

# Writer changes life— in Sun City . . .

By MARY DUMOND  
View Editor

A poet doesn't make hasty decisions when she's writing a poem.

She chooses an idea and the poetic form, fine-tunes the words and phrases, then rewrites, rewrites and polishes.

These decisions may or may not toughen an individual in making life-wrenching decisions.

Right now these life-wrenchers are decisions Truth Mary Fowler, an 11-year resident of Sun City and a master poet, has working with.

"I'm moving into a retirement home in Alexandria, Va.," she said. "We lived in Arlington more than 20 years and I know the area."

Her son, George, wonders how comfortable his mother will be in one room "with four rocking chairs and my filing cabinets.

"I don't know. But I've been a widow for four years. My husband loved to eat and I liked to cook. But it hardly seems worthwhile to cook for just one person," she said.

"I will have more time to write there and I won't have to shop for groceries. I'm tired of keeping house."

With a college just across the street from her new residence and with old friends already taking courses there,

**Truth Mary Fowler:**  
"I miss the young people."

Mrs. Fowler thinks she will adjust.

Tired she may be, but Truth Mary Fowler is not calling a time out—not with another book of poetry coming off the press next month.

Its title is *Glow from a Stone Lantern*, imagery caught from the lighting of huge Japanese stone lanterns in Washington, D.C., to open the spring Cherry Blossom Festival.

The book, her fourth, is a collection of haiku poems—not easy to do, but one of Mrs. Fowler's evident favorites.

Mrs. Fowler already is planning her next book after *Glow* and intends to work on it when she's settled.

She's proud that she's been published in Japan and that she attended the first East-West conclave at San Jose, Calif., along with other internationally respected poets, editors and judges.

"I won a lot of prizes,"



she said.

Mrs. Fowler has won a lot of recognition, too.

Her work has been published in Italy and in Belgium, she's a former president of the American Poetry League, she's won all sorts of honors in local, state, national and international poetry societies and she's taught workshops and courses in poetry.

"Haiku are like olives," she said. "You either acquire a taste for them or you don't like them at all.

Mrs. Fowler knows whereof she speaks. She took many college and workshop courses in poetry and lived many experiences before she could give them back in her own teaching.

"And I'm in all the

usual *Who's Who* books," she said with a grin.

Mrs. Fowler's work also shows up in many poetry anthologies.

She has been elected a fellow of the International Academy of Poets and was poet laureate of Rome for November 1978.

Although her home furnishings reflect a graceful affinity for Japan, she's quick to point out that the forms her poems take depend upon the mood she's in or the subject she's working with.

"You have to make the thought to fit the pattern," she said. "You wouldn't write a sad song in greeting card verse, as we call it. It's too lilting. You'd pick an elegy or an ode."

"I had the feeling

Continued on next page

somehow that I wasn't good enough to be published," Mrs. Fowler added.

Her first book of poetry, *Haiku for All Day* and published in 1968, bolstered her morale.

Another book, *Come Laugh with Me*, came out in 1977.

Mrs. Fowler was born in Northampton, Mass.

"My grandmother lived just around the corner from Emily Dickinson's house," she said.

"Emily Dickinson squirreled away all her poetry in bureau drawers and they didn't find it until after she had died."

Mrs. Fowler, who began writing poetry in the second grade, squirreled away her poetry, too.

She had two brothers—one older and one younger—to contend with.

One of them would say, "If you tell Ma what I did, I'll scatter your poems all over town."

"That wasn't necessary," she said. "In

those days, just to be called a tattletale was about the worst thing you could think of."

When she was 7 years

"but the younger one, when I was visiting him some time ago, said, 'Do you want to hear some palms?'"

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**"Young people were wonderful to me when I went back to college."**

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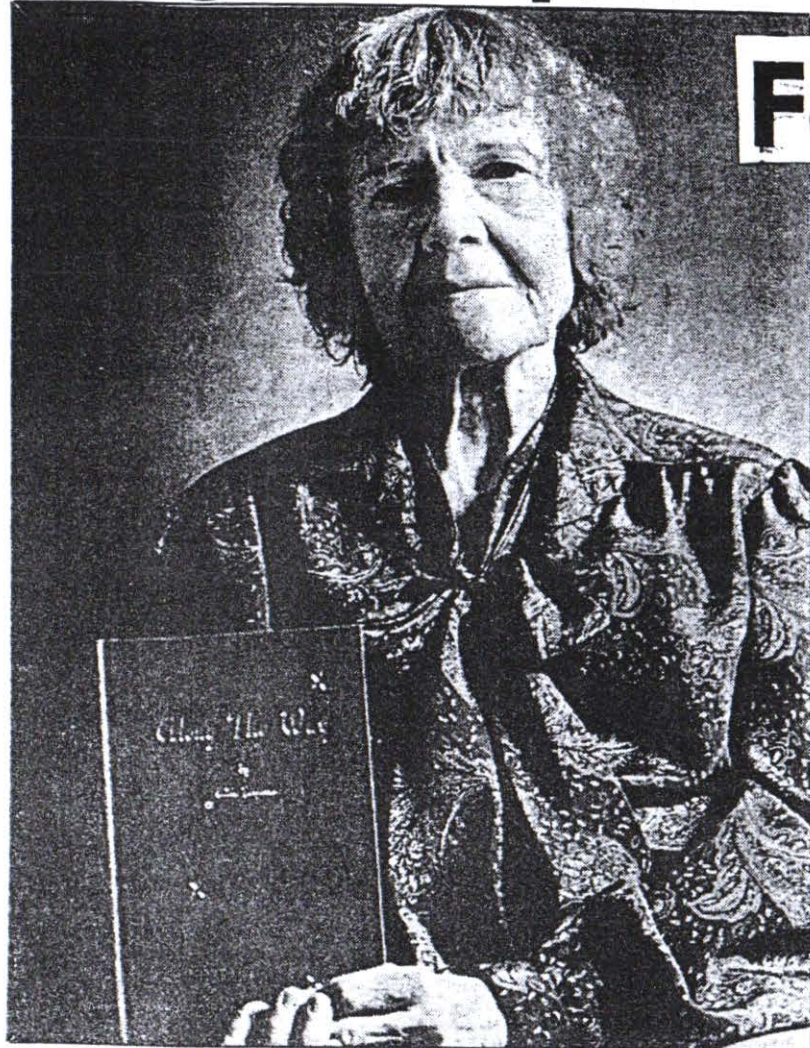
old, she won a prize from one of that day's women's magazines for a Halloween poem.

