "the weather is still a big draw," agrees Phyllis Street, current president of the Historical Society. The job market in the Valley is also appealing for those 55 years of age who are still working, and like the community of Sun City.

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and ready to show on opening day, Jan. 1, 1960. It now houses The Sun Cities Area Historical Society.

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Mrs. Street and Mrs. Freeman remember the days when the Sun Bowl drew big name acts, like Lawrence Welk. "We had wonderful, free concerts," said Mrs. Freeman. But now most of the big names go to the Sundome, which is owned by Arizona State University. However, the Sun Bowl is still used for events through the Recreation Centers.



Ina Dodt

See ■ PIONEERS, Page 3



Ina Dodt (left) and friends were "originals" in Sun City. The threesome (sometimes a foursome) performed their Hawaiian routine at the Lions Club, parties, events, and also frequently performed around the pool at the recreation center.

over

To maintain the quality of life for aging residents, organizations such as the Community Council, Interfaith Services and the Community Fund, started over 34 years ago, were formed to help residents with rent, bills, and prescription costs. Mrs. Freeman said that loss of income is the hardest thing that hits many elderly residents. Pride stands between those residents in need and the services that are out there to help them. All they have to do is ask.

A poll was taken in 1960, and of the 1,050 residents it was found that 108 of them were in sales, 21 military retirees, various other occupations, and one sea captain.

Perhaps many of those salesmen worked for Del Webb as did John W. Dodt. "My husband was one of Del Webb's first salesmen. The Historical Society has a brochure with my husband's card still in it," said Ina Dodt, a Sun City pioneer.

Mrs. Dodt and her husband moved to Sun City in 1960 and were married for 63 years. "I still live in the same house and I love it!" she said. Mrs. Dodt was a hostess for Del Webb: the hostess sat in the model homes waiting for prospects to arrive.

Mrs. Dodt finds it a little harder to get around now than when she first moved to Sun City. "There's lots more traffic, because of the growth," she noted. However, Mrs. Dodt doesn't let traffic stand in her way. She has friends in Sun City, and friends from her church, and she gets out to attend parties and special events.

"I love people and I love my neighbors, they are great," Mrs. Dodt said. An avid golfer, Mrs. Dodt has golfed about three times a week since the '60s, usually on the South Course.

During Sun City's 35th Anniversary Grand Old West Fest Parade, Marshal Ina Dodt was joined by fellow parade Marshals Naomi and Bill Langdon. The Langdons are also Sun City pioneers with family ties in

Youngtown, where Mr. Langdon's parents lived, and 40 years after Sun City's origination, they still reside here.

Mr. Langdon, a former school-teacher for 30 years and part-time cowboy, taught fifth grade in the Peoria School District and worked on ranches in the west Valley during summer breaks. Mrs. Langdon was a manicurist at a hair salon in Youngtown.

The Langdons live in their original Sun City home, purchased in September 1960. Now they have an addition, a fireplace, gardens, and cowboy art that Mr. Langdon collects.

Mrs. Langdon admits that after 39 years, they have gotten older, and that slows them down a little, however, "whenever friends come to town they call me to ask where everything is," she said.

Sun City has "grown real, real, fast. They started building Sun City across the tracks and it's grown since then and didn't stop," said Mrs. Langdon.

The Langdons met in Decatur, Ill., married, then moved to Arizona in 1958. It seems that the Del Webb salesmen didn't always stick to the over-50 age rule for new homeowners. "We were both under 50 years old," said Mrs. Langdon. "The salesman was in the Reserves and he had to leave in a day or two. I think he just wanted to make a sale. When he looked at us he figured we wouldn't have any children so he was safe."

The Langdons have outlived all of their close neighbors. "And even the second and third sets, we've outlived them all," said Mrs. Langdon.

As the Langdons have seen, there has been a turnover of residents in Sun City.

Sun Citian Evelyn Grace Havlik's parents moved to Sun City in 1965. "If you had told me when my mom and dad moved out here that I would want to move here and not live anywhere else, I would have said that you were crazy," said Mrs. Havlik. She has three sons and she thinks they might eventually like to live here too.

Mrs. Havlik's father, Alfred

Kabica, painted the mural that graces the Sundome's lobby. The mural is his depiction of how the earth began and how it will end if we don't take care of it. Mrs. Havlik said her father was very concerned about Sun City, and the entire earth.

"We're second generation Sun Citians and I have concerns that the newly retired people moving in are not as responsive as the previous generations to community needs, such as volunteering," said Mrs. Havlik.

The Sun Cities Area Historical Society will celebrate the 40th Anniversary of Sun City, the 22nd Anniversary of Sun City West, and the 10th Anniversary of the opening of its headquarters at 10801 Oakmont Drive in Sun City during a ceremony Jan. 11-14. This is the site of the first five model homes which Del Webb built for the opening of Sun City.

The Historical Society will present honored guests, Jane Freeman, and pioneers of the Sun Cities, who will tell their early experiences. Call 974-2568 for more information.



Photo by LORA BERRY/Independent Newspapers
Sun City Pioneers Naomi and Bill Langdon still live in the same home they purchased in September 1960.

Last known list of PIONEERS. Check mark means they were in the 1996-7 telephone directory

EVELYN PARRY
Sec'y - Treas.

Copied from List
dated August 1993

All addresses are Sun City 85351
except where indicated otherwise

SUN CITY PIONEERS CLUB

Membership List

October 1995

✓ PATEMAN, EMMA L.	933-2058		12226 105th Avenue
✓ BAUM, (POLLY) RUTH	933-1503		10612 Oakmont Drive
BELL, DOROTHY	933-5759		10854 Michael Drive *Sun City 85373
✓ BROTON, C.A. & MARY	933-1863		10333 W. Olive APT 1 *Peoria, AZ 85345
✓ FUGHER, ERMA	933-2278		12415 103rd Avenue
✓ COMPTON, RUTH	933-0046		12601 St. Andrew DR.
CRANAK, ALICE	876-6227		11311 N 99th AVE. *BOX E APT 245 PEORIA, AZ, 85372)
✓ CRISMOND, MARIAN ¹¹⁰ <i>Postm S</i>	933-5376		11444 107th AVENUE
✓ DODT, INA	933-1027		10825 109th Avenue
✓ DROUGHT, EARL	933-4883		12415 103rd Avenue
✓ ELLIS, DOROTHY	933-3346		*10509 Signal Butte Circle, 85373)
✓ ESSERY, INEZ	933-1829		10743 Clair Drive
FORD, EVELYN SALLY	933-2546		12045 Hacienda DR
FOURNIER, FRANCIS	933-0398		12220 Hacienda DR
GREISEN, ALICE	933-6349		9824 101st AVENUE
HALLADAY, JEWEL	933-5461		10737 Sun City BLVD
✓ HARTMAN, ELIZABETH	933-2137		12222 E Cherry Hill DR
✓ HIGGINBOTHAM, SAM & GERI	933-3438		10317 Bright Angel Circle
✓ HORNACEK, STEVE	unlisted ⁹⁷⁴⁻²⁶⁰¹		* 19821 Wolk Drive SC-85373 <i>109th St. Cozy Home Cir</i>
✓ HUNT, HAROLD & MARTHA	977-1865		10636 Balboa Drive
INWOOD, ELIZABETH	977-2977		18170 N 91st AVENUE 1220 *PEORIA, AZ 85382
JELLEY, STELLA	933-5553		10749 W Cherry Hill DR
✓ KIASSEN, REUPEN & TILLIE	974-3363		10208 101st AVENUE
✓ LANGDON, WM. & NAOMI	933-4353	10-95	10615 Alabama AVE
LARSON, JEAN	933-1295		12439 Augusta DR
LEE, EDNA	933-2356		10330-A330 Thunderbird BLVD.
✓ LOUVIER, JOSEPHINE	933-5076		11012 Canterbury DR
✓ LYNE, MRS MARY	974-9131		10050-R Royal Oak Road
✓ MATHIS, LAURA	933-3150		10015 Royal Oak Road APT 212
McDONALD, CIARA	933-1462		12446 St. Andrew DR
✓ McKINLEY, ELIZABETH	933-2538		*17231 Palo Verde DR 85373
✓ MUELLER, WM.	933-1263		12012 Pebble Beach DR
✓ MYERS, M/M SAUL (Bertha)	974-0402		10330 W Thunderbird BLVD Apartment 213

OVER

SUN CITY PIONEERS CLUB

OTTO, VIOLET 933-3039
 ✓ PAAL, RAY & CLARA 977-8584
 ✓ PAINTER, RUTH 933-2798
 ✓ PARRY, EVELYN 933-2698
 PFEIFER, HAZEL & ARTHUR 876-6101 6224
 P.O. Box 450 85372
 PRYOR, GERTRUDE 933-2402
 SCHWARTZ, IDA MAE 933-0919
 ✓ SCHWERTZ, LULU B. 933-4515
 ✓ SCHWESSINGER, HAZEL 933-2495
 ✓ SEARS, FLORENCE 933-1853
 ✓ SELL, DOROTHY 933-3005
 ✓ SENN, KATHERINE 933-2509
 ✓ SMITH, JOSEPHINE 933-2376
 ✓ SPURLOCK, CELESTIA 933-7394
 ✓ STONE, VIRGINIA 933-1949
 ✓ SWANSON, GEORGE & CHARLOTTE 933-2334
 ✓ TOLDRIAN, MILDRED 584-1346
 ✓ UPTHEGROVE, MAY 933-8668
 ✓ WAITES, RANDY 933-1077
 ✓ WILSON, ZELLA 933-8583
 ✓ WIRSCHING, MABEL 933-0357
 ✓ WITT, DR WALTER & GLADYS 933-3977
 WOLF, HELEN ANITA 933-6826
 ✓ ZACHARY, ELSIE 933-3052

12433 N. 105th AVENUE
 *18834 Lake Forest DR 85373
 12415 N. 103rd AVE #F
 10729 CLAIR DRIVE
 *Camelot Gardens APT-5-125
 11295 N-99TH Avenue
 Peoria, AZ-85345
 10015 Royal Oak RD 85351
 12243 111TH AVENUE
 10328 Clair Drive
 10722 W. Venturi DRIVE
 10219 Audrey Drive
 12415 103RD AVENUE D-37
 11469 Hacienda DR
 10923 Windsor DRIVE
 10410 Audrey Drive
 10203 Coggins DRIVE APT C
 10322 El Rancho DRIVE
 13225 Maplewood Drive
 *Sun City WEST, AZ 85375
 11640 N. 105TH AVENUE
~~12415 103RD AVENUE~~
 11435 111th AVENUE
 10259 SNEAD CIRCLE
 10330 W THUNDERBIRD DR A337
 12453 Cherry Hill DR W
 10314 CHERRY HILL DR E

* 12415-D36 103rd Ave

10908 W. Cherry Hill Dr

40 as } 5/2/96
87

February 22, 1995

Copy 2-22-95

Mr. James Hawks, President
Sun Cities Area Historical Society
10801 Oakmont Drive
Sun City, AZ 85351

Dear Mr. Hawks,

In appreciation of the attached proposal to encourage and assist the Sun City Pioneer Club members in activities we will continue to contribute memories and mementoes of significance.

