

# Posse chief testifies before panel studying crime against elderly

By Betty Latty  
Gazette correspondent

Eldon Page, commander of the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City, appeared Tuesday in Washington, D.C., before the House Select Committee on Aging, which is studying crime against the elderly.

One of four members of a panel, Page described the volunteer posse's efforts in reducing crime in the Sun City area.

Page was called to the Capitol by the office of Rep. Matthew Rinaldo, R-N.J.

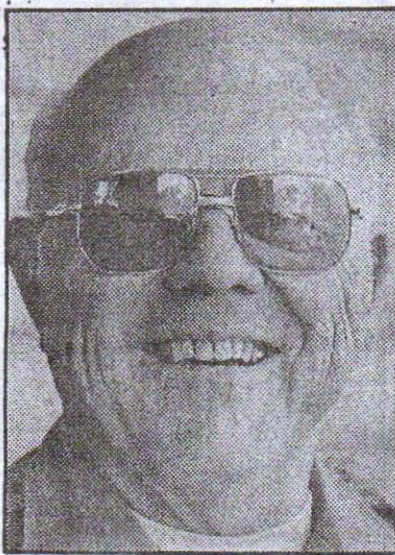
Rinaldo, with Edward Roybal, D-Calif., is introducing legislation to create an office within the Department of Justice to coordinate federal crime prevention and victim assistance efforts, specifically relating to the elderly. The bill officially is called Elderly Crime Prevention and Victim Assistance Act of 1985.

The consolidation of information about these efforts "makes sense to me," Page said on his return. "It means there would be one source where law enforcement and other agencies could seek statistics on these crimes. Information about

## Scenics

resources available also would be found there."

Page, who had been notified two months ago to "be on the ready" for the Washington appearance, flew there Monday and returned to Sun



Eldon Page testified on elderly crime.

City Tuesday night after the hearing in the Cannon Office Building.

The operation of the local sheriff's posse was detailed by Page in the hearing, which was open to the public "and a lot of television cameras."

He described the training programs for posse members and the various ways in which they serve the community, including neighborhood watch, home security checks, operation identification for commercial businesses and awareness projects.

The posse serves as a patrol for about 70,000 homes a year, Page testified, and logs 184,000 miles by car each year. Foot patrols are added in shopping centers and high traffic areas during the holiday times, he said.

## Singing on tap

Two hundred and fifty Sun Cities singers and musicians will entertain rec card holders and their guests twice this Sunday in Sundial Auditorium.

The "Sun City Song Sampler"  
See • Scenics, NW-C

V F SC Sheriff's Posse Phx. Gazette Oct 30, 1985

# Sun Citians celebrate home security

## Block Watch events draw thousands

By MIKE GARRETT  
and IAN MITCHELL  
Daily News-Sun staff

It was party time in the Sun Cities for Block Watch's Gala Light Up Night Tuesday.

It also served notice that the party is over for would-be burglars in the Sun Cities.

At least 50 to 60 neighborhood parties of 20 to 40 people each were going in the streets of Sun City, Sheriff's Posse of Sun City commander Bill Ellsworth said.

Another 18 known parties involving 500 to 550 people celebrated the gala event in Sun City West, said Sun City West home security officer and Light Up Night coordinator Merle Bodine.

Both sheriff's posses were out in full force patrolling Sun Cities streets to hand out posse brochures and answer residents' questions on how they can better protect their neighborhoods from crime. Block Watch is neighbor helping neighbor by observing suspicious activity in the area.

"I was really impressed with the enthusiasm and attendance at the seven parties I attended," said Deputy Ron Greth, Maricopa County Sheriff's Department block watch coordinator.

"Our residents accepted it real well with a variety of activities," Ellsworth said. "Our posse members answered a lot of questions."

"We were real happy with what we

saw," Bodine said. "Three of the parties involved people who wanted to set up a neighborhood Block Watch and we had a lot of people asking about our R.U.O.K. and home security programs."

Greth noted statistics showing that since July 1991, the Sun Cities have seen a 50 percent reduction in resi-

dential burglaries, which he largely attributes to the hundreds of neighborhood block watch programs launched in the past two years.

"We have had no crime at all in Sun City West in January and so far in February," Bodine said.

The 30 residents attending the Greystone Drive Block Watch party

near 147th avenue in Sun City West indicated they haven't had any crime in their neighborhood since forming a Block Watch in October 1991.

Started by posse members Don and Rheta Slawson, the Greystone Block Watch now involves 20 houses and 40 people who consider themselves "one big happy family."

Block Watch captain Frank Zimmermann is responsible for telling his neighbors when they have left their garage doors open. All names, addresses and phone numbers are kept on a resident's home computer and house keys are exchanged during the summer vacation months.

"We take good care of one another," said Rheta Slawson.

"The block captain and others all know who is gone," said Don Slawson.

"These are the greatest bunch of people and this is the friendliest neighborhood I've ever lived in," Dan MacLean said.

Group members say they often get together for Christmas parties and other social functions so everybody knows everybody else.

The Greystone party was visited by posse members Sgt. Carol Thornton and Les Rufolo and later by Bodine, Jack Lewis and the nationally known crime-fighter dog "Mr. McGruff."

At John and Shirley Lines' block watch party in the 10500 block of Oakmont Drive in Sun City, 102-year-old Ellamarie Krenzien ate dinner with her neighbors.

Krenzien, a Sun Valley Lodge resident, can remember when she didn't have many neighbors, moving to Sun City in its founding year, 1960.

"There were only 20 people when we moved here," Krenzien said. Members of the Sun City Sheriff's Posse awarded Krenzien a deputy's star before they moved on to the next Block Watch picnic.

In the 10900 block of Saratoga Circle, Mel and Esther Canty's picnic attracted more than 20 block watchers.

"Everybody is just thrilled to do this," Esther Canty said.

# Safety 'trak'

## Posses offer free tracking system

By GINGER SCOTT-EIDEN  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

A battery-operated radio transmitter, no bigger than the face of a watch, could be the difference between officials tracking down a missing Alzheimer's patient in a matter of minutes as opposed to hours.

The wristband transmitters are offered to residents by the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City and Sun City West for only the cost of monthly battery replacements — about \$8.

However, officials said, few are taking advantage of the devices.

Of the approximate 25 to 30 wristbands available between the two posses, only six are in use, said Lt. Ray Harkey of the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office District 3, which serves the Sun Cities.

"The biggest problem is people are embarrassed to use it," said Bryan Foley of the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City.

Care Trak is a tracking device that can locate a wanderer for up to 3/4 mile on the ground and two miles by air. The system consists of a set of wrist bands with small transmitters that are worn by the patient and a radio receiver used by searchers. The posses purchased the \$225 unit with donations they received.

The main receiver is kept at the District 3 Sheriff's substation so it is available 24 hours a day. Wristbands are available at the posse buildings, and each transmitter has its own frequency.

The Sheriff's Office and the posses have had the Care Trak system for about a year and a half, and officials said they hope to increase the public's use of the transmitters.

"A lot of people don't like the size of the bracelet," said Bobbie Hadley of the Sun City Sheriff's Posse. "They're ashamed and they don't want people to know."

But the device can be made less obtrusive, Hadley said. She suggested wearers put a small photo of a family member or a picture on the top of the wristband to make it seem more personal. The tracking device can also be fastened on a belt buckle, tucked in a fanny pack or hidden somewhere on the person.

"It's whatever that person feels comfortable with," Harkey said. "Whatever they'll put up with."

The bands can only be removed by cutting them off, Harkey said. The batteries are replaced once a month by an official with Sunshine Services or another organization, who removes and refastens the bracelet.

"But if they want it off badly enough, they'll get it off," said Harkey, adding that one of the qualifications for receiving the device is to show that the person is going to willingly wear it.

Sheriff's officials have yet to track a lost Alzheimer's patient with Care Trak, Harkey said. But, he said, it's nice to have the system available.

For information on the Care Trak system, call the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City at 972-2555 or the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City West at 546-1018.



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun

Sun City Posse member Bobbie Hadley demonstrates how the Care Trak works at the Sundial auditorium Tuesday morning. The system is used for Alzheimer's patients who may wander away. A battery operated transmitter is worn by the patient and the antenna is used to track the signal from the device.

# Sun City posse is activated by sheriff

By THELMA HEATWOLE

SUN CITY — The Maricopa County sheriff's office has gained a helping arm in this retirement community through the organization of a Sun City Sheriff's Posse.

Fifty men and four women have been sworn in by Sheriff Paul Blubaum. More will be given the oath Tuesday and others are being processed for posse ranks.

Posse commander Marvin Vandera said the goal is to have a posse member in every block in Sun City.

The posse, he said, will function as a deterrent to thieves and burglars. A call

system will be established so that possemen can be pressed into service rapidly.

Blubaum, speaking Wednesday night at a meeting attended by wives of posse members in the Western Savings and Loan Greenway Terrace Branch, stressed the need for citizen involvement in law enforcement.

"I am excited about what is happening in the area of volunteers," Blubaum said. "In the election campaign I promised to make effective use of volunteers."

He told Sun Citizens they were not alone in the effort.

"There are 15 different volunteer groups serving in the county," the sheriff said. "It appears that nationally we have the most active groups of citizen volunteers among county organizations in the country."

Blubaum said the Sun City group is unique.

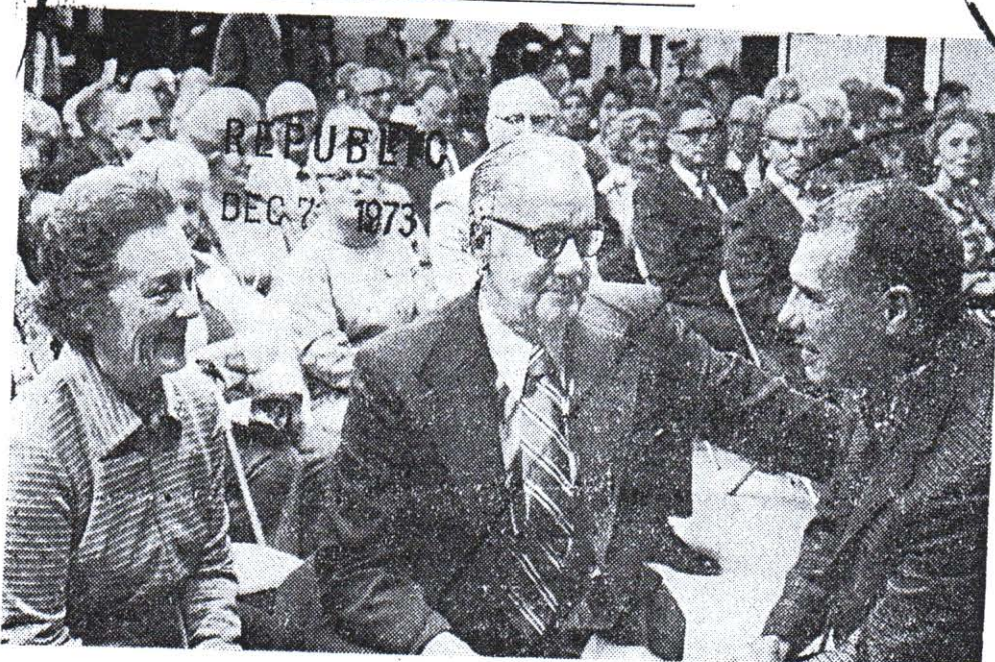
"Besides being available to the sheriff's office in the traditional posse mode," he said, "they are working very closely with the county Civil Defense program."

Vandera, a retired U.S. Navy captain

Continued on Page B-22

B-22 The Arizona Republic

Friday, Dec. 7, 1973



Mrs. Grace Haas and Posse Capt. Marvin Vandera, center, chat with Sheriff Paul Blubaum at Sun City Posse swearing-in ceremony.

Republic photo by Nyle Leatham

## More about Sheriff's posse

Continued from Page B-1

who worked in intelligence, said plans are for the posse to be used in local hospital emergencies, traffic control at fires, in times of flood, explosion or whenever the sheriff wants the posse activated.

Helmets will be obtained to identify easily members at emergency scenes.

Vandera said that from indications he did not feel it would be difficult to get 200 posse members. Others interested in the community organization may contact him.

Members meet twice a month and receive training in such facets as traffic and civil disturbance control. Some already are qualified in that area, Vandera said.

## *Posses perform vital functions in Sun Cities*



Photos by Mark Henle/The Arizona Republic

Sun City posse member Hugh Vick checks a door of a house while performing vacation watch patrol, one of the posse's many duties. Posse members also patrol, direct traffic when needed, organize Block Watches and check the welfare of elderly residents.

# Sheriff's eyes, ears

By Ryan Konig  
The Arizona Republic

SUN CITIES — Even at 78 years of age, Hugh Vick is still faster than an automatic garage door.

He proved that recently as a member of the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City, responding to a call that a garage door had been left open at a vacationer's home. To prevent a burglary, Vick decided to close the garage door. But that meant pushing a button inside the garage and then racing outside before the door closed.

Vick saw humor in the challenge: "I might be 78 years old, but I'm still faster than a garage door."

The humor wasn't lost on the neighbors who had gathered near the driveway. As Vick's door-closing mission was successfully completed, the small crowd greeted him with a round of applause.

"Perhaps I should get a medal for this," he joked.

Vick was just performing one of the numerous duties of the Sheriff's Posse. He is one of 180 retired residents who volunteer time in the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City. And 220 retirees are serving in the Sheriff's Posse Sun City West.

Posse members in both retirement communities are the eyes and ears of the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, patrolling the streets in squad cars, reporting crimes and suspicious activity to the Sheriff's Office.

But posse members do much more than that, said Lt. Jack Lewis, a spokesman for the Sheriff's Posse Sun City West. Posse members in both communities often:

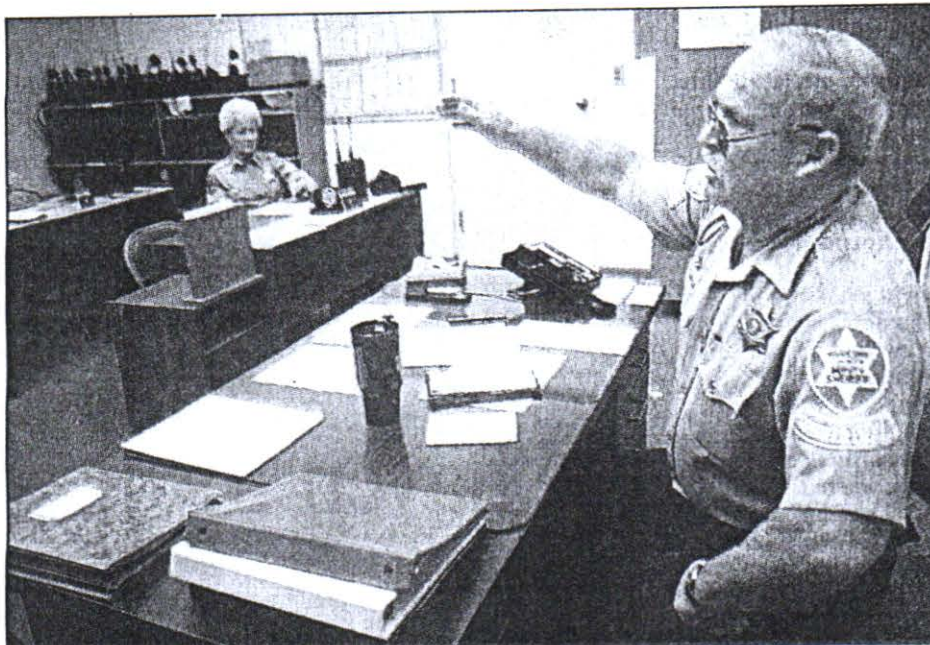
- Check on the welfare of elderly residents and call for medical assistance, if needed.
- Help organize Block Watch programs, as well as seminars on personal and home security.
- Direct traffic at the scene of car accidents.
- Assist sheriff deputies on special programs, such as the patrols of shopping mall parking lots during the holidays.

The Sun City West posse also has a program in which illegally parked cars are given warning tickets.

"Through that program, we have virtually eliminated illegal parking in the community during the past two years," Lewis said.

The posses also take part in programs to check on the homes of residents who leave town on vacation. The volunteers make sure all doors and windows — and garage doors — are locked and secure.

"I believe it gives people peace of



Duty officer Bob Warren conducts the 7 a.m. briefing for members at the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City headquarters.

mind to know that we're checking on their homes when they're away on vacation," said member Muriel Talcott, who moved to Sun City in 1982 and has been a posse member for about two years.

"Being a posse member really is a fun way to serve the community."

The posse programs for the Sun Cities are funded entirely through private contributions. And that includes their headquar-

— Please see **POSSES**, Page 6



Edna Rolle, a master sergeant in the Sun City posse, explains the situation to Alex Brown during a medical emergency.

## FYI

### Volunteers needed

The Sun City and Sun City West posses are always looking for men and women to volunteer as members.

Volunteers generally are asked to devote 20 hours a month to help keep the retirement communities safe.

Duties include street patrol, radio dispatching, vacation watch, patrol car maintenance, building maintenance and helping to organize Block Watches.

The two posses are funded through private contributions, and they always welcome donations.

For more information about volunteering or donating, contact:

- The Sheriff's Posse of Sun City, 10861 Sunland Drive, Sun City 85375. Telephone: 972-2555. Contributions can be mailed to: Sheriff's Posse of Sun City, P.O. Box 6, Sun City 85372.

- For non-emergencies, residents can contact the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City by calling 972-2555. For emergencies, call 911.

- The Sheriff's Posse Sun City West, 20450 Stardust Blvd., Sun City West 85373. Telephone: 584-5808. Contributions can be sent to that address.

For non-emergencies, residents can contact the Sheriff's Posse Sun City West by calling 584-5808. For emergencies, call 911.

OVER

- SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT— DECEMBER 8-14, 1999

# Posses begin holiday shopping center patrols

## Holiday season is busy time for thieves

By **MIKE RUSSO**  
Independent Newspapers

Christmas brings visions of sugar plums dancing through the heads of children, merchants enthralled with the sweet sound of the cash register tallying more sales and a time for joyous shoppers to be extremely wary.

The business community is not the only segment of the population salivating at the prospects of a prosperous holiday season. Criminals are also gearing up for a busy few weeks leading up to Christmas.

Ne'er-do-wells look forward to

the season much like children awaiting the arrival of Santa Claus. Shoppers hurrying about with their minds focused on the next Christmas present to be purchased make easy prey for the miscreants trolling shopping center parking lots searching for the catch of the day.

With that in mind the Sun City and Sun City West Posses lend a hand to the beleaguered Maricopa County Sheriff's Office deputies and municipal police departments to help patrol major shopping centers in the northwest Valley.

The two posses lend their support to patrol the Arrowhead Towne

Center in Glendale, the largest shopping center in the area, and they also cruise the shopping centers in their respective communities.

Lt. Jack Lewis of the Sun City West Posse noted that crime does increase during the holiday season, especially crimes of opportunity. "There are pickpockets out there who prey upon elderly people who are moving along slowly; not aware of their surroundings," he warned.

The majority of the crimes are perpetrated by nefarious denizens of the dark, though some have become

See ■ PATROLS, Page 3

## Shopping safety tips

Some safety tips offered by the Sun City and Sun City West Posses to help ensure a safe and pleasurable holiday shopping experience:

- Be alert when exiting a store. Be aware of your surroundings. If you feel as though something is wrong go back into the store and ask for an escort to your vehicle.
- Be self assured. Walk with conviction. Try not to appear lost or disoriented.
- Have your keys in your hand as you approach your vehicle, then you will not have to fumble in your pockets or purse upon reaching the vehicle. This reduces the criminal's window of opportunity.



(over)

quite emboldened and will attempt to commit their crime during broad daylight.

Lt. Lewis offers some suggestions to help avoid being a victim.

"Walk with conviction," he said. "Be aware of your surroundings."

As you approach your vehicle, you should have your key handy so there will be little delay in entering the safety of the vehicle.

The keys, placed between your fingers, can also be used as a weapon to fend off a mugger's attack

"Check under your vehicle and in the back seat before entering, to make sure there is no one hiding there who could rob you," Lt. Lewis advised.

In order to protect your purchases, Lt. Lewis suggests placing your parcel in the trunk, out of sight of roving eyes.

"If anyone notices anything out of the ordinary, they should return to the mall and seek out Posse personnel to accompany them back to the car," Lt. Lewis said.

The Sun City West Posse began its patrol at Arrowhead Towne Center last week and provide the same service from 5 to 11 p.m. Dec. 13, 14 and 21.

"We will have three cars, with at least one person each, patrol those days," Lt. Lewis said. Also, on Dec. 22, the Sun City West Posse will provide security at the mall for two shifts, 1-4 and 4-11 p.m.

Plans are still being made for group's patrol golf car of Sun City West's shopping centers in golf cars.

Sun City, because it has a larger force and is located closer to Arrowhead Towne Center, will handle a few more shifts than their Sun

City West counterparts.

Patrols by Sun City personnel of the northwest Valley's largest shopping center began Dec. 6, according to Lt. Will Box, Sun City Posse operations officer.

Sun City Posse members will provide security in the mall's parking lot from 5 to 10 p.m. Dec. 8, 9, 15, 16 and 20. Additionally, Sun City Posse officers will handle a double shift on Dec. 23 — 1-6 p.m. and 6-11 p.m.

The posse began its patrols of Sun City's shopping centers earlier this week and will continue until Christmas Eve, according to Lt. Box.

Two people and one patrol vehicle will make the rounds of the shopping centers from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Dec. 12-18 and Dec. 20-24.

Shopping centers include are Grand Center, east and west, Sun Bowl Center, east and west, Thunderbird Plaza, LeRhone, east and west, Greenway Terrace, Bell Camino, Promenade, Sun Shadow and Campana Square.

"The two people assigned to each center will do a combination of foot and vehicular patrols," explained Lt. Box.



Saturday, December 11, 1999 • The Arizona Republic

# New commander trades partying for posse

By Brent Whiting  
The Arizona Republic

SUN CITY — He finds posse duty a great replacement for the life of drinking and partying.

"The posse has filled a void for me," said Will Box, 73, a nearly four-year member of the Sun City Sheriff's Posse. "It has given me a renewed purpose in life. I hardly ever drink anymore."

Box will get plenty of service opportunities next year.

He has been elected as the group's commander for 2000, a job that demands long hours of hard work and concentrated effort.

Dave Kaemmerer, the posse's current commander, as well as former leaders of the more than 170-member group said they ex-



Will  
Box

pect outstanding things from Box.

"He's been my operations manager, one of the pivotal positions in the posse, and he has done an excellent job," Kaemmerer said.

Eileen Weber and Irv Dennis, both former commanders, agreed, saying Box has the background and experience to lead the volunteer group forward in the coming year.

Box, a former resident of Castro Valley, Calif., moved to Sun City about 10 years ago after retiring from a long career in both

the military and private sectors.

A World War II veteran and retired sergeant major, he had 42 years of active duty with both the Army and the California National Guard, where he helped direct military police operations.

He also worked as a meat cutter for Safeway and as secretary/treasurer for Local 120 of the Butchers Union in Oakland.

Box's wife died before he moved to Sun City, and he said he found a lot of time on his hands.

"I guess I ran around and partied a lot," he said. "And I did plenty of drinking. But eventually I got to thinking that I really wanted to do something else for my life."

In April 1996, he joined the posse and has since enjoyed what he calls the joy of posse service.

"It's so rewarding to help the senior citizens in Sun City," Box said. "When you do something for some older people, they just can't thank you enough. It makes the work so worthwhile."

Recruiting and training will be top priorities next year, he said.

In addition, the posse will be kept busy directing traffic for a number of activities as Sun City celebrates its 40th anniversary as a retirement community next year.

One of these events, now scheduled for mid-2000, will be what is expected to be the world's largest golf cart parade.

Box was challenged for the commander post by Wylie Haukland and Wally Hoop, two posse veterans. The election results

were announced during a meeting Tuesday at posse headquarters in Sun City.

Also elected were four new people to the posse's 16-member board of directors, Ed Olberding, Lois Goetz, Elaine Manucci and Bob Warren.

The posse, which operates under the auspices of the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, conducts neighborhood patrols and other crime-prevention programs, such as Block Watch and a watch of homes when residents are on vacation.

Posse volunteers also perform other functions, including traffic control at accident scenes or crowd and traffic control at other events.



Photo by JULIA DE SIMONE/Independent Newspapers

## Gearing up for their patrol

5-7-97-1

From left, Lts. Dave Cody and Wylie Haukland of the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City will be keeping an eye on the community from behind their handlebars. May 1 marked the beginning of a joint venture between the posse and the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office to provide a bike patrol unit in the Sun City area. Eight posse members recently received 10 hours of basic training in bike patrolling.

# Posse patrols take to the streets

By JULIA DE SIMONE  
Independent Newspapers

The Sheriff's Posse of Sun City is wheeling its way into the area, keeping an eye on the community this time from behind handlebars rather than a steering wheel.

May 1 marked the beginning of a new bike patrol unit in Sun City — a joint venture between the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City and the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office.

"It's a way to make the posse and sheriff's department more visible to the public," says Commander John Evans of the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City.

He says eight of his organization's members recently received 10 hours of basic training in bike patrol.

The sheriff's department has seven bikes for the new unit. Patrolmen on bikes can cover a mile within three minutes, he says.

Each 24-speed bike costs \$1,100. Five bikes were donated to the sheriff's department by the Sun City Posse. The remaining bikes were donated by a local bike shop and service organization.

Although still in the planning stages, two posse members and two deputies are expected to patrol the community together. The number of

bike patrolmen on call and the frequency of their patrol will vary according to need.

"Since this is so new, we're working the bugs out," says Lt. Schulz of the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City.

Lt. Dave Cody, one of the posse's bike patrolmen, says he was looking forward to the first day of his new volunteer job.

"We really hope to just get a little closer to the citizens and just make our presence known," he says.

Lt. Wylie Haukland, a posse volunteer and Lt. Cody's partner, says

See ■ BIKE PATROL, Page 3

he's also been anxious for the big day to arrive.

