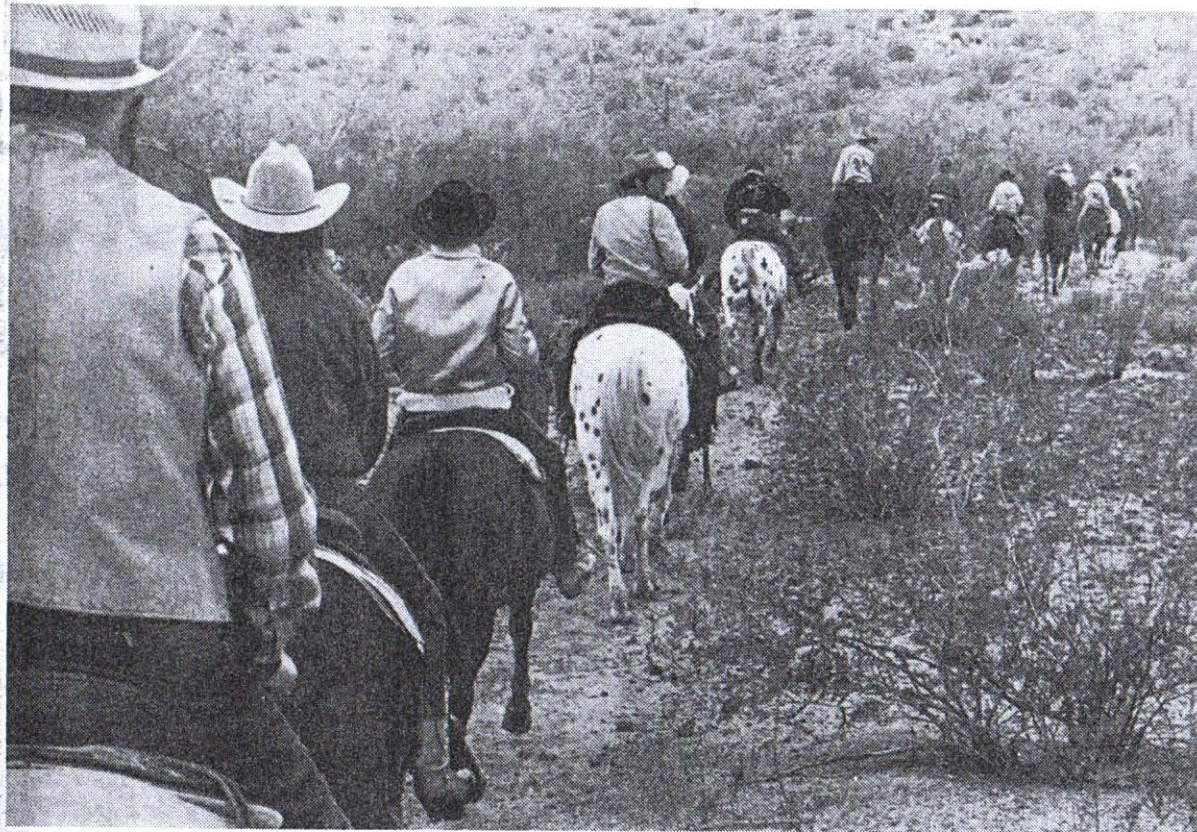


Whoa, Nellie

Saddle Club members mix trail adventures at a gallop



SADDLE CLUB MEMBERS take their weekly trail ride in the desert.

Laurie Hurd-Moore/Independent

By **LAURIE HURD-MOORE**
Sun Cities Independent

While citizens of China celebrate 1990 as the Year of the Horse, 138 Sun Citians will commemorate 20 years together as horse fanciers.

The Sun Cities Saddle Club was formed in 1970, as a horse and carriage club, explains Club President Edward M. Grenard.

Approximately 14 years later, the group opened its doors to horse lovers in Sun City West.

"Most of our new members now come from Sun City West. About one-third of our members are from that community," explains the president from Sun City.

New members as well as old ones, gathered together, Feb. 1, to take part in a weekly ritual -- taking a trail ride.

This particular ride began

north of the Carefree Highway, just across from the New River Bridge.

Riders on this day, ranged in age from 28 to 90.

The 90 year old, Warren "Shonie" Schoenneman of Sun City West, was one of the more veteran horsemen taking part in the event.

His friends in the club refer to him by his nickname.

Asked if he has ridden all his life, Shonie replied, "No, just for 50 years."

He was been a member of the Sun Cities Saddle Club for 10 years.

On this day as on others, Shonie arrives with his saddle and a two-step pine stool.

"I need this stool 'cause I got short legs," he chuckles.

A few other members also bring along saddles.

All twenty members

See SADDLE, page 2

OVER

participating in this trail ride, proudly wear various types of Western-style clothes and cowboy hats.

A few of the residents wore the silver and blue club jackets.

To keep the riders on the straight and narrow, one member even fashioned a floating compass ball to the front of his jacket.

A few Saddle Club members own their own horses, but says, Mr Grenard, they usually participate in longer trail rides.

"Some of them feel its too much work to load the horses and bring them out for a 2-hour ride," he says.

The club features a "Special Ride" each month, where the members eat lunch together.

The weekly rides consist of two, three and four-hour rides to locations such as the Squaw Peak Preserve, Cave Creek and Lake Pleasant.

The Sun Citians have also hit the trails in the Superstitions, Estrella and McDowell Mountains.

Near the end of the year, members can participate in a two-day trail ride.

There is also a monthly membership meeting, where future rides are planned.

Residents who select a particular ride, must make reservations by specified dates.

The reservations are necessary for renting horses, as well as for any meals which may be served.

Not all Saddle Club members take part in the trail rides.

Some of them prefer to attend just the luncheons or dinners held at the end of some rides.

"Some members will go places while their spouses ride. They will go to a museum or sightseeing," says Mr. Grenard.

Ed Hanks Stables provides the horses for the regular rides.

On the Feb. 1 ride, the Scottsdale-based stables, delivered two truck/trailer rigs, each containing 11 horses.

The two cowboys who brought the horses, would also accompany the members on the trail ride.

Most of the regular riders have particular horses reserved for use on the rides.

Each horse has a name and a distinctive personality.

This distinctiveness became most apparent when two sister horses were separated as the ride began.

With riders on their backs, the sisters took matters into their own "hands" and abruptly reunited with each other in line.

No one was hurt in the shuffle.

"Accidents are few," explains President Grenard.

"The horses are good on trails. They're very sure-footed."

On one rare occasion, he adds, a member did fall off her horse.

"We gave her an award for

it. The award is called the 'Fallen Angel.' "

No one qualified for the award on this particular trail ride.

Instead, the 20 members were treated to a leisurely ride through the desert.

Riders went through dried river beds and desert brush, up to a small rocky mountain range.

After a short break, where some riders fed their horses carrots, apples and Granola Bars, the ride began again.

The returning route was different from the one taken to the mountain range.

Arriving back at the parked cars and rigs, the riders dismounted and handed their horses back to the two stable cowboys.

This Thursday, Feb. 8, another set of Sun Cities Saddle Club members will continue the weekly tradition.

They will ride on a four-hour ride at Spur Cross, off of Cave Creek Road.

To become a part of this 20-year-old club, telephone 974-6819 or 584-2607, for more information.