"We started earlier in the olden times," she remarked.

An older grandson, she said, is hooked on sports,

"I wondered just what palms were, but I told him yes, go ahead."

Mrs. Fowler recalled about an hour or so filled with "the most bloodthirsty, sad poems I ever heard. And he's such a happy child."



Adele Ferguson Boudousquie

News-Sun photo

# Ferguson paints word pictures of exotic

## Fabrics

Bougainvillea is a drape  
Made of satin fuchsia crepe;  
Hibiscus is chiffon,  
Delicate, painted on  
By the sun's brush,  
And the wind's;  
And royal poinciana  
Is a stiff brocade  
Woven for a queen  
For her dress-parade.

## Fort Amador

Trees  
are  
in  
that  
moonlight  
magically  
made  
into  
silver  
candelabra  
on  
silver-green  
brocade.

# places

## Messenger

I saw a white heron  
Today fly  
Over mud-flats;  
He was a piece  
Of white paper  
Upon which  
I had written  
A love-letter  
That will never  
Reach you.

## Well clad

Oaktrees are flaunting  
Scarves of moss, while their neighbors  
shiver in the cold.

By P. ATWOOD WILLIAMS

News-Sun staff

1988

SUN CITY — Dieticians warn "We are what we eat." Therefore poets must be what they see and feel. And what they see may depend on where they live.

So that if a person has had a chance to travel to romantic, exotic locales, then his/her poetry should reflect this.

This is certainly true of the verses of Adele Ferguson (Mrs. Charles Boudousquie) who recently published her second book of verses.

One has only to read her first "After Tonight" published in 1959 to notice titles such as "Hawaiian Night," "Royal Poinciana," "Manoa," "Florida," "Panama," "Fort Amador," "Taboga," "Louisiana" and "Lafayette." We know she has either visited or lived in these places.

She writes of a rain forest: "Oaktrees are flaunting/Scarves of moss, while their neighbors/shiver in the cold." No need to realize one has just read a haiku (structured verse in 17 syllables) to conjure up the image Ferguson had in mind in her new book "Along the Way."

Although now a Sun Citian, she will probably never forget Louisiana. But today she writes about Palo Verdes: In spring/Palo Verdes/Toss their cool green-gold scarves/over the sunburnt back of our/desert. And quail, cactus wren, blue jay, towhees, finches and rabbits, who think they are camouflaged in her backyard golf course, have found a niche in her verses.

Adele Ferguson was born in St. Paul, Minn., but lived many interesting places.

Her father, an 1891 West Point graduate, had a career in the Engineer Corps., which took him to many wars beginning with the Boxer War, Spanish American War and World War I. and many military stations.

Adele was raised all over and remembers writing her first poetry as a teenager at a convent school in Georgetown, where she won the gold medal in Latin. She lived in Hawaii, Panama and South Florida — which inspired many of the above verses.

She says both her parents loved poets; her Scottish father preferred Burns, Scott and Kipling; her mother Tennyson.

Adele's first published poem was in the George Washington University magazine and was about her sister's yellow dress. She also became a dramatic critic for the college paper.

Later as a member of the Three Arts Club in Florida, she was to win their poetry prize.

"I wrote my verses off and on before I married Charles in New Orleans in 1934," she says.

His job as a national bank examiner meant that they continued to move around a great deal. Among her acquaintances was the publisher of The Pelican Press in New Orleans; the result was "After Tonight" with its 110 pages, a single verse to a page, published in 1959 in a hardbound volume.

In 1974 the Boudousquies moved to Sun City for their health. Almost immediately Adele joined the Sun Cities, Arizona, Poetry Society (SCAPS) where she says she received a great deal of encouragement with her verses.

"The first one I wrote in Arizona was about an adobe house," she said, adding that since moving to the state she has much more time to write.

"The scenery is so totally different as is the Indian culture, the plants and birds," she said.

For Adele Ferguson, a visual image triggers her imagination and she may stop to write down a phrase. Later she sits at her desk with her typewriter and composes a first draft, which she leaves in a drawer for several days.

"Usually I can polish enough in a second draft before I type the poem in a small three-ringed notebook." She may write a couple of poems a week, sandwiching this in between participation in the American Association of University Women, Daughters of the American Revolution, the Sun City Scots and SCAPS events.

Her second library bound volume contains 116 poems, most published one to a page as is the format of the first book. "Along the Way" contains verses which reveal her lifelong love affair with nature and the responsibilities it entails.

And the incurably romantic person is still found there. Just as there is a clump of mistletoe hanging year-round from the chandelier in the hall of her home, there is "Chanson de Noel" to explain why it hangs there. Both books are dedicated to her husband. The first dedication reads: "For Charles," the second "For Charley."

"Along the Way." By Adele Ferguson, Published by Kwik Copy Printing, Phoenix, 1988. \$15 from the author, 10634 Mimosa Drive, Sun City, Ariz., 85373.

# History of local poetry groups

By MARY LIND  
Sun City

Poets are delighted. The nation has chosen a poet laureate. Robert Penn Warren has been selected by the esteemed Library of Congress and its poetry consultant. We look forward to a poetry renaissance. Once, a whole town gathered to hear their poet read his latest work. Today, more attention is given to pro and con between nations and television programs. (Warren poem F2.)

But, Arizona poets are in a celebrating mood, nevertheless. One rainy evening in September, 1966 40 Phoenix area poets met at the city library to organize the Arizona State Poetry Society. Mabelle Lyon became the first president and Gladys Bagley Shaeffer, a feature writer for the Phoenix Gazette was her assistant. Wauneta Hackleman, who later became the national president, was elected to serve as treasurer.