"I'm ready," he says. "I've been waiting."

Sgt. Dave Low of the sheriff's department says the idea of the bike patrol is not a new concept. Police departments nationwide are using the bikes as another method of crime prevention.

"They can be used for a number of different purposes," he says. "To meet the public (and) burglary suppression."

Lt. Bill Schulz of the Sun City Sheriff's Posse adds that bike patrolmen have an advantage over patrol cars: time.

"They (the patrol cars) can't sit

there, but with the bikes they can ride around for 10-15 minutes," he says.

Sgt. Low says an ultimate test in Arizona will be enduring the sun while patrolling the streets.

"I don't know how well we'll handle 100-degree weather," he says.

Posse officials say they hope to increase the number of bike patrols in the future.

"As we get going, we'll find more and more uses," says Cmdr. Evans.

The Sun City Posse is currently recruiting new members for all facets of the department.

For more information call 972-2555.

Posse

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# Community

■ Sun City's opening weekend saw 237 homes sold at a value of \$2.5 million. By the end of the first month, 400 homes had been sold.

## Posses round up 10,000 calls

By **BOB BUSHNER**  
Staff writer

SUN CITY — To say the Sheriff's posses of Sun City and Sun City West help ease the strain on the duties of Maricopa County Sheriff's deputies is an understatement.

During the months of May and June alone, the volunteers in the two communities answered more than 10,000 calls, posted more than 6,000 vacation watch hours and totaled almost 7,000 hours patrolling the streets.

Lt. Jack Lewis, public information officer for the Sun City West posse, noted that during May and June of this year, his group provided assistance to more than 250 injured or sick people, while Sheriff's deputies assigned to the area responded to only 10 similar calls.

"These numbers clearly show that our posse is supporting the Sheriff's office to the fullest within our capabilities, allowing the limited number of deputies to carry out their responsibilities as peace officers as needed," Lewis said.

"We are making an impact, because then the officers don't have to spend the time in this area on many of the calls we answer."

During May and June, Sun City West and Sun City posse members performed more than 200 welfare checks, while deputies responded to four. Posse members investigated more than 100 suspicious person or vehicle calls, while Maricopa County deputies were called out on 10.

And while deputies were called out to four dozen traffic accidents during May and June, posse members' assistance at the accident

scenes allowed the deputies freer rein to investigate the mishaps — making their jobs easier and less time consuming.

"We know that there is a shortage of deputies for the large District 3 geographical area, so we're glad we can help out — and it doesn't cost the state or county any money," Lewis added.

Eileen Webber, commander of the Sun City posse, agreed.

"We're happy to provide these services, because it gives us an opportunity to put something back into the community," Webber said.

"I've been at this for more than 10 years, and the support we get from the people is fantastic. And it makes you feel good about your efforts when the people say, 'Hey, we like

you guys, we're glad you're out there for us.'"

Capt. Phillip Babb, commander of Maricopa County Sheriff's District 3, said the services provided by the posse are invaluable.

"With the manpower I've got, there's no way we could provide the kinds of services the posse does," Babb said.

"They do the vacation watches and welfare checks we can't. When they answer calls, they evaluate the situation, and if a deputy is needed, they back off and call one in.

"When they respond to those calls, that allows the deputies to stay on the road, investigating cases and focusing on their law enforcement work."

VF-SHERIFF'S POSSE

# Arpaio commends posse volunteers

By BRUCE ELLISON  
Staff writer

SUN CITY — Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio honored volunteers in sheriff's posses in Sun City and Sun City West at an awards ceremony Friday night.

A Sheriff's office lieutenant from Peoria, Penny Babb, who commands the general investigations unit, received a sheriff's commendation for her work.

Cited for contributing 2,407 hours of volunteer time to the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City last year was Dave Cody, last year's commander of the posse.

A former commander, Bert Brosius of Sun City, who now volunteers in



Cody

training programs, was honored for contributing 2,071 hours last year.

The volunteer hours of each man amount to about a 40-hour-a-week job.

Brosius also was honored as posse member of the year in his posse, Special Forces.

Robert J. Zandier of Sun City West was cited as posse member of the year in that community, while Leroy Gilbrech picked up the same award in Sun City. Zandier is personnel officer; Gilbrech is in charge of traffic.

About 800 law enforcement officers and their family members attended the catered dinner affair in Sundial Auditorium, which one official called "the biggest turnout I have ever seen at such an awards ceremony."

It was the 19th year in which the sheriff's office conducted such an event.

Among regular sheriff's deputies

and employees cited were those who responded and helped deal with the derailment of an Amtrak train near Hyder last year, a sabotage incident that injured more than 100 people and taxed to the ultimate the resources of the sheriff's office.

Several individual deputies were honored for bravery and exceptional service, as were a handful of citizens who assisted deputies in trouble.

Babb was described as the woman whose division "handles the most complex and violent crimes investigations."

"Under her leadership," the citation said, "the division has successfully solved many violent crimes," including helping to catch a man now awaiting trial in connection with the shooting death of Department of Public Safety officer Bob Martin on State Route 87, the Beeline Highway, last year.

Babb's expertise "has had a posi-

tive impact on the citizens of Maricopa County, and shows the highest professional standards," Arpaio said.

In remarks opening the four-hour session, Arpaio lauded his staff and deputies for the personal popularity which surveys show he (Arpaio) enjoys.

"The approval ratings aren't for the sheriff; they're for the sheriff's programs," Arpaio said.

"How do you get the programs accomplished? It's you," he told his crew, "You are the staff and employees and volunteers who make the programs work."

"There's one good thing about this sheriff. You can't fire this sheriff. The politicians can't fire this sheriff. Only the people can fire him, and that's great, that's the way it should be," Arpaio said, "because it means the politicians leave us alone."

# Top gun

## Sun City posse honors 85-year-old volunteer

By TOM EVANS  
Daily News-Sun staff

She may be small, but she carried a big gun. Dorothy Olmstead was honored last month for her 20 years of service with the posse. She has served in a number of positions, including lieutenant in charge of communications, patrol officer and master sergeant in charge of the Vacation Watch program.

The 85-year-old was the first female posse member to carry a gun. But not just any gun — a .38 caliber pistol. That's a large gun for someone not even 5 feet tall. She carried it on patrol until about seven years ago when she ended her patrols.

"(Other posse members) would be sort of puzzled," she said. "They would just look at me when I was carrying it and say, 'Do you know how to shoot it?'"

Part of her interest in the posse stemmed from a curiosity about firearms, she said.

"I knew that some of them (posse members) had guns and I thought that if I was going to be in the posse I wanted to be around shooting," she said.

So one afternoon at the shooting range, she gave it a try. She was surprised with the results.

"I fired and said, 'It didn't knock me over!' So I went back and kept practicing," she said.

Before retiring in 1974, she worked in Chicago for an investment counseling firm, an experience she said helped prepare her for her time at the posse.

"I was always very observant then of what was happening," she said. "I was a secretary and treasurer, so we were supervising people's money portfolios. You just get a training to where you want to protect people."

Olmstead said another factor that made her a better posse member was her upbringing on an Illinois farm.

"I grew up in a family where we were very honest," she said. "I can't understand the way



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun

Dorothy Olmstead has volunteered with the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City for 20 years. The posse honored the 85-year-old recently for her service.

people aren't honest anymore."

She learned about the posse from a posse member, and thought she might enjoy the organization. She joined the posse six months after moving to Sun City in March 1974.

Olmstead never fired her gun in the line of duty, but helped patrol the streets of Sun City until seven years ago.

She then confined her volunteer duties to the Vacation Watch desk where she is in charge of organizing the posse's program to check homes while residents are on vacation.

"I liked all of what I was doing," she said. "It was interesting doing the patrolling, and when I got older the other things kept me busy."

One of her favorite stories comes from her patrolling days. One time on the beat, she saw a group of suspicious-looking men on the side of

the road. Because she was in a patrol car, the men drove off.

"They seemed sort of bothered because I was in a patrol car," she said.

They drove back onto a busier street, where sheriff's deputies, who had pursued and lost them a few minutes earlier, got back on the trail and apprehended them for a crime committed in the area.

"These young men had gotten away from the deputies, and I didn't know what I had done," she said. "You're doing things when you're on patrol and sometimes you get involved before you know what you're getting into."

Olmstead said she has no plans to leave the posse anytime soon and credits the posse for making her retirement more enjoyable.

## Sun Citians hold sense of safety, study says

By JULIE LARSON  
Daily News-Sun staff

One thing's for sure, Sun Citians aren't wringing their hands fearing for their safety or worrying about crime.

That is one of the preliminary findings of a study being conducted by an Arizona State University West class on "Criminal Justice Research Methods."

The class of 45 students chose to do its semester project on a study of Sun City residents attempting to find out their feelings about crime and their sheriff's posse.

"In law enforcement they (senior citizens) are traditionally overlooked and that's why the class chose to do the study," said James Lasley, associate professor of justice studies in the Human Services Programs at ASU West. "We wanted to explore some of the main crime concerns that are typical of the elderly and see if Sun City has those concerns or if they're a special community."

"They (the students) were fully

expecting to find them (Sun City residents) afraid and reclusive — typical stereotypes of the elderly," Lasley said. "They were shocked to find it was totally the opposite. These people are not afraid of crime."

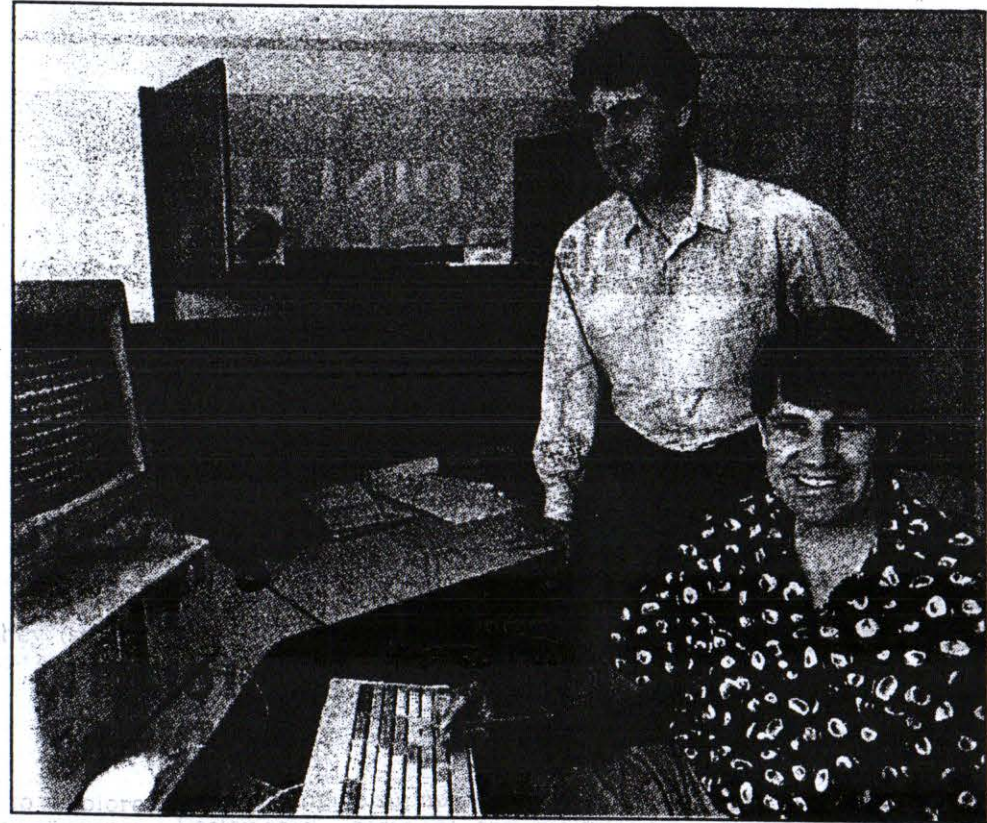
Lasley said less than 1 percent of an estimated 450 Sun City residents interviewed said they are afraid of crime.

"The rest are confident and have a tremendous sense of safety," Lasley said. "They seem to be resistant to the typical elder fear of crime. They seem to feel very safe — that goes for women, men and those living alone. They're doing something right."

When the students conducted the personal interviews with the residents in various areas of Sun City, they also found "overwhelmingly that they strongly support the posse," Lasley said.

"They are very confident and feel very comfortable having the posse out to serve and protect them," said

See Researchers to, A5



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun  
A.S.U. West student John Wistuber, left and associate professor James Lasley are surveying area residents on their feelings about sheriff's posse's.

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## Researchers to share results with AARP

—From A1

John Wistuber, student spokesman for the project.

Wistuber added that the residents "would like to see police work more closely with people. They want more involvement with the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office. They want to be able to voice their concerns to the sheriff's office and what they think could be done better to protect them."

The class started the study in mid-January and will complete it by the end of

April. The students will record the results of the study and offer them to interested Sun Citians.

The class also wants to give the findings to the research branch of AARP "to show that Sun City has some benefits that other communities could model themselves after," Lasley said.

Lasley, who worked for several years as an adviser to the Los Angeles Police Department on developing community policing projects,

said that department also is "very interested in Sun City and its posse because they want to create a citizens police force modeled after the posse."

The study also is a pilot for an institute in ASU West Human Services that will specialize in community outreach programs like the one being done in Sun City, Lasley said.

"The mission of this campus is to develop programs that will benefit the community,"

Lasley said. "The students thought Sun City would be one of the best places to focus their talents and use their knowledge to benefit the community."

"The class decided to adopt Sun City so that they could do them some good. We wanted to bridge the gap between our students and Sun City, and the study is just a small piece of what we can offer them. We really want to contribute to the community."

# SCW Posse assists Vial of Life project

By TRACY CHARUHAS  
Daily News-Sun staff

Information to save your life can be as easy to get as a can of pop in your refrigerator.

Sun Health Auxiliary has formed an alliance with the Sun City West Posse and other Sun City West organizations in promoting and distributing starter kits for a program called Vial of Life.

The kit contains a plastic bottle or vial suitable for storage in the refrigerator. Medical information placed in the vial may be obtained by a paramedic in an emergency.

"This is an easy, quick way for paramedics to gain access to information in case of an emergency," said Jean Stahl, director of volunteer services at Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital.

Sun Health Auxiliary has been involved in the program since 1980. The auxiliary supplies the vials which contain personal health information forms. The forms, to be filled out by the participant, list any allergies or medical problems and prescription and non-prescription drugs information.

"The auxiliary has been doing this for a number of years. With the help of the posse and other organizations, the program is getting more visibility," Stahl said.

In addition to the health information form, the starter kit contains two Vial of Life stickers to be put on the front door of the residence and on the refrigerator door. Paramedics will be able to identify the members of a household as Vial of Life participants by spotting the orange sticker.

Don Schorg, captain of the Sun City West Posse said this program is needed because most people are unable to provide crucial health information when they are in the middle of a medical emergency.

"We had a 911 call last week where the man was having trouble breathing. How can you provide information when you're gasping for air?" Schorg asked.

"A lot of time the spouse of the patient can be pretty shook up. It's hard for them to think clearly in a situation like that," Schorg said.

He and his wife, Dorothy, who also is a member of the posse, were on a 911 call last week when the Vial of Life program came to mind.

"We thought, Sun Health has this

**'This is an easy, quick way for paramedics to gain access to information in case of an emergency.'**

**Jean Stahl  
hospital official**

great program that could save lives and no one really knows about it," he said. "We decided to get the posse involved in promoting the program."

"Just having the vial could provide the paramedics with several more minutes to save the patient," said Lt. Bob Bailey, executive officer for the Sun City West Posse.

The Sun Health Auxiliary is a volunteer organization that provides a number of services, in addition to sponsoring fund-raisers for Walter O. Boswell and Del E. Webb memorial hospitals.

Sun Health Auxiliary is paying for the cost of the starter kit with money from the auxiliary fund. The kits may be obtained at Sun City West organizations such as the Property Owners and Residents Association office, 13815 Camino Del Sol, Sun City West, the Sun City West Posse, 20450 Stardust Blvd., Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital, 13902 Meeker Blvd., Sun City West and at the Sun City West thrift shops.

The vials are also available in Sun City at Walter O. Boswell Memorial Hospital, 10401 West Thunderbird Blvd., and the Olive Branch Senior Center at 10765 West Peoria Ave.

The form in the starter kit also has spaces for a person's family physician and hospital preference. It should be filled out legibly and be updated on a regular basis, Stahl said.

The forms have been approved by nurses and other emergency room health care workers in the community, Stahl said.

For more information, visit one of the participating organizations or call Sun Health at 876-5432.



Capt. Don Schorg and Lt. Bob Bailey of the Sun City West Posse prepare starter kits for Sun Health

Auxiliary's Vial of Life program. The vials store medical data in the patient's refrigerator.

**'We thought, Sun Health has this great program that could save lives and no one really knows about it. We decided to get the posse involved in promoting the program.'**

**Lt. Bob Bailey  
executive officer for the Sun City West Posse**



## Retirees are no over-the-hill gang: Sun City posse willing, able to help

By Lourdes Medrano Leslie  
The Arizona Republic

The menacing shadow of crime and the ills of old age keep Jack Best on his toes.

Once a week, sometimes more, Best jumps into a patrol car and scours Sun City's squeaky-clean neighborhoods for signs of illegal activity.

What he usually finds is a fellow retiree who needs urgent medical care or someone who wants a little company or a shoulder to cry on.

"It's not about chasing robbers and speeding. It's about helping people," explained Best, a bespectacled, wiry man with a quick pace.

At 78, he puts in more than 130 hours a month on various duties for the Sun City Posse.

Best said his involvement with the posse served as an antidote for his own grief and loneliness after losing his wife of 42 years, Sophie, to cancer more than a decade ago.

"It gave me something to think about other than my recent loss and my self-pity," he recalled, puffing on another of a string of cigarettes.

"It was better than any medicine that I could get."

Like Best, many retirees who join the volunteer

— See **THIS POSSE**, page A14

— **THIS POSSE**, from page A1

posse soon find themselves spending less time relaxing and more tracking down "911" calls and doing crime-prevention work.

For the past 20 years, the west Valley retirement community has been safeguarded by the posse, initially by residents who worked out of their homes and patrolled in golf cars to deter crime.

The posse now operates around the clock from a \$1.2 million building that rivals any police precinct with its state-of-the-art computer equipment, its own communications center, and a dozen fully equipped patrol cars that can easily be mistaken for those of the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office.

Through donations, residents willingly foot 100 percent of the \$200,000 annual budget.

The Sun City group served as a model for its neighbor, Sun City West, which has operated a posse for 15 years.

"I trust them," one longtime Sun City retiree said of posse members. "They've been to my house several times for illness. It gives you a feeling of security to have them around."

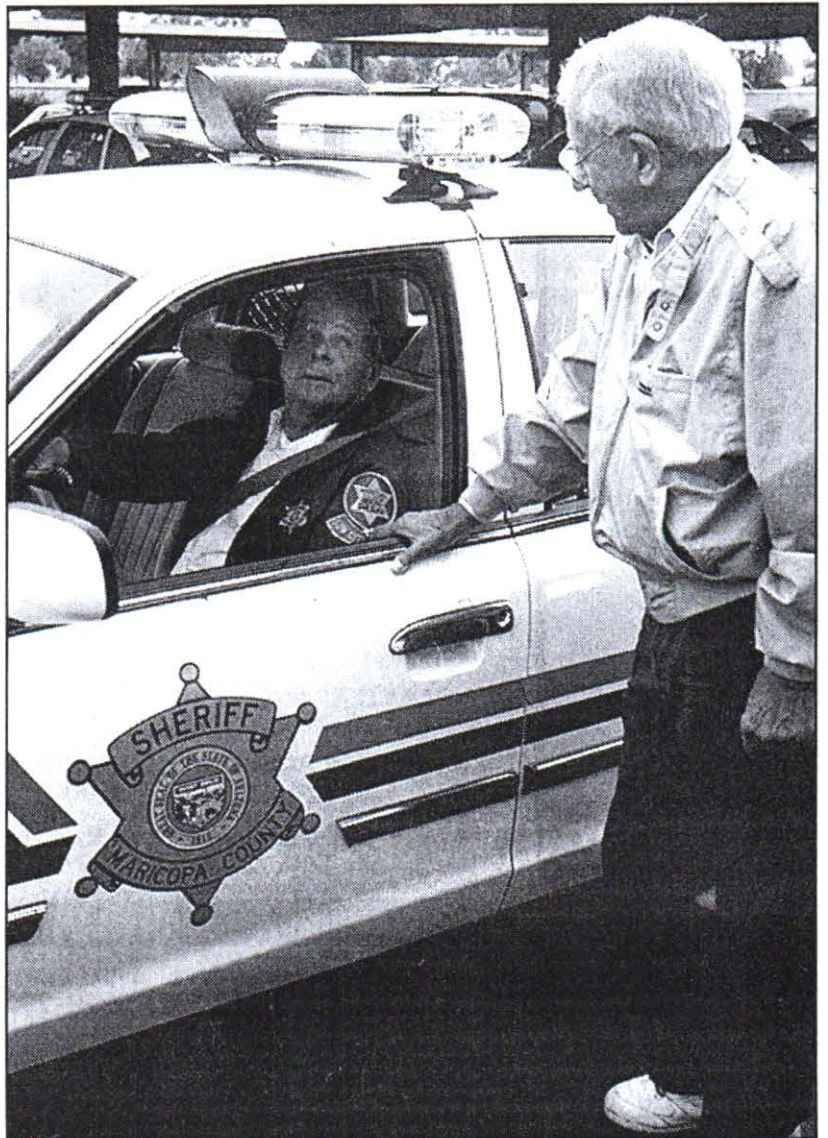
Just as armed men on horseback were crucial to the taming of the Wild West, the Sun City group has become an invaluable tool in modern-day law enforcement. But unlike the territorial posse of yesteryear, even those volunteers who choose to pack a pistol are barred from dealing with violent crime. They cannot make arrests or issue traffic tickets, either.

Working under the jurisdiction of the Sheriff's Office, posse members soon will wear uniforms that more closely resemble those of deputies.

The posse has various divisions, a ranking system much like that of the Sheriff's Office, and a disciplinary group. A governing board sets policy, and a commander implements it.

The 185-member posse assists deputies and paramedics in such calls as medical emergencies, missing-person reports and traffic accidents.

It also checks on the welfare of residents who live alone, rescues stranded motorists, and watches up to 22,000 homes of vacationing retirees each year. Some members have been known to chase javelinas out of



Charles Krejcsi/The Arizona Republic

Before starting his patrol, volunteer Chuck Gillette (left) talks with Arnold Asterino, leader of the 185-member Sun City Posse.

residents' yards.

Posse leader Arnold Asterino, a jovial and energetic 74-year-old, said demand for his small army of volunteers to perform outside Sun City has grown since Sheriff Joe Arpaio began beefing up countywide posses.

Those moves have been praised for helping people feel safer but criticized as a publicity stunt that could get the county into legal trouble if a posse member shot someone or got hurt.

The retirees and other volunteers

were assigned to patrol Valley shopping centers after a series of carjackings in December.

They also provided extra security in the 1991 investigation of the Buddhist temple massacre that drew a horde of reporters and curious onlookers to the scene west of Phoenix.

Asterino, who volunteers at least 40 hours a week to the posse, said the group's strength lies in its ability to deter crime and serve the unique needs of its community of about

— See **SUN CITY**, page A15

# Sun City posse proves willing and able to help

— SUN CITY, from page A14

45,000.

The posse is never short of volunteers, even though it frequently loses members to old age, illness or death. In the lobby of its spacious offices, the names of deceased comrades grace a plaque on the wall. Last year, it was nine. The year before, 13.

The posse accepts the losses as a fact of life and aggressively recruits volunteers to counteract the high turnover. There is no age limit to become a posse member, but there are several requirements applicants must meet.

All aspiring posse men and women must be in reasonably good health, have a good driving record and no criminal background. Since many retirees leave Sun City during the hot summer, the posse requires that its members be permanent residents. And they must be U.S. citizens.

Volunteer Lois Goetz, 64, fingerprints and photographs applicants and forwards all pertinent information to the Sheriff's Office for a background check and final approval.

Goetz, a grandmotherly woman who has fun in her work, said all recruits undergo 72 hours of training that includes cardiopulmonary resuscitation, first aid, traffic control, defensive driving, and search-and-rescue techniques.

They also must go on six "confidence rides" with an experienced patrol member before they are allowed to patrol on their own. Everyone must

## SUN CITY'S BEST AT A GLANCE

The Sun City Posse has been safeguarding the retirement community for 20 years:

✓ Residents entirely fund the non-profit group.

✓ Based in a \$1.2 million building in the heart of Sun City, it operates on a \$200,000 annual budget.

✓ There is no age limit to join. The oldest member is 86, the youngest is 56.

✓ The posse is barred from dealing with violent crime. It cannot make arrests or issue traffic tickets.

✓ Members may carry a gun, but they cannot use it unless ordered by a Maricopa County sheriff's deputy.

do at least three patrols and attend the posse's governing-board meeting each month.

Members have the option of carrying a gun but cannot do so until they receive about 100 hours of additional training, including 56 hours in firearm courses, from the Sheriff's Office. Volunteers are forbidden to draw their guns except under direct orders from a sheriff's deputy.

Eldon Page, 77, is one of 10 posse members who pack a gun. He said he's never fired his 9mm handgun while on duty because Sun City volunteers "just don't get into those kinds of situations."

Best and his partner, Rudy Popiela, once responded to five calls in a four-hour shift. Popiela, 77, never drove faster than 25 to 30 mph, his attention riveted to the neat rows of home condominiums in search of the right locations. Map in hand, Best directed Popiela to three medical emergencies, a house burglar alarm that went off and a minor fire.

In one of the medical emergencies, a man had collapsed in a business office, and it was the job of the two men to clear the way for paramedics, find out whether the patient's spouse had transportation, and reassure her that she could count on the posse.

Best and Popiela later tried to help a woman who had locked herself out of a red Buick parked in a fire zone in front of a grocery store.

"Sometimes I wish we could ticket people," Best said, shaking his head.