We are closing out the Pioneer Club bank account which amounts to \$126.03. It is our desire to give this to SCAHS to be used to help underwrite the oral history project - many of the interviewees being Pioneers.

With memories of SUN CITY PIONEERS,

Dr. Walter W. Witt
Dr. Walter W. Witt, President

R. Evelyn Parry
R. Evelyn Parry, Secy/Treas.

PURCHASED BY Sun City Pioneer Club c/o Evelyn Parry OFFICE NO. 61 T 4133163
ADDRESS Sun City, ARIZONA 02-22 1995 01-1/1221

PAY TO THE ORDER OF ***** Sun Cities Area Historical Society ***** \$ *126.03* *****

1260300

DOLLARS

First Interstate Bank of Arizona, N.A.

CASHIER'S CHECK

[Signature]
AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE

⑈41331636⑈

⑈122100011⑈

⑈001170026⑈

Pioneers recall the early days of Sun City

By KATHLEEN WINSTEAD
Sun Cities Independent

Although unknown to most residents today, the late Les Parry was at one time probably the most popular person in Sun City.

Known as Del Webb's "Key Man," it was Mr. Parry who greeted new homebuyers, shook their hands and gave them keys to their new retirement home. He was there to meet the first residents of Sun City and, for many of the community's earliest pioneers, Mr. Parry was the first friendly face they saw.

"My husband was with the Del Webb Corp. and they wanted him so we (moved to Sun City). He met nearly all the new homeowners," says his wife, Evelyn, who still resides in Sun City.

"Those first 15 years he gave the keys to 16,000 homes. When (a couple's) home was completed, he did a quality control inspection and provided them with an American flag and assured them (Sun City) was a friendly place."

Because Ms. Parry's husband was a Del Webb Corp. employee, he was one of the first residents to move into the community, arriving in March 1960.

"My husband was here and had the very first appointment with the very first couple on April 8, 1960 — the Frasers."

Mr. and Mrs. Parry's home on Oakmont Drive was completed in July and Ms. Parry arrived in August.

When she moved in, there were barely any paved roads, she recalls. "Grand Avenue, Alabama west to 111th and

Dusty roads, cotton fields were common in early '60s

107th (south) to Alabama were paved. There were no buildings north of Grand Avenue at all. I could stand outside the house on the patio on a stepladder and watch them harvest cotton."

In the early '60s, businesses and services were not as widely available and the only shopping center readily accessible to early Sun Citians was Grand Center, southwest of 107th and Grand

said I wanted to see Youngtown and my son said, 'No, you want to see Del Webb's Sun City.'

"My husband was an avid golfer so the golf was a drawing card. We looked it over. We were only going to be here a week, and we went home and my husband was in the hospital for three weeks and decided he wanted to move to Sun City," she says.

were no lights there for seven years. The only buildings were (in) the shopping center. You saw across the track (north) and that was all cotton fields. I don't think they started Phase II until 1967."

In its infancy, Sun City was a tightly knit community. Ms. Parry says when she first came to the small community, she had few neighbors and it seemed that everyone knew one another.

"There was one on each side," she says of her neighbors. "The people were wonderful. They were so nice and friendly."

Although everyone seemed to know each other, Ms. Mulholland admits "people came here from different parts of the country and had different ideas and opinions."

Ms. Parry and her husband were charter members of United Church of Sun City, the community's first church.

Popular entertainers such as Lawrence Welk, for which Sun City's Welk Drive is named, performed at the Sun Bowl in Sun City's early years, Ms. Parry says.

And Bob Hope enjoyed the community's golf courses.

"I remember my husband saying, 'You want to see Bob Hope and Mr. Webb playing golf?' I turned off the oven and we went over there. That was in 1962."

In 1960 Walter O. Boswell Memorial Hospital was not even an inkling in

”

I remember my husband saying, 'You want to see Bob Hope and Mr. Webb playing golf?' I turned off the oven and we went over there. That was in 1962.

Evelyn Parry

A resident of Sun City since 1960.



avenues.

"Safeway was there and there was a furniture store and a beauty shop. The first bank, First National Bank (now First Interstate) was in the shopping center," Ms. Parry says.

Another pioneer, Margaret Mulholland, recalls visiting the retirement community for the first time in 1960.

"I came in 1960 because we were visiting our son who lives in Scottsdale. I

The couple moved to Sun City from Decatur, Ill., in August 1961, "the hottest time of the year," into a house on the golf course with two bedrooms and one bathroom.

"Augusta Drive was the first street finished in Sun City. This is the 19th house that was finished in Sun City. We have the best built houses in this whole section," Ms. Mulholland says.

"Of course I live very near the intersection of 107th and Alabama and there

See ■ YEARS, Page B3

■ YEARS

From Page B1

builders' minds and residents were required to travel to Glendale or Phoenix for hospital services.

But Ms. Parry and Ms. Mulholland volunteered at Northwest Hospital, located on Northern and Grand avenues.

"It was two blocks (to) there," Ms. Parry says.

"Then in 1969, neighbors organizing Boswell Hospital took up a collection — \$100 or whatever one could give right then — for Boswell. In 1970, the first patient was admitted to Boswell."

When Ms. Mulholland's husband died in 1966, she left the retirement community.

She rented her house but was lured back by the community's beauty and amenities four years later.

"I have seen this place grow, but it has grown comfortably. It is very fascinating to see how the recreation centers built themselves up," she says.

Many early residents of Sun City are members of the Sun City Pioneers Club which was formed about 1974 and nearly disbanded recently because of dwindling membership, Ms. Parry says.

When the club was first formed for the purposes of socializing, there were 400 members. Now there are 80, she says.



Margaret Mulholland moved to Sun City in 1960 with her husband, who passed away in 1966. Afterward, she left the community, but returned four years later.

Pioneers journey to desert

By JEANNIE JOHNSON
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Years ago, the pioneers set out in their covered wagons, leaving their Eastern homes for new land and new opportunities — often settling before reaching their original destination.

Years ago, Serafin and Alvina Muradas set out in their 35-foot long trailer, leaving their Detroit home for new land and warm weather — settling before they reached their original destination of Riverside, Calif.

“My husband had a good friend he had worked with for a long time,” said Alvina, one of Sun City’s original residents. “They had moved out to Riverside and told us we should come out there, too. So, my husband sold our hardware store, bought a trailer and we went.”

They packed up a few necessities, headed West and drove as far as Mesa. They stayed in Mesa until it became too crowded, so they decided to continue their journey to California. On the way, they stayed at the Michigan Trailer Court near what would become Sun City.

“Some friends we knew here said



Jeannie Johnson/Daily News Sun

Alvina Muradas shows the brochure displaying the models available in 1960 when Sun City was developed. She and her husband were among the retirement community’s pioneers.

there was a nice place for older people, and they were talking about Youngtown,” Alvina said. “We looked around and liked it. We thought about buying something, but someone said, ‘Don’t buy here. Sun City is going to open pretty soon.’ So, on the way back to our trailer, we

stopped in the sales office for Sun City.

“There was this map on the wall where the houses would be built. I picked out a lot, but it already was taken. The salesman told us to call back on Monday to find out if the

See Woman critical, A5

Woman critical of traffic

—From A1

deal had actually gone through. It hadn't, and we got the lot."

That was January 1960 and the beginning of the Muradas' stay in Sun City. The sales agent gave Serafin and Alvina a brochure showing model homes ranging from \$8,500 to \$11,300. The lots sold for \$1,250, and air conditioning in the home could be added for another \$600.

On May 24, 1961, Les Parry handed them the keys to their new home. Alvina has since spent every winter in Sun City.

"We've spent a lot on this house over the years," Alvina said. "We kept adding to it. It's been painted at least two times since we got it. I just redecorated the kitchen last year."

Hard work and the pioneer spirit isn't new to the 84-year-old native of Mexico. Her father owned three copper mines, a coffee plantation and was superintendent of an electric plant when the Mexican revolution broke out. The rebels threatened to blow up the plant, and her father resisted the effort.

He was jailed for a time until illness struck. While in the infirmary, rumors spread that the rebels would shoot him in the back claiming he had tried to escape. With the help of President Woodrow Wilson, Alvina and her parents were able to escape Mexico with only the clothes on their backs.

The family went to Cuba, then on to New Orleans where her father worked for the U.S. government as an electrical engineer. After saving enough money, Alvina's parents bought a farm in Alabama.

Her father worked 20 miles north of the farm, so it was up to Alvina, her mother, aunt, grandmother and five sisters to run the 180-acre farm.

She met her husband while staying with her aunt in Birmingham.