The following April the group was affiliated with the National Federation of State Poetry Societies, Inc.

Three years later, poets from Tucson organized and became the the state's second affiliated group. News travels fast. The next year, in March

1970, due to the efforts of two Sun City residents, Ruth Peterson and the present Lillian Nelson, the Sun City Poetry Society was added to the state organization.

Poets from Globe and Miami followed them. The Phoenix local with members from Scottsdale, Tempe, Mesa and Phoenix, decided to divide and a new group, TriCity was formed. Interest in poetry spread and today includes Green Valley, the White Mountain area, Flagstaff and Yuma.

The state has published three anthologies and since beginning a quarterly journal, The Sandcutters. Many poets from other states maintain their membership, due to the excellence of this magazine.

Since 1967 the state has conducted a national contest, open to all poets. 1971 marked the first conference with Dr. Wallace Fuller of Arizona State University as chairman.

The state was host to the national convention in 1985 at the Doubletree Inn in Scottsdale. Visitors from many states attended. Sun City members made decorations and favors. A.S.P.S. was profusely complimented for an enjoyable three days.



ROBERT PENN WARREN

The Sun City group began with a membership of 18, which has grown yearly and at present is 62. Throughout the years, Sun City's group has included people from a variety of professions—doctors, engineers, teachers and professors, artisans, musicians and artists, to mention some.

Two members are honorary: Don Olson, as honorary and historian for the state as well as the Sun City group and Lillian Nelson as founder.

As least 50 percent of Sun City members have published one or more books and the group has been responsible for an anthology, Palo Verde Verse. Poets have been inspired by the cooperation of the two Sun Cities newspapers. Both papers have recognized Oct. 15 as Poetry Day, which is so designated by the governor of the state.

The Sun City poets have been hosts for three state conferences. Three of its members have served as state president: Nat Zausner, Florence Otter and Edythe Bregnard.

The group is grateful for the privilege of holding meetings in the Merabank community room. Visitors are welcome. For information call 977-4335.

# Laurels: Poetry teacher

## shows how to win 'em

**SUN CITY** — There is an old saying hated by those in the teaching profession — "Those that can, do. Those that can't, teach."

Florence Otter not only teaches, she does. And very well.

Otter teaches a poetry class at the Arizona State University-Sun Cities satellite campus.

She also won nine national poetry awards in one night.

"I really can't believe it," Otter said. "Don't expect to see me do this again."

In November, at the Annual National Poetry Contest, sponsored by the Arizona State Poetry Society, Otter received four first place awards, three second place awards, one third place award and a first honorable mention.

"I'm told it's a record," she said. "I'm overwhelmed."

The contest drew more than 3,000 entries from 49 states and several foreign countries, including a winner from Guam. There were six awards — first, second and third place and three honorable mentions — in each of 17 categories.

Otter won awards in six categories: haiku, a three-line Japanese form; romantic; philosophical; long free verse; Southwestern; and cinquain, a French form using five-line stanzas.

Otter, 67, grew up in Rochester, N.Y., with parents who shared their love of art, music and poetry. She remembers her mother reciting poems whenever the family went for a drive.

"It was subtle encouragement and it was every day," she said. "I thought everyone grew up that way."

Otter excelled in school and won a scholarship to Greenville College, Greenville, Ill. She returned to get her master's degree from the University of Rochester and became a high-school counselor.

"I've always loved words," she said. "I did some editing and writing for professional journals."

Otter and her husband, Vince, discovered Arizona one Easter vacation and returned many times. When he retired from his job at General Motors in 1973, they moved to Sun City.

Florence Otter joined the state poetry society, and became its president in 1979.

"Anyone can join," she said. "You don't have to be a poet."

Besides her activities with the society, Otter has written two books, *Fountain Grass* and *Slipstream of a Star*, and has made a tape of her works.

She heard about the ASU-Sun Cities satellite campus at a meeting of the American Association of University Women.

"Something told me this was a wonderful opportunity to get involved," she said. "I volunteered my services to them in 1981, when ASU came out here, and I've been with them ever since."

Her class meets for two hours Monday mornings. There usually are 15 to 18 students, and she may offer an advanced class next semester.

"I need that class," she said.

"I love the intellectual stimulation it gives me, and I thrive on it."

— ROBERT BARRETT



Florence Otter

"Don't expect to see me do this again."

# Sun City Silver Jubilee

Although tumbleweeds soon lose faith  
 Forsake their roots, and disappear  
 Del Webb's flourish ever stronger  
 In their quarter-century year.

Others saw a desert bleached and bare,  
 He envisioned a fairy land.  
 They viewed but desolation there.  
 He dreamed of castles in the sand.

When imitators tried to trace  
Sun City's shadow on the sand  
 Their images were soon erased  
 For none were quite so grand.

The enchantment that Sun City holds  
 For those who've sampled of its grace  
 Once more spurs them to return  
 To claim the warmth of its embrace.

The facilities that caught our eye  
Still give us boundless pleasure  
But we're held here by the people ...  
Sun City's greatest treasure.

We've seen the beauty of exotic lands,  
We've let our imaginations roam,  
But here in Arizona's desert sands  
We've found the only place for home.

So from Del Webb's liberty bell  
We'll let our praises proudly ring,  
"We live in Sun City, Arizona....  
Who said you can't have everything?"

...Bill Ihlenfeldt  
©1985



# Women from Bible come to life through Sun City author's verse

By P. ATWOOD WILLIAMS  
Staff Writer

"Did you ever wonder what Bible women thought/  
As they went about the work they did/  
And the life they led each day?"  
Essie Mae Thompson Hill did.

And the result is a recently published small, softcover book, "Let Thy Handmaiden Speak." It bears the inscription which is partially quoted above.

Mrs. Hill recently gave a reading of her gentle verses to the women of her church, All Saints of the Desert Episcopal Church. The verses interpret the lives of women barely sketched in the Bible.