Laurie Hurd-Moore/Independent

Sun City folks horn in on that cowboy life

By Julia Jones
Staff writer

Sun City

The only Arizona some folks know is the wild, wild West they've seen in the movies. And when they retire to the Sun Cities, by golly, they've got a hankerin' to cut themselves in on a little of that action.

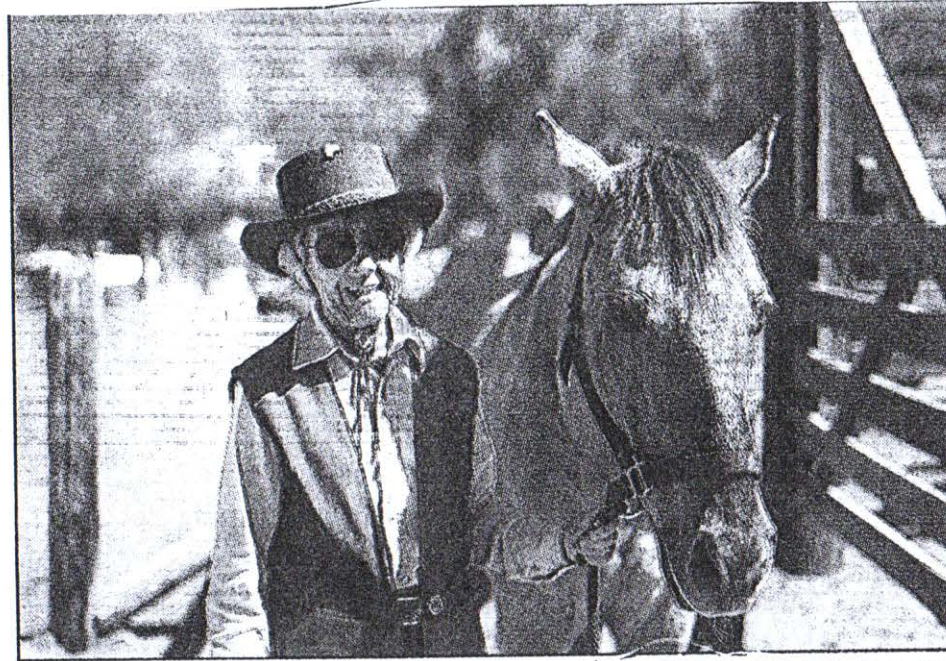
Trail rides get the job done, says Edward Grenard, president of the Sun Cities Saddle Club. "Riding a horse is about as Western as you can get," he says.

The group began its 20th anniversary celebration last month with a ride at Rancho de Los Caballeros in Wickenburg to the Vulture Mine.

Every Thursday morning, from October through May finds about two dozen of the club's 140 members ready to hit the trail. Coming up Thursday is a trek through the Phoenix Mountains from Hole-in-the-Wall Stables at the Pointe at Squaw Peak.

Members come in all levels of horsemanship, Grenard says, from tenderfoot to equestrian, and a few keep their own horses. Most members, though, rent horses from one of the Valley's veteran horse suppliers, who delivers the horses by special rig and provides a trail boss, Grenard says. Fees generally range between \$16 and \$22 for a two-hour ride.

Each month, the group doubles in size for a special



Cheryl Evans / Staff photographer

three-hour ride, followed by lunch at spots such as the Wickenburg Tennis Club or Cave Creek's Horny Toad. They're off to Estrella Park, near Litchfield and Buckeye Roads, for a special ride and lunch March 29. Non-riders can join the group for lunch after shopping or golf, Grenard says.

He says a little trail ride isn't usually enough to scare folks off. "We don't canter at all," he says. "We have a 90-year-old fellow in our group who carries along a little stepladder that he uses to mount, but other than that, he does just fine."

The group also plans some overnight excursions to resorts outside the Valley.

All levels of horsemanship are represented in the 140 members of the Sun Cities Saddle Club, which marked its 20th anniversary in February. Most members rent horses for club trail rides in the Valley and beyond.

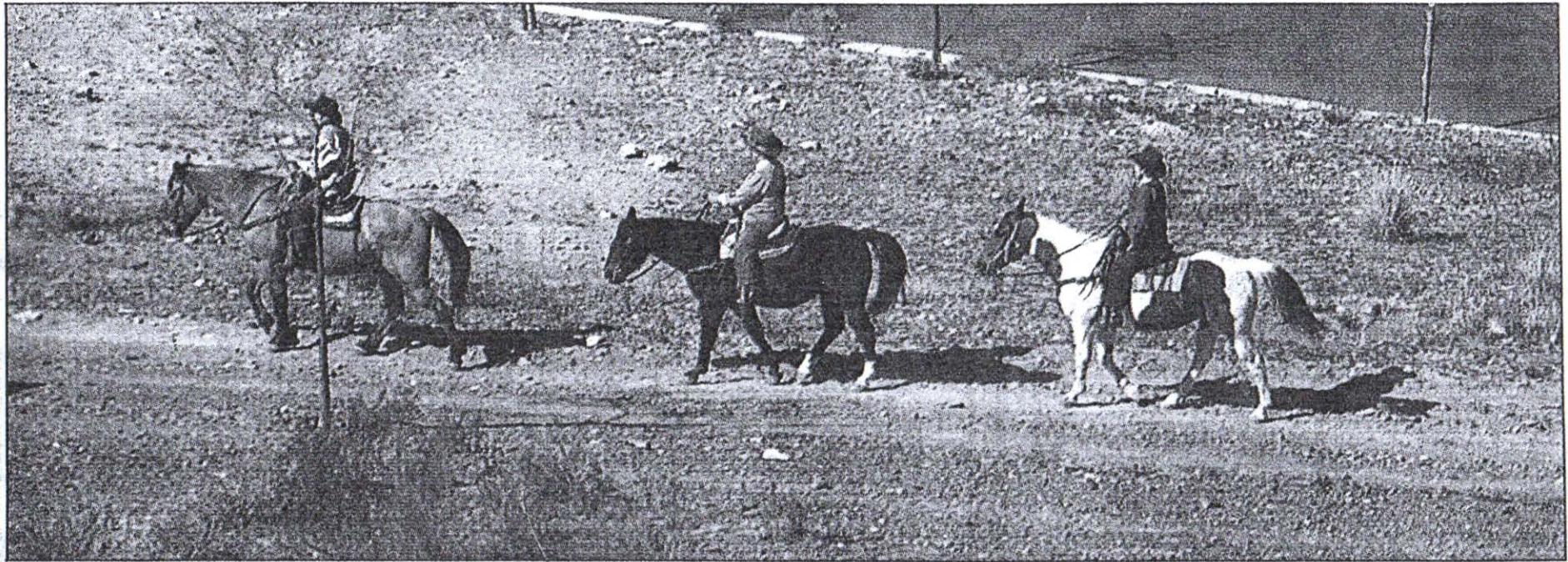
There's a 9:30 a.m. membership meeting on the fourth Tuesday of each month at Wooddale Healthcare Center, 9940 W. Union Hills Drive, when the list of rides is distributed, Grenard says.

New members often ease into the sport just like he and his wife, Jane, did.

"When we came out here from Grosse Pointe, Michigan, I bought a golf cart," he says, "and my wife said, 'If you're going to have a golf cart, I want a horse.' She had ridden horseback to school as a child in Saskatchewan," he says.