The pair offered the woman a ride home because they didn't want to fiddle with the electronic door locks, but she declined.

On a coffee break, Best and Popiela remembered some of the people they've met while on duty. The woman who leaned on Best's shoulder and cried after he told her that her husband had passed away. And the agitated Alzheimer's patient who had lived for years in Sun City but insisted on going home to Chicago — until Popiela started talking to him in Polish.

"Some of the things we deal with are heartbreaking," Best said. "But we got a job to do, and we do it."

## Posse: Then &amp; now



Stephen Chermek/Daily News-Sun

Newspaper clippings trace high points in existence of the Sun City Posse, which is celebrating its 20th anniversary.

## Ex-head remembers when posse began

By IAN MITCHELL  
Daily News-Sun staff

As the Sun City Posse celebrates its 20th anniversary this year, one local resident has a special reason to be proud.

Marvin VanDera was the first commander of the posse and served in that elected post for four years as the organization grew.

When VanDera was elected posse commander in 1973 there were about 50 men, but only four women, in the posse's ranks. Today's 190-volunteer force includes 47 women in uniform.

VanDera said he is in favor of husband-and-wife patrol teams.

"When they go out on patrols they don't spend a lot of time talking — 'Where are you from?' and 'How many kids do you have?'" VanDera said. "When you're out with your wife you don't have to waste time talking, with all these questions."

The first posse patrols operated without the benefits of police radios. VanDera said some posse members used walkie-talkies, but when they traveled beyond the radios' limited range, they had to rely

on a less glamorous communications option.

They used pay phones.

"Everybody had to make sure that they had money, that they knew where the phone was," VanDera remembered.

Today's posse relies on a sophisticated radio system that operates on a UHF frequency similar to cellular phones.

In the early years, the posse didn't even have its own patrol vehicles — just large magnetic signs bearing the posse name and sheriff's badge.

"We used to slap those on the side of the car," VanDera said. "We used to use our own cars."

The magnetic sign turned a private car into a posse vehicle, said former commander Jack Sorenson.

"And each time they went off-duty, they would have to give it to the next guy," said Sorenson, who keeps track of the group's history.

The Sun City Posse will celebrate its 20th anniversary from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday with an open house at its headquarters, 10861 Sunland Drive.

# Posse operation up-to-date

By IAN MITCHELL  
Daily News-Sun staff

The name "posse" may conjure up images of the Old West, but Sun City's sheriff volunteers patrol the retirement community riding in squad cars, not on saddled steeds.

Sun City's crime fighting force, celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, is on duty nearly around the clock.

Posse members patrol the streets of Sun City for all but one or two hours a day, Commander Bill Ellsworth said.

On the lookout for anything suspicious or unusual, posse members may also call in to headquarters to report something as simple as an open garage door.

They will wait while their dispatcher telephones the homeowner, since open garages doors are invitations to thieves, posse member Jack Sorenson said.

One of the posse's most popular crime-fighting programs is the Vacation Watch service. Posse members make regular checks on the homes of Sun City residents away for the summer.

Ellsworth said there were 28,774 homes participating in the Vacation Watch program last year, up 24 percent over 1991.

The Sun City Block Watch program, another posse crime-prevention project, is co-sponsored by the Home Owners Association with help from the Condominium Chairmen's Association and the Recreation Centers.

There are almost 450 block watches in Sun City, Ellsworth said. "People in Sun City have accepted the program and are enthused about it."

Posse members are often called to help the sheriff beyond the local area, Sorenson said. "Anytime there's a murder outside of Sun City, they will ask us to set up a crime scene."

Posse members will keep the perimeter of an area where a crime occurred secure so that evidence is not disturbed, he said.

Sorenson, a former posse commander, reeled off a list of other posse services.

There's the R.U.O.K. ("Are you OK?") system, operated

with the Youngtown police, which calls people who live alone and alerts authorities if no one answers the phone.

Or the Tag-A-Tot program, in which posse members periodically help out with fingerprinting children so that parents will have an identifying record if their child is lost or missing.

Or the simple service of guarding the house of a widow or widower while they attend their spouse's funeral.

Ellsworth recalled one evening when he was on patrol and a call came in from a worried woman. Earlier that day, the woman had mentioned in a public place that she was going to be alone that

evening, and she was concerned that someone might have overheard her.

Ellsworth stopped by the house and visited with the woman, and posse members drove by to check on her house throughout the night.

"The lady was so much relieved and calmed ... there is no way you could put a money value on it," he said.

Even such small gestures can help make Sun City residents feel safer, Ellsworth said.

"It's just the feeling of security that they get from it," he said. "I think that's prob-

ably our biggest contribution to Sun City."

Sheriff's Lt. Ed Shepherd, who works in community services coordinating operations with the county's 40 different posses, said the volunteer groups make a big difference.

Although posse members don't make traffic stops or arrests, Shepherd said their contributions — organizing crime prevention programs, directing traffic and performing other valuable public services — free deputies for patrols and investigations.

Shepherd said he got a good feeling when he thought of the all the work performed by volunteers in the sheriff's posse.

"I don't know what to call it," he said. "You know when you salute the flag? That kind of feeling. An extraordinary feeling."

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**Sun City's crime fighting force, celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, is on duty nearly around the clock.**

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# Posse plans to plug in to new radio system

By IAN MITCHELL  
Daily News-Sun staff

A new radio system, announced at Tuesday's membership meeting of the Sun City Posse, should solve the group's communications problems.

Dean Timmerman, lieutenant of the posse's communications division, said the posse's current VHF radio system has trouble reaching areas north of Union Hills Drive.

Posse members inside buildings also sometimes lose communication, Timmerman said.

Then, there's the problem of interference.

Last summer, posse members heard strange voices on their radios.

"We could hear them, and they could hear us," said Timmerman.

The voices told posse members to get off the radio.

But the speakers weren't spectral spirits from beyond; They were mere mortals — from Connecticut.

"It was the Danbury, Conn., police department, reaching us full and clear," Timmerman said.

The Danbury police operate on the same frequencies used by the Sun City Posse.

Timmerman blamed the communications mix-up on sun spots, which sometimes affect VHF radio communication.

The UHF radio system announced Tuesday will operate at a frequency in the 800 megahertz range.

Timmerman said the new frequency, in a band used for cellular phones, would solve many of the posse's communications problems.

"They will provide us with much better coverage," said Timmerman.

Unlike cellular phone transmissions, which operate at the same frequency throughout a conversation, the posse's new radio system will automatically switch frequencies every millisecond, Timmerman said.

This new technology will prevent

people with scanners from listening to posse radio broadcasts.

"Even if you've got the exotic scanners, which cost about \$500, you still wouldn't be able to monitor our transmission," said Timmerman.

The UHF frequency, combined with two or three new repeater stations, will extend the radio system's range and help eliminate interference.

"With this new system we are jumping from the 19th century into the 21st in terms of communications," said Bill Ellsworth, posse commander.

The posse is soliciting bids from three vendors for the system, Timmerman said.

Two competing brands of radios, from General Electric and Motorola, are being considered, he said.

Timmerman said the posse would buy about 16 mobile units for patrol cars, 20 hand-held portable units and two base units for the station. He said he didn't know how much the new radios would cost or when they would be installed.



Rick D'Elia/Daily News-Sun

Sun City Posse member Dean Timmerman talks into a posse radio. The two radios on the car are among

the units the posse is evaluating before purchasing a new radio system.

# Neighborhood watches help block crime in SC

## Residents see eye to eye on crime stopping effort

By JACQUE PAPPAS  
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — The number of block watches in Sun City are growing by the day and residents such as Eck Sellars are helping the communitywide effort flourish.

Sellar's neighbors know him as Mr. Block Watch.

He is responsible for starting 27 block watches in the southern portion of the community and is helping organize 16 more.

Sellars' zeal for the block watch effort began more than two years ago when he and his wife, Margie, decided to start a program in their own neighborhood.

Encouragement of his friend Floyd Welander, a block watch proponent since 1978, Sellars decided to walk door to door asking his neighbors to participate.

"I've always wondered why there weren't more visible block watches in the area. Crime has been getting so rampant that someone had to do something. We live at the southern tip of Sun City and it just looked like we were vulnerable," Sellars said.

After Sellars organized his own neighborhood block watch, he called on other neighbors to "recruit more organized crime stoppers" in Sun City.

"I went house to house to find people who were willing to organize their block. I just kept at it and at it and finally it started paying off," Sellars said.

He has taped a quote by Seneca to his block watch folder: "He who does not prevent a crime when he can, encourages it."

Homes throughout the neighborhoods where Sellars has helped start block watches display "block watch" signs in their windows provided by the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office. Some neighborhoods have metal street signs.

"All the organizers are very

proud of themselves and the people in the area are really tickled," Sellars said. "To my knowledge we haven't had any problem with crime since this started. But the first benefit was that our neighbors have become more neighborly. We all know each other."

Block watch programs encourage residents to observe unusual noises or activities in their neighborhoods, keep an eye out for each other and report observations to the police.

Sellars said he encourages anyone who does not have an active block watch in their neighborhood to call the Sun City Block Watch Steering Committee.

The committee organized in December and has been calling on local residents to volunteer as block watch coordinators for their neighborhoods.

The Sun City Home Owners Association, Recreation Centers of Sun City, Sun City Condominium Chairmen Association, Sun City Posse and sheriff's office are jointly sponsoring the program.

Those interested may call the HOA at 974-4718.

Merlen Ferguson, chairman of the effort, said there are 300 to 350 block watches in place now in Sun City.

"The people are getting more and more interested. By the fall I hope we will have two times as many as we do now," Ferguson said. "Things have been going so well lately that the sheriff's office has not been able to keep up with us."

The Sheriff's office has provided signs, information and training to residents interested in starting a block watch in their neighborhood.

Sheriff's Dept. Ron Greth, who is helping coordinate the block watch program in Sun City, conducts classes every couple of weeks to train residents and encourage them to get their neighbors involved.



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun

Eck Sellars, known as Mr. Block Watch to his neighbors, helped organize several block watches in Sun City over the past two years. Sellars has



# Vacation watches keep eye out for trouble

By MIKE GARRETT  
Daily News-Sun staff

Sun Citians making plans to depart for their summer vacation homes are reminded to make contact with their homeowners associations, the Posse and their block watch captains before leaving.

All groups say that the time residents spend on making vacation watch contacts can help ensure that their homes will be safe and sound upon their return.

Both the Sun City and Sun City West Sheriff's Posse offer vacation watch cards for residents to fill out with basic vacation information.

The cards let the patrolling Posse know if a light will be left on in the house, if a car is left in the carport and who to notify in an emergency. The card also makes note if a house key has been left with a neighbor and whether utilities have been disconnected.

The Sun City Home Owners Association and the Property Owners and Residents Association offers vacation checklists for residents planning to leave for summer vacations.

Some are obvious hints like discontinuing all daily services like newspapers and mail, not leaving an empty garbage can out front or valuables showing in a window or not maintaining yard landscaping.

Sgt. Keith Moore of the District 3 sheriff's substation said one way of giving a home the appearance of still being oc-

cupied is to get a neighbor to park his or her car in your driveway or open carport.

Del Webb's Product Control Department (546-5090) also has a checklist and helpful hints booklet for Sun City West residents on how to maintain household appliances and utilities during a summer of inactivity.

Posse members and District 3 Sheriff's substation deputies will be patrolling Sun Cities neighborhoods all summer armed with the vacation watch cards on who is gone for how long.

Moore said up to four Sheriff's cars are on patrol at all times in both Sun Cities in three 8-hour shifts.

Deputies are supported by a sergeant and a lieutenant during each shift and reserves are called in when needed, Moore said.

Posse-sponsored block watches in both Sun Cities can also be excellent deterrents to crime, Moore said.

With 350 organized block watches involving 10,000 to 12,000 people, Sun City has the largest block watch network in the state and possibly in the country, says the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office.

The block watch concept encourages neighbors to watch out for each other. Neighbors are encouraged to contact police if they notice something out of the ordinary taking place in their neighborhoods.

Dixon Wightman, president of the Sun City Home Owners As-

sociation, said block watch is a major selling point of living in Sun City when residents know a neighbor will watch their vacant home.

Wightman said the Sun City rec centers and their employees have recently joined block watch to better keep an eye on strangers or anything unusual around the centers and surrounding neighborhoods.

"We don't have specific statistics yet on how effective it has been from a crime prevention point of view," Wightman said. "But we definitely have a strong feeling about its effectiveness from the interaction we hear about between neighbors. There have been many reports from people who now know their neighbors but didn't before their block watch was organized."

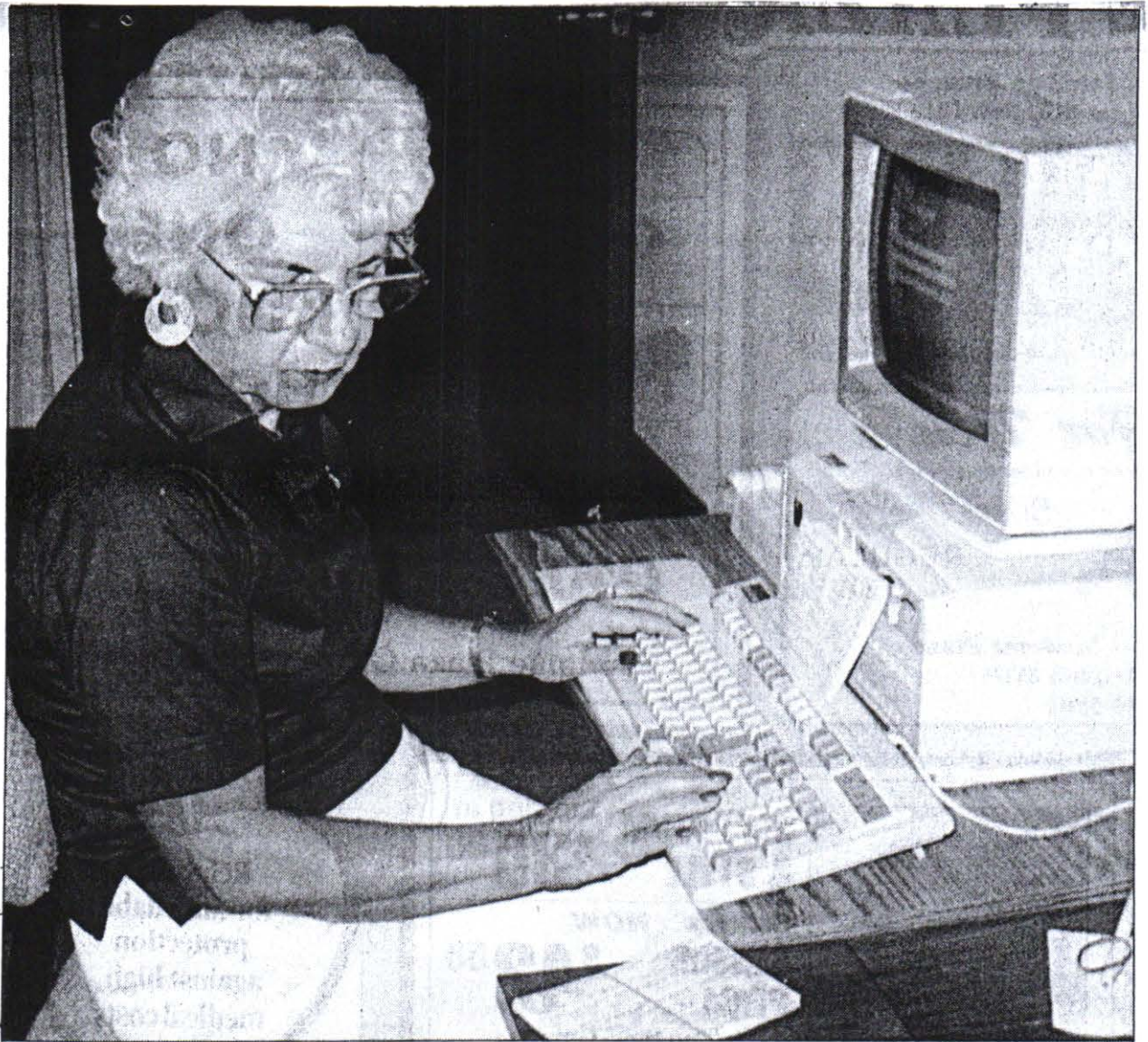
Wightman said HOA would like to see at least half of all Sun City residents and neighborhoods covered by block watch programs by Jan. 1.

Merle Bodine, home security officer of the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City West, said Sun City West now has 829 homes in 39 block watch neighborhoods.

"Because of recent burglaries, residents are calling the Posse daily (584-5808) for information on home security and block watch," Bodine said.

Dick Schiefelbein, commander of the Sun City Posse, said up to 12 cars will be patrolling Sun City during any 24-hour summer day, including four each during the morning and night shifts.

OVER



Mike Garrett/Daily News-Sun

Sun City Sheriff's Posse Deputy Pat Kelly enters information from vacation watch cards into a computer. The data is used by the Posse to keep tabs on the homes of vacationing residents.

Daily News-Sun, Sun City, Ariz. Monday, April 20, 1992

# Sun Cities posse work extends beyond retirement communities

By JACQUE PAPPAS  
Daily News-Sun staff

Many people think of the Sun City Sheriff's Posse as community-minded volunteers who keep their eyes on golf car traffic and do vacation watches.

But the duties of the Posse's 185 members go well beyond directing traffic and responding to residents' calls for assistance.

Quite often, in fact, their duties extend far beyond the Sun City boundaries, said Richard Schiefelbein, posse commander.

In 1991, for example, Sun City Posse members were involved in providing security at Luke Air Force Base during Operation Desert Storm and at Wat Promkunaram Temple following the slayings of nine people there.

"It was an extraordinary year. Situations came up that we never experienced before," Schiefelbein said. "It just proves that the Posse person has to be very versatile. They could be doing search and rescue, CPR or traffic control all in one day."

Schiefelbein said Posse members were asked to help patrol the gates at Luke Air Force Base and also patrol Luke Elementary School after a bomb threat was received.

"That was very exciting. We once had to chase a person driving a car that crashed the gate at Luke. The officer jumped into our squad car and said 'Go get him!'" Schiefelbein said.

The person turned out to be someone who was authorized to be on base, but didn't want to wait in line to have an ID checked.

Brig. Gen. Ralph T. Browning, 58th fighter wing commander for Luke, said the base appreciated the support provided by the Posse during Desert Storm.

"The Posse members were instrumental in providing assistance with security procedures at the Luke main gate from the start of Desert Storm to the end.

The Luke security force was devoting



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun

Members of the Sun City and Sun City West posses help the Maricopa County Sheriff's office look for clues Friday in the murder of a Phoenix cabdriver east of 115th Avenue and McDowell Road. Pictured from left are, Herb Cahill, Ken Ingersoll and Harry Gippert.

all of its time to base security and, without the assistance of the Sun City Posse, the Luke personnel would have been stretched very thin," Browning said. "It's folks like the Posse that make living in the Valley of the Sun a real pleasure."

After the Aug. 10 slaying of six priests, two young disciples and a nun at the Buddhist temple in the West Valley, Posse members helped the sheriff in providing perimeter security.

On Friday, eight Posse members helped the sheriff search for evidence in a remote area near 115th Avenue and McDowell Road where a cabdriver was found dead Wednesday.

The body of 40-year-old David Lane Lacey was found miles from where his vandalized cab was discovered at the edge of White Tank Mountain Regional Park.

Investigators said they were checking possible links between Lacey's death and the killing of Linda Reynolds, 31, a Pizza Hut delivery driver whose body was found April 7. She disappeared after being lured by a phony order to a west Phoenix home.

In recognition of the Posse's crime prevention efforts, the group was given the Posse of the Year Award for Crime Prevention at a reception recently. The award was for the group's achievements in 1991.

Last year, Sun City Posse members volunteered 81,179 hours for a variety of services from vacation watch visits to welfare checks to collecting toys for needy children.

And yes, they direct lots of traffic. In 1991, the Posse provided 936 hours of traffic and crowd control for 46 special events in Sun City.

"Basically we are fulfilling our primary function of crime prevention in Sun City and to act as the eyes and ears of the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office," Schiefelbein said.

"None of these accomplishments would be possible without the dedication and hard work of our Posse members and the generous support of the Sun City community."

The Posse headquarters is at 10861 Sunland Drive.

OVER



Bill Schulz of the Sun City posse looks for anything out of the ordinary that could be a murder clue in a cotton field north of McDowell Road and east of 115th Avenue.

# Posse patrols save sheriff time, money

4-2-92

By MIKE GARRETT  
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITIES — Crime prevention and helping Sun Cities residents help their neighbors remains the prime goal of the Sun City and Sun City West posses.

Both posses are continuing drives to boost their 374 volunteer memberships.

"Our basic function is crime prevention. Checking homes to make sure the occupants are safe and the homes are secure is a regular part of our routine," said Capt. Gil Pantea, Sun City West Posse commander.

"This is the kind of organization people volunteer for because they know they will be able to help others," Sun City Posse Cmdr. Richard Schiefelbein said.

Pantea said the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office prefers to handle the dangerous situations involving possible arrests. Posse members frequently spot suspicious activity they bring to the attention of District 3 (Sun Cities and Wittmann) sheriff's deputies.

Since the Sun City Posse was formed in 1973 and Sun City West Posse in 1979, members have donated thousands of hours reports the sheriff's Community Services Division.

In 1991, division officials reported the two posses volunteered approximately 140,000 hours at a savings of more than \$2 million.

The Sun City Posse has more than 152 members, a new 16,000-square-foot building, two complete internal communications systems, 12 patrol cars and a mobile command post.

The Sun City West Posse now has 222 members, a 14,000-square-foot building, two communications systems and eight patrol cars.

Taking turns on patrols or at command posts as dispatchers are retired bankers, policemen and teachers.

"Our members represent a cross section of life," Schiefelbein said. "Most

are either retired military or businessmen.

Since taking over as Sun City West Posse commander in December, Pantea said he has seen only positives and no negatives in terms of Posse growth and community support.

"Recruiting is moving real well at the moment," Pantea said. "We've expanded our efforts and are starting to produce some results."

Despite some recent retirements, Pantea said the Sun City West Posse has added 12 more members than it has lost through retirement. "We still need more people because the area is growing so fast. We have people out there waiting to come in so whatever we're doing, it's working."

Pantea said he continues to work on plans to expand the Posse building at 20450 Stardust Blvd., to meet the community's projected growth.

"It's something that isn't materializing as rapidly as I've wanted and it may take another four or five months before anything becomes definite," Pantea said. "We're trying to define what our role is out here for the next three-to-five-year period."

The other positives Pantea has seen are the organization and expansion of the Sun City West Block Watch program to get neighbor to help neighbor, a greater resident demand for home security checks and a better vehicle maintenance program.

"I really think we've got a super group of people working together, not patrolling but in the support of all of those people," Pantea said. "I'm referring to the training groups who train people to go into the field and the communications areas we're using."

"There may be something negative out there but I haven't heard about it yet," he said.

# DOERS PROFILE

## Russell Hood

### Vitae

Bachelor's in business administration, Indiana University.

**Hometown** Indianapolis.

**Valley home** 5 1/2 years in Sun City West.

**Marital status** Married 46 years in September to Audrey Hood.



**Self-portrait** Laid back, easy-going, low profile.

**Motto** To your own self be true.

**Greatest feat** Rearing of two very fine young men; sons Laurence and Gary.

**Walter Mitty fantasy** I would own a castle and be Lord of the Manor.

**Inspirations** The principles of Scouting made a deep impression.

**Good/bad habits** I listen to people. I procrastinate.

**Favorite food/drink** Mexican. Wine.

**TV programs** Old movies.

**Books at bedside** Anything that Tom Clancy writes.

**Vacation spot/luxury:** Northern California. Having more than what you need or want.

**Key to longevity** Taking care of yourself.

**Last words** For a really rich and fulfilling life, try volunteer work.

# Posse responds to community needs

By CONNIE STEELE YOUNG  
Daily News-Sun staff

Capt. Russell Hood, Posse commander, describes the Sheriff's Posse in Sun City West as a "community-wide block watch."

The Posse serves as an ongoing crime prevention arm of the sheriff's office. Most other deputized posse respond on demand only to special situations or disasters, Hood said.



Young

The Posse patrols Sun City West daily. "If we see or hear something while patrolling, we respond," Hood said. Usually Posse members report their findings to the Sheriff's substation at Bell and Dysart roads.

When patrolling, two to three of the Posse's nine cars will be out on the streets at any one time, Hood said. Patrolling Posse answer all medical calls to assist paramedics and the family.

"We extend a closer awareness of what's going on in the community," he said. "We have no police powers. We just hope we make people feel more secure."

Right now, the force needs about 50 more volunteers. Hood said that Bob Anton is on a

## Did you know?

recruit hunt to add to the 198-person Posse. Anton is replacing Wally Holda until he returns from medical leave.

We've had some people working as many as 10 shifts each month, or about 40 hours a month more than the 20-hour minimum required of Posse members, Hood said.

"The more volunteers we have, the more cars we can field and the more visible we are," Hood said.

Posse members work for their community primarily for the same reason given by Werner Beyen who said, "For what I wanted out of the community, I wanted to give something back."

Most volunteers have no law enforcement background, Hood said and undergo training before taking to the streets. Posse basic training includes courses on the law, first aid, cardiovascular pulmonary resuscitation and traffic control.

"Traffic control isn't difficult but the first time it scares the heck out of you," Hood said.

Before recruits patrol the streets of Sun City West, they ride all four shifts with an experienced officer.

Posse work has attracted about 17 husband and wife

teams. Another 40 volunteers work in the receptionist area.

"If people want something to do, we could use them in this area too," said Dolores Lunardi, who works one four-hour shift twice a month.

Posse recruits can be recognized by the yellow shirt or jump suit they're issued. Before a class A uniform or fire arm can be worn, the volunteer must complete the county's 150-hour Second Man Academy.

The academy covers law, emergency first aid, CPR, how to take care of yourself and advance traffic control. The final 40 class hours focus on the use of firearms and include range practice.