For at least one of them she has drawn upon an emotion she felt when she "cut the silver cord." She knew how Hannah must have felt when she gave her son, Samuel, up to be raised in the temple.

"I felt an immense feeling of loss when my husband and I left our oldest son, George, standing alone under the archway at Yale University when he was just 16 years old."

"But parting with him, I do now confess/  
Was almost more than I could ever bear.  
And I'll remember always through my tears,  
His tiny form, the brightness of his hair,  
And his small hands outstretched toward me/  
As we left the temple gate."  
So says Mrs. Hill's Hannah.

Essie Mae Thompson majored in geology at Cornell College and taught geology there in Mt. Vernon, Iowa. She was always interested in comparative religion, and after World War II she and her husband, Gerald Hill, lived in Sac City, Iowa, where she planned and taught a course for young married couples in the Methodist Church.

"The Old Testament stories are remarkable. The stories are of men as they were, very human, yet they still had vision and the inspiration of the real, one God," said Mrs. Hill.

She also used to sing and make up personalized verses to other tunes to entertain at Lions Club shows and parties. At Christmas she sent letters in rhyme, and she wrote verses for her Lisbon, Iowa, high school 50th class reunion.

But there was only one poem in her first autobiographical book, "Prairie Daughter." Her son, Dr. George Hill, encouraged her to carry a notebook and jot down ideas as they came to her and had a Phoenix publisher print 1,000 copies of it in 1978.

"I threw away more than I kept," said Mrs. Hill when discussing her second literary work with a gentle laugh.

She began with the story of Hannah, using one of the many Bibles she has in her study, working for the most part at the kitchen table.

"I had trouble with "Leah's Lament" and threw away many pages while trying to get Leah's feelings about her sister, Rachel, down on paper, admitted the white-haired author.

There are several styles of free and rhyming verse in the book and several "funnies."

"For 40 days and forty nights/  
I was nauseated ev'ry minute—/  
The ark smelled awful and so did the beasts/  
That were living in it."

So said Mrs. Noah while Lot's wife complained ... "I'm salt—His fault."

A reviewer in Lansing, Mich., said "The author reveals herself to be well-versed in Scripture as well as a compassionate, perceptive person. Her poems range in style from blank verse to intricate rhythmic patterns, all of them handled with a sure touch." A minister in Denver, Colo., said that she had "opened the eyes of the church and sharpened imaginations."

He was referring to the fact that she included so many females, largely ignored, such as her "Equal Rights Amendment," which brings to life the five fatherless daughters to whom Moses gave acreage in the promised land, something never done before for women.

One story, "A Widow Wonders," was motivated by a framed collection of coins of the Bible hanging on the wall in her living room. While others came with difficulty, she sat right down and wrote this story of the widow and her simple offering.

When Dr. Hill visited his mother last year, she had a typed copy of her second book from which she was giving readings, but she was ill and did not have the energy to find a publisher.

He took the manuscript with him, copyrighted it and found a publisher in Chatham, N.J. The cover design is by Hans Herrmann.

When the copies arrived recently, she took a few to the two Resident's Gallery shops, Am Ric Books and the Bread of Life Bookstore in Bell Tower Plaza.

Her eyes have a special glow in them when she recalls a phone call from a young mother who especially enjoyed the poem of Hannah and called to share this feeling with her.

She feels that at this time of the year, many readers may especially appreciate "Apology to Martha." It deals with the feelings of Lazarus' sisters, Martha and Mary.

Jesus had said that "Mary has chosen the better portion" for her devotion to Him. But Mary makes her sister feel better with the following:

"I was not there when He raised Lazarus from the dead,  
But you said He told you He was the Resurrection and the Life/  
That if we truly trust Him, and believe that this is true/  
then we shall live forever! This is what He told to you."



1/19/84 EDNA VON PISCHKE n.s.

LEGION

*In spite of eyes, some men are blind, like moles;  
they struggle through the mire of their days  
and never catch the vision of a world  
made brighter by their living presence in it*  
—Edna Von Pischke

By ROBERTA LANDMAN  
Staff Writer

Poetry, self-writ and self-published, hath charm.

—That children and grandchildren can remember you by ...

—That eases the pain of losing a loved one ...

—That provides delight and whimsy, pure and simple.

—That appeals, let the truth be publicly known, to one's vanity.

EDNA VON Pischke has written poems and published her poems for all the above reasons.

Her two paperbound books of poetry "... are, of course, vanity press," the Sun City woman volunteers without embarrassment.

"It means you've had it done because you were vain enough to think it merited publication," Mrs. Von Pischke states

with a gentle blend of poise and humor.

"I SUPPOSE it's really an egotistical thing," she explains. "You feel as if you want other people to know how good you are."

"That's 'good' in quotes," she interjects with laughter.

What price vanity?

HER FIRST self-published book of poems, the result of encouragement of her husband, John, "cost a little over \$200 for 100 copies," she said. Not too much of an investment, she decided, for the volumes she and her husband wished to send in 1978 as Christmas greetings.

Mrs. Von Pischke said she picked her printer on the basis of the experience of associates, fellow members of the Sun City Poetry Society.

"I typed it, got it camera-ready, as it's called,

and took it to them, and they took a picture of it and put a cover on it."

BOTH HER first published venture, "With Time in Mind," and her latest book, "Honey and Hyssop," published in late 1983, saw Mrs. Von Pischke seeking the skill of artists for cover de-

signs and some inside work.

The art investment in her publishing venture was a wise one, she explains, both for beauty and economy.

"It was only \$25 for calligraphy and illustrations for the last book," she said.

HOW DID friends and relatives respond to the published gifts of poetry?

"It was a favorable response," she recalled. "I think some people have received the second one with greater enthusiasm than they did the first."

MRS. VON Pischke talks with seriousness

about the poetry writing she enjoys.

"I'm influenced by memories," she said of her writing.