They kept the mare for about two years, then decided to leave the chores to someone else.

OVER



Ride chairwoman Mary Dutcher, with her horse, Joker, has been a member of the Sun Cities Saddle Club for 18 years.

Cheryl Evans / Staff photographer

Heading call of the trail

Club riders meet desert on horseback

By CONNIE STEELE YOUNG
Daily News-Sun staff

A drove of adventuresome retirees traded the links and courts along with their rocking chairs when they headed West. For these folks, one of the allures of Western retirement is the call of the trail. Instead of heading quietly and sedately into the sunset, at least once a week from October through May members of the Sun Cities Saddle Club either mount their own horses or one from Ed Hanks' stables and ride into the desert or hills for one- to three-hour treks.

"We thought when we moved from Prescott 13 years ago to be with the old folks, we couldn't ride anymore," Virgil Miller said winking at his wife, Marjorie.

The Millers keep their three horses in stables located on the grounds of the Sun Cities recreational vehicle parking area.

The Millers were among about 30 riders Thursday who had driven west of Wickenburg for a morning trail ride, where they rode for three hours in a close knit line beside ancient river beds and along ridges outside of Rancho de Los Caballeros resort.

Horses with names like Clovis and Banshe carried their riders along a desert trail amid manzanita, saguaros, Teddy bear cholla, jumping cholla, hedgehog cactus and other desert natives. For a brief period, riders shared the home Mother Nature provided these denizens of the desert rather than touring a man-made display in a botanical garden.

"What a beautiful way to meet the desert," said club member Jan North of Sun City West.

"In a couple of weeks, there'll be lots of flowers," said Hardin Eoff, waving at a desert green from recent rains.

Each week, around 20 members of the club saddle up destined for sight-seeing excursions that trailboss Mary

Dutcher has selected.

"I like it because riding's a nice change of scenery from golf or tennis," said Randy Shelton of Sun City West, a transplanted South Carolinian who rides with the club about once a month.

Common destinations include trips to the White Tank Mountains, Blue Point ridge near Fountain Hills, the Squaw Peak Reserve and several other nearby spots with an occasional over night campout thrown in.

Taking up horseback at the age of retirement may sound like more adventure than most people would want. But club treasurer Eoff said anyone can enjoy riding.

"Riding trails is for the scenery not for showing off what the horse can do," he said.

Riders keep their mounts to a walk except for an occasional trot. As in any sport, riders follow a set of etiquette rules, said Boo Warner of Sun City West.

"It's the same in any sport," said Warner, the club's only woman president. While Warner no longer rides, she said she's

"back in harness" as a member of the board. "The club is a bunch of wonderful people," she said.

The club's 127 members range in age from under 60 to over 80. They represent riding experience that includes greenhorns to life-long ranchers.

"We have some people who've never ridden before they moved out West," said president Jack Hall, who has ridden on and off all his life.

One of those is Eoff who said trail riding lassoed his interest after he discovered the fun of learning the ropes.

On the otherhand, Colorado

rancher Sumner Brody said the club's trailride is just one seventh of his weekly venture into the Valley's world of steers and horses. When Brody isn't riding trail with the Sun Cities Saddle Club, he's out roping and riding in other Valley circles.

Club membership is open to anyone living in the Sun Cities for \$5 a year, although anyone living in a nearby retirement community may join as an associate member.

Trailboss Mary Dutcher remains a club member although she now lives in Phoenix. The former Colorado State University professor has owned horses

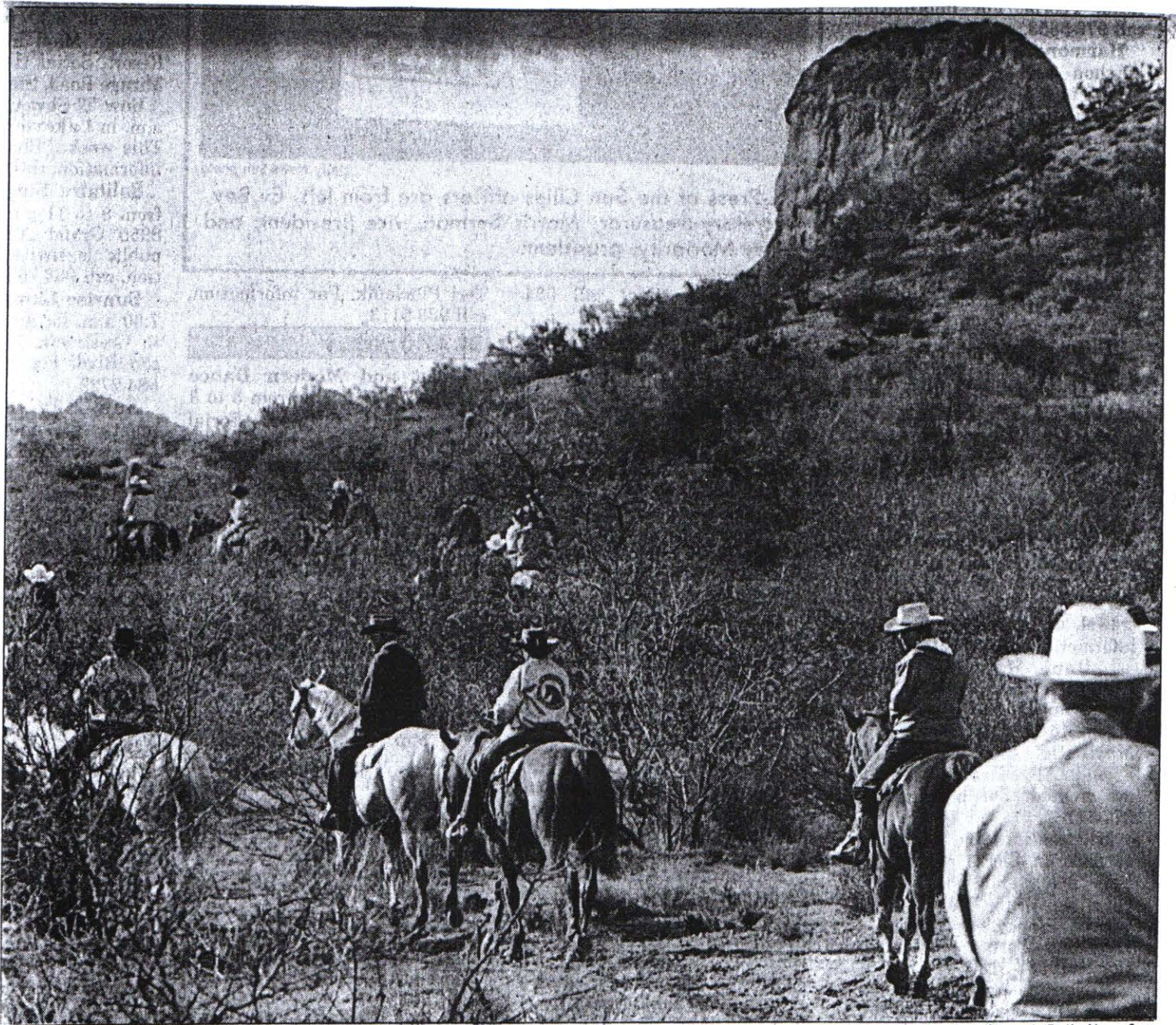
most of her life. She joined the club when she retired to Sun City after the club received its charter in 1972.