"I was taking care of my aunt's little girl, and she was an active one," Alvina said. "I was running after her and went right by Serafin. He saw me and said 'Gee, you're pretty. I'm going to marry you.' I never thought I'd see him again."

They married in 1929. After 31 years of hard work and hard winters, it was time to head south for nine months of the year.

Alvina remembers how open and quiet it was among the cotton fields 35 years ago.

"All we had was the sales office, a post office, a Safeway store and a First of Arizona Bank," she said. "Del Webb added a motel where all our guests could stay. They had the only pool for awhile because I remember having to go over there to swim."

She also recalls what a tight-knit community the first enclave became.

"When we first moved here, it was so friendly," she said. "Anytime a new person would come into the neighborhood we would have a coffee klatch to get to know one another. We don't have that anymore. Just about all my friends who were here are gone now. The ones I have now are new and younger."

The couple kept busy in the new community, and Alvina returned to college. She earned her bachelor's degree in Spanish in 1961 and graduated second in her class just behind a nun.

"My husband didn't want me to go to college," she said. "He wanted to keep me where he could keep an eye on me. I went anyway by myself. I'd get up early while he was still sleeping and catch the bus to Tempe. I had to talk him into taking me to my final."

"When I graduated, he gave me a Spanish dictionary. I told him he should have given it to me before I was finished with my studies. These men. I don't know how we can stand them," she said with a laugh.

Residents of Sun City soon became the beneficiaries of her academic persistence. Alvina offered Spanish lessons for the next 12 years.

"I kept very busy with the classes I taught," she said. "It took a lot preparation time."

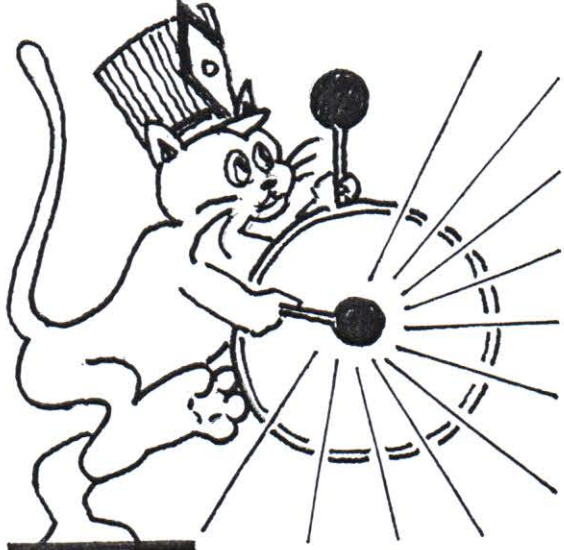
Her life changed dramatically in 1974. Serafin died and Alvina found herself with two homes and a car she didn't know how to drive.

She got behind the wheel for the first time at 63 and will only drive in Sun City. The tremendous amount of traffic in Sun City is the only thing she would change about the area, Alvina said.

"The traffic has gotten terrible," she said. "They ought to re-route it and keep it out of Sun City. That's what I'd do. Everybody gets lost around here. You can't find anybody."

Although the area has grown, and although her husband is gone, Alvina still loves coming to Sun City and is grateful for the opportunity.

"Del Webb sure was a nice man, and I'm very thankful to him," she said. "He was a fine, fine gentleman. He stopped us from going to California, and I sure wouldn't want to be there now."



SUN CITY PIONEERS

we invite you to

THE GRAND OLD WEST FEST

FRIDAY .. OCTOBER 1, 1993

10:00 A.M. - 12:00 NOON

at the

SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

[10801 OAKMONT AVENUE]

- Visit with old friends
- Meet new friends.
- See Sun City Memorabilia

ENJOY OUR COFFEE AND DOUGHNUTS

for more information call.. 974-2568
or Evelyn Parry --- 933-2698

West Fest taking shape

The Maricopa County Sheriff's Office Youth Assistance Foundation Walk-A-Thon kicks off Oct. 2 events. The walk, which will begin in the Sundome parking lot, benefits a foundation which supports youth programs throughout the county.

Antique car displays, a celebrity baseball game at Sun Cities Stadium and a "Country Street Dance" in the Sundome parking lot will conclude the fest's second day.

"We're going to have a country band playing in the Sundome parking lot," Watson said. "We're looking into having someone there to encourage line dancing. ... It'll be a mixture of all types of dancing."

Watson's planning committee is urging area businesses to participate in the event with themed decorating, costumes for employees and sponsorship of related events.

Daily News-Sun staff

Businesses and organizations in Sun City, Sun City West, Youngtown, Surprise and El Mirage are planning a shindig — and everyone's invited.

The Grand Old West Fest, scheduled for Oct. 1 and 2, is named for Grand Avenue, the street that unites the five communities. The festival will include Western-themed performances, exhibits and events at area shopping centers, the Sun Bowl, the Sundome and Sun Cities Stadium.

Major sponsors of the two-day event are the Northwest Valley Chamber of Commerce, the Daily News-Sun, Del Webb Corp. and the Sundome Center for the Performing Arts.

On Oct. 1, free entertainment at 15 area shopping centers will be the order of the day. Historical exhibits from the Arizona Civil War Council and a Sunfresh Farms petting zoo will also be on display, said Connie Watson, Del Webb spokeswoman and chairwoman of the event.

At 6:30 p.m. the Sun Bowl Sunset Show begins with acts including the Sun City Poms, the "Just For Fun Four" barbership quartet, the Westernaires Chorus and other groups to be announced.



SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

August 13, 1993

Dear

The copy of a news release on the reverse side of this letter will explain the reason for writing.

On Friday, October 1st we plan to host an open house/reception for the remaining "pioneers" - there are now about 100 left. The reception hours will be from 10:00 a.m. to 12 noon. Excluding age we consider you one of the pioneers! After all, you were there when it all started.

We certainly hope you can find the time to be with us and I know the "pioneers" would enjoy seeing you again and "do you remember when..."

To save you writing a letter, you can let us know by calling 974-2568 and leaving a message. If you would like more information and want me to call you, just let me know.

It will be good to see you again.

Cordially,

Jane Freeman

John Meeker
Owen Childress
Tom Austin
Jerry Svendsen

SONG OF THE SUN CITY PIONEERS
(Dedicated to Mr. Del E. Webb)
Tune: HOME ON THE RANGE

Verse 1

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!

Verse 2

They came first to look; but looking, they stayed
In the place next to Heaven's own door.
In letters, they wrote of the joys they had found
Until friends joined them here, more and more.

Verse 3

O, lucky was he, and lucky was she
To be part of this pioneer band!
They realized dreams as they helped found a town
Where the castles are not built of sand.

CHORUS

Bold, brave pioneers,
Leaving loved ones and all of their kind,
To challenge a plan well designed for their years
And new opportunities find!

- Lilian Steele Munson

Lilian Steele Munson

Local Historical Society rescues SC Pioneers Club

Club nearly disbanded due to low membership

The Sun City Pioneers Club has a new lease on life.

The club, whose members were among those who moved to Sun City during the early 1960s, announced last month that it was disbanding after 17 years due to dwindling membership.

Thanks to an offer by the Sun Cities Historical Society, the club will continue to meet on a regular basis. According to Les Merydith, president of the Historical Society, the club is welcome to hold its meetings at the home of the Historical Society.

"The Sun City Pioneers Club is too valuable a source of historical data to be allowed to disappear from the local scene," says Mr. Merydith.

"The Society has therefore offered the following services to the Pioneers Club to continue as long as there is one Pioneer left to participate."

The services offered are:

- The Pioneer Club will make available for club use the Society's facilities, including the meeting room, kitchen, filing and copying.
- The Society will perform secretarial service including maintaining the roster and mailings.
- The Society will conduct oral history or VCR-taped interviews with Pioneers who have items of historical significance to record.
- The Society will provide a permanent repository for any items of historical significance that members wish to leave to the Society.
- Members will receive invitations to all meetings and programs.

Sun Cities Independent 11-14-90

Fri., Nov. 2, 1990 The Arizona Republic/THE PHOENIX GAZETTE

Farewell lunch gives new life for Pioneers

By Connie Cone Sexton
Staff writer

SUN CITY — Don't play taps yet for the Sun City Pioneer Club, its members say.

During what was to be the final annual meeting of the club Saturday, several members protested the club's proposed demise.

Dozens of the 125 people attending a "farewell" luncheon Saturday asked that the club carry on.

Pioneer Club members — many of whom are now in their 80s and 90s — settled into Sun City between 1960 and 1965, the early years of the retirement community. The club formed 17 years ago to share memories and rekindle friendships.

But the planning of club activities recently has become burdensome, say club leaders Margaret Diggs and Evelyn Parry.

During the past year, the Pioneer Club's board decided that Saturday's luncheon was to be the group's last organized meeting.

But sentiment washed over the crowd during the lunch. When club president Walter Witt asked how many people wanted to continue meeting, there was a flurry of hands.

Parry, Diggs and Witt have worried about who would be willing to take over; they said new leaders were needed to help the board. "It's hard sometimes to get people involved," Diggs said.

Her fears may be unfounded. Members of the Sun City Historical Society have volunteered to help.

Historical club member Les Merydith made the offer during the Pioneer Club's luncheon Saturday.

When historical society members heard that the day was to be the final meeting of the club, the news "had come as quite a shock," Merydith said.

Members of the historical group did not want to see the Pioneer Club disappear, he said. To keep the group going, Merydith said the historical society is willing to perform all secretarial duties, including keeping a roster of the Pioneer Club members up to date.

See PIONEERS, Page 3



David McIntyre / Staff photographer
Inez Chamberlin, 99, attends what was supposed to be the final luncheon of the Sun City Pioneers, which may not disband after all.

PIONEERS

Because Pioneer members have a rich history of the area, he said his group would like to make written and oral histories, interviewing the Pioneer members to make a record of the early years of Sun City.

"We should have a file drawer full and a stack of tapes" from the Pioneers, Merydith said.