"Honey and Hyssop," with its requiem section of 10 poems, is dedicated to the memory of her husband, John, now deceased.

HER TWO grandchildren have found their way into her poems as has her youth on an Ohio farm, she said.

When the one-time elementary school teacher and homemaker was not involved in poetic climes, she was active in community affairs, both in Ohio and in Sun City.

Since moving to Sun City in 1964, her activities have included terms as president of the Women's League of Sun City and Rotary Anns, serving on the boards of Dysart Community Center and four years on the Sun City-Youngtown-Sun City West Press Council.

She was chosen Sun City Woman of the Year in 1975.



FLORENCE OTTER

## Poetry finds true friend

By CHERYL SWEET  
Staff Writer

When Florence Otter was a child, she loved to read and write poetry. She enjoyed it so much, she assumed everyone shared her passion.

"Poetry and I have been friends forever. I just assumed it was true of everyone."

Although not all people are poetry enthusiasts, Mrs. Otter believes "Inside most of us there is a poet locked up."

**SHE WILL** teach an Arizona State University one-day course in Sun City this fall on "Poetry as a Tool for Living."

"Poetry has a practical use for self-expression. It can be used to help rid ourselves of unhealthy reactions or emotions," Mrs. Otter says.

Purpose of the course, she explained, is to show non-writers how to express themselves through poetry.

**BUT WITH** so many types of self-expression

cropping up, why should someone who doesn't even write choose poetry?

There are many reasons, says Mrs. Otter.

"Poetry requires very few tools. You don't have to go out and buy a set of golf clubs or a lot of art supplies. It can be enjoyed day or night, at home or away, alone or with others.

**"WITH POETRY,** you can experience basic emotions and do it in a unique way. I would hope that when the class is over, people will say they never realized what they were missing and will give it a try."

Although Mrs. Otter has enjoyed poetry all her life, it wasn't until she moved to Sun City in 1974 that she began writing for contests and publications.

Poetry, she says is being used as a tool in therapy. But, "It must be used professionally and judiciously. It is not a panacea, only a help," she stresses.

Further information about the class may be obtained by calling the ASU Sun City office at 972-7398.

# Poetic justice: Teacher sees what she sowed

By Glenn B. Sanberg  
Special for The Republic

Margaret Gatzweiler took the book of poetry from her former student and, like a child cuddling a new doll, held it close to her breast.

Miss Gatzweiler isn't able to read poetry anymore — her 87 years having taken their toll — but she listened with moist eyes as the author read from her new book, *Promises to Keep*.

"I have seen a row of birch trees,  
Sentinels on a northern lake  
Have heard the loons at dusk,  
Been lulled to sleep with wave's  
break.

A large pine can be an awesome  
sight,

Wondrous oaks like giants call  
But I have seen a chorus line of  
palms,

Turquoise mountains — and I  
forget them all."

Jessie Mason Chermak of Sun City began writing poetry when she was eight. Her father had given her an old Underwood typewriter that was so heavy she couldn't lift it. But it was Margaret Gatzweiler, her high school teacher of English and creative writing in Duluth, Minn., who planted the seeds that were to germinate over the years and finally blossom into her sparkling new book.

When the Chermaks moved to Sun City three years ago from Minneapolis, Mrs. Chermak called her teacher, long since retired and living here.

"She recognized my voice immediately . . . and after more than 40 years!" Mrs. Chermak said. Now a resident of Sun Valley Lodge, Miss Gatzweiler has moments of recognition that tug at the heart strings and was overjoyed at seeing her former pupil again.

"I know she knew me and that it was my book," Mrs. Chermak said. "I could tell by the way her eyes lighted up and the way she held the book in that loving gesture of happiness."

It was the way her teacher read poetry to the class that inspired Mrs. Chermak to explore the riches of poetic culture in later life. The urge to write followed her to junior college, where she became a reporter,

## Retired in style

then editor of the college paper. Recognition came in election to the honor society — Quill and Scroll.

She met her future husband on a bus after a school dance. The trombone that helped her husband, Dick, make his way through school still has a prominent place in the Chermaks' Sun City home. They were married and moved to Minneapolis, where he went to the university and established a career in public accounting.

Mrs. Chermak got a job as secretary and editorial assistant to one of the editors of the Minneapolis-based magazine *Sports Afield*. Later, she was offered a job as secretary to the branch manager of Abbott Laboratories, a nationally known pharmaceutical company. There she developed a keen interest in transcribing medical material.

When the children came along, she turned her skill to pabulum, whooping cough and the PTA. But when the youngest reached eighth grade, she was able to resume part-time work as secretary to a group of internists and once again put her experience as a medical transcriptionist to work.

When the move to Sun City was agreed upon, there was no plan for full retirement. Her husband continued his accounting work, and she was welcomed by Boswell Memorial Hospital as an experienced medical secretary.

Transcribing medical histories, physicals, operative reports and discharge summaries for the staff takes three days a week out of creative poetic time — a schedule that seems to lend just the right balance to the couple's lives.

The new Sun City surroundings have proven to be the right climate for her creative effort.

"When you're close to your family, as we were in Minneapolis," she said, "it is too easy to put off the discipline involved in writing. Getting away gave us the freedom to do things that were impossible before."



Jessie Mason Chermak

The Chermak children not only approved the changed lifestyle but pitched in to provide illustrations for the book. Son-in-law Steve Puck, who had no previous art experience, surprised the family with a birch-forest drawing used on the jacket of the book. Two daughters, Lynne Puck and Joy Hartman, contributed the pen-and-ink sketches that brighten the printed pages.

*Promises to Keep* is a precious little book that can hold its head high anywhere. It is available at \$6.50 at Am-Ric Book Store, Arrowhead Center, East Mall.

The 57 pages of poems not only are easily understood but bring back memories that have danced through most of our lives.

Perhaps the highest compliment ever paid an author came from her grandson, a first-grader. He wanted to take Grandma to school for "show and tell."

# Former opera singer packs busy agenda with comedy

By CHERYL SWEET  
Staff Writer

If you're planning an out-of-town trip and prefer traveling light, you're in luck.