Camaraderie which attracts some in the first place keeps members coming back after they've given up riding. So for every one riding the trail, there are two who come to a luncheon following the ride.

Thursday, charter members Virginia and Mary Kennedy joined riders at the end of the trail in the Los Caballeros dining room and clubhouse for a luncheon buffet.

For information, call 977-7024 or 584-0175.

OVER



Stephen Cherek/Daily News-Sun

Vulture Peak looms behind a hill as members of the Sun Cities Saddle Club ride through brush.



Members of the Sun Cities Saddle Club ride throughout Arizona including Lake Pleasant, Death Valley, the White Tank Mountains and around the Phoenix area.

Retirees Are Back in the Saddle

Jane Grenard rode a horse bareback to school as a child in Canada. Now in her eighties, she's been on the backs of horses ever since.

Grenard is just one member of the Sun Cities Saddle Club. The club's 120 members come from all 50 states and Canada, but now are residents of Sun City or Sun City West, two active adult communities developed by Del Webb Corporation. All members are 55 years or older.

"When I came here, my husband bought a golf cart, and I bought a horse," says Grenard. Grenard learned to ride horses on her family's farm in Canada when she was five years old. Their farm was three miles away from the school, so she made the journey on horseback. Since she lived far from other children, Grenard says she made friends with the farm animals and even named all the new colts and

calves. Her idol as a young girl was Dorothy Herbert, a horsewoman who could stand up and trot a horse.

Grenard's husband Ed is also a club member. The Grenard's joined the club upon moving to Sun City to meet people. Ed says the club "is for people who like horses and people who like people who like horses."

The Saddle Club began in 1970. The club rides every Thursday and holds a monthly meeting. While some club members have their own horses, the club uses a horse supplier for the rest of the group. Weekly rides are two or three hours long. Once a month, the group takes a longer ride and then stops for lunch, and once a year, the Saddle Club makes a two-day outing to Prescott, Payson or other Arizona towns. Previous rides have

Continued on page 12

March 13, 1992

The ARROW

Back in the saddle

Continued from page 6

been to Lake Pleasant, Estrella Mountain Park, Carefree, Death Valley, the White Tank Mountains and around the Phoenix area. Aside from the weekly rides, club members also participate in parades throughout the state.

In his nineties, Warren Schoenneman is the oldest member of the club. Schoenneman, a city boy, started riding when he was 52 years old. He joined a riding group when living in CA, which spawned his interest in the Saddle Club after moving to Sun City West.

"I didn't ride, except a pony ride, until I joined the club," says member Dave Roberts. Only upon retirement did Roberts have the time and opportunity to learn how to ride; now he rides twice a month. Other club members rode 30, 40 or 50 years ago, and have just climbed back in the saddle upon

moving to the Sun Cities.

It is not always easy riding for the group. The dubious title of "Fallen Angel" and a plaque are given to club members who fall off their horses, which isn't often and leaves the rider with more of a bruised ego than a bruised body.

Beulah Warner recalls a humorous story of one trail ride when the club members were crossing a river on horses. One horse decided to lie down in the river to cool off and took its rider with it!

Approximately one third of the club's members are active riders. The rest attend the monthly social events and meet the riders for lunch at the end of rides.

"The world at large thinks of people 65 years old as sitting in a rocking chair," says member Mary Dutcher. The Sun Cities Saddle Club does its part to dispell that myth.

Horse of a Different Color?

by Mildred Baker

Well, not that much contrast in color. They are all sleek and beautiful. Perhaps there is more contrast in desert colors Thursday when Sun Cities Saddle Club members congregate, just off Jomax Road near Lake Pleasant, for their weekly trail ride.

Creosote trees are bright yellow and fragrant with bloom. Scores of brittlebush clumps blossom closer to the ground. Orange mallow, penstemon, and paintbrush add accent.

If these riders have a favorite mount, they request it when making reservations at Ed Hanks Hole-in-the-Wall Stables. Then Mary Dutcher, stables representative, program chair, and trail leader of the Saddle Club matches horse and rider as each horse descends from rigs that bring them from the stables.

For Charles and Joyce Johnston, two of the Sun City West members, this is their first ride with the club, but they have been vacation riders. It is the second time here for Inka Muller, although she had ridden elsewhere.

"Jitters" has been Dave Robertson's favorite mount since 1985. Riding fits neatly with Dave's interest in nature conservancy. He is a computer volunteer for the Sun City West Library and Our Lady of Lourdes.

Ralph Wege continues his interest in horses from the horse ranch he and Kay owned in Colorado before they retired to Sun City West. Currently he is Sun Cities Stable Manager of Facilities.

Wege rides "Doc," his own horse on trail rides here, at the walking track at the stables or at nearby Agua Fria River bed trails.

"I have trained and ridden show horses," he explains. One was his own International Buckskin Award winner.

Three other riders have their own mounts for the ride.

When this club is taking a summer vacation, the horses summer at youth camps in northern Arizona.

In addition to the many scenic rides in this area, which may be two or three hours long, they schedule overnights in Tucson, Payson, Prescott, Patagonia and Death Valley. For this two-hour outing, the Hieroglyphic Mountains will be in the near distance and outlines of the Bradshaws beyond.

The season ends with a two-day outing in mid-May, featuring an afternoon ride the first day, a dinner dance that night, and a morning ride the second day.

Interested Sun City West residents may contact John Bond, 584-8877.



For Charles and Joyce Johnston, this is their first ride with Sun Cities Saddle Club.



Inka Muller's horse browses in lush desert greenery.



Ralph Wege, Sun Cities Stable Manager of Facilities rides "Doc" every day.

Saddle up in Sun City

Horses are a vital part of the history and folklore of the West. Many people who migrate here from the Midwest and East have a great desire to participate in horse riding activities or just to be around horses and horse people. The Sun Cities Saddle Club helps them to fulfill these desires.

The club has trail rides every Thursday from October to the end of May. Some members own their horses, and stable space is available at the Sun City Stables, located near the Agua Fria River bed, south of Bell Road at 115th Avenue. Most of our members rent horses from a veteran horse supplier, who delivers the horses by special trip, to trail heads all over the Valley.

Rides start from various places in the Valley, like Lake Pleasant, the Superstitions, Estrella and McDowell mountains, and also in the Carefree, Cave Creek and Wickenburg areas.

Once a month the club has a special ride which will include a three-hour trail ride followed by lunch for the riders and non-riders at specialty eateries like Los Caballeros, Wickenburg Tennis Club, The Horny Toad and South Mountain Park.

The 4th Tuesday of each month the club has a membership meeting at 9:30 a.m. at the Wooddale Center, 9940 W. Union Hills Dr., Sun City. List of rides for the following month are distributed and new members are introduced.