He offered the use of the historical society's facility in Sun City for meetings and programs. Pioneers can bring items they would like to donate to the society,

which will act as a repository, Merydith said.

In providing such services, he said he hopes to keep the Pioneer group alive "right down to the last Pioneer."

In an interview after the luncheon, Witt said he appreciated the historical society's offer. "We'll work along with them and maybe give them more to work with as time goes on," he said.

Witt said the society is a "natural" group that could take over the purpose of the Pioneer

Club. "There has been a mutual interest in preserving the history of Sun City," he said.

"It takes a tremendous amount of work to keep the Pioneer Club going. If new blood wants to come along, we'll work with them," Witt said.

Pioneer Club member Fred Turner, 85, moved to Sun City 29 years ago. He said he enjoys being a part of history and hopes the spirit of the club will continue.

"It's just wonderful to get together with fellow Pioneers. I

really appreciate our time," he said.

Edna Wagner, 79, agreed. She was surprised to see so many people at the luncheon.

"It's amazing that so many of our people are still getting around as well as they do," she said.

Wagner, who moved to Sun City in 1961, also has enjoyed the Pioneer Club. "It's wonderful that the club has lasted this long. I love seeing everyone. We're like one big family."

Opinion

■ OUR VIEW

They created Sun City's lifestyle

A community's first residents are the ones who give it life, who create its image.

They lead it through its infancy. They shape the civic and service groups and clubs, setting their purposes and goals. They organize the activities. They establish a lifestyle that makes the new community a recognizable entity.

The residents who moved to Sun City during its first, formative years did that.

Their love for the freedom of active retirement and the beauty of their desert surroundings was communicated enthusiastically to friends back home who were soon to retire. Former neighbors and friends came to join them and this undoubtedly accounted for the friendliness that characterized Sun City then and impresses visitors now.

Those early residents were recognized for their influence on the development of Sun City's unique lifestyle by being designated Sun City Pioneers in 1973. The

original Pioneers were those who moved to Sun City in 1960 and 1961. Later, as their numbers decreased, residents who had moved to Sun City from 1962 to 1965 were given associate member status.

A while back, when the Pioneers were planning their annual luncheon, it was felt that dwindling numbers might make it their final meeting. Not so. The 17th annual event drew 102 people, Pioneers and guests. So, there will be an 18th luncheon; and the Sun Cities Area Historical Society has offered to help maintain the group's records and will tape interviews with members.

These tapes will keep alive the stories of early Sun City for now and the future. Sun Citians owe the Pioneers a huge debt of gratitude for their contributions.

We salute these First Citizens for the spirit that led them to a new kind of community and for their imprint on its history.

Pioneers receive new life

Club assured of future

By JACQUE PAPPAS
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — A meeting thought to be the last hurrah for the Sun City Pioneers on Saturday ended up being a new beginning for the community's original residents.

Earlier this month, the Pioneers considered disbanding the club because attendance at annual meetings had dropped drastically since the group was established in 1973.

Evelyn Parry and Margaret Diggs, who have borne the bulk of work for the club since it started, said more Pioneers need to show an interest in the club to keep it alive.

But with 120 Pioneers and their guests at the group's 17th annual luncheon, President Walter Witt said he did not want the club to call it quits.

"This was publicized as our last meeting. With the turnout here, I'm not sure," Witt said.

Witt said the club will operate on its own for at least one more year. And an offer made at the meeting by the Sun Cities Area Historical Society assured the future prosperity of the club down to the last living Pioneer.

Les Merydith, president of the historical society, offered a



Daily News-Sun photo by Stephen Cherek

SUN CITY'S FIRSTS — The Sun City Pioneers helped establish the first clubs, service groups and community programs in Sun City. The Pioneers, who moved to the community in 1960, attended the group's 17th annual luncheon Saturday.

number of services to the Pioneers.

"The Sun City Pioneers Club is too valuable a source of historical data to be allowed to disappear from the local scene," Merydith 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 Sun City from 1962 to 1965.

Merydith said the historical society's office — in Sun City's first model house on 107th Avenue and Oakmont Drive — is open to the Pioneers.

In addition, the society offered to maintain the club's roster and mailings, conduct taped interviews with members who

have stories of the early years and honor at least one Pioneer each month, Merydith said.

"We want to help the club continue as long as there is one Pioneer left to participate," Merydith said.

Many of the Pioneers at Saturday's meeting said they were happy with the historical society's offer.

Sarah Butts, who moved to Sun City in 1960, said she always looks forward to seeing her first friends at the annual luncheon.

"We all love to come to these meetings and reminisce, so their offer to help us out is wonderful," Butts said.

Butts, 89, once volunteered as a Sun City hostess, taking newcomers on bus tours of the

community in the 1960s.

"I still meet people who say they remember me giving tours on one of Del Webb's buses," she said.

Several of the pioneers at the meeting are in their late 90s. One is 100 years old. Many had stories to tell of Sun City's early years.

Bernice Wallace, 95, said she moved to a two-bedroom house in Sun City from a log house in Oklahoma.

She still lives in her original home on Desert Hills Court, drives and does her own yard work.

"The early years were so exciting," Wallace said. "I remember the parades we had along 107th (Avenue) from Peoria to Grand (avenues)."

Monday, Oct. 29, 1990 Daily News-Sun, Sun City, Ariz.

SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY**A PROPOSAL TO THE SUN CITY PIONEERS CLUB FROM THE SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY:**

The Sun City Area Historical Society recognizes the Sun City Pioneers Club as a unique and irreplaceable source of historical data. The Society seeks to encourage and assist the Pioneers Club in its activities. The Society is therefore offering the following services to the Pioneer Club to continue as long as there is one pioneer left to participate.

- 1 - The Pioneer Club will have available for club use the Society's facilities including meeting room, kitchen, filing and copying.
- 2 - The Society will perform secretarial service for the Pioneers including: maintaining the roster and mailing.
- 3 - The Society will conduct oral history or VCR taped interviews with Pioneers who have items of historical significance to record.
- 4 - The Society will provide a permanent repository for any items of historical significance that Pioneer members wish to leave to the Society.
- 5 - Pioneer members will receive invitations to all meetings and programs.
- 6 - One or more Pioneers will be honored monthly. The public will be invited to meet them and enjoy informal programs and exhibits.

NOTE: THE ABOVE PROPOSAL WAS APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND BY THE SUN CITY PIONEERS CLUB AT ITS ANNUAL MEETING ON OCTOBER 27, 1990.

OVER

ATTENTION SUN CITY PIONEERS !

The Sun City Area Historical Society is committed to preserving the history of Sun City and recognizes that there are over 150 Sun City Pioneers who have knowledge and memories that should be recorded and mementoes that should be preserved for future generations.

Last year the Society purchased the first model home that Del Webb Built in Sun City and it has served as our headquarters and museum since Sun City's 30th anniversary on January 1, 1990.

We want you to know that the Society's home is also the Pioneer's home and we want you to make yourself at home at the Society's headquarters on Oakmont Ave. next door to the Oakmont Recreation Center.

--The welcome mat is out. Pay us a visit.

If you have not already done so, we suggest you pay a visit to the museum and get acquainted with our personnel and our facilities. We are open every day from one to three in the afternoon and we will be happy to show you around and answer any questions you may have regarding our aims and our operations.

--Tell us about the Pioneer days.

You know what happened in the early sixties when Sun City was just getting started. Your stories added to those of other pioneers will provide authentic historical information for future residents and scholars. We will be happy to make appointments to record your recollections of interesting things that were going on when you first moved to town. How about fires, floods, parades, rallies and celebrations?

--Bring us your items of historical interest.

Don't throw away those old pictures, newspaper clippings, brochures and souvenirs. For example, the dates when the various Sun City organizations were founded and the names of the founders have historical significance and should be preserved.

--Register as a Pioneer with the Historical Society.

Please fill out and return the enclosed Pioneer Registration form. This information will be part of the permanent records of the Society and will insure that you will receive future mailings from the Society.

lem 11/1/90

OVER

End of an era

Sun City Pioneers to disband

By PEG KEITH
Sun Cities Independent

There's something, well, final, about the word, "final."

The Sun City Pioneers, who will hold its final meeting this month and members are taking the announcement with a grain of salt.

The "final" event is a luncheon gathering, at noon, Oct. 27, at the Lakes Club. Cost is \$10, and reservations must be made by Oct. 19.

The group has been around for a long time, and members take changes in stride. "Final" may not mean what it says.

Club members who are interested are being invited to continue small-group get-togethers.

The club, which enjoyed its exclusivity, was organized 17 years ago and is comprised of the very first Sun City homeowners.

Members are those who received keys to homes from Les Parry, Del Webb Key Man, during 1960 and 1961.

Member Margaret Diggs says the end of the group is the "passing" of an era in Sun City history.

See PIONEERS, PAGE 10

• PIONEERS

"Membership has, inevitably, declined with the passage of years, and because of this, associate members were added. Associates were those who received their keys from 1962-65."

Mrs. Diggs says that, for this final meeting, all members may invite friends and neighbors who came to this community in other years as guests to the luncheon meeting.

She and her husband, the late Dudley Diggs, came to Sun City in 1962.

"We barely were Pioneers."

The Pioneers, she adds, are not sad at the finality of the coming affair.

"Courageous, rather," she says.

Some 150 cards are being mailed to Pioneers and Associates. How many will show up for the party remains a mystery.

Since the group organized, they've had only two meetings a year.

The October luncheon and a program in February.

"People abruptly stopped coming in 1984, '85 and '86. Technically, although they haven't attended, they're still Pioneers."

Most of them maintained contacts for fellowship,

reminiscing and sharing scrap books and special memories.

Mrs. Diggs says, "I loved it, in the beginning. It was so exciting. "I hope Sun City will go on forever," Mrs. Diggs continues.

"But I know we had the best."

Those who came in 1960, were the true Pioneers, she says.