Before they can be certified, Posse members have to score 210 out of 250 on the shooting range, the same as DPS (Department of Public Service) officers and MCSO (Maricopa County Sheriff's Office) deputies," Hood said. Certification must be renewed annually.

Before he retired and found his place in the Posse, Hood worked in the computer end of the pharmaceutical industry.

"I chased a lot of bugs but that's about all," he said laughingly in Posse headquarters.

This past week Hood has

worked up a sweat lifting boxes of fund-raising fliers from his office floor onto a dolly and moving them into storage. The Posse's annual fund drive begins in the fall.

The Posse's headquarters, "really belongs to the community" since community contributions paid for the building at 20450 Stardust Blvd., Hood said.

The building lot, in the Sun City West Community Services Center complex, has been leased from the Sun City West Foundation for 99 years at \$1 a year.

"We're paid up," Hood said.

OVER  
**Daily News-Sun**

**B5 Monday, Aug. 12, 1991**



**COMPUTER CENTER** — G. Tweeten, treasurer of the Sun City West Sheriff's Posse, processes information into the computer at Posse headquarters.



**NERVE CENTER** — Don Gable is a dispatcher for the Sun City West Sheriff's Posse.

Daily News-Sun photos by Patrick Knight



**PERFECT FIT** — William Crowl, a Posse volunteer, gets fitted for a new uniform by Janice Runyon, an executive officer in the Posse.



**FILL 'ER UP** — Commander Russ Hood of the Sun City West Sheriff's Posse loads bullets into a speed loader.



**PERFECT FIT** — William Crowl, a Posse volunteer, gets fitted for a new uniform by Janice Runyon, an executive officer in the Posse.



# VALLEY & STATE

VF - SHERIFF'S POSSE

SECTION  
**B**

TUESDAY  
SEPTEMBER 4, 1990

★★

*'They give people a sense of security'*

## Posses keep eyes and ears open to serve Sun Cities

**By Pamela Manson**  
The Arizona Republic

They call themselves the eyes and ears of the sheriff.

Several hundred Sun City and Sun City West residents put in thousands of hours each year in local posses, working to make the retirement communities secure and to free sheriff's deputies for more-pressing duties.

And they do it at no cost to the taxpayer.

"They're very good for the community," sheriff's Sgt. Mark Nelson said. "They give people a sense of security."

The posses are crime-prevention groups of volunteer deputies operating under the guidance of the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office. Posse members go through at least 80 hours of training in patrol procedures, first aid, traffic

control, communications and other duties.

Some volunteers take additional hours of training that qualify them to carry guns.

Once they have completed their training, posse members perform many of the duties of sworn officers. They patrol the streets of Sun City and Sun City West looking for suspicious activity, handle traffic-control duties and participate in search-and-rescue missions.

They also answer emergency medical calls, keep an eye on the homes of those on vacation and check up on residents when, for example, they fail to appear for a regular club meeting.

Posse members in the retirement communities are available throughout the week, whereas volunteers with other posses frequently are at their regular jobs, Nelson said.

— See POSSES, page B3

OVER

ARIZONA REPUBLIC

Sept. 4, 1990



Charles Krejcsi/The Arizona Republic

Herbert Cahill, a Sun City Posse member, fills out a report after checking a vacant home during his patrol. Cahill made sure doors and windows were locked, looked for water leaks and picked up the newspaper.

## Posses are serving Sun Cities

— POSSES, from page B1

"We hit them here for help in the week," he said. "They're unique in that aspect."

The work of the posse members frequently lacks drama, but it adds to the sense of caring in the community.

Posse member Herbert Cahill went to the residence of a Sun City woman when she failed to meet a friend one morning. He was at the woman's house five minutes after a posse dispatcher received a call from the worried friend.

The woman was there, safe and sound, having decided to go to church that morning.

For Dick Schiefelbein, those types of "humanitarian" acts bring him the most satisfaction as a member of the Sun City Posse.

For example, in an emergency, some residents are too distraught to know what to do, said Schiefelbein, executive officer of operations.

"Sometimes, they're so emotional," he said. "We'll make the call to relatives for them. We'll drive them to

the hospital. We'll lock their front door before we leave."

Schiefelbein added that Sun City and Sun City West residents sometimes feel more comfortable talking to posse members, who are closer to them in age, than to most regular deputies, who are younger.

Richard Baikie, commander of the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City West, said search-and-rescue missions are an important part of the work. When mentally confused people wander away from home, it is imperative that they be found quickly, he said.

The posses grew from groups of residents patrolling the streets in their own cars in the 1970s to organizations that are almost indistinguishable from professional police agencies.

The posses operate out of modern buildings equipped with state-of-the-art communications equipment. Members wear uniforms and patrol in marked cars. With forces totaling 170 to 200 members each, the posses are larger than many Valley police forces.

All of the members work for free. Jack Goodrich, executive officer of

the Sun City Posse, said that members are required to work 20 hours a month, or 240 hours a year, but that a few put in as many as 2,000 a year.

Baikie said that each year the posses each put in about \$1 million worth of work. That doesn't count the cost of the posse headquarters, patrol cars, equipment and uniforms. Those are paid for with contributions made during fund drives each fall.

Goodrich emphasized that posse members only augment regular law-enforcement officers, freeing them for other work.

When posse members see something suspicious or observe a crime, they radio the Sheriff's Office. Direct intervention by posse members is discouraged.

Schiefelbein said posse members have the time to do things a regular deputy could not.

"If we see a garage door open at night, we'll call the resident on the phone to tell him," he said.

"We'll warn him about the possibility of having something stolen out of there."

# Posse rides in as residents leave town

By Bob Jackson  
Special to Community

For many residents the arrival of 100-degree heat means just one thing: Vacation.

And those worried whether their belongings will be safe while they are away, several northwest Valley communities offer programs to safeguard homes.

In Sun City, when the mercury begins to climb residents scramble for the cooler weather, said Dick Schiefelbein, executive operations officer for the Sun City Posse.

When that exodus occurs, he said, the Posse gets busy. Real busy.

"As a matter of fact, when summer comes, our workload increases by a whole bunch," he added. "Most residents look to us to keep an eye on things while they're gone."

Schiefelbein and the 160 volunteer members that make up the Posse have the responsibility of keeping Sun City neighborhoods secure. They patrol Sun City streets, making routine home checks day and night.

The checks are performed randomly and must be requested by residents before they leave on vacation, Schiefelbein said. Vacation Watch cards can be obtained at the various Sun City recreation centers, the Sun City Fire Department, and at the Posse headquarters, 10861 Sunland Drive.

The Sun City West Posse offers its own Vacation Watch program, according to Posse Commander Dick Baikie. Sun City West residents desiring to take part in the program must complete a Vacation Watch card and submit it to Posse headquarters, 20450 Stardust Blvd.

Vacation Watch cards may be obtained at Sun City West recreation centers, the Sun City West Fire Department, the Sun City West Library and Posse headquarters.

Posse members check doors and windows, pick up newspapers and make a general sweep of the grounds.

"Sun City residents are quite security conscious," Schiefelbein said. "Most of them know to look out for their neighbors, and they are good at reporting any type of suspicious activity."

Schiefelbein said that residents should not rely solely on law enforcement officials to keep their homes secure.

"What I recommend to residents is that they should make the house look like its being lived in," Schiefelbein said. "There are simple things you can do to give that illusion."

Simple precautions, such as stopping the delivery of newspapers, having a neighbor park a second car in your driveway or having a neighbor use your trash containers, can make a difference, he said.

See SECURITY, Page 5

OVER

# SECURITY

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It is also important to tell a neighbor your destination, how long you'll be gone and a telephone number where you can be reached in an emergency, Schiefelbein added.

"We have found, in many cases, that having a neighbor watching the house, along with a few precautionary measures, is the best form of security," he said.

The Sun City and Sun City West posses also perform free security surveys for residents who request the service. The surveys examine residences looking for ways to improve security.

Sun City and Sun City West residents wanting more information on the Vacation Watch or the Home Security Check, can call the Posse headquarters in Sun City at 972-1103 and in Sun City West at 584-5808.

In Glendale, residents can take advantage of a Vacation Watch program sponsored by the Glendale Police Department.

According to Glendale Police Department spokesman Marshall Downen, the department performs an average of 300 vacation checks per month during the summer. Downen said residents can obtain Vacation Watch forms at the Glendale Police Station, 7119 57th Drive.

"We usually ask how long the resident will be gone, the phone number of a friend who can be reached in case of an emergency and other miscellaneous information that may be important to officers," Downen said.

Glendale police provide a brochure containing home-security precautions that residents may take before leaving for vacation.

The department also performs free security surveys on homes and businesses. Additional information on either program may be obtained by calling 931-5500.

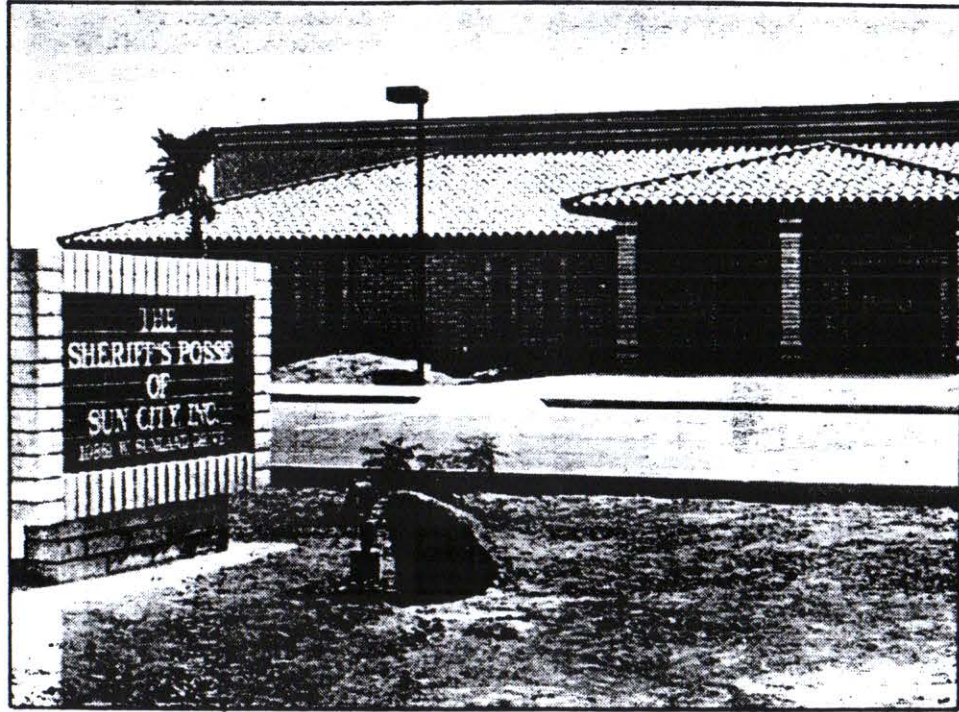
The Peoria Police Department does not have a vacation watch

program, according to Peoria Police Department spokesman Sgt. Jim Flonacher. However, the department does encourage residents to fill out vacation watch forms so that police officials are able to contact out-of-town residents in the event of an emergency.

"We are unable to check houses because of manpower constraints," Flonacher said. "We discontinued the Vacation Watch program back in 1983."

Flonacher added that if time permits, the department will send out auxiliary police officers to make checks if a resident fills out a vacation watch form.

"That could take place about once per week," Flonacher said.



Daily News-Sun photo

**HEADQUARTERS** — The Sheriff's Posse of Sun City Inc. moved into a new building.

## Posse boasts new home

**SUN CITY** — Nine years of investing surplus contributions paid off for the Sun City posse in 1989 when it moved into a new \$1.25-million headquarters building behind Sunland Memorial Park cemetery.

The headquarters, at 10861 W. Sunland Drive, has 12,000 square feet of building space and parking for 154 vehicles. An auditorium seats 210. The building has special work areas for each of the posse's 12 working departments.

Capt. Eldon Page, Sun City posse commander in 1989, said planning for the new headquarters went on for nearly three years. Move-in started in September 1989 and on Oct. 22, the building was officially dedicated with the help of Maricopa County Sheriff Tom Agnos.

But best of all, the new Sun City posse headquarters was built entirely through donations from the community. The posse, in fact, operates on donations, most of which come from

fund drives and memorial contributions.

Its 170 active members are all volunteers. The Sun City posse is governed by an elected commander and 12-member board of directors.

Board members serving a three-year term are: Jim Beauchamp, Bert Brosius, George Burton, Marian Buscemi, Ken Harrison, Eldon Page, Jess Reed, Warren Roeger, John Sorenson, Bobbi Summers, Eileen Webber and Lyle Wharton.

The Sun City posse was established in 1973. Its role is to assist the sheriff by looking and listening for anything suspicious in the community. The posse assists with emergencies, directs traffic, checks on the welfare of local businesses and conducts vacation watches for homeowners who are away.

Regular meetings are held at 9 a.m. the first Tuesday of every month at headquarters. Anyone interested in joining may call 972-1103.

# Open house

## 700 tour new posse building

By DOUG DUSIK  
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — The community came out in force Sunday to tour the posse's new \$1.25-million headquarters building behind Sunland Memorial Park.

Between 1 and 4 p.m., more than 700 people had signed the guest register. The posse began moving into the new building in September, but Sunday marked the dedication and first open house.

"It's beautiful," said resident Marie Seal. "It's so much bigger than I thought. I think we're so lucky to have the posse in Sun City."

The new posse building, at 10861 W. Sunland Drive, has 12,000 square feet of space and boasts 154 parking spaces. An auditorium seats 210 people and each of the posse's 12 departments has its own office.

The Sun City Posse was established in 1973. Its role is to assist the sheriff by looking and listening for anything suspicious in the community. The posse assists with emergencies, directs traffic, checks on the welfare of local businesses and conducts vacation watches for homeowners who are away. The 170 members of the posse are all volunteers.

Posse member Jack Goodrich said the new headquarters will provide adequate space for existing needs and any anticipated needs in the future.

"There's no more doubling up now," Goodrich said.

The new headquarters even has a lounge area equipped with a microwave oven, stove and refrigerator. Outside, a car wash sits ready to clean any of the posse's 12 patrol cars.

"People have told me it's so much nicer than our other building," posse Sgt. Dorothy Olmstead said. "And it's all paid for — that's what they lis-

ten to."

The posse has been investing its surplus donations for about nine years to finance the new building. The Sun City Posse operates entirely on donations, most coming from fund drives or memorial contributions.

Plans for the new building have been in the works for about three years. The posse's original headquarters, now being used by the local state Department of Public Safety district, was at 111th and Peoria avenues.

"I'm impressed. It's terrific," said resident Florence Meyer.

Her husband, Carl, said, "They haven't missed a thing as far as I can see. I used to be on a volunteer fire department. I wish we had as much as they do."

Most of the furniture in the headquarters was purchased from Northern Trust Bank. A Sun City office is being remodeled and the old furniture was available at a nominal price, posse commander Capt. Eldon Page said.

"Everybody is really impressed with the building," Page said. "I haven't heard a negative comment yet."

Representatives from other Maricopa County posses, the sheriff's office and community organizations were on hand Sunday to tour the building and enjoy the refreshments provided.

Page said the additional space provided by the new headquarters means "that the posse is going to be able to serve the people of Sun City better."

over



Daily News-Sun photo by Stephen Cherek

**BUILDING DEDICATED** — Maricopa County Sheriff Tom Agnos dedicated the new Sun City Sheriff's Posse Building Sunday, 10861 W. Sunland Drive.



Daily News-Sun photo by Stephen Cherek

**COMMUNICATIONS ROOM** — Dispatcher Pat Addison, left, shows Betty Gillen of Sun City the telephone system on the radio console in the communications room.



Daily News-Sun photo by Jacque Pappas

**NO ONE'S HOME** — Sun City Posse volunteer Jack Goodrich checks the door of a area resident's home who is on vacation. August is the month that most locals request vacation watch services from the Sun City and Sun City West Posses.

## Posse on guard as residents take off

By JACQUE PAPPAS  
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Maybe it's the weather. Or maybe it's that lull before school starts.

But for some reason, August is the time many local residents leave the retirement community and use posse vacation watch services.

Members of the Sun City and Sun City West posses say August is traditionally the time when the groups are called upon to keep tabs on people's homes while they go on vacation.

Norm Thaler, who heads the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City West's vacation watch, said the group hit an all-time high number of requests last week with 1,900.

Last year's high was 1,700 vacation watches.

"I think the number of people using our vacation watch keeps increasing because Sun City West is still growing. We added a great number of new homes last year," Thaler said. "We work toward going to every home that sends in a vacation card every week. The volunteers are what make this all work."

Thaler, who oversees the vacation watch with the help of four assistants, said the program has been growing since the Sun City West posse was established more than 10 years ago.

He said the third week in August seems to be when most residents are away on vacation.

The posse also conducts a number of vacation watches during holidays, he said.

"Now we will start on a downhill trend. Already we have

more than 150 less this week than last week," Thaler said. "But our numbers are up significantly from years prior."

Jan. 24 was the posse's least active day so far this year with 97 vacation watches. By April, the number increased to 237 and there were 1,149 in June.

Thaler said the program is a real benefit to residents away on vacation.

"Vacation watch is primarily to check homes while the residents are away. But if they do not request the vacation watch, then we have no way to help them," Thaler said. "You never know what can happen. A house can be burglarized, the water could be left on or a number of other problems could occur."

Thaler said residents give the posse forwarding addresses and

phone numbers so they can be contacted if anything goes wrong.

The posse also suggests a house key be given to a neighbor who is in town just in case there is a need to enter the home.

The Sheriff's Posse of Sun City, founder of the vacation watch program, also checks homes and condominiums on a regular basis.

Posse volunteers Jack and Audrey Goodrich have checked homes for three years during mornings when they are on patrol.

"It seems that there is an increase in the number of vacation watches we do. I think people who use it tell their friends about it and the word spreads," Jack Goodrich said.



## • CHECKS

*From page one*

receive R U OK check ups for the price of owning a telephone.

"Not a great cost for a service that may save a life," she said.

Other speakers attending the kick-off ceremony were:

Maricopa County Supervisor Carole Carpenter; Maricopa County Sheriff Tom Agnos, Police Chief Branham, Valley View Community Hospital Administrator Kendra Sabol and Hospital Auxiliary President Caroline Delbridge.

Sen. John McCain was represented by a staff member.

Kelly Humenuik read Sen. McCain's message of

congratulations on the program.

"Arizona has a proud heritage of neighbor helping neighbor," the senator wrote.

Adding that the system will provide elderly in the community with a greater sense of security.

Supervisor Carpenter called the telephone check-up "a terrific system," and expressed her delight that the northwest Valley was first to present the program to the public.

Area citizens and groups donated nearly \$8,000 to fund the program.

For further information on the program, call the Youngtown Police Department, 974-3665.

# Sun City Posse expects to build new headquarters

## Road project to cut parking for current site

By M.E. Saavedra  
The Arizona Republic

Construction on a new building for the Sun City Sheriff's Posse is expected to begin early next year.

The 200-member posse may be able to relocate by summer to the new building, which is on a 5-acre lot near 108th and Sunland drives behind Sunland Memorial Park, posse Commander Alfred Dunn said.

The posse is a group of volunteers that organized in 1973 to assist the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office in patrolling the community.

The posse is being forced out of its current headquarters at 111th and Peoria avenues in Sun City because Youngtown plans to widen Peoria Avenue, which will eliminate parking spaces for the organization.

Dunn said the group needs about 200 spaces to provide enough parking for members during meetings and training sessions.

In addition, the posse has outgrown the building, and more space is needed for equipment and training for the posse's increased number of volunteers, Dunn said.

The new headquarters will be about 12,800 square feet. The posse cur-

rently has a meeting room, communications and equipment rooms and offices that occupy 4,800 square feet.

"Everything so far is positive, and there should be no problems," Dunn said recently.

Although he would not disclose how much the posse is paying for the property, he said the group has paid 25 percent of the purchase price and plans to make the final payment by Jan. 1.

The lot is owned by a Pennsylvania corporation that owns cemeteries throughout the nation.

Dunn said he would not reveal the purchase price for the property because he did not want to endanger the sale.

In addition to the cost of the property, construction of the new headquarters will cost about \$900,000, which will be paid for with donations collected from Sun City residents, Dunn said.

Members of the posse's building committee are trying to change the zoning of the new property from cemetery use to residential, which is the appropriate zoning for a community-service building, said Eldon Page, the committee's chairman.

Youngtown Police Chief Mike Branham said the town is considering purchasing the building the posse will be vacating.

Dunn said the building has been appraised at \$445,000.



Sheriff Blubaum administers oath to new members of Sun City Posse.

## Where Citizens Help Control Crime

More than 2,500 well-trained volunteers aid the lawmen in this Arizona county.

by Glenn White

**C**rime—especially the burglary of homes—has become commonplace in most of the nation's quiet suburbs. Federal Bureau of Investigation reports show that burglary, larceny-theft, auto theft and strong-arm robbery are increasing at a faster rate in suburbia than in large cities. The victims are shocked that it can happen to them, fearful and frustrated because they feel helpless to do anything about it.

"Although I have taken new security measures," reported one such victim, "I am left with a sense of insecurity and a new reality: That lights and locks do not a fortress make, and the only things really separating *them* from me are double-paned windows. That reality greets me each time I return home and ask myself, 'Has anyone been here?' And at night, as I lie in bed listening to the walls creak and settle, the thought 'What was that?' no longer occurs. Instead, I now wonder, 'Who is that?'"

A few years ago when crime came to Sun City, Ariz., residents took some unusual action which proved to be

highly effective. A retirement community 20 miles northwest of Phoenix, Sun City is unincorporated and dependent upon the Maricopa County Sheriff's Department for protection. The three patrol cars provided by the Sheriff's Department were not enough, all concerned agreed, to keep an eye on 30,000 persons, nine golf courses and seven shopping centers on the 10,000 acres the community comprises. Sun City residents were easy prey for every dope addict who rolled down the highway looking for something to steal and sell for a "fix." Vandalism and pilferage from new building sites were also common.

### The Posse Rides Again

Today, the largest volunteer posse in Arizona—250 men and women—rides in Sun City. They do not wear spurs or carry guns. In 2-man teams, they ride in their own unmarked cars, wear white hard-hat helmets, and carry whistles and flashlights. They are one of 36 posses

in Maricopa County, where the Sheriff's Department lays undisputed claim to the "biggest volunteer law enforcement program" in the nation.

Most of the members of the Sun City Posse have unusual qualifications. Close to 50 are former police officers. Several of its members are former police chiefs of large Eastern and Midwestern cities. Former prosecuting attorneys, judges, college professors and business executives are in the posse's ranks. A woman expert in communications runs the base station.

Sun Citians also have an extensive Neighborhood Watch program. Participating homeowners keep a careful watch on neighboring houses, especially when occupants are absent. If they see any suspicious activity, they phone Sun City Crime Stop, which brings Sheriff's deputies to the scene within minutes. "Suspicious activity" is not always easy to spot. One neighbor phoned Crime Stop to report a man busily pruning shrubbery and raking the lawn around a vacated house. Sheriff's deputies who investigated found not one man but two—the second busily ransacking the house. The two "gardeners" later confessed to dozens of similar robberies.

The posse's members, who maintain an almost constant patrol in every section of their city, volunteer their



Deputy transmits message on search & rescue mission.

The Sun City Posse and 35 other posses in Maricopa County are under the supervision of County Sheriff Paul E. Blubaum, 51, who heads a paid staff of 488 and a Volunteer Community Resources Division of 2,500 men and women between the ages of 18 and 80. "Citizen involvement is the key to good law enforcement," says Blubaum.

How can private citizens "get involved" and help with law enforcement? No thoughtful person believes any individual should "take the law into his own hands," or join a band of gun-totin' vigilantes. And no professional lawman in Maricopa believes in the foolhardy heroics of the fictional Western sheriff and his deputies. But there is evidence that people *do* involve themselves in law enforcement when they see an effective way to go about it.

Maricopa County has special needs. Covering an area of 9,226 square miles, the county is larger than the states of Connecticut, Rhode Island and Delaware combined. The sheriff, elected to a 4-year term, is the chief law enforcement officer, responsible for all the unincorporated areas which is 95% of the county. This vast territory has many special problems, one being that people get lost in its mountains and desert. On the other hand, it has some special assets, such as the old tradition of neighborly help and volunteer search parties, even under the harshest of conditions.

Sheriff Blubaum and his professional and volunteer staff have the same crime problems as other metropolitan areas—and, according to FBI statistics, more crime to contend with. The population of Maricopa County is over 1.1 million, well over half the population of the state, most of it clustered in Phoenix and its suburbs. It is the fastest-growing population center in the country. This means, besides the desirable flow of tourists who spend their money, many transient thieves, both amateur and professional, are attracted. "They pull a job in the suburbs of Phoenix tonight," Sgt. Don Blankenship said in plain disgust, "and tomorrow they're in Los Angeles."

The Sheriff's Department of this vast territory has two main responsibilities—search and rescue, and crime



Blubaum congratulating new members for becoming involved in community law enforcement.

time, and must pay \$5 for their whistle, flashlight and hard-hat. To purchase a needed 10-unit, mobile radio communications system, 34 community organizations contributed to the fund. The equipment allows volunteers to keep in around-the-clock contact with their base station, the Sheriff's Department and the Phoenix Police.

"We are a volunteer organization and our mission is to protect," said Captain Marvin Van Dera, commander of the Sun City Posse. "We are willing to devote our time, our cars and our gas to protect Sun City." Incidence of crime has dwindled. In late 1974, the Arizona State Insurance Department credited Sun City with the lowest burglary rate of any large community in Maricopa County.

prevention. Volunteer posse members are essential to the success of both of these programs, and they also assist in the civil process—serving subpoenas, summonses, notices, etc.

The word *posse* was in use centuries before the opening of the West. It is an abbreviation of *posse comitatus*, a Latin phrase found in 13th century English law, referring to "the force of the county," a body of men which a county peace officer was empowered to call to assist him.