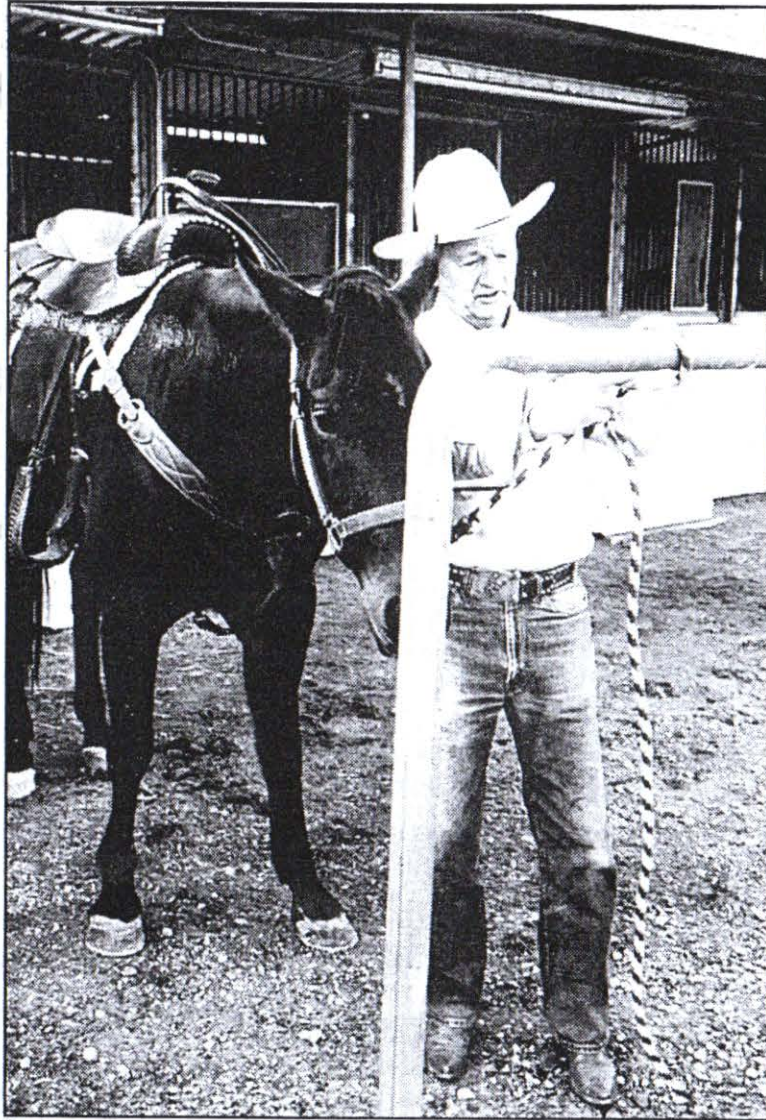
Membership in the club is limited to residents of Sun City and Sun City West. Total number now equal 136, of which 30-40% are from Sun City West, the number one source of new members. They are so enthusiastic.

The riding season ends with a two-day outing in mid-May. This will feature an afternoon ride the first day, a dinner dance that night and a morning ride the second day. These events are held at resorts outside of our area - in Tucson, Payson, Prescott, Patagonia and Death Valley.

The club is truly Western - open, friendly, cooperative and our activities bring some members closer to their fantasies of being cowboys or cowgirls.

Residents wishing more information about the club should call: Jack Hall in Sun City at 977-7024, or John Bond in Sun City West at 584-8877.

Friday, May 21, 1993



The Saddle Club began in 1970. The club rides every Thursday and holds a monthly meeting.

Back in the Saddle!

SUN CITIES — Jane Grenard rode a horse bareback to school as a child in Canada. Now in her eighties, she's been on the backs of horses ever since.

Grenard is just one member of the Sun Cities Saddle Club. The club's 120 members come from all 50 states and Canada, but now are residents of Sun City or Sun City West, two active adult communities developed by Del Webb Corporation. All members are 55 years or older.

"When I came here, my husband bought a golf cart, and I bought a horse," says Grenard. Grenard learned to ride horses on her family's farm in Canada when she was five years old. Their farm was three miles away from the school, so

she made the journey on horseback. Since she lived far from other children, Grenard says she made friends with the farm animals and even named all the new colts and calves. Her idol as a young girl was Dorothy Herbert, a horsewoman who could stand up and trot a horse.

Grenard's husband Ed is also a club member. The Grenard's joined the club upon moving to Sun City to meet people. Ed says the club "is for people who like horses and people who like people who like horses."

The Saddle Club began in 1970. The club rides every Thursday and holds a monthly meeting. While some club members have their own horses, the club uses a horse supplier

for the rest of the group. Weekly rides are two or three hours long. Once a month, the
see *RETIREES* page 23

Retirees are back in the saddle in the Sun Cities

continued from page 2

groups takes a longer ride and then stops for lunch, and once a year, the Saddle Club makes a two-day outing to Prescott, Payson or other Arizona towns. Previous rides have been to Lake Pleasant, Estrella Mountain Park, Carefree, Death Valley, the White Tank Mountains and around the Phoenix area. Aside from the weekly rides, club members also participate in parades throughout the state.

In his nineties, Warren Schoenneman is the oldest member of the club. Schoenneman, a city boy, started riding when he was 52 years old. He joined a riding

group when living in California, which spawned his interest in the Saddle Club after moving to Sun City West.

"I didn't ride, except a pony ride, until I joined the club," says member Dave Roberts. Only upon retirement did Roberts have the time and opportunity to learn how to ride; now he rides twice a month. Other club members rode 30, 40 or 50 years ago, and have just climbed back in the saddle upon moving to the Sun Cities.

It is not always easy riding for the group. The dubious title of "Fallen Angel" and a plaque are given to club members who fall off their horse, which isn't often and leaves the ride with

more of a bruised ego than a bruised body.

Beulah Warner recalls a humorous story of one trail ride when the club members were crossing a river on horses. One horse decided to lie down in the river to cool off and took its rider with it!

Approximately one third of the club's members are active riders. The rest attend the monthly social events and meet the riders for lunch at the end of rides.

"The world at large thinks of people 65 years old as sitting in a rocking chair," says member Mary Dutcher. The Sun Cities Saddle Club does its part to dispel that myth.

Sun Cities Saddle Club caters to those yearning to be cowboys

By **GEORGE WITKOWSKI**
Independent Newspapers

Sun Citian Don Vincent enjoys getting away from it all — and having the luxury of not needing to travel that far to escape the busy life of the retirement community makes “getting away” all that much more enjoyable.

Even more enjoyable for Mr. Vincent is the fact that his escape can be made on horseback.

As a member of the Sun Cities Saddle Club, Mr. Vincent enjoys the west the way it was supposed to be enjoyed: galloping along the dusty trail on top of a fine horse.

“It’s relaxing, with nice scenery and nice people,” says Mr. Vincent.

Sun City West’s Joyce Johnston is ride chairman of the club, formed in 1970. Trail rides begin in October and run through April.