Forget about carrying the two oversized suitcases you normally cart your two-week wardrobe in. And don't plan on taking an extra bag for toiletries.

Eve Vanek can tell you how to fit 14 changes of clothes in a small overnight bag—with room to spare for accessories and other incidentals.

THE FORMER Chicago opera singer, who now resides in Sun City, does not fit the image many people have of opera singers.

Mrs. Vanek keeps busy nowadays doing comedy stints throughout the Valley. Her material is derived from her opera experiences.

"In the opera, very often I would get called for a performance at the last minute—maybe when I couldn't get costumes. I was constantly ad-libbing and making changes.

"What I do now is taking the place of being on stage," she explains.

ALTHOUGH she wouldn't let too many traveling secrets out of the bag, Mrs. Vanek was willing to part with one.

During her acts, she tells women in the audience to carry an ample supply of rubberbands while traveling. After all, if you're in a hurry or are late for an appointment, who has time to fiddle with fastening earrings?

Sound reasonable? Mrs. Vanek evidently thinks so. The woman need only put one rubberband around each ear, she says, and simply let the earrings dangle from the rubberbands.

A definite time-saver and an indisputable space saver, she points out.

Mrs. Vanek inherited her interest in the entertainment field at an early age. Her father traveled the United States and Europe doing comedy and juggling acts. By the time she was 4, she was performing in skits with her brother, and "always came away with first and second place ribbons."

AT ABOUT the same time, her musical curiosi-

ty also was aroused by the Chicago theaters, which featured opera performances.

But it wasn't until after she got married that her opera career got off the ground.

Having previously taken courses at the Chicago Christian College of Music and received coaching from notable opera singers, she decided to apply for a chorus line position with the American Opera Company in Chicago.

To her surprise, she was told she would fit into the lead roles much better.

SHE WAS subsequently cast as Nedda in the opera "Pagliaccio."

A story of a woman who marries and then falls in love with another man, the story portrays the drama present in most operas, Mrs. Vanek says.

Taken from plays or legends, operas inevitably contain an element of love, she explains. The woman usually suffers and the man commits suicide, she added.

Mrs. Vanek sang during the pre-microphone era—which meant she had

to be in excellent health. "You really had to belt it out," she recalls.

TODAY, HER performances, which she has named, "The Little Black Dress" (if you want to understand the title, go see the act, she says), are physically a little easier, allow her more flexibility and just as much satisfaction.

"With singing, you have to have an accompanist, rehearsals, and so on. This way, I'm all by myself and don't have to worry about anything but myself."

As far slowing down, it probably won't happen for quite a while.

At 69, Mrs. Vanek is rarely idle. President of the Sun City branch of the National League of American Pen Women, she also writes poetry, articles for various magazines and paints.

"IF I slow down, I won't be good for anything," she says with a slight smile.

"My husband has told me that I'll be a little old lady with a cane and still be walking around with a suitcase, changing clothes."



Former opera singer Eve Vanek says her writing, poetry and artwork keep her occupied these days. The walls in her Sun City home are covered with oil

and other types of paintings she has done, including the pictures above her. Mrs. Vanek also performs comedy skits for local groups. (News-Sun Photo)

# Poet to leave Sun City, perchance return

Guanetta Gordon is not an unfamiliar name in Sun City. Not that she's much of an unfamiliar name anywhere.

Mrs. Gordon, 11847 Hacienda Dr., has received worldwide recognition for her numerous poetic works, including a personal acknowledgement from President Jimmy Carter for her fifth poetry book, "Above Rubies".

An active Sun City resident, Mrs. Gordon is a member of Sun City Arizona Poetry Society and Arizona State Poetry Society. She was selected as the 1979 "Poet of the Year" at

the Arizona society conference in Tucson.

She recently was honored by the Sun City society with a corsage as a token of their gratitude as Mrs. Gordon will leave Sun City to be closer to her son and daughter in Maryland. But she will continue to maintain her Sun City home, perhaps returning here at a later date.

Her son, Dr. Stewart Gordon, University of Maryland's music director, has in the past been a featured pianist with the Sun City Symphony.

Mrs. Gordon has given numerous radio readings, both in Phoenix

and Sun City. She has made personal appearances for churches, museums, and local organizations in addition to her assistance at workshops and to those seeking writing improvement.

Her name is listed in the "Who's Who of American Women", "Who's Who in the United States", and the "International Who's Who in Poetry".

She has been elected a Founder Fellow of the International Academy of Poets in Cambridge, England, and recognized in Rome as a "Master of Modern Poetry" as well as being honored by the World Poetry Society. Mrs. Gordon was given a Distinguished Service Citation for her poem that tells of a wife who lost her husband in the Vietnam War.

She has been active in numerous organizations, especially the National League of American Pen Women with a recent citation for 40 years of service and as national first vice president during 1970-72.

A member of the Shepherd of the Desert Luthern Church and a long-time student of the Bible, her convictions are often reflected in her works.

Before her move to Sun City, Mrs. Gordon had been a radio dram-

atist and script writer. She is noted for her stories in "The Saturday Evening Post". Many can recall her poetry readings in the former radio program, "Between the Bookends".

Today, her original scripts, work sheets and published material are preserved in the University of Kansas' library.

She has traveled extensively abroad as an army wife. Her ances-

try traces back to Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, also a poet.

Her sixth book of poems, "Red Are the Embers", is scheduled to be released in the fall of 1980. Her followers are anxiously awaiting the day when her historical novel, "The Aurora Tree", will be available in bookstores.

Friends and poets who wish to keep in touch with Mrs. Gordon may write her at 6700 Belcrest Road, Apt. 602, Hyattsville, Md., 20782.



Guanetta Gordon is pinned with corsage by Mildred Slauer, president of the Sun City Poetry Society. Mrs. Gordon, known worldwide for her poetry, will leave Sun City to be closer to her son and daughter in Maryland.