### Volunteers Do Many Jobs

The Sheriff's Department volunteers are organized into 36 posses, or community service groups, with a variety of specialties: Mounted, jeep, motorcycle, airplane, desert survival, scuba diver and communications



Jeep Posse volunteer checking in with headquarters.

posses serve in search and rescue missions. (A couple of airplane units have been credited with catching cattle rustlers!) Other posses are devoted to crime prevention, security training and community relations. A Corrections Posse works with jail personnel in the rehabilitation of inmates.

Each posse screens its own members, holds its own meetings and writes its own bylaws, but it must follow the Rules and Orders Guidelines of the Sheriff's Department. These provide for a disciplinary board to judge violations and a system of appeal to the Sheriff's Voluntary Advisory Committee.

Posse members may wear a uniform which looks just like that of a regular deputy, but they may not carry a gun unless they have had the firearms training course; and they have no powers of arrest, unless specifically called up by the sheriff. Once, when members of a Jeep Posse were practicing on a shooting range in the Carefree area, they got radio notice of a bank robbery only a mile away. They joined regular deputies and used their jeeps to block two highways. Almost immediately they found themselves involved in a shootout. One of the unlucky suspects was shot and the other three surrendered—while the bank alarm was still sounding.

A variety of training courses are open to posse members, including first aid, map and compass, desert survival techniques, search coordination, tracking, firearms and traffic control. Those who qualify may join the volunteer reserve program and study to become certified (by the Arizona Law Enforcement Advisory Council) law enforcement officers.

Candidates for the reserve program are screened by the Sheriff's Department the same way as regular personnel. They must pass a written and oral examination and submit to a polygraph test before being assigned to the Reserve Academy. The Academy operates for three months in the spring on Saturdays and Sundays and is supplemented by a home-study program. Possemen (and women) who complete the course may continue to serve with their regular posses, but they are also qualified to work in the position of a reserve officer when the need arises.

After being certified, the volunteer may ride as a second man in a patrol car until he becomes proficient enough that two district field sergeants are satisfied he can function on his own. He is then designated a "car commander" and can replace a regular officer when needed. The only difference between a certified volunteer commander and a regular deputy is that the volunteer is not paid. The volunteer also buys his own uniform and furnishes his own specialized equipment (his own automobile, jeep, airplane, motorcycle, scuba gear, etc.). Often volunteers don't claim the reimbursement to which they are entitled for gasoline.

Last spring two women and a little girl were driving in Mexico when their car blew up and burned, seriously injuring the two women. Mexican authorities placed a noontime call to the Sheriff's office, saying the three wished to return to Phoenix. Within the hour, two private planes of posse members were airborne to rescue them, and the burn victims were in the Maricopa County Hospital by 4:30 p.m. The plane owners wouldn't accept reimbursement. They said the trip made them "feel good."

"This is frequently the case," said Capt. James E. Proffitt, director of the Crime Prevention Bureau and

### Sgt. Blankenship demonstrates how to etch driver's license number on TV in Operation Identification.





**Mock drill in Vulture Mt. desert attracts members from various posses.**

liaison officer to all posses. "They say they are honored to work with us, and we feel honored to have them."

Sheriff Blubaum, an ex-Marine who joined the Phoenix police force in 1947 as a foot patrolman and was appointed to chief in 1964, was elected the 32nd sheriff of Maricopa County in 1972. He is dedicated to expanding volunteer services in county law enforcement. "I can't afford *not* to use volunteers," he said. "We couldn't do half the things we're doing now without volunteer help." Yet several sheriffs in middle-western and eastern counties have told Sheriff Blubaum that what he is doing with volunteers cannot be done in their counties. He smiles and says, "Usually when anyone says it can't be done, it means he doesn't want to try it. If he wants to do it, he'll find a way." He believes that nearly everything his Department is doing with volunteers in Maricopa County could be done elsewhere—in principle if not in exact form.

### **Posse Members in Action**

For the men and women who volunteer to serve on posses, particularly the search and rescue units which are called out about once every two weeks, the hours are often poor and the 'working' conditions rugged. Yet, says Dave Underdown, volunteer captain of the Wickenburg Posse, "My men really have their hearts in this. They never refuse to help, even though it seems we're always called out in the middle of the night. Sure it's a lot of hard work, but when you can help someone—you really feel good inside."

The Wickenburg Posse is the only one in Maricopa County made up of several divisions, all the rest are restricted to one type of activity, such as mounted or paramedic. "We've got ten planes, paramedics, 4-wheel drive vehicles and a lot of horses. Sixteen of our 40 men are certified for law enforcement." Underdown, who owns a cement plant in Wickenburg, 50 miles northwest of Phoenix, said the posse was formed two

years ago and includes businessmen, a father-son team, laborers and retired persons.

Many of their search and rescue missions involve hunters, rockhounds or motorcyclists who become lost. Recently, the posse assisted with an unusual search: "The local police asked us to help locate a burglar who escaped from jail one night. We sealed the exits to town and searched for him on foot and by jeep. He couldn't get out of town, and because of our intense search, had to keep running most of the night. We picked him up the next morning seven blocks from the jail."

Posse members often get together for outings with their families, trail rides and rodeos, often competing with posse members from other areas of Arizona. They also get together for training exercises, such as the 2-day mock drill in the Vulture Mountain desert. Members from 22 posses participated.

The first assignment, beginning at 8 a.m. on Saturday, was to find five "lost rockhounds" believed to be wandering around in the desert. A plane of the Air Posse spotted the first within an hour and directed a helicopter with members of the Paramedic Posse to treat him for "head injuries" and a "broken leg." The four others were located one by one until the last foot-sore rockhound was found nearly 10 miles south of camp at high noon.

Sunday's plot read that "four armed men have escaped from the law, stolen a van and were last seen entering the search area from the highway." Searchers



**Deputy organizing desert survival classes.**

were given photographs and descriptions of the fugitives and warned, as in a real search, that they must stay in constant communication with the command post. The "stolen van" was soon spotted from the air, and the Jeep Posse moved in, but in their wary precautions against "armed fugitives," they managed to capture only one. The other three evaded capture until late afternoon when they were surrounded by horsemen and jeeps at a road intersection five miles west of the command post.



**Mounted Posse participating in Phoenix parade.**

One of the "fugitives" lamented, "There was no way we could have escaped. We sure tried. The planes and helicopter spotted me, and the guys on horses came over the hills on both sides like the old U.S. Cavalry."

Such training experiences are good preparation for real search and rescue missions which occur all too frequently. Last year volunteer posse members took part in 31 missions, donating a total of 5,260 manhours of their time. One mission was to recover a person injured on a mountain, which was successful. Seven were diving missions for victims of drowning; eight missions were searches for lost hunters; fifteen other missing-person searches were conducted in desert areas and all but one person was found alive.

Another continuing work of a number of posses is "Operation Cooperation" with the Indians on the Gila River Reservation. The Indians have problems with vandals who destroy or carry away artifacts from grave sites and other sacred grounds, and in disciplining their own members. At least 14 Indians have been graduated from the Reserve Academy, and the Gila River Reservation Police have been assisted by the Paramedic Posse, the Jeep Posse and the Air Posse, among others.

If the volunteer posses of Maricopa County served no other purpose, their function as an educational and public relations force more than justifies their existence. The Scottsdale Civic Posse is specifically involved in education for elementary school children. It has produced a 44-page "Junior Deputy Manual" for use by more than 9,000 boys and girls in sixth grade classes of the unincorporated areas of the county. Deputies appear at the schools on a regular basis as instructors.

There is no way to measure in full the accomplishments of the 2,500 volunteer posse members of Maricopa County. Each, in addition to his service in crime prevention or search and rescue is a public relations emissary for the Sheriff's Department and respect for the law. Each is living proof that people will "get involved" and cooperate in crime prevention, given the right incentives and ways to do it. □

*For more information on making your home and your neighborhood safer, send for the free AIM Guide to Home and Personal Security. Write: Dynamic Maturity, 1909 K St. NW, Washington, D.C., 20049.*



**Tracking illegal narcotics operations is only one activity of the Air Posse, shown preparing for takeoff.**

## Crusading against Crime

Crime is the second most important concern of older persons according to a survey of the NRTA/AARP membership. Only food and shelter ranked higher.

To educate older persons about crime, the NRTA/AARP Crime Prevention Program was established under George Sunderland, retired captain of the White House police and an expert in crime prevention. A series of four, 2-hour seminars was developed covering: Street Crime, Burglary, Fraud/Bunco and Community-Police Relations.

Sunderland said, "This program is designed to bring older persons practical, realistic ways to avoid being victimized, to reduce criminal opportunities, and to alert people to real dangers. At the same time, the program is designed to help dispel imaginary fears."

The series is offered through local NRTA/AARP chapters, and is also made available as a public service to community organizations. Religious groups, nutrition centers and local chapters of the Red Cross are

frequent sponsors of the Crime Prevention series.

The Crime Prevention Program is also sponsoring workshops across the nation for law enforcement officials. "We try to help them deal more effectively with both crime and non-crime related problems of older persons," explained Sunderland. Several workshops are scheduled for this fall.

For more information on this activity, write: NRTA/AARP Crime Prevention Program, 1909 K St. NW, Washington, D.C., 20049.

# Sun City posse asks residents for cooperation

By THELMA HEATWOLE

SUN CITY — Sun City Sheriff's Posse members are emphasizing the importance of concerned neighbors in their ongoing effort to help keep the crime rate here low.

Both S. H. "Jack" Jackson, the new commander, and James A. White, the immediate past leader, believe homes are the most vulnerable targets of crime. They are encouraging residents to revive the "old pioneer spirit of protective neighborliness" to reduce crime.

As such, residents are asked to report suspicious behavior to the sheriff's office Crime Stop.

Jackson, with a background in military police, security and investigation, assumed reins of the 250-person unit Jan. 1. White, a former Navy officer, received the first Sun City posse card when the organization began functioning in 1973.

Despite the possibility of incorporation here, a situation that would end the need for the posse, the two men are looking ahead.

Labeled the "eyes and ears" of the regular sheriff's patrol in this retirement community, the posse patrols Sun City in six fully equipped cars. Two more units are expected this month.

The posse functions chiefly in patrol, observation and reporting. Members are in immediate contact with the sheriff's office and can assist or be assisted by sheriff's deputies.

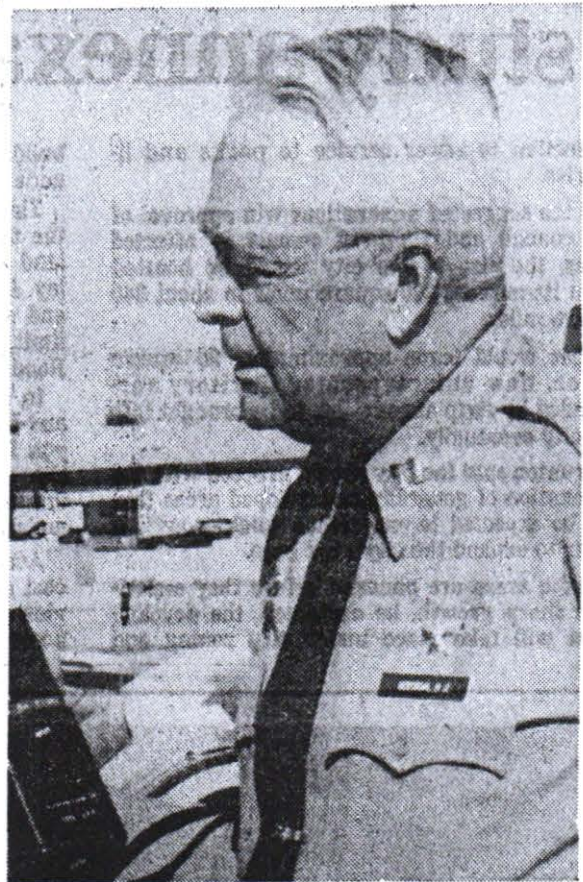
Members, through activation by Sheriff Jerry Hill, can make arrests for unlawful acts committed in their presence, White said.

"We do not cite for traffic violations or investigate automotive accidents," White added. But the posse helps with traffic and the injured. First aid is part of their basic training.

The posse has a "vacation watch" program — close to 15,000 instances last year. Traffic control at all large events in Sun City also is in the hands of the posse.

There are about 30 women posse members.

"We consider them regular posse people. Most are real good, doing whatever necessary. We are not prejudiced," White explained.



S. W. "Jack" Jackson

On occasion, the sheriff has called the posse for activity outside Sun City. In such cases, qualified volunteers are sought.

For instance, posse members once were called upon to guard convicted land fraud figure Ned Warren and to help prevent looting during March floods. And when former California Gov. Ronald Reagan came to Sun City to speak after his defeat in the presidential primary, posse members served as guards.

The crime rate in Sun City is low, White pointed out.

"People passing through account for what little crime we have except for an occasional shoplifter," he said.

The posse has a pistol range and training officer. All members are required to take the basic posse training for Sun City duty. The sheriff's office is the agency that qualifies members to carry a gun as a posse member, the men said.

Obviously Sun City residents appreciate the posse. Money for posse extensive equipment and operational expenses has come from citizen contributions.



# They're physically fit and action ready

## Volunteer posse aids

### Sun City sheriff

By CAROL SOWERS  
Assistant Editor  
Women's Forum

There's no sign on the office door — no way to tell that inside is the headquarters of an all-volunteer crime-stopping team that started with 30 men, borrowed walkie talkies and a telephone booth.

Today that 30-man team — the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City — has blossomed into a sophisticated force dedicated to keeping crime off the well-manicured streets of this retirement community.

The 250 men — and women — of today's posse may have collared no rapists or murderers, but they do assist with burglary investigations, patrol city streets, and re-route jammed traffic. Once they were called to guard convicted land swindler Ned Warren.

"When a woman was killed in front of King's Inn, we were the first on the scene," said Martin Van Dera, posse commander. "We are the eyes and ears of the sheriff and we work under his guidance."

THE POSSE was activated in January by Sheriff Jerry Hill and given peace officer status.

"That means we can make an arrest when we see a felony being committed. We wouldn't just wait around for the sheriff to show up," Van Dera said.

So far the group hasn't had to arrest anyone.

The posse, probably the largest of its kind, is a model of community involvement, a pattern other neighborhoods could follow in helping fight crime, said Van Dera, who is often called out-of-town to talk about the group.

"But what I always tell them is not to start some kind of vigilante committee waving guns on the street," he said.

Lest anyone think the Sun City Posse is a group of flab-sided retirees with guns and golf carts, Van Dera recently ordered them to double-time during a parade in neighboring Surprise in a display of physical fitness. And they routinely spread through the desert on mock search missions, practice on a pistol range and learn a variety of techniques from first aid to traffic control.

Drawing on a generous cigar, Van Dera, a retired naval intelligence officer, remembered the days four years ago when the posse was formed as an emergency unit to calm crowds or deter vandals.

"WE STARTED with walkie talkies borrowed from Jim White (a posse lieutenant) and they'd only carry for three or four blocks," he said. "Then, when we saw something suspicious, we'd have to go to the phone booth to call the sheriff. They didn't really know who was calling them and by the time they got there the suspicious character would be gone."

Eventually, the posse brought citizen band radios but still had to thread their calls through local CBer traffic.

"We'd be on the air and hear things like, 'I just took Elsie down to get her hair cut.' It was a mess," Van Dera recalled.

But now the posse has its own CB channel, voice-activated tape players, traffic control equipment, and radios, all stored in an office

whose location is kept secret to discourage theft.

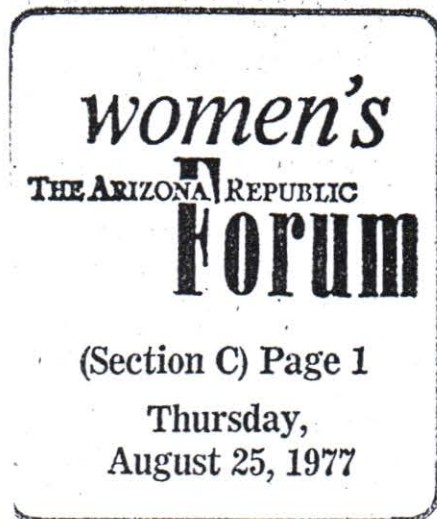
"Since the posse formed four years ago we have had a lower percentage of crime in this city of 42,000 than we did when we were just 15,000," said taut-bellied Lt. White, a retired submarine officer who looks like he was born in a deputy uniform.

The community is grateful for its nearly worry-free streets. Last year it raised some \$56,000 to help the posse buy equipment. Posse members are not paid and the group receives no money from the Sheriff's Department.

Members must buy their own uniforms. White said his, a replica of regular deputy uniforms, cost \$400, including the gun.

SOON OTHER posse members, who don't cotton to the cowboy version, will wear yellow jumpsuits complete with deputy insignias.

"We want everyone to be readily recognized," Van Dera said. "It doesn't do much for the posse image when a guy comes up in bermuda shorts and a flowered shirt and says he's a member."



High on commitment and intensive training, Van Dera said posse members must spend seven hours per month on duty, be approved by a posse board, and be given security clearance by the Sheriff's Department.

The posse has methodically cleared the glamour-seeking dead-wood out of the group.

"We'd get these guys coming from Chicago or New York and they'd be intrigued with this idea of being in a posse," Van Dera said. "They'd just want to be a posse member so they'd have a card to flash around at cocktail parties. We didn't want that."

To banish any fear the posse is unleashing gun-waving vigilante

committees onto Sun City streets, Van Dera said only the officers who have trained at the sheriff's pistol range can buckle on guns.

ALTHOUGH MOST of the women in the group are in communications, or ride on patrols, a few are qualified to carry pistols.

"We've got a couple of them who were raised on farms and shot turkeys. They are damn good with a gun," Van Dera said.

The posse, anxious to involve the community in their crime stopping efforts, initiated a "vacation watch" program and taught Sun Citians to become "nosy neighbors." It's paid off.

(OVER)

"There had been several burglaries in the neighborhood," Van Dera said. "And when one woman saw a yard man's truck pull up in front of a neighbor's house, she knew that man didn't get his yard done. She got suspicious, called the sheriff, they caught him and it led to clearing up several burglaries — all because she was a nosy neighbor."

Posse members patrol streets on foot, bicycle, in their own flashing-light-equipped cars, or with golf carts that may have radios plugged into the cigarette lighters. As they slip through the city, they look for anything out-of-the-ordinary, like cars cruising streets in the early morning.

"In Sun City you rarely see a car out at 2 a.m.," he said, "so if we do, we check it out. When we patrol, we don't just drive blindly around. We look between the houses, note people's habits."

ANYTHING suspicious is recorded on a tape in the headquarters, radio room and could be used during investigations of crimes committed in the area on that date.

The posse has been effective in hurrying outsiders out of town.

"Time and time again I've driven by a parked car and come up behind it," Van Dera said. "By the time I get the license number on the air and make my turn, they get on 111th Ave. and get out of town."

The posse is also called on to help citizens with day to day problems.

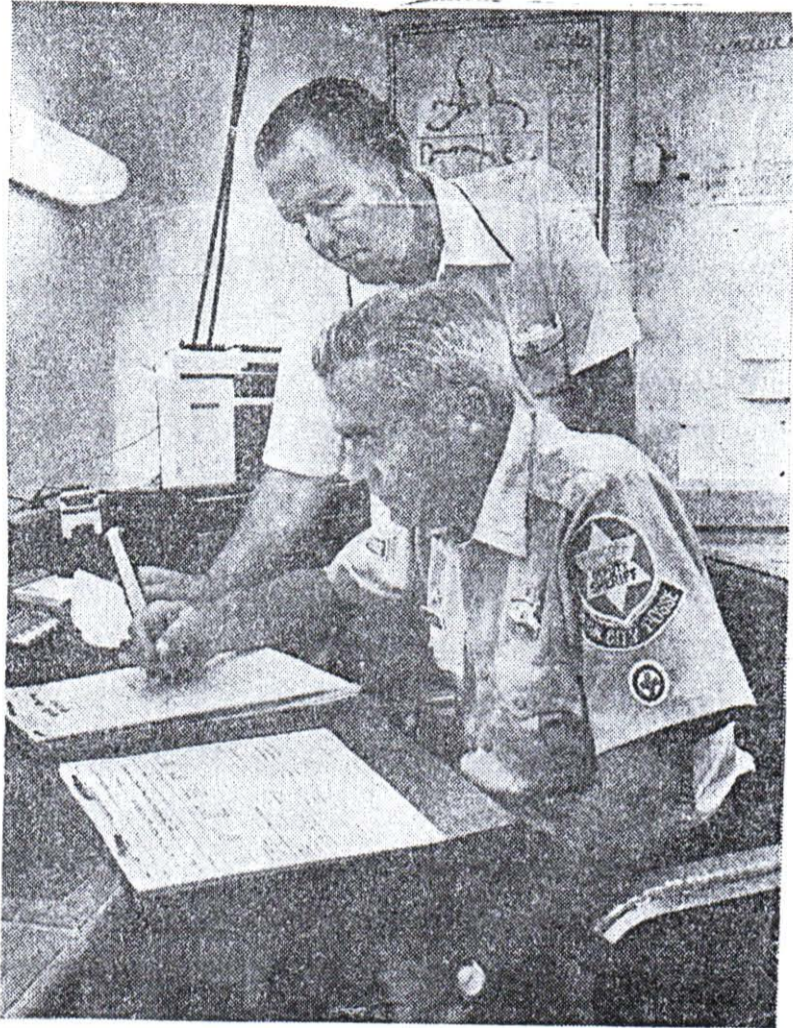
"Like helping with dead car batteries or driving drunks home," Van Dera said.

They were also asked to guard Ronald Reagan during a visit and they stationed sharpshooters on

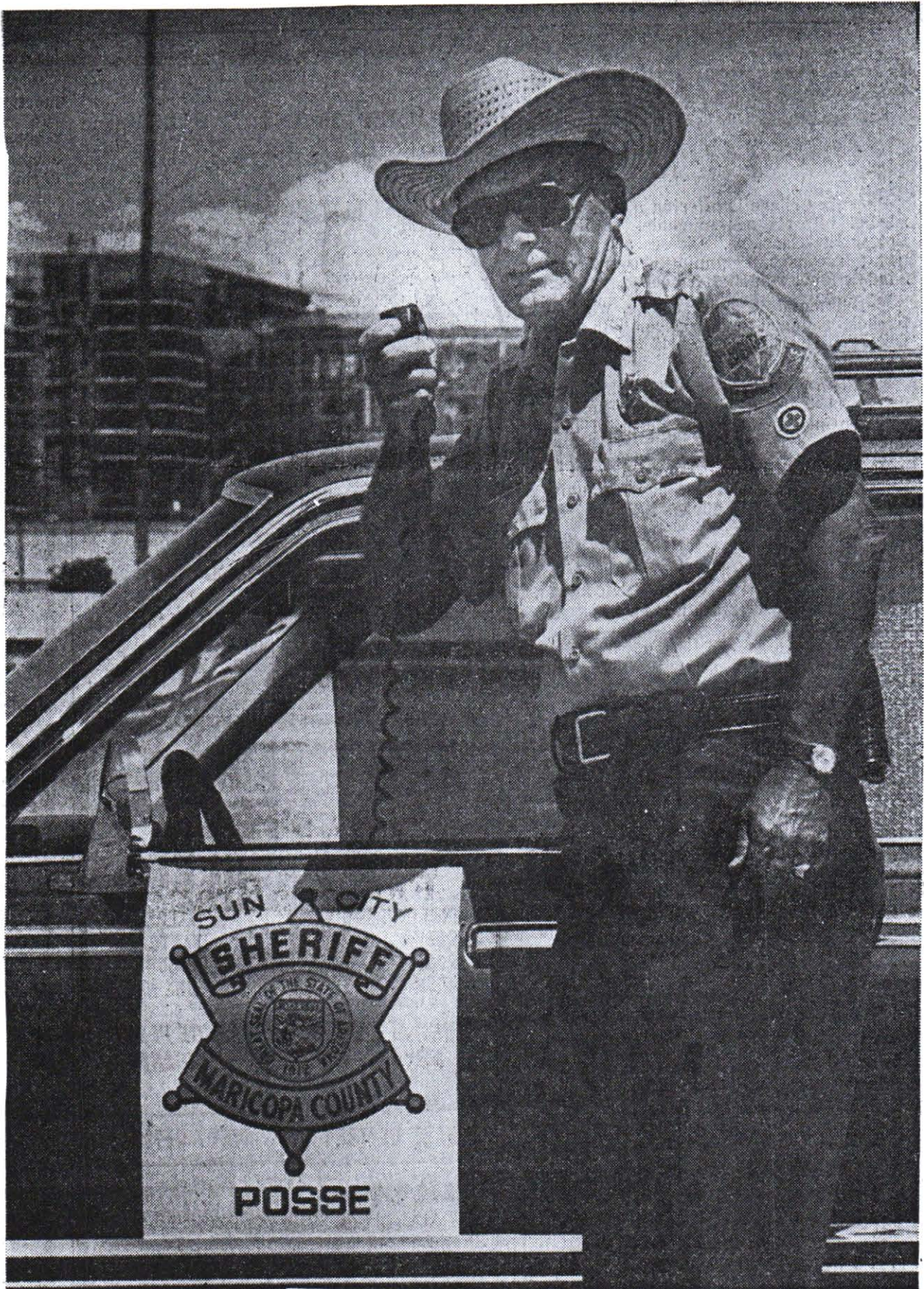
the Sun Bowl roof to look for troublemakers.

Van Dera, proud of the posse, never tires of talking about their training. But he is also careful to credit the sheriff's department for their help.

"We have a continuing, extensive training program for all posse members," he said. "We do not challenge the criminal element to come in, but we want to state we are willing and able to assist the sheriff in protecting the property and persons of Sun City."



Lt. White and Lt. Don Galloway, standing, check the radio log at the posse's communications center.



Republic photo's by Lud Keaton

Lt. Jim White, executive officer of the Sun City posse, reports to secret headquarters.

**SUN CITY SHERIFF'S POSSE**

The Del E. Webb Development Co. salutes the 251 men and women of the Sun City Sheriff's Posse for the important service this volunteer law enforcement agency is providing.