"They didn't know if Sun City, the concept, would get off the ground.

"They were leaders, administrators, educators. They cut their ties to families and familiar surroundings and moved."

Many people don't understand that Del Webb didn't start the groups and organizations.

The ones who moved here, the Pioneers, started them. They were leaders, full of energy and ideas, recalls Mrs. Diggs.

The houses were moderately priced, to appeal to everyone. During the 1960s, residents didn't talk or brag about what they had done.

They just got together and made Sun City come to life.

"They came with enthusiasm and faith. These are things the Pioneers gave us.

"They did all these things to make Sun City as exciting as it is. They made it a success."

Daily News-Sun, Sun City, Ariz. Saturday, Oct. 13, 1990

SC Pioneers will play taps at '90 party

By JACQUE PAPPAS
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Thousands of people poured into Sun City in the early 1960s to catch a glimpse of a new way of life created by Del Webb Development Corp.

Many of them had never seen a cactus, much less heard of active retirement living.

They are known as pioneers — people who moved to Sun City when it was just a row of model houses along Oakmont Drive surrounded by cotton fields.

About 17 years ago, the Sun City Pioneers started meeting annually to talk about old times and share the nostalgia of the community's roots.

But this year's annual get-together may be the last one organized for the group of Sun City originals.

"I have mixed emotions about this," club secretary Evelyn Parry said. "It's kind of bitter-sweet thinking that this may be the last luncheon the Pioneers have. We've had a cherished membership and it's been great, but the number of pioneers is getting slimmer and slimmer."

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 Sun City from 1962 to 1965.

Parry, who moved to Sun City in the spring of 1960, said nearly 200 residents are still living in the community who moved in during 1960 and 1961.

Many of the pioneers still living in Sun City are not able to attend the group's annual luncheon and breakfast coffee because of illness or other reasons, Parry said.

"I hope that those who want to remain active get involved with the Sun Cities Area Historical Society. The Pioneers could really add a touch of nostalgia as volunteers," Parry said.

Margaret Diggs, who handles publicity for the Pioneers, said the final luncheon will be Oct. 27 in the Lakeside Banquet Center, 10484 W. Thunderbird Blvd.

For reservations call 933-2698.

"People who are not even connected with the Pioneers may come and help celebrate the final luncheon," Diggs said. "We're a long-lived generation, but it's hard to get people who want to help put these luncheons together and organize the few Pioneers left in Sun City."

See Pioneers, A5

—From A1

Diggs, who moved to Sun City in the spring of 1961, doesn't even consider herself a "true pioneer."

"The true pioneers are the ones who came here in 1960 when this was nothing but one little shopping center, a golf

course and a row of model homes. It took courage for these people to come out here from every state in the union and settle down," Diggs said. "Nobody knew whether Del Webb was a scoundrel taking their money or whether Sun City was going to be successful."



BILL TURNER PHOTO



SUN LIFE PHOTO



BILL TURNER PHOTO

DESERT DELIGHT

by Bill Turner

Residents – old and new – see Sun City as a retirement oasis

History is a record of things past, an image chiseled on the wall of a cave, an award etched on the face of a memorial plaque, or a story inked on a printed page.

But the most indelible historical records are locked in the hearts of those who lived through the events.

The "pioneers" of Sun City — many of them still alert and active although slower to move about — enjoy relating happy memories of Sun City when it was only a tiny speck on the Arizona desert. Little did they realize that Sun City would grow and prosper to the extent and with the swiftness that it did. Or that the old would blend with the new — the new, in time, replacing the old. Let's stroll through the years and watch the process in action.

A man named Lester Parry once traveled to the Southwest in search of clean air and a warmer climate. In Arizona, he found what he was looking for,

and immediately began to send persuasive brochures and enticing press clippings to his wife in Wisconsin. His glowing letters described a new retirement community west of Phoenix.

Back in Wisconsin, Evelyn Parry faithfully pasted the literature in her scrapbook, and impatiently waited for the day when she could terminate her employment and join Lester in his newly discovered Utopia.

The year was 1960, and for three decades since, Evelyn has saved press clippings, books and brochures. Gently touching her scrapbooks filled with pasted memories, she describes the new Sun Cities Area Historical Society headquarters. One day it will probably house her treasures. Locating the building on an old map, Mrs. Parry asked, "Did you know this was the first model home built by Del Webb?"

NO MATTER whether they're pioneer Sun Citians or newcomers, these four couples all have something in common: their love of Sun City. Ina and John Dodt, far left, are 30-year residents who find contentment in a quieter life that includes bridge games. Dr. Walter Witt and his wife, Gladys, bottom left, also moved to Sun City 30 years ago and were involved in organizing one of its first churches. Newcomers, such as Phil and Jackie Morris, left, and Bob and Lillian Parkhurst, right, had no trouble settling into the community. The Morrises keep busy remodeling their house and traveling, and the Parkhursts take advantage of the "overwhelming" recreational activities and the harvest from their backyard citrus trees.



SUN LIFE PHOTO

On Looking Back

Sun City is a legend with an international reputation. Among its surviving pioneers one finds contentment — even gratitude — for happy retirement years in the desert community. They talk with affection about landmarks like Del Webb's Hiway House, Oakmont Recreation Center and Grand Shopping Center.

Dr. Walter Witt and his wife, Gladys, arrived in the early days to organize one of the first churches in Sun City. In his wise way, he is able to put historical events in proper perspective and to characterize Sun City's development as a social pheno-

menon. He recalls active days of the pioneers, admitting that occasional jealousies and conflicts sprang up among the people. Such things are inevitable when large groups live closely together.

Oakmont Center, Dr. Witt recalls, was unwilling at first for church services to be held in the social hall while the worship center was being built.

"We even considered meeting on the golf course," Dr. Witt said. But the recreation board finally relented. **PIONEERS, cont. page 26**

PIONEERS, from page 25

ed and opened its doors to the church group. Eight months later, the first church building was completed.

George and Charlotte Swanson moved to Sun City from Glendale, although the couple originally migrated from Illinois. For most of his life George had been a banker, so he was selected by the president of First National (now First Interstate) in Phoenix to head up a new branch in Sun City.

"I didn't want to come," Charlotte said, "unless I could have a very special house on the golf course." They still live in that special house.

"We've never had any regrets," the couple agreed. "It was the best decision we ever made in our lives."

The Swansons described "the crazy things" they used to do with new-found friends: "We'd dress up in costumes on Halloween and go 'trick or treating' except we'd give things instead of asking for them."

The Swansons participated in many of Sun City's activities, but their favorite pastimes were "rock-hounding" and ceramics. They carted unique rocks from the desert floor and used them to line the sidewalks around their house. Very special stones decorate coffeetables or lie neatly arranged in storage cabinets. The couple also enjoyed climbing mountains or finding a safe, secluded place to sharpen their skills with target pistols.

"But we don't do those things anymore," Charlotte said without sadness. Their lives move at a slower pace now. Like many others, they are content to watch television or deal cards instead of hiking desert trails and exploring mountain hideaways.

John and Ina Dodt, another pair of pioneers, have likewise discovered contentment in a quieter life, although Ina swings her golf clubs three days a week. Because they are still fun-loving people, it's easy to imagine what a joy they must have been 30 years ago: golf, parties, bridge — even hula-dancing programs. They did it all. John was an early-day real-estate salesman for Del Webb. He "sold" himself a house in 1960 — a charming place they still occupy.

"I never dreamed I could love Sun City so much," Ina said. "So much to do. So many friends." And Sun City loves her — at least the quieter part of Sun City does, because on the day of this interview her telephone rang incessantly — with friends calling to wish her a happy 81st birthday.

Enter the Newcomers

As life's tempo slows for Sun City's hardy pioneers, a younger breed of retired folks have appeared to play golf, fill the restaurants, heat the kilns, and provide new leadership for the churches.

Among the "replacement crop" are Bob and Lillian Parkhurst, who moved to Sun City three years ago. For the Parkhursts the abundance of recreation activities is overwhelming. Like hundreds of others, they abandoned winter snow and snarled traffic to discover the unique lifestyle of a desert retirement community. Sun City is their reward for many years of service to the corporate world.

Pioneers honored as SC trendsetters

By JACQUE PAPPAS
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Like most Sun Citians, they were born before television, penicillin, frozen food, credit cards, instant coffee and ballpoint pens.

But unlike most local residents, they moved to the retirement community soon after the original model homes opened in January 1960.

Sun City Pioneers — people who moved to the community in the early 1960s — were honored Saturday at a program that saw reminiscing about the community's infancy.

The nearly 100 Pioneers who attended the program were individually recognized and given a red and white carnation.

Many of the Pioneers, who moved to Sun City between 1960 and 1965, said they still live in their original homes.

The majority are older than 80 and some played major roles in establishing businesses, charitable organizations and clubs in Sun City.

George Swanson was manager of First National Bank — the first bank that opened in Sun City.

See Original, A3

Original residents feted

—From A1

"There wasn't too much around Sun City at that time. Now there's a bank on every corner," Swanson said. "Most people in Sun City weren't around when the first bank opened but the Pioneers were. They were here from the beginning."

Sun City's early residents walked down memory lane as they were reminded of national, local and musical highlights of the 1960s.

Among those in attendance were Joe and Emily Slaughter, who moved to Sun City in 1960 and still live in the same house.

"Sun City has grown up so much. It wasn't very big when we moved here from Iowa," Joe Slaughter said.

The Slaughters, who are 97

and 98 years old, were among some of the oldest Pioneers in attendance.

Gayle Woodcock, 98, is another one of the oldest Pioneers. She moved to Sun City in October 1960 and now lives in Sun Valley Lodge — the retirement community's first nursing home.

"We moved here because we wanted this lifestyle that offered so much to senior citizens," Woodcock said.

Alex Smith, 87, who moved to Sun City in February 1961, remembers the many events that took place in the retirement community shortly after it opened.