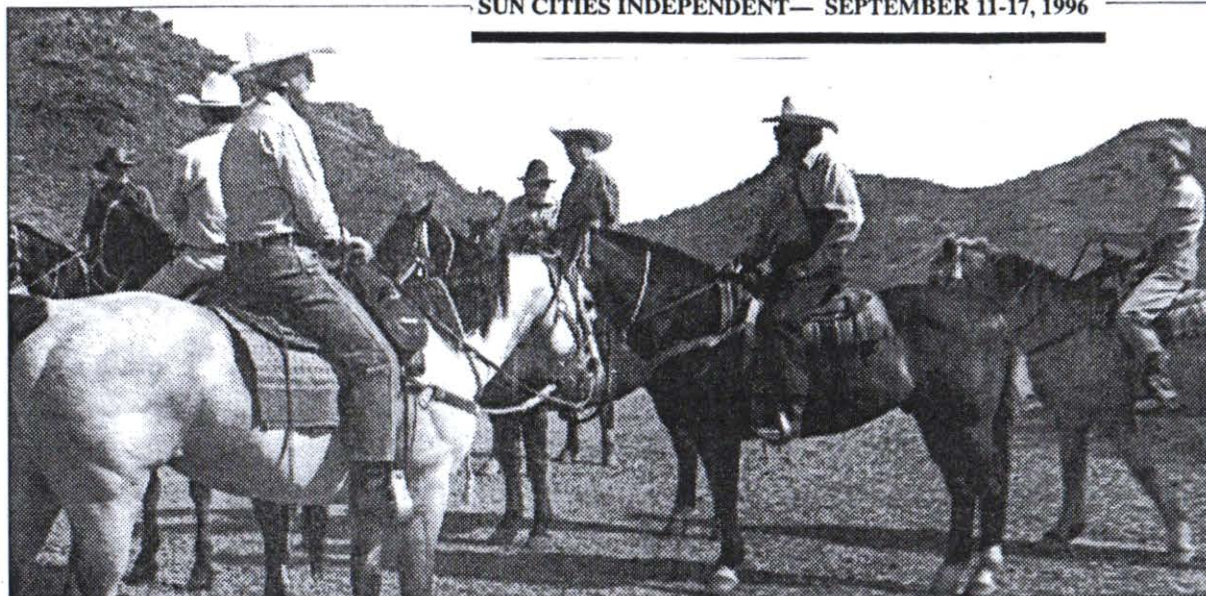
The club meets 9:30 a.m. every fourth Thursday of the month from September through April at Wooddale Village in Sun City. The cost to join the club is \$5 a year.

“We have all levels of riders and some members ride their own horses,” Mrs. Johnston says. “We get our horses from a local Valley outfitter and we ride an assortment of two-, three- and four-hour rides.”

The 85-member club conducts rides to Vulture Peak in Wickenburg, South Mountain Park, the Superstition Mountains and their ride to Prescott consists of two days with an overnight stay.

Vice president Dick Jensen, a resident of Sun City West, says the club lists a schedule of events for the upcoming month, along with directions and fees.

“People don’t need to have a lot



Top photo, Bob Schmohr, foreground, director of the Sun Cities Saddle Club, leads riders from the Cave Creek Park horse staging area. Above, Harlan Schwonek sits atop Laramie prior to a Sun Cities Saddle Club trail ride at Cave Creek Park.

of experience riding and we do a lot of trail riding,” Mr. Jensen says. “We come here with our water jugs and treats for the horses, and the horses come already saddled. The only cost is the cost of the ride.”

Club publicity chairman and Sun City West resident, Curt McElhany, like Mr. Vincent, enjoys horseback riding because he sees things “that you’d never see from a car.”

Marty Potter of Sun City finds age is no barrier to having a good time.

“I just like to be on a horse,” Mr. Potter says. “I’m 80 years old and I feel 40.”

Ed Howe of Sun City West has been with the club for two years and rode horses prior to living in Arizona.

“I’ve ridden in Colorado and I know what to expect, but it’s a

great way of seeing Arizona and it’s a great way to let the horse do the hiking,” Mr. Howe says.

Former Ohioan, Bob Baldrige, who lives in Sun City West, has been with the club for one year.

“Just being outdoors is great and getting to places in the desert,” he says. “My wife has ridden horses all her life and these horses are so well trained you don’t have to know that much. I was apprehensive at first because I’ve probably ridden two or three horses in my life, but I feel safe.”

Harlan Schwonek, also of Sun City West, enjoys getting away from the noise and the traffic. “I guess we all have a little bit of cowboy in us,” he says.

For more information about the Sun Cities Saddle Club call 584-5013, 584-3575 or 972-6400.



Daily News-Sun • **Club news** • Monday, Oct. 2, 2000

Saddle Club giddies up for another year

Group's 30th anniversary celebrated later this month

JOHN GUZZON
DAILY NEWS-SUN

They're back in the saddle again.

Just as the song Gene Autry popularized years ago proclaimed, the Sun Cities Saddle Club has mounted up for yet another year of rides, social events and old-fashioned fun.

The primary purpose of the club is to give members from Sun City, Sun City West and Sun City Grand the opportunity to enjoy Arizona from horseback. Club member Bud Clark said in order to experience all that Arizona has to offer, automobiles and walking must be enhanced with authentic horsepower.

"One of the nicest things about it is you get to places in the desert that you only can get to on horseback," Clark said. "The scenery is absolutely fabulous, and sometimes we see animals. We see a lot of deer and sometimes javelina."

The club is celebrating its 30th anniversary this season with festivities after the Oct. 24 monthly meeting in the activities room at Wooddale Village, 18616 N. 99th Ave. Club President Bob Thornton said some former members

who can no longer ride due to physical limitations will be on hand to discuss the early days of the club.

Novices and experts alike enjoy the rides, Thornton said.

"We have a gal in her 80s who is on every ride," Thornton said. "She's just super. When you go on a four- or five-hour ride, that can be physically demanding. She just shines."

The rides are at varied locations throughout the county and that resists boredom, Thornton said. The stable hauls the horses to the specific location, he said.

"If you ride the same trail time after time, it gets boring," he said.

For their first ride after the celebration, the club will go on a five-hour ride that begins at the Lorill Equestrian Center, which is at 30208 N. 152nd St. in northeast Scottsdale. This \$55 ride starts at 9:30 a.m.

Wranglers accompany the riders on the Thursday morning rides for safety and as skilled guides.

Dues are \$10 for the first year and \$5 per year thereafter. Most rides are \$45. For information, call Romey Chance at 975-9406 or Bob Thornton at 214-7024.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Residents of Sun City, Sun City West and Sun City Grand are invited to ride with the Sun Cities Saddle Club, which celebrates its 30th anniversary this year. Dues are \$10 for the first year and \$5 per year thereafter. Rides are \$45.

Sun Citians ride weekly into sunset



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Members of the Sun Cities Saddle Club ride every Thursday throughout the Valley.

MARC BUCKHOUT
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Sun City West resident Bob Heise said there's no better way to see the scenic Arizona landscape than on the back of a horse.

"There's just something about being out in the wilderness seeing all the scenery and the feel of being on top of a horse that is good for the spirit," Heise said.

Heise, the club president of the Sun Cities Saddle Club, has been riding horses since the 1930s.

Like many in the group, which consists of approximately 60 members, Heise came to the Sun Cities looking forward to continuing a hobby he grew up with.

"My family had horses when I was growing up in North Dakota," he said. "My dad got me hooked on roping events and that's how I started competing in rodeos."

Heise competed in his first rodeo event in 1947 after graduating from high school and continued competing in them up until 1975.

Since moving to Sun City West full time six years ago, he has been riding as a member of the Saddle Club, which recently celebrated its 31st year in existence.

Pat Davis of Sun City West is in charge of scheduling for the group which rides every Thursday at various locales throughout the Valley.