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**FOREWORD**

By Maurine E. "Babe" Barkdoll

The Sheriff's Posse of Sun City is recognized as the NUMBER ONE Posse in the United States. This is not because it is the largest and the most active nor because it has vehicles, communication and other equipment which are the envy of many professional police organizations. The principal reason for the outstanding achievements of the Sun City Posse is due to the dedicated efforts of the men and women who make up its membership.

The Posse provides many services to the citizens of Sun City such as: the Vacation Watch Program whereby the homes of absent citizens are checked to provide security from thieves and vandals; patrolling the streets and surveillance of suspicious persons; control of traffic at public events; and assisting citizens when professional help is not immediately available.

The Sheriff of Maricopa County, recognizing Posse achievements, has placed the Sun City Posse on "continuous active status" under the authority of the Arizona Comitatus Statute.

While the Posse members on duty have ostensibly the same authority as professional Peace Officers, the Sheriff (as well as the Posse Board of Governors) has placed certain restrictions on the Posse members because of their general age and physical fitness.

In general, it can be said that the Posse serves the community as the "eyes and ears" of the Sheriff.

This Manual will attempt to set forth the rules, regulations and policies of the Sheriff and the Posse. Efforts will be made to keep the Manual current as changes and corrections are necessary. Questions should be referred to supervisory personnel or members of the Board of Governors.

## HISTORY

In 1973, some concerned citizens of Sun City realized that the Sheriff of Maricopa County did not have a sufficient number of deputies to provide the kind of security deemed necessary for an unincorporated community such as Sun City. Therefore, a committee headed by Col. Paul Morrill, USA (Ret.) organized a Civil Defense Unit.

This early Civil Defense Unit was just that, a Civil Defense Unit, that would serve the Community in the event of an emergency. The Unit was composed of four divisions: (1) First Aid, (2) Fire Protection, (3) Communications, and (4) Police Assistance. The unit existed solely to serve in an emergency.

Andy Wagner, Civilian Aide to Sheriff Blubaum, assisted in the early organization and training of the Civil Defense Unit - with organizational meetings in private homes. All equipment and funds were provided by individual members.

Later, the members started patrolling the streets of Sun City in their own private vehicles identified by means of magnetic signs on the sides of the cars. At first the only means of communication was by telephone, and each patroler was expected to carry twenty cents for the phone call. These early volunteers had experience in the military service, police backgrounds and other occupations which were helpful in providing guidance in the organization and operation of a security force.

It was soon realized that this activity would fall under the authority of the County Sheriff and therefore it became apparent that the unit should organize as a Posse under the direction of the

(Rev. 7/80)

**Sheriff.**

Organizational meetings were held with James A. White as Chairman. As a result of these meetings the Posse was born and the members were given legal status as Peace Officers by Sheriff Paul E. Blubaum who recognized the valuable service rendered by this Civil Defense Unit.

In November, 1973, Marvin Van Dera was elected as the first Commander of the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City.

As members patrolled the back streets at night, it soon became evident that some kind of identification was needed so the Posse Members could be recognized by the citizens and not mistaken for prowlers with evil intent. So the white plastic helmet with a Sheriff's emblem and a whistle on a gold chain became the first "uniform".

In 1974, Marvin Van Dera was reelected as Commander and the Posse had grown to some 140 men and one woman. In the fall, some forty Possemen underwent voluntary firearms training at the Sheriff's Academy and the membership climbed to 220. A communication facility, with C.B. radios, became a reality with funds donated by the Sun City Community Fund, Men's Club of Sun City, Sun City-Agua Fria Kiwanis Club, and many other clubs and activities which recognized the need.

The use of C.B. radios provided mobile communication which was, of course, an improvement over the telephone. However, local chatter tended to clutter the airways on these radio frequencies

and was particularly unsatisfactory in an emergency.

The Posse now had a base station and eight mobile units. Posse members began appearing in the regular Sheriff's uniform while others continued with the "Bubble Hat and the Whistle" image.

Marvin Van Dera continued as Commander in 1975 with a membership of about 250. The Posse began to receive journalistic recognition in such publications as the Arizona Republic, Arizona Magazine, National Enquirer, Life Magazine, FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin, Phoenix Gazette, Congressional Record, and last, but not least, the local News Sun and the Sun City Citizen. Specialized training was started in Communications, Patrolling, Traffic Control and First Aid.

The year 1976 brought Charles Haas to the Posse Leadership. The growth of Sun City required expanding the borders of the Patrols. C.B. type communications were insufficient for Posse needs. A financial campaign resulted in the purchase of a 50-watt, single channel, Base Station (KAX 283), twelve 30-watt mobile units and eighteen 5-watt portable radios. Boswell Memorial Hospital permitted a remote antenna to be erected on the roof of the hospital, thus extending the operating range.

Marvin Van Dera returned in 1977 as the Posse Commander simultaneously with elected Sheriff Jerry I. Hill. The first day in office, Sheriff Hill issued a permanent "call to duty" to the Sun City Posse in recognition of his confidence in the capabilities of the Posse. Thus, it was no longer necessary for the Sheriff to call the Posse to duty each day a patrol was scheduled.

(Rev. 7/80)



During the year, the financial picture enabled the Posse to purchase station wagons and equip them as emergency vehicles, including a radio channel on the Sheriff's system. This relieved the Posse members from having to use their personal vehicles for patrol, particularly during the above 100 degree temperatures for which the average vehicle is not equipped to patrol for hours on end at slow speeds.

In response to the Sheriff's wishes, a formalized Training Program was established and the Board of Governors directed that all Possemen, old as well as new, would be required to take the established training.

As a result of numerous complaints from the citizens about unidentified Possemen prowling residential areas, the need for identifying uniforms became increasingly apparent. It was decided to provide each Posse member with a yellow jump suit with identifying insignia as approved by the Sheriff. This would also comply with the Sheriff's request that marked patrol cars would be driven and manned only by uniformed personnel.

James A. White became Posse Commander in 1978. The first item of business on his agenda was the clarifying and correcting of Posse By-Laws. The new bylaws were approved by the Sheriff and the General Membership of the Posse. A copy is appended to this Manual as Appendix I.

With the expansion of Sun City and the high residential absentee rate in the summer, a reallocation of patrol areas and

schedules was established in an effort to provide the best security available within Posse resources, with special emphasis on developing neighborhood awareness of the Vacation Watch program. Special training and instructions were prepared for the Shift Supervisors or Duty Officers.

It has been estimated that Vacation Watch homes covered by patrols in 1977 were 6,000; in 1978 this program covered over 12,000 homes of absentees.

With the start of the year 1979, S. H. (Jack) Jackson assumed the responsibilities of Posse Commander. Under his general supervision, the number of Posse Patrols was expanded and the Training Program was upgraded. Additional vehicles were purchased to bring the number of Posse vehicles to a total of eight (8).

All vehicles were equipped with mobile and portable radios to provide communication between cars and the Base Control Station. In addition, direct radio contact with the Sheriff's office is provided for all patrol cars. This improved communication procedure provides increased security and service for all of Sun City.

The funds for Posse equipment are donated by concerned and grateful citizens as the annual Fund Drive is conducted by mail.

The Posse's principal mission is to function as "The Eyes and Ears" of the Maricopa County Sheriff. The number of homes checked as a part of the Vacation Watch Program continues to grow.

In addition, the Posse controls traffic at special functions; conducts Search and Rescue Missions; assists citizens in a multitude of ways; and, when requested, provides "back-up" support for the Sheriff's Deputies in a variety of circumstances ranging from car accidents to bank robberies.

The 1981 Commander was Herbert C. Kreppel, who contracted for the building at Peoria and 111th Avenues.

In 1982 Earl P. Root became commander.

In 1983 Maurine E. "Babe" Barkdoll became commander.

# Reagan coming here

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Reagan has added a visit with the Sun City Sheriff's Posse to his schedule during a stop in Arizona on Friday, his spokesman announced today.

Reagan, who will be in Phoenix to address the National Rifle Association, will visit the retirement community and meet with the Posse, made up of local residents aged 60 to 89, said deputy White House press secretary Larry Speakes.

The spokesman said Reagan would designate May as Older Americans Month while in Sun City.

"**WE ARE** very flattered and look forward to the visit," said Sgt. Joy Fraser, spokesman for the Posse. "It's quite an honor."

(Posse Cmdr. Maurine "Babe" Barkdoll said she is "proud of the Posse" and that its reputation has resulted in a visit from President Reagan.)

The president, an NRA member, will speak during a political-legislative session on gun owners' rights and firearms control.

**BEFORE THE** visit to Sun City, the president will spend Thursday night in Phoenix after stopping in Texas for a Cinco de Mayo celebration.

Nancy Reagan will join the president here. The first lady's mother, Edith Davis,

lives in a Phoenix apartment.

After the NRA speech, the president will fly to Santa Barbara, Calif., to spend the weekend at his 688-acre ranch in the Santa Ynez Mountains.

**ABOUT 1,800** of the 2.5 million NRA members are expected to attend the convention which runs through Sunday.

NRA officials said the session will include a panel discussion by state Attorney General Bob Corbin; U.S. Reps. Eldon Rudd and John McCain, Arizona Republicans; U.S. Sen. Dennis DeConcini, D-Ariz.; and Gov. Toney Anaya of New Mexico. Corbin is a Republican, Anaya a

## Reagan tickets

Sun City residents wanting to attend President Reagan's address before the National Rifle Association at 1 p.m. Friday in the Biltmore Hotel, Phoenix, may pick up tickets in the Daily News-Sun offices. A total of 250 will be available from noon Wednesday to 5 p.m. Thursday.

The tickets will be given free on a first-come, first-served basis in either of the News-Sun offices: 10020 or 10102 Santa Fe Drive.

Ticket-holders will be required to prove residency for Secret Service representatives before being admitted.

Democrat.

Other panelists listed for opening day include Rep. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah; Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-Calif.; Sen. Ted Stevens, R-Alaska, and Sen. James McClure, R-Idaho.

**THE CONVENTION** is expected to have a bruising fight that could have a significant effect on the future of gun-control legislation.

Dissidents headed by former NRA lobbyist Neal Knox contend that Harlon Carter, the association's top staff member, should be ousted. Carter began a five-year term in 1980.

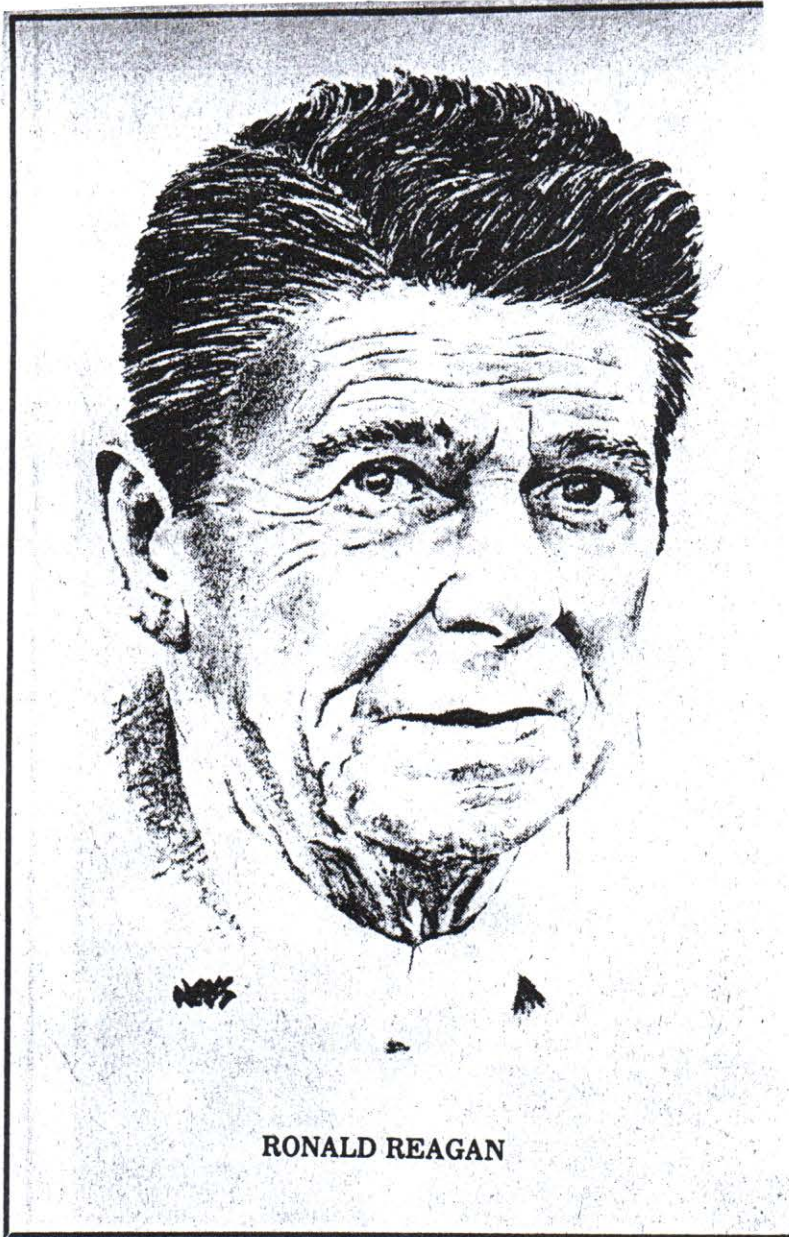
Special convention presentations will be made by the six branches of the U.S. armed services; Arizona Game and Fish Department; U.S. Olympic committee and gun manufacturers, the NRA said.

**EN ROUTE BACK** to the White House on Monday, Reagan will attend a commemorative dinner in Ashland, Ohio, for the late Rep. John Ashbrook, who died a year ago.

The president will mark the opening of the John M. Ashbrook Center for Public Affairs and the Ashbrook Memorial Library.

Reagan's first stop will be San Antonio, where he will stay for an hour to celebrate the Mexican national holiday.

OVER



RONALD REAGAN

# Posse ropes Reagan for Friday briefings, handcuffing exercise

By LYNN NEWTON

The Sun City Sheriff's Posse will present a mock briefing and a handcuffing demonstration for President Reagan's visit Friday morning.

Posse Cmdr. Maurine "Babe" Barkdoll said the Posse would receive an award during the ceremony, but she was unsure whether the president would present it.

"When we were contacted, the press asked if we would be receiving any awards," she said. "Hawley Atkinson was supposed to present us an award during June, so we just asked whether it could be done during the ceremony."

**SHERIFF JERRY Hill** will introduce President Reagan who is expected to speak briefly, designating May as Older Americans Month, Mrs. Barkdoll said.

The commander was unsure if Mrs. Reagan would attend the ceremony.

Mrs. Barkdoll said she learned of the scheduled visit by the president about a week ago when the lieutenant in charge of the sheriff's Special Services Department spoke with her.

**SHE SAID** Lt. Ed Leyva brought members of the FBI and Secret Service to Posse headquar-



**MAURINE 'BABE' BARKDOLL**

ters to check the building facilities and location.

"They (FBI and Secret Service agents) went to Phoenix and checked over buildings there, and went to the Special Services Building to check it, but neither one was appropriate," she said.

"So Lt. Leyva brought him to our headquarters. The agents decided the building, its location and the clearness of the area make it the perfect area for him to speak," Mrs. Barkdoll added.

**THE POSSE** is expecting approximately 300 people for the presentation. Sun City Posse members, 20 members of the Sun City West Posse, and two "senior" representatives from each of the other 38 posses in Maricopa County have been invited, she said.

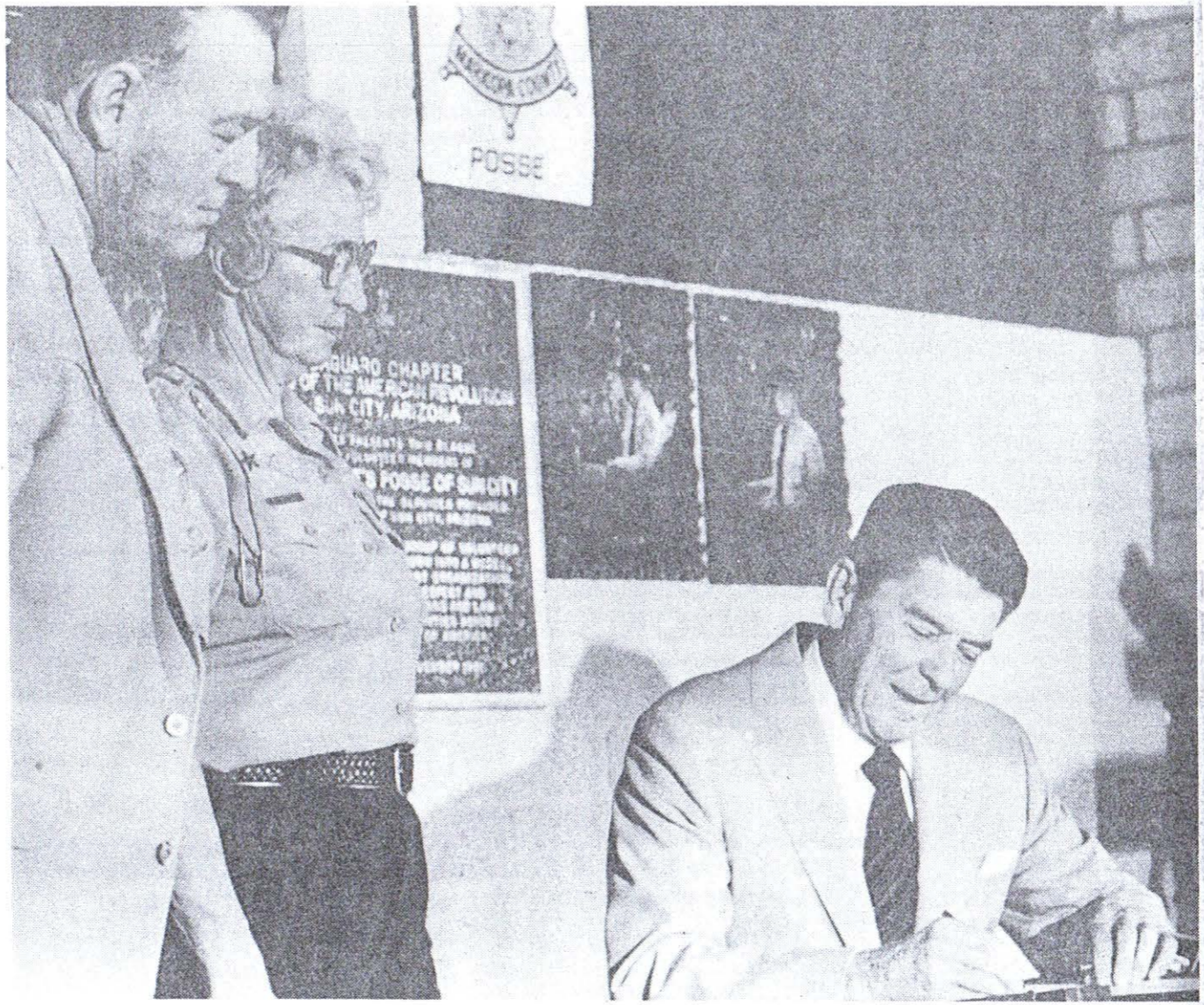
"All Posse members have been requested to come in uniform, but no firearms will be allowed inside the headquarters," Mrs. Barkdoll said. "Only the FBI and Secret Service people will be carrying arms."

She said the headquarters would be checked for bombs Friday morning before the president arrives.

**THE CEREMONY** and presentation, which will be taped for television, will not be open to the public.

Mrs. Barkdoll said she had originally heard that Reagan would be coming to Sun City Thursday, but she received a phone call Tuesday morning informing her he would arrive Friday.

A definite time has not been set, Mrs. Barkdoll said, but he is tentatively scheduled to arrive at 9 a.m.



President Reagan signs declaration making May Older Americans Month under watchful eyes of Sheriff Jerry Hill, left, and Sun City Posse Cmdr. Maurine "Babe" Barkdoll. (AP photo)

# Does Reagan recall first Posse report?

By JEANNE STUCKWISH

I imagine many people from our community have wondered how the president of the United States knew about the Sun City Posse.

Surely, he must have received recent information from someone in our community ... but, deep inside, I also wonder if I could have had just a little bit to do with his visit—or if the president even remembered a conversation we had several years ago when he was running from state to state on the campaign trail.

At the time, my husband and I were residents of Illinois where our business

was located. Reagan came into our radio station for an on-the-air interview.

It was a bit hectic at the time—he was a well-known politician and celebrity even then—and everyone was trying to ask questions even before the interview.

As many situations are in this life, it is hard to remember exactly how things come about when later they might become important. This experience was no exception. Somehow I found myself in an interesting conversation with the man who would later become our president.

I was leaving in a few days for Sun

City to visit my parents. Reagan seemed interested in the community and I found myself explaining some of the activities available to the many retired people.

The fact that my father enjoyed being a member of the Posse, even rolling out of bed at the unsavory hour of 2 a.m. to team up with another Sun Citian for their weekly tour about town, seemed to interest him.

He asked both my husband and me many questions about the organization—ones we were not able to answer at the time. I have always been sorry we didn't know all the answers, but Sun City

seemed so far away from Illinois, and even though our family was close, details were very often omitted from our correspondence.

When my father passed away I learned quickly the honor and respect the Posse has for its own.

Following our own retirement and move to Sun City we learned about the esteem and good will the community holds for them.

I can't believe that the president would remember that long-ago conversation—but then, how do I really know?

American Airlines Magazine  
1,300,000 circ.

# Partners Against Crime



*Folks who go to Sun City, Arizona, with crime on their minds better mosey on along or they'll have to contend with 250 street-smart grandmas and grandpas. They're the Sun City Posse, and they mean business.*

*by Ted Schwarz*

FRED P. KUENTZ

1985

**S**un City, Arizona, a community of more than 50,000 citizens, is carved into the rugged desert landscape just outside of Phoenix. It is an area that combines shopping centers, a state-of-the-art entertainment center, saguaro cactus, stark mountain views, and an Old West spirit that is kept alive by the 250 members of the Maricopa County Sheriff's Sun City Posse.

"We call ourselves the eyes and ears of the sheriff's department," explains Capt. Ralph Grimm, commanding officer for the posse, whose members range in age from mid-50s to 85. Most travel unarmed, yet their patrols have dramatically reduced crime, improved medical assistance, and made Sun City what some law-enforcement experts consider the safest community of its size in the United States.

The members of the posse, most of whom have no background in law enforcement and usually have spent their previous years in the "violent" worlds of accounting, engineering, teaching, and the like, have been so effective that they have been used in other sections of the county.

"I participated in Operation Avalanche," Helen Blake explains proudly, mentioning the code name for a concentrated law-enforcement action meant to close escort parlors and houses of prostitution in the Phoenix area. She and her husband retired to Sun City in April, 1980, and joined the posse four months later. She had been

a housewife whose major activity outside the home was volunteering in area hospitals and helping run art festivals. The posse seemed a way to be of service to her new community, though she never expected how far that service might go.

The Blakes were alerted by the sheriff's department that they would be among the posse members needed for a special mission that would combine the skills of several law-enforcement agencies. At the appointed time, they were taken to a central meeting area and divided into teams of four men and one woman, then dispatched to locations near apartments and houses used for prostitution. Upon receiving a radio signal, the patrols conducted simultaneous raids. Says Helen Blake:

"The girl I helped arrest was in her early 20s and quite beautiful. She seemed well educated and it just tore my heart, because I realized she could have been my daughter. Her apartment was spotlessly clean, and she had done what she could to make it more attractive, but it was obvious that the man she worked for gave her almost no money. She had three pairs of jeans, three blouses, a half-dozen changes of underwear, and everything else was her 'working clothes.'

"After I searched her and she was

**Warren Roeger (top left) and Helen Blake (facing page) are members of the Sun City Posse, a 250-member volunteer crime-prevention organization.**

OVER





Posse-member Viola Perrault leaves for her rounds, which include checking on residents' vacant houses.

taken to the police station, I became a 'madam' for the day, answering the telephone and making appointments for men who called. I just gave them the name of a girl and the meeting place. They had to ask for everything else so it wouldn't be entrapment. There was an elaborate code her clients used, involving five different telephone calls, but when they reached the place I arranged, they were met by a female undercover officer. In the few hours I was there, I logged in 80 calls. It was a very profitable business for the man who ran it, though the girls didn't do very well."

Crime fighting, such as Operation Avalanche, is the rare exception to the work of the Sun City Posse. Their most essential work comes from crime prevention and community assistance. They are trained in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), providing what may be lifesaving assistance until area paramedics arrive. Posse members often are the first trained personnel to arrive at a traffic accident, and they work to cordon off streets when there is a fire or other serious problem. In addition, they provide a high visibility of law enforcement, which discourages criminals.

"If we see someone cruising suspiciously along the streets, we'll follow them in one of our patrol cars," explains Grimm. The posse has 10 patrol cars operating night and day, its own

headquarters building, and a communications center linked with the sheriff's department — all paid for through voluntary contributions. Says Grimm:

"We had one car we thought had people in it looking for trouble. One of our patrol cars started following it as it drove along the streets, through alleys, in and out of carports, and all over Sun City. After 45 minutes the driver gave up and drove rapidly out of town."

High visibility is essential because of the number of homes vacant for long periods of time when residents vacation and visit family during the year. Between March and July, 1984, the posse made 10,549 house checks for people who were away from the area. This meant a complete physical check of the property to determine if there was a burglary or unexpected accidental damage. Such house checks have resulted in homes being saved from fires and floods, and also have alerted burglars that Sun City is not a place to earn a dishonest living. Says Blake:

"We had one house that was flooding. It was locked tight, the owner [was] on vacation, and there was eight inches of water at the foundation. We had to get a sheriff's deputy to help us break in and stop the flood. The owner had left his washing machine on at the tap, and the hose linking the tap with the machine burst after a few days. We got it turned off, swept out the water, then piled furniture so that the owner's possessions would be saved. We secured the place, then tried to locate the owner so he would know what happened."