(News-Sun Photo)

2/8/80

# BUT SHE CRIED UPON HEARING THE BILTMORE 'Indian children still make me happy' WAS BURNING

By VAL BEMBENEK  
Women's Editor

"Were you ever in love with a thing?" said Mrs. Anna Phelps Kopta haltingly as tears spilled from her bright blue eyes. "I just received a phone call; the Arizona-Biltmore is burning. I love that building."

I interviewed Mrs. Kopta Wednesday afternoon, shortly after the fire in the upper section at the Phoenix landmark began burning out of control.

"A lot of people who've lived here for years have never seen the Biltmore. I've traveled back and forth across the country and there is no more beautiful hotel," said the almost-91 educator who came to the Valley at the tender age of 19.

She was personally involved in the Biltmore when architect Albert Chase McArthur finalized his drawings back in 1928. Her husband, a sculptor of Indian busts and designs, devised the intricate pat-

terns of palm tree trunks and "leaves" which decorate the cast concrete accent blocks used throughout the interior and exterior of the sprawling luxury resort.

"HE MADE the designs in clay, from which plaster casts were made, then each block was molded individually. There are five basic designs used, but they are varied because of the sizes of the blocks."

Persons who carefully examine the news pictures of the fire will be struck with the yet-contemporary feeling of the designs, really of the whole building.

"Everyone says that Frank Lloyd Wright designed the Biltmore. That's wrong; it's probably something that evolved at the first to give the building more prestige. Albert Chase was a student of Wright's back in Chicago, but McArthur was the sole architect," she said pulling an "Architectural Record—1929" from a bookshelf in her study at 10337 Audrey Dr. and showing a several-page expose of the building. And, yes, there it says Albert Chase McArthur, architect, with no mention whatever of Wright.

Perhaps there is confusion because previous to the building of the Biltmore, Frank Lloyd Wright was commissioned to build a "San Marcus on the Desert" hotel near Chandler mused Mrs. Kopta, her bright mind recalling facts.

"EMERY (her husband) designed cast concrete blocks for that, too, but they never went beyond the clay stage because financing fell through when the Depression hit.

"But you wait and see, all the news stories will say how the Biltmore was



Nearing 91 years, Mrs. Anna Kopta looks both back and forward. She is a member of the Founders and Patriots Society, tracing her American roots to 1630 and an ancestor who was sent to found the Connecticut Colony and became the first white man to purchase land from an Indian on the west side of the Connecticut River. (News-Sun Photo)



designed by Wright. He never actually said he did, and he never denied McArthur did either; he just let the news media build the myth."

Though it was her husband who brought her to love the Biltmore, Mrs. Kopta has left her mark on the Valley and Arizona in other ways. And it was for her work and continuing interest in Arizona Indians that another significant award was heaped upon her last week.

The Saguaro Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution named her Woman of the Year and their plaque will join the engraved accolades which in 1968 named her Phoenix Outstanding Woman of the Year and in 1969 Very Outstanding Phoenician.

GROWING up in Ohio, she had no contact with Indians.

It was not until she was graduated from high school and visited her sister and brother-in-law at Ft. Sill, Oklahoma, that she saw her first Indian man, Geronimo.

"My brother was in charge of the cavalry post and was responsible for Apache prisoners of war. He talked often with Geronimo because the Indian leader could speak Spanish," she explained.

She "fell in love with Indians" after visiting the Bureau of Indian Affairs school located near there, went back to Ohio and began teaching ("because at that time teaching was the only respectable profession for a woman") and finally talked her father into letting her take the civil service examination to teach Indian

Phoenix Indian School, interrupted by a leave of absence for her marriage and later lived on the Hopi reservation for more than a dozen years, continuing her teaching.

"EVERYBODY has an instant solution to the so-called Indian problems," she said, leafing through a current file of clippings she keeps. "I don't have a solution; I wish I did.

"My feeling is that we are trying to rush the Indian into a white culture while we should simply allow time and the passing generations to let them adjust. We can't take them away from the cultural patterns which are an important part of their heritage. I have always taught youngsters that the place in destiny of the American Indian will only be reached when they become useful and respected citizens of the country."

She talked of the dilemma from the Indian point of view. "We are trying to impose our standards of living on them. They have many fine qualities, but they may not be our qualities and so we try to change them instead of respecting and understanding," she said with obvious love.

Perhaps Mrs. Kopta's most intriguing thought on the subject was this: "The Jewish people and the Japanese are working and living in the mainstream of American culture, yet they have retained what is of value and significance of their own background. They are not hurt with inner turmoil and conflict.

"Certainly the Indian can

friend of a friend picks the birds dry (removes the feathers without dipping the slaughtered bird in hot water) and brings me the feathers. The Hopis use them in ceremonials and to make Kachinas. They would prefer eagle feathers, but turkey feathers are also sacred," she said, smoothing the white fluffy quills and laying them carefully in a shoebox.

# Memories of career crowd in at 90

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By THELMA HEATWOLE

SUN CITY — Anna Phelps Kopta, keen and vivacious at 90, relaxed in her home here, a stack of Congressional Records at arm's reach. And remembered.

There were so many memories — the 30 years she taught Indian children, her life as wife of Arizona's renowned sculptor of Indians. And even Geronimo.

"The very first Indian I saw was Geronimo," said she.

That was when she was living with her sister and brother-in-law, the latter who was in charge of Apache prisoners of war at Fort Sill, Okla.

"I opened the door of our home and saw him (Geronimo) and let out a little screech," she recalled. "When anything came up with the prisoners, Geronimo, who could speak Spanish, was dispatched to communicate with my brother."

It was not Geronimo, however, but Indian children at a nearby school who inspired her to teach. When her brother was sent on an overseas assignment, Anna went back to her native Ohio. And longed to go west.

"In those days (the early 1900s) the only thing a respectable girl could do was teach," she recalled. "I decided I would rather teach Indians. I took a civil service examination for teachers in the Indian Service and was sent to teach at the Phoenix Indian School in 1906."