"In 1962 and 1963 they had a big parade down 107th Avenue. There would also be a big cook-out in the center (Oakmont Recreation Center, the commu-

nity's first recreation center)," Smith said. "Things are still on the move here. I'm playing golf this afternoon."

Since the Pioneers club was established in 1973, members have met twice a year for a luncheon and a breakfast.

Membership was originally open to residents who moved to Sun City in 1960 and 1961, but as membership decreased, the club opened to members who moved to community from 1962 to 1965.

Dollie Hengstler, 83, purchased her Sun City home in 1964.

"One day we opened the Saturday Evening Post and saw this double-page ad for Sun City," she said. "We decided to come out here as quick as we could."

'We've always had a good time'

Pioneers recall Sun City's early days -- the fun, the activities, the comradery

Editor's note: In honor of Sun City's 30th anniversary, during the next four weeks the Independent's "Sun City Profile" will feature Sun City pioneers.

Sun Citian

Profile

Portraits Of Our Residents

By PEG KEITH
Sun Cities Independent

John and Ina Dodt came to Sun City to enjoy their retirement, and that's just what they've been doing, for the past 30 years.

In fact, Mr. Dodt, 90, says he can't imagine living anywhere else.

The Midwesterners (they're from Indiana and Illinois) moved to Arizona in 1958, after he retired as a Railway Express agent in Indiana. She was a former model in Illinois.

The couple settled in Scottsdale where Mr. Dodt worked as an expeditor in his brother's construction company.

Soon, he busied himself in acquiring a real estate license and in fashioning a new career.

When Sun City started, the Dodts both joined the Del Webb team. As a real estate agent, he sold the first house that was built in Sun City.

The purchaser was John G. McDonald, a motel builder from Denver. Mr. McDonald owned the house from 1960 until 1984. The second owner was Vera Jean Painter, owner of Jean's Sportstogs of Sun City.

The Historical Society of Sun City recently purchased the residence from Mrs. Painter and has

turned it into a museum.

It must be the Sun City ambience. The "first house" has maintained its charm, as have Sun City Pioneers, Mr. and Mrs. Dodt.

Mr. Dodt resumed his retirement last year, after racking up a total of 70 years on the job.

"If you're active, you'll live longer," he declares.

He insists that he'd never have made it this far, if he hadn't lived in Sun City. All the outdoors, all the fresh air and activity keep the body going, he declares.

His "retirement" years were built on activity. John was one of the first 10 Del Webb salesmen, and became a sales manager for the Webb organization.

Later, he organized his own real estate firm, Sun City Realty, with his partner, the late Hal James.

As one of the 1961 Pioneer Del Webb hostesses, Mrs. Dodt introduced visitors to the model homes.

"I never did sell houses out here," says Mr. Dodt.

"No, there was never any hard sell," his wife agrees, explaining that her husband would take the visitors around to several houses, and explain the good and the not-so-good.

Sun City just sold itself.

"Those days were the days when we did things," says Mrs. Dodt. "We've always had a good time."

Her ready smile, and his affectionate attention emphasize the words. "I didn't really retire until Jan. 1, 1988," he says,

adding that he loved his work.

"He loved anything he did," Mrs. Dodt agrees.

Life in the retirement community wasn't all work. Mr. Dodt belonged to the Businessmen's Golf Group and enjoyed tournaments, which, for the most part were set in June, July and August, "the hottest part of the day, the hottest months of the year," he declares.

He quit golfing about seven years ago.

His wife, about 10 years younger than he, still golfs regularly, and describes herself as an avid bridge player.

Mrs. Dodt recalls the comradeship of helping build the community, the enjoyment and friendly ease in knowing almost everyone in Sun City, being on a first-name basis with newcomers and oldtimers.

There were style shows and dances and card games, and parties around the pool to keep folks occupied.

And hula dances.

The Dodts traveled to Hawaii shortly after they moved to Arizona, and both earned their proficiency certificates for the dances — the trademark of the Island Paradise.

"The Hula Boys were great out here," Mrs. Dodt laughs.

Life has changed, certainly.

"Sun City was smaller; that made for more friendship ... We had about 2,000 people in 1961," she says.

"But it's a dream for us to be living out here ... we wonder

how we could have been so lucky."

And he continues, "We fell into a big bowl of wishbones."

The Dodts have lived in the same house for 30 years. It fits their needs, as they've enlarged it to some extent, but preserved the restful, sweeping view of Fairway golf course.

They remain involved in community affairs as board members of the Pioneers Association, an organization made up of residents who have lived in Sun City since its early days.



NO REGRETS. Although Sun City Pioneers John and Ina Dodt moved to Sun City 30 years ago, they say they continue to enjoy the community as much now as they did when they first moved into their home. Working for the Webb Corporation, Mr. Dodt was the salesman who sold the very first Sun City home.



LOOKING BACK. The Dodts were involved in a number of community activities during the early days of Sun City. Both were fans of hula dancing and were responsible for organizing the Hula Men, shown above. Although the group made for a nice photograph, the Hula Men has long since disbanded.

225 'pioneers' still live in 'a real fun community'

1st house built in development now a museum

By Jeff Nies
Arizona Republic Correspondent

From the outside, the white, two-bedroom house at 10801 Oakmont Ave. seems an unassuming landmark for a cultural revolution led by Sun City developer Del E. Webb.

Sun City's first official residence has a single carport, desert landscaping and a backyard view of the 154-acre front nine of the 72-par North Golf Course.

Although she has never lived in the home, Vera Jean Painter is very much a part of its history.

Painter, owner of Jean's Sportsgs, 12801 W. Bell Road, bought it in 1984 for \$50,000 from the family of the original owner, Denver motel builder John McDonald. He and, in turn, each of his two wives, occupied it for 24 years.

"I just thought it would be nice to own the first home in Sun City," Painter said.

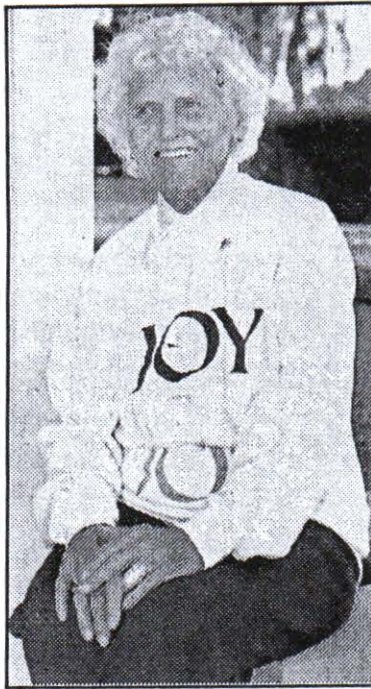
At the time, "I also had (my) business at (Grand Center) on the corner of Grand Avenue and 107th Avenue. It was right across the street from the back door of my store."

Painter rented out the house while she owned it, never spending a single night there herself. She once considered moving her 94-year-old mother into it, but never did.

Last spring, she sold her piece of local history to the Sun Cities Area Historical Society for \$44,000.

"I sold it at a loss, but I felt like I made a donation to the Historical Society," she said.

Historical Society founders Jane Freeman and Glen Sandberg are grateful the property is now available for display and use as a local museum. It will be open to the



Michael Ging/The Arizona Republic
Mildred Toldrian, 82, is a pioneer of Sun City. When she and her now-deceased husband saw the community, "we were just amazed," she said. "We fell in love with it."

public starting Monday.

When new in 1959, the 950-square-foot Kentworth model home, built of brick, sold for \$8,500.

It was the prototypical starter house for an older but wiser generation — retiring grandparents of baby boomers, who bought into Webb's concept of an active lifestyle in their golden years, according to Sandberg.

Today, there are still 225 of the original residents.

One of them, Mildred Toldrian, 82, is a pioneer of both Sun City and Sun City West, where she moved when Del Webb Corp. opened it in 1978.

She and her now-deceased husband, Clarence, a 30-year Milwaukee postal worker, moved from Wisconsin to Phoenix in 1958

before being enticed to visit Sun City.

When they saw the place, "we were just amazed," she said.

"We fell in love with it," Toldrian said. "It was like country-club living, something we weren't used to."

On June 20, 1960, the couple bought a Brookside model home for about \$10,000 on a corner of a cul-de-sac at 12025 Hillcrest Drive.

"It was a two-bedroom, one-bath house, with a living room and nice kitchen area," Toldrian recalled.

The home was within walking distance of both Grand Center and the Oakmont Community Center, then the twin hubs of such Sun City socializing and recreational pursuits as golf, lawn bowling and swimming.

"We went swimming every day. If I went to the grocery store, I needed an hour and a half," she said, explaining that filling up her shopping cart was just an excuse for visiting with neighbors and making friends of new arrivals.

"It was a real fun community."

Despite Sun City's growth from a small, tight-knit community of 2,000 to today's population of 46,000, Toldrian said she and her husband never wanted to move.