Cpl. Ray Harkey of the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office says the posse members are not full law-enforcement officers. They are private citizens who have undergone training in aspects of law enforcement that relate to traffic control, laws of arrest, first aid, and similar needs. Approximately a third of the members eventually take more-advanced training, including the use of firearms. When they have completed that training, the posse members are authorized to carry weapons and can

that be necessary. However, while the posse has functioned since November, 1973, no posse member has had to draw a weapon in the line of duty. Harkey says:

"The crooks don't realize the difference between a posse member and a regular law-enforcement officer. They drive radio-equipped marked cars, and all the crooks see is someone in a uniform.

"The high visibility helps because we are limited in what we can do. We have four beat areas for our regular deputies in the Sun City area, and we can never put more than 12 deputies quickly on the streets. With the posse, there are patrol cars constantly visible throughout the area. The posse members are also alert to suspicious behavior, recording descriptions of suspects, noting car license plates, and securing perimeter areas when there is a problem. They also direct traffic after concerts at the Sun Dome [the entertainment center], and they cut down on accidents and parking-area theft."

All Sun City Posse members, including those few who had careers in law enforcement, are given a thorough background check. If the individual is handicapped, he or she may join the posse, though such an individual will be used according to his or her abilities. (A blind posse member can come a radio dispatcher, for example.)

Many of the posse calls reflect the medical problems of the aged. Helen Blake's husband, Jim, once responded to a call from a wheelchair-bound woman whose motorized chair became stuck on a ramp in her locked garage. She kept a cordless telephone with her and used it to call the posse. Blake had to climb over the wall surrounding the home in order to get inside and rescue her. Without the portable telephone, she might have died before help could arrive. Yet her biggest concern was that the posse would remain silent about the incident so her son would not try to end her independence by placing her in a

nursing home.

Posse-member Viola Perrault, a former schoolteacher, mentions the problem of those elderly who are suffering from Alzheimer's disease and who no longer can think clearly. Frequently such individuals have to be rescued from their desert wanderings. In other instances, posse members act as intermediaries when sufferers become confused.

For example, Jim Blake responded to one call that came from a home where a woman had walked inside and demanded to know why strangers were living in her house. The woman had lived there three years earlier, but her mind had deteriorated, and she now was living in a medical facility. Not only did the posse have to defuse a confrontation, they also had to help the woman regain an awareness of her changed life.

Although Sun City is a desert community, monsoon winds can bring torrential rains and short-term flooding during the late-summer months. The posse has developed the Quick Re-Action Group composed of armed men and women with extensive advanced training who can respond to a crisis caused by a flood, disaster, or crime. The community also has purchased a specially outfitted mobile unit complete with trauma kits. In an emergency any physician arriving at a disaster can use the kits to perform lifesaving procedures.

Although the only children in Sun City are the visiting grandchildren of residents, posse members have taken training in fingerprinting for Operation Child Identification. They go to neighboring communities to fingerprint children as a method for countering kidnappings.

The Sun City Posse remains one of the most unusual and most effective law-enforcement assistance groups in the nation. The 250 senior citizens in the posse have shown that dedicated community volunteers can create an atmosphere in which residents can feel safe and secure, knowing that their neighbors are watching out for them.

## **POSSE RECONNOITERED**

# Reagan: a week of planning

Although he was only going to be in Sun City half an hour, the president of the United States doesn't just walk in and start speaking.

Preparations for the visit started Saturday, but the official announcement that President Reagan would visit the Sun City Posse wasn't made until Tuesday morning.

By Tuesday, White House aides, communication technicians, Secret Service agents and other members of the president's advance party had surveyed the area around Posse headquarters and the building itself, declaring both to be suitable for his visit.

LT. EDWARD Leyva, commander of the Special Services Division of the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, said he was first contacted about the visit late Friday, and White House staff arrived Saturday to locate a site for Reagan's stop.

Initially, Sun City was just one of several possible sites, Leyva said, so a possible presidential visit was kept secret until the White House statement was

released Tuesday.

Reagan advance men picked Posse headquarters to hold the visit because of its secure nature, Leyva explained. The building contains a secure room where the president can wait to be announced; it is surrounded by plenty of landing space; and a telephone network can easily be set up—all necessities for the visit.

LEYVA DID not know the details of the Secret Service inspection of the building, although part of the team inspecting the facility included "anti-sniper" experts.

"Exactly what they're looking for I honestly don't know," he added.

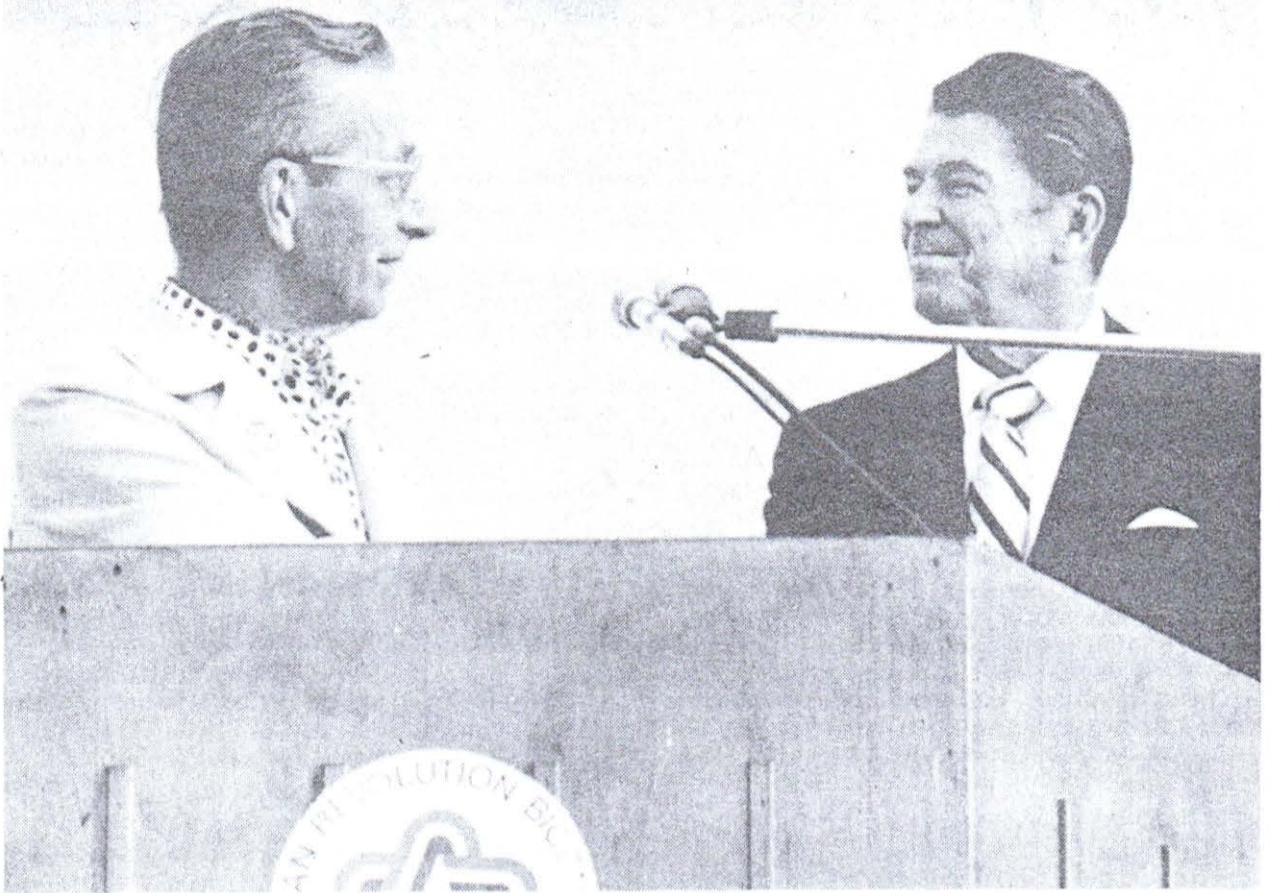
Overall he was impressed by the speed and efficiency of the president's advance party, Leyva continued. "Everywhere he's scheduled to go they arrive, it seems, a week in advance," he said. "Even the roaches packed up and moved out."

—MARK COAST



Protesters line up outside Posse headquarters awaiting President Reagan.

(Photo by Morris Berman)



Former Sun City newsman Doug Morris recalls President Reagan's 1976 visit to Sun City when he presented the certificate that made Reagan an "honorary Sun Citian."

## '76 'Honorary Sun Citian' visits old stumping ground

By MARK COAST

President Reagan was made an honorary member of the Sun City Sheriff's Posse when he visited today, but his Sun City ties run a little bit deeper than that.

In his last visit to Sun City, Oct. 26, 1976, the politician—stumping for the Republican Party and then-President Gerald Ford's re-election—was given a certificate by event emcee Doug Morris making him an "honorary Sun Citian".

"That certificate had no more validity than a three dollar confederate bill," chuckled Morris.

Reagan had been touring the United States on behalf of the Republican Party and was able to speak in Sun City because of another appointment in Phoenix, Morris said.

**AT THE TIME**, Morris remembers, members of the Sun City Sheriff's Posse were on hand to regulate traffic, and the former California governor and presidential aspirant was flanked by "three or four" secret service agents.

For this visit, the president was preceded by a team of dozens of White House technicians and Secret Service agents, preparing for the event.

According to a News-Sun article published after his appearance, Reagan spoke in the Sun Bowl to a crowd of more than 5,000. His talk centered on ways the Republican platform differed from the Democratic platform.

"The difference between them and us is that we want to check government spending, and they want to spend government checks," Reagan quipped, according to the article.

"**ALL OVER** this land I have heard Americans saying that their liberties, their human dignity and rights are being eroded," the article quoted Reagan as saying.

And he continued: "What they are yearning for is what we stand for."

He also criticized the Democratic-controlled

Congress, calling it "spendthrift and unwilling to live within its means." He accused it of spending \$1 billion each day and borrowing \$2 billion every two days.

He added that the elderly have the most to gain from the Republican platform since they had been hardest hit by inflation, the article states.

**IN HIS** speech, Reagan refuted charges that he was meeting with supporters to form another political party. According to the article, Reagan said, "I pledged from the beginning that I would accept what the party chose, and I haven't retreated from that."

Reagan struck a now-familiar chord in his speech when he touched on defense spending. He criticized the Democrats for their plans to cut \$5-7 billion from the defense budget.

The Republicans, on the other hand, advocate superiority in arms and favored development of the B1 bomber, cruise missile and Trident submarine, the article states.

It quoted Reagan as saying: "We are not talking in the context of winning a war, but of avoiding a war."

The actor-turned-politician compared the Democratic plank on fair distribution of wealth with taking away from those who produce and giving it to those who do not, the article states.

"We object to their social engineering because their programs have failed," he said. "Their doctrinaire liberalism makes it impossible for them to see they've failed."

"That (Democratic) platform does not represent the common-sense thinking of millions of Democrats who feel as we do," he told the audience in the Sun Bowl.

"The gulf is widening between the rank and file and the Democratic leaders, and I believe millions of Democrats are going to take a walk this year."

OVER

# Reagan to Posse: 'That's the spirit'

By MARK COAST

Declaring May to be Older Americans Month, President Ronald Reagan praised the Sun City Sheriff's Posse today for making Sun City a safe place for senior citizens.

He signed the declaration this morning in Posse headquarters before a packed house of Posse representatives from throughout Maricopa County.

"I know that the residents here are very grateful that you are out there on the streets," the president told the audience after reading two verses from the Posse's theme song.

"**THAT TRULY** is the volunteer spirit, which is another way of saying American spirit," Reagan said.

Posse Cmdr. Maurine "Babe" Barkdoll presented Reagan with a Posse cap and shirt and then handed him a Posse handbook, saying, "if you are going out on patrol, there are certain things that you must abide by."

Smiling, Reagan accepted the gifts, and quipped, "I imagine that makes me duty officer for the day. You're dismissed. Let's be careful out there."

**THE PRESIDENT** arrived by helicopter in the Shepherd of the Desert Lutheran Church parking lot at 10 a.m. and drove by motorcade down 111th Avenue to Posse headquarters. The ceremony lasted about 20 minutes.

At Posse headquarters, Reagan watched a mock briefing of the troops and a handcuffing demonstration by Posse members. Entering with the president were United States Rep. Bob Stump and Maricopa County Supervisor Hawley Atkinson.

In a brief speech, Reagan told the audience, consisting largely of Sun City and Sun City West Posse members, that older Americans were threatened by things other than crime.

"**REMEMBER THE** terrifying bully called inflation?" Reagan asked, citing inflation statistics of less than half of a percent.

"Who would have thought ... that we could ever return to the low inflation of the 1960s?" Reagan continued.

He said the one statistic "that bothers us most" is unemployment.

"**THERE ARE** things about the unemployment statistics that baffle me," Reagan admitted, explaining that 650,000 workers have been added to the employment rolls since December, but statistics apparently did not reflect the new numbers.

Commenting on a Social Security deal recently cut by Congress,

Reagan contended, "It assures them that Americans will keep the provisions made in troubled times," and would "allow the vast majority of senior citizens to live productive lives."

Reagan confessed to the audience that in preparing his speech a speech writer had him referring to senior citizens "as 'them' instead of 'us.'"

**IN PRESENTING** Reagan his honorary membership in the Posse, Mrs. Barkdoll explained that in his last visit to Sun City in 1976—on a campaign tour for Gerald Ford—he wasn't eligible for the Posse.

"Through perseverance I've made it," Reagan replied.

Contending "guns don't make criminals," Reagan told the National Rifle Association this afternoon in Phoenix, "We will never disarm any American who seeks to protect his or her family from fear and harm."

**REAGAN, PRAISING** the NRA as a group that has promoted gun safety and respect for laws, said that locking up criminals who use guns "and throwing away the key is the best gun control law we could ever have."

The president, a member of the NRA, called for changing firearms' laws "which needlessly interfere with the rights of legitimate owners like yourselves."

But he stopped short of endorsing a NRA-backed bill to remove most restraints on mail-order gun sales, repeal a ban on the import of cheap handguns and make interstate firearms sales easier.

**INSTEAD, REAGAN** said in remarks prepared for delivery that he looked forward to "signing a

bill that truly protects the rights of law-abiding citizens without diminishing the effectiveness of criminal law enforcement against the misuse of firearms."

Turning to Central America, Reagan denounced leftists fighting the El Salvador government as "thugs who trample the common man in their quest for total power."

Urging support for his policies in the region, the president said that "running away from this clear-cut responsibility would reward aggression and bring dishonor on the good name of the United States.

"**IT WOULD** swell the tide of political and economic instability in Central America, creating a new army of refugees and bringing danger closer and closer to home," he said.

"I appeal to you today: tell your representatives they cannot remain indifferent to another communist takeover on our doorstep," he declared.

Reagan said that although El Salvador has made mistakes "as we have made mistakes," the country is trying "with great bravery and against tremendous odds to build the dream of a society like ours."

**REAGAN HAS** asked Congress for an additional \$110 million in military and economic aid for El Salvador. He said guerrillas there, "armed to the teeth by Nicaragua, Cuba and the Soviets, are determined to shoot their way into power."

The military aid is essential, he insisted, "because the guerrillas are deliberately destroying El Salvador's economy."

OVER



President Reagan adjusts Sun City Posse cap.

(News-Sun photo by Jim Painter)

# Posse starts recruiting drive to offset attrition

By JOHN MACHAY  
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — The Sheriff's Posse of Sun City is looking for a few good men and women.

A recent review of the posse's roster showed that Sun City's finest was short about 60 members, Cmdr. Al Dunn said.

"Our membership is definitely down," Dunn said Monday. "It's not a great concern of ours at this time, but we know it's something we can't let go for too long."

Dunn said the posse currently has about 190 members, but the ideal membership would consist of 250 Sun Citians.

The drop in membership came suddenly, Dunn said. Although several members of the posse were no longer on active duty for quite some time, posse officials discovered the dwindling membership only last month.

Dunn, who became commander at the beginning of the year, said he decided to run checks on all the members to see who was active and who wasn't.

"We have to pay insurance on all the members," Dunn said. "As a cost-cutting move, we checked to see who was active so we could weed out all the people who weren't. The ones who weren't were cut from the roster."

Dunn said several posse members took leaves for summer vacations and never returned to work with the posse. Other members took sick leaves and either died or never returned.

"We have lost a few members to death," Dunn said. "It's real sad when that happens, but we're all getting up there in years, and it does happen."

Also, posse members are required to work 240 hours a year, Dunn said. Members who didn't put in that much time last year were cut from the roster.

When Dunn was finished reviewing the roster, more than 35 members had been removed, he said.

"It was a good thing that we weeded out a lot of non-active

members, but then we noticed that we'd have to replace them," Dunn said.

Dunn said the posse's 190 members are more than enough to efficiently cover the city — for now. He said if the posse doesn't recruit some members, the posse may run into a problem during the summer months.

During the summer, many members take extended leaves to visit relatives in other states, Dunn said. Also, many Sun City residents leave the state, meaning more vacant homes for the posse to watch.

"We have less people, but there's more work," Dunn said. "When we conduct vacation watches, the posse member has to get out of his car and check the home. He walks around back and checks all the doors. That can take some time. With all the vacation watches we conduct, it adds up."

To compensate for the lack of members, the posse is kicking off a recruiting drive.

Dunn said the posse is starting the recruiting drive imme-

## Posse's 1987 report

News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — The Sheriff's Posse of Sun City operated on a \$90,000 budget last year, according to the posse's annual report.

Also, the posse drove a total of 116,077 miles during performance of its duties, the report shows. Posse members worked a total of 70,141 hours.

During 1987, posse members responded to:

- 756 citizen assists.
- 960 motorist assists.
- 252 welfare checks.
- 1,596 ill persons.
- 168 fires.
- 192 non-injury car accidents.
- 15 car accidents with injuries.
- 80 open doors.
- 7,400 requests to drive by homes.
- 19,437 vacation watches.

diately because it takes four to six months to train members.

"They have to learn first aid, the duties of the posse and a lot of other things," Dunn said. "It involves classroom time and training on the field."

## Our vigilant protectors

# The Sun Cities Posse

Photo by Dillman Putz



By Nancy L. Brandt

SUN CITY WEST Posse Commander Bob Laird (left) and Sun City Posse Commander Al Dunn check out a lead.

One evening, a couple of possemen found a lady in the middle of the street, decked out in a bright red evening gown, directing traffic. She had obviously been imbibing a little too much. It took a lot of persuasion on the part of the possemen to get her out of the street so that she would not be injured—while her irate husband (who had apparently been to the same party) argued that they were spoiling her fun.

More often than not, the missions performed by the Posse of Sun City and Sun City West are of greater import to the communities they serve. Operating under the auspices of the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, Posse members are lauded as "our eyes and ears in the Sun Cities" by Sheriff Dick Godbehere. He goes on to explain that "there are approximately eight possemen on the road for every two deputies out there."

The nearly 400 men and women of the two Sheriff's Posse have become so familiar to the residents that they are often taken for granted. They are always available to handle traffic control, search and rescue, vacation watch, and crime prevention. These people aren't paid to be there—they are there because they care about their communities.

Each member of the Sun City Posse is required to donate a minimum of 20 hours a month; the Sun City West Posse 18 hours. In 1987, Sun City's approximately 200 Posse members contributed over 70,000 man hours to the county; the same year, the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City West donated more than 60,000 man hours.

The dollar value represented is astronomical.

Both Posse have several husband and wife teams. Sun City West's immediate past commander, Burke Stout, and wife Mary Jane, are examples. For the Stouts the Posse was a factor in their move to Sun City West. They liked the security it provided and wanted to be a part of the organization.

Although she and her husband often work together, Mary Jane has no qualms about being on her own on patrol. "We never feel isolated. There are always other patrol cars in the area, and if we need a deputy they are usually there within three minutes."

In addition to patrolling, Mary Jane assists Robert Schirmer with the publication of the Posse paper, *The Scanner*.

Sun City West's current commander, Robert Laird, hails from New Jersey where he owned an auto repair shop for 30 years. It was at a newcomer's get-together that Laird met posseman Bob Keller, last year's Posseman of the Year and the namesake for the new Posse auditorium. Keller introduced him to the organization and it didn't take long before he, too, was a member.

"It's been an education," says Laird of his newfound second career. "Being a commander keeps me busier than when I owned my own business."

For Lt. Marion Buscemi, the Posse filled a need in her life at a time when she needed it most. "I was living in Florida and my husband died. My world was wrapped up in my home and church, and suddenly

everything I knew was gone. I didn't handle being alone very well. I was on my way to Lake Havasu when I stopped for three nights in Sun City and fell in love with it. I didn't go any further.

"I'm 71, soon to be 72. Last year I put in 941 hours with the Posse. Women can do the work. If they are interested, they should come down and apply."

Of course, the Posses are always looking for people to join their ranks. To join, you must be a permanent resident and in good health.

Newly elected Sun City Posse Commander Al Dunn came from Wisconsin where he was a tool and die maker. Upon retirement in 1982 he moved to Sun City. "As a retirement activity I wanted something in the field of community relations. Then I met Posse Lieutenant Cleo Kirkpatrick. After hearing his description of Posse activities, I was convinced this is what I was looking for. The Posses get involved in a variety of situations, from life threatening, to community threatening, to comic, to mostly routine."

Commander Dunn, like most Posse members, finds his greatest reward in the success of a medical call. "I was on duty one afternoon when a call came in from a concerned resident who hadn't seen one of his neighbors for a couple of days and was worried. When I got there, both doors and the windows were open but the screens were locked. When I heard a gurgling sound coming from the bedroom I called a deputy and we went in through the window. The man was lying beside

his bed where he had fallen after having a stroke. We got the medics; they worked on him and got him to the hospital, where he recovered. The medic told me later that if he hadn't been found he would have died within a few hours. That's all the reward you need—to know that you've helped save a life."

Dunn recalled another interesting incident. "A couple of years ago we ran a cat burglar out of the area. He was a pretty smart operator. He would park his car in an unused carport then walk up the alley, trying doors along the way. He never forced entry or hurt anyone. He always entered through an unlocked door. Upon finding one, he'd go in and help himself. We finally ran him out of this area and he was picked up in another retirement community. If people would just remember to lock their doors and windows, it would make it harder for guys like that to operate."

"We had an unusual incident at Viewpoint Lake," relates longtime Sun City Posseman Earl Root. "It was kind of amusing. We got word that a woman was being attacked by a swan. Sure enough, when we arrived we found the huge bird running at this lady, hitting her with its wings. My guess is it was merely protecting a nearby nest. The swan went its way unmolested." (In other words, no arrests were made.)

The Sun City Posse's 1987 Commander, Warren Roeger, laughs when he thinks of a call he went on a while back. "I was on patrol and was having some back

*Continued on page 24*

## Cataract surgeons from around the world attended this man's symposiums.



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(602) 981-9060





Photo by Dillman Putz

**SUN CITY WEST** Posse member Robert Lavell at the communications keyboard.

problems at the time. I was called out to help a man who had fallen out of bed and broken his hip. The paramedics wanted to give him a shot to relieve his pain, but they couldn't find a vein in his arm, so they gave him nitrous oxide (laughing gas) instead. The gas must have dispersed into the air, because by the time I got out of there I had no pain in my back at all."

Roeger talks of another incident. "Awhile back, there was a bad fire at an apartment complex in Sun

City. The fire started in one unit—I think it was caused by lightning—and it spread to a second unit. There were six or eight altogether. We arrived there shortly after the fire department and stayed 'round the clock to protect the burned-out units until the residents were able to return for their possessions."

A sampling of the diverse services the Posses have performed at the Sheriff's request—just in 1987—include: blocking off Dysart Road because of a gas leak; traffic control during the Open House at Luke Air Force Base; and security and traffic patrol at the scene of two railroad derailments occurring about a week apart.

Because of the work of the Sheriff's Posses of Sun City and Sun City West, the crime rate in these two communities is far below average. Not only are the numbers lower, but the nature of the crimes is also less violent.

In all their years of service, despite all the man hours logged, no Sun City or Sun City West Posse member has ever found the need to draw a firearm.

And one final footnote: the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City has a famous member—the President of the United States. President Ronald Reagan was made an honorary member (the only one) in 1983 when he visited Posse headquarters. The Sun City Posse was picked as the outstanding representative of volunteerism across America. **RL**



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# Sheriff's Posse

**Sun City's own...  
they're pushing  
for professionalism,  
proficiency**



By **TIM CLARK**  
Staff Writer

(First in a Series)

The Sun City Sheriff's Posse is on the move.

The recent announcement that the volunteer Posse intends to buy four patrol vehicles marks another stage in that movement.

Already the Posse has changed from an outfit whose members wear white helmets and whistles to one in which all but 10-15 per cent of the unpaid volunteers wear \$200 uniforms virtually identical to those of regular deputies.

A recent directive from James White, Posse executive officer, states:

**"WHEN WEARING** the uniform a full uniform must be worn except that the white helmet may be substituted for the headgear. If not wearing a uniform the white helmet and whistle are acceptable."

More changes are expected.

Bill Bryant, Posse public relations officer, envisions a time in the near future when the Posse will be "as professional as any police force."

Within a year, he expects the Posse to have its own building, 24-hour dispatching, and round-the-clock patrols.

A **KEY** element in what local Posse leaders call an "upgrading" of Posse capabilities is the attitude

of Maricopa County Sheriff Jerry Hill.

"Sheriff Hill is encouraging all posses to become more familiar with laws, traffic, communications, first aid, and firearms," reports Lt. Dom Marino, posse liaison officer for the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office.

The sheriff is moving to "intensity training for posses," Marino said.

MCSO now has a "second man" training program to prepare reserve officers and posse members to ride with a regular deputy and assist the regular officer.

**MARINO SAID** the sheriff is establishing a program to train a man from each posse as an instructor who then will train posse members to the "second man" level. The sheriff's office will continue to handle firearms training.

Bryant of the Sun City Posse believes this training will result in a "higher degree of proficiency and professionalism" for Sun City Posse members.

"Eventually I see us as being as well-trained as a graduate of the sheriff's academy, with allowances for physical limitations," Bryant commented.