Her beginning salary at the Indian School, where she taught 17 years, was \$600 a year. It was there she later met her husband, Emry Kopta, an adopted son of Tom Pavetca, a Hopi trader at First Mesa. Koptka was at the school to



Anna Phelps Kopta

build a fountain as a memorial to Indians who volunteered in World War I.

"When we married I, too, was adopted by Pavetca," said Mrs. Kopta. "There was the conventional 'mud fight,' and I was presented a complete bridal outfit and named 'Alquaptewa'".

She later taught Indians on the Zuni, Hopi and Pima reservations.

"I never regretted becoming an Indian teacher," said the graduate of the State Normal of California and the University of Arizona. "All it takes to help others is concern and determination. Service does not require special knowledge in social sciences taught only at universities."

"I believe reservation Indians as a whole are happier than Anglos," she added. "They enjoy a more simple lifestyle and are a part of their environment. I sometimes wonder whether all the pressure of the modern world is really worth their while."

Although the Koptas called Phoenix home base, they often went to the reservation and lived in Indian stone houses chinked with adobe, using their camping equipment.

Even now Mrs. Kopta remembers stepping out of the house and walking to the edge of the mesa, dawn just breaking, dusting away the furry shadows from the crevasses of the Painted Desert.

"Below me," she recalled, "up the mile-long rock staircase tailed a snake-like line — Hopi housewives, bringing up the day's supply of water, trudging up those stepping stones worn thin and smooth by the countless footsteps of the housekeepers of this tribe of America's primitives — this interesting and mysterious people for whom the clock stopped long before the arrival of the Pilgrim fathers . . ."

She retired from teaching in 1944. Her husband died in 1953.

In the mid-1960s, Mrs. Kopta as state chairman of the Historic Landmarks and Memorials of the Daughters of the American Colonists was prime mover in having the Hubbell Trading Post on the Navajo Reservation declared a national historic site and placed under the U.S. Park Service.

She was named "Woman of the Year" by the Phoenix Advertising Club in 1968.

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More  
about

## Teaching career recalled

Continued from Page B-1

She moved here three years ago, but is still interested in Indian projects, a current one involving a memorial event this fall. She also collects turkey feathers for her Indian friends to use in making Kachina dolls and other artifacts.

Studiously interested in current events, she reads the Congressional Record religiously, marking reference items on the cover.

"I usually try to read one Congressional Record a day," she said. "I'm very fond of swimming too, but I haven't

found time to swim lately. There's so much to do. I can go a whole week and never have dinner at home."

About swimming and bathing suits. Mrs. Kopta still has the Jantzen swim suit, a one-piece black wool with short attached skirt, that she bought in 1915 in San Francisco.

"Upon my return to Phoenix where I was teaching," she said, "everyone was shocked that I was so brazen as to have discarded the customary long skirt and hose. But I loved my new suit and wore it in spite of criticism."



Jane Grenard, left, of Sun City shows star quilt to recent houseguest, childhood chum Mrs. Louise Knott of Seamans, Saskatchewan. Mrs. Grenard and Mrs. Knott grew up in Canadian pioneer farmland. Mrs. Knott has remained near her home town. The two are sitting on Grenards' sofa upholstered in linen damask from Winnipeg.

# Sun Citian, pioneer Canadian



Mrs. Grenard and Mrs. Knott sit beside name quilt which went back home with Mrs. Knott to hang in the tiny town's new historical museum. Quilt has embroidered signatures of old settlers on it. Mrs. Grenard's mother put it together. (News-Sun Photos)

By **MARY DUMOND**  
Women's Editor

It's not hard for Jane (Mrs. Edward) Grenard to think about the old days—"and yes, they were rough, but we had a wonderful time," she said.

Reminders of her Canadian girlhood meet Mrs. Grenard's sight at almost every turn—and what's more, some of her Canadiana just went back to Saskatchewan to help fill her home town museum.

The Grenards' sofa is covered with quilted heavy damask linen—the fine tablecloths on which Jane and her family and the neighbors ate Christmas and Thanksgiving dinner and other holiday meals.

**SHE HAD** saved the tablecloths in perfect condition all these years and when the time came to recover the sofa, the designer suggested them, she said.

But Mrs. Grenard's roots run deep and north, up to a tiny town of Seaman, Saskatchewan, where she and a girlhood chum, Georgia Knott, grew up.

"My father bought three sections of virgin land and moved up from South Dakota to the Canadian province in 1913.

"Those were pioneer days up there," she said. "We had no running water, no electricity—Canada was way behind the United States in rural electrification. We had a lot of fun, though."

**SHE RECALLED** Satur-

day night baths in a copper tub in front of the fire—the water had been heated on the stove.

"If we wanted a soft-water bath, we melted snow," she said.

Nights are long in Canada and "we had no radio, no television, no movies," Mrs. Grenard said. "My mother spent those nights quilting."

Among other craft products was a name quilt, on which each settler in the region had signed his name, which then was embroidered onto a quilt block.

"**MY MOTHER** put the quilt together and finished it," said the Sun Citian. "She must have made about nine quilts. We needed wool—it was cold up there a long time."

Parents of Mrs. Knott and Mrs. Grenard were friends. They lived comparatively close for pioneer farmers—they were only 3 miles apart.

"Georgia visited us for three weeks," she said, adding that Mrs. Knott had left late last week.

Mrs. Knott took the name quilt back with her.

"**THEY ARE** redoing the old train depot as a town museum and collecting all the old pioneer relics they can find to put into it," said the Sun Citian.

"I thought Mother's quilt should be up there, with all those old names on it," she added. "Georgia's husband is going to frame it when she gets back."

For her friend stayed in Canada, although Mrs. Grenard went south to Minneapolis for school, attended college, has worked in the U.S. and has lived down here since. Her father lost his land in the Depression.

"We drove back up there four or five years ago," she said. "It has changed."

**ONE THING** remains a new-old love for Mrs. Grenard—horses and horseback riding.

"But those days back up in Canada, Georgia and I would ride out into the hills and name all the landmarks."