"Once a year we'll schedule something outside the Valley, go up to Sedonna or something, but I enjoy myself wherever we ride," said the snowbird from Victoria British Columbia, who has been spending the winters in Sun City West for the last seven years.

A few of the group's members

See Saddle Club, B3

OVER

From B1

own horses, though everyone rents for the club rides.

Active from October through April, the Saddle Club is open to residents of Sun City, Sun City West and Sun City Grand. Meetings take place the fourth Monday of every month beginning with coffee at 9:30 a.m. at Woodale Village retirement center, 18616 North 99th Ave., Sun City. At that time the group discusses the ride schedule for the coming month.

Generally rides are three hours long. Davis said that prices vary depending on the renter and the length of the ride. Typically though, they fall in the range of \$35 to \$60 for the guided adventure.

"We usually have 10 to 12 on a typical ride," Davis said. "We're all regulars that have become good friends. We really enjoy each others company. Sometimes we'll have barbecues afterwards or sometimes we'll go out to a restaurant for dinner."

Lake Pleasant and Wickenburg are two of the more frequent destinations for the group, which has theme rides

that often include group speakers. The group occasionally has sunset rides.

"We see all sorts of wildlife — coyotes, javelinas, birds, rattlesnakes, rabbits and burrows," Davis said.

Ann Jewett of Sun City adds that March is a particularly good month to go riding.

"Last year it was too dry, but we've gotten enough moisture, we should see the flowers blooming out there," she said. "The desert is really beautiful with all the colors."

Jewett is the only original member of the group, having lived in Sun City for the last 32 years after moving from Missouri.

During that time Jewett, who rides four or five times a week, has owned three horses.

"Most of us have a good amount of experience riding horses," she said. "For those that haven't ridden in a number of years or maybe have never ridden we recommend that they go out a couple of times on their own and get some instructions before joining us on a ride. That way they feel more comfortable when they join us and they don't hold the group up."

For information on joining



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Sun Cities Saddle Club — shown here getting ready for a ride — has been going strong for 31 years and has one original member left, Ann Jewett of Sun City.

the Sun Cities Saddle Club membership chairman Bob attend the next meeting contact Freise at 214-7546, Schmohr at 214-1992 or scheduled for March 24.

Back in the saddle again

Saturday, July 31, 1993
Daily News-Sun, Sun City, Ariz.

By ROSA De SIMONE
Daily News-Sun staff

They'll be the first to admit it — Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid they're not.

But Sun Citians Virgil Miller, 79, and Vince Fragapane, 66, are still horse-ridin' buddies — dedicated to their quarter horses and Arabians even in 100-plus degree heat.

In the summer, when other Valley riders are saddling their steeds up north at "summer camp," Virgil of Sun City West, and Vince of Sun City, are at the Sun Cities Stables.

The two horse lovers board their mounts and store all of their equipment, down to the spurs, at the stables near Bell Road and 114th Avenue.

Clad in old jeans, boots and cowboy hats, they prepare their horses for riding together early each morning.

Virgil rides horses as part of his daily exercise regimen.

"It's good therapy for anybody," he said.

Vince said his daily rides provide relaxation.

"When I ride, I meditate," he said. "And I see a lot of country you can't see in a car — like rattlers and wild pigs."

"I always wanted to ride horses and be a cowboy," said Vince, a native of Brooklyn, N.Y.

At 15 he bought his first horse, a polo pony named "Cutie."

In 1939, horse flesh was cheap and Cutie came complete with a saddle for \$50, Vince recalled.

Aside from a love for the animals, Virgil's experience with horses is widely different from his partner's.

Virgil said he was born in Missouri, but he and his family moved to Wyoming when he was 4 years old. He grew up poor — without enough money for riding lessons or a saddle. His family had a horse, but "it wasn't much of a horse," Virgil said. He learned to ride bareback.

"We were so poor we didn't have anything," Virgil said. "In those days



Virgil Miller's boots and spurs get plenty of wear.

you just learned by yourself. And if you fell off, you knew you weren't doing it the right way."

During his three years in the Marines Vince couldn't do much riding, but once back in Brooklyn, he picked up where he'd left off.

Vince was a maintenance supervisor for an airline and did plenty of riding at a friend's farm in New Jersey and while hunting in Wyoming.

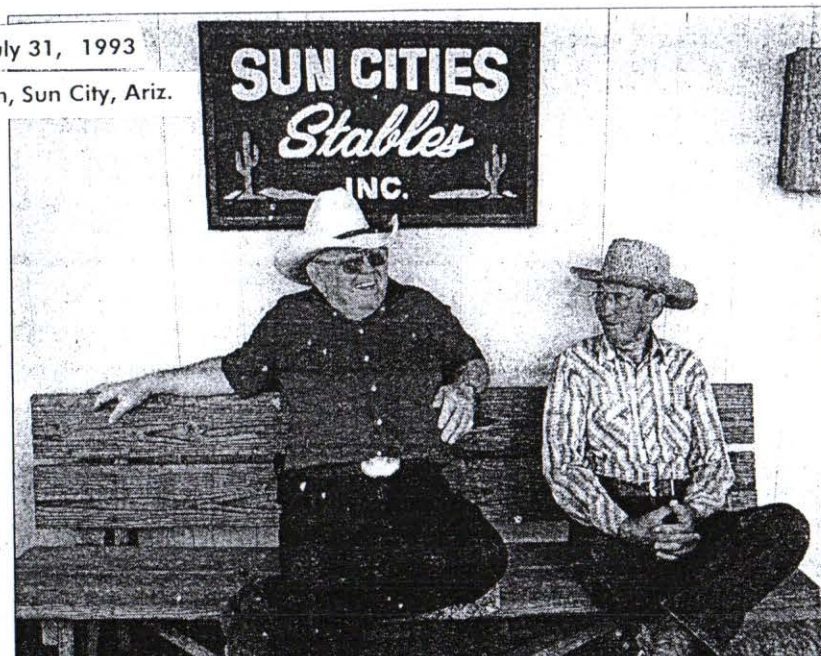
Virgil rode frequently. He moved to Maryland and worked in Washington D.C. for the Naval Ship Research and Development Center.

Both men retained their passion for horseback riding.

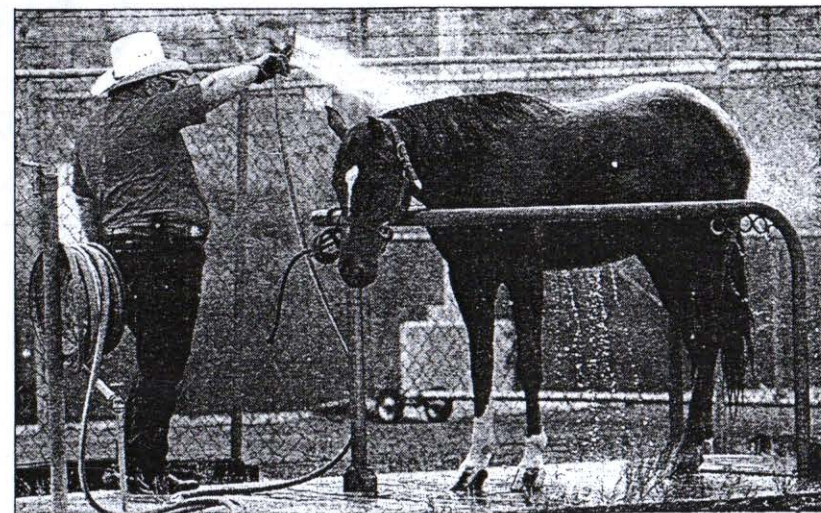
And they continued to horse around after moving to the Sun Cities.