Sun City's Posse training program—a 100-hour course, Bryant estimates—will be required of all posse members, from newest recruits to senior officers.

**EXECUTIVE** officer White, a retired naval officer who holds the first posse card issued here in 1973, has seen the Posse develop through the years.

Initial impetus for the Posse, he recounted, came from an effort to form a group here for civil defense planning.

Eventually it was decided to form a sheriff's posse as the vehicle for the organization. Then-Sheriff Paul Blubaum agreed.

"We were taking anybody," White recalls of that early period when membership rolls increased to 290.

**THE POSSE** began patrolling several nights a week and called on members to participate.

Not all responded. "Some of them thought it was a social club," White said.

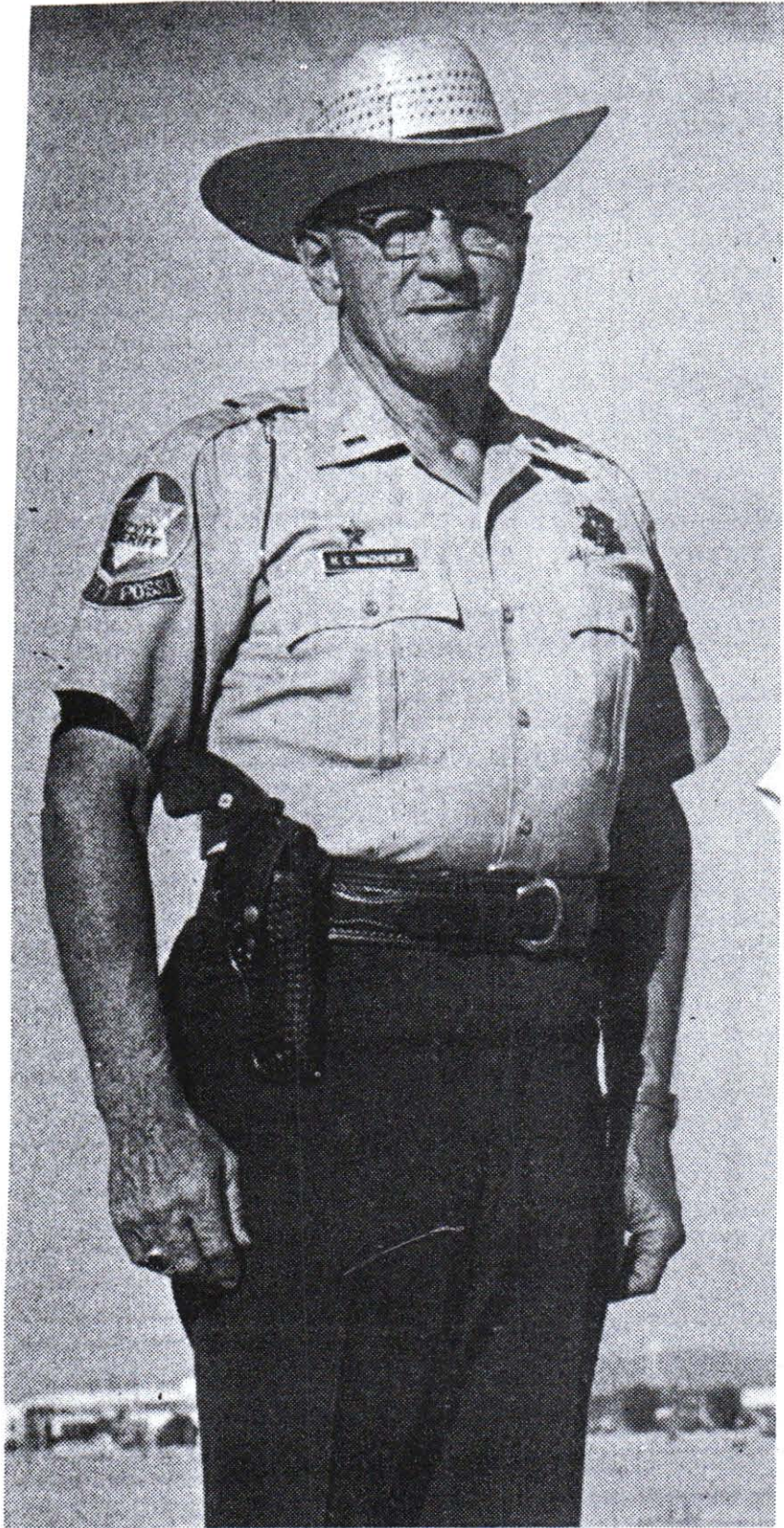
As of May 27, the Posse, with a maximum authorized strength of 300, included 250 active members and six applicants waiting for acceptance.

For patrol purposes, the Posse now divides Sun City into three divisions, each with its own commander.

**PRAISE** for the Posse, generally in glowing terms, has become almost routine from Maricopa County sheriffs.

"Posse members do the citizens of Sun City a great service. They take on many chores that otherwise regular sheriff's deputies

OVER



Lt. Herbert Macheimer, at left, shows Sun City Posse's new uniform, which volunteer members purchase themselves. Small photo was taken when Posse members began making rounds to check homes; each wore natty white helmet and carried only flashlight and whistle.

(News-Sun Photos)

persons or vehicles and to check empty homes under the "Vacation Watch" program.

**VACATION** Watch duties increase in summer months, when many residents leave town.

Posse members who stay in town find they are called on more frequently than normal during the summer because the work is heavier and the workers fewer.

Bryant describes these prevention activities as the key to Posse operations.

"We act as a shield between Sun City and outsiders who would disrupt the tranquillity of our city," he said.

"We are not concerned about the department of Sun City people," the posseman added.

**NO CRIME** prevention or detection program can be effective without the cooperation of the citizenry, Bryant observed.

"The Posse is an extension of the citizens' desire to prevent crime," he declared.

If financial support from Sun City residents is any measure, citizens here support the Posse's role in crime prevention.

Last year the Posse fund drive, which will become an annual feature, netted in excess of \$52,000, far beyond the projected budget of around \$21,000.

would have to do, and they do them very well," Sheriff Hill told a Sun City audience in January.

Hill has given the Sun City Posse "posse committatus" status, meaning it is on permanent duty here.

Under state law dating back to territorial days, posses can be formed to assist the sheriff in emergencies.

**IN A LETTER** dated Dec. 31, 76, Hill expanded that status to a

full-time basis for the Sun City Posse.

With that permanent status goes the power to make arrests as a law enforcement officer.

"Technically they have arrest powers. However, we encourage them to function as 'eyes and ears' and information-gatherers. Let the deputies make the physical arrests," said Marino.

Principal duties of the Posse patrols are to watch for suspicious

**LARGEST IN STATE**

# SC Posse expands role

By SUE CHILDRESS  
Staff Writer

With crime growing in Phoenix and its surrounding suburbs, lawmakers and enforcers become more concerned and additional precautions are taken.

Sun City, which could become a target for law breakers, now has a first line of defense.

With only three Maricopa County Sheriff's Department patrol cars assigned to the local area, the Sun City Sheriff's Posse has become the eyes and ears of the Sheriff's Department.

More than 200 local men and women have banded together to form the largest posse in the state of Arizona. Under the leadership of Capt. Marvin Van Dera, the group has received training in traffic control, observation, and patrolling.

THE POSSE began as a part of the Civil Defense Emergency Service Committee, designed to aid citizens should a disaster strike. But a rash of burglaries and crime seemed to necessitate a more permanent, active group.

Sun Citian Andy Wagner, aide to Sheriff Paul Blubaum, took it upon himself to instigate the formation of a posse.

Rather than sit and wait for catastrophes, the group wanted to aid and protect the citizens of their community at all times. They were happy, however, to remain responsible to the committee in the case of disasters.

TODAY, more than a year later, a captain, six lieutenants, and 14 sergeants lead the voluntary organization. It consists of some 50 former police officers, some 30 former military men, professionals, non-professionals, and 12 women experienced in communication and traffic control fields.

After applying for membership, applicants are screened by posse members and the Sheriff's Department. If accepted, they are issued Deputy Sheriff cards; women receive Special Deputy cards.

"We have as much power as any citizen to make arrests," explained Captain Van Dera. "When we see a felony in progress, you better believe we are going to make an arrest."

IN OTHER cases, the power of arrest is invalid unless Sheriff Blubaum specifically designates authority or when the posse is activated for civil defense purposes. Such is the case in earthquakes, tornadoes, explosions, floods, train and plane wrecks, and the like.

The military decimal system of contact, much like the old fashioned phone chain, provides a hurry-up means of contacting posse members.

"In case of a crisis, if everybody's home, we can call as many as 150 people in 15 minutes," the captain said. "So if there's a surge of vandalism, we can saturate the area in minutes."

"WE PATROL with as many as 20 vehicles, with two men per vehicle, for two-hour shifts during the night," he continued, "but we're in a bind."

At present posse members are using "begged and borrowed" walkie-talkie communication equipment. They have two ham radio contact stations in Phase 1 and 2, and have applied for their own frequency.

"Buying our own radio equipment is a must," interjected Ed Prouty, posse PR director. "We badly need \$3,000 for communications equipment, and if we don't find an angel to donate money, we'll be forced to go door-to-door—and we don't want to do that."

"WE DON'T want to have obligations to anyone. We are a volunteer organization and our mission is to protect," Capt. Van Dera added. "We are willing to devote our time, our cars, and our gas to protect Sun City."

Although the posse has no source of funds, members are asked to contribute \$5 for hats and whistles.

"The hat, whistle, and flashlight are our tools, and we are authorized for badges and uniforms prescribed specifically for posse members," he emphasized.

Among other missions are the Neighborhood and Vacation Watch programs. A total of 900 homes in Phase 1 and 1,200 homes in Phase 2 participate in Neighborhood Watch

which is cosponsored by the Homeowners Association.

EACH participating homeowner is responsible for watching his neighbors' homes. If any suspicious activity is observed, watchers are to call the Sun City Crime Stop number at 262-3121. This is a direct line to the sheriff's dispatch desk.

In addition, the Sheriff's Department has encouraged Sun Citians to submit vacation cards when they plan a lengthy excursion. This aids the department in detecting suspicious circumstances or crimes committed.

Recently the department turned the entire vacation program over to the posse, which will handle it from now on.

FOR THE past eight months, the Sheriff's Department has been sponsoring training sessions for posse members.

Sessions on the first Tuesday of every month in Lakeview Center enable the men and women to earn credits. The better attendance, the more likely a person will be chosen for special programs and areas of concentration.

Forty members were picked by the department recently to participate in firearms training, although these "rookies" must qualify and meet department standards.

THE FIRST phase of firearms training took place during an August Saturday at the new Department—FBI range in Pioneer Village, Captain Van Dera said. Members spent an entire day target shooting.

Other members have been or are being trained in first aid and must pass the standard Red Cross test to be certified as official posse "lifesavers."

During the Spring, posse members created their own traffic jam in the stadium parking lot for practice in traffic control. Other practical workshops and drills are performed periodically.

In the meantime, a group within the group is studying flood control here. When the hard rains hit, posse members will know just what roads are safe to travel and how to reach their destinations quickly.

Friday, September 17, 1974 - News-Sun 5D

VF - SHERIFF'S POSSE

# REPUBLIC Posse in Sun City is 'eyes' for sheriff

APR 28 1975

## 252 volunteers patrol in cars and golf carts to aid crime watch

By THELMA HEATWOLE

SUN CITY — The arm of the law is lengthened in this retirement community by the Sun City Sheriff's Posse.

Its 252 volunteer men and women make up the largest such posse in Arizona and possibly the nation.

Dressed in beige and brown uniforms (which they provide themselves), posse members can be seen patrolling from autos, golf carts, bicycles or on foot. They direct traffic in emergencies and special events, and promote neighborhood watch programs to gain community participation in the fight against crime.

Captain of the posse is Martin Van Dera, who had 28 years' service with U.S. Naval Intelligence.

Van Dera said that the cost of operating three patrol cars around the clock with one sheriff's deputy in each unit would be about \$250,000 annually. Police protection here is provided by the sheriff's office.

"Because of budgetary restrictions," said Van Dera, "it is impossible for the sheriff to provide as many deputies as he would like, to serve this community."

"The posse serves as eyes and ears for the sheriff's office."

A posse candidate who successfully passes a security check by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and an oral board examination, pays a \$5 initiation fee and dues of \$2 a year.

Responsibilities include monthly training sessions on traffic, laws, powers of arrest, use of firearms and patrol.

"We are constantly learning," said Van Dera.

"We have the same powers of arrest as a sheriff's deputy when felonies are

committed in our presence," he said. "We make no citations for speeding or traffic violations, but we do report license numbers of speeders."

Van Dera said posse members are entitled as citizens to carry weapons, and many members take FBI-sheriff's office firearms training.

Auto patrols serve in three-hour shifts, concentrating on weekend nights when police problems are normally heaviest. They assist the sheriff's office in vacation watch checks and also carry a "want list" of suspicious vehicles in the area.

"Sometimes we hit the streets with as many as 30 cars on patrol if the sheriff calls us out," Van Dera said.

The posse works with sophisticated

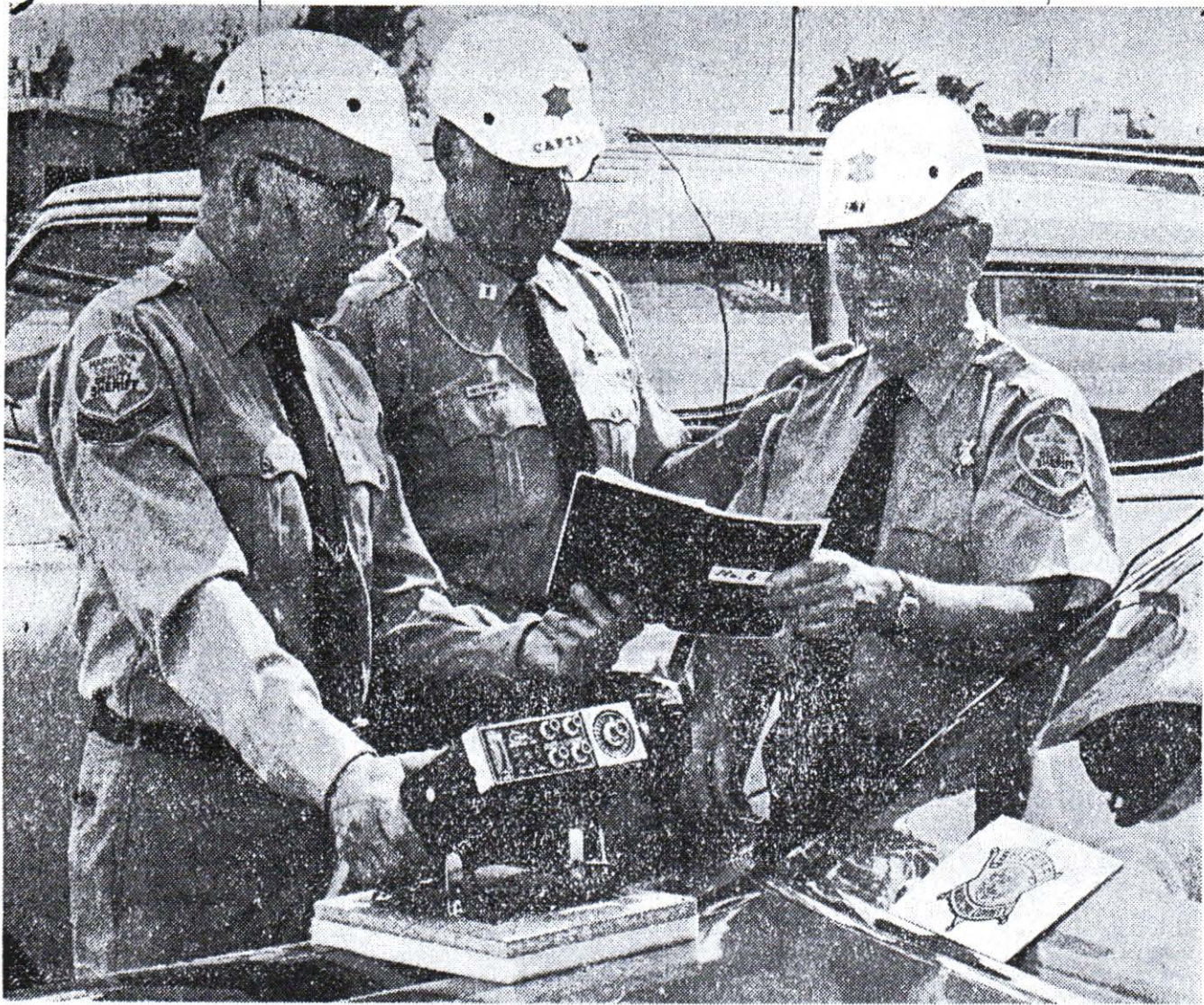
radio equipment in patrol cars communicating with two base stations, and contacts the sheriff's office when necessary.

The posse also promotes a Crime Stop program in which citizens report anything suspicious.

Posseman William Arlt summed up the role of the group: "We raise a hue and cry when we find something wrong. Our group is interested in preserving this community as a pleasant place to live."

Maricopa County Sheriff Paul Blubaum calls the Sun City posse "one of the real (nationwide) success stories in citizen involvement . . . I am proud of the posse and the willingness of members to be involved."

OVER



Republic photo by Roy Cosway

Sun City Sheriff's Posse members, from left, Lt. Carl Zoeller, Capt. Martin Van Dera, and Lt. Jurl

Armstrong plan a training exercise. The posse has 252 volunteer members.



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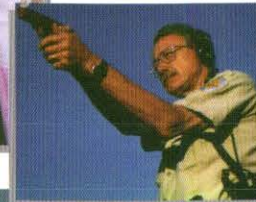
- 12 Administration
- 13 Duty Officer
- 14 Traffic Control
- 15 C.P.R. Training
- 16 Electrician
- 17 Building Maintenance
- 18 Recruiting
- 19 Firearms Training  
(not mandatory)

As you can see, there are many facets of the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City West that are interesting and are enjoyed by more

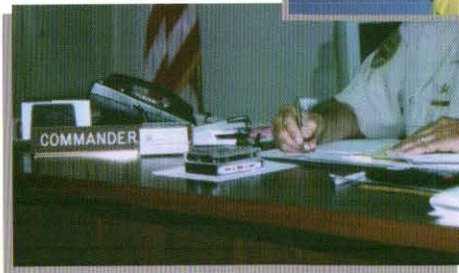
Photos by John E. Lewis



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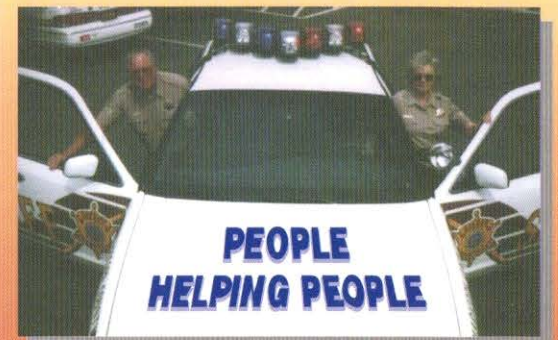
than 225 Posse Persons, all residents. We are proud to state that our roster has 13% women and 10% Husband and Wife teams, that work together. When you become one of us, after a few years experience, you may want to run for commander.

### 20 Commander

If you are interested in learning more about becoming a member of this proud organization, fill-in the attached tear-off and mail it to us. We will contact you and set up a time for an interview with our Recruiting Department, at your convenience.

Lt. John E. Lewis  
Public Relations Officer  
Sheriff's Posse SCW

# "If We Can Do It You Can Do It!"



1

## Couples Working Together



2

We offer you the opportunity to give something back to your community, to meet and know your neighbors and have fun doing it. The Sheriff's Posse of Sun City West is looking for a few good men and women to fill their ranks.

3

To join our Posse - you must be a permanent resident of Sun City West - be of good moral character - no felony convictions - must possess a valid Arizona drivers license - have an Arizona registered vehicle - be in good health and be a U.S. citizen.



4

After completing one of the finest training courses, presented at our Posse Headquarters, you may choose to either:

5



6

- 2 Patrol Our Streets
- 3 Radio Control Dispatcher
- 4 Vacation Watch

(checking security of homes for those who are away)

7

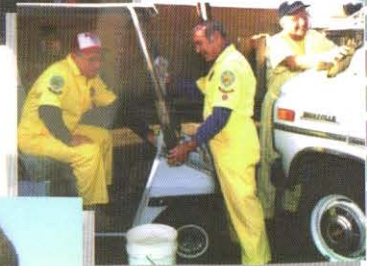
Each tour is 6 hours duration and there are 3 tours per month that are required. One of each, or 3 of a kind, you select your preference. There is one informative monthly meeting required for all Posse persons to attend that lasts about 2 hours. Coffee, doughnuts and fellowship prevail.

Other opportunities available for you to participate in after you qualify with 3

8



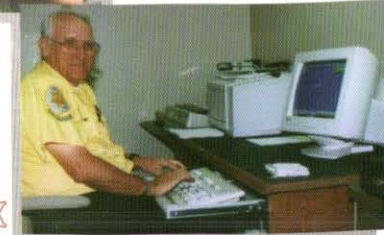
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10



11



monthly tours, could be an extension of hobbies that you enjoyed prior to your retirement - such as:

- 5 Home Security
- 6 Personal Security
- 7 Block Watch
- 8 Vehicle Maintenance
- 9 Car Care
- 10 Photography
- 11 Data Processing

(over)



### **PURPOSE**

The Sun City Posse has the primary function of crime prevention in Sun City and to act as the eyes and ears of the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office. Also a main function is to be of assistance to the citizen's of Sun City and to be of help whenever we can.

Although we are a separate non-profit organization we operate under the direct authorization of the office of the Sheriff of Maricopa County and are subject to call when needed to assist the Sheriff's Office in or out of Sun City.

### **FUNDING**

The Sun City Posse does not receive any County, State, or Federal funds to carry out the programs of the Posse.

On October 1 of each year a letter is sent to each homeowner in Sun City asking them to support the Posse. Response to these requests have been most gratifying and for this your Posse is extremely grateful. Your generous support allows us to carry on our programs and to help maintain one of the lowest crime rates in the nation.

The Posse is constantly seeking ways to improve and upgrade our services to the community and with your continued support these programs will be accomplished in the years to come.

Since all Posse members are unpaid volunteers, the savings to the taxpayers is a very significant sum.

### **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

The Sun City Posse is always in need of qualified men and women to become members of this fine organization.

To become a Posse member no previous police experience is necessary. However several of our members have had some law enforcement background. All that is required is that you be in reasonably good health, be a permanent resident of Sun City, have an unrestricted Arizona driver's license, and be of good moral character. We will train you to become a qualified Posse member. If you are interested in becoming a member of this proud organization or you would like more information on the Posse, please call 972-2555 Monday thru Friday from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. or if you prefer write to:

SUN CITY SHERIFF'S POSSE  
P. O. BOX 6  
SUN CITY, AZ 85372



# **SUN CITY POSSE**

## **ORGANIZATION**

In 1973 a group of Sun City citizens banded together as a Civil Defense unit to patrol the streets of Sun City as a crime deterrent.

In 1974 the Sun City Posse was formed and became an incorporated non-profit organization with the blessing of the Sheriff's Department. The Posse grew each year and went from patrolling in private cars with CB radios to the present day of having fully equipped patrol cars and our own radio station and Posse building.

The Posse business is conducted by a board of Governors consisting of 12 elected members serving 3 year terms and 4 appointees serving 1 year. Each year a new commander is elected to serve 1 year and 4 new board members are elected to replace the 4 outgoing governors. The commander holds the rank of Captain and board members hold the rank of Lieutenants.

## **VACATION WATCH**

If a home is to be unoccupied for an extended period of time, the resident can fill out a vacation watch card (10 days prior to leaving) and the Posse will periodically check the house while the owner is away. Vacation Watch cards may be obtained from the Posse office, Recreation Center office, and all Fire Stations. Also each Posse patrol car has them and you can obtain one from them. Should you need a card and you see one of our patrol cars, they will be happy to stop and give you one. Approximately 20,000 vacation watch inspections are made each year which proves this program is very successful and one that the citizens of Sun City appreciate and utilize.

## **TRAINING**

Each Posse member is required to pass satisfactorily, training courses that consist of:

- Organization & Mission
- Search & Rescue
- Vacation Watch
- Posseperson & the Law
- Uniform & Dress
- Traffic Control
- Communications
- First Aid
- Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (C.P.R.)
- Defensive Driving

In addition they must complete a minimum of 6 training rides when the basic training courses are completed.

In order to carry a firearm, additional training in weapons handling and firing is required. The Posse now has a range and excellent facilities for carrying out this program. Also the Posse has certified range personnel to instruct and qualify our members to carry firearms.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

The Sun City Posse has one of the finest radio networks available. We have recently installed two new base communication consoles that allow immediate contact with the Sheriff's Office, Rural Metro Fire and Ambulance Service, and the towns surrounding Sun City. The two radio scanners pick all transmissions to these departments and our radio dispatcher can send patrol units where it is deemed necessary. The Posse responds to all fire calls, all medical calls, and all accidents in Sun City. In addition, five duty officers patrol cars are also equipped with scanners and have direct contact with the Sheriff's Department. The Posse also has a mobile communications unit that is useful in search and rescue, and disaster operations, and has responded to many requests to aid in these missions.

## **OTHER PROGRAMS**

The Posse has several active programs to benefit the citizens and businesses of Sun City.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH**

Community involvement is the main ingredient to this program. A neighborhood which is interested will contact the Posse or the Sheriff's office and the program will be explained to them. Basically it means each neighbor watches the others property. Neighbors are more aware of strangers in the area than anyone else.

## **HOME SECURITY CHECKS**

Upon request a trained Posse team will visit your home and check inside and out for security, and will offer suggestions on how to upgrade the security of the property if it is deemed necessary.

## **OPERATION IDENTIFICATION**

All the commercial offices and businesses of Sun City have a visible card posted in their windows or doors with a coded number. Since most problems occur when the businesses are closed, this coded number enables the Posse and the Sheriff's offices to locate the owner or his representative to respond to the location to help resolve the problem.