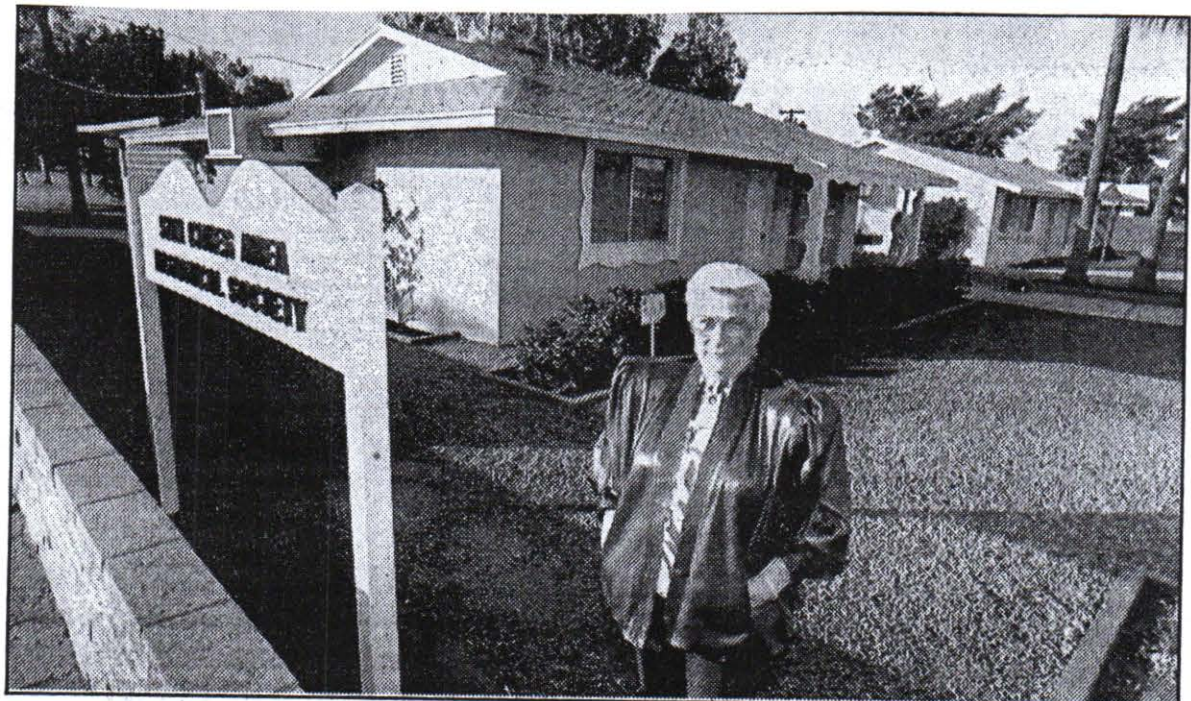
They lived together in the same house for 14 years.

After her husband's death in 1974, she stayed there four more years before deciding it was time to leave.

"I felt I had to do something different," she said. "I picked up all my good memories" and departed for Sun City West.

With the sale of her Sun City home, she purchased another in its sister community, where she maintains an active lifestyle.

"I like Sun City and Sun City West," she said. "There's so much to do. If you can't find something that interests you, then there's something wrong with you."



Michael Ging/The Arizona Republic
Vera Jean Painter, who bought Sun City's first official residence in 1984, sold her piece of history last year to the Sun Cities Area Historical Society. It was converted into a museum that will be open to the public starting Monday.

New world filled with laughing Hula boys, pool parties

By Connie Cone Sexton

Staff writer

SUN CITY — Ina Dods glanced at her 90-year-old husband and recalled the day he donned a skirt and danced the hula for a group of her friends.

Such antics were common for those living in Sun City during its early years. It was a time hula dances, backyard barbecues and festive parties were mainstays in the community.

"I was chairman of the golf association and had to plan for a luncheon," Ina said, remembering the occasion in the early 1960s.

"I decided to have the 'hula boys' entertain — six or seven of the men who lived out here. John was a hula boy," she said, tapping her husband's arm.

"Well, they got up on stage and started to dance. The girls at the luncheon laughed and applauded and then took the artificial flowers at their tables and threw them at John, at all of them. I'll never forget that."

The Dods, sitting across from one another in their Sun City home of 29 years, exchanged a few chuckles.

"It was a new world out here," John said, adding that the early retirees thought of themselves as pioneers, ready to carve out a niche in the retirement community.

Ina was about 50 in the early 1960s when they came to the community. "You wouldn't realize what the first Sun City was like. We had parties around the pool. I was a hula girl, too. We put on dances. It was wonderful."

John said that during those first few years the community had only about 2,000 people, compared with today's population of about 46,000. "We knew so many people by their first names, what they did, everything," John said. "It was a special time. We were sort of a family back then."

The Dods moved to the Valley in 1958 from Champaign-Urbana, Ill. Right away, the summer heat took hold.

"First time we came out here I burned my arm on a car door," John said. "I didn't want to turn around and go home, though. We thought we'd stick it out."

Some time after settling in

Scottsdale, John and Ina heard about Sun City.

"We came out here cold. We didn't know what we were going to see. But the more we saw, the more we liked," Ina said.

John liked it so much that he went to work as a salesman for Del Webb Development in Sun City.

Although they rented a house

first, their own home was finished in December 1961.

Through the years, John continued in the real estate business and retired just last year, at the age of 89.

Ina was one of Webb's hostesses, answering questions of those touring the models.

"One time, our janitor came in while I was sitting in the model No. 2 waiting for people to come in. He said, 'My, you look homely.' We both laughed. He said: 'I didn't mean to say that. I meant to say you look at home.'"

Ina said she enjoyed meeting so

See ■ PIONEERS, Page SC-18

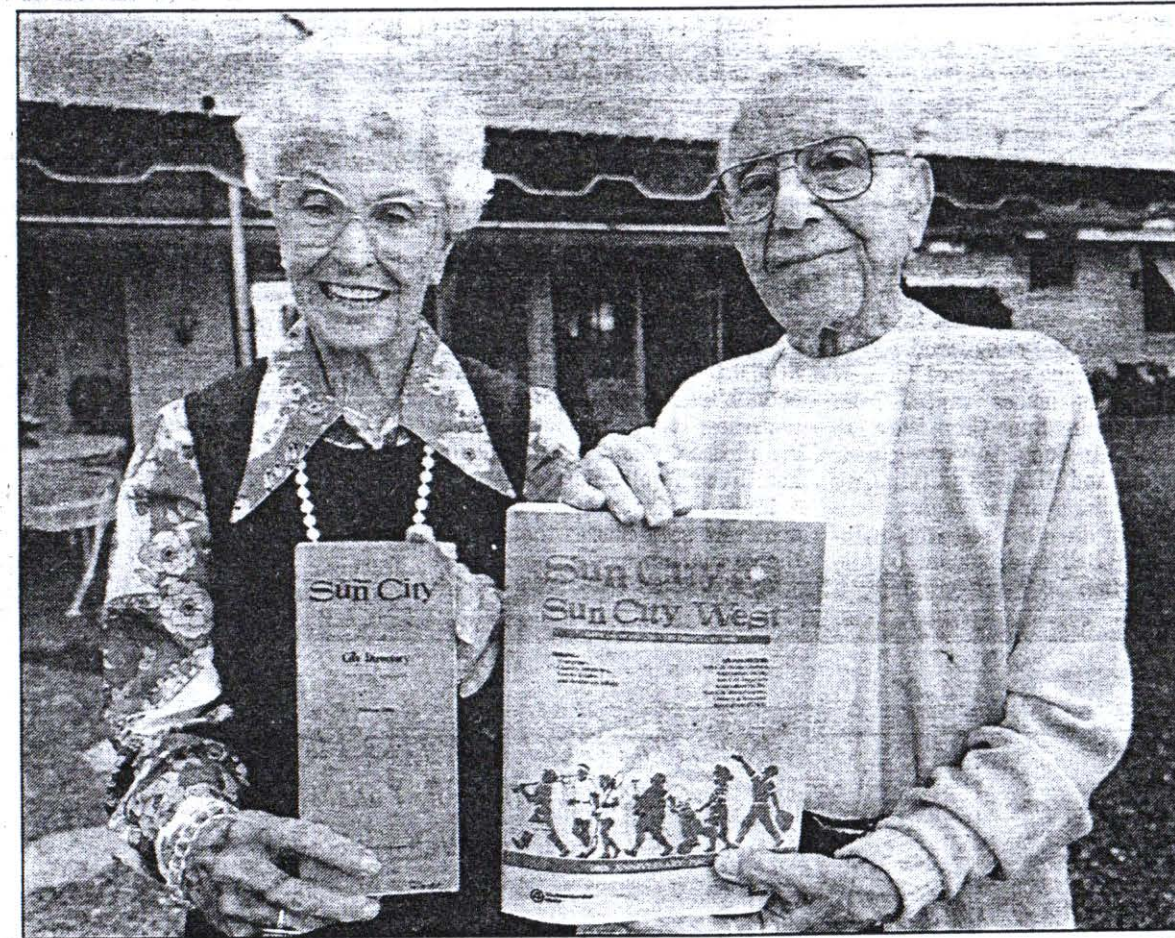
■ PIONEERS

many people.

"We had pensioners (those retiring on a pension) coming out at first. The pensions were about \$300 a month and I told people they could live on that amount with some of the houses costing less than \$10,000. I told them they couldn't have a ball on \$300 a month but you could live well," she said.

During his stint as a salesman for Webb, John said he met the developer himself.

"Del Webb was a wonderful man," John said. "We didn't get to see him much. But I sold four houses one day and he was here, and he patted me on the back and said 'Keep up the good work.'"



Hula dances, barbecues and parties were mainstays during the early days of Sun City. They were wonderful times, say pioneers Ina Dodt (above, far left) and her husband, John (group photo, second from right). The growth of the community is indicated by copies of the small, thin Sun City phone book from 1961, held by Ina, and the 1990 issue, about 2 inches thick, displayed by John.

Russell Gates, Staff photographer

Sun City West resident recalls days as 'pioneer'

By Tina Gamez
DAILY NEWS-SUN

After finishing his work with Sun City, Del E. Webb developed Sun City West, and those who bought their homes and were living in them by 1979, are considered "pioneers."

Lucille Hager, 85, still lives in the same home she and her late husband Bill, bought in 1979; and when they first came here, there was no grocery store. "It was really like you were out in the boonies, almost, when it first started."

The couple was living in Littleton, Colo., and Lucille had taken an early retirement. While looking at the Denver newspaper, she saw an advertisement about Sun City West in the travel section and what it had to offer, including renting two-week vacation apartments so those interested could take a closer look at the area.

She told her husband about

coming, to "take a look and see what it looks like."

Her husband's former boss was retired and lived in Sun City.