Vince said he wouldn't have settled in Sun City if it weren't for the community's stables.

"I came to Arizona on vacation, and I saw a cowboy on a horse riding in the desert. So I said, 'I'm going to retire, get a horse and a six-shooter and ride in the desert,'" he said — and now, he's done all three.



Vince Fragapane, left, and Virgil Miller stop to shoot the breeze.



Vince Fragapane washes Buckaroo Cody after the morning's ride.

Although they have a long-standing debate on quarter horses vs. Arabians — Vince like quarter horses for their "quieter" nature while Virgil prefers the "pleasure riding" provided by his two Arabians — the friends enjoy their daily meetings.

On their rides, they debate a variety of topics, exchange philosophies and remember the old days.

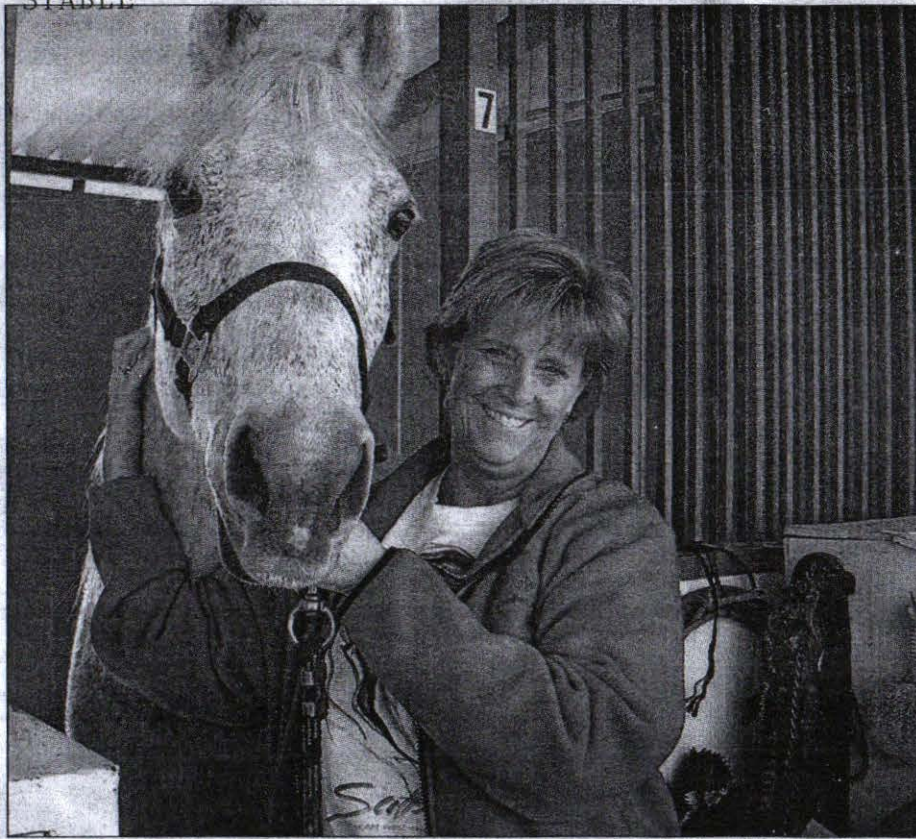
While scraping dirt and other non-mentionables out of Buckaroo Cody's hooves, Vince offered his thoughts on newfangled equipment:

"Back when, cowboys didn't go out and buy hook picks," he said. "They'd make 'em."

Virgil had a few opinions as well. "People who deal in horses are mostly liars," he warned.

VF SC STABLE

Horse owner Patti Hirst of Sun City West shows off Rebel, a 20-year-old Arabian gelding, and resident of the Sun Cities Stable for the last nine years, during an open house at the stable Saturday.



ERIN TURNER/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Sun Cities Stable corrals horse lovers

ERIN TURNER
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Tucked away behind a convenience store and a huge RV park in Surprise is a place Patti Hirst and her horse love.

Rebel, a 20-year-old Arabian gelding, has been boarded at the Sun Cities Stable for the last nine years.

At an open house on Saturday, Hirst wanted other horse owners in the Sun Cities to know they, too, could become a part of the family-like group.

"I love it here. We have so much fun," said Hirst, a Sun City West resident. "It's a real friendly group of people who love horses. We all have a common interest.

We go on rides together; we join parades together. We're mostly pleasure riders, (but) we have some people who compete."

Two spots are open at the 25-stall stable, primarily for residents of Sun City, Sun City West and Sun City Grand. Spots may be available to residents of other communities if they are not filled by residents of the Sun Cities. A waiting list is available, as well. The stable is only open to trained and rideable horses, Hirst said.

The available stalls are \$50 a month, but other sizes run \$60 and \$80 a month. The price includes

SEE STABLES, A5

water and electricity at the stable, which has lights for night riding. Hay, food and cleaning duties are not included in the monthly rent and horse owners take turns cleaning the stalls twice daily.

"We take care of the horses ourselves and get into pods to share the duties," Hirst said. "We clean the stalls twice a day so it's real clean. There's a big arena, a round pen and a hot-walker."

A perk of the stable's location is the nearby riverbeds for riding, she said.

"There's quite a bit of riding nearby. We can ride out here in the river bottom all the way to Phoenix if we had the energy. Then you can go the other direction and cross over Bell Road," she said. "It's a nice ride."

For more information about the stable or boarding a horse, call Dick Hodgson, president of the Sun Cities Stable at 623-694-3400. The stable is at 16204 N. 115th Ave. in Surprise.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Members of the Sun Cities Saddle Club explore the Sonoran desert on weekly trail rides.

Sun Cities Saddle Club still riding high after 40 years

STAFF REPORT

The Sun Cities Saddle Club is celebrating its 40th anniversary.

From October through April, members enjoy weekly trail riding. Many members owned or rode horses in their earlier years and enjoy the opportunity to explore the Sonoran Desert on horseback.

The club enjoys western-style riding.

All of the trail rides are guided and are single file, walk-only rides. Most of the trails are narrow and rocky. For safety reasons, club members do not let the horses trot, lope or gallop at any time.

The trails vary from very easy to quite challenging. The rides vary in length from two hours to four hours or more.

Membership is open to residents of the Sun Cities who enjoy horseback

riding and have some previous riding experience. The initial membership fee is \$20, which includes an information package. The annual renewal fee is \$10.

Club meetings are at 10 a.m. on the fourth Monday of each month in the Activities Room at Wooddale Village, 18616 N. 99th Ave., which is one block north of Union Hills Drive on Concho Circle.

Weekly trail rides are usually scheduled at 9:30 a.m. every Thursday. The stable matches each rider with a horse appropriate to their skill level. The location and exact time for each ride is listed in the club's monthly ride schedule.

Interested riders should attend the Nov. 22 meeting.

For information, call 623-933-1944 or log on to www.scwclubs.com/saddle.