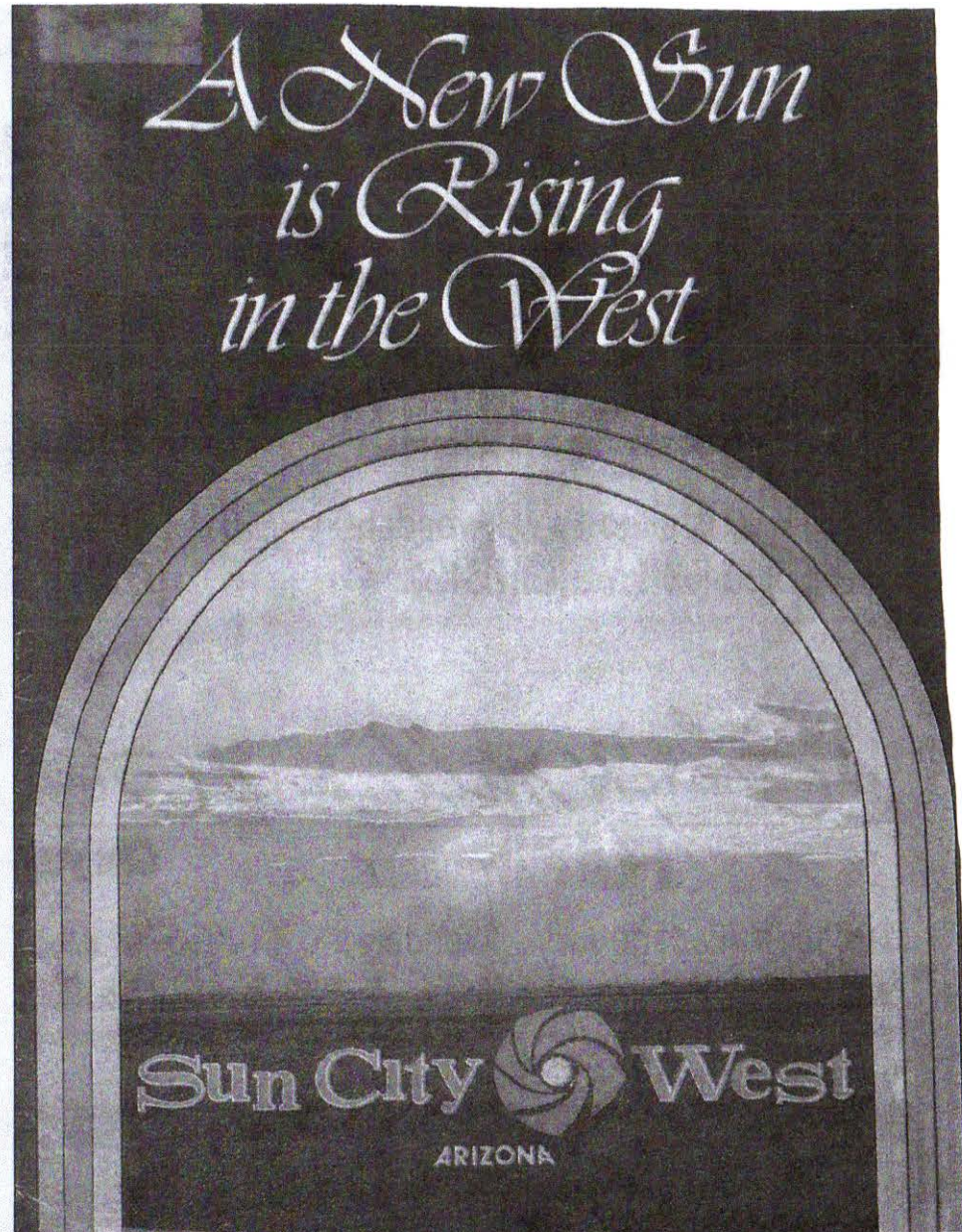
The Hagers visited in the early 1960s when they had just started Sun City. "I thought that was the neatest thing, all those little golf cars riding around," Lucille said. "When we retire, that's what I want, no lawns, all the rocks and everything."

Lucille said that when Del Webb finished Sun City, he was asked, "What are you going to do for an encore, and he said, 'Sun City West,'" and the first group of houses (models) were called "The Encore."

Groundbreaking for Sun City West took place on Feb. 15, 1978. Wesley Bolin was the governor and Dennis DeConcini was a U.S. Senator.

The Hagers came out for two weeks to stay in the vacation apartments

» See Hagers on page A6



This is a brochure Lucille Hager has kept since she came to vacation in Sun City West in 1979 to see if she and her husband were interested in moving to the retirement community. [Submitted photo]

Lucille Hager is one of the Sun City West "pioneers." She is next to a portrait of her late husband, Bill. [Tina Gamez/ Daily News-Sun]



Hagers

» From page A1
in August. Her husband
“wanted to come in the
summer so he could see if
he liked the heat.”

Lucille said at that time,
they were selling inventory
homes. “We decided we
would want a house, and he
wanted a large garage,” and
“at that time you could put
\$500 down.”

Prospective buyers were
given time to go back to
their homes and decide if
they wanted to make the
move. If you didn’t want
the house, “they’d refund
your money,” she said.

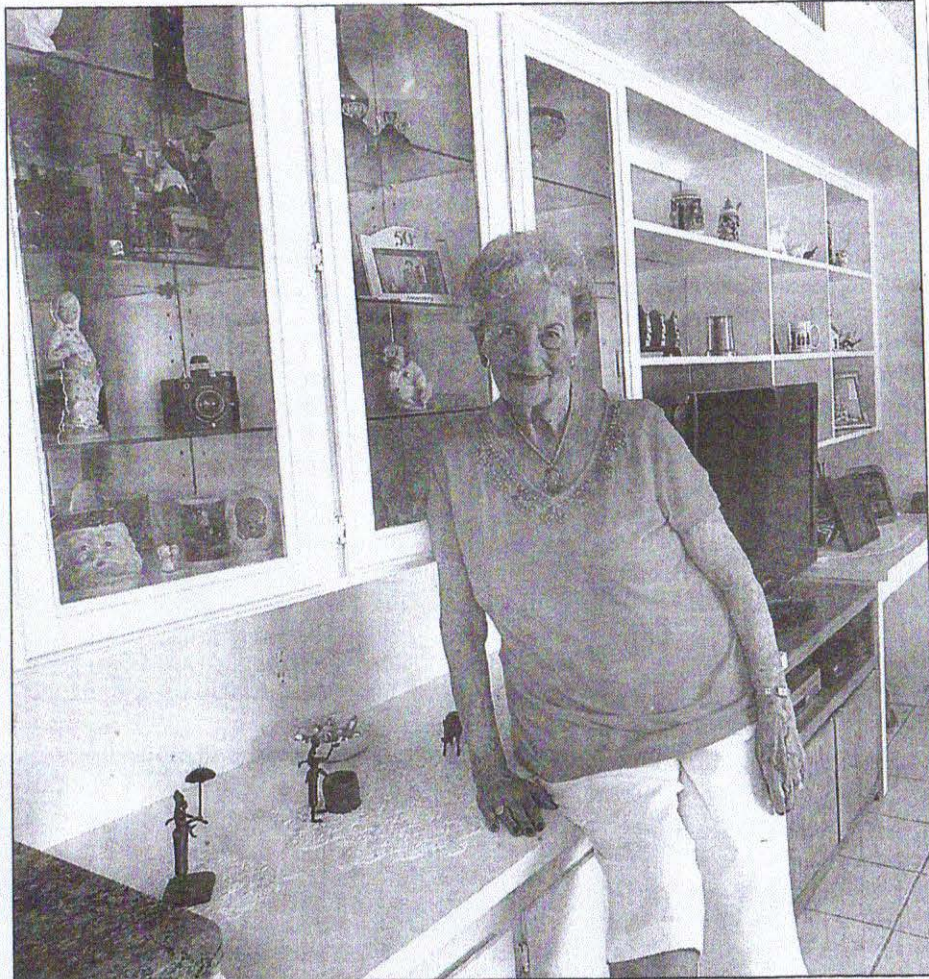
They decided they wanted
to live in Sun City West and
chose the spacious Berkley
model, paid for their home
on Oct. 11, and their annual
dues in November.

Since it was an inventory
house and already built,
they just needed to choose
their flooring and carpeting,
and make some changes
to their patio.

Camping out for six weeks,
Lucille and Bill moved in
with two cots, bedding, pots
and pans, and cooking utensils.
They used a sheet to cover
their window in the bedroom.

For groceries, they needed
to drive to the Safeway and
Longs Drugs in Sun City on
Bell Road and Del Webb
Boulevard.

The couple returned to
Colorado to wrap up the
sale of their house and return
with their belongings. When
they got back, the bridge
over the Agua Fria River
had been washed away
after heavy rains in



Lucille Hager is one of the Sun City West “pioneers.” She is in her original home, the Berkley model with the original built-in cabinetry that was a dark color and she had painted white. [Tina Gamez/Daily News-Sun]

February 1980.

So when they returned to
Sun City West in March,
they needed to drive on a
dirt road on the riverbed to
get to the grocery store.

They were here when the
Sundome opened. “We went
to the first performance,
which was Lawrence Welk,”
Lucille said.

Both of her sisters, Sandy
Jugenheimer and Shirley
Gliot, moved into Sun City
West later, because “they
liked the area” and

all there was to do.

As for how the community
is now, she said “it’s
different. Everything has
to change.”

Recreation Centers of
Sun City West General
Services Manager Katy
O’Grady said there are
currently 27,352 homeowners
and 1,033 associates, people
who live in the home but
not on the deed. The number
of tenants is not available.

So, although Lucille is a

“pioneer,” to be recognized
as a pioneer, she would
have had to join the
Pioneers Club in order to
gain “official status.”
Lucille was busy with
clubs she joined and
helped organize and
never realized there was
a Pioneer Club.

“I love it here.”
Lucille has no regrets
about moving to Sun City
West. “I wouldn’t go
any place else and I
hope I could stay in
this house for a long
